

## HALAL TOURISM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE QURAN: AN EXPLORATION OF THE MEANING OF *RIHLAH* ACCORDING TO ASH-SHA'RĀWĪ AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR MUSLIM TRAVEL ETHICS

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### Abstract

*The growing trend of Muslim travel to various global destinations necessitates the concept of halal tourism, which prioritises not only the fulfilment of Islamic law but also Islamic ethical and spiritual values. However, the implementation of halal tourism has tended to be reductive, focusing primarily on halal food and prayer facilities, without exploring more substantive Quranic dimensions. This study aims to explore the meaning of rihlah in the Quran based on Ash-Sha'rāwī's interpretation and examine its implications for contemporary Muslim travel ethics. Using a qualitative method with a thematic approach and analysis of Ash-Sha'rāwī's thematic interpretations, data were collected from tafsir books, supporting literature, and secondary sources on halal tourism. The results show that rihlah, from the Ash-Sha'rāwī perspective, is not merely a physical activity of moving from one place to another, but a spiritual and epistemological process of knowing God through His signs in nature. Rihlah also has social, economic, and educational functions, emphasising morality, responsibility, and self-reflection. In the context of halal tourism, these values form the basis for establishing a responsible, environmentally conscious, and respectful Muslim travel ethic.*

**Keywords:** Halal Tourism, Rihlah, Ash-Sha'rāwī, Travel Ethics, Thematic Interpretation

### Abstrak

*Tren meningkatnya perjalanan umat Muslim ke berbagai destinasi global menuntut konsep pariwisata halal, yang memprioritaskan tidak hanya pemenuhan hukum Islam tetapi juga nilai-nilai etika dan spiritual Islam. Namun, implementasi pariwisata halal cenderung bersifat reduktif, terutama berfokus pada makanan halal dan fasilitas ibadah, tanpa mengeksplorasi dimensi Al-Quran yang lebih substansial. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi makna rihlah dalam Al-Quran berdasarkan interpretasi Ash-Sha'rāwī dan meneliti implikasinya terhadap etika perjalanan Muslim kontemporer. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan tematik dan analisis interpretasi tematik Ash-Sha'rāwī, data dikumpulkan dari buku-buku tafsir, literatur pendukung, dan sumber sekunder tentang pariwisata halal. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa rihlah, dari perspektif Ash-Sha'rāwī, bukan hanya aktivitas fisik berpindah dari satu tempat ke tempat lain, tetapi juga proses spiritual dan epistemologis untuk mengenal Tuhan melalui tanda-tanda-Nya di alam. Rihlah juga memiliki fungsi sosial, ekonomi, dan pendidikan, yang menekankan moralitas, tanggung jawab, dan refleksi diri. Dalam konteks pariwisata halal, nilai-nilai ini menjadi dasar untuk membangun etika perjalanan Muslim yang bertanggung jawab, sadar lingkungan, dan penuh hormat.*

**Kata kunci:** Pariwisata Halal, Rihlah, Ash-Sha'rāwī, Etika Perjalanan, Interpretasi Tematik



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## INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of travel in today's global context has undergone a significant transformation in meaning. Human mobility is driven not only by economic and political needs, but also by spiritual, educational, and lifestyle motives.<sup>1</sup> One form of travel that is gaining increasing attention is halal tourism, namely travel undertaken with comprehensive consideration of Islamic values, from consumption and accommodation to ethical behaviour.<sup>2</sup> The growing awareness of Muslims to implement Islamic law in every aspect of life, including travel, has given rise to various international initiatives, such as the provision of halal hotels, halal-certified food, and tourist destinations that are friendly to religious practices.<sup>3</sup> This trend not only reflects practical needs but also manifests a religious identity that seeks to be maintained despite geographical and cultural differences.

The growing interest in halal tourism also reflects a shift in the Muslim paradigm regarding travel. While previously travel, or travel, was primarily understood in economic, pilgrimage, or migration contexts, there is now a broader understanding of travel as a contemplative, educational, and even spiritual tool.<sup>4</sup> In this context, understanding the meaning of travel as embodied in the Quran is crucial. The Quran contains numerous verses calling on humans to explore the earth, reflect on God's creation, and learn from the footsteps of previous generations. These calls are not merely invitations to migrate, but rather contain philosophical meanings that lead to the development of spiritual, intellectual, and social awareness.<sup>5</sup>

Data from the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) shows that in recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of Muslim travellers globally, with estimates reaching over 160 million by 2023. This growth is not only due to economic factors and global mobility, but also to increasing religious awareness among the younger generation of Muslims. However, amid this increase, there are not many studies that highlight the ethical and spiritual dimensions of this travel activity based on Islamic normative sources, particularly the Quran. Most studies emphasise aspects of destination management, halal tourism marketing, and halal product

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<sup>1</sup> Luca Pappalardo et al., "Future Directions in Human Mobility Science," *Nature Computational Science* 3, no. 7 (2023): 588–600, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43588-023-00469-4>.

<sup>2</sup> Nawarti Bustamam and Susie Suryani, "Potensi Pengembangan Pariwisata Halal Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Pembangunan Ekonomi Daerah Provinsi Riau," *Jurnal Ekonomi KIAT* 32, no. 2 (2022): 146–62, [https://doi.org/10.25299/kiat.2021.vol32\(2\).8839](https://doi.org/10.25299/kiat.2021.vol32(2).8839).

<sup>3</sup> Mukidi, "Prosedur Pemberian Sertifikat Label Halal Terhadap Produk Makanan Di Restoran Hotel Syariah Untuk Mewujudkan Hak Kenyamanan Konsumen Muslim," *Jurnal Hukum Kaidah* 19, no. 3 (2020): 397–415, <https://doi.org/10.30743/JHK.V19I3.2674>.

<sup>4</sup> Jauhar Najib et al., "Traveling Dalam Al-Qur'an: Studi Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Rihlah Dan Safar Dalam Tafsir Al-Azhar," *Journal of Islamic Scriptures in Non-Arabic Societies* 1, no. 3 (2024): 191–207, <https://doi.org/10.51214/jisnas.v1i3.1032>.

<sup>5</sup> Jaenudin Jaenudin, "Pendidikan Pariwisata Dalam Al-Qur'an: Telaah Ayat-Ayat Yang Berkaitan Dengan Pariwisata," *Andragogi: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 1 (2021): 73–93, <https://doi.org/10.36671/andragogi.v4i01.154>.

regulations, but have not yet touched deeply on the normative and epistemological basis of how a Muslim should interpret travel within the framework of faith values.

Several previous studies relevant to the topic of halal tourism from a Quranic perspective have been conducted with varying focuses. Hamim's study discusses the concept of travel in Islam, highlighting verses about travel, but has not explored a thematic approach or thematic interpretation of the meaning of *rihlah*.<sup>6</sup> Rachman and Sangare's study explores the development of the halal tourism industry in Indonesia from a fiqh perspective, but does not directly link it to the moral-spiritual messages of the Quran.<sup>7</sup> Farida's analysis of sharia tourism emphasises the regulation and standardisation of halal services, but tends to minimise exploration of the Quranic spiritual values that shape a traveller's ethical awareness.<sup>8</sup> The gap between these previous studies lies in the lack of emphasis on exploring the meaning of *rihlah* within a contemporary interpretive framework and its normative relevance to Muslim travel ethics. Therefore, this study presents novelty through a thematic study of the verses of *rihlah* based on the *Tafsir Ash-Sha'rawi* and its relevance in forming the principles of halal tourism that are ethical, spiritual, and Qur'anic.

The problem studied in this research is formulated in the following question: What is the meaning of *rihlah* in the Qur'an according to Ash-Sha'rawi, and what are its implications for the development of travel ethics in the context of halal tourism? Departing from the formulated problem, this research aims to identify and examine in depth the meaning of *rihlah* in the Qur'an through the *Tafsir Ash-Sha'rawi* approach and formulate the principles of travel ethics based on Qur'anic values that can strengthen the philosophical foundation of halal tourism. The initial argument underlying the importance of this research is that the current practice of halal tourism tends to be legal-formal and emphasises more on service aspects, thus potentially ignoring the esoteric, contemplative, and ethical dimensions that have been deeply taught in the Qur'an. Therefore, this research is expected to provide theoretical contributions in the form of expanding the meaning of halal tourism based on Qur'anic spirituality as well as practical contributions in formulating Muslim travel ethics that are oriented towards transcendental awareness, social responsibility, and respect for God's creation in every form of travel.

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<sup>6</sup> Khairul Hamim, "Travel in Islam (A Study of the Concept of *Sirū* in the Qur'an)," *Ulumuna* 27, no. 2 (December 11, 2023): 529–51, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v27i2.785>.

<sup>7</sup> Abdul Rachman and Bilaly Sangare, "Impact of Implementation of Halal Tourism in West Nusa Tenggara Province: Maqashid Al-Sharia Perspective," *Justicia Islamica* 20, no. 1 (June 20, 2023): 17–36, <https://doi.org/10.21154/justicia.v20i1.5173>.

<sup>8</sup> Adrian Adi Hamzana, "Pelaksanaan Standarisasi Pelayanan Pariwisata Halal Dalam Pengembangan Pariwisata Di Nusa Tenggara Barat," *Pena Justisia* 17, no. 2 (2017): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.31941/PJ.V17I2.545>.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a library research approach to explore the meaning of *riḥlah* in the Qur'an according to the interpretation of ash-Sha‘rāwī and its implications for travel ethics within the framework of halal tourism. The primary data sources in this study are the verses of the Qur'an containing the concept of *riḥlah*, accompanied by the *Tafsīr Ash-Sha‘rāwī* as the main reference, as well as relevant secondary literature such as classical and contemporary *tafsīr* books, books on halal tourism, and related scientific articles. The data collection technique was carried out through documentation of Islamic *tafsir* manuscripts and references that discuss *riḥlah* and travel ethics. The data obtained were analysed using content analysis techniques that aim to identify thematic meanings, contextualise the meaning of *riḥlah* in travel discourse, and explore the integration of Islamic spiritual and ethical values in halal tourism practices. This approach allows researchers to draw in-depth conclusions regarding the contribution of ash-Sha‘rāwī's interpretation to the formation of Muslim travel ethics based on Qur'anic principles.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Concept of Halal Tourism in Contemporary Literature

Halal tourism is a concept that has developed in response to the needs of Muslims in conducting tourism activities without neglecting Sharia principles. According to Battour and Ismail, halal tourism is defined as a type of travel activity undertaken by Muslim tourists that complies with Islamic teachings in all aspects of services, facilities, and tourism activities.<sup>9</sup> This definition emphasises that halal tourism is not only about avoiding prohibited activities, but also about presenting Islamic spiritual and ethical values in the travel experience. Meanwhile, according to Mohsin, Ramli, and Alkhulayfi, halal tourism includes efforts to provide tourism services that not only meet general tourism standards but also align with Sharia principles, such as the availability of halal food, prayer facilities, and non-discriminatory policies towards Muslim tourists.<sup>10</sup>

The characteristics of halal tourism encompass various elements that affirm halal-certified tourism products and services. Zailani et al. explain that the main characteristics of halal tourism include the provision of halal-certified food and beverages, Muslim-friendly accommodation facilities such as Qibla directions, prayer equipment, and separate facilities for men and women in recreation areas or spas. Halal tourism services also avoid the provision of alcohol, gambling, and

<sup>9</sup> Mohamed Battour and Mohd. Nazari Ismail, *Halal Tourism* (London: Routledge, 2018), 99.

<sup>10</sup> Asad Mohsin, Noriah Ramli, and Bader Abdulaziz Alkhulayfi, "Halal Tourism: Emerging Opportunities," *Tourism Management Perspectives* 19 (2016): 137–43, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2015.12.010>.

entertainment that conflict with Islamic values.<sup>11</sup> This aligns with Henderson's view that halal tourism is not merely physical but also reflects religious values and identity maintained through Islamic behaviour, interactions, and social environments.<sup>12</sup>

The spiritual dimension of halal tourism is the main foundation that distinguishes it from conventional forms of tourism. Spirituality in this context refers to the religious experiences gained during travel that strengthen the relationship between the individual and God. Duman suggests that halal tourism provides a space for Muslim tourists not only to rest physically but also to engage in spiritual reflection through worship, remembrance, and contemplation in places of religious significance. Visits to historical Islamic sites, pilgrimages to the tombs of scholars, or educational tours to Islamic museums are concrete forms of spiritual integration in halal tourism.<sup>13</sup>

The social dimension of halal tourism involves interactions that reflect the values of togetherness, tolerance, and politeness between individuals during tourism activities. According to Zamani-Farahani and Henderson, halal tourism encourages the formation of communities that respect cultural and religious diversity, as Muslim tourists frequently interact with local communities and fellow tourists, embracing Islamic ethics. The practice of politeness, dressing according to Islamic law, and avoiding behaviour that contradicts Islamic social norms are forms of social expression demonstrated by halal tourists. This social dimension reinforces the concept of Islamic brotherhood and creates a friendly, harmonious tourism environment conducive to the formation of meaningful collective experiences. Service by tour guides who understand Islamic culture and the provision of family tour packages also strengthen social solidarity in halal tourism.<sup>14</sup>

The sharia dimension serves as a normative principle that frames all halal tourism activities to ensure they remain within the boundaries of Islamic law. According to Akyol and Kilinc, the sharia dimension encompasses adherence to Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh muamalah*) in managing tourism services, including aspects of usury-free financial transactions, non-exploitation-based business management, and social responsibility towards the environment. Halal certification for products, services, and destinations is part of this dimension because it

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<sup>11</sup> Suhaiza Zailani, Azizah Omar, and Simon Kopong, "An Exploratory Study on the Factors Influencing the Non-Compliance to Halal among Hoteliers in Malaysia," *International Business Management* 5, no. 1 (2011): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.3923/ibm.2011.1.12>.

<sup>12</sup> Joan C Henderson, "Halal Food, Certification and Halal Tourism: Insights from Malaysia and Singapore," *Tourism Management Perspectives* 19 (2016): 160–64, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2015.12.006>.

<sup>13</sup> Teoman Duman, "The Value of Islamic Tourism: Perspectives from the Turkish Experience," *ICR Journal* 3, no. 4 (July 15, 2012): 718–39, <https://doi.org/10.52282/icr.v3i4.513>.

<sup>14</sup> Hamira Zamani-Farahani and Joan C. Henderson, "Islamic Tourism and Managing Tourism Development in Islamic Societies: The Cases of Iran and Saudi Arabia," *International Journal of Tourism Research* 12, no. 1 (2010): 79–89, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.741>.

functions as a monitoring mechanism to ensure service providers remain consistent with sharia principles. Furthermore, the Sharia aspect also requires the involvement of Islamic scholars or Sharia councils in formulating halal tourism standards and overseeing tourism business practices that claim to be part of the halal industry.<sup>15</sup> This dimension leads to a tourism system that is not solely profit-oriented but also reflects justice, sustainability, and moral integrity.

The integration of spiritual, social, and Sharia dimensions demonstrates that halal tourism is a holistic concept that harmoniously combines religious values with modern travel practices. From a contemporary Islamic tourism perspective, halal tourism serves as a means of developing a complete Muslim character, as during the trip, tourists not only enjoy natural and cultural beauty but also strengthen their religious identity, build social solidarity, and deepen their understanding of Islamic values.<sup>16</sup> This awareness is crucial in addressing the challenges of globalisation, which often lead to the secularisation of conventional tourism practices. Therefore, the concept of halal tourism is not only relevant for Muslim tourists but also contributes to the formation of a more inclusive, civilised, and sustainable global tourism ethic.

The transformation of the concept of halal tourism in contemporary literature marks the advancement of Islamic thought in responding to global dynamics, including in the tourism sector. The emphasis on spiritual, social, and Sharia dimensions makes halal tourism an alternative discourse that emphasises morality and responsibility in travel. The implications of this approach include not only the creation of a new tourism market for industry players but also leading to the development of a more meaningful and valuable tourism civilisation. Going forward, the development of halal tourism requires synergy between academics, practitioners, and regulators to continuously formulate standards, increase public literacy, and build collective awareness that tourism is not only about relaxation, but also a journey toward spiritual and social maturity.

### **The Meaning of *Rihlah* in the Quran**

*Rihlah*, as a concept of travel in the Quran, not only reflects the physical activity of moving from one place to another, but also contains deep spiritual, social, and intellectual meanings. Lexically, the word “*rihlah*” comes from the root word ر-ح-ل, which in Arabic refers to the act of travelling, especially in the context of trade or a specific, systematic purpose.<sup>17</sup> In the Quran, the word “*rihlah*” is explicitly mentioned in Surah Quraysh verses 1-2. This verse

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<sup>15</sup> M. Akyol and O. Kilinc, “Internet and Halal Tourism Marketing,” *Turkish Studies* 9 (2014): 171–86, <https://doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.7278>.

<sup>16</sup> Novi Febriyanti, “The Review of Islamic Law on the Distribution of Zakat Directly by Muzaki to Mustahik in the Sunan Ampel Religious Tourism Area in Surabaya,” vol. 11, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Abū Ḥusain Aḥmad bin Farīs bin Zakariyā, *Mu'jam Maqāyis Al-Lugah* (Beirūt: Dār al-Fikr, 1979), 417.

illustrates that the activity of *rihlah* is not merely a trade mobility, but also part of the social system and a gift from God that supports the survival of a community through order, stability, and security during travel.<sup>18</sup>

The meaning of *rihlah* in the Quran is not limited to this explicit terminology. Synonyms for *rihlah*, such as *safar* (journey), *sayr* (journey in the sense of walking on the earth), and *darb fī al-Ard* (travelling on the earth), appear in various contexts that suggest the dimension of travel as a means of learning, introspection, and strengthening faith. The term “*sīrū fī al-Ardī*” (travel on the earth) is mentioned in many verses, such as QS. Al-An‘ām: 11, QS. Ar-Rūm: 42, and QS. Al-Hajj: 46, which directs humans to reflect on the destruction of previous nations and learn lessons from history and civilisation.<sup>19</sup> This term reflects an epistemic and spiritual journey aimed at strengthening faith through observing the sunnatullah in human life and natural phenomena.

The symbolic and spiritual meaning of *rihlah* has been further deepened by commentators in their interpretations of these verses. Al-Asfahānī stated that *rihlah* does not only mean physical journey, but also the process of moving a person from one state to a better one, both morally and in faith.<sup>20</sup> This interpretation allows for the interpretation that *rihlah* is closely correlated with the process of *tazkiyah al-Nafs* (purification of the soul) and the elevation of spiritual status through travel experiences. Al-Qurtubī, in his commentary, interpreted Surah Quraysh as a reminder of the importance of gratitude for the blessing of stability during the journey, which is essentially a means for humans to draw closer to God through worldly activities accompanied by divine awareness.<sup>21</sup>

The Sufi approach also emphasises that *rihlah* in the Qur’anic sense has the connotation of a journey towards God. Imam al-Qushayrī in *Risālah al-Qushayriyyah* explains that the outward journey will culminate in a spiritual journey to the presence of God. The concept of *safar ilā Allah* becomes a spiritual paradigm in Sufism, where a person begins his spiritual journey by abandoning despicable traits (*safar ‘an al-Nafs*) and moving towards noble traits and knowledge of God.<sup>22</sup> This view is in line with the story of the Prophet Moses and Khidr in Surah Al-Kahf:

<sup>18</sup> Faruk Tuncer, “The Terms Trade (Tijarah) and Road (Rihlah) in Qur’anic Context: With Special References to the Trade of Prophet Muhammad in Sirah,” *Religions* 14, no. 8 (2023): 1055, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14081055>.

<sup>19</sup> Muhammad Fuād ‘Abd Al-Bāqī, *Al-Mu‘jam Al-Mufahras Li Alfāz Al-Qur’ān Al-Karīm* (Kairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1945), 170.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Rāghib Al-Asfahānī, *Mu‘jam Mufradāt Alfāz Alquran*, vol. 7 (Damsik: Dār al-Qalam, 2009), 337.

<sup>21</sup> Abū ‘Abdillāh Muhammad bin Aḥmad al-Anṣārī Al-Qurtubī, *Al-Jāmi’ Li Aḥkām Al-Qur’ān*, ed. Aḥmad Al-Birdūnī and Ibrāhīm Atṭīsī, vol. 12 (Kairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1964), 429.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Abd al-Karīm bin ‘Abd al-Mulk Al-Qusyayrī, *Al-Risālah Al-Qusayriyyah*, ed. A. Hanafī, vol. 8 (Kairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1998), 77.

60-82, which describes the journey as a medium for learning wisdom, patience, and divine wisdom that cannot be immediately accessed through logic alone.<sup>23</sup>

The spiritual dimension of *rihlah* is also evident in the stories of the Prophets, whose journeys were not only to convey messages, but also as a process of self-development, strengthening of faith, and a test of patience. Prophet Ibrahim's journey from Babylon to Syria and then to Mecca, which not only contains elements of geographical migration but also symbolises total submission to God's commands.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina was not simply a change of location, but also the beginning of Islamic civilisation built on the values of justice, solidarity, and monotheism.<sup>25</sup> QS. At-Taubah: 20-21 emphasises that those who migrate and strive in the path of Allah are of a higher rank in His sight, demonstrating that a journey based on pure intentions has high spiritual value.

*Rihlah* also has a significant educational function. Surah Al-Mulk: 15 directs humans to explore the earth in search of God's bounty and to contemplate the signs of His power. In this context, *rihlah* becomes a means of acquiring knowledge through empirical observation of nature and society. Al-Tabarī's commentary on this verse emphasises that God created the earth for humans to explore it, not only to fulfil material needs, but also to strengthen faith and foster a sense of dependence on God.<sup>26</sup> Al-Rāzī added that observing the wonders of creation is evidence of God's oneness and wisdom, so every step of the journey should be accompanied by dhikr and contemplation.<sup>27</sup>

Reflections on the meaning of *rihlah* in the Quran emphasise that travel is not merely physical mobility, but reflects spiritual transformation, an awareness of divine gifts, and a means to deepen understanding of the essence of life. This understanding is reinforced by a hermeneutic approach and thematic interpretation, which emphasise that all journeys in the Quran consistently contain an invitation to meditation, gratitude, and progress toward spiritual maturity. *Rihlah*, therefore, has not only geographical implications but also existential and transcendental ones.

<sup>23</sup> Ahmad bin 'Alī bin Hajar Al-'Asqalānī, *Fatḥ Al-Bārī*, vol. 1 (Mesir: al-Maktabah al-Salafiyyah, 1970), 257.

<sup>24</sup> 'Abdul Hakam Aṣ-Ṣā'īdī, *Al-Rihlah Fī Al-Islām* (Riyad: Maktabah Dār al-'Arabiyyah, 1996), 57.

<sup>25</sup> Syamsuddīn Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin 'Uṣmān Al-Żahabī, *Siyar A'lām Al-Nubalā'*, vol. 1 (Kairo: Dār al-Ḥadīṣ, 1985), 117.

<sup>26</sup> Abū Ja'far Muḥammad bin Jarīr Al-Tabarī, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'Wīl Ai Al-Qur'ān*, vol. 8 (Kairo: Dār al-Ḥijr, 2001), 433.

<sup>27</sup> Abū 'Abdillah Muḥammad bin 'Amr bin al-Ḥasan bin al-Ḥusain al-Tamīmī Al-Rāzī, *Mafātiḥ Al-Gaib*, vol. 4 (Beirūt: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turās al-Ārābī, 2001), 341.

### Analysis of the Meaning of *Rihlah* according to Ash-Sha'rawi

According to ash-Sha'rawi, travel is not merely an activity of geographical movement, but rather an existential process containing spiritual, intellectual, and ethical content. Ash-Sha'rawi views travel in the Qur'an as always containing an implicit command to meditate, engage in self-introspection, and direct humans to deep reflection on the signs of God's power spread throughout the universe. According to him, travel is a form of worship in the form of movement, because through it humans can transform limited views into broader insights.<sup>28</sup> In this sense, travel becomes a medium for contemplation on the essence of life, especially when one directly observes the dynamics of humanity, cultural diversity, and differences in geographical conditions that demonstrate God's greatness in creating diversity as part of a cosmic balance system.

Ash-Sha'rawi emphasised that every journey must be accompanied by spiritual awareness so that it does not stop at mere external experiences. He quoted and interpreted verses such as “*Afalam yasīrū fī al-Ardi fa takūna lahum qulūbun ya'qilūna bihā*” as a call to use *rihlah* as a means of strengthening faith and sharpening the mind. In his commentary, Ash-Sha'rawi explained that the heart and mind have the function of understanding the meaning behind the empirical phenomena encountered during the journey. Therefore, travel not only provides visual or geographical experiences, but also enriches the inner dimension of humans. When someone performs *rihlah* with the awareness of tawhid, then he will realise that everything he sees is not a coincidence, but part of the order determined by God, and at this point, *rihlah* becomes a medium for total gratitude for the blessings of life.<sup>29</sup>

Ash-Sha'rawi also explained that the *rihlah* in Surah Quraisy refers not only to the safety of trade travel, but also symbolises social order, a great blessing from God. Safety during travel, he argued, is an essential element for humans to live a peaceful life, and this sense of peace allows for contemplation and the strengthening of faith. When humans realise that travel is undertaken within the context of the blessings bestowed by God, a sense of gratitude emerges that is existential, not merely verbal. This gratitude is not merely expressed, but rather concrete actions in maintaining travel ethics, respecting other creatures, and making the experience of *rihlah* a foundation for spiritual self-improvement.<sup>30</sup>

Ash-Sha'rawi's view of the spiritual dimension of *rihlah* is evident in his interpretation of verses about the journeys of the Prophets. He emphasised that the journeys of Abraham, Moses, and Muhammad not only served the purpose of missionary work but also contained a dimension

<sup>28</sup> Muḥammad Mutawallī Asy-Sya'rawī, *Tafsīr Asy-Sya'rawī*, vol. 13 (Madinah: Akhbār al-Yaum, 1997), 7819.

<sup>29</sup> Asy-Sya'rawī, *Tafsīr Asy-Sya'rawī*, 12: 7131.

<sup>30</sup> Asy-Sya'rawī, 16: 10086.

of developing a strong inner personality. The journey itself, he argued, is a test of the steadfastness of one's faith, as one faces challenges and temptations not encountered in a static state. Travel becomes a vehicle for cultivating trust in God, strengthening patience, and experiencing God's presence more deeply, as the isolation and dynamics of travel bring humans closer to the Creator. Therefore, in Ash-Sha‘rāwī's view, every *rihlah* must begin with a pure intention, be carried out with noble morals, and conclude with a spiritual evaluation of what has been experienced.<sup>31</sup>

The epistemological dimension of *rihlah* also received significant attention from ash-Sha‘rāwī. He believed that by travelling, humans would witness firsthand the greatness of God in creating the earth, seas, mountains, sky, and living creatures in extraordinary variety. The empirical experience gained from travelling broadens the horizons of thought, strengthens belief in the *Kauniyah* verses, and confirms the Qur'anic verses. In this regard, ash-Sha‘rāwī emphasised the importance of the connection between reason and faith, because observation of the universe without faith will only produce empty admiration, while faith without observation will tend to stagnate. *Rihlah* conducted with an integrative approach between reason and faith will produce a complete understanding of God's greatness and strengthen tawhid rationally and emotionally.<sup>32</sup>

Ash-Sha‘rāwī also emphasised the importance of broadening one's horizons through *rihlah* as a form of self-development. He criticised closed and stagnant mindsets that focus solely on one's environment without looking at the outside world. He argued that humans cannot be just, tolerant, and wise if they do not open themselves to experiences across cultures, regions, and histories. Through *rihlah*, humans will better understand that universal values such as justice, kindness, and compassion are inherent in all societies.<sup>33</sup> This view aligns with the principle that Islam is not a local or exclusive religion, but rather one that encourages openness, dialogue, and boundless learning. *Rihlah*, within this framework, not only broadens knowledge but also broadens human horizons and refines social sensitivity.

According to Ash-Sha‘rāwī, the strengthening of faith generated through *rihlah* is closely related to the awareness that this world is transitory and full of signs of Divine power. He emphasised that every place visited, every sight seen, and every experience must be read as a spiritual text that directs humans to God. *Rihlah*, accompanied by *tadabbur*, will guide humans toward solid faith, because through direct interaction with reality, humans realise that this life is

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<sup>31</sup> Asy-Sya‘rāwī, 10: 6947.

<sup>32</sup> Asy-Sya‘rāwī, *Tafsīr Asy-Sya‘rāwī*, 14: 9278.

<sup>33</sup> Asy-Sya‘rāwī, *Tafsīr Asy-Sya‘rāwī*, 14: 9310.

part of a grand design full of wisdom. This awareness will give rise to humility, submission, and a spirit to continuously improve oneself and contribute positively to others.<sup>34</sup>

Ash-Sha‘rāwī’s overall perspective on travel demonstrates that travel is an effective means of creating a deeper connection between humans and their God, between humans and their fellow humans, and between humans and the universe. Travel is not merely a temporary activity, but a continuous process that enriches the meaning of life, fosters spiritual awareness, and broadens the horizons of thought and feeling. Travel is an integral part of the spiritual education process, as it brings humans closer to reality, refines the conscience, and purifies the heart through existential dialogue with the universe. Therefore, according to Ash-Sha‘rāwī, travel is a form of worship that can lead humans to the depths of faith and the breadth of wisdom.

### Implications of the Concept of *Rihlah* for Muslim Travel Ethics

The concept of *rihlah*, from the perspective of Ash-Sha‘rāwī, provides a strong foundation for establishing a Muslim travel ethic that is not only oriented towards the physical aspects but also encompasses the spiritual, social, and moral dimensions as a whole. Ash-Sha‘rāwī emphasised that every journey must begin with the right intention, as intention is the foundation for determining blessings and the orientation of all activities. Ethical travel planning requires awareness of the destination, time, place, and potential benefits to be gained. Travel undertaken solely for entertainment without a spiritual orientation, he argued, will lose the noble values that should be obtained through the *rihlah* process. Therefore, a Muslim’s travel planning must take into account prayer times, access to halal facilities, and consider the impact on physical and spiritual conditions. This ethic is highly relevant in the concept of halal tourism, which emphasises the integration of physical pleasure and inner peace through travel that is by Islamic values.<sup>35</sup>

According to Ash-Sha‘rāwī, travelling is a spiritual test that demands personal integrity. When someone breaks out of their routine and enters a new environment, temptations, challenges, and unusual situations will arise. In this context, the principle of *murāqabah*, or awareness of God’s supervision, must always be present. Ash-Sha‘rāwī emphasised that travelling is not an excuse to relax commitment to worship and morals, but rather a crucial moment to demonstrate the consistency of Islamic values in changing situations. This aligns with the principles of halal tourism, which require a Muslim to maintain prayer, cover their intimate parts, choose halal food,

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<sup>34</sup> Asy-Sya‘rāwī, *Tafsīr Asy-Sya‘rāwī*, 14: 9316.

<sup>35</sup> Muhammad Ashraf Fauzi and Mohamed Battour, “Halal and Islamic Tourism: Science Mapping of Present and Future Trends,” *Tourism Review* 80, no. 5 (2024): 1156–1170, <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-08-2023-0533>.

and maintain interactions with the opposite sex within the boundaries of sharia.<sup>36</sup> This consistency reflects moral integrity, not only impacting the traveller but also serving as an example for the surrounding community.

Ash-Sha'rawi emphasised the moral and social responsibility of travel as part of the spiritual implications of *rihlah*. He viewed every journey as an opportunity to understand diversity and broaden social sensitivity. Therefore, a Muslim should not be arrogant, exclusive, or feel superior when travelling elsewhere. This ethic is crucial in the context of halal tourism, which prioritises polite interactions and respect for local cultures. A Muslim should be an ambassador of Islamic values, conveying a message of peace, justice, and hospitality, rather than projecting superiority or belittling diverse communities.<sup>37</sup> In his commentary, ash-Sha'rawi stated that experiencing the outside world is a process of learning about the signs of God's greatness while recognising humanity as a complementary creation, not one to be compared in a discriminatory manner.<sup>38</sup> Thus, halal tourism is not merely about seeking new experiences but also about strengthening human brotherhood and increasing empathy for others.

The ecological dimension of travel also receives attention within the framework of ash-Sha'rawi's thought. He emphasised that the entire universe is a trust and a sign of God that must be preserved. Travel that ignores environmental sustainability violates the meaning of *rihlah* as a means of drawing closer to God. The ideal concept of halal tourism encompasses ecological responsibilities such as reducing waste, respecting flora and fauna, and avoiding damage to historical sites and the natural environment. Small acts such as not littering, using environmentally friendly transportation, and respecting the tranquillity of nature are truly part of worship if carried out to preserve God's creation.<sup>39</sup> Ash-Sha'rawi stated that damage to the earth occurs due to human hands that disregard the values of tawhid in their actions, including when travelling.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, preserving the ecosystem during travel is a concrete manifestation of social and ecological piety that aligns with the values of halal tourism.

Etiquette during travel is a crucial aspect of ash-Sha'rawi's concept of *rihlah*. He explained that travel tests the quality of one's interactions, patience, and self-control. A Muslim is

<sup>36</sup> Bakhrul Huda, "Konsep Wisata Halal Dan Hak-Hak Wisatawan Dalam Perspektif Fikih (The Concept of Halal Tourism and the Tourist Rights in an Islamic Jurisprudence ...," *El-Qist: Juounal of Islamic Economics and Business (JIEB)* 12, no. 1 (2022): 57–76, <http://jurnalfebi.uinsby.ac.id/index.php/elqist/article/download/818/372>.

<sup>37</sup> Indah murni Mahardini, "Wisata Religi Menurut Al-Qur'an: Kajian Penafsiran Quraish Shihab," *Journal of Islamic Scriptures in Non-Arabic Societies* 8, no. 3 (2022), [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378446072\\_Wisata\\_Religi\\_Menurut\\_al-Qur'an\\_Kajian\\_Penafsiran\\_Quraish\\_Shihab](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378446072_Wisata_Religi_Menurut_al-Qur'an_Kajian_Penafsiran_Quraish_Shihab).

<sup>38</sup> Asy-Sya'rawi, *Tafsīr Asy-Sya'rawi*, 13: 7819.

<sup>39</sup> Tetty Yuliaty, "Model Wisata Halal Sustainable Di Indonesia" (Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, 2020), 47.

<sup>40</sup> Asy-Sya'rawi, *Tafsīr Asy-Sya'rawi*, 2: 493.

required to guard his tongue, be honest, help fellow travellers, and be polite to residents. This etiquette reflects the character of the Prophet Muhammad, who highly valued hospitality and openness, even in unfamiliar surroundings.<sup>41</sup> In the context of halal tourism, this etiquette is a key pillar to ensure that travel is not only physically enjoyable but also spiritually enriching. Polite interactions, clean and halal consumption, and attention to prayer times demonstrate that a Muslim's travel is always grounded in the values of worship. Ash-Sha‘rāwī reminded that every activity based on good intentions and noble morals will be considered a pious deed, including in the context of travel and tourism.

Ash-Sha‘rāwī's thinking on *rihlah* provides a powerful conceptual foundation for the development of an ethically and spiritually oriented halal tourism paradigm. He taught that travel should be interpreted as a process of self-improvement, not escape; as worship, not mere recreation; and as a means of expanding the horizons of faith, not merely knowledge. This implication is crucial for fostering awareness that a Muslim is never truly "free" in the sense of relinquishing values, even in travel or vacation situations. Halal tourism based on Ash-Sha‘rāwī's thinking is not only about what is legally permissible, but also about what is permissible in terms of intention, behaviour, and impact. Therefore, *rihlah* within this framework becomes an integral medium for the formation of a Muslim personality that is not only individually pious but also socially and ecologically responsible in every step.

## CONCLUSION

According to Ash-Sha‘rāwī, the meaning of *rihlah* emphasises that travel is not merely physical mobility, but rather a means of contemplation, strengthening faith, and developing insight through an understanding of God's creation. These findings demonstrate that *rihlah* plays a crucial role in shaping spiritual awareness, moral responsibility, and social and ecological ethics. In the context of halal tourism, Ash-Sha‘rāwī's perspective emphasises that halal tourism is not merely a sharia label, but a concrete practice of Islamic ethical and spiritual values in global mobility. Halal tourism must reflect adherence to worship, politeness in interactions, environmental stewardship, and righteous intentions in every journey. Based on this, it is recommended that the development of halal tourism not only focus on facilities and certification, but also integrate Qur'anic values into travel design, traveller education, and tourism policies that promote personal piety and universal sustainability.

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<sup>41</sup> Asy-Sya'rāwī, *Tafsīr Asy-Sya'rāwī*, 5: 2479.

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