

MY MENTOR, MY ROLE MODEL, EGBON-E ADIEU!!!!

The last message I expected to receive after the marathon prayer and vigil that we individually and collectively observed for perfect healing of my brother on Saturday October 10, 2020 was the unfortunate news on Sunday afternoon of the demise of Egbon-e, SATAR OLASEHINDEMI OLAMILEKAN ABIODUN Omo ALAKA, Olori-ebi, Ojulowo Omo, Omo oseparo, Omoluabi, Omo atata, Omo pataki, Omo to n toju Obi, a workaholic, my super duper active, ever bubbly and ever happy brother, my greatest role model, my children's mentor and gist partner who knew what each of them was doing at every point in time, who reviewed their Short, Medium and Long term plans with them, who encouraged them to be the best, who showered them with love and everything that will make them excel, a man who made a meaningful impact in my life, our dependable OKANLAWON (the only man in the midst of women) of Mr & Mrs Shamsideen Olayiwola Alaka family, a man who never looked for praises when giving helping hand, a man who was never to boast and who has touched humanity in the most humble and selflessly-unique way.

Of all the greatest gifts of life, having a brother like Egbon-e is a prized possession. To me, Egbon-e can never die, Egbon-e is not dead because Egbon-e shall live forever in my heart. Broda Sehinde, the reality of your death is not likely to sink in me for a long time to come; I am still hoping to wake up from my dream. This is a rude shock.

That I am heartbroken is an understatement. I am still unable to piece it together. Your passing made the book of Ecclesiastes's description of "VANITYness" of this world more meaningful to me. If good deeds, open handedness, compassionate heart or unconditional love alone are the sacrifices that could save one, you never would have died.

In my heart you hold a place that no one could ever fill. How do I start to explain, is it to remember my growing up with you which seemed like you had loved me while I was still in the womb before you set your eyes on me? Is it your guidance for each step of life I was making? Honestly, I felt soul-amputation with your death as nothing ever prepared me for losing you, such never crossed my mind, not in my wildest imagination. Why would my own brother die when I had thought he was going to hit 100years in life!!!!

I must admit I was very fortunate to have a brother like you and that you were in my life. I have fond memories of growing up under a protective and caring brother like you. I wouldn't trade those sweet memories for anything. You were 'mother- hen' in a male form. We were extremely close growing up. You were very strong, no task or chore was too much or too difficult for you to do. I am proud to have come from the same womb as you. I recall your frequent visits to FGGC Oyo on my visiting days. My friends and I rechristened you "EGBON -E" because you became a brother to my friends and they all saw you as their brother, some who had no brother, adopted you a dear brother they never had. This happened in 1988 and that name stuck till date...*EGBON-E of life...EGBON-E Worldwide!* I get amused at your over protectiveness and fierce expression whenever you saw any male friend around any of your siblings.

I doubt if I can ever get over the loss of you. You were always there for me. How do I begin to talk about you, you were my Mentor, you were full of wisdom, you were my guiding Angel, you provided the support that propelled me in life. You gave me so much to remember in life that can last me till eternity, relating with you and having you as a brother made a huge impact my life, you are loved beyond words and beyond measure, thinking about how much you cared gave me an in-depth understanding of God's commandment about loving our neighbors. You were simply a complete man. Your over caring attitude and concern for my health and well being recently came to fore when you insisted speaking with my Doctor to be sure the course of treatment was on track while you were also being wheeled into the theatre for a major surgery. You forgot your own critical situation just to ensure I was not in any danger! What an UNCONDITIONAL, UNPARRALLELED, UNQUANTIFIABLE AND UNCOMPARABLE LOVE.

Growing up with you was fun with nostalgic childish pranks. I remember the mark on my cheek was through you when you fell me down in the bathroom, I am sure you are laughing by the side of God now because you are definitely by the right hand of God with glorious crown on your head having many shining stars.

When our beloved father, Shamsideen Olayiwola Alaka, the most handsome man, a loving and most caring father and the best father in the Universe answered the call of his creator on November 29, 2009, (wait...they both died on a Sunday – could that be a coincidence?) I became so confused and disillusioned, I was shattered, I didn't know how to carry on but you stepped in, doubling your efforts and giving credence to your name OLASEHINDEMI, (Sehindemi literarily means, FILL THE GAP WHEN I AM GONE) you didn't allow us to feel the vacuum created by

Daddy's death. You cared for your mother like something else. You took over the role of a FULL FATHER from your earlier Baba Kekere's (small Daddy) roles you were playing. Because Daddy passed around Ileya period and Mummy still gets the chills whenever Ileya festival is approaching, you made it a point of duty to celebrate every Ileya festival with us right from the first year, completely filling that gap. Your love and Support stabilized us. Egbon-E, you gave us so many beautiful memories. Be assured I shall keep your golden advices because they are priceless and will help me navigate life.

To all of us your siblings, you were the family chain, you were a solid foundation, giving everyone a shoulder to lean on through the storms of life as well as in the times of stress and strife we faced. My brother never allowed successes to get to his head as not to seek opinions or run issues by us his Sisters, he was such a humble, reliable and dependable great brother who carried our challenges on his head, he rejoiced most when we recorded any kind of success, he shared our pains much more than we were feeling, you could then imagine how broken hearted we would be to no longer see your face. It's unfortunate I could not physically see you at your last hours to express my gratitude to you nor did you wait longer for me to pay a fraction of my gratitude before God called you home. My consolation is that we were always talking, though you were so concerned about how your situation would depress me and you hid some of your health challenge and pains from me. It gives me so much joy to know that you saw God before you saw death. You shall continue to be alive in my heart. I am still imagining what life will be without you, even though they say time heals wound but a wound of this magnitude? Our God is ever faithful! This buttresses the saying that beautiful fruits in the garden never stay long.

There was never a dull moment with my brother. When you call someone a 'GERMAN MACHINE', you are referring to my brother, he was never idle, and always busy doing one thing or the other for greater part of 24 hours that make up a day, I am sure he will be working even while sleeping!!! Till he passed on, whenever he came home, he will insist on cooking, did I mention that he was a great cook? I thoroughly relished his amala, ewedu and ata elepo dindin while growing up. He will wash the dirty clothes, wash the car, clean the house and do everything doable!!! Whenever he arrived, he will take over the steering wheel right from the Airport not minding the long haul he just covered to Nigeria and till he will go back, he will insist on helping out with tasks and chores without asking!!! He was purely a domesticated man.

He learnt how to drive without any tutor before he was 15 years (boys rascality), drove out Dad's second car while Dad was off to work, he was naughty growing up!!!

He played meaningful and remarkable roles in so many ways and touched lives of so many people as evident by many testimonies of his good deeds and uncontrollable tears, weeping and inconsolability of people of different ages, shades and background the minute the news of his death broke. In our grief, the beautiful stories and testimonies especially people whose lives he touched so positively gladdened out hearts, different people from different races coming up to relate his acts of kindness ranging from saving lives, feeding them, paying their rents, bailing them out of financial mess, and the elderly he was taking care of on monthly basis, assistance he extended to many. All these he did in strict compliance on how to give genuinely and privately without sounding a trumpet, where what your right hand does is not known to the left hand as enjoined by God. No "*se ka rimi*" (no notice me) You may not realize it Egbon-e but you have left behind an amazing legacy.

Egbon-e was a comfort to our parents and always creating joy in them, a typical Olu-Omo. He took great care of Daddy till he passed on and Mummy has never lacked anything through the instrumentality of generosity and love he showered her. He was what Yoruba people will describe as Okansoso Araba, ti n mi gbo kijikiji, Omo ti a fi ma n gbadura fun omo, a very valuable and caring Son.

You were a complete man who profoundly loved his family, a devoted husband and father. To the Oyedeji Family, you were a son and brother they were proud of, not a son or brother In-law. To your children, you were a great father, not in terms of meeting their financial needs alone, but in all aspect. You were the definition of a FATHER, showing them the ways of life, teaching them values, respect and the ways of the Lord, inculcating in them benefits of hard work, value of Omoluwabi and essence of good education. You were simply a family man, an all round father. You were always there to support, guide and most importantly, protect your family. You were always at your happiest moment when surrounded by your family members. You were a free and open-minded personality. You lived a principled life devoid of grudges. You never claimed to know it all. You led us by example, and you were an inspiration in our lives. I was delighted when I was informed that you looked so peaceful in death, all your features were at peace and free from pain or strain. I am not surprised it was so, as the holy books have given a vivid description of what will happen to whoever received God's grace and mercy, because you saw God before you saw

death. Wishing you to stay back therefore will be a selfish act on my part because your last words were so philosophical and full of meaning.

To your friends, you were a good friend. You never looked down on any of them, even your old school mates who are not too fortunate in life; you were a good friend to them all – the Tailor, the Vulcanizer and even the Mechanic! You were a friend of the downtrodden. You were a friend that could be counted upon and depended on, always giving empathetic ear, an untiring and broad shoulder to lean on.

FINALLY, let me confess, I know my brother had God's Mercy and Grace bestowed upon him and he has made heaven. I have no doubt that you are resting in the bosom of your creator away from sorrows and tears, from tribulations and from Governments of this world, you are now in paradise where there is neither day nor night. Definitely, it is not how long but how well.

Adieu my dear brother SATAR OLASEHINDEMI, Sleep on ABIODUN OLAMILEKAN in the bosom of God (oriki). Greet our dear father Shamsideen Alaka, tell him we are carrying on and are proud of the legacy he left behind.

IKU ORO RE DA, ISA OKU, ISEGUN RE DA? (DEATH WHERE IS YOUR STING?)
GOODNIGHT TILL WE MEET TO PART NO MORE.

**Your Sister,
OLAMIDE ALAKA YUSUF**
