

IFISM

Vol. 2



The complete works of
ORUNMILA

THE ODUS OF EJI-OGBE
How man created his own god

C. Osamaro Ibie

IFISM: The complete work of Orunmila Volume II is a continuation of the first book on Ifism. The author has tried in this book to provide answers to the often-posed questions of why it is that evil covers more ground than good, why institutionalised religion is being profaned in today's world and why man in society is more capricious than when in a state of nature.

The work is divided into four broad sections: Chapters 1-7 deal with ethical precepts according to Ifism; Chapter 8 with why Orunmila enjoined the author not to institutionalise Ifism; Chapter 9, a book by itself, takes a look at what institutionalisation has done to contemporary theology by examining Judaism, Christianity and Islam; Chapter 10-25 deal with the mode of Ifa divination and the work of the *Odus of Eji-Ogbe*.

This work is an invaluable companion for all those who seek the meaning of Truth and desire an insight into the art of divination.

About the Author

Mr. Cromwell Osamaro Ibie was born on 29th September, 1934. He received his elementary and secondary education at Benin City in Edo State, Nigeria between 1941 and 1953. He joined the Colonial Civil Service on 1st February, 1954 where he rose to the rank of Executive Officer before proceeding to the United Kingdom for further studies.

During his stay in the United Kingdom he studied at the Universities of London and Strathclyde where he obtained the B.Sc. (Hons) in Economics from the University of London and B.A. (Hons) in Economics from the University of Strathclyde.

He returned to the Nigerian Federal Public Service in September 1963 where he rose to the rank of Permanent Secretary, a position from which he voluntarily retired on 1st April, 1980.

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Dr. E. A. Faniyi

**Chief Owoeye,
Royal Ifa Priest to the late Ajero of Ijero-Ekiti, Ondo State, Nigeria.**

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PREFACE

The work of Ejiogbe on how man created his own god, is a continuation of the first book on Ifism, detailing the complete work on Orunmila. It follows the same general outline as the first book. The only major difference is the deviation in Chapter 9 from the orthodox thematic on Ifism to a cursory examination of the three main Religions. It was not originally intended to embark on such an iconoclastic exercise. It was only provoked by Orunmila's observation on the pollution of simple truths by institutional conventions and dogma.

The only other variation is on the vexed question of Ifa divination. Were it not for Orunmila who himself authorised the superficial revelation of that aspect of his work, the author would not have had the courage to delve into it. No human being taught the author the art of divination. He was taught over a two night period by Orunmila himself for the benefit of ignorant humanity. I sincerely apologise to the Ifa priests who might see this aspect of the work as an unnecessary affront on their fundamental practice of Ifism. They will see that I lay no claim to expertise on the art of divination. It is however reasonable to imagine that Chapter Ten will galvanise the reader to do a more in-depth study of the art of divination, which will ultimately send him to the adepts.

Since the publication of the first book, I must have directed no less than three hundred enquirers to practising Ifa Priests and I imagine that this book will even do more than that. The other points of interest are Chapters eleven to twenty-five on the work of the Odus of Eji-ogbe, addressed to students of African Literature who will discover that in terms of ethics and philosophy, Ifism is based on a tradition, culture, and religion much older than the other religions. It is also a boon to Ifa scholars and priests in terms of history and routine divination.

A revolutionary revelation is made in the opening Chapters of this book; that far from the cliché that Esu (devil) was created by God, Orunmila has revealed that like God, the Devil (Esu) existed autonomously. While God represents the embodiment of good, the Devil is the embodiment of all evil forces.

I have tried in this book to provide answers to the often posed questions of why is it that evil covers more ground than good, Man in society is more capricious than when in a state of nature, and why institutionalised religion is being profaned the world over. It is hoped that the brief insight into the three institutionalised synoptic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam would reveal why their spiritual appeal has been devalued; why they have been persecuted, and, why they have themselves persecuted sceptics and critics alike. At the same time the book praises individuals in religion who still live by orthodox doctrine and dogma; without minding the visible corruption of their corporate institutions, men and women who serve God truly in total disregard for the conventions woven around the truth by institutions.

The book is divided into four broad sections: the first seven chapters deal with ethical precepts according to Ifism; the eighth chapter deals with why Orunmila enjoined the author not to institutionalise Ifism; and, Chapter 9, a book by itself, deals with the effects of institutionalisation on the three synoptic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, which drew inspiration from the Bible. Chapter 10 deals with the mode of Ifa divination, and the remaining chapters deal with the underlying stories of divination.

It is the first attempt by a writer who has previously had a brush with modern religion, to give others the benefit of his experience as a mirror to reflect the dogmas so often taken for granted by adherents.

Many fanatics will find Chapter 9 distasteful if not unpalatable. I make no apologies for window-dressing the skeletons they prefer to hide in the cupboard because several scholars have previously written about them since the days of Martin Luther.

Someone has told me that the three tripods which support religion - Brotherly love, Truth and Charity have been changed by institutions to - Envy, Hypocrisy and Lies. A believer's word of honour which was once his bond of sacrosanctity to be relied upon, has now become a fog of obfuscation and promiscuity. I invite believers and unbelievers of all stripes and strands to judge whether my claims are false.

In this connection I wish to thank Ifa practitioners in the Americas and the Caribbean who were mainly responsible for accelerating the completion of this book in the light of their persistent inquiries for the next book.

My thanks also go to Chief Owoeye, the Royal Ifa Priest to the late Ajero of Ijero in the Ekiti area of Ondo State. My gratitude also goes posthumously to Chief Omoruyi Edokpayi of Ondo as well as to Prince Omobude for their contributions to this work, as well as readers all over the world who have urged me to write more.



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INTRODUCTION

The first book on Ifism revealed Orunmila's account of how God created heaven and earth without indicating where God came from. The first book also demonstrated how the divinities created by God lived in the divinosphere, in heaven and on earth. This second book will not only reveal where God came from but also give an indication of why in spite of His desire to make all his creatures good and perfect they have been overrun by evil. It will also give the history of evil and why it has overtaken the earth so effectively that God has temporarily abandoned mankind to it.

This work will also give an indication of the difference between the True God that created all existence, and the tribal god created by man to serve his purpose and to which an infinitesimal proportion of mankind claims a monopoly. It will also go to demonstrate the reason for the preponderance of evil over good in the world of man. In the course of man's flight from reality, he embraced the world of fiction in which 'evil' has become the erudite rule while 'good' is relegated to the feeble exception. It will also demonstrate that even man's rule of law is all about WHO can be right and WHO is wrong, which depend on subjective factors - and not about WHAT can be right and WHAT is wrong, which *ceteris paribus* are more objective. That is why man's rule of law is divisive and totally incapable of settling issues between peoples, because no matter is settled until it is settled right.

Truth had considerable difficulty in thriving in a world dominated by Esu (devil) who begat falsehood. The divinities subsequently withdrew from earth as soon as Truth returned to heaven. The children of the divinities did their utmost to make the world liveable for the righteous but to no avail.

Orunmila therefore taught his own children how to consult him in his absence. These teachings are contained in Chapters ten to twenty-five of this book. The teachings give brief accounts of the Ifa Oracle and its mode of divination. It will enable anyone interested, to have a working knowledge of the so called secrets of Ifa divination.

A word of warning however is that reference throughout the book to animate and inanimate objects should be regarded as strictly allegorical and metaphorical.

I have tried to venture; not only into the past of mankind but more specifically into the genesis of black culture and religion. Ours is a culture disengaged by ignorance, thrallish gullibility, and hybrid education, from its ancient and time-tested moorings. Yet, without the past, and some appreciation of what it has done to us - of where the ingredients in our present life have come from, and how they have come, we can only with difficulty comprehend the significance of our present behavioural stripes and strands. For, without some knowledge of the past, we are blind-folded in our efforts to grapple with the future; and the multitudinous problems it will pose if we know nothing of our roots because so many of them are embedded in our ancient past.

The educated black man particularly shies away from his past and grabs the synthetic culture of colonial masters as if he never had a culture and a history. Many friends and contemporaries have asked why I, a supposed knowledgeable academician and eco-political scientist found solace in writing about an idolatrous past, instead of reaching for the demonstration effect of following the Joneses, to write about my experience in the field of societal economic management. Incidentally, without the force of destiny, I might probably have taken

that course, but the more I delve into Ifism, the greater the satisfaction I derive from knowing the history of how our forebears lived without the coercive intervention of colonialism, which is our basic undoing. The alien cultures imposed on the black man in the last two hundred years have cut him adrift with no past and no indigenous culture on which to fall back. Thus, we have unwittingly imbibed the culture of the colonisers, who are unable to unscramble their own pre-history, in order to distinguish myth from legend, fiction from facts, and who can at best only make a plausible synthesis of a capricious past, laced with streaks of romanticism and a fictitious present.

In fairness however to imperialists, Africa is not the first part of the world to have been subjected to external colonial influence. Greece was an empire with its own brand of religious polytheism. The countries of the near and far East came under Greek suzerainty up to 300 B.C. But the countries they colonised did not abandon their religion and culture to give way to the Greek equivalents. Until the Pagan Roman Empire became the Holy Roman Empire, their colonies kept their religions and cultures.

In contrast, African history is immanent with instances of total surrender to invasions by foreign culture and religions without examining whether they are inferior to their own. I have tried therefore in this book to mirror the kaleidoscopic enchantments in the foreign religions and cultures which have so easily overwhelmed the African psyche and soul.

For instance what dazzled parts of the world into surrendering to Christianity was *Inter alia* the promise of a better life after death and the immortality of the soul. These concepts did not originate from Jesus Christ. They pre-dated Him into antiquity. In pre-Islamic Egypt, an initiation to the cult of Isis, carried with it the promise of a future happiness after death. If, as Luke reports in the gospel, Jesus and his parents took refuge in Egypt when Herod wanted to destroy the child, and that they remained there until after the death of Herod, it is easy to surmise that Jesus had already discovered in Egypt that the promise of a happier life after death, was a rough and ready heart winner. Luke, by the way was a Greek scholar and intelligentsia, which explain why his account of the early life of Jesus differs substantially from those of Matthew, Mark and John.

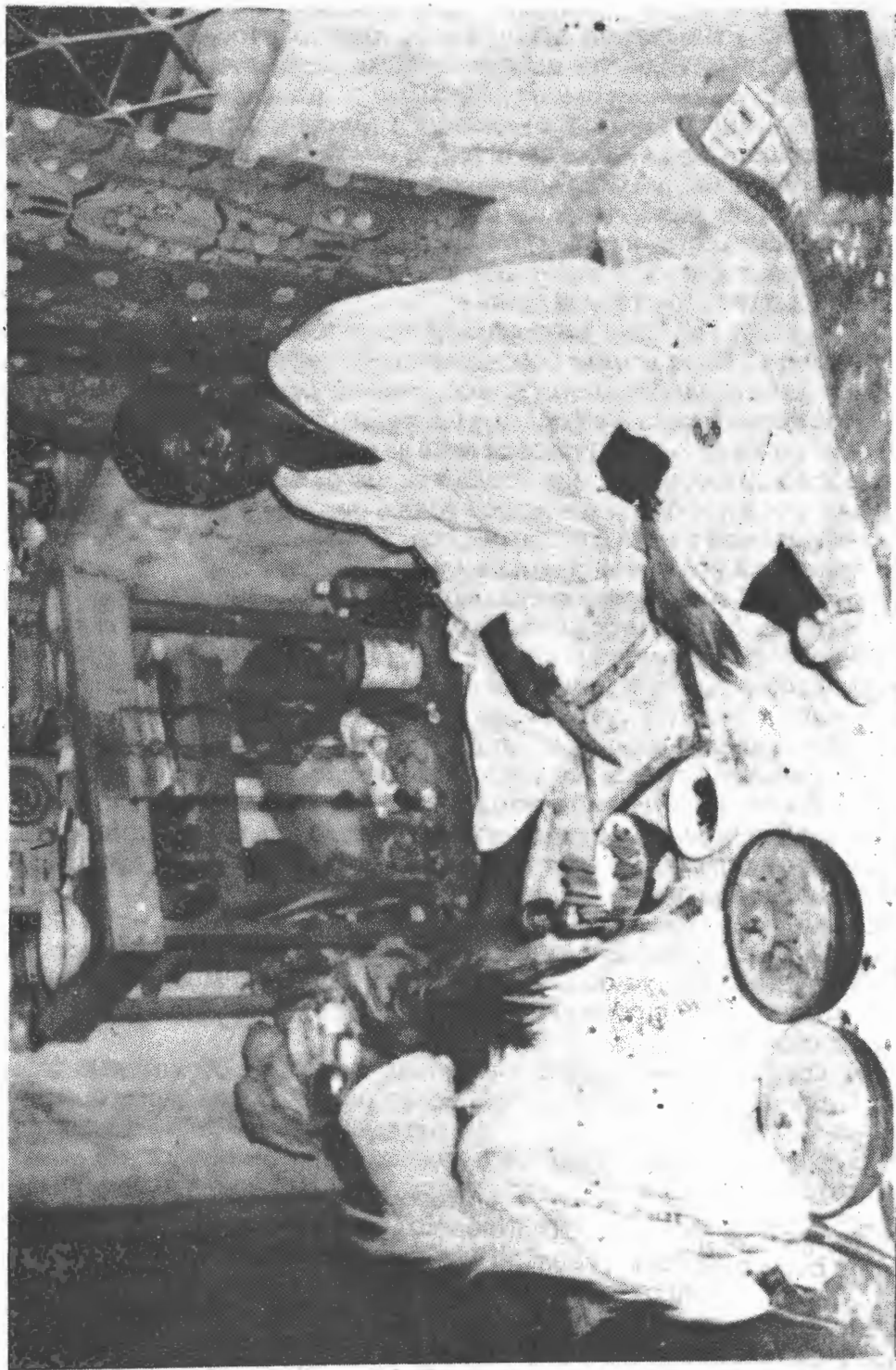
For over 150 years before the birth of Christ, the worship of the Iranian Light-god Mithra, gained vogue in the Roman Empire although it did not make any special appeal to the Greeks. The Romans on the other hand, had accepted Mithraism because its strongest appeals were its doctrines of; the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body and the belief that through the help of the god Mithra, those faithful to him would reach heaven. While on earth, the faithful were pledged to good human conduct, brotherly regard, and mutual help, regardless of status. Mithraism, like Christianity was to adopt later, was the religion of the poor and degraded servile classes.

Many will be surprised to know that the Judaeo-Christian story of God's creation of man, has its root in Greek Mythology. In the 'Birth of Western civilization'. Michael Grant, under the caption of "how we are all enthralled by tradition". reveals that "The giant Prometheus in early (Greek) mythology was a loyal friend of mankind for whom he is said to have stolen fire from heaven. A later version of the myth even made Prometheus, the creator of the Human race. He even refers to the remains of the clay from which Prometheus created man. To the Jews and early Christians, this Grecian myth symbolised rebirth in the life after death and in the process of transmission through history, was eventually accepted and passed into Christianity as the creation of man by God.

Orpheus was used by classical Greek mythology to represent the Good shepherd. He reappeared in French and English fairy tales in the middle ages when Dante used Orpheus allegorically in the artistic style of saying one thing and meaning another. Orpheus however owes his survival to King David because it is in the guise of Orpheus that David is portrayed as the biblical good shepherd.

Hercules left Western Art and Literature at the end of the ancient world only to reappear in the Bible in the second millenium as Samson.

The foregoing analytical relationship between human history and culture on the one hand, and the so-called modern religion on the other, would be further examined in the subsequent chapters.



Chief Omoruyi Edokpayi in his shrine.

Chapter 1

THE ORIGIN OF GOOD AND EVIL

Orunmila has revealed through Ogbe-Idi that before the creation of the divinosphere, there was a phenomenal void called ORIMA or AIMA. The closest approximation to ORIMA in modern etymology is the primeval, which was characterised by total darkness. That was the realm controlled by Esu as illustrated in Figure 1. A layer above the darkness was a minute translucent enclave which contained the seeds of a subsequent existence. Within the transparent enclave existed the nucleus of light, air, water, space and the abode of Olodumare, or the kingdom of God.

In the fullness of time, God ordered light to emerge by pronouncing ONO-YOO - and He lit up the entirety of ORIMA or the primeval. The total darkness of Esu's kingdom was lit and he raised up his head to query "Who is this?" God replied: "I am Olodumare" (God). He continued, "I saw that the darkness engulfing us, did not provide a basis for the fullness of existence. That is why I created light to enable life to blossom and flourish". As the dialogue continued, Esu reminded Olodumare that he owned the vast majority of the space called ORIMA because, it was all darkness, save for the microscopic part which He (Olodumare) occupied. Esu conceded that darkness did not conduce to the organic development of life, which explains why he (Esu) has no creative capabilities. He promised however to move freely under the brightness of light and Olodumare agreed that he was at liberty to mix with his own creatures. That, according to Orunmila, is why Evil which thrives in obscurity and darkness, occupies more grounds than goodness, to this day. That is also why good and evil cannot totally eliminate each other, but must perforce live together.

The famous proclamations of Esu

Olodumare proceeded to complete his creative work by creating plants and animals to live side by side with the 200 divinities. As soon as Esu saw the multiplicity of Olodumare's creatures, he proclaimed that while he was incapable of creating life, he was nonetheless determined to demonstrate that he had the disruptive power to mutilate by proclaiming to Olodumare:

Whatever vegetation blossoms under the brightness of light will become my farmland and whatsoever being you create in the vastness of space will become my servants and handmaids.

Not even the divinities realised what Esu meant with his everlasting proclamation, and the fact that after several millenia since creation, man is still boasting to achieve the feat of eliminating the devil and the forces of evil, clearly illustrates that man has still not appreciated the significance of Esu's proclamations.

After that dialogue, God went ahead to conclude his creative works. His first creations were the 200 divinities which included Light, Wind, Ground, Earth, Space, Metal, Lightning, Water, Death, Fear etc. Thereafter he created plants and animals to live on land space and water to feed the divinities. When God created the divinities He intended them to be good, to behave well and to support and co-operate with one another. No sooner were they created than Esu infiltrated them and they began to fight one another.

Olodumare created all his animate beings to be perfect and good. Esu's threat to make a servant of any being created by Olodumare was not idle at all. He set out to work at once on the divinities, and before Olodumare knew what was happening, his divinities were already behaving in the manner instigated by Esu. They were veering away from the path of goodness and beginning to practice evil.

The Creation of the Virtue of Intelligence

The proclamation of Esu to mutilate, transform, and arrogate whatever God created under the sceptre of light, marked the beginning of the competition between good and evil, or light and darkness, openness and obscurity as well as truth and falsehood. Esu quickly went to work and began to turn the divinities against one another. To checkmate the evil machinations of Esu, God created the virtue called OLOGBON (intelligence) to enable the divinities to withstand and resist the onslaught of Esu.

Thereafter, God decided to put the divinities through a test to find out how they would use their newly acquired intelligence to ward off the might of Esu. It will be recalled that soon after the commencement of creation, Esu had caused the grounds of the divinosphere to be heated up. The snail was created by God for the purpose of cooling the grounds. Meanwhile, God sent each of the divinities in search of snails from the forest. One after the other, God sent each of the divinities on what looked like the wild-goose-chase knowing fully well that Esu would accost them. Esu made it impossible for each of them to accomplish their mission of finding the snail. It was then the turn of Orunmila to try his mettle. God symbolised "intelligence" with five different and disposable materials. These were: white chalk, kolanut, camwood, white cloth and alligator pepper.

Before leaving for his mission, Orunmila embarked on divination on what to do to accomplish his task. He was advised to be as magnanimous as possible throughout his mission. As soon as Orunmila set out, Esu, as he did to the others, went on his trail. God gave all five materials to each of the divinities before sending them out in search of the snail, but without disclosing how to use them. Esu transfigured into five different creatures to beseech Orunmila to part with each of his five divine gifts. In consonance with the divinational advice he got before leaving home, Orunmila parted with each of his materials.

By the time he disposed of his fifth gift which was the alligator pepper, Esu appeared to him and asked him what he was looking for and he disclosed that God had sent him in search of snails for cooling down the over-heated grounds of the divinosphere. Realising that God was aware of his machination and having received what he wanted, he told Orunmila to look into one corner of the forest, where he saw a large collection of snails. He took 16 of them and returned home to report mission accomplished. After receiving the five gifts which God gave to Orunmila, and the snails which were offered in sacrifice, Esu instantaneously plugged the heat-wave which he had caused to heat-up the grounds of the divinosphere and everywhere became cool once more.

When God asked Orunmila to disclose to the Divine Council how he succeeded in procuring the snails where others failed, he narrated how on five different occasions he was approached by five separate creatures (to which Esu had transfigured) to persuade him to part with each of God's five gifts to him, and that he did not hesitate to part with them. Orunmila added that it was after he had parted with the last of the five gifts, that a strange creature asked him what he was looking for and helped him to procure the snails. The others quickly recalled that they too had been approached by similar creatures but did not

think it was appropriate to part with the divine gifts given to them by their Father. At that point, God told all the divinities that He deliberately refrained from telling them what to do with the gifts to test how they could use them intelligently on their own initiative. God added that no one attains a desire without giving up something for it, and that to whom much is given, much is expected. If one must succeed in one's endeavour, one must be prepared to part with an equally precious investment in materials, patience or time. That was how God taught the divinities the significance of sacrifice. The atonement invested to cool down the heated grounds of the divinosphere was the first sacrifice ever made.

For having the intelligence to use his initiative effectively, God proclaimed Orunmila, "the divinity of wisdom". That is why to this day, the *modus operandi* of Orunmila is the doctrine of sacrificial offerings, with which he can always achieve his objectives.

The Paradox of Virtue

It has often been said that virtue is poorer than vice and that vice has more disciples than virtue. On the face of it, the axiom is a truism. Virtue triumphs too late to have proximate appeal, and it is not in the nature of man to invest in the perseverance necessary to witness the inevitable victory of virtue. It is true that virtue only triumphs quickly in the synthetic and fictitious world of theatrical and cinematographic performances.

In a world dominated by Esu however, the path of virtue is lined with the corpses of its indomitable champions and soaked with the blood of its fanatical defenders.

How often have people been jailed, molested and even killed for having the courage to give honest advice. It is those who tell people what they want to hear that get more hearing than those who prefer to stick to the naked truth. The man who will not compromise his basic principles for momentary benefits, can never be liked by the multitude of others who prefer the short circuit approach to material acquisition. Be it in politics, management, governance, or virtually any community of human beings, it is the defender of truth that gets dreaded like leprosy. Everyone keeps quiet when he approaches because the truth is invariably only to be found in the point which everybody is afraid to mention. When one cheats through deceit, false hopes and flattery, one is more likely to be acknowledged albeit momentarily, than when one plods the path of virtue in one's interactions with human beings.

When we come to Eka-Oyeku in latter books, we shall see how Orunmila demonstrated the subordination of falsehood to veracity in his interactions with human beings. When his followers asked him why that was so, he replied that Truth was the only son of God while Falsehood was the only son of Esu.

The origin of truth and falsehood

Truth came with God just as Falsehood came with Esu out of ORIMA or the primeval. These are the only known children of the primordial powers. All other forces claiming to be their children are mere impostors. Truth accompanied the divinities to earth and lived with and among them quite happily. Try as Esu did, he could not get his son Falsehood to subdue Truth in that environment. As long as he dwelt among the divinities, Truth felt at home.

When the divinities however brought their mortal servants to earth, it soon became clear that man could not feel at ease with Truth. He became so miserable among men, that he became poor, dejected and frustrated. When the last of the divinities was leaving earth the second time, Truth returned with them to heaven. He was the conscience of the earth and told peop'

all the time. The Divinities listened to him very attentively, but not their mortal followers. He knew that he would no longer belong as soon as the earth was abandoned to man. That was why he left the world to return to heaven with the divinities.

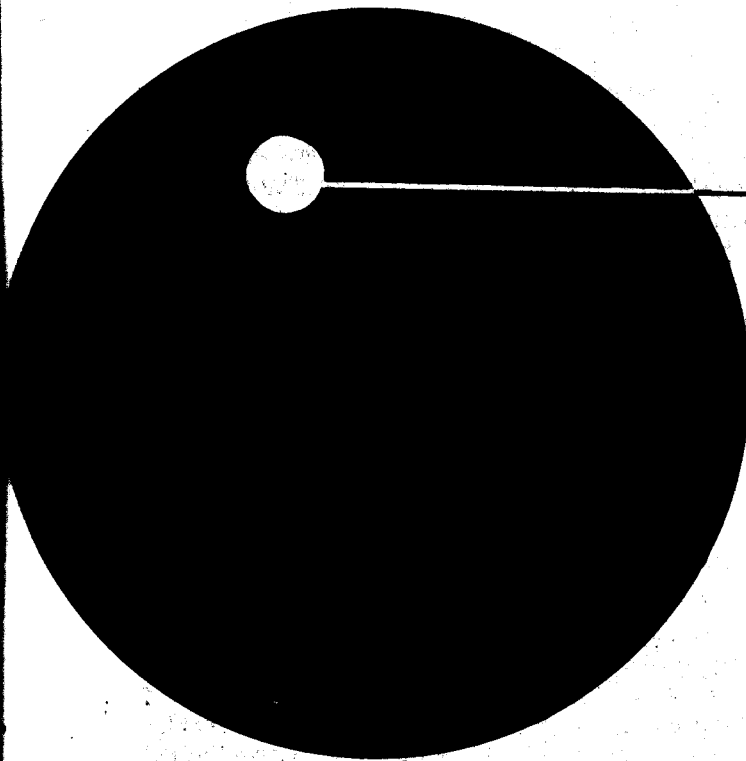
As soon as he left however, Falsehood not only took his place, but occupied his house. Falsehood then began to tell men whatever they were happy to hear. He quickly succeeded in using the concepts of probabilities, hope without a time-frame, euphoria and remote fear, in winning the hearts of men. They believed him and paid him handsomely, which made him to become materially wealthy.

Most of what he said however never came to pass, but having captured their hearts, he would always tell man a new lie to explain the abortion of the last one. It was only then that man began to remember the veracity of what Truth used to tell them. It is therefore well nigh impossible to be virtuous and be materially wealthy because truth, although sanguine and right in the end, is neither liked nor respected by man, which explains why he is materially poor but righteously rich. That was how Orunmila explained the paradox of virtue to his followers, just before he joined his colleagues in heaven. Incidentally, the abode of Truth was the hearts of men, which Falsehood stealthily occupied as soon as Truth left for heaven with the divinities. That is why it is said that conscience is the voice of God in man, which tells him what is good and what is evil, what is true and what is false, but how many of us listen to that voice? God created earth as a means of experimenting whether an evil-free universe could evolve outside Heaven and the Divinosphere. God was anxious to test the vow of Esu to mutilate any being created by Him to become his servant. God thought that an earth was the answer. We have already seen from the first book that before the Divinities left for earth, Esu was there in ambush on the swamps waiting for them. By the time they were alighting from the top of the palm-tree, Esu was there to welcome them. He soon began to work on the Divinities and instead of supplementing the efforts of one another as God ordained them to do, they began to work at cross purposes.

Before God's next experiment with the earth, Man had been created as servants to the divinities. This and subsequent editions of the Books of IFISM will be devoted to How the Divinities lived with their mortal servants and how men lived among themselves after the withdrawal of the divinities.

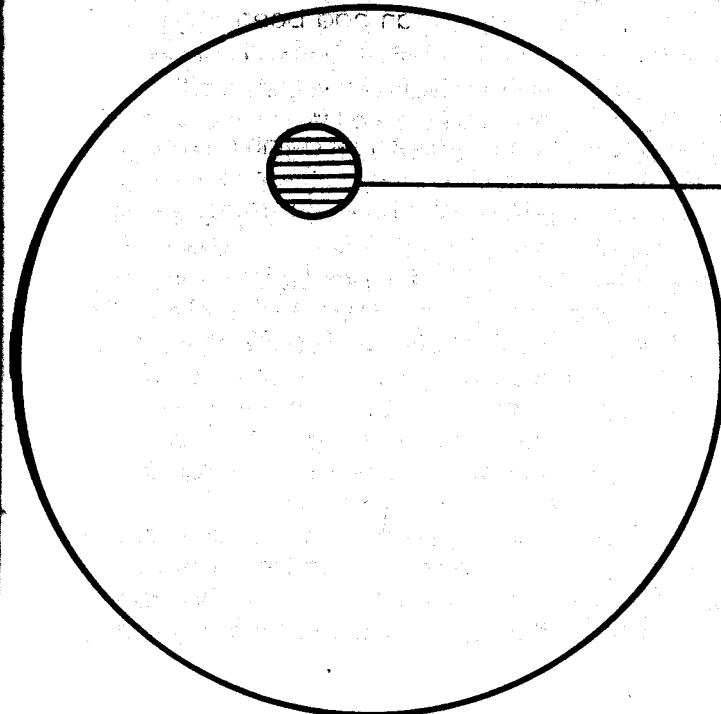
It took no time for Esu to turn mortal servants against their divine masters. On account of the traditional meekness of some of the divinities, their servants soon rebelled against them and began to usurp the authority of their masters. Once he felt free and liberated from his divine master, the true nature of Man began to emerge. He had come to demonstrate that he did not need any divine inhibitions to pursue his goals in life. He was beginning to exhibit the features of a selfish monster capable of fighting to destroy anything standing in his way.

ORIMA-PRIMEVAL



Kingdom of Olodumare

Abode of Esu



The beginning of Heaven

**The Planetary system as
we know it.**

Chapter 2

DID GOD MAKE A MISTAKE ?

It will be recalled that when God created man, the Divinity of Death hailed the action with hysterical optimism. Death remarked delightfully that God created plants and animals to provide food for other divinities, but that by creating man, He had at last provided food for him. The other divinities for whom God supposedly created man to serve, did not immediately know the import of Death's jubilation. It was only when Death began to remove men one after the other, that they appreciated that he was out to plunder their servants. They began to reason among themselves whether God's intention had been misconstrued or that God had made a mistake.

However, ALAGEMO - the favourite servant of God, insisted that God was incapable of making mistakes and that Death might have misconstrued God's intention. Alagemo recalled that God had only authorized Death to take any man who transgressed the basic natural law. This argument remained extant until the divinities came with their mortal servants to the earth. Even after man came to the world, Death who remained in heaven, continued to come to the world to kill them at will, notwithstanding their moral dispositions. That was in spite of the fact that God at His first meeting with his divinities, enumerated the transgressions capable of attracting the intervention of Death.

As it turned out subsequently, however, Death began to plunder man indiscriminately, irrespective of their ethical inclinations and behaviour. Both good and evil doers fell victim to Death at will. It will be recalled that under OYEKU-MEJI, in the first book, Orunmila had taught man in heaven how to checkmate the menace of Death which explains why Death does not operate in heaven.

As soon as man got to earth, Death continued to come with his CLUB (Alugbogbo in Yoruba, Ugbolo in Ibo, and Ukpokpo in Bini) in hand, to remove men in their thousands on a daily basis. It was once again Orunmila who eventually stopped Death from coming to remove man by himself from the face of the earth. It happened when Death travelled to the world, to take Orunmila's eldest son, Sacrifice (Ebo in Yoruba and Ese in Bini) because he had been helping man to obviate the onset of Death. When Death discovered in heaven that (Ebo) - Sacrifice the son of Orunmila was helping man on earth, to prevent him, (Death) from attacking them, he decided to go for Orunmila's son himself. Ebo was famous for playing the Ayo Game (Ise in Bini) very proficiently. One day, Death decided to go to the earth to challenge Ebo to an Ayo contest. On getting to Ebo's house, Death challenged him to an Ayo contest with the caveat that if he defeated Ebo, he would kill him and take him to heaven which would have meant the end of all forms of sacrifices on earth. On the other hand, if Ebo was victorious, he (Death) would refrain forever from coming to the world.

The game started in earnest and there were several contests in which Death was victorious for most of the time. The equivalent of the Ayo game in other social cultures is the (Game of Chess). Towards evening of that day, as the contestants were retiring to resume the game the next morning, Death remarked that on the following day, it would be one full month since he had been defeating Ebo in the game. Ebo in his youthful ignorance retorted by querying

how Death could claim to have been defeating him for one whole month, when they had only played the game for one day. Death explained Ebo's puzzle by reminding him that the new moon was going to appear on the next day. Ebo argued that far from appearing the next day, the new moon was going to appear on the third day. The argument was resolved when Death amended his earlier caveat by declaring that whether or not he ultimately defeated Ebo in the ayo game, he would no longer take him to heaven on that score. His new conditionality was that if as he proclaimed, the new moon appeared on the next day, he would not only take Ebo with him to heaven, but, would invariably continue to return to the world to take human-beings. If on the other hand the new moon appeared on the third day as Ebo predicted, he would not only leave him alone but would stop coming to take anyone from the world. On that wager, they retired for the night.

Thereafter, Ebo ran to his father, Orunmila, and reported how he argued with Death on when the new moon was going to appear. Orunmila quickly checked his lunar calendar and discovered that true to Death's prediction, the moon was due to appear on the next day. He became perplexed. He however consulted Okpelle, his main instrument of divination, on what to do about the situation. The divination advised him to offer a he-goat immediately to Esu. Ebo offered the he-goat without any delay beseeching Esu to prevent Death from overcoming him in the on-going contest, because defeat for him would have wide-ranging reverberations throughout the earth.

After eating his he-goat, Esu raced to heaven to visit the home of the Moon. On his part, the Moon has only one loin cloth with which he dresses when he comes to the world. The following morning he had washed and spread it on the grass of his court-yard to dry before putting it on in the evening. When Esu got to the house, he asked him when he was due to make his monthly trip to the world. The Moon replied that he was going that evening. With that, Esu left. At that time of the day the Sun was beginning to retire from his daily trip to earth. Esu then gathered the little children of heaven to play and tread on Moon's white loin cloth which was already dry. The children marched on the cloth with their dirty feet and it became totally defaced with untidiness. The children left the cloth in such a dirty condition that the Moon would scarcely have been visible if he had appeared in it.

When at dusk the Moon got up to collect his loin cloth to wear, he discovered that the little children of heaven had messed it up. He cried havoc threatening to punish the children of heaven. As he moved to strike, God intervened to find out what was happening and the Moon narrated what the children of heaven had done to his cloth. God admonished the Moon for seeking to punish innocent children on account of a single error. God asked him whether it was not the same little children who often hailed him anytime he made his monthly appearance. Was he going to forget their songs in praise of him because of one fortuitous mistake, God asked? The Moon retorted by apologising to God for being so forgetful and with that, he forgave the children. The Moon then decided that he would wash his loin cloth the next day, and spread it on a rope, instead of on the ground to dry, and would therefore appear on earth the following day.

Back on earth, Death and everyone else waited in vain for the Moon to appear that night. He did not. It was in the evening of the following day that the Moon finally appeared. Before then, the Moon usually came to earth every thirty days. It was from that time that he began to appear every thirty one days. When the Moon finally appeared on the thirty-first day, Death conceded to Ebo that events had proved him right and promised never to come to earth again. That

was how Orunmila and his Son's sacrifice (Ebo) succeeded in expelling Death from the face of the earth.

Since Death had however proclaimed the human flesh to be his staple food he had to improvise a new arrangement for fetching his food. As he did previously in heaven, he once again appealed to the ferocious divinities to assist in fetching food for him on earth. These are: OGUN - the divinity of strife, accident and war; SHANGO - the divinity of thunder, lightning and electricity; OLOKUN - the divinity of water; WITCHCRAFT - the divinity of sorcery; and SAKPANA - the divinity of epidemics, in addition to his wife ARON, the divinity of sickness. When OGUN kills through war or accident, the victims are collected by the messengers of death, because, Ogun does not feed on human flesh. The same is true of Sango when he kills by lightning or electricity. When Olokun kills in and with Water the victims become food for Death. When Sakpana kills via all forms of epidemics, he is fetching food for Death. Even when elders of the night kill human beings, they first turn them into animals while the human carcasses are taken by the messengers of death to him in heaven. On her part, Sickness - the wife of Death is slow to take her victims especially if they seek solace with sacrifice or with Osun - divinity of medicine.

Back to the debate on the infallibility of God, the argument continued as long as Death continued to plunder man on earth either by himself, or by proxy. When Orunmila discovered that Death was continuing to plunder man on earth, through the other vindictive divinities, he recalled God's injunction in heaven that they should not kill on earth. He was hurshed down by the others on the ground that God was incapable of making mistakes. He recalled that God only authorised death to feed on those who did evil or those condemned at the weekly court of the divine council of God. Why was it that Death was taking both the innocent and the guilty?

The hypothetical imperative of existence

That was the point at which Orunmila delivered his famous treatise to be revealed later under ETURA-ORILANA on what ought to have been. For the present purpose, it is enough to recall the lamentations of Orunmila when he said to the other divinities that when God created man to serve them, he expected men like them not only to be good but also to live for ever. He added that good would have stood a better chance of triumphing over evil, if God had differentiated between good and evil doers, in authorising the intervention of Death. He added that if by the processes of regeneration and rejuvenation, God had ordained those who do good to live on earth forever, while Death took away those who practiced evil, the presence of a few champions and defenders of ethical objectivity on earth might have been a shining example to prospective evil doers. If upcoming generations discovered that those who did evil were the only ones dying, while those who did good live permanently on earth, they too might have been persuaded to do good and to abhor evil. Given a choice, nobody wants to die.

The reason why there is no compelling attraction for doing good and why good people succumb to evil is because even the do-gooders of this world die more prematurely than the evil doers, as if to confirm the saying that those who the gods love, die young. If the reverse had been true, the degree of ethical objectivity on earth might have been more appealing. That, in the words of Orunmila, amounts to the basic mistake made by God at creation. Readers are called upon to reflect on the logic of this privileged information.

Chapter 3

DOES GOD NEED MAN TO DEFEND HIS CAUSE?

Man has deluded himself throughout history by thinking that he is expected to strive and die in defence of God. What man has often failed to do is to ask himself whether God actually needs him to defend His virtues. Man is a transient and ephemeral bird of passage. He is here today and gone tomorrow.

God created man to serve the divinities, while He exists for all humanity and divinities alike. It is the corpus of humanity and divinities that needs God and not the other way round. Doing good has its reward, just as the practice of evil attracts its own punishment. Reward and punishment follow good and evil, as night follows day. The fact that human governance requires law enforcement agents does not mean that divine governance requires man to enforce natural laws. They exist and are automatically enforced whether or not man exists.

When man does good, he does so for his personal benefit. When he prefers to practice evil, he does so to please himself. Man should therefore not think that God is happy when he engages in evil practices "in defence of God", because He does not require such services. The laws exist in spite of whether or not man protects them. It therefore behoves him to evolve his personal strategy for ensuring a virtuous existence on earth.

Did God create hell?

When I asked Orunmila whether hell existed, he merely laughed at me, saying that that was a figment of human imagination. He asked me a question I could not answer effectively - "Do you believe that God is capable of doing evil?" I answered in the negative. He went on, "If God is incapable of doing evil, how do you explain that Olodumare can be heartless enough to create hell fire for burning his defaulting creatures?" He continued, "Will you as a transient mortal condemn your misbehaving children to a Tiger's den?" I answered in the negative. "What makes you think that God, in His infinite desire to ensure the preponderance of good over evil, will condemn transgressors to eternal hell fire. He reminded me that natural laws enacted by the Divine Council of God, exist to mete out proximate punishment here on earth or in heaven to transgressors. Just as over-feeding gives rise to constipation, so do transgressions of natural laws engender automatic difficulties for offenders. The fact that one man prospers while the other is condemned to penury is a reflection of the differentiation institutionalised in the concepts of heaven and hell.

If a person leads a life in which he feathers his own nest at the expense of neighbours; in which he deprives others of the legitimate rights and privileges due to them, the punishment is bound to come to him before he dies. Whatever he gets at the expense of others may give momentary satisfaction, but at the end of the day, it goes back to the rightful owner. That is why some people live a life of ups and downs.

How Man invented hell

As soon as man liberated himself from the divinities and found solace with Esu, he came to the realisation that human action was motivated by two complementarities - selfishness and fear of suffering. Human selfishness arose

from man's tendency to feather his own nest at the expense of his fellow men, while the fear of punishment originated from the sanctions which the Divine Council of God imposed for transgressing the laws of nature. Much as man abhorred divine punishment, he nonetheless borrowed a leaf from them to enact a series of laws to punish offenders. After creating his own god, man has to weave a web of celestial fears around him to force his fellow men to behave well in society, in order to enrich his own authority. First, the concept of Hell was created to drive everlasting fear into subordinated man.

Man rounded up his circle of selfishness by arrogating to himself the authority: to shut the gates of hell through the practice of indulgence, penance and forgiveness and to open the door to paradise by encouraging subordinated man to do what he says, even though, he was himself totally incapable of practising what he proclaimed. By so doing, he gave an open invitation to Esu to intervene, which Esu did by influencing some non-conformists to protest under pain of death. Some kings and princes who had become powerful enough to oppose, took over the protest of the under-privileged but vocal protesters and effectively divided the ranks of man to evangelicals and protestants. That was because the Truth about God had been obscured and disfigured by human customs and conventions.

Moses Maimonides, a Spanish Jew, told the Jews that "the bliss of Paradise and the tortures of Hell are all metaphorical - figment of human imagination - and mere attempts to express spiritual imponderables in popular forms." He went on to explain that the real bliss of Paradise consists in spiritual communion with God and the real suffering of Hell in alienation from God.

The Antithesis of Wealth and Death

When Wealth got to the world from heaven, he became so rich that he was capable of buying anything under the sun. We shall see in later books on Ofun-Ife or Ofun-Alaje that he soon became so conceited and pompous that he challenged kings and nobles alike. Meanwhile, he decided to return to heaven to buy perpetual longevity from Death to enable him live on earth forever. He was anxious to know what it would cost him to live forever on earth.

When he met Death in heaven, he was directed to put his request to Indiscretion, the son of Death. Orunmila called him Aigboron in Yoruba and Aquaeon in Bini. The full name of Indiscretion is "Inability to heed advice". When he got to Indiscretion, he was given a positive reception. Wealth was however told by Indiscretion that he would visit him on earth in seven days time and should make arrangements to receive him.

Upon returning to earth, Wealth sent out invitations to all his friends and relations to join him in according a befitting reception to an august visitor. On the appointed day, Wealth had made elaborate preparations for food and drinks. The invitees began to arrive in trickles whilst the food was still being cooked in the kitchen. It is important to mention that Indiscretion, the son of Death did not disclose to him, the time and mode of his arrival.

Meanwhile, Indiscretion set out from heaven in the form of a noon-day tornado. Suddenly the compound of Wealth, was engulfed in a whirling wind-storm which sent everybody running helter-skelter. Subsequently, the windstorm gathered speed and jettisoned fire before the kitchen to the roof of the house, setting the palace of Wealth ablaze. During the conflagration, Wealth lamented that he had very important items of treasure to rescue from the blazing inferno. He was advised by everyone not to dare enter the burning house but no one could stop him. He went fool-hardily into the house and the fire consumed him, dead.

Thus, it was Wealth's inability to accept honest and prudent advice that led to his demise. That is why Wealthy people are prone to die prematurely in the course of looking for more wealth because they scarcely listen to advice after becoming rich. Those who heed the genuine advice of others and resist the urge to behave rashly and indiscreetly in critical circumstances are bound to enjoy the cool air of longevity.

God continues to give man a chance to improve

Orunmila said that God created the divinities to serve Him and that at the instance of the divinities, He created man to serve them. He also said that God created Orisa-Nia to be His corporeal representative when He decided to evaporate into thin air and to be communicating with the divinities in spirit. He created Orisa-Nia to become the embodiment of what He stood for at the Divine Council. The mortal servants He created for Orisa-Nia became known as the Omonighorogho-Orun and Omonighorogho-Aiye - that is, the prophets of good tidings who were created to uphold the good intentions of God at creation. It is from this category of human beings that prophets have come to this world from time to time, and they have been remarkable for the exemplary lives they lived. They are supposed to be shining examples to other men and women, just as Orisa-Nia is a shining example to all the other divinities created by God.

Orunmila then goes on to say with all the emphasis at his command, that God does not need the flatteries and eulogies of man. You can praise Him from here to eternity without acknowledgement, but if you perform one good turn to your fellow man or resist the temptation to avenge any wrong done to you, or if you can take an indomitable stand against the urge to think, speak or practice any evil, God will instantly acknowledge you as His true son.

The reward of ingratitude

According to Iwori-Ogunda, God admonished Ogun when he fell from grace after contriving the assassination of Orunmila. Ogun was very poor, and his guardian angel advised him to request Orunmila to prepare Ifa for him. Orunmila refused on the ground that Ogun would try to kill him in an ultimate show of ingratitude. Ogun begged Orunmila several times, but on each occasion, the latter refused to oblige. Eventually, Ogun reported the matter to the Divine Council of God where all present accused Orunmila of being uncharacteristically hard-hearted.

In his verdict, God commanded Orunmila to prepare Ifa for Ogun. Orunmila agreed to carry out the injunction, but predicted that God would Himself be a witness to the ultimate manifestation of Ogun's ingratitude. Orunmila proceeded to perform the ceremony which lasted seven days. Before finalising the ceremonies, war broke out between Ilakporo (Hades) and Aminikun (Erebus) on the sixth day, and being the divinity of war, Ogun had to leave for battle before completing his Ifa ceremonies. He fought both sides into submission and returned home with over 600 prisoners of war, all carrying the spoils and loots of war.

On getting home, Ogun began to ponder over the hidden powers that Orunmila wielded. He thought to himself that if the ceremony performed by Orunmila could so efficaciously transform his lot from penury to affluence, what would such a fellow-divinity do to him the day he decided to dare him. Ogun then contrived a strategy for the elimination of Orunmila. He invited his soldiers and gave them detailed instructions to go to Orunmila's house late in the night not only to set it on fire but also to kill anyone trying to escape from the blazing inferno.

Traditionally, Orunmila's house is next to God's in heaven, which is why he is called Ajiborisha Kpero - meaning, the divinity who goes to greet God first thing in the morning. God's house is all-white with a white flag in front of it. On the other hand, Orunmila's house is painted with black dyestuff with a palm frond in front of it. Ogun told his followers to burn the dark coloured house without telling them who owned or lived in it.

Meanwhile, at his usual morning divination, Ifa revealed to Orunmila that war was imminent and that he should without delay offer a he-goat, white chalk, charcoal, white cloth, and palm-frond to Esu. He quickly sent Akpetebi to the market to fetch the materials and he made the sacrifice without any delay.

Late in the night, when everyone had slept, Esu got up to do the work for which food had been given to him. He turned the colour of Orunmila's house to white and inserted a white flag in front of it. At the same time, he turned the colour of God's house from white to black and inserted a palm-frond in front of it. At this point, it is important to recall the proclamation of Esu, that although, he has no creative powers, he can nonetheless mutilate whatever God has created or designed.

After everyone had slept, Ogun's soldiers moved in to attack. They had no difficulty in locating the black house with the palm frond in front of it. They instantly set it on fire and took position to attack whoever would come out of it. When God saw that His house was on fire, He commanded the fire to extinguish because, "it is forbidden to do any damage in the house of God" - Aikoro lule Orisa. The fire was instantly extinguished.

God then asked Ogun's soldiers what it was all about and they explained that they were acting on Ogun's instructions. He asked which house they were instructed to set on fire, and they further explained that it was the dark-coloured house with palm-frond in front of it. God immediately realised what had happened and used the Divine Telephonic Telepathy to invite Ogun and Orunmila to His Divine Chamber. It will be recalled that the telephonic communication the white man brought to this world is a replica of the means of communication used between God and the Divinities and between the Divinities, Guardian angels and their wards. It was revealed to this earth by the cult of witchcraft.

In no time, Ogun and Orunmila were present in God's palace. God asked Ogun, who sent the arsonists that tried to set His house ablaze. He was speechless. When he was finally able to collect himself together, he giggled that they did not go to where he sent them. Asked where he sent them, he replied that he directed them to destroy Orunmila's house. By this time, the Houses of God and Orunmila had assumed their usual features and characteristics from what Esu had transformed them to be.

God settled back to His throne and recalled the predictions of Orunmila. The Divine Father admonished Ogun for not having the magnanimity to present a few of his spoils from war to his benefactor, as a gesture of appreciation for what Orunmila did for him. Rather, he thought that the best way of demonstrating his gratitude was by eliminating his benefactor from the face of heaven. That was the first demonstration of anger that God was ever associated with. He quickly convened an emergency meeting of the Divine Council to make a proclamation. When all the Divinities were assembled, God recalled what transpired on the day He ordered Orunmila to prepare Ifa for Ogun, and how Ogun and his followers tried to set His own house on fire when in fact he told them to set

Orunmila's house ablaze and to kill him and to kill him and members of his household. He briefed them on how Orunmila's good turn to Ogun manifested in his success in the war between Ilakporo and Aminikun. Instead of sharing his loot with Orunmila, he decided under the influence of Esu to eliminate him from the face of heaven. God commanded Ogun to stand in the middle of the conference chamber and proclaimed:-

"Ogun, I had earlier on at creation, ordained that you would for all time, be the indispensable complement of all divinities and mortals created by Me. That will continue to be so without fail, because, no divinity or mortal will be able to do without you on account of your engineering industry and inventiveness. Now that you have demonstrated that you are not only an arsonist but also an ingrate, I will add another proclamation because, your mind has been taken over by Esu."

God then brought out his wand of authority (ASE in Yoruba and Akhase or Sošomaye in Bini) and further proclaimed:-

"From today to eternity, you Ogun will become the servant of all my divinities and mortals. You will assist them in all their chores, be it in the home, in the farm, moving from one place to another and in moments of strife. As the metal divinity, you will continue to be endowed with the authority to produce all kinds of instruments and ornamentations. However, before you are able to perform any transformation, the fire with which you tried to burn My house and the house of Orunmila, your benefactor, and mentor, will always be used to burn your head, chest, hands and feet, before you assume the shape in which you are required for service. After working for my creatures night and day, no one will ever remember to express gratitude to you in any shape or form. That will be your everlasting punishment for the ingratitude you have shown to your benefactor."

God then turned to Orunmila and proclaimed that "as the Divinity of Wisdom, and the wisdom diviner of Heaven and Earth, anyone who repays your good deeds with ingratitude will also become the victim of ingratitude for all the good turn they may do to others. But I will always repay you tenfold for any act of ingratitude demonstrated to you for your good deeds."

The manifestation of God's curse on Ogun is reflected in the following living facts we all take for granted:-

- (a) Before iron ore is melted into malleable steel or cast iron, it is heated with fire and beaten up with manual or mechanical instruments before assuming the required design. Examples are matchets, guns, metal beds and tables, bicycles, motor vehicles, aeroplanes, factory machinery, all domestic and institutional metal appliances and so on.
- (b) After using any of them for the required purposes, they are cast aside until they are required for use again. No one ever bothers to thank the matchets, hoes and ploughs with which the farmer feeds the world, nor does any one express any form of ingratitude to the bicycle, motor bike, car, helicopter or aeroplanes that transport them to and from the places they fetch their means of livelihood. That is Ogun, the metal divinity, performing all the chores, but no one stops to show him any form of recognition or appreciation.

With that final proclamation, the meeting of the Divine Council dispersed just before the crow of the cock. That is why anyone for whom Iwori-Ogunda comes out at Ugboodu can rightly be described as an ingrate and hence all his good deeds are also bound to be repaid with ingratitude.

This goes to illustrate that we do not really have anything to do for God except to the extent to which we live in harmony among ourselves. As long as we are

supportive of one another's effort, assist, and cooperate with one another, God will be happy that His objective for creation is manifesting. If on the other hand, we are at odds and war with one another, no matter the ostensible justification for it, it is a sad reflection of the success of Esu, which provokes the lamentation of God.

Make no mistake about it, whenever you have to play God, or assume the authority of the Divine Council by kill, maiming, dehumanising, plotting against, seducing the wife, bearing false witness, subverting, conspiring, robbing and meting out al unwholesome acts against your fellow men, supposedly in the name of God, and the punishment will await you at the pinnacle of your life, not in "hell" but hereon earth.

It is true that the institutionalisation of religion has given rise to universal enlightenment, stopped slavery, human sacrifice and enhanced moral virtues, all of which culminated in making the world more liveable. At the sme time, it has enhanced universal corruption, wars, factional hatred, schisms, nepotism, divisiveness, factional discrimination, and all forms of human denigration. Religious institutionalisation has always been the precursor and midwife of any diaspora among "the civilised and the barbarians, believers and unbelievers, saints and villains."

Chapter 4

GOD ABANDONS THE EARTH TO ESU

When the divinities inhabited the world, people were still generally afraid of doing evil because they did their best to observe the laws of heaven on earth. They were final authorities within the jurisdiction allotted to each of them by God in heaven. Any matter which defied the authority of any single one or a group of them, was referred to the Earthly Council of the Divinities, under the Chairmanship of Orisa-Nla, that is, God's own representative on earth. While on earth, they kept the tradition of meeting every five days, during which no one went for any outside chores, be it to the farm, forest, or market. That day was generally observed as the sabbath day (*Ijo iyasi mimo* in Yoruba or *Eken* in Binl). It was universally forbidden under pain of mysterious death or sickness to perform any chore outside the house on that day. The Earthly Council of the Divinities (which was the final court of appeal on all matters affecting mankind on earth), decided the fate of each human being on earth. Most of the activities of the divinities, however, transcends the common sense comprehension of lay mortals, because, the Divinities themselves were endowed by God with the perceptive vision of simultaneously knowing and seeing what transpired in heaven and on earth, which power, was denied to man when he was created to serve the divinities before the advent of the earth.

When the mortal population of the world began to increase however, the divinities discovered that their mortal servants were gradually beginning to stray away from the paths of their destiny to uncharted terrain. They were falling easy preys to the machinations of Esu who had vowed to mutilate and bastardise whatever being was created by God. As long as the authority of the divinities held sway on earth, little was heard of divinity's indivinity to divinity. As soon as the earth became totally mortalised however, man's inhumanity to man became rife to the point of ringing discordant gongs in heaven. Men began to cannibalize, rob, scandalise, brutalise, subjugate, enslave, torment, dehumanise, rape, etc. themselves in the name of one cause or the other.

That period coincided with the time when the divinities began to return to base in heaven. The children and priests of the departed divinities thought that law and order could be maintained by introducing the concepts of swearing, cursing, and oath-taking in the name of their departed divinities. That was how oath-taking and corporate and mutual cursing became universal practice on earth. They even introduced trial by ordeal as a means of evincing the truth from those who were economical with the facts.

It will be recalled that for a millenia, Orunmila was the only divinity left by God, to continue corporeal existence on earth, after recalling all the other divinities to heaven. That was because, he was the only divinity adjudged by God, to abhorre evil and champion the cause of ethical objectivity. Anyone who practices evil cannot be an adherent of Orunmila.

Orunmila travelled far and wide from his base at Oke-Mesi now called Ile-Ife in Western Nigeria to places beyond the mass of sand as distant as Mecca and Medina, where he taught the art of divination and beyond the sea to the land of the albinos where they could not recognise the importance of sacrifice.

We have already seen from the first book under Otuu-meji, why Orunmila could not settle in the land of the mass sand because, they had no respect for seniority.

of age, and elders. He found in those places that man had abandoned the heavenly law which decrees the supremacy of the elders. They had come to give pride of place to position, possession and knowledge, thus, subverting the wisdom that goes with age.

From there, he travelled to the land of albinos where people were only interested in divination but not in sacrifice because they did not recognise the subversive influence of Esu. He saw in the land beyond the seas, the manifestation of the curse which Esu pronounced on the albinos in heaven, that for failing to recognise him (Esu), they would always live to be the scavengers of the earth without having final satisfaction. And that in the process of providing for others, they would have no peace, because since they came to heaven to seek the unknown, they would continue to wander from one discovery to another, forever and ever, with no amen, in search of the unknown. That, in latter day parlance, means that not being satisfied with the discovery of the four winds of the earth, the white man has since embarked on the infinite probing of space.

With that frustration, Orunmila returned to Oke-Mesi with the determination that it was time to return to the simplicity of heaven. In later books, we shall see from Okonron-Oyeku that when he returned home, he assembled his followers and told them that he was already over-awed with a feeling of unbelonging on earth and a nostalgia for his colleague in heaven.

That was in spite of the fact that his own followers remained the only flock that still managed to resist the urge to do evil. They asked him why he was choosing to leave them for heaven never to return in view of the fact that they had always done their utmost to live by his values and standards. He told them in a poetical diction, that he came to the world, not for his followers alone, but, for all mankind, that in the course of his interaction with human nature, he had come to the conclusion that, the earth was beyond redemption, and that contrary to the wish of God, that man should love, respect, support and co-operate with his fellow men, man was always at war, not only with his conscience but also with his fellow men. He added that for him as a divinity, he felt like an unwanted stranger among men and was therefore resolved to return home to heaven, where he belonged. His followers then queried:-

Wonni tan won maa kpe, e ni baba

And he replied:-

Eni ebaa ri le maa kpe e ni baba

Orunmila, losi Igberere Okun, kooni wamo.

In other words, his followers who were already used to calling him their father, asked him who they were going to refer to as their father if he left them. He replied that, they would have to get used to regarding any benefactor as their father, because, he was leaving never to return.

With that valedictory dialogue, Orunmila went to the foot of the original palm tree through which the divinities came to the world in the first instance and he translated into eternity.

Chapter 5

THE BEGINNING OF STRIFE ON EARTH

First, men began to make themselves Kings by using brute force to compel weaker men to accept their leadership. World Kings became so powerful that they began to create their own divinities. God only became relevant in so far as the Almighty Father could be used for the advancement of political and economic objectives. Some kings and queens were even deified, either at their own instance, or at the instance of their subjects, and worshipped as gods by their subjugated fellow men. Generally, Kings saw themselves as nominees of the gods, chosen to represent them on earth. While some were satisfied to be regarded as the gods' chosen representatives others regarded themselves and were regarded by their people, as reincarnates of one or many gods. The era of King-worship in human history is replete with instances in which the deified King was the cone on top of the secular and religious pyramids of the state.

After consolidating their immediate kingdom, they began to plunder other habitations of human beings around them and across the waters. Man's insatiable desire for power made him to conquer and subdue other habitations of human beings to bring them under his suzerainty. Man held whole races of fellow human beings by brute force to answer to his beck and call. His whims and wishes became societal laws backed by discipline hinged on fear.

Unknown to him however, he was now acting fully as a servant of Esu. By using man to subvert the Divinities, Esu has established the dictum that the servant of today can become the master of tomorrow. It was time to demonstrate that the master of today could also become the servant of tomorrow. For one thing, since man was forever condemned to a transient life through Death's intervention, no king was able to live forever. For another thing, their arbitrariness generated untold hardship and suffering for the vast majority of their subjects. Since common suffering has a way of welding people together, all kinds of covert opposition began to emerge, which over time, culminated in the overthrow of kings all over the earth. Groups of conspirators began to gang up to overthrow their kings. They were able to obtain the support of the mass of people united by common suffering. In time, it soon turned out that the rule of might is right only transferred from one man (king) to a smaller group of oligarchs.

Before the oligarchs seized power from their kings, they had preached slogans like the liberation of men from the oppression of one man and the restoration of justice. The definitions of Freedom and Justice began to change from one system of human governance to another, as it pleased the powers that be. The rule of the Oligarchs was however, also transient.

Esu once again moved against them and the unorganised mass of people began to overthrow them by popular or armed uprising. Man has continued to experiment on one system of order to the other without arriving at a definitive anchorage. And yet, God ordered his own methodology once and it has remained immutable and unchanging ever since. The sun rises and sets daily, the moon comes and goes monthly, the rain falls when it should and the seasons of the year come and go without fail. In contrast, man has experienced innumerable changes both in his social relationship with fellow men and in ordering his priorities.

The failure of man in his various experiments in socio-political relationship with fellow men and in his attempt to conquer the unknown since he was abandoned to his own devices, will constitute the philosophical preface to the next book. For now, we shall continue with Orunmila's modes of divination, which he taught man as a means of reducing the margin of error in his daily life.

Lessons from Orunmila's observations on human behaviour

Orunmila came to the conclusion that, instead of being loving, supportive and sympathetic to one another, they had come to be at war with one another. Having virtually abandoned the divinities they were created to serve, men had arrogated to themselves the right to chart their own paths, in search of God. In his search for the unknown, man has found himself in a whirlpool of endless thesis and anti-thesis. Man has chosen to engage in an endless search for his own definition of truth and values in an endless construction of disposable hypotheses. Champions and defenders of the heavenly ordained truths and values, have over the ages, been denigrated derisively as barbarians, pagans, savages and under-developed minds. In the final analysis, man will come to the realisation that original truths and values are immutable.

God did not create men to base the freedom of some on the political or economic enslavement of others. Nor did God wish to create man, to become so selfish, that the affluence of some should be based on the penury of others, or that the prosperity of some, should be based on the dehumanisation of others. Man has truly become not the worshiper of God, but the true servant of Esu or evil.

Are men truly sympathetic to one another?

The ordinary definition of sympathy is "a feeling corresponding to that which another feels, that is, feeling for another person in pain or grief. A sharing of emotion, interest or desire, compassion or pity".

It might seem cynical to ask whether men truly and sincerely sympathise with one another. Let us at this stage anticipate the revelations of OSE-OGBE (Ose-Origbemi) which will appear in the last book of the series and see how Orunmila illustrated the illusion of human sympathy.

There were two bosom friends who were reputed to love themselves so much that they could volunteer to die for each other. They were both very famous hunters and used to travel together on hunting expeditions. One was called Ekundayo and the other was called Odegbami.

As the year drew to an end, the king announced that anyone who could fetch a live tiger for him to serve his head during the end-of-year festival, would be aptly rewarded with among other things, a chieftaincy title. When the two friends heard the announcement, they both went for divination and were told to serve their heads for success on the mission and to serve Esu against misfortune after success. They both served their heads separately but Odegbami said he did not have money for a he-goat. Ekundayo volunteered to buy a he-goat for them to serve Esu together. After making all the sacrifices, they set out for the forest.

On their way to the forest, Ekundayo asked Odegbami why it was that when he lost his eldest son recently, nearly every household in the town visited to commiserate with him, whereas, when his junior wife delivered a male child the following month, he was able to count those who came to rejoice with him on his ten fingers. Odegbami replied that it was because people were prone to be closer to one when one was in pain than when one was in pleasure. Ekundayo said that he thought from the calibre of people visiting him, especially those who had

never visited him before, that the multitude of "mourners" who visited him when he lost his son were merely demonstrating their subconscious pleasure that what happened to him did not happen to them which is an extension of human selfishness whilst the fewness of people who visited him when he had a new child clearly illustrated that people are not too happy when one moves one step ahead of them.

Odegbami wondered why his friend should be so cynical in his assessment of human reaction and that man needed more sympathy in pain than in pleasure. As the argument was going on, Esu was right behind them scheming how to demonstrate the veracity or lack of it, of their stances. Meanwhile, Esu turned himself into a farmer and began to run after the two of them. As the supposed farmer caught up with them, he broke the news that war had broken out in their town and that; all the houses had been set ablaze, that the casualties were in the thousands, that survivors had taken flight to the bush, and, that the king had been taken prisoner. Instinctively, both of them decided to return home without any delay. As they were racing home, the supposed farmer-informant, disappeared. As they were half-way home, Esu again transfigured into a palm wine tapper who they met on the way. They asked the palmwine tapper how he was still able to come and tap wine in the bush when there was war at home. The palm wine tapper told them that the invading army only made a hit-and-run raid on the eastern end of the town where they burnt several houses and took several captives. Ekundayo lived on the eastern part of the town whilst Odegbami lived on the western part.

Almost immediately, a sigh of relief could be seen on the countenance of Odegbami who lived on the western part of the town. He instantly stopped to rest, whilst the other friend continued racing home. As soon as he stopped running however, Odegbami sighted a tigress and shot it. The animal fell dead. As Ekundayo continued to run, he saw a small helpless animal running along the path way. He ran for it and saw it was an infant tiger. He ran after it and caught up with it. With the small tiger in hand, he ran home into the town only to discover that his house was among those set ablaze by the attacking enemy forces. His family was nowhere to be found and he now began to cry, not knowing how to look for them. He however decided to go and keep the young tiger in his farm as he went in search of members of his family.

Meanwhile, Odegbami returned to his house on the Western end of the town, where he was happily received by members of his family. He arranged at once for people to help him ferry home the game he shot in the forest. It was very late in the evening before he finally got back to his house with the tigress. When he was however told that Ekundayo's house was among those razed to the ground and that members of his family were missing, he decided to visit him before resting.

He got to Ekundayo's house but found nobody because the entire area was desolate. Thereafter, he returned home. Ekundayo got to his farm only to discover happily that all members of his family had taken refuge in the farm during the enemy attack. They all spent the night at the farm. The following day, Ekundayo decided to visit Odegbami to let him know that he only lost his belongings and not his family, to the war. He was received by his friend with mixed feelings when he accused him of abandoning him at the time he needed him most. They parted on a polemic note in spite of the fact that Ekundayo disclosed that his family was safe anyway. The parting of the ways had started between the two friends.

Meanwhile, after shooting the tigress Odegbami discovered that it was a nursing mother and began to wonder what happened to its young ones. He decided to return to the forest. That was the point at which Ekundayo, after improvising a temporary accommodation for his family, decided to report to the king that he had captured a young tiger. As soon as he made the report, the king ordered the construction of a new house befitting the title of the Shashere, or Iyashere, that is, the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the kingdom's Armed Forces. After conferring the title on Ekundayo, the king immediately charged him with the responsibility of organising troops to punish the hit-and-run attackers.

In accordance with tradition, as soon as a title is conferred on someone, he will return to his house at the head of a thanksgiving procession through the main streets of the town. That was the point at which Odegbami was returning from the forest after unsuccessfully searching for the children of the tigress he shot. He saw a jubilant procession of celebrants and stopped for them to pass by. He however became curious after he was told that the man at the head of the procession was Ekundayo. Curiosity gave way to hysteria when he was later told that his friend had been given one of the highest chieftaincy titles of the land because he was the first person to succeed in delivering a tiger to the king for serving his head at the up-coming annual Festival. His mind began to race and he decided to rendezvous with his friend at once. He scarcely waited for Ekundayo to get back to his house before asking him where and how he got the tiger.

Unwittingly, Ekundayo told him how he got the tiger soon after they saw the wine tapper. Odegbami lost no time in concluding that the small tiger captured by Ekundayo was the young one of the nursing-mother-tiger he had shot. Without waiting a moment longer, he raced to the palace to tell the king that he had conferred title on the wrong man. He produced the skin of the tigress he shot to prove his point that Ekundayo had cheated.

The king was confused. He quickly convened a meeting of his Council of Chiefs to discuss the matter. At the end of the deliberations, it was decided that the two friends should be invited. Ekundayo explained that his experience of the last twenty-four hours had clearly proved two points to him: first, that there is coefficient between name and experience. True to his name Ekundayo, his tears had been wiped off by joy. Secondly, that he had been proved right that sympathy is a reflection of human selfishness. He began by explaining how his friend and himself were both told in the first place that war had broken out at home; followed by their decision to race back home; how Odegbami stopped running, the moment they were told that only his (Ekundayo's) part of the town was affected by the war; how he alone continued running home in the course of which he saw the young tiger which transformed his life; a manifestation of his argument that his friend stopped running and heaved a sigh of relief - as soon as he knew that he was not affected by the tragedy which befell him; and, that human selfishness was manifested, the moment he knew and realised that his life-long friend had taken several jumps ahead of him by the title he had just been given.

Odegbami himself decided the matter when he admitted everything said by his friend and ended up by agreeing that sympathy is an illusion, and, that man is more interested in what happens to him personally than in what happens to his fellow men. With that, he was made the Balogun of the town, but to take orders from his friend Ekundayo. Between the two of them, they mobilised a powerful army that drove the attacking enemy forces out of the town and returned home with loots and several prisoners of war.

Chapter 6

MAN CREATED HIS OWN "GOD"

As soon as man was abandoned to his own world, or to put it in the words of Orunmila, when God decided to abandon the earth to Esu, there was a vacuum which had to be filled. First, the children, followers and priests of all the various divinities decided to make gods out of their patron divinities. Wars were fought to establish which gods were more powerful or more supreme than the others. Man fought himself for over five thousand years to create a universally acceptable "god" for himself.

First, the followers of the various divinities became so powerful in their individual rights that the resultant balance of terror made man to accept the compromise of living with many gods. It was man who, for selfish reasons, upgraded the divinities to become so-called gods and not the divinities themselves. It will be recalled that Orunmila, the wisdom divinity, had always described himself and the divinities as the servants of God. It is in the same way that divinities who operate by possession describe their priests as their servants. In fact as soon as a divine priest becomes possessed, his or her patron divinity immediately begins to refer to the priest (through the priest's mouth) as his or her servant (Ovienmwen in Bini and Erumi in Yoruba).

Subsequently, by Esu's doctrine of disposable hypothesis, and of constructing a model for a particular use and of destroying it after using it, he was at work on man once more. The epoch of polytheism had to end and Esu induced man to embark on another exercise in self destruction. It is nauseating to imagine the millions of human beings that lost their lives to the futile struggle between the monotheists and the polytheists, that is, among those who claimed to believe in one or more gods. That was the foundation of what is commonly regarded as the awakening of man.

Once the concept of one god was universally enforced, man had to give that god a unique character. He called him an ever-present, an all-powerful, and an all-knowing god. In the bellicose tradition of fighting, instead of loving his fellow-men, for supremacy, man had begun to feel insecure. He had become thoroughly afraid. Like in war, success requires discipline which must be shrouded with fear. Man's god therefore had to take the shape of a military commander having his eyes all over the place and who must be obeyed under pain of death. He therefore proceeded to evolve rules and regulations ensuring that his followers behaved without falling out of line which he called the commandments of his authoritarian god.

Like the torture chambers and dungeons introduced by man to penalise terrestrial offenders, man also had to create "hell" as a celestial prison for double-punishing those who offend on earth. Here again, man was merely using hell to institutionalise his own selfishness and to consolidate his personal authority and security. According to Orunmila, the God who represents the embodiment of good, could not also be the architect of evil or vengeance, by throwing offenders into burning flames.

Over the last two thousand years, thinkers have been pontificating over the paradox in which "the all-knowing, all-powerful and infallible God has both blamed and punished us for the sinful acts of which He appears to be the sole author. At page 170 of *Philosophy for Every Man* by L. H. Grunebaum, the

question is put by W.T. Jones "Why did a merciful, loving and just God endow man with the freedom to sin and did not, instead, make him a necessarily good (and perfect) creature?" This question betrays man's erroneous impression that God is the creator of both good and evil. Orunmila has revealed that God did not create evil. God cannot be both good and bad. He expected all his creatures to be good and perfect. It is a fundamental truth of post-creation existence that the autonomous influence of Esu was responsible for introducing the concept of parallel opposites good/bad, truth/falsehood, harmony/strife, pleasure/pain, etc.

Whereas God remains the embodiment of goodness and righteousness, Esu has occupied the opposite end of the spectrum as the personification of evil and crookedness. The appreciation of this axiom is the beginning of a rational understanding of the paradox of life.

According to Orunmila, since a snake cannot produce a rat, and a crocodile cannot produce a fish, God could not have been expected to sow the seeds of righteousness to yield a harvest of evil without the autonomous intervention of Esu. That is why God expects his own good children not to tread the path of evil. Man has however preferred to create a god of both good and evil.

When man was creating all these imaginary institutions, little did he know that Esu was once again preparing him for self destruction. He soon discovered that the rules and regulations he had created were too far-reaching for convenience. He found himself being pushed by Esu to commit all the sins supposedly punishable by civil and celestial laws. It was time to create the concept of forgiveness of sins and yet another institution had to be invented for that purpose. That was when his followers began to accuse him of doing what they were being punished for doing. First, the cost of forgiving sins was made so prohibitive that it was outside the reach of the poor and under-privileged. That became the source of yet another problem fomented by Esu who had planned another strategy.

The whole concept of monotheism was based on the struggle between Esu and Oludumare, and since Esu was being made to look like the ruthless under-dog, he decided once more to divide and rule man in terms of those who saw god from one end and those who saw it from another end. That was because it had become clear that the god created by man was an imperfect divinity. It is only hoped that sooner than later, God in his infinite mercy will allow man to return to roost not by destroying the earth with fire as had been widely predicted, but by making man to return to his senses. That is why man tends to lose faith in the god he has created, when things go wrong. People have moved from one denomination, sect or faith to another, after the man-created god failed their expectations. The personification and humanisation of God is basically responsible for all the reformations, revisionism, revanchism and protestations recorded in human history. Long after God had given up man on earth, man continued to conjure an image of a god, who will see that you are not punished when you are innocent, who rescues the under-dog from a ruthless authoritarian and who will save innocent lives from an accident. That was because man had created the concept of divine worship and prayer as panaceas for all his problems, abandoning the lessons that God taught the divinities by creating the virtue of intelligence - that is, to be able to put Esu out of their way, through the medium of sacrifice. Man will also only receive salvation by serving the divinities they were created to serve, who will always invariably advise warding off Esu through sacrifice.

To demonstrate "The imperfections of human intellect, human judgement and intelligence", it is sometimes necessary to look up to his past. In this connection

It is necessary to imagine the number of human beings who have lost their lives because of their religious, ideological, political and even socio-economic inclinations, since the beginning of human history. Men have been incarcerated, rusticated, vandalised, dehumanised and often mortified for their convictions during one epoch only to be rehabilitated sometimes post-humously long after they ceased to be a threat or when batons change. How many Gentiles were killed by Jews because they did not belong? How many Jews were killed by Europeans because of what they are? How many Christians were killed by Rome and Judea because they proclaimed a different faith? How many "unbelievers" were killed by European governments after being christianised? How many non-communists were killed after the 1917 Russian revolution? How many persons were dehumanised in the United States for having known or imagined communist sympathies in the M'Carthy era? Compare those periods with the situation in the world today? All these go to show how unreliable, the human mind is as a definitive and decisive force in world governance. Man has done his utmost to take his fellow man on jolly good rides, under the banner of a never-ending campaign for "individual freedom" - FROM WHO? Capitalism and communism both came in that wake as different sides of the same coin. Capitalism aims at the economic enrichment of a few individuals, whilst communism aims at the political enrichment of a few individuals. One puts a premium on the freedom of a few to cheat the rest by giving the majority the freedom to fight for the crumbs falling from the oligarch's table, while the other allows a few individuals to use brute force to hold down the majority with the euphoria of the right to work for a living. In other words Capitalism is the inequitable distribution of affluence, whilst Communism is the equitable distribution of penury. The only difference between the two ideologies is that one uses covert means to acquire and retain political power, whilst the other takes and holds on to power by superficially overt means. Common to both of them however, is the reins of political influence which is held tightly by a coterie of like-minded bed-fellows.

Capitalism evolved in Europe with a few vindictive fellows who perforce acquired the land given freely to man by God and began to call themselves land owners. Then they proceeded to enact laws that based political rights and power on land ownership. The rest were relegated to the subservient role of slaves of the land owners. Not satisfied with the status of serfdom, the underdogs took to adventuring to distant lands and seas far away from home. By a cohabitation of dare-devilry and piracy, they acquired considerable wealth and influence with which they bribed their king into giving them knighthoods, thus putting the under-dog in a position not only to rub shoulders with the Lords of the manor but also to compete with them for political authority. When the Lords and the knights discovered that they could minimise their problems by co-operation instead of competition, they decided to join forces not only to fight the king but to maintain a tight hold on the less adventurous serfs. That group was later joined by skilled tradesmen who by their ingenuity created the industrial revolution and with it, the industrial class.

On the other hand, it was the ferocity and viciousness of the human cruelty generated by the industrial revolution that sowed the seeds of communism. It is paradoxical to recall that the Jew who wrote the manifesto of communism was inspired by what he saw in the then industrial heartland of England. Communism was the working class' reaction to the kind of man's inhumanity to man incubated and hatched by Capitalism. The aristocracy of land, capital and

know-how could not have been expected to sit idly - by and watch the working class remove the bottom from their feet. By the same token, the working class will not sit and watch the capitalists demolish the socio-political edifices they erected with so much pain and sacrifice.

civic administration of man or self proclaimed custodians of God's laws, can have no justification for arrogating to themselves, the right to kill their fellow men. That is why Orunmila chided under Ose-tutu, that governance, far from being a solution to man's problems, is in fact the cause of them.

Another manifestation of the inconsistency of man's intellect, is man's attitude to voluntary abortion. After allowing millions of unborn men and women to be killed before birth over thousands of years, man is suddenly coming to the realisation that abortion is an affront on the fundamental human right of an unborn child. Laws are now being introduced here and there to prohibit the voluntary termination of pregnancies. What greater evidence can there be that the human intellect has become the victim of the law of unintended consequences.

Since Esu installed the bellicose instinct in the human intellect, man has come to believe that he has the permission of his "god", to fight and kill his fellow man for any cause beneficial to himself. The concept of liberation theology is as old as man. Man believes he can use war to achieve his objective no matter the righteousness or otherwise of that cause. God intended all differences between men to be resolved by dialogue and not by violence. That was what he told the divinities at the very first meeting of the divine council. There can be no justification therefore, for killing anyone as a result of ideological, religious, political or economic differences. God created man as a free wheeling agent. He has the right to exercise the option of using his freedom to save or to destroy himself. It is not for another man to do it for him. The history of man is replete with instances in which he has gone to war for the flimsiest of reasons. That is because since man refuses to give food to Esu, he will force it out of him. Anyone who advocates violence for whatever reason, does so to satisfy Esu and not to please the Almighty creator of existence, no matter whether it is for religious, political or economic freedom.

Perhaps the most bizarre evidence that man's intellect has probably run riot, is his attitude to plants and animals. At creation, God provided for our needs by creating plants and animals, before creating man. What God did not do was to provide for man's greed. Thus, it is said that God provided for our needs but forgot to provide for our greed. The plants and animals of this earth were quite adequate to provide for the basic requirements of man. However, as soon as man's desires moved from need to greed, he started to destroy the traditional habitat of animals by cutting down the forests, thus depleting the animal population of the earth. Now man talks about restoring the forest life of the earth and of not being cruel to what is left of the animal population. The plants and animals produced naturally did man no harm, but those produced synthetically are the carriers of most of the diseases that depopulate the earth to this day. It is time for man to ask himself, "What exactly do I want from this earth?"

Finally, the futility of the Arms race is a sad reminder of how Esu continues to play with man. As soon as Esu introduced the gun to man, he lost no time in giving him the intellect to perfect it. As a weapon of self destruction, the dane gun was developed into the rifle, the bazooka, and from the conventional bomb to the atomic and nuclear weapons. After spending financial resources that could have been used to provide better amenities to the needy, it took almost 2,000 years before man came to the realisation that the gun had been over-developed as a weapon of mass destruction. He then decided to start destroying all the ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons on which so much money and effort had been invested. One might say that man is finally coming to his senses, but it is only an indication of how unreliable the human intellect is, as a definitive and decisive force for the leadership of the world.

people having Ifa, but who had not received full readings, to write to Ogbe-Emiko Ifa Cultural Society through my Lagos Office Address. The outcome of that exercise will feature in a later book. The initial reactions were very poor, although it later began to gather momentum".

Ogbe Emiko Ifa Cultural Society

Meanwhile, I invited the Ifa Priests who made contributions to the work on Ifism and scheduled a meeting at Benin City for the 21st of February, 1988. Somehow, the meeting did not hold on that day because the proposal of one of the Priests puzzled me. He had earlier proposed that the society should be modelled as a cult, to which people would be formally initiated after an oath-taking ceremony, rituals and the payment of entry fees. He reminded me that, that was how the late Ogunbiyi established the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity. I had my misgivings on whether such an approach would give appropriate translation to Orunmila's wishes and injunctions. I then proposed that we would find out through divination the following evening.

As I was about to wake up the following morning however, Orunmila appeared to me in my Lagos bedroom and with fist clenched, warned me three times not to allow anyone to commercialise Ifism in any modern sense. He reminded me that he wanted me to use his revelations for the benefit of mankind and not for self or factional enrichment. He assured me that all those who did his work with dedication and altruism would be benefited in several other ways. He added that if I allowed Ifism to be incorporated as had been proposed to me, corruption, violence, antagonism and factional repression would set in, and that long after my death, the faith would suffer the fates of latter-day religious organisations.

True enough, he had earlier told me in London that far from being a collective responsibility, religion was an individual and personal calling. Belief in, and service to God are matters for the individual soul. Whether a man loves his fellow man or not, is a matter for the voice of God (conscience) in him and not a catechumenical injunction. Whether one abides by, or breaks, the commandments of natural laws is an individual and not a collective responsibility.

He stressed the point that each individual is endowed with a separate and not a collective soul. The soul of a good person cannot behave the same way as that of a bad one. The soul of the person who vowed in heaven to come and make the world a better place for people to live in, cannot incline in the same direction as the soul of the person who vowed in heaven to come and destroy the good things of the world. With the original declaration of Esu to mutilate everything and everyone created by God, what better opportunity could he have for carrying out his intentions than through institutions embracing individuals with heterogeneous inclinations and intentions. Sooner or later, the evil-minded activists of any institution will gain ascendancy and in the end, they are bound to incline the basic objectives of the institution to their evil thoughts and hidden agenda.

Institutionalisation is a manifestation of the gregarious instincts of man. It is a socio-political phenomenon and not a religious prerequisite. Religion deals with the soul whilst politics deals with the mind and hence, the sociological instincts of man. Orunmila illustrated this dichotomy of the group mind and the individual soul by drawing attention to the experience of the divinities when they initially came to the world.

Before they left heaven, they were advised at divination not to establish institutional rules that could later become an albatross round the necks. At one of their usual five daily meetings, Ogun moved a motion that whoever had grey

hairs on earth would return to heaven. Orunmila opposed the motion on the ground that it would not leave them sufficient time to complete their assignments on earth. Being a junior divinity however, his counter-motion was out-voted by the majority and Ogun's motion was carried. It meant that, the appearance of grey hairs on anyone's head, would signal his return to heaven.

That was how the more elderly divinities returned to heaven. When it came to the turn of Orunmila to have grey hairs, the others reminded him that it was time for him to return to heaven, and he agreed that he was already concluding arrangements to do so.

He however sounded his Ifa who advised him to make sacrifice with white hen and to pluck all the feathers, grind them, adding Iyerosun and to tie the powder in a bag which he was to hang up at the entrance to his house. He was subsequently to prepare a feast for all the other divinities in his house for a farewell party. He did as he was advised by Ifa.

It was time for Esu to go to work. It was the custom in those days, as it still is to this day, that anyone entering a divine house should remove his cap. As each of the divinities walked through the entrance to Orunmila's house to take their seats, Esu would release the powder inside the bag and smear it on their hair, which made them instantly grey. After taking their seats, they wore their caps once more.

They feasted and made valedictory speeches to wish Orunmila safe journey to heaven. In his reply, he thanked all of them for accepting his invitation and for coming to rejoice with him, before returning home to heaven. He added rather unequivocally that his return journey to heaven was particularly pleasant because, he was not going alone.

Asked what he meant by that statement, he told them that group travel was less boring than a lonesome journey, just as there was no pain from mass death. Asked to further explain his figure of speech, he disclosed that since everybody in the room had gone grey, they were all returning together to heaven. The rest admonished him for referring to them as having gone grey. When they removed the caps on their heads, they discovered in truth that everyone in the room had gone completely grey, except for Orunmila, who only had streaks of grey hairs.

Since they were not prepared for the mass death, they decided to review their previous ruling. It was Olokun, the water divinity who moved another motion that the growth of grey hairs should no longer be the criterion determining the time of death, and that from then on, only those who were invited to heaven by the Divine Council should actually return to heaven. The motion was unanimously carried. That is why people live long on earth to this day, lest, people would have been dying at the first appearance of grey hairs on their heads.

Orunmila used this analogy to illustrate how institutions can mutilate the will of God. No private individual could have initiated such a self-defeating law as the divinities had done collectively.

"He was emphatic, that he did not want anything in the nature of a cult, altar or medium of congregation for worshipping him as people claim to worship God. Asked what was wrong with the idea of institutionalising Ifism, he asked me whether I came to this world in a group. I replied that as much as my mortal memory could conceptualise, I came alone. He also asked me whether if I transgressed any of the natural laws, would I suffer the inevitable punishment severally or jointly. I also replied that I would bear the brunt alone. He was anxious to close the subject because he obviously did not enjoy my naivety. He ended up by saying that as long as I agreed that I came alone to this world and would

suffer the penal consequences of my transgressions alone, there was no basis for contemplating the institutionalisation of Ifism, except in so far as it is necessary for imparting knowledge to ignorant humanity. That dialogue has given me a number of sleepless nights ever since, in my attempt to juxtapose Ifism with other religious callings”.

The Individuality of religion

Orunmila has proclaimed that the sanctity of religion revolves around the individual and the divinity he serves. Anyone who does harm to his fellow man in the name of religion is doing so as a servant of Esu, and not as a true son of God.

There are no double standards in the manifestation and retribution of divine justice. If one embarks on any violent crusade in the defence of institutional dogmas, one will, as night follows day, take the retributive punishment alone. If anyone deludes himself into killing another in defence of his collective faith, he will pay for it alone and not collectively.

Orunmila has emphasised that when people go for divination, they do so alone and often in secret, and when they perform the prescribed sacrifices, they also do so alone. Man was born alone and will die alone. He does not discourage the tendency of establishing social institutions as long as the focus resolves itself into the observance of ethical rules capable of making society more liveable, but not behind religious facades. The establishment of religious institutions for the propagation and defence of faith will degenerate into an open invitation to Esu to bastardise and prostitute their genuine objective especially if it is seen to masquerade as a monolithic not-for-profit philanthropical association. The history of man is a cliché of instances in which religious institutionalisation becomes divisive enough to provoke a diaspora and schism in erstwhile cordial relationships between peoples.

The question therefore is whether one requires any institution for offering honest and sincere service to God and his Divinities, or whether the worship of God is a personal obligation of the individual to his God. What has been obvious from empirical analysis generally is that religious institutionalisation appears to have been an evolutionary contrivance by man for the manifestation of his selfish political and economic ambitions.

Empirical evidence seems to suggest that although, religious institutions were originally established for the theological propagation of faith, overtime however, with the onslaught of Esu, the focus has invariably shifted to more mundane succulence, especially the socio-political force that man can wield through these institutions.

That is why it is often said that religious zealots are not so much interested in the spiritual tenets of their faiths, as in the secular force and power they can wield through it. For example, man has over the ages hidden behind the facade of liberation theology to lead political crusades. It is an uneasy cohabitation between theology and politics. Over time, such theo-political aberration was bound to splash corrosive fluid on the credibility of religion. Once a course loses its credible credentials, it is often difficult to whistle it back to base. Human history is replete with motifs, giving religion a black eye from its flirtation with politics, invariably leading to withdrawal syndromes on the part of those who could not reconcile the two. Self-appointed custodians of ideological purity have been given the derisive name of Fundamentalists only because they too tried to use politics to achieve their objectives through religious militancy. For instance, what has often given rise to religious splinter-organisations, wars, persecutions etc. is not

the interpretation of Natural Laws or the commandments of God, but invariably the interpretation and application of conventional and institutional laws woven around them. Blasphemy, heresy and apostasy for which millions of people have been killed or jailed, are human laws and not God's law. There is nothing in God's laws which authorised the leader of a religious sect in one country to pass an open death sentence without prior trial, on a writer in another country, who was exercising his fundamental human rights. That is because institutional laws are often influenced by cultural, ecological, factional, societal, individual and despotic nuances.

At this point the writer will digress to take a look at what institutionalisation has done to contemporary theology.

CHAPTER 9

WHAT INSTITUTIONALISATION HAS DONE TO RELIGION

The purpose of this digression is to attempt to unscramble the spiritual from the secular factors in the cosmic theological equation. Far from being designed to deride the hall-marks and dogmas of modern religion, it is meant to focus the genesis of the fundamental assumptions and parameters under-scoring religious precepts and practices. The Bible has been said to reflect the cultural history of the Jews, who succeeded in intellectualising and universalising their basic customs, mores, myths and folklore. The Bible is a collection of stories originally written by sixty three writers and before getting to its present form, it was revised over a period of 1400 years.

Without making any deliberate concession to the concept of comparative religion, the writer will now take a bird's eye view of what may be described as the three synoptic religions which derived inspiration from the Bible.

The foundation of modern religion was never laid on institutions. The individual was the axis on which it revolved. An uneasy intercourse between politics and religion brought about the institutions which became its undoing. Religion is based on divine revelation and spiritual inspiration, not of society or community at large, but of the solitary individual. The revelations to the prophets were converted into institutions that began to flirt with secular authorities in the name of geo-political expansion, a process which soon became so divisive as to splash corrosive fluids on erstwhile cordial relations between peoples or human beings.

It is therefore necessary for the present generation to have an insight into how the incurable selfishness of human nature, adulterated the pure relationship between man and his creator, into an institutional anthropomorphism.

How religious institutionalism began with Judaism

Since the days of Moses, the Jews have established the foundations of religious separatism because as far as they are concerned, Israel's national identity and its religion are indissolubly linked. The early history of the Jews is told in the Hebrew Bible, or the five books of Moses - Pentateuch or Torah. Their Patriarchs are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Abraham crossed from Mesopotamia to Canaan (the promised land) in 1800 B.C. During a severe famine, the twelve sons of Jacob took refuge in Egypt where they later became slaves. At about 1250 B.C. Moses began the institutionalisation of Judaism by consolidating the political demands of the descendants of Jacob, for freedom from Egypt, when he beseeched the Pharaoh to "Let my people go". That was a political and not a religious action. This fact became clear from the difficulties he subsequently encountered in moulding manumitted slaves into a united people (Jews). Moses was however more of a society builder than a spiritual leader, which makes him one of the world's leading political scientists. He was principally concerned, with how to use the law to regulate the behaviour of individuals in society.

Much of the legal structure that constitute the (Torah) or law of the Israelites covers both religious and private lives including the type of food to be eaten and the way it is to be cooked. It has been verified that generally, the mosaic law is not very different from the Babylonian and Hittite laws that existed at the time of Moses.

Much of it including the ten commandments was no more than an encoding of the ethical standards of the time especially in the light of the emphasis which Moses and his law-giving successors placed, on detailed law as the foundation of the society. The emphasis was not on the way people behaved towards one another, but how they behaved towards the law. It follows therefore that if everyone observes the law everyone will behave rationally towards each other and towards society.

This is the *raison d'être* of the mosaic approach to society. The religious aspect of Moses' work begins and ends with belief in his single God (YAHWEH), as the authority for his law. Thereafter, the emphasis shifted to detailed law which implies detailed structure of society. It is a fundamental principle in political philosophy, that if the law governing Man's behaviour in society is sound enough, and backed by effective authority, all will be well in society. This explains why Plato advocated that, the wise men, or guardians of society should pretend that the laws came from God, when developing laws for society, "since no one challenges the authority of God".

The more detailed the law, the less scope there is for subjective human inputs, since man has to interpret the law. Hence, detailed laws of procedure are more durable than laws of belief because, belief is always vulnerable to interpretation and heresies. Religion has so much imposed a god-centered culture on mankind that Voltaire was able to declare that if God did not exist, it would have been necessary to invent Him; which is what man has done through religious institutionalism.

Moses never got to the promised land of Canaan. No one knows where he died or where the original Sinai is. It was Joshua and the Judges who eventually got the Jews to the promised land. The circle of institutionalization continued when the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob made themselves leaders of their clans and constituted themselves into a loose federation, governed by a succession of Judges.

They formalised the association by organising a central government, ruled by a King, the first of whom was Saul, followed by David and Solomon. The circle of institutionalisation was completed by David, the shepherd who used to play songs on his lyre to King Saul, whenever the latter felt disillusioned. David later became King and he formalised the unification of the twelve tribes of Israel, naming Jerusalem as its capital.

It was David's son Solomon who was later accused of "introducing elements into life and worship which many thought destructive of Israel's religion". The disgruntlement gave rise to discontent, unrest and civil war, which split the Jews into two after Solomon's death; - Israel in the North and Judah in the South.

Two years later, Israel fell to the Assyrian Empire. It was Solomon who introduced Temples and appointed Priests to be making sacrifices in them, and he it was, who brought politics and religion together. The Temple was a place of worship as well as a forum for social activities. But it soon became corrupt. A series of prophets, visionaries and rebels spoke out against social injustice in Israel and Judah.

The kingdom of Judah survived until it fell to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The Babylonians destroyed the Jewish temples after which the Jews began to improvise by socialising and worshipping in small rooms that became the model for the Synagogue, which was later to take the place of temples.

Under Judaism, there was no fine demarcation between religion and politics. In the days of Jesus Christ, the Council of the Jews (Sanhedrin) was headed by the High Priest, chosen from among the Sadducees, a group of aristocratic priests.

devoted to the first five books of the old testament. The council used to meet twice a week at the Jerusalem Temple. In addition to its religious function of fixing the religious events of the year, and deciding on true teachings, it had other secular duties. It ran a police force and also operated as a court of Law. There were mini-Councils throughout Palestine. It was one of these Councils that helped to condemn Jesus Christ.

According to Angela Wood in "Judaism", "the Jews in exile had seen the weakness of buildings and institutions and found that only that which has not been created can never be destroyed, but in order to keep their beliefs and stop their way of life from being polluted, the Jews had to live separate from other peoples".

On the religious front, the Jews began to monopolise God as if He is a tribal god. In the words of Isidore Epstein at pages 20-30 of his book on Judaism, backed by quotations from the Bible, "God became the God of Israel, who were the only chosen children of God to mark them out as a distinct people among the nations of the world". the Jews were to regard the rest of mankind as 'strangers' to be tolerated, because God loveth the stranger...love ye therefore the stranger". Epstein went on to add, still quoting from the Bible, an injunction for "Israel to separate itself from all contaminating contacts with the idolatrous civilisations and cultures of the surrounding nations". Israel had thus to be apart from the world and yet remain of the world. This was the fundamental principle which underscored the Jewish Torah - the brainchild of institutionalised Judaism. Judaism has unwittingly or deliberately distinguished itself as a separatist religion in a variety of ways:

- (1) They used the word Gentiles to refer to all non-Jews, including those who willingly decided to become Jews (Proselytes) and who were circumcised, baptised and accepted all the Jewish laws.
- (2) The construction of the famous Jerusalem Temple was started by King Herod the Great, 40 years before the birth of Christ, and completed in 64 A.D. Non-Jews were only allowed into the outer chambers of the Temple. Two large inscriptions warned non-Jews that they only went further into the Temple at the risk of their lives. The most sacred part of the Temple was the Court of Priests (the Altar) where twice a day, a lamb was sacrificed. It was also the scene of several private sacrifices throughout the day. Sacrificial animals were sold in the court of the Non-Jews. The Temple was destroyed by the Romans only four years after it was completed.
- (3) They also discriminated against the Samaritans, who were Jews, brought into Samaria by the King of Assyria. Judaism would have nothing to do with them even though they accepted as their Holy Bible the same books as the orthodox Jews.
- (4) The word "Pharisee" means "separated ones" - those who had to separate themselves from what Judaism regarded as the sinful world.

Much later, they even marked out "Jewish Christians as separate peoples...who...to gain some temporary advantages, did not hesitate to renounce all the Jewish religious practices, cutting themselves adrift from their people and finally joining the mass of Pagans who were attracted to Christianity". Even now, the Jews still cannot acknowledge the fact that the knowledge and worship of God have spread more through Christianity than through Judaism. The basic difference between Judaism and Christianity is that the latter became a universal religion by riding on the back of a political horse, whilst the former has always been and remains the religion of a part (excluding Gentiles) of a single nation.

Christ is so repugnant to the Jews that rather than using the terms "Before Christ" (B.C.) and "Anno Domini" (A.D.), they prefer to use "Before the Common Era" (B.C.E) and "Common Era" (C.E). As we shall see presently, Christianity was to practice its own brand of exclusive chauvinism and narrow-mindedness which provoked the reaction that culminated in the birth of Islam over 600 years after the advent of christianity. It is not surprising therefore that in Sura II Verses 111 and 113, the Quran demonstrates the narrow-mindedness of Judaism and Christianity by drawing attention to earlier proclamations that:

"None shall enter paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian" and yet "The Jews say that Christians have naught to stand upon whilst Christians say that Jews have naught to stand upon".

and they are supposed to have derived inspiration from the same source.

The Quran was however later to have its doze of the gull and wormwood of institutionalisation and politicisation, which has provoked the differences between the orthodox Muslim and the Muslim fundamentalists of our day and age. The situation was summed up by Khalif Al Rawaf at page xi of his commentary on the Quran:

"The new Renaissance of Islam which is just beginning, will, it is hoped, sweep away cobwebs and let in the full light of reason and understanding"

He went on to lament that:-

"The increasing knowledge (by Quranic commentators) of history and of Jewish and Christian legends, enabled the commentators to illustrate the text of the Holy Book with reference to these (Jewish and Christian) legends. Sometimes the amount of Jewish stuff, - some of it absurd, - which found this way into the commentaries was out of all proportion to its importance and relevance and gave rise to the legend ... that Islam was built upon an imperfect knowledge of Christianity and Judaism".

These dialectics of disposable hypotheses only lend fillip to the co-efficient of regression between religious institutionalisation and human divisiveness. To the detached observer of contemporary developments, one finds it all the more difficult either to draw a distinction between myths and reality, or between legend and history without having a distorted reflection of a real past. Institutionalised religion has therefore failed to provide a basis of solid and verifiable facts against which to determine the comparative reality of the events related in heroic myths.

The bane of modern religion is the construction of earthly kingdoms in co-habitation with secular authorities, leading to spiritual degeneration, moral depravity and corruption.

To demonstrate the unreliability of the human intellect, it required Amos to admonish the Jews,

"...of deluding themselves when they imagined that they were God's favourites, (because) God had no greater regard for them than for other nations".

He added:

"He was not God of Israel only; He was a universal God of universal morality".

According to Epstein,

"the warnings of Amos fell upon deaf ears and Israel continued to tread the path of doom provoking a rivalry between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel".

Exodus 19:6 says that since Israel failed to be to God "a Kingdom of priests and a holy nation" it was invaded by "strangers" Tiglath-Pileser III who wrenched, took and depopulated more than half of its territory". All he left to Israel was the little province of Samaria, which was subsequently over-run in 721 B.C. and what remained of it formed "a semi-idolatrous people known as the Samaritans". Thus, the kingdom of Israel passed out of history.

The Jews however consoled themselves in those circumstances by saying that "although they were scattered to the four corners of the earth without a state, country or government, nonetheless, the knowledge of the Torah and allegiance to the only God, ... ensured their survival as one distinct people among the nations of the world".

Once more, it required the instrumentality of individual prophets, as opposed to institutions, to startle mankind to rise above national boundaries to conceptualise "a vision of a united humanity, a world united in harmony in which all men and peoples acknowledge and revere God as the Lord of all the earth". It was the individualities of Isaiah, Joel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel etc. that came to lay the emphasis on the universality of Religion, and the conversion of all peoples to the worship of God through self or autonomous conversion, as opposed to induced or coercive conversion. According to Ezekiel, "the universal salvation of mankind will require the highest contribution of the individual".

The individual must will to be delivered from sin and make for himself, through penitence and confession, a new spirit. Having done his share, he is reconciled with God, who in His loving kindness, recreates him in spirit and life. That was at the time when in exile, the Israelites came to the realisation that "man's personal relationship with God meant that city, temples and institutions were no longer indispensable to the worship of God".

In 539 B.C. Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon and he allowed the Jewish exiles to return to Judah, making Nehemiah the governor of Judah. In 63 B.C. the Romans invaded Judah and occupied it. In 66 A.D. there was a Jewish revolt led by the Zealots, who opposed taxes levied on native Jews by the Roman authorities, but it was ruthlessly put down, destroying the rebuilt Temples. In 135 A.D. there was another revolt which was again put down by the Romans. Jerusalem was made a pagan city once more and the Jews were forbidden under pain of death from going there. That was when the Romans renamed the country Palestine, and the Jews settled elsewhere.

When Islam conquered Spain in 714 A.D. the Jews there welcomed them because according to them, "they were so much more civilised than the barbarians of Europe". But the Muslims were expelled from Spain by the Christians in 1492 A.D. and the Jews with them, even though they had lived in Spain since the Babylonian conquest 2000 years before. The early Christians were forbidden to lend one another money at interest, but they could borrow from the Jews at high interest rates, which continued to find a place for the Jews in Christian societies. The Roman Catholic Church only sanctified the usury laws in 1830 A.D. after condemning it for 1800 years.

Later, it required Moses Ben Maimon Maimonides (1135-1205) a Spanish theologian, scholar and philosopher of Jewish extraction, (page 214 of *Judaism* by Epstein) - to drive it home to the Jews that:

Christianity and Islam had an important role to play in paving the way for all mankind to embrace the full truth and knowledge of God.

The Theologico-Political treatise

Benedictus Spinoza (1632-77) was the first Jew to demonstrate in his book, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* that the language of the Bible is allegorical, as a

concession to ordinary mortals, and that the scriptures thus interpreted, contains nothing contrary to reason. In his philosophy he demurred that "there is no personal immortality and that good and evil are relative to human wants and purposes". He was excommunicated from Judaism in 1656 for his views, his father being a Jewish clergyman. His religious orientation was pantheistic and he was one of the first seventeenth century philosophers to argue forcefully that "It is pointless to use political power and coercion to enforce religious belief, and that it is unnecessary for any government to regulate the religious beliefs of its subjects... because men cannot really be compelled to believe". He was particularly concerned with individual freedom of thought and action and in the light of the real life experience of his time, he startled the Western world when he proclaimed that "the greatest enemies of freedom of thought were institutionalised religion and the clergy; (who were) exploiting the fears and the consequent fanaticism of their followers; using their spiritual authority to extend their temporal power; and using the political power thus achieved, to impose orthodox opinion". That was why Thomas Hobbes like Spinoza, advocated "the concept of a strong secular government as a counter-weight to the clergy especially as they also wielded international power". This goes to show that when secular and spiritual authorities engage in unholy matrimony, the first casualty is the freedom of the helpless individual to think and speak freely.

Yet, man continues to construct chasms instead of bridges, to destroy themselves. Instead of serving each other, people continue to enslave one another politically, ideologically and economically in the name of God. God did not create the world for the survival of one part to depend on the devastation and dehumanisation of another.

Judaism versus Christianity

According to H. L. Ellison in the *History of Christianity*, the Jews and the Gentiles initially regarded Christians as a Jewish sect. The Jewish authorities however began to persecute Christian Jews because of "their radical" doctrine and their admission of Gentiles without accepting the Judaic Law. When the Jews revolted against the Roman Empire in 66 to 73 A.D. and 132 to 133 A.D., the Christians did not participate in the revolts, which were spear-headed by the zealots. For failing to demonstrate sympathy and solidarity with their nationalism, the Jews from then on, began to regard Christian Jews as national enemies.

On their part, Christians came to regard Jews as haters of the objective good. When Christianity was subsequently recognised as the religion of the Roman Empire by Emperor Constantine in 313 A.D., Christians began to behave as custodians of theological purity and the Jews were elbowed to the sidelines, on account of their "inexorable bigotry". Legal discrimination against the Jews gathered a fresh momentum and they were gradually deprived of all rights. Incidentally there was no distinction in the attitudes of the Church and state against the Jews.

During the dark and middle ages, Jews were exposed to constant harassment, frequent expulsions and even massacres, especially during the first crusade between 1096 and 1099 A.D. The Jews were banished from England in 1290, from France in 1306, 1322 and 1394, when they were given the option of accepting Christianity or banishment. Following the massacre of Jews in 1391, the Spanish Inquisition investigated, with its horrendous track record, the genuineness of Jewish faith. Eventually all Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492.

In parts of Europe where they were still tolerated, the Jews were forced to live in designated streets (ghettos) and to wear distinctive dresses. The Renaissance

and Reformation mellowed the attitudes of the liberals and the intelligentsia. Even Martin Luther, after earlier having favourable views about the Jews, later made bitter and despicable attacks against them.

As attitudes began to change, the Jews were allowed to settle in Holland in 1598, in Hamburg in 1612 and in England unofficially in 1656. From 1354, Poland became the chief centre of European Jewry. As Poland grew politically weaker, the Jews were exposed to the hatred of the Roman Catholic Church, and the hostility of the people. When Poland was partitioned after 1772, Polish Jews found themselves in Roman Catholic Austria and in orthodox Russia. The Russian massacres (Pogroms) of 1881 to 1914 forced about 2 million Jews to seek refuge in the U.S.A.

The age of enlightenment in the 18th century created a more liberal attitude towards the Jews, leading to their emancipation in various parts of Europe, beginning with France. Nonetheless, political acceptance could not change deep-rooted popular prejudice. The growth of anti-semitism smouldered from diminuendo to crescendo, climaxing in 1878 with the infamous "Final solution" which culminated in about 6 million Jews perishing under Hitler's Nazi regime. Thus, it is said that there are only two groups of animals that destroy their species wholesale - rats and men. Did God create Man to destroy his fellow men in such savagery?

The Jews may have carried their chauvinism far too far, but what gave the Christian world the "divine right" to slaughter their fellow men - all in the name of God? Only a man's god could have acquiesced in that degree of brutality - the god that the institutionalised Church created to serve its political and material greed. It was only after the Nazi holocaust that Christians began to shed crocodile tears by stressing understanding, removal of prejudices and dialogue, although even in this day and age, there is "little evidence that anti-judaism is disappearing".

It is not surprising therefore that Rene Descartes, the French philosopher and mathematician of the sixteenth century (1596-1650) and the father of modern philosophy, brazenly expostulated in his concept of "metaphysical dualism" that "it is logically possible in the absence of any proof to the contrary, that God is a deceiver, in the sense that ... truths accepted in the light of reason, may not necessarily correspond to verifiable reality". He went on to blaspheme that "Some proof is needed that God cannot be a deceiver and that we are not the victims of a malicious demon. He was such a sceptic that he said that there was only one truth he could not doubt, viz., his own existence (*cogito ergo sum*). Of course, Descartes was provoked to propound his cartesian theory in the light of the god created in his day by institutionalised religion; and could not have been referring to the Almighty God of all creation, whose existence is an indubitable reality, because even he or any of us is an infinitesimal cell in the corporate body of all existence or God.

Effects of Institutionalisation on Christianity

Following the death of Jesus Christ, Christianity started with a few handful (about 120) of sometimes reluctant followers in the small obscure province of Judaea, and has since grown to a followership of over 1000 million people. Nominally, one third of the world's population are Christians.

During its metamorphosis, it has survived harrowing turbulences galvanised by ideo-philosophical and geo-political factors, beginning with Celcus and Lucian in the second century, to those of Voltaire in the 18th century, Karl Marx in the 19th century and Adolf Hitler in the 20th century.

Its resilience has been a function of its ability to reform and renew itself after every storm. From the first to the third centuries, the adhesive that glued the oppressed and harassed Christians together was its individuality and faith in Christ. As the Messiah, Christ held out to the individual believer the prospects of forgiveness of sin, peace with God, hope for the future, a new and higher ethical code and a promise of life after death. They practiced a new ethics of love - even towards enemies. Early converts were attracted by the visible manifestation of love demonstrated by believers.

They were excluded from the main stream of pagan society because of their different life-style. The early Christians were taught to refuse to participate in the pomp and pageantry of material social life; not to participate in war; to reject luxury and personal adornment; and to consider earthly citizenship as unimportant, since they looked forward to becoming citizens of heaven. This withdrawal syndrome made them to be regarded as anti-social and fanatical. In the Roman world, they were called "the third race", being neither Jewish nor pagans.

In consonance with Christ's dictum of "giving to Caesar what is Caesar's", Paul in Romans Chapter 13 was discouraging anarchism, which made the early Christians to give proper respect to constituted authority. In fact, the pathos of early Christianity were simplicity, community, evangelism, and love. It was simple because it had no formal organisation, maintained no Church buildings or membership rolls, taught easy-to understand doctrines, and financed mutual activities by voluntary personal giving.

The simplicity appealed to the poor and oppressed classes, who were able to participate in a new faith without difficulty. Christian communities made no distinctions based on nation, cultural status, slavery or sex. It gave otherwise social out-casts a sense of identity and belonging.

Jesus had taught his followers three ways of reaping favour from man and from God:

(1) Through prayer - He said "hypocrites love to stand and pray in Synagogues and at street corners, so that people may see them. Well, that is their reward and nothing more"

He then added:

"When you pray, go into your inner room, shut the door, and pray to your father in secret. Your heavenly father will reward you".

(2) Through Alms giving - He said that "hypocrites, when they give alms in synagogues, sound a trumpet so that people will praise them. Well, that is their reward; nothing more".

He then taught -

"When you give alms, do it so secretly that even your left hand does not know what your right hand is giving. Your heavenly father will know, and will reward you".

(3) Through Fasting - He said that "hypocrites, when they fast, deliberately look miserable (leaving their beards unshaved and faces unwashed) so that people will know they are fasting. Well, that is their reward, nothing more".

He then taught -

"When you fast, make sure there is no change in your appearance. Wash your face and anoint your head. Fast for your heavenly father in secret. He will reward you".

Jesus reassured his followers that they had no reason to amass treasures on earth because they only needed treasures in heaven. He asked, whom do you serve? God or your possessions. You cannot serve God and mammon (the god of greed). That is why it is said that God has provided for our needs but forgot to provide for our greed.

In his valedictory address to his followers at Ephesus, Paul said, "I know that after my going away, oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves, men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore keep awake!" Acts 20:29-31

Two years before the end of the first century, John the only surviving apostle, disclosed how far apostasy had progressed and said "Young children, it is the last hour ... anti-christ is coming, even now there have come to be many anti-christs:... They went out from us, but they were not of our kind, lest ... they would have remained with us. He then urged them to be steadfast in their faith in God" John 2:18,19,24.

Time was soon to prove the accuracy of these prophetic warnings, many of them began to fall for the attractions of the material world to yield to the popularity of Greek philosophy, and to place it above the Holy Scriptures. By trying to harmonise the Scriptures with Greek philosophy, they began to compromise the truth. In the later half of the second century, Theophilus, the bishop of Antioch in Syria, apparently soaked in popular paganism, wrote in Greek to introduce the doctrine of the word "trias", meaning "triad or trinity.

His contemporary in North Africa, Tertullian of Carthage, wrote in defence of the word trinitas, meaning trinity. From then on, the trinitarian doctrine came to infect orthodox Christian belief. The word "trias" is nowhere to be found in the "inspired" Christian Greek Scriptures nor is the word "trinitas" to be found in the Latin translation of the Bible, the Vulgate.

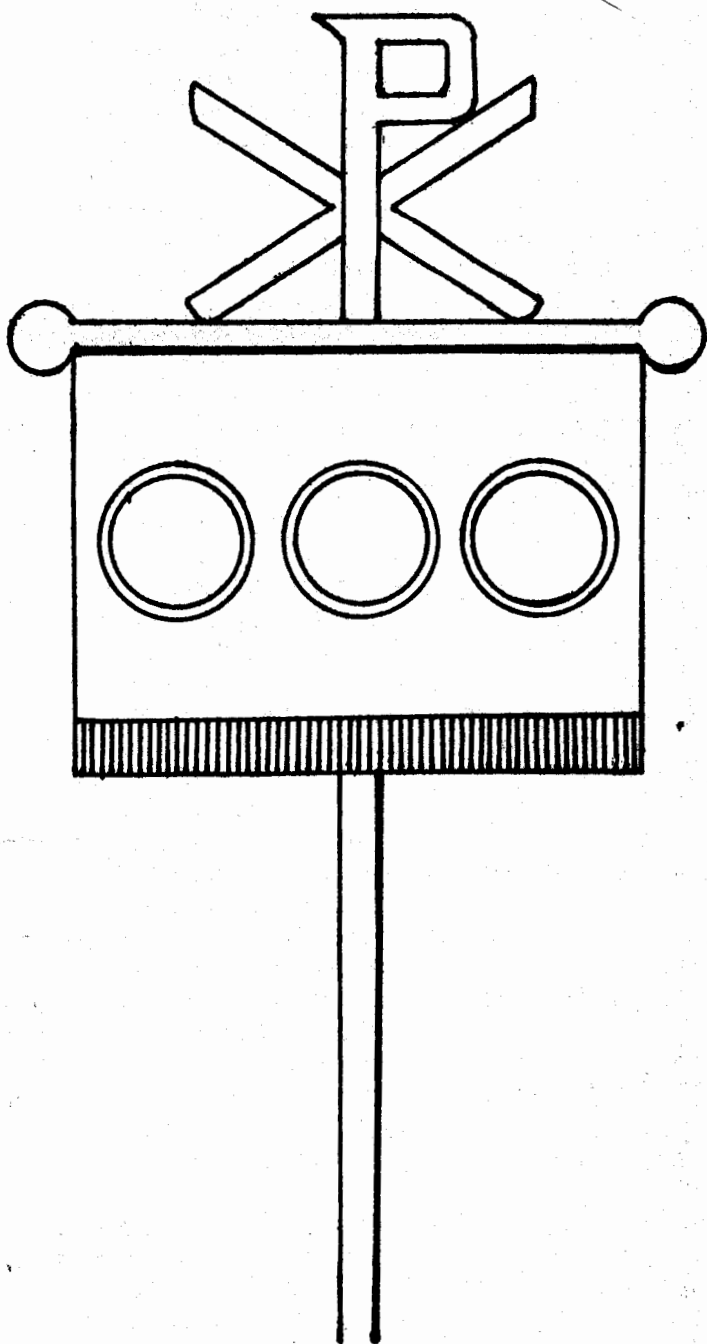
On the other hand, Origen (185-254 A.D.) of Caesarea, a famous Biblical critic and his Hexapla, yielded to the philosophy of Plato on the immortality of the human soul. That led him to believe in the "pre-existence of human souls, and their re-incarnation in bodies for offences previously committed". (Mosheim's Institute of Ecclesiastical History)

The politicisation of the Church

The politicisation of the Church was completed when Emperor Constantine, brought about a cohabitation of Roman paganism and Christianity in 312 A.D., when Flavius Aurelius Constantinus was the Emperor of the Pagan Roman Empire.

To be able to take the imperial crown of Rome, he had to dislodge his arch-rival Maxentius, who had usurped the government of Italy and Africa. After losing two battles to Maxentius, he had to engage him in a third combat at Rome's Milvian bridge. He had one problem; the source of recruitment into his army was being depleted as more citizens were being converted to Christianity. It was therefore tactically expedient to feign conversion to Christianity because the early Christians were famous for their pacifism and they preferred to go to prison rather than to be enlisted into the secular Army; for two reasons: Christ's injunction to love one's enemy, and the fact that they were rebuffed by the idolatry which permeated the Roman army. He is reported to have said to his close aides, "If I can infiltrate the Christian flock, I will have at my command the biggest army the world has ever known".

Before embarking on a third battle with Maxentius, Constantine claimed to have seen a cross flaming on the face of the sun, in the noon-day sky, with the words *In hoc signo vinces*, that is, "Conquer by this sign" pointing to the Cross. The following night, Christ is said to have appeared to him and to have ordered him to take for his standard an imitation of the fiery cross he saw in the heavenly vision. So he had a standard made in that form (Fig. 2) and he called it the



THE LABARUM

Labarum. He disclosed this event to the historian, Eusebius of Caesarea before he died.

The Roman Catholic Hierarchy claim this was a sign from heaven which led to Constantine's conversion to the Christianity of the day. On the other hand, faithful upholders of the Holy Scriptures took no such view of the matter.

Jesus had admonished his countrymen, the Jews, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe", and he called them adulterous and wicked generation, because of always wanting a sign. The faithfuls therefore did not believe Constantine's conversion gimmick because they considered it highly unlikely that Jesus would stultify himself by sending a sign from heaven to a pagan in order to convert him to Christianity, and especially when that pagan was shedding blood with carnal weapons in order to gain political supremacy in the aggressive Roman Empire.

In the ensuing combat, Constantine defeated Maxentius in the autumn of 312 A.D. and the Roman Senate declared him to be Augustus and Pontifex Maximus, on 28th October, 312 A.D. Consequently he became the Chief Priest of the Pagan Roman religion, which was quite different from getting baptised to consummate his feigned conversion to Christianity. In fact, he was not baptised till he fell sick twenty five years later in 337 A.D., when he died.

Emperor Constantine's favourite worship was to the Sun god, whose symbol was the cross or the letter T, the initial of the god Tammuz. According to Richard Todd in the History of Christianity, Emperor Constantine did not initially distinguish clearly between the Father of Jesus Christ and the divine Sun. For a decade his coins continued to feature some of the Pagan gods, notably his own favourite deity, the Unconquered Sun. Retaining the pagan symbols was a necessary compromise with his pagan subjects, still very much in the majority. "He continued to identify the Sun with the Christian God, a belief made easier by the tendency of Christian writers and artists to use the sun imagery in portraying Christ". He later confided Eusebius that the cross he saw on the sun was the sign of his Sun god, because Jewish historians aver that "Jesus was not hanged upon a cross but upon a simple stake". It was from Constantine's time onwards that the symbol of the apostate Christianity, became the Cross.

Emperor Constantine's (who changed the place name of Byzantium to Constantinople) successors followed his example in adopting the title Pontifex Maximus until Gratian Emperor of the Western wing of the Roman Empire (375-383 A.D.) refused to assume the title and insignia of Pontifex Maximus, a dignity till then considered as annexed to that of Emperor. In 378 A.D. the bishop of Rome Damascus, took over the title, borrowed from a Pagan cult, as one of the Chief designations of the Pope or Pontiff of Vatican City.

For Christianity, the "Conversion" of Emperor Constantine, the Imperial Ruler of the world at the time, was a mixed blessing. By the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D., he stopped the persecution of Christians and appointed many of them into secular positions, and he eventually declared Christianity, the Religion of the Holy Roman Empire.

Bishop Leo I (A.D. 440-461) was the first totalitarian Pope in the modern sense. He established the "apostolic chair" which endowed the bishop of Rome with spiritual supremacy over every branch of Catholicism and established for its occupant, the exclusive use of the title of Papa (Pope) by proclaiming that the bishop of Rome was the successor of Peter. He was called "Father of Fathers" (Pater Patrum) and "holy father" in absolute violation of Jesus' command, "Call none your father upon earth; for one is your father who is in heaven" - Matthew 23:9.

The Roman Catholic Cardinal, John Henry Newman, composer of the song "Lead, kindly Light" was outspoken enough to admit that "the Roman Catholic system had disobeyed God's command to avoid becoming infected with Pagan

religion and getting snared by it". He admitted that the Church had continually made compromises with demonism. In 1878 he published his essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, where he said inter-alia "...and they (the Church's hierarchy) must invent what they needed, if they did not like what they found, ...being possessed of the very archetypes, of which paganism attempted the shadows: the rulers of the Church from early times were prepared, should the occasion arise, to adopt, imitate, or sanction the existing rites and customs of the populace, as well as the philosophy of the educated class".

Betraying the fusion for Christianity with Paganism, the British Cardinal continued:

The use of temples dedicated to particular saints and ornamented on occasions with branches of trees, incense, lamps and candles; votive offerings on recovery from illness, holy water, asylums, holidays and seasons, use of calendars, processions, blessings on the fields; sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure, the ring in marriage, turning to the east (the direction from which the sun sets) and Images. Perhaps the ecclesiastical chant, and the song Kyrie Eleison (Lord have mercy) are all of Pagan origin, and sanctified by their adoption into the Church.

Michael Williams, once a leading defender of Roman Catholicism in the U.S.A. contributed an article to *Brooklyn Eagle* (New York) on February 21, 1943 quoting the under-mentioned statement made by the Late Pope Pius XI to Newspapers in Rome:

The Head of the Catholic Church would consider it his duty to deal with the Devil himself, to say nothing about any other mortals who, hypothetically, or in reality, were merely agents of the Dictator of Diabolism, if reasonable grounds existed to support the hope that such dealings would protect, or advance, the interests of religion among mankind.

This statement, coming from the Pope who made concordats with the Fascist dictator Mussolini in 1929 and the Nazi Fuehrer Hitler in 1933, clearly demonstrates that the spirit of Catholicism had not changed from what it was in the days of Emperor Constantine, 1600 years ago. This is in stark naked contrast to the refusal of Jesus on the mount of temptation to make any bargain with the Devil for worldly political power. The Pope's spirit was one of compromise with demonism, Babylon's religion, for temporal power.

The paganisation of Christianity

Among the far-reaching changes which Emperor Constantine introduced into Christianity were the following:-

1. He believed that the apparition he saw was inspired by the Sun which was his favourite Roman god, who directed him to tolerate Christianity, and who he regarded as the Father of Jesus Christ, which explains why Christian writers and artists used the imagery of the Sun to portray Christ.
2. Before 321 A.D., Christians observed the Sabbath in consonance with their Jewish tradition. According to the new Testament, Jesus used to worship and preach in the Synagogue on Sabbath days. The Romans on the other hand observed the first day of the week as a day of rest for serving the Sun god. In 321 A.D., Emperor Constantine declared the first day of the week as the holy day of observation - or Sunday.
3. From the worship for the Sun came the celebration of Christ's birth on the 25th of December, which before then, pagan Rome observed as the birthday of the Sun god, with all the affectations of what is now Christmas.

In contrast, there is nothing in the Bible to suggest that Jesus was born on the 25th of December. In fact, the early Christians used to celebrate the birth of Jesus on 6th January.

4. Saturn was served on Saturdays. Saturnalia, the Roman winter festival of 17th to 21st December provided the merriment, gift giving, candle lights and incense burning, typical of latter-day Christian modes of worship.
5. It was not until the fifth century A.D. that Pope Leo I stopped the Christian practice (earlier imposed by Emperor Constantine) of bowing to the Sun before entering St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.
6. The use of candles, incenses and garlands were Roman pagan practices which were first resisted by Christians because they symbolised paganism, but subsequently Christianised.
7. European scholars and theologians have associated the night deification of the "Virgin" Mary, with the pagan worship of Artemis or Diana of Ephesus.
8. Egyptologists on the other hand, believe that Pagan practices died hard after the fusion of paganism and Christianity and that the worship of Isis, the Egyptian goddess who was described as "the great virgin" and the mother of god, was transferred *mutatis mutandis* to the Virgin Mary. Surviving images of Isis holding the child Horus are similar in every respect to later Christian Madonnas.
9. The Christian historian Theodoret holds that in many parts of Europe, Saints and Martyrs took the place of pagan gods, their shrines replaced pagan temples, and their feast days were replaced by holy days of observation of Christian Saints and Martyrs.
10. In commemoration of pagan beliefs in the mystical capabilities of the predecessor gods, some Saints and Martyrs, were claimed to be capable of curing barrenness, protecting travellers, detecting perjury, foretelling the future and healing the sick. The shrines of Saints Cyrus and John, who as physicians charged no fees in their life-time were popular healing shrines for early Christians near Alexandria. St. Augustine himself sent two Reverend Fathers who accused each other, to the shrine of St. Felix of Nola, who was believed to be capable of detecting which of them was lying. That was why orthodox Christians argued that attachment to shrines and Saints marked a return to paganism and why, Rev. Father Vigilantius of Aquitaine lamented, "We almost see the rites of the pagans introduced not the churches under the pretext of religion. Ranks of candles are lit in bright day light and everywhere people kiss and adore some bit of dust in a little pot, wrapped in a precious fabric" although he was rebuked by Archbishop Jerome for saying so.
11. An argument between Bishop Alexander of Alexandria and Presbyter Arius as to whether there was theological justification for equating Christ with God when he was created by God, was settled by a proclamation from the unbaptised Emperor Constantine at his first Ecumenical council in Nicaea in 325 A.D. His decision was final. The Council was convened by Emperor Constantine in his capacity at the Pontifex Maximus. Only about 318 bishops (one sixth of the total number) attended. The bishop of Rome did not preside and discussions were in Greek and not Latin. After two months of wrangling, the Emperor decided that the Nicene Creed upholding the trinity should be the doctrine of the Church, and was enforced by the sword of the state, and not by the sword of the spirit, viz, the word of God. Arius who argued powerfully against the trinity was banished after the Emperor sided with Athanasius.

12. The month of January was named after the two-faced Roman god Janos whose gates were closed in times of peace and opened during times of war.
13. February comes from the Roman pagan word, "Februa" - (that which purifies) and it refers to the 15th of February Festival of Lupercalia commemorating where the she-wolf was said to have acted as a foster-mother to Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome. On that day a dog and goat were sacrificed and strips were cut from the hides of the goat to whip any woman the celebrant met during their procession. The Roman year began with the 1st of March in honour of god Mars, which gave us the word March as the third month of the year.
14. The month of June took its name after Juno, the Roman god of women, who considered the second half of the year as the more favourable time for marriage, a practice prevalent among Christians for over a thousand years.
15. Jupiter was the highest pagan god who was said to make his wish known through thunder and lightning, the equivalent of Sango. Its priests dressed in red robes.
16. Neptune was the Roman god of the sea or water (the equivalent of Olokun) whose priests dressed in white robes. The High Priest of Neptune was called "Pontifex Maximus" who supervised the religious Calendar and sacrifices. The title has survived and is today applied to the Pope - (Pontiff).

The foregoing adulteration of religious dogma with secular expediencies was only made possible because of the institutionalised Church. After 313 A.D., it became convenient to become a Christian for political, economic and social benefits.

The recourse of the Church to philosophy

In its piquant enthusiasm to build a kingdom on earth, the Catholic Church, preferred to ignore the teachings of Christ and the Apostles and to seek solace in the doctrines of capricious theosophers like St. Augustine who in the fifth century, established the framework of Christianity, upon which St. Thomas Aquinas was eventually to construct the edifice of Catholic orthodoxy in the thirteenth century. Christian philosophers and clerics especially those who were converted to Aristotle's philosophy after the translation from Greek to Latin of the Greek Philosopher's Physics found in it, a formidably complete rational explanation of the order of the universe. That was in spite of the fact that the irresistible Aristotelian Physics was anchored on ideas far removed from Christianity. The Aristotelian universe which dazzled Christian Philosophers after the complete institutionalisation of the Church, had no beginning; it is governed by a God who is not a creator; it includes no beatitudes, immortality of the soul, or divine grace and it almost defied human reason. They began to erect pillars for their city of man by theorising that: there could be no conflict between reason and revelation "because both come from God"; salvation comes not by separation or escape from the material world, but through the intellect's power to abstract immutable truths from our changing sense perceptions, which meant that our ideas have a sensory origin, and that to reach God, men need not, indeed cannot, turn away from human life. Thus, Christ's doctrine of self-denial in the love of God - by giving up the immediate, tangible, sense-gratifying universe for a new eternal universe was finally jettisoned. Christ had taught that man need not worry about material life because there is a better one after death. Needless to observe that this is a dogma that could not have been comprehended by the senses. St. Augustine set out to square the Bible with Plato, just as St. Thomas Aquinas was later to square it with Aristotle.

Christian Philosophers began to propound theories that everything is linked in a reality that has the form of a ladder leading to God, in a world in which everything is essential to the economy of the whole. What is particularly disturbing is that the so-called Christian Philosophers based their theories on the pagan philosophies of Plato and Aristotle whose hypotheses were based on human reason rather than on faith and whose universe was godless. It is not surprising therefore that Monsignor Martin Luther began his diatribe on the Catholic Church with a denunciation of St. Thomas Aquinas's ladder to God (which the Church had accepted as a dogma) as "the invention of ungodly men, who pretended to be capable of ascending to heaven by their own wits". It is however a paradox of history that after splitting from the Church of Rome, the Protestant Church reverted to an even purer form of Augustinianism. Beside the fact that Luther was an Augustinian Monk, John Calvin, the French Protestant leader and Cornelius Jansen the Dutch Chief protagonist of Protestantism advocated the severe concern with pre-destination, sinfulness and moral responsibility that originated with St. Augustine. It has been said that Augustine was responsible for the main difference in moral concepts between the Western and Eastern world. And yet, St. Augustine was converted to Christianity relatively late in his intellectual life; after he had first done a lot of thinking under the influence of secular Greek philosophy. Far from being an intellectual convert, he was emotionally converted to Christianity, largely as a result of the influence of his Christian mother, and the way of life he observed among Christians.

Eventually, Jesus became obscured by the institutionalised Church, as the pivot around which Christianity revolved. The Church's flirtation with pagan philosophy, politics, and secular authority culminated in its spiritual devaluation, which gave rise to its dismemberment. Christ strove to build a Kingdom in heaven, but the institutionalised Church preferred to build a Kingdom in this world.

Armenia was the first country to adopt Christianity as an official religion. It then swept across the Greco-Roman world and lost some of its original zeal and simplicity. The institutionalisation of the Church and its cohabitation with secular power provoked the loss of its apostolic purity and seriously damaged its simplicity. Its internal problems began with the split between Constantinople and Rome. In the former, the Church subjugated itself to secular authority, whilst the Pope emerged in the latter as the dominant political and spiritual authority because the institutionalised Church had become embroiled in the affairs of the temporal world.

The advent of Roman Catholicism and Greek orthodoxy at about 1054 A.D. was influenced by diverging psychology, history, philosophy, language, culture and loving-kindness. The Greeks with their aggressive inter-city squabbling and the Romans with their force-imposed empire, could not have provided an adequate school for Christianity in their successor-nation-states. Nonetheless it goes without saying that it was the Greco-Roman epoch, especially the Pagan Roman Empire that provided the conditions which enabled Christianity to survive and spread, albeit, not without the pollution of its spiritual appeal.

For instance, page 316 of *The Birth of Western Civilization* clearly demonstrates how the message of Christianity - following its cohabitation with Roman paganism - was "expressed in a variety of symbolic images, many taken over (like the river god of Jordan or the egg) signifying the Resurrection from pagan heritage".

To illustrate how the teaching of the institutionalized Church had deviated from the piety of Christ and the apostles, page 142 of the *History of Christianity* tells the story of how in 388 A.D. following a riot in the town of Callinicum, on the River

Euphrates, Bishop Ambrose "led the Christians to rob and burn a Jewish Synagogue". When Emperor Theodosius ordered the return of the stolen property and the Bishop to rebuild the synagogue, the bishop challenged the right of the Emperor to impose civil law on a religious matter, observing that "it amounted to apostasy (abandonment of religious faith) for the Emperor to side with the Jews, being enemies of Christ". The Emperor subsequently withdrew his orders.

In the fifth century, the Bishop of Rome, Gelasius I developed the dogma that the Bishop of Rome (that is, the Pope) should rule the Empire for the good of God's people. Bishop Ambrose later demonstrated how it could work in practice by making Emperor Theodosius to publicly apologise and ask for forgiveness for his sin of avenging the murder of a military commander in Thessalonica by massacring 7,000 citizens including several innocent persons. The supremacy of the Pope over civil administration was to be more vigorously pursued in the middle ages when the pope divided the world to be administered by Spain and Portugal in the Papal Bill of Demarcation.

Even before then, the Church was already running into difficulties with the crowned heads of Europe. Under the Bill of Clericis Laicos in 1296 A.D. Pope Boniface sought to limit the powers of Kings to tax the clergy. France reacted by prohibiting the export of bullion and in England, King Edward I threatened to remove Royal protection from the clergy. The Pope had to withdraw the Bill by force of circumstances. Between 1300 and 1500 A.D., there were several changes in the spiritual liturgy of the institutionalised Church, which had become the dominant force in society, that generated the disunity and unrest that pointed to the Reformation. One of such changes was the announcement by Pope Boniface of plenary indulgence (assurance of immediate entry into heaven after death) for pilgrims to Rome in the Jubilee year of 1300 A.D.

Later-day theologians and Philosophers have blamed the fall of the Roman Empire on its cohabitation with Christianity whilst at the same time blaming the spiritual devaluation and dismemberment of the Church on its intercourse with political and secular authority. When Rome fell, Constantinople became the second Rome. Constantinople itself also fell to the onset of Muslim Turks, after which Moscow became the third Rome. This impression was conveyed in a letter written by Monk Philotheus to Ivan III, the Emperor of Russia, in which the Russian church claimed to be the chief protector of Eastern Christianity.

The Spanish Inquisition by the Catholic Church was superficially designed to wipe out witchcraft, but the methods used by the Inquisition posed a greater danger than witchcraft. The political authority of the Pope was always responsible for the difficulties of the Church. He ran into political difficulties again with France when a bishop was arrested and charged with treason. The Pope reacted by promulgating another Bill (Ascuta Fili) emphasising the Pope's superiority over secular rulers. In reply, King Phillip V of France stirred up public opinion against the Pope. Pope Boniface answered with yet another Bill, Unam Sanctum in 1302, summing up extreme papal claims.

Finally, the French King sent Nogaret, his agent to bring the Pope to Paris to decide his fate. Boniface reacted by excommunicating the French King. In February 1303, with the support of the Colonna family (the Pope's arch rival) in Italy, Nogaret attacked the Pope at Anagni and Boniface escaped to Rome where he died a month later at the Vatican.

After the death of Pope Boniface, the French King exerted pressure on the college of cardinals to elect a docile and less ambitious Pope, which found expression in Pope Benedict XI. The new Pope died a year later before he had any chance to demonstrate his more conciliatory approach to papal govern-

the apostles, and hence, advocated that the Church should refrain from entanglements in the material world; and the Church hierarchy who were happy to head a massively wealthy Church whose head was the ruler of the temporal princes of Christendom. Pope John XXII eventually condemned the Franciscans doctrine of poverty in 1323 and excommunicated some of its leaders.

That however did not stop the open criticism of the material wealth and political power of the Church, by those who saw "the suffering Christ as replacing God, the stern judge". This found expression in a swing away from an institutional to a personalised religion. The Dominican order championed the personalisation of the faith of the individual in his God. This coincided with the age of overseas discovery of new lands and the missionary zeal in individual priests and clergy. To demonstrate how corruption had plagued the Church hierarchy, the Italian Philosopher, Machiavelli, once wrote "the nearer one got to Rome, the more corruption one found". Even the plague epidemics (black death) and the menace from Muslim Turks that ravaged Europe were regarded as the scourge of God to punish the failings of Catholicism. In three years, the plague killed one third of the population of the entire Catholic West and remained endemic for several years afterwards. The Turks took Constantinople in 1453, Negroponte in 1470 and made a landing on the heels of Italy in Otranto in 1480.

An age of national consciousness dawned in Europe with the discovery of new territories overseas. The institutionalised Church in terms of its doctrine, morals and administration was seen as a far-cry from the ideals of piety and love enshrined in the New Testament. Meanwhile, the egg of Reformation which was laid by Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam was soon to be hatched by Professor/Monsignor Martin Luther of Wittenberg in Germany. The seeds of renewal had been sown and the harvest of reformation was at hand.

The forgiveness of sins through Absolution and sale of indulgence was introduced by the Church, in the words of Martin Luther, when the Church was looking for money to build Cathedrals and golden statues. Certificates of forgiveness of sins were prepared in advance and issued to believers after confessing their sins and paying penance in cash or in kind, depending on status. After paying penance, absolution was then given. Martin Luther vigorously opposed the sale of indulgence, and blazed the trail of religious reformation in the early sixteenth century - by releasing his famous "Ninety-five Theses of objection and nailing it to the wall of Wittenberg University where he was Professor of Philosophy. He embarked on the crusade that became known as the Reformation or Protestantism, after exposing the abuse of indulgence and forgiveness of sins.

In those days, Priests (generally referred to as indulgence salesmen) used to travel itinerantly to public squares and parks to ring bells for people to come and confess their sins so they can obtain forgiveness. After confessing to the Priest, the "sinner" was fined an amount which he paid on the spot. A certificate of forgiveness signed by the Priest, was then given to him.

In 1517, Pope Leo X gave permission to the Archbishop of Mainz to allow the sale of indulgences (remission of sins) in his diocese. Officially, the proceeds of the sales were to go towards the rebuilding of St. Peter's in Rome, but also to be used to help the Archbishop pay his debts.

Before then people were already fed up with the menace of indulgence salesmen in other parts of Europe. Luther, who had previously only been pre-occupied with his arguments against the doctrine of trans-substantiation (the myth that the Priest can consecrate bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Jesus)

now had a more proximate pretext for launching the opprobrium against the Church hierarchy. Martin Luther decided to ridicule the sale of indulgence by summoning some hefty men to go before the indulgence salesmen to pay penance and obtain absolution for a sin they were about to commit. After paying for and obtaining the certificates of forgiveness, they proceeded to lay in ambush to rob the divine forgivers. In those days in Germany, offences were tried and judged instantly by magistrates.

As the carts carrying the Priests were returning to base, the "marauders" attacked, and robbed them of all the fines they collected for that day. For daring to rob holy Priests, the marauders were instantly apprehended and almost lynched by the populace. They were saved from the mob by policemen who immediately arraigned them before the magistrate. Of course, they admitted the offence but pleaded "Not Guilty". Asked to explain their plea in spite of their admission, they asked the magistrate, whether a Magistrate had the right to punish anyone for an offence already forgiven by God.

The Magistrate answered in the negative, but told them to explain whether God had forgiven them for the offence. Each of them brought out the Certificate of Forgiveness issued to them by the Priests. Without any further argument, the magistrate discharged and acquitted them. This clearly illustrates that penance and absolution marked the beginning of corruption in the institutionalized Church. Luther was convinced that the Priesthood, mysticism and academic theology summed up to man's attempt to use discipline, curiosity and speculation to shroud the true nature and character of God. The underlying mistake, according to Luther, was that man made his fellow man to believe that he could get them to God, or at least take them near enough to God to accept them. He concluded that the reverse was true. "Man created and sinful, was distant from God".

On the 31st of October, 1517, which was the eve of All Souls' day, Martin Luther, Professor of Biblical Studies at the University of Wittenberg in Germany, announced his disputation of indulgences, stating his argument in 95 theses, which he pinned to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg. It set Europe ablaze and within two weeks all universities and religious centres were agog with excitement.

He opposed the abuses and perversions of indulgences. Medieval people had very real dread of the period of punishment in purgatory as portrayed by the Church. The Church had taught people to believe that before reaching heaven, they had to be cleansed of every sin committed in mortal life. The Church also taught and many believed, that once penance was made a sacrament, an indulgence assured the shortening of the punishments to be endured after death in purgatory.

Luther saw the "holy trade" in indulgence as wholly unwarranted by the scriptures, reason or tradition. It encouraged a man in his sin as he had demonstrated before preparing his 95 theses.

The Pope claimed authority to shut the gates of hell and open the door to paradise. Luther had treaded on the exposed corn of the Church hierarchy and the everyday practice of Christianity. He was excommunicated by the Pope in 1520 and outlawed by Emperor Charles V in 1521, but he found support from his faith in God.

During the next twenty five years, he wrote books after books and translated the Bible for people to see for themselves the truth of his arguments. He appealed to the ordinary people by publishing an account of all his disputes with Rome, which multiplied his followership. When the Pope tried to curb Luther's move-

ment at the Diet of Speyers in 1529, some of the Princes of the German states stood up in "protest". That was how the movement found itself with the title of "Protestants". Having failed to reform the institutionalised Catholic Church from within, the movement branched off to become known as the Reformation.

Luther had split Christian Europe in two, giving rise to the Churches known as evangelicals or Protestants - having three strands; Lutherans in Germany and Scandinavia, Zwinglian and Calvinists in Switzerland, France, Holland and Scotland, and the Church of England. The Reformation was an attempt to liberate the gospel of Christ from the web of obscurities that Church theology had woven round it, and also to rid it of all the practices, customs and conventions that corrupted it.

The Reformers rejected the authority of the Pope, indulgences, the mediation of the Virgin Mary and the Saints, and all sacraments not instituted by Christ. They rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation (that is, the myth that the Priest can consecrate bread and wine to become the body and blood of Jesus Christ), the doctrine of the Mass as a sacrifice, purgatory and prayers for the dead, private confession of sins to a priest, celibacy of the clergy, holy water, shrines, chantries, wonder-working images, rosaries, pater nosta stones images and candles. They argued that there was no precedent in the early Church for the Priest as a mediator and more importantly, that there was nothing in the scriptures supporting the secular power of the clergy.

The Protestants soon began their own brand of institutionalisation when they realised after the Diet of Angsburg in 1530 that the Pope was going to wage total war on Protestantism. They formed themselves into a defensive alliance called the League of Schmalkald. After several abortive attempts to strike a compromise, the tragic Schmalkald war broke out in 1547, shortly after Luther's death in 1546. The Protestants were defeated and many of their leaders were imprisoned.

Maurice of Saxony however fought back successfully and by the treaty of Passau in 1552, Protestantism was legally recognised. By the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the Lutherans and the Calvinists won equal rights with the Catholics. Protestantism had a smooth ride in Switzerland but a bumpy drive in France.

At the end of the middle ages, the divisive effects of institutionalisation had splintered Christianity into the following sects; Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans, Zwinglians, Anabaptists, etc. The reform movement soon developed its own political commitment to independence in the imperialist countries of Europe at considerable cost in human lives. The Spanish Duke of Alva was responsible for the deaths of over 100,000 Protestants between 1567 and 1573.

The Protestants soon began to use political power to spread their doctrine. After being converted in 1536, King Christian of Denmark imposed Protestantism on his people. That was followed by a war between Norway and Denmark after which, the former was also forced to accept Protestantism. Following a revolt in Iceland which was ruthlessly suppressed, that country was also forced to accept Protestantism in 1540.

In England, King Henry VIII proclaimed himself, head of the Church of England, not for religious reasons but on account of the Pope's refusal to sanction his proposed divorce of Queen Catherine. It was Queen Elizabeth who finally established Protestantism in England during her long reign from 1558 to 1603. In Scotland, John Knox who studied under Calvin introduced Protestantism to Catholic Scotland. Mary Queen of Scot, a Catholic, stoutly opposed Knox, but she was defeated in battle and later beheaded in 1587, after which reformation was consolidated in Scotland.

The radicals

There were people who were not happy with the use of the fist to champion the word of God. It was time for Protestantism to have its own challenge from those who believed that it was possible to retain individual free will, while believing in God. It has been said that Martin Luther experienced more opposition from Radicals than from Catholics. Luther wanted a spiritual and moral reformation of the Church, but the Radicals were prepared to go further - to express their theology in terms of the political and revolutionary aspirations of the age.

The stance of the Radicals culminated, in spite of Luther's opposition, in the Peasants' revolt of 1525 in which 100,000 lives perished. Their brand of spiritual reformation marked a return to the injunctions of Christ in their dealing with people outside their fold. They would neither go to war, defend themselves against their persecutors, nor take part in coercion by the state. They also practiced mutual aid and re-distribution of wealth within their community. In Moravia, it was practiced as Christian communism. They re-baptised themselves which is why they were called Anabaptists. They distinguished Church from Society even where society claimed to be Christian. Paradoxically, there was an alliance between Protestants and Catholics to root out the Anabaptists in 1527, because they were considered to be a threat to the religious and social stability of Christian Europe.

They were persecuted during the next twenty five years - put to death by fire, in Catholic territories, and by drowning and the sword in Protestant regimes. Others were forced to recant. Even the pacific Anabaptists were to alter their tune as soon as they had a brush with political power. In 1534, some surviving Anabaptists came to power in Munster in Westphalia and this politicised wing of Anabaptism sanctioned the cohabitation between religion and politics, and freedom to participate in violence. It was Menno Simons who tried to restore the virtues of Anabaptism when he repudiated violence and advocated pacifism. That is how the 20th-century survivors of Anabaptism became known as Mennonites, although they have not been able to rediscover the radical discipleship and evangelical fervour that ignited their forefathers to be such unique actors in the drama of the Reformation.

The Attempts of the Church to reform itself

Attempts by liberal Popes to reform the Church in the 16th and 17th centuries were often resisted by those who had a vested interest in a corrupt Church. It is an irony of history that Pope John Paul I, Albino Luciani, "a fierce opponent of corruption", was murdered 33 days after his election on September 29, 1978, on the eve of announcing his revolutionary proposals for the reformation of the Church. If the conclusion of David Yallop in his book *In God's Name* is anything to go by, the Pope was said to have been murdered because, inter-alia, he had discovered during his brief papacy, "that a chain of corruption existed linking leading figures in financial, political, criminal and clerical circles round the world in a conspiracy".

Back to the 16th and 17th centuries, the attempts of liberal Popes like Clement VII (1523-34), Paul III (1534-49), and Paul VI (1555-59) at internal reformation of the Church were invariably frustrated on the political front. The Pope was the temporal ruler of Catholic States, which were often military and diplomatic rivals. The Emperor of Rome and the King of France were always competing for supremacy in Europe.

The most sincere reformer of them all was Pope Paul III. He appointed Reformers to the college of cardinals, set up a papal reform commission, and

convened the Ecumenical Council of Trent in 1545, to consider the commission's report. The Reform Commission submitted a very blunt report in 1537. The report confirmed that the papal office had become too secular, and that both Pope and Cardinals needed to give more attention to spiritual matters and stop flirting with the world. It recommended cleaning up in the following areas: bribery in high places, abuses of papal power, evasion of Church laws by both Clergy and Laity, laxity in monastic orders, abuse of indulgences and the high number of prostitutes operating in Rome itself.

Against opposition from older cardinals, Pope Paul III reformed the papal bureaucracy, ended the taking of money for spiritual favours, and forbade buying and selling of Church appointments. He was stopped on his track when the Protestants got hold of the Report and published it as evidence of the corrupt state of the Roman Church.

The Ecumenical Council of Trent turned out to be the most important between Nicea in 325 and Vatican II in 1962-65. As it turned out, Trent only reaffirmed the dogmas which provoked the Reformation. These were transubstantiation, justification by faith and works, medieval practice of Mass, the seven sacraments, celibacy of the clergy and the existence of Purgatory. The post of Indulgence seller was abolished, and the abuses connected with it were condemned, but Indulgences itself was reaffirmed. A curse was pronounced on anyone who disagreed with the Council's decisions, which further alienated the Protestants, many of whom came to agree with Luther on the irreformability of the Catholic Church.

To check the onslaught of protestantism, the Church introduced the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy office, which turned out to be the grandchild of the Spanish Inquisitions of the 13th and 15th centuries. It became known as the Roman Inquisition. Six cardinals were appointed as Inquisitors-General. One of them was Cardinal Caraffa, who was later appointed Pope, and he became the architect of the use of the Inquisition as a means of dealing with heretics by branding them as traitors against God. The Inquisition used terror and torture to procure confessions, and where they returned a verdict of death penalty, the victims were handed over to civil authorities for execution, since canon law forbade Churchmen to shed blood.

Another step taken by the Church to check the surge of protestantism was the periodic publication of an index of books, parts of books, authors, and printers, not fit for the eyes of faithfuls, - the so-called Tridentine Index. The first index of prohibitions was published by Pope Pius IV in 1584, banning three quarters of the books being published in Europe at the time. The only books allowed were Catholic devotional literature and the Latin Vulgate Bible. Pope Pius IV established the congregation of the Index to update the index periodically, a practice which was only finally abolished in 1966.

Correlation between Church Institutionalisation and strife

The reformation of Christianity set the stage for the religious wars which broke out in Europe following the failure of the Lutherans and the Catholics to reach a compromise at Regensburg in 1541. There were several wars in the 1540s and early 1550s until the peace at Augsburg in 1555, when it was agreed that each King or secular ruler could decide the faith of his subjects (whose the rule, his the religion).

In France there were more wars between the Huguenots (Calvinist Protestants) and the Roman Catholics from 1562 to 1598, often complicated by political issues. It was the Edict of Nantes in 1598 which drew up the religious map of

France, between the Huguenots and the Catholics. It was revoked by King Louis in 1685 when Protestants were subjected to a new wave of persecution. Thousands fled to Geneva, Germany, England and America.

The war of Independence in Holland between 1560 and 1618 had tremendous religious undertones, so was the civil war in England from 1642 to 1649.

The last of the religious wars of the 17th century was the thirty years war of 1618 to 1648. It started as a religious struggle with political undertones and ended as a political struggle with religious overtones, in Germany, when a Catholic Prince became King of Bohemia, which was then a Calvinist state. He was Ferdinand II, Emperor and King of Bohemia. His coronation brought religious conflict to a head. When anti-protestant violence broke out in 1618, the Bohemian nobles, mostly protestants, appealed to the Emperor for protection, and a guarantee of religious freedom. When they got no satisfaction, they rose in revolt. The Nobles declared King Ferdinand II deposed, and offered the crown to the Calvinist ruler of Palatinate, one of the major German states. His acceptance of the crown marked the beginning of the war between Calvinists and Catholics in Germany. Later, the German Lutherans, Danes, Swedes and even the French became involved. The war ended after 30 years with the peace of Westphalia, which re-drew the religious map of Germany.

In Russia, the struggle was between those who believed that the Church should minister to society from a position of poverty, independent of secular political authority, (Non-Possessors) and those who believed in the union of Church and state, with a rich Church supporting and being supported by the ruler (Possessors). The state supported the Possessors and persecuted the Non-Possessors. Following the doctrine of the Possessors, the Church became a wealthy land owner, owning up to one third of all property in Russia at the end of the 16th century.

The first Patriarch was appointed in Moscow in 1589 when Moscow declared itself the third Rome. There was a time, when Patriarch Filaret was the father of King Czar Michael. The King was completely dominated by his father, who sat side by side with him on the throne and was co-signing all state documents. The Patriarch called himself "the Great Sovereign". The post of Patriarch was abolished by Czar Alexis in 1721 and in his place, the Czar appointed a Procurator-General, to head the holy Synod. The Russian Orthodox Church became little more than a department of state, in which Priests taking confessions, were statutorily obliged to report all evidence of treason to the police. Those who could not go with that were called the Priestless group. It resulted in the Peasants Revolt of 1773-75 in which hundreds of thousands were killed.

The Peasant Revolt of 1792 in France was largely provoked by religious grievances, because people were dissatisfied with the secular powers of the Church. The French Revolution temporarily abolished the power of the papacy in France, compelled the clergy to swear allegiance to the state, enacted the law that Bishops and Priests were to be elected by the people, and reduced the number of bishops in France from 140 to 83. After beheading King Louis XVI on the 21st of January, 1793, the revolutionaries marched on Notre Dame Cathedral in November of the same year. Normalcy was only restored after Napoleon Bonaparte made a concordat of 1801, which restored the power of the Pope to appoint bishops, subject to the veto of the state. Napoleon also granted freedom of religion to French Protestants. Ironically, Pope Pius VII sat as a spectator when Napoleon crowned himself Emperor in 1804. In 1808, Napoleon conquered the Papal States, seized the Pope, deported him to Savona and finally exiled him to Fontainebleau, near Paris. He was not restored to the Vatican until 1814.

The Church added insult to injury when the dogma of Papal infallibility when speaking *ex cathedra* (i.e. on matters of faith and practice) was promulgated in July, 1870, by Pope Pius IX. After another twenty five years of struggle between the Church and the state, France passed the Association Law which led to the break between Church and state in 1905. Pope Pius X declared the law null and void and called on French Catholics to disobey it. The Pope's action was generally ignored.

In Italy the Law of Papal guarantees was passed in 1871 defining the rights of the Pope, fixing his annual remuneration and limiting his properties to the Vatican. Pope Pius the IX categorically rejected the law and went into exile in the Vatican until Mussolini concluded the Lateran Treaty in 1929.

The era of religious wars and persecution could not have done justice to Christ's teachings on piety of "Love your enemies, and do good to those who mistreat you, or render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." He had taught that it was blessed to be poor, and he lived that way.

The experience of the U.S. was remarkably different. The founding fathers of America were mainly religious refugees who were fleeing from persecution from Europe. They had experienced the adverse consequences of religious and secular political co-habitation and were looking for a new haven where the individual was free to make up his own mind on his relationship with God. They were moving to America at a time when John Locke in England and Voltaire in France were philosophizing that "God is to be adored and worshipped and not to be made the object of institutional religion. They saw the Church as a citadel of corruption and deceit". The American declaration of Rights was influenced by the Philosophy of Descartes. The declaration says:

"We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created

- equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are; life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness...

Perhaps one of the factors responsible for the success story of the United States, is the wisdom of the founding fathers in distancing religion from secular authority. The first amendment to the American Constitution in 1791 proclaimed neutrality in religion, freedom of speech and right of assembly. It barred Congress from making laws on religion and rejected religious tests for holders of public office.

In spite of all that, religious zealots tried their utmost to drag religion into governance behind the facade of native Americanism. For instance, in 1830, the American Bible Society urged Protestants of all stripes and strands to join forces against Catholic influence in the West. At the same time, Christians from all parts of the United States began to use the Bible to attack or defend slavery. When Southern Methodists later discovered that their Northern counterparts were advocating the abolition of slavery, they (Southern Methodists) declared themselves independent. That was in 1845, the same year that the Southern Baptist Convention was held.

After 1860, ministers in both North and South, encouraged their young men to serve in their respective armies. Both Confederates and Republicans prayed for victory in the civil war. Julia Ward Howe wrote the battle hymn of the Republicans in 1861 to explain that "God was trampling out a vintage where grapes of wrath were stored and that God's truth (the Northern Cause) was matching on". The confederates answered with a prayer to the same God: "Lay thou their legions low, roll back the ruthless foe. Let the proud spoiler know that God is on our side".

Even the surrender of the Southern Armies did not bring reconciliation between the Churches in the north and the south. After the civil war, Southern Christians failed to admit the wrongs of slavery. The freed slaves became Methodists and Baptists because they were freer to express their emotions in those denominations.

About fifty years ago, the Pope designated the year 1950 as the "Holy Year" and "the year of the great return" (of Protestants home to roost in Catholicism). In 1991, it is only modest to suggest that the cleavage between them has widened because there are thousands more Christian denominations today than there were in 1950.

In September 1897, ambitions ran riot and a World's Parliament of Religions was convened. Events have since demonstrated that it is utopian enough to talk of "Christian Unity" let alone, "Religious Unity". Twenty years later, there was a world war, which was followed by a second world war after another two decades. Under the title of "What Religion has done for Mankind", the Watchtower Bible and Tracts Society observed in 1951, that "The rupture of peace and harmony began, not in the so-called 'heathendom', but in Christendom, where all are supposed to be Christian brothers, who show that they follow Christ, because they love one another and lay down their lives for one another, not to kill one another. Catholic and Protestant Clergymen ignored the rule laid down by Christ, when he said - 'I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves'. Contrary to this injunction, these sectarian leaders, remained patriotically divided on national and Ideo-political issues of the time (during the two world wars) and prayed to this one and the same Christ to bless and prosper the death-dealing weapons of whichever side they were on".

The book went on to conclude that "More than Ideo-political beliefs, religion is a divisive force, ... because it is itself divided. Religious intolerance has been a curse to mankind. It is still rife today and threatens to do more damage than it has already wrought throughout the centuries. So divisive is religion that the United Nations Assembly ... cannot open its sessions with a united prayer to a common deity".

One is tempted to agree with these broad generalisations, except that they fail to draw a distinction between the generic and objective meaning of "religion" (belief in the existence of a supernatural ruling power - the creator and controller of the universe, who has given to man a spiritual nature, which continues to live after the death of the body) and institutionalised religions by which men have created their own "institutional gods to replace the God of all creation. That is what happened when Esu (devil) capitalised on the selfishness of man to turn him against his creator.

Institutionalisation of Islam

The crisis of religious chauvinism did not end with Christianity, although the two younger religions were one step ahead of their elder brethren Judaism, in terms of diversity. Christianity and Islam were not construed as the exclusive religion of one part of a single nation - barring the Gentiles.

The founder of Islam was born at Mecca in A.D. 570 with the name of Kutam, the son of Abdallah, but before his call to religious missionary, he came to be named Ahmad or Muhammad, meaning "the Praised One". He belonged to the Hashim family which claimed lineal descent from Ishma'el, Abraham's son by

Hagar, the Egyptian slave girl of Abraham's wife Sarah. Except that Muhammad was a caravan conductor, little is known of his early life until he married his employer, Khadijah, a wealthy widow fifteen years his senior. He had seven children by her. He periodically sought solitude for meditation.

The 14th and 15th Quranic commentaries dramatise the demise of the Greeks, the Romans, the Persians, the Indians and the Chinese and how "God chose to give pagan Arabia a light that was to spread to all directions of the globe especially in Asia, Europe and Africa, and made the Arabs, the leading nation of culture, science, business, law and arts". Commentary 16 refers to the Birth of Prophet Muhammad whilst 17 starts off on its divisive trail by proclaiming that "others before him had been born in darkness, beyond the reach of history, and others it pleased God to send as messengers preaching and working in the twilight of history in which men fashioned legends far removed from reality". "In came Muhammad in the fullest blaze of history as a man of faith who never broke his words. He was to be the voice of unity to speak and declare to the people without the appurtenances of priests or priest-craft, without miracles and mysteries, the Unity of God and the Brotherhood of man".

Commentary 46 demonstrates how "the Jews failed time and again spiritually, to live up to God's expectation", how they rebelled against Moses and how they slew their prophets, rejected the signs, falsified the scriptures and turned their backs on righteousness; that was why God decided to illuminate Arabia in order to reform the world. That was why Abraham and Ishma'el, both Muslims, built the house of God in Mecca, as a centre of worship for all the world". How did all these high hopes materialise in the face of institutionalised Islam? The first note of discord was struck in Sura II Verse 145 which enjoins "Muslims not to accept the Judaeo-Christian Qibla since they will not accept the Muslim Qibla". The Qibla is the direction to which Muslims turn at prayer - the Holy Mosque in Mecca. The Judaeo-Christian Qibla is said to be Jerusalem. Muslims were soon required to physically "fight in defence of God because mayhem was proclaimed" to be permissible in self-defence ... to restore peace and freedom for worship".

According to Stephen Neil in his Essay on "God in other Religions", Muhammad began his Ministry at the age of 40 years. He was a man of infinite patience. He preached for thirteen years in Mecca without making any significant impact in terms of converts. As an individual, he never claimed to have found a religion. He merely said that he was bringing back the ancient faith of Abraham, the oldest prophet. He did not claim to have written the Quran because He received it from God or as some traditions say, through the mediation of Arch-ANGEL Gabriel. It is said to be the utterance and the very voice of God in the Arabic language. Thus, the Muslims claim for the Quran what Jews and Christians have never claimed for the Bible. Muslims often question, how can the Bible be the word of God when it claims to have human elements in it? According to Stephen Neil, "there are 99 beautiful names of God in the Quran but "God is Love" is not among them", because love implies relatedness and God is too highly exalted to enter into any kind of relationship. God is referred to as the compassionate, the merciful. But this mercy is limited to believers. Nothing awaits the unbelievers except to be cast into hell on the day of judgement.

Genesis of institutionalisation

Right from the outset, Islam was institutionalized for socio-political and religious objectives. Islam however has always seen itself as a total way of life, where politics and religion are inseparable. According to Allama Sir Abdullah al-

Mamun al-Suhrawardy at pages 3 to 4 of his book on the sayings of Muhammad, "Islam made its debut at a time when "Arabia ... was in a state of religious chaos and political dissolution ... Almost all the population of Arabia worshipped idols, stars, stones and fetishes. The idolatry of his people, their immorality and the terrible treatment of the poor and the weak set Muhammad's mind and soul aflame with intense horror and righteous disgust ... Muhammad and the other leading members of his clan Bani Hashim and their relations Bani Al-Muttalib and the Leaders of the clans of Bani Zurra and Bani Taym formed themselves into a league pledged to defend the weak and champion the oppressed, freemen and slaves alike, and to vindicate their rights against tyranny and aggression". This league known as HILF AL-Fudhood exercised such efficient protection that for a long time, the mere threat of its intervention was sufficient to repress lawlessness and afford redress to the helpless. "Muhammad was very proud of his membership of this chivalrous league and used to say, I would not have the riches of the earth in exchange for my membership of it".

According to Myrtle S. Langley at page 53 of his book of Beliefs, at the request of the citizens of Yathrib, renamed Medina in his honour, (Medinat alnabi-city of the Prophet), the Prophet left Mecca for Medina (the celebrated hijra, the event from which the Muslim Calender begins). "Over the next few years, Muhammad organised his followers and the citizens of Medina as a religious and political community and began to attack the trade caravans from Mecca". Meanwhile, he had expelled most of the Jewish tribes, whom he had hoped to win, and gradually incorporated the Bedouin tribes of Western and Central Arabia into the Muslim community.

"The Mass of Pagan Arabs in Mecca and elsewhere ... was utterly destroyed by the conquest of Mecca. The first armed conflict between the Quraish in Mecca and the Muslims took place at Badar in Ramadhan, in which the Muslims were victorious. The Trench (Khandaq) dug round Medina on the Prophet's orders protected the city when the infidels from Mecca besieged Medina with 10,000 troops. The Prophet was himself wounded at the battle of Uhud and he was nursed by his daughter Famina. The abortive siege of Medina was the last and dying effort of the military alliance comprising Meccans, the central Arabian Bedouins, discontented Jews and the Hypocrites. Thereafter the initiative lay with the forces of Islam".

Page 9 of the sayings of Muhammad by Suhrawardy clearly suggests that the Ka'ba or Qu'bla, was originally used by the Quraish as a holy shrine for worshipping their idols. Following the prophet's denunciation of the idolatry of his people, he would have been killed by the Quraish if they had not been deterred by the fear of blood vengeance from his powerful clan, the Bani Hashim. In 630 A.D., he massed an attack against Mecca, which finally surrendered. He subsequently began to eliminate the polytheists and re-dedicated the ancient sanctuary of the Ka'aba to Allah, making it the central shrine of pilgrimage for Muslims, which it remains to the present day.

He spent the next two years consolidating the tribes of Arabia. Historically, before the dawn of the Muslim era, Mecca was already a city of pilgrimage for those who came there to worship the black meteorite stone in its K'aba or cubical receptacle. According to Chapter 22 of What Religion Has Done for Mankind - pp. 282/283. "Against the worship of this K'aba stone Muhammad had once preached, but after the Muslim conquest of Mecca, he compromised to make it a part of the Islamic religious doctrine, so that one of the duties laid on each Muslim was to make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca during his life time and do religious acts toward the stone, including kissing it seven times.

"From being a persecuted preacher exiled to Medina, Muhammad rose to political power in the last few years before he died at the age of 63. He was the Head of the state of Medina, and his mode of governance - as an Islamic State - is a model to which Muslim statesmen aspire to this day.

Nonetheless his mission was unique in the sense that Islam recognises the individuality of man in the service of the one and only invisible, eternal, indivisible, beneficent, Almighty, All-knowing, Omnipresent, Just, Merciful, Loving and Forgiving God. Islam does not believe that any priest, pastor or saint can intervene or mediate between the individual worshipper and his creator, nor can anyone grant indulgence or absolution from sins. Each soul must work out its own salvation. The Muslims blame the Jews for rejecting the message of Christ, and also blame the Christians for deifying Christ. Muhammad did not preach that salvation is only reserved for Muslims. Anyone; Jew, Christian or Sabian who "believes in God and the last day and does good to others shall find his recompense with God".

The Prophet died in 632 A.D. without naming a successor. He was however succeeded by a series of Caliphs (successors) the first two being Abu Bakr and Umar. During the tenure of Umar as Caliph, the frontiers of the Islamic world expanded by geometric progression. He led military conquests in Persia and laid siege on Damascus. He also negotiated terms for the Muslim occupation of Jerusalem. Umar was eventually stabbed to death by a non-Muslim. Forty years after his death, the mosque called "The Dome of rock" was built in Jerusalem on the site of the Jewish Temple and nicknamed "The Mosque of Umar".

"It should be recalled that after the death of Muhammad, the revelations which had been received by him were put together from oral and written sources to form the Quran, which means recitation. That was at about 650 A.D. under Uthman, the third Caliph.

Haddith (tradition) is the record of the life and activities of Muhammad and the early Muslim communities. It contains the Sunnah (example) of the prophet, and sets the standards which all Muslims should follow. The Quran and the Sunnah combined to form the Shari'a (law), a comprehensive guide to life and conduct in Muslim communities.

Although Muhammad had said "Henceforth the vengeance of blood is forbidden and all blood feuds abolished commencing with the murder of my cousin Ibn Rabi'a a son of Al-Harith, son of Abdul-Muttalib", the institutionalised Muslim religion proceeded to have a Muslim Army that spread Islam by conquest. In fact, Islamic commentators believe that the hey-day of Islam began with "the Muslim victory at the battle of Madain in 637 A.D. when the great and glorious Persian Monarchy, full of pride and ambition, came to an ignominious end and a new chapter opened for Persia under the banner of Islam". When Ali-Al-Murtada became the fourth Caliph, Muslim missionaries and soldiers spread into Asia, North Africa and eventually Spain. All was assassinated during the holy month of Ramadan on a Friday during prayers. The Muslim Empire was still spreading. Ideally, Islam clearly demonstrates how politics and religion can sustain a happy matrimony. Nonetheless, the basic problem which arises from any intercourse between religion and politics is according to Suhrawardy, that:...

"It is a recognised fact of history that in the Dark ages of the crusades, truth was constantly perverted for the sake of political ends" and hoped that his "little book (The sayings of Muhammad) will be an ambassador of goodwill and understanding between Muslims and Christians".

Thereafter, "the Roman Empire itself began to shrink by losing territory ... to the new Muslim Power. Between 635 and 642 A.D. the Roman Empire that lost several

of the provinces nearest to Arabia to the Muslim Empire ... which continued to spread on in Asia Minor to the North and Egypt to the South. Constantinople eventually surrendered to the Muslim Army" in 1453.

Institutionalised Islam was however to have its own dose of schism. After Ali, the Muslims began to split - some calling themselves Sunni, after the Sunnah, that is, those who follow the prophet's way of life. They began to advocate that any good Muslim who was respected by the community and having demonstrable leadership qualities, could be chosen as Caliph.

A second group close to Ali, or Shi'at-Ali or Shi'i, felt that the Caliph's role was to continue the revelations from Allah, and so, should be a blood relative of the Prophet, descended through Ali. Caliph Ali married Muhammad's daughter, Fatimah, and they had two sons; Hassan and Hussein.

Although, the Shi'ite Muslims constitute only about 10% of world Muslims, they are in turn divided into three sub-groupings; the Zaidis of the Yemen, the 12 Imam Shi'ites who dominate in Iran and who believe that the line ended with the 12th Imam, and the seven-Imam Shi'ites or Ismailis of India and East Africa, the followers of Aga Khan and who believe that the line ended with the seventh Imam.

The basic difference between them is that the Shi'ite Muslims do not believe in the principle of consensus (Ijma) or majority decision. Their leading theologians called Mujtahids are regarded as spokesmen of "the hidden Imam"; and exercise extensive authority in religious, legal, and political matters - the Mullahs and Ayatollahs of contemporary Iran, who claim to have descended from Ali.

The Mujtahids discount the opinions of early Muslim lawyers and prefer to go back directly to the basic principles contained in the Quran, Sunna (the prophet's way of life), and Hadith (which refers to what the prophet said or is reported to have said), which underscores their fundamentalism.

The struggle for leadership is always very hot among Muslim communities, because, Islam being a way of private and public life, gives the Caliph tremendous authority over all aspects of material and spiritual life.

Jamhat Ahmadiyya (Ahmadis)

The Ahmadiyya movement in Islam is another Muslim Sect led by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad. It is said to have ten million followers throughout the world. It is relevant at this stage to draw attention to the position of the movement on the celebrated Salman Rushdie Saga. It will be remembered that Salman Rushdie wrote a book titled, "The Satanic Verses as a result of which he was accused of apostasy by the late Ayatollah Khomeini, the spiritual leader of Iran, who passed an open death sentence on the author. The position of the Ahmadiyya movement is reflected in the following excerpts culled from Caliph Ahmad's book titled *Murder in the name of God*. The author's attention was drawn to it by a Min-Cab driver who drove him one morning in London. The book is said to be "the first translation into English of *Mazhab Ke Nam Per Khoon*" being "a reaffirmation of the basic tenets of Islam"

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad argues "that religion is often blamed for what are actually political struggles though religion has little to do with them. He asserts that Islam has been abused by fanatics and made an excuse for violence and the spread of terror. It is a powerful force that leaders cynically exploit for their own political ends".

He then went on to "call on Muslims to reject terrorism and return to the true meaning of Islam, peace and submission to the will of God ... He proves beyond doubt that the Prophet Muhammad only fought in self-defence and against

unbearable oppression. True Muslims are ashamed when leaders preach violence in the prophet's name under the banner of religious militancy.

On the death sentence passed on Salman Rushdie, he concluded:

The punishment for apostasy lies in the hands of God Almighty against whom the offence has been committed. The Caliph lumps the Ayatollah together with Joseph Stalin and Adolph Hitler as totalitarians.

At this point, it will be recalled that the author of this book started his elementary education at the Ahmadiyya Muslim School in Benin City, Edo State of Nigeria in January, 1941.

However, since history is not famous for exactitude, it often happens that what the Quran says is one thing, but what institutionalised practitioners do, is another. For instance, (Sura) verses 30-46 refers to the meekness of Abel when Cain threatened to murder him. He said, "If thou dost stretch thy hand against me, to slay me, it is not for me to stretch my hand against thee to slay thee". Joseph forgave his brothers who sold him into slavery. At the same time, (Sura) verses XXIII: 93-118, enjoins Muslims "to eschew evil, but not to pay back evil with its own coins however great the temptation". Also that the brotherhood of Truth is one in all ages. "It is the narrow man that creates sects". The Quran says in (Sura) verses X: 19, that God created mankind as one nation".

In practice, the institutionalization of Islam has introduced its own brand of exclusionary approach to faith. They began by condemning the children of Israel for rejecting faith (Sura) verse: 81) and for befriending unbelievers (SURA V:83). Sura IX: 30 condemns Jews for calling Uzair the son of God and also Christians for calling Jesus the son of God. SURA IV: 155 accuses both religions of blasphemy and of incurring divine displeasure.

On the other hand, SURA IX: 5 authorises Muslims to fight and slay Pagans outside the forbidden months, unless they repent in Islam. Literally, that is a prescription for coercive conversion and mayhem. SURA IX: 43-72 forbids Muslims from having anything to do with hypocrites because they are a burden whether or not they join Muslims.

There is a whole medley of don'ts for Muslims because "only Islam upholds the law of Moses":

1. To fight and die in defence of God (SURA Vs: 242).
2. Not to associate with those outside their ranks or those who are not Muslims, (SURA III: 89-118) because they will not fail to corrupt you.
3. Seize and slay renegades who turn against the faiths (SURA IV: 89) as well as spies and double dealers. Muslims should keep together in brotherhood with muslims (Sura IV:71-91).
4. Fight unbelievers because they are enemies in the cause of God - Seize them and slay them wherever ye get them (SURA IV: Vs 91).
5. Unbelievers are open enemies (SURA IV: Vs.101).
6. You can take property from the enemy, provided you give a share of it to the needy (Hadith).
7. Exile is righteous in the sight of God (SURA X: Vs. 20).
8. Do not turn to the enemies of God for friendship (SURA LVIII: Vs. 14) nor seek any Vs. protection from them (SURA LX: Vs. 1).
9. There should be no marriage between believers and unbelievers. Better to marry a believing slave than a faithless woman.
10. According to the Hadith, a Muslim need not obey a ruler who does not obey Allah.

Since most of these injunctions are subject to human decisions, the questions which arise are:

- a. who decides when it is appropriate for an individual or a community to fight and die in defence of God?
- b. who declares a fellow man as a pagan, renegade, enemy of God, an unbeliever, or when a ruler disobeys God?

These are decisions that must of necessity be the products of value judgement, which is relative, subjective and hence divisive. It also enables Non-Muslims to understand the reactions of Muslims in some parts of the world to national and international issues. This is in spite of the fact that commentary 200 to Sura XXXVIII, clearly states that "self glory" separatism, envy and suspicion are among the roots of evil. Commentary 241 to Sura LXII states that: "God's care for His creatures is universal and His revelation is for all".

Epilogue on Institutionalised religion

The chequered experience of Institutionalised religion and in its cohabitation with politics, sowed the seeds of doubts through the rationalists in the 17th century. The seeds were nurtured by the sceptics and deists of the 18th century, and it began to flower in the 19th century. Eventually, Science, Philosophy and History were all called upon to show that institutionalised religion had no leg to stand on.

It demonstrated that religion is the prerogative of the individual will. The history of religion during the last 2000 years, has clearly demonstrated that man institutionalized religion not for the purpose of strengthening faith, but for the sole purpose of wielding socio-political and economic power. On the other hand, Government is not particularly famous, as an efficient manager of human affairs. That is why it has often and always come out with a black eye in its flirtations with religion, because the bureaucratic command syndrome in human governance will invariably adversely affect Institutionalised religion.

Moreover, man has a strong tendency to define freedom superficially, in terms of the removal of proximate ecological constraints, without conceptualizing where the ultimate autonomy will lead him. History has all too often demonstrated that the autonomy incubated by licentiate freedom, brings out the worst excesses of human selfishness, leading to abuse of authority and corruption. That is because freedom is an intoxicative wine which can produce some very painful hang-overs.

Freedom as a concept was based on the value judgement of mankind, which is very subjective. Man has always wanted his own way since he was taken over by the free-wheeling influence of Esu, biblically referred to as Satan or Devil. That was when man moved to create his own God in the image of his own likeness, the kind of supreme authority he wants to see as his hero - a celestial supreme judge surrounded by stern regulations, despotic discipline and inescapable punishment for all transgressions. Since such a god was the embodiment of subjective human values, it was inevitable that every man became free to take his own pick in the ethical supermarket of existence. Is it surprising therefore that more than half of the population of this world have metamorphosed in the last three thousand years, from polytheism to monotheism, and then to syncretism (mixed religion) ending up with the total rejection of deism by seeking solace in atheism? The remaining half is divided between over 22,000 different denominations each having its own concept of God.

Orunmila's revelation of the primordial proclamation of Esu (Devil) on his determination to pollute the creatures of God with evil, was re-echoed by Jesus Christ when he forewarned his apostles that "Satan the enemy would sow weeds (servants of the Devil) among the wheat (children of God) particularly after

the twelve apostles shall have fallen asleep in death". *Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43.*

The God of all creation and existence only created a good earth, but man has made it an evil world. If ours were a perfect world and we were perfect human beings, there would have been no need for religion. Unfortunately, our world and our lives are fractured by greed, lust, cruelty and selfishness.

It is now abundantly clear that all the strifes, wars, persecutions discord and schisms that man has gone through, are the products of institutionalized religion and not caused by religion itself, which is *prima facie* a unifying glue. That is because the god created by the insitutional man as against the God who created all the good things of existence, has always been anthropomophic (presumed to have a human personality). The qualities which the creators of that god liked most, they transferred *mutatis mutandis* to him. That god has to be placated, eulogised and flattered to avoid his wrath. Orunmila says that the Almighty Creator of all existence has no taste for the draconian punishment that man has associated with his own brand of god.

Without the perversions of institutional dogma, man is aware of the self evident existence of God, and that he does not need man to use brute force, political and military power - all instrumentalities of Esu (Devil) - fight for, or defend, Him.

The undoing of institutionalized religion is its flirtation with secular governance, on whose wings it rides to enforce its will on the individual. Unfortunately man still does not realise that government is not just a part of human problem, it is actually the cause of it. That is why secular authorities masquerading as divine, become deaf to the necessity of criticism and scepticism, in a "do-what-we-say-or-else" syndrome.

The three monotheistic religions examined in this long chapter, have tried to make it a beter world, but the only mistake common to the three of them is the assumption that God created the devil to be free to tempt humanity or by presuming that God created man as a medium for testing the comparative strength of good and evil.

The God of all creation and existence is so god that He does not have a stomach for evil. Man has assumed that flattering God with all kinds of high-faluting encomiums and praying round the clock, day in and day out, approximate to the most superlative worship of Him. Far from it.

Voltaire, the French philosopher of the 17th century, puzzled by what man was doing in God's name, adduced that God is to be adored and served - and not to be made the object of institutionalised religion. G. E. Lessing, another philosopher of the 18th century, argued that the truth of God cannot be settled by appeals to religious history, because all religions are relative. He said that religion was analogous to the story of a man who had one ring, which gave him the gift of being loved simultaneously by God and man. He had three sons, whom he equally loved. To resolve the dilemma of which son should have the ring on his death, he had two exact replicas of the ring made. The three sons quarelled as to who had the authentic ring. A wise judge told them each to behave as if he had the true ring. Their behaviour would show which one had the gift of being loved by God and man.

The three sons represent Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the same way, we cannot prove that two and two make four by appealing to history, because history does not produce the same kind of truth as mathematics. That is why religion should not base truth on historical events alone, because history might at best embody truths, but does not provide the basis of truth.

Moreover, history, far from being absolute and objective, is actually subjective because it can become the victim of several extraneous factors in the laboratory

of the human mind. To illustrate the unreliability of history in presenting facts, it is necessary to go back to the new Testament to demonstrate how gospel reporters slanted the report of one of the miracles performed by Jesus Christ on the withering of the fig tree.

Marks's gospel reports in Chapter 11 Verses 12-14 and 20-22 that Jesus went to Jerusalem, entered the Temple and thereafter returned to Bethany. He was hungry, and seeing a fig tree in the distance, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs, Jesus said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again". When they were returning the next morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. Peter asked Jesus - "Master, Look! The fig tree which you cursed has withered". And Jesus answered them "Have faith in God".

Mathew changes the story slightly in chapter 21, Verses 18-21 by reporting thus: In the morning, as Jesus was returning to the city, he was hungry and seeing a fig tree by the way-side, he went to it and found nothing on it but leaves only. And he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again". And the fig tree withered at once. When the disciples saw it, they marvelled saying "How did the fig tree wither at once? And Jesus answered them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith, and never doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree...

Many early Christians held this to be a somewhat unreasonable miracle, because the fig tree apparently committed no offence for which it could be punished so harshly. Luke apparently shared this view because his gospel contains no such miracle. Instead, he substitutes a parable in chapter 13 Verses 6 to 9.

"A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruits on it, and found none. And he said to the vine-dresser, "Lo, these three years have I come seeking fruit on this tree, and I find none. Cut it down". And the vine-dresser answered him, "Leave it alone, Sir, for this year too, till I dig about it and put manure. And if it bears fruits next year, well and good; if not, you can cut it down".

Although the miracle/parable was said to have predicted the demise of Jerusalem, the differing accounts tempts one to ask, what can be truly believed about these stories.

A more spectacular enigma variation is to be seen in the first two chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke on how the virgin birth of Jesus was revealed and what happened immediately after his birth. Apart from these two gospels, there is no direct reference to the virgin birth anywhere else in the New Testament.

The reference to these two incidents is not designed to cast aspersion on the credibility of the events but to focus the co-efficient of pollution between the human mind and history. Immanuel Kant rounded it up by putting it more succinctly that with the dawn of the age of enlightenment - when man thought he had come of age - he decided to cast aside all authorities outside himself, by bringing everything to the bar of his own reason.

On the other hand, Orunmila has taught that the truth of God is beyond all arguments because it is verified by the truth of all existence. He then goes to proclaim that the only way man can express his gratitude for the bounties of God is by dutifully playing his part as a tiny cell in the corporeal existence of God. Man's only duty is to return the love of God by loving Him. When you love God, you do the things that will please Him, which are: to love your fellowmen, by doing nothing to harm them, by not denying them their fair dues and rights, by living according to good sense, tolerance and harmony, and by not avenging wrongs done to you.

Upon reflection, it is easy to imagine, what a better world it would have been for everybody and to the joy and happiness of God, if men in positions of authority dealt fairly with their fellow men, without depriving them of their legitimate entitlements on grounds of religion, race, birth, colour, fraternity and by assisting fellowmen in moments of need, telling them the simple truth always, by not demanding or expecting gratifications for doing their duties; by not treating them less favourably than their own blood relations, friends and associates, and by dealing with them as children of the same parent (God). If man was able to behave in the foregoing manner, he would be putting Esu (devil) to shame and God would be happy with man. Before concluding this chapter, the writer would like to draw attention to three popular Islamic dicta (hadith):

Whoever relieves a fellow human being from grief in this world, God will relieve him from grief on the day of judgement.

Anyone who has no mercy on juniors and respect for seniors is not a believer in God.

None of you is a true believer in God until and unless he loves for his fellow man what he loves for his own self".

These are all summed up in the biblical golden rule - Love your neighbour as you love yourself. I am the Lord. (Leviticus 19:18). This goes to demonstrate that the three religions are prone to looking at different sides of the same coin.

To reduce the margin of friction, it is a cliché to emphasize the areas of common ground between the three religions. Instead of being polarised on opposite sides of the base of Mount Ararat or Mount Sinai, it is necessary in the interest of this generation and of posterity for them to construct ladders to take them up to the apex of any of these mountains, so that together, they can look below at existing and potential areas of common interest and understanding in the name of the one and only God, the Father of us all.

From the top of the mountain, they are sure to see clearly below that all three of them have the same canons of faith viz:

- (1) Belief in one God or the confession of faith (Shahada)
- (2) Prayer - (Salat) not minding the form;
- (3) Fasting - (Ramadan) irrespective of frequency and duration;
- (4) Alms giving or charity (Zakat)
- (5) Hajj or Pilgrimage to Mecca or Jerusalem.

Besides, of the known Prophets named in the Bible and the Quran, there is only difference in language between the Judaeo-Christians on the one hand, and Muslims, on the other, as may be surmised from the following:

Judaeo-Christian	Muslim
Adam	Idris
Noah	Nuh
Abraham	Ibrahim
Ishmael	Ismail
Isaac	Ishaq
Lot	Lut
Jacob	Yaqub
Joseph	Yusuf
Job	Ayyub
Moses	Musa
Aaron	Harun
Ezekiel	Dhulkifi
David	Dawood
Solomon	Sulaiman

Elijah	Ilias
Elisha	Al-gesu
Jonah	Yunus
Zechariah	Zekerlyya
John	Yahya
Jesus	Isa
Mohammed	Muhammad

They all believe in eternal life after death which Muslims call Akhirah, as well as in the final day of judgement (Yamwuddin in Islam).

They all believe in spirits which the Muslims call Jinn which Islam teaches were created from fire. They also believe in the exemplary holiness of Angels which the Muslims call Nur, created from light, as well as in Death called Izrail by Muslims. They are all at one in accepting the dictum that man was created from clay. The only differences in emphasis and dogma are the web of conventions woven around the facts because in the words of a Muslim theologian, "Compilers have changed God's words either deliberately or accidentally."

It is time man realised that he is only a bird of passage, here today and gone tomorrow. Man should recognise the immutable fact that he does not, and can never, have a free-hold on this planet. All that he can strive to have is a partial repair lease.

This chapter has clearly demonstrated that Esu has truly been using the instrumentality of organised religion to frustrate God's intentions at creation. God created man in his own image to be perfect and good, but what a demon (Esu (devil) has turned him out to be under cover of organised religion. On its part institutionalised religion has deified man's idealised consciousness, his aspirations for ideal values, and cosmic consciousness as man's god.

Organised religion may be credited with a contribution to enlightenment and scientific progress, but these are outweighed by its psychological enslavement of man. Organized religion has become so divisive that according to Emil Brunner, "the God of the other religion is regarded as an idol".

By stressing the beauty and benevolence of the world as God-manifesting, we should not also be blind to the destructiveness and the evil aspects of life on earth, which are devil-manifesting. That is why L.H. Gruenbaum concluded that "the world is so dreadful, so bloodstained and full of misery that it might just as well have been planned and created by Satan instead of God."

The truth is that man is helpless in a world virtually ruled by evil and no one should blame God for it. Esu is merely carrying out his proclamation at creation that through bereft of creative power, he would nonetheless mutilate and turn to his servant, any being created by God. What other opportunity could he have got short of exploiting the narcissism of man through the instrumentality of organized religion?

References on Chapter 9

The author is grateful to acknowledge the fact that in compiling Chapter 9, he culled elaborate excerpts from the following books:-

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The greatest thinkers by Edward de Bono.

Chapter 10

IFA AS A WAY OF LIFE

The Art of divination according to Orunmila

Divination has been defined as the art of telling the future and the unknown by non-rational or metaphysical methods, intuitive prevision, or augury. There are several methods of divination which can be done by astrological means and by prediction through star gazing. It can also be done through palm or face reading. Other methods include the use of sand or water and crystal balls. In sorcery a witch doctor is able to tell the future of someone by reading the person's vibrations. Some diviners use appropriate herbs to rub the faces of ordinary persons to make it possible for them to fore-tell the future of others. Other doctors use medicinal preparations for prospective seers to swallow, thus making it possible for such persons through extra-perceptual vision to tell the future of other people.

Orunmila however, has proclaimed that any Ifa Priest who uses extra-perceptual vision to interpret his revelations or to supplement his theophysical knowledge of Ifism with extra-curricular visionary powers, will court the risk of running into difficulties such as blindness, permanent deformities, or premature death. That is because, extra-visionary powers belong to the elders of the night, and to use them unauthorisedly involves spying on the night without being a witch. A witch doctor who is also an Ifa Priest might use such powers and get away with it provided he does not transgress the rules of the Night. Any non-initiate into the cult of witchcraft, no matter how diabolically strong he may be, as an Ifa Priest or as a diviner, runs the risk of blindness, if he uses extra-perceptual power of divination without being a witch. In fact, he runs the risk of losing his life if he is not strong enough to protect himself against the inevitable onslaught of the Night, as soon as his spying is discovered.

Possession

Orunmila is the only divinity that can be invoked to advise without being possessed. That is mainly because he was first and foremost, the wisdom divinity of the divinosphere from the beginning of existence. The second reason is that he was the last of the divinities to return on his own free-will to heaven. He did not die like the others did, but merely climbed the tree of life to lapse into eternity. For the other divinities, they can only truly divine by taking over the ordinary senses of their servants or priests, and talking to people through them. When the ordinary divine priest is possessed, he or she can foretell past, present, and future events in the usual way, because the person is no longer in charge of his or her senses. As soon as the Priest is de-possessed, he or she cannot remember a word of what he or she said under the spell of divine possession. The most common divinities known to West Africa who divine by possession are Ogun, Sango, Osun, Osanyin, Obalifon, Obaluwaye, Ake, Irewe, Ovia or Osa, Okhualhe, Olokun, Oya, Eziza or Ajija, and so on. In addition to involuntary possession, the divinity is usually invoked by beating drums or gongs or maracas, or an ensemble of all the three musical instruments. As soon as the instrumental music, sometimes accompanied by vocal music, builds up to crescendo, the allegro comes when

the priest gets possessed and gives thanks to God for creating the divinity that ordained him or her as a priest and for creating the earth on which he or she stands. Divination then begins.

On the other hand, Orunmila does not permit the use of any of the above-mentioned methods of divination by his followers. Orunmila says that divination should not be made to look like magic. He only recommends the use of Ifa symbols for divination through the 256 Ifa ODUS. The only similarity, between Ifism and astrology is that just as astrologers use the stars appearing at divination to predict the future, an Ifa Priest uses the particular ODU appearing at divination to interpret past, present, and future occurrences.

Ifa art of Divination

The simplest form of divination known in Ifism is the use of the four-piece kolanuts. The kolanut is split open and four of the pieces can be used to invoke the following five Oloodus of Orunmila:

1. If all the four pieces appear face up, it means that the most senior Olodu, Ejiogbe, is ready to speak;
2. If all the four pieces appear face down, it means that Oyeku-meji, the second most senior Olodu of Orunmila is ready to speak;
3. If two of the four pieces appear face up and the remaining two appear face down, it means Obara-meji, the fifth Olodu of Orunmila, is ready to speak;
4. If one of the four pieces appears face up and the remaining three appear face down, it means that Okonron-meji, the sixth Olodu of Orunmila, is ready to speak; and
5. If three of the four pieces appear face up, and the remaining one appears face down, it means that Ogunda-meji, the ninth Olodu of Orunmila, is ready to speak.

It can be said therefore that the kolanut can only invoke five out of the 256 ODUS of Orunmila. That is why Orunmila does not rely on the use of the kolanut for in-depth divination. One slight variation is that when it becomes absolutely necessary to invoke more than the five ODUS that the four-piece kolanut can invoke, a second set of four piece kolanuts can be used side by side with the other one. Even then, it can only invoke four more ODUS such as Ogbe-Oyeku, Ogbe-Obara, Ogbe-Okonron and Ogbe-Ogunda. Any other permutation beyond that will not belong to the Ifa literary corpus.

Some Ifa Priests who are not aware of this injunction by Orunmila are often tempted to use the kolanut for purposes which it was never meant for, in the course of divination.

The Cannons of Divination in Ifism

We know through Orunmila that Seniority is the first order in heaven. A junior person submits to the will of his Senior. Whatever a senior person in a gathering says, holds sway. This is the first cannon in Ifism. The senior person's will is decisive. The most important thing to note therefore in Ifism is that when one Odu says move and a senior one countermands by saying don't move, there is no movement. We can see from Fig. 3 the order of seniority in Ifism according to the Ifa literary corpus, as demonstrated through Okpelle.

The Use of the Kolanut for Divination

Like it is with all other divinities, the kolanut is traditionally used for offering prayers and sacrifice to Orunmila. Whether the sacrifice is with rat, fish, hen, snail, reptiles

and amphibians, or quadruped mammals like goat, ram, cow and so on, that is being made to Orunmila, the kolanut is used as a call sign to beg Orunmila to accept the offering. This is virtually the case with all other divinities because the kolanut was created by God not only as the staple snack in heaven, but mainly for use in offering prayers.

After praying to Orunmila with a kolanut in hand, and beseeching him to accept the food being offered to him, that is, before actually offering the sacrifice, the Ifa Priest splits the kolanut and picks out four pieces. Any extra, say a fifth piece is offered to 'Esu'. Taking two of the kolanuts with the right hand and two with the left hand, the Priest clenches the four pieces between his two palms and ask Orunmila whether he is prepared to accept the sacrifice being made.

The appearance of Ejiogbe, Oyeku-meji or Obara-meji on the ground, usually indicates that the offering is acceptable. Obara-meji is universally accepted as signalling acceptance of sacrifice. The only other Odu which can supersede Obara-meji in these circumstances is the Odu which appears on the first throw of the kolanut, for a new initiate into Ifism, at Ugboodu during a ceremony that is normally regarded as the baptism of Ifism. It is unfortunate that it is strictly forbidden to disclose what happens at Ugboodu or the secret conclave during an initiation ceremony into the priesthood of Ifism.

There are a variety of reasons why the confirmatory Odus may refuse to appear on the first throw. Among these reasons are:

1. If the offering is incomplete
2. If the Ifa Priest making the sacrifice is not satisfied;
3. If Orunmila intends to give any further advice, or if any supplementary sacrifice is required to be made to other divinities, such as Ogun, Olokun, Shango, the offeror's heads or his guardian angel and so on.
4. If the offeror is very worried in which case Okonron normally appears at the throw of the kolanut once or twice in succession, the offeror is advised to leave his problems to Orunmila. If subsequently Ogunda appears, at the next throw of the kolanut, the offeror is told that Orunmila is prepared to solve his problems. Thereafter, the confirmatory Odu normally appears.
5. Ordinarily, the kolanut is used as a rough and ready medium for asking Yes or No questions from Orunmila, although, highly proficient adepts do also use it for interpreting Ifa. That however is not the regular use to which the kolanut is normally applied.

If on a particular day, one does not feel like going out, one can ask Orunmila through the kolanut whether or not to venture outside on that day. If one is in a tight spot and wishes to seek new directions, in the absence of Okpelle, one can use the kolanut to find out what to do next. In short, the kolanut can be used to ask as a question like should I or should I not proceed with a proposed action.

Assuming you propose to take an action therefore and you throw down the kolanut to ask Orunmila whether to proceed as proposed, and all the four pieces fall face upwards - it means that Ejiogbe, the eldest ODU is ready to advise you. You do not bother to throw the kolanut pieces a second time to ask for confirmation, because no other ODU is senior to Ogbe. It means that you are cleared to proceed with the proposed action.

If on the other hand all the four pieces face downwards, it means that Oyeku is ready to advise. Although he is the second in rank among the 256 ODUS, you then proceed in one of two ways. You can ask a second question, - should I not proceed with the proposed action? If Ejiogbe comes out, it means that the overall verdict is not to proceed with the action, because Ogbe is senior to Oyeku. Alternatively if any of the other three remaining ODUS (viz. Obara, Okonron and

Egitan) appears on the second throw of the kolanut, it means you are cleared to proceed with the proposed action, since all of them are junior to Oyeku, who appeared on the first throw.

The second method of proceeding is to throw the kolanut thrice. Following the above order of seniority, if for instance, Obara appeared first, you throw the kolanut a second time by asking - should I actually proceed? Then Okonron appears. Finally, you throw the kolanuts a third time to ask, - should I not proceed? Then Egitan appears, it means you are cleared to proceed because Egitan is junior to either Obara or Okonron. In this case the second throw becomes the deciding factor in the divinational equation. Remember that Okonron appeared on the second throw. If Obara or Okonron again appears on the third throw, it means you are cleared to proceed with the proposed action. On the other hand, if Ogbe or Oyeku appears on the third throw, the answer is No since they are both senior to Obara and Okonron. There are slight variations which are the exclusive preserve of the Ifa Priest, such as asking whether there is anything to be done before proceeding with the action. Those details will scarcely make sense to the lay reader and neophytes.

For a person having his own Ifa, if the kolanut which first came out for him at Ugboodu comes out on the first or second throws, he is cleared to go ahead without asking more questions. On the other hand, if it appears on the third throw, even if it is senior to the first two Odus that appeared, it is confirming that you should not go ahead.

The Use of Cowries

Orunmila only taught his wives Akpetebi to use the four cowries for divination when he is away from home. The same principle applies as with the kolanut.

In the event that Orunmila has declared through the kolanut, that further enquiries should be made regarding the problems necessitating the sacrifice, the kolanut ceases to be the medium for making such enquiries. Resort is then made to the use of the traditional instrument of divination in Ifism called Okpelle, or the divination chain. See Fig. 3.

The Use of Okpelle for Divination

It has been revealed by Ogunda-meji that Okpelle was one of the favourite surrogates of Orunmila. It will be recalled that during Orunmila's second expedition for the establishment of the earth, he was accompanied during that mission by Okpelle his favourite servant. It was Okpelle that Orunmila sent back to heaven to inform God that he had succeeded with his followers in founding a habitation on earth. It was on that occasion that God released ULE in Yoruba or OWA in Bini, (the House or dwelling divinity) to join Orunmila on earth.

After the earth was reasonably and firmly established, Okpelle told Orunmila that his mission on earth had been accomplished and sought permission to return to heaven to rest for good.

The transfiguration of Okpelle

It was Ejiogbe who on the other hand revealed how and why Okpelle decided to give up his physical existence on earth. He felt slighted by Orunmila. Orunmila was in the habit of treating him, not as an auxiliary; but as a servant who was not fit to dine on the same plate and table with his master. Okpelle felt that he was being slighted by Orunmila because of his harmlessness. This was because Orunmila was in the habit of cutting out of what he was going to eat and putting it aside for Okpelle to eat. The practice has survived to this day by which

Okpelle's shares of any food given to Orunmila is put on top of Okpelle instrument at Orunmila's shrine. One day, Okpelle whose actual name was (Akpepere in Yoruba or Asefenoglobo in Bini), complained to Orunmila why it was that after serving so faithfully both in heaven and on earth, he was still being treated as a servant. Orunmila in reply told him that far from treating as a slave he Akpepere was actually the mirror which reflected the future to him, and that he was more of an auxiliary than a servant.

Ejogbe has revealed that before Akpepere came to live with Orunmila, the latter had no formal divination instrument. Orunmila had the rare gift of understanding the language of all living plants and animals. The wind could always bring messages to Orunmila to reveal to any one who came to him for divination. Orunmila had three wives at the time who were; (Ode in Yoruba or Orere in Bini, Use (poverty) and Uya in Yoruba and Oya in Bini - hardship). On one occasion one of his wives called Use (poverty) challenged him to reveal what he was using to see the past and the future. He merely replied that God had given him the instrument of authority which made it possible for him to live and operate simultaneously in the past, the present and the future. On the other hand, Ode or (Orere in Bini) his senior wife was determined to discover his secret. His three wives conspired to tantalise him into revealing his secrets.

Since he knew what the women were up to, he appealed to the Wind divinity to send him a messenger who would constitute the demonstrable physical eyes with which he was to see the past, the present and the future. The following morning, a visitor came to Orunmila's house when he was away to the forest to collect leaves for his lfa practice. The visitor who introduced himself as Akpepere met his three wives and appealed to them to persuade Orunmila to employ him to live with him as a servant or apprentice to learn the lfa art. The women liked him at once and agreed to persuade their husband to employ him. When Orunmila eventually returned from the forest, he met Akpepere waiting in his sitting room. Since he knew what the visitor's mission was, he told him that if his wives agreed to accommodate him, he too would have no objection. He called on his wives to sound their opinion on their preparedness or otherwise to accommodate the visitor.

They unanimously agreed to accommodate him. That was how Okpelle came to live with Orunmila. Other servants who were also sent to assist Orunmila included Orofa, Uroke, and Akpako, and much later, Ominigun. They became his principal divinational aides throughout his operation in heaven.

Okpelle returns to Heaven

Just before leaving for heaven, Okpelle however, informed Orunmila that after he had left, he would find a tree growing on the way to the farm and that the tree would bear fruits and the shell of the fruits would continue to help him as much as he Okpelle did, as flesh and blood.

With that injunction, Okpelle disappeared into heaven through the earth beneath.

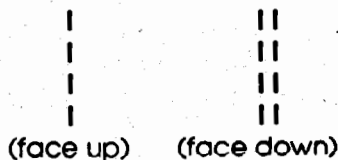


Fig. 1. Okpelle

A few days later, a strange plant germinated at the point of the earth where Okpelé lapsed into heaven. The plant soon developed into a full blown tree within three months and it began to bear fruits. In consonance with Okpelé's advice, Orunmila collected the shells of the fruits and sewed them up in units of eight pieces. By throwing the string of eight pieces of Okpelé shells on the ground he began to carry messages to Orunmila. It was from then on that the use of Okpelé shells, as a divination instrument became a universal practice in Ifism.

Translation of Okpelé

When an Okpelé chain is thrown on the floor, on a piece of animal skin, cloth, mat or canvas, any seed dropping face up is represented by one marking - one vertical stroke on the Ifa tray. On the other hand any Okpelé seed dropping face down is represented by two vertical markings on the Ifa tray. The Okpelé chain although sewed into eight seeds is held at the middle such that when it drops to the ground, it will fall in two bilateral formation of four seeds on either side as represented in Fig. 3.

When the Okpelé chain is thrown on the floor and all the eight seeds falling on either side appear face up, it means that Ejiogbe is ready to speak. When all the eight seeds appear face down, it means that Oyeku-meji is ready to speak. The same process of translation follows in representing all the other 254 Odus. The second canon of Ifism is that the reading of the Odu in Ifism is done from right to left. The third canon in Ifism is that the markings representing the Odus are done vertically from top to bottom.

As an illustration, if the Okpelé is thrown on the ground in units of four in a bilateral formation and the first of the four seeds from the top of the right, faces upwards, while the other three seeds below are facing downwards, it is marked as in A below.



On the other hand, if all the four seeds on the left are facing upwards, the circle is completed by marking one stroke each as in B above. By that single throw of Okpelé has invoked Obara on the right and Ogbe on the left to speak to the enquirer. The principal Odu which the Ifa Priest will interpret therefore, is Obara-b'ogbe.

The fourth canon of Ifism therefore is that it is the Odu appearing on the right of the bilateral formation that determines the seniority of the appearing ODU. There are three ways of using the Okpelé divination instrument. In a formal process of divination, the Okpelé chain is thrown on the floor three times as follows:

1. First throw - Akoko - Let us assume that Obara-bogbe appears on the floor.



2. Second throw - (Uree) or confirmation - Let us assume that Ogunda-Osa appears on the floor.



3. Third or contradictory throw, (Ayeo) that is, to ask Ifa whether there are any problems. - Let's assume that on the third throw, Ofun-Ose appears on the floor.

I	II
II	I
I	II
II	I

In all cases it is the Ifa which appears at the first throw of Okpelle (Akoko) that is translated. In the above illustration that is, Obara-bo-Ogbe. In this particular example, Ifa's verdict is Uree, or that there are no remarkable problems. The reason why the result of this divination is described as reasonably trouble-free is that the ODU which appeared at the second throw is senior to the one which appeared on the third throw. The first throw is important for translation. The second and the third throw are the ones which determine the state of affairs, and the tone in which to interpret the first throw.

The reason why the result of the above example is said to be in the affirmative is because the last throw, or Ofunse, is junior to the second throw. Referring to Fig. 3. Ofunse is the last Odu of Orunmila at Number 256 whereas Ogunda-maasa stands at number 145. The seniority of the first throw is not relevant in determining superiority for purposes of comparison, except that it is the only Odu that is actually interpreted.

When the divination comes out as UREE, it means there are no immediate dangers to worry about. Nonetheless, if the question asked is for Ifa to take a bird's eye view of one's entire life, it is still necessary to ask supplementary questions. UREE means not to worry, that the enquirer should have peace of mind. A proficient and thorough Ifa Priest will yet ask what kind of UREE it is? Is it because death is not lurking around anywhere - UREE Ariku? Or is it Uree because the enquirer is going to triumph over his enemies (Uree Isegun-ota) or Uree to see the end of mischief makers - (Uree aare-yilin - odi), Or is Uree for having money, childbirth, marriage and so on.

In all such cases the Ifa Priest asks Yes or No questions only twice. The question is asked by the first throw of Okpelle. If the second throw is junior to the first throw, then Ifa has answered whatever question has been asked, affirmatively. If on the other hand the second throw is senior to the first throw, it means the answer is "No" and the Ifa Priest will continue to ask more questions until he gets an affirmative answer.

It is important however to emphasise that the question the Ifa priest will ask will depend on his knowledge and understanding of the interpretation of the appearing ODU.

On the other hand, let us take a second example:

First throw, Eka-Idi-200

Second throw, Irosun-Ogbe-107

Third throw, Oyeku-biwo-33

In this case, the confirming Odu or the second throw is junior to the deciding Odu. In other words the third throw is senior to the second throw. The verdict in this case is AYE0 that is, there is danger in the offing. If Ifa declares that there is going to be danger, it becomes necessary to ask a number of supplementary questions.

Briefly, after the first three throws, if the verdict is AYE0 that is, danger is portended, the Ifa Priest now proceeds to ask supplementary questions. During the subsequent question and answer process, he only throws the Okpelle twice

and not thrice, in a "Yes" or "No" relay, but always following the law of seniority.

The Ifa Priest then proceeds to ask the following questions if the verdict is AYEO (danger):

1. Is it death - Yes or No?

If "Death" is confirmed, he will proceed to probe whether it is against the divinee, his children, his wife, relation, friend or foe.

2. If it says No to "death", the next question is to ask whether it is "sickness" that is foreboded.

3. If it is confirmed, he again asks whether it is going to affect the divinee, his children, wife, relation or friend.

4. If "sickness" is again rejected, the Ifa Priest asks whether a "dispute" is foreseen. If confirmed, he proceeds to probe whether it is domestic quarrel, place of work or it has to do with police or court case.

5. If "dispute" is declined, then he asks whether Orunmila merely wishes to advise the divinee.

The amount of probing done however depends on the Ifa Priest's fore-knowledge of the interpretation of the appearing ODU. If he has a wide-ranging knowledge of the interpretation of the ODU, he can proceed without much ado to pin-point the reason why ORUNMILA brought AYEO (danger) out.

After pinpointing one of the causes, the probing proceeds to find out what has to be done to avoid or minimise the danger, in the following manner:

1. Does it require Akpako sacrifice (EBO) to be done to ward off the danger? If confirmed, the Priest proceeds to find out the materials to be used.

2. If "EBO" is rejected, he then asks whether it is "ADIMU", that is, is sacrifice required to a divinity. If it is confirmed, he then finds out which divinity is to be served and with what, beginning with the divinee's Head, IFA, OGUN, SANGO, OLOKUN or any other principal or secondary divinity. (A secondary divinity refers to a derivative from one of the original divinities created by God, or a human being who had perfected himself sufficiently to be elevated to the rank of a divinity by the Divine Council upon returning to heaven).

3. If "ADIMU" is rejected, he then asks whether the sacrifice is to be made to the night (ETUTU) and with what materials.

4. If rejected, he can also ask whether the person is required to make a feast (Sarah) to human beings in the form of food and drinks or alms in cash or in kind.

The session closes by asking whether the foreseen danger will be abated after making the sacrifice. If the Ifa Priest is painstaking enough, he can then explain from his knowledge of Ifa, the story underscoring the sacrifice to enable the person appreciate the *raison d'être* for the sacrifice. The divinee can then proceed to ask any supplementary questions.

If on the other hand, the finding spells no danger or "Uree", it may become necessary to find out what kind of UREE. Is it for long life (Ariku in Yoruba or Utomwen in Bini) or prosperity (Aje in Yoruba or Uwa in Bini) or Victory over enemies (Isegun Ota in Yoruba and Irihase-egian in Bini) or finally, seeing the end of an enemy (Areyin-odi in Yoruba or Ami Yekeghian in Bini). By the time the Ifa Priest completes the probing, the divinee should have derived maximum satisfaction from the divination, if conscientiously done.

Divination by Ibo

This is a variation in the art of divination through Okpelle. It is believed to be a more effective form of divination through Okpelle. This is where divination is done by more than one person at a time, through the casting of lots. The method used

depends on the tradition of the particular Ifa Priest. It will not serve any useful purpose to give the details here because the bottom line amounts to what has already been mentioned above about Okpelle.

Ikin Divination

Orunmila has ORDERED the writer not to reveal the secret of the Ikin mode of divination, because it is the exclusive preserve of his ordained Priests. One has to have one's own Ifa and be fully initiated at Ugboḍu in order to be let into the secret practice at Ugboḍu. It is in that conclave that the initiate learns the art of Ikin divination. The writer therefore apologises for not being able to reveal the secrets of Ugboḍu or Ugboḍunmi. The origin of Ugboḍunmi will however be discussed much later under Owarrin-Ose.

The fifteen chapters which follow will reveal the works of the disciples of Ejiogbe in heaven and on earth. They will also provide materials for interpreting the outcome of divination. If any of them from Ogbe-Oyeku to Ogbe-Ofun appears at divination, the revelation in these chapters can safely be used to advise divinees as a means of providing solution to their problems.

Chapter 11

OGBE - OYEKU



Ogbe-Oyeku made Divination for the Ceremonial

Brass and Drum in Heaven

Ogbe-Oyeku baba molu Oriogbo,
Ogbo ori ato ato,
baba edon Maaje tete,
babalawo edon. Odifan fun edon.

He made divination for the Brass image (used by the Ogboni fraternity). On the other hand, the Awo who made divination for the big drum was called "Maaje womuwomu, baba awo agba, (the drum used by the Ogbonis at Uledi). Edon brass cast gave birth to the gong bell. When this Odu comes out of divination, the person should be advised not to be greedy and that he should not be in a hurry to acquire wealth in order to avoid the danger of untimely death, that is, if the divination comes out as Uree, when it is supposed to be free of immediate danger. The person should be told to make sacrifice with his Agbada or traditional dress, which when he wears, covers both hands and which he has at home. He should add a duck to the sacrifice. He should also be advised to give he-goat to Esu. At the same time, he should be told never to allow his eldest son to travel to or settle down in any town named after a mountain. That is, if the name of the town is prefixed or suffixed by the syllable OKE like Oke-luse or Igbara-Oke.

If on the other hand the divination foretells danger in which case it comes out as Ayeo, the divinee should be told that the danger of death is hanging over the head of his eldest son, unless he makes sacrifice to Orunmila with a goat, a duck, a rat and a fish in addition to the Agbada or traditional dress earlier referred to.

He should be told that if he does not seek to acquire wealth in a hurry, his prosperity would blossom at the middle of his life (middle age) and that he would live to the end of his life, albeit without being exceedingly prosperous.

If on the other hand this Odu comes out during initiation at Ugboodu, the person should be advised to forbid all alcoholic drinks and that his eldest daughter should marry an Ifa man. He should also be told that there were three other divinities that accompanied him to the world which he would have to serve. These divinities are Orisa, Ogun and Osonyin, (Osun) and that he should always wear white and light coloured dresses.

He made Divination for Agboya

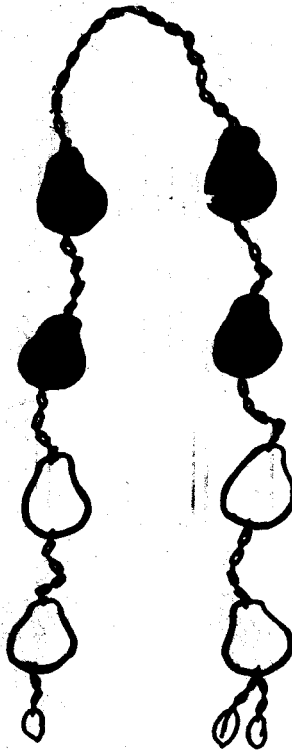
Ogbe-Oyeku, baba imolu
Ogbo ato baba edon,
Odifa fun Agboya,

OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

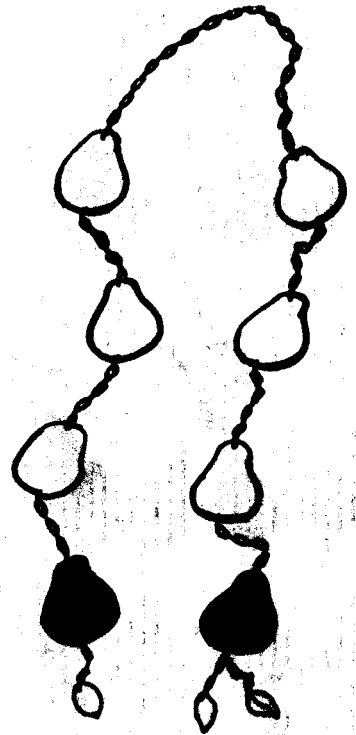
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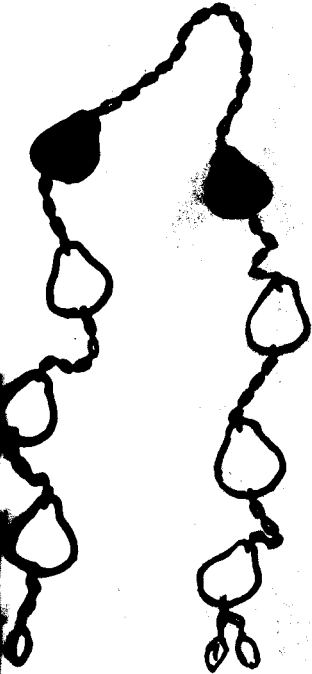
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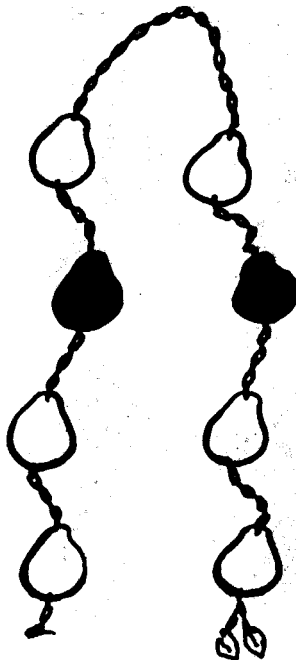
9 OGUNDA-MEJI



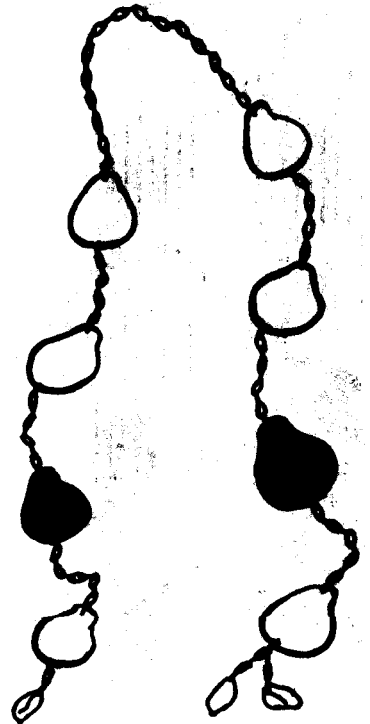
10 OSA-MEJI



11 ETURA-MEJI



12 IRETE-MEJI

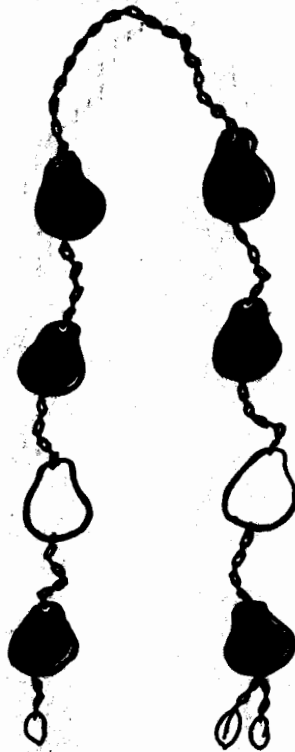


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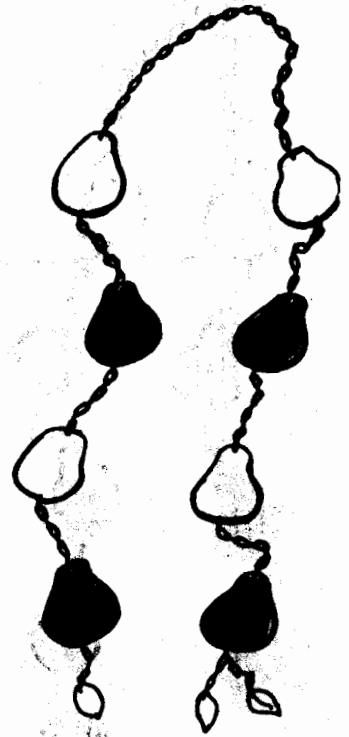
13 EKA-MEJI



14 ETURUKPON-MEJI



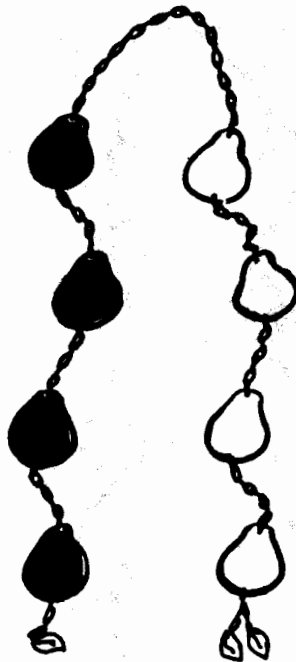
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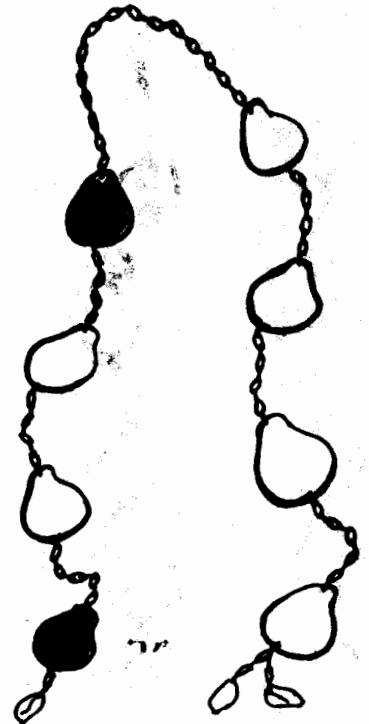
16 OFUN-MEJI



17 OGBE-OYEKU



18 OGBE-IWORI

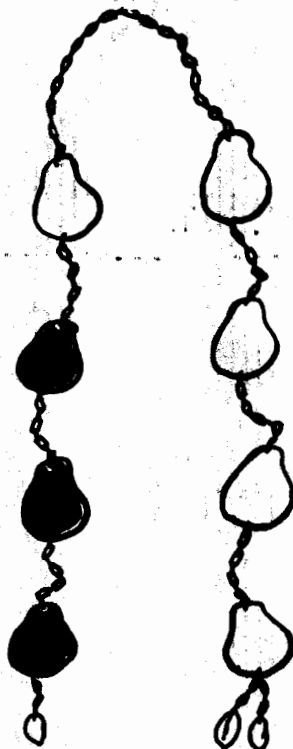


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

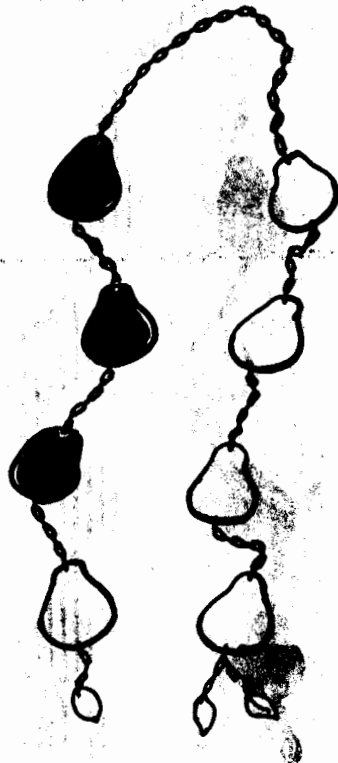
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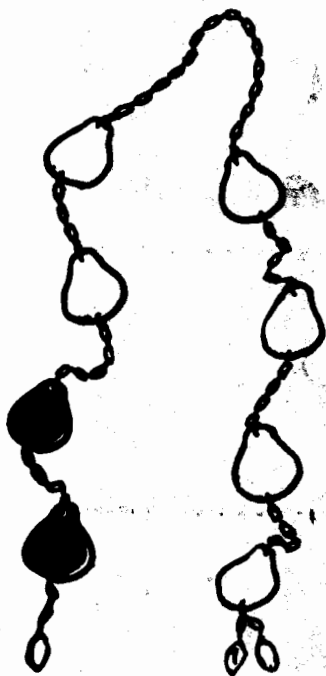
20 OGBE-OBARA



21 OGBE-OKONRON



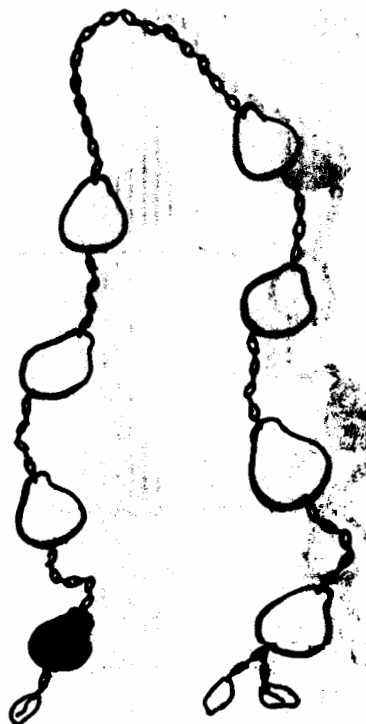
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23 OGBE-OWANRIN

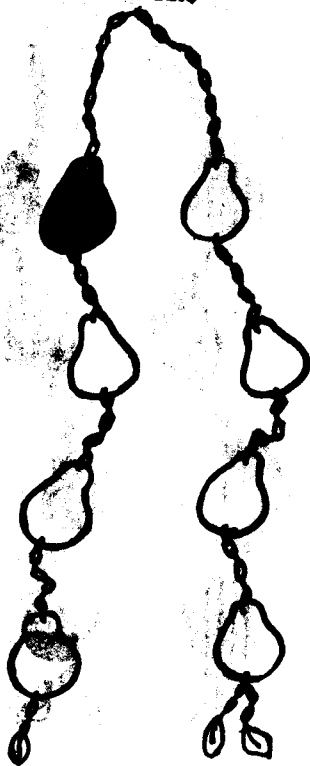


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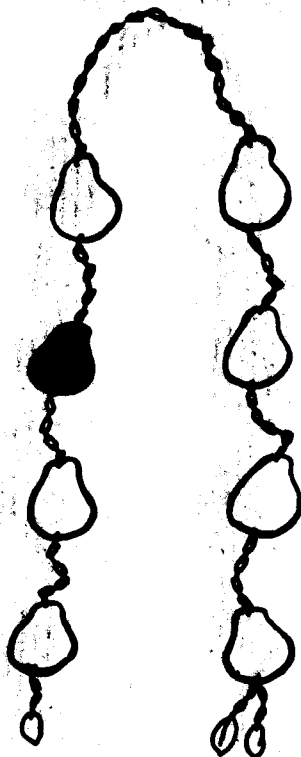


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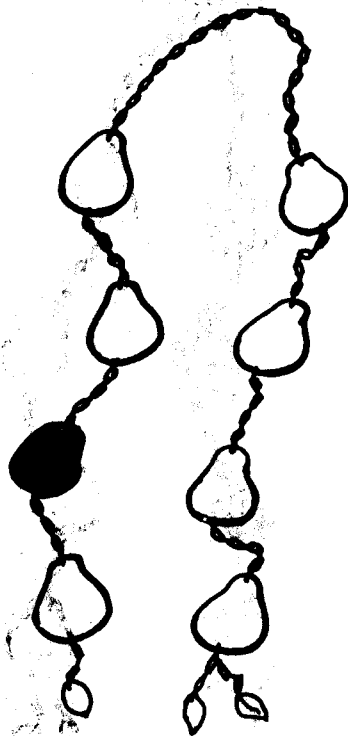
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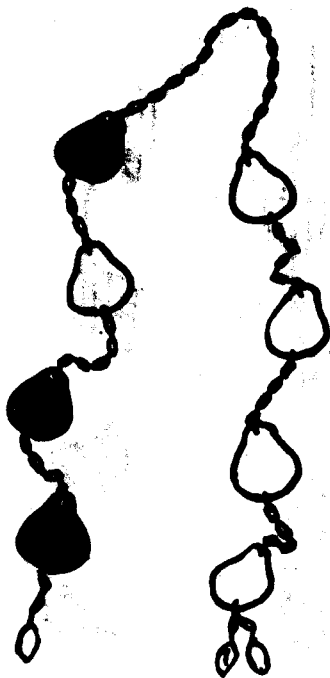
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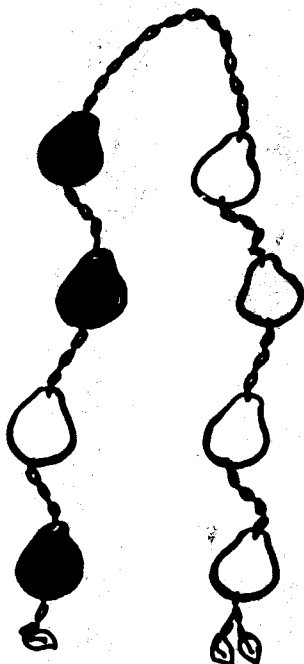
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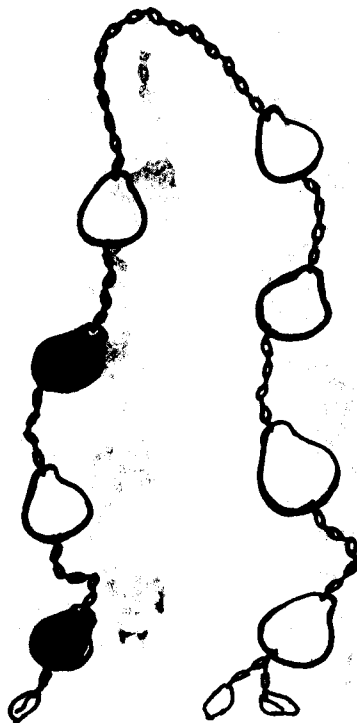
28 OGBE-EKA
(1)



29 OGBE-ETURUKPON



30 OGBE-OSE

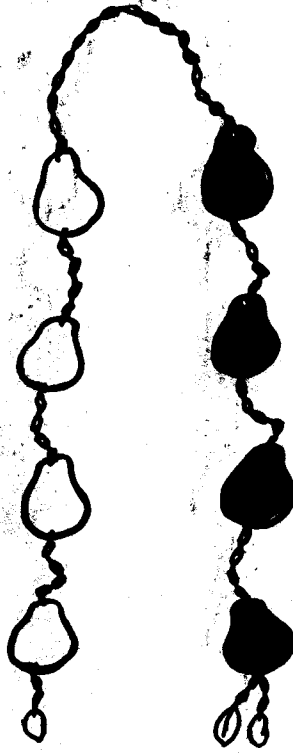


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

31 OGBE-OFUN



32 OYEKU-YI-LOGBE



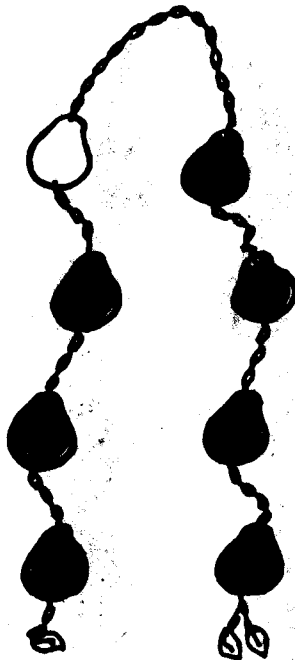
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34 OYEKU-IDI



35 OYEKU-OBARA



36 OYEKU-OKONRON

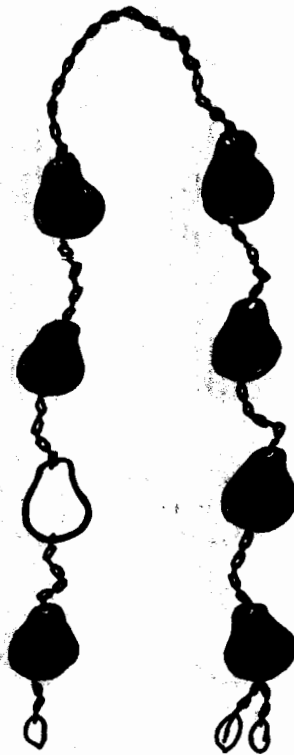


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

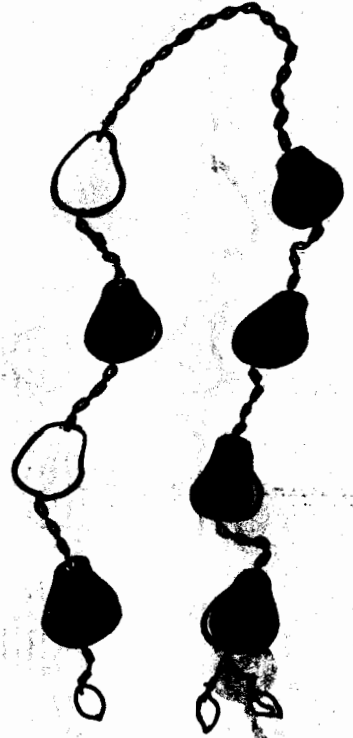
43 OYEKU-BE-EKA



44 OYEKU-LE-ETURUKPON



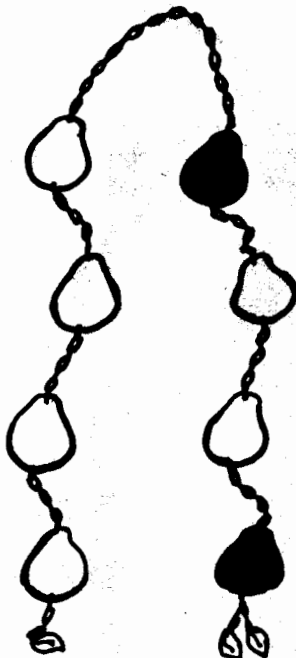
45 OYEKU-OSE



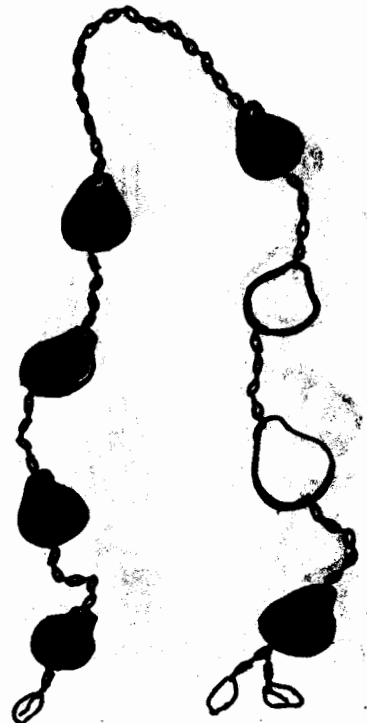
46 OYEKU-OFUN



47 IWORI-BO-OGBE



48 IWORI-OYEKU

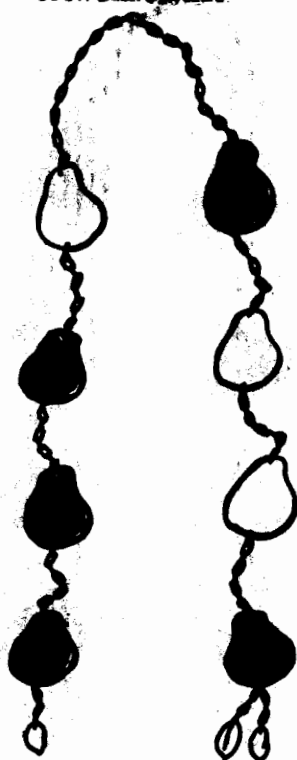


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

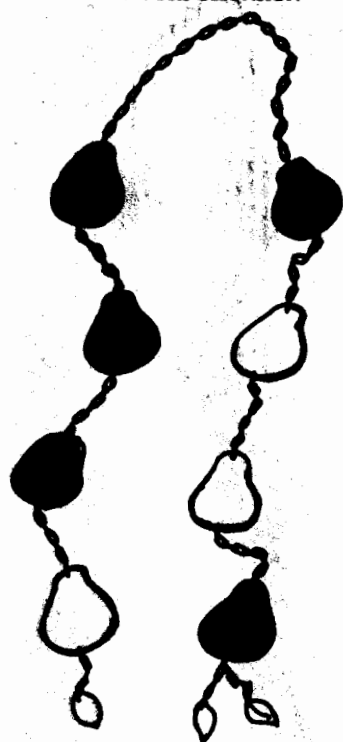
49 IWORI-WO-IDI



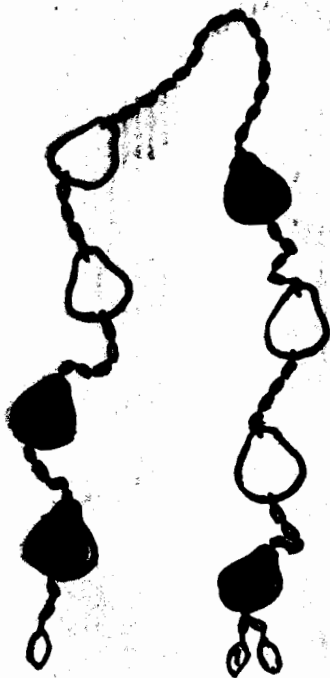
50 IWORI-OBARA



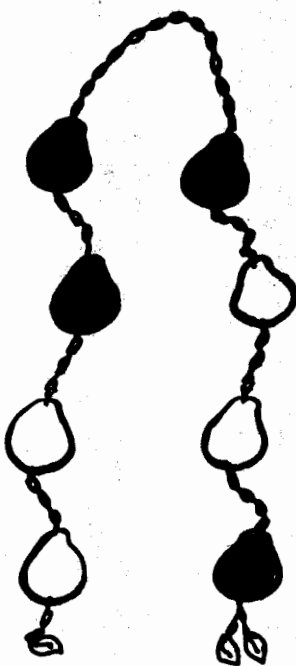
51 IWORI-OKONRUN



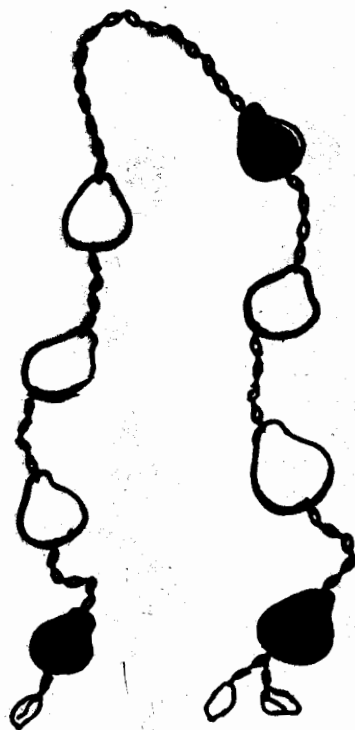
52 IWORI-IROSUN



53 IWORI-OWANNIN

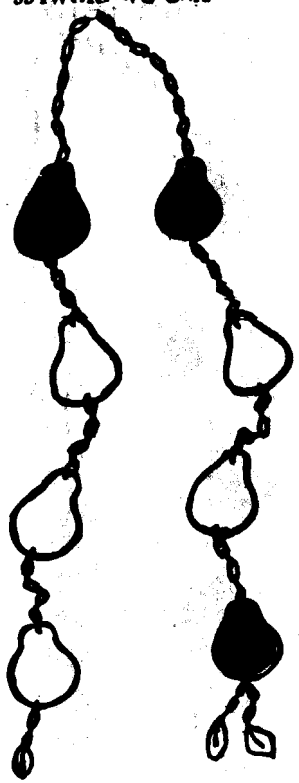


54 IWORI-OGUNDA

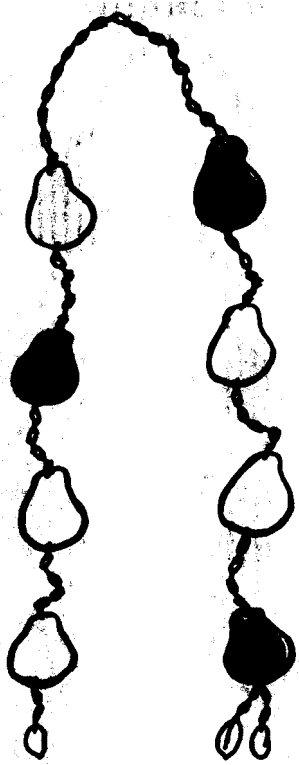


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

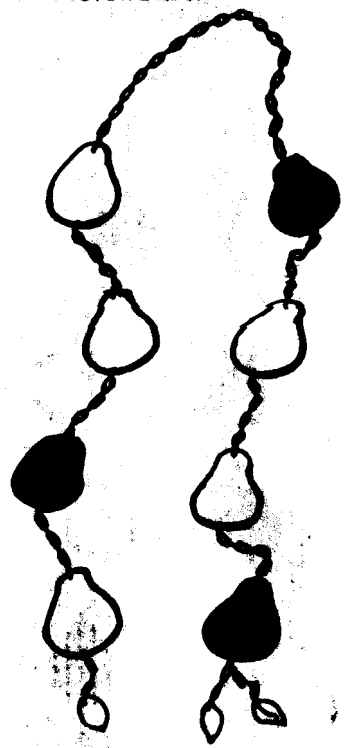
55 IWORI-WO-OSA



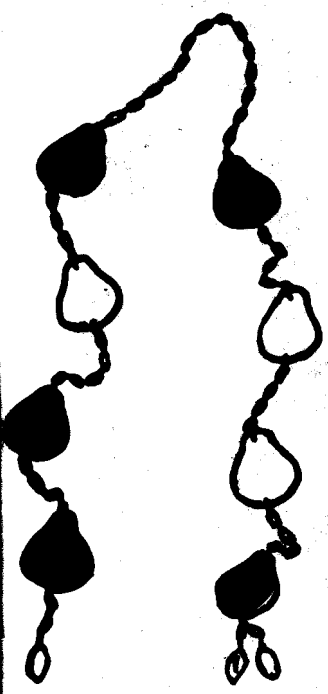
56 IWORI-ETURA



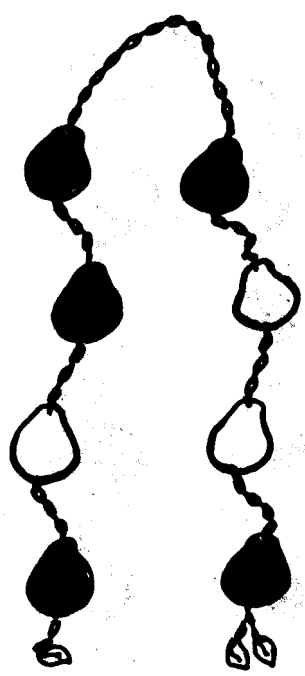
57 IWORI-IRETE



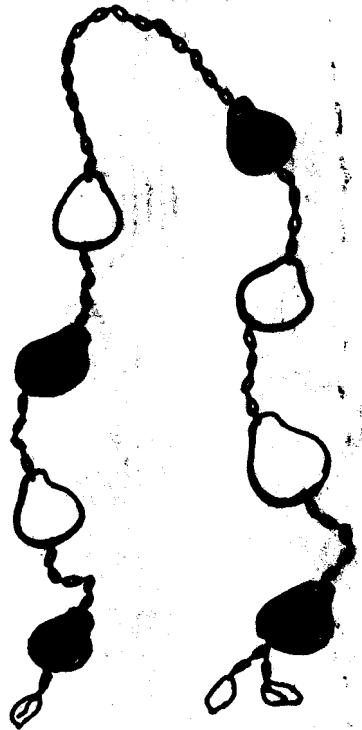
58 IWORI-EKA



59 IWORI-ETURUKPON



60 IWORI-OSE

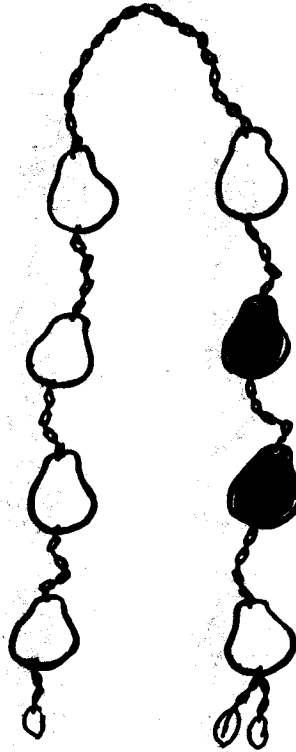


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

61 IWORI-WO-OFUN



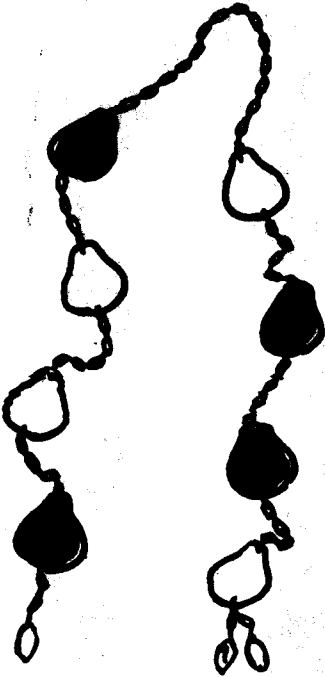
62 EDIGBE



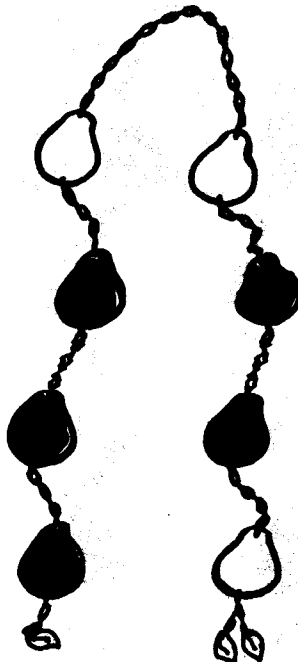
63 EDI-OYEKU



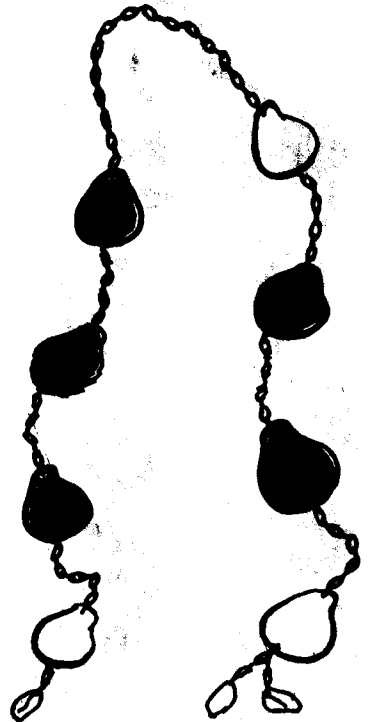
64 EDI-IWORI



65 EDI-OBARA



66 EDI-OKONKON

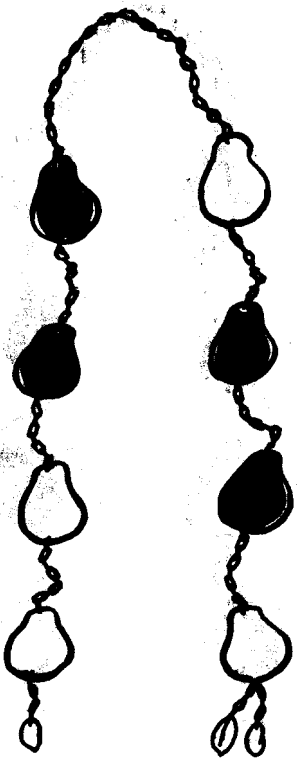


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

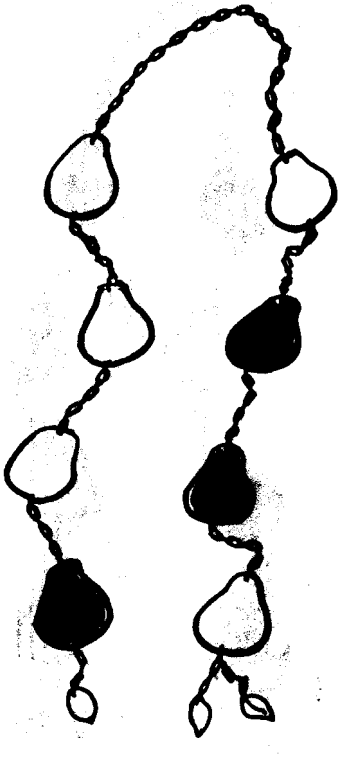
67 EDI-IROSUN



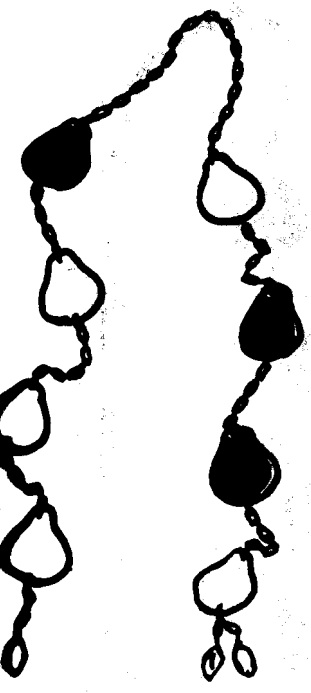
68 EDI-OWANRIN



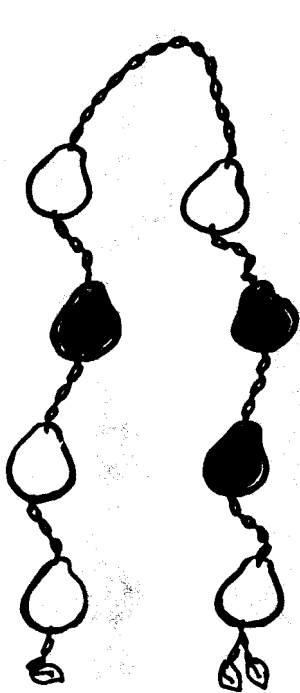
69 EDI-OGUNDA



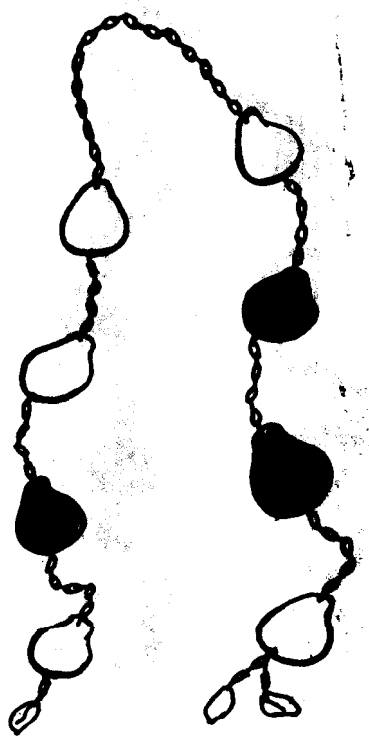
70 EDI-OSA



71 EDI-ETURA

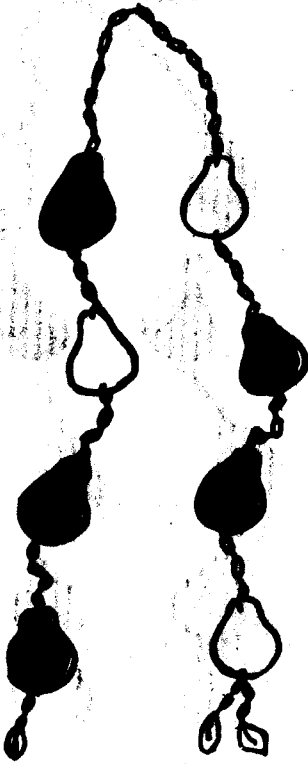


72 EDI-IRETE



OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

73 EDI-EKA



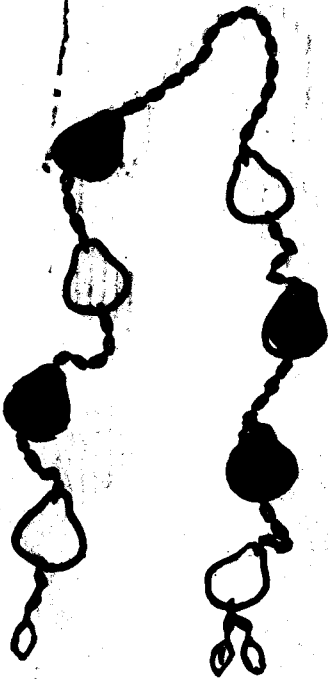
74 EDI-ETURUKPON



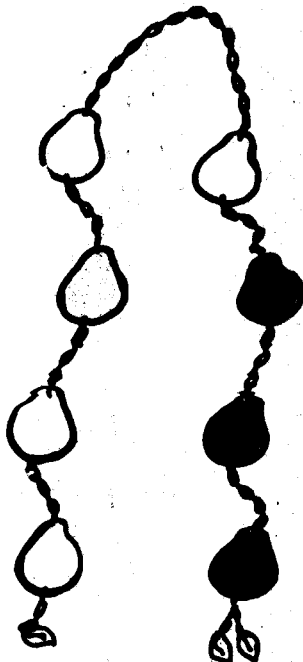
75 EDI-OSE



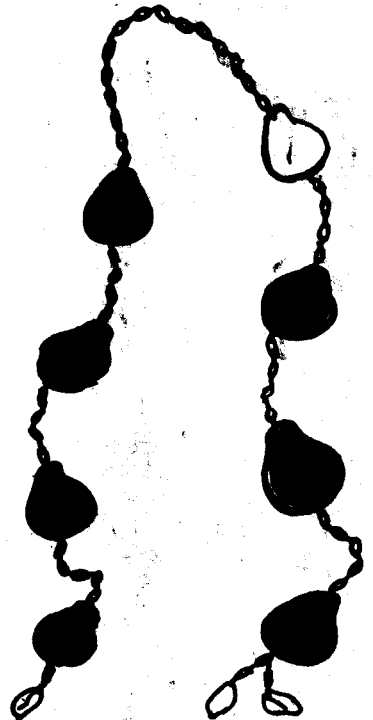
76 EDI-OFUN



77 OBARA-BO-OGBE

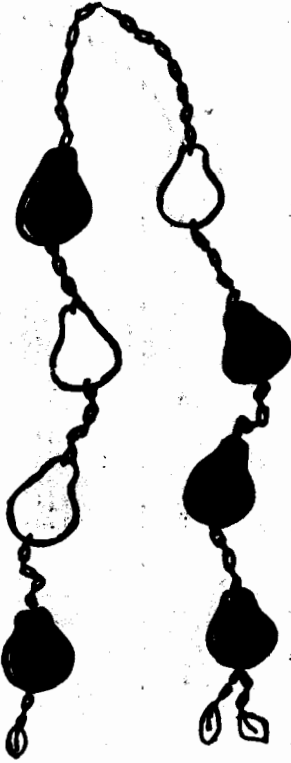


78 OBARA-OYEKU



OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

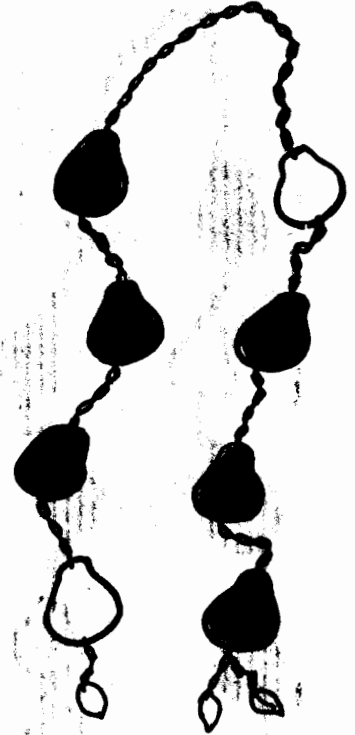
79 OBARA-IWORI



80 OBARA-BO-IDI



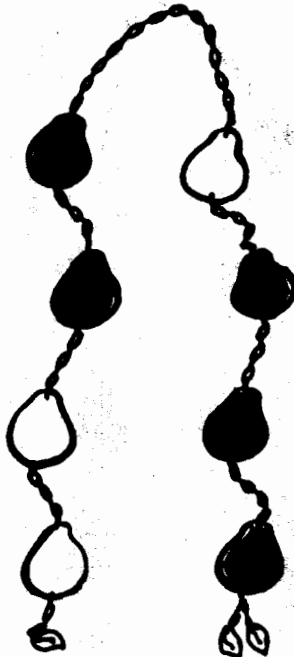
81 OBARA-OKONRON



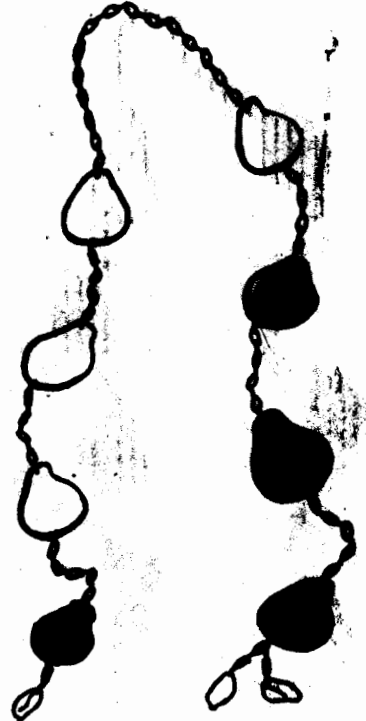
82 OBARA-IROSUN



83 OBARA-OWARIN



84 OBARA-OGUNDA

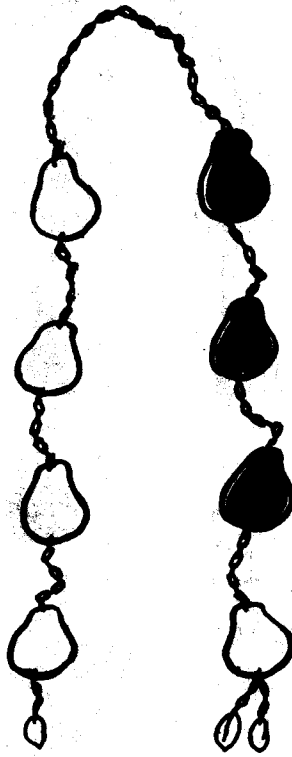


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

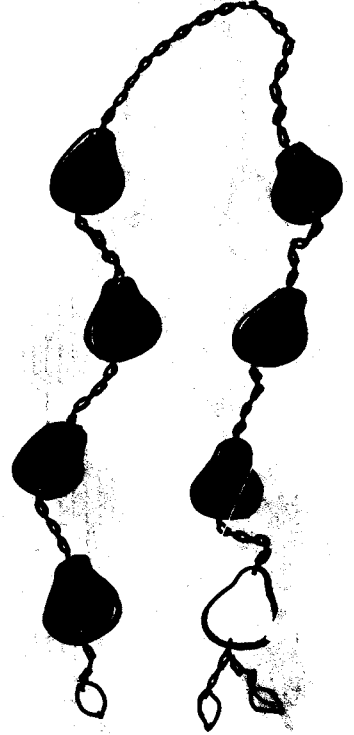
91 OBARA-OFUN



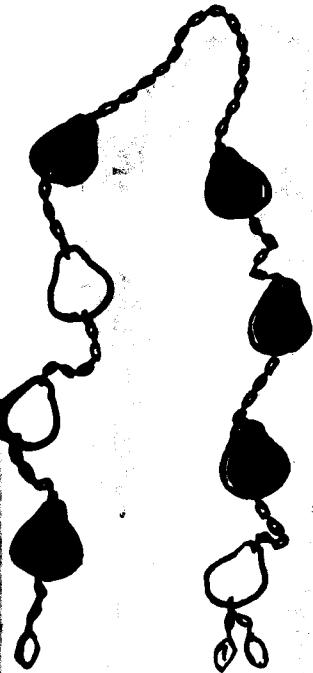
92 OKONRON-OGBE



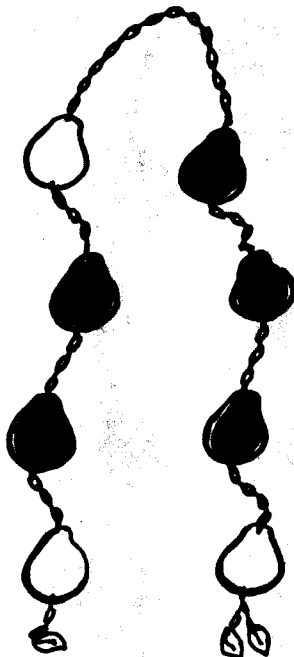
93 OKONRON-OYEKU



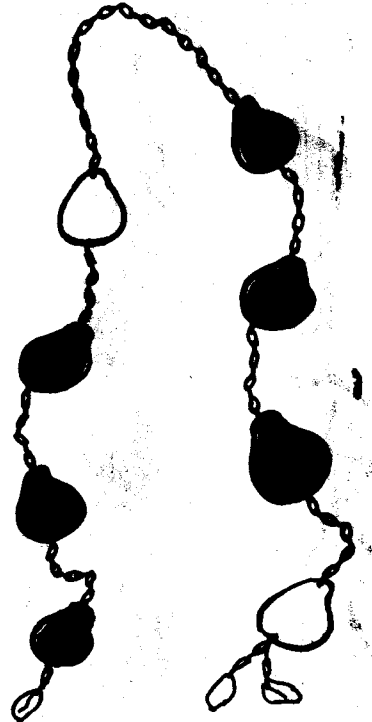
94 OKONRON-IWORI



95 OKONRON-IDI



96 OKONRON-OBARA

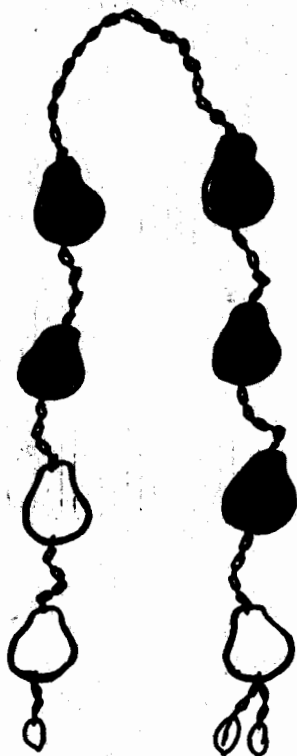


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

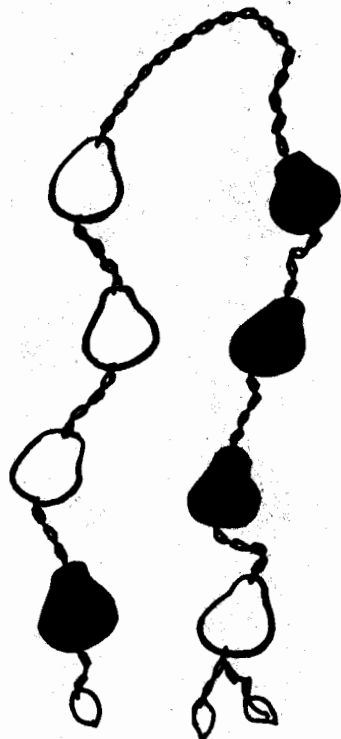
97 OKONRON-IROSUN



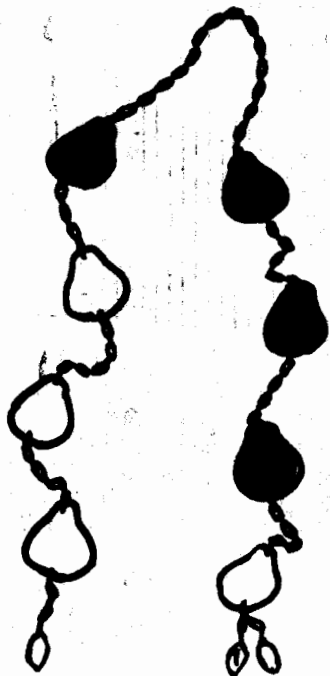
98 OKONRON-OWANRIN



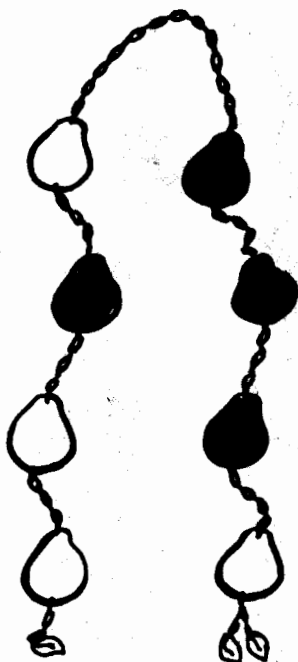
99 OKONRON-OGUNDA



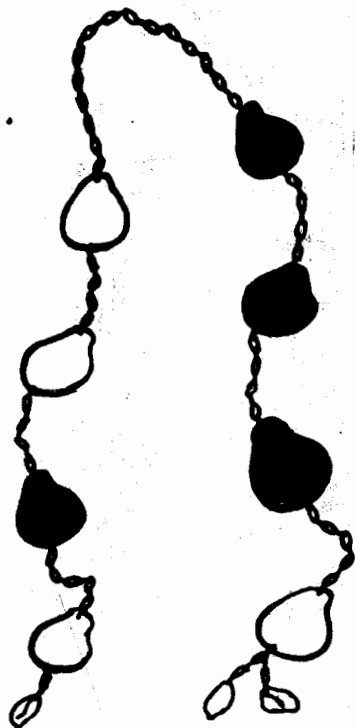
100 OKONRON-OSA



101 OKONRON-ETURA



102 OKONRON-IRETE

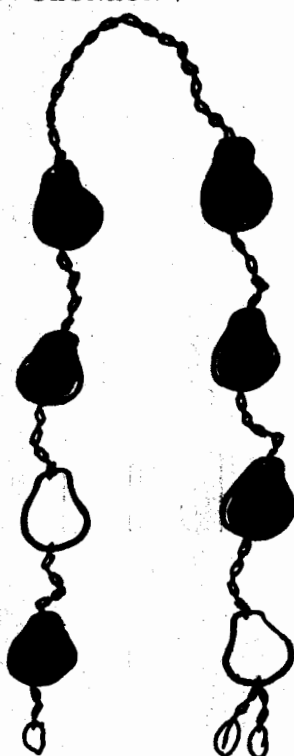


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

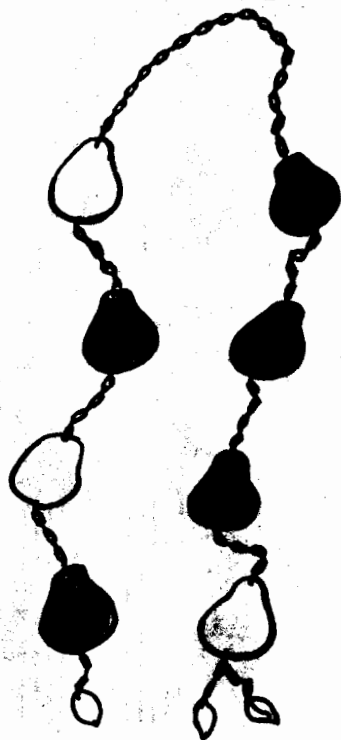
103 OKONRON-EKA



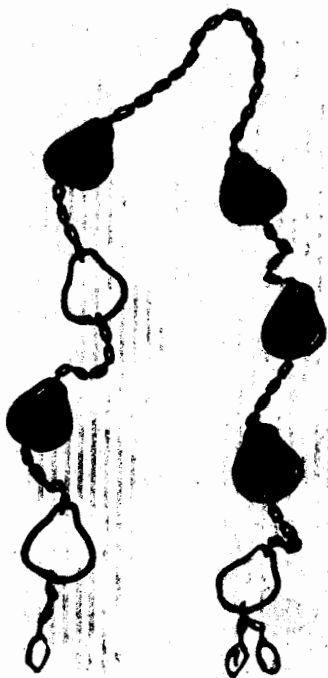
104 OKONRON-ETURUKPON



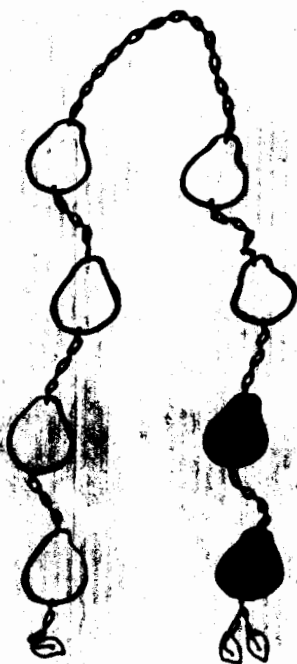
105 OKONRON-OSE



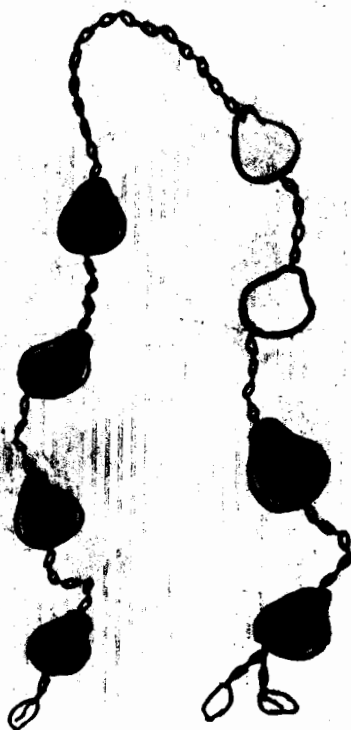
106 OKONRON-OFUN



107 IROSUN-OGBE



108 IROSUN-OYEKU



OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

109 IROSUN-TWORI



110 IROSUN-IDI



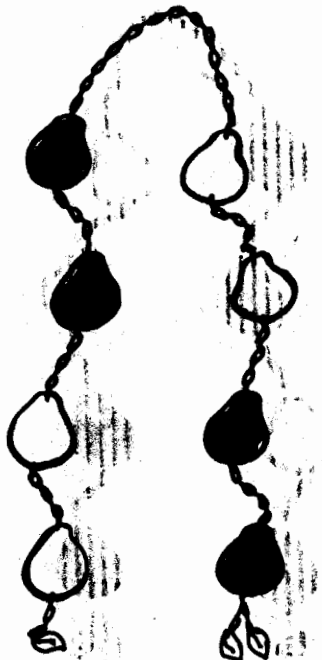
111 IROSUN-OBARA



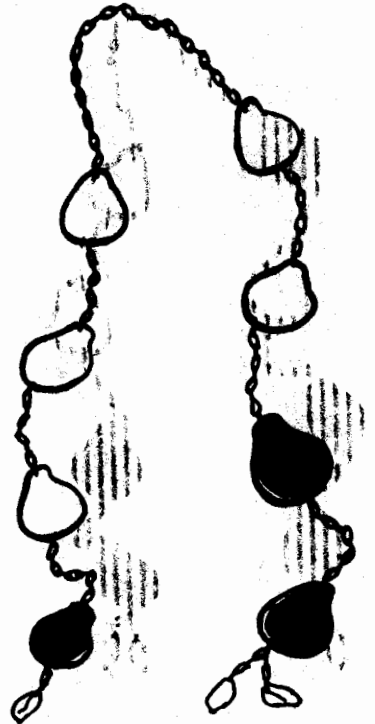
112 IROSUN-OKONRON



113 IROSUN-OWANRIN



114 IROSUN-OGUNDA

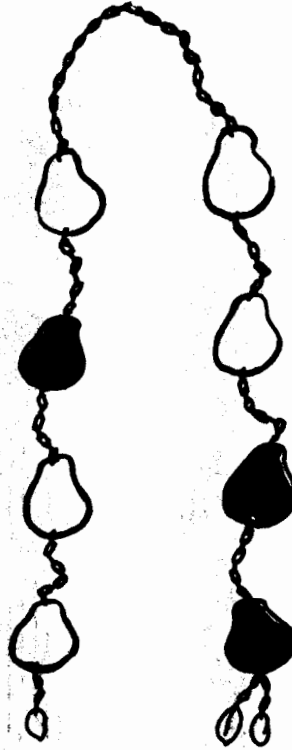


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

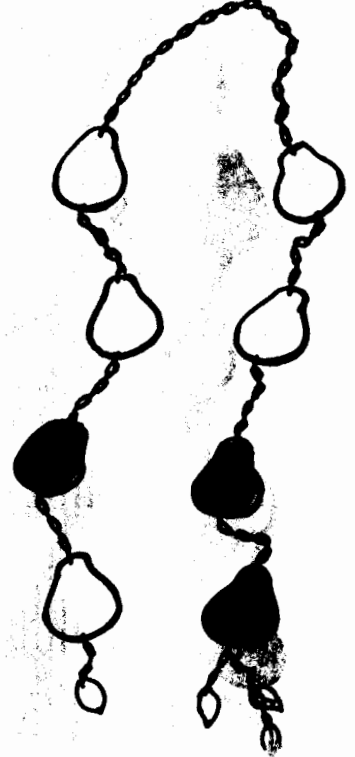
115 IROSUN-OSA



116 IROSUN-ETURA



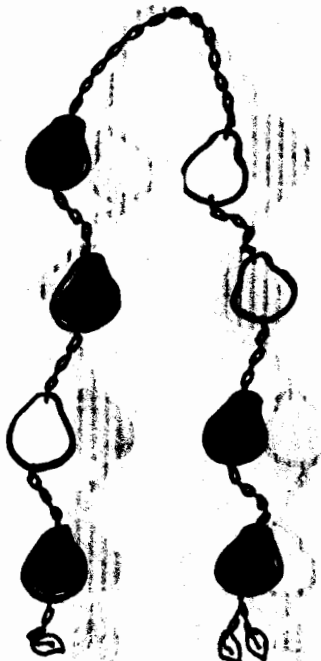
117 IROSUN-IRETE



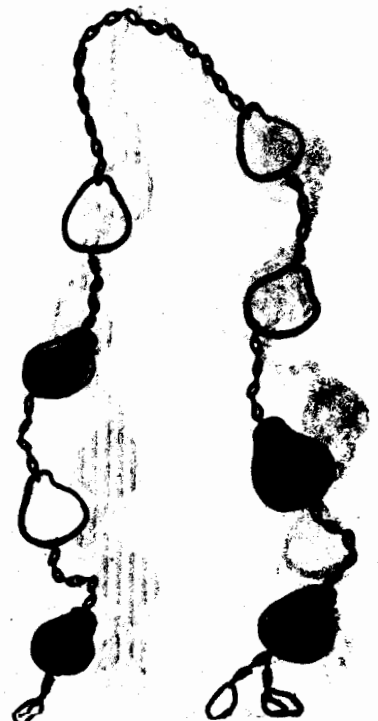
118 IROSUN-EKA



119 IROSUN-ETURUKPON



120 IROSUN-OSUN

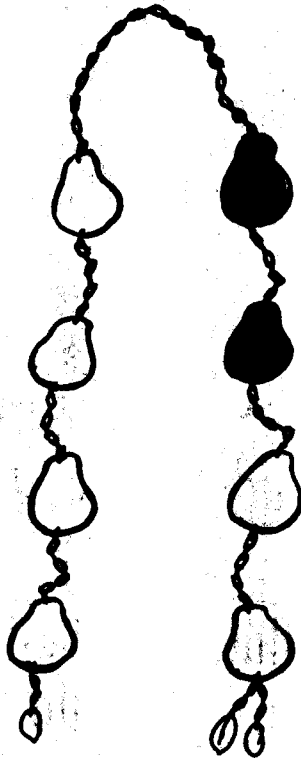


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

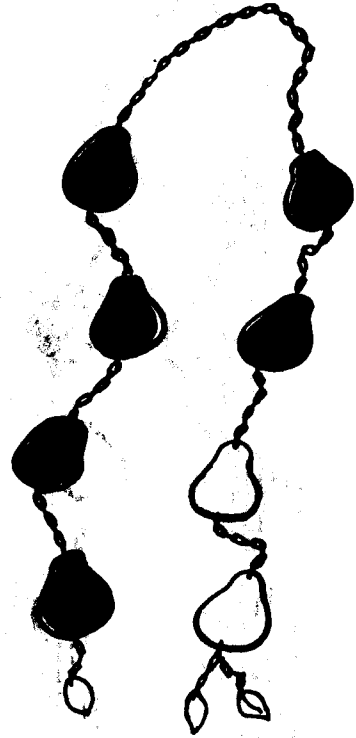
121 IROSUN-OFUN



122 OWANRIN-SO-OGBE



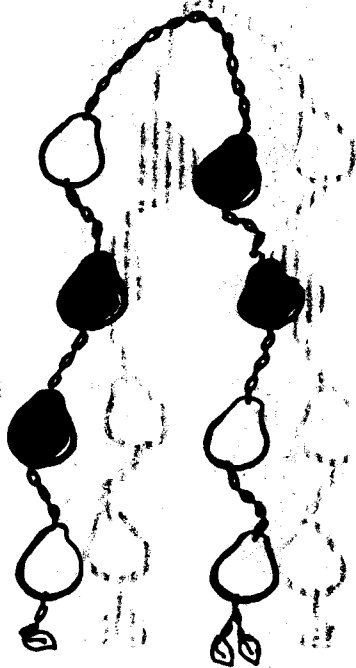
123 OWANRIN-OYEKU



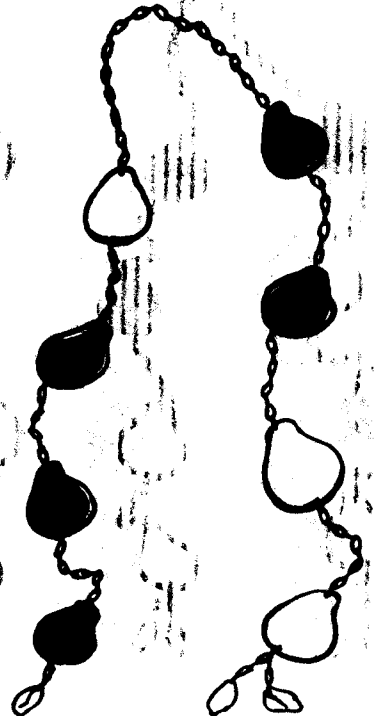
124 OWANRIN-IWORI



125 OWANRIN-IDI



126 OWANRIN-OBARA



OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

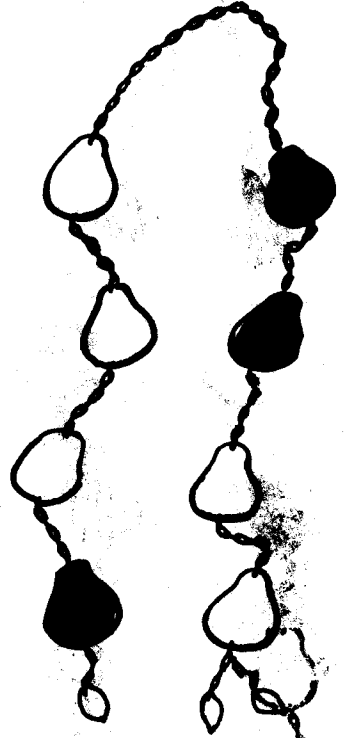
127 OWANRIN-OKONRON



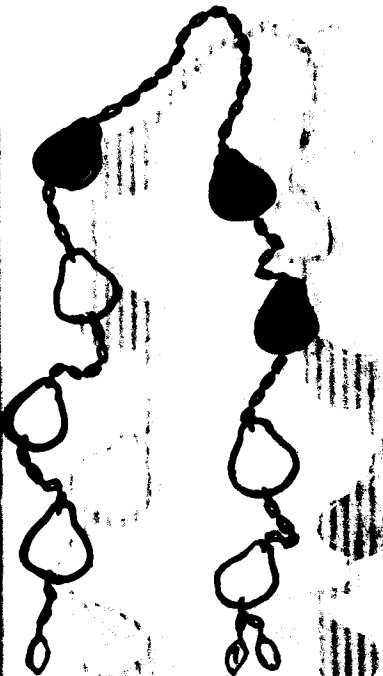
128 OWANRIN-IROSUN



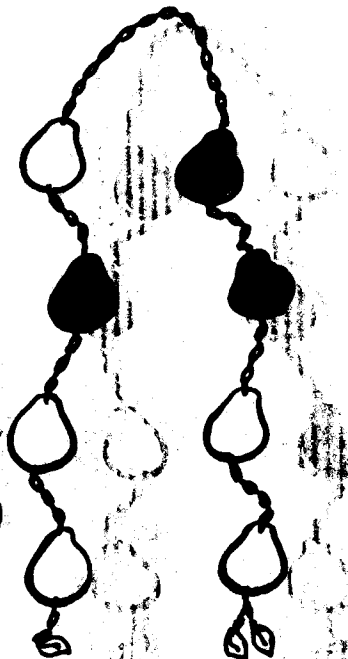
129 OWANRIN-OGUNDA



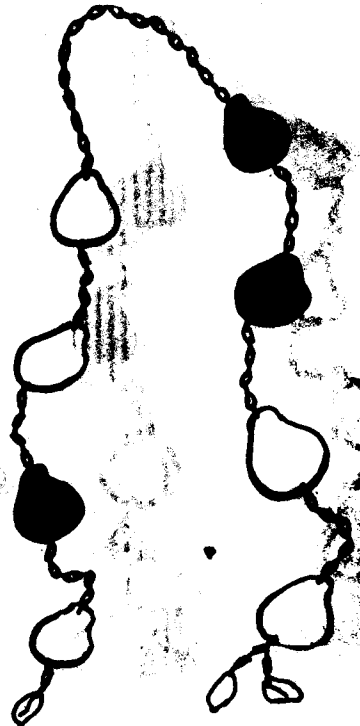
130 OWARIN-OSA



131 OWANRIN-ETURA

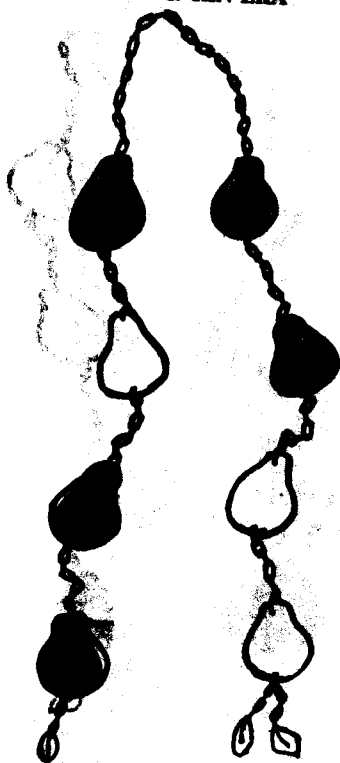


132 OWANRIN-IRETE

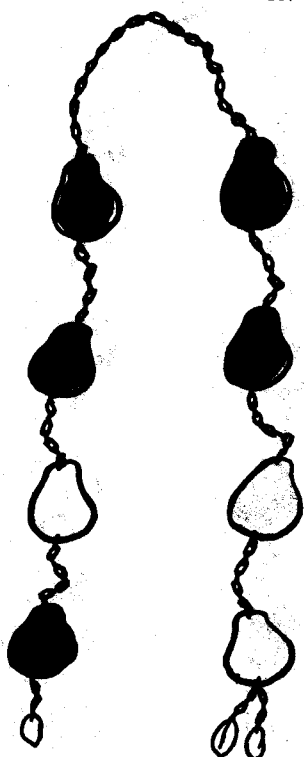


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

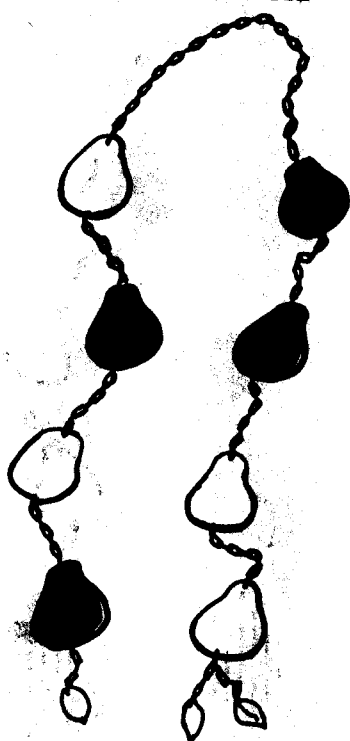
133 OWANRIN-EKA



134 OWANRIN-ETURUKPON



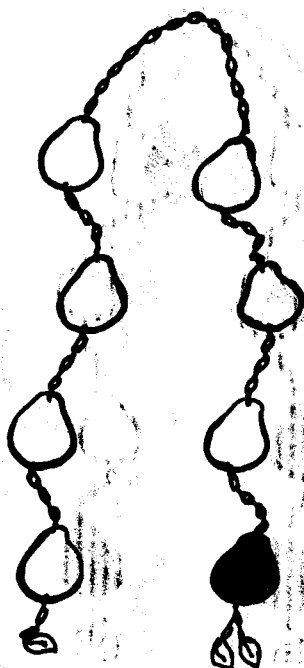
135 OWANRIN-OSE



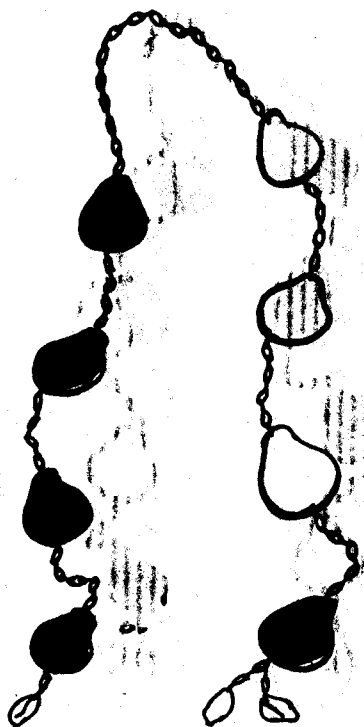
136 OWANRIN-OFUN



137 OGUNDA-OGBE

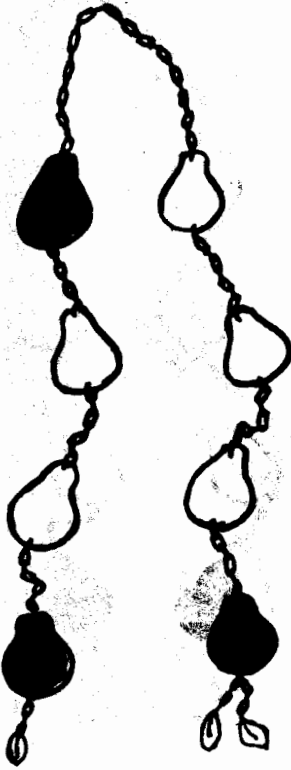


138 OGUNDA-OYEKU

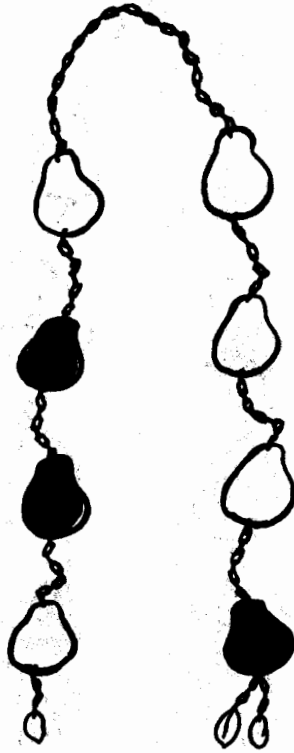


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

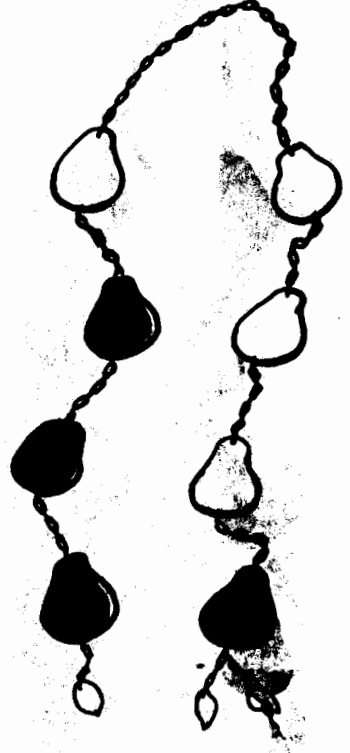
139 OGUNDA-IWORI



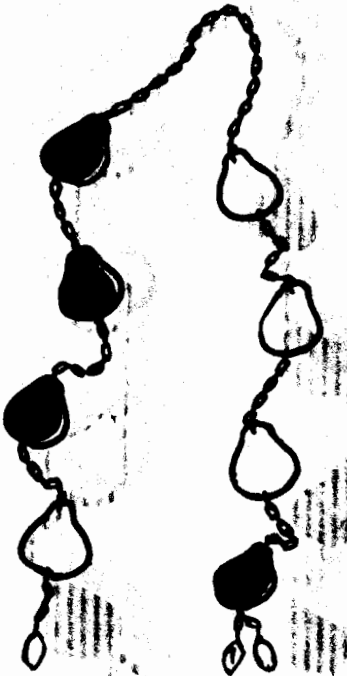
140 OGUNDA-IDI



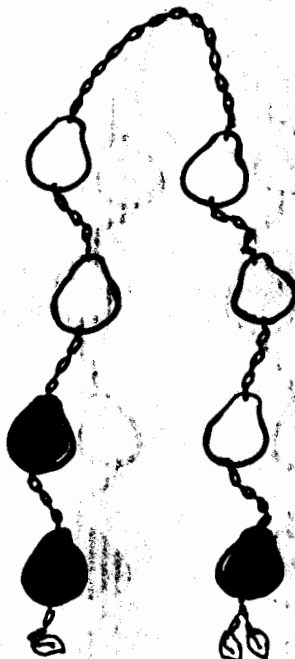
141 OGUNDA-OBARA



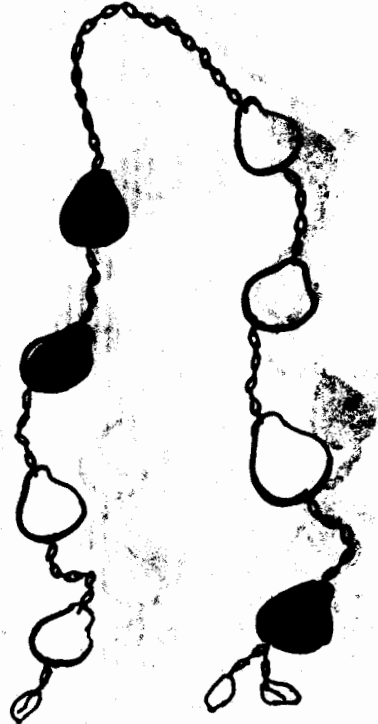
142 OGUNDA-OKONRON



143 OGUNDA-IROSUN

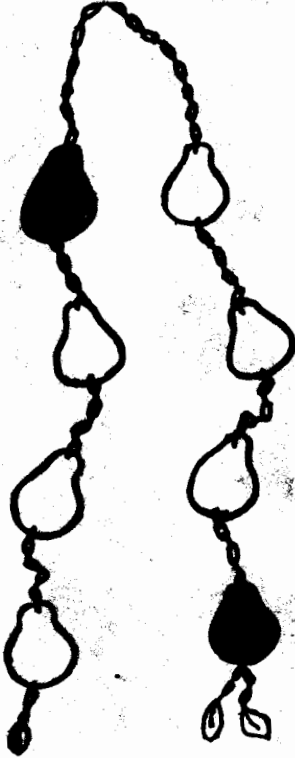


144 OGUNDA-OWANRIN

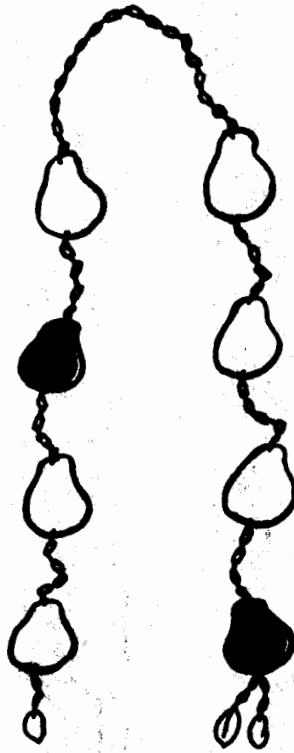


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

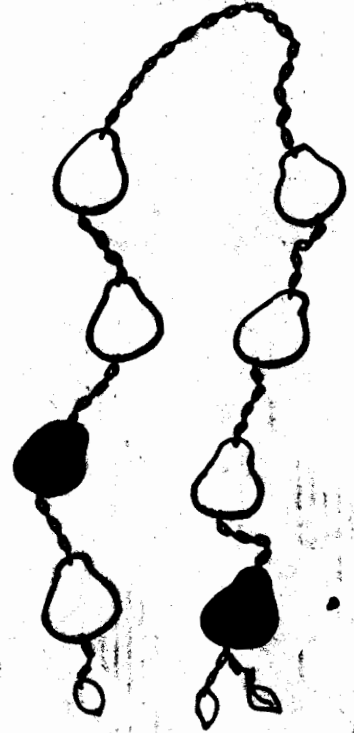
145 OGUNDA-OSA



146 OGUNDA-ETURA



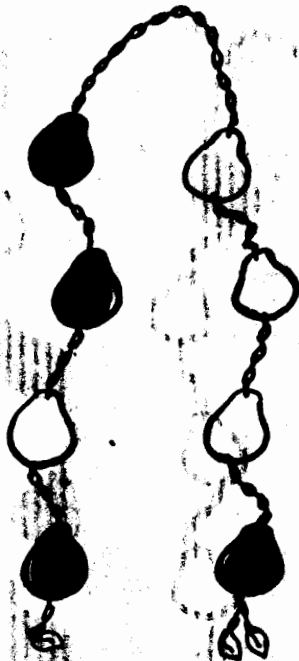
147 OGUNDA-IRETE



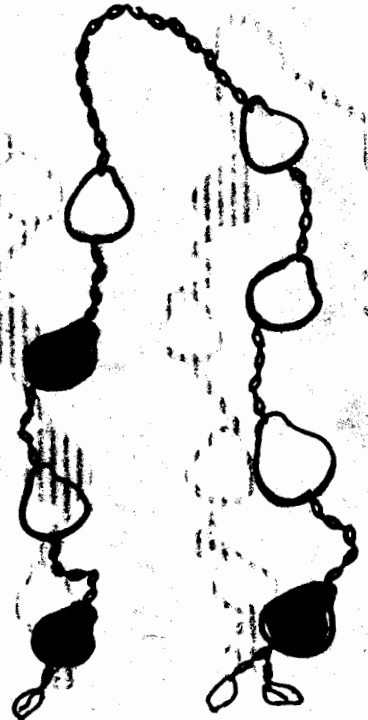
148 OGUNDA-EKA



149 OGUNDA-ETURUKPON



150 OGUNDA-OSE

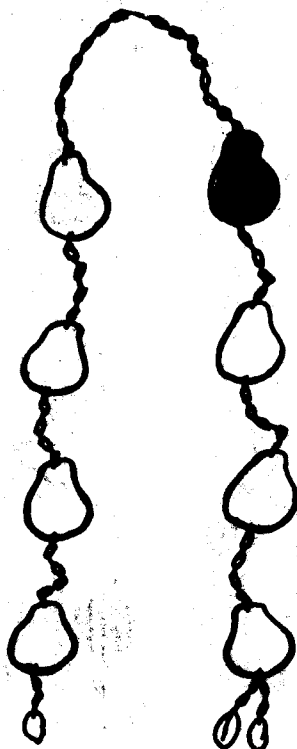


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

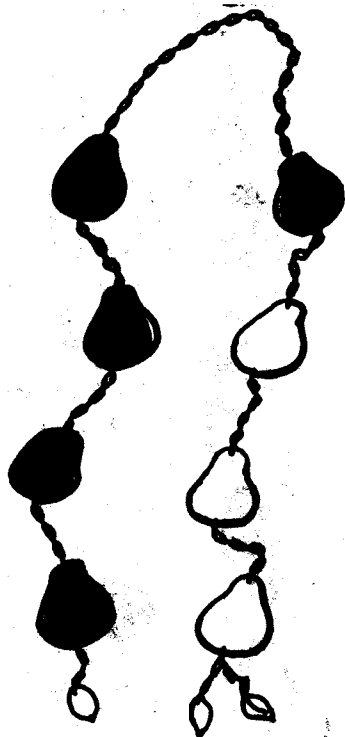
151 OGUNDA-OFUN



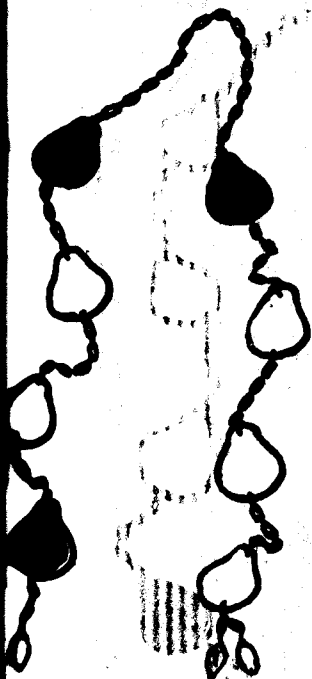
152 OSA-OGBE



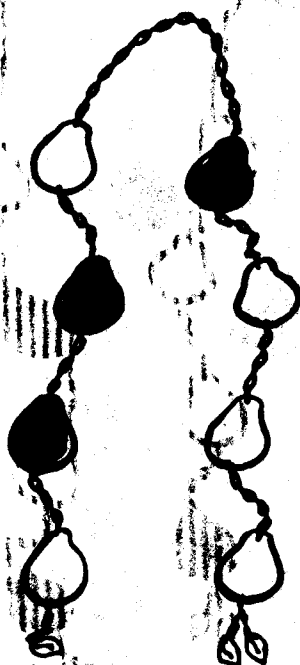
153 OSA-OYEKU



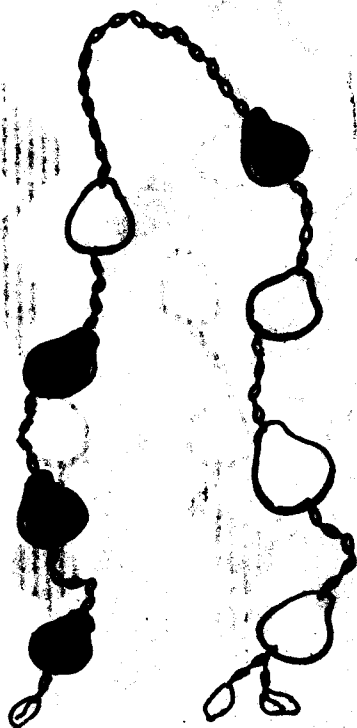
154 OSA-IWORI



155 OSA-IDI



156 OSA-OBARA

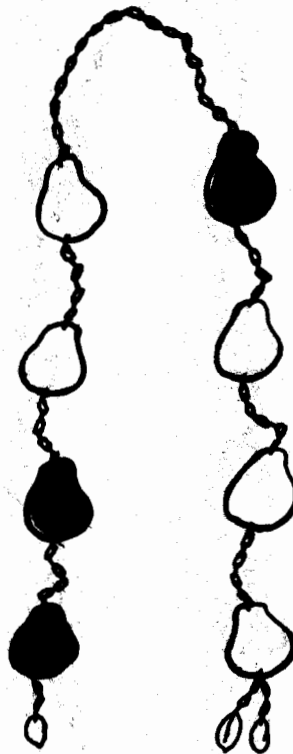


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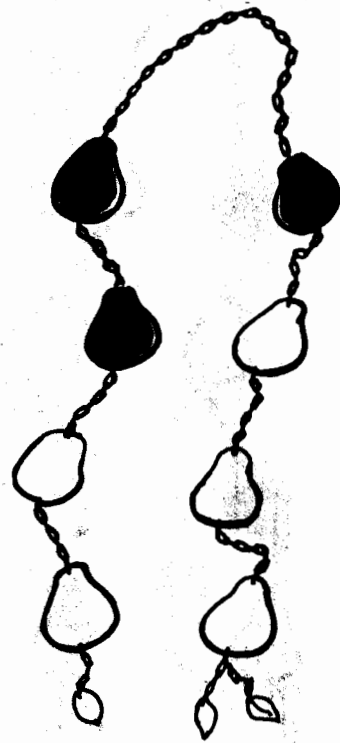
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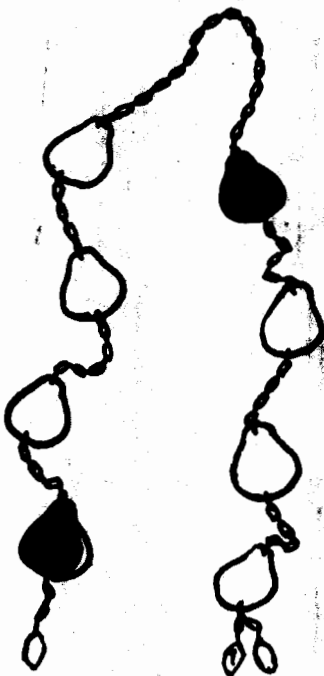
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159 OSA-OWANRIN



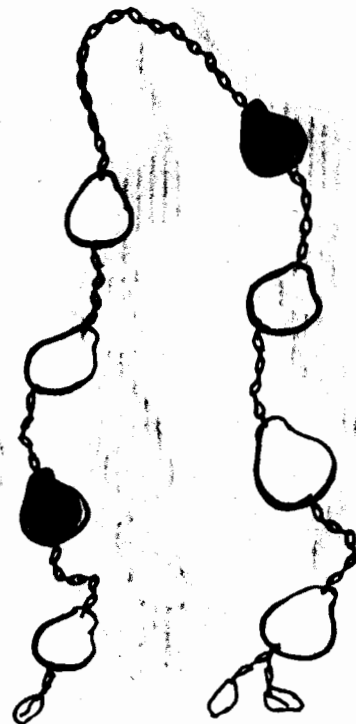
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161 OSA-ETURA



162 OSA-IRETE

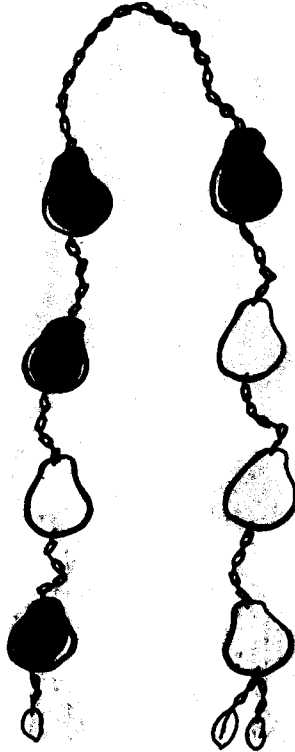


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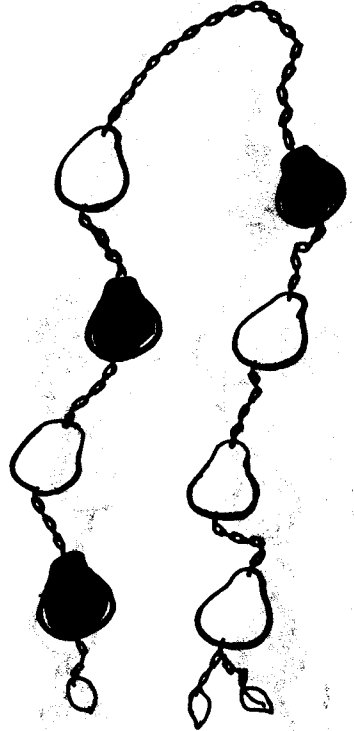
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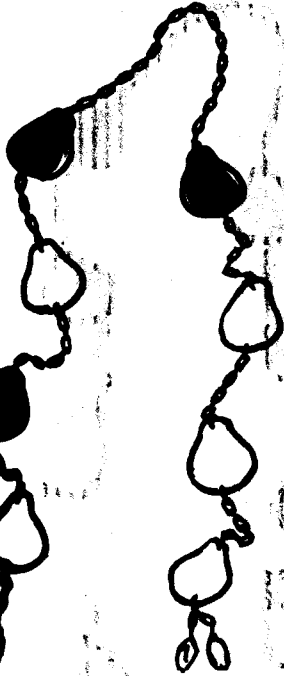
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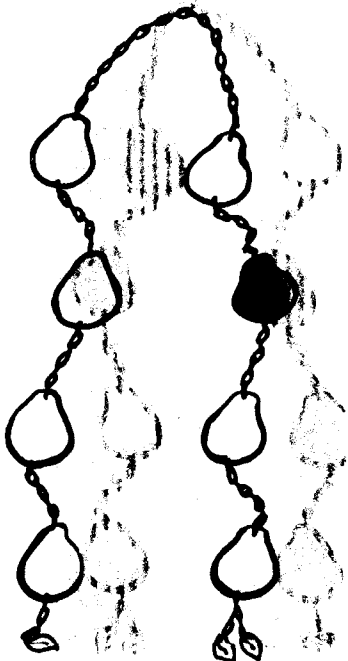
165 OSA-OSE



166 OSA-OFUN



167 ETURA-OGBE



168 ETURA-OYEKU

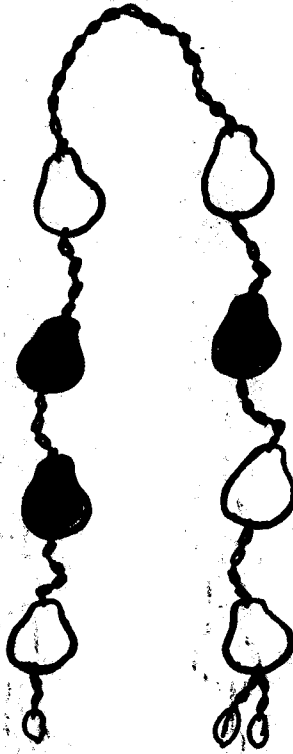


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

169 ETURA-IWORI



170 ETURA-IDI



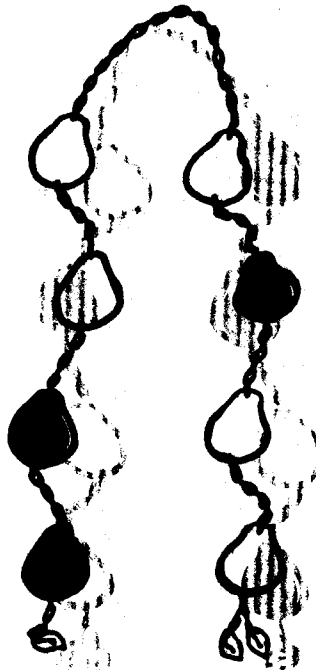
171-ETURA-OBARA



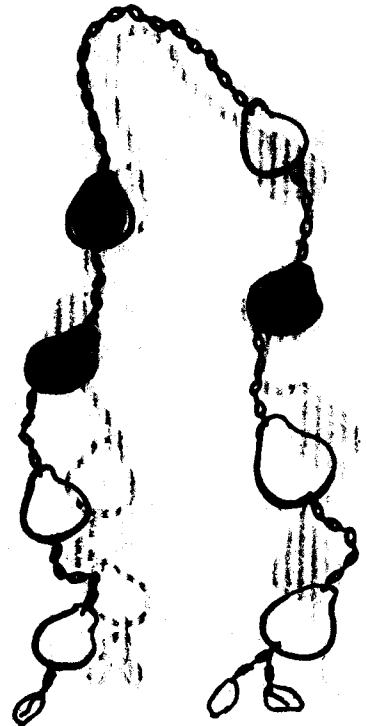
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173 ETURA-IROSUN

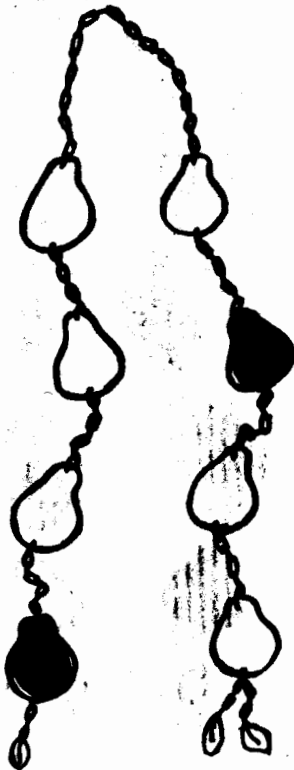


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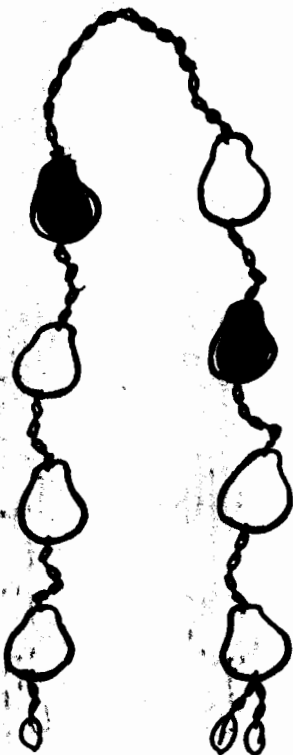


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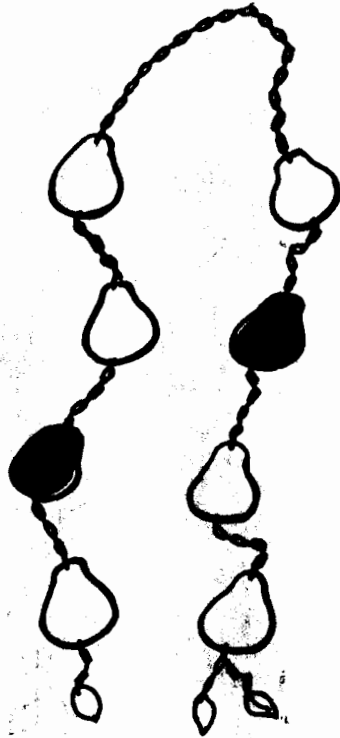
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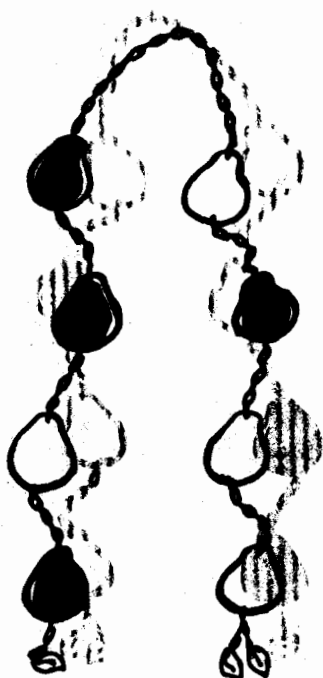
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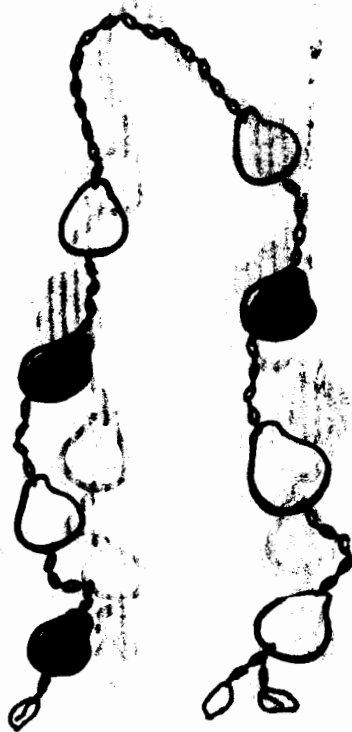
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179 ETURA-ETURUKPON



180 ETURA-OSE

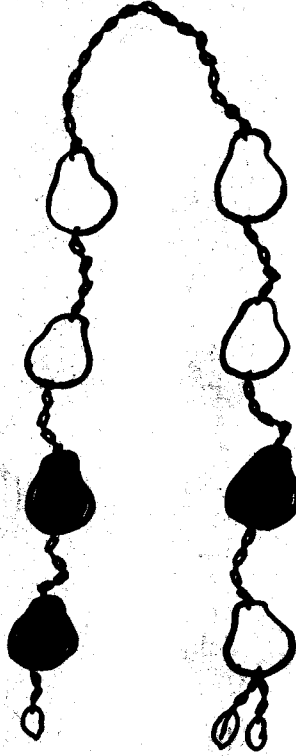


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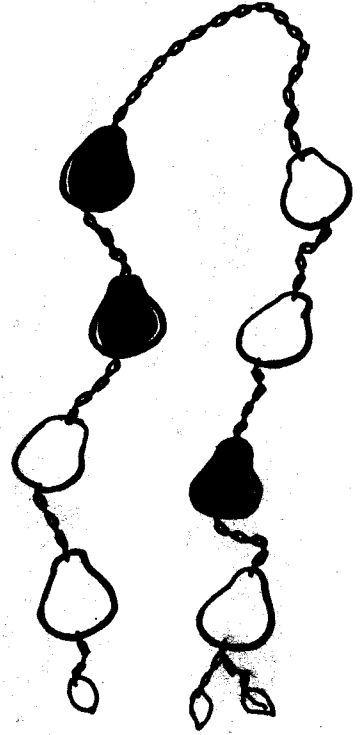
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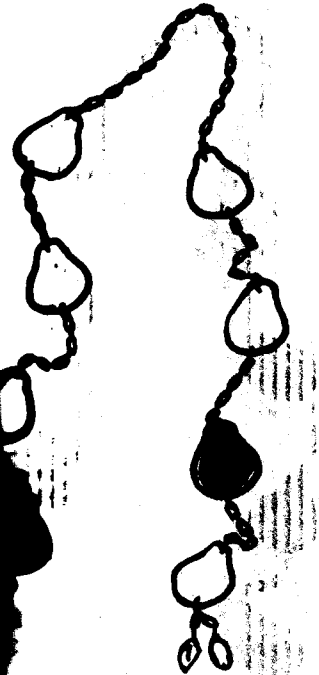
188 IRETE-IROSUN



189 IRETE-OWANRIN



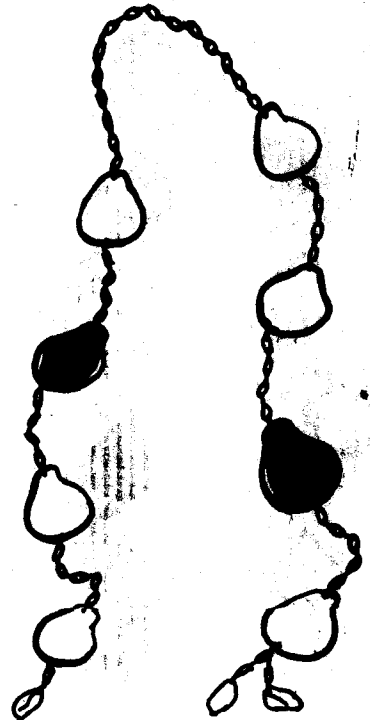
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192 IRETE-ETURA

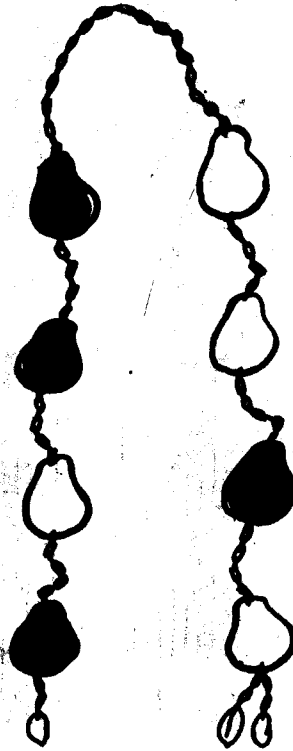


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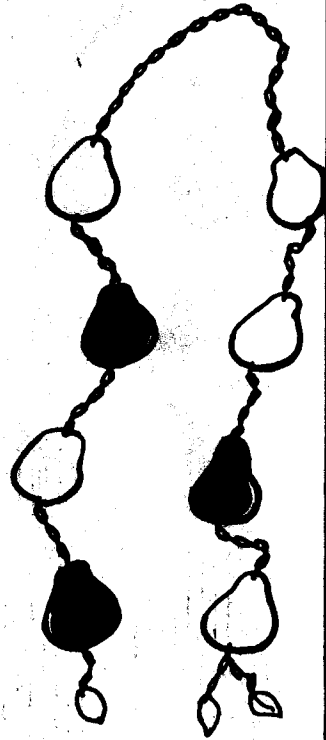
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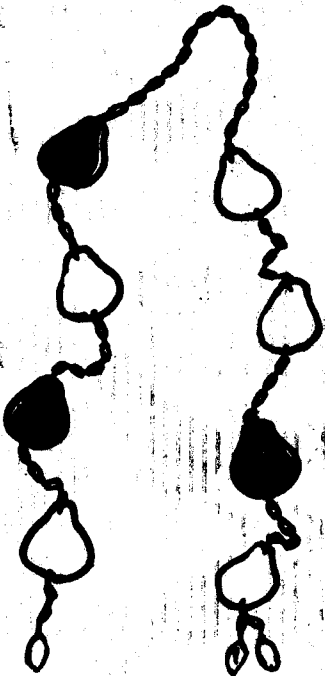
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195 IRETE-OSE



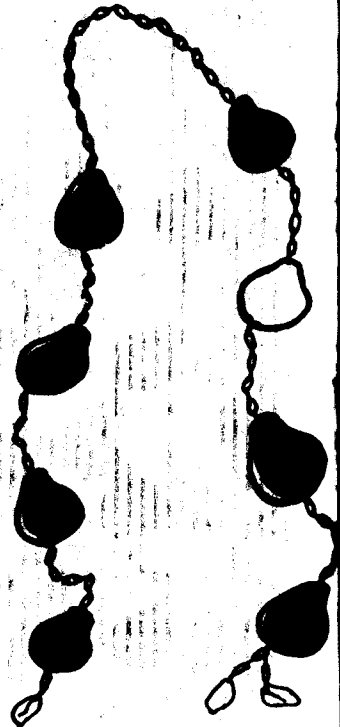
196 IRETE-OFUN



197 EKA-OGBE



198 EKA-OYEKU



OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

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200 EKA-IDI



201 EKA-OBARA



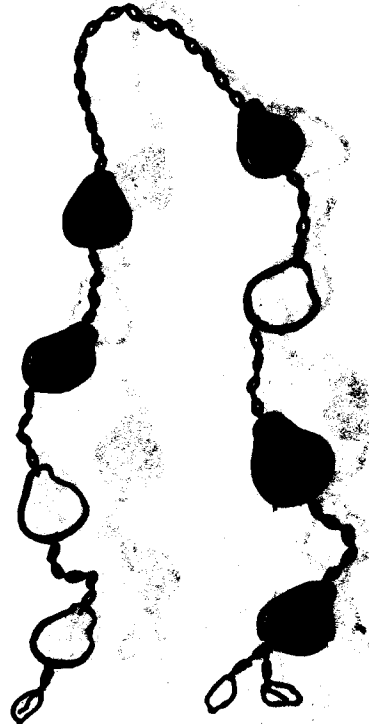
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203 EKA-IROSUN



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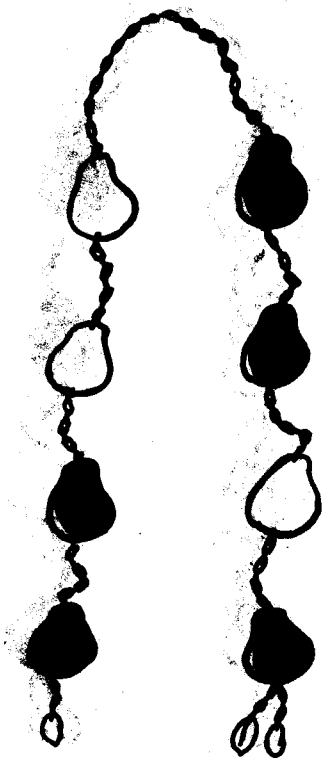


OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

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218 ETURUKPON IROSUN

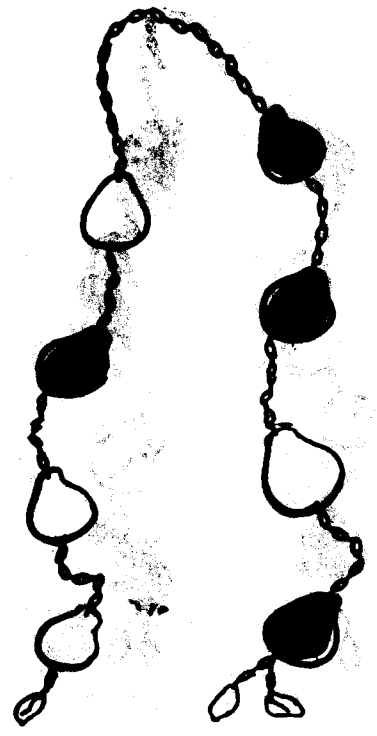
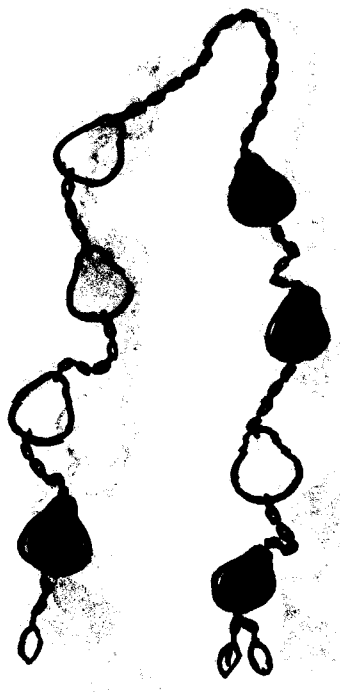
219 ETURUKPON OWANRIN



220 ETURUKPON OGUNDA

221 ETURUKPON OSA

222 ETURUKPON ETURA



OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

223 ETURUKPON-IRETE

224 ETURUKPON-EKA

225 ETURUKPON-OGBE



226 ETURUKPON-OFUN

227 OSE-OGBE

228 OSE-ÖYEKU



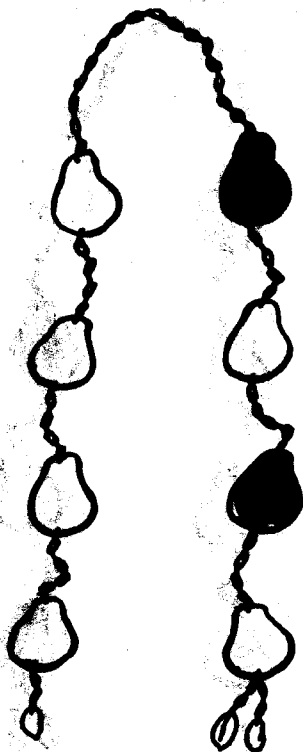
220 ETURUKPON-OGBE

OKPELE DIVINATIONAL SYMBOLS IN IFISM

241 OFUN-OFUN



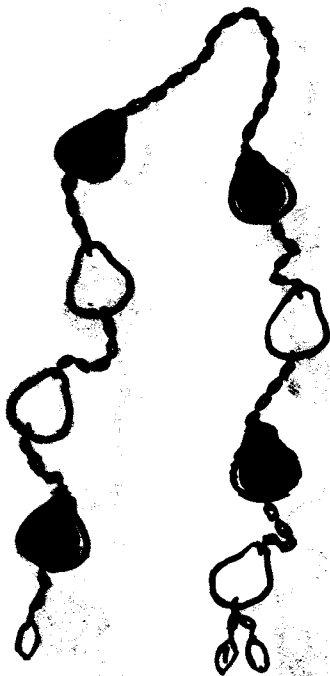
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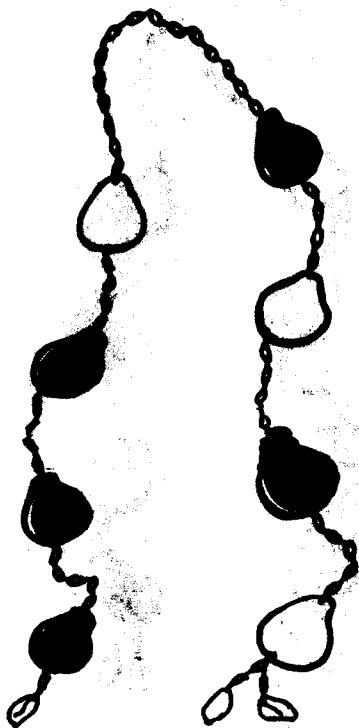
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245 OFUN-IDI



246 OFUN-OBARA

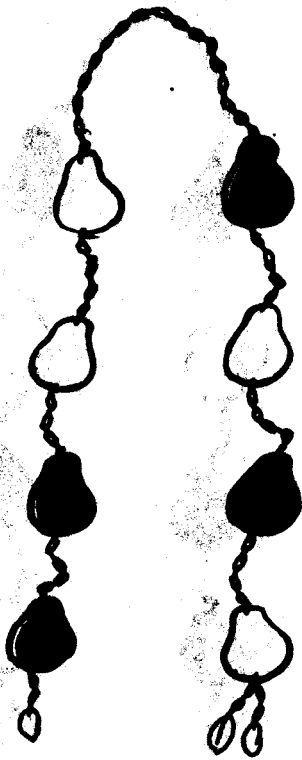


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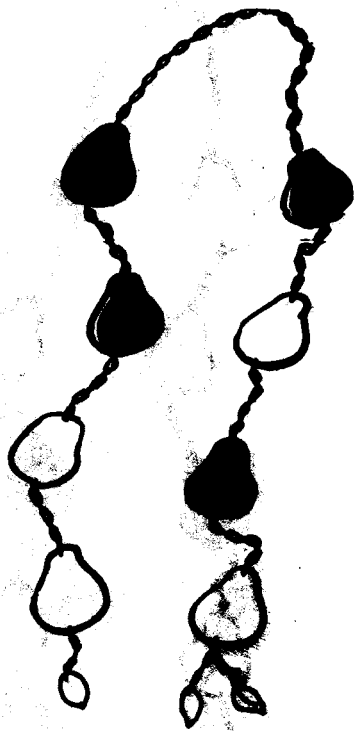
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248 OFUN-IROSUN



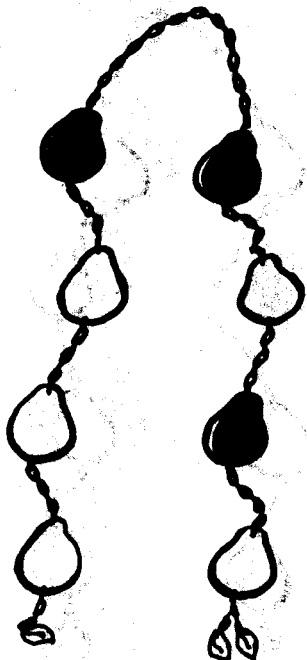
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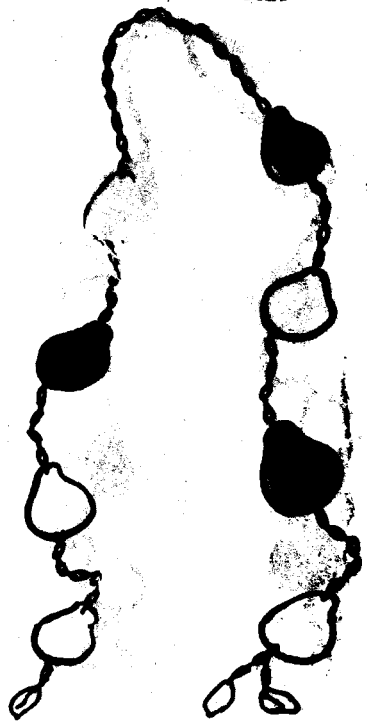
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251 OFUN-OSA



252 OFUN-ETURA



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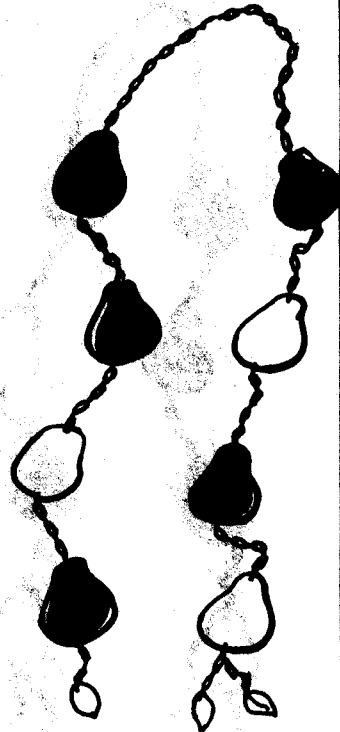
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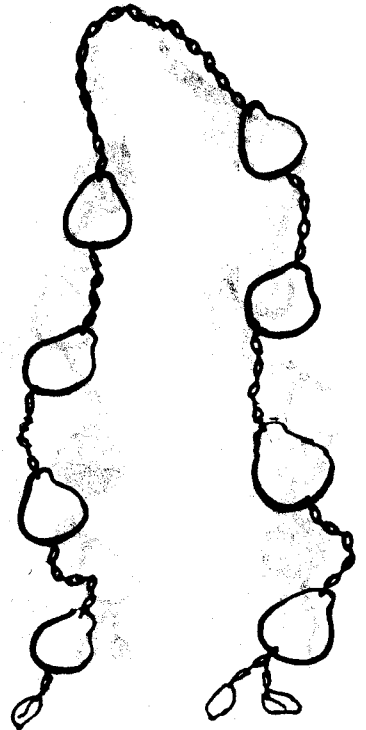
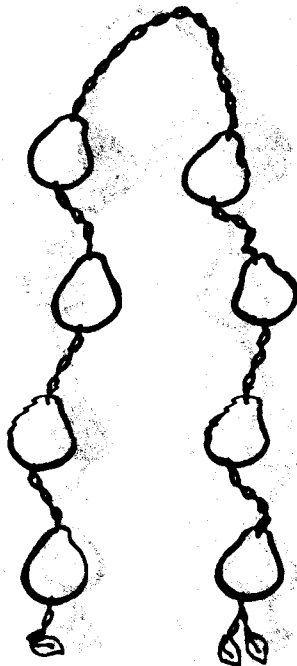
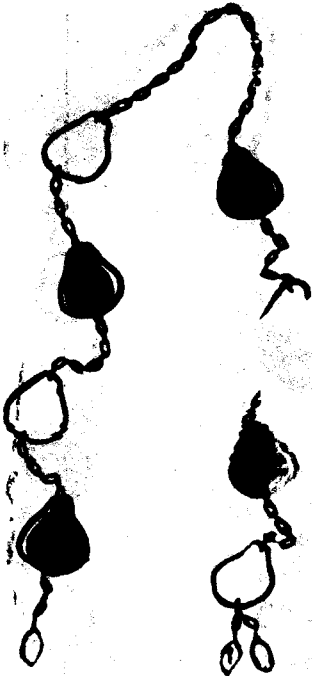
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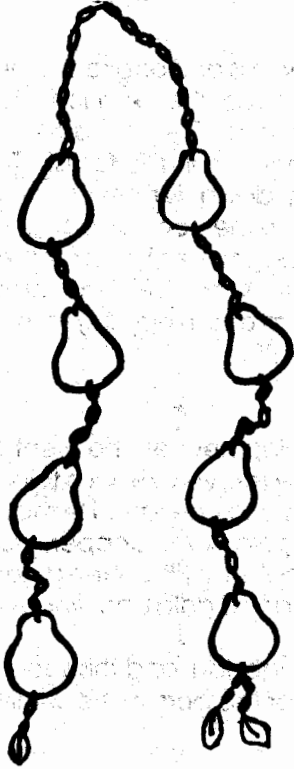


256 OFUN-OSE



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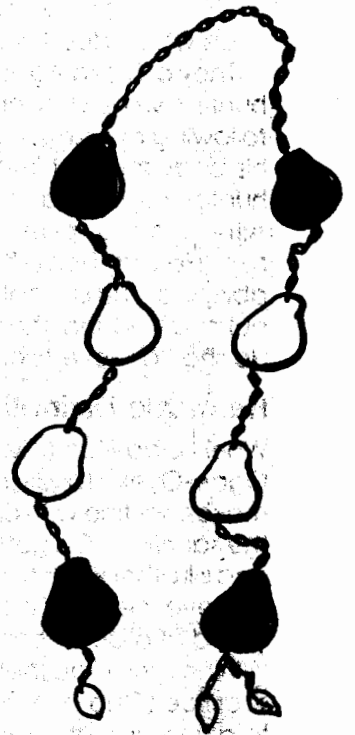
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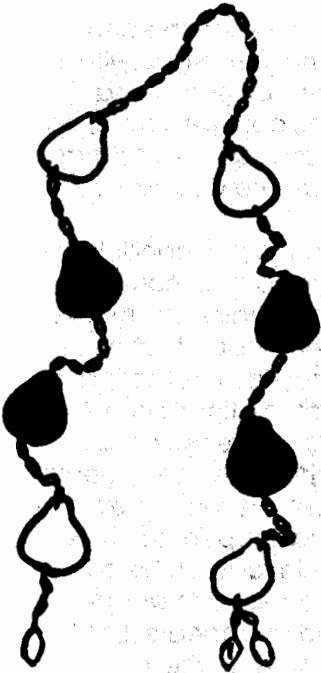
2 OYEKU-MEJI



3 IWORI-MEJI



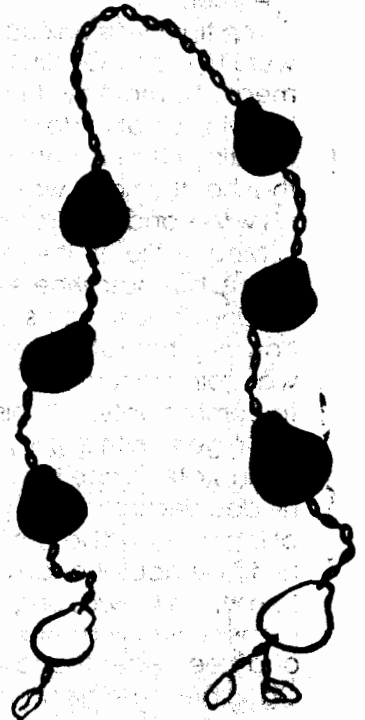
4 IDI-MEJI



5 OBARA-MEJI



6 OKONRON-MEJI



Eron ko abiru kilo nigbati won fi
lku re oba ojo kiini kin.

Meaning: The two diviners made divination for Agboya.

The bush animal with a big curved tail,
on which death sentence had been pronounced.

They advised Agboya to make sacrifice with two cow tails and one ram, when hunters were desperately looking for him to kill. He made the sacrifice. The following morning, his body was clothed with plenty of hairs. The hairs covering his body made it impossible for the hunters to recognise him in the forest. The hunter organised a search party which trailed him down for seven days. Although, they passed him by several times, they could neither see nor recognise him. He was then left in peace. That is how the saying began - Agboya eron ko, abiru kilo. The animal which does not die a sudden death. When this Odu comes out of divination, the person will be advised that his enemies are hunting for him. He should make sacrifice to escape the danger of death.

He made Divination for Oba-Lifon

When Oba-lifon (divinity of precious metals), was leaving heaven, he went to Ogbe-Oyeku for divination on what to do in order to live forever. He was told to make sacrifice with one hoe, one cutlass, piece of cloth and one ram. He made the sacrifice. On getting to the world, he gave birth to gold, silver, copper, lead and all other kinds of metals, all of which live for ever. That is why it is often asked, who ever heard of a dead silver? Who ever heard of a dead gold and who ever heard of a dead brass?

When this Odu therefore comes out of divination at Ugboodu, and this special sacrifice (Ono Ifa in Yoruba or Odiha in Bini), is made for the person, he will live to a very ripe old age.

He made Divination for the Tiger in Heaven

Ori Agba baba edon - Ariku baba awo - were the Awos who made divination for the tiger.

The tiger was anxious to find out what to do in order to prosper on earth. He went to Ogbe-Oyeku for divination. He was advised to make sacrifice with the meat of a monkey. Incidentally, the monkey was the tiger's bossom friend. Not knowing what to do to capture the monkey for sacrifice, he contrived a strategy for luring his friend into his trap. He caused a public announcement to be made that he (the tiger) was dead. He was dressed up in bed as if he was truly dead. His wives and children assumed a mourning posture.

Meanwhile, all the members of the animal family began to pay condolence visits to his house where he lay in state, to pay their last respects. The monkey was among the last visitors to pay their last respects to the tiger's remains. The monkey however hesitated before going because, he had a premonition that his luck was going to turn sour. However, when he was reminded of his moral obligation to commiserate with his friend's family, he decided to visit the tiger's home.

On getting to the tiger's house, a tigress directed him to where their husband lay in state. Since he was full of misgivings on the veracity of the tiger's death, he decided instinctively not to move too close to the corpse. He therefore stood at the door and began to sing a song imagining what would happen to him were he to be apprehended. He surmised how his captor would roast up his corpse to eat. As he was singing, the tiger jumped out of his death-bed to attack the monkey, who instantaneously escaped into the forest and disappeared on top of a tree. After the failure of his initial strategy, the tiger was advised to serve Ogun because his hunting expedition.

When this Odu comes out of divination therefore, the divinee should be advised to serve Ogun and to perform all important chores on market days.

He made Divination for Himself

Ifa fobi rakpa otun,
Agbigbore lakpa ori,

These were the awos who made divination for Oshorisa when he was coming to the world. He was advised to make sacrifice with a ram to his Ifa and to take to trading on getting to the world. He did the sacrifice.

On getting to the world he developed several enemies on account of his modest success in his business activity. Some of these enemies were actually preparing deadly charms to destroy him. He then made divination as a result of which he was advised not to fight back at his enemies. He was told however to make sacrifice with a duck to his Ifa and he-goat to Esu. He did the sacrifice.

Not long afterwards, his close associates who were the ones plotting against him began to die, one after the other.

He made Divination for Ogbe-Oyeku against Death

Onoghere ghere koode le Orun
babalawo Orunmila
Odifa fun Ogbe-Oyeku.

He made divination for Ogbe-Oyeku when he had a dream portending the danger of death. He was advised to make sacrifice with two rats, two fishes, two pigeons and a goat to Ifa, one he-goat to Esu and a dog to Ogun, so that if he escaped death, he might not lose any of his children. He was also to give one cock to appease Uja who had been suborned to throw a missile at Ogbe-Oyeku's house in order to destroy him. Uja had eaten the sacrificial cock before realising that she was forbidden to do so. That incapacitated her from carrying out her morbid design against Ogbe-Oyeku. At divination the person should be advised to make a similar sacrifice to avoid the danger of death.

Ogbe-Oyeku's Ono-Ifa (Odiha) for Long Life

Anuumina Agolo Oode,
Babalawo Ogbe-Oyeku,
Odifa fun Ogbe-Oyeku.

That is the name of the awo who made divination for Ogbe-Oyeku, telling him that he would live to a ripe old age, provided he made sacrifice with one he-goat, one goat, one ram, one pig, cow meat, 16 snails and three eggs. He collected the relevant leaves to prepare the Ono-Ifa sacrifice on a soap dish for him to be using. After this special sacrifice Ogbe-Oyeku lived a prolific life to a ripe old age. Eleven years later, the Awo visited him and he was compensated and glorified for the efficacy of the sacrifice he made.

He also made Divination for the Hedge-Hog and the Hunter

Before leaving heaven, the hedge-hog went for divination on what to do to live long on earth. He went for divination to:

Ogbe-yekutu-yekete
Baba mi olu
Odifa fun Ure
Abufun Ode.

After divination, Ure (Okhaen in Bini) was advised to make sacrifice to avoid war from Ogun on earth. He also advised the hunter to make sacrifice in order to

become the beneficiary of the carelessness of forest animals. The hunter made the sacrifice but the hedge-hog did not. That is why the hunter kills the hedge-hog with impunity when he goes hunting.

When this Odu comes out at divination, the person should be advised to serve Ogun with a dog in order to avoid accidental death.

He made Divination for longevity

When the elderly man was leaving heaven, he went for divination on what to do to live to a ripe old age on earth. He was told by *Ogbe-Oyeku-Baba molu-Ori-Agbo-Ori-ato*, to make sacrifice because he would live so long on earth that he would eat his own excreta. He was told to make sacrifice with a sheep and apple fruit (Osan Agbalumo in Yoruba and Otien in Bini). He made the sacrifice.

On getting to the world, he took to farming. One day, on his way to the farm he picked up an apple fruit which he later ate in the farm. While eating the fruit, he accidentally swallowed one of the seeds. Later in the day, he went to the latrine on the periphery of his farm which he traditionally used exclusively. Unknown to him, he passed out the apple seed along with his human waste.

After sometime, he became too old to continue farming. He then retired from the camp in his farm to live in the town. Meanwhile, the apple seed which he ate and excreted had germinated and developed into an apple producing tree. The tree began to bear fruits. Soon afterwards, the apple fruits began to ripe and to drop to the ground. When his children went to the camp, they discovered many apple fruits at the foot of the tree. They picked the fruits and brought them home to their parents. As he was sucking the fruit, he discovered that they were very sweet. He then asked his children for the source of the fruits, and they replied that it came from the apple tree which grew at the point near the farm which used to serve as his exclusive latrine. Upon deep reflection, he realised the manifestation of his earlier divination that he would live to be so old as to eat his own excreta. Indeed, he was the one who excreted the seed that grew into the apple tree that produced the fruits he was then eating.

When this Odu comes out at divination in Ugboḍu, the person will be told to make a special sacrifice with a sheep and an apple (Osan agbaluma in Yoruba and Otien in Bini) in order to live to a ripe old age.

Chapter 12

OGBE - IWORI

OGBE-BO-JU-WEYIN

II I
I I
I I
II I

Preparation before leaving heaven

Okulere Aiyere.

Oku aron loju aiyere.

These were the two Awos who made divination for Ogbe-Iwori before he left heaven for the world. He was told that he would be a team leader or gatherer and would perform great feats. He was told to make sacrifice to his guardian angel with a dead goat, a hen and 16 snails. He was also to give a he-goat to Esu and to feast Ogun with a cock, a dog and a tortoise. He made the sacrifices and then came to the world. Before leaving for earth, he was told never to travel anywhere away from home without consulting his Ifa because the only sore point in his life would be the risk of catastrophe occurring in his absence. That is why when this Odu comes out of divination, everybody around should immediately look backwards to the right and to the left and pray thus: "may Orunmila not allow battle to over-run me from the rear".

Ogbe-Iwori proves that a dead animal cries louder than a live animal

Ogbe-Iwori was born as the son of an Ifa Priest. As a child he was often gathering crowds around himself and he was unwittingly made the head of such gatherings. Even without formal training, he was able to assist his father in his Ifa art and practice. His proficiency as a young Ifa Priest was quickly acclaimed and it was soon realised that he was born for greatness. When he grew to be a man, he established an abode in the town of Ilu Ajoji in Oyo State of Nigeria. His house soon became the venue for the weekly meetings of all the Ifa Priests in the locality. He was the youngest of the lot. Meanwhile, it was time for the annual festival and the conference had decided to use a three-year old goat for the ceremony. The young Ogbe-Iwori suggested that it was better for them to use a dead goat for the ceremony because its cry was louder than that of a live one. The suggestion annoyed the elders who could not understand the rationale behind it. The ensuing argument was resolved by asking Ogbe-Iwori to come with his dead goat on the festival day while the rest would bring live goats for the traditional sacrifice.

On getting home, Ogbe-Iwori sounded Ifa who asked him for sacrifice with a goat but which he was to unskin to dry. He was to make a drum with the skin of the goat when it became dry and to take the drum to the venue of the festival on the scheduled day.

On the day of the festival, the other Awos brought in their live goats and requested Ogbe-Iwori to produce his dead goat and to prove that its cry would

be louder than that of the live goats around. Meanwhile, he concealed his drum and the stick for beating it inside his garment and proclaimed that he stood by his pledge to prove that a dead goat would sound louder than a live one.

At that point the Ojugbona (the priest who kneels down to offer sacrifice to Ifa) reminded the Awos that the festivity had to commence with the offering of he-goat to Esu in accordance with tradition. They then trooped to the shrine of Esu to offer the traditional he-goat. As the other Awos were going through the Esu ritual, Ogbe-Iwori began to beat his drum in a low andante. As the others were returning to the Ifa shrine for the main ceremony, he continued to beat the drum in allegro crescendo and all the awos began to dance to the drum-beat.

It then came to the time to offer the live goat to Ifa. He was again enjoined to produce his dead goat and he promised to do so after the live goats had been slaughtered. As the goat was being slaughtered, he continued to beat the drum to the melody of the traditional songs of offering being chanted by the Awos. The singing and dancing which followed was so melodious that everybody forgot about his dead goat. It was the Ojugbona who finally remembered to ask him to produce the dead goat to complete the ceremony. It was at that stage that he asked the other Awos which voice sounded more melodious - the voice of the live goat or the sound of his drum. In concert, they all confirmed that the sound of the drum was louder and more concordant than that of the slaughtered goats but wondered how that fact proved his point. He then replied that the skin used for preparing the drum he had been beating was extracted from the dead goat with which he served Ifa. Thereafter, they all conceded that he had made his point - and that truly a dead goat sounds louder than a live goat.

He prepares for gathering a crowd around himself

The name of the Awo who made divination for him before he became famous was called Ojikutukutu Gbede korun. He advised him to make sacrifice with the heads of two boa constrictors (Ejo Ere in Yoruba or Ikpin in Bini), two boa serpents (Okaa in Yoruba or Aru in Bini), one cock, one hen, two weaver birds (Eye kaare in Yoruba or Akha in Bini), two snails and two pigeons so that he might prosper and become famous. He did the sacrifice with the incantation that "One weaver bird does not settle in a town because they flock in multitudes". This is the main Ono-Ifa for Ogbe-weyin. After the sacrifice he became the pivot around which all principal occasions revolved in the town of Oyo. People came to him from afar and nigh for divination and salvation. We shall see later how he brought salvation to the people of Oyo.

The feud between Oyo and Iwo

Aakpa eku - omu oju siwaju.

Wonni kilode ti o fi oju siwaju.

Oni Iku wa iwaju lonkpa baba oun, Alajogun.

Nwon kpa eja, won se, omu oju seeyin.

Ki lode to mu oju seyin.

Oni Iku eyin lonkpa ye ye won la joogun.

Agbo, ofe aya orisa - ibiwon tinikon omu agbo.

Ibi ti sa lo - Ibiwon ti ju okpa orere si yin re.

Awon loon difa fun Eleengba to mo ni Ifa to mo loogun.

The rat was killed and turned his face forward after death. When asked why he looked forward at death, he explained that it was a frontal attack that killed his ancestors. The fish died and he turned his face backward. Asked why he turned his face backward at death, he explained that it was the battle from the

rear that vanquished his ancestors. The ram seduced the wife of a divinity but as he ran away, a spear was thrown at him which broke his horns. These are the names of the three awos who made divination for Eleengba who was vast in the practice of both Ifa art and traditional medicine.

His prowess had made it impossible for any successful war to be waged on the land of Oyo. Before Eleengba came to Oyo, the people of Iwo were always coming with impunity to harass Oyo and to take her citizens into slavery. The coming to Oyo of Eleengba marked the end of Iwo's onset on Oyo. He always advised the King of Oyo on what to do to checkmate enemy attacks. Meanwhile, the king of Iwo invited all the Ifa Priests in his kingdom to divine on how to evolve a strategy for capturing or luring Eleengba to Iwo, since they knew that he was the one protecting Oyo from outside attacks.

After divination, it was Ogbe-weyin who told the king of Iwo that it was impossible to do anything to Eleengba and that the only solution was to allure him from Oyo with his two principal weaknesses; a beautiful girl, and kolanuts. He added that the only acceptable girl would be the king's own daughter who was famous for her captivating busts, and who was of marriageable age. She was to go to Eleengba's house with a basket of kolanuts on her head to hawk. She was to be equipped with a clairvoyant mirror in hand.

The king of Iwo accordingly prepared the princess to go with a basket of kolanuts to sell at Oyo with the advice that she was to agree to marry the first man to woo her for marriage in Oyo. When the princess got to Oyo, she hawked her wares of kolanuts about until she got to the gate of Eleengba. When Eleengba heard the resonant voice of a damsel hawking kolanuts, he quickly came out to buy from her. On seeing the ensnaring beauty that hawked the kolanut, he instinctively smiled at her and the girl's face blushed, as she bashfully returned the smile. After offering to buy all the kolanuts from the girl, he took her inside his apartment with her basket of kolanuts. With very little or no persuasion, she accepted his offer of marriage and to live with him right away. The opening scene of the scenario contrived by the king of Iwo had manifested. It was the turn of the girl to trade her femininity to achieve the objective of her mission.

One day, as Eleengba went out on his daily chores, the princess took his fly-whisk (horse tail) roasted it and used the skin to prepare soup for him to eat. On getting home, he asked for his horse tail (Urukere) and she snapped back querying whether he left any money at home to buy meat. She explained defiantly that she had to use that divine instrument to cook because there was no meat at home. Eleengba did not lose his temper.

Next day, when he went out again for his daily round, the girl broke up his wooden divination tray (Akpako) and used If as wood to prepare fire for cooking. When Eleengba returned home to discover that his divination tray had vanished, the girl explained that she used If to prepare fire because there was no firewood at home. Once again, he kept his cool.

The following day she used his (Uranke) (divination staff) to make fire to cook. Once again, Eleengba nonetheless refused to lose his temper. The princess began to wander the stuff he was made of, for refusing to truckle to all provocations. After abortively subjecting him to several other provocations she began to firm up arrangements to return home. She told Eleengba that she had been away for three months and felt it was time to return home to reassure her parents that she was still alive. She explained that she considered it to be an act of disrespect to her and to her parents for keeping her in his house for contamination for three months without bothering to find out about her home or parents. In tears, she admonished that it was time to let him know that she had a home to which to return.

He however caressed and reassured her by saying that far from meaning to disrespect her or her parents, he had every intention of going with her to meet them formally as soon as she returned from her pending trip. Pretending to be satisfied with his explanation, the princess concluded her arrangements for returning home the next morning. As she got her things together she also took pains to pack Eleengba's traditional requirements for a short trip as if he was travelling with her. She collected his Okpelle, Akpako, Iyerosun or divination powder, dresses, Urukere and all the other minor things she thought he would require for a trip he did not bargain for.

On the next morning, she carried her luggage to set out for the journey. Before leaving, she promised to return to Oyo after spending a few weeks with her parents. As she was saying goodbye, she asked Eleengba whether he was not going to bother to escort her. He quickly put on his loin cloth to escort her briefly. This incident will explain later why Eleengba did not bother to perform any divination or sacrifice before leaving home because as far as he was concerned he was only going to escort her through the first few hundred meters of her journey in the traditional manner.

After escorting her for what might have been about 300 meters, he decided to return home. She retorted that there was a bandit-infested forest ahead, called Eluju-Shono-fe, which no woman could safely pass through alone. He readily agreed to see her through that stretch of forest. As soon as they got through that forest, he offered to return home. At that point she brought out the clairvoyant mirror given to her by her father and invited him to look at it to indicate that they had scarcely left the gates of Oyo. The mirror had a way of telescoping any stretch of distance.

Eleengba then agreed to continue to escort her. After covering what he reckoned to have been 10 kilometers, he thought it was time he returned home. Once again she told him that there was a more tortuous stretch of forest in front called Eluju-Shonb-konre, which no human being, let alone a woman, dared to pass through alone. He again agreed to see her through that forest. When he decided definitively to return home after putting that fearsome forest behind them, she again brought out her magic mirror which disclosed that they were already within ear-shot of her father's farm house. That was because Eleengba had vehemently refused to proceed any further.

She appealed passionately to him that she would look cheap and reckless before her parents if they knew that the man who had kept her for three months came close to his farm house without coming to identify himself through a courtesy call. She beseeched him melo-dramatically that her people might not even believe that she had been living with a man of presentable credentials - who loved a girl enough to keep her for three months but not sincerely enough to meet her family. In the light of her solemn appeal, he agreed to see her up to her father's farm house, promising only to exchange courtesies because he was not prepared for any formal meeting with anyone.

They got to the village farm and exchanged courtesies with the people there. He was greeted with flamboyant reverence. After receiving him with the traditional respect befitting a famous Ifa Priest, the people of the village assumed that he was on his way to the town to see the king of Iwo. As they offered to lead him in procession to Iwo town, he declined to proceed any further, on the ground that there was no previous arrangement for him to get as far as the town. He said that he only undertook to escort his wife on her way back home to her people, and that not only did he consider it inauspicious for him to visit his prospective father-in-law, he did not prepare himself for any journey. More specifically, he

explained that he left home neither with any dresses to change into nor with any of the appurtenances of his vocation.

At that stage, the princess brought out all his clothes and divination instruments including garments, slippers, Okpelle, Uranke, Urukere, Akpako and Iyerosun, all of which she had packed in her luggage in anticipation of that contingency. Although, he became bereft of excuses for not proceeding to Iwo, nonetheless he was visibly gripped with apprehension on what to expect at Iwo. He was now convinced that he had been baited into a trap. However, the dignity of manhood enjoined him to proceed to Iwo, and that was what he did. It was on getting to Iwo and to the palace of the king that he realised he had been living with the famous princess of Iwo. As a royal guest, he was given an elaborately furnished apartment to stay with his wife, where he was treated to unparalleled regal hospitality. As he was being entertained night and day with endless feasts sponsored in turns by the Palace Chiefs, the king of Iwo ordered his troops to launch an attack on Oyo.

Since Eleengba was not at home to provide the usual protection, the king of Oyo was captured and beheaded and all his chiefs and Army were taken captive. The severed head of the king of Oyo was brought in a special box to the palace of Iwo. When the content of the box was presented to the king, he called on his daughter to invite her husband to make divination to reveal the content of the box. Eleengba touched the box with his Okpelle and sounded it and his own Ifa (Ogbe-Iwor) appeared. He was immediately overwhelmed with grief and he began to sob, crying:

Iyari sogbe, nile nile Orun,

loogun fi je, Ile Iwo,

Olori Oba Oyo, niyi.

Whilst Eleengba continued to weep, the king of Iwo was flabbergasted as to how Eleengba knew the content of the box. The king of Iwo pacified him passionately by offering to release any of the war captives which he proclaimed to belong to him. Earlier in the morning, Eleengba had made sacrifice with two white hens. It was therefore time for Esu to intervene to fulfil the purpose of the sacrifice. Eleengba told the king that any of the captives having white hair on his or her head was his own follower.

Almost immediately thereafter, Esu converted all the white feathers of the hens with which Eleengba made sacrifice and used them to cover the heads of all the war captives whose heads immediately became white. When the king of Iwo saw that the heads of practically all the prisoners-of-war were covered in white, he released all of them to return home to Oyo with Eleengba. At that stage, Eleengba stopped crying, with an exclamation: Ogbe-beju weyin, meaning: it was the battle from the rear that vanquished him. From that day, anytime this Odu comes out of divination, both the diviner and the divinee will suddenly turn their heads backwards to the right and to the left saying: "may the battle of the rear not overcome me". With that, Eleengba collected all the captured inhabitants of Oyo as well as his wife to return home. On getting home, the elders asked him where he got his beautiful wife who was now formally adorned as a Princess and he replied;

Uya, nimonje, lule-Iwo,

shortened to (Iya-Ile Iwo)

abbreviated to Iyawo

meaning:

This woman is the result of the suffering I encountered at Iwo.

This is the origin of the word Iyawo in Yoruba, meaning: a new wife or a bride.

How Ogbe-Iweyin cures stomach ache and lumbago

Adoondo ado, addondo ado,
Akeregbe shebi adoon dagba,
Adifa fun kogbe-kaawo inu alara,
Kaawo eyin ajero,
Ogbe Oba tiwo, Inu alaara,
Koba tiwo eyin ajero,
Kaan kpee Ogbe mi eyin.

When Ogbe-Iwori comes out of divination the divinee is told that he is suffering from stomach ache which is also affecting his waist-line and that it was caused by the elders of the night. To cure it, the relevant leaves are obtained from the bush for a special preparation which takes two days to complete because it involves burning a whole cock and 10 eggs to prepare the medicine for the person to be taking every morning for seven days. It is believed that a total cure will be achieved within the seven day period of taking the medicine.

Ogbe-Iweyin takes a new wife

Alakpe suni - beere,
Olafa wowo tiwo

These are the two Awos who made divination for Ogbe-Iwori when he was going to marry one intelligent woman. He was told to make sacrifice with two hens and to serve his head with a goat. He made the sacrifices and he courted the woman successfully to become his second wife.

When it comes out of divination therefore for a person who is proposing to marry a new wife, he will be told that the woman has a beautiful face, heavy buttocks, and wide chest and that she will have five eloquent and famous children. He should however make a sacrifice for the woman to become his wife.

Ogbe-Iwori becomes the king of Ilu Ajoji

Okpa efubu she wa agbo,
Ototo deje lo ri ewe
Ugbin gboju logun gua,
Ogun eyin ju Ogbin.

These were the Ifa Priests who made divination for Ogbe-Iwori before he became an Oba. He was told to serve his head with a tortoise and a snail, a fruit of kolanuts which was not to be split open. He was told to fetch the tortoise and the snail by himself from the forest. He subsequently went to the forest and succeeded in procuring the materials for the sacrifice. As he sat down to serve his head, an unknown intruder came stealthily from his rear to steal them. When he looked back to see who the thief was, he saw the messenger who was sent by the elders of his town to invite him to return home to become their king.

He got dressed and left for the council hall where he was told that the populace had unanimously agreed to make him the Oba of the town. He retorted by saying that it was utterly wrong to appoint any king arbitrarily without prior divination. He then proposed that a number of proficient Awos should be invited to make special divination on who was to be appointed among seven nominees. The elders got their heads together and nominated seven names including Ogbe-Iwori's. Three Awos were assembled from different towns to

make the divination. At the end of the exercise, all the three Awos unanimously returned a verdict in favour of Ogbe-Iwori, and he was subsequently crowned as the Oba of Ilu-Ajoji.

If Ogbe-Iwori comes out for a new initiate at Ugboodu he should be told to offer sacrifice with a ram to his Ifa within five days. He should be advised to beware of the risk of robbery against him, and that there is an old woman in his family who is a witch. There is also a divinity in his family associated with a secret (Oro) cult. If the special sacrifices (Ono-Ifa or Odha) are promptly prepared this ODU should make the owner prosper to a position of eminence.

Why benevolence to relations yields ingratitude

Orire kil ri Iran mi loju

Adifa fun Ejimere

To 'nlo yo ikoriko ninu ofi

Ebo ki ore ma'da obi mani lowo

Lo'ma ru o, akiko, adiyé ni Ebo.

This Odu postulates that favour does not please one's relations. That was the name of the Awo who divined for an animal called Ejimere when he was going to rescue his brother, the lion who was trapped in a deep pit. The lion had remained for two days groaning for help from within the pit and no one ventured to go to his rescue. Meanwhile, Ejimere who belongs to the family of Chimpanzees, heard the cry of the lion from the top of a tree.

When Ejimere got to the pit, he saw the lion who begged him to help him out. Knowing how vicious the lion can be, Ejimere decided to run home first for divination and he met the Awo who told him to make sacrifice with a cock so that his magnanimity might not earn him death. He made the sacrifice without any delay. Thereafter, he returned to the pit. He told the lion to remember that favour does not traditionally turn out well for members of their family. He asked the lion whether he would not kill him after saving him, and the lion promised to do nothing of the sort. Ejimere then climbed a tree and held on steadfastly to its branch, dropping his long tail into the pit to bring out the lion.

As the lion came out with the help of the tail, Ejimere climbed upwards on the tree. When the lion got to the surface, he clenched his fist to attack. Ejimere told him to stop on his track and reminded him of his earlier proverb that benevolence to relations was often repaid with ingratitude. He told the lion that before killing him, he should beg God for forgiveness. As the lion removed his fist to pray to God for forgiveness, Ejimere escaped unto the top of the tree. That was how Ejimere survived the ingratitude of the lion.

At divination, the person should be told that magnanimity, especially to members of his family, does not favour him, and that he should make sacrifice so that his benevolence does not earn him ingratitude, if it is Uree, or death, if it is Ayewo.

How a dead goat sounds louder than a life goat - another variation

Irigi tigi

Odifa fun omo obule

Oni oku eron

Oni oru senu ju alye.

The dead goat makes a louder sound than a live one was the name of the Ifa Priest who made divination for the tree called Omobule in heaven. (Ethan-nogbukpo in Bini). Esu had proclaimed to the divinities that a dead goat sounded louder than a live one. All the divinities objected. A live goat was instantly produced and Esu was invited to demonstrate the veracity of his proclamation. Esu then got the trunk of a tree with a hole.

He began by beating the goat and it could only shout - Mo-bee or mee. He then killed the goat and unskinned it. Esu blew air into the skin of the goat and it was instantly dry. He put the dried skin over the hole on the trunk of the tree, and began to beat the drum. All those who heard the sound of the drum with a melodious song accompaniment, gathered to dance to the tune of the music. That was how Esu proved his point that unseen and unknown forces are more powerful than known and vocal ones.

When this Odu comes out of divination, the person should be told that he has too many powerful unknown enemies capable of harming him, and that the temperamental and vocal antagonists who he regards as his enemies cannot pull a hair off his body. He should be advised to buy a live goat in the market, kill it at the back of the house, and use the dead goat to serve Ifa to enable Ifa assist him in exposing his enemies. He should unskin the goat to prepare a drum for Ifa.

The Incantation of Ogbe-Iwori

Baba lawo kii gban gban gban,
 Komo Ifa tomaa da loju okpon.
 Baba lawo kii gban gban gban,
 Komo lbo to maa gba.
 Oro nwayi kii eni maa fi se eyaro.
 Awon me teta L'ouin difa fun Orunmila,
 Nijoti agba baa Orunmila shota.

Meaning

An Ifa Priest cannot be intelligent enough,
 To foretell the Odu likely,
 To appear on the tray at Ikin divination.
 An Ifa Priest cannot be intelligent enough,
 To foretell the result of Ibo divination
 An issue already known and revealed
 Can no longer be regarded as a Secret.

These are the names of the Ifa Priests who made divination for Orunmila in heaven, when the ram kept enmity with Orunmila. The names of those Ifa Priests are the incantation which an Ifa Priest should sing before slaughtering a ram to Ifa.

Divination for the man who Seduced the wife of another man

Ile to yoo ara iwaju,
 Kii eru eyin kii ye si ora.
 Eni ti ekun kpaa ejule reje,
 Bi o'ba ri omo agba riye yo, aasa.
 Adifa fun omo kunrin jogolo,
 Ti yio lofe laa ye, Aya ebite.
 Ebo ki o'maa ku ni ojiji loma ru.
 Obuko ati akiko ni ebo re.
 Kii ayera fun alagberi Obinrin.

Meaning

The ground which slipped the people in front,
Warns those coming behind them.
The person who lost a relation to a tiger,
Takes to his heels at the sight of a fox.

These are the names of the Awos who made divination for the young-man who was proposing to seduce the wife of a stronger man. He was advised not to do it. If he however was too committed to retreat, he was told to make sacrifice with a he-goat and a cock to avoid sudden death.

Chapter 13

OGBE - IDI



He made divination for Orisa-Nla to gain supremacy over all divinities

It was this Odu that revealed that Orisa-Nla was the last of the divinities to be created by God. It was when God discovered that Esu had infiltrated the ranks and taken over the minds of the first 200 divinities to be created, that He created Orisa-Nla (Obiemwen In Bini). He was to act as the embodiment of God's own desires, in terms of goodness and ethical objectivity in dealing with his 200 divinities. Like Esu warned God at creation however, Esu soon took over their minds and began to manipulate them to carry out his wishes. Instead of behaving as paragons of excellence, as God expected them to be, they became antagonistic and destructive to one another. That was how Esu demonstrated that although, he was incapable of creative work, he was nonetheless capable of mutilating and bastardising the products of God's own creative works. It was also this ODU that revealed that God neither created Esu nor evil.

Orisa-Nla is reputed to be the only divinity that Esu could not influence, although, it is a historical fact that Esu often tempted and procured many problems for him. Orisa-Nla was able to neutralise the machinations of Esu on account of the sacrifice he made.

Awon tolo tolo

Ofi kekere fun Urugban ye were

Adifa fun Orisa-Nla

Niijo t'oun lo a ni akpesi

la'aro awon obogbo ugba erumole.

Ofi obuko, agbo ati aso fifun ru ebo.

Meaning: The turkey is the only creature that develops beards from infancy that was the Awo who divined, for God the son before he, gained supremacy over all, the other 200 divinities.

After divination, he was told to make sacrifice with a he-goat, 201 coconuts, a ram and a white piece of cloth. Meanwhile, God invited all the other 200 divinities to admonish them for transgressing the commandments he gave them at creation. He told them that having fallen victims to the evil machinations of Esu, they had not only made evil to triumph over good, contrary to his expectation, but had also established the impression, that He created them to do evil. God proclaimed that He is the embodiment of truth, goodness and justice, and that whatever evil they did, confirmed them as servants of Esu and not as his own sons. He then warned that as long as they engaged in the practice of evil, any act of evil would limit the efficacy of the authority (ASE) which he gave them, whilst any act of truth and goodness done by them would increase their powers.

At that point, Ogun, who previously regarded himself as the eldest and most powerful of the divinities, asked God why in spite of all his powers, he allowed Esu to plunder them. Ogun continued, was it not God Himself that created Esu and gave him the authority he wielded? Elenini - the divinity of obstacle (Idoboo in Bini) also asked God whether he was not capable of destroying the forces of evil from the face of heaven and earth, since God was all-knowing, ever present and all-powerful.

After a long pause, God ultimately proclaimed that he was not an architect of evil as they had come to think. He asked them whether they as his own chosen servants, were capable of locking up their children in a room and putting a wolf or an *enfant-terrible* in their midst to live with them. They all answered negatively.

At that point, God revealed that he was not the creator of Esu. All the divinities looked at one another in astonishment. It was the turn of OBALIFON to ask who created Esu, if it was not God Himself. On the other hand, Orunmila added that he had always believed since the first temptation he got from Esu when he went in search of snails for sacrifice, that God created Esu to test the steadfastness of the other divinities. God then asked them why Esu was never physically present at the five daily meetings of the divine council if he was one of them. They all remembered, in fact, that Esu had never been physically and formally invited to meetings of the divine council. God added that like the turkey who developed beards from infancy, Esu had his own independent existence and power from the beginning of time. And that both Esu and Himself lived in AIMA (ORIMA in Bini) or the PRIMEVAL before He God began his creative works. He disclosed that the primeval was a large sphere of total darkness in which He, God, occupied a microscopic enclave which carried the only nucleus of light and life, and which in the fullness of time, metamorphosed into the existence of the divinosphere, heaven and earth. God ended the account by revealing that it was when He created the divinity of light to eliminate the entire darkness of the primeval that Esu was provoked into vowing to disrupt His creative efforts. He recalled that Esu had boasted that any vegetation He created under the sceptre of light, would be his own farmland, and that any living being He created would become his (Esu) servants.

God concluded His expose by proclaiming that He was determined to call off the bluff of Esu by creating Orisa-Nia as his own representative, having his own features of steadfastness and determination. After introducing Orisa-Nia, the other divinities were unanimous in acclaiming him as their leader who would be the Chairman of the Divine Council - whenever God was not in a position to attend. That is how Orisa-Nia was proclaimed as the son of God or God the Son.

When this Odu comes out of divination, the person will be told that he will give birth to a last son, who will prosper and become more powerful than his other children provided sacrifice is made for him. His prosperity, fame, and influence would only blossom after serving his head with as many as 201 coconuts.

Ogbe - Idi

I I
 II I
 II I
 I I

Ale Ofoju, Eedi eti.
 Ale Ogboro, Eereno.

These were the two Awos who made divination for Ogbe-Idi when he was coming to the world. He was told to make sacrifice with a he-goat to Esu, who was going to be his main problem on earth. He was advised to make frequent sacrifices to Esu. He was told that if he offered food always to Esu, while on earth, he would have his everlasting support and cooperation. On the other hand, if he failed to do so, Esu would constitute a major obstacle to deprive him of success in whatever he did on earth. In heaven however, he was told to offer a he-goat to Esu and a tortoise to his Ifa. He did the sacrifice and left for the world.

When Ogbe-Idi comes out at Ugbodu the initiate should be advised never to engage in the fishing business in any shape or form. He should be advised also to refrain as much as possible from eating fish in order to avoid the risk of malignant stomach trouble. The person should be told that he suffered from stomach pains during infancy and that it could relapse unless he gave up eating fish.

Ogbe-Idi reveals how cheating began among the children of the 200 divinities in the world

In view of the fact the earth was still relatively water-logged from the flood which terminated its first habitation, there was not much for its inhabitants to do. They resorted to the use of nets for fishing. Esu was also fishing with them with his own net. It turned out that the net of all the others were never catching more than one or two fishes at a time whereas the one belonging to Esu was always full of catches overnight.

When the others thought that the secret of Esu's success in fishing lay in positioning the mouth of his net to face downward whilst others positioned the mouth of theirs upwards, they decided to follow his example. In spite of all these contrivances, only Esu's net used to catch fishes elaborately.

The other divinities were at a loss on what to do to checkmate the challenge of Esu. They all got together and persuaded him to go to heaven on an errand, as a diversionary strategy for getting Esu out of the way. They told Esu to go to Ogun in heaven to cast new instruments for them to use for fishing. The instruments included hooks, spears and giant needles.

After setting his net in the evening, Esu decided to leave for heaven early the next morning. As soon as he put his foot outside his house, he was instantly in heaven. However, when he got to Ogun's house, it was still fairly dark and Ogun's factory had not opened. Moreover, Ogun was preparing to answer a call at the palace of God. As Ogun was about to leave for God's palace, Esu arrived to beseech him to manufacture some instruments for him. Ogun told Esu to wait for him to return from an invitation to God's divine palace. Since Esu was pressed for time, he decided to make Ogun stay to do his work for him right away.

Meanwhile, Ogun's children were eating and Esu focussed his gaze on one of them who instantly began to choke with a hiccup. As the child struggled for breath, Esu feigned concern at his suffering, whereas he was responsible for his problem.

In a subsequent rescue operation, Esu went to the back of Ogun's house to pluck some leaves, but what he actually did was to untie the rope with which he mysteriously tied up the child's oesophagus. As soon as the rope was untied the child obtained immediate relief. In a gesture of gratitude, Ogun immediately postponed his trip to God's palace, and assembled his equipment to produce the materials that Esu came to collect from him. As soon as Ogun ignited his furnace, Esu blinked an eye to the fire, and all the materials on the fire sharpened into the required sizes, design and quantity. When Ogun brought them out of the

furnace, he went to fetch water with which to cool them. Esu told him not to bother cooling them. Thereafter, Esu blinked a second eye and all the materials became glittered to the astonishment of Ogun himself. Esu collected all the materials and stretched out one foot which immediately transported him back to earth. On getting home, Esu discovered that all the divinities had stolen the fishes caught by his net. He then admonished them to save themselves the embarrassment of being disgraced. He announced that the price to be paid for their transgression was 30k. All the others readily paid the fine, except Orunmila who bluntly refused to pay.

Orunmila sounded his Ifa who advised him to slaughter a he-goat and to fry the meat keeping it by the road side. Meanwhile, Esu concluded arrangement to return to heaven where he proposed to accuse Orunmila of stealing. Orunmila had fried the meat of the he-goat and kept it by the roadside concealing himself nearby. The inviting smell of the meat of the he-goat soon got to Esu's house and he could not resist the temptation to find out where it was. When he saw the meat, Esu knew that it was Orunmila who prepared it to tempt him. He then passed by the meat without touching it. Seeing Esu pass by, Orunmila blew his divination powder (Iyerosun) with an incantation into the air. That made the aroma of the he-goat's meat more alluring. Esu then returned to the spot to feed on the meat. He sat down to a sumptuous meal and finished up the meat.

As he was cracking the skull of the he-goat, Orunmila emerged from where he was hiding, and instantly accused Esu of stealing the meat he prepared for feasting the 200 divinities. With the balance of theft accusation on both sides, Esu was left with no option but to compromise on the accusation he earlier preferred against Orunmila, because he too had stolen in contravention of the laws of heaven.

The previous day, Esu had made a public announcement that Orunmila had stolen because he was the only one who refused to pay the fine he prescribed. As part of the peace settlement between Orunmila and Esu, the latter was required to reverse his earlier announcement. On the next day, Esu went round again and announced that Orunmila was not a thief at all and that what he said was that he was going to be made a chief. Orunmila was subsequently made a chief. Esu also agreed to remain in the perpetual service of all the divinities especially Orunmila, provided they gave him food from time to time.

That is why when Ogbe-Idi comes out of divination, the person should be advised to serve Esu with a he-goat and to fry the meat and deposit it by the road side in order to avoid the risk of robbery or of being falsely accused of robbery.

Other heavenly works of Ogbe-Idi

He made divination for the moat (Odi in Yoruba and Iya in Bini).

Ogbe-Idi, din din, Odifa fun Odi,

Abufun yara eyinre.

Ogbe-Idi made divination for the moat surrounding the town. Kii aye Obaje, igharafa ulu, aatu aye odishe; meaning, for the moat surrounding the town or at the entrance of the town to die of neglect, the elders of the town would convene a conference to do something to repair it.

If it comes out of divination, the person should be told that no matter how difficult things might be with him, he would find someone who would come in the nick of time to his rescue. The person will be told that he is crying for money and that it will come to him soon. The sacrifice is done by cooking beans, corn and coconut adding akara and eko with a cock for Sango and Salama.

The palm oil is poured on the ground outside and the divinities are invoked to

come and eat on the spot. Thereafter all present will eat out of the cooked materials.

The protective force of Orunmila

Orunmila asked his followers, what tree it is that is strong enough in the bush to back a person and remain the protective force behind him, as well as directing him on what to do, and what not to do?

His followers replied that it was the oak tree. Orunmila retorted that the oak tree is not strong enough to support anyone because it is prone to being up-rooted.

When he put the question the second time, his followers asked, what about the iroko tree? He replied that the iroko tree could not support anybody because it was susceptible to being felled or up-rooted. His followers then considered that they knew of no other tree in the forest having the capability of protecting and supporting people and telling them the future.

He replied that the palm tree is the only tree having that capability just as he "Okpe shaga Okoodoyii, abikulu, ara weerewe. Oni oun nikan lotu feyin tilka shubo orun yuuurutu", meaning: "I Orunmila 'am the only one that stands behind your back and tell you about the future". The sacrifice is made with a pigeon. If the enquirer is a farmer, he should be told that there is a palm tree belonging to Orunmila near his farm. He should go and serve the palm tree with a pigeon. If on the other hand he is not a farmer he should be told to serve his Ifa with a pigeon.

If Ogbe-Idi comes out at Ugboodu, the person should be advised to serve his head with a coconut always, using the milk of the coconut to wash his head from time to time. Prosperity will only come to him after he has served his head with coconut two hundred and one times during his life span.

Physician heal thyself

Orunmila had built up considerable reputation for himself from his philanthropy and preparedness to help others in solving their problems. It was his own turn to have his share of problems. These were however minor problems which had the effect of attacking his peace of mind. Since he was apparently unable to solve those problems, the young people of the town began to ridicule him calling him the doctor who could save others from their problems but incapable of doing anything to help himself.

It was then that he invited the Ifa Priest living with him, called Fiiirin Jigini to make divination for him. After divination, he told him to make sacrifice with three rats in order to be able to solve the minor problems besetting him. The three rats were called Eku-emo, Eku-edaa and Eku-Afo. He quickly made the sacrifice and all his problems abated. It is this same sacrifice that the Awo advises a divinee to make, when it comes out at divination, after telling him that people are laughing at him for helping others, while not being able to help himself.

He made divination for Ejo and Eku

Ejo (snake) and Eku (rat) were brothers. Once upon a time, there was famine in the world, as one of the perennial heavenly punishments for the sins of mankind. Very many people were dying of starvation. However, no matter how widespread the famine was, there was always food in the palace of the king. Meanwhile, Ejo went to befriend one of the king's wives through whom he was having regular meals. Eku, who lived in the same house with Ejo, began to wonder why in spite of the universal famine and starvation, Ejo was still looking

fresh and robust.

Ejo replied Eku that he had taken out a comprehensive insurance against the prevailing famine but that he was forbidden to disclose the secret to anyone. Ejo however revealed to Eku that he was privileged to be having free meals from a friend who had given him an injunction not to allow anyone to accompany him to her abode. There was however a device at the entrance to the king's harem prepared for trapping any intruder. The trap could not catch Ejo because of the peculiar size and shape of his physique. That is why it is said that a trap does not catch a snake. Those appointed to watch the trap at the entrance to the king's harem were the cock, who was expected to crow at the approach of any intruder, Ugba or the Calabash and Awoo (clay pot) both of which were suspended over the gate and expected to fall to the ground as soon as the cock crew. The noise from their fall was expected to alert the human police keeping vigil over the entire royal household.

Eku however succeeded in persuading Ejo to accompany him on his next trip to wherever he was getting food from, because he was at the point of dying of starvation. Much as Ejo was prepared to oblige his brother, he was not sure of how to ferry Eku through the trap without being caught. Eku however came up with the proposal that Ejo could swallow him up so that they could both go through the trap as a single passenger. The plan was agreed. Unfortunately however, Eku on his part had meanwhile eaten some maize which inflated his abdomen. Eku entered the mouth of Ejo and they were on their way. With Eku in his stomach, the size of Ejo had increased considerably. As the snake was passing through the trap he was caught by it. Having been caught by the trap the snake begged to be released. The trap refused on the ground that he was caught because he came with someone else inside his stomach. The snake fought with all the weapons at his disposal to no avail.

The cock in turn, opened his mouth to crow. But again, the snake begged him not to crow. The cock refused since he had a job to do. The cock then crowed - Uren alaana kpee ejoo, hoo (i.e. the trap has caught the snake). When Ejo's lover heard the crow of the cock, she ran out of the harem and quickly severed the head and the tail of the snake and kept them in her drinking water-pot. The clay pot and the calabash meanwhile dropped to the ground to alert the police constables watching the palace. They came out in full force to search for the intruder. They met the snake without its head and tail on the trap and wondered what such a creature was coming to do in the king's harem. They could not unravel the puzzle. The snake had however died in the cause of doing a favour to a relation.

When Ogbe-Idi comes out of divination therefore, the person should be advised to refrain from risking any favour that could either take his life or get him into trouble. He should also be advised to refrain from any extra-mural flirtation, and of harbouring any visitors. He should be told to give a he-goat to Esu in order to avoid the risk of carrying someone else's problem.

Ogbe-Idi settles down in Iwara-Ola

Ogbe-Idi ka ka ka, Oge-Idi ele, le

Ogbe-Idi la - la Aran Ogun,

Ogbe-Idi la - la Aran Orisa,

Odifa fun Orunmila ni jo shawo lo si Iwara-Ola.

These are the Awos who made divination for Ogbe-Idi when he was going to settle down for Ifa art and practice in the town of Iwara-Ola. He was told before going, to make sacrifice with six coconuts and six cocks. He was to serve his head with three cocks, and three coconuts while the remaining cocks and coconuts

were to be used to prepare a special Ifa sacrifice for him. When he got to the place, he realised plenty of gains, money, wives and children. At the height of his prosperity, he sang in praise of the Ifa Priests who made divination and sacrifice for him and also praised Olodumare in the following poem:-

Aje timo ma ni,

Ola she ni wara lowa,

Ire gbogbo niwara, niwaro, niwara le wa...

If Ogbe-Idi comes out for a person at Ugboodu, he should be told that he has not led a settled life before his Ifa initiation and that prosperity will only come to him if he goes back to settle down near his home town because, Ifa has advised him that everything he is looking for is waiting for him nearer home.

Ogbe-Idi made divination for averting the danger of having only one child

Eni wure Ogbe-Idi,

Olawure Ogbe-Idi,

Adifa fun ekiiri bolojo

Omo abikan kpadi mofe.

He made divination for a woman called Ekiiri bolojo when she was going to marry. He advised her to make sacrifice in order to avoid the probability of having only one child. She did not make the sacrifice. She subsequently got married and gave birth to one child. Try as she did to have another child, she did not succeed.

On the other hand, if this Odu comes out of divination for a person especially a woman having only one child, she will be told to make sacrifice to obviate the risk of losing her only child. Even if she has many more children she will lose them one after the other, until it remains only one of them.

He made divination for the Big Bat and the King Fisher

The bat and king fisher flew surrepticiously to the earth without making any divination or sacrifice in heaven. Ogbe-Idi told the big bat to make sacrifice with a goat, a hen, and an empty sack of money and to give he-goat to Esu in order to have children. The big-bat is called Oloja-Oloworon in Yoruba and Owa in Bini. On the other hand, the king fisher (Okpeghe in Yoruba and Ukpomobie in Bini) also went to Ogbe-Idi for divination on how to have good health and prosperity. Ogbe-Idi advised him to make sacrifice with a goat, a he-goat, and four pigeons.

The bat was not satisfied with the divination made for him and so, decided to make another divination on earth. On his part, the king fisher just flew away from heaven without making any sacrifice. While on earth the bat went to earthly diviners for fresh divination. The earthly Awos were annoyed with him for undermining the advice he was given by Ogbe-Idi in heaven. They therefore resolved to deceive him by assuring him that he would have children if he could make sacrifice to his grand-parents. The advice did not give him any satisfaction either.

Once again, he decided to return to Ogbe-Idi in heaven. When he got to Ogbe-Idi's house to make the sacrifice, he was told that his initial hesitation had doubled the sacrifice. Nonetheless he produced all the materials for the sacrifice. After making the sacrifice he went home, and the following month, his wife became pregnant and she eventually had a child. The bat was so happy that he decided to go and thank Ogbe-di with elaborate gifts, vowing that he would only express his gratitude to the Awo in heaven, and not the one on earth.

That is why to this day, the bat bows his head downward, when standing on top of a tree, thus expressing his gratitude to the Awo in heaven.

The poverty and sickness of the king fisher on the other hand have stuck with him incurably ever since, because they came with him from heaven. When Ogbe-Idi therefore comes out at Ugboodu, the person should be told to beware of a relapse of an illness he previously suffered from, unless he makes the sacrifice prescribed for the king fisher.

He made divination for the people of Oro

Kpengele ajo fidi gbe di
Adifa fun won ni Ode Oro
Nijo ti ode Oro fi Omi oju,
Shu bere omo tuurutu.

The divinity of secrecy (Oro) wandered into the forest and founded the part of Kwara State of Nigeria now called Oro. He was often served annually in what was always a sumptuous festival. After sometime however, subsequent generations neglected the annual festival to the Oro divinity resulting in general deprivation. There was endless famine in the town and no woman become pregnant for a long time. Many of the able-bodied men and women began to emigrate southwards and northwards.

One day, the elders reasoned among themselves and decided to send a message to Oke-Mesi (now Ife) for divination, on what to do to overcome their problems. They were told that they had neglected the worship of their patron divinity (Oro) for too long. They were advised to offer sacrifice to him with two rams, two goats, two hens, two wooden images and two snails. Ogbe-Idi the diviner of the time, also told them that their town had been largely depopulated through emigration but that if they made the sacrifice, although their emigres might not return home bag and baggage, they would nonetheless, enrich the town with the fortunes acquired from their sojourn to distant lands. He finally advised them that their land was stony and not suitable for prolific arable farming. Therefore their generic occupation was trading.

As soon as they returned home, the sacrifice was made. On the day of the sacrifice, there was a heavy rain which marked the beginning of the return of prosperity and childbirth to the town. Subsequently, the children of Oro living abroad began to return home at the end of every year for the Oro festival.

When this Odu comes out of divination for someone he should be told that he had neglected his guardian divinity and should go and offer sacrifice to it. He should be told however that he is not living in the land of his birth because his fortune and prosperity lies away from home. He will prosper abroad and return home safely with his wealth. He should also be advised to visit the land of his birth at least once a year to make a feast there after he becoming prosperous.

Divined for Ifajimi when his wife was lying to him

Ogbe Idi ka ka ka
Ogbe Idi le le le
Awa kofi otinwa
Da owuro ola
Adifa fun Ifajimi nijoti,
Aya re kpuro fun.

Meaning We will not leave our drinks,
To be given tomorrow morning,
Give us the drink now.

These are the names of the Awos who made divination for Ifajimi when his wife was not telling him the truth. That is why as soon as Ogbe Idi appears at divination, the diviners should immediately ask the divinee to produce drinks for his or them.

The wife of Ifajimi was often cheating on whatever she bought from the market. If she bought goods worth 10k, she would extort the equivalent of 50k from the husband. The Ifa Priest told him that his wife was cheating and that Orunmila was going to punish her in a manner that would affect him unless he made sacrifice, after which, she would be exposed. He was told to make a sacrifice with a cock and a hen. The next day, he told the wife to buy a cock and a hen from the market, and he gave her, the equivalent of 50k to buy the two. She insisted that the current price in the market was 50k for each of them and demanded ₦1 from the husband. He refused to burge because 50k was all that he had at home. The woman went to the market in the morning and returned home with the money on the ground that it could not buy the two as she had earlier intimated.

As soon as she returned home however, Esu, directed a girl hawking fowls on her head in a basket, to come by Ifajimi's house. the girl was shouting:

Ewa ra abo ati akiko adiye - o

That is, come and buy hen and cock. When Ifajimi heard the hawking chant of the young girl, he came out to ask for their prices. The girl gave the prices as ranging between 15k and 25k each. Ifajimi bought the hen for 15k and the cock for 20k. Before the girl went away, Ifajimi invited his wife to verify the prices from the horse's mouth. The girl confirmed to her that the price ranged between 15k and 25k each. With that dialogue, the girl went away and the cheating of Ifajimi's wife had been exposed. As punishment for her cheating, and to avoid the wrath of Orunmila, the Ifa Priest who later came to make sacrifice fined the woman the equivalent of the cost of the cock and the hen and warned her to stop cheating forthwith, because, Orunmila would expose her, as she was on that occasion.

He made divination for Orunmila when animal-kind reported him to God

Ogbe Idi ka ka ka
Ogbe Idi le le le
Ogbe kura kura
Ogbologbo Okpe,
Nihu imu leyin
Adifa fun Orunmila
Ti egosan eranko.

They made divination for Orunmila when 1,800 animals trooped to heaven to report him to God. They accused him of killing them indiscriminately, whether or not they did well or badly. They argued that God created him and them to live side by side. Why then was he killing and feeding on them carnivorously, when God created man to live on the fruits, vegetables, tubers of plants and the meat of transgressing animals.

Orunmila was advised to make sacrifice with a he-goat to Esu and he did. Thereafter Esu came to intimate Orunmila of the accusation leveled against him before God by animal-kind. Esu then advised Orunmila to deny the charge before God, but that before going to answer the subpoena sent to him by God, he should put his house in order by clearing all the bones and skulls of animals in his house. Orunmila did as he was advised by Esu.

When he got to the divine palace of God, he met all the animals seated. God read the charge to him that he (Orunmila) did no other work apart from killing animals on a daily basis. He denied the charge. At that point, the animals disclosed that if God sent errands to search Orunmila's house, they would find his house strewed and laden with the skulls of their demised brethren. God then asked Orunmila whether he would agree to the verification proposed by the animals. He answered that he had no objection whatsoever. God then sent a search party to find out if any animal bones, skulls, meat, or blood, abound in Orunmila's house.

Before leaving for Orunmila's house the search party asked the animals whether they had with them as evidence the bones of their sons, friends, relations or kindred removed from Orunmila's house. They were dumb founded.

When the search party got to Orunmila's house, they produced the search authority given to them by God, to members of Orunmila's household and ordered everybody to leave the house. They then moved in and searched the roof, counters, fire-place, walls, interior and exterior shrines, as well as the rubbish dump of Orunmila's house. They even excavated freshly dug holes in his compound but found no skulls, meat, blood or the bones of animals.

Satisfied that there was no truth in the allegation of the animals, the search party returned to the palace of God, where they accused the animals of bearing false witness against Orunmila. On hearing the fact that the search party found no evidence whatsoever, all the animals became dumb founded. In His verdict God proclaimed that from then on, in view of the lies told by the animals, He was removing from them the power of speech. They would no longer be able to report anyone with the words of their mouth. God then turned to Orunmila and gave him an everlasting authorisation to be killing and feeding on animals at will.

At divination, the person should be told that an accusation is imminent on something which he is guilty of and that a search is likely to be made on his houses. He should offer a he-goat to Esu and remove from his house all probable contraband items and thereafter to deny the charge. He will come out of it in flying colours.

He made divination for the adulterous woman

Ologbo gigiri, made divination for the mother of Igherekpe when she fell in love with another man. As the husband was about to discover her infidelity, she went to Orunmila for divination. She had lived with the husband for many years without having a child. At divination, Orunmila told her that her present husband was not her destined husband, and that she was only late in coming across the new lover (her rightful husband) because of the sacrifice she failed to make in heaven. He told her that the lover who was an Ifa Priest, was the husband she chose from heaven. She was advised to make sacrifice with a he-goat to Esu, snails to Ifa and rabbit to the night to avoid death from the hands of her former husband and to enable her have a child who would be a daughter.

She performed the sacrifices and the husband gave her up without a fight. Subsequently, she became pregnant and later gave birth to a daughter called Igberekpe. When this Odu comes out at divination for a woman, she will be told that she has a secret lover who is her heavenly chosen husband. She should make sacrifice in order to marry and produce children for the new husband.

Chapter 14

OGBE - OBARA



Ogbe-Obara made divination for Sango

Ogbe barira raba raba
Ononegigi araba soso orire ogun.

He made divination and prepared Ifa for Sango when he was very poor in heaven. Ogbe-Obara was himself also very poor. After completing the Ifa initiation ceremony for him, Shango offered to follow him home, but knowing that his house was not presentable, he declined the offer. Ogbe-Obara then came home alone.

Meanwhile, Shango saw from heaven that the world of mankind had become a very dirty and wicked place and vowed to eliminate all the evil doers on earth. As Shango was preparing to do battle, there was a thunder storm accompanied by a tornado which removed the roofs of several houses on earth. When the first wind was blowing, Ogbe-Obara was himself away on a divination tour, leaving his wife at home. As all the great trees and palatial buildings were falling, Shango saw Ogbe-Obara's wretched house, not knowing it was his home. As the wind was however shaking the roof, Ogbe-Obara's wife began to sing:

Arira, arira mo juare,
Ule Ifa, dowa re-o
Arira mo-ju-are.

This song was to remind Shango that that was the home of his benefactor. As soon as Shango heard the song, he left the house and returned to heaven.

When Ogbe-Obara comes out of divination therefore, the person should be advised to beware of ingratitude to his benefactor.

The birth of Ogbe-Obara

He was born in a place called Oba in Ondo State of Southern Nigeria. He grew up to be a proficient Ifa Priest, under the watchful eyes of the town's elders and king. He was subsequently appointed the Chief diviner of the Oloba of Oba.

He made divination for three brothers

The first important divination he did at Oba was for three brothers born of the same parents. That is why when this Odu comes out at divination, the divinee should be asked whether he is one of three brothers or associates. The father of the three brothers used to harvest fish in a lake, by bailing out the water and catching the helpless fishes therein. That is why when Ogbe-Obara comes out during initiation at Ugboodu, the neophyte should be told to go and have his bath at the nearest lake.

The three brothers came to Orunmila's house to enquire what to do in order to flourish in their father's business. He advised them to give a he-goat to Esu. When they left his house, they began to hesitate on the necessity of serving Esu, since their father apparently succeeded in the same business without making any sacrifice. They refused to make the sacrifice.

The Boa (Oka in Yoruba and Aru in Bini) also went to Ogbe-Obara and he was told to give a he-goat to Esu in order to survive the kind of death that took the life of his father. He was also told to serve his head. He only used coconut to serve his head but refused to serve Esu.

The rabbit also went to Ogbe-Obara for divination and she was told to serve Esu with a he-goat, and her head with a guinea fowl, in order to avoid the onset of trouble in her house. Iroko also went for divination and he was told to make the same sacrifice. The guinea fowl also went for divination and she too was told to make a similar sacrifice. They all refused to make the sacrifices.

Meanwhile, the three brothers left home to harvest fish at the lake. When the eldest of the three brothers entered the lake to start balling water out, he sank swiftly into the swamp. The second brother moved to his rescue but had his two hands quickly severed from his body. As the third brother opened his mouth to shout for help his jaw got broken.

When the squirrel who was standing by, saw what was happening to the three brothers he started laughing hilariously, while at the same time jumping up and down the tree branch on which he was standing. With the excitement with which the squirrel was jumping up and down, the dead branch of the tree, gave way and fell on the Boa resting below at the foot of the tree. The laughter of the squirrel and the onslaught of the falling tree branch reminded the boa that these were the incidents that ended the lives of his parents and brothers. He quickly escaped into the rabbit's hole, to beg for refuge in her house. At that point in time, the rabbit was nursing her seven newly born babies inside her hole. Nonetheless, she agreed to oblige the boa. Before the following morning however, the boa had eaten up all the seven children of the rabbit and was also gunning for the rabbit herself.

It was now broad day-light and to save her life, the rabbit ran out of her hole, and sought refuge in the home of the Iroko tree. One of the branches of the Iroko tree had been paining him and much as he was willing to accommodate the rabbit, he warned her not to touch his afflicted hand because it was paining him. The fright and shock with which the rabbit ran into Iroko's home for refuge made her to forget the warning given by the host and she nonetheless climbed on the afflicted branch.

The guinea fowl was at the same time hiding two hundred and one (201) eggs at the foot of the Iroko. As the rabbit climbed the ailing Iroko branch, it broke and fell on the 201 eggs laid by the guinea fowl. When the guinea fowl returned to see the catastrophe that had befallen her, she decided to provoke simultaneous commotion both on earth and in heaven. She began to shout; Ara kanmi gogogogo-o. The cry of the guinea fowl is usually an indication of a sudden outbreak of war in the forest. On hearing the war cry of the guinea fowl, the elephant, the buffalo, the lion, the tiger and so on began to run heiter-sketter. There was total commotion in the forest. Meanwhile God in heaven over-heard the strife and war cries and sent a knight of the heavenly grail to find out what was happening. The knight immediately ordered a cease fire in the forest. Thereafter, all the ferocious animals in the forest which had become hysterical were asked to explain why they embarked on the war path. In unison, they all explained that it was the war cry of the guinea fowl that gave them paranoia and the matching orders. The guinea fowl in turn explained that it was the overbearing Iroko that destroyed all the 201 eggs that were in her roost.

On his part, Iroko explained that he had for four years had a deformed arm which got broken when the rabbit treaded on it in frenzy. On the other hand, the rabbit explained that the boa had abused her hospitality by eating up all the

seven young ones she was nursing in her home, and that she had to run out in fright when the ingrate set out to devour her as well. The boa on his part explained that he was quietly resting under the thicket of the forest, when an object jettisoned by the restless and hilarious squirrel, startled him into escaping for refuge. He recalled that it was the creator of all existence who authorised the squirrel to be announcing his whereabouts since he killed the servant of God, and that it was the squirrel that heralded the laughter that led to the death of his ancestors and relations.

On his part, the squirrel explained that what excited him into hilarious laughter was the experience of three brothers who were trying to fish in the pond. The heavenly knight then called on the three unfortunate brothers. They all came out with their afflictions healed instantaneously to explain that their misfortunes arose from their refusal to make sacrifice.

The heavenly knight otherwise known as "Omo-oni ghorogbo Orun", admonished them to follow the tradition established by their father. He reminded them that their father used to make sacrifice before commencing his annual fishing expedition at the lake. He advised them to go and make the prescribed sacrifice as soon as they got home. The knight absolved the squirrel but advised him to refrain from laughing at the misfortune of other people, lest he would invite the wrath of the hunter. He blamed the boa for the ingratitude he demonstrated to the rabbit. He advised the rabbit that in future she should learn to block the entrance to her house against the risk of harbouring unscrupulous intruders. That is why to this day, the rabbit blocks the entrance to her hole at various points. From then on, the boa should refrain from entering any hole which is why he does not enter any hole, no matter how inviting it may be. The knight also absolved Iroko, but told the guinea fowl never again to lay her eggs under any tree but to conceal them in a cave or beneath the sand of the grass land or desert.

The foregoing panoply of hard luck stories sums up the sequence of special sacrifices (Ono lfa or Odiha) which the son of Ogbe-bara at Ugbodu should perform in order to receive salvation. He should first bath with prepared leaves after serving Esu in a lake with a he-goat. The he-goat should not be killed but thrown live into the lake. Next, he should go to the foot of an old Iroko tree with a bundle of three-tied yams and a rabbit and have another bath at the foot of the tree. After having his bath, he should peel the bark of the tree and take home to prepare a special wand for him to keep for the rest of his life. When this Odu comes out at divination, the person should be advised not to delay the performance of any sacrifice at any time, to avoid unleashing general cataclysm.

He made divination for Akensheolu

Ogbe-bara da telegan loku
Adlfa fun Akensheolu.

He made divination for Akensheolu who was a vicious bandit that stopped at nothing to prevent others, from going about their legitimate businesses. He stopped brides from getting to their bridegrooms' homes, prevented men from going to their farms, women from going to the market, and children from going to the river because he terrorised them with his banditry. After trying everything they knew to abate the menace of Akensheolu, the elders of the town invited Ogbe-Obara to assist them. At divination Ogbe-Obara was himself told that he would succeed in dislodging the bandit if he could make sacrifices with a cock, he-goat, cutlass, rat, fish, akara, eko and mashed yam. He made the sacrifice and set out to confront Akensheolu.

While on his way in search of the bandit, Ogbe-Obara came to a four-road junction and did not know which of the four roads led to the abode of Akensheolu. When he could not find anyone to show him the direction, he lay down pretending to be unconscious. The next set of passers-by exclaimed on seeing him "who is this unfortunate dead man who has his head pointed to the direction of the market and his feet pointing to the direction of Akensheolu's hideout". With those remarks they passed him by but he had got the information he wanted.

When he got to Akensheolu's farm, Ogbe-Obara called on him having in hand his only weapon of one bow and three arrows, which he had prepared for the exploit. When he called on Akensheolu, the bandit roared back querying which man was bold enough not only to come to his farm but also to dare shout on his name. He asked whether the intruder did not know that he was the dispenser of death. Akensheolu then came out in fury to face Ogbe-Obara, holding his own bow and three arrows. He asked Ogbe-Obara what his backbone was for daring to venture into his farm. In an equally defiant reply, Ogbe-Obara told him that he came to kill him. Akensheolu laughed and then faced Ogbe-Obara squarely, telling him that it was only his foot steps to the farm that would bear testimony to his dare devilry, because he would neither walk back nor return home alive.

Ogbe-Obara replied that he was joking because he was going to cut off his head and return home with it as a testimony to the success of the mission to his farm. Akensheolu then became delirious.

He took out an arrow and stretched it out in full to shoot at Ogbe-Obara, who instantly used an incantation implying that a nursing mother backs her child through the left side of her body. When Akensheolu simultaneously released the arrow, the wind carried it to Ogbe-Obara's left side and it went astray. It was Ogbe-Obara's turn to shoot. When he shot his arrow at Akensheolu, the bandit retorted with his own incantation, conjuring the arrow to stray skyward because when Ekikan (Okikhan in Bin) tree shoots its arrow, it goes upwards. The bandit shot a second arrow and once more, Ogbe-Obara conjured it to shoot downward into the ground because it is into the depth of a woman's genitals that a man's penis directs its head. The arrow then hit and pierced into the ground.

Ogbe-Obara shot a second arrow at the bandit, who conjured it to go astray and it did. Akensheolu then aimed with his third and last arrow at Ogbe-Obara, who instantly conjured the hands holding the bow and the arrow to shiver and the arrow went astray. It was Ogbe-Obara's turn to shoot the last arrow. He touched the ground with the arrow, and took an aim conjuring it this time to go to where it was sent, because a messenger goes to where he is sent. As soon as he released his hand from the base of his arrow and before the bandit could utter a word, the arrow impacted on his chest and he fell to the ground. He died instantly in a pool of blood, because the arrow pierced straight into his heart. As soon as the bandit died, Ogbe-Obara severed his head, kept it in his bag and took it home.

Akensheolu's wife watched the duel while it lasted and saw what finally happened to her husband. With another incantation the woman invoked an eclipse of the sun to usher in total darkness in order to prevent Ogbe-Obara from knowing his way home. There was instant darkness. Finding himself engulfed in total darkness, Ogbe-Obara commanded daylight to reappear, because when one closes one's eyes, one eventually opens them. Almost instantaneously, the darkness disappeared giving way to daylight which eventually cleared the way for his triumphant entry into the town to report his victory over the notorious bandit. He was carried shoulder high in a long procession from his house to the king's palace where a large reception was awaiting him.

When this Odu therefore appears at divination, the person should be told to make sacrifice in order to survive a difficult assignment which he will be called upon to undertake, but which he cannot, in honour, decline.

Ogbe-Obara's experience as a hunter

Ogbe-bara was a proficient hunter and trap setter. His field of operation was a stretch of forest called Ahe. One day, he met another hunter who, unknown to him, came from heaven. He drew the attention of his friend to a particular stretch of the forest which no one including himself had ever dared to enter, but understood to have plenty of big games. That stretch was said to be used formerly by the citizens of heaven and earth. The two friends decided to venture into the stretch of forest. They dug out a pit for trapping animals. They had an agreement between them that whoever found a catch of game in the pit should slaughter the animal into two equal halves, taking one half away and leaving the remaining half for his partner to collect subsequently.

One day, (Iya lorun) heaven's mother who lived in heaven fell into the pit. When Ogbe-Obara got to the pit, he killed her and slaughtered her meat into two halves. His partner from heaven, was enraged to discover that their heavenly mother had been killed in the pit. He also discovered that the pit had caught a dog which he killed in the usual way.

Meanwhile, when the people of heaven discovered that their mother had been killed by the people of the earth, they decided to punish the earth. The people of heaven seized rain, sunshine, dew and coolness from coming to the earth. These deprivations gave rise to severe famine on earth in which thousands of persons were dying daily. When Ogbe-Obara saw what was happening, he made divination in which he was told to make a special sacrifice to procure the intervention of God. On seeing that there was no food on earth, God subsequently advised the inhabitants of earth and heaven to make a farm together. After clearing the farm and setting it on fire, they discovered seven dead animals from the blaze. The two groups shared the meat by each taking three leaving one to be divided. An argument ensued on who should take the seventh meat. The earth being traditionally more vindictive than heaven, insisted on having, and indeed took, the seventh meat. The people of heaven were obviously annoyed and went home vowing never to share anything in common with the people of the earth thereafter.

Life became tougher on earth than before God's settlement. The earth then went to beg the people of heaven for forgiveness. It was at that stage that God proclaimed that heaven being the first to be created by Him was the permanent home of all existence. People left heaven to found the earth and therefore the earth had always been, and will always remain, a temporary abode for its inhabitants who will eventually return home to heaven. That was the point in time at which God decreed that since heaven was the home and the earth a sojourn, the offspring could never claim seniority over its parent.

At that stage, the people of the earth went on their knees to recognise the superiority of heaven over the earth. Following the reconciliation, God called on Arone the keeper of the key to the earth to open the way for good things to return from heaven, which was to remind the people of the earth that the key to all good tidings coming to the earth was being kept in heaven.

When Ogbe-Obara therefore comes out of divination, the person should be told to serve Ogun and to offer a goat for sacrifice at the ancestral shrine of his forefathers so that he might not run into difficulties as a result of the action of his relation, and to avoid vengeance from higher authority as a result of the deeds of his relation.

Ogbe-Obara survives fire accident

Ogbe-Obara was a home-bird in the sense that he loved his home, and never left it for any length of time to go abroad. One day, he left home and during his absence, fire destroyed the home and properties of his father. The parents who did not know that Ogbe-Obara had left his room in the night lamented in the thought that the fire had consumed him. His father began to weep with the words: "Ogbe bami ba Obara", meaning Orunmila help me to fetch and save the life of my son. That was in the night when the fire was blazing.

The following morning, Ogbe-Obara returned to see that his family home had been razed to the ground by fire. At the sight of him, everybody greeted him with the exclamation, Eku orire, and he wondered why he was being complimented in this way. They replied that not seeing him come out of the room during the fire incident, they had given him up for dead, especially when they saw his favourite goat going into the blazing inferno apparently in search of its master in the course of which it died. The goat used to bear four kids at a time. He openly lamented the death of the goat, and used its ashes to proclaim that from then on, whenever there is a fire outbreak in a house, any goat that had eaten, drank and lived in the house, should move into the fire to be consumed by it. That is why to this day, any goat raised in a house goes in to die in the burning flame whenever there is a fire outbreak.

Thereafter Ogbe-Obara got a tortoise, cut it into two and tied them at the entrance of his father's house and told his father that if any visitor was passing through that gate, and blood dropped from the tortoise on his or her clothes, he should know that the person is his enemy. A visitor on whom the blood from the tortoise does not drop should be seen as a friend and well-wisher. That was how the father distinguished between those who came to sympathise or rejoice at his misfortune of the fire outbreak.

When this Odu therefore comes out at divination, the person should be told to serve the entrance to his house with a tortoise in order to avoid a fire accident.

Ogbe-Obara makes sacrifice for Prosperity

Ogbe-bara bara la ge si

Odifa fun Angberi

omo akon ilekun orun

gari gari malesi.

He made divination for Angberi in order to succeed in whatever he did in life. He was told to make sacrifice with a cock, roasted yam, and alligator pepper. He did the sacrifice. Thereafter he became very prosperous.

He Made Divination for Adegoroye - The Prince of Ewi-Ado

Ijo kijo nijo Asinwin

Ayo Kayo l'ayo din din tin

Adifa fun Adegoroye Orno Oba Ewi

Ebo amubo tori oye,

Ewure nfa rabata ni aofi, kpetu

Ebo eyi tori arisan ni la.

Meaning The lunatic dances all kinds of dance;

The idiot is happy at all kinds of excitements

These were the Awos who made divination for Prince Adegoroye of Ewi-Ado. When the Ewi of Ado joined his ancestors, the search began for a successor. The son Adegoroye was popularly acclaimed as the rightful successor to the throne because he was very popular, intelligent and eloquent. Some smart alack

however, argued that there was no law of primogeniture in Ado-Ekiti, which permitted the son of a demised Oba to succeed his father. That School of thought argued that the choice of a new Oba should go to the next house in the line of succession, as was the tradition in the land.

At that point, his supporters among the kingmakers advised him to go to Ogbe-Obara for divination, on what to do to ascend to the throne of his father. At divination, Orunmila advised him to make sacrifice with a big ram and a multi-coloured gown he had at home, so that after ascending to the throne, he would not be afflicted through the machination of his enemies with an incurable disease. He made the sacrifice and occupied the throne to a ripe old age.

When this Odu comes out of divination for any person aspiring to a position of authority, he should be advised to make sacrifice with a big ram and a multi-coloured apparel - garment he has in his house. In Ifism, Ram is used for making sacrifice for chieftaincy, sheep or ewe for long life, pig for peace and tranquility, whilst goat remains the staple food of Orunmila.

He made divination for a man bewitched by his wife

Ukege went to Orunmila for divination on what to do to arrest his declining fortunes. Nothing he touched seemed to manifest correctly, and he was beginning to degenerate into penury. The poem with which Orunmila made divination for him was as follows:-

Atoto bi atoto
Enini Bi enini,
Koje ki ojo aro oda
Ojo aro oti da
Ewuru wuru re kotan nile,
Adifa fun okege ati iya `re aje.
Ewure ati ewu alarabara re lebo.

Meaning The threatening rain,
was preceded by heavy dew,
The rain fell; and the dew followed the rain,
But the moisture on the foliage, and
the flood on the ground,
Remained stagnant.

That was the epilogue with which Orunmila made divination for Okege whose wife was the witch creating problems for him. Okege was advised to make sacrifice with a goat and his multi-coloured garment.

Subsequently, as his wife was fast asleep, one night, she went into delirium tremens and began a feat of open confession. She admitted that she was responsible for creating all the problems her husband has been experiencing. She disclosed that she was responsible for using her witchcraft to bring prosperity to the household, and that she only became annoyed when the husband began to befriend another lover. She then begged Orunmila to spare her life after promising to undo whatever she did to cause deprivation to the husband. The husband agreed to forgive her and prosperity returned to them afterwards.

When this Odu comes out of divination, the person will be told that his senior wife is a witch, and that she was responsible for fomenting his most recent problems, because, he married a new wife or is courting a new one. That is why it is generally believed that it is easy to marry a witch, provided the husband is either himself a wizard or he is prepared to exercise the self-imposed discipline of not flirting with or marrying another wife. If he makes the mistake of marrying another wife to join a witch in the house, he will be truncating the pillars of his

destiny. In any event, he should be advised to make the sacrifices referred to above.

He made divination for the pregnant woman

A woman was pregnant and was having frightful dreams, which made her to go for divination on what to do for safe delivery.

Ki aduro ki akanse
Ki abere ki akanse
Adifa fun aboyun
Tini beni ekan aye
Asukan orun

Meaning

Stand and hit your foot on the stud,
Bend and stand your foot

These are the names of the Ifa Priests who made divination for a pregnant woman, who, unknown to her, had one foot on earth and the other foot in heaven. After divination, she was advised to make sacrifice with a goat, and the cloth she was wearing so that the child in her womb might know the father. In other words, if she did not make the sacrifice, the father would surely die before the child grew to know him. She made the sacrifice and the couple lived to nurture the child to adulthood.

At divination, the person should be asked if he has a pregnant woman, who should be told to make sacrifice, to avoid the danger of premature death for the husband soon after the birth of the child. That is, if the Ifa comes out as Ayeo. If it is Uree, the woman should nonetheless, make sacrifice for a safe-delivery.

Chapter 15

OGBE - OKONRON



Erinku ton ton ton lode,

Ere keni oje tere olu akoko mo oha.

These were the awos who made divination for Ogbe-Okonron when he was leaving heaven for the world. They told him to make sacrifice in order to live long on earth and to avoid the risk of undoing himself. He bluntly refused to make any sacrifice. He even vowed to shake and cool the world because it was reported to be very hot.

On getting to the world, he actually made life difficult for people. The people in his locality got together to find out what to do to abate his nuisance effect. They went to the witch doctor to tell them what to do to end his life. The witch doctor told them that the man would live for 30 years. Not satisfied with the revelation of the witch doctor, they decided to go to the divine priest who again told them that Ogbe-Okonron would live for 20 years.

Since he was the only Ifa Priest around, they decided to go to him for divination on how to end his own life. They told him to divine for them on what to do to overcome their enemy, who was making life intolerable for them. He told them after divination that the man was already fully prepared for death. He advised them to make sacrifice with only one hen. They quickly did the sacrifice. Not long afterwards, Ogbe-Okonron died, only to re-incarnate in Ife where he was told to make a feast with a goat to the elders and to give a he-goat to Esu.

Oni maatee Ifa mi, Kutu Owuro Ouni maa, gbigbo re, were the Ifa Priests who made divination for Ogbe-Okonron when he came to the land of Ife. He was told to feast the elders of Ife with a goat. He made the feast and the elders prayed for him and cleared the way for him to practice his Ifa art in the kingdom of Ife. He became very famous and prosperous.

If this Odu comes out of divination for someone who is starting a new venture or changing residence, he should be told to feast the elders with a goat and to give a he-goat to Esu.

Ogbe-Okonron leaves for the world

Eja Inu Ubu ati Oni male Odo were the two awos who made divination for Ogbe-Okonron when he was coming to the world. He was advised not to live in any abandoned premises (Ati kporo le in Yoruba and Owa nevbo nasikpaa in Bini). He was also advised not to engage in playing a game of marble with anyone while in the world in order to enjoy his fortune to the end of his life. He was told to serve his head with four snails, a pigeon and a goat in order to have honour and respect from the people of the world. He made the sacrifice

No sooner had he entered the world, than he was asked to go and live in an abandoned dwelling. Having lost all memory of what transpired in heaven, he went to live in the abandoned building. The house was in such a poor state of disrepair that its roof was always leaking whenever it rained. He was a renowned Ifa Priest and all comers and goers consulted him for divination in the dilapidated building. He then consulted his Ifa who advised him to offer a he-goat to Esu and a pigeon, goat and snail to his head. He did as he was told.

After performing the sacrifices, Esu challenged the people of the town whether they were not ashamed to consult the old man in such a ram shackled dwelling. The people of the town immediately got together and built a befitting house for him by communal effort.

The incantation which Esu used to conjure the people of the town to build a house for him was "tigi tokpe, loun shaanu fun lghere". Both trees and palm trees give respect and honour to the ginger plant. Thereafter he lived a prosperous and happy life.

Ogbe-Okonron made divination for Elephant and Orunmila

Iroke amenu Jigini
Adifa fun Orunmila
Abufun Erin
Nijo tiwon she Awo,
Losi ile owan
Ani kiwon ru ébo
Tori iku enikan ninu won
Tori erunre ki abakpo
Kia tun sora ojokokoro.

Uranke - a surrogate of Orunmila made divination for the elephant and Orunmila in heaven when they went to the land of Owan for Awo practice. They were both advised to make sacrifice to obviate the risk of death to one of them who might have been killed by greediness and the words of his mouth.

Orunmila tried unsuccessfully to persuade the elephant to make the sacrifice but he refused. Orunmila then proceeded to make the sacrifice alone which was done with a he-goat to Esu, and a dog to Ogun.

When they got to Owan, Orunmila's Ifa art and practice impressed their hosts and they had a large clientele. The elephant was the treasurer of all the gifts and compensation they had which he kept in the bag inside his stomach. At the end of 17 days, it was time for them to return home. As they got to the junction of the roads leading to their separate homes, Orunmila requested the elephant to produce their rewards to be shared. The elephant bluntly refused to surrender them. He told Orunmila that whatever entered his bag never came out except through death. And that not even Ogun, the owner of the forest was capable of doing anything to him. Orunmila wished him good luck and took leave of the elephant.

Meanwhile, unknown to either of them, Ogun over-heard their dialogue especially the boasting of the elephant. Ogun took aim with his principal hunting instrument and shot the elephant as he was returning home. He struggled through a distance and died.

As soon as the elephant fell, Ogun called on Orunmila and told him to take his reward from the elephant. Since the latter boasted that he could only surrender them at death, Orunmila thanked Ogun and gave him adequate compensation for coming to his assistance. Orunmila then returned home to obtain assistance for butchering the elephant.

When this Odu appears at Ugboodu, the Initiate should be advised that if he wants to live long, he should refrain from being mouthy and greedy. Greediness would earn him deadly enmity and loquaciousness would fetch him instant death. At ordinary divination, the person should be asked whether he is preparing to embark on a joint venture away from home. If so, he should be advised to avoid being greedy and mouthy to escape the risk of losing all his gains from the enterprise including his life.

He made divination for the well in heaven

We shall later see under Ogbe-Osa how the well lost his head to Ogongo hiahla - Olori eye Igbo and became a headless creature. He used to live in the house like anyone else. After losing his head to the mysterious head-chopping creature, he decided to live outside the house. He then went for divination to Orunmila on what to do in order to have food to eat in spite of his physical deformity.

lrawe wele wele
Odlfa fun Ofin
Nijo t'nlo ba olugbodo
Ebo lfa jije ni ohun
Ti afe she ylo dara

The small leaves divined for the well when he was going to live in the bush. He was told to make sacrifice with pigeon and a hen in order to be receiving free gifts and favours. He made the sacrifice. Thereafter, leaves from top of trees, animals and other things began falling into the well and once inside the bowels of the well, they never surfaced again. That was how the well started receiving free gifts in spite of his deformity.

When this Odu appears at divination, the person should be told that he is likely to suffer a physical deformity later in life, but that the handicap will become a blessing in disguise, because, it will mark the beginning of his prosperity.

He made divination for Meerlye

Ikpe ikpe lenu eja,
Ogbe-konron male,
Una ewoboba joni kojoni,
Bloba nil joni kodabo yerl bibu.

These were the awos who made divination for Meerlye when he was going to make a new farm at the beginning of the year.

They told him that he should make his new farm far away from his native land and that as soon as he got to the place he should make another divination on what to do to realise a good harvest from the farm. He was told to give a he-goat to Esu.

He then left home and travelled until he came to the town of Okpoti. On getting there, he went to the king and applied for permission to stay and make a farm in the town. He obtained the permission to stay and he was directed to make his farm on a forbidden stretch of forest called Ugbo-Umale. The forest was traditionally inhabited by dangerous man-eating animals and reptiles. On getting to the forest, he brushed a small portion of it and brought out his Ikin to make divination on the bare ground. Ifa advised him to buy a tortoise and to make plenty of mashed yam (Obobo or Ewo) and to spray it with the Iyerosun of this ODU on the forest before brushing the farm. He did the sacrifice and began his farm. At the time of harvest, all his crops of maize, yam, plantain, melon and so on, yielded elaborately to the amazement of the people of the town.

At the end of the year, he barned several tubers of yams and grains. He sent a large number of harvested crops and a whole antelope as homage to the king of the town. His success also as a trap setter made the people to ask him to vacate that stretch of forest. The following year, he was directed to a swampy valley where he was told to make his farm. Unknown to him, that stretch of forest had the handicap of being completely flooded during the rainy season. All the other inhabitants of the town were used to making their farms on dry land.

Before setting out to brush his farm, he decided to make another divination and the Ifa that appeared was Ogbe-Okonron. He was advised to give another he-goat to Esu which he quickly did. Subsequently, he proceeded to brush his farm. He felled the trees and as soon as the foliage became dry, he set the farm on fire. After clearing the shrubs, he dug yam ridges and planted other traditional farm crops such as maize, melon, pepper, cocoyam, plantain and vegetables and so on. After the planting season, it was time for the rains to start.

After enjoying his sacrifice however, Esu made sure that he regulated the rain tap on the sky, to release only little drops of rain. All the indigenes of the town who made their farms on dry ground did not have enough rain to make their crops to flourish. Thereafter, Esu locked-up the rain tap and there was no rain for the rest of the season. With the benefit of the earlier rain-fall, coupled with the advantage of planting on the swamps, all of Meeriye's crops flourished immensely. On the other hand, for want of rain, all the crops planted by the indigenes of the town on dry ground, which would otherwise have flourished with regular rain-fall, got burnt before the harvesting season.

The general poverty of the harvest in the town during that year caused a severe famine and everyone else had to buy foodstuffs from Meeriye and the surrounding towns and villages throughout the following year.

At the beginning of the next planting season, the indigenous farmers thought it was more advantageous to make their farms on the swamps and delta of the river. When Meeriye subsequently asked for the spot where he was to farm, the elders of the town directed him to the hilltops and dry land and told him to farm as expansively as he could. With the money he realised from the previous year's harvest, he was able to cultivate and plant several acres of dry land. Before embarking on the farm however, he once more made divination and he was told to serve Esu with yet another he-goat. He did the sacrifice before proceeding to brush, fell the trees and fire his farm. He went ahead to plant the usual seeds and crops. As the crops began to develop, it was time once again for Esu to intervene on the side of those who made sacrifice. He unplugged the rain tap of the sky to unleash a spate of continuous heavy rain-fall on the earth. Thereafter Esu embarked on a rhythm of releasing heavy rains every five days to soften up the ground for crops planted on hill-tops and on dry land. On the other hand all the crops planted on swamps, deltas, and the base of valleys were completely destroyed by the consequential floods.

At the end of the year, he had another bumper harvest whilst all the other farmers could not realise any harvest. Once again the whole town was relegated to starvation and those who could afford it had to buy food-stuffs from Meeriye. His success now began to invoke envy and enmity. They called him a witch and decided to plot to put him on the path of death.

At the beginning of the next farming season, when he asked for the spot on which to make his farm, he was directed to a stretch of forest called Ugbo-Olore which was forbidden for any citizen to tread upon let alone farm on because that stretch of forest belonged to Ogun himself. That is why it is often said that a stranger does not know the forbidden stretch of forest without being told. Nobody told him that it was forbidden to enter that forest.

At that point in time, Ogun had been away to war for the last three years. As soon as the stretch of forest was shown to him to farm on, he again consulted Ifa who told him to give one more he-goat to Esu but that after clearing and firing, he was to serve Ogun in the farm before planting. He was first to serve Ogun in his house, before proceeding to serve Ogun in the farm. To serve Ogun in the house, he was told to offer a cock and a tortoise. On the other hand, he was to serve Ogun in the farm with another cock, tortoise, dog, snail, roasted yam; a gourd of wine and a gourd of palm oil. He gave the he-goat to Esu. As he was about to start planting, he served Ogun in the house. Thereafter, he made preparations to serve Ogun in the farm for which ceremony, he invited the elders of the town to join him. It will be recalled that when he was felling the trees in the farm, there was a particularly big tree which he could not fell no matter how much he tried. He gave up his attempt and built his hut under the tree which became his resting spot in the farm. Unknown to him, it was the foot of that tree that Ogun usually cleared to make his annual festival whenever he was at home.

He was however told at divination not to kill the dog, the tortoise, the cock, and the snails until other people came to serve Ogun with him in the farm. After sending all the sacrificial victims and all the materials to the farm, he made several abortive efforts to invite the elders of the town to his farm to assist him in serving Ogun. They used one pretext or the other to tacitly decline his invitation by telling him to expect them, but refusing to turn up because they were afraid of entering Ogun's forest, since they knew it was forbidden to enter Ugbo-Olore.

Meanwhile, he kept all the animals and reared them from day to day in his farm. After sending seven fruitless invitations to the elders of the town he decided to consult Ifa. At divination he was told to rear all the animals in the hut and to name the dog Okpe-Ogun. He was also to roast plenty of yams and prepare them for eating everyday in the farm leaving them in the hut overnight. He was to keep a fresh gourd of palm wine at the hut every morning and to leave it unconsumed every day until the following morning. He was also advised to change the names of all his servant and children and to give them sobriquets relating to Ogun, viz: Ogunjimi, Ogungbeja, Ogunfemi, Oguntoye, Ogundarjimi, Ogungbamila, Ogbushorire, Oguniyi, Ogundamilehin etc.

Accordingly, he changed the names of all the members of his household to have Ogun prefixes with suffixes, eulogising Ogun. Thereafter he continued the regular chores in his farm. Up to this time he still had no clue on why Ifa advised him to name his household after Ogun nor of Ogun's connections with his farm. Meanwhile it was time for harvesting yam tubers. Meeriye and his entire household took temporary abode in the farm house for the purpose of uprooting and barning the yam harvest.

That was the state of play, when Ogun and his Army were returning from their military expedition. When he got to his forest, he discovered that it had been cleared up and that a farm was thriving on it. He became delirious with rage and wondered who the dare-devil was that ventured to farm on his domain. As if Ogun was back in battle megalomania, he charged straight on the farm for decimation.

When Meeriye saw people trooping into his farm, he heaved a sigh of relief, thinking that at last, the people of the town had agreed to honour his invitation to assist him in serving Ogun. He quickly assembled all the animals and materials with which he was to serve Ogun, positioning them at the foot of the unfelled tree which incidentally was the spot at which Ogun normally performed his annual festival.

As the advancing party approached the hut, Meeriye began to call the members of his household one after the other. He called on his eldest son Oguniyi to fetch Okpe-Ogun-the-dog. He called on his second son Oguntoye to fetch the cock while calling on Ogunshorire his eldest daughter to fetch water and his second daughter Ogundarijimi, to fetch the gourd of wine. The name-calling process continued in that sequence until all the members of his household were assembled. That was the point at which Ogun and his followers arrived at the shrine. Along with all the members of his household he prostrated fully to welcome the visitors he considered to be the elders of the town.

Ogun, who had charged to tear him down began to wonder who this strange man was that paid such elaborate respects to him by naming everyone around him after him without knowing him. He then began to pipe down. Still prostrating, Meeriye told Ogun "my Lord and master, I thank you in the name of God for coming at last to honour my invitation because I have been expecting you for months now since you very kindly authorised me to farm on this land. I have day-in and day-out remained in a constant state of preparedness to receive you in order to help me to serve Ogun, the most powerful divinity that God sent to this world". At that point, he got up and began to use the sacrificial materials to pray at the improvised Ogun shrine, beseeching Ogun to save him and all members of his household and to grant them the blessing of living to enjoy the benefit of what already promised to be a successful farming year.

As he prayed, he looked up to see the leader of the visiting delegation and saw Ogun in full battle regalia. He began to wonder whether he had seen that kind of man in the town in the last three years. All this time, Ogun stood motionless. Meeriye and the members of his household began to tremble at the sight of the fearsome looking visitors. Without saying anything, Ogun seized the cock, severed its head with his hand, and put the throat into his mouth to drink its blood. After draining the cock of its blood, he threw the body to his followers to eat. Next, he threw up the tortoise, split it open and drank its blood, throwing the body to his followers to eat. He then focussed his gaze on the dog which he captured, beheaded and drank its blood, surrendering the body to his followers. Meeriye continued to tremble with trepidation. After drinking the blood of the animals, Ogun took the roasted yam, tore it and ate the middle part of it, throwing the rest to his followers to eat.

He then broke the shell of the snail, drank its liquid and threw the flesh to his followers who were all visibly hungry from their long journey. After drinking the liquid from the snail, Ogun's eyes and body noticeably flushed and simmered down. The paranoia and spasm of battle and the delirium tremens of war had given way to a humanised syndrome and disposition. He then drank wine from the gourd and gave the rest to his followers.

After completing the sacrificial ritual, Ogun faced Meeriye and asked whether he knew him. Meeriye replied negatively. He then asked who directed and authorised him to farm on that land where he used to serve his own guardian angel because the great Ogun owned that forest. Meeriye replied that he was a stranger to the town of Okpoti and that it was the king and elders of the town who asked him to farm on that spot. Ogun then exclaimed that truly, a stranger without being told does not know a divine forest. At that juncture, Ogun told him not to be afraid any longer and to continue his farming on that spot in earnest. Ogun then offered his hand to Meeriye in fellowship as a testimony to his permission.

Thereafter Ogun ordered his soldiers in frenzy to move on the town of Okpoti. On getting to the main gate of the town, he accused the people of showing

ingratitude to him. He had been away for three years fighting to ward off the risk of enemy invasion on the town and that while he was away, the only gesture they could demonstrate to appreciate his magnanimity was to give away his domain to an innocent stranger to farm. As he moved into the town he slaughtered 200 persons on his left and 200 persons on his right before moving into his house. He had left four of his wives at home while going to war. After accusing them of lacking the courage to defend his interest behind his back, he executed all four of them. As he moved in fury to attack Elaghalogho his favourite wife, she went on her knees to remind him that she was not at home all the time because she accompanied him to war. With that reminder he spared her life and she began to sing: "Oku Ooun nkon shoshosho" which is what Elaghalogho, the ceremonial dress worn by Ogun Priests, chants to this day. The red dress is normally lined with small bells and when Ogun Priests move or dance about, the noise made by all the bells on the dress chant Oku Ooun nukon shoshosho. That is why a new Ogun Priest begins his initiation ceremonies by serving Ogun in the forest with all the materials and animals mentioned above before making a similar sacrifice at home.

Meanwhile, Ogun had instructed Meeriye to accompany him to the town and he was a witness to all the devastation that befell the town of Okpoti. Ogun then moved to the palace of the king of the town. On getting there he queried why the king allowed his chiefs and the elders of the town to surrender his forest to an innocent visitor. The king explained that the stranger had mysteriously excelled the whole town in farming during the three previous years. That was why, the king explained, they lured him to farm on Ogun's land so that he might finish the man off upon his return from war. Contrary to his expectation however, Ogun beheaded the king and all his senior chiefs and immediately crowned Meeriye as the new king of Okpoti with the name of Ajoji-Godogbo. Oba oun nile gbile doo, meaning, "the stranger who came to town, contested ownership of the land with the sons of the soil, and won it and the crown from them." Up till today, the land of Okpoti or Ile Ikpudon exists in the Ondo State of Nigeria and only strangers survive as kings of the town.

When this Odu comes out at divination, the person should be advised to leave his present home to settle in another town because his prosperity lies there. When it comes out during Ifa initiation ceremony at Ugboodu, the person should be advised to be initiated fully as an Ogun Priest almost simultaneously.

He made divination for Ekunkun

Ogbe-Okonron male dain dain

lo difa fun Ekunkun

nigba ti ofe gba irin lowo erin.

Irin was the wife of Erin, the elephant. Ekunkun on the other hand, had fallen in love with Irin and was determined to seduce her from Erin, the husband. Meanwhile, the secret love affair between Irin and Ekunkun was disclosed to Erin (elephant). When the elephant challenged his wife, she ran away from the house to live with Ekunkun. The Elephant then sent a message to Ekunkun threatening him that if he did not surrender his wife immediately, he would smash both him and his wife under his feet. Ekunkun became so thoroughly frightened, that he escaped from home to Orunmila for divination on how to survive the wrath of the elephant. Orunmila advised Ekunkun to make sacrifice with 200 needles, two cocks and a fork stick. He made the sacrifice, after which Orunmila advised him to build his house on the swamp and to live with the seduced wife of the elephant in the house. He was to serve his head and that of the woman

In the new abode to be located on the swamp. He did as he was told and settled down in the swamp to await the onset of the elephant.

After waiting in vain for his wife to return to him, the elephant sent a final warning to Ekunkun that he was coming to destroy him and his wife, by eating them up, in seven days time. On the seventh day, the elephant set out for the house to Ekunkun. On getting there, he roared sonorously to alert them that he had arrived, and told them to fly or to sink. Ekunkun replied from his house that he had no intention of taking any of the options proposed by the elephant and that he was waiting for him to do his worst. The elephant feeling thoroughly insulted then ventured out his right hand on the swamp and it began to sink. As the right hand was sinking, he moved the left hand for support and it also sank into the swamp. To obtain balance he moved his hind legs both of which also sank into the swamp. When he brought out his trunk to lift himself up, Esu intervened by cooking it with the 200 needles with which Ekunkun made sacrifice. As he became helpless, the elephant surrendered and sank into the swamp giving up the ghost. That was how the elephant lost his life and why Ekunkun took the elephant's wife and saved his own life. Ekunkun is a plant which belongs to the coconut family of trees and its root or (Irin) grows in the swamp to this day. The 200 needles with which he made sacrifice, constitute thorns hooks lining all sides of its leaves. It is called EBO in Bini.

When Ogbe-Okonron comes out of divination, the person should be warned not to seduce the wife of a man much more powerful and influential than himself, otherwise it could cost him his life. If he has already done it however, he should quickly make sacrifice in order to get away with it. For a woman, she should be advised similarly to refrain from leaving an influential husband for an inconsequential one. If she is already committed, she should make sacrifice to avoid the wrath of the husband and without getting his lover into trouble.

How Araka lost his wife

Babalawo Ifa ni,
Oun she Bi ojo Bi ojo,
Oni shegun asi mashe,
Bi Aigboron bi Aigboron,
Aigboron Ishegunni,
O unko Ogunje ilu
Adifa fun Araka,
nijo toon fi Omi Oju
shubere Aya tuurutu.

Araka was anxious to have a wife and he went to Ogbe-Okonron for divination.

Araka had been searching in vain for a woman to marry. He was told to make sacrifice so that after getting a wife he might not lose her. He made sacrifice with a hen to enable him have a wife but failed to make the second orte with a Ram to avoid losing her.

Not long afterwards, he married Erin, a very beautiful girl, but who had the capability of transfiguring into an elephant. One day, she went to the forest in the shape of an elephant to fetch food for the house. After collecting all the food she could obtain from the forest, she transfigured once more into the beautiful young girl that she was, to her husband. She then realised that she needed to buy salt and palm oil from the market. While she was transfiguring from an elephant into a young woman, a forest guard saw her but concealed himself

from view. After she left for the market, the forest guard quickly packed her elephant cloak and went to hide it. When she came back from the market, she searched in vain for her elephant cloak until the forest guard came out to threaten to reveal her animal identity unless she agreed to marry him. Since she had no intention of allowing Araka, her erstwhile husband and his people to know that she was indeed an elephant, she accepted the suggestion of the forest guard and followed him home to become his wife. She however warned him never to call her an animal, and the new husband agreed.

She lived happily with the new husband bearing four children for him. Before marrying the new wife the forest guard had also been advised to make sacrifice with a he-goat to Esu so that the words of his mouth might not scare away a new wife who was to bring him fortune. While marrying him, the wife was still going into the forest as an elephant to bring home new Ivory for sale to her husband. Each time she transfigured into an elephant, she took on new pairs of tusks while discarding the old ones. That business made the couple exceedingly rich.

Meanwhile, Esu turned up at the boundary of heaven and earth one morning to ask his daily question from his friend Ighoroko; "who has been advised to make sacrifice that refused to do it" Ighoroko replied that it was Airowoshebo the name of the forest guard who refused to make sacrifice in spite of his new found fortune. Esu then moved to the house of Araka in the shape of an informant to disclose to him that his long lost wife was happily living with and married to a simple forest guard called Airowoshebo. Excited at knowing the whereabouts of his wife at last, Araka implored the informant to take him to where his wife lived. Esu quickly obliged. On getting to Airowoshebo's house, Erin was overwhelmed with joy at the sight of her first husband and openly embraced him. Airowoshebo, the new husband became curiously jealous and asked who the intruder was. The woman replied that the man was her first husband before he (Airowoshebo) blackmailed her into marriage. The new husband obviously felt insulted and at the height of temper, accused the woman of ingratitude since he was the one who brought her out from her animal life as an elephant into the lime-light of human habitation. The woman became delirious, went inside, collected her animal cloak, packed them and ran away into the forest. The first husband who obviously still loved her, ran after her singing to beg her to return to him with the following poem:

Araka ti raagbo,

Erin kpadawa o.

Ki o ma loo.

Araka ti raagbo.

Meaning I have bought the Ram with which I was told to make sacrifice so that you might not leave me. I am now ready to make the sacrifice. Please come back to me my beloved wife. Erin then looked back and replied,

Oun gun Oke loo,

Agufon Erin gun Oke alo.

Meaning "Once an animal, always an animal. I have assumed the shape in which I was created and I am returning to my flock because, birds of identical plumage congregate together."

With that song she translated into the eternal life of the animal world in the forest.

If this Odu comes out at divination for a man who is seeking to marry a new wife, he should be advised to make sacrifice with a hen, a he-goat, and a ram so that she might not run away from him or die a premature death after marrying her.

Orunmila's advice to the children of Ogbe-Okonron

The children of Ogbe-konron, that is, those for whom this Odu appears at birth divination or during an initiation ceremony at Ugboodu, are advised by Orunmila as follows:

Orunmila ni Odi Okitirikpa,
Emini Esu noo eshe mejeji Iran di onan,
Orunmila ni ki a mu okan ti a lefi ale fi ka kuro wa,
Ani eku, Oni ki n she eku,
Ani eja, Oni mi n she eja,
Moni Orunmila kini a o fi ka kuro ni ono,
Oni ki aro akika ati Okpokolopo akara.

When Esu discovered that the people of the world had persistently refused to make sacrifice, he positioned his two legs stretching them out at a common thoroughfare to prevent anyone from going about their daily businesses. When people began to starve from not being allowed to go about their legitimate businesses, they went to Orunmila to ask what was to be used to remove the disruptive legs positioned by Esu. They brought in rat and fishes for the sacrifice but Orunmila rejected them. The people then asked Orunmila the adequate sacrifice to be made.

Replying, he told them to make sacrifice with akika or porcupine and plenty of Akara (beanspuns) to appease Esu. When the sacrifice was finally made, Esu eventually withdrew his legs from the way to allow people to resume their normal chores, saying:

"Kabi kara kabi kuro loju ono".

If this Odu comes out for a person who is proposing to travel, he should be advised to make sacrifice with the head of a porcupine with plenty of akara to Esu but not to embark on his proposed journey until seven days after making the sacrifice.

Chapter 16

OGBE-IROSUN OGBE-MO WO RINTELE OGBE-MO WO RIBALE OGBE-MAASUN



Ogbe-Irosun reveals how Orunmila won Ude (Insignia of authority from God)

Abinu erin, amu owore 'da 'san,
Abinu agbo momo, amu prire kon ogiri,
Abinu okpe luju kon ya gbude Komi,
Awon me'teta lo'n difa fun Orunmila ni jo to fe gba Ude,
Lowo Olodumare.

Meaning

He who was annoyed with the elephant but ate its meat in his soup;
He who was annoyed with the Ram and knocked its head against the wall before slaughtering it for food; and
He who was annoyed with the palm-wine in the forest and threw the pendant of authority (Ude) into the water.

These were the Awos who made divination for Orunmila, when he was going to inherit the instrument of authority from God.

The heavens became over-populated, after the creation of human beings and it became rather cumbersome for God to sit down with his creatures as he was wont to do traditionally, to listen to their daily complaints and problems. The Almighty Father announced to his servant-divinities and human beings alike that He wanted to evaporate into emptiness. Before doing so however, He proclaimed that He was going to appoint one of His 200 divinities who could act in His place in heaven and on earth.

He invited all the 200 divinities to test which of them could perform the task. Before leaving to answer Olodumare's invitation, Orunmila decided to consult his Ifa who told him not to go to the Divine Palace of God without giving a he-goat to Esu. He accordingly gave a he-goat to Esu.

When all the divinities were subsequently assembled at the divine palace, God held out His pendant of authority (Ude in Yoruba or Egbeda in Bini). All the more ferocious divinities quickly moved forward swaggering around that they were the logical inheritors of God's authority. Esu meanwhile transfigured into a heavenly elder and advised God that the lazy and inconsequential looking divinity in white dress was the only one with the potential for carrying out God's divine wishes both in heaven and on earth. God himself wondered whether the feeble and senile Orunmila was physically and diabolically strong enough to

weather the storm of wielding both celestial and terrestrial authority. However, God decided to defer to the advice of the heavenly elder, and agreed to test whether Orunmila was articulate and tenacious enough to keep it for seven days. God gave it to Orunmila with the injunction to return it safely to Him after seven days.

On getting home Orunmila hung the pendant on the shrine of his guardian angel. Osonyin (Osun in Bini), that is, the divinity of medicine, was a bosom associate of Orunmila and interacted hands-in-gloves with him. He was the only divinity who could come and go freely in Orunmila's house.

Meanwhile, the divinity of witchcraft assembled his flock and conspired to persuade Osonyin to cooperate with him in firming up a strategy to steal the Ude from Orunmila because he believed that he was the rightful candidate for the custody of God's insignia of authority. The divinity of witchcraft argued that after all, he was the senior of the four agents that used to watch over the pendant whenever God had his bath before the crow of the cock in the morning. The witches succeeded in persuading Osonyin to agree to steal the pendant from Orunmila's house.

After agreeing to cooperate with the witches, Osonyin went to Orunmila's bedroom that night when he was sleeping and hypnotised him into a heavy honey dew of slumber. Thereafter Osonyin stole the pendant and sent it to the divinity of the night. As soon as they got hold of it, they dug a hole in the fire place (Aruwu in Bini and Ori Ikaño in Yoruba) of Orunmila's own house, and kept it there.

When Orunmila woke up in the morning, he discovered that the pendant of authority had disappeared. He instantly invited his awos mentioned in the opening paragraph, to come to his rescue. They all made divination and advised him to make sacrifice with mashed yam mixed with the meat of rat and fish and to throw it round the back of his house and to put some in the fire place of his kitchen. He quickly made the sacrifice.

Thereafter, all the goats and fowls abounded in his house began to feed on the sacrificial offering, including the one on the fire place. After eating the food, the fowls began to dig into the ground of the fire place until they exposed the pendant of authority which the witches had concealed there. Later in the day, Akpetebi, Orunmila's wife was going to the kitchen to cook for the day and saw the exposed pendant of authority and quickly alerted her husband who collected it, cleaned it and wore it round his neck. He was required to wear it to occupy the chair at the five daily meetings of all the divinities. He wore it when he attended that night's meeting of the divinities at which all 200 of them were present. When he got to the main entrance of the meeting chamber he uttered the usual words for opening the door viz:

"Salama alaikun", and they all answered:

"Salauku Baba-o".

This event was sufficient to reassure the divinities, especially Osonyin and the divinity of the night that Orunmila had recovered the pendant of authority. All the divinities then prostrated to greet him.

After the meeting, he decided to keep the pendant of authority inside his pillow. Later that night however, Osonyin again came to his house to congratulate him on the success with which he handled the meeting of the divinities earlier in the evening. He waited until Orunmila fell asleep and once more hypnotised him into a deep sleep. As soon as he was fast asleep, Osonyin lifted Orunmila's head from the pillow, removed the pendant from it and surrendered it once more to the elders of the night. After retrieving the pendant, they

proceeded to dig it on the grounds of the rubbish dump (otitan in Yoruba and Otiku in Bini). When Orunmila woke up in the morning he discovered that the pendant had once again been stolen from within his pillow. He quickly sent for his three awos once more.

As the three awos were coming to answer his invitation, they came with their household surrogates. At divination, Ogbelrosun appeared. They advised him to make sacrifice with mashed yam mixed with pieces of rat meat and fish, and to deposit it at the rubbish dump. He was also told to offer a he-goat to Esu. One of the surrogates who came with the three awos at this stage, sought permission to volunteer a suggestion on how the sacrifice was to be made. He was granted permission to speak.

He suggested that when sending the sacrifice to the rubbish dump, whoever was carrying it should go with a machet. On getting to the rubbish dump the person would see a rat hole, which he should dig to catch the rat before depositing the sacrifice. Since he was the author of that idea, he was told to go and deposit the sacrifice, accordingly. On getting there, he actually saw a rat hole. As he dug it, a rat ran out of it and entered a second hole under the root of a tree at the rubbish dump. As he dug into the root of the tree, in search of the rat, his cutlass struck a metal object which turned out to be the missing pendant of authority. He killed the rat and brought it into the house with the pendant to the awos.

After washing and cleaning the pendant, Orunmila wore it once again, and with it, attended that night's meeting of divinities. After the usual exchange of ritual greetings, Orunmila took the chair, amidst the traditional obeisance to the head of the high table. The conspirators again suspected that he had found the pendant from where it was hidden.

When the meeting dispersed, the elders of the night planned to jettison the pendant into the river. Once more, Osonyin went to steal the pendant from where Orunmila concealed it at his Ifa shrine after hypnotising him to sleep. When Osonyin took it to the witches, they threw it into the river called Okun-Osa. The pendant was remarkable for glittering like diamond. As soon as it fell into the river, all the fishes were attracted to it by its glittering rays. A small fish was the first to get to it and swallowed it up. A bigger fish who was beaten to it by the small fish then swallowed up the small fish. When Amiegho, the king of fishes saw what happened, he in turn swallowed up the second carnivorous fish. As the king of fishes turned back to retreat into his hole, he fell into a fishing net.

Then came the eve of the appointed day that Orunmila was to return the pendant to God. To his utter amazement, it was no where to be found, having been stolen again at his revered Ifa shrine. Once more, he invited his three favourite awos. After divination, he was told to make a sacrifice to river Okun-Osa. He was told to make sacrifice with a he-goat to Esu and a guinea fowl and three fishes freshly obtained from the river to Ifa. At that stage the young man who discovered the whereabouts of the pendant on the last occasion, again proposed that first, a sacrifice prepared with mashed yam mixed with pieces of fish and rat should be thrown into the river Okun-Osa, after obtaining three fishes in one from an anchored canoe. The more elderly awos were at a loss to understand what the young awo referred to as three fishes in one. He was again given the opportunity of unravelling the puzzle.

He then asked to be given one bag of money which was the equivalent of 65k at that time (Oke-owo in Yoruba and Ebi-gho in Bini). He proposed that whoever was going to the river would see a fisherman, landing his canoe with two fishes, one big one, being sold for 35k. He should buy the bigger one of 65k before

throwing the sacrifice into the river. Once more, he was enjoined to take the sacrifice prepared with mashed yam, rat and fish and the 65k to the river.

On getting to the river, as he knelt down to pray for the manifestation of the sacrifice, he saw a canoe paddler pulling up at the bank of the river. Inside the canoe were two fishes, one big one with a protruded abdomen and another small one. He asked for the price of the bigger fish and the fisherman told him that it was exactly 65k without haggling. He bought it and threw the sacrifice into the river. When he got home, the awos slaughtered the fish and offered it with a guinea fowl to Ifa after giving a he-goat to Esu as prescribed at divination. After the sacrifice the awos dissected the fish and found another fish inside the abdomen of the big fish. When they opened up the stomach of the second fish, they found yet another smaller fish which when opened up, contained the missing pendant. They applauded the young surrogate-Ifa priest and then offered the guinea fowl to thank Ifa.

Orunmila, afraid of the pendant being stolen again overnight begged his three awos and their surrogates to keep an all-night vigil of dancing, wining and dining with him until dawn. They agreed to do so provided he would spray them with gifts and money while dancing. Orunmila then prepared a giant oil lamp at five locations within his premises, viz; the rubbish dump, Esu shrine, front of the house, back of his house and his Ifa shrine. They feasted on the three fishes and the guinea fowl and drank plenty of wine until dawn. The following morning he offered the he-goat to Esu and the awos shared the meat between them and left for their respective homes. That was the much awaited day for presentation of the pendant.

The meeting was assembled and Orunmila wore the pendant and with God himself on the chair, he removed it from his neck and offered it on his knees to the Great Father. As he was removing it, Olodumare told him to leave it on his neck and to wear it forever, as his divine inheritance. With that proclamation, God gave Orunmila supreme authority over all the other 199 divinities from generation to generation. God however, assured him that so many enemies would try to undo him by stealing the pendant, but that after that day, no one would again succeed in stealing it.

Meanwhile Osonyin was appointed by Orisa-Nla in heaven to become his physician, which profession he performed creditably. One day, Osonyin was invited to prepare a medicine for one of Orisa-Nla's wives. After performing the task, he began to cohabit with the woman. Earlier on, Orunmila had used his instrument of authority to curse whoever it was that gave him so much problem over the divine pendant.

One night, Orisa-Nla had a muffled voice (Osonyin speaking through his nostrils) from the direction of his harem. He vowed to discover who it was and what he was up to in his harem. He began to open every door to his harem. On getting to the room of his favourite wife, he knocked at the door and not knowing where to hide, Osonyin transfigured into a serpent and crawled into a hole in the fire place of Orisa-Nla's favourite wife. When he entered the room, he asked for the intruder who he suspected to be there. Although he saw no one, he remained in the room and sent for Orunmila his chief diviner. When Orunmila got to the room he sounded his Ifa and through the crystal mirror on the pendant he wore on his neck, he saw Osonyin inside the hole of a big firewood in the fire place of the woman. Osonyin began to beg him telepathically not to betray him. On account of the long association between them the former was reluctant to give his friend away.

Meanwhile, Orunmila suggested that Orisa-Nla should make sacrifice with a rat, fish, hen, goat and the big firewood in the wife's fire place, because he saw nothing in the room. Orisa-Nla brought out the sacrificial materials but insisted that the sacrifice should be made on the spot. Orunmila however retorted that the sacrifice had to be made at his own Ifa shrine in his house. With that, all the materials including the firewood containing Osanyin - turned snake, were taken to Orunmila's house. On getting there he ordered Orisa-Nla's messengers to return to their house.

Thereafter, Osanyin came out to thank Orunmila who told him that he was aware that he (Osanyin) cooperated with those who were conspiring to steal God's pendant from him all the time, and that the experience he had just undergone, was the wages of his sins. Osanyin then made a clean breast of the unholy collusion he entered into with the king of the night to deprive him of the privilege of having authority over all the divinities. Osanyin begged to atone for his misdeed by offering to become a life-servant of Orunmila to eternity; by carrying out all his wishes and performing all assignments allotted to him. Orunmila agreed. That is why to this day, before a child is born, it is Osanyin that prepares all the medicines for its ante-natal care, right up to the time of birth, whilst Orunmila takes all the credit in the end.

At Ugboodu, the person should be told to prepare the above special sacrifice against the time, he would be given a test or contest for a position of high authority. He should beware of his junior brother, relation or friend very close to him. If the brother or relation betrays him, he should not over-react because the law of retributive justice would surely bring him to his knees later. He should always be patient and watchful.

Ogbe-Irosun leaves Heaven for the World

When Ogbe-Irosun got to the world, he began to practice Ifa art as he did in heaven; but he had initial set-backs. Although he was a proficient and sympathetic Ifa priest, nonetheless, he derived tenuous benefits from his work because people were exploiting his magnanimity. The two Awos who became his regular diviners on earth were called: Uroke mi lawo ligonrin and Uruke mi lawo le turuye. They advised him to offer a he-goat to Esu, a rabbit to the elders of the night and a cock to his head. He was also to make sacrifice with a bell which after preparation with the relevant leaves, was to be hung over his Ifa shrine. He was also advised to have inexhaustible patience because he was going to experience lots of trials and tribulations. He performed all the sacrifices as he was directed to do.

The root of his problems stemmed from the fact that the heavenly awos were annoyed for the generosity with which he was dispensing his benevolence to ungrateful humanity on earth. He had a way of saving the poor from their afflictions without demanding or obtaining any fees or compensation from them. The awos of heaven were not happy about this gesture, because his work on earth was not allowing them to have enough to do in heaven.

His enemies in heaven decided to be mailing one problem after the other to him. They started by sending "indebtedness" (Igbese in Yoruba and Oseka in Binl), to go and ravage him on earth. They later approached the divinity of death to send errands to fetch him back to heaven. They also approached the divinity of sickness to bring him back to heaven.

The three agents of destruction, viz: debt, death and sickness, refused to go to him because he would recognise them. On his part, death insisted that he would only go for Ogbe-masun if they sent riches and money in advance to

precede him. He reckoned that since Ogbe-Irosun was already very poor on earth, he would fall easily for the attractions of money and riches. Sickness on the other hand, said that she would only go for him if they sent a wife to him in advance to precede her, since he had no wife on earth. Indebtedness, said he would go only after they had sent a child to him since he had none on earth.

Meanwhile, the conspirators in heaven plotted to despatch perseverance (suuru in Yoruba and Izengbe in Bini) to go first to wear him down. Perseverance's assignment was to keep them informed on the point at which he would be vulnerable enough to welcome the other impending heavenly visitors. Patience, being the eldest and ugliest daughter of the divinity of wealth, was required by heavenly tradition to visit the guardian angels of all inhabitants on earth. When Patience got to the gates of the guardian angel of Ogbe-Irosun, he beseeched her to protect his ward on earth and to prepare him against the approach of all dangers. She agreed to protect him because he had been so kind to the poor people of the earth. With that covenant, Patience left for the world and for the house of Ogbe-Irosun.

That was the point on earth, at which the two awos advised him that in addition to the sacrifices he had made, he was required to cultivate the quality of having inexhaustible patience by deferring to the advice of the two awos, and his own mind. That was how they prepared him, for according a befitting hospitality to Patience. Thereafter the other morbid visitors decided to follow the lead of Patience. Riches/money then left for his place with Death trailing closely behind him. Meanwhile, the two awos who lived with him made another divination for him, and he was told to make sacrifice with a he-goat and three cudgels to Esu.

After that sacrifice, as he was sleeping the following night, he had a dream in which his guardian angel focussed the approach of Riches to him in the form of plenty of money streaming into his house. As the swarm of money approached the entrance to his house, the bell hanging on his Ifa shrine with which he earlier made sacrifice, began to ring a continuous alarm which woke him up. He saw parcels of money entering his house, closely followed by the messenger of Death hiding behind. If he had allowed the money to gain entrance to his house, Death would have had the opportunity of getting at him.

On the advice of Patience who was already in his house, he summoned the courage and forbearance to close his eyes and to give an ultimatum to Money to leave his house before he opened his eyes. He told money that he would have received him with open arms but for the machinations of his enemies by visiting him with Death trailing behind him. Money immediately took to his heels followed by the messenger of Death, who complained that he told his principals in heaven that Ogbe-Irosun would recognise him under any guise.

It was the turn of Sickness to visit him behind the facade of a prospective wife in front. As he was sleeping, his guardian angel again rang the alarm bell at his shrine, to warn him that a wife was approaching with Sickness closely behind her. He woke up and saw a beautiful girl knocking at the door of his house with the caricature of Sickness behind her.

Once again, the voice of Patience gave him the equanimity to resist the temptation of falling head over heels in love with the girl. He however said to her "Lovely damsel, I would have been a very happy man to have you for a wife and to share the rest of my life blissfully with you. But why did you have to allow Sickness to trail you to my house. I am afraid I cannot accommodate you with the Sickness behind you". In fright, the girl ran back and Sickness retreated with her saying that she knew that the stubborn man would recognise her.

Indebtedness then left with a child in front. As he was sleeping again, his

guardian angel rang the alarm bell and sang for him to wake up as follows:-

Ogbe-maasun o,

Alukereje,

Ogbe-maasun,

Alukereje.

This was the song that his guardian angel was always singing as the bell rang to wake him up. When he woke up, he saw a number of small children playing in front of his house. Their presence attracted him, but with the help of Patience he refused to receive them. Although these were amongst the most priceless assets he desired all his life, nonetheless he told them that he would have received them but for the sight of indebtedness hiding behind them. The children retreated, followed by indebtednesses who recalled his earlier warning in heaven to his principals, that Ogbe-maasun would recognise him.

All the three sets of heavenly hosts made a rendezvous, at the boundary of heaven and earth and returned together to heaven. When they all got back to heaven, Money complained of the embarrassment of being rejected for the first time by anyone. He blamed Death for preventing him from settling down with a man who would have handled him carefully and caressingly. The young woman also felt disgraced and complained that Sickness deprived her of the opportunity of marrying a husband who would have loved and maintained her satisfactorily. Finally, the children also blamed Debt for scaring away a potentially loving father who would have given them a happy upbringing.

On the other hand, they lamented that Patience, their elder sister, who in heaven took good care of all of them was already living with Ogbe-maasun on earth, and vowed that their permanent abode was by her side. They sang a song that Patience was the only one relation of theirs with whom they could stay and decided to troop back to earth without any escort to live with her.

Money was the first to move into Ogbe-maasun's house in the afternoon. Thereafter, he became exceedingly rich. A bevy of young girls subsequently followed money into his house and he got married to all of them. The children were the last to move in and he had several children simultaneously. Several years later, after he became prosperous, he decided to thank his guardian angel and the two Awos who made divination and sacrifices for him. He made an elaborate feast, slaughtering cows, pigs, rams and goats to feast them with plenty of drinks. He then reminded them of the divination they made for him. While the feast was going on, he sang:-

Ogbe-maa-sun-o,

Alukereje,

Ogbe maasun-o,

Alukereje, Ogbe-mosun Alukereje,

Suru wole mi o,

Alukereje,

Mogbalajoo,

Alukereje,

Owo-de-'le mi-o,

Alukereje,

Uku le le eyin o,

Alukereje,

Mowa le won lo-o,

Alukereje,

Won kpada leyin mi o,

Alukereje.

Ayade'lemi o,
 Alukereje, Ogbe mosun-o-Alukereje.
 Arun le le yin o,
 Alukereje,
 Mowa le won lo-o
 Alukereje
 Won kpada leyin min o,
 Alukereje.
 Omo wale mi o,
 Alukereje.
 Gbese le le yin-o,
 Alukereje,
 Mowa le won lo-o,
 Alukereje,
 Won kpade leyin min o,
 Alukereje.
 Ogbe maaama sun-o,
 Alukereje,
 Ola-wa sile min-o
 Alukereje,
 Ono leyin o,
 Alukereje, Ogbe maasun Alukereje.
 Aya kpadewa o,
 Alukereje,
 Obebe sile min o,
 Alukereje
 Omo wa sile min o,
 Alukereje,
 Won joko sile min o,
 Alukereje.
 Awon bamin jo o,
 Alukereje,
 Awon bamin yo o,
 Alukereje.

This song recounted the abortive visits of money, woman and children to his house which he was able to resist with the assistance of Patience which the Awos advised him to have in the first place. He successfully resisted the temptation to receive the ominous visitors of fortune because they were followed by the dangers of Death, Sickness and Indebtedness. With the help of Patience and the sacrifices which they made for him, all the agents of fortune subsequently returned to him without any evil escorts and they had lived happily with him every since.

When this Ifa therefore comes out at Ugbody, the person should be told that very powerful enemies are plotting evil against him, and that if he makes the necessary sacrifices and exercises lots of patience, he will overcome. Besides, he should be told that perseverance is the panacea to enduring happiness and prosperity. Although things may be difficult with him now, with lots of patience he will have everything that money - not hot money - can buy in the end.

How Ogbe-Irosun lost his first wife

On getting to world, he got married initially to a woman called **Morivake**: meaning - a woman whose mother reincarnated to become her child. The

woman was a spoilt brat. At that time, all the awos used to hold weekly meetings in the house of Ogbe-Irosun. As he lived with the wife she began to misbehave in several ways. Try as he did to advise her to behave more humanely, the more he tried, the more quarrel they had. He became very unhappy.

One day, after another reprimand and a fight, she packed her belongings and left for her mother's house. A witch doctor called Ojigbona began to make amorous overtures to her in her mother's house. She however, warned the man to keep his distance because she was married to a very strong man. Ojigbona told her not to worry because he was equal to the task. She eventually married Ojigbona.

Not satisfied, with merely seducing his wife, the new husband started throwing mysterious darts and challenges to Ogbe-Irosun. On his part, Ogbe-Irosun had one amulet which he wore round his neck and which was capable of disclosing the evil plans of enemies against him. All the devilish plans which Ojigbona was hatching against him from time to time were being revealed to him by this magical amulet. Whenever the amulet had cause to disclose goings-on to him, it would begin by singing:

Ogbe maasun o,

Alukereje,

Ogbe maasun o,

Alukereje,

Iku mabo o,

Alukereje,

Ogbe maasun o,

Alukereje,

Aron maabo o,

Alukereje,

Ogbe maasun o,

Alukereje,

Ogun maabo o,

Alukereje,

Ogbe maasun o,

Alukereje.

That was to warn that death, sickness or trouble were approaching and that he should stay awake. That is why the sobriquet of this ODU is briefly referred to as Ogbe-masun. With these warning signs he was able to neutralise all the evil machinations of Ojigbona.

One day, Sango visited him and challenged Ogbe-masun, whether he was not ashamed of not being able to do anything to avenge the seduction of his wife who ran away to marry another man. He replied by asking why he should be ashamed merely because a woman left him. He added that he was not annoyed and would only become annoyed if the divinities including Sango were annoyed at the action of his wife. In other words, he would only become ashamed and annoyed if the divinities felt the same.

With that challenge, Ogun, Esu, Sango and Sankpana volunteered that they were already annoyed and had decided on visiting their wrath on the woman. All four of them asked Ogbe-Irosun what he would give them if they succeeded in punishing the woman and he promised to give one cock to Ogun, cock to Sango, cock to Sankpana and a he-goat to Esu. They then promised that the woman would be brought to him in chains within seven days.

That night, Ogun went to the woman's bedroom and used his sledge hammer to hit her on the head. She immediately developed a severe headache from her

sleep. When it became very serious, her husband consulted his own Land of oracle which disclosed that the headache would not stop unless she went back to her former husband. Ojigbona shamelessly went to Ogbe-masun to beg him to cure the woman. He replied that he was not a physician and that as an Ifa priest, he only knew how to make sacrifice and the sacrifice required to cure her needed a cock. Ojigbona quickly produced a cock and Ogbe-masun gave it to Ogun, to fulfil his promise. The woman became well, but continued to live with Ojigbona.

The next day, Sango also went in spirit to the woman when she was sleeping and positioned a drum on her chest and began to beat it. Once more, the woman cried out from her sleep with severe chest pain. It became very serious and when she was at the point of death, she was carried to Ogbe-masun who again demanded another cock to cure her. He used the cock to compensate Sango for his efforts. She again became momentarily well, but continued to stay with Ojigbona.

It was Sonponna's turn to test his prowess. Two nights later, Sonponno used his traditional weapon of throwing the corn at his victims to attack the woman. She woke up in the morning with a high fever and developed chicken pox. She was again taken to her former husband who demanded yet another cock to cure her. They gave him the cock and he used it to gratify Sonponno and the woman became well immediately, while continuing to live with Ojigbona.

On his part Esu waited for her to recover fully before launching his own attack. As soon as the woman was well enough to think that she was out of danger, Esu went to her in the night, tied up her hands, feet, throat, stomach and waist and the following morning she was met in bed totally paralysed, speechless and helpless. As soon as Ojigbona saw her in that condition, he decided to surrender because he could no longer cope with the situation. He ran away from his house, abandoning the woman to her mother. After Ojigbona had escaped, her mother carried her, unconscious to Ogbe-masun's house. On this occasion, he demanded a he-goat for Esu and a goat for his own Ifa. Her mother went to produce them immediately, begging Ogbe-masun to cure her and to live with her for the rest of her life. After making the sacrifices, the woman became well but refused to accept her back as a wife.

It is significant to note from these events that Orunmila does not normally avenge against his offenders. If it had been any of the more violent divinities, they would probably have destroyed the runaway wife in one fell swoop. But he waited patiently until other people began to ridicule him. Even when he had to react, he refrained from doing so directly. Rather, he allowed others to do the dirty work for him. It is remarkable to observe that on no occasion was the woman punished by Orunmila himself. He left that task to others. It is well known that he is powerful enough to do and undo but he refrained from doing anything on that occasion. That is also how he expects his children and followers to behave, that is, to cultivate the virtue of never-ending perseverance.

If this Odu comes out during Ifa initiation at Ugboodu, the person should be told immediately to serve his head and that of his wife with a guinea fowl at the Ifa shrine. Otherwise, the wife will surely leave him soon afterwards but will also return when she is between life and death. It is also significant to note that it is forbidden to seduce the wife of an Ifa priest, because the culprit will either die or go mad. The Ifa priest should also be advised to avoid the danger of seducing another man's wife in order to avoid the risk of stomach trouble.

He makes divination for child-birth

Moru were, motu were,
Babalawo kan agogo tun lkan
Moru were, motu were, awo orere,
Adifa fun Orere
Moru kan kpo, motu kan kpo,
Awo agogo, Odifa fun agogo.

Agogo and his friends lkan and Orere were anxious to have children and they went to the above mentioned Babalawos. They were advised to make sacrifice with all eatable foodstuffs that they could lay their hands on. Agogo made sacrifice with only one foodstuff while his two friends collected several eatable items. It is an Ifa dictum that "from each according to his ability and to each according to the weight of his sacrifice". Orere (Erero in Bini) and lkan (Ighaghan in Bini) gave birth to several children whilst Agogo gave birth to only one child. That is why to this day, Orere or (Erero) and lkan or (Ighaghan) move in large multiples singing in praise of the Awos who made divination for the two of them as follows:-

Moru were, mo bi were.
On the other hand, Agogo (bell) bears only one child or at best twins. And it sings in praise of the Awo who made divination for him thus:-
Moru kankpo, motu kankpo,
Mobi kankpo.

Therefore, when this Odu comes out for a neophyte at Ugboodu the person should be advised to make sacrifice with different kinds of foodstuffs in order to obviate the risk of having only one child.

He made divination for Mangalaja

Ogbeda wosun tile
Ne so Olorun Mangalaja
Mangalaja lo Olorun arase,
Eni gbu kpa so Odu ladan korun,
Karare tile she.

Ogbe-masun made divination for Mangalaja when he was coming to the world. He wanted to know what to do in order to prosper on earth. Orunmila advised him to serve his head with a cock and to offer a he-goat to Esu. He was told that unless he made those sacrifices, he would court the risk of becoming an invalid on earth, which could end his life prematurely. He promised to do the sacrifice and left for his house. On getting home, he complained that Orunmila merely wanted the meat of a he-goat at his own expense and vowed never to do the sacrifice. On the other hand he reasoned that since the head was the king of his body he would merely appeal to him to lead him away from any danger. He also refused to offer the cock to his head.

Meanwhile, he came to the world where he was born into a wealthy family. In his adolescence he developed hyena (Eve in Bini and Ikpaa in Yoruba), which prevented him from exercising all the attributes of manhood. His parents did their best to help him but as they were not given to making divination, they could not discover what was responsible for his affliction. While they were running around to do what they could for him, he also developed throat tumour (Oligbegbe in Bini and Odu in Yoruba). He was born into a family which was remarkable for the service of a divinity given to prayers and wearing of white garments. As soon as he was afflicted by the throat tumour, everybody concluded that he was a hard luck case and therefore not good enough for the community. He was subse-

quently condemned to be used for sacrificial anointment to the ground-divinity.

When this Odu therefore comes out at Ugboḍu, the person should be told that he was a hyena patient or someone with throat tumour in his family. He should beware of such person and he should be advised to offer a cock to his head and a he-goat to Esu so that he might not contact an incurable disease himself.

At ordinary divination the divinee should be told to make a similar sacrifice, to avoid insurmountable misfortune.

Ogbe-Irosun's works on earth

Aluku rinjin awo ile Orunmila Odifa fun,
Baba igbonimiregun nijoti olare duró sono.

Alukunrinjin was the first awo to make divination for Ogbe-Irosun when he got to the world. Although he had made all the necessary sacrifices before leaving heaven, things were not altogether moving well with him when he got to the world. At divination, he was told that the prosperity he bought in heaven, was arrested somewhere on the way between heaven and earth. To release it from bondage he was required to make sacrifice with a cock, pigeon and a hen which he did. The sacrifice was made and he was given the preparations with which he was to light a lantern for seven days.

Thereafter the host of prosperity which had been entrapped in a cloud of total darkness found the illumination which showed them the way to Ogbe-Irosun's house. Before the end of seven days, all the wealth began to move into his house. He suddenly became very wealthy, and thereafter married several wives and had many children. He then sang in praise of Alukunrinjin, the awo who made divination and sacrifice for him.

As he was rejoicing the awo told him that to be able to welcome prosperity to his home, he was required to make two more sacrifices. He was to watch out for the first rain following the arrival of prosperity and to use a cock to make sacrifice at the point where rain water touched the ground from the roof of his house. He was also advised to serve his father's head with another cock. Thereafter his prosperity became properly consolidated.

When this Odu comes out at divination therefore, the person should be told that he had a dream the previous night and he should follow the advice given to him through it. If it comes out at Ugboḍu, the initiate should be told not to wear any cloth particularly Asho-oke with unwoven or loose edges.

He made divination for two brothers, the Hand and the Mouth

Okon kpokl babalawo Owó Odifa fun Owó, abufun enu.

He made divination for the Hand and the Mouth, when they were leaving heaven for the earth. The Hand and the Mouth were two inseparable brothers who could not travel without each other. The Hand was a very industrious person while the Mouth had a very good voice with which he could sing very well. One day, they both went on a divination tour to a town where a murder had just been committed. When they got to the town, the murderers came to the Hand and the Mouth to prepare charms for them so that the truth of their offence might not be revealed and to avoid the risk of being apprehended. The two brothers asked the murderers to fetch six cowries which they produced instantly. The Hand and the Mouth then prepared the necessary medicine for the murderers and they left for home.

After they left, the Mouth who is the senior of the two, gave two cowries out of the six to the Hand while retaining four for himself. The Mouth argued that he was

entitled to have the lion's share because he was not only senior to the Hand but also the chief diviner. The Hand was not happy with the situation and decided to undo the Mouth. It will be mentioned that both the Hand and the Mouth followed the murderers to the grave of their victim to bury the prepared medicine there.

Meanwhile the Hand ran to the palace of the king to report that it was the Mouth who murdered the missing person in the town and that he knew the grave in which the victim was buried. Soon after the Hand left the palace, Esu transfigured into a well wisher and went to alert the Mouth that he had been accused of being responsible for the murder of the missing person in the town.

He quickly brought out his divination instruments and consulted Ifa who advised him to make sacrifice to Esu with garden-eggs with thorns, pinned all over its body, a gourd of water and a gourd of wine, adding the chaff from palm kernel oil. He was to give wine to Esu and to make a case against the enemy who had lied against him, cursing him not to have the Mouth with which to state a case against him. He was to light the palm kernel oil chaff on the Esu shrine. As it was burning, he was to move backwards and pour the wine on it saying "Esu, I have just seen someone (name the enemy) light fire on your head after giving you wine which you forbid. That is why I have brought this gourd of water to quench the fire because it is only water you take". Following the report made by the Hand (Owo) to the palace, the king sent for the Mouth (Enu) to come and defend himself. Enu denied having anything to do with the death of the deceased victim. Unfortunately, his own brother Owo was at hand to challenge him saying that he knew the grave where the murdered person was buried. The king then sent palace policemen to go to the grave side to verify the existence of a corpse there-under.

Meanwhile, Esu set out to work for the sacrifice that Enu had made to him by causing a series of garden eggs plants to grow round the entire area on which the grave was dug. When Enu got there with the palace police he became dumb-founded by the thickness of the bush surrounding the site. When he was asked to point to the location of the grave, he was struck dumb and began to use his hand to point at various directions. There being no sign of any movement, let alone of a freshly dug grave anywhere in the vicinity, the police men arrested Owo for bearing false witness. That was how the Hand or Owo became dumb and has never spoken a word since that day.

When they got back to the palace, the policemen told the king that Owo could not locate any grave and that worse still, he had become dumb. The king then proclaimed that the heavens had taken their decision by striking Owo dumb, which he said, was a suitable punishment for the false allegation he made against his own brother. The king then set Enu free with the proclamation that from then on, the Hand (Owo) will never be able to open his mouth to speak whilst the Mouth (Enu) will always find the words to defend himself against false accusations. Before leaving for the palace that morning, Enu had used a cock to pray to his head promising to kill it if he returned home in triumph. On getting home in the afternoon, he thanked his head with the cock and finally slaughtered it in the night.

When this Odu comes out of divination for a person having a case pending against him, he should be told that the case was brought against him by a close relation or associate of his, that is, if the divination spells danger or Ayewo. If on the other hand it comes out as Uree, the person will be told that someone close to him is contriving to lie against him. In either case he should be advised to serve Esu with garden eggs with thorns pinned all over it, palm kernel oil chaff, wine and

water. He should also serve his head with kola nut in the morning and afternoon without splitting it, adding a cock to it in the evening of the same day to serve the head formally.

Divination against enmity

Ata rata offewa
Adifa fun gbiri abati,
Omo ele she, ebo oriku.
Ogbe dawo osun tije.
Oduro gbain gbain,
Adifa fun ake,
Ombe le erinrin
Iblye omo araye
Ebo ashegbere akeregbe omf
Akiko adlye le bo.

It was the strong man of charms and medicine who divined for Ake when his success through honesty surrounded him with enemies. Those who envied him for his prosperity plotted to destroy his success and even to take his life. The Awo advised him to make sacrifice with a gourd of water and a cock. He did the sacrifice after which he continued to flourish in his business.

At divination, the person should be told that he is a success story in whatever profession he is undertaking, but that his superlative success has encircled him with enemies. He should make sacrifice in order to thwart the evil machinations of his enemies.

He made divination for Olofin

Olofin was very dictatorial in his style of rulership and his subjects began to plot a scheme for incapacitating him. They assembled all the witch doctors of his domain to procure an incurable illness for him.

Meanwhile, he had a frightful dream which made him to invite Orunmila for divination. After divination, Orunmila told him to make sacrifice to avoid having an incurable disease that would make it impossible for him to continue to rule effectively. He was told to make sacrifice with a goat and any apparel he had having rough-edges. He made the sacrifice and the plans of the witch doctors came to naught.

He made divination for Onigede

When money - Aje or Igho left heaven for earth, it was only stopping at the homes of people who had an atmosphere conducive to its effective boarding and lodging. When Onigede saw that money was entering into several homes but not his own, he invited Orunmila for divination. He was told to make sacrifice with white pigeon, white cloth, and white marshed yam (Ewo or Obobo). The sacrifice was made by spreading the feathers of the pigeon and the marshed yam round Onigede's compound and inserting a white flag on a long pole in front of the house. When Aje next visited the world, he saw all the things he liked in Onigede's house and entered there to live with him.

At divination, the person should be told that money is running away from him because his house is untidy. He should be advised to serve Ifa with a goat if he already has one or to have his own Ifa if he does not. He should renovate his house with white paint and make sacrifice for money with white cloth, marshed yam and white pigeon. He will surely prosper thereafter.

Chapter 17

OGBE-OWANRIN

OGBE-HUNLÉ

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Not much is known yet of the works done by Ogbe -Owanrin in heaven before he came to the world. In heaven however, he was called Moru Motu and he it was, who revealed how the food crops came to the world.

Fowo lo'tun, foshe losin "

Adifa for Isu

Abufun Agbado,

Atun bufun Ogede ati Laakpa.

Those were the Awos who made divination for the yam, maize, plantain and cocoyam when they were leaving heaven for earth. They were advised to make sacrifice and to avoid travelling very early in the morning in order to obviate the risk of sudden death. They were told to make sacrifice with the cutlass with which they used to go to the farm. All the others except Laakpa (the Cocoyam) considered their machetes too indispensable to be surrendered for sacrifice. The cocoyam made the sacrifice as recommended.

The following morning, they left for earth. On their way to the earth, they decided to fetch chewing sticks to clean their teeth. The others used their individual machetes to cut chewing-sticks very quickly and proceeded on their journey to earth. The cocoyam begged the others to borrow him the use of their machetes, but they refused on the ground that having foolishly used his own for sacrifice, they had no moral obligation to lend him the use of their own. While the cocoyam was battling to use his hand and teeth to cut the chewing stick from the bush, the others proceeded in earnest to earth.

Meanwhile, Esu who was the beneficiary of Cocoyam's sacrifice, made it well nigh impossible for him to succeed in cutting any stick. On his part, he was determined to cut a chewing stick, but the more he tried the more he failed. He was at the point of giving up after what must have lasted about an hour of fruitless effort, when he succeeded in cutting a stick to chew. The sun had already appeared brightly on the sky and the morning dew had evaporated when he resumed his journey to earth.

Meanwhile, the others who had proceeded in earnest to earth, got to the boundary of heaven and earth, where they met the king of death already incensed at his failure to capture any victim on earth, and was returning empty handed to heaven. As soon as death met them, he got their cutlasses from each of them and beheaded them and returned with their corpses to heaven. Death had already passed into heaven before sunrise.

That was the point at which the cocoyam came-by. When he got to the boundary of heaven and earth, people asked him (laakpa) how he succeeded

in deluding the king of death. When he explained the difficulties he encountered, the people immediately exclaimed "eni tiku eko", which earned him the earthly name of "Ekoko"; that is, "the one who succeeded in eluding death".

That is why to this day the yam, the corn, and the plantain are generally beheaded with matchets to remove their fruits, while the fruits produced by the cocoyam are uprooted without cutting it.

At divination, the person should be told to make sacrifice with the usual materials which should include his only cutlass. He should also be advised to avoid travelling very early in the morning in order to obviate the risk of accidental death.

Ogbe-Owanrin made sacrifice for prosperity

Orunmila ni Erin, moni asho Oba mokun,

Oni ofun erin li aso yi, ko mo ro,

A fun efon, ko mo lo,

A fun Eranko merindilojo,

Woo fi nwo ile gere-gere-gere,

Orunmila gba li'owo won,

O si fun adiyee, adiyee mo riru ebo,

O gbe enu atukeru, O'tu, oun nikan ni o, mo aso yi lo

Oni fini-gaga ni adiyee nbo ninu enu - mo.

When Ogbe-Owanrin was leaving heaven he went to Orunmila for divination on what to do to prosper on earth. He was told to make sacrifice with the skin of an Elephant, the Buffalo and the skin of as many other animals as he could find. He was to use a hen to serve his Ifa. He made the sacrifice and left for the earth. The pieces of the animals with which he made sacrifice were prepared into a medicine and marked on his head with the prayer that all the good things of heaven would accompany him to the earth, and that he would never be in want.

When this Odu therefore comes out at Ugboodu, the person should be told that right from the time he takes his own Ifa, his prosperity will begin to consolidate and that he will be able to make good use of it, without spoiling it.

Other sacrifices made by Ogbe-Owanrin before leaving heaven

Just before leaving heaven, Morumotu consulted Orunmila for final advice before going to the world. Orunmila told him he had one more sacrifice to make on his way to the earth. That sacrifice was to be made at a three-road-junction with three gourds of palm oil and three kolanuts, one of which was to be a three-piece unit. He was advised that after depositing the sacrifice at the three-road-junction, he was to walk briefly into the bush nearby and to pick up the first thing he saw. He then went home to prepare for his final trip to the earth.

When he left for the world, he stopped at the first three-road-junction called Orita Ijaloko where he made the sacrifice. Thereafter, he walked into the bush where he came across a stone sitting on a piece of iron, as well as a brass smith's furnace. He collected all three of them and left for the world. It was no surprise therefore that from an early age in life Ogbe-Owanrin began to work as a brass smith, in which business he was very successful.

It goes without saying therefore, that the person for whom this Odu comes out at Ugboodu will prosper on earth if he takes to any profession that has a metallurgical base. He should take to engineering, and his prosperity would be assured.

What Ogbe-Owanrin should not do on earth

The only taboo which Ogbe-Owanrin was given in heaven was to beware of dancing and of going to parties involving dancing in order to avoid the danger of false accusation. When he asked what he was to do to avoid the danger since he might not remember on earth what he was told in heaven, he was told to buy a piece of cloth and give it to his wife. He performed that last simple sacrifice.

When he got to the world, and after he grew up as a man, he was invited one day to a dance party holding in his town. Needless to say that he had no recollection of the warning he was given in heaven not to attend any dance. When he got to the dance party, he danced with other people and most of the women around, preferred to dance with him because he was otherwise a fair complexioned and a very attractive man. The children of Ogbe-Owanrin are often light-skinned and good looking. They should refrain from attending dancing parties.

While the dance was in progress, news came that someone had stolen a gourd of oil from the host's kitchen. At the same time, someone emerged from the kitchen to say that he saw the thief making away with the oil and that the culprit was a light complexioned man. Ogbe-Owanrin was the only fair skinned man in the crowd. As soon as he heard of the accusation, he made his exit from the party.

As he was running home, he came across a three-road-junction and took one of the roads home. As soon as his disappearance from the party was noticed, a group of people was sent to pursue him. After he had passed the junction, Esu jettisoned plenty of oil to litter the three-road-junction. When the people pursuing him got to the three road junction, they saw the oil flowing on the ground and came to the conclusion that the children of the house must have poured the oil on the ground. They were satisfied that Ogbe-Owanrin was being wrongly accused. They then returned to the party to report that the oil they were looking for had been spilled by some little children at the three road junction.

Still thinking that he was being accused of the theft of oil, he got home quickly and put on the garb of a dark skinned man since it was his fair skin that got him into trouble at the party. When his friends returned from the party they were astonished to see him in dark skin instead of his usual fair complexion. When Ogbe-Owanrin was asked why he had changed his complexion, he explained that it was his fair skin and handsomeness that earned him the enmity of those who wanted to embarrass him by bringing false accusation against him. They explained to him how the oil had been discovered spilled at the three-road-junction.

Ogbe-Owanrin retorted that he saw how his pursuers came to vindicate him after they discovered the spilled oil at the road junction, but that when he came out of hiding, he neither saw any road junction nor spilled oil. It is reasonable to imagine from that experience that the embarrassment he suffered was the prize he paid for defying the advice given to him in heaven not to attend any dance party. On the other hand however, Esu came to his rescue because of the sacrifice he had made at the three road junction on his way from heaven. He however preferred to keep his newly acquired dark complexion.

The next Ono-Ifa which should be made when Ogbe-Owanrin appears at Ugboodu therefore, is to go to a three road junction with three gourds of palm oil, a stick, a piece of stone and dis-used iron to avoid the risk of being falsely accused of an offence - the person did not commit. The same sacrifice should be made if this Odu comes out at ordinary divination for the same reasons.

Whether at Ugboodu or at divination the person should be advised to refrain from attending any dancing party.

When Ogbe-Owanin comes out at Ugboodu for a light skinned person, he will sooner or later suffer from an illness which will change his colour from a fair to a dark skin. He should immediately follow up the initiation ceremony by buying a piece of cloth for his wife.

He made divination for Orisa-Nla when he was going to visit the people of Obaa

It will be recalled that Orisa-Nla was one of the last divinities sent by God to the earth. No sooner did he arrive, than he was appointed the head of all the divinities because of his capacity as God's own representative on earth. Although, he made Ife his base of operation, he was however in the habit of paying visits to all the other divinities from time to time in their respective places of abode.

On one occasion, he decided to visit Obaa and his fellow divinities there. Before going, he went to Orunmila for divination.

Ukoko eti aso seke,
Ejeji gburodo elere,
Oun lo'n difa fun Orisa-Nla,
Niyo ti O'ni shawo,
Lode Oba Akoko:

After divination he advised Orisa-Nla to make sacrifice to avoid embarrassment during his trip to Obaa. The town of Obaa in Akoko division of Ekiti province of Ondo State, was named after the divinity called Obaa which they serve in the town. Orisa-Nla was told to make sacrifice with a grey coloured goat and 16 snails, two pigeons, a piece of white cloth and a red parrot's feather. He made the sacrifice and left for Obaa. Before leaving, Orunmila also advised Orisa-Nla to refrain from dressing shabbily and to make sacrifice with a he-goat to Esu as soon as he got to his destination.

He was hospitably received by the people of Obaa who immediately quartered him in a suitable building on the outskirts of the town. Soon afterwards, he was formally received by all the divinities in the neighbouring towns and villages. The town of Obaa traditionally offered elaborate sacrifices to all the divinities annually. Soon after Orisa-Nla's arrival to the town, it was time for the annual festival and he had been earmarked to lead the ceremonies of that year.

Before the time of the festival, it was customary for all able-bodied males to participate in clearing the path leading to the festival shrine. Since his arrival to Obaa, Orisa-Nla forgot to make the sacrifice of he-goat to Esu. One morning, he got dressed shabbily in a hunter's outfit and left with a gun on his shoulder for the forest, apparently to hunt. No sooner had he ventured into the forest, than he met the people of the town clearing the way to the shrine where they were going to mark the festivities. Without knowing who he was, they mistook him for a defiant hunter who dared to go out for a hunting expedition when he was supposed to join them. Someone in the crowd then slapped him and the rest joined in beating him up, leaving him sprawling on the ground with several bruises all over his body.

As soon as he was able to gather himself together, he left straight for the Oba's palace to report what his people had done to him. The Oba of Obaa apologised profoundly to Orisa-Nla, wondering what had gone wrong. As the Oba was about to convene a meeting to assemble his people for public atonement for the shabby treatment they meted out to the representative of Oloдумare, Orisa-Nla remembered the leaving advice he was given before Ife. He had neither remembered to offer a he-goat to Esu nor to refrain from dressing in a

manner unbefitting of his divine status. He then told the Oba not to bother to admonish his people because he himself was much to blame for the misunderstanding.

He however proclaimed that since it was against divine law to molest any divinity, the punishment would follow as night follow the day. He told the Oba that the festival they were about to do, would not augur well for the people of the town throughout the ensuing year. The festival was done all the same, but soon afterwards, the whole town was engulfed in tribulations and deprivations throughout the next year. There were; draught famine, childlessness and poor harvests throughout the following year.

Orisa-Nia subsequently made the sacrifice to Esu and he stopped dressing in any other garment except in his divine apparel. When the time came, the following year for the path clearing exercise, this time around, he robed himself in a white apparel, rubbed his face with white chalk, wore a red parrot's feather on his head and held his divine staff of office on his right hand. When he later met the road clearing party on the way, they all paid obeisance to him and prostrated with the exclamations of Baba o, Obatala. They then told him that they were clearing the way to meet him at the festival shrine. He however reminded them on how they beat him up and bruised him the previous year.

When they flatly denied any such occurrence he showed them the scars he received from the bruises of their manhandling. Nonetheless, he proclaimed that it was not their fault because it was the way he presented himself to them. He added the adage that it is the way a visitor dresses and behaves that makes his host to invite him in participating in domestic chores.

Orisa-Nia then brought out his wand of authority (Ase) and prayed that the king and people of the town of Obaa would relish in prosperity and plenty, throughout the following year. There would be plenty of marriages, child births, good harvests and riches for everyone but that on account of the way they treated him the previous year, they would never again return home jointly but severally from the shrine. That is why to the present day, although people troop for communal work, they usually return home in scattered units in twos and threes but never in a group.

The ceremony for that year was very successful. It ushered in peace and prosperity to reign throughout the town of Obaa.

When this Odu comes out for anyone at Ugboodu, he should be advised to refrain from dressing shabbily to avoid embarrassment.

When it comes out at ordinary divination for a person who is proposing to undertake a journey away from home, he should be advised to make sacrifice in order to avoid any embarrassment or the risk of being beaten up or attacked by marauders during the tour.

He made divination for Nugbuke hen he was going to ascend the throne of his father

When the Oba of Obaa in Akoko died, it was the turn of his eldest son Nugbuke to succeed to the throne. The people of Obaa were however not disposed to accepting Nugbuke as their ruler. Tradition however, was on the side of Nugbuke because all the other children of the Oba were women. The other male children were still very much in their infancy. When the king makers discovered that there was little they could do to stop Nugbuke from taking the crown, they contrived other diabolical means of stopping him. It was at that stage that Nugbuke invited a surrogate of Ogbe-Owanrin to make divination for him, on what to do to ascend to his father's throne without let or hindrance. The name of the awo was called Okiki bababa nimeru okpokpo.

There was a secret shrine in the town called Otu-lfe which was the secret conclave at which the coronation ceremonies traditionally began. The prospective Oba had to walk blind-folded from his house to the shrine. Unknown to Nugbuke however, the conspirators who were determined to stand between him and the crown, plotted to line the route with all kinds of harmful installations. They planted charms, dangerous insects and animals, serpents and scorpions right through the route, from the town to the shrine. The dangerous installations were carefully concealed and planted on the footsteps all along the way.

At divination, Okiki bababa advised Nugbuke to offer a he-goat to Esu and to make sacrificial preparations with three palm branches like the ones used for reinforcing the floor of a new building or a well during construction and called (Ugbogbo egho in Yoruba)! The awo prepared a special pot with hen, cock and the relevant leaves used as antidote for poisoned or spoilt ground. The three palm branches were painted with chalk and carwood. Ogbewaririn and Okiki bababa volunteered to accompany Nugbuke to the shrine.

It was the tradition for the kingmakers and the chief priests to go to the shrine before the crown prince. The crown prince would traditionally leave the town for the shrine after Oro or the secret herald had declared a curfew throughout the whole town from the direction of the shrine.

As soon as the curfew was declared by Oro, it was the call-tune for the crown prince to commence his journey to the shrine which was after dusk. Nugbuke and one of his escorts held a palm branch each, while Okiki bababa held the antidotal pot. It is important to emphasise that although tradition demanded that no one should accompany the crown prince to the shrine, the two awos defied the custom because no secret chronicle (Oro) can stop any Ifa priest.

As they began the march to the shrine, the awo holding the pot was sprinkling the liquid from the pot with a special palm frond, as the others were hitting the ground with the palm branches. The exercise was accompanied throughout the route with the following song:-

Ela - ooo,

Elamosin ki awari babalawo,

Nugbuke mura yajoye abare Oni oo,

Orunmila dafa fun Nugbuke,

Ogboo oni, oru lutu Esu,

Orere dami dami dami o, Orere,

Dami lowo uku,

Orere dami dami looni orere,

Dami lowo ajojo,

Orere dami, dami, dami orere,

Dami lowo 'otao,

Orere dami dami lonio orere.

Dami lowo osika,

Orere dami dami lonio orere,

Dami lowo Ogun baleje,

Orere dami dami lonio ore e.

Ugbogbo kpaa o amoren kpao,

Ejiirin Omoren lale,

Ejiirin jin o,

Irete motee, omorenla le ifete teo.

Meaning:-

Sacrifice manifests,
For those who make it.
Nugbuke, the crown prince,
Is today beginning,
His coronation ceremonies.
All dangers ahead and behind;
On the right and on the left;
Of the road to the coronation conclave,
Should melt and evaporate;
Because from sun rise to sun set,
No danger befalls the sun
I have neutralised,
All dangers and poisons,
On the route,
To the coronation conclave;
Death, sickness and misfortune;
Should all clear from the way.

With these operations they succeeded in neutralising all the dangers on the route to the shrine. As the trip got to the gate of the shrine, Nugbuke was told to lead the procession. When the kingmakers and the priests of the shrine saw him at the gate, they instantaneously stood up and gave him a sounding ovation, amazed that he was able to survive the ordeal. They had no choice but to begin the coronation ceremonies. After concluding the ceremonies at the shrine, all the elders led him in procession to complete the installation at the palace. He was successfully crowned the next Oba of Obaa-Akoko.

When this Odu comes out at ordinary divination, the person should be told that the ground of his house has been spilt for him and that he should offer a he-goat to Esu. The same operation that was done for Nugbuke should be done for the person by anointing the ground from the Ifa shrine to the Esu shrine. The water from the pot should be sprinkled right round the house.

On the other hand, if it comes out at Ugboodu, the person should be told that there is a hereditary chieftaincy title awaiting him, and that as soon as it fell to his turn to take the title, he should do the special ceremony of neutralising the inevitable conspiracy bound to be hatched against him by his detractors who would try to do everything to negate his aspirations.

Ogbe-Owanrin becomes the Balogun of Obaa-Akoko

Soon after Nugbuke became the Oba of Akoko he sent for Ogbe-Owanrin very early one morning. Before leaving, he made divination on what to do for a successful trip. He was told to make sacrifice with one pigeon, one hen, one snail and two yards of white cloth.

Bi Iwaju anjujo;
Urele si miomon Bi eyin;
Leyin lajinjo;
Urele si miomon;
Adifa fun Ogbe-Owanrin nijoti o'lo gba oye
Lowo Oba Akoko

Although he was told to make the sacrifice before leaving, the royal messengers sent to fetch him insisted that there was no time for the sacrifice. He then left for the palace without making the sacrifice.

On his way to the palace, he came across a couple (man and wife) who were fighting. He stopped to appeal to them to stop fighting. Regarding him as an

uninvited intruder, they both stopped fighting, and together faced him and threw him on the ground. He became annoyed. But his surrogate Okiki bababa nimenrun okpokpo, who accompanied him on the trip, reminded him that he should take the incident with equanimity because it was the prize he had to pay for failing to make the prescribed sacrifice before leaving home. He immediately discontinued the journey and returned home to make the sacrifice. Thereafter he left for the palace.

On getting to the palace, he was hailed as the royal diviner, and given the title of the Baalogun of Obaa. He returned home amidst pomp and pageantry. When the procession got to the house where the couple had earlier molested him, they came out of their house to see what was happening. When they saw the man they had earlier fallen to the ground, at the head of a triumphal procession, they both prostrated on the ground, and beseeched him to forgive them for the offence they had inadvertently committed against him. He replied by asking them to stand on their feet, because Orunmila is not given to losing his temper in such circumstances. He also admitted that he was partly to blame for the fate he suffered in their hands. The spot on which he was fallen to the ground was then anointed with a goat, and he treaded on the blood of the goat, to lead the procession to his house. That event illustrates what anyone can suffer as a result of failure to make prescribed sacrifices.

He made divination for a barren woman, warrior and king

In his new capacity as a titled chief, he became the diviner for the aristocratic class of the society.

Owu didu ko'se Ikuran
Owo Igbale ko se Ikurobo
Aso taafun oku eegbeni
Adifa fun ologun erun,
Abufun Oloji olofa;
Abufun aganribi ile ife,
Ton bowa fowo alasorin.

These were the three Awos who made divination for the wealthy barren of Ile Ife, the chief warrior of Offa as well as for the Olofa of Offa.

The barren woman was told to make sacrifice with a goat, rat and fish in order to have a child. The Ologun and Olofa of Offa were also told to make similar sacrifices in order to accomplish their desires. They all made the sacrifices. The barren woman was soon cured of her barrenness and she began to have children. The warrior of Offa was subsequently invited to combat an invading army in which he was victorious, and the spoils from the war translated him into blissful wealth and prosperity. The Olofa succeeded in bringing peace and prosperity to his domain and his reign was marked by general peace and prosperity throughout the town.

He played Ayo game with the Olofen

When the king of Ife began to hear about the fame of Ogbe-Owanrin in Akoko, he sent for him. He spent a whole day with the king in his palace. After completing the assignment for which he was invited, the king brought the Ayo game out, for the two of them to play. He was now very hungry. In his presence, food was brought to Olofen who ate without inviting him. Soon afterwards, he left for home. Before he got home, one of Olofen's children developed convulsion and died. The same thing happened on the sixth of the remaining

seven days he spent at life. Throughout these seven days, Olofen was in the habit of eating without inviting him. After Olofen had lost the seventh child, he invited his own Ifa priest to find out why he was losing his children. The Awo asked him who he was playing ayo game with and he replied that it was Ogbe-Owanrin. When they realised that the visitor was a disciple of Orunmila, they asked him whether he had forgotten that it was forbidden to eat in the presence of an Ifa priest without inviting him.

They then told him to give a goat, wine, hen and kolanut to atone for the starvation he meted out to Ogbe-Owanrin and to give a he-goat to Esu who was responsible for procuring the fate of his mortified children. The king quickly made the sacrifices. Thereafter, he lost no other children.

It was Ogbe-Owanrin's experience in the palace of the Olofen that established the usage of inviting one's visitors to table, when one has to eat in their presence. Even if the visitor refuses to eat, his host is enjoined to invite him in the first instance. At divination the person should be advised to develop the habit of inviting his visitors to table to avoid problems with his children.



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Chapter 18

OGBE-OGUNDA	I	I	OGBE-OLIGUN
OGBE-YONU	I	I	OGBE-SURU
	I	I	
	II	I	

At the time of the second habitation of the earth, God had created up to 460 junior divinities. The earth was thriving but news was reaching heaven that it had virtually become the kingdom of Esu. It was Ogbe-Oligun who revealed how the 460 junior divinities went for divination on what to do to be able to rescue the world from the clutches of Esu.

At divination, they were advised to give a he-goat to Esu and to serve all their heads together with one ram, so that they might not go about contradicting and fighting one another. They were happy to serve their heads with a Ram but refused to offer a he-goat to Esu, because he was the very enemy they were coming to fight on earth. The place at which they served their heads was the kolanut street of heaven, a place called Igun. After eating the food for the sacrifice, each of them decided to take a name before leaving for the world. Before the name-bearing exercise was over, Esu had influenced the minds of some of them. Without any provocation whatsoever, they decided to go and kill the Head of the house of Igun. Sankpana, the divinity of epidemics, challenged them to justify their proposed action. Thereafter, a fight ensued and at the end of the scuffle, half of them refused to accompany the others to the world. That was how half of the junior divinities stayed in heaven, while the remaining half came to the world.

Thus, even before they left heaven for earth, where they had intended to fight Esu, they were already being plundered by him. That was how Ogbe-Ogunda earn his name of Ogbe-Oligun.

When this Odu appears at Ugboodu, the person should immediately serve Otta-Lerun-Imale (Osagbaye in Bini) outside the house, give a Ram to his Ifa and a he-goat to Esu, to avoid contracting an infectious disease.

Divination for three friends when they were coming to the world

Igba Odun luugun waye okpari,
Egberin Oga lakala waye.

Meaning

The vulture lived for 200 years, but served until he became bald-headed.

Akala lived for 100 years, until he lost most of the hairs on his head.

These were the names of the two Awos who made divination for three friends before they left heaven for earth.

Oriseku, the son of Ogun,

Orile-Imere, the son of Osanyin or Osun and

Afuwakpe the son of Orunmila.

After deciding to visit the world they went for divination on what to do in order to be prosperous on earth. Each of them was advised to make sacrifice in order to come to the world with a good head. None of them agreed to make the sacrifice.

The tradition in heaven is for anyone coming to the world to go to the head moulder of heaven called AJALA, to buy a head. Anyone who makes sacrifice before going to choose a head has the fortune of choosing a prosperous head, while those who fail to make sacrifice in heaven have the misfortune of choosing hard-luck heads. Since the three friends refused to make sacrifice they suffered the following fates:

The senior of the three - Oriseku, the son of Ogun, chose a poverty head, the next one Orile-Imele, the son of Osanyin, chose the head of a FAE (Igbakhuan in Bini and Imere in Yoruba) whilst the junior of the three, Afuwakpe or Ajuyakpe - the son of Orunmila, chose a head of suffering.

When they got to the world, their experiences transpired in the light of the kind of heads they had chosen. After striving in vain to make a head-way on earth, each of them died at a very early age and returned to heaven to choose new and better heads.

Once again, the three friends went to Orunmila for another divination, and he advised each of them to make sacrifice with three bags of money, now the equivalent of N1.50 and salt, to the obstacle divinity (Elenini or Idoboo) and to give a he-goat to Esu. Oriseku and Orile-Imere, who had still not established a causal relationship between their failure to make sacrifice and the fate they suffered on earth, yet refused to make sacrifice. The son of Ogun, Oriseku, preferred to rely on the physical strength of his father, who equipped him with all the instruments for physical strength. Orile-Imere, the son of Osanyin Osun, preferred to rely on the diabolical strength of his father, who prepared all kinds of mysterious charms for him. Afuwakpe, the son of Orunmila, relied on the wisdom of his father who advised him not to choose a head or indeed return to the earth, without making the prescribed sacrifice. Thereafter, Afuwakpe served Esu with a he-goat and got the materials for serving Elenini.

Oriseku and Orile-Imere then returned to Ajala's mill to choose new heads. They got there and chose beautiful and glittering heads without the advice of the head moulder. At the time they were making their choices, Ajala, the head keeper was being held to ransom by the obstacle divinity (Elenini in Yoruba and Idoboo in Bini) to whom he was indebted. When Oriseku and Orile-Imere got to Ajala's mill, he was being held by Elenini, who vowed never to release him to do his day's chores until he repaid his debts. Ajala then told the two callers Oriseku and Orile-Imere to go to his factory to choose their heads. That was how they chose what they thought to be the best heads available at the head mill and left for the earth.

As they were returning to the earth, they met Afuwakpe on his way to Ajala's head factory. He admired the beautiful heads they had chosen. When he too got to Ajala's mill, he found the head maker still being held to ransom by Elenini. He however told Ajala that he came to choose a new head, having made no headway with his previous choice. Once again, Ajala told Afuwakpe that on account of his being held to ransom by the obstacle divinity for his indebtedness, he was not in a position to help him make a choice and so he was free to choose any head he liked. Afuwakpe refused to do as he was told, insisting that he had no means of distinguishing between a good and a bad head. He then asked Ajala how much he owed. Elenini replied that Ajala owed him three bags of money. Since that amount was equal to the sum with which Afuwakpe's father advised him to make sacrifice to Elenini/Idoboo, he dipped his hand into his bag and handed the three bags of money to Elenini.

He immediately released his grip on Ajala, who expressed his gratitude to Afuwakpe. On getting to his headry, Ajala remembered that he had been

looking for salt to put in his soup but had no money to buy it. He told Afuwakpe to excuse him to go and look for money with which to buy salt. Afuwakpe told him not to bother because he had salt with him. He surrendered the salt in his bag to Ajala, who without any further delay, told Afuwakpe to choose any head he liked from the available collection. Afuwakpe chose the most good-looking head in the headry, but Ajala told him that the most attractive objects were not necessarily the best ones. The head keeper then picked a strong, enduring and prosperous head and gave it to the son of Orunmila who immediately returned to the earth, after thanking Ajala.

Meanwhile, before the sons of Ogun and Osanyin got to the last of the seven hills before the earth, it had rained heavily, and the beautiful heads they chose had broken up. Once again, they had to return to heaven to choose a third pair of heads, with the determination, this time, to make the prescribed sacrifice. On their way back to heaven, they met Afuwakpe on his way to earth with the new head he had chosen and which was standing firmly on top of his body.

When they got back to the head keeper, he asked them for the heads they had chosen previously, and they replied that they had broken up. He then enjoined them to pay for the former heads first. This time, Ogun's son had enough money to pay for the former head, and also for a new and better one. On his part, the son of Osanyin had enough money to pay for his former head but not enough to pay for a new and better one. However, Ajala allowed him to collect a new head on credit. This incident explains why the images on the shrines of Orunmila and Ogun are very strong and enduring, whereas, the images (Edidimode in Yoruba and Amazee in Bini) and containers (clay pots) are prone to breaking up easily.

When this Odu appears for anyone at Ugboodu, the person is advised to repay a debt he owed in heaven if he is to prosper on earth. He should without delay prepare his Esu shrine with a he-goat, to avoid any repetitive mistake in his Ifa ceremonies.

He made divination for Erumen when she was coming to the world

Erumen (Omi in Bini) is a kind of yam. She went for divination to Ogbe-Oligun before she came to the world. The Awos who made divination for her in the house of Ogbe-Oligun were called:-

Kpanke denke (mortar and piston),

Awo ile Orunmila,

Adifa fun Erumen,

Nijo toun, kuro

Lorun bowa kole aye.

The awo advised her to make sacrifice with a sponge, a sharp pointed stick, and a cutlass to avoid the risk of suffering in the hands of her fellow women on earth. They also advised her to serve Esu with a he-goat and touse a hen to make sacrifice in order to have honour and respect on earth. She did not do any of the sacrifices before leaving for the earth.

On getting to the world, she grew to be very pretty, having been endowed with rich foliage which won general admiration. When she became pregnant, she gave birth to a very beautiful tuber. When she was ripe for harvesting, her husband, the farmer, preferred to uproot her with a sharp pointed stick. After uprooting her tuber the farmer used a sponge to wash her body which peeled off her skin. That made her to become ill and she began to emaciate. Thus, the materials with which she failed to make sacrifice in heaven became her undoing on earth.

Observing the change in her body, the farmer immediately sold her away in the market, which explains why the white yam (Erumen or Omi) is not always bamed. It is cooked or sold soon after it is harvested. The women bought her from the market, to be cooked as food. On getting home, they brought out a cutlass which they used on her beautiful body. When she remembered that the cutlass was the third instrument with which she was advised to make sacrifice in heaven to avoid sickness and suffering in the hands of her fellow women, she shouted - moo juuya, meaning; I have suffered. That is the noise made by Erumen yam when the cutlass is used on it to this day. After being cooked, her pieces were put inside the mortar whilst the piston was used to pound them. At this stage, she remembered and began to shout the names of the two Awos who made divination for her in heaven, thus;

Kpanke denke, kpanke denke, kpanke denke,

which is the noise a newly harvested white yam makes when it is being pounded on the mortar, to the present day.

He made divination for the Moon

The Moon, the Sun, and the Stars are the three children of the divinity of light. The sun shines brightly, from sun-rise to sun-set. The star shines brightly and consistently throughout the night. Why then is it that the moon blooms and wanes?

Amaaka ukeregbe sherun,

Bodo ukeregbe sherun,

Gbodo sherun manka manka.

Those were the Awos who made divination for the moon, advising him to make sacrifice so that his fortune might not undulate in zigs and zags. He was advised to serve Esu with he-goat, cock, Eko and Akara. After divination, he thought it superfluous to make any sacrifice, since he was already endowed with everything anyone could wish for, namely:-

GLAMOUR,

TRANQUILITY,

POPULARITY; and

FAME.

Not long afterwards he appeared on the horizon and everyone rejoiced over his beauty and splendour. He began to grow in size and as he got bigger, he became brighter and better looking. It took him twenty three days to grow into his full size. At that stage, Esu got up in the morning, to ask for who was told to make sacrifice, but refused to make it, and his followers replied that the Moon failed to make sacrifice. Thereafter, Esu began to blow him and he began to reduce in size, until he became so pale and anaemic that nobody bothered to take any notice of him any more. He eventually paled into insignificance and nothingness. That is why, after blossoming into fullness, the moon begins to deteriorate because of the sacrifice he refused to make at the beginning of time.

When this Odu appears at divination for a newly born child, the parents should be advised to make sacrifice to avoid the risk of suffering from blood disease or deficiency later in life. If it comes out for an adult, he should be advised to make sacrifice in order to avoid the risk of anaemia or leukaemia.

Ogbe-Oligun reveals Orunmila's attributes of perseverance

It was Ogbe-Oligun nicknamed Ogbe-Suru on earth, who disclosed the in-exhaustiveness of Orunmila's patience. Orunmila declared that although he looks weak and feeble, when, however, he decides to move, he can be as swift as lightning. When he is offended, it takes him three years to react, thus, leaving

enough time for the offender to repent and seek re-approachment. Even when he decides to take offence, his reaction is as slow as the movement of the snail, although, his feet are as many as those of a millipede, who although endowed with 200 pairs of feet, nonetheless moves slowly and gracefully. Orunmila continues "when I move and my movement is obstructed by a rock on the way, I coil like the millipede and wait for the foliage of the trees above to ripe and fall to the ground to constitute a bridge, to facilitate my movement over the rock. On the other hand, if my movement is obstructed by a fallen tree, I will wait for the tree to decay before I continue my movement". It must indeed be a morbid anger that can outlive the time it takes for a fallen tree to decay or for the dropping foliage to heap up on the rock.

This is how Orunmila enjoins all his children and adherents to develop a disposition to in-exhaustible patience when anyone offends them. Orunmila's dictum is, "medicines and charms may fail as remedies, but the efficacy of patience never fails".

Orunmila's eulogy of patience

Orunmila says that to follow his ways is to learn the art and efficacy of perseverance. He says that medicinal and diabolical preparations may fail but the efficacy of patience is as constant as the existence of heaven and earth. Patience, he says, requires forbearance and the ability to resist the temptation to avenge a wrong-doing. If one is offended by the actions of others, one is not expected to react through vengeance but to leave judgement to the divinities who will surely intervene on the side of righteousness. In any event, people were bound to be annoyed as often as possible, but that temper should not be allowed to span over the length of one over-night's sleep because the heat of boiled water does not endure from dusk to dawn.

Although Orunmila never forgives those who seduce his wife, he is nonetheless stoical in his attitude to seduction. Anybody who seduces his wife as well as the wife who allows herself to be seduced pay dearly in the end for their transgression.

Ewure, Orunmila's wife was fond of telling him that she had many admirers, more attractive than himself. One day, the wife challenged him that an admirer had long been flirting with her and that if he did not allow her to cohabit with the man, she would leave him to marry the man.

Alaminagun, Ajaminagun, Emietiri, Eyiteemaarl loonl ylojutire, miilo adifa fun Akpetebi Orunmila nijo toun lofe ale. That is the name of the Awo who made divination for the wife of Orunmila when she wanted to flirt with a lover. When Orunmila was confronted with the ultimatum of allowing his wife to flirt or to leave him, he told her that she was free to invite her lover to the house; rather than risk the danger of losing her life by engaging in secret infidelity.

The wife queried whether any man existed, capable of defying the redness of his eyes, to seduce his wife. He replied that she had his full permission to bring her lover to the house. She then dressed up and went to her lover's place, and invited him to her matrimonial home. The man never suspected that Akpetebi was Orunmila's wife. On getting to her house, the lover was invited by Orunmila to enjoy the food he had prepared for him. He had also dressed his bed and beckoned to his wife to lie on the bed with the lover, while he went to sleep in another room. After lying down, the woman caressed the lover to make love to her. After hesitating for a long time, the man refused to have sex with her on the ground that he did not know the husband's intentions. Before dawn, the lover ran away, but not before Orunmila had fetched water from the river for his wife and her lover to have their baths. Having done that, he went outside to visit his friends.

When Akpetebi realised that it was for fear of Orunmila's disposition that the lover whom she liked so much refused to make love to her, she went out in the morning to plait her hair with a particular hair-do called SHUUKU, having two perpendicular weavings. Thereafter she left the house to settle down with the lover.

She spent exactly three years with the lover during which Orunmila did nothing to betray any anger. Meanwhile, the other divinities were beginning to ridicule Orunmila for lacking the courage to fight back after a fellow being and had seduced his wife. The seducer turned out to be Sakpana, the divinity of epidemics. On the third anniversary of his wife's seduction, Ogun came to him and accused him of being an idiot and an imbecile. He retorted by asking Ogun whether he was annoyed as a result of his wife's action. Ogun replied by saying that if any divinity offended him in a similar manner he would react with the ferocity of a wounded lion. Orunmila then asked Ogun to fight on his behalf if he felt that his anger was irresistible. Ogun asked Orunmila what his reward would be, if he forced the wife to return to him and Orunmila replied that he would compensate him with a cock. The following night, Ogun waited for the woman to fall deeply asleep before making an onset. He moved to the woman's bedroom and hit her head with a sledge hammer. Instantly, she developed a splitting headache. The headache became so serious that when the woman lapsed into a coma, Sakpana went for divination that night, and he was told to present a cock to her former husband. The following morning he took a cock to Orunmila's house, which he gave to Ogun to compensate him for the work he had done. The woman became well but she did not return to Orunmila's house.

A few days later, Sango, the thunder divinity came to admonish Orunmila for not using his powers to get back his wife from Sakpana. Once again, he told Shango that he would only become annoyed if Shango demonstrated that he too was annoyed. Sango confirmed that he was not only annoyed but thoroughly ashamed that a junior divinity could treat the in-offensive Orunmila so shabbily with impunity. Orunmila told Shango to do what he could to demonstrate his anger. Asked what his compensation would be if he succeeded in bringing back the woman, Orunmila confirmed that he would compensate Sango with a cock. With that, Sango left for Sakpana's house.

In the middle of the night, the rain began to threaten and the clouds were gathered. Sango's wife, Oya, put on the light in the form of lightening for Sango to identify his target. Sango entered Sakpana's house and roared through the woman's chest and she had a heart attack which immediately lapsed her into unconsciousness. Once more, Sakpana went for a hurried divination and he was told to send a second cock to her former husband. Sakpana went with the cock to Orunmila, who in turn gave the cock to Sango.

Once more, the woman became well, but she did not return to Orunmila's house. The ferocious divinities had exhausted their capabilities without accomplishing their objectives. It was time for Orunmila to react, albeit by proxy. He then invited Esu, his favourite arbiter, tuned him up with a chicken, to bring back Akpetebi if only to save his divine dignity, promising to give him a he-goat, after he had returned the infidel to his house.

After eating the chicken, Esu moved to the woman's bedroom in the small hours of the morning. He tied up her hands, feet, throat and chest, and hit her on the head and she lapsed into a coma in her sleep. When Sakpana woke up in the morning, he observed that his wife was still apparently fast asleep. It was broad day light and she was still not up. He then went to her room, only to find her unconscious. He did everything to wake her up, but she could neither speak

nor raise her hands and feet. At that point, Sakpana realised that he was fighting a battle that he stood no chance of winning. He then packed his bag, eloped from his house and went to Akpetebi's mother to request her to collect the corpse of her daughter, because he had taken enough. He then ran into the forest where he stays to the present day.

On her part, the mother of Akpetebi, after seeing her condition, ran to Orunmila to save the life of her daughter. Orunmila told her to produce a he-goat for Esu, which she did without a moment's delay. After the sacrifice, Akpetebi regained consciousness because Esu consequently released all the ropes with which he bound her. As soon as she was well enough to stand on her feet again, she went on her knees to apologise to Orunmila for her actions. As she remained on her knees with hands and feet on the ground, Orunmila pointed his wand of authority (Uranke) at her and, calling her name "Ewure", proclaimed "you have disgraced my masculinity and divine dignity by challenging my authority as your husband. It has taken you three years to repent your transgressions, and only when you were between life and death. Henceforth, you will always tread the ground on your hands and your feet in the position in which you are now. the two hair-do with which you left my house to cohabit with another man will become horns on your head".

With that proclamation, Ewure, in a plea for forgiveness cried out "Moobee, moobee, moobee". Thereafter she transfigured into the four-footed-goat which the Yorubas called Ewure, the name of the unfaithful wife of Orunmila. Her cry on that day remains the cry of the goat to this day.

If this Odu appears therefore at divination for the wife of an Ifa Priest, she should be advised to resist the temptation to embark on the flirtatious path she is contemplating, lest she would either die in consequence or if she is lucky, she might escape with a compound stroke.

Ogbe Suru's own demonstration of the reward of perseverance to three Princes

When Olofen died at Ife, he had three children, called in order of seniority; Ashikpagale, Afuwagale, and Oshikpeletu, all of whom lived beyond the river. After the death of their father, the king-makers sent for the senior son, Ashikpagale to return home to begin the ceremonies for ascending the throne of his father. Before leaving, he went for divination to Ogbe-Suru, who advised him to make sacrifice with a ram to his Ifa, a he-goat to Esu and to serve his mind with salt and chalk in order to be able to bear the little suffering he was bound to encounter before taking the crown. Ogbe-suru advised him to be infinitely patient especially on account of an embarrassing ultimatum he would be given on his way home, which would over-tax his patience, and capable of costing him, his life and the crown.

Ashikpagale was so annoyed with Ogbe-Suru's divination that he vowed never to perform the sacrifice, because having been invited by the king-makers, it was only a matter of time before he became the new king, being the eldest son of his father. He invited his wife and left at once for Ife. On getting to the river Omo, they had to enter a canoe to ferry them across. After the paddler had ferried the canoe right up to the middle of the river, he faced the crown prince and told him that he was ferrying him to greatness and wondered what compensation he had in mind for him. Ashikpagale replied that he would get his appropriate reward after being crowned king. The canoe paddler insisted that he demanded his reward there and then. Asked what his prize was, the canoe paddler replied that he wanted to make love to his wife. Ashikpagale reacted

by accusing the paddler of blasphemy for which the penalty was death. A little later, the paddler jettisoned the canoe and it capsized, drowning all the occupants into the depth of river Omo. The paddler however swam to rescue the wife of the crown prince, taking her home to become his wife after the demise of her impatient husband.

Words soon reached Ife that the eldest crown Prince had lost his life in the river Omo and they quickly sent for his junior brother Afuwagale, who, without knowing how his brother died, also lost his life in the same process in river Osun, because he too, neither agreed to make sacrifice nor to exercise the requisite patience during his trip.

Eventually, the king-makers sent for Oshikpeletu, who was now wondering what happened to his two brothers. Two messengers were sent to invite him to Ife without explaining why he was being invited. He did not know that his two brothers had lost their lives. When the messengers wanted to return to Ife, he prevailed on them to wait for food to be prepared for them. As the food was being cooked, he sneaked out through the back of the house to Ogbe-Suru's house for divination. The diviner told him that his two elder brothers were no more, and that he was being invited to take the throne of his father, which had eluded his two elder brothers. Ogbe-Suru told him to make sacrifice with two mats (Ejiko in Yoruba or Aghen in Bini), two cocks, 2 pigeons, a gun, a knife, a cutlass and fried corn. He quickly made the sacrifice, after which Ogbe-Suru gave him half of the fried corn and one of the mats to hold with him for the journey. He was also advised to forebear any shabby treatment he was going to receive, while sailing through the river. He was told to be patient and not to allow any vulgar suggestion or treatment to put him off. Thereafter he returned home. After feeding the visitors, they entered the canoe and set out for the journey.

At the middle of the river, the sailor again demanded to have sex with his wife. He instantly agreed without any hesitation telling him to satisfy himself. As soon as the sailor began to have sex with his wife, he screened them off with the mat he was holding and began to chew the fried corn with the adage that he who chews corn does not overhear what happens around him. The two sailors made love to his wife in turns before the journey ended. Eventually, they alighted from the canoe and he thanked the sailors for assisting him, without betraying any signs of annoyance. He did not mention the incident to anyone.

As soon as he reported his safe arrival to the king-makers, the coronation ceremonies began in earnest. After the completion of the coronation ceremonies, he invited the two sailors to the palace. The Oba's chiefs were assembled, as tradition demanded, to pay respects to the king. After they were all gathered, the Oba put a simple question to them in the following words: "my respected chiefs and councillors, what is the traditional reward for a good turn?" In concert all the Chiefs replied, "my Lord, kindness begets gratitude, as one good turn deserves another". The king then reported that it was the magnanimity and kindness of the two sailors that made his coronation possible. He decided to compensate them by conferring chieftaincy titles on them. Thereafter, he told them that he had one more request to make on the sailors. He nominated two candidates for the sailors to train as swimmers, paddlers and divers to be capable of doing search and rescue operations inside the river. The sailors readily accepted the assignment and went on their knees to express gratitude for the Chieftaincy titles conferred on them.

Before the first anniversary of the coronation, the two maritime trainees had attained perfection and returned to the palace where they were made the royal mariners. On the first anniversary of the coronation, all the Chiefs were again

assembled to pay the customary respects to the king. The two sailors upon whom Chieftaincy titles had been conferred were also present to pay their respects to the king along with their colleagues. As soon as all the chiefs were assembled, the Oba put another innocuous question to them, "my loyal Chiefs and Coun- cillors, what is the reward of someone who does a wicked act to one", all the Chiefs unanimously replied, "long live the King, wickedness begets punishment as one evil turn deserves another". The king then asked the two titled sailors to narrate what they did to him during his last journey to the coronation the previous year. The two sailors got up, but could not explain their transgression. They only appealed for leniency and forgiveness.

When the sailors could not explain their despicable act, the Oba narrated the story of how the two of them made love to his wife inside the canoe in a situation where they were between the devil and the deep blue sea. He added that his two elder brothers lost their lives in similar circumstances. He ended by asking the Chiefs to pronounce a suitable punishment for their act. The verdict of the Chiefs was that by forcing love on the helpless queen in the presence of the king, the sailors had not only defied their human pride and dignity but had also insulted the integrity of every man and woman in the kingdom. Therefore, the wages of their transgression was death by execution.

As soon as the verdict of death was pronounced on them, the two sailors as if to come forwarded to surrender themselves, took to their heels and escaped by diving into the river. At that stage, the Oba quickly ordered the two royal mariners who had been invited to be in attendance, to go after the two culprits, because that was the objective of their maritime training. They both dived after the villains and dragged them up from the depth of the river to the surface where they were instantly beheaded for sacrifice to mother-earth and Ogun, the Iron divinity. When the ceremonies were all over, all the chiefs concluded that what they did to King and Queen explained the disappearance of the two elder brothers of the King, Ashikpagale and Afuwagale, surmising that they must have been drowned because they refused to allow their wives to be seduced under duress in a similar manner.

When this Odu comes out at divination for any person who is aspiring to greater heights of achievement, he will be advised to cultivate inexhaustible patience and forbearance. That is because, whatever human suffering he is bound to encounter is likely to be no more than the darkest hour of the night, which is just before the dawn of a new day. He should make the same sacrifice that Oshikpeletu was required to do before he ascended the throne of his father. When the Odu comes out at Ugboodu, the person should be advised to beware of a temptation that he is bound to have, through a woman if he is to live long. He should forbid the drinking of all types of palm-wine.

Ogbe Oligun's sacrifice against poverty

Ajala mukporo moba lere,
Oshemi bu'jo,
Oshemi bi oyo.
Oshemi de mi ku oshe meji,
So ike demi jo.

Meaning He was so happy,
That he felt like dancing.
His guardian angel asked him?
What is amusing you, and
He replied, I had a dream.

In which I saw,
A large host of money,
Coming in to my house.

His guardian angel told him that unless he made sacrifice, the money would not reach him. The dream signified the prospect of prosperity lurking around him. At divination Ajala was told to make sacrifice with a three-year-old goat, a big ram, with protruding testicles, 16 pigeons and 16 cowries. He did not do the sacrifice.

The next day, Ajala had another dream from which he woke up rejoicing. Asked by his guardian angel why he was rejoicing, he explained that in his dream, he saw a number of children moving into his house. His guardian angel however explained to him that his dream would not manifest, because he did not pay for children in heaven. He added that the children would only reach him if he made sacrifice to Ifa with a goat, hen and snails, which he, his guardian angel would use to pay for the children in heaven. In other words, this was his guardian angel's way of putting it to him that he (Ajala) did not make any sacrifice before leaving heaven for the world.

The third night, Ajala had yet another dream in which he saw that he had become so wealthy, that he was made a king. As he was once again rejoicing, his guardian angel told him that he only saw an apparition of the fortune awaiting him but that he would only attain it, if at the appropriate time, he made sacrifice to Ifa with a cow, a hen, a snail and fourteen different kinds of animals, and to give a he-goat to Esu. In reply, Ajala said that once a pauper is told to make sacrifice with a cow at divination, he feigns deafness because he could not imagine how he would ever be able to afford a cow for sacrifice.

Ajala threw up his hands in despair and so refused to make any of the sacrifices. He also continued to live in abject penury, to the end of his life.

For a brief explanation, Ajala was not required to make all the sacrifices at the same time. He should have started with the sacrifice for money to come into his life first. After coming into money, he would then have made the next sacrifice for children since his new found wealth would have enabled him to afford the cost of marriage and maintenance and possibly to build a house. That would have translated him into a life of affluence and prosperity. It would also have enabled him to make the third sacrifice and the recognition associated with prosperity, would have rendered him eligible for eminence and distinction.

At divination therefore, the person should be asked whether he had had the type of dream that Ajala had. In fact, this part of Ogbe-Oligun's revelation is meant for interpretation for anyone who dreams of wealth and prosperity. In that case, the dreamer would be advised to make the sacrifices in chronological order. That is, if the Odu coming out of divination on the dream is Ogbe-Oligun. It is a special ONO-IFA or ODIHA for Ogbe-Oligun.

He made divination for Aiye, the blind man

In a further attempt to demonstrate the efficacy of patience as a panacea to all human afflictions and deprivations, Orunmila revealed how four brothers and a sister born of the same parents, tried to molest their eldest brother, Aiye. The sacrifice he made and the patience he exercised delivered Aiye from the evil machinations of his younger brethren.

Biko basi alaja
Ajakole de
Adifa fun Aiye
Abufun awon mererin
Aburore, Keeke, Reere, Olugboi ati Keke.

These were the two Awos who made divination for Aiyé and his four junior brothers and sister called KEEKE, REERE, OLUGBOI and KEKE. Aiyé was blind and he was the most senior out of five children born of the same parents. That is why, when this ODU appears at Ligbodu, the person should be asked whether he is the senior out of the five children born of the same parents. If he so confirms, he should be told to make a special sacrifice in order to avoid being victimized by his juniors. At ordinary divination, the person should be told to have his own Ifa in order to avoid the risk of becoming blind later in life. He should however be advised in the light of his position among his brothers and sisters.

Since Aiyé was blind, his livelihood and movement, depended on his favourite dog, called Ere, who took him about and fetched food for him from the forest. In spite of his physical handicap, his dog provided him with abundance of meat and food.

Meanwhile, his four brethren plotted to bring him suffering by contriving to deprive him the use of his dog, who had a chain-laden with bells round its neck. They beseeched him to lend them the use of his dog for a hunting expedition. He however told them that he doubted whether the dog would obey hunting instructions in his absence. They assured him that they would make the dog to operate without him. He then removed the chain of bells from the dog's neck and released it to go with them to the forest.

They travelled at length in the forest, but the dog was not in the mood to hunt for any game after which they returned home. Meanwhile, they persuaded Aiyé to accompany them with his dog to the forest, and he readily agreed to oblige. Before the next morning, Aiyé had a dream in which his guardian angel advised him to make sacrifice without delay, by offering guinea fowl to his head and to serve Esu with a chicken, the bone of a rabbit, and kolanut, so that he might return safely from the forest. He did the two sacrifices that very night.

The following morning, all four brothers and sister, including Aiyé and his dog - Ere, left for the forest for a second hunting expedition. When they got to the forest, they asked Aiyé to wait for them by the foot of a tree while the dog went with them into the depth of the forest to hunt for game. The dog was able to kill enough animals for the four brethren to carry home. Thereafter, they carried the meat home while asking Aiyé, their eldest brother, to wait for them in the forest. Little did Aiyé know that his brothers had no intention of returning to the forest to bring him and his dog home.

After they had travelled some distance on their way home, they stopped to congratulate themselves on their success in out-witting their eldest brother. Meanwhile, their most junior sister KEKE insisted that they should return to fetch Aiyé, but the rest hushed her down, insisting that he should be left to die in the forest.

After the three brothers and sister left, Aiyé's dog went into the forest and returned with a fresh and unsplit kolanut fruit which he gave to its master. Aiyé took the kolanut from the dog and kept it. The dog made a second trip to the forest, and returned with a rabbit which it gave to its master, who also kept it.

At that instant in heaven, one of the children in God's Household was critically ill and the heavenly Awos were invited to make divination for him. They had recommended sacrifice with an unsplit kolanut fruit and a rabbit to save the life of the sick child. God had sent out errands in heaven to obtain the kolanut and rabbit without success. That was because after enjoying the sacrifice made to him by Aiyé, Esu in heaven, caused the illness of the sick child while at the same time conjuring all the kolanut trees in heaven to conceal their fruits and for all the rabbits in heaven to bury themselves deep inside the ground. After unsuccess-

fully combing the length and breadth of heaven for the two sacrificial materials, God ordered two messengers to go to the earth to look for them.

This act of Esu was a further manifestation of his avowed proclamation during God's creation of the universe that although, he Esu, lacked creative capability, he however had the means of mutilating whatever God had created.

Instantly, God's divine messengers took a position at the boundary of heaven and earth, and telescoped into the four corners of the earth until they targeted a blind man who was sitting with a fresh kola nut fruit and a live rabbit at the foot of a tree. These messengers are called the angels of God. Within the twinkle of an eye, they had made a rendezvous with Aiye at the foot of the tree where he had been abandoned by his brothers and sister. When God's angels met Aiye, they asked him why he was alone in the forest. He replied by saying that he was on an errand which his junior brothers and sister sent him. He disclosed that he was blind, and that his three junior brothers and sister contrived to trick him into the forest and had apparently abandoned him in his helpless disposition, to die.

The angels denounced the action of his junior ones but regretted that but for the urgency of their own mission, they would have done something about his predicament. Aiye asked what their mission was, and the angels (Aiye did not know that they were divine messengers from heaven), replied that they came to the forest in search of fresh kola nut fruits and a live rabbit. Without any hesitation, Aiye surrendered the ones he had to while the other plucked leaves with the left hand and gave them to Aiye. They told him that as soon as they were out of sight, and he had seized hearing their footsteps and the sound of their herald birds, he should squeeze the leaves and clean his eyes with them. With that, they bade him goodbye and God's blessings.

Aiye waited until the forest was totally quiet. There were no more sounds from birds and the movement of leaves on top of the trees. He then knelt down to thank God, his head and his guardian angel, squeezed the leaves between the two palms and used them to rub his eyes. When he finished the operation, he opened his eyes slowly and saw the forest around him for the first time. His dog, who was his only companion, was the first to notice the change in the physical condition of its master. It jumped at him in a gesture of relief and bliss. He held the dog under his right armpit and set out for his journey home. On his way home, he picked up a cudgel and went straight to the house of Keeke his immediate junior brother, cudgelling him to death with the stick and setting his house on fire. He did the same thing to Reere and Olugboi. Thereafter he set out for the house of Keke. As soon as Keke saw her eldest brother, she ran away from the house through the back door and Aiye pursued her. Keke ran into Orunmila's house for refuge and shouted for deliverance from the hands of his brother.

When Aiye got to the gate of Orunmila's house, he stopped because it is forbidden to fight in Orunmila's house. He however requested Orunmila to bring Keke out, so that he could kill her. Orunmila however pleaded with Aiye to have mercy on Keke. Aiye then narrated what his three brothers and sister including Keke, did to him. At the instance of Orunmila, he agreed to spare Keke's life. With that Aiye departed and left for home. Thereafter, Keke rejoiced with the following song:

Aiye kpa Keeke
Aiye kpa Reere,
Aiye kpa Olugboi
Olee Keke iboo,
Bio ba siti Ifa,
Bio ba si to Orisa,

Ta lo lee to,
Keke gba o.

Meaning

Aiye killed Keeke,
Aiye killed Reere,
Aiye killed Olugboi,
But for God and Orunmila,
Who would have saved Keke, from death?

That was how two of the five brothers and sister survived. When this Odu comes out of divination, the person will be told that he is one of five brothers and sisters born of the same mother. If their mother is alive, she should be advised to make sacrifice to avoid losing three of them in her life time. The person should be advised to warn the other three of his brothers and sisters not to offend their senior brother, so that his head might not bring them premature demise.

The contest of five friends for a single woman

Alaminagun (Farmer)
Ajaminagun (Wine tapper)
Emiletiri (Trader)
Iyiteriloni hunter) and;
Yioju Temilo (Native Doctor);

These were five friends who, unknown to one another, were be-friending the same lover. The woman spaced out their visits to her place in such a manner that no two of the lovers were there at the same time. Meanwhile, three of them, the farmer, the wine tapper and the hunter went for divination and they were told to make sacrifice to avoid losing their lives in a contest. Only the farmer made his sacrifice. The hunter and the wine tapper did not. On the other hand, the trader was always travelling out of town and was scarcely ever visiting the lover. The Native Doctor had got an earlier premonition that his lover was the agent of the King of Death, and had quietly withdrawn.

One day, the hunter and the wine tapper decided to visit their respective lovers. As they proceeded on the journey, each of them discovered that they were heading for the same venue. Eventually, they ended up visiting the same woman. As soon as they realised that they were be-friending the same woman, a dispute ensued. They both returned home quarrelling.

On getting home, they narrated the incident to the farmer who also discovered that they were referring to his lover. Thereafter all three of them decided to troop to the woman's house. As soon as the woman sighted the men's approach to her house, she escaped through the back door. Soon afterwards, they started fighting, which led to the death of the hunter and the wine tapper. The only survivors were the farmer, who made sacrifice, the Native Doctor who did not participate in the fight and the Trader who was away to a distant market.

When this Odu comes out during divination, the person should be told or asked to recall any contest he is having with four other persons. If he confirms, he should be asked to make sacrifice and if possible to withdraw from the contest. He, however, stands a chance of winning the contest if he makes the sacrifice.

The prince who suffered a high prize for failing to make a token sacrifice

There lived a Prince who was so stubborn that he refused to heed all genuine advice. One day, two Ifa Priests made divination for him and warned him that he should be prepared to encounter a light embarrassment, in order to avoid the risk of encountering a more excruciating one.

The names of the Awos were:

Oyun ra ekpe luku

Qabi amuseru osi era ta deegbe

Keetu ayare delekpin

Meaning

No one can enslave an unborn child,

When it is in the womb.

No one can be as naive and cowardly,

As to surrender his belongings to be shared by others.

He was told to make sacrifice with a cock, four mud images of human beings, four daggers, a chaff of white melon and ripe plantain, and to add a he-goat for Esu. He was also told to serve his wife's head with a hen and pounded yam which he was to pound himself. That was the small suffering he was advised to bear in order to avoid a heavier one. He wondered why he, a Prince, should condescend not only to serve his wife's head but also to pound yam, which he had never done before. He refused to make any of the sacrifices.

Three months later, he was embroiled in a major crisis. His town was invaded by enemy troops from outside. The war was so devastating that himself and his wife were taken as captives. As the invading troops were making away with their loots and war captives, they were be-nighted in the middle of the forest. Their captors ordered his wife to cook yams on the fire for them to eat. After the yam was cooked, the Prince, who had been heavily bound in chains was temporarily released and ordered to pound the yam cooked by his wife. This time, he had no choice but to pound the yam, after which he was again put in chains without eating out of the food. The troops and his wife ate the pounded yam.

After dinner, the Commander of the enemy troops spread out his mat along side where the Prince lay in chains and slept with his wife. The commander made love to the Prince's wife to his full hearing. Next morning, they continued the journey to their destination.

At noon of the following day, the Soldiers decided to fetch food for the Prince to eat. They plucked ripe plantain from a farm they came across and gave him to eat. For water, they collected particles of water from the shells of harvested melons and gave him to drink. Those were the two items with which he was advised to make sacrifice at home but which he refused to do. It was then he remembered the weight of suffering, that fate had meted out to him for his failure to heed the advice of his Ifa Priests.

Meanwhile, he ate part of the ripe plantain and threw the rest out for Esu. He did the same with the empty melon shells promising Esu that if he returned home alive, he would offer a he-goat to him. Towards dusk on that day, the retreating troops realised that the Prince was beginning to constitute an unwanted burden on them. They brought him forward, cut off his two ears and released him to find his way home without his wife, who they kept with them.

He then began his long journey home. Before he reached his town, he became ashamed of having to be seen without his ears. He made a cap with leaves having side flaps to cover his ears. With the cap on, he entered the town. His subjects rejoiced at seeing him back alive. The cap with which he entered the town and which became his customary headgear has become a tradition in Yoruba land ever since. The cap is called - Agadaba which the Yorubas wear as a symbol of authority to this day.

When this Odu comes out for any one during initiation at Ugboodu, he should be advised to forbid eating ripe plantain and white melon. He should also be told to serve his wife's head with a hen and pounded yam which he should pound

by himself. He should be told that he is stubbornly inclined and not disposed to heeding advice. If he does not want to encounter any serious catastrophe, he should mellow down.

If the Odu comes out at ordinary divination, the person should be told to make sacrifice in order to survive a major crisis hovering around him.

Ogbe-Oligun leaves heaven for the world

When Ogbe-Oligun was in heaven, he was very rascally and pugnacious, and very many people dreaded him. When he then decided to leave for earth, he went to make his wishes for earth at the divine altar of God. Thereafter, he went to his guardian angel who told him that he would not live long on earth, unless he cultivated the habit of perseverance and meekness. His guardian angel advised him to go for divination, where he was told that he would fight many battles and come across many trials and tribulations while on earth. He was assured that he would however survive them if he made sacrifices; to the King of Death, Ogun and Sango as well as Esu, before leaving heaven. He was to make sacrifice to these divinities with seven rats, seven dogs, seven fishes, seven cocks, seven alligator pepper, seven gourds of palm oil and cakes of carwood (Osun in Yoruba and Umen in Bini). He was to make these sacrifices over a seven day period before leaving heaven. He gave a he-goat to Esu, and made all the sacrifices before coming to the world.

He came to the world to become a blacksmith. Ogun had given him a wand which was embedded into his head to enable him survive all earthly battles. The wand was prepared with the head and blood of one of the dogs with which he made sacrifice. Sango on the other hand, prepared an Axe for him with the head of a ram which was to be his source of strength on getting to the world. That is why the children of Ogbe-Ogunda are forbidden to eat dog and ram throughout their lives. If they can forbid the two animals, no difficulty can overcome them.

Heaven wages war on the sinful world

News had long been reaching heaven of the sinful excesses of men on earth. When the flow of such bad news became torrential in heaven, the divine council of God was convened to consider what to do, to cleanse the world and to verify whether there were any oasis of righteousness in a desert of earthly corruption, moral depravity and decadence. The divine council decided to send two birds called (Urere in Yoruba or Akala Nugbogbo in Bini), and Ogogo hiahia, Olori eye Igbo in Yoruba or Oghidian in Bini, otherwise known as the queen of witches. The two birds made a reconnaissance tour of the whole earth and reported back to the divine council that they could not find a single cell of righteousness anywhere on earth. The divine council was so annoyed that it passed a verdict of total condemnation on the inhabitants of the world. The two birds were authorised to go back and plunder the earth and return all its inhabitants to heaven.

Urere was empowered to sever the head of every victim he came across and to return it to heaven, whilst Ogogo hiahia was empowered to take a position at a suitable junction on earth, open her anus to all roads leading to the junction, so that any one moving on those roads would walk into her bowels and to return to heaven when her stomach was full of human victims. After getting the marching orders, the two birds made several trips to the earth, leaving trails of human casualties, lost or beheaded husbands, wives and children, behind them.

There was total pandemonium and cataclysm on earth and people began to run helter-skelter. One day, the Well, (Konga in Yoruba and Uhae in Bini) left for Orunmila's place for divination on what to do to survive the on-going tribulation of mass deaths. He was told to make sacrifice, so that the battles from the head and anus might not overrun him. To avoid trouble from his head, he was told to make sacrifice with his cap, snails, rat and fish and to give a he-goat to Esu. He made the sacrifice without adding his cap and failed to give a he-goat to Esu. He made his half-hearted sacrifice in Orunmila's house and he was told to carry it to a road junction. As soon as he deposited the sacrifice, between the road junction and his house, the mysterious bird, Urere, was at that instant on one of his morbid trips to earth. As soon as Urere saw Ekonga, the bird engaged him severing his head from the rest of his body. That is why Ekonga or the Well has no head to this day.

At the same time, Ogogo hiahia had positioned herself at a strategic road junction through which everybody had to pass. She opened her hind legs and anus, in such a manner that everybody treading those routes ended up in the death alley of her stomach. People going to their farms, markets, and other daily chores walked right into the blind alley of her stomach. As soon as her elasticated stomach was filled with human victims, she closed up her anus and legs and disappeared into heaven, with all her passengers. As all the towns of the known world were being gradually depopulated by the mysterious heavenly birds, the 16 Kings of the countries around, assembled at Ife and invited Orunmila to make special divination to find out what was happening. At this time, Ogbe-Oligun was the prominent Awo at Ife. He had three surrogates called;

Meera tori erin mu esemi gasa,
Meera tori ale demi ose gegun,
Meeru tori Olori ku urere gbe temi lo.

Meaning

I cannot tread on poison or trap because of the size of the elephant
I cannot get into trouble because of a lover.
I cannot save someone's head by losing my own.

Ogbe-Oligun and his three surrogates quickly embarked on divination to unravel the cause and cure of the despicable calamity.

At divination, they discovered that a sacrifice had to be made with a cap, rat, fish and snails. All the sacrificial materials and the Iyerosun (divination powder) of Ogbe-Ogunda were to be loaded into the cap and carried to the last road junction to the town. A he-goat was also to be given to Esu. The second sacrifice was to be made by loading all edible foodstuffs into a calabash with a sharp two-edged dagger tied to the back of the calabash and deposited at the junction of Orita-Ijaloko. After the two sacrifices had been prepared, it was time to find out who was to carry them to the road junction and to Orita-Ijaloko.

The final divination appointed Ogbe-Oligun himself to wear the cap containing the first sacrifice and to carry it to the last road junction before the town. On the other hand, Ifa called for a volunteer to carry the second sacrifice to Orita-Ijaloko. Since no one was prepared to risk the danger of ending up in the stomach of Ogogo hiahia, nobody volunteered.

Meanwhile, Ogbe-Oligun wore the cap containing the first sacrifice and proceeded to the road junction. As he approached to deposit the sacrifice, Urere was on his way once more from heaven. Thinking that he was cutting off Ogbe-Oligun's head, he removed the cap from his head, and flew back with it to heaven. Thereafter, Ogbe-Oligun quickly ran home with his head still intact on top of his body. Before getting home, the Tortoise had volunteered to carry the second sacrifice to Orita-Ijaloko.

Meanwhile, the second sacrifice was tied to the back of the Tortoise and he proceeded on the long journey to Orita-Ijaloko - the boundary between heaven and earth. After a very long journey, he suddenly found himself engulfed in a conclave of utter darkness and oblivion. He was the last passenger to enter the bowels of Ogogo hiahia who quickly closed her anus and proceeded on her return journey to heaven. As soon as the Tortoise found himself entrapped, he began to struggle inside the stomach of the mysterious bird. As he struggled, the two-edged dagger tied to the sacrifice on his back was cutting indiscriminately into everything that obstructed its way. The knife tore into shreds all the intestines and the liver of the bird until it got to her heart. As soon as the knife impacted on the heart, the bird roared, shaking the whole ground like an earthquake and the bird gave up the ghost. All was still. Eventually the Tortoise cut into the ribs of the bird and he fell down to the ground and to safety. He then left for home. The sacrifice had been embedded inside the stomach of Ogogo hiahia.

In the meantime, Urere the head-cutting-bird landed in heaven with what he thought was the head of Ogbe-Oligun. When he put down his loot from earth, members of the council discovered that it contained a sacrifice. Urere was obviously disappointed and was determined to go back to earth. The divine council of heaven however, met and ordered Urere not to return to earth because the people of the world had made atonement sacrifice. They then decreed that never again should Urere return to the world to cut off anybody's head, because heaven does not kill after the victim has made sacrifice.

Back in Orunmila's house, they had waited for a long time for the tortoise to return. Ogbe-Oligun then began to sing.

Ogogo hiahia,
Olori eye Igbo,
Omu Olobahun,
Kpelu abemiloooo!

The tortoise heard Orunmila's song and replied with another song:

Ogogo hiahia
Ti n she orori eye igbo,
Olori eye igbo tiku ooo.

That was how the Tortoise announced the demise of the queen of witches. When the Tortoise returned home, he explained the ordeal he encountered in the stomach of Ogogo hiahia, and how the sacrificial knife ended her menace.

To test the veracity of the Tortoise's proclamation, the elders of Ife sent errandmen to Orita Ijaloko where they found the corpse of the heavenly queen of witches. The people then came home and there was general rejoicing over the end of one of the biggest holocaust ever experienced on earth. The king and his people then gathered to thank Ogbe-Oligun who was then crowned the Araba of Ife. That was how the title of the Araba of Ife began.

When this Odu therefore comes out of divination during a general crisis, these sacrifices are recommended in order to end the cause of the problems.

Advice to the children of Ogbe-Oligun

Ogbe-Oligun lived to a ripe old age. He lived a non-violent life throughout. Patience and perseverance were his watchwords. Some enemies however mistook his meekness for weakness and began to dare him. It was only then he demonstrated a bit of what he was capable of doing.

At that point, a visiting Ifa Priest called Inakuana Inagejiya, Odifa fun Orunmila nijo toun fi uton okiri kpo olowo ija. He made divination for Orunmila when his enemies challenged him to a fight to the death. He tried to avoid any combat

with anyone. But when his caution was being mistaken for cowardice, the Ifa Priest advised him to make a special sacrifice with the foot of a bush goat (Okiri in Yoruba and Oguonziran in Bini): which was used to prepare a special wand. With the wand in hand, he dared anyone to confront him but no one did, because he had never been seen to be angry. This special wand is prepared for the children of Ogbe-Oligun and with it, they can destroy all their enemies, no matter how powerful.

When nobody accepted his challenge, he sang the following incantational poem:-

Ikpele mikpele,
Ugba kpele kinwo.
Ikpele mikpele,
Awo kpele kiinya.
Nitaa lesu mu kiibaje,
Nitaa fa o gbara mu.
Koko loonle,
Ahara gbara gbi nagbo.
Aaki gbo kpele kpele gbi.
Eyin kinle awure,
Lantin gba alagbara lo.

Meaning:

A calabash carried carefully does not break.

A pot carried carefully does not break.

It is a big fall from a hard fight,
that makes a loud noise.

A light fall,
makes no noise.

The body of a wounded strong fighter,
is carried through the back of a weakling's house.

How Ogbe-Oligun solved the problem of his parasitic brothers

He had three brothers who were virtually hangers-on around him. They were called Ishe, Osi and Uya. They bothered him so much that he could not have peace of mind. When their humbug became unbearable he approached an Ifa Priest called Arandede Awonle, for divination. He was advised to make sacrifice with four pigeons. He was to wash his head with three of them and to use the fourth one to serve his own head, praying to his head to remove the menace of his junior brothers from him. Thereafter, he was to release the three pigeons with which he washed his head to fly to each of his three brothers. He was to release the pigeons early in the morning, before his brothers made their usual morning calls on his house. He did the sacrifice in the night and before sunrise the following morning calls on his house. He did the sacrifice in the night and before sunrise on the following morning, he released the three pigeons to fly to his brothers.

Ishe was the first to leave for Ogbe-Oligun's house subsequently. As Ishe approached his brother's house, he saw a pigeon flying out at ground level altitude and he ran after it. He pursued the pigeon so relentlessly that he got lost with it in the process. The same thing happened to each of the two remaining brothers, Osi and Uya. At the end of that day, news came to Ogbe-Oligun that his three brothers were no where to be found. That was how the brothers got off his back into oblivion and *ipso-facto*, that was how he cast away the dangers of poverty, want, and suffering that had been lurking around him for so long. Ishe,

Osi and Uya respectively mean: Want, Poverty and Suffering, which were the names of his three brothers.

Anybody, for whom Ogbe-Oligun comes out at Ugbody, is required to make this special sacrifice (Ono Ifa or Odiha) to avoid the danger of doing things in half measure (Amubo In Yoruba or Osobonomasunu In Bini).

Ogbe-Oligun reveals how the divinities returned to heaven

News had been reaching heaven that the divinities on earth were misbehaving and the king of Death was mandated to bring all of them back to heaven. Orunmila had a dream in which he had a foretaste of the approaching calamity and at divination, Ifa revealed the meaning of the dream to him in the following metaphor:

Oru lle oshe bi,
Eni maarin,
Sagbon kolerin.
Adifa fun Ogofa Erumole
Egbeje eborawon ransee,
Iku siwon lode orun
Orunmila nki oke ikponrin,
Yonwon l'elo
Osigi agbokan igbin merindilogun
Orunmila ru ebo na.

Meaning:

The frustration at home,
Is as helpless,
As the person,
Who wants to move,
But cannot walk.
Is the Ifa Priest,
Who made divination for,
The sixty divinities
Who were remaining on earth,
When the 140 divinities in heaven
Commissioned Death,
To send messengers,
To fetch the divinities on earth.

As already stated, Orunmila had a premonition of the impending calamity in a dream. He sounded Ifa at divination and he was advised to make an urgent sacrifice, with a big ram and 16 snails. He made the sacrifice.

Thereafter, Ogun, the Iron divinity made preparations and left for heaven. So did Obalifon and Obatala who also proceeded without delay, to heaven. Sango and Oya followed them, accompanied by Olota who left from Ado. Rinrin woke up at a village in Owo and also left for heaven. Ibebe woke up at Oyo and left for heaven. Oluku woke up at Ijero and they all left for heaven. Ose woke up at Ilamagbon and also left for heaven. Ojukosi, Sakpana, all woke up and left for heaven. Ake, Olokun and Obiemwen and Ovia woke up at Ile Ibinu and left for heaven.

Orunmila then woke up at Okejeli and mounted on a ram as if riding on a horse, and left for heaven. Orunmila fell from the back of the ram six times over a six day period. On the seventh day, with bruises all over his body, he sat down to rest before continuing on his journey to heaven.

Meanwhile, the messengers sent to fetch them as well as all the remaining divinities had arrived in heaven. God and the members of the divine council were beginning to wonder what Orunmila was still doing on earth after seven days. Why had he not come home, along with the other children of Erumole.

The divine messengers were asked to go back to find out what Orunmila was still doing on earth. They met him on the way, lying ill from the injuries received from falling off the ram. He asked them to tell God that since he left home seven days ago, he had neither eaten any food nor drank any water, and that he was therefore too weak to complete the journey. He also showed them the injuries inflicted on all parts of his body by the Ram.

The heavenly messengers returned to heaven to report to Olodumare, who instantly brought his wand of authority and proclaimed that from then on, Orunmila should remain on earth (Oba aja l'aye) while, He Olodumare, would remain King of heaven (Oba aja l'ona). He ordained all the remaining divinities to stay for good in heaven.

Thereafter, Ogun sent a message to his children and followers on earth to put a sledge hammer (Irin dudu or Umomo) on his shrine so that anybody who wished to speak to him or to invoke him should use the sledge hammer and he would respond.

Obalifon also sent a message to his children and followers on earth, that they should insert a brass (Aya Ide or Eronmwon) moulding on his shrine to invoke him. Esu who left to heaven with the other divinities also ordained that he would remain there with them, but that anyone who wished to serve him on earth should insert a piece of stone removed from the bed of a flowing river (Iyangi) on his shrine, and invoke him from there and he would respond instantly.

Sango also sent a message to his children and followers on earth that they should insert a thunder-stone (Ose) on his shrine for his invocation and he would respond. All the other divinities sent similar messages to their children and followers on earth, and whatever they were told to use to prepare their shrines is what the followers of each of the divinities use for initiation ceremonies to this day.

In the fullness of time, Orunmila decided out of frustration to return to heaven because he was beginning to feel lonely on earth in the absence of his contemporaries. He was also estranged with a feeling of unbelonging on account of the wickedness of man on earth. He then invited his children and followers and taught them the art of divination by Ikin which is the main instrument of initiation and divination in Ifism to this day.

That was how the last generation of the divinosphere came to an end abandoning their children and followers on earth.

He made divination for the barren woman

Inubibi, Awo Alara - Isa
Edon afufun, Awo Ajero - kin - osa
Agba ti ko binu, ni nu omo re kpukpo
Awo Orangun - aga.
Awon meteta loun difa fun Aganbi,
Nijo to'nfi omi oju shubere
Omo tuurutu.
Atun bufun Alara ati Ajero ati Orangun,
Tori aroko rere.
Ebo ki ama fi ebinu,
Gbe ire won sonu.

The hot tempered Ifa Priest, the quick tempered Ifa Priest and the Tolerant Ifa Priest who was even-tempered because he believed that only persevering parents bear many children, were the three awos who made divination for a barren woman, who was still anxious to have children. After divination, they advised her to tie a rabbit on her back to serve Esu owned by someone she did not know. She then travelled to Ilara with the sacrificial rabbit on her back, and without knowing it, used the rabbit to serve the Esu shrine of the Alara, that is - the king of Ilara.

As she was praying with the rabbit at the Esu shrine, the palace orderlies arrested her and she was arraigned before the Alara himself. She was otherwise a very pretty lady. She was placed under palace arrest for a few days during which the king himself cohabited with her. She was subsequently released after a mock trial. The following month, she became pregnant, and in the fullness of time, gave birth to a male child. The incident was subsequently reported to king Alara who received the news very happily.

Since she had earlier refused to marry the Alara, she did not become pregnant again for some years after the birth of her first child. She then returned to the same Ifa Priest who advised her to repeat her earlier sacrifice in a different locality. This time around, but again unknown to her, she made the sacrifice at the Esu shrine of the Ajero of Ijero.

As if history was repeating itself, as she was making the sacrifice, she was arrested and brought before the king of Ijero who again fell for her good looks and had carnal knowledge of her. She again became pregnant and subsequently gave birth to another male child. The incident was instantly reported to king Ajero who was happy to receive the news. Try as he did to recruit her into his harem the woman refused. Meanwhile, she relapsed into continence.

Convinced that she was still capable of having another child since she was still menstruating, she returned once again to her Ifa Priests who advised her to repeat the same sacrifice. As usual, they told her to make the sacrifice in a new locality, far removed from the earlier places.

She then travelled to Ila-Orangun to make the sacrifice, this time, at the Esu shrine of the Orangun of Ila. Once more she was arrested by the palace guards and marched before king Orangun of Ila to complete the circle of her destiny. The king ordered her to be detained in his inner chamber and made love to her over a period of 14 days. She was expelled from the palace when she refused to become one of the King's wives. That did not however stop her from becoming pregnant the following month. She later gave birth to a male child, which event was promptly reported to the King.

After the birth of her third son, she retired to her family home at Ife where she lived the rest of her life.

Several years later however, as fate would have it, her three male children became the Alara of Ilara, the Ajero of Ijero and the Orangun of Ila. To compensate them for the efficacious divination and sacrifices they made for her, she introduced each of her three Ifa Priests to her three sons.

In her old age, she decided to send gifts to her three children. She prepared three pots laden with beads but covered with cocoyam at the top, to send one pot to each of her children. When the messenger bearing the pot got to Alara's palace, he was happy to receive the pot from his mother but when he examined it and found that it contained cocoyam, he wondered "whether his mother thought he was starving. He decided to send the pot to his most junior brother - the Orangun of Ila. The Ajero of Ijero treated his gift pot in a similar manner by consigning it to his junior brother, the Orangun of Ila.

Meanwhile, the royal diviner of the Orangun of Ila, advised him not to undermine or reject any gift sent by his mother or brothers no matter how unattractive they might seem. That was the point at which the first pot from his mother arrived. He was so happy to receive the pot of cocoyam from his mother that he instructed his wives to cook out of it for him to eat immediately. As the wife removed the cocoyam from the pot, she observed that the bottom was underlaid with precious beads. She immediately drew the husband's attention to the unexpected discovery. The king became even happier. Over the next two days, messengers from his two elder brothers delivered two additional pots and he received them happily. Since beads were scarce treasures at the time, he used them to sew crowns, dresses and shoes. After preparing them, he sent a full outfit of a beaded crown, gown and a pair of shoes to each of his elder brothers at a price of ten slaves each. The brothers were quite happy to pay for them which made the Orangun of Ila exceedingly richer than his two other brothers.

At divination, the person should be told to avoid the danger of uneven temper and not to undermine any gift sent to him by his parents or relations no matter how tenuous. He should make sacrifice to avoid losing his fortune through anger and contempt, to another.

He made divination for two brothers

Akanju wa wo, oko niyu Igbo

Akpo she she woro oju n'ina

Adifa fun Ajala, Omo Aroko ese oke laa.

Meaning

The person who is looking for money in a hurry goes to the forest,

But he who looks for money with patience takes to trading.

These were the Awos who made divination for two brothers who were told to make sacrifice and they did. The senior brother took to farming and he made his farm on the valley. His junior brother took to trading and started receiving yields from his business from the moment he started trading.

Meanwhile, the elder brother was regretting that he probably made a mistake by resorting to farming because, his crops were not likely to yield any fruits until the second half of the year. Just before the yam planting season, he went back to the Ifa Priest who reassured him that farming was more prolific than trading. The Awo assured him that if he made yet another sacrifice, he would return to him with a different story within a period of fourteen days. He made the sacrifice with a he-goat to Esu.

As he was digging the ridges for his yams, he struck a wooden box which turned out to be a coffin that had been buried there several decades before. Thinking that it contained a human corpse, he dug around it without opening it. He went home without exhuming the coffin. He later had a dream that night, in which his late mother appeared, advising him to rebury the coffin found in his farm by opening it and offering it the blood of a pigeon and white cloth.

The following morning, he took a pigeon and a piece of white cloth to the farm, where he opened the coffin. Instead of finding a human corpse, he found beads, money, leads and corals. He extracted the contents of the coffin and replaced them with the pigeon and the white cloth, and reburied it. The mysterious find translated him into instant affluence, and he was subsequently made the Oba of Itoko. His farming was then done by his slaves thereafter. He compensated the Ifa Priest elaborately.

When this Odu comes out of divination for a person anxious to find out which profession to adopt in life, he should be told that his prosperity lies in farming.

He made divination for the King of Itoko

Okpeku mariwo tosi,
Iku oko ni uya obinrin,
Adifa fun Oni Itoko,
Tiyl ora oka ati ere ati agbado Ieru.
Ebo ki ama bawon ja l'ogun,
Nifori Ika Idile ere.

Meaning:

The palm tree suffered a draught, and
its fronds began to suffer.

The impotence of a husband,

Spells suffering for his wife.

These were the Awos who made divination for the King of Itoko when he bought the personifications of the boa, python and corn among his slaves. The slaves began to quarrel among themselves because the new arrivals were too aggressive to live happily with the others. The King became restless and it occurred to him that the problem among his slaves was only meant to startle him into realisation. His meteoric success had made him to relax into complacency, but for the dispute among his slaves he might have taken life for granted as a bed of roses. At divination, Orunmila told him that early success in life, is often followed by sudden misfortune or death. And that the death that used to ravage members of his family was already knocking at his door. He was told to make sacrifice immediately with a sheep to drive death away, adding the head of boa, python and corn. He made the sacrifice and thrived in prosperity to a ripe old age.

When this Odu comes out of divination for a person who is at the high watermark or apogee of his prosperity, he should be told that the death which traditionally attacked members of his family, at the pinnacle of their success, is lurking around him. He should make sacrifice to escape it, and should avoid being engaged in any dispute over the sharing of legacy.

Chapter 19

OGBE - OSA .

OGBE - RU - UKU - SA

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Like Orunmila, Ogbe-Osa had plenty of enemies in heaven. It was the problems he was encountering from the elders of the night that precipitated his decision to seek refuge on earth. He reveals what Orunmila did to obtain immunity from the evil machinations of his four deadly enemies, who were SUNSHINE, FIRE, MOON and WATER, and whose heavenly names are as follows:-

Uno Omo ojogbo (Fire)

Orunrun omo ojodon (Sunshine)

Osuupa, Ota girl konran (Moon)

Ojo girl ke somo (Okonyin (Water))

All four enemies had conspired to fight Orunmila in his house. He then made an early morning divination in which Ifa intimated him of the plot of his four enemies. He was consequently advised to make sacrifice with a hen and to prepare soup on three clay pots while leaving a fourth pot empty, without any soup. He was also required to prepare four dishes of pounded yam. The dishes were to be made of calabash. He was to get one uncut gourd and a stack of cudgels and to deposit the sacrifice at the last junction before his house. He made the sacrifice without any delay.

The following day, sunshine, fire, moon and water left to fight Orunmila in his house. On their way to his house, they saw the sacrifice at the road junction and stopped to feed on it. Fire took one dish of pounded yam and one pot of soup. The sun and the moon took the other two pairs. Meanwhile, the obstacle divinity (Elenini or Idoboo) had taken the empty calabash away from the scene thinking it contained food. Water, the most junior of the four brothers took the remaining dish of pounded yam, but had no soup left for him. He then appealed to Fire to give him part of his soup to eat his pounded yam. Fire refused the request on the excuse that he did not traditionally share his food with anyone else. He also appealed to the Sun and the Moon, but they too refused to give him any part of their soup. In anger, Water accused the other three of undermining him because he was the youngest. He reacted by throwing away his pounded yam and taking the pack of cudgels left of the sacrifice and began to sing a war song. He beat fire with the cudgel, which consisted of rain-drops that extinguished the fire. He also beat the sun and the moon to extinction with heavy rain-drops and the cloud.

That was how Orunmila's enemies destroyed themselves and he was left alone in peace and tranquility. When this Odu therefore comes out at divination for a person, he should be told that he has four deadly enemies gunning for him. He should make sacrifice to get them off his back.

He made divination for a woman - Ekpikpayemi when she had four suitors

Una omo ojogbo (Fire)

Orun omo ojodon (Sun-shine)

Oshuukpa ntara wolu (Moon)

Ojo giri giri omo lkeyin won leenje (Water)

The Sun, the Moon, Fire and Rain were all wooing Ekpikpayemi. Unknown to one another, each of them wanted to marry her. On her part, the woman encouraged all four of them to be visiting her without however having any intimate relationship with any of them. When they were becoming desperate, Ekpikpayemi decided to go to Orunmila for divination to find out which of her four admirers was her rightful husband. She was told to make sacrifice with a cock, a hen, a pigeon and a piece of black cloth. Shè did the sacrifice. Orunmila also told her to prepare three plates of pounded yam and a fourth one to be left empty. She was also to use the meat of the cock, hen and pigeon to prepare three pots of soup together with a fourth one to be left empty. Orunmila however advised her to beware of flirtation because her favourite suitor may not be the husband.

As soon as she got home, she prepared the food and left them in her living room, ready for eating. Thereafter she left the house to plait her hair. Una (Fire) was the first to meet her where she was plaiting her hair and asked her whether she had prepared food for him. She told him to go and eat one portion of the food she left at home. Orun (Sun) was the next to come by and she also directed him to go and eat in the house. Oshuukpa (Moon) came and was told to do likewise. Ojo (Rain) was the last to come, but he only met the empty pot. He then returned to her to find out what food she had prepared for him. She confirmed that she prepared four plates of pounded yam and four pots of soup richly equipped with meat. She then wondered which of his rivals had eaten up the fourth portion of food meant for him. On hearing that, Rain became annoyed and left in fury to find out who dared to eat up his food along with his own. The woman told him that it was not her fault because she adequately prepared food for all four of them.

The moment Rain became annoyed, the clouds began to gather and the rain started threatening. A heavy down pour of rain soon began, and he drove the sun and the moon into the sky and fire ran for cover inside the stone. That is why the sun and the moon take refuge in the sky whenever the rain is threatening. In the same way, man started to use flint to extract fire from the stone during the stone age, because that was where fire sought solace when confronted by the onslaught of Rain that beats divinity, kings, and commoners alike.

After rain had vanquished his three rivals, ekpikpayemi ran to embrace him, rejoicing that she had discovered her true husband, at last. She then sang:-

Ojo moba koo dimba dona,

Una kpikpa beleje,

Ojo didu dere,

Ora ita ojo,

Okpenu fun Orunmila.

Meaning:

I had preferred fire to water

Before making sacrifice

Sacrifice manifested.

To proclaim Rain,

As my husband,
Praise be to Orunmila,
Who made sacrifice for me.

When third ODU appears at divination, the divinee if a man, should be told that he is contesting for something with three others. He should make sacrifice to be victorious. If Ayeo, he should be told to forget about it. If it comes out for a woman, she should be told to make sacrifice so that one out of four admirers might succeed in becoming her husband. She should however resist the temptation to trade on her beauty through flirtation.

Ekpikpayemi pays a high price for flirtation

It will be recalled that at divination Orunmila warned Ekpikpayemi - a very attractive fair-complexioned woman, to avoid the risk of flirtation. Incidentally from the triumphal song, sang above by Ekpikpayemi, she preferred the more handsome Sunshine to all her three other admirers. The manifestation of sacrifice however proclaimed Rain as the right husband for her. She continued however to nurse secret admiration for the Sun. The invincible Sun was not prepared to take his defeat lying down. Each time he re-emerged from the clouds into which he was consigned, he continued to make overtures to Ekpikpayemi, who did her best to resist his advances. When he was satisfied that he was not going to succeed in winning the woman to himself, he decided to punish her.

He then went to Fire and invoked him to come out from the stone. Fire appeared and gave Sun his wand of authority (Ase) to use against Ekpikpayemi. Since he took refuge inside the stone, Fire could no longer come out by himself unless when invoked. That is why someone else has to take action to ignite fire to this day. On the other hand, the moon and the sun required no invocation before appearing from the clouds.

With the wand of authority from Fire in hand, the Sun decided to visit Ekpikpayemi when her husband was away on tour. As soon as she saw him, the memories of the admiration she had for him but which she had corked up since her marriage to Rain, overwhelmed her. She embraced him passionately and before she could realise what was happening she was again in love with the Sun. She however beseeched him to allow their relationship to remain platonic because she could not afford to betray her husband. The Sun was not prepared to be satisfied with any gesture short of seducing her. After trying in vain to convince her, he decided to leave for home. He however succeeded in persuading her to escort him into the grass-lands of heaven where the shrubs were very dry. On getting there the Sun suddenly stopped and told her to choose between death and elopement with him. She remained adamant.

Unfortunately, Ekpikpayemi neither bothered to alert her husband of the flirtatious overtures of the Sun, nor to return to Orunmila for divination on how to check the menace, apparently because she was enjoying the situation in which she found herself. However, when the Sun confronted her with the life and earth ultimatum, she chose to die rather than betray Rain, her husband. The sun then brought out his Fire wand and ignited the bush and disappeared leaving Ekpikpayemi to roast to death. As the fire was engulfing her, she called on her husband to save her from the death sentence passed on her by his vindictive rivals, Sun and Fire in the following words:-

Ololufemi Owon,
Iku ti fe pa mi,
Lafi owo awon orun ati ina,
Wa gbamilla,

Nitori mon ku lo, titori esin mi si o,
Emi kotu asiri re
Egbami ni owo awon Orun ati Ina,
Ti koba jebe, lwo yio ni ri mi mo.

Meaning...

My beloved husband the Rain,
I am about to die,
From the hands of Sun and Fire.
Come to my rescue,
'Cause I am dying,
Out of loyalty to you.
I have not betrayed you.
Save me from the Sun and Fire,
Lest you see me no more.

As soon as the Rain heard the distress message from his wife, a cloud gathered, immediately followed by a Rain storm, which extinguished the fire that was already engulfing Ekpikpayemi. The rainfall made her exceedingly happy again. Before the fire extinguished, it had ventured into the forest around. On her way home, unknown to her, the fire had attacked the root of a dead wood and burnt it into the ground. Before she knew what was happening, she stepped into the hole created by the burnt root and fell headlong into the fire which burnt up her hands and her legs. Nonetheless, the Rain continued to fall and soon extinguished the fire inside the hole. By the time she pulled herself clear from the fire, she had lost her limbs, and she had to crawl home on her abdomen.

When the husband saw her, he could not recognise her. He wondered who the beautiful lady was, that was crawling into his house on her stomach. When he looked closely at her, he discovered that it was his wife, Ekpikpayemi. After narrating her ordeal, he embraced her in appreciation of her loyalty, fidelity and steadfastness. He vowed that he too would never abandon her in spite of her deformity. He then renamed her EKOLO in Yoruba or IKOLO in Bini, meaning the faithful one.

Ekolo or Ikolo is the earthworm and it is her faithfulness to her husband, Rain, that makes her appear on the surface of the earth only during the rain while burying herself beneath the earth to avoid danger from Fire and Heat, at all other times.

When this Odu comes out at divination for a woman who is not yet married or who is seeking a husband, she will be told that there are four men wooing her and that she will have to make sacrifice in order to know the right one to marry. She should be advised however to remain implicitly faithful to the husband after marriage because any act of betrayal or infidelity would make her to die or suffer from such physical deformity as could deprive her the use of her limbs. If it comes out for a man, he will be told that he is vying for the hands of a woman with three other men and that he must make sacrifice in order to avoid losing his life in the process, because, some of the rivals are aggressive and vindictive. If he is a dark complexioned man, he should be told that the woman prefers one of the other suitors especially the fair complexioned one, but that if he makes sacrifice, he will win the woman's hands in marriage. If the enquirer is a fair complexioned man, he should be told to give up the woman, because she was not meant for him, lest he would suffer immensely in the process of trying to impose his love on her.

He reveals how Orunmila saved one friend from the other

Okiki bababa nimerun okpokpo made divination for Okiki (Ekhi in Bini) when the ram, (Agbo) his bosom friend, plotted to betray him during the new yam festival

In heaven. Okiki had incurred the displeasure of his contemporaries by habitually refusing to participate in communal chores. One night, he had a dream portending that a close associate of his was going to deliver him for execution. The next morning, he went for divination and he was told to make sacrifice by giving a he-goat to Esu, cock to Ogun and cock to Sango. He quickly made the sacrifices. Thereafter, he was advised to refrain from escorting any visitor away from his house, and to avoid answering any call of his name from outside the house. He quickly alerted his wife to warn him in case he was going to make the mistake of forgetting any of the two warnings.

Meanwhile, the plan was hatched by his enemies to execute him during the up-coming yam festival. It was however, common knowledge in heaven that Okiki was very strong diabolically and that it was not going to be easy to apprehend him. His best friend, the Ram, (Agbo) volunteered to capture him and deliver him alive for the execution. One day, Agbo left for the house of Okiki. On getting there, Agbo shouted on his name from outside the house. His wife instantly reminded him not to answer. Recognising the voice as that of his friend, Agbo, he told his wife that no danger could possibly source him. Thereafter, he answered the call and ushered Agbo into his house and entertained him elaborately.

As Agbo got up to return home, he asked Okiki to escort him. Once again, his wife reminded him of the warning at divination that he should not escort any visitor away from his house. Once more, he ignored the timely reminder of his wife.

As soon as the two friends got to the forest, Agbo told Okiki that he wanted to teach him a newly established game of climbing a tree and jumping from its top into an open wooden casket. Agbo demonstrated the game successfully and asked Okiki to try it. To be able to entice Okiki into accepting the invitation to try the game, Agbo brought out a charmed kolanut from his bag and gave it to his friend to eat. The effect of the kolanut was to mesmerise Okiki into accepting his suggestions without question. Agbo knew that Okiki could never refuse a kolanut offering, being his favourite snack.

Okiki used to wear a seamless brass bangle called Abagun which had the capability of seeing him through all dangers, real or apparent. By eating the kolanut, it had neutralised the power of his brass-bangle. That is why when this Odu appears at an Ugbodu Initiation ceremony, the person is told to forbid kolanut for the rest of his life. If it appears at ordinary divination, the person should be advised to refrain from eating kolanut for a minimum period of seven days.

In consonance with the wish of his friend, Okiki climbed to the top of the tree. As he jettisoned himself into the open casket on the ground, Agbo instantly lined the casket with a net, prepared specially for carrying out his nefarious design. The net was made of multi-coloured Sango beads called Etutu-Okpon in Yoruba. As soon as Okiki fell into it, he was tightly bound in place. Agbo quickly closed the wooden casket and left to deliver Okiki to his enemies for sacrifice.

Before embarking on the adventure however, Agbo had volunteered to be executed if he failed in his mission. Seeing that he had been tricked by his friend, Okiki remembered Orunmila's warnings at divination, although he never expected that it would manifest through the evil machinations of his bosom friend. Seeing how helpless he was, he began to cry for help from the divinities to which he had made sacrifices in the following poem:-

Okpá kere mi ye mi - oo
Oji fere mi ye mi - oo

Agbo mumi lo orun - o

Okpe mi ye mi - oo

It was a distress call to Esu, Sango and Ogun for help.

Instantly, Sango responded by ordering a gale - force wind, followed by a thunder storm and a heavy rain-fall. As Sango was demonstrating, Ogun reacted by felling all the trees and ropes along the route of Agbo. Esu then moved in on top of the felled trees and untied the net gear binding Okiki. Finding himself free, and the casket opened, Okiki held on to the branch of a tree and climbed to safety, leaving his brass bangle (Abagun) and the piece of kolanut he was eating inside the casket. When he got home eventually, he narrated his experience to his wife who admonished him by saying it was the prize he had to pay for ignoring the two warnings given to him.

When the gale and the rain subsided, Agbo shook the casket and something made a noise, not knowing it was only the brass bangle inside it. The noise reassured him that his friend was still there. Meanwhile, he landed at the main quadrangle and put his casket down, full of the joy of accomplishment. He told the elders that he had fulfilled his promise by delivering his friend Okiki to them. Esu who knew what had happened, scornfully applauded Agbo and immediately convened a conference of all the women of heaven to come and hail Agbo:

When the casket was eventually opened, it was seen to be empty but for the contents of a piece of kolanut and Okiki's brass bangle. When asked of the whereabouts of Okiki, Agbo merely replied meehh, which is his cry to this day. The women insisted that they could wait no longer and demanded the instant execution of Agbo, in consonance with his promise before he set out on his escapade. Overwhelmed with shame and defeat, Agbo surrendered himself willingly to the women who led him to the divine executioner and he was beheaded. This incident explains why the Ram when roped, willingly follows women because of the shame that overwhelmed him on that day in heaven. A man has invariably to drag a Ram to follow him, whereas he offers no resistance when a woman takes the rope binding his neck. He also offered no resistance when being executed, which remains his tradition to this day.

When it comes out at divination, the person should be advised to make sacrifice with a he-goat to Esu, cock to Ogun and cock to Sango, in order to avoid the danger of being deceived by a close friend or colleague.

Ogbe-Osa prepares to come to the world

After taking his decision to come to the world, he went for divination to the head of Witch Doctors (Agbanmurere, orori awo orun) in heaven to divine for him on how to ensure a successful sojourn on earth. The witch doctor advised him to make sacrifice with a ram, a dog, and a basket of pounded yam for his guardian angel to feast the higher powers of heaven. He was also to give a cock, tortoise and dog to Ogun and four pigeons, chalk and cowries to Olokun, the water divinity, as well as giving a he-goat to Esu. He was also to feast the elders of the Night with a pigeon, rabbit and a bundle of yams. He did all the sacrifices but failed to add a dog to the feast offerings he was advised to give to his guardian angel, which the latter otherwise earmarked for Yeyemuwo the wife of the obstacle divinity. Thereafter, he left for the world.

On getting to the world, he took to trading in addition to practising Ifa art on the side line. He was doing very well in the two vocations which made him very popular in the town. On account of the sacrifice he made to Olokun, the water divinity in heaven, he sent her daughter to meet him in the world. The girl was

called (Iwa) who, he soon met on earth, and married her. It was the star of the wife that brought him success and prosperity in his work. Unfortunately, she had no child, which worried him exceedingly because he desperately needed a child from her.

Meanwhile, Yeyemuwo, who was annoyed in heaven because of Ogbe-Osa's failure to offer sacrifice to her, decided to send him one beautiful daughter to marry him for the specific purpose of thwarting his efforts and disrupting his activities on earth. Not long afterwards, he went on tour to the market of Oja Ajigbo-mekon - where he met a pretty fair complexioned girl. He fell in love with her immediately. The girl also instantly reciprocated his love, and agreed to marry him. He brought her to his house to live with him as man and wife. He did not know that he had married the agent of misfortune and the daughter of the Obstacle divinity. He was head-over-heels in love with her.

No sooner had the new wife got to his house than his fortune began to wane, on account of her uncompromising and inhospitable attitude. Ogbe-Osa's clients stopped patronising him because she was always very harsh and insolent to his visitors. On the other hand, the appearance of the woman created considerable disharmony in his house, because she was always quarreling with her senior mate, Iwa. The tribulations in his house especially between the two women became so intolerable that Iwa the senior wife, packed her belongings, and left Ogbe-Osa's house. When he discovered that Iwa the architect of his fortune had left his house, he too decided to leave the house to look for her, abandoning the junior wife in his house. As soon as he left the house, the woman-agent of misfortune, resolved that no hiding place would ever accommodate Ogbe-Osa. Where-ever he went, the woman soon caught up with him.

After taking refuge at pillars and posts, he decided to settle for a hide-out at the junction between heaven and earth. On getting there, he left the ground level and built a hut on top of the last mountain before getting to heaven called Oke-Alubode, in the hope that the woman would not discover him there. While there, his guardian angel appeared to him in a dream and told him that the problem he was having from his second wife arose from the dog he failed to offer to him for Yeyemuwo before he left heaven. He quickly sent his servant to go and fetch him a dog at once. It was instantly produced. Thereafter, he used it to serve his guardian angel and his head. After the sacrifice, he threw the severed body and head of the dog down to the base of the hill on which he was hiding.

Not long afterwards, the woman traced his footsteps to the base of the mountain of Oke-Alubode, where she saw the body and head of the dog. She was satisfied that the sacrifice was meant for her, but wondered who made it. When she lifted up her head, she saw Orunmila on the apex of the mountain. As she tried to climb up to meet him on top of the mountain, Ogbe-Osa disappeared. She was however satisfied that the sacrificial debt which he owed her, had at last been paid. She took the dog and its head and returned to heaven, leaving Ogbe-Osa alone. Soon afterwards, Ogbe returned to his house.

He was however greeted by an empty house because Iwa his wife from Olukun had long left home. He decided immediately to go out in search of her. On her part, Iwa had tried in vain to take refuge with several men, but they were all afraid to harbour her for fear of Orunmila's reaction. Eventually, when she could not find anyone to accommodate her, she set out on the long journey by land and sea to the country of the white man beyond the sea. That was how Ogbe-Osa, in search of Iwa, travelled to the whiteman's country. As he was going, he was always singing:-

Iwa mo wa o Iwa,
Ebamiwa ayami,
Iwa mowa o Iwa
Meaning

I am looking for my wife, Iwa,
Help me search for my wife, Iwa,
Who has seen Iwa, my wife?

After searching for her in vain throughout the houses of the children of all the divinities, the last of them told him that she had travelled beyond the sea. Incidentally, the woman's name Iwa meant good behaviour. On getting to the land of the white-man, her humane disposition was appreciated by the white people who extended hospitality to her. After sometime, she died. But the white people decided to give her a befitting burial. In spite of her humane disposition, the white people did not accept her, because the colour of her skin was different from their own. It is believed that she died of loneliness and home-sickness. She it was, who made the white race to know that human beings with black complexion existed beyond the seas.

After being told that Iwa went over-seas, Ogbe-Osa decided to follow her. When he finally got to Europe, he told the people that he came in search of his kwife Iwa, and bursted into tears when he ws told that she had died three days before his arrival. With that he decided to return home to settle down at Okojetl in Ife, to begin a new life.

The first test of Ogbe-Osa on earth

Ogbe-Osa came out of the land of Ife. The king of Ife had invited all the known Diviners and Priests around for a test. There was a big stone called Ota-kugbin which he wanted each of them to lift up from the ground. All the Obas around had previously tried and failed in the test. It was the turn of the wisdom diviners to try their prowess.

Ota Kunji - Ota Orisa,
alara lsa gbe gbe gbe koo legbe,
Orongun aga gbe gbe gbe Ko'legbe
Oba ado ajuwaleke gbe gbe gbe oo - legbe.

The great kings of the time had tried to lift up the stone but they failed. All the famous witch doctors and wisdom diviners also tried but failed. Ogbe-Osa who was just an up and coming Ifa Priest, was also invited to try his hands. He collected combed cotton wool (Ele Owu in Yoruba and Ititi-Oru in Binl), and inserted it on top of the stone. He then recited the following incantational poem:

Owo wo eewowo
Feree eegbon owu feeree.

With those words, he conjured the stone to lift up itself. He then held on to the stone, lifted it up and carried it right to the chamber of the King of Ife. He was instantly applauded. Although the achievement made him famous among the Kings, it earned him the enmity of his fellow Awos. When this Odu comes out at Ugboodu, the person should be advised to beware of stealing the show from his contemporaries in order to avoid becoming the target of attack.

How Ogbe-Osa ended the female rebellion at Ife

Before Ogbe-Osa returned from Europe in-search of his wife Iwa, the women of Ife had rebelled against their men-folk and their king and barricaded themselves in the town of Ilu-eleye or ilu-Omuo. Following the women's action, the king of Ife convened a meeting of his council of chiefs to deliberate on the rebellion. Yeye-omuo, an agent of the obstacle divinity and herself a witch, was the one

who led the women of Ife into rebellion against the men folk.

The king of Ife-in-council decided to despatch the crack force of his kingdom's armed forces to end the female rebellion. The army of men marched on Ilu-eleye but *Vaya-omuo* turned all the men in the invading army to women, and thereafter, they settled down at Ilu-eleye. All the women involved in the rebellion were confessed and ostracized witches and it was in revenge for their treatment that they decided to be using their esoteric powers to eliminate the men of Ife one after the other.

Thereafter, able-bodied men began to die in mysterious circumstances at Ife. The King invited all the Awos in his Kingdom and enjoined them to make divination on how to end the calamity. The Awos disclosed that it was only one Awo called OGBE-OSA in his domain who could solve the problem but that the Ifa Priest was out of town on a long journey. That was the point at which Ogbé-Osa returned from Europe.

As soon as news reached the palace that Ogbé-Osa was back in town, the King despatched two royal messengers to request him to report at the palace without any delay. The King updated him on the hard luck experience that had befallen Ife during his absence. He was left in no doubt, that the society missed him and it was a relief to have him back. The King then went straight to the point and told him that divination had marked him out as the only one capable of ending the female rebellion of Ilu-omuo. Since Ogbé-Osa did not traditionally truckle to challenge, he agreed to embark on the assignment after making the usual preparations.

He immediately went to an Awo called *Isa wele sawele* for divination. He was told that he would succeed in the encounter if he could make the necessary sacrifice. He was required to make sacrifice to Esu with a he-goat, and to prepare special musical instruments including maracas, gongs and drums, adding comb and mirror to be inserted on his Ifa shrine and to offer a hen to Ifa. He was also told to fetch a rabbit, a fish, a rat and mashed yam (*Ewo* or *Obobo*) which were to be prepared specially and kept inside the divination bag (*Akpo mini jekun* or *Agba-vboko*) with which he was to travel. *Isa wele sawele* told him that the only way that could succeed against the women of Omuo was peace and not combat. He was therefore advised to lead a musical procession of dancing and singing from Ife to Ilu-Omuo without any combat weapons of any kind.

There were four strong women constituting the backbone of the rebellion in Ilu-Omuo. Each of the four women forbade one thing or the other, including rabbit, rat, fish, and mashed yam. The Ifa Priest also advised him to go with four bangles made of special beads called, *Tutu Opon*.

Ogbé-Osa quickly went to work to make all the sacrifices and preparations. On D-Day, he despatched an advanced party of armed troops to encircle the entire town of Omuo with instructions to attack, only if he shouted the words: "Kpaye gbaa".

Thereafter, he set out with a few of his followers for the trip to the town. He was elaborately dressed in the outfit of a high chief while his followers were dancing and singing to the melodious music of the maracas, gongs and drums. He led the procession with appropriate dancing to the tune of the music. In his own hand, he held the prepared mirror and comb as he danced along. He left no one in any doubt that he did not come to fight, but to dance for peace since he was not dressed for combat operations. In other words, he was not dressed as a warrior but as a traditional chief. As he danced along, he held the mirror on

his left hand and the comb on his right hand. He used the mirror as a mesmeric crystal gazer for watching the movement of the women. As he danced along, he sang:

Isa wele sawele
Lon difa fun mi
Nijo timo gbe Ogun,
Losi Ilu awon Obinrin,
Ire nimowa ba yin she sawele,
Miowa ja sawele.

Meaning:

Isa wele sawele is the Awo who divined for me,
When I was appointed
To wage war on
The land of women;
I am not a war monger,
But a peace monger.
I have come to sue for,
Peace and tranquility.

He led the dance procession right into the town. When the women heard his song, they realised that the intruder did not come to fight. They too turned out with their musical instruments and joined in the dancing. The four ring-leaders with their extra-perceptive visionary powers had seen what lay behind Ogbe-Osa's strategy. The four women had taken positions at each of the cardinal points in the town and were simultaneously watching Ogbe-Osa, who was also watching them through his mirror. As soon as he met them, he brought out the rabbit from his bag and threw it at Yeye-Omuo - the leader of the women. He threw the rat at her second-in-command, the fish at the next one and the mashed yam at the fourth one, while he continued his dancing. It was through his magic mirror that he was able to recognise the strong woman in their order of precedence and to discern what to give to each of them.

As soon as the four women saw what they forbade, they were completely defortified and neutralized. Realising that the power base of the women of Omuo had been crippled, Ogbe-Osa shouted the call sign of "kpaye gbaa" and all his soldiers emerged. The women told him that they already knew that he came to collect them back to Ife, but wondered whether he would not ridicule them by calling them witches upon their return to Ife.

He reassured them by saying that if he ever called them witches, they should also call him the husband and father of witches, since he was the one who came to persuade them to return to Ife.

At that stage, he brought out his special bangles, (Tutu Opon) fixed and tied them to the wrist of each of the four strong women, thus instantly making them his wives. That is why it is said that all the wives of any person for whom Ogbe-Osa comes out at Ugboodu are bound to be witches. However, if he makes the requisite sacrifices, (Ono Ifa or Odha), they will also use their witchcraft to fetch him prosperity and long life, that is, if he takes Ifa and clears the obstacle with sacrifices early enough in his life.

With the summary marriage ceremony over, the four women beckoned to the others to accompany the troops on their way back to Ife. Thus ended the rebellion of the women against the men of Ife. On getting home with them, Ogbe-Osa was thanked and praised by the king and entire people of Ife. As the men of Ife moved to share the women among themselves, Ogbe-Osa told them that before sharing them, they should not touch those wearing Tutu Opon, on

their wrists, as those were his chosen wives. His wish was instantly respected before the men shared the remaining women. Thereafter, peace and tranquillity returned to Ife.

The first plot against Ogbe-Osa at Ife

Following his success in the stone lifting contest, Ogbe-Osa was instantly appointed by the King of Ife to be the one to be serving his head during the annual festival. That appointment, immediately united his detractors into a conspiracy to destroy him. While sleeping one night, he had a dream in which his guardian angel gave him a vision of the plot that was being hatched against him.

The following morning, four heavenly priests knocked at his door to visit him. They were called:

Ikpeti gerelee awo eba ono,
Ogan lololo awo eba ono,
Ifa ku oho gbani on lese lamo lorin,
Efunfun lele tiin she omo balorun
Awon niwon kpa arakpo biri
Won difa fun Ogbe-Osa

These were the sons of the Wind, the Thicket, the Trees and the Ropes.

They made divination for Ogbe-Osa when his choice as the only one to serve the head of Olofen earned him the envy of his enemies. He was to make sacrifice with a Ram to his Ifa and a he-goat to Esu. He quickly made the sacrifice. Before leaving the four Priests advised him never to answer any call on his name by anyone standing behind the wall and whom he did not see. He quickly alerted his wife to remind him whenever he was so called in case his memory failed him.

One morning without telling Olofen, Ogbe-Osa left for the farm with his wife. At the same time, his enemies produced a witch doctor called Ogbologbo to visit the Olofen. On getting to the Olofen's Palace he made divination for him, advising him that he had an Ifa Priest in his domain who was responsible for the human suffering and deprivation which were prevailing in the kingdom. Ogbologbo advised Olofen that if he could use Ogbe-Osa to serve his head, the problems would abate. Olofen replied that Ogbe-Osa was so diabolically strong that he believed that no one could capture him for sacrificial purposes. Ogbologbo volunteered to go.

Unknown to anyone else, Ogbologbo was the heavenly bosom friend of Ogbe-Osa. On the other hand, he knew that Ogbe-Osa used to wear a brass bangle which could always make him invisible but also capable of making him disappear in the face of danger. Ogbologbo volunteered to go and capture Ogbe-Osa for sacrifice to Olofen's head. Ogbologbo then asked for the wooden container with which Olofen use to serve his head. He also asked for kolanut to put in the wooden container. Traditionally, Olofen was forbidden to see brass, which unknown to him, was always worn on the left wrist of Ogbe-Osa.

Knowing that Ogbe-Osa had left for the farm, Ogbologbo went to meet him with the wooden container. When he got to the entrance of Ogbe-Osa's farm he repeated the following incantation:

The fowl does not refuse the call of the com,
The body does not resist the bite of the bee,
The foot does not ignore the bite of the Adder and the boa and
A child does not resist the invitation of a hiccup.

Thereafter, he called on Ogbe-Osa by his heavenly name. Ogbe-Osa answered the call because he could not have imagined anyone else calling him by that name, except his heavenly friend Ogbologbo. His wife could not fore-

warn him because she did not know him by that name. He then ran to embrace Ogbologbo and invited him to the hut, for entertainment. After eating and drinking, Ogbologbo told him that he made a divination in heaven in which he was advised to come to the world to meet with him so that they could serve their heads together in order to avoid imminent danger. He professed that he had to come to the earth without any delay, because he could not live to see any danger coming to his friend.

Ogbe-Osa was re-assured because the two of them used to serve their heads together in heaven. He also told Ogbologbo about a dream he had a few days earlier which fore-boded danger. To demonstrate how they were to serve their heads together, Ogbologbo opened the wooden container, took the kolanut inside it and entered the container and prayed for himself and his friend. After the prayers, he came out of the container and split the kolanut giving parts of it to his friend.

Next, he asked Ogbe-Osa to enter the container and used a second kolanut to pray mutually for himself and his friend. As soon as Ogbe-Osa entered the container, Ogbologbo repeated yet another incantation:

What the mouth swallows does not come out through the mouth,

What the vagina takes in does not come out of it,

when the padlock fastens, it does not release itself.

With that, the wooden container was bolted fast, and Ogbe-Osa was effectively bolted under lock and key. When Ogbe-Osa saw the twist in events, he asked Ogbologbo what the game was all about and the latter disclosed that he was sending him to Olofen. As Ogbe-Osa was perspiring to death inside the wooden container, he called on the four heavenly Awos who had earlier made divination and sacrifice for him.

Ikpeti geerele awo eba onoo,

Ogan lololo tiin shawo eba onoo,

Itaku ono gbamon lose lamon lo oriri,

Efunfun lelele tiin shawo Oba lorun

Ogbologbo muni gbelo ule Olofen oo.

He was making a distress call to his diviners. After two refrains, they answered, wondering why he forgot their advice not to answer calls by unseen callers. Efunfun lelele, otherwise the son of the Wind divinity put on his fathers dress and a tornado began to blow bringing about total darkness. Ikpeti geerele the son of the Plant divinity took position and waited for the approach of Ogbologbo, commanding all the heavy trees on the way to be breaking their branches to block movement. Itaku ono gba mon lose tamon loriri, the son of the Thicket put stud on Ogbologbo's legs and he fell to the ground. As soon as he fell, Ogan lololo, the son of the Rope divinity put his hands on the lid of the wooden container and tore it open, removed the brass bangle in Ogbe-Osa's hands and deposited it inside the wooden container from which he fell into the Thicket. Igbeti geerele, carried him away, and disappeared to the safety of his house.

Ogbe-Osa's wife who had taken a short cut home to report the plight of her husband, was shocked to meet him safely waiting for her at home. Meanwhile, tranquillity returned to the forest. Thereafter, Ogbologbo shook the container and it was even heavier than before, which reassured him that his friend was still there. He then continued on his journey. On getting to the Palace, he was warmly welcomed by Olofen while he boasted that he had delivered Ogbe-Osa safely for the sacrifice. Meanwhile, he was told to have his bath, clean-up and dress ceremonially for the occasion, apparently because he, Ogbologbo, was going to be appointed the new man to serve the head of the King. He had his

bath, a clean shave and settled down to have a meal, because he was already hungry from his long exploit. All the high chiefs and members of the King's council were invited for Olofen's head serving ceremony.

Ogbologbo in ceremonial dress then emerged and he was told to produce Ogbe-Osa. He brought the wooden container out, opened it, but all that was left in it was the brass bangle. When Olofen was the brass bangle, he quickly turned his eyes away since it was forbidden for him to see brass ornamentations. Olofen accused Ogbologbo of polluting his ceremonial container by putting inside it, the brass item which he traditionally forbade. Since Ogbologbo had offered to be executed if he failed to produce Ogbe-Osa, the Royal executioner was invited to complete his assignment. Ogbe-Osa remained the royal diviner and head server.

When Ogbe-Osa appears for anyone at Ugbodun, the person should be told to avoid investing too much trust in any bosom friend. He will excel in any venture, but should beware of stealing the show from his colleagues. Before embarking on any major contest, he should go for divination or serve his Ifa and Esu. He should always listen to advice especially from diviners and Ifa. Orunmila will always advise him through dreams. He should take his dreams seriously and should not embark on any major project without consulting his Ifa.

The return of Ogbe-Osa to Olofen's Palace

When Ogbologbo was coming from heaven, he came with his friend Oro, who waited at the boundary between heaven and earth in anticipation of news of how his friend was faring. When he was told about the execution of Ogbologbo, he decided to embark on a vendetta. Oro had two wands (ASE) with which he could command any thing to happen. He brought out the Ase which was embedded in two horns. Equipped with his magic horns, he set out for Olofen's palace. That was after conjuring an endless wind to blow and fell down all the trees of the forest, for animals to run from the bush to the town, and for domestic animals to run into the forest in fright. There was total confusion in the town. It was in that state of pandemonium that the divine council of God met in heaven to decide what to do about the menace of Oro on earth.

God was not happy that Oro was obstructing his work on earth. The Almighty Father then inspired Osere-igbo (Orisa-nla) or God's representative on earth, to invite Orunmila for divination. Since Ogbe-Osa was the chief Ifa Priest on earth at the time, he was invited by Orisa-nla. When the divine messengers got to Ogbe-Osa's house, they met him preparing for a visit to the King's Palace. He told the messengers that he would report at the divine palace of Orisa-nla after answering an earlier call by Olofen. He then left for the Palace, where he was surprised to find the severed head of Ogbologbo. He did not narrate what happened, but merely asked the King for what happened to the man pointing to the skull of Ogbologbo. The King replied that he was happy to see him back, and that as for the man whose skull lay on the floor, he was the victim of a trap he prepared by himself.

The King then confirmed that he sent for him, to provide solutions to the pandemonium that was raging in the town. Ogbe-Osa replied that it was apparently for the same reason that Osere-Igbo had invited him for a chat. He promised to see the Olofen again on his way back. With that, he left to answer the call of Osere-Igbo. On getting there, he was told to embark on immediate divination on what to do to return tranquility because, Oro had threatened to turn the world upside down to avenge the execution of his friend Ogbologbo. In subsequent divination, Ogbe-Osa told Osere-Igbo that Oro was doing the

havoc with two magic horns (Ase) and that nothing could be done unless he was rid of them. To be able to do so, he advised Orisa-nia to make sacrifice with four plates of pounded yams, four pots of soups, four gourds of wine and four kolanuts. These materials were instantly provided, and Ogbe-Osa proceeded to make the sacrifice without any delay. After preparing the sacrifice, he advised Orisa-nia not to send it to the shrine of Esu, but to leave it at the entrance to his house and to sit by it. Orisa-nia did so accordingly, and Ogbe-Osa left for home.

Not long afterwards, Oro was passing by as if to come and verify the aftermath of the havoc he had generated. When he saw Orisa-nia, he asked for the content of the sacrificial parcel. Orisa-nia told him to open the parcel if he so desired. He proceeded to open it up. He consumed the four plates of pounded yam and the soup, putting the kolanuts in his pocket. He then asked for a cup with which to sample the gourds of wine. After sampling them, he told Orisa-nia to drink out of them. He refused because he traditionally forbade wine drinking. Oro brought out his two magic wands and threatened to use them against Orisa-nia unless he drank out of the wine. Reluctantly, Orisa-nia drank a cup from each of the four gourds of wine. Thereafter, Oro consumed two of the four gourds of wine and went away with the remaining two.

Meanwhile, Orisa-nia was annoyed that Ogbe-Osa made him to prepare a sacrifice which culminated in his being forced to drink wine, which he forbade. But Esu possessed one of Orisa-nia's servants who told him not to worry because the day was still very young and that he should wait to see how the sacrifice would manifest itself.

Before getting home, the Iyerosun with which Ogbe-Osa prepared the wines was beginning to react by intoxicating Oro. On getting home, he drank the remaining two gourds of wine and hung up his two magic wands (ASE) together with the two empty gourds of wine. Thereafter, he became delirious and fell fast asleep. Later in the day, Orisa-nia sent one of his children to go and fetch the empty gourds of wine from Oro in case he had emptied them. When Orisa-nia's son got to Oro's house, he woke up Oro and asked for the gourds and he told the boy to collect them from where he hung them. The boy not only collected the empty gourds but also the two horns which, unknown to him, were the magic power of Oro.

On getting to his father, the boy surrendered both the gourds and the horns. Almost immediately, Orisa-nia went to the back of his house and with the two charms in hand conjured calm to return to the universe. Soon afterwards cool air returned to replace heat and sunshine appeared to brighten the cloudy atmosphere. Orisa-nia rejoiced for procuring the weapon which Oro used to do havoc. He then concealed the two charms away in his inner pocket.

When Oro woke up, he looked out for his charms but could not find them. He only had vague recollections of one person visiting him during his delirium tremens. He looked for the empty gourds of wine, and when he saw that they had disappeared, he concluded that Orisa-nia must have sent someone to collect the empty gourds and surmised that whoever it was, must have been responsible for making away with his magic wands.

Without waiting any longer, he set out for Orisa-nia's palace. As soon as Orisa-nia sighted Oro in the distance, he commanded him to stop, brought out the magic wands and after rebuking him for the wide-ranging damage he had done, cursed him to develop hernia (Upka or Eve) with the following words:

Oni ki ukpa udi,

Re koshan kon le.

Orisa-nya then ordered him to retire into the forest never to come out again into the open. It was from that day that Oro began to stay and conceal himself in the forest. Oro then began to shout.

Oru memon gbe wo woko

Aye do rudu rudu

It is Orudu rudu which Oro cries to this days.

Ogbe-Osa checks the menace of witchcraft against Ife

The success with which Ogbe-Osa tackled the problems besetting Ife got him the title of Ojugbona which made him the chief royal diviner of the Kingdom.

Kuyin kuyin oshuro ose olote,

Ose olote oshu rose kuyin kuyin

Odifa fun gongo hiyo toon sije

Olori eye ibini.

Eejo omo ile lfe ugbagunle,

Eeja 'gba gba ile lfe rigbale.

Ugba Erumole oju gotun,

Ugba Erumole ojo gosii

Gbogbo won kole ikpa ogongo hiyo.

The head of the cult of Bini witchcraft called Ogongo hiyo (Ogongo hiahia in Bini) had been ravaging the people of Ife for a long time. The 200 divinities on the right and on the left had tried to subdue the witch without success. The people of Ife then appealed to Ogbe-Osa to deal with the situation.

At divination, Ogbe-Osa was told to make sacrifice with a tortoise, a he-goat, a knife (Obeke in Yoruba or Abe-Osiwu in Bini), cock, pigeon and 21 cowries. He got all the things together and performed the sacrifice. After preparing the sacrifice, he collected the relevant leaves, prepared it and tied the sacrifice with the knife to the back of the tortoise.

The tortoise with the sacrificial burden on its back was taken to the kitchen and covered on the floor with a mortar.

That night Ogongo hiyo came again to Ife and flew on top of Ogbe-Osa's house. After taking position on the roof of the house, Ogongo hiyo cried:

Mo ni eye loun neye,

Amu ko sorororo.

The tortoise below replied from under the mortar:

Emi aghun

Emi aghun

Emi aghun

Moru kuja.

Ogongo hiyo had announced that he came to take a fresh round of victims and the tortoise replied that he was ready to give him the fight of his life. Ogongo hiyo wondered who it was that dared to give him that kind of reply. In the full knowledge that it was Ogbe-Osa's house, he tore the roof with his beak and entered. When he got into the house, he repeated his earlier challenge and the tortoise replied like he did before. He tore into the kitchen door and shouted again, and the tortoise replied with equal ferocity from under the mortar.

Next he tore the mortar into two and roared out once more and the tortoise replied with equal intensity. He looked scornfully at the tortoise and swallowed him up. As the tortoise got into his stomach, the knife on his back tore up the intestines of Ogongo hiyo. He was now obviously in pains and by the time he got to the road junction over-looking Ogbe-Osa's house, the tortoise fell out through his anus, and Ogongo hiyo fell down, dead. The tortoise then began to dance

round him at the road junction. The first set of women to see the dead Ogongo hiyo are the women who have big busts to this day. The next set of women are those with moderate breasts. Those who saw him last are the women with small breasts. Nonetheless, the menace of Ogongo hiyo had been laid to rest.

The following morning, Ogbe-Osa was invited to go and see the dead Ogongo hiyo. As he was going to the road junction, he sang:

Wori Awo wee mawo,
Awo ati okpa orere,
Riru ebo agbeni,
Ariru kesu kilgbe niyan,
Ebo taafi wi eni titu nigbeni,
Adifa fun Ogbe-Osa,
NiJo toun shegun Ogongo hiyo
Eerere yeuke,
Iba mushe yeu,
Eerere yeuke,
Olori eye oku,
Eerere yeuke.

That was how he announced the demise of the king of Biri Witches who had been molesting the people of Ife for a long time. At divination, the person should be told that he is the victim of a deadly witch and that if he makes the above sacrifice as Ogbe-Osa did, he will triumph over the witch.

Ogbe -Osa made divination for the Ezomo and why Ezomo's children do not serve as pages to the Oba of Benin

Ogbe-Osa's fame had spread throughout the known world of his time and he was often approached for divination from afar and near. The Ezomo of Benin, was one of the few aristocrats, wealthy enough in Benin to send for Ogbe-Osa from Ife. On his journey to Benin, he was accompanied by some of his surrogates one of whom was called, AWOKAJUKO (nicknamed The Round Mirror). Chief Ezomo had indentured one of his children to serve as a page (Omuada), in the Royal court of the Oba of Benin.

Chief Ezomo had become so rich that he was considered to be richer than the Oba himself. His wealth also made him to become arrogant. One day he challenged the Oba to a contest to prove which of them was wealthier. Chief Ezomo recounted his elaborate wealth which ostensibly put him materially head and shoulder above the Oba.

After Chief Ezomo had enumerated his human and material belongings, it was the turn of the Oba to enumerate his own belongings. The Oba began by naming Chief Ezomo and all his assets as the first in his list of belongings, which axiom, was traditionally incontrovertible. That was the end of the contest. The Oba had won hands down.

Nonetheless, the fact that Chief Ezomo was audacious enough to challenge his King and master was sufficient to draw the battle line between the two of them. It was however to be a covert, and not an overt, combat. Meanwhile, the Oba contrived to eliminate the vane-glorious Chief Ezomo in order to confiscate his belongings. The Oba gave orders for a big trench to be dug on the floor of the Palace chamber and for the bottom of the hole to be lined with poisoned hooks and thorns. A beautiful mat was spread over the hole after underlaying it with collapsible planks. A bronze chair was then positioned on top of the mat next to the regal chair traditionally occupied by the King.

Thereafter, the Oba made the son of Ezomo, who was a page in his court, to take a special oath which had the effect of manifesting within 24 hours, not to reveal the plot to his father. The son of Ezomo was put to a further agonizing test when he was sent by the Oba to invite his father to the Palace for urgent consultations.

Caught between his loyalty to his King and to his father, Ezomo's son put on his thinking cap. He contrived an uneasy compromise which would neither make him disloyal to his King and master nor betray his father. He prepared for himself a trumpet (Ukpe in Yoruba or Eziken/Ekpere in Bini) to take to his father's house to call him. He told his father that the Oba wanted to see him in seven days time. After delivering the royal message he had discharged his obligation. He then set about playing his trumpet in his father's house. The song he repeatedly chanted went as follows:

Meaning in Bini

Ezomon ughi renenegbue o,
Nughe gle ehuan ruen,
Kevbe ose rue, keke,
Rhunmwunda, aga ne mose mose,
Nugha totayi,
No the Agbanwindin.
Ghe fie gbue rua o.

Meaning in Yoruba

Ojomon omoto ojomo,
Omo terin kpukpa dodo ro,
Mama joko lewo,
Omon mulun bumole,
Uhkan won tiri ma

Meaning in English

Ojomo know thyself,
Don't let your fair complexion and;
handsomeness go to rot,
By sitting on a beautiful chair,
Which conceals death below.
Beware of carelessness.

At first, Ojomo only admired the melody of his son's music and he at times danced to it because, his son continued to chant the music ceaselessly. On the fourth day, his son changed the tune of the music as follows:

Ugba oni ko suwa,
Ugba oni kekon yin,
Ojomon mai rele o,
Ojo ma tarako.

Meaning:

May this day save us,
May this day not deceive you,
May today lead us to another day,
Father, I am returning home.

As soon as Ezomo's Councillor (Umenwaen) heard the refrain of the music, he advised his Lord to stop dancing and to pay attention to the words of the Son's music. The Councillor told Ezomo that the song of the son was sending a coded message. With that, Ezomo sat down to listen attentively to the music. As soon as he was satisfied that the song was warning him metaphorically, he invited Awo Kajuko - the Ifa Priest to make divination for him before going to the Palace. The

Ifa that appeared at divination was OGBE-RUKUSA. The Awo advised him that his journey to the Palace foreboded death and that he should make urgent sacrifice in order to return home alive. He was told to give a he-goat to Esu and to produce two dogs for sacrifice - one to Ogun and the other to rear with him. The Awo Kajuko prepared a special walking stick for him. The sacrifice to Esu was to include Eko and Akara (bear, bun and porridge). After making the sacrifices his son returned to the Palace without confirming or refuting the divination revelations.

Two days later, Ezomo left for the Palace. Meanwhile, the Oba positioned a battalion of troops to conceal themselves from view around Ezomo's Palace, with a Royal injunction to loot and confiscate all of Ezomo's belongings and bring them to the Palace as soon as his death was announced.

When Ezomo got to the Palace, the Oba motioned him to sit on the bronze chair beside him. As Ezomo got up to take the sit, his dog who travelled with him started walking in front of him. As he moved towards the chair he was hitting the ground ahead of him with the walking stick specially prepared for him by the Ifa Priest. When he got to the mat on which the chair was positioned, his walking stick indicated a depression on the floor. With that, Ezomo stood still and his dog with him. He brought out his handkerchief to wipe his face. While he was wiping his face, Esu released the Akara and Eko with which Ezomo had made sacrifice and they landed under the bronze chair. His dog instantly ran for the food to eat but almost immediately the dog, the bronze chair, the Akara and Eko, all sank into the hole below. Ezomo stood aghast and looked at the Oba and asked whether that was the death trap prepared for him to fall into.

Overwhelmed with indignation, Ezomo pulled out his sword to strike the Oba who immediately ran into the inner chamber of the Palace. His followers immediately declared war on the Palace and everyone ran for cover, following the example of the Oba. That was how this Odu, Ogbé-Osá, earned the sobriquet of Ogbé-rukusa, that is, the one who escaped in the face of death.

Seeing that everybody had escaped, Ezomo returned to his Palace and decreed that never again should any son of Ezomo go to the Oba's Palace as Page or Omuada. Out of respect for the dog who saved his life, Ezomo also decreed that from then on, all his offsprings from generation to generation should forbid eating dog's meat. That is why members of Ezomo's family in Benin do not eat Dog to this day. It will be recalled that when the author unknowingly ate Dog's meat several years ago, in a foreign Restaurant, he became so sick that he vomited everything in his stomach and was instantly hospitalised. He hails from Ezomo's family in Benin. The only occasion in which Ezomo ate dog or drank its blood was just before leaving home for war. After dressing up in battle outfit he would be-head a dog, drink its blood and proceed to battle, and he was never known to lose any battle in his capacity as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Benin Empire.

When this Odu comes out of divination at Ugbođu, the person should be told never to give any of his children out as a servant to anyone, and that if he already had any child in servitude, he or she should be withdrawn to avoid contravening a curse. He should also forbid the use of a round mirror to avoid eye trouble.

Ogbe-Osa made divination for Oliha and his brother Oruoni

Among the surrogates who accompanied Ogbe-Osa to Benin was an Awo called Akirajo, Akirajo, gbam gbam. He made divination for Oliha one of the King makers of the Benin throne and his brother Oruoni. His brother Oruoni had a nickname which meant "Whatever is done to undo me will not pain me". Oliha

always argued with his brother that it was not every pain that the body could bear and promised to prove his point at an appropriate time. As long as their father was alive, Ollha could not dare to carry out his morbid intentions against his junior brother. Meanwhile, their father died and was accorded Royal burial, in accordance with the Benin tradition.

Following the death and burial of their father, Ollha seized the share of their father's legacy which had been re-earmarked for his junior brother, Oruoni. Ollha also took over all his father's wives and children. Finally, he ordered his brother to sever his own (Oruoni's) hands and legs and parcel them to him. His brother retorted that he could not cut off his limbs by himself. To demonstrate that he meant what he said, Ollha sent his body-guards to go and perform the amputation on his brother and also to remove his eyes and parcel the extracted parts to him. After performing the operation, Ollha's body-guards abandoned the helpless Oruoni at the foot of an Iroko tree, to die.

Coincidentally, the top of that Iroko tree happened to be the nocturnal assembly hall of the cult of witches. At nightfall, after all the witches were gathered, their King asked why the Ajero of Ijero was absent and a member from Ijero replied that he was bed-ridden with an eye trouble. The King plucked a leaf and lamented that if he was available they would have squeezed the leaf into his eyes to regain his sight. Since the leaf could not be sent to him, it was left to drop to the ground below. Incidentally, the leaf dropped on the eye of Oruoni below and he instantly regained his sight.

Next, the King of witches asked for the Oba of Takpa who was also absent from the meeting and it was reported that he had lost the use of his hands and legs and had become crippled. Once again, the King of witches lamented that if the Oba of Takpa had been present, they would have used another leaf to rub his body which would have made him to regain the use of his hands and legs. Thereafter, they released the leaf to drop to the ground where it fell on Oruoni and instantly made his limbs to become whole again.

Finally the King of Witches asked for the Owa of Ijesha and it was reported that he was down with hernia. Once again, the King of witches remarked that if he had been present, he would have cooked the leaves for him to drink which would have made him to pass out the affliction as urine. The leaves were also left to drop to the ground, which Oruoni once again picked up. Thereafter, Oruoni tied up the three sets of leaves in different parts of his loin cloth.

At the first crow of the cock, the assembly of witches dispersed. By the time all was clear, it was broad-day-light. Oruoni got up, hale and hearty and headed at once for Ijero. On getting to the Ajero's Palace he announced that he came to cure the Ajero who was reportedly ill. For proclaiming that he was capable of curing the Oba, the Princess of the Palace welcomed him with a gift of a man and a woman, and promised that if he succeeded in curing their father, they would divide his Kingdom into two and give him one part of it to administer. He was then taken into the Oba's inner chamber where he requested that the door should be locked. He then brought out the first leaf, squeezed it and administered the solution on the two eyes of the Oba. Almost immediately, the Oba opened his eyes and he rejoiced exceedingly when he discovered that he was able to see again. The Oba looked at the Doctor who performed the miracle on him and saw that he was in tattered clothes. Meanwhile, the Oba toured his harem, embracing his wives and children as he moved along.

After touring his household, he called on Oruoni to remove his tattered clothes. Oruoni refused because he had the other sets of leaves tied to the cloth. He however explained that he had other commitments to discharge before settling

down. In consonance with the promise to Oruoni, Ijero was instantly divided into two halves and he was appointed the Shashere (Iyasere in Bini) or Prime Minister of Ijero.

Oruoni's next point of call was Takpa where he also met the Oba, using the second leaf to assist him in regaining the use of his hands and legs. After being healed, the Oba of Takpa stretched out his hands and jumped up with his legs, thanking Oruoni for the miracle. In accordance with the promise made earlier, he was given a hundred each of all valuable treasures, men, women, cows, goats, bags of money, sacs of clothes, sacs of beads etc. etc., all of which were transported to Ijero, which had become his new home.

He finally left for the palace of the Owa of Ijesha still wearing his tattered clothes. On getting to the palace, he was again promised a hundred each of all earthly treasures if he succeeded in curing the Owa of Ijesha. On getting to the Oba's chamber, he asked for a small pot with which he cooked the third set of leaves. After the pot was cooked he took a cup out of it and gave it to the Oba to drink. After some time, the Oba began to urinate profusely until the hernia disappeared. The Oba rejoiced with his wives and children. Meanwhile each of the wives began to present gifts to Oruoni in addition to the promised ones. In less than a week, Oruoni had become not only a famous doctor but an elaborately wealthy man.

Back in Benin, his brother Oliha was beginning to hear news of the activities of one popular Awo called Oruoni to the West of Benin. He could not connect the Awo with his own Oruoni because the only brother he had by that name was already presumed dead. When the probability became irresistible, that the famous and wealthy Oruoni might be his own brother, he decided to leave for Ijero. On getting there, he was astonished to discover that it was truly his brother. After exchanging pleasantries, Oliha remarked that really and truly, Oruoni had, true to his nickname, survived all the trials and tribulations to which he had been subjected. At that point, Oliha offered to surrender his legitimate share of their father's legacy to him. In reply Oruoni refused because he was himself already contemplating how to surrender a substantial part of his new found wealth to him (Oliha). However, Oliha told him not to mention it and that if Oruoni insisted it would mean that he did not wish him to become as wealthy as himself.

Oliha then returned to Benin where he made a proclamation transferring all his earthly belongings to his junior brother Oruoni. Thereafter, he got one of his servants to cut off his own hands and legs and to pluck out his own eyes, with instructions that he should be carried to the foot of the Irokó tree where his brother was previously abandoned. In the expectation that at the end of his self-imposed ordeal, he would become enriched like his junior brother. His wishes were carried out with text-book exactitude.

At night, the witches were again assembled on top of the Iroko tree. They were astonished to receive a report that one doctor had gone to cure the Obas of Ijero, Takpa and Ijesha, and that the three of them were completely relieved of their afflictions and were preparing to attend that night's meeting. They all began to wonder who that doctor was, because only one of their members could have performed such miracles. They began to suspect one another, convinced that there must be a spy among them. In the ensuing fight, two of the witches fell from the top of the tree, to the ground, where they saw the helpless Oliha. As soon as they saw him, they accused him of being the intruder who had been spying on them and dragged him up to the top of the tree. After finding the intruder, the two witches advised their colleagues to stop fighting since they had discovered the culprit. Oliha was summarily executed. Thereafter the

meeting dispersed. After waiting in vain for Oliha to return home, his people gave him up for lost since there was no trace of him, dead or alive.

At last, Oruoni decided to thank his Ifa for translating him from nonentity to fame, affluence and prosperity. He made an elaborate feast with cows and goats and sang in praise of the Ifa Priest who made divination for him.

If this Odu appears at a naming ceremony divination, the child should be named Modukpe in Yoruba or Ikponmwenhi in Bini, and the parents should be told that the child would only become prosperous in life not through the assistance of any human being but with the help of God and his guardian angel. When it comes out at Ugbody, the initiate should be told to make a special sacrifice to his Ifa in order to survive an up-coming plot by his eldest brother to undo him. If he makes the sacrifice, he will not only survive his brother but the undoing will become his own blessing in disguise. His prosperity will come from outside, and not from his place of birth.

Ogbe-Osa's divination for Alaakpa

Alaakpa was the name of an Oba of Benin who was abandoned by his people on the banks of the sea, after he had fought several wars to expand his people's empire. Once he was abandoned by his troops, he became very poor and helpless. It was in his penury that he came across Urule, Amerugugugu, nicknamed Afijagberu lo'n dila fun Alakapa, Oruko Oba Ado Ajuwaleke. The Awo got the nickname of Afijagberu, that is, "the Awo who fights with those who refuse to make the sacrifice he prescribes at divination". He was in the habit of compelling his divinees to make prescribed sacrifices although not necessarily through or by him. Alaakpa, who was too poor to fund the sacrifice prescribed, threw up his hands in despair because he could not afford the cost of doing it. The Awo told him not to dare to refuse to do the sacrifice, insisting that it had to be done on that very day. On his part, the Awo was prepared to guarantee that the sacrifice would manifest as instantly as he did it because that year was going to mark Alaakpa's return to prosperity. In the end, Alaakpa did everything to borrow money for the sacrifice which included hoisting a piece of white cloth, or a white flag over his house.

At divination, Alaakpa was told to make sacrifice with a basket of hens and eggs, plenty of fried groundnuts, bananas, coconuts and pineapples, which he was to keep on the bank of the sea as if they were displayed for sale. He was also advised to build a temporary hut by the side of the sacrifice and to stay there to watch how his sacrifice would manifest.

Meanwhile, the first ship of white explorers was enroute from Europe in search of the land of the black man from where Ogbe-Osa came to Europe. While at sea, their ship ran out of provisions and the crew had been starving for almost a week. At that point, they sighted smoke coming out from a hut on the embankment of the sea. They quickly headed for the shore. When they disembarked, they saw stacks of bananas, coconuts, eggs, hens, groundnuts and several other fruits. Since there was no one in sight, they concluded that their new found provisions were gifts from God in answer to their prayers. They sat down to help themselves to the provisions.

After eating to their hearts' content, they removed the remaining provisions into the ship. That was the point at which Alaakpa came out from his hut, wearing the traditional regalia of an Oba (Ebuluku in Bini or Ebante in Yoruba). He challenged the white men whether that was how they were used to stealing other people's properties in the land from which they were coming. They did not however understand his language. As the Oba continued to shout at the top

of his voice, his followers came out and surrounded the white men. A voice whose owner was concealed interpreted to the Oba that the strangers were prepared to pay for what they had taken. When he was asked to name the price for what they had taken, he replied that the cost was 100 men and 100 women. Since they had no human price to pay, the white men offered to surrender the contents of one of their ships in the flotilla, to pay for the provisions. In reply, the Oba insisted that the contents of each vessel in the flotilla would pay for each of the provisions separately namely; One ship each of bananas, eggs, pineapples, groundnuts etc. etc. The white men agreed. But by the time they had discharged the contents of three vessels in the flotilla, they escaped back to sea.

Among the goods discharged were bags of salt, clothes, china-ware, tobacco, and money which made Alaakpa to become exceedingly wealthy. Alaakpa then sent back messages to Benin for his people to come and help him to transport his new-found wealth home. This incident happened in the sixteenth century at Eko (war camp) now Lagos. Alaakpa was otherwise known as King Orhogbua in Benin who founded Lagos around 1540 A.D. His consignment of salt was the first contact the Bini man had with refined salt. In Benin history, King Orhogbua (Orongun in Yoruba), is referred to as Olague a corruption of Alaakpa - the man who introduced the white man's salt to Benin. That was how King Orhogbua regained the acceptance and loyalty of his subjects in Benin.

When this Odu appears at divination for a person who has fallen from grace to grass, he should be advised to make sacrifice with a hen, eggs and various fruits including bananas, coconuts, and pineapples and to deposit the sacrifice by the side of a sea. He should be told that circumstances would make him to have business transactions with foreigners or white men which would put back his feet on the saddle of prosperity.

Ogbe-Osa made divination for two friends

There were two friends with two challenging names - one was called Abashemi-koodumi (Shemi) and the other was called Emiase-ojue-oja (Emi).

One day, the two friends went to the forest and Emi asked Shemi to put his back against an oak tree and Emi nailed the two eyes of Shemi to the tree and abandoned him there. The meaning of Shemi's name was "whatever is done to undo me cannot deter my destiny from manifesting". On the other hand, Emi's name meant, "if I undo you, you will feel it". As Emi was leaving, he told Shemi that since his name connoted that whatever was done to him would not stop his destiny from manifesting, he would like to see how he could leave the oak tree. Shemi was now obviously in pains and he started crying out to God and to his guardian angel for deliverance.

Meanwhile he heard a voice from the distance which taught him how to understand the language of animals, birds, and reptiles. The voice ended by telling him that a bird was on its way to deliver a special preparation that would cure him of his blindness. Not long afterwards, a bird called Elulu in Yoruba and Erimohi in Bini dropped something in his hands which he quickly applied to his eyes. Instantly, the nail fastening his head to the oak tree gave way. His pain disappeared and he regained his sight.

When he opened his eyes, he saw that under his feet was a boa serpent. He quickly jumped to safety, but he heard the boa screaming and saying "foolish man, he is running from me, when I was sent to come and save him". Since he now understood the language of the reptile, he stopped running. The boa then moved to the foot of the Oak tree and plucked a leaf, saying "This is the leaf with which I clean my teeth every morning so that the food I will eat for that day might

come to me in my resting place". After using the leaf, the boa crawled away. Shemi then went to the plant to recognise it. Meanwhile, he plucked a few leaves from it and kept them in his bag. As he turned back to return home, he met the spinning-cobra, removing some substances from a pool of water at the foot of a tree and saying, "Anyone who grinds these substances and the leaves of these plants together and marks 201 incisions on his head with it, will command the fear and respect of all animals including human beings"

As he moved to the direction of the Cobra, the serpent ran away, but Shemi picked up the substances that it left behind, and plucked some of the leaves and kept them in his bag.

By the time he left the spot he was already very hungry. First, he remembered the leaves used by the Boa for conjuring food. He cleaned his teeth with one of the leaves and instantly, all descriptions of food and fruits came to him from several directions. Next, since he was alone in the forest he wanted to command the respect of all and sundry. He then brought all the leaves of honour and used it to inscribe 201 markings on his forehead. He then began to move towards the direction of home. As he got into a lane, he came across a bunch of ripe plantain and he sat down to eat out of it. As he sat eating, the woman who owned the plantain and who incidentally had been expelled from her town, came along. She accused him of stealing and he confessed to theft proclaiming that he was a nonentity with neither a mission, nor any idea of where he was going to, or coming from. The woman took pity on him and cleared him to take as many plantains as he could carry.

The woman was coming from a town in which the King had just joined his ancestors and they were looking for a stranger to succeed him as was the tradition of the place. The town was called Ilu Ajoji. The woman told him that fortune was going to smile on him and that from that day, he was going to personify honour and respect. She assured him that he was going to be crowned as the next King of Ilu Ajoji. He was dumb-founded in disbelief as the woman told him to follow her. When they got to the town the woman told him that there were three life trees, (Igi Akoko in Yoruba, and Ikhinmwini in Bini) at the main entrance of the town and that any stranger who embraced the life tree at the middle, would be acknowledged by the people and crowned as their next King. She further disclosed that as soon as his Kingship was acknowledged and confirmed, the elders would automatically assemble all the marriageable spinsters for him to choose one of them as his Queen. The woman added that he was traditionally obliged to take the girl to wife lest his reign would not last. He thanked her and agreed to comply with her advice if her predictions manifested.

As soon as they got to the town, he sighted the three life trees, moved to the one in the middle and embraced it. Almost instantaneously, the citizens of the town saw him and burst into songs of praise, thanking God and their ancestors for bringing them their next King. The whole town then gathered, put him on a horse and led him in possession to the town hall, where he was dressed up and crowned as the new Oba of Ilu Ajoji. All the young girls in the town were assembled and he was told to choose one of them for a wife. He looked at all of them and chose the very woman who led him from grass to grace. She was called AMUKAN because her legs kayed. Everybody was astonished but they hailed it all the same.

By tradition, all the palm wine tappers of the town were obliged to bring one gourd of wine to him every morning. Eml, the friend who hailed him to the Iroko tree in the forest and who had been languishing in penury, had meanwhile resorted to palmwine tapping. Previously, the two friends had lived in the town

of lleto. News soon came to the King that there was a special palm-wine tapper at lleto whose wine was a delicatessen for its sweetness. Not knowing that it was his friend, the King sent for him. Shemi the King, instantly recognised his friend as soon as Emi was arraigned before him, but the latter could not recognise the King as the friend he had consigned to mortification in the heart of the forest.

As soon as Emi was brought to the palace, the King asked his royal heralds to request the town's elders to assemble in the palace. When the crowd was assembled, the King proclaimed that anyone who had committed any mortal evil in the past should make an open confession, failing which, whoever was indicted for such an offence would be executed summarily by crucifixion, that is by nailing him to a tree. Almost immediately afterwards, Emi went on his knees and begged the King not to execute him because he was an evil man. He confessed that his latest evil deed was to his life long friend who he killed by nailing him to a tree and abandoning him to die and be eaten up by vultures in the forest. The King immediately took pity on him and told him to stand up on his feet. The King then asked him whether he would recognise that friend if he saw him. He replied that recognition of the friend was out of the question because the man had long been dead.

The King then ordered the people to remove the lleto-based palm wine tapper's dirty clothes and to dress him up properly. As soon as he was dressed up in presentable atires, the King identified himself to him as his friend Shemi and that true to his name, his destiny had manifested because all that was done to undo him neither deterred nor pained him. The King advised him to refrain from that day, from doing any evil. He was subsequently appointed the next man to the King.

When this Odu comes out at divination therefore, the person should be told that he has a long standing friend who will do him a bad turn that will become a blessing in disguise. He should be told to make sacrifice with a boa, spitting cobra, and the relevant leaves which would be prepared by the Ifa Priest after adding the Iyerosun of this Odu and marked 201 on his head. He will be a great man.

He made divination for the Hunter and the Deer

Ase elu omujo ode ilu,
Omujọ yeye oshoro fun eni mejl
Jere ogojo
Adifa fun Ode, Abufun Agbonrin.
Ebo tori lku omo,
Ki amu Isu marun osuan, Igbin,
Eja - aro bo Orisa.
Ki atoro omo rere ni owo Orisa.

These Awos made divination for the Hunter and the Deer. The hunter had a farm where the deer used to feed. Apprehensive that the owner of the farm might react negatively to her intrusion, the deer went to Orunmila for divination on what to do to avoid the wrath of the owner of the farm. She was told to make sacrifice with 80 cowries which she produced instantly. Orunmila then advised her to take 40 out of the 80 cowries to give to the old woman whose house was positioned on the way to the farm. He also asked her to put a tree branch at the entrance to the farm before entering to go and feed. With that, she left.

Soon afterwards, the hunter also came to Orunmila for divination on what to do to apprehend the deer that used to ravage his farm. He too was told to make sacrifice with 80 cowries which he also produced instantly. Orunmila again gave

him 40 out of the 80 cowries to give to the woman who lived at the last house on the way to his farm. With that, the hunter also left.

Next morning, the deer left with her young one for the farm. When she got to the last house before the farm, she knocked at the door and an old woman came out from the house. The deer asked her whether the hunter had passed to his farm. In annoyance, the woman asked whether the deer employed her to be her day-guard. The deer gave her the 40 cowries which immediately changed her attitude. She then disclosed that the hunter had not passed to the farm. After the dialogue, the deer quickly left for the farm, where she began feeding at once with her young one after positioning the tree-branch at the farm's entrance.

Not long afterwards the hunter also came to the house occupied by the old woman. She he asked the woman whether the deer has passed by and she again queried whether she was his informant. He also gave her 40 cowries and she replied more positively that the deer had just passed.

On getting to the entrance to the farm, the hunter saw a fallen tree branch. As he removed it from the way, the noise alerted the deer, who immediately saw the hunter taking aim and she escaped into the forest. The baby deer began to wonder what made the mother to run away. As it wondered whether to continue eating or to run away, the hunter took aim and shot it, dead.

When the mother-deer got home, she rushed in fury to query Orunmila why she lost her child in spite of the sacrifice she made. Orunmila replied that she only made the sacrifice for herself and not for her child. Perplexed, the deer returned home.

Next, the hunter also came to query Orunmila why, in spite of his sacrifice, he could only shoot the baby deer instead of the more aggressive mother. Once again, Orunmila replied that he neither mentioned any specific deer nor two deers when he made the sacrifice. With that, the hunter left Orunmila for home.

At divination, the person should be told to make sacrifice so that the death which misses him or her, might not get hold of the son or daughter, that is, if it comes out as Ayewo. If it is Ure, for some one seeking to achieve a desired objective, he will be told to be specific in praying and making sacrifice for the objective to avoid manifestation in half measure.

Chapter 20

I OGBE - ETURA I
II OGBE - ALAARA I
I OGBE - KUNLE-ARA I
I OGBE - KUNLE-JO I

Uroke mi lawo ll'gonri,
Oroke lokpoke
Awon meji meji,
Lo'ndifa fun Ariku
Nijo toun bowa ni kole aye.

U ranke (divination Wand) and Oroke (fly whisk or horse tail) were the two servants of Orunmila who made divinations for longevity (long life) when he was leaving heaven for earth. He was told to make sacrifice with a gourd of wine (Uko-ayon in Bini and Akpa Otin in Yoruba), cock, cutlass, rat, and fish and a bag of money (50k) in order to prosper in the world, because he was destined to have a bumpy ride on earth. He made the sacrifice. A part of the wine was prepared into a small gourd with medicine for him to drink before setting out for the world. He was born into the home of Ogbe-Etura, who before then, had no living child even though his wife had given birth to several children, but who often died at birth.

Longevity (Ariku in Yoruba and Onaiwu in Bini) had gone before the divine palace of God in heaven, to appeal for clearance to be born into the home of Ogbe-Etura, out of sympathy for his childlessness.

Meanwhile, Ogbe-Etura's wife was once again pregnant on earth, and he went to Orunmila for divination on what to do in order to retain the incoming child. He was told to make sacrifice with 2 snails, cock, pigeon, fish, rat, chain and white cloth. He did the sacrifice. The liquid from the snails, the blood of the pigeon, and the crown of the cock, were used to prepare the necessary medicine. Part of the medicine was used to prepare a talisman and a magic belt (Akpalode). He was told by Orunmila that the incoming child was going to be a boy whose name should be Ariku. He was to tie the magic belt to the child's waist seven days after his birth and to wear the talisman round his neck until he grew up. He did the sacrifice half-heartedly, since he was already reconciled to the experience and prospect of losing his children after birth.

Eight and a half months later, the wife gave birth to a male child. On the seventh day, a naming ceremony was done at which the child was named Ariku. At the same time the magic belt was worn round his waist and the talisman round his neck. At the subsequent naming ceremony divination, he was told that his wife would become pregnant again after her first post-natal menstruation and that it would be a female child who should be named Omotade (Omosede in Bini). He was told to make yet another sacrifice in anticipation of the second child with a cock, pigeon, Scimitar and Miter (Ada and Eben in Bini), white cloth, and cowries to prepare medicine to await her arrival. He produced all the materials and the medicine was prepared and tied to the small Ada and Eben as a Talisman.

Three months later his wife became pregnant and in the fulness of time, she gave birth to a female child who was named Omotade.

In accordance with the injunction of the Ifa Priest, the special medicinal preparation on the Ada and Eben was kept under the pillow of the child's cradle, while the talisman was worn round her neck. At the naming ceremony divination, Ogbe-Etura was told that heaven had cleared the way with a special Ono-lfa or Ode-lha for the children and that he would live to a ripe age.

As soon as he began to have children Ogbe-Etura achieved contentment and peace of mind. However, contentment soon generated complacency and he began to neglect his obligations to his family. He became an ubiquitous musician dancing about from place to place with divine priests. His happy-go-lucky adventuring distanced him physically from his wife who had no opportunity of becoming pregnant again. The son Ariku grew up without adequate fatherly guidance and supervision. He too began to misbehave and to fish in troubled waters, as he had been fore-warned before he left heaven. He became pugnacious, fighting both old and young, all over the place.

Finding that his life was becoming listless and colourless, Ogbe-Etura went again for divination, where he was reminded that his carelessness was going to endanger his life and those of his children. He was told that the only solution was for him to return home, and settle down with his family, after making sacrifice. He was to give a he-goat to Esu as soon as he returned home, serve his Ifa with a goat and thereafter, refrain from travelling about. He accepted the advice and since he had no house of his own, he settled down in a ram-shackled building but nonetheless stayed home. In fact it was Ariku who was advised by the Ifa Priest not to abandon his father's Ifa and to invite his father to return home to settle down, so that he (Ariku) might prosper as he was told in heaven.

This is the principal sacrifice (Ono-lfa or Odilha) of this Odu which has to be properly prepared, lest the life of the subject will not settle. The Awo told Ariku:

Ariku ma "da lfa no"

Jeje ni uwarebo,

Lo ono jenje.

Ariku ma da fano.

Uware bo leyin jenje.

Meaning:

Ariku, don't abandon Ifa

'cause prosperity is on its way to you.

Ariku don't ignore Ifa.

Prosperity will come slowly but surely.

After returning home to settle down, Ogbe-Etura began to mould and monitor the upbringing of his children much more closely. He rehabilitated his Ifa and revived the protective medicines prepared for his children. Soon afterwards, he began to have more children. He had two other children called Ewemilere (Ebemwen ere in Bini) and Ifa Kiyeremi (Iha Kheyekemen in Bini) and many others. It was not long before he was able to build his own house and prosperity began to gather around him. When the other divine priests with whom he went dancing, discovered that Ogbe-Etura had sneaked away from their dancing and gallivanting spree, some of them began to contrive how to undo him. One night he dreamt and saw the sign of approaching danger and decided to sound his Ifa.

He invited his two Awos, who made divination for him at which his own Ifa appeared. He was advised to make sacrifice because some enemies were planning to wage war against him in his house. He was to make the sacrifice with a he-goat to Esu, but to fry all the meat for Esu to eat alone. He was also to offer

a goat to his Ifa and to buy plenty of horse tails or fly whisks (Oroke). He did the sacrifices. Soon after the sacrifice, all the Divine Priests accompanied by Esu headed for his house on a visit with the determination to end the life of Ogbe-Etura. By the time they arrived, the food for the sacrifice had just been prepared.

As soon as they met him, they admonished him for daring to abandon them. They told him that they had come to execute him summarily because the cult of divinities had already tried and found him guilty of desertion, the penalty of which was death. First, they ordered him to begin to dance by jumping up. He agreed that he was prepared to carry out their instructions, but beseeched them to first grant him audience. Esu then intervened, having earlier been solicited for support through Ogbe-Etura's sacrifice, by reminding the divine priests that heaven does not condemn anyone without being given the opportunity of explanation and defence. With that intervention, the divine priests agreed to sit down and listen to him.

At that point, the feast was ready and they all settled down to eat and drink to their hearts' content. After the feast, Ogbe-Etura sought permission to sing a song to which he was going to dance. The permission was granted. He began by singing in praise of the Awos who made divination for him, referring to the advice they gave him, that translated him from penury to prosperity:

Oroke mi lawo Igonri,
Oroke mi lawo le turu ye.
Awon mejji lo'n dafa fun mi.
Mo gbo, moru, lutu Esu,
Morola morayoo,
Monaya monomo.

With that he invited his children one after the other to join him in dancing to a refrain each with a fly whisk in hand:

Ariku omo mi yajo hon mi oo,
Aa mi lolo siwe,
Omomi yeye-o-amilolo siwee.
Omotade omo mi yajo hon mi oo,
Amilolo siwee,
Omo mi yeye o, aami lolo siwee
Ewe mi lere omo mi yajo hon mi-oo,
Ami lolo siwee
Omo mi yeye-o-ami lolo siwee.
Ifasemoyin omo mi,
Ya jo honmi o, amilolo siwee,
Omo mi yeye o, amilolo siwee
Ifagbamila omo mi,
Ya jo honmi o, amilolo siwee
Ae' miyeye o, amilolo siwee
Ifa kiyeremi omo mi ya jo honmi oo,
Amilolo siwee,
Omo mi yeye o, amilolo siwee.

He did so with all his many children and the singing and dancing became very exciting. The divine priests told him to be shouting, eeyoo as he used to do with them previously. He refused to do so on the ground that since his children were already dancing, he was the one dancing. He added that he had passed the stage of dancing to eeyoo. His visitors were astonished at the number of children he had, since he left them, and instinctively, they all became hysterical and a wail of weeping and gnashing of teeth ensued. They all began to lament that

In retrospect, if they had stayed and settled in their respective homes, they might have been as prosperous as Ogbe-Etura turned out to be. He however pacified them by advising them to change their way of life to stop dancing about aimlessly and settle down like he did, in their respective homes. They all became so downcast and sober that they began to depart sluggishly for their respective homes, leaving Ogbe-Etura in peace and tranquillity.

When this Odu comes out therefore at Ugboḍu, the person should be advised to make sacrifice in order to avert the danger of losing his children at birth. If it is already happening to him, he should be advised to make the same special sacrifice or Ono-Ifa which his Patron Odu made to stop the incidence of child-death. He should however be advised never to lead a life of gallivanting about because his fortune and prosperity would come from settling down at home with his family. If it comes out at ordinary divination for a happy-go-lucky adventurer he should be advised to have his own Ifa if he does not already have one, and to settle down at home.

Prosperity begets enmity

After surviving the conspiracy of the divine priests, he thought that his problems were over. Little did he expect that another combat awaited him from his relatives who were not happy to see him tower above them in fame and achievement. He lost contact with his diviners, forgetting that the path of prosperity is lined endlessly with hooks and thorns, from the beginning to the end. His diviners, who, unknown to him, came from heaven, decided to return to heaven after losing contact with him for a long time.

Not long afterwards, he was suddenly taken ill and died prematurely before the fulness of his time, leaving his eldest son Ariku to take charge of his family. That is why it is said that if the son of Ogbe-Etura does not strive to overcome the risk of complacency and euphoria, he is not likely to live to a ripe old age.

His son Ariku had been advised not to engage in mutual work or thrift contribution with anyone. The divine priests at one of their meetings agreed to be assisting one another through mutual aid effort (Abo in Yoruba or Use In Bini) in their socio-economic pursuits. They agreed to start by assisting Ogun's son in brushing his new farm during the bush clearing season. In the course of the exercise, they killed 201 rats and since it was agreed that whatever was realised during the mutual work would be sent to the host, all the rats were surrendered to Ogun's son.

After another nine days, it was the turn of the Olokun, son of the water divinity, to enjoy the benefit of the mutual assistance of the others. After clearing up his farm, the group caught 201 fishes which, by usage, were also surrendered to the host. When it came to the turn of Ariku the son of Orunmila, there was no farm to be cleared. He told the helping party to clear the weeds round his father's house and to effect all necessary repairs to it.

While the children of the other divinities were working round his father's house, he retired to his own house to prepare food for them to eat. Before he returned to meet them, they had cleared up the pit at the back of his father's house where incidentally unknown to anyone, his father buried all his treasures, viz: Beads, Gold, Bronze, Brass ornaments, Elephant tusks, Money etc. As soon as they excavated the treasure, instead of returning them to the host, they divided it among themselves. They did so because they reasoned that to surrender the finds to Ariku would make him head and shoulder richer than all of them. After sharing the treasures, they dispersed. By the time he later returned with food for them to eat, they had all gone.

He might never have known what transpired, but for Esu who disclosed to him how the children of other divinities found and stole all the treasures which his father buried beneath the earth. After the intimation from Esu, he returned home and invited the following Awos for divination:

Akara le ekpo,
Egboun ekpo wi,
Agbadibo egboun,
Agbadibo wi.

Meaning

Beans bun entered red oil,
But remained white inside:
The Porridge was consumed by black pot,
But retained its white colour.

After divination, they told him to make sacrifice in order to get back his treasures. He was told to offer a he-goat to Esu and to make sacrifice with a cock, pigeon, cudgel, sand stone, river sand, outside sand, parcel of ashes, 31 cowries, basket filter, black and white tread as well as the skulls of bush goat and deer. He collected all the materials and the sacrifices and medicinal preparations were made after adding the relevant leaves. After preparing the sacrifice, the Ifa Priests put it on the basket filter and carried it to the shrine of Esu with the he-goat.

With the special incantation for invoking Esu to go into battle, Ariku and the Ifa Priests served Esu with the he-goat. While the sacrifice was still being made, Esu went to Ogun's house to warn him that Ariku was repeating incantation to kill him on the Esu shrine unless he quickly returned his share of the stolen treasures. He reminded Ogun that the penalty for theft was death. With his esoteric telepathy, he overheard what the Ifa Priests were saying at the shrine of Esu in Ariku's house. Ogun became scared. He quickly collected his share of the treasures adding some more and raced to Orunmila's house to surrender them. He then begged for forgiveness.

Next, Esu went to Olokun and to each of the other remaining divinities who benefited from the treasures looted from Orunmila's premises. They all met Ariku still repeating the incantation at Esu shrine. It is forbidden to write that special incantation in any guise. However, that was how Ariku retrieved all his father's stolen treasures. That is why it is forbidden for the son of Ogbe-Etura to engage in mutual aid work or thrift contribution (Esusu) with any one else.

At ordinary divination, the person will be told that unknown to him, he has been robbed of some of his most treasured assets. He should obtain the assistance of a proficient Ifa Priest to make sacrifice with the special incantation to Esu, and that the thieves would return what they had stolen from him. He should refrain from mutual aid work or thrift contribution for a minimum duration three months. But if Ogbe-Etura is his patron Odu, he should refrain from mutual aid work and thrift contribution for the rest of his life.

How Orunmila made divination for sleep

When Sleep was created by God, he also went his own way like all other creatures having little or no influence on other creatures. In other words, he was not recognised by anyone. Each time he tried to visit any other creature, he was hounded away as an unwelcomed guest because he was found to be the bosom friend of the divinity of Death. Apart from the divinity of death, he had no other companion. He decided to go for divination on what to do in order to gain acceptance. The diviners who made divination for him were called Rest

(Isimi in Yoruba and Iketin in Bini), and Thought (Iro in both Yoruba and Bini) and Dream (Ala in Yoruba and Imina in Bini).

Akpata, akpata okpaara (Dream, Rest and Thought)

Okpaara re Iajugba,

Adifa fun otalegbeje eniyan,

Tibo orun orun shoshe ota

Orun ni oreyin gbo gbo won,

Orun kumi oo orun kasha,

R! kun mi oo orun.

They advised Sleep to make sacrifice with a he-goat to Esu, in order to see the end of the universe. The Awos prepared the Iyerosun of this Odu for Sleep for him to blow into the eyes of living organisms resting, dreaming, or thinking. As soon as he approached the domain of any creature he would blow the powder into his eyes and the victim would surrender to Sleep. That was how Sleep conquered his universal enemies of living creatures.

When this Odu comes out at divination, the person will be told that he has several enemies lurking around him, and that if he makes sacrifice to Esu, he will overcome the enemies.

Ogbe-Etura made divination for the farmer and the hunter

At the beginning of the year, both the farmer and the hunter approached Orunmila for divination on what to do to ensure success in their businesses during the up-coming year. Each of them was told to offer a he-goat to Esu. The farmer did the sacrifice but the hunter refused because he could not imagine why he had to make any sacrifice before going hunting especially as he was not known to miss any shot. He taunted the farmer that Orunmila was merely looking for meat to eat.

Subsequently, all the crops the farmer cultivated turned out well and he reaped a very rich harvest.

On his part, during his first post-divination hunting expedition, he was in the forest for six days without being able to shoot a single game. All his shots missed their marks. On the seventh day, he decided to return home empty-handed. On his way home, he came across a kolanut tree with fruits ripe for harvesting. He plucked as many of the kolanuts as his bag could carry. By the time he got to the farmer's farm, the hunter was already very hungry. He called the farmer by his nickname, OGBE-OLUSHI AYETIGI who replied by calling the Hunter by his nickname - ODE OMINAJO AKPAKOM DAGBO. The Hunter replied that he lost his way in the forest. Asked what he had in his bag, he replied that it was kolanuts and not meat.

At that point, the farmer brought out roasted yam prepared for eating with palm-oil and fresh vegetables. The Hunter sat down to eat, after which he drank palm-wine. When the Hunter was ready to go home, he gave one unsplit kolanut to the farmer in return for his hospitality. The mother of the Oba of the town had been missing for three years and there had been a royal proclamation that whoever was able to return the Queen-mother would be adequately compensated.

After the departure of the hunter, the farmer brought out a cutlass to split the kolanut. As he applied the cutlass on the skin of the kolanut, a voice spoke from within asking him to split gently. Astonished at the turn of events, the farmer assembled members of his farm-hold to listen to the voice from the kolanut which continued to caution the farmer to split gently. He was therefore extra-careful in splitting the kolanut. By the time he finished the careful operation of splitting

the kolanut, the missing queen-mother emerged, in her royal majesty. The Farmer and all the members of his farm-hold prostrated to pay reverence to the Queen mother. The farmer's wives quickly bathed the Queen mother before taking her home.

When the farmer got home, he made for the Oba's palace to enquire after the reward that awaited whoever succeeded in locating the whereabouts of the missing Queen mother. The Oba promised to divide his kingdom into two halves and to surrender one part to the successful discoverer. With that, he subsequently produced the Oba's mother and he got his reward.

There was general rejoicing in the town. At the end of the day, the farmer was given the title of the Shashere of Prime Minister of the town.

At Ugboodu, the person should be advised never to refuse to make any sacrifice prescribed at divination and that he should reflect deeply before giving gifts to any one. The Esu of the Ifa should be prepared within two days of going to Ugboodu. Olokun should also be prepared for the Ifa as well as providing a thunderstone for It. At divination, the person should wash his head on the shrine of Esu with a he-goat in order to obviate the danger of diverting his fortune to others. He should serve his mother to avoid the risk of unconsummated fortune (Amubo in Yoruba and Osobo no ma sunu in Bini).

Ogbe-Alara made divination for Jegbe the eldest son of Oduduwa

Before leaving heaven, Jegbe who was a member of God's own household went before the divine altar of God to wish his destiny for his sojourn on earth. He wished for himself not only to be born as the eldest son of a King, but also to become a King in his own right. Thereafter, he went to Ogbe-Kunlejo who in heaven was called Ori Omo dara baba omon for divination on what to do. He was advised to serve his head with a goat and Esu with a he-goat. He was also told to give parts (heart, ears, eyes, skull, liver, lungs, tongue and intestine) of the goat with which he served his head, as offerings to the elders of the night.

He served his head with the goat but failed to give parts of it to the Night. He totally refused to serve Esu and did not pay the traditional homage to the obstacle divinity (Elenini or Idoboo). For refusing to serve the night, they wore a poverty garment on him before he left for earth. Esu also vowed to disrupt whatever he did to the point of frustration. He was advised not to drink any wine while on earth. He was also to make a special sacrifice in order to avoid the danger of making love to his father's wife, which would shorten his life. He would have initial problems before having children but should persevere because he would have several children later in life. The special sacrifice was made with a hen, eko and akara together with white and black threads.

He was born to the home of Oduduwa as the first son of the family. He grew up to be a farmer and a hunter. As soon as he was old enough to make his own independent farm, he went to meet Ogbe-Etura who was living at Ilara at the time, for divination on what to do to make a successful farm. That was how Ogbe-Etura got the title of Ogbe-kunle-Ara or Ogbe-Alara. He was told that there were three sacrifices hanging over his head, which he failed to make before leaving heaven. He was told to offer a goat to the night, a he-goat to Esu and a cock for his head, and all items of edible foodstuffs and a dog to the obstacle divinity (Elenini or Idoboo) falling which he was going to experience considerable problems before setting his feet on the path of his destiny. He retorted by insulting Ogbe-Alara for daring to profess that the crown prince of Ife was going to experience problems. With that, he refused to do any of the sacrifices, except serving his head with a cock.

One morning, after the members of his household had left home, he left alone for the farm. It was time for harvesting. On his way to the farm, he heard shouts or uproar. As he tried to find out what was happening, he was apprehended by vigilantes as the murderer they were looking for. He was chained and taken to his father for having committed murder, an offence he did not commit. Due to the fact that there had previously been no love-lust between his father and himself, his father did not bother to hear his defence before condemning him in accordance with tradition to perpetual banishment. While his family was still expecting him at the farm, he was expelled from the town into exile.

While in exile the clothes he wore on him were torn into shreds. He resorted to sewing up leaves and animal skin to cover his genitals. All along, he had a hunting instrument, the boomerang with him, and he had taken to killing animals and smoking them for meat.

One day, the women passing by, saw smoke coming from the direction of his hut and they went to meet him. They discovered that he had a tremendous stock of meat. They bought as much as they could carry and offered to return regularly to buy meat from him. Subsequently, he became their regular source of meat supply.

Meanwhile, the King was told at divination to serve his head with a live monkey. The King then made a royal proclamation enjoining all his subjects to look for a live monkey. Almost immediately the women went to the forest to intimate him of the King's proclamation. He refused to look for a monkey, although he was told that whoever fetched the monkey would be richly rewarded.

Eventually, he got hold of a monkey and insisted on sending it to his father by himself. His father was appreciative of his gesture and in return granted him temporary reprieve. Having been used to staying in seclusion and hunting in the forest for so long, it was not easy for him to re-adjust to urban life. He decided however to continue with his hunting profession.

One day, he set out for the forest, with his hunting instruments, where he killed an elephant. He removed the ears and the tusks and brought them home as testimonies to what he had killed. His father sent people to accompany him to butcher the elephant in the forest. It was an irony of fate. They got to the spot, only to discover that the elephant had turned into a mountain. He was completely dumbfounded, because it looked as if he had told a lie.

On a second occasion he killed a Buffalo and he returned home with its ears and tail, but when people accompanied him to carry it home, it had turned into a swamp. The cycle of his hardluck stories was completed when on a third occasion he killed a deer and returned home with its severed head, but when people accompanied him to carry it home, it had turned into an ant hill. His father was now so thoroughly disgusted with him that he wrote him off as a liar.

At that point, his mother set out for Ilara to consult Ogbé-Alara. At divination, she was told that his catalogue of unconsummated fortunes would not abate, unless a special sacrifice was made in the forest to burn the poverty dress put on him by the Elders of the Night, when he was coming from heaven. Secondly, the long delayed sacrifice to Esu had to be made with two he-goats. Thirdly, a dog was to be given to the misfortune divinity, (Elenini or Idoboo). The mother decided that the sacrifices had to be made without any further delay. First, two he-goats were provided for sacrifice to Esu. Next, a dog together with all eatable items were provided for sacrifice to Elenini at the junction of seven roads. Finally, Jegbe was dressed in complete outfit and taken to the forest where he was completely stripped naked. His cap, garment, trouser, hat and shoes were all removed. Ogbé-Alara prepared a huge burn-fire, collected the relevant leaves,

added the appropriate divination powder (Iyerosun) and threw all of Jegbe's wearing apparels into the burning flames. As the fire was burning, Ogbe-Alara and his mother returned home, leaving him naked and alone in the forest. He was told not to return home until he got clothes by whatever means, to wear. He spent the night in the forest.

Meanwhile, sixteen high Chiefs of Ife had been out for the last three months in search of the monkey with which the King wanted to serve his head. That was before Jegbe brought one to his father. On account of the sacrifice which they failed to make to Esu before they left home, the latter blocked all known passages from the forest and they missed their way. All the Chiefs were on horse-backs and they had been plodding the length and breadth of the forest in search of their way home. Meanwhile, since he was naked, Jegbe had left the fire which burnt his apparels, burning throughout the night.

In the morning, the sixteen Chiefs spotted smoke in the air from the distance. They decided to explore the direction of the smoke in the hope of finding some trace of humanity. As they approached the fire place, Jegbe ordered them to stop in their advance because it was forbidden to see him in the nude. The Chiefs quickly offered to send him some clothes to wear and he readily agreed to their suggestion. As soon as he was dressed up, the Chiefs introduced themselves because he could scarcely recognise them. Their bodies had become very hairy from not shaving for three months. After telling him their plight, they begged him to take them home to Ife. He told them that he could not walk on foot with them when they were all riding horses. He was given one of their spare horses on which he rode with them to the palace of his father.

The father was delighted that his son had at last succeeded in bringing home his Chiefs who had been missing for several months. At that point, his father gave him a wand of authority (ASE) and told him that thereafter, they could not again live under the same roof or within the same kingdom because it was ordained that Jegbe would have to found a new kingdom for himself.

The father told him not to disembark from the horse's back but to ride away into the heart of the world with his full blessings, until he got to a spot where his horse would slip and fall on its left knee. He should stay in that place only temporarily. He should continue on his journey until his horse fell down on all-fours where he was to settle down, permanently. With that he bade goodbye to his father and to Ife. He journeyed into the forest until his horse fell down on its left knee. He stayed there for three years and founded the place now called Ijesha.

Remembering the injunction of his father, he continued on his journey at the end of the third year, until he came to the point where his horse fell down on its four knees and stomach. He decided to settle down there, and that place became the kingdom of Oyo. That is how Jegbe, the senior son of Oduduwa became the first Alaafin of Oyo, and why it was the second son of Oduduwa who was called Onioni, who succeeded to the throne of Ife after the death of their father. That is why it is generally believed that by natural age, the Alaafin of Oyo, is senior to the Onioni (corrupted later to Ooni) of Ife. But because the latter ascended the throne of their father, the Ooni of Ife is titularly superior to the Alaafin of Oyo.

The punishment of Oriwaye for having an affair with his father's wife

Oriwaye was the eldest son of the Alara of Ilara. He was also the only son of the King of Ilara. He was a very handsome man and his father loved him exceedingly. Those who were looking forward to usurping the throne of his father began

to plot a strategy for subverting the throne. They deceived Oriwaye, the crown prince, into making love to his father's junior wife, who had no child for the father. Oriwaye was cajoled by the conspirators with the lie that the woman was likely to leave after the death of his father, and that if he cultivated a relationship with her during the life-time of his father, the woman would remain to marry him, subsequently. What they conveniently concealed from him was the tradition which stipulated the death penalty for making love to one's father's wife.

As soon as he made love to his father's wife, the conspirators lost no time in reporting the incident to his father. When his father heard about it, he refused to do anything on the ground that Oriwaye was his only son. The conspirators convened a meeting of the King's council to allow the law to take its course and to pronounce the execution of Oriwaye because the law was no respecter of any person. When his father remained indomitable, the conspirators incited the people to rebel against the King for applying double standards. Faced with the threat of popular insurrection and banishment, the Alara eventually capitulated to the conspirators. The King however insisted that he could not execute his only son, but would prefer to take solace in the age-old tradition of consigning his son to his senior brother, the Oba Ado Ajuwaleke (that is, the Oba of Benin).

Oriwaye was then ordered to get himself prepared to go to Benin without disclosing to him the fatality of his mission. It was however common knowledge at the time that whoever went to Ado never returned alive because it was only the Oba of Ado who could execute summarily. The executioners of Ilara prepared a calabash inserting inside it a rope, a piece of black cloth, a charcoal and a micro-mini matchet, and covered it up. It was obvious that the forebodings of the contents signified that the bearer had been condemned to death. In short, it meant that Oriwaye, the only son of Alara of Ilara was to be summarily executed on sight. As soon as the parcel was ready, it was given to Oriwaye for him to deliver to the Oba of Ado.

The mother of Oriwaye collected whatever money she had and gave to her only son for the trip, and bade him goodbye. Oriwaye then set out for the journey to Ado. On his way, he heard something rattling by the roadside, giving the appearance of someone performing an act of divination.

When he moved to find out who it was, he met Okitikpuke, Awo eba ono, who was making divination for some people. Oriwaye also waited to take his turn for divination. He put down his parcel and beseeched Okitikpuke to divine for him. At divination, Okitikpuke advised him to make sacrifice immediately because he was too young to suffer the fate awaiting him through the parcel he was carrying. It was the burden of death. He was advised to make sacrifice with a he-goat, rat, fish, eko, akara and ewo (obobo in Bini). From the money given to him by his mother he purchased the materials and the sacrifice was made. After performing the sacrifice, the Awo opened up the parcel and removed all the contents.

After disposing of the contents at the shrine of Esu, he replaced them with a piece of white cloth, white chalk, shaving knife and beads and closed the calabash once more, using the leaves of the tree of life, (Ewe Akoko or Ebe Ikhinmwini in Bini) as an underlay. Oriwaye then continued his journey to Ado after being assured by Okitikpuke that death was no longer his lot.

On getting to Ado, he went to see the Oba who caused the calabash to be opened. On seeing the contents, the Oba reasoned that it was probably due to the absence of any vacant title at Ilara that the people decided to send their crown prince to Ado to take one because that was the significance of the contents of the parcel. He was then made the Iyashere or the Prime Minister of

Ado. He flourished immensely in his title at Benin and became very prosperous.

If this Odu comes out at Ugbođu the person should be told that his prosperity lies far away from home. If he belongs to a titled family, whose succession is subject to the law of primogeniture and he is the heir-apparent, he will be told that he can never ascend to the title of his father but will assume a more dignifying title in another land. If it comes out as Ayewo that is, if it portends danger, the person should be advised that he might be tempted later in life to make love to his father's wife; but that he should resist the temptation if he wants to live long. In all cases however, he should be advised to make sacrifice.

Chapter 21

OGBE - ATE

Ogbe-si-lekun-ote			
OGBE			IRETE

Ogbe-Ate was a famous Awo in heaven where he was called Abakete kete. The most important work he did in heaven was that of healing the divinity of prosperity, (Ola-Aje in Yoruba or Uwa in Bini). Ola-aje had many enemies who used to turn into mice at night to bite him in his sleep. All the knowledgeable Awos in heaven had tried unsuccessfully to heal him, but the more they tried the more desperately ill he became. Ola-aje had three rooms which had their doors locked. The first of the rooms contained the messenger of Death, who had a cudjel in his hand for beating to death anyone who dared to enter it. The second door contained Ogogohiahia, an agent of the divinity of witchcraft who was capable of swallowing up anyone who dared to enter the room. The third room contained all the fits of prosperity capable of enriching anyone who succeeded in entering.

All the Awos who tried to cure Ola-aje were told to knock on the door of any of the three rooms for compensation. Almost invariably, all the awos knocked at the wrong doors never to re-emerge after being let into the room. When there were no other Awos left, it was the turn of Abakete Kete, oruko Ogbe-ate. Ola-Aje sent errands to inform him that the divinity of prosperity was critically ill and that he was required to come and cure him. As soon as he got the message, he invited his two favourite surrogates Uroke Mi Lawo Ligonrin and Oroke mi lawo Leturuye to make divination for him. They sounded Ifa and Ogbe-Ate came out. He was advised to make sacrifice with a he-goat to Esu and to fetch a pigeon, rat, fish, head of cat, and 50k worth of soap to make a special medicinal preparation for the trip. The sacrifice was made and the appropriate leaves were fetched for preparing a special bathing soap.

They told their boss that what was troubling Ola-aje was present with him in his own house and that if he bathed with the special soap, he would see the identity and machinations of the culprits in his dream. Armed with the special soap, Abakete kete left to answer the invitation of Ola-aje. On getting there, he saw that his host was actually very ill. He used the soap to bath him after which he gave him a specially prepared white cloth to cover up himself when he went to sleep in the night.

Later that night, Ola-aje had a dream in which he saw that one of his wives transfigured into a mouse and came into his room. Instantly, a cat emerged from the soap ditch prepared by Abakete kete, chased the rat and killed it. Not long afterwards, his favourite servant turned into another giant rat and entered the room. The cat took position and caught the second rat. One after the other, each of the six members of his household who used to transfigure into mice to bite him were eliminated by the cat. Ola-aje then slept peacefully for the rest of the night.

The following morning, he thanked the Awo for helping to cure him of his illness. As they were rejoicing over the situation, cries came from the direction of his harem that five of his wives and his favourite servant did not wake up from their sleep. Ola-aje and the Awo were the only two persons who knew what caused the mysterious death of the six conspirators, in their sleep. Their corpses were subsequently thrown away for burial. Within the next seven days Ola-aje became totally well, and the Awo Abaketete was still with him.

On the seventh day, Abaketete sought leave to return home. To express his gratitude, his host told him to open one of the three doors of his treasury and collect whatever he could find there. As he moved to open one of the doors, Esu transfigured into a young boy, bringing him water to drink. The boy warned him not to enter the first two rooms. He advised him to merely knock at the two doors and after hearing three gongs from within, he should only greet the occupants by telling them that he was passing by. The boy told him that the good things were in the third room. Thereafter the boy left.

Abaketete acted as he was advised by the boy. He knocked at the first two doors telling the occupants that he came to pay his respects to them. By the time he got to the third door, Aba-kete-kete was overwhelmed with indignation at the apparent ingratitude of Ola-aje. He thought to himself that if Esu had not come to his rescue, he might have knocked at any of the first two doors and probably lost his life to the man-eating occupants. He wondered if that was a befitting gratitude to a benefactor who had just saved his life. Instead of opening the door to the third room, he decided to cause havoc in heaven, to give God the chance of intervening to determine the good or bad faith of Ola-aje. He began to sing an incantational song as follows:

Ere da saka,
Lu bi ollsaka.
Ere fo bojo,
Erate kporokporo.

As he was singing the song, a child who had been waiting to come to life through Aba-kete-kete spoke from the third room: emlala kpeji. The Awo then called at Ala-kp-ejio, and the child answered; eml omo re ni o. Aba-kete-kete then changed the tune of his song and spoke to the child as follows:

Maafu oko 'du kpa asan lo rini,
maafu obo gi do ri yon,
maafu ni yan digi,
owo lonje loni.

Thereafter, he knocked at the third door and a voice asked him to open. As soon as he opened the door a child ran to embrace him with a crown in hand. The child gave him the crown and told him to put it on his head. When Ola-aje saw the turn of events, he acknowledged the prowess of Abaketete for opening the right door. However, as soon as Abaketete was inside the room, Ola-aje conjured the door to lock against him. The door locked instantly, effectively jailing him in the room. After spending three days in the room, his guardian angel spoke to him advising him to persevere because perseverance begets prosperity.

Meanwhile, his host decided to give him the final trial. He told Aba-kete-kete behind the door that he would be released to return home with all the fortunes in the room if he could produce a ram, a duck, and a pigeon. Almost instantaneously, Esu tied the bones of ram, duck and pigeon to a rope, blew into the wall and it opened to pass the rope. As soon as the bones entered the room, they transfigured into full blown live ram, duck and pigeon. After that miracle,

Aba-kete-kete replied Ola-aje that if he opened the door, he would produce the three lives-stock without any difficulties. His host opened the door, and took the rope to pull out the three live-stock. Thereafter, Aba-kete-kete was released to go with all the fortunes in the room. The small child however told him that he would join him as soon as he got home.

He got home amidst rejoicing and jubilation. His wife became pregnant the following month and subsequently gave birth to a male child who was named Ala-kpeji and Adeyemi.

When this Odu comes out at Ugboḍ J, the person should be told to serve the new Ifa almost immediately with a ram, a duck, and a pigeon and to serve Esu without any delay with a he-goat. He should be fore-warned that soon after preparing the Ifa, an event would develop which could lead to his arrest and detention. He would however be released if the sacrifices were made in advance, and the incident would mark the beginning of his prosperity. He will have a male child after the completion of the Ifa initiation ceremony who shall be called Adeyemi or Alakpeji. At ordinary divination the person should be told to be careful in extending benevolence to people in order to avoid the risk of losing his life through the ingratitude of his beneficiaries.

He made divination for Olokun - The water divinity

When Olokun was coming to the world, he went to Ogbe-Ate for divination and he was advised to make sacrifice with plenty of snails, cowries and white chalk, and to serve Esu with a cat. He was told that he would have many children while on earth, but he was to make the sacrifice to avoid losing them to the treachery of the world. He made the sacrifice, but forgot to serve Esu. When the water divinity got to the world, he had many children. Esu invited human beings to feed on his children who are the fishes of the sea. When he saw that he was losing his children to mankind and birds, he went for divination. He was told that he failed to make sacrifice to Esu before he left heaven. He was told to serve Esu with a he-goat and a cat and to add okro to the sacrifice.

Thereafter, Esu went and rubbed the bodies of his children with the slimy liquid of okro which made it difficult for anyone to capture them with bare hands. That is why the body of the fish has become too slippery to be touched live with ordinary hands. The children were also warned never to leave their father's house to avoid falling victim to their father's many enemies. That is why fishes do not normally come out from the water, since no animals are able to catch them with bare hands in their father's house. When Ogbe-Ate comes out at Ugboḍ, the person should make similar sacrifice to avoid losing his children to the wickedness of mankind.

Ogbe-Ate leaves for the World

When he finally decided to come to the world, he went to three Awos for divination. They were called:

Ewure kiljole, kee muobe jeun,

Odologbo ee mon ron keefa koko,

Obin-rin monron monron ke wole oko.

They told him to make sacrifice so that the prosperity he acquired in heaven might accompany him to the world. He was to serve his guardian angel with 50k worth of fish, give pigeon to the water divinity and a he-goat to Esu. He performed the other sacrifices but forgot to serve Esu. Five days later, as he split kolanut to serve his Ifa, he demanded another roll of fish. He also served Ifa with the fish. After another five days, Ifa demanded yet another roll of fish. This time,

he refused to buy the fish but decided to go to the river to fish for it. He left for the river with his divination bag and wand (Uranke and Akpominijekun).

On getting to the river, he put down his bag, and sub-merged his uranke into the water. Almost immediately, several fishes got glued onto the wand which he brought to the surface, and into his bag. He dipped it into the water a second and more fishes got glued to it. As he pulled the fishes out of the water, Esu transfigured into a young police guard who emerged from the water. The police guard greeted him but queried what he was doing by the water? He explained that he came to fish in the water. The young man accused him of stealing because the water did not belong to him. As he was arguing that the water belonged to no one, the police guard slapped him, after identifying himself as a soldier of the Armed Forces of the water divinity and that he was charged with the responsibility of protecting the water against unauthorised intruders. The soldier then arrested him, with his fish as exhibit, and marched him to the Commander-in-chief of Olokun's Armed Forces.

After being arraigned before the Commander, he was formally charged with stealing, bound in chains, and thrown into solitary confinement. The following day, the wife of the Commander was cleaning the house when she came to the cell in which Ogbe-Ate was detained. When she greeted him, he responded by telling the woman that the husband was preparing to go to war but that he should perform some sacrifice in order to obviate the risk of disappointment after his victory at the war front. He advised the woman to tell her husband to serve Esu with a he-goat, before leaving for the war. The woman instantly ran to the husband to report what the captive had told her. The Commander refused to listen to the advice of an accused prisoner and boasted that he would go and return safely from the war, vowing to tread on the prisoner's blood before re-entering his house from the war-front.

Not long afterwards, the water divinity issued marching orders to the Commander to proceed to fight a menacing enemy who had rebelled against his authority. Almost immediately, the Commander mobilised his Army, got dressed in battle formation and marched out into war. Before leaving however, he went to meet Ogbe-ate in his captivity and told him that he was going to war, but would return to tread on his blood before entering his house. As he left Ogbe-Ate, the prisoner began to sing:-

Tawo laba tawo lase,

Godo godo godo tawo laba tawo lase

It meant that the prophesy of the Ifa Priest would certainly manifest.

The Commander made a quick job of his military encounter and he was victorious over the enemies. He returned home with tremendous loots and thousands of war captives. He marched straight to the Palace of Olokun and reported his victory. After he had finished the account of his victory, Esu went quickly to work and influenced the Chief Councillor of Olokun to insist that it was not enough for the General to narrate his victory by words of mouth. The Councillor suggested that the General should demonstrate for the benefit of those who did not accompany him to battle, how he used his weapon on the enemies. The General then asked his band to play the signature tune of his traditional war dance. As soon as the drumming and singing moved from crescendo to allegro, he became ecstatic as if possessed. The General began to dance and to demonstrate how he used his sword in battle. The entertainment value of his demonstration wrapped the attention of spectators and amidst roaring applause, he threw up his sword several times. On one occasion Olokun got up to embrace him and spray him with gifts. While Olokun was dancing with

him, he again threw up his sword and the sharp end of the blade peared the skull of Olokun and he swooned into a coma. The dancing and singing ended abruptly. Meanwhile, the -Esu-influenced Councillor ordered that the General should at once be put in chains and detained. He was formally accused of trying to assassinate his lord and master.

Before the anti-climax, the General's wife had reasoned with Ogbe-Ate who was still in detention, that if he was psychic enough to prophesy for others, why could he not save himself. In other words, "physician heal thyself". He however appealed to the General's wife to send a message to his own household instructing them to offer a he-goat to Esu. It was quickly done.

That sacrifice had been made before the accidental injury of Olokun occurred. At that point, Osonyin (Osun in Bini) the medicine divinity was invited to heal Olokun. As soon as Osonyin came to the scene, he told the General that the reason he suffered his fate was because he had broken the law of heaven by detaining an Awo, which it is forbidden to do. Osonyin proclaimed that the Awo should at once be released from detention because he was the only one capable of saving the life of Olokun.

The General admitted that he indeed had an Awo in chains and that the prisoner actually predicted what had just happened but that he stubbornly refused to listen to him, let alone, perform the sacrifice he advised. When errand-men were sent to release Ogbe-ate from detention, he refused to be released from bondage unceremoniously. To be released, he insisted that it required two men, two women, two goats and two he-goats to appease him, lest there would be chaos in heaven. The atonements were produced without delay from the palace of Olokun. As soon as he was released, he offered one of the he-goats to Esu, there and then. At this point, it is relevant to emphasise that Esu can be served anywhere by putting down sticks with hooks, and invoking him to accept the sacrificial offering.

On getting to Olokun's palace, he brought out a leaf, squeezed it, and applied it to the injury with the relevant incantation for stopping the flow of blood. He also applied the liquid to Olokun's eyes hitting Olokun with his divination wand (Uranke). The bleeding stopped and Olokun regained consciousness, opened his eyes and got up. In appreciation of the miraculous feat performed by Ogbe-Ate, Olokun asked him to name his compensation. At that point, the -Esu-influenced-Councillor, went to Ogbe-Ate and advised him to demand for the General and all his belongings. Ogbe-Ate named his compensations accordingly and Olokun accepted it, after adding many other gifts. He then tied up the General and went home with all his personal effects and followers.

On getting home, his followers insisted that the General should be offered as sacrifice to his guardian angel for the fate he metted out to him. He invited his three Awos and he insisted that in accordance with the tradition and philosophy of Ifism; "to err is human and to forgive is divine." He then brought out one of the goats given to him by Olokun, touched the head of the General with the head of the goat and released him to return to his house. As the goat was being slaughtered on the shrine of Orunmila, the Awos sang:

Ibara ekpa eje si senren,
Orunmila mo ssegun ota oo,
Ibara kpa ma kpijoko,
Ibara kpa eje sisenren.
Orunmila mo reyin odi
Ibara kpa eje sisenren
Ibara kpa awo dodoro
Ibara akpa eje sisenren.

When this Odu comes out at divination, the person should be told to beware of contemptuous behaviour and to offer a he-goat to Esu to avoid the risk of fortuitous arrest and imprisonment.

Ogbe-Ate's experience in the world

Just before leaving for the world, Ogbe-Ate went to a diviner called Okon Jajaja, eji ja a ja. The diviner told him that he had no sacrifice to make, having already made adequate sacrifices and arrangements for his trip to earth. The Awo told him that when he got to wherever he was going, he would be made a King because of the crown he had already won during his trials and tribulations. He travelled with his wife on the trip to the earth. When they got to river Ominokpo, that is the river separating heaven from earth, they fell into the water and got drowned.

As soon as they fell to the depth of the river, all the fishes rejoiced and thanked God for sending them a King at last. He too, was happy to be in their midst. As they were going to put a crown on his head, he stopped to ask them the name of the place and they replied that it was the land of fishes. He replied that since he used to serve his Ifa with fishes, he could not condescend to become the King of fishes. He declined to be crowned and preferred to return to heaven.

On getting back to heaven, he decided to go to another diviner called Okan. The diviner told him that he had no sacrifice to make because Kingship was awaiting him on earth, and that if he went to the world on that occasion, he would not have cause to return to heaven prematurely. He then left for earth again with his wife. This time, he landed in the land of rats, and they rejoiced that God had sent them a King at last. As he was about to be crowned, he asked for the name of the place and they replied that it was the land of mice. Once again, he refused to be crowned on the ground that since he used to serve his Ifa with rats, he could not become their King. He again returned to heaven and went to yet a third diviner, called Oke ranyin eji ranyin. Once again, the diviner told him to return to earth because he had no sacrifice to make and that he would be made King of all and sundry.

He landed in the land of animals and when they were about to crown him, they told him that it was forbidden in the town called Ilu-eron for the inhabitants to wash their hands before eating. He refused to settle down in a land where people ate without washing and bathing. For the third time, he returned to heaven where he met a diviner called Koko baba who advised him to serve his head with five different materials, and his Ifa with five different materials. The diviner advised that as soon as he got to his destination, he should refuse to speak for the first five days. Thereafter, he would be served by all the inhabitants of the place.

He finally emerged with his wife, in the land called Ibere-aiye (Eziagbon in Bini). His wife travelled from heaven with a mat. He too had one medicinal preparation with which he came to Ibere-Aiye or Eziagbon. He did not speak to anyone for the first five days. His medicinal preparation was called Agbede-gbeyo (Azeka-Zedu in Bini) which taught him the language during his first five days in the place. The charm also briefed him on what was happening in the place. The medicine told him that the son of the King was ill and that everybody was running helter-skelter to save his life, and that he should only go to the palace after five days of his arrival.

On the sixth day, he underwent an all-day fasting and waited until evening before going to the palace. He went with the wife's mat. On getting to the palace, he spread out the mat and stood on it outside the palace gate. His

presence was soon noticed. When the Oba asked him who he was, he replied that he was a disciple of Orunmila from heaven, otherwise an Ifa Priest. The King invited him to enter the palace. As soon as he entered the palace however, the traditional witch doctors in the palace drove him out. He then went outside to stand on the wife's mat. When the King later asked why he was standing outside, he replied that he was precluded by the witch doctors from performing divination. At that point, the King told him to sit down to divine for him. He brought out his Ikin for special divination after which he told the King that he had a sick child who would soon be well if he did whatever he asked him to do. He added that if the King followed his advice, and the child did not become well, he the (Awo) should be executed. The King gave him clearance to make his revelations and prescriptions.

He started by asking for whoever was called Gboiojo Aja logo Ibini among the King's witch doctors to identify himself. The man got up and Ogbe-Ate told the King to offer him as sacrifice immediately, at the shrine of the divinity at the back of the palace.

Next, he asked for the person called Otata Awo aba Ioran, who identified himself and was executed in front of the palace. Finally he asked for the person called Oja mande firi sebo, who also identified himself, after which he was offered to the elders of the night. The King himself was to carry the last sacrifice to Awon Iya mi Osoronga, that is the king of the night. Ogbe-Ate then proclaimed that by the time the King was returning from offering the last sacrifice at the road junction, if his sick son did not get up to embrace him, he (the Awo) should himself be instantly executed. All the sacrifices were accordingly performed. As the King was returning to the palace, his sick son who had been unconscious for over five days, was waiting by the door to receive his father. When the prince embraced the King, the latter exclaimed that Orunmila was indeed a divinity. The King immediately tried to persuade Ogbe-Ate to stay permanently in Ibere-aiye (Eziagbon).

It will be recalled however, that the three executed men, were the leaders of the witch doctors in the palace. Ogbe-Ate later disclosed privately to the King that the three men were descendants of three of the four most ruthless and wicked witches who escaped from heaven to come and plunder the world, and that prosperity and longevity would have a hard time to thrive wherever they lived. He however lamented that to be able to eliminate their evil hands from the face of the earth, it would have been necessary to destroy their entire kindred. Since that was not possible, a special sacrifice would be necessary to neutralise their destructive tendencies and to correct the damage already done by them. We shall see later from Eturukpon-Oyeku that the sacrifice which was to be made by every street, town, village and hamlet throughout the kingdom of Ibere-aiye (Eziagbon) was never made. In the hope of persuading Ogbe-Ate to replace the dead witch doctors as the head of the Royal Diviners in the palace, he was given a lodging within the palace. Ogbe-Ate soon discovered the problems he had, that of not being able to help the needy outside the walls of the palace. Traditionally, it was forbidden for any citizen of Ibere-aiye (Eziagbon) to seek divinational assistance from the royal diviner inside the palace. It was equally forbidden for royal diviners and physicians to perform their act for others outside the palace. Ogbe-Ate eventually told the King that he could not operate in an environment in which he would only see people suffering without being able to assist them, when in all conscience, he knew he could help them.

Thereafter the King began to contrive how to deal with Ogbe-Ate, at least, to stop him from being able to help others. Knowing what the King was contemplating

ing, Ogbe-Ate forewarned him not to bother hatching any negative plans, because doing so, would only create catastrophe in his kingdom.

At that point, the King asked Ogbe-Ate what he wanted for compensations. When he said he wanted nothing, the King offered to divide the land of Ibero-aiye (Eziagbon) into two halves and to surrender one half for him to administer. He replied that he did not come from heaven to acquire landed properties on earth or to amass material wealth. He came for the sole purpose of bringing succour to suffering humanity, and all he demanded was freedom to do it. The King then allowed Ogbe-Ate to leave the palace for an abode in the town. As he was leaving, he told the King that the only reverence he would pay to Orunmila, was that wherever he saw the shrine of Orunmila, he should remove his crown and touch the ground with his fore-head as a mark of respect to him. The King agreed, but little did he know how difficult it was going to be in practice. Ogbe-Ate subsequently left the palace and took up residence in the town where he began to make divination for the common citizenry.

From that day and to this day, wherever the Oba sees Orunmila he would kneel down, remove his crown or cap and touch the ground with his fore-head to pay respects to the wisdom divinity. This obligation explains why the Oba of Benin scarcely visits any of his subjects because, if he visits any house, and finds the shrine of Orunmila there, he is required to touch the ground with his head. That is the tradition to this day.

It was Ogbe-Ate who spread the worship of Orunmila throughout the Benin kingdom. It will be recalled that after the miraculous feat he performed on his first arrival to Eziagbon, the King slaughtered a cow, a goat, and several chickens to prepare a feast of reception for him. To show his appreciation, he proclaimed that on account of the befitting reception given to him by Eziagbon, aristocracy and nobility would never leave the place. He also proclaimed that from then on, all important occasions would be marked by the slaughtering of cows, goats and fowls throughout the kingdom which accounts for why the Binis mark all occasions of birth, merriment, coronations, chieftaincy and death by the slaughtering of these animals.

However he was soon to observe that the people of Eziagbon, relate more warmly to visitors than to their kiths and kins. He was determined to find out why the people did not love one another. At divination, he recommended two sacrifices to be made; one by the populace and the other by the King himself. He told the King, that three of the four most wicked witches created by God came to live in Eziagbon as the original children of the first human beings to exist there. Their parents were called Tebite, the husband and Teghori his wife. The three witches were the ones who sowed the seeds of wickedness on earth. They destroyed and extinguished the flower of prosperity and sowed the seeds of fratricidal animosity and hatred among the people. He therefore advised the King of Eziagbon to fetch a live pig from the forest for the sacrifice required to abate the anomaly. He also asked the King to make a proclamation enjoining every street, village, hamlet and settlement throughout the kingdom to contribute money for each community to buy a he-goat to serve Esu who alone could extinguish the flame of hatred, wickedness, mutual destruction, and all covert and overt fratricidal schisms from Eziagbon.

A live pig was quickly procured from the forest and tied to the tree of life (Igi Akoko or Ikhinmwini). In the night, the rain fell heavily and the pig dug the grounds around the tree and buried itself in the waterlogged pit. When the King woke up in the morning to verify how the pig had fared overnight, he discovered that it was no where to be found. He looked closely into the flooded pit excavated by

the pig and found it sleeping cosily inside it. Upon closer examination, he saw three pots slightly exposed inside the pit. The King then invited the pages of the royal household to dig out the pots. When they were brought to the surface, the King discovered that the pots contained beads, cowries, (money) brass ornamentations and corals. The finds gave the King so much satisfaction, that he quickly gave orders for the pig to be cut loose and set free to return to the forest, having apparently accomplished the task for which it was required. The treasures were quickly kept in the royal treasury of the palace.

Later that morning, Ogbe-Ate came with the appropriate leaves to prepare the requisite sacrifice. When he asked for the pig, the King told him why he had liberated it to return to its forest habitat. Ogbe-Ate was visibly annoyed and lamented that far from treasuring the excavated finds in the palace, what he intended to do with them was to add the blood and meat of the pig and to distribute them to the seven main entrances to the kingdom as a means of bringing back from the elders of the Night, the fortunes which they had buried beneath the earth since the beginning of human habitation in Ibere-Aye (Eziagbon). That would have spread infinite wealth to King and commoners throughout the kingdom from generation to generation. The King refused to rescind his action but Ogbe-Ate warned him that the significance of his action, was that, only people who amassed their wealth outside the kingdom would prosper, but that if they made the mistake of bringing their wealth home, they would run into all kinds of difficulties in the hands of the remaining descendants of the three deadly witches who corked up the prosperity of Eziagbon since the beginning of time. He added that visitors to Eziagbon would prosper and flourish without any let or hindrance to the astonishment of the indigenes, since they are not sons of the soil. The same indigenes would become morbidly envious if one of their own sons was seen to be on the threshold of prosperity.

On the other hand, since the King preferred to treasure the finds from the pit excavated by the pig within the walls of the palace, only those given beads by the King from the palace would flourish and live long in modest affluence. Thus, to live long in prosperity in Eziagbon, the person would have to be initiated into one or the other of the various cults of the King's palace.

He waited for another week for the citizens to make their own sacrifices to Esu, but on the fifth day, the feedback from the royal heralds who announced the proclamation for the sacrifice, returned with the sad news that not a single street, town, village, hamlet or settlement was able to muster the requisite unity to buy a single he-goat for the sacrifice. It was reported that only households, wealthy enough to afford it were able to make the sacrifice individually. As a result, Ogbe-Ate deplored that individual families would however have trickles of prosperity surviving from time to time although, they would forever be the targets of neighbouring detractors and haters of progress, and that a large proportion of the wealth with which they would have flourished would partly be used to save their lives from the evil machinations of their enemies. That is why the sacrifice of the he-goat to Esu was supposed to have been made jointly and not severally.

Two days later, Ogbe-Ate left Eziagbon unceremoniously, apparently in anger, without saying goodbye to anyone. He came to a place called Ilu-Omuo which he discovered to be the land inhabited by the last of the four heartless witches created by God.

When he arrived at Ilu-Omuo, they treated him rather shabbily by feasting him with a dog, which he forbade. He left the town three days later because he realised that only witches could live and thrive happily in the place. Before leaving, he proclaimed that all important occasions would have to be cel-

celebrated in the place by the slaughtering of dogs. That is why to this day in that area (in the Ondo State of Nigeria) the dog is a popular meat for making sacrifices.

He then left for Uhe (Now Ile-Ife) where he settled down for the rest of his life.

Ogbe-Ate's first work at Ife

This account illustrates that whatever one experienced in heaven, is invariably repeated on earth, as we shall see from the divination that Ogbe-Ate made for Akogun Oduru or the War Lord of Ife when he was going to war. He advised Akogun Oduru to offer a he-goat to Esu so that his success at the war-front will endure throughout the end of the war. The war-lord told him that victory had never eluded him in any war even without any sacrifices. He refused to make the sacrifice and left for the battle front.

In battle, he lost no time in achieving victory. He returned with thousands of war prisoners, and the severed head of the King of the vanquished town. At a point in the village of Okpoti where he stopped to rest, he sent two messengers to inform Ogbe-Ate that he had already succeeded in the war without the sacrifice prescribed at his misleading divination. Ogbe-Ate told the two errand-men that he had no cause to change his sooth because not being home yet, Akogun Oduru had not seen the end of the war.

Just before arriving at Ife and as he arranged for his triumphal procession into the town, Akogun Oduru sent another messenger to Ogbe-Ate to arrange to receive him on getting home. The Awo sent an equally sarcastic reply that it was still too early for the war-lord to chant victory songs because he had only seen the front and not the back of the war. When the military procession entered the town with victory songs, the war-lord sent a final message to Ogbe-Ate to be prepared to meet him when he was returning from the King's palace. Ogbe-Ate insisted that the end of the war was yet to come and that it would not augur well for him.

When the war-lord and his troops arrived at the courtyard of the King's palace, he began to dance. As he was reporting the success of his mission, he danced to the beating of the drum. As he threw up his sword, it deflected and landed on the King's head. The King fell down and collapsed in a pool of blood. The war-lord was immediately apprehended and put in detention awaiting trial and execution for his callousness. The war-lord however appealed that before his trial, he owed one sacrifice which he must make before being executed. He was released temporarily to go and perform the sacrifice in Orunmila's house. When he got to Ogbe-Ate he apologised for his stubbornness and begged to be allowed to do the sacrifice. Ogbe-Ate accepted his apology but insisted that having delayed the sacrifice for so long, Esu had doubled it. He quickly produced two he-goats which were used to serve Esu. After the sacrifice, Ogbe-Ate gave him the Iyerosun (divine powder) of the sacrifice for him to apply on the King's injury.

As soon as the powder was applied to bleeding wound, it dried up and the King got up, apparently recovered. The King then proclaimed that a loyal subject who had recorded several victories for the Kingdom in the past could not be executed on account of one fortuitous error. The war-lord was then released to lead all the Chiefs and elders in a victory procession round the town after being conferred with the title of the Baalogun of Ife. Subsequently, he returned to Ogbe-Ate to compensate him with ten war prisoners, ten goats and then bags of money.

Ogbe-Ate made divination for Ogberere and the Olowu of Owu

While at Ife, his proficiency and popularity attracted several people to learn the Ifa art from him. After tutoring them for several years, some of them had become adepts. When the Olowu of Owu then sent for him to come and divine for him, he sent Ogberere, one of his most efficient surrogates because he was too busy with the Olofen of Ife to undertake the trip himself. Before going however, Ogbe-Ate made divination for the trip and told Ogberere to go with a pigeon with which he would serve the head of the Olowu of Owu and that the Olowu would also serve his, (Ogberere's) head with another pigeon, which ceremony would mark the beginning of prosperity for him and the realisation of the wishes of the Olowu.

At the same time, Olowu's diviners had told him that a visiting Awo would come to his palace with a pigeon with which to serve his (Olowu's) head. He was advised to have no qualms about the sacrifice. In return he was also advised to serve the Awo's head with a pigeon. He arranged for a pigeon to be made available in anticipation of the arrival of the visiting Awo.

Meanwhile, Ogberere landed at Owu and made straight for Olowu's palace. He was given a room to lodge in the place. After resting for a while, went with his pigeon and two kolanuts to Olowu's apartment, telling him that he had to come in lieu of Ogbe-Ate who was engaged in some ceremonies at the palace of the Olofen. He told the King however that his pre-journey divination advised him to come with a pigeon to serve the head of the Olowu, in which suggestion, the King readily acquiesced. In reply the King also told him, that he too was advised to serve with a pigeon, the head of the Ifa Priest who was coming from afar to visit him, and that he was prepared for the ceremonies.

The King asked him what his problems were and he replied that it was poverty. He too asked the King what was wrong with his wives and he replied that it was the problem of childlessness. He assured the King that his wives would have children. After serving the King's head, he used the blood and the gizzard of the pigeon to prepare medicines for the wives. At the beginning of the following month, practically all the King's wives became pregnant. Thereafter, the King opened the room in his treasury and asked Ogberere to collect all the valuables and treasures he found in it. Ogberere was so overwhelmed with the compensation that he requested for the King's permission to settle down for the rest of his life in Owu. His request was instantly granted. The King ordered his people to build a house very quickly for him by communal labour. He was later conferred with the title of the royal diviner. The two of them (King and Diviner) lived to be so old that they had no contemporaries anywhere at the time they joined their ancestors.

Before their demise, they asked each other the mode of journey preferable for their return to heaven, since death had refused to invite them. King Olowu subsequently preferred to live forever by transfiguring himself into the rock now called Oke Olumo (originally called Oke Olowu) but subsequently corrupted to Olumo through the ages. It situates at Abeokuta, which later got its name from the rock itself. On his part, Ogberere also choose to live forever by transfiguring himself into a river now called river Ogberere having its source within the precincts of Abeokuta. That was the origin of the song chanted as follows:

Ogberere lo'nshere awo Olowu,
Olowu gbo gbo gbo Odofa,
Ogberere go gbo gbo ondomi,
Ogberere o awo Olowu
Ogberere do do awo ree lee.

Interpretation

Ogbere the Ifa Priest,
Divined for Olowu of Owu,
And made sacrifice for him,
To live to be so old that,
He turned into a rock,
That lived forever
Whilst Ogbere also lived so long,
To become an everlasting river.
Behold Ogbere the proficient Priest,
Whose name lives forever.

When this Odu therefore comes out at divination, the person should be told that an Ifa Priest would visit him. He should serve the head of the Priest with a Pigeon and 2 kolanuts, while at the same time, the Ifa should serve his head with the same materials, so that their mutual handicaps may be overcome. When it comes out at Ugboodu, the ceremony should be performed between the initiate and his Ifa PATRON. In each case, they will live so long in prosperity that their names will live forever.

Orunmila's marriage to Ajiwenu

Adin obere munkan - eesun,
won waa kiri.
Odifa fun Orunmila,
Niijo toun fi Ajiwenu shaya.

That is the name of the Awo who made divination for Orunmila when he wanted to carry a girl called Ajiwenu. She had been approached previously by several admirers who proposed to her. She refused to marry any of them. Orunmila took it up as a challenge and so embarked on divination on what to do to win her hands in marriage. He was told to make sacrifice which he did and when he eventually visited her, he greeted her with the following poem:

Omo eja wa fun eja,
Omo eku wa fun eku,
Omo eye was fun eye,
Omo ejo wa fun ejo,
Omo eran was fun eran.
Beni, Okunrin wa fun Obirin.
Eyi ti nse ofin ile aye,
Ti mo si pa ni ase wipe Iwo,
Ajiwenu yoo wa fun emi gege bi iyawo.

Meaning

Fishes marry fishes,
Rats marry rats,
Birds marry birds,
Reptiles marry reptiles,
Goats marry goats,
And men marry women.
Hence, that is the law of nature,
Under which I now command you,
Ajiwenu to become my wife.

She quickly embraced Orunmila and agreed to become his wife. When this Odu comes out therefore for a man, who is wooing a stubborn woman, he should perform the sacrifice and use this special incantation to request for her hands in marriage.

He made divination for the masquerade (Egun)

When Egun was coming from heaven, he had no food to eat. He went to a town called Egbo-ona where there was a tree of life (Igi Akoko or Ikhinmwiri). At the road junction immediately before the town, he held on to the tree and shouted Oohoooo, Oohoooo, Oohoooo. When his shouting was over-heard in the town, the people quickly reported to the Oba, that one mysterious man was shouting at the entrance to the town. As the shouting became persistent, the Oba of Egbo-Ona decided to go and verify for himself. When they met him, they saw that he wore no dress except for a net-mast over his face. The Oba asked him what the matter was and he replied that the Oba should not allow anyone to see him and that he was only searching for his brother Oro. He added that he was coming from heaven and that when his brother Oro was travelling to earth, he borrowed from him his only garment. His brother had not returned his garment to him since then.

The Oba replied that no one by the name of Oro had been to his town. For want of a name to call him, the Oba called him Ara Orun (The man from heaven), beseeching him to help him to make his town more prosperous and populous. Egun replied, that he should fetch eko, akara and oshosho igbado (cooked corn) and palmwine which were quickly produced. After eating to his heart's content, he promised to come back after three years, but that before then there would be prosperity and population increase in the town.

Within three months of his leaving the town however, there was general epidemic which led to the deaths of both old and young. On the third anniversary of his visit he returned to the same spot, and once again shouted - Oohoooo several times. The Oba went again to him and explained that instead of prospering and increasing in numbers, the town had been suffering from epidemics, famine and desolation. He again asked for the same kind of food and they were produced. After eating, he promised once again to be back after three years and that things would improve before then. Before he returned on the third occasion, the town had not only further degenerated and depopulated but the Oba also died.

At the end of three years, he came to the same spot and shouted again. This time around, the chiefs and elders decided that this agent of death and destruction had to be killed, vowing never to allow him to return alive. All the able-bodied men of the town, went to him with cudgels in hand and they all charged to lynch him to death. When he discovered the bellicose mood of the people, he conjured all of them to keep their hands up with the cudgels never to come down again "because when the praying-mantis raises up its hands to fight, it does not bring them down. All their hands with cudgels in them were transfixed in the air. He then asked them what the matter was and they told him the misfortune that had be-fallen their town as a result of his last two visits. They disclosed that they had vowed never to allow him leave the town alive.

He laughed hilariously after which he asked them whether it was possible for anyone to kill air or water. He then revealed that there were three factors responsible for the problems of the town. they had expelled three men from the town and that unless they were brought back, the town would never again have any peace and prosperity. Asked for the names of these men, he replied that they were (Otin, Oguro and Oju). He further explained that:

OTIN had gone to Ilari

OGURO had gone to Ilode; and

OJU had gone to Ijarere.

He advised them to return the men to the town without any further delay. Thereafter, he conjured their hands to come down.

When the people got back to the town, they quickly went to consult Orunmila for divination and Ogbe-Ate came out. Orunmila told them to fetch:

Otin from Ilari - the land of Sankpana;

Oguro from Ilode - the home of Ogun and;

Oju from Ijarere - the land of the bees.

These three places incidentally were regarded as NO-GO areas on which lay mortals dared not set their feet. Orunmila however advised them to make sacrifice with a he-goat, a she-goat, a pigeon and a piece of white cloth. The materials were quickly produced and the sacrifices were made.

Thereafter, Orunmila invited his own wife (Akpetebi) and asked her to go with Iyerosun on her palm to Ilari to meet a woman called Keke, who was the power-base of Sankpana. On getting to the town, she was to blow the Iyerosun into the open air, after which, whatever she asked would be granted. Akpetebi was to ask Keke to leave for the town of Egboona where she was being invited to become the Oba of the town. She should then ask for the home of Otin and invite him to return home. Normally, Sankpana would not have allowed Otin to leave Ilari as long as Keke was in the town. Akpetebi did as she was told, and accordingly, cajoled Keke to leave the town of Ilari for Egbo-ona. As soon as she left, Akpetebi made for the house of Otin and asked him to leave at once for Egbo-ona. Otin replied that having been driven out of the town on his feet, he would not again walk back to it on his feet, unless he was carried on the armpit. Akpetebi then carried him on her armpit and returned home with him to Egbo-ona.

On getting home, Orunmila gave another Iyerosun to Akpetebi and sent her to Ilode to invite Oguro to return home from the land of Ogun. She was told to blow the Iyerosun into the town which would make Ogun to fall asleep. That would clear the way for her to establish contact with Oguro. She followed her husband's instructions accordingly. When Akpetebi eventually met him, Oguro insisted that he would only return home on some one's head. Akpetebi got one of her followers to carry Oguro home on his head.

Finally, she performed the same feat at Ijarere, the land of the Bees where the Iyerosun hypnotized all the inhabitants to fall asleep as she was procuring the return of Oju from Ijarere, to Egbo-ona. Oju however insisted that he would only return home by being carried with the hand.

That explains why; bottles of alcoholic drinks are traditionally carried on the armpit; gourds of palmwine are carried on the head; and calabashes of Oju are carried home with the hand.

Otin was alcoholic wines

Oguro was ordinary wine tapped from palm trees in the swamp

Oju ordinary wine tapped from felled palm trees.

They had all been banned from entering Egbo-ona, when their consumption was prohibited by royal proclamation. That was the beginning of the town's problems.

After the sacrifices, peace, tranquility and prosperity returned to the town of Egbo-ona.

When this Odu comes out at divination for people, they should be advised to make sacrifice so that their inhabitants who were in exile could return with prosperity to the town. If it comes out for an individual, he should be advised to serve his head and his father, if late, or to present a hat and other gifts including hot drink, to his father if still alive.

When it comes out at Ugboodu, the person should be advised not to present any of his used clothes to anybody and that he should not marry a fair complexioned woman.

Chapter 22

OGBE - EKA

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Ogbe-Eka made divination for several of the birds kindred while in heaven.

He made Divination for Ugun, Akala, Asa and Awodi

The titles of Oloori and Jogboloro fell vacant in heaven and only the elderly birds were qualified for the contest. Ugun, the vulture and Asa the hawk, contested for the title of Oloori, while Akala and Awodi were vying for the title of Jogboloro. All four of them went to Orunmila for divination. He advised each of them to make sacrifice with a hen, on the condition that they should buy the fowl and not steal it.

Waking up in the morning, on the top of a tree, the hawk saw a fowl moving around a house in the town. He could not resist the temptation to go for his staple food. The hawk flew down and dived for the fowl. He decided to use it for his break-fast before proceeding to look for another hen for his sacrifice. As he took position to make for a second hen, a hunter saw him, took aim and shot him, dead. That was the end of the hawk's quest for the Oloori title.

On his part, the vulture collected all the money he had and bought a hen since he was not in a position to steal one. He was then given the title of Oloori. On the other hand, Akala was also killed by the hunter when he was trying to steal another hen. On his part, Awodi bought the hen for his sacrifice and was given the title of Jogboloro.

If this Odu comes out at divination as Uree, the person should be told that he is a thief, but that if he can refrain from stealing for the next few weeks and serve ifa with a hen, he will avoid the danger of being killed during a robbery. If it is Ayeo, he should be told that he is an incurable thief and that he will soon die in a robbery operation, unless he makes sacrifice.

He made divination for Udi (Uderu)

Udi is a huge carnivorous bird who feeds on all kinds of animals in the forest. He was a hunter. On one occasion, he went to Orunmila for divination for successful hunting. He was advised to serve Esu with a he-goat to avoid the danger of unconsummated fortune (Amubo or Osobo-noma - sunu). He made jest of Orunmila that the he-goat with which he was required to make sacrifice was as good as any animal he was likely to kill in the forest. He boasted however that no small-to-medium-sized animal in the forest had yet defied his hunting skill. He declined to make the sacrifice but proceeded all the same, for hunting.

When Esu stood at Orita Ijaloko early in the morning to ask for who was told to make sacrifice but refused, Ighoroko the bosom friend of Esu directed the search light on Udi. Esu then set out to punish Udi for failing to provide food for him for

the day. Esu went into the bush and transfigured himself into a giant tortoise called Aragba, which is capable of carrying a human being on its back. The tortoise introverted himself upside down, and was moving its four legs up in the air as if it was unable to move. Udi saw the tortoise and considering it an easy prey, went all out for it. Aragba opened its anus and Udi pushed its beak into it, while the latter instantly closed its anus. Udi's beak was effectively trapped while the tortoise stubbornly refused to open its anus. Udi began to groan and moan and he remained in that state of agony for the whole day. At night-fall, the tortoise opened its anus, and released Udi to stagger home hungry and dejected. He had effectively failed to catch any animal to eat for the whole day.

The following morning, he quickly went to beg Orunmila to make the sacrifice. In accordance with tradition, the sacrifice had doubled. He produced 2 he-goats and 2 kolanuts, and the sacrifice was made for him. Thereafter, he began to record successful hunting expeditions.

At divination, the person should be advised not to delay in making prescribed sacrifices in order to avoid obstacles.

He made divination for Ogun in heaven

When Ogun was leaving for earth, he went to Ogbe-Eka, who in heaven was called Ookale, Ookano, Ookara lule, Ookara lono. He advised Ogun to make sacrifice against the danger of catching a thief stronger than himself on earth. He was told to serve his guardian angel with a dog, cock, tortoise, snail, a gourd of palm wine and roasted yam and to give he-goat to Esu. He was to make the festival to his guardian angel for 14 days before leaving for the world. Relying on his physical strength as usual, Ogun refused to make any sacrifice. He then came to the world with the other divinities.

On getting to the world, Orisa-Nla was recognized as the leader of the divinities, being God's appointed representative on earth. The council of the earthly divinities was held in his house every five days. When they got to the earth, Ogun went again for divination and he was told to perform a fourteen day festival to his guardian angel. Once again, he declined on the ground that he had no time for sacrifices. Meanwhile, his kolanut tree bore fruits which were ripe for harvesting. Incidentally, his kolanut tree was the only one that yielded fruits at that time. He fenced the tree and encircled it with his professional gadgets.

Before the next meeting of the divine council, Orisa-Nla searched in vain for kolanuts with which to open the discussions. Left with no other option, he moved stealthily one night to Ogun's kola tree, to pluck a fruit. As he tried to remove one of the gadgets used by Ogun to protect the tree, the instrument injured Orisa-Nla's hand and the injury bled from the foot of the tree to his house, where he used a piece of cloth to bandage it.

The following morning, when Ogun went to check the tree, he discovered that one fruit had been plucked from it. When he looked closely round the foot of the tree, he saw blood stains which he decided to trail in order to catch the thief. He trailed the blood stains right up to Orisa-Nla's house and as if to confirm the charge, he found Orisa-Nla's hand bandaged. He then raised an alarm that he had caught the thief that robbed him. When asked who the robber was, he proclaimed that it was Orisa-Nla. Asked to confirm his allegation, he drew attention to the blood trail and the bandaged hand of Orisa-Nla. Thus, true to the warning he was given in heaven for which he refused to make sacrifice, Ogun had caught a thief mightier than himself. Meanwhile, the other divinities went into conference with Orisa-Nla to deliberate on how to checkmate the embarrassment caused by Ogun. They all resolved that if the head was

disgraced, it would affect the rest of the body. Since Orisa-Nla was their leader, any accusation levelled and successfully proven against him, would affect the corporate and individual imagery of all of them.

Orisa-Nla however confirmed that after searching in vain for kolanuts for libation at the next council meeting, he plucked the kolanut fruit from Ogun's kola tree and that it was one of the gadgets protecting the tree that injured his bandaged hand. After the admission he went for divination to Orunmila, who advised him to give one he-goat to Esu immediately and he did it.

After Esu had eaten his he-goat, he caused each and every divinity to injure the same part of their hands similar to Orisa-Nla's injury. Those cutting trees, sticks, food, clothes, grass etc, in the world, all began to injure their hands and to bandage them up as Orisa-Nla did his own. Esu also caused a heavy rain storm to wipe off all traces of the blood trail.

At the next council meeting, all the 200 divinities met again. Ogun was invited to confirm the accusation he had earlier preferred against Orisa-Nla, and he did so with brazen effrontery. He then formally accused Orisa-Nla of stealing. Since the penalty for proven theft was to return to heaven, Ogun was told to substantiate his allegation. Ogun explained that Orisa-Nla injured his hand during the robbery operation which was why he bandaged his hand. All the divinities looked at Orisa-Nla's bandaged hand and looked back at their own, only to discover that Ogun's flimsy allegation was based on a hand injury which had recently afflicted everybody. As if to belie Ogun's allegation, they all raised their hands adding that if the only proof he had was the injury to Orisa-Nla's hand, then far from being Orisa-Nla alone, they were all equally guilty of stealing. Knowing that he could no longer use the second circumstantial evidence of blood trail to substantiate his allegation because Esu had recently procured a heavy-down pour of rain to wipe off all traces of Orisa-Nla's blood on the trail, Ogun opened his eyes and mouth aghast not knowing what next to say.

After due consideration, the divine council decided that Ogun should be executed for slandering the good name of their leader. As he was being apprehended for execution, Orisa-Nla intervened and appealed that Ogun's life should be spared. His wish was granted. Orisa-Nla however ordered Ogun to move closer to him. He inserted his hands on the two shoulder blades of Ogun and removed two long objects from them. The practical effect of that operation was to destabilize the physical strength of Ogun and to render him less harmful. Thereafter, Orisa-Nla decreed that from then on, Ogun should forever become the slave to serve all the other divinities.

That is why to this day, Ogun serves all and sundry, mortals and deities alike, be it in the form of a machet, hoe, shovel, plough, bull-dozer, bicycles, motor vehicles, ships, aeroplanes, building materials, road construction materials, etc, etc without any appreciation or gratitude. That is the prize he had to pay for refusing to make sacrifice both in heaven and on earth.

At divination the person should be advised not to rely too heavily in his physical power and to have respect for superior authority to avoid the danger of not receiving any reward for his stewardship and benevolence.

How the divinities got their crowns

Before they left heaven, God assembled the divinities and gave them 16 crowns to share among themselves. Between themselves, they decided to share them in order of seniority. Before then, Orunmila had been told to give a he-goat to Esu; and he did. When the crowns were being shared, it did not get to the turn of Orunmila being a very junior divinity. At that time however, Ogun was away to war and Esu intervened that since it was forbidden to share benefits to

absentees who were away from home, the crown otherwise earmarked for Ogun should be given to Orunmila. Esu argued that as the wisdom divinity, Orunmila was capable of administering the affairs of the world much better than the bellicose and pugnacious Ogun. Esu pleaded that Orunmila deserved to have a crown. The crown was eventually given to Orunmila who thanked Esu with yet another he-goat.

Meanwhile, Ogun returned from the war front. When he discovered that no crown had been kept for him, he made a representation to God, who explained what happened. He decided to challenge Esu and Orunmila for usurping his rightful entitlement. On his way home, he met Esu and hit his head with a club. Esu shouted and the grounds of heaven quaked. Ogun hit him a second time and there was volcanic eruption which set the grounds of heaven ablaze. When God enquired after what was going on, He was told that Ogun was aggressing Esu for giving his crown to Orunmila. God quickly ordered the crown miller of heaven to provide another crown for Ogun. Sango volunteered to deliver it to Ogun. That was how Ogun earned the title of Amuja Joye, that is, the one who won the crown with a fight. After obtaining his crown, Ogun finally released Esu, who went straight to Orunmila. Orunmila appeased Esu with a third he-goat and expressed regret for lacking the courage to come to the venue of his combat with Ogun.

When this Odu comes out of divination the person should be told to serve Esu with one live he-goat and the skulls of two other he-goats, so that a position of authority earmarked for him might not pass him by. He will nonetheless experience considerable delay and difficulties before achieving it.

He made divination for the head

When the Head was looking for a permanent abode, he went to three heavenly priests called: Omo oshin, Omo ora and Omo Ogun kperere-lu-urode. He was told to make sacrifice in order to multiply. He made sacrifice with 2 cocks and sand, taken from the moat surrounding the town, (Odi in Yoruba and Iya in Bini). He was given one of the cocks and the Iyerosun of this Odu and a portion of the sand from the moat. He was to serve his head with the cock on getting home and to mix the sand and the Iyerosun with the blood of the cock and mark it on his head. He did the sacrifice and became the leader of all creatures created by God.

When it comes out at divination, the person should be told to make a similar sacrifice in order to become a leader in his calling or vocation.

He made divination for a pregnant woman

Yi ole ribiti, mi ole keregun,
Kini ikon be nimu Omo eku,
Oun na lo'ma kpa.
Yi ole ribiti, mi ole keregun,
Kini ikon beni inu omo eja,
Oun na loma kpa.
Yi ole ribiti, mi ole keregun,
Kini kon'be ninu Omo eniyan,
Yio no lo'ma kpa.
Mi eleyi odara o Orunmila,
Yio obirin ni akpawo dashe.

Meaning

There is something in the abdomens of the rat, the fish, and the goat, which is capable of killing them.

There is also something in the abdomen of a pregnant woman which can kill her.

Orunmila was told that it was not a good thing to happen.

He was asked what was to be done to prevent pregnancy from killing a woman.

He recommended sacrifice with three cocks and the wearing apparel of the pregnant woman.

The sacrifice was accordingly done.

And the woman had a safe delivery.

This is how to make sacrifice for a woman when danger (Ayeo) is portended at divination.

Ogbe-Ayoka leaves heaven for the world

Before leaving heaven, Ogbe-Alayoka consulted the elders of heaven who advised him to serve his head with aro fish. He was to do it by sitting behind a masquerade. Thereafter, he was to dance round the town the next day with the masquerade. As soon as he emerged, the women of the town got maracas (Shekere in Yoruba or Ukuse in Bini) and they began to dance around the masquerade. After dancing to several places in the town, he later went into the bush to undress at which point the women dispersed. When the masquerade was performing, people suspected that it was Ogbe-Alayoka who turned into the masquerade and they went in search of him. He was nowhere to be found. They concluded that he was the one masked in the masquerade. When he later came out, he was applauded and he could no longer deny the fact that he was the masquerade. Then he was asked when the next dancing session would be. He replied that it would be the following year, this time, on earth.

When he got to the world, he was always moving around daily. One day, he decided to visit the Oba of the town. His father tried to stop him on the ground that a small boy, which he was, did not know how to visit the Oba. He however insisted on going to see him. The following day, he got dressed up as a masquerade and headed alone for the palace. As he danced towards the palace, a multitude of children danced along with him. When he got to the courtyard of the palace, he continued to dance gracefully like no other masquerade had danced before. His songs were so melodious and his dance movement so alluring that a group of palace chiefs headed by Chief Agese-Iyowo trooped out of the palace to watch him in admiration. The chiefs went back into the palace to challenge the Oba for not telling them previously that there was going to be a masquerade dance at the courtyard of his palace on that day. The Oba wondered where the dance troupe could have come from, because he had no previous knowledge of their coming. When the Oba came out to see the crowd surrounding the masquerade, he too together with his chiefs joined in the dancing. He then asked Chief Agese-Iyowa to accompany the dance party to his house and to arrange for a day for the masquerade to come and stage a royal gala performance for the Oba.

The masquerade promised to come and dance for the Oba on any day appointed by him. At that point, Chief Agese-Iyowa intervened and told the masquerade to return to dance for the Oba three days later because there was going to be an important ceremony at the palace on that day. The masquerade then went away. On getting to his changing post, he beckoned with both hands to his followers to return to their houses. On getting home, the father asked him what he got from his day long visit to the Oba. He replied by inviting his parents to accompany him to the Oba's palace in three days time.

On the appointed day, he retired to his usual changing post to dress as a masquerade. The children who already knew that the masquerade was going to perform on that day, had gathered to wait for him. As soon as the masquerade came out, the children had equipped themselves with drums, gongs trumpets and maracas to provide appropriate musical accompaniment to his songs. The dance procession set out immediately passing through his father's house. After wondering how and when the masquerade came to the town, his parents and their entire household joined the procession to the palace. Meanwhile at the palace, the Oba and his Chiefs, were already occupying the high table of the courtyard to receive the masquerade. After paying the traditional obeisance to the Oba-in-Council, he began to dance. Almost instinctively, all the Chiefs rose to dance with him and it was branded as the most exhilarating dance session that had ever taken place in the town. While the dancing was going on, several gifts in cash and kind were sprayed on him. Everyone began to wonder that only a masquerade from heaven could have accomplished the kind of feats he demonstrated. At the end of it all the Oba presented him with gifts and told him to return to the palace the following day, to come and identify himself physically in order to know whether or not he came from heaven since no one seemed to know who he was. He distributed some of his gifts to the children and then returned to base.

The following day, he went to the palace to see the Oba, where he identified himself as a loyal citizen of his domain. The Oba was happy to see him and prayed for him. In a show of appreciation, the Oba told him to gather the children and to be staging the masquerade dance every market day. He thanked the Oba and promised to carry out his wishes.

On the next market day, he staged the dance accordingly at the end of which he requested all the women to return to their homes, while asking his male supporters to come along with him. The men and the boys followed him to his changing post where he removed his mask for them to know who he was. Thereafter they accompanied him to his father's house where he told his parents that he was the masquerade they accompanied to the palace. His masquerade performance was later institutionalised as a royal occasion and to this day it features at all important occasions in the town of Ayoka in Yoruba land. That is how this Odu got its pseudonym of Ogbe-Alayoka.

When this Odu comes out at divination the person should be told to prepare a masquerade and to serve his head with an aro fish because he will be very prosperous as a crowd puller and a group leader. The person should be told to serve his head annually. The person for whom this Odu comes out at Ugboḍu should forbid the meat of pig and monkey.

Chapter 23

OGBE - ETURUKPON OGBE - TOMOKPON

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Before leaving for the world, Ogbe-tomokpon was advised in heaven to make sacrifice in order to survive the problems he was bound to encounter from the brother born before him. The Ifa Priests who made divination for him were called:-

Eni tomu Ugba godogbo gbomi,
Orire logbon ilo.
Agba tokpe ibu ike rate,
Omo oni kpage.

Meaning

Whoever raises water up with a flat basin,
Invites water to pour over his head.
Any adult who sows the seeds of hatred,
Will get his children to reap the fruits.

He was advised to serve Esu with a he-goat and a fish. He was also advised to cultivate a soft and humane disposition and to refrain from any act of wickedness. He was told that one of his brothers would create a lot of trouble for him, but that if he resisted the urge to return tit for tat, he would be more prosperous than him. He did that sacrifice and the Awo collected the appropriate leaves, added the heads of tortoise, rat and fish and ground them together. They prepared the medicine, tied it to the handle of a mini axe and buried it in his head, with the incantation that: "it is with one head that the axe fells 201 trees in the forest". When he got to the world, he became a famous Ifa Priest and a successful farmer. He soon became very prosperous and his wealth and popularity earned him the enmity of his senior brother who began to plot against him. After some time, he ran into difficulties and his fortune began to flag. He then made divination and his Ifa reminded him of the heavenly injunction not to avenge any wicked act done against him and not to do anything with anger. That was when he was provoked into hitting back at his brother. With the divinational reminder, he decided to soften up and went quietly about his business. His brother did everything he could to procure his downfall. Although he was staggered from pillar to post, he nonetheless remained on his feet. After all his other contrivances had failed, the brother incited the whole town against him. Some people began to turn against him. He then invited the following Awos for divination.

Beeni ooniri, ola ooribee;
Oron ola eena sema teteri.

Meaning

Today cannot be like tomorrow and
Nobody knows what he will do tomorrow.

They told him to persevere because the child who goes to play outside never forgets to return home. He was advised to make sacrifice to avoid being killed. He offered a black goat to his Ifa and made a feast with it. He served his head with a cock in order to invoke the wand buried inside it before he left heaven. He also served Ogun with a dog, tortoise and cock.

Not long afterwards his senior brother who had been gunning for him, died. People began to return to him with the apology that it was his dead brother who incited them against him. Others betrothed wives to him and he came to have several children. Sixteen years later, he had a very big household comprising several wives and children. At the height of his prosperity he prepared a feast of thanksgiving to his Ifa to which he invited the Awos who made divination and sacrifice for him. He sang in praise of his celestial and terrestrial Awos, who helped him to survive his ordeals.

When this Odu comes out at divination, the person should be told to make sacrifice in order to avoid problems created for him by his elder brother, that is, if it is Uree. If it is Ayeo, he should be told to serve his Ifa with a black goat, his head with a cock and Ogun with dog, cock and tortoise so that his brother who had prepared a burden of death for him might carry it.

Other heavenly works of Ogbe-Tomokpon

Ugba onle ahun teregun maja was the name of the awo who made divination for the Tortoise in heaven when he was going to start his farm. The tradition in those days was for the inhabitants of heaven to go to God to collect the seeds they wished to plant in their farms during the planting season. After clearing his farm, which he was late in doing, the Tortoise went to God to ask for seeds to plant. God told him that he was late in coming because others had collected the seeds available for the year. Since God does not refuse any requests, He told the Tortoise that the only remaining seeds were those of the gourd (Ugba In Yoruba and Okpan in Bini). The only rider for planting the gourd's seeds was to avoid talking to it and God warned the Tortoise that he would have problems with the gourd unless he could control his loquacious disposition.

It will be recalled that the Awo who made divination for him had warned him that if he did not make sacrifice, he would collect seeds that would constitute an albatross round his neck.

In spite of that premonition, the Tortoise, characteristically, made no sacrifice before going to God. God however gave him the seeds and the Tortoise promised to keep his mouth shut.

He subsequently went to the farm to plant the gourd's seeds. When he returned to the farm the next day, he discovered that the seeds had germinated. Out of excitement he shouted: "my gourd has germinated". He was astonished to hear the reply of the gourd who shouted back "my Tortoise has germinated". Supposedly, that was sufficient indication of the inevitable outcome of his talkative tendency. The Tortoise however did not comprehend the foreboding.

Three days later, he returned to the farm and discovered that the gourd had borne fruits. He rejoiced and exclaimed "my gourd has borne fruits" to which the gourd replied "my Tortoise is pregnant". When the Tortoise touched the fruits of the gourd, the gourd retorted by hitting the Tortoise. Up to that point the tortoise had still not got the message of what lay in store for him. He went home rejoicing that his gourd would soon be ripe for harvesting. Two days later, he returned to

see that the fruits were already dry enough for harvesting. He brought out his cutlass and cut the first fruit. Instantly, the gourd seized the cutlass from him. As the gourd tried to cut his neck, the Tortoise took to his heels and the gourd pursued him. As the gourd raced in hot pursuit, the Tortoise began to sing:

Ugba onle ahun,

Tere gungun maja,

Gun maja tere.

Ugba koni owo,

Tere gungun maja,

Gun maja tere.

Ugba koni ese,

Tere gungun maja,

Gun maja tere.

Da mi low ugba,

Tere gungun maja,

Gun maja tere.

This was the distress cry of the Tortoise calling on people to save him from the limbless gourd who had no hands and no feet. Whenever anyone tried to come to his rescue, the sight of the mysterious gourd scared them away.

The Tortoise was almost exhausted when he came across the Ram who told him to hide in one corner of his house while he took position to attack the gourd. When he finally saw the gourd, the Ram stopped him and hit him with his horns. In the ensuing combat the gourd broke into pieces, thus saving the Tortoise from the wrath of the gourd.

When this Odu comes out at divination, the person should be told that he only came for divination out of curiosity because he is not in the habit of making sacrifices. He should be told that he is very talkative but should bridle his tongue so that the words of his mouth do not put him between the horns of a dilemma. He should endeavour to make sacrifice to avoid imminent catastrophe.

He made divination for the first Olu of Iwere

Iginua was a very poor man, although he was nonetheless a Prince of the kingdom of the Edos. He eloped from home when he fell out of favour with his father, King Oluwa. Besides, the Edos had left King Oluwa in no doubt that they would not accept his eldest son as their King. He became so dejected that Iginua decided to go into exile where he languished into a life of abject penury. To erase all connections with Benin, he changed his name from Iginua to Ogbomodù. He finally settled in the land of Akoko where he met an Ifa Priest, called:

Ojo'kpa, aka kon,

Omo aka konjo

Odafa fun Ogbomodù,

Li Iranran omo keye okun oreje

His nickname later became the one who feeds his fowls with beads. He was advised to serve his head with a guinea fowl and to dress like a chief before making the sacrifice. He was also advised to serve Esu with a he-goat. He made the sacrifices, but remained poor. Meanwhile, war broke out between Akoko where he lived and the neighbouring Ekiti. The people of Akoko were defeated and Ogbomodù was one of the war captives taken away by the victorious forces of Ekiti. He was later sold into slavery. When the Ewi of Ado sent for a slave to be bought for his annual festival of the head, Ogbomodù was bought into the royal house of Ado. When the slave was subsequently presented to the Ewi of Ado, the Oba observed that the slave looked too good to be used for sacrifice.

He was accordingly unchained and released to serve as a servant of the royal household. The Oba was so satisfied with his loyalty, intelligence, and eloquence that he was finally appointed to serve the King's head at annual festivals.

When it was time to serve the Oba's head, Ogbomodu was dressed as a chief for the ceremony. He did the work very diligently. After serving the Oba's head, he was told to take his seat and to serve his own head. In his own prayers, he beseeched his head to lead him to his pre-destinated goal in life. On hearing his prayers, the Oba looked at him questioningly, wondering where else he wanted his head to lead him, beyond the exalted position he held in his court. The following day, the Oba directed that Ogbomodu should be tied up and re-sold into slavery. Tradition enjoined the Oba not execute the man who had served his head. That is why he was condemned into slavery.

He was taken to the market of Ekue, now Akure, where he was bought as a slave to be used for serving the head of the Udezu (Deji of Ekue). Once again, he served the royal household of the Deji, so satisfactorily, that he was released from slavery to serve the head of the Oba. Once again, after serving the Oba's head, he was told to pray to his own head. In spite of what had previously happened to him, he prayed to his head once more, to lead him to the realisation of his destiny. Instantly, the Oba could not conceal his anger. He asked Ogbomodu, to which other destination he expected his head to lead him, beyond the privileged position he had been given in the royal court. Once more, on the orders of the Oba, he was bound in chains and sold back into slavery.

As fate would have it, he repeated the same experience in the royal households of 13 other Obas including the royal household of Ijero, Ilara, Ila Orogun, Ife, Abeokuta, Owu, Owo, Ijebu, Ijesha, Ondo until he was finally sold to the royal palace of Oba Ado Ajuwaleke. He had completed the full circle of returning in chains to the land to which he swore never to return. By the time he got to Benin, just before the Igue festival, no one could recognise him as the crown prince who left Benin under the name of Iginua. True to the dictates of his destiny, he was again appointed as the man to serve the Oba's head. After serving the Oba's head, tradition demanded that he too had to serve his own head. Once again, he beseeched his head to lead him to his final destination which prayer, obviously annoyed the Oba of Benin.

The following morning, the Oba invited the royal brass smiths (Igun-eronmwon) to measure the height of Ogbomodu and to cast a bronze coffin to accommodate his size. The Oba also invited the royal iron-mongers (Owina) and ordered them to produce the requisite sizes of sharp pointed U-bolts to nail him down in the coffin. The coffin, decorated with ornamentations, was produced together with the U-bolts. The interior of the coffin was lined with white cloth and he was ordered to lie inside it. He was wrapped up with another cloth and the coffin was covered with its lid. One U-bolt was hammered down in the position of his head and others were hammered down in the positions of his chest, abdomen and feet. He was to be offered for sacrifice to the water divinity, presumed dead.

It was however time for Esu to work for his he-goat. While the U-bolts were being nailed down, Esu had meanwhile inserted a stony membrane between Ogbomodu's skin and the cloth used to wrap him up, which had the effect of bending the sharp points of the U-bolts before impacting on his body. Through the intervention of Esu, not a single one of the U-bolts touched his body. The Oba directed that the coffin should be thrown into the sea (Olokun).

Meanwhile, the Iweres or Ighan (now Itsekiris) had been craving to have their own King. They had earlier been told at divination that a King would come to them through the water because they were forbidden before then to appoint

any son of Ighan as their King. They had made several sacrifices to their big river so that the water divinity could send them a King. They made sacrifices with 14 different animals and 201 inanimate materials for that purpose.

Four days after they made the sacrifice, the elders were performing a special ritual at the bank of the "big river" when they saw a big shining object floating on the water. They brought it out and opened it quietly with an axe. As they were opening it, they had a voice from the box asking them to break it carefully. When they removed the lid, they saw the face of a young handsome man blinking his eyes. When they saw it was a full grown adult, they all thanked the sea for manifesting their wishes and sacrifice for a King. He was carried shoulder high in a dance procession through the town, announcing to the populace that a water king (or Ogiamen) had arrived. In the ensuing coronation ceremony, he personally chose to be crowned with the title of the King of water or Ogiamen. He also reverted to his original name of Iginua or Iginuwa which was the name his father gave him at birth before he went into voluntary exile. Three years after his coronation, he decided to pay homage to his father, King Olua of Benin. Before then, he sent an errand to present 2 cocks and 2 hens and 6 bags loaded with beads to the King of Benin. When the fowls were fed with corn, they refused to swallow them. The errand men corrected them by disclosing that the fowls only fed on beads which was the purpose of the six bags of beads they brought. The messengers notified the Oba of Benin of the appointment of a new Ogiamen of the Iweres. The Oba gave his blessing but rejected the fowls while accepting the beads.

Subsequently, the King of the Iweres dressed up in a beaded outfit and crown to visit the Oba of Benin. When the Binis saw him they wondered what King it was that dressed so luxuriously, as they had never seen before. He introduced himself, as the Ogiamen of Ighan. He asked the Oba of Benin whether he recognised him and he replied in the negative. He removed his crown and identified himself as Ogbomodun whose name was "if the head does not get to its destination, it does not stop". Consequently, the Oba remembered him to be the man who was nailed down in the coffin and jettisoned into the big river. The Oba then touched his head with his own head and exclaimed that indeed, "there is no armour against fate and that no cloud can obliterate the star of destiny".

There was a final shock in store for the Oba when the Ogiamen later introduced himself as his eldest son who went into self-imposed exile several years before. He then narrated his exploits which took him to the palaces of the fifteen Kings of the known world before he got to his father's palace where he was finally made to realise his destiny in a new land across the water. As he narrated his story, the Oba was in tears as he hugged him in open embrace, thanking God and his ancestors for being alive to witness the event of that day. He then went into the palace and gave him the wand of regal authority or Ise-mwen-righo which all kings of Warri use to this day.

With all his chiefs assembled, his father told Iginua to stand up. After doing so, he formally gave him the title of Olua-namen, or King Olua of the water. The significance of the title was to give his son corresponding jurisdiction over the riverine area called Iwere. Thus, Iginua became recognized as the Olua of Iwere, and his destiny was eventually realised. Olua was abbreviated over the centuries of Olu and Iwere was changed by the European explorers to Warri.

The drum beat which heralded him into the palace was so melodious that at the instance of King Olua of Benin, they exchanged drums. Those drums are what the Binis call Emedo-Emighan neguegbero which is played on ceremonial occasions in Benin to this day.

When this Odu comes out at Ugboodu the person should be told that he will realise his destiny after a long sojourn of suffering and that his prosperity is not in the land of his birth but far away from home. He should serve Esu and his head to hasten the realisation of his aspirations.

At divination, the person should be told to serve his head with a cock in order to persevere to receive the fortune coming to him. He should not react violently to any transient set-backs.

He revealed Ajija's (or Eziza) destiny to him

Ogbe-tomokpon was a very poor man. He came with the Wind divinity (Ajija or Eziza) to the world. He was an expert in foliage technology, that is, the science of leaves and their uses. As a young man, he was given the task of clearing Ajija's farm. On his first trip for bush cleaning, he stood dazed with cutlass in hand apparently amusing himself without cutting a single grass. When he finally decided to start weeding he would cut a grass and hold it up in his hand in admiration because he knew what it could be used for. Passers-by who saw him, reported to Ajija that rather than weed the grass which he was sent to do, he was always gazing at the leaves. Ajija then went to see him in the farm. When asked why he was in the habit of gazing at the leaves instead of brushing them away, he told Ajija that if he closely looked at the leaves, he would not agree to cut down any of them.

He then pointed at the leaves respectively used by each of the divinities, such as Ogun, Sango, Olokun, Ake, Obalifon, Sankpana and even Ajija himself. He admonished Ajija that farming was not his correct profession because, since it involved cutting down leaves, it would amount to murdering his benefactors which by the laws of heaven would amount to ingratitude. That is why the dictum in heaven is that no one should show ingratitude to the animate and inanimate objects that their guardian angels used to prepare their instruments of authority before leaving heaven. That explains why some people are told to forbid the consumption or use of certain animals and materials.

He disclosed to Ajija that he was destined to be either a hunter or a herbalist. Ajija then appealed to him to teach him the science of the use of the leaves, and he taught him the use of every leaf in the forest, is used for.

The first leaf he taught Ajija was Ewe gha ghoha, used for curing the incidence of infant mortality, which his wife had been experiencing every year. He showed him a special instrument which he was to cook with 201 of those leaves and to prepare it into a waist belt (Akpalode) for his wife to wear throughout her pregnancy, and to prepare a neck-lace from it for the child to wear as soon as it was born. It can stop the danger of premature death for infants.

Ajija did as he was told and when his wife delivered the next child, instead of naming him on the 8th day, the child was named after three months. His name was Ifafeyi, meaning Orunmila helped me to save this one. It took Ajija three years to learn the names and uses of most leaves in the forest. That is why the offsprings of Ajija are prone to disappearing into the forest for long periods without trace because they are learning the use of leaves in the forest. When they eventually reappear, they turn out to be wonderful herbalists and physicians.

When this Odu comes out at Ugboodu, the person should be told that he would end up being a native doctor, but that he should make sacrifice to avoid getting lost before taking up that profession.

At ordinary divination, the person should be told that there is a strong likelihood that he would be the victim of a wicked lie and a show of ingratitude. He should make sacrifice to avoid them.

The earthly work of Ogbe-Tomokpon

Before leaving heaven, he consulted his guardian angel who advised him to make sacrifice with pumpkin (Unwenkhen in Bini and Eroku in Yoruba). He made the sacrifice. He was born into a house on earth which had no children because all the ones born before him never used to stay at home. As soon as they grew up, they often left for other places to settle. Unknown to the parents, Shango, the thunder divinity used to drive the children away from home. It had become a tradition for Shango to strike at the Palm tree in front of their house every year, without failing, because the original owner of that house, who sold it to the present owner, had much earlier, offended Sango. That is why Sango was fighting the house annually which incident, in turn, scared the children of the house into emigrating from home as soon as they grew up.

However, when Ogbe-tomokpon grew up, he advised his father that there was a sacrifice to be made to stop the annual onset of Sango. He asked him to produce raw seeds of pumpkin and a gourd of Palm oil. When they were produced, Ogbe-tomokpon planted the pumpkin seeds round the house and sprinkled the gourd of oil also round the house. The pumpkin soon germinated and constituted a shade of foliage over the house.

On the next anniversary of his annual attack, Sango discovered that the house was surrounded by pumpkins. He then hummed round the house and returned without dropping any missile. The next day, Sango transfigured into a man and returned to the house. He met the landlord of the house and they exchanged greetings. When the landlord saw his red outfit, he took the visitor for a Shango Priest and welcomed him with a gourd of oil, kolanut and bitter kola. The visitor broke the kolanut and prayed for the landlord. He then asked the landlord what year he built the house and he replied that he did not build the house originally but bought it from its previous owner. Sango then asked him for the present abode of the vendor who sold the house to him and the landlord replied that he last saw him in the market. Sango insisted that he wanted to meet the man because they were bosom friends. The landlord replied that he would try to trace him to the market, on the following market day because he did not know where the man lived.

The following day, the landlord took Sango to the market. As soon as the man saw the buyer of his house and Sango together, he took to his heels. Sango then asked the landlord to return home because having seen his friend he would trace him to wherever he ran for refuge. After the market rendezvous, Shango gave the man a wide berth of briefing space. It took a long period before the man who offended Sango plucked the courage to return to the market, apparently in the euphoria that Sango had lost track of him. One day, he went to the market and sat at his stall to market his wares. Not long afterwards, the cloud gathered and Sango's wife, Oya, lit up the dark cloud with lightning and Sango targetted his victim and struck him with his axe (thunder) on the chest and the man died instantly. Sango left on his chest the gourd of oil which the innocent landlord used to welcome him during his visit to the house. The furore generated by the incident, created pandemonium in the market, which dispersed spontaneously.

The following day, Sango again transfigured into a man and paid another visit to the landlord. It was then he identified himself as the one who fought in the market the previous day. He thanked the landlord for taking him to the man who was the casualty of the fight. Sango then proclaimed that as from that day, he would never fight in any house where he sees the pumpkin plant. He also advised

the landlord that any time he heard his battle cry anywhere, he should immediately pour palm oil on the ground so that he might know that the house belongs to his friend.

Before taking his leave, Sango promised to appeal to God in heaven to send the landlord a special favour. He then left. Not long afterwards, the landlord's wife became pregnant and in the fullness of time, she gave birth to a child who was delivered in a sac. As they were wondering, how to deal with a child born in a sac, Sango transfigured once more into a man and visited them. He advised them to fetch palm oil, a cock and a knife. Sango cut the sac containing the child with the knife. When the child was brought out, he was found to be holding a thunderstone on his right hand and an axe on his left hand. He asked them to pour the palm oil on the child's body with which to bath him. He told them to keep the two instruments which the child brought from heaven safely and that a visitor would come to the house on the seventh day to name the child. They thanked him and he went away. Before leaving, he told them to keep a cock for another ceremony on the seventh day.

On the seventh day, Sango came back to the house as an ordinary mortal and asked for the cock they were told to keep. It was brought to him and he slaughtered it on the thunderstone and the axe. He reminded the father that the child was the favour he promised to beg God to send to him. He said that the child should be called Oke and that he was one of his own (Sango's disciples on earth). Before leaving, he advised the father that after three months he should buy a ram and a mortar for sacrifice to Sango. When Sango returned again after three months, he placed the axe and the thunderstone on top of the mortar and served them with the ram. That was the first Sango shrine on earth. The child grew up to be the first Sango Priest ever, which explains why Oke is the most senior disciple of Shango on earth. Peace and prosperity reigned ever after, in that family.

When this Odu comes out at divination therefore, the person should be advised to make sacrifice with pumpkin and Palm oil, to avoid carrying someone else's burden and in order to reap the favour coming to him from Sango.

He made divination for a barren woman

- Ogbe-tomokpon,
- Ogbe-tomosun,
- Ogbe-suju omo,
- Sibere bere udi,
- Agbakpan eeye mon eniyan,
- Eese eni to matu,
- Omo kpon leyin olomo,
- Adifa fun agan bi,
- To ma-nfo wo ala shosun.

This Odu made divination for a barren woman who was desperately praying for a child. She was told to make sacrifice after which she began to have children. She made sacrifice with a hen for Ifa, a ram for Shango, white kolanut, land a white hen for her head, and he-goat for Esu. The first child was called Ere and the next one was called Iyadehin. Altogether she has seven children. Her first son was called Owo miman (Dada) who was born with curly hairs and became the second disciple of Sango on earth.

That is why the children of this Odu have initial difficulties in having children, but they will end up having a maximum of seven children.

Chapter 24

OGBE - OSE

OGBE - SANWO

OGBE - KOWOJO

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It was this ODU that revealed how money came to settle down. Any person born under the patronage of this Odu is bound to be immensely wealthy and prosperous provided he serves Orunmila well. He will however have initial problems from his family because many enemies accompanied him to the world to frustrate the realisation of his destiny. However, if he makes adequate preparation through the requisite sacrifices (Ono Ifa or Odilha) he will rise head and shoulder above his enemies.

Heavenly works of Ogbe-Ose

He made divination for the chain

The Chain (Eghan in Bini and Seke in Yoruba), was dreaded by all and sundry in heaven but in spite of his power he was very poor. He was called Seke aroju elebaa. When his poverty became unbearable, he went to Ogbe-Ose who was called Igbera orun, for divination. He was advised to make sacrifice with a he-goat for Esu, cock for Ogun and coconut for his head. He felt offended that he who was capable of holding both divinities and mortals, animate and inanimate objects alike, could not condescend to make sacrifice to anyone. He remained in his poverty. His work in heaven was that of the Chief jailor who took custody of all offenders. The sacrifice he was required to make was to avoid the danger of unconsummated fortune, that is, Amubo in Yoruba and Osobo-no-masunu in Bini. In spite of the diligence with which he carried out his task, he discovered that he received no compensation whatsoever from his work. Those who were kept with him for custody, were either acquitted after trial, fined, released or executed if the offence carried the death penalty. After the accused had been tried, the Chain became empty again. His frustration became so unbearable that he decided to come to the world, nonetheless without making sacrifice. While in heaven, he was a disciple of the iron divinity (Ogun).

On getting to the world, he continued with his work as keeper of accused persons and other organic and inorganic substances awaiting trial or execution. Animals which were awaiting slaughter were kept under his custody and he either tied them up on their necks, waist or limbs. However, as soon as the fates of his prisoners were determined and they were to be consigned for sale, slaughter or sacrifice, he was simply asked to release them thanklessly and without any recompense. When accused persons were given to him to keep in custody, awaiting trial or execution, they were subsequently released from his custody without any gratification. The degree of ingratitude was so much that he was used, time and time again without any requital. He neither got words of

appreciation from his victims nor from his mentors. That is why it is said that no one should pray to suffer the fate of the Chain who works without any appreciation but is merely cast aside after performing one assignment until he is required for another.

Whenever a human being or an animal was brought to him to keep, he became happy that he had got slaves to use. But soon afterwards his prisoners would be released and he would begin to lament over his stubbornness for refusing to make sacrifice in heaven against unconsummated achievements (Amubo or Osobonomansuru).

When this Odu comes out at Ugboodu, the sacrifice that the Chain refused to make is the first Ono-lfa or Odiha which the person should be advised to make to avoid going to earthy or heavenly jail before seeing the lime-light of prosperity. At ordinary divination, the person should be advised to serve his head, Ogun and Esu respectively with coconut, oock, and he-goat, to avoid the danger of unconsummated fortune.

Preparation before leaving heaven

When this Odu, otherwise called Igbera-orun in heaven, decided to come to the world, he went to two diviners for advice. They were called:

Bi babalawo ba kperonje,
Ogboi loma sanwo re,
Awon mejeli lo'n difa fun,
Igbera orun,
Afo kpukpu ile abarede.

Meaning

The goat, slaughtered by an awo to eat,
Is paid for by the lay man.

He was advised to make sacrifice before leaving heaven so that the problems he was bound to encounter in his father's house might not constrain his progress on earth. He was told to make sacrifice with the head and the four feet of a goat sold in the market as "eron akpata" and to give a he-goat to Esu, because he was going to operate as an Ifa Priest and as a trader. If he did not make the sacrifice early enough, he would experience a malignant stomach trouble which would prevent him from embarking successfully on his professions. For that reason, he was told to buy the bowel and intestines of a goat in addition to its head and feet. He did the sacrifice, and the awos extracted parts of the meat to which they added the appropriate leaves to prepare medicine to mark on his head while he ate a part of it. This is another Ono-lfa or Odiha which has to be prepared when this ODU comes out at Ugboodu.

Ogbe-Kowojo's experience before setting out for the world

His trip to the world was not altogether a down-hill ride. When he left heaven for the world, he did not get to the world in the first instance. He stopped at the bank of the river separating heaven and earth (Odo-mimikpo) and settled there for a long time where he was making divination for whoever was coming to the earth. His consultation fee was always one cowry (akowo). He was consulting for everyone passing to earth until it came to the turn of the wind divinity.

When the wind divinity was passing, Ogbe-kowojo did not know because the wind flew overhead while others walked on their feet. It was Ogbe-kowojo who cursed the wind divinity with his wand of authority (ASE) proclaiming that since he did not see him with his own eyes, no one would ever be able to see the wind with his eyes from that day. He also proclaimed that all other divinities who came

to the world on their feet would have priests and shrines, but that the wind divinity who flew by stealth to the world would neither have a shrine nor a priest. That is why to this day, the wind divinity is neither institutionally served by anyone nor having any discernible mode of worship.

It was at that point, that Igbera Orun, otherwise known as Ogbe-kowojo, decided to move down to the world. It was with the money he collected from divination at the bank of Odo-mimikpo, the river separating heaven and earth, that he started trading when he got to the earth.

At Ugboodu, the man should go into business and would become very rich. His Ifa will require two Esu (the traditional Esu-Obadara, and another Water Esu for sending messages). They should be prepared with two separate he-goats. The person should be told that his fortune before preparing his Ifa had not been consolidated.

At divination the person should be told to tie one cowry and 65k in a piece of cloth to be kept at his Ifa shrine. The officiating Ifa Priest will ask Ifa to gather his wealth together in order to flourish.

Other sacrifices made on earth

When he was still trying to make ends meet, he went to an Ifa Priest called:

Ogbe sheraje,

Kuku kuku she,

Ojo tiba luwe sha wo wo

who advised him to serve his Ifa with 8 snails in order to position his feet on the path of his destiny. He made the sacrifice. Thereafter the priest prepared the leaves of the sacrifice into a gourd, which was buried in the ground and he was told to bath over it. He was then told that he was about to come within hailing distance of his fortune. While he was bathing, he was told to repeat a special incantation to the effect that 'water is never scarce in the bathroom.

At divination, this special sacrifice is made when a man runs short of money. The snails are broken on the floor of his bathroom, while saying that the bathroom never runs short of water. Thereafter, genuine money will surely come his way again. The preparation is however made by an Ifa Priest.

His experience on earth

He was born in the world to the household of an Olokun Priest of the Water divinity, where there were already many brothers and sisters before him. The elder brothers and sisters were quick to spot his star and started from the outset to create all kinds of problems for him. He soon developed a chronic stomach trouble which refused to respond to any form of treatment. The harassment became so intense that he went for divination at which he was told to make sacrifice by collecting all edible food-stuffs including corn and to add chicken, pigeon and a he-goat to be sent to the river. Thereafter, he was to buy a goat with the two horns pointing forward, to serve his Ifa. After the sacrifice, the Awos took the heart, bowel and duodenum of the goat, added Ifa leaves to them and they were cooked for him to eat. Those were the only parts of the goat he was allowed to eat.

In the night, he began to vomit all the foreign substances in his stomach, after which his stomach trouble, which had already degenerated to the point of vomiting blood, subsided. The brothers who were responsible for his problems began to die one after the other. His new found health enabled him to flourish in his Ifa practice and in his trading enterprise. Although he left from the palace of Olokun in heaven, he had forgotten to "serve Olokun on earth". Once again things began to fall apart for him.

Eventually, he invited seven awos to make divination for him. They revealed to him that he had neglected Olokun, the Water divinity, who accompanied him to the world. He was told to go and fetch a special axe (Urobo in Yoruba and Ize in Bini). He immediately ordered one from an iron-monger or black-smith who prepared it for him. Thereafter, the priests prepared medicine on the axe and told him to go and cut a bunch of palm fruits with it. The special injunction was that the palm fruit was to be cut without losing a single fruit and without touching the ground. A second assignment was to catch a live parrot and bring to them. He was told to perform these special assignments while they were waiting for him in his house. For his journey, he was told to go with a palm tree climber and to put in his bag all eatable foodstuffs and a gourd of water, including corn, mashed yam, (ewo or obobo), chicken, pigeon and he-goat to be given to the river. But he was not told how to use them. On getting to the river, he threw them inside the water and they quickly went under. That was how the awos expected him to serve the Esu of the water.

He combed the forest around for ripe palm fruit and a parrot unsuccessfully. As he was returning home towards dusk, he heard the voices of parrots. As he raised up his head to see the direction from which the parrot's voices come, he saw a palm tree that bent its head right into the river with a ripe fruit on its top. The parrots were feeding on the fruits. He used his palm tree climber to get to the top of the palm tree. As soon as he got to the top, all the parrots flew away. However, he quietly cut a ripe palm fruit, putting all the falling fruits in his bag. As he turned to position himself to cut the bunch of fruit, the special axe he was using dropped into the river.

Out of frustration, he decided to end his life by jumping into the water. At that point a voice spoke to him to climb down gently. He did not see who was speaking to him. He however came down quietly totally dejected. In a state of paranoia however, he threw his palm tree climber and bag into the river and dived in, to go in search of his special axe. As soon as he impacted on the water, a flock of fowls, emerged from nowhere and started beating him with their beaks. Almost immediately Esu released the corn with which he had made sacrifice for the fowls to eat. After the fowls had eaten the corn to their satisfaction, he was released. At that point, they asked him what he was looking for, and he replied that he was searching for his axe. They confirmed that they saw it flying past them a short while before he came. They wished him success and cleared the way for him to continue on his search. Next, he saw goats with horns pointed forward charging to attacked him. At the same time, Esu released the pieces of yam and plantains with which he made sacrifice, for them to eat. The same dialogue followed. They told him that they saw his axe flying past them a little while ago.

Meanwhile, he met the tiger sharpening his nails and groaning for attack. At that point, Esu released the he-goat with which he made sacrifice, throwing it at the tiger. After eating, the tiger told him that he was on track towards the destination of his axe and wished him success. Next, he saw a heavy ball of fire burning fiercely and Esu threw the gourd of water and marshed yam with which he made sacrifice, at the fire and it instantly extinguished. Thereafter, he met the python (Ere in Yoruba and Ikpın in Bini) to whom Esu threw a rat before allowing him to continue on his journey. Finally, he saw a whale (Erinomi in Yoruba and Eñue in Bini) who again tried to swallow him. Esu threw a pigeon at the whale and it closed its mouth, allowing him to proceed. The whale told him that his axe had entered the palace of Olokun.

At that point, he entered the palace of Olokun. Meanwhile, Olokun had with her 14 awos who had been invited to make divination for her on what to do to

have a child. The 14 awos had advised her to offer a he-goat to Esu and to look for an axe prepared by a black-smith for them to make a special sacrifice to enable her have a child. The sacrifice to Esu was made the previous evening. It was in recompense for the he-goat which Esu ate that he contrived to steal the axe from Ogbe-sanwo to bring it to Olokun. At the same time, it was the elaborate offerings made by Ogbe-sonwo to Esu then he decided to guide him through thick and thin to prosperity in the palace of Olokun.

Meanwhile, the mysterious axe fell into Olokun's palace and it was apprehended by the waiting Awos who locked it up in a guard room. Almost immediately after hiding away the axe, Ogbe-sanwo arrived at the palace and the Awos challenged him whether he came to try them. He replied that far from coming to confront them, he was only trailing the movement of his axe which fell in mysterious circumstances from his hands when he was using it to cut a bunch of palm fruits. The awos asked him whether he would recognise it at sight and he answered affirmatively. He was then taken to the room containing several axes made of gold, silver, brass, lead and cowries. He said his own was made of iron and that it was not there in that room. He was then taken to the room containing disused axes where his own was kept. He looked around, identified his own and picked it up and held on tightly to it. He was then matched with his axe in hand before Olokun, the water divinity. After explaining the significance of the axe to her, he vowed to prefer to die rather than part with it at any prize because his life depended on it. Olokun offered to buy it, but he refused. Perplexed, Olokun put an alluring question to him: "Would you be prepared to part with it if you were moulded to become prosperous in life?" After thinking deeply, he replied in a melodramatic tone: "Since the axe was prepared for the purpose of making me prosperous, I will not mind to surrender it on that condition". Olokun then gave orders to her chief of staff to mould Ogbe-sonwo with all the paraphernalia and apotheosis of enduring wealth and prosperity. After moulding him up to a point, he was brought before Olokun to test whether his frame of prosperity had reached its apogee. Olokun told him that if she threw him up and all the birds of the land and water hailed and applauded simultaneously, it would mean that his prosperity was complete. On the other hand, if anything remained to be done for him, the birds of the water would hail and applaud while their terrestrial counterparts would keep quiet. She then threw him up and the water birds shouted and applauded while nothing was heard from the land birds. It meant that the moulding had not been completed.

At that juncture, Esu blinked his eyes to Olokun and muttered to her that since she was the Queen of the water, she should also ordain the man as the King of prosperity on earth. Olokun quickly acquiesced in Esu's proposal and did so accordingly. When she threw him up the second time, all the birds of the land and the water hailed and applauded in unison. It meant that his prosperity was completed. He then asked to be given the instruments he was moulded with, to avoid returning home empty handed. Olokun in response moulded all the instruments of prosperity into a ball of chalk, decorating it with a scimitar and miter on top of it. It was encased in a casket of brass and lead, adding axes made of cowries, bronze, and lead and they were all given to him. After expressing his gratitude on his knees to the water divinity, he asked for the route he was to take home without encountering any difficulties. She directed him to take a special route in the inner chamber of her palace which was utterly dark. As soon as he stepped into the room, he found himself back on earth at the entrance to his own house where the seven awos were still waiting for him. When they asked him for the parrot and the bunch of palm fruits he was told to fetch, he replied, mission

unaccomplished. Asked for the special axe they prepared for him, he replied that he had lost it.

He then narrated the experience that led him to the palace of Olokun in the underworld and brought out the moulded cask given to him by Olokun. At that stage, the awos told him that Orunmila enjoined him to embark on his impossible mission to search for his prosperity, and that his difficult encounters were the proverbial darkness before sunrise. They told him that he had put his feet on the ladder of his destiny and that prosperity would come within his grip from then on. He thanked the awos and gave them the little amount of money left with him and they dispersed. Thereafter he inserted the moulded cask on the shrine of his Ifa.

Not long afterwards, money began to flow into his house from many directions. Whatever he tried his hands on, was resoundingly successful. He soon became so prosperous and popular that he was crowned the King of the town. As soon as he became King, he invited his awos, other priests, the laity and the common people and feted them elaborately at the height of which he sang in praise of his Awos.

When this Odu comes out at Ugboodu, the person should be told that he was destined to be prosperous and that he should prepare an Olokun mould for his Ifa and to give it part of whatever he uses to serve his Ifa. He would however become prosperous after treading on several hooks and thorns and that he should serve Esu always.

At divination, the person should be told to make sacrifice to Ifa, Esu and Olokun because he is on the threshold of prosperity. The person born of this Odu, should refrain from eating fowl, goat, tiger, python, and whale and not to risk entering a burning house to avoid showing ingratitude to his benefactors, lest he would always be a victim of ingratitude from the beneficiaries of his own magnanimity.

Ogbe-Ose revealed how money came to the world

At the height of his prosperity, his brothers were beginning to wonder over the secret of his new found prosperity. However, he told them that the path of prosperity was always very rugged and tortuous and that the only secret for treading its path without bruises was unlimited perseverance. He then narrated the story of how money came to the world during the era of the divinosphere. The divinities had been beseeching God to send money to the world to serve as a medium of exchange.

One night, his guardian angel appeared to Orunmila in a dream, to alert him that in response to the yearnings of the divinities (Ota legbeje Erumole) God was sending money to the world. His guardian angel however warned him that anyone who went for money with greed and avarice would be perished by it, and that he should let all the divinities go for it before him, being junior to most of them.

Continuing, his guardian angel told him that anyone who runs after wealth in a hurry will be perished by it before the evening of his life. With that warning, his guardian angel advised Orunmila that when money arrived in the world, he should be the last to go for it.

Finally, before the end of the apparition his guardian angel advised him to rear a parrot without disclosing the significance of doing so. He did as he was told. Three months later, the parrot began to shout every morning and evening, "Owo t'owa la t'oorun, ekaa roo", meaning: "the money which came from heaven. Good morning". In the evening, it would say "Owo towa late'orun, ekaale o" meaning: "money which came from heaven, Good evening". The parrot chanted these words for several days without Orunmila understanding the

message it underscored. An old woman living next door who was the Queen of witches (Iyami Oshoronga in Yoruba or Oghidian-ni yason in Bini) was the only one who understood the message of the parrot. She subsequently convened a meeting of all the divinities to intimate them of the message of Orunmila's parrot. She told them that money had arrived in the world and that they should trace it in the direction to the east of the town which was where the parrot faced during its morning and evening greetings.

The following morning, Ogun impatiently set out to trace the path of money. After two days and two nights, he caught up with money, far into the forest. Unknown to him however, the heap of money sourced from the sky and apexed on the ground. In his characteristic haste and hurry, Ogun set out to excavate money with axe and shovel which he had specially prepared for that purpose. As he was proceeding with the exercise the avalanche of money gave way and fell on him, perishing him beneath its debris. After killing Ogun, money deposited sixteen of its pieces (cowries) on his chest. One after the other, all the divinities ended up and returned to heaven in a similar manner. Finally, it was only Orunmila who was left to go for money. It will be recalled that when the Queen of witches first made the announcement of the arrival of money, Orunmila suggested that they should make divination before going for it. The others made jest of him with the decision that a time would come when Orunmila would not eat any food prepared for him, without first embarking on prior divination. Ogun had said that God hearkened to their yearnings and aspirations by sending money to them to end trading by barter which was the only medium of exchange at the time. What was the necessity, Ogun had queried, of making divination before going for it. He dissociated himself from Orunmila's suggestion of prior divination.

Little did they know that God had his own time for sending money to the world as a unit of value. Since the divinities preferred to pre-empt God's own timing, He decided to send down money to the world to end the lives of the greedy and to benefit those who persevered.

Curiously enough, all the divinities who leaped blindly into the vault of money returned to heaven through it. Orunmila was beginning to wonder why all those who went for money in haste and hurry did not return. He decided to embark on divination before making any move. At divination, he was told that money would only stay and endure with those who mastered it and that the only means of mastering it was by giving it the food it eats. That meant that he was to make sacrifice with two pigeons, two ladders, and 2 U-bolts. Orunmila proceeded to make the sacrifice at the site of the money heap. He retained one ladder and one U-bolt after giving the remaining ones to Esu.

The following morning, he left for the money heap. On getting there, he served it with the blood of the pigeon, positioned the ladder on it and nailed it down with the U-bolt. In consonance with the prescription at divination, he returned home after making the sacrifice without touching the heap. When he came back the following morning, Esu had positioned an elongated ladder stretching into the higher reaches of the heap. As advised at divination, he started the long process of climbing the ladder to excavate the heap from its top. Each time he dug up to where he saw the instruments earlier used by the other divinities unsuccessfully to extract the heap before they died, he found a number of cowries placed on their chests and kept the numbers separately. It is the number of cowries found on the chests of each divinity that the offsprings, adherents and priests of those divinities use for divination to this day. Those on whose chest he found 4 cowries are consulted by their children and priests at divination with the same number.

Those on whose chest he found 8, 16 or several cowries are consulted accordingly with those numbers at divination. These are the diviners who consult Oracle with cowries.

In this way, Orunmila was able to excavate all the money (cowries) to his house. On getting home, he gave the number of cowries he found on the chests of the divinities to their respective children which they started using for divination. Orunmila thus became the only divinity who succeeded in excavating the heap of money from top to bottom without losing his life. That is also why Orunmila's shrine is the only one traditionally decorated with a seat of cowries, in commemoration of his success in digging money from the top.

At divination, the person should be advised that he can only become prosperous without being in a hurry to acquire wealth. If he is patient, he will be the dispenser of fortune to others around him. His patience should be inexhaustible.

Any person for whom Ogbe-Ose comes out at Ugboodu will surely become rich in life. The person should forbid the palm tree maggot (Ogongo, Iworiwo or Iton in Yoruba and Oruu in Bini). He should refrain from ever diving into the water. He should forbid groundnut and meat cut with someone else's teeth. If he dives into the river, Olokun will surely seize him because he is not likely to have performed the requisite sacrifice. He can bath however with water taken out from the river but should not swim inside the river. He must not take up paid employment because he will be dismissed from the job. His only profession is trading, and Ifa art on the side-line. He will do business with white expatriates. He should always serve Sango, Ogun and Olokun along with his Ifa.

How Orunmila got his Parrot

As earlier indicated, the Parrot was to play a significant role in the work of the divinities, but try as they did to get hold of it, they did not succeed. Parrots did not fly within the reach of the human grip. Meanwhile, Orunmila had a dream in which his guardian angel advised him to start the only farm he ever made in his life. It was to be a maize farm. That was the sacrifice he had to make not only for getting a parrot but also for avoiding death through the money coming to the world. He proceeded to make the farm on which he only planted maize. When the maize matured for harvesting he did not go to the farm. The corn became dry. All the animals of the forest and the birds of the sky, went to his farm to feed on his corn. It was time once again for Esu to compensate him for the elaborate sacrifices he had been offering to him. Esu moved to his farm to cut the stems of the maize plants half-way. A swarm of Parrots had been hovering in the sky in search of food to eat when they sighted Orunmila's farm.

When the parrots got the farm, as soon as they stepped on the plants to feed on the corn, they dropped to the ground. Traditionally, when the parrot's feet touch the ground, it will never fly up again. In that way, all the Parrots were down in Orunmila's farm. When he subsequently came to the farm he collected all the parrots to his house. Thereafter, he sold them to the other divinities and kept only one. We have already seen how the Parrot chronicled the arrival of money to the world, by showing Aje wanbeoo, wanbeoo, meaning: "money is there". That is why when this Odu comes out at Ugboodu, the person is advised to rear a parrot, and to farm in maize as a part-time vocation.

Chapter 25

OGBE - OFUN OGBE - KULEJO

II I
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I I

While in heaven, he is known to have performed five principal divination ceremonies. He made divination for two brothers of the Ape/Monkey kindred called Edon and Ariwo. They were told to make sacrifice and to stop being argumentive in order to avoid sudden death. Edon made the sacrifice but Ariwo refused. Nonetheless they did not refrain from their constant quarrels and arguments. One day, the two brothers were quarreling over a fruit on top of a tree. The argument between them attracted the hunter who took a shot at them. Ariwo was hit and he fell to the ground, dead. Edon ran away.

At divination therefore, the person should be told to serve Esu with a he-goat and to refrain from engaging in arguments with his maternal relations to avoid being poisoned to death. It is believed that without his altercation with Edon, Ariwo would not have died.

He made divination for Cough and Throat

His surrogates Baba kou-kou and Baba kan-gidi-kan-gidi made divination for the Cough and the Throat when leaving heaven. They advised the Cough to make sacrifice in order to have an abode on earth. He was told to make sacrifice with kolanut, coconut and a small chicken for Esu. He made the sacrifice. They also advised the Throat to make sacrifice to Esu with a he-goat, palm oil, honey and salt in order to avoid the risk on earth of harbouring a parasitic and troublesome lodger. He refused to do the sacrifice. They both came to the world separately. On getting to the world, the Cough was looking for a suitable abode. He approached the Throat to give him temporary accommodation and the latter agreed.

Meanwhile, the Throat began to develop interest in the materials used by the Cough for sacrifice in heaven, which were: kolanuts and coconuts. As the Throat ate more and more of these materials, the Cough began to develop in his house. The three materials with which Throat refused to make sacrifice in heaven, viz: palm oil, honey and salt, are the antidotes which would have stopped the Cough from rapid development, but he refused to use them. As the Cough developed, the Throat fell ill, so much so, that his voice became in-audible. The Throat then went to meet Orunmila for divination, where he was told that he was the architect of his own misfortune, by refusing to make sacrifice as he was told to do in heaven.

Orunmila however advised him to make sacrifice with two he-goats, honey, palm oil, roasted coconut and roasted kolanut. He quickly produced the materials. After the sacrifice, Orunmila took part of the materials, added burnt marble seeds (Akhue in Bini), roasted kolanut, burnt them and mixed the ground powder with salt, palm oil and honey and gave the mixture to the Throat to be

licking from time to time. Since the materials used for preparing the mixture were the very things that Cough forbade, he ran into the house of the Stomach for refuge as soon as the Throat started licking the medicine. It was only then that the Throat began to have peace of mind.

At divination, the person should be told to make sacrifice to Esu and to refrain from accommodating any lodging visitors for sometime, to avoid the danger of boarding someone who will create hypertensive problems for him, such as insomnia or sleeplessness. He should refrain from eating kolanuts and coconuts.

How Ogbe-Kulejo brought salt to the World

After making the prescribed sacrifices, Ogbe-kulejo consulted the elders of heaven and they gave him good wishes for his sojourn on earth. Before leaving, he was asked to fetch sand from the sea for sacrifice, and he did so. They parcelled it for him and told him to hold it with his hands to take to the world. At that time, there was nothing on earth for salinating the taste of soup. He was told to leave the parcel at a road junction as soon as he got to the world. He did so as soon as he arrived. Before the following morning, the parcel had turned into an ever-multiplying heap of salt.

When the wife of the Oba was going to fetch water from the river early in the morning, she saw a heap of white substance at the road junction and imagined that it was not there the previous day. She sampled it and the taste was good. She then packed out of it into her pot and took it home. On getting home, she showed it to the Oba who also tasted it. The Oba gave her two cowries to go and drop on the salt site.

Meanwhile, the Oba convened an emergency conference of his people. As soon as the people were assembled, the Oba asked for anyone who had a new arrival since the previous day in his house to identify himself. Everybody said that they had no visiting strangers. The father of Ogbe-Ofun however declared that his wife had delivered a baby the night before. The Oba then explained that his reason for inviting the people was to witness the strange discovery made by his wife that morning. He called on his wife to bring a part of the salt which everyone present, tasted. The taste delighted everybody and they all came to the conclusion that it was the newly born child, being the only new arrival in their midst, who brought the salt from heaven. The Oba ordered everybody to be collecting from the salt heap after depositing money, as he did, at the site. Very soon, there was plenty of money at the site which the Oba invited the parents of Ogbe-Ofun to collect at the salt-site for their own use. That was how Ogbe-Ofun brought salt from heaven and prosperity to his parents.

At divination, the person should be advised to make sacrifice with salt and sea sand in order to prepare the way for prosperity to come to him.

Ogbe-Ofun's experience in the World

He was the last of the disciples (ODUS) of Ejiogbe to come to the world. He had heard echoes of the problems which his elder disciples were experiencing on earth. He was therefore determined to make elaborate preparations for his trip before setting out. He was told to make sacrifice to his guardian angel with a pig and to serve Esu with a he-goat. He was told that prosperity would come to him on earth through his guardian angel and not through human beings. He made the sacrifices. At the same time, Ogun also set out for the world. He too went for divination. They went to the same Awos whose names are as follows:

To to, lo laagbo owuanro.

Gbogo gbogo laagbo owo omon.

Orogba Orogba lauko kifi ologba,
 Orieni louje egun,
 Ojo ye olu wonron,
 Eniyon tiyon mesonon ofun kpin,
 Awonlo difa fun Orunmila,
 Abufun Ogun alagbede,
 Nijo awon meje fikole orun,
 Bowa ni ikole aye.

Ogun was advised to make sacrifice to his guardian angel with a dog, cock and snail and to give he-goat to Esu. Since he traditionally relied on his physical strength in preference to sacrifice, he refused to make the sacrifices. On getting to the world, Ogun built his house on the brow of the hill overlooking the river, while Ogbe-ofun built his house on the river embankment. Orunmila took to farming in addition to Ifa practice while Ogun Alagbede became an iron smelter. One day, Ogun proposed to Orunmila that they should return to heaven to make a representation to God to release prosperity to come to them on earth. On getting to heaven, God persuaded them to return to earth where he promised to take care of their problems. With that assurance, they both returned to earth.

The following day, God arranged all forms of treasures including, money and beads into a big clay pot and sealed the top with pap (Eko Ogirl) and he sent two messengers to carry it to Ogun as the food he sent to him. When the heavenly messengers delivered the pot to Ogun, he opened the cover with his scissors wand and discovered that the pot contained pap. Ogun queried that Eko-Ogirl was not his staple food. He added that since it was only his junior brother Ogbe-ofun who ate Eko-Ogirl as his staple food; he decided to keep the pot for him.

At his morning divination before leaving for farm on that day, Ifa advised Ogbe-ofun to roast two tubers of yam for Ogun and to peel them attractively, and to deliver them to Ogun on his way from the farm. As he was returning from the farm, Ogun greeted him and he presented the two yams to him. Ogun was very happy to receive his staple food. In return, Ogun gave him the pot of Eko, which he happily received. Ogbe-ofun carried the pot to his house. When he opened it on getting home he discovered that the Eko-Ogirl on top of the pot was only a membrane concealing an underlay full of treasures. He collected the treasures and kept them safely.

Five days later, Ogun cried out again of hunger and suffering and his vibrations shook the earth and echoed in heaven. The Almighty Father prepared a bigger pot loaded with more precious treasures filling the top again with pap. God was concealing the contents of the pot with pap so that the carriers might not know what was inside it. God sent four messengers to carry the second pot again to Ogun. When the pot was delivered to Ogun, he opened it with his scissors wand and saw that it was again filled with pap. Once more, he kept it for his junior brother Ogbe-ofun. When the latter overheard the cries of Ogun, it was his signal that the great Ogun was hungry. Once more, he prepared roasted yams for him with a bottle of oil and a gourd of wine when he was returning from the farm. When he delivered the food to Ogun, the latter gave him the pot of pap which he again happily took home. It was however so heavy that he could not carry it. He invited one of Ogun's servants to assist him in carrying the pot to his house. With his treasure finds, he bought several slaves, a horse, and several furniture to adorn his house. He also prepared beaded apparels, shoes and caps for himself, while also preparing a beaded dress for his horse. He was now farming with the help of his newly acquired slaves.

The following day, Ogun cried out once again and the vibration shook the grounds of heaven and earth as if an earthquake had occurred. At that point, God began to wonder what Ogun had been doing with the gifts He was sending to him. Once again, God prepared a third pot of treasures and pap which Ogun disposed of, in the same manner as he did =to the previous ones. After Ogbe-fun had given him roasted yams in exchange for the pot, Ogun complained that God was not sending him what he wanted, while the former exclaimed that he was satisfied with the staple food he was getting.

Three days later, Ogun roared once again. This time, God responded by sending for Ogun and Ogbe-ofun to present themselves before Him in heaven. On the eve of their departure to answer the call of God, Ogun put a massive piece of iron in his furnace and heated it until the following morning. Ogbe-hunle was also making his preparation for the trip. The following morning, Ogun carried the red hot iron on his shoulder and left for heaven with it. He was burning everything on sight along the way. When he got to God's palace, he lifted the iron up as if to burn the Almighty Father. God commanded him to stand still in the distance. He asked for Ogbe-ofun and he replied that he was on his way.

Ogbe-ofun dressed up himself and his horse in beaded outfit and left for heaven. When he came to God's palace, he alighted from his horse, and prostrated in full to greet his Father. God looked at Ogbe-ofun and asked Ogun what he used to do with the food, He had been sending him. Ogun asked God whether He knew him to feed on pap, adding defiantly that he always gave them to Ogbe-ofun who alone knew how to feed on pap. God then looked at Ogun lamentably and proclaimed that Ogun would never again have peace of mind throughout eternity and that he would always be restless and destitute. On the other hand, He proclaimed that Ogbe-ofun would always live in peace and prosperity and that people would always serve him wherever he happened to be. That is why to this day, Ogun is always either being heated or beaten on the head, while food comes to meet Ogbe-ofun wherever he may be. That is how this ODU earned the nickname of Ogbe-ofun that is, one who receives food in his house.

With that proclamation God cleared them to return to earth. On getting home, Ogbe-ofun brought out a pig, a goat and a ram for a feast of thanksgiving to his Ifa to which he invited his awos, and sang in praise of them.

At Ugboodu, the person should be told that he would be enriched by his guardian angel and that he should always receive any gift offerings with satisfaction and use them for himself. He should never give away to others any gifts offered to him no matters how unappealing they may seem.

He made divination for the Article Seller

When this Odu comes out for a trader or businessman, he should be advised to be satisfied with his wares and not to steal from others.

Ogbefunfunu,

Onuu kooja, onuu koodea,

Kaamaan to da kpelu egba,

Odafa fun Olushowo kekere.

These are the Awos who advised the seller of small articles not to steal other people's wares for sale along with his own. He however retorted that since he had neither stolen nor was inclined to steal, there was no necessity for him to make precautionary sacrifice. He had been told to offer a he-goat to Esu, but he did not do it.

He was selling Oja agbaa (Agbagii). For failing to make sacrifice, Esu decided to punish him by cajoling him to steal a matchet which he sold along with his Agbagi or mini-cutlass. After selling the stolen cutlass, Esu revealed his theft and he was instantly arrested. He begged for forgiveness, but his appeal fell on deaf ears. He then requested to be allowed to make the sacrifice he owed. This request was granted and he offered the he-goat to Esu. After eating his he-goat, Esu intervened by challenging his accusers why Olushowo kerere was arrested. He was told that the man had stolen. Esu declared that the man was falsely accused because he did not steal. An argument ensued, but before the verification, Esu transformed the stolen cutlass into Oja-Agbaa. In vain, they searched for the stolen cutlass but it was no where to be found. The accused was then acquitted.

At divination, the person should be advised to make sacrifice to Esu to avoid being accused of an offence he would not be able to deny.

He made divination for Oba Alaaye

Oba Alaaye was suffering from destitution and deprivation. Eventually, Ogbe-Ofun visited his palace in the company of the following awos:

Mee mugba shewe, meemu awo shewe,
Meeru gagaga, ki mi domi ewe si uro ode, lo Oba lu,
Mee mon oron alaye kimoshe eniyon ona efon,
Omo lo ogogogo owu bababa di ino,
Adifa fun alaaye.

They advised him to make a feast for the whole town with food and drinks. Oba Alaaye then called his wife to reason with her, on how they were going to afford the means of feasting the entire community. They both hatched a strategy for dealing with the situation.

The following night, Oba Alaaye got a lantern and toured from one farm to the other until he came across a farm with two long barns of yams. The wife of the Oba fetched sixteen pots into which they stacked all the yams they stole from the barn. In anticipation of the time when the owner of the yams would cry out, the Oba's wife filled all the sixteen pots with water. The next day, the farmer who owned the yams was able to trace the footsteps of the intruders right up to the backyard of the palace. Satisfied that the thief came from the palace, he shouted that he traced the footsteps of the thief who stole yams from his farm to the back of Alaaye's house. Alaaye reacted by inviting the people to comb his house for any trace of the yams. There was no trace of stolen yams because they had been dug beneath the earth, under the water pots. They only saw several pots of water. Asked why there were so many water pots in his house, he queried whether they did not know that dyestuffs was often produced in his house. After searching in vain for the stolen yams, the investigators left the palace and the feast was made in earnest.

Alaaye had three hunters and three Ifa Priests. The awos used to make divination for him every five days. On the next divination day, the awos predicted to him that his three hunters would return from the forest with different animals on that very day, but that he should not eat out of them. They were to be given to the awos. He agreed.

Not long afterwards, the first hunter came in with an antelope. They severed the head and put it on Esu's plate while the Awos kept the body in their bag. The second hunter came in with a deer which was treated the same way. They waited for the third hunter to arrive. He later came in with a bush goat (Edu in Yoruba and Oguonziran in Bini). As the hunter was returning however, the

favourite wife of Alaaye was wondering where they were going to procure meat for use in the house, stopped the hunter's approach. She forced him to surrender the animal to her because the awos had taken the first two. She did not want them to take the third one as well.

She roasted the meat, butchered it and made soup with the small parts. The awo began to wonder why the third hunter did not arrive with his game. When he failed to arrive, they prepared the sacrifice with the heads of the first two animals and sent it to Esu. Thereafter, they left for home.

The following morning, the favourite wife of Alaaye prepared pounded yam and soup with the meat of the bush goat and gave him to eat. When the Oba took the first helping from the food, it got stuck in his throat. The second and third helpings also got stuck in his throat and he began to choke. As he started perspiring profusely, he sent for the awos.

When they arrived, he queried them for not revealing to him the previous day that he was going to die the following day. They retorted by asking him what he ate. He replied that he ate pounded yam. The awos requested the wife to bring the pot of soup. When they saw the head of the bush goat, they asked the wife how she came by it and she confessed that she seized it from the third hunter. She was then told to save Alaaye's life. Her family began to beg for forgiveness. They asked her family to atone for her misdeed by bringing two goats, two rams, two cocks, two hens, two fishes, two rats and 2 bags of money. After the fines were produced, they brought the head of the bush goat from the pot of soup, opened its mouth, and found a mushroom inside its throat, which it was apparently eating when the hunter shot it. Since Ifa knew that Alaaye forbade mushroom, that was why he ordered that he should surrender all the day's game to the awos who did not forbid mushroom. The awo then prepared leaves, squeezed them and gave to Alaaye to drink and he instantly vomited the mussels of pounded yam, that got stuck in his throat.

As soon as he became well, he sentenced the offending wife to summary execution. The royal executioner realising that Alaaye took the decision in anger, beseeched him on three different occasions to temper justice with mercy. He refused on the ground that his wife knew that he was capable of killing a cow to eat, and yet she wanted to end his life with the meat of a bush goat. At this point, the executioner presented his wife for confirmatory proclamation.

As he was about to pronounce the final condemnation, the wife held on to his feet and went on her knees to remind him that it was a woman who fetched the water that filled 16 pots recently. As soon as she said that, he embraced her and pronounced forgiveness. After the feast, prosperity returned to Alaaye.

At divination, the person should be told that he is suffering from poverty, but then he should endeavour to borrow money to do a feast for members of his family. He should refrain for sometime from eating bush meat, but should forbid mushroom.