

Research Article

Interrogating the Influence of *Babaláwo-Ifá* Priest's Lifestyle on *Ọmọ Awo*-Neophytes as Found in *Ìrètè-Ọkànràn* in *Ifá* Divination and the Lessons for the Contemporary Society

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Abstract

Leadership, the ability to lead by good example, is universal and it cuts across every aspect of human life, be it political, social, economic and religious. Leadership quality must be displayed by the people at the top so that their followers/disciples will not be led astray. However, not all leaders are leading by good examples, the effects of which are felt by the led at the receiving end and the society at large because the disciples or the followers tend to emulate some of the characters of their leaders. Therefore, it is imperative for a leader to demonstrate quality examples for the followers to imitate as demonstrated by Ọrúnmilà in *Ìrètè-Ọkànràn* and other similar tenets of *Ifá* divination system. This is found in the lifestyle of the *Babaláwo-Ifá* priests that followed the teachings/lifestyle of Ọrúnmilà, the custodian of *Ifá* and by extension their neophytes, particularly, in the aspect of greed. Greed is evidently displayed in leadership especially in contemporary third world nations. Conversely, how has the lifestyle of *Babaláwo* been able to curtail this among their followers and of what benefits to the contemporary generation? The study proffered answers to the questions from the data generated from fifteen *Babaláwo-Ifá* priests and twenty *Ọmọ Awo*-trainees/ neophytes and their views content analysed. The study was able to discover that *Ifá* priesthood is a service to humanity (not a money-making venture) and discipline against greed is their watchword for them to achieve this. If the contemporary generation could imbibe this culture, it is going to be the best antidote against many social vices particularly the get-rich quick syndrome that is rampant among the youths nowadays that is responsible for their early death.

Keywords

Leadership, *Babaláwo-Ifá* Priests, Neophytes, *Ifá* Divination System, Contemporary Generation

1. Introduction

Leadership is the ability to lead others to success in a mission or assignment set by an employer or by oneself. A leader should be able to draw from his pool of skills, attributes and values and should be able to make use of them at the right time and at the right direction. This is because his/her success depends largely on how his/her followers are able to follow

his steps, examples or better still on the ability of the followers to follow well [1] This is the reason why Drucker says “he who thinks he leads and has no one following him is only taking a walk” [2]. Therefore, a good leader must not only have a vision or a goal toward which he or she aspires to walk toward achieving the goal; he must have people following him.

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In a similar form, Myles Munroe defines leadership as ability to lead others by influence or a response to responsibility [3]. Here, there are some vital issues to be raised if we agree with the definitions articulated above. One, a leader must have the ability, capacity and capability to lead. Not only to lead anyhow, but to lead to success in a mission, whether to run an errand for family members or to organize an event possibly among friends, at school, in religious homes etc. Two, a good leader must have a vision, or must be an influencer, and must be someone that can be proudly emulated. This is the position every Babaláwo found himself in the midst of his *Omọ Awo* based on the interview conducted among some selected Babaláwo and *Omọ Awo*. The study showed that *Ifá* priesthood is a service to humanity and not a money-making venture. Besides this, discipline against greed is their watchword for them to achieve this.

2. The Dynamics of Leadership and Why Leading by Example

Leadership is all about responsibility. That is why LeRoy opined that a leader must be ready to take responsibility of a mission both in success and in failure [4]. The ability of a leader to accept or be responsible for the failure or success of a mission will surely boost the morale and motivation of the people whom he or she is leading and this may affect to a great extent the loyalty and respect they have for such a leader. A very good example here is the leadership style of the politician in Nigeria, late Lamidi Adedibu, who gained the confidence of the people in his environment because he was ready to take responsibility for their actions. As a result, he was able to use them as a tool for protection against challenges from opponents and for political leverage during the Third Republic, in the 1990s [5]. Again, in the same manner, Adekunle Fajuyi, the military governor of the then Western region in 1966 demonstrated leadership quality and mark of responsibility when he sacrificed his life along with the then Head of Nigerian State, Aguiyi Irosi. It was clear to Fajuyi that he was not the target; however, the target was in his territory, under his custody. When it was clear to the coup plotters that he would not allow them to kill their target alone, they eliminated the two [6]. Gbile Akanni [7] summed this up when he says that ‘leadership determines the destiny of a nation’. Thus Fajuyi saved Nigeria from an inter-tribal war or what could have led to an everlasting enmity between the Yoruba and Igbo ethnic groups in Nigeria. That long-lasting animosity was averted by the responsibility taken by Fajuyi to die with his Supreme Commander. Therefore, a good leader must be responsible, fair but firm, honest, act decisively, be correct, not selfish or greedy, and must be a good listener to criticism. This is so because, according to an informant, leadership gives shape and form to any society, association and finally to a nation. He went further to explain that the blessing of all these organisa-

tions mentioned above is tied to the quality of leaders they have. According to him, this is the grace *Ifá* priesthood is enjoying today. He admitted that though there are some bad eggs among the cult, yet they are able to curtail their excesses to a large extent [8].

To lead by example, therefore, a leader must be a good example of right living and discipline. He should not be someone who has mortgaged himself, his freedom of speech and decision-making to his superiors. He must not listen to falsehood. He must be able to entrust people with responsibilities by delegating authority and providing support and supervision. He must also be a good planner for success [9].

3. The Babaláwo-Ifá Priest and Their Lifestyle

Babaláwo-*Ifá* priest are the representatives of *Òrúnmilà*, the custodian of *Ifá* on earth who must be able to cast *Ifá* through the use of *Òpèlè* or *Ikin* – instruments used in diagnosing man’s challenges physically and spiritually. In addition to that, he must be able to interpret the *Odu* that comes out of divination and relay or link it with the client’s situation. Therefore, the Babaláwo-*Ifá* priest must, as a matter of fact, be able to chant a lot of verses from each *Odu Ifá*. This is in order to equip him (the Babaláwo-*Ifá* priest) to be able to carry out the appropriate sacrifice that will solve the client’s problems for which he came to make an enquiry about. Therefore, a Babaláwo is a mediator between the man and his God [10].

The Babaláwos are the keepers of morals, ethics and culture. As a representative of *Òrúnmilà*, a Babaláwo must be able to reflect all the moral teachings of *Ifá* in his personal life. All values of uprightness must be found in him. He must be gentle and not misbehave because of the power he possesses as a Babaláwo. He is a king in his own right and so must not prostrate to anyone not even to a king when in his full regalia so as not to rubbish the sacred post he holds. Therefore, they are hardly annoyed. All these attributes or behaviours are what all the *omọ Awo* – neophytes are expected and must emulate from their master before they graduate.

The Babaláwo must as a matter of fact commit to memory a great number of verses of *Odu Ifá* from both the major and minor *Odu*. He must know the procedures of what to say in services and at festivals. It is essential also for him to know all the rules guiding *ẹbọ*-sacrifice [11]. In summary, he must know the three basic procedures guiding the profession which are *didá ọwó* – casting of *Òpèlè*, *Agbigba*, *Ikin*, *Èrìndínlógún*, *Olókun* and other divination procedures. *Títè alẹ* – imprinting the *Odu* that comes out of casting of *Opele* and *òkarara ẹbọ* – the sacrifice that will proffer solution to the problem brought to *Ifá* by the client. Therefore, *Ẹbọ*-sacrifice is the most important aspect of divination. This is buttressed by *Odu Òyèkú biwòrì* [12] where *Ifá* says:

Şákítí ní gbojú aró	Şákítí ní gbojú aró*
Ìkàsi òun ni ò kan bọ̀rọ̀bọ̀rọ̀	Ìkàsi òun ni ò kan bọ̀rọ̀bọ̀rọ̀**
Ogun àjàjù ni ò jọmọ́ ó mojú oróri baba	Constant war prevents a child from knowing his father's grave
Ogun àjàjù ni ò jọmọ́ ó mojú oróri yeye	Constant war prevents a child from knowing his mother's grave
A dífá fún Ọ̀fúnnuólá	Cast divination for Ofunnuola
Yíó lóyún Ọ̀sányìn sínú	She will be pregnant of Osanyin
Ìgbà tí yíó bí,	When she gave birth
Ó bí egbé	She gave birth to Egbe (Egbe is a career, a kind of charm)
Ó bí àjàbó (ọ̀wọ̀)	She gave birth to Ajabo (Ajabo is a kind charm to make someone struggle and escape)
Ó bí àfẹ̀rì (ìşjìjú)	She gave birth to Afeeri (Afeeri is a kind charm to make someone invisible)
Ó wá bí ebo tí nşomọ́ ikéyìn wọn lénjelénje	Ebo was the smallest she gave birth to
Níjọ́ ó burú	On a bad day
Egbé rebi, Egbé ò sí nílé	Egbe traveled, he was not around
Àjàbò ò tilẹ́ sí nílú rárá	Ajabo was not in town at all
Ojọ́ ó burú,	On the bad day
Ebo ní gbéni yo.	It is sacrifice that saves one

To identify a Babaláwo, there are some things they do and ways by which they dress to distinguish themselves from the rest. A Babaláwo in his full regalia will put on *otutu ọpón* or *idè* on his neck, which are beads in form of necklace; there is another one that is usually put on the neck which signifies the office the Babaláwo is occupying. Every Babaláwo also carries whisk in his left hand. A Babaláwo will either tie a wrapper (white) across his shoulder or in a flowing Agbádá. Above all, he puts on a beaded crown, most especially the Araba Awo who is usually the head of all the Babaláwo in a town or city. This is the reason why they do not prostrate for anyone including Kings because they are kings in their own right as said earlier [13]. In festive period or during important rituals or rites, they are always with *Ọ̀sùn idè*, a kind of staff that jiggles when hit on ground. They do this to create an awareness of their presence. It is also used to announce an appointment into a new post of any of their members. Whenever it is placed in front of a person's house, it symbolises that the person has been appointed to hold a chieftaincy post in such a town, or country. There is also *Apo Jèrùgbé*. This is a bag that usually contains their divination

materials like *Ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀*, *ọpón Ifá*, *Ikin* and whatever things they were given during the time of discharging their duties which may be part of sacrificial materials and money. Important charms and medicine are also kept there.

Apart from items mentioned above, there are other emblems that form part of the dressing of Babaláwo. One such is *Ìléwó*, a wooden staff that looks like *Ìrókẹ̀* but not as curved as *Ìrókẹ̀*. All these emblems have both physical and spiritual importance and symbols in the life of the Babaláwo. For instance, the use of *Ìdè* by a Babaláwo and all devotees of *Ifá* was as a result of an agreement between *Ọ̀rúnmilá* and Sanponna (the Orisa that afflicts with small pox) who was coming to the world to inflict punishment on people that *Ọ̀rúnmilá* said through divination. He offered sacrifice to avert this and made further enquiry and Sanponna told him that he, his priest and all his devotees should wear *ide* which he would see on them as a mark of identification for him to spear them. This is the genesis of wearing *Ìdè* by *Ifá* devotees. According to Salami, it is a taboo for anyone wearing these sacred beads to serve as slaves or laborers. *Ifá* confirmed this in *Ogbè réyè* [14] that

Àfàimọ́ didá ọ̀wọ́	Scarcely does the Babaláwo not know how to pack the seeds off his palms
Àfàimọ́ òntẹ́ alẹ́	Hardly does the Babaláwo not know how to pack the seeds off his palms
Babaláwo kíí f'ìdè sọ̀wọ́ sin ní.	Babaláwos do not put Ide on their wrists and serve as slaves or labourers.

This validates the saying of the Yoruba that *Oúnjẹ t'Áwo ó jẹ, ibùgbé Awo ní b'Áwo* - the food that Ifa priests will eat will always come to his domain. This is a fact because no *Ifá* priest will go to anybody's house for divination except on demand and this is usually by the kings and high chiefs or a sick person who cannot walk to the priest's house.

Basically, *Ifá* priesthood is a profession dominated by men. However, there are a few women among them who are *Ifá* practitioners. They are called *Ìyánifá* - mother in *Ifá*. Although *Ìyánifá* can chant *Ifá* poems, offer sacrifice to *Ifá* and other *Orisa* but they cannot see *Odù Olófin*, the sacred deity in *Ifá* divination, whether before, during or after initiation. This

is because *Odù*, otherwise known as *Ọ̀rọ̀mòdìmòdì* was also a woman. This is the reason why some *Babaláwo* claim that it is not appropriate to initiate women into *Ifá* cult and not that *Ifá* forbids their initiation into the cult [15]. However, the aspect of divination that women have their domination is *Owó Eérìndínlógún* -16 cowries because of its simplicity. According to Bascom [16], it is simpler than *Ifa* divination. This may be the reason why it was held in low esteem in Yorubáland. However, in foreign land like Cuba, Brazil and America, it is more important than *Ifá* due to the same reason why it is held in less esteem in Yorubáland, simplicity. Here we can only see a few men practicing it in Yorubáland. Other

aspects of divination women are found in their large members is Olókun – a kind of divination with shells picked from the Atlantic. Another form of divination where the lifestyle of Babaláwo influence their *omọ Awo* is *Agbigba*. *Agbigba* is a kind of fruit from a crawling plant that is used for divination purposes. There is also divination through *obi-kolanut*. This often happens in the shrines, temples groves and where traditional form of prayers takes place. However, no matter the forms and differences, they always arrive at the same conclusion which is divination to know the mind of the gods and the same principle and law guides all.

4. The *Omọ Awo*-Neophytes and Their Responsibilities

The concept of *Omọ Awo*, according to Atunfagbon, the Araba Awo of Ipakodo [17] can be trace back to Èṣù, the first *Omọ Awo* Òrúnmilà-apprentice of Orunmila. This is a view supported by Ayo Salami that Esu was the first apprentice of Òrúnmilà on Earth [18]. Part of the duty and responsibility of *Omọ Awo* is to help his master carry load with the *Àpò Jèrùgbé* –bag that usually contains all divination materials and all the *èrù* – gifts given to the master to and from any function. They are to sit at the right hand side of their masters to hold the ballots and to dabble the surface of the divination tray containing divination powder with *Ìrùkèrè* – whisk after each casting.

Again, the *Omọ Awo*'s responsibility is to run errands for his master, particularly, domestic errand. This is the reason why they usually stay with their masters as part of the family of their masters. The fact is that their masters always supplement what they get from divination with farming, since it is not a paid job, rather, a service to humanity, the *Omọ Awo* usually help out in the farm. Again, *Omọ Awo* is also to testify for or against his master in the hereafter before Olódumarè, God in Yorùbá belief about the upright nature of their masters. This is responsible for the reason why Babaláwo's leadership by good example is crucial.

In the past, the learning of *Ifá* usually took up to fifteen years and memorization of enough verses to be called a full-fledge *Ifá* priest could take about thirty years. Today,

Ajá tí mo wí lóràn tí ò bá fẹ́,
 Ó dájá Èlégbára
 Àgbò mòmò tí mo wí lóràn tí ò gbà
 Ó dàgbò mọlẹ́
 Ọ̀tòtò ènìyàn tí mo wí lóràn tí ò bá fẹ́
 È jòọ̀ è sí
 Bó ti le ẹ̀ ni kó máa ẹ̀
 Ọ̀un ni yóò fọ̀wọ̀ agara bomi mu.
 A dífá fún ọ̀kọ̀ọ̀kan nínú Irúnmọ̀lẹ́
 Níjọ̀ tí wọ̀n nọ̀ rẹ̀è bá wọ̀n nájá pà̀yàmọ̀rà...

All the divinities tried to go to the market of tolerance but could not succeed in entering or buying in the market except

learning the profession may not take more than a few years. After the initial training and graduation, he travels far and near to learn more from other Babaláwo, though not as an apprentice again, before he finally settles down to practice alone. This is the reason why *Omọ Awo* usually begins the training at an early stage of life [19].

5. Interrogating the Influence of Babaláwo's Lifestyle on *Omọ Awo* as Found in *Ìrétè-Ọ̀kànràn*

Ifá, according to Olayemi [20], is the philosophy and wisdom divinely revealed to Òrúnmilà. It is a fundamental knowledge relating to life that encompasses philosophy, politics, religion, wise sayings, science, ethics, metaphysics, theology, divination and the therapeutic arts. Makinde [21] also affirms that *Ifá* is a repository of knowledge with many branches such as science of nature (physics), animals (biology), plants (botany), oral incantations, divination, medicinal plants and all the sciences associated with healing diseases. All these are what every Babaláwo following the footsteps and procedures laid down by Òrúnmilà, the custodian of *Ifá* must follow, most especially the moral [22] and ethical aspect that directly deals with human relation and everyday affairs.

Among these moral and ethical values of Babaláwo's lifestyle that usually influenced the *Omọ Awo* is the concept of simple life devoid of pride; how to live in the world and operate according to the laws of nature and how to live at peace with the Creator without contravening these laws of nature. Also, worthy of mention is the principle of love and how to show compassion, most especially to the poor who cannot afford money for divination purchased items prescribed for sacrifice. Thus, a Babaláwo cannot say because a client cannot afford these items and as a result refused to attend to his/her problem. At the same time, he would not say someone is very rich he will overcharge the client as this would be tantamount to greed that must be avoided. A Babaláwo must be tolerant. This is a virtue demonstrated by Òrúnmilà in *Ìwòrì Wẹ̀rẹ̀* [23] where *Ifá* says:

The dog that I warned without heeding,
 Will become Elegbara's own
 A huge ram that I warned without heeding
 Will become emblem of ancestral worship
 A human that I warned without heeding
 Leave him alone
 He should act the way he pleases
 He would be the one to regret it
 Cast divination for four hundred and one deities
 On the day they went to trade at payamora market...

Òrúnmilà who was able to tolerate the gate keeper's actions. To emulate their master therefore, every Babaláwo must be

able to endure pain and tolerate nonsense from people, most especially the rich and the kings who always look down on

the Babaláwo as poor and greedy as found in *Ìrètè-Òkànràn* [24] where *Ifá* says:

Ìrètè Òkànràn ni a dá f'Òrúnmilá
Lójò tí gbogbo Awo péjò sílè Ọlọ́fín
Tí wón lọ jẹ'yán aláimọra nilè Ọlọ́fín
A ní kí Òrúnmilá gbàwè sùlè ojó lóní
Kí ojú má bàá tí bọ ilé Ọlọ́fín lóní,
Wón ní èé tún ti rí lóní,
Ó ní èyin kò mò pé
Aláìlójúti ní jẹ'yán Ọ̀bàrà Ọ̀fún?

It was Irete Okanran that came out for Orunmila
On the day all the initiates assembled in Olofin's house
That they went to eat pounded yam in Olofin's house without consciousness
Orunmila was asked to fast throughout that day
So that he would not be put to shame from Olofin's house today
They said, what happened again today?
He said don't you know that
It is a shameless person who eats pounded yam of Obara Ofun

In the Odu, Ọlọ́fín thought that Ọ̀rúnmilá was just coming to his house to collect his money and material things which he was not happy about. As a result of that, he puts poison in the drink and the pounded yam prepared for Ọ̀rúnmilá and other Babaláwo who divined and assured Ọlọ́fín that his son that was sick would

not die. However, Ọ̀rúnmilá, through divination detected the plot of Ọlọ́fín and prevented other Babaláwo from drinking and eating the poisoned food and drink. When Ọlọ́fín realised that Ọ̀rúnmilá detected his evil intention, he was afraid and he paid dearly for his action. In the same manner, Ọ̀sẹ́ Ọ̀wòrì [25] also explained that

Bí wón bá moşé jé,
Wón a má a jé onişé
Bí wón kò mò jé
Wón a má a jé oluşè
Ló dífá fún Eja
Tí í s'omọ Olókun şení adé
Bía bá ránni nişé erú
T'omọ la fi jé
Ló dífá fún Alákàn
Omọ Olókun şení adé....

If they are skillful on how to run errand
They become errand experts
If they are not skillful on how to run errand
They become mere doer/unfortunate
Cast divination for Fish
The son of Olokun
If we are sent on a slave like (stupid) errand
We should try to deliver the message as humbly and tactically as possible
(with caution like a child)
Cast divination for Crab
The son of Olokun...

"*Alákàn*—crab was sent to Orisa-nla for the command of the source of the water". Even though he was offered abundant food and drink, he refused to be tempted with them until he delivered the message sent him. He applied wisdom that benefited him beyond the message he was asked to go and delivered. Therefore, it is expected of every Babaláwo to portray and display wisdom as a basic virtue because *Ifá* is a book of wisdom that every *Omọ Awo* must emulate from their masters just as Ọ̀wòrìrín was made a Chief in his father's house because he displayed wisdom even though he had no money [26]. This is an indication that wisdom is

more valuable than money. After all, if one is rich, he needs wisdom to spend the money on the right path.

As said earlier, helpfulness and service to humanity are two of the important concept and key in Babaláwo lifestyle that his *Omọ Awo* must emulate for them to make it in life. The Yorùbá is of the opinion that *ò fi ti è sílè gbó teni eléni, Ọlórún ní bá gbó tiè* – Whoever devotes his time in helping others; it is God himself that will personally help such a person to oversee his own affairs. This *Ifá* below in *Irosun Meji* [27] explains further:

Àkùkọfogbelébélébéşeyì
A dífá fún Ọ̀pílíkí.
Tí ó fi tiè sílè
Tí ó ma a gbó ti eni eléni káyé kiri
Ọ̀rúnmilá ni ó ba tún tiè náà şe...

Àkùkọfogbelébélébéşeyì (name of a priest)
Cast divination for Opiliki (name of a person)
Who would abandon his own affairs
And concentrates on other people's matter
Orunmila will help such a person in his own affairs...

Opiliki was asked to offer sacrifice and be helpful, more than ever to people. If he does that, Ọ̀rúnmilá will intercede for him from God to ensure that fame, joy and every other good things of life he desired from God gets to him [28].

A Babaláwo's lifestyle is also worthy of emulation in

guiding against lustfulness after women and avoiding the temptation of being carried off his feet by physical beauty and cosmetic achievement as explained by Ọ̀wòrì Ọ̀wòrìrín [29] that expounded the adoration for unmistakable death under clothing.

M bá j'òbinrin,
Àrà kan ni m bá dá
M bá tò'lèkè títi lọ dé bèbèrè idí

Were I a woman,
I would have performed one feat
I would have displayed waist beads most alluringly

Ma fi gbogbo ara hurun tí lẹ dé pọ-n-pọlọ itan
Ma bojú w'abé wò ma fẹrín si

Ma ní ikú deḡe n bẹ lábé aṣo

Òrìṣà tí kii jẹ k'ómọkùnrin ó leè t'ójó

Dífá fún Gbòngàn-Ìròkò,

Tí í ṣe olóbò yèrèpè

Èyí tí n relé ọkọ

Njé, Gbòngàn-Ìròkò, a rí ẹ r'ẹwà ná ò

Jé ká rí ẹ rọmọ tuntun.

I would display fluffy skin hair right down onto my thighs

I would behold my captivating vagina with a smile

And express ominous adoration for this unmistakable death under my clothing

The goddess that spells premature death for many a young man

Cast divination for Gbongan-Iroko

With excessively sexy vagina

Who was getting set for her betrothal

Now, Gbongan-Iroko, we know you are beautiful

But what about your fortune to rear babies?

Here *Ifá* emphasised that a sex with the kind of Gbongan Iroko, the goddess that spells premature death for men that lust after women is not qualified to be a priest. This is the reason why a big test is conducted for would-be Babaláwo before initiation into the cult. A week before the initiation, he would be kept in a confinement where only a woman is allowed to attend to his needs. If he lusts after her, then, he is not qualified to be initiated because it is believed that this is what he would be doing after graduation because most of his client would be women. Therefore, if he cannot discipline

himself against lust after women and greed against money, then he is not qualified to be a priest.

A Babaláwo must be appreciative and show gratitude for little kindness. This would help a long way to help his *Omọ Awo*, a virtue they will emulate from him. This is so because in the past, every *Omọ Awo* usually joins his master's family before their formative period. As a result, whatever his master is doing will become part of him at the end of the day because he sees him as a father figure worthy of emulation. This is explained more by *Irosun Meji* [30] where *Ifá* says:

Olówó ó wá

Aláwín ó wá

Asièrè èniyàn

Ní bẹ nídí ẹkọ

Èyàn tí ò lówó lówó

Kó má a gbóórùn léyinkùlè

A dífá fún Èlẹkòdèrè

Èyí tíó lórò

Kálẹlẹ ó tó ó lẹ

Ojú ní pọn Èlẹkọ Ìdèrè

Òun le lówó lówó báyí

Ni Èlẹkọ Ìdèrè dífá sí

Wọn ní ẹbọ ni kó wá rú

Ó rúbọ, wọn ṣe Ifá fún ún

Kò rówó Ifá náà san

Tí àwọn Awo rẹ

Fi sawo lọ

Apá òkun, ilàjì ọsa

Ìgbà tí wọn ó fi dé lódún kẹta

Èlẹkọ Ìdèrè ti di olówó

Ṣùgbọn,

Nígbà tí àwọn Awo rẹ bèèrè owó lówó ọ rẹ

Ó ní òun ò lówó lówó

Ni àwọn Awo rẹ bá nfií ṣorin kọ

Èlẹkọ'Dèrè

Ṣe bóo ló jere

Èlẹkọ'Dèrè

Ṣe bóo ló jere

O róṣọ dúdú

O róṣọ pupa

O fāyinrin gbàjá

O lé kinkà

O fāpófi tídí

The rich will come

The debtor will come

The metal derailed

Was the one selling Solid pap

The person that has no money

Should stay at the backyard to perceive the odor

Cast divination for Elekodere

That will be rich

Before her old age

Elekodere was in need

Would she be rich

Was what Elekodere consulted Ifa for

She was told to come and offer sacrifice

She offered and Ifa was done for her

But could not pay Ifa consultation fee

Till her priests

Went on divination tour

To part of the beach and half of the ocean (far distance)

When they came back the third year,

Elekodere was already became rich

But

When her diviners ask for their money,

She said she had no money

Her diviners burst out singing

Elekodere

You claim you did not make profit

Elekodere

You claim you did not make profit

You tied black dress

You tied red dress

You tied multi colour dress

You look gorgeous

You sat on a stool

O lé kenkà
 Èlèkò' Dèrè
 Şe bóo ló jere.

Regardless of any situation in which a Babaláwo might find himself, he should and must be able to tell the truth and guide against perfidy. Babaláwo are dutiful. This is contrary to people's belief that they are lazy. To avoid being called lazy, therefore, they usually have farm to support the little

Aşégé şégé mósun
 Aşégè gègè mósun
 Ọşun lótún
 Ìbàdàn lósi
 A dífà fún Ológoşé
 Tí nşawo ó ló sí ọde Ìbàdàn
 Bí Babaláwo bá kì fún ni
 A má a kì f'áwo
 A dífà fún Oníbàdàn
 Tí yío kì Ifá fún Ológoşé Awo re...

It was Ológoşé, a priest of Onibadan (a king) that divined for the king to engage in farming. When the king realised that there was money and food there, he also advised his priest to go into farming in addition to his priesthood. He took to the advice and he also became rich through farming.

6. The Influence of Babaláwo's Lifestyle on *Omọ Awo*, the Lessons for the Contemporary Society

The contemporary generation should learn from the Influence of *Babaláwo-Ifá* Priest's Lifestyle on *Omọ Awo*-Neophytes especially in all the points raised above and learnt that, just as *Ifá* priesthood is a service to humanity and not a money-making venture that made discipline against greed their watchword, the contemporary generation need to guide against greed that is turning African society upside down today. In this generation, nothing should give African greater pleasure than to learn how to be patience, endure, persevere in all things, tell the truth in every situation, be considerate, show love and concern and be our brothers' keeper. Above all, not be envious.

If the contemporary generation could imbibe this culture, it is going to be the best remedy against many social vices predominantly the get-rich quick syndrome that is widespread like harmattan fire among the youths which is accountable for their early death. This is an indication that what we are discussing here goes beyond the *Babaláwo-Ifá* Priest's Lifestyle on *Omọ Awo*-Neophytes. Rather, it is applicable to all. The

Ajá gbó gbó ó gbó [33]
 Ajá dẹran asínwín
 Ọfàfà gbó gbóó gbó

You look gorgeous
 Elekodere
 You claim you did not make profit

income they generate through divination and sacrifice so that they will not entirely rely on what their clients give them, so as to guide against greed, falsehood and betraying the confidence reposed in them by their communities. *Ifá* buttresses this further in *Ose Meji* [31] where *Ifá* says that:

Aşégé şégé mósun
 Aşégè gègè mósun
 Osun on the right side
 Ibadan on the left side
 Cast divination for Ológoşé (an Ifá priest)
 Who was on a divination tour to the city of Ibadan
 If a diviner casts divination for someone
 Someone can as well divine for the priest
 Cast divination for Onibadan
 Who was going to divine for Ológoşé his Ifa priest...

Babaláwo and their *Omọ Awo* only serves as models in Yorúbá society and in every society in Africa in general. We should learn how to be satisfy with God given virtues that are peculiar to Africans as a whole before the advent of western education, foreign religions and civilisation so that our situation will not look like what *Ifá* says in *Ìrèntegbè* [32] that:

Oun a bi wonbi kii wu won	They are never inspired by their own historical legacy
Teni elelni ni yawon lara	The ones for the others are what they catered for
A difa fun iwo deere	Cast divination for the fishing Hook
Ti nsalabarin eja	The close friend of the fish.

7. Conclusion

Leadership, as it cuts across all aspects of human life, is more sensitive religion, particularly in traditional religion and training of *Omọ Awo* where they begin their training at a very tender age in their formative period. This makes it more complex and sensitive because whatever their masters do, they assume and believe it is the right thing. However, priesthood is a service to humanity. This is a notion they are made to know from the beginning of their training by their masters. This gives their mentors the opportunity to guide them against greed, falsehood and other social vices that could make them lose credibility in their various communities thereby tarnishing the good and prestigious image that priesthood has. Therefore, the watchword of these masters (*Babaláwo*) to their *Omọ Awo* (Neophytes) is always:

The dog backed and backed
 It became a neurotic animal
 Tree Hyrax backed and backed

Òfàfà dèran ìjìwèrè
 Àgbònrín tí nbẹ̀ nínú igbòrò gbó gbóó gbó
 Ó wọ̀ igbó iráhùn lọ
 A dífá fún òpẹ̀ sẹ̀gí sẹ̀gí
 Èyí tíó jẹ̀ baalẹ̀ asòótó
 Ó sòótó
 Ó bí Ikin fún Alára
 Ó sòótó
 Ó bí Oduso fún Ajero
 Òpẹ̀ sẹ̀gí sẹ̀gí
 Ló bí Erinwo Oşin fún Àjàlá
 È jẹ̀ á sòótó
 È jẹ̀ á máa sòdodo
 Èni tó bá nsòótó o
 ‘Lọ́lọrun ó gbè.

Tree Hyrax became a neurotic animal
 The deer living in the sacred forest growls and bellows
 It became tongue-tied
 Cast divination for sacred palm tree
 The chief truth teller
 She told the truth
 She had baby Ikin for Alara
 She told the truth
 She had baby Oduso for Ajero
 It was the sacred palm tree
 That gave birth to Erinwo Osin for Ajala
 Let us tell the truth
 Let us tell the facts
 It is he that speaks the truth
 Whom God would take side with

Nonetheless, there are still bad eggs among the Babaláwos and the *Omo Awos*. However, what they usually made them realise is found in one of the Babaláwo's songs:

Kámá şikà láyé
 Torí à nrọrun
 Kámá şikà láyé oò
 Torí à nrọrun ùn
 Tabá ti débodè aó rojò ò.

We should not do evil on earth
 Because we are going to heaven
 We should not do evil on earth
 Because we are going to heaven
 When we get to heaven's gate we shall render account.

That is, whatever one does on earth here, one will render account in the hereafter.

Author Contributions

Samuel Káyòdè Oḷáléyẹ is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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