

Mambo Husambaratika
thanking you any more." ya kukushukuru tena."

SURA YA KUMI NA SITA

When nearly two years later Obierika paid another visit to his friend in exile, the circumstances were less happy. The missionaries had come to Umuofia. They had built their church there, won a handful of converts and were already sending evangelists to the surrounding towns and villages. That was a source of great sorrow to the leaders of the clan, but many of them believed that the strange faith and the white man's god would not last. None of his converts was a man whose word

Wakati karibu miaka miwili baadaye Obierika alipomtembelea tena rafiki yake uhamishoni, hali hazikuwa za furaha. Wamishonari walikuwa wamekuja Umuofia. Walikuwa wamejenga kanisa lao huko, wakapata waongofu wachache na tayari walikuwa wakituma wainjilisti katika miji na vijiji vya jirani. Hilo lilikuwa ni huzuni kubwa kwa viongozi wa ukoo huo, lakini wengi wao waliamini kwamba imani ya ajabu na mungu wa wazungu hazitadumu. Hakuna hata mmoja

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was heeded in the assembly of the people. None of them was a man of title. They were mostly the kind of people that were called efulefu, worthless, empty men. The imagery of an efulefu in the language of the clan was a man who sold his machete and wore the sheath to battle. Chielo, the priestess of Agbala, called the converts the excrement of the clan, and the new faith was a mad dog that had come to eat it up.

What moved Obierika to visit Okonkwo was the sudden appearance of the latter's son, Nwoye, among the missionaries in Umuofia.

"What are you doing here?" Obierika had asked when after many difficulties the missionaries had allowed him to speak to the boy.

"I am one of them," replied Nwoye.

"How is your father?" Obierika asked, not knowing what else to say. "I don't know. He is not my

wa waongofu wake aliyekuwa mtu ambaye neno lake lilizingatiwa katika mkusanyiko wa watu. Hakuna hata mmoja wao aliyekuwa mtu wa cheo. Wengi wao walikuwa ni aina ya watu walioitwa efulefu, wasio na thamani, wanaume watupu. Taswira ya efulefu kwa lugha ya ukoo ilikuwa ni mtu aliyeuza panga lake na kuvaa shela kwa vita. Chielo, kuhani wa kike wa Agbala, aliwaita waongofu kuwa ni kinyesi cha ukoo, na imani hiyo mpya ilikuwa mbwa mwenye kichaa ambaye alikuja kuila.

Kilichomsukuma Obierika kumtembelea Okonkwo ni kutokea ghafula kwa mwana wa mwisho, Nwoye, kati ya wamishonari huko Umuofia.

"Unafanya nini hapa?" Obierika alikuwa ameuliza ni lini baada ya matatizo mengi wamishonari walimruhusu kuzungumza na mvulana huyo.

"Mimi ni mmoja wao," alijibu Nwoye.

"Vipi baba yako?" Obierika aliuliza, asijue la kusema zaidi. "Sijui. Si baba yangu," alisema

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father," said Nwoye, unhappily.

Nwoye, bila furaha.

And so Obierika went to Mbanta to see his friend. And he found that Okonkwo did not wish to speak about Nwoye. It was only from Nwoye's mother that he heard scraps of the story.

Na hivyo Obierika akaenda Mbanta kumuona rafiki yake. Na akagundua kuwa Okonkwo hakutaka kuzungumza juu ya Nwoye. Ilikuwa tu kutoka kwa mama Nwoye kwamba alisikia vipande vya hadithi.

The arrival of the missionaries had caused a considerable stir in the village of Mbanta. There were six of them and one was a white man. Every man and woman came out to see the white man. Stories about these strange men had grown since one of them had been killed in Abame and his iron horse tied to the sacred silk-cotton tree. And so everybody came to see the white man. It was the time of the year when everybody was at home. The harvest was over.

Kuwasili kwa wamishonari kumesababisha msukosuko mkubwa katika kijiji cha Mbanta. Walikuwa sita na mmoja alikuwa mzungu. Kila mwanamume na mwanamke walitoka kumwona mzungu. Hadithi kuhusu watu hawa wa ajabu zilikuwa zimekua tangu mmoja wao alipouawa huko Abame na farasi wake wa chuma akiwa amefungwa kwenye mti mtakatifu wa pamba-hariri. Na kwa hivyo kila mtu alikuja kumuona mzungu. Ilikuwa wakati wa mwaka ambapo kila mtu alikuwa nyumbani. Mavuno yalikuwa yamekwisha.

When they had all gathered, the white man began to speak to them. He spoke through an interpreter who was an Ibo man, though his dialect was different and harsh to the ears of Mbanta. Many people laughed at his dialect and the way

Walipokusanyika wote, yule mzungu alianza kuzungumza nao. Alizungumza kupitia mkalimani ambaye alikuwa ni mtu wa Kiibo, japo lahaja yake ilikuwa tofauti na ngumu masikioni mwa Mbanta. Watu wengi walimcheka lahaja

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he used words strangely. Instead of saying "myself" he always said "my buttocks." But he was a man of commanding presence and the clansmen listened to him. He said he was one of them, they could see from his colour and his language. The other four black men were also their brothers, although one of them did not speak Ibo. The white man was also their brother because they were all sons of God. And he told them about this new God, the Creator of all the world and all the men and women. He told them that they worshipped false gods, gods of wood and stone. A deep murmur went through the crowd when he said this. He told them that the true God lived on high and that all men when they died went before Him for judgment. Evil men and all the heathen who in their blindness bowed to wood and stone were thrown into a fire that burned like palm-oil. But good men who worshipped the true God lived forever in His happy kingdom.

yake na jinsi alivyotumia maneno ya ajabu. Badala ya kusema "mwenyewe" kila mara alisema "matako yangu." Lakini alikuwa mtu wa amri na watu wa ukoo walimsikiliza. Alisema alikuwa mmoja wao, waliweza kuona kutokana na rangi yake na lugha yake. Wanaume wengine wanne weusi pia walikuwa ndugu zao, ingawa mmoja wao hakuzungumza Kiibo. Mzungu pia alikuwa ndugu yao kwa sababu wote walikuwa wana wa Mungu. Naye akawaambia kuhusu huyu Mungu mpya, Muumba wa ulimwengu wote na wanaume na wanawake wote. Aliwaambia kwamba waliabudu miungu ya uwongo, miungu ya miti na mawe. Manung'uniko mazito yalipita katikati ya umati aliposema haya. Aliwaambia kwamba Mungu wa kweli aliishi juu na kwamba watu wote walipokufa walienda mbele zake kwa ajili ya hukumu. Watu waovu na mataifa yote ambao katika upofu wao waliinamia kuni na mawe walitupwa katika moto uliowaka kama mawese. Lakini watu wema waliomwabudu Mungu wa kweli waliishi milele katika ufalme Wake wenye furaha.

"We have been sent by this great

"Tumetumwa na huyu Mungu

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God to ask you to leave your wicked ways and false gods and turn to Him so that you may be saved when you die," he said. "Your buttocks understand our language," said someone light-heartedly and the crowd laughed.

"What did he say?" the white man asked his interpreter. But before he could answer, another man asked a question: "Where is the white man's horse?" he asked. The Ibo evangelists consulted among themselves and decided that the man probably meant bicycle. They told the white man and he smiled benevolently.

"Tell them," he said, "that I shall bring many iron horses when we have settled down among them. Some of them will even ride the iron horse themselves." This was interpreted to them but very few of them heard. They were talking excitedly among themselves because the white man had said he was going to live among them. They had not thought about that.

At this point an old man said he had a question. "Which is this god

mkuu kuwataka muache njia zenu mbaya na miungu ya uongo na kumgeukia yeye ili mkifa mpate kuokolewa," alisema.

"Matako yako yanaelewa lugha yetu," alisema mtu kwa moyo mwepesi na umati ukacheka.

"Alisema nini?" yule mzungu alimuuliza mkalimani wake. Lakini kabla hajajibu, mtu mwingine aliuliza swali: "Farasi wa mtu mweupe yuko wapi?" Aliuliza. Wainjilisti wa Ibo walishauriana wao kwa wao na kuamua kwamba huenda mtu huyo alimaanisha baiskeli. Walimwambia yule mzungu na akatabasamu kwa ukarimu.

"Waambie," alisema, "ya kwamba nitaleta farasi wengi wa chuma tutakapoketi kati yao. Baadhi yao hata watapanda farasi wa chuma wenyewe." Hii ilitafsiriwa kwao lakini ni wachache sana waliosikia. Walikuwa wakizungumza kati yao kwa furaha kwa sababu mzungu huyo alikuwa amesema angeishi kati yao. Hawakuwa wamefikiria kuhusu hilo.

Wakati huu mzee alisema ana swali. "Mungu wenu huyu ni

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of yours," he asked, "the goddess of the earth, the god of the sky, Amadiora or the thunderbolt, or what?"

The interpreter spoke to the white man and he immediately gave his answer. "All the gods you have named are not gods at all. They are gods of deceit who tell you to kill your fellows and destroy innocent children. There is only one true God and He has the earth, the sky, you and me and all of us." "If we leave our gods and follow your god," asked another man, "who will protect us from the anger of our neglected gods and ancestors?"

"Your gods are not alive and cannot do you any harm," replied the white man. "They are pieces of wood and stone."

When this was interpreted to the men of Mbanta they broke into derisive laughter. These men must be mad, they said to themselves. How else could they say that Ani and Amadiora were harmless? And Idemili and Ogwugwu too? And some of them began to go away.

yupi," aliuliza, "mungu mke wa dunia, mungu wa anga, Amadiora au radi, au nini?"

The interpreter spoke to the white man and he immediately gave his answer. "All the gods you have named are not gods at all. They are gods of deceit who tell you to kill your fellows and destroy innocent children. There is only one true God and He has the earth, the sky, you and me and all of us." "Tukiiacha miungu yetu na kumfuata mungu wako," akauliza mtu mwingine, "ni nani atakayetulinda na hasira ya miungu na mababu zetu waliopuuzwa?"

"Miungu yako haiko hai na haiwezi kukudhuru," mzungu alijibu. "Ni vipande vya mbao na mawe."

Hili lilipotafsiriwa kwa wanaume wa Mbanta waliangua kicheko cha dhihaka. Wanaume hawa lazima wawe wazimu, walijiambia. Je, wangewezaje tena kusema kwamba Ani na Amadiora hawakuwa na madhara? Na Idemili na Ogwugwu pia? Na baadhi yao wakaanza kwenda zao.

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Then the missionaries burst into song. It was one of those gay and rollicking tunes of evangelism which had the power of plucking at silent and dusty chords in the heart of an Ibo man. The interpreter explained each verse to the audience, some of whom now stood enthralled. It was a story of brothers who lived in darkness and in fear, ignorant of the love of God. It told of one sheep out on the hills, away from the gates of God and from the tender shepherd's care.

After the singing the interpreter spoke about the Son of God whose name was Jesu Kristi. Okonkwo, who only stayed in the hope that it might come to chasing the men out of the village or whipping them, now said "You told us with your own mouth that there was only one god. Now you talk about his son. He must have a wife, then." The crowd agreed.

"I did not say He had a wife," said the interpreter, somewhat lamely.

"Your buttocks said he had a son," said the joker. "So he must have a wife and all of them must have

Kisha wamisionari wakaimba nyimbo. Ilikuwa ni mojawapo ya nyimbo za uinjilisti za mashoga ambazo zilikuwa na uwezo wa kunyanyua sauti za kimya na zenye vumbi moyoni mwa mtu wa Ibo. Mkalimani alifafanua kila mstari kwa wasikilizaji, ambao baadhi yao walisimama kwa shangwe. Ilikuwa ni hadithi ya ndugu walioishi gizani na kwa hofu, wasiojua upendo wa Mungu. Ilisimulia juu ya kondoo mmoja huko milimani, mbali na malango ya Mungu na kutoka kwa uangalizi wa mchungaji mwororo. Baada ya uimbaji mkalimani alizungumza kuhusu Mwana wa Mungu ambaye jina lake lilikuwa Yesu Kristi. Okonkwo, ambaye alikaa tu kwa matumaini kwamba inaweza kuja kuwafukuza wanaume kutoka kijijini au kuwapiga viboko, sasa alisema "Ulituambia kwa mdomo wako kuwa kuna mungu mmoja tu. Sasa unazungumza juu ya mtoto wake. kuwa na mke basi." Umati ulikubali.

"Sikusema alikuwa na mke," mkalimani huyo alisema kwa unyonge kiasi.

"Matako yako yalisema ana mtoto wa kiume," mcheshi alisema.

"Kwa hiyo lazima awe na mke na

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buttocks."

The missionary ignored him and went on to talk about the Holy Trinity. At the end of it Okonkwo was fully convinced that the man was mad. He shrugged his shoulders and went away to tap his afternoon palm-wine.

But there was a young lad who had been captivated. His name was Nwoye, Okonkwo's first son. It was not the mad logic of the Trinity that captivated him. He did not understand it. It was the poetry of the new religion, something felt in the marrow. The hymn about brothers who sat in darkness and in fear seemed to answer a vague and persistent question that haunted his young soul--the question of the twins crying in the bush and the question of Ikemefuna who was killed. He felt a relief within as the hymn poured into his parched soul. The words of the hymn were like the drops of frozen rain melting on the dry palate of the panting earth. Nwoye's callow mind was greatly puzzled.

wote wawe na matako."

Mmisionari alimpuuza na akaendelea kuzungumza juu ya Utatu Mtakatifu. Mwishowe Okonkwo aliamini kabisa kuwa mtu huyo alikuwa na wazimu. Aliinua mabega yake na kwenda kugonga divai yake ya mchana ya mitende.

Lakini kulikuwa na kijana mdogo ambaye alikuwa ametekwa. Jina lake lilikuwa Nwoye, mwana wa kwanza wa Okonkwo. Haikuwa mantiki ya kichaa ya Utatu iliyomteka. Hakuelewa. Ilikuwa ni mashairi ya dini mpya, kitu kilichohisiwa kwenye mafuta. Wimbo huo kuhusu ndugu waliokaa gizani na kwa woga ulionekana kujibu swali lisiloleweka na lenye kudumu ambalo liliisumbua roho yake mchanga-swali la mapacha kulia msituni na swali la Ikemefuna aliyeuawa. Alihisi utulivu ndani wakati wimbo huo ukimiminika katika nafsi yake iliyokauka. Maneno ya wimbo huo yalikuwa kama matone ya mvua yaliyoganda yakiyeyuka kwenye kaaka kavu la ardhi inayopumua. Akili tulivu ya Nwoye ilichanganyikiwa sana.