

The Powers of Love and Forgiveness, Part I

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*, and *Babalawo of Ile Awo Orisa*.

Ifa is a traditional formula for how to live in the world. It is a guide to bridging the barrier between the material and spiritual worlds. It's a vehicle for a purposeful and successful journey in the *Oja* (the marketplace).

In telling the story of the **Ifa History of the Beginning** I always start with the moment when the ***Oro*** (the ***Ase*** of Olodumare) became **self-aware, manifested consciousness, sentience**, and became the entity that we call **Olodumare**. It is in the moment that ***Oro*** (Pure, Undifferentiated Energy) passes into the physical realms and becomes ***Ela*** (formless, undifferentiated energetic potential, Infinite Possibility) ready to manifest as creation.

In that moment differentiation and therefore polarities begin to emerge. It is in that moment of awareness, (when ***Olodumare*** became aware of itself as the ***Oro***, the ***Ase***, the Realm of Infinite Possibility and Potential) that **the first emotion every experienced by a Sentient Being was manifested - Love, Self-Love, Love of Self**.

NOTE: We are using the limitations of our human language and thought references to try and grasp, describe, and explain, that which by its very nature cannot be fully grasped, described, or explained from our limited human perspective.

The Sacred Oracles of *Ifa* do not speak explicitly of Love, not in any direct way, but it is implicit in most of what human beings are expected to do and how we are expected to live according to the Sacred Odu Ifa.

In the Yoruba worldview, the dynamic interplay of such opposites as heaven and earth, day and night, masculine and feminine, material and immaterial, physical and metaphysical, body and soul, life and death, giving and

receiving, success and failure, descendants and progenitors (ancestors), hot and cold, left and right, humility and arrogance, all these clearly point to the existence of the polarity of love and hate.

This **Dawn of Consciousness** then, is a moment of tremendous power that precedes what is called the Big Bang of the physical world, the moment of creation.

Love is an intense feeling of deep affection. The word **love** comes from the Latin root, *libet* meaning ‘**it is pleasing**’. When the *Oro* (the primordial energetic source of everything, the *Ase* of *Olodumare*) became self-aware the first feeling (emotion) that emerged from the *Ase* was *libet*, ‘**it is pleasing**’. And in Yoruba we say *Ife*: Love; and we have expressions and words like:

ota ni won – there is no love lost between them;

ase ife - love-feast;

lainife - loveless;

nife - loving;

iseun-ife - loving-kindness.

Olodumare’s expression of this powerful emotion is so profound that the Creator ordained that **Love should be one of the only things that cannot be commanded**. Even *Olodumare* cannot command our love, for love by its very nature must be given freely, from the heart.

Only love that is given freely from the heart carries the *Ase Ami* (Energy Signature) of the Primordial, Divine, and Spiritual Love that was experienced in the beginning, and given to us as a gift, so that we also might experience its full power and beauty.

It is this **primordial love** that gives birth to *Olodumare’s* **determined idea to experience the fullness of the Realm of Infinite Possibility**, the fullness of **itself**. It is this determined idea that in turn gives rise to the manifestation of *Olofi-dumare*, the Creator aspect of the *Ase* and to the process of creation itself.

In this very real sense, **Love (it is pleasing) lies at the very root of creation and of your and my existence.**

(NOTE: Look at what the God of the Bible says of his creation, “*And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was (pleasing) very good.* And there was the evening and there was the morning, of the sixth day’.)

It is this energy of love that lies at the heart of the **Good Condition** ordained by *Olodumare* for every human being to experience, expressed in *Odu Irosu'wori* (78) (That we will continue to live and die, that we will continue to journey from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven until we have created the Good Condition for every human being.)

Can you imagine the creation of a loveless creator, an all-powerful sentient being who was passionless, unloving, unfeeling, heartless, and cold?

Could such a being create this beautiful system of interlocking and harmonious manifestations of reality, that you and I witness and experience each and every day?

The First Love was and is self-love! The Ase in its sentient form **felt love of self**. As it was in the beginning **so it is with the architecture of your and my nature**.

Just as Love originated from within the Ase, was first directed back towards the Ase, and then manifested outward to the differentiated realm of created things, so too **our capacity to love others must begin with the love of self**.

We are not talking about some kind of narcissistic pathology where you have a **grandiose view of yourself**, your **talents**, your **appearance**, or your **resources**; where you go about your life **craving and expecting the admiration of others**. Nor are we talking about the kind of **sensual** or **sexual** love that emerges from your biological nature, **for these is not the origin of love, nor are these the most powerful kind of love**.

We are talking about the kind of self-love that emerges from an inner sense of your spiritual nature, and of your continuous connection to The Source of your existence.

This sense of **connection** (*Isopo*) to The Source is **present in every newborn child**, and awaits the tone of love to resonate from the voices that surround it, **for its own sense of *Isopo* to be quickened**.

Once quickened it will seek to grow to its fullest potential, into '**a heart big enough to care for a world**'; **a heart big enough to bring about the 'Good Condition, ordained by *Olodumare*, for every human being to experience'**.

Most parents worldwide instinctively shower their babies with love. Too many don't! *And even for those who do, times and circumstances change, don't they?*

When children do not receive this early nurturance, into the love of self, their *Ase Ami* is more susceptible to cracks and their spiritual powers remain weak, underdeveloped, and dormant. They are less able to develop *Iwa Pele* (gentle character) and *Iwa Rere* (Good Character), both of which are necessary in order to be active in bringing about the Good Condition.

But when you are filled with this most powerful form of love, primordial love, you are able to call up love, creativity, sacrifice, commitment, empathy, compassion, and achievement, in your self and in others.

The capacity to feel the aspect of the *Ase* that is love, is a gift for which you and I should be grateful. Your love is a treasure that you should both guard and share.

Many *Ifa* devotees come to the Priests, *Babalawos*, and Priestesses to consult regarding relationship problems and matters of the heart. **Underlying many relationship problems and matters of the heart, is an attempt to extend love outward, before it has been firmly rooted inward.**

Understanding the origin and source of your capacity to experience love (*Isopo*, connection), is a first step towards solving social or intimate relationship problems.

An important next step is to exercise your power over the second great gift that you and I have been given; another one of your capacities that cannot be commanded, **the capacity to forgive**, which we will discuss in Part II.

Ifokanbole! Peace of Mind from *Olodumare*!

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

Ase! Ase! Ase o!

To be continued: The Powers of Love and Forgiveness, Part II - Forgiveness