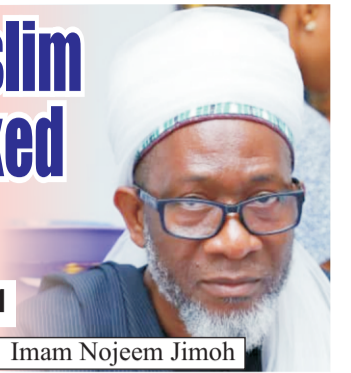




Friends of Olowu speak on Oba Matemilola's emergence as Otileta VII Pg.7&10
 – Say monarch's private sector experience will benefit Owu Kingdom

Why prominent Muslim Organisations backed Oba Matemilola for exalted throne Pg.6&11



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...promoting Islam, uniting Muslims

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- Becomes 14th Olowu of Owu Kingdom
- Vows to mobilise Owu sons, daughters home, abroad for growth
- I am a Muslim and will be fair to all – Monarch

SPECIAL EDITION



Oba Saka Matemilola receiving certificate from Ogun State Governor, Dapo Abiodun during the presentation of staff of office ceremony



Oba Matemilola flanked by his beautiful wives, Olori Khadijah (l) and Olori Ameenat (r)



Olowu of Owu with the Iwarefas shortly after the crowning ceremony

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Allah, the King of kings

The world today is older than all that live in it. It has raised and witnessed the emergence, rise, decline and fall of nations and their leaders as emperors, kings, presidents, heads of states, khaleefahs, sultans, ameers, popes, etc. There have always been leaders in the religious, secular or traditional sphere. Today, it is hard to see a society without its own leader.

It is essential for mankind to realise some basic points about leadership across the world. One, there are those who are leaders in their country but still indirectly dominate other leaders. Two, every leader has his domain or territory. Three, no leader remains on throne forever, not even leaders who were Prophets. Four, people have always aspired to become leaders in one way or the other. Five, there has always been peaceful or violent change of leadership. Six, the led have always viewed or seen their leaders in different ways. Seven, no human society has been led by an angel; it has always been humans who exhibit all human traits and tendencies. Eight, no leader has been able to provide all the need of men or requests.

Society has always been run by different kinds of leaders with their different styles. To us in Islam, leadership is part of and a path to worship. Guidelines are drawn for leadership emergence. It is basically Shuurah (consultation) that is composed of men of piety, integrity, experience and knowledge. The ideal Islamic leadership was exemplified by the Prophet (S.A.W) and his noble successors.

X-raying our world today, leadership tussle at the expense of followers' peace and comforts is seen. It has become so unbelievable that some can take the life of fellow men to become

leaders. Some will disregard all human ethics to spread falsehood about others to achieve their leadership aspirations. Some will engage in litigations upon litigations to strike out the deal of who is the rightful owner of mantle of leadership. There are others too who will use and spend humongous resources to get into power.

Islam has made it crystal clear that it is Allah (SWT) who makes people emerge as leaders. The kind or persons that emerges is another thing entirely. But Allah (SWT) as one of His ways to either reward or punish us has always given us the kind of leaders we deserve in most cases.

For the good people of Owu Kingdom, for instance, Allah has chosen for them a king that will be kind and merciful to them.

Allah (SWT) alone is the Kingmaker; He is the King of kings. He was there when ancient kings were enthroned.

expected to emerge. It is not always about money or connection or even a right; it is about Allah (SWT). Though, there may be committees or kingmakers, it's Allah that guides them by His "kun fayakun," a powered phrase of the Qur'an, which literally means, "be, and it is". Buttressing this, Almighty Allah says; "And We made them leaders, guiding by Our command; and We inspired them to do good works, and to observe the prayer, and to give out charity. They were devoted servants to Us." [Qur'an, 21:73]

From history, there had existed the good and the bad kings. There was a king known as Namrood, a tyrant leader who claimed to be God. He ordered Prophet Ibrahim to be thrown into fire but He later saved him. He also challenged Prophet Ibraahim but was intellectually defeated (Q.2: 258). Allah also related to us the story of tyrant King, Fir'aun, also known as

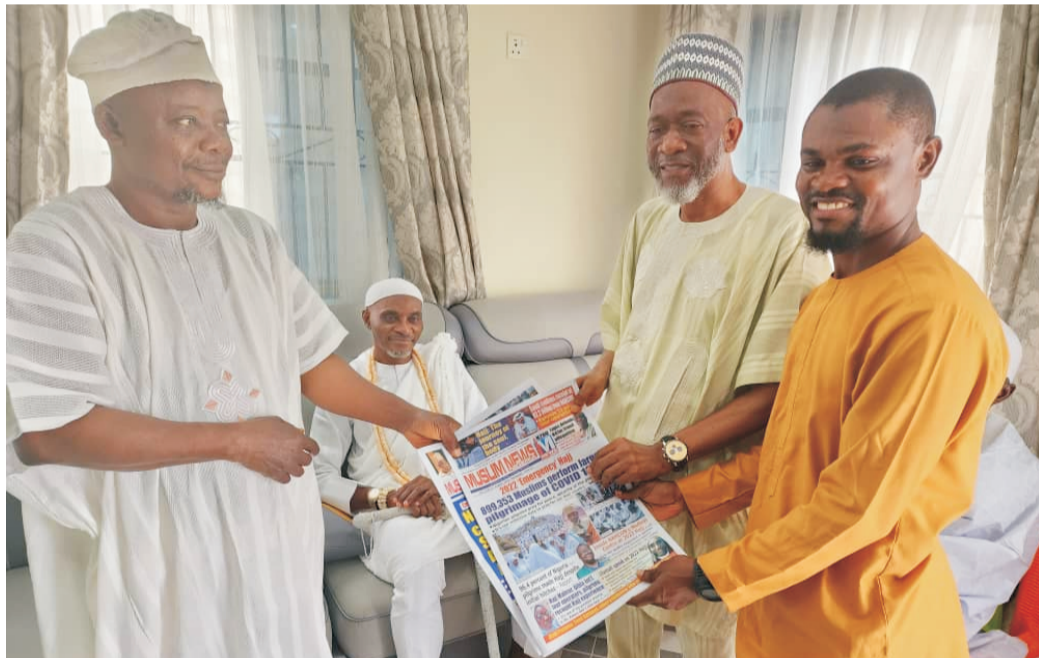
and Knowing."

It's also important to relate the story of Najashi (Negus), a Christian King in then Abyssinia (known today to be in Ethiopia) who saved about 80 Muslims delegation who fled the persecution of the Quraysh in Makkah during Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W)'s initial years of prophecy.

It is narrated that Prophet Mohammed (S.A.W) advised a group of Muslims to secretly immigrate to Abyssinia, for their "king will not tolerate injustice." His main aim was to allow his companions to perform their religious duties without torture and abuse.

They travelled through the Red Sea on vessels until they landed in Africa. This was the first emigration in Islam. Around 70 to 80 Muslims travelled to Abyssinia.

Lastly, becoming a king in some cultures is laden with some irrational or unislamic rites and rituals. A Muslim king cannot because of position disobey Allah (SWT). No matter



L-R: The Akogun of Owu Kingdom, Ishola Akinsipo (left) receiving copies of Muslim News print edition on behalf of the new Olowu of Owu, Dr. Saka Matemilola (sitting) from the newspaper's publisher, Rasheed Abubakar (r) supported by Lighthouse Lekki Imam and Muslim News' adviser, Imam Nojeem Jimoh (2nd right) during a meeting held today, Sunday, 18th September 2022 at the Owu palace, Abeokuta, Ogun State.

He is here today and will eternally be existing in the future. He can make the least

Pharaoh, during the time of Prophet Musa (AS). The wicked Fir'aun was intoxicated by his power and was made to drown in the sea according to Qur'an 2: 47-50.

Allah also revealed to us the emergence of a humble King Taa'ut (Saul) as against the wish of some of his people, and how he eventually led them to victory. In Qur'an 2: 247, Allah says; And their Prophets said to them, "Indeed, Allah has sent to you Saul as a king." They said, "How can he have kingship over us while we are more worthy of kingship than him and he has not been given any measure of wealth?" He said, "Indeed, Allah has chosen him over you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature. And Allah gives His sovereignty to whom He wills. And Allah is All-encompassing [in favor]

how powerful he might think he is, he remains Allah's servant. He must not allow authority or power to becloud his sense of Islamicity. He needs Allah (SWT) Who has chosen him to succeed. Allah (SWT) is not in need of him. He is holding brief for Allah (SWT) as His representative. So, he has to be just and empathetic. He must know that he will account for all that happens in his kingdom while on the throne. A Muslim king is a Muslim before any other thing. His being a king is not greater than his being a Muslim. So, his genuine practice of Islam will help him in manifold.

We at Muslim News Nigeria congratulate Oba Prof. Saka Matemilola on his emergence as the 14th Olowu of Owu. We pray Almighty Allah to guard, guide and make him a just, great leader for the entire Owu Kingdom.



“ Say: O Allah! Lord of power (and rule), Thou givest power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off power from whom Thou pleasest: Thou enduest with honour whom Thou pleasest, and Thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest: In Thy hand is all good. Verily, over all things Thou hast power. – Surah al-Imran, ayat 26.

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Messenger (SAW) said, "The most awful name in Allah's sight on the Day of Resurrection, will be (that of) a man calling himself Malik Al-Amlak (the king of kings).

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari 6205



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Our Mission: To give special media attention and coverage to important people and events in the life of Muslims that do not gain mainstream media attention, and to change the media narrative of blaming Islam and Muslims for offences committed in its lofty name.

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KABIYESI	PERIOD OF REIGN	RULING HOUSE	
???	PAWU	1855-1867	OTILETA I
OBA ADEFOWOTE	1867-1872	OTILETA II	
OBA ADERINMOYE	1873-1890	OTILETA III	
OBA ADEPEGBA	1893-1905	AYOLOYE	
OBA OWOKOKADE	1906-1918	OTILETA IV	
OBA DOSUMU	1918-1924	AMORORO	
OBA ADESINA	1924-1936	OTILETA V	
OBA ADELANI	1938-1946	OTILETA VI	
OBA SALAMI	1949-1972	AYOLOYE	
GBADELA AJIBOLA			
OBA ADEBOWALE	1975-1980	AKINJOBI	
OYEGBADE			
MICHAEL AYINDE	29/4/87-8/5/87	AKINOSO	
OYELEKAN			
OBA (DR) OLAWALE	1993-2003	LAGBEDU	
ADISA ODELEYE			
OBA DR. OLUSANYA	2005-2021	AMORORO II	
DOSUNMU			
OBA PROF. SAKA	CURRENT	OTILETA VII	
MATEMILOLA			

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Oba (Prof.) Matemilola ascends throne of his forefathers

• Becomes 14th Olowu of Owu

Prof. Saka Adelola Matemilola has emerged the 14th Olowu of Owu Kingdom, a first-class traditional title in Abeokuta North Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Matemilola replaced the late Olowu, Oba Adegboyega Dosunmu, who returned to his Creator in December, 2021, reigning for 16 years.

Prof. Matemilola's appointment as the new Olowu was confirmed on Monday, July 25, 2022 by the Ogun State Governor, Prince Dr. Dapo Abiodun, weeks after he was screened alongside other princes by the former President Olusegun Obasanjo-led kingmakers of the Owu kingdom in Ogun State.

The new Olowu was until his ascension to the revered throne, the Executive Director of Ankor Pointe Integrated. Oba Matemilola, the Otileta VII had a stint in the academy as Visiting Scholar at the Institute of Petroleum Studies (IPS), University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

He bagged a Ph.D. in Applied Mechanics from the prestigious University of Cambridge, UK. His emergence finally puts to rest the question of "who becomes the next paramount ruler of the ancient Owu kingdom."

Oba Matemilola, the most educated and widely travelled monarch in the history of Owu, holds both B.Sc. and M.Sc. Degrees in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Ibadan.

Matemilola is a stakeholder in the petroleum industry where he served as a Consultant for Reservoir Engineering at Shell Petroleum industry in Port-Harcourt from 2009 to 2011. He was involved in the establishment of the Centre of Excellence in Geosciences and Petroleum Engineering, University of Benin in 2011.

Saka Matemilola, a young, vibrant, dynamic public servant and human capacity developer, hails from the Matemilola ruling house in Soke Compound, Owu, Abeokuta.

He was born on 4th August 1964. He is a member of Section 3 of the Otileta Dynasty, which comprises the Oluyalo and Olajisoye families. Section 3 of Otileta Dynasty are descendants of Iyá Àgbà Bolajoko, the third wife of Oba Olapetiji Asunkungbade Otileta I, who reigned at the Owu homestead from 1405-1437.

Saka is a great-great grandson of Chief Oluyalo, who was made the Omolefon of Owu in 1878. His grandfather was Oba Okanloye Otileta XXII, who was the last Olowu at the Owu homestead before the Owu people moved to Abeokuta in 1834, under the leadership of Chief Fehintopoola.

It was Chief Oluyalo who granted permission for the corpse of Oba Okanloye to be exhumed and re-buried in Abeokuta, before Oba Pawu, the son of Chief Fehintopoola, could be crowned in Abeokuta in 1855, eleven years after he was made Omolefon.

In 1890, following the death of Oba Aderinoye, Chief Oluyalo was appointed to the Owu throne in 1891. However, three days to when he was to enter Ipebi (orientation camp), his son Kadejo died. While still in mourning, his second son Olanloye died within 3 months.

Chief Oluyalo was devastated by this sad event and subsequently left Ipebi. He then requested that the Olowu slot be reserved for any of his children in the future. In

The new Olowu was until his ascension to the revered throne, the Executive Director of Ankor Pointe Integrated. Oba Matemilola, the Otileta VII had a stint in the academy as Visiting Scholar at the Institute of Petroleum Studies (IPS), University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State. He bagged a Ph.D. in Applied Mechanics from the prestigious University of Cambridge, UK.

He sits on the board of Motus Technology Limited, City Roller Limited and Cypher Crescent Limited. He belongs to the Nigeria Society of Engineers and a Fellow of the Cambridge Philosophical Society.

Before his announcement, Prof. Matemilola had contributed immensely to the development of his community, providing water boreholes, facilitated monthly feeding allowances to the needy, dedicated financial support for healthcare, donated books, rebuilt school facilities, and successfully constructed and continuously maintaining the Matemilola Heritage building, among others.

Back home in Lagos, Prof. Matemilola has been committed to the growth and wellbeing of the members of his community.

Muslim News reliably gathered that the new Olowu was among the brains behind Lighthouse Mosque scholarship award for 4 (four) members of the community who graduated with first class degrees from different universities. They were each presented with a cheque of N200,000 as a way of encouraging academic excellence.

As a devout Muslim, Prof. Matemilola has joined a league of religiously conscious individuals being elected into traditional kingship.

Muslim News can authoritatively confirm that Prof. Matemilola's emergence as the new Olowu will not affect his belief, as Governor Dapo Abiodun in January 2022 signed into law, the chieftaincy bill stopping the imposition of rituals during the installation and burial of an Oba.

With the new law which was initiated in June 2020 by the Awujale and paramount Ruler of Ijebuland, Oba Sikirulahi Adetona, the new Olowu and other traditional rulers in Ogun State can now be installed without the usual rites and rituals considered antithetical to other religious beliefs.

Family history

sympathy with Oluyalo, all 4 ruling houses in Otileta declined to accept the throne of Olowu on that occasion.

As the Olowu throne could not be left unoccupied for too long, in 1893 the kingmakers appointed Adepegba as the Olowu. Adepegba was a descendant of Akinolu, who was a paternal brother of Oba Olowu Otileta.

Begins three months seclusion

In August, the new Olowu of Owu Kingdom met with the Balogun of Owu and former President Olusegun Obasanjo and other high chiefs. The meeting, *Muslim News* gathered, signified the commencement of his three month traditional seclusion in Ipebi.

Obasanjo received the new traditional ruler at his Ita-Iyalode residence in Abeokuta, in the presence of high chiefs of Owu Kingdom, which included the Towulade of Akinale, Oba Olufemi Ogunleye; Chief Niyi Adegbenro;



Oba Matemilola

Oba (Dr.) Matemilola ascends... *Cont'd from pg.3*

Chief Doja Adewolu; Chief Ogooluwa Bankole; Chief Johnson Olu-Fatoki among others.

Presenting the new monarch to the chiefs and others, Obasanjo said, "When the late king died, the Owu kingdom did what had never been done in the Owu kingdom as Christians, Muslims and traditionalists gathered to celebrate the life of the late monarch.

"We (kingmakers) did what we played our part and some people were not happy with us, but we thank God that after the kingmakers completed their assignment, the state government approved his appointment.

"This is the fastest time that a new king will fill a vacant seat at the passage of our departed monarch. We have preserved our culture and tradition and we must not allow our culture to go into extinction.

"I want to assure you (Matemilola) of my unalloyed support and the support of the entire sons and daughters of Owu kingdom in your journey as the new Olowu of Owu kingdom."

Crowning process

Oba Saka Matemilola, the Otileta VII, was crowned on Monday, October 24th, 2022, in the presence of dignitaries from within and outside the kingdom, who had thronged the palace to be part of the ceremony.

Among the personalities who were welcomed with fanfare, drums and trumpets were leaders of Islamic organisations to whom the Kabiyesi is actively connected.

Some of them included Port-Harcourt-based Al-Ussrah and the Lagos chapter of The Companion, an association of Muslim men in business and the professions, their female counterpart, The Criterion, among others.

The sons and daughters of Owu Kingdom were also not left out in the celebration of this year's Odun Omo Olowu, an annual carnival-like event held on the same day, hours after Oba Saka Matemilola was installed with the Owu traditional crown.

The 2022 Odun Omo Olowu witnessed the showcasing of different Owu tradition to the delight of those present at the palace.

Ahead of the formal crowning, the agile Olowu of Owu, who just concluded his three months seclusion in Ipebi, circumambulated the palace area seven times at midnight, accompanied by chiefs and hundreds of indigenes,

He was also seen wearing the symbolic small Obalufon crown,

Obasanjo seeks support for new Olowu

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo has said, in his lifetime, he does not wish to witness the emergence of another Olowu of Owu kingdom in Abeokuta, Ogun State.

The elder statesman, who is the Balogun (Chief Warrior) of Owu Kingdom, led the kingmakers in the selection process, which produced Oba Matemilola after the late Oba Dosumu, joined his ancestors on December 12, 2021.

Obasanjo, 85, said at his age, he would not wish to be alive to witness the reign of another Olowu of Owu.

"I pray I don't witness (reign of) another Olowu of Owu after our new Kabiyesi.

"What that means is that,

holding it with one hand, during the exercise.

Muslim News findings revealed that the exercise marked one of the rites meant to build a spiritual relationship between the King and the palace where he is going to reign.

Why we circumambulate the palace seven times, Akogun explains

About its significance, the Akogun of Owu, Raobil Ishola Akinsipo said the new Olowu of Owu circumambulated the palace seven times in order to get himself familiarised with it.

"We are doing it because that is the way our fathers have been doing it. And we find joy in it. Besides, that's where Kabiyesi is going to live and the circumambulation is a way of familiarising himself with the palace.

The Akogun added, "There is also a form of exercise in the traditional rite. For instance, the king has been in seclusion for 90 days. He didn't go out of that enclave. So, it is an opportunity for him to move around the palace he is going to reside.

"Then, your acceptability is measured by the type of crowd that follows you. Although it was the middle of the night, the crowd that followed us was mammoth. We thought by the 3rd to 4th round, the crowd would have reduced, but they continued with us in their numbers. This shows that our Kabiyesi is accepted by all."

Oba Matemilola, already putting another beautiful crown known as the 'Oduduwa crown', prayed for the community to grow during his reign, at the frontage of the palace, where people were already gathered in numbers.

I'll be fair to all – Monarch

The new Olowu also hinted that he would be fair to everyone irrespective of their religious affiliations.

He said though a Muslim, his good leadership and interventions would cut across all sons and daughters of Owu Kingdom he had been coronated to rule over.

Meanwhile, Oba Matemilola, in an exclusive interview with *Muslim News*, disclosed that Allah had revealed to him that he would one day become an Oba in his community.

According to him, "The truth is, Allah had shown me this when I was about 9 years old, very clearly. I didn't even realise who I was at the time. At that time I wasn't even aware that I was from a royal family, but Allah showed me in my dream that I was crowned, and the crown was such

Kabiyesi will live long and as an old man, I will not be around when another Olowu will be installed," Obasanjo who spoke in Yoruba said.

While inaugurating the committee led by a retired General, Ekundayo Opaleye, Obasanjo charged all the members to work with sincerity of purpose in line with the standards set.

He said "We are setting standards. The standard that will be emulated by people in the South West region. Owu Kingdom is our collective responsibility. We must all cooperate with the new monarch.

"I am part of this because we want to incorporate the installation of our new king with our annual Odun Omo Olowu celebration.

Allah revealed I'



Oba Matemilola

In this interview with Muslim News' Publisher, Rasheed Abubakar, Oba Matemilola revealed the intrigues, resistance and interventions that led to his emergence as the Olowu of Owu. Besides, he spoke about his plans for his community.

Did you see the ascension to the throne coming in any form?

The truth is Allah had shown me this at the tender age of 9. I didn't even realise who I was at the time. I wasn't even aware that I was from a royal family, but Allah showed me in a dream that I was crowned and the crown was such that it had rays of light all over it. I couldn't explain it. So, I sketched exactly how it manifested and showed it to my father. He asked if I was sure. I affirmed yes. Thereafter, he revealed that we belong to a royal lineage but I was not aware. So, he explained the family links with the Olowu throne. He explained how our forefathers had been kings and said that by Allah's grace, I will become a king in my lifetime. That was it.

At that time, one of my uncles, Pa Adebawale Joseph Michael Matemilola, was contesting for the kingship. So, he used to come to our place. He tells us stories, then we pray for him. Momentarily, I forgot about the entire issue and it was not an issue that agitated my mind further because I was not interested.

For me, it was something I

wasn't keen on, particularly because of the feelings we had about traditions and practices in the traditional setting. However, as I matured into adulthood, some members of the family began to suggest to me that I should be preparing to become the king. We just joke about it. There was a time it became too serious and I threatened that if they pushed me too far, I would leave Nigeria because I was not just interested.

That went on and on until December last year. I was in Abuja and I got a call from one of my cousins. He said Olowu just passed on. We have been telling you since to prepare. And I said I am not interested. That went on and on for about a month. I had to write a very strong letter to the family to forget the idea. Somehow, a member of the family who I had never met before; had never spoken to before called me out of the blue and explained to me why all my fears are unfounded. So, it's very strange that somebody who I had never seen before, never spoken to before would be the one to convince me. I just listened to the person and tried to give it a thought. I called a few of my friends who are chiefs and shared the development with them and my stance.

They encouraged me to erase the negative thoughts, assured me and my family of their staunch support to become the new Olowu.

Similarly, three of my friends; a chief from the southeast and another from Osogbo also allayed my fear. However, my wife did not fall for the obaship stool.

Anyway, Allah changed my mind, and with the endorsement of my wives, I accepted, even though I was still a bit reluctant. I agreed that my name should be submitted as a candidate for the throne, and the rest has become history. Alhamdulillah!

What did the distant family member tell you that eventually convinced you?

Two things he told me essentially. He happens to be a very senior kingmaker in another community. We are relations from my mother's family. He said a lot of things that they talk about are more to keep the secrecy of the whole thing so it doesn't become a common thing. When it becomes common, people don't appreciate it. And if you say there are some traditional practices that you do not want, nobody is going to force you. So long they believe you are qualified and competent, they would allow you. He buttressed his position that the Ogun State governor had recently signed the new chieftaincy bill which says the Oba is allowed to reign along the line of his religious beliefs. He said he would send me a copy of that bill. Those two things were a result of the fact that he was a senior kingmaker. He said if we keep running away from it, we won't get the right people to sit on the throne. Those were the two or three things I considered.

What are the roles your parents played, especially from the time you narrated the dream?

How the Owu Obaship process began: Akogun

Says 'we observed five daily Salat, Jumu'ah in Ipebi'

Akogun Owu

The Akogun of Owu Kingdom, Chief Raobil Ishola Akinsipo gave a vivid account to Muslim News on Monday, October 24, of how the process of the Owu Obaship began. According to him, the process that pronounced Oba Saka Matemilola as the 14th Olowu of Owu was thorough and painstaking. He said Matemilola came top among the other princes, based on the parameters considered in the process and had the support of the majority of the kingmakers. The Akogun, who is an Owu warrior and the head of the kingmakers (Afobaje) also painted a graphic picture of how the Ipebi (seclusion) process, which is a period of learning, orientation and fortification for the new monarch went. More poignantly, he advised the Muslim faithful not to be discouraged from taking up the obaship position, saying infidels would rule over them if they continue to avoid traditional positions. He added that it is only when they assume such positions that they can introduce the change and reform they want, pointing out for instance that they observed the five daily salat, including Juma'h at Ipebi. Excerpts...

Give us an insight into how the whole process of the Obaship began

The entire Obaship selection process started around January/February this year when we concluded the rites of passage for our late Olowu of Owu, Oba Adegboyega Dosunmu and communicated the same to the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs. So, the local government wrote a letter to the next ruling house, Otileta. Oba Dosunmu was from Amororo ruling family.

The next in line is Otileta ruling house which received a letter to produce candidates to fill the vacancy created by the demise of Oba Dosunmu. The Otileta ruling house met and the meeting was witnessed by the local government authorities too. They selected seven candidates and forwarded same to the local government.

After that, the local government wrote to the kingmakers, giving us a week or so to notify them of the date we want to do the selection. We did that on 30th March 2022. We held a selection process in the palace. Of the seven candidates, Saka Matemilola came top. We had our parameters, among which is your relationship with any Oba in Otileta. We also wanted to know their means of income. We wanted to know their antecedents. We wanted to know their political neutrality because we don't want anybody that would draw us into unnecessary political logjam with any party or any political office holder, whether the governor or others. These are part, not all of the parameters.

Having done that, Saka scored the highest among the seven candidates. But that did not put an end to it because the local government told us even if he scored the highest, we still had to vote. So, we voted and he had the highest number of votes. There are 8 kingmakers in Owu. However, three of them were not on seat as they are yet to be installed. So, five of us voted. But then, Saka had the highest number of votes.

We decided that we were not going to announce it. We gave the honour to the Executive Governor of Ogun State, Prince Dapo Abiodun to

do the announcement. However, he waited and did not sign the paper until July. It was a period of political engagements, and they were busy. Towards the end of July, the Governor gave his nod at the State Executive Council meeting. It was approved and the announcement came on air.

When did the Ipebi process start and what were the activities that heralded the period?

On the 1st of August, we started the Ipebi process. The Ipebi is a period of learning, orientation and fortification. All these we did. The experience we had in Owu, A be o k u t a i s u n p r e c e d e n t e d a n y w h e r e i n



Akogun Owu, r, with Oba Matemilola, at Owu Central Mosque

him may harm him, his mother took him to her relations at Magbo to fortify him. Till date, we keep doing that. The crowd was massive. Even in the hallowed places, people were following us. Your acceptability is measured by the type of crowd that follows you in doing these rites. Although it was in the mid of the night, the crowd that followed us was mammoth. It's a test of acceptability. The Oba himself would be very happy seeing the crowd around him.

The crown the Oba was holding was that of Oba Alufon, the main deity of Magbo. It's a symbolic crown. He would have to hold it because it's very small and you cannot balance it on your head. If you put it on your palm, it cannot

people and came in for some other rites. Coming in, the Aloje would remove that ancient crown and take it into custody. From there, he gets another crown and by afternoon, he would come back to receive the crown which he would be using.

What's your reaction to some Muslims who do not support Muslims ascending any Yoruba royal throne?

The Prophet of Allah (S.A.W) appointed leaders and heads for communities. If you say you will not be there because you are a Muslim; you won't take the title and you won't rule over your people, imbeciles and infidels will rule over your people and you too. They would be ruling the way of infidels and you will be a follower of an infidel leader.

However, if you choose to join, the only thing constant in life is change. In Ipebi, we were observing our five daily prayers in jama'ah. In Ipebi, we were observing Jum'ah service. In Ipebi, Christian groups were coming to pray for the Oba, to worship in their way. If enlightened people refuse to come in, how would that have happened?

The immediate past Oba was a devout Christian. Every day there was fellowship in this palace. A full-blown church started. In Itapa Olowu Moshu, we were calling adhan there, praying five obligatory prayers, observing tahajud and Jum'ah service. The Oba could not go out for three months and said he could not miss his Jum'ah service. So, we had to call the Chief Imam of Owu who sent his Mufasir who led the prayers. And twice a week, the clerics come to recite the whole Qur'an. If not a Muslim, how could that have happened? If a Christian did not come in, how would they be having fellowship in the palace? It's only idolatry acts that would be going on.

So, Muslims should come in. Today, I am Akogun, head of the kingmakers. Apart from the Olowu, there is no chief higher than the Akogun. Since I became the Akogun, we do tahajud, recite the Qur'an, observe solat and have sermons the Islamic way. Go into it with your Islam. Use your Islam to improve it. Use your Islam to modify it. Society would be better for it.

If you say you will not be there because you are a Muslim; you won't take the title and you won't rule over your people, imbeciles and infidels will rule over your people and you too. They would be ruling the way of infidels and you will be a follower of an infidel leader.

Yorubaland. You have the Oba in Ipebi and people are trooping to pay their homage, bringing gifts of so many kinds. We thank God for the acceptability, not just in Owu but also in the Egba Traditional Council. The Egba Traditional Council is the whole of Ogun Central Senatorial District and part of Ogun West Senatorial District. Everywhere and even from Ogun East (Ijebu), from the North, East and even the diaspora. Six days to the end of Ipebi, we had to say we won't admit anybody again. But again, we had no choice but to grant

some concessions to some people and groups.

The Ipebi process started with white fasting. We wouldn't eat anything containing salt, oil, or sugar. We had to deny ourselves and go into purity. That we did up till yesterday, Sunday, October 23. We did some activities at Ipebi there and later moved to Magbo. Magbo is a unique place. The Magbos are in-laws to the Owu people. They are the mothers of the Otiletas. When the first Otileta was to ascend the throne of his forefathers and there was anxiety that his brother Lagbedu who lost out to

cover it. So, it's very small. It's a symbolic crown. Immediately we finished the circumambulation, they took the crown away.

Among the rites was also the pledge or the sacred oath taken by the first six of the kingmakers that they would always be loyal to the King. That they would not do anything against his interest. The king would also pray for them and the town at large. Then, the crown of Oduduwa is placed on his head. It's that crown he carried from Imosha to his palace. With that crown, he blessed his

Muslim organisations present as Olowu of Owu receives staff of office in grand style

It was jubilation galore on Saturday, October 29, at Oba Odeleye Park, Sokori, Abeokuta area of Ogun State as prominent Muslim organisations in Nigeria turned out in their numbers to celebrate with one of their own, Oba Dr Saka Matemilola, who has been installed the 14th Olowu of the Owu Kingdom.

Members of the Al-Usrah, a Port Harcourt-based organisation; The Companion, The Criterion and Lighthouse Muslim community, clad in their beautiful and modest Islamic attires converged at the venue of the event that climaxed the eight-day coronation ceremony, where the Arole Oduduwa, as the Olowu of Owu is fondly called, received the staff of office.

Muslim News gathered that the staff of office was presented to the Otileta VII, Oba Matemilola by the Executive Governor of Ogun State, Otunba Dapo Abiodun, in the presence of other Yoruba monarchs, including the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, the Obong of Calabar, Edidem Ekpo OkonAbasi Otu V.

The Governor, while speaking at the coronation and the 23rd edition of 'Odun Omo Olowu festival' called on Oba Matemilola to see his installation as a call to service towards the development of Owu Kingdom and the state in general.

Gov. Abiodun equally charged the new monarch to join hands with his government towards achieving its vision of building the future of the state, especially now when his administration has charted a new economic blueprint for the state.

The governor described the new Olowu as a man of honour and integrity whose vast experience and intellectual prowess would bring immense growth to the kingdom.

He implored all sons and daughters of the kingdom to support the traditional ruler in his developmental agenda to take the town to greater heights.

Our correspondent, who has been following the crowning of Olowu since Monday, October 24, revealed that while The Companion, an association of Muslim men in business and the professions, stood by the Kabiyesi, who is their member, The Criterion rallied round the Senior wife, Olori Khadijah, who is an active member of the association, since the day her husband was nominated as the Olowu.

Olori Khadijah spearheads the newly floated non-governmental organisation, Oba Oluyalo, Otileta VII Foundation, which was established to provide impactful interventions in education, healthcare, women and youth affairs to the Owu community.

The foundation was launched on Wednesday, October 27 at the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library, OOP, Abeokuta immediately after the colloquium, chaired by JAMB Registrar, Prof Is-haq Oloyede.

Speaking with *Muslim News* after the launch, Olori Khadijah, who appreciated the unflinching support The Criterion had rendered from its inception, said the foundation would have great impact on the lives in the community.



L-R: Immediate Former Governor, Sen. Ibikunle Amosun; Olowu of Owu, Oba Matemilola; Current Gov. Prince Dapo Abiodun and first Gov, Chief Olusegun Osoba at the event

Alhaja Dhikratullah Abiodun Matesun-Oshodi, the immediate past Amirah of The Criterion, Lagos district, who led the delegation of the faith-based children, which is the objective of the organisation at the event thanked Allah for the success of the coronation ceremony.

Also glad to speak with *Muslim News* was Alhaja Maryam Arinola Alege, former National Secretary of The Criterion, who congratulated the Kabiyesi and his wife, Hajia Khadijah is one of us. She is the coordinator of the Lighthouse Allah.

According to her, I am highly excited to be here to celebrate with our brother, Kabiyesi, and most importantly, our sister, Olori Khadijah, who is our member, on this

glorious day. We pray that Allah will guides them on the right path.

Hajiah Sakinah Abdulganiy, the Treasurer of The Criterion, Lagos district, also spoke with *Muslim News* at the presentation of staff of office to the new Olowu.

I rejoice with the new Olowu of Owu Kingdom, especially his wife, who is an active member of our organisation. She coordinates the affairs of our members in the estate. She is a very quiet woman and easygoing. May Allah bless the family.

In his acceptance speech, Oba Matemilola assured all sons and daughters of Owu kingdom that he would lead the way and facilitate the growth of the kingdom, calling on

groups, religious leaders and individuals in the kingdom to play their parts with trust, dedication and unity.

According to Oba Matemilola, the Olowu stool is unique and comes with great responsibilities, as he promised to live up to the virtues, principles and values as exemplified by his predecessors.

The event was also attended by dignitaries from all walks of life, including former governors, Olusegun Osoba, Senator Ibikunle Amosun, top government functionaries, traditional rulers, including the Olu of Warri, Ogiame Atuwatse 111 of Warri; the Alake of Egbaland, Oba Adedotun Aremu Gbadebo and other traditional rulers,

Why we backed Oba Matemilola for Olowu throne

Speaking on behalf of Al-Usrah, a Port Harcourt-based Islamic organisation, Prof. Abdulrazaq Kilani, who led a congregation of members to the coronation ceremony, recalled how Dr. Matemilola had served as secretary of the Islamic group for about a decade.

Prof. Kilani, who is also the Imam of the University of Port Harcourt Mosque, said it was important to rejoice and identify with Oba Matemilola on his elevation as the Olowu.

He noted that the emergence of Dr Matemilola is divine, having been privy to the processes that led to his selection.

"We are here to rejoice, celebrate and associate with our friend, our brother, the Olowu of Owu, Oba Saka Adelola Matemilola. He was one of us in Port Harcourt. He was the Secretary of Al-Usrah in Port Harcourt for close to a decade before

he relocated to Lagos. Up to the time he was announced, he was still an active member of Al-Usrah. Due to that, we need to identify with him for this kind of elevation Almighty Allah has given to him, to serve not only his community, but also to serve humanity, which is what I've known him for a very long time. We are here to celebrate this success story in his life.

"I think his emergence is divine. I was involved. I knew everything from the beginning to the end, the processes, the interviews, the obstacles and all others. I have a very good knowledge of the whole thing and I consider it to be a divine thing. If God had not destined that he would be the Olowu, there was no way he would have been.

"His emergence indicates that God sanctioned that he should come and rule the Owu Kingdom at this material time, for a particular purpose, which Almighty Allah will

now begin to manifest to us. I pray that the manifestation in a positive manner will begin to be recorded not only in Owu Kingdom but in the whole of Nigeria."

Prof. Kilani meanwhile dismissed insinuations that the processes that punctuated the installation of the Olowu were ritual.

He said, "I think what we need to do is to interrogate some of these cultures and begin to know the basics. For example, look at Ipebi. Ipebi is a traditional school of politics where an Oba will be retooled. It's a school of politics for the Owu Kingdom. But because it's called Ipebi - seclusion, people will begin to think if there are initiations.

"These are some of the misunderstandings and misinformation surrounding these activities. Somebody coming from an academic setting or a business world needs to be trained: how to greet, how to address, and how to

manage local, community meetings. That's what Ipebi is meant for."

He emphasised that the Ipebi is a preparatory ground for leadership in every community.

"If you look at the traditional culture, we have the philosophy of the Yoruba, the politics of the Yoruba, the religion of the Yoruba, the social life of the Yoruba. If you are well grounded, you will be able to separate the chaff from the grain in interrogating this. But if you are looking at it from a distance, you may not be able to know that Ipebi is not about initiation or ritual, rather, it's about how to retool the new monarch that has just emerged so that he's trained on the rudiments of the traditional institution.

"In the secular setting too, you have the president-elect. Before you are sworn in, there are things you have to know and do. You'll be exposed to files of the government. You'll be exposed to rules and

Friends of Oba Matemilola pay tributes on his emergence as Otileta VII

Say monarch's private sector experience will benefit Owu Kingdom

The Committee of Friends of His Royal Majesty, HRM, Oba Saka Adelola Matemilola have hailed the emergence of the new Olowu of Owu, saying his reign will surely herald a new vista of hope and era of positive change for the noble Owu Kingdom..

They described his emergence as surprising, saying, because of his exemplary humility, they never knew their friend is a prince, who would in the future rule over his people in Owu Kingdom, despite years of rewarding and marvelous relationship.

They posited that Dr Saka's decades of experience in the private and academic world will surely be of immense benefit to the kingdom.

Muslim News spoke exclusively to Oba Matemilola's friends, many of whom didn't only actively participate in the 8-day coronation ceremony but also sponsored multimillion Naira projects including solar electrification and CCTV installation of the palace, its environs, among others.

The distinguished friends of the Olowu, who are professionals and captains of industries noted that the 58-year-old, first class monarch is a man of principle and an upright personality notable for pursuing whatever cause he believes in to a logical conclusion.

In separate interviews with *Muslim News*, they relished memories of their age-long harmonious relationship, dating back to their university days to work experience up to the time of his ascension to the throne of his forefathers.

Knowledgeable, sound, with human empathy - Owodunni

A lawyer and business executive, Mr. Abdulfatai Bolaji Owodunni, who has spent over a decade with the new Olowu, said they got closer as residents of the Lighthouse Estate, Lekki Beach, Lagos, Southwest, Nigeria.

He testified to Prof. Matemilola's sense of duty, citing his role as chairman, environment committee of the estate that was founded in the early 2000s as the first ever Islamic Estate in the Centre of Excellence.

"We both share some passion. These are: doing regular physical exercise and walking. At least, we walk regularly together. We spend quality times together, day and night. With Prof. Matemilola, we do an average of 15,000 steps daily. We were always together. That's how I became close to him. In the cause of the exercise, we have time to discuss various issues, ranging from professional to politics to international relations to socio-economic activities to national issues," he said.

"There I discovered in him somebody that is very knowledgeable and sound with human empathy. I know Prof. Matemilola to be forthright. Later on, while still in the estate, a committee

was formed to run its affairs. Coincidentally, I found myself serving under the chairmanship of Prof. Matemilola (because we are both lovers of nature).

"That bonded us even the more. While doing our exercises in the morning and in the evening, we ensured that we covered all areas, closes, all nooks and crannies of the estate simultaneously, doing the work of environment committee. Aside from meeting at the mosque, we spend minimum of one and a half hours daily, regardless of weekday or weekend.

"Aside from being a Muslim, an upright one, the zeal with which he discharges his obligations to the environment committee and

traditionalist invalid. I see Prof. Matemilola fitting into that bracket very well."

Mr. Owodunni said Prof. Matemilola is a principled person, stressing that he has paid his dues in the private sector and his experience will help put Owu at an advantage.

He also noted that as one of the friends in the know of his emergence, he believes in his capacity to drive the change needed by Owu Kingdom.

"He is from the private sector. He has paid his dues in the private enterprise, which makes him even better than coming from public enterprise. He is a process person. So, he will survive in that environment. I am one of those who are shocked that

was able to assemble that caliber of people who can but represent what he stands for."

We met in 1983 during our first year at UI - Dr Ibrahim

Dr Sarafa Oladele Ibrahim, a university colleague of the Olowu described him in glowing terms during his interview with *Muslim News* from his base in the United States of America. He said the monarch shows concern for his friends' wellbeing, which has helped to sustain their relationship including the deep respect they share within themselves.

Ibrahim related how they met in the first year of their university days in 1983. According to him, We

Shell. We were posted to Lagos. So, we were working at different places, but we were also together. When he left Mobil to go abroad, I also left Shell to go abroad. He was in England and I was in US. Every summer, it's either he comes to me or I go to him. We have never been apart."

Dr Ibrahim noted that Prof. Matemilola carries himself responsibly, noting that it never occurred to him that he was a prince until he disclosed his intention to contest for the Obaship.

"Definitely, I have no doubt in my mind that the Owu Kingdom has chosen the right person. I never knew that Dr Saka Matemilola was a prince until he told me in January that he's vying for the Owu stool. I asked why, since he wasn't a prince. Then he explained to me. I was full of surprise. I then rallied all my friends around him. We thank God for today. He will be a good monarch, no doubt about it.

"He has always carried himself with dignity. He is a man of principle. He is above board when it comes to doing right things. He doesn't talk too much. He listens a lot. I came to Nigeria for his coronation anniversary. We remain friends just like we have been. I know a lot about him. We raised our children together too."

Dr Ibrahim stressed that Oba Matemilola is a good Muslim who is strong-minded enough to withstand the challenges that come with being a monarch in Yoruba land. He said the Otileta VII has brought Islam to the palace, saying his establishment of Salat at Ipebi is a signal of better things to come.

"I know Saka Matemilola to be a very good Muslim brother since time immemorial. He never misses prayers. He prays at the appropriate time. I know the position he was going to take is controversial. We talked about this and people have decided on this. I was in support of him going for the position. I said to him unless conscious Muslims begin to step up, there is no way there would be a change. I believe Saka is strong-minded enough to withstand the challenges that will come as a King, especially regarding this spiritual issues that would be thrown at him. I know he will neither bend nor compromise and will stick to the Shahada.

"The immediate past Olowu was also a pastor and a very good Christian. Since he was able to withstand it, the Muslim should be able to do better. So far, our Kabiyesi has tried his best. He has brought Islam into the palace. He has established five daily prayers which he leads. I was in the palace and prayed Salat with the King. The only prayer he doesn't lead is the Jum'ah prayer which the Chief Imam of Owu sends representatives to lead. He prayed in Ipebi. I think that's a lot, considering the fact that Ipebi is believed to be a mystical place where ritual activities are done. I believe that's a light. That's the signal that we should expect many more to come to Owu land", he said.



Mr. Owodunni



Dr Ibrahim

then the passion he has for being physically fit in the form of doing exercise bonded us together the more and sustained our relationship. It makes me know him and observe him at closer range than most people who relate with him."

Mr. Owodunni explained that Oba Matemilola is a Muslim by conviction and is not likely to derail after assuming the traditional position.

"Prof. Matemilola and I met as Muslims. As of today, he is a Muslim. In shaa Allah, till death, he will remain a Muslim. That he has assumed the position of Olowu of Owu will not change his being a Muslim. He is a Muslim not because he doesn't have a choice. He is a Muslim by conviction. When you are convinced about something, you will not derail easily. So, the fear that as he becomes the Oba, he is likely to derail from being a Muslim, I don't see that happening.

"Yes, in some areas, there is a belief that once you become an Oba, you lose your religion and religious identity. I don't think it's so in all cases. Empirical examples abound. I can give instances of Awujale of Ijebu Land and Oba Tejuosho. There are precedences already set which make the assertion that once you join the monarchy, you become a

somebody that does an average of 15,000 or 20,000 steps a day now being locked in for three months in Ipebi. But I knew he is a man that does yoga too. And within his tight schedule at Ipebi, he would find time to remain fit. That showed during the coronation period that he still remained a fit and proper person. So, I see Prof. Matemilola driving the necessary change needed by the Owu Kingdom.

"I happened to be one of the few privileged friends of Kabiyesi that were involved in the process of his emergence and installation as the Olowu. And I can tell you that originally, there were about 18 friends that came together, found him capable and having the capacity and all that requires much more than any other candidate that contested for the stool with him. So, from day one, we believed in his candidature. We believed he is the best man for the job. The friends that he has are quality set of people and from day one, they stood by him. You could see that playing out during the coronation.

Those who attended the coronation would bear testimony that it's one of the most brilliantly organised events they ever witnessed. The whole arrangements, accommodations, logistics, feeding were perfectly handled. It shows the type of person Oba Matemilola is. That is why he

came in through advanced level to study Mechanical Engineering at UI. That's how we met. We bonded almost immediately. Oba Matemilola is very quiet, very coolheaded and mature. I am not the only one who gravitated towards him but I am happy to be one of his best friends.

"The deep respect we share among ourselves has sustained the relationship we have up till this moment. We are flexible with each other. Everyone of our friends will testify to the great concern Oba Matemilola has for the wellbeing of his friends. He'll come all the way from his hostel to mine and I will also reciprocate that. But he is always out there looking out for his friends.

"We exercise together, go for swimming together. Sometimes we just walk the campus together. That friendship was sustained from year one till when we graduated and when he was serving. During service, we still had time for each other. We put in for our Masters together at the University of Ibadan (UI). So, the friendship continued.

"One other friend that joined us later was Dr Olosho Amidu. We were inseparable during those periods. We shared the same room during our graduate studies at UI. Later of course, we went our separate ways. He joined Mobil; I joined

Faces at the coronation ceremony

The eight-day coronation ceremony of Oba Dr Saka Matemilola was held between Sunday, October 23 and 30 at different locations in Owu Kingdom, Abeokuta, Ogun State. Here are official pictures from the colourful events as captured by Habeeb Ismail-Badmus...



Presentation of the staff of office



Launching of Kabiyesi's new foundation



Lunch meal

Emergence of Oba (Prof.) Saka Matemilola



Crowning of Olowu of Owu



Coronation Banquet



Golf Kitty in honour of Olowu



The Oloris extra

We at Muslim News Nigeria congratulate Oba Prof. Saka Matemilola on his emergence as the 14th Olowu of Owu Kingdom

Friends of Oba Matemilola... Cont'd from pg.7

We're glad to be instrumental to the new Olowu - Otunba Bamigbade

Otunba Jerry Olukayode Bamigbade, Chairman, Committee of Friends of Kabiyesi, expressed excitement over his involvement and support towards the coronation of the newly installed Olowu. He said he was very happy for being helpful to a friend like a brother.

He said, "Considering how we were able to support the cause of his installation as Olowu of Owu, we are all very happy that God used us in a way to get to this point."

He disclosed that being the Chairman, the planning started in February, adding that, members of the committee were actively involved in the execution of their assignments towards the successful coronation ceremony.

Otunba Bamigbade added that the Olowu is bound to realize his vision for Owu with his network and support from Committee of Friends.

"Oba Matemilola has a vision of what he wants to do for Owu Kingdom and I think with his network and Committee of Friends, he will be able to bring his vision to life."

Oba Matemilola will make a great king - Chikezie Nwosu

Engineer Chikezie Nwosu, the Chief Executive Officer, CEO of Waltersmith Petroman Oil Limited, an indigenous oil and gas company says Oba Matemilola will make a great king.

Nwosu who has been in the industry for over 30 years, gave the assurance in an interview with *Muslim News*, saying the new Olowu is not someone that settles for less.

According to him, "Dr Saka is someone that goes after greatness. He is going to bring exceptional development to the kingdom, especially in the areas of education, healthcare, agriculture, energy and capacity building.

"Of course with the support of many other people, that's going to be one of his landmarks. He will also bring peace to his community. He is indeed a very peaceful person. For all the years that I have known him, I can't remember him ever raising his voice at anyone. He tries to calm people down and carry them along in every situation.

"If he reaches out and creates synergies across the country, he will



Otunba Bamigbade



Chief Nwosu



Engr. Musbau

achieve greatly and bring remarkable development to the Owu Kingdom," he said.

Recounting his first encounter with Oba Matemilola, the CEO recalled that they first met when they both joined Shell in October

engineers and giving them skills sets required for their success in the field. I had to partner with two other engineers and Kabiyesi was the most instrumental of them all," he said.

Mutual interest and respect have been the driving force

professionally, we are like minds. He is a man of integrity who speaks honestly and I think to an extent, those qualities describe me as well. So, this very character has also been very key to our relationship over the years," he said.

member of my family and asks after everyone especially.

"In short, his character and personality have been the driving force of our relationship at every level of our interaction. He exhibits exceptional and enviable leadership and human relations skills. We interacted personally, in the industry, as occupants of the same estate and at some other levels. He is able to think critically and proffer solutions even in difficult situations."

Oba Matemilola is well prepared for the Responsibilities ahead of him

Engr Musbau, having known the Olowu since their undergraduate days at the University of Ibadan, worked with him at Shell, collaborated with him in the same estate in humanitarian projects and services, he thinks the Olowu is fully prepared to steer Owu to greatness, fulfilment and accomplishment, especially with the unwavering support of the committee of friends and the Muslim Community.

He said: Hence, I think he is well prepared for the role, moreover he has the support of friends and the Muslim Community. So far, he has led a life of service, just that this is a bigger project. However, I think he is prepared with his intellectual capacity and the experiences he had gathered over the years.

Oba Matemilola has a vision of what he wants to do for Owu Kingdom and I think with his network and Committee of Friends, he will be able to bring his vision to life.

1996 as engineers.

He stated that they had to cooperate and synergize on different occasions and went on official duties together, noting that some of their characters and goals align.

"Back in those days, Shell used to have something known as a buddy system. So, being the first person I met, we worked together on so many projects. He was in petroleum engineering and I was in petrophysics. At a point, we were both on an assignment to Netherlands, we worked together even there.

"On getting back to Nigeria, we became principal engineers and were saddled with the responsibility of training and raising younger

of our relationship

Engr Nwosu said the interests and values he shares with Oba Matemilola have been the driving force of their relationship over the years. He said that they were both petroleum engineers aspiring to attain the peak of their careers and are passionate about philanthropy.

"Well, I'll say it is mutual interest and mutual respect. We are both petroleum engineers and are interested in attaining the peak in our careers and also helping to grow the next generation. Another mutual interest we have is philanthropy," he said.

Engr Nwosu described the Kabiyesi is a man of integrity and honesty. "Beyond that,

Oba Matemilola is well prepared for the responsibilities ahead of him - Engr Musbau

Another former colleague and neighbour of the Olowu, Engr Suara Adeyemi Musbau described Oba Matemilola as an exceptional leader who doesn't lose his composure even in difficult situations. He also described him as an epitome of humility and service.

He said: "Well, talking about the Olowu, he is a very nice person who exhibits some wonderful qualities such as humility, mutual respect and he cares a lot about the welfare of the people around him as well as their progress. He is ever ready to give listening ears to every

Shuaib Salisu congratulates the 14th Olowu of Owu Kingdom

The All Progressives Congress candidate for Ogun Central Senatorial district, Shuaib Afolabi Salisu, SAS has congratulated His Royal Majesty, Oba Prof. Saka Adelola Matemilola on his coronation and the official presentation of the staff of office as the 14th Olowu of Owu

As a thorough-bred Mechanical Engineer with a Doctorate Degree in Applied Mathematics from the University of Cambridge, Salisu said he does not doubt that the new Olowu will use his gift and intellect to serve his people meritoriously.

The APC senatorial

development.

"On behalf of my family and the good people of Ogun Central Senatorial district, I heartily congratulate His Royal Majesty, Oba Dr. Saka Adelola Matemilola on the occasion of his coronation as the 14th Olowu of Owu. Oba Matemilola is an epitome of dedication and

usher in a new era of peace, stability, and progress in Owu kingdom, Egbaland, and Ogun state as a whole," he said.

Salisu also describes the new Olowu as being very trust worthy and loyal to his friends and he (Salisu) is proud of their association dating back several decades.

"I congratulate Oba Dr. Saka Adelola Matemilola and I pray that the Almighty God will continue to bestow on him the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding for a reign of peace, prosperity, and love in Owu Kingdom".



Alh. Salisu

I congratulate Oba Dr. Saka Adelola Matemilola and I pray that the Almighty God will continue to bestow on him the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding for a reign of peace, prosperity, and love in Owu Kingdom

kingdom, Abeokuta.

In a statement issued by his media office, the APC senatorial candidate described the newly crowned monarch as a selfless leader with the right temperament and attributes that will chart a new course for the highly revered Owu traditional stool, Egbaland and Ogun state in general.

candidate adds that the people of Owu Kingdom, who are among prominent constituents in Ogun Central senatorial district he will be representing at the senate from 2023, by God's grace are blessed to have a renowned Engineer, whose exploits in the business world spread across several sectors, including oil and gas, community service, and national

selflessness in private, public, and community service who has used his position as an Engineer to uplift the standards of life of so many people through the provision of social amenities, mentoring of youths and education support to indigent students of the state.

"As you ascend the throne of your forefathers, may your reign

Muslim organisations present... *Cont'd from pg.6*

regulations, and protocols of government before you assume a position. The Yoruba society also has this in their traditional way of life which to some extent a lot of mysteries surround it. If such mysteries are not there, there is no way people would respect them. That's it about traditional society and culture."

For his part, The Companion, Lagos State District Amir, Mallam Abdulkabir Olawola Baruwa, said Dr Matemilola is one of them and they are present to give him the support as he is being crowned the new Olowu.

He allayed the fears that Oba Matemilola would embrace practices against the Islamic belief, noting he is a conscious Muslim brother who will do things in line with the Shari'ah.

The Amir also referred to the legislation passed by the Ogun State House of Assembly regarding the traditional institution, saying it is an instrument that Oba Matemilola can rely on to organise himself in line with

the dictates of his faith.

"We are here to felicitate

with our brother Dr Saka Matemilola who is being crowned as the Olowu of Owu. Today is the crowning and that's

why we are here. He is one of us. He is a member of The Companion. He is also a Muslim brother. We are here to

give him support and to also pray for him that Allah will guide him. That's very important. It's not an easy role to assume. May Allah guide him. May Allah bless him and make his reign witness success and bring prosperity to this community. May Allah accept it from him.

"There is fear for everybody, but along the line, things are changing. We are in a dynamic world. If you recall, recently, there was a law that was passed by the Ogun State House of Assembly, which was assented to by the Governor. Any Oba has a choice of the faith he wants to profess and practice. He can decide to organise himself in line with the dictates of his faith.

He expressed the belief that Dr Matemilola would measure up to expectations, especially by setting a good standard by which other Muslims would be encouraged to take up such traditional stools.



Members of prominent Muslim organisations during their visit to the Olowu of Owu (m)

Lighthouse holds special prayer for 14th Olowu as scholars encourage Muslims to take exalted offices

Earlier, the Lighthouse Mosque, Lekki, Lagos State, had on Saturday, October 1, organised a special prayer for the new Olowu of Owu Kingdom, Oba Matemilola.

The special prayer session was led by the Chief Imam, Falomo Police Central Mosque, Victoria Island, Lagos, Dr. Tajudeen Adebayo.

The Imam, who recited some selected verses from the Noble Qur'an, offered prayers for the protection of eeman (faith), life and guidance for the new Oba and urged the

congregation to also remember the new Olowu in their prayers.

Explaining the need for the special prayer, Imam Nojeem Jimoh noted that the prayer session was part of the support of the Muslim community for the new monarch.

He noted that many Muslim brothers were at a loss on how to react to Dr. Matemilola becoming an Oba in Yorubaland, which is erroneously believed to be full of fetish activities.

Findings by *Muslim News* show that the last time a Muslim occupied the Olowu throne was in 1972, about 50 years ago.

"That was the late father of Chief Bola Ajibola. He was the last Muslim Olowu. Alhamdulillah, we have a new Muslim king. So, we are here to support him with prayers for correcting same. He said with the Allah to guide his steps," Imam Jimoh corroborated the findings.

Muslims should be encouraged to take exalted thrones — *Lekki Chief Imam*

The Chief Imam of Lekki Central Mosque, Sheikh Ridwan Jamiu, on his part, said committed Muslims should be encouraged to take exalted traditional thrones.

Sheikh Jamiu, who delivered a lecture on 'Being an Oba and a

Committed Muslim: The Challenges', added that Muslims should rally round their brothers to take up leadership positions to make positive impacts and change the narratives.

"I think Muslims should be encouraged to take up exalted thrones, especially those who are learned and committed. Once we have seen that they are committed, even if they are not so committed. We should rally round them and support them to make impact. The same thing applies to the political space in Nigeria. If we discourage Muslims from going into politics, we are going to be punishing the Ummah seriously.

"The Prophet (S.A.W) used to say anyone who sees wrong should correct it. He then mentioned ways of correcting same. He said with the hands; and if you can't use that, then with the tongue and then with your heart, which is the lowest point of faith. You can hardly make any impact by correcting wrong with your mind. But if your mind hates something, you will probably change it if you have the opportunity to use your hands.

"On the hadith, the use of hands has been interpreted in two ways: the figurative hands and the literary hands. Scholars have said the a correction with hands mostly applies

to leaders and rulers who influence people.

"Use your power to correct things. Using the tongue to correct things applies to scholars. Using the mind is for the generality of Muslims. In Nigeria, we know there are many wrongs. We have always complained about it. If we have people who are competent to make impact and change things, why shouldn't we encourage them? It may be in the political space or through traditional chieftancy," he noted.

The Imam cited the case of one of his friends who is now a monarch in Osun, noting he's also a scholar with whom he went to Madrasah. He said Muslims are understandably always afraid to take up the traditional stool.

"As we have Emirs in the North, we have Obas in the South, Southwest especially. Just yesterday (September 30), somebody came to me after the Jum'ah prayer. He was being considered for installation as a first-class Oba in one of the Yoruba cities. He asked if he should take the position because he thought it is not something good for him as a committed Muslim. I encouraged him and guided him.

Meanwhile, the scholar

explained that any Muslim taking up the traditional stool must be conscious of Allah and remember the day he would account for his actions.

"The person taking up the throne should remember this. A day is coming when he's going to stand before Allah for accountability. Everybody wants salvation for themselves in the hereafter. Nobody wants to suffer in the hereafter. Therefore, fear Allah, Your Royal Majesty. Our first admonition to you is to fear Allah in whatever you do and remember the day you are going to stand before Him for accountability.

"I want to admonish the Oba. Allah is the possessor of all powers and kingdoms. We should use our power to make impact. We want you to make a difference. Let the non-Muslims have it in their history that the best Oba that has ever risen to the throne is a Muslim Oba. That will be good. We should always try to leave a legacy for posterity."

In attendance at the prayer session was the Deputy President 1, MUSWEN, Alhaji Rafiu Ebiti, who advised the princes and other family members of the new Olowu to be very conscious of their Islam.

Prince Abdulkareem Matemilola who graced the event gave the vote of thanks and appreciated the Lighthouse Muslim Community for their support and demonstration of love.



Nojeem Jimoh

Oba Dr Saka Adelola Matemilola, Otileta VII, on Friday, October 28, observed the first Jum'ah prayer since his crowning as the 14th Olowu of Owu Kingdom, Abeokuta Ogun State.

The Jum'ah service, an event last witnessed in 1972 – the last time a Muslim Olowu was installed, was one of the activities marking the eight-day coronation programme.

The King, a devout Muslim, was joined by his two wives, tens of sons and daughters of Owu at the community ancient central mosque, in Apo, for the special Jum'ah, led by the Chief Imam, Sheikh Sulaiman Kehinde Akorede.

Not only that, friends of the new Olowu from within and outside the State, including former Governor of the State, Otunba Gbenga Daniel and his successor,

Olowu of Owu observes inaugural Jum'ah

Senator Ibikunle Amosun, Oba Matemilola didn't only bow, he immediate Chief of Staff to the State Governor, Alhaji Salisu Shuaibu, the Lord of the universe.

During his emotion-laden speech, Oba Matemilola charged the ulamah to always remind him about his duties to Allah and the society. He said, "Allah has put the

Muslim News findings revealed that immediately the Olowu, a foremost king in the history of Yorubaland, entered the mosque, he observed Tahiyat Al-Masjid - two rakat supererogatory prayer - standing, bow, prostrating before his Creator, the King of all kings, Allah.

According to Yoruba tradition, a kabiyesi doesn't bow to anyone as the culture demands that it's the people that must prostrate or kneel to greet the king. But today,

indigene through both his parents. Whereas his late father hailed from the Gbagura Kingdom of the ancient city, his mother hailed from Totoro, which is part of the Owu Kingdom.



Olowu of Owu, other dignitaries, during special Jum'ah service

Queens of Oba Matemilola re-affirm support for Olowu

- I'll focus on the welfare of women and children – Queen Khadijah
- We'll concentrate on human capacity development – Queen Ameenat

The Olowu of Owu, Oba (Dr.) Saka Matemilola has attracted support and backing from various individuals and groups before and after his eight-day coronation ceremony. A different level of support has, however, emanated from the household of the newly crowned monarch, as his two beautiful wives, Queen Khadijah Ajayi and Queen Ameenat Adeleye showered unflinching love for their husband, receiving personalities that graced the events.

Besides, the Queens are also at the forefront of impactful programmes and projects that will benefit a lot of Owu sons and daughters, especially the downtrodden, on behalf of the monarch. The queens play vital roles in holding the palace and community at large together.

During the classy and colourful coronation, the Oba Matemilola Oluyalo Otileta VII Foundation was inaugurated.

At the head of the Foundation is the senior wife, Queen Khadijah, with the active support of Queen Ameenat Adeleye Matemilola.

The Oba Matemilola Oluyalo Otileta VII Foundation is geared towards the development of the Owu Kingdom through impactful interventions in education, healthcare, women and youth affairs. It will empower and support Owu indigenes through its people-centered programmes.

As the senior wife, I'll focus on the welfare of women and children

Speaking with *Muslim News*, the senior queen said that while the Oba focuses on the whole community, as a woman, she would take the specific responsibility of focusing on women and children.

She disclosed how her conversation with her friends about making impact led to the idea of the Oba Matemilola Oluyalo Otileta VII Foundation.

"After the screening and later announcement of the result, my friends rallied around me. They promised to support me. They also met Kabiyesi. From there, we formed a platform and thought of so many things. We agreed to establish a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) in the name of the Oba.

"As a woman, my passion is for women and children. I belong to an Islamic group, *The Criterion*. What we do is see to the welfare of women and children. So, we are focusing on women and children. The King is focusing on everybody. But for us, we are concentrating on women and children. We will look into their education, empowerment, welfare, guidance and counseling, health and anything that will bring progress to the community," she said.

Queen Matemilola assured that the palace would be fair to all categories of people in the community, noting the stool is not meant for the Muslims alone despite



Kabiyesi (m) with his beautiful wives, Queen Khadijah (l) and Queen Ameenat (r)

“As a woman, my passion is for women and children. I belong to an Islamic group, *The Criterion*. What we do is see to the welfare of women and children. So, we are focusing on women and children. The King is focusing on everybody. But for us, we are concentrating on women and children.”

that the monarch being a committed Muslim.

She also gave an account of the processes that led to the kingship, noting that Oba Matemilola did not

family because we never expected him to become king being a Muslim. But Allah has destined that it would be. And whatever would be would be. Initially, we felt that being a Muslim

trust in Allah and seek His guidance (through *Istikhaarah*). At first, my husband said he didn't want it and even told his people that he was ready to assist any other person from the



Queen Khadijah



Queen Ameenat

crave the traditional title in the first instance.

According to her, *Alhamdulillah rabil aalamin*. I am delighted and give thanks to Almighty Allah for His mercy on our

will be difficult because there is no way you would say you want to rule as a king and that you would not be involved in activities against the wish of Allah.

"However, in anything that you want to do, you should put your

family that wants it. The family insisted they didn't have any other person to present except him because of his profile and experience.

"So, he came back. We did *Istikhaarah* (supplication to seek Allah's guidance). We also consulted

the scholars. At the end of the day, the position of the scholars is that if we Muslims refuse to become kings when the opportunity comes, non-Muslims would rule over us. It's better to be in a position where you can change things. They, however, charged that he should have the mind that his ascension to the throne will be to serve Allah and make changes that would benefit the community.

"I also told him that we should pray over it after two of his friends he consulted strongly encouraged him to take the position. As Allah would have it, everything just fell in place," she added.

We'll concentrate on human capacity development – Queen Ameenat

Speaking with *Muslim News*, Queen Ameenat revealed more details about the Foundation, confirming that she would be of active support to her senior wife in the smooth running of the Foundation.

According to her, "The Foundation, for now, will focus mainly on human capacity development. As time goes on, we'll continue to focus on new things. We have different roles we are going to be playing. Even though they are different, they are related.

"Take for instance, the area of education, there are so many activities to be done such as the annual payment of WASSCE, NECO, and JAMB fees, under the Olowu scholarship initiative.

Still under education, there is a literacy development project, which is fortress. It's about skills development.

"It will not stop at speaking/reading English, it will also include Yoruba, which is our cultural language here in Ogun State. If you choose one over the other, it's like a disservice to the children because we need to continue to preserve our language and at the same time, they need to be taught English language.

"There is also going to be lots of book-reading competitions. There is also going to be a library in the palace. Already, we have identified some in town. We are also going to see how we can revive the reading culture. That is where my strength is.

"I will also be playing a supportive role to Olori agba as occasions and situations demand. For instance, on Wednesday, November 16, there was an inter-house sports event. We were both invited but her presence was more needed because the school was among the beneficiaries of the Olowu project on annual payment of WASSCE, NECO, etc fees. She couldn't attend and I had to represent her. So, a supportive role will come even though I also have a project I manage."

Allaying fear in some quarters that her husband may backtrack, Queen Ameenat dismissed the notion, saying her husband knew well that he is a Muslim and accepted the responsibility.

Besides, she assured that he would be firm as a Muslim, having demonstrated that at the Ipebi and coronation ceremony.

Olori Ameenat who said she was in full support of Dr. Matemilola accepting the responsibility, expressed confidence that he is going to make a great king.

"He is a great man. He has always been a great leader. Hence, I have no doubt that all he has garnered over the years, even in the private world, will be brought to bear in the community."

I be a king at age 9 – Olowu



Oba Matemilola flanked by his beautiful wives, Olori Khadijah (l) and Olori Ameenat (r)

Alhamdulillah, my father, may Allah accept his soul, even though he had a privileged birth, along the line still had to struggle for himself. He gave all he had just to see me move up and to see me as educated as he could help me when he still had the means. That I appreciate a lot. The inspiration he gave me to push myself and to also help others in life, I see as a legacy laid down for me. That it is not just about me; I must help people around me rise if I want to rise. I can't rise alone. I'm very grateful to him for all these. May Allah accept his soul.

Of course, my mother has been very supportive. She never wanted me this way because her father was also a Baale in Abiola, one of the Gbagura towns in the west of Ogun State. My uncle also did not want it because they are aware of the issues and challenges people face and the threats from those who want things at all costs. I had to keep it away from my mother. She later got to know and confronted me. I told her the truth, but she wasn't happy about it. Until the government made the announcement formally, I just had to explain to her that things are okay and are not as bad as they used to be. Allah is our protector. If Allah says anything would happen to me, it would happen to me. We are Muslims, we don't have to worry about all of that. Let's keep everything to Allah. We just continue to pray that Allah will keep my faith in me. That's the key thing. That kind of soothed her a bit. Alhamdulillah now, at least, her mind is at peace.

What is your plan for the community?

We plan and Allah also plans, but Allah's plan is the best. Well, the primary thing for me is to try and foster that unity and love amongst our people and also to foster that unity and love with our neighbours. If we don't have that, there is no way we can develop as individuals, as a people or as a community living in Abeokuta. That's my number one priority and I will be working towards it. May Allah make it easy. I am a Muslim, but I will be fair to all, irrespective of their religion.

We will then build on that

once we begin to see ourselves as one, a community that needs to progress together. We cannot progress in isolation. It's not possible. We can then begin to see how we can assist ourselves educationally, economically, and spiritually, assist our students, especially those who are struggling to pay their fees and also mentorship. For me, mentorship is a big one. Mentorship about education, entrepreneurship, businesses, trade and faith. When you have people who are seniors and have done it, it is always important you reach out to

unity, empowerment, industrial, mentorship, history and culture.

What area of public service do you intend to go into during your reign?

Before now, I focused my attention on education and health. But now, it is about unity because there is nothing you can achieve in this kind of role without unity. Hence, the number one thing is to ensure unity among the people. It is only when you have a united people that you can have unity of purpose. You can then co-own whatever you intend to deliver

So, it is the people first, after that, you have unity of purpose and ensure the people have the right education, including market women, whom you are expected to develop their businesses and by so doing, the economy and other things in the city. And I am not talking about Abeokuta by the way, but the whole of Owu land- which is far beyond Ogun State and, as a matter of fact, beyond Nigeria. You may not know, there is Owu in Benin Republic and other parts of the sub-region. It is about coming together to ensure we co-

that in the background, then where is the pride?

How do you intend to transit from scholarship to monarchy?

I don't see it as a transition in that sense. It is about the mindset. When I was in academia, by the way, I straddled both academia and the industrial sector. Where I was then, I was a captain of industry and when you occupy that role, it is about how you utilise it to deliver on your mandate. Long before thinking about ascending the throne of Olowu, I was already thinking about how the administration would be. What does this role involve? What do I need to do to deliver? So, since that race started in January, I had already prepared my mind. My agenda was already drawn. The day I indicated interest, I already had a programme. I have a profile that contains the details of what I intend to do. Those are the key things – not too many of them – just about five points. So, the mindset is what is the role about? What do I need to deliver to ensure that people feel the impact of my reign as soon as possible? And we are doing that already.

How do you address the concerns of some Muslims about keeping your faith on the throne?

The thing is, one of the things our religion has taught us is that we must learn. We must learn about things. It's not proper to condemn things you don't know about, just because you've heard things about them. First is, how they do these things. It's only when you get to know how they do these things you can now say I am okay with this or not.

I was also very curious when I came, but every single thing they did were just dua (supplication), traditionally. The traditional way is in the sense that they will make the supplication and say 'lagbara Olohun, lagbara Orunmila'. You then have to differentiate the one you say Amin to. But fundamentally, it's all prayers. In our tradition, when they want to pray, they use alcohol, but I prevented them from doing so. I suggested water in its stead and they used it. They want to sip the water before they pray or they want to pour it into my legs. Recently, we just had what we call 'Odun Ilasu'. It was all prayers. They split the yam into two and we thank Allah in our traditional way, that he has made us witness the harvest of the new yam. It's a traditional practice. It's their way of thanking Allah for harvesting yam and they also want the Kabiyesi to bless it before they eat. It's just that you don't eat the new yam until you do that festival. You can eat yam from the previous year, but you don't eat the one that has just been harvested until that practice is done. Many of our forefathers were farmers. So, it was their way of thanking the Creator that they had a new harvest before they begin to eat it. When you are the leader, you must accommodate other people's personal beliefs, just like the Prophet (S.A.W) accommodated the Jews and Christians. You won't necessarily worship with them. That's the essence of leadership. Allah could have made everyone Muslims, but in His wisdom, He created people worshipping this and that. You should just thank Allah for where you are. For me, that's where I come from.

So, when I woke up, I sketched exactly how I saw myself and showed it to my father. He asked if I was sure. I said, yes. He then said do you know you are from a royal family? I wasn't aware. So, he explained to me how we are from a royal family; how our forefathers had been kings. And he said by Allah's grace, you will become a king one day. Here we are today, being crowned as the 14th Olowu of Owu Kingdom.

Alhamdulillah!

them. We can build on that.

Again, I am very passionate about our culture because that is the essence of people. In every community that Allah has created, He has evolved for them a culture. When I say culture, I am not talking about shirk (idol worshipping). I am talking about, as a people, how did we evolve from Oodua to where we are now. We need to keep this as part of our identity. It is only when we appreciate the struggles that our forefathers and mothers went through to get to where we are now that we will be able to appreciate ourselves better. It gives us pride as a people.

One of the things I intend to do is to try and get the documentation, archeological findings, and all other things we need to do around it. We should document them and make them available not only to ourselves but also to our children, to feel proud about their heritage as well. Other people can also read about us. For me, it's very important. All other things, we will anchor into these five key issues:

because when your followers identify with this cause, it becomes easier for them to work with you to deliver on those goals.

Capacity development is very vital. So, when you want to develop people, capacity-building comes first. When the people are developed, those people will support the development of the economy, infrastructure and the rest.

develop ourselves, the economy and the rest.

A lot of people would wonder if somebody who is highly educated and exposed to the Western world is still in tune with the traditions of his people. What message do you have for those who might think that what you are doing now is outdated?

If you don't know yourself, or where you are coming from, then what is your identity? When you say you are someone from somewhere, that somewhere has a history and culture that makes your people what they are and that is your pride. For me as an Owu man, it is about how Owu evolved its history and heritage. That is my pride. That is what I identify with.

And it will be surprising to me for people to say knowing and identifying with one's background is not something to be proud of. So, it is very important to understand where you are coming from. That is the only way you can identify with your people and that will be a motivation to help to do things in your community. If you don't have



Oba Matemilola with mother

The Chief Executive Officer, CEO of Vanguard's Academy, Ustadh Zafaran Adeniyi says modelling students to become achievers is a culture of the school, a leading secondary educational institution in Ogun State.

Dr. Adeniyi, author of many soul-inspiring books, made the remark at the grand finale of the 20th anniversary of the school, held on Saturday at the school football field, Odosengulu, Ijebu Ode, Ogun State.

Vanguard's Academy is a household name, especially among Muslims in Southwest Nigeria, with a reputation for quality education.

Founded in September 2002, Vanguard's Academy which operates day and boarding has produced close to a thousand graduands in the last twenty years of its existence.

In his welcome address, Adeniyi appreciated Allah for the successes and achievements made within the two decades, saying, "acquisition of permanent site and various academic feats have characterised the period."

He said students are trained in aspects of spirituality, character building, social interactions and emotional intelligence, stressing that they have been fantastic and exceptional.

"Modelling is our culture here. Students are like raw materials. We have raw materials, we want to process them. In our own case, parents and guardians bring them here, we screen them and begin their modelling. We want to model how they think with ample evidence that are realities. For example, we have a programme on sex education under our comprehensive training. We let them know it's real.

"Here, we model them to be spiritually conscious. We model their character. We model them for social interactions: emotional skills, relations with others, dealing with their parents and neighbors. All these areas of human endeavours, we have separate programmes for them. We train them on how to live and survive on their own and enjoy life."

Describing the two-decade journey of running a faith-based school from its former place at Isiwo town to Odosengulu, along Ijebu Ode-Epe road, in Ogun State, Dr. Adeniyi said, "The journey has been long, just as it's equally short. But for the 20 years, we have every cause to appreciate Allah.

"We now have a permanent site, and have produced over 961 students, among others. We've achieved academically too. Our students have been fantastic and exceptional. They have attended and are in various universities, bagged first class degrees. They are also in industries. It's a marvelous and rewarding achievement for us," he said.

The director explained that the management of Vanguard's Academy is not relenting as new challenges increasingly appear. He said that the dream of the founders is to have their products at the corridors of Nigerian leadership, even when the name of the school is almost on the lips of everyone.

The grand finale of the week-long programme which featured educating and interesting events including lectures, drama, and balad presentation among others, was attended by parents, alumni and students, many of whom were not born when the great citadel of

Vanguard's Academy marks 20th Anniversary in grand style

• Launches N55m digital laboratory, library project



Cross-section of dignitaries at the grand finale of Vanguard's Academy's 20th anniversary

learning was established.

Also at the event were members of the Governing Council, the industrious staff and many stakeholders, including the representative of the Ogun State Commissioner of Education.

There was also a special presentation of a book, 'The Child I Am', written by 12 year old Maryam Oluwakemi Zafaran when she was JSS 1. Now in JSS 2, Maryam is one of the beautiful daughters of Dr. Zafaran Adeniyi, the school director, and renowned author.

Why we want to build world class laboratory, library - Principal

The school principal, Mr Lukman Alatise, disclosed that Vanguard's Academy, owing to its unwavering commitment towards best standards and attainment of the highest quality education, proposes to build a multimillion Naira laboratory of international standards.

The laboratory together with a digitalised library he said, would enable students to study extensively, foster research in areas

The laboratory we're projecting is one that will be able to accommodate 200 students at a go and will be equipped with modern equipment, apparatus and accessories, to foster research cum initiative and make students consider areas of research beyond the school curriculum. It is going to be an extraordinary digitalised laboratory/library."

Speaking further, Mr Alatise said the proposed laboratory will provide our students with immeasurable opportunities to explore, compete and measure up to their contemporaries worldwide.

He called on multinationals, philanthropists and well-wishers to support the successful completion of the project.

"We look forward to partnership with multinationals like Chevron and Shell among others, well-wishers, philanthropists, well-meaning citizens of the global community who know the relevance of sound education and alumni of the school who are committed to continued progress of their alma mater.

Education Commissioner, Mr Lawal Mikail who is a Director of Education at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Ogun State, expressed delight at the commitment and investment Vanguard's has put into the educational enterprise in the state.

According to him, Vanguard's is visionary and has been able to demonstrate a high level of competence and seriousness.

"I congratulate Vanguard's for their commitment and investment in the educational enterprise and for changing the lifestyle of our youths by combining modern knowledge with spirituality. We need to encourage them. The milestone achievements they have recorded within just 20 years is not a joke. I am overwhelmed.

"This is a school that has a vision. Within 20 years, the school has been able to demonstrate a high level of competence and seriousness because of the development in terms of physical facilities we have seen around and the achievements of the school - especially in ensuring their students



Vanguard's Academy students entertaining guests with a drama presentation during the anniversary

of interest, and prepare them for emerging global situations.

According to him, today at this gathering, we are launching a N55m digitalised laboratory/library.

Visionary school, transforming lives of youths: Ogun Education Director

The representative of the

what we have seen, a JS1 student has written a book (referring to Maryam Zafaran). And that's not the first one. Some other scores of the students had equally written,

meaning that they have been able to key into the educational policy thrust of Ogun State in delivering quality education.

"In Ogun State, we are known for quality. Our forebearers were the first in virtually everything. This state produced the first Chief Judge in Nigeria, the first professor, the first medical doctor. As at today, Ogun State is the education capital of Nigeria because of our investment in education".

The education expert charged Vanguard's Academy to lay more emphasis on the delivery of qualitative and comprehensive education, noting, "If education is not qualitative and comprehensive, it will be devoid of the required standard anybody can attain in life."

What stands Vanguard's out, Adeleke explains

The Chairman, Governing Council of Vanguard's Academy, Dr. Imran Adeleke noted that Vanguard's is well recognised with a reputation of excellence and good performance in external examinations, especially that of the West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE)

He said records show excellent performance of the students, whom are not allowed to cheat during examinations. "Our students are from across various parts of Nigeria and they perform excellently well. Their parents also appreciate our efforts", he said.

The chairman explained that, though the board is thinking in the direction of establishing a university, but so many things still need to be done to upgrade the college.

"Part of the projects we are looking to complete include having a digital library, ultramodern laboratory and an administrative block. So, if we have a standard college, we can easily metamorphose into a university," he said.

Adeleke appreciated the Ogun State government for their support so far, pleading, however, for financial assistance in fixing the projects and to achieve their aims.

I never regretted enrolling my children at Vanguard's - Parent

A parent who spoke with our reporter, Dr. Fadeyi Muse, an Abeokuta-based medical doctor, said he never regretted enrolling his children in the Vanguard's Academy, noting the school has proven itself among its peers over the years.

"That is why I brought my children to the school, to really achieve both the Western and Islamic education with excellence. I have four children that have passed adequately through the school. Three are still attending, while one has graduated and is now in the university.

"Honestly speaking, Vanguard's is a place you can actually put your child and have the confidence he's going to be transformed into what your heart desires. I have never regretted bringing my children to Vanguard's. It has been a thing of joy for me, seeing what they are transforming into in terms of character as well as in academic pursuit," the parent said.

He advised the school to further prioritise the welfare of the teachers, noting that the present economic situation is pushing people to look for greener pastures all over the place, a development that could take away some of the best hands among the staff.



L-R: Prince Sulayman Olagunju, Prof. Tajudeen Yusuf, a beneficiary, Sheikh Moh'd Jami'u Tirmidhi, Dr. Oluremi Nurudeen Olaleye, a guest

How Zakat Foundation disbursed N287m to 3,556 Nigerians in 2022 - Tasks government at all levels on job creation

No fewer than 3,556 beneficiaries across twenty-five states of the Federation, including Federal Capital Territory, FCT, Abuja benefited from the N287m proceeds from the 2022 zakat distribution organised by Zakat and Sadaqat Foundation.

At the last phase of the distribution held on Sunday, September, 2022, in Lagos, the leading faith-based charitable organisation urged the federal government to do more in the area of job creation, saying it will bring about peace and harmony in the country.

Notable Muslim personalities, including the acting Vice Chancellor of Lagos State University of Science and Technology, Dr. Oluremi Nurudeen Olaleye, witnessed the presentation of items which included industrial sewing machines, deep freezers, and dummy cheques to the beneficiaries who thronged the Lagos State Secretariat Hall, Ikeja; venue of the zakat disbursement exercise.

Zakat, the third pillar of Islam was established by Allah to alleviate poverty, paving the way to financial independence for individuals, enhancing peaceful coexistence and promoting overall economic growth in society.

In history, zakat has always been a core area of finance and administration which ensures equity and fairness to all and sundry in the society.

The Executive Director of the Foundation, Prince Sulayman Olagunju, could not hide his excitement on the successful exercise, as he expressed profound gratitude for the payers of zakat, saying, "We are happy and excited about today's event and we shall be disbursing more than N287M to 3,556 beneficiaries across the country."

According to him, "We started the disbursement about four months ago and as I speak, we've been to 25 states to disburse zakat. We are so appreciative of our zakat

payers because if they have not paid their zakat, we will not have anything to disburse and I can tell them authoritatively that their prayers are being answered."

Zakat is a means towards job creation - Prince Olagunju

Prince Olagunju said one of the important roles of the government is to ensure peace and harmony in society through job creation.

He said, "Government needs to look for people and foundations like ours who act as channels of job

creation and see how we can synergize. It's not that we don't go to the government, we write letters and try to form meaningful alliances with them, but don't get favourable responses, maybe because we are not politicians. They don't even look and it's really disturbing.

"However, we have chosen to do this and nothing can discourage or stop us from doing so. I'm sincerely appealing to the government, politicians and wealthy people in our midst that the peace and harmony we desire are possible when the poor and

needy in our society are taken care of. Their needs are not too much.

"With 2.5%, many of them will be so happy. You hand a sewing machine of #50,000 to someone, and he claims this is what he's been looking for all his life, for about 13 years and he was unable to get it. When he was presented with a sewing machine and a token of #20,000, it was as if the whole world was at his feet.

"So, to me, the government should look at us and create an enabling environment where charitable organisations like ours can have access to the government. Let them see what we are doing and see how we can work together.

Zakat, important for economic redistribution - Dr. Olaleye

The acting Vice Chancellor of Lagos State University of Science and Technology, Dr. Oluremi Nurudeen Olaleye, disclosed that zakat is important for economic distribution and redistribution.

He also stressed its importance towards peaceful coexistence and national growth, noting that it can be a strong tool in the fight against crimes.

"Well, you see, Zakat is a cardinal principle of Islam which Allah stipulates for Muslims and Muslim communities for economic distribution and redistribution. It is that the rich will give to the poor. If you amass wealth to a certain level, you are expected to share your wealth among others. By so doing, you breed love, peace, and development (socioeconomic and political).

"Yes, you can use zakat to fight crimes. When you share your wealth, you share love and peace, and someone who loves you will not commit crime against you. So, doing that, zakat can be used to foster peace and economic development."

He urged wealthy Nigerians to put smiles on the faces of people with the money they stack with financial institutions.

Our zakat distribution now spreads across Nigeria - Prof.

Yusuf

The Chairman, Board of Trustees, Zakat and Sadaqat Foundation, Prof. Tajudeen Olalekan Yusuf expressed his gratitude to Almighty Allah over the transformation taking place in the lives of beneficiaries and the growth within the foundation, and called on the government for synergy.

He said, "We thank Almighty Allah. Zakat aims to distribute resources in the society. So far so good, we've had many of our zakat recipients who have now become zakat payers, that is one of the goals of this foundation. We've been achieving it and we'll keep on doing that.

"We have expanded our scope of impact. Zakat now spreads across the federation. Even from states where we don't receive zakat, we go there and disburse to them. We have also ensured that the money keeps increasing, we keep expanding and extending our areas of impact creation. We also have people coming forward to be part of zakat payers and that makes us a partner with the government positively in terms of creating an environment that engenders peace, security and harmony.

Our partnership with Zakat Foundation, Lotus Bank explains...

Lotus Bank, a non-interest banking institution that partnered with Z & S also pledged continuous support to the foundation.

The Chief Executive Officer, who was ably represented by the Group Head, Retail Banking of the same institution, Adeoye Hafeez Abiodun, explained how Lotus Bank has been helping Z & S in the advancement and disbursement of zakat.

According to him, "We are glad to partner with Zakat and Sadaqat Foundation. We are one of their bankers. One of the ways we partner is by enhancing the value of contributions made by Zakat Payers."

He also urged the beneficiary to utilize the grants judiciously to encourage more payers of zakat to come aboard.

The beneficiaries expressed their joy and gratitude which knew no bound.

2022 SECTIONAL DISBURSEMENT OF N287.493.887 TO 3,556 BENEFICIARIES ACROSS TWENTY FIVE STATES IN NIGERIA			
STATE	DISBURSED AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE	TOTAL NO OF BENEFICIARIES
ABIA	1.705.000.00	0.59	33
ABUJA	2.000.000.00	0.70	20
AKWA IBOM	1,737.000.00	0.60	26
BAYELSA	1.500.000.00	0.52	28
BENUE	540,000,00	0.19	13
DELTA	2.035,000.00	0.71	29
EBONYI	1.698.000.00	0.59	37
EDO	3.297.000.00	1.15	48
ENUGU	2.000.000.00	0.70	46
GOMBE	450,000.00.	0.16	18
IMO	1,480,000.00	0.51	34
KADUNA	850.000.00	0.30	27
KOGI	1.705,000.00	0.59	39
KWARA	7,410,000.00	2.58	76
LAGOS	206,642,880.45	71.88	2,625
NASARAWA	1,625,000.00	0.57	26
NIGER	1,750,000.00	0.61	38
OGUN	18,712,488.65	6.51	164
ONDO	1,745,000.00	0.61	33
OSUN	2,959,356.00	1.03	46
OYO	4,955,911.96	1.72	53
RIVERS	1,750,000.00	0.61	35
SOKOTO	476,250.00	0.17	10
ZAMFARA	735,000.00	0.26	17
ADMIN EXPENSE	15,990,000.00	5.56	
	287,493,887.00	100	3556

IN PICTURES: The 2022 Zakat and Sadaqat Foundation disbursement exercise

Twenty-five (25) states in Nigeria benefited from the N287,493,887.00 zakat distribution of the Zakat and Sadaqat Foundation. The proceeds covered year 2022 and some of the states are represented in the pictures below...



Abuja 2022



Egba 2022



Ijebu Ode 2022



Abia 2022



Akwa Ibom 2022



Bayelsa 2022



Delta 2022



Ebonyi 2022



Edo 2022



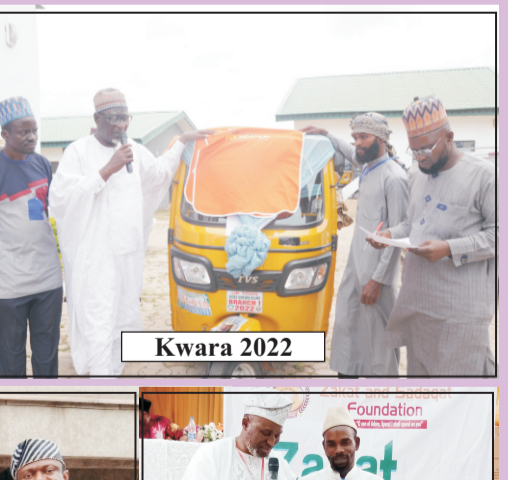
Ekiti 2022



Enugu 2022



Gombe 2022



Kwara 2022



Imo 2022



Kaduna 2022



Lagos 2022

