

Sacred *Odù Ifá* Series: October 2025 Release
Overview of the Sacred *Odù Ifá*

Alàfíà Brothers and Sisters!
Orí ire 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! *Àşẹ o!*

If you are striving to change your life by following the guidance of your ancestors, then you are in the right place. This is where we break things down to help you to expand your mind into the wisdom of the *Ifá* Spiritual Tradition of Ancestor and *Òrìṣà* Worship. And I am grateful for your presence on this journey with me! Some of us have traveled this path together for years! I thank you for that.

Itesiwaju ati Isokan! (Progress and Peace!)

Everything we share here is intended to assist you in making progress and finding peace and success in your life. Your goal, our goal is consistent progress, our target is perfection! We all just need to do the best that we can, with the knowledge that we have, to address any circumstance or condition that we face on our life journey, one day at a time, bit by bit.

Àşẹ! Àşẹ! Àşẹ o!

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

If you are new to these video lessons, 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*). You can learn more about the *Emese* and the *Isoro* Council in the description section below and on our website. A link to our website is also in the description section below.

Our topic in this video is: An Overview of the Sacred *Ifá* Corpus or Sacred *Odù Ifá*

In this series of lessons, we will be taking a deeper look into the Sacred *Odù Ifá*, the foundational corpus of the *Ifá* Spiritual Tradition of Ancestor and *Òrìṣà* Worship.

Overview of *Odù Ifá*

The Sacred *Odù Ifá* are the foundational scriptures and spiritual blueprint of the *Ifá* tradition, a system of divination, cosmology, ethics, and spiritual guidance rooted in the Yorùbá culture of West Africa, particularly in Nigeria, and practiced throughout the African diaspora. Many, if not most African Americans and other African descendants throughout the Diaspora are genetically linked to this spiritual tradition. That's why it calls to us! It embodies our ancestral memories!

Let's dive in!

Part 1: What is the Sacred Odù Ifá?

The *Odù Ifá* (also called *Odù* or plural *Àwọn Odù*) are 256 sacred texts or signs that contain the wisdom of *Ifá*. These are not merely writings, but oral verses, proverbs, parables, myths, and spiritual codes that are chanted, memorized, and transmitted through trained diviners known as *Babaláwo* (fathers of the secrets) and *Iyanifa* (mothers of the secrets).

Part 2: Structure of the Odù

There are 256 *Odù*, which are divided into two groupings:

- 16 Major (Principal) *Odù* – called *Ojú Odù Méjì* (*Méjì* means two)
 - Examples: *Èjì Ogbè, Òyèkú Méjì, Ìwòrì Méjì, Ìdí or Òdí Méjì*
 - These are considered the “mothers and fathers” of all *Odù*.
- 240 Minor *Odù* (*Omoluabi*) – combinations of the 16, forming $16 \times 16 = 256$ total signs
 - Examples: *Ogbè Òyèkú, Ìwòrì Ogbè, Òtúrá Ìrosù*, etc.
 - Each minor *Odù* is a combination of two major signs.

The *Odùs* contain an entire library of information:

- Hundreds of *Ese Ifá* (*Ifá* verses or poems) - spiritual stories, teachings, and rituals
- Ritual Prescriptions (*Èbọ*) - sacrifices and offerings that help us to move the *Àṣẹ* and bend reality.
- Moral guidance and taboos (*Ìwà Pèlẹ́, Eewo*)
- Healing knowledge (plants, herbs, foods, and other natural healing technologies)
- Cosmological insights (dealing with the origin and general structure and evolution of the Universe, with its parts, elements, and laws, and especially with its characteristics such as space, time, causality, and freedom.
- Incantations / Invocations (*Òfọ*) (words of power for healing, influencing the weather, overcoming enemies, and much more)

Part 3: Divination: How the Odù are Used

Ifá Divination is performed using sacred tools to determine which *Odù* speaks to a person, situation, or event: Some of you have already contacted me and had me perform your *Odù Ojọ Ibi Afọṣẹ*, a divination to determine your Birthing *Odù*, the *Odù* that you brought into the world with you. You can contact me via email to learn how to have me perform this reading for you.

Spiritual Tools of Divination:

- *Opele* (divination chain)
- *Ikin Ifá* (sacred palm nuts)
- Cowry Shells or *Obi* (that you learned about in our lessons on *Ifá Ìwà*) You can check out the videos on that series of lessons.
- *Opon Ifá* (divination tray)
- *Erinla* (chalk) used to mark spiritual symbols and *Odù* signatures.

The *Babaláwo* (diviner) invokes *Òrúnmìlà*, the *Òrìṣà* of wisdom and witness of destiny, to reveal the correct *Odù* for the specific situation.

Part 4: Oral Tradition and Wisdom

The *Odùs* contain:

- Mythic and historical stories of *Òrìṣà* and ancestors
- Teachings about destiny (*Àyànmó*), *Orí* (inner head), and moral choices
- Rituals to restore harmony when imbalance is revealed
- Guidance for resolving personal, family, and community issues

The *Odù* are memorized and chanted by priests or priestesses. They are passed down orally and learned through decades of apprenticeship. Many lines/verses are thousands of years old.

Part 5: Sacrifice & *Ẹbọ*

Each *Odù* contains *Ẹbọ* - prescriptions for offerings, actions, or sacrifices needed to correct imbalance and align with *Ìwà Pẹ̀lẹ́* (good character).

Ẹbọs may include:

- Offerings to *Òrìṣà* or *Ẹgun*
- Acts of humility or restitution
- Spiritual cleansings or taboos (*Eewo*)
- Community service or sacred rituals

Part 6: Spiritual Significance

The Sacred *Odù Ifá*:

- Are a living archive of Yoruba cosmology and ethics
- Preserve the destiny stories of all beings
- Serve as a divine compass to help you align with your higher self and your purpose for coming into the world
- Reflects interconnectedness of all things, and teaches that destiny, character, and divine will are harmonized through wisdom and action

Part 7: Purpose of the Sacred *Odù Ifá*

“*Ifá* is the wisdom of *Olódùmarè* passed down through *Òrúnmìlà* so that humans can fulfill their destiny.”

The purpose of the *Odù Ifá* is to:

- Illuminate the path of *Ìwà Pẹ̀lẹ́* (Good Character)
- Help you remember your pre-birth covenant (*Ìpín*), or sacred contract/agreement with *Olódùmarè* and with your Ancestors

- Restore harmony between human beings, ancestors, *Iyá Ile* (Mother Earth), *Òrìṣà*, and *Olódùmarè*
- Teach you how to become (an avatar or embodiment of) *Òrìṣà* through righteous living
 - An Avatar is - a person, being, or thing embodying a spirit, principle, abstraction, (or incarnation) of something or someone else.

Part 8: What *Ifá* is and What *Ifá* is not

Ifá ni ki isin!

Ifá is not a religion!

Ifá ni bawo aiye ṣiṣe!

Ifá is how the universe works!

Ifá ni iwa ti aiye!

Ifá is the nature of the universe!

Ifá kii puro!

Ifá does not lie,

Ifá kii seke!

Ifá does not mislead or deceive!

Ohun tiyoo sele nifá nwi!

Ifá simply says what will happen!

Ifá ló wí bẹ̀ẹ̀!

Ifá renders it thus!

Àṣẹ! Àṣẹ! Àṣẹ o!

This brief overview lays the groundwork for our journey of exploration into the wisdom of the Sacred Odù *Ifá*. I look forward to having you share in this journey with me. Let me know in the comments your level of interest and excitement about this next series of lessons. *Àṣẹ o!*

Ki Olódùmarè, Òrìṣà, ati Egun fifun e ni

Itona, Imoye, ati Opo Ire!

May Olódùmarè, Òrìṣà, and Egun bestow on you,

Guidance, Wisdom, and Abundant Blessings!

Ifokanbale! Peace of Mind from Olódùmarè!

Alafia ati Ife! Peace and Love!

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

Àṣẹ! Àṣẹ! Àṣẹ o!