

P02_2_17_How_Ifa_Speaks_vscript (December 2021)

Greetings: *Oriire fun owo!* (Good Tidings to you!)

I pray that you are feeling awake, aware, and elevated in mind, body, and spirit wherever you are, and whatever may be happening around you!

Ase! Ase! Ase o!

I am *Baba Umar, Oluranse Emese, (Voice of the Emese), Member of the Isoro Traditional Council of Chiefs, Oluwo of the House of Umar, and Babalawo of Ile Awo Orisa. This Ile (Spiritual House), our website, and these video lessons are certified and sanctioned by the Isoro Traditional Council of Chiefs in Ile-Ife, Nigeria.*

Thank you for joining us for another lesson in our Video Blog Series. I invite you to **click the links below** to become a **Subscriber** to this Channel, click the **Notification** button to stay up to date, and **Share** this resource with your family, friends, associates, and anyone who you feel may benefit from this wisdom.

Homage to The One Who Sends, and to those who are sent! Homage to ***Orisa*** and ***Egun!***

Ifokanbale Omo Orisa!

Peace of Mind from *Olodumare* Children of *Orisa!*

Our topic in this video review from my December 2016 Blog Post is: How Ifa Speaks: The History of the Sacred Odu ***Ifa Eji Ogbe***

The Isoro Traditional Council of Chiefs have entrusted me with the delivery of a series of teachings on the History of the Sixteen Major ***Odu Ifa***. This talk explains how ***Eji Ogbe*** came to be the First ***Odu*** in the Sacred Order of ***Orunmila***.

The ***Orisa Orunmila***, also called ***Ifa***, is the Source of the ***Ifa*** Literary Corpus. The ***Odu Ifa*** are called the Children of ***Orunmila***. The Sacred ***Odus*** and the ***Ese Ifa (Ifa verses)*** within them were brought into existence by ***Olodumare*** for the purpose of helping ***Orunmila*** in the human world to accomplish the mission for which he was sent from ***Orun***, that is, to assist the ***Eniyan*** (human beings, the Chosen Ones) in achieving their chosen destinies. ***Orunmila*** and the ***Odus*** accomplish this task by speaking to us in proverbs and using the ***Orisas***, humans, objects, animals, plants, birds, insects, trees, and other aspects and forces of nature to teach us through the example of others. Even the Sacred ***Odus*** themselves are part of the exemplary tales and histories in the Sacred Oracles of ***Ifa***.

The Sacred ***Odus*** speak to us, you and me, about our past, present, and future circumstances. In other words, you and I are the subject matter of the Sacred ***Odu Ifa***. The messages of Ifa talk about:

- Choice and Consequences
- Humility and Arrogance
- Despair and Hope
- Oppression and Liberation
- Abuse and Redemption

- Stagnation and Transformation
- Justice and Injustice
- Good Fortune (ire) and Bad Fortune (ibi)
- Life and death

The history of *Ifa* begins by telling us that ‘**things are subject to change**’. This fact is made clear because according to the history, *Olodumare* changed the order of the *Odus* after testing their character (*Iwa Pele*) and *Ori*. The order of the *Odus*, according to the Sacred Order of *Orunmila* was based on the behaviors and choices of the *Odus*. So, it is with you and me!

In *Ifa*, we believe that our journey in life depends on both our **Destiny** (the choices we made in heaven before coming into the world) and our **Fate** (the choices we make once we come into the world). Our challenge in life is to align our **Fate** (post-birth choices) with our **Destiny** (pre-birth choices).

As we share the history of how *Eji Ogbe* came to be the first of the Sixteen Major (*Oju*) *Odu Ifa*, the importance of your and my individual choices will become very clear. In *Ifa*, predestination is always associated with our *Ori Inu* (our inner head, Carrier of our Destiny) and our *Ori Ode* (our physical *Ori*, egoic consciousness). Your *Ori* is considered to be the symbol of the power of free choice that you received in heaven before making your journey to the *L’oja*. You will also be able to see ‘How *Ifa* Speaks’ to us within the *Ifa* Literary Corpus.

A quick word about **predestination**:

In the Christian theology, **predestination is the divine foreordaining of all that will happen, especially with regard to the salvation of some and not others.**

This is not the *Ifa*! From the *Ifa* perspective, **pre-destination** refers to the **Destiny** you planned for yourself before you came into the *l’oja* (world). It is chosen, not imposed, and it does not refer to your salvation, but to the direction of your journey, where you plan to go in life, and what you plan to accomplish. In other words, **pre-destination** is a planned trip, and as with any such trip, you are free to make stops, detours, and changes along the way to your planned destination. Your **Fate** (your post-birth choices) will determine how successful you are in reaching your **Destiny** (pre-birth choices), and what you set out to accomplish is not necessarily restricted to one lifetime.

Remember: In reading *Odu Ifa*, here are several points and principles to keep in mind:

First: The seven major parts of an *Ese Odu Ifa*:

1. The *awo* / *babalawo* who is casting *Ifa*.
2. The person, persons, or characters for whom *Ifa* is being cast.
3. The reason or situation presented to the *awo*, that is the reason *Ifa* is being consulted.
4. The response of *Ifa* presented in the *Odu*.
5. The *ebo* advised to be done in order to address / resolve the matter, as well as the attitudes or behaviors that should be addressed or changed.
6. Whether or not the advice was heeded and the *ebo* performed.

7. What was the final outcome?

Note: All of these parts do not necessarily appear in every *ese Ifa*. Also, **note** that when you see an *ese* for a certain *Odu*, it does not represent all of the *ese* that exist for that *Odu*. In the traditional oral corpus, each *Odu Ifa* may contain some 360 *ese* and each *ese* may contain some 360 variations. The **Sacred Oracles of Ifa** is a living and comprehensive body of knowledge about how the universe works.

Second: Some key concepts regarding the *Ifa* Spiritual Tradition

Ifa ni ki isin!

Ifa is not a religion!

Ifa ni bawo aiye sise!

Ifa is how the universe works!

Ifa ni iwa ti aiye!

Ifa is the nature of the universe!

Bi Owe, bi owe, ru Ifa soro!

Like proverbs, like proverbs is how *Ifa* speaks!

Ifa kii puro!

Ifa does not lie!

Ifa kii seke!

Ifa does not mislead or deceive!

Ohun tiyoo sele nifa nwi!

Ifa simply says what will happen!

As you read and study *Odu Ifa*, reflect on the messages your *Ori* wants you to grasp so that you may transform your life in positive ways, achieve *opo ire* (abundant blessings / abundant good fortune), and develop *Iwa Pele* (Good Character).

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History of the Sixteen Major *Odu Ifa*

The knowledge and secrets of each *Odu Ifa*, and the creation and history of each of the sixteen major *Odus*, called *Oju Odu*, is very sacred. The history and creation of each individual *Odu* gives us the insight into the uses and positions of each *Odu* in the spiritual realm. Before the *Odus* were arranged in the present order as we have them, there was no specific order or sequence. However, the history, creation, and use of each *Odu* created a hierarchical sequence of arrangement as ordained by *Olodumare* for their purpose in the realm of humans. *Olodumare* made us understand that all the *Odus* were children of *Orunmila*. *Olodumare* caused the *Odus* to come into being for the purpose of helping *Orunmila* in the human world on the mission for which he was being sent from *Orun*.

Odu Eji Ogbe

“Okanjuwa kii je / won omo o pin. /

*Eni apa tosi /
Niwon fun nitan /
Eni gegesi aya tosi /
Niwon / fun ni komookun /
Adifa fun awon / Odu mere/erindin/logun /
Tiwon rele Olodumare /
Tiwon oolore / joba wale aye.”*

“Greediness has blinded their sense of proportion
He that deserves the arm was given the thigh
He that deserves the chest was given buttocks
This is the reading lot of all the sixteen sacred **Odus**
When they went to **Olodumare**
To choose a king for them before going to earth.”

This *Ifa* verse of **Eji Ogbe** tells the story of how he became the first among the sixteen major **Odus**.

Eji Ogbe was the youngest among the sixteen and he was also the least endowed physically. When it was time to go to **Olodumare** to choose a leader amongst them for the mission to earth he went to his own **babalawo** to seek guidance and direction on the way forward. He was told to make a sacrifice of a cow, sixteen cowries shell, and a change of clothes. **Eji Ogbe** was so poor that he could not afford a live cow, so he bought just the head of a cow. He gathered the sixteen cowry shells and took the only clothes he had on his body to make the sacrifice as directed by his **awo**.

*(Can you already begin to relate to this story and **Eji Ogbe** – small framed, poor, and a target for bullying and abuse?)*

Soon after the sacrifice **Olodumare** called all the sixteen **Odus**, and they were led by **Ofun Meji** because of his size, for he was a giant amongst them. When they assembled at the presence of **Olodumare** he gave them a cow and told them to return to him in sixteen days after sharing the cow accordingly. He would then choose a king and leader amongst them for **Orunmila’s** mission on earth.

When they got home, they started making preparation on how to kill the cow and share it. None of them was prepared to go anywhere or do any preparation for fear of being cheated out of the cow. So, they all decided that the smallest among them **Eji Ogbe** should go to the woods and bring firewood, leaves, and other ingredients needed for the cow’s preparation.

(Were you the youngest sibling in the family, or the small kid in your group of friends, or the female among dominating males, and therefore the one who always got picked to do the grunt work? Or perhaps a child living with an abusive parent.)

So it was that **Eji Ogbe** went into the woods, and before he came back the cow had been slaughtered and distributed with **Ofun Meji** taking the choicest part and all the other **Odus** taking theirs as well. **Eji Ogbe** was left with just the head stripped of all meat. He took the head

without grumbling because he was too small to fight or argue with them and he said to his self, “*even if I was there, I will still get whatever they decide to give me, not what I want!*”

So, they all went home with their parts of the cow. On the sixteenth day, **Olodumare** summoned all the sixteen **Oju Odus** into his presence to ask them how the cow was shared amongst them. They said, “**Ofun Meji** took the thighs, **Ose Meji** took arms, **Irete Meji** took the heart, and so on according to their physical size and power.”

Olodumare now asked ‘*who got the head?*’. They all laughed and said it was **Eji Ogbe**, because he was the youngest and was also the smallest. **Olodumare** now turned away from them and caused sixteen horses to appear with different robes and staffs of office and said to them, “*Your greediness has made you give your rights to the one that is small and powerless amongst you, therefore, he that has the head will be your king, because ‘Ori ni Oba Ara’ the head is the king of the body.*”

So it was that **Eji Ogbe** became the king and leader of all the sixteen **Oju Odus**. **Olodumare** then gave **Eji Ogbe** the task of molding the human skull before **Obatala** joins all the other parts of the human body.

(My message to all of the **Eniyan** out there from **Ifa**; all of you who are mocked, and ridiculed, and abused, and passed over, and humiliated for one reason or another. Please believe me and remember that the cause of your suffering is not a flaw in you, but rather a lack of **Iwa Pele** in those who cause your suffering. In the end, you will rise to the top in honor and respect. Hang in there, and like **Eji Ogbe**, stay humble. Don’t let your heart be filled with envy, jealousy, resentment, or hatred. Heaven is on your side!)

Iba se Orunmila, e leri ipin, ibekeji Olodumare!
Homage to Orunmila, Witness of Fate, Second to the Creator!

Orimi Apesin!
My **Ori**, the Most Precious!
Ise Olorun Tobi!
God’s Work is Great and Mighty!
Ase! Ase! Ase o!

Ki Olodumare, Orisa, ati Egun fifun e ni
Itona, Imoye, ati Opo Ire!
My Olodumare, Orisa, and Ancestors bestow on you
Guidance, Wisdom, and Abundant Blessings!

Ifokanbole! Peace of Mind from **Olodumare!**
Ajolo Ajobo! We go out together; We return together!
Ase! Ase! Ase o!