

# BASORUN

THE ARCH OF

# OYOMESI

3.093



# Chapter 1

## TRIBUTE TO ALAFIN OF OYO.

If there is any king I call my mentor, father and king, it is no other person than the Iku Baba Yeye, the Allafin of Oyo, Oba Lamidi Olayiwla Adeyemi III. He is not just a king; he is a mentor to kings who recognize his god-given administrative skills and sagacity. I am proud to be associated with the king who can stand on any platform in any part of the world and will still maintain his philosophy and convictions. He is the king on whose shoulders I stand to see the future. He is a dynamic king who has sacrificed a lot for the people of Oyo and other parts of Yoruba land."

"His leadership prowess keeps me wondering what sort of king he is. In my one year of close interaction with the king as the Basorun of Oyo, I have come to realize that Alafin of Oyo is a deep and vast person when it comes to history and tradition of Yoruba land. He is not just ruling in Oyo town, he administers other kings who are humble enough to bring matters that bother on their jurisdictions to him. I have acquired skills that the four walls of academic environment can

not offer. Each time he speaks, he teaches wisdom. It is a privilege to serve in Alafin's royal cabinet and benefit from his wealth of experience."

"I have had interaction with leaders at different levels as I have served in communities outside Oyo Township and even in companies owned by individuals. One thing that gives me pride about the wonderful opportunity my king has given me to serve is that the king does not just give you a mandate without adequate support or backing. He is always at one point or the other asking if the challenge of running my office is not overwhelming or cumbersome."

"There have been times we did not measure up to the expectation of the king in delivery of our services as chiefs in our districts, instead of the king to be angry and bitter, he would call us and point out ways we could have done it better. The chiefs and Alafin are like a wonderful family seeking the progress of the people of Oyo. The royal palace where the Alafin administers justice is like my home. If I have not been to the palace in a day, my mind will always be longing for it. This is contrary to some offices where one is always afraid to see the boss. We reverence the Alafin but he does not rule with intimidation. He is highly democratic as he gives us our voices in the administration of the land."



“Alafin, I affirm my commitment to your leadership structure and philosophy. A child may have cloth as an

Elder but can never have rags of wisdom as the elder. Your rags of wisdom are neater than the best of the fabrics manufactured by the fools who think they are wise. It is one thing to see a man who has knowledge and wisdom, it is another thing to follow him and learn from him. I have found a mentor, a father and a ruler of invaluable virtues in you. I choose to follow. Long, long and long may your reign be.”

Basorun of Oyo has just paid tribute to Iku Baba Yeye, the Alafin of Oyo. We were just thinking to ourselves if there is such loyalty in the corporate sectors where we work. The level of commitment of Basorun Ayoola dazes me. Most of the time we stayed with him, he would have one reason or the other to make reference to the Alafin, calling him Iku Baba Yeye. We asked why he could not do without the reference to the Alafin, his response was in an adage “Ola abata lo n m'odo san; Ola baba omo lo n m'omoo yan” To interpret that may cause some problems. In a nutshell, what he means is that it is impossible to excel without the support of a father. It is the honor attributed to the father that rubs on the son.

## Chapter 2

### WHO IS BASORUN?

**A**lhaji Yusuf Akinade Ayoola the Basorun of Oyo has gone through different seasons of life before ascending the office of Basorun of Oyo under the rulership of the Alafin Oba Adeyemi, Iku Baba Yeye. This book does not really serve as an autobiography; it is just a piece for sober reflection. It is to look back and tell people that life is a stage where every man has come to act. Some people choose to be the bad characters while some chose the good part. Only God knows why?

In 1944 when he was born in Sindodo compound, Oyo little did his parents know that an eminent personality has just arrived the planet earth. The simplicity of his humble background did not suggest prominence though it is a noted fact that he is from the lineage of the Basorun of Oyo. His parents were not the type that would contest for chieftaincy title. They believe the



Yoruba adage that says, "Ilesanmi dun j'oye lo" which is being interpreted as: contentment with being a subject is better than being a chief as there would be some responsibility that comes with the so called position.

His mother though a princess of the Alafin, taught him early that hardwork is the mark that distinguishes great men and places them in authority. He was not encouraged to set his mind on inheritance which unfortunately most of the young men in his days were setting their minds on. He lost his father at early age. This taught him that life is for a season and that it is expedient for a man to do something meaningful with his life and make impact in his generation. This is what Ayoola set his heart to do.

He was encouraged to stay in the village and farm. He did it for a while but destiny was always knocking on his door that he was not to settle in the village. Without so much consultation with people he taught would discourage him, little Ayoola left Oyo for Ibadan where he joined some relatives and began menial jobs for survival. He was staying in a suburb of Ibadan called Motunde. Majority of the people in his place loved him and were willing to assist him because he was always listening to the counsel of the elders and running errands for them.

It was during his stay in Motunde that a teacher took interest in him and asked why he would not go to school as a child that has a promising future. As his manner was, he listened to the counsel of the teacher and went back to inform his mother in Oyo that he wanted to start schooling. This was in 1955. His mother was so surprised since she thought what a young man of his age should be thinking about was a wife. He assured the mother that he would marry as at when due but at that moment what was paramount in his agenda was western education. The mother pledged her support and gave him her blessing. He did well in school and was promoted that he graduated primary six under three years.

Tragedy struck! His mother's farm got burnt. His mother has been the major benefactor but now that her major source of income has been destroyed by fire what would become his hope of furthering his education? He did not call a pity party neither did he dally. He made up his mind to quit school and go further to search for a way to bail his mother out of the mess.



# Chapter 3

## In Search of Greener Pasture

In 1962, he decided to go to Lagos in search of the proverbial Green Grass. Lagos was a different terrain for the young Ayoola. There were different sorts of people and languages. He felt that to amount to anything in that city he had to tighten his belt and be a man. He went through different experiences that a new person in Lagos at that time would tell over and over again. He did not allow his experience to dissuade him from running after his vision. After lots of search here and there, he secured job with one Madam Debo who was a popular business woman in Lagos. He did not work with her for a longtime before he secured job with Fan Milk.

Fan Milk was the beginning of leadership responsibility for him. His employers saw how dedicated and disciplined he was and made him a supervisor. He worked hard to prove his worth to them by making sure he had proper record of sales and report on activities of the people under him. The job required that he ensured

that milk was sold to the white men on the Island. He did that for a season before he started thinking that there was supposed to be a better endeavor for him in Lagos. He resigned without another job in view, but with the desire to be better than where he was.

His friends who were shocked by his decision started coming to him to know what had led him in that path. He told them he was not born to be serving white men milk but to be served also. They all left him wondering what sort of a stubborn man he was. To show he was not stubborn, he tried and followed some of his friend to another place where they said they were loading cocoa produce into ship. He worked there for a day but that was the last day he worked there. He said he quit the place not because he was lazy but he could not just be working like a slave. He was not looking for money at the expense of his life.

As fate would have it, he met a friend of his who advised him to go to seaport to work. He was told that all he needed was labor card that would permit him to work at the Port Authority. He was directed to the labor office, Ikoyi where the card was being issued. When he got there he met a lot of people. He stayed there throughout the day but couldn't obtain a card. His friend later advised him to bring 10 pounds and he



would get the card. True to his word, his friend got him the labor card.

With the labor card at hand, Mr. Ayoola headed for seaport to try his luck. On getting there, without much ado, they offered him employment with the Port Authority. He was really delighted to have got the job. Most of the people at his level were not educated. He also had little education but could function with it. His knowledge of mathematics helped him a great deal. There was an occasion when the person in charge of record keeping was not at work and he volunteered to take charge. The white men in charge of the Port were surprised that he had a good grasp of calculation and record management; they immediately promoted him to become the Assistant Supervisor. That was the beginning of greatness in his life.

While in Lagos, this young man was not just wasting his time like some young men were, he took time to acquire driving skill. It paid off later. In 1973, he was employed at the Flower Mill as a driver. He said his employment at the Flower Mills was one of the sweet memories he would like to always remember. It was while at the Flower Mills that he traveled to Mecca in 1975.

Among his peers at the Flower Mills, Alhaji Ayoola

stood out as disciplined and well respected personnel. They all spoke well of him as he was always willing to assist and share people's problems. He was a counselor to most of the young guys trying to find their footing in Lagos State. There were indigenes of Oyo that he assisted to get accommodation and assisted financially.

Despite the fact that he enjoyed his job and had friends who loved him at the Flower Mills, Alhaji Ayoola still could not see the place as his final destination in his search for personal fulfillment. In 1979, he resigned his appointment with the Flower Mills. People around him could not believe. They persuaded him to stay but his mind was made up. He finally left giving the excuse that he wanted to return home.

His friends who knew him so well knew that he was up to something. What he wanted to do was what they did not know. Alhaji, falling back on the experience he had garnered as at the time he was working with Fan Milk, he decided to open a retail shop where whites and other elites came to purchase packaged imported food items. The shop was on Queen's Drive.

It didn't take long before he was known in the area. His business started booming to the extent that other business men and women started approaching him to



form association. The product of his friendship with these people was the Olaniyonu Market formed in that same 1979. He was made the market officer and later when they saw how he administered the market, they made him the Babaloja (head of the market).

He was wondering what he had done to deserve such title, not knowing greater ones were still coming ahead. He was a father to the merchants as many of them would bring matters that would have caused strife and contention and he would proffer solution to them. He averted undue riot and encouraged harmony among different tribes represented in the market. His style of leadership fascinated the people and through words of mouth, people from far and near began to his house at number 4 Coker Close to seek opinions on community matters.

In 1986, he was made the Babalaje of Iganmu. This was a surprise to him. In Lagos where nobody knew his family background, he was honored and celebrated. He then remembered what his mother had always told him, "Hardwork and honesty are the hallmark of the great." He wished his mother was there at the time. He did not know there would be other days of glory and lifting when he would miss his mother greatly.

He made up his mind he would not just carry title without performance, he increase the tempo of his commitment to the service of the people of his community, seeking a better and new way of increasing productivity and profitability without discomforting the populace. He consulted with local government officials and other government bodies to proffer solution to immediate problem of his people. He encouraged smooth relationship between the market people and the government by ensuring tax payment and collection of the due benefit by the people.

In 1993, another chieftaincy title knocked on his door. He didn't expect it also. It was a reward for his commitment and dedication. He was made the Oloja of Ajeromi Ifelodun Market. As if in succession, the National Trader and Marketing Council of Nigeria appointed him as their Auditor. At this point, he looked back and gave thanks to God. He thought he couldn't ask for more. His zeal to serve humanity increased.



# Chapter 4

## A Call to Higher Responsibility

Ayoola thought he had seen it all. He has been honored in every community he had found himself. In 2004, he was being installed as Babalaje Oloja of Ojora land in Lagos State when envoys were sent from the Alafin of Oyo that he was being considered as one of the people to vie for the vacant office of the Basorun of Oyo. At first he was shocked. But it did not last as the experience has shown him that the head that will wear the crown will definitely control his legs to walk to the doorstep of the kingmaker.

From 2004 till 2008 when he was installed as the Basorun of Oyo, he was always shuttling between Lagos and Oyo. He was really excited that after serving in another state it was time to serve his own people directly. The reason he put his mind to this title was to really showcase his god-given ability in service to humanity. He believed that such opportunity comes

once in a lifetime. He was prepared to go all the way to ensure he contributed his own quota to the development of his people.

It should be noted that he was not the only one qualified to serve in this capacity. He said he had made up his mind to pursue the chieftaincy but he would not make it a do or die affair. There were up to sixteen

People entitled to the post and only one person was going to be chosen! Alhaji Ayoola just said, "Let me do my best and leave the rest. If it the will of God, it will be done but if it is not, there is nothing any man can do about it."

One thing that distinguished majority of the people in this race was contentment. They all made a resolution that whosoever was finally chosen would be recognized by them as their Basorun because they believed in the integrity of the Alafin and other chiefs involved in the process of the selection of the Basorun. It was therefore not a surprise that there was no acrimony among them when Chief Ayoola was finally chosen as the Basorun of Oyo.

This chapter especially will not be complete without proper appreciation to the brotherhood spirit possessed by all the people that were involved in this race. Basorun is especially grateful to these people because if they have not been cooperative, he would



It is also worthy of note that if the Alafin has not been discreet in communicating the appointment of the new Basorun, there would have been commotion even before the installation of Basorun.

# Chapter 5

## FESTIVALS IN BASORUN'S PALACE

### **Odun Orun Festival**

In Oyo, every festival has its history. The history of Orun is rich and it also accentuates the loyal and adventurous spirit of the Iba (now known as Basorun). The history started with Alafin's inquisitive spirit. There had been a very high hill which used to exhale smoke. It was so close to the palace of the Alafin. The Alafin, being a king who loved to unravel mysteries, sent Iba to go and find out the source of the smoke. In his findings, he discovered that the hole on top of the hill where the smoke was coming from was wide enough to contain human being. He made up his mind to enter. As he was about to enter, he started hearing voices of people. That awakened his curiosity the more. He quickly entered and discovered that the place was not just an ordinary hole but an abode for thousand of people. As a matter of fact, it was a community! He was shocked beyond words. What surprised Iba was the population of the people in it. They were more than a thousand! "Who are these?" He thought to himself. They were also surprised to see him. He did not entertain fear when they demanded



who he was. He confidently told them he was an emissary from the Alafin of Oyo who had demanded to know the cause of the smoke.

Amazingly, they stretched their hand of friendship. He also reciprocated their gesture but was cautious as a warrior went they offered food. He declined. He told them that the message of the king was paramount in his heart and would not mix pleasure with business. Rather, he asked them to give him something definite that would substantiate or be an attestation of his presence in their midst. This would serve as a testimony to present to the Royal Father Alafin who had sent him on this fact finding mission.

In response to his request, they gave him Igba Orun. Igba Orun is a powerful entity that could not be handled anyhow and by anybody. It required an old woman to carry it. It was the woman who followed Iba with the calabash on her head when Iba was leaving the hole on the hill: the hole he had discovered was not just a hole but a town of more than a thousand people. Iba left with an orientation that the work of God was unfathomable. He was also excited that he obeyed the king and was adventurous and courageous enough to take up the challenge.

The old woman who followed Iba did not stop until they got to river not far from the palace. It was there that the old woman asked Iba to make whatever request he could. Iba did as he was asked. It was then

explained to him that a festival should be instituted to worship the god called Orun. It was the calabash of Orun that was carried to the riverside that would be the symbol of the Orun. He was also asked to note that it was only an old woman that could carry the Igba Orun during the festival. Another warning that was given to Iba was that he should not eat the new yam until after the Orun festival. The old woman then bid him bye.

Immediately the old woman left, Iba headed straight for the palace to deliver the message to his king. Alafin was glad to see his warrior's return. Iba after paying obeisance to the king reported all he had seen and all he had been commanded to do. Alafin gave his blessing and instituted the festival as requested. The festival was celebrated. A befitting shrine was made for the god and all the people of Oyo came and made request before the god. The festival lasted for more than five days. Odun Orun is also called Iyemoja.

The practice is that during the festival, Ogun and Ifa are worshiped. Also, a visit is always made to Chief Osi Efa and the Iba. The two chiefs now will go with the carrier of the calabash and other worshipers to pay homage to the Alafin. It is after the celebration that Iba has the freedom to eat the new yam. The significance of the festival is to celebrate the power believed to have been given to Iba.

Alafin was impressed by the performance of Iba. To



show that he recognized his heroic performance, he started calling him Iba ti nse Orun which is interpreted as Iba that has dealings with the Spirits. It was the deduction from this new name given to Iba by the Alafin that changed Iba to Iba Osorun (now known as Basorun).

## Egun Festival

This festival is a deep method devised to keep record of past Bashoruns and make reference to their past activities and heroic performances to eulogize them. Before the advent of writing in Africa, Oyo people have devised their own method of keeping and updating records to check ambiguity and confusion about their legends. Each of the past Bashoruns is apportioned his own egun. During the festival each egun for the past Bashorun comes to display and the Oriki of the particular Bashorun will be recited as the Egun dances. As the oriki is recited by the egun of each, the people present: people of different age group. The older generation would begin to educate the younger generation about the particular Bashorun mentioned which the younger generation did not witness. The older generation would also tell the younger generation about the ones their forefathers have witnessed which were explained to them also. Seventeen days of sacrifice usually precedes the Egun

festival. It is after the seventeenth day that the Egun for each Bashorun begins to come out.

It is a celebration associated with merriment and fun. During the festival, paps (Eko), fried bean cake (Akara), and another cooked bean caked (Moinoim) are always prepared for people to eat. Items are also taken to the Egun shrine for prayer and sacrifice: seven Akara, seven Moinmoin, sponge, soap and paps. Chief Bashorun is not allowed to follow them to the shrine. It is worthy of note that the essence of the festival is tribute to all the past Bashoruns and to recall, update and transfer history to the next generation.

## Jelepa Festival

As other festivals in Oyo are not without a significant importance, so is the Jelepa Festival. Security of human lives and property has been paramount in the agenda of the Alafin and his cabinet that it actually became a tradition. To combat the hazard of fire in the old Oyo Empire, a viable method of communication had to be devised.

Major among the occupation of the Oyo people were farming, hunting and fishing. It was discovered then that because there was no proper way of intimating farmers that the hunters who at a season of the year would use fire to hunt some animals, lots of farmers lost their crops to fire hazards which was always degenerating to fight between the hunters and farmers.



The Alafin and his cabinet in their wisdom devised a method of circulating information to people far and near.

The system stipulated that at the beginning of the hunting season, there would be a festival that would serve as announcement that it was time for the hunters to use fire. Alafin commissioned the Basorun to sort of showcase a kind of hunting event in which a life bush meat must have been tied to a tree in the bush. Fire would then be set on the particular area of the bush where the animal had been tied. As soon as the fire started the animal would be loosed. As it started to run for its dear life, the Basorun would then kill it. That would signify the commencement of the hunting season. The animal would then be taken to the Alafin for blessings.

By this time, the farmers, the hunters and all stakeholders would begin to make arrangement for secure and controlled mode of hunting. It is always targeted towards the harvest period to create room for minimal loss if there would be any.

The festival is associated with merriment also as there will always be feast and celebration at the Basorun's palace.

It is worthy of note that this festival is not just something from the blues, it is a product of intelligent mind of the Alafin and his cabinet to ensure security of life and property of the people of Oyo.

## Chapter 7

ORIKI: PAST BASORUNS

lowo fadairo oku baba eni ti yoo bo. Okunrin ti e mi tie mi loko loko oloko fu ru bamu ninu ilo sun ekun akora kise ni eyin ere. Olani pe kun kiba ni ja leyin alafin.

Eese ti o ni ola akanji aye e se to ni owo eru ni baba fi je ni owo iwofa ni iran akanji fi se owo iran ojosin ri fadairo ta fi alailoro joye boye kan ba ga bi ageere fadairo ni gbakeji alaaafin. Okobo ki feran iyawo lani pekun eni ti ko bi iru eni kole feran eni

### 6 OLAGUNJU

Mokan ju ola ko se ni to dun mo afori eni. Ije aje tete dagunro ose je ajehun mo arojo joye. Itakun to lerin mowo do tohun terin lohun lo. Ogbhon oba dide kan. Ogbo hun oba dide fuu ni bi olohun kofe ni ibe ni momenu hun monu eyan oferan eyan eyan ti olohun oba ko ya bo si waju eyan iba komi afolabi alao aye olohun feran basorun.

### 7. LATUNDE

Egungun jobi baba madarugbo omo oyin kola ori loni se orisa bi ori osi gbaruru koma gbaruru gbe kobi ko ma kobi gbe to gbe kobi tio ko fi ba je



The progenitor of the present Bashorun of Oyo (in the present day Oyo) was late Chief Gbenla who hailed from Ooke in the Ilorin Emirate of Kwara State. When the first Alafin in the present day Oyo i.e. "Ago d'oyo", Oluyole of Ibadan who was the nephew of Alafin Abiodun Atiba was made the Bashorun of Oyo. This was after the Eleduwe war which Oluyole and Gbenla fought along with Alafin Abiodun Atiba. At this period the Laguna of old Oyo refused to settle at Ago d'oyo (i.e. the present day) with Alafin Abiodun Atiba and thus, Alafin disposed the lagunna and appointed his friend Gbenla as the new lagunna of Oyo. Later on after the death of Oluyole, the Government of Ibadan devoured upon Balogun. Gbenla was later rewarded for his brave action at the Eleduwe war in which Alafin Atiba move lagunna to the rank of Bashorun of Oyo. Since then Gbenla was the first Bashorun of Oyo Ago d'oyo (i.e. the present day) Copied unedited

1. GBENLA

Gbenla-Iba-Osorun. O bo sile kija mole. Igbo wonu eye keye otuka. Okunrin sibata sibata niwaju lakanlu odi dandan niwaju oluku ewu. Eniti to luku ewu gboju le tolohun ju ologun lo. Eni atiba feyin ti to lohun o ta wara. Oni talagb ba ku, ogn o ni jagboro. Osi oye joye. Osini lagunna oje lemo so lu. Igbo biribiri, okunkun birikun birikun. Eda to mose okunkun ki o mo ma gbe lowo. Igbo gbogbo ki se lomi. Eda to mose okunkun koma se d'osupa loro. Ominu n ko ni arinrin oru okunkun ko yr mo eniyan. Kukunduku o se we geru opolopo ogun arumo gale gale. To bani opo ogun, to bani eke koni je. Ibin ko da nkankan fun ni, suru ni baba iwa. Agba to bani suru, ohun gbogbo lo koja. Gbenla, a paku ilu aje iba to moro jebi. Agbada agba yi ti oba ogba ako yi ti oba ko akoro t'Alafin ofe. Ajigbo to ba tosan toru. Gbenla Iba Osorun Atiba oji ni kutukutu da gojo. Gbenla, abi esin ji gologolo.

2. OGUNSORO

Eja lo n'ibu. Bi o sadi pe aja ye. Oba jej ajanaku.



Oyope daradara. Odo ni gi ikoko lama iyi eyido ema yikoko, bi aba yi koko, inu Alamo abaje. Omo kini mbe nigbo tin dun mohuru mohuru, bi o panije ko kuku panije, bi 'osi panije, ko ma panije, ko ye dun mohuru mohuru moni mo.

3. YEKANBI

Ologbo Ade kile okun. Okun odede teruteru. Alara agbayida. Ayo ninu egbe dara dara. Eni kanju gboku oku o ni sunti. Mon dan n dola, Ayinde Iba Osorun. Eni abini abinibi ti n roka le deni, lorun oba laa file lowo. Olorun o sebi, ire lo n se. Esin mi, etekete, esin mi erokero. Olorun bami mu gbogbo won.

4. LAYODE

Atitebi ogidan LAYODE

Atitebi ogidan kunrin ogun ma kara kara baja baja ba ti roju ekun yoo pa lolo oko jironi. Okete igbale - tije ni di afoju di. Awo ti yoo opa koro ju ogbe ri ko gbodo wobe. A fase gbejo n tan ra ra je. Bi ibi ko ba te. Layode bi ibi ko ba wo eni aba n waju oto baba eni se. layo de bi ibi ba te. Layode bi ibi ba wo oluka luku ama se baba ni le ara re arubo si ki pa ode ada si kole pa atan ohun waa ye wase ki hun ni.

5. OLANIPEKUN

Igbo fi dudu sola oko sola pe. Bo pe ti ti alejo yoo do ni le oni ka luku esin milenu. Afoje bolo ri sa

# Chapter 8

## BASORUN AND THE OYO MESI

bo pe titi won ama gbe aruru . olowo ko bi eran oro iwofa ti bi egun be re bi otutu ba n pa iwofa won ani ogbe ise re de bo ba se olowo won ani koro ju ko fata senu

8. LADOKUN

Jeje ni wa oba bi olohun ko silaye ologbon je eni emi ro apoju baba iwo ra okan juwa to fe kiki arare eke oni so pe eke lohun osi ka koni pe rare ni osika. Kamunu sika kamode sooto. Ladokun ohun ti bi ni koni sala i bini eyi owu a wi to lohun lase bi ku olohun oya logun odun. Bi ku olohuri- koya logbon osu. Ari te ni monwi afi apa di bo ti e mole ayan ebi 'sore oko adeyanju awo omo kewu se lore.

9. EESU OLA

Koro koto bi oka oko mopolola asa n ta awodi oke won a ma re akano aye oni bi olohun ko pa igun bi igun ba ri afise nu awodi oke ti gbe ko ni san ra bi igun ba san ra. Abi ye ti emi tie mi ina niyi oogun. Mo to niyi ogun karogun niyi omo kunrin ojo oto jo ojo oto 0 tojo ti a ri ija loke afin eni okunrin wosi ti ro eyan to gun bere akano aye ko bere beeni ko kuru . Eesu ola oro gan gan la bo



orisa oko ko n ko so mo bi selo kulubo bi qwon ti se omo ni mope lola nipe nipe Ie 10 tun n pele si. Oya gbeke Ie ira Aroni gbeke Ie ogun eesu ola akano gbeke Ie olohun oba oji ni kutu kutu ogba ojude baba e lo o mon toni toni oni bi ile baba eni ba gbe ni aatun ode baba eni se ni bi eegun ba gbe ni adaso fun eegun akano aye bio rI sa eleda eni bagbe ni eesu ola akano aadupe lowo olohun.

## Chapter 9

### BASORUN'S PHILOSOPHY.

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Philosophy or values a man esteems defines such a person a great deal. Also, a life without any guiding principle is like a aircraft set for a great crash. Basorun Ayoola is a man of principle and he does his best possible to ensure he follows these principles as they are the lamps that shine to dispel darkness around him. While speaking with him, he dwelt on certain attributes which are of uttermost importance to him and have helped him in his service to the king and the people.

They are words of an elder which must be arrows in the quivers of the young aspiring to be great and elders intending to progress from one level of greatness to the other. In writing these principles, I may not use quotation marks, please bear with us. They are not less than the word of an elder.



## •SERVICE

Basorun has always put it to whoever cares to hear that service to humanity is the substratum of happiness. A fulfilled life is not just acquisition of good things of life but fulfilling the purpose for a man's creation. A man's major objective in life is to serve his creator and serve his neighbor. Which is fulfilled in the golden rule: Love your neighbor as yourself and love your God with the whole of your strength. The world today is witnessing wars and famine due to **INJUSTICE OF MAN TO MAN**. Until man sees his neighbor as he sees himself he can not have pity for his suffering neighbor.

A man who has acquired wealth has to know that there is a purpose for it. It is his maker who has given him the strength to possess such wealth; hence he has the responsibility towards his community in his little capacity. The developed countries have the history of men and women who have sacrificed for the good of their country. It is not necessarily money that has made such people heroes but their heart of service to their fellow men. Men who have volunteered as soldiers are to be honored because they are not only giving their possession but their lives to serve their nation.

It is imperative to note that the legacy we are going to bequeath to the next generation is the good work we have done which result in good roads, electricity, pipe borne water, and other social amenities. If we use our ten hands to eat today, our children will meet nothing tomorrow. The dichotomy between the developed and the undeveloped nation is not the natural resources but the willingness of men to leave their nation better than how they met it. When great men are thinking, they are not just thinking for themselves, they are thinking for their people: how to give them a better life.

Nigeria will never forget great men like Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Alhaji Tafawa Balewa. These were men who in their time did not just occupy the ground, they replenish the ground. Their works today still speak. The next generation is watching us. What we make out of them will come after us. It is not hard to recognize a man that has the interest of his people at heart: he does not give lip service, he acts and people see. He does not praise himself; it is the people who will laud his projects.

Basorun of Oyo is a man of few words; it is his action that has actually defined his personality. He has served people for major part of his life. Service is natural to



him. A leader is not to be served but to serve. It is the people he serves that now give him honor in return. In reality, a man who serves others will be served in return. Whatever a man sows, he reaps. A man's sweat that falls on the ground in service to his people is more precious than the blood of the selfish and oppressive leaders who will not only steal the wealth of the people but maim and kill in the process.

I believe in one Nigeria. I believe in the service to my people. I have in communities where we have the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. It is our languages that are different skin colors are the same. We are all children of same father who have migrated over the years and have established different kingdoms and acquired different languages which make us to think one race is superior to the other. We need to understand that to make Nigeria great there is a need for us to come together in unity of purpose through service to ensure a better tomorrow for our children.

No matter how much wealth we have acquired, a day is coming when we shall leave them. Naked we came to this world, naked we shall return to the maker of all. In my years of sojourn here on earth, I have seen the good, The bad and the ugly sides of life. People have wantonly

coveted riches to the detriment of their families, friend and neighbors. Some have sold their souls to amass riches only to bite their fingers later. What then is the happiness of a man, if at the end of his life he can not point to people he has been able to assist to become great? I have dedicated my life to serve my people and that will I continue to do as long as I live.

Service to humanity is a matter of choice. In life, there are different things a man can do to occupy his twenty four hours of a day. Some choose to be armed robbers who steal and maim to acquire wealth. It is their choice. They need to know that life is not forever.

Man Will one day look back and say life is vanity. There are other people who have taken on careers that are profitable to humanity. They are the medical doctors, lawyer, motor drivers, mechanics, accountants, artisans and other professionals in other fields of human endeavors.



## • LOYALTY

Basorun of Oyo, Chief Ayoola is a man under authority and he recognizes such authority. He serves the Alafin of Oyo and abides by the rules that guide the relationship that exists between the king and his chiefs. As the head of the Oyomesi, he recognizes that the king is the head of all. He believes that the royal authority must be obeyed to the letter. Trust in the ability of the leader to give right judgments is a pivot on which loyalty stands. Basorun Ayoola always says he trusts the sanity of Alafin's principles and philosophy which provokes his loyalty to him. A follower who can not trust the judgment of his leader is not fit to be in the cabinet of such leader. The loyalty of a man will determine how far he can grow in any organization.

Loyalty is synonymous with certain words such as: faithfulness, devotion, trustworthiness, dedication, commitment, affection, truthfulness, allegiance, dependability and fidelity. These are not just mere words. They are deep core values which determine the stability of any sect or group of people. Basorun believes that a man that is not loyal is not fit to possess any title or leadership role. Allegiance to the king is the hallmark of a noble chief. A chief who is not faithful to the king is still a child in the affair of power.

To be successful in the corridor of power, loyalty is a compulsory attribute a man must possess. See a loyal man; see a man with great future. Loyalty will take a man farther than his expectation. A man who is loyal will go to any extent to defend his master. In the olden days, there existed great soldiers who will rather die than reveal the secret of their army. It was even hard to execute a coup because the soldiers believed that the king was an oracle. This generation has witnessed lots of unfaithful soldiers that will stab their Generals from the back. There is a need to address this aspect in our society. We all can not occupy one throne at the same time. God has appointed one man to be the head. The Alafin is the king of Oyo and there is nothing anybody can do about it. It is just as the husband is the head of the wife. There is nothing the wife can do about it.

It is even cowardice that makes a man not to respect authority. If you are confident in yourself, you will give honor to whom honor is due. I revere the Alafin as my father and king. It is a mark of royalty for a man to defend the course of his master, boss or king. It shows that such man will one day be esteemed by others that are his subordinates. Clash of power needs not be where a man recognizes the powers that be. A child



who wants to see the foundation of the earth will go on a journey of no return. I dare not contest power with people who occupy places of authority over me.

Ask a man who has walked with great men and has not run into troubles, he will tell you he has paid the sacrifice of loyalty. He can not eat their salt, pepper and drink their water and still want to go behind to stab them. A man who does such will not live long. In the history of humanity, such people have existed but their latter end is worse than their beginning. Loyalty is a key to walk with the great. Absolute loyalty is demanded from the subordinate to his leader.

Insubordination is a crime in the corridor of power. The hangman's noose is not far from the neck of the disloyal fellow. In the military, disloyalty is not viewed as a mere offence; it is a serious offence which attracts serious punishment.

It is my advice to every individual who works in one organization or the other to recognize that the authority above them and abide by the rules that guide their relationship with their superiors and colleagues. The longevity of a man in any chosen area of endeavor is largely determined by his level of loyalty to such.

Leaning on the shoulders of leaders too see ahead is a great advantage but where there is enmity between the leader and the led, such advantage suffers shipwreck.



## •FAIRNESS

"Is it fair" That is Basorun's question. Justice and equity are what Basorun demands in every case. According to him, "I hate cheating!" He does not like cheating. Injustice of man to man is the root of adversity and imbroglio the world is experiencing today. Until we come to understand that respect for individual's right should be respected, we will keep moving from one chaos to the other.

Favoritism or prejudice in judgment weakens the staff of office. It is really necessary for a leader to brace up at every time to ensure that the righteous does not take the place of the wicked in the process of judgment. In the prison today lies people who do not deserve to be there but because some people who seem to be more powerful have roped them into cases they can never be free from, they continue to languish in jail.

Intimidation is not a good weapon in the hand of a good leader. Facing reality and accepting the truth will establish a man in whatever he does. It is high time we accepted the truth as the greatest constitution that guides man in the discharge of his responsibility. Justice must prevail in all of our undertakings to ensure free and fair relationship among different sectors that make up our community.

Fairness is a virtue that will play a major role in our economy and relationship with other persons who wish to transact business with us. If we are fair in our dealings, hardly shall we face opposition and attacks from any quarters. There is a Yoruba adage that says, "Iwa omo lo n mu omo se okigbe" i.e. a child character will push him to make cutlass proof | " If you have not been given to injustice you will not waste money to hire the service of many lawyers to defend a simple case.



# Chapter 10

## BASORUN AND FAMILY LIFE

BASORUN is a family man. He has the large heart to bring people together. There is a saying in Yoruba that "Agba to roro ki kooyan jo" i.e. it is impossible for a wicked elder to gather people. Basorun Ayoola has the heart of a father. He is not just overseeing his immediate family, but also his extended family. They refer to him as father. An encounter with his brother held me enthralled. I asked him who he is to the Basorun. He replied, "baba mi ni won" i.e. he is my father. This is a demonstration of love between two brothers. We have seen brothers at war in the time past. It is really a great mark of honor for a younger brother to call his elder brother his father.

His respect for family is another quality which distinguishes him. He has always been referred to as "Baba Olomo Pupo" i.e. father of many children. He does not discriminate. His extended family's closeness to him is like his nuclear family. This attribute, if imbibed by leaders of every community, will put end to disputes and rancor that exists in our communities. The role he has played in ensuring the unity of the

extended Basorun family is what has ensured peaceful relationship he has been maintaining with his kinsmen since he has received the staff of office.

In the bid to achieve, many so called successful men have lost family relationship. They have no united family due to weird lust for success. History has it that some men betrayed their clan to achieve personal success. Neglect of wife and kids is the other of the day in some western countries. The same is creeping to our nation. Some people do not even see members of their family all in the name of work. What those people don't know is that when calamities come from outside world, it is the people at home who take responsibility of ensuring that they are not drowned by the calamity.

Basorun values family life and he accentuates this by constantly ensuring that his family creates occasion to wine and dine together. It is a man who values family that can value the community, and it is the man who values the community that will value the nation! Weird men hate family. They do bizarre things that are unimaginable. Why? They are not responsible family managers. One secret of happiness is to have a good family that cares for you because they know you have their interest at heart.