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RESEARCH ARTICLE

TOK KU PALOH'S ISLAH MOVEMENT IN TERENGGANU IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY

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Abstract

Many colonial British officers considered the Terengganu people as different from Muslims in other Malay states. They were considered as the most pious among the Muslims in Malaysia. They refused to accept British administration due to the influence of the scholars' leadership in their lives. The attitude of the Terengganu people towards the British was due to the influence of scholars' efforts, especially Tok Ku Paloh, who launched the *Islah* Movement to establish firmly the tenets of Islam among the population so that they did not stray from Islamic principles even after they were colonised by the British. He directed his efforts to all levels of society, the common people as well as the ruling class of Terengganu. This research is for the purpose of studying the role played by Tok Ku Paloh in his efforts to entrench the principles of Islam and prepare the people of Terengganu to face the threat of British occupation. This research is a qualitative research using historical study approach. Research finds that Tok Ku Paloh played a big role in implementing *islah* (revival) to entrench Islamic principles among the Terengganu population both through his own endeavour and his students, especially Sultan Zainal Abidin III who was in ruling power from 1881 to 1918. He succeeded in forming the next echelon of scholars, such as Haji Abdul Rahman Limbong who played the main role in continuing the endeavour to entrench Islam among the people of Terengganu. Scholars were also responsible for organising the reaction of the Terengganu people against British colonisation after the demise of Tok Ku Paloh and Sultan Zainal Abidin III.

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Introduction:-

Toward the time of British intervention in early 20th Century, Tok Ku Paloh, or his real name Syed Abdul Rahman al-Idrus (d.1917), was already the most respected scholar in Terengganu. He was not only highly esteemed in Terengganu, his reputation preceded him even among the Muslim population in the other East Coast states of the Malay Peninsula. Humphrey recorded that for 40 years until his death, Tok Ku Paloh was regarded as a saint who had extraordinary powers, especially in healing people. His residence was always visited by Muslims who came from as far north as Pattani (in Thailand) and Pahang in the south (C.O. 840 1918). Tok Ku Paloh also had a very special relationship with Sultan Zainal Abidin III who was in ruling power from 1881 to 1918. The Sultan turned to

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him for counsel when he faced problems. As the most influential scholar, Tok Ku Paloh saw the British advent as a big threat to the Terengganu people. He saw the British attempt to subjugate Terengganu as an plot by unbelievers to colonise Muslims. The British attempt to dominate in the year 1909 not only caught the full attention of Sultan Zainal Abidin III and his nobles, but was also a big issue for Tok Ku Paloh.

Tok Ku Paloh' teachings spread at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries from Kuala Sungai Terengganu (river mouth) upstream to Hulu Terengganu (river source) as in those traditional times, river was a vital communicate route. His teachings covered the areas of Hulu Terengganu Mati, Tanjung Baharu, Batu Belah, Puih, Pauh, Dusun, Kuala Por, Jenagor, Gaung, Kampung Buluh, Tersat, Kuala Berang, Telaga, Nibong, Kuala Ping to Telemong, Pulau Manis, Beladau, Sungai Rengas, Manir, Pulau Rusa, Paloh, Pulau Sekati, Duyong, Seberang Takir and Kuala Terengganu. The important places which became centres for his teachings were Pauh, Tanjong Baharu, Kuala Berang, Pulau Manis, Beladau, Pulau Duyong, Paloh, Kuala Terengganu and Bukit Bayas (Bakar 1977). His preeminence attracted hundreds of students from every corner of the state every time he gave a lecture, as frequent as three times weekly (Clifford 1992).

Tok Ku Paloh saw British advent in Terengganu after the 1909 Bangkok Treaty as a big threat to the Terengganu population as it was interpreted as an attempt by *kafir* (unbeliever) power to dominate Muslims. However, developments in Terengganu after the 1909 Bangkok Treaty evidently sided with Tok Ku Paloh. With the placement of British agents who were without authority in the year 1909, Tok Ku Paloh had ample time to prepare the Terengganu people spiritually to face the advancing British. Tok Ku Paloh who died in the year 1917 (C.O. 840 1918; Balwi 2006; Awang 1978) had almost ten years after the entry of British agents to 'prepare' a society able to ward off the danger posed by British colonizers in their lives. He launched a movement to entrench of Islam among the Terengganu people until his last breath.

Entrenchment of Islam through Knowledge Dissemination

Tok Ku Paloh espoused the concept of scholars' responsibility to disseminate knowledge and the right of the subjects or the public to demand religious knowledge from them. His responsibility as a scholar was to educate the Muslim society of Terengganu, deepening their knowledge, as well as ensuring that they practise Islamic teachings based on knowledge. He never claimed to be a *mujaddid* (reviver) or *muslih* (reformer), but he asserted that, "I need to speak because the present generation is ignorant about the true path. They drown in misguided *i'tikad* (belief and conviction)... when *fitnah* (trial or temptation) and *bid'ah* (heresy or unlawful innovations) appear, then scholars must express their knowledge. Any of them who fails to do so will be accursed by Allah" (Chik 1977).

Tok Ku Paloh was not alone in educating the people of Terengganu. Many Terengganu scholars practised Islamic teachings in their lives and had high standing in the society such that religious education in Terengganu was more advanced than in the other Malay states (C.O. 840 1916). The endeavour to entrench Islamic teachings was spiritual preparation for defence of the Terengganu people to face the threat of British colonisation which had only just begun in Terengganu.

Entrenchment of Islam through Teachings and Tariqah

Tok Ku Paloh himself took the responsibility of entrenching Islamic belief in the Terengganu people. He held the opinion that the way to reinforce their faith was to launch a movement to entrench Islam among them to the grassroots of society. He implemented this reinforcement in the entire society from the top ruling class down to the common people of Terengganu. Besides, entrenchment through teaching activity, Tok Ku Paloh also continued to advise Sultan Zainal Abidin III to do entrenchment of Islam on his subjects. Tok Ku Paloh had never claimed himself as *muslih* (reformer) thoughborn amidst the people of Terengganu, but he helped to revitalise them by shouldering the responsibility of entrenching Islamic belief in the society to build their spiritual strength in facing British colonization. He raised the question of responsibility for *islah* (reform) or *tajdid* (revival) by emphasizing a hadith narrated by Abu Dawud, translation: From Abu Hurairah RA from the Prophet Muhammad PBUH who said, "Verily Allah will send to this nation at the top of every one hundred years the people who renew (to the nation) the religion". According to Tok Ku Paloh, this is Allah's will in bestowing additional honour on His beloved Messenger for the *ummah* (Chik 1977; Ibn Kathir 1997: 9).

Sultan Zainal Abidin III did not openly protest against the intervention of British officers. However, many of the Sultan's actions proved that he accepted and implemented Tok Ku Paloh's advice. Among his actions was neglecting the education system the British attempted to implement. This situation gave the opportunity for the

religious class, especially for Tok Ku Paloh, to entrench Islamic teachings through the traditional educational system without any interference. His *tasawwuf* book, *Kitab Ma'arif al-Lahfan*, was written in stages based on his teaching requirements. He dedicated his life to educating society but he passed away before he could complete writing this book on *tasawwuf* (Bakar 1977). He used *tariqah* as a medium to nurture a strongly principled society practising Shariah brought by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH based on teachings in al-Qur'an and al-Hadith, basically relating to both religious injunctions and prohibitions. Integrated knowledge of *tawhid*, *fiqh* and *tasawwuf* were disseminated in society to build the foundation of a *rabbani* (God's) society. The concept of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil) became the formula to deal with the diseases of the *ummah* of that time. The danger posed by British colonization needed the people of Terengganu to be high committed to Islamic teachings. Tok Ku Paloh held the opinion that *tariqah* was the best way for Muslims who desired to gain the pleasure of Allah SWT (Chik 1977).

As the *sheikh* (teacher) of the Naqshabandiyyah *tariqah*, Tuk Ku Paloh spread its spiritual practice among his *murid* (students), but he did not claim this *tariqah* was the best. He explained that the original source of Naqshabandiyyah *tariqah* was the Prophet Muhammad PBUH himself, in outward deeds and heart or soul, according to the *i'tikad* (faith and conviction) of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* (Sunni). It involves leaving all *rukhsah* (leniency) in facilitations permissible with lawful excuses, doing every good deed wholeheartedly in all circumstances, and turning away from worldly desires and everything other than Allah. The heart is fully present with Allah SWT, *khalwat in jalwat* (choosing or seeking seclusion or solitaire albeit in company), and pursuing religious knowledge or teaching it and conducting oneself normally as most people do. A person who follows Naqshabandiyyah *tariqah* is obliged to earnestly purify himself from all blameworthy traits and adorn himself with praiseworthy qualities (Chik 1977).

For Tok Ku Paloh, it was sufficient for the public to implement the requirement of the noble *kalimah* (declaration of faith), namely to reject worshipping anything else except Allah SWT, surrender the self to divine *haqq* (divine truth or ultimate reality) and hold on firmly to the *'aqidah* (doctrine of faith) of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* (Sunni). According to him, only the Sunni school (orthodox Islam) is the true one acceptable in Islam. Whoever holds on to it will be saved because it was the path taken by the Companions as affirmed by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. He held on to the basis of the Prophet Muhammad's PBUH hadith which means: "You shall follow the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*" (Chik 1977). Tok Ku Paloh emphasized that *tariqah* teachings demand its members to be consistent with the basis of the *'aqidah* (doctrine of faith) of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* (Sunni) (Yasin 1997). In his endeavour to cultivate a *rabbani* (God's) society, Tok Ku Paloh asserted that every *mukallaf* (accountable Muslim) is obliged to avoid words and *i'tikad* (faith and conviction) which are *kufr* (disbelief, nonbelief, unbelief, denial, rejection, ungrateful, thankless, faithless) or *rejectiman* (faith in Islam). A person is also obliged to hold on to the correct *i'tikad* taken from a teacher who knows al-Qur'an and al-Hadith (Chik 1977). The *Mu'minun* (the righteous one who struggles for Allah) is also obliged to avoid the major sins. According to Tok Ku Paloh, a major sin is any vice committed in disregard to Allah's wrath by someone who takes his religion lightly (Chik 1977).

Tok Ku Paloh endeavoured to unify the Muslim *ummah* by strengthening the bond between members of society through the *tariqah* (Yasin 1997). *Sufi tariqah* teachings aimed to emphasize the relationship of members through the system of *murshid* (teacher) and *murid* (student) (al-Taftazani 1996). Deference for the teacher was the key to all knowledge, as the teacher has gained the higher truth to qualify as a competent spiritual leader (al-Taftazani 1996). Whatever the teacher instructs shall be obeyed without any objection, except if it is contradictory to Islamic Shariah (Yusof 2004). The effectiveness of this teaching was proven by the attitude of Hulu Terengganu residents who so trusted and were loyal to their teachers, Haji Abdul Rahman Limbung, Sayyid Sagaf and Haji Musa Abdul Ghani Minangkabau, besides being loyal to their leaders such as Mat Zin, Penghulu Saleh and others. After Haji Abdul Rahman Limbung surrendered to the government, he questioned government action in punishing the residents of Hulu Terengganu. He claimed that if they were told that he was at Istana Maziah (Palace), they would immediately be quiet (C.O. 717/61 1928). The obedience of the Hulu Terengganu residents to their teacher was proven when he wrote a letter to his students not to create disturbance (Suk. Tr. 1295/1346; Ghazali 1996), and so the residents of Hulu Terengganu halted opposition to the government.

The principle of *tariqah* teaching emphasized on students learning and gaining more knowledge. They voluntarily make efforts to study and acquire knowledge in order to reinforce their practice (Yasin 1997). This situation was proven when Tok Ku Paloh, Haji Abdul Rahman Limbung and Haji Musa Minangkabau came to teach at many surau, hundreds of residents would come to hear their lectures. All this was important to build an Islamic society

with the ability to ward off the colonial danger with combined strong faith and knowledge. A society with a loose hold of religion and shallow knowledge probably would not be able ward off all the manipulation and distortions spread by the colonial British. In studying and appreciating all these concepts, it is understandable why Hulu residents were so obedient and highly praised the teachings nourished by Tok Ku Paloh through his students, Haji Abdul Rahman Limbung and Haji Musa Minangkabau on the question of having to request a permission pass to clear huma (land), and so on.

Tok Ku Paloh used the *tariqah* approach in order to ensure producing Muslims with truly world and hereafter quality. He stressed that whoever desired to get what the saints got, must seriously put into practice what they learnt. They were prohibited from abandoning obligatory and optional recommended Shariah practices and told to abandon *haram* or forbidden matters by Allah's command. They will hold on to the perfected or finalized law, recognise the four schools of law or jurisprudence, avoid all evil and blameworthy behaviour and replace it with praiseworthy behavior (Chik 1977). Tok Ku Paloh nurtured the Terengganu people to become *rabbani* (God's) society, able to reject British colonial propaganda. The main basis of Sufi education was that each human must achieve the degree of *taqwa* (piety) which was the key to ensure the movement for entrenchment of Islam among the Terengganu people achieved success.

Tariqahteachings require its members to *istiqamah* (consistently be firm and steadfast) in *taqwa* (piety) and frequently make efforts to enhance their *taqwa* to Allah SWT. Enhancement of *taqwa* (piety) is associated with *'ibadah* practice and living life based on avoiding evil, both outward and inner. The importance of *taqwa* (piety) causes sufi scholars who consistently observe their *'ibadah* practices without slipping from the foundation of *taqwa* (piety). It is unlikely for a person to gain *haqiqah* (truth) without first practising *Shari'ah* (al-Taftazani 1996). The principle of *taqwa* (piety) means a person firmly holds on to and practices in the best matters in compliance with the teachings in al-Qur'an. A very important aspect is that *'aqidah* held conforms to that of *al-salafiyyah* (early generation Muslims), free from elements of doubt and deviation (Yusof 2004). Hence, the importance of being pious and *taqwa* principles are emphasized by *tariqah* to enable developing a truly quality Islamic *ummah* as *rabbani* (God's) society. Tok Ku Paloh asserted that the true path to Allah SWT originates from al-Qur'an, al-Hadith, guidance of scholars and their books (Chik 1977).

Tok Ku Paloh used *tariqah* as the medium, as one of the basis of *sufi* education is voluntary change. With awareness and voluntary changes by a Muslim, the program of entrenchment of Islam becomes easier to achieve. Without coercion, members of *tariqah* compete to practise all Islamic teachings and prepare to correct themselves in order to achieve Allah's pleasure. Tok Ku Paloh emphasized on *tasawwuf* (sufism) as this knowledge is the essence of Islam which should be in the inner self of every Muslim. Without this essence, Islam is merely a formality or a symbol or a slogan (Yasin 1997). A Muslim who wishes to reach the *ma'rifah* (mystical intuitive knowledge of spiritual truth, through ecstatic experiences, rather than revealed or rationally acquired) level, he needs to purify his *tawhid* (monotheistic) belief from *shirk* (deification of anyone or anything for worship other than Allah) which causes him to be excluded from *sa'adah* (salvation) and trapped in *shaqawah* (misery). In order to progress, the soul must be cleansed by the pure path of *tawhid* (monotheism) as preparation for higher improvement. Tok Ku Paloh adopted Imam al-Ghazali's approach of going through stages: *takhliyyah* (emptying of blameworthy traits), *tahliyyah* (adorning with praiseworthy qualities) and *tajliyyah* (illumination of the soul). In order to avoid the Muslim *ummah* from falling into *mulhid* (heresy), philosophy and *wujudhiyyah* (existency is essentially one), he stressed that a person must study under a *mu'tabar* (venerated) teacher or scholar. He also emphasized that the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* (Sunni) stream and *i'tikad* is the best way in Islam (Bakar 1977).

Hence, this prominent figure emphasized the importance of perfecting practice of Shariah by a Muslim who wishes to achieve perfection of *tawhid* (monotheism) to Allah SWT. Haji Abdul Rahman Limbung was a model human being nurtured by Tuk Ku Paloh in his movement to entrench Islam, which the former implemented. The essence of Tuk Ku Paloh's teachings consolidated in the self of this figure, who later led the people of Terengganu in facing the colonial British. This figure was not only loaded with Islamic knowledge and wisdom, but he was also a successful entrepreneur. His personality was portrayed as the translation of Tuk Ku Paloh's teachings, as the latter had endeavoured to form a God - fearing man, capable and committed to defend against the danger of British colonization.

Tuk Ku Paloh played a very significant role in cultivating the *sufi* ideology in the people through his teachings compiled in his famous book, *Ma'arif al-Lahfan* (Chik 1977). He made this treatise as a guideline to form a new

rabbani generation which was pioneered by his own father, Tuk Ku Tuan Besar (Saripan 1991). The Tawhid worldview developed through *tasawwuf* teachings was proven to have produced quite a comprehensive effect. The *sufi* approach used by Tuk Ku Paloh not only influenced his contemporary society but was further extended by his students such as Haji Abdul Rahman Limbung and Haji Musa Minangkabau. They continued the endeavour to entrench Islam commenced by Tok Ku Paloh to prepare a spiritually strong society opposed to Western colonization. The *sufi* approach used made Naqshabandiyyah *tariqah* (Ghazali 1996; Hamzah 1991), which Tok Ku Paloh espoused, spread among the people of Terengganu. The *tariqah* medium used by him coincided with the need to guide the Muslim *ummah* in the question of spirituality (Bakar 1987). This approach indirectly guaranteed the Muslim *ummah* of Terengganu strived to comply with Islamic teachings to the maximum (Yasin 1984). The basic teachings of *sufi tariqah* spread by him within the society were in alignment with the basic principles of '*aqidah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*'.

Entrenchment of Islam in advice to Sultan Zainal Abidin III

Tok Ku Paloh used his position as the Sultan's adviser to counsel the Sultan of Terengganu, Sultan Zainal Abidin III. He cautioned Sultan Zainal Abidin III on the danger posed by the unbelievers, namely, the British and Siam, through personal correspondence (Hashim 1991). He reminded Sultan Zainal Abidin III that "Allah will never let hardship befall the Muslim *ummah* unless because of *tadyi'*, namely, their neglecting (Madina 1973) the *huquq al-shari'ah* or the rights (and obligations) in Shariah". A Muslim society that does not seriously implement Shariah law and allows Islamic teachings to be influenced by *haram* matters or forbidden by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. He asserted that Allah SWT will give help to Sultan Zainal Abidin III to solve the problems arising if His Highness, "earnestly hopes and *tawajjahaila Allah* (turns towards God) by expediting compliance to Allah's commands and enforcement of His *nawahi* (prohibitions)" (Hashim 1991). Tok Ku Paloh in his letter asserted to the Sultan that the threat of the colonizer, whether the British or Siam, to the Muslim *ummah*, could only be curbed by building the strength of the Muslim *ummah*, in terms of '*aqidah* (faith) in Allah SWT and His Messenger PBUH.

Tok Ku Paloh held the opinion that the movement to entrench Islam teachings among the people of Terengganu must be done by totally enforcing the concept of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (the leader to enjoin the good and prevent the evil). He advised Sultan Zainal Abidin III that it was the time for the Sultan fulfill his obligation to 'exert in demonstrating religion and eradicating all evil. Never be silent or be indifferent' (Hashim 1991). Sultan Zainal Abidin III was advised to implement Allah's commands and prevent all His prohibitions. He categorized the responsibility as obligatory or compulsory for Sultan Zainal Abidin III as ruler of Terengganu. In order to strengthen the Muslim *ummah* and for the state of Terengganu to always be graced by the mercy of Allah SWT, Sultan Zainal Abidin III as ruler of Terengganu must fully execute the Shariah brought by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

The movement to entrench Islam inspired the people to be more committed in practising Islamic teachings, even as described by researchers, to become fanatic (Kartodirjo 1984). However, in the case of Terengganu, this awakening did not reach the level of armed uprising to oust the colonial British, unlike the Peasants' Revolt in Banten in the year 1988. This was probably because the Sultanate of Terengganu was not totally removed by the colonial British, unlike the colonial Dutch which ended the Banten Sultanate in the year 1808 (Kartodirjo 1984).

Tok Ku Paloh also advised Sultan Zainal Abidin III to fulfill totally his responsibility as the entrusted ruler of the state of Terengganu. His Highness must ensure that his nobles perform their responsibilities justly and equitably. The reason is that even if the ruler is just and fulfills his responsibilities properly according to Allah's Shariah, there would still be some tyranny and wickedness happening in his state, though unknown and unauthorised by him, and the ruler would still be held accountable by Allah SWT on Judgement Day. The Sultan is the pillar of the state. The trust given to the ruler is a big responsibility, not for pride and wealth. Tuk Ku Paloh was of the opinion that the tribulation which befell the state of Terengganu at the time in the form of Siam and the British was a reminder from Allah SWT for the people of Terengganu to return to Shariah, practice all His commands and avoid all His prohibitions (Hashim 1991).

Tok Ku Paloh's advice to Sultan Zainal Abidin III was given when Terengganu was under threat of British colonization. He suggested that the Sultan use the method *amr ma'ruf* (to enjoin the good) to strengthen Islamic teachings and practice among the people of Terengganu so that they will gain the strength and help from Allah SWT to drive out their enemies. This concept of *nahy munkar* (to prevent evil) is important to eradicate evil happening in society. The main factor for the Muslim *ummah* becoming weak was because they neglected the Shariah of Allah

SWT. They did not implement all the laws and rules outlined in Islamic teachings. Instead they replaced it with other laws and rules not outlined by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. In other words, they disregarded or disobeyed the commands of Allah SWT and the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. The threat of British colonization of Terengganu was seen by Tok Ku Paloh as a trial or tribulation from Allah SWT to make the Muslim *ummah* in Terengganu realize that Allah SWT will not test them without a reason, so long as they obey His laws and rules. In order to regain the mercy of Allah upon the Muslim *ummah* of Terengganu, the ruler was obliged to heal the 'disease' which afflicted the whole of the Muslim society, at every level in Terengganu.

Tok Ku Paloh made it obligatory for Sultan Zainal Abidin III to implement a movement to entrench Islamic teachings and religious practice at every level of society so that they may develop character and identity to build a Muslim *ummah* based on the *rabbani* system in Terengganu. In another letter to Sultan Zainal Abidin III, he asserted that, "Then, of course we Muslims follow the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. In affairs of the hereafter or this world, there can never be turning toward others, *qat'an* (for sure) because of true public interest" (Hashim 1991). With this, the Sultan, nobles and subjects of Terengganu must perform their responsibilities in truth according to Shariah principles brought by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH based al-Qur'an and al-Hadith. They cannot ever leave it. Only in this way can the Muslim *ummah* regain their strength and help from Allah SWT to ward off the danger of British colonization which threatened the independence of their land (and seas) and the sanctitude of their religion.

He recommended to the ruler, Sultan Zainal Abidin III, to implement an endeavour of *islah* or revival in his governance by practising Islamic principles in his rule. With that, not only would the subjects have their Islamicity reinforced, the ruling class would also rule the state using a system recommended by Islam. Indirectly, he tried to remind Sultan Zainal Abidin III to be cautious of advice by British agents who wished to apply the British system in the Terengganu Sultanate.

Tok Ku Paloh suggested that the Sultan implement the movement to entrench Islam before the British began full administrative control of Terengganu. Tok Ku Paloh's action proved that he implemented the *'aqidah* requirement or principle of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, that the Muslim *ummah* should not be in haste to react in opposing or revolting even though there were signs of *fasiq* (from *fiṣq*, meaning open sinfulness or corruption) in the ruling party or phenomenon of not being *istiqamah* (firm and steady) in implementing Islamic law. Instead, the Muslim *ummah* should as much as possible advise, follow and oversee by the principle of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, whether among the specific or general (Yasin 1984). With that, Tok Ku Paloh fulfilled his responsibility in reminding the Sultan of Terengganu to implement the principle of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* among the common people and the administrative machinery.

Tok Ku Paloh made efforts to apply this principle among his students to entrench Islamic teachings in the people of Terengganu. Sultan Zainal Abidin III was reminded that with this advantage, the Sultan and the people of Terengganu as Muslim *ummah* were created by Allah SWT for the mission of inviting people to Islam. Their task was to spread and strengthen goodness or virtue and prevent and eradicate evil. He reminded Sultan Zainal Abidin III about the commands of Allah SWT to the Muslim *ummah*, who collectively or as a group from among them, should prepare themselves to execute their duty to preach and enforce *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (enjoin good and prevent evil).

The duty to *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (enjoin good and prevent evil) was suggested by Tok Ku Paloh because in Islamic teachings it is insufficient to only correct oneself, but efforts must extend to correcting others as well. *Iman* (faith) and *'amal salih* (pious deeds) are not enough to save a person from loss and destruction until they endeavour to help others correct themselves, and spread advice and invite others to embrace truth firmly, and persevere in defending it. His advice to Sultan Zainal Abidin III that a just ruler will not be exempt from accountability for his responsibility before Allah SWT, if he allows his nobles to commit tyranny or they commit it without his knowledge (Hashim 1991). Clearly a ruler must rule justly and ensure that all his nobles do so. It was not appropriate for the Sultan alone to rule justly, while he allowed his nobles or subordinates to commit tyranny on the common people.

The importance of implementing this duty of *amr ma'ruf nahy munkar* (enjoining good and preventing evil) to restore the strength of the *ummah* and gain the help as well as mercy of Allah SWT, clearly shows why this concept was given serious attention by Tok Ku Paloh and became the main matter advised by him for Sultan Zainal Abidin III to

implement at the time the British had not yet full control of the Terengganu ruler. New colonial rules were not yet enforced in administration of Terengganu. He realized the danger the British brought and understood that the British always had a negative perception of Islamic laws and rules (Clifford 1992).

Response of Sultan Zainal Abidin III to Tok Ku Paloh's Advice

Sultan Zainal Abidin III was astute in playing his role in the critical situation of Terengganu facing the threat of British colonization. He actually had a very special relationship with Tok Ku Paloh, who was his main adviser before the placement of British agents in Terengganu. Tok Ku Paloh served as the Sultan's teacher and was also his in-law. In spite of historians' opinion that the relationship between them fell apart after the placement of British agents in Terengganu, the Sultan's actions proved that he actually did not disregard Tok Ku Paloh's advice and reminders. Instead, the Sultan's actions showed that he indirectly and fully supported Tok Ku Paloh's plan and actions to entrench Islam among the people of Terengganu.

Sultan Zainal Abidin III acted with full precaution when dealing with the deception and intrigue of British officers. The Sultan tacitly agreed to advice from Tok Ku Paloh that the threat of British colonization was very real and dangerous. With that, the Sultan and his nobles by all means attempted to reject British colonization by disregarding the advice of British agents. The British agents serving in Terengganu frequently recorded that the Sultan was equivocal and non-committal in making decisions on suggestions by them. Actually, this was the way the Sultan agreed with the advice of his teacher, Tok Ku Paloh. The ten years of British agents' placement in Terengganu was not long enough for them to influence the Sultan to implement the British system. British agents considered their mission to interfere in ruling Terengganu as a failure. With that, the Sultan's action indirectly enabled Tok Ku Paloh to run the process of entrenching Islam and form the next echelon of leaders for the people of Terengganu to react to the threat of British colonization.

After the demise of Tok Ku Paloh and the Sultan, the British succeeded in full control of ruling over Terengganu. However, the people of Terengganu was now led by the students of Tok Ku Paloh to reject the changes implemented by the British. The events which occurred since full British interference in the year 1919 until the peak in 1928 proved the ability of Tok Ku Paloh in transforming Terengganu people to oppose the British from loyalty and obedience to Islamic Shariah.

Conclusion:-

Tok Ku Paloh realized that the British relentlessly made efforts to enforce their laws and rules in Terengganu, especially after the 1909 Bangkok Treaty. In the treaty, the British claimed that Siam had surrendered Terengganu to them. With the placement of British agents in Terengganu, foreign elements began to gradually enter administration of Terengganu. Even though the British had not yet fully interfered in the administration of Terengganu, the attitude and action of British officers clearly indicated direction toward that aim. Tok Ku Paloh who was full of anti-British sentiment saw the British attempt to control Terengganu as an attempt by a *kuffar* (unbelieving) power to control a Muslim state. To him, it was a threat or big danger. If the Muslim *ummah* were not cultivated with proper and firm religious knowledge, they would follow all British laws and rules enforced, and abandon Islamic law, which the British may later repeal arbitrarily. With that, it was feared their lives would slip off the Islamic foundation. Hence, Tok Ku Paloh started a movement to entrench Islamic teachings in the people of Terengganu. In addition, he also made efforts to develop the next echelon in the leadership for the movement to continue his efforts. With that, the next group or echelon of leaders would carry on the responsibility of reminding the people of Terengganu on the dangers brought by the colonial British. This was to avoid the Muslim *ummah* from following the laws and rules introduced by the *kafir* (unbelievers), specifically the British, as well as their behaviour.

Hence, the duty of the leader to enjoin good and prevent evil or *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* was needed urgently to be implemented among the people of Terengganu, such that Tok Ku Paloh labelled it as an obligation to be fulfilled by Sultan Zainal Abidin III. This principle was very important to form a Muslim society able to oppose the colonial British. He worried that forgetting this duty would create a *munafiq* (hypocrite) people of Terengganu, some of whom would not only become accomplices for the colonizers but were willing to hinder their own brothers from fulfilling their obligations in Islam. He also worried that the society in Terengganu would lose their religious sensitivity when Islamic laws and rules were to be repealed and replaced with laws and rules molded according to the *kuffar* (unbelieving) British colonizers.

Another concern was that they would, without questioning, accept all laws and rules brought by the British as suitable to replace old laws and rules deemed no longer appropriate by the British, when in fact, the old laws and rules are derived from Islamic sources. Denial of suitability of Islamic laws and rules would cause the people of Terengganu to deny the universality of Islamic laws and rules and it was feared that this would lead to hidden *shirk* (thoughts and actions which do not reflect *tawhid* or Oneness of Allah) to Allah SWT, unintentionally without realization. Tok Ku Paloh and scholars after him wanted to avoid this from happening. The Terengganu people's rejection of new laws and rules introduced by the British proved that Tok Ku Paloh's hard work in entrenching the Islamicity of the people of Terengganu succeeded, especially when it was continued by his students such as Haji Abdul Rahman Limbong and Haji Musa Abdul Ghani Minangkabau

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