



Fundamental Code of Natural Laws in *Ifá* Divination as Agents of Morality for Good Governance in Nigeria

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Abstract

Ifá is the natural wisdom and knowledge concerning all life activities divinely revealed to Ọ̀rúnmilà by Olódùmarè, God in Yorùbá belief. It is the living foundation and custodian of the deity, moral, economic, language, religion, healing arts, tradition, culture and metaphysical orders. However, the concern of this paper is on the moral contents of the natural laws in Ifá corpus. Basically, there are two fundamental codes of natural laws in Ifá divination under which all other laws in Ifá exist. The first law enjoined every human being to acknowledge Olódùmarè as the Supreme Being and father of the universe who created all things. While the second law says “do unto others what you want them do unto you.” However, it is quite unfortunate that, today, these laws that linked human relationships with the Supreme Being and the dos and don'ts of the divinities and those that hold the society together in harmonious relationships are no longer in proper use. This is evident in the lack of fear for the Creator, mismanagement of public funds, embezzlement and political killings, to mention a few. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to examine the natural laws in Ifá and suggest how it can help sustain our fragile democracy as it did in the traditional society in the past for the sake of our future. The paper is premised on Matthew Flanagan's theory of divine commands which asserts that what is moral is determined by what God commands, and to be moral is to follow his commands.

Keywords: Natural laws, Ifá divination, morality, Ọ̀rúnmilà, divine commands.

Introduction

What is *Ifá* divination? This is the question that readily comes to the minds of anybody that hears the word. *Ifá* divination is the word of *Olódùmarè* that had been in existence since the establishment of the world¹. It is natural wisdom and knowledge concerning all life activities given to by *Olódùmarè*. Although *Ifá* is not a philosophy, but it has a lot of concepts with philosophical issues. In it is the living foundation and custodian of the deity, economic, religion healing arts, metaphysical order as well as moral and a host of other virtues. *Ifá* is infinite source of knowledge – *imọ̀ àmọ̀n ì mọ̀n tán*² that talks virtually about everything one can think of, including science of nature, animals, plants, incantations, divination, human and their nature with their peaceful

¹Ifálere Odegbemi Odegbola, 2014, *Iwe Mimo Ifá: Esin Akoda Olódùmarè*, Ibadan: Odegbola Transitional Global Services, vii.

² M. Akin Makinde, 1988, *African philosophy, culture and traditional medicine*, Athens; University Center for international studies, 5.



coexistence with the aid of moral laws given by *Olódùmarè* and some more generated from this natural laws by the people.

Among the Yorùbá, *Ifá* is the potent source of having an insight into the future³. More importantly, it is the source of morality and ethical values of the society. Though *Ifá* is the word of *Olódùmarè*, He however, commissioned *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* to be in charge of this word for the benefit of humanity and other divinities. According to Adewale⁴, when he was sent to the earth by *Olódùmarè* on a mission to restore order and teach human beings the science of nature and the art of proper living (i.e. moral virtues), he was given the word of *Olódùmarè* that is known and called *Ifá*. *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* came to the world with the entourage of heavenly beings known and called *Irúnmọ̀lẹ̀*. They were the first inhabitants of the earth and *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* was their mouth piece. They spent a long time on earth and later ascended to heaven⁵.

After *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* had ascended to heaven, his disciples, known and called *Babaláwo-Ifá* priests in Yorùbáland continued in the tradition he laid down till today.⁶ However, it is quite unfortunate that western civilization has led to the neglect of *Ifá*; the word of *Olódùmarè* thereby created a vacuum against its development, particularly the moral and ethical aspect of *Ifá* as we have in other religions like Christianity and Islam that are failing us today as a nation. Though they preach moral, they have little regards for ethical virtues. Do we then say that all religious truth lives within one tradition, and therefore, that anything outside such a tradition is wrong? Or can we assume that there is no truth in other sacred traditions but only in one, particularly one's own or in the case of Nigeria, in Christianity and Islam?

Our nation is in disarray because we have neglected our past and God given rules. What we have in place are insecurity, *voodoo* economy, political killings religious intolerance and many other social vices. To get out of the woods, therefore, this paper examined the natural laws in *Ifá* and offered suggestions on how it can help us sustains our fragile democracy as it was in the days of the natives for the sake of our future. The theoretical framework for this paper is premised on Mathew Flanagan theory of divine command that says what is moral is determined by what God commands. Therefore, to be moral is to follow the command of the creator. One may then ask, what is morality is all about, and what is the role of *Ifá* divination as agent of morality?

What Morality is all about and the Roles *Ifá* Divination as a Moral Agent

Morality is the principle concerning the distinction between what is right and what is wrong. It is about good and bad behaviour. It is a conformity with self-code, doctrine or system of rules or wishes of God, or how to behave with the norms of social behaviour. Looking at this with the laws or wishes of God, we still realise that morality depends on God. According to Dostoevsky⁷, if there is no God, then we won't be talking about right or wrong. As a result, everyone would go about doing whatever he/she like. Therefore, morality in his view, depends on God.

Looking at this from the Yorùbá traditional religion's perspective, we shall realize that *Olódùmarè*, in his words *Ifá*, through *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* prescribed some natural laws to guide our behaviour and conducts toward *Olódùmarè*, divinities and fellow human beings. *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* enjoined everyone to live at peace with God and fellow human beings in accordance with these laws. There, he teaches

³ M. Akin Makinde 1988, African philosophy, culture and traditional medicine, Athens; University center for international studies,

⁴ Aina Adewale Somadhi, 2008, *Fundamental of the Yoruba Religion; Orisa Worship*, San Bernadino, USA: Ile Ọ̀rúnmìlà Communications, xxiii.

⁵ Ifagbemi Yokelepekun, (Babalawo Ifa priest), *Personal Interview*, Apete, Ibadan, 10th, July 2020

⁶ C.L. Adeoye, 1979, *Asa Ati Ise Yoruba*, Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 9

⁷ www.businessdictionary.com. Retrieved on 25/09/2015.



that we should all love one another. According to *Òrúnmìlà*, it is through this love for fellow human beings that happiness comes when one devotes one's time to the selfless service of other members of the community or country. This implies that if one truly loves his or her fellow being, there won't be killing, cheating, seduction, embezzlement, misappropriation of public funds, stealing and some other social vices.

Out of different means of articulating the divine mystery and different paths leading to it, *Ifá* divination is one and whole indivisible source of this mystery. According to Lucas, *Ifá* is the oracular deity, the most popular and most important in Yorùbáland⁸. *Ifá* is turned to for guidance and for ascertaining the will of *Olódùmarè* as regards the matter of the past, present and the future. All important events in life is referred to *Ifá* for its guidance and advice. *Ifá* is consulted in marriage relationships, friendships, kingship, chieftaincy, economic, political and religious matters. As said earlier, this *Ifá* is neither human worship rather, as written by Salami⁹ in his word, the divine message of *Olódùmarè* to the entire world.

Although *Ifá* is in possession of knowledge of several branches as said earlier, but knowledge of this surpasses the moral and ethical teachings of *Ifá*. This evidence in most of *Ifá* is available in both major and minor *Odù`*s. Hardly do we see any chapter or verse of *Odù`* that does not talk about one moral instruction or the other, directly or indirectly. Most of these moral teachings are *either* taught in proverbs, wise saying, or stories.

Some of these moral teachings of *Ifá* are found in natural laws given to humanity to guide our conducts among human beings, and our relationship with the divine begins and finally with *Olódùmarè* the Supreme Being¹⁰. The first of such natural laws is the one that enjoined human beings to acknowledge *Olódùmarè* as the Supreme Being and father of the universe who created all things. This is evidence in many *Ifá* chapters and verses. Both divinities and mankind were advised to worship *Olódùmarè*. According to *Odù Ófún-sé*¹¹ *Ifá* says divinities acknowledged the supremacy and headship of *Olódùmarè*. There *Ifá* says;

Orí gbó kéké, idàndá gèèrè
Eruku yomù Awo wọn lóde ọrun
A dífá fún gbogbo ọkànlérúnwó Irúnmọlẹ

Wọn nọ rẹ̀e gba isin nílẹ̀ Olódùmarè l'óde ọrun

Eruku – yomì a dé ọ
Olódùmarè mo dé ọ
Mo wá yin ó ọ o.

Ori gbo keke, Idanda geere
 Eruku yomu the initiate in heaven
 Ifa divination was performed for all the four
 hundred and one divinities
 They were going to obtain worship at
 Olodumare's house in heaven
 Erukuyomu we've arrived
 Olodumare I'm around
 I came to pay homage.

In the same vain, *Òrúnmìlà*, the custodian of *Ifá*, also advised all mankind's to direct all its worship to *Olódùmarè*. Though one may wonder why he gives such an advice it is because a lot of people, particularly people from different faiths, hope and belief that the Yorùbá and Africans in general worship idols. This assertion had been argued several times that Africans do not worship idols. Rather, these divinities or the so called idols are just servants, errand boys and girls of the creator, *Olódùmarè*. It is undeniable in those days that people directed their worship toward the divinities, the concept that was not peculiar to the Africans alone, rather the whole world. However, the fact

⁸ J. Olumide Lucas, 1948. *The religion of the Yorùbás*, Lagos; CMS Bookshop. 71.

⁹ Ayo Salami, 2008, *Yorùbá Theology and Tradition the Genealogy*, Lagos: NIDD Publishing Company, 11.

¹⁰ William Bascom, 1969, *Ifa Divination; Communication Between Gods and man in West Africa*, London: Indiana University Press, 104

¹¹ Adebowale Akintola, 1999, *Yoruba Ethics and Meta Physics*, Ogbomosho: Valour Publishing Venture Limited, 41



remains that mankind knows that both the divinities and the spirits were created by *Olódùmarè*¹². They also know that they (divinities and spirits) possess some qualities and powers that mankind do not have. Thus people tend to fear and reverence them. However with the advice of *Ọ̀rúnmilà* through *Ifá*, mankind re-established its commitment to worship *Olódùmarè* through these divinities. *Àràbà Ọ̀láyemí*, an informant sited *Ọ̀ṣẹ̀túrá*¹³ that attested to the above fact:

<p>Ọ̀yèlẹ̀ yẹlẹ̀ Ifá ní ká máa júbà Ọ̀lọrun Torípé, oyin á sí Oyin á lọ ní kókó igi Ọ̀yèlẹ̀ nyẹlẹ̀ Ifá ní ká má a júbà Ọ̀lọrun Ó ní lójó kan l'áfòmọ̀ yó lọ lórùn ọ̀pẹ Ó ní lójó kan l'ojijifèrè yó relé Olódùmarè láfẹfẹ Ó ni lójó kan ni òun Ọ̀rúnmilà yó sí nílẹ̀ ayé. Tí òun ó ròde ọ̀run Ó ní wọn a ní baba olóore lọ Baba tí í gbami lójó ibi Ó ní njẹ̀ nígbàyí È ẹ̀ ma júbà mi pèlú Olódùmarè bí?</p>	<p>Oyele yele Ifa says we should be paying homage to Go Because bee will depart Bee will go away from the tree Oyele yele Ifa says we should be paying homage to God He says the parasite will depart from the palm tree He says one day Ojijifere will go to the house of Olodumare in a wind form. He says he, Orunmila would one day migrate from this world, That he would go to heaven They would say a benefactor has gone the father that rescue on evil days He says then Would you be paying homage to me?</p>
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In *Odù Ọ̀ṣẹ̀-Ìrẹ̀tẹ̀*, *Ifá* also advised that it is important for mankind to serve, worship and venerate *Olódùmarè*, the self - existent being. In the *Odù*, *Ifá* says,

<p>Ewé layé, Gbòngbò èniyàn nbẹ̀ lóde ọ̀run A difà fún Ọ̀rúnmilà, Níjọ̀ tí yíó mú ìbà Olódùmarè wálẹ̀ ayé Ó fi nkọ̀ gbogbo wa, Ó ní kí á má ẹ̀ fi sùrú pe eṣú Kí a má fi sùrú pe eṣú ọ̀dàrà Ó ní kí a má fi ewé ìròkò p'ewé oriro Ká má fewé àgbágbà p'ewé àgbọn Awá ta sílẹ̀ kótó ta senu, Èdùmarè mà làgbà Àwọn tí wọn fi sùrú pe sùrú Èdùmarè mà làgbà Àwọn tó nfewé ìròkò pewé àgbọn Èdùmarè mà làgbà</p>	<p>The world is a leaf Man's root is in heaven Ifa divination was performed for Orunmila On the day he will bring Olodumare's homage to the world He taught every one of us He says we should not misconstrue Suru for Esu We should not misconstrue suru with Esu Odara He says we should not misconstrue iroko's leaf for oriro's leaf We should not refer to plantain leaf as coconut leaf It will splash on the grand before mouth Edumare^{14**} is supreme Those that referred to suru as suru Edumare is Supreme Those that referred to iroko's leaf as coconut's leaf Edumare is Supreme.</p>
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As a divine decree for humanity, *Ọ̀rúnmilà* teaches mankind never to mistake truth for falsehood. This is *Olódùmarè*'s law to all living beings that established the sacredness of truth. It is sad to say that truth has eluded Nigeria as a nation. Rather than truth, we celebrate falsehood, greed,

¹² E. Bolaji Idowu, 1962, *Olodumare God in Yoruba Belief*, Nigeria: Longman Nigeria Limited, 62.
¹³ Araba Olayemi, Babalawo - Ifa Priest, *Personal Interview*, Ilaporu, 12th September, 2020
¹⁴ ** Edumare is the shorten form of the Supreme Being's name called Olodumare in Yoruba belief system.



unrighteousness and other social vices. Besides, the above *Odù* explained that there is no substitute for *Olódùmarè* the Supreme Being that must be worshipped and feared. But the question is, if we truly fear and respect this God and his laws, Nigeria ought not to be experiencing what she is experiencing today. *Ìwòrì wòdin*¹⁵ is also in support of the above assertion. According to the *Odù*, *Ifá* explained that:

*A njowú Olórun ni
 Ìbòsí Olódùmarè lawo nké
 Bí a ní wọn ó kínni lẹhin
 Wọn a fẹgún sọwọ
 Èni a ní ó fẹni lójú
 F'ata senu
 Òpó à bá fẹyìn ti
 Ikán ti múdí è jẹ tán
 Èni a ní á finú hàn
 Jálárò kiri ẹni.
 A dífá fún gbogbo ọmọ èniyàn.
 Wọn dorí kodò
 Wọn npe Olódùmarè ní baba.*

We are only envy God
 We are only proclaiming Olodumare's might
 If we ask for their support
 They turn deaf ears
 The one we rely on for assistance
 Happened to be a wicked one
 The pillar we ought to lean on,
 Has been devoured by termites at the base
 The person we intend to confide in
 Is a talkative
 Cast divination for the all human beings
 They became pensive
 They are referring to Olodumare as the father.

The second law established that we should do unto others what you want them do unto you. This is what Adebawale¹⁶ called the golden rule in his work. According to him, since no one likes to be killed, no one should kill another man. No one wants his property stolen; this indicates that no one should steal other person's property. No one admires a liar, therefore, we should endeavour to tell the truth and stand by it. These and so many others are the fundamental code of national laws that constitute the foundation of all ethics and moral laws all over the world. Somadhi¹⁷ was elaborate in her own exploitation of these laws. She identified sixteen of these laws in *Odù Ìká Òfún*, which included ability to tell the truth, not to mislead people, not to deceive people, not to claim wisdom that they lacked, to be humble and never be egocentric, not to be treacherous, not to break taboos, respect the weak, the poor, the feeble and be nice to them, respect to the elderly, respect to moral laws, not to betray truths, not to disrespect and so on.

The laws of nature that says we should do unto others what we want them to do unto us enjoined us among other things to render selfless service to others. This is the reason why the Yorùbá would say or always say that "*Òfi ti è sílẹ gbọ tẹmi ẹlẹni, Òrìṣà òkè- Olódùmarè ni í ba a gbọ tiẹ-* whoever devotes his time to help others, it is God that helps such a person. This is evidence in one of the informants assertion in *Ìròsùn méjì*¹⁸ on this interpersonal relationship that;

*Àkùkọ f'ogbe lẹbẹ lẹbẹ se'yi
 A dífá fún Òpílíkí
 Tí ó fi tiẹ sílẹ
 Tí ó ngbọ tẹni ẹlẹni kiri
 Wọn ní ẹbọ ni kí Òpílíkí rú
 Òpílíkí gbẹbọ nbẹ ó sì ru
 Ìgbà tó rúbọ náà tán,
 Wọn ní kí ó má a lọ tún ti ọmọ ẹlòmíràn ẹ
 Ju ti ara rẹ lọ*

The cock decorates itself with its comb
 Ifa divination was performed for Opiliki
 That abandons his work
 That concentrates on other people's task
 They told him to offer sacrifice
 Opiliki yielded and performed the sacrifice
 After he had performed the sacrifice,
 He was told to concentrate the more on others
 Than his own

¹⁵ Fagbougbe Ibiyemi, Babawo- Ifa Priest, *Personal Interview*, Mokola, Ibadan, 24th September, 2020
¹⁶ Adewale Akintola, 1999, *Yoruba Ethics and Metaphysics*, Ogbomosho: Valour Publishing Venture Limited, 98
¹⁷ Aina Adewale Somadhi, 2008, *Fundamentals of the Yoruba Religion; Orisa Worship*, San Bernadino, USA: Ile Orúnmila Communications, 12-13
¹⁸ Fatoba Adedeji, an Ifa Priest, *Personal interview*, 26th August, 2021.



<i>Ìgbà tí tiẹ ó dáa tán,</i>	After fortune had smiled on him,
<i>Ijó ni í jó,</i>	He started to dance
<i>Ayò ni í yò.</i>	He started to rejoice
<i>Ó ní kíni ó bámi túnwà a tẹmi ẹ?</i>	He says what will assist in reshaping his character?
<i>Èrìgi àlò, Ifá ni ó bámi túnwà a tẹmi ẹ. Erigi alo, Ifa will assist in reshaping my character.</i>	

What *Ifá* is saying here is that, the custodian of *Ifá* (we should note that *Ifá* is used for *Òrúnmilà* interchangeably by people because of their closeness) will intercede on behalf of the person that the divination was performed for before the creator - *Olódùmarè*. This is the primary responsibility of the divinities for mankind, and this is the reason why human beings offer them foods of all kinds and some other materials in form of *ẹbọ*- sacrifice, for them to present our petitions very well before the creator. Another informant also speak about the truth as an ethical concept which is the most important of all the virtues. According to him, *Ifá* advised us in *Odù Èjioḡbè*¹⁹ that;

<i>Sòtító,</i>	Say the truth
<i>Sòdodo</i>	Be honest
<i>Èní sòtító</i>	Whoever say the truth
<i>Nimalẹ ngbè</i>	Will be aided by the gods
<i>Torípé, ẹké ẹké, ẹké tíí</i>	Because the deceitful was so engrossed in deceit
<i>Ó kú sójú iná,</i>	That he died in the public
<i>Şòdàlẹ şòdàlẹ, şòdàlẹ tíí</i>	The treacherous was so engrossed in treachery that
<i>Ó kú şòdàn oòrùn</i>	He died in the open place
<i>Onínún ire şere tíí</i>	The benevolent was so engrossed in benevolence
<i>Ó kú, forí l'ajere idẹ</i>	That he died and rest in peace
<i>Ó kó ọwọ méjèjì lé orí ọmọ tẹnté</i>	He placed his two hands on his children
<i>A dífá fún Ọrúnmilà</i>	Ifa divination was performed for Orunmila
<i>Ifá nşawo re'fẹ aşèké</i>	Ifa was on expedition to deceitful lfe town
<i>Ó nşawo re'fẹ aşòdàlẹ</i>	Ifa was on expedition to treacherous lfe town
<i>Ó nşawo re'fẹ aşòdodo...</i>	Ifa was on expedition to truthful lfe town

These and many other *Odù* are what *Ifá* advised us to include into our society to edify human for everyone to leave at peace. One may wonder what all these have got to do with governance in Nigeria. However, before we answer this question, it is important to make a critical work at the Nigerian governance.

The Relevance of Natural Laws in *Ifá* as a Model for Good Governance

In the traditional religion of the Yorùbá, and Africans in general, though *Olódùmarè* is physically absent on earth, everyone must love him as the Supreme Being, acknowledge him as the father of the universe and creator of all things. *Ifá*, the word of *Olódùmarè* is the author and custodian of all things that *Olódùmarè* created. *Òrúnmilà* in turn was given the authority to care for this world of *Olódùmarè* because of his wisdom. As earlier said, *Ifá* is recognized all over Yorùbá land, Africa and the world in general. The truth in *Ifá* cannot be over emphasized and its laws are strictly obeyed by our forefathers. Good lessons derived from *Ifá* in those days are still in place and ardent devotees still obey and make use of them till today. Though there are great changes in the ways of doing things now. Nevertheless, obeying the laws, then made all things easy and convenient for our forefathers. For instance, in those days, in Yorùbá land, our forefathers will only use stone to indicate how much they wanted to sell their goods where there was no one to stay by such goods, especially beside the road to their respective farms. Any passersby who were interested in buying the goods would count the stone and drop the amount in monetary value

¹⁹ Fatile Gbenga, Babalawo- Ifa Priest, *Personal Interview*, 27th Inalende, September, 2021



without taking more than the required goods or paying incomplete, inadequate money that was not in commensurate with the goods taken.

This is because they were aware and knew in their hearts that where there is no man, *Olódùmarè* is there. Therefore, their belief in *Olódùmarè* was so deep that they were always afraid to do evil.²⁰ Besides, they also opined that whatever things they do on earth here, they are going to render account before the creator at the end of their life in the land of the living. This is the reason why *Ifá* priests always sing the song below;

*Kámá ùkà láyé²¹,
Tori à ún rọrun,
Kámá ùkà láyé o o ò
Tori à ún rọrun ùn,
T'abá ti dé bodè,
Aó rojọ o.*

We should not be wicked on earth
Because we are going to heaven
We should never be wicked on earth
Because we are going to heaven
When we get to heaven's gate
We shall surely give account of our deeds

Again, the second law that says do unto others what you want them do unto you that Somadhi²² explained in elaborate manner in *Odù Íká Òfún* as part of several *Ifá* laws that guide *Babaláwo* and *Ọrúnmilà* followers is pertinent to everyone who practices Yorùbá religion through *Ifá*. This is where these laws are relevant. It could be a model for good governance in the sense that all that they preach, all that they advocate for in their religion, love, truth, peace, accountability, prudence in spending and a host of other social vices are what our political systems lack. By emulating these *Babaláwo* and the followers of *Ọrúnmilà*, we hope that things will change for the better in Nigeria. Although we are not saying here that there are no few bad ones among the *Babaláwo* who sometimes deviates from these laws, yet the point remains that such bad eggs, where found among them, would be seriously warned, punished and eventually be sent packing if they refused to heed warnings. All the *Babaláwo* interviewed admitted that there are a few bad eggs among them but they are not afraid because if they are not found, they take solace in after life judgment of *Olódùmarè* who is going to judge according to every deeds. Besides, *kò sèni tó ma ùkà t'ólọrun kò ní dá léjọ*-no wicked man will escape the judgment of the creator. *Ifá* explained this in *Odù Ìdín-Èrín²³* that:

*Ìdín arinrin morin
Ìdín arinrin morin
Ò bá rìn rìn rìn,
Kó o múgi àyin bọwálé
Ènikan kò ní ọ ó yin bó dọla
A dífá fún orí,
Ó sawo títi ó fi gbadé
Ọrún sawo títi ó gbèjigbàrà ilẹkẹ
Bèbè idí sawo títi,
Ó gba mósàájì așọ ọba tó koná yanranyanran.
A dífá fún Ọrúnmilà
Ó sawo títi ó gba èbúbù ịșu wálé...*

Idin arinrin morin
Idin arinrin morin
You could have walk so long
And bring Ayin tree home
No one will praise you tomorrow
Ifa divination was performed for Ori
Who divined to the level of receiving a crown
The neck divined and collect expensive beads
The buttocks divined
Received expensive clothes
Ifa divination was performed for Orunmila
Who divined and receive half cut of yam

²⁰ E.A Lijadu, 1998, *Ifa Mimo Alabalase Palero Kinni*, Ondo: Ifeoluwa Printing Press, 1

²¹ Ogunyemi Ojo, Babalawo- Ifa Priest, *Oral Interview*, Inalende Ibadan, 16th September 2021.

²² Aina Adewale Somadhi, 2008, *Fundamental of the Yoruba Religion; Orisa Worship*, San Bernadino, USA: Ile Ọrúnmila Communications, 17

²³ Ifalere Odegbemi Odegbola, 2014, *Iwe Ifa Mimo: Esin Akoda Olodumare*, Ibadan: Odegbola Traditional Global Services, 196



The four of them went to divine for *Ọlọfin*, where they all prescribed for *Olofin*. *Ori*- head lied by prescribing crown and lots of money as sacrifice; the neck prescribed expensive beads and lots of money as sacrifice, while the buttocks prescribed expensive clothing and lots of money. It was only *Ọrúnmilà* that did not lie in his own prescription of half cut of a tubal of yam and little money. They all went away with their prescriptions. Shortly after that, *Ori*- head, *orun* – neck and *bebe idi*- buttocks were sick. They had to offer those things they cunningly collected as sacrifice before they were okay. This is what gives good *Babaláwo* confidence that “*Eni bá kánjú gba kọkọrọ ọlà, ilẹkùn àbámọ ni yíó fi sí kẹyin*”- he who was in a hurry to get the key to riches will use the key to open the door of sorrow at the end. At least all the *Babaláwo* interviewed agreed with this assertion.

Conclusion

Ifá is the pathfinder of the Yorùbá. As confirmed by *Ọrúnmilà* himself when he was leaving the world, that whatever one desires in life, one should ask *Ifá* for guidance. It is *Ifá* that will foretell about epidemic outbreak, diseases and so on. It is also *Ifá* that tells the type of sacrifice to offer to avert calamity. For peaceful co-existence, *Ifá* plays a big role. In fact, in a thousand and one things that the Yorùbá might try to do, *Ifá* is not left behind. In governance, installation of new king, chieftaincy taking and smooth running of government in those days in Yorùbá land, *Ifá* took preeminent position. Therefore there is nothing wrong in tapping some wisdom from *Ifá*, the source of our ancient beginning. This does not necessarily mean we are backward or uncivilized. Islam, Christian, Judaism and Buddhism among others are traditional religions of some people. They are not superior to *Ọrúnmilà*'s testament that *Ifá* represents. Just as we are receive wisdom and knowledge from these foreign religions, so also we can derive wisdom as it used to be in the past to direct our affairs in our own ways rather than adopting corrupt system.

To maintain a political stability in the country, political office holders should be ready to obey *Olódùmarè*'s laws that will help them to be truthful in their dealing with public funds and the citizen, rather than paying lip service. Through the fear of God, they would stop killing people in the name of politics. When they realize that they cannot create, then they will not kill. With all these at the back of their minds, there would be free and fair elections when they realize that the law of *Olódùmarè* is all about love and truth, then they would be accountable to the electorates, thereby minimizing to the barest minimal, if it cannot eradicate mismanagement of public funds, all these put together will bring out the good leadership in them.

Besides, it is high time we took our culture seriously and made use of valuable things in it to better our social life. It is high time we re-discovered our nationalism and our wealth so as to liberate ourselves from the slavery, shackles and thralldom of western civilization and government that is not yielding the desired results. It is their own God given system and it is working for them. Therefore, our on will also work for us if we desire it. This would be a better world if the power of love replaces the love of power. *Ifá* divination would be of great help in this direction.

** Edumare is the shorten form of the Supreme Being's name called Olodumare in Yoruba belief system.

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