



Sin and Atonement in Relation to *Obì Èṣṣè* (Reparation of Sin) in Yorùbá Indigenous Religions as Viewed by *Òsè Ìrètè* in *Ifá* Divination

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Abstract: *Obì (kola nut-Cola acumulata) is an important fruit enjoyed by both human and the gods in African, particularly the Yorùbá of South Western Nigeria. Its utility is seen in the realm of entertainment of guests by individuals and groups. It is an important element in festivals, religions, rituals, naming ceremonies, marriages, foundation laying, house warming, vocational graduation, and many other essential occasions in Africa. Obì, as important instrument of divination, particularly in the temples, groves and shrines of the gods and any ritual activities is used to ascertain that prayers offered before the gods have been accepted by the Creator. Because Obì is believed to bring life, its usage includes atonement of sin committed by humans in the religion of the Yorùbá. However, as useful as obì is for all occasions, not enough emphasis has been laid on the divine role it plays, particularly in relation to the doctrine of sin. This paper, therefore, looks at the concept of sin in relation to how obì are used to ward off sin from human path. Twenty Babaláwo and 10 priests of different cults were interviewed in Ibadan and at Abeokuta to know their views on the concept. Their views were content analysed. The study revealed that atonement for sin which Jesus Christ came to do on earth in Christian belief is not limited to a particular religion. Rather, it spreads among all other religions. Therefore, no religious sect can lay claim to the Creator alone because His revelation to humanity is in diverse forms.*

Keywords: *Obì Èṣṣè, Sin, Atonement, Yorùbá Religions, Babaláwo*

INTRODUCTION

Sin is believed to be a transgression against the divine law. The Muslims view sin as anything that goes against the will and commands of Allah in its totality (Oxford University Press). While traditional African religion believes that sin is an act of disobedience to the will of the spirits, ancestors, divinities and the Supreme Being called Olódumarè by the Yorùbá. Christianity also holds that anything contrary to the will of the Holy Spirit and God the Creator is sin. Jainism, Judaism and other religious sects (except Buddhism which does not have the concept of sin) also see sin as rebellion against the Creator or divine being¹. However, the ultimate end product of sin by most of these religious sects is punishment, and this varies from one religion to the other.

While some religious sects believe that the ultimate end product of sin is death and eternal condemnation but that acceptance of certain or some heroic figures will alleviate and convert the death to everlasting life, others are of the opinion that death alone is the punishment for any sin committed. With various and diverse views on the concept of sin and punishment, we look at the concept of sin from the Yorùbá perspective and various means of punishing offenders of the divine being. Here it is important therefore, to reflect on the source of sin, where sin actually originated from.

The Genesis of the Concept of Sin

¹ www.goyourownway.org, Retrieved on 19/09/2019

It is common belief in the religious circles that when the world was created in the beginning, the world was perfect. They, religious sects, apart from Buddhists who speak of sin only whenever the universal moral codes are violated (Von Furer Haimendorf, Christoph, 1974) are of the opinion that imperfection came into the world as a result of sin. Bahai defines sin as anything that the concourse on high might find averse (Susan Gammage, 2017). This original sin according to Bahai faith is likened to a mirror, which, if turned away from the light of the sun represents God the Creator and is incapable of receiving God's love because humans were created perfect by the love of God². Therefore, their view of sin and evil, they claim, emanated from the lower nature of each human being at the same time see the higher nature of man as the result of spiritual education and development³. In Christian parlance, sin originated from the first created man and woman who ate the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3⁶).

However, some Christians believe that even before the creation of man by God, there was already a sinful creature in the Garden of Eden that caused the sin of Adam. Therefore, Adam was the first human sinner while Satan, the Lucifer, was the first creature sinner who led the first human to sin⁴. According to Buddhists, sin is transgression against the universal moral code (Rahula Walpola, 1974). Therefore, sin is considered to be highly awesome, horrendous-and horrifying unwholesome action that leads to the downfall of man and it is transgression against God and something to be punished or forgiven by God. It is believed that evil deeds are product of evil thoughts that emanate from evil minds, the consequence of which is misery for the doers of the deed (Guy Gardner, 2017).

In the view of Calvinism, concerning the origin of sin, it was a divine arrangement that sin should enter the world because God had the power to prevent it. Calvinists believe that nothing comes to fulfilment without God decreeing it. Therefore, God's decree that sin should enter the world was a secret hidden in Himself.⁵ This is contrary to another view that God is not to be blamed for sin. Rather, the origin and nature of sin emanated from man and angels who sinned and should be blamed, for God is just and perfect⁶. Sin was a moon god in Mesopotamian religion. He was the father of the sun god, *Shamash*, who was represented as an old man with a flowing beard. He was considered a wise and unfathomable god wearing a headdress of four horns covered by a crescent moon⁷.

In African indigenous religions, particularly the Yorùbá religions, sin is considered a transgression against the ancestors, the Òrìṣà and Olódùmarè the Creator (Ayo Salami, 2008). This is where the importance of sacrifice is highly appreciated as we shall later see in the offering of *obi ẹ̀ṣẹ̀* in atonement of the sins committed or in appreciation for good deed done by the gods (Omosade Awolalu, 1979).

Obi-Kolanut and its Usefulness in African Society

Kolanut occupies a unique place in West Africa, particularly in Yorùbáland and Central Africa e.g. Caribbean Island, Sri Lanka and Malaysia. In Nigeria, kolanut was first grown in Egba division of Ogun State, Nigeria in 1902. This may probably be as a result of their contact with the white. From there it spread to the forest area following first the course of the railway line in Abeokuta, Ibadan and Offa and from there penetrated the stream and river banks into the Guinea Savannah, South-South, and Eastern states (Van Eijnattan, 1969). Scholars like Adedokun, Soaga, Olawumi, Oyebanji and Oluwalana are of the opinion that kolanut grows mainly in two states of Ogun and Oyo (Adedokun et al., 2013). However, this may not be true as we can find kolanut in all the states in Yorùbáland. Contrary to their view that kolanut is second to palm oil in the region we have discovered that cocoa was even more popular than kolanut in the past, most especially, during the time of Awolowo in the old western region when cocoa was the major export of the region with more recognition than kolanut (Marius Wessel and Foluke, 2015).

Obi Àbàtà, (*Kolanut-Cola acumulata*) as an important edible fruit in West Africa particularly in Yorùbá society of south western Nigeria has over 20 species of kolanuts only two are common in Nigeria and they are **cola acumulata-Àbàtà** and *cola nitida-Gbànja* (Ojo and Ehinmowo, 2010). However, this paper is only interested in **cola acumulata** because of its religious importance and usage. Kolanut tree is an enduring tree that could produce fruits for over one hundred years if not cut off or damaged/burnt by fire (Asogwa et al., 2012). It is a fruit that contained caffeine and tastes bitter when chewed, most especially when it is still

² <https://www.bahai.org>, Retrieved on 10/09/2019

³ www.detroitinerfaithcouncil.com, Retrieved on 10/09/2019

⁴ www.middletonbiblechurch.org, Retrieved on 19/09/2019

⁵ www.bibleandlife.org, retrieved on 18/09/2019

⁶ The Origin and Nature of Sin, <https://churchmedia-cms.s3amazonands.com>, Retrieved on 18/09/2019

⁷ <https://www.windows2universe.org>, Retrieved on 18/09/2019

fresh. As rightly said by Corinne O'Keefe Osborn⁸, kolanut is a cultural staple in many West African countries especially in Yorùbá society and Debra Wilson⁹ medically confirmed its good effect as a central nervous system stimulant. Kola nut is found everywhere in Yorùbáland; market place, bus stops and shops. Besides its being eaten naturally, kola nut is culturally used for marriage, naming ceremonies and religious purposes with its symbolic significance on all these occasions¹⁰. As the name implies, *obì, tí nbi ikú, obì tí nbi àrùn, obì tí nbi òfò*- it is the kola nut that wards off death, sickness and evil. That is why it is used symbolically on those occasions for fervent prayers to the ancestors and the gods. For instance, all the gods in Yoruba society enjoy the eating of kolanut except *Ọṣun, Ajé, Egbé, Ẓàngó, Ìbejì, Erinlè, Ọsányìn, Oya* and *Yemoja* (Aina Adewale Somadhi, 1993). Again, there is a saying in the Igbo community of eastern part of Nigeria that "he who brings kola, brings life". This is to show that life is attached to the fruit and the saying indicates how important kolanut is to the people of Igbo community of Western Nigeria. Therefore, every occasion like funeral, naming and wedding that brings two or more people together, kolanut has a role to play there.

Medically, kolanut is believed to be similar to coffee and useful in so many ways. It contains some nutritive value which can sustain life for some time even if no food is taken. Industrially it is a good source of essential vital chemicals used mostly in the confectionery industries. According to medical news today, kolanut is used to flavor sodas and as supplements to increase energy or improve health. Other possible benefits of the kolanut and its products include **boosting of metabolism as a result of the caffeine** it contains; it is also believed to **aid digestion because it produces** gastric acid, which increases the effectiveness in the digestive enzyme in the stomach. **As earlier said, kolanut** contained caffeine which helps in speeding up the rate of the heart and also helps in stimulating the central nervous system (CNS). According to *Journal of biosciences and medicines*, kolanut extract might stop the growth of harmful bacteria. Also, the consumption of kolanut may be helpful in the area of prostate cancer through the presence of phytoestrogens that is present in kolanut¹¹. Other areas where kolanut may be useful are in the areas of migraine headache and asthma as a result of some chemical compositions in kolanut which is mainly the caffeine that helps in widening blood vessels and act as a bronchodilator that opens the airways to make breathing easier in the case of people with breathing deficiencies (Muhammad and Fatima, 2014).

Economically, kolanut plays significant roles in the rural communities. Information gathered revealed that there is considerable economic potential from kolanut which contributes immensely to the household income. However, women tend to get more involved in the business than their male counterparts most especially, in the areas of collection, processing and sales of the fruits. Nevertheless, the initial planting and harvesting are done by the men, except if the matured fruits fall voluntarily from the tree, men have to either a devise known as use go to hell or climb the tree to harvest the matured fruits. Men are also involved in the sale of the product. Although it is believed that the trade is mostly common among the poor household and indigenous communities, yet research revealed that many of those who are involved in the sales of kolanut are not only rich but influential in their various communities in Yorùbáland. Rather than take it as part-time, they are fully involved in it as a trade. Some farmers may have some other farm products they sell along with kolanut since is a seasonal product¹². However, generally, kolanut is consumed throughout the year.

Traditionally, a kolanut tree can be termed a magic tree with different uses. All the component parts, in terms of the pod, nut, leaves, bark, stem, wood and so on are vital raw material for medicinal purposes. The medicinal values of kolanut include but not limited to these; it increases sensitivity, good for whooping cough, good for fresh wound and circumcision, aphrodisiac particularly the type with six valves. Kola nut, if combined with other medicinal plants, is good for the treatment of infertility especially in women, anti-toxic, and a sure prevention against witches' attack¹³. Culturally it is used for rituals which play important roles in religious affairs which is the major focus of this paper. One may then ask, What are the religious values of kolanut especially in relation to sin and its atonements?

The Concept of Sin and Atonement in Relation to *Obì Èṣẹ̀* (Kolanut for the Reparation of Sin) in Yorùbá Indigenous Religions

⁸ Corinne O'Keefe Osborn, *What is Kola Nut?* <https://www.healthline.com>, Retrieved on 21/09/2019

⁹ Debra Rose Wilson, *What is Kola Nut?* <https://www.healthline.com>, Retrieved on 21/09/2019

¹⁰ Olu Daramola ati A. Jeje, *Awon Asa ati Orisa Ile Yoruba*, Ibadan: Onibon-Oje Press and Book Industries (Nig. Ltd). 37

¹¹ www.medicalnewstoday.com, Retrieved on 21/09/2019

¹² <http://biopublisher.ca/ndex>, Retrieved 10/08/2019

¹³ Chief Abiodun Ajaja, *An Ifa Priest, Civi Servant/Farmer, Interview Respondent*, Ikole Ekiti, 12/July 2019

In Yorùbá religious tradition, *obi-kolanut* is sacred and takes a prominent role. The sacredness of *Obi* can be seen in the area of divination, which is one of the important ways to make an enquiry particularly in the presence of the gods. However, whether we make enquiry or not, casting kolanut in the presence of an *Òrìṣà* is a must on daily basis to get answers to our request from *Olódùmarè* through this agents called *Òrìṣà* (Adeoye, 1989). The concept of sin and its atonement started and began with *Èṣù* the first apprentice of *Òrúnmilà*. In the beginning, if *Òrúnmilà* healed any one or rendered any services either to human beings or his fellow *Òrìṣà*, he would not collect any reward from the person. However, *Èṣù* was not happy about this because of his gluttony. His excessive could make him allies with anyone who gives the right sacrifice. This is evidence in *Èjìogbè* (Ayo Salami, 2008) where *Ifá* says;

<i>Ifá ló dalárùn b́árùn wáyé</i>	Ifá says it is like the people that came to the world with diseases
<i>Èmi nàà wí mo lo dalárùn b́árùn wáyé</i>	I too say it is like the people born with diseases
<i>Òrúnmilà ló ntikòlè òrun b̀owá Ìkòlè ayé</i>	Òrúnmilà was coming from heaven to the earth
<i>Òun tẹ́pá òsùn</i>	He was walking with an Osun staff
<i>Èṣù Òdàrà ló rẹ̀rù awo tẹ̀le òun</i>	Èṣù Odara was the one that carried divination loads on his head
<i>A difá fún alárùn</i>	Cast divination for the sick ones
<i>Nijó Èṣù Òdàrà lóun ó gba gbogbo èrè iṣé ògá òun</i>	On the day Èṣù Odara said he would take all the goodies of his master.

It may be this love for food that made *Èṣù* enter agreement to be the representative of all the *ajogun* and the witches to reduce or forestall the impact of their activities. Therefore, whenever a client is directed by the *Babaláwo* to offer sacrifice and the person complied, *Èṣù* is always there to take such a sacrifice to the *ajogun* in replacement of the victim when the *ajogun* intends to take. According to Lijadu, quoting *Òbàrà Méjì* (Lijadu, 1972)

<i>Àjò awo ilé ayé,</i>	Ajo the priest of the earth
<i>Abemọ, awo òde ìsálú-Òrun</i>	Abemo, the priest of heaven
<i>Àwọn méjèjì ní npàdè kómọ ní ipinnà ayé òun òrun</i>	They both usually meet at middle of heaven and earth
<i>A ní kí wọn ó rúbọ</i>	They were asked to offer sacrifice
<i>Kí Obìnrin kanṣoṣo tó wà láarín wọn</i>	So that the only woman between them
<i>Má le ba ètò jẹ mọwọn lówó</i>	May not disorganize their plans
<i>Àwọn méjèjì kòtí ògbonin sẹ́bọ</i>	They both refused to offer the sacrifice
<i>Wọ́n kò tu'fá</i>	They refused to offer sacrifice to Ifá
<i>Wọ́n ní kíni Obìnrin kan ṣoṣo</i>	They both asked, What would only one woman between them
<i>Ṣe le ba ètò ayé òun òrun jẹ mọwọn lówó...?</i>	Could disorganize their plans....?

The name of the woman was *Obi-kolanut* the wife of *Abemọ* the priest of *Ìsálú- Òrun-* heaven. He was asked to offer sacrifice of one black goat and *ẹgbàáfà-* twelve thousand cowries, so that he would bear children. Also, he should offer six pigeons with *ẹgbèrindínlógún-* seven hundred and sixty cowries for him to have wealth and money. *Abemọ* offered that of money but refused to offer that of children. For a very long time, *Obi* did not bear any child and was not happy about that. Therefore, she ran away to go and marry *Ajo* the priest of *Ìsáláyé-* earth. *Ajo* consulted the oracle and same sacrifice prescribed for *Abemọ* came up again and he offered it. *Obi* bore *Ajo* only one child. On their annual journey to *ikómọ*, *Obi* followed *Ajo* to go and meet *Abemọ*. *Abemọ* was angry that *Ajo* could hold on to his wife for a whole year without sending her back to him. *Ajo* was also not happy that *Abemọ* could not exercise patience to ask for the reason. This resulted into a big scuffle between the two. *Obi* stayed afar off to watch their fierce fight. When they were both tired and were resting, they both reasoned that it was because *Obi* wanted

both the heaven and the earth to be destroyed that was what responsible for their action. As a result, they both agreed to kill Obi to settle the misunderstanding between the two. They did and put her corpse in a bag and hung it in-between a tree and left. On the third day, Orisa was passing along the road and saw the corpse, he woke her up and asked what responsible for her death and she narrated the story. Orisa then held her back, put her in the bag and replaced her as he met her. Ever since then humans had continued in that tradition to settle quarrel and for any sin committed. This, according to him, was the beginning of *Obi Èşè*. The concept of sin may also have stemmed from the account given by Beyioku (1940) According to his account from *Òtúrá Méjì*, it was *Awónrínwón* that gave birth to three children; *Èbò*, *Èyèkéyé* and *Ènìyànkénìyàn*. *Èbò* was the eldest and was immensely rich like Croesus-such that all the important kings and chiefs usually came to him to borrow money. However, they couldn't pay his money back before he died. After his burial, *Èyèkéyé* now went to these debtors to collect his brother's money; they all denied ever owing him. As a result of this, *Èyèkéyé* decided to see *Òrúnmilà* for advice on how to get the money back. *Òrúnmilà* consulted the oracle and helped *Èyèkéyé* to make edifice of *Èbò* on the roadside as *Ifá* had prescribed. *Èyèkéyé* called the spirit of *Èbò* and reported how the debtors have all refused to pay the money they owed him. *Èbò*, in turn, gave *Èyèkéyé* a big bag containing small gong. *Èyèkéyé* begins to pinch the debtors with the gong as instructed. They started falling sick and calamity began to overtake them. They ran to *Òrúnmilà* and *Òrúnmilà* advised them to go and pay the money they owed *Èbò* to *Èyèkéyé* so that all their sins to the dead *Èbò*-sacrifice would be forgiven and they would be well. Ever since then, whenever human beings offer *Èbò*-sacrifice to any of the *ajogun* or *Irúnmolè*, we are paying back for the offence or sins we have committed against these spiritual beings. Can this be true? Or is it mere myth? Well, myths are profound and this may not be far from the truth. Looking at the event that happened to *Òrúnmilà* himself when he had encounter with the *elèyè*-witches in Ayo Salami's narrative explained in the last page above, *Òrúnmilà* was not collecting anything for rendering his service. *Èşù* and the witches were not happy about this and the witches were looking for a way to deal with the situation. One day, *Òrúnmilà* and *Èşù* were coming from heaven where *Òrúnmilà* went to give reports of his deeds to *Olódùmarè* and they met *Olúugbó*-forest, *Olúòdàn-savannah* and *Ojú Odò*- River of which *Òrúnmilà* solved their problems without collecting anything from them. *Èşù* was not happy because he was hungry but he did nothing. Next, they saw a cripple and a sick man on the way that *Òrúnmilà* also healed them of their sicknesses. However, their joy was short-lived because *Èşù* could not bear the pang of hunger anymore; as a result, he demanded for compensation from them (without the knowledge of *Òrúnmilà*) which they could not provide as a result told lies against them to wreck havocs on their perceived enemies that made *Òrúnmilà* to reverse the healing. However, this did not yield the expected result to solve *Èşù*'s problem of hunger.

As *Òrúnmilà* was about to enter his house a man came whose wife had been in child labour for four days to seek *Òrúnmilà*'s help for the woman. As *Òrúnmilà* was trying to help the woman, *Èşù* asked him to stop and demanded for what the man would give for rendering help. Quickly the man and the relatives of the woman brought out everything from food items to kolanuts. Even before *Òrúnmilà* opened his mouth to say anything, *Èşù* had already collected everything. He ate so much that he told *Òrúnmilà* that henceforth, he must first take a token before he renders any help to anyone that comes for divination as the ancestors to who humans came to appease would not be happy on an empty stomach. He also instructed him that he should also demand for articles of sacrifice that he, *Òrúnmilà*, would use for his upkeep. It was at this junction that *Òrúnmilà* realized the mistakes he made on the cripple and the sick man. He went back, took something from their families and heals them. Since then *Òrúnmilà* has been collecting some tokens before administering divination (Ayo Salami, 2008). In the same manner, if any client comes for divination, he would advise such a client to go and offer sacrifice to any Orisa that the client might have offended, thereby providing food for other Orisa. This is corroborated by *Ifá* in *Òsá Ìrètè* (Ayo Salami, 2008) where *Ifá* says;

<i>Òrúnmilà wí ó ló dèşè nşìşè</i>	<i>Òrúnmilà</i> said it is about people who have sinned
<i>Ifá, mo ló dèbè n bibè</i>	<i>Ifá</i> , I too said it is about time to apologize
<i>Ifá ní bí Àwòrò Ògún bá şè Ògún</i>	<i>Ifá</i> says if the devotee of Ogun offends Ogun
<i>Biò tiè şè ògún</i>	Or even if he does not offend Ogun,
<i>Yóó mọọ rawó rasè</i>	He would be rubbing his palms against each other (in supplication)
<i>Yóó mọ bẹ ògún</i>	He would placate Ogun

<i>Ògún ó sì mọ́ fẹ́</i>	Ogun would be appeased
<i>Ògún ó sì mọ́ gbà.</i>	Ogun would accept.
<i>Òrúnmilà ló dèṣẹ̀ n sísẹ̀</i>	Òrúnmilà said it is about people who have sinned
<i>Ifá mo ló dèbè n bíbè</i>	Ifá, I too said it is about time to apologize
<i>Ifá ní bí àwòrò Òòṣà bá ṣẹ̀ Òòṣà</i>	Ifá says if the devotee of Oosa offends Oosa
<i>Bí ò tiẹ̀ ṣẹ̀ Òòṣà</i>	Or even if he does not offend Oosa
<i>Yóó mọ́ rawó rasẹ̀</i>	He would be rubbing his palms against each other (in supplication)
<i>Yóó mọ́ bẹ̀ Òòṣà</i>	He would placate Oosa
<i>Òòṣà ó sì mọ́ fẹ́</i>	Oosa would be appeased
<i>Òòṣà ó sì mọ́ gbà.</i>	Oosa would accept
<i>Òrúnmilà ló dèṣẹ̀ n sísẹ̀</i>	Òrúnmilà said it is about people who have sinned
<i>Ifá mo ló dèbè n bíbè</i>	Ifá, I too said it is about time to apologize
<i>Ifá ní bí ọlọkọ̀ eégún bá ṣẹ̀ eégún</i>	Ifá says if the devotee of the masquerade
<i>Bi o tie ṣẹ eégún</i>	Or even if he does not offend the masquerade
<i>Yóó mọ́ rawó rasẹ̀</i>	He would be rubbing his palms against each other (in supplication)
<i>Yóó mọ́ bẹ̀ Eégún</i>	He would placate the
<i>Eégún ó sì mọ́ fẹ́</i>	Masquerade would be appeased
<i>Eégún ó sì mọ́ gbà.</i>	Masquerade would accept
<i>Òrúnmilà ló dèṣẹ̀ n sísẹ̀</i>	Òrúnmilà said it is about people who have sinned
<i>Ifá mo ló dèbè n bíbè</i>	Ifá, I too said it is about time to apologize
<i>Ifá ní bí Babaláwo bá ṣẹ̀ Òrúnmilà</i>	Ifá says if Ifá priest Òrúnmilà
<i>Bí ò tiẹ̀ ṣẹ̀ Òrúnmilà</i>	Or even if he does not offend Òrúnmilà
<i>Òrúnmilà ní kó mọ́ rawó rasẹ̀</i>	Òrúnmilà says he should be rubbing his palms against each other (in supplication)
<i>Kó sì mọ́ bẹ̀ oun</i>	And offer prayers to him
<i>Òun ó sì mọ́ gbọ́</i>	And he would accept his pleas
<i>Òun ó sì mọ́ gbà.</i>	He would be appeased
<i>Njé iwó lo sọ̀rọ̀ èṣẹ̀</i>	You are the one who raised the issue of our sin
<i>La fí wá bẹ̀ ọ́</i>	That is why we have come to appease you

<i>Ifá ikin omọ alájogun</i>	Ifá ikin the son of alajogun
<i>Èlà kóo mòmò şe kẹ̀bẹ̀</i>	Ela do not refuse our plea
<i>Bóoru bá mú</i>	When there is heat
<i>Abẹ̀bẹ̀ ni ì bẹ̀ẹ̀</i>	It is the fan that would appease it
<i>Èbùrẹ̀ dé</i>	Ebure is here
<i>Awo olùjẹ̀bẹ̀</i>	The priest of Olujebe
<i>Bá a bá ráwo rere</i>	If we see a good priest
<i>À á gbẹ̀bẹ̀ ni</i>	We should accept a plea.

However, on the issue of *Obi Èṣẹ̀*- kolanuts for the reparation of sins, which is the given of kolanuts to any of the deities on the first day of the week that is called *obi ọ̀sẹ̀* initially, this, according to Salami is a kolanut given to the deity as an offering and commitment to the service of the particular deity that should be given at the beginning of the week. Though it was called *Obi Ọ̀sẹ̀*, but it is actually *Obi Èṣẹ̀*, the kola for the reparation of sin for the atonement of sin that might have been committed against the ancestors in the beginning of life. This assertion is buttressed by *Ifá* in *Ọ̀sẹ̀ Ìrẹ̀tẹ̀* (Ayo Salami, 2008) that;

<i>Ajá gbó gbó gbó</i>	The dog barked and barked
<i>Ajá ọ̀ fobì soúnjẹ̀</i>	The dog could not make kola nut his food
<i>Ìpọ̀nrí ajá ọ̀ jobì rí</i>	The ancestors of dog don't eat kola nut
<i>Emi lajá ó fobì şe</i>	What would the dog use kola nut to do
<i>Ọ̀ṣẹ̀bìsilẹ̀</i>	Oṣẹ̀bisile
<i>Awo wọ̀n níṣẹ̀bìrún</i>	Their priest in Iṣẹ̀birun
<i>Difá fúnwọ̀n níṣẹ̀bìrún</i>	Cast divination for them in the city of Iṣẹ̀birun
<i>Omọ̀ afiṣẹ̀bì ṣorò ṣuru ṣuru fólófin</i>	The child that uses large kola nut as offertory to Olofin
<i>Ifá wí ó ló diṣẹ̀bì i wẹ̀rẹ̀ i wẹ̀rẹ̀</i>	Ifá says is a matter of cutting the kola nuts in bits
<i>Èmi náà wí, mo ló diṣẹ̀bì i wẹ̀rẹ̀ i wẹ̀rẹ̀</i>	I too says it is a matter of cutting the kola nuts in bits
<i>Ifá ní tá a bá jí</i>	Ifá says whenever we wake up
<i>Ká yá a móbì fì ṣọ̀run ẹnì</i>	We should quickly use kola as offering to our ancestors
<i>Afẹ̀dẹ̀fẹ̀yọ̀ wí, ó ní tá a bá jí</i>	The polyglot says whenever wake up
<i>Ká yá a móbì fì ṣọ̀run àjìjà</i>	We should use kola nut as sacrifice to heaven the inevitable
<i>Torí èṣẹ̀lẹ̀ obì a mó ọ̀ dọ̀run</i>	Because the bits of kola do reach the heaven
<i>Èṣẹ̀lẹ̀ obì tó bá dọ̀nà a dawé</i>	When the bits of kola get to the way, it would become whole
<i>Èṣẹ̀lẹ̀ obì tó bá dọ̀run a dọtòtò</i>	When the bits of kola get to heaven, it would become unique

<i>A difá fún Abítulà</i>	Cast divination for Abitula
<i>Abítulà tíi şomọ bíbí inú Àgbonnirègún</i>	Abitula the very child of Agbonmiregun
<i>Nijó tó fẹ̀yìn tí</i>	On the day he reflected on his life
<i>Tí nfomi ojú şògbéré ire gbogbo</i>	He was crying because of all good things of life
<i>Èbọ ni wọn ní kí Abítulà ó wá şe</i>	Abitula was asked to offer sacrifice
<i>Abítulà gbẹ̀bọ níbẹ̀ ó şe</i>	Abitula heard about the sacrifice, he offered
<i>Ó gbọ ẹ̀rù àtukẹ̀şù ó tù</i>	He heard the offering of Èşù, he offered
<i>Njé Abítulà omọ ikin</i>	Abitula is the child of Ikin
<i>Ìgbà tó o şẹ̀bí lo là lo dalájé</i>	It was when you divided the kola that you becomeh
<i>Abítulà omọ ikin.</i>	Abitula the child of Ikin
<i>Ìgbà tó şẹ̀bí lo d'aláya</i>	It was when you divided the kola that you had a wife to marry
<i>Abítulà omọ ikin</i>	Abitula the child of Ikin
<i>Ìgbà tó o şẹ̀bí lo là lo dọlómọ</i>	It was when you divided the kola that you had a baby
<i>Abítulà omọ ikin</i>	Abitula the child of Ikin
<i>Ìgbà tó o şẹ̀bí lo là lo donilé</i>	It was when you divided the kola that you were able to build a house
<i>Abítulà omọ ikin</i>	Abitula the child of Ikin
<i>Ìgbà tó o şẹ̀bí lo là lo doníre gbogbo</i>	It was when you divided the kola that you had all good things of life
<i>Abítulà omọ ikin</i>	Abitula the child of Ikin
<i>Ìgbà tó o şẹ̀bí lo là lo ò kú mó</i>	It was when you divided the kola that you did not die again
<i>Abítulà omọ ikin</i>	Abitula the child of Ikin

As earlier said, Èşù coaxed Òrúnmílà to begin to collect a token for every service rendered to human. At the same time, we explained that the witches who were at *Ìròná*, the lower pedestal of heaven where every human being coming to the world would pass to the earth were not happy with how Òrúnmílà was rendering his services without collecting anything that is making them go hungry. Therefore, they decided to come and meet Òrúnmílà on earth at the sometime caused mayhem for those who refused to compensate Òrúnmílà for his good deeds. Òrúnmílà slept and had nightmares. He consulted his Òkẹ̀pọ̀nrí and was told that some people were coming to come and destroy the good work he was doing. As a result, he decided to go to heaven. As he was trying to enter his *Àpèrè Ayórunbò* (modern space bus), he saw the same people *Ifá* earlier told him were coming. They, the witches, saw him and told him their mission to the earth. He asked them the solution to the problem and he was told that he should be collecting something as an atonement for the sins committed by their forefathers against you and all the deities they

subjected to hunger in heaven and once this is done, no calamity will befall them. Ọ̀rúnmilà was asked to offer kolanuts and everyone was asked to do same and put the kolanut on his/her respective deity to avert calamity and evil. Thus, humans begin to offer kolanuts to their deities and spirits on their knees begging so that the sins committed by their forefathers can be pardoned that became a practice till today.¹⁴

Closely related to this (atonement for sin) is the cleansing of sin found in Odu Obara Meji that narrates the experiences of three divinities, Ọ̀gún, Ọ̀sanyìn and Ọ̀rúnmilà who wanted to marry Ìwà the daughter of Oníwó (Ìwó is a town in the present state of Osun) who was naughty and unruly in her behaviour. This she displayed in order to secure a true love as prescribed by Ifa even before she was born. According to the *Odù Ọ̀bàrà Mèjì* (Adebowale Akintola, 1999) that says:

<i>È̀ébú ilé àna kò dun ni</i>	One never feel disturb by abusive utterances from one's in-laws
<i>Ọ̀rò ò dun 'wòfà</i>	A peonage never feel troubled with insulted words showered on him
<i>B'órò bá dùn 'wòfà</i>	If he feels pained or troubled by it
<i>K'ó lọ 'lé rẹ̀è m'ówó wá</i>	He should go home, bring money and pay
<i>Ojú a pón koko bí ojú odíderé</i>	Eyes will be red like that of parrot
<i>L'ó dífá f'Ọ̀runmilà</i>	Casts divination for Ọ̀rúnmilà
<i>T'ó ní òun ó fẹ̀ omọ Oníwó isaájú...</i>	That says he would marry the daughter of the first Oniwo

In actual sense, it was all the four hundred and one divinities in Otùufẹ̀ that were interested in marrying Ìwà. However, these three prominent figures mentioned above were the ones that Ifa focused attention on. All of them tried one way or the other to impress Ìwà to marry them but did not succeed because of her unruly, antics behaviour and violation of those gods' taboos. When Ọ̀rúnmilà realised that all the divinities had tried without success, he also went to try his luck. When he got to Iwo, he made his intention known and was taken to Ìwà's place. Ìwà received him with the condition that he would not touch her or have sex with her for certain period. During this period, all the forbidden foods that Ọ̀rúnmilà told her were prepared for him and he ate them out of love. Not done with that by Ìwà, she invited a lover a male lover that made love to her in the presence of Ọ̀rúnmilà. Ọ̀rúnmilà did not say anything he only maintained his cool without showing any negative reaction to the extreme provocation. Rather, in the morning, Ọ̀rúnmilà fetched water for the lover to have his bath. It was while they were escorting the lover that Ọ̀rúnmilà reacted through È̀sù he had offered sacrifice to before going to Ìwó. Esu turned his head to a stone that the lover hit his foot against and fell down. In this position, Ọ̀rúnmilà pointed his horse whip to him and turned him into a snail;

<i>...Ọ̀rúnmilà bá he ìgbín yí n'ìlẹ̀</i>	...Ọ̀rúnmilà picked the snail
<i>Ó kán an</i>	Broke it
<i>Ó wá tú omi ìgbín yí sówó ara rẹ̀</i>	And poured its water on his hand
<i>Ó wípé, pèlẹ̀ ò, Ìwà;</i>	He said; well-done, Iwa
<i>O kú àmú è̀gbín àti è̀é́rì mọ́'ra.</i>	Honour to you for tolerating all these mess
<i>Yáa jékí nfi è̀rò omi ìgbín yí</i>	Let me quickly use the calmness of this snail's water
<i>Şe àlùwàlá iwènùmó fun ọ</i>	As ablution cleansing for you
<i>Kí nfi omi è̀rò yí pa ó lára</i>	Let me rub this antidote on you

¹⁴ Awosola Fatoosin, an Ifa Priest, Interview Respondence, 12/08/2018

<i>Láti wẹ gbogbo èé́rì òun ègbín</i>	To clean all these mess
<i>Téniyàn-kéniyàn ní</i>	That this not well to do
<i>Ti fi nkín o lára lát'ána...</i>	Had rubbed on you since yesterday...

Conclusion

We have seen through this paper that sin is sin whether big or small and atonement for sin which Jesus Christ came to do on earth in Christian belief is not limited to a particular religion. Rather, it spread among all other religions. For those that care to listen, atoning for this sin will come in different form because the revelation of the Creator does not follow a particular pattern. Rather, it came in different form and different ways that will be convenient for every race and continent to serve him. Religion of the Yorùbá had been in existence before the advent of all the foreign religions. It has answers to all the questions about life issues, may it be science, commerce, technology, arts and humanities. *Ifá* in *Ogbè Ọ̀sẹ́* (Ayo Salami, 2002) says;

<i>Àşẹ́ síhín</i>	The manner of spilling here
<i>Àşẹ́ sòhún</i>	And spilling there
<i>Lomi koto èè́ fí kún</i>	Is the reason why the water in a koto (a kind of container for fetching water) can never be full
<i>Tii fí wónú ilé</i>	Till it reaches the house
<i>A dífá fún Odíderé</i>	Cast divination for Odidere (Parrot)
<i>Ti nfi oşoşù şòwò èjè</i>	The one that trades in blood all months
<i>Odíderé ní şe nkan ni ò lóriyìn</i>	Odidere had been doing all things without
<i>Òún le şe nka rere báyi</i>	Would I be able to do something good? She asked
<i>Wón ní kí Odíderé rúbọ</i>	They asked her to offer sacrifice
<i>Wón ní gbogbo nkan è ni ó bára mu</i>	They told her that her things would be as she desires
<i>Odíderé bá rúbọ</i>	Odidere performed the sacrifice
<i>O rúbọ tán ni ayé bá yéé</i>	She offered the sacrifice and lie pleased her
<i>Gbogbo nkan tí ò ti dáa</i>	All her things in which she had not been succeeding
<i>Ti ò ti lájé</i>	She had never had wealth
<i>Ti ò ti bímọ</i>	She had never had children
<i>Oşù gbogbo ni í fi nşòwò èjè</i>	She started trading in blood all months
<i>Wón ní kó tójú nka iponmi</i>	She was asked to prepare a water container
<i>Kó fi rúbọ</i>	She should use it to offer sacrifice
<i>Wón gbẹbọ fún Èşù</i>	They offered the sacrifice to Esu
<i>Béré béré idi è bá tún dowó fun</i>	The feathers at her tail became a source of wealth
<i>Ni inú rẹ ndùn</i>	She became very happy

<i>Ní wá nǵó</i>	She was dancing
<i>Ní nwá nyò</i>	She was rejoicing
<i>Ní yin àwọ̀n Babaláwo</i>	Şe was praising her priests
<i>Àwọ̀n Babaláwo nyinfá</i>	Her priests were praising Ifá
<i>Ó ní bé è gégé làwọ̀n Babaláwo toun wí</i>	She said it was exactly as her priests predicted
<i>Àşé síhín</i>	The manner of spilling here
<i>Àşé sòhún</i>	And spilling there
<i>Lomi koto èè fí kún</i>	Is the reason why the water in a koto (a kind of container for fetching water) can never be full
<i>A difá fún Odíderé</i>	Cast divination for Odidere (Parrot)
<i>Tí nfi oşooşù şòwò èjè</i>	The one that trades in blood all months
<i>Yóó dọmọ</i>	It would become a baby
<i>Òwò èjè kan òwò èjè kàn</i>	A certain blood trading
<i>Táwa şe lóşù yí</i>	Which we performed this month
<i>Yóó dọmọ</i>	It would become a baby
<i>Ọmọ ní ó mọ̀mọ̀ dà.</i>	It certainly would become a baby

This is science of life found in biology that made us know that conception begins with blood as proven in the field of science today. However, this has been said by *Ifá* many centuries before the formation of contemporary science. It is not the foreign religion and science that came to teach us this? No. This is an indication that no one religion, no one science or technology, has an answer to all the issues relating to life. God is not stupid, irrational or made by revealing himself to humanity in different forms. Therefore, no one should lay claim to the monopoly of the Creator and his created order. He is absolute and just in all the ramifications of the word. He moves in mysterious ways. His wonders to perform. One such way is sin and atonement in relation to *Obi Èşè*. I daresay.

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