



# ODÙ IFÁ

THE ETHICAL TEACHINGS

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY  
A KAWAIDA INTERPRETATION

**MAULANA KARENGA**

*Preface by Wande Abimbola, Àwísẹ̀ Àgbáyé*

ODÙ IFÁ  
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*For our people everywhere.*

*Fún àwọn èniyàn wa níbi-gbogbo.*

*Kwa watu wetu kila mahali.*



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## PREFACE

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It gives me a great pleasure to write a few words about this new and exciting work of Dr. Maulana Karenga which I have read with considerable interest. This monumental work is undoubtedly an excellent scholarly addition to the rich and growing body of translations, commentaries, expositions and interpretations of the *Odu Ifa*, a task which started at the turn of this century with the works of D. Onadele Epega, E.M. Lijadu and A.F. Beyioku. Professor Karenga's current work on the ethical teachings of Ifa will certainly set the tone for similar studies of Ifa as we enter another millennium. His contributions in this volume are to my mind important in the following respects.

First, he has carefully researched existing published texts of Ifa which are available in Yoruba with accompanying English and French translations and pulled out from them a wide range of ethical and moral teachings. Some of these were not immediately accessible because the texts are out-of-print and therefore no longer in circulation. Thus, he provides for us a large volume of texts on Ifa ethical teachings which are of immense value beyond the world of scholarship. Indeed, this book will be useful to the general reader as well as those who are interested in enriching themselves with the philosophy and moral teachings of ancient and modern Africa.

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Much more important are the interpretations of the texts contained in this volume which Professor Karenga has developed with tremendous insight. He has brought to bear in this volume his rich background in the translation and interpretation of ancient Egyptian texts which is characterized by a commendable combination of scholarship and sensitivity to the texts. I find his interpretation of Ifa texts contained in this volume to be very profound and thought-provoking. Furthermore, Professor Karenga has been very careful in the way he has handled the texts, thus, preserving their original poetic and philosophical import even in the English translation. Only a scholar and a teacher who is deeply connected with and highly committed to the preservation and dissemination of African culture and values can see the need to treat the texts with such profound respect.

This volume should put to rest the speculations of writers who have ignorantly stated that African religions and societies are not concerned with moral values. This present work of Dr. Karenga demonstrates how greatly committed African societies have always been to imparting and disseminating cogent and essential moral values from one generation to another. I deeply appreciate this volume of the ethical teachings of Ifa and highly recommend it as a useful, informative, and excellent work.

Wande Abimbola, Awisẹ Agbáyé  
Professor of African Religions and Cultures,  
Boston University

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## INTRODUCTION

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### *Overview of the Project*

The *Odù Ifá*, the sacred text of the spiritual and ethical tradition of Ifa, is one of the great sacred texts in the world and a classic of African and world literature. Its sacred narratives and divination focus have been well-discussed, but less attention has been given to the rich resource it offers in ethical teachings. This book seeks to address this inadequacy of attention. Its governing interest is to present the ethical teachings of the *Odù* in the language of modern moral discourse while at the same time preserving and building on its distinctiveness as an ancient body of moral literature capable of framing and inspiring modern ethical philosophical reflection.

Furthermore, this book represents a larger effort to provide a modern translation of an ancient text with accompanying commentary which serve as both an *interpretation* and *transmission* of this classical African ethical tradition, the *Ifá* tradition of the Yoruba. This project is conducted within the Kawaiida tradition which defines itself as an ongoing synthesis of the best of African thought and practice in constant exchange with the world. Moreover, *Kawaiida* philosophy maintains that we must constantly dialog with African culture in the ongoing quest to become and be the best of what it means

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to be African and human in the fullest sense. This requires that we constantly ask questions and seek answers from African culture to the fundamental and enduring concerns of human life--concerns of transcendence and everyday life, of human meaning and the human prospect, of the good life, the moral person, the just society and the good world. This engagement of the Odu is carried out within this philosophical understanding.

In addition, the project is one in which tradition is approached not simply as a process or context into which one comes, but also as an ongoing product of one's effort to understand and engage it. Thus, within the framework of this engagement, a Kawaiida approach evolves which represents not only reaffirmation and continuity, but also change in focus and ongoing development of the particular tradition of Ifa as well as African culture in general. In this, we observe the Kawaiida principle that everything we do must be based on *tradition* and *reason*. Tradition is our foundation, our cultural grounding, and reason, especially moral reasoning, is a mode of engagement that aids us in our ongoing efforts to understand and practice tradition in new and expanded ways and to keep it as a living, vibrant and rich source of the best of human thought and practice.

In this thrust we have in a real sense begun to build a Kawaiida or African American form of Ifa tradition

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in the same sense that forms of the way of Ifa have evolved in Brazil as Candomblé, Cuba as Lukumí, Haiti as Voudun, and Puerto Rico as Lukumí. Again, then, we approach our tradition--continental as well as diasporan tradition--not simply as a context or process in which we come, but also as an ongoing product of our efforts to understand and engage it and constantly enrich and expand it as a living, valuable and instructive way of being human in the world.

The Odu Ifa is a corpus of sacred texts designed essentially to answer questions of human life through the process of divination. But as Awisẹ Wande Abimbola has pointed out in his seminal works on the Odu, they contain a wealth of knowledge and teachings in the realm of various fields including art, literature, medicine, history, religion and ethics.

The fundamental thrust of the Kawaiida interpretation of the Odu Ifa is to shift the almost exclusive focus on divination by adherents and scholars to an essentially ethical focus. To do this one must first search for and extract explicit and implicit moral teaching and critically discuss them, giving due attention to the delicate task of balancing assumptions concerning ancient meanings with modern moral interpretations and concerns. Secondly, given the centrality of the concept and practice of sacrifice (*irúbo*) in the Ifa tradition, an

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expanded understanding of *irúbp* must be established. Kawaiida understands sacrifice in two basic ways--as *ritual performance* and as *moral practice*. In ritual performance, the thing offered is an object; in moral practice, what is offered is oneself. Thus, ritual sacrifice is *object-giving* and moral sacrifice is *self-giving*.

At this point it is important to note two things. First, sacrifice as object-giving does not mean that one does not self-give at one level, but clearly the main and overriding focus is on the giving of objects. Likewise, sacrifice as self-giving does not mean one does not give objects, i.e., valuables, but clearly the principal and determining focus is on the giving of self. Secondly, a critical and expanded reading of the text offers an opportunity for both object-giving and self-giving exclusively or collectively. For example, the Odu Ogbedi (21:1) says:

*Ogbedi Perepere was the one who  
interpreted the teachings of Ifa for Ori  
Who had kneeled down and chosen his destiny,  
And whom detractors were preventing from  
achieving it.  
Ifa says he sees the evil-wishers who do not want us  
to succeed in what we are doing.  
Ifa says he will join us in overcoming the  
evil-wishers.*

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*He says we should sacrifice,  
When Ori had done all that was due in  
practicing sacrifice,  
All that he was doing fell into place and  
straightened out.  
And the way became clear.*

Now, when Ifa says "he will join us in overcoming the evil-wishers." I read that as a call to cooperative struggle of the divinity and human person to achieve a good end. Furthermore, when Ifa says "we should sacrifice," I read that as a counsel to give more of self in the struggle, i.e., more dedication, more discipline, more effort. And when the text says that "After Ori had done all that was due in practicing sacrifice," all that he was doing fell into place and straightened out and the way became clear." I take sacrifice to mean an expanded dedication, discipline and effort--in a word, an *expanded giving of self* through which he prospered and his way became clear.

Indeed, as Kawaiida teaches, the *clear way* and the *good life* require a *morality of sacrifice*. And the teachings of Odu Ifa offer an excellent source for framing and grounding such a morality. In a contemporary context of commercially cultivated self-indulgence and therapeutic consumerism, a morality of sacrifice becomes a central pillar in the ongoing thrust to envision and pursue

possibilities of human freedom and flourishing in society, history and our daily lives.

Finally, in this regard, the Odu teach that ritual sacrifice without moral character and practice is of no value. In the Odu Irete'yeku (70:1), it says:

*Orifusi, father of Elu, was searching for a way  
to avoid death,  
So that death would not kill him, his children  
or his wives.  
They said: if you want to avoid death,  
You must sacrifice and follow the teachings of Ifa.  
Ifa will teach you the conduct and character  
Which will enable you to avoid death.  
They said: if you sacrifice, you should begin  
doing good more than ever before.  
For your sacrifice is useless, if your character  
is deficient.*

The text goes on to advise Orifusi to take the chickens and pigeons he had for sacrifice home and release them. Also, he was told to not kill them but to give them food. And finally, the divine ones say to him, "And you must not kill anything whatsoever from this day on. For one who does not want death to kill him, should not kill anything whatsoever either."

The text clearly tells us that sacrifice as ritual performance is not sufficient in itself. In fact, it calls one's ritual performance useless, invalid, or in vain (*lãsan*) if one's character is deficient (*dín*). Moreover, the text says, Ifa will teach us "the conduct and character" necessary to achieve our end. And the instruction is "if you sacrifice, you should begin doing good more than ever before." This I take to mean that the beginning and essential sacrifice is good-doing. This assumption is reinforced by the advice to release the objects of sacrifice and to renounce, and refrain from, i.e., give up, killing anything whatsoever (see Odu 70:1). Thus, the Kawaïda tradition reads this and related texts as a divine preference for self-giving as distinct from object-giving, although it recognizes and respects the practice of sacrifice as object-giving in the historical and current Ifa tradition.

Also, Kawaïda, which has embraced and expanded the understanding and practice of the ancient Egyptian Maatian tradition, finds additional support in it for moral self-giving. In this ancient African ethical tradition, doing *Maat*, i.e., right in the broadest sense, is the essential offering to the Divine. In the *Husia*, Kheti says, "make worthy your house in the West and make firm your place in God's domain by being upright and just. It is on this that the hearts of men and women rely. For more acceptable is the virtue of the righteous than the (sacrificed) ox of those who do evil." And Queen

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Hatshepsut says to the Lord of Heaven, "I offer you *Maat* for I know you live by it." In a word, then, *Maat*, or *Ire* or *rere-ise* (doing good and right) is the essential offering in the Kawaïda tradition and it is how we read the Ifa tradition without denying the central meaning of the ritual sacrifice to it.

A second requirement for moving from an almost exclusive divination-focused reading of the Odu to an essentially ethics-focused reading is the need for an expanded interpretation of the phrase "*a òfá fún*." This phrase is usually translated as "divination was performed for" but may be translated in various other ways which stress divination. However, an ethical-focused interpretation of the texts requires that the interpretive dimension of divination and the text themselves be expanded so that the interpretation is not only of the signs but also of *the teachings of Ifa*. Thus, in Kawaïda, we translate "*a òfá fún*" as "*the teachings of Ifa were interpreted for*" or "*this was the teaching of Ifa for*." This allows for interpretations of both ethical and other instructions in matters of life and death, human problems and prospects, this-world and other-world concerns and considerations.

A final requirement for the transition from an almost exclusive divination-focused interpretation of the Odu Ifa to an essentially ethics-focused reading is the cultivation among scholars, priests and general adherents

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of a wide-reaching, thorough and profound ethical dialog tradition. In such a tradition, persons will engage the texts, personally and communally, as a fundamental source of the best of African and human ethics, constantly reading and re-reading them to discover and recover ancient and modern meaning in the ongoing quest to answer current moral questions, and to envision and bring into being the moral community, just society and good world we all want and deserve to live in. Thus, it will become and be for us a sacred legacy of moral instruction left by our ancestors and offered by us to the generations that follow. And this legacy will have at its core the ethical teaching and practice of speaking truth and doing justice, honoring elders and ancestors, caring for the vulnerable, having a rightful relation with the environment, resisting evil and constantly raising up and pursuing the good, in ever more expansive ways.

### *The Ethical Framework*

A Kawaïda reading of the Odu Ifa finds an ethics rooted in the four fundamental pillars of the larger African ethical tradition. These fundamental principles are respect for and commitment to: (1) the dignity and rights of the human person; (2) the well-being and flourishing of family and community; (3) the integrity and value of the environment; and (4) the reciprocal solidarity and common interests of humanity. The conceptual

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context for the evolution of Ifa ethics is a spirituality which conceives of the world as essentially good but constantly needing to be renewed, repaired and enriched with good. Secondly, humans are designed by the Creator as those chosen to constantly bring good into the world and not let any good be lost (Iwosu'wori, 78). This *chosenness*, along with its companion concept of being *omọ Olódūmarè*, the offspring of God, offer a ground for the ethical principle of human dignity or the inherent and inviolable worthiness of each and every human. The divine designation of humans as chosen ones, *àniyàn*, carries with it, not only a special status of beings with an inherent and inviolable worthiness. It also, as Odu Irosu'wori (78) tells us, suggests that the fundamental mission and meaning of human life is to constantly bring good into the world.

In order to achieve this ongoing task, as is explained in Odu Irosu'wori (78), humans are told that they need several essential attributes and virtues. These include: wisdom, character, the love of doing good, especially for the needy, and constant *commitment* and *struggle* to bringing good into the world and not let any good be lost. Likewise, we are told throughout the texts that we must be good parents, sons and daughters, friends and fellow human beings and that we should respect our elders and ancestors, with the understanding that our *togetherness in harmony* insures and enhances our ability

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to bring, give and receive good in the world. The principle here, as Odu Osa'gunda (202:1) tells us, is *àṣùwà*, gathering together in harmony for the good. In fact, the text says that "all good comes from the gathering together in harmony."

The Odu Ifa also reminds us of our obligation to the earth, indeed the world, and our reciprocal relationship with it. It urges us to avoid plundering, polluting and depleting the earth in our pursuit of wealth and comfort. Instead, Odu Osa Meji (10:5) urges us to *sacrifice* so that the integrity of the earth can be maintained and we can honor our reciprocal relationship with the world in which we live and are a part. For "in this way, we live" also. In conclusion, then, the moral imagination and instruction in the Odu Ifa are rich, varied and resourceful. And it is an ancient legacy worthy of the most profound reflection and the most serious practice in engaging in meaningful and beneficial ways the critical issues of our times.

### *Textual Notes*

In preparing the translations, I have used the Epega model rather than the Fama model for ordering the minor Odu, although it's my understanding that each is valid. Our choice is based on the assumed greater antiquity of the Epega model, though the Fama model seems easier to learn and follow. I have also consciously

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made use of the gender neutrality which the Yoruba language offers in pronominal use of "he" and "she" to balance male/female representation in the text without trying to achieve an exact ratio of one-to-one. This is done first because faithfulness to the texts allows and often requires this. But it is also done to emphasize that the best of African ethics and spirituality recognizes the indispensability and equal value, role and responsibility of woman in the world as expressed in the Odu Osa Meji (10:2) and Ose Otura (248:1).

Also, in the interest of the scholarly and regular need for citation, the Odu are ordered so that one may cite Odu, *ẹsẹ* (verse) and line. This may be written, for example 248:1.1-2, meaning, Odu 248, verse 1, lines 1-2. Given that often a literal translation is neither clear nor the best, I have tried to translate the text in a way which reveals its capacity for an expanded imagery and message without sacrificing its literal or essential meaning. And where I've added a word or phrase to the text for clarity, I have used italics to signify this.

Moreover, I have offered commentaries, *àṣọyẹ*, only on a selected number of Odu. This is not only because of the need to keep the text an accessible length, but also to allow as much as possible an uninterrupted reading of the text as a whole. Also, it is hoped that efforts to understand the text from our own personal and

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various group vantage points will enrich and expand the discourse around the text. My intention in providing the commentaries is simply to offer a useful framework for understanding and engaging the most essential concepts in this rich and inexhaustible storehouse of moral instruction and moral imagination. It is in this spirit of encouraging an ongoing and constantly expanding dialog around the ethical teachings of the Odu Ifa that the Kawaiida Institute of Pan-African Studies (Us) has called and co-sponsored the Conference on Yoruba Culture and Ethics, "Ethics and Spirituality in the Odu Ifa: Bringing Good into the World," February 4-7, 1999 in Los Angeles. And it is also in pursuit and support of such a dialog that I have especially prepared this volume to be released and discussed at this conference.

The obvious stress on ethical teaching and learning represents the Kawaiida rootedness in the African moral teacher or *Seba* tradition that reaches back to ancient Egypt. It is a tradition of which the Odu are a fundamental part according to our understanding. In the Kawaiida tradition, Orunmila is, above all, a sage and an *Olúkọ*, a teacher or more precisely an *Olúkọ-tẹ̀dèrere*, a moral teacher. And here moral includes and necessitates the spiritual, i.e., commitment to the Transcendent. Thus, the stress on the ethical teachings of Ifa or Orunmila are central to our concept and translation of the text.

Obviously, then, I have edited the texts to focus in on the ethical teaching. This has produced Odu and verses of a few lines, as well as, Odu of whole narratives. Many of the texts collected originally reflected the dialectical variants of the areas or sources from which they came or in which they were recorded. As far as possible, I have tried to standardize the textual language, using standard Yoruba unless change of the word to its standard form proved impossible or unadvisable. As in my work in ancient Egyptian texts, I have tried to recapture in the Yoruba texts the poetic beauty of the moral imagination, imagery and instruction of the Odu Ifa.

We, at the Kawaida Institute of Pan-African Studies, have collected these texts from a wide range of sources, often a few texts or even one text from a series of single sources. But clearly the major collection of texts from early and current authors are the main source of the texts in this work, even though the Odu are sometimes duplicated in various sources and may have varied in text and dialect. We have approached the Odu Ifa itself as a common heritage of African people available for varied translations and interpretations while still respecting prior and other particular translations and interpretations as the protected intellectual work of each author. The model for this is the ability of interested persons to translate and interpret the other major religious texts collected by others such as the *Quran*, *Bible*, *Husia*, *Dhammapada*, *Torah*,

*Bhagavad-Gita*, etc., without infringing on the rights of those who collected and/or assembled them. Thus, in preparing these translations and commentaries, I have used the existing original texts and benefitted from the early and current translations and studies of the Odu which, as mentioned above, are scattered throughout the literature.

### *Acknowledgements*

My list of acknowledgments in this area is obviously and rightfully long. And a selected list of key sources follow at the end of the text. First, I am profoundly indebted to those who recorded this oral tradition in writing and began the dialog around and within the Ifa tradition: Babalawo Fagbenro Beyioku, Rev. E.M. Lijadu, Babalawo Fela Sowande and especially Rev. D. Onadele Epega who has provided us with the most complete corpus of Ifa texts and who founded the Imole Oluwa Institute for the studying and publishing of Ifa texts. Likewise, I have benefitted from the work of Babalawos Afolabi A. Epega, his grandson, and Philip Neimark for providing an English translation and commentary on this essential and extensive text; Iyanifa Aina Fama Adewale for her valuable work on the theological narratives of the Odu with accompanying Yoruba texts; Babalawo S. Solagbade Popoola for his insightful translations and interpretations of the Odu

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texts; Alagba David A. Adeniji and Dr. Akinsola Akiwowo for their invaluable work of collection and interpretation of the texts, especially the *Aláṣṣùwàdà* text of Osa'gunda; and William Bascom for his collection and commentary.

Certainly, I am greatly indebted to Dr. Wande Abimbola, the internationally renowned scholar of the Odu Ifa and Yoruba theology and culture whose seminal work in translation and in linguistic, poetic, textual, historical and cultural analysis of the Odu texts has been an invaluable source of knowledge for me. Moreover, he has given me valuable support and advice and has provided me with insightful and helpful reviews of both individual texts and this work as a whole. Such an interest in and encouragement of my work have special meaning, not only because of his intellectual status as preeminent authority on the Odu texts, but also because of his status as *Àwísẹ̀ Agbáyé* (spokesperson for Ifa in the world).

I owe thanks also to Dr. E. Bolaji Idowu whose work *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* was my introduction to Yoruba religion and ethics and which I read while at UCLA in the midst of developing my philosophy, Kawaída, in the 60's. In fact, I taught from his book in *Micahimu* class, a class for the training of moral teachers now called *Seba* in the Kawaída tradition. And I am sure the Yoruba stress on character as a personal and social value as discussed by him influenced greatly my focus on

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values as central to personal and collective practice in Kawaída philosophy. Likewise, I have benefitted greatly from the incisive interpretations of art, ethics and culture of Dr. Babatunde Lawal and Dr. Rowland Abiodun.

I reserve a special thanks for Dr. Stephen Adewole, an accomplished linguist and my first tutor in Yoruba, who offered important linguistic as well as cultural insights as we meticulously worked our way through the Odu. And thanks is also due to Dr. Yetunde Laniran, also a proficient linguist, who critically reviewed the final manuscript to insure the accuracy of diacritical marks and standardization of the language. A special thanks goes also to Dr. Molefi Asante, a colleague of the first rank whose continuous discussion of African culture with me is always engaging and valuable.

As always, I give the greatest thanks to the members of my organization Us who provide me with the support and intellectual challenge and exchange indispensable to this and other of my projects, especially to Thabiti Ambata, Tulivu Jadi, Tukufu Kalonji, Thanayi Karenga, Tiamoyo Karenga, Mpinduzi Khuthaza, MHimili Kinamo, Mshinda Nyofu, Aminisha Tambuzi, Robert Tambuzi, Mark Tangulifu, Chimbuko Tembo, Limbiko Tembo and Ujima Wema. Moreover, I am grateful to the members of the National Association of Kawaída Organizations (NAKO), especially those in New

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York, Philadelphia, and Chicago who have also provided me with an important context of support and exchange. My gratitude is also special and continuing to my publishers and friends, Chimbuko Tembo and Limbiko Tembo, whose involvement in my creative projects are always supportive, sustained and greatly helpful.

As ever, there is no greater debt I owe or thanks I can give than that which I owe and give to my friend, wife and companion in all things good, pure and eternal, Tiamoyo Karenga. It is she who is always my first and final collaborator and colleague, my typist, proofreader, editor and co-creator of the good. I bear the burden of my own mistakes, but any good which comes from this and other works surely is shared with all those who made them possible. May the ancestors who gave us these texts on the good and the right and who opened the way to the good society and world for us, be pleased with our efforts and our humble offerings. *Aṣṣe*.

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Los Angeles, California

## ODÙ IFÁ

### THE ETHICAL TEACHINGS

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## ÈJÌ OGBÈ

ODÙ I

1:1

**L**et us not engage the world hurriedly.  
Let us not grasp at the rope of wealth  
impatiently.  
That which should be treated with mature  
judgment,  
Let us not deal with in a state of  
uncontrolled passion.  
When we arrive at a cool place,  
Let us rest fully.  
Let us give continuous attention to the future.  
Let us give deep consideration to the  
consequences of things.  
And this because of our eventual passing.

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K'á má fi kánjúkánjú j'ayé.  
K'á má fi wàràwàrà n'okùn ọrọ.  
Ohun a bá fi s'àgbá,  
K'á má fi sè'bínú.  
Bí a bá dé'bi t'ó tútù,  
K'á simi-simi.  
K'á wò'wajú ọjó lọ títí.  
K'á tún bọ wá r'ẹhin ọràn wò.  
Nítorí àti sùn ara ẹni ní.

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ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on having a measured approach to achieving the good life. It reflects the Odu stress on the virtue of *ìwọ̀n*, or balance, and the *amúwọ̀n*, the balanced person. We are not to engage the world in a hurried, heedless or reckless manner. Nor are we to seek material gain impatiently. For although Odu ethics poses wealth as one of the main blessings in life as well as an important condition to live a truly full life and a means to aid and share with others, there is continuous concern that pursuit of material gain not be excessive or all-consuming (Odu, 82:1). The good or moral life, the teaching tells us, also necessitates that we treat important matters with the reasonableness and calmness they require.

Moreover, the text suggests that the good life also requires that we know when and how to rest. It poses rest as an essential condition not only for the good life in general, but also specifically for serious moral and critical reflection. Finally, the text tells us that we should give full and ongoing attention to the future and be constantly and profoundly concerned about the consequences of

things. This dual moral emphasis speaks to our need to be concerned with the effect of our actions, not only on the quality of life and relations in the contemporary world, but also on the future of the world and generations to come. And thus, it has particular moral meaning not only for the quality of human relations, but for the integrity of the environment (Odu, 10:5).

Such moral concern, the text suggests, is to be embraced not only for the good life here, but also to secure our place in eternity given our eventual passing. In a word, it speaks to our need to live a life that leaves a legacy of goodness in this world which not only promises respectful memory in this world but also eternal life in the next.

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ÈJÌ OGBÈ

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1:2

**O**runmila says it should be done little by little.  
I say it is little by little we eat the head of  
the fish.

We are not as large as the elephant nor as sturdy  
as the buffalo.

The sash worn underneath is not equal to the  
sash tied on top.

No noble is as great as the Oni of Ife.

No string of cowries is as long as that of  
Yemideregbe.

Yemideregbe is what we call the owner of  
the sea.

Orunmila says that we should measure the length  
and measure the breadth of things.

The hand reaches much higher than the head.

And the young palm fronds extend much higher  
than the old palm fronds.

But no forest is so dense that the iroko tree  
cannot be seen.

And no celebration is so loud that the gong cannot  
be heard.

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ÈJÌ OGBÈ

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1:2

Òrúnmìlà ní ó dì kẹ̀rẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀.

Èmí ní kẹ̀rẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀ l'àá j'orí ẹ̀ja.

A kí ígbà tobi t'erin, a kí sẹ̀ yẹ̀kẹ̀tẹ̀ t'ẹ̀fọ̀n.

Ọ̀já kí it' ọ̀ja ígbà lé.

Elú k'élú kí it' Ọ̀ni Ife.

Okún owó ẹ̀yọ́ kí it'ókùn Yemideregbe.

Yemideregbe l'orúkọ a p'ólókun.

Òrúnmìlà ní k'á wọ̀n n'ìbú k'á wọ̀n n'ìró.

Gbọghorogbo l'owó yọ́ j'orí.

Gbọghorogbo ní màrìwò ọ̀pẹ̀ yọ́ j'ogomọ́

Igbó kí dí kí ìròkò kí ó má yọ́.

A kí ik'éré yọ́ kí t'agogo kí ó má yọ́.

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ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on moderation in our approach to life and in our truthful evaluation of our ability, potential and possibilities. Things should be done "little by little" or "step by step," the text tells us. For such a measured approach enables us to make adequate evaluations in our engagement and understanding of things. In a word, the text says, "We should measure the length and breadth of things." This also implies our need to delve into the depth of things. For the metaphor of the sash underneath of the one on top requires our going below the surface to see difference and distinction. And, indeed, the examination of each situation itself, requires depthful reflection.

This verse also teaches that even though we must not overestimate ourselves, we still must determine our possibilities, pursue them and make our own distinct contribution to the whole. Thus, we may not be as large as an elephant or sturdy as a buffalo, but we each have our own strengths. We are not the king of Ife; nor do we have the riches of the sea, but there is royalty in righteousness and riches in good character. And if we are not

intellectually inclined, we must still use our heads the way we can and find the higher work our hands can reach and do.

Moreover, the teaching suggests that there are advantages to being both young and old. The old palm fronds have defined and strengthened the tree, but the young palm fronds, building on that base, must find their meaning in pushing forward further and higher. And finally, the text teaches that in the midst of the many, the distinct, by definition, stands out. Thus, no matter how dense the forest is, the iroko or African teak tree will still stand out and regardless of the loudness of the celebration, the gong dares to be heard.

In conclusion, we must approach life and the things before us in a measured and reflective way. And we must not be immobilized or dispirited by what we cannot do or be, but rather we must discover and clear our own paths of possibilities and pursue them.

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ÈJÌ OGBÈ

I

1:3

**D**aylight does not endure beyond its usual time.  
Night does not last beyond its regular limit.  
And darkness does not continue beyond what is customary.  
He who provides a pair of sandals for a child's feet  
Interpreted the teachings of Ifa for Baalejo who was coming from heaven to earth.  
If we have a problem,  
We should take it to our ancestors.  
He will protect us;  
Our paternal ancestor will never desert us.  
She will protect us;  
Our maternal ancestor will never neglect us.  
They will protect us;  
Our Ifa teachings will never forsake us.  
It shall protect us;  
Our Ori, our inner head, will not abandon us.

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ÈJÌ OGBÈ

I

1:3

Ọsán ní ò sán pé.  
Ọru ní ò ru pé.  
Ọkùnkùn ò kùn pé.  
Ọ pa bàtà m'ọmọ lẹsẹ pẹẹ pẹẹ pẹẹ  
A dífá fún Báalejọ  
Tí nt' ìkòlé ọrun bọ wáyé.  
Bá a bá lẹjọ o,  
Sẹ b'ọrún ẹnì là á báá sọ.  
Yóó gbè ọ o.  
Baba ẹnì kẹ í gbẹ'ni í tì.  
Yóó gbè ọ o.  
Iye ẹnì kẹ í gbẹ'ni í tì.  
Yóó gbè ọ o.  
Ìkín ẹnì kẹ í gbẹ'ni í tì.  
Yóó gbè ọ o.  
Orí ẹnì kẹ í gbẹ'ni í tì.

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## ÈJÌ OGBÈ

I

1:3

### ÀSQYÉ

This Odu focuses first on the lesson that we should be knowledgeable on how the world works and have enough patience to see it unfold. It suggests that night and day become unbearably long for the impatient or anxious person, but the wise and self-controlled person sits down calmly, as the ancient Egyptian says, anticipating what happens, knowing what will occur.

Also, the text teaches that we have no real reason to worry unduly. Caution against injury, Odu 222:2 says, is not being overly fearful, for we must defend ourselves. Here the answer is spiritual and moral grounding through linking with the ancestors and, by extension, following in their ways. The portrait of a caring Creator is immediately projected by his praise name, "He who provides a pair of sandals (even) for a child's feet." And the way of the ancestors which is always and infinitely moral and spiritual is key to how well we walk and prosper in the world. Thus, the advice of the Odu is take our problems to our maternal and paternal ancestors, study the ways and teachings of Ifa, and honor the council of the inner, the divinely-placed guide and ground in all of us.

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## ÈJÌ OGBÈ

I

1:4

**I**f a friend is exceedingly kind,  
He is like a relative of one's mother or father.  
Ifa says that one who seeks a new friend  
Will find that friend to be of great value.

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B' ọrẹ bá nínúrerere l'á nínúrerere jù,  
À dàbí iyékan.  
Ifá ní eni tí ńfẹ̀ ní ọrẹ̀ titun kan  
Ọrẹ̀ náà yíò ẹ̀e ní ànfààní ńlá.

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## ÈJÌ OGBÈ

I

1:4

### ÀSỌYÉ

Here this Odu reaffirm the social basis of relationships. The friend who is exceedingly kind is described as "*dàbí iyékan*" or a person who resembles a relative of one's parents. Clearly, we are not talking about physical similarity here but moral and spiritual resemblance, i.e., loving, kind, giving, protective, a bringer of good. Inherent in this brief *esè* or verse is that message that friendship has a special place in Yoruba social and ethical life. Many of the ethical teachings measure the quality of our ethical commitments and ethical life by our relationship with our friends. Injunctions are throughout the texts on loving and helping of friends, on speaking truth and doing justice to them, not betraying them or seducing their partners.

The text encourages us to seek new friends, saying we will find them of great value--indeed, of great value in every sense of the word. And this is so not only in the sense of support, creative challenge and the joy of sharing,

but also by serving in the role of mirror and honest advisor in the midst of our constant growth and development. As for others, we might find reasons to reject their advice. But with friends, we are obligated to listen.

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ÈJÌ OGBÈ

I

1:5

**I** lift up my arms and walk in joyful  
satisfaction.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Orunmila.  
They said Baba would not be able to carry  
out his responsibilities to the end  
of his life.

But I will carry out my responsibilities to  
the end of my life.

And so, I lift up my arms and walk with  
dignity and measured movement.

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Mo sípá; mo yan gede.

A dífá fún Òrúnmilà.

Wón ní Baba ò ní lè rẹ̀rù rẹ̀ dalẹ̀.

Èmi ní ká nì n ó rẹ̀rù mí dalẹ̀.

Mo sípá; mo yan gede.

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ÈJÌ OGBÈ

I

1:5

ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on the joyful acceptance and carrying out of our responsibilities of life. The teaching begins with the teacher declaring that he will lift up his arms in joyful satisfaction of carrying out his responsibilities. He notes the sentiment that Baba, meaning Orunmila, will not carry out his responsibilities to the end of his life. But we who know Orunmila will indeed carry out his responsibilities. For throughout the Odu, the text tells us that he will not move or be moved by the seductions of money and material things, sex, comfort or power. He is the master teacher of Ifa, the good life, witness to creation and he cannot be diverted or dispirited.

The verse turns to each of us and gives us a chance to answer a question inherent in the discussion: will we carry out your responsibilities to the rest of our life? This question, of course, raises the related question of what kind of responsibilities? And the Odu reveal both grand and specific responsibilities. We are first of all reminded by Odu 78 that we are chosen by the Divine to bring good into the world; that we should let no good be lost; and

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finally, that we should do our work and live our lives with joy. Specifically and within the framework of this moral guideline, the Odu instruct us to speak truth, do justice, care for the vulnerable and needy, honor and care for the elders, raise our children right, relate rightfully to the world around us, and again do it with a triumphant sense of joy.

2:1

**C**onstantly shifting is a boat on water.  
And so are human beings.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Ona Ishokan  
Who was a child of the King of Oyo.

One who is brave

Should not assume the voice of the timid.

And one who is timid

Should not talk like one who is brave.

The king does not allow us to make war on a  
town of women

So that we may go with them.

Let us conduct ourselves with gentleness

So that we may pass peacefully,

And so that our children can stretch forth  
their hands fully

On us in burial.

---

2:1

Bíríbirí l'ókò dá.  
 Bèènnáni ni ọmọ aráyé.  
 A dífá fún Ọ̀nà Ịsòkùn  
 Tí ịse ọmọ ọba l'óde Ọyọ.  
 Ẹnití ó bá ńs'akin  
 K'ó má m'óhùn ojo.  
 Ẹnití ó bá ńs'ọjọ  
 K'ó má m'óhùn akin.  
 Ọba kò jẹkí á s'ogun sí ilú obirin,  
 K'á bá wọn lọ.  
 K'ẹni hùwà gbèdègbèdè  
 K'ẹni lè kú pèlẹ pèlẹ.  
 K'ómọ ẹni lè n'ọwọ gbogbogbo  
 L'ẹni sin.

2:1

## ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on the virtues of genuineness, gentleness and truthful self-presentation. It begins by recognizing that human beings are in a constant process of change, i.e., "constantly shifting" from one place, position, level of development, etc., to another. The implicit challenge here, then, becomes one of always being one's real self in the midst of the demands of change. The text also teaches that a person should neither hide one's courage nor pretend a courage one does not have. The courageous are compelled to step forward and the timid are counseled to be modest in their claims. This teaching is important in stressing the need for those who are capable to always show moral courage as well as courage of heart and mind in difficult situations when it would be easy to step back, remain silent or "assume the voice of the timid." The counsel here is to not disguise oneself and by extension to stand up and step forward in the service of good (*ire*). On the other hand, the verse counsels the timid

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not to pretend courage but to strengthen themselves through self-development and practice which leads to the acquisition of courage.

Likewise, the text suggests that the example of the coward posing as a courageous person is found in men who would "make war on" or attack women in various ways to have access to and control of them. The teaching is that in a group situation, a real ruler or leader would not permit it and that the moral path to access and exchange is through gentleness. "We are to behave gently then" to achieve our ends in the world.

The last part of this Odu, then, is a teaching on gentleness of behavior. It advises us to be gentle in all we do. And although there are numerous other reasons given in the Odu for being gentle, this *esè* gives two main ones. The first reason this verse gives for our need to be gentle is so "that we might leave life peacefully," that is to say, so that we may die *at peace* and *in peace*. To die or pass *at peace* is to pass into the next world without undue worry about what will be left behind or what will be met ahead. And to die or pass *in peace* is to lie down to make the transition to the next world in the midst of harmony, love, calmness, contentment and untroubleness. In a word, it

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is to leave life in a moral community we ourselves have helped create.

The second reason the text gives us for behaving gently in life is so that our children who experience this loving kindness will reciprocate and respond to our passing in a loving and respectful manner. The teaching tells us that we must live our lives in a manner which causes love and respect from our children which in turn causes them "to stretch forth their hands fully upon us," that is to say, to embrace us fully in death as they did in life.

In sum, then, to leave life peacefully is to act in life with such gentle kindness that we leave a legacy of goodness in this world which is the basis for respectful memory in this world and eternal life in the next.

2:2

**L**et us not lie against a companion.  
Let us not break a commitment to an  
associate.  
And this, because of our eventual passing.

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K'á má s'èké egbé.  
K'á má da'lẹ̀ ògbà.  
Nítorí àti sùn ara eni ni.

2:2

### ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on not lying against or to a friend, companion or an associate, or breaking a commitment one makes to another. The emphasis is on truth-telling and commitment-keeping as essential to friendship and by extension to all relations of closeness. Surely, these two values are essential in any relationship, but they take on added meaning in close relations like friendship or companionship. The importance of avoiding such behavior is underlined by the verse's reminding us of our mortality and the need to live in such a way that our passing is a good one. That is to say, that it is peaceful in this life and promising in the next.

It is important to note that Ifa ethics uses *òrẹ*, friend, or similar categories of closeness, i.e., *egbé* (companion, comrade) or *ògbà* (associate, peer), rather than *aládugbò*, neighbor, to teach moral lessons and moral practice of respect and concern for others. The moral reasoning concerning this seems to be that human solidarity is best achieved in the quest for and practice directed toward friendship. Likewise, the violation of a friendship, even more than a similar injury to a neighbor,

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reveals the gravity of the moral offense. My sense is that a neighbor requires much less of us. We may and often do keep a respectful distance from most neighbors, tolerating some and actually hating others. But friends, real friends, are here, as in the ancient Egyptian and Kawaiida tradition, a mirror and map of the best of what we can become as an African and human being.

This does not mean that friends cannot and do not sometimes injure or even betray us. But the value of friendship, the text suggests, outweighs any risks such a relationship might bring.

2:3

I fa says that a visitor is coming  
And that we should take care of her  
Lest her kindness and goodness pass us by.  
For there is value in the presence of a visitor.

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Ifá ní àlejó kan òbò  
K'á tójú rẹ,  
Kí oore àti ire rẹ má bá kọjá ẹni  
Nítorí ànfààní wá l'ára àlejó nàà.

---

I fa says that a stranger is coming  
And that we should take care of him,  
Lest his kindness and goodness pass us by.  
For there is value in the presence of a stranger.

2:3

ÀSỌYÉ

This verse focuses on the moral considerability of the guest or stranger. Like many other African languages, Yoruba uses the same word, "àléjò" for both stranger and guest. For example in Swahili, Zulu and ancient Egyptian, the words "mgeni," "isihambi," and "keri" may mean visitor or stranger. This suggests a positive approach to the stranger which welcomes him or her as a guest as distinct from a xenophobic response which sees the stranger as threat or enemy. Clearly, in the Maatian ethics of ancient Egypt the moral considerability of the stranger is a basic principle. Thus, in the *Husia*, the stranger is to be welcomed, and we read assertions that one was kind and generous to those whom one did not know like those whom one did know.

The key point here is that in many African societies, the considerability of the stranger is a central element in the moral calculus of the right, the wrong and the worthy, and in Yoruba culture counts among these. In this verse, the moral assumption is made that the stranger brings something of good and value and we risk

losing it by not welcoming and taking good care of him or her.

The issue of possible vulnerability from too quick or too close an embrace of a stranger speaks to the virtues of balance and reciprocity found throughout the Odu Ifa. The first virtue teaches us to be balanced in all things. Here a balance of heart (moral sensitivity) and head (social reasoning informed by moral sensitivity) are central. One presumes, then, that the other is a potential good neighbor and possible friend until actions prove otherwise. And one never invests beyond what is warranted by reciprocal response. Such a posture becomes an important way to avoid vulnerability to exploitation and injury on one hand and unwarranted hostility on the other.

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ÒYÈKÚ MÉJÌ

2

2:4

**E**ven if you move away from your position,  
I will not move.  
The foundation stones of the house must not  
fail the house.  
And the crown of the head must not fail  
the person at the market.  
So I will not move away.  
And you will not move away.  
Twilight is just appearing in the heavens,  
But some people thought day had already  
dawned.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Eji Oye  
Who would dawn on earth like daylight.  
So, if it were money that moved me,  
I would certainly say so.  
But Ifa will assign me my own good fortune.

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ÒYÈKÚ MÉJÌ

2

2:4

Bí o bá yè.  
Èmi ò yè.  
Yangi ilé, wọn ò gbọdò yelẹ.  
Àtàrí, wọn ò gbọdò yẹ èrò ojà.  
Èmi ò yè.  
Ìwọ ò yẹ.  
Òyè sèsè ní lá bọ lókè,  
Wọn se bójúmó ní òmó.  
A dífá f'Éjì Òyè  
Tí ó t'ojú ọrun là wáyé bí ọbèrèkẹ.  
Njẹ owó ló bá òwú mì,  
Dandan, mo wí.  
Ifá ní ó yẹ're tẹmi f'ẹmi.

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2:4

ÀSỌYÉ

This verse stresses the virtue of steadfastness in the right and the good. It promises that such a commitment to the way of Ifa, the way of rightness, will bring a good fortune beyond material gains. Moreover, the teaching invites us to see the virtue of steadfastness as essential to maintaining the good in the world as the foundation stones of the house are to upholding it and as useful to a person as the crown of the head is to one in the market who uses the head on which to carry heavy and valuable loads.

The verse begins by declaring a commitment to hold firm to the position of the good and right even if others move away from it. But it also expresses a moral optimism in others by declaring however that "I will not move away and you will not move away." This suggests not only a genuine moral optimism about the human will to hold to the good, but perhaps also suggests our constant need to support others in their struggle to keep their position. Also, important in this teaching is the subtle lesson that people are often drawn from their positions of

steadfastness in the right by misreading signs of achievement or change. Thus, it says although it was only twilight which was appearing in the heavens, some thought it was already daylight and apparently acted accordingly. The sense seems to be that they, misreading the situations, moved away from their positions prematurely, like those in struggle misreading the turn of events, assuming victory before the battle is won and walking away from the battlefield.

Finally, the text also suggests that material gain, here in the form of money, can also entice us to leave the way and lose the way. But the assertion is that if we don't confuse money or material gain with the good fortune Ifa offers, we will gain a special good and be among those who will, through steadfastness in the good and right, "dawn on earth like daylight."

**F**ierce is the fire on the face of those who  
gather honey.

Severe is the sun on the bent back of the farmer.  
The one who gathers honey suffers losses;  
The honey bee moves away and the honey is  
eventually exhausted.

But the house of the teacher of Ifa is never empty.  
Ifa says he will not allow us to come up  
empty-handed

In that for which we seek the advice of Ifa.

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Iná kankan ni'wájú aréyin.  
Oòrún kankan n'ibàdí àgbé.  
Ti aréyin á di ègbé.  
Oyin sí àti àdó rẹ.  
Sùgbón ilé awo kò ní gb'ófo.  
Ifá ní òun kò n jẹkí a pòfo.  
Ni ohun tí a dá Ifá.

ÀSQYÉ

This is an *ese* in praise of the rewards of studying Ifa and following the counsel of the Odu. It tells us that the gathering of the sweet of honey brings with it the heat from the fire used to smoke out the bees and that the sun is severe on the back of farmers as they work the fields for their yield. These examples teach us to recognize that good gain requires sacrifice and effort. But then the gathering of honey as a problematic, questionable and ephemeral gain is contrasted with the counsel of Ifa as a sure and lasting good.

This verse complements the previous and following verses which praise the power and promise of our study and practice of the teachings of Ifa. Also, it reaffirms the need to hold on to what the ancient Egyptians called "that which endures in the midst of that which is overthrown," i.e., our moral and spiritual principles which give direction, meaning and fullness to our lives. And the way of Ifa is clearly and certainly the central source and ground of these principles in these texts.

2:6

Orunmila says there should be a gathering  
together like trees do to form a forest.  
I say there should be a gathering together.  
We find monkeys in groups.  
We find wild pigs in groups.  
We don't even find "one who keeps silent"  
walking alone.  
Nor do we find the greedy one walking alone.  
Ifa says we should gather together and not  
walk alone.

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Orunmila ni ó bá di igbó.  
Mo ni ó di bá igbó ni.  
Igbó ni áá bá ehan.  
Igbó ni áá bá esi.  
A kí rí anìkarìn nadunadu.  
A kí rí anìkarìn yunrè.  
Ifá ní a bá di igbó, kò sì n'òkan rìn.

3:1

Orunmila says we should cry "watch out!"  
I say "One who is in the way should move  
to the side."  
He says "We should look before we throw  
out water,  
So that we don't throw water on a stranger."  
I ask "what stranger?"  
He says, "a visitor who brings fortune,  
a spouse, children, or honor."  
Ifa says that he sees the blessings of visitors.  
The blessing of fortune, the blessing of a  
spouse, the blessings of children,  
and the blessing of honor.

3:1

Ọrúnmilà ní ó di "sù."  
 Mo ní "k'ó ró yè'ba."  
 Ó ní "k'á sọ omi dà.  
 K'á má bá da omí si àlejò l'ára."  
 Mo ní "àlejò wo ni?"  
 Ó ní "àlejò ajé, aya tàbí ọkọ, ọmọ àti oyè ni".  
 Ifá ní òún rí ire àlejò.  
 Ire ajé, ire aya tàbí ọkọ àti ire oyè.

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3:2

If a young person shows deference to an elder,  
 Everything he attempts to do  
 Will turn out exactly right.  
 And he will be extremely serene of character.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for the young  
 person of gentle character  
 Who did not disrespect his mother or father  
 And whose life was exceedingly pleasant.

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Bí ọmọdé bá tẹríba fún àgbà,  
 Ohun gbogbo tí ó bá dáwólé,  
 Á má gún gégégé.  
 Ìwá rẹ á sì má tutù pèsè pèsè.  
 À dífá f'ọmọ oníwà pèlẹ  
 Tí kò se àfojúdi sí iyá tàbí baba  
 Tí ayé rẹ dùn jojo.

I arrive well.  
I travel well.

I am one who usually travels and finds fortune.  
Just as they were laying down riches,  
I entered without hesitation like an offspring  
of the owner  
But I am not an offspring of the owner.  
I am only one who knows how to travel  
And find good fortune.

Mo dé rere.  
Mo rín rere.  
Èmi nìkan ni mo mò rín àrìnkòdòrìn.  
A sègè nìkòhun ọrọ̀ sùlẹ̀,  
Ni mo wọlẹ̀ wẹrẹ bí omo olọhun.  
Èmi dẹ s'omọ olọhun.  
Ìrín àrìnkòdò ni mo mòdọ rín.

ÀSỌYÉ

This Odu teaches us the virtue of expecting and finding good wherever we go. It says that to travel well and to arrive well enables or leads one to find good fortune. The text suggests that central to traveling and arriving well is a positive attitude that expects and finds good in the world. It also suggests that when we find good in the world we should boldly and confidently reach out to embrace it and share in it. This is the meaning of the line that says the person in the text "entered without hesitation like the offspring of the owner." But as the person says, s/he was not the owner's offspring, only "one who knows how to travel and find good fortune."

Again the central lesson here is that finding fortune or goodness in the world begins with a positive attitude, a necessary sense of possibility and culminates with a bold and confident self-assertion at the right moment to embrace and share the good of the world. And this, of course, is a reaffirmation of the sense of human agency which is so central to Odu ethics and spirituality.

4:2

**Y**ou arrive well.  
You travel well.  
You know how to walk on foot and  
still be on time.  
Just when the valuables are being layed out  
on the ground  
You arrive just like you were an offspring  
of the owner.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for the  
important stranger,  
Who was on his way to Benin City.  
They said that someone's head would  
bring him to a place  
Where he would achieve his destiny  
They said that in this very place, good things  
will be accomplished.

4:2

They said he should sacrifice and  
he heard and complied.  
When he arrived in Benin, everything he  
touched turned into something good.  
Ifa says one who wants to go on a journey  
should sacrifice.  
So that s/he may gain honor, respect and wealth  
at the place where s/he is going,  
And so that there s/he may reap great rewards.

---

4:2

O dé rere.  
 O rìn rere.  
 O mò l'ìn asiko rìn l'èsè méjèjì.  
 A sèṣè kó ohun ọrò sílè,  
 O dé gégé bí ọmọ onihun.  
 A dífá fún àjèjì gòdògbò  
 Tí lọ sí òde ìbíní.  
 Wọ́n ní orí ẹnìkan yìó múu dé ibiti  
 Yìó gbé ẹ̀ ẹ̀wà kan  
 Wọ́n ní ọ̀gangan ire ni yìó maa ẹ.  
 Wọ́n ní ó rúbọ; o gbọ ó rúbọ.  
 Nígbàtí ó dé òde ìbíní, ohunkóhun  
     ó bá fí ọwọ̀ rẹ̀ kan ni ó ndi rere.  
 Ifá ní ẹnìkan tí ó nṣe lọ sí idálẹ̀  
     kí mú ara kí ó rúbọ.  
 Kí ó bá lè rí ọlá, iyí àti ọrò ibiti ó nlọ nàà  
 Àti pé kí ibé kí ó lè san dárádára.

4:3

**M**ay we not die young.  
 May we not reach an old age in  
     wretchedness.  
 And may we not have to walk around  
     with a stick  
 Searching for food at the place of sacrifice.

K'á má kú ni kékeré.  
 K'á má d'ágbàlágba òsì.  
 K'á má f'òpá tà ilẹ̀  
 Ní 'bí ije ẹbọ.

ÀSQYÉ

This is a teaching on expectations concerning reaching an old age. It presupposes that one has lived a moral life and can thus legitimately or justifiably expect goodness to come from this. Thus, the first expectation is that the person of character or good person will indeed reach an old age and not die young. This speaks to the conception of dying young as a greater tragedy than dying a ripe old age. For to pass young without having lived a full and meaningful life seems so meaningless in the scheme of things.

The second expectation is that the good person will not reach old age in a state of wretchedness. The category *òṣì* used in the text may mean misery, poverty or the general state characterized by distress, misery and lowliness which is translated here as wretchedness. This expectation is also, then, that we will die in dignity and not be left to waste away in pain, misery, poverty and the like. The third expectation of the person of character (*ìwà*) is that s/he will not have to look for food at the place of

*ẹbọ* or sacrifice. This may mean the place of making sacrifices or the place of feasting tied to sacrificing.

These expectations are rooted both in the Yoruba and general African belief about how the divine works and how society and family should preform. Old age is a status of honor and deference in the family and society and thus the teaching is an indirect reminder to family and community of their obligation of care and responsibility of the aged.

**T**he buttocks are sufficient support for a person to sit on.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for the gatekeeper of the city of Ajengbere Mogun.  
 Who would stay in one place and there find all good things.  
 There was no kind of work that the gatekeeper had not done.  
 But he did not remain long in the same place.  
 Could he find fortune in this way?  
 This is the question he sought the answer to from Ifa.  
 It was said that he should practice sacrifice.  
 And he practiced sacrifice.  
 After he practiced sacrifice,  
 It happened that when farmers arrived from their farms  
 And when artisans returned from their travels,

They gave the gatekeeper various kinds of products like corn and yams.  
 After the gatekeeper had eaten and sufficiently satisfied himself  
 He would then sell the rest of the products  
 It is in this way that the gatekeeper became a rich man *by staying in the same place.*

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4:4

Ìdì méjèèjì tó ouwarè jókòó.  
 A díá f'óníbodè Ajèngbèrè Mògún.  
 Èyítí òd gbóju kan ríire gbogbo.  
 Kòsì isẹ tí oníbodè ò se tán,  
 Òkan ò pé e nìbè.  
 Òún lè ríre báyií.  
 Ní oníbodè dáfá sí.  
 Wọn ní ẹbọ ní ó wá rú.  
 Ò sí rú u.  
 Igbà ó rúbọ tán,  
 Ló bá di pé bólóko nítoko bọ,  
 Bọlona nítònà bọ,  
 Wọn nífún oníbodè ní oríṣiríṣi nńkan  
 bí àgbàdò àti ipu.  
 Bóníbodè bá je tó yó tan.  
 A sì tún tà nínú nńkan wònyi  
 Bẹ̀ẹ̀ ní oníbodè se tí ó fi dolówó.

5:1

After Orisha had married this certain woman,  
 He was afraid because it was said that  
 another person would take her from him.  
 So he built his house on a road at the back of  
 a walled courtyard.  
 And whenever anyone passed,  
 He began to suspect that perhaps someone  
 would take her from him.  
 Then the people began to sing:  
 "The noon day ripens quickly into heat waves;  
 And one who seeks trouble will find it."

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ÌROSÙN MÉJÌ

5

5:1

Nígbà tí òrìṣà gbà obìrin yí tán,  
Èrú nàà nìtorí tí ó wípé èlòmíràn  
Yíó gbà ní ọwọ̀ òun.  
Nìtorínàà ó lọ kọ ilé rẹ sí ọ̀nà àgbàlá.  
Nígbàkúúgbà tí ènìyàn bá níkojá nìbẹ̀,  
Ara á bèrẹ̀ sí fun òrìṣà pé bóyá  
Ènìkan yíó tún gba òun ní ọwọ̀ rẹ̀.  
Nígbà nàà ni wọ̀n wa fi dá'rin pé:  
"Ọ̀sán pọ̀n wéréwéré;  
Èni ó fín'dan á rí'dan."

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ÒWÓNÍN MÉJÌ

6

6:1

**I**t is stone which breaks suddenly  
without bleeding.

This is the teaching of Ifa interpreted for Hand,  
Offspring of one who inherits five fingers  
and retains all five.

Hand was asked to sacrifice for her children  
Because of the threat of death.

Hand performed sacrifice for all her five children,  
And all the children survived.

She said "Hand's children should not die in  
the presence of Hand.

Foot's children should not die in the presence  
of Foot.

Very soon, at no distant date,  
Come and find us alive, strong and healthy then."

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6:1

Òkúta là pàá mọ gẹ̀gẹ̀  
 A dífá f'Ọwọ.  
 Ọmọ abárúnjàrún  
 Wọ́n ní ó rúbọ́ fún ọmọ rẹ̀  
 Nítórí ikú.  
 Ghogbo ọmọ márààrún tí Ọwọ  
 Bí náà ló rúbọ́ fún.  
 Ghogbo àwọn ọmọ náà sì yè  
 Ó ní, "ọmọ Ọwọ kì í t'ojú Ọwọ kú.  
 Ọmọ Èsẹ̀ kì í t'ọ̀jù Èsẹ̀ rọ̀run.  
 Kèè pé o,  
 Kèè jìnà,  
 È tètè wáá bá ní lálú kàngírí."

8:1

**I**f the host does not invite one to the  
 ceremony,  
 It is not proper to participate in it.  
 An improper practice causes a stern and  
 shameful face.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for Eji Okanran,  
 Who was going to the city of Itile  
 May he just be allowed to walk in peace.  
 May he be permitted to walk with dignity.

Bélẹ́bọ̀ ọ̀ pé ní,  
 Àsẹ̀lín ọ̀ yẹ ní.  
 Ọ̀ràn tí ọ̀ sunwọ̀n.  
 Konko ńsojú.  
 A dífá fún Èjì Ọ̀kànràn,  
 Tí árelé Itilẹ̀.  
 È sáà jẹ́ ó mọ́ọ̀ rìn.  
 È jẹ́ ó mọ́ọ̀ yàn.

8:2

**T**hunder does not crash during the dry season;  
 Lightning does not flash in secret.  
 Male and female partridges do not have upright  
 combs on their heads.  
 This was the teaching of Ifá for black Ereje, the  
 mother of Agbo, the Ram;  
 She who had given birth to Erin, the Elephant,  
 and to Efon, the Buffalo,  
 And likewise gave birth to Agbo, the Ram,  
 as her third child.  
 When Shango, the spirit of Thunder, roared at  
 Elephant and Buffalo,  
 They fled into the forest.  
 But when Shango roared at Agbo, the Ram,  
 This same ram roared right back at him.  
 He would not run; he fought with Shango,  
 the spirit of thunder,

8:2

After they had struggled for a while,  
 Shango withdrew and returned to heaven.  
 Since that time, Shango, the spirit of Thunder,  
 remains in heaven.  
 And whenever the thunder roars and the  
 lightning flashes.  
 Agbo, the Ram, paws the ground and says:  
 "Our fight is not finished yet."

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is the first-born of courage, determination and commitment, one who would not run, who roars at one who roars at him, who wrestles with the spirit of thunder, and who always stands ready for the ongoing struggle. He breaks the mould; he thunders at thunder and wears an invisible crest and crown on his head. Thus, the light of his deeds does not flash in secret but streaks across the heavens like lightning and is known world-wide.

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ÒGÚNDÁ MÉJÌ

9

9.1

**T**he powerful person craves the crown.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Ogun.

He was advised to sacrifice.

*The symbols of the sacrifice:*

a sword, a rooster and a roasted yam.

Ifa said that it was the sword which Ogun would  
use in the pursuit of prosperity.

And that he should carry it with him everywhere.

Ogun was advised to eat the roasted yam and  
he ate it.

When he became thirsty, he went to the river  
to drink some water.

When he had finished drinking the water,  
he saw two people quarelling over a fish  
they had caught

Ogun told them that they should be patient  
And that they should divide the fish and go home.

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ÒGÚNDÁ MÉJÌ

9

9:1

But they refused.  
The first person said he came from the West.  
The second person said she came from the East.  
After hearing what they both had to say  
concerning the matter,  
Ogun took the sword which he had in his hand  
and cut the fish into two equal parts  
for them.  
The first person thanked him and said that he  
wanted him to open a way for him  
so that he might reach his city.  
He said that Ogun would become a prosperous  
person.  
He said that he would acquire an abundance of  
good things.  
And that he would suffer no hardship before  
before reaching his city.

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ÒGÚNDÁ MÉJÌ

9

9:1

The second person also thanked Ogun  
And she asked that Ogun not neglect to open  
the way for her to her city in the same way.  
Ogun told them that he understood.  
Therefore, since the day that Ogun divided the  
fish into two for the two people who  
were quarrelling  
He has been called Ògúndáméjì, Ogun who  
divides into two equal parts.

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9:1

Alágbára ni òsókún adé lí.  
 A dífá f'Ògún.  
 A níki ó rúbọ.  
 Èbọ: àgàdà, àkúkọ àtí ọ̀ṣun síṣun.  
 Ifá ní: àgàdà yẹn ní Ògún màá fíṣe ọ̀ṣẹ ọ̀ṣẹ.  
 Kí ó màa múu l'ọ̀wọ káàkiri.  
 A níki kí ó jẹ ọ̀ṣun síṣun. Ó jẹ.  
 Òrùngbẹ sì nígbẹẹ, ó lọ sí odò lọ mu omi.  
 Bí ó tí mu omi tán, ó rí àwọn méjì tí níjà  
     nítórí ẹja kan tí wọn pa.  
 Ògún níki àwọn méjì nàà mú sùúrù  
 Kí wọn lọ pín ẹja nàà lọ n'ílẹ̀ sùgbón wọn kọ  
 Èkúní ọ̀ṣọ pé ọ̀wọ-òdrùn ní òun tí wá.  
 Èkẹjì sì ọ̀ṣọ pé ọ̀lẹ-òdrùn ní òun tí wá.  
 Lẹhin gbogbo eyiti wọn ọ̀ṣọ fún un,  
 Ògún fí àdà tí ó wà ní ọ̀wọ rẹ dádá ẹja nàà sì  
     méjì fún àwọn

9:1

Èkúní dúpẹ l'ọ̀wọ rẹ ó ní òun fẹ kí ó là  
     ọ̀nà wá dé ọ̀lẹ òun.  
 Ó ní Ògún á sọdì ọ̀lórọ  
 Ó ní ọ̀wọ rẹ yóo tẹ ọ̀pọlọpọ nkan  
 Tí ọ̀jù kò níífi pọ̀n ọ̀n kí ó tó dé ọ̀dọ òun.  
 Ènìkẹjì tún dúpẹ, ó bẹ kí Ògún má sàì là ọ̀nà  
     wá dé ọ̀lẹ òun bákan nàà.  
 Ògún ní òun gbọ  
 Njẹ ọ̀jọ tí Ògún tí dádá ẹja sì méjì fún àwọn méjì  
     tí níjà  
 Ní a tí nípe ní Ògúndáméjì.

## ÒGÚNDÁ MÉJÌ

9

9:1

### ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on the right use of power as a means to open the way for oneself by opening the way for others. It begins with the assertion that a powerful person usually seeks ultimate or maximum power which is symbolized here by the "craving for the crown," i.e., the power of the royal ruler and all its benefits. The text says literally "the powerful person cries for the crown—*sokún adé*." Given such a craving for maximum power, the person of power must sacrifice in order to use power rightfully and to cultivate moderation in one's desire for increase in power. It suggests that we don't all have to be kings and queens to live a good life and that serving, itself, is greatly rewarding. This Odu offers three objects of sacrifice which at the same time are symbols of areas of self-sacrifice. (A similar symbolic offering is recommended in Odu 119:2 to teach on the need and value of work.)

Here the prescribed sacrifice for the person is the sword, the rooster and the roasted yam. The sword is to be sacrificed as a weapon of war and aggression and used instead to "open the way—*lá ọ̀nà*," to the good life. The rooster is to be sacrificed as a giving up of the aggressive arrogance of power, in a word, the "cockiness" associated with the rooster or cock. And the roasted yam serves as a symbol of the sacrifice of physical needs and comfort whose pursuit with power could lead to excesses against others and destructive self-indulgence.

Ogun is the perfect example and focus for this narrative on power, for he is the orisha of war, iron, technology and related areas. He is told at the outset that his sword will be the key instrument in his pursuit of prosperity, or the good life. It is both the symbol and source of his power, the instrument of his work and the opener of his way to the good life. When he sees the two people fighting over a fish they both have caught, he could have simply took the fish for himself through killing them, robbing them or both. Instead, he acts as judge and advises patience and the sharing of a common good. When they refuse, he uses his sword, his power, to cut the fish in two.

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By this act, he "opens the way" for their sharing and thus the practice of justice. Justice here is a shared good and it reminds one of the ancient African teaching in the *Husia* of ancient Egypt in which the officials say, "I judged so that both parties were satisfied." It is important to note also that Ogun listens to each person before deciding and taking action. As judge, justice requires him to listen before deciding or acting, even though he had the power to impose his wishes arbitrarily. However, this would not have been justice but rather the arrogance or "cockiness" of power. As judge, his responsibility is to "open a way" for justice to emerge, a justice of shared good, regardless of whether one comes from the east or the west. And this is what he does.

In addition to using his power to open the way for justice, Ogun also uses his power to open a way for the traveller. This "way opening" is both literal and figurative, both actual and symbolic. He actually clears a road so that the two persons can use it to reach their respective cities-- in the east and in the west. It is here that he is promised compensation for his work which points towards his realization of prosperity in abundance. The central lesson here is that it is by opening the way to good for others

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that we open the way to good for ourselves. The journey to the city is a metaphor for our journey through life to a good end. And Ogun's example of opening the way for himself, by opening the way for others is an invaluable model of how we can live full, good and meaningful lives.

10:1

**T**he head of a person with a bad future  
does not swell up.  
No one can recognize the footprints of a  
madman on the road.  
And, no one can distinguish the head of an  
honorable person in an assembly of  
people.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Mobowu,  
Who was the wife of Ogun.  
Surely, the head that will wear the crown  
tomorrow,  
No one can recognize it.  
Therefore, let husband and wife stop calling  
each other names,  
And stop talking foolishly to each other.  
For the head that will wear the crown  
tomorrow,  
No one can tell which one it will be.

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10:1

Orí burúkú kǐí wú tuulu.  
A kǐ í dá ẹ̀sẹ̀ aṣiwèrè mò lójú-òná.  
A kǐ í m'orí olóyè lǎwùjọ.  
A dífá fún Móbówú  
Tí í ẹ̀ obìnrin Ògún  
Orí tí ó jọba lẹ́lẹ́,  
Ẹ̀nikan ò mò.  
Kí tọkọ-taya ó mò pé'ra.  
Wọ́n ní wèrè mó.  
Orí tí ó jọba lẹ́lẹ́,  
Ẹ̀nikan ò mò.

ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on the need for respect for everyone regardless of appearance or status. The sense given here is that we cannot always distinguish the person with a good or bad future, the sane or insane or the honorable and dishonorable nor the one who will become the royal ruler. And thus, we should be careful not to misjudge the value or importance of the person. On first reading, this may seem to be simple prudence to avoid offending one who might one day be in a position of power and thus, bring injury or loss to those who did not respect him or her. But at a deeper level, the Ifa tradition assumes an equal and inherent worthiness of all and here warns against failing to give each proper respect, regardless of appearance or current status.

Moreover, the metaphor of the possibility of any head becoming the one that wears the crown in the future speaks to the assumption of human potentiality. Here we read the "crowned head" as the one who flourishes. And we respect others not only because we recognize their inherent worth, but also because not respecting them

could diminish their human potential, destroy a potential genius and deprive a head a crown of achievement that would have been its destiny and rightful heritage. Such a blocking and preventing of human development is clearly immoral and therefore this text suggests we should not distinguish persons in ways that diminish their dignity or fail to take into account the human potential inherent in each of us.

**T**his is the teaching of Ifa for Odu,  
Obarisa and Ogun,  
When they were coming from heaven to earth.  
Odu asked: "O Olodumare, *Lord of Heaven*,  
this earth where we are going,  
What will happen when we arrive there?"  
Olodumare said that they were going to make  
the world  
So that the world will be good.  
He also said that everything that they were  
going to do there,  
He would give them the *asẹ*, power and authority,  
to accomplish it,  
So that it would be done well.

Odu said "O Olodumare this earth where  
we are going,  
Ogun has the power to wage war.

And Obarisa has the *asẹ* to do anything  
he wishes to do.  
What is my power?  
Olodumare said: "you will be their mother forever.  
And you will also sustain the world."  
Olodumare, then, gave her the power.  
And when he gave her power, he gave her  
the *spirit* power of the bird.

It was then that he gave women the power  
and authority so that anything men  
wished to do,  
They could not dare to do it successfully  
without women.  
Odu said that everything that people would  
want to do,  
If they do not include women,  
It will not be possible.

10:2

Obarisa said that people should always respect  
women greatly.  
For if they always respect women greatly, the world  
will be in right order.

Pay homage; give respect to women.  
Indeed, it is woman who brought us into being  
Before we became recognized as human beings.  
The wisdom of the world belongs to women.  
Give respect to women then.  
Indeed, it was a woman who brought  
us into being.  
Before we became recognized as human beings.

10:2

A difá fún Odù, Òbàrìṣà àti Ógún  
Nijò tí àwọn níti'kòlè ọrun bọ wá ilé ayé.  
Odù ní: Ìwọ Olódùmarè; ó ní, ilé ayé  
l'àwọn nílo yìí,  
Ó ní, nígbàti àwọn bá dé ọhún nkọ?  
Olódùmarè ní kí wọn ó lọ máa ẹ ilé ayé kí ilé  
ayé ó dára.  
Ó ní gbogbo ohun tí wọn yìó bá sì máa,  
Ó ní òun ó fún wọn l'asẹ tí wọn ó máa fi ẹe,  
Tí yìó sì fi máa dára.

Odù ní: Ìwọ Olódùmarè; ilé ayé t'àwọn nílo yìí,  
Ógún l'ágbára ogun jija.  
Ó ní: Òbàrìṣà, òun náà l'asẹ làti iṣe gbogbo  
ohun t'ó bá fẹ ẹe.  
Ó ní kinni agbára ti òun?  
Olódùmarè ní "ìwọ l'ó máa jẹ iyá wọn lọ láilái.  
Ó ní ìwọ ní o ó sì mú ilé ayé ró."  
Olódùmarè l'ó bá fún òun l'ágbára.  
Nígbàti ó fún òun l'ágbára, ó fún òun l'ágbára ẹyẹ.

Ni ó gbé fún obìnrin l'asẹ wípé gbogbo  
 ohun yìó wà,  
 Olùnrin kò gbòdò lè dá nkankekan ẹ l'ẹ̀hìn obìnrin.  
 Odù ní gbogbo ohun tí ẹ̀nìyàn bá ńse,  
 Tí kò bá fi tí obìnrin kún un,  
 Ó ní kò lè ẹ ẹ.  
 Ọ̀bàràfà ní kí wọn ó máa fi ibà fún obìnrin  
 Ó ní tí wọn bá tí ní ibà fún obìnrin,  
 Ilé ayé yìó máa tòrò.

Ẹ kúnlẹ' o; ẹ kúnlẹ f'óbìnrin, o.  
 Obìnrin l'ó bí wa  
 K'áwa tó d'ẹ̀nìyàn.  
 Qghón ayé t'óbìnrin ní.  
 Ẹ kúnlẹ f'óbìnrin.  
 Obìnrin l'ó bí wa  
 K'áwa tó d'ẹ̀nìyàn.

# ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on the cooperative creation of the world. It, like Odu 248:1, provides a critical segment of the creation narrative, explaining the order of things at the beginning and the establishment of the principle of male/female equality in the creation, structuring and functioning of the world and in all things of importance. The Odu opens with Olodumare, Lord of Heaven and the source of all beings, sending three divine beings to complete the work of creation. Up to this point, as other texts tell us, the world is only a watery and marshy possibility. Olodumare thus sends the divine ones to *make the world good* and gives them the ase so that they could do their work well. The word used here is "dara" which means *good*, not only in the sense of beneficial and suitable to a purpose, but also pleasant and enjoyable. Here we have the affirmation of the *inherent goodness* of the world, an

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inherent goodness God ordains at the beginning of creation.

Secondly, we are instructed that the divine beings represent male and female principles in and of the world, each with an equal yet different power and authority, i.e., *asẹ*, to be used to complete creation cooperatively. Special attention, however, is given to defining the role of the female principle or woman in the world. Two major roles are assigned to woman -- *mother of the world* and *sustainer of the world*. To be mother of the world clearly speaks to a joint effort with the father of the world to reproduce and insure continuity and to nurture, care for and teach. But to be sustainer of the world is a wider role and one rich in possibilities of performance. However, we know from other texts that this role is above all related to the role of creator and guardian of culture, learning, refinement and flourishing of humanity and the world which includes a vast field of social responsibility which ranges from rulership to education. This is reaffirmed by the fact that in Odu 248:1 it is Oshun, the embodiment of culture, learning and human flourishing, who accompanies the male divine powers to make the world good.

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The Odu next turns to a teaching on the special respect we should have for women as partners who are indispensable to the success of anything that men attempt to do and to the right order in and of the world. Finally, the Odu stresses the special respect we should all hold for women as women. In a sense, it is reaffirmation of the need for respect for women as both mother and sustainer, not only in the larger world sense, but especially in the personal and deeply human sense of bringing us in the physical and social, i.e., cultural being.

Again in the best of Ifa tradition and African tradition in general, all humans, men and women, have equal inherent worthiness or dignity. But here the text asks us to give added respect to women, for their role in bringing us into being before we become recognized as human beings. The text literally says "before we become human beings." But the extended sense suggests the reading as "before we become *recognized* as human beings." This period of not being recognized as human being seems to refer to the period in Yoruba and other African societies before the baby has been incorporated into society. It is the time when the baby has no name and is only a potential person. After seven or eight days, when

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the child appears to be a permanent member of the family, s/he is given a name and status and thus, is "recognized as a human being," not a spirit or *àbíkú*, i.e., one reluctant to live in the material world.

In this period of transition and possibility, it is our mothers who not only bring us into being physically, but begin the process of cultural nurturing which lays the basis for our social incorporation. In a word, she molds us in the image and interest of human society. And it is for her giving us this physical and cultural birth that the text tells us we should respect her in a special and meaningful way.

In addition, the text tells us we should respect women as the possessors of wisdom in the world. This, in the Ifa theological narrative, refers to the special power of knowledge and spirit power symbolized by the bird given to women by the Lord of Heaven, Olodumare, at the beginning of the creation. In *Kawaida* tradition, this text reaffirms the need to respect women as rational and knowledgeable human beings as well as actual or potential mothers and sustainers of the world. Thus, the moral obligation here is to respect women in their wholeness and as indispensable in bringing into being, physically and

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culturally, the human person. And it also reaffirms the equality and indispensability of women in the structure and functioning of the world and the ongoing requirement of male and female cooperation in any project of importance.

10:3

**A**h, an elder who commits excess will be  
thoroughly disgraced.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Odu  
When Odu arrived on earth.

Ah, they said, "O you, Odu;"

They said "you must be careful.

You must be patient.

And you must not be shamelessly  
disrespectful."

Odu asked "why?"

They said "it is because of the power  
Which Oludumare has given you."

---

10:3

Há! Àgbà tí ó bá ẹ̀ ẹ̀jẹ́ títẹ̀ ní tẹ̀.

A dífá fún Òdù

Nígbà tí Òdù délé ayé.

Há! Wọ́n ní "two, Òdù."

Wọ́n ní "ò bá sọra rẹ̀.

Kí o sì ẹ̀ sùúrù.

Kí o má yàájú."

Òdù ní "èétirí?"

Wọ́n ní nítorí agbára rẹ̀

Tí Olódùmarè fún un.

---

ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on how one who is an elder and powerful person should act, especially toward others. It begins by asserting that an elder will lose respect if she commits excesses. The moral prohibition against excess (*àṣẹjù*) indicates both an ethical concern with balance and propriety. In the first case, balance is prescribed as a central virtue in Ifa tradition and appears as an emphasis throughout the Odu. A balanced person becomes a model of the moral person, one who has no habits or tendencies which lead to disgrace, self-destruction or self-diminishing.

Propriety, as a moral category, suggests the rightness of doing what is fitting, appropriate and in conformity with accepted moral and social standards. An elder should be concerned with the dignity and respect required of one holding such a status. And a powerful person must likewise act in such a way that s/he is not abusive or a disgrace to her/his office. Odu, as a powerful elder, is advised to be careful and patient and not to be shamefully disrespectful. Here careful refers to

maintaining a considerateness towards others which is respectful and caring. The virtue of patience is a central Ifaic virtue and complements the virtues of calmness and self-control, so essential to good character, *iwàrere*.

10:4

**T**he hand of a child cannot reach the  
high shelf.  
And the hand of the elder is too large  
to enter the mouth of the gourd.  
The work the child humbly asks an  
elder to do,  
The elder should not refuse to do.  
All of us have work to do for each  
other's good.

Qwọ̀ èwe ò tó pepe,  
Ti àgbàlagbà ò wọ̀ akèrègbe.  
Isẹ̀ èwe bẹ̀ àgbà.  
Kí ó má ẹ̀ kọ̀ mọ̀.  
Gbogbo wa la ní ẹ̀ a jọ̀ nìbẹ̀'ra wa.

10:5

**O**sa, the brightly shining one, Babalawo  
of the world,  
Interpreted the teachings of Ifa for the earth.  
They said that the earth should stop making  
sacrifices for wealth,  
And instead make sacrifices that would  
protect earth from its enemies.  
In this way, we will live.  
And so we plead  
That as long as we live on earth,  
That the earth not be destroyed.

Òsá yòóò, babaláwo ayé,  
Ló dífá f'áyé.  
Wọ̀n láyẹ̀ ó fẹ̀bọ̀ olá lẹ̀  
Ẹ̀bọ̀ ajogun ní ó ẹ̀.  
Njẹ̀ àwa nìbẹ̀,  
À nìbẹ̀  
Àwa mọ̀pọ̀ mọ̀ nìbẹ̀ l'áyé o,  
Ayé ò níí parun.

10:6

**I**f all people were destined to be buried in  
coffins,  
All the iroko trees in the forest would have  
been used up.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Owere, one  
called struggle,  
Who was coming from heaven to earth.  
*They said* we are constantly struggling, all of us.  
We are constantly struggling.  
Those who choose good destinies are not many.  
Thus, we are continuously struggling, all of us.  
We are continuously struggling.

---

10:6

Bí ó há ẹ pé gbogbo orí gbogbo ní í sun pọsí,  
Ìrókò gbogbo ìbá ti tán n'ìgbó.  
À dífá fún Ọwèrè,  
Tí níti ìkọlé ọrun bọ wá sí t'ayé.  
Wọ́n ni ọwèrè là nǎà, gbogbo wa.  
Ọwèrè là nǎà,  
Èni tó yan'rí rere kò wọpọ .  
Ọwèrè là nǎà, gbogbo wa.  
Ọwèrè là nǎà.

---

I I I

I barere, one who pays homage from afar,  
 the priest of fire,  
 Interpreted the teachings of Ifa for fire.  
 They said that wherever fire emerges,  
 It will make a way for itself.  
 They said its head will clear a way for it.  
 Ifa says that anyone who wants to achieve  
 anything,  
 That person should practice sacrifice  
 So that a way can be opened for him,  
 As it is opened for fire.  
 For if a person practices sacrifice,  
 Anything she wishes to accomplish,  
 Whether it is work or some other  
 important thing,  
 That thing can be done.

---

I I I

Ibarere, awo iná,  
 A dífá fún iná.  
 Wón ní ibikíbi tí iná fi orí lé,  
 Ní yíó jẹ ọ̀nà fún un.  
 Wón ní orí rẹ yíó là ọ̀nà fún un.  
 Ifá ní ẹnìkan ńfẹ ẹe ohun kan,  
 Kí olúwarẹ bá rúbọ,  
 Kí ọ̀nà ba lẹ là fún un,  
 Bí ó ẹe là fún iná.  
 Nítorí tí bí olúwarẹ bá rúbọ,  
 Ohunkóhun tí ó fẹ ẹe,  
 Ibáse ẹ́ẹ ní tàbí bí ó bá fẹ ẹe ohun  
 míràn pàtàkì,  
 Ohun náà yíó ẹe ẹ́ẹ.

---

12:1

**E**ven a wise person cannot tie water into a knot on the hem of a garment.  
And no sage knows the number of grains of sand on the ground.  
The Ifa teachings were interpreted for Ori.  
Ifa was also interpreted for character.  
Ori asked the interpreters whether he could have all the good things of life.  
He was asked to practice sacrifice.  
He practiced it.  
And when he practiced sacrifice,  
He had all the good things he wanted.

---

12:1

Ológbọ́n kan ò ta kókó omi sẹ́tí aṣọ.  
Ọ̀mọ̀ràn kan ó mọ̀ye è̀pẹ̀ 'lẹ̀.  
À dífá fọ́rí.  
À bù fún wà.  
Orí ní ire gbogbo lẹ̀ tó òun lówọ́ bá yí?   
Wọ́n ní ó rúbọ́.  
Ó sì rú u.  
Ìgbà tí ó rúbọ́ tán,  
Ó sì ní gbogbo ire tí ó nńẹ́.

---

12:2

It is the Ethiopian sparrow which builds  
its own nest,  
And puts its entrance face down in a curve.  
The nest neither touches the water nor touches  
the sky,  
But its entrance points down in a curve.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Oyeepolu  
Offspring of those who perform the ancestral  
rites of Ife,  
One whose mother left him all alone when he  
was very young.  
Thus, when Oyeepolu grew up,  
He did not know all the rites of his ancestors.  
His life became chaotic.  
He sought a wife to marry but could not  
find one.  
And he did not have even a place he could  
call home.

12:2

Then, he took his situation under consideration  
And went to a babalawo for advice.  
He was advised that it was because of his  
ancestral rites  
Which he had neglected  
That he was in such confusion.  
He was told to go to the graves of his ancestors  
And to pay homage and ask guidance.  
After he had done so,  
He started to enjoy his life.

12:2

Alapàndèdè l'ó kọlé tán,  
 L'ó kọjú rẹ sódòdò.  
 Kò kànmì, kò kànkè;  
 Ó wá kọjú re sódòdò.  
 A dífá fún Oyèèpolú,  
 Ọmọ ịsòrò n'Ífẹ,  
 Èyítí ịyá rẹ ó fi sílẹ  
 Ní òun nìkan sọsọ lénje lénje.  
 Ìghàtí Oyèèpolú dàgbà tán,  
 Kò mọ ohun orò ilé baba rẹ mọ.  
 Ghogbo nìkan rẹ wá dàrú.  
 Ó wá obìnrin, kò rí.  
 Bẹẹ ni kò rí ilé gbé.  
 L'ó bá méjì kẹta,  
 Ó lọ oko aláwo.  
 Wọn ní ghogbo nìkan orò ilé baba rẹ  
 Tó ti gbàgbé,  
 L'ó ní dà a láàmú.  
 Wọn ní kí ó lọ sí ojú oórì àwọn baba rẹ  
 Kí ó máa lọ júbà  
 Ìghà tí ó se bẹẹ tán  
 L'ó wá bẹrẹ síí gbádùn ara rẹ.

13:1

**L**ying does not mean that one will not  
 become rich.

And breaking commitments does not  
 mean that one will not reach  
 an old age.

But on the day of death, the sacrifice  
 will be required.

Irọ pípá kíf wípé k'á má lówó.  
 Ilẹ dídà kíf wípé k'á má dàgbá.  
 Sùgbọ́n ọjọ àtí sùn l'ẹbọ.

13:1

## ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on the possibility of wrongdoing gaining advantage in this life and the certainty of its disadvantage in the next life. It concedes that wickedness may gain wealth and that betrayal or breaking commitment does not prevent one from reaching old age. But it also expresses the profound conviction central to Odu ethics, that in the end one will have to answer for the wrong one does. This reflects the Yoruba belief in divine judgment and in the eventual triumph of right whether in this life or the next. It recalls and parallels the ancient Egyptian Husitic teaching that those who violate the laws of Maat (rightness) are eventually punished whether in this life or the next. The *Book of Ptahhotep* says "although wickedness may gain wealth, wrongdoing has never brought its wares to a safe port. In the end, it is Maat that endures and enables a person to say 'it is the legacy of my father and mother'." Thus, in both texts, gains from wrongdoing are not enduring gains. On the contrary, the texts suggest rightness is the real and lasting achievement and reward in this life and the next.

13:2

**T**he unrestrained mouth;  
The mouth that cannot govern itself.  
The trap set by the mouth never fails to  
catch victims.  
It is the mouth of the talkative which causes  
the talkative to suffer.  
It is the mouth of one who talks overmuch  
which brings suffering to him.  
It is the mouth which talks too much that  
causes one suffering who talks  
excessively.  
What the eye sees,  
The mouth talks about.  
When the mouth talks,  
It is torn apart like a piece of cloth.

---

13:2

Ayóóró ẹnu.  
Ayòòrò ẹnu.  
Èbití ẹnu ò tàsé.  
Ẹnu ofóró ní pofóró.  
Ẹnu ofòrò ní pofòrò.  
Ẹnu fófòfòrò ní pòfóró.  
Bí ojú bá rí,  
Ẹnu a wí.  
Bí ẹnú bá wí,  
Ẹnu a sì ya pààrà paara bí aṣọ.

---

14:1

**T**he teachings of Ifa were interpreted for  
Aduke, she who everyone indulges,  
An offspring of the kind-hearted people  
of ancient times,  
Who cooked a simple dish of maize and beans  
so that they might acquire character.  
She woke up early in the morning,  
Weeping and chanting the funeral song of  
sorrow for the loss of good in her life.  
Aduke was advised to sacrifice.  
And she did so.  
After she had practiced sacrifice.  
She gained honor.  
She acquired wealth.  
And all the good she was looking for,  
She was able to grasp it firmly in her hands.

---

## 14:1

A dífá fún Àdùkẹ,  
 Qmọ olóore àtijótijó,  
 Asẹwà ọsọsọ ríwà.  
 Ó jì ní kùtù,  
 Ó nfomi ojúú ọ̀ghẹ̀rẹ̀ ire.  
 Wọ̀n ní kí Àdùkẹ́ ó rúbọ.  
 Ó sì ẹ̀ bẹ̀.  
 Ìgbà tí ó rúbọ́ tán,  
 Ó sì l'ọ́lá.  
 Ó lówó lówó.  
 Gbogho ire tí ó níwá pátápátá  
 Ní ó tẹ̀ ẹ̀ lówó.

---

## 14:2

**T**he fine sand which children play with on  
 the road to the land of Ilesá,  
 If it is used to teach children how to walk,  
 It can also be used to teach them how to  
 walk gracefully.

---

Bùtùbútá ọ̀nà Ìjèsà lẹ̀mọ̀dé fíí ẹ̀rẹ̀,  
 Bí ó bá kọ̀mọ ní rírìn ẹ̀sẹ̀  
 A kọ̀mọ ní yíyan.

15:2

**T**he torrent breaks through hills and valleys.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Orunmila.  
Who would triumph on earth,  
And would do likewise in heaven.  
Orunmila was told to sacrifice.  
He was told he would triumph over his enemies.  
And indeed when he practiced sacrifice,  
He was victorious.

---

Àgbàrá làkè, làlẹ.  
A dífá fún Ọ̀rúnmilà  
Yóò sẹ́gun ayé;  
Yóò sì sẹ́ tòrun.  
Wọ̀n ní kẹ́ Ọ̀rúnmilà rúbọ.  
Wọ̀n ní yóò sẹ́gun ọ̀tá rẹ.  
Ìgbàtí ó rúbọ tán,  
Ó sì ní lẹ́gun.

16:1

**T**he soles of the feet are always flat.  
The teachings of Ifa were interpreted for  
the one who cannot be conquered.  
One who cannot be conquered is another  
name for mountain.  
Many years from today,  
The mountain will be as alive and firmly  
established as ever.  
The mountain is always as firmly established  
as ever.  
The mountain, the mountain, firmly established.  
Years and years from now,  
The mountain will remain immortal and  
immovable.  
Immovable is the mountain,  
The mountain which is firmly established.

16:3

**I**fa says that we should not break a  
commitment to a friend.  
Lest we die an unexpected death.  
If we discuss something with a person,  
And that person wants to break a  
promise to us,  
The ancestors will judge him.

Ifá ní kí á má dalẹ̀ ọ̀rẹ̀.  
Kí á má baà kú ikú àìrò tẹ̀lẹ̀.  
Bí a bá eníkan pèro ọ̀rẹ̀ kan,  
Bí olúwarẹ̀ nfẹ̀ dalẹ̀ s'eni,  
Arà ọ̀run ní yíò sẹ̀ dájó ọ̀rẹ̀ rẹ̀.

17:1

**I**fa says he sees someone who owns neither  
a calabash nor plate.  
Everyone including her own relatives says she  
has a bad destiny  
And is making fun of her.  
Ifa says this person will become important  
in the near future  
And that she will overcome all obstacles.

Ifá ní òun rí eníkan tí kò ní igbá tí  
kò ní àwo,  
Tí ghogbo ènìyàn àti àwọn ara ilé  
rẹ̀ nwípé ní olórí búburú  
Tí wọn sì ní sẹ̀ ẹ̀lẹ̀yà.  
Ifá ní olúwarẹ̀ yíò di ènìyàn nílá  
l'ẹ̀hìn ọ̀lá  
Àti pé yíò sì má sẹ̀gun ghogbo ìdìwọ̀.

17:2

**I**fa says that there is someone who has a title  
Who will be replaced in his position.  
And a person who stays in the background  
Will be chosen to succeed him.  
Everyone will rub their hands together  
in honor of him.  
And they will recognize and respect him.  
There is also a divinity that was once revered  
by all the people of a house.  
But they do not revere him anymore.  
And the forest has overgrown his shrine.  
We should renovate the shrine.  
And we should tie young palms fronds at the  
entrance to it.  
The person in the background that young and  
old people are sneering at  
Will indeed become a public figure.

---

17:2

Íṣá ní ẹnìkan ni ó wà l'órí oyè yíí.  
Tí a yíò pa n'ípò dà.  
Tí a yíò fi enití wà ní ìkòkò dípò rẹ.  
Ẹni ìkòkò náà ni gbogbo ará-ayé yíò  
má rawọ sí òun.  
Tí wọn yíò sì má júbà fún un.  
Òrìṣà kan sì ni yíí ti gbogbo ilé ti nín.  
Tí wọn kò sì sìn mọ.  
Ìgbó sì kún bò ojúbọ rẹ.  
K'á tún sẹ;  
K'á sì ta mòrìwò sí ẹnú ọ̀nà rẹ.  
Ẹni ìkòkò ti t'omode t'agba ti nífi ojú tínrín rẹ,  
Dandan yíò di ẹnì gbangba.

---

17:3

One who does not want to walk around naked,  
Will find a seller of cloth when the  
market opens.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Olofa, "the  
ruler of Ofa who sells a box of velvet,"  
The offspring of one who coughs like the  
trumpeting of an elephant,  
Descendant of one who uses a large container  
to measure out jewels for his beloved,  
The child of one who enjoys life moist and  
smooth like a person eating honey.  
Olofa, "the ruler of Ofa who sells a box of  
velvet" was an old man  
Who owned neither calabash nor plate.  
But he had a large piece of cloth put away.  
He did not allow himself to use it.  
But others borrowed it to dress up and go out.  
Olofa prepared himself and went to the babalawo.

17:3

And he asked them what he could do so that he  
might gain importance.  
They said that he should practice sacrifice,  
including giving up the large piece  
of cloth.  
He heard and sacrificed.  
Not the next day nor the next month, but the  
king of Ofa eventually died.  
Then, the people of Ofa made Olofa king,  
Expecting that it would not be long before  
he passed away.  
But after he had assumed the office,  
Instead of dying, he became increasingly stronger.  
The life of the people of Ofa likewise  
became good.  
It became soft and easy for them.  
And then they no longer wanted him to die.

17:3

Ifa says the person in the background will come  
to the forefront.  
She will achieve an important position.  
And she will remain in this position a long time  
before her passing.

---

17:3

Orí tí kò bá ni rín ihòhò,  
Yìò rí aláṣọ nígbàtí ojà tó.  
A dá fún Ọlọfà-a-tà-àpótí-àrán,  
Qmọ awúkọ gbinrin bí erin fọn,  
Qmọ a fi ẹ̀kòkò wọ̀n ẹ̀lẹ̀kẹ̀ fún àyànfẹ̀ rẹ̀,  
Qmọ a j'ayé gbedegbede bí ẹ̀ni nílá oyin.  
Ọlọfà-a-tà-àpótí-àrán jẹ arúgbó,  
Kòsì ní ighá tàbí àwọ.  
Sùgbọ̀n ó ní aṣọ nílá kan nínú odídì  
Tí ẹ̀dun pàápàá kò jẹ̀ lò,  
Sùgbọ̀n àwọ̀n ẹ̀nìyàn ní má tọ̀rọ̀ rẹ̀ lọ sóde.  
Ọlọfà múra ó tọ̀ àwọ̀n babaláwo lọ.  
Ó hẹ̀rẹ̀ pé báwo ní ẹ̀dun yìò tí ẹ̀so ní láári.  
Wọ̀n níkéí ó rúbọ̀ ní ifi pẹ̀lú aṣọ nílá.  
Ó gbó; o rúbọ̀.  
Kò l'ọjó, kò l'osù ọba Ọfà kú.  
Àwọ̀n ára Ọfà mú Ọlọfà wọ̀n fí jọba  
Ní ìrẹ́tí pé kò ní pẹ̀ kẹ́ ó tó kú.  
Sùgbọ̀n nígbàtí ó dé orí oyè tán,

17:3

Kàkà tí íbá fí kú íṣe, ní ara rẹ túbọ̀ nìlẹ̀ sí.  
 Ayé àwọn ara Ọfà sì wà dùn.  
 Ó sì dè fún wọn l'ọ̀rùn.  
 Wọn kò sì tún fẹ̀ pé kí ó kú mọ́.  
 Ífá ní ẹnì ikọkọ kan yìdì ẹnì igbangba,  
 Tí yìdì sì dé ipò nílá kan,  
 Tí yìdì sì pé púpọ̀ nínú ipò nàà kí ó tó kú.

17:3

# ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on striving and succeeding against all odds, and on the promise of those in the background moving to the forefront through sacrifice and struggle. The Odu begins with a proverbial teaching on how we will and should find a way to do things which are necessary. It also suggests that a person of character will demonstrate his or her worthiness and will eventually get his or her due. This is exemplified by Olofa who is an old man, poor and of minor importance, but eventually becomes king.

Olofa is called "ruler of Ofa," even though poor and without power, to indicate both possibility and promise. An ethics of character assumes that possibility lies in living a rightful life and that the promise of real prosperity, well-being and achievement is tied to and dependent on living a good life, sacrifice and struggle. Now the sacrifice and struggle are key because as Odu 401 says, even if we are going to die, we must wage a life and death struggle.

Olofa is contrasted with his father who is defined as having been strong "trumpeting like an elephant, wealthy, measuring out jewels in a large container" and happy enjoying a life as smooth and sweet as honey. Olofa is an old man, less strong, poor without calabash or plate, having only a long piece of velvet cloth. Moreover, he is not happy and is searching for a way to end his condition of unimportance.

The priest tells him to sacrifice. This is both a call for self-sacrifice, i.e., sacrifice of things that make the self unable to realize its potential, and a call to sacrifice objects, especially this one piece of cloth Olofa has. To sacrifice it, to give it up when it is the only thing he has is truly a lesson in sacrifice of smaller and replaceable things for that which endures and is irreplaceable.

The people of Ofa choose Olofa as king expecting he will die soon. But he becomes increasingly stronger. And he improves the life of the people and turns their wish for him to pass to a prayer for him to endure. The lesson here of giving to the people reinforces the lesson earlier when Ofu does not use his own cloth but shares it with others.

The lesson in both cases is that what we give returns in abundance. As Odu 95:1 says, i.e., "one who gives one thousand will receive two thousand in return."

**T**he hunter opens his pouch and pulls out poison.

Aronimoja, the healer, unties his bag and takes out medicine.

And the farmer seeks very soft ground in which to cultivate his yams.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Oluorogbo  
Who was the messenger of the king of earth  
And who pounded palm nuts for Olushonsho,  
the messenger of the king of heaven.

They said that if it should happen that the  
earth falls into disorder,

Then Oluorogbo should set the earth right again.

And if heaven were to experience disorder,

Then Olushonsho would set heaven  
right again.

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18:1

Ọdẹ ẹ'ápò yọ'ró,  
Arónimoja tú àpò yọ òògùn.  
Àgbẹ wá ibi ríròrírò kọ ọ̀sù sí.  
A dá fún Olúorogbo,  
Tí ọ̀sẹ̀ ikò àjàláyé  
A lú ilein fún Olúsonso,  
Tí ọ̀sẹ̀ ikò àjàlòrun.  
Wọ̀n ní bí ó bá dá kí ayé bàjẹ,  
Olúorogbo á tún ayé ẹ̀.  
Bí ó bá dá kí ọ̀run bàjẹ,  
Olúsonso á tún ọ̀run ẹ̀.

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18:1

# ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on seeing all things in their proper place. The hunter kills and thus, pulls out poison; the healer heals and thus, makes available medicine; the farmers who produce crops look for the best soil in which to sow their seeds. This anticipated order of things, this expected regularity is reflected also in the teaching that the messenger of the king of earth is to set things right on earth and the messenger of the king of heaven is to set things right in heaven. Kawaida reads this as an obligation for us who are on earth to set the earth right when it goes wrong, to constantly put forth right and bring good into the world as Odu 78 teaches us. For such responsibility for bringing good into the world is the fundamental mission and meaning of human life. This is at the same time a teaching for those who would be so concerned about the affairs of heaven they are negligent in the affairs of earth. The affairs of heaven and

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responsibility for it rightly belong to the heavenly hosts, spiritual aides to the Lord of Heaven. Our simple yet demanding task is to constantly bring good into the world and make the world a good place in which to live and flourish.

**T**he teachings of Ifa were interpreted  
for Odogbo

When he was in the midst of much trouble.

They said that this was the year that he  
would achieve wealth.

They said he should sacrifice.

He heard and he complied.

They said that when he had practiced sacrifice,

He should go and pay homage to his mother.

They said it is at home that his good fortune  
would be found.

And that he should not go anywhere else.

When Odogbo had offered sacrifice,

And had also paid homage to his mother,

He stayed home for four days.

But he did not see anything whatsoever like  
good fortune.

On the fifth day, he got ready and went to  
the farm for wood.

He said he would not die of hunger.

When he arrived at the farm, he cut quite  
a bit of firewood.  
He then began to carry back as large a load  
as possible.  
As he was returning carrying his load,  
The spirit of his mother appeared in the  
form of a bird  
And she began to speak saying:  
"Odogbo, throw away the wood.  
The good fortune arrived at your house  
while you were gone."  
When Odogbo heard this, he said he would  
carry the wood home anyway.  
When he arrived home, he threw the bundle  
of wood to the ground  
And it broke through the ground to a pit of beads.  
In this way money and wealth came to Odogbo.  
And he became a rich man.

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A dífá fún Odogbo  
Ní ojú tí ó wà nínú oyíkítì ìpẹ̀njú.  
Wọ̀n ní nì ọ̀dún yìí nì ọ̀rọ̀ rẹ̀ pẹ̀.  
Wọ̀n ní kí ó rúbọ̀.  
Ó ghọ́, Ó rúbọ̀.  
Wọ̀n ní bí ó bá rúbọ̀ tán  
Kí ó lọ̀ bọ̀ iyá rẹ̀.  
Wọ̀n ní ilẹ̀ nì ire rẹ̀ wà  
Kò ghòdò̀ lọ̀ sí ibikíbi.  
Nígbà tí Odogbo rúbọ̀ tán,  
Tí ó sì bọ̀ iyá rẹ̀.  
Ó jókòó sí ilẹ̀ títí di ọ̀jó ẹ̀kẹ̀rín,  
Sùgbọ̀n kò rí ohunkóhun bí ire.  
Nígbà tí ó di ọ̀jó ẹ̀karùún Odogbo  
múra lọ̀ sí oko igi.  
Ó ní ọ̀un kò nì jẹ́kí ebi kí ó pa ọ̀un kú.  
Nígbà tí ó dé oko ó sẹ̀ igi dádára  
Ó sì rú nì àrù tò ẹ̀rù.

19:1

Bí ó ti gberù tí ó nìbò,  
 Ìyá rè di ẹyẹ.  
 Ó sì bẹrẹ sí wípé.  
 Odogbo dà 'gi nù.  
 Ire ti délé l'ẹhin rẹ.  
 Nígbà tí Odogbo gbọ ó ní òun yíò rù igi  
 yíí délé.  
 Bí ó ti délé tí ó fi ìdì igi sọ'lẹ.  
 Bẹ̀nì ó jìn sí'lẹ akún.  
 Bá'yí ni owó dé tí olá dé,  
 Tí ó sì di olórò.

19:1

# ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on the need for moral reasoning in the context of tradition. It is a rare verse in that even though Odogbo seems to disobey instructions of the babalawo, he is not punished nor does he lose the good fortune promised him as in most cases of failure to comply. He is told to sacrifice and he does, but he is told to stay home and he does not.

Two things should be noted here. First, he does sacrifice which is the critical aspect of this moral tradition. Thus, he has done the essential thing. And secondly, he does stay home until he is presented with the possibility of starvation. Then, he chooses to live, even if he does not obtain a great fortune. Now he does not clearly defy the instruction of Ifa. He simply reaches a point where he must make a choice about the greater good: a) follow instructions which unchanged could lead to death, or (b) choose life by reasoning through the instructions and seeing that morality is not simply following rules but

finding ways to maintain principle in the context of changing and often conflicting circumstances. Here the greater good is preservation of life and the sacrifice required is to pass up the promise of fortune for the maintenance of life. Also, by going to get the wood, he is not simply waiting for good to come to him. In fact, his going out to get wood to save his life is the very way by which he comes into a double good fortune. Also instructive is his not throwing the wood away in spite of ancestor advice given by the spirit of his mother. This also suggests that we should think things through, recognize that we might not always read or hear our ancestors correctly, and having thought about things deeply and soberly, make a decision based on the best of our moral values and thinking as persons and as a people.

Finally, there remains the lesson that it is "at home," within ourselves, and among our friends, family and people, that we will always find the good fortune we might often seek elsewhere. This is a reaffirmation of Odu 147's teaching that "the very thing we are looking for is near us." So was the message for Odogbo and each of us. For it was when he returned home that he found the good fortune for which he was searching.

**P**lucking the feathers of a living fowl ruins it.  
Not plucking the feathers of the fowl  
leaves it with its splendor.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Ebu-Eyin,  
internal deterioration,

Who is the senior sibling of war.

They said the people should sacrifice,

But they turned a deaf ear to the wisdom  
of making sacrifice.

They were not wise to do so.

They were not perceptive.

They did not know that

It is at home that the war is lost before even  
reaching the battlefield.

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19:2

Títu ní m'ádìẹ̀ bàjẹ̀.  
 Àtítú ní m'ádìẹ̀ ẹ̀ se yègbèyègbè.  
 Dífá fún Èbù-Èyìn,  
 Tíí ẹ̀ se ègbón ogún.  
 Wón níkí wón rúbọ̀.  
 Wón kótí ogbón ìṣẹ̀bọ̀.  
 Njẹ̀ wón ò gbón ẹ̀e.  
 Wón ò mòràn.  
 Wón ò mò wípé  
 Nílé l'ogun tí bàjẹ̀ kí wón tó  
 r'íbi ogun.

19:3

**T**hose who are in the habit of throwing water  
 in the streets,  
 You should throw it cautiously,  
 So that you might not wet your own guest.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for Orunmila  
 Who was going to take Olojo, *the expected*  
*guest, as wife*  
 Olojo had promised to come within nine days,  
 But Olojo actually arrived in five.

Domi, domi.  
 E fèsò domi.  
 Kí ẹ̀ má domi s'ólojò lára.  
 Dífá fún Orunmila  
 Tí ó nílọ̀ gb'Ólojò n'iyàwò.  
 Ísán l'Ólojò dá,  
 Àrún l'Ólojò dé.

19:4

**B**ad conduct is what is attributed to youth.  
Bad character is what is attributed to elders.

Ìsekúṣe l'èwè lè se.

Ìwà ihùkuhù ní ti àgbàlagbà.

19:5

**A**n elder who sits down without leaning back  
Has the appearance of a person standing up.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Olayilokun,  
*whose name means "wherever honor  
turns it finds fortune."*  
She said that her strength was not adequate  
for the world.  
But they said her strength would be equal to  
her tasks in the world.  
They said she should sacrifice.

Ajókòó kò fẹhìn ti àgbà

Bí ẹnítí ó nàró nírí.

L'ó dífá fún "olá-yí-lù-okùn"

Ó ní ipá oun kò ní ká ayé.

Wọ́n ní ipá rẹ yíò ká ayé.

Wọ́n ní kí ó rúbọ.

Ogbedi Perepere was the one who interpreted  
the teachings of Ifa for Ori,  
Who had kneeled down and chosen his destiny,  
And whom detractors were preventing  
from achieving it.  
Ifa says he sees the evil wishers who do not  
want us to succeed in what we are doing.  
Ifa says he will join us in overcoming the  
evil wishers.  
He says we should sacrifice.  
When Ori had done what was due in  
practicing sacrifice,  
All that he was doing fell into place and  
straightened out.  
And the way became clear.

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Ogbè-di-pèrèpèrè l'ó dífá fún Orí  
Tí ó kúnlẹ̀ tí ó yàn iwà rẹ̀,  
Tí elénìní kò jẹ́kí ó ẹ̀e,  
Ífá ní: òun tí àwọn aláàròmọ̀ tí wọ̀n kò fẹ́ kí  
a ẹ̀un kan ẹ̀ni.  
Ó ní: k'á rúbọ̀.  
Ífá ní òun yíò bá ẹ̀ni ẹ̀gun aláàròmọ̀ náà.  
Nígbàtí Orí tó rúbọ̀,  
Ní ohun gbogbo tí ó ńfẹ́ tó gún.  
Tí ò sí ní ọ̀nà.

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**Q**uietly I go, smoothly I return."  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for Ariwowo,  
 the Hook, the Grasper,  
 When he was waging war against a tangled knot.  
 They said he would not return empty-handed.  
 They said he should sacrifice.  
 He made the sacrifice.  
 Since then Ariwowo, the Grasper, has not  
 been empty-handed,  
 Even if he reaches to the top of a mountain  
 to pull something down.  
 Ifa says we are stretching out our hands  
 toward something.  
 Ifa says we should sacrifice  
 So that we may not be unsuccessful in that  
 for which we reach,  
 Whether it is in the work we do or something  
 else.

"Jẹ mi lọ, ẹẹ mi bọ."  
 L'ò d'Ífá Aríwòwọ  
 Tí ó ngbógún lọ sí i-n'ítì.  
 Wọ́n ní kò ní ẹ́nwo bọ.  
 Wọ́n ní ó rúbọ.  
 Ó rúbọ.  
 Látígbà náà ní Aríwòwọ kù tí ẹ́nwo,  
 Bí ó bá ná sí ò kẹ fà ohunkóhun.  
 Ifá ní a nnàwọ sí ohun kan.  
 Ifá ní a rúbọ.  
 K'á má bá pòfò nínú nnkan tí à ńnawọ sí náà.  
 Ẹ́báse ẹ́ẹ tábí nnkan mírán.

23:1

**T**he teachings of Ifa were interpreted  
for Nwonmile  
Who would see his father in a vision.  
He said "I see my father today,  
father of the leopard.  
Father, come from heaven and help me.  
The father of a child should not fail to  
help his child."  
Ifa says someone has forgotten his father.  
And that if he does not take care of his father,  
He will not find anyone on earth to take  
care of him.  
Ifa says this person should sacrifice  
So that the way may become clear for him  
in his affairs.  
Indeed, something belonging to this person  
will be completely ruined,  
If he does not care for his father,  
Whether his father is in heaven or on earth.

23:1

A dífá Ifá Nwọnmile  
Tí ó ńlọ rí baba rẹ̀ ní ojú àlá.  
Ó ní: mo rí baba mi l'óní, 1bà ẹ̀kùn.  
Baba tí òrun wá gbé mi.  
1bà ọmọ kò fàl ghe ọmọ rẹ̀.  
Ifá ní ẹnìkan gbàgbé baba rẹ̀.  
Tí kò bá tọ́jú baba rẹ̀,  
Kò ní rí ẹnì tọ́jú òun náà ní ayé.  
Ifá ní ó rúbọ,  
Kí ọràn rẹ̀ bá lè ní ọ̀nà.  
Núkan eléyí yíò bàjẹ̀ pátápátá,  
Bí kò bá tọ́jú baba rẹ̀,  
Yálà bí ó wà ní ọ̀run tàbí ní ayé.

23:2

**T**he elephant makes a place tremble  
by virtue of its power.  
And an ant's size cannot be compared to  
that of a buffalo.  
Ayinka, the one praised everywhere,  
babalawo of the world,  
Was the one who interpreted the teachings  
of Ifa for the world.  
The world was advised to sacrifice  
So that good things might be said about it.  
Ayin, the praiser is praised everywhere.  
The mouth with which you praise me,  
May you not turn it around against me.  
For the praised one should be praised  
everywhere.

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23:2

Erin ní fi ibi mími solá.  
Eerà ò ní jòbò tò ẹfòn.  
Àyinkà awo ayé  
L'ó dífá fún ayé.  
Wọ̀n ní káyé ọ rúbọ  
Kí wọ̀n lè ma sọrọ rẹ ní rere.  
Àyìn kà láá yìn ayìn.  
Ẹnu tí ẹ mú yìn mí  
Ẹ má mà padà.  
Àyìn kà láá yìn ayìn.

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23:3

If we would listen to the teachings of Ifa,  
We would last like our ancestors lasted.  
If we would follow the teachings of  
Ope, Orunmila,  
We would grow old like the ancient ones.

B'ó bá ẹ wípé tí Ifá l'a bá ńgbò,  
À bá pé bí ara iwájú tí pẹ.  
B'ó bá ẹ wípé tí Ọpẹ l'a bá ń tọ lẹhìn,  
À bá dàgbà bí ara ìgbàhun-ìgbàhun.

23:4

The teachings of Ifa were interpreted  
for Orunmila  
When he was going on a spiritual mission  
on the shore of the ocean,  
When he was in the middle of the lagoon  
At the home of the sixteen owners of  
the market.  
They said Baba Orunmila would never  
return home.  
But it came to pass that Baba Orunmila began  
to cry out in a powerful way, turning  
his cry into a shout  
And he turned his lamentation into a song  
of sorrow.

23:4

He called out saying: Agbe bird, carry me home,  
O' Agbe.

We do not go on a journey so that we may not  
return home.

So, Agbe bird, please carry me home.

Then, before long and in the not distant future,  
Come and join us in a victory achieved  
through sacrifice;

Victorious in struggle as we have come to be.

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23:4

A dífá fún Ọ́rúnmílà

Ifá nsawo lọ sí àpá òkun

T'òun ilà méjì ọ̀sà,

Nílẹ̀ ọ̀lọ̀jà mẹ̀rindínlógún.

Wọ̀n ní Baba ò nìí padà délé.

Baba wá m'ekún s'ekún ìgbe.

Ó fí ìyèrè ẹ̀e ìyèrè aro.

Ó ní: Agbe gbé mi délé o ò Agbe.

A kírì ràjò k'á má délé o.

Agbe gbé mi délé o.

Kò pé kò jìnnà

E wá bá ni bá àrúṣẹ̀ ogun

Àjàṣẹ̀ ogun l'á wá wà.

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27:1

**A** hassock has a hard chest.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Olokunde  
whose name means "one who has the  
the strength to endure will arrive,"  
When she was crying and praying for a child.  
They said that she should sacrifice.  
They said that if she did not sacrifice, she would  
still bear children.  
But so that her children might not become  
enemies to each other, she should  
practice sacrifice.

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Ìmùtìmù bí àyà pì.  
L'ó dífá fún Olókundé,  
Níjọ tí ó ní ẹkún ojú nse ìráhùn ọmọ.  
Wọ́n ní kí ó rúbọ.  
Wọ́n ní bí kò rúbọ yíò hímọ,  
Sùgbọ́n kí àwọ́n ọmọ rẹ má ba maa bá  
ara wọ́n se ọ́tá ní kí ó rúbọ.

27:2

**O** gbe achieved amazing things,  
But the critics remained.  
Ifa accomplished everything successfully,  
But the slanderers continued to exist.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Edu, Orunmila,  
Offspring of one who brings forth one  
extraordinary thing after another,  
Offspring of one who produces wonders upon  
wonders.  
The wondrous things which Ifa brings forth  
cannot be ruined.  
They simply continue to multiply.  
And the wonderful things Ifa says that I am  
to accomplish  
Cannot be destroyed either.

27:2

Ogbè gharadá tań.  
 T'ẹlẹgàn l'ó kù.  
 Ifá ẹe ohun gbogbo tań.  
 Ó ku tí ẹlẹnu.  
 A dífá fún Èdú,  
 Qmọ agbápà l'ápà,  
 Qmọ agbé rekete l'orí rekete.  
 Àrà tí Ifá dá,  
 Kò leè bàjẹ.  
 Pípele níf pele.  
 Àrà tí Ifá níki ndá,  
 Kò níf parun.

31:1

**A**n uncontrolled temper does not create anything for anyone.

Patience is the father of character.

A person who is patient will become the master of all things.

She will reach a ripe old age.

He will live a healthy life.

And she will enjoy life thoroughly

Like a person tasting honey.

Inúbíbí kò dá nńkan fún ẹni.

Sùúrú ni baba iwà.

Ẹniti ó ni sùúrú ohun gbogbo l'ó ní.

À j'agbó

À j'atọ

À' j'ayé rindin-rindin

Bí ẹni alá oyin.

31:2

**N**ight falls and we spread out our  
sleeping mats.  
Day breaks and we roll the mats up.  
One who weaves cotton yarn must wind it  
while walking back and forth.  
And when a person dies, we dig into the ground,  
Going much too far down in the mind  
of the timid.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Orunmila  
When he was going on a spiritual journey to  
the town of Ika.

Alẹ lẹ ǎǎ tẹ ẹní.  
Ojúmọ mọ ǎǎ ká ẹní.  
Adàwú nì pọyì rẹrẹ kálẹ.  
Òkú l'ó kú nì a gbẹ ilẹ  
L'ó jìn gbùngbùn l'ójú ojo.  
A dá fún Ọrúnmilà  
Njọ tí ó ńsawo re òde Ika.

31:2

# ÀŞOYÉ

This is a teaching on doing what is appropriate when it is appropriate. It suggests we not delay doing what is necessary, nor be afraid to do our duty in taxing times. Thus, it says we must sleep when it is time and wake up when it is time. We must walk in the world in the appropriate way in order to weave the fabric of life we want. And when it comes time to deal with crisis or danger, we must have the courage to do so regardless of the depth to which we must dig or the extent to which we must go to achieve our ends.

The teaching suggests that often people seek magic formulas to living a good life. But this verse suggests that it is doing the simple, appropriate and necessary things that grounds our life and lays the basis for our successful dealing with larger and more complex things. Therefore, if we want a healthy life we must not simply wait until we get word from a doctor, but must begin by doing the

simple things: being moderate and selective in what we eat and drink, exercising regularly, avoiding unnecessary stress and strain and at the end of work well done, finding a cool and peaceful place to rest adequately and think deeply about the future and consequences of things as Odu 1:1 teaches us.

31:3

**C**haracter is all that is required.  
Character is all that is required.

There is no destiny that needs to be called  
unfortunate in Ife city,  
Character is all that is required.

---

Ìwà nikan l'ó sòro o.

Ìwà nikan l'ó sòro o.

Orí kan kùí, burú l'otù Ifẹ̀,

Ìwà nikan l'ó sòro o.

31:3

ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on character as the central, if not sole, determinant of a person's destiny. It is an extraordinary assertion within Odu ethics for at least two reasons. First, the Odu also teach that destinies are chosen by persons as spirits before coming to the world and that these are essentially unalterable. But there are passages throughout the Odu which suggest a moral life can and will in fact determine one's destiny. This passage on character is such a passage. For it clearly states that no destiny is *ipso facto* or needs to be bad or unfortunate, *buru*. For character is all that is required for a good one.

This passage is also important in its stress on character as the essence of the moral personality. It suggests that the cultivation and possession of character is the essential moral task and the ground for a good life in this world and the next. This suggests that character subsumes and makes possible the fulfillment of all other moral obligations.

31:4

What we hear is the sound of things  
done loudly.

We do not hear the sound of things  
done gently.

We drag the one who does things loudly to  
the back door of the house of the  
unpretentious person.

Orunmila says he does things gently when  
he gives someone his destiny.

Ifa says that we should not engage in fighting,  
And that we should sacrifice

So that our relatives will not injure us in the  
evil of fighting.

31:4

Pàràpàrà gbù n'ìlẹ̀ l'a gbó.  
 A kí igbó pẹ̀lẹ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀ gbíí.  
 Èhìn lẹ̀kun ilé awurẹ̀tẹ̀tẹ̀ l'áá tí wọ̀ pàràpàrà lọ.  
 Ọ̀rúnmílà ní ó a ẹ̀ pẹ̀lẹ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀ fí iwà jìn ẹ̀ni.  
 Ifá ní kí a má ẹ̀ jà.  
 Kí ẹ̀nikan rúbọ̀  
 Kí araalẹ̀ rẹ̀ má bá ẹ̀ ẹ̀nìjám-bá ní ibi ẹ̀jà.



33:1

**T**he liar dies and dies in a forest of fire.  
 The wicked dies and dies on a sun-scorched  
 savannah.  
 But the righteous dies and dies peacefully,  
 Leaning back against a water jar decorated  
 with jewels.  
 Orunmila, priest of the world, interpreted the  
 teachings of Ifa for the people of  
 the world,  
 When they were creating a world,  
 A world where there was no peace,  
 A world where there was no harmony.  
 They were advised to sacrifice.  
 But only the righteous remained to  
 practice sacrifice.

33:1

So, speak truth; do justice  
Be kind and do not do evil.  
Truth travels on a narrow path  
But the wicked wander on a wide road.  
Speak truth; do justice  
Do justice and speak truth.  
For one who is righteous is supported by  
the Divine.

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33:1

Puró-puró kú, ó kú s'igbo iná.  
Sika-Sika kú, ó kú s'òdan òdòrùn.  
Sòdótó-sòdótó kú, ó kú gbèdèmukey,  
Ó fèhinti àmù iléké.  
Òrúnmílà awo ayé dífá fún ọmọ aráyé  
Nígbatí wón nṣe ayé,  
Tí ayé kò rójú,  
Tí ayé kò ọ.  
Wón níkí wón rúbọ.  
Olódótó nìkan ní ùbẹ l'ẹhìn tí nṣe ọ  
Njẹ s'òtító; ẹe òdodo.  
Soore; má sika.  
Òtító a bònà tóóró.  
Òsìkà a bònà gbàràrà.  
Sọ òtító; ẹe òdodo.  
Sòdodo; sòtító.  
Ẹnìtí sòtító ní ìmólé nḡbè.

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ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on the need and value of righteousness in the world. The wrongdoer who lies and is cruel is portrayed as one who does not find cool relief, but rather searing heat signified by the "forest of fire" and the "sun-scorched savannah." These metaphors for heat and discomfort are contrasted with the metaphor of leaning against the jeweled water jar which signifies not only relaxation in wealth, but also a coolness or calmness suggested by the image of water.

The verse urges us to practice two of the cardinal virtues of Ifaic and Maatian ethics: truth and justice. And it assures us that the righteous who practice these will be favored by the Divine. The verse also encourages us to "be kind" and not be evil. This joining of kindness to the virtues of truthfulness and justice is key to the care and responsibility we must feel and exercise toward one another. For both truth and justice can be harsh. And it

is with loving kindness that they are balanced and serve their essential function of bringing and supporting good in the world. It is through kindness that the moral excellence of *iwàpẹ́lẹ́*, gentle character, is grounded and flourishes.

33:2

**T**he teachings of Ifa were interpreted for  
Eni-aye-kan, "one whose turn it is  
to take responsibility for the world,"  
And the same was done for Sheerere, "one  
who does it well."  
Do it well; bear the responsibility well.  
Those whose turn it is to take responsibility  
for the world,  
They should do good for the world.  
When it becomes your turn to take responsibility  
for the world,  
You should do good for the world.  
When it becomes my turn to take responsibility  
for the world.  
May I bear the burden well.  
And may I do good for the world.

---

33:2

A difá fún Èni-ayé-kan.  
A bù Sée-rere.  
Sée-rere; gbé ẹrù rere.  
Èni-ayé-kan,  
È s'ayé ire.  
Bí ó jẹ ̀wọ l'ayé kan,  
Kí o s'ayé ire o.  
Bí ó jẹ ̀emi l'ayé kan,  
Kí mo gbé ẹrù rere.  
Kí mo s'ayé ire.

---

33:3

**E**ven if a babalawo is in great need,  
A babalawo should not lie.  
And even if a healer is in difficult  
circumstances,  
A healer should not be dishonest.  
Indeed, no one should lie or be dishonest.  
This was the interpretation of Ifa for Orunmila  
When unknown persons were waging war  
against him.  
He was advised to sacrifice.  
He heard and made the sacrifice.

---

33:3

Bí ojú bá ń pọ̀n babálawo,  
Kí babaláwo má purọ́.  
Bí ojú bá ń pọ̀n onísẹ̀gùn  
Kí onísẹ̀gùn má ẹ̀ se parọ́.  
Gidi, k'ẹ̀ni má sẹ̀ké tàbí ẹ̀ se parọ́.  
Dífá fún Ọ̀rúnmilà  
Níjọ ẹ̀ni àìmọ́ wá níko ogun já òun.  
Wọ̀n níki ó rúbọ́.  
Ó gbọ́; ó rúbọ́.

---

35:1

I stood for a long time,  
 But I was unable to reach the ishin fruit.  
 I bent down for a long time,  
 And I still could not reach the ishin fruit.  
 But thanks to some special elders  
 Who advised me to prostrate myself in respect  
 and without reservation,  
 I prostrated myself in respect and without  
 reservation.  
 Then, the ishin fruit dropped into my hands.  
 And the ishin fruit dropped into my mouth.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for Ejika-gogoogo  
 Who was going to carry Osu to the sacred  
 grove of Ifa.  
 They were advised to sacrifice.  
 They heard and complied.  
 May Osu stand up straight.  
 May he not lie down.  
 Standing firm and upright is how we must  
 always find Osu.

35:1

Mo dúró-dúró,  
 Qwó mi ò tó isin.  
 Mo bèrè-bèrè,  
 Qwo mi ò tó isin.  
 Qpélope àwọn àgbà kan,  
 Tí wọn ní kí ndòbálè yéké.  
 Mo dòbálè yéké.  
 Isin òbó sí mi l'ówó.  
 Isin òbó sí mi l'énú.  
 Dífá fún Èjìkà-gògòdògò  
 Tí yìò gbé Òsù dé'gbódù.  
 Wọn ní kí wọn rúbọ.  
 Wọn gbọ; wọn rú.  
 Njẹ Òsù m'órí ró o.  
 Kí ó má dùbúlẹ.  
 Idúró gágán l'áá bá Òsù.

ÀSQYÉ

This is a teaching on self-surrender and mastery of the teachings of Ifa as a foundation for success and achievement. Here the effort of standing and stooping to achieve is contrasted with an effortless prostration in respect. The teaching is that sometimes outward self-assertion regardless on what level--high (standing) or low (stooping)--does not yield the desired results. One, then, must turn inward and in profound respect for the wisdom of the ancestors as expressed in Ifa, surrender oneself to study and reflection. Having done this, one is then prepared to stand upright and step forward with a fresh energy and profound insight.

The metaphor of prostration in respect is an important one. It is at once a call for self-discipline and self-surrender. It is rooted in the Yoruba custom of bowing to the great, those great in age, great in wisdom or great in status. And thus, carries with it a need to

recognize those who have achieved these positions of greatness. But in a deeper sense, it teaches us to be humble, to be willing to make oneself low in order to attain heights, to submit to instruction in order to learn and then be able to teach, and to open oneself in order to be filled.

36:1

**H**e said it's a matter of disrespect.  
 I said it's a matter of being disregardful.  
 He said people dare not be so disrespectful of  
     fire that they would roll dry cloth in it.  
 I said people dare not be so disrespectful of a  
     snake that they would make it into a belt.  
 And they dare not be so disdainful towards  
     the child of a ruler  
 That they would strike him on the crown  
     of his head.  
 Thus, may people respect me likewise today  
     and always.

---

Ó ní: àfojúdi.

Mo ní: àfagbádi.

Ó ní: wón kèí fojúdi iná kí wón fi m'áṣọ ka.

Mo ní: wón kèí fojúdi ejò kí wón fi ẹ'ọjá.

Wón kèí fojúdi ọmọ ọlójá

Kí wón kàn ní ìkó àtáí.

Kí wón bù ọwọ́ fún mí l'óní àtí nígbà ghogbo.

37:1

**O**gbe, bind your child securely on your back.  
 Nursing mother, firmly fix your child on it.  
 Carrying others' children is not as beneficial.  
 When a child cries out,  
 It is the mother whom we should inform.  
 This was the advice of Ifa for Adiro  
     Nigbagi-gbagi, the firmly fixed  
     hearthstone.  
 Who will sustain the wall without wavering.  
 She was advised to sacrifice.  
 It is when Adiro, the hearthstone, carries the  
     wall on its back,  
 That we have wealth,  
 That we have children,  
 That we have all good things.

37:1

Ogbè, tún'mọ pọn.  
 Abiyamọ sún'mọ sí.  
 Àgbàpọn ni kò l'ère.  
 B'ọmọ bá nké,  
 Ìyá làá wí fún.  
 Dífá fún Àdìrò Nìgbàgì-gbàgì,  
 Tì yóó gbé ògìrì pọn tímótímọ.  
 Wọ́n níké ó rúbọ.  
 Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.  
 Ìgbà Àdìrò gb'ògìrì pọn  
 La bá n lájé,  
 La bá nímọ,  
 La bá n nìre gbogbo.

39:1

If we have money and do not have character,  
 The money belongs to someone else.  
 Character, iwa, is what we are looking for,  
 character.  
 If we have children and do not have character,  
 The children belong to someone else.  
 Character, iwa, is what we are looking for,  
 character.  
 If we have a house and do not have character,  
 The house belongs to someone else.  
 Character, iwa, is what we are looking for,  
 character.  
 If we have clothes and do not have character,  
 The clothes belong to someone else.  
 Character, iwa, is what we are looking for,  
 character.  
 All the good things we have, if we do not have  
 character,  
 These good things belong to someone else.  
 And so, it's character, iwa, we are looking for,  
 character.

39:1

Óní bó lówó, tá ò níwà,  
 Owó olówó ni.  
 Ìwà, ìwà l'a níwá o, ìwà.  
 Qmọ l'a bí, tá à níwà,  
 Qmọ ọlọmo ni.  
 Ìwà, ìwà l'a níwá o, ìwà.  
 B'á a nílẹ, tá à níwà,  
 Ilé onílẹ ni.  
 Ìwà, ìwà l'a níwá o, ìwà.  
 B'á a l'áṣọ, tá à níwà,  
 Aṣọ aláṣọ ni.  
 Ìwà, ìwà l'a níwá o, ìwà.  
 Ire gbogbo tá a ní, tá à níwà,  
 Ire oníre ni.  
 Ìwà, ìwà l'a níwá o, ìwà.

39:2

**S**ecret slander,  
 Undercover ridicule.

There is no one who turns his back  
 Who does not become the subject of slander.  
 This was the teaching for Orunmila  
 When people were directing slander against him.  
 He was advised to sacrifice.  
 He heard and he sacrificed.  
 He said: now, you may continue your slander,  
 But ridicule cannot remove the sweetness  
 from honey.  
 It is when you direct slander against me,  
 That I become extremely wealthy,  
 That I build houses upon houses,  
 That I bring into being an abundance of children,  
 And that I become the possessor of all  
 good things.  
 So, continue your slander,  
 For ridicule does not mean that honey will not  
 still be sweet.

39:2

Sùtisùti wáyewáye.  
 Sùtisùti wáyewáye.  
 Kò s'èni ti yóo pèhìndà  
 Tí kò ní l'órò sùti l'ara.  
 Dífá fún Òrúnmìlà  
 Tí ọmọ aráyé yóò máa yosùti sí.  
 Wọ̀n ní kí ó rúbọ.  
 Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ  
 Ó ní: È ẹe máa yosùti èyin lọ  
 Ègàn ò pé k'óyin má dùn.  
 Sùti lẹ yọ sí mi,  
 Ní mo fí lówó lówó,  
 Ní mo fí kólé mólé,  
 Ní mo fí bímọ lé ọmọ,  
 Ní mo fí ní ire gbogbo.  
 È ẹe máa yosùti èyin lọ.  
 Ègàn ò pé kóyin má dùn.

39:3

**A**nyone who wishes to have good fortune  
 Will constantly practice sacrifice.  
 And anyone who cultivates the habit of doing  
 good deeds, especially for the needy,  
 This person, in particular, will never lack  
 happiness.

Ènití ó bá sí ñwá ire,  
 L'ó màá ñs'ẹbọ.  
 Ènití ó bá sí fẹràn iwà oore síse, pàápàá fún  
 àwọn aláíní,  
 Oun paapaa kò ní yẹ ní ìdùnú.

39:4

A person who is in deep distress cannot afford  
to take an afternoon nap.  
And a *useful* trap cannot afford to sleep at night.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Kosolu,  
Offspring of Ojo; offspring of Owo;  
The one who interpreted Ifa teachings  
for Ininirin,  
The offspring of the ruler of Orin-Abokun,  
When she was continually suffering sickness  
And looking forward to the day she would  
rise up recovered.  
They said she should sacrifice.  
She heard and complied.

---

39:4

Ipónripónjú ò sùn oorun ọsán.  
Èbiti kò sùn oorun òru.  
Dífá fún Kósólu,  
Qmọ Qjọ; ọmọ Ọwọ;  
Dífá fún Inínrín,  
Qmo Qlọrin-Abòkun,  
Níjọ tó ń sògbògbò àrùn  
Tó ń najú àti díde.  
Wọn níki ó rúbọ.  
Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.

---

39:5

A kindness done endures, but the foolish  
person forgets it.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Igun  
Who was going to give advice at the palace of  
Olofin, *the ungrateful king*.  
They said he should sacrifice.  
He heard and he complied.  
Igun, priest of the world, interpreted the  
teachings of Ifa for the Olofin at Ife,  
the cradle of the world,  
When his life was broken like a calabash,  
When it was torn completely apart like a  
piece of cloth.  
They said that he should sacrifice.  
For he did not recognize Igun, the priest as  
priest and respect him accordingly.

39:5

Olofin said he did not recognize Igun  
any longer.  
And he failed to recognize and respect  
the priest as priest.  
It is a kindness done which endures;  
It is a foolish person who forgets it.

39:5

Oore pé, asiwèrè gbàgbé.  
 Dífá fún Igún  
 Tí òlò gb'awo nílẹ̀ Qlòfin.  
 Wón níki ó rúbọ.  
 Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.  
 Igún, awo ayé,  
 Dífá fún Qlòfin n'Ifẹ̀ Oòdayé  
 Níjọ tí ayé rẹ̀ fọ̀ bí igbá,  
 Tó fàya gbàràgàda bí aṣọ.  
 Wón níki ó rúbọ.  
 Nṣe lẹ̀ ò m'awo l'áwo.  
 Qlòfin l'ó un ò tún mọ̀ Igún mọ̀.  
 Nṣe lẹ̀ ò m'awo l'áwo.  
 Oore l'ó pé,  
 L'asiwèrè gbàgbé.

41:1

**E**ven if the beginning of wrong-doing is  
 pleasant,  
 The end of wickedness will not be good.  
 We cannot use evil to secure goods and expect  
 them to be anchored firmly.  
 These were the teachings of Ifa for the  
 upright one.  
 The offspring of the initiated one who treads the  
 earth in humbleness.  
 Olodumare is the lord of the land.  
 Olodumare is the owner of judgment.  
 Retribution belongs to Olodumare.  
 The king of the world will reward everyone  
 Precisely according to the work of their hands.

OGBÈATÈ  
41

41:1

Bí iwájú ìkà bá dára,  
Èyín ìkà kò ní sunwòn.  
A káí fí ìkà dí ẹrù kó gún gégé.  
Díá fún Òtítọ-inú,  
Qmọ ọtítẹ afitelẹ tìrẹlẹtìrẹlẹ.  
Olódùmarè ló ní ilẹ.  
Olódùmarè ló ní idájọ.  
Èsan ní tí Olódùmarè.  
Ọba yód san-án fún oníkálukú.  
Gégé bí ịẹ ọwọ wọn.

---

OGBÈATÈ  
41

41:2

**T**he detractors said, he would die in the forest,  
But he was building mansions.  
They said he would be buried in a hill of sand,  
But he was accumulating and wearing  
fine clothes.  
They said that no one would assist him in  
his work,  
But he was dismounting male horses and  
mounting female ones.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Orunmila,  
When he was in the midst of enemies,  
And when he was everyday engaged in  
thoughts about doing battle.  
They said he should practice sacrifice.  
He heard and he complied.

---

41:2

Igbó ni yódò kú sí,  
Ilé òlálá níí maa kọ.  
Òkè yèpè ni yódò sùn,  
Àkànpò èwú jìmba-jìmba níí maa wò.  
Kò níí r'ènikan rán ní sẹ,  
Látórí akọ ẹsin níí tíí bọ s'orí abo ẹsin.  
Dífá fún Ọrúnmílà  
Nígbàtí o òbè níràngun ọtá.  
Ó f'ojoojúmọ kọminá ogun.  
Wọ́n níkí ó rúbọ.  
Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.

---

41:3

**T**he gentle breeze causes leaves of the trees  
on the farm to sway.

A strong wind shakes the leaves violently.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Orunmila.  
Ifa said that the honor due me will be  
shown to me.

Ifa asked me how prosperous would I like to be?  
I said I would like to be as prosperous as  
Olajugba of the city of Ilala.

Olajugba of Ilala turned a forest into a  
dwelling place.

He turned a refuse site into a marketplace.  
He built a home for his mother's family.  
He built a house for his father's family.

41:3

He became a greatly respected person, one  
whom upon waking one greets first.  
He became a highly adored person,  
one for whom people gather to praise.  
May Ifa permit me to be as prosperous as  
Olajugba of Ilala.

---

41:3

Afété lẹlẹ níí s'ewe igi oko láálo-láálo.  
Èfúùfú lẹlẹ níí s'ewe igi oko gbáárikókó-  
gbáárikókó.  
Dífá fún Ọ̀rúnmilá.  
Ifá l'óun ó f'olá témi hàn mi.  
Ifá ní báwo ni ngo se là tó .  
Mo ní mo fé lálàlà bí Ọlájugbà Ìlálà;  
Ọlájugbà Ìlálà ló sọ ighó di ilé.  
Ó s'atàn d'ọjà.  
Ó kólẹ nílẹ́ iyá.  
Ó kólẹ nílẹ́ baba.  
O di ẹni àjíkí.  
O di ẹni àpèsìn.  
Ifá jẹkí n là bí Ọlájugbà Ìlálà.

---

41:4

**N**ow, if I have been made,  
I should reconstruct myself.  
The forbidden things which are  
enumerated for me,  
I will comply with.  
For I have been made,  
And I must also remake myself.

---

Njẹ bí a bá tẹ mí,  
N ó tún'ra mi tẹ.  
Èwọ tí a bá kà fún mí,  
N ó gbọ.  
Títè l'a tẹ mí,  
N yòò tún'ra mi tẹ.

41:5

**L**et us close our eyes and pretend to be dead,  
So that we may know who will mourn for us.  
Let us walk unsteadily and pretend to stumble,  
So that we might see who will express concern.  
It would not be a bad thing, even if we could  
count on only one person.  
But who will remain is difficult to determine.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Orunmila  
When he was going to make people think  
that he was dead,  
So that he might know who were his true friends.  
He was advised to sacrifice.  
He heard and he complied.

41:5

Orunmila who was said to be dead was not  
dead after all.  
He discovered that their mourning was a  
mourning for themselves.  
And their fasting in sorrow was a fasting  
for themselves.  
Only his true friends remained to mourn him  
and help his family.

---

41:5

K'a dijú, k'á pé a kú,  
K'a m'ènití yóó sunkún ẹni.  
K'a búrín-búrín, k'á kòsè dánwò,  
K'a mò ẹnití yóò ẹni pèlẹ.  
Kò ní burúburú bí kó má kẹ̀nkan péré mò ní.  
Súgbón ẹnití yóò kù l'a ò mò.  
Dífá fún Ọ̀rúnmilà  
Nígbàti ó nífi ikú tàn wọn ẹ,  
Kí ó mò ẹnití ábẹ ọ̀rẹ olódótó rẹ.  
Wọn níki ó rúbọ.  
Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.  
Ọ̀rúnmilà ní e pé a kú kò kú mò o.  
Ó wá rí pé ẹkún ara wọn ní wọn ńsun.  
Pé àrùwè ara wọn ní wọn ńgba.  
Àwọn ọ̀rẹ olódótó rẹ ńikan ní ábẹ l'ẹhìn  
tí ńsunkún àti tí ńran àwọn ara rẹ lówọ.

---

41:5

ÀSQYÉ

This is a teaching on the test and discovery of friendship. The narrative from which this teaching comes tells us that Orunmila was being greatly praised by persons and people who were claiming a friendship with him and yet he felt uneasy about the sincerity of the praise and the quality of his friends. So, he pretended to die so that he could test the sincerity and commitment of the people. Once the pretenders heard he was dead, they collected monies from his family unjustly, did not help the family, mourned falsely and disrespected his memory. But some people who never made outrageous claims nor promised great things came to truly mourn his passing and to help his family with all that was necessary. They were ready to stay 40 days for mourning, but Orunmila returned on the 7th day. When the pretenders heard Orunmila had returned, they came to ask for forgiveness.

But they had already revealed themselves! It was his true friends to whom he turned in reciprocity and even deeper respect.

The lesson here is that true friends not only aid and praise each other in each other's presence, but also demonstrate in each other's absence an equal or even greater commitment to the friendship. This is a situation, our ancestors in ancient Egypt say, in which one friend's righteousness and goodness equal the other's. It is thus, balanced, mutually beneficial and worthy of the highest sacrifice.

41:6

**U**nhelpful persons are as abundant  
as bushes in the forest.  
A good person is as rare as another eye.  
To find a good person, one must travel  
a long way.  
These were the teachings of Ifa for Orunmila  
When he was going to become husband  
of the world,  
When he was going to share the world into  
two equal parts with Olodumare.  
He was advised to practice sacrifice.  
He heard and he practiced it.

---

41:6

Ènìyàn lásan pọ bí ìgbé.  
Ènirere wọn ju ojú lọ.  
K'á tó rí ẹnirere, ọ̀nà á ń.   
Dífá fún Ọ̀rúnmìlà  
Nígbà tí ó ńlọ rẹ́é s'ọkọ ayé,  
Ó ńlọ rẹ́é bá Olódùmarè pín ayé lógbogba.  
Wọn ní kí ó rúbọ.  
Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ

---

ÀSQYÉ

This is a teaching on accepting responsibility for the world we live in and knowing both the difficulty and the honor. The honor is to be *husband of the world or wife of the world* and to share this responsibility with the Lord of Heaven, Olodumare. This status and role as husband or wife of the world, *okọ ayé* or *aya ayé*, calls for all the virtues of marriage - love, respect, care, commitment, partnership, sacrifice, shared work, shared joy, shared life. The second aspect of this role and status is to be partner with the Lord of Heaven in care and responsibility for the world. This reaffirms the divine character of the role and status and reaffirms the teaching in Odu 78 that says "surely humans have been chosen to bring good into the world." This adds the dimension that this bringing of good into the world is in partnership with the Divine.

It is important here to note that Kawaiida

recognizes the specific assignment which is given to Orunmila, to be husband of the world. But it sees this teaching in its larger meaning as an assignment for all humans in the model of Orunmila. Thus, it is the Ifa teachings that are both husband and wife of the world and serve in partnership with Olodumare in giving indispensable moral and spiritual vision and values to the world through Olodumare's assignment. For to rightly and effectively assume responsibility and care for the world requires the highest spiritual and moral vision and values.

Finally, the text says that useless or unhelpful persons are everywhere, but one must travel far to find a good person. This is a teaching that in carrying out one's responsibility one must realize that only a few will be immediately useful to the task of bringing good into the world. It is important to notice that the world *lāsan* or useless is used here to describe the many rather than evil as in some traditions. It therefore does not challenge the concept of our chosenness. It speaks to our *usefulness* or *non-usefulness* as human beings in carrying out the task of bringing good into the world at any given time. And it challenges us by implication to dare to be those rare and precious good persons caring to constantly lift up the light

that lasts, those eternal moral and spiritual principles of our ancestors as expressed in the teachings of Ifa. For through this, we open the way for others so that the truly good persons are no longer rare, but are regular everyday people and everywhere.

## 43:1

**E**ven if we are going to die,  
We must wage a life-and-death struggle.  
We should still struggle hard.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for the lame person.  
And the same was given to the blind person.  
They said that both should sacrifice.  
They heard and they complied.  
Before long and not too far in the future, then,  
You can come and join us where practicing  
sacrifice produces victory.

---

Bí a yió kúu,  
A yió jòwèrè.  
A yió jòwèrè.  
Dífá fún arọ.  
A bù fún afọjú.  
Wọ́n ní kí àwọ́n méjèèjì rúbọ.  
Wọ́n gbọ; wọ́n rúbọ.  
Kò pé, kò jínà,  
Èjé wá bá'ni ní àrúṣẹ ogun.

43:2

I pursue the work my destiny has assigned me.  
 I follow the path down which Ifa directs me.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for Aghonbula,  
 Who would drain the deepest waters in order to  
 be prosperous.  
 They said he should practice sacrifice.  
 He heard and he complied.  
 I will not fail to drain the deepest waters in  
 order to be prosperous.  
 I will not fail to drain the deepest waters to  
 achieve goodness.

43:2

Isẹ orí rán mi ní mò nse o.  
 Ọ̀nà Èdu rán mi ní mò útọ̀.  
 Dífá fún Agbónbúla  
 Tí yóó gbón ibú là.  
 Wón níki ó rúbọ.  
 Ó ghọ; ó rúbọ.  
 N kò ọ́ai gbón ibú mi là.  
 N kò ọ́ai gbón ibú mi níre.

44: I

**O**runmila says that we should endure  
hardship in the beginning,  
So that we might enjoy prosperity in the end.

---

Òrúnmìlà níkí a ìbá fòsì síwájú  
K'á f'orò s'èhin.

45: I

**I**made a small sacrifice,  
And it yielded a small result.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Iya Ajija,  
When she was crying and complaining  
That she could not achieve any good.  
They said she should sacrifice.  
She heard and she made the sacrifice.

---

Mo rú kéré.  
Ó dá kéré.  
Dífá fún Ìyá Àjijà,  
Ó ámójú èkún sun ráhùn  
Kí ó kò lè se tán ni ire gbogbo.  
Wọ́n níkí ó rúbọ.  
Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.

50:1

**T**he way of Ifa is very straight.  
It does not deviate.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Oye,  
When he was going to marry a bride  
from his own neighborhood.  
They said he should sacrifice,  
So that his penis would not put him to shame.  
But Oye would not sacrifice.  
So when he took his wife home,  
He could not sleep with her.  
They said that Oye had died at the waist.  
Ifa says a person should sacrifice against  
diseases which can be concealed  
under one's clothes.

---

50:1

Ọ̀nà Ifá tọ̀ tààrà.  
Kò yà.  
A dá fún Ọ̀yẹ,  
Nígbà tí ó nlọ̀ gbé ọ̀yàwó adúgbò wá ilé.  
Wọ̀n ní kí ó rúbọ̀,  
Kí ọ̀kọ̀ rẹ̀ má ba dójútí oun.  
Ọ̀yẹ kò rúbọ̀.  
Nígbà tí Ọ̀yẹ mú ọ̀yàwó délé,  
Kò lè basùn.  
Wọ̀n ní Ọ̀yẹ tí ó tí kú ní ìdì ní.  
Ifá ní kí ẹnìkan rúbọ̀ àrùn, a fi aṣọ̀ bọ̀ mọ́ra.

---

57:1

On the day that Olodumare would think  
that a star was being arrogant,  
We would see that star suddenly fall and  
disappear into darkness.

---

Ni ọjọ tí Olódùmarè bá rò  
Tí ìgbéraga iràwò kan,  
Ni a se nríí tí iràwò náà sídís lójíjì  
a sì wọ òòkún.

65:1

Orunmila will forgive me.  
The forgiving one will forgive me.  
If water kills a person, people will forgive it.  
Orunmila, may people forgive me in this matter,  
Even as the entire town usually forgives rain.

---

Òrúnmilà fihun jímí  
Ọjọ́ fihun jímí.  
Bí omi bá pọ́ ní, wọ́n á fíjẹ́.  
Òrúnmilà, kí wọ́n f'òràn yí jímí,  
Bí gbogbo ilú ní f'òràn jì ọ̀jọ̀.

**O**rifusi, father of Elu, was searching  
 for a way to avoid death.  
 So that death would not kill him, his children  
 and his wives,  
 They said: if you want to avoid death,  
 You must sacrifice and follow the  
 teachings of Ifa.  
 Ifa will teach you the conduct and character  
 Which will enable you to avoid death.  
 They said when you sacrifice, you should  
 begin doing good from this day on  
 more than ever before.  
 For your sacrifice is in vain, if your character  
 is deficient.

Therefore, you should take the sacrificial  
 pigeons and chickens home.  
 You should release them.  
 You should not kill them.  
 You should give them food, if they come  
 to eat at your house.  
 And you must not kill anything whatsoever  
 from this day on.  
 For one who does not want death to kill him,  
 Should not kill anything whatsoever either.

---

70:1

Orifusi baba Elu nwa ibi a ba ye ikú,  
 Sí kí ó ma lè pa òun, omọ rẹ ti aya rẹ.  
 A ní kí bí ẹ bá wípé kí ikú má lè pa ẹyin,  
 Kí ẹ rúbọ kí ẹ sì wá tẹ Ifá.  
 Ifá yòd má kó ẹyin, ní ẹse àti iwà  
 Tí ká jé ká a kú.  
 Wọn ní bí ẹ rúbọ,  
 Ẹ bèrẹsì rere-ẹse láti oní lọ jù ti àtẹhìn wá.  
 Lásan ní ẹ rúbọ, bí ẹ bá dín iwàrerere.  
 Kí ẹ kó àwọn ẹyelé àti adìyẹ lọ sí ilé ẹyin.  
 Kí ẹ kó wọn dàsilẹ.  
 Kí ẹ má se pa wọn.  
 Kí ẹ máa fún wọn ni oúnjẹ bí wọn bá jẹ wá ilé.  
 Ẹ kò gbódò pa ohunkóhun láti oní lọ.  
 Nítorí ẹniti kò fẹ kí ikú pa òun,  
 Kí ó má se ikú pa ohunkóhun sì.

70:2

**M**ay death not ruin my house.  
 I have not done evil.

May disease not ruin my house.

I have not done evil.

Whether enemy or friend, I have shown  
 them kindness.

I have not done evil.

When people were engaged in litigation at Ake,

I was compassionate and I was kind to them.

When people were involved in lawsuits at Oko,

I was compassionate and I showed them kindness.

I have not done evil.

May litigation not ruin my house.

I have not done evil.

70:2

When I found two people fighting,  
 I mediated between them.  
 I have not done evil.  
 May poverty not ruin my house.  
 I dare not be lazy.  
 May loss not ruin my house.  
 I dare not steal.

---

70:2

Ikú má sọ'lé mi d'ode.  
 N kò má sùkà.  
 Àrùn má sọ'lé mi d'ode.  
 N kò má sùkà.  
 Àti ọtá ati ọré, mo se wọn lóore.  
 N kò má sùkà.  
 Ejó bá wọn l'Áké,  
 Mo dáròdárò; mo se wọn lóore.  
 N kò má sùkà.  
 Ejó bá wọn l'Oko,  
 Mo dáròdárò; mo se wọn lóore.  
 N kò má sùkà.  
 Ejó má sọ'lé mi d'ode.  
 N kò má sùkà.  
 Mo bá ẹnikẹjì níjà,  
 Mo là wọn ní ìjà.  
 N kò má sùkà.  
 Ọ̀sì má sọ'lé mi d'ode.  
 N kò jẹ sọ'lé  
 Ọ̀fò má sọ'lé mi d'ode.  
 N kò jẹ jalè.

---

**T**he teachings of Ifa were interpreted for the wise ones.  
 Who assembled and invited some babalawo to interpret the teachings of Ifa on death.  
 They asked "Why is it that death kills people and there is no one who does not die?"  
 The babalawo said that Ifa says it is good that Amuniwaye, the One who brought us into the world, created death.  
 Water which does not flow back and forth  
 Becomes a pond of polluted water, a pond of water which causes disease.  
 Water takes people away freely and water brings them back freely.  
 Let the ill go home to receive a new body;

Let the corrupt go home to receive new character;  
 So they may return to the world.  
 The babalawo then asked:  
 "What is unpleasant about this?"  
 The wise ones bowed in respect for Ifa, saying:  
 The offering has been made; may it be accepted; and may it be blessed.  
 Then, they dispersed and went away.  
 And they no longer regarded death as a matter of sorrow.

A dífá fún àwọn amòye,  
 Tí wọn gbàrá jọ nípè babaláwo wá dífá ikú.  
 Wọn ní: ètírí ikú fí nípò'ni tí kòsì ẹnítí kíí kù?  
 Àwọn babaláwo ní: Ifá wípé ire lí  
     Amuniwáyé níí ikú se.  
 Omi tí kò sàń síwájú tí kò padà sẹhin  
 Á dọgọdọ omi ibàjẹ, ọgọdọ omi àrùn  
 Omi nígbe wọn lo réré; omi níko wọn bọ réré.  
 Olókùrùn k'á re'lé lọ gba àwò titun;  
 Asẹbàjẹ k'á re'lé lọ gbà iwà titun;  
 Kí wọn bọwá'yé.  
 Àwọn babaláwo ní: èwo ni kò dùn?  
 Àwọn amòye foríbalẹ fún Ifá níwípé:  
 Ọrúnmilà, abọrú; bọyè; bọsísé.  
 Wọn túka lọ.  
 Wọn kò gbà ikú sí ọràn ẹdùn mọ.

**T**here is no childbearing woman who  
 cannot give birth to an Ifa priest.  
 There is no childbearing woman who cannot  
 give birth to Orunmila, himself.  
 Our father, if he fully brings us into being,  
 Eventually we will bring him into being.  
 Our mother, if she fully gives birth to us,  
 Eventually, we will give birth to her.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for Orunmila,  
 Who said he would bring heaven to earth,  
 And he would take earth to heaven.

75:1

Kòsì abiyamọ tí kò lé bí awo l'omọ.  
 Kòsì abiyamọ tí kò lé bí Ọ̀rúnmilà.  
 Baba ẹnì bí ó há bíni ní pépé,  
 Bí ó há pé títí á tún ní baba ẹnì lọmọ  
 Yèyè ẹnì hí ó há bíni ní pépé,  
 Bí ó há pé títí á tún ní yèyè ẹnì lọmọ  
 A dífá fún Ọ̀rúnmilà,  
 Tí ó wípé òun máà mú ọ̀run bò sáyé  
 Ọ̀un máà mù ayé lọ sọrun.

76:1

**I**t is Ela Iwori who will not allow the world  
 to be ruined.  
 When the world of Oba'lufe fell into disorder,  
 It was Ela Iwori who restored order to it.  
 When the commitment breakers in Akila  
 corrupted the town,  
 It was Ela Iwori who set things right again  
 for the people.  
 When day turned into night in the city  
 of Okerekese,  
 When conditions in this city became chaotic,  
 And when the priests there failed to find  
 a solution,  
 It was Ela Iwori who helped Oluyori,  
 the King there, to set things right again.

76:1

When Elegbara plans to turn the world  
 upside down,  
 It is Ela Iwori who blocks his way.  
 Ela Iwori does not accept money.  
 Ela Iwori does not accept kola nuts.  
 And yet, it is he who sets right unfortunate  
 destinies.

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76:1

Èlà Ìwòrì ní káí jẹkí ayé ra'jú.  
 Nígbàtí ayé Qba'Lufo dàrú,  
 Èlà Ìwòrì l'ó báa tún ayé rẹ se.  
 Nígbàtí àwọn ọdálẹ ilú Akilà bà ayé  
     ilú wọn jẹ,  
 Èlà Ìwòrì l'ó bá wọn tún un se.  
 Nígbàtí ọsán d'òru ni ilú Ọkèrẹkẹsẹ,  
 Tí ayé ilú náà di rúdurúdu,  
 Tí àwọn awo ibẹ bàtì,  
 Èlà Ìwòrì l'ó bá Olúyọrí Qba ibẹ tún un se.  
 Nígbàtí Èlẹgbára bá nfẹ s'orí ayé kodò,  
 Èlà Ìwòrì ni máà dúbùú ọnà rẹ.  
 Èlà Ìwòrì kíí gbowó.  
 Èlà Ìwòrì kíí gbobi.  
 Ọun ló sì ńtún orí tí kò sunwọn se.

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76:2

**I**f we have wisdom and do not use it,  
 We will become uninformed persons.  
 If we have ability and do not use it,  
 We will become sluggish.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for people  
 Who were not associating with the wise,  
     nor with the worker;  
 And who were forging friendships with  
     the unworthy of the world.  
 Ifa reprimanded them saying:  
 You are not associating with good people.  
 You are not keeping company with persons  
     of worth.  
 And this usually brings misfortune to people.

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76:2

Bí a lẹgbọn nínú bí a kò lòó,  
 A ó d'ògbẹ̀rì.  
 Bí a lẹgbára nínú bí a kò lòó,  
 A ó d'òlẹ.  
 A dífá fún àwọn ènìyàn,  
 Tí wọn má b'ọlọgbọn rìn má b'asìsẹ́  
 Tí wọn sọ̀ọ̀rẹ̀ èrò ìsàlẹ̀ ayé.  
 Ifá nílá wọn wí ó ní:  
 Ìwọ kò bá enirere rìn.  
 Ìwọ kò bá enirere sọ̀rẹ̀.  
 Orí burúkú níí mú bá ènìyàn.

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77:1

**W**hen a new day dawns we should not be as  
uniformed as yesterday.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Komo,  
the uninformed one,

Who was meditating on how he should have  
done something yesterday.

He meditated until he fell asleep.

When the day dawned and twilight appeared,

He still did not know for certain what  
he should have done.

Therefore, we should strive day after day  
to accomplish a task.

And if that is not enough, then we should strive  
month after month to succeed,

Until eventually we know what we should do.

They said he should sacrifice so that  
his plans would prosper.

He heard and practiced sacrifice.

77:1

Bí ojúmó bá nmọ, a kò nìí y'ògbẹ́rẹ́ bí ọjọ ànà.

Ní ó dífá fún Kòmọ,

Tí ó ñronú bí oun tí máà ẹ kẹ́nì yí sí lánàà.

Ó ronú títí ó sùn.

Nígbàtí ojúmọ mọ tí ọyẹ là,

Kò ìmọ ẹyítí òun máà ẹ dandan.

Njẹ kí a jẹkí ọjọ bọrí ọjọ.

Bí kò bá tó, kí ọ̀ṣù bọrí ọ̀ṣù,

Bópẹtítí aó mọ eyítí á máà ẹ.

Wọ́n níkí ó rúbọ, kí èrò rẹ má ẹ orí.

Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.

78:1

**L**et us do things with joy.  
 Those who want to go, let them go.  
 Those who want to stay, let them stay.  
 Surely, humans have been chosen to bring  
     good into the world.  
 The All-Knowing One, priest of Orunmila,  
     interpreted the teachings of Ifa  
     for Orunmila.  
 He said the people of the world would come  
     to ask him a certain question.  
 He said that Orunmila should sacrifice.  
 Orunmila heard and complied.  
 One day all kinds of people, good people and  
     those who do not allow good in other  
     people's lives gathered together.  
 They then went to Orunmila.  
 They said: "Coming back and forth to earth  
     tires us, Orunmila.  
 Therefore, please allow us to rest in heaven."

78:1

Orunmila said: "You cannot avoid going  
     back and forth to earth,  
 Until you bring about the good condition that  
     Olodumare has ordained for every  
     human being.  
 After then, you may rest in heaven.  
 They asked "What is the good condition?"  
 Orunmila said: "The good condition is a  
     good world:  
 A world in which there is full knowledge  
     of all things;  
 Happiness everywhere;  
 Life without anxiety or fear of enemies;  
 Without clashes with snakes or other  
     dangerous animals;  
 Without fear of death, disease, litigation  
     losses, wizards, witches or Eshu;  
 Without fear of injury from water or fire; and  
 Without fear of poverty or misery."

78:1

Because of your wisdom, your compelling  
 desire for good character and your  
 internal strength.  
 The things needed to bring about the good  
 condition in the world then are:  
 Wisdom that is fully adequate to  
 govern the world;  
 Sacrifice; character; the love of doing good  
 for all people, especially those who are in  
 need,  
 And those who seek assistance from us;  
 And the eagerness and struggle to increase  
 good in the world,  
 And not let any good at all be lost.  
 People will continue to go to heaven;  
 And they will go back and forth to earth after  
 their transfiguration,  
 Until everyone has achieved the good condition.  
 Thus, when the children of Oduduwa gather  
 together,  
 Those chosen to bring good into the world are  
 called human beings or the chosen ones.

78:1

K'á fi'núdíḍùn ṣeé.  
 Èní máa lọ, kí ó máa lọ.  
 Èní máa dẹhìn, kí ó máa dẹhìn.  
 Dandan, ènìyàn ni a yàn kí wọn mú're lọ sáyé.  
 Mòrantan awo Ọ̀rúnmilà l'ò dífá f' Ọ̀rúnmilà.  
 Ó ní àwọn omọ-ayé níbẹwá bíléèrè ọ̀rọ kan.  
 A níkí Ọ̀rúnmilà rúbọ.  
 Ọ̀rúnmilà gbọ; ó rúbọ.  
 Nijọkan onírúurú ènìyàn, àwọn ènìyàn rere àti  
 àwọn ènìyàn má jẹkí l'ènìyàn sunwọn  
 gbàrajo.  
 Wọn tò Ọ̀rúnmilà wá.  
 Wọn ní ìpaarà ayé yí sù wa Ọ̀rúnmilà.  
 Nítorínàà, kí ó jẹwọ jẹkí a simi sí ọ̀run.  
 Ọ̀rúnmilà ní eyin kò lè sàì máa paara ọ̀de-ayé,  
 Títí eyin yòd fi dé ipò rere nàà tí Olódùmarè tí  
 yàn fún gbogho ènìyàn.  
 Lẹhinnáà ni eyin yòd simi sí ọ̀run.

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ÌROSÙ WÒRÌ

78

78:1

Wón ní: kinni ipò rere?  
Orúnmílà ní ipò rere náà lí ayé rere;  
Ayé àmotán ohun gbogbo;  
Ayò níbi-gbogbo;  
Wíwà láisí ominú tàbí ibèrù òtá;  
Láisí ijà ejò tàbí eranko búburú mírán;  
Láisí ibèrù ilé, àrùn, ejó, òfú, oṣó, ajé tàbí Èṣù;  
Láisí ibèrù ifarapa omi tàbí iná;  
Àti láisí ibèrù àìní tàbí òṣì,  
Nítorí oḡbón, yún iwàrere àti agbára inú.  
Ohun tí yóò gbé wá dé ipò rere náà:  
Oḡbón tí ó pò tò eyítí a lè fìṣe àkóso ayé;  
Ìrúbó, iwà, iféran oore-ṣíṣe fún gbogbo  
            èniyàn, ní pàtàkì jùlọ àwọn tí iṣe aláìní,  
Àti àwọn tí ó nífẹ́ frànlọwọ́ lódò wa;  
Ìtara fún ati síṣà ipá láti fí kún ire tí ó  
            wà ní ayé;

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ÌROSÙ WÒRÌ

78

78:1

Láìjẹkí ire èyíkéyí tí a tí ní lọ.  
Àwọn èniyàn yóó máà lọ sí ọ̀rùn.  
Wón yóò sì máà padà wá s'óde ayé  
            lẹ́hín iparadà wón,  
Títí ẹnìkòòkan yóó fí dé ipò rere náà.  
Nítorí náà nígbà tí àwọn ọmọ Odùduà pé jọ,  
Àwọn tí ó yàn láti kó ire wá s'óde ayé ní  
            à ñpè ní: èniyàn.

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## ÀSỌYÉ

No Odu and ese is more definitive of the rich and varied range and depth of the moral concerns and instructions of the Odu Ifa than Odu Irosu'Wori (78:1). Its richness, range and depth are rooted in a moral anthropology, a conception of the human person and the meaning and mission of human life, which is of profound human significance, both in a personal and collective sense. At the heart of Ifa moral anthropology is the teaching that humans are *chosen* by the Creator to bring good into the world and that this special status and task are the fundamental mission and meaning of human life.

In fact, the central word for human in Yoruba is *èniyàn*, which literally means the *chosen ones*. This fact not only stresses the moral significance of this status, but also is a clear and constant point of reference in our understanding and treatment of human beings. This concept of "chosen-

ness" is significant in several ways. First, it represents the highest level of ethical humanism in its conception of *all* humans as chosen (*yàn*) without distinction of nation, gender, race, ethnicity, class or a special religious relationship or promise. It, thus, poses the ideal many other world religions are still trying to establish as a central moral doctrine.

Secondly, this moral and spiritual conception of the human person is important because it is a chosenness endowed by the Creator with all the transcendent and ultimate meaning this brings with it for us as persons, peoples and members of the human community. Thirdly, the special status of human as chosen ones (*èniyàn*) is a companion concept of our being *ẹmọ Olódùmarè*, the offspring of Olodumare, God. It, thus, reinforces the Ifa concept that we are in the image of God and gives augmented grounding to the concept of our inherent and inviolable worthiness which we call human dignity. This moral sense of inherent worthiness of the human person is reflected throughout the Odu in instructions to respect all persons and in the constant concerns for honor, dignity and respect, and the need to reaffirm, defend and maintain these. The various words

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for these concerns are *ofá*, *iyin* and *òwò* which may be used to indicate both inherent and socially achieved and recognized worthiness.

The significance of the Ifa concept of chosenness rests also in its role of adding an active dimension to the spiritual and moral understanding of what it means to be in the image of God. For it requires that the image not be one simply of *spiritual origin* as divine offspring but also one of *moral action* as bringers-of-Good-in-the-world in emulation of the Creator. Therefore, being in the image of God or like God is not only an affirmation of inherent worth or dignity but also a certain way of asserting oneself in the world.

The Odu begins by teaching us that, as the chosen ones, we should do things with joy. This speaks not only to the happiness we should experience in our divine designation and assignment, but also to the Ifa conception of the world as essentially good but constantly needing to be renewed and enriched with added good. Secondly, the text speaks to the issue of free will in its apparent suggestion that we may accept and engage in our divinely assigned task and honor our special status or not. Clearly, there are consequences throughout the Odu for those who

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reject or act in contradiction to our divine chosenness. But we can and must choose even as we are chosen.

Also, the value of this text is expressed in its affirmation that the Creator has not only chosen humans as bringers-of-good-in-the-world, but also has ordained that each and every human being should enjoy a *good life* in a *good world*. In fact, the text says that not only should we have a good life in the world, but also that we are the ones who must bring the good world into being which makes the good life possible. The question is then posed to the sage and master teacher, Orunmila, what is a good life, called here the good condition or position, *ipò rere*? And Orunmila answers by saying that the achieving of a good life is the achieving of a good world defined by several essential things: knowledge of all things; universal happiness; freedom from anxiety and fear of hostile others; the end of antagonism with other beings on earth, i.e., animals, reptiles and the like; well-being and the end of fear of forces that threaten it, and finally, freedom from poverty and misery.

At this point the text reaffirms the idea of human *agency*, i.e., our moral capacity and need to think, feel and act as competent and concerned beings, which is so

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essential to concepts of what it means to be human as well as what it means to be moral. Indeed, it tells us that the good world requires ongoing effort from us for its achievement. The text first sums up the requirements as: "wisdom, the compelling desire for good character and internal strength" or the power of will. This stress on wisdom, which is repeated, reaffirms the importance of knowledge in the Ifa ethical tradition and reminds us that the first condition required for a good world is knowledge—full and varied and in every realm. The text, however, goes on to give us a longer list. This includes again wisdom, but further defines it as "wisdom to adequately govern the world."

This, of course, reaffirms human responsibility for the world (Odu 33:2) and the need to be wise enough to carry out the responsibility effectively. Here the core wisdom is, of necessity, moral and spiritual wisdom which conceives of the world in its interrelated wholeness, respects its integrity and works constantly to save, renew and expand the good in it. But it also means that we must know the world in its concreteness and wholeness and thus requires human development and mastery of all the disciplines of human knowledge. A similar stress on

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the possession of knowledge as a defining characteristic of humans and its need for full realization of our humanity is found in ancient Egyptian moral teachings. In fact, a central word for humans in ancient Egyptian is *rhyt*, "possessors of knowledge" or "knowing beings."

Character, the relatively stable disposition toward doing good and right, is also reaffirmed as an indispensable aspect of being moral and bringing good into the world. Moreover, the text lists also as essential to this moral project, sacrifice, and love of good doing, especially for the needy and those who ask. And finally, it further defines the needs of the project and the project itself of bringing good into the world as "*the eagerness and an ongoing struggle to increase good in the world and not let any good be lost.*"

In sum, then, what is needed are: wisdom, character, sacrifice, good-doing, commitment, struggle--and of course--a self-understanding of our chosenness that undergirds and encourages our self-conscious and effective assertion in the world. These seven themes appear repeatedly throughout the Odu Ifa and form the core concepts of what it means to be moral and act morally in the Ifa ethical tradition. This Odu and csc, then, serve as

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a central source for understanding Ifa ethics and thus warrant this more extensive Asoye and continuous study and reflection.

78:2

**I**f we continually tasted sweetness without  
tasting a little bitterness also,  
Life would be dull.  
One who has never experienced the  
hardship of adversity,  
Does not really know the pleasure of prosperity.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for a group  
of farmers,  
Who said that if all seasons were just the  
rainy season,  
The world would be immeasurably pleasant.  
They said they would offer sacrifice  
So that Orunmila might graciously help them.  
Orunmila said that they should instead sacrifice  
because of their foolishness.  
And that the world should remain as Oduduwa  
has created it.

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has created it.

78:2

So that the rainy season and the dry season  
will not fail to come.  
They would not sacrifice.  
Orunmila then allowed the rains to pour down  
continuously that year,  
So that there was not even a glimpse of the sun.  
People began to become ill.  
And many of them died that year.  
Also crops and the like did not fare well.  
The people returned to sacrifice and pray.  
Orunmila said to them: ashes rise;  
The sacrifice must be doubled.

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78:2

Bí a je adùn títí láìjẹ ìkorò díe sù,  
Ayé a máa sù ní je .  
Èniti kò je ipónjù rí,  
Kò mò adùn ọrọ.  
A dífá fún àwọn àgbẹ tí nwípé:  
Gbogbo ìgbà ayé ibá je kíkí ọjò  
Ayé ibá dùn adùntán.  
Wón ní àwọn a rúbọ  
Kí Ọrúnmilà jẹwọ yéé gbà wọn.  
Ọrúnmilà ní kí wọn wá rúbọ nítorí iwèrè wọn.  
Àti pé kí ayé lè maa wà bí Odùdúwà tí dá ayé sù,  
Ìgbà ọjò àti ìgbà èèrún kí ó má tàsé.  
Wón kò rúbọ.  
Ọrúnmilà wá jẹkí ọjò rọ púpọ̀ lí ọdún nàà títí.  
A kò fi rí dèrún rárá.

Èniyàn bèrèsi s'òkùn-rùn.  
 Wón sì kú púpò nínú ọdún nàà.  
 Ohun-ògbìn àti hẹẹbẹẹ kò dára.  
 Wón padà wá rúbọ pèlú ẹbẹ.  
 Ọrúnmilà ni: ẹrú gòkè.  
 Ẹbọ l'ó sọdi méjì.

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**Y**ams were scarce; palm oil was scarce;  
 corn was scarce.  
 All food items were in short supply.  
 The teachings of Ifa were interpreted for  
 the people of Iwori.  
 They said that the people should sacrifice,  
 So that they might have abundance.  
 They heard and they sacrificed.  
 The babalawo said that all the people should  
 gather their hoes and cutlasses,  
 And go work on the farms,  
 So that abundance might come for them.  
 For only work alleviates adversity.

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Isú wọn; epó wọn; àghàdo wọn.  
 Ohun gbogbo tí ẹnú nje ni ó wọn.  
 A dífá fún wọn l'óde Ìwòrì.  
 Wọn níkéi wọn rúbọ kẹ ọpọ̀ lẹ́ dé fún wọn.  
 Wọn gbọ; wọn rúbọ.  
 Babaláwo níkéi gbogbo ènìyàn kó ọkọ àti àdá,  
 Kí wọn máa re oko lọ ọ̀sẹ́,  
 Kí ọpọ̀ lẹ́ dé.  
 Ịsẹ́ ní ịdẹ ọ̀pọ̀njú.

**H**easy words have the weight of an anvil.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for the world,  
 At a time when all the people of the world  
     were overpraising money saying:  
 There is nothing else in the world that is  
     more respected than money.  
 They said they would give up everything,  
 And they would continuously run after money.  
 Orunmila said: what you think about  
     money is so.  
 And what you think about money is also not so.  
 It is the teachings of Ifa we should honor.  
 It is these we should regard highly.  
 It is said money is a raiser of status and a  
 corrupter of character.  
 A person who loves money excessively,  
     his character will be ruined.  
 Good character is the finest beauty of a person.

82:1

Even if you have money, it does not mean  
you will not become blind.  
It does not mean you will not go mad.  
It does not mean you will not become lame.  
It does not mean you will not become ill  
and the like.  
You still can become disabled in any  
part of your body.  
Therefore you should go and get more wisdom  
So that you may think deeply about things.  
You should cultivate good character;  
You should acquire wisdom;  
And you should come and sacrifice  
So that you may be at ease inside and out.

82:1

Òrò bàntà a wúwo bí owú.  
A dífá fún ayé,  
Níjọ tí gbogbo ọmọ arayé npọn owó pé:  
Kòsì ohun míràn mọ nínú ayé tí ó tún  
ní iyì mọ rárá.  
Wọn ní àwọn ó kọ ohungbogbo sílẹ,  
Àwọn ó máa sáré mọ owó.  
Òrúnmílà ní eyítí ẹ níro níti owó hẹ̀ẹ̀ni.  
Àti eyítí e níro níti owó hẹ̀ẹ̀kó sì.  
Ífá l'á bá máa yẹ.  
Ogbón l'á bá má yẹ.  
Àwọn l'á bá bu iyin fún.  
Agbénigá l'áá pé owó; abìwàjé l'áá pé owó.  
Enítí bá fẹ̀ràn owó l'áfẹ́jú, íwà rẹ́ á bàjẹ́.  
Ìwà rere ní ọ̀sọ̀ ènìyàn.  
Bí ẹ ní owó l'ọ̀wọ̀ kò wípé kí ẹ má di afójú.  
Kò wípé kí ẹ má di aṣiwèrè.  
Kò wípé kí ẹ má di aṣọ.

82:1

Kò wípé kí ẹ má di olókúnrún àti bẹ̀ẹ̀bẹ̀.  
 Àhùkù ara gbogbo lè dé há yín.  
 Ẹ jẹ lẹ tún ogbón gbón.  
 Kí ẹ tún èro gbà.  
 Kí ẹ mú ìwà rere.  
 Kí ẹ mú ogbón  
 Kí ẹ wá rúbọ  
 Kí ara lè rọ nyin tinútòde.

86:1

One who does not build a house, does not  
 have to sleep in the tree top.  
 One who does not cultivate yams, does not  
 have to eat dirt off the ground.  
 And an adult who learns the teachings of Ifá,  
 does not have to eat old kola nuts.

Kò kọ́lé, kò sùn orí gí  
 Kò kọ́su, kò jẹ erùpe ilẹ  
 Àgbà kan kọ Ifá, kò jẹ obì gbó.

87:1

**A**tikaresete, the self-adjuster, the priest of  
 heaven,  
 Interpreted the teachings of Ifa for Olodumare  
 and the world,  
 When the people of the world were running to  
 Olodumare for everything,  
 Crying out "Baba, Father, I have come.  
 Save me; please save me."  
 Olodumare said: "What is the matter?  
 Those whom I have given ability do not  
 use their ability.  
 And those whom I have given wisdom do not  
 use the wisdom I have given them."  
 It is said: children who do not see their parents,  
 Will strive for their own inner strength.

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87:1

Atikaresete, awo ọrun  
 A difá fún Olódùmarè àti ayé  
 Nígbà tí àwọn ọmọ-aráyé nísáre tò  
 Olódùmarè nítorí ohun gbogbo  
 Nkẹ Baba, Baba, mo dé.  
 Gbà mi; jẹwọ gbà mi.  
 Olódùmarè ní: ètírí?  
 Ẹnítí mo fún l'ágbára, kò lo agbára.  
 Ẹnítí mo fún l'ógbọn, kò lo ọgbọn  
 wọn tí mo fún wọn.  
 Wọn ní àwọn ọmọ tí kò rí àwọn òbí wọn  
 Wọn màá sá ipá inú wọn.

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90: 1

**T**he self-injurer; one who acts against himself.  
 One who throws ashes is followed by  
 those ashes.  
 One who does evil deeds injures himself in  
 equal measure.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for Inukogun,  
 the one not-straight-inside,  
 Who was planning to do evil.  
 They said that the evil things that he was  
 going to do,  
 Would, in the end, return to ruin him.  
 They said that he should sacrifice,  
 And that he should give up his evil conduct.

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90: 1

Se'ra-rẹ; se ara rẹ.  
 Ẹnití ó dà eérú ní eérú itọ.  
 Ẹkàgàkà fí ẹdájí se'ra rẹ .  
 A dífá fún Inúkògún,  
 Ẹgbèrò ibi.  
 Wọ̀n ní kẹ́ ohun burúkú tí ó máà se yí,  
 Yóò dẹhìn bọwá bàjẹ ọ̀n.  
 A níkẹ́ ó wá rúbọ.  
 Kí ó kọ́ ẹwà ẹkà sílẹ.

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93:1

**A**crooked stick diffuses fire.  
 And a mad man scatters his own home.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for Baba Ejo,  
     the father of snakes, and his children.  
 They said the children of a snake would never  
     be able to come together  
 So that they might offer effective resistance  
     on the day of battle.  
 They said if Baba Ejo, the father of snakes,  
     wanted them to come to agreement,  
 That they must sacrifice.  
 They heard, but they did not comply.

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93:1

Igi wórókó ní tú iná ká.  
 Asiwèrè ní tú ilé ara rẹ ká.  
 A dífá fún Baba Ejò àti ọmọ rẹ.  
 Wọn ní: àwọn ọmọ ejò kò ní lé  
     ní àjọhun kí wọn kó ara wọn jọ,  
 Kí wọn kọyà l'ọjọ ọjọ.  
 Wọn ní bí Baba Ejò bá pé kí wọn ní àjọhun  
 Kí wọn wá rúbọ.  
 Wọn gbọ; wọn kò rúbọ.

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94:1

**E**ven in the adversity of famine, we must not  
eat hot stew hastily.  
For if we eat hot stew hastily,  
It will surely burn our mouths.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Akinsuyi.  
They said: the year of prosperity is coming,  
And that he should not act thoughtlessly.  
They said he should sacrifice.  
He heard and practiced sacrifice.

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K'á má fí'pónjù yàn lá ọbẹ gbígbóná.  
Bí a bá fí'pónjù yàn lá ọbẹ gbígbóná,  
Dájúdájú a máà jò'ni l'ẹnú.  
A dífá fún Akínsuyì.  
Wón ní: ọdún ọrọ́ dé,  
Àti kí ó má ẹ lǎírónú.  
Wón ní: kí ó rúbọ.  
Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ

95:1

**N**urture them gently; cultivate them carefully,  
So that the people of the world might  
not go wrong.  
Anyone who does good, does it for herself.  
And anyone who does evil, does it to herself.  
This was the teaching of Ifa interpreted  
for the world.  
They said thieves should refrain from stealing.  
They said anyone who steals a thousand things  
from people will lose two thousand  
things in life.  
Anyone who sees a person in need should show  
him kindness.  
And anyone who does a thousand good deeds  
will receive two thousand in return.  
Surely, Oluwa, our Lord will reward him.

95:1

Arọratẹ wọn; rọra tẹ wọn.  
 Kí àwọn ọmọ-arayé má ẹ̀wafu.  
 Ẹ̀nítí ẹ̀e rere, ó ẹ̀é fún ara rẹ.  
 Ẹ̀nítí ẹ̀e ìkà, ó ẹ̀é fún ara rẹ.  
 Ní Ifá tí a dá fáyẹ.  
 Wọn ní àwọn olẹ́ kẹ́ wọn yé jàlẹ́ mọ.  
 Wọn ní enítí jí wọn l'ẹ̀gbẹ̀rún,  
     a ẹ̀dọ ẹ̀gbàwá l'áyẹ.  
 Ẹ̀nítí rí akẹ́bọ́je kẹ́ ó fi oore ẹ̀e.  
 Ẹ̀nítí ẹ̀'ore ẹ̀gbẹ̀rún, a fi gb'ẹ̀gbàwá.  
 Dandan, Oluwa wa ló máa san ẹ̀n.

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96:1

One who has to eat corn meal without  
 condiments complains that  
 it's wrapped in leaves.  
 And one who has to scrape food from  
 wrapping leaves,  
 Wonders what one should do.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa interpreted  
 for Otewori,  
 Who said that he was going to the forest to  
 hang himself *because of adversity*.  
 They said: Otewori, do not hang yourself yet.  
 They are bringing you the symbolic  
 leaves of rulership now.

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96:1

A sọ̀n èkọ̀ sùn ní t'̀dun pọ̀n.  
 Ènití ó fá ewé orí,  
 Èwo ni k'ó se?  
 Ó dá fún Ọ̀tẹ̀wòrì  
 T'ó sọ̀ wípé òun nre ìgbẹ̀ rẹ̀'so.  
 Wọ̀n ní: Ọ̀tẹ̀wòrì, má tíí sọ.  
 Wọ̀n nímu ewé ire oyè ùbọ̀.

96:2

**W**ar ruins the world.  
 And intrigue undermines the people.  
 This was the interpretation of the teachings  
 of Ifa for Olofin Iwatuka.  
 They said: Olofin, war is coming.  
 Therefore, if you want to be victorious,  
 You should practice sacrifice.  
 Olofin heard, but he did not comply.

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Ogún bayé jẹ.  
 Àti ọ̀tọ̀ nte ọmọ ènìyàn rí.  
 A dáfá fún Ọ̀lọ́fin Iwátuka.  
 Wọ̀n ní: ogun máa dé o, Ọ̀lọ́fin  
 Nítorínàà bí Ọ̀lọ́fin bá wípé kí òun sẹ́gun,  
 Kí ó rúbọ̀.  
 Ọ̀lọ́fin gbọ̀; kò rúbọ̀.

**A**dversity does not come without bringing  
its good aspects to us.  
That which is evil and that which is good  
come together.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for one called  
"The-lack-of-money-disables-a-person."  
They said: one who experiences adversity,  
should not lose hope,  
And that she should maintain her good name.  
For the sweetness of the bitter eruwo leaf comes  
after its transformation through cooking.  
They said she should practice sacrifice,  
So that adversity can likewise be turned into  
prosperity for her.

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Ìṣẹ̀ kùí dé kí ó má mú ìre rẹ̀ bọ̀ ní.  
T'ibi t'ire èjì wápò.  
A dífá fún "Owó-kòsì-èniyàn-kò-sunwón."  
Wón ní: ojú tí ó rí ìṣẹ̀, kí ó má bà'ra jẹ,  
Kí ó tọ́jú orúko rere rẹ̀.  
Adún nìí gbèhìn ewúro.  
Wón ní kí ó rúbọ,  
Kí ìṣẹ̀ lè di ọrọ̀ fún un sì.

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100:1

If we are kind, the children of others  
will become our children.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for  
Obonhunbonhun,  
Who had built a house and accumulated  
a lot of wealth,  
But who had no children at all.

Bí a bá n'inúre, ọmọ ọlọmọ a máa  
di ọmọ eni.  
A dífá fún Obonhùnbòhùn,  
Tí ó kọlé àti káṣẹ́ tán,  
Sùgbọ́n tí kò bímo rárá.

104:1

Accept a thing of value and hold on to it.  
Keep it safe.  
And when we are asked for it,  
We should give the thing to its owner.  
Goodness lies in not keeping it for ourselves.  
They said: May we see our ancestors,  
And that anyone who returns things to  
their owner  
Will never be empty-handed.

Gba ohun iyè; dáníí.  
Gbàa láílẹ̀wú.  
Bí a bá bí eni  
K'á fí ohun náà fún ọlọhun  
Ire ni àìgbá fún ara eni  
Wọ́n ní: t'ó a bá rí wọ́n;  
Ènitińfí ohun fún ọlọhun  
Kò ma yéé ni lẹ́wọ́.

104:2

**L**eave them alone.  
Let them run.  
It is their character which is continuously  
chasing them around.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Aniwonikun,  
the person of bad conscience,  
Who was constantly afraid day and night.  
They said: "you should cultivate your character;  
You should conduct yourself well, Akinwonikun,  
So that you might stop running around  
like a coward."

È jò wọn.  
È jẹ wọn sá.  
Ìwà wọn ní mǎa lé wọn kiri.  
A dífá fún Aníwóníkùn  
Tí yíò mǎa bèrù tòsań tòru.  
O jẹ hùwà re;  
O jẹ hùwà àtàtá, Aníwóníkùn,  
Kí o yé sá kiri bí ojo.

109:1

**O**runmila said Ogun's house is empty.  
I said Ogun's house is empty.  
We arrived at Ogun's house and did not  
find anyone.  
I asked why have we arrived at Ogun's house  
and found no one?  
The whole house was completely empty.  
They said: Ogun's character was not good.  
Therefore, should we expect that Ogun's house  
would be crowded?

Òrúnmìlǎ ní ìdì Ògún dá.  
Mo ní ìdì Ògún dá.  
A délé Ògún a kò bẹnikan.  
Mo ní ètírí tí a dé ilé Ògún tí a kò bẹnikan  
Gbogbo ilé dá késekése.  
Wón ní: Ìwà Ògún kò sunwón  
Njé bí a bí wípé kí ilé Ògún kún sómúsómú?

**O**runmila said good news is thing of joy.  
I say good news.  
He said that you should come join us  
and tell everyone  
That the person we have been looking for  
has indeed arrived.

Ọrúnmílà ní àgbóká òràn ayò.  
Èmí ní àgbóká.  
Ó níké ẹ wá bá wa wí fún gbogbo èniyàn  
Ènití a níwà mà dé o.

**T**he world is nice, but heaven is truly good.  
Odudua said the people of the world  
should return to heaven,  
So that they might be reincarnated.  
The young people said they would not go.  
The elders also said they would not go.  
We asked why?  
They said: heaven does not readily let  
return those who would go.  
Orunmila said "heaven is beautiful.  
It is the home of beauty.  
Odudua would not live in a place which  
is not good.  
It is in a good place we find the orisha.  
One who is called should answer the call.  
A mother does not call her child to come  
and suffer."

But the people were still reluctant  
It was said that they should sacrifice  
So that the darkness might be lifted and  
removed from their eyes,  
And so that when they are worried,  
They would be able to look up to heaven.  
But they did not sacrifice.

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Ilé ayé dára; ọrun ma sunwọn, o.  
Odùduwà ní kí àwọn ọmọ aráyé maa padà wá.  
Kí òun máa tún wọn se.  
Ọmọdé ní òun kò lọ.  
Àgbàlagbà ní òun kò lọ.  
A ní ètírí?  
Wọn ní: ọrun kò yá rébọ àwọn ibá máa lọ.  
Ọrúnmlà ní: ọrun dára  
Ọrun ni ilé ẹwà.  
Odùduwà kò jẹ gbé ibi tí kò sunwọn.  
Ibi rere ni a ibá òrìṣà  
Ẹniti a bá pè kí ó jẹ ipè.  
Abiamo kí ipe ọmọ wá joró  
Sibèsibè ọmọ aráyé ñkòdì.  
A ní kí wọn rúbọ  
Kí òkùnkún lè ká kúrò lójú wọn.  
Bí wọn ñsísé kí wọn lè máa wò ọrun.  
Wọn kò rúbọ.

---

119:1

**I**t is gentle character which enables the  
rope of life to remain strong  
in our hands.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Orunmila,  
Who was going to use gentle character  
To obtain the rope of life from the  
four hundred and one divine powers.

---

Ìwà pẹ̀lẹ̀ fí okùn ayé rọ̀ pẹ̀tí lówó ẹnì.  
Ó dá fún Ọ̀rúnmilà,  
Tí ó ńlọ̀ fí ìwà pẹ̀lẹ̀  
Gba okùn ayé lówó ọ̀kan-lé-ní-rín wó ìmàlẹ̀.

119:2

**I**jimere, the babalawo of physical fitness  
and surpassing beauty,

Interpreted the teachings of Ifa for the  
one who sees what is to be done and  
does not do it; the irresponsible  
comfort seeker.

They said one should sacrifice so that work  
might appeal to one who fears it.

The *symbols* of the sacrifice: a hoe, a sword,  
a dog and a ram.

We asked why?

Ifa said:

A hoe never refuses to work.

A sword never becomes sick.

A dog uses his head to fight through the forest  
to come to work.

And a ram does not fear struggle.

---

Ìjímèrè, awo ìdàrayá asunwòn lẹwà  
 Ló dífá fún Arísemáṣe Ìdíṣètẹ̀rẹ̀tẹ̀  
 Wọ̀n níkí ó wá ẹ̀bọ kí ẹ̀ṣẹ̀ lè máa wu  
 ní ẹ̀ ẹ̀ni ẹ̀rù ẹ̀ṣẹ̀ nǵà.  
 Ẹ̀bọ: ọ̀kọ, àdà, ajá àti àgbò  
 A ní ètírí?  
 Ifá ní:  
 Ọ̀kọ kíí ko ẹ̀ṣẹ̀ sílẹ̀.  
 Àdà kíí ẹ̀'òkùnrùn.  
 Ajá níforí já ẹ̀gbò wá ẹ̀ṣẹ̀.  
 Ẹ̀rù ijá kíí bàgbò.

**H**e who repays good and evil will  
 certainly repay.

He will not fail to repay.

He who questions will certainly question.

He will not fail to question.

This is the teaching of Ifa given to Orunmila,  
 Who, in turn, gave admonition to the people  
 Male and female.

Ẹ̀lẹ́sàn á sán ire àti ibi.

Kà ẹ̀àì sán.

Àbèrèrè á bèrèrè

Kà ẹ̀àì bèrèrè.

Ó dá fún Ọ̀rúnmilà,

T'ó ẹ̀ ẹ̀kìlẹ̀kìlẹ̀ fún èniyàn,

Tako tabo.

**W**e should not catch a thief and then not  
subdue him.

If we overcome him, we should constrain  
the offender.

For if we do not constrain the offender,

That person whom we defeated,

when he has finished resting,

Will claim he defeated us.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Saanuote,

one who is overly lenient

with offenders.

He was asked to sacrifice so that his

excessive compassion would not

bring him to ruin.

The Lord of Heaven loves all things,

But he does not love them to an excess.

A kíí mólè kí á má yán an.

Bí a bá sẹ́gún, kí á mọ̀lòtẹ̀ dè.

Bí a kò mọ̀lòtẹ̀ dè,

Ẹ̀nítí a sẹ́, bí ó bá simi tán,

Á ní òun ní ó sẹ̀ni.

A dífá fún Sàánú-òtè

A níkí ó wá rúbọ́ kí àṣẹ̀jù àánú

má bàà sọ́ọ́ di abòṣì.

Ohun gbogbo ni Ọ̀lọ̀run fẹ́,

Ọ̀lọ̀run kò fẹ́ àṣẹ̀jù.

ÀṢOYÉ

This is a teaching on the need for moderation in emotions, even positive ones like compassion and love. It is directed toward the *saanú-òtẹ̀*, literally the one-who-is lenient-with offenders, that is to say, those who violate moral and legal rules of the community, who betray and conspire against the good. The teaching tells us that if we catch an offender, we must not simply let him or her go, but must constrain him or her. This implies the need not only to constrain in the physical or literal sense of the word *dé* which is used here and means tie, bind, hobble, fetter, etc. It also implies the need to discipline offenders in such a way that they not benefit from their offense, so that they recognize its wrongness and so that they not be left with the illusion that they got away with their wrong-doing or even, as the texts say, are able to claim they defeated us.

This teaching tells us that excessive compassion and leniency toward wrong-doing, *àṣejù aanú*, can bring us to ruin. The implication here is that excess, even in positive emotions, leaves us vulnerable to misuse, injury and ruin. The teaching further suggests that we should follow the divine example of the Lord of Heaven, who is compassionate and loving toward all things--human, natural and spiritual, but *not* to an excess.

**Y**ou cause trouble, but you don't ask forgiveness.

You don't ask for forgiveness

You offer indignant denials,

making a lot out of little things.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Shakeu,  
the offspring of Ibagboloro

On the day he was going to take the  
stone of rulership to the mountain  
*as part of his coronation.*

They said he should sacrifice so that no one would  
threaten him in his bid for the throne.

But Shakeu refused to sacrifice,

For he was the son of a king and possessed  
much wealth.

When the king died, Shakeu asked:

Who now is there in this world for me to  
compete with for this title?

He dared to go to heaven *to compete.*

124:1

He stretched out a rope to climb the mountain  
toward heaven.

The Lord of Heaven spoke and asked Shakeu:  
"Did you not find anyone in all the earth with  
whom you could compete?"

He told Shakeu that he must never do  
anything like this again.

When Shakeu was returning to earth,  
Eshu cut the rope he used to climb the  
mountain toward heaven.

He cut it at the top and the bottom,  
And Shakeu was left hanging in mid-air.

Ifa says the Lord of Heaven wants to give  
the lamp of destiny to someone,

But this person should be careful so that  
he is not over ambitious and ruin it;

So that he, himself, does not break the rope  
and block the way to prosperity.

124:1

O se ọ̀ràn, o kò bèbẹ̀.

Ìwọ kò bèbẹ̀ ọ̀ràn.

Ìwọ nṣe oníkojù yánràn yánràn.

A dífá fún Sakeu ti iṣe ọmọ Ìbágboloro,

Níjọ tí ó nlọ mú ota oyè lókè

Wọ́n ní kí ó rúbọ kí aráyé má bá dá níjì.

Sakeu kò rúbọ.

Sakeu jẹ ọmọ ọba ó sì là púpò.

Nígbà tí ọba kú, Sakeu ní:

"Tani dùn tún lè dù oyè dé ọ̀dòrẹ̀ mó  
nínú ayé yìí."

Nígbà náà, ó gbòdò lọ sí ọ̀run.

Ó ta okùn gùn òkè lọ sí ọ̀run

Qlọrun ní, ó bèrèrè Sakeu:

"Ìwọ, kò rí enití ìwọ yíó dù oyè l'òdò  
ní gbogbo ayé mó?"

Ó níkí ó má sẹ báyii mó.  
 Nígbàti Sakeu nípadà hò wá sí ayé,  
 Okún tí ó fi gùn òkè lọ sí ọrun Èsù já.  
 Ó jáa l'óri nísàlẹ.  
 Sakeu wà dúró sí agbedeméjì ọrun.  
 Ifá ní Qlọrun fẹ gbé àtùpà iwà fún ẹnìkan  
 Kí ó sọra kí ó mà bà fi àsejù bàjẹ  
 Kí ó má bá já okùn di ojú.

**T**he teachings of Ifa were interpreted  
 for Olori Oga.  
 They said that anyone who restricts  
 goodness to the house,  
 Will never obtain goodness on the outside.  
 They said she should sacrifice,  
 So that goodness might flow into the house.

A difá f'Olori Ògá.  
 Wọ́n níkí ẹnítí ó dí ire mọ'lẹ,  
 Kí rí t'òde gbà.  
 Wọ́n níkí ó wá rúbọ,  
 Kí ire báa lẹ ọ́n wá ilẹ.

---

ÌROSÙ-ÒBÀRÀ

127

127:1

**I**f we practiced the principle "share with  
me that I may share with you,"  
The world would be an orderly place.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Orunmila,  
Who was going to Otu-Ifè  
To teach the people the rules of conduct  
at home and the rules of conduct  
in the countryside.

---

Bùfúnmi kí mibùfún o  
Ayé a máa gún.  
A dífá f Ọ̀rúnmilà,  
Tì ó ńlọ s'Otù-Ìfè  
Kọ wọn ní ịse ilé àti ịse oko.

---

ÌROSÙ-KÀNRÀN

129

129:1

**A** leader does not send insults  
A leader wards off insults.  
Anyone who cannot ward off insults,  
Will continue to suffer from them.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Ologbo,  
the son of a babalawo.  
Ologbo said that he would triumph over  
all opposition,  
And that he would see the end of his enemies.  
He was advised to sacrifice.  
He heard and complied.

---

129:1

Olú kò òrán iwòsì;  
 Olú kòyà iwòsì.  
 Ènití kò lè kòyà iwòsì,  
 Ìyà kùf yé wòn sẹ.  
 A dífà f'Qlógbo ọmọ awo.  
 Qlógbo ni òun máa sẹgún gbogbo òdì,  
 Àti òun máa rí ẹhìn ọtá.  
 A níkí ó wá rúbọ.  
 Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.

---

130:1

**K**nowingly doing evil is not good.  
 If a person who does evil apologizes,  
 The matter will be resolved.  
 Everyone forgives those who do wrong  
 unknowingly.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for the  
 one who confronts matters,  
 the courageous one, Mebelufe  
*Whose name means "I will not beg  
 even the king."*  
 Everyone was continually complaining  
 about him.  
 If he would just apologize, people would  
 say the matter is finished.  
 Then, one day it happened.

---

Ìmòṣmò se ibi kò sunwòn.  
 Ẹnítí nṣe ibi, bí o bá bèbè ọ̀ràn,  
 Ọ̀ràn á tán.  
 Gbogho ayé ní nífi orí jì àìmò  
 A dífá fún oṣọ̀ràn, kìn, Mèbèlufe  
 Gbogho wòn ní nífi ẹ̀jọ̀ rẹ̀ sùn.  
 Bí ó bá bèbè ọ̀ràn, wòn á ní: ó tán  
 Ó wá di níjọkan.

Olorun, the Lord of Heaven does not  
 demand sacrifice.

Nor does he request material things.  
 But anyone who seeks the good will  
 practice sacrifice.

For it is Olorun, the Lord of Heaven, who says  
 that humans should sacrifice.

Olórún kò tọ̀ọ̀ ẹ̀bọ̀.

Béèni kò bẹ̀èrè erú.

Sùgbón ẹnítí wá ire níí ẹ̀bọ̀

Olórún; ó wípé kí àwọn omọ-arayé maa ẹ̀bọ̀.

131:2

**T**oday, we say "Orunmila,"  
 This means that "The Lord of Heaven  
 is the one who owns real riches."  
 It is He who can give to anyone according  
 to his will.

---

Lódúní a wípé: Òrúnmìlà  
 Ìtúmò èdè yi nípé Olórún níkan ló  
 ní olá lówó.  
 Òun sì lè fún ẹnìkẹni gégẹbí ó ti wù á.

135:1

**T**he sound of a bell is heard far and wide.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for Orunmila.  
 They said that in every place around the world  
 People would hear his name,  
 And that they would seek to know him.  
 They said he should sacrifice,  
 So that he would be at peace.  
 He heard and complied.

---

Ìró agogo àgbóká.  
 A dífá f'Òrúnmìlà.  
 Wọ́n ní nìbí gbogbo ayíká ayé  
 Ní wọ́n ma gbọ́ orúko rẹ.,  
 Tí wọ́n sì máa wà mọ́.  
 Wọ́n níkí ó rúbọ.  
 Kí ara lè rọ́.  
 Ó gbọ́; ó rúbọ.

140:1

Gently, Gently.

This was the advice of Ifa

For those at an impasse.

They said that they should sacrifice

So that all they were doing would not  
come to an impasse.

But those at the impasse did not sacrifice.

So, they tried to get money but it did not work.

They tried to have children but it was  
not successful.

They tried to get wives and husbands but  
it came to naught also.

Everything they were doing came to an impasse.

Ifa says a person should practice sacrifice

So that he will not encounter an impasse in  
what he does,

And so that things will not slip from her grasp,

And she be unable to hold on to anything.

140:1

Wúyèwúyè.

A dífá fún wón ní tibọ.

Wọn níkí wọn rúbọ,

Kí ohun ghogbo tí wón máa ẹ

Kí ó má bá máa ẹ tibọ.

Wón kò rúbọ ní tibọ.

Báyí wọn ẹ ọràn owó, ó di tibọ.

Wón ẹ ọràn ọmọ, ó di tibọ.

Wón sì ẹ ọràn aya àti ọkọ, ó di tibo pẹlú.

Ohun ghogbo ti wón níse ni, ó nbọ sí tibọ.

Ifá ní kí ẹńkàn rúbọ,

Kí ó má bá máa rí òràn tibọ.

Kí ohun ti ó múu má bó lówọ rẹ,

Kò sì lè tẹ ni ohunkóhun.

---

ÒFÚN'ROSÚ

146

146:1

**O**fun is giving out goodness everywhere.  
Ofun does not make noise about it.  
People like this are difficult to find in the world,  
Anyone who wants to do wonderful things  
should observe the ways of heaven.  
Heaven is the home of honor.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for humans.  
It was said that death would bring them  
to see the ways of heaven  
They were asked to sacrifice,  
So that there would be no darkness and  
grief on their way.  
They heard but they did not sacrifice.

---

---

ÒFÚN'ROSÚ

146

146:1

Òfún nífún ire ká.  
Òfún kò pariwo.  
Ènìyàn bí irú wònyí sòwòn layè.  
Èni mǎà dǎsà kí ó wò ìṣe ọrun.  
Ọrun nilé ọlá.  
A dífá f'àwọn ènìyàn.  
A ní ikú a mǎa mú wòn lọ fún àwọn wò ìṣe ọrun  
A ní kí wòn rúbọ  
Kí ó má báa sí òkúnkún àti ibànújé lònà wòn.  
Wòn gbọ; wòn kò rúbọ.

---

**S**he sees me. I don't see her.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Owa.  
They said that which we are looking for  
is near us,  
But we do not recognize it.  
Orunmila, Witness to Destiny, said:  
The very thing we are looking for is near us,  
But our lack of knowledge prevents our  
seeing it.

---

Ó rí mi. N kò rí.  
A dífá fún Owa.  
Wọ́n ní: ohun tí à n wá nìbẹ̀ nítòsì ẹ̀ni.  
Àfí àìmọ̀ ẹ̀ni.  
Ọ̀rúnmilá, Èlẹ́rì Ìpín, ó ní:  
Ohun tí a n wá nìbẹ̀ nítòsì ẹ̀ni.  
Àfí àìmọ̀ ẹ̀ni ní kàí jẹ́ ká rí.

**O**ne day is a day of laughter.  
Another day is a day of crying.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Egasheshe,  
the bird on the cotton tree.  
He asked: "which is this one?"  
They said: "a day of joy and a day of amusement."  
He was advised to sacrifice.  
He heard and complied.

---

Ọjọ́ kan nìbẹ̀ ọjọ́ èrín.  
Ọjọ́ míràn nìbẹ̀ ọjọ́ ẹ̀kún.  
A dífá fún Egasheshe ẹyẹ orí òwú  
Ò ní: èwo lí èyí?  
Wọ́n ní: ọjọ́ ayò àti ọjọ́ eré.  
A níkéí ó rúbọ.  
Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.

149:2

One day is a day of laughter.  
 Another day is a day of crying.  
 We asked: "which day will this one be?"  
 They said: "a day of sorrow."  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for  
     Obahun Ijapa,  
 Who treated matters as if weeping  
     were laughter.  
 They said: "today is a day of  
     false accusations,"  
 And therefore, he should sacrifice.  
 He heard, but he would not sacrifice.  
 He said there was no matter on  
     earth that could affect him,  
 That he could not laugh about.  
 But he finally sacrificed when the  
     false accusations became too  
     much for him.

149:2

Qjọ kan nbeojọ ẹrín.  
 Qjọ miràn nbe ojọ ekún.  
 A ní: èwo ni a kàn yí?  
 Wọn ní: ojọ ibànújé.  
 A dífá f'Obahun Ijàpá  
 A fọràn hí ekún s'ẹrín.  
 Wọn ní: loní ojọ ẹdúnrún mó  
 Nítorí nàà kí ó rúbọ.  
 Ó gbọ ; kò rúbọ.  
 Ó ní: kòsì ọràn ibànújé lè kàn  
     òun láyẹ.  
 Kí òun má fi se ẹrín rín.  
 Ó wá rúbọ nígbà tí  
     ẹdúnrún mó pàpọ̀jù.

**B**e able to suffer without surrendering;  
persevere in what you do.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Okanran  
They said: A case has come, but it is the one  
who ridicules us who will suffer.  
They said that sacrifice should be made  
So that Okanran might not die dealing  
with the case  
He heard and he sacrificed.  
They said that Okanran will surely get  
some rest.  
Pigeons gather good things on the right and  
on the left to bring into the house.  
Long is the lifetime of a sheep.  
She has been given this blessing,  
So that she might have the opportunity to  
enjoy her life.

Rójú. Forítí.  
A dífá Òkànràn.  
Wọ̀n ní: ejọ́ de tí a f'ní rẹ́rín lójú.  
Wọ̀n ní ẹ̀bọ́ ní ká ẹ̀.  
Kí Òkànràn máa kú ẹ̀jọ́.  
Ó gbọ́; ó rúbọ́  
Wọ̀n ní Òkànràn á simi o.  
Òtún àtí òsì ní ẹ̀yẹ́lé fí nko ire wọ́lé.  
Ìgbà gígùn nítí àgútàn.  
Àgútàn tí gbà oore náà  
K'a rójú ẹ̀yẹ́.

**L**etting people practice cruelty supports the  
cruel person.  
Allowing people to do evil sustains the  
evil person.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for those who  
would not listen,  
Who said that Orunmila was giving too many  
warnings about wrongdoing,  
And that they would do what they wanted.  
They were doing evil.  
They were committing acts of cruelty.  
And things in life were going well for them.  
People went to report this to Orunmila.  
Orunmila said that regardless of how long it  
may be, the one who rewards and  
punishes will come around again  
and again.

He will relieve people of their burdens in the end.  
He will go about his work quietly.  
And when he comes, all of them will run.  
They said we should sacrifice  
So that permissiveness towards cruelty and  
allowance of evil,  
Might not get an opportunity to become  
a part of us;  
And so that our companions and peers  
might not deride and show contempt  
for us in the end.

"Jẹkó sekà" ñgbe oṣìkà.  
 "Jẹkó sekà" ñgbe aṣẹbi.  
 A dítá f'awọn àfòḡbò  
 Tí wípé Ọrúnmilà nkílò ọràn ju,  
 Tí inú àwọn lí àwọn máa ẹ.  
 Wọn nṣe ibi.  
 Wọn nṣe ika.  
 Ohun ayé òdára fún wọn.  
 A lọ wí fún Ọrúnmilà  
 Ọrúnmilà ni: bóbápètítí, elẹsan  
                     ńbòwá àyíká gbirighiri.  
 Ó tùmò l'erù kálẹ.  
 A ẹ jẹjẹ sísẹ.  
 Bí ó bá dé, gbogbo wọn a sá.  
 Wọn níki a ẹbọ kí "Jẹkó sekà" àti  
                     "Jẹkó ẹ'bí"  
 Má lẹ ráyè bọsì ilùn ẹnì,  
 Kí àwọn ẹgbẹ àti ọgbá má bá fi wá rẹrin  
                     elẹyà ni ìgbẹhìn.

**T**he lazy person sleeps while the worker works.  
 And when the worker finishes his work,  
 Others begin to envy him.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for Ogun.  
 They said that Ogun should sacrifice  
 So that those who were envying him  
                     might be defeated.  
 He heard and sacrificed.  
 They said that calabash that makes an enemy  
                     of the water jar  
 Will break on the way to the river.  
 And those who make an enemy of you  
                     will be defeated also.

152:1

Òlẹ̀ n̄sùn n̄gbàtí òsìsẹ̀ n̄sìsẹ̀.  
 Òsìsẹ̀ seé tán,  
 Wọ̀n n̄se ilàra.  
 A dífá f'Ògún  
 A níki Ogún wá rúbọ̀  
 Kí àwọ̀n tí n̄se ilàra rẹ̀ báa lẹ̀ sẹ̀gún.  
 Ó gbọ̀; ó rúbọ̀.  
 Wọ̀n ní: kèrègbẹ̀ tí ó báa à mu n̄se òtá  
             ọ̀na odò níí fọ̀ sí  
 Àwọ̀n tí n̄ba ó se òtá yóò sì sẹ̀gún.

152:2

**M**ay the battle I fight always add to my honor.  
 The battle that brings honor belongs  
             to the lion.  
 The battle that brings honor belongs to Aara.  
 Ogunda. You defeated them in struggle  
             everyday and everywhere.  
 May the battle I fight always add to my honor,  
 The battle that brings honor.

Ìjà tí n ó jà yí kímí n̄yí síí.  
 Àjàgbuyì n̄tí kìnìún.  
 Àjàgbuyì n̄tí Ààrá.  
 Ògúndá. Ìwọ̀ ló n̄dà wọ̀n n̄'jàkádì  
             lọ́jọ̀ gbogbo n̄lẹ̀kílẹ̀  
 Ìjà tí n ó jà yí kímí n̄yí síí.  
 Àjàgbuyì.

**E**legbara does not run on the day of battle.  
A battle of honor belongs to Elegbara.  
Aara does not run on the day of battle,  
And a battle of honor belongs to Aara.  
The lion does not run on the day of battle,  
And a battle of honor belongs to the lion.  
I will not run on the day of battle,  
And may my fellow soldiers not run  
on the day of battle either.

---

Elégbará kíísá lójó ijà.  
Àjàgbuyì níti Elégbará.  
Ààrà kíísá lójó ijà.  
Àjàgbuyì níti Ààrà.  
Kìniún kíísá lójó ijà.  
Àjàgbuyì níti kìniún.  
Èmi kò máa sá lójó ijà.  
Kí àwọn omọ ogun èhìn mi má sàá lójó ijà.

**E**we Omo interpreted the teachings of Ifa  
for Osa.  
They said: regardless of whether he runs  
around in circles or not,  
The world will still see him.  
And they will ridicule him.  
They said he should practice sacrifice,  
So that matters of shame might not reach him.  
He heard and complied.  
After he had sacrificed, he heard the babalawo  
chanting this Ifa chant:  
"Indeed, Osa does not steal.  
Indeed, Osa does not use evil potions.  
Indeed, Osa does not reveal the secrets  
of friends.  
Indeed, Osa does not lie.  
His affairs have become worthy of respect."  
And all the people there joined in this chant.

154:1

Ewé Qmọ li ó dífá f'Qsá.  
 Wọn ní làíkàsí sísá tí ó má sá yí,  
 Ayé a ríí mú.  
 Wọn a máa fí rẹrín.  
 Wọn ni ẹbọ níkí ó ẹ,  
 Kí ọran itíjù má báa dé sí.  
 Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.  
 Nígbàti ó rúbọ tán, à nígbo babaláwo  
     ńkorin orin Ifá yí:  
 Qsá má máa jalè o hẹn!  
 Qsá má máa sa òògùn ikà o, hẹn!  
 Qsá má máa tú àsírí ọrẹ o, hẹn!  
 Qsá má máa ẹ'èké o, hẹn!  
 Ọràn rẹ dayẹyẹ.  
 Gbogbo ènìyàn tí ó wà nìbẹ  
     sì nbá wọn gbé orin nàà.

155:1

I asked why is Owon laughing so lively?  
 Orunmila responded saying:

Owon is laughing so lively because:

There is money in the house;  
 There is a wife in the house;  
 There are children in the house.  
 Every good thing is in the house.  
 Indeed, Owon's life is exactly right.  
 Owon weighs everything in the balance.  
 Owon does not eat without measuring  
     what he eats.  
 Owon does not drink without measuring  
     what he drinks.  
 Owon does not use cloth without measuring  
     what he uses.  
 And Owon does not build a house before  
     making measurements of what he is  
     going to build.

This was the teaching of Ifa for the Measurer-  
of-all-Things at Ife-Ooye and  
for the stranger.

They were asked to sacrifice so that they  
would never lose balance.

They sacrificed; they were given Ifa leaves and  
they accepted them.

It was said: What pincers hold firmly  
does not fall.

And a bat does not hold on to a tree in  
order to fall down.

Mo ní eetirí ti Òwón fí nín kààkàá?

Òrúnmìlà dàhùn ó ní: Òwón nín kààkàá nítorí:

Owó wà nílẹ̀;

Ayá wà nílẹ̀;

Omọ wà nílẹ̀.

Ohun rere gbogbo nílẹ̀.

Gan, ayé Òwón gún gégé.

Òwón ngbẹ ohun gbogbo wà sórí iwón.

Òwón kii jeun kí ó má wón ọ́n kí ó tó jẹ́.

Òwón kii mu kí ó má wón ọ́n kí ó tó mu.

Òwón kii lo aṣọ kí ó ma wón kí ó tó lò.

Òwón kii kólẹ́ kí ó ma wón kí ó tó kọ.

A dífá fún Afiwón-ṣe-ohun-gbogbo n'Ífẹ̀ Oḍyè;  
a bù fún àlejò.

155:1

A ní kí wón rúbọ kí wón ma báa ju ìwón  
 nù láiláí.  
 Wón rúbọ; a s'ewé Ifá fún wón; wón gbàa  
 A ní: ohun èmú bá mú nídúróṣansan kíi bọ.  
 Àdán kíi mú igi kí ó bọ.

---

155:2

**M**ay we go away and may we come  
 back home.

If a child does not move around, the child  
 will not be wise.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Ademoorin  
 Ayankale, she who has learned to  
 walk and strolls around the house easily.

They said she should sacrifice  
 So that she might not fall into the hands  
 of death,

And if she fell into the hands of death,  
 That death would not be able to kill her.  
 She heard and sacrificed.

---

155:2

K'á rín lọ; k'á rín bọwálé.  
 Bí ọmọ kò rín, ọmọ náà kí gbọ́n.  
 Ní a dá f'Ademọ́rín Ayankálé.  
 Wọ́n ní k'í wá rúbọ,  
 Kí ó má baà bọ s'ọwọ́ ikú,  
 Àti bí ó bá bọ s'ọwọ́ ikú,  
 Kí ikú má lè pa á.  
 Ó gbọ́; ó rúbọ.

---

155:3

**S**carcity travels around the world.  
 This was the teaching of Ifá for Orunmila.  
 It was said that he should sacrifice  
 When he was travelling around this world,  
 So that the hands of detractors would not  
 touch and taint him.  
 He heard and complied.  
 They said that the fingernails of a person do not  
 infect kola nuts by carrying them.  
 They do not contaminate bitter kola  
 nuts by carrying them.  
 And they do not affect a joyful person.  
 Thus, may the hand of the detractors not be  
 able to touch and taint you either.

---

Òwọ̀n rìn káyé.  
 A dífá fún Òrúnmilà.  
 A níké Òrúnmilà à rúbọ̀  
 Bí òun tí maa nírin ká ayé yíí,  
 Kí ọwọ̀ àwọn abatanijé má lè ràn.  
 Ó gbọ́; ó rúbọ̀.  
 Wọ̀n ní èékánná eléèkánná kííran obì gbígbehè  
 Èékánná eléèkánná kííran oroghó gbígbehè.  
 Èékánná eléèkánná kííran ọmọ ayọ́.  
 Kí ọwọ̀ àwọn abatanijé kí ó maa lè ràn ọ.

---

**T**he wicked do not weigh their conduct  
 before they act.

This was the teaching of Ifa given to Alabamo,  
 the one who regrets afterwards.  
 They said he should practice sacrifice,  
 So that he might do good things continuously.  
 He heard but he did not sacrifice.

---

Ìkà ènìyàn kùí wọ̀n ohun tírẹ́ kí ó tóó sẹ́.  
 A dǎa fún Alabáámọ̀.  
 Wọ̀n níké wá rúbọ̀.  
 Kí ó lè maa sẹ́ ohun rere.  
 Ó gbo fùgbọ́n kò rú.

156:2

**E**vil was whirling all around them,  
 But Owon was laughing.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for the people  
 at Ife Ooye.  
 They were advised to sacrifice  
 So that their enemies would not be able to  
 remove them from their positions,  
 And so that their adversaries would not be  
 able to detract from their honor.  
 They heard and they sacrificed.  
 The babalawo said: anyone who says that Ife  
 should not expand in the world  
 Will be destroyed in the world.  
 We do not say that Ife should not expand  
 in the world.  
 May we live long.  
 And may the mark we leave not be wiped  
 out in the world.

156:2

Ìkà òpòdòyì òyíká wọn.  
 Ọwọn òrérín.  
 A dífá fún wọn ní Ifẹ-Oòyè.  
 A níkí wọn rùbọ.  
 Kí òtá má lè sí wọn nípo.  
 Kí òtá wọn má lè bù ọlá wọn kú.  
 Wọn gbọ;wọn rú.  
 Babaláwo níi ẹnítí ó bá wípé kí  
 Ifẹ má fẹ  
 A rún kùrò l'áyé.  
 Awa kò wípè kí Ifẹ má fẹ o.  
 K'á s'áyé pẹ  
 Kí ìlà tiwa má run nínú ayé.

159:1

**T**he constant soldier is never unready,  
even once.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Igbin, the snail,  
the courteous one.

Who was going to engage Ekun, the leopard  
in a sudden fight.

They said that Ekun was always ready for battle,  
And that Igbin should not engage him.

One whom we cannot engage in battle, we leave  
to the Lord of Heaven.

They said he should sacrifice,  
So that the lord of destiny might fight for him.  
He understood and made the sacrifice.

159:1

Ìjàmájà kò túrasílẹ̀ lẹ̀ẹ̀kan.

A dífá fún Ìgbín omẹ̀sọ̀,

Tí n lẹ̀ b'Èkùn jà ọ̀jìjà.

Wọ̀n ní: Èkùn wà ní ìmúratẹ̀lẹ̀ nígbà ghogbo

Kí Ìgbín má ẹ̀

Ènítí à kò lẹ̀ mú, Ọ̀lórún ní áá fún.

Wọ̀n ní: ọ́ wá rúbọ̀.

Kí Ìpín lẹ̀ jà fún un.

Ó gbọ̀; ọ́ rúbọ̀.

**T**ravelers of earth and travelers of heaven,  
we will see each other again.  
Termites do not scatter without coming back  
together again.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for us humans  
who were mourning the dead.  
They said the place from which the people of  
earth come is where they are returning.  
What are the tears for then? Why the sorrow?  
What is the raising oneself up and down for?  
And why is there fasting?  
He who sends us is he who calls us to  
return home.  
If a child does not know his father, the world  
is not right.  
It is death which takes the child so that he  
may know heaven.  
We will know darkness then.

Speak to me that I may speak to you.  
It is by our voices we recognize each other  
in the darkness.  
If a child does not know her father, the world  
is not right.  
The people of the world were advised  
to sacrifice.  
They heard and they practiced sacrifice  
So that they might live long on earth  
And that they might experience goodness.

---

160:1

Èro ayé àt'èro ọrun, a ó tún'ra wa rí.  
 Ètútú kí tóká kí ó má gbàrajo.  
 A dífá f'awa èniyàn tífí maa sọkún òkú.  
 Wọn níki ibi ọmọ-aráyé tí wá ní wọn òpadà sí.  
 Èwo nítí ẹkún? Èwo nítí ibànújé?  
 Èwo nítí igbarasale? Èwo nítí àiyeun?  
 Ẹnítí ó ràn ní wá ló tún òpẹni  
     padà kí a bọwálé.  
 Ọmọ kò lè gba ìmọ baba, k'áyé gún.  
 Ìkú l'ó mú ọmọ wá mọ ọrun.  
 Awa ó mọ òkùnkùn.  
 Fọ sí mi kími fò sí ọ.  
 Ọhun ní a fí òmọ ara ẹni nínú òkùnkùn.  
 Ọmọ kò lè gba ìmọ baba, k'áyé gún.  
 Wọn níki ọmọ-aráyé rúbọ.  
 Wọn gbọ; wọn rú nitorí pé kí wọn  
     lè maa pé nínú ayé,  
 Àti pé kí wọn lè maa rí ire.

161:1

**T**here is no war in the fields.  
 There is no intrigue in the cities.  
 This was the interpretation of Ifa  
     for Olofin Iwajo.  
 They said that the time of his rule  
     would be good.  
 They said that the Olofin should sacrifice  
 So that the joy of his reign would not cause  
     a lot of people to become lazy or  
     of unsound mind.  
 He heard and sacrificed.

---

Kòsì ọgun ní pápá.  
 Kòsì ọtẹ láárin ilú.  
 A dífá fún Ọlọfin Iwajo.  
 Wọn ní: ọtẹ rẹ lórí oyé á sunwọn.  
 Wọn níki Ọlọfin rúbọ  
 Kí ayò igba rẹ má lè mú ọpólópò  
     èniyàn di ọlẹ tàbí asínwín.  
 Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.

Owonrin does not do wrong.  
 Owonrin does not cause pain.  
 They are accusing Owonrin falsely.  
 It was said that Owonrin would triumph  
 over them,  
 And that Owonrin should sacrifice  
 He heard and he complied.  
 And he placed the thunder stone on Ifa.

Òwónrín kò sẹ.  
 Òwónrín kò rò.  
 Wọ́n ńdùrùnmọ́ Òwónrín.  
 A ní Òwónrín á sẹgun wọ́n.  
 Kí Òwónrín wá s'ẹbo.  
 Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.  
 Ó fi ẹdún-ààrá lé Ifá.

The teachings of Ifa were interpreted for the  
 people of Ife-Ooye.  
 They said a time is coming when the people  
 of earth  
 Will travel through the air of earth and heaven  
 like a bird.  
 They said that the city of Ife should  
 practice sacrifice,  
 So that it might not suffer numerous losses  
 at that time.  
 It would not begin at Ife, but would go  
 around the world.  
 The people heard but they did not sacrifice.  
 They said they had sacrificed to walk on earth;  
 They would not walk in the air.

165:1

A dífá fún wọn ní Ifẹ-Oḍyè,  
 Wọn ní: ìghà kan nbẹwá ìghàfí  
     àwọn ọmọ-aráyé  
 Yóo má rín ní òfúurufú ayé àti ọrun bí ẹyẹ.  
 Wọn níkí wọn nílú náà wá rúbọ  
 Kí ó má bá sì òfò púpò nígbànáà.  
 Kò ní bèrẹ ní Ifẹ sùgbọn òfò tí ó màá  
     múwá yóò káí ayé  
 Wọn gbọ; wọn kò rú.  
 Wọn ní àwọn tí rúbọ à tẹpẹ lórí ilẹ;  
 Àwọn kò ní rín lòfúurufú.

166:1

**T**he teachings of Ifa were interpreted for Igun,  
 the vulture,  
 And likewise for Osin, the fish eagle,  
 On the day that those who take people away  
     were arriving from the heavens,  
 On the day that spirits from heaven  
     were appearing.  
 They said that Igun and Osin should sacrifice  
 So that they would not die an accidental death.  
 Osin refused to sacrifice.  
 He said that what the Lord of Heaven made,  
 He did not leave unfinished.  
 Igun said his future did not look promising  
 And that as for him, he was going to sacrifice.  
 So, he sacrificed.  
 Afterwards, the babalawo said:  
 That he should go forth without fear,  
 And that he should go forth with dignity and  
     measured movement.

166:1

A dífá fún Igún  
 A bu fún Qsin,  
 Níjọ tí múnì-múnì òrun dé,  
 Níjọ tí ẹmimọ ọrun síhàn.  
 Wọ́n ní kí Igún àti Qsin rúbọ  
 Nítorí ikú à-sì-kú.  
 Qsin kò kò rúbọ.  
 Ó ní ohun tí Ọlọrun bá tí ẹ  
 Kí ẹ kù.  
 Igún ní orí rẹ kò dára.  
 Ó ní oun yío rúbọ.  
 Ó rúbọ.  
 Nígbà tí Igún rúbọ tán, àwọn babaláwọ ní  
 Kí ó lọ máa rín àìbèrù  
 Kí ó lọ máa yan.

166:2

Ofun, the Giving One, gives to them so that  
 they might nurture.  
 Ofun, the Giving One, gives to them so that  
 they might care for others.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for Oduduwa  
 Who was doing good all over the world.  
 He said "doing good worldwide is the best  
 expression of character."  
 They said a part of the world would not thank  
 him for his kindness.  
 And others would not even recognize its value.  
 But he said "a father cannot help but give good  
 things to his children  
 And a mother cannot help but give good things  
 to her son or daughter."  
 They said that Orunmila should sacrifice  
 So that all the good things which he  
 gave to people,  
 If they were wasted in the world,  
 They would return to him in good order.  
 He heard and sacrificed.

166:2

Òfún fún wọ́n kẹ.  
 Òfún fún wọ́n sọ.  
 A dífá fún Odùduà  
 Tí ó máa soore kárí ayé.  
 Ó ní kí a soore kárí ayé l'ó dáràjù ní iwà.  
 Wọ́n ní kí a pàkan kò ní sọpẹ oore lówó rẹ .  
 Àwọ́n mífàràn kò tilẹ̀ ní mọ́ tiwon ilẹ̀.  
 Sùgbọ́n ó ní baba ọmọ kò lè se kí ó  
     má fi ohun rere fún ọmọ.  
 Àti iyá ọmọ kò lè se kí ó má fi  
     ohun rere fún ọmọ.  
 Wọ́n ní kí Odùduà wá rúbọ  
 Kí ohun rere ghogbo tí ó ní fún èniyàn,  
 Bí wọ́n bá fi s'òfò ní ayé,  
 Kí wọ́n lè máa tún padà tó Odùduà l'ọwọ́.  
 Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.

167:1

**E**veryone in the world searches for  
 something good for themselves  
 Now, if mine would turn out well,  
 yours would turn out well also.  
 Everyone in the world searches for  
 something good for themselves.  
 It is another person who wishes bad things  
 for us.

Ggbogbo ayé ní òwá ohun rere sí ara won.  
 Njẹ̀ tẹ̀mi ibá dára, tíre ibá dára.  
 Ggbogbo ayé ní òwá ohun rere tí ara won.  
 Èni-ẹ̀lẹ̀ni ní iwá ohun burúkú fún-ni.

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ÒGÚNDÁ' BÀRÀ

170

170:1

**T**umultuous is the place of dancing.  
Turbulent is the place of battle.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Ogun  
When he was going to engage Obara in battle.  
They said that Ogun would do well,  
But that Ogun should practice sacrifice  
So that Obara might not be killed in  
the struggle.  
He heard and sacrificed.  
They said that a bird should not fight  
another bird to the death.  
And a basket of dry leaves is not heavy enough,  
That its contents should kill someone.

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ÒGÚNDÁ' BÀRÀ

170

170:1

Ritiriti ni ojú ijó.  
Ritiriti ni ojú ija.  
A dífá fún Ògún  
Nlọ ba Òbàrà ja ija kan.  
Wón ní Ògún á dára,  
Sùghòṇ kí Ògún wá sebo  
Kí Òbàrà má baà kú sù lórùn.  
Ó ghò; ó rú.  
Wón ní adie kí bá adie ja kí ó kú.  
Aghòṇ ìràwé kí wúwo  
Kí ó d'èru pa'ni.

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ÒGÚNDÁ'BÀRÀ

170

170:1

ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on the need to respect and preserve human life. It begins by placing side by side the site of dancing and the site of battle, the place of sport and the place of fighting, the place of joy and the place of anger. And it notes that both places are rowdy or tumultuous and turbulent. The intention seems to be to suggest that things are likely to get out of hand in both contexts but that the person of character must hold to principle in both places. This is an important juxtaposition, because dancing is seen as more joyful and less serious than war, not a life and death matter. Thus, to place the site of dancing alongside the site of battle tends to suggest that claiming exoneration from extreme offences because the situation got out of hand is no more justifiable on the battlefield than it is on the dance floor.

The teaching is for Ogun, the divinity of war, iron and the human hardness and moral roughness this

suggests. He is advised, concerning his battle with Obara, to sacrifice so that Obara might not be killed in the struggle. Now, a warrior makes war, a soldier does battle and they are trained to kill. But Ifa here tells the embodiment of the warrior, the divinity of war, to expect victory, do well in the struggle, but do not kill. He is asked to *sacrifice* so that Obara might not be killed in the struggle. Kawaiida tradition reads this as a challenge to *sacrifice* self, not to give up one's life and lose the battle, but to sacrifice one's will to kill and cultivate the will to win without killing, to defeat without destroying.

This text and the Odu in general recognizes the constant need to struggle against opponents of varying degrees of opposition and evil. But what it says here is that humans should always fight in ways that show adequate respect for human life, beginning with each other. The analogy used here is that a bird should not fight another bird to the death. Furthermore, the text suggests that weighed against the heavy value of preserving human life, other issues are as light as a basket of dry leaves. And as the text says, "a basket of dry leaves is not heavy enough that its content should kill someone."

176:1

**H**onor goes forth from the house and  
honor returns to the house.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Iyamooke,  
the mother who knows how to nurture,  
They said that the child she gave birth to  
would not die or be unhealthy.  
But the child would not stay with her  
after she grew up.  
They said she should practice sacrifice so  
that the child might have a good life.  
She heard and she complied.

Qlá sílò n'ílé; olá dẹhìn s'ile.

A dífá fún òyámòòkẹ.

Wọ̀n ní ọmọ náà tí ó bí kò ní kú  
kò ní lálálááfíà.

Sùgbọ̀n ọmọ náà kò ní gbé ọ̀dọ̀ rẹ̀  
nígbà tí ó bá dàgbà.

Wọ̀n ní kí ó wá rúbọ̀ kí ọmọ náà  
baà ní ayé rere.

Ó gbọ; ó rú.

178:1

**T**he hips seem indifferent when they settle  
down on the mat.  
The net works gently, but it holds its  
goods firmly.  
The alukerese vine creeps slowly to maturity,  
And when it becomes mature, it turns its face  
here and there.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Aye, the Earth.  
When she was weeping and praying for a child.  
They said she would bear a child,  
And that the whole world would assemble  
to serve the child.  
They said the child would wear a crown,  
But so that she might witness the work of  
the child in her lifetime,  
She should sacrifice for the child.

178:1

Ìdì ẹ̀e bí láìsúja, nígbàtí ó gúnlẹ̀  
lórí ẹ̀nì.  
Àwọn ẹ̀e jẹ́jẹ́jẹ́, ẹ̀gbọn ó mú ẹ̀rù le.  
Alukere ẹ̀e rákòròrákòrò ó dàgbà.  
Nígbàtí ó dàgbà tán, ó ńse ojú rẹ̀  
níhìn àtí lẹ́hùn.  
A dá fún Ayé,  
Tí ó ńfẹ́kún ojú ẹ̀e ìráhùn ọmọ.  
Wọn ní kí ó bímo,  
Kí gbogbo ayé yíó máa pé sín  
ọmọ náà,  
Kí ọmọ yíó sì dè ní adé.  
Sùgbọn, kí ẹ̀e rẹ̀ lẹ̀ ẹ̀e ojú rẹ̀ ní  
ìgbà ayé rẹ̀,  
Kí ó rúbọ̀ fún ọmọ náà.

185:1

One who stands ready to act for the good  
is supported by Ogun on the day of battle.  
A person who cannot fight or talk does not  
live long on earth.  
Struggle brings respect; struggle brings honor.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Ogungbemi.  
They said that even if he does not provoke it,  
Whenever the fight comes to him,  
He should not run away from it.  
It is the powerful who have control  
of the world.  
No one respects the passive person.  
It is the courageous who lay claim  
to the world.  
People do not give consideration  
to the coward.  
He was asked to sacrifice.  
So that his internal strength would not perish  
and his body would remain sound.

185:1

Ènì ọwọ nyá fún ire ni Ògún igbée  
ojó ijà.

Ènìyàn tí kò lè jà, tí kò lè sọrò,  
kò ní lè gbé nínú ayé pé.

Ìjà nísọlẹ; ìjà nìsẹ̀ iyì.

A dífá Ògúngbémi.

Wọ̀n ní: bí kò tilẹ̀ nìí fínràn  
nígbàkígà tí ijà bá dé sfi,

Kí ó má maà sá, o.

Alágbára ni ó ní ayé.

Kòsì ẹnìtí t'ó jẹ̀ buyìn fún ọlẹ.

Akin li ó ní ayé.

Wọ̀n kíi bù ọlá fún ojo.

Wọ̀n níkí ó wá rúbọ.

Kí iyè inu má ra àti ara líle.

187:1

**N**ot knowing when to fight and when  
to withdraw is to be ignorant  
of the requirements of courage.

A courageous person who knows how to fight,

But does not know how to withdraw

Will be soundly defeated by another person  
of courage in one place or another.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Akinsuyi.

They said he should sacrifice

So that he might know when to avoid and  
when not to avoid a battle,

And so that he might be respected always.

187:1

Má jà, má sá ni àlímọ́ akin.  
 Akin tí ó mọ́ọ́ jà,  
 Tí ko mọ́ọ́ sá  
 A bá akin ibòmíràn lọ.  
 A dǎa fún Akinsuyi.  
 Wọ́n ní kí ó rúbọ́,  
 Kí ó báa lẹ máà mọ́ ìgbà tí yẹra àti  
 àlẹyera fún ìjà,  
 Kí ó bá lẹ máà n'íyì lẹjọ́ gbogbo.

188:1

The teachings of Ifa were interpreted for  
 Agbonrin, the antelope.  
 They said that he should sacrifice  
 So that incidents of insult might not  
 reach him;  
 So that he might not die at the hands of  
 his enemies;  
 And so that he might be able to save  
 himself from harm.  
 He heard but did not sacrifice.  
 He said his horns were adequate to ward  
 off suffering.  
 They said that from far away places,  
 his enemies would send trouble  
 that would affect him.  
 He said his own horns would be enough  
 to protect him.  
 But in the end, his horns were not enough.

A dífá fún Àgbònrin.  
 Wọ̀n ní kí ó rúbọ.  
 Kí ọ̀ràn ìwọ̀sì tóó dé;  
 Kí ó má bá kú sí owọ̀ ọ̀tá;  
 Kí ó báa lè gbà ara rẹ̀ sílẹ̀.  
 Ó gbọ; kò rú.  
 Ó ní ìwọ̀ rẹ̀ tó kọ̀ yà  
 Wọ̀n ní: látí òkèèrè ní ọ̀tá tí má máa ránsé  
     wá tí yíò máa kàn án lára.  
 Ó ní: ìwọ̀ rẹ̀ tí tó dáàbòbò òun.  
 Sùgbón ìwọ̀ rẹ̀ kò tó.

**T**here is no one whose house cannot become  
 a place overgrown with grass.  
 There is no one whose farm cannot become a  
 rundown place overgrown with  
 weed and bush.  
 Right-mindedness will not allow mine to  
 become an overgrown place.  
 There is no one whom death cannot kill.  
 There is no one whose child death cannot kill.  
 Except for Orunmila, my Lord,  
 Abiku-Jigbo, one who was born, died,  
 woke up and lived a long life;  
 And except for the righteous ones, the  
 children of Olodumare.

189:1

Kò sènití ilé rẹ̀ kò lèè doko.  
 Kò sènití oko rẹ̀ kò lo di ìgbòro.  
 Òtító inú kò má jẹ́kí tẹ̀mi doko.  
 Kò sènití ikú kò lè pa.  
 Kò sènití ikú kò lè pa ọmọ rẹ̀,  
 Àfi Ọ̀rúnmilà, Ọ̀lúwa mi,  
 Àbíkú-jìgbó;  
 À fàwọ̀n olótító inú, ọmọ Ọ̀lódùmarè.

189:2

**F**ighting in front; fighting behind  
 If it does not lead to one's death,  
 It will cause one to become a  
 courageous person,  
 One who fights and gains honor,  
 A person of courage, one who does  
 battle and wins respect.

Ìjà níwajú, ìjà lẹ̀hìn  
 Bí kò bá pa'ni,  
 A máà sọ'ni di akin,  
 Afijàbuyi,  
 Akin, afijàgbólá.

**I**t is through constantly studying Ifa that we  
come to understand Ifa.  
It is through missing the way that we come  
to know the way.  
It is the road we have not traveled before  
that causes us to wander here and there.

Ifá kẹ́ kó nífí mú'ni mọ́ Ifá.  
Ọ̀nà sí sí nífí mú'ni mọ́ ọ̀nà.  
Ọ̀nà tí a kò rìn rí,  
Nífí ẹ̀'ni síbàsìbó.

**F**alsehood is not good for anyone.  
Commitment breaking is not  
good for anyone.  
If young people act secretly to  
break commitments,  
Secret things will happen to them.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for an  
assistant priest  
Who was going to proposition the wife  
of the oluwo, the high priest  
of Orunmila.

Èké kò sunwọ̀n ara eni.  
Ọ̀dàlẹ̀ kò sunwọ̀n ara eni.  
B'ọ̀mọ́dẹ́ bá ńyọ̀lẹ́ dà,  
Ọ̀hun abẹ̀-'nú á maa yọ́ wọ̀n ẹ̀.  
O dífá fún ajùbóná  
Tí ó lọ nífe obìnrin oluwo.

193:1

**T**he principle of "offend me and I will  
offend you,"

Does not allow for the resolution  
of a matter.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Olukoya.

They said there is a problem between  
him and his relatives,

And that he should sacrifice

So that this problem might not ruin  
the harmony among relatives.

"S'emi ki emi se o,"

Kí jẹkí ọràn ó tán.

A dífá fún Olúkòyà

Wọ̀n ní ọràn kan wà láàrin òun àti

àwọn ẹbí rẹ.

Wọ̀n níkí ó wá rúbọ

Kí ọràn náà má lè ba ìrẹ̀pò jẹ nínú ẹbí.

197:1

**A** condition of deprivation is not good,  
*Especially* a condition of deprivation which  
has never been experienced.

This was the teaching of Ifa for the son  
of a person who was once rich.

They said he should sacrifice

So that he would not experience  
deprivation also.

The son of the once rich person asked,  
"What is deprivation?"

They said: "illness is deprivation."

The son of the formerly rich person asked again,  
"What is deprivation?"

They said: "being confined is deprivation, and  
being without people is deprivation."

He said that that was enough.

The son of the formerly rich person then  
asked what should the sacrifice be?"

197:1

Òràn ìsé kò sunwòn.  
 Òràn ìsé kòṣeérí.  
 A dífá fún ọmọ ọlórò kan àtíjọ.  
 Wọ́n ní kí ó wá rúbọ.  
 Kí ọràn ìsé má lè dé sí.  
 Ọmọ ọlórò ní: kíni ìsé?  
 Wọ́n ní: òkùnrun ni ìsé.  
 Ọmọ ọlórò ní kíni ìsé?  
 Wọ́n ní: akámọ ni ìsé; àilénìyàn ni ìsé  
 Ó ní: ó tó.  
 Ọmọ ọlórò ní kíni ẹbọ?

198:1

**Y**ou do not want it. I do not want it.  
 Deprivation walks alone.  
 This is the teaching of Ifa for the  
 unfortunate person.  
 They said the unfortunate person  
 should sacrifice  
 So that s/he might find someone with  
 whom to walk.

Ìwọ kò fẹ; èmi kò fẹ.  
 Ìsé níkan rìn.  
 A dára fún olórí burúkú.  
 Wọ́n ní kí olórí burúkú wá rúbọ.  
 Kí ó báà lè r'èni bá rìn.

**O**penly presented and done on behalf  
of others.

Openly conducted in the interest of others.

It is Ifa who does things we hear about.

It is only invocations of evil that one  
does not know more about.

Pèrè sîpè; pèrè sîpe.

Ifá l'ó se ohun tí a bá gbò.

Ìgèdè níkan ni kò jù mò.

**T**he anthill is the place of deliberation  
of the eerun ants.

Asuwa, a grouping together in harmony, is the  
place of deliberation of human beings.

It was through the principle of grouping  
together that earth was created.

It was through the principle of grouping  
together, that heaven was created.

And it was in the form of collectivities that  
beings descended on earth.

All inclusive was the grouping together  
when beings were first created.

All embracing was the grouping together when  
beings were completed.

Formed into collectivities were beings  
when they rained down on earth.

All goodness became a grouping together  
in harmony.  
The grouping together of the strands of hair  
covered the head.  
The grouping together of hairs on the chin  
became an object of attention.  
The grouping together of trees became a forest.  
The grouping together of the eruwa grasses  
became a savannah.  
The grouping together of the beehives hold up  
the roof of the house.  
And the grouping together of the ita ants  
led to their covering the earth.  
Alasuwada, Great Being who creates all beings  
in groups, we ask you humbly,  
That you grant us things gathered in groups  
So that they bring together all things good  
for us.

Bees form swarms  
Eeran plants grow together on the farm.  
Brooms are formed from bundles of twigs.  
Eeran grass grows in bunches on the plains.  
And the elegiri birds form flocks.  
  
It is as a grouping together that we encounter  
the grassland.  
It is as swarms that the locusts consume  
the farm.  
It is in several colonies that we find the  
termites in their mounds.  
It is in groves that we encounter the ekunkun  
trees on the water's edge.  
It is in clusters we find oore grass at  
the riverside.  
It is in schools that we find the egbele fish  
in the ocean.  
It is in groups we encounter the dragon fly.  
And the adosusu leaf is never found alone.

202:1

Dews pouring lightly, pouring lightly  
Were used to create the world.  
And likewise was done to create the earth.  
So that the goodness of togetherness could  
come forth at once.  
Indeed all goodness took the form of a  
gathering together in harmony.

Now, if one ori (mind/heart) encounters good,  
It will spread out and touch two hundred.  
If my mind/heart is good,  
It will spread out and touch you.  
And if your mind/heart is good,  
It will spread out and touch me.  
For if just one mind/heart experiences good,  
It will spread out and touch two hundred.

202:1

Àgírìyàn ni mọ̀rẹ̀rẹ̀ èèrùn.  
Àsùwà ni mọ̀rẹ̀rẹ̀ ènìyàn.  
Àsùwà dá ayé.  
Àsùwà dá Ọrun.  
Àsùwà dàa sílẹ̀  
Àsẹ̀kún sùwàdà nígbàtí iwà ẹ.  
Àsẹ̀kún sùwàdà nígbàtí iwà gún.  
Àsùwà nígbà iwà rọ̀.

Ire ghogbo wá d'àsùwà.  
Irún pé sùsù, wọn gborí.  
Irún àghbọn pé sùsù, wọn di òjòntarigi.  
Igí pé sùsù, wọn di igbó.  
Erúwà pé sùsù, wọn dòdàn.  
Agbọn pé sùsù fówó tilé.  
Ìtá pé sùsù bó ilẹ̀.  
Alàsùwàdà, a pé ọ  
Kó Ọ rán iwà sùsù wáá  
Kí wọn kó ire ghogbo wáá bá wa.

202: 1

Aṣùwà ni toyin  
Aṣùwà leéran níhù nínú oko.  
Aṣùwà ni tò sùsù ọwò  
Aṣùwà leéran níhù nínú aáre  
Aṣùwà ni ti Èlẹgírí

Aṣùwà làá bọdàn  
Aṣùwà leṣú nífijoko.  
Aṣùwà ọpọ sùùù làá bá ikán nínú ògán.  
Aṣùwà làá bá ekunkun létí omi  
Aṣùwà làá bá òdòré lódò  
Aṣùwà làá bá lamilámi.  
Aṣùwà làá bejá ẹgbẹlẹ lókun  
Ewé adósùsù kí dúró lóun nikan

Ìrì tu wílí, tu wílí  
Lafi dálé ayé  
La bù dá ile

202: 1

Kíre sùsù kó wá sù pírípírí.  
Ire gbogbo d'asùwà.

Ñjé, bórí kan bá sunwọn,  
A ràn igba.  
Orí mi tó sunwọn,  
Ló ràn yín.  
Orí yín tó sunwọn  
Ló ràn mí.  
Bórí kan bá sunwọn  
A ràn igba.

204: I

Ogun causes me to be vindicated.  
Ogun, please support me.

There is no one who has a problem or  
a struggle

Who should not ask that Ogun please  
support her.

One who does good will receive good.  
Surely a good person is one whom Ogun  
will support.

This was the teaching of Ifa for Adetutu,  
Offspring of the coward who  
breathes fearfully,

He who was half dead before the  
struggle began.

They said he should sacrifice  
He heard but did not comply.

204: I

Ògún dá mi láre.

Ògún jòwọ; gbé mí.

Kòsì enití ó ní ejọ; tàbí ọjà

Tí kù wípé kí Ògún jòwọ gbé òun.

Ẹnití ńsẹ rere á rí ọre.

Dandan, ẹnirere ní tí Ògún yíó gbé.

A dífá fún Adétútú

Ọmọ ọjọ k'ó f'ọkàn bá lẹmí,

A kú dé' daṣi kí ọjà tó dé.

Wọn níki ó rúbọ.

Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.

206:1

**I**t is when they are young that we  
should prune the branches  
of the iroko tree.  
For when they are fully grown,  
We will have to make greater sacrifice.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Otu,  
the mother who was still breast  
feeding her child.

Kérékéré li a tii pẹka iroko.  
Bí ó bá dàgbà tán,  
A máà gbà ebọ.  
A dǎa fún Ótú, abiyamo.

207:1

**I**t is a good head that overcomes  
the opponent.  
It is the impaired head that the opponent  
renders completely powerless.  
Who is one with an impaired head?  
It is one whom the world constantly blocks  
And he says there is no one who can block  
him until he dies.  
He, indeed, is the one with the impaired head.

Orí rere ni sẹgun ọtá.  
Orí àìsàn li ọtá i di li adipa  
Tani ijẹ orí àlǎìsàn?  
Enití ayé ndi  
Tí ó ní kòsì ẹniti ó lè di òun li àdipa  
Òun, nìi jẹ orí-àìsàn.

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ÒTÚRÁ ÒGÚNDÁ

208

208:1

**T**hey have done great wrong to me,  
but I am not ruined.  
The strength of their arms do not match mine.  
They curse; they swear and they wish me evil.  
But Otura Ogunda says that I should not fear.  
He says that I should not be timid,  
He says that he will mend my ways,  
And that my life will be good.  
It is Otura Ogunda who will touch my  
head gently for me,  
So that no curse may harm me;  
So that no swearing may harm me;  
So that no charm may harm me;  
So that no evil wish may harm me.

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ÒTÚRÁ ÒGÚNDÁ

208

208:1

Wón semísemí sùghón èmi kò bàjé.  
Apá wón kò ká tẹ̀mí.  
Wón nṣ'èpè; wón nígegún;  
wón nfẹ̀ ibi sí mí.  
Òtúrá Ògúndá ní kí èmi má bèrù.  
Ó ní kí mo mà s'ọ̀jọ.  
Kí a bá mí tún tẹ̀mí ẹ.  
Kí ayé tẹ̀mí á dára.  
Òtúrá Ògúndá lẹ́ ọ̀ wẹ́ orí tẹ̀mí fún mí,  
Kí ègegún má mú mí,  
Kí èpè má mú mí,  
Kí èèdì má mú mí,  
Kí èfún má mú mí.

---

**S**weet potato with fresh leaves might seem  
like a powerful potion.  
And an abundance of magical medicine tends  
to intoxicate the possessor.  
But even if you have a multitude of powerful  
potions,  
If you are dishonest,  
Your dishonesty will undermine their  
effectiveness.  
Surely, kindness will be more effective than  
such potions.  
This was the teaching of Ifá for  
King Alanak'esuu.  
One who dared not reject the advice of Ifá.

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Kúkúndùkún a b'ewé ẹrugeru dàbí  
oògùn l'ágbára.  
Òpò oògùn a gun'mo gálègàlè.  
Sùgbón bí ó bá l'ópò oògùn,  
Bí ó bá l'ékèé,  
Èké ò níí jẹ ó jẹ.  
Dandan, inúrerere jẹ ju ewé lọ.  
Dífá fún Qòni Alànak'esùú,  
Èyítí kò gbòdò kò ọrò Ifá sílẹ.

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212:1

**I**fa does not recognize king or queen.  
 Poverty does not recognize beauty.  
 The machete does not recognize its maker.  
 And on the day the guest is extremely hungry,  
 His eyes search unashamedly through  
     the house and through the farm.  
 This is the teaching of Ifa interpreted for a king,  
 Who sold his jeweled crown for a simple dish  
     of green vegetables.

Ifá kò mò ọba okùnrin tàbí ọba obìnrin.  
 Òsì kò mò èwà.  
 Àgàdà kò m'ojú ẹ̀nítí ó rọ́hun.  
 Ebi ọjó kan pa ọmọ àlejò,  
 Ojú rẹ̀ tó'lé; ọjú rẹ̀ tó'ko.  
 Dífá fún Ọlọ́fin  
 Tí a tà adé èsurú j'ẹ̀fọ.

214:1

**A** marshy place puts forth a soft chest.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for Orunmila  
 Who was suffering losses on all sides for a  
     very long time.  
 They said that he should practice sacrifice,  
 So that during the year, the Lord of Heaven  
     might compensate him for all his losses.  
 He sacrificed and found wealth.  
 When those who had joined him to eat the  
     day before came to greet him saying  
 "Greetings for being generous" and "the Lord  
     of Heaven will transform your losses  
     into riches,"  
 Orunmila answered, saying that the losses  
     he had suffered in the past  
 Did not equal the wealth he had gained.  
 Ifa says that someone has been suffering  
     losses in the past;  
 But this year the Lord of Heaven will transform  
     her losses into gain  
 And everything that has been lost from her hand  
 Will return to her purse.

214:1

Àbatà obaya gbẹdẹgbẹdẹ.  
 A dá fún Ọrúnmilà  
 Tí ó ti nṣe ọ̀fọ̀ ẹ̀gbẹ̀lẹ̀gbẹ̀ láíláí.  
 Wọ̀n ní kí ó rúbọ̀.  
 Pé ní ọ̀dún yíí ní Ọ̀lọ̀run san ghogbo  
                                 ohun rẹ̀ tí ó ti nṣe ọ̀fọ̀ fún un.  
 Ó rúbọ̀ ó sì rí olà.  
 Nígbà tí àwọ̀n tí ó bá jẹun ní ànà wá kí pé  
 "È kú ináwó" àti pé "Ọ̀lọ̀run yíó sọ  
                                 ọ̀fọ̀ rẹ̀ di ọ̀rọ̀,"  
 Ọ̀rúnmilà dáhùn ó ní ọ̀fọ̀ tí ẹ̀ láná kò tò  
                                 olà tí ó ti jẹ̀rẹ̀.  
 Ifá ní ẹnìkan tí nṣe ọ̀fọ̀ rí,  
 Sùgbọ̀n ní ọ̀dún yíí ní Ọ̀lọ̀run yíó sọ ọ̀fọ̀  
                                 nàà di èrẹ̀.  
 Tí ghogbo ohun tí ó ti sonù lẹwọ̀ rẹ̀  
 Yíó bẹ̀ sí àpo rẹ̀ pátápátá.

216:1

**B**ad character causes one to become  
 a coward.

This was the teaching of Ifa for the thief.  
 They said that a thief is not as courageous  
 as an owner.

They said the thief should sacrifice  
 So that he might accept the gentle way  
 to acquire things.  
 But he would not sacrifice.

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Ìwà burúkú nímu'ni s'ọ̀jọ̀.  
 A dífá fún olẹ̀.  
 Wọ̀n ní kí olẹ̀ kò maa láiyà bí olóhun.  
 Wọ̀n ní kí olẹ̀ wá rúbọ̀.  
 Kí ó bá lẹ̀ maa gbà ọ̀nà ẹ̀sọ̀ ní ẹnìkan.  
 Kò rúbọ̀.

219:1

**O**sa Otura asks what is truth?  
I ask what is truth?  
Orunmila says truth is the Lord of Heaven  
who guides the world rightly.  
Osa Otura asks what is truth?  
I ask what is truth?  
Orunmila says truth is the Unseen One  
guiding the world in the right way,  
The wisdom that Olodumare uses,  
great wisdom, abundant wisdom.  
Osa Otura asks what is truth?  
I ask what is truth?  
Orunmila says truth is the nature  
of Olodumare.  
Truth is the word that cannot fall.

219:1

Ifa is truth.  
Truth is the word that cannot be ruined.  
A great power superior to all, an  
everlasting good.  
Speak truth; do justice.  
Speak truth and do justice constantly.  
Those who do right the divine ones will sustain.

---

ÒSÁ' ÒTÚRÁ  
219

219:1

Òsá Òtúrá ní kíni òtító?  
Èmi ní kíni òtító?  
Òrúnmílà ní: òtító ni Olúwa Ọrun ti ńtọ ayé.  
Òsá Òtúrá ní kíni òtító?  
Èmi ní kíni òtító?  
Òrúnmílà ní: òtító ni Ẹni-àlẹ́ ńtọ ayé.  
Ọgbón ti Olódùmare ńlọ, ọgbón ńlá,  
òpòlópò ọgbón.  
Òsá Òtúrá ní kíni òtító?  
Òrúnmílà ní òtító ni ìwà Olódùmarè.  
Òtító ni ọrọ̀ ti kò lè subú.  
Ífá ni òtító.  
Òtító ni ọrọ̀ ti kò lè bàjẹ.  
Agbára ńlá, ajùlọ, ire àlópín.  
S'òtító; s'òdodo.  
S'òtító; o sì tún s'òdodo.  
Ẹnití s'òtító ni imàlẹ̀ yíó gbè, o.

ÒSÁ RẸTÈ  
221

221:1

**I**f one who sleeps alone sleeps badly,  
Only the Lord of Heaven can wake him  
while he sleeps.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for the stranger  
Who was going to a field to stand,  
So that he might ask someone to help him  
to lift a load on his head.  
They said he should sacrifice.  
He heard and complied.  
The stranger went into the field and secured  
his load on the ground.  
He looked forward but he saw no one.  
He looked backwards and he saw no one.  
He said, "This load has, indeed, become the  
load of the Lord of Heaven.

221:1

Now, strong wind help me lift this load  
onto my head.  
Don't you know that one who has no one,  
The Lord of Heaven is the one on whom  
that person relies."

---

221:1

Anìkànsùn bí ó bá sùn sí aburadi,  
Qlòrun nìkan nìí jìí lójú oorun.  
A dǎa fún àjẹ̀lẹ́ tí ó lọ sí ẹ̀lùjù nì ó ìdúrò,  
Kí ó bá bèèrè ẹ̀ni bá òun gbé ẹ̀rù dé orí  
Wón níki ó rú.  
Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ  
Àjẹ̀lẹ́ dé inú ẹ̀lùjù ó di ẹ̀rù kálẹ́  
Ó wò iwájú kò rí eníkan.  
Ó wò ẹ̀hìn kò rí eníkan.  
Ó ní: ẹ̀rù yí mà di ẹ̀rù Qlòrun o.  
Njé efúfú lile bá mi gbé ẹ̀rù yí d'órí  
Èyin kò mò pé ẹ̀nití kò ní ará,  
Qlòrun nì aghójúlé olúwarè?

---

ÌRẸTÈ'SÁ  
222

222:1

**W**hen the head is full of hair,  
We call the barber.  
When the river has risen in flood,  
We call the ferryman.  
And if the ferryman does not carry us across,  
Then we row straight across the river ourselves.  
We row across the water anyway.

---

Órì l'ó kún,  
Ni a npe alábe.  
Odò l'ó kún,  
L'a npè òtukò.  
Òtukò kò bá tù,  
Àwa a tu odò looró gangan.  
Àwa tu ojú omi sánkálá.

ÌRẸTÈ'SÁ  
222

222:2

**O**ne who guards against treachery is not  
overly fearful.  
After all, when honey bees are finished,  
they leave a honeycomb in the house.  
But when soldier ants are finished,  
they leave devastation.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for the people of  
earth and the inhabitants of heaven  
When they were warring with each other.

---

Ẹnití r'òtè sá kò s'òjo  
Oyin ẹe tán, fáfára dé'lé.  
Eerùn ẹe tán, f'àgàn dé'lé.  
A dífá aráyé a bu fún ará ọrun  
Nígbàtí wọn nígboṣun sí ara won.

**T**he teachings of Ifa were interpreted for  
Akere Kokeyo, the frog, the child  
of the King of Oyo.  
They said two blessings were coming to him,  
And that he should sacrifice so that both  
blessings might reach him.  
But Akere refused to sacrifice.  
He said when he saw the blessings,  
he would sacrifice.  
He was at the farm when they came to tell  
him his wife had given birth to a child.  
When Akere heard this, he was exceedingly  
happy.  
He said that before he went home, he would  
tap some palm wine.  
Then, a messenger from the house arrived to  
say that some people came to call  
on Akere at home,

Because the king had passed and they wanted  
to give him the title.  
They found Akere on the farm where he  
was tapping palm wine at the  
top of a palm tree.  
When they told Akere, he was so happy  
to accept  
He forgot that he was up in the palm tree.  
And he fell down and broke his arms and legs.  
They took him home.  
But when they tried to cure him and could not,  
They gave the title to another person and left  
Akere alone.  
Since that day, people have been saying:  
"Happiness, too much happiness,  
broke the frog's legs."

A dá fún Àkeré kokeyo ti ise omọ Onisinko.  
 Wọn ni ire méjì nbòwá baa  
 Kí ó rúbọ kí méjèèjì le tẹẹ lẹwọ  
 Àkeré kò kò rúbọ.  
 Ó ní ìgbà tí òun bá rí ire náà, òun yíó wá rúbọ.  
 Oke ni Àkeré wà, ìbẹ ní wọn sí gbé wá sọ fún  
     un pé aya rẹ bí omọ.  
 Nígbà tí Àkeré gbọ èyí, inú rẹ dùn púpọ  
 Ó ní kí òun tó lọ sílé, òun yíó dá ẹmu òun náà.  
 Léhìnnàà onísé ti ilé dé wípé wọn npe  
     Àkeré nílẹ  
 Nítorí ọba kú, wọn fẹ fi Àkeré joyè.  
 Wọn lọ bá Àkeré nínú oko níbití ó gbé fúfú  
     ẹmu ní orí ọpẹ.  
 Nígbà tí wọn so fún Àkeré, inú rẹ dùn tó bẹ  
     gẹ tí ó fi jẹ-pé.

Ó gbàghé pé orí ọpẹ ní ó wà.  
 Ó sì wólulẹ ó sì fi apá àti itan sẹ  
 Wọn gbéé wá sílé.  
 Nígbà tí wọn wòó tí kò se wò sà, òun,  
 Wọn fi elòmíran joyé náà wọn sì fi Àkeré sílé.  
 Láti ọjọ náà ni wọn ti máà nwípé;  
 Ayò, ayò jù, Àkeré f'itan sẹ.

223:1

**T**he tradition which the father of  
a child follows,  
Is the one which the child practices.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Oluigbo.  
The same was given to Oluodan.  
They said they should sacrifice.  
Oluigbo was the one who sacrificed.  
They said that all good would gather  
in his hands.  
And people would come to receive it.

---

Àsà tí baba ọmọ nse,  
Ní ọmọ ihù ní.  
A dífá fún Olúigbó  
A bù fún Olúòdàn  
Wọn ní kí àwọn wá rúbọ.  
Olúigbó ní ó rú.  
Wọn ní gbogbo ire ní o máà pé sí ọwọ rẹ  
Tí wọn máa maa wá gbàá.

223:2

**O**sa does not offend.  
Osa does not injure.  
The one who we thought offended us,  
did not do us harm.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for Owa,  
Who was seeing a person as a thief,  
When in fact that person had not done  
any harm.  
They said that Owa should sacrifice,  
So that Eshu might not punish him  
For falsely accusing a person who did  
nothing wrong.

---

223:2

Òsá kò sẹ́.

Òsá kò ró.

Ẹnítí a rò pé ó s'ẹni, kò s'ẹni.

A dífá fún Qwa.

Qwa nífi ojú olè

Wò eníkan tí kò sẹ́

Wọ́n níkí ó wá rúbọ

Kí Ẹsù má bá tì lẹ.

Dúnrumọ́ ẹniyàn kan ọ́a tí kò sẹ́ẹ́.

225:1

**W**e avoid the snake so that the snake  
might not bite us.

We avoid the elephant so that the elephant  
might not seize us.

We avoid the buffalo so that the buffalo  
might not fight with us.

We avoid fire so that fire might not burn us.

We avoid debt so that people  
might not ridicule us.

We avoid other people's property so that we  
might not become thieves.

And so that one day people, without warning,  
will not yell out at us.

We avoid charms so that the evil words of  
charms might not affect us.

They said that those who do not  
avoid anything whatsoever on earth,

225:1

There will be no pleasantness for them,  
And they will not live long on earth.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for humans.  
They said that humans should sacrifice  
So that they might know what to avoid  
which is called *eewo*, *that which is forbidden*.  
They said "those of you who sacrifice will  
live long on earth."

225:1

À nísá fún ejò kí ejò má báa bù'ni je.  
À nísá fún erin kí erin má báa mú'ni.  
À nísá fún ẹfòn kí ẹfòn má lè bá'ni jà.  
À nísá fún iná kí iná má lè jó'ni.  
À nísá fún igbèsè kí ọmọ aráyé máa báa  
fí'ni se ẹlẹyà.  
À nísá fún ohun olóhun kí a má báa di olè  
Níjòkan àìròtẹlẹ kí a má báa pariwo lẹni.  
À nísá fún àlẹ kí ọrọ burúkú àlẹ má báa mú'ni.  
Àwọn tí ó wà tí wípé àwọn kíí sáfún  
ohunkóhun nínú ayé,  
Adún kòsí fún wọn.  
À jẹ pé ayé kòsí.  
A dára fún àwọn ènìyàn.  
Wọn nífí àwọn ènìyàn wá rúbọ  
Kí wọn lè máa mò ohun tí a isáfún  
Tí à nípè ní èèwọ.  
Wọn ní: ẹyin tí ẹ rúbọ á pé nínú ayé  
Àti ayé á màá dún fún yin.

235:1

They said that Olobahun Ijapa should sacrifice.  
 So that he might be given a great gift.  
 He refused and did not sacrifice.  
 They said, "One who does not give something  
 from himself  
 Will not receive something for himself  
 from others."

Wón níki Qlobahun Íjàpá rú  
 Kí wón baà lè máa mú èbùn nílá wá fún un.  
 Ó kò kò rú.  
 Wón ní: Ènití kò mú ohun t'owò rẹ wá,  
 Kí rí tẹni gbà sọwọ.

241:1

The world is not pleasant enough to  
 live in forever.  
 It is the child who says that the world  
 is nice enough.  
 This was the teaching of Ifa for Orunmila,  
 And likewise for the people.  
 They said that Orunmila should sacrifice,  
 So that the world might be pleasant for people.  
 Orunmila asked: "If they themselves do not do  
 things for themselves,  
 How can they truly experience the enjoyment  
 of being in the world?"  
 They said: "A child acts so that a child may eat;  
 But the father of the child teaches the child  
 how to act so the child might eat."  
 Orunmila understood and sacrificed.  
 Then they said humans should sacrifice so  
 that it might benefit them.  
 They came to sacrifice little by little.  
 Those who sacrifice will have enjoyable life.

241:1

Ayé kò dùn tó ibiti à tgbé títí.  
 Ọmọdé ní ó níwípe ayé dára tó.  
 À dásá fún Ọrúnmilà  
 À bù fún àwọn èniyàn.  
 Wọn níki Ọrúnmilà wá rúbọ.  
 Kí ayé lè màá dùn fún àwọn èniyàn.  
 Ọrúnmilà ní: bí wọn kò bá tìkálará wọn  
     se ohun ara wọn,  
 Wọn ha lè mò adún ní ayé báwo?  
 Wọn ní: ọmọ a se kí ọmọ ije;  
 Baba ọmọ nìi kò ọmọ je.  
 Ọrúnmilà gbọ; ó rú.  
 À níki àwọn èniyàn wá se ẹbọ tí ó kàn wọn.  
 Wọn nwa diẹdiẹ  
 Eniti ó bá se ẹbọ ayé rẹ à dùn.

243:1

I fa teachings were interpreted for the osan tree.  
 They said that the osan tree should give  
     food to others,  
 And that she should give drink to others.  
 They said that the osan tree would never come  
     to an end, if she sacrificed.  
 They said she should, therefore, sacrifice.  
 She heard and complied.  
 They said anyone who has much,  
 Should share some of it with those who  
     are still searching.  
 May it be that we see the ancestors again.  
 And may we also never come to an end.

243:1

A dífá fún igi-ọsàn.  
 Wọ́n níkí igi-ọsàn máa fún wọ́n je.  
 Kí ó máa fún wọ́n mu.  
 Wọ́n níkí igi-ọsàn kó máa yéé ní, bí ó bá rúbọ.  
 Wọ́n níkí ó rúbọ.  
 Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.  
 Wọ́n níkí ẹnítí ó bá ní púpò,  
 Kí ó fi diẹ fún ẹnítí kòì tí ní tí ó ñwákiri.  
 Tó a bá rí wón.  
 Àwá sì yóò máa yè ní.

245:1

**R**econstruct yourself.  
 If we are given birth, we should bring  
 ourselves into being again.  
 The balanced person. The moderate person.  
 One who knows moderation will not fall  
 into disgrace.  
 I ask "who knows moderation?"  
 Orunmila says "One who is always working."  
 I ask "who knows moderation?"  
 Orunmila says "one who does not  
 squander money."  
 I ask "who knows moderation?"  
 Orunmila says "one who dares not steal."  
 I ask "who knows moderation?"  
 Orunmila says "one who does not owe  
 excessive debts."

245:1

I ask "who knows moderation?"  
 Orunmila says "one who does not drink liquor,"  
 One who does not break commitments  
     to a friend;  
 One who wakes early in the morning, meditates  
     and thinks deeply about one's actions."  
 From among the thorns and thistles, the palm  
     leaf emerges pointing upward.  
 A balanced person is an *ameso*,  
     one who is truly thoughtful in conduct.

---

245:1

Tún'ra rẹ̀ tẹ̀.  
 Bí a bí'ni, àá tún'ra ẹnì bí.  
 Àmúwọ̀n. Àmúwọ̀n.  
 Ẹ̀nì mọ̀ iwọ̀n, kíí tẹ̀  
 Ẹ̀mì ní taní mọ̀'wọ̀n?  
 Ọ̀rúnmilà ní ẹnìtí ńsísẹ̀  
 Ẹ̀mì ní taní mọ̀'wọ̀n?  
 Ọ̀rúnmilà ní ẹnìtí kíí nǎwó ọ̀wọ̀ rẹ̀ tán.  
 Ẹ̀mì ní taní mọ̀'wọ̀n?  
 Ọ̀rúnmilà ní ẹnìtí kò jẹ̀ jalẹ̀.  
 Ẹ̀mì ní taní mọ̀'wọ̀n?  
 Ọ̀rúnmilà ní ẹnìtí kíí jẹ̀ gbèsè rékojà  
 Ẹ̀mì ní taní mọ̀'wọ̀n?  
 Ọ̀rúnmilà ní ẹnìtí kíí mu ọ̀tí;  
 Ẹ̀nìtí kò jẹ̀ dalẹ̀ ọ̀rẹ̀;  
 Ọ̀jẹ̀kùtùkùtù bǎnú ara rẹ̀ sǎrò nǎtorí ịsẹ̀ rẹ̀  
 Nínú ègún nínú ịsọ, màríwò ọ̀pẹ̀ yọ̀ rí sókè.  
 Àmúwọ̀n ní amẹ̀sọ̀.

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248:1

**T**he teachings of Ifa were interpreted  
for the 200 divine powers on the  
right side of the Lord of Heaven.  
And the same was done for the 200  
divine powers on the left side of  
the Lord of Heaven.  
Who came to earth with Oshun, the elegant  
one, possessor of the beautiful  
coral comb,  
In order to prepare the world for all creatures.  
But when they arrived on earth, they did  
not want to give Oshun due respect.  
So, Oshun began to use her secret power to  
render ineffective the efforts of the  
400 divine powers.  
They quickly went to Olodumare.  
They prepared their case and presented it  
to him.

248:1

They told him that everything that he had  
told them to go and do,  
They could not accomplish it.  
Olodumare asked them: "what about Oshun,  
the only female among you?"  
Then he asked "did you give her due respect?"  
They said they did not give her due respect.  
Olodumare said that they should go and  
give Oshun due respect.  
They returned to earth and they began to  
give due respect to Oshun.  
Then, all their deliberations and efforts  
began to go right.  
Thus, we give due respect to Oshun,  
Our mother who is always present.

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248: 1

Dí fá fún igba Irúnmọlẹ ojùkòtún Olórún,  
 A bù fún igba Irúnmọlẹ ojùkòsì Olórún,  
 Tí wọn bọwa ilé ayé pẹlú Ọsun Sẹ̀ẹ̀gẹ̀sì  
     Olódya-iyùn,  
 Láti pèsè ilé ayé fún gbogbo ẹ̀dá.  
 Nígbà tí wọn dé ilé ayé, wọn kò fẹ́  
     fímọ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀ t'Ọsun.  
 Njẹ Ọsun bèrẹ̀ sí gbé ìkòkò ba ẹbọ Irúnmọlẹ jẹ.  
 Gbogbo ẹ̀ro àti ẹ̀se wọn sí kùná.  
 Wọn gbéra; wọn lọ dọ̀dọ̀ Olódùmarè.  
 Wọn k'ẹ́jọ̀; wọn rò fún Olódùmarè.  
 Wọn ní gbogbo ohun tí ó ní wọn lọ ẹ̀,  
 Wọn ní kò ẹ́ẹ̀ ẹ̀.  
 Olódùmarè ní: "Ọsun, obinrin kan tí ábẹ  
     láarín yin ní kó?"  
 Ó ní nìjẹ, "ẹ̀ fímọ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀ tirẹ̀?"

248: 1

Wọn ní àwọn ó fímọ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀ tirẹ̀  
 Olódùmarè ní kí wọn lọ fímọ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀ tirẹ̀.  
 Wọn wá padà wá silé ayé.  
 Wọn wá fímọ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀ t'Ọsun  
 Nígbà náà gbogbo ẹ̀ro àti ẹ̀se  
     wọn bèrẹ̀ sí gún.  
 Nítorí náà, a fímọ̀ jẹ t'Ọsun  
 Yẹyẹ wa a bá wọn pé nímọ̀.

ÀSỌYÉ

This is a teaching on the indispensability of the female presence and principle in existence and in all things of importance to the world as a whole. It immediately reminds us of Anna Julia Cooper's teaching that "there is a female as well as male side to truth" and that those who do not recognize and respond appropriately to this do, damage to both male and female, as well as to the world. The critical nature of the teaching is accentuated by several elements. First, the composition of the workforce sent to set the world right is a ratio of 400 to one. We can read this in at least two ways: first, as an indication that the issue is woman/female whether one or 1,000. Also the lesson is that the *asẹ* of one who is right is greater than the larger number and power of those who are wrong. Secondly, the teaching is about the very

work of creation of the world, and thus essential to how we understand both its foundation and functioning.

Thirdly, the point of the indispensability of the female element in existence and the world is reaffirmed not only by Oshun's ability to thwart and make successful the work of creation, but by the divine direction to the male divinities to return to earth and give Oshun due respect. That Olodumare, Lord of Heaven and Earth, gave this specific direction carries with it an unsurpassable authority for the moral necessity of the due respect and respectful inclusion of the female in all matters of importance in the world. Olodumare's two questions before giving the direction to respect and include Oshun in the work of creation are instructive and rich in symbolism. First, he asks what about Oshun, the one female among them. The question at once suggests that in their report the male divinities did not even mention Oshun. Therefore, Olodumare first compels them by his question to recognize her very presence in the creation process.

Secondly, he asks them did they give her due respect? The first and second questions are linked and both are about respectful recognition and inclusion. But

the first question is to indicate that basic recognition of the female presence and principle in the serious activity of world creation is the beginning basis of respect for female as female, woman as woman. The second question makes it morally compelling to recognize and respect the personal and general worth of women as partners in any process and project of bringing good into the world. Here *due respect* is clearly a question of respect for both the presence and power of women. For their presence and participation determine not only the *quality of the process* but also the *success of the project*. This point is made clear in this text but also in Odu Osa Meji (10:2) which states that men can do nothing *of substance* in the world without the participation of women.

The lesson here, again, is that in all things essential, women and men are and must be partners in the constant co-creation of the world. And thus, we are morally compelled to ask in every important and essential activity, the two questions Olodumare asks: first, what about the woman, where is she in the process or project, and secondly, do we give her due respect as a person and indispensable partner in the ongoing project and process of bringing good into the world?

250:1

**T**he liar casts the kola nut and it  
yields a bad omen.

The commitment breaker casts the kola nut  
and it does not yield a good result.

But the good-hearted person casts the  
kola nut and the result is clearly  
promising.

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Èké pa'bi, ó dí.

Òdàlẹ̀ pa'bi, kò yàn.

Onínúre pa'bi, ó yé peregede.

253:1

**T**he teachings of Ifa were interpreted  
for one who is familiar with wealth  
and is not ungenerous.  
They said he should come forth and sacrifice.  
They said he should sacrifice everything  
that the mouth consumes.  
He heard and made the sacrifice.  
And he prospered accordingly.  
They said that a kindhearted person will not  
suffer from need in the world.

A dífá fún anímò-ọlà anímáshun  
Wọn níki ó wá rúbọ.  
Wọn níki ohun ghogbo tí ẹnú ije ni kí ó wá rú.  
Ó gbọ; ó rúbọ.  
Ó sì se aásíkí bètè gégè.  
Wọn níki olóore kí se àìní layé.

254:1

**T**hey taught me and then I taught  
myself again.

This was the interpretation of Ifa for Oluseso,  
the one who practices gentleness.  
They said "that which is good in the eyes of the  
whole world is what Oluseso would  
like to do."  
They said he should sacrifice,  
So that the people of the world might have  
respect for him.  
He heard and made the sacrifice.

Wọn tẹ mí; mo túnra mi tẹ.  
A dífá fún Olùṣèsò.  
Wọn ní: èyítí ó dára lójú ayé ni yíó  
máa wù Olùṣèsò láti se.  
Wọn ní ó wá rúbọ  
Kí àwọn ọmọ aráyé lè máa buyin fún un.  
Ó gbọ; ó rú.

254:2

**T**he teaching of Ifa was interpreted  
for Omi, water.  
They said that he should sacrifice.  
They said that no one would ever become  
his enemy.  
He understood and sacrificed.  
They said anyone who makes himself  
an enemy of water  
Will die a premature death.

A dífá fún Omi.

Wón níki ó wá rúbọ.

Wón ní: ẹníkẹni kó maa s'ọtá rẹ láíláí.

Ó gbọ; ó rú.

Wón ní: ẹnítí ó nńá Omi sọtá,

Ni yíò kú ikú àtọ́jọ.

255:1

**I**f one's destiny is unfortunate, perhaps one's  
internal wisdom is not sufficient.  
There is water in the house of the owner  
of the ocean.  
The ocean is the head of all waters.  
There is water in the house of the owner of  
the lagoon, the lagoon which holds  
second place.  
There is wisdom within Akoda,  
Akoda who taught the whole world Ifa.  
There are words within Asheda, Asheda who  
taught all the elders wise counsel.  
There is wisdom within Orunmila,  
He who makes the world right,  
The repairer who repairs the unfortunate  
destiny.

255:1

The one who improves perception that  
is not good.  
This was the teaching of Ifa for those who  
did not know what to do and did not  
know what to be,  
Who were crying out every day about lacking  
a good destiny.  
They said that those who do not know  
what to do and do not know what to be,  
If they study Ifa, their destinies, in the end,  
will be good.

---

255:1

Bí orí kò sunwòn, báyá ọgbọn inú ni kò itó.  
Omi nbe nlé Olokun.  
Okun nbe olórí omi.  
Omi nbe nlé olóṣà, ọṣà ibikéjì.  
Ọgbọn nbe nínú Akódá, Akódá tí nkó  
gbogbo ayé n'Ífá.  
Ọrò nbe nínú Aṣèdà, Aṣèdà tí nkó  
gbogbo àgbà ni ìmọ̀ràn.  
Ọgbọn nbe nínú Ọ̀rúnmilà, amáyégún,  
Ò dúdú tí ndú orí emèrè,  
A tún rí tí kò sunwòn ẹ.  
A dára fún àwọn kòmòṣe-kòmòṣewà  
Tí ojoojúmọ́ kégbe orí àisunwòn.  
Wọn ní: àwọn kòmòṣe-kòmòṣewà  
Tí wọn kó Ifá, orí wọn á sunwòn nígbèhìn.

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256:1

**I**fa says there is someone whom people say  
will never be important.  
But the Lord of Heaven will open the way to  
wealth and peace for her/him.  
Everyone will return repeatedly to pay honor  
to her/him.  
And they will bow down to her/him.  
And even if s/he does not acquire a title,  
S/he will be honored more than those who  
do have titles.

256:1

Ifá ní ẹnìkan wà tí àwọn ènìyàn n̄sọ pé  
kò ní láárí.  
Sùgbón Qlórùn máa sí ọ̀nà ọ̀là àti  
àlǎáfà fún un.  
Gbogho ènìyàn nì yíó máa padà látí wá tún bọ  
ọ̀là fún un.  
Tí wọn yíó sì máa tẹ orí balẹ́ fún un.  
Bí kò joyè,  
Ọ̀un yíó ní ọ̀là ju ẹnítí ó joyè lọ.

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