

CHAPTER 2

THE MEANING OF *KAFIR* IN ISLAM

2.1 Introduction

The concept of *takfir*, despite not finding direct mention in the Qur'an or Hadith as a term used by Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. to label Muslims as *kafir*, it holds immense historical and contemporary significance within Islamic discourse. It surfaced after the Qur'anic era, particularly among the group of *Khawarij* around 7th century. They accused Caliph Ali of going against Allah's will. The *Khawarij* believed that committing big sins could make someone as apostate or infidel. However, this ideology totally contradicts with the ideology of *Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah* which denying the core beliefs of Islam and *Iman* can made someone as apostate. It means that by doing serious sins, it didn't make someone become a non-believer.

Islamic scholars have different ways to interpret the meaning of *kafir* that could affect the understanding of *takfir*. *Kufr* are divided into two parts which are *kufr 'aqdi* and *kufr 'amali*. *Kufr 'aqdi* can lead someone to leave Islam, while *kufr 'amali* means doing serious sins but still consider as a Muslim. It's like knowing something is wrong but still doing it. Ibn Qayyim also mention about major and minor *kufr*, which means that some actions might get someone being punished but not forever. It is very important to be careful with these terms and not easily accuse people wrongly. Instead, we should focus on unity and respect among Muslims, even when we have different views about our belief.

2.2 Definition of *Kafir*

Kafir is an Arabic word that comes from the initial ك - ف - ر, which is similar to "الكُفْرُ" that pronounce as *kufur* or *kufir*. In terms of language, the word means to cover and hide (Al-Bakri Z. M., 2024). As for example, "قد كفر درعهُ", which translates to "He has cover his armour suit". While the word "المكفّر" refer as a man that hide his weapon. A farmer is also refer as "كافر" due to the act of covering and hiding the seeds in the ground (Al-Bakri Z. M., 2024). Ibnu Faris and Ibnu Manzur believe that *kafir* or *kufur* is the antonym of the word *iman* as the word bring the meaning of hiding the truth. *Iman* and *kufur* is opposite to each other as *iman* is a strong believe that Allah is the only owner, creator and God of the whole universe, while *kufur* is refuse toward the truth of Islam after adhere to it (Al-Bakri Z. M., 2024).

Abu Hassan Al-Ash'ari define *kafir* into two categories which are; *kafir shar'i* and *kafir lughawi*. *Kafir shar'i* is seen as the real unbeliever and could nullified individual's believe by his actions and intentions. The consequence of this category of *kafir* might cause the person's marriage to be void, his slaughter is illegal, prohibited to be the heir of wealth, prohibited to become *Imam* (one who leads Muslim worshippers in prayer (Zeidan, 2024)), and prohibited to be buried in Muslim cemetery. While in the hereafter, he will be permanently punished in Hell forever. The real *kufir* is denying, rejecting, and opposing the primary teaching of Islam that come from the Qur'an, Hadith, and tacit agreement. As examples, the atheistic people resist to believe

the existence of Allah and the Prophets are considered as *kafir* due to their rejection of the fundamental teaching of Islam.

The second category is *kafir lughawi* or also known as *kafir duna kufir*. The word is from linguistic approach which used to express *taqliz* (extreme harshness) and *tashdid* (severe) as a warning and prevention for others from doing bad things (Al-Sha'rani, n.d). It is a metaphorical to stipulate the seriousness of the action that close to infidel. The misinterpretation of Islamic teaching based on *ijtihad* of certain groups that are not in line with *Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah* is called as *dhulmu, ta'adda, mubtadi'ah, and mukhti'ah* in Islamic teaching (Al-Sha'rani, n.d). According to Abu Hassan Al-Ash'ari, the misinterpretation will not cause the group to be infidel and they are still believer. This is because all of them has the same intention which is to worship Allah as the only God.

Al-Ghazali (2002) states that *kufir* means to deem anything the Prophet brought to be a lie just as *iman* means to deem everything he brought to be true. Jews and Christians are seen as unbelievers without doubt as they perceive one or two prophets as liar (Al-Ghazali, 2002). While, the group of Atheists are also a core unbeliever as they totally deny the existence of God, and they assume that there is no creator for this universe (Al-Ghazali, 2002). There are three fundamental principles (*usul*) of *iman*: the existence and oneness of God; the prophet hood of the Prophet Muhammad; and the reality of the Last day (Al-Ghazali, 2002). Other than these three fundamentals are consider as subordinate and cannot be grasp as the basis of *iman*.

Ibn Taymiyyah (1978) define the word *kufur* or *kafir* as disbelief towards Allah and His prophet either by disobey or being doubtful or reject the teaching due to the ill feeling such as arrogant, envious or following lust that are totally contradict from Islamic teaching (Ibn Taimiyyah, 1978). *Kufur* from Islamic principles is a rejection of

something that already known as a part of Prophet Muhammad’s P.B.U.H. teaching. It can be specify as deny the existence of the creator and prophetic, do greater sins and many more (Wizaratul Awqaf Wa Ash-Shauni Al-Islamiyyah Al-Mausu'atil Fiqhiyyah, 1982). In the Qur’an, the word *kafir* mostly refer to a state or condition of the individual as being *kufur*. The word *kafir* in Qur’an used to regard on several meaning that are most suited with the context of the text.

2.2.1 Disbelief

The word *kafir* in the Qur’an was mention as to refer to the group or individual that disbelief towards Allah’s existence. Allah says:

﴿۶﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

“As for those who persist in disbelief, it is the same whether you warn them or not – they will never believe.” (Al-Baqarah 2:6)

﴿۱۲﴾ قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَتْغَلِبُونَ وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وَيَسَّرَ الْمِهَادُ

“O Prophet! Tell the disbelievers, ‘Soon you will be overpowered and driven to Hell – what an evil place to rest!’” (Ali-Imran 3:12)

﴿۱۰﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ

“As for those who disbelieve and deny Our signs, they are the residents of the Hellfire.” (Al-Maidah 5:10)

﴿۱۴﴾ ذَٰلِكُمْ فَذُوقُوهُ وَأَنَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابَ النَّارِ

“That ‘worldly punishment’ is yours, so taste it! Then the disbelievers will suffer the torment of Fire.” (Al-Anfal 8:14)

2.2.2 Ungrateful

In Qur'anic terminology, the words *kafir* also used to show ungratefulness for the favors of Allah as the God or faith or Qur'an as the message of God. Allah says:

﴿٢٧﴾ إِنَّ الْمُبَدِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ ط وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا

“Surely the wasteful are ‘like’ brothers to the devils. And the Devil is ungrateful to his Lord.” (Al-Isra’ 17:27)

﴿٢٨﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَدْفَعُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ خَوَّانٍ كَفُورٍ

“Indeed, Allah defends those who believe. Surely Allah does not like whoever is deceitful, ungrateful.” (Al-Haj 22:38)

﴿٦٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ

“And He is the One Who gave you life, then will cause you to die, and then will bring you back to life. ‘But’ surely humankind is ungrateful.” (Al-Haj 22:66)

﴿١٧﴾ ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَاهُمْ بِمَا كَفَرُوا وَهَلْ نُجْزِي إِلَّا الْكَافِرَ

“This is how We rewarded them for their ingratitude. Would We ever punish ‘anyone in such a way’ except the ungrateful?” (Saba’ 34:17)

2.2.3 Remove

The word *kafir* also used in the Qur'an to refer to the act of remove. Allah says:

﴿٣١﴾ إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا نُهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نَكُفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلْكُمْ مُدْخَلًا كَرِيمًا

“If you avoid the major sins which you are forbidden, We will remove from you your lesser sins and admit you to a noble entrance (paradise).” (An-Nisa’ 4:31)

﴿٦٥﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَكَفَّرْنَا عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَادْخَلْنَاهُمْ جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

“And if only the People of the Scripture had believed and feared Allah, We would have removed from them their misdeeds and admitted them to Gardens of Pleasure.” (Al-Maidah 5:65)

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَحْسَنَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧﴾

“And those who believe and do righteous deeds – We will surely remove from them their misdeeds and will surely reward them according to the best of what they used to do.” (Al-Ankabut 29:7)

لِيُكَفِّرَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

“That Allah may remove from them the worst of what they did and reward them their due for the best of what they used to do.” (Az-Zumar 39:35)

2.2.4 Deny/Reject

Allah also mention the word *kafir* in the Qur’an to point out people’s denial or rejection towards the faith. Allah says:

وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ ءَايَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَا إِلَّا الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

“Indeed, We have sent down to you ‘O Prophet’ clear revelations. ‘But’ none will deny them except the rebellious.” (Al-Baqarah 2:99)

وَأَتَّبِعُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ عَادًا كَفَرُوا رَبَّهُمْ ۗ أَلَا بَعْدَ إِعَادِ قَوْمِ هُودٍ ﴿٦٠﴾

“They were followed by a curse in this world, as they will be on the Day of Judgement. Surely ‘Ād denied their Lord. So away with ‘Ād, the people of Hūd.” (Hud 11:60)

كَلَّا سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدًّا ﴿٨٢﴾

“But no! Those ‘gods’ will deny their worship and turn against them.” (Maryam 19:82)

تَجْرِي بِأَعْيُنِنَا جَزَاءَ لِمَنْ كَانَ كُفْرًا ﴿١٤﴾

“sailing under Our ‘watchful’ Eyes – a ‘fair’ punishment on behalf of the one ‘they’ denied.” (Al-Qamar 54:14)

2.3 The Types of *Kafir*

There are four types of *kafir* agreed by Muslim scholars which are *kafir mu’ahad*, *kafir zimni*, *kafir musta’man*, and *kafir harbi*.

2.3.1 *Kafir Mu'ahad*

Kafir Mu'ahad is refer to non-Muslim that has agreement with Muslim, such as during the event between Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. and Quraisy society in *Hudaibiyah* agreement (Mahmud, 1430). Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. said:

مَنْ قَتَلَ مُعَاهِدًا لَمْ يَرِحْ رَائِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنَّ رِيحَهَا تُوجَدُ مِنْ مَسِيرَةِ أَرْبَعِينَ عَامًا

“Whoever killed a person having a treaty with the Muslims, shall not smell the smell of Paradise though its smell perceived from a distance of forty years.” (Al-Bukhari: 3166)

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani interpret that *kafir* people mentioned in the hadith refer to the people that has make agreement with Muslim, either it is through *jizyah* (tax paid by non-Muslim to their Muslim rulers (Jizyah, 2009)), cease fire, or security protection from Muslim society.

2.3.2 *Kafir Zimni*

Kafir Zimni is regard to the religious communities specifically Jews and Christians that has agreement which make them compulsory to pay *jizyah* (Hamdi, 2001). This group of people has its special ruling that only applicable to them. In another word, they are non-Muslim that live in the same country with Muslim society, and Muslim people need to protect and guard them. *Kafir Zimni* people need to pay *jizyah* as a replacement for the residence and protection given by Muslim country (Al-Bakri Z. M., 2024). Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. said:

مَنْ قَتَلَ رَجُلًا مِنْ أَهْلِ الذِّمَّةِ، لَمْ يَجِدْ رِيحَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنَّ رِيحَهَا لَيُوجَدُ مِنْ مَسِيرَةِ سَبْعِينَ عَامًا

“Whoever kills a man from among Ahl Adh-Dhimmah, he will not smell the fragrance of Paradise, and its fragrance may be detected from a distance of seventy years.” (Ahmad: 18072, Al-Nasa’i: 4749)

2.3.3 *Kafir Musta'man*

Kafir Musta'man refer to non-Muslim from the rival country that comes to Muslim country harmlessly with the intention to buy and sell goods or for daily labour (Mahmud, 1430). This group of people are respected and his soul is protected even they come from the group of enemy due to the fact they are given special security assurance (Mahmud, 1430). Syeikh Muhammad al-Mukhtar al-Syanqiti describe *kafir musta'man* as Muslim's rival that comes to Muslim country in peace, to do business or agreement for certain purposes, whether public or personal interests. They will be given security by the authority and given to those who are entitled only (Al-Bakri Z. M., 2024). Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. said:

وَدِمَةٌ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَاحِدَةٌ يَسْعَى بِهَا أَذْنَاہُمْ

“And the asylum granted by any Muslim is to be secured by all the Muslims even if it is granted by one of the lowest social status among them.” (Al-Bukhari: 3179)

It is an Arabic tradition when someone request for protection come into another person's house, they will be given protection as he provide for his own self (Al-Bakri Z. M., 2024). This is part of human's nobility and sign of superiority that they will not going to be betrayed with the condition not violating the limit sets by Allah. If they violate the limit sets for them, the protection will be null and Islamic principle has the right to be applied on them (Al-Bakri Z. M., 2024).

2.3.4 *Kafir Harbi*

Kafir Harbi indicate to non-Muslim that does not have any agreement and assurance from Muslim people. They are not included in *zimmah* agreement and do not

experience security or agreement between Muslim and non-Muslim (Wizaratul Awqaf Wa Ash-Shauni Al-Islamiyyah Al-Mausu'atil Fiqhiyyah, 1982). They were define as people that have conflict and hostility against Muslim (Al-Bakri Z. M., 2024). Therefore, Islamic scholars call them *kafir harbi* even they are in cease fire situation with Muslim community. *Harb* people is the group that reject and oppose Islamic teaching, clarify its bitterness with Muslim, and don't have trust while signing agreement with Muslim society. They live in country that did not apply Islamic principles and also known as *dar al-harb*. In this regard, the law applied on them is totally different from the one that applied on *zimmi* (al-Qaradhawi, 2013).

2.4 The Category of *Kufr*

Islamic theologians divide *kufr* into several parts. Some agreed that there are two types of *kufr*; *kufr asghar* or *kufr 'amali* (the act does not cause the individual to be infidel but regard as violate Islamic law) and *kufr akbar* or *kufr 'aqdi* (the act cause the individual to be infidel). While some agreed that there are five categories of *kufr* which are; *kufr* in the form of denial and refutation, *kufr* in arrogance and pride, *kufr* in doubt, *kufr* in rejection, and *kufr nifaq*.

2.4.1 *Kufr* in the Form of Denial and Refutation

This type of *kufr* consist of denial towards all the prophets which is consider as the actual denial of Islamic teaching. Whoever deny the prophets publicly although they already known the truth and seen the signs of prophet hood, is the real denial which happen to majority of people during the prophets' times.

وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

“And, although their hearts were convinced the signs were true, they still denied them wrongfully and arrogantly. See then what was the end of the corruptors!” (An-Naml 27:14)

قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزَنُكَ الَّذِي يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يَكَذِبُونَكَ وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعَاثَ اللَّهُ بِمُحَدِّثِينَ

“We certainly know that what they say grieves you ‘O Prophet’. It is not your honesty they question – it is Allah’s signs that the wrongdoers deny.” (Al-An’am 6:33)

According to Al-Sa’di (2002), those people did not deny Muhammad because they know what kind of person he is. They even call him as ‘*Al-Amin*’ before they know about his prophet hood due to his honest and humble personality. But after Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. convey Allah’s command, they instantly refuse and deny it. This situation proved that those people totally oppose Allah’s words and command and not Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. (Al-Sa’di, 2002).

2.4.2 *Kufr* in Arrogance and Pride

This type of *kufr* happen when the individual already known the truth but too shame to admit it due to their pride and feel arrogance in the heart (Al-Bakri Z. M., 2024). To give an example, during the situation of *Iblis* being *kufr* towards Allah’s order to show respect towards Prophet Adam.

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

“And ‘remember’ when We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam,’ so they all did – but not Iblis, who refused and acted arrogantly, becoming unfaithful.” (Al-Baqarah 2:34)

2.4.3 *Kufr* in Doubt

This type of *kufr* totally contradict with acknowledgement and strong belief toward Islamic teaching (Al-Bakri Z. M., 2024). Allah has created the doubt feeling as part of *kufr* which can lead the individual to be thrown in Hellfire.

وَحِيلَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ كَمَا فُعِلَ بِأَشْيَاعِهِمْ مِّن قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا فِي شَكٍّ مُّريبٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

“They will be sealed off from whatever they desire, as was done to their counterparts before. Indeed, they were ‘all’ in alarming doubt.” (Saba’ 34:54)

2.4.4 *Kufr* in Rejection

This category of *kufr* refer to individual that reject the truth without even hear or accept it.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَمَّا أُنذِرُوا مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣﴾

“Yet the disbelievers are turning away from what they have been warned about.” (Al-Ahqaf 46:3)

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ ثُمَّ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنْقِمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

“And who does more wrong than the one who is reminded of Allah’s revelations then turns away from them? We will surely inflict punishment upon the wicked.” (As-Sajdah 32:22)

Islamic scholars elucidate the verses as: We will definitely make them undergo through the punishment, and they will still not regress towards the truth (‘Umar, 1862). Firstly, they have been warned with the good deeds of Allah but still reject the truth. Secondly, they have been warned of the chastisement from Allah but still not accepting Islam. They were seen as the heartless person due to the fact that all the individuals that not believe in Allah is consider as wicked (‘Umar, 1862).

2.5 History and Ideological Roots of *Takfir*

Despite the fact that the terms *kufr* and *kafir* are available in the Qur’an and Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H.’s Hadith, however the term of *takfir* were never mentioned in Qur’an and Hadith to declare Muslims as *kafir*. This shows that *takfir* is not a Qur’anic term neither were used by Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. toward others.

The term was used in the post-Qur'anic period and firstly done by the sectarians of Khawarij (Kadivar, 2020). *Takfir* were used in the present day for authorizing violence against leaders of Islamic states which is inadequately religious. Even so, in the last decade the term has widened and includes different Islamic groups and common Muslims (Kadivar, 2020).

The history of *takfir* appear in the mid-7th century during a battle of Siffin which happened due to the insurrection by Muawiyah against caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib (Kadivar, 2020). When caliph Ali's armies were close to defeat Muawiyah, Muawiyah suggest for conciliation. Caliph Ali agreed with the conciliation and resulting to some of the soldiers turned against him due to his decision. Those armies were known as Khawarij in this day and they convinced that God is the one that has the right to judge (Kadivar, 2020). They argue that Caliph Ali's agreement to the conciliation was a breach against God's will and declare that Caliph Ali and his supporters were apostates. Khawarij states that "Muslims who commit grave sins effectively reject their religion, entering the ranks of apostates, and therefore deserve capital punishment" (Tamara Sonn, 2009).

Khawarij later became a political belief that seek for political power (Kadivar, 2020). Their concept of *takfir* were based on their own understanding of who is not a believer nor a Muslim. They determined a grave sin was not based on belief or disbelief in God but on acts and practices (Timani, 2018). Throughout this approach, they validate their own views and devaluate others who they viewed as *kafir*. Generally, this approach of *takfir*, triggered lots of debates and controversy among scholars and theologians in interpreting *kufir*, *iman*, Islam, *kafir*, and *mu'min*. In Murji'ites views, they refused to label other Muslims as *kafir* and accept the postponement of judgement on committers of serious sins, and believe God is the only judge to decide whether or

not a Muslim has lost his faith (Kadivar, 2020). The Murji'ah firmly stand that no one who professed Islam could be accused as *kafir* regardless of their sins (Annemarie Schimmel, 2024).

Other theological school of thought, Mu'tazilah emphasized that a grave sinner cannot be categorized as believer nor unbeliever but was in-between position (Britannica, 2020). Ibn Hazm clarified that a believer that committed a grave sin is a believer in regard to his good deeds, and a non-believer in regards to his evil acts (Timani, 2018). The next theological school of thought, Ash'ari determined that he or she still a believer but was responsible to punishment in the Hellfire (Kadivar, 2020). It's point of view had narrowed down the domain of *kufir* and widened the domain of belief, and also focusing on the belief in the heart (Timani, 2018).

Ibn Taymiyyah, a significant figure in *takfir*, aimed to bring Islam back to its roots which are the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad's P.B.U.H. teachings. He allowed the practice of *takfir* against various Muslim groups, deviating from his interpretation of Islam (Laoust, 2024). For instance, he labeled Mongols as non-authentic Muslims and fought against them. He believed that fighting those deviating from Islamic laws was more important than prayer or fasting (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1978). He strongly opposed Shi'a Muslims, claiming they supported enemies of Islam and posed a threat. Ibn Taymiyyah also condemned the Alawites, considering them worse than other non-Muslim groups and encouraging war against them (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1978). His ideas influenced Salafi-Takfiri groups such as Al-Qaeda and Daesh, who used *takfir* extensively, targeting Muslim governments, leaders, and even ordinary Muslims. This ideology led to ethnic cleansing in countries like Iraq and Syria.

Moreover, Ibn Taymiyyah's views influenced Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab, whose teachings expanded on *takfir*, allowing accusations against Muslims who disagreed

with strict interpretations (Kadivar, 2020). Wahhabism, backed by Saudi Arabia, spread this ideology worldwide through funding and educational institutions, impacting Salafi groups globally (Crooke, 2017). Sayyid Qutb continued this ideology, dividing Muslim societies into good and bad and advocating for violent actions against corrupt rulers, further influencing groups of Al-Qaeda and Daesh (Qutb & al-Mehri, 2014). Daesh, tracing its roots to Al-Qaeda in Iraq, adopting *takfir* to target *Shi'a* Muslims, aiming to gain political power and remove rivals. Their propaganda portrayed *Shi'a* Muslims as conspiring against Islam (Kadivar, 2020).

2.6 Factors Lead to *Takfir*

The issue of *takfir* among Muslim society were caused by several factors. The factors are divided into two parts which are; internal and external factors. Internal factor consists of lack of understanding the real definition of *iman* based on Islamic teaching and principles, while external factors consist of political and social factors.

2.6.1 Internal Factors

Internal factors that led to *takfir* issue involve the misunderstanding the definition of the real *iman* from Islamic teaching. By not understanding the real definition of *iman* it can easily lead society to accuse others as infidel without acknowledge the real context. Some people conclude that when someone did certain wrongful action or did something that is out of ordinary, there are instantly consider as infidel. While in fact, *iman* is a comprehensive matter and we as a human being should not easily conclude thing without totally understand it and refer to other reliable sources.

Iman from linguistic aspect is *al-tasdiq* which means allowing (Al-Bakri D. Z., 2023). According to Ibn Manzur (1232-1311), *iman* mean *al-tasdiq* has been agreed by the majority of Muslim scholars such as Al-Asfahani, Al-Qadhi Iyadh and Al-Tabari (Al-Bakri D. Z., 2023). While in terminological meaning, Ibn Kathir states that there is no terminological meaning of *iman* unless there is existence of the real belief or conviction (*I'tiqad*) through verbal and action of the individual (Al-Sha'rani, n.d.). Even Imam al-Syafi'i, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Abu 'Ubaid, and other Muslim scholars agree on the fact that *iman* are both word and action, it can increase and decrease (Al-Bakri D. Z., 2023). *Ahl Sunnah Wal Jamaah* believe that *iman* is accepting in the heart, verbally uttered it, and practice through the action of the body.

2.6.2 External Factors

External factors that could led to *takfir* issue primarily consist of political and social factors.

Politics

After analysing the emergence history of *takfir* during post-Qur'anic period, we can clarify that politic is the biggest factor of the issue. Khawarij sectarian is the first group that applied *takfir* to justify their immoral act. They argue that Caliph Ali's agreement to the conciliation with *Muawiyah* during the battle of *Siffin* was a breach against God's will and declare that Caliph Ali and his supporters were apostates (Kadivar, 2020). Khawarij states that "Muslims who commit grave sins effectively reject their religion, entering the ranks of apostates, and therefore deserve capital punishment" (Tamara Sonn, 2009). Khawarij later became a political belief that seek for political power. Their concept of *takfir* were based on their own understanding of

who is not a believer nor a Muslim. They determined a grave sin was not based on belief or disbelief in God but on acts and practices of the individual (Kadivar, 2020).

While in Malaysia, politic is the root causes of the emergence of *takfir* issue among society (Razali Musa M. S., 2018). The dissension between UMNO and PAS had a great impact towards societies' belief and understanding of Islam. The dispute had influence their attitudes and practices which had caused isolation and separation among the public such as null marriage vows due to the fact that the *tok kadi* (religious official that perform solemnization ceremony (Asrina Tanuri, 2021)) is an UMNO supporter. Another scenario that caused the issue is when PAS joined Barisan Nasional which had caused the conflict of religion separation from politics instantly being doubtful (Razali Musa M. S., 2018).

Social

This social factor was the consequence from the politic factors. The situations of oppression, repression, and discrimination that were felt among certain groups in Malaysia had led the religious scholars to raise the issue of *takfir* (Razali Musa M. S., 2018). This accusation was based on the perception of particular verses in Qur'an and Hadith.

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ بِآيَاتِنَا فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

“Then after these ‘messengers’ We sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his chiefs with Our signs. But they behaved arrogantly and were a wicked people.” (Yunus 10:75)

To explain the meaning of *mustakbirin* in depth, Dewan Pemuda PAS Kelantan stated in the magazine of as below (Dewan Pemuda Pas Kelantan, 1405 H):

“...the group in power in an ignorant (*jahiliyyah*) society that is controlled without any equal rights from a political or economic aspect. Besides they are always trying to

control and hold on to power by using force, they try to control the mind and use numerous ways to force someone to condescend to them.”

Although the accusation toward certain group were not specifically mentioned in the text, however, the writer define that whoever read the magazine will able to detect the possibility of the situations (Razali Musa M. S., 2018). The issue arises due to the discrimination felt by the powerless group (*mustad'affin*) that were done by the oppresses (*mustakbirin*). This situation deteriorates when incidents that portray the rulers as the oppressing group which fight for supremacy of Islam happened such as Lubuk Merbau and Memali incidents (Razali Musa M. S., 2018). Due to the incidents, PAS had meetings that called as the *Ijtimak Mustad'affin* on 27 January 1985 in Darul Amin in Temerloh, Pahang. Haji Abdul Hadi mentioned in his speech (Said, 1985):

“The bloody incident in Lubuk Merbau is the beginning of *Jahiliyyah* atrocities and also marks the beginning of the rise of Islam in this country.”

2.7 The Implications of *Takfir*

In a study conducted by Agam Royana (2021), stated about the negative impact of *takfir*. It is very unpleasant to claim other Muslim as *kafir* just because of different perspectives on topics regarding faith and *fiqh*. Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. even gave a stern warning concerning this issue as the following:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مَعْمَرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْوَارِثِ، عَنِ الْحُسَيْنِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ بُرَيْدَةَ، حَدَّثَنِي يَحْيَى بْنُ يَعْمَرَ، أَنَّ أَبَا

"لَا الْأَسْوَدَ الدِّيلِيَّ، حَدَّثَهُ عَنْ أَبِي دَرٍّ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ:

يُرْمِي رَجُلٌ رَجُلًا بِالْفُسُوقِ، وَلَا يَزِمِيهِ بِالْكَفْرِ، إِلَّا ارْتَدَّتْ عَلَيْهِ، إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ صَاحِبُهُ كَذَلِكَ."

Narrated by Abu Dhar: That he heard the Prophet saying, “If somebody accuses another of *Fusuq* (by calling him *Fasiq*, a wicked person) or accuses him of *Kufr*, such an accusation will revert to him (the accuser) if the companion (the accused) is innocent.” (Al-Bukhari: 6045)

Accusing a Muslim as infidel will have a bad impact and causing dishonor towards individuals involved. Imam Subki clarified that *takfir* is like telling the person that he will be permanently in the hell (Royana, 2021).

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَنَ الْكٰفِرِينَ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ سَعِيرًا ﴿٦٤﴾

“Surely Allah condemns the disbelievers, and has prepared for them a blazing Fire.” (Al-Ahzab 33:64)

خٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا اَبَدًا لَا يَجِدُوْنَ وٰلِيًا وَلَا نٰصِرًا ﴿٦٥﴾

“to stay there for ever and ever-never will they find any protector or helper.” (Al-Ahzab 33:65)

Undoubtedly, in the end of all these, it will return back to Allah’s judgement. However, the situation could be that the accused will be considered as a bad and terrible person, but get a great blessing from Allah (Royana,2021). Blessing that has indication in the direction of forgiveness which caused by the acts of kindness that are not acknowledge by other people (Royana, 2021). In addition to that, the accused that labeled as *kafir* are seen as apostates. According to Islamic principles, any Muslim that leave Islam will receive certain consequences such as his blood is to be fought and killed, and his prosperity to be seized (Royana, 2021).

مَنْ بَدَّلَ دِيْنَهُ فَاقْتُلُوْهُ

Ibn ‘Abbas said: “The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ‘Whoever changes his religion, kill him’.” (An-Nasa’I: 4059)

لَا يَجِلُّ دَمُ امْرِئٍ مُّسْلِمٍ اِلَّا بِاِحْدَى ثَلَاثٍ النَّفْسُ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالتَّيْبُ الزَّانِي وَالتَّارِكُ دِيْنَهُ الْمَقَارِقُ

It was narrated from ‘Abdullah that the Messenger of Allah said: “It is not permissible to shed the blood of a Muslim except in one of three cases: A soul for a soul, an adulterer who has been married, and on who separates leaving his religion.” (Al-Nasa’I: 4721)

2.8 Conclusions

The majority (*Ahli Sunnah Wal-Jamaah*) define the two methods of *takfir* which are; *Takfir Mutlaq* (whoever state that someone’s act or behavior as *kafir* could lead to *kufir*) and *Takfir Mu’ayyan* (specifically calling out the person’s name and tell them that they are *kafir*). According to Dr. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *takfir* should be differentiate by two ways which by its type and its personality. The term of *takfir* was used in the post-Quranic period and firstly done by the sectarians of Khawarij and it were used in the present day for authorizing violence against leaders of Islamic states which is inadequately religious. However, in the last decade the term has widened and includes different Islamic groups and common Muslims. In the classification of *Kafir* part, majority of Islamic scholars did not claim *Umum al-Muslimin* (groups of Islamic ideology except *Ahli Sunnah Wal-Jamaah*) as *kafir* for the reason the committed sin was not associated to the denial of Allah’s existence and not a grave sin. If the sin was done as an aspect of denial toward Islamic *Syari’ah* and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H., then they can be regard as *kafir*. In spite of that, his *kufir* is not because of the committed sin, but due to the denial of Islamic principles.