

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!

Àṣẹ! Àṣẹ! Àṣẹ o!

I'm **Baba Umar, Oluranse Emese**, (Voice of the Emese), Member of the **Isoro** Traditional Council of Chiefs in **Ile-Ife, Nigeria, Olúwo** of the House of Umar, and **Babaláwo of Ile Awo Òrìṣà** (the House of the Mysteries of the Òrìṣàs).

Opo Ire (abundant blessings) to our **Egbé**, our online community of Subscribers that continues to grow thanks to you. Thank you for joining us for another lesson. Remember, as a member of our **YouTube Egbé** you can support each other's spiritual journey by posting your questions and uplifting comments in the comment section below. You can also email me using the link in the description section below if you need to connect with me on a more personal matter. Also check the Community section of this Channel for periodic messages from me.

If you are new to these video lessons, we invite you to go ahead and Click the **Subscribe** and **Notification** buttons, and **Share** this resource with your family, friends, and associates. You never know whose life you may change by that simple act of sharing.

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

Our topic in this video is: **Ifá: Òrìṣà and Ancestor Worship, Pt V**

Bi owe, Bi owe ru Ifá soro! (Like Proverbs, like proverbs is how *Ifá* speaks!)

That means that there are two sides to this process:

- I can tell you, *'This is what Ifá says!' 'This is the Tradition!'*
- Then you must ask yourself, *'What does this mean to me? What can I learn from this? How can this help me? How can I use this knowledge to direct my life with wisdom?'*

Ifá & the Òrìṣà, Part V

The *Ifá* Spiritual Tradition of **Òrìṣà** and Ancestor Worship has persisted for thousands of years, among millions of people, across multiple generations and cultures. The reason that it has persisted is simple. It is because *Ifá* brings to devotees and even to non-devotees a volume of knowledge and protocols of behavior that are effective in helping us to:

- explore the possibilities,
- understand the mysteries,
- seize the opportunities,
- and overcome the challenges of everyday life.

As I have stated in previous lessons, “*Religion is not an end in itself! It is a means to an end!*” And that end is your ongoing pursuit of the joy, happiness, and success, that is prescribed for every human being. In my personal experience, and from the experiences reported to me directly by my Spiritual Godchildren and other devotees and seekers, **Ifá delivers!**

In fact, the word ‘religion’ does not provide a comprehensive enough representation of the *Ifá* Spiritual Tradition. Which is why we say emphatically, ***Ifá ni ki Isin!*** (*Ifá* is not a religion!)
Ifá ni bawo Aiye sise! (*Ifá* is how the universe works!)

Yes, the *Ifá* tradition has its beliefs, its holidays, its rituals and ceremonies, and its priesthood, like other ‘religious’ systems. The *Ifá* Spiritual Tradition of *Òrìṣà* and Ancestor Worship ‘contains religious elements’ but it is much more than a religion. The *Ifá* Spiritual Tradition of *Òrìṣà* and Ancestor Worship is indigenous, originating and developing naturally among the Yoruba people of what today is Nigeria, West Africa in the ancient and sacred cities of *Ile-Ife*. It developed organically, based on their observations about how the ‘Universe works’!

The Yoruba are one of the largest populations of Black Africa, and the creators of one of the most far-reaching cultural traditions to have spread across the modern world. We believe that we are descendants of gods and goddesses, extraterrestrial and celestial beings, dating back to the time when these powerful entities inhabited the earth and lived amid human beings, genetically modifying us into the beings that we are today. For more on this point, visit the **Emese Library** on our website and read the section **About the Emese**.

Unlike other ‘religious’ traditions, that tend to position the followers as helpless and often unworthy creatures, and to focus the attention of the believers on a life after death, and on an unseen God passing judgments and decrees from somewhere up in the sky, *Ifá* provides us with a down-to-earth navigational system for tapping into the *Àṣẹ* (spiritual power) that exists in every aspect of creation including:

- inanimate objects
- insects, plants, animals
- environmental and cosmic forces
- universal laws, and scientific knowledge

Ifá empowers the devotee to act as *Eda Orisun* (a creature of the Source), *Omo Orisun* (a child of the Source), and *Iranse Orisun* (a servant of the Source). *Ifá* provides a dynamic strategy for the devotee to follow. The Sacred Oracles of Ifa provide a navigational system that includes:

1. **Logic** – reasoning conducted or assessed according to strict principles of validity (does it work).
2. **Intuition** – the ability to understand something immediately, without the need for conscious reasoning.
3. **Insight** – the ability to gain an accurate and deep intuitive understanding of a person or thing without clear or explainable reasons of how this ‘knowing’ is obtained.
4. **Inspiration** – being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative (divine influences, infused with spirit).

5. **Linear and Non-Linear Reasoning** – the ability to reason with, or without, progressing from one sequential stage to another. The ability to make use of rational and non-rational thinking.
6. **Objective and Subjective Observations** – the ability to observe the phenomenal world with, or without, being influenced by personal feelings, or opinions, in considering and representing facts.
7. **Material and Spiritual Practices** – relating to the tangible and intangible aspects of reality.

As human beings we have been given all these mental and energetic tools to assist us in navigating our journey through life. *Ifá* not only recognizes these natural gifts, talents, and capacities but also encourages their use. As mentioned in previous lessons, it is the role of our Spiritual *Orí* to activate these capacities and the role of our physical *Orí* to carry them out. It is the role of the *Òrìṣà* to support the will of our *Orí*, with *Egun* (the Spirit of our Ancestors) acting like a strong breeze in the sail of our boat.

There are 801 *Òrìṣà* in the *Ifá* Corpus but there are only a few who have the responsibility of Crowning the Head of a devotee and supporting the will of their *Orí*. These primary supporting *Òrìṣà* are *Èṣù*, *Ọbàtálá*, *Yémòjá*, *Ọgún*, *Ọyá*, *Ṣàngó*, *Ọṣun*, and the Prophet of *Ifá*, *Òrìṣà Ọrúnmilà*. The *Òrìṣà* are often compared with angels when trying to help the uninitiated to understand the *Ifá* tradition, but, in the *Ifá* Spiritual Tradition, the *Òrìṣà* are viewed as gods, and of those just mentioned, the most important are:

- *Ọrúnmilà* (the god of divination, and the Keeper of the Secrets of Existence) and
- *Èṣù* (the Guardian of the Gates of Good and Bad Fortune, the Keeper of the *Aṣẹ* of the *Òrìṣà*, the god of the crossroads, of choice, chance, and change, and the Messenger of *Olódùmarè*, *Egun*, and *Òrìṣà*), and
- *Ọbàtálá* (the Owner of *Orí*, the One Who Bears the Scepter of *Olódùmarè*, the Deputy of *Olódùmarè*).

Èṣù is the closest to *Ọrúnmilà* among all the *Òrìṣà*. However, it should be noted that there is not a clear hierarchy among the Yoruba deities and the expression ‘most important’ must be taken as relative and conditional or circumstantial (depending on the situation or matter at hand).

Because *Èṣù* is the Keeper of the *Aṣẹ* of the *Òrìṣà*, his approval must be sought for anything to happen, i.e., for the other *Òrìṣà* to exercise their powers. This establishes the important relationship between *Ọrúnmilà* and *Èṣù*, and it is for this reason that when *Ọrúnmilà* declares through divination that an *Èbọ* must be performed, it is *Èṣù* that receives the first and largest portion of the offerings.

Divination is central to the *Ifá* Tradition and to the relationship between *Orí*, *Egun*, and *Òrìṣà*. Using divination, the devotee can find meaning, guidance, and purpose in:

- resolving the energies of the past,
- navigating the choices of the present, and
- anticipating and shaping the conditions of the future.

For example: *Odù Òtúrá Méjì / Òtúráméjì* (13) says: (speaking of *Ifá* guiding us to success if we sacrifice.)

Aboru Aboye!

“Òkìtì-ògán-af’idij’ago ni o dífá f’Òtú
Wọn niki ó rú:
Awun méjì, wọn ni a di ọlórò.
Òtú gbó ó rú
Àwọn babaláwo niki Òtú maṣe pa àwọn
Awun naa, tita niki ó ta wọn.
Wọn le Ibo lati mọ ibiti oun iba lọ ta wọn
O lọsi ilu naa, wọn yọ’wo Awun titi
de Ogoji ọke.
Èṣù sọ fún un pe kioma gba.
Ẹniti ó ba rúbọ ni Èṣù ngbe.
Nigbi wọn yọ’wo Awun titi ni ilu naa
de Ọke-aimoye owó ni Èṣù sọ fún un pe kio gba.
Beẹ ni Òtú di Ọlórò si.
Àwọn babaláwo ni: Ijọ ti Òtú ra Awun méjì,
ki ama pee ni “Òtúráméjì.”

“Òkìtì-ògán-af’idij’ago divined *Ifá* for Òtú.

He was told to offer two tortoises in order to become wealthy.

Òtú listened and sacrificed.

The *babaláwo*s warned Òtú not to kill the tortoises, but to sell them.

Through a casting of lots, he should decide where to go to sell them.

When he arrived at the town, he was offered eighty bags of money for the tortoises.

Èṣù advised Òtú not to accept the price.

Èṣù is always in favor of anyone who performs sacrifices.

When the price was raised to several hundred bags of money,

Èṣù advised him to accept the offer.

This was how Òtú became wealthy.

The *babaláwo* said: The day Òtú bought two tortoises should be called *Òtúráméjì*.”

Òtúrá Méjì / Òtúráméjì (13)

An *Ifá ese* states:

Ifá ki I’oni,

Ifá is the master of today,

Ifá lo I’ola,

Ifá is the master of tomorrow,

Ifá lo I’otunla pelu e,

Ifá is the master of the day after tomorrow.

Òrúnmilà lo n'ijo mereerin Oosa d'aaye.

To *Ifá* belongs all the four days established by *Oosa* on earth.

When a child is born in the *Ifá* Tradition, the Yoruba consult *Ifá* to determine the *Òrìṣà*(s) that will 'crown the head' of the child and support them throughout their journey in the world. Divination will be used throughout life to seek the guidance and support of *Orí*, *Egun*, and the *Òrìṣà*(s) in all important decisions and affairs, like sickness, taking a journey, deciding on family matters, occupation, and work issues, and whatever else the devotee considers important or about which they feel a degree of uncertainty.

In the Yoruba Spiritual Tradition, *Òrúnmilà* (also called *Ifá*) and *Èṣù* act as the intermediaries between the devotee, the other gods, and the ancestors. In other words, they are the managers of the entire system of interaction between the physical and spiritual realms.

Àṣẹ! Àṣẹ! Àṣẹ o!

To be continued:

Ref: *Ifa: An Exposition of Ifa Literary Corpus*, by Wande Abimbola, Athelia Henrietta Press, 1997
ISBN: 1-890157-00-7

Ki Olódùmarè, Òrìṣà, ati Egun fifun e ni

Itona, Imoye, ati Opo Ire!

My *Olódùmarè*, *Òrìṣà*, and *Egun* bestow on you
Guidance, Wisdom, and Abundant Blessings!

Ifokanbale! Peace of Mind from *Olódùmarè!*

Ajolo Ajobo! We go out together; We return together!

Àṣẹ! Àṣẹ! Àṣẹ o!