Character of Ifa Meets the Development in Psychological Tools

How We Cope in Volatile

Ibinu o da nnkan fun’ni
Suuru ni baba iwa
Agba to ni suuru
Oun gbogbo lo ni
Dia fun Ina
To l’oun o j’oye Olonroro
Ebo ni won ni ko waa se o
Ibinu o da nnkan fun’ni
Suuru ni baba iwa
Agba to ni suuru
Oun gbogbo lo ni
Dia fun Oorun
Ti yoo j’oye Olonroro
Ebo ni won ni ko waa se
Dia fun Osupa Kirimu
Ti yoo j’oye Olonroro
Ebo ni won ni ko waa se
Osupa nikan ni nbe l’eyin ti ns’ebo
A m’Osupa j’oye ire de
A m’Osupa j’oye Olonroro
A m’Osupa j’oye aye gun
A m’Osupa j’oye Olonroro
Lasan n’Ina gbo’ju
Ina o ni’wa ni’nu
A m’Osupa j’oye Olonroro
Lasan l’Oorun gbo’ju
Oorun o ni’wa ni’nu
A m’Osupa j’oye Olonroro
A m’Osupa j’oye ire de
A m’Osupa j’oye Olonroro
A m’Osupa j’oye aye gun
A m’Osupa j’oye Olonroro

Translation:

Anger amounts to nothing for one
Patience is the father of all good characters
An elder who is patient
He is blessed with all the good things of life
These were Ifa’s messages for Ina, the fire
Who wanted to be installed as Olonroro, the illuminator?
He was advised to offer ebo
Anger amounts to nothing for one
Patience is the father of all good character
An elder who is patient
He is blessed with all the good things of life
These were Ifa’s messages to Oorun, the sun
Who wanted to be installed as Olonroro, the illuminator?
He was advised to offer ebo
These were Ifa’s messages for Osupa Kirimu, the full moon
Who wanted to be installed as Olonroro, the illuminator?
He was advised to offer ebo
Only Osupa complied with the advice of the Awo
We have installed Osupa and all Ire has arrived
We have installed Osupa as the Olonroro
We installed Osupa and the world has become peaceful
We have installed Osupa as the Olonroro
In vain was the competence of Ina
Ina has no good character
We have installed Osupa as the Olonroro
Of no purpose is the capacity of Oorun
Oorun is not endowed with good character
We have installed Osupa as the Olonroro
We have installed Osupa and all Ire has arrived
We have installed Osupa as the Olonroro
We installed Osupa and the world has become peaceful
We have installed Osupa as the Olonroro, the illuminator

Normally, I would give a rather lengthy dissertation on how important cool minds are in the development of our personalities and character in Ifa. One of the greatest challenges to that growth is when one makes a resolve to think and then apply those new thought patterns to a life in Ifa and Orisa; which is structured and disciplined. It is when volatility of emotions of phenomena, which are painful events and we respond in an equally precarious and unstable way.

Below are some words that describe what the volatile mind and behavioral features are defined.

- Volatile: likely to change in a very sudden or extreme way
- having or showing extreme or sudden changes of emotion
- likely to become dangerous or out of control
- readily vaporizable at a relatively low temperature
- flying or having the power to fly
- lighthearted, lively
- easily aroused <volatile suspension>
- tending to erupt into violence:
- explosive <a volatile temper>
- unable to hold the attention fixed because of an inherent lightness or fickleness of disposition
- characterized by or subject to rapid or unexpected change <a volatile market>
- difficult to capture or hold permanently: evanescent, transitory

Also in Irosun Akeregbe
Move very close to me
Let me teach you wisdom
Drop your confrontations and embrace patience
If there is no anger in the morning

One of the great attributes of our ancient system is in seeing its prestigious spiritual and religious system meet areas of science and in very obvious ways bring to our attention those observable factors in exceptional ways. Here is an example of what I mean:

In family therapy Murray Bowen advanced and created a therapeutic system that define aspects of problem behaviors and the psychological formulations and techniques, which model theories that are able to assist in the healing of an Ori-mind.

When as I was making an observation to a student on this discovery it revolved in understanding what Bowen termed the “Differentiation of Self”; which is in direction relationship to the above ese Ifa in Ogbe Yonu. If as we look at this in a larger purview and limited authority we will also ascertain and discern the deep relevance to what the scenario in Ogbe Yonu speaks to us about.

Ifa teaches us about looking at evolving and thus emerging as Ifa devotees from the embryonic stages of our undisciplined lives which is volatile when meeting adversity. To that which is the more discipline personality as we connect and with the cool waters of Ifa rather than the undifferentiated personality that is moved to marked emotionality.

The point taken here is that in our Ifa communities in our leader as we teach our lessons to our constituencies in our Temples, Iles, and Ifa and Orisa organizations; we must not only teach this discipline but give our people examples in our demeanor and in the tools to correct behaviors that can become aberrant and undisciplined when confronted with adversity.

Anger amounts to nothing for one
Patience is the father of all good character
An elder who is patient
He is blessed with all the good things of life

Murray Bowen as he created this theoretical formulation who were pragmatist and more concern with actions on how to make significant change to the dynamic of the personality when adversely affected. In family therapy he watched the interdisciplinary play within family systems but coming from the individualistic global view of Western thinking missed some of the more valued lessons that the culture of the Yoruba seek in communal understanding and global purview. While this theory was devised on a multigenerational network of relationships and he interlocked with 6 concepts. Ifa on the other hand describes in the above ese Ifa in an Ita (story) which denotes the life of a great Elders-Osupa (Moon) and Ina (Fire) who learned the importance of sacrifice and coolness of character. The Elders here represent not just the act of committing to the sacrifice prescribe but to face the challenges with level-headedness and imperturbable and unflappable character. Meaning, just because some jumps bad doesn’t mean they can win over your calm demeanor.

In Murray’s formulas and theory on the ‘Differentiated Self’ which is intrapsychic and an interpersonal concept speak to: Roughly, analogous to ego strength; differentiation of self is the capacity to think and reflect; to not respond automatically to emotional pressures, internal or external. It is the ability to be flexible and act wisely, even in the face of anxiety (Kerr & Bowen, 1988) (Nichols, 2010).

Subsequently, the undifferentiated person(s) are easily moved to emotionality. Their lives are driven by reactivity to those around them (Nichols, 2010). The person who is differentiated is able to balance thinking and feeling: capable pf strong emotion and spontaneity but also possessing the self-restraint that comes with the ability to resist the pull of emotional impulses (Nichols 210). Accordingly, as in Nichols again the undifferentiated personality find it difficult to maintain their autonomy, especially when anxious issues. Asked what they think, they say what they feel; asked what they believe, they echo what they have heard. They argue with everything or agree to whatever it told to them.

Just as Osupa, who not only committed to the sacrifice; it was his differentiated self, in contrast to the undifferentiated volatile person, who is unable to stand on important issues. The differentiated persons are able to think things through and make a decision by deciding what they believe and then act on those beliefs. This is what true Elder behavior according to Ifa should exhibit.

Lastly,

Ogbe Yonu speaks on the faithful in Ifa remember this:
Ifa declares that this is a scenario;
I declare that it is time to watch;
Egúngún, the masquerade is dancing;  
Akapo went to watch; 
Ifa declare that the dancing Egúngún is raving mad  
And the watching Akapo is equally daft; 
I declared that it is time to watch; 
Oosa is dancing and Akapo went to watch; 
Ifa says that the dancing Orisa is raving mad;  
And the watching Akapo is equally daft; 
Orunmila, why are you speaking in incomprehensible parable? 
Orunmila declares that it is for the sake of his Akapo; 
Orunmila says that Only Ifa is worth watching like a scene.  

Standing off looking in the night, peering at the fullness of the moon, the stars patterns and constellations; an epiphany closed into my mind concerning the true meaning of this ese Ifa Ogbe Yonu, and how important it is for us all. We spend so much time in conversations of non-theological importance, of what is right or wrong in this religious tradition. Often, these discussions are more motivated by financial gain rather than true ecumenical deliberation and seeking of righting wrongs. We spend more time in controversial discussion; which are no more than high gossip riddled with jealousies and fear daemons that promenade as righteous indictments of the sinful.

The truth is throughout history of religion in the world, each world religious groups have always had the evolution of change in the same way. People serve Olodumare in different ways. Some rituals have regional differences but has it ever occurred to anyone that these changes-differences-variances and modifications are all part of a metamorphoses in the designed DNA of different Religious etiologies. Changes that are placed in the spiritual design and Olodumare and Ifa already know about it and got it handled?

Consistencies verses differentiations of the base of Ifa theology is more a delicate balance of transformation rather than conversion; adjustments rather than modification. The meaning of this is that Theology is the study of or practice, and experience especially: the study of Olodumare (God) and of Olodumare’s relation to the world is Ifa.

Then, etiology is seeking to find the root, origin or cause of a conditions or in some cases abnormalities of that condition. Thus, ecumenical patterns here are the Religion of Ifa’s DNA influences and how they are applied in our worship. Following and watching Ifa is better than watching a mad person(s). Here in this context ecumenical is not Christian vernacular; which was used and meant to influence and unify. Here if we are watching Ifa we would understand Its
evolution and meanings in our lives. But I bet we can tell you all the business of those pages of gossip about others and a cyber-bullying campaign scam agenda. But I also bet you don’t know the importance of Ogbe Yonu to the creation of the Universe can you?

It is Orunmila that stipulates that those who participate in these antics either as spectators and participators are equally mad and daft or just emotionally ill. Those people of the religion of Ifa and Orisa, particularly those of our priesthoods (i.e. Babalawo, Iyanifa, Babalorisa, and Iyaolorisa) who are doing anything but watching, praising, developing healing programs, discussing Ifa and Orisa corpus are all stupid and participating frivolity.

Orunmila wanted to save his Akapo-Priest (ess) by informing them over and over again (Ogbe Yonu) that the only object, thing, and entity worth our attention and study was Ifa. Not the dance show of nay sayers, jealousy hounds, braggadocios persons, who are using the so-called fake-fraudulent scare tactics to really cover up their lack, in terms of their insecurities and deficits; to keep you from looking too closely towards them and their obsessions. For if you see the truth, you will see that these people cannot save you or help you-they cannot save or help themselves; so how could they save you. This task is done by pointing out the non-existence issues of others, outright lies, and other scare tactics. Or if there is truth mix in with perceptions of truth and lies then you will not have the sense to here Ifa still say, “the only thing worth watching is Ifa”. Ifa says that as long as we are watching and listening to these people we are not paying attention to Ifa:

Oosa is dancing and Akapo went to watch;

Ifa says that the dancing Orisa is raving mad;

And the watching Akapo is equally daft;

Orunmila, why are you speaking in incomprehensible parable?

Orunmila declares that it is for the sake of his Akapo;

Orunmila says that Only Ifa is worth watching like a scene.

What did I come to Ifa for? I came to serve and in that service become closer to Olodumare and Ifa.

Ifa Gbe wa O!

Iya Abiye Awo Agbaye, Oloye Fayomi Falade Aworeni

Ile Iwosan Orunmila Mimo Temple
References

Kerr & Bowen, 1988