

Forgiveness and Forbidden Things in Ifa

**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.***

In our previous two videos, we discussed **The Powers of Love and Forgiveness** in some detail. In this video, we'll look a little further into **the Concept and Practice of Forgiveness in Yoruba Culture.**

Back around June of 2016, a Christian Preacher wrote to me inquiring about the concept and practice of Forgiveness in the Ifa Tradition. I forwarded his inquiry to the **Isoro Traditional Council of Chiefs** so that I could reply to the Preacher with the authority and wisdom of the Council. This video is based on the reply of the Council and my Blog Post from June 2016.

**The concept of forgiveness is an all-encompassing foothold of the whole culture and belief system of the Yoruba people.** The culture is structured on the teachings of *Ifa* as handed down through the **Sacred Odu** and interpreted by the *Babalawo*. **Ebo Riru** (sacrifice) and **Eewo** (forbidden things) are very **integral parts of the Yoruba daily life.**

**To try and categorize the concept of forgiveness in the spiritual domain or belief system is akin to separating the breath and the nostril, for one cannot stand without the other. Forgiveness is in fact part of the very thread that weaves the people, the community, and the belief system together as a whole.**

### ***EEWO***

**Eewo are things, actions, and behaviors that are forbidden (to be done) in Yoruba society.** They range from **stealing, lying, killing, and all human endeavors deemed to be bad or injurious to the continued harmonious living of the people and nature.** For instance, it is forbidden to intentionally step on an ant, if it does not constitute a pest situation to one (for example, in your home).

The ***Eewo*** serves as **deterrents to people from engaging in things or behaviors that are injurious to their selves, their neighbors, and the society at large.** ***Eewo*** usually end with **repercussions of heavy magnitude** for the offender and so serves as a deterrent to members of the society.

***Odu Ikalogbe*** says,

***“Talení to too da Olodumare kowa wí?”***

Who can recreate ***Olodumare***, let him come and say?

***Taleyan to too seka forisa?***

Who dares inflict injuries on the ***Orisas***?

***Taleda tole jí ohun ini irunmole***

Who is that creation, that can steal the possession of the ***Irunmole***,

***ko naka arawa ní an loo fun***

Let that being signify him/her self.

***kalení irorun leewo se waye fun awa eniyan.”***

We are warning ourselves,

For our earthly peace, was ***EEWO*** given to us.

***Odu Irosun Meji*** goes further on ***Eewo***,

***“Akii se eewo ní***

It is not done; it is ***Eewo***.

***hihun ní yio pada huni***

The repercussion will hunt us eternally.

***adifa feni tí baba re ku***

The divination lot of he whose father died

***tolohun o su iya ohun lopo.”***

And he is contemplating betrothing his own mother.

Which would certainly be a most egregious act!

## ***EBO RIRU***

The Yoruba have a profound belief in the **power of appeasement, remorse, and ultimately forgiveness**. Even with the presence of *Ewo* the safety net of **forgiveness is provided by *Ebo Riru***.

The guilty person offers a sacrifice according to the gravity of the offence or crime he or she has committed. **The essence of *Ebo Riru* is to appease the *Ori Inu* (Spiritual Head) of the aggrieved person or entity**. It is an integral part of the belief system to **not caste people out of the society and to instill the spirit of forgiveness in the community**.

***Ebo Riru* is the sacrifice of appeasement, remorse, and to seek forgiveness spiritually for wrongs done in the earthly realm.**

It is believed that **if the Orisas forgive and accept the *ebo* of the guilty person then the offended human has to ultimately forgive also**. The concept of **revenge is thereby eliminated and the guilty is believed to have aggrieved more the *Orisa* than the individual**.

However, **some *Ebo Riru* (sacrifice of remorse or appeasement) are rejected** based on the reading of *Ifa* on the particular situation. In these cases, the *Babalawo* requires **further reading to determine the next line of action**.

This practice of ***Ebo Riru*** states that the offering of sacrifice by a *Babalawo* on behalf of the offender, directly to the ***Orisa*** ruling the head of the aggrieved, is **the ultimate show of remorse, and forgiveness therefore comes from the *Orisa***.

***Odu Oyeku*** states,

***“Riru ebo ni gbeni  
Airu ki gbeniyan.”***

**“It is when we make sacrifices that we are rewarded/forgiven;  
Lack of sacrifice leaves us vulnerable.”**

***Odu Owonrin Meji*** says,

***“Ebo riru lorisa ngbo.”***

**“The *Orisa* listens to the voice of sacrifice.”**

Let us, each of us, avoid **Eewo** (doing forbidden things), and let us strive to be forgiving of those who violate the guidance of **Ifa**.

Let us all strive to exemplify **Iwa rere ati pele** (good and gentle character), and to do our part in bringing about the **Good Condition** for every human being as commanded by **Olodumare** and reported by **Orunmila**.

**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!**