

# ORISHAS — AND — HOODOO

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO DISCOVERING AFRICAN SPIRITUAL  
TRADITIONS. LEARN EVERYTHING ABOUT ANCIENT  
HOODOO RITUALS AND AFRICAN ORISHA DEITIES  
TO REACH SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT



2 BOOKS  
IN 1

Evelyn Marie FOURNETTE  
OrangePen PUBLICATIONS

# HOODOO ORISHAS

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# **Orishas and Hoodoo:**

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*The Complete Guide to Discovering African Spiritual Traditions. Learn Everything About Ancient Hoodoo Rituals and African Orisha Deities to Reach Spiritual Enlightenment*

**OrangePen Publications Evelyn Marie Fournette**

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# ORISHAS

*The Ultimate Guide to Yoruba Tradition,  
Sacred Rituals, the Divine Feminine, and  
Spiritual Enlightenment of African Culture  
and Wisdom-The Ancient Orishas*

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# INTRODUCTION

**T**he Yoruba people are one of the major ethnic groups of Africa who inhabit central Nigeria, southwestern Niger, and western Cameroon. The Yoruba language is the best-known member of the Niger-Congo family, spoken by nearly 30 million people worldwide.

Yoruba tradition holds that an early ancestor named Oduduwa migrated north from Ile Ife in present-day Nigeria with other migrants to take possession of a piece of land that was considered theirs by ancient requests made to divine ancestors. Oduduwa became ruler over this territory and established his capital at Oyo.

The Yoruba speaks a language that belongs to the Niger-Congo family, with considerable Hausa and Fulani influence. The language is highly structured and characterized by intricate rhythms (Sufi) and complex tonal qualities (music).

The Yoruba make up about 17% of Nigeria's population; this group includes about 22 million people whose primary villages are located in southwestern Nigeria. Yorubas have historically lived in an area covered by scattered small political units. Until the colonial period, the Yoruba people were organized by townlands, larger units also known as "jagun" or "okunrin" land, consisting of several small townships.

The okunrin is responsible for public works, judicial affairs, and the selection of the junior chief. However, people rarely interacted with their leaders because they were viewed as very powerful and mystical. Instead, most communication is conducted at the village level. Each village is autonomous with its unique history. Approximately 300 distinct communities in southwestern Nigeria are spread across five geopolitical zones. A collection of towns were built around a central town or city called a "lga." Lga's ruled by a king (Oba) who would share power with various councils consisting of civilian elders of different family lineages and professional guilds such as priests, traders, etc.

The king was a ceremonial position rather than a political one, as seen in other parts of Africa. The political power lies within the councils, mostly elders from powerful lineage families. In the days of conquest, warring parties represented by their chiefs were selected through a series of ingenious tests designed to ascertain their bravery and determine whether they had the skills needed for leadership.

Religion is perhaps the most important institution that shaped life in Yorubaland. It provided the moral and legal foundation for social relations and activities. It ensured that individuals and communities operated within a well-understood supernatural and natural order. The peninsula became widely known as "The Land of the Holy Spirit" or simply "The Land of Ori." Since the 19th century, missionaries have been active in Yoruba land, and their influence has been wide-ranging. Church missions were established by the Wesleyan Missionary Society, the Church of England, and later several Baptists. For a long time, Protestant missionaries influenced Yoruba culture far more than Islamic missionaries from other countries.

In contrast to most other African peoples who often adopted religious ideas from others, the Yoruba people have always considered themselves true believers in their religion practiced for thousands of years. In fact, many traditional customs are practiced today.

The Yoruba people believe in a supreme being called Olorun. They believe that he is the father of all creation and also the owner of the cosmos. Behind him are minor but powerful deities subordinate to him. There are many lesser gods in Yoruba belief. Some represent natural forces (e.g., Olokun, the orisha of the ocean; Ogboni, the orisha of iron), and others represent ancestors (e.g., Eshu, Olofi). These deities are grouped into four categories:

**Between Olorun and these gods are other intermediary spirits called Orishas. Each of the orishas corresponds to one of the following characteristics:**

The orishas are believed to be spirits who live in nature and help humans with practical matters (e.g., the gods of iron who serve as protectors against snakebite). They also influence humanity in various ways. One of the most

important is that each orisha confers specific skills on human beings, known as "ashé." Those with artistic, intellectual, or spiritual attributes are traditionally called Orisa, meaning "the wise," or Orisa Opa meaning "the highly literate." The orishas can be grouped by their human characteristics (e.g., Osanyin, the god of herbs and healing).

There are hundreds of orishas ranging from gods who govern forces of nature (e.g., stones) to those who exert control over social relations (e.g., Esu, the messenger, or psychopomp). Each deity has particular abilities and responsibilities. The Yoruba pantheon is vast and complex; this complexity is mirrored in the various facets of life governed by these deities.

The gods are believed to be around people at all times; they must be worshipped every day to help human beings live long, healthy lives free from sickness and trouble. Families perform rituals known as "beliefs" (i.e., the worship of Olumo Otu, god of fertility) to ensure that their gods are appeased, and that success is achieved for all.



# YORUBA CULTURE



## **The African Continent, the Cradle of Traditions**

**A**frica is home to various unique and interesting cultures, many of which have been studied and documented in depth. One such culture is the Yoruba people of Nigeria, the home country of the famous Orisha worshippers.

Nigeria has a large number of different vibrant cultures, and Nigeria's history dates back 3000 years to when the Yoruba people migrated from the Sahara Desert. The Yoruba people settled in what eventually became an area called Oyo Midan (The Place) on the Niger River. Eventually, the Oyo Midan expanded into several major city-states that included Ibadan, Osun,

and Ijebu Ode, all growing on their own separate cultures within a larger "Ibo" Yoruba culture.

In the past, the capitals of the Yoruba land were connected with each other in a kind of open confederation under the leadership of the leader of the Yoruba people.

The confederation had as its cornerstone the consideration that the people were like a big family, and this has certainly favored peace and harmony between the confederate units, keeping possible conflicts away. Every single territory was ruled by a monarch (Oba), the council of monarchs, the leaders of the guilds, and Egbe (the merchants).

In addition, government power was passed down from generation to generation, except in some territories where the appointment of a king on the basis of royal descent had been abolished and open to any male born in the territory. Generally, the Obas were polygamous, and it is said that some of them married a disproportionate number of wives, even over 25. Marriage was one of the main means to increase political power; for this reason, they preferred to marry women of royal lineage.

In the 16th century, the decline of the power of the Yoruba confederacy began, and the peace that had reigned for years was interrupted by the first conflicts. Conflicts with the Sokoto Caliphate of the northern region were the main causes of this decline. The Sokoto Caliphate was an Islamic empire founded by Uthman Dan Fodio, and forcibly took control of a northern Yoruba city, causing riots and riots, resulting in a massive retreat of the besieged population in the southern regions.

A choice that will prove wicked because the swamps and the tsetse fly caused the death of men and horses. The Uthman Dan Fodio intensified the offensive to conquer the remaining territories but was defeated by Ibadan, "the savior of the Yoruba land" in 1840.

Nigeria became a UK protectorate in 1901 and then a colony in 1914.

In the following years, Nigerian nationalism grew greatly, and the United Kingdom led the colony, made up of numerous factions and ethnic groups, towards self-government on a federal basis. Colonization, religiously

speaking, marked the beginning of Christianity in Nigeria, which resulted in a gradual decline in traditional Yoruba practices and beliefs.

Nigeria gained independence on October 1, 1960, and the entire Yoruba land was incorporated into present-day Nigeria, which became a republic three years after independence.

Today, the Yoruba people live in Nigeria's three major cities of Lagos, Ibadan, and Abeokuta. The majority of people from this culture are spread throughout West Africa, with significant communities in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. The Yoruba people have a rich oral tradition that includes proverbs, sayings, and myths that have been passed down to every generation within the family community.

African culture is an amazing blend of West, Central, South, and various other African influences. Yoruba people are one of the dominant ethnic groups in the country who are known to have an immense cultural influence on present-day Nigeria. They are also one of the largest multicultural ethnic groups within Nigeria, with their population estimated at around 19%, according to 2011 census data. The Yoruba are believed to have originated from Benin, which was also known as Ife. They are one of the groups of people who are called the Igbo by the others, after their kingdom.

Yoruba is a Bantu language, which is far more prominent in Western Nigeria than it is in the North. The Yoruba culture has its roots in Benin, where it flourished for centuries before being influenced by many other cultures.

It is interesting to note that due to the influence of the large ethnic groups that came later, there are differences between northern and southern Yorubas today. Yoruba in the South has a much richer culture than that of their counterparts in the North. They have a more complex system of ritual, which they follow for the religious ceremonies.

Yoruba are extremely religious people. Yoruba people are considered to be one of the most spiritual ethnic groups in the country, with few Yoruba areas being considered ghost towns or abandoned settlements. The Yoruba also pride themselves on being very good-looking people and believe that

beauty is important in life. Yoruba women have an intricate social hierarchy that can be traced back to the original “Oyo Midan,” where only the senior women were allowed to mix with men outside of their communities. The Yoruba are also made up of many different clans, each with their own unique customs regarding marriage, marriage rituals, and rules.

The Yoruba have a very elaborate wedding ritual. This ritual is believed to have originated from the time when kings were still around. Yoruba people believe that if the process of marriage is not followed to the T, it may bring misfortune upon the couple after they are married. The practice can be traced back to an incident that took place in Ibadan during the colonial period. It was then realized that women who got married to men other than their intended groom would always end up ill or dead after their wedding reception, which many people attributed to witchcraft by the woman's family. The practice of this ritual was then formalized, and it became a part of Yoruba culture.

Yoruba people perform many rites of passage during their lives, such as the “Gbedu.” This is where women undergo a ceremony to free themselves from all bad spirits such as those which may cause disease and the like. The Yorubas believe that through this ceremony, they will be protected from bad spirits and can lead happy lives. The Gbedu is offered to an elderly woman who already has two children, is with child, or has been widowed with no children. It is then her duty to take care of her extended family members after that age. The Gbedu is a mock ceremony that is usually held indoors and involves the exchange of gifts, such as money, to the elderly woman's family members.

The Yoruba belief in witchcraft has also been known to be popular among their culture. Witches are believed to cause harm or disease by making use of charms and other items. Sadly, the Yoruba people believe that these people can cause harm through any means and not just by using charms. The Yoruba still perform many rituals designed to prevent evil spirits from entering their homes and causing harm to their family members.

There are great aspects of Yoruba culture that can be seen today in present society, such as music, dance, and even fashion styles. These have been

handed down from generation to generation until they became popular amongst the general population. These aspects of Yoruba culture continue to be popular in present-day society, and most people can still identify with them.

Yoruba culture is very rich and vibrant. It is only right that every Nigerian learns more about their local cultures and traditions to appreciate what they have inherited from their ancestors and how they can be beneficial in their lives today.

Yorubaland is a cultural region in southwestern Nigeria. The term may also be used to refer to the traditional religion of the Yoruba, which originated in southwestern Nigeria (though it has spread into neighboring Benin and Togo).

## **The Birth of Yoruba Culture in Africa and Its Great Importance**

As noted, Yoruba culture is one of the most dominant cultures in Africa and has played a significant role in shaping modern-day Africa. It continues to influence many regions of the world with its vibrant individuality.

There are over 35 million Yorubas living today, but not all know how they got to be where they are now. There have been many theories of the origins of Yoruba culture, with the most common being that it came from Igboland. We now know that this theory is inaccurate because there are many similarities between Igboland and Yoruba.

The first Yoruba were considered to have come from Benin City, which is now part of Nigeria; however, there is evidence that they may have come from what is currently known as the Oyo Empire, which was located in present-day Nigeria.

There are many reasons why most historians agree with this theory. They share similar cultural practices, such as their belief in ancestor worship.

Another theory is that they are the descendants of Nok, or in modern-day political terms, Nupes. They were believed to have come from current-day

Cameroon and migrated into the Oyo Empire. It is believed that they were traders who migrated around 500 years ago; however, there is evidence of this earlier on; it is thought that they were already trading long before 500 years ago. This theory also makes sense because they share similar cultural practices, such as their way of dressing and how both groups speak Ewe/Fon (a language belonging to the Kwa family).

The Yoruba were predominantly farmers and hunters. They were also skilled craftsmen who produced pottery, woodwork, bronze, and ironworks.

Yoruba traditional religion is built around the belief in a supreme deity called Olodumare and a pantheon of lesser deities known as the orixas. The orixas represent a natural phenomenon: their appearances can be seen in rivers, forests, mountains, and other manifestations of nature, while the descendants of these gods are humans whose personalities reflect the characteristics of that god.

There are many principles used by Yoruba, such as moderation and balance. Yoruba religion is based on a belief that a divine being created them, and they must do as this being says if they want to be rewarded after death. It was also believed that there were many different gods who ruled the world, and you needed to please each of them if you wanted to be rewarded after death.

Yoruba people believe in the saying “Aje bi o ji o ti,” which means “A person with a good heart will always have a good eye.” This means that a person with a good heart will always see good, which can be believed by looking at how lovely their towns are. They believe that things should not only look beautiful, but they should be beautiful as well.

As an African society, the Yoruba came to African American culture through such vital elements as its music. African American music has been influenced by many different elements, including the original Africans. However, most of these elements have been taken from the Yoruba culture.

## **Origin of the Name “Yoruba”**

The Yoruba are referred to as Yoruba by their neighbors because, apparently, they are identified by the way they talk. According to Olawoyin, the Yoruba are called “Ogho-Ojo,” which means “those who go down for water.” The name gradually changed to Oyo-Oro because the river Oyo is just below where they live, within their territory.

According to Douglas Johnson in his book “African Traditions,” the word “Yoruba” may have come from a strange phenomenon that happened when Europeans first met with the region's people. When the Europeans asked them where they were from, they replied, “O rúba,” which means “O the well-rooted trees.” The Europeans thought they were saying “O rúba,” which is Yoruba. From there, it was reduced to Yoruba.

Another theory of the name “Yoruba” is that it came from the Yoruban word “Orun,” which means “to make a sudden movement.” This may have referred to the fact that when strangers met with them, they were very abrupt and quick in their movements. However, none of these theories have been proven to be right.

In early history, many African peoples journeyed from one part of Africa to another in search of a place they could call their own. This was a hard task for people looking for a home because they had to travel through miles and miles of desert and jungles with little food or water in order to reach their destination alive.

The Yoruba were one of the many African migrants who traveled east in search of a place to call home. They migrated out of their territory, the Oyo Empire, and reached what is now modern-day Benin, Togo, and Cameroon. They came upon what they believed to be a potential home that was located on two rivers known as the Niger and the Benue. This was where they thought they would find fertile land for their crops.

The Yoruba were not considered to be very politically active until Olowo Ajulo became Ooni of Ife in 1809. This made him one of the most important leaders in Yorubaland for nearly 50 years until he died in 1854 at

age 78. He was the first Yoruba Ooni to succeed his father, Oba Abasanjo, who was Ooni of Ife at the same time.

After his death, Oba Ajao Adeoyo I took over as the traditional authority of Yorubaland. He had little power because he was not considered to be very strong-willed or trusted by the people. His son, Oba Osinlade Ogodo, became Ooni of Ife shortly after his father's death in 1864. He held this position until he died in 1885 at age 65.

## **History of the Yoruba People**

There are several stories that describe the Yoruba people. The most popular of these stories was the story of their origin, which they refer to as “Okolikaji.”

The Yoruba were a tribe who lived in a small region in present-day Nigeria, which they called Ife. They were a thriving and successful city-state closely tied with its larger neighbors, Igboland and Benin. Their society was very advanced and was one of the most successfully organized civilizations in Africa at the time.

**By the mid-1970s, nearly half of all Nigerian citizens lived in Ife, making it the most densely populated place on earth at that time.**

They were known for their impressive art, high level of trade, and incredibly advanced methods of building. At the peak of their success as a civilization, many other cultures tried to imitate them, which is why there are so many Yoruba-influenced cities today. Although they no longer exist as a single culture since they were conquered by other people or assimilated into different cultures, there still remain large numbers of Yoruba people and territories that carry on the culture and traditions of the first Yoruba peoples.

As mentioned above, The first Yoruba were considered to have come from Benin city, which is now part of Nigeria. However, there is evidence that they may have come from what is currently known as the Oyo Empire. While there are similarities between the Igboland and Yoruba, it has been concluded that the Yoruba integration into Igboland was much later than



their neighboring regions. The people who migrated into Igboland were said to be fleeing the Fulani Jihad of 1804 and 1805.

While it is believed by many historians that these people came over from Benin City, it has also been said that some did migrate from Oyo and Ife at around this time. Despite this, most believe that the Yoruba were not a centralized society at this time, and they spent most of their time in their separate city-states.

However, even though the Yorubas were separated by their respective city-states, they still had very close ties with one another. They shared many beliefs and practiced many similar rituals. Of course, just like any other society in history, there were always conflicts between one another, and no matter how strong the relationship between neighboring states was, they could never stay together indefinitely.

## **Expansion to Other Parts of the World**

What is the Yoruba religion? The answer cannot be unambiguous. First of all, it is the religion of the Orisha, which arrived with the diaspora of slaves in Brazil and Cuba and spread massively after 1950, but it is also the Pentecostalism of many Nigerians who have emigrated in recent decades to European countries and those of Sub-Saharan Africa, especially to large cities like Nairobi and Johannesburg. Not only that but at the same time, there are Yoruba in Africa. Some of whom, albeit with difficulty and compromise, continue to practice the “old religion,” along with various forms of Islam and Christianity that those practices demonize.

**For the sake of clarity, let us distinguish “three concentric circles” of Yoruba religion, which are, from the innermost to the outermost:**

- 1) The religion practiced by the Yoruba in their homeland, which is conventionally called “Yoruba traditional religion” (YTR) and which has at its core the worship of the Orisha;
- 1) The religion followed by the vast majority of Yoruba today, consisting of various forms of Islam and Christianity (neo-

Pentecostalism and other evangelical offshoots), oriented towards a general anti-Orisha sentiment;

- 2) The Yoruba religion is practiced outside Nigeria in various parts of the world by people who are not Yoruba or their descendants.

Between the first and third circles, there is an intimate connection and, at the same time, a continuous contradiction. The cult of the Orisha has had not only lasting, but a growing impulse and flowering outside Africa. Whereas, at home, these supernatural entities only dimly retain the importance they had in tribal cults before the dominant Christian and Muslim groups made them the object of theological attacks by declaring them “demonic.”

At the base of the traditional Yoruba religion, in its two directions inside and outside Nigeria, is the YTR. First of all, the term “Yoruba” itself, of Arab origin, was used to designate only the Oyo, one of the most important of the many ethnic groups that populated the region. Adopted by the Anglican missionary Church in 1840, the name was extended to all the local populations that it was intended to evangelize, similar in language and culture, and, above all, who considered themselves descendants of Ife-Ife.

However, these diverse groups found greater unity in the context of slavery in the Americas, where they also often had to defend themselves against other very different African ethnic groups such as the Lucumi in Cuba, the Nago in Brazil, and the Aku in Sierra Leone. What, more than all the different origins or affiliations, counts in the “Yoruba” identification is the devotion to the Orisha, which can manifest itself in Nigeria in an extreme variety of local forms different from city to city. For example, Shangò, who plays a predominant role in the South American cult, was an Oyo deity practically ignored by the eastern ethnic groups; Oduduwa was an ancestral (male) commander of Ife in the central-eastern regions while she is considered the (female) consort of the god of creation in the southwest; among river deities, Yemoja belonged mainly to the west, Osun to the center and east while Oya, connected to the Niger River and tornadoes, to the north. Geographical location favored the western regions, home to the

preeminent Oyo. Islam had arrived over the more remote east and its inaccessible forests.

The flow of Yoruba slaves to the Americas was continuous and massive. Especially between the 1810s and 1826-50, a period when the social and political weakening of the Oyo left a power vacuum and decades of internecine wars, until well after the abolition of slavery by France and Britain in the 1930s as human trafficking continued through illegal routes to the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, where slavery was later abolished (in Cuba in 1886, in Brazil in 1888). The ability of these cults to survive adversity and change while maintaining a strong African

connotation is, therefore, due to their adaptability, but also to a series of other circumstances: for example, in the colonies of Latin America, Catholic missionaries and evangelicals were better prepared than their Protestant and Anglican counterparts to recognize and accept the existence of different African nations and allow them to associate in a limited sphere of activity, a condition that understandably favored the survival of the traditions; the cabildos, missionary institutions, had this aggregative function and, at the same time, provided an important framework within which to maintain the cult of the Orisha in the process of syncretic dissimulation with Catholic saints and their Iberian-Baroque iconography.

Therefore, the necessity of adaptation and new inspirations have led to a reduction in the number of deities present in indefinite quantity in the traditional religion. The primary “survivors” (Sango, Ogun, Yemoja, Esu-Elegba, Obatala, Ososi, Osun, Oya, Sopona, or Babaluaye) have in common that they come from the central and north-western regions of Yorubaland. In particular, Sango, a royal god for the Oyo and who also assumed a prominent position in America to the point of eclipsing even, in some cases, the importance of the others (think of the Brazilian Xango or the Shango of Trinidad). Other Orisha has disappeared in certain regions and flourished in others - Orunmila, for example, is almost non-existent in Brazil, while in Cuba, it is the object of great devotion.

The complex rituals of Yoruba derivation then developed a modern, rational theological and ritual organization in response to the impact of a non-

African context and its tools as a resource. This transformation of the religion of the Orisha into a true belief system involved a sort of “pantheonization” of the cult under the banner of unification and hierarchy, similar to what is found in Greco-Roman religion. Still, it is a slippery road to travel, an abstraction, when the concrete reality consists of many different cults in various. Unlike in the New World colonies, the Orisha have never shared festivals or temples. Indeed, their relations are marked by open rivalry.

Hence the religion of the Orisha in the Americas seems to take two different paths; the first marked by African Americans and the other, in particular, by the Santeros of Cuba, wherein the late nineteenth century five Yoruba Babalawo established the Regla de Ifa and founded its main branches.

The “third circle” (expansion of the religion of Orisha outside Africa) includes two different lines of historical development: that of the contraction, in Nigeria, of the cult of the Orisha and the opposite and contrary line of expansion in the radically new context of the diaspora. These two directions produced, on the one hand, the desire of Yoruba African Americans for a “return to Africa,” revisionism that would provide answers to the need for ethnic integrity, and, on the other, the Yorubización, an inclusive opening supported above all by the Cubans, who had introduced the religion of the Orisha into the United States at the end of the 1940s. Afro-Cuban religions are characterized by a “theology of non-racially marked recruitment” because, in Cuba, these cults did not identify with blackness, as on the contrary happened in the United States.

The most concrete result of the first current was the founding of a village in South Carolina called Oyotunji (Oyo Revived), still active and operating today. In this place, a Yoruba community has literally reinvented itself, respecting a cycle of ceremonies dedicated to the major Orisha and appealing to divination to learn about its African ancestors. Its founder, the Oba Adefunmi (Walter S. King by birth), first lived through a more eclectic phase, today one would say “open to contamination” (especially from the Aka and Dahomei) until, towards the end of the 1950s, he formed a special bond with a Santero, Cristóbal Olliana, and then turned sharply towards the political positions of black nationalism. The result on the religious level

was, on the one hand, the refusal to accept that non-black people could be initiated into the traditional religion, and on the other hand, the need for legitimacy coming directly from the Oni of Ife, the highest authority on the matter. According to this orientation, the “primordial” rituals and doctrinal formulas, coming from Ife-Ife as the place of cosmogony, have greater effectiveness. But African Americans on this side of the Atlantic did not suspect that, paradoxically, this charge is, if not a Christian subject, at least strongly influenced by the Pentecostal presence of the dominant community; and that for their part, Nigerians consider the “new” Yoruba of Adefunmi as Yojimbo (“Europeans,” no more than outsiders).

In Nigeria, Islam and Christianity are the foreign and hegemonic religions with respect to the indigenous population, which suffers their influences: the Church of Orunmila, for example, founded in the 1920s, models its services on those of the Protestant churches, with the result that is anything but primitive and original. But on the fortunate wings of this need for recognition flew many episcopal advantages, ceremonial experts and Babalawo, the best known of whom was Professor Wande Abimbola, Ifa's spokesman in the world on behalf of the Ooni himself, whose task is to promote Nigerian Yoruba practice as “normative” and who has found greater support in Brazil than in Cuba, where the Regla de Ifa prevails.

The profound decline of traditional religion in Yorubaland corresponds, in America, the search for the original wisdom to which to refer and by which to feel legitimized, becoming the means for a tradition that one would like to be uninterrupted. Spurious elements are expunged in respect of a re-Africanization that becomes a sort of “desyncretization,” in sharp contrast with the accommodating and dogma-free nature of the religion of the Orisha, that ability to mix-and-match with the variegated forms of African Protestantism, with the even more aerial new age spirituality or with other non-Yoruba African traditions capable of creating syncretic products continually distinguished by the freshness of contemporaneity.

It must be admitted that the Yoruba are no longer the primary vectors of their traditional religion, but Afro-Caribbeans and African-Americans are no less so now than devout Latinos. Santeria and Candomblé are the classic examples of a good result in adapting flexibly to the point of losing any

obligation with the ethnolinguistic provenance. This is the first requirement for the Orisha to aspire to become a World religion of the third millennium.

# THE YORUBA RELIGION

## What is Yoruba?



**Y**oruba is a religion practiced by over 50 million people--the plurality religion in Nigeria, Benin, Togo, and Ghana. It's also practiced in Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Suriname.

As already described in the previous chapters, the Yoruba religion is named after a group of people living in southwestern Nigeria. That's why people also call it "Ori-Igbon," which means "the religion of the Yoruba people."

The Yoruba religion is sometimes called Lucumi or Santeria, but those names aren't as accurate as Yoruba. In fact, they're Spanish words that mean "light" and "sanctuary." When they were first used in Cuba as a name for the Yoruba religion, Lucumi and Santeria were used to describe all African religions.

**The Yoruba Religion is NOT Santeria. There are some similarities between them, but there are also many significant differences.**

Yoruba is derived from the Yoruba people who live in southwestern Nigeria. They are ethnically diverse but have some commonalities in terms

of their history, culture, language, and mythology. So the Yoruba religion really has little to do with Cuba or Santeria.

Santeria is derived from the word “santaria.” Santaria is a word for religion in several African languages, including Yoruba. It's important to clarify this because the Yoruba religion is sometimes confused with Santeria or Lucumi. If that happens, it's not accurate. A better description of the Yoruba religion would be “Yorubaland African Traditional Religion” or “Yoruba African Traditional Religion.” That's because the Yoruba are only one African ethnic group among many that practice similar religions. Cuba is the only country where the Yoruba religion has been called “Santeria” or “Lucumi.” In other parts of the world, it's more commonly known as “Yoruba.”

The Yoruba religion is a very old religion with a rich mythology and a complex pantheon of deities. It's an important part of African Traditional Religion, which includes a number of similar religions practiced throughout Africa, the Caribbean, and South America.

The Yoruba religion is derived from the Yoruba people who live in southwestern Nigeria.

That's why it's sometimes called “Ori-Igbon,” which means “the religion of the Yoruba people.” While “Yoruba” and “Ori-Igbon” both mean the same thing, Ori-Igbon is more accurate because it uses the group's name that practices this religion.

It spread through much of the African Diaspora, including Cuba, Brazil, Trinidad, and Venezuela. It's also practiced in Benin, Togo, Ghana, the Bahamas. The Yoruba religion has many similarities with other African indigenous religions.

The Yoruba people are ethnically diverse and have commonalities in terms of their history, culture, language, and mythology. They regard themselves as original human beings. Many of them believe that they were formed from the union of Orishala and Oduduwa.

The Yoruba religion is often confused with Santeria, also called “Lucumi.” This confusion stems from the fact that these two religions have many



similarities. For example, there are Yoruba people in Cuba and Lucumi/Santeria priests in Nigeria. Cuba and Nigeria were the first nations to be colonized by Spain and Portugal, respectively. This means that Spanish Catholicism influenced many Lucumi/Santeria priests. The Yoruba religion is usually not influenced by Catholicism.

**There are some differences between Lucumi (Santeria) and the Yoruba religion, such as:**

The most important difference is that Lucumi (Santeria) is a syncretic religion, while the Yoruba religion is not. Lucumi (Santeria) has incorporated many Catholic elements into its practices. The Yoruba religion is not syncretic. It has kept its African roots intact.

Many people practice both the traditional Yoruba religion and Christianity because of the influence of colonialism on African societies. These individuals are not practicing syncretism but rather are practicing both religions side-by-side. They simply choose to worship one deity on Sunday and another on Tuesday. This is also true for those who practice Lucumi (Santeria) and the Yoruba religion. Many people in Cuba, Trinidad, and Venezuela practice both religions.

The Yoruba religion is not a new religion. It's very old and has been passed down from generation to generation orally. It uses a number of orishas, which are spirits that have been recognized by the Yoruba people since time immemorial. They respond to prayers called "Ifá," "Oshun," and "Olorun," among others. These are spirits of nature, wisdom, divination, and communications. Some of them also embody deities that came to the Yoruba people through trade with other cultures. For example, the orisha of "Ogun" may have originated in Nigeria or Benin.

The Yoruba religion is not just an African religion. It's also referred to as Obeah because it was introduced by Angolan slaves into the Caribbean. This religion was brought to the Caribbean by Yorubas, who were brought over during the slave trade. They sold their skills as blacksmiths and other occupations and also sold their beliefs in African deities. In fact, both Lucumi/Santeria and Obeah have been associated with witchcraft.

There are also similarities between the Yoruba religion and Candomblé, which is practiced in Brazil. Candomblé originated from the Yoruba religion, but it has been influenced by Catholicism and indigenous Brazilian spirituality. Brazil's history with the slave trade is similar to Cuba's history.

In fact, many slaves who were brought to Cuba came from Brazil. This means that Yoruba people were brought to Cuba and that the Yoruba religion was brought to Brazil. The same is true for Haiti and Trinidad, which also experienced a significant influx of Yoruba slaves. The Yoruba religion has been practiced in those countries as well.

**There are also similarities between the Yoruba religion and Vodou, which is practiced in Haiti. Many of the Yoruba deities have been incorporated into Vodou rituals.**

The Yoruba religion does not have a priesthood. Vodou priests, for example, are a respected group who take on the role of godfathers and godmothers of children and offer aid to those who seek their aid. The Vodou priesthood is not hereditary. Anyone can serve the gods of the Yoruba religion, whether they are male or female. There are no houses of priests in the Yoruba religion. Almost all Yoruba people who practice this religion are part of a lineage that is associated with a god or goddess, but they do not refer to themselves as priests. In fact, there is no word in the Yoruba language for a priest. This is because the Yoruba religion has no priesthood. Though, there are spiritual leaders that can be associated with the title priest or priestess.

The Yoruba religion does not have the concept of a temple. The Yoruba people do not build temples and other buildings that would be dedicated to a god or goddess. There are, however, shrines, which are places where important events occur in Yoruba life. These include birth, marriage, and death, as well as other celebrations such as rites of passage and funerals.

The Yoruba religion uses an abidjan (kwassa k'osin) to perform divination.

It is made of palm fibers and is steeped in the oil of the sacred plant, "kelewele" (banana tree). It is considered to be a gift from the gods.

Sorcery (which is often referred to as Ifá or "Oshun") can also be performed with this Abidjan.

## What Do Yoruba People Believe?

One of the most important concepts in the Yoruba religion is the figure of "Olorun."

"Olorun" means "lord" or "owner of paradise."

He is the supreme deity and creator of the Yoruba African people.

An important key to the Yoruba religion, to live in peace and to be good followers, is to follow the Orishas.

“Orishas” are spirits. They are the most important deities in the Yoruba religion. Orisa means “head” in the Yoruba language, which refers to each Orishas presiding over a different part of people’s lives. The head is considered the most important part of the human body, so it makes sense that Orishas would preside over different aspects of life.

Each Orisha has certain characteristics, which are often represented through animals. For example, Oya is believed to have braided hair, so she's worshiped with a comb.

Each Orisha has the power to control the things around her. They are also believed to interact with people in ways that affect their lives. For example, Babalu Aye is said to be able to increase the size of people’s bodies, and Eleda is known as the goddess of marriage (among other things).

These deities are worshiped by the Yoruba and almost all Africans who practice Traditional Religion. The Orishas are considered essential to daily life and the fulfillment of one's destiny.

### **Some of the most well-known Orishas include:**

**Eshu:** Eshu is an Orisha of crossroads and boundaries. He's often associated with business and trade, and he has an important role in deciding destinies and making things happen in people's lives.

**Odùduwà:** Odùduwà is the Orisha recognized as the father of the Yoruba people.

**Obatala:** Obatala is a principle Orisha in Yorubaland. He's also the Orisha of creation and the ruler of heaven. People who don't follow any other Orisha often follow him instead. Some people consider him a principle Orisha in African Traditional Religion.

**Ogun:** Ogun is a main orisha warrior and hunter known for his skill with a blade. A demigod of war, fire, iron, hunting, and agriculture, he is considered both a creator and a destroyer, protector of blacksmiths and metalworkers, soldiers, and mechanics.

**Oya:** Oya is the goddess of storms. She is often worshiped with drumming and dancing, which attracts her attention, so she will cause destruction. People also worship Eleda for marriage and Obatala for children, but they also pray to Oya for protection during storms.

**Oshun:** Oshun is the goddess of beauty, sexuality, and love. She is worshipped for marriage, children, beauty, and fertility.

**Oshumare:** Osumare has the meaning of rainbow in the Yoruba language. In fact, it is considered the spirit of the rainbow.

**Oba ':** Oba' is the female Orisha of the Oba River and is identified as Shango's elderly wife.

**Oshosi:** Oshosi is a god of nature who is worshiped for the bounty of the land. He's often indirectly associated with good harvests, so farmers and hunters worship him for protection from wild animals.

**Shango:** Shango is a warrior-king who overthrew his brother and established a new government. Some people worship him as the equivalent of Zeus in Greek mythology, while others consider him a principle Orisha in African Traditional Religion. He's considered a war god because, as a warrior-king, he was the one who won the Yoruba people freedom from bondage and oppression. His festival celebrated his victory over his brother, so it's also known as a “freedom festival.”

Shango is also worshipped for success in business and for good fortunes. Shango is by far the most popular deity among Yoruba people for business or financial success

**Olokun:** Olokun was originally a hero, later became Orisha. He is the one who governs mental health, material wealth, dreams, and psychic abilities. He is a divinity linked to the sea.

**Yemoja:** Yemoja is considered the queen of the sea and controls the waters. She is a protective mother but also has a destructive aspect, symbolized by the stormy sea. She is the eldest daughter of Olokun.

## **Fundamental Beliefs And Traditions In The Yoruba**

### **The Five Fundamental Beliefs That Make Up the Yoruba:**

**Firstly**, and most importantly, your god and goddess is the god and goddess of your ancestors. Your Orishas are supposed to be manifestations of them. Your ancestors died so that you could live.

**Secondly**, the Yoruba believe that death is an integral part of life. Before they can take their place in the afterlife, people must die to free up their energy to move into the spirit world. This is called "reaping." Reaping is involuntary, so people who are still living are unable to participate. When someone dies, they are thought to leave the material world forever.

**Thirdly**, it's important for West Africans to keep their ancestors alive through rituals and ceremonies to provide them with love and protection.

The Yoruba believe that the dead are afraid of being forgotten. If they aren't remembered by their families or friends after they die, they become restless and worried about being forgotten in the afterlife. They stay in the world of the dead, and they become disrupted and unhappy. If they aren't remembered, then their souls cannot continue into the material world.

Consequently, people who forget their ancestors or don't keep them alive through ceremonies or rituals suffer because their bodies aren't properly aligned with the material world, and so they can also be disruptive.

**Fourthly**, West Africans believe that everyone has a personal god and goddess called your Orishas. Orishas are the Yoruba's manifestation of the gods, goddesses, and spirits that they believe exist in the spirit world. Your

Orishas can be either male or female. They each have their own attributes and characteristics, just like every other god in the material world. Every person has their own Orishas, so people in the Yoruba belief system are often surprised when they visit another person in West Africa and see that person's Orishas in their possession. Fifthly, the Yoruba believe that everyone has a spirit guardian, a deity that protects them from harm and misfortune.

The Yoruba religion provides a full-scale system for guiding people through their lives. Every aspect of someone's life, from birth to death, is thought to be under the control of one or more Orishas. Therefore, the Yoruba believe that if you do something considered disloyal to your Orishas, they will be angry with you. They will become upset because their relationship with you has been damaged or broken. This can result in negative things happening to you or your family, like sickness or death.

To avoid making the Orishas unhappy, people participate in many rituals and ceremonies throughout the year.

## **Traditions of the Yoruba People**

### **Naming of children**

-The Yoruba people believe that naming someone is an act of respect. Because they are the ones who will be providing the child with physical existence, they must be respected. So, if there's a possibility that you might want to change their name, later on, it would be best to think about them carefully before calling them by another name.

-There is a belief in the Yoruba culture that the children of people who die young are more fortunate than those who live long lives.

### **Marriage**

-For the Yoruba people, weddings are very special events. When a couple gets married, they are considered to have joined one another in a relationship that goes beyond the material world. Therefore, they are no

longer considered separate entities; rather, they become one in the relationship between two people.

-There is also an idea in their culture that marriages should be special occasions when there is great joy mixed with sadness because separation is inevitable when two people join together in marriage.

### **Importance of deceased relatives**

-When a person dies, they are supposed to be remembered and honored by the living. However, unlike other belief systems, the Yoruba believe that it is not enough for them to simply remember their deceased family and friends. They also believe that they must continue to provide them with love and material goods in the form of food and clothing until they get to the next world.

# OLODUMARE/OLORUN



**O**lodumare/Olorun is the highest deity in the Yoruba religion and is sometimes called Olode. It is believed that he created the earth and heavens and resides at their highest point, often considered to be a transcendent location. He is the king of the gods, and in some stories, Olorun creates all. He does not have children.

According to the Yoruba, Olorun is the force of all life force. He is considered to be an omnipotent being who embodies the power of the universe. He is said to have created everything in existence by giving it form, including people. It also means "light", "brightness", or "light-beam" in Ijebuano language. Olorun is the personification of the heavens.

In some cultures, Yoruba people worship Olodumare as a monotheistic God, while some others worship him as a plurality of gods. When he first created the earth from water and soil, Olorun gave control to lesser gods. As a result, some believe that he has no control over human lives on earth and is unable to affect them directly. Olorun is associated with the elements such as water and earth.

In the traditional Yoruba religion, Olorun is seen as a supreme deity who is above all others, including Oduduwa (also known as Oludumare and Yemoja) and Oduduwa's son Shango (called Eshin or Sango). Orisha Ogun (also known as Oni) and Osa (also known as Oro) are also worshiped by



some Yoruba people. Oduduwa is a creator or fashioner of all things, including the Earth and sky. Ogun is the divinity of fire, weapons, and iron.

In Yoruba cosmology, several pairs of deities carry out various functions in the world. In some stories, Olorun is considered mortal or semi-mortal due to his ability to make mistakes. His mistakes are often attributed to being the cause of humanity's challenges during its evolution on earth. When the world was first created, his mistakes gave rise to the people who were also made from clay.

Other Orishas are often considered as his children, such as Yewa (also known as Oshun), Oya, and Osun. Other deities include Ade (also known as Olodumare) and Shango (also known as Eshu).

In the Yoruba religion, Ogun is a malevolent deity of war and iron, and he is one of the most important deities in Yoruba culture. This deity is popular among the Yoruba people and is mentioned frequently in their folklore.

Ogun was not originally a god in the Yoruba pantheon but became significant because of his association with warfare and blacksmiths. It might also be the same god as Oni, a name sometimes applied to Ogun. In addition to weapons and war, Ogun is a deity associated with agriculture, politics, hunting, and blacksmiths, among other things.

Olodumare is also one of the most important deities in Santeria, a system of faiths originating with the Yoruba slaves who were transported from Nigeria to Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other Caribbean islands. In Santeria, he is known as Olorun and called "The Creator." Olorun is mentioned in the prayers of a priest or a "filhos" (child) in Santeria.

Prayers are said to him so that he may help humanity. As the Supreme Creator of the world, Olorun is associated with peace, harmony, justice, fairness, and equity. He also takes an interest in humanity's well-being. When people are suffering on Earth due to crime or injustice, it is believed that Olorun is disturbed as well. He is approached through prayer or offerings at a shrine dedicated to him.

Olodumare is the supreme god of the Yoruba religion in that he is believed to be older than all other deities or non-deities. However, this is not

necessarily true. He was created when the world was made before humans existed, but he did not create humans. It was Olorun who gave humanity life on Earth.

As the creator of the world, Olodumare is credited with all creation. If a baby is born to a family, then he or she is believed to be a creation of Olorun. He sees everything and knows everything that happens on earth. It is believed that the mistakes humans make are due to him communicating with them directly. He only speaks to the people on earth through oracles.

Once, Olodumare sent a messenger to earth to tell humans that they would receive divine resurrection if they lived well on earth. When this message was brought back, Olodumare was pleased with humanity's reaction and decided to give them immortality and rule over the world (Bashorun and Ajayi, 2012).

Olodumare is said to be invisible and all-knowing. Because of his great knowledge, it is said that he is able to see everything. His only eyes are the eyes of the people.

Since he is invisible, people can see him through dreams and visions. In this vision, they will often see Olodumare in red. People also see him as a white or pink-haired old man who wears a crown on his head and a black cloth around his waist (Arinze, 2005).

Some call him the "spirit of love" because he is believed to be the people's teacher. He gives very wise teachings to people. If someone does not act in accordance with his teachings, he will punish them by causing them to fall ill or to die (Ajayi, 2005).

The purpose of Olodumare is two-fold: First, he tries to help humans survive on earth and teach them how to survive it. Second, he makes them know what he wants of them. He also helps the people of the earth when they are in trouble.

Originally, Olodumare was a river divinity that emerged from the Ogun River and branched into several streams. He was called "the one who is unlimited." In time, this river divinity became known as the highest of all gods.

In Yewa, where he came from, he had a female counterpart called Olokun. She was conceived of as his consort, the feminine part of the Supreme Being. She was considered the mother-creatress of all things

Olodumare created several deities in Yoruba mythology. Among them are Ogun, the god of iron; Agbada (also known as Ogboni), god of irrigation; Oya, goddess of thunder; Okanran, god of war; Ibinabo, land goddess; Oduduwa, god of lightning; Obatala, supreme God who was originally thought to be Olodumare.

Oya, the mother of the gods, was said to be Olodumare's daughter. She had her own children, Kanu and Kunu. She was also the wife of Orisha-nla.

As in most myths, all children of Olodumare grew up to be gods. Orunla, the god of divination; Ana, the god of wine; and Aganju, the god of thunder and war, were among these (Arinze, 2005).

Another deity created by Olodumare was Erinle. He is sometimes referred to as Eshu-Alafin (Eshu is the divine messenger in Yoruba religion). He later became the messenger of Olodumare.

Olodumare is often identified with or called "Olorun," which means something like "the all-knowing and all-powerful." Olorun is synonymous with the Roman god Jupiter: both gods had a connection with light and were considered ruling deities in some parts of Africa (Watkins 2004).

As the supreme deity, Olorun's primary roles are that of creative energy and spiritual leader. He is responsible for providing an area of protected space, referred to as "Olorun's realm," within which to conduct spiritual, religious, or family activities. This realm is envisioned as a place where heaven and earth meet through clouds or water waves. He also furnishes the people with the material resources needed for sustenance and survival (Ajayi 2005).

As the supreme deity, Olodumare is associated with "Elusi" or "Iroru," which are aspects of deities that are observed in their creation, often directly by Olodumare ("Orun" in Yoruba) through dreams. These particular deities are said to be the most powerful of all but still fall under the orders of Olorun. Their role is to protect human beings from harm or evil spirits. It is

believed that their presence will strengthen people. They are important to the people because they provide protection (Ajayi, 2005).

Relatives and ancestors can also protect an individual. Olorun protects and watches over everyone, but other spirits and deities may help as well.

The Orishas (Deities) were created by Olorun after he created humanity. He ordered them to create humans as well as teach them how to survive on earth (Ajayi, 2005). The Orishas became angry at Olorun because they were unhappy with their creations. They told Olorun that they wanted to make their own creations (humanity) and not be ordered about and also teach the humans. Olodumare agreed. The Orishas were assigned different tasks, such as rain, agriculture, water, fire, and other natural phenomena, which often involved sending messages to humans through oracles (Arinze 2005).

**Since Olodumare created everything on earth, he is thought to be the guardian of life. When someone dies, he is also responsible for giving them a new body.**

The worship of Olodumare has declined over the years due to Oyo Empire's conversion to Islam, but some still hold on to the faith. There are many celebrations of Olodumare's birthday in Yorubaland. In the state of Oyo state, Olodumare is called "Ebereyi" or "Ebusun" and is worshiped through numerous shrines all over the state. In Ibadan, one of the largest cities in Nigeria, Olodumare is worshiped at a large shrine known as the "Amenle" or "Agbado." In Nigeria, he is also known as Obi Nla (Obiasun). Some people may choose to call him by his Yoruba name.

Olodumare's main celebrations are held at the beginning of the year, usually during the first two weeks of December. The festivals are mainly held inside shrines to honor Olodumare.

Aside from being celebrated through festivals, Olodumare is also worshiped in many other ways. There are many shrines dedicated to him for people who may not be able to go to the festivals. Amulets and pieces of cloth with his image cut out on them are also worn by followers. This is done to remind them to always follow Olodumare's teachings, such as sacrifice and selflessness (Ajayi 2005).

Human beings are not the only things that Olodumare creates. He has also created plants, animals, and objects such as the crossbow and the human body. He is thought to hold a relationship with all creation in Yorubaland.

In Yorubaland, the crossbow was traditionally used in hunting. It is a device that launches a projectile by means of a mechanism. Olodumare created the crossbow to use for hunting and food gathering. Olodumare taught people how to make the crossbow and warned them against giving it to strangers. He warned that if they disobeyed him, then he would be forced to destroy it. He gave the crossbow to a man, who then shared it with strangers. It was destroyed as promised.

In Yorubaland, the human body is thought to be superior to all other objects created by Olodumare. He created it as a gift for humans to use for over one hundred years. He gave the body many senses and capabilities to make people's lives better. When a person dies, they are given a new body in heaven.

Olodumare is the supreme deity in Yorubaland and has many worshippers. People all around Yorubaland worship him, but there are several annual festivals that are held to celebrate him. Some of these festivals are held on fixed dates, while some are based on lunar calendars. A few of the celebrations include Oba-Ara, Eyo-Owa, Egungun Festivals, Oduduwa Festival and Erin Osa.

**Oba-Ara Festival:** It is held in Ilesha, Osun State. It is celebrated in March or April. The festival celebrates the Oba of Ilesha, who was also a priest of Olodumare.

**Eyo-Owa Celebration:** It is held on varying dates every year. There are different celebrations for different villages of Yorubaland, but many celebrate the same festival within the first two weeks of December. The festival is held to celebrate the death anniversary of Oba Ewuare the Great, who was the founder of the Oyo Empire. He was also a priest of Olodumare.

**Egungun Festival:** It is celebrated in Lagos and Ibadan, Yorubaland. The celebration attracts thousands of people and takes place on the first of

January. The festival is believed to commemorate the landing of Oduduwa of Ife on land after he arrived from across the sea (Okafor 1999).

**Erin Osa Festival:** It takes place on the third of January, in Ibadan. It is celebrated in honor of Erin Osa or Olorun-Ebere, Olodumare's sister. The celebration is held to celebrate the birthday of Olodumare.

**Ozo-Oya Celebration:** It takes place in Ilesha, Osun State. The celebration is held on the eighth of March or April to celebrate the birth anniversary of Oba Ewuare the Great. He is believed to be the incarnation of Olodumare.

**Oduduwa Festival:** It is celebrated in Ilesha, Osun State. It signifies the birth of Oduduwa, who was the founder of Ife or Oyo Empire. He was also a priest of Olodumare. This festival takes place on the first week of December every year to celebrate the birth anniversary of Oduduwa.

**Ekeremi Festival:** It is celebrated in Ibadan, Yorubaland. The festival takes place on the thirteenth of January. It is celebrated to celebrate the birthday of Olorun-Ebere, Olodumare's sister.

**Ameko-obi Festival:** It takes place in Ibadan, Yorubaland. It is celebrated to celebrate the birthday of Ameko-Ogbon, Olodumare's son and the leader of the Yoruba pantheon.

**Iru Festival:** It takes place in Ibadan, Yorubaland. It celebrates the birth anniversary of Eshu-Iru, another son of Olodumare and a warrior who fought against human beings.

Festivals such as these are celebrated throughout Yorubaland and many other parts of Nigeria. They are celebrated to honor different deities. Olodumare is the deity of choice for many Yoruba people, and the celebration of his festivals is widespread.

The mythology and rites of passage in Yorubaland take place during one's initiation to adulthood. Many tribes have unique initiation rituals that take place during adolescence, calling it the "Oduduwa Festival." The Yoruba people believe that at birth, a person receives a set period of time before they can be considered an adult.

Initiation rites usually begin at the onset of puberty, which is around 13–15 years old. The Yoruba believe that at this age, one has reached complete physical maturity, and their body is ready to serve their deities. Although it varies by tribe, the initiation rituals are still unique to each culture (Ajayi 2005).

Yoruban mythology states that there are five realms of existence: one material, three spiritual, and an underworld. These realms are divided into four quadrants which together form a cross. The five realms are the upper world, the underworld, the earth, the sea, and the sky. The four quadrants are also known as "odu" (east), "orisa" (south), "ilu" (west), and "oro" (north) odu or orisa ilu Ororo Oduduwa meaning respectively Divine Ancestors and Deities of Creation; Earthly Sacrificial Altars; Sources of Wealth and Power; and Spiritual Forces that maintain order in the universe. In Yoruba cosmology, the sun, moon, and stars are all located in the upper world, which is located in the east. The moon is located in the north and west directions. This cosmology, much like any other creation mythology, works with a hierarchy of creation. For example, the world was originated from a small plant. The divine ancestors were all created by Olodumare as part of Olodumare's plan to create life on earth; hence they are all Olodumare's offspring. They are gods or spirits that live in heaven. Collectively, their name means 'The Ancestors', while individually, they are called Eyo, Oduduwa, Oludumare, etc. They are responsible for bringing life to the world, which is how they came to be known as the ancestral deities.

### ***The qualities of Olodumare***

To approach and connect with this important and fundamental figure in the Yoruba religion, it is necessary to understand the characteristics and qualities of Olodumare.

He is the first and **supreme creator** of the earth and the universe and also of important figures in the Yoruba religion, the Orishas.

This statement is echoed in one of the stories of the creation of the Yoruba world: at first, the land was inhospitable and swampy, and Olodumare and

the Orishas lived in the sky but assiduously visited the land to profess their divine abilities and for hunting.

Wishing to restore the land and have a healthy, non-swampy territory, Olodumare asked Obatala for help in achieving his intention.

Obatala received from Olodumare, a hen, a pigeon, and a snail shell filled with sand, and through the divine chain headed for the land. He started to throw the sand on the ground, and the hen spread it with her feet. Olodumare sent a chameleon to check the work done after receiving the news from the pigeon sent by Obatala.

The next step was to cover the earth with the nuts of the divine palms, which in turn sprouted, filled the territory with vegetation.

With the material obtained from the vegetation, Obatala created the first shelter on earth, even with the sound advice of Orunmila. The next step was the creation with the clay of human figures.

Only Olodumare, the creator of life, could "animate" them. In fact, after having descended to earth, with his breath, he gave soul to these clay figures, motionless and lifeless, all this under the attentive and envious gaze of Obatala. As a punishment, Olodumare made him sink into a deep sleep and continued the work of the divine creator started.

From the story of the creation of the earth according to the Yoruba tradition, it can be said that Olodumare "sees all and knows all," **he is a learned and wise deity.**

Olodumare is also called "*Arinurode Olumoranokan*," which means: "*one who sees the outside and the inside, and understands the intentions of the heart.*"

Many times its figure comes approached to Olokun, like an eventual rival, but erroneously, because being the supreme creator, he is placed on a higher level than any other Orishas. His virtues and powers are an example to all. He has no rivals and is **unique.**



Yoruba culture celebrates Olodumare as **immortal** because he has always existed and will continue to exist forever. He is the giver and preserver of life and therefore cannot die.

He also grants immortality to the souls of mortals, and he also has the power to guard the souls after death and preserve them until he decides to reincarnate them in another body.

Olodumare is the king who "works to perfection," has immense power, and is **omnipotent**.

Anyone can address and dedicate prayers to the divine, and he will be able to give answers to the invocations and help through Orunmila.

### ***Other Names of Olodumare***

Olodumare is known in the Yoruba world by other names as well due to how he manifests himself to humanity. Names are used in praise and prayers.

Some religions that arrived in Africa later, such as Christianity and Islam, have "adopted" many of the names attributed to Olodumare as names to indicate God.

### **Olorun**

This is the version of Olodumare, sovereign of the heavens and the skies. He dominates the abode of the Orishas. The Orishas need his intervention to descend into the realm of men. The prayers are addressed to the sky because it is where the Orishas live and act as an intermediary between the faithful and the sky, mortals can not reach the sky, which is reserved for the Orishas, only after many sacrifices and a change of form, you can think of accessing heaven.

### **Olu'ase**

This name means Olodumare as the source of all power and authority.

He is the source of all Ase, and without his Ase, no one else can function.

As the creator of all authority, Olodumare is also prayed to and hailed when a new king is proclaimed in the various Yoruba communities.

The king is prayed to manifest both his mortal authority and his divine authority, which is represented by the creator of all, Olodumare.

### **Olulana**

Olodumare is invoked by this name when confusion reigns. In fact, Olulana means "the one who shows you the way."

Olulana is a fundamental figure for the faithful who are confused about which path to take for their salvation of the soul or the resolution of life's problems.

### **Eledaa**

It is the creative aspect of Olodumare, the creator and giver of life. The Yoruba people pray to him and praise him to protect them from curses and bad luck.

### **Elemi**

He is the guardian of life, and it is believed that this figure lives between the physical and spiritual realms and has the function of being the intermediary between mortals and Orisha and mortals.

# ORISHAS

**O**rishas are generally spiritual or supernatural entities that are worshipped by humans – particularly the Yoruba people. While the native Yoruba call them Orisa, which is pronounced as Orisha, variations exist in certain places where the Yoruba culture has permeated. For instance, the Yoruba community in Cuba identifies Orisha as orichá, while the Brazilian Yoruba culture of Latin America recognizes Orisha as orixá. The existence of the Yoruba culture (albeit varied) in other nations and foreign lands points at the thriving resilience of the culture – it is one of the few cultures that has been posited to stand the test of time and shake off extinction.

The belief that people don't utterly die but become guardian spirits that can influence the destiny of the living, and the fact that there exist other spiritual entities aside from those referred into the Yoruba culture leads to a question - are all spiritual entities Orisha? Evidently, the answer would be. Not all spiritual entities are Orisha. But even that answer would need a bit of explanation.

First and foremost, the defining attribute of an Orisha is they are worshipped. It is not just a matter of being a spiritual entity, but more of being a spiritual entity duly worshipped and revered by the living. Put into consideration a salient Grecian belief – the gods demand our worship, so they can be empowered and willing to intervene in our lives. The secret of gods and goddesses is in the fact that although they have a considerable measure of power and influence over the physical realm, they need the recognition and reverence of mortals to enable them to exercise such influence. Their relevance is mostly tied to the reverence they derive from mortals.

Having noted the core definition of an Orisha being mortals worship them, it stands to reason that although there is a spiritual realm with uncountable spiritual entities roaming, only those recognized and respected by and in the Yoruba culture are known as Orisha.

Although Orishas are spiritual entities that are regarded in the Yoruba culture, certain categories are worthy of mention. Orishas are not just guardian spirits of ancestors worshipped in a particular family. Neither are they just divine spirits superior to certain other spirits being worshipped.

## **First Class Orisha**

The first level or category of Orisha belongs to divinities. Starting first and foremost with the “Lord over all” – Olodumare, who is also known as Olorun – Lord over the heavens (skies) Olodumare sees all, knows all, created all, and is all-powerful. Every other Orisha serves as a subordinate through which mortals can access Olodumare. He can be likened to Zeus, who is the head of the Greek Pantheon.

Still within the first category are other heavenly deities subject to Olodumare. These include Obatala, Orunmila, Osanyin, Obaluaye, Esu (pronounced Esu), among others, and existed before the creation of the Earth and its inhabitants. They’re the ones known as Ara orun – the people of the heavens (skies), and they have greater amounts of power and influence than other Orishas below them.

**Note:** Irunmole is often mistaken as Orisha because they’re spiritual entities that are recognized and sometimes worshiped in the Yoruba culture. They differ from the Orisha in one respect – they’re mostly messengers of Olodumare who are appointed specific tasks on the Earth. They were neither born on Earth nor do they die on Earth. They simply exist on Earth for the duration of their assignment and ultimately return to Olodumare once their task is completed.

Divinities subject to Olodumare, such as Obaluaye and others, are often recognized as irunmole consequent on their spiritual origin, earthly appearance, operations, and eventual departures. They served as the link between mortals and Olodumare while on Earth and were the first visitors of Earth once Obatala had finished creating the Earth and the first Yoruba men and women. Ultimately, their return to heaven created a communication vacuum between the mortals and Olodumare, which was ultimately solved via special worship and invocation attributed to them.

What is utilized in invoking this irunmole (such as shrines and graven images) is referred to as Orisha because these items carry the presence of specific irunmole. While Orisha strictly refers to divine entities and spirits that are worshipped in the Yoruba culture, the Irunmole is a special category of Orisha still within the first class, subject to Olodumare and invoked through unique means.

## **Deified Mortals**

These were mortal men and women, kings, warriors, hunters, healers ancestors who held great influence over the Yoruba culture by virtue of their sacrifice, personality, and powers. People like Sango were renowned kings who were deified by their followers and ultimately became Orishas. For a mortal to be deified, they must have shown great skill or power, which greatly affected the Yoruba community. As a case study, Sango was one of the fiercest kings in Yoruba's history, marking lots of territories and winning a lot of battles for the Yoruba people. Peculiar to his name was his affiliation to thunder, lightning, and fire. Sango Olukoso is the Orisha or Yoruba god of thunder and lightning. He breathes fire and summons lightning without rainfall or storms, thus striking fear and reverence in both enemies and subjects' hearts. His wives, Oya, Osun, and Oba, were renowned women who became Orishas commonly attributed to water and other feminine traits.

Note: Certain mortals became deified not based on their own strength or prowess but based on the spirit in them. These were known to be marked by divinity, i.e., they were reincarnations of certain Orishas. Thus, they possessed the unique traits of a number of Orishas. They were often not referred to by their names but by the names of the Orisha that marked them.

## **Natural Elements and Other Spiritual Entities**

The Yoruba pantheon is made up of major and minor Orishas. The greater Orishas are strongly known and idolized in the Yoruba culture, while the lesser Orishas are not very well known. Divine beings with great power but

possessing no human forms and manifesting through natural elements and phenomena are often classified as messengers of the first class of Orishas. They are mostly worshiped by a relatively small group of followers (these groups were mostly made up of direct descendants - each family had their own Orisha whom they worshiped apart from the major Orishas of the Yoruba pantheon). These lesser Orishas are what make the Yoruba pantheon vast and innumerable. Some are partially known by few, some exist and are known, but their followers have disappeared, and some exist but remain largely unknown. Be that as it may, these other spiritual entities are mostly regarded in the Yoruba culture as inactive Orisha, who is also known as house deities.

As stated earlier, every natural force or element has a spirit attached to it, and the Yoruba people love to pray to whatever spirit is behind any natural element or force to gain some form of favor or to avoid falling into it. Harm or incur anger for sinning against that spirit (knowingly or unknowingly). Natural forces such as water, fire, air, earth, metal, light, darkness, plants or herbs, and wild animals are duly respected in Yoruba culture because they enjoy the coverage of specific Orisha.

Cases where a mortal has witnessed an unnatural manifestation in a natural element often hinted that an Orisha had touched such a natural element. Due homage must be paid to that Orisha or spirit behind the unnatural manifestation. Numerous Yoruba tales abound concerning mortal men and women who heard voices from the waters or forests or picked up certain incomprehensible sounds from the land and air. Whenever such sounds or voices were heard, the default modality of such a Yoruba person was to beg for mercy not to be shot to death by the presence of an Orisha in such natural elements.

Note: Although there are major Orishas such as Osun, Yemoja, Orisha Oko who rule the natural elements, there are lesser-known Orishas that manifest and are worshiped through natural elements.

## **Colors of the Orisha**

Another classification of Orisha is based on the colors attached to them. The colors hint at the personality and powers associated with such an Orisha, and it often influences the rituals to be made when invoking them.

Universally, the color white is used to symbolize peace. The Yoruba culture also recognizes this and attributes the color to select Orisha. Where an Orisha is associated with the color white, such an Orisha is known for peace and wisdom. An Orisha using the white color can easily be called upon without fear of suffering wrath. Such Orisha includes but is not limited to Obatala, who is also known as Orisha Funfun, Osun, the goddess of beauty, who is affiliated with water, and Orunmila, who is associated with wisdom. Yemoja, who happens to be the mother goddess of water, is also associated with the white color but is mostly depicted in blue – a pointer to her affinity with water, natural resources, and motherhood.

Where an Orisha is depicted in red or black, such an Orisha is often characterized by terror. They are usually fierce and warrior or hunter-based, calling for rituals that most often involve the spilling of blood. Utmost care is required when invoking a red or black-themed Orisha. Error or carelessness in calling upon such an Orisha could result in being struck to death by the Orisha. This category of ferocity includes Sango, the god of thunder and lightning, Esu, who is often called the devil, and at other times the trickster – is the god of balance and justice. Ogun and Aganju, among others, are likewise listed under this category. Patron gods of hunters, warriors, and blacksmiths are also depicted with the colors red and/or black.

Depending on the color affiliation, each Orisha possesses its unique ritual, food, object of invocation, dress style, and at times even requires a unique hairstyle from its devotees. For example, Sango devotees are noted for plaiting their hair and fixing white cowries in between the braids – this is in honor and replication of their patron god Sango who did the same.

It should be noted that the white-themed Orisha are known to be calm and wise – which explains why they are referred to as Orisha tutu (cool). But that doesn't deny them the capacity to require certain blood spilling for special sacrifices – after all, the seal of blood is the most potent. In the same vein, the Orisha associated with red and/or black, which are known as

fierce, tasking, and generally scary – Orisha gbigbona (hot-blooded), can on rare occasions call for unique sacrifices that may not be “hot.”



# HOW TO WORSHIP THE ORISHAS

**P**rayer is very important in the life of a believer, but most importantly, they must pray to all the Orishas. They have to make a prayer with their work. Making this prayer is an offering. It can be done without a model, or it can be made on a small piece of paper.

## *Orisha prayer:*

**-The following words are used to pray to the Orishas, for example:**

"In Your name, I make a prayer" "I offer this to you, O Orisha." - The Orisha is saluted with respect. Some add a brief prayer of thanksgiving or praise in honor of the deity. There are many forms of thanksgiving prayers. Some religious texts can be used as a model for praying.

**- The expression of praise and gratitude that is used in the Yoruba language can be summarized in the following:**

- "I thank you for what you have done and your help," "Thank you O Orisha," "Thank you, O Orun," "The Orisa is well." -

There are some words to be used in prayer to each deity. In general, these words are not pronounced exactly as written.

**-There are four main types of prayers that are common to the Yoruba-Lucumí religion:**

- The prayer of thanksgiving is also referred to as praise.
- The prayer of petition. This is the prayer "to ask for something."
- The prayer of obligation or gratitude for what has been given. It can be both petition and thanksgiving at the same time, depending on whether it is

asked for something or simply praise. The prayer of obligation is often referred to as the "prayer of the Trinity" because it contains elements of praise, petition, and thanksgiving.

- The prayer of blessing, invocation, or consecration (which is done before making an offering).

## **Simple Prayers**

The simplest form of prayer is as follows: "thank you spirit for what you have done for me" "thank you spirit for your help." Some people use formulas from which they choose words that summarize their petition, but these prayers are more compact and efficient than those that use more words or phrases.

- Statement: "I offer this to You, O Orisha."
- Statement: "In Your name, I make a prayer."
- By saying the names of the Orishas and their titles in a chorus, for example: "I offer this to Ochún. In His name, I make a prayer."

## **Model of Prayer**

A model of prayer is a tool for beings. It is used as a way to be sincere, to practice, and to make things easy. A model can be made from any of the following materials: wood, metal, etc. The material depends on the Orisha that will give you their protection and blessing. However, it can also be of any color – black – white – red – brown – green – violet – orange – blue – yellow — but always decorated with leaves and fruits; flower petals; beads (snake, coconut shells, etc.) and colors (blue and yellow).

Every Yoruba religion has its own model of prayer. The Yoruba prayer to Orisha is given. It goes like this: "I want to work for Orisha, so I will do my best. Thank you, Orisha." This is the most effective prayer. It must be ready to work for everyone for life, so it must be done every day without fail,

morning and evening. The first thing that Yoruba does when he wakes up is to pray to all the Orishas before anything else.

The prayer with the aid of the model is very effective. It is like a book of charms, and it can be read throughout your life. For this reason, people save it, and they need to know how to make it; because if something happens or you come out of trouble, you will be able to use it at any time. The model can also be used as a gift for special occasions.

**The following are examples of the model of prayer to Orisha with different colors.**

**Examples can be made in any material, but wood is very good. The following are some examples:**

The colors used in the model of prayer to Orisha are different depending on the specific color of your religion or religion that you want to access when you pray. If it is white, use oval beads for Ajowain, round beads for Oshun, red beads for Yemaya, and so forth.

The model of prayer to Orisha has mystical powers that can be beneficial. By praying, you can have knowledge. You do not understand all the words in a prayer, but sometimes a word means a lot of things, so it is important to know what is being told with your model of prayer to Orisha.

This type of prayer helps you communicate with the spiritual world and helps it open doors for you so that you can solve problems as well as opportunities as they come up for your life. If you have a problem, take the model of prayer to Orisha and ask the Orishas to help you solve it.

The model of prayer can also be used as a personal amulet. In this case, not only will you use it as a way to pray, but it will also protect you from things that may go wrong in your life. It can also be used in the way that you need something to help you in your day-to-day life, things that are bad for you, or even health problems.

The model of prayer to Orisha is not only used to pray to Orisha, but it can also be used in order to attract good things. Depending on the color of the

bead, it attracts specific energies. The different colors of the beads are white, red, yellow, and green.

A model of prayer to Orisha can also be used if your pregnancy is having difficulties or you are unhappy with the life of your child. If you pray with the model to Orishas, you will help your children.

Prayer is very important in all religions, but not all faiths have their models of prayer. There are people who use the same model they used before they became Yoruba followers or who just improvise independently.

Prayers are said almost every day, even if they are improvised. This is because these prayers have energy, and you do not know where it will come from, but those who make prayer models to Orisha can tell you how to make their model of prayer by saying the name of the Orisha and the color of the bead.

The Yoruba religion allows its followers to talk to the spirits, but they have to do it with respect and love. If you pray every day with your model of prayer to Orisha, you will see that life will change for the better.

In addition, by working from a spiritual point of view, the results are very efficient and effective over time.

The models of prayer can be made by anyone who is open to learning about them. However, they are not free, but they do not cost too much to make. It all depends on the material you use to make it. You can ask an Orisha for help or consult a Babalawo to teach you how to pray with your model of prayer to Orisha.

The materials are usually round metal beads, ceramic beads in the shape of cubes, rectangular shapes in glass, or ceramic. Any material can be used, but these are the most common ones.

The model of prayer to Orisha can be made by anyone, but it is more effective if it is done by experienced people. It is always better to do it with the help of an Orisha or a Babalawo.

There are different versions of the prayer to Orisha, depending on which region or region you want to learn about. This is because each region has its own culture, traditions, and religion. However, all have the same goal.

The models of prayer are available in different stores, which are stores that specialize in the sale of Orisha items. These stores are called botanicas or tiendas Yoruba. They can also be found in markets that sell traditional medicines since they have a large variety there.

The Yoruba religion has a model of prayer to Orisha that is made by the community, and it is used only by the community.

## **Ashe**

"Ashe" has the meaning of "so be it" and is a symbol of power and authority. Faith towards an Orisha must also be shown through the word and not just through an action (sacrifice). Every believer must know how to do this. Using an Ashe, one can determine the fate and even ask the Orishas for help. Some of the more popular Ashe may sound like this: "I am asking you for your glory, your blessing, and my protection." There is no limit to the number of times they say, but that depends on each person. The more they say, the better. All communication with Orisha must begin with this prayer. It is also used when dealing with a situation where you need help, guidance, or a solution to a problem. After the Ashe, there is no need to say more, but you will have to wait for your Orisha's response or blessing, so it will be shown by them.

It is also thought that Olodumare blessed the human figures created by Obatala with Ashe.

The act of invoking the Orishas is called "Iboru." Once invoked, they tell the disciples things about their lives and the situations they face. The method of invocation is very important because each Orisha has his own way of being invoked. You can choose the one you feel comfortable with.

## **The circle of the Ashe**

The "circle of Ashe" is an act of Purification, which is done by recording the name of the Orisha in the circle. This means that you dedicate your life to the Orishas and to God.

The circle can be done with all kinds of materials (paper, coconut stems, etc.), but it must be very colorful; leaves, beads, fruits, flowers, shells, snakes, or other items that are used to decorate it with colors. The circle of Ashe is prayed with water, milk, or other materials that are appropriate for the Orishas. It must be done that the eye is turned towards God and then prayed aloud.

### **Acacia (Ikú)**

"Ikú, I offer this to you; please come to me; take my life; make it healthy; make it beautiful; make me happy and take care of all my family.

"Ikú, please help me. I offer this to you.

"Yemò! Yemò!

### **Ebo Riru (Sacrifice)**

"Ebo riru" (sacrifice) is one of the most important things in the Orisha religion, which is symbolic and carries many meanings. It contains food prepared by believers for their Orishas according to their daily needs; fruit; flowers, honey, water, etc., more or less depending on the true relationship between them. The Ebo riru is done as a sign of love and respect to their gods. In addition, it is also a way of asking the Orishas to give them what they have asked for. The Ebo can be done twice a day, at sunrise and sunset, which is the time when the Orishas awake and go to sleep. This is done at a public place or in a private place that belongs to him or her. It can also be done twice a month – Once every 20 days – once every 40 days – one year – 5 years – 10 years – etc. It depends on what the believer decides to do it. The Ebo is also done when there are special events in the life of the Orisha, for example, when they are married, have children, when they are ill, have good fortune, or have misfortune.

There are different kinds of sacrifices that can be made. For example, The Ebo is usually done with food or other things that can be given to an Orisha or a Babalawo. That gift can be given to the Orisha or the Babalawo one time, or it can be distributed over time. There are full Ebo which are done with food, drinks, and drinks made with food items.

There are also partial Ebo which are done with one item of gift to an Orisha. That gift can be given to them once or several times. You can distribute it in several locations or give it all in one place.

**Orisha sippets are the bread that is made from "Yemò" and placed under the hearth to thank Orisha for their blessings:**

- "Ibo" (food) is the most important and sacred part of the sacrifice. Food used for sacrifices must be prepared by an "Osú," which is a believer who has to show sacrifices.

- Ebo riru can include more than one Orisha. They can be old – young – males – females – dogs – cows – dogs, horses, and other animals. It is important that it will be done in a public place where people can see it, but no one should enter the room where the Ebo riru takes place. The reason for this is that once someone enters the room, they will be seen by everyone, and this may cause problems for them.

- The Ebo riru also has something significant for believers to know: nobody should interrupt their Orishas when they are doing it.

A sacrifice is sometimes a complex act. For this reason, a priest or a faithful expert could help you in case of doubts or help you prepare your sacrifice.

## **Cowrie's Shell Divination (Obi Divination-Diloggun Divination)**

To use Ashe effectively, experience and practice in cowrie shell divination are important.

"Obi" is a shell that is very similar to the sea snail. It is used as a type of amulet. In Nigeria, cowries are also called "Dagbani," which means "man's

eye." It is believed to be the messenger or helper of the Orisha. The belief that it works as an amulet comes from the fact that people have been using it for divination since ancient times. The cowrie shell has various meanings. It can be used for love, luck, business, and friendship, to talk to Orisha, to answer prayers, etc.

Cowries are also used for divination. They are worn on the back of the neck (on the temple), and they act as an amulet for some people who ask some questions about their life or problems that they face. This is not an act of purification or any type of worship. It is done with good intentions only.

It is said that the cowries are the messenger of Orishas because it is believed that when you have a question for an Orisha, the answer will be found in them. Clean cowries are used for good things, while dirty ones are used when there is bad news or when they have problems to deal with. The cowrie's shell can also be used in case there is a need to determine if someone has been speaking behind your back. To do this, the person who is interested in knowing if someone had spoken behind his or her back must put an egg under his or her pillow. The next day, he must go to a river with clean cowries and ask them the question. If the answer is negative, then there was no one who had spoken against him or her. If it was positive, then there was someone who said something against that person's interest.

The cowrie's shell has many meanings, but the most significant are luck, love, communication, business activity, and family. There are many types of cowries of different values, and they can serve different purposes. For example, the larger of the cowries of the same color (black or white) shows an increase of whatever power it symbolizes: family, money, business, etc. The shape of the shell can also determine what power it has. Usually, the most expensive and rare type of cowries is the white "tiger," while the black "the buffalo" is less valuable.

The cowrie shell has many positive meanings, but it can also be used in magic. The belief about the spells that are done with this shell comes from Africa. They believe that when you use cowries to cast spells, they must be worn on the neck of the person who is to receive them. This causes problems for people who try to cast spells in bad ways. Because of this,



there are many superstitions related to cowrie's shells. For example, there are people who say that these shells will cause sickness if they are worn on the wrong person. If someone tries to buy them for magic use, the seller must see his or her intentions. The seller must also ask if he or she is doing it rightly. When cowries are sold for magic use, there is a separate person who controls their distribution to ensure that this does not happen.

There are still many superstitions related to cowries. They say that they must not be thrown against the wall or they will break into pieces, and people's life will be in danger. They also say that when a person gets them, and they lay them on the table (and they don't know what to do with them), this means that someone will die or be seriously injured. It is believed that cowries would not dare to leave the house if these events happen.

Cowries shells can also be done with the following purposes: to tell if someone is true; to show that people are enemies; to know who is using or abusing money; to determine if someone will be content in their marriage; etc.

Obi is a type of necklace that can be made from cowry shells, but it is not actually cowries. The sellers of the shells have to ensure that their origin is from Africa. This is because if they are from another origin, they will not be authentic cowries.

Obi comes in different colors and sizes. It can be done with glass or plastic beads, metal elements, or shiny semi-precious stones. The beads used for this necklace are coconut, wood, or glass. Obi can be done on a regular basis or as an accessory to the attire. Obi is believed to bring good luck to women. The main color of Obi is red because it is associated with fertility and procreation.

Obi comes in many patterns, but the most common ones are: "Idemo nu," which means "gift of Orisha," or "lele epo," which means "I carry the cowries." These come in white and black colors. The white Obi is usually used for good luck, while the black one is more for bad luck. "Idemo nu" can be done with cowries of different animal patterns.

The origin of the Obi necklace comes from Africa. In Nigeria, it is very popular among women. It can be worn by any woman, but it has more meaning for older women who are married or divorced. It is important to note that not all Obi necklaces are made from cowries shells.

The cowrie shell (Obi divination-dilogun divination) is one of the most important tools that Orishas used to answer questions for their believers. It's like reading omens; it can be done on a daily basis or on special occasions. They are used to serve the Orisha Oya (the patron of travelers). It is an agreement between the Orisha and their believers to serve them in this way. The results are always positive because it is a shield against negative forces in the world. Human beings have the ability to communicate with their gods through this method, but they cannot control what is given by them since she governs by themselves.

**Her believers must respect her decisions. It works as follows:**

- Having the cowrie shell in the palm of your hands, close your eyes, ask your Orisha to speak with you through it. Open your eyes and look at the cowrie shell that you have on your hands. Try to see what happens to it (which way it falls, if it is on the left or right, etc.).

- If your Orisha is Ochún, you can ask her for seven answers because that is the number of cowrie shells that come in her Obi. If you are talking with Yemaya (the patron of the sea), you can ask for five answers because there are only five cowries shells in the Obi. This same rule applies to all Orishas travelers). It is an agreement between the Orisha and their believers to serve them in this way. The results are always positive because it is a shield against negative forces in the world. Human beings have the ability to communicate with their gods through this method, but they cannot control what is given by them since she governs by themselves. Her believers must respect her decisions. It works as follows:

- If your Orisha is Ochún, you can ask her for 7 answers because that is the number of cowrie shells that come in her Obi. If you are talking with Yemaya (the patron of the sea), you can ask for 5 answers because there are only 5 cowries shells in the Obi. This same rule applies to all Orishas.



# WHITE ORISHAS I

Power comes in many forms, and the Orishas are divided into two groups based on their expression of power.

White-themed Orishas are those who have a calm and peaceful demeanor, while Red / Black colored Orishas are known for their brutal and bloodthirsty expression of power.

Colors do not identify an Orisha as evil or good, but the choice is based primarily on each Orisha's preferences which color he would like to be associated with.

A substantial difference could be sought between the various rituals and sacrifices of the faithful in honor of the Orishas, but here too, there are some peculiarities.

Blood sacrifices, performed during propitiatory rituals, are recurring to honor the red/black-themed Orishas.

For the white-themed Orishas, the typical sacrifices made are food (ebo riru) or similar.

However, it should be noted that it is not excluded that the rituals with blood sacrifices can be performed for a "white" Orishas and that the less bloody sacrifices cannot be performed for an Orishas associated with the red/black colors.

It depends very much on the nature of what is required of the Orisha.

This highlights how the choices of the devotees' actions are characterized by the situations, the reason for the sacrifices, and many other circumstances. The certain thing is that the greater the request/need, the greater the sacrifice required.

We can conclude that the colors do not identify an Orisha as good or even evil.

## OBATALA



In some myths, Obatala is said to have fought battles with a trickster named Yemoja. Their fight lasted a long time until Obatala threw Yemoja's cap into the ocean. He then made a bridge from the ocean to land and called upon all gods to come and worship him. In this way, Obatala was able to dictate what people could worship, which shows his power as one of the major deities of Yoruba culture.

In the beginning, there was nothing but the ocean, and when Obatala came forth from the ocean, he created people from clay and gave them specific tasks. In this way, Obatala showed his ability to take on human characteristics and was able to create different kinds of people who could accomplish different tasks throughout time. Obatala also chose from among his creations which ones would be descended into royalty. The ones that belonged to royalty were more powerful than the rest of the people because of their royal bloodline.

Obatala is considered a father figure in most African cultures because he created people in his likeness out of clay. This is an example of symbolic magic that the Yoruba have employed throughout time.

Although many things can be attributed to Obatala's powers, it is generally accepted that Obatala represents wisdom and magic. It is believed that Obatala has the insight to understand the true nature of all things and that he is able to change anything with this knowledge.

He controls the fertility of cattle and produces children through people who worship him (in this case, they become mothers). It is in this respect that Obatala may seem like a very ambiguous deity in a way because he controls these things in a way that is not necessarily good.

In the Yoruba culture, Obatala is regarded as one of the most powerful deities because he is seen as an all-knowing god that has the power to take on any form at any point in time. This can be interpreted from him being able to appear in both male and female genders and from his being able to control people's emotions and opinions which means he must have strong empathy. He also seems like a god that has wisdom and is able to see what mistakes were made in the past and how they could be avoided in the future.

Obatala is also seen as a father figure because it is stated that he created people to be like himself and that he is the source of all fertility in people. This means that any child that was born was given this ability by Obatala to create children in the same way. Thus, if he were ever angry or offended by someone who worshipped him, this could lead to infertility and ultimately the end of mankind (i.e., destruction).

Obatala is often depicted as being bald. His hair is sometimes described as being straight, or sometimes it is described as made of different colors. The symbol of Obatala's power over people's fertility may be associated with this because Obatala can take on the characteristics of women, which symbolically represents his power over women's fertility.

Obatala is also linked with the moon because he is considered a deity that controls women's cycles and menstruation. In Yoruba culture, women are often thought of as a reflection of a man's success, and Obatala is considered to be able to represent male virility. As such, it is said that men maintain their strength by worshipping Obatala.

Some religious scholars view Obatala as the mediator between humans and Olodumare, the creator god of the Yoruba religion. This mediation would explain how he saw things from all perspectives and had insight into every situation. This role also means that Obatala was one of the most powerful deities in Yorubaland because he was able to influence what both gods and men thought and how they acted on those thoughts.

Obatala is mainly known for its affiliation with the white color.

Orisha Funfun, as she is also known, derives from her name, Oba (meaning king), t'ala (which refers to an undyed fabric - a white canvas on which other colors are cast to represent its different paths). He is considered the light of all consciousness and the embodiment of purity, both physical and spiritual. Obatala is the Orisha adored to find purity, peace, and harmony in life.

Off the coast of southwestern Nigeria, Obatala is seen as Jesus of Nazareth because he is seen as the savior and protector of humanity. Like other Orisha who have reincarnated in humans, according to the Yoruba belief, Obatala was once Oba (king) of Ife. His subjects revered him until he lost the throne to Oduduwa. His loss of the throne is still the subject of dramatic history today during the Itapa festival in Ile Ife.

If the male Orishas' paths are greater than the female paths, Obatala is known for the existence of double paths. His paths are similar in number between males and females. Although the female ones prevail more, the Obatala priestesses are more numerous than the male priests.

Obatala also has a minor influence in the depictions of Santeria, Voodoo, and Hoodoo. There are only small variations, and these are seen essentially in the names and oriki. For example, if in the Yoruba culture, it is called Obatala or Orisha Funfun, in these other religions, it is known as Orixala, Oxala, Ochala, Oshala, or Orichala.

Purity of heart is essential when invoking Obatala. Obatala will never respond to people with bad intentions.

The food that Obatala prefers in rituals are coconuts, milk, white bread, white rice, and water, accompanied by prayers or praising him with his

oriki. Like Olodumare and other Orishas, Obatala reveals himself in several forms known as paths or avatars. These paths have different purposes and, as such, can be requested on the basis of specific needs.

### ***Path of Obatala***

Obatala is depicted in several forms known as paths or avatars. These paths can be requested based on specific purposes and needs.

#### **Obatala Orisa Aye**

It is a female path of Obatala and represents the great mystical virtues of women.

#### **Obatala Ondo**

It is a feminine path of Obatala, who lives near the rocks by the sea.

#### **Obatala Ayalua**

It is a path of Obatala represented as a destroyer, warrior, and exterminator. Obatala Ayalua is a rival of his brother Ayalá.

#### **Obatala Alabalashe**

It is a path where Obatala converses with his children with prophetic dreams. It depicts the past, the present, and the future.

#### **Obatala Olufon**

Obatala in this path can not remain in darkness. He needs continuous light. His shrine must always have a source of perpetual light.

#### **Obatala Oloyu Okuni**

This path of Obatala is the source and possessor of the eyes of all humans.

#### **Obatala Osha Orolu**

This is the king of the Egwadó.



### **Obatala Okelu**

This path is the king of Ekiti and Abeokuta; he lives in the highest place.

### **Obatala Ana Suare**

This is a male path of Obatala who accompanies Oba Moro. His sons cannot oust anyone from their home or raise their hands in anger.

### **Obatala Oshalufon**

It is of the king of Ifón. This male path of Obatala gave people the ability to speak

### **Obatala Oguiniyan**

This male path of Obatala does not allow anyone to see his face.

### **Obatala Obalabi**

This path of Obatala is the Creator of Oyó and is supposed to be deaf.

### **Obatala Elefuro**

It is a female path of Obatala. She is the queen of the earth and is also known as Imolé.

### **Obatala Oba Ayiká**

This path of Obatala protects the houses. We rely on this path when we want special protection of homes and property.

### **Obatala Oba Malu**

This path of Obatala is a help in the most difficult moments. It is a support for people to overcome obstacles in their lives.

### **Obatala Efun Yobi**

This path of Obatala is the protector of his children and also those of his enemies. She brings serenity into the home and relieves leg pain.

### **Obatala Alarmorere**

This Obatala path is depicted with a silver saw and hammer.

### **Obatala Orisha Yeye**

This is another Obatala female path believed to be one of the oldest of the Obatala female paths.

### **Obatala Ogbon**

This Obatala path walks with her brother Oggán. It is responsible for the journey of the spirits of Obatala's children when they pass through Orun

### **Obatala Aikalambo Male**

This Obatala path is near Ibadánè and is the king of Iká. Originated in the Odu Ofun Sa.

### **Obatala Oshereilbo**

This male Obatala path continuously walks with Sango.

### **Obatala Airanike**

This path is called Ajósupato in Arará and is a warrior walking alongside Oshalufón.

### **Obatala Oyu Alueko**

A male path of Obatala who selfishly does not want any Orisha to have children besides himself.

### **Obatala Orisha Iwin**

This Obatala path originates from Owó and defends the palace of Obatala.

### **Obatala Oye Lade**

This Obatala path represents a hunter and the king of Ekiti. In the Arara, his name is Bajelo, he always walks with Oshosi.

### **Obatala Ekundire**

It is a men's path from the land of Iyesá and guides Oduduwa.

### **Obatala Orisha Obrala**

A young and valiant male path from Obatala.

### **Obatala Bibi Nike**

A male path of Obatala constantly riding a horse.

### **Obatala Edegu**

This Obatala path is the king of the Efushé lands.

### **Obatala Abgany**

This path is a master of Iyebú. He lives in the water, is blind, and is a defender of life.

### **Obatalá Ayenolú**

It is a male path, also known as Yelú and Laguelu, in the city of Ibadán.

### **Obatala Agguidai**

A male path of Obatala oversees messages with Olofi. It has four stones and instruments that are sealed and cannot be touched by the sun, air, or dew.

### **Obatala Orisha Aye**

It is the path of Obatala that gave balance and order to the world and also brought the secret of Ase to Orunmila.

### ***Oriki Obatala***

There are different ways to approach Obatala. Simple prayers can be made to his name, and ritual meals can be placed before his shrine. But one of the easiest to do, which is most recommended for new worshippers and enthusiasts of the Yoruba religion, is to sing praises to the Orishas. These praises serve as a unique form of prayer and are known as 'Oriki.' Each Orisha has at least one oriki dedicated to him/her. Some are available to the general public and sung during festivals dedicated to the Orishas, but other

oriki are sacred and only sung by experienced devotees and within closed circles.

**Below is an oriki dedicated to Orisha Obatala:**

*Iba Obatala*

*Iba Oba igbo*

*Iba Oba n'le Ifon*

*O fi koko ala rumo*

*Orisa ni ma sin*

*Orisa ni ma sin*

*Obatala o su n'nu ala*

*Obatala o ji n'nu ala*

*Obatala o tinu ala dide*

*Adiniboiti ri, adupe*

*Ase, ase, asese o*

*This translates to:*

*Praise to the chief of the white cloth*

*Praise to the chief of the sacred grove*

*Praise to the chief of the heavens*

*I salute the owner of the white cloth*

*It is the owner of white light that I serve*

*It is the owner of white light that I serve*

*Chief of the white cloth sleeps in white*

*Chief of the white cloth wakes up in white*

*Chief of the white cloth gets up in white*

*He who creates at will, I thank you.*

*So, let it be, so let it be, so let it be done.*

**Another fascinating piece of Oriki for Obatala:**

*Obatala, the strong king of Ejigbo*

*Seating at the trial, a tranquil judge.*

*The king whose every day becomes a feast,*

*The Owner of the brilliant white cloth.*

*Owner of the chain to the court of heaven.*

*Obatala stands behind the people who tell the truth,*

*The protector of the handicapped,*

*Oshagiyan, the warrior with the handsome beard.*

*He wakes up to create two hundred civilized customs.*

*It is he who holds the staff – Opasoro, the great king of Ifon. Oshanla  
(mighty god), grant me a white cloth of my own*

*You who makes things white,*

*Tall as a granary tall as a hill.*

*Ajaguna, deliver me.*

*You're the king that leans on a white iron staff.*

**ORUNMILA**



Orunmila is one of the most important Orisha of the Yoruba tradition and was sent to earth by Olodumare to initiate and complete creation, reclaim the earth and make it habitable to begin life. He is also known as Orunla or Agboniregun, and in the santeria, he is linked to St. Francis of Assisi. He is the son of Obatala and Yemu and is a relative of Shango and Elegua.

Knowledge, divine wisdom, and justice are typical of the figure of Orunmila. His wisdom about him is so immense that he understands everything there is to know about human nature and has the most effective methods of purification. He founded divination and has his own form of divination known as Ifa (the divine wisdom of Olodumare).

Ifa divination is accessible only to a select few who are dedicated to learning and who can divination using Ifa as an oracle. Devotees to Ifa divination are the Babalawo (priests of Ifa) and Iyanifa (priestesses of Ifa). According to the Yoruba tradition of creation, it was the Orisha who advised Obatala on how to proceed, how to create the dry soil and mold man from clay. After the creation of man, Orunmila joined the other Orishas to visit the earth. He remained among the Yoruba people as a priest to teach the ways of righteousness, the characteristics and virtues of Olodumare, and the ways to invoke Olodumare. His divination powers are always precise and help determine a person's fate.

Orunmila has a special place among the Orishas, and this is mainly due to the fact that Olodumare has attributed to him the virtue Ori (intuitive knowledge). This special and unique power gives him the ability to influence and intercede in the life and destiny of each chosen person, and he can do so much more than other Orishas.

Realizing that his stay on Earth was not eternal, Orunmila knew that there was a need to fill the void that his absence would create. He foresaw this and gave selected people a greater portion of his wisdom, teachings, and divination skills. These people were to serve as priests in his stead once he left the surface of the Earth. They had to uphold his teachings and guide all who sought Olodumare's wisdom regarding their lives and difficulties.

The elect was given the title Awo Ifa which translated can loosely mean "the priest of Ifa." Suppose priests were mostly adult males who had undergone sacred training. Gender restrictions have been shattered over time as some women have shown potential in Ifa divination.

In fact, even females were allowed to participate in sacred training prior to their full initiation. The females had the unique title of Iyanifa, which can loosely be translated as the divination of Ifa's mother, instead of being called Awo.

Male and female are fundamental for existence and balance; in fact, duality is a principle in Ifa divination.

The basic principle is that the male cannot exist without the female essence, and the same is true for the female who cannot exist without the male essence. Precisely for this principle, just as the males had to be initiated into Ifa divination, the females also had to be initiated. Interest and being personally chosen by the oracle play a key role in being initiated.

Orunmila is a soothsayer who can predict anyone's fate and is characterized by great moral integrity and wisdom. As a result, devotees are expected to have a path in a life marked by honesty and loyalty, to live harmoniously and prevent problems.

Orunmila can rewrite fate, but only with the consent of the person concerned; otherwise, there will be no change in fate.

To celebrate this divinity, the rites of the devotees provide for a particular type of propitiatory dance and the offering of some types of food of animal origin, such as the hen.

### ***Oriki Orunmila***

*Orunmila Eleri Ipin*

*Ibikeji Olodumare.*

*Akeju Oogun,*

*Obiriti, apijo Iku da,*

*Oluwa mi, atoibajaye*

*Oro abiku jigbo.*

*Oluwa mi, ajiki.*

*Ogege agbaiye gun.*

*Odudu ti n du ori emere,*

*A tun ori ti ko sunwon se,*

*Amo iku,*

*Olowa aiyere,*

*Agiri ile ilogbon.*

*Oluwa mi amoimotan,*

*A ko mo o tan ko se.*

*Aba mo o tan iba se ke.*

*Mojuba akogda,*

*Mojuba aseda*

*Akoda ti n ko gbogbo aiye ni Ifa*

*Aseda ti n ko gbogbo agba n'imoran*

*The translation is:*

*Orunmila, the witness of fate,*



*The second in command to Olodumare (Supreme God).  
You are far more effective than medicine.  
You are the one who averts the day of death.  
My Lord, the almighty to save.  
The mysterious spirit that fought death,  
Unto you salutations are due first in the morning.  
You are the equilibrium that adjusts the forces of the world  
You are the one whose exertion it is to reconstruct the creatures of bad luck.  
You are the repairer of ill luck.  
He who knows you becomes immortal.  
Lord of the King that cannot be deposed.  
Perfect in the house of wisdom.  
You are the lord who is infinite in knowledge.  
By not knowing you in full, we – your servants are futile.  
If only we could know you in full,  
All would be well with us.  
I praise the first created  
I praise the creator  
The first created who teaches the whole world the divination of Ifa  
The creator who teaches the elders wisdom.*

## ***Odu Ifa***

Orunmila already existed before the creation of the earth and was of great help to Olodumare in the role of a priest when he sojourned on earth. In fact, he is considered by the Yoruba culture to be the greatest priest who has ever been on earth and the creator of the divination system called Ifa.

Odu Ifa is a collection of 16 main books, and each book has 16 subdivisions of secrets that only the priests and priestesses of Ifa can access. Many think

that the 256 Odu Ifa contains all the possible decisions and situations which can arise in everyone's life every day.

A sacred collection of Orunmila's prayers and stories handed down over the years by priests and priestesses, who gave advice and guidance to anyone seeking their help.

Regardless of the sacrifices that may be required to remedy whatever situation one may find oneself in, works of righteousness, also known as Iwa Pele, have often saved someone from total damnation.

Ifa divination prayers are divine and can only be reached by the priests and priestesses of Ifa. But here is a more generic prayer dedicated to Ifa. It is directed towards the human Ori (spiritual thinking), fundamental to the destiny of each individual.

*Ori, mo'juba (I honor you and give you thanks),*

*It is you who is with me through all the events of life.*

*Ori're l'ori mi (I have a good Ori – head)*

*Ori ire (good Ori) that links me to Olorun*

*Ori ire that is Olorun's essence in me.*

*Ori ire that is open to receive the blessings that Olorun sends to me*

*Ori're l'ori mi (I have a good Ori – head),*

*Ori ire that is open to the wisdom of Ifa*

*Ori ire that is open to the guidance of Orunmila.*

*Ori ire that receives assistance from the Orishas – gods.*

*Ori ire that welcomes and embraces Egungun – the spirits of the dead.*

*Ori ire that welcomes assistance from Egungun.*

*Ori're l'ori mi (I have a good Ori – head)*

*Ori, I beseech you to keep my doors open*

*Ori, I ask that you always bring me blessings*

*Ori, I beseech you to always support me in tough times,*

*Ori, I beseech you to always rejoice in good times with me.*

*Ori, I embrace you, and I ask that you always embrace me.*

*Ashe, Ashe, Ashe o (a variant of Amen – so let it be).*

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## WHITE ORISHAS II: THE GODS OF WATER

**A**ccording to the Yoruba culture, there is a powerful balance on earth between masculine and feminine energy. Feminine energy was of crucial importance for the creation of the world; otherwise, it would have been an incomplete world.

Women have a quiet nature and a destructive one, and this can be crucial on many occasions, depending on the influence women want to address.

Men naturally have more destructive energy, and the influence of quieter female energy can have a beneficial effect on men.

For these characteristics, but also for their beauty and inventiveness, most of the Orishas women are associated with the white color and the element of water, and Osun is a prime example.

The Orisha Oya is an opposite example and highlights that Orisha women are not only associated with beauty and stillness but can also reveal ferocious and devastating power. In fact, she is associated with the color red, which symbolizes her violence and brutality. She is actively involved in the military campaigns of her husband Orisha Sango, and her thunderstorms have often helped Sango send lightning bolts to enemies during battles.

## OLOKUN



If Olodumare is the creator of all Orisha, Olokun is the creator of every female Orisha, and in particular, those that have to do with the element of water.

Olokun is a hero who later became Orisha (a demigod) and is known as the "God of water" and protector of deep waters because he presides over the seas, streams, lakes, rivers, and rain in the Americas. He is considered a god of vision and revelation. He is a revealer of secrets and a bearer of prophecies. He can also do it on behalf of others.

He has the distinction of being androgynous but operates predominantly as a female Orisha. Olokun holds material riches, psychic abilities, dreams, meditation, mental health. He embodies many human characteristics such as meditation, patience, future visions. He is invoked to bring about fertility, prosperity, and health.

He is the god of fish and fishermen. He watches over those who go to sea and protects them from danger and evil. Sacrifices are made in honor of

Olokun by those who want their prayers answered, mainly asking for success in work and protection in daily life.

In the past, the Yoruba people believed that Olokun was one of their most powerful Orisha. They believed that since all the water came from Olokun, he had power over life and death and could impart wisdom and prophecy. His cult is still very strong today. Priests conduct Olokun rituals for all kinds of wishes, including wishes for good health, luck, love, power, and success.

Olokun is worshiped in Nigeria and Benin along with Mami Wata, as the two deities possess very similar character and nature.

### **Here are some statements about Olokun:**

- Olokun is the ruler of the "bottom of the ocean," which means that he also rules the water sources that are under the earth.

- Because Olokun resides on the ocean floor, this god is not often honored or worshiped by people on land.

- The ocean is very important for Olokun's existence because it provides him with his food source, which are animals, fish, and crustaceans.

- Olokun is invoked by devotees when they need to find items that have been lost at sea.

- Olokun is also seen as a spirit of the deep and can be found in any swamp, river, or lake.

- Olokun is highly respected by the Yoruba because he carries the power of the ocean with him.

- Olokun is also seen as the protector of fishermen.

- Olokun is also mentioned in the prayers to Yemaya.

- He also represents wisdom, protection, and stability.

- Olokun is the Orisha of the sea, and therefore, people who live by the sea should be very respectful of him.

-He Helps fishermen have substantial fishing trips.

-He protects waterways so that people can travel through them safely.

-If a person is devoted to this Orisha, it is said that he can easily understand the mysteries of life and death.

### ***Oriki Olokun***

*Olokun aje ti aye oba omi*

*Omi nla to kari aye*

*Osele gbe senibu omi ti koni momo*

*Gbogbo eni ti waje*

*E je ka kori si ile Olokun*

*Sanle aje*

*Iya eni to l'aje*

*Iya eni to l'aje*

*Ogbugbu ni so oni so boji*

*Alagbalu gbu omi*

*Alagbalu gbu omi*

*Eni ajiki*

*Eni ajike*

*Ai ri di Olokun*

*Ao mo bere re*

*Aje pe gbogbo omi*

*E fi ori fun Olokun gbogbo odo*

*E fo ori fun Olokun oba omi*

*The translation is:*

*The owner of the waters and prosperity – the  
Queen of the realm of waters  
The great waters that cover the Earth  
A wonderful ocean that has no end  
Whoever seeks wealth, let them go to the  
house of Olokun who has abundant wealth  
Mother of uncountable wealth  
Mother of uncountable wealth  
Waters without end  
Waters without end  
The one we greet when we wake  
The one whom we cherish  
No one knows the source of Olokun  
No one knows her beginning  
Prosperity calls unto all the waters  
Let the waters bow to Olokun  
Crown Olokun as the Queen of the waters.*

## **YEMOJA**





Yemoja for the world Yoruba is the Mother Goddess of the world. She is considered "Lady and Queen of the Waters" and the mother of all the Orisha.

Yemonja's name comes from the words Yey Omo Eja, literally "Mother whose children are fish."

The sea is home to lost and innumerable riches and, according to Yoruba tradition, Yemoja possesses the riches of deep waters. It is also said that every time she turns in her sleep, she gives rise to a new spring, which then turns into a river wherever she is paths.

She is the goddess of the Ogun River, the largest river in the Yorubaland territory of Nigeria, and is the counterpart of Olokun, an Orisha, androgynous, considered protector of African slaves transferred to the Americas and the master of the sea.

Yemoja (or Iemanjá) Represents motherhood, purity, fertility, and femininity. Motherhood is both physical and spiritual; therefore, it includes love, care, protection, and guidance. She is a mother figure and is sometimes compared to the Virgin Mary of the Catholic Church and the Afro-Cuban "Our Lady of Regla." Yemoja, as already mentioned, is everyone's mother, but she has a soft spot for her daughters (women) and offers help to cure them for infertility.

If sterile, women could make sacrifices to Yemoja, and, in return, Yemoja offered one of her eggs for fertility. She also cares about the aspect of childbirth, nurturing, love and healing. She is considered a calm and quiet Orisha and is associated with the colors blue and white. She is responsible for the waves of rivers and seas, and whenever a storm occurs, her devotees know that she is upset, so they resort to some sacrifice to appease her anger.

Fishermen and sailors pray to her when they travel or when they are fishing. With her blessing, a fisherman is protected from the adversity of the waters, and she can hope for a great harvest of fish. Survivors of the shipwreck tell of being rescued by force and some of having seen sirens or heard sounds.

Yemoja is depicted as a beautiful Nubian woman walking on the surface of the water under a full moon or as a mermaid.

She generally holds in her hand a fan in gold and mother of pearl, embellished with beads and shells, and wears a beautiful necklace of blue crystals like the sea. The shells are sacred, and the places of veneration of her are the shore of the sea or of the great rivers that go towards the sea.

Among her features are the moon and the sun, the anchor, the life jackets, the lifeboats, and objects worked in silver, steel, tin, and lead that recall the sea. Her symbol is a six-pointed star, an open shell, and the moon.

The flowers attributed to Yemaja are violet and aquatic flowers, the fragrances of verbena, sandalwood, and dog-rose. Her animals are the creatures of the sea, the peacocks with their blue and green iridescence, and the goose. Her day is Saturday, and her number is seven, as the seas are seven.

Her stones are lapis lazuli, aquamarine, pearls, corals, and all the crystals of the color of the sea. In Salvador, Yemoja is celebrated together with the "Our Lady of Navigation" of the Catholic tradition.

Offerings of her as flowers, porcelain plates, jewelry, hairbrushes, etc., are deposited in her sanctuary in Rio Vermelho.

Yemonja was a spiritual entity charged by Olodumare to assist Orisha Obatala in training humans in the creation of the Earth. Yemonja descended to Earth with the other 16 Orishas of Orun on a rope and traveled the world, engaging with them in preparing the world for humanity.

Tapa (Iganna) in the Oke area of Ogun is the place of origin of Yemonja, and her worship began in Saki. Abeokuta, the capital of the state of Ogun (Nigeria), is the main site of her shrine.

Yemoja is often regarded as the wife of various male Orishas, such as Erinle, Okere, Obatala, Oko, and Erinle. Some also say that she is the mother of Ogun, Sango, Oya, Osun, Oba, Babaluaiye, and Osoosi, while many others say that she never gave birth but raised many children, most notably Dada, Sango, and Ibéji (means twins ).

Yemonja is said to have taught other Orishas an alternative method of accessing the Odus, namely by "throwing" cowrie shells. She is very

revered, and in her honor, there are several Yemoja festivals: February 2nd, September 7th, December 8th, or December 31st.

## ***Paths of Yemoja***

### **Yemoja Yembo (Yemu)**

This path is the origin of the Yemoja crown and the mother of all Orisha. She is considered Oduduwa in female form.

### **Yemoja Ibu**

This Yemoja path is married to Orisha Aganyu. Their encounters take place on the river bank.

### **Yemoja Ibu Oleyo**

This path of Yemoja was born in Odun Ogunda - Iroso. She is always dressed in blue and loves fish and chickens.

### **Yemoja Ibu Olowo**

This path of Yemoja was originated in the Odu Odi-Iroso. Yemoja Ibu Olowo is the possessor of all the riches hidden in the depths of the waters.

### **Yemoja Ibu Okoto**

This Yemoja path originated in the Odu Merunla - Iroso. She is thought to live in shells.

### **Yemoja Ibu Asesu**

This Yemoja path is the Orisha patroness of geese, swans, and ducks. She is Olokun's messenger and requires tolerance and consistency when she is called.

### **Yemoja Akere**

This Yemoja path lives deep in the ocean and originated from the Odu Odi-Ojuani.

## **Yemoja Oro**

This path of Yemoja acts mysteriously and works with egungun (masked spirit).

## **Yemoja Achaba**

Born from the Odu Osa Mesan, this path of Yemoja is frequently represented as an anchor, but they often say that it is she who finds refuge in the anchors.

## **Yemoja Okute or Okunte**

This path of Yemoja was born from Odu Ogunda Meji. She is a warrior, guardian of the Amazons.

## **Yemoja Mayelewo**

This path of Yemoja is Olodumare's favorite daughter. She was born in Odu Irosun Ofun and lives in the depths of the ocean. She has stability as the main virtue.

## **Yemoja Ibuagana**

On this path, Yemoja is the wife of Orisa Oko and was born in the Odu Iroso-Metala. Although she is very beautiful, she has seven protrusions on her abdomen, and one leg is smaller than the other.

## **Yemoja Atarawa**

This is Yemoja's path, owner of the treasures found on land and in the ocean.

## **Yemoja Ibubunle**

This path of Yemoja originated from Odu Eye'nle Meli. It is symbolized by a hook, a sword, or shells. Her home is the reef rocks.

## **Yemoja Ibu Akinomi**

This path of Yemoja dwells in the waves of the water and was born of Odu Eye'nle Odi.

### **Yemoja Ibuconla**

This path of Yemoja originates from Odu Odi-ejila. She is recognized as an inspirer for poets, and she creates ships.

### **Yemoja Ibuina**

This path of Yemoja was born of Odu Osa-ogunda and is a warrior. She prefers goat and carp meat.

### **Yemoja Ogunayibo**

This Yemoja path originates from the Odu Marunla-Ogunda. She is the Orisha patroness of older women and is famous for her large breasts. She is a warrior who works alongside Orisha Ogun.

### **Yemoja Ogunosomi**

This Yemoja path works with Ogun and Sango. She was born from the Odu Iroso-obara. She is a warrior who climbs the mountain peaks and lives on the surface of the waters.

### **Yemoja Ibunodo**

This path of Yemoja has a silver chain as its symbol, and her abode is rivers.

### **Yemoja Yemase**

This Yemoja path has a mighty crown on which seven ritual cowries, machetes, and axes are hung. There is also a boat and an arrow by Orisha Oshosi.

### **Yemoja Ibualaro**

This path of Yemoja can be represented as the Orisha of life and death.

### ***Oriki Yemoja***

*Agbe ni igbe're ki Yemoja ibikeji odo*

*Aluko ni igbe're ki'losa, ibikeji odo*

*Ogbo odidere I igbe're k'oniwo  
Omo at'orun gbe 'gba aje ka'ri w'aiye  
Olugbe rere ko, Olugbe rere ko, Olugbe rere ko,  
Gbe rere ko ni olugberere Ase!*

*Translation:*

*It is the bird that takes good fortune to the  
Spirit of the Mother of the Fish – the assistant  
to the goddess of the Sea (Olokun)*

*It is the bird Aluko that takes good fortune  
to the Spirit of the Lagoon – the Assistant to  
the goddess of the Sea (Olokun)*

*It is the parrot who takes good fortune to the Chief of Iwo  
Children are the ones who bring good fortune from Heaven down to the  
Earth*

*The Great One who gives good things,*

*The Great One who gives good things,*

*The Great One who gives good things,*

*Give me good things from the Great One who gives good things.*

*So, let it be.*

**OSUN**



In Yoruba culture, there are major Orisha that comes from the soil of the earth and represent different aspects of life.

The General Notes of Osun is a representation of beauty and fertility. In Yoruba folklore, Osun was said to have been both a goddess and a spirit in charge of women's fertility rates.

Osun can be seen as being responsible for periods in women's menstrual cycles, pregnancies, childbirth, and breastfeeding.

Many people in Nigeria use her powerful herbs to treat infertility-related issues; in addition, she is used by mothers for post-partum care when they breastfeed their babies.

General Notes of Osun:

"She is a powerful and sacred spirit. Her power is today manifested in her capacity to cure infertility and soothe motherly instincts. She reduces menstrual pains and helps to strengthen the intestinal tract."

"If one or more children are born as a result of a union with Osun, then that would be

considered as a gift from God, as the children were destined by God."

In Nigeria, General Notes of Osun is meant for those women who have been successful in having children after trying unsuccessfully for years. In other words, General Notes of Osun is not used for those who have miscarried or aborted their pregnancy. General Notes of Osun is also useful for women who have gone through tubal ligation and failed to conceive or those who did and were unable to get pregnant again.

## ***Paths of Osun***

### **Osun Ibu Kole**

This Osun path works as a housekeeper and eats whatever sacrifices his vulture brings.

### **Osun Ololoridi**

This path of Osun is a revolutionary and a fighter. With struggles, he seeks to create change.

### **Osun Ibu Akuaro**

This Osun path has a secret name that only his children know, and he loves to eat with his sister Yemoja.

### **Osun Ibu Ana**

This Osun path has the domain of the drums.

### **Osun Anani**

This path of Osun is invoked to defend his case before the real help. It is a controversial path.

### **Osun Ibu Yumu**

This Osun path is famous for its beauty. She is not courted because she is deaf, although it is not clear whether she is real or figurative deafness.

### **Osun Ibu Odonki**



This Osun path abides at the mouth of the stream. She is the mistress of the streams.

### **Osun Ibu Ogale**

This path of Osun is an ancient fighter who doesn't like to be disturbed.

### **Osun Ibu Akuanda**

This Osun path was born in Odu Ikafun and is the one who freed Sango from Oya's kidnapping.

### **Osun Ibu Adesa**

This path of Osun is the one who keeps the royalty. In fact, the meaning of her name is: "she who has the crown well secured." She is accompanied by a faithful peacock.

### **Osun Ibu Alade**

This Osun path works closely with Eshu.

### **Osun Akuase Odo**

In this path, Osun is said to have worked with spirits (especially those of the dead) as a stillborn.

### **Osun Ibu Bumi**

This path of Osun has a personal Eshu that he works with.

### **Osun Ibu Eleke Oni**

This Osun path is characterized by great beauty and excellent character.

### **Osun Ibu Itumu**

This path of Osun is a warrior who rides an ostrich in battles. She is an Orisha protector of the Amazons.

### **Osun Ita Timibu**

Osun's path is community leadership and only shows itself at night.

### **Osun Ibu Aremu Kondiamo**

This Osun path lives on an Ifa divination table and originates from the mountain peaks.

### **Osun Ibu Seeds**

This Osun path dwells in the areas around rivers.

### **Osun Ibu Fonda**

This path of Osun is a warrior who died in the war.

### **Osun Ibu Odoko**

Osun works on this path with Orisha Oko, and she is known as a peasant woman.

### **Osun Ibu Awuayemi**

This path of Osun speaks through Odu Oyekun Meli: she walks with five bronze rods and a horse and is blind

### **Osun Ibu Idere Lekun**

This Osun path inhabits caves and is delighted every time the waves crash against the ocean cliffs. To cover her flabby face, she wears a mask. It is the only path where Osun shows himself ugly.

### **Osun Ibu Inare**

On this path, Osun thrives on wealth and is the daughter of Ibu Ana.

### **Osun Ibu Agandara**

This Osun path originated in Odun Ikadi and is found with a padlock sitting on a chair.

### **Osun Oroyobi**

On this path, Osun owns precious sands donated by Olokun. Her favorite ritual meal is salmon.

### ***Oriki Osun***

*Oriki Osun Iba Osun sekese,*

*Latojuku awede we mo*

*Iba Osun Olodi,*

*Latojuku awede we mo.*

*Iba Osun ibu kole,*

*Latojuku awede we mo.*

*Yeye kari,*

*Yeye 'jo,*

*Yeye opo,*

*O san rere o.*

*Mbe mbe ma.*

*Yeye, mbe mbe l'oro.*

*Ase.*

*The translation is:*

*Praise to the Spirit of Mystery,*

*The Spirit who cleanses me inside out.*

*Praise to the Spirit of the River,*

*The Spirit who cleanses me inside out.*

*Praise to the Spirit of Seduction,*

*The Spirit who cleanses me inside out.*

*Mother of the mirror,  
Mother of dance,  
Mother of abundance,  
We sing your praises.  
Remain (exist), exist always Mother,  
Exist always in our tradition.  
So, let it be.*

# **DARK ORISHAS I: THE TRICKSTER AND THE WARRIOR**

**D**ark-colored (red or black) Orishas are often associated with devastation and cruelty.

They are known purely for their terror, and it is a basic reason why they are celebrated and worshiped by devotees.

It is true that they have a gory and intimidating temperament, but this statement is not entirely correct.

Dark Orishas, such as Aganju, Esu, Sango, Ogun, Oya, and others, are known for their brutal and heinous deeds, but that doesn't mean they are necessarily evil. Often the evil sent is directed towards the wrong people, or some wars are not caused or initiated by the dark Orisha. These examples want to highlight how many times the actions that are taken are a consequence of incorrect behavior on the part of the antagonists. Ultimately there is also a good end in actions that can be seen as senseless and wicked.

## **ESU**

Esu has many names all over the world, from West Africa to Brazil (Eshu, Exú, Elegua, or Elegba), and is defined as the intermediary between the gods (Orisha) and humans, and a messenger between the Orisha themselves. He is a clever, irreverent god and always ready to make jokes and tease; in short, he is the trickster of the Yoruba tradition.

Esu is often seen as a complex character who can be both useful and harmful to humans. In fact, he is often referred to as a cheater due to his spiteful nature of him. He often tests men, deceives them, sometimes jokes or tempts them, with the main aim of helping them to mature. He is a god of causes and effects.

Esu is characterized by balance, law, and order, and for this, one pays homage to him in an attempt to attract his virtues into one's life. Considering his typically unpredictable personality, he can range from a benevolent spirit to a more chaotic and dangerous entity. He has an ambivalent character. On the one hand, he is spiteful, irascible, and violent. On the other hand, he often appears benevolent, cheerful, and protective.

Along with many other African deities, Eshu also crossed the ocean on ships loaded with slaves to stay close to his people in such a difficult time. We find him, in fact, in the Cuban Santeria and in the Brazilian Candomblé, where he is known as Elegba.

Many times Esu is depicted with a staff, representing power and order. His being changeable and capable of adapting to any situation makes him join the chameleon, the animal that holds the role of messenger of the supreme god Olorun. He is said to be adored for reasons such as protection, business success, political power, good health, and good luck.

Given his role as protector of responses and as a messenger, it is a good rule, whenever an important decision has to be made, to invoke Esu to orient himself in the right direction.

The virtue of his balance helps to clearly see the perspectives contained on the two sides, to evaluate the possible consequences, and make a correct decision.

Associated with medicine because it protects people with aneurysms, fibromyalgia, or epilepsy, who are often referred to as the children of Esu. It is also said that people with these conditions can heal themselves using herbs or amulets through the guidance of fortune tellers (Babalawo).

In the Western world, some religious scholars translate "Eshu" as "the devil," as an evil figure and even underworld, but all of this is extremely inaccurate. Esu, can be invoked through the Oriki in honor of him and offering a sacrifice of goats, black chickens, or coconuts. In many villages, there are shrines dedicated to him.

In conclusion, it can be said that the Orisha can be a divine help in the moment of making important decisions, and it is wise to ask for advice, but

the final decision must be made by man.

### **Other features of Esu:**

- Esu was blessed by Olodumare with the divine keys of each sacred door, so he is recognized as the first among other Orishas.
- Esu serves other Orishas, but he is the leader of the Ajogun.
- Esu is a mischievous Orisha, so he doesn't like monotonous people.
- Esu is known as Exu in Candomble.
- Esu is known by the name of Elegua in Santeria.
- He is also known by other names in the Yoruba religions, such as Elewa and Elegbara.
- Esu is the first to receive a sacrifice before any other Orisha. Esu must be prayed before bringing a sacrifice to a particular Orisha.

### ***Paths of Esu***

#### **Esu Laroye**

This path is one of the youngest in Esu. He is a very good friend and messenger of Osun. He loves making jokes and is very mischievous.

#### **Esu Lagu'na**

This path of Esu is the patron Orisha of Egungun. He is famous for his strength of him.

#### **Esu Bi**

This Esu path is always seen at a crossroads. It causes discord and misfortune on people who make mistakes. His lessons are taught in painful and sometimes deadly deeds. He afflicts punishments if the lessons are not received. With him, it takes wisdom and foresight because Esu can be a great friend or a dangerous enemy.

### **Esu Anaki**

This path of Esu is regarded as a female. He is seen as a guardian of law and rigor in the paths of Esu. She teaches how to make each path communicate with other Orishas and with humans.

### **Esu Aina / Bara Aina**

This path is a messenger and works in symbiosis with Orisha Sango. He is tasked with paving the way for Sango when he goes into battle.

### **Esu Arerebioko**

This path is the path that works with Ogun. Esu Arerebioko follows Ogun when he goes into the forest to hunt or during his adventures.

### **Esu Aye**

This path of Esu has exposed the shores of the sea. He knows everything we want, so he is aware of the pleasures common to humanity and the secret places of riches.

### **Esu Elegbara**

This path is very positive and blessed for its followers. It conveys luck.

### **Esu Alaketu**

This Esu path is located in an area outside the city of Ketu (Africa). He is a wise man who bestows luck in the city.

### **Esu Afra**

This Esu path originates from Arara, the land of Dahomey. Esu Afra is a great friend of Asojano.

### **Esu Ana**

This path of Esu opens the way for communication between the Orishas and the sacred drums.

### **Esu Ashikuelu**



This Esu path lives at the entrance to the market. He is a skilled broker and expert in resolving money disputes.

### **Esu Bara Layiki**

This path of Esu is carefree, and he loves to dance and party.

### **Esu Dako**

This path of Esu is based in the forest. He is a skilled connoisseur of hunting and herbs.

### **Esu Alboni**

This Esu path resides high in the mountains.

### **Esu Ayeru**

This path of Esu is the messenger of Ifa.

### **Esu Aroyeyi**

This Esu path defends the entrance to Olofi Castle.

### **Esu Ode / Ode Mata**

This Esu path marches alongside Ochosi in the hunt.

### **Esu Owo**

This Esu path safeguards all the riches of the world.

### **Esu Beleke**

This path of Esu loves to play, dance, and give fate to those who deserve it.

### **Esu Eluufe**

This Esu path is old and wise. He is annoyed by those who have no respect for him. He grants wisdom, but only to those who are deserving.

### ***Oriki Esu***

*Esu,  
Esu odara,  
Esu la'olu ogirioko  
Okunrin ori ita  
A jo langa lau  
Arin lanja lalu  
Ode ibi ija de mole  
Ija ni otaru ba d'ele ife  
To fi de omo won  
Oro Esu, to akoni  
Ao fi ida re lale  
Esu ma se mi o,  
Esu ma se mi o,  
Esu ma se mi o.  
Omo elomiran ni ko lo se.  
Pa ado asubi da  
Na ado asure si wa  
Ase o!  
This translates to:*

*Divine Messenger,  
Divine Messenger of Transformation,  
Divine Messenger speak with power.  
Man of the crossroads, dance to the drum,  
Tickle the toe of the drum.  
Move beyond strife,*

*Strife is contrary to the Spirits of the Invisible Realm.  
Unite the unsteady feet of weaning children  
The Word of the Divine Messenger is always respected  
We shall use your sword to touch the Earth.  
Divine Messenger, do not confuse or hurt me,  
Divine Messenger, do not confuse or hurt me  
Divine Messenger, do not confuse or hurt me.  
Confuse or hurt the child of another (instead).  
Turn my suffering around  
Give me the blessings of the calabash.  
So, let it be.*

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## OGUN

Ogun is the Orisha of iron and war. He is the guardian of all metals, especially weapons, which he uses to give strength to his followers. He is the protector of blacksmiths, hunters, metalworkers, artisans, and of the warriors who invoke him for victory.

A call to Ogun, whatever the situation, means victory is assured. He is a warrior god, skilled hunter, and above all, unparalleled blacksmith. According to the Yoruba tradition, Ogun is the Orisha creator of the paths and the first Orisha to have come to Earth.

It is said that the Orisha were unable to descend to earth due to too thick vegetation, but Ogun cleared the path for them, cutting away the tall grasses with his indestructible sword. It was always he who taught men metalworking.

He is often depicted in the pose of a warrior, holding a machete or a saber; in fact, he is considered the Orisha of the opening of the paths and the preserver of the peace obtained with the conquest. He, therefore, has the ability to open a path for anyone who has lost their way. His "warrior knife" is a short, heavy, sharp knife with a long handle and a harmlessly curved brass blade. He wears it on his left side tied to his belt. He also has a knife

called a "cheating knife," which is a small, sharp blade that he carries in his right pocket. It is used to tease and irritate people when they annoy him or do things he doesn't like, such as trying to intimidate him, hold a grudge against him, or threaten him in any way.

Although he is the Orisha of war, he is not considered an evil deity but can be inflexible and ruthless, proud and warlike, but also protective with his proteges. The day dedicated to him is Ojo Isegun, the day linked to the battle, like our Tuesday. His sacred animal is the dog, from which he never separates, and on his sword, the oaths were sworn.

The Ogun cult involves the use of various types of iron objects during feasts and celebrations.

On the Ogun altar, in fact, we find tools such as weapons (swords, bayonets, spears), knives, pistols, ammunition belts, helmets, saw blades, hatchets, hard rags/leather gloves for protection during metalworking. Locksmith equipment, wrenches.

Although for Ogun, the dog is a sacred animal, the sacrifices made to it are not complete without the beheading of a dog held apart from the head and hind legs. Being Orisha's patron for hunters, he also requires sacrifices of bushmeat. Other forms of sacrifice are represented by kola nuts, palm wine, palm oil, roosters, salt (because it contains iron), snails, yams, alligator pepper, and water.

Non-devotees cannot pay homage to Ogun, but they can seek his blessing by turning to a priest or more experienced devotees.

## ***Paths of Ogun***

### **Ogún Onile**

He is called Ogun Onile due to his nature as an explorer. His title means that he was the first to go to an uncultivated place, to settle and work the land—great Discoverer of animals, water bodies, and new territories.

### **Ogún Alagbo or Alagbede**

It is a path that represents the patron Orisha of all blacksmiths. He has a rude and shrewish disposition and is always concentrated on work. He does not waste time and energy in conversations and is a hard worker.

### **Ogún Meji / Ogún Bi**

This path of Ogun has two faces. The first has the appearance of a good and industrious parent who loves respite and serenity. The second face is aggressive, impetuous, and bloodthirsty.

### **Ogún Arere**

This Ogun trail is a butcher.

### **Ogún Shibiriki**

He is the figure who created all things in metal and is referred to as the killer. He is bold, proud, and very brave. He is jealous of Sango and is fighting for the love of Yemoja. He was born to fight.

### **Ogún-Kobukobu**

This Ogun path is depicted holding a whip and is known as the foreman.

### **Ogún Aguanile**

This Ogun Path is a conqueror and master of the mountains and new lands.

### **Ogún Adaiba**

This Ogun Path is a conqueror who shows love through his machete.

### **Ogún Jobi**

This path of Ogun is a violent warrior who also reacts with destruction. His characteristic is to hide among the brambles to ambush enemies or his prey.

### **Ogún Adeola**

A proud and valiant warrior who became king. His main goal is to preserve and defend his people with wisdom and honor.

### **Ogún Já**

This path is renowned for violence and is a fierce warrior. He eats dogs and is a great provocateur and aggressive. He prefers a bloodbath rather than a bath in water.

### **Ogún Oloka**

This Ogùn path is also known as Olorukó. Owner of the land he works and of all that is cultivated and harvested. He is famous for his good harvests.

### **Ogún Aroyo (toye)**

He is violent and impulsive. He is the best guard in the palace, as he always has quick reflexes and is quick when there is danger. He is irritable and deeply irrational.

### **Ogún Onira**

This name was given to him because, on this path, he was king of the city of Ira. It symbolizes rain, mud, and the muddy waters of the river.

### **Ogún Onire**

This Ogun path is known as an army general and a man of war. It was the king of the city, Ire.

### **Ogún Oké**

This Ogun path is referred to as the protector and owner of the mountains. It is also called Afanamule and Ogún Ogumbí.

### **Ogún Aladú**

This Ogun Path declared war on Yemoja

### **Ogún Valanya or Ogún Valenyé**

This Ogun Path is known as the one that tills the land.

### **Ogún Niko**

This Ogun path exercises the figure of the killer.

### **Ogún Olode**

This Ogun Path is the leader of the hunters.

### **Ogún Soroka**

This path is known as "the highest speaking" path.

### **Oriki Ogun**

*Ogun Lakaaye o!*

*Ogun alara ni n gb'aja*

*Ogun onire a gb'agbo*

*Ogun Ikole a gb'agbin*

*Ogun gbengbena oje igi ni'imu*

*Ogun ila a gb'esun isu*

*Ogun akirin a gb'awo agbo*

*Ogun elemono, eran ahun ni je*

*Ogun o, makinde ti n dogun leyin odi*

*Bi o ba gba Tapa a gb'Aboki*

*A gba Ukuuku a gba Kemberi.*

*This translates to:*

*Ogun Lakaaye o!*

*Ogun manifests in seven paths*

*Ogun of the town of Ilara is the one who accepts a dog for atonement*

*Ogun of the town of Ire will accept a ram for atonement*

*Ogun of the town of Ikole will accept a snail for atonement*

*Ogun of the town of Gbenagena drinks tree sap for atonement*



*Ogun of the town of Ila accepts yam seedlings for atonement*

*Ogun of the town of Akirin accepts the fleece of rams for atonement*

*Ogun of the town of Elemono eats tortoise for atonement*

*Ogun o, the brave that wages war with aliens/foreigners*

*He will destroy either Nupe or Hausa*

*He destroys alien/foreign people and will destroy Kanuri too.*

## **DARK ORISHAS II: SANGO AND OYA**

**D**eath plays a significant role in the tragic love story between Sango, a mighty Alaafin of the Old Oyo Empire, and Oya, his concubine with powers to summon rain and transform into animals.

Their story is comparable to the Shakespearean story of Romeo and Juliet, where two minds in love see beyond the family feud and cling to their love. In the end, only death will seal their infinite love.

Sango is compared to many women in his life, but he is credited with two wives in great competition with each other, Osun, whom historians considered the legitimate wife, and Oba the second.

In Oya, however, Sango found something that both of them lacked, and in fact, it became her favorite. The bond between them is so strong that Oya is definitely more than a wife for Sango.

The bond between them strengthened thanks to the superpowers they possessed, and we can certainly say that together they were a powerful and invincible force. Together they are a devastating force, possessing powers that complement each other.

When it's time to defeat their enemies, Oya, who has the power to summon wind and storms, leads the attack, while Sango, who can give life to the fire of her thunder, can deliver the final blow to enemies and get a victory.

It was said that Oya was the one who advised Sango to get rid of her two prominent war generals, Gbonka and Timi Olofa Ina, as they refused an order from her.

Although Sango has brought great expansion and prosperity to the Yoruba kingdom, thanks to his great manhood and his brutal character, he has become its undoing.

There are various hypotheses about the end of Sango. The first (the most accredited) tells that his reign ended when, by mistake, he destroyed his palace with lightning, and this act was followed by a revolt of the people against him who asked him to resign from Alaafin.

For this reason, Sango fled the city along with its leaders and members of his royal cult called Baba Mogba.

Some say that Sango hanged himself in Koso on an Ayan tree, but this has been disproved and declared false by Sango devotees.

Anyway, Oya, Shango's favorite wife, the only wife who remained faithful to him to the end, took her own life for Sango's disappearance/death, just as Juliet did for Romeo, for the loss of him was powerful, and she had a pure feeling of love.

## **SANGO**



Orisha Sango (pronounced Shango), known in Latin America as Chango (Xango), is the god of fire, the god of lightning, and thunder.

He is the representative of power and justice. For this reason, he is often represented with a double ax called Oxê (Oshe).

Sango was a historical figure, and more precisely, the third ruler of the Oyo Empire, one of the most flourishing in West Africa of the 15th century. Sango was a ruler devoted to war, and it is said that his reign came to an end when, by mistake, he destroyed his own palace with lightning to get the attention of the Orisha, who welcomed him among themselves.

Sango is the most terrible of the Orisha. It is said that thunder and lightning come directly from him, so when lightning strikes the ground or a rock and produces fragments, these are kept as talismans blessed by Sango. Sango is the spirit of war and physical strength. He represents strength, protection, masculinity, violent justice, and healing.

The fierce aspect he takes on when engaged in combat is often invoked by him devoted to him during times of conflict to become strong themselves. He is worshiped by warriors, athletes, hunters, and all who live according to the dominion of physical strength.

Orisha Sango is often invoked to grant virility to men who require "male fertility." Sango is a fiery Orisha of the Yoruba pantheon, so his predominant colors are red and black with blood-colored tricks.

Sango's energy must never be tested or challenged because he becomes extremely aggressive when provoked. He is a very active deity, and the more aggressive his energy becomes, the more powerful he becomes. He can be very violent in times of conflict, but he is always ready to administer pain and punishment to those who deserve it. The work he does when he is invoked can bring a lot of pain and suffering, but once completed, he heals many sick and wounded in him.

Statues representing Shango often show the ax the ox emerging directly from the top of his head, indicating that killing enemies and warfare are essential characteristics of him. Oxe is also used by the Sango priesthood. As they dance, the priests hold a wooden ax close to the chest for protection or swing it in a wide arc towards the chest.

The bata drum is Sango's signature drum, and he is said to have played bata drums to evoke storms and lightning. For this reason, during the evocations and prayers in honor of him, they are played by his devotees.

Sango has often been regarded as the symbol of blacks' struggle against white slavery.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, thousands of Yoruba people were enslaved and transported to the new world, and in many locations in the Caribbean and South America, African slaves and their descendants were

able to restore the Sango cult. At the beginning of the 21st century, Shango was worshiped in the Santería tradition of Cuba, the Vodou religion of Haiti, and also the Candomblé cult in Brazil. Two new religious movements bear his name: the Afro-Brazilian cult Xangô, very present in the city of Recife, and Trinidad Shango (also known as Shango Baptists).

His followers braid their hair adorned with cowries. Sango followers offer cult foods such as gbegiri (bean soup), bitter cola, and amala during ceremonies. They are forbidden to eat cowpea, as this would provoke the wrath of Ogun, the god of iron and the patron saint of Sango Orisha.

Devotees worship Sango on the fifth day of the week, and he is known by the name of Ojo Jakuta.<sup>4</sup> 4 and 6 are the sacred numbers attributed to Sango. When a fixed object is struck by lightning, the devotees transform the area around the object into a sacred place for the Sango worship cult.

## ***Paths of Sango***

### **Sango Obadimeyi**

This path indicates the relationship between Sangó and Aganju, the twin brother. Sangó and Aganju, being twins, must be followed in the same way.

### **Sango Obakoso**

The title Aganju received after ascending the throne of Oyó, signifying the return of Sangó.

### **Sango Bum**

In this path, Sango is represented as the son of Yemoja and Obatala.

### **Sango Dibeyi**

This path represents the connection between Sango' and the children he had with Osún, known as Ibeyi.

### **Sango Alafi**

This path of Sango is united with law, justice, government, and supremacy. Sangó Alafi is revered for his prestige and sense of justice.

### **Sango Arira**

This path represents Sangó as the ruler of the rains. Bringer of peace and the one who ends drought.

### **Sango Olose**

Sango Olose is the possessor of power and the double-edged ax, a solid and great warrior. He must not be contradicted because his words are law.

### **Sango Kamukan**

He is the one who works with Egun and is in control of life and death.

### **Sango Obara**

Sango Obara in this path is poor, and his clothes are of little value, but he never lies. His word is sacred. A house touched by Sangó Obara's ray will be abandoned and cursed.

### **Sango Jakuta**

Sangó Jakuta is a path of Sangó. It means "the one who throws stones."

### **Sango Ko So**

This is a path of Sangó, meaning 'the one who did not hang himself.' This refers to the events that occurred after the death of Sangó, the fourth Alaafín of Oyó.

### **Sango Bara Lube**

This path of Sangó was the master of divination before the advent of Orunmila.

### **Sango Olufina Kake**

This path of Sangó is the owner of the Ceiba tree, the creator who sets fire to the streets.

## **Sango Obalube**

This is a path of Sangó, where he met his wife, Oyá. It means "The king who attacks with a knife."

## **Sango Obaluekun**

Sangó Obaluekun is Sangó's epithet, literally meaning "the king who hunts leopards."

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## ***Oriki Sango***

*Sango Olukoso!*

*Akata yeri*

*Arabambi Oko Oya*

*Alaafin ekun bu, a sa*

*Oloju Orogbo*

*Elereke obi*

*Eleyinju ogun'na*

*Olukoso lala*

*Ina l'oju, ina l'enu*

*E'egun tin yona l'enu*

*Orisa ti n bologbo leri*

*San'giri, la'giri*

*Ola'giri Kankan figba edun bo.*

*A ri igba ota, sete*

*O fi alapa segunota*

*Ajisaye gbege oko Oya*

*Oloju Orogbo, Sango Olukosoooooooo!*

*The translation for this is:*

*Sango the king of Koso,*

*The strong and mighty man.*

*Arabambi, husband of Oya.*

*The great and terrible ruler (of the palace) with a tiger.*



*The one with the eyes of bitter kola,  
Whose cheeks are like kola nut.  
Whose eyeballs are like coals of fire.  
With fire in his eyes, and fire in his mouth.  
The great masquerade that spits fire.  
The god that is feared by all.  
Sango the strong and mighty one.  
With his might he reclaimed Edun.  
He is unmoved by the sight of a thousand enemies.  
He smites his enemies with his double-edged axe.  
The one who awakens to impact the lives of all who call on him, the  
husband of Oya The one whose eyes are like bitter kola,  
Sango - king of Koso.*

**There are various Oriki that speak about Sango in Yoruba folklore. In this, we shall include only a few of the most important ones.**

- *"Sango baye ile saren de dere lotope lajibi, dinu dan. Nii sango dieno doewu loorun, daaduun sango"*

This translation is as follows: "Sango flies on a horse of iron, and he holds a thunderbolt in his hand. This is Sango, creator of human beings with wisdom and fortune."

This oriki expresses the fact that the awesomeness of this Orisha can be compared to that of powerful warriors such as those who fought for their kings in the Middle Ages.

- *"Ba sango bubu fian fujo olorun loloke sango, beni anu are raraa sango"*

This translation is as follows: "Sango's are songs are beautiful, songs heard by all people including the gods." This is speaking of the power of songs to

affect change.

- *"Otu o a afa a Okun lo sango, orokun o Tolusfun o Oloru o Ejio"*

This translation is as follows: "Ogun and Olokun and Olorun and Elegba and Obatala".

This oriki is telling Sango to go and make an offering to Oloko, Osun and Elegba.

- *"Oluwo sango labi oko ni, fenu baa rano ne sango"*

This translation is as follows: "Oluwo Sango excites at the time of the war. He always terrifies. He is the god of war."

It is implied that this oriki was recorded when Oloko, Ogun, and Sango fought in the Middle Ages. It also could be speaking of the wars between these Orishas in modern times. *Sango is also called "divine creator" in this oriki.*

**OYA**



Oya, is a powerful and enigmatic goddess of the Yoruba world, is the Orisha who rules the greatest and most violent natural changes such as tornadoes, earthquakes, floods, cyclones, lightning, and even the wind.

She was Ogun's wife, but she later married Sango, the god of thunder. Oya is also the patroness of the tumultuous Niger River. She had nine children, the nine tributaries of the Niger River. She possesses immense power, and sometimes in the depictions, she dances with weapons in hand, the machete, to chase away ghosts, as she is the only Goddess able to do so.

She can bring unexpected luck and therefore be a light that bursts into life. Her aspects of her are as numerous as her many colors: all of the rainbow, plus black and red. She is also called the lady of fire, a sudden, explosive fire, as she is in her character. For this reason, she is often represented with fire in her hand. Oya helps women overcome a fear of male figures and stand side by side with their husbands with honor and authority.

She is the Orisha bringer of many changes and often devastation; she is a guide for people to consider and rebuild. For these reasons, she is a goddess who cannot stand stagnation. To encourage change, she attracts a lot of attention. If that is not enough, she increases the intensity until she reaches her intent. It is the drive to make you leave the old and direct you to the glorious birth of the new. Oya is the air and the wind, and therefore the breath, in particular, the first and the last, hence her definition of a companion of the dead. This is why cemeteries are also called "Oya Gardens."

She is a warrior goddess. She is the patroness of the female ability to be authoritative and to rule. Oya is unpredictable, sudden as the wind, and she can go from being gentle and calm to angry and furious. If she cries, a pouring rain falls on the ground.

The cult of her, especially in Nigeria, is practiced by setting up an altar in the corner of the house and includes a clay vase covered and surrounded by amulets and various magical and symbolic objects.

The copper crowns, which symbolize the copper palace which she shares with Sango; a sword representing Oya's ability to deliver an effective

speech; layers of red, brown, or orange glass beads, locust scales, and buffalo horns and represent symbols of the goddess. In devotion to the goddess, you can place a red and brown pearl necklace on your temple to sanctify her energy.

To fully please Oya, offer dishes full of foods she loves, such as akara, eggplant, or bean cakes. The invocations of Oya are made during stormy nights, sitting on dry ground, scattering purple and red flower petals, and with a lighted candle.

Reciting her oriki, you write on a piece of paper the changes you want, then ask the goddess to remove all the obstacles that are present in your life in order to arrive at the desire so that the spirits can get away.

Faith in Oya and her personal commitment will lead to the desired results.

Oya is known in Brazil by the name of Yansa, which is the bringer of fire. She is also one of the most important deities of Macumba).

In Cuba, she is called Olla, Aido-Wedo in Haiti, Brigitte in New Orleans.

## ***Paths of Oya***

### **Oya Iyansan**

This path is in reference to Oya, goddess of the storm. Known as the queen and source of the Niger River (in the Yoruba world called Odo-Oya)

### **Oya Bomi**

This path of Oya is known as the one that can cause from modest winds up to tornado and hurricane-level winds.

### **Oya Afefere**

In this path, Oya is known as the Goddess of

Her changes are not gradual but fast, brutal, and often destructive.

### **Oya Igbale**

This path is known for protecting graves marked with crosses and cemetery gates.

### **Oya Ira**

This Oya path is thought to have entered Ira's realm in search of Sango when he was informed of her death.

### **Oya Funke**

This path of Oya takes in custody and protects the spirit of stillborn or unborn children while leading them into the afterlife.

### **Oya Iya Efon**

This Oya path can be prayed when an illness is in its terminal state.

### **Oya Dira**

This path of Oya is skilled with horses and is an experienced businesswoman.

Easy to find her in places where business is transacted.

### **Oya De**

Oya De, after her death, became an Orisha goddess, but in life, she was an invincible warrior, and her skills were unparalleled.

### **Oya Nike**

This path of Oya is known as the representative of women, as she has fought several times in their favor. For this reason, women often require Oya's strength to choose the right words to express themselves convincingly and authoritatively.

### **Oya Obinidodo**

He is represented by a machete, the sword of truth. Oya will cut through all injustice, deception, and dishonesty in his path. He is in charge of guiding

the dead to the cemetery and leaves their souls in the hands of Babalu Aye. He is present inside the cemetery, and the side gate of the cemetery belongs to him. Maintain contact with ancestors.

### **Oya Dumi**

This path of Oya is considered the protector of children and spouses and is a tenacious and proud protector of women.

### **Oriki Oya**

*Oya yeba, Iya mesan, Iya Oyo.*

*Orun afefe iku lele bioke,*

*Ayaba gbogbo le'ya obinrin.*

*Ogo mi ano gbogbo gbun,*

*Orisa mi abaya*

*Oya ewa, Iya mesan.*

*Ase.*

*Translation:*

*Spirit of the wind, Mother of nine, Mother of Oyo,*

*The winds of heaven bring down the ancestors,*

*You're the queen of all women.*

*Always protect me with your strong medicine,*

*My guardian Spirit is the queen.*

*Spirit of the Wind and Mother of Nine.*

*So, let it be.*

## **DARK ORISHAS III: THE HEALERS**

In the previous chapters, we have analyzed the characteristics and virtues of the white Orisha, associated with calm and counsel, and the dark Orisha, known for judgment, often brutal and merciless.

We will now analyze a category of Orisha, which is in the middle of the two groups mentioned above, very important and decisive in the Yoruba world, the healers.

They possess the power to influence many aspects of life, but healers are Orishas who specialize in healing.

Among the main ones, we find Babaluwaye, who is the Orisha who heals all diseases. Osanyin the Orisha, who knows the properties of plants and specializes in herbal medicine, and Nana Buluku, who takes care of women. Babaluwaye is a dark Orisha, while Osanyin and Nana Buluku are white Orishas. Babaluwaye, being the Orisha of all diseases, is certainly the most charismatic and complex figure, which deserves a particular study.

In addition to having the power of healing, it is believed that he can rage on people who make mistakes, or for selfish reasons, even inflicting terrible diseases.

## BABALUWAYE



Babaluwaye is the god of healing and is one of the most important and respected Orishas in Yoruba culture. He has many names, such as Babalú Ayé, Obaluwaiye, Obaluwaye. In the Yoruba world, Babaluwaye is depicted as a muscular man, with several sores covered in raffia curtains and with crutches, representing his control over leprosy, smallpox, and disease in general.

He is accompanied by two dogs, who lick his wounds, relieving the pain of his sores.

His story of him tells that he was initially respected and revered by everyone, but his unruly and stubborn behavior sealed his fate and his body. He was punished with illnesses and injuries, which he had to live with.



This lesson brought Babaluwaye to the right path, and he became the protector and healer of those who seek physical and even mental healing by invoking him. He is worshiped for preventing diseases. He is the healer of infectious diseases and is invoked to cure them. He is the Orisha who helps to preserve the health of all. Babaluwaye is the Orisha of life but also of death and is the patron of diseases. He can act in two ways: he can cure the sick, or he can inflict disease.

Even with modern medicines or medical technologies, if Babaluwaye inflicts a disease on a person, his anger and rage must be appeased in order to seek a speedy recovery. Worshiping Babaluwaye is a good start to achieving physical and mental well-being, but he must be helped, with a healthy lifestyle, perhaps by changing harmful habits and eating healthy foods.

The healer of all ills is the one who heals the body, mind, and spirit, and Babaluwaye has these characteristics. Babaluwaye is the healer par excellence. He is the Orisha to refer to when you need treatment. If you are depressed, he will propitiate your recovery. If you are sick, he will cure you. If your heart has been broken, she can mend it with her advice and her wisdom. If your life dream has gone wrong, Babaluwaye will help you chart a new path to follow.

His energy heals deep pain, soothes overwhelming emotions, and clears destructive thoughts. With him on your side, you can release any pattern that is holding you back from your true potential and achieve the success you seek. His energy also helps you release whatever is holding you back from achieving your goals, often held back by worry or fear. With his strength, it becomes easier to accept reality and at the same time seek what is yet to come.

Babalulwaye teaches that one should celebrate each day as it comes without wishing for any un-lived day. He also teaches us that while change is often scary, it is necessary for your growth as a person. You should never allow yourself to be limited by anything other than yourself. He also teaches us to celebrate the things that make us unique.

Babaluwaye is an Orisha who can bring blessings when you have done good deeds and who can see your divine path in life. He helps you fulfill your destiny through her gentle reminders and pushes when you're off course. Babaluwayé is the healer of all ills, but he is an Orisha who helps stimulate your healing abilities, makes him stronger and more lasting. Humility is a key principle you must adhere to, as Babaluwaye doesn't like arrogance. Therefore, always be open and unafraid to say what you have in your mind and heart.

Babaluwaye is often prayed to in situations where sickness and death are present. He helps the souls of the deceased and brings peace and tranquility to their families. Babaluwaye also brings comfort to those suffering from all forms of pain, including heartbreak, depression, and physical ailments.

His power lies in his ability to heal mind, body, and spirit. He can restore health where he is deficient by making sure the right medicine is taken. His medicine is also good for helping ailments of the mind. When you call upon him, ask him to help you make peace with all things in life.

## ***Invoking Babaluwaye***

Babaluwaye is the orisha of healing and protector of health. He is called every time it is necessary to prevent or cure diseases, especially in the terminal state.

He has the power to heal, that is, to favor a death that can cause the least possible suffering; in fact, he is also invoked to help a sick person, with no more hope, to pass through a peaceful death. A Yoruba legend has it that he managed to heal Sango after no one believed in his healing anymore. This story was a demonstration of his immense and divine healing power. Babaluwaye is a great connoisseur of the healing power of plants, which is why he is associated with the Orisha of herbs, Osain.

Invoking Babaluwaye without being a priest is a serious mistake because you risk terrible diseases that can lead to death, so it is preferable that divination is done using the Diloggun or the Obi system of divination.

Grain, tobacco, and wine are willing offerings, and invocations should be made, especially when the temperature is higher.

The offerings must be placed before the altar erected in his honor, with a statue representing him and decorated with candles and sacred stones for prayer, strictly for mercy.

It is approached Babaluwaye, in Santeria San Lazzaro, a leper of the Catholic tradition who was often represented with two dogs licking the wounds caused by his wounds. He is celebrated on December 17, just like Saint Lazarus. He is associated with the number 17, and his day of worship for him is Thursday. In tradition, he is depicted in bright colors such as red, brown, blue, purple, and black. Babaluwaye resides in an earthenware pot decorated with ciprea shells. Priests can invoke him by using the vase with 18 cypress shells.

All of Babaluwaye's worshippers are known as his children. They often suffered from skin diseases in their younger years. As we have already mentioned, Babaluwaye can be calm and healing, but also furious and nefarious, and this is also reflected in his "children," who can have healing power, both medical and spiritual, but also the power to inflict terrible diseases.

Here are some prayers that are recited in favor of Babaluwaye :

- *Babaluwaye, the god of all sicknesses and those who are sick.*

*I call upon you, have mercy on us.*

*We are your children, have mercy on us,*

*Keep sicknesses far away from our homes, and protect us - your children - from all plague.*

*Thank you, father, for you have answered, and you will heal us.*

- *Ashe Babaluwaye, Orisha of my life, Orisha of my soul.*

*Great Yoruba god and our patron saint, healer of the sick and physical and mental ailments.*

*Asojano Orisha powerful I invoke you to help the orphans,the homeless and other forgotten beings.*

*Ashe' kind Babaluwaye that your attention and mantle are always with me in the bad and good moments.*

*Grant me protection from contagious diseases.*

*Respected Orisha for my fortunes and misadventures.*

*Through this prayer I want to honor you,purple Orisha,my Orisha, everyone's Orisha.*

## ***Paths of Babaluwaye***

Babaluwaye's paths are about 60, and Sopona is one of its most troubling paths because it is the path that names it as the Orisha of smallpox, a disease that in the past was fatal to a large number of people.

Here are the main paths of Babaluwaye:

### **Babaluwaye Asoyin Arara**

It is the path of Babaluwaye, known as the father of rain, and has the power to kill with its particularly hot temperature. It is said to be the path that has killed many with smallpox.

### **Babaluwaye Alua**

It is the path of Babaluwaye characterized by wisdom.

### **Babaluwaye Baba Arugbo**

This is a path known as the ancient father and has the appearance of an old man.

### **Babaluwaye Afimaye**

This path of Babaluwaye walks alongside Orisha Oyaè, who administers the dead. He is known as the mortician.

### **Babaluwaye N'yone Nanu**

This is the female path of Babaluwaye Asojano. She lives in the ceiba trees and always wears a black dress.

### **Babaluwaye Molu**

This is the path of Babaluwaye, representative of hunting. She often uses a bow and arrows covered in leopard skin.

### **Babaluwaye Aberu Shaban**

This is a male path of Babaluwaye, who feeds on the intestines. He brings food to the children of Babaluwaye Asojano.

### **Babaluwaye Abokun**

This is a male path of Babaluwaye and is depicted as a farmer and is always in the company of a lion, a crocodile, and the maja. He is known as the one who fertilizes the land.

### **Babaluwaye Adu Kake**

This is a path of Babaluwaye in Cuba. He is depicted with the body of a man with the head of a dog and lives without clothes in the mountains.

### **Babaluwaye Adan Wan**

He is a male path of Babaluwaye, very touchy and fierce. He kills anyone who offends him.

### **Babaluwaye Af'rosan**

This is a male path of Babaluwaye, who uses the air for his activities.

### **Babaluwaye Afisinu Sanaje**

This is a male path of Babaluwaye and lives in the market. He has the appearance of a mouse and speaks very little.

### **Babaluwaye Ajidenudo**

He is a male path of Babaluwaye, who lives with Osanyin and supports witchcraft. He has the appearance of a dwarf.

### **Babaluwaye Amabo**

This is a male path of Babaluwaye, who punishes sinners with elephantiasis and chickenpox.

### **Babaluwaye Apadado**

This is a warrior path of Babaluwaye and lives in anthills.

### **Babaluwaye Bayanana**

This is a female path of Babaluwaye and is the Orisha patroness of the virgin daughters of Babaluwaye Asojano.

### **Babaluwaye Ason'tuno**

This is a male path of Babaluwaye and is popular for being a traveler despite being afflicted with many diseases.

## **Osanyin and the Differences with Babaluwaye**

For the Yoruba, health is a combination of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being, and to achieve this harmony, they resort to divination to discover the cause and remedy of their disease. There are many healers, but the herbalist is the one who satisfies the needs of anyone who is sick by providing both diagnosis and medication.

Osanyin is a god of herbal medicine and a healing priest. Created by Olodumare to teach humans how to find remedies for their disease problems through the use of plants and herbs. He is a strong orisha and an excellent doctor, to whom plants are offered as a sign of respect and devotion. He knows all plants, their secrets, their use.

Osanyin is the Orisha who can show the way to identify diseases and teach how to cure them.

There are big differences between the Osanyin and the Babaluwaye, although, at first glance, they may have the same characteristics and be confusing. Obaluwaye is considered to be the true god of medicine, while Osanyin specializes in knowledge and care through plants. If you are looking for a path that offers knowledge and use of plants, Osanyin must be followed and adored.

Osanyin heals with indifference; Babaluwaye, on the other hand, often inflicts disease out of pure selfishness. In fact, he doesn't heal everyone, especially those on whom they inflict disease. Babaluwaye works through his raffia curtains which he uses as a broom to eliminate disease, Osanyin works through a power group.

A substantial difference between the two deities is that Osanyin uses plant medicine to relieve pain in the sick, while Babaluwaye helps the terminally ill to have a pain-free transition.

In conclusion, it can be said that these two Orishas are fundamental in medicine and that despite the differences of divine nature and powers, they can be an aid in case of illness or suffering for the world of the Yoruba faithful.

## OTHER IMPORTANT ORISHAS

There are other important Orishas that are helpful to know. With so many Orishas, it can be overwhelming to understand what they all represent and their significance, but learning them gradually and in groups can be beneficial. These Orishas may not be as well-known as the other ones, but they still have fascinating stories and important roles in Yoruba religions.

### OBA

Oba is a goddess whose symbol is water, and being as such, it makes sense that she is the goddess of rivers. Just like water, she is a dynamic and flowing orisha. Oba is a consort of Shango as well as the daughter of Yemaja. She is part of a trinity with Oya and Oshun, who are her sisters, and they all handle water as a source of life.

Some common traits of hers include flexibility, revival, energy, motion, and manifestation. A beautiful and rich goddess, she is prone to jealousy, but she is also hopeful. Her hopefulness can make her naive, and it can result in her falling for tricks when the trickster appeals to what she wants. Yet, she is not weak except to those who know her pressure points.

Her story is a sad one, and one of her greatest adversaries is her own sister, Oshun. While Oshun has a sexual relationship with Shango, as did Oya, Oba wants to be the sole love interest for Shango. However, because of her ability to cook, Shango likes Oshun best of all his women. Oshun, for her part, is resentful because Oba is the first legitimate wife of Shango, which means that Oba's children will inherit Shango's kingdom. That status isn't enough for Oba, though, so she seeks her sister's advice on how to please Shango. Because she is jealous of Oba, Oshun tells a tall tale about cutting off her ear and drying it to be sprinkled on Shango's meals; she promises that the ear will regrow. This story causes Oba to cut off her ear and put it in her husband's food. Shango then sees her ear floating in his meal, and he thinks she's trying to poison him. Filled with anger, Shango sends Oba



away. Distraught over what happened, Oba fell to Earth, becoming the Oba river, which meets the Oshun river at a turbulent juncture.

Her story is often overshadowed by others, and that tendency reflects the tragedy of her story because despite her work to fulfill her passion and desires, she was unable to get what she wanted, and she was never number one in the eyes of the man she loved. Her desperations and gullibility are what get her into the most trouble; yet, she is not a complete fool. She is powerful and often times smart, but it is her yearning and want of love that makes her foolish.

Her exact associations vary across cultures. For example, in some parts of Africa, she protects sex workers, while in other places, like Brazil, she is considered to be a goddess of love. Frequently, she is related to domains like marriage and motherhood. Additionally, she is commonly associated with the colors pink and blue with some accents of red and white, and she is connected to the number eight and the days Friday and Sunday. She has a range of symbols associated with her, including wedding rings, flowers in her colors, headscarves, and double swords.

One holiday related to her is Kuomboka, which relates to the flood cycle that occurs each year in places like Zambia. Accordingly, she represents getting to higher ground and being safer from the potential dangers of water.

## **AJE**

Aje does not have a clear gender, and to some is a god while to others is a goddess. However, for the purposes of this book, she will be referred to as a goddess. For those looking for abundance, Aje is an appealing goddess, and her connection to prosperity makes her one of the most worshipped goddesses of the hundreds of Yoruban gods and goddesses. Aje is the goddess of wealth, so she is worshipped for her bounty and ability to improve economic outcomes. She encourages trade and all types of currencies. She is also often associated with marketplaces. Aje represents much more than just financial wealth, and she's a bold and confident goddess. She rewards those who do good deeds, which shows her

generosity and willingness to give prosperity to others. She especially rewards those who do goods to other people.

She is the daughter of Olokun. Her mother is Yemaya. As Olokun's only daughter, she is loved very deeply by her father, and Olokun appreciates those who will praise his daughter.

Aje is commonly found near water. She's usually found in white clothes, and cowries are part of her accessories, and this represents cowries being used as currency before there were modern currencies.

In one story, Orunmila tries to find Aje, and in his search, his patience prevailed because seeing that he wasn't trying to hurry to see her, she was more welcoming of his presence. When she sees desperation, she hides and does not grant prosperity. Thus, being patient is rewarded. Orunmila also gave Aje offerings such as bananas and other foods that she likes, which results in her rewarding him richly.

The Aje festival takes place on February 24 each year, and it is a special holiday to celebrate Aje. On this day, worshippers often bring white pigeons to celebrate. These pigeons represent purity as well as peace. These pigeons are used for prayer, but they are then released back into nature.

Aje is a powerful goddess who can offer wealth, but she expects those who worship her to act in goodwill and be patient. She shows that generosity and wealth can go hand in hand.

## **NANA BULUKU**

Nana Buluku is the supreme goddess, and she is linked to the start of creation. She first showed up in Fon mythology, but she shows up in a range of religions, including the Yoruba religion. Her domain is primarily in West Africa. She is also known as a manifestation of Yemoja among some religious groups, but others say that Yemoja is a separate deity.

She is known for being courageous. She is also known for being a very rich woman who would help fellow women when they were having trouble with their husbands. This makes men afraid of her because she's willing to go

out of her way to make sure that both women and children are treated appropriately. Her reputation results in her struggling to find male companionships. Men could not keep up with her strong character. She represents the image of a woman who will not be pushed around by a man and who can stand on her own. She resists the expectation that women be submissive to a man.

She is the daughter of Olokun. As Olokun's only daughter, she is loved very deeply by her father, and Olokun appreciates those who will praise his daughter. Another important part of her character is that she is the mother to twins Mawu and Olisa, who are the moon and sun, respectively.

One of her best-known associations is to Ogun, who is the God of Iron, who traumatized her. Ogun raped her, and at that point, she ran away to Dahomey. As a result of her rape, she dislikes iron and all objects made of it. Due to her own rape, groups often relate her to abortions and other issues with pregnancy. Sacrifices to her include drowning sacrificial animals and using bamboo tools to cut those animals.

## **OSHUMARE**

Oshumare is a cosmic goddess related to the origins of the Earth and a supreme being. She is known as the connection between the Earth and the rest of the universe. She is associated with things such as creation, procreation, and rainbows. She's often associated with serpents. One interesting connection she has is to the umbilical cord, which is because it is known to connect things, including energy, nurturing, and the creation of life; furthermore, it relates to her being a protector of children.

She's often portrayed as a naked woman who sits with her legs crossed and wears a mask, which suggests that she is strong and mysterious. She has her arms held out, and a rainbow shines between her arms. She has an Earth in her lap that spins. The mask represents strength, and it shows her high sense of self and self-possession. She knows her own self, and she is willing to stand by what brings her joy and feels true to her nature. She never wavers in that respect.

Oshumare is a tranquil goddess. She is also proud, but not in an excessive way. She's all about balance. Thus, she is commonly associated with things such as Reiki healing, yoga, meditation, and chakras. She finds a deep connection with the universe, and through her connection, she can find internal peace, which she offers to those who worship her.

In some instances, Oshumare is not the usual god or goddess that you would expect, and she is said to spend some time as a male deity, and in various iterations, she is either portrayed as transgender or androgynous.

## **OSHOSI**

Oshosi is also spelled as Oxosi, Ochosi, and Ochossi. His close friends are Ogun and Eleggua, and he usually isn't that far from them. Collectively, they are called "the warriors." As a hunter and a defended, Oshosi is linked to justice and is represented by his arrow and arc. He lives in the forest and is said to have the power to transfer himself to other locations so that he can take what he wants. As a wizard, he is often associated with witchcraft. He's commonly linked to the color blue, which matches the blue coral necklace that he wears that has some blue beads. He's also associated with yellow. Furthermore, he's linked to the number three, including multiples of three as well as the number seven.

He's a cunning adversary and is highly focused, but he also promotes balance between people and nature. He believes that we need to be aware of our surroundings to promote justice and help us grow better and evolve as people. He is highly knowledgeable about all the elements of nature. His skills allow him to not just be a provider for his family but many others as well. He instinctually knows how to hunt. His pet parrot contains his knowledge. This parrot is an important part of his lore.

In one version of one of his popular stories, Oshosi decides to hunt one day, but unfortunately, the animals around him a scare. He doesn't want to overwork his pet parrot, so he leaves the parrot behind with his grandmother. He goes into the forest alone to hunt, using the medicine that he has from his parrot. Eventually, he finds prey to bring back to the people he has to feed. He tries to find his parrot, but there are only parrots. He's

devastated by the loss of his parrot, who he assumes to have been eaten by a hungry person. He sends out his arrow and tells it to hit whoever hurt his parrot. When he goes into his house, he sees that his grandmother has an arrow through her chest.

This story and its variations show his high standard for justice and his passion for making things right. It also shows much more than that, and it shows that in our search for justice, the results may not always be easy or turn out from what we expected. It also warns you to be careful about the people around you who may betray you. Oshosi can help you realize hard truths.

Oshosi shows that people are connected with nature. There are signs when we are in harmony and when we are disconnected from nature. He represents learning to adapt and have continued balance, even in challenging situations. In many ways, he directs people to be their best selves through this balance and wants to promote growth for them through his knowledge and guidance.

## **OKO**

The Orisha Oko is another hunting deity and a protector of the land. He makes sure the land is fertile and is often linked to farmers for this reason. He is also linked to the balance between life and death because he has the power to sustain life, and without his blessings, life cannot be sustained. Oko is also a fair deity. He has a strong moral compass, and that drives him in his pursuits.

Due to his link to farming and all the hard work that goes into it, it is no wonder that Oko is a hardworking Orisha. He was one of the first Orishas to work on the Earth, and when he became exhausted by working the land and trying to tend to the Earth, he complained to Olofi, who promised that in time there would be other Orishas who would help him on Earth. Olofi also compared Oko's children to fingers on a hand because when they worked together, they could get more done. Through the death of humans, as their bodies are given back to the Earth, Oko gets rewarded for his efforts. It is

him who returns people to the Earth when they have died, and in the process of human deaths, Oko is being fed by human bodies in the ground.

Oko and his family are known for their loyalty. His children are loyal to their father, and his relationship with his wife is strong. He is married to Yemaya Agana, and her marriage to her represents the ideal marriage, as it connects both the water and the land.

He is often symbolized by phallic objects in African religions, which symbolizes his association with fertility and sustaining life. He's often associated with the color red. Some of his tools include plows and oxen, who can pull machinery for faster work on farms. He is linked to the number seven. Offerings to him can include root vegetables and smoked fish, and animal sacrifices include sacrifices of guinea hen, pigeons, and roosters.

## **ORI**

Ori is an important Orisha in a range of religions, including Yoruba, Umbanda, Candomble, and Voodoo. What makes him stand out is that he can give people blessings instantaneously. He strongly represents a connection between our heads and the spiritual field. Thus, he has great influence over destiny, making him incredibly powerful. With his help, people can learn to heal themselves physically and spiritually. People tend to consult Ori when things are going wrong, and they want guidance to make things better and to promote a positive future. He helps people find balance in themselves, and he can help people promote prolonged well-being.

## **EGBE**

Technically, an Egbe is not an orisha but is a related spiritual entity. Egbe, also sometimes called Egbe Orun, represents a group of spirits living in the Orun (heaven). To explain this more clearly, Egbe Orun means the spiritual mates of humans. This concept is often hard for people to understand because it is often abstract and mysterious. Each person has an Egbe Orun, no matter who they are or what they believe. Yoruban religions believe that

all humans must have a spiritual force in the Egbe Orun and these spiritual forces are loyal to their human mates. They promote good things, and they help people reach their destinies.

# HOODOO AND VOODOO

**H**oodoo and Voodoo are words that people often use interchangeably, yet they are different practices, and each has unique beliefs despite some overlap. These practices are both popular in the witchcraft, healing, and magic communities, and there are negative and unfair connotations associated with these practices. One of the main differences is that while Hoodoo is a spiritual practice and a set of ancestral beliefs, it is not a religion, but Voodoo is a religion. This chapter will detail what each practice means and how they relate to Yoruban religions. The truth about these spiritual practices may surprise you and give you some insight into not only how they developed but what they mean to those who practice them.

## HOODOO

Hoodoo is a spiritual practice that arose from the transatlantic slave trade, and it is folk magic for African American people, so its origins are in Africa. It is not a religion because it does not have an organizational system. These practices were used for enslaved people to continue their traditions and religious practices in secret, and it was a way to resist their captivity and hold onto their spiritual practices. These people's spirituality was one of the few things that they could keep of their own. These practices are highly related to secrecy, so many of the traditions are done at night and in private conditions. The power in Hoodoo stems from the suffering and perseverance of enslaved people who had to endure so much just to survive and carry on their family lines.

Hoodoo often links to Roman Catholic beliefs and uses the religion's saints, but practitioners will also incorporate the Lwas and Orishas;. However, Lwas and Orishas were not part of the original practices of Hoodoo because Hoodoo has evolved and expanded over time to capture other practices and new practitioners. The main spiritual connection is with ancestors in traditional Hoodoo practices, and it is an ancestral connection that continues to drive Hoodoo practitioners.



You should note that Hoodoo did not originally use Orishas, but it does have a lot of inspiration related to Yoruban culture. Many Yoruban ideas became foundational for Hoodoo practices, such as the deity Eshu-Elegba. During the slave trade, many of the names for deities and the lore related to them was lost; however, in Hoodoo, there is the belief of a spiritual entity at the crossroads, which is inspired by Eshu-Elegba. Another example of Yoruban influence is the use of iron in practices, such as using horseshoes, which relates to Ogun, the Orisha related to iron.

## **VOODOO**

Unfortunately, Voodoo is often associated with evil and other nefarious concepts, but Voodoo is much more than most people realize. It is a religion with long roots, and its portrayal stems from colonial power struggles and fears of western forces. Many practices in the Voodoo religion became demonized by Westerners, who would exaggerate the traditions and make them seem evil, such as furthering rumors that Voodoo included human sacrifice. The media began to spread falsehoods, and as a result, Voodoo started to become something that it wasn't in Western culture.

Whereas Hoodoo arose in Africa, Voodoo was established in Haiti, and many practitioners may use the alternative spelling of "Vodou" to describe Haitian practices, while Voodoo is often related to Vodou practices that arose in New Orleans. As with Hoodoo, this practice was established as a way to promote spiritual freedom under oppression, and it was brought to the United States due to slavery.

Voodoo uses both Catholic practices as well as traditions from West African religions. It was a product of cultural clashes during and after the slave trade. This practice even was a factor in the first Haitian revolution that allowed Haiti to become independent from colonial France. Thus, Voodoo, because of its role in causing a colonial rebellion, those in power in the United States and Europe started to associate Voodoo with negative forces. Thus, colonizers began to create a narrative suggesting that Voodoo was primitive and uncivilized.

In the United States, as black people started to get more power, the erroneous lies about Voodoo were used to further narratives that supported racism and white superiority. The history of Voodoo echoes the struggles that African Americans faced because of colonial forces.

However, Voodoo is an enriching religion for so many people, and the goal is to interact with deities in a way that promotes health and happiness. The Yoruban religion has influenced Voodoo despite the significant divergence and how these religions are practiced. Not all slaves were from areas that practiced Yoruban religions; yet, some of the deities, such as the warrior spirits like Ogun or Eshu, influenced Voodoo, and there's no doubt that the Yoruban people had a role in the formulation of religions like Voodoo.

## CONNECT AND TALK TO THE ORISHAS

**T**he Yoruba people, mainly in western Africa, have a variety of cultural practices that reflect their belief system. One such practice is divination- which refers to the use of magical skills (a combination of mentalism and mediumship) for obtaining or establishing knowledge about something not visible or tangible, relying on chance operations, subjective analysis, or natural phenomena. Divination serves to explain or solve problems or serves as a form of communication between them and the gods.

In Yoruba culture, there exists a body of literature that comprises history, mythology, and folklore. This body of literature is called IFA and comprises 256 chapters as compared to the Bible, which comprises 66 chapters. The IFA has been in existence for several centuries with scribes/priests who are literate transcribing them in hard copy or in soft form (through recitation).

The IFA as a body of literature is a collection of Ifa aphorisms/proverbs, which were derived from the words of Orunmila, the god of divination and wisdom. These proverbs serve as words of advice and admonitions on various subjects ranging from wisdom to child-rearing to moral issues, thereby giving one a clear picture of how they should live their lives and what is expected of them.

It should be noted that divination did not begin with Orunmila but from the creator of all Olodumare. The Yoruba legend tells that Olodumare reunited his children and communicated that it was time to continue the work of creation he had begun.

From that moment, the Orishas would have had a method to communicate first with him, then communicate with each other, and finally with all humanity.

Their primary task will be to teach every living being his will and the means to be able to reach him spiritually. The change was also introduced

by Olodumare to commission the growth of the planet he created and increase the number of devotees of the Yoruba people.

In the modern-day, these scribes are called Babalawo/Babalorisa, who is believed to be chosen by Orunmila himself in their lifetime. The Babalawo/Babalorisa has been described as being literate, open-minded, and of great intelligence.

Another major source of information about how an event or situation will pan out is through dreams. This is due to the fact that dreams are believed to have divine inspiration. There are two types of dreams among the Yoruba people, the first being "Ogbo Oru," otherwise known as "sickness dreams," and the second being "Eburu Oru," otherwise known as "good dream."

The first kind of dream, which is a sick dream, is a type of dream initiated by Orunmila himself through which he presents an opportunity for healing either spiritually or physically. The sick person who experiences these dreams will be offered advice on what he should or shouldn't do in order to be healed. Ifa practitioners among the Yoruba people usually interpret this type of dream for sick people and advise them accordingly.

The second kind of dream, "Eburu Oru," is a type of dream that is initiated by the person himself, which serves to foretell a happy or positive happening in his life. In this instance, it is not Orunmila who presents this opportunity for the person, but it is he who interprets the meaning of the dream. It will be him who advises or guides on what actions should be taken or what should be avoided based on an interpretation of this kind of dream.

The third major source for divination among Yoruba people is through interpreting oracles. The word 'Oracle' comes from the Greek word "Oraculum," which means a dispatch or a message in the form of a question and a prediction. In the Yoruba world, Oracles are generally referred to as Divination-Omisi. An Oracle is, therefore, an object that, when used to ask a question and perform an action, will give the person being consulted a response in the form of an answer.

The word Omisi is used to describe any object (which can be either human or non-human) that serves as an instrument of divination. Omisis include stones, sticks, shells, turtle shells, etc. These objects have been known to have been used by the Yoruba people before Babalawos were created. The Babalawo's role is to interpret the omi's responses and give a report or a prognosis to the person who consulted.

After the death of Babalorisa, his siblings were left to take his place as the keeper of the gods. This is where the Babalawos come in. According to their belief, they are supposed to take on this role once they reach adulthood. If one does not achieve this status before death, there are people who will continue to practice divination for them after their death. As a result, divination continues to be practiced in Yoruba communities even after the creation of the Babalawo order.

Divination amongst the Yoruba people can be traced as far back as their creation. It is said that Orunmila, their creator, was the first diviner who founded the art of IFA (Ifa literature). The practice of divination in Yoruba land also existed before the Babalawo order was created. Divination for this race is believed to have been performed by babalorisa, or Babalawos, who were well versed in Ifa and its related sciences. They were also literate and versed in the arts and sciences of their culture.

Babalorisa was initially an order of priests within the Yoruba society. They performed different roles such as keeping records for the gods, watching over funeral rites, narrating their people's myths and legends, supervising births, marriages, and deaths, among other things. Babalorisa were also known to be well versed in various runes or charms that would be used for divination.

The Yoruba people themselves had their own interpretation of divination and how it was practiced. The diviners among this race would use items such as stones, shells, and sticks to perform divination. Their interpretations and way of doing things differed from those of the Babalawos.

There is an overwhelming belief among the Yoruba people that the power of their gods is so strong that they can be contacted through divination alone.

Divination is a practice of discerning the future or the unknown by divine, intuitive, or prophetic means. Divination can be broken down into systems that use various ways of understanding what a questioner seeks from a diviner.

## **Tools for Divination**

The Diloggun is a cowrie shell divination system, and to get started and get results, you need to follow some precautions. In Santeria, an important figure is the Oba, who represents a divinatory priest who must have a bag of cowrie shells to be used for divination. The number of cowrie shells each Oba possesses depends on which divination is performed. For divination in honor of Eshu, a messenger of the Orisha, 18 are used, for other Orisha 18 or 16 cowrie shells.

### **Divining Bone**

Cowrie shells are used in divination, and each small shell contains a group of indefinite motifs etched on its surface. These signs contain many interpretations, which can be interpreted by a practitioner or by an Ifa priest, thanks to a small bone, a fundamental tool for divination, and which can be considered a watershed between good and evil.

### **Cleaning**

Typically, the tools used for divination come. This ensures that all impurities are washed away from objects, leaving them clean for use by the Orishas to respond to humanity.

Cleansing and purification are very important in divination. Impurities must be washed away from objects, and these precautions allow a greater and pure connection between the Orisha and humans. It is purified and consecrated through blood sacrifices and prayers.

### **The time of divination**

Time is an essential aspect of divination. According to the Yoruba people, Osun, the main Orisha of divination, is present and operates only during the

day and with the heat of the sun. For this reason, divination takes place exclusively from sunrise to sunset, and at other times of the day, it may have no effect.

### **Divination Platform**

Diloggun is defined as the divination system and consists of throwing cowrie shells and subsequently interpreting the signs created by them. The divination platform where cowrie shells or even kola nuts are thrown is usually a table, raffia rug, wooden tray, or cloth, usually white. This tool is used to create a sacred space for divination purposes.

### **Dowsing Cloth**

Whenever any divination is done, different preparations are made, and sacred clothing is used. The diviner cloth used as a platform is essential. It can be red or white in color, depending on the type of divination being performed, and is often decorated with cowrie shells. Fortune tellers must be stripped of any superfluous objects (necklaces, rings) as these could affect and compromise their divination.

### **Efun**

Represents Ire in divination, i.e., a blessing. It is a sphere made up of pulverized eggshells held in the palm of the hand.

### **Ota**

Represents Ofo in divination, that is, misfortune. It is a black-colored rock object held in the palm of the hand.

## DIVINATION SYSTEMS

**D**ivination systems play an important role in all kinds of religions, and that is true of Yoruba religions as well, which have a deep connection to divining practices. These systems help people connect with the deities and answer some of the questions they may have about the universe. They also create organized guidelines for practitioners to follow, and these guidelines are passed through the generations to keep the religions thriving. Divination can come in many forms, and while there are certainly differences across Yoruban religions, Yoruban systems generally share many of the same tendencies and rituals for divination. Yoruban divination systems allow people to talk to Orishas to tap into their power and call to them for help. While some of these terms and techniques have already been discussed, this chapter will give a more in-depth view of divination in Yoruban religions.

Divination is a way to tell the future using methods that follow certain rituals, and these rituals vary by the practice of divination in use. While life may seem random and disjointed, divination shows the way it works more clearly through the integration of the spiritual realm. Many people are skeptical of divination because they believe it contradicts scientific principles; however, that does not have to be the case. Rather than viewing it as superstitious, many people choose to believe that spiritual practices like divination go beyond science to explain something outside of the physical realm, which science cannot do because it relies on our five physical senses, which do not fully perceive the spiritual.

In general, divination refers to the acting of using supernatural methods to find information about life's biggest mysteries, including the future and the spiritual world. When you hear the word supernatural, you may be thinking of things like vampires or werewolves, but the world has much broader applications, and it goes beyond fantastical creatures found in storybooks. It also includes everything that extends beyond the physical world. Thus, divination is often the connection to the spiritual, the parts of the universe that we cannot explain with physical science, and we struggle to perceive



these parts of the universe with our ordinary senses. Divination helps people tap into those spiritual parts of the universe as a way to learn not just more about themselves and their destiny but about the world that surrounds them.

Divination uses signs to give people vital information, and it is a sacred practice that can dictate what happens to a person. In Yoruban religions, it is often seen as a determiner of fate. Not only does it speak to the future, but it can give valuable information in hindsight that people can use to understand their past actions and influence their future actions. Additionally, it connects people to their heritage and creates a spiritual connection to their ancestors and fellow practitioners.

The divination techniques in Yoruba religions are centuries old, and they have long been used in West Africa. Their prominence has spread beyond, and they have become part of the New World through religions such as Santeria. These practices are generally practiced by priests or priestesses (Oba), who will divine on behalf of others in the religion, but independent practitioners do exist, especially for Yoruba practitioners outside of organized groups or who prefer solitary spiritual endeavors. Diviners generally require extensive training to ensure that they know all the stories and signs associated with Yoruban divination practices.

Across Yoruba and Yorba-inspired religions, divination practices are integral in the religions, and few Yoruban religions do not include divination techniques. These religions include divination practices, and what individual religions entail for divination can range greatly based on the techniques employed, the tools used, and the specific practices of the religion. It was Orunmila that showed people how to complete divination using the Ifa system of divination. Other systems of divination include Obi. Meanwhile, Olodumare began divination using the Diloggun, which is associated with the Santerian religion. Thus, there are many types of Yoruban divination, each with its unique properties. Yet, there are also many common threads between the systems. A common tool among the Yoruban divination systems, for example, is the use of cowrie shells, showing how interconnected Yoruban practices are.

There are certain parameters for most types of Yoruban divining. For example, the time of day for divining is important, and it is important to only attempt divination from dawn until dusk. Prayers are also used to cleanse tools used in divination across all practices and ensure a strong practice of divination. Furthermore, whenever a person is divining, they must have a clear intention, or they may have unclear or insincere answers. A diviner should be mentally prepared for the divination, as should the person who is asking for divination. Sincereness is important, and if a person is not sincere in their request, they will not have worthwhile results, and the practice will be a waste of time.

When thinking about divination, it is vital to remember that connecting with the spiritual has many challenges. Divination is never as straightforward as you may wish it was, and that is true with Yoruba divination as well, which means that the communication humans get from the gods and goddesses is often vague or feels a lot like a puzzle. With practice, anyone can improve their divination skills and understand how to interpret the answers given to them. Though, in most Yoruban religions, divination is only carried out by highly trained religious leaders. Nevertheless, you can uncover a deeper spiritual connection when you commit to learning divination.

Despite all the rules, hardships, and complexities of divination, it can be a highly rewarding process when done properly. Divination creates a powerful connection with the Orishas, and it can help people enrich their spiritual experiences. These practices have been completed for hundreds of years, and they continue to provide fulfillment for people, and they continue to provide enriched spiritual lives for those who follow the various divination methods. In Yoruba religions, the Orishas predate time or the world itself, and they will continue long past all of us and Earth is gone. Thus, they have valuable wisdom and guidance to give through divination.

## **Interpreting Shells' Mouths**

One common ritual in divination is the use of cowrie shells, which are typically thrown to give answers from the Orishas. Thus, cowrie shells are a highly important part of divination because they symbolize the Orishas'

mouths, which means that they tell the messages that the Orishas are given. Shells have a serrated side, which looks something like a parted mouth. The serrated side is the “light” part of the mouth, which is the one that speaks, while the other side is the “dark” (sometimes called “silent”) side of the mouth, which is usually shaped so that it is flat on the bottom rather than curved.

A reading starts by finding the primary Odu, or a written work that points to the meaning of the shells. The primary Odu, which is the Odu that gives the most significant messages. This task is done by evaluating the open mouths of the shells. From there, the shells will be cast further to determine other meanings and figure out certain specifics.

Most of the time, the mouths will be open, but in rare instances, all the Orisha mouths may be closed. This occurrence happens when all the serrated sides of the shells are downward. If such a thing happens, it is a terrible sign, and it would result in several cleansing rituals to try to heal the bad omen.

The answers are found based on not only how many mouths are open but also the pattern of how the shells fall. It is up to the diviner to determine the meaning behind the tossed shells. Most forms of divination use collections of works that have been passed down. These works can include poems, stories, and prayers.

## **Obi Divination**

Obi divination is a method of divination that provides yes or no answers. Still, the answers are more complicated than merely yes or no, as this divination gives various levels of yes or no because it uses four pieces to give those answers. For example, Alaafia is the strongest yes, while Ejife is a simpler yes. It uses four (sometimes five!) kola nuts in place of cowrie shells, but in some cases, shells are used. In this process, you must throw five pieces on a divination cloth, and then a priest or priestess determines what signs are being presented to you. Often, practitioners toss the kola nuts twice to confirm responses or get more nuanced answers. This form of divination is fairly simple and easy to complete. Alternate versions of this

system exist. For example, in the Caribbean and Latin America, instead of kola nuts, they usually use four parts of a coconut (which is fitting because Obi means coconut).

It's important to remember that these answers reflect one's current track. Thus, the outcomes can change with effort, but it may require substantial (or sometimes not so substantial) effort to do so. These responses are often used by practitioners to determine how to do better going forward rather than as something they are destined or doomed to experience. Divination is never a sure tell of the future, but it is instructional and highly informative.

### ***Alaafia***

When four mouths face up, the answer is Alaafia, which is a strong yes that means "yes with blessings."

### ***Etawa***

Your answer is Etawa when three mouths are up, and one is down. It means "maybe."

### ***Ejife***

Ejife is another version of yes, but it is less string than Alaafia. You get it when you have two pieces up and two pieces down. It is a more balanced yes, meaning it is a yes without the emphasis. It also represents harmony in the universe. With this answer, you do not need to throw the pieces again to be sure.

### ***Okanran***

Okanaran suggests that a positive outcome is unlikely to be reached or that someone needs to do more spiritual work to change the outcome. It is represented by one mouth up and the rest down. It tells you that you're going to have to put in a lot of effort to make a change.

### ***Oyekun***

Oyekun is the firmest negative response. It happens when four pieces are mouth down. It will usually require a person to find balance through rituals, cleanses, and handling their negative energies.

## **Ifa Divination**

One of the most prominent types of divination is Ifa divination, which you have already been introduced to. Odu Ifu contains stories and prayers that Orunmila gave to priests, who then assured the information would be shared with many generations. It has 16 books that are then divided into 16 smaller books. In total, there are 256 Odu within the system. Listed below are the sixteen major Odu of Ifa divination because it would be too overwhelming to list summaries for all 256 works.

### ***Okanran***

Okanran suggests that someone must be persistent. It may also suggest something to do with tumult or losing someone or something important in one's life.

### ***Eji Oko***

Eji Oko suggests that there is a conflict between two people, or it could relate to one's ancestors.

### ***Ogunda***

Ogunda reflects small fights, but it also represents candor, a strong work ethic, and earnestness.

### ***Irosun***

Irosun is another one that has to do with ancestors, and it focuses on family trees, but it also relates to charitable actions.

### ***Ose***

Ose suggests things such as plenty, goodwill, and sweetness.

### ***Obara***

Obara usually has to do with finances, and it is usually related to financial gain over a financial loss.

### ***Odi***

Odi represents concluding something that one has started or earning the benefits from hard work.

***Eji Ogbe***

Eji Ogbe refers to bodily prosperity and longevity and that one has many blessings.

***Osa***

Osa marks change, and it usually refers to a big change.

***Ofun***

Ofun suggests spiritual enrichment and wealth, but it can also represent that something is going to come to an end.

***Owonrin***

Owonrin usually has to do with one letting go of the past and moving forward.

***Ejila Seborá***

Ejila Seborá can refer to loss, usually of a lesser degree. It can also refer to gossip or fickleness.

***Ika***

Ika is another Odu that suggests change, but it can also mean illness of some sort, whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually.

***Oturupon***

Oturupon is most linked to humbleness and bravery.

***Ofun Kanran***

Ofun Kanran reflects education and the act of seeking more knowledge, but it also represents tranquility.

***Irete***

Irete has bad associations as it is related to feeling held back or confined. It can also suggest high-stress levels or some kind of pressure, whether external or internal.

## **Diloggun Divination and the 16 Basic Patterns**

Diloggun divination is known within Yoruban culture as Odu Orisha Erindilogun because of its use of 16 cowrie shells, which each represent a primary Odu, a work that reflects the message being given, and this is quite similar to other divination systems. A priest or priestess in the Santerian religion has training that helps them figure out what the meaning of the shells is. Due to the secondary Odus, there are 256 signs that can result in this practice, meaning that it takes significant study to understand the potential outcomes. All the signs are linked to stories that can help guide practitioners. During Diloggun readings, people can learn about the past, present, and future through the signs.

The tools of divination are important. While sixteen shells are used in divination, the Oba may have up to twenty-one shells if divining for Eshu, while other Orishas may require 18 cowrie shells in the Oba's possession. A practitioner will also need to have a diving bone, which represents the division between good and evil, which makes it an important tool in divination. An Efun represents blessings (Ire), and it is a ball of eggshells that practitioners hold in their hands. Another item held in a practitioner's hand is an Ota, which stands for misfortune (Ofo), and it is black and rocky.

Additionally, a divining platform is used in these practices to help read the signs by the shells that the Oba throws. This platform can be a white cloth, a table, a tray, or other similar surfaces. Practitioners also wear a diving cloth, which is often white but can be read in certain instances. This cloth will be adorned with cowrie shells. Furthermore, jewelry is removed before divination.

As with Ifa divination, this type of divination uses sixteen primary Odu, and the way the shells' mouths land influences the meaning of each throw. Below are the various outcomes that may occur.

### ***Okanran***

Okanran tells one not to hurt other people, and it happens with one mouth of the shell being up.

### ***Eji Oko***

In cases where there are two mouths up, you have Eji Oko, which tells you to not be hurtful or hateful towards others.

### ***Eta Ogunda***

Eta Ogunda warns against revenge and bitterness, and it is three shells with their mouths up.

### ***Irosun***

When there are four shells with their mouths open, you have Irosun. Irosun tells you not to unfairly speak badly of someone or run their information. It also tells you not to confine them.

### ***Ose***

Ose happens with five upward mouths, and it tells people not to be jealous.

### ***Obara***

Six mouths being faced upward reads as Obara, which promotes honesty.

### ***Odi***

For seven upward mouths, Odi tells you to be virtuous and to not corrupt other people.

### ***Eji Onile***

Eji Onile means you have eight shell mouths facing up, and it tells you to keep a level head and to not carelessly share the secrets of other people.

### ***Osa***

Osa occurs with nine shell mouths being upward, and it tells you to be genuine in your interactions.

### ***Ofun***

When you have ten shell mouths facing you, it indicates that you must avoid things such as cursing too much, stealing, and other similar vices.

### ***Owanrin***

Eleven mouths indicate Owanrin, which means that you should not destroy the lives of others in any way. It also suggests that you should be thankful for the good in your life.

### ***Ejila Seborá***

When twelve shells have open mouths, you have Ejila Seborá, which warns against indiscretions or tragedies.



### ***Eji Ologbon***

Eji Ologbon occurs when thirteen of the shells face up, and it tells one that they should honor those who have come before. It is sometimes known as metala.

### ***Ika***

Ika is the merinla, and it happens when fourteen shells face up. It is a warning not to spread disease, but it can also be a reminder against wrongdoing and evil.

### ***Osebegunda***

Osebegunda occurs when fifteen of the shells have open mouths. This is called the marunla, and it is linked with respecting people, such as parents, children, and elders.

### ***Alaafia***

When sixteen shells have their mouths up, your response is Alaafia, which is considered a merindilogun. What that means is that listening to the advice given by the reading will lead to tranquility and courage when standing in front of Olodumare.

### ***Opira***

While there are only sixteen shells, Opira represents when none of the shells are faced mouth up, and it can be a bad omen or a sign the reading is not accurate.

## **Tips for Divination**

Divination can be a challenging and intimidating process, but if you keep certain tips in mind, you can get a better sense of what divination is, how to use it, and what it means in the grand scheme of things. The more you deal with divination, the more natural it will become, and you won't feel as overwhelmed as you might feel right now.

Find someone who is knowledgeable in Yoruban divination. The best way to understand divination is to see it in action from someone who has practiced it. No book can rival experiential knowledge, especially for spiritual development. This book can give you the facts you need to know

to take steps towards spirituality, but you must take action to reap the benefits. Learning from wiser individuals is always a fantastic option, and it's also a great idea to find a community that appeals to you.

Remember to keep an open mind. If you don't keep an open mind, you won't get good results from divination. Part of divination is belief. If you don't think it's going to work, there's no way that you will have a meaningful connection with the Orishas. It's as simple as that. It's normal to have some doubts, and many people starting spiritual journies are skeptical, but you need to let go of the skepticism and give divination a chance. It doesn't hurt to try, so you have very little to lose and a lot to gain.

Practice focusing on your intentions. This book has already mentioned the importance of your intentions in divination, and that point cannot be understated. Just as your belief shapes your outcomes, you have to be clear about what you want and why you are seeking wisdom. Spiritual leaders can often help you with this and show you what to do to stay on track, but it's also something you can learn through techniques such as journaling, which help you process your thoughts and desires. You can work hard to do better. Just as if you slack, you can fall behind!

You always have some degree of autonomy over your fate. Remember that no matter what your reading says, there's still a chance to change the direction of your life. Use divination as constructive feedback and not a reason to give in to bad things that could happen or stop working towards positive things.

You're not going to fully understand divination ever, so don't try to. The bottom line is that divination is full of mystery that no human could understand, no matter how spiritual they are or how long they have been practicing divination. There are some things that you will never be meant to know, and don't take that as a failure or let it discourage you. Take a deep breath and see what happens. Don't try to control your experience; instead, learn to appreciate the process for what it is. When you can do this, you can channel the Orishas and gain valuable insight.



# ORISHAS FESTIVAL AFRICA

Orisha festivals are an important aspect of the religious life of the Yoruba and are celebrated in honor of the deities who come down to Earth to interact with mortals. There are many important Orisha festivals in Africa, and during these celebrations, various rituals are performed, which include the burning of sacrifices, singing, and dancing.



## Olokun Festival

Olokun festivals are the set of annual celebrations that are celebrated throughout Yorubaland in honor of Olokun, lord of deep waters, protector, and guardian of African souls. They are organized to venerate and thank Olokun for all the benefits received over the past year. Olokun Festivals is a community-wide event that involves many people from the state and features different types of traditional arts. Some include music, mask making, dance, and arts and crafts. The colors used for traditional clothing are blues and immaculate white. Devotees sprinkle their faces with white chalk.

The main sanctuary of Olokun is located in Nigeria in the state of Osun, and more precisely, in the Ilode district of Ile Ife. An important festival for the Edos, it takes place at the end of February, in Usonigbe, in the state of Edo

in Nigeria.<sup>b</sup>The most recent festival is held in Lagos (Nigeria), in the month of November, and attracts many people from all over Africa and also from the rest of the world.

## **Osun Festival**

Osun Festival is a festival of the most revered, and Osun is prayed by the faithful who ask him for protection and resolution to the various problems of life. It is held every year in the sacred forest of Osun, a city in the state of Osun in Nigeria, between the month of July and August. Originally born as a religious event to venerate the goddess of the Osun River, the festival has evolved into an important cultural celebration of the Yoruba people.

It is an event deeply felt by the locals because Osogbo is celebrated as the place of the Osun settlement. During the festival, there is no shortage of typical party activities such as drinking, eating, dancing, and playing.

In addition, acrobatic performances and other traditional events are held, which also involve neighboring countries, which come to honor Osun. The most important and sacred aspect of the event is when the priests and the faithful go to the temple to pray and pay homage to Osun and to ask, also through sacrifices, for spiritual and physical renewal. Then a procession is made to the river bank where people are prayed, and food is thrown as an offering.

## **Sango Festival**

This festival is named after the Yoruba Orisha Sango, a deity of thunder and fire.

Its main purpose is to promote the cult of Sango through arts, crafts, cultural performances, and temporary shrines erected in Sango in each of the communities founded by Ekekwe.

The festival features the commemoration of the ancestors and giving thanks for their blessings. Begun in the community alone in Ijaiye, it soon became a national celebration, held in over 50 cities in Nigeria alone. The Sango

Festival is an annual festival and usually takes place in August at the Alaafin palace in Oyo. in Nigeria.

A festival is an event featuring an opening ceremony, keynote address, performances, and worship. Various groups parade through communities where temporary shrines have been built in Sango, worship it, and receive blessings and luck for their lives.

Featuring various events, including traditional crafts, music, dance, and performing arts. It also features several traditional dances such as "Ajebutter," "Agbesan," "Akutan," among others. The festival attracts many people from all over Nigeria and is considered to be one of the most popular festivals in Oyo state.

## **Obatala Festival**

The Obatala Festival is an annual festival, and it is a cultural gathering celebrated in Nigeria and many other African countries. The festival honors Obatala, the god of life and death and the supreme creator, and begins with women in prayer, calling out to heaven, until Obatala's powers descend. It involves traditional crafts, music, dance, and the performing arts.

The festival features different types of traditional art such as mask making, dance, and performing arts. It includes a procession of worshipers dressed in white and silver jewels and of priests around the cities, where they sing and dance to the accompaniment of drums and chants in praise of Obatala.

Igbin bells are also rung, a musical instrument invented centuries ago to celebrate Obatala, and food offerings made, always in honor of him. This festival is very important to the people of Yoruba, as it is one of the main festivals that exist in their culture. The celebrations involve artisans who make traditional artifacts to use during the celebrations.

## **Olojo Festival**

The Olojo Festival is an ancient festival celebrated annually in October in Ife, in the state of Osun, Nigeria. There are no precise dates for the first

event, but it seems that the Festival was held for the first time between the 11th and 15th centuries.

It is a very important festival for the Yoruba people because it is also known as the celebration of the black race in the world. Olojo has as its meaning "the day of the first sunrise," so this festival has as its main purpose the celebration of creation, both divine and man.

It is celebrated in honor of Ogun, the god of iron and fire, to ask for luck for the year to come and for wealth and abundance in crops. Tradition has it that before the festivities begin, the reigning king will invoke prayers and perform rituals together with seven high priests. He will have to isolate himself for five days to speak with the deities who resided in the ancient city of Ile-Ife.

Throughout the period, the Ooni could only eat spiritual foods, alligator pepper, and kola nuts. Also, during this time, the high priest will go to the Oonis to perform some rituals for five consecutive days

## **Ogun Festival**

This Festival, like that of Olojo, is celebrated in honor of Ogun, god of iron, but celebrated in the state of Ondo and also of Ekiti, in the month of August.

Ogun is the patron saint of those who use metals in their daily work, such as surgeons, blacksmiths, and mechanics, who must be revered by these categories of workers to receive favor and protection from him. The celebrations begin with the priest, who, playing the Upe for seven days, announces the advent of the new moon.

A representative of the priest acts as a messenger announcing the beginning of the ceremonies to all the faithful, and the sanctuaries are embellished for the occasion. The festival includes traditional crafts, music, and dances. During the festival, ancestors are also worshiped, thinking that the ancestors are with them again to greet them and bless their brothers. To worship

Ogun, the elements used are palm oil, dogs, roasted yam, palm wine, cold water, and kola nuts.

Ogun festival has become one of the most popular festivals in Nigeria. It has become a popular annual event, and in addition to attracting local visitors from all over Yorubaland, visitors also come from other parts of Africa and different parts of Europe to visit this festival.

## **Yemoja Festival**

Yemoja is considered the Mother of all, the source of all waters, including the rivers of West Africa, especially the Ogun River. The Yemoja festival is a celebration that takes place annually for 17 days in October, commemorating the Yoruba religion and spirituality through a full program of dance, song, and ritual festivals. The festival begins by cutting the newest yams, called Ila'su. Subsequently, sacrifices and gifts are also made to other Orisha of water, such as Oya and Osun.

During the grand finale of the Yemoja Festival in Ibadan, several groups of Orisa devotees dance to the rhythm of the drums in front of the Yemoja Temple. Inside the temple is Ogunleki, an old statue of Yemoja about 1 meter tall and over 400 years old, depicting a woman nursing a baby. The faithful sing Yoruba songs, thanking the Orishas for having given them health in the previous year and for having been able to participate in another party.

Next to the Ogunleki statue, there is a series of hollowed-out pumpkins into which sacred items are dropped as offerings to the goddess, such as dried kola nuts where people have spoken prayer words to Yemoja.

Outside the temple, accompanied by the music, women dressed in white carry pumpkins on their heads. In each pumpkin, there are different things, cooked beans, corn, fruit, polenta, prepared for the Orisha. Participants follow the procession of the arugba, the pumpkin bearers. Their destination: the nearby river. Their purpose: propitiation and prayers to Yemoja.



A procession of Arugba and devotees begins, which will take them along the river to make offerings and other prayers to Yemaja, to thank the fortunes of the past year, and to propitiate what is to come.

# SANTERIA

Santeria is a blend of Catholic practices and African traditional beliefs, which rose to prominence in the 17th century and has been a part of Cuban society ever since. Nowadays, it is a lot more popular than Catholicism on the island—Santeros transcends Catholics by eight to one. Cuba remains the religious hub of Santería, but the faith now spans several other countries, including the U.S.

Santeria is actually not a set of beliefs. It is a “syncretic” religion, meaning it blends aspects of a variety of diverse cultures and faiths, although some of these beliefs might contradict one another. Santeria blends influences of Caribbean tradition, elements of Catholicism, and West Africa’s Yoruba spirituality. It evolved when African slaves were taken from their homelands during the Colonial era and subjected to forced labor in Caribbean sugar plantations.



Santeria is a passably intricate system. This is due to blending the Yoruba Orishas, or divine beings, along with the Catholic saints. In some parts, African slaves learned that worshiping their ancestral Orishas was a lot safer if their Catholic owners were convinced that they were worshiping the saints instead – this led to the tradition of overlap between the beliefs.

The Orishas were regarded as messengers between the humans and the divine. Priests summon them through a variety of methods, such as possession and trances, divination, ritual, and as well as sacrifice. To an extent, Santeria involves magical practice, even though this magical system is founded on interaction with and the understanding of the Orishas.

## **Key Points of the Santeria Belief System**

Santeria survived for centuries despite various efforts to eliminate it. It even became popularly known as Santeria as Africans initially recognized the likeliness between their Orishas and some Catholic Saints.

Many of today's adherents that had the branches of the religion's foundation in Cuba prefer to call themselves Lucumi adherents, and Santeria is also referred to as La Regla De Ocha. This roughly translates to 'the rule of the Orisha.'

All over the US, Latin America, and Europe, Santeria is widely practiced today. Despite its wide practice, religion still faces immense fear, misunderstanding, and mystery. To clear the air on many of these beliefs and lay the fears that wrap themselves up with this religion, we'll be examining the main elements of the Santeria religion.

## **Followers of Santeria Believe in Just One God**

Just as many of the modern belief systems, the practitioners of Santeria believe that there is only one God, Olodumare, the creator of all. Santeria is not a pagan religion; neither is it polytheistic. It isn't an animistic religion either. Many people believe Orishas are God, which is the main reason for the widespread confusion. The truth is that the Orishas are not God. They are parts of God that manifest around us and our natural world.

Every person is regarded as the offspring of a particular Orisha. Hundreds of Orishas exist, and some are more revered than others. Some most revered Orishas include Esu, widely known as the trickster deity, Sango-the king of

drums whose strengths are thunder and lightning. He was once the King of Oyo.

Other revered Orishas include the god of all blacksmiths and iron, Ogun. He is widely known as a warrior. Yemoja is the deity who governs the oceans and is a mother to everyone. Obatala owns all uninitiated heads, and he stands for patience, justice, and wisdom. He is widely regarded as a peaceful King. Osun, the deity of calm waters, guards all things that make life beautiful. Oya is the queen of the market who guards the entrance of the cemetery.

There are many more Orishas, and each of them has its own unique character and importance.

## **Santeria Followers Worship Their Ancestors**

A big emphasis is placed on ancestral worship in the Santeria Belief System, just as in most other African religions. Worshiping the ancestors is an integral part of Santeria, and before any ceremony is held, libations and prayers are raised to the ancestors. While this is going on, the names of deceased family members and religious stewards who are now regarded as ancestors are mentioned.

In addition to these practices rooted in African beliefs, the practice of Misa Blanca and Espiritismo in Europe has been integrated into Santeria's practices. There is no ranking in this context because everyone is believed to have the capacity to improve his or her personal know-how as an individual. Songs are sung, and prayers are offered to call the spirits to communicate with those at the ceremony.

A French educator named Allen Kardec, who was born in 1804, founded this practice. He held the opinion that humans were spirits that lived in a physical body and that we were indeed spiritual and not physical. He was of the belief that each person has his or her own guardian angel specifically assigned to them and charged with caring for them. In return, they must be accepted before they can look after us.

## Divination

At one point or another in their lives, Santeria followers would find themselves at the house of Dilogun-the Divination having sixteen cowrie shells, or Ifa. These two are the primary and most rated types of Divination within the Santeria belief system.

There is a probability of two hundred and fifty-six different signs popping up in just one reading. There are many stories and parables connected to each of these signs, and reading informs the worshipper of the place they find themselves in life. It entails the past, present, and future. The worshipper whose reading was being done would be offered advice on how to achieve a balance in their personal lives, the path they should tread regarding their personal relationships, social, work, family, and spiritual matters, and practical recommendations on ways to achieve their dreams. These devices are not final as the onus rests on the worshippers to take them or not. It is a matter of free will, and the worshipper is entitled to free will.

Another Divination system is Obi. In this system, five kola nut pieces are thrown, and it is an easy form of Divination used by worshipers whenever they want to talk to their Orisha.

### **Initiation Is One Year and Seven Days**

During Initiation, various ceremonies are held for a preliminary period of seven days. This is then succeeded by a year of stringent code of conduct, including wearing white apparel, beads, and sacred bangles. During the one-year period, the members undergoing initiation must stay away from members who aren't being initiated. They are not allowed to shave, wear makeup, drink alcohol, or eat with others at the table. That's not all. They are also not permitted to visit crowded places, shake hands or hug anyone, go out at night, collect things directly from people, walk barefooted, take pictures, or attend parties.

They are only permitted to eat and drink from a special personal bowl, spoon, and cup, which they are required to carry around at all times. Keeping pure is also expected of them, while they must take their time to study and understand the Orishas and their advice. Their heads must be covered every time, as the year signals the kick-start of a new life in which they have been reborn. At the end of the year, the newly initiated members will continually follow certain restrictions and taboos for the rest of their lives. Every member has different taboos applicable to them, and a newly initiated Santero is given the title Iyawo.

## **Two Concepts Are Vital to the Fundamental Beliefs of Santeria**

The first among these theories or concepts is Ase, which has Brazilian and Cuban variants spelled as Axe or Ache. All variants are pronounced as A-she. Ase is the force of life in all humans; it is the productive energy bestowed on everyone by Olodumare. This energy is the breath of the powers or force of life within us, and we cannot live without it. It empowers us to create and grants us the wisdom to discern tough things. In simple terms, Ase is life, and there is no life without it.

The other concept or theory is Iwa Pele. This translates to a compassionate and good character. Both initiated and non-initiated Santeria practitioners need to understand the concept of Iwa Pele. One must live with good character to have a purpose in this life as we are spiritual beings that oversee living the best lives that we have been given. Our works should revolve around scrutinizing our flaws and ironing them out. It is of utmost importance to be conscious of being a person who has a compassionate character and working toward being a better person. When this is done, the flow of energy changes around us.

Having titles such as Santero or Babalawo amounts to little or nothing if such a person doesn't measure up to the standards of Iwa Pele.

## **Santeria Isn't Witchcraft**

Many people are scared or skeptical about Santeria because of their association of Witchcraft practices with Santeria. Santeria is not witchcraft, neither is it in any way related to witchcraft. Santeria does not study spells or teach how to use spells to harm anyone or otherwise. Only misguided people who are void of adequate knowledge believe that Santeria can be used for sinister purposes such as winning the lottery, harming an enemy, or making someone love them.

Everything about Santeria entails living the best of your life that Olodumare gave you. Admittedly, worshippers do several things, such as wearing sacred necklaces, having a spiritual bath to protect themselves, giving offerings or sacrifices to Orishas or their ancestors, or using herbs to protect or cleanse themselves. None of these practices is related to witchcraft.

## **Animal Offerings**

Animal sacrifice in Santeria has always been a subject of debate. Offerings or sacrifices to Orishas or ancestors usually include things such as candles, fruit, flowers, water, or edible food items. When a reading is done, the advice that would follow may be to improve or change one's behavior, and only in rare cases would an animal be requested as an offering. Regardless of this, the animal offering makes up part of the practices in Santeria.

Contrary to common belief, animal sacrifices aren't as harsh as these animals are eaten and not wasted. The animal for sacrifice is slaughtered and prepared in the same manner as Jewish and Moslem practices for slaughtering Kosher or Halal meat. Usually, prayers follow the sacrifice, and the people in attendance eat the animal.

## **Their Temple - The House of a Santeros**

Generally, there is no church or a specific place where Santeros gather for worship. As a result, their houses serve as temples. There is no Bible or law guiding the Santeros, but each person is given personal advice by the Orisha they adhere to. They use Divination systems as a guide and rely on their ancestors for further help and counsel. The Divination system gave out

moral tales and stories that were orally passed from one generation to another. In modern times, books containing these stories have been published.

### **Different Songs Accompany Different Ceremonies**

Every Santeros must know the songs that apply to different ceremonies as a matter of importance. This will enable them to join in the songs and create a viable Ase. Ceremonies are public, and anyone can attend, but non-initiated members cannot go close to the drums as they have to be at the back. Everyone can sing as it plays a major role in improving the energy in the atmosphere. An Orisha known as Ana lives in the sacred drums, and this Orisha is responsible for the speaking of the drums.

The Orishas descend in a ceremony known as Tambor. In this ceremony, initiated priests are turned to vessels, which are then inhabited by the Orishas for a short period. This happens so that the Orishas can bestow knowledge and good counsel on everyone who is present at the ceremony.

In modern times, many cultural projects have refurbished the Orishas song tradition. Despite this, the rhythms and cultural meanings remain unchanged, but the drums are no longer sacred. These songs are nice songs, and their renderings are deep. Their cultural meanings arose basically from an existing spiritual tradition.



## ORISHAS IN OUR DAY

**Y**ou may be wondering why all this information about Orishas really matters when Yoruba religions began so long ago. You may think, “Okay, all that is interesting, but what does that have to do with my present life?” Many people have similar reactions, but there’s so much enrichment that you can have by having a continued appreciation for the Orishas and Yoruban religious rituals.

Orishas often seem like outdated deities to many modern people, but that is not at all the case. These spirits, in a wide range of capacities, can still be relevant to people of today. While many people may have misperceptions about Yoruba religions and not understand Orishas, that does not invalidate the power of these deities. Modern-day people around the world find connections through the stories and rituals of Orishas. Some people have a more serious connection than others, but in all cases, a deep connection can be found in Orishas. Even if you aren’t sure whether you believe in them or not. Give Orishas a chance, and as you experiment with them, you will start to find the path that is right for your needs as an individual. Don’t close your mind to this idea until you have time to process the information in this book and attempt to build a personal connection.

The first thing to mention is that belief in the Orishas are not dead. Across the world, Yoruba and Yoruba-inspired religions remain present. These types of religions are the seventh most common type of religion in the world, and millions of people still practice what has been detailed in this book. Thus, no matter what your intentions are reading this book, hopefully, you can take some time and contemplate how Orishas can be present in your daily life.

Again, you don’t have to rush into anything, and you’re welcome to process this information at a pace that works for you, but remember that Orisha worship is a highly viable spiritual choice for lots of people. You may think that you need to be initiated into the religion to engage with Orishas; however, that is not always the case, and there are people who deal with Orishas without all the strict practices and more organized groups.

Spirituality exists on a spectrum, and how you want to celebrate that part of you depends on what gives you joy and balance. History shows how this works. For example, as you know, Santeria combines many traditional Yoruban practices with Catholicism. Thus, the evolution of Orisha worship and spirituality is acceptable and welcome.

One of the best parts of Orishas is that they can connect you to your ancestors. The rituals and stories of the Orishas have been passed through the generations, and they continue to connect the past with the present and the future. There's no denying the power of so many years of history and connection. Orisha worship was an original religion of Africa before colonizers came in, which shows how rich the Orisha culture is. Think of how nice it would be to carry on the information and spiritual beliefs that have existed for so long. Orishas have been passed through the generations and can continue to be passed on, which is an amazing thing.

Yoruba religions have a great power to create community. Communities that celebrate and worship Orishas are some of the most vibrant and helpful communities that you can engage with. You can find people who have similar troubles and concerns as you do and learn how to mitigate those concerns through religion.

Orishas can help you find focus in your life. One of the most amazing things about discovering Orishas is that they can give your life a direction when previously you weren't quite sure what you were doing. If you feel lost, finding a spiritual practice that appeals to you can be one of the greatest discoveries.

By understanding Orishas, people can be more in harmony with themselves and their world. A big emphasis of Orishas is balance and harmony in the universe, and this is something that we could all use in our lives.

Orishas create a deeper understanding of the universe. When you only understand the world based on its physical elements, you're missing out on many of the deeper connections. When you find a spiritual connection, you find greater meaning in your life. That meaning can help you discover not only what you want from your life but what gives you the most meaning as a human being. It's natural to feel lost sometimes, but when you have a guide through the Orishas, it's easier to be found.

Yoruba religion can bring spiritual peace. If you feel like your world is too full of chaos, the Orishas can give you guidance. They are filled with the answers of the universe, and they serve as resources for people who most need their guidance. They speak to people, and all you have to do is listen to what they are saying. When you learn to listen to the messages of the Orishas, you uncover truths that help you defy the chaos that likely drives you crazy. No one likes chaos, and while it is somewhat unavoidable, you can find order within that chaos.

There is so much of yourself that you have yet to understand. No matter who you are, there are elements of yourself and your world that are still such a mystery. Getting to know the Orishas can demystify some of that and help you be more at peace. Life is scary, but with Orishas, it makes more sense, and you can get a better sense of your role in the world rather than feeling like a tiny, meaningless part of it.

One amazing thing about Orishas is that they are not perfect beings. Yes, they are higher powers, and they have many strengths that humans don't have, but they also have flaws and egos that can get in their way. Thus, people can relate to them, and by relating to those who rule over us, we can start to understand why we are the way we are and realize that we too are part of the universe and are influenced by the Orishas whether we want to admit that we are or not.

Orishas dictate how the world exists and operates. They teach people how to be more in tune with the universe and all the parts that are within the universe. Take some time to imagine how the Orishas can be part of your world. It may be hard to imagine at first, especially if you are super new to the idea of the Orishas, but with some contemplation, you might discover that the divine can take your life to new heights and help you find parts of yourself you didn't know exists. The Orishas are still perfectly alive and relevant to today's world, and people all around the world will continue to celebrate them for years to come.

## CONCLUSION

The Yoruba religion is the main religion in West Africa. It is also present in parts of Brazil, Cuba, and other Caribbean countries. The faith has many different aspects to it, which are all part of developing a deeper understanding of Yoruba culture. The Orishas are fundamental figures because they are the deities who interact with humans in order to ensure their well-being.

The Yoruba religion believes that spirits move amongst the living, so they pray to these deities at times. They believe that natural forces are their enemies, so it is important to be on their good side. They also worship the deceased, who are the ancestors of the living. They have a system of sacred animals, which are very important to this religion; they believe that all these deities can be seen as manifestations of one Supreme God.

There are several types of Orishas, each with its own function, but all of them represent chieftains, which is the highest level in the Yoruba society. They also created personages, which are believed to be deities in human form.

The Yoruba religion means "the way of the ancestors" or "the way of the Yoruba people." In Nigeria, we have the largest group professing this religion, over 19 million people, out of about 25 million individuals. The other part of the population follows other religions such as Christianity or Islam. However, the Yoruba use different forms of Christianity and Islam because they are mixed with their traditional religion.

This religion considers rituals and venerations important for an intense and complete connection with the spiritual world and, in particular, with the Orisha. It is a religion that considers its ancient traditions fundamental and essential. Many people will follow the Yoruba religion for personal reasons and for social acceptance and will also try to convert new members to this faith, illustrating the many virtues and positive sides of this religious belief.

Over the centuries, the Yoruba people have emigrated with their culture and traditions to different parts of the world, influencing the countries of emigration in many ways. In South America, between about 1500 and 1600, a group of people, originally from the territories of present-day Nigeria and Togo, migrated from West Africa, bringing with them the traditions of the Yoruba religion. Around 1520 AD, they moved to the Bahamas and to Cuba in 1695 AD. The Yoruba people developed their businesses to support themselves, mainly in the fishing and agriculture sectors.

Thousands of Yoruba emigrated to the United States, and today they are the third-largest African ethnic group in the country. According to recent estimates, around six million people of African descent in the United States are returning to Africa due to education and job opportunities outside the continent. However, according to some recent studies, around sixty-two percent of Americans of Nigerian descent are believed to be born in America.

A new generation of Yoruba-Americans is forming, and the children have come under intense pressure from parents, relatives, and other members of the community to conform to traditional customs. The number of women practicing religion is on the rise, but divorces are also on the rise. Yoruba living in New York mostly follow traditional customs than those living outside the city limits. It has been observed that Yoruba females are more conservative in their lifestyle, while Yoruba males have great freedom. The Yoruba are known for their great hospitality, are very kind to strangers, and are generous even without necessarily getting something in return.

They believe in spirits and believe that if a person does not have a spirit to guide them through life, they will be troubled by many problems. There are several Orishas who protect the faithful of the Yoruba religion and represent a beacon, a light in their daily life.

In order to have serenity and peace, the Orisha must be prayed to and given sacrifices to them. They can represent salvation on many occasions, and their divine help will often become precious.

Many Yoruba believe in the afterlife and think that when people die, they will exist in another world. Their religion tells them that if a dead person

does not make his way in this life or if he does not make peace with other living beings, then they will go to hell. We can say that the Yoruba are unique and have kept many of their traditions and beliefs, keeping their culture as pure as it was hundreds of years ago. The younger generations have been influenced by Western culture but have done their best to keep the old and sacred traditions alive.

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# HOODOO FOR BEGINNERS

*LEARN ABOUT THE SECRET POWER OF ROOTWORK AND  
CONJURE WITH HERBS, CANDLES AND OILS TO ELIMINATE  
NEGATIVITY - DISCOVER AFRICAN SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS  
AND CAST MAGIC SPELLS*

**By Evelyn Marie FOURNETTE**

**OrangePen Publications**

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# INTRODUCTION

Hoodoo is a spiritual practice that was brought to the Americas by enslaved West Africans. It's a form of folk magic that revolves around spells and charms to ward off evil and attract good luck. Hoodoo is often used in tandem with another spiritual practice like Voodoo, which is its sister religion. It is used for healing, protection, luck, and other purposes. Practitioners of hoodoo are called hoodoos, hoodoo doctors, or conjure men and women.

Hoodoo, at its center, is an African American custom. It was made by subjugated individuals from different spiritual practices that they adjusted to the land they wound up in. Hoodoo is additionally known by different names summon or rootwork. Individuals who practice hoodoo work with various devices, like candles, trinkets, and, obviously, roots and herbs. Precursor reverence is especially significant. Motion pictures frequently show hoodoos as dark and harmful, yet a large portion of the work we do is worried about healing and assurance.

More specifically, Hoodoo is a set of legends, practices of "sympathetic" and not sympathetic magic, elementary kabbalah, traditional herbal cures, a successful synthesis of traditional folk magic that has its origins in Africa and its development in the enslaved African Americans of the late seventeenth century. It is difficult to assess the prevalence of such beliefs and practices, as the word Hoodoo often has wide usage ranging from elemental ceremonial magic to amulet making. Hoodoo is often associated with religion but rarely has a well-defined religious connotation.

There are no precise deities or developed theologies to which the Hoodoo believer or practitioner refers. It seems that religion, in Hoodoo is added, so to speak, by exclusion and that is to occupy that place that traditional belief fails to occupy because it is too little theoretical. On the altars of the practitioners, one can find images of Catholic saints, Buddhists, pagan divinities, figures that have more to do with superstition than with the sacred, folkloric symbols, sometimes the altar is simply a jumble of theological contradictions. Alongside Catholic saints such as St. Expedite,



St. Photinus, St. Mary, and St. Anthony are images of Shiva, Kali, Buddha, and Mercury and so on.... All this, however, does not count for the mentality of the practitioner on duty, whose prayers and dedications go mainly to the spirits of the dead and the natural spirits that rarely have a specific connotation. It may seem strange, but it is not if we think about the essence of Hoodoo, that is the search for earthly advantages through magic.

Many people think that Hoodoo is a religious practice, but the truth is quite the opposite. Hoodoo isn't based on worshipping Gods, Goddesses, or other formal deities. Instead, it is a way for people to practice folk magic using the most basic tools and ingredients. So, what relevance does Hoodoo have in today's society? Quite a lot! Humans are starting to understand just what powers lie in nature and how to use them.

Understanding why some plants and herbs can attract good luck while others form a protective shield appeals to our personal sense of well-being. This type of magic and conjuring can be carried out by anyone who wants to try it, providing you respect the power and learn how to protect yourself from harm.

This book has everything you need to know to perform the craft safely and powerfully. Learn the ancient craft of Hoodoo and see how it can change your life forever!

This is a tradition that has its source in spiritual practices from African cultures that were ravaged by the slave trade. In these cultures, we discover the source of many of the things hoodoo practitioners do, for example, divination, chanting (or reciting mantras), and channeling.

The reason for the development of hoodoo was a desire to change one's life, specifically in the face of being enslaved. It came out of a need to survive, to have autonomy.

Hoodoo magic has also influenced the Spiritualist, Manifestation and Wicca traditions, with which it has many similarities. Unlike most Western school forms of magic, Hoodoo magic has no tradition of summoning or negotiation with particular spirits.

The purpose of Hoodoo is usually to gain positive outcomes from everyday life to strengthen a link with the source of one's power and abilities. In

African American practice, this source is traditionally the spirit world or the force of the universe. Hoodoo practitioners are concerned with the line between physical reality and the spirit world, whereas the spiritual world influences events in the physical world and the relationship between the spiritual world and the self.

Happy Reading.

# CHAPTER 1: HISTORY AND ORIGINS



## **What is Hoodoo?**

In simple terms, hoodoo is a magical and spiritual practice that emerged out of a need. 'Work' is an important word. You do work and find what works to achieve what you want.

Hoodoo is a practice that is about creating a change in our internal and external worlds. This is done through a series of methods that have been passed down for centuries.

This goes back to hoodoo being about a balance between physical and nonphysical worlds. When working with spirits, we approach from the perspective that we're working with the people who paved the way for us, often from hundreds and thousands of years back.

Hoodoo is not a modern concept, nor is it a blanket word for a number of activities, as pop culture often portrays it. Hoodoo is, in reality, a distinct tradition with its own set of rules and history. It has also been appropriated by a large number of individuals, resulting in a great deal of misinformation going around online.

At its heart, Hoodoo is an African American tradition. Enslaved people developed it by adapting different spiritual traditions to the land they found themselves in. Hoodoo is often referred to by other words, most notably "conjure" or "rootwork." Hoodoo practitioners use various instruments, including candles, trinkets, and, of course, roots and herbs. The worship of ancestors is especially important. Although Hollywood often portrays Hoodoo as dark and dangerous, most hoodoo practitioners' practice is focused on healing and defense.

When we engage with hoodoo, we are engaging with ancestors whose lives centered around the church, whether Christian or Catholic.

In addition to recognizing the spirit of the roots and plants, the conjurer in our example made a point to pay attention to the unseen forces within *herself*. She didn't just do the work and go back to the same thoughts and ideas about the money she had before. She could use the physical act of cleaning her space to stand in as a metaphor for a nonphysical act, cleansing her mind of poverty thinking. This is another example of how magick blends the physical and nonphysical worlds to create change in a person's life.

With all of these definitions and references to hoodoo, we can see why it may be difficult to trace a definite origin. Any Hoodoo belief or practice is closely related to African American/African culture and that of other cultures.

A closer look at the history of hoodoo will show that it grew from many different sources, some with ancient origins while others came from more recent practices. The two major sources for hoodoo would be African American folk magic and European witchcraft and folk magic.

Many rituals used in hoodoo have African roots. Hoodoo began as a part of the African system of folk medicine and magic that is based on the premise

that nothing happens in the world without some spiritual cause or reason. This idea, along with many others, was brought to this country by slaves who were routinely forced to leave their homes and move from place to place, making it necessary for them to accept change as a part of their lives. Settlers also introduced herbs from Europe, which were well-suited for growing in our climate. For a number of years, hoodoo was practiced in the South by African Americans on their own, but it was not until the 1940s that it became more widespread.

In America there is an expression: "It's better to ask for forgiveness than permission." Some of the African American folk healers were adept at finding traditional solutions for many problems without seeking permission from the white man or even seeking permission from other black people. These solutions came from herbs gathered from plants and trees rather than from the white man's pharmacopeia. In this way, cures were handed down as "family recipes" and passed down through generations of families.

Hoodoo is a type of folk magic practiced by African Americans and many immigrants in Louisiana. It has roots that extend back to African traditions, although it has also been influenced by European practices (see hoodoo-conjure). Hoodoo begins as an attempt to use natural elements such as herbs, plants, roots, stones, and woods to cure illnesses and protect against evil forces.

Hoodoo has been found in various states throughout the South including Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and New Orleans. In many ways, hoodoo is similar to voodoo. The word hoodoo actually comes from the African word "voodoo" meaning "spirit." However, the emphasis in hoodoo is more on spells to improve your life, whereas voodoo tends to be more focused on spells cast out on others.

Hoodoo is based on the idea that every person has an energy force (or soul) within them and there are certain rituals you can perform to help re-balance the body. This idea comes from West African ideas about a person's soul. There is another force though which is also important in hoodoo: this force doesn't come from inside you, but from outside sources like plants and minerals, or even spirits of people who have died. Hoodoo practitioners are called rootworkers.

One of the most important parts of hoodoo is the idea that specific herbs, minerals and woods have energy in them (or spirits) that can be used to improve your life. For example, it is believed that a small piece of snakeskin can protect you from others' negative thoughts or that a bundle of herbs in your pocket will make you stronger. In order to use hoodoo for healing, rootworkers must first learn about these energies and use them wisely so they can benefit others rather than harm them. All in all, hoodoo is a system that helps us understand that there is no separation between God, nature, and humans.

People who practice hoodoo believe that there is a spirit force (or soul) within everyone we all have one, and what we do to our own spirits can affect our health and wellbeing. Hoodoo teaches its followers that certain herbs, minerals, and other elements can be used to help us achieve better health. Hoodoo also teaches its followers the importance of rituals in order to help achieve balance and protection. Hoodoo is often associated with Christianity though it has been influenced by African beliefs.

## **A Brief History of Hoodoo**

Hoodoo has a long history in Louisiana and many other parts of the United States which have also been influenced by African culture, including parts of South Carolina and Georgia. It has roots that extend back to Cherokee, Choctaw, African, and European traditions. In the early 1800s, a priest named Rochard Brunnquell was introduced to hoodoo when he met suffragist activist Rachel Carson (1907-1964). He learned about hoodoo and was so intrigued that he performed a "hoodoo" wedding and began to study this African-influenced magic. He and other rootworkers in New Orleans began to practice hoodoo because their more traditional practices were not very popular with the community or the country as a whole. They eventually formed a rootwork tradition of their own which mixed traditional African beliefs with hoodoo from Louisiana.

Hoodoo evolved from traditional African religions brought to the New World by enslaved Africans. The slave owners taught them a new language, dressed them in new clothes, gave them new food to eat, and attempted to “reform” them. Although they were separated from the people and

everything they knew, some things were too deeply woven into their very existence to be altered or changed.

Slaves in the New World came from many areas of Africa, but frightened, confused, and abused in a strange land, they sought each other's company, finding comfort there. Gradually, they became a community in which they shared their customs. The old ways of doing things that they'd brought with them were adjusted, tweaked, and manipulated to match their present circumstances.

Many aspects of Christianity were familiar to the African slaves. They already believed in one creator God, who was helped by powerful spirits to run the world, which they recognized in the Christian saints. They understood the Bible as a powerful spell book, and Hoodoo practitioners still use Bible verses in their work. In other words, Hoodoo is, historically, strongly based on Christianity. My grandmother Estelle, who taught me Hoodoo, was a devout Baptist and met many of her clients after church on Sunday. We don't see Hoodoo as a separate religion or as being in any way in conflict with Christianity.

The African religions evolved differently depending on where the slaves landed in the New World. For instance, in the larger Catholic plantations of Cuba, the slave owners had less direct control over the slaves, so they were better able to maintain their traditional practices. Those slaves focused more on the Catholic saints as being aspects of spirits from their homeland, and their practices grew into Santeria. In Haiti, also strongly Catholic, the practices grew into Voodoo, which played a large part in the revolution that freed the island's slaves from the French. In other places, the African religions developed into practices like Candomblé, which was practiced in Brazil.

## **Hoodoo Today**

Today, spiritual supplies' stores and traditional practitioners continue to operate, despite Hoodoo's evolution. Recent intellectual developments have contributed significantly to the transformation of conjure from a taboo element of African American life to a widely accepted model of supernaturalism open to all. The emergence of postmodernism among artists and intellectuals has aided in the dismantling of long-held beliefs

about Hoodoo. The heart of postmodern thought is that all moral authority is subjective and can only be determined by one's actions. Along with increasing respect for African American heritage, this way of thinking has greatly increased exposure to the role of supernaturalism and creole religions in black life. This new perspective is reflected in a growing number of artworks and literary works dedicated to them. Similarly, many African American women regarding conjure to reconnect with their African ancestors and a long history of strong female hoodoo practitioners. Hoodoo can no longer be simply described as devilish by those who opposed it, at least not without disagreement.

Although the implications of postmodernism are readily evident to theorists and other users of high culture, they are not so visible to the majority of practitioners and believers. They also put a much higher premium on the New Age and Neopagan movements. Indeed, the closely linked movements can be viewed as popular culture's response to postmodernism. Notably, both postmodernists and New Agers/Neopagans disregard conventional sources of authority, favoring personal knowledge and conviction. Neopagans and New Age followers, the majority of whom are wealthy whites, choose to construct personal collages of values from various cultures and peoples rather than embracing Christianity or whatever else is considered normative by their heritage.

Since the first African slaves carried their ancient practices to the New World, conjure, Hoodoo, and Voodoo have evolved dramatically. In the United States, an ancient African creole religion has not been commonly practiced since the early twentieth century. In addition, traditional practitioners who collect magical resources from nature are becoming increasingly scarce. The fact that modern conjurers are almost as likely to be white as they are black would have astounded nineteenth-century observers beyond words. Unsurprisingly, a legacy of such change would foster discussion among artists, writers, academics, and the general public.

Many of our everyday practices can have magical uses. Take a shower, organize your files and workspace, cook, work exercise and even use the bathroom. Anything and everything can have a hoodoo application if you're willing to get creative and open your mind.



You could say hoodoo is everywhere. A basic concept in hoodoo is paying respect to the things we can and cannot see. It is a way to connect, work with, and respect the powerful natural forces and world around us and the forces that remain unseen to the naked eye.

By natural forces, I mean the earth: plants, trees, herbs, and dirt. More specifically, actual roots from plants, trees, and herbs. Common roots you will hear of are High John the Conqueror, Mandrake, Licorice, and Angelica.

Unseen forces are exactly that: unseen. The air is often mentioned as an example of a force that we can't see, but one we know exists. The same could be said of WIFI.

When it comes to hoodoo, we're talking about forces that are a little easier to deny. What our ancestors knew was (and is) that the spirit world is just as "real" as our 3D world. Colonizers saw how they lived, how close they were to Spirit, and immediately labeled it as evil.

Unfortunately, this mindset spread and eventually, it wasn't the colonizer saying working with spirits was 'evil'; it was the descendants of our ancestors.

You may have encountered people who think like this in your life. If you want to build your practice, you have to give yourself permission to see things differently.

## **Hoodoo Beliefs**

Let's talk about exactly what Hoodoo is in practical terms. It shares many qualities with practices like Voodoo and European-based witchcraft, so it's important to know what is different about Hoodoo.

### **Ancestral Veneration**

I think working with the spirits of our ancestors is, perhaps, the key part of Hoodoo that separates it from other spiritual and magical practices. The spirits of your ancestors can be called on for aid and guidance. It's important to develop a relationship with your ancestors and not simply call on them when you're in need, like a fair-weather friend who you only hear from when they need something from you.

## **Rootwork**

There is power in roots and herbs, and you can call on that power. In Hoodoo, we call this rootwork, and you'll find roots and herbs in nearly every Hoodoo spell. You can usually understand why an herb is used by understanding the plant it came from, the aspects of the herb itself, or its effects on the human body. For instance, cinnamon is a common herb used to speed up drawing work because cinnamon is both sweet and a bit warm to the tongue. The sweetness will draw things to it, just like a bear being drawn to honey. And the heat will make the work faster, just like in cooking or chemistry.

## **The Power of the Earth**

There are two special cases of using earth that I want to discuss in a bit more detail, and the first is graveyard dirt. Graveyard dirt is special because it can be used in many different ways and because collecting it is more involved than it is at other locations. Dirt in a graveyard hasn't just collected the energy of a place, it has also collected the energy of the spirits that reside in that graveyard. A graveyard is home to many spirits, like a neighborhood, and you should not enter such a place without showing respect. First, whenever you enter a graveyard, you should cover your head. This is both a sign of respect and a way to block the spirits from attaching themselves to your mind. Second, always bring with you an offering to leave at the entrance. This can take several forms, but the most common are rum, sweet bread, or three pennies.

## **Who Can Practice Hoodoo?**

Remember this—rootwork is not a religion. It is a practice that is inherited solely by birth line. You are born into being able to practice hoodoo. You are born into a line of family members that likely has some sort of history with hoodoo. In particular, if you have no descendants of Africans enslaved in the United States, you lack the spiritual connection that you would need. Without that spiritual connection, how can you call upon your ancestors? Though some recipes may claim that they have a European influence, remember that the Europeans segregated the enslaved Africans—they were kept entirely separate and therefore did not socialize. Those recipes that

claim that they have European influence are a dead giveaway that they are not actually authentic Hoodoo recipes.

## **Hoodoo Principles**

### **Respect for Ancestors**

Who are we working with when we practice? Who are the spirits that help us on the other side? Who helps us in ways we can't see or recognize?

You might not know who your ancestors are by name, but they know who you are. Reverence to those who have worked hard so we can live the way we live is a core principle of hoodoo practice.

It took some time for me to listen to my ancestors' voices and be confident that they were with me in the first place. I'm guessing that you weren't raised in a home where it was common to talk to ancestors, and if my guess is correct, then you and I have this in common.

### **Respect for Environment**

Hoodoo is a practice that looks different, depending on which region you are in. New Orleans is probably the most notable example of this. You might not have a hoodoo practice specific to where you live, but what I want you to take from this is you and your environment come first.

You might find a working online that asks for Angelica root, but if this is hard to find in your region, this is something you need to be aware of, at least. Most of us are lucky to live in countries where anything we want is accessible if we're willing to pay for the shipping.

You'll also want to be mindful of going out and picking fresh flowers and plants. This is knowing what plants grow natively in your region, what trees and plants are endangered and which ones thrive. This might require getting another book to research botanicals, but if you're serious about this practice, then you don't need much convincing.

### **Hearing the Ego**

The more you learn to listen to the voice of your own ego, the more you'll hear it speak to you in patterns. One common pattern that all of us know is statements around an idea that sounds like "I'm not good enough."

Thinking someone else is “better” than you at something, like talking to spirit, is an example of this type of thinking.

The benevolent ancestors you call on can help with hearing their voice over your own as well. Again, the only thing you need to do is ask. If it sounds like I’m talking about capital-s Spirit, that is on purpose. Your benevolent ancestors are connected with Spirit, with Infinite Love, Infinite Abundance, and Infinite Wisdom.

It’s this connection that will help you live in balance and maintain that balance in your hoodoo and conjure work.

Another mindset that we’re quick to shift to, especially as we consider solving our problems with magic, is that we are stupid for having the problems we have in the first place, that the

## **Differences between Hoodoo and Voodoo**

Hoodoo is NOT Voodoo (Vodou). Hoodoo is the folk magic of the southern United States devoid of any religious connection. It is a magical technology - pure and simple - developed by the black descendants of African slaves brought to this country. As has already been mentioned, most Hoodoo practitioners are Protestant Christians.

Voodoo, more correctly spelled Vodou, is a separate and distinct religion originating from the island of Haiti. It is one of the African diasporic faiths that evolved in the Caribbean as a result of the destructive legacy of the slave trade. African tribes that never had any dealings or even knew about each other were forced to live and work jointly. In an attempt to safeguard their native religions, they merged many of their beliefs into a conglomerate practice. The Vodou was the result. Vodou practitioners worship God and Jesus primarily through the recitation of French Catholic prayers and through the Catholic mass, but they also worship and operate with their native African spirits and powers, known as lwa or loa. Vodou is an initiatory religion where specialists dedicate their life and ritual to the lwa through religious consecration. Vodou is not a malevolent religion as many portray it to be. It is a charming religion that has preserved the native religious practices of the African citizens who endured terrible pain at the

hands of slave owners. It should be respected and honored, but it is not Hoodoo or Rootwork.

Hoodoo is a voodoo style of magic that focuses on the supernatural and the practical use of spells. In reality, it's a combination of many magical traditions that focus on spiritualism, mysticism, and craft. Hoodoo magic differs from Voodoo in that it's a widespread practice in the south and works more like alchemy than a religion.

There are many important differences between hoodoo and Voodoo. The key difference is that hoodoo is typically Christian in nature, while Voodoo is not. This means that Christian practitioners usually cast hoodoo spells. You'll notice that most hoodoo magic spells are intended to take care of problems or help someone with their life.

Many people confuse hoodoo with Vodou, which is a religion and magic system practiced primarily in Haiti. Vodou and hoodoo's main difference is that Vodou is an entire religion devoted to honoring and communicating with spirits. Hoodoo tends to be more of a practical magic system focused on solving problems instead of gaining mystical knowledge about the world around us.

Hoodoo is a form of Voodoo that emerged in the American South after the Civil War. Hoodoo magic stems from African traditions, and both forms are distinctive in their focus on herbs and other plant materials. However, it is important to note that hoodoo magic differs from its southern counterpart in its magical approach.

There are many essential differences between hoodoo and voodoo magic. First of all, voodoo magic focuses on the transference of energy from one living thing to another, whereas hoodoo magic relies on herbal remedies to heal ailments or cure diseases. Voodoo uses its language, a phraseology rooted in West African languages, while hoodoo magic is generally easier to understand as it uses English phrases to convey its magical intentions. The use of herbs in hoodoo is also highly regulated and controlled.

Hoodoo remedies were originally used by poor southerners who lacked medical care for various illnesses or diseases. In some cases, herbs were

used instead of traditional medicines or treatments because they had known curative properties to replace the medics.

Voodoo, as opposed to hoodoo, is a type of magic practiced by its practitioners (called voodooists) and is often associated with the religion of the same name. This folk culture practice is made up of a mix of African beliefs in witchcraft and magic that came from there and European Catholic traditions. Voodoo practitioners have "god-mother" figures in their religion like houngans and mambos (male and female priests). These high priests do not have the same kind of power that Christian priests have. They act more like community leaders than holy men or women. Many voodooists believe that they are in touch with the "spirit world" and get messages from their ancestors through dreams, visions or other mediums. Many voodooists also perform animal sacrifices and carry on traditional funerals similar to those done for the dead.

Voodoo is practiced by people of African descent, although it has spread beyond this group to other people of African descent as well as to others of Caribbean descent. The religion of voodoo is very different though. Many African Americans have turned to voodoo because they are frustrated with hoodoo and don't want to follow its more "legendary" elements.

The term Voodoo comes from the name of a small island, apparently a by-word for witchcraft in the Caribbean. The word is believed to mean "don't wake up," also in reference to the fact that people said they would be punished if they performed harmful magic rites while their minds were still asleep. Some say voodoo was an abomination brought by the French along with other slaves, while others say it was an ancient African religious cult that was brought to Haiti along with other aspects of West African culture such as stories and legends.

Local legends say that voodoo practitioners worked with the devil, made deals with the dead and participated in voodoo rites. So if you heard someone talk about "voodoo," they were most likely referring to hoodoo. The term Voodoo has been used to describe any aspect of West African culture since the early 19th century.

Hoodoo is American, Vodou is Haitian. Hoodoo is a magical tradition without religious attachment, while Vodou is a religion. Hoodoo is an

assortment of spells and magical techniques that any individual can perform, while Vodou is an initiatory and community-based religion. Hoodoo practitioners make use of roots, herbs and minerals to create preparations or spells for their customers, empowered in the name of the Christian God, while Vodou introduces work with the lwa through divine insight and intercession to help or introduce others. As well-intentioned as these people may be, mixing Hoodoo and Vodou is not only disrespectful to both practices, it confuses most people and muddies the spiritual waters.

## **Hoodoo Books**

First, we will talk about the book most used by Conjure men: the bible.

The bible is considered by many Conjure men as "the greatest of magical books." Besides using the invocations and the passages of the bible (especially of the Old Testament) as magic formulas, the Conjure man has very peculiar concepts of interpretation of the passages and principles of the bible. The most used passages are certainly the psalms; there are 150 of them and to each one, the root doctor associates a specific efficacy in the field of magic. There are psalms to make good journeys, psalms of protection, psalms of consecration, psalms to ward off the enemy or to strike him, psalms effective in matters of love, gambling and so on. They are so used that some modern Conjure man has written specific treatises on the subject, for example, the famous "power of the psalms" by Godfrey Selig. The bible is therefore considered a 'huge treaty of Hoodoo. God is considered the greatest of root doctors and the creation of the universe is interpreted as a grandiose work of magic.

People have the right to practice Hoodoo and magic because God gives man all of creation and the ability to name (and therefore command) all creatures. Moreover, since God punishes, blesses, helps or curses and he knows and foresees everything, why shouldn't this punishment or blessing pass through the hands of the Conjure man, making him a divine instrument? Moses is considered a great Conjure man and is attributed to him even two apocryphal books used by rootworkers, the sixth and seventh book of Moses (actually two grimoires probably renaissance). How to explain then the prohibition of magic in the Mosaic Law? Simple: Moses was forbidden to the common people the practice of Hoodoo, to reserve it

to the class of priests. In fact it may seem strange, but these explanations and interpretations are supported by biblical citations. We can give some examples, also reported by the famous Rootworker Doctor Kioni, regarding stories of "biblical Hoodoo":

- In Genesis 30: 1,43 Jacob makes the white sheep drink by putting stripped and worked sticks in the water so that the sheep give birth to ragged instead of white children;
- In the first book of Samuel 30:7,20, King David asks God for a response, and God responds through the stones of the priest's breastplate (today we would say a work of divination);
- In the book of Numbers 5: 11,31 it is said that to find out if a wife has cheated one can go to the priest, who will make her drink water consecrated with powder taken from the tabernacle, and will curse the water so that if the woman has cheated, she will also be cursed.

These are not the only examples that can be given, in fact, the bible is full of these "authorized Hoodoo works" despite being prohibited by Mosaic Law. On the other hand, the boundary between magic ritual and religious ritual is often blurred; beyond the meanings and authorizations, the magician considers himself a priest and acts accordingly.

We can say that perhaps the interpretation of the root doctor is dictated by convenience, but not without support in the text.

Other books widely used by the Hoodoo man are the already mentioned sixth and seventh book of Moses, two grimoires of vague biblical inspiration that are nothing more than catalogs of formulas and magic diagrams of ready use inspired by the actions of Moses, interpreted as acts of Hoodoo. Thus we will find the formulas with which Moses defeated the Egyptian magicians in the well-known episode, with which he made the plague of hail come down, and even a couple of formulas that say to make God appear in person in front of whoever pronounces them (!). Finally, another text is the grimoire called "pow-wow or the long lost friend." It's a set of spells and formulas of surely central European origin imported at the end of 800 by the Dutch community emigrated to America. In it, there are formulas that should solve common evils (worms, bruises, wounds) as well



as spells against evil, bad spirits, and bad luck. Actually, the Conjure man often does not use the formulas for the actions stated in the books, but he uses them, adapting them to his own case, exactly as he does for the psalms.

The formula of Moses against the Egyptian magicians could be used to win an enemy, the one for hail to destroy it, the one for the divine apparition to bless herbs and preparations. Once again, we find in practice great freedom even if assisted by principles of operation that are fundamentally traditional. Even in some cases, the book acts as a real amulet (pow-wows also have this function) or is used per se to ward off bad spirits (for example, the bible is left open to a certain page on the altar, directing it in a certain direction). There are many other books and books that can be used in the practice of Hoodoo, to examine them one by one would go beyond the scope of this article, as well as being virtually impossible. Consider only the fact that in addition to traditional, regional, imported books, there are also books written from scratch by today's Conjure men.

## **Difference between Wicca and Hoodoo- 21 Voodoo Divisions**

First and most importantly, modern witchcraft is NOT used to communicate with the devil! This is an example of how the folklore and superstitions of the past have bled into the present and continue to color the practice today.

In a general sense, witchcraft *should* be defined as behaviors that fall under the casting of spells that either have a positive or negative effect on the individual who is the focal point of the spell. Yes, witchcraft can be used to have negative effects on people; referred to as “black magick.” However, we will be staying on the positive, affirming, “white magick” side of witchcraft. Witchcraft should be an act that promotes self-awareness, healing, and all-around the well-being of an individual.

The beautiful part of witchcraft is that it is completely driven by YOU! There is no liturgical or holy book, there are no services to attend every week, and there are no donation plates to pass around. Your witchcraft practice is dependent on your own intent on your time. The world is your sanctuary.

Wicca is the “religion” of witchcraft. So, if you ask ten Wiccans their spiritual beliefs, you are likely to get ten different answers. However, there

are some core principles and beliefs which are common to the vast majority of modern Wiccan sects. Let's explore some of these overarching beliefs.

Wicca acknowledges the *duality* of the divine, meaning that both the male and female aspects of divinity - a God and a Goddess. Depending upon the tradition that the Wiccan ascribes to, the God and Goddess can be known by many different names: Isis and Osiris, Cerridwen and Herne, Apollo and Athena, *etc.* There are even traditions that honor a non-gender specific deity (still encompassing both the male and female aspects, but not identified as “male” and “female”). In many Gardnerian sects, the names of the honored deities are revealed only to initiated members and kept secret from all people outside of their sect.

The belief in and use of *magick* is nearly a universal principle among Wiccans. Magick is viewed within Wicca as the redirection of natural forces through manipulation on the spirit plane to realize or manifest the practitioner's intent. This is where evil can become a problem within Wicca. There are spells (curses) that can be used to cause injury or negativity to occur to another individual. In order to perform that type of magick (black magic), the intent of the practitioner must be evil. The intent of the practitioner is extremely important to spell work. Magick can be used for good or magick can be used for evil, and oftentimes, the difference is found in the heart (the intent) of the practitioner.

Each person has the right and, indeed, the responsibility to choose their own spiritual path. Quite frankly, Wicca is not for everyone. If the beliefs and principles of Wicca do not fall in line with your personal beliefs, find a different path. It is important for the conviction of the Wiccan that they search out Wicca, not have Wicca thrust upon them, nor should they expect everyone around them to convert to Wicca. Although we do not necessarily receive the same from other organized religions, Wiccans are to fully respect the spiritual beliefs of others.

## **21 Divisions**

There are, first and foremost, several traditions of voodoo. Although they share a common matrix, Africa, and similarities, they are, in reality, very different in their myths, rituals, practices, metaphysical conceptions and spirits. Even the way entities are conceived varies from one place to

another. It is a bit like talking about Christianity, we find Roman Catholicism, Protestant Christianity, the evangelical sects... all have the figure of Jesus Christ in common, but each interprets it differently because of enlightened personalities who founded a "new" religiosity, or because of political motivations that pushed a particular Church, as in the case of the Anglican Church at the time of Henry VIII, to break away from the mother church of Rome.

The African voodoo of the origins is still practiced in Africa, in Togo and Benin, but it is profoundly different from the various types of voodoo we find in the diaspora.

Haitian voodoo is certainly the best known. It is called 21 nachons (21 nations) because the divinities are considered according to their original place of origin in specific ways. It revolves around the structure of the hounfor (temple), each of which is governed by a priest or a priestess (houngan and mambo). It is extremely complex in ritualistic and elaborate in practices. One arrives at the priesthood only after many sacrifices, physical and economical, and it takes years to complete the initiation cycle that characterizes it.

The voodoo of New Orleans derives from the Haitian one and has a deeply magical mark. In relation to the Haitian one, it is simplified, less divinities are considered, and the ritualistic is less complex and structured.

The voodoo of Puerto Rico is called Sanse, and it is a kind of Umbanda spiritism associated with the lwà, while the Dominican voodoo, the one we will deal with in this text, is distinguished by the strong recourse to syncretism and for the modalities of the cult.

If it is true that in part it is of Haitian derivation, it is also true that Dominican voodoo is not only Haitian, but has its own history and its own path and is legitimized by nothing less than a group of lwà (spirits) who have the task of protecting the purity of this extraordinary tradition. In Dominican voodoo, there is no honor (temple), but rather there are centers in which the initiates perform ceremonies; there is no strict dependence between initiate and initiator. Who is "baptized" is considered free and does not depend on anyone; there is no assòn (the ritual rattle of the Haitian tradition to call the spirits); there are no blood sacrifices (if not in very rare

cases); everyone, regardless of whether they are initiated or not, can serve the lwà and get any kind of help from the divinities; even an uninitiated person can be "caballo del santo" (literally, "horse of the saint"), that is to say, a horse of the saint. Even an uninitiated person can be "caballo del santo" (literally, "horse of the saint"), i.e., be possessed by a lwa; it is evident that whoever is endowed with this gift will normally have an incentive to receive initiation and baptism in the tradition. The priests of Dominican voodoo are called papabokòs if men and mambosas if females. Dominican voodoo tends to be softer and less aggressive than Haitian voodoo and not all lwà correspond in both traditions. The myths related to the deities are different. If Haitian voodoo has 21 nations, Dominican voodoo is called 21 divisions or Dominican Santeria. In fact, the entities are considered not by reason of origin but by reason of vibration and mode of implementation.

To each lwà, the supreme spirit of voodoo corresponds a Catholic saint. Dominican syncretism is not necessarily the same as Haitian syncretism even if there are many similarities.

Dominican voodoo operates in most cases for positive purposes. The faithful ask the lwà for well-being, health, protection, defense, money and advancement in life. If it's true that there are attack practices, it's also true that very rarely lwà are used, even the most aggressive ones, to do evil for pure pleasure. The entities are mainly used to solve the problems of everyday life. While it is true that there are individuals who use these powers incorrectly, it is also true that such behavior is neither encouraged nor approved.

### **Oration at 21 Divisions**

This prayer is recited to impart special graces to the 21 Divisions, but also as an opening prayer in rituals of this tradition.

Light a seven-day candle of seven colors in front of an image of the 21 Divisions; place a glass with water on the side. Begin the prayer on a Monday or Friday.

I invoke the sublime influence of the 21 Divisions to achieve good success and progress in every area of my life and to smooth out all the difficulties I may encounter on my path. I invoke the help of the Holy Spirit so that the

stars illuminate my path and drive away any evil shadow that may follow me. I invoke the God of Heights that my home may prosper, my business may increase, and my person may receive a message of good fortune from Divine Providence.

Oh, Great Power of God, I implore your powerful help to keep me out of danger at the right time and to illuminate my path with the beacon of good fortune. I will receive the infinite blessings of heaven, I believe in God the Father Almighty. Amen. (Our Father and Hail Mary).

## CHAPTER 2: GETTING STARTED WITH HOODOO



### **Where to Start For Beginners?**

Hoodoo practitioners believed in a number of spirits, including cleansing and protective ones, such as saint-like imagery and animals like owls and ravens. Other spirits included those associated with disease or death, such as ghosts, zombies, or evil spirits like witches.

Hoodoo practitioners worked with these powers in many ways. Spells and charms were used to bring about change in a person's life, much as they are used by many people today for the same purpose.

Spells were also used to bring good luck, protect oneself from spells cast by others, and ensure that one's wishes were granted. Practitioners of hoodoo usually gathered herbs from their backyards for use in spells or for healing purposes. These herbs were believed to have special powers and could be used in combination with other ingredients that were thought to provide the desired results.

Hoodoo practitioners were very careful not to harm themselves through their practices. Hoodoo spells and charms often contained a warning not to use them for ill purposes against anyone else, or they could come back on you three times as hard in the form of bad luck or evil magic.

The traditional language of hoodoo, also called conjure talk, was usually English. However, some practitioners may have used African languages such as Yoruba or Fon to perform deeper hoodoo magic. The term hoodoo is itself a Southern African American language word that means "bad luck" or "jinx."

### **Hoodoo Practitioners**

Many of the women who practiced hoodoo did so because they were not allowed to learn more "common" forms of magic and witchcraft. As a result, most people who practiced this type of magic were considered outsiders by mainstream society. The practitioners were often called upon to help with issues that mainstream society was either too afraid or too unwilling to deal with on their own. Many times, these issues involved either the presence or destruction of evil influences. The practitioner could then use hoodoo to help rid the space of these influences and restore it to a more desirable state.

Women also used this practice for personal healing or even in beauty rituals. The African American women who practiced hoodoo were not just concerned with their own health, but also with that of others in their community. Hoodoo spells and charms were often used as a method of protection from bad luck, harm, or misfortune. Women would seek out the help of other women who had knowledge or experience through this practice to seek help with the issues they faced in their own lives.

African American men also sought out hoodoo practitioners for various reasons as well. They often sought out hoodoo practitioners to help with issues involving their families. Some of the most common reasons were to get rid of unkind spirits, ghosts, or harmful influences in their homes in which they were unable to do so otherwise themselves.

Many traditional African American styles of religious practices such as hoodoo were passed on down through history and across generations until they finally disappeared into other cultures and are now a part of a whole

new group of traditions. However, the practice is still alive today within African American communities. It is a blend of African culture, European tradition, and Native American spirituality.

In the past, many people believed that magic was something that only certain people could perform. They believed that the practice of hoodoo was a way for these special people to harness the power of their magical practices. While today's beliefs may be different, we can still utilize hoodoo in order to better deal with the issues and challenges we face in our own lives. As long as we stay true to ourselves and good spirits will help us along the way.

## **How to Practice Hoodoo**

Dipping your toes into the hoodoo can seem daunting. With no familiarity with what it is and how it works, just finding a spell for you can be a challenge, especially when you are new to the practice.

If you have to work in secret from nosy friends and family, getting a package of 7-day candles, Florida water, and holy oils might not be so easy.

And that's not to mention the costs. There are the costs of buying what you need for a working and possibly the costs of setting up an altar.

As with everything, part of respecting your ancestors, your environment, and yourself means doing your research and knowing what works for you. Copying spells from someone else is fine, but with your knowledge and knowing the core elements of hoodoo, you are better equipped to create your own workings.

If you know the core elements of hoodoo, this becomes easier with time. This is where we incorporate many of the topics we've covered already. In hoodoo, the spirit is at the core of everything. Practitioners think about the spirit of everything they work with, what is at the core or root.

As mentioned, hoodoo exists to make your life easier. Do not burden yourself with getting supplies and materials that someone else says you need for a spell.

There is a way to practice with what's readily available to you. The things you already touch and experience every day can be used in your hoodoo.



Plus, you probably already have some powerful herbs in your kitchen cabinets. Often items you have just hanging around as decor, like candles and seashells, can be used in your work.

### **Working with Spirit**

Your day might start with a prayer acknowledging the ancestors and reconnecting with the work you're doing in your life. A practice could begin with acknowledging those who went before you and the power they lend to you.

If you don't have an image or any idea of who your ancestors are, this might seem like a challenge. This is one of the painful consequences of the slave trade; many descendants of ancestors living in North America don't have any connection to those who came before them.

Many of my clients know this pain intimately. Some of them come from families who just do not seem to care about their lineage, so their questions and quest for knowledge are met with indifference, if not anger.

Their blood still runs through your veins, and in this way, you will stay connected to them for as long as you are alive.

### **Working with Nature**

The term 'rootwork' is interchangeable with hoodoo. Other than roots, natural elements, such as herbs, plants, seeds, leaves, peels, and dirt, play an important role in hoodoo practice. Take any vegetable or plant you have or that grows around you.

An orange can feed your body, but the peel can also be used in working for luck and money. Same with fennel seeds and bay leaves.

Each of the natural powers we use in hoodoo pulled their power in from the earth. Not only does the earth power the growth of the plants and herbs you use, but it also powers our own growth. It feeds us every day and grounds us in place, even as we run around and get distracted with living life.

Often, we get so enthusiastic about a spell we're looking around to find a store that sells everything in one place. Before buying roots and herbs was a possibility, conjurers either grew what they used on their own, or got what they needed straight from the source: the earth.

If you can, try to forage what you need or grow it on your own. This might mean doing a few substitutions here and there, and if you choose to use an alternate ingredient, be careful to understand what results you might get with what you're using.

### **Working with Waters**

I'm using 'waters' here as a metaphor for cleansing and purification. Your energy is affected by countless things on any given day. Our world continuously bombards us with all types of ideas that can either zap our energy or empower us.

Let's be honest, we're more likely to be drawn to the things that zap our energy.

Need I list examples? The news, social media, gossip, YouTube channels, reality television, trauma fiction. Going out and having a negative interaction with someone on the street or in a grocery store is a prime example of the kind of interaction that can muck up your energy.

Of course, we'd all like to think we're immune to the energy of others, but even with a strong mental and vibrational shield, most people need to continuously keep their field maintained.

In this way, your spirit is a lot like your physical body. It requires work to keep healthy and in tune. As sensitive people, we are open to absorbing negative energies that need to be removed regularly.

We'll talk more about cleansing in another section, but for now, know that within hoodoo there are various liquids; oils, colognes, perfumes, spiritual waters, and vinegars that are used for multiple purposes. There are money drawing oils, two types of Florida Water, war and peace water, and Four Thieves Vinegar, for example.

### **Working with Place**

Graveyards and crossroads are two important places in hoodoo because of the energy they carry. Other places that you'll often hear or read about in your research are banks and churches.

Specifically, you'll most often work with the spirit of a place like a bank by using the dirt from the land around where it is located (if it's surrounded by

concrete, that is another story). You could really get creative with this, but using dirt from just anywhere could produce unintended results.

The symbolism of crossroads is also big in conjure. The crossroads represent many things. In our plane of existence, we live in a world where we can experience both 3D life and the spirit world.

## **Hoodoo as a Way of Life**

You can't talk about Hoodoo from a native perspective without going into stories from the motherland. These stories were orally passed on to us by our ancestors. You will not find them on the pages of history books. Even in the books of those who have tried to chronicle our history for us, Hoodoo is not a religion or a belief. It is the way we live our lives.

Our ancestors lived off the land. This meant that when they were sick, it was the land that provided healing. If they needed love, they turned to the land. On the land is where they would find water, herbs, and any other accouterments that, when combined, could provide solutions to the problems that plagued them. Courage, community, and culture inspired them at every level and continue to inspire us.

What do I mean by courage, you may wonder? Courage to face problems head-on instead of running away from them. Courage to embrace every part of oneself even though it may not favorably tally up against the opinions of the public. Courage to do what is necessary to achieve the results you desire. This was the kind of courage my people spoke and sang about.

When it comes to community, our practice is a communal one. The energy that we tap into when creating spells is a powerful communal or ancestral energy. We feed on the energy of our past and bind it to our will/intention in the present.

Finally, we come to culture, which is our way of life. Hoodoo is not some secret cult practice that we hide in the back of our closet only to put on a mask to present when we are in public. It is the very essence of who we are. The more you incorporate Hoodoo into your day-to-day living, the more powerful your spells will become.

When you create spells after Hoodoo has already become a part of you, those spells will be more potent.

### **Your Ancestor Altar**

One of the most sacred aspects of Hoodoo practice is the space where you carry out your spell. Within our community, this space is commonly known as the ancestral altar. This is where you pay homage to the ancestors who paved the way for you and then tap into their powers to create and manifest the desires of your heart. An altar is a place of transformation and the starting point of manifestation.

The altar is the space through which your ancestors can give their blessings and pour their power into the spells cast by you. It is where you will feel the most powerful. Your altar is crucial to your Hoodoo practice and is traditionally meant to be somewhere in your home. However, it is not uncommon to place it outside your home, in a location where you feel most connected to your ancestors.

## CHAPTER 3: CLEANSING



Before doing any Hoodoo, it's important to perform some kind of spiritual cleansing. Having a regular cleanse is the way of life for people who practice Hoodoo. For us, a cleanse is beyond washing off your body with soap and water. You have to purify yourself and this purification provides fortification.

When you tamper with powers beyond the physical plane, you expose yourself. With or without fortification, there are dark spirits that will ride on the waves of that ancestral connection and enter into your space. A thorough cleanse will ward off their impact and cause them to be powerless. But when you fail to do a cleanse, you will absorb that impact, and as you continue to cast spells, they will begin to change form and become darker until the darkness consumes you. If the spell is intended to be a love spell, this darkness will also consume the person your spell is directed at.

### **Spiritual Cleansing**

Spiritual cleansing in the American South is often done through a technique called Hoodoo. While this tradition does not always use what one may classify as “magic,” it does employ methods that many would define as superstitious.

This practice is used to ward off evil spirits and to provide the practitioner with good luck. A practitioner of Hoodoo might also perform other rituals such as palm reading and using amulets in an effort to attract or maintain the favor of an individual or group. In addition, Hoodoos will often resort to performing elaborate ceremonies in order to achieve goals such as finding a new job or improving a relationship.

Hoodoo talismans are believed to protect the wearer from evil spirits, negative energies or bad luck. These items are either handmade by hoodoo practitioners themselves or purchased in a store. Many times hoodoo practitioners will make their own mixture of herbs and roots to use in the creation of their magical talisman.

A gris-gris or mojo bag is a small cloth bag filled with herbs, roots and other materials. These items are worn close to the body in order to carry one's intent or goal. This item can be sewn by hand or purchased at a store.

A conjure doll is a very powerful magical object that is created for the purpose of attracting a specific person into one's life. Conjure dolls are usually dressed in clothing that represents the person they are intended for. However, these dolls are also filled with personal items of the individual they are made for as well as herbs and other magical ingredients that supposedly attract that particular person to come into one's life.

Hoodoo practitioners also use candles made from beeswax or tallow (animal fat). These candles are used for a variety of spells, such as love, luck, protection, and to increase one's income. This candle magic is very popular with many practitioners of hoodoo that desire financial stability.

Most African-based spiritual traditions use a mixture of charms and talismans to protect the home and family. Hoodoo practitioners use similar methods to connect with their deities in order to help them achieve their goals in life. Hoodoo is also known as Conjure, Rootwork or Faith Healing.

## **Personal Cleansing**

This form of ritual is especially important if you are feeling under the weather or anxious about something. If you feel like your powers are waning and you have blockages in your aura, then cleansing your body and soul will help you restore your energy levels.

Cleansing is one of the most important parts of conjure work, and it's essential to make time for your rituals. To get the best results to perform the cleansing during certain planetary hours. This will increase the powers of your ritual and give them added intentions. Use an online planetary hour calculator to calculate the body that rules the day and choose the best day for you.

Now take a jug and pour the water over your head 13 times while reciting a cleansing prayer. Psalm 37 is a prayer option, or you can compose your own prayer. Only wash downward, so negative energies are flushed into the bathwater. Once you feel refreshed and cleansed, step out of the bath and air dry yourself (no drying with towels) before dressing in clean clothes. Now take a jug full of the bathwater before draining the rest. Take your saved bathwater and head for a crossroads. Throw the water over your shoulder and then walk back home without looking back. If you are lucky enough to have trees in your garden, you can dispose of the bathwater by throwing it at the trunk so it can absorb the negativity.

Handy tip: This type of bath can be used as an attraction bath with a few simple changes. Use the same ingredients but add rose petals or other floral essential oils to your water. Wash in an upward manner and pour the water over your head 7 or 9 times. Recite Psalm 23 or other uplifting text while you wash and then air dry yourself before dressing. Using yellow or red candles will make the object of your attraction more attainable, and the saved water should be used to wash your front doorstep and be swept inwards to bring the attraction toward you.

### **Quick-Fix Methods of Cleansing Yourself**

If you can't use baths to cleanse yourself because you don't have the time or just need a quick fix, you can use several following methods to remove negativity.

- **The chicken foot:** This is a wonderful tool for cleansing, and lightly scratching yourself with it will keep your energy positive and will

remove any negative energies. Think how the chicken deals with its mess. It simply scratches it away and moves on!

- **Brushing:** If you feel like your cleansing should be more rigorous, but you want to use natural elements, then upgrade to a turkey or chicken wing. If you feel the need to remove a crossing or a jinx, take the turkey wing and brush it down from the top of your head to the base of your feet. Traditionally turkeys gobble up all the mess, so the wing will remove the condition and cleanse your aura.
- **Rubdown:** Use your alcohol rub to form a base. Add herbs and oils to infuse the mixture before rubbing yourself down. Perform the ritual in a sacred place and use prayers and spiritual chants to enhance the experience.
- **Candle Cleansing:** Use a black candle to remove a crossed or jinxed condition. Wipe yourself with the candle in downward movements while praying.
- **Smoke Cleansing:** Also known as smudging, this process can be performed by burning incense, essential oils, or dried herbs. Use a white cloth to cover yourself from the neck down and burn the selected items under it. Allow the smoke to swirl around you before removing the sheet and allowing the smoke to permeate the house.
- **Sprinkle:** Use a sprinkler head to perform this ritual. Fill it with holy or blessed water and add salt and essential oils to the liquid. Sprinkle your head and shoulders with the water, recite your favorite psalm (psalm 23 works well), and then sprinkle your feet.

## Cleansing and Blessing the Home

Floor washes based on the elements used in cleansing baths can be used to clean houses and other physical places. The same rule of directing energies applies to floor washes, just like it applies to bathing. Wash windows and doors downward to dispel negativity and upward to attract goods, luck, and wealth. Candles, prayers, and smudging can all be used to give your cleanse added depth.



Hoodoo practitioners will often use elemental ingredients to increase the power of their house cleanses and blessings. Here are a few ways to use these strong influences in your rituals: *Earth* Actual dirt is the most basic elemental form of Earth, but not everyone wants to have dirt on their floor. Several substitutes can be used just as effectively.

- **Redbrick dust:** Hoodoo practitioners believe this form of Earth is particularly effective, and they will sprinkle it almost everywhere. Doorways and windows, thresholds, and entrances should all be protected, and red brick dust does the job perfectly. The most powerful dust is from old houses or sacred buildings, and homemade dust can be found almost everywhere. There are specialist spiritual products online, but ensure they are reputable and the dust has provenance. Lay unbroken lines across your thresholds to form psychic barriers that are impossible to cross. The most effective time to perform this ritual is the eve of the full moon, and the dust should be replaced monthly.
- **Salt:** Salt is readily available and can be removed only by evaporation. Sea salt is particularly effective, and many Hoodoo practitioners swear by the salt from the Dead Sea. Salt or saltwater can be used to solve problems with nightmares and bad dreams. Sprinkle the area around the bed with salt to remove nighttime influences and aid healthy sleep. A box filled with sea salt at your front door will protect your home and stop negative energy from entering.
- **Black salt:** This is a mixture of regular or sea salt with iron filings or charcoal. This type of salt should be used when obstructions or negative energies are particularly strong.

*Air.* This element is incorporated naturally in house blessings and cleanses. Burning candles or incense permeates the air while doors and windows can be opened to allow negativity to escape.

*Fire.* Both black and white candles bring power to your cleansing. Their potency is increased when combined with essential oils like Myrrh or Sandalwood. Use burners to protect and clean doorways and windows.

*Water.* Most deep cleanses are based around the element water, and it is used to wash away a multitude of ills. You can ask your local church for blessed water, or it can be purchased online.

***Alternatively, You Can Bless Your Own Water with the Following Method***

*Step 1:* Collect seawater for your cleanse. If you take it from natural sources, be sure to leave a gift for the spirits that live there. A small offering of fresh fruit or vegetables will show you are thankful for their blessings.

*Step 2:* Gather rainwater. Use open containers to collect fresh rainwater from your garden or windowsill. Water gathered during a thunderstorm is particularly effective. The morning dew is also used for rituals to bring revitalization to your home.

*Step 3:* Make your water holy. There are Hoodoo practitioners that believe in the power of moonlight, and leaving your water outside overnight renders it holy. Mix the seawater and rainwater and place the mix in a silver or glass container. Place the container on a table in the garden where it will receive the most exposure to moonlight. Charge the water with your blessings and prayers before you leave it.

*Step 4:* Add salt ideally, you will use a form of holy salt. Use the same phrase as you did for the water but replace the phrase "giver of life" with "preserver of life" to consecrate your salt and make it more powerful.

*Step 5: Combine the two elements. Add pinches of salt to the water while stirring in a clockwise direction. Say the final prayer, "This holy union is blessed with the power of the elements and life. The Gods and Goddesses have made this union powerful and ready to be used in goodness and health."*

## **Purification Baths**

Purification baths are meant to purify you for the ritual you want to perform and open you up spiritually to create a channel that allows you access to the spirit world, where you can make your petition known. By doing so, purification baths increase the chances of your desires becoming a reality. But beyond opening you up, a purification bath serves other purposes, and I want to talk about a few of these right now.

## **Severing Ties**

Some of us unwittingly get ourselves into sticky situations, either through love ties, ancestral curses, or as a result of our own actions. One of the many ways to get rid of such a tie is to undergo a purification bath. It helps to separate you from that person, curse, or consequence. When it comes to soul ties, you may come across an individual who is unnaturally addicted to you. Their obsession with you might have negative repercussions in your life. Even if they are not doing anything spiritual, the fact that you may have had some kind of physical interaction with them, whether through intercourse or some other shared intimate activity, may have created a tie with that person without you realizing it.

These bonds can become dangerous, especially when the person becomes obsessed with you. As for the ancestral curse, there are times when the sins of the father are visited on the son, so just because you were born to this particular individual could mean that you carry some pain and hurt in your present life as a result of that lineage. There are special baths that you can prepare to break such a tie and make sure that it ends permanently. Finally, when you offend someone, and that person holds a grudge against you, if they are the spiritual type, they could engage in declarations, sometimes through incantations and spells that will negatively affect you. Putting yourself through a purification bath will separate you from those declarations and free you from the consequences.

## **For Protection**

As you ascend in your journey as a Hoodoo practitioner, one of the things you will realize is that a lot of the things we deal with daily are more spiritual than they are physical. The energy that people project towards you can affect you without you even realizing it. The spaces that you inhabit are not entirely new, as they belonged to previous owners. These people may have left a very negative aura in that space, and if you do not perform a purification bath, you will find yourself absorbing some of that negativity in different areas of your life. A purification bath helps to give you additional protection against these unpredictable elements. We can never predict the intentions of another, but a purification bath will protect you from them. Think of it as boosting your immune system. You might not yet be sick, but by feeding your body with the right vitamins and nutrients, you arm

yourself against any disease that may want to invade your body. There may not currently be any spiritual attack or negativity in your physical space in the same way. Still, to maintain that serenity and ensure that you are well-guarded against any future attacks, a purification bath will create a barrier that keeps such things out.

## CHAPTER 4: MATERIALS USED IN HOODOO



When you are ready to practice hoodoo, you must first begin gathering the tools and supplies that you are likely to require during your practices. Not all spells will require all of these supplies, but this chapter will go over the bulk of those that you will need. Remember, everything in this world has some sort of divine signature—they all have purposes, and when you learn to recognize the purposes, you will start drawing from their powers.

### **Baths**

Maintaining purity during your attempts to communicate with the spirits is also essential to practice. Baths are viewed commonly as purifying—they are meant to help prepare you for the ritual you intend to perform, allowing you to open your mind and spirit up. Your openness then allows you to create a means of accessing the spirit world, which is how you are able to create your petition for what you want in the first place. Really, purification

baths serve a very important amplification effect that you can use for your rootwork.

However, they can also be used to break ties as well. If you have made ties that are unhealthy, unnatural, or simply just negative, you can sever those ties with the bathing process. Bonds that are negative can be dangerous. Likewise, there could be occurrences in which ancestral curses fall upon you. If this happens, you can take special baths that will help to end those curses.

## **Candles**

Candles are also incredibly prevalent in many forms of magic and religion, and they work well to help to focus energy where it is needed. When you have a candlelit, you can use it to help you to focus your psychic power where you need it. As you do so, you can then begin projecting your thoughts toward the intentions. This requires you to work on meditation while also creating and manifesting the desired intention.

Candle magic helps you to gain the clarity you need. When you have the candle present, your mind can focus, which allows you to focus effectively on the incantations or rituals you have chosen to follow to complete your spell. Of course, this is where you start seeing the power of intention working for you as well. Spells can fail or go haywire if you do not have the right intentions, and because of that, you will need to focus entirely on what you are casting. This is exactly where that candle comes in.

## **Herbs and Roots**

Plant matter of all kinds plays an important role in hoodoo. These were some of the most traditional methods of performing magic that existed and allowed for the manifestation of those powers that were intended. They were designed to heal, protect, and defend.

The purpose of your own herbs and roots is quite important. They work in all sorts of different manners to create various effects that can very clearly change the outcomes of events in the world around you. Plants and herbs, in general, are some of the most prevalent tools that you will see in Hoodoo, and we will be dedicating a significant amount of space later to determine the various purposes of the herbs, plants, and roots that you will be able to

utilize if you want to create the intended effects. Nevertheless, plants, in general, become an essential part of Hoodoo magic, and you will need to know how to wield them.

## **Divination Tools**

Now, divination is a topic that could fill several books on its own with ease. Divination tools are various tools that will enable you to start seeing into the future to piece together the likelihood of whatever you would like to see happen. There are several different tools that are utilized for divination that all work in various ways to start spelling out the future for you before you have to do anything at all. We won't be getting into how to divine the future too much in this book just due to the sheer depth that you would need to go into. However, we will be discussing the various options that you have.

Most commonly, you see people turn to cards, bones, and candles to divine the future. When reading the cards, you are engaging in what is known as cartomancy. This is the process of reading the future through the utilization of a deck of cards. In particular, the kings and queens of the deck hold the most significance, signifying family, authorities, loved ones, and more. Through drawing the cards, you can start to understand who is being referred to in order to start piecing together what the most likely results that you will see are.

Bone reading is commonly referred to as osteomancy and is another common form of foretelling what is to come that is featured around the world. You will need a set of bones to read the future, and the ones the most commonly used were chicken or possum bones. These traditions are rooted in West Africa and remain prevalent in hoodoo. However, the tools for this task are a bit harder to get than simply using a deck of cards. If you are using the bones of an animal that you have found outside, you will need to clean and cure the bones, which is not always a very pleasant method. From there, you must bless them, and then you can start casting your bones. They are commonly cast by tossing them onto a table or other surface after asking a question. Horizontal bones are a yes, while vertical bones are a no.

## **Mojo Bags**

Mojo bags refer to talismans or amulets. They are commonly described as a “prayer in a bag,” referring to the fact that you will be casting your very own intentions when you utilize these bags. They are primarily for protection. However, there is more to it in hoodoo. In hoodoo, you will also see that there is a degree of potency included that goes a step further. The mojo bag is more along the lines of a long-term spell that you can use to focus your power. It is meant to drive that power over a period of time, allowing you to create the intended result. It is meant to be tied to who you are and the fate that you will face.

## **Name Papers**

One thing that you will see used regularly in hoodoo is the creation of a name paper. In fact, you will see several spells that utilize them at the end of this book. Creating name papers, obviously, becomes a very important part of any hoodoo practice, so you will need to know how to make them.

Once you have the paper that you are using, you will want to write on the paper. You will write the other person’s name, typically in an odd number. You want to write it in threes for manifestation, fives for domination, sevens for luck, and nines for enemy work.

## **Amulets and Charms**

These items are used to produce vibrations and energies for the holder and the recipient of magic. They often have daily functions, yet they become magical in the right hands. Candles and holders play a significant role in certain hoodoo rituals, and it is important to have a stock of them in various colors.

Many of the most effective amulets are formed by the user and contain personal effects like hair and nail clippings to give them extra power. There are several powerful talismans connected to luck, and that are carried by gamblers and poker players. Most of these contain symbols originating from the Key of Solomon and attract power, success, and wealth.

## **Coyote Claws**

Coyotes are known for their trickster ways, and stories tell of them stealing fire from the gods to give it to mankind, setting his tail on fire during the



raid, which accounts for the markings on their tail.

Although the coyote is a rogue, he has mankind's best interest at heart. He can travel in the dark and find water in desolate places. His claw is carried by scouts and travelers who want to benefit from his skills and remain undiscovered when traveling. Claws can be purchased from select online hoodoo suppliers.

## **Porcupine Needles**

These American needles are fun to use and can be incorporated in candles, dolls, and rootwork. They provide protection and should be placed around the object that needs protecting with the black pointy bit facing outward.

## **Incense**

Burning incense when performing spells and rituals enhances the experience and signals the intention of the practitioner. Use a clay-burning bowl to burn your incense and self-igniting charcoal to fuel the flame.

Blends of Incense and What They Promote:

- **African juju:** Used to draw passion and intense desire into a relationship.
- **Banishing:** Remove unwanted and harmful people from your life by burning this incense when casting your spells.
- **Chuparosa:** Also known as hummingbird incense, burn it to draw your lover closer like a hummingbird seeking nectar.
- **Dragon's blood:** Containing the real blood of dragons, this resin should be burned to bring power and strength when performing rituals.
- **Has no Hanna:** This incense should be used to enhance your tools. Pass them through the smoke to enhance, charge and reenergize them before use.
- **Jinx killer:** This special blend of incense is burned to give protection from all hexes and curses sent your way.
- **Obeah:** This incense is burned by sorcerers and rootworkers who wish to communicate with the spirits.

- **Seven African Powers:** This orisha essence is used to obtain energy from Africa's seven saints.
- **Tranquility:** Burned to bring peace and harmony to your home.

## **Boss Fix Oil**

When the hoodoo community wanted to "give it to the man" or give their boss a taste of their wrath, they would concoct a fixing oil or powder to cause discomfort when they touched certain objects like keys or doorknobs. Mixtures containing licorice, high john herbs, and other powerful herbs were used to pay back bosses who were less than kind to their staff.

This type of oil or powder can be used in modern workplaces and can be sprinkled onto their office doorknob or computer keyboard. Recite an accompanying prayer to stop them from micromanaging you and realize what a key worker you are.

## **Poppets**

These traditional dolls are often mistaken for voodoo dolls that represent other people and that are used to cause pain. In hoodoo practices, poppets are formed from cloth or wax and represent a spirit connected to the owner. There is no malice intended when a poppet is formed, and if you treat your doll well, it will do the same for you.

When making your poppet, the color of the fabric you use will determine the powers it holds. They can be made from simple white felt and then added to, or you can choose a hue from the list below to imbue your poppet with magic:

- **Banishing:** Black fabric decorated with swords or fire.
- **Ingenuity:** Use orange or yellow fabrics with bright symbols like the sun or fire.
- **Healing:** Use spiritual colors like pale blue or white and decorate with clouds and stars.
- **Love and passion:** Red or deep pink fabric decorated with hearts and bows.

- **Wealth:** Silver or gold fabric with green trims. Decorate with dollar bills or coins and cups.
- **Protection:** Red or white material decorated with shields or keys. Use mistletoe to add an extra layer of protection.

## **Lodestones**

Naturally occurring magnetized pieces of iron ore lodestones are used to draw positive influences toward the user. They attract love and money and are also used to direct spells away from the practitioner who has been cast by others.

## **Lucky Blue Balls**

Known as anil in Latin American countries, these bright blue spheres are made from copper sulfate and carried for good luck. When dissolved in water, they provide a cleansing solution that will protect your house and make it a lucky place to live.

## **Pyrite**

Known as fool's gold, this shiny mineral is widely used in Hoodoo to draw money and success to the person who carries it. Small chunks of the material can be bought for as little as \$10 and make a perfect accompaniment for important attraction spells.

## **Coins**

Certain coins play roles in Hoodoo and are often silver dollars or souvenir good luck coins. These will often have a personal attachment to the person who carries them. In the 1930s, at the height of the Great Depression, these coins were manufactured to bring luck to people who were suffering. They feature horseshoes, four-leaf clover, and other symbols of good luck. Most of the coins have no monetary value and can be found online or in traditional shops selling hoodoo paraphernalia.

## **Mojo Beans**

Also known as wishing beans and African mojo beans, these are classic good luck talismans and should be carried in a piece of red material to bring the holder good fortune.

## **Twice Stricken Lightning Wood**

This is a popular tool in Hoodoo and is a powder ground from wood that has been struck by lightning. It has powers of attraction that can be used for sexual spells and commanding a lover to return. It also has cleansing properties as the lightning represents the power of purity and transformation.

## **Bones**

Throwing the bones is one of the most traditional forms of divination and is part of hoodoo-style worship. The bones used will all have a meaning, and how the throw is interpreted will depend on the person who casts them. The bone reader should cast a petition to the gods describing what they need to know before casting the bones to the mat or animal skin covering a table.

Many people believe that the further away the bones fall means they depict things from the future while the closest bones relate to the present. Spaces between the bones or the shapes they make all have relevance.

If you intend to perform this divination rite, it is important to have a variety of natural bones and other objects to cast. Include items like:

- The arm from a china doll
- Alligator foot
- Sharks' tooth
- Dog ankle bone
- Shell from nutmeg
- Snake vertebra
- Raccoon penis bone
- Rabbit rib bone
- Abalone shell
- Cowrie shell
- Vintage keys
- Ravens' claw

- Chickens' foot

This is just a selection of items you can use to throw the bones. Add jewelry or personal items to make the reading more relevant to whoever wants their questions answered.

## **Abramelin Oil**

Abramelin Oil is a magical ceremonial oil mixed with aromatic plants. It is so-called because its description is in a medieval grimoire called "The Book of Abramelin", written by Abraham of Worms. The recipe is adapted from the Holy Jewish Oil of Tanakh, which is described in the book of Exodus attributed to Moses.

Much has been written about this oil. In the Jewish tradition, from which the original biblical recipe for oil derives, the olive is a symbol of happiness and domestic stability, myrrh is considered sacred to the Lord, the aromatic calamus is known for its sweetness, and the phallic shape of its fruit represents male sexuality and love, while cinnamon is favored for its warming power. Crowley also had a symbolic vision of the ingredients he found in Mathers' translation:

## **Spirits**

Spirits are the foundation of hoodoo, one of the few "strong" beliefs that is present and is also one of the sine qua non-conditions without which hoodoo becomes an act without reasoned basis. Spirits are those of the dead, linked to acts, people and places but rarely with a specific connotation. The simplest thing to define the spirits of hoodoo is to consider the rules that govern them. In fact, they are subject, in tradition, to precise limitations, just as the living are.

They influence and regulate everyday life, they are part of the human community, they move and act with precise purposes and according to desires similar to those of the living. So a spirit will not be able to cross a bridge, a living watercourse (like a river), a busy road or some "magic" barriers (lines of brick or white salt dust, for example, or points where specific prayers have been said) unless the root doctor removes these barriers making them ineffective through his magic. Spirits cannot enter a house unless they are called from within. They will be drawn by specific

invocations, prayers and artifacts, driven out and exorcised by equally specific invocations, artifacts and prayers. They will love offerings of money, candles and food, chili and pepper, but they will hate salt and will want to be paid for every job done so much so that they will take a payment due if it is not paid.

## **The sacred space**

In the practice of the root doctor, the sacred space is a natural rather than consecrated place, which takes shape in the place and time of the magic operation and ceases to be particular at the end of the operation. Sacred places are the crossroads and the cemetery, but any room or place becomes one. For quick operations, such as lighting a candle rubbed with various oils or building a bag full of amulets, complex consecrations, ceremonial precautions, symbolic protections are not used. The two-headed doctor is immersed in the spiritual world he is part of, and in practice, the hoodoo operation is immediate and simple. The spirits know him, and he pays them for their services with offerings and prayers, and that is that. However, even in complex operations, it is rare that "ceremonial circles" or "invocation triangles" are built in the European way to protect themselves from apparitions of spirits because, in these places, the spirits are always free and present. Just think that a handful of cemetery land is considered to contain a spirit and that some root doctors have dozens of jars (depending on the graves they have visited, to use them in different spells).

## ***Vinegar of the Four Thieves***

Four Thieves vinegar is widely used in Hoodoo. It can be used for personal protection, disease prevention, banishing unwanted people from your life, and casting curses.

Legend has it that the recipe dates back to the origin of a band of thieves in the Middle Ages. The thieves were in the habit of robbing victims of the Black Plague. Upon arrest, they revealed the secret of not catching the plague: four vinegar thieves. This is an interesting story, but it is more likely that "the vinegar of the four thieves" is a corruption of "Fort have's Vinegar," which had been used as a remedy for centuries.

Also known as Marseille vinegar, the potion varies widely among manufacturers. There are two general classes, one for internal use and another strictly for external use. The solution can contain any number of herbs. However, almost all recipes say there must be a minimum of four additives, one for each of the thieves.

Vinegar is used as both an attractant and repellent because it has the ability to absorb negative energy. Sulfur powder is thought to have magical properties such as the power to draw money, love or luck. Additionally, it can be used for protection from evil influences and witchcraft. Cat hair is one of the most common ingredients used in hoodoo spells because the cat represents strong will and power. It is believed to be lucky to have a cat in the house.

### **Components:**

- 1 gallon of apple cider vinegar
- 1 fl. oz. thyme
- 1 fl. oz. word phrase
- 1 fl. oz. lavender
- 1 fl. oz. camphor powder
- 1 fl. oz. wise sage
- 1 fl. oz. mint peppermint
- 1 fl. oz. lilac grass

### **Vinegar of the Four Thieves spell**

This is a spell designed to banish, that is to say, drive someone away or make them disappear from our lives. It includes punishment for the victim if they do not satisfy your desire to leave your life. Obviously, there has to be a right motive, not a purer spell.

### **Needed:**

- A black candle
- Crossing or hexing oil
- A small bottle of vinegar

- A lemon
- A glass jar
- Pins
- Photo of the person

### **How to Proceed:**

First step, purify everything with fumigations of sage or rosemary.

Then proceed by engraving the person's name on the candle and then greasing it. As you anoint the candle, say "(name) that all the evil you have done to me now may come back to you!" Being a spell to banish the candle, pay attention.

Put the candle in a holder and light it with a fire returned. Write the person's name three times in small letters on the picture, then cross it and cover it with the words "AGRO E AMARO" in large letters and bold. Fold the photo three times, turning it counterclockwise between each fold, saying, "The presence and influence of X (name) in my life that is forever away from me!

Cut a slice in the lemon, insert the photo and close it. Stick the lemon with the pins and pronounce "(name)" while inserting each pin "shut your mouth or shut up or leave".

Put the lemon in the jar and fill the jar with vinegar. Screw the lid on tightly, shake the jar and say "(name)":

"Sir, while you were showing the blind, show (name) that you didn't put it in my life! How did the lame man walk, let (name) walk away from my life forever! As you cast the demons out of the possessed, cast them out of my life forever! Lord, may your life become as bitter as this lemon and as bitter as this vinegar with each passing day until you leave my life forever! As this lemon rots, so will its health and vitality rot until it leaves my life forever! In the name of Jesus. Amen."

Leave the jar next to the candle until it is consumed, then when you have finished, bury the jar in a cemetery or throw it in a body of water. As long as the person stays out of your life and business, nothing will happen to



them. But they continue to creep into your life, the curse will take hold. The choice is up to them.

## **Black powder**

Black powder is an evocation potion composed of cemetery dirt and various additives, such as snakeskin or salt. The name comes from the Bantu word kufua, which means "to die." It is used as a curse or to hurt someone. A black bag is worn to protect against such attacks.

Black powder is spread in the path of the intended victim or applied to a pillow, person or the edges of one's home. The first sign of being targeted is sharp pains in the feet and legs, followed by swelling and inability to walk. These symptoms are almost identical to complications of diabetes.

## **Black Powder Spell**

**Purpose:** for protecting stationary or inanimate objects like your home, jewelry or even the area where you cast your spell. You can also use it as a protection spell for a person

Protection spells commonly use circles. In Hoodoo magic, drawing circles is a form of basic ritualistic practice. You use certain elements to create circles around what you are blessing, cursing, protecting or empowering with your spell. It is no different in this situation. The black salt that you create should be used in a circle around the person object or space that you want to protect. Here is what you need:

- Black pepper
- Charcoal
- Salt
- Wood ash

Put all ingredients together in a mortar and grind them using the same movement as the clock hand. Ensure that everything mixes smoothly and evenly. Empty the contents into a bowl and bless it with a prayer from Psalm 91. Use the salt powder to make circles around anything or any person you want to protect.

## **Dislodging the Spirit from the Client**

Before you start to meddle with the customer, start by protecting yourself. You ought to have the two feet, two hands, your forehead, heart, navel, and the rear of your neck blessed with Fiery Protection Oil. Furthermore, I recommend you call the entirety of your protective entities and spirits to take care of you. At long last, ensure you are donning white or comparatively light-colored clothes to ensure you are very much protected. On the off chance that you have a Protection Mojo Bag, convey it.

Since everything is set up, you're ready to start. Start by lighting the stogie and ensuring you have decent consuming ash toward the end. Flip the stogie around and put the lit end into your mouth, and blow through the stogie to drive smoke out of it toward your customer. Utilize the smoke to cajole the spirit that is assaulting them to approach. Then, at that point, get the heap of herbs, blow some stogie smoke onto it, and ask either Psalm 51 (beneath) or The Lord's Prayer:

Show benevolence upon me, O God, as indicated by thy lovingkindness: agreeing unto a large number of thy delicate kindnesses abrogate my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine evildoing, and cleanse me from my transgression.

For I recognize my transgressions: and my wrongdoing is ever before me.

Against you, you just, have I trespassed and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be defended when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest.

Observe, I was sharpened in injustice; and in wrongdoing did my mom consider me.

See, thou desires truth in the internal parts: and in the secret part thou shalt make me know insight.

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean: wash me, and I will be more white than snow.

Make me hear bliss and happiness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Cover up thy face from my transgressions, and scratch out the entirety of mine injustices.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit inside me.

Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Essence of God from me.

Restore unto me the delight of thy salvation, and maintain me with thy free spirit.

Then, at that point will I instruct transgressors thy ways; and delinquents will be changed over unto you.

Convey me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue will sing so anyone might hear of thy honorableness.

O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth will shew forward thy acclaim.

For thou desirest not penance; else would I give it: thou delightest not in the consumed offering.

The penances of God are a messed up spirit: a wrecked and a humble heart, O God, thou shrivel not loathe.

Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: fabricate thou the dividers of Jerusalem.

Then, at that point shalt thou be satisfied with the penances of honesty, with consumed offering and entire consumed offering: then, at that point will they offer bullocks upon thine special stepped area.

Presently, gradually turn the customer and softly whack their body with the help of herbs. As you do as such, order the spirit to leave that person's body and to let them be for the sake of Jesus Christ, Amen. Start at their head, and work your direction down toward the feet. (Ensure you don't disturb the twisting of memorial park soil and black powder.) Once you have reached the feet, move over to the jug and blow some stogie smoke into the container and around it to cajole the spirit to advance toward the jug. Presently addressing the spirit directly, express that you have created another home for it, one where it can appreciate a good beverage and a good smoke - over in their bottle.

## **Catching the Spirit**

Presently, supplicating the Lord's Prayer, again and again, take the stogie and light the black powder nearest to the customer with the goal that the copy will be winding out and away from him toward the jug, pushing the spirit to leave the body and go into the jug. Shoo it alongside the heap of herbs as the starting fire moves along. At the point when the black powder completes the process of consuming around the jug, rapidly cap the container and state out loud: "Spirit, I have caught you in the tangled wreck in this jug. Nevermore can you get away from this container, and never again will you inconvenience another spirit! In Jesus' name AMEN!" Wrap the jug in dark cloth and tie the opposite corners firmly over the highest point of the jug with the goal that it won't ever come around again.

## **Cascarilla (Croton Eluteria)**

If you have got a legal battle coming up and do not know if you will win it, you will probably turn to cascara sagrada bark. By creating an infusion and surrounding your property before your court case, you will help to protect yourself. Or, you can also burn it on charcoal the day before your case to up your chances of victory.

## **Peace Rituals: Using Dirt and Minerals**

I mentioned using *dirt from a church* in a mojo bag for love, but this can also be used to bring peace to your home or place of work (if these two spaces aren't one and the same).

Chalk or *Cascarilla* (pronounced kaws-kuh-ree-uh). An inexpensive powder made of eggshells that can be added to workings or sprinkled around a space.

*Peace Powder*. Sometimes this is the same as Cascarilla, but you can also find botanicals that make unique blends. For use in the home or at work.

## **Coffin Nails**

These are used in conjure work to drive away or harm an enemy.

## **Colognes and Perfumes**

There are various colognes made by non-Hoodoo firms that are employed by practitioners because of their magical and spiritual properties.

Florida Water, Strong Love, Kananga Water, Hoyt's Cologne, and Jockey Club are some of the most popular colognes. Colognes may be used to cleanse items and people while also providing protection and good luck. The Jockey Club became well-known for its ability to bring about good fortune and employment. Hoyt's Cologne is one of the most well-known Hoodoo colognes. Hoyt's is said to offer gamblers good luck. Both Kananga Water and Florida Water are well-known for their usage in Hoodoo protection and purification rituals. Hoodoo perfumes are used to "attract" certain energies based on their aroma and color. Perfumes can be used to attract luck or money and to hex or remove curses.

### **Coon Bone**

The bone extracted from a raccoon's penis is treasured as a lucky charm. The bone is thought to be beneficial in concerns of love and gambling. These bones were discovered in slave quarters in both Tennessee and Virginia.

### **Dimes**

The silver from a dime can alleviate pain when drilled and threaded through a piece of red thread. Wearing a dime around one's neck or ankle will protect the wearer from being "tricked."

### **Floor Washes**

Floor washes are liquids containing various fluids, oils, and plants that are used to "mop" spaces where spiritual activity can be done.

### **Goofer Dust**

Goofer dust is used to perform tricks on adversaries. It might be strewn in an area where the sufferer would be exposed to the dust. The victim is drawn to the victim by the dust, which draws the souls of the deceased. Graveyard dirt, sulfur, brimstone, and salt are all traditional ingredients. Snake and lizard skins, as well as red peppers, are among the variations. The name "goofer" is an abbreviation for the African word *kuwfa*, which means "dead person." Slave superstition said that if a slave wore burial soil in his shoes, he would not be spotted by dogs.

### **Gunpowder**

Gunpowder can be used to call spirits or put a spell in motion.

## **Horseshoes**

Horseshoes are classic good luck symbols. They are thought to be able to fend off ghosts, witches, and conjurers in Hoodoo culture. They were widely used to cover the entrances to homes and businesses.

## **Lodestones**

These are amulets used for protection and attracting success. To attract funds, they might be “dressed” with “Money Drawing” oil. Magnetic sand is “fed” to lodestones to put them to work. Lodestones are said to exist in both male and female versions. Giving iron filings to the male is known as “feeding the he,” while feeding the female is known as “feeding the she.” “Lucky Bingo” is used to increase gaming success. Citronella is present in “Fast Luck” oil, which may be utilized to attract consumers to a business. In operations, “Come to Me,” and “Drawing” oils are used to attract the opposite sex. According to Zora Neale Hurston, Van Van oil was once the most popular conjuring medicine in Louisiana. The oil is thought to bestow luck and power on those who use it. It is also said to be capable of removing tricks. Oils such as “Prosperity,” “Triple Fast Luck,” “Fast Success,” and “Lucky 13” are said to bring financial benefits. Oils used to counteract bad effects such as hexes include “Cast Off Evil,” “Stop Evil,” and “Jinx Remover.” “Double Cross” can be used to “turn back” trickery.

## **Powders**

Powders are referred to be “spiritual sachet powers.” These are usually made of talc mixed with various herbs and colors. Powders can be dusted and blown into specified areas to clear negativity or bring about positive outcomes. There are several powders used in Hoodoo culture, including “Attraction Powder,” which is used to attract love into your life; “Magnet Powder,” which is used to attract good health and luck; “Money Drawing Powder,” which is used to bring financial success; and “Uncrossing Powder,” which is used to remove curses, among others. “Hot Foot Powder,” which is meant to drive adversaries and undesired persons away, is one powder that has garnered prominence in the Hoodoo tradition. “You will take the Hot Foot Powder and sprinkle of this powder at a place where

your enemy will walk so that the fever to move will take hold of them and enter their body and they will become dissatisfied with their place of living and move away and not bother either you or your good neighbors anymore,” anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston told her readers. Sonny Boy Brand Jinx Remover is a popular powder among practitioners, with the label stating, “The purported abilities of Sonny Boy are limited only by your own faith.” The advantages of good fortune and prosperity are available via spiritual strength and power.”

### **Quicksilver**

Mercury is utilized to ward off the evil eye. Also, it is used to speed up the work of spirits in several African-based faiths. To get good luck in gaming, conjurers would drill a hole in a piece of nutmeg and fill it with quicksilver.

### **Rabbit’s Foot**

The rabbit’s foot is said to bring good luck and was previously used to ward off evil spirits. To relieve a fever, some rootworkers advised customers to put their foot on a string around their neck.

### **Red Brick Dust**

Crushed bricks are ground into a powder, and the resulting powder is utilized to create magical protection. There are several testimonials in Hoodoo tradition regarding devotees who put red brick dust at the entryway of a home to protect it.

### **Salt**

Salt is mostly used for protection.

### **Scissors**

Scissors are used to “cutaway” crossings and protection.

## CHAPTER 5: ROOTWORK AND HOW TO USE HERBS AND ROOTS IN YOUR MAGIC



### **Rootwork**

In its earliest days, hoodoo was called many different things. One of the terms for healing that the first conjurers practiced was called 'rootwork,' 'mojo,' 'conjure,' 'folk magick,' or 'mojo.'

There are also different names for magickal practices similar to hoodoo. For example, what's known as hoodoo in the United States would be called 'obeah' in Jamaica.

We used to use plants for healing. Many indigenous cultures still do. One of the more common ways plants are still used in this way is with teas. You probably have a selection of teas in your kitchen cabinet right now that can be used for one purpose or another.

To practice seriously, you'll need to do more than spend a few minutes researching. Smell the plants, herbs, and roots you have. Feel them. Look at



them to know how they appear so you can tell one dried or fresh plant from the next.

You may already know the taste from cooking and drinking, but ideally, you get to a point where you can tell a plant (and know its properties useful for your work) by looking at it.

Often beginning practitioners have a list of things they go out and buy for their first spell. While this is fine when it comes to working, hoodoo is about being connected to plants, roots, and herbs. It is the root in rootwork.

This might mean a lot of research and time for you at first, but really what you're doing is connecting yourself to the spirit of the earth. You don't want to rush this just for the sake of getting to whatever spell you want to work. The relationship you develop is a lifelong one and will serve you for years to come.

After your teas, do some research on the spices you have, the plants and flowers growing in your backyard or in pots. Next, you may want to look into how you can grow more herbs on your own. Eventually getting to the point where you don't have to buy a plant for a working.

### **The Power of Dirt**

Just like you wouldn't throw any plant inside of working without knowing what the plant is and why you're using it, you wouldn't collect and use dirt from just anywhere.

*Especially* not a graveyard.

As discussed in the section Working with Place, dirt from different locations can help with our magic. Aside from graveyards, these are common:

- Hospitals
- Churches
- Banks
- Colleges or Universities
- Courthouses

- Casinos
- Rivers

Folks definitely get creative when it comes to collecting dirt. Any place you come across has a spirit, and that spirit gets into the soil around and underneath. With the right process, you could technically collect dirt from anywhere, not just the ones listed above.

There is dirt and dust used in hoodoo that doesn't come from a specific place but is tied to a circumstance or situation. One example is anvil dust, which is commonly substituted with magnetic dust in many spells. These two things are not the same.

Anvil dust is specifically collected from what is leftover in a blacksmith's shop, where hard work happens and direct focus is necessary. Anvil dust is infused with that spirit.

Taking dirt from a place is taking some of the power for your own purposes, so before going out to collect dirt, you want to know why you're taking dirt and what you plan to do with it.

You also want to take with you something to leave in place of whatever you took. Coins are a common offering, as is rum or whisky. If you don't want to leave anything or disturb the roots, you can clean up any garbage left in the area and leave the space better than you found it.

Collecting graveyard dirt isn't for the novice practitioner, but if you venture out, you want to collect at the right time. Take note of the cycle of the moon and time of day. As a general guide, collecting after midnight and in the early morning hours is best.

Another consideration is the exact location of the dirt collected, again, this is especially true when collecting graveyard dirt. Depending on your spell, you may want to collect dirt underneath a shadow, at the entrance or the four corners of the graveyard.

## **Roots at Home**

Growing some of your own plants not only gives you access to the plants but gives you the opportunity to influence the energies in the plant itself. Using blessed water on a plant can purify its power.

There are also practices that show plants respond to positive speech and energies. This gives us the opportunity to practice prayer in an unconventional way, as we can begin to pray to the plant itself.

I would also look into a greenhouse or outdoor storage of some sort, as certain plants need warmer, damper conditions to grow, and, thus, during colder months, they are harder to get hold of.

This greenhouse could also be a place where you can store bags of soil or any items you've collected that you may not want in the house, such as chicken bones.

Hanging protection stones or painting symbols on and in the greenhouse will also keep unwanted spirits from your materials.

By the way, don't panic if you have no plant pots, like jars, jugs, and old plastic tubs work just as well for planting with very alterations. In fact, you could grab a small plastic tub, put some soil in it, and grow mint on any windowsill in your home.

The key here is to make an effort. There is a big difference between "wanting" and "doing" and between "saying" and "doing." And the spirits will see this; someone who truly wants to do something but who is not actually acting may not be in favor of the spirits.

## **Cleaning Your Roots**

Remove the soil and dirt gently and with care. An old toothbrush is perfect as it can remove the dirt without removing the tiny hairs that cover the roots. These hairs are packed with important constituents that need to be preserved.

Any cutting needs to be done when fresh as dry roots are difficult to cut cleanly. Once you have cut your roots to the required size, you need to dry them sympathetically. This can be done by laying the cuttings on trays placing them outside out of direct sunlight but in a warm atmosphere. You can use a food dehydrator on a low setting of 150 degrees or a regular oven on a low setting with the door left open.

*Quick Note:* Some roots will attract moisture and become soft, discard any limp or flaccid roots immediately.

There are different rituals for charging your herbs and roots and preparing them for rootwork, so here is a general tutorial you can adapt for your uses:

- Place your herbs and roots on a sacred surface and bless them with a prayer or psalm
- Use a smudging stick to bless the offerings
- Leave the roots and herbs outside in the light of the full moon
- Place the roots and herbs in a container filled with sacred salt

## Herbal Magic

Although many adherents of modern hoodoo practices are African-American, there are also many non-black practitioners. However, the roots of the tradition are typically found in the folkloric practices of Central and West Africa and were carried to the United States during the slave trade period. These magical systems are sometimes known as Hoodoo but are also called conjure or rootwork, depending on the practitioner.

Many Hoodoo spells are linked to love and lust, money and gambling, and other functional applications. There is also, in some ways of Hoodoo, a veneration of ancestors. However, it is important to note that despite the use of magic and ancestor worship, Hoodoo is by no means a pagan tradition—many practitioners are, in fact, Christians, and some even use the Psalms as a starting point for sorcery.

A list of *some* common roots, barks and wood, leaves, and herbs that are commonly used in hoodoo.

There are a few different ways these can be used in your magic.

- ***As an offering to your ancestors or to deities.*** Many of the seeds, plants, roots, and herbs we use regularly were also used by our ancestors. Usually about half a teaspoon of herbs or seeds can be added onto a small plate and left on the altar once offered.
- ***Burned as an incense.*** It's much easier to do this with some herbs and roots than others. Burning can heighten the vibration of space and prepare an environment before a ritual or spell.

- ***Added to your working.*** One of the easiest ways to use the power of seeds, roots, barks, leaves, and herbs is by adding them to a mojo bag, hoodoo lamp, or jar or bottle.
- ***Dressing candles.*** In rituals or prior to meditation, some hoodoo spells require the dressing of a candle, though you can also dress any candle that you're getting ready to use. If you've set an intention for the day, for example, looking for a job, you can dress a candle with herbs that can help and let it burn while you're going about your day.

When you start your practice, you'll soon discover it can be hard to keep track of what you have in your hoodoo pantry. Here's where keeping a magical record is useful. Some traditions would call this a 'book of shadows.'

There isn't really a hoodoo equivalent to a book of shadows, and it doesn't take long to figure out why. Keeping a diary of magick is something people who have the privilege of privacy do. This is why, in starting your hoodoo practice, you want to recognize that you can read a book like this or keep notes and not be in trouble should someone else discover what you're doing.

All this to say, if you're reading this, I'm pretty sure you can get a binder or some other notebook to write down how you're progressing in your practice.

Section out a few pages to keep track of what herbs you have in stock and if you'll need to resupply soon. Alternatively, you can keep a digital list of some sort. These can help with marking which items you need to get and when your stock is running low.

The point is to find a system that works. You don't want to go out to buy something only to get home and find you had it already.

## **Seeds**

- ***Caraway.*** Can be used to stop someone you love from straying away, is also helpful for increasing mental powers, bringing in love, passion, and is said to be anti-theft. Offer on a love altar or add some seeds to a mojo bag.

- **Cardamom.** For increasing the love in your life. Particularly useful to soothe your own heart if you've been hurt or in pain. Can help with your luck in love and fidelity.
- **Celery.** If placed under a pillow, can encourage prophetic dreams while sleeping also increases psychic abilities and helps with concentration.
- **Coriander.** Commonly used in love spells, for lust, can be added to wine in ground form (though be careful with this). Can be used to ease the pain of a breakup. Great for mojo bags or dressing candles ahead of love rituals.
- **Cumin.** Can be used to keep evil away, curse enemies, or increase fidelity in your relationships. Can also be used to prevent theft and for protection. Can be burned on a charcoal disc and used in workings.
- **Fennel.** Use these if you are going through hard times and need some extra support. Good for healing spells. Also works in purification, strength, and protection. Tie in a satchel and hang it in your home to protect your space from evil and unwanted energies.
- **Fenugreek.** Commonly used for drawing in money. One way to use it is to keep some seeds in an open container on a kitchen counter or table and add seeds to it over time. Can also be used in the home by adding seeds to floor washes.
- **Flax.** Can help to ward off any harsh or angry energies. Used in spells for healing and drawing in money. Also called Linseed. Combine with a few coins and place on an altar for financial stability.
- **Mustard.** Different types have different uses. White or yellow seeds are usually associated with faith, as the bible verse says. Yellow mustard seeds can be carried in a small bottle or amulet for faith and success.
- **Poppy.** The highly potent drug opium is extracted from these seeds, which aligns with how it can be used in magic: to help with getting

rest and feeling pleasure. Can also be used to confuse enemies or people who are in your way. Carry some seeds in a mojo bag or satchel.

- ***Star Anise.*** Can increase your psychic ability and awareness. Carried to increase your luck and is said to be able to keep the evil eye away. Also used in money magic. Excellent for container spells or carried for luck, protection, and divination.

## Roots

- ***Adam & Eve Root.*** Available in two; one root is shaped like a large marble with a flat side, and the other is shaped like a large nail. Together, these roots can be used to attract love to you. If you're in a relationship, each partner can carry one of the roots to keep your union strong. These roots come from orchid plants, which are endangered in many parts of the United States.
- ***Althaea.*** A protective healer. Use in your spells when you or someone else needs to ease a broken heart or any emotional discord. It is said to draw spirits to you that will help in whatever you need. Can be burned on a charcoal disc.
- ***Angelica.*** The root of angels. This is often said to help women with feeling strong and protected. Add to a bath or personal skincare products, grow in a garden or balcony to protect your home.
- ***Bat's Head.*** Also called Devil Pod, Vampire Root, and Cat's Claw. This is an actual pod that appears to have eyes and a mouth. It looks a little scary but is considered a favorite among hoodoo workers. Used primarily for protection, but also has powers in granting wishes.
- ***Dandelion.*** For strengthening psychic abilities. A plant that can aid in transformation and abundance. If you live in an area where there are many of these plants, forage for your own instead of buying from a supplier. Be aware, dandelion leaves have slightly different uses than the root.

- ***Calamus.*** To gain control over yourself or get the upper hand in situations where you need it. Also great for protection. Often used in work that has to do with domination, casting a spell, or added to oils.
- ***Culver.*** A major purifier. Other names for this root are Bowman's Root, Brinton Root, Culver's Physic, and Physic Root (yes, that's physic, and not psychic). If you need spiritual purification beyond what you can do on your own, an experienced practitioner may use this root.
- ***Ginger.*** A root that is amazing for building confidence and going out into a brave new world. Next time you're in the market for ginger root, look for one that is shaped like a human—this is said to be a powerful magical tool. Use to add fire and speed to spells.
- ***Ginseng.*** Used for various magical purposes, including protection, healing, love, sex, and general luck. Famously used to boost male virility. Burn to keep evil spirits away or carry to draw luck to you.
- ***Gravel Root.*** For help in getting and maintaining a job. Additionally, it can be used to ease distress, so if you are having trouble at work, this root may be an ideal option. Best used when carried, especially while working.
- ***Jezebel.*** Said to be used by sex workers to draw clients who are submissive and give good tips. Can be used equally well for cursing an enemy. Use in a money-drawing mojo bag or honey jar.
- ***Licorice.*** Generally used in spells about love and relationships. However, it is also often used for spells with the intent of gaining control. Can be carried to attract love or chewed to build confidence.
- ***Mandrake.*** Another common all-purpose root used for wealth, health, love, and protection. As its name suggests, this root is shaped like a man and said to 'scream' when it is harvested. Keep in your home, on a mantel or altar, for protection. Place on top of money for financial abundance.
- ***Valerian.*** For peace, harmony, love, and protection. May be helpful in situations where there's discord in a relationship. Also known as



'Vandal'. Can be burned, to hex, or burned with a yellow candle to clear a hex cast on you.

- ***Verbena***. An all-purpose. Noted to help with all of the usual life situations: money, love, protection, healing, and peace. Additionally, helpful with maintaining youth, helping with low vibrations, and increasing creativity. Also known as 'Vervain.' Include in prosperity spells or carry with you when you need to be creative.

## From Trees

- ***Cedar***. There's some disagreement on how this wood can help with your magic, but it's generally said to be protective and helpful with matters of the home. Available as wood chips, branches are also used in incense. Can be burned for cleansing in the same way as sage and palo santo.
- ***Frankincense***. A massively powerful resin used in nearly all types of spells to boost their power. Usually burned on a charcoal disc to clear a space and to heighten vibration, so excellent to use ahead of rituals where you need extra power. Resin can also be offered to ancestors and deities on your altar.
- ***Myrrh***. Another powerful resin that can be used in the same way as Frankincense. Associated with Isis. Used for spiritual healing, to raise vibrations ahead of meditation or rituals. Excellent for blessing your space and magical tools and is a connector to the dead.
- ***Pine Needles***. An alternative to palo santo if you're in need of spiritual cleansing. In addition, said to attract prosperity. Pine trees survive in harsh conditions and are worth a try if you need some of that resilience in you or your magic.

## Leaves

- ***Acacia***. Used in spiritual practices and rites for thousands of years in cultures around the world. A masculine all-purpose plant that can be used to clean and consecrate your magical tools. Burn, or use in washes.

- ***Agrimony.*** A spell reverser. If you think or know someone has hexed you, this leaf can help and dissolve the things that can get in your way: depression, anger, sadness, fear, impatience, *etc.* Use in body washes and in oils.
- ***Alfalfa.*** A leaf commonly used for money and financial abundance. In addition, it's also said to keep away poverty and hunger. Dispersing under a carpet in your home may help with attracting clients and customers for your at-home business,
- ***Basil.*** All-purpose: love, cleansing, protection, attracting money, love, and abundance, must-have for any serious practitioner. Widely available in North America considered sacred in some cultures. To use for blessing your home with prosperity and happiness, soak some dried herbs in water for three days. Strain and sprinkle the water by your door.
- ***Bay.*** Another all-purpose leaf that many practitioners across many different magical practices use regularly. Particularly effective at keeping evil away, specifically when dealing in hexes and curses. Write what you want on a leaf and burn it to draw in your desires. Excellent to purify the air (by burning) if someone sick has been in a room.
- ***Catnip.*** Used for love, particularly by women who want to attract a specific man. Can also be useful in mojo bags for physical attractiveness and self-love. Can be carried to attract someone to you. Hang dried over your door to draw in luck and good spiritual energy.
- ***Damiana.*** Another leaf used for love and lust specifically. Also used to increase psychic ability and to help align the chakras. Helps build the energy of other magical herbs. Use as an offering on a love altar or in sachets, honey jars, mojo bags, or candle working to draw love to you.
- ***Holly.*** Used for protection and drawing luck. The same leaf is often associated with Christmas, so you'll find it hanging in practitioners'

homes during Yule. Can draw protection for the home when burned with incense. Often used around Christmas time.

- ***Lemon.*** Lemon leaves have similar magical properties to the fruit. Very effective for cleansing negative energy, especially from old or reused items. Leaves can be used for cleansing, either your body or home.
- ***Oregano.*** An herb commonly used in food can also be protective and give your magick some added energy. Oregano leaves have been burned for centuries to keep negative energies away.
- ***Passion Flower.*** Doesn't quite arouse passion but is useful in love spells and for building your social circle. Promotes sleep when placed under a pillow.
- ***Patchouli.*** A masculine leaf that's useful for money and for love. Is also reported to be useful for breaking spells cast on you by someone else. Often used in spells, oils, and bags for love and for money. Can be placed in your wallet to draw money.
- ***Rosemary.*** Another leaf used by many practitioners, particularly by women. Can both heal and protect. Also said to be useful in the home, particularly when hung dried over a window or door. Use to draw love or healing by creating a poppet of yourself and filling it with this herb.
- ***Sage.*** Like Palo Santo, Sage is a leaf used for cleansing, blessing, and purification. Certain types of sage are specifically sacred to Native American cultures.
- ***Violet.*** Can be worn to keep a calm temperament and stay peaceful. May also help with drawing in love. Place leaves in a green mojo bag or sachet to heal physical and emotional wounds, and protect yourself when wounded.

## Herbs

- ***Asafetida.*** Said to help with repelling evil and can be used to bring difficulties to your enemies. Does not smell nice. Burn on charcoal

and say your petition in the name of the devil to stop someone from bothering you.

- ***Calendula***. A flower used for psychic and spiritual powers, boosting your luck, and getting help when it comes to legal matters. Can be placed in a garland on your door to keep evil away. Useful in love working or as an offering on a love altar.
- ***Chamomile***. Widely used for healing, to diminish stress and clean an environment of any hexes, curses or lingering energy. Also useful for luck, bringing in money, and attracting love. Use in a bath for love.
- ***Cinnamon***. A fiery spice that can be burned for heightened spiritual abilities, for prosperity, and to raise your vibration. Beneficial for drawing in money and success. If you have cinnamon, burn it! It can draw money and love, purify, and aid your psychic abilities.
- ***Cinquefoil***. Can be useful when you're dealing with legal bodies, since it helps with finding your words. Five points represent love, money, power, health, and wisdom, and it's said this herb will impart those on anyone who wears it.
- ***Cloves***. Can be used for any magick related to fire (i.e. your willpower). Helps with money, love, and protection. Burning cloves as incense can work to attract money and raise vibrations.
- ***Elder***. Roots, leaves, berries, and flowers are major for protection but are also poisonous, so be careful. Can be used to guard your home and your money-making endeavors. Can be worn for protection.
- ***Garlic***. Widely used to protect against all forms of evil, including vampires (energetic or otherwise). Healing and great for exorcising negative energies or entities. Hanging in the home won't protect against vampires but will boost your willpower and strengthen family bonds.
- ***Hops***. This beer flower is excellent in magick to help induce sleep and pleasant dreams. Also beneficial in healing and money magic. Use in dream pillows or to help with inducing restful sleep.

- ***Hyssop***. A mint mentioned in the bible (Psalm 51) for spiritual purification. Highly popular in magick for cleansing, particularly for washes and baths. Soak in water for a few days, strain and use the water to cleanse your magical tools and objects.
- ***Jasmine***. A flower that is good for attracting a soul mate and generally being open to love. Also useful for divination, drawing wealth, and charging crystals (quartz specifically).
- ***Juniper Berry***. Used for attracting love and increasing attraction and lust. It keeps things you don't want away and has the ability to attract good vibrations and health.
- ***Lavender***. A flower used to attract love, heal from depression. Promotes sleep and can help with purification. Highly popular as an essential oil. Burning the flowers and spreading ashes can help with love spells and rituals.
- ***Mugwort***. Often used to cleanse and purify tools used for divination, such as scrying mirrors. Can also help with fertility. Create a Mugwort 'tea' (or infusion) by mixing one teaspoon of the herb with one cup of boiling water and using this to clean your altar and magical tools.
- ***Nettle***. Nature's 'Return to Sender'. Return any spells or hexes cast on you, build your will, strengthen yourself and your ability to handle emergencies.
- ***Nutmeg***. Whole helps with luck and winning at games where luck is needed. Can also be used to attract prosperity, protection, and help to break a hex. Sprinkle on a green or white candle for use in prosperity spells, use in mojo bags, and satchels.
- ***Red Pepper***. Crushed or pods, have the same correspondence, cleansing and triggering a breakup of a relationship. Used for 'enemy' magic, to drive someone away or cause bad luck to someone else, often with other herbs like salt and black pepper.
- ***Rose***. The love flower. As a rose has its thorns, so does this flower's protective ability in magic. Can help with any matters of the heart,

finding love, self-healing, and removing bad luck. Place roses on your love altar to honor Venus, goddess of love, beauty (and much more).

- **Skullcap.** Used in money magic, also used to keep partners (usually the masculine energy) faithful in relationships. Can also be helpful in fostering peacefulness. Some of this herb in a lover's shoe is used to help keep them from being noticed by others.
- **Wormwood.** It is said to be good for creating peace in war-like conditions. Also helpful in protection and assisting in receiving clairvoyant information. Can be carried or placed as protection from accidents, so in a satchel, bag, or car.
- **Yarrow.** Popular in spells and workings for courage and self-confidence. Useful for healing and drawing love to anyone who wears it in a sachet. Rubbing over your eyes is said to help with clairvoyance.

## Waters

Beware of applying waters and the oils listed in the next section on your skin or ingesting them. I do not recommend you put any of these on your skin or eat them, you have to know what is safe for you.

- **Florida Water.** A widely popular in many magical practices, but hoodoo in particular. It is an all-purpose water that can be used across multiple purposes in your magic. Technically a cologne.
  - Attract good spirits and repel negative ones.
  - Cleanse your area before working by using it in a spray.
  - Add to your ancestor altar as an offering.
  - Create a wipe for your altar and use it for regular cleanings.
  - Add to spiritual baths and scrubs. While Florida Water is considered safe for skin, you want to test this out first.
- **Kananga Water.** It is a cologne used for spiritual cleansing and protection in the same way as Florida Water, though not as widely available.

- **Orange Water.** Made with orange essential oil mixed in distilled water. Used topically for those who are wishing to increase their luck or looking to get married. Offer on money and love altars. Use it as a wash in a bath or shower. Can also be added to your altar when doing rituals or prayers focused on love or fortune.
- **Peace Water.** As the name suggests, used to promote peace wherever it is used. Comes in an indigo blue color. Use on self-love or altars for the home. Sprinkle around your space after cleaning to encourage a peaceful environment.
- **Rose Water.** Generally used on the body to attract love, also used in beautification rituals and spells. Can also be offered on love altars or to love goddesses. Add to baths and include it as an offering on your altar.
- **War Water.** Used in witch wars and for hexing. Often contains an iron nail along with herbs and plants consistent with the purpose. *Definitely* not for drinking.
- **Willow Water.** Like a tree that grows near water and is often found in or around graveyards (usually in the South), willow water is good for healing, poured as an offering at gravesites. It's considered a natural remedy to physical ailments and can be offered on ancestor altars. Can also be presented as an offering to your herbs, plants, and roots.

## CHAPTER 6: DIRT IN HOODOO PRACTICES



According to the Loci, or "spirit of place," particular places are inhabited by spirits or deities that may be sought or appeased to fulfill our objectives and ambitions. It is currently largely regarded as the energy that inhabits a certain location in the contemporary period. This energy can be obtained in the form of dirt that occupies a certain location.

### **Hoodoo's Distribution of the Earth**

Dirt/earth, like plants and dry powders, can be utilized in various ways. Personally, I spread the dirt on a level area and then make a symbol or write a keyword suggestive of my aim in it. I then address the individual whose grave the dirt was taken and solicit their assistance. Remember that when they received payment for the dirt, they committed to assisting. Following that, the dirt is collected and disseminated in various ways.



It might, for example, be placed in a fanny pack or mojo bag or folded into a parcel. It might be sprinkled on a dressed candle (the oil will make the dirt adhere to the candle, but don't use too much), a house or company, etc. In rare circumstances, the ghost whose grave the dirt is coming from will instruct you on using the dirt.

## **The Power of Dirt**

Just like you wouldn't throw any plant inside of working without knowing what the plant is and why you're using it, you wouldn't collect and use dirt from just anywhere.

*Especially* not a graveyard.

As discussed in the section Working with Place, dirt from different locations can help with our magic. Aside from graveyards. Below are certain examples of where dirt can be gathered and what it can be used for. They are as follows:

- Bank - a financial institution that attracts and retains funds.
- Hospital - for health and healing.
- Police station - for protection
- Court - for success in legal proceedings.
- The church - for spiritual protection and collaboration with beneficial spiritual forces.
- Casino - for good fortune in gambling.
- Post Office - used for sending and receiving mails.
- Bordello / Sexy Shop - for desire, sex, and seduction spells
- Bookstore / Library - knowledge acquisition, school or college achievement
- Gymnasium - an achievement in athletics and sporting events

Folks definitely get creative when it comes to collecting dirt. Any place you come across has a spirit, and that spirit gets into the soil around and underneath. With the right process, you could technically collect dirt from anywhere, not just the ones listed above.

If you're in or around a major city, there's dirt from districts, like financial or fashion. You could potentially get dirt from a neighborhood, a beach, park, zoo, airport or bus terminal, community center, city hall, soccer or sports field, club, animal shelter, even an adult store.

There is dirt and dust used in hoodoo that doesn't come from a specific place but is tied to a circumstance or situation. One example is anvil dust, which is commonly substituted with magnetic dust in many spells. These two things are not the same.

Anvil dust is specifically collected from what is leftover in a blacksmith's shop, where hard work happens and direct focus is necessary. Anvil dust is infused with that spirit.

Taking dirt from a place is taking some of the power for your own purposes, so before going out to collect dirt, you want to know why you're taking dirt and what you plan to do with it.

You also want to take with you something to leave in place of whatever you took. Coins are a common offering, as is rum or whisky. If you don't want to leave anything or disturb the roots, you can clean up any garbage left in the area and leave the space better than you found it.

Collecting graveyard dirt isn't for the novice practitioner, but if you do venture out, you want to ensure to collect at the right time. Take note of the cycle of the moon and time of day. As a general guide, collecting after midnight and in the early morning hours is best.

Another consideration is the exact location of the dirt collected, again, this is especially true when collecting graveyard dirt. Depending on your spell, you may want to collect dirt underneath a shadow, at the entrance or the four corners of the graveyard.

In this case, it is definitely safer to purchase from someone who is more experienced at collecting graveyard dirt rather than collecting yourself. If you feel anything negative *at all*, leave the graveyard and do not collect any dirt.

Practitioners will also be sure to leave something in exchange for the dirt they collect.

## **Power Places**

### **Places of power**

As previously said, hoodoo practitioners believe that the energy of the cosmos is universal - that divine forces are all around us, ready to be harnessed via the proper channels. However, it should be mentioned that there are specific sites where the spiritual forces existing in the physical realm are more concentrated due to the hallowed character of these places or because of historical events that have occurred there. This part will look at some of these "power points" and how they relate to rituals and spellcasting procedures.

### **The Graveyard**

Graveyard soil has previously been addressed several times in this work, demonstrating how strong the graveyard can be as a source of enormous spiritual power and energy, which, when channeled properly, may dramatically increase a person's magical skills. I make my way to the primordial plane. However, when their corpses degrade into the earth, remnants of their spiritual powers evaporate into the surrounding environment. The presence of several corpses rotting within the earth adds to the power of a graveyard's atmosphere. People can utilize graveyards and graves to take power from the surroundings and fuel their spells when performing a big spell that demands a lot of spiritual energy. The larger the graveyard or cemetery, the more power may be extracted from it in most circumstances. The grade of persons buried in a certain graveyard may likewise influence the quantity of power that may be harnessed from that type of location. A graveyard full of deceased witches and diviners may be a source of great power that can result in cataclysmic results when channeled by an equally strong diviner.

### **The Home**

You might not believe it, but your house probably has more spiritual energy than you think. Residential structures, particularly those with a large number of occupants, may be huge repositories of distinct individual spiritual energy. Compared to vacant buildings and commercial sites where people merely come and go, a person's house is an important place to them—and they perform the majority of their activities there—they sleep and

wake up there, eat, freshen up, and entertain visitors. As you continue to leave in your ho, moi, you gradually deposit significant quantities of spiritual energy in there over time. When evil individuals reside in a house and infuse it with their bad energy, those energies may stay active long after the evil people die, transforming the house into a haven for evil and mischievous spirits.

As a result, your house may be an important site to perform rituals and make sacrifices to the spirits.

### **The Bank**

In some cultures, money is said to be a spirit. Everyone wants money, and we all spend a significant portion of our lives attempting to obtain it. Banks may be extraordinarily effective centers of spiritual power due to the importance of money in people's lives and the heated spiritual energies surrounding money. Banks typically contain significant sums of money, making them ideal locations for casting spells to bring good fortune and wealth because of the abundance of spiritual energies associated with these beings in banks.

### **The Church**

Hoodoo rituals and magic spells are often carried out in churches, even though this may appear strange or blasphemous to some, but churches are revered in hoodoo tradition as sacred sites of power. People visit churches to pray and connect with God. People begin to commit themselves to the service of the supernatural. Because the church is a place of worship for a higher force, it is a wonderful site of power. Aside from the unique type of contact that occurs within the four walls of a church, the huge number of people present in a church may also make it a location of extraordinary spiritual energy.

### **The Hospital**

People visit hospitals to get treated for various ailments. Illnesses are expressions of a person's bad spiritual energy. Positive energies provide power, vitality, well-being, health, wealth, and vigor. On the other hand, negative energies are associated with illness, poverty, weakness, drowsiness, and, in the most extreme situations, death. Care must be taken when performing rituals and casting spells at a hospital. On the other hand,

a hospital might be a supercharged place of negative energies associated with disease and death. However, power is power, whether bad or positive and when channeled properly, a hospital may be a wonderful environment to gain great spiritual powers.

## **Graveyard Dirt**

Dirt and dust are different things. The dirt from graveyards is the actual soil surrounding the grave, while the dust is residual material found on the surface. The Bokongo people of Central Africa are believed to be the source of this form of magic, and they believed that the dirt contained the spirits of the people buried in the soil. When they traveled to America in 1730 as slaves, they brought this concept with them.

Graveyard dirt can't just be taken. It needs to be purchased. This involves communing with the dead person and creating a contract to buy the dirt. This would usually involve the purchaser leaving a gift on the grave for the deceased, usually in something they enjoyed in life, like liquor or money.

Not all graveyard dirt is equal. The dirt from the graves of babies and young children is especially powerful for healing and spells of good fortune, while the dirt from directly above the heart of the body is used for love spells. If you plan more iniquitous deeds, then the dirt from a murderer's grave will prove more powerful. Dirt from the graves of lesser criminals can be used to cast spells of chaos and disorder.

According to the Bokongo people of central Africa, cemetery dirt contains powerful magic. The dirt contains the spirit of the person buried there. Bokongo slaves brought this belief to the Americas in the 1730s.

You can't just take dirt from a cemetery; it must be bought. This involves communicating with the dead and offering them something in return for the dirt, often liquor or something they enjoyed in life. In the 19th century, the typical payment was a silver penny.

Not all cemetery dirt is created equal. Children's graves are sought after for blessings and good luck. Love spells are best performed with the dirt of someone who loved you, ideally the dirt that was on their heart. If you have evil in mind, the grave of a murderer is preferable. Minor criminals such as con men and tricksters have good dirt to cause mess and confusion.

When you consider that one of Hoodoo's primary factors is ancestral spirits, it should come as no surprise that you will also be working in graveyards. Now, working in graveyards is not exactly a beginner's tactic, but it is a key part of hoodoo. It requires a high degree of intuition and focus because there may be spirits there that are not pleased that you are there when you enter. They may not be there to help you, and that can become dangerous for you as well. Some spirits would prefer to be left alone or would prefer to lead you astray. As a beginner, it would be better for you to focus on your time at home. Learn to develop your skills with the ancestral altar and use it before you start delving into graveyards, which will be dangerous for you. Eventually, when you have got that spiritual intuition and that experience with your ancestors, you can start trying to experiment with graveyards, but do not do so lightly.

Before we delve further into discussing graveyards, however, remember that graveyards are not evil. They are not negative, either. They are actually, in hoodoo, believed to be highly revered. Rather than being places of grief and sadness, they are regarded as places of reverence. After all, in hoodoo, you are acknowledging that death is not final. Death is not the end of everything—rather, it is the beginning of the next phase. Your ancestors have died; they are no longer walking on this earth in their physical forms, but they still exist. They are still there, and their energy is still prevalent if you know where you are looking or what you need. If you can understand this concept, you start to step away from those negative connotations that the graveyard may initially evoke. Yes, you leave the bodies of your loved ones behind in them. However, their energy lives on.

We acknowledge that the graveyard becomes a place where we can access the energies of our loved ones. Death is a connection between our world and the next one, and because of that, the graveyard becomes symbolic of that journey.

The graveyard, then, creates the effect of evoking transitions. It is the beginning and the end at the same time. Graveyard earth can be that perfect way to harness the energy you need to represent that end or beginning. It can help to end eras or times. However, it can also be used to create new beginnings.

Remember, however, that when you take earth from a grave, you need to pay attention to where you are. You need to be selective of the people whose graves you take from. If you were to choose the wrong graves, you could end up creating issues with your spells. And, if you are not respectful, you can actually cause other problems as well.

Collecting graveyard dirt must be very respectful and almost even formal at times. You want to make sure that you are only to choose the right grave, paying attention to the energy that you wish to evoke, but you must also appease the spirit that resides there. It would help if you were respectful of their resting place and either pay for the soil with some pennies or with some whiskey or something else. This helps to show them that you are thanking them for the soil.

There are different ways that you can choose out a grave to draw from a spirit. From being able to figure out what the power of that spirit is through divination to using your own intuition after getting the experience necessary, you can start figuring out what you are doing with ease. Walk around the graveyard that you are in. Start taking the time to figure out what you are doing and get a feel for where you are. Get to know the spirits. You may find some that draw you, and if you do feel compelled to approach one, remember that you should do your research.

Remember that with this kind of magic, however, you are not just trying to get something. You are making relationships. You are building that connection with the energy of another being that was also once alive. You are not just trying to buy their services with a splash of whiskey or a few bites of something. You are trying to create that relationship to rely upon the people you are connected to.

## **Death in Hoodoo**

Many Root Operators begin to work with the dead's spirits in the form of Ancestors, the spirits of the dead connected to them by blood. It is believed that the dead do not die but rather ascend to another level of being, from which they can watch over us and help us. From this higher level, the Ancestors can guide us in our daily life, intercede with the Divinity on our behalf and protect us in our time of need.

The process of working with the Ancestors begins with the construction of an Ancestral Altar. Before I go any further, I would like to point out that many of the rootworkers are Christians and adhere to God's commandment in Exodus 20:3 to "have no other gods before me." Therefore, the rootworkers do NOT worship the Ancestors because they worship them. The ancestral altar is the place where this veneration takes place ritually. (See also The Ancestors) In other cases, a practitioner may visit the cemetery to ritually collect dirt from a particular tomb or graves for use in spells and rituals. There are many variables to consider when collecting dirt from the cemetery for spells and rituals. Some of these variables include:

- Position of the grave
- How the person died
- Obtain permission
- Where to collect dirt

Moreover, the cemetery's dirt is not simply taken but rather paid for after negotiating with an appropriate spirit. Some practitioners regard work with the Saints and the Saints of the People as a form of work with the dead, since the Saints were once living human beings who also lived exceptionally virtuous lives.

## **What is Goofer Dust?**

The name derives from the Bantu word kufua, which means "to die," and it is used to harm or kill the targeted victim. Composed primarily from graveyard dirt and dust, it also incorporates other ingredients depending on the required outcome. Snakeskin and salt are added to the dust to create a powerful way to cause someone harm.

The Goofer dust is spread on the victim's pillow or around the path they use to cause the greatest damage. The first sign the hex has worked is sharp pains in the legs or feet followed by severe swelling, which leads to the inability to walk. The term has also evolved to become a verb and a noun. The term "goofering someone" refers to any practice that involves a form of poisoning or inflicting harm by introducing injurious elements into their environment.



In January 2016, a man from Queens was sentenced to 50 years in prison for killing his parents five years earlier. After firing four sets of defense lawyers, he represented himself in court and claimed that his parents died as a direct result of his mother's use of goofer dust in the home. The truth was that he bludgeoned his mother to death and choked her with a pearl necklace before plunging her head into the bathtub.

## **Working with Place**

Spirit is everywhere. Have you ever walked into a place and noticed that it just *felt* different? Some would call this a “vibe,” short for vibration. You feel this when you walk into someone’s home, but types of places have the same effect.

Think about what it feels like to walk into a school, a library, or a bodega. Each of these places has a distinct vibe to it that you know but don’t think about too much.

Graveyards and crossroads are two important places in hoodoo because of the energy they carry. Other places that you’ll often hear or read about in your research are banks and churches.

Specifically, you’ll most often work with the spirit of a place like a bank by using the dirt from the land around where it is located (if it’s surrounded by concrete, that is another story). You could really get creative with this, but using dirt from just anywhere could produce unintended results.

The symbolism of crossroads is also big in conjure. The crossroads represent many things. In our plane of existence, we live in a world where we can experience both 3D life and the spirit world.

## CHAPTER 7: MAGIC CANDLES



As you begin your hoodoo work, you'll quickly discover the importance of candles. When it comes to depicting magick, this is one of the things Hollywood gets right.

Your first hoodoo candle will probably be called a 7-day candle. These are available in a tall, glass cylinder, and as their name suggests, are built to last seven days. They are about 8 inches high and just over 2 inches in diameter.

You may have seen religious 7-day candles before. These are the ones with religious figures depicted on them, like Mother Mary, and may have a prayer printed on the back.

You can get plain candles or ones in various colors. A 7-day candle may have seven different colors or two. These different colors can help you with blessing your candle, and with doing spells that require you to do a working every day for a week.

Some spells require you to bless a candle halfway up and halfway down. Two-colored 7-day candles show you easily where the halfway mark is.

One kind of candle you can purchase can have multiple colors, sometimes two, but you can find candles with up to seven colors in a column as if each color is stacked one on another.

Another type of candle that is easier to use for spells and is not designed to last more than a week is the smaller, thinner pillar in different colors. You could make these candles stand on something by melting the wax at the bottom and sticking the candle down on whatever you're working on.

## **Using a Lamp**

In addition to candles, part of your practice can include the use of hoodoo lamps. If you have a traditional lamp at home, consider yourself lucky. You can use these lamps in your hoodoo.

More often, you'll find the kind of lamp that is created using a mason jar or other glass-type of container. Most of your magical items and ingredients will go inside of the jar with your oil. Your floating wick would then go on top of the oil, and you can light it to activate your lamp.

What you're creating will look different from anything you may have seen in the past. Even in the hoodoo tradition, there aren't many people who create lamps. That said, it is not complicated.

At the end of your working, you'll most likely have your lamp sitting on a plate with different curios and items floating inside of the glass, with your flame or wick burning on top. On the plate, you may have more curios or items with the purpose of bolstering your work.

Generally, these floating wicks can last up to 24 hours, but you never want to leave an open flame by itself.

## **The Candle Materials**

Of course, as mentioned above, the best candles of all are those that the magician makes himself using pure beeswax. This is basically for two reasons:

The first is that the operator can infuse (consciously or unconsciously) his energy during the various stages of the process. The second reason is that virgin wax is a natural, living material that vibrates with light energy (it is no coincidence that bees have always been considered "solar" creatures).

These considerations make "self-made" candles more effective in their function of channeling astral energies. Furthermore, when we need to get rid of the remnants of a ritual, we can easily (e.g.) bury the remaining wax because, as beeswax is natural and biodegradable, we can be sure that its dispersion in the environment will be more respectful towards Mother Earth.

However, many people find it inconvenient to make their own candles. In fact, it is a question of finding good quality wax, suitable wicks, molds, the right melting temperature, cooling and extraction from the molds, *etc.* There is a risk that you will find yourself in a situation where you have to make your own candles. There is a risk of finding something that should look like a candle but in the end, does not burn properly. Good results require a certain amount of practice and effort.

A good alternative is that there are ready-made candles made of pure beeswax on the market... the practitioner simply has to purify them and charge them with his personal energy before performing any magic ritual. Obviously, the color of these candles is golden yellow (solar) or white (if the beeswax has been bleached). These are "universal" colors, so they are suitable for all sorts of rituals.

However, for those who prefer differently colored candles (in order to make the most of the subtle vibration of the colors), there are excellent candles available on the market made of pure vegetable stearin from coconut palms, dyed with food coloring. These candles are also fully biodegradable and therefore respect the natural balance.

As a last choice, there are regular candles made of non-biodegradable stearin. The qualities of these are very variable, certainly inferior to the natural and biodegradable candles seen above. In general, we can say that the price is a good indicator of the quality of a candle. In fact, the more expensive the candle, the better (from both a magical and a natural point of view) the materials used in its manufacture.

## **Burning candles in magic**

We usually think of candles as something that, once lit, has a fixed duration. In fact, in the boxes of commercial candles, there is an indication of the

burning time (e.g., "duration 8 hours"). In reality, the indication is a kind of "average" since a candle can burn faster or slower depending on the case.

In any case, the slowness or rapidity with which candles are consumed in the context of a magic ritual is of considerable importance. In general, we can say that if a candle is consumed rapidly in a spell, it is a sign that in the Air present in the place or room in which we are operating, there will be a good quantity of Spirit Ether.

Vice versa, there will be little Astral Spirit in the Air if the candles are consumed more slowly than usual. The presence or absence of Spirit in the air depends on many factors, the most important of which are: astrological moment, geographical position, energies of the place where we operate, energies of the people or entities nearby, our state of mind, and last but not least, the type of rite or spell we are performing.

So if we are performing a constructive (or "white magic") spell, a fast-burning of the candles will be a good sign. It follows that our occult operation has an excellent chance of succeeding. Conversely, if the candles burn slowly, there is little chance that the ritual will be successful.

The opposite is true for destructive (or "black magic") rituals. Therefore, in the latter case, rapid combustion is a sign of vitality and a negative outcome of the ritual, while slow combustion indicates a positive outcome of the magical operation. Naturally, these are signs that provide general indications. Only time (and objective verification) will be able to say with absolute certainty whether an operation has been truly effective.

## **Preparing the Consecrated Oil**

The candles should be "dressed," as we will see later. Generally, purified and consecrated oil is used for this operation. You can buy bottles of ready-to-use oil in various shops and esoteric bookshops but, as always, the best results are obtained by creating the oil yourself (and you save a lot of money in the process). So how do you do it?

Take a small bottle and put some extra virgin olive oil in it. Add a pinch of salt and, if you wish, other ingredients (herbs, essential oils) that match your purposes. For example, if you are going to do a ritual to attract money and abundance, you could add some dried apple seeds, orange juice,

chamomile (open a bag of ordinary infusion and use a pinch of powder, or crumble some flowers, or use some essential oil to that aroma), *etc.* When you are satisfied and you have added all the ingredients you consider useful, place the bottle in a bain-marie in a small saucepan and heat it slightly. Caution: it should not boil but simply receive heat energy.

While the oil is heating up, consecrate it with your intention. There are, of course, many different methods (each Wizard or Witch develops in the course of their practice their own systems for consecrating ceremonial objects and instruments). Here is a fairly simple and complete one that you can use or modify as you wish.

Draw with the index finger of your right hand (with the Wand or the Athame) a Pentagram of Invocation (depending on the purpose, the symbol can refer to a different Element. For example, you can use an Earth invocation staff following the example above, as it is the Element most directly connected with money and prosperity).

Then place your right hand over the bottle at a distance that allows you to feel the heat without burning yourself, and recite a consecration formula. Below, you can read some of them, just as an example:

Creator Spirit, descend into this oil and consecrate it with your virtue. Let every spirit, ghost, larva and evil shadow be cast out of it, and let every lie and illusion be banished. Make it sacred and pure so that I may use it for my Work. With the blessing of all, without harm to any, so be it.

Those who have more affinity with the Judeo-Christian tradition can recite some passages from the Bible, for example:

Then Moses took the anointing oil, anointed the dwelling and all things therein, and so consecrated them.

(Leviticus 8: 10)

Or the formula for anointing the Oil of Catechumens, used during baptism (when you see the symbol "+", make a sign of the cross with the index finger of your right hand, the Wand or the Athame, on the oil that is being heated):

Ego te linio + Oleo salutis in Christo + Jesu Domino nostro + Ut habeas vitam aeternam, Amen + Or the formula used for the consecration of Chrism in Catholic ceremonies:

Lord, bless this oil, so that you may infuse into it the power of the Holy Spirit with which you united the priests, kings, prophets and martyrs.

Continuing the example of the ritual about money and prosperity, the deities most closely related to such an intention could be Hermes/Mercury, Ganesh, Lakshmi, Abundantia, Plutus, Horus, Renenutet, Anuket, Teutates (Toutatis), Odino/Wotan. In addition, you could invoke the spirit of the Archangel Metatron or Uriel (linked to the North, the fertile land and its fruits), as well as various Spirits and Demons of Goetia who deal specifically with attracting money and wealth. Staying with the classic, a possible invocation to Hermes/Mercury for this ritual could be the following:

I call the Messenger of the Holy Gods

Faster than the wind

Faster than the thunderbolts of Zeus

Angelos Athanaton

Come rattling with winged feet

I call the lord of cunning

Mechaniotes

God of serpents

Who guides the path of Psyche

Through heavenly and chthonic gates

In life and in death

In dreaming and waking

I call on him to whom no path is hidden

Remove every obstacle in my path

Sanctify this oil dedicated to you

Bring me your gifts, Holy Hermes

So be it!

If we choose to use this formula, it might be a good idea to do the oil consecration ritual on a Wednesday, possibly in the hour of Mercury or Jupiter.

## **Dressing the Candles**

Take the candle with your left hand (the receptive hand) and wet the fingers of your right hand (the projective hand) with the consecrated oil (remember, wait until it has cooled down).

## **The Moon Phases**

- The New Moon or also Black Moon is in tune with the purification rites, amplifies the effect in the period of the lunation, and influences the actions performed on the day of the new moon.
- The Crescent Moon lasts about two weeks, the lunar energy increases the vital force and the earth's magnetism: these are good days for rituals related to actions that need to be carried out quickly.
- The Full Moon is the most suitable and most important phase for oneself since it is the complete maturation of what has been conceived and developed during the phases of the New Moon and the Crescent Moon.
- The Waning Moon can be used to reverse a health problem, to remove obstacles, to silence gossip. It is the ideal time to maintain lasting results.



## **Days of the Week for Candle Magic**

Depending on the wish, we have to choose the right day of the week, matching the planets, colors, essential oils, incense, and zodiac signs.

### **Monday: Day of the Moon**

- Zodiac sign: Cancer
- Candle color: White - Light blue - Pastel green
- Essential oils: Sandalwood - Jasmine
- Incense: Sandalwood - Ginger - Jasmine.

### **Tuesday: Day of Mars**

- Zodiac signs: Aries - Scorpio
- Color: Red - Bordeaux
- Essential oils: Pepper - Thyme - Hot pepper
- Incense: Black pepper - Geranium - Nettle

### **Wednesday: Mercury Day**

- Zodiac signs: Gemini - Virgo
- Color: Light Yellow - Dark Green - Light Brown - Copper
- Essential oils: Aniseed - Cumin - Fennel
- Incense: Cinnamon - Lavender - Chamomile

### **Thursday: Day of Jupiter**

- Zodiac signs: Sagittarius - Pisces
- Color: Blue - Turquoise - Violet
- Essential oils: Cedar - Nutmeg
- Incense: Cedar - Mint - Benzoin - Saffron

### **Friday: Day of Venus**

- Zodiac signs: Taurus - Libra
- Color: Green - Pink

- Essential oils: Myrtle - Rose - Vervain
- Incense: Rose - Orange Blossom - Apple

### **Saturday: Day of Saturn**

- Zodiac signs: Capricorn - Aquarius
- Color: Olive Green - Dark Brown - Black
- Essential oils: Cypress
- Incense: Myrrh - Musk - Dandelion

### **Sunday: The day of the Sun**

- Sign of the Zodiac: Leo
- Color: Gold - Yellow - Orange - Silver
- Essential oils: Orange - Cinnamon
- Incenses: Olibanum - Saffron – Laurel

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## **Colors and Signs of the Zodiac**

- Aries - red
- Taurus - green
- Gemini - yellow
- Cancer - silver
- Leo - orange/gold
- Virgo - brown
- Libra - pink
- Scorpio - black
- Sagittarius - purple
- Capricorn - blue
- Aquarius - white
- Pisces - purple

## CHAPTER 8: MAGIC OILS



Oils are another curious part of a religion that has been used throughout the ages. You will find the use of oils in virtually all religions. In Hoodoo, oils are used as an accelerant and a sealant. In other words, when you put a specific oil on an object or place, or person, you are accelerating the power of the spell that you want to invoke or conjure within that object, place, or person. You can also use it to seal that power that has been placed in/on them. For example, if you consecrate a specific place and assign it as holy, you need an oil to seal this consecration process. So whatever kind of spell you want to create, there is an oil mixture that can aid that process, and that is what we'll talk about in this chapter. I will share the core uses of oil in Hoodoo and then highlight a spell that utilizes oils in its enchantment.

### **Understanding Magic Powder and Oils**

Powders and oils are an integral part of the Hoodoo tradition. They have been used for centuries, long before it became commonplace to use essential oils for aromatherapy. The only difference between the general use of oils and the way they are used in Hoodoo practices is that each oil is conditioned with a purpose. This tradition is perhaps what gave rise to the knowledge that certain scents are associated with certain emotions and can

invoke certain feelings. For example, the scent of citrus is said to inspire creativity. There is a lot of science that backs up the effectiveness of these aromatherapy oils. But as you well know by now, Hoodoo is not exactly science that can be cooked up in a laboratory. It requires the merging of mind and spirit.

Oils and powders are extracted from plants, and so, with the understanding of plant spirits and what they represent, you can extract the essence of that plant, combine it with other herbs in specific portions, and then bind that to a purpose with your mind. It really is as simple as that. However, the process is very delicate. Some oils and powders have been crafted for this particular purpose.

While there are many experts and people like myself who are deeply steeped in the practice of Hoodoo who can create the right oils for you, there is something beautiful about being able to create a unique mix for you. Eventually, as you advance and grow in the craft, you might be able to create these mixtures for other people as well. My goal and desire here are to pass on my knowledge to create your herb mixes, oils, and potions that are just as effective as mine, if not more so because they are specific to you. To create your own oil and powder mix, the first place to start is to understand plants. Now you see why I said it is essential to research all these herbs and plants. Don't just focus on their magical properties. You have to identify them individually. There are different species of each plant, which are unique to their geographical location. Mastering their uses and extraction process requires constant practice and study.

## **Conjure Oils**

Conjure oils and incantations from a time when life was closer to the earth. Hoodoo is one of the most misunderstood practices in witchcraft, or perhaps witchcraft is misunderstood in how it relates to Hoodoo. In either case, there are many misconceptions about what this practice entails and who its practitioners are.

Hoodoo practitioners were once primarily male, but more women are involved today than ever before. While their numbers have decreased, they still remain a minority within the broader world of witchcraft.

Hoodoo practitioners (or practitioners of hoodoo) generally work with herbs, roots and other plants in combination with more complex and elaborate spells. Though there are many similarities between hoodoo and other forms of witchcraft, there are also differences that set hoodoo apart from them as well.

Hoodoo consists of a set of practices that are derived from African cultural and spiritual traditions. Most hoodoo practitioners are also practitioners of more mainstream witchcraft, like Wicca or ceremonial magic. In fact, hoodoo was the ancestor of these forms of witchcraft as well as other magical systems that developed later in the New World like Santeria and Voodoo.

There are several unique aspects to hoodoo, including some practices that are frowned upon by many other forms of witchcraft. The use of eggs in spells, for example, is something not practiced by many Wiccans - but it's common in hoodoo. That said, there are also similarities between hoodoo and other forms of witchcraft as well.

### **How to Use Conjure Oils**

The potency of a powder like this depends on how well it latches on to that person's imprint, which carries their essence. You will quickly learn about Hoodoo magic because the essence of a person is an important ingredient in increasing the potency of the spell you are casting. This is because the spell in question is no longer generic but has a unique identity to work with. Let us say you live in a neighborhood that is relatively quiet, except for one annoying neighbor who is a nuisance to you. A quick way to get them out of your life without having to tip the balance of good and evil is to use Hoodoo powder. Sprinkle this powder on a well-known path where they walk. Mixing the powder with a little bit of dirt will help disguise it. Once you have sprinkled it, you have to seal the spell with your intention by vocally saying their name and what you want to happen. There are specific powder mixtures that can act as a repellent, and when you attach your intention to such a mixture, you are guaranteed to get results almost immediately. This can also work if you are trying to get attention from that person.

Oils work a little differently from powders, which has a lot to do with their consistency. For instance, if you sprinkle oil on an invoice, it would look tacky, and you would come off as unprofessional. This bad impression that the image creates will set the mind of the recipient against you. So it is better to use powder in certain situations and oils in others. One instance where both oil and powders can be used is when you are creating a spell or working with candle magic. There are candles that are created for spell purposes. Sprinkle a little bit of powder or oil on the uppermost part of the area where the candle is burning and then place your intentions on that candle so that as it burns, the spell will be activated and cause your desires to manifest in your life. You can also use oils and powders as a way to feed your mojo bags. In the next chapter, we are going to be talking in greater detail about mojo bags. But the thing you need to understand about them right now is that their power wanes over time. For this reason, you need powders and oils to continue feeding that energy if you want to keep the spell active and relevant.

There are many other ways to use Hoodoo oils and powders, but I am saving some of those tips for the chapters where we get into the creation of spells, so you can see this part of Hoodoo practice in action. For now, the only thing left to discuss is how to create or conjure up your own magic oils and powders.

## **Oils and Potions**

This heading delves into some of the most popular oils and potions used in Voodoo hoodoo. You would either need to discover how to create them or buy them for several of the spells. Most conventional rootworkers create their own, but technological advancements and internet connections have made it simpler for some people to buy what they need. You are free to choose whatever you desire; there is no rule requiring you to create your own. Making your own has the bonus of knowing just what's in it and being able to charge it yourself.

### **Carrier Oils**

Grapeseed Oil has a shelf life of around 3-6 months. Grapeseed oil processed with solvents has a 9-month shelf life. Keep refrigerated until ready to use.

Abyssinian Seed Oil - Mustard Seed - Shelf life is roughly about 18 to 24 months.

Olive oil has a shelf life of 12 to 18 months if properly stored in a cold, dark place.

If not refrigerated, sweet almond oil has a shelf life of around 3-6 months. The shelf life can be extended to 12 months if refrigerated.

## **Precautionary Measures**

Please keep in mind that any oil or oil mix may cause an allergic reaction. Until using any essential oil that can come into contact with the skin, a skin patch examination should be performed. This is to see if you're allergic to the oil or if you have a sensitization reflex to it.

- 1) Keep all oils out of the reach of children and pets.
- 2) Pregnant women and people with health issues should seek medical advice.
- 3) Essential oils should never be applied to the skin undiluted.
- 4) Essential oils can never be consumed.
- 5) Natural ingredient-based products can also induce allergic reactions in certain people.

Working with essential oils necessitates knowledge of the oils' properties and awareness of the oils' safety concerns.

- *Hazardous Oils:* Bitter Almond, Elecampane, Arnica, Costus, Boldo, Cinnamon (bark), Broom, Chervil, Buchu, Camphor, Calamus, Cassia, Fennel(bitter), Wormseed, Horseradish, Tonka, Mugwort, Thuja, Mustard, Tansy, Oregano, Savory, Pennyroyal, Sage (common), Sassafras, Santolina, Savine, Wintergreen, and Wormwood are some of the Hazardous oils.
- *Toxicity:* Essential oils such as Ajowan, Sage (exotic), Anise Star, Pepper (black), Basil (exotic), Parsley, Bay Laurel, Nutmeg, Bay (West Indian), Juniper, Camphor (white), Fennel (sweet), Cassie, Cedarwood (Virginian), Hyssop, Cinnamon (leaf), Hops, Clove



(bud), Fennel (sweet), Eucalyptus, Coriander, should be used in moderation.

- *Dermal Irritation:* Ajowan, Thyme (white) Allspice, Peppermint, Aniseed, Parsley, Basil (sweet), Lemon, Garlic, black pepper, Ginger, Boreal, Eucalyptus, Cajeput, Cornmint, Caraway, Clove (bud), Cinnamon (leaf), Cedarwood (Virginian), and Turmeric are some of the Oils that can irritate the skin, particularly when used in high concentrations.
- *Sensitization:* Certain oils can irritate the skin only in people with extremely sensitive skin or cause an allergy in some people. Before using fresh oil, always do a thorough inspection to ensure that you are not allergic to it. Basil (French), Pine (Scotch and long-leaf), Bay Laurel, Peru Balsam, Benzoin, Orange, Cade, Mint, Mastic, Lovage, Canagaa, Litsea Cubeba, Cedarwood (Virginian), Lemon Balm (melissa), Lemongrass, Lemon, Chamomile (Roman and German), Jasmine, Citronella, Geranium, Garlic, Hops, Ginger, and Styrax are some of the oils that can cause irritation to some people.
- *Phototoxicity:* Certain oils are phototoxic, which means that they can induce skin pigmentation if exposed to direct sunlight. If the region may be exposed to the light, do not use the below oils on the skin, either pure or in dilution: Angelica Root, Lovage, Bergamot (except bergapten-free type), Lime (expressed), Ginger, Cumin, Lemon (expressed), Mandarin, Verbena. and Orange.
- *High Blood Pressure:* Hyssop, Sage (Spanish and Common), Rosemary, and Thyme are all oils to avoid if you have high blood pressure.
- *Epilepsy:* Fennel (sweet).
- *Diabetes:* Hyssop, Angelica, Rosemary, and Sage (all types).
- *Homeopathy:* Black pepper, eucalyptus, camphor, and peppermint are incompatible with homeopathic therapy.

## **Storage**

Essential oils should be kept in dark glass bottles or vials to keep them fresh. On the other hand, critical oils can be wrapped in transparent glass bottles or vials and placed in a jar or dark carrying case. Keep all essential oils away from children and pets at a mild to cool temperature.

## Formulas

Any of the formulas below will have detailed blending instructions, while others will not. **Some people like** the intensity of a specific herb or fragrance to vary based on the job or intent they are working on, so they change it accordingly. You can do it, too, because you've mastered both the mixing process and the properties of essential oils.

Meanwhile, below are some general instructions to follow when exact measures for a calculation are not provided.

- **Anointing Oil** - Various ratios of essential oils should be used to make anointing oils. To 1 oz. of carrier oil, add 60-75 drops of essential oil or essential oil mix.
- **Spray** – Fill an 8 oz. spray bottle with 30-50 drops of essential oil or essential oil mix. Fill the bottle of purified water to the top. The majority of spray bottles of this size will be plastic; however, keep in mind that the oils will eventually erode the plastic container.
- **Bath Oil** – To one ounce of carrier oil, add 5-7 drops of essential oils or an essential oil mix. Fill a pool of running water with a minimal volume of the mix. Before entering the bath, mix the water and oil.

## Cleansing Oils

There are *many* different types of oils in the hoodoo practice. We're just going to list the cleansing oils here, but there is an oil for money and abundance, keeping your home peaceful, attracting love to you, hexing and blessing, breaking curses, and getting lucky.

To use the oils, you can anoint yourself anoint any special paperwork you're using for working or just in your life. You can anoint your altar or tools used on your altar, such as statues of deities. You can also use oils to bless your personal items, such as a wallet.

For this section of the book, we'll focus on just the oils for cleansing. As we'll cover in future chapters, cleansing and protection are very important when you're working with spirit.

- ***Cut & Clear.*** An oil you'll find at almost any hoodoo shop. For cutting and clearing anything out of your life, such as habits, exes, and attachments. Anoint yourself, use in personal care products, wear on your body like a perfume.
- ***Dragon's Blood.*** Considered a powerful all-purpose oil. It is red in color from Dragon's Blood, a deeply red-colored resin. Add some drops to your cleaning products or use them to anoint your tools and altar.
- ***Hindu Grass.*** An oil for cutting out things from your life. This could be a relationship or a pattern of thinking or behavior, tied to past events. An oil you can use on yourself, anointing and wearing.
- ***Blessing.*** There's Blessing oil *and* House Blessing oil. The first type is generally used for yourself, the second strictly for your home. These oils cleanse and are said to help bring favor from deities. Depending on the type of oil, you can use it on yourself or for your home. You could also offer this oil to your ancestors or deities you're working with by leaving some drops on a plate or leaving an open jar on your altar.
- ***Psychic Cleansing.*** If you need a psychic cleansing of old energies weighing you down or getting in your way, try a psychic cleansing oil. Anoint yourself before meditating or offer some of the oil on a self-love altar.
- ***Purification.*** A blaster of any blocks or energies that remain in your way. Not as available as the other oils, but an excellent option if you're just getting out of a bad relationship or attachment. Burn this oil on a charcoal disc or add it to a self-healing mojo bag.

## Creating Personalized Oils

Creating your own oils will require having a neutral carrier oil as your base. Personally, I like to use homemade coconut oil. It is a very receptive oil and

adapts its structure to whatever herbal elements you put in it. If you add very strong herbs, it will adjust its physiological nature and adopt the potency of whatever you are using. It is also soft enough to be flexible when you want something very mild. For love potions, I prefer to use oils extracted from flowers, like roses. The nature of the rose plant is very open to love, and when used in a spell, it can invoke very strong imagery in the mind of the recipients. As a beginner, I would recommend the oils I have listed below. When you become stronger in the craft, you can move on to oils like bergamot oil. For your first lesson, the intention is to create a “*Get me a Job*” oil. These are hard times we live in, and you might need a little spiritual boost to help you get ahead. For this oil, you will need the following:

- Allspice - Used in prosperity spells
- Cinnamon - Attracts luck
- Coconut oil - An excellent base oil
- Dill - To make you irresistible
- Sage - For wisdom and to ward off evil eyes

Use a transparent glass bottle for this work. Pour your base into this bottle or jar and then add the cinnamon, allspice, dill and sage. If you are using fresh dill and sage, you will need to prep them ahead of time by bruising the leaves a little before immersing them in oil. Let them sit in the bottle overnight, and then pour the oil and herb mixture into a strainer. Squeeze to extract and then use what is in the container. Ensure that no fresh leaves get into the mixture. Repeat this for three days with new dill and sage leaves.

On the third day, you should have enough to use for the mixture. Put the allspice and cinnamon into the oil/herb mixture. Shake it and set it down for an entire day. For the next week, continue shaking it several times every day. At the end of the seventh day, you have your first magic oil. Rub this on the sole of your shoe before you go for a job interview. You are bound to get positive outcomes. Another way to amplify the potency of this oil is to use it on a candle.

## CHAPTER 9: ALTAR



Where in the use of European magic, the altar is a single, consecrated artifact, in hoodoo we speak more correctly of altars in the plural because the conjure man often has more than one. So there will be special altars depending on the technique used, the 'action, dedicated to more than one function and can be fixed or temporary. Usually, the altar is not consecrated in the true sense of the word and acquires power only by virtue of what is grouped there. The simplest thing is to give some practical examples. An altar for love will be dominated by the colors red and pink, there will be on it simple red candles or shaped like a phallus or vagina, sexual symbols, depictions of genitals, magnetic stones paired and loaded with magnetic powder, depictions of hearts, violets, roots of John the conqueror, images of saints related to love as St. Valentine or gods like Shiva and Parvati depicted in sexual union, oils and dust for luck in love and sex etc..

An altar for money and play will have a green color, will contain dice, green candles, symbols of \$ and €, single magnetic stones, coins (especially leap years), teeth and legs of alligator or rabbit, chestnut chestnuts, dust and

oils for luck and money, playing cards, horseshoes, depictions of Chinese fortune gods, lottery tickets with special numerical combinations, etc.

Finally, an altar dedicated to the curse will have a black look, will contain pepper and chili powder, curse oils, goofer dust, representations of the devil, black cats, pins, nails, rag dolls, black candles, bones, cemetery land, depictions of Baron Samedi and Maman Brigitte, Kali, etc.

Usually, rather than having a "handyman" altar (which is also possible and in some cases very practical), it is preferable to undo an altar that is no longer needed and redo an altar that is needed at the moment. Having a "handyman" altar would confuse the situation, and perhaps even the spirits, as well as having to be of considerable size to contain all the suitable objects.

## **Working Altars**

An ancestor altar is very common in hoodoo practice. In addition to this, you may want to create an altar specifically for a certain aspect of your life or something you want.

Here, I go over a few of these types of altars and some ways you can get creative. With each, you want to think about how you can invite the presence of God and/or the Goddess (or Solar Light, whichever deity speaks to you). Your ancestor altar may have God in every aspect. Or you may use a candle to represent Solar Light.

Some altars are permanent, but if there's something specific you're working on, you could use a temporary altar.

## **The Self-Love Altar**

If you've struggled with self-image issues or come from a childhood home where you witnessed violence, a self-love altar is a space to center and heal.

It's a place where you can take everything you love about yourself and honor it. This might require some creativity as you're taking intangible aspects and making them physical.

The four elements are thought to stand in for aspects of life and living: earth honors your foundation, water your emotions and intuition, wind your

thinking, and fire your willpower. These are common elements in all altars. You can use things that you like to represent these elements.

For example, if you love frogs, you could create a self-love altar that is heavy on the frog decor. If you're an artist, you could paint your self-love altar on a massive canvas. The advantage of this is it saves space in your home.

Small statues, trinkets, and figurines are great for altars in general, but especially for tapping into your personality and attributes. Animal and mystical symbolism is great for this. A horse, for example, could represent freedom, strength of spirit, triumph, and courage. A fairy could represent a sense of wonder and magic.

A trinket like a pair of glasses or binoculars could represent foresight. Jewelry, abundance and beauty. Crystals like rose quartz are great to represent love.

A figurine of a small Oscar award can be immensely powerful if you one day want to win an Oscar.

As you can tell, the possibilities for this kind of altar are endless. Searching options on Google is a great option, but you can also use tarot cards or think of things that just mean something to *you*. However, don't deny the power in common symbols, like stars. Many times, you can go to a local dollar store and find lots of usable stuff. Or you may already have something at home.

You are a strong spirit. A self-love altar is a space where you can honor your true spirit, regardless of how you've had to shift and bend to exist in the world.

### **The Money Altar**

What's your relationship with money? How do you feel when you look at people who have more money than you? A money altar is a space to heal your relationship with money if you need to or honor the strong relationship you already have.

Many of us have the misperception that "no one will pay us the money we want". A money altar is an ideal place to heal this idea.

You can be creative with this altar, creativity is the channel through which money and abundance flow. The only rule is to keep the intent of the altar focused. Putting a random object on your money altar will muddy up the lines of communication.

Money is one of the first things you want on this type of altar. If you have any dollar bills or coins hanging around, especially if they're different denominations, use these. It doesn't matter how much or what denomination you have, even monopoly money will work if you want it to.

Old checks hanging around are *great* for a money altar. This is an idea from The Secret but it applies here. You might have a check from a closed bank account. Use these to start writing checks to yourself with amounts that you want. Write an infinity check!

The usual items for most altars apply for this type as well: crystals, candles, herbs, roots, and other items like money, oils, and dirt that we have and will cover.

Statues of deities that are associated with wealth and money are ideal for a money altar, for example, Oshun, or Fortuna.

Tarot cards work as well, though you may want to purchase a deck that is separate from the one you use for readings, or you can print out an image online.

You want to think about things that mean something to you for your money altar. A growing plant can be a symbol of expansion. Watering a plant on your money altar every day can be important symbolism, same with pruning the plant and removing dead leaves (removing old ideas).

Pinecones or double samaras (those things that fall from trees in a pinwheel motion) are a symbol of abundance if you live in an area where these things are everywhere.

### **The Deity Altar**

If you respect more than one deity, then you'll know whether you can use one altar for every deity or if you need one altar for each deity.

Some deities require their own space, so sharing their sacred space in your home is not an option.



You'll also want to know what the deity you're honoring likes to receive. Money is one example. It means something to us, and can work on your money altar, but some deities may not care for money at all.

One of the basics you'll want on the altar is a statue or some representation of the deity that the altar is being built for. Some altars will even include more than one statue or depiction. *You want these visual elements to represent the deity for you, items that as soon as you come into contact with them, you connect with your deity.*

## **Building Your Altar**

How great is it to know that all of your problems can be solved with the help of the Spirit?

If you're beginning to feel some gratitude in knowing this, try to bottle up this feeling. Gratitude is the vibration you want to conjure and maintain when building your altar.

An altar is the physical manifestation of your relationship with your ancestors and a non-negotiable for the serious hoodoo practitioner.

This is a place for you to speak to and receive messages from your ancestors, a place to present your offerings and to do your work. It is a kind of a spiritual center for your home. You can also keep specific types of altars in your space for your work.

Some practitioners have multiple altars; they keep one specifically for their ancestors, another for working (which we'll get into later). An altar for money, one for love, the list goes on.

Do not worry if you don't have the space for all of this. The point is to have a dedicated area for your work. Altars can take different forms, but a basic altar set up usually has:

- A bible
- At least one candle
- Water in a wine glass or other glass
- Images of your ancestors
- Items belonging to your ancestors, such as jewelry

Usually, this is set up with a white tablecloth atop a table. You will find altars as different and varied as there are homes.

Other basics include food. This is usually cooked or baked, it's always better if you know what foods your ancestors preferred and take the time to prepare and offer what you know they like. You can also include your tarot cards or anything you use for divination, images, or any depictions you have of deities that mean something to you.

You don't want to keep food on your altar for too long. When drinks or food get cold, dispose of it. If you were to offer your ancestors an afternoon cup of tea, for example, in the evening, you dispose of it at your front door. Or, if you don't want to make a mess of your hallway, find a tree and pour it out there. This is how you dispose of food left on your altar as well; never throw out or put food in the compost.

Offerings can be left as often as you like, but try to ritualize this, for example leaving food once a week.

The table in your home can take any form. It might be built-in, like by a bay window or shelf. If you have more space, you can go bigger and use a small desk or table that has a dedicated spot in your home.

It's most important to set up an altar that works for you. This might mean creating an altar that doesn't *appear* like one at first glance. Or it might mean that you use a smaller table that can fit perfectly in a corner.

This space is and will become sacred. It should be out of the way of anyone touching it, other than you. Do not feel obligated to tell anyone what it is or why any of the items are on it. If it seems too many people are interacting with the space, you may want to move it to somewhere more private.

Once the altar is built, do a small ritual where you call on your ancestors. The main purpose of this is to present your altar space to them so that they know this is their physical home in your life, a representation of the home they have in your heart and mind.

## **Getting Prepared**

You need a way to get calm and centered. Not just for this ritual, but for everything. You do not want to begin this ritual with *any* anxiety at all.

Maybe you've never done this before, but remove any jitters or feelings of being 'freaked out.' Unsure is fine, but try to convert that unsure feeling to reverence.

Do something that tells your mind this is a special moment. One simple way to do this is to get dressed up; wear all white or something that marks what you're doing.

Prepare what you are going to present as offerings to your ancestors. A few ideas: coins, warm food, a drink you know they liked (though wine, rum, or whiskey will suffice), fresh flowers, coffee or tea (with sugar), coins, bread or fruit that has been cut and is ready to eat. If you leave food, like nuts or seeds, leave it open (i.e., not in a bottle or jar that's closed).

The last thing you want to have on hand is your prayers and a bible, either physical or digital to read from (unless you have what you want to recite memorized).

Your prayers will require some thought beforehand, depending on how formal you want to be. If you're more comfortable just talking to your ancestors like a friend, do that.

## **Opening the Ritual**

Open the ritual by anointing yourself and your space with hoodoo oil. There are many ways to anoint yourself, but here's a simple method using your body's pressure points and third eye.

Set your intention (i.e., Say aloud something like: *Thank you, [your name for God] for facilitating my connection to my ancestors.*). Continue to repeat your intention throughout as you apply oil to your pressure points:

Apply a drop of the oil to one wrist and rub your wrists together, then apply oil (take more as needed):

- The upper shell of your ear.
- Behind your shoulders.
- Your third eye.

Alternatively, if you don't have an oil or prefer not to use them on your skin, you can anoint with a spray or a cologne.

Do not worry about buying an oil or spray. These can be made with water and a few ingredients you probably already have in your kitchen. These instructions will be covered in Part 2, under Cleaning Rituals and Spirit Washes.

With sprays, you set and state your intention while spraying the air at least once. Three times is more than sufficient. The number of times you spray is important. Three represents a holy trinity.

After you've anointed, get the fire started: light your candle(s) and/or incense.

## **Make Your Offerings**

If you're using smoke, run the items you're offering over and through the smoke to cleanse them and then 'present' them to your ancestors. This can be done by holding the item and then lifting it as if you were giving a gift to someone much taller than you.

Do this activity with your whole being. Imagine your benevolent ancestors coming around and graciously accepting what you offer.

## **Dial In**

Read Psalms 23. If you don't have a bible, look the prayer up online. There are also many bible apps available for free and with no ads.

*Call on your ancestors. Here's an example of what you might want to say. Feel free to edit or change according to your needs:* I now call on the benevolent and honored spirits of my lineage, every man and woman who sired and birthed the men and women who now live through me.

I invite you into my home and into my life. This altar is where we will meet, and where I will offer my deep gratitude for the sacrifices you've made and the work you continue to do on my behalf.

I offer you [name the items you've offered in the form of food, scents, items, etc.] with honor, love, and thanks. I hope they are pleasing to you.

You don't have to make the call super formal. I would actually recommend telling your ancestors that you're just starting on this journey, that this is the first time you are working with them (though there's a good chance they

know already). You can also ask for guidance on your relationship with them. Be open to even the smallest ways that they speak to you.

Once you say that your altar is the place where you will meet and offer gratitude, you have to actually use your altar to meet your ancestors and offer gratitude when you get there. This ritual is about making a commitment to a relationship. What you say in this meeting is important, so take note.

## **Get Comfortable**

Spend some time in silence, just listening. You may receive guidance on things you're dealing with right now. Or you may just feel feelings, like love, peace, or just a general good You Are Blessed feeling. Sit as long as you like. You will intuitively feel when your time at the altar is complete.

## **Close**

I keep closings very simple at my altar. I simply clasp my hands, close my eyes, and feel gratitude throughout my body. This is my everyday practice, and since you're doing a first-time ritual at your altar, you may want to do something more formal.

In your practice, you'll come across countless more altar and ritual ideas, some you'll work, and others you'll let go by.

## **Creating an Altar in Your Mind**

This is an option to consider if you don't have space for an altar or aren't really interested in creating a physical space in your home, as described.

To Spirit, everything is energy. Our physical world helps us humans with that, but for spirit, these physical things don't mean much. This is why intent is so important. You can (and do) create a whole world in your mind and without intention, you can create a lot without being aware.

Creating an altar in your mind uses visualization, an important skill that some people find easier than others.

You can create a whole castle in your mind that is an altar, then speak to your ancestors and the spirits you are calling to let them know that space is for them. If you are unable to purchase or find the items for your altar, you

can just imagine them. Or better yet, create them in your mind and place them in your mind altar.

## **The Choose Your Adventure Altar**

Whereas there are specific rules for ancestors, you can create an altar for whatever you want to draw into your life. Remember how everything has a spirit? Creating an altar is basically honoring these spirits.

You can create an altar for style, peace, and serenity, beauty, a season, a career you want, good health, education, a sport, a craft, for a loving family, cooking, the elements, even a place, maybe somewhere you want to live, like a cottage or a farm.

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## Holidays in Hoodoo

### *Days of feast and charged power*

**JANUARY** 6-8th: Feast Days of Jasper, Balthazar & Melchior (For obtaining gifts & prosperity). 17th: Ogun (For work, opportunities, protection from accidents and firearms).

**FEBRUARY** 2nd: Oyá, Mistress of the Cemetery (For a change, readying for battle, protection from weather).

**MARCH** 19th: Osanyin (Deciduous vegetation, for healing and nourishment from Nature). 25th: Oshun - Our Lady of Charity. For love, abundance, charity, passion, creativity (See also September).

**APRIL** 22nd: Earth Day - All Loa and Orisha (For renewing one's vows to make one's life sacred and in harmony with the whole Creation)

**MAY** 15th: Ochosi - The Divine Hunter -(For justice, court cases, re-establishing balance and universal harmony)

**JUNE** 21-23rd: Summer Solstice - Legba - St John's Eve - John the Conqueror. To celebrate the summer, the warmth, fire and nourishment from the Sun. (For opportunities, good luck and to re-align with cosmic forces)

**AUGUST** 2nd: Black Madonna - Virgin of the Angels. For solace, protection, fertility, to give up one's sorrows and for protection of mothers and children.)

**SEPTEMBER** 7th: Yemayá (For appeasement of sorrows, abundance, love and fertility, protection of the home). 8th: Oshun -Our Lady of Charity (For love, abundance, charity, passion, creativity, the Arts. (See

also March) 24th: Obatalá - Our Lady of Mercy (For universal peace and harmony).

**OCTOBER** 4th: Orunmila (For divination, psychic powers, prophetic knowledge) 24th: Erinle (For healing all) 31st: Halloween (to make hallowed before the rites of the Ancestors - to dispel evil forces through disguise and trickery)

**NOVEMBER** 1st: Day of the Dead - Baron Samedi - Manman Brigitte - Ghede (Rites to the Ancestors according to your own familial or ethnic tradition) 3rd: St Martin de Porres (For healing and for those who have made healing professions their chosen path)

**DECEMBER** 4th: Changó (For vitality, health, courage, victory in battles, to repel enemies and negative works and evil spells)  
12th: Our Lady of Guadalupe (For miracles, for abundance, solace in times of trials and troubles, healing and for strengthening one's faith)  
17th: Babalú-Ayé (For healing, particularly skin ailments, for abundance)  
21-25th: Winter Solstice - Christmas - Ellegua - El Nino de Atocha – Infant Jesus of Prague. (To celebrate the coming return of the sun, to prepare for the winter months and their unseen transformation, which will lead to new birth in springtime, to re-align with the cosmic forces. Birth of Jesus celebration 31st: Yemayá - La Madre de Agua. (For the protection of mothers and children, for fertility and abundance, to usher a new year of compassion and well-being and wealth in all things).



# CHAPTER 10: MOJO BAGS GRIS-GRIS TALISMAN BOTTLE TRESES JACK BALL



## **Hoodoo Inks**

Any spells or rituals that require special ink to write name sheets and the like require the use of this ink. Among the earliest forms include Egyptian ink, different natural metal colors, the husk or outer covering of beans or seeds, and sea critters such as the cuttlefish (known as sepia). Indian ink is dark pink with an Asian heritage. Many of the old masters utilized iron gall ink to sketch. Using abundant berries, plants, and minerals, early cultures generated a variety of pink hues. Scribes in medieval Europe (about AD 800–1550) used sheepskin parchment to write. In one 12th-century ink recipe, hawthorn branches were harvested and dried in the spring. After pounding the bark off the branches, it was steeped in water for eight days.

The water was brought to a boil and allowed to thicken and darken. The wine was added when the mixture was boiling. The ink was placed into special bags and allowed to dry in the sunlight. After drying, the mixture was heated and combined with wine and iron salt to make the final ink. In China, around 5000 years ago, ink for blackening the raised surfaces of

stone images and writings was invented. This early ink was composed of soot from pine smoke, lamp oil, gelatin derived from animal skins, and musk.

Rather than creating your inks or using the prescribed ink, you can dedicate an ordinary pen in the proper color for ritual usage. Based on the Key of Solomon the King, this ritual will prepare your pen for use in rituals.

Recite the following while holding your pen up in front of you: ADRAI, HAHLLI, TAMAH, TILONAS, ATHAMAS, ZIANOR, ADONAI, cleanse my pen of all deception and mistake, so I may write everything that I wish with virtue and efficacy. Indeed, Amen.

Now, smudge the area with fragrant incense such as sandalwood, sprinkle it with holy water, and set it away in a silken robe of any color other than black or grey.

Some modern formulas for three popular links have been included below for anyone so motivated.

### **The Ink of the Bat**

- High-quality ink
- Cinnamon absolute essential oil
- Essential myrrh oil

Combine all ingredients and use them as ink for writing spells.

### **The Ink of the Dove**

- High-quality ink
- Rose essential oil

Combine ingredients to create love spells and talismans.

### **The Ink of the Dragon**

Dragon's blood is a term that refers to the vibrant red gum resin produced by the Dragon palm tree. In ancient times, the red resin was utilized as varnish, medicine, incense, and color. It was utilized in medieval alchemy and ritual magic. Some continue to use Magickal Inks for the objectives mentioned above. It is used in Hoodoo for money-drawing or love-drawing and as a fragrance to cleanse an area of negative beings or influences.

Additionally, it is added with red ink to develop "Dragon's Blood Ink," which is used for engraving mystical seals and talismans. To make your own Dragon's Blood Ink, you will need the following ingredients: • High-quality ink • Resin from Dragon tree Combine to create talismans of good fortune or protection.

## **Hoodoo Powders**

Gris (pronounced as gree-gree) is a phrase used in New Orleans to refer to a form of grey magic and mojo used by many hoodoos. Grey magic, often known as neutral magic, is a type of magic that is not practiced purely for positive causes but is not fully hostile either. It is thought to be between black and white magic. The term "mojo" is originally related to an African-inspired amulet or magical charm. Though the history is obscure, it may be connected in form and concept to "moco'o," a West African term for "medicine man." There is a gris-gris for everything. Gris-gris is whatever mixture you make for any given scenario. Frequently, gris-gris is used in foot track works. Gris may be made with various ingredients, including powdered minerals, herbs, cemetery dust, and roots.

Powders are frequently utilized in hoodoo spell work. They are used in spells to create charms, adorn letters, job applications, and business cards, combine with other powders, and work with foot track magick. Sulfur, cemetery soil, salt, and pepper are the most often used constituents in these powders.

Here are a few recipes to get you started. You will learn to use these powders in spells and crossroads as you proceed to read the book. You just have to put the powders in a bag and place them at the location you want to execute your spells.

### **Aunt Sally's Dream Powder**

Make sure that some of this results in prophetic dreams. Before retiring to bed, sprinkle on your linens.

- Licorice
- Cardamom
- Cinnamon

- Coriander

Grind herbs and add them into rice flour or corn starch base.

### **Powder of Blessings**

- Lavandin
- Indian sandalwood
- Rosemary
- Sand that is magnetic

Grind herbs and combine with magnetic sand in rice flour or corn starch base.

### **Powder for Control**

- Corn starch
- Sodium chloride
- Epsom salts

### **Drawing Powder**

- Magnetic sand
- Corn gluten meal
- Sucrose (confectioner's sugar)

Add to rice flour or corn starch base.

### **Goofer Dust**

Goofer Dust is an extremely ancient African-American hoodoo mixture designed to inflict great hardship, damage, or even death to an adversary. Several recipes are not likely to reflect the conjuror's goal. If the necessary substances are added to goofer dust, it can also be employed for its protective characteristics.

Goofer dust in its purest form comprises the following:

- Mausoleum soil
- Snakeskin
- Sesame seed

- Magnetic sand
- Sulfur granules

To this basic mixture, other ingredients such as pulverized insects, powdered bones, or black pepper would be added to increase its effects.

### **Graveyard dust**

Graveyard soil was collected from nine different graveyards, including one from a child's grave for good deeds and one or more from a criminal's tomb for evil deeds.

### **Hot Foot Powder**

- Chili powder
- Black pepper
- Red pepper
- Sulfur

Mix a rice flour or corn starch base.

### **Jinx Removing Powder**

- Wintergreen
- Mint
- Chamomile

Grind herbs and add them into rice flour or corn starch base.

### **Money Drawing Powder**

- Patchouli
- Cedar
- Ginger
- Galangal

Grind herbs and add them into rice flour or corn starch base.

### **Gris Bags**

Gris bags are usually carried in dolls or bags and are essentially used to transport charms or spells. Marie Laveau was most known for her powerful

gris-gris charms, which comprised a magical sign or vèvè written on parchment paper using Dragon's blood ink and sewed into fabric or leather bags. Her consumers shelled out hundreds of dollars for these charms and swore by their efficacy.

A gris-gris bag is traditionally a two-inch by three-inch drawstring bag crafted of red flannel, leather into which some things are written and placed on something.

For Example,

- Special Herbs
- Chamois
- Stones
- Personal Effects
- Coins
- Roots
- Bones
- Lucky Metal Charms
- Carved Stones
- Crystals
- Good Luck Tokens
- European Sigils and Seals

These things are written and placed on parchment paper.

Additionally, colors can also be employed following their magickal meanings, as mentioned in the earlier chapters. Your gris-gris bag should include an odd amount of items; no fewer than three and no more than thirteen. As the items are put into the bag, they are blessed, and the entire bag is anointed with anointing oil. It is then smeared with incense or inhaled to trigger the magic.

This is similar to a talisman, except that it is concealed from public view. It is always cooked next to an altar in a ritualistic fashion. Bear in mind the

following five considerations while "repairing" a gris-gris bag:

The significance of color symbolism. Select a hue that is appropriate for your situation.

- 2) It must include an odd quantity of pieces, more than three but not exceeding thirteen.
- 3) It should be stocked with purpose-specific items.
- 4) It must be prepared in some liquid.
- 5) It is also smeared or smoked in incense, candles, or when breathed.

To utilize a gris-gris bag, grasp it and direct your attention to a need or desire. Imagine yourself achieving your objective by developing a vivid mental image of yourself achieving what you desire. As regularly as possible, perform this exercise. Keep it in a prominent location to serve as a reminder of your desire or need. Men often wear them on their right side, while women often wear them on their left sides.

## **Talismans**

A talisman is a tiny amulet or another artifact, frequently imprinted with mystical symbols, to ward off bad spirits or the supernatural. Drawings are employed as talismans or amulets and placed in mojo bags in Afro-Caribbean syncretic faiths such as Hoodoo, Voodoo, Umbanda, Quimbanda, and Santera. Other signs, such as magic squares, heavenly signatures, Solomon's seals, and kabbalistic signs, have been used for benign and malignant purposes. Each of these is used in Hoodoo.

Horseshoes are regarded as a good luck charm in a wide variety of cultures. A widespread belief is that if a horseshoe is placed on a door with its two ends pointing upward, it will bring good fortune. However, if both ends point downward, misfortune will strike. However, traditions diverge on this issue. In some cultures, the horseshoe is hung pointed down (so that the luck flows over you); in others, it is hung pointed up (so that the luck does not fall out); and in still others, it is irrelevant as long as the horseshoe has been used (not new), was discovered (not purchased), and is touchable. In every tradition, fortune is housed within the shoe and may be released through the ends.

The difference in effect between an amulet and a talisman is minor. Some practitioners of magick believe that amulets should be charged while the moon is declining, and talismans should be charged when the moon is waxing.

Talismans are relatively common in diverse cultures throughout the world. They are used for protection and purification, offerings to deities, as charms or amulets protecting against evil influences, as good luck objects or talismans of power. A person with a knowledge of these practices can create such a talisman using traditional forms and techniques or create them using materials available to him/her. The practice of creating these charms is known in some cultures as Hoodoo, a term also used in Vodou hand-dancing for the creation of protective circles who practice this art.

### **Consecration of a Talisman**

Consecrate your amulets and talismans and amulets. To accomplish this, take these steps: As a sacrifice to the Divine, light some incense (or whatever you feel is your greater power), three white candles, arranged in a triangular shape on your altar, should be lit.

Sprinkle salt on the amulet/talisman.

"I sanctify you with the Earth element so that you will emanate a protective aura around the person who holds you."

Through the incense, pass the amulet/talisman.

"I sanctify you with the element of Air, in the hope that you will emanate a protective aura around whoever holds you."

Through the candle flame, pass the amulet/talisman.

"I sanctify you with the element of Fire, in the hope that you would emanate a protective aura around whoever holds you."

Water the amulet/talisman.

"I sanctify you with the element of Water, in the hope that you will emanate a protective aura around whoever holds you."

Reintroduce the amulet/talisman to your altar. Both hands should be placed over the amulet/talisman.



Visualize a stream of white light streaming into the amulet/talisman from above.

"I entrust this amulet/talisman with the duty of (insert its function) since I [your name] am a Divine servant. Thus be it!"

Put out your candles (always pinch out the flame, never blow).

Your Talisman or Amulet is now complete and ready to be worn.

### **Uses of Talismans**

In your mojo bags, country sacks, and gris-gris bags, incorporate the following talismans. Copies of the ones you require and place them in your gris-gris bags to amp up their magickal properties. To draw the finest results, trace the talisman onto parchment paper using Dragon's blood ink. Alternatively, you can print the page, cut out the appropriate talisman, and fold it either toward you or away from you to draw the talisman's qualities.

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*Exu Loa:*



The ritual emblem for Exu, the god of crossroads. Utilize to remove impediments and create opportunities.

*Square Satori:*



The Sator Square is a word square containing a Latin palindrome consisting of the phrases SATOR AREPO TENET OPERA ROTAS arranged in a square so that they can be read in ascending, descending and sideways orders. Use to remove jinxes and hexes, protect against evil influences, and combat tiredness when traveling.

*The Pentagram:*




A pentagram is a five-pointed star formed by five straight strokes. As an amulet, it can be used to attract money, love, and other blessings and protect against envy, misfortune, and other embarrassments.

*Love:*



This amulet design is taken from the Black Pullet grimoire. The Black Pullet is a grimoire that purports to instruct readers in the "science of magical

	<p>talismans and rings," including necromancy and Kabbalah.</p> <p>It is said that if you embroider it on black satin and say "Nades, Suradis, Maniner," a djinn will arrive; if you tell the djinn "Sader, Prostras, Solaster," the djinn will bring you true love. When you have had enough of her, say, "Mammes, Laher."</p>
<p><i>Clover with Four Leaves:</i></p>	
	<p>The clover, which originated with the medieval Celts, signifies good luck if it has four leaves.</p>

*Power:*



Utilize when you need to end a relationship or scenario. It is possible to use this against a person, but it is not suggested.

*Sexual Potency:*



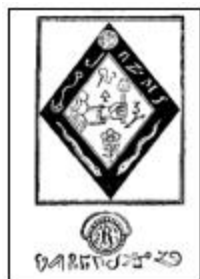
Loa Erzulie Freda is a talisman for sexual potency.

*To Invoke Celestial Forces:*




Utilize this talisman to summon infernal and celestial forces. Make a talisman ring with the bottom words written inside the ring's band. Put the talisman on your finger, place it over your heart, and then say these words: Siras, Etar, Besanar, and you will feel the results.

*For Wealth and Prosperity:*



This talisman will assist you in discovering all available treasures and ensuring your possession of them. Make a ring for the talisman, ensuring that the bottom characters are inscribed on the inside of the

	ring. Put the ring on your right-hand second finger, encircle the talisman with your left thumb and little finger, and say, Onaim, Perantes, Rasonastos. Seven bronze-colored spirits will approach, each carrying a big hide bag brimming with riches that will be emptied at your feet.
<i>Seal of the Archangels' Choir of Ministering Archangels:</i>	
	This seal's great secret and unique function is that it will rise to the surface on its own accord during a full moon if it is placed in the dirt near treasures.

## Mojo Bags

A mojo bag is a very popular working in hoodoo. It is also one of the first things you want to create as you start your practice.

The hoodoo definition of mojo is spirit.

We talked about containment in a previous section. This is a concept specific to the Yoruba tradition out of western Africa.

A mojo bag is about concentrating the energy of spirit in work towards whatever your intent.

You generally can't go wrong when creating one of these for your personal use. You can find many, many spells for mojo bags online or in hoodoo books. It makes a great first spell for beginners because you are encouraged to get creative.

One practitioner I know used a name necklace that broke in such a way that their name was split almost in half. She wasn't interested in getting the piece fixed, but she also didn't care to throw it away because it meant

something to her. The broken necklace made a perfect addition to her self-love mojo bag. Her intent in creating the bag was to heal a broken spirit.

Generally, the purpose of these bags is to draw love, money, success, or protection to you. You can use it while you're working to create a larger change in your life.

Let's say, for example, that you want to draw in real romantic love. Not just a new boyfriend or girlfriend (or boyfriends or girlfriends), but a true shift in your outlook on love.

You know, however, that this will require a change in your mindset and you're not sure about what this will look or feel like.

With a mojo bag, you can get help making this deeper shift so that when your love spell works, you don't block the love you deserve.

The rules for a mojo bag are simple:

No one but you is to touch, see, or use your mojo bag for any reason. We're all used to keeping things in secret; that applies here as well.

You can either keep it on you all the time or every day over a period, like a week or lunar cycle, depending on what you're using it for.

### **Making a Mojo Bag**

It might seem excessive to buy a whole yard of flannel online just to create a relatively small item. Another option may be searching through your closet to see if you have any flannel that will work or checking with anyone who may want to donate some fabric to you.

However, most flannel is available cheaply priced, and if you enjoy making a mojo bag with enough fabric, you can make bags for your friends and family.

You want to create a mojo bag with intention, in the same way that you would create your altar.

You can also imagine that the items that go inside can include things you would put on an altar; curios (small items like figurines and symbols), herbs, oils (usually in small glass jars or containers), crystals and energy

stones, dried plants, petitions to spirit, hair or fingernails, coins and dollar bills, jewelry, and, of course, roots.

There are two different ways you can make one of these bags for yourself, depending on how comfortable you are with a needle and thread. For the mojo bags below, you will need your flannel and string, again, in a color that *speaks* to you and your working. However, the simple and effective choice in many cases may be to go with your favorites.

Before creating your mojo bag, you'll want to do a good cleanse and pray over *everything* you'll be using to create and make your bag.

One thing I have not included in the ingredient lists below is *you*. In each mojo bag you create for yourself, you must include inside something that has your DNA, your energetic signature. This can be as simple as the breath.

After all of the ingredients, adding your breath can be saying your intention at the mouth of the bag or over the ingredients inside. You want your breath to come into contact with the ingredients you've put inside.

Other than your breath, you can include hair, toenails, fingernails, spit, blood, anything that comes from your body. Most practitioners would recommend adding some substance of yours, such as your toenails and your breath.

You want to keep your mojo bag as close as possible to your body for at least a week.

The advantage of the sewing option is the ability to create a satchel that can hold more than the non-sewing option.

### **The Sewing Option**

Cut a piece of flannel cloth, 4 inches wide by 12 inches long.

Fold the flannel in half on the “wrong” side so the bag is 4 inches wide by 6 inches long.

Sew inside about a quarter inch along the long edges, leaving the top open.

Flip inside out, and now you have a little bag.

Pray over and bless each item before putting it inside. As you fill your bag, you will start to feel the energy building.

Tie a string around the closure or create a simple drawstring.

### **The Non-Sewing Option**

This type of mojo bag is commonly called a 'flaming comet' because once tied closed, it looks like a comet.

You'll want to cut your flannel in the shape of a square; 5 in x 5 in is sufficient. The idea is to put all of your materials in the middle and then gather the ends and secure the string around, so everything is contained tightly inside.

### **Ingredient Lists**

Each recipe has a few color options for your flannel. You'll also find most recipes include: a small symbolic object, a natural element (such as a root or dried herb), one or two crystals.

Do not include anything in your mojo bag that you don't connect with, or that doesn't mean anything to you.

Another name for a mojo bag is a 'hand'. An apt name, since to make these bags, you use your hands. If your energy is off in any way, that is going to transfer through your body, through your hands, and go into the bag you're creating.

Before you begin praying and cleansing, get as calm as possible. If you can't get calm, choose another date or time to create the bag. Create a feeling of excitement. As you create your bag, keep in mind that you're getting everything you want, and the specific circumstances that led you to create this mojo bag! Think and agree with yourself that every item you're using to create your bag will *work for you*.

A few elements listed below are universal, meaning you can use them for any of the bags listed. Instead of going for a generic green, for example, choose a shade that aligns with your intent. For an inner peace or inner healing mojo bag you might go with sage green, while for the money, you could use an emerald green.



In addition, often you'll find crystals that are molded into different shapes, for example, a rose quartz in the shape of a heart or a jade stone in the shape of a frog. These objects can do double or triple duty in your mojo bag if used with intention.

I should note that while white is a universal shade for magic, a mojo bag is created to be carried with you all the time, which would mean it may show dirt easily. Consider using white for the items you place inside of your bag. Otherwise, be prepared to clean your bag constantly.

### **Colors to Choose for Your Mojo Bag**

- **Gold:** This works with the Sun and encourages wealth and success combined with projectivity. The god yang is linked with gold, and he provides a loud, in-your-face type of energy.
- **Silver:** Working with the moon, the goddess yin is linked with this color and promotes meditative processes and peace.
- **Red:** Connected to the planet Mars, passion and courage are associated with this hue. The deeper the red, the more energetic the mojo.
- **Orange:** Associated with the planet Mercury, orange is the color of success. It helps give the ingredients of the bag the power of vitality and speed.
- **Yellow:** Governed by the Sun, yellow is the color of joy and creativity. Bring an aura of allure to your spells when you store your tools in this bag.
- **Green:** working with the planet Venus your bag will be imbued with the power of good fortune and wealth.
- **Blue:** Associated with the planet Jupiter use blue material to bring wisdom and rhetoric to your spells. This is the color of intelligence and represents the deep connection you have mentally with the spirits.
- **Violet:** This striking color is all about healing and aiding karmic connections. Tools kept in this bag will be powerful when connecting to the spiritual world or using divination connections.

- **Rose Pink:** This is the color of love and friendship. Use it to enhance your romantic and creative skills and increase personal beauty.
- **White:** The classic color of divination and spirituality. This bag will help you connect to angels and improve your psychological health.
- **Grey:** Objects stored in grey bags will become mysterious and will be powerful when creating illusions. They will be powerful in spells involving invisibility and secretive moves.
- **Black:** Banishing spells and protection rituals will work better with a black mojo bag. The planet Saturn is associated with this color and provides a level of discipline.

### **Tips to Help You Name Your Bag**

- Listen to your heart. Once you have made your bag, you will begin to hear certain names or see a sign that indicates what to call your bag. You may dream of meeting a woman called Mary and then see the name in the press a couple of times. This will help you decide what to call your bag.
- For a more off-the-wall name, you need to pick a person who symbolizes the endeavor you want your bag to represent. For instance, if you want to attract wealth, call your bag Elon or Bezos after the tech giants. Love mojo bags should be called Romeo or Cupid to signify their connection to romance. The base idea is your bag will take on the characteristics of the person after whom it is named.
- Look to your faith. If you are of a certain faith, then biblical names will be suitable. Samson is a great name for strength, while Adam means living. Research your choices with a baby name book to discover what different names mean.
- Let the spirits guide you. Take a random book from your bookshelf and let it fall open. There will be a name there that shouts to you and tells you what to call your bag.

Once your bag is loaded, blessed, and named, it's time to make it part of your being. For the first week, you need to keep it close to your skin. Pin it inside your clothes or wear it around your neck so it can imbue your spirit and become part of your psyche. At night pin it to the base of your pillow or keep it on your nightstand. Feed it with magic oil regularly during that first week and keep it dry and clean.

### **How Long Does the Mojo Bag Work?**

- 1) Your bag is for your eyes only. If someone else sees or touches your bag, it can "kill your hand" and render the mojo inactive.
- 2) Hard items should be taken out and cleaned, while soft items like herbs and petals need to be replaced when needed.
- 3) Feed the bag every week on the same day as it was made by using oil to regenerate its power. Use incense smoke and prayer to feed the bag whenever you need to call upon it.
- 4) Keep your bag dry. If it gets wet, attempt to revive its power with the Rose of Jericho plant, aka the resurrection plant.
- 5) There is no reason to replace your bag after a year if it's still working for you. Time and strength can differ, and different bags work better than others. Only you will know when to make a new bag and dispose of your old one.
- 6) When you decide to replace your bag, treat it with respect and bury it with care. This manifestation tool has been good to you, and you need to acknowledge that.

### **Storing Your Mojo Bags**

After the first week, store your bag carefully so it will work correctly. Choose a hardwood box that is decorative and well-sealed. Place your bag inside and choose a candle to sit on the lid. Light the candle and burn it until the wax reaches the bottom of the box. This will form a sacred seal that will protect your bag until you need it.

Your mojo bag can be customized to suit any need. If you are looking for a new job, you can use a green bag filled with gravel root and magnetizing salt to draw well-paid employment into your life. If you are unfortunate

enough to be falsely accused of a crime, then a blend of sage, galangal (aka court case root), and other herbs will help you get your case across in court. Use your mojo bag to confuse the opposition and get the judge or jury to rule in your favor.

If you prefer to buy commercial mojo bags, know the terms "double strength" or "triple strength." Ideally, this will mean the bag contains curios that are less readily available, like a human bone or a snake rib, but sometimes it just means there are more than the normal amount of items inside. Commercial bags do work, but you empower them with your essence and spirit when you make them yourself. Hoodoo is a powerful way to protect yourself, and commercial bags are less personal but can still be effective.

## CHAPTER 11: CEMETERIES



If it is easy to understand the development environment and hoodoo history, it is less easy to understand the practice environment. The first one we will examine is familiar to everyone, although it arouses different reactions; it is the cemetery.

The hoodoo rituals and spells that involve visits to the cemetery are many and to avoid ending up in topics that could be judged morbid, we will only say the extreme limits that can be reached in the practice of the root doctor. The minimum is to pray at the cemetery or use cemetery earth (usually a few grams) taken from particular graves' outer surfaces to make amulets and powders. The maximum is to light votive candles on a tomb or bury a small fetish on the side. Another traditional practice is to use human bones or teeth in amulets. Usually, they are small fragments or bones of phalanges that, however, you never go and never go to dig up at the cemetery since human bones, in Anglo-Saxon countries, can be safely purchased from stores specializing in anatomical models, which can provide the parts

individually or deliver entire skeletons, mounted with special attachments to scholars, artists or anatomy enthusiasts.

It is interesting to reflect that one often cares about the bones of poor animals and no one blinks an eye when anonymous skeletons of strangers who have died in China or India are sold piece by piece. *Homo homini lupus*. However, at most in the past, it could happen to use ashes of their own extinct or to buy from some complacent cemetery keeper a small bone fragment today the practice is much less widespread. In Italy, however, all this is prohibited by the current laws, and therefore we will not describe any amulet that uses such objects.

Concerning other cemetery practices, we will describe later only the simplest, which is also basic in hoodoo: to "buy land" at the cemetery; land that, today, can also be bought in specialized stores.

Obviously, the most sensitive mentalities are shocked or shaken by this familiarity with death and the dead. The psychology of the root doctor, however, is very different from that of the normal well-thinking. The conjure man does not see the cemetery as a place of ancestral fears and "bad thoughts," for him it is not a place of death, but a place of life and especially of sacred power. It is the place for a different form of life, with which one can communicate, which one can celebrate, which is often "familiar" in the true sense of the word. The root doctor thinks of the dead as alive and well and able to autonomously dispose of what they have to give. It may seem absurd for the mentality accustomed to the sacred reverential fear of earthly remains, but the Tibetan Buddhist monk who offers the buddha drinks in cups made from human skulls, or blows during ceremonies in flutes made with shins of old llamas does not do anything different from the conjure man; he does much more, only that generally, for his peaceful demeanor, is much more sympathetic to public opinion.

## CHAPTER 12: HOODOO SIGILS



### LOA Mystery

In Hoodoo, many spirits are worshiped that are referred to as Loa (mystery), and these spirits are invoked and nourished during voodoo or woodoo rituals, and there is a belief in the presence of supernatural forces in plants, objects, and people. On various occasions, voodoo rituals celebrate special events such as births, deaths, and weddings or to obtain help from the Loa spirits and keep him "happy" and nourish him through the rituals. According to this religion, each person would have two spirits: a great guardian spirit and a minor spirit, a small guardian spirit, and it would

be possible for the small guardian spirit to leave the body during sleep or during certain types of rituals and could be captured by other entities that make up the Loa.

Some deities that make up the Loa are called **Afra, Asojano, Afreqete, Hevioso.**

The preachers of voodoo rituals, if they are men, are called hungan, if they are women, are called mambo. Voodoo rituals last an entire night and are so organized:

Sacious chants accompanied by drum rolls for the duration of the ritual, the drums are three, of increasing size, the smallest is called bula, the middle is called second, and the largest is called manman.

Frenzied dances called Ararà accompanied by physical beatings to the dancers.

Sacrificial animals such as chickens, goats, chickens, or dogs are slaughtered during the ritual, the blood of the sacrificial animals is sometimes drunk, and the blood poured into the ground instead serves to feed the Loa as the spirits that have the same function, to feed the Loa.

### **Use of herbal extracts, spices, and drugs**

Each Loa has a particular type of sound made with the drum and a specific sacrificial animal and dance. During a ritual, a dancer can fall into a trance with convulsions and tremors, finding himself possessed by Loa's spirit that communicates with the whole village through the body of the dancer. The trance of these people sometimes lasts for hours but can last for days.

### **The Meaning of Loa**

Often the Voodoo religion is considered polytheistic, but that's not the case... The Loa are the deities through which the "God of the Gods" of Voodoo is manifested. The unique and powerful God is seen in Voodoo, far away from the man. The distance of the Bon Dieu is because, in its immensity, it cannot be grasped by human reason in its totality, as it is infinite. But He does not want to be far from man, so He is divided into a series of divinities that are part of Him and are closer in fact to man. These divinities are comprehensible to the human intellect as laws, behaviors,



manifestations that in Haitian Voodoo take the name of Loa and that in Africa were simply called Vodun.

Loa has a value, a number, and is understandable. We can practically compare them to the angels of the Jewish tradition. Although in the Poem there are 401, in reality, the Loa are many more, almost infinite, since new ones could be born every day. They have intelligence, and they are immortal, yet they are subject to a time and, once their mission is over, they can be absorbed by Bon Dieu and return, perhaps in a different form and in other eras.

Although the myth refers to Him as the Great Old Man, in reality, He is androgynous, Father and Mother at the same time.

God, the Father is called Lihsah Bha God and contains the powers of the Sun, the first from which all the male figures in the pantheon derive.

Mother God is called Mawu and contains the powers of the moon, the first from which all the female figures of the pantheon derive.

Mawu and Lihsah are not Loa, but in them, all Loa vibrate. The Loa derive from them when they descend in Damballah and Aida's guise, beginning the history of man and the world.

Loa are divided into families (fanmi) and nations (nanchòn). A family groups the various manifestations of the Loa itself plus any Loa that vibrate together with this Loa. The nations indicate the origin and the mode of worship of a particular Loa.

### **Loa Manifestations**

The manifestations of the Loa are true crossings of energetic vibrations. These in Voodoo are called points. The point indicates a force, a power, energy coming from a spiritual source.

A point of Danbhallah Pethro, which defines itself as Bord de la Mer, will indicate a manifestation of Danbhallah Pethro which is honored on the bramble of the sea, which crosses its energy with that of Agwé (male Loa of the sea) and which in its offerings will require elements typical of Danbhallah Pethro and Agwé.

The point theory is fundamental. It is not easy to understand which Loa holds a person's head; only possession can reveal the arcane. In Voodoo, the first one who rides an individual's head will necessarily be his Met Tet. But this first Loa is not always defined. In this case, the theory of points will be fundamental to allow us to recognize the quality or mode of the Loa, specifying its essence and making it possible to interpret its esoteric and religious meaning.

Although magic practice tends to give each Loa a specific task, in reality each Loa can act on several fronts, so a person who is a child of a specific Loa will be able to turn to this for each problem, even if this does not prevent him/her from winking at other Loa and turning to them.

As for African traditions, it is always necessary to ask a Loa, through cards, through dreams or through a child's possession, if the Loa is willing to help and in what terms.

In New Orleans, in addition to these systems, the 4 shells (the Yoruba oracle of Oborí) or the divination practice of dice are used. Some use candles to scan the flame for answers; others use a magic mirror.

## **Danbhallah Family**

The most important mystery of the Voodoo tradition is the androgynous snake Danbhallah Wedo - Aida Wedo.

Da(n) = snake

Dan Gbè = Sacred Serpent, whose esoteric meaning is:

Dan = Snake

Gbe/a = of life, which dispenses life

The snake in the Voodoo tradition is a symbol of knowledge and understanding; it is God who allows man to be understood and who does great things for him. The snake Dan represents the mystery of the Incarnation.

According to the Poem, all Loa are children of Danbhallah and his comoagna Aida. Their children are generally calm and reserved individuals and have great willpower; they do not allow themselves to be influenced.

They have a great sense of adaptation. They are led to reflection and knowledge. Usually, they are individuals of a good economic situation.

Danbhallah is depicted as a snake plowing the sky following the solar course, accompanied by the rainbow, his wife, Aida. It is a celestial Loa but is also associated with the element water and is usually invoked to bring peace, wealth and rain. In her honor, leaf baths are prepared to eliminate evil or propitiate fate.

### **Danbhallah We Do**

The suffix We Do comes from the etymology of the royal family of the kingdom of Ouidah in West Africa. The Loa with this suffix belongs to the solar rite Rada and are distinguished by their benevolence and magnanimity. The sun in Voodoo is the star and the living and visible symbol of the Ville aux Champs, from which all Loa come and reside.

Danbhallah We Do embodies good, it is the old father of the man. He is the patron saint and lord of the waters of heaven. He is made a creature with St. Patrick. During the trance, his spiritual children crawl like snakes and hiss like snakes. One of his famous daughters was Marie Laveau. In the myth, he is the one who causes earthquakes. He is invoked for wealth, good fortune, and success.

Festivity: 17th March

Day of the week: Thursday or Sunday

Beverage: milk, barley syrup

Color: white, white and green

Metal: silver

Number: 7 and 2

Flowers: White flowers, iris

Fruit: Coconut, grape, pineapple

Perfume: magnolia, linden

Plate: ceramic

Food offers: white-shelled eggs resting on a small mountain of flour, condensed milk, snake-shaped gummy candies, white and yellow corn flour, honey, rice, rice flour, chickpeas, coconut, sweet potatoes, almonds, soya, meringues, white and juicy fruit

Homage: silver coins, white candles, candles of 7 colors, ceramic basin with water

Place of power: springs, riverbanks

Planet: sun

Ritual necklace: made of white glass beads

### **Aida, We Do**

She is the wife of Danbhallah We Do, from their union would be born Legbha.

She is the lady of the rainbow and wealth; she is represented as the Virgin of Haute grace. She is Queen of Heaven, Earth, and all Angels.

She protects trade and is conducive to fertility and pregnancy.

Her spiritual daughters are sparkling, impulsive, love to chat and joke, love children and have a strong sense of justice. They are often invoked in rites of love and union and when they wish to change their lifestyle.

Festivities: 21st January

Day of the week: Tuesday, Saturday

Beverage: sparkling wine, milk

Color: white and blue

Metal: gold

Number: 7, 6

Flower: Amapola, white iris

Fruit: coconut

Perfume: amber

Plate: ceramic

Food offers: white shell eggs on which rainbow colors are traced with chalk, white or yellow corn flour, milk cakes, honey, rice, rice flour, chickpeas, coconut, sweet potatoes, duck, pigeon

Homage: golden coins, sweet scents, white and blue candles, candles of 7 colors, snake-shaped jewelry colored with the seven colors of the iris

Place of power: springs, riverbanks

Ritual necklace: formed by beads of the 7 colors of the iris or soft blue balls

Planet: moon

### **Danbhallah Nagò/Ocumare**

In this Loa, we recognize the well-known Orixà Oxumarè from the Yoruba pantheon. Protector of wealth and change, he embodies the mystery of transmutation and continuous movement. His female counterpart is Ewà.

Festivity: 24th August

Day of the week: Tuesday

Beverage: milk

Color: the 7 colors of the iris

Metal: silver

Number: 7

Flower: evergreen

Fruit: coconut

Perfume: Mandarin

Plate: ceramic

Food offers: eggs, white corn, honey, rice, rice, chickpeas, and sweet potatoes

Homage: silver coins

Place of power: under the trees

Ritual necklace: made of white powder shells

Planet: uran

## **Danbhallah Pethro/Danbhallah Le Flambeau**

This manifestation, cultured in the fire ritualistic Pethro, embodies God's wrath, anger in the face of the wicked and those who go against his laws. He is depicted as a snake of fire and always accompanied by his wife, Erzulie Jé Rouge. He is the head of the phalanx of all Loa Pethro and Congo Savane. He protects crops and those who work the land. He is vindictive and violent. The Loa, even though it is Pethro, is cultured according to the Congo rite. Some people worship it with Moses. According to the myth, the father of Ti Jean Pethro is the spirit of Jean Philippe Pedro, the Dominican who founded the Pethro cult in Haiti.

He is invoked to punish those who commit serious injustices. Its strength is not maliciously destructive; it can be used in a strong opposition or when you find powerful antagonists and want to triumph.

Color: red and blue

Day of the week: Thursday

Drinks: dry rum

Planet: Jupiter and Mars

Food offers and gifts: the same as in Danbhallah We Do

Seasoning: hot pepper and gunpowder

## **Spirits**

Most magical practices that exist depend on some sort of element. In particular, they bring together water, fire, earth, and air, all four of which are commonly considered to be distinctive elements that exist. Each of these elements has power in the universe, and that is recognized in Hoodoo as well. However, it is not just those elements that we see in the world that are important. More is used, primarily in symbolism and in the connection to the earth they maintain, which is important. In hoodoo, most of the elements that we use will help us connect to the spiritual realm. They are there to help us bridge that gap to start to communicate with the spirits. It requires a degree of symbolism, which you will start to see throughout the coming chapters. And we will also see that the symbolism and representative magic is incredibly beneficial.

## **Ancestral Spirits**

Ancestral magic refers to the DNA that you inherited from those who came before you. It refers to the connections that you have, the essence and spirits of those who came before you. Your descendants will share that connection with you. That lineage is incredibly powerful, and when you can identify it and start to tap into it actively, you can start seeing the power that you have. However, this sort of blood magic is not without risk. There is always a chance that there is a curse causing you to pay for something from the past. Think of karma—you reap what you sow. Sometimes, however, your ancestors reap what you sow as well.

Someone with a terrible temper may actually have family members with terrible tempers as well. That temper was inherited in genetics. However, other traits that are a bit more intangible can also be passed down. Some people are particularly fortunate. Others may find themselves suffering from a curse. Ancestors who have done something that was so good or so bad that it impacted their descendants can create ties of blessings or curses to their blood. This power matters. While you personally may have never done anything that would warrant being treated poorly, the truth is, someone else in your past may have.

Similarly, however, you have the power that is passed down. Your power that you draw on comes from your ancestors. And, if you fail ever actively to acknowledge it, you can wind up in situations that are very undesirable for you. Your power can slowly wane over time as it is not acknowledged, fizzling out until it is barely there.

Your ancestral spirits are with you at all times. They are present, and they will try to guide you if you give them a chance. If you ignore them, they may not be particularly open to you, but they are there. Remember, they are more powerful than you. They are more experienced than you. They have wisdom that they can share with you. They can help you make choices that will help you, but that requires you to actually acknowledge them. That requires you to be there in positions where you can and will be able to make choices that will help you.

When you are able to start making those connections to your ancestors, you start seeing that you are capable of so much more. You start recognizing

that you have that power within yourself and that you can call upon that power whenever you might need it. Before you know it, you have got that power. You are going to be able to call upon your ancestors when you need them, and they will be there for you if you have given them that connection to you and you have begun to honor them as well.

### **Spirits of the Roots**

Hoodoo is known as rootwork, thanks to the bulk of what you do will be connected to the plants, roots, and herbs that you use. They will help you to focus on. They will help you to start channeling your power where you need it. These herbs are meant to be beneficial spiritually and physically as well, and many of these herbs also serve very medicinal purposes. As you will start to see in the next chapter, there are many different options based upon each plant's powers and properties that you can see.

Remember that, once upon a time, we didn't have a bottle of Tylenol we could take to cure our headaches—we had herbs. We didn't have law enforcement to call and serve a restraining order to protect us—we had our spiritual guides, ancestral spirits, and the rituals that we could perform to try to sway the world's fate so we could be protected. This is imperative to remember.

We have always found ways to figure out what we need. We have always known that the earth provided us with a way that we could heal our bodies, and we turned to the earth to provide us with guidance in other ways as well. The plants that were around us were there to help us. Some were even able to help us bridge that gap and connect with the spirit world. By learning which plants will help you to bridge that gap, you can start reaching out to the spirits to ensure that you have that help.

Knowing which plants will help us create the effects that we need or desire will help us become more powerful. It will help us to be able to get those effects that we want. From being able to cast protection to draw luck or goodwill, we start to see that we have the power to do what we need. We start to know which roots will do what and how that can help us to be able to cast the spells that we seek to get the effects that we need.

### **Spirits of the Earth**



There are also spirits of the earth that must be acknowledged as well. We are not just drawing from our ancestors and the roots that we've chosen—we are also drawing from the earth's spirits. By drawing soil or other earth from the ground of locations, you can start creating the effect you want. The soil that you choose will have the properties of the place that you drew it from. A bank, for example, would bring about wealth. A casino may bring luck. A courthouse may bring justice, and earth from a crime scene may evoke evil. The earth that we use can help us to ground our spells—it works to start focusing and balancing out the magic that we draw from.

Because magic is so incredibly powerful, it can be volatile as well. However, being able to stop and connect that to the earth helps you to make sure that it is more focused. Adding soil can also help you to hone the spell that you are using. Adding that soil can actually help you direct the spell to where you want it to go. The love spell that you might want to work on could be more focused if you used soil from somewhere good to help hone it. The spell for justice might be better if you add in the soil from the courthouse that you will be in. These nuances will help protect you; they help guide the power you are drawing from so you know that it will go the direction you want. This will be enough to help you successfully navigate these different situations that you are in.

The earth also brings with it more as well. It brings with it the wealth of the universe as well. Think about it—gold comes from the earth. Gemstones come from the earth. This need for energy surrounds the world around us, and when you draw from it, you start to attract wealth as well.

### **The Spiritual Practices of Hoodoo**

The Hoodoo spiritual practices are a component of the spiritual beliefs of the Hoodoo faith. In teachings concerning the spiritual world, practitioners may or may not use such tools as rituals and prayer. Visualization of the outcome and will of the effect and the magnetizing of the individual's or object's physical presence may be used. Prayers and offerings may be made with the help of ancestors or gods. Magic, rituals and spells, conjuring and curses conjured by the application of Hoodoo are believed to be ways of forcing change. Hoodoo is linked to sorcery and is therefore understood to promote a variety of spiritual practices and rituals. Indeed, some of these

practices and rituals are found in Voodoo and other religious ritual and practices called "pagan" or "sorcery." Hoodoo is understood to be a form of Santeria practice which is an aspect of African origins. Only in North America and in the Caribbean is it called Hoodoo. Hoodoo is known to be a part of Egyptian traditions. Hoodoo might have been a part of Voodoo practice in the US. The practice of Hoodoo has roots in African American folklore and folk religion. It draws from African-American folk practices and perhaps its culture. It draws from the mysticism of the Caribbean, Native American, and European magical beliefs. Hoodoo is a spiritual practice that blends rootwork, conjures, and folk healing.

### **How to Get In Touch with Spirits**

How do you get in touch with spirits? When you are a worship leader, people are mainly looking to you for power or guidance. There are rituals, such as making a sacrifice from things such as food, water or something people value or make use of. In most cases, the transactions with the spirits are paid for in some type of currency. The leaders make the sacrifice and then give the blessings to the people. This is why they make the sacrifice.

Hoodoo is similar to other secret societies, especially the kind that has its history in the African diaspora. However, unlike most secret societies, Hoodoo is open to the general public. With its origins being a secret African culture, Hoodoo keeps some rituals or beliefs secret from prying eyes, especially those who have no honor or respect for its traditions. It is very similar to the secret societies of the 18th and 19th centuries, like the Masonic orders and Catholic and Anglican institutions. The only difference is in what these secret societies believe in, which is their spiritual and religious philosophies. If something is revealed, they will banish the one who reveals them and punish the one who committed the crime and broke the law.

Hoodoo rituals and traditions are similar to West African traditions. The secret masters that are in the Hoodoo tradition have African origins. The origins of Hoodoo or the African magic scene come from African countries in the context of the slave trade. Hoodoo, or African magic, especially those rituals that are performed, are based on African beliefs and philosophy. The Hoodoo tradition is a form of religion that is like other African traditional

religions. The adherents of the religion believe in spiritual beings and sacred ancestors.

The ancient African philosophical and religious beliefs do not require the belief in a God or a theistic form of theology. However, many African philosophies and religions display some type of theistic theme. The prominent in African traditional religions is the presence of the Supreme Being which is assisted by lesser spiritual beings. Although In some, there is none. But in almost every African traditional religion, the concept of a Supreme Being exists, appearing in the form of a sky-god or a creator god. Not all the concepts of a Supreme Being are considered to be omnipotent.

### **How to Evoke Spirits in Hoodoo**

In the Hoodoo tradition and African philosophy, the use of spiritual and magic spirituality is formed from the inter-relationship with the natural elements of the universe. It is not a Christian or a Judeo-Christian belief. The Hoodoo tradition believes that spiritual beings exist and that they are a part of the spirit world. In the African and Hoodoo tradition, there are many object-based rituals whose purpose is to make contact with spirits to make a transaction or a trade. An example of how that is related to Hoodoo tradition is the burning of incense and other herbs used to aid in the invocation of a spirit. Another example would be the burning of oils or candles in a ritual, like using a candle as a focal point. Hoodoo is a pact between humans and unseen counterparts, or higher beings in the spirit world to establish a deal or a transaction between humans and spirits.

In Hoodoo, spiritual or magical work is the making of deals with one of these higher beings to exchange services. The service could be doing rituals like candles offered to the spirit in exchange for a wish.

Hoodoo is not just using spiritual work for rituals but also for love or even to talk to spirits for guidance and advice when you are having problems in your relationship or marriage. In Hoodoo, if you have problems with a partner or questions about love, you can talk to a spirit who will help and guide you to a solution for your problems. In Hoodoo, spirit guides are called Orisha, Odu or Obayifo.

## CHAPTER 13: IMPORTANCE OF CROSSROAD



Crossroads also represent an important element to Hoodoo magic. In particular, when we see crossroads, we acknowledge that there is an opportunity. Think about it—when you stand at the center of a crossroads, you can see that there are four different directions you can go. You have opportunities, and those opportunities that present themselves are incredibly powerful as well.

You can use these to start casting off bad energy. You can use them to protect yourself and to create the effect of encouraging transition. However, unlike a graveyard, a crossroads doesn't have to carry that same air of death that you would otherwise see.

Additionally, the crossroads represent a place of magical neutrality. This makes it commonplace for your spell remnants to be disposed of. If you have created a spell using supplies that is very magically powerful, you may want to neutralize the power in the remnants by leaving them at a crossroads. This will help to lower the power that they have so that they can be disposed of safely.

The junction, also known as "the crossroads," is where two paths intersect at right angles. It is the topic of religious and folkloric beliefs throughout the world. Because the junction is a piece of land that belongs to no one and is located outside the city limits, it is seen as a good location for conducting magical rites and casting spells. Using the crossroads as an improvised altar where offerings are deposited, rituals are commonly conducted in European and African folklore.

Almost every ethnic group in Africa has its own version of the deity of crossing. Legba, Elegbara, Ellegua, Eshu, Exu, Nbumba Nzila, and Pomba Gira are names of the spirit that leads the way, protects the crossroads, and imparts knowledge in African and African diaspora languages.

Some contemporary anthropologists have christened these crossroads gods as delinquents. This, in my opinion, is a misnomer because not all gods and spirits of crossroads are cheaters (untrustworthy, clever, deceptive), and not all cheating gods or spirits are gods of the crossroads.

Crossbreeding beliefs in the United States are diverse and varied. There are two major themes concerning crossroads rituals in the African American hoodoo tradition. While these practices may contain elements of European folklore, they are mostly descended from African ancestors.

After finishing a "magical work" or magical ritual, the most neutral method to dispose of remnants such as candle wax, incense ash, dirt, or ritual bath water is to carry everything to the crossroads, dump everything into the crossing, then turn and go home without looking back.

(Alternative ways to dispose of ritual materials include dumping them into rushing water to escape or move spells, taking them to a cemetery for hard labor against an opponent, or burying them in your own lawn to draw influences.)

If a Follow Me Boy spell is worked on to unite two individuals passionately, the trick may be tracked to every crossing between the practitioner's house and the lover's house, i.e., each crossing will be marked with ritual objects for cementing or gluing. In contrast, in at least one variation of Hot Foot or Drive Away Spell, ritual objects are hurled into a succession of junctions that leave the Citta, pushing the despised person out

of the city and acting as guards against his return. There is also a variant of the junction in which Graveyard Dirt is buried at a crossroads.

Not all Hoodoo rituals take place at a true crossroads, but when tricks may be performed when casting spells, many practitioners utilize what is known as a "portable crossbreed" or circle with a cross within, known as an "X" or "cross" in general. The cross can be drawn on the ground or a personal altar with purchased or homemade powders, or it can be constructed delicately, with only five points instead of two crossed lines. In the latter situation, the points are put in the four corners where the intersecting lines meet the perimeter of an imaginary circle and at the circle's intersection or center point. If drawn this way, it is not called a crossroads, but a "five-point," a "quincunx," and some anthropologists use the term "cosmogram." In real conversations with real practitioners, you will hear them say things like this: "arrange the salt at the four corners and in the center, like point five of the die "or" sprinkle your powders in the shape of a cross mark inside a circle "or" they would place the powders near the door

The technique is documented in a 19th-century pen and ink sketch titled "the hoodoo dance" by EW Kemble. By looking closely, you will see a clearly marked portable intersection or five points in the center of the dance floor: a piece of cloth is spread out on the ground, and at the 4 corners of the cloth are placed four candlesticks with lighted candles, plus four identical pieces of herbiage judging by their size and shape, four large clematis flowers, or four carefully opened banana (plantain) peels. A little dish filled with herbiage, likely an offering, sits in the center of this portable crossing.

Crossroads is the most common location for performing a special crossroads ritual hoodoo to learn a talent, like playing a musical instrument or becoming skilled at tossing dice, dancing, public speaking, or anything you desire. According to how this ritual is commonly described, you bring the object you want to master, such as a banjo, guitar, violin, deck of cards, or dice, and wait at the junction for three or nine predetermined nights or mornings. On successive trips, you may notice the strange appearances of various creatures. A "huge black dude" will appear on your last visit. If you are not terrified and do not flee, he will request that you borrow the object

you desire to learn. He will demonstrate the proper technique to utilize the item alone. When he returns it to you, you will find yourself unexpectedly endowed with the gift of greatness.

The individual who meets them at the crossroads and teaches them the skills is sometimes referred to as "the devil." He is also referred to as "the knight," "the hilarious little guy," or "the large black man," where black is the true hue and not a brown-skinned ("colored" or black) person. It is a common academic conception to equate the crossroads "devil" with Legba because it shares qualities and derives from several African crossbreed spirits (of which Legba, Ellegua, Elegbara, Eshu, Nbumba Nzila, and Pomba Gira are some African names and African diaspora), but this is completely unheard of in popular oral tradition.

This African-originated crossroads ritual is one of the most widely dispersed superstitions in African American folklore, and it is conducted across the southern states.

### **Who Was Tommy Johnson, Not Robert Johnson**

The crossroads ritual is now most well-known in American popular culture due to the recent adoption of a bogus legend in which famed 1930s blues musician Robert Johnson claimed to have learned to play the guitar by selling his soul to the devil at the crossroads, somewhere in Mississippi. Indeed, the blues artist who made this public claim was Tommy Johnson, a lesser-known contemporary and friend of Robert's who was unrelated to Robert. Tommy Johnson is widely known for his iconic version of "Maggie Campbell Blues." Tommy Johnson's brother, LeDell Johnson, spoke with blues researcher David Evans about Tommy's newfound ability to play the guitar and his claims. His description of the ritual is typical of other crops in the south.

It's worth noting that LeDell made no mention of Tommy Johnson calling the crossroads ghost "the devil" or selling his soul.

"Get a guitar and head towards a crossroads where the road meets the other road if you want to learn to write songs on your own." Get there, and make sure you arrive before 12 a.m. that night, so you know you'll be there. You have your guitar and perform a solo piece there. A huge black man will

come up and take your instrument and tune it. Then he'll play a piece for you and hand it to you. That's how I learned to play anything I wanted." from David Evans' "Tommy Johnson" (London: Studio Vista, 1971).

In blues mythology, the crossing of highways 49 and 61 in Mississippi is explicitly mentioned as the location where many artists went to sell their soul to the devil (or, as we know it, Legba) in return for powers beyond this world and recognition.

The Hoodoo is a belief system in and of itself, and the ritual of acquiring skills at a crossroads is simply one of the hundreds of activities that comprise the Hoodoo heritage. Robert Johnson worked on the Hoodoo and believed in it, but he never claimed to have utilized the crossroads ritual to learn the guitar. That's not to say he didn't; many others did, and not only to learn to play the guitar, but also to become adept on other musical instruments, develop their dancing talents, and become good. To play a dice game and learn acrobatics (casting spells). In the spirit of completeness, I must reiterate that Robert Johnson never claimed to have completed the crossing ritual.

Hoodoo was and still is a widely held concept among African American communities. It is not a "cult," there is no "initiation," and it is something that may be "picked up" by family members, neighborhood storytellers, and even newspaper advertisements.

The customary colors ascribed to the spirit of the African crossroads are red and black, and gifts of wine and slaughtered animals are made to the same spirit, making it easy for Christian slaves and their masters to mistake it with "the devil" (e.g., example Satan, the adversary to monotheistic god in the Jewish, Christian and Islamic religions). The spirit of the crossroads, however, is not Satan. He is also not the Judeo-Christian devil because he is malevolent, hurtful, deceiving, or harsh. He is a spiritual being who is worshipped by a polytheistic religious system. It does not need the use of "dark arts" in the medieval European sense to invoke him or gain his favor. He is a teacher and a guide who shows the path.

Crossbreeds are considered to respect in both Hoodoo and Voodoo because they serve an important part in setting the stage for various ceremonies, rituals, and requests. Ritual residues may be disposed of at the crossroads,



spiritual hot springs can be disposed of, curses can be lifted, and various spells can be performed and increased.

## **The Crossroads and the Black Man**

Another well-known place in the practice of hoodoo is the crossroads. The "X" crossroads, in particular, has a deep meaning. It is the center of the world, the place from which all roads depart, the place from which all corners of the world can be seen. It is a ritual place par excellence, full of power and inhabited by powerful spirits. This fascination was also well known in European antiquity, which placed at the crossroads the newsstands of the family Iari and the god Mercury, which later became the Italian Madonnas and saints.

The Madonna or the saint probably have been there since the year 500, the newsstand probably since 300 before Christ. The crossroads in the hoodoo is the subject of legends, pacts with the spirits, and the favorite place of a particular character: the black man. He is often confused with the devil and is also called the devil or Satan, but the root doctors know that there is nothing more different. The black man or man of the crossroads is an archetypal character, present in many cultures of the world, in particular, it is important in African religions and practices and those that derive from them. He is known by many names: exu, eleggua, papa legba, maitre carrefour, calfu, lucero mundo are just some of them. In some religions and philosophies, he is a deity, in others an ancestor with great powers but he is always linked to four things: change, crossing, divination and play. He is considered as a joker spirit, lover of parties, gambling, who enjoys making jokes and is often considered the link between the gods and man.

To it are given honors and offers before the other spirits and, in hoodoo, is the only spirit that has a dedicated ritual, the ritual of crossing, which allows the person who performs it to make a pact with him. This pact brings good luck to those who contract it, it can be used to have fame or skill. The thing that makes this spirit darker and more interesting is the fact that it never refuses a desire of whatever nature it is. It is the contact with our deep unconscious, with the unexpressed desire, with our true moral essence. Both the intersection and the black man cannot be explained, they can only be

perceived. Here comes into play the gnosis, the intuition of the sacred, and the personal sensitivity of the individual.

### **The Crossroads Ritual**

While visiting the crossroads every night, you may or may not see or be greeted by any number of black animals. On the last night, you will be greeted by a figure. It could be a person dressed in black, it could be a black man (i.e., a person of African origin); however it appears, it will be the Devil. If you show no fear, he will take the object you have brought to you and teach you how to use it correctly. Finally, he will return the object to you, and you will have both the mastery and the ability to use the object.

## CHAPTER 14: SPELLS



### **The Hoodoo spells**

The Hoodoo spell is more properly called an oath and, in its substance, is as varied as one can imagine. It can be classified according to the action that you want to undertake and we speak of averts of blessing, curse, money, love, power, health, justice. Often they are also classified according to the association of traditional "color": white for the blessing, black for the curse, green for money, red for love, purple for power, blue for health, brown for justice. The curses of blessing include all exorcisms that seek to remove bad spirits, purify people or environments, attract good spirits, those of curse include the real curses, revenge, removal, punishment of evil tongues and troublesome characters, those of money seek to bring economic benefits or luck at the game; those of love have to do with "ligaments," attract love, cement the couple or help to find a new lover; those of power seek to make some people be subject to others; those of health seeks to heal diseases or accelerate the healing; finally those of justice include all actions aimed at winning lawsuits or have advantages in court.

Of course, all these categories are not precise and insurmountable distinctions, and often new ones are created depending on the situation and

the action sought. To perform them, you can use herbs, prayers, powders, oils, bags, stones, dolls, animal remains, and objects among the most varied. These "tools," unlike other techniques and magical philosophies, do not have a precise form and there are not indispensable. There are no knives, sticks, cups consecrated for a certain symbolism rather than for another; often in fact the root doctor acts with what he has at the moment.

Let us remember, in fact, that the Conjure man of the past often did not have the possibility to resort to elaborate symbolic solutions, nor to read traditional texts, nor did he have enough time to devote to study and preparation. Everything was entrusted to his brain and to his knowledge of the tradition. With time things have changed, but the characteristic simplicity of Hoodoo remains the same. A kitchen stocked with a few spices and a piece of cloth, some soil taken from a special place, an oil made by infusion, a candle, a bible can give acceptable solutions for many a two-headed doctor.

## Love Spells

### Honey Jar Spell

#### What You Need

- Pen and paper
- Slate to place your candle on
- Pink or red candles
- Your preferred love herbs and roots like cloves, rose petals, cardamom, and magnolia
- Attraction oil or powder
- Jar with honey in it

#### Instructions

Honey is often used to attract other people because that is its natural state. Bees are drawn to honey and nectar, and so it will attract love. In ancient days honey was also used as offerings to love and fertility deities to access their gifts.

Take the piece of paper and write the name of the person you want to reconnect to three times. Now rotate the paper and write your name three times, so it overlaps their name and forms a block. Circle the block with loving words and phrases like "love me" and "come back to me" without lifting your pen from the paper.

Now add the oils and herbs to the paper. You can add some personal items to strengthen your honey and infuse it with your intentions. Use hair from your heads or even bodily fluids (use your imagination here) to enhance the mix. All these items should be kept in the center of the paper.

Now charge the jar with herbs, roots, and other items related to loving. Rosemary represents fidelity, while orange peel signifies joy. Use your favorite ingredients to charge the honey before you add the paper.

*Now place the paper into the honey jar while reciting the following words* "This honey is sweet to me just like (say the name of the person you are influencing) will be sweet and loving to me."

Place your candle on the slate and use the honey from the jar to anoint it. Light the candle and ask for help from the spirits and deities of love. Repeat for three days, and the spell will be cast.

### **Finding Love with Honeysuckle**

#### **What You Will Need**

- Love Drawing Oil
- Red candle
- Honeysuckle flowers

#### **Instructions**

Dress the love candle with the Love Drawing Oil by rubbing the oil on it from top to bottom.

Place the candle on a plate on a non-flammable part of your altar.

Sprinkle the petals of the honeysuckle flowers around the candle wick and then light it.

Center your focus on your intentions (to attract your true love) as you watch the flame burn.

This work draws on your energy and focus. You will focus on the flames, visualize your intentions, vocalize your expectations in the form of the scriptures, and then will them into existence. You must stay at the candle until you can smell the scent of the honeysuckle, and then let the candle burn down naturally. You can speak the Song of Solomon 2:10-13 to aid the work as the candle burns.

### **Pinning Your Partner Down**

#### **What You Will Need**

- Hoodoo doll
- Tailor pin (for a man)
- Candle (for a woman)
- Holy water
- Pubic hair of the target

## **Instructions**

Place the pubic hair of the target on the doll for potency. The pubic hair should be placed on the corresponding genital area of the doll.

Bind the doll to the target by sprinkling the doll's head thrice with holy water and repeating these words, "I name you (insert target's name). You are now this doll and this doll is you."

For a man, pierce the genital area of the doll with the pin, but make sure it doesn't go through the doll. Then tell the doll what you want.

For the woman, place the genitals of the dolls over a burning candle. Call her name three times and speak your intentions to the flames. Don't let it burn. The result might be permanent.

Keep the doll in a safe space.

Whenever you want to have intercourse with your partner, take out the pin for the man. For the woman, place a ball of wet cotton wool on the doll's genitals. Relations should proceed as usual. When they go out, and you suspect their intentions, simply run through steps 3 or 4 and then repeat step five.

# **Money**

## **The Money Spell**

### **What You Need**

- A green candle
- A white candle
- Prosperity oil like bergamot, eucalyptus, or jasmine

In this spell, the green candle represents wealth and money, and the white candle represents you. To maximize the power of the spell, you can inscribe the white candle with your name.

### **Instructions**

Charge your candles with the oil you have chosen

Place them on your altar nine inches apart

Light them both and repeat the following chant "*Money and wealth come to me.*"

In fullness and in plenty three times three

I seek enrichment without harming none

With your help, it will be done

"Money, I welcome you three times three."

Move the two candles one inch closer to each other

Extinguish the candles

Repeat the ritual for nine days

On the ninth day, let the candles burn to wax before wrapping the remains in a white cloth and placing it in your mojo bag or wallet.

### **Spell for Business Growth**

#### **What You Need**

- A large plate
- ¼ cup of curd



- Seven coins (include some foreign coins)
- Red mojo bag
- Fast luck oil
- Almond oil
- One green, yellow, red, and blue candle
- A small magnet

## **Instructions**

First, write the name of your business on a piece of paper and place it under the plate. If you don't have a name yet, write what your intentions and dreams for the business involve.

Place the green candle at the top of the plate, the yellow to the right, the blue to the left, and the red at the bottom. Place the magnet in the center of your candles, then light the green candle.

Pray to the gods and goddesses of plenty and ask for their assistance. Now light the yellow candle and repeat your prayers. Follow this with the red and blue candles.

Once the candles have burned down, take the remnants of the curd, the wax, and the coins and place them in your red mojo bag. Carry it with you wherever you go. The spell should be reenergized and repeated every six months or whenever you feel the need.

Remember, there are no freebies in business. All exchanges should be equal, and you need to keep yourself energized. This doesn't mean you can't be generous or helpful but don't overextend yourself or be overly generous.

## **The Green Candle Money Spell**

### **What You Need**

- A green candle
- Six coins, two gold, two silver, and two bronze
- A gold cloth
- Jasmine oil

## **Instructions**

Prepare your altar and take a moment to pray to your favorite deity. Ask for assistance in your magic work, and pray for success. Once you feel charged with energy, begin the spell.

Anoint the candle with your oil and place it in the center of your altar.

Place the six coins around the candle to form a circle of alternate-colored coins, as you prepare the candle and coins, visualize what you will do with the money or good fortune your spell will attract.

Light your candle while repeating the phrase below three times

"Make the money flow and make my fortunes grow. As the money shines, god fortune will be mine."

Lay out the gold cloth and place the six coins on it. Form a pouch from the cloth while repeating this phrase *"Money comes three by three; all good fortune come to me."*

Carry the pouch with you wherever you periodically charge it with your favorite herb or oil to make it work.

## **Protect Your Business Mojo Bag with Devil's Claw**

### **What You Will Need**

- 1 tablespoon Devil's Claw root, dried or powdered
- 1 teaspoon Dried five finger grass - to ward off evil
- 1 teaspoon Goldenseal root - for protection
- Money Drawing Oil
- Piece of paper
- Pen
- Green cloth
- Twine

## **Instructions**

On the piece of paper, write down your business's name along with your intention. Something like, "Stop people from stealing from me."

Pour 7 drops of Money Drawing Oil on the paper.

Put the herbs on top of the petition paper and fold it closed as best you can.

Wrap the paper with the green cloth.

Secure the green cloth with a twine.

Put it in a safe location in your business.

A mojo bag is a small spirit and must be fed. You should feed the mojo bag regularly with either rum, Hoyt's Cologne, or holy water. A few drops once per week should do. Each time you feed it, remind the spirit inside what you want it to do.

### **Dream Home Purchase with Shoes**

#### **What You Will Need**

- 1 green candle
- 1 yellow candle
- 2 pieces of paper
- Pen
- Favor Cologne
- A pair of shoes (yours)

#### **Instructions**

Write down the address of your dream home on each of the pieces of paper.

Dress the papers with the Favor Cologne.

Insert each of the pieces of paper in each shoe.

Walk around the building you want to buy nine times, then return home.

Remove the paper from each shoe and set it aside.

Light both candles at your altar.

Burn the papers in the flames of these candles, one piece of paper per candle.

After you've finished, dispose of the tools for the spell in running water.

Please note that this spell is meant to be carried out before you place the bid on the house. You can put the papers into your shoes before doing a walk-through and then walk around the house nine times as part of that process.

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## Success

### Success by Invoking: A Simple Candle Spell

#### You will need

- Scissors or something sharp to carve with.
- Crown of success conjure oil.
- Your intent.

#### Instructions

Cleanse all of your materials. Carefully carve your name and date of birth into the candle using a sharp end of the scissors (or whatever you have to carve with).

On the opposite side of the candle, or underneath your name, carve in what it is that you want. If your petition is a little long for a candle, try editing it down to a couple of words, such as 'dedicated subscribers.'

Anoint your candle with the crown of success oil, making sure to go from the bottom and upwards. Cover the wick, your name, and the petition with your fingers, which should have the oil on them.

Add your essence by speaking your intention into the candle before lighting it. Once it's lit, recite the Psalms and express gratitude. You can also speak to the flame and put into it everything you want.

This is something you want to think about *before* casting your spell: the type of problems that will follow when you achieve. Do you want these problems? Speak your anxieties or worries about achieving success to the fire. Ask Spirit and your ancestors for help with all that will come as your star rises.

Continue burning the candle until it goes out on its own. If you achieve your goal before the candle is finished, you can stop doing the daily ritual. I like to let the candle burn out on its own one last time and use the light as a reminder to keep a gratitude attitude.

If the candle goes out before you achieve what you're looking to achieve, consider the spell complete. Whenever you think about the spell or catch

yourself worrying about results, remind yourself that you did the spell and the work is done.

I can understand the temptation to do another spell but do your best to resist doing another work. This will undermine the candle spell you've already done and undermine your magick overall.

You can, however, *continue* the work by anointing yourself with a crown of success oil or burning the oil with an herb in a homemade incense.

When you speak about whatever you cast for, speak as if what you want has already happened, especially if you are speaking to yourself about what you want.

*Never* think of the spell as having "not worked." (It's fair to say this goes for any spell you do.) If what you wanted did not happen, think of how you can do things better next time. Or better yet, think of how the spell worked in any unexpected ways.

### **Prosper Me Pumpkin Spell**

If you want to get some more luck into your home, you want to bring in some of the luckiest things that you can. In this spell, you will be working with a pumpkin, pecans, ginger, brown sugar, and rum to create a spell that will not only smell amazing as you work through it but will start bringing good luck, prosperity, and love into your home. Are you ready? This spell is quite simple. You will just do the following:

Start by cutting open your pumpkin carefully. You are leaving the seeds inside of it.

Then, carve the names of the people you want to be blessed with good luck into the sides of the pumpkin, right into the skin.

Put all ingredients inside of the pumpkin and toss in any personal belongings or effects of those who you want to have blessed.

Then, if possible, dig a fire pit into burning the pumpkin. You will bury the pumpkin in the soil, then have a fire on top of it while you let the fire burn. Share a meal while you want the fire to burn out.

If you can't dig a fire pit, then you can bake the pumpkin in your oven set to 200 all day long.

Bury the pumpkin either in your yard or in the nearest crossroads to get the effect intended.

### **Prosper Me Wash**

Take two large handfuls of each of your herbs and toss them into 2 quarts of water.

Then, while you boil the water, pray Psalm 23 over your pot.

Then, take out your herbs and bury them.

Wash your floors, walls, door frames, and other surfaces of the home or business that you are trying to bless.

Do this five times over five weeks, choosing Fridays as the day of choice.

### **Sweeten My Business with Honeycomb**

#### **What You Will Need**

- A small piece of honeycomb (to sweeten and stabilize)
- Lodestone (to attract)
- Three basil leaves (to draw money)
- Piece of green cloth
- String or twine

#### **Instructions**

Place the green cloth at the center of your altar.

Put the honeycomb at the center of the green cloth.

Put the lodestone and basil leaves on top of the honeycomb.

Wrap the green cloth to cover everything and tie it closed.

Bury the bundle close to your business or home.

This spell can also be used if you are uncertain about your job. Repeat the process mentioned here, but in the last step, bury it close to your place of work.

### **Restore Passion for Your Work Bath with Saffron**

#### **What You Will Need**

- 1 cup Saffron
- 1 cup Patchouli (to move forward)
- 1 cup Gravel root (to bring blessings)
- A pot of water
- A stove
- Spray bottle
- A strainer

### **Instructions**

Pour the ingredients into the pot.

Bring the water to a boil.

Let half the water boil away, then set the pot aside to cool.

Strain into a spray bottle and dispose of the herbs in running water.

In a bathtub or shower, wash the water over yourself. Take your time, and think of the parts of your work that you actually like, or liked when you first started.

You can enhance the bath by reciting Psalm 23 while you wash. Before leaving for work, spray on some of the Favor Cologne to help bring you good fortune.



## **Peace**

### **End Conflict with Sugar**

#### **What You Will Need**

- 1 teaspoon Sugar
- 1 teaspoon Vanilla extract (to calm troubles)
- A few drops of lavender essential oil (for luck in love)
- A small blue candle
- A jar filled with water

#### **Instructions**

Pour a few drops of lavender oil, vanilla extract, and sugar into each hole.

Place the candle at the center of your altar and light it.

Speak your intentions as the candle burns.

When the candle burns out, put the candle ends inside the jar of water.

Seal the jar tightly and bury it in your backyard.

Blue candles are used for bringing healing to relationships. When your relationship is gripped with strife, putting an end to the conflict is one way to put things back on track and restore peace. When the sealed jar goes into the ground, so does the conflict. When you cover it with dirt, the conflict is as good as gone. Do not break this jar. You can enhance the work with Psalm 32.

### **Psychic Peace Spell**

#### **To create it, you will need:**

- 1 orange peel
- ¼ cup honey
- 3 cups of pomegranate juice
- 3 lemongrass stalks

#### **Instructions**

Start by boiling the juice, honey, orange, and lemongrass until the liquid starts to thicken a bit.

Pray Psalm 10 over the mixture while you stir counterclockwise.

Pray Psalm 4 over the mixture, stirring clockwise.

Drink before bed each day for the next nine days. You should be able to prevent any sort of unwanted spiritual connection.

### **For Your Space: A Knot Spell**

#### **You will need**

String in a 'peace' color (see candle options above) or any type of string that is strong enough to withstand being tied into knots (i.e., not sewing thread). Twine is an excellent, neutral option.

Your petition and statements.

#### **Instructions**

Cut your string long enough so you can tie nine knots, and then double this over so you have one end that is a loop.

This spell is really about item #2. You want to have your intention so clear in your mind, that when speaking freely your words match up with what you want. This spell is about solidifying what you want as your hands tie each knot.

Tie three knots, close together making your statements. Then three more, and then the last three doing the same.

Your petition does not have to be the same for each knot. For example, for the first knot in this spell you may say something as simple as: *Peace now for me and my space*. The second knot: *Serenity now for me and my space*. The third: *Inner stillness for me and my space*.

If you need to be even quieter, you can say these in your mind, pray or meditate on what you want.

## **Protection**

### **For Your Self: A Loving Protection Oil**

#### **You will need**

- A black candle
- A glass bottle
- Cinnamon sticks (you will be using one, make sure it can fit in the glass bottle)
- Pink salt
- Castor oil
- Dried rose petals

#### **Instructions**

Another simple spell, for this one we're going to layer the ingredients inside the bottle, starting with the cinnamon stick. You can follow the order above for the rest of the items.

You may also want to use Holy Water for this spell by putting some on your hands and sprinkling it around your space. This is optional.

The one "item" I did not include on this list is *you*. Before putting the cap on your bottle, add something of yourself to the spell. This can be some of your hair, nails, blood, or spit.

A resin-like Myrrh is both healing and protective and associated with Mother Mary or the goddess Isis. An essential oil like rosemary can lend both cleansing and protective properties to your oil. It is spiky and has the ability to encourage clarity.

You don't need to add either of these to your bottle; this is where I encourage you to get creative.

As much as you might want to, do not use the oil right away. Let it sit for at least two weeks before using it. Let your work rest in a dark space away from sunlight (a medicine cabinet is perfect).

### **Power and Protect Hand Spell**

#### **You will need the following:**

- High John Root
- Urine from your target (or cologne if you can't get urine)
- Red thread
- Name paper
- Salt

### **Instructions**

Start by writing the target's name on paper. If you are the one being protected, then you are the intended target. Then, after you have the name paper, soak it with urine or cologne.

Cover the paper with a sprinkle of salt. Then, recite Psalm 91 over it.

Wrap the paper around the High John Root.

Then, bind the paper with the red thread, wrapping it around the root.

Allow the root to dry in the sun for three days. Then, carry it with you after that. Every Monday, feed it with Florida water, cologne, or more urine.

### **Protection from Evil Candle Spell**

**This spell only needs a few simple tools:**

- A blue 7-day candle
- Dried onion
- Cloves
- Camphor oil

### **Instructions**

Start by poking three holes in the top of your candle.

In one hole, drip in four drops of your camphor oil.

In the other two holes, add a bit of each herb.

Write the name of the person, place, or thing that you want to protect onto paper and place it under the candle.

Pray Psalm 91 over your candle. Light it and burn it daily, reciting the Psalm every time you light it.

## **Protection from Losing Children Spell**

### **You will need:**

- Dirt from your front yard
- Dirt from a churchyard (or from a crossroads)
- Your child's shoes

### **Instructions**

Then, when you have everything, you will put a bit of the dirt from your yard into your child's **left** shoe. You will take a bit of the dirt from the churchyard and sprinkle it into your child's **right** foot. After doing this, they should have the protection to keep them at home with you, safe and sound.

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## **Luck**

### **Lucky Cologne Spell**

- Orange peel
- Rum
- Nutmeg

### **Instructions**

Take your orange and your nutmeg and toss them into a full bottle of rum.

Close the bottle and shake it while chanting, “All my kin, below and above, make me lucky, and make me love.”

Then, put your bottle into a sunny spot and leave it there for nine days. Every day, shake it and repeat your chant.

Use the oil on candles (making sure they’re unlit first), mojos, baths, or anywhere else that you want to help bring luck and joy to your life.

### **Seal the Deal with Pancake Syrup**

#### **What You Will Need**

- Pancake syrup
- Jar
- Brown paper
- Pen

### **Instructions**

Put the syrup in a pan and leave it to boil. Syrup may be faster than honey, but boiling it will speed it up.

When it is bubbling, pour the syrup into a jar.

Put the person's name paper in the jar.

Store in a dark place and then go ahead with the deal.

Dispose of the jar in running water as soon as the deal is done.

To give more power to the spell, you can substitute something personal from the target instead of using a name paper. Things like pieces of their

clothing, their handwritten signature, and so on would work just fine. Just swap out their name paper and follow the rest of the instructions.

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## **Justice**

### **For Court Cases: A Simple Fire Spell**

#### **You will need**

- A white 7-day candle (it's better if you can get one specifically for the purpose of your working, in this case, going to court).
- A conjuring oil, again, anything that speaks to your work, but snake oil is a good option if you can find it from a reputable retailer.
- A copy\* of the paperwork for the case.
- A black marker.
- Tobacco.
- A cauldron or plate with tin foil so you can collect ashes.

You may wonder why I'm recommending snake oil for this spell and not a court case or law stay away oil. The court case would work for this spell as well, but as a beginner, I am considering that after you cast this spell, you may have no need for a whole bottle of court case oil. On the other hand, a bottle of snake oil can be used for this and in other workings, like protection for example.

For tobacco, empty out the contents of a cigarette (use one from someone else if you don't smoke yourself). If having cigarettes is triggering for you, purchase a cigar from a local bodega.

Buying a whole pack of cigarettes just for this spell is not the message you want to send to spirit. It suggests you will have a lot in your life that you will need to do similar work on.

Approach this with a beginner's mind and just get what you need.

\*You definitely want to use a copy of the court case papers because you will be burning it. Keeping the original will provide you with strong evidence when your magick works!

#### **Instructions**

Turn the paper upside down and take out your marker. Write down words that reverse whatever this case is about for you. Use your name and date of



birth and continue writing words that oppose what is already on the page.

Avoid writing down anything that you desire. This is banishing magick. Everything you're using (the oil and fire, eventually) is about dissolving this situation. If you put down what you *do* want, you send confusing messages to spirit and risk including those good things within the banishing.

Think about what you want when you celebrate victory; *after* the spell is closed.

Dress your candle with the oil (place a few drops in at the top) and the tobacco. Light the candle, picturing the court case removing itself from your life.

Rip off a section of the court document copy. Rip the paper away from you.

You will rip a piece of the paper for each day of the work, so consider how many days you will do the work. Take your piece while leaving enough for each day you plan to work.

Set the paper on fire using the lit candle. Let it burn until the fire goes completely out and all that's left are the ashes.

Once all the paper has been burned, collect the ashes. In the traditional version of this spell, you would go to the courthouse and sprinkle all of the ashes there. If your case will be taking place over an online video conferencing platform, it is still possible to do this step. Remember, this work is about spirit. The correspondences still exist even as our world remains in flux.

If there *is* a courthouse address on your paperwork, use this. If there isn't an address, do a little research online to find a courthouse closest to you, even better if you can find a courthouse nearby where similar cases are handled.

### **Baby Daddy Spell**

- Truth oil
- Tobacco leaves
- Dirt dauber nest
- Child's hair
- The name paper of the father

## **Instructions**

Start by dressing the name paper with three dots of truth oil. Then, fold the items into the paper. Pray over it, “[Father’s name]; this is your [son/daughter]. Come and lift them up!” Repeat this nine times.

Carry the packet with you and repeat your nine iterations of the prayer nine times per day for nine days.

If the father acknowledges the truth within the nine days, save the packet somewhere safe.

If he does not acknowledge the truth, bury the packet in the churchyard with a coin. This will curse his money until he supports his child.

## **Quick Reconciliation Spell**

Are you in a bit of a tough spot with someone right now but wish you weren’t? You are not alone—you can use this spell to help to heal the quarrel before it can be allowed to fester any longer. This particular spell will require you to first write out all of Psalm 32, take a pink candle, eight pins, and honey. When you have everything, you can start the spell.

Begin by writing out all of Psalm 32.

After writing everything out, write on the back of the paper, the name of the person with who you wish to reconcile, and do so three times.

Then, carve the name of the person you wish to reconcile with into the candle three times.

Place the pins around the candle on the bottom of the plate in a circle. Then, cover the pins with honey (this encourages the pain of the argument to be forgotten).

Burn over the next three days. Every day, repeat Psalm 32.

## **Fertility Spells**

### **To Enhance Fertility**

To enhance fertility, avoid miscarriage, and increase male potency, make a Ya-Ya powder and sprinkle it on yourself on a daily basis. You will need the listed below ingredients to make this powder:

- Vetivert
- Cinnamon
- Sage
- Rose

Take a handful of each herb and crush it into a powder. Mix well with a cornstarch base.

### **Making a Woman Barren**

Roll the egg of a guineafowl bird in cayenne pepper and Goofer dust. Cook it in a kettle of pure rainwater until it becomes firm. This will result in the woman's infertility.

## **Healing Spells**

### **To Heal Physical Ailment**

**You will need the listed items to cast this spell:**

- A piece of amethyst (preferably as transparent as possible) or Fluorite
- Good visualization skills

Sit in a peaceful area and cleanse your mind of everything that comes to mind. Hold the amethyst (or Fluorite) in the hand that is closest to the pain (if the pain is in the center of the body, hold it in your writing hand). Imagine a calming light gathering at your feet and gently drawing it up towards your head, filling every part of your body. While doing so, silently recite the following verse:

"Shining light, bright light

Heal my hurts with all thy might."

Rep this as you move the light up your body. When you get to the top of your head, extend to cover the space around your head with light for approximately a foot. Then, return to the place of most discomfort and direct all of your healing energy there. If that does not work the first time, try again. You should start feeling better soon. To conclude the spell, repeat the poem but add "so be it."

### **Voodoo Doll Healing Spell**

A white Voodoo doll is required for this spell since white is the color of healing and purification. On a paper piece, write the person's name in need of healing and connect it to the doll with a personal impact that belongs to the person. Set 2 white candles on either side of the doll, anointed with holy oil. Anoint the doll as well with the holy oil. Light the candles and offer your prayers for good health and healing.

## CHAPTER 15: USEFUL VOCABULARY WITH WORDS USED IN HOODOO



### **Two-Headed Doctors**

Two-Headed Doctors are those who have learned their craft from the spirit of a two-headed doctor. Stories differ on how they were born but say that the two heads give them powerful healing medicine and knowledge not only about medicinal herbs but about magic as well.

### **Mojo**

Mojo is a powerful force in magic and is the most commonly known term for the magical working that is performed by practicing hoodoo practitioners. In many African cultures, it's thought to be an essential part of life. The word "mojo" has come to be synonymous with any magical charm or device created by a practitioner and employed for benevolent purposes.

### **Hoodoo**

An African American folk magic belief system and magical practice.

### **Spiritualism**

A broad Christian eschatological movement that results in modern spiritual practices and beliefs.

### **Grimoires**

Books of magic spells were primarily written during the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, although some date back to the thirteenth century.

### **Ready to use**

Perhaps the easiest way to create a baby doll is to buy a store-bought doll as a generic doll or an action character. The doll should be cleaned with ammonia and incorporate the personal concerns of the individual you wish the doll to represent.

### **Wax Images**

Many spiritual practitioners are familiar with male and female candles which are often used in candle magic spells. However, these small images can easily be used in the same way as a wax image because that is exactly what they are. To prepare a candle, like a baby doll you can simply scratch the person's name on the doll's chest.

### **Poppet**

A poppet is composed of two pieces of cloth cut in the shape of a human body. This fabric can also be something that the individual has worn or simply a piece of colored fabric that fits your target. The pieces are sewn together, turned upside down and filled with cotton, herbs, straw, buds, **etc.** If you have a connection with the individual, add it to the inner padding. Finish by sewing the opening you used to fill it. Then, personalize the doll by giving it the characteristics of the person it is intended to represent, hair and eye color for instance. When you are finished, wrap the doll in a clean cloth until the spell or ritual has been performed.

### **Rootworkers**

Rootworkers (also known as "Hoodoo Hands" or "Granny Women") are practitioners of American folk magic whose primary objective is the alteration of one's inner aspects and/or outer circumstances by the application of herbs, roots, minerals, oils, mojo bags and a variety of spells.

Some Hoodoo workers may also curanderos in that they practice the folk healing traditions of other cultures.

### **Root Doctors**

Root doctors known as 'hoodoo doctors' come from the practice of folk magic in African-American communities. They are called 'hoodoo' because of their use of folk magic, which is often thought to be magical. They were most prominent in the south and border states as African-Americans migrated to the north and west through the early 20th century. Hoodoo doctors were believed to help with an array of different problems, including but not limited to: love spells and potions, protection magics (such as charms for warding off evil spirits or curses), money magics (such as gris bags or mojo hands), healing charms (for healing many different ailments from minor sicknesses to major troubles such as infertility), and protection from ill wishes cast by other rootworkers via "crossing work.

### **Necromancy**

A form of divination conducted with the aid of a necromancer or other spirit mediums, who use communication with spirits to answer questions set on behalf of others; also used as a term for rituals and incantations associated with this practice.

### **Sigil**

A symbol is consciously constructed to represent the magician's desired outcome. Sigils are linked by belief to the details of a desired effect.

**Sorcery:** Witchcraft

### **Witchcraft:**

Magic practices believed to obtain power over supernatural forces

### **Aggression/Assertion:**

Willfully acting out or practicing spells in order to cause harm or injury upon another individual for one's own benefit.

### **Rootworking**

Rootworkers look at plants to perform magic spells upon people or objects. They also identify herbs that may need to be planted for healing purposes.

## **Cross-gridding**

Cross-gridders use their hands, sticks, and other items to cast spells in order to find the future and predict the unknown.

## **Conjure**

Crowley (a renowned master of hoodoo) defined conjure as being in touch with the natural life force – a magical power that resides within all things. Some conjurers work with small objects, while others work with people or animals.

In other words, you must understand that there are no categorizations regarding who can practice hoodoo. Though it is true that most practitioners of the art fall under one of these three branches, there are also practitioners who practice mostly one craft (for instance, rootworking or cross-gridding).



# CONCLUSION

Thank you for reading this book. Hoodoo is a skill, and like any skill, it takes time to become good at it. You can't get off a couch and run a marathon without a lot of practice, and you can't master the spiritual world the first time you approach your ancestor altar. You will become better with practice, I promise.

Also, remember that some spells take time. Expecting to get an immediate result after you carry out a conjure is not realistic. Some spells work very fast, but most of them require at least a few days' intervals in order to be effective.

Give it time to marinate and get going. For the most part, you are working with the help of the spirits. Your first foray into Hoodoo work is an introduction to your ancestors.

If anything, they will be delighted to have the opportunity to be involved in the affairs of your life. Enjoy the opportunities that conjure brings your way. Embrace your roots and your identity by connecting with your ancestors. This connection will empower your spells and turn you into a powerful Hoodoo worker in no time. Most importantly, enjoy yourself. Learn. Grow. Evolve.

Being a Hoodoo practitioner is more than just casting spells and changing your destiny. It is about aligning yourself with your spiritual purpose and I am thankful and honored to be a part of your process. As you close this book, meditate on some of the lessons that you have learned here. Especially the ones that deeply resonated with you. From time to time, re-read the book to find clarity on things that may not have offered enlightenment the first time you read about them. If you have friends who are equally curious, share with them the knowledge that you have gained. I believe that our world becomes a better place when knowledge is shared. Unlike the olden days, when Hoodoo was relegated to dark and mysterious corners of the world, today we are openly practicing our craft, and we are proud of it.

The purpose of Hoodoo is to give access to supernatural forces in order to improve the various aspects of everyday life such as luck, money, love, work, health or revenge. Hoodoo is practiced with the extensive use of herbs and stones and traditional ingredients of spells, fragments of animal bones, personal items and body fluids (menstrual blood, urine and semen). Very common practices in the Hoodoo magic system are contact with the spirits of the dead (including those of the ancestors) and the magical use of roots. The goal of Hoodoo is, therefore, to improve everyday life almost for medical purposes through the action of supernatural forces acting for example on love, health, in everyday life or work. Hoodoo uses the parts of animals, body parts of people such as blood, nails, hair, urine, then there are objects such as candles, incense, oil, powders used in potions.

Whatever the reason is for your interest in Hoodoo, you must use the practice with extreme care and respect. Never underestimate the power of the practices contained in this book. Thank you for reading and good practice.

The final thought is to remind you of the Law of Three, or karmic law, depending on how you define the term. Individuals who practice white magic or the right-hand path abstain from casting spells that damage, destroy, or kill. They are fully aware that the repercussions will be far too severe. After all, Hoodoo and conjure are faith-based systems with a primary focus on healing.

Good luck.