



The wisdom behind the Igbo name “mgbeomasirichi”

But man's existence, his welfare, and destiny are totally caught up with the general behaviour of forces above, around, and underneath him. And while deploying the power of his reason, and utilizing his mental and physical skills to better his lot, man expends as much energy and ingenuity in trying to sustain the delicate balance between the various orders of his world view in order to ensure the continued welfare of his life and that of his family and such is the case at hand where man tries to grapple with realities beyond and around him and try to portray it by way of names, proverbs and tales etc.

Although Human history has revealed that above everything else that nobody has come out to say I know when God's will come to be as regards things of destiny or better put anything that has a theocentric undertone since all we know is that it will come to pass but the time we do not know and looking at all these the great saying came to capture the reality and it runs “God's time is the best” and **Igbo** race like every other tribe of its kind whose view of God is not separated from its day to day living and interaction in attempt to depict this believe try to be answering names that depicts their beliefs and the name mgbeomasirichi was not left out of these names that depict Igbo belief system with such vivid lucidity on what the igbos believe about God's time because the way of God is complex and his time is hard for us to predict but funny enough he does it at the point is needed but to men who is always ahead of time is too late.

And as a corollary to this name is Ogechukwu ka mma (God's time is the best) One might be tempted to say that God just felt like Abram is too short a name and let him make it longer by changing it to Abraham. Can we say that Jesus just woke up one day and felt like changing Simon to Peter? time immemorial one would discern through personal reflection that whatever is, has a raison d'être and **deductively** it follows that there is a reason for any name and that reason gives it its meaning and **etymology** and such is the case of this Igbo thought provoking name mgbomasirichi: it took its root from three Igbo words: mgbe;omasiri and chi. 'Mgbe' is an Igbo word meaning time, or literally interpreted as 'when' 'Omasiri' this means 'pleases' or 'wills' or in a loose language if one feel like Chi: For the Igbo man “chi is a participation in God (**Chukwu** or chi-ukzvu i.e. big God) since 'chi' means life or presence of God in man that is why we say personal chi in man. As such human beings do participate in God's life in their personal 'chi'. “Onye kwe chi ya ekwe”, if you are persistent your chi will go along with you”. his destiny is determined by the



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'chi' variously interpreted as his 'personal God' or guardian angel. . This nature and destiny are spoken of as 'uwa' and the personal 'chi' which every human being possesses.

Thus if any person does something characteristics of him/her, the Igbo say “ọ bụ etu ụwa ya dị or onye obula na chi ya” (i.e. it is how his/her nature is or everybody with his destiny}. The idea of 'chi' explains the elements of luck, fortune, destiny or fate unique to an individual. The Igbo say of a lucky man “ọ bụ onye chi ọma”. The Igbo nation like every other traditional African tribes name their children based on circumstances and that reflects the meaning of the name and opine with apt clarity and intelligibility what the person giving the name has in mind. The names brings to mind the worldview of the people and as it is these names as given accentuates and situates the significance or otherwise of an experience, an event or a phenomenon. A name from the point of view of most cultural heritages depicts the nature and life of a corporate personality, body or organization, to a great length one is influenced by the name he or she carries. Among the Igbos their names depicts their worldview and constitute an integral part of human existence. They are means of arousing, defining, manifesting and establishing the expectations, aspirations and consciousness of the bearers. Based on our situation here were interested on the names given by parents by virtue of some special extra-ordinary features and circumstances about the birth of the child and as such the person’s life is shaped and revolves around the name. Since Igbo world view upholds causality one will say that no one bears a name without a reason and no name exists without explanation.

Every name has its own peculiarity bestowed on it by virtue of certain circumstances, environment, the nature and situation of the family or parent of the person being named and all these peculiarities serve as explanation or justification for the name. it has been something glaring that in human history a child is influenced by his name or get used to behaving like his name and such was the reason why Abram was changed to Abraham (father of multitude) based his covenant with God to become the father of a great nation and also Simon was changed to peter (rock) as a result of his task to lead the church and as the rock upon which the church will be built As it is names could serve different purposes: it could be a means of catching the attention of the child when in the midst of multitude as such it serves as identification tags. Secondly names could play a



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significant role in accentuating the destiny and consciousness of a bearer such that whatever the child does either consciously or unconsciously is explained through his or her name. A child's name then serves as a ready explanation of why he or she is involved in whatever he or she is doing. From the foregoing it is clear that a name given to a child could suggest the kind of person the child would be; what would happen to the child, to the extent that when the child behaves according to the dictate of the name nobody is surprised. Conclusively the name of a person can show the destiny of the bearer and at this point lies the Kpim of this essay as were trying to bring to lime light the deep theology embedded in this name in spite of the remarkable awareness of spiritual forces, the Igbo nation, place man at the center of the universe, yet there is the irony that his destiny is determined by the 'chi' variously interpreted as his 'personal God' or guardian angel. For the Igbos Chineke, the Supreme Being brings man into being, at the same time bequeaths him his nature and destiny. This nature and destiny are spoken of as 'uwa' and the personal 'chi' which every human being possesses. Thus if any person does something characteristics of him/her, the Igbo say “ọ bụ etu ụwa ya dị (i.e. it is how his/her nature is}. The idea of 'chi' explains the elements of luck, fortune, destiny or fate unique to an individual. 'Chi' is like a personal guide which pilots a man's prospects and determines his fortune. For the Igbo three principles are operative in the shaping of a person's life. We have already pointed to the principle of “onye kwe chi ya ekwe”, the other two are:

(1) “akara aka” and

(2) “Ife si na chi”(that which is from God) but very eminent here is that it all depends on a chi who possesses his own time and pace Akara aka literally refers to lines inscripted on a person's palm but in a deeper sense it means destiny, fate or fortune as the case may be. Among the Igbo it is believed that what one would be in life is already inscripted on the person's palm. What can hinder the actualization of what is inscripted are incorrect reading and misinterpretation as well as lack of sustained personal effort. The principle of “Ife si na chi” implies things that are already predetermined from birth for somebody.

However in both principles we observe that:

(1) what comes to people are predetermined and so no escape and

(2) the relationship between chi and personal effort in the total shaping of a person's life and



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(3) the principle of “onye kwe chi ya ekwe” (if you agree your chi will agree) is a normative paradigm in the conduct of one's affairs in life. It is a manifestation of optimism and dynamism so evident in the Igbo attempt at self actualization and achievement orientation. A careful reflection will point to the fact that the two underlying factor are time and chi and as an attempt to summarize these three principles one can say mgbeomasirichi because “akara aka” is decided by chi or [chukwu](#) (i.e. God) and we all know it is at his own time, “onye kwe chi ya ekwe” it means your God has to agree and he will agree at his own time and finally “ife sin a chi”(something coming from chi) which also means it has to come at his time and pace .so the foundation within which these three principles are built is upon the name mgbomasirichi As a matter of fact the Igbos do not give up or get discouraged. The principles of “akara aka, lfe si na chi and onye kwe chi ya ekwe” built upon “mgbe omasiri chi” serve as ideology of consolation, encouragement, and determination.

In Achebe's Things Fall Apart, Okonkwo contributed to his own fate. He was consumed by his personal ambition. He failed to understand the basic Igbo philosophy of complementary dualities and consequent accommodationist's principle inherent in that philosophy. This suggests that saying 'yes' must be understood within the framework of the dominant world view of the people. The Igbo hardly ever resign to fate; they hardly give up in a struggle which involves fate or better put Gods which they set their minds on. This is supported by their wisdom sayings: “Otụ egwu mgbagbu adighi eje ogo” (If you are afraid of death you won't go to war). “di ochi anaghi akwusi iri enu akwu maka na o dara n'enu ya” (A palm wine tapper does not stop tapping because he fell from a palm wine tree). “ebe oku nyuru achisa owa” (Surrender comes only after one had tried all one could). Mgbe omasiri chi o za anyi This is also why the traditional Igbo consult diviners and move from one sacrifice to one deity to the other in the hope that some how they would succeed. A world-view as this makes a people rugged and does not encourage the doctrine of fatalism. (Doctrine of fate: the philosophical doctrine according to which all events are fated to happen, so that human beings cannot change their destinies) It is part of man to look at God at most cases from an academic vantage point and in such scientific probity we tend to feel we have a grip of his ways but God offers us the better way to live and that is that which requires faith and this lifts us above the level of this world, opens new dimension of thought and introduces a perspective



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without human limitation.

This is a stage that requires deep knowledge of God and at the point you have this switch our focus turns from egocentricism to theocentricism where whatever pleases him or whenever he feels like doing anything let him do because you strongly believing in his providence and power. When one talks of God’s time what quickly come to mind are faith and God’s immutability and his complete harmony with his plan and nature. It is an indubitantum that God is ever faithful and does not change and if one has faith on this one would say without reservation that no matter what he will surely do it. Since we know that “all work for good for those who put their trust in God”. Why is it that God always waits for his own time and not ours? This has been a question older than this generation and a story is told of a sculptor who was asked how he does carve out a lion’s head out of a large block of marble and he said “I just chip away everything that does not look like a lion’s head. Like him God in doing things at his own time chips away from our being everything that does not look like Christ like impatience, short temper, pride, lack of faith and trust, and all the emotional drive that keep us far from God.

The story of Abraham is one of those standing examples that even when he thought he could do it at his time and took in his maid Hagar it still did not solve his problem but when it was time Sarah became pregnant. What happens when we tend to move faster we tend to forget we are the clay and that someone is the potter, that were the branch and someone is the vine. The book of Ecclesiastes 3 has said it all that there is time for every thing.

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