



IFE AXE Creative Designs
By *Gerardo*
Jewelry Inspired by The Orisha

Chapter Eight

THE ORACLES

The oracles are used to obtain the Orisha's opinions and advice, to see into the future, to counsel those who come to a Santero to seek help and to see what will heal the sick.

The most popular oracles used in Santeria are the coconut oracle (El Coco or Biague) and the cowrie shell oracle (Los Caracoles or Dilogun).



THE COCONUTS (El Coco, Biague)

The coconut oracle is known as Biague to honor the name of the first Babalawo to make use of Olodumare's gift.

According to an old African tale, Olodumare came to earth and became so enchanted by a coconut palm that he decide to give it a gift.

"Not only will you give nourishment and oil to men," said Olodumare to the palm. "But all the Orishas will read the future in you. The pieces of your fruit will have meaning to the Orishas. They, in turn will pass it on to men."

The oracle operates by interpreting the positions that four pieces of coconut shell (the Obinu) land in when thrown. The Obinu always respond yes or no, so questions to the Biague must be very direct and to the point. For example:

P.O. Box 805763
CHICAGO, IL
60680-4119
USA

USA Tel: +1-312-479-1767
Tel: +52 1 55 1648 7960
Fax: +52 55 2614 8349
gbhawkins2@comcast.net

www.IFEAXEJewelry.com

The question: "Should I change my job?"

May have any of the following answers:

ALAFIA; Yes. It is possible.

EYIFE; Yes. Definitely.

OTAWE; Not sure. Throw again.

OCANASODE; No.

OYEKUN; Death. Stop consulting the oracle and go to a Babalawo to find out what's going on.

The simpler the question, the easier the answer's interpretation.

The Obinu are simply pieces of a coconut shell. What gives them their oracular power is the Ashe, the Santero or Santera's grace and natural psychic gifts. It is the Ashe which allows the consultant's relationship with the Orishas. Not everyone can use the Biague.

When consulting the Biague, questions should only be asked of one Orisha at a time. If the person consulting the oracle is not experienced in its manipulation or interpretation, only Elegua should be invoked.

The Biague may be consulted daily, but the same question should not be repeated. Elegua will become bored and play tricks on the questioner. Strange and very upsetting answers will come up. Stupid questions insult the Orishas. The oracle is not to be used as a party game or as an amusement. The Orishas are helpful when treated with respect, but they punish disrespect.

Persons who have not been initiated into Santeria, or do not have an Elegua, may consult the Biague as long as they show proper respect towards the Orishas. The prayers and invocations to Elegua may be made in the person's own language and in their own words.



How to Consult the Biague

P.O. Box 805763
CHICAGO, IL
60680-4119
USA

USA Tel: +1-312-479-1767
Tel: +52 1 55 1648 7960
Fax: +52 55 2614 8349
gbhawkins2@comcast.net

www.IFEAXEJewelry.com

Have two gourds standing by, one filled with fresh river water (water from a faucet is not considered as effective) and one filled with the following mixture:

A pinch of toasted corn.

A pinch of smoked jutia. If smoked jutia is unavailable, as it is likely to be, it may be replaced by smoked fish.

A smear of corajo butter.

A spoonful of molasses or honey.

A spoonful of powdered eggshell.

Also have a candle ready. The candle should be of a color pleasing to the Orisha being consulted. For example, if Elegua is invoked, the candle should be red and black.

Strip the outer husk off a coconut until the inner nut is freed. Take the nut in one hand and split it apart by hitting it with a hard object. A hammer will do. Tap around the nut's circumference until it splits open. Note that the inside of the nut is full of coconut milk, which will pour out when the nut is split open.

If you are inside, do not throw the coconut against the floor to open it. It is considered disrespectful to the Orishas. However, the coconut may be taken outside and split open by throwing against a rock or a cement patio floor.

After you split the coconut apart, choose four clean pieces. They must not show any cracks or other imperfections. These will be the Obinus. Wash them in the gourd filled with fresh river water.

Take up the Obinu in your left hand. With your right hand pick out bits of coconut meat from the corners of each piece. The number of pinches should correspond to a number pleasing to the Orisha consulted. For example, pinch out three pieces for Elegua, six pieces for Chango, five pieces for Oshun or seven pieces for Yemaya.

As you are pinching out the pieces of coconut meat, chant:

obinú ikú obinú ano obinú eyo obinú ofó arikú babagwá.

Save the pieces.

P.O. Box 805763
CHICAGO, IL
60680-4119
USA

USA Tel: +1-312-479-1767
Tel: +52 1 55 1648 7960
Fax: +52 55 2614 8349
gbhawkins2@comcast.net

Light a candle in honor of the Orisha being consulted. Assuming that Elegua is the Orisha whose advise you seek, the candle may be placed before the image of Elegua or, if you do not have an Elegua, by the front door.

Place the small pieces of coconut you pinched off the Obinu and place them on top of Elegua's tureen or on a small plate next to the candle.

Take up the gourd with the Saraceo mixture and add leaves of witch hazel, sargasso, or neat's tongue to it. Add enough river water to make a thick gruel. Place the gourd next to the candle and the coconut meat as an offering to Elegua.

Sprinkle river water three times around the offering while chanting:

omi tutu ana tutu tutu laroye tutu ilé.

Take the gourd full of Saraeco mixture and spill a little bit in each corner of the room. Throw a few drops out the front door to guard against an unfavorable oracle. This cleansing will also help you change an unfavorable should one still come up.

Once the cleansing of the room is completed, offer this prayer to Elegua:

elegua laroye akiloye aguro tente onú apagurá akama sesé areletuse abamula omubatá okolofofó okoloñiñi toni kan ofó omoró ogun oyona alayiki agó.

You may also compose a prayer of your own, in your own language.

Other Orishas may be invoked by using one of the following prayers or, again, you may compose your own.

<>

Mayubos to the Orishas

To Elegua:

laroye akiloye aguro tente onú apagurá akama sesé areletuse abamula omubatá okólofofó okoloñiñi toni kan ofó omoró agun oyona alayiki agó.

To Ogun:

P.O. Box 805763
CHICAGO, IL
60680-4119
USA

USA Tel: +1-312-479-1767
Tel: +52 1 55 1648 7960
Fax: +52 55 2614 8349
gbhawkins2@comcast.net

Ogun ñakobié kobú kobú alaguere ogúo ogun yumu su ogun finamalú egueleyein andaloro ekum feyú tana guaraguru osibiriki alalúo agó.

To Oshosi:

oshosi odematá onibebé ede kuresé olebure atamasile eobeki agó.

To Obatala:

obatalá obataisa obatayanu obirigwalano katioke okuni ayé kofiedenu babámi ayaguná leyibó jekun babá odumila oduaremu asabi olodo babámi ayuba.

To Chango:

eluwekon ashé osain cherere adashé kokoni jikoji omó la dufetini cherebinu oluosó bogwó ayalu kosó agó.

To Yemaya:

yemayá aguayo a kere odun a limí karabio osa ñabio legu eyin tebié gwá sirueku yebwá obini duato okuba okana kwana keku yanza ori eré gwá mio agó.

To Oshun:

Yeiyé kari imbamoro ofi kereme ogwá meri kokuasi agó.

To Osain:

osain ake meyi oshe kure kere meyi bero eki dibi agwanakero ama te le iku mori chase le berike a yaya agó.

To Orunmila:

orunmila egwadoni en agwaluri ñakiedé ifá omá ifá ogwó ifá arikú babagwá agó.

To Babalu-Aye:

babalú ayé ogoro niga iba elobi agwa litala babá sinlao iba eloni ogoro niga chapkuaná agó.

P.O. Box 805763
CHICAGO, IL
60680-4119
USA

USA Tel: +1-312-479-1767
Tel: +52 1 55 1648 7960
Fax: +52 55 2614 8349
gbhawkins2@comcast.net

To The Ibeyi:

beyi oro araba aina kainde ideu agó.

To Orishaoko:

orishaoko ikú afefé orogodó gailotigwaro agó.

To Biague and Adiototo (the first Babalawo to use the oracle and his son):

oshé bile adagwe biagué babadona orun adiatoto adafum ala kenta dada omo tuyo agó.

After the Orisha who is to answer through the Biague is summoned, respect is paid to the following entities:

Olodumare is honored:

bogwo ikú oluwo embesesé olodumare ayuba igbaé bayé tonú.

The dead Santeros and Babalawos are honored:

boguo imaworo iyalosha babalosha babalao olorisha icu embelese ibae bayeral baye tonu.

The spirits of the dead are honored:

kosi ikú kosi ano kosi eyo kosi ofó arikú babagwá.

Ask your Godmother and your Godfather for permission to throw the Biague, even though they may not be present:

kinkamashe (your Godmother) kinkamashe (your Godfather).

Gather the Obinus in your right hand even if you are left handed. Without kneeling, touch the floor and the Orisha's tureen with your left hand and say:

ilé mókueo (the Orisha's name) mó kueo.

Repeat the words three times. If anyone else is present, they should respond:

akué yé.

P.O. Box 805763
CHICAGO, IL
60680-4119
USA

USA Tel: +1-312-479-1767
Tel: +52 1 55 1648 7960
Fax: +52 55 2614 8349
gbhawkins2@comcast.net

www.IFEAXEJewelry.com

Place your right hand over your heart and say:

unile ovi elegua.

Bend down and moisten the fingers of your left hand in the water that you spilled on the floor. Moisten your right hand with the wet fingers and say:

akué yé oguó akué yé omá arikú babagwá.

If anyone is present, they should respond:

apkuaná.

Toss the Obinu on the floor while saying:

oni elé bake.

If you are consulting the Biague on behalf of another person, touch the Obinu to their head before throwing them.

Now that you have followed the preliminary steps, the position of the Obinu on the floor, determines the answer. The possible permutations are:

<>

ALAFIA

Chango and Orunmila speak.

Position: All four Obinu land white (meat) side up.

Meaning: Affirmative. It is possible.

Interpretation:

Happiness and health. Everything has been done as is right and proper. Peace, prosperity and grace.

Further actions:

When Alafia comes up, say: eyionlé obatalá orú ayé.

Then, lay down on the floor before the Obinu and make reverence to them.

Repeat the question and throw the Obinu again. Alafia must be ratified by Otawe or Eyife.

OTAWE

Chango, Ogun, Yemaya, and Oshosi speak.

P.O. Box 805763
CHICAGO, IL
60680-4119
USA

USA Tel: +1-312-479-1767
Tel: +52 1 55 1648 7960
Fax: +52 55 2614 8349
gbhawkins2@comcast.net

Position: Three Obinu land white side up. One lands dark (shell) side up.

Meaning: Maybe. There are doubts.

Interpretation:

Hope, but not complete confidence. What is asked is possible, but subject to conditions.

Further action: When Otawe comes up, say:

obara ni bara obara koso telerio ayé kikaté ala kamake arayé eluwekon ashé osain ogun arere la boko. The Obinu must be thrown again. This time, make your question more specific. The next throw will give the answer. If Otawe comes up again, the answer is no.

With Otawe, or if the previous throw was Alafia it might be necessary to make Ebo, a sacrifice. By consulting the Oracle, the type of sacrifice can be pinpointed.

◇

EYIFE

Elegua, Ogun, Oshosi and Oshun speak.

Position: Two Obinu white side up. Two dark side up.

Meaning: Yes.

Interpretation: Absolutely positive. Definitely affirmative.

Further action: When Eyife comes up, say:

eyífe olówo eyité omó arikú babao arikú babagwá.

If the previous throw was Alafia, the answer is yes. No need to throw again.

◇

OCANASODE

Chango, Babalu-Aye and the spirits of the dead speak.

Position: One Obinu white side up. The other three pieces are dark side up.

Meaning: No.

Interpretation: Negative. Beware of tragedy. Be alert in order to avoid misfortune. Grave difficulty.

Further action: When Ocanasode comes up, open your eyes wide, pull your ears and say:

ocana sode okuá ti sode sode oke sode oma sode oguó batiosode arikú babagwá.

Consult the oracle again and ask if Ocanasode just means "No", or if there are further difficulties and complications present.

P.O. Box 805763
CHICAGO, IL
60680-4119
USA

USA Tel: +1-312-479-1767
Tel: +52 1 55 1648 7960
Fax: +52 55 2614 8349
gbhawkins2@comcast.net

www.IFEAXEJewelry.com



OYEKUN

Chango and Oya speak.

Position: All four Obinu are dark side up.

Meaning: Death.

Interpretation: Definitely no. A very bad sign which announces death and suffering.

Further action: When Oyekun comes up, take the four Obinu and put them in a gourd filled with water and eight pieces of cocoa butter. This will refresh the Obinu from such a negative reading. After the Obinu are soaking in water, touch your chest and say:

olufina. Touch the floor and say: mofin karé mofin karé godo godo da fá mofin karé godo ba é alafi kisieko beké lorié eña kan ori mi aferé asaka beke ouani moyuba abe ebami oma tun oma ese erbami che fun ni omó omó ni mi yegwá jekua jeri apú yan fú yanza ará orún.

A babalawo must be consulted immediately. You need to be ritually cleansed by a despojo, the brushing and washing away of evil influences. Light a candle for the souls of the dead.

The Babalawo and you must keep asking the oracle if the message of death comes from the Orishas who speak or from the spirits of the dead. That will give the Babalawo an idea of the forces he must deal with.

P.O. Box 805763
CHICAGO, IL
60680-4119
USA

USA Tel: +1-312-479-1767
Tel: +52 1 55 1648 7960
Fax: +52 55 2614 8349
gbhawkins2@comcast.net

www.IFEAXEJewelry.com