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By

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**DR. 'SAIDOVICH' IDRISAH AHMADA
NEUROSURGEON**

At the background is the Mnazi Mmoja
Hospital, Stone Town, Zanzibar

EBUBE DIKE, OUR GREAT GOD: THE PERFECT ORGANIZER

This is a story about Bibian, a dear friend of mine. About the entire month of November 2020, she had persistent headaches. She visited her doctor who prescribed pain relievers for her. In December 2020, the pains had become excruciating. The pain relievers didn't work anymore. But somehow, she managed to go about her work and life with it like most of us do in Nigeria. Our endurance level appears to be the exception to Hooke's law on elasticity.

Putting the pain behind her, Bibian and her siblings Chidinma and Kasi decided to take a short trip to Zanzibar for Christmas. It had been a terrible year marred by COVID-19. People just wanted to breathe and at least begin the difficult path to having their sanity restored.

What was meant to be a simple process became so complicated. First, their visas were delayed. Then when the visas were issued, finding a flight became almost impossible. A trip that was meant for Christmas was delayed until the 31st of December 2020.

FIRSTPOST.

She almost called off the trip. In fact, she complained of how a country like Tanzania would have such a rigorous visa issuing process. She wondered why she and her sister had to cough out an additional N100,000 per person to get a flight after missing their initial flight due to the late issuance of their visas. Was it even worth it? They wondered. But for their sister who was already in Tanzania, having flown in from the UK, they would have called off the journey. The roadblocks were just too much.

You would see later that while all these were going on, Ebube Dike, Our Great God, The Perfect Organiser was orchestrating things for their favour. You would see how when things don't go our way after doing all that we possibly can to achieve them, we just need to concede to the will and purpose of God, especially when it is our daily prayer to work in God's will and purpose.

They arrived Dar es Salam, Tanzania on the first day of the new year 2021. Spent some time there before going on a Safari in Arusha, a different city. The last Port of call in the vacation was Zanzibar.

The trip to the island of Zanzibar was life-altering. Besides the fun that it presented it was also the perfect bubble for good tourism on the continent. The experience was surreal, they said. What struck them first on arrival at Zanzibar, a predominantly Muslim society, was the exceptional goodness of the people even to themselves. Each person greeted the other courteously and was genuinely interested in the good of the other. They noticed that this was not just a thing they did to warm up to strangers but among themselves. They also noticed they were a completely honest people. So honest that they take it for granted that there's dishonesty in the world. Honesty is so deeply entrenched in Zanzibar that Cab drivers don't count the fares they receive from their passengers. They just chock it down somewhere as they receive it. This is happening in Africa.

They also love Nigerians as they do all Africans. The reputation of Nigerians as big spenders precedes every Nigerian there. My well-travelled friend, Bibian and her sisters Chidinma and Kasi, noted this for a fact and concluded that Zanzibar was a welcoming hub for Africans; sort of a safe space on the continent for to breathe and feel alive.

The only thing that kind of bothered Bibian were those persistent headaches that wouldn't go. They had become intense. More like sucking up the energy of her entire existence into her head. They seem likely primed to explode by a timed buzzer. The strong pills she was placed on had all lost their efficacy. Nothing seemed to work. But she endured. Like all Nigerians, numbed to the pain of our existence, she fought on. The headaches would not spoil her fun.

Then tragedy struck. She collapsed on the very day she arrived Stone Town in Zanzibar. While she wanted to continue to move on, her body could no longer carry the weight of the misnomer. It happened at Tembo Hotels in Zanzibar, where she lodged along with her sisters. It seemed like the end of her existence. She had switched off. Numbed to life itself. At least almost so.

She was rushed to a nearby private hospital. Jav and Rahim, the managers of Tembo Hotels who were relatives managing their family business visited her at the hospital to see how she was doing. Thankfully, she was revived there, and a scan was done as part of the investigation to ascertain the cause of her ailment. They broke the sad news to the trio, Bibian, Chidinma and Kasi, innocent sisters who just wanted to breathe. Bibian has a blood clot on her brain and had to have an emergency brain surgery performed on her.

That was bad enough. When they were told the cost, it made it worse. Where could they get access to £7,000 to pay for the emergency brain surgery in Zanzibar of all places? As if that was not bad enough, the surgery would have to be performed in Dar es Salaam, the capital city of Tanzania. The trouble was, even if they had the money on them, how would she be allowed to fly in her vegetable state. Time was running out.

FIRSTPOST.

But without minding the imposing roadblocks, they made efforts to get money to ensure they stood a good chance at having the surgery done. But, unfortunately and sadly so, all walls were impregnable. There was no way of getting money through their debit cards although they could access funds in Nigeria. The Central Bank of Nigeria's conflicting fiscal policies have made our debit cards virtually useless abroad. It dawned on them. There was no way they were getting access to their money from Zanzibar. Just no way. She had collapsed on the first day of their visit to Stone Town Zanzibar and just a few days to their return to Nigeria. The money they had on them was to sustain them and for basic transportation back to Nigeria.

As the clock ticked away, and her life hung in the balance, the windows of opportunities for help came closing in on them. Her life was slipping away. Amidst her bouts of illusory consciousness, she begged her sisters to do anything they could to get her back to Nigeria. It was not because she believed she would get the help she needed in Nigeria. She just didn't want to die in Zanzibar and end up further complicating the travails of her loving and ever-supportive Sisters. She believed dying in Nigeria was a more manageable crisis for her siblings and family. What she didn't know was that Ebube Dike, Our Great God, the Perfect Organiser was doing what He knows best to do. It was all His unfolding plan. He is the only One who knows the end from the beginning. He is the Greatest Strategist and the source of infinite intelligence, knowledge and influence. He had it all figured out. He had the full picture. And everything was going according to plan even amidst the ensuing crisis that they could find no leeway from.

She had to be moved to a Government hospital eventually because they couldn't access their funds for the brain surgery and she also couldn't fly out of Zanzibar in her condition. They were told there was only one NeuroSurgeon in the whole of Zanzibar, and he was at the Mnazi Mmoja Hospital, just about three minutes' drive from their hotel. Given that it was the only ray of hope left, the very last flare of the ebbing flame, they had no option but to take her there. All these while the hotel managers Jav and Rahim had remained with them, taking them around either to buy drugs in the middle of the night or to find solution to the unfolding calamitous imbroglio. Tembo hotels continued to serve them food and kept phones around Zanzibar ringing just to ensure their guests had medical attention. That was how they knew about Dr. Said Idrissa Ahmada, a Ukrainian and Chinese trained Neurosurgeon who goes by the nickname 'Dr. Saidovich.'

Dr. Saidovich, a very unassuming and innocuous man, said he could perform the brain surgery. At this time Bibian was no longer part of the conversation. She had switched off and was on her way back to her Maker, the one she loved so dearly and whom she had served so faithfully.

Bibian is one of the few persons I can vouch for. She loved God genuinely and was also a genuinely good person. She is so nice that I have never had a beef with her and that is pretty strange, to think of it. I generate beefs on a regular and if you can't manage my beef as a friend, too bad for you, not me. Anyway, such is the purity of her being that even God would probably think twice before letting such a great soul return to Him.

On hearing the confidence of Dr. Saidovich, Chidinma, objected to his bid to perform the brain surgery on Bibian. She felt both Dr. Saidovich and the entire Mnazi Mmoja Hospital didn't give the assurances she needed. It was a matter of life and death and this was her Sister. She had to be pretty sure.

"How many surgeries have you performed?" An emotional Chidinma, who was losing her beloved Sister queried. The Private hospital gave her more assurances not what she was seeing at the Government Hospital. It was reminiscent of visiting any public health facility in Nigeria, something most of us, reasonably privileged citizens, don't do.

Dr. Saidovich calmly reassured her. He showed her proofs of the many brain surgeries he had performed. He told her there had not been a single fatality.

FIRSTPOST.

'Insha Allah, this will go well too,' he said.

While his reassurance seemed to build her confidence, the 'insha Allah' shook it. It might be 50/50, she thought. It could go anyway. Drawing strength from the hope of it going good and placing her faith in God, she consented to the surgery.

All the hospital staff were so warm. Bibian recalls receiving blessings even from other patients managing their own ailments. She wondered what sort of creatures were in Zanzibar. Why and how can these people be so good? A nurse even went as far as holding her hands and telling her that she would not let anything bad happen to her. Such infectious humanity! Purified love! Damn!

I wept when Bibian told me this story. No. I didn't shed a tear. I cried like a baby and you're more likely just about to join me. If Bibian didn't understand why she was in Tanzania and having this special experience, I did. I got the memo she did not see, just as she briefed me about her experience. A good person like her would only be pampered by God himself. He knew exactly where to take her to and to prove to her that he regulates the affairs of humanity. All her seeds of innocuous goodness, sown for only God knows how long, were being drawn in massive returns. Angels were active to ensure she got treated like Daddy's little baby. She hasn't gotten it yet and may only get it after reading this from me. Then she would cry again, like a baby, just as I did.

The brain surgery was successful. What could have cost her £7,000 to perform was done free of charge. Yes, go ahead and cry. I just wept again. Ebube Dike, the perfect organiser took her to the island nation of Zanzibar to save her life for free, and to show her that He is God.

All the travel and visa delay they had experienced were just to ensure they were at the right place and the right time. If she had travelled at the time she originally planned, she would have been back to Nigeria earlier. The result would be that she would probably have died in Nigeria, given that she was basically being treated for headache. She also didn't collapse in Dar es Salam because that would mean spending at £7,000 that they didn't have on them at the time and couldn't source for locally. The hiccups in their travel plans were to ensure she was at the right place at the right time to get the right treatment for free and the clear message from God that He is indeed God who rules over the entire firmament!

There is only one Neurosurgeon in the whole of Zanzibar, and he is Dr. Saidovich Idrissa Ahmada. He could have been anywhere else but Zanzibar on that day. But Ebube Dike, Our Great God, the origin and originator of strategy itself, had organised all things for her good. He sorted her out and relaxed to see it play out.

Why was the surgery free? At the Mnazi Mmoja Hospital it just so happened that healthcare is free for all citizens and there is no arrangement to charge foreigners. Except that would change after this story goes viral. Bibian was told by the hospital authorities to take her free treatment as a blessing from God. Dr. Saidovich refused gratifications for saving her life. He said he was just doing his job.

Bibian is still overwhelmed. She is healing just fine without a single headache since the surgery. In two days, after the surgery, she was back on her feet. She has since returned to Nigeria where she spent N100,000 on the first day of her consultancy with a neurosurgeon who spent just about 10 minutes with her and yes there was also that angry nurse that doesn't know how to talk. If Bibian had fainted in Nigeria, the surgery would probably have cost her about 7 million naira minimum, but she would probably not have made it either due to traffic or the non-availability of a doctor.

FIRSTPOST.

There are too many lessons to learn from this story. Most of all, it is about being good. Being good a seed whose harvest cannot but be drawn at the nick of time. Bibian is grateful to God. She has every reason to be. He is bankable! Dependable! Reliable! And He pays...He pays in huge returns as you can see. She is grateful to God for orchestrating her recovery.

As her friend, I use this opportunity to thank all Zanzibaris for being such a lovely breed of Africans. It is unfortunate that great stories of Africa like Zanzibar are obscured by the continent's shortcomings. Bibian's experience has made Zanzibar a destination we should all visit for tourism and an enriching life experience. Let's remember Dr. Saidovich and the good people of Zanzibar in our prayers always. Let's share this story across continents. Let's spread goodness. We never can tell when we will need to draw from it. Please share as you please.

Sincere gratitude to the Government and people of Zanzibar!

Thank you, all Staff and Management of Mnazi Mmoja Hospital, Stone Town!

Thank you, Dr 'Saidovich' Idrissa Ahmada (He is on Facebook)

Thank you, all staff and management of Tembo Hotels, Stone Town, especially to Jav and Rahim.

Thank you, Ebube Dike, Our Great God and Perfect Organiser, who remains UNFAILING AND NEVER LATE.

Oraye St. Franklyn
Friend of Bibian