

The Meaning of Deniers of Religious in QS al-Ma'un/107: 1-3: An Islamic Thought Analysis of Structural Poverty

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Abstract

This study aims to uncover the meaning of Deniers of Religious in QS al-Ma'un/107:1-3, as well as to analyze the relationship between the behavior of Deniers of Religious and structural poverty, and the solutions offered for addressing poverty. The research design employed is descriptive qualitative with a literature review approach (*library research*). The method used is the analytical method. The results of the study indicate that Deniers of Religious in Surah al-Ma'un are not only interpreted as those who deny religious teachings theologically, but also as those who are unjust toward orphans, reluctant to help the poor, and do not encourage social compassion. Such behavior is linked to the formation of structural poverty as it reflects social injustice and the neglect of the rights of vulnerable groups. This study also emphasizes that poverty is not merely an individual issue but is influenced by a social system that does not favor the poor. Therefore, Surah al-Ma'un contains moral and social messages urging Muslims to foster social compassion, channel aid effectively, and optimize the zakat system as an effort to reduce poverty and social inequality. This study is expected to contribute to the development of social exegesis studies related to the problem of poverty. Further research is recommended to develop a more in-depth study through the maqāsid exegesis approach.

Keywords: Denier of Religious, Al-Ma'un, Structural Poverty.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap makna pendusta agama dalam QS al-Ma'un/107: 1-3, serta menganalisis relasi antara perilaku pendusta agama dengan kemiskinan struktural dan solusi yang ditawarkan dalam penanganan kemiskinan. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan kepustakaan (*library research*). Adapun metode yang digunakan ialah metode tahlili. Hasil penelitian

menunjukkan bahwa pendusta agama dalam QS al-Mā'ūn tidak hanya dimaknai sebagai orang yang mengingkari ajaran agama secara teologis, tetapi juga mereka yang bersikap zalim terhadap anak yatim, enggan membantu fakir miskin, serta tidak mendorong kepedulian sosial. Perilaku tersebut memiliki keterkaitan dengan terbentuknya kemiskinan struktural karena mencerminkan ketidakadilan sosial dan pengabaian hak kelompok lemah. Penelitian ini juga menegaskan bahwa kemiskinan bukan sekadar persoalan individual, melainkan dipengaruhi oleh sistem sosial yang tidak berpihak kepada masyarakat miskin. Oleh karena itu, QS al-Mā'ūn mengandung pesan moral dan sosial agar umat Islam membangun kepedulian sosial, menyalurkan bantuan secara tepat sasaran, serta mengoptimalkan instrumen zakat sebagai upaya mengurangi kemiskinan dan ketimpangan sosial. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat berkontribusi dalam pengembangan kajian tafsir sosial terkait problem kemiskinan. Penelitian selanjutnya disarankan mengembangkan kajian yang lebih mendalam melalui pendekatan tafsir maqāṣid.

Kata Kunci: Peningkar Agama, Al-Ma'un, Structural Poverty

A. Introduction

The phenomenon of religiosity in society often reveals a gap between ritual worship practices and social concern for others. It is not uncommon to find individuals who outwardly appear religious through the performance of worship, yet simultaneously lack sensitivity toward the social conditions around them, particularly toward vulnerable groups.¹

One social condition that urgently requires such sensitivity is poverty. According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the poverty rate in Indonesia has shown a downward trend from 2022 to 2025. Nevertheless, the percentage of the poor population remained at 8.47% as of September 2024.² This condition is not only related to economic constraints but also to access to education, health services, and opportunities to secure a decent life.³

Inequality in the distribution of wealth is one of the causes of various social problems⁴ This is because the majority of resources are controlled by certain groups, while other groups are forced to live in deprivation. This situation can trigger social injustice and exacerbate poverty. In Islam, this issue has been addressed through social

¹Dinda Setyani dan Siti Masyithoh, 'Kepatuhan Beragama dan Interaksi Sosial Dalam Masyarakat Islam', *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, Vol. 2 No. 2, (2024), h. 61.

²<https://www.bps.go.id/id/news/2025/07/25/731/tingkat-kemiskinan-kembali-menurun.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com> (Diakses pada 6 Mei 2026).

³El Adawiyah, 'Kemiskinan Dan Faktor-Faktor Penyebabnya', *Journal of Social Work and Social Service*, Vol. 1 (2020), h. 43.

⁴Mandjarekki Sakaruddin, 'Jurnal Mimbar Kesejahteraan Sosial', *Jurnal Mimbar Kesejahteraan Sosial*, Vol. 4, No (2021).

instruments such as zakat to achieve economic equality.⁵ Furthermore, the Qur'an, through Surah al-Ma'un, reminds us that true faith must manifest in compassion toward orphans and the poor. This indicates that a person's piety cannot be measured solely by ritual observance but also by their social sensitivity in communal life.

Amir Syakib Arslan, a Muslim politician in the Islamic world, stated that Western nations are more developed than Muslim nations because Western nations reject their own beliefs, while Muslim nations fail to follow the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Among the teachings of Islam that are sometimes violated is the obligation to assist the underprivileged and orphans.⁶ Contrary to Amir's view, in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber argues that Western progress is not due to their "rejection of religion," but rather to a specific type of religious ethic (Protestantism) that fosters rationality, hard work, discipline, and the accumulation of capital. Considering the two views above, Amir Syakib Arslan's perspective aligns with the author's position, which holds that one reason for societal decline is the suboptimal implementation of Islamic values. This certainly aligns with what is expressed in Surah al-Ma'un, which will be discussed later.

In previous studies, Surah al-Ma'un has been extensively examined, such as the scholarly article by Dewi Sartika titled "The Denier of Religion in Surah al-Ma'un (A Thematic Study)," which focuses on analyzing Surah al-Ma'un by explaining the character of those who deny religion and the traits of those who neglect prayer. She focused on explaining the religious deceivers in Surah al-Ma'un using a thematic method. Unlike that study, the author will focus on analyzing Surah al-Ma'un 107:1–3 using a tahlili analysis, which will explain the meaning of religious deceit by linking it to the phenomenon of structural poverty.

The study conducted by Nopriani Hasibuan examines the meaning of *al-miskin* in Surah Al-Ma'un through the perspective of Nur Khalik Ridwan's progressive exegesis, emphasizing that poverty is the result of social structural injustice, not merely fate. However, this study focuses more on the thematic reinterpretation of the concept of *al-miskin* and has not specifically linked it to an analysis of the behavior of "religious hypocrites" in Surah al-Ma'un, verses 1–3, and its implications for structural poverty.

⁵Mubarak. Sahrum, 'Zakat Sebagai Distribusi Kekayaan', *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, Vol. 03 No (2025),.

⁶Wiwik Permatasari and others, 'Konsep Jaminan Sosial Dalam Islam: Kajian Surah Al-Ma'Un 2-3', *Jurnal Ilmiah Penelitian Mandira Cendikia*, Vol. 1.No. 5 (2023), h. 23.

Although discussions regarding Deniers of Religious in Surah al-Ma'un have tended to focus on textual analysis of the verses, using a thematic approach to explain the literal meaning of the verses and compare the opinions of exegetes. Addressing this gap, this study aims to provide an in-depth examination of the relationship between religious hypocrisy and its impact on the persistence of structural poverty.

Based on the background discussion presented, this paper is highly significant for study because the discussion regarding Deniers of Religious in Surah al-Ma'un, viewed through the lens of exegesis related to poverty, remains highly relevant across eras. Thus, through this study, readers are expected to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the characteristics of Deniers of Religious contribute to the root causes of poverty in society.

B. Literatur Review

Several studies explain that the term *yukadzhibu bid-din* in Surah al-Ma'un is not only interpreted as a theological denial of religion but also as a rejection of human values and social justice. Classical exegeses such as those by Imam al-Tabari and contemporary ones like Quraish Shihab emphasize that the traits of Deniers of Religious are evident in their mistreatment of orphans, neglect of the poor, and performing acts of worship for show. Thus, religiosity in this surah is not measured solely through rituals but also through social responsibility.⁷

A sociologist from Airlangga University, Bagong Suyanto offers an insightful perspective on research regarding structural poverty. He explains that poverty is not always caused by individual laziness but rather by unfair social, economic, and political systems. Inequalities in access to education, economic distribution, employment opportunities, and social policies are the primary factors keeping communities trapped in poverty. Bagong argues that there is often a mistaken stigma in society that judges the poor as a group that is lazy or unwilling to work hard. In reality, however, the situation on the ground shows the opposite; one example is the phenomenon of street performers dressed as clowns who physically perform extremely strenuous and exhausting work just to survive. This demonstrates that poverty is not solely due to laziness but also to other factors.

Bagong emphasized that the workload in the informal sector is actually far heavier than in the middle-class sector. Nevertheless, limited educational backgrounds, coupled with minimal access to social networks, force the poor to remain trapped in

⁷Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī., *Tafsir Al-Ṭabarī: Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy Al-Qur'ān*. Terj. Ahsan Askan, Jilid XXVI (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2007).

that cycle of work. Meanwhile, in other parts of the world, some people are rolling in wealth and who, in essence, have a moral obligation to distribute their wealth in accordance with established principles, so that wealth circulates and we can move away from persistent poverty. From a socio-religious perspective, structural poverty is viewed as a collective issue requiring shared concern and responsibility so that the cycle of poverty can be broken in the future.⁸

Some studies indicate that Islam places social justice as a vital component of its religious teachings. Instruments such as zakat, infak, sadaqah, and the protection of vulnerable groups demonstrate that Islam is oriented toward social welfare. QS al-Mā'ūn is often used as a theological basis for fostering social awareness because it condemns individualistic behavior and indifference toward the poor.⁹ Although this theological awareness has been widely discussed, such studies rarely examine the effectiveness of religious social movements in breaking the chain of systemic poverty, not merely cultural poverty. Therefore, this article aims to evaluate the relationship between Surah al-Ma'un and structural poverty.

C. Method

The research type employed is descriptive qualitative with *a library research* approach, which focuses on collecting data from various literature relevant to the study topic. This approach is used to thoroughly examine the concepts of religious hypocrisy and structural poverty from the Qur'anic perspective. The method employed is the analytical method, which involves analyzing Surah al-Ma'un verses 1–3 by explaining key vocabulary, the reasons for revelation (*asbab al-Nuzul*), the contextual relationships between verses, as well as classical and contemporary interpretations such as those by Ibn Kathir and Quraish Shibab. The data sources in this study are twofold: primary data and secondary data. Primary data is obtained from Qur'anic verses, while secondary data is obtained from tafsir texts, books, articles, and literature relevant to the themes of religious hypocrisy and structural poverty. Data analysis is conducted by analyzing, identifying, classifying, and interpreting data related to the research theme, after which conclusions are drawn.

D. Finding

1. The Meaning of Deniers of Religious in QS al-Ma'un/107:1-3

a. Verse Text and Translation

⁸<https://News.Unair.Ac.Id/2021/10/22/Pakar-Sosiolog-Unair-Orang-Miskin-Bukan-Karena-Malas-Bekerja/> (Diakses Pada 12 Mei 2026)'.
⁹Erika Sugiarti and Gunawan Aji, 'Dampak Penyaluran Distribusi Zakat Terhadap Inklusi Keuangan Dan Pengentasan Kemiskinan', *Aksyana: Jurnal Akuntansi Dan Keuangan Islam*, 3.01 (2023).

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالذِّينِ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدُعُّ الْيَتِيمَ وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ^{١٠}

‘Do you know who denies religion? It is the one who scolds orphans and does not encourage feeding the poor.’”

b. Explanation of Terms

1) يُكَذِّبُ

Kata The word يُكَذِّبُ is derived from the word كَذَّبَ. The word كَذَّبَ is mentioned 4 times in the Quran¹⁰ And 5 times in the form يُكَذِّبُ.¹¹ This word can be interpreted as the act of denying or rejecting, whether in the form of an inner attitude or an outward attitude manifested through actions.¹²

2) الذِّينِ

The word الذِّينِ is interpreted as religion, as well as obedience and retribution. The word al-Din itself in Surah al-Ma'un is more closely associated with the meaning of religion, though it is also commonly used to mean retribution. Upon closer examination, when the word *al-din* is associated with the phrase يُكَذِّبُونَ, the context leans more toward denial of the Hereafter (the Day of Judgment). This aligns with QS al-Infithar/82: 9 and QS al-Tin/95: 7.¹³

3) يَدُعُّ

The word يَدُعُّ comes from the word دَعَّ, which means to push hard, to drive away.¹⁴ The word *yadu'u* does not necessarily have to be interpreted as a physical push, but may also be understood as persecution, harassment, or an unfriendly attitude toward them.¹⁵

4) الْيَتِيمَ

¹⁰Muhammad Fuad Abd Baqi, *Al-Mu'jam Mufahras Li Al-Alfaaz Al-Qur'an Al-Karim* (Bandung: CV Dipenogoro, 1963), h. 760.

¹¹Muhammad Fuad Abd Baqi, *Al-Mu'jam Mufahras Li Al-Alfaaz Al-Qur'an Al-Karim...* h. 763.

¹²Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah 'Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an'* (Cet. II; Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2009), Jilid XV h. 645.

¹³Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah 'Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an...* h. 645.

¹⁴Allamah Kamal Faqih, *Nur Al-Qur'an*, Terj Tafsir (Jakarta: Al-Huda, 2006), h. 352.

¹⁵Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah 'Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an'*,...h. 645..

The word **الْيَتِيمَ** is derived from the root **يَتِيمَ** which means solitude. This word generally refers to a human child who has not yet reached adulthood and whose father has passed away, or an animal whose mother is no longer alive. It is interpreted as an orphan because the death of a father for a child who has not yet reached adulthood causes the child to lose a protector, as if the child were alone and without support. Although *the term "orphan"* in this verse is interpreted on its own, it is not necessarily understood solely in a literal sense; rather, its meaning is expanded to include those who are weak and in need of assistance.¹⁶

5) **يُحِضُّ**

The use of the word **يُحِضُّ** indicates that every individual, regardless of their financial limitations, has at least the obligation to be an “advocate” or a driving force in meeting the food needs of the poor. This role is inclusive of anyone who possesses social empathy. Through Surah al-Ma’un, the Qur’an closes the gap of indifference, while simultaneously obligating all segments of society to actively engage in providing care and advocacy for the underprivileged who need assistance.¹⁷

6) **الْمَسْكِينِ**

Etymologically, the term *miskīn* is derived from the root word *sakana–yaskunu–sukūn*, which conveys the meaning of stillness, calm, or tranquility. Al-Isfahani and Ibn Manzur define this term as the condition of “something settling after movement,” which can also imply a place of residence. In a social context, the word “poor” refers to individuals who possess no wealth at all, or who possess some but are unable to meet their basic needs, as well as those “crippled” by poverty to the point of being in a state of weakness and humiliation.¹⁸ Based on this definition, the label “poor” should not be applied to individuals who beg, even though they still possess the financial or physical ability to earn a living. This group is more appropriately categorized as *mulḥif*, that is, people who beg out of desperation even though their daily needs have been met. Regarding this group

¹⁶Quraish Shihab, Tafsir Al-Misbah ‘Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur’an’,... h. 646..

¹⁷Quraish Shihab, Tafsir Al-Misbah ‘Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur’an’,... h. 646..

¹⁸Lukman Hakim and Ahmad Danu Syaputra, ‘Al-Qur’an Dan Pengentasan Kemiskinan’, Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Islam, Vol. 6.No. 03 (2020), h. 631.

of mulhif, the act of ignoring them or not giving is permitted as a form of moral education for them¹⁹

7) طَعَامٍ

The word طَعَامٍ means food or sustenance.²⁰ Sometimes this word is interpreted as wheat, based on a hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The case described in Surah al-Ma'un does not encourage giving food.²¹

c. Asbab al-Nuzul

Exegetes differ regarding the reason for the revelation of Surah Al-Ma'un, verses 1–3. Some scholars, such as Muqatil ibn Sulayman and Al-Kalbi, associate it with 'Ash bin Wa'il as-Sahmi, while As-Suddi and Muqatil bin Hayyan identify al-Walid bin al-Mughirah as the figure in question. Other opinions also mention names such as 'Amr bin 'Aiz of the Bani Makhzum and Hubairah bin Abi Wahhab. Additionally, there is a narration linking this verse to Abu Sufyan bin Harb, as mentioned by Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, that Abu Sufyan used to slaughter two camels every week. On one occasion, an orphan came to him asking for a portion of the slaughtered meat. However, he instead scolded and struck the orphan with a stick. It was this event that later became the background for the revelation of that verse.²²

A similar narrative is discussed by Wahbah az-Zuhaili in *Tafsir al-Munir*. By synthesizing various narrations from Ibn Abbas and other exegetes, he highlights the historical context (*asbabun nuzul*) regarding the denial of orphans' rights. One tradition states that this verse was revealed in response to the actions of Abu Jahl. As the guardian entrusted with an orphan's care, Abu Jahl rudely refused when the child, wearing nothing but the clothes on his back, came to claim his rightful inheritance. This incident subsequently prompted the revelation of the verse.²³

¹⁹Muhammad Abduh, *Tafsir Juz Amma Terj. Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Karim* (Mesir, 1999), h. 331.

²⁰Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah 'Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an'*,... h. 646.

²¹ Al-Ragib Al-Ashfahani, *Kamus Al-Qur'an*, Jilid 2 (Pustaka Khazanah Fawa'id), h. 575.

²²Abu Ishaq Ahmad bin Ibrahim Al-Talabiy, *Al-Kasyfu Wa Al-Bayan AnTafsir Al-Qur'an*, (Cet. I; Jeddah: Dar al-Tafsir, 2015), Jilid 30, h. 331.

²³Wahbah az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir: Aqidah, Syariah, Dan Manhaj, Terj. Abdul Hayyie Al-Kattani*, (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2013), *Jilid 15* h. 686.

These diverse accounts collectively indicate that the verse was revealed concerning individuals who disregard the rights of orphans and display indifference toward the vulnerable.

d. Context of the Verse

a. Contextual Connection with the Previous Surah

In the previous surah, Allah (swt) rebuked those who denied His blessings, even though He had provided them with sustenance in the form of food. Meanwhile, in this surah, the rebuke is directed at those who are reluctant to provide food aid to the poor and needy.²⁴ Quraish Shihab explains that in Surah al-Quraish, Allah SWT is described as having bestowed sustenance in the form of food upon humanity, namely by providing natural resources and conditions that enable them to avoid starvation. Meanwhile, in Surah al-Ma'un, Allah (swt) condemns the attitude of those who actually have the means but are unwilling to care; not only do they not give, but they do not even encourage others to help.²⁵ Thus, the connection is that both verses contain condemnation of servants who deny blessings and are unwilling to share

b. Contextual Connection with the Following Verse

QS al-Ma'un/107:1–3 describes the wicked behavior of Deniers of Religious in social relations, particularly toward vulnerable groups such as orphans and the poor. Meanwhile, verses 4–7 explain their wicked attitude in relation to Allah, especially regarding negligence in performing prayer.

The connection between these two parts of the verse indicates a continuity of meaning: verses 1–3 describe the concrete form of religious denial in the social dimension, while verses 4–7 emphasize the consequence of misfortune for those who are negligent in worship. Thus, those who are negligent in prayer fall into the category of religious deniers, and both are in the same condition, namely, threatened with misfortune.²⁶

e. Interpretation of the Verse

In a narration, Muhammad bin Sa'ad stated that he received this hadith from his father, who heard it from his uncle. His uncle received it from his father (Muhammad's grandfather), who narrated it from his own father (Muhammad's great-grandfather),

²⁴Wahbah az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir: Aqidah, Syariah, Dan Manhaj*, Terj. Abdul Hayyie Al-Kattani, ... h. 684.

²⁵Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah 'Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, ... h., 644.

²⁶Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah 'Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, ... h. 647.

from Ibn Abbas regarding His words: “أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْذِّينِ^ط” “Do you know the one who denies religion?” He said,

“What is meant in this verse is those who deny the laws of Allah, the Exalted.²⁷ That is, the Day of Resurrection and the bestowal of retribution and reward.²⁸ In this first verse, Allah, the Exalted, speaks while rebuking those who neglect their duties toward Allah and His servants. Those who deny religion in the first verse are those who deny the Resurrection and retribution, and do not believe in what the messengers brought.²⁹

فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدُعُّ الْيَتِيمَ^ل “*That is the one who mistreats orphans*” is an explanation of the first verse regarding the criteria for religious hypocrites. Rebuking or mistreating orphans here means depriving them of their rights, acting unjustly³⁰ as well as driving them away or rebuking them with harsh words when they ask for help. This attitude is often driven by arrogance and a sense of superiority, causing them to look down on the vulnerable condition of orphans who lack parental protection.³¹ Besides shouting harshly without compassion, they also act without seeking reward or fearing Allah’s punishment.³² In line with this, Ibn Kathir emphasizes that scolding orbering orphans includes arbitrary actions, committing injustice, and refusing to feed them or treat them well. This behavior is closely related to the reluctance to feed the poor, namely, a poor person who has absolutely no means to provide for his own livelihood.³³

وَلَا يُحِضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ^ق They forbid others from feeding food to the poor; even worse, they do not feed the poor themselves..³⁴ The verse does not use the word (*ith'am*), which means “to feed,” but rather (*tha'am*), which means “food.” This word choice indicates that those who encourage or provide aid should not feel as though they are the ones “feeding” others. This implies that the food or aid provided,

²⁷Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī., *Tafsir Al-Ṭabarī: Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'Wīl Āy Al-Qur'Ān. Terj. Ahsan Askan*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2007), *Jilid XXVI*, h. 983.

²⁸Imam Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir Ibn Katsir*, (Jawa Tengah: Penerbit Insan kamil, 2015), *Jilid 10*, h. 829.

²⁹Syaikh Abdurrahman bin nashir As-Sa'di, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an*, (Cet. IX Jakarta: Darul Haq, 2019), 591.

³⁰Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī., *Tafsir Al-Ṭabarī: Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'Wīl Āy Al-Qur'Ān. Terj. Ahsan Askan*,...h. 983.

³¹Muhammad Abduh, *Tafsir Juz Amma*,... h. 330-331.

³²As-Sa'di, *Tafsir al-Qur'an*, ...h. 591.

³³Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī., *Tafsir Al-Ṭabarī: Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'Wīl Āy Al-Qur'Ān*,... h. 830.

³⁴Syaikh Abdurrahman bin nashir As-Sa'di, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an*,...h. 591.

although taken from wealth that outwardly belongs to the giver, is in reality not entirely their own, but rather the right of the poor and those in need.³⁵

Based on the above review of *the asbabun nuzul*, it can be understood that the criticism in the verse also applies to those who provide aid but do not target it appropriately according to Allah's stipulations—namely, to those who are truly in need. The act of giving is often motivated by hidden motives to obtain certain rewards. Consequently, the giver is reluctant to help orphans and the poor because they are perceived as not providing reciprocal benefits, whether material or social.

In reality, many people provide aid to those who are not actually in great need, and even in excessive amounts. Meanwhile, at the same time, they neglect those who are far more in need, even though the latter would be deeply grateful even for a small amount of assistance.³⁶

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that the Deniers of Religious mentioned in Surah al-Ma'un/107:1-3 are those who scold orphans, commit injustice—whether through words or actions— and those who refuse to feed or forbid others from feeding the children of the poor.

E. Discussion

I. The Relationship Between the Behavior of Deniers of Religious and Structural Poverty

Qur'anic Surah al-Ma'un, verses 1–3, is a Makkan surah. Its main content describes certain human traits: scolding orphans and neglecting their well-being, refusing to give charity or pay zakat, and refusing to provide aid to the poor and needy. All of these behaviors fall under the category of those who deny religion, as mentioned in QS al-Ma'un, verses 1–3.³⁷ Therefore, the focus of this study is not merely to view Deniers of Religious as a matter of moral failing alone, but also to address the social realm that is relevant to structural poverty.

From a sociological perspective, poverty is influenced by two main factors. First, cultural factors originating from the individual, such as a low work ethic and a lazy attitude. Second, structural factors include limited opportunities, a lack of business capital, and intense economic competition. In response to this, sociologist Bagong

³⁵Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah "Pesan dan Kesan Keserasian al-Qur'an"*,... h. 646.

³⁶Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah "Pesan dan Kesan Keserasian al-Qur'an"* ...h.646-647.

³⁷A Mudjab Mahali, *Asbabun Nuzul 'Studi Pendalaman Al-Qur'an Surat Al-Baqarah-An Nas'* (Jakarta: PT raja Grafindo Persada, 2001), h. 954-955.

Suyanto argues that poverty has no direct link to laziness. According to him, poverty is caused more by structural factors than by cultural ones. You can see it on the streets: many of them work in the scorching heat dressed as clowns, and that is certainly no easy feat. This view aligns with a 2019 study showing that children, once they reach adulthood, will remain poor. This is what is meant by structural poverty. Thus, this finding reinforces Bagong Suyanto's view while also demonstrating that breaking the cycle of poverty is no easy task.³⁸

In this context, structural poverty is defined as a condition of deprivation arising from systemic inequalities within society. This phenomenon is no longer viewed merely as the result of personal factors such as low individual competence or misfortune, but rather as a direct consequence of the imbalance in the prevailing social, economic, and political structures.³⁹

In the context of Surah al-Ma'un, denying religion is not merely about matters of faith or rejecting the teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). More than that, such reprehensible behavior contributes to the formation of structural poverty. The attitude of scolding orphans and withholding food reflects a social failing because it harms others, particularly oppressed orphans and the poor who are denied their rights. In fact, classical exegetes agree that helping the poor is an obligation that is not only moral but also religious.

In this regard, there are two fundamental aspects concerning the existence of the poor: the importance of assisting and feeding them as a fulfillment of their rights, and the importance of empowerment efforts so they can escape their limited circumstances. Therefore, the rejection of both of these matters is viewed by classical exegetes as reprehensible attitudes that reflect a tangible form of betrayal of religious values.⁴⁰

This indicates a failure to implement religious norms in social life. One form of social behavior that is often overlooked yet has significant worldly and otherworldly consequences is indifference toward the social and economic conditions of vulnerable

³⁸<https://News.Unair.Ac.Id/2021/10/22/Pakar-Sosiolog-Unair-Orang-Miskin-Bukan-Karena-Malas-Bekerja/> (Diakses Pada 12 Mei 2026)'.
³⁹<https://Bpika.Uma.Ac.Id/2023/07/12/Memahami-Kemiskinan-Struktural-Faktor-Penyebab-Dampak-Dan-Solusi/>'.

⁴⁰Nopriani Hasibuan and Mukhlis Sore, 'Tafsir Progresif : Makna Al- Miskīn Dalam Tafsir Surah Al- Ma ' Un Karya Nur Khalik Ridwan', *Al-Bunyan: Interdisciplinary Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies*, Vol. 3.No. 2 (2025), h. 219.

groups, such as orphans and the poor, as described in the Quranic Surah al-Ma'un, verses 2–3, previously explained.

If this pattern of indifference continues on a broader scale, it will have consequences that extend beyond mere interpersonal relations to create a more complex social problem: poverty. It is important to note that poverty is a social issue influenced not only by income levels or an individual's laziness but also by their inability to access resources and services fairly and sustainably.⁴¹

One concrete example observable in Indonesia is the high dropout rate. According to the Central Statistics Agency, the dropout rate for the 2023/2024 academic year was recorded as having increased.⁴² The primary factor is largely economic hardship or parents' inability to afford their children's education. This inability compels them to drop out of school and take up work to support the family's economy.⁴³

This situation indicates that the poverty occurring is not merely individual in nature but has led to structural poverty, where systemic injustice tightly closes off access and opportunities for every individual to develop equally. In this context, the attitude of indifference as described in Surah al-Ma'un also contributes to perpetuating this structure of inequality. The Qur'an explains that the emergence of poverty within society is partly caused by the oppressive treatment and injustice committed by humans against one another. The system in place in Society prevents an individual or a group from freeing themselves from the shackles of poverty.⁴⁴

According to Yusuf al-Qaradawi, one of the Qur'an's guidelines in the effort to eradicate poverty is the command to pay zakat. One of the factors supporting the success of this poverty alleviation effort is the equitable distribution of zakat to those entitled to receive it. Among the groups most entitled to receive zakat are the poor; in fact, they must be prioritized over other groups. Therefore, this command is closely

⁴¹Diah Andani, Dini Rizki Fitriani, and Arisriyanto, 'Fenomena Kemiskinan Struktural Dan Respons Kebijakan Publik Di Wilayah Subang Utara', *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Administrasi Negara*, Vol. 12.No. 2 (2025), h. 2.

⁴²<https://Data.Goodstats.Id/Statistic/Simak-Angka-Putus-Sekolah-20232024-RAG4M> (Diakses Pada 06 Mei 2026).

⁴³Destiar A. Maghfirah, 'Faktor-Faktor Penyebab Siswa Putus Sekolah Tingkat SMA/SMK Negeri Di Kota Mataram', *Jurnal Kebijakan Pendidikan*, Vol. 8.No. 3 (2019), h. 217.

⁴⁴Lukman Hakim and Ahmad Danu Syaputra, 'Pengentasan Kemiskinan', *Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi*, h. 631.

linked to the exhortation to feed and provide assistance to the poor, as contained in Surah al-Mā'ūn, which is currently being discussed.⁴⁵

In essence, zakat can serve as an instrument for poverty reduction if managed properly. However, if its management is suboptimal, its impact will not be maximized. Therefore, the zakat distribution system serves as a solution-oriented instrument to address this issue. Through targeted management, without regard to race, skin color, ethnicity, and other worldly attributes, zakat does not merely serve as a temporary economic cushion but is capable of dismantling the structural inequalities that have long shackled marginalized communities.⁴⁶ However, in reality, one of the main issues in the implementation of zakat is the uneven distribution, resulting in certain groups or regions receiving greater benefits than others.⁴⁷

This issue is not a simple one because it can perpetuate social injustice and exacerbate poverty. In fact, M. Quraish Shihab, in his Tafsir al-Mishbah, explains that the condemnation is not only directed at those who refuse to feed or assist the poor, but also at those who distribute aid inappropriately—that is, not to those who truly need it, such as orphans and the poor, as intended by Allah SWT.

This aligns with the message of QS al-Ma'un verses 1–3, which explicitly link religious hypocrisy to socially unjust behavior, such as scolding orphans and failing to encourage feeding the poor.⁴⁸ These verses emphasize that indifference toward vulnerable groups is not merely an individual moral issue but carries broad social implications. When this attitude occurs, on a If repeated, it can create a pattern of deep-rooted injustice in society.⁴⁹

Thus, the concept of *ith'amu miskīn*—that is, feeding the poor—should not be understood merely in a textual sense but as general assistance to those in need; it is not merely a matter of individual charity but must be understood as a collective effort involving structural change.⁵⁰

Thus, the poverty that emerges within society cannot be separated from the existence of practices of injustice and oppressive treatment among fellow human

⁴⁵Erika Sugiarti and Gunawan Aji.

⁴⁶Firmansyah, 'Zakat Sebagai Instrumen Pengentasan Kemiskinan Dan Kesenjangan Pendapatan', 2013, h. 180.

⁴⁷Erika Sugiarti and Gunawan Aji.

⁴⁸Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Zilāl Al-Qur'ān* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2004), h. 357.

⁴⁹Quraish Shihab, Tafsir al-Misbah "Pesan dan Kesan Keserasian al-Qur'an"... h.646-647.

⁵⁰Hasibuan and Sore Tafsir Progresif: makna Al-miskin dlam tafsir Surah al-Ma'un Karya Nur khalik Ridwan, Al-Bunyan,... h. 220.

beings. A social system that does not favor the vulnerable ultimately prevents certain individuals or groups from breaking free from the shackles of poverty. At this point, Surah al-Ma'un not only criticizes individual behavior but also contains a warning against the formation of an unjust social structure.

Therefore, at this point, Surah al-Ma'un calls for an awareness that poverty is not merely a matter of fate or God's will, but also the result of social inequality, economic systems, and neglect of religious values.⁵¹ As long as acts of religious hypocrisy such as neglecting the rights of orphans and the poor continue, inequality will persist. Conversely, if these values are brought to life in social practice, then poverty has a chance of being minimized.

2. Solutions to Overcome Poverty

Addressing poverty is not a simple matter; it requires comprehensive and sustained efforts. This cannot be the responsibility of just one or two individuals but demands the involvement of all segments of society. In the context of Surah al-Ma'un, the most fundamental step that can be taken is to avoid the behavior of religious hypocrites, as previously explained. This is because actions that seem small, if repeatedly carried out, can have a significant impact on social conditions. Therefore, here are several solutions that can be offered in an effort to address poverty:

a. Fulfilling the Rights of Orphans and the Poor

In QS al-Ma'un verse 3, the word *ṭa'ām* appears, meaning food or sustenance. In this verse, the word *ī'ām*—which means “to feed”—is not used; instead, *ṭa'ām*, meaning “sustenance,” is employed. This choice of wording indicates that a person who encourages or provides assistance should not feel as though they are the one feeding others.⁵² As Allah the Almighty states in Surah Adz-Dzariyat/51:19 as follows:

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

“In their wealth there is a right for the poor, both those who ask and those who do not ask.”

Wealth is a temporary trust from Allah SWT. Therefore, human ownership of wealth is not absolute; rather, it is merely a trust from Allah SWT. Humans are merely

⁵¹Hasibuan and Sore, Tafsir Progresif: Makna Al-Miskin dalam Tafsir Surah Al-Ma'un Karya Nur Khalik Ridwan, *Al-Bunyan*,... h. 220.

⁵²Quraish Shihab, Tafsir Al-Misbah 'Pesan, Kesan Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an' ..., h. 646.

stewards and will eventually be held accountable..⁵³ This implies that the food provided, although outwardly derived from the giver's wealth, is not entirely their own; rather, it is the right of the poor and those in need.

b. Targeted Distribution of Aid

In Tafsir Al-Misbah, Prof. Quraish Shihab explains that the rebuke is not only directed at those who are reluctant to provide food or aid, but also at those who distribute aid inappropriately—that is, not to those who are truly in need, such as orphans and the poor, as intended by Allah. Sometimes a person gives, yet does so with the expectation of a specific reward. On the other hand, they are actually reluctant to help orphans and the poor because they see no benefit in doing so. In social reality, this phenomenon still occurs frequently. Some people distribute aid to those who do not actually need it very much, even in excessive amounts. Meanwhile, they neglect groups that are far more in need, even though a small amount of aid would be very meaningful and appreciated by them.⁵⁴

c. Building Social Compassion

In the Qur'an, Allah commands humanity to do good to orphans and the poor. Orphans and the poor are explicitly mentioned in Surah al-Baqarah/2:83 as follows:

وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ

“Dan berbuat baiklah kepada kedua orang tua, kerabat, anak-anak yatim, dan orang-orang miskin. Selain itu, bertuturlah kata yang baik kepada manusia, laksanakanlah shalat dan tunaikanlah zakat.”

⁵³Pipi Arviana Achmad Abubakar, 'Harta Dan Pengelolaannya Dalam Islam', *Ar-Rihlah: Jurnal Keuangan Dan Perbankan Syariah*, Vol. 4.No. 1 (2024), 1174.

⁵⁴Quraish Shihab, Tafsir al-Misbah "Pesan dan Kesan Keserasian al-Qur'an" h.646-647..

Conclusion

Based on the results of a study of QS al-Mā'ūn verses 1–3 using a tahlili exegetical approach, it can be concluded that Deniers of Religious are not merely defined as those who deny religious teachings verbally or in terms of creed, but also those who fail to put religious values into practice in social life. Surah al-Mā'ūn emphasizes that the primary characteristics of Deniers of Religious are scolding orphans, being unjust toward the vulnerable, and refusing to help or encourage aid for the poor and needy. Thus, religious commitment in Islam is not sufficiently measured by ritual worship alone but must also be reflected in social compassion and justice toward fellow human beings. This study also indicates that the behavior of Deniers of Religious is closely linked to the emergence and persistence of structural poverty. Indifference toward the rights of vulnerable groups, misdirected aid distribution, and neglect of social obligations such as zakat and the empowerment of the poor can exacerbate social inequality within society. Therefore, Surah al-Mā'ūn contains not only a critique of individual morality but also a warning against the formation of an unjust social system that perpetuates poverty. Furthermore, the concept of feeding the poor in Surah al-Mā'ūn cannot be narrowly understood as merely individual charity but rather as a collective effort to achieve social justice. Islam holds that the wealth of the affluent includes a right for the poor and those in need. Consequently, poverty alleviation requires the involvement of all segments of society through the fulfillment of the rights of orphans and the poor, the targeted distribution of aid, the strengthening of the zakat system, and the cultivation of social compassion rooted in Qur'anic values. Thus, Surah al-Mā'ūn teaches that poverty is not merely a matter of fate or individual weakness, but can also arise from social injustice and the erosion of humanitarian values in society. If the values of compassion, justice, and social responsibility are truly realized in life, then poverty and social inequality have a great chance of being minimized.

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