



# **GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis**

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## **INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE**

**Joseph Nkang OGAR**

Department of Philosophy and Leadership Studies,

University of Calabar,

Cross River State, Nigeria

Email: [nkangjoseph@yahoo.com](mailto:nkangjoseph@yahoo.com)

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## **GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis, Vol. 8 No. 2 (March 2025)**

This special issue of *GNOSI* is a tribute to a man who was not only the founding editor in chief of this journal but also a philosopher, a mentor, and a friend to many. Professor Asira E. Asira passed on after a life devoted to the pursuit of wisdom and the cultivation of young minds. Many universities, including the University of Calabar and the Department of Philosophy and Leadership Studies, and the wider scholarly communities will deeply feel his absence. With this volume, we honour his memory by doing what he loved most: engaging seriously on some of the hardest questions of human existence, especially those concerning death, personhood, what it means to live well in the face of man's inhumanity to man, and the immortality of the soul.

Professor Asira Enya Asira was not a distant academic. He was a teacher who stayed long after class to help struggling students, a unique colleague who offered quiet encouragement when research hit a dead end, and a leader who led by example rather than by command. Over the years, he supervised and mentored a remarkable number of Master's and Doctoral candidates, many of whom have now grown to the status of full professors. His influence ripples outward through the careers of those he trained, and through the countless students who sat under his tutelage, left with a deeper appreciation and ready with a rekindled zeal for philosophy.

He served as head of the Department of Philosophy and Leadership Studies at the University of Calabar, a role he carried with fairness and vision. In that capacity, he strengthened the department's academic programmes, encouraged interdisciplinary research, and created space for younger scholars to find their voices globally. His leadership was never about power; it was about service delivery. Very humane in his dealings.

Perhaps one of his most enduring contributions to scholarship includes his stewardship of this journal. Professor Asira was the editor in chief of *GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis* from its very first issue until his death. Under his guidance, the journal grew from a local publication into a platform that now welcomes contributions from across the humanities and social sciences, from scholars in Africa, Asia, Europe, and beyond. He insisted on rigorous peer review, on clarity of argument, and on the importance of bringing African philosophical perspectives into global conver-

sation. He never wavered in his belief that a journal should be a space for genuine intellectual exchange, not merely a vehicle for career advancement but a rigorous climate for intellectual cross-breeding.

Beyond these formal roles, Professor Asira touched countless lives through small but varying unforgettable gestures. He was known to drive students to academic conferences at his own expense and lend books from his personal library to anyone who showed genuine curiosity for reading. He was always ready to write letters of recommendation that opened doors for young scholars across continents. He shared in his colleagues' successes and took on their burdens without complaint. Many who knew him speak of his extraordinary patience, his gentle humour, and his ability to make even the less anxious student feel seen and heard.

He also contributed to the wider intellectual community through his services on university boards, his works as an external examiner for several Nigerian universities, and his tireless advocacy for the revitalisation of philosophy education at all levels. He believed that philosophy was not an abstract luxury but a practical necessity for ethical leadership and social transformation. That belief drove him to revise curricula, mentor early-career academics, and build bridges between the university and local communities.

The heart of this special issue is philosophical thanatology, the study of death and dying from a philosophical perspective. It was a subject that Professor Asira held dear. The issue is titled *Continuities of Being: Rethinking Personhood, Death, and Posthumous Existence: A Tribute to Prof. Asira E. Asira*.

The papers you will find here ask several important questions. What happens to personhood after death? How do different religious and cultural traditions understand mortality? Can the dead have rights or dignity? And how are new technologies and ecological crises reshaping our relationship with the end of life?

Contributors come from Nigeria, Indonesia, Ghana, Ireland, and Morocco. They include philosophers, legal scholars, medical ethicists, anthropologists, and digital humanists. Together, they show that the study of death is not morbid. Rather, it is a way of clarifying what we truly value.

We dedicate this special issue to the memory of Professor Asira Enya Asira. May it stand as a small testament to a large heart and a sharp mind. And may it remind us that the best way to honour the dead is to keep asking the questions that mattered to them.

**Prof. Joseph Nkang OGAR**

Associate Editor, *GNOSI*

Department of Philosophy and Leadership Studies

University of Calabar

**On behalf of the Editorial Board**

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