



THE QUR'ĀNIC MODEL OF HOSPITALITY SERVICES  
AND ITS APPLICATION ON GRAND PUTERI HOTEL  
OF KUALA TERENGGANU

BY

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## ABSTRACT

The modern Islamic hospitality sector is witnessing new enhancements, especially in terms of the range of services and facilities offered. However, since room for improvement remains significant, this study aims to contribute to the sector by highlighting the hospitality characteristics that the Qur'ān inspires to be the Qur'ānic model of hospitality. In order to achieve this objective, the study adopted qualitative research in which data was collected through library research, individual interviews and observation. The most important finding is that the Qur'ānic verses related to hospitality touch not only on the physical elements, but also the psychological principles. In particular, the latter, which should be given more priority, is about utilizing hospitality: to fulfil one's role as a servant and vicegerent of Allah on earth; to seek not only benefits for oneself, but also for the community and nation; and to aim for rewards in the afterlife without neglecting those of this earth. As example for the physical elements, they are vary. The story of Prophets Ibrāhīm and Sulaimān in entertaining their guests illuminates the elements of a welcoming banquet. Meanwhile, the description of the landscape attendants in Paradise inspires the meditators to design a hospitable landscape that pleases the human's intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics, as reflected in any impressive frontline hotel staff. In addition, the Qur'ān also instructs adherents to learn from history; which among the most important lessons from Islamic history is *waqf* based hospitality establishments. The current study goes further by applying the findings of the library research on the operations of a modern Islamic hospitality hotel in order for it to become the benchmark. The Grand Puteri Hotel was chosen for this study because it is the best Islamic-branded hotel currently operating in Malaysia and its unique *waqf*. In its conclusion, the study recommends further developments of the Islamic hospitality sector, which centres on prioritizing seeking guidance from the Qur'ān and referring to Grand Puteri Hotel as its benchmark. As for the stakeholders of the hotel, even though its performance is already revered, there are still elements to be improved.

## خلاصة البحث

يتناول هذا البحث الضيافة من المنظور القرآني وتطبيقها في فندق جراند بوتري؛ إذ تشهد الضيافة الإسلامية الحديثة تحسُّناً ملحوظاً في خدماتها، ولكن مع قصور في تطبيق أنموذج الضيافة من المنظور القرآني؛ لذا يهدف البحث إلى الإسهام في هذا المجال من خلال تطبيق خصائص الضيافة التي أشار إليها القرآن الكريم؛ ليكون الأنموذج القرآني للضيافة هو المتبع، وقد توَّسل الباحث نهجاً نوعياً باستخدام المنهجين الاستقرائي والتحليلي، مع أدوات بحثية أُخرى من المقابلات الفردية، والملاحظة المباشرة، وكان من أهم النتائج التي توصل إليها أن آيات الضيافة لا تمس الأجزاء المادية فقط، وإنما المبادئ النفسية أيضاً، وهذه الأخيرة يلزم إيلاؤها أولوية أكبر، فهي تتعلَّق باستخدام الضيافة لإنجاز مهمة المضيف عبداً لله وخليفة له في الأرض، ولصالح المجتمع والعمران، لا لمجرد السعي في المصلحة الفردية؛ أي ابتغاء الدار الآخرة والنصيب الدنيوي، أما الأجزاء المادية ففيها وفرة، من مثل أسبقية القرآن في خدمة الترحيب بالولائم، ومشاركة أعضاء المؤسسة في الاحتفال بالضيوف، كما أن وصف المشهد في الجنة يلهم المتأملين في تصميم ما تشتهيهِ الأنفس وتلد الأعين من المناظر الطبيعية، وأيضاً خصائص موظفي الفندق المباشرين للضيوف، وإذ يتضمن القرآن الكريم توجيهات للاستفادة من التاريخ، فلا بُدَّ للمسلمين اليوم من استغلال مؤسسات الأوقاف للضيافة، وتوظيفها في أفضل مما كانت عليه سابقاً، وعليه؛ كان اختيار فندق جراند بوتري؛ لأنه في خدماته من أفضل الفنادق الإسلامية في ماليزيا، ويعمل بنظام الوقف؛ لذا يقترح الباحث تطوير قطاع الضيافة الإسلامية من خلال الاهتمام أكثر بالتوجيهات القرآنية، واتخاذ فندق جراند بوتري معياراً لذلك.

## APPROVAL PAGE

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B2B	Business to Business
DSM	Department of Standards Malaysia
F&B	Food and Beverages
FINAS	National Film Development Corporation Malaysia
GDP	Gross domestic product
GTZ	Syria-German Technical Cooperation
JAWHAR	<i>Jabatan Wakaf, Haji dan Umrah</i> (Department of <i>Waqf, Haj</i> and <i>Umrah</i> )
IHIAS	International Halal Intergrity Alliance Standard
IKIM	<i>Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia</i> (Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia)
ITC	Islamic Tourism Centre (Malaysia)
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
JAKIM	<i>Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia</i> (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia)
MAIDAM	<i>Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Terengganu</i> (State Council of Islamic Affairs and Malay Traditions of Terengganu)
MAIN	<i>Majlis Agama Islam Negeri</i> (State Islamic Religious Council/s)
MAMPU	Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit
MFHS	Muslim Friendly Hospitality Services
MS	Malaysia Standard
NPC	National Productivity Centre
PBUH	Peace and bless be upon him
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
<i>r.a</i>	<i>Raḍiyallāh ‘anh/ ‘anhā/ ‘anhumā/ ‘anhum/ ‘anhun</i> (trans. Allah pleases/ consents with him/ her/ them)
SIRIM	Standards and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia
SOP	Standard Operational Procedure
<i>s.w.t.</i>	<i>Subhānah wa Ta‘ālā</i> (trans. Glorified and Exalted Be He)
TRC	Tourism Recovery Committee
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UNWTO	United Nation World Tourism Organisation
USA	United States of America
WTO	World Tourism Organization
YWM	<i>Yayasan Wakaf Malaysia</i> (Malaysia <i>Waqf</i> Foundation)

## TRANSLITERATION

ء	’	خ	Kh	ش	Sh	غ	Gh	ن	N
ب	B	د	D	ص	ṣ	ف	F	هـ	H
ت	T	ذ	Dh	ض	ḍ	ق	Q	و	W
ث	Th	ر	r	ط	ṭ	ك	K	ي	Y
ج	J	ز	z	ظ	ẓ	ل	L		
ح	ḥ	س	s	ع	‘	م	M		

Short Vowels	
َ	a
ِ	i
ُ	u

Long Vowels	
ا + َ	ā
ي + ِ	ī
و + ُ	ū

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Qur'ānic guidance encompasses the whole gamut of human life, including its social, economic, political, cultural, educational, moral, religious and intellectual activities, among others. The Qur'ān serves as *dhikr*, which denotes the description of human life, its nature, needs, problems and solutions. The Qur'ān says:

﴿بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ ۗ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾

[We sent them] with clear proofs and written ordinances. And We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought. [*al-Nahl*: 44]

This particular verse clarifies that the Qur'ān functions as *dhikr*—just as *dhikr* is included as a part of the Qur'ān—for us to ponder upon cognitively. As such, one of the activities that people embark on is travelling. In the past, humankind travelled from one place to another in search of sustenance and enjoyment. In this modern age, this particular interest has taken upon an economic significance that it has become a globally recognized industry known as tourism. With the emergence of tourism, the world has witnessed the development of another economically highly performing sector known as hospitality services, primarily through the hotel industry.

As hospitality is the subject of concern in this study, the Qur'ān provides principles, rules and regulations of hospitality either through instructive (*inshā'iyah*) or descriptive (*ikhbāriyyah*) sentences. For instance, concerning the former, the Qur'ān states:

﴿وَأْتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا ﴿﴾

And give to the kinsman his due and to the poor and to the traveler. But spend not be excessive in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily, spendthrifts are brothers of the Satan, and the Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord. [*al-Isrā'*: 26-27]

As for descriptive sentences, the Qur'ān praises the hospitality of 'Anṣār (the locals of Madinah during the time of Prophet Muhammad [PBUH]), which Muslims are ordained to uphold:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْتُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شَحْحَ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿﴾

And (it is also for) those who, before them, had homes (in al-Madinah) and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrated to them, and have no ulterior motive in their hearts for that which they gave, and prioritize them (emigrants) over themselves, even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful. [*al-Hashr*: 9]

Inspired by the appraisal above, previous Muslim rulers and philanthropists became involved in charitable hospitality by providing accommodation facilities for travellers throughout the state. Most of the services provided were free of charge. In 719, the governor of Samarkand (in Uzbekistan) even gave out the following instruction:

Establish inns in your lands so that whenever a Muslim passes by, you will put him up for a day and a night and take care of his animals; if he is sick, provide him with hospitality for (additional) two days and two nights; and if he has used up all of his provisions and is unable to continue, supply him with whatever he needs to reach his hometown.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O'Gorman, Kevin, *The Origins of Hospitality and Tourism*, (Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers Limited, 2010), p. 143-144, excerpted from *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*.

This instruction was clearly based on the understanding and application of the *ḥadīth*, which states:

«وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمِ ضَيْفَهُ جَائِزَتَهُ» قَالَ: وَمَا جَائِزَتُهُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟  
قَالَ: «يَوْمٌ وَلَيْلَةٌ، وَالضِّيَافَةُ ثَلَاثَةُ أَيَّامٍ، فَمَا كَانَ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ صَدَقَةٌ عَلَيْهِ».

“Who is faithful to Allah and the Last Day, he must treat kindly his guest as his.” A companion said, “What is his, O Messenger of Allah?” Prophet said, “(To be fully treated for) a day and a night. A complete course of hospitality may extend to three days. And the treat beyond that is considered as charity.”<sup>2</sup>

In order to apply such concept of hospitality, the Qur’ān also states the financial sources needed to sustain such hospitality, which are through the collection of *zakāt* (trans. obligatory alms), *waqf* (trans. endowed mortmain property), *ṣadaqah* (trans. unobligated alms) and the like. During the early period of Islam, many infrastructures were built throughout Muslim cities and travel routes as the socio-economic conditions and high moral values, which encouraged Muslims of that era to travel, enabled them to invest in such endeavours.

Looking at the present situation of such services, the prominent concept of hospitality has shifted from charitable to commercial. Indeed, there is nothing wrong with commercializing hospitality services, as some tourists who prefer additional luxury would willingly pay more for such services. However, the concern that this study wants to highlight is the Qur’ānic messages pertinent to the sector.

The specification of Grand Puteri Hotel as the subject of this study is due to its own interest in developing its hospitality services based on Islamic values and

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<sup>2</sup> Al-Bukhārī, Muhammad bin Ismā‘īl al-Ju‘fī, (d. 870), *Al-Jāmi‘ al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar min ‘Umūr Rasūlillāh ṣallallāh ‘alaih wa sallam wa Sunanih wa ‘Ayyāmih*, (*Al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*), vol. 8 (Riyadh: Dār Tūq al-Najāh, revision by Muhammad bin Nāṣir al-Nāṣir), 11; Muslim, ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushairī al-Naisābūrī (d. 875), *al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar bi Naql al-‘Adl ‘an al-‘Adl ilā Rasūlillāh ṣallallāh ‘alaih wa sallam (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim)*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār Ihyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, revision by Muhammad Fu‘ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī, n.d.), p. 1352.

regulations. The hotel was established in 2011 as an incorporated *waqf* entity that is associated with both charitable and commercial systems in its threshold.

The hotel was a joint establishment by *Jabatan Wakaf, Haji dan Umrah* (Federal Department of *Waqf, Haj and Umrah* [JAWHAR]), *Yayasan Wakaf Malaysia* (Malaysia *Waqf* Foundation [YWM]), *Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Terengganu* (State Council of Islamic Affairs and Malay Traditions of Terengganu [MAIDAM]) and Puteri International Group of Hotels. The joint management determines to eliminate all elements of *fasād* (trans. corruption; unlawful). Only Halal-certified food and amenities are offered and used in the hotel. The staff wear *‘aurah*-covered attire. Gender-separated swimming pools are also provided. The supplies are only purchased from Muslim suppliers. A fixed portion of all profits that is generated by the hotel is distributed equally as aid to the deserving locals, according to the *Sharī’ah* law of *maṣārīf al-zakāt* (trans. distribution of obligatory alms).

Indeed, the hotel is incisive to provide all necessities for Muslim travellers to adhere to their religion while staying abroad and, at the same time, not disregard common tourists’ expectations and needs in a hotel. In addition to earning high consumer ratings in online travel agency websites such as Agoda and TripAdvisor, the hotel deserves to be set as a benchmark to escalate contemporary Islamic hospitality to a higher level.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The current efforts of inserting Islamic values in the conventional concept of hospitality deserve appreciation and respect. However, there are still several gaps that have to be fulfilled. This is because previous studies —such as those by Mohd Fadil and Mohd

Zulkifli Muhamma<sup>3</sup> as well as Hesham Ezzat Saad, Badran Nabil Ali and Abdel- Aleem Magdy Abdel-Ati<sup>4</sup>— have paid little attention to Islamic hospitality from the perspective of the Qur’ān as the main source of Islamic knowledge and practice.

While other studies —such as that of Nor Azmin Mohamed Salleh, Wan Mohd Zul Wan Yusuf and Mohd Toha Rulam Ahmad<sup>5</sup>— do mention Qur’ānic verses and prophetic traditions in their book, but limited to support certain *Sharī‘ah* particulars and, thus, are unable to convey the holistic concept of hospitality. In short, they mostly focus on four areas, which are as follows:

1. Unlawful practices such as non-Halal food and beverage consumption, ‘*aurah*-exposing attire, promiscuity, usury-based credit, decoration and the like
2. ‘*Tbādah* facilities such as praying facility, breaking fast (‘*ifṭār*) and pre-dawn meal (*suhūr*) during *Ramaḍān* and the like
3. Ensuring the sustainability of the two above-mentioned by establishing the posts of *Sharī‘ah* executive, division and board
4. Investigating the market demographic of Islamic tourism and hospitality

However, these studies did not look into the Qur’ānic perspective or even the classical models of Muslim accommodation services (hospitality). Thus, this current study comes with the target to cover the gaps and further determine the ideal and final

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<sup>3</sup> Mohd Fadil Mohd Yusof and Mohd Zulkifli Muhammad. *Introducing Sharī‘ah Compliant Hotels as a New Tourism Product: The Case of Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Conference on Entrepreneurship Vision 2020: Innovation, Development Sustainability, and Economic Growth, March 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Hesham Ezzat Saad, Badran Nabil Ali and Abdel- Aleem Magdy Abdel-Ati. *Sharia-Compliant Hotels in Egypt: Concept and Challenges*. (Antalya – Turkey: Akedniz University, Tourism Faculty, Journal of Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Research (AHTR), vol. 2, no.1: 1-15, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Nor Azmin Mohamed Salleh, Wan Mohd Zul Wan Yusuf and Mohd Toha Rulam Ahmad. *Hospitaliti dan Pelancongan dalam Islam*. (Putrajaya: Department of Polytechnic Education, Ministry of Education, Development and Career Training Division Publication, n.d.)

form of Islamic hospitable accommodation, which covers both the psychological and physical aspects.

In comprehending the holistic concept of Islamic hospitality, the historical development of the hospitality sector in the Muslim world since the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is essential. The references of the concerned matter exist but are scattered in various classical and modern books. Despite their essential value, they are yet to be compiled. Learning from other nations that are not Islamic, both in classical and current times, is also important and among the pillars in establishing the Islamic holistic concept of hospitality. However, it is undetermined as to which areas might and should be given additional attention. Thus, critical observation of such records is crucial. Currently, al-Sirjānī's study<sup>6</sup> is the only such research found by the researcher.

Also among the pillars is to abide by government requirements and guidelines. In Malaysia, there are two categories of guidelines. The first applies to all hotel establishments in Malaysia, while the second is for Shariah-compliant ones. However, the question arises as to whether the entire contents are absolute or if they are still open for discussion, elaboration and suggestion. Indeed the answer is the latter and scrutiny from both the Qur'ānic and prophetic perspectives is crucial in order to affirm a genuine Islamic stand on the matter.

Next, benchmarks need to be set and updated from time to time in order to determine the next milestone in the development of Islamic hospitality, though it is subjected to its respective region or country as there are numerous circumstances that need to be appraised. According to Md. Hamzaini, in the Malaysian market, De Palma

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<sup>6</sup> Al-Sirjānī, Rāghib, *al-Fanādiq wa al-Khānāt fī al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmiyyah*. (www.islamstory.com, 16 May 2010). <Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> February 2014)

Hotel, Ampang has unofficially played this role for a substantial period of time.<sup>7</sup> However, due to its current poor market performance, the current study renounces this inference. The internal qualities and market performance of a hotel are paramount in determining those benchmarks. If Grand Puteri were suited to take over the position as a benchmark, it must then be decided what qualities should be offered and what elements need to be improved.

The same goes with any study about the mutual socio-economic and moral benefits and impacts between Islamic hospitality and local community. It is one of the features of Islamic economic system, of which the hospitality sector is not an exception. The guideline of the particular matter is crucial to be observed.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following serve as the research questions of this study:

1. What is the historical developmental of Islamic and modern hospitality and what can be learned from them?
2. What are the principles of hospitality mentioned in the Qur'ān, and to what extent is the Grand Puteri Hotel consistent with those principles?
3. What are the hospitality services envisioned in the Qur'ān as well as required by the authority, and to what extent does the Grand Puteri Hotel comply with both of them?
4. What are the managerial responsibilities of hospitality establishments according to the Qur'ānic perspective as well as the authority, and to what extent does the Grand Puteri Hotel comply with them?

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<sup>7</sup> Md Hamzaini Azrol bin Md Baharudin. *Sharī'h Compliant Dalam Industri Perhotelan di Malaysia: Kajian Hotel De Palma Ampang, Selangor*. (Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, u.p. B.A. Project Thesis, 2012)

#### **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The following serve as the research objectives of this study:

1. To analyze the historical development of Islamic hospitality
2. To sort out the principles of hospitality mentioned in the Qur'ān, and to determine the consistency of Grand Puteri Hotel's compliance with them
3. To study thoroughly the hospitality services envisioned in the Qur'ān as well as the requirements from the authority, and compare both findings to the practice of Grand Puteri Hotel
4. To analyze the management and personnel responsibilities in Islamic hotels as well as the consistency of Grand Puteri Hotel in upholding them. This is in addition to observing the future of the Islamic hospitality industry

#### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

In Malaysia, tourism is the second largest sector that contributes to the Malaysian inland revenues and offers millions of employment opportunities. The industry has flourished more strikingly with the increase of Muslim tourists from Gulf countries as they are considered as high-spending tourists and, thus, are of high concern by the stakeholders. With that in mind, Muslim stakeholders have been attempting to seize the opportunity to promote the concept of Islamic hospitality, which aims to enable Muslim tourists to adhere to their religion while they are abroad or on a vacation.

By analyzing the historical development of civil and Islamic hospitality, Muslim hoteliers would be able to deepen their understanding towards the nature of hospitality itself, as learning from history is a characteristic of excellent individuals and communities, and the tourism and hospitality sector is not an exception. The flow of changes in hospitality could be observed and, thus, a better plan could be outlined.