Islamic Tourism in Southeast Asia: The Concept and its Implementation

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has now become an important source of revenue for many countries in the world. The spillover from this booming and lucrative industry impacts positively the other sectors of the national economy in those countries. This situation is not only true in the advanced countries of the world, but also in the Muslim world. In this present study on Islamic tourism the researchers intend to investigate the definition, destination, purpose and ethical issues related to Islamic tourism. Very particularly, the study will focus on the situation in three of the Muslim countries situated in the region of Southeast Asia; namely Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei. Driven by the passion to study on Islamic tourism, the researchers are interested to know the guiding principles set in these countries in contrast to others in the region. Apart from the crux of the investigation, on the peripheral, this study will also look into the topic of tourism from the Islamic ethical dimension, mainly referring to the Qur'an and Sunnah. As a qualitative study, the researchers will employ the library research approach in collecting the pertinent data related to the study. By using the textual-analysis method they will scrutinize data collected from online and print materials. It is hoped that this modest research can be a contribution in advancing Islamic tourism in the Malay Archipelago and elsewhere in the world. From this study, it could discovered initially that Islamic tourism is a huge opportunity for the Muslims in the region to develop further to tap the industry as well as to introduce the region with Muslim majority to the world. Enormous efforts have been done to promote and to develop the religious tourism in the region along with the conventional tourism generally and it had achieved significant results by attaining the top place   in Islamic tourism industry. However a lot of works should be done such as the lack of standard facilities and promotions as well as the regional coordination in order to bring the religious industry to another level. It is necessary to expand the niche of Islamic tourism which is still below 20 percent out the conventional tourism industry largely.

1.   Introduction

Though Islamic tourism is relatively a newly coined term, travelling for various different reason has been a normal practice in the Muslim world ever since the advent of Islam. Compared to ancient times, in recent times with the introduction of modern means of transportation, we now

witness a sharp increase in the number of Muslims travelling not only within the Muslim world but to other parts of the world, particularly to Europe and America and other parts of the world. Besides that, globalization, economic growth, budget aircraft, online ticketing, easy information on the enchanting and scenic places posted on the internet and social media has exponentially promoted tourism in general and Islamic tourism in particular. Tourism has now become a booming industry globally.

Islamic tourism in Southeast Asia had developed rapidly in this decades after restless efforts and continuous improvement as well as extensive promotion. This type of industry is considered new industry in the region and in the Muslim world in general. Despite of that the industry of religious tourism had reached tremendous achievement by getting top spot in Islamic tourism industry in recent years. However the religious tourism industry generally still could not compete the conventional one yet as its share is less than 20 percent of the whole industry in the region and in the world as well. This is due to various factors that need to be improved further by all service providers as well as the authorities to attract more tourist coming in the region. In this article we try to discuss the concept of Islamic tourism, Islamic tourism industry in Southeast Asia and its standard and implementation.

2.   Definition and the Origin of Islamic Tourism

Unlike other communities, Muslims are encouraged by the Qur'an and Sunnah to travel. Very particularly, the Qur'an mentions travelling in many different places for several reasons. The word tourism in modern Arabic is known as *Al-SiyÉÍah*. Although relative a new term, it explains the meaning of one traveling or sets on a journey similar to *Safar* or *Sayr*, but it is used more specifically to describe traveling for recreational purpose or for pleasure (*al -Ma'ÉnÊ,2019*).

Al-Siyahah is slightly different when compared to *Safar* or *Sair*. The latter covers a wide range of meanings like; a journey undertaken be it for the purpose of seeking knowledge, business, visit, religious or any other purpose[1]. Some *'ulama* (scholars) in area of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) even specified that a journey should be classified as Safar when it exceeds more than 80 km in distance. (*al -Ma'ÉnÊ,2019*).

In the holy Qur'an one finds that terms like *Safar* and *Sayr* which refer to travel are repeatedly mentioned in different contexts and undertaken for different reasons. What follows below here are a few verses of the Qur'an that refer to the different words relate to travelling and the benefit of travels undertaken for a good purpose:

The Qur'an uses words such as *sÉra- yasÊru- sayr, sÉfara- yusÉfiru- safar, or rahala- yarhalu, rihlah* that denote traveling or journey;

سار-يسير-سير , سافر- يسافر- سفر, رحل-يرحل –رحلة

From the Qur'anic perspective these words pretty much carry similar meanings to one another. The word *sÉra* is probably the most general term used which means going, travelling, departing, moving away, following etc. On the other hand, words like *sÉra or yasÊru* or its derivation such as *sÊrË* are mentioned 27 times that connote traveling or going out or sightseeing. At times, the Qur'an also uses them in other forms like ' *wa sÊrË*' which means do travel or '*qul sÊrË*' which 'means say to them to travel', or in the question form such أفلم يسيروا which means 'why don't they travel'. The latter form is mentioned more than 10 times in the Qur'an compared to the other form of the word. This also means that Allah stresses the importance of traveling for a certain purpose[2].

Based on the contextual meaning of the above *ÉyÉt*(verse), one can deduce the understanding that the philosophical reason as to why one is encouraged to travel in the Qur'an is none other than to

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[1] ibid

[2]   M. FuÉd 'Abd al-BÉqÊ (1364 AH), al-Mufahras li alfÉÐ al-Qur'Én, Cairo, DÉr al-×adÊth, p.373

ponder and reflect on the sociological and historical phenomena of the bygone and vanished people and their civilizations. At other times the phrase "why don't they travel on earth" in the Qur'an emphasizes the traveler to observe and reflect on the cosmological and sociological phenomena.

افَلَمْ يَسِيرُواْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَآ أَوْ ءَاذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۖ فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى ٱلْأَبْصَـٰرُ وَلَـٰكِن تَعْمَى ٱلْقُلُوبُ ٱلَّتِى فِى ٱلصُّدُورِ (سورة الحج 46)

"

Have they not travelled in the land, and have they hearts wherewith to feel and ears wherewith to hear? For indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind". (46)

قُلْ سِيرُواْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ فَٱنظُرُواْ كَيْفَ بَدَأَ ٱلْخَلْقَ ۚ ثُمَّ ٱللَّهُ يُنشِئُ ٱلنَّشْأَةَ ٱلْءَاخِرَةَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (٢٠)

Say (O Muhammad): Travel in the land and see how He originated creation, then Allah bringeth forth the later growth. Lo! Allah is Able to do all things. (QS. Al Ankaboot:20)

In most instances, the Qur'an encourages the Muslims to go on a journey or travel to witness the glory and majesty of God in the world of creations. Through such travels the good and pious Muslims are expected to learn and contemplate on the bounties given by God to humanity. Besides the recommended travels, the Qur'an has also made traveling an obligatory (*fardhu ain*) one for those who have the capacity to go for *Haj* (pilgrimage to Mecca). Such a travel is only an obligatory travel undertaken by an individual once in his or her life. *Haj* literally means "the intended travel". Below here is the reference to *Haj* in the Qur'an: It is mentioned in the Qur'an:

فِيهِ ءَايَـٰتٌ بَيِّنَـٰتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ ۖ وَمَن دَخَلَهُ كَانَ ءَامِنًا ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ حِجُّ ٱلْبَيْتِ مَنِ ٱسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا ۚ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَنِىٌّ عَنِ ٱلْعَـٰلَمِينَ (٩٧)

Wherein are plain memorials (of Allah's guidance); the place where Abraham stood up to pray; and whosoever entereth it is safe. And pilgrimage to the House is a duty unto Allah for mankind, for him who can find a way thither. As for him who disbelieveth, (let him know that) lo! Allah is Independent of (all) creatures. (Ali 'Imron:97)

From the above discussion it can be said that the term travel/*safar* or journey in Islam is not only for recreational purpose but it could also be for social or religious duties depending on the aim or purpose of that activity. In contrast to Islamic ideas, tourism in the secular and more conventional contexts is more restricted in its meaning merely referring to recreational activity. Nevertheless, Islam does not forbid tourism that focuses on recreational activity so long it is done in line with a good purpose and adherent to the ethical values of Islam.

Although many Muslim scholars have given their definitions on Islamic tourism, but all agreed on one principle that it should not go against norms and values set by Islam.[3] While Hassan on the other hand, stress that Islamic tourism is based on acceptable moral values, ethics and divine principles (2004)[4]. Hassan (2007) simplified that Islamic tourism is a tourism which observes the Islamic values.

INHART IIUM's definition on Islamic tourism states that the Arabic term called *Siyaahah* which is derived from the Arabic word (س ي ح) means travelling or journey in the world as mentioned in the Qur'an, "Go you, then for four months..." (QS.At-Taubah, 9:2). Moreover, INHART explains that; terminologically, *Siyaahah* in Islam means the effort of Muslim travelers to face the challenges and to uphold the moral values of Islam and to be an obedient servant to God. (Inhart, IIUM,2019).

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[3] Shakiry A.S. (2006), The academy of Islamic Tourism project. 25 Sept 2103.

[4]. Hassan A. R. (2004). Islamic tourism: The concept and the reality. Islamic Tourism, 14, 2.

While the Malaysian authority in giving its definition states Islamic tourism is a kind of interest and activity of traveling to explore the heritage of Islam, history, art and culture and to experience the Islamic way of life in conformity with Islamic belief. (ITC,2009). OIC on its part defined tourism as to Muslim travelers to visit Islamic destinations and for religious purpose. (Henderson, 2010). Travelling per se in the Islamic context is deeply rooted in aspects like: history, social, religious, economic and education.

The origin of travelling is recommended if not compulsory for the Muslims like journey for *hajj* and *umrah* and it can be divided into the following types:

1. *Hajj* or *Umrah* (Pilgrimage)
2. Business
3. Education & Spiritual Enlightenment
4. Recreation
5. War or migration (*Hijrah*)

In Islam, before one undertakes a journey or a travel trip, he or she has to look into the priorities and importance of that journey. Muslim scholars have classified travels into; starting from the most important one to the less important one. In other words, such travels can be obligatory, recommended, permissible or prohibited[5]. The one that falls under the obligatory travel will be ×*ajj* (pilglrimare to Mecca) . This travel is a dream of every Muslims to go to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage. Philosophically, ×*ajj* for Muslims is more than a ritual. For many, it is a long journey undertaken to fulfill the last pillar of Islam. Muslims congregate during the ×*ajj* season to showcase their universal brotherhood. They not only meet but exchange ideas with other Muslims on their state of affair in their own homeland. The history of ×*ajj* performance goes back as early as during the time to Prophet Ibrahim. ×*ajj* as a form of *ibÉdah* (ritual) was later reintroduced in 7th century A.D. during the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW. ×*ajj* as a spiritual journey is a dream of every Muslim to undertake at least once a lifetime. ×*ajj* is the largest Muslim gathering that takes place every year. Close to three million Muslims gather during the annual ×*ajj* gathering (Amna Puri,2018).This number is small compared to the long waiting list of the Muslims who desire to perform ×*ajj* every year. Due to space and logistic limitations during the ×*ajj* reason, the Saudi government has adopted a quota system for every country i.e. 1 per 1000 people (NST,2019).

Apart from the obligatory journey of pilgrimage, Muslims are also recommended to do '*Umrah* (a shorter version *haj*) according to their economic capacity. This act of *ibadah* has attracted millions of Muslims to visit the cities of Mecca and Medina throughout the years especially those who don't get the chance to perform Haj and those who wish to do extra worship[6].

Another type of journey which is also recommended by Islam is the visit to the *Aqsha* Mosque in Jerusalem. During one occasion, the Prophet Muhammad spoke the importance of visiting *Al-Aqsa* Mosque by saying: Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "Do not set out on a journey except for three Mosques i.e. *Al-masjid-AI-Haram*, the Mosque of Allah's Apostle, and the Mosque of *Al-Aqsa*, (Mosque of Jerusalem)." (Al Bukhari: Book #21, Hadith #281)

In the Qur'an, Muslims read that Prophet Muhammad SAW was taken on a spiritual journey guided by angels. This famous story of the Prophet known as the "Night Journey" is mentioned in the opening chapter of *Surah* 17 (*al-Isra*); '*Glory to (Allah) Who did take His servant for a Journey*

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[5] The permissible journey is the journey which is not recommended or prohibited in Islam such as travelling for recreational purpose or job. While the prohibited one is a journey that could inflict a harm rather than benefiting the person such as traveling for evil purpose.

[6] According to Saudi government the number of small pilgrims (umrah) is around 8 million a year and nowadays they want to open all cities in Saudi Arabia for tourism and not restricted to 3 cities only for visitors. It is expected to draw more tourists to visit Saudi Arabia up to 30 millions by 2030.

by night from the Sacred Mosque to the farthest Mosque, whose precincts We did bless,- in order that We might show him some of Our Signs: for He is the One Who heareth and seeth (all things)'.

In the first verse itself, we are told as to the reason why God invited him. The reason was none other than to show God's signs and wonders to him. Some scholars also mentioned that the journey can also be interpreted as a way God wanted to console his grieving heart over the death of AbË ÙÉlib (his uncle) and Khadijah (his beloved wife). In the *SÊrah* (biography of the Prophet), one reads that the losing of these two personalities who were among the great supporters of the Prophet in a single year was marked as the 'Year of Grief'. It was during the night journey, the Prophet was educated by God Almighty on the many Islamic eschatological events that will bound to happen at the end of time and during the resurrection.

However with the current condition of the third mosque *Al AqÎa* which is under the occupation of Israel, the majority of Muslims are deprived visitation except for a small number of people. Other than these three mosques, some in the Muslim World interested to pay a visit to religious sites or Islamic shrines in different countries especially the sites which have historical significance in Islam and its heritage. Among Muslim pilgrims who go on *Haj* and *Umrah*, there are some who would like to visit mosques and historical sites around Madinah, such *Quba* and *Qiblataian* mosques, the graves of martyrs of *Uhud*, those companions of the Prophet at *Baqi'* graveyard etc. At times, Muslims interested in Islamic history and heritage prefer to extend their travel beyond Mecca and Madinah by visiting countries like Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, etc.

As a place of origin, countries in the Middle East have a lot of historical and religious heritage starting from the Judeo-Christian era to the advent of Islam as God's final revelation. Countries like Egypt, Jerusalem, Jordan, and Turkey are some of the countries in the Middle East that receive an influx of international visitors yearly from all over the world. These countries have become so popular with that narrated the stories as a place of the birth or death of earlier prophets who came before Muhammad SAW. A travel to historical sites is expected to broaden up the travelers' horizon of thinking when they witness the evidence for themselves. Such an experience is very different many times than looking at pictures or watching documentaries on electronic media. As such, during such travel, the sites mainly visited by tourists are those that belong to historical and archeological sites of a particular country they are visiting. Learning from bygone ancient civilizations and their people is a thing mentioned in the Qur'an. The famous George Santayana also once said "Those who fail to read from history are doomed to fail". The great Muslim traveler Ibn Battuta who travelled around the world during his time also had a quote on traveling that states "Traveling – it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller." In modern times, there is a quote that says, "Never say my home is my world, but say the world is my home".[7]

Contrary to the Islamic idealism, at the moment, due to political or some other reasons, Muslims in many parts of the world, especially those from the Middle East are feeling discouraged to travel for some reasons. Among the reasons, that prevent them from travelling are; Islamophobia, terrorism, war, sectarian violence and racism.

In summary, the Qur'an and Sunnah explain that traveling can be an activity that is necessary, if not permissible for a Muslim be it for religious or recreational purposes. It depends on the intention, types as well as the purpose of the journey and it is bound with ethical values and Islamic norms. This becomes one of the core issues of Islamic tourism that will be dealt in this paper.

3.   Observance of Ethical Values in Islamic Travel and Tourism

Islam as a complete guidance for mankind has set some guiding principles that need to be observed under all circumstances when one is traveling. The same is applicable for those involved in tourism

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[7] Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak in SlideShare (Slide No:9) https://www.slideshare.net/maarji/my-quotes-58836218. Retrieved on 30th August 2019

or countries that promote tourism for economic purpose. The Islamic guiding principles are what the Muslims have adopted from the Prophet SAW and early pious Muslim scholars. Although the term Islamic tourism was not in use back then, travelling was something undertaken by Muslims for a variety of reasons. In Islam, traveling can be considered as a form of worship if it is done with a good intention and carried out in line with the ethical values of Islam. The ethical values in Islam are not measured by reason only but by the revelation of God. All actions of a Muslim in Islam are categorized into five: obligatory, recommended, permissible, reprehended or prohibited. In Islamic laws it deals with all human activities not as the Western believes including food, drinks whether it is permitted or not to consume, dress, entertainment which is allowed or not and the financial transactions as well as human relationship which is legal and illegal. It may vary from one country to other in its implementation. (Hasan Saad,2010).

The following moral values that should be abided by Muslims with regard to travelling are:

3.1 Intention or purpose

The intention or purpose of travelling in Islam is not a less important issue in travelling. This is due to the fact that any action of a Muslim will be meaningful because of its intention. The intention to do something determines the quality of the action itself, if it is good it will be rewardable and otherwise. As it is mentioned by the Prophet SAW[8]

حديث أمير المؤمنين أبي حفص عمر بن الخطاب قال: سمعت رسول الله ﷺ يقول: إنما الأعمال بالنيات، وإنما لكل امرئ ما نوى، فمن كانت هجرته إلى الله ورسوله، فهجرته إلى الله ورسوله، ومن كانت هجرته لدنيا يصيبها أو امرأة ينكحها، فهجرته إلى ما هاجر إليه.

Abu Hafs Umar ibn al Khattab said: " I heard the messenger of God says:' the rewards of any action depends on the intention and everyone will get his rewards according to his intention. Whoever migrates for the pleasure of Allah and his messenger, his action will be counted for that and whoever migrates for worldly benefit or for women his migration will be counted for what he intended to". (reported by al Bukhari and Muslim).

For that reason, a traveler should have a good intention for his journey and it will be regarded as a rewardable action for him or her. The intention is important for any action as it will affect the quality of that action. If it is good, it will bring good outcome and vice versa. That is why a Muslim should also decide his intention for travelling, be it for social reason, economic, or even just for relaxation (Inhart 2019).

3.2 Food and Beverages

Food and beverages are among the important issue for Muslims be it in his home or outside. The main concern among Muslims when they travel is to make sure that they get *halal* food wherever they are. This is what normally the Muslims think before they travel to any place or country especially when they are visiting a non-Muslim country. They have to plan and prepare for themselves when *Halal* food is not available in the countries they visit. This situation will be different when they are visiting any Muslim majority country, where finding *Halal* food is not a major issue. Conversely, for non-Muslims finding food is not a big problem as they don't have dietary laws that need to be followed. Like Muslims, orthodox Jews also strictly follow dietary laws mentioned in their scripture. While Muslims go for *Halal* food, for the Jews it is '*Kosher*' food. Simply put, for the Muslims religion plays an important part in their decision making when it comes to travelling. (Arasteh & Eilami, 2011; Essoo & Dibb, 2004). Muslims normally don't travel to places where *Halal* food is not available, unless under desperate situation or there is an urgency or emergency. (Battour et al., 2011).

Hence, it is necessary to know the Muslims' character in order to fulfill their needs and to attract them to visit a certain country or place before any other consideration. However, many non-Muslim countries have realized this issue and they provide the Muslims with food stalls/restaurant in order

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[8] Reported by imam al Bukhari, book of revelation 1/6 no.1

to attract them. It could be done by either providing *Halal* products for the Muslims or to provide facilities for the Muslims to open stalls/restaurant that serve the *Halal* food at the tourist destination. Moreover, nowadays most nations have adopted *Halal* food certifications to ensure *Halal* food for the Muslims (Mukhtar & Butt, 2012). At the moment, many non-Muslim countries have realized the issue on *Halal* food and the Muslims need for such foods in order to allure the Muslim tourists into their countries (Henderson, 2003).

3.3 Facilities and Accommodation

Muslim tourists have different needs of facilities due to the Islamic laws and the duty of worship in their daily life. This includes clean facilities according to Islam which are free from the 'unclean' place and utilities as well as the place of worship. The clean facilities mean to be free from the non-*Halal* things either food or drinks or the utilities affected by the non-*Halal* things such as alcohol or pork ingredients. While for worship the Muslims have to pray five times a day that they cannot postpone or skip. As such, Muslims need a clean space for worship whether at home or while travelling. However, this facility doesn't necessarily mean spacious place for worship but at least enough place for performing prayer and its facilities such as prayer mat as well as the direction of the *Ka'bah* indicted at the place of worship. Usually, the Muslims have to think of all these necessities when they go to non-Muslim countries. If such facilities are available, they can entice the Muslims to visit the country or place. For this purpose, it is necessary for the tourism industry to know these needs of the Muslims so that they can provide at least the minimum facilities. Since these needs are crucial for the Muslims therefore it must be taken seriously by the tourism providers be it in the Muslim countries or in the non-Muslim ones (Battour et al., 2013).

3.4 Entertainment

One can observe that tourism is closely associated with amusement and entertainment. But in Islam, tourism serves more than leisure and amusement. Along with the objective of Islam itself that is to serve for the benefit of man, entertainment in Islam has its own principles and limits. Islam preaches that it is permissible for man to enjoy the worldly pleasure in a *Halal* way and avoid all that are harmful to the existence of the individual and the society. The permissible and the unlawful things in the entertainment industry should be in line with the moral principles preached in Islam. It is permissible when it doesn't violate the laws of Islam such as light music, dance, or singing which doesn't promote indecency, moral corruption or permissiveness. Islam bans the type of entertainment that encourages illicit sex, drugs, indecencies as well as gambling.

The *Shari'a* (the Islamic laws) is meant for the benefit of man. Hence, all roads leading to harm human interest is considered wrong and should be blocked. It is based on the principle of درء المفاسد مقدم على جلب المصالح or it means to block the harms is more important than to get its benefits(*al -Zuhaili*,2006).

3.5 Social or Educational Activities

Tourism is not only about individual activity and hobby, but it can be more than that. Perhaps it can be an activity meant for family bonding, social interaction and educational. These types of tourism are more popular nowadays that bring family members together or even to organize a trip with neighbors, school, team, or colleagues, co-workers, mosque organization, etc. This type of tourism is getting popular in the recent decades with different purpose ranging from learning purpose, comparative study, strengthening social bond, brotherhood, or even just for shopping. When compared to the West, these types of tourism are a thriving business in many parts of Asia. Experts in tourism attribute this latest development to the booming economy in many Asian countries.

This trend of social activity has different nature of tourism which is more to educational visit to school, university, museum, zoo, historical sites, national parks, eco- tourism, etc. which aims at introducing them to a learning opportunity. For the Muslims, especially mosque tourism has become a trending site to visit in Malaysia and South East Asia in general due to its historical value, spiritual experience and aesthetic beauty.

In Malaysia, mosque tourism is getting popular in the country by taking tourist who are Muslims and non-Muslims. Tourists are normally taken to visit mosques like Masjid Negara, Wilayah Mosque, Raya Mosque, Iron Mosque, in Kuala Lumpur and Putra Jaya. Besides the mosque in the capital city, other mosques in Penang, Melaka, Kedah and Perak are also visited by tourists. This situation has been used by the local Islamic NGOs to promote Islam by giving them information on mosque and its philosophy, plus some information on Islam, especially to non-Muslim tourists.[9] In Indonesia however, this type of tourism is more popular among the local tourists to visit historical mosques which are attached to the early propagators of Islam, who are well-known as '*Wali Songo*' or 'The Seven Saints' in the Island of Java. This trend of tourism however has not got its due attention from the government agencies or from the industry in terms of its exposure, promotion, accommodation, or holding cultural events related to educational and religious festivals.

3.6   Gender Segregation and Women Travelers

Another issue of the Muslim tourists is the gender segregation. This is because man and woman have their limit to mingle especially between non-relative and non-*Mahram*. It directly affects the way of travelling for the Muslims where they could not travel together for any reason. As a consequence, the facilities for man and women should be separated as much as possible. This issue has an impact for the tourism industry to provide the facilities and the service for both genders. Among the issues faced in tourism is how the hotel industry could put a control on the non-married couple to stay together in the room (Henderson, 2010). This issue perhaps could affect the rate of occupancy in the hotel, but this rule is more relevant for the Muslims rather than the non-Muslims. This is because coupling is prohibited in Islam unless they are married. However, this issue has caused some problems in its implementation in the hotel industry due to the reluctance of the hoteliers as this could affect the coming of the tourists to their hotels. Furthermore, in Islam a woman could not travel alone unless there is an emergence to do so. A woman is allowed to travel with her family or relative or in a group to make sure her safety and security. In some Muslim countries, especially in the gulf countries and Pakistan, this rule is strictly practiced compared to other Muslim countries in South East Asia or Africa unless it is for a noble and necessary purpose such as studying abroad, seeking medical treatment, etc.

3.7   *ÓdÉb (*Morals) Observed during Travelling

Another issue which is not less important to the Muslims is the ethical issue related to traveling. Traveling in Islam is not only about worldly activity which is free from any ethical values, but it has its ethics and norms related to it. It is due to the comprehensiveness of Islam as guidance for human life and the role model of it is the Prophet saw who guided Muslims in all aspects of life. This ethics are meant to get the blessing of God in all activities of life including in traveling. The following is a short summary on ethics that need to observe during travel and tour:

a.   Decency

It is necessary for a Muslim traveler to observe decency in his/her action as well as in dress whenever he or she has gone out of home or with other people (non-*Mahram*). The traveler is required to close his/her body as required by Islam and to make sure it is not exposed to others in all condition especially when he or she is travelling as mentioned in the Qur'an (QS. Al- Nur;31). This requirement should be given due attention by the tourism industry to provide the Muslim with required facilities such as bathroom, toilet, and swimming pool (if possible) or other facilities which are necessary to avoid indecency and obscenity.

b.   *Du'a* (Supplication) during the Journey

Traveling is a kind of adventure that man would not know what will happen in the journey and only God knows and to Him man will ask for help. Although travelling is not very hard nowadays, thanks for the transportation and good roads, however man would not know what will happen to

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[9] The writer was involved in voluntary work to be mosque guide in some mosques in Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya with the Islamic Outreach, ABIM.

him throughout his journey. For that reason, man is required to seek God's blessings protection from any harm or calamity. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad has taught some *Dua'* one can recite before leaving one's place of domicile or when one starts to ride his camel/horse those days and vechile of all kinds in modern context. One is encouraged to recite a *Dua'* in gratitude to God, even after one arrives safely at the destination. Below here is an example of a *Dua'*[10] before embarking on a journey:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ وَإِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ فِي سَفَرِنَا هَذَا الْبِرَّ وَالتَّقْوَى ، وَمِنَ الْعَمَلِ مَا تَرْضَى، اللَّهُمَّ هَوِّنْ عَلَيْنَا سَفَرَنَا هَذَا وَاطْوِ عَنَّا بَعْدَهُ ، اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ الصَّاحِبُ فِي السَّفَرِ، وَالْخَلِيفَةُ فِي الأَهْلِ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ وَعْثَاءِ السَّفَرِ، وَكَآبَةِ الْمَنْظَرِ وَسُوءِ الْمُنْقَلَبِ فِي الْمَالِ وَالأَهْلِ + آيِبُونَ تَائِبُونَ عَابِدُونَ لِرَبِّنَا حَامِدُونَ

(Glory be to the One Who has placed this (transport) at our service and we ourselves would not have been capable of that, and to our Lord is our final destiny. O Allah, we ask You for righteousness and piety in this journey of ours, and we ask You for deeds which please You. O Allah, facilitate our journey and let us cover its distance quickly. O Allah, You are the Companion on the journey and the Successor (the One Who guards them in a person's absence) over the family. O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the difficulties of travel, from having a change of heart and from being in a bad predicament, and I seek refuge with You from an ill-fated outcome with regard to wealth and family)."

c.   **To Praise God and be Thankful for His Bounties**

It is recommended for a Muslim traveler to always remember God during his journey and to praise Him for his blessing. Whenever he sees the beauty in God's creation, he should praise Him. For the bad things he comes across he should ask God to avert him from what he sees in people and objects. This is because the traveler will see a lot of new things in his journey either good or bad. Praising God for the good sceneries and asking God's protection from evil is the way practice shown to us by the Prophet of Islam. Muslims have been asked to follow the ways of the Prophet in many parts of the Qur'an, one such example is in *Surah Ali Imran* 191. The example can be seen in the verse below:

"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding. Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire". (*Ali Imran*: 191-193)

4.   Islamic Tourism in South East Asia

Islamic tourism which had started in 80th where the tourism industry developed rapidly and it became the main source of income for almost all countries, developed and the developing countries as well. It is along with the progress of the economic and infrastructures facilities in the developing countries, especially in South East Asia with its worldwide promotion on tourism. Based on UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, the revenue from international traveler reached US$1.075 billion in 2011 and increased by 4% in 2012 and the growth of the world tourism is estimated at 10.9% in 2014 (Lee &Chang,2008). The figure of travelers across the world to reach 1602 million in 2020 and the spending is estimated to reach US $200 billion (Lee and Chang,2008). While the growth rate of Muslim tourists is about 13.36% with estimate expenditure is about $192billion by 2020. Malaysia, Egypt, Turkey, UAE, Thailand, Singapore, China and Indonesia are among the popular destination for Muslim tourists. It is estimated that the region will attract over 18 million Muslim arrivals by 2020, which is nearly 15 percent of all tourist arrivals to the 10-member bloc (Jason Thomas, 2019).

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[10] The du'a is based on hadith narrated by Muslim, *Riyadh al-ØaliÍÊn*, chapter *ÓdÉb fi al-Safar*, book 8, no 17.

In South East Asia, the trend of the Muslims visiting places of interest is also increasing annually. The most popular places to visit are the historical mosques, shrines of religious scholars (*Ulama'*) as well as the Islamic heritage and natural sites. Among the places in Malaysia, the National Mosque, Raya Mosque, Iron Mosque in Kuala Lumpur, and the historical mosques in other cities. In Indonesia, the most popular places visited by the Muslims are the mosques built or attached to the 'Seven Saints' (*Wali Songo*) and other historical or beautiful mosques in the country. This trend is not different in Brunei and Singapore, despite the other popular vocational places that came to exist later.

The booming tourism industry in the last few decades in the world should be attributed to faster and cheaper transportation as well as the development of accommodation has as a result in the increase of tourists in many countries in general, particularly in the South East Asia. This trend has motivated the developing countries in South East Asia to develop the tourism industry and to attract the tourists from the West as well as from the Muslim countries to visit this region. South East Asia is regarded as the fastest growing nations in building tourism industry and with the growth of two digits annually in average. This situation is contributed by the rapid development of the facilities and accommodation in the region as well as the stable political situation in addition to relatively cheap living cost and multiracial society.

Despite most of the tourists coming to this region are from Western countries and Eastern countries, the number of Muslim tourists had increased significantly in the last few decades. This fact can be seen in an increase of 20 percent of Muslim tourists from the Middle East and Indian Subcontinent coming to this region. This trend took place not without reason, but it is due to the hostility of the Western nations towards the Muslims after 9/11 terror attacks in the US. It can be a blessing in disguise for Muslim countries with the changing of the Muslims travel destination to other countries especially to this region (The Sun Daily, 2019). The GMTI index estimates that there will be 160 million Muslim travelers by 2020. This figure is expected to increase by 230 million by 2026. (The Star (24/8/2019). According to the Malaysian Prime Minister, in launching visit Malaysia 2020, Tun Mahathir optimistically expects the arrival of 30 million tourists in 2020 (Mazwin Nik, 2018). Mohamaddin (ex-Tourism minister) added that "non-Muslim countries" such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan have also started to tap into the Muslim traveler market (Mazwin Nik, 2018)).

By the arrival of more Muslims tourists to this region it has challenged the Muslims in this region to take part in the tourism and service industries be it government institution or the private and individual entrepreneurs. As we know the hotel and accommodation facilities were dominated by the non-Muslims since early times, a 'negative' image tarnishes the industry due to non-Islamic elements in it such as alcohol, illicit sex, drug, etc. Such an image has made the Muslims so reluctant to embark on any business in the tourist industry. However, with more awareness of the Muslims about the industry and its benefits socially, psychologically and economically the Muslims climb onto the bandwagon of the industry. This trend however has its own issues with regard to the facilities, foods, services as well as the standard and the certification and the rules to be adhered by the players in the industry. Governments institutions had its own role to attract the Muslim and non-Muslim tourists to visit countries in the region since 90th by developing public facilities and incentives for the players of the industry as well as an easy entry into the country. Malaysia as an example managed to attract more than 20 million tourists annually by promoting the country using different strategies. Followed by Indonesia and Brunei apart from other Asean countries such as Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam etc. However, the three Muslim countries in the region have to face different issues though Muslims are the majority living there.

5.   The Concept of Islamic Tourism

The concept of Islamic tourism emerged with the booming tourist industry and the arrival of more Muslims from the Arab world, sub-continent countries as well as from other Asean countries. Apart from that, it is attributed to the participation of the more Muslims in the industry. Among the main

issues are the adherence to the Islamic laws, the absence of non Halal food and beverages, the facilities that accommodate the Muslims need and the segregation of different gender in some aspects, etc.

6.   The Implementation of the Islamic Tourism in South East Asia

The trend of travelling and vacation started decades ago when the means of transportation and information are getting faster and easier along with the economic progress of the world and the Muslim nation. Nowadays travelling has become a lucrative industry that can produce great income for individuals as well as for the nation. It has created millions of jobs whether directly or indirectly. Due to this trend and the rapid development in tourism industry and vacation, it is necessary to investigate the issues related to traveling more seriously from the Islamic perspective. There are different terms used in South East Asia that refers to Islamic tourism, such as Islamic tourism, *Sharia* tourism, or even *Halal* tourism. Although they are close to each other but perhaps there are different reasons to use these terms such as sensitivity of the term for non-Muslims or commercial reason or even   due to the different understanding of the term that represents its proper meaning. In the three Muslim countries in SEA namely Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia the use of the term is little bit different. In Malaysia, Islamic tourism is more popular, while *Sharia* tourism is more familiar in Indonesian context, although the two refers to the same meaning. Above these differences the main issue of Islamic tourism is on the characteristics and the standard used in implementing the concept of Islamic tourism in the region. The standard of Islamic tourism in the region might be different from one country to another; however they may share the common values and principles based on the guidance of the Qur'an and Sunnah. In this article we try to compare the standardization used by the authority in this region especially in the above mentioned three countries.

Referring to the Malaysian context, Islamic tourism had been introduced by the Malaysian authority since 90th along with the influx of foreign tourists to the country. Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) had been established in Malaysia in 2009 under the Ministry of Tourism which was set up in 1985 to cater for the tourism industry which was developing at that time and to find strategies to attract more Muslim tourists to the country (ITC 2009).

As a separate body it focuses more on the issue of the concept of Islamic tourism and its implementation to provide better facilities for the Muslim tourists who visit the country. After sometimes the establishment of the centre along with the big promotion done by the Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia managed to attract more Muslim tourists within few years and the growth rate is very high along with other Muslim countries such as Morocco, Egypt and Turkey (Lina Munirah, 2013).

Based on the definition given by the Islamic Tourism Centre Malaysia, Islamic tourism is a sphere of interest or activity which is related to travel and explore Islamic history, arts, culture and heritage and/or to experience the Islamic way of life, in conformity with the Islamic faith (ITC, 2009).

A lot of effort had been taken by Malaysia to improve the quality of Islamic tourism to meet the standard and to implement the concept of Islam in the tourism industry. Among the efforts that given priority related to Islamic tourism are as follow:

6.1   Halal Food Industry

Malaysia had adopted *Halal* certification since 1983 and the *Halal* standardization is under the name of *Halal* food; production, preparation, handling and storage – general guide (MS 1500:2009). It was developed under the Malaysian Standard Development System, under the wing of the Department of Standardization Malaysia (DSM), Ministry of Science, Technology and innovation (Siti Salwa, 2015). It is supervised by the Islamic Affairs Department (JAKIM) and other related institutions. This institution was established to make sure the food production meets all the *Halal* standard developed by the Department and to ensure the *Halal* requirements are

fulfilled by the players in the food industry. The *Halal* standardization in Malaysia had been applied to all food and beverages as well as all related product of food and beverages under stringent rules to ensure its quality and *Halal* status. Hence each food and drink product must bear a logo of *Halal* approved by the JAKIM authority and it is supervised and monitored directly by that institution (Jakim, 2019). The process had met the international standard of Malaysian Standard (MS 1500:2009) and in the process to meet the international standard in the near future. The products that have been certified include food, restaurant, food stall, hotel, companies, pharmaceutical, households products, drinking water products, slaughtering facilities and logistics (Halal Malaysia;2019).This process is still going on to cover other products that need to be certified due to its nature of containing possible non-*Halal* substance.

6.2   *Sharia* Compliant Hotel

Hotel industry plays an important role to support the process of developing Islamic tourism in Malaysia. Therefore, it is necessary to have certain standard that can be applied to all hotels regardless of the ownership whether it is managed by the Muslims or non-Muslims, local or international players. ITC Malaysia launched recently Muslim Friendly hotel recognition and according to the report Malaysia had received 5.2 million Muslim tourists in 2018 (Joseph Kaos,2019). The move launched by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture aims at putting the standards or accreditation to hotel industry to meet the required level of *Halal* status and *Sharia* compliant accommodation. He claimed that such accreditation which is to be carried out by the Islamic Tourist Centre (ITC) is the first of its kind in the world (The Star, 2019).This move is meant to set a standard for *Halal* status and accreditation and it is to be followed by others in the future. The accreditation consists of three levels namely, platinum, gold and silver and it is based on the compliance to the standard that has been set by the Centre in collaboration with SIRIM. Interestingly, among the standards to be fulfilled by the hoteliers are the proximity to the mosque and other Islamic attraction, the availability of prayer room and mat, *Kiblah* direction, *Halal* certified restaurant, segregated gym and swimming pool (ITC, 2019). Although there is no complete agreement on the description of *Shari'ah* compliant hotel, the common description of it is outlined as below:

1.   Only *Halal* food should be served in the hotel premises and restaurant.
2.   Prayer room is provided at least the *Kiblah* direction to be given in the room.
3.   Hotel staff to wear proper Islamic dress code.
4.   To provide water tap in the toilet and bath room.
5.   Prohibition of serving alcohol and indecent entertainment.
6.   No unwed couple to stay in the same room
7.   No non *Halal* food to be brought by the visitor to the hotel (Zakiah Samori, 2013).

While in Malaysia the *Halal* certified hotel has to meet the following criteria:

Serving the *Halal* food or *Halal* restaurant, having the facilities for performing prayer and having *Kiblah* indicator in each room, not serving non-*Halal* food and alcoholic drinks (Zakiah Samori, 2012). Each hotel should fulfill these criteria in order to be recognized as *Halal* hotel and to get the *Halal* logo which is issued by JAKIM or JAIS. However, for the comprehensive criteria of the Halal hotel, according to JAKIM, so far there are no legal guidelines or standard regulations for the hoteliers to follow in order to achieve the *Halal* certification (Yuni Aryanty, 2010).

In promoting to the Muslim tourists, Malaysia had launched the campaign to attract especially those from Arab countries that include the following moves:

a.   Promoting Islamic museum and mosque tourism.
b.   Art and cultural sites and event.
c.   Introducing Muslim and Arab food and event.
d.   Providing Arabic speaking guides and travels, etc.

7. The Implementation in Indonesia and Brunei

In Indonesia, the most common term used is 'Wisata Halal' which means *Halal* tourism rather than Islamic tourism. As a Muslim majority country, Indonesia has launched the campaign of *Halal* tourism since 90th and it is still in the process of developing the proper standard of Islamic tourism. Indonesia receives about 20 percent of Muslim tourists out of around 15 million tourists every year. This niche of Muslim tourist is still small compared to total number of tourists visiting Indonesia every year and the government is pushing hard to increase the number by having international campaign to attract Muslim tourists, especially from Arab countries. Along with this campaign the government is also trying to develop Halal tourism by designing the standards and regulations to be followed by the players in the industry. In this regard, the Ministry is drafting the guidelines of *Halal* tourism that includes destination, marketing, industry and association (Mitra Tarigan,2019 Jul 27). According to the Ministry of Tourism of Indonesia, the *Halal* certification is necessary in the industry because it will attract more Muslim visitors to the country and at the same time it can improve the quality of service for tourists. He added that Indonesia has a huge potential for *Halal* tourism industry due to its diverse culture and wide natural tourist destination such as Lombok Island that develops to be *Halal* tourist destination.

In the process of drafting the standard and regulations the Minister of Tourism of Indonesia was stressing on the importance of having certification of Halal for hotel industry including culinary, hotel, travel agent and spa services (Mitra Tarigan 2019 Jul 27). The standard of certification is also to clarify some misunderstanding among the players in the industry such as in issue of separating the gender for the climbers of Rinjani Mountain, Lombok. However, the issue that created havoc weeks ago had been clarified by the Chief of the Rinjani geopark Sudiyono that the plan to separate the gender had been postponed and not to be implemented soon.

On the other hand, Lombok Island that has been declared as an icon of *Halal* tourism by the Ministry in 2015 managed to attract 1.4 million Muslim tourists in 2017 and the number increased almost 40 % within 2 years. Arif Yahya[11] also reiterated that the government is committed to improve the facilities for Muslim tourists by providing the Muslim friendly airports with *Mushalla* (prayer room), with better facilities, *Halal* certified hotel, restaurant at a reasonable rate and more cultural events (Fardah, 2019/5/27). Five destinations had been declared so far as *Halal* destinations by the ministry that includes Aceh, West Sumatera, Riau and Riau Islands, Jakarta and Lombok. According to Global Muslim Travel index (GMTI 2019) Indonesia and Malaysia are positioned at No.1 of the most Muslim friendly destination for Muslim tourists based on four criteria namely; accessibility, communication, environment and service. Indonesia rose to the No.1 position in 2019 after four years of continuous effort done by the government and the industry players to improve the infrastructures and facilities. (Robby Setiawan, 2019 April 16).

According to Crescent the rating is based on the 6 common criteria of Halal tourism namely:

1. Pork free food, non-alcohol and its products.
2. Availability of worship facilities\
3. Toilet and water for taking ablution.
4. Special service during Ramadan (breakfast and sahur)
5. Identification of non-Halal food
6. Recreation facilities that separate between male and female.

While according to Global Muslim Travel Index the rating is based on the following standard:
1. Muslim family friendly destination
2. Safety for Muslim tourist

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[11] Arief Yahya, the Former Minister of Tourism of Indonesia under the fisrt term of Joko Widodo presidency up to 2019.

3.   High volume of the Muslim tourists
4.   Friendly service and facilities of Muslim tourist
5.   Variety of Halal food
6.   Easy access and comfortable place of worship
7.   Good and friendly airport
8.   Option of accommodation facilities
9.   Halal awareness and marketing destination
10.   communication facilities
11.   Accessibility and awareness of the need of Muslim tourist
12.   Connectivity of air transportation
13.   Ease Visa requirement (GMTI, 2019)

Brunei

Brunei Darussalam as a Muslim country in ASEAN is also struggling to develop its Islamic tourism along with its continued campaign to attract tourists to this tiny country. Brunei as a Muslim country has long history of Islam and rich with Islamic culture and heritage has a lot to offer to the Muslims tourists. As a Muslim majority country, Brunei implemented the Islamic laws since 2014 in different aspects including criminal punishment despite the criticism raised by some countries. In addition to that, its small population that consists of Muslim majority had contributed immensely to the Islamic environment and ambient. This situation has formed more Islamic environment for Islamic tourism in Brunei and contributed to the less effort to offer Islamic tourism compared to other countries.

However the adherence to the *Sharia* law should not be an obstacle to develop the Islamic tourism market in the country. Instead Brunei has reached number 10 of GMTI Top-10 of OIC destinations. Brunei scored 90/100 on GMTI benchmark criteria in term of safety and dining facitilites. GMTI provides the Muslims with the scores of halal-friendly standards of more than 100 destinations across the world. The main attraction to Muslims visitors to Brunei includes Omar Ali Saifuddin mosque, Hasan al Bolkiah mosque, Darul Ifta building with its valuable Islamic artifacts, the Royal Mausoleum, Brunei History etc. Brunei Tourism is working closely with the Ministry of Religious Affairs to develop Islamic tourism that includes offering mosque tourism and Islamic gallery. And the main source of Muslim tourists in the country is from Asean countries including Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Philippines.

Brunei Tourism Board is also promoting Islamic tourism by providing materials as well as products and tours that would be an interest to the visitors. (Puvanesvari 2019 Nov 18) According to Brunei's Ministry of Primary resources and tourism, Malaysia and Indonesia have consistently been among Brunei's largest tourism markets since 2015. Out of 218,213 tourists arrival in 2015, Malaysian shared 26.6 % and Indonesian shared 23,5 % and this trend seems to an ongoing one. (The Asean Post team, 2019 Feb 15).

8.   Conclusion

Based on the discussion above it can be concluded that Islamic tourism conceptually not a new activity in Islam but it has transformed to be more commercial and recreational in nature. However, Islam as a comprehensive way of life has provided the general principles and guidelines on its concept of travel and journey. Tourism is not exempted from the guidelines set by Islam. The guiding principles set by Islam are mainly related to this life or the hereafter. As a new trend of activity and the new type of business and a new form of national revenue, tourism has developed fast in the world and in the Muslim countries as well. This situation challenged the Muslim nations and the Muslim countries to develop its infrastructures and facilities to the new level to provide the best service for tourists in general and the Muslim tourists in particular. The Asean region is dynamic economically and rich with culture and natural tourist destinations is not spared from the trend to attract travelers to visit the region. In order to attract more travelers to the region,

particularly Muslim travelers, some works need to be done in order to fulfill the needs of Muslims travelers be it in service, accommodation, food, etc. It also requires the Muslim countries to develop its infrastructures and accessibility as well as its promotions to other countries especially among the OIC countries to provide them with better services and indirectly it could strengthen the relation and brotherhood among the Muslim *ummah* in general.

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