The Movement of Uthman bin Foduye: An Examination of Malacca Sultanate in Spreading Islam

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The Movement of Uthman bin Foduye: An Examination of Malacca Sultanate in Spreading Islam

ABSTRACT

This research examines the movement of Uthman bin Foduye in changing the pre-colonial Nigerian society in order to figure out its relevance in the contributions made by Malacca Sultanate in spreading Islam in the Malay World. This is historical-comparative research. The findings reveal that Uthman bin Foduye’s movement changed the Nigerian society in two stages namely evolutionary and revolutionary. His movement in the evolutionary stage is through teaching, preaching, and writing. However, Uthman bin Foduye and his movement have resorted to revolutionary due to the plot made by the rulers of Hausaland (presently, Northern Nigeria) to assassinate them. Further, the findings exposed that despite the fact that Malacca Sultanate had long established before the time of Uthman bin Foduye, his movement in changing the Nigerian society is relevant to what Malacca Sultanate did in spreading Islam in the Malay World, because the Sultanate wherever conquered, made Islam as the official religion of the region.

Keywords: Malacca Sultanate, Nigerian Society, Uthman bin Foduye.
INTRODUCTION

History is the most integral part of any civilization in the world. As Sulaiman observed that “history is a single chain of events, just as mankind is a chain of individuals and the world itself a chain of happenings”\(^1\), as Allah says “The creation you all and the resurrection of you all are only as (the creation and resurrection of) a single person.”\(^2\) It should, however, be noted that since prior to the creation of human beings, Allah promised to send a man as His vicegerent on earth as He clearly mentioned in the Qur’an “…Verily, I am going to place (mankind) generations after generations on earth.”\(^3\) This implies that the structures of human beings on earth under the leadership of someone among them would be in form of groups after groups, society after society, and state after state, in which one succeeds another until the end of this world. Meanwhile, it may be said that the idea of societal transformation was first and foremost gets its root from this Qur’anic verse. In other words, Bugaje argues that to understand the idea of reformation in Islam, it is so vital to note that “Islamic religion is founded on the belief that guidance would be sent to human beings through the Messengers of Allah. Therefore, on the basis of this promise the final Prophet who was sent as a reformer to his society in particular and Islam, in general, was Muhammad (PBUH). This made society reform is compulsory since without guidance the society would continue to be declined.”\(^4\)

However, in the Glorious Qur’an, Almighty Allah stated clearly that “… And so are the days (good and not good), We give to men by turns…”\(^5\) Historically, Muslims

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\(^5\) Qur’an, *Surah Al-Imran*, 3:140.
have witnessed a number of powerful Islamic governments that have been risen and fallen and been replaced by one after another. As Asyiqin asserted that “the event was started with the period of the Prophet (PBUH) and later the period of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, continued with the Umayyad and Abbasid Empires. Later, they were substituted by small Muslim governments in places including the Safavid Empires in Iran, the Mughal Empire in India and the Ottoman Empire in Turkey. However, when the Ottoman Empire fell in the nineteenth century, Muslims began to be weakened and lost their courage to rise again as a great nation. She added that Muslim territories were divided and split into different countries and ruled by the colonies.”

It might be added that according to the history of Islamic societies various reform movements had been emerged to find solutions to the religious, social, political, moral and economic problems of their times. Therefore, it could be said that their origin goes back to the reform movement which undertook by the Prophet in the pre-Arabian societies of Islam.

In view of the above, it appeared that various reformist movements had emerged in different parts of the African continent. Although it is argued that most of the origins of these movements were associated with religion, while others with political subjugation, anyway. It has been said that almost three hundred years before the emergence of Uthman bin Foduye’s movement in 19th century West-Africa, it becomes evident that in North-East Africa, the Ethiopian people had witnessed the revolution led by the leader of Harar in the sixteenth-century. It might be said that his revolution helped the cultural development of the land. Subsequently, with this revolutionary Jihad, Imam bin Ibrahim al-Ghazi invaded Ethiopia between 1526 and 1543 and was

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called “The Conqueror” by the Muslims and ‘Gran’ by the Europeans, and the
migratory movements of the Somali tribes which formed the core of his armies began,
and was followed by those of the Gallas during the last year of the reign of Lebna
Dengel. The Portuguese, who were Roman Catholics, allied with the Christian
Ethiopians pro-independence reaction which made them almost anti-Muslim in their
character.⁹

Looking the above, prior to the colonial invasion of African continent, it is
clearly understood that various Islamic governments have been risen and fallen, despite
that the most powerful and successful that lived almost to one century is the one
established by Uthman bin Foduye in 19th century West Africa (Bilad al-Sudan), the
Sokoto Caliphate, in present day Northern-Nigeria. Additionally, the organization and
transformation of Nigerian society at that time was originally resulted because of the
political decline of Islam in the near east, following the Russian attacks on the Ottoman
Empire as indicated earlier.¹⁰ With this sequence of Islamic movements, it might be
argued that throughout the history of Islam, reform movements would not be
considered as a new phenomenon, but rather as a perpetual activity that has been started
since in the earlier century of Islam.

Considering the above facts, Chafe in his remarks, declared that Uthman bin
Foduye has tremendously achieved in transforming what is today known as Nigerian on
a scale unprecedented in its history. He also stated that the revolutionary movement of
Uthman bin Foduye had contributed in the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate, “a
political community that was the largest and perhaps the most socio-politically
sophisticated, in the history of pre-colonial Nigeria. He further illustrated that historians
generally agree that the 19th century was very significant to the emergence of modern
Nigeria. He, however, argues that the 19th century was characterised by the socio-

⁹ Ibid.
¹⁰ Ibid., P. 172.
political transformation of the various communities out of which modern Nigeria emerged in the early 20th century.”

Moreover, it should be noted that writing on Uthman bin Foduye and his movement have been continuously discussing by different scholars and academics. Although, the major problem is how and why his movement emerged and changed the Nigerian society is perhaps in the narrow sense. Therefore, this study is, however, unique. It studied the movement in changing the pre-colonial Nigerian society in the light of contribution made by Malacca Sultanate in spreading Islam in the Malay World, in order to see its relevance in Uthman bin Foduye’s movement.

The above discussion clearly explicates that it was probably the vast knowledge of the triumvirate influenced them remarkably in transforming their society to an Islamic government. It is also understood that for any acts of reformation or revolution, knowledge is the most important thing; otherwise one cannot understand the core of Islamic teachings governing his activities in this world. It also shows that Uthman bin Foduye’s relatives played a pivotal role in the successful achievements of his goals. It is noteworthy that no civilisation, whether in it is religious, social, cultural or political nature without mutual co-operation of the people. In this regard, Uthman bin Foduye’s methods of teaching and preaching toward winning the minds of the people of Hausaland is a key area in this research.

Conversely, it has been stated that with the emergence of Malacca Sultanate, the spread of Islam in the Malay World increased rapidly. Hence, it is of paramount importance to note that the term Malay World signifies nations dominated by majority Malay-Muslims such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and the minority Malay-Muslim population of Cambodia, Thailand, Singapore and Philippines brought several

changes,\textsuperscript{12} in certain respects, “the appearance of Islam in the Malay World came through Pasai, in the twelve century by Arab traders originated from Saudi Arabia. It is reported that Pasai was the first state to accept Islam as part of state identity. even though Pasai was the first state to adopt Islamic acceptance in the region, it was Malacca at that time delivered the motivation on Islamic leadership, skills, and administration”\textsuperscript{13}. This implies that one may be in a position to endorse that in spite of the various states in the Malay World, Malacca Sultanate energetically boosts the development of Islamic civilization in the region.

The Movement of Uthman bin Foduye in Changing Nigerian Society

Due to the decline of the government of Hausa states, and the various attempts that had been made and failed by some scholars to reform Nigerian society according to the dictate of Sharia, notably among those scholars is Jibril Umar of Aghadez, although it is revealed that he failed to reform Nigerian society due to the lack of systematic approaches. However, in a mystical narration, it is reported that the reason why Uthman teacher in the early 18th century failed to achieve societal change is due to the fact that Allah had told him that this job was kept for Uthman bin Foduye.\textsuperscript{14} Hence, Uthman employed systematic approaches step by step which finally helped him to succeed in organizing and changing the Nigerian society into Islamic government in present-day Northern Nigeria. It is discovered that initially, Uthman bin Foduye remained silent in the society while studying its major problems. This in agreement with a statement made by Dr. Umar Faruk Malumfashi in his interview:

\begin{quote}


\end{quote}
Uthman bin Foduye, having acquired a vast knowledge of Islamic sciences, and received a paramount orientation from his teachers; he, however, decided to use his knowledge for the development of his society. Hence, he (Uthman) thinks that he was supplied with all the facilities to bring about a lasting change in his society. In so doing, Uthman has thoroughly studied his society and identified its problems, which include religious, social, and political aspects. Therefore, following his acquaintance with all the religious, social and political problems of his society, systematically, he finally adopted a step-by-step approaches to bringing about a new Islamic society. This is based on teaching, preaching and writing.\(^{15}\)

This was in line with the idea of qualitative research that if one needs to know people, he must study them according to their natural setting (i.e. their culture, behavior, and ideas).\(^{16}\) In this study, based on the researchers’ inquiries, the findings have revealed that Uthman bin Foduye’s movement in changing Nigerian society was initially organized while he was teaching, preaching and writing, whereupon he manifested his mission. Therefore, in order to do justice and to understand his movement, it is necessary to divide it into two stages: initially Evolutionary and finally a Revolutionary movement for changing the Nigerian society.

**Evolutionary Movement of Change**

By using evolutionary, according to the dictionary, it means a process of continuous change from a lower, simpler, or worse to a higher, more complex, or better state that is growth. While on the other hand, it means a process of gradual and relatively peaceful social, political and economic progress.\(^{17}\) In line with these definitions, it implies a gradual process and steps that Uthman bin Foduye organized his movement in changing the pre-colonial Nigerian society without fighting. Basically, at the initial stage, the process that he (Uthman) used towards winning the minds of his people was religiously

\(^{15}\) Dr. Umar Faruk Malumfashi (Senior lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies, Bayero University, Kano, +2347030311330, Nigeria, personal communication held at his resident in Kano metropolitan on 16 September 2015).


and socially in a peaceful manner. This is because of neither by force nor through any fighting. It was rather a systematically organized approach, which in one way or the other has convinced the people of Hausaland to accept him as a teacher and at the same time a leader. However, the findings have further discovered that Uthman bin Foduye was successfully organized his movement with the interplay of his intellectual and ethical factors.

**Ethical Factor**

It could be said that most of the researchers have ignored this factor as the first to contribute Uthman’s acceptance in the eyes of people of Hausaland. It is believed that for a person to be a leader, he must excel in good characters, in deeds and utterances. This is because it will sympathetically guide him to win the minds of people to incline and support him towards achieving his goals. Thus, one of the most important things that helped Uthman bin Foduye to get the co-operation and support of his people was his mystical experience and various miracles that had been displayed at his appearance. Similarly, Uthman bin Foduye was a follower of Maliki school of thought and a *Qadiri* Sufi order by affiliation. Despite that, Uthman bin Foduye relies upon the Qur’an, the Sunnah and *ijma*’ (a consensus of Muslim scholars) to substantiate his all point of view. Uthman bin Foduye is a strictly orthodox theologian and jurist. The other aspect of his personality is most clearly shown in his *Wird*. In this work, he relates how divine favour was conferred upon him, whereupon he acquired gnostic (maarifa) and attained a mystical state (hal). The significant feature of this process was that he was drawn to the presence of the Prophet Muhammad and the other Prophets and saints, and was girded with the sword of truth to be drawn against the enemies of God… Although, it was the
Sufi aspect of his character that greatly contributed to his popularity and the respect in which he held.\textsuperscript{18}

\textbf{Intellectual Factor}

The finding here discovered that Uthman bin Foduye’s knowledge of various Islamic sciences and his knowledge about the behaviour, religion, and culture of the people of Hausaland have influenced him remarkably in his gradual societal change. It was in this way he played a vital role in teaching, preaching and writing for the transformation of traditional society into an Islamic society. For example, Tahir stated that Uthman’s writing was meant to reform his society.\textsuperscript{19} He posited that his preaching lasted for twenty years from 1774-1793, thus, however, took the method of tours in the course of which he delivered sermons, taught and wrote textbooks, treatises, and poems. The sermon and poems were in the people’s languages. Mostly in Fulfulde, the Uthman’s mother tongue. He had to resort to tour and to composing poems in the languages of the people he was trying to preach who were, in fact, Muslims but whose Islam is questionable.\textsuperscript{20} It was, in this case, Uthman considered as a resident and mobile teacher whose aims and that of his movement were sole to change traditional and polytheism to monotheism. In other words, it is revealed that Uthman knowledge was entirely meant to change not only Nigerian society but the entire Africa, and his mission was only to see people are practicing pure religion without mixing with traditional activities. In supporting this statement, Dr. Nura in his interview declared that:

Uthman bin Foduye’s contribution could not be translated for political subjugation; rather it will be considered a movement for changing the traditional system of Hausaland to an Islamic system. Nevertheless, Nura further asserted that Uthman did not show interest to become a leader, but

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
his own target is to see people of Hausaland are practicing what Allah and His Messenger have commanded.\textsuperscript{21}

In a similar way, Islahi illustrated that Uthman bin Foduye’s writings on economic problems in Hausaland, served as a protest to the imposition of heavy taxation on the masses by the rulers of Hausaland; also it is an opposition to any economic evils in the land.\textsuperscript{22} Meanwhile, it is discovered that he started manifesting his mission at the early years of 20 in his village called Degel. Wherein, he is teaching, preaching and at the same time writing to mobilize his people and to teach them the pure religion of Islam. Surprisingly enough, he adopted a systematic method of teaching and preaching. That is through doing at his home as a resident teacher and by going to other places in the company of his disciples, as an itinerant scholar.\textsuperscript{23} Within a limited time, they have rounded all the important areas in Hausaland. Besides teaching at home in a collective session, it has been discovered that others came with their book for their personal learning. This accord a statement made by Prof. Umaru Dahiru in his interview:

\begin{quote}
Stated that Uthman bin Foduye’s methods of teachings and preaching were contained in what his brother, Abdullah mentioned in his \textit{Tazyin al-Waraqat}, \textit{Ida al-Nusukh} and what his son, Muhammad Bello mentioned in his \textit{Infaq al-Maisur}. In spite of these, at certain times, some of his students came with their books for personal learning.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

It is figured out that what Uthman started teaching his people was the fundamental principles of Islam……..it was through teaching his students, he declared in his famous book, \textit{Ihya al-Sunnah wa Ikhmad al-Bid’a} that everyone must take his faith from the Glorious Qur’an, since in it, Almighty Allah explained the fundamental

\textsuperscript{21} Nura Sani, Lecturer One, Department of Islamic Studies, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria (Oral communication held on 15 September 2015, +2347034528864), Email Address: nuradiso329@gmail.com.

\textsuperscript{22} Abdul Azim Islahi. “Shehu Usman Dan Fodio and his Economic Ideas” (Munich Personal Repec Archive: Jeddah, Islamic Economics Institute, King AbduAziz University). P.1


\textsuperscript{24} Professor Umaru Dahiru. (Senior Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. Telephone Interview on 14 February, 2016).
principles of Islam. He supported his argument with the Qur’anic verse.\textsuperscript{25} Also, in his mission to change the Nigerian society, it revealed that he gave much emphasis to the women’s education and he warned those who neglecting their family without instructing them on what is obligatory on them.\textsuperscript{26}

It is however discovered that Uthman bin Foduye mission was not only confined to the common people but rather extended to the nobles’ people. A time came when he visited the most powerful ruler of Hausaland, Bawa Jangwarzo and explained him his mission on behalf of Islam. Also, the ruler was one time invited Uthman and other scholars of Hausaland and presented them with gifts, all they were accepted except Uthman, instead he requested for five things, which the ruler was eventually and confidently agreed. Among which, to allow him to continue inviting people to the pure religion of Islam and to release the prisoners... Analytically, Uthman meeting with Bawa won the heart of many people from near and far distance places to come and join his movement to change the entire Hausa society. Interestingly, however, he (Uthman) returned to his homeland and was able to call (people) to religion on that account, in the sense that people who did not have the fear of Allah were afraid of rejecting Uthman’s instruction. This is because of his connection with the Sultan Bawa...\textsuperscript{27} in this regard, Uthman was able to accomplish changing the Nigerian society to an Islamic society and his movement became so strong and powerful.

\textbf{Revolutionary Movement of Change}

The findings of this study shown that the movement of Uthman bin Foduye from evolutionary stage turned to revolutionary. It is noteworthy that it was through this stage

\textsuperscript{25} Qur’an, Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 177.
\textsuperscript{26} Uthman bin Foduye, IhyÉ’ al-Sunnah Wa IkhmÉd al-BidÑah (Reviving the Sunnah and Suppressing the Innovation) Vol 1, translated by Abdul-Hafeez Isma’il Ojoyo & et als, (edt) by A. B. Yahya (Gada-Biyu, Gusau, Nigeria: Iqra’ Publishing House, 2013).
Uthman and his movement overthrown the government of Hausaland. Therefore, by using revolutionary in this paper, is meant the change that has resulted in overthrowing something. Thus, according to the English Encarta Dictionary is the “overthrow of a ruler or political system.” Actually, according to the contemporary Western sociologists, “Revolutionary Movements are participants who extremely discontented with the existing social order and promote change in accordance with their belief. Such movements can bring about sweeping social changes, as happened, for example, in countries such as Russia, China, Cuba, and Iran.”

In view of the above, it is so vital to note that Uthman bin Foduy did not revolt against the rulers of Hausaland until when they tried to assassinate him. Basically, various commentators and analysts on the movement of Uthman bin Foudye argue that Uthman and his Jama’a never intended to launch Jihad against the rulers of Hausaland. To understand this statement, it is significantly important to note that Islam was revived in the pre-colonial Nigerian society, when Uthman bin Foduye and his follower, launched a holy war to cast out inherited paganism and to reinstate, spread and amalgamate Islam. It must be clearly understood that the nature of the disputes between the Hausa kings and Uthman bin Foduye at the beginning of the nineteenth century was similar to the character of those between Songhai and Morocco at the end of the sixteenth century. Songhai and Hausa kings were protecting traditional African standards of government. On the other hand, Morocco and the jihad movement controlled by Uthman bin Foduye were promoting the Islamic religion. Evidently enough, the Sokoto leaders (Uthman and his movement) never intended to create an empire, ruled by force. Rather, they wanted to create a caliphate, a federation of states

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held together by common aims and religious allegiance to the *Amir al-Mu’minin* (Leader of the Faithful). By all indication, it is discovered that Uthman’s second stage of his movement in changing the Nigerian society was finally through sensitive and confrontation. But the movement initially was in a peaceful manner. Although this revolutionary stage was clearly warranted for self-defence and for the progress of Allah’s religion all over the Hausaland.

**Military Factor**

It is therefore discovered that besides Uthman bin Foduye’s success in gradual transforming his society into a model Islamic society, many issues continued to exist which finally led to the military fighting between Uthman’s army and that of Hausa rulers. Confidently, Uthman bin Foduye was then satisfied to launch *Jihad* against the un-Islamic government of the Hausaland. Hence, he believed, it was enough to do so, since he educated his companions, and they were understood what is all about the difference between Islamic government and un-Islamic one. Thus, he (Uthman) however, produced various literature to enlighten his people on the necessity of overthrowing the un-Islamic government. It was in this situation Uthman bin Foduye expressed the need for an Islamic government to take over, as he categorically outlines in his *Wathiqat ahl al-Sudan*. Nevertheless, Prof. Yakubu Yahaya Ibrahim in his interview asserted that:

> Up to the end of the *Jihad*, Uthman bin Foduye did not ever participate, he was only used to instruct his armies to do what is accordingly, and he used to communicate with them from a far distance place. This was by means of *Karamat*, once he says something they heard him loudly.

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34 Yakubu Yahaya Ibrahim (Senior Lecturer), Department of Islamic Studies, Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria). Personal communication held on 16 September 2015.
As the *Jihad* continued, subsequently, Uthman and some of his followers emigrated from Degel to Gudu, on 10th Dhul-Qada 1218/21st February 1804, on his famous *Hijrah*, being a forerunner to his *Jihad*. Some of the followers remained behind, however, for fear of losing their wealth. With the *Hijrah*, the community decided to make a concerted effort against the Sultan of Gobir and his supporters. Therefore, they elected 'Uthman as their *Amir al-Muminin* (leader of the Believers), pledging allegiance to him in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Thereupon, he gave to each of the fourteen trusted companions a flag, blessed them and sent them out to fight in the name of Allah. The whole of the Hausaland was consequently plunged into *Jihad*, and by 1225 CE/1810 AH 'Uthman and his lieutenants had gained control of practically all the Kingdom of Hausa. This marked the establishment of Islamic government that later known as the Sokoto Caliphate in present-day Northern part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

**Historical Overview of the Sokoto Caliphate**

It is understood that Yunfa, the ruler of Gobir tried to assassinate Uthman bin Foduye, but failed. This attempt led Uthman bin Foduye declaring Jihad in 1804, with the huge support from Fulani herdsmen and Hausa townsmen of his community. Subsequently, the *Jihad* was successful, and the Hausa States of Gobir was finally declined in 1808. Thus, all the Hausaland was under the control of Uthman bin Foduye. Undoubtedly, this is what grounded the establishment of Islamic State that later known as the Sokoto Caliphate, in present-day northern-Nigeria.

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35 Abdullahi bin Foduye, *TazyÈn al-WaraqÈt…*, P. 108.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
The Sokoto Caliphate: Its Location and Territories

The new government that arises during Uthman bin Foduye's revolutionary *jihad* recognized as the Sokoto Caliphate, termed after his capital at Sokoto, founded in 1810. Uthman bin Foduye’s *Jihad* was a religious war that revolts against the existing socio-political system of Hausaland. It is noteworthy that, with the *Hijra* of Uthman bin Foduye and his *Jama’a* to Gudu, they fought many battles, some of which they won and lost some. Consequently, with the seizure of Alkalawa, a solid ground for the establishment of a caliphate with all its structures and headquarters was laid down. The Caliphate polished stronger with vast lands covering most of the Northern states of the present-day Federal Republic of Nigeria and extending its borders to some parts of the present-day Republic of Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Mali. Even the powerful kingdom of Borno lost some part of its territories to the Caliphate.

Historical Background of Malacca Sultanate

Parameswara (1344-1414) founded Malacca Sultanate. However, various historical chronicles reported that the Sultanate originally called Melaka because of what impressed its founder while he was resting under a tree of Melaka. Hence, “the sultanate stretched from southern Thailand in the north to Sumatra in the southwest”. Therefore, “the year 2011 marks the 500th anniversary of the fall of the Sultanate of Malacca under the reign of Sultan Muhammad Shah”. It is reported that, prior to the fall, the entire

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38 It was in present-day Northern-Nigeria. Sokoto is the capital of the State with the name, Sokoto State. It is located in the extreme Northwest of Nigeria near the meeting point of the Sokoto River and the Rima River. Sokoto is also the home of the Sokoto Caliphate with the Sultan who heads the Caliphate being the widely recognized leader of Nigerian Muslims. The name Sokoto is derived from the Arabic name *Sakkwato*, it represents "Suk" or "market". Sokoto does go by many names, which include *Sakkwato* and *Birnin Shehu da Bello* which means "Capital of Shehu and Bello". Retrieved from: [http://www.nigeria.to/cities/Sokoto/Sokoto.php](http://www.nigeria.to/cities/Sokoto/Sokoto.php). Accessed on 25 May, 2015.


40 See Sambo Wali Junaidu, p. 1


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Malay Archipelago region place under various empires such as Srivijaya, Majabapahit, and the Malacca Sultanate. Surprisingly, it is approximately estimated 200 years from the time that Islam began to spread rapidly throughout the region to the time of the fall of Malacca Sultanate that is from the 13th century to 1511. Presently, it may assume that there were some famous local indigenous Islamic forms of architecture in Tanah Malaya (Malaya). However, finding reveals that none of the earlier structures of this era remained. What is known is the fact that the oldest remaining Masjid in Malacca is the Masjid Kampong Hulu, first built in 1700’s. Probably, this was one of the biggest and most impressive structures that portrayed the picture of Islamic architecture.\(^{43}\)

**The Contribution of Malacca Sultanate in Spreading Islam in the Malay World**

The history of Malacca Sultanate contains many important things that contemporary society needs to be reviewed in order to appreciate its role in the expansion of Islam in Malaysia in particular and the Malay World in general. One of the most important things that led to the spread of Islam in the Malay World is the acceptance of Islam by the first King of Malacca, Prameswara. It is reported that “in (1414 C E), Prameswara embraced Islam. Hence, Islam became the official religion in the Malacca Sultanate and embraced by many indigenous people. This event was the most influential factor in the development of Islamic religion and civilization in the South East Asia. It is however stated that Islam reached its glorious period during the reign of Sultan Mansur Shah (1457-1457 C E).”\(^{44}\) Therefore, the development of Malacca Sultanate is always connected with the development of Islam. Meanwhile, most of the conquered territories of Malacca made Islam as the official religion of the Sultanate. In addition, the spread of Islam gets monumental progress because of a marriage contract among families.\(^{45}\)

\(^{43}\) Ibid.


\(^{45}\) Ibid.
Moreover, it is significantly important to note that most of other states in the Malay World developed due to the existence of Islam in Malacca. For example, it has been described, “the spread of Islam in Java was germane to the existence of Islamic in Malacca. Most of the troops who came from Java embrace Islam as their religion. After going back to Java, they supported the process of the spread of Islam. Hence, from Malacca, Islam continued spreading to Java\textsuperscript{46}, West Kalimantan\textsuperscript{47}, Brunei, Sulu\textsuperscript{48}, and Mindanao (South Philippines).”\textsuperscript{49}

**The Sokoto Caliphate and the Malacca Sultanate: Points of Convergence**

Having seen that the movement of Uthman bin Foduye in its revolutionary stage resulted in the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate based on the Qur’an and Sunnah as its constitution. Despite the fact that the Sokoto Caliphate established in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century while the Malacca Sultanate established in 14\textsuperscript{th} century, many points of similarity can be drawn between them. For example, in changing the society from paganism to monotheism:

1- The movement of Uthman bin Foduye in its evolutionary stage of changing Nigerian society, which was entirely based on teaching and preaching, played a significant role in changing traditional religion of the people of Hausaland (Northern Nigeria) to pure Islamic religion, because, people in Hausaland before and during the time of Uthman bin Foduye mixed Islam with traditional customs. On the other hand, the Malacca Sultanate played a vital role in changing the religion of the indigenous of Malay World to Islamic religion. More especially when the first King, Prameswara accepted Islam. Since prior to the coming of Islam into the Malay World, most of the people followed the religion of Hindu-Buddhist, but when Islam came, they were not only accepted it but they also changed the systems of their lives.

\textsuperscript{46} Presently Indonesia  
\textsuperscript{47} Presently in Indonesia  
\textsuperscript{48} Presently in Philippines.  
\textsuperscript{49} Malacca Sultanate., Ibid.
2- On the spread of Islam to other territories, both Sultanates played a substantial role. For example, the movement of Uthman bin Foduye in its revolutionary stage defeated the kingdom of Hausa Hausaland to the extent that Uthman gave the flag to each of his fourteenth trusted men sent and blessed them to fight in the name of Allah till when Allah’s religion prevail in Hausaland. Immediately, Uthman bin Foduye and his movement won the battle and had practically gained control of the whole Hausaland. From there, Islam became the official religion of Nigerian society. This might be the reason why most of the present Northern-Nigerian states are practicing Shari’a legal systems in line with the Maliki codified laws. The Sultanate of Malacca, on the other hand, played a pivotal role in spreading Islam in the entire region of the Malay World. As has been stated that wherever conquered, Islam became the official religion of the region. It might be assumed that even the Islamic nature and the presence of majority Malays-Muslims, in particular, Malaysia and the Malay World, in general, was the direct impact of the Malacca Sultanate. In order to support this statement, it is asserted, “the Sultanate’s Islamic legacy to Malaysia was long-lasting, and its espousal and promotion of Islam marks the start of the political entrenchment in Malaysian political life. Moreover, as a mechanism for increasing its allies and support, the Sultanate encouraged the rapid and peaceful conversion of its subjects and other Malays royal families to Islam.”

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion depicts that Uthman bin Foduye’s movement has contributed significantly in changing the Nigerian society. In its organization, the movement started in a village of Degel, outside the main city of the Kingdom of Hausaland. Uthman bin Foduye utilized his knowledge in calling the people of Hausaland to abandon traditional religion that allows worshipping idols and to refrain from committing blameworthy acts.

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in the society. Uthman and his movement spent almost 30 years while educating people
to know what is lawful and unlawful in Islam. Later on, when many people responded
to his mission of reforming the society, the rulers of Hausaland attempted to assassinate
him but failed. It was in this situation Uthman bin Foduye and his movement resorted to
revolution stage, in which fighting broke out between his armies and that of Hausa
rulers. Finally, Uthman and his movement defeated them and established Islamic
government known as the Sokoto Caliphate; and made the Qur’an as the constitution of
the new government. Islam became widespread all over the Hausaland; it continuously
up to the present time. On the other hand, this study indicates the similarities between
the movements of Uthman bin Foduye in spreading Islam with the Sultanate of
Malacca. It is discovered that Malacca Sultanate played a vital role in spreading Islam
in all what is today known as Southeast Asia. This might be true when one looks at the
presence of majority Malay-Muslims in countries like Indonesia, Brunei, and Malaysia.
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