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## Prologue To Volume III

Orunmila has revealed that when God created the divinities and man, He intended that success was to be measured in terms of one's contributions to the objective good. The barometer for measuring such contributions was expected to be the degree of harmony, co-operation and love fostered among his creatures. On the other hand Esu was determined to substitute these goals with discord, confrontation and hatred, as the values of a self-centred world.

Moreover, Orunmila will reveal that "money" and "power" became the tantalizers held out by Esu for manipulating and teleguiding the human psyche and soul. The quest for these subjective values provided Esu the parameters with which he constructed an anthropocentric universe, a factor which became largely responsible for the capriciousness of earthly values and standards, as human history reveals.

In this and subsequent books, the author will endeavour to present a bird's-eye-view of how money has affected human socio-political and religious institutions in the last two thousand years, since man engaged himself in the search for the meaning of life on earth.

Since the attention of thinkers moved from the study of man in a state of nature to the study of man in society, one fact has been irrefutable, which is, that man has not succeeded in his vain attempt to build a paradise on earth. History has reflected man's attempts to solve the problem of survival through brute force, cheating, robbery, customs and command behind a facade of central governance.

Starting with the feudal system in which man was enslaved by traditional usage and command by head chiefs, Lords, the aristocracy of birth and wealth and kings, man tried to manumit himself by changing to a society in which survival came to depend on leaving the individual to be free to organise his life as he pleased in what came to be known as the Laissez-Faire approach to societal management. It subsequently turned out to be the institutionalization of the contrivance of Esu to cut men adrift in order to divide and rule them instead of allowing them to cooperate with one another to optimise the general good of all. It also set the stage which allowed the few hundreds or thousands to become outrageously rich at the expense of the impoverished millions of people. The inequitable attributes of that system culminated in the creation of a class structure in society made up of the "haves" and the "have-nots".

The Laissez-Faire concept created such a furore of discontent in human governance that its protagonists renovated it with the more phlegmatic gloss of "the Market System". Under the market system, the propensity to maximize personal gains at the expense of the less privileged majority became the axis around which individual and societal efforts revolved. The proponents of the acquisitive pull argued that by allowing individuals to be free to maximise their greed, the interest of society writ-large will be safe-guarded. The profit nexus became the hub-house of human eco-political stimulus.

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Right from its outset, the exotic market system was held by the defenceless majority with suspicion and distrust, because the antediluvian biblically-inspired "Usury Laws" under which millions of people were decimated for "the heinous crime of making profit especially from money lending" still held sway. On its part, the church subsequently sanctified the Usury Laws in 1830 after condemning it for 1,000 years and that was when itself.

The philosophy of wealth at all cost brought with it a new social problem. According to Heilbroner in his book on "The worldly philosophers", the problem became "how to keep the poor to (remain) poor." The political arithmeticians of the eighteenth century generally advocated that "unless the poor were kept poor, they could not be counted upon to do an honest day's toil without asking for exorbitant wages." A leading moralist wrote in 1723 that "To make society happy, it is necessary that great numbers should be wretched as well as poor." Another school advocated that "the poor were meant by God to be poor and even if they were not, their poverty was essential to the wealth of the nation." That was a reverberation of Aristotle's dictum of 300 BC that "From the hour of their birth some are marked out for subjection and some for command."

Beginning with the wonderful world pictured by Adam Smith in his book on "the Wealth of Nations" in 1776, through the gloomy world of Parson Malthus and David Ricardo, the beautiful world of the Utopian socialists, right up to the inexorable world of Karl Marx, the melee of eco-philosophical argument was how to salvage the poor working class from the ugly excesses of the capitalists. History is today repeating itself which is why this matter has found expression in an abstract book on Ifism. How man used the quest for profit to subjugate, de-humanise, rob, aggress, and destabilize his fellow men nationally and internationally will be the prologue to the next and subsequent books, in order to demonstrate the dictum that MONEY is the root of all evils.

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## **AGBIGBA OR OGUEGA**

It has often been argued by Binis of Edo State of Nigeria, that Oguega (Agbigba in Yoruba) is one of the principal divinities. Oguega is the art of divination prevalent in many parts of Southern Nigeria and former Bini colonies inside and outside Nigeria. It is necessary to resolve the question of whether or not he was a divinity. Orunmila reveals that Agbigba (Oguega) was never a divinity, but his own (Orunmila's) servant, just like Okpelle. The similarity in their methods and styles of divination demonstrate that Agbigba must have learnt his art of divination from Orunmila.

Ogbe-Ate however reveals how Ominigun (Ominigbon in Bini) came to be the servant of Orunmila. It has already been revealed that at the beginning of existence in heaven, Diviners used to perform their arts of divination in the market place. Orunmila and all his Olodus used to go to the market to divine for all those who wanted to find out anything about their lives. We shall later see from Ofun-Ogbe how the Almighty God disguised to the market to test the good faith of the diviners.

## **THE CURSE OF GOD ON OMINIGUN (OMINIGBON)**

Ofun-Ogbe will also later tell us how Ominigun earned the wrath of God. Although not a divinity, he was always taking every opportunity to steal the show from the divinities. God was however anxious to reward Ominigun's proficiency, but had first to test his power of endurance. He relied so much on his proficiency that he was not given to making sacrifice. It was always said in heaven that Ominigun knew how to direct his clients to make sacrifice, but never bothered to make any for himself. Desirous of upgrading him to the rank of a divinity, God invited Ominigun and the divinities to participate in a contest. God had kept beads, cowries, white and red chalk, and alligator pepper inside a calabash and wanted each of the invitees to tell him what He kept in His inner chamber.

Orunmila on his part had been warned at divination neither to honour God's invitation nor to participate in the contest. He was told instead to serve his Ifa with a cow and to use the meat to prepare a feast to unspecified august visitors who were coming to his house on that day. He was also told to serve his Ifa with wild melon (Elegede in Yoruba and Eyen in Bini), but try as he did to procure it from the market, he was not successful. He however served his Ifa without Elegede but prepared for the feast all the same.

Meanwhile, all the divinities were assembled in the outer chamber of God and one after the other, they were told to disclose what He kept in the inner chamber. One by one they tried their extra-perceptive prowess. At the end of the contest, it was only Ominigun (Ominigbon) who succeeded in revealing the container and its contents in God's inner chamber. He was given a standing ovation, but Esu, to whom he gave no sacrifice, was poised to thwart his victory by beclouding his vision with a veil of (Amubo in Yoruba and Osobonomasunu in Bini). Amubo translates in English to unconsummated success.

Before the time came for God to reward them, they were all very hungry and thirsty.

God brought out a large container of wild melons and gave one to each of the contestants, while giving two to Ominigun. God told all of them to reassemble in His Outer Chamber on the fifth day and to appear in their ceremonial regalias because He was going to make an important proclamation. He wanted to use that occasion to proclaim the appointment of Ominigun as a divinity. God also sent one melon to Orunmila through his colleagues and told them to direct him not to fail to attend the next conference, having sent a message on that occasion that he was serving his Ifa. It is commonly known that Orunmila does not move out of his house on the day he serves his Ifa.

All the divinities, including Ominigun tramped to Orunmila's house to give him God's message and to verify whether in truth, he was serving his Ifa. They arrived at his house to discover that he had prepared the table for a sumptuous feast. Without waiting to be invited, they all sat down to eat and drink to their heart's content. It was not until they had enjoyed his hospitality, that they delivered God's message to Orunmila. He was very happy to receive the melon because he needed it to serve his Ifa.

When the others saw how happy he was to receive the melon, they all surrendered their's to him because they said that they did not know how to eat melon. He expressed his profound gratitude to them after which they dispersed.

The following morning, Akpetebi (Orunmila's wife) asked him where the food for the day was going to come from, since he had used all the foodstuff and money in the house for the previous day's feast. He replied that she could be cooking out of the melons until clients came in. When she took out one of the melons to cut up for cooking, she noticed a metallic sound from within it. She was surprised to see that the melon was laden with beads and money. She quickly called Orunmila to see what she had discovered. The entire consignment of melons, yielded beads and money which filled a whole room in the house. Orunmila had been translated into unforeseen wealth and prosperity. That is why when Ofun-Ogbe comes out for a person during Ifa initiation ceremony at Ugboodu, he is often advised not to part with any gift given to him by a higher authority no matter how unappealing it may seem. The person is bound to be prosperous by a stroke of fortune.

Meanwhile, Orunmila bought a horse, prepared a beaded dress for himself and the horse complete with cap and shoes to match, against the next invitation of God.

On the appointed day, God had prepared a second throne and positioned it close to his Divine Throne and earmarked it to be occupied by the best-dressed invitee to the conference. In fact since God gave two melons to Ominigun, He intended him to have the means of funding the best attire and for him to occupy the second throne before upgrading him to the status of a divinity.

One after the other the divinities appeared at the conference chamber and took their seats. Ominigun also came in his usual rags and sat on the floor. God was surprised to see him. At that morning's divination, Orunmila had been told to make sure that he was the last to arrive at the conference. As soon as he made sure that all the other invitees were already seated, he got dressed in his new beaded regalia and rode on his horse with a beaded flywhisk in hand to the conference chamber. As soon as he alighted from the

horse, he was given a spontaneous ovation and after genuflecting to greet God, he was motioned to take the second seat by the side of God. Almost instantaneously, the other divinities acclaimed Orunmila, as Orisa-Keji, that is, the next divinity to God, which he does not often like to be called.

As soon as all were assembled, God observed that no other divinity was adorned with beads except Orunmila. He then asked the others what they did with the melons he gave them at the previous meeting. They all announced in unison that since He gave them no entertainment during the day-long meeting, they feasted in Orunmila's house after the meeting, and since he needed it to serve his Ifa, they surrendered their own to him en-masse. After a deep reflection, God proclaimed that for parting with the "Food" he gave them, they should from then on forbid the eating of melon, with the exception of the divinity of wisdom, Orunmila.

God then brought out His divine instrument of authority and proclaimed that any divinity who ate melon would from that day lose his power and authority (ASE). He next turned to Ominigun and told him that forever and from then on, he would always go in rags unless he sought solace under the cover of Orunmila, and that he would always sit on the floor to be able to foretell and divine. That is why to this day, an Agbigba (Oguega) diviner can only prosper if he has his own Ifa. On that note, the conference dispersed.

It is for this reason that some adherents of Ifa refer to Orunmila as Orisa-Keji (the next to God). But Orunmila has warned the writer never to refer to him as Orisa-Keji because God did not proclaim it on that day. God only referred to him as the Divinity of wisdom, apparently for successfully using the law of unintended consequences to obtain from the other divinities the gifts He gave to them. God never revealed to the other divinities and Ominigun, the significance of the Divine gifts they parted with.

That was how Ominigun lost the only opportunity of being up-graded to the rank of a divinity, and why it is said that any divinity that eats wild melon loses his or her authority.

#### **ORUNMILA BUYS OMINIGUN AS A SLAVE**

The curse on Ominigun was later to manifest when he subsequently fell from Grace to Grass. Try as he did to make ends meet, he could not. One night, his guardian angel appeared to him in a dream and told him that since the curse of God was on him, his only salvation lay in going to the market to offer himself for sale as a slave.

He hesitated for sometime, since he was not given to going for divination. When things became really difficult for him, he eventually decided to obey the injunction of his guardian angel. He had been warned by his guardian angel that his fortunes would always undulate by rising and falling, unless he had his own Ifa. Having demonstrated that he was a more proficient seer, he had always looked down on Orunmila and wondered how he could condescend to request him to prepare Ifa for him.

At one of his morning divinations, Orunmila was told to offer a he-goat to Esu to avoid the danger of buying a slave that could outshine and subvert him. He made the sacrifice without delay. On the next market day, he went to the market as usual. After getting

to his stall, he began his work. As he was divining for some one, in came a slave who offered himself for sale to a willing buyer. The slave looked very active and well built. Orunmila quickly offered to buy him. After paying him the asking price, Orunmila told him to sit down and wait to accompany him home at the close of the market.

Meanwhile, Orunmila went into the market to buy some materials he was to take home for his work, but before returning from his shopping spree, the slave had disappeared. When Orunmila returned to his stall, he asked after the slave he had just bought and his neighbours told him that they thought the man had accompanied him in his shopping. In vain, he went in search of the slave. He then sounded his Ifa who told him that, that was the slave against whom he was advised to make the sacrifice he made before coming to the market. He was told not to worry because he would meet the slave waiting for him at home.

True to the manifestation of his market divination, he actually met the slave waiting for him at home. Asked how he knew the way to Orunmila's house, the slave declared that he saw the way to Orunmila's home from his sitting position in the market and thought it was best to come and wait for him at home to prepare for his return. With that, Orunmila was left in no doubt regarding the potentialities of this strange slave.

As soon as he settled down, Orunmila asked for his name and he gave it as Ominigun (OMINIGBON in Bini). Meanwhile, he explained to Orunmila how he lost all his heavenly belongings and began to go in rags and to beg for food to eat. When he subsequently went for divination, he was told that his only salvation lay in getting himself to be bought as a slave. That was how he came to the market to be bought up as a slave. Orunmila, immediately invited Akpetebi, his wife to treat Ominigun with the reverence he deserved and not to treat him as a slave because he was a person of substance.

The following morning, some people were coming to Orunmila's house for divination and without seeing them, Ominigun declared from the interior of the house that there were three persons coming to Orunmila for divination and he mentioned the problems each of them wanted to resolve through divination as well as telling them what sacrifices they were to make.

The practice of pre-empting Orunmila to divine for his visitors became so regular that very soon no one bothered to listen to Orunmila's long process of divination anymore. Callers began to prefer the instant divination of Ominigun. Besides, he was in the habit of staging dance demonstrations every eight days at which he exhibited his diabolical prowess. He was capable of standing on his ears and dancing to the delight of spectators whilst at the same time divining for them without using any instruments. He was also capable of severing his head from his body while both parts danced separately to be joined together in the air. He had clearly outshone his master, who was beginning to suffer from lack of patronage since all his previous clients swung to his supposed slave. Unfortunately, Ominigun's ephemeral success beclouded his vision and he never bothered to ask Orunmila to prepare Ifa for him. That is why, to this day, it is well nigh impossible for an Agbigba diviner to endure in prosperity unless he is discreet enough



to have his own Ifa.

Ominigun had come to make so much money from his performances and divination that he was able to put up several imposing buildings and halls around his master's residence. People were beginning to wonder whether Orunmila was indeed the master of Ominigun, who had tacitly but clearly, stolen the show from his master.

While Orunmila took the situation with equanimity, Esu was poised to intervene on the side of Orunmila. At the next dancing session, Ominigun was again demonstrating to the delight of his spectators. Once again, he severed his head from the rest of his body and while his body was dancing on the ground, his head was dancing in the air. Meanwhile, Esu seized his head and took it into the air never to return to his body. After the body had danced for sometime without the head to keep it together, the body fell to the ground, dead. That was the end of Ominigun in heaven. He subsequently left for the world without his head, which explains why he has no shrine and no distinct mode of worship. Orunmila then inherited all of Ominigun's belongings, being his master.

### **OMINIGBON EMERGES ON EARTH**

The divinities had meanwhile abandoned the earth to mankind. There was a place called Ibere-aiye or Eziagbon, which was later to be called Ugodomigodo and subsequently Ile-Ibinu or Benin. Orunmila has revealed that it was at Ibere-aiye (Eziagbon) he first landed and settled briefly, but later moved to settle at Uhe which was subsequently called Ile-Ife.

The first human inhabitants of Ibere-aiye (Eziagbon) were Etebite and his wife Eteghori. They had established a habitation at Eziagbon and it expanded tremendously. Following his demise in heaven, Ominigbon appeared on earth as a male child in the household of Etebite. As he grew up, his parents noticed that he was able to foretell upcoming events with precision. He was able to warn prospective victims about the imminent approach of danger and how to avert it. Whenever death targetted a victim on earth, Ominigbon would warn the person and advise him on the precautionary moves to make. His proficiency as a seer soon brought him in contact with the royalty. He was often invited to divine for the royal household and he invariably did so quite satisfactorily. Nonetheless, the unparalleled efficacy of his divining was to put him at odds with more experienced and elderly diviners.

At the same time, his pre-emptive moves were beginning to annoy the divinities, especially Death. He also incurred the displeasure of Esu because his peculiar mode of divination negated the offer of sacrifice to the divinity of evil. Meanwhile, Death had sent messengers from heaven to come and fetch the King of Eziagbon from the earth.

As soon as Death's messengers took off from heaven, he went to the palace to warn the King that Death was on his trail. He advised the King to prepare an elaborate feast for visitors who were due in the palace the following day.

The King adhered to the advice of Ominigbon and prepared food and drinks for a palace feast the following day. Among those invited to the feast was Ominigbon himself. At about noon, seven men arrived at the palace but before they could deliver their

Ate lost no time in making the sacrifice to Esu.

Meanwhile, the king of Eziagbon ordered 100 men and 100 women to be incarcerated, in separate apartments for keeping prisoners of war, without disclosing the purpose of the exercise to anyone.

After eating the he-goat offered by Ogbe-Ate, Esu went late in the night to the location of the female internees and induced into labour one of the women who was at an advanced stage of pregnancy. The woman delivered a male child before dawn.

Later that morning, all the invited guests and contestants were assembled. The king was the last to take his seat. As soon as he was seated, he revealed that he was anxious to proclaim the most proficient seer in his kingdom. In that connection he had kept certain materials in separate locations. He added that the first seer, priest or diviner to declare the aggregate contents of the two places would be given the title of the High priest of the Kingdom of Eziagbon (or Ibere-Aiye).

While others were still fidgeting with and rattling their divination instruments, Ogbeide, the son of Ominigbon stepped forward and revealed that the King had kept 100 men and 100 women in confinement since the previous evening. Others declared all sorts of things which were wide off the mark. It was the turn of Ogbe-Ate to speak. At divination, his own ODU came out and he chanted the relevant incantation, "that God (Olodumare) created the 200 divinities (Ugba Erumale), but that Esu infiltrated them. Since the King wanted to know the aggregate number of materials he kept in the two locations, he had the authority of Orunmila, the divinity of Wisdom to proclaim that there were 201 human beings under confinement.

The King who nodded his head approvingly when Ogbeide made his declaration began to show signs of uneasiness. After all the contestants had taken their turns, it was time for the king to declare the winner. Before doing so however, he decided to send two verifiers to each of the two chambers and to report their findings.

The two men who went to verify the male chamber declared that they counted 100 men. On the other hand, those who went to verify the female chamber disclosed that they counted 100 women and one newly born child. Although all eyes had turned on Ogbeide as the winner, it was eventually the visiting Ifa priest Ogbe-Ate, that became the cynosure of all eyes.

Ogbeide felt so disappointed that he conceded supremacy to Ogbe-Ate. Since Ogbe-Ate was only a visiting Ifa priest and not a citizen of Ibere-Aiye, he declined to accept appointment as the Chief Priest of the Kingdom. He offered it to Ogbeide who was equally correct in his disclosure. At that point the king intervened that without the participation of Ogbe-Ate, he would have declared Ogbeide the winner of the contest because he actually ordered 100 men and 100 women to be kept in confinement overnight. The king gave adequate compensation to Ogbe-Ate who was due to return to Uhe (now Ife) soon afterwards.

Baffled at the exactitude with which Ogbe-Ate made his declaration, Ogbeide offered to learn from the former, his art of Ifa divination. That was how the similarity between the 256 ODUS of Ifa and Oguega (Agbigba) came about as may be verified from the sixteen principal ODUS.

S/NO.	NAMES OF IFA'S ODUS	NAMES OF OGUEGA'S ODUS
1.	OGBE	OGBI
2.	OYEKU	AKO
3.	IWORI	OGHORI
4.	EDI	ODIN
5.	OBARA	OBA
6.	OKONRON	OKAN
7.	IROSUN	ORUHU
8.	OWANRIN	OGHAE
9.	EGITAN	IGHITAN
10.	OSA	OHA
11.	ETURA	ETURE
12.	IRETE	ETE
13.	EKA	EKA
14.	ETURUKPON	EROKHUA
15.	OSE	OSE
16.	OFUN	OHUN