

TRIBUTE

Jinadu: A Death So Painful

Olawale Olaleye pays tribute to Hon. Olatunde Saheed Jinadu, a former member of the Oyo State House of Assembly, who died last month in a fatal road accident along Lokoja/Abuja expressway

Kikiogo, 6, had walked up to her niece, Akorede, also 6 but a few months older and said with some sympathy of sort: "They are burying your dad tomorrow, are you aware?" Innocent and naive, she immediately took off in excitement and rushed to her mum: "Mum, Kiki said they are burying my daddy tomorrow...yipee," she screamed, thinking it was one of those great parties that usually afforded her great eating and merriment. Akorede, like an average child, likes to eat and does not allow any opportunity to eat as much as she could slip by. But that was not the case in this instance. If only Akorede- her dad's supposed favourite- knew she'd never see him again, she most likely would have passed out hearing the news.

But Damilola, 14, the eldest daughter of the deceased, was completely weighed down. She could tell that her dad, Hon. Olatunde Saheed Jinadu, had embarked on a journey of no return. Intermittently, she wailed with such pains that underscored the full realisation of the impact of what had happened. Her friend and mentor had ceased to live, painfully too.

Do not even ask of the widow, Mrs. Olusola Jinadu, this writer's eldest sister. There could be no apt description of her state- physical, emotional and mental. She had ceased to be human, momentarily. Again, that was understandable.

"Akanbi", she called out to this reporter, "It is not well. This is too painful for me. I could have made do with a permanently disabled husband but not the dead one," Mrs. Jinadu retorted, brushing aside every attempt to console her.

However, if you thought you understood the pains of the wife- a young woman in her 40s suddenly widowed- what then would you say of the deceased's aged mother, who had thought she would someday die and leave behind a promising son? Perhaps, it is not one area to delve into.

Alhaja, as she's referred to, bore such a rare courage that was inexplicable even before some men of God who had come to pray with her and the family. She took solace in the prism that "God gives and takes" adding: "What if it was worse? What if I had lost his entire family at this time? My bible says we must give thanks in all situations," she said, consoling herself. That was naturality, you'd agree.

Mr. Lanre Jinadu, younger brother of the deceased, had a rather philosophical view of the misfortune. "So Tunde is gone", he soliloquised unconsciously, betraying the pains of his loss. "I wish I could rewind all of this and prevent this misfortune from happening," he mused.

"But Wale, I see this whole thing differently. Looking back, although he died at a very young age, Tunde impacted the lives of so many people. After all, how old was Adelabu Adegoke (penkelemes) when he was an issue in Ibadan politics? He died at 43. But Tunde was 45 and he gave back everything to the people. He died almost poor. I remember his skills acquisition programme which graduated over 6,000 people, amongst the numerous empowerment projects he conceived and executed.

"Sometimes, I thought the whole concept of politics was about waste because he hardly saved for himself but wanted the people to be fine. It was understandable why people shut down their shops in honour of him the moment the news of his death broke.

"Tunde was selfless; he had vision centred principally on human development capacity. He had the skills of mass mobilisation. Above all, his human relation was excellent. He had his shortfalls though and I had thought an opportunity would come for him to redress some of his personal and political miscalculations. Unfortunately, here he is lying dead. This is painful.

"This is why I insist we are not mourning Tunde but celebrating his short and eventful life. He did a lot in a very short time and would remain the darling of many. Tunde gave his best shot at everything and put a human face to all that he undertook," Lanre said.



Jinadu ...cut down in his prime

Tunde and Lanre were not just brothers; they were also friends- intimate one at that. They shared virtually everything. They discussed business, social life, marital issues and the future. They literally planned together with a view to complementing each other in all spheres of life.

With Tunde gone, Lanre is obviously a loner. His widow, Olusola, henceforth, has to contend with and shoulder the responsibilities alone. Without pretence, it will be burdening, no doubt. The kids, Dammy and Korede, no longer have anyone to call father and relate with, at least, in the filial sense. For Alhaja, one of the promising sons is gone and certainly irreplaceable even though she still has Lanre to look up to.

And for this reporter, he has lost an in-law with whom he shared an uncommon bond. This writer is one of the very few with whom he dealt closely- personal and political. It was easier in the political sense because of this writer's disposition as a political reporter. He reckoned with this reporter's contacts on the turf and would call to discuss issues of interest as they related to his career. His understanding of issues was incredible. He was a strategist in party politics. His analytical mind was an asset. He was compassionate and

selfless and a very rational being.

His degree of wisdom was evident in his ability to determine when he was right or wrong and this was further consummated by his unrestrained inclination to mending fences with people where necessary. Hon. Jinadu was a gem in a sense. Loved by all, even his political opponents admitted to his strengths ensconced principally in his human relations skills. He hated to keep foes and would roll with everyone, regardless of differing ideologies, ethnic background, status or faith.

The former lawmaker died Wednesday night, December 18, on his way to Abuja for meeting with a minister from Oyo State. He reportedly sat in front of the vehicle when they had a head-on collision with another vehicle and was amongst the three who died on the spot.

Sadly, it was not the first time that he would be faced with life-threatening situation; he was just unlucky in the last instance. Sometime in 2008, some armed men had stormed the home of the lawmaker on a Saturday morning but met his aged mother, Mrs. Susana Boade Jinadu, whom they did not spare.

About seven armed men had invaded his home at about 3am but he was lucky as he was not

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around. Jinadu, who represented Ibadan North Constituency II, was one of the 11 ANPP lawmakers in the state legislature.

Jinadu had reportedly accused a councillor in his constituency of masterminding the plot to assassinate him, saying the councillor had severely threatened him and that despite reporting to the state Police Command, "the police have not been able to arrest him," he was quoted as telling a local news journal. Whilst he was lucky the first time, he was not as lucky the second time and had since been buried, even though he was a Christian. Before his unfortunate death that Wednesday, Tunde had begun to strategise and refocus his political future. He was said to have started mobilising his former colleague-lawmakers to form a bloc in the state's polity. He had penetrated the core of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and positioned himself such that would pave the way for a sure standing in the coming but inauspicious dispensation.

Indeed, the meeting with the minister was said to be about the future of the party as well as the situating of interests, with his former colleagues conspicuously assigned roles as active players in the scheme of things. That was the quintessential Tunde- a man quick to thinking up ideas, generated contents and in the face of overwhelming circumstances, gave such hope that redefined seeming hopelessness with a silver lining that attested to good thinking.

It was evident from the side-talks that attended the grieving of his sudden demise. If anything, his friends knew there could never be a replacement for him in their midst and that, in addition to others, was the real misfortune that befell them in the wake of his death.

Beyond the wailing and his virtues that many extolled, there is no better way to end this honour for Jinadu than the musings of Akorede, his second daughter. Again, she walked up to her mum in their bedroom the morning after the burial and started to ask certain questions to the best of her understanding.

Hear this: "Mummy, why is he lying there (referring to the casket)? He won't be comfortable now. But they say Jesus Christ wakes the dead, can't he wake him up? Are we going to see him again?" she continued until the mum asked that she be taken away.

Although Jinadu is late and will never be seen again in the physical realm until that time when everyone is billed to meet and part no more, his good deeds remain in the subconscious of everyone who came in contact with him and would reside there for good. Continue to rest, amazing brother-in-law. Adieu!