

The 19th Benjamin Oluwakayode Osuntokun Lecture

4 January 2018

Rescuing Nigeria:
Restoring Her Health
and Her Sanity

by

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INTRODUCTION

In this New Year, 2018, permit to start this lecture with two of my favourite prayers: Isaiah 55:12-13 and Psalm 20: 1-4.

*You shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace:
The mountains and the hills shall break forth before
you into singing,
And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree,
And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree:
And it shall be to the LORD for a name,
For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.*

§ § § §

*May the Lord hear thee in the day of trouble;
May the name of the God of Jacob defend thee;
May he send thee help from the sanctuary,
And strengthen thee out of Zion;
May he remember all thy offerings,
And accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah.
May he grant thee according to thine own heart,
And fulfil all thy counsel.*

On March 12, 2016, I received a message from Professor Jide Osuntokun, the Bapitan of Oyo Kingdom, asking if I will be available to give the annual Kayode Osuntokun

Lecture. My immediate response was: *I have waited for this day and thought it would never come. I am glad it has and God willing, I will be available.* I went on to say that *I have listened to and read of the Benjamin Oluwakayode Osuntokun Lectures for years and I have thought that one day it will be my turn to deliver the lecture because of the respect and admiration I had for the late Professor Benjamin Oluwakayode Osuntokun. So, search no more, I said; God willing, we will meet on Jan 6 2017, a Friday; Jan 7, a Saturday or even Jan 8, a Sunday--whatever day. I am already preparing, even though I am not sure what the topic will be.*

I then prepared the lecture and was sweating to deliver it on 6th January 2017. Unknown to me, I had to wait for one year. I actually waited for one year as the 19th lecture was originally scheduled for Jan 2017 but was postponed until 2018 for family reasons. Nonetheless, we are each alive today to witness this lecture and to God we give the glory.

I especially thank God for the Osuntokun family for this day. So, I urge you to settle down and relax because having waited this long for this opportunity, I intend to give you the chance to hear what Professor B. Oluwakayode Osuntokun meant to me and how he influenced my life.

I thank my friend who introduced me with that citation. A writer once said "We seem normal but only to those who don't know us very well". He only told you as much as he knows of me. Perhaps what he left unsaid would tell more about me than what he said, as you will learn soon with this story I am about to relate.

I am the 39th surviving child of my highly “multi-gamous” father. It will become clear soon that I mean no insult to my father by calling him a polygamous man. When using another man’s language to describe oneself or one’s father, one needs to be careful. The synonym for polygamous in the Oxford Dictionary of English include words like “bi-gamous” and “two-timing”. My father, who married a dozen or so wives before I was born, and two others after my mother, cannot but be described with such words as bi-gamous and two-timing because he was MULTIGAMOUS as he was multi-timing! Coming into this world as his 39th surviving child, my education was never thought of, as there was no plan to send me to school, but for the introduction of free primary education by the late Obafemi Awolowo in 1955. If I had not gone to school, I probably would have grown up to become a local tough man ensconced in the political arena, as the Eruobodo of Ulesa Kingdom. I certainly would not have qualified to stand before you this morning. I remember the opening of school that January 19, 1955 when children of all ages were admitted into school. Some of us, who were already developing features of adulthood, began school in earnest with boys and girls whose right fingers could not touch their left ears.

As soon as we acquired a smattering of the English language, we were employed by the headmaster to confront the district officer who menaced and harassed the teachers with his irregular and unannounced school monitoring inspection visits. Each time he came, the teachers bolted through the windows followed by most of the students.

Only the headmaster stayed in the classroom shaking and sweating before the district officer. The headmaster often wondered why I never ran away whenever the district officer appeared. He assumed I was courageous because he often heard my classmates sing my "oriki" after the district officer left. The truth is that I was so small and with very short legs that could not get me over the windows. You want to hear the *oriki*?

Oyewale omo Okokomoki

Aji mu taba ogun

Omo abelejo koju

Omo a teni wijo

Mo jejo, mo jejo, o gbe ori oka s'erun

Omo ekun, ti n'deru b'erin-

Oyewale, the son of Okokomoki

Who wakes up smoking the medicinal tobacco

He, who can confront anyone,

He who enjoys talking lying down on a mat

Told not to eat a snake,

He got annoyed and swallowed the head of a live cobra

The son of the leopard who frightens the elephant

Later, when the CMS (Church Missionary Society) became well entrenched in my town and was baptizing with a second name fished out of the Old Testament, the second

line of my “oriki” changed from *Ajimu taba ogun to Aji gbadura s’Olodumare*. The rest remained as it is today.

With such a pre-CMS oriki, I became a collaborator with the headmaster in the plan to put the oyibo district officer in his place—which was to send him back to his cold country. So, one day, the headmaster invited me to join him in dealing with the district officer when next he showed up. We had rehearsed what incantation we would reel out to bind the district officer. I was to do the Ijsha incantation and he would translate it into English to put the district officer at full disadvantage. The day arrived and as soon as the district officer showed up in his white shirt, brown knickers and calf-length socks with laced catalogue-ordered shoes from the Oxen dale, England, I launched into the incantation that will turn the head of the district officer and send him back to Queen Victoria:

Eyi a wi fogbo ni ogbo ngbo

Eyi a wi fogba ni ogba ngba

Subu sire ni ti omo ewure

Garawo ni t o’mo aguntan

Ti opolo tabi akere ba fi owo kanle,

Suwa, a bo si inu omi

Oyibo fowo kanle ko fo lo si igbo a lo ma pada

For maximum potency and effect (and for those who do not understand Yoruba) to fully hear, my headmaster translated the words of the incantation into the Queen’s English:

It is what we tell the listener that he hears

It is what we tell the fence to enclose that it encloses

*Fall down "as if playing" is the lot of the new born
goat*

*To stagger and stagger is the nature of the new born
lamb*

*When a frog or a toad places its front foot on the
ground*

It jumps into the water

*Oyibo, touch the ground and fly to the forest of no
return*

There is no need to tell you that my headmaster was sacked but not before I got six lashes of the cane for the failure of my incantation to reduce the oyibo district officer into a blabbering lunatic.

Indeed, I had started school before Awolowo introduced the free and compulsory primary education. However, completing primary school education was not guaranteed as I was needed more in the farm than in the school. Just imagine that the free and *COMPULSORY* primary education was not introduced at the time. I may have ended up as a half-educated nitwit, who through the accident of time, space and location, would be occupying one important political position in the legislative or executive arm of our national government with such name as *Honourable*

*Awalung Adike, representing people with maximum power, but minimum restraint. These are people currently operating in the National "Chopping" Mall with tri-partite headquarters in our national assembly, executive arm and the judiciary and branches at State and LGA levels. In their greedy hands, the nation has been turned into a massive shopping mall, where goods are looted and not paid for.*¹

I am now at an age where my mouth has become much sharper than both my eyes and ears combined. A few years before I graduated from primary school, my headmaster (HM) called me to the front of the class during one of the morning assemblies and this dialogue ensued:

HM: Oyewale Tomori (OT) – do you know that the Almighty God has given each person the number of words he or she will speak before death?

OT: No Sir, How Sir, When Sir, Why Sir, Which Sir?

HM: I am sorry for you because at the rate you talk, you will finish your number of words and die before you leave the primary school.

OT: No Sir, IT CANNOT POSSIBLE, Sir, who told you so, Sir?

HM: You see, instead of using just two words – “No

¹*Disclaimer: except where names are specifically mentioned, all description bears no relation to any person living or dead).*

Sir", you have wasted nineteen words out of your allocation!

I have learnt my lesson to speak less. However, because today is a special day, please permit me to speak in honour and appreciation of our beloved and revered professor, Benjamin Oluwakayode Osuntokun. Let us bask in the glory of a great and accomplished man; let us splash in his splendour; let us gyrate in his grandeur and rub his opulence on our egos. Let us savour the aroma of his excellence and relish in the uniqueness of his prodigious humanity. Professor Benjamin Oluwakayode Osuntokun is an extraordinary and phenomenal researcher, an unusual and exceptional professional, a team player, a remarkable and an amazingly impressive and perceptive scientist. He combined all these with exceptional humility and humanity.

Above all, our cherished and treasured Professor Osuntokun was a courageous man who wrote his own *Nunc Dimitis* at the age many of us consider the beginning of life. By the time we become aware of the origin and true meaning of *Nunc Dimitis*, we will fully appreciate the distinctiveness and matchlessness of his life. "*Nunc dimitis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum, in pace.*" means "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, just as you promised."

Furthermore, Simeon said, for *mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all*

people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. Nunc Dimittis implies peace, fulfilment and rest. Professor Osuntokun, in his uniqueness, saw what many of us did not see and he had the courage which many of us may never have to go, in peace as the Lord had promised him. Professor Osuntokun was a man blessed by God with contentment. Indeed, in many ways, he was as extraordinary as he was astonishing. He was an amazing man; he was special, uncommon, exceptional and remarkable. Professor Adelaye,¹ another of our distinguished professors, said, "The Osuntokun *Nunc Dimitis* booklet detailed his background, professional experience, appointments at national and international levels, membership of learned societies, and scientific conferences attended over a thirty-year period from 1964 to 1994". It also contained the details of his 321 publications. Professor Adelaye went on to say that Professor Osuntokun's career in neurology spawned a

. . . cornucopia of scientific and scholarly publications solely and jointly on epilepsy, nutritional and toxic neuropathies, cerebrovascular diseases, headaches and pain problems, neoplasms of the nervous system, the neurology of diabetes mellitus and of the haemoglobinopathies of Africa.

Was Professor Osuntokun, through his life and writings, telling us something we are yet to realise, especially by calling his curriculum vitae *Nunc Dimitis* and at the time he did? May the Lord open our eyes to see the salvation promised by God and the light to lighten the darkness of our nation so that we will not be in perpetual darkness and remain a nation perpetually at the periphery of greatness. Our nation needs rescuing and I think a thorough study of the life of Professor Osuntokun is a must read for all. By his hard work and industry he brought so much honour, acclaim, fame and glory to, not just the College of Medicine and the University of Ibadan, but also to Nigeria and Africa. I am glad the college deemed it fit to name the college auditorium after this illustrious son of Okemesi Ekiti, an Old Boy of Christ's School, Ado, and distinguished alumnus of the University of Ibadan. Our dear country, known for scant regard for intellectual attainment, bestowed on Professor Osuntokun the honour of the Officer of the Federal Republic (OFR) of Nigeria in 1978, and Nigeria's highest award, the Nigerian National Merit Award (NNMA) for his distinguished contribution at national and international levels in the sciences, medicine, literature, arts and culture in 1984. No honour is too much for such a legendary academic.

I have told stories of what I have heard others say or write about Professor Osuntokun. Now, you have the rare

opportunity to hear of how Professor Osuntokun and I came across each other with neither of us even knowing it. Indeed, the number of times our paths crossed was as far as the Virology Department was from the School of Nursing hostel. In between those few times and occasions, the eminent professor had such a significant and tremendous influence on the way I eventually ran my life and the way my life turned out. His was a significant life in more ways than one, but especially in the measure of impact he had on other lives.

So, let me briefly summarise how I first met Professor Osuntokun whose family of Okemesi Ekiti fame *are* of the Olupo ancestry. Falsehood, fiction and half information peddled by a half-educated community letter writer in my town, Ulesa, led me to find out about Professor Osuntokun. On 19 July, 1971, I assumed duty in the Rockefeller Arbovirus Research Unit, later to become the Department of Virology of the college. A visit home the following week to announce the good news of a new job landed me at a meeting of the Indigenous Ijesha Progressive Elite (IIPE). An AOB (any other business) broached by the secretary of IIPE, the half-educated community letter writer, at the end of the meeting, was directed to me. He narrated a story about a researcher in the University of Ibadan who had discovered a new disease which he called the "*Ijesha Shakes*". We were told the researcher was an Ekiti man

from Okemesi who said he found something in the new yam we consume, especially between July and August every year.

I was mandated, as a budding virologist, to prove him wrong and to conduct a research to show that the Ijeshas are not cowards and will never shake before anybody. I assured the meeting that it will be very easy to prove the Ekiti man wrong. First, the Ekitis eat more pounded yam than the Ijeshas. While Ijeshas eat pounded yam only three times a day, the Ekitis, in addition to eating pounded yam as many times as the Ijeshas, also roast yam for snacks twice a day while waiting for their pounded yam to be ready. Moreover, the Ekiti pounded yam is thicker than the soft Ijeshas type. So, if anyone is going to shake, it will not be the Ijeshas. I promised them that by the next meeting, the name of the disease will be changed and known as "Ekiti Shakes". Thinking of the assignment ahead of me on my way to Ibadan, I concluded that the only person fitting the description of the Ekiti researcher was Professor Osuntokun.

You remember my oriki, *Oyewale omo Okokomoki, a ba elejo koju?* So, I decided to confront him when I got back to Ibadan. On arrival to Ibadan, I told my bosom friend of my plan to confront the Osuntokun man. He looked at me and said something that made me rethink my course of action: "*Ore, on fi iku sere; Ina ma ni Osuntokun;*

A jo e tutu; A so e di eru". (My friend, you are playing with death. Osuntokun is fire! He will reduce you to ashes).

I therefore thought it wise to first check in the library about this disease and who was bold enough to name the disease after the Ijesha people before confronting Professor Osuntokun. During my investigation, I found that there was indeed a disease called *Ijesha Shakes* but that it was first reported in 1956 in the *British Medical Journal*² by the famous David Morley of the Methodist (Wesley) Guild Hospital, Ilesha. Now convinced that the enemy of the Ijesha people was a white man, I took a step further to find out a bit about this Osuntokun man who was described to me as fire! The librarian directed me to his thesis. It was not a thesis. It was a two volume, 449 page encyclopaedia titled: *Chronic cyanide intoxication and a degenerative neuropathy in Nigeria*.³ It was a compendium of clinical studies: biochemistry, epidemiology, experimental pathology and neuropathology. I left the library in a daze and for the next two days remained speechless. Can you imagine a speechless *abelejoku* and a dumb *ateniwijo*! I seriously considered abandoning my plan for a lifetime in research and academics and began looking for a plot of land around Abadina to raise chickens! But my oriki won the day and when I fully recovered, I decided to study this Osuntokun man in some more detail and find out what made him confound, stun, stupefy, amaze, mystify his peers

with his intelligence and leave his external examiners flabbergasted and overwhelmed.

The first day I saw him, I was expecting to see a giant - an "*Osun to ju Okun lo*"- (an Osun river bigger than the lagoon and the Atlantic Ocean combined). Each time I expected his head to be bigger than it was the day before. The more I studied him and got to know him, the more I came to know he was indeed an exceptional man. Osuntokun dedicated himself to a meaningful and purposeful life, committed to making his life better today than it was yesterday. He invested his time and energy, not on today, but on and in the future. He openly engaged in intellectual discussions that were mutually beneficial. He shared and spread his knowledge through the number of his publications and used his power and influence, not for self, but to uplift the community. Professor Osuntokun set the example for my life and this guided my future as an outsider in the College of Medicine.

Later, as I got to know the oriki of the Osuntokun family, I came to understand that he could not have been anything else.

PROFESSOR KAYODE OSUNTOKUN'S FAMILY ORIKI

Olupo Ala Elu

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Anomo ni Olupo Ala Elu
nje | 1. Sweet potatoes are Olupo's
favorite food |
| 2. Jagun abi inu bi omi
gbigbo na | 2. He's a warrior with the temper of
boiling water |
| 3. Aro bi ulu Ujesh | 3. He vibrates like the Ijesh talking
drum |
| 4. Ogbologbo Ekiti ke fi erun
ta ibon | 4. The original Ekiti who speaks
like the boom of the gun |
| 5. Bebedi le pate ileke, | 5. His waist line advertises beads |
| 6. Bi oyun ti pate omo bibi | 6. As pregnancy advertises the birth
of a child |
| 7. Degbapinra Olupo agbele
perin | 7. Degbapinra Olupo sits at home to
kill an elephant |
| 8. Ekun suwon roro | 8. The tiger that is as beautiful as it
is dangerous |
| 9. Eniyan ti o ba se Olupo
pele | 9. Whoever wishes Olupo well |
| 10. Won a lowo, won a bimo, | 10. Will be blessed with wealth and
children |
| 11. Won a si sowo jere, | 11. He will trade and prosper |
| 12. Ominisingini awelewa bi
iwin | 12. Ominisingini, as good looking as
a fairy |
| 13. O ba m'osun, fi ewa ran
omo | 13. Those good looks are contagious |
| 14. Omo bi e kemi, ng o do
egbeje oko | 14. Having been well groomed, she
sleeps with 1, 400 men |
| 15. Ki ke tai ke mi, ng o do
egbefa ale | 15. Ungroomed, she sleeps with 1,
200 concubines |
| 16. Idi re ti omo oya fi ndoko
jura won lo | 16. Reason why Oya's offspring
show varying levels of
immodesty |

According to Jackie Robinson, "A life isn't significant except for its impact on other lives".⁴ It was Albert Schweitzer who said "Example is not the main thing in influencing others; it is the only thing."⁵ Stephen King, also said "We never know which lives we influence, or when, or why".⁶ All these apply to Professor Benjamin Oluwakayode Osuntokun.

OSUNTOKUN AND NIGERIA

Now, where does Nigeria come in to Osuntokun's life? Perhaps we should split that question into two separate questions: the first—How did life in the old Nigeria shape Osuntokun's life? And the second: How can Osuntokun's life shape lives in the new Nigeria?

In the sixty years of his life, he spent 90% or more in Nigeria. He was nurtured from childhood through primary to secondary and university in Nigeria. He did not go to a staff school in UI or a private secondary school in Lekki; nor did he complete his university education at Harvard or Cambridge. There are few of us here who completed our education from primary to tertiary level without leaving this country except for occasional study leaves and sabbaticals. That was the country we grew up in. The other day, one of the top people in the country looked at me and asked: You must have attended Igbobi College.

Me, Igbobi...*rara oo*. Primary was Igbo Elerin, secondary at Igbo Agala and university at Igbo Sambisa. In the Nigeria of those days, no matter which Igbo school you attended, the quality of education was not only top class, but of international standard and merit.

Today our universities spend millions of naira, erecting super-gates emblazoned with CENTER OF EXCELLENCE, when their libraries are stocked with moldy and outdated books acquired in the colonial days. Our universities shamelessly pride themselves in being addressed as The “Harvard”, the “Cambridge” or the “Oxford” of Nigeria. If there is any semblance of excellence in any activity in a Nigerian, rest assured that the activity has foreign funding or support.

In a recent release by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, in its July 2017 Monthly Digest indicated that in July 2017 alone, it provided ₦6.1billion to 198 institutions: 61 universities, 60 polytechnics, 76 colleges of education, and one professional body. The funds were provided for physical infrastructure for teaching and learning, research activities, academic staff training and development, conference attendance and other interventions. If we are to match the performance of our tertiary institutions with the funds disbursed and the reported depth of misuse of funds going on, the TET-Fund may soon become Nigeria’s TET-Front for TET-Fraud!

Professor Oluwakayode Osuntokun started with home training, and then proceeded on foot to the Holy Trinity School, Ilawe, the Emmanuel School, Ado and Christ's School, also in Ado. He did not even go to the University of Ibadan; he went to the University College, near Abadina in Ibadan. He was home grown! Nigeria provided a conducive environment for Osuntokun to bloom. By the time, he first went overseas, he had already blossomed. He was a finished cake who later went overseas to receive the icing on the cake of excellence baked in Nigeria. It was Nigeria that provided the essential and basic ingredient to baking of the cake.

In February 2016, Professor Michel Goldman, the founder of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Innovation in Health Care of the Université Libre de Bruxelles, contributed a Field Grand Challenge article titled: "Education in Medicine: Moving the Boundaries to Foster Interdisciplinarity".⁷ He said

Translational medicine can be defined as the interdisciplinary science that will cover this continuum from basic research to preclinical and clinical research, development of new medicines and medical devices, and ultimately patient-centric care.

He continued . . .

Collaboration between healthcare stakeholders will be essential to address the complex scientific, regulatory, societal and economic challenges related to precision medicine.

Fifty years before Goldman wrote those words, Osuntokun had appreciated and demonstrated the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in translational medicine. His two-volume 449 page thesis is an indestructible evidence of his belief in the theory and practice of interdisciplinary collaboration. When Osuntokun studied anything, he looked at every possible angle of the subject leaving nothing for anybody else to discover. He did this, by collaborating with colleagues from different fields and disciplines—biochemistry, haematology, pathology, clinical science, epidemiology, social science and with Nigerian experts like the Aladetoyinbos, the Durowojus, the Williams, the Adeujas, the Odekus, the Ogunniyis, the Aghaduinis, the Edoziens, the Smiths as well as Nigerianised expatriates – the MacFarlanes, Luzattos, Martinsons and the Browns to name a few.

The 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak in West Africa convinced us that as medicine becomes increasingly interlinked with other fields, medical education, if it is going to be relevant to the needs of the patient and the community—must also evolve towards a more interdisciplinary approach. You will recollect that what

contributed to the escalation of the EVD (Ebola Virus Disease) outbreak into a humanitarian disaster and at the same time was responsible for its eventual control had very little to do with medicine per se. You will recollect that when Patrick Sawyer brought Ebola into Nigeria, our public hospitals were closed and he had to be taken to a private hospital. As Ebola spread in Nigeria, appeals to the NMA (Nigeria Medical Association) to call off the strike which closed the public health institutions met with stony silence.

The NMA had a unique opportunity to endear itself to the hearts of Nigerians and prove that it is not as opportunistic as the politicians that have raped our country, but it failed to live up to its cherished ideals. Until we understood and addressed the social and cultural dimensions of the EVD disaster, it raged unabated. By the time the epidemic was finally brought under control, we still had no efficacious drug to treat the disease.

The efficacious Ebola vaccine came almost a year later—after the epidemic had been controlled and we had locked up our surveillance and vigilance apparatus waiting for the next epidemic to catch us unaware and unprepared.

Professor Osuntokun was way ahead of his time. Even now, we still have not caught up with him in certain areas. Therefore, in 2015, twenty years after his death, I was a bit distressed to note the directive of the MDCN that from 2019, all lecturers in basic medical sciences should be

qualified medical doctors. If Osuntokun had been committed to such a view, we might not be celebrating him today. If the Ibadan Medical School had been built on such a directive, I would not even qualify to be admitted as a spectator to this lecture, let alone, invited to deliver the lecture.

Lancet commissioned a report on Education of Health Professionals for the 21th Century.⁸ The executive summary of the Global Independent Commission report states,

By the beginning of the 21st century, however, all is not well. Glaring gaps and inequities in health practice persist both within and between countries, underscoring our collective failure to share the dramatic health advances equitably. At the same time, fresh health challenges loom. New infectious, environmental, and behavioural risks at a time of rapid demographic and epidemiological transitions threaten the health and security of all. Health systems worldwide are struggling to keep up as they become more complex and costly, placing additional demands on health workers.

.....

[Medical] professional education has not kept pace with these challenges largely because of

fragmented, outdated, and static curricula that produce ill-equipped graduates. The problems are systemic: mismatch of competencies to patient and population needs; poor teamwork; persistent gender stratification of professional status; narrow technical focus without broader contextual understanding; episodic encounters rather than continuous care; predominant hospital orientation at the expense of primary care; quantitative and qualitative imbalances in the professional labour market and weak leadership to improve health-system performance. Laudable efforts to address these deficiencies have mostly floundered partly because of the so-called tribalism of the professions, i.e., the tendency of the various professions to act in isolation from or even in competition with each other.

The report called for, among other things, the

. . . promotion of inter-professional and trans-professional education that breaks down professional silos while enhancing collaborative and non-hierarchical relationships into effective teams. Alongside specific technical skills, inter-professional education should focus on cross-

cutting generic competencies such as analytical abilities (for effective use of both evidence and ethical deliberation in decision making), leadership and management capabilities (for efficient handling of scarce resources in conditions of uncertainty), and communication skills (for mobilisation of all stakeholders, including patients and populations.

So, a long while before anyone appreciated the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in translational medicine, Osuntokun not only appreciated it in his research, in addition, he walked his talk by championing interdisciplinary collaboration in an atmosphere of mutual respect and recognition of the unique expertise of his colleagues and collaborators no matter their level and type of qualification.

Back to my earlier questions: Where did the old Nigeria come into Osuntokun's life and where does Osuntokun's life come into the new Nigeria?

The education of the young Osuntokun began at home before he went to his primary school. Osuntokun received home training from his parents. Quite apart from his ability at the age of six years to read the native edition of the Bible from cover to cover, the foundation for the excellence demonstrated in his later life was laid before he went to primary school. I am sure as it was in the Osuntokun family, so it was in the home of the Cameron-

Coles. These were homes where honesty was the foundation of living. In these homes, children were served with a bowl of integrity for breakfast; and loyalty was on the lunch menu. In the evening, they “swallowed” decency as the meal for supper or dinner. They drank from the stream of uprightness and breathed the air of truthfulness. At night, they wore the pajamas of candour and slept on a mat or mattress of contentment laying their heads on pillows of gratitude to God Almighty.

The corridors of the Holy Trinity School, Ilawe, were paved with tiles of probity. The classroom of Emmanuel School at Ado was constructed on the burnt brick of diligence and hard work. The short journey of life between Emmanuel School and Christ’s School both at Ado was taken on the narrow but solid road called Reliability with the two schools connected by the Dependability Bridge. Working with parents, the dedicated teachers of Benjamin Osuntokun groomed the ordinary child into an extraordinary human being and the brilliant ones into globally celebrated icons of brilliance, prominence and inter-galactic stardom. Outside the school environment, in the old PWD (Public Works Department) office down the road in Akure, workers wrote with dedicated hands on papers of probity and with pens flowing with ink of honour. On the streets, the citizens walked unmolested; they walked with boldness to right the wrong. The malefactor was confronted and the notorious one was challenged. The society reprimanded the reprobate and vilified the villain.

That was another country; that was another time; that was a different period; that was a singular season that shaped the likes of Benjamin Osuntokun and his peers and contemporaries such as Lucas Adetokunbo, Ayo Banjo, Oladipo Akinkugbe, Adelola Adeloye, Tai Solarin, Akinlawon Mabogunje, Tekena Tamuno, Ade Ajayi, Ayo Bamgbose, Chike Obi, Chukwuedu Nwokolo, Chike Edozien and the many others in this hall today. It was not as if all was quintessential in those days; as if ministers did not steal money or Obas did not lay their wayward royal feet on their subjects' wives; but these aberrations were few and far between. More importantly, the society ostracized the aberrant, set them apart, avoided them, shunned them, ignored them, named and shamed them and expelled them from the activities of the community.

So, Benjamin Osuntokun died, and even before his death, we had begun to carve out a new country out of the old. Then and gradually, we let down our guard. Politics, ethnic rivalries, and the inordinate love of money all crept into the orderly excellence of our community life. Today, we live in another country; one filled with people in the throes of decadence; a nation in the froth of corruption; a nation where vice is victory; nasty is nice; sadism is sweetness; stealing is saintly; brutality is basic; malice is magnificent; arson is acceptable and looting is our first love.

We live in a nation where stealing is not corruption. No segment of our society is free from corruption. Corruption roams freely in the corridors of our ministries. It has a place of honour

in the bedroom of our leaders and in our private and public settings. Indiscipline and falsehood are to be found in the sacred and whitewashed sepulchres of our churches and citadels of worship. Our edifices of learning and our universities are breeding grounds for the same societal ills they are charged to correct.

We are a country with a national

- Aversion to excellence
- Desire to accept and settle for second best
- Culture of subtle and bare faced corruption
- Double standard for private and public living
- Timidity to oppose evil and stand up for what is right
- Acquiescence to forces of evil and decadence
- Desire for taking the easy way out
- Disdain for paying attention to details
- Relish of rapid results and upfront gains
- Talent for misapplication of resources
- Penchant to seeking solutions tomorrow for the problems of yesterday

It was not as if the change came on Nigeria as a “tsunami” without warning. The change came as the relentless dripping of the acid of corruption. It was gradual; it was slow but regular and that fall is a continuing journey; a step by step march into the new and decadent future. It has not

fully evolved yet; we have not yet sunk into the depth of decadence; we are on our way; we will soon get there.

Gone are the days when parents taught their children the dignity of labour, the virtue of honesty, the fruit of hard work and the importance of a good name. A child is lucky if he or she sees his or her parents in a month. As we run after money (legitimately or otherwise), we are out of the house before the cock crows and return long after the chicken has retired to bed. Weekends are not for relating to the children but for exhibiting conspicuous consumption and celebrating the audacity of the gangster and the ill-gotten gains of the looter. Our children only hear of integrity spoken in the past tense, having rarely seen it in practice. Our scandal-ridden nation keeps the tabloids in print and the social media froths with the foam of fraudulence. Check our newspapers, view our television stations, from the headlines to the main news, our officials are either telling lies about the whereabouts of our leaders or courts in the US or Europe are exposing our leaders who have taken bribes. In our universities, academic fraud is a compulsory course for promotion, and sexual abuse and misuse are the tutorials for award of first class degrees.

Nonetheless, we are not yet dead as a nation but we are dying slowly and excruciatingly. The sad part of it is that we pretend not to know that we are sick or have accepted our sickness as the norm and have resigned ourselves to a

state of helpless incapability, inability, unwillingness and unpreparedness to do anything positive to turn our country around.

Our greatest problem may yet be that we do not know we are a nation of unhealthy people. WHO (World Health Organisation) says "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". I think what WHO is saying is that you may have no disease or infirmity and still be sick or not healthy. You may be physically well and still be sick. WHO says until you are in a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, you are sick. So, in Nigeria, what are those daily and "taken-for-granted" signs and symptoms of lack of health or sickness that we exhibit in our homes, offices, roads, communities and among the high and low? What do we display on our television programmes? What happens in the hallowed halls of our commercially-oriented business-cum-worship centres called churches, where we go into a spontaneous orgy of contrived adulation of celestial bodies? Is WHO saying some of those actions point to an absence of a state of well being? What are those things we do that obviously point to an absence of emotional well being as we do some of the things we do that lead us to express such pregnant exclamations as "Naaaaaaaaija"!

In my thinking, WHO is saying that you are not healthy; or bluntly put, WHO says you are sick or not well, when you . . .

Drive your car like a madman against the run of traffic, entering a one-way road and from the wrong end blasting your horn and flashing your headlights at 12 noon to drive away those doing the right thing;

Get treated for malaria, only for you to return to your home surrounded by a gutter where the malaria pathogen infested mosquitoes are waiting to give you malaria again and again and forever;

Get hypertension because you stash your nation's resources in a foreign bank under a secret code you have hidden from your wife and children;

Accept 500 for your vote from the same person who four years earlier promised to transform your life but instead transforms his own by destroying yours;

Build a 12-room mansion with a car attached to each room and then lock up the rooms and the cars while you live in a rented apartment and ride "okada" to your office;

Build a one-story building containing three stalls with no toilet and you call it "The Global Intergalactic Mega Plaza";

Consider excellence and mediocrity as identical twins;

“Spray” your annual salary and add the money you borrowed to plaster the forehead of your concubine while your family is starving and your child is away from school for failure to pay his/ her fees;

Make a carpet out of your national currency notes, littering the dusty dance floor and stepping on it with gleeful abandon;

Are knocked out in the first round of the FIFA World Cup and you pat yourself on the back and say at least we are better than Sao Tomé and Príncipe!

Win the Africa Cup, and you tell your players, we did not expect you to win, so we were unprepared for your victory;

Live under the assumption that you are well because you are not dead, while laboratory evidence confirms a diagnosis of cancer or diabetes and you say God forbid! I reject it because nobody in my family has ever had cancer or diabetes forgetting that when your father died before the amalgamation of Nigeria, there was no laboratory test for diabetes;

Go into spontaneous saturnalia of debauched celebration like a decapitated chicken running wild—when the man who impoverished you and your nation, looting your resources, is jailed in another land and is finally released from prison.

As I conclude, allow me to ask some questions.

1. What is wrong with us as a nation?
2. Was it the accident of the 1914 amalgamation of the strange-bed fellows?
3. Is our country under a curse?
4. What brought Nigeria from the mountain of hope and optimism into the valley of underdevelopment?
5. Who is responsible for making Nigeria a nation perpetually at the periphery of progress and orderly development?
6. Why is Nigeria with all her resources—human, financial, natural—still a sleepy, slumbering and sloppy giant?
7. How did we snatch defeat from the hands of victory?
8. When did we become the laughing stock of the world and for how long would we be?

The short answer to all of these questions is that in Nigeria we have a lethal combination of a villainously obtuse leadership and an impulsively thoughtless followership. Over the years, since Osuntokun died, the emerging diseases of injustice, lack of a level playing field, inequity, disdain for excellence, escalation and promotion of mediocrity have become endemic, breaking out occasionally as epidemics and emergencies of national

concerns. Our dying as a nation has not been a one-day occurrence.

The death of decency, the demise of dignity, the hanging of honour, the killing of knowledge, the uprooting of uprightness, the murder of morality, the passing away of principles, the castration of character, expiration of esteem and the suffocation of sanity all came slowly and gradually, first with acquiescence and ultimately with acceptance. With the funeral of faith in our country, we have now reached the level of mutual acceptance of incapability on either side – government and the governed – to do anything positive to change our country.

You do remember that we once had a law on wearing of helmets when you ride on a motorcycle (*okada*)? We know the helmet was designed to crush the Yoruba cap. We know it was fashioned to ruffle the feather of the *ndigbo* cap. We are aware that the helmet was manufactured purposely to destroy the fine embroidery of the Hausa-Fulani cap. We also know the law of the helmet was enacted to protect our skulls from cracking when plummeted onto badly maintained roads and to prevent our brains from stewing in the pot holes of the road.

Yet, today, out of defiance to the law and colluding with designated agencies charged with the enforcement of the law, Nigerians ride on *okadas* in absolute violation of the simple laws of safety and security. What we see with *okada* riding, we see in almost every aspect of life. The result of this poverty of leadership and a people rendered spineless by ethnic division, inequity, greed, corruption, disregard for

excellence and ignorance, is well described in a recent UN report.⁹ The report provides some answers to the “what”, the “why”, the “how” and the “when” questions I asked above.

The report on Nigeria’s Common Country Analysis, CCA, said, amongst other things, that Nigeria is one of the poorest and the most inequitable countries in the world with over 80 million of her people (64%) living below the poverty line. The report says Nigeria,¹⁰ with a population range of 175 -187 million, is the most populous nation in Africa and the seventh most populous in the world and that her population will rise to 200 million by 2019 and over 400 million by 2050. The country is deeply divided along ethnic, religious and regional identities; that 37% of her children under five years old are stunted; 18 percent wasted, 29% underweight and overall, only 10% of children aged 6-23 months are fed appropriately based on recommended infant and young children feeding practices.

Nigeria’s high youth unemployment rate of 42% in 2016 is a ready recipe for poverty and despair, making our children an easy target for criminal and terrorist activities. Over 10 million children of school age are out of school with no knowledge and skills.

Nigeria’s economy crashed into a recession in 2016 with government revenue falling by as much as 33 percent, and a contraction of the Gross Domestic Product, GDP, by 0.36 percent in the first three months of 2016.

The vulnerable macroeconomic environment in Nigeria affects investors’ confidence in the domestic economy.

Even though Nigeria is signatory to several protocols on sustainable and renewable environment, the country has, over the decades, failed to protect the environment, ecosystems and natural resources.

Over-exploitation of the natural resources and pollution of the environment such as desertification has exposed and is exposing the population to vulnerability and risks caused by climate change, among others.

Nigeria is well-endowed with forest resources, accounting for 2.5% of her GDP. But Nigeria has one of the highest rates of forest loss in the world. Between 1990 and 2000, Nigeria lost an average of 409,700 hectares of forest per year, with an average deforestation rate of 3.5% per annum.

An increase in population and human activities like farming, construction and cutting of trees, use of wood and the effect of climate change lead to environmental destruction across Nigeria.

This in turn leads to unpredictable weather patterns, drought and floods. The implication of the destruction of the environment includes reduced agricultural productivity, destruction of property and loss of life.

The major challenges Nigeria is currently faced with are lack of good governance and the general increase in insecurity across the geo-political zones especially the North East, the Niger Delta and the Lake Chad regions. The situation is exacerbated by the existence of systematic accountability challenges, limited capacities of independent

institutions/commissions and limited accountability at the federal, states and local government levels.

For decades, different segments of the nation's population have, at different times, expressed feelings of margin-alization, of being short-changed, dominated, oppressed, threatened, or even targeted for elimination.

Available reports indicate that there are over 3.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria—the largest in Africa, ranking behind Syria and Columbia on a global scale. The most distressing aspect of the report is the conclusion that the situation has not changed over the decades, but is getting worse.

LIFE IMAGES

Nigeria 57 Years of Independence

What did the UN see and describe as a humanitarian disaster that we did not see but accepted as normal? Please let us take a pictorial tour of our country 57 years after independence. Poor leadership and atrocious governance form the stanzas of our national anthem. Our deplorable roads are the killing fields of our nation. Poor amenities and facilities for health, education and security certify that we have a sick nation of underdeveloped and half-educated citizens, ravaged by disease and living in perpetual fear, insecurity, pain and agony.

How Did We Get to this Point?

On Education

How did we get to this point? I think the problem started with the neglect of proper education at home, at our educational institutions and our government offices and houses of assembly; where our representatives and senators gather to determine the future of our nation.

What is education you may ask? I am told education has no less than 10 components. Just as a car has many components, with none of the components alone being the car, so also the ten or more components of education taken together, make education complete. These components of education are culture, development, edification, enlightenment, information, instruction, learning, schooling, teaching and tutoring. I will not go into details of each of these components but will pose some pertinent questions to us:

Which component of education is missing in the upbringing of our political leaders who fight in the respected chambers of the national assembly; who loot the national treasury for their "meritorious" service to our nation; who officially take away, every year, 6 billion naira, an average of 147 million per legislator representing 1% of the entire national budget? Why is it that while the average Nigerian is encouraging himself or herself with the charge call of "*aluta continua*", our leaders are busy steeling themselves to steal more of our resources with the clarion call "*a looters continuum*".

I ask what component of education is missing in the upbringing of our parents that make them jam JAMB, squeeze the neck of NECO and fabricate certificates so their children can gain admission into our centres of decomposed educational excellence.

What component of education is missing in the training of our civil servants and contractors that make them inflate contracts, execute budgets in the real sense of EXECUTION and fiddle with documents to filch our finances?

Finally, what component of education is missing in the upbringing of our pastors and preachers that make them desecrate the altar of celestial adulation?

The best place to start addressing our education is from the home front, the foundation of our education. For if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? Psa 11:3

Currently, we have 160 approved universities (the federal government approved six more last week) in the country with more to be established. Perhaps we will stop when every one of the 774 LGAs has a university. We need to take a hard and serious review of our university system. With vice chancellors competing with seasoned politicians to enter EFCC net, the first step is for the academic community to accept that there is a major problem with the university system. The system needs to examine itself and focus on being relevant to national development. We should stop, forthwith, the current system of internal evaluation of our universities which we call 'accreditation'. The ideal

accreditation process should be impartial, objective and conducted by an independent party and not by the people who provided the guideline or those implementing the guideline.

The NUC sets the operating guidelines (benchmark) for universities, oversees the university accreditation system and draws the accreditation team from staff of the universities being accredited. A more transparent accreditation system not involving the NUC and university staff serving as judges and juries but involving independent parties free of the 'brown envelope syndrome' should be constituted. In this way, it will become possible to truly determine which programme should be accredited. It may eventually change the poor public perception of our university system and products – unemployable graduates, poor quality of teaching arising from pitiable quality of teachers and rampant examination malpractices both by staff and students of our universities, etc.

Second, our government should not approve the establishment of more universities but upgrade existing ones and fully maximise the utilisation of the resources. Our premise for setting up universities is based on false analysis. Because we have a million or more students leaving our secondary schools, we think we should establish enough universities to accommodate all secondary school graduates. While we are driven by the craze to get ALL secondary school graduates admitted into universities, we forget that not all of them make the cut off points for

university admission based on the results of examining bodies, namely, WAEC, NECO and JAMB.

A recent release

There is no creativity in determining the programmes and courses run by our universities. Each one—old or new—has a ‘cut and paste’ academic brief with a play on words! There must be close to 160 out of 160 universities offering degree programmes in botany, philosophy, and zoology. The universities in Nigeria offer degrees in history which had been expunged from the curriculum for over two decades, but has recently been resurrected and is back in the curriculum. Nigerians lament the poor global ranking of Nigerian universities. We should not lament but rather accept that the rankings truly reflect not just the deplorable state of our universities, but the depth of decadence in our nation; a nation perpetually on the periphery of excellence!

We dream of Nigerian universities conducting ‘cutting edge’ research when we cannot guarantee regular supply of electricity; when we use the equivalent of pond water as distilled water; when we sterilize equipment with cooking stoves! These are conditions for conducting ‘cudgel edge’ and not ‘cutting edge’ research. One of our newspapers reported that the national power grid collapsed 28 times in nine months and we want to do cutting edge research! Before we even think of conducting any research at all-o, we should first deal with providing adequate basic infrastructure and facilities, not just to the university, but the entire nation. We seem to be on our way to achieving

this impossible feat by appointing one ‘Super Minister’ to deal with power, works and housing, all together!

Finally, we now need more than ever to have our industries and universities work together to make use of any future research outcomes and products from our research establishments. But first, our universities must re-focus and be determined in finding solutions to our national problems.

On Population

It is estimated that Nigeria’s uncontrolled population will hit 206.8 million by 2020, 398.5 million by 2050 and 752.2 million by 2100. Unless we do what is urgent and positive to bring our population under control, our situation will get worse economically, socially and politically. Yes, the Bible says in Gen 1:22, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and FILL the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth”. The Bible was referring to great whales, and every living creature that moves in the waters and every winged fowl flying in the air. To man God said in Gen 1:28, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and REPLENISH, (not fill) the earth, and subdue it”. In Nigeria, the misinterpretation of religion and misuse of culture take precedence over population, a serious developmental issue in Nigeria. We need to use the correct interpretation of religion and the proper application of our culture as we try to find the solution to the problem of overpopulation.

On Federal Character

One of the points raised by the UN report¹⁰ was that

For decades, different segments of Nigeria's population had, at different times, expressed feelings of marginalization, of being short-changed, dominated, oppressed, threatened, or even targeted for elimination.

The federal character policy has contributed in no small measure to creating this negative feeling expressed in the report. We need to pursue an educational policy that will ensure that in 30-40 years from now, no part of Nigeria will be described as educationally disadvantaged or backward or less developed. Having achieved that, we will not need to give undue federal character advantage to any section of this country. We need to have a time limit for the end of the federal character system to encourage the so called educationally backward states or regions to move forward and be at par with other areas of the country. Time is ripe for all Nigerians to be treated with justice and fair play in issues of appointment and promotion at federal and state civil services. No part of Nigeria should bask or rejoice FOREVER in being described as DISADVANTAGED either in education and/or infrastructure.

Restructuring Decadence and Chaos

The new clamour is for the re-structuring of Nigeria. One often hears different calls:

“Let us go back to the old Regions”

“No, no, let it be Biafra”

“I want Oduduwa State”

“No way, it must be Eko O Ni Baje State” and

“Do not forget Ijesha State-o”.

We all agree that it is this current Nigeria that we want restructured so that there will be justice, fair play and equitable distribution of the nation's resources; so no one will feel cheated any longer. We want THIS current Nigeria replaced, restructured, refashioned to a country where compatriots will arise to serve the motherland with love and strength and faith. We are looking for a restructured country bound in freedom, peace, equity and unity. As we call on the God of creation to guide our leaders' right and help our youth to know and act in truth, we must call on each Nigerian to live in love and honesty and be just and fair in our daily dealings with one another. Only then can Nigeria attain lofty heights and become a nation where peace, justice fairness and equity reign.

It is time to abolish the current flag of our nation stained with injustice, falsehood, looting, corruption, war, insurrection and insecurity. It is time to get a new flag to pass on to our children; a flag emblazoned with justice, equity, integrity, merit and excellence. Only then can each Nigerian pledge to the nation faithfulness, loyalty, and honesty. Only then can we all serve with our strength in defending Nigeria's unity and uphold her honour and glory.

When people say let us go back to the old regions. I ask: do we have the same calibre of leadership we had when we

had the three regions? Can you compare Obafemi Awolowo to any of the so called dealer leaders currently occupying our federal and state assemblies and governors' houses? Do we want to be restructured to the old regions headed by the new leaders who feel no sadness when they do not pay workers' salaries for months? The restructuring of this present-day Nigeria must start from the restructuring of the thinking and attitude of each and every one of us. The true, progressive and viable change

Nigeria needs must be preceded by a change in our readiness to change to an attitude of fair play, merit and equity. Any attempt to restructure Nigeria without such a transformation will end up in restructuring inequity and enhancing the practices and policies currently dividing Nigeria. Restructuring Nigeria into six, seven or twelve geopolitical entities, without addressing the issues of integrity, corruption and merit, will only end up in setting up many entities and zones of discord, dissension and division.

Concluding Remarks

I need to ask the question I asked earlier on: What is wrong with us as a nation? When we blame colonial powers, we are like the 70 year old man who says his father is responsible for his poverty. Two years from now, Nigeria will have existed for 60 years as an independent nation. Blaming the colonial master is apportioning blame to the wrong source of the problem.

So I ask again: Why is our country being run on the four pillars of wrong attitude, wrong behaviour, wrong motives and wrong morals? Is the heart of our country cauterized by the chains of corruption? Has fraud senselessly hacked the brain of our nation? As we plunge daggers of fraud, corruption, inequity and injustice into the backbone of our nation, we are setting ourselves up as pawns in the new dawn of a dismal, depressing, despondent, drab and deadly future.

After paying attention to our educational challenges and problems of equity, justice and fair play, we will be well prepared to manage our natural and human resources and commit to re-ordering our priorities in order to turn our country into a truly developed nation and not one running in circles around the edge of haphazard development and the periphery of greatness.

The UN report¹⁰ suggested a way out—a radically new approach to transforming and diversifying the country's development with a strong bias to invest in people and in a strong and more dynamic and inclusive productive informal sector. *The Guardian* newspaper of October 18 2016 also carried this report.¹¹

Notwithstanding the prevailing economic challenges which the country is undergoing, the latest report by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) on the nation's future projected that Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) may hit \$1.45 trillion by 2030 if corruption is reduced and effective policies

implemented. But it depends on what Nigerians want.

We have always known what to do; we just have not got the courage to do it. History has shown that when a group of people or a nation is willing to change, it reinvents itself in a new process of creative thinking. Is Nigeria ready to reinvent itself? Are we ready as a nation to begin a new process of creative thinking in re-inventing ourselves? The Nigerian 1999 Constitution talks about national ethics in Chapter II, Section 23. It says "*the national ethics shall be Discipline, Integrity, Dignity of Labour, Social Justice, Religious Tolerance, Self-reliance and Patriotism*".

If Nigeria does not know where she is going or where she is to go, her disintegration will only be a matter of time. For Nigeria to make the desired progress excellence must replace mediocrity and merit must take the place of nepotism in the allocation of our national resources. Above all, there is only one universal standard and measurement for excellence. We must not taint it with our national or local standard by equating the standard of Tiger Woods with that of Tigers' Wood.

By his life lived on the principles of truth, hard work, diligence, industry and excellence, Professor Benjamin Oluwakayode Osuntokun exhibited the national ethics and provided the example we need to turn our country around. We need to remember him more often. A great man never dies and that is why I have not used the word "late" to describe him. He lives in each and all of us.

I have two more points.

Many have offered numerous suggestions but it appears one reason we miss Osuntokun is because of one of his discoveries. You remember that in 1968, together with Odeku and Luzzato, Osuntokun described a rare syndrome in the paper titled: *Congenital pain asymbolia and auditory imperceptions*¹². The disease is not as rare as we think. Go to our national and state assemblies, check our governors' lodges and you will find these places populated by people with congenital asymbolia to the pain, aches, and suffering of the citizens of this country. In addition, they have developed auditory imperceptions to the groaning, moaning, grumbling, yelling, screaming and shrieking of the over 180 million Nigerians.

So, the first step is for the leaders to feel the pain of the people, feel their pulse and demonstrate empathy. Maybe the new government is listening and not hearing alone. For those who will refuse to change for the better, those who will make Nigeria weep, I have a prayer: When you sleep, when you wake up, when you eat, when you look in your mirror, may these three faces be what you see.

Let me end this lecture with the issue of the 'Ijesha Shakes'. After reading a summary of Professor Osuntokun's thesis and combining it with the 1956 *British Medical Journal's* publication of David Morley¹² and reports of other studies by researchers at Obafemi Awolowo University,^{14, 15, 16} I am now able to report to the Indigenous Ijesha Progressive Elite (IIPE) that the eating of the roasted larvae of the African silk worm called *kanni* was

responsible for the shaking of people which occurred everywhere the delicacy was eaten from Ilesha to Ikare. I presented the following summary of my monumental discovery to the plenary session of the IIPE:

*Garri kikan pelu eja gbigbe lo nfa subu sire
to kolu won ni Ijebu Epe*

*Kanni womu ninu obe ila ati iyan lo nfa
gbighon awon ara Ijebu-Jesha.*

Cyanide-loaded Garri, soaked in water and consumed with smoked fish leads to the *subu sire* of the ataxic encephalopathy of Ijebu Epe. Eating pounded yam with okra soup clogged with *kanni*, the roasted larvae of African silk worm, leads to Ijebu-Jesha shakes.

Thus, I was finally able to shift the shaking away from Ilesha and move it to Epe and Ikare via Ijebu Jesha.

I take this opportunity to salute the Osuntokun family, especially those I have met. You are, each in your different ways, making a positive impact on the life of the people you came across. In October 2015, we celebrated the 80th birthday of Professor Olapeju Olabopo Osuntokun, the unassuming, intelligent and humble professor of ophthalmology. It was a celebration with a difference. It was reported that free cataract surgeries were provided to 500 indigent patients in Oyo State. You continue to bring light to the life of many people.

As for Professor Jide Osuntokun, the Bapitan of Oyo Kingdom, your reputation preceded you as a man of courage and principle. While many disappeared into the

Diaspora in the Abacha days, you were hauled out of the ambassador's position at Bonn and stood tall in the NADECO days, for which you were later hauled into what your nephew, Akin Osuntokun, called the "Abacha gulag".

You joined Redeemer's University, Nigeria at a time when we had a dearth of professors with courage. Some of our professors saw the new private universities as retirement homes and their departments as geriatric wards! You stood up and stood out as a man of courage and principle. You may never know how your stand gave courage and boldness to the declaration of RUN as a university daring to be positively different in a decadent and depraved society. I never got a chance to publicly acknowledge your contributions to the development of the Redeemer's University. I seize the opportunity today to say Thank you, Sir.

As for Akin Osuntokun, you write well and lucidly. You bring out the life in your stories and I have had great moments reading your exquisite pieces. Thank you for providing the oriki of the Osuntokun family. I assume you vetted it.

I here rest my case.

Oyewale Tomori

Ibadan

December 31, 2016

Updated in Vientiane, Lao PDR, November 30 2017

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