

## **ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY AND *TA'AWUN*: A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO ROHINGYA REFUGEES IN SABANG, ACEH**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The principle of *ta'awun* or mutual assistance is a fundamental Islamic value that promotes solidarity and shared responsibility. Its practical application in contemporary, culturally diverse societies often encounter significant challenges. This study investigates how the residents of Ie Meulee Village, Sukajaya Subdistrict, Sabang City, practiced *ta'awun* in responding to Rohingya refugees stranded in the area during December 2023. Employing a qualitative methodology, the study collected data through observations, interviews with 14 informants—including village officials, religious leaders, community members, and refugees—and document analysis. The findings reveal *varied interpretations and implementations of ta'awun*, shaped by factors such as religious education, the social environment, and economic constraints. While residents with strong religious knowledge exhibited proactive assistance, others provided help spontaneously or hesitated due to existing prejudices. This study underscores the importance of inclusive religious education, community-based social programs, and local policies to foster cross-cultural solidarity, ensuring the sustainable application of *ta'awun* values in multiethnic societies.

**Keywords:** *Ta'awun, Social Solidarity, Rohingya Refugees, Community Response*

### **ABSTRAK**

Prinsip *ta'awun* atau tolong-menolong adalah nilai penting dalam Islam yang menekankan solidaritas dan tanggung jawab bersama. Namun, penerapannya di masa kini, terutama di masyarakat yang beragam secara budaya, sering menghadapi tantangan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami bagaimana masyarakat Desa Ie Meulee, Kecamatan Sukajaya, Kota Sabang, mempraktikkan *ta'awun* dalam merespons pengungsi Rohingya yang terdampar pada Desember 2023. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara dengan 14 informan (perangkat desa, tokoh agama, warga, dan pengungsi), serta analisis dokumen. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa pemahaman dan penerapan *ta'awun* beragam, tergantung pada pendidikan agama, pengaruh lingkungan sosial, dan kekhawatiran ekonomi. Beberapa warga dengan pemahaman agama yang mendalam menunjukkan sikap proaktif, sementara lainnya memberikan bantuan secara spontan atau bahkan enggan membantu karena prasangka. Penelitian ini menyarankan perlunya pendidikan agama yang inklusif, program sosial untuk mendorong kerjasama, dan kebijakan lokal yang mendukung solidaritas lintas budaya, sehingga *ta'awun* dapat diterapkan secara luas dan berkelanjutan.

**Kata Kunci:** *Ta'awun, Solidaritas Sosial, Pengungsi Rohingya, Respons Masyarakat*

**A. Introduction**

Mutual assistance is a universal value upheld by various religions and cultures, with its practice particularly emphasized in Islam under the principle of *ta'awun*. This principle serves not only as a guide for individual ethics but also as a framework for social interactions rooted in benevolence (*al-birr*) and piety (*al-taqwa*). The Qur'an highlights the significance of *ta'awun* in Surah Al-Maidah (5:2):

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢﴾

“... and cooperate with one another in goodness and righteousness, and do not cooperate in sin and transgression. And be mindful of Allah. Surely Allah is severe in punishment.”

Historically, *ta'awun* has been a cornerstone of societal harmony and resilience within Muslim communities. For example, during the migration (*hijrah*) from Mecca to Medina, the Ansar warmly welcomed and supported the Muhajirun, demonstrating social solidarity as both a religious obligation and a source of communal strength. According to Quraish Shihab,<sup>1</sup> *ta'awun* embodies cooperation based on shared objectives of righteousness and piety, applicable to all relationships regardless of background.

In contemporary settings, however, the implementation of *ta'awun* faces challenges, particularly in culturally diverse and interfaith contexts. A pertinent example is the response of the Ie Meulee Village community, Sukajaya Subdistrict, Sabang City, to the arrival of Rohingya refugees stranded in December 2023.<sup>2</sup> While the Qur'an advocates mutual assistance without discrimination, initial observations reveal inconsistencies in practice. Although some community members offered assistance proactively, others hesitated, citing economic concerns or harboring prejudices.<sup>3</sup>

This discrepancy between Islamic teachings and community practices highlights the complexity of applying *ta'awun* in real-world scenarios. Previous studies by Pratisti et al.<sup>4</sup> and Darnela<sup>5</sup> shed light on similar issues, including the role of religious sentiments and misinformation in hindering solidarity. Moreover, instances of commodification in humanitarian aid, as observed in Aceh during 2015-2016, underscore the need for genuine and inclusive approaches to fostering social support. Similarly, research on the response to Rohingya refugees in Aceh reveals that while Sharia law fosters humanitarian solidarity, community responses are often influenced by economic and political dynamics, further complicating the consistent application of Qur'anic principles.<sup>6</sup> In light of these challenges,

<sup>1</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Miṣbāh* (Lentera Hati, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Mawar Kusuma Wulan, 'Continuing to Arrive, President Orders Joint Handling of Rohingya Refugees - Kompas.Id', *Kompas.Id*, 2023 <<https://www.kompas.id/baca/english/2023/12/04/en-president-perintahkan-penanganan-bersama-pengungsi-rohingya>>.

<sup>3</sup> The results of interviews and initial observations conducted in January 2024 in Ie Meulee Village, Sukajaya District, Sabang City.

<sup>4</sup> Siti Aliyuna Pratisti, Taufik Hidayat, and Deasy Silvy Sari, 'When Solidarity Is Trampled by Religious Sentiment: Outlining Indonesian Muslim Solidarity toward Rohingya Refugees', *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik*, 23.1 (2019), p. 1, doi:10.22146/jsp.35732.

<sup>5</sup> Lindra Darnela, 'Islam and Humanity: Commodification of Aid for Rohingya in Aceh', *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 59.1 (2021), pp. 57–96, doi:10.14421/ajis.2021.591.57-96.

<sup>6</sup> Suraiya Ismail Thaib and others, 'SHARIA LAW AND COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO ROHINGYA REFUGEES IN ACEH', *PETITA: JURNAL KAJIAN ILMU HUKUM DAN SYARIAH*, 9.2

this study explores two key questions: to what extent does the community's understanding of Qur'anic teachings on mutual assistance influence their actions? And how are these principles applied in practice? By examining the perspectives of Ie Meulee Village residents, this study seeks to bridge the gap between normative teachings of *ta'awun* and their practical implementation in addressing the needs of Rohingya refugees.

This research employs a qualitative approach with a field research design to explore in depth the understanding of Ie Meulee Village residents, Sukajaya Subdistrict, Sabang City, regarding Qur'anic teachings on mutual assistance and the application of these values in responding to Rohingya refugees. This method was chosen to comprehensively understand the social phenomenon based on the perspectives and direct experiences of the informants.<sup>7</sup> The research location is Ie Meulee Village, selected for its relevance to the arrival of Rohingya refugees in December 2023, which sparked various social dynamics within the community. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document studies. The study involved 14 purposively selected informants to ensure diverse perspectives. The informants included village officials, religious leaders (mosque imams and *teungku*), the general public, and Rohingya refugees. Informants were selected based on their knowledge, experience, and level of involvement in the issue. Data analysis utilized the interactive model of Miles and Huberman,<sup>8</sup> enabling an in-depth exploration of the relationship between normative understanding and practical actions within the context of the Muslim community.

## **B. Results and Discussion**

### **1. Qur'anic Verses Related to Mutual Assistance**

In Islam, the concept of *ta'awun* or mutual assistance underpins social relations, emphasizing benevolence (*al-birr*) and piety (*al-taqwa*).<sup>9</sup> This principal manifest as a dual obligation: reliance on Allah SWT for support and fostering mutual aid among humans.<sup>10</sup> As highlighted in the Qur'an, *ta'awun* serves as a cornerstone for ethical and collaborative interactions. An analysis of Qur'anic terminology by Muhammad Fuad Abdul-Baqi<sup>11</sup> in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Mufahras li Alfaz Al-Qur'an Al-Karim* identifies 11 occurrences of terms derived

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(2024), doi:10.22373/petita.v9i2.336; Rizki Yunanda and others, 'The Social Impact of the Existence of Rohingya Refugees in Aceh', *Community: Pengawas Dinamika Sosial*, 10.1 (2024), p. 129, doi:10.35308/jcpds.v10i1.9009; Irwansyah Irwansyah and Al Asya'ari Al Asya'ari, 'Rohingya Muslims in Indonesia: Interaction, Stigmatization and Religious Response', *FIKRAH*, 10.2 (2022), p. 241, doi:10.21043/fikrah.v10i2.16287.

<sup>7</sup> J.W. Creswell, *Research and Design Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Thousand Oaks California, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew B Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis, A Methods Sourcebook*, ed. by Tjetjep Rohindi Rohidi, 3rd edn (UI Press, 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Suhaimi Mhd Sarif, Yusof Ismail, and Dolhadi Zainudin, 'Empowering Responsible Consumers Through Ta'awun (Mutual Cooperation) for Sustainability', 2024, p. Suhaimi Mhd-101, doi:10.15405/epsbs.2024.05.8.

<sup>10</sup> Teguh Saputra, 'Konsep Ta'awun Dalam Al-Qur'an Sebagai Penguat Tauhid Dan Solidaritas Sosial', *Al-Mutharahah: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Kajian Sosial Keagamaan*, 19.2 (2022), pp. 29–45, doi:10.46781/al-mutharahah.v19i2.517.

<sup>11</sup> Muhammad Fu'ad Abdul-Baqi, *Mu'jam Al-Mufahras Li Alfaz Al-Qur'an Al-Karim* (1981).

from the root ‘awana, spanning nine surahs and ten verses. Table 1 below presents a summary of these occurrences:

Table 1  
Identification of Qur'anic Verses Related to *Ta'awun*

No	Surah/Verse	Arabic Text	Translation
1	Al-Fatihah 1:5	إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ	“It is You we worship and You we ask for help.”
2	Al-Baqarah 2:45	وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ	“Seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah].”
3	Al-Baqarah 2:153	يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ	“O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.”
4	Al-Maidah 5:2	وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ	“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression.”
5	Al-A'raf 7:128	قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ	“Moses said to his people, 'Seek help through Allah and be patient. Indeed, the earth belongs to Allah; He causes to inherit it whom He wills.’”
6	Yusuf 12:18	وَجَاءُوا عَلَىٰ قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ	“And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, 'Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting. And Allah is the one sought for help against that which you describe.’”
7	Al-Kahf 18:95	قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ فَأَعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا	“He said, 'That in which my Lord has established me is better [than what you offer], but assist me with strength; I will make between you and them a dam.’”
8	Al-Anbiya 21:112	قَالَ رَبِّ احْكُم بِالْحَقِّ وَرَبُّنَا الرَّحْمَنُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ	“[The Prophet] said, 'My Lord, judge between us in truth. And our Lord is the Most Merciful, the one whose help is sought against that which you describe.’”

9	Al-Furqan 25:4	وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا إِفْكٌ أَفْتَرَاهُ وَأَعَانَهُ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ آخَرُونَ فَقَدْ جَاءُوا ظُلْمًا وَزُورًا	“And those who disbelieve say, 'This [Qur'an] is not except a falsehood he invented, and another people assisted him in it.' But they have committed an injustice and a lie.”
10	Al-Ma'un 107:7	وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ	“And withhold [simple] assistance.”

Source: Al-Mu'jam Al-Mufahras li Alfaz Al-Qur'an Al-Karim Application

Based on Table 1, the following explains the correlation of the verse containing the term نَعَاوُنَ with the preceding verses:

### QS. Al-Fatihah, Verse 5

This verse was revealed in Mecca, prior to the migration (hijrah) of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to Medina.<sup>12</sup> There are no specific narrations detailing the circumstances of its revelation or *Asbabun Nuzul*.<sup>13</sup> However, there is data regarding the correlation (*Munasabah*) between this verse and the preceding verses, which pertains to fundamental aspects of Islam such as faith (*aqidah*), worship (*ibadah*), and the Hereafter. The connection with the subsequent verse relates to the supplication for guidance and divine direction to remain on the straight path while avoiding misguidance.<sup>14</sup>

The verse “*Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'in*,” meaning “*It is You we worship, and You we ask for help*,” underscores the principle of monotheism (*tawhid*) in the relationship between humans and Allah SWT. This verse emphasizes that all forms of worship and seeking assistance must be centered on Allah as the ultimate source of strength and guidance. In the context of *ta'awun*, this verse teaches that the vertical relationship with Allah (*hablum minallah*) forms the foundation for harmonious horizontal relationships among humans (*hablum minannas*). By placing Allah at the center of one's purpose and reliance, solidarity among individuals can be realized within a framework grounded in piety and sincerity.

This verse provides a theological foundation, affirming that every effort to assist others must remain rooted in the awareness of unity under Allah's Oneness (*tawhid*). Consequently, all forms of cooperation are directed toward achieving blessings and Allah's pleasure. It encourages a balance where acts of helping others align with the spiritual consciousness of serving Allah, ensuring that mutual support fosters both individual and collective benefit under divine guidance.

<sup>12</sup> Taufiq Adnan Amal, *Rekonstruksi Sejarah Al-Qur'an* (FKBA, 2001).

<sup>13</sup> *Asbabun-Nuzul: Kronologi Dan Sebab Turun Wahyu Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Muchlis M Hanafi (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, Badan Litbang dan Diklat, Kementerian Agama RI, 2015).

<sup>14</sup> Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir Jilid 1: Aqidah, Syariah, Manhaj* (Gema Insani, 2013).

**QS. Al-Baqarah, Verse 45**

This verse was revealed in Medina after the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) migrated from Mecca.<sup>15</sup> There are no narrations explicitly detailing the circumstances of its revelation. However, data indicates a correlation between this verse and the preceding verses, which address the negative attitudes of the Jews. The connection with the subsequent verse also pertains to the Jews' reluctance in carrying out Allah's commands.<sup>16</sup> The central message of *ta'awun* in this verse is the directive to seek Allah's assistance through prayer (*salah*) and patience (*sabr*), accompanied by a sense of humility and focus in their practice.

**QS. Al-Baqarah, Verse 153**

This verse was also revealed in Medina following the Prophet's migration from Mecca.<sup>17</sup> No specific narrations explain the circumstances of its revelation. However, there is evidence of correlation with the preceding verse, which discusses the Battle of Badr and the command to remember and show gratitude to Allah SWT. The connection with the subsequent verse remains linked to the Battle of Badr, particularly concerning those who attained martyrdom.<sup>18</sup>

The verse "*Ya ayyuha alladhina amanu ista'inu bi al-sabri wa al-salah,*" meaning "*O you who have believed! Seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient,*" emphasizes the importance of patience and prayer as the primary sources of strength in facing various challenges. According to Quraish Shihab's<sup>19</sup> exegesis (*tafsir*), patience (*sabr*) encompasses not only resilience in adversity but also persistence in fulfilling Allah's commands. Prayer (*salah*), on the other hand, serves as a spiritual medium connecting humans to the Creator, offering inner peace and solace. In the context of *ta'awun*, this verse underscores the role of patience as an ethical foundation for social interactions and prayer as a spiritual resource that enables individuals to help others with sincerity and wisdom. Therefore, this verse establishes a synergistic relationship between worship, personal resilience, and social solidarity in overcoming life's challenges.

**QS. Al-Maidah, Verse 2**

This verse was revealed in Medina after the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) migrated from Mecca.<sup>20</sup> The circumstances of revelation of this verse relates to the event at Hudaibiyah, where the Prophet and his companions were prevented by the Quraysh from visiting the Kaaba. When a group of polytheists from the east intended to perform Umrah at the Kaaba, some of the Prophet's companions suggested blocking their access, as the Quraysh had done to them. This verse was revealed as a response,

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<sup>15</sup> T A Amal, *Rekonstruksi Sejarah Al-Quran* (Pustaka Alvabet, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> Az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir Jilid 1: Aqidah, Syariah, Manhaj*.

<sup>17</sup> Amal.

<sup>18</sup> Az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir Jilid 1: Aqidah, Syariah, Manhaj*.

<sup>19</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah (Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Quran*, Vol. 10 (Lentera Hati, 2017).

<sup>20</sup> Amal.

prohibiting retaliation based on hostility alone.<sup>21</sup> The verse, “*Wa ta'awanu 'ala al-birri wa al-taqwa wa la ta'awanu 'ala al-ithmi wa al-'udwan,*” meaning, “*And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty,*” provides a fundamental ethical principle in Islam. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration grounded in benevolence (*al-birr*) and piety (*al-taqwa*), while strictly forbidding any form of cooperation in sin (*al-ithm*) and enmity (*al-'udwan*).

According to Ibn Kathir's exegesis (*tafsir*),<sup>22</sup> *al-birr* refers to all forms of good deeds in alignment with Islamic law, including social actions such as helping those in need. *Al-taqwa* denotes full obedience to Allah SWT in every action. The prohibition against collaborating in sin and hostility adds an ethical dimension that distinguishes the Islamic principle of *ta'awun* from general notions of solidarity. Hamka<sup>23</sup> elaborates that this verse supports the formation of associations or organizations with good intentions based on *taqwa*. He further underscores that acts of cooperation in Islam must aim to fulfill divine guidance, ensuring that collective efforts align with moral and spiritual values. This principle establishes *ta'awun* as a framework for ethical and constructive collaboration, fostering both individual and societal well-being under the guidance of Islamic teachings.

#### ***QS. Al-A'raf, Verse 128***

This verse was revealed in Mecca before the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) migrated to Medina.<sup>24</sup> There are no narrations explaining its specific circumstances of revelation. However, the verse's correlation with the preceding verses relates to Pharaoh's conspiracy and his advisors' schemes against Prophet Musa (Moses, peace be upon him) and his people. The connection with the subsequent verse highlights Musa's continued encouragement to his followers, advising them to seek Allah's help persistently in the face of oppression.<sup>25</sup> The core concept of *ta'awun* in this verse is the act of seeking assistance from Allah SWT during times of difficulty, accompanied by patience. The verse demonstrates Musa's reassurance to his people, urging them to remain steadfast and trust in Allah's promise, even under extreme oppression and hardship.

#### ***QS. Yusuf, Verse 18***

This verse was revealed in Mecca before the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) migrated to Medina. There are no narrations clarifying its circumstances of revelation.<sup>26</sup> However, its correlation with the preceding verses lies in the conspiracy by Prophet Yusuf's (Joseph, peace be upon him) brothers to harm him by throwing him

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<sup>21</sup> Jalaluddin Imam As-Suyuthi, *Asbabun Nuzul : Sebab-Sebab Turunnya Ayat Al-Qur'an*, ed. by Ali Nurdin and Ummu Nabila Handrini (Qisthi Press, 2017).

<sup>22</sup> Abu al-Fida' 'Imaduddin Isma'il bin Umar bin Kathir al-Qurasyi Al-Bushrawi, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir Jilid 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, Terjemahan Arif Rahman Hakim Dkk* (Insan Kamil, 2015).

<sup>23</sup> Abdul Malik Abdul Karim Amrullah, *Tafsir Al-Azhar, Cet. Ke-5* (Pustaka Nasional Pte. Ltd, 2003).

<sup>24</sup> Amal.

<sup>25</sup> Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir Jilid 5: Aqidah, Syariah, Manhaj* (Gema Insani, 2016).

<sup>26</sup> Amal.

into a well, along with their deceptive efforts to convince their father, Prophet Ya'qub (Jacob, peace be upon him). The connection with the subsequent verse concerns Yusuf's survival from his brothers' plot as he clung to the well's rope and was later rescued by a caravan of travelers.<sup>27</sup> The *ta'awun* in this verse emphasizes reliance on Allah alone when facing calamities or uncertainties. It illustrates the steadfastness of Prophet Ya'qub in enduring the hardship caused by his sons' betrayal, as he turned to Allah for strength and guidance. The verse offers a profound reminder about placing trust in Allah's wisdom and maintaining patience through life's trials.

***QS. Al-Kahfi, Verse 95***

This verse was revealed in Mecca before the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) migrated to Medina. There are no specific narrations detailing the circumstances of its revelation.<sup>28</sup> However, its correlation with the preceding verses relates to the story of Dzulqarnain and his interactions with Ya'juj and Ma'juj.<sup>29</sup> The connection with the subsequent verses remains focused on this narrative, particularly on Dzulqarnain's leadership and the construction of a protective barrier. The verse, "*Fa a'inuni bi quwwatin aj'al baynakum wa baynahum radma,*" meaning, "*So help me with strength; I will make a barrier between you and them,*" presents a practical example of the concept of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance) in Islam. It illustrates how Dzulqarnain sought collaboration with the local community to build a structure that would protect them from the threat of Ya'juj and Ma'juj. This cooperation reflects not only physical effort but also collective resolve to address a common concern. It underscores the principle that *ta'awun* should aim for communal benefit and involve shared responsibility for societal welfare and security. The verse serves as a reminder of how collective strength and unity can achieve objectives unattainable by individuals alone.

***QS. Al-Anbiya, Verse 112***

This verse was revealed in Mecca before the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) migrated to Medina. There are no narrations describing its circumstances of revelation. However, its correlation with the preceding verses revolves around Allah SWT's commissioning of Prophet Muhammad as a mercy to all creation.<sup>30</sup> The *ta'awun* aspect in this verse is reflected in the Prophet Muhammad's prayer to Allah for a fair and just judgment, as he faced opposition and challenges in his mission. The verse emphasizes reliance on Allah's justice as the ultimate recourse for resolving disputes and affirming truth. This highlights the spiritual dimension of *ta'awun*, where believers turn to Allah for support and justice in their struggles.

***QS. Al-Furqan, Verse 4***

This verse was revealed in Mecca before the Prophet's migration to Medina.<sup>31</sup> No specific narrations explain its circumstances of revelation. Its correlation with the

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<sup>27</sup> Az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir Jilid 5: Aqidah, Syariah, Manhaj*.

<sup>28</sup> Amal.

<sup>29</sup> Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir Jilid 8: Aqidah, Syariah, Manhaj* (Gema Insani, 2016).

<sup>30</sup> Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir Jilid 9: Aqidah, Syariah, Manhaj* (Gema Insani, 2016).

<sup>31</sup> Amal, *Rekonstruksi Sejarah Al-Qur'an*.



preceding verses concerns the revelation of the Qur'an and the affirmation of Allah's Oneness. The subsequent verses address accusations by the polytheists, who claimed that the Qur'an was fabricated by the Prophet Muhammad with help from others.<sup>32</sup> The concept of *ta'awun* in this verse is seen in the polytheists' false assertion that the Qur'an was the product of human collaboration rather than divine revelation. This verse highlights the misuse of the notion of assistance (*ta'awun*) to propagate falsehood, contrasting it with the Islamic principle of mutual aid rooted in truth and righteousness.

### **QS. Al-Ma'un, Verse 7**

This verse was revealed in Mecca prior to the Prophet Muhammad's migration to Medina. There are no specific narrations explaining its circumstances of revelation.<sup>33</sup> Its correlation with the preceding verses pertains to disbelievers who deny the Hereafter and hypocrites who perform deeds for show. The subsequent verses address the consequences faced by these groups.<sup>34</sup> The *ta'awun* element in this verse relates to the hypocrites' refusal to provide help or engage in mutual support. It criticizes those who withhold assistance and fail to embody the values of compassion and solidarity, as their actions reflect a lack of sincere faith. This verse serves as a moral critique, emphasizing that the neglect of mutual aid contradicts Islamic principles and undermines social cohesion.

Based on data regarding the chronology of revelation, it is evident that out of the 10 verses discussing *ta'awun*, 7 were revealed in Mecca, characterized by themes emphasizing monotheism (*tawhid*) and the distinctive traits of Makki verses. These include verses affirming faith in Allah SWT and the concept of *tawhid*. Meanwhile, the other 3 verses were revealed in Medina, focusing more on legal, transactional, and social matters, aligning with the characteristics of Madani verses. These verses address laws, social interactions, the behavior of hypocrites, and related issues.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, based on the collected data concerning the compilation, chronology, reasons for revelation and the relationship of each verse within its respective surah (*Munasabah*), the researcher identified two concepts of *ta'awun* in the Qur'an. The first concept is seeking assistance from Allah SWT, which is mentioned six times across five surahs and six verses, including Surah Al-Fatihah: 5, Al-Baqarah: 45, Al-Baqarah: 153, Al-A'raf: 128, Yusuf: 18, and Al-Anbiya: 112. The second concept involves mutual assistance among humans in the path of Allah SWT, mentioned five times across four surahs and four verses, namely Surah Al-Maidah: 2 (twice), Al-Kahfi: 95, Al-Furqan: 4, and Al-Ma'un: 7. Additionally, there are other terms in the Qur'an related to mutual assistance, such as the terms نصر (*nashr*, help) and نصير (*nasir*, helper).

## **2. Understanding of Ie Meulee Residents Regarding *Ta'awun***

Understanding Qur'anic teachings extends beyond textual familiarity, requiring engagement in religious studies, reflection, and practical application. In Ie Meulee Village,

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<sup>32</sup> Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir Jilid 10: Aqidah, Syariah, Manhaj* (Gema Insani, 2016).

<sup>33</sup> Amal.

<sup>34</sup> Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir Jilid 15: Aqidah, Syariah, Manhaj* (Gema Insani, 2016).

<sup>35</sup> Rosihon Anwar, *Ulum Al-Qur'an* (Pustaka Setia, 2008).

the understanding of *ta'awun* or mutual assistance varies significantly, shaped by factors such as religious education, access to Islamic teachings, and social experiences.

Interviews revealed three primary groups based on their level of understanding: those with comprehensive understanding, those with general understanding, and those with limited understanding.

1) Comprehensive Understanding:

This group, consisting of individuals with formal religious education (e.g., graduates of Islamic schools or universities), demonstrated a nuanced grasp of *ta'awun* as a religious obligation. Respondents cited Surah Al-Maidah (5:2) and Surah At-Taubah (9:71) as guiding principles for mutual assistance. One noted: *“Mutual assistance is an obligation in Islam, reinforced by verses like Surah Al-Maidah: 2. It emphasizes solidarity, which motivates me to assist the Rohingya refugees.”*<sup>36</sup> This understanding translated into concrete actions, such as providing material aid and advocating for refugee welfare.

2) General Understanding

Respondents with informal religious education acknowledged *ta'awun* as a core Islamic principle but struggled to connect it directly to specific Qur'anic verses. Instead, their understanding relied on cultural traditions and moral intuition. For example: *“I know Islam teaches us to help others, but I don't recall specific verses. Helping those in need feels aligned with Islamic values.”*<sup>37</sup>

3) Limited Understanding:

A small segment, lacking consistent access to religious education, exhibited a minimal grasp of *ta'awun*. They viewed helping others as inherently good but lacked deeper insights into its religious significance. One respondent explained: *“I've never learned much about this concept. However, I believe helping others is important, even without knowing the religious teachings behind it.”*<sup>38</sup>

These findings emphasize the critical role of education and community influence in shaping individuals' understanding of Islamic values. Numerous studies corroborate this observation, emphasizing that the integration of religious moderation into Islamic education significantly contributes to the cultivation of a supportive environment.<sup>39</sup> This, in turn, plays a crucial role in shaping students' character to become more compassionate and socially aware.

Social environments also significantly impact comprehension and practice. Supportive families or communities foster engagement in acts of *ta'awun*, while indifferent settings limit understanding. Personal experiences, such as aiding disaster victims or

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<sup>36</sup> Interview with Mr. R, January, 2024

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Mr. RS, January, 2024

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Mr. HS, July, 2024

<sup>39</sup> Nurul Komariah and Ishmatun Nihayah, 'Improving The Personality Character of Students Through Learning Islamic Religious Education', *At-Tadzkir: Islamic Education Journal*, 2.1 (2023), pp. 65–77, doi:10.59373/attadzkir.v2i1.15; Azhariah Rachman and others, 'Building Religious Character of Students in Madrasah Through Moral Learning', *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education*, 4.1 (2023), pp. 78–94, doi:10.31538/tijie.v4i1.261.

refugees, reinforce practical awareness of *ta'awun*'s importance, motivating deeper exploration of religious teachings. This aligns with findings from various studies. For example, Sarif, Ismail, and Zainudin<sup>40</sup> highlights that *ta'awun* between governments and industries enhances social enterprises through strategic partnerships and collaboration with grassroots communities, government agencies, and NGOs. This synergy fosters social and economic resilience, underscoring the importance of a supportive social environment in practicing *ta'awun*. Similarly, Wong-Parodi emphasizes that individuals with personal experiences related to health challenges or exposure to hazards, such as aiding disaster victims, are more likely to recognize the value of cooperative behaviors. Such experiences often lead to increased participation in community support activities, illustrating the practical application of *ta'awun*.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, a study published in the *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* explores how personal narratives and past experiences influence individual behaviors during disasters.<sup>42</sup> Engaging in mutual aid during these events enhances understanding and appreciation of cooperative principles like *ta'awun*.

Futhermore, most respondents recognized Surah Al-Maidah (5:2) as central to the obligation of *ta'awun*, though interpretations varied. Some viewed it as a universal duty toward all humanity, while others limited its application to fellow Muslims. These differences reflect the influence of religious education and exposure to diverse perspectives. In summary, the understanding of *ta'awun* in Ie Meulee Village is shaped by intersecting factors of education, social environment, and personal experience. Enhancing inclusive religious education and integrating it with community engagement programs can help bridge gaps and foster a deeper collective appreciation of *ta'awun* as a vital Islamic value.

### **3. The Application of Qur'anic Verses on the Obligation of Mutual Assistance by the Ie Meulee Village Community**

The principle of *ta'awun* taught in the Qur'an provides a normative foundation for Muslims to fulfill social obligations, including assisting vulnerable groups such as Rohingya refugees. However, the implementation of this principle among the Ie Meulee village community reflects diverse actions influenced by the level of religious understanding, social background, and environmental context. Based on observations and interviews, the application of *ta'awun* values in responding to Rohingya refugees can be categorized into four main patterns.

The First Group consists of those who understand and proactively apply these principles. This group comprehends and implements the Qur'anic verses on *ta'awun*, such as QS. Al-Maidah: 2 and QS. At-Taubah: 71, proactively. They contribute by providing both material and non-material assistance. A local religious leader explained:

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<sup>40</sup> Sarif, Ismail, and Zainudin.

<sup>41</sup> Rob Jordan, 'Personal Experience and Disaster Adaptation', *Stanford Report*, 2022 <[https://news.stanford.edu/stories/2022/03/personal-experience-disaster-adaptation?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://news.stanford.edu/stories/2022/03/personal-experience-disaster-adaptation?utm_source=chatgpt.com)>.

<sup>42</sup> Wendy Madsen, 'People's Past Experiences and Personal Stories Can Influence Risk-Taking Behaviour', *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, 34.3 (2019), pp. 47–51 <[https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/ajem-july-2019-people-s-past-experiences-and-personal-stories-can-influence-risk-taking-behaviour/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/ajem-july-2019-people-s-past-experiences-and-personal-stories-can-influence-risk-taking-behaviour/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)>.

*"We see this not merely as helping fellow humans but as fulfilling a religious obligation. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught us to care for those in need, regardless of their background."*<sup>43</sup>

The Second Group comprises those who understand but tend to be passive. This group recognizes the obligation of *ta'awun* but does not actively implement it. Their passive stance is often driven by social and economic concerns. One resident with a general education background stated:

*"I know Islam encourages mutual assistance, but in reality, we are facing many problems ourselves. I fear their presence might bring additional issues, such as health or security concerns."*<sup>44</sup>

The Third Group includes those with limited understanding who act spontaneously. This group has a limited grasp of *ta'awun* verses but still demonstrates concern through simple actions driven by empathy. A housewife shared:

*"I don't know much about the verses related to mutual assistance, but I feel sorry for them. I once gave them a packed meal and a little money, even if it wasn't much."*<sup>45</sup>

The Fourth Group comprises those who exhibit apathy. This last group shows apathy and does not participate in solidarity efforts. They not only lack understanding of *ta'awun* values but also demonstrate resistance due to prejudice or excessive concerns. A skeptical resident expressed:

*"We don't know who they are or their intentions for coming here. Their presence only adds to the village's problems. It's better if the government relocates them elsewhere."*<sup>46</sup>

The implementation of *ta'awun* values in Ie Meulee Village clearly illustrates the influence of religious understanding, social motivation, and environmental conditions. Individuals with formal religious education show higher consistency in assisting refugees, while those with limited understanding often rely on spontaneous empathy. On the other hand, those unfamiliar with the concept tend to exhibit apathy or resistance. These findings emphasize the importance of systematic religious education and inclusive social approaches to strengthen the application of *ta'awun* values across society. Integrating religious education with social activities also emerges as a crucial strategy for fostering collective awareness of the obligation of mutual assistance as a fundamental Islamic value.

### **C. Conclusion**

This study sheds light on the varied interpretations and applications of *ta'awun* values within the Ie Meulee Village community. While those with formal religious education demonstrated consistent and proactive solidarity, others acted spontaneously, guided by empathy rather than deep theological understanding. Economic and social barriers also played a significant role in shaping responses, sometimes limiting broader community participation. These findings suggest an urgent need for inclusive religious education and

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<sup>43</sup> Interview with Mr. RS, January, 2024

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Mrs. AT, January, 2024

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Mrs. FH, July, 2024

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Mr. AM, July, 2024

community-driven programs to nurture a culture of mutual assistance. By fostering cross-cultural solidarity, such initiatives can bridge gaps, eliminate prejudice, and ensure the sustainability of *ta'awun* values in addressing humanitarian challenges. In this way, the principles of *ta'awun* can serve not only as a foundation for Islamic communities but also as a model for global solidarity in increasingly diverse societies.

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