Traditional Rational Arguments for the Existence of God (Chukwu in Igbo Traditional Philosophy)

C.C. Mbaegbu

Abstract

The question on whether or not the Supreme Being is a stranger in Igbo traditional philosophy is a question on being and its being there. This paper adopts an analytico-deductive method to examine some clues on this existence-question of God among the pre-modern Igbo; and the implication is that due to hasty generalizations and false certainty some scholars even of philosophy still maintain that the Supreme Being is of Western importation. Both Christianity and Igbo traditional philosophy, the paper also argues, have something to contribute to the debate but the contribution of Christianity far outweighs that of the pre-modern Igbo since the former has the epistemological advantage of the Supernatural revelation and in possession of literacy before the latter. Nevertheless, prior to Christianity the raw materials for the philosophy of God were encapsulated in the Igbo man's oral tradition only to be highlighted by a culture that is highly literate and philosophical.

Introduction

The God question debate in philosophy has remained pervasive an inevitable in the history of human thought and tradition possibly because of its great importance in the question of God-man relationship. It seems that God is the reason behind the whole universe sensible and supra-sensible. No wonder also man has turned his attention to all sorts of problems revolving around God, ranging from whether or not he exists, to his essence or nature and other related issues not excluding the all important issue of his relationship with other beings in the universe. In trying to solve all these problems, Western thinkers do not agree in almost all issues raised. Consequently they are divided.

Likewise, the God-question extends to African philosophy. However, our consideration here is with particular reference to Igbo traditional philosophy. Our interest in this paper is on the most controvertible question of them all which is the existence-question. On this