

Omoluabi, Traditional Yoruba Value: Implications for Corpers Serving in the State of Osun

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In Yoruba world, shamelessness is a taboo, children took their parents as their earthly God, by according them utmost respect, a world where the young respect the old (authority), a world where greetings serves as an agent of love and affection, a world where parent would gather their children and feed them with fairy tales about how to live a responsible life, a world where decency is highly celebrated and crime is greatly abhorred and criminals are penalized. In Yoruba world, primacy were given to moral values, immorality in all forms were not acceptable. The total way of life and idiosyncrasies of the then people actually propelled their greatness and achievements majorly because things were done in the ideal way. With civilization and globalization, there has been redefinition of morality and ethical concepts. In our attempt to adapt to alien culture, we have incorrectly redefined our Omoluabi nature and view of being moral.

Great justice has been done to the history of the Yorubas. Additionally, Yorubas are virtuous, loving and kind. It is undisputed that we are all from Ife as Omo Oduduwa (Odu to da Iwa), (the essence of Reality), I will later talk about Iwa and the political headquarters of the Yorubas was the Oyo Empire. The colonial reclassification and their divide and rule methods were adopted by neo-colonialist indigenious people. They brought the issue of seniority and class to Obaship and formulate policies and laws that are dividing us as a race and ensuring that we the monarchist never got back our community. The challenges of our race today and by extension, our country are deeply rooted in the erosion of our cultural values and abandonment of Omoluabi concept.

What do we mean by Omoluabi?

The Omoluabi is a Yoruba philosophical and cultural concept to describe a person of good character and the standard which determines morality and the immorality of an act in Yoruba Society. The Omoluabi concept signifies courage, hard work, humility and respect. An Omoluabi is a morally sound and upright person of honor who believes in hard work, respects the rights of others, and gives to the community in deeds and in action. Above all, an Omoluabi is a person of integrity.

An Omoluabi demonstrates and exhibits the inherent virtue of Iwapele (gentle character/self-restraint). Iwapele is ultimately the basis of moral conduct in Yoruba culture and a core defining attribute of an Omoluabi. The most fundamental of these principles demonstrated by an Omoluabi are:

- Oro Siso (spoken word, the Yoruba accord great respect for intelligent and expert use of language, Oratory)
- Iteriba (respect)
- Inu Rere (Good Will, Having a good mind towards others, good intention)
- Otitio (Truth)
- Iwa (Character)
- Akinkanju (Bravery)
- Ise (Handwork)
- Opolo Pipe (Intelligence)

Careful analysis of the above embody diligence, self-reliance, honesty, social responsibility, integrity, self-control especially under provocation, wisdom and shrewdness in judgement, loyalty, devotion to one's parent and authority. Yorubas also believe that an Omoluabi must not tell lies, be a talebearer, or break contractual agreement. Faithfulness and loyalty are also due to one's lineage members, to one's government, and to one's friends.

The above attributes are all traditional Yoruba values and the essence of the traditional methodology of the Yoruba education is to transform an individual into an Omoluabi. We proudly refer to it as "eko ile" home training, please note that it is not synonymous to Western home schooling. Home training is about how to be a complete person, an Omoluabi.

Omoluwabi (Omo ti Olu Iwa Bi) translates as "the baby begotten by the chief of Iwa" Such a child is thought of as a paragon of excellence in character. The translation of Iwa to Character does not capture the entire meaning of Iwa in Yoruba language, I will be more elaborate of what Iwa indeed really mean in Yoruba culture and traditional value. Iwa is highly significant in Yoruba traditional values to the extent as exemplified in some common phrases.

- Iwa lewa (Character is beauty)
- Iwa rere lesu eniyan – good character is the adornment of people and reflecting the saying that:
- Bi iwa ba nu eniyan, Eyin o mope aye re lo nu un – If a person loses his good character, don't you know he has lost his life?

Iwa is a virtue in Yoruba cosmology. The extract from Ifa literary corpus serves as a strong fulcrum to the understanding of the Yoruba concept of virtue.

Inu bibi o da nkan

Suru baba iwa

Agba t'oni suuru

Ohun gbogbo Ioni

A dia fun ori, A bu fun Iwa

Tiwa nikan lo soro

Ori kan Oburu n'ile ife

Indignation does not bring forth anything good

Patience is the best of characters

A patient elders has everything

The truth of this thesis is adequately demonstrated

In the incidence of destiny that lacks good character

Nurturing as well as exhibiting good character is difficult

No destiny is bad in pristine Ife

Iwa is explained as the acquisition of good character. And virtue in Western and religion understanding is a firm disposition towards good in a consistent manner. It therefore means that both Iwa in the Yoruba context and virtue in the Western understanding drive at the derivation of good that effects one's personal life and the lives around him.

If Iwa can be substituted for virtue in the Yoruba culture, then what is Iwa in Yoruba belief?

Iwa baba Ini

Olu gbogbo Ola Omo Ijinle

Oba gbogbo Oro

Iwa can also be understood within the context of Iwapele (gentle character/self restraint). Iwapele is the fruit of a stem called Omoluabi which I already described as a child given birth to by the highest being of perfected character. Iwapele is a valuable asset in a life of any child which serves as a fertile soil to grow other valuable characters like inurere (good intention) and iteriba (respect) which helps the core Yoruba child finds his/her place in the society. Iwapele is mother of every good character. Eni to ba ti ni iwapele, ohun gbogbo Ioni. It is through iwapele that all other characters are gotten. One needs patience (suuru) for other good and essential character to dwell in anyone who possesses it. Through Iwapele, iteriba

and inurere are built. Anyone who has these three mother characters is said to be an Omoluabi.

Someone that has what it takes to be in the society, someone who has a place amongst his/her people, one who knows how to talk, when to talk and what to say while talking. One who knows what and what-not to do, and how to do what ought to be done. The omoluabi must be respectful and good nurtured towards all, ready to accept the will of the elders and obedient to the customs and traditions of the people.

Yoruba belief that anyone that has other valuable things and opportunities of life but lacks good character of moral beingness, which is the essence of proper human existence will sooner than later forfeit all his material possessions which would not let him be moral.

The world today is globalized, fast advancing and technology is simplifying lifestyles, as a race, we are quickly forgotten our values and some of our today's actions totally deviate from Omoluabi ethos. It now becomes highly essential that we all join in the crusade to eradicate moral decadency and further degeneration. We need renaissance, irrespective of where we find ourselves, be in Osogbo, Maiduguri or Elele in Rivers State. As a Nigerian, we are expected to be an Omoluabi, our families should be built on sound intellectual engagement centering on love, respect, decency, character, dignity, chastity, and responsibilities among many others. As the future of our nation, corpors should imbibe the spirit of selflessness, humanity, peaceful co-existence and industriousness.

The state of our country is far from being what Omoluabi concept postulates. Our cultural values and traditional moral codes have been abandoned. As we serve our nation here in Osun, the cradle of Yoruba civilization and epicenter of Omoluabis, We should all deeply reflect on the values and virtues that had sustained Yoruba society and we should work together to restore the glory of our past. In the next one year and henceforth, I enjoin you to embark on activities, projects, programs around being an Omoluabi. I challenge you to start thinking positively and abhor all vices and imbibe Omoluabi virtues. As I stated earlier, in Omoluabi lies the solution to problems confronting us as a nation. You all remember the Yoruba adage, *Omo ti a ko to ni yio ko ile ti a ko ta*" We need to rebuild a society where bribery and corruption, terrorism, nepotism, ethnic and religious violence, kidnapping and armed robbery, rape, political mugging, discrimination, disrespect for rule of law and other social vices would be unacceptable. As the future of our nation, you need to be an Omoluabi.

Thanks you and I wish you a very happy stay in the State of Osun.

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