

SPEECH BY IS-HAQ OLOYEDE,(OFR,FNAL) AT A PRAYER/RECEPTION FOR DR MUIZ A.BANIRE (SAN) BY UNILAG MUSLIM ALUMNI(UMA) AT PROTEA HOTEL, IKEJA ON SUNDAY, 29TH OF NOV 2015 ON HIS ATTAINMENT OF THE RANK OF SENIOR ADVOCATE OF NIGERIA(SAN)

I would like to start my speech by giving gratitude to Almighty Allah because he turned the opportunities that came the way of Dr Muiz Banire (SAN) into blessings. A lot of people have different opportunities in life that never tuned into success. According to Muhammed Yunus “Poor people are the world greatest entrepreneurs. Every day they must innovate in order to survive. They remain poor because they do not have the opportunity to turn their creativity or talent into sustainable income”. This doesn't necessarily mean absence of opportunities, in many cases it is lack of opportunity to recognize or ability to seize the opportunity and convert it to some little advantages that makes a failure of potential success. Accumulation of little advantages provided by opportunities through judicious use of blessed talents translates to success. I recommend to all, **Outliers** by **Malcolm Gladwell** from which I derive the lessons and some illustrations to write on the topic of this speech.

With the blessings of Almighty Allah, the opportunities, talents and hard work of our brother have turned into a blessing, not only for him but also to his community and to all of us who know him. Apart from the blessings of Almighty Allah, Muniz Banire is successful because he was able to combine his opportunities with talent and turned both into success.

"Opportunities, talent, hard work and success" is the main theme of my speech today. This is because a lot of us become deluded by thinking that we are self-made when we attain success. It is not uncommon to hear stories of "rag to riches" during thanksgiving. We hear numerous narrations of mysterious triumph over odds and adversaries, told with passion that glosses over unique opportunities emanating from positive or negative circumstances. While thanking Allah, the Originator and Sustainer of all opportunities, we must reflect sufficiently on opportunities, earned and thrusted, which manifest in the recorded success.

We forget or take for granted the contributions made by others such as our parents or the opportunities that came our way as a result of our family background. It is not uncommon to find people talk about from rag to riches, brilliance or gut as the reason behind their success.

However, successful people are never self-made. The reality on ground is that when talents, teamwork, abilities, opportunities and advantages are combined, then we talk about success. Success is never achieved when a number of these elements are not present.

For example when some people talk about Bill Gate, they only talk about him being a school dropout who stumble on wealth through hard work and exceptional brilliance. Some even say he turned into a Multi Billionaire from nowhere. However is this true? Looking at his family background his father was one of the richest lawyers in the US and his mother was a daughter of a famous banker. This turned out to be key ingredient in his success. Many appraisals of his success discount the strategic roles of his noble family in the attainment of his success which to many is either sudden or undeserved. He began to have access to exceptional opportunities from age 8. When Bill Gate was not doing well in the Public School, his parents had the money to send him to a private school called the Lakeside. This provided Bill Gate an exemptional opportunity because he was exposed to the mainframe computers in the school. By age 15 no one of his age was on record as having more exposure to computers than Bill Gate. This provided him the perfect opportunity to turn the advantage provided by his family background into success. People don't usually talk about this. When they talk about Bill Gate, because of the delusion that success can be self-made, out of luck, miracle or as a result of brilliance alone, they never talk about the opportunities that came his way as a result of his family background.

This is also same for some of us. We do not give enough credit to our parents. Even if our parents are poor, we one way or the other, stood on their shoulders and this offered us the opportunity to become taller. Some of us also say that some people contributed negatively to our growth whereas some of these things we see as negatives are actually stepping stones for success. Jeb Bush was on record to have claimed that being a son and a brother of two former Presidents of America was/is not an advantage to him!!!

Many of us in the education sector believed that Prof Mahmud Yakubu deserved a second term as TETFUND's Executive Secretary in Nigeria, but President Jonahtan deprived him of the opportunity. Only very few today ascribes any credit of the Prof's present delicate position as INEC Chairman to collateral fortune of an earlier unjust deprivation. At times you love the hurtful as the Quran hints.

I would like to emphasise that talent, opportunities and operationalised ability (not just latent) make success with Allah's permission. Studies have shown that there is no correlation between intellect and achievements. Talent without opportunities would turn into wasted talents and

opportunities without talents is what usually turn into squandered opportunities. This is why we find out that a lot of talents or opportunities are not converted into success. No matter what we dream or aim to become as a result of our talents, if there is no platform to exhibit those talents then they are wasted. However, a combination of these elements with Allah's blessings can turn into success.

For this reason, today we are not only celebrating Muiz Banire but all those who contributed in converting his talent into success. We need to celebrate everyone that contributed one way or the other because no one can make it alone. This is why **teamwork** is also very essential in life.

I would like to also use this opportunity to advise politicians in Nigeria to be more reflective on terminologies and slogans employed to register political narratives. It is registered that Deputy Governors are **spare tyres** needed only when the principals are incapacitated. This is not likely to be the intention of the framers of the constitution . The effect of the political joke has been overwhelming. This is never a good idea because we are allowing our governors to become demons and the deputies are suspicious of the actions of the governors. This brings hatred to the table not only between a governor and the deputy, but among the aides and family members. From what we have seen in this country when accident or change in government happens and the deputy becomes the subject then the aides and family members find it difficult to work together as a result of the hatred already established. In some cases deputy governors are even afraid to correct their governors when they make mistakes. This is clearly the case because I can give you examples of deputy governors who reversed some of the legacies of the former boss.

Gentlemen of the press, I would like you to create public awareness and propagate the appropriate imagery that **deputies are co-pilot**. The relationship between the governors and their deputies need to change to that between a pilot and the co-pilot in an aircraft in order to make our society a better one. This is because for a successful flight, the pilot and the co-pilot must work together. Research has shown that most of the plane crashes that happen as a result of human error are as a result of lack of **cooperation or communication between the pilot and the co-pilot. This usually results into multiple mistakes.**

In order for our country "Nigeria" not to fail we must address and avoid **the accumulation** of minor difficulties and trivial malfunctions. We are bashing this country a lot. Please do not

allow small issues to crash us. Hatred, suppression, anger, error in team work or lack of communication kills a county more than economic meltdown. Cummulation makes an ordinary straw to break the back of a camel.

We have fought civil war and are overcoming some the challenges thrown at us as a result of the Boko haram, we need to use the opportunity and our abilities to make this country great.

We need to benefit from our diverse heritages and antecedents. Diversity is an opportunity being squandered and mismanaged as misfortune. We need to combine ability with attitude. Morality will sanitise the attitude required for nation building.

This is because it is only the Almighty God that created us that can give us guidance.

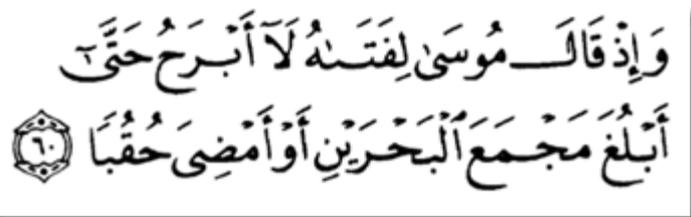
The success we are celebrating today has a combination of ability, talent, luck with a sound family background. He works as part of a team, he converted his opportunity into an advantage

LESSONS FROM THE QURAN

Surah Al-Kahf (verses 60-82)

Allah admonished Moses as he did not attribute absolute knowledge to Him (Allah SWT). So Allah instructed him to go to the junction of the two seas where he would meet one who was more learned than Moses.

The Quran states:



وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِفَتَاهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّى
أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا ﴿٦٠﴾

And (remember) when Moosa (Moses) said to his boy-servant: "I will not give up (travelling) until I reach the junction of the two seas or (until) I spend years and years in travelling." (Quran, Surah Al-Kahf:60)

That learned man at the junction of the two seas was Al-Khidr. When Moses met him and introduced himself, Al-Khidr asked:

"The Moses of Banu Israel?"

Moses replied in the affirmative. The Quran then explains further:

قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَىٰ هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُعَلِّمَ مِن
مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَ رُشْدًا ﴿٦٦﴾

Moosa (Moses) said to him (Khidr) “May I follow you so that you teach me something of that knowledge (guidance and true path) which you have been taught (by Allah)?” (Quran, Surah Kahf:66)

Al-Khidr replied:

“Verily! You will not be able to remain patient with me, O Moses! I have some of the knowledge of Allah which He has taught me and which you do not know, while you have some knowledge which Allah has taught you which I do not know.”

The Quran states:

قَالَ إِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٦٧﴾
وَكَيفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٦٨﴾

(67) He (Khidr) said: “Verily! You will not be able to have patience with me!

(68) “And how can you have patience about a thing which you know not?” (Quran, Surah Kahf:67,68)

Moses assured him that he would be patient and not disobey him in any matter. Both of them set out walking along the seashore. Soon a boat passed by and they requested the crew to take them on board. The crew recognized Al-Khidr and took them on board without fare.

Then a sparrow came and stood on the edge of the boat and dipped its beak once or twice in the sea. Al-Khidr said:

“O Moses! My knowledge and your knowledge have not decreased Allah’s knowledge except as much as this sparrow has decreased the water of the sea with its beak.”

Al-Khidr then removed one of the planks of the boat. Moses said:

“These people gave us a free lift but you have broken their boat and scuttled it so as to drown its people.”

Al-Khidr replied:

“Didn’t I tell you that you will not be able to remain patient with me?”

Moses said (as stated in the Quran):

قَالَ لَا تَأْخُذْ بِمَا نَسِيتُ وَلَا تَرَهِّقْنِي
مِنْ أَمْرِي عُسْرًا ﴿٧٣﴾

(Moosa (Moses)) said: “Call me not to account for what I forgot, and be not hard upon me for my affair (with you).” (Quran, Surah Al-Kahf:73)

They proceeded further and found a boy playing with other boys. Al-Khidr killed him. The Quran describes that in this verse:

فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلَامًا فَقَتَلَهُ، قَالَ أَقْتَلْت
نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةً بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا نُكْرًا ﴿٧٤﴾

Then they both proceeded, till they met a boy, he (Khidr) killed him. (Prophet Moosa) said: “Have you killed an innocent person who had killed none? Verily, you have committed a thing “Nukra” (a great Munkar – prohibited, evil, dreadful thing)!” (Quran, Surah Al-Kahf:74)

Al-Khidr replied:

“Did I not tell you that you cannot remain patient with me?”

They went farther till they came to a town. They asked the people for food, but they refused. In this town they found a wall which was on the point of collapsing. Al-Khidr repaired it with his own hands. Moses said:

“If you had wished, surely you could have taken wages for it.”

The Quran states this as:

فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَنبَأَ أَهْلَ قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَطْعَمَ أَهْلُهَا
فَأَبَوْا أَنْ يُضَيِّفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَ فِيهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ
أَنْ يَنْقَضَ فَأَقَامَهُ، قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لَتَّخَذْتَ
عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا ﴿٧٧﴾

“Then they both proceeded, till, when they came to the people of a town, they asked them for food, but they refused to entertain them. Then they found therein a wall about to collapse and he (Khidr) set it up straight. (Moosa (Moses)) said: If you had wished, surely, you could have taken wages for it!” (Quran, Surah Kahf:77)

Al-Khidr then replied:

“This is the parting between you and me.”

Al-Khidr then explained all his actions which had astonished Moses and made him question them. He said that the ship which he had damaged, belonged to a few poor people working in the sea. A king was behind them seizing every ship by force. So by making it defective, he had saved it for its owners. As for the boy, his parents were believers, and there was a fear that the boy would depress them by his rebellion and disbelief. So Allah planned to take him away and give them another child instead who would be more righteous and kind. As for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the town. A treasure was hidden under it which also belonged to them; their father had been a righteous man, and Allah intended to safeguard their treasure. Building the wall ensured that the treasure would be protected till they reached maturity. **Al-Khidr concluded that he had not done anything of his own accord but had followed Allah's instructions.**

The above incident is explained in Surah Al-Kahf, verses, 60-82.

In spite of repeated reminders from Khidr, and assurances from Moses that he would be patient and not question any of Khidr's actions, Moses forgot his promise and demanded immediate explanations for actions that seemed to him unjust and inexplicable at the moment.

We can learn from this incident about the weakness of human mind and limitations of human understanding. The example should make us remember and resolve never to have any misgivings, surprise or regrets about occurrences in our life that might temporarily inconvenience us or thwart our desires. After all, it is Allah Who Knows what's best for us and He, The Most Merciful, plans everything for our benefit which is not immediately visible to us.

Before I conclude my speech I would like to implore everyone to pray for our brother because in the sight of Allah anyone who passes judgment on other must account on the day of judgement. Muiz belongs to the Law profession where he has to be involved in determining justice, He is also a politician and politicians are responsible for determining the fate of a country. In addition to this Muiz is a teacher and he determines the fate of his students and the future of a country is determined by what we teach the young ones. You can see that by combining these three responsibilities he needs Allah's guidance to become successful in the hereafter, the ultimate success. I pray Allah will grant this model of a muslim ultimate success

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