

# Islamization Trends

## – Implications for Tourism Market –

Mohamed M. Battour  
Faculty of Business and Accounting  
University of Malaya  
50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
and

Mohd Nazari Ismail  
Department of Business Policy and Strategy  
Faculty of Business and Accounting  
University of Malaya  
50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

### ABSTRACT

This paper begins by explaining the concept of Islamic Shariah. It explains the sources of Shariah as well as its broad objectives. The paper then focuses on the implications of observance of Shariah in the tourism and hospitality industries. This is followed by a description of the recent phenomena of 'Halal tourism' and 'Islamic Hospitality' using some examples from selected Muslim countries in Asia and the Middle East. The development of 'Islamically-oriented' standards is also discussed giving rise to new concepts such 'Shariah-compliant' which refer to aspects such as alcohol-free, gambling-free and the offering of 'Halal' food. Finally the paper discusses future trends and challenges related to Halal tourism.

**Key Words:** Islamization, Shariah, Halal tourism, Hotel , Marketing.

### Introduction

The relationship between tourism and religion has been addressed in the literature, see for example (Crouch, 2007; Richard and Priya, 2005; Brian, 2002; Donn James, 2001; Heintzman, 1998), but there is a lack of theoretical publications in the area of tourism in the context of Islam. Each religion has an impact on its believers or followers. Likewise, Islamic rules (Shariah) cover all trade and industry including domestic and global tourism. The true Islamic teachings emerge from two main streams; Al-Quran (Islam's holy book) and the documented deeds and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (Sunnah). Tourism in Arabic, which is the original language of Al-Quran, has many connotations, but in modern usage it is limited to a few meanings. It indicates moving about in the land for fun or to look at things, research and find out, and so on; not to earn money, work or settle there (ALM, 2004, p.467). The Islamic teachings control the exercise of this type of tourism in order to conform with the higher objectives of the Shariah that uphold five necessities; the protection of religion, protection of life, protection of the mind, protection of lineage and protection of property. Some Islamic scholars have stated that all the five necessities which are agreed by the heavenly religions are ingredients without which communities cannot live and prosper (Badhdah, 2005). Therefore, understanding the Islamic teachings and observing them in the tourism market as well as the hospitality market may be considered a competitive advantage while Muslim customers' needs who travel overseas may be a source of worry to themselves and those with whom they interact (Syed, 2001).

Undoubtedly, the global economy, including world tourism, has been negatively affected by poor relations between Islamic and Western nations especially after the September 11 attacks in the United States (Henderson, 2003). These harmful effects were exacerbated with the U.S. war on terrorism. This effect in the Middle East has emerged in the form of preventing Arab and Muslim tourists from travelling to Europe and North America on the grounds that these attacks were of Muslim and Arab origin. Therefore, this became the archetypal image of Islam among the American people which led to Muslims of Arab origins being unwelcome. The Arabian and Muslims choice of traditional destinations (especially to USA and Europe) after September 11 changed to the Middle East and Muslim countries. Therefore, intra-tourism in the Middle East and Muslim countries boomed remarkably. Thus, there is no doubt that they constitute a broad market which has its special requirements and its culture which cannot be ignored as a target market from the decision making in the international tourism market as well as the intra-Islamic tourism market.

In recent years, it has been observed that there is a growing interest in new concepts such as "Islamic (Halal) tourism" or "Islamic hospitality" similar to the Halal food concept in many countries including the Middle East. Newspaper articles considered it as new phenomenon in the United Arab Emirates and Middle Eastern countries, which began to highlight the importance of intra-regional tourism (OIC, 2008). It attracted many tour destinations entirely based on Islamic culture (Javed, 2007).

The objectives of this paper are: (1) to provide some Shariah knowledge of tourism in order to explain Islamization trends in tourism, (2) to discuss the phenomenon of Halal tourism using some examples of Muslim countries and (3) to present some future trends and challenges related to Halal tourism. The paper is organized as follows; first, is a description of the Shariah and its relationship with tourism. Next, is a discussion of some Shariah practices in Muslim countries. Finally, some future trends and challenges in Halal tourism are discussed.

## The Shariah

Islamization is a term which describes a variety of attempts and approaches to implement Islamic laws in all aspects of life. Therefore, the Muslim Ummah should examine every aspect of modern life from the perspective of Islamic teachings and make the necessary corrections. The Islamization process aims to develop an awareness of the Islamic teachings that relate to current problems and analyze modern problems in the light of the Shariah. The major problem we face is and how to formulate practical Islamic solutions to these problems (Muhammad, 1989, p.24).

Islamic law is known in Arabic as the Shariah which means "the clear path" or "guide". The Shariah refers to a set of rules, regulations, teachings, and values which guide the good Muslim along the right path towards a pure life consistent with Islam, whose reward will be everlasting life in paradise (Edge, 1996, p. XV). However, these rules and regulations, contrary to how they are often explained by many non-Muslims, cover every aspects of life. The Shariah is the fulfilment of the total man, inner and outer, individual and corporate, as he seeks to live by the will of his one and only God. The Shariah, therefore, is a path which is set by Allah for those who accept Him to follow in order to attain success both in the worldly life and in the hereafter. The Shariah is virtually synonymous, and can be used interchangeably, with the word Din, which can only inadequately be translated as 'religion'. Din literally means 'way of life', 'submission', 'following' or the 'Way'. The word Shariah in its various derivative forms is found in five places in Al-Quran (5: 48; 7: 163; 42: 13 and 21; 45: 18) (Murad, 1981, p.86).

The Shariah includes both faith and practice. It embraces worship, individual attitude and conduct as well as social norms and laws, whether in the political, economic, familial, criminal or civil spheres. It may also sometimes be used to imply, in a more restricted sense, the do's and don'ts, the rules and regulations for conduct and behaviour. The Shariah is thus nothing less than the divinely ordained way of life for man. To realize the divine will, man must follow

the Shariah. To live in Islam is to live according to the Shariah. To give up the Shariah or any part of it knowingly, willfully or deliberately is to give up Islam. A Muslim must, therefore, do his utmost to observe and to implement the whole of it, wherever and in whatever situation he finds himself. Hence the Muslim insistence, persistence, commitment and passion for it.

The First objective of the Shariah is the protection of religion, as religion is the essence and spirit of life. The Shariah also aims to protect life. One cannot kill others or harm them in any way. The blood of others is sacred, and one of the most serious sins in Islam is to kill innocent people. The Shariah is also concerned with protecting the mind. Muslims should be sober at all times and should not consume any intoxicants, whether alcohol or drugs. Intoxicants are very harmful to societies and bring much more destruction than benefit - if there is any benefit at all. Property in the Shariah is also something that is highly protected. Naturally, to feel a sense of security is to feel that the fruits of one's labour are protected and not subject to theft or interference. The Shariah is also very keen on keeping lineages clear and accurate. Progeny is protected, and thus pre- and extramarital sexual relations are forbidden and punishable. The Shariah prohibits not only fornication and adultery, but also everything that leads to them. The whole objective of the Shariah is ethical and moral. as the Shariah tries to establish and promote certain values such as justice, rights and obligations, consultation, public interest, success in this world and the hereafter. In secular systems, law and ethics are not necessarily interrelated. However, ethics and the Shariah are directly related; the Shariah laws try to enforce and encourage ethical standards within the society. One cannot fully implement the Shariah without being truly sincere and without regarding it as the true and only way to lead a society instructed by the Creator of all beings.

## Sources of Shariah

There are two main sources of the Shariah, Al-Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In addition to Al-Quran and the Sunnah, there are some secondary sources of the Shariah such as Ijma (consensus), Qiyas (analogical deduction), Ijtihad (personal reasoning), and Maslaha (public interest).

Al-Quran is the principal source of the Shariah which could only be the actual word of God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad through the Angel Gabriel. These revelations are compiled in Al-Quran which, and nobody disputes this, has come down to us word for word as it was conveyed by the Prophet. Al-Quran is the regulation of the whole of a man's life; the word Muslim refers to obedience to the religion of Islam and its affiliated commitments. Al-Quran contains specific exhortations to pray, fast, give charity, go on the Hajj and other similar moral obligations. Moreover, it contains legal rules that concern family law (marriage, divorce and succession), references to criminal law (the Hadd crimes, including adultery, slander and wine drinking) and to commercial matters (the forms of contracts and the prohibition of Riba such as the payment of interest on money deposits) (Edge, 1996, p. XVII). Therefore, it delineates the necessary rules and regulations which are essential for the formation of the community of Islam, for one cannot be realized without the other.

The Sunnah is the second major formal source of the Shariah which means practice tradition or precedent (Edge, 1996, P. XVII). It includes what the Prophet Muhammad (PUH) said, did, and approved of. The Sunnah is mostly recorded in books of Hadith (sayings or traditions). It records the details of how the Prophet and his companions sought to live their lives in accordance to the orders offered by Al-Quran. The Holy Quran states: **To obey him is to obey God** (Al-Quran, 4: 80). Therefore, the authority of the Sunnah is firmly rooted in Al-Quran and in the historically continuous consensus of the Muslim Ummah. The lives of Prophet Muhammad and his companions were seen by later generations as exemplary, being influenced by Muhammad's closeness to God. Their behaviour, therefore, served as a pattern for that of all Muslims. By the middle of the third century the first main source books, those now in use, were

recorded by Bukhari (d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875). Bukhari lists 2,762 traditions and Muslim 4,000 traditions (Murad, 1981, p.102).

The consensus (Ijma) of the Ummah in understanding, interpreting and applying the teachings of Al-Quran and the Sunnah forms the third basic source of the Shariah. This can be the only natural, feasible and wise course to determine the Shariah. Any consensus which has a historical continuity from the days of the four Caliphs and the Companions of the Prophet is accepted as binding. Any other consensus serves as a strong precedent but one which is nonetheless replaceable by another consensus. Ijma (within the limits set by Al-Quran and the Sunnah) provides a mechanism for the Ummah to undertake legislation collectively on issues and problems it may face in an ever-changing world, and even venture into fresh thinking on past interpretations (Murad, 1981,p.55). Ijtihad literally means "endeavour or self-exertion. It refers to the endeavour of a scholar to formulate an Islamic rule on the basis of evidence found in the other sources of the Shariah (Edge, 1996, p.200). Therefore, it is the exercise of reason and judgment to determine the Shariah and it includes different types of endeavour such as opinion (Ra'y), analogy (Qiyas), equity (Istihsan), and public good (Istislah). Ijtihad is a precursor to Ijma and has to be exercised within the framework provided by Al-Quran and the Sunnah.

## Shariah Teachings Relating to Tourism

Some Shariah teachings in Islam have direct implications for the tourism and hospitality industry. The Shariah forbids Muslims to visit places of corruption, where alcohol is consumed, immoral acts take place and sins are committed, such as beaches and parties and immoral places, or travelling to hold celebrations on innovated festivals. The Muslim is enjoined to keep away from sin so he should not commit sin or sit with those who are committing sin. The Holy Quran states: **"Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils).** (Al-Quran, 17: 32). Therefore, no entertainment such as nightclubs and sex TV channels which leads to sin are allowed in tourist places or hotels. The scholars of the Standing Committee said: It is not permissible to go to places of corruption for the sake of tourism because of the danger that this poses to one's religious commitment and morals. Islam came to block the means that lead to evil (Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daaimah, 26/332). If tourism involves making it easy to commit sin and do evil and promotes them, then it is not permissible for the Muslim who believes in Allah and the Last Day to help others to disobey Allah and go against His commands (Rasma, 2008).

Quranic evidence has been presented regarding the use of alcohol. Allah - the All Knowing and Wise- knows what is best for His creation. The Holy Quran states: **"They ask The concerning Wine and Gambling, Say: In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit..."** (Al-Quran, 2: 219) The Arabic word used in this text is Khamr which is applied to all intoxicating liquor or drugs. Al-Quran further states: **"O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination,- of Satan's handwork: eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper. Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer: will ye not then abstain?"** ( Al-Quran,5 :90,91).Therefore, tourism and hotels have to be oriented by the Shariah in terms of forbidding alcohol as well as satisfying Muslim customers who must not consume alcohol at all. Moreover, it is also completely forbidden to sell alcohol as part of business in the tourism and hospitality industry. In response to this verse related to the complete prohibition of alcohol and gambling, it is not permissible for Muslims to gamble and visit places where such practices take place.

In Arabic speaking nations, the word Halal is used to refer to anything which is permitted by the Shariah, as the word in Arabic means lawful or permitted. But the word Haram is used to refer to the opposite meaning of Halal. Most

nations have food labelling laws to protect both Halal and kosher certification, to ensure that food labels are accurate. The important distinguishing feature of Halal meat is that the animal must be slaughtered in the name of Allah. Any Muslim can slaughter an animal for food as long as he or she slaughters the animal by quickly severing the major arteries of the neck, and utters the name of God as the animal is killed. Furthermore, under Shariah law, Muslims are forbidden to eat pork. The Holy Quran states: *He hath only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine and that on which any other name hath been invoked besides that of Allah. But if one is forced by necessity, without willful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits, then is he guiltless. For Allah is Oft-forgiving Most Merciful.* (Al-Quran, 2: 173). Thus, it is not permissible for a Muslim to consume it under any circumstances except in cases of necessity where a person's life depends on eating it, such as in the case of starvation where a person fears that he is going to die, and he cannot find any other kind of food, based on the Shariah principle: **In cases of necessity, Haram things are permitted**". Therefore, the tourism and hospitality industry has to make an effort to meet Shariah rules in terms of Halal food being served and not allowing the serving of any types of food.

The meeting, mixing, and intermingling of men and women in one place, crowding together, and the revealing and exposure of women to men are all prohibited by the Shariah. These acts are prohibited because they are among the causes of Fitnah (temptation or trial which implies evil consequences), the arousing of desires, and the committing of indecent acts and wrong doing. Among the many proofs of the prohibition of the meeting and mixing of men and women in the Holy Quran and Sunnah are: *"...And when ye ask (his ladies) for anything ye want, ask them from before a screen: that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs"* (Al-Quran, 33:53). In explaining this verse, Ibn Kathir said: "Meaning, as I forbade you to enter their rooms, I forbid you to look at them at all. If one wants to take something from a woman, one should do so without looking at her. If one wants to ask a woman for something, the same has to be done from behind a screen. The Prophet Muhammad enforced the segregation of men and women even in Allah's most revered and preferred place, the mosque. This was accomplished via the separation of the women's rows from the men's; men were asked to stay in the mosque after completion of the obligatory prayer so that women would have enough time to leave the mosque; and, a special door was assigned to women. Evidence of this is found in the Prophet's Hadith according to which: **"The best of the men's rows is the first and the worst is the last, and the best of the women's rows is the last and the worst in the first."** (Jibreen, 1996, p.121). Therefore, the tourism and hospitality industry has to meet these requirements by assigning separate male and female rooms in the restaurants, gym, and swimming pool.

Prayer is the greatest virtue in Islam which is considered one of the five pillars. The Holy Quran states: *And be steadfast in prayer; practise regular charity; and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship)* (Al-Quran, 2: 43). The Muslim is ordered to pray five times daily (Early morning, Noon, Mid-afternoon, Sunset, and Evening) in the mosque (a Muslim house of worship). Prayer should be offered at its due time, unless there is a reasonable excuse. Delayed obligatory prayers must be made up. Therefore, the tourism and hospitality industry has to allocate a mosque for Muslims to pray in when the infrastructure is designed for tourism sites or at least assign a prayer room for Muslims. Moreover, according to Al-Quran and Islamic tradition, Muslims around the world must face Mecca (where the sacred mosque is located) during their daily prayers as in this verse *We see the turning of thy face (for guidance to the heavens: now shall we turn thee to a Qibla that shall please thee. Turn then Thy face in the direction of the sacred Mosque: Wherever ye are, turn your faces in that direction. The people of the Book know well that that is the truth from their Lord. Nor is Allah unmindful of what they do* (Al-Quran, 2: 144). Thus, the mosques as the main place of worship for all Muslims have to face the Qibla (the direction of the Ka'bah in Mecca). Therefore, the hotel rooms should include markers indicating the direction of Mecca for Muslims who want to pray in their rooms.

In Islam, it is clearly not allowed for women to travel alone without the presence of a Mahram (a male family member) according to Ibn Abbas Hadith who said **The Prophet (PUH) said: No woman should travel except with a Mahram, and no man should enter upon her unless a Mahram of hers is present.** Moreover, if a woman travels alone, someone may sit near her who does not fear Allah, and he may persuade her to do something Haram. Furthermore, it is not allowed for single women to check into hotels in some Muslim countries according to objective of Shariah. This is act of respect for them and the view that they are precious pearls who must be protected from evil (Alminjad, 2008). In addition, the Shariah imposes a dress code upon women followers as seen in this verse: *And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O ye Believers! turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain Bliss* (Al-Quran, 24: 31). Therefore, women are required to dress in Hijab which covers all of their bodies except their hands and face to prevent society from falling into discord. The Muslim women are protected in Islamic teachings to safeguard their chastity and to emphasize their value and lofty stature. Therefore, the consideration of the rules on women travelling in tourism programmes and airline programmes is very important to cater for Muslim tourists. Thus, the tourism industry should oblige Muslim women staff to wear uniforms thereby applying the Shariah rules related to staff dress to attract the Muslim family as target customers.

## **Shariah Implications of Tourism and Practice: Some Examples in Muslim Countries**

Although the tourism and hospitality industry in Muslim countries aims to attract many non Muslim tourists, currently the increasing numbers of Arab and Muslim travellers and their high purchasing power have motivated the industry to implement some Shariah teachings to meet the needs of Muslim tourists directly. In other words, Muslim travellers have become an important target market especially in the Gulf region. Therefore, Islamic tourism has emerged as a new concept which means tourism based on Shariah and ethical codes. Shakiry (2007) said "Islamic Tourism has been putting the spotlight on the new dimension of tourism, in addition to the traditional one, by adopting the moral principles of tourism, but Jeffery, Chairman of World Travel Market, defined Halal tourism as a type of religious tourism which represents allowable activities under the Shariah in terms of behaviour, dress, conduct and diet (WTM, 2007). Therefore, many tourist organizations have begun to implement Shariah and invest in Islamic tourism considering it as a competitive advantage. Halal tourism is particularly targeting the Gulf families which conserve customs and traditions or the Islamic Shariah teachings.

The United Arab Emirates can be considered the biggest winner in the tourism sector after September 11 for Muslims tourists from the Middle East; it is becoming a preferred destination for short holidays because of its safety, proximity, and common culture (Al-hamarnah & Steiner, 2004). Dubai initiated investment in Halal tourism with Islamic hotels beginning to spread in an attempt to grasp a share of regional investments in the tourism sector. They serve only Halal food, are alcohol free and feature women only floors. Almulla Hospitality, the Dubai-based hospitality group, launched the world's first Shariah-compliant hotel portfolio in October 2007. It comprises three brand tiers -Cliftonwood, Adham and Wings- and operates under universal Shariah rules which are illustrated in Table

1 (AHCC, 2008). Moreover, the Shariah board was formed along the lines of Shariah committees of the Islamic financial institutions to control facilities, work and performance within the Shariah compliant hotels. Almulla, Chairman of Almulla Hospitality, is also planning to set up 150 Shariah compliant hotels around the world by 2013 at the tune of \$2 billion, firstly targetting Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, Egypt and Malaysia, followed by Thailand and Europe (Greaves, 2008). In addition, there are other companies in the UAE which have Shariah-compliant hotels such as the Rezidor Hotel Group, Shaza Hotels from Kempinski Hotel, Tamani Hotels & Suites from the KM Group, as well as Rotana Hotels, which recently launched Rayhaan Hotels & Resorts (Heyer, 2008).

Table 1. Almulla Hospitality Shariah Rules

No alcohol to be served on the premises	Markers indicating direction of Mecca
No entertainment such as nightclubs	Staff to be predominantly Muslim
Halal food served, no pork allowed	Separate wellness facilities such as gyms
Gender segregated prayer rooms	Conservative TV channels
Male staff for single men and female staff for women and families	Plumbing considerations - toilets not to be facing Mecca
In-house religious figures that host seminars and preaching sessions	Art should not depict the human form
Traditional uniforms	Beds not to be placed in the direction of Mecca
Al-Quran, prayer mats, tasbi (rosary) in each room or at the front desk	

Source: (AHCC, 2008)

Malaysia was considered the premier country that has succeeded in marketing itself strongly in recent years as the ideal destination for the Gulf families who are looking for enjoyable tourism in nature parks and a modern society without being contrary to custom and tradition or the Islamic Shariah teachings. Malaysian international hotels provide Halal food slaughtered according to the Shariah and pork-free fat. In addition, they are providing Muslim employees who speak Arabic to help those who are not proficient in other languages. It has become familiar to find Arab television stations providing Arabic news and some religious programmes within a whole range of television channels offered by hotels. Also, markers are placed inside the rooms to indicate the direction of Mecca, with prayer rugs and Prayer Times provided (Shakiry, 2008).

Saudi Arabia is the Muslim country that implements the most severe Shariah rules. Alcohol, nightclubs and intermingling of men and women in one place are definitely not allowed. Moreover, women are forbidden from checking in at hotels or travelling without the presence of a male family member. The Rosewood Corniche Hotel in Jeddah has considered that a good opportunity by adopting a Halal-based business strategy to meet the needs of the Muslim female traveller. Therefore, the Rosewood Hotel offers a floor exclusively for women (Abdullah, 2007). Similarly, in 2007 in Bahrain, alcohol was limited to five-star hotels and forbidden in all restaurants near mosques, schools or residential areas, under a ministerial decision. Moreover, about 85% of non-five-star hotels have been ordered to close nightclubs hosting foreign bands on their premises and to stop selling alcohol if they are in the designated areas (Alferian, 2007). Also in Egypt, the Grand Hyatt Hotel owner, Saudi sheikh Abdel Aziz Ibrahim, ordered his staff to empty every alcohol bottle on the premises into the Nile in May 2008. So the Grand Hyatt Hotel which occupies one of the most expensive sites overlooking the River Nile became alcohol free and the bar drinks were replaced with juice drinks. The Hyatt management said the owner did that because foreign tourists have to

respect Muslim cultural norms and to conform with Islamic law. Moreover, passengers cannot find alcoholic drinks on Egypt Air flights.

## Future Trends and Challenges

The Shariah practices related to the tourism sector which are already implemented may be just a beginning, in a similar way to Islamic banks when they were in their early stages but which now occupy a high market share in the international banking market. Halal tourism as a business opportunity will become one of the most flexible types of tourism (Chitakasem, 2007). It is expected to attract Muslim and non-Muslim tourists, but that will take time such as the idea of Islamic finance when it was promoted for the first time. According to the World Travel Market Global Trend Reports, the forecasted number of inbound tourists to the Middle East will grow by 66%, totalling 55 million visitors by 2011, and the large percentage of these will be intra-regional (WTM, 2007). Therefore, it may be fair to say that the ignorance of Middle Eastern travellers' needs on the part of international tourist organizations will lead to their losing much profit. The Arabian Hotel Investment Conference which held on May 2008 focused on Halal hospitality trends in its session dubbed 'Multi-faceted future of Islamic Hospitality. In this session, Almulla said that the demand for Shariah-compliant hotels represents 10 % of the world tourism market. Hartley, CEO of Shaza Hotels, added that the market for Halal hotels will grow by 20 % each year (AHIC, 2008).

We can highlight the expected trends in Halal tourism as follow:

- The inbound tourist receipts to the Middle East are expected to grow by 108% to almost US\$51 billion and domestic tourism by 82% to reach US\$24 billion in 2011(WTM, 2007).Therefore, the tourism sector growth will encourage tourist organizations to invest in Halal tourism.
- It is expected that many Islamic hotel brands will appear to differentiate themselves for Muslim tourists in the Middle East and this will extend all over Muslim world and internationally.
- The future Islamic finance growth will support tourism investments as well as following the Shariah.
- Halal tourism will develop its own international standards to be Shariah complaint such as alcohol free, gambling free and offering Halal food.
- It is expected that Halal tourism will attract non Muslim tourists who are looking for a cultural experience.
- International hotels will follow the example of Shariah compliant hotels in the UAE to be able to compete in the Muslim tourist segment.
- Halal airlines will appear especially on Hajj and Umrah offering services such as Halal food, calls for prayer, Al-Quran in the seat pocket, religious programmes on the in-flight entertainment system and separate sections for male and female passengers (WTM, 2007).
- Tourism packages will target European Muslims including Hajj or Umrah, Halal airlines and visiting Islamic sites.
- Some rules will appear which have to be followed by non-Muslim tourists such as observing the Shariah dress code at Islamic sites (e.g. old mosque).

Although Halal tourism may reshape the Middle Eastern tourism sector in the coming years, there are some challenges which should be considered by the organizations to ensure success in this sector. Firstly, the world standards will conflict with Shariah requirements. It is known that the international hotels have to provide specific services to become five- star hotels and this may conflict with Islamic teachings such as serving alcoholic drinks. Secondly, secular governments in some counties will try to impose rules to restrict Halal tourism. They will justify this



by saying that the tourism sector may lose a huge number of non-Muslim tourists because the Shariah implementation will limit the services provided. Thirdly, some countries will try to impose some penalties on hotels which forbid alcohol such as in the case of the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Egypt. The Egyptian tourism ministry threatened it by decreasing its class from five stars to three stars. Finally, there are some Muslim tourists who do not practise Islam well and who do not implement the Shariah teachings as they are ordered by God. So Halal tourism may not be able to attract this kind of tourists.

## Conclusion

In response to the need to understand Halal tourism, the paper has described the Shariah (Islamic law), its sources and the Shariah rules that are related to tourism. It is important to understand the Shariah rules and practices to explain the examples in the tourism sector in selected Muslim countries (UAE, Malaysia, Saudi, Bahrain, and Egypt). Some future trends have been presented related to Halal tourism as a business opportunity which will grow in the coming years. It is important for individuals and organizations involved in the tourism and hospitality industries to be more aware of the implications of greater observance of Shariah by Muslims.

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