

The Tolerance of Yoruba Religious Practice as a Means for Peaceful Co-existence amongst Religious Adherents in Nigeria

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Abstract: Religion as a general phenomenon is found in every human society around the globe. Religion is the most important institutional structures that make up the total unifying social system. This is true in the words of Idowu that Yorùbá are in all things religious. Religion is the source of morality and public order. It is the source of the inner peace of the individual persons and a civilizing factor. However, the overall interest in religion in the world has damaged what religion really is and what it means through intolerance, particularism and hatred. There are crises everywhere, particularly between foreign religions in the land as a result of this. This has created a great difference between religion in practice and the word “religion” that clearly shows the fact that it is not everyone who talks about religion that knows what religion is all about. In most cases, appearance has been taken for reality. Despite all these however, the level of tolerance among the Yorùbá religion calls for attention that other religious bodies could emulate and allow peace to reign. This is the reason why this paper reflected on it as a recipe for peaceful co-existence among other religious groups in Yorùbáland, in particular and in Nigeria in general. The paper was interview based where 10 Christians, 10 Muslims and 10 Yorùbá indigenous religious practitioners were interviewed and their views content analysed. The study viewed that beyond extreme tolerance, no peaceful coexistence can materialize in a pluralistic society like Nigeria.

Keywords: Yorùbá, Religion, Tolerance, Adherents, Peaceful Co-existence.

INTRODUCTION

Religion is like a two edged sword which, if rightly used can promote peace, but again, time if wrongly used, can bring out the beast in human. Every given society desire peaceful coexistence among members of the society. This is the reason why religion is domesticated, most

A multi religious, pluralistic society such as Nigeria thus Nigeria is properly a plural rather than a secular society. How can a nation be termed secular when it spends millions of the tax payer’s hard earned money year in year out sponsoring pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Jordan, Mecca and Medina. This clear evidence of Nigeria’s religiosity manifests itself mostly during political periods when leaders are selected on the basis of religious affiliation. There were also occasions that economic, social geographical and political unrest always lead to religious conflict in the country among the three prominent religious groups, most especially between Christians and Muslims.

In all this scenario, however, one thing is unassailable traditional religion has always been playing the role of a big brother or senior wife among these three religions by tolerating the excesses of the most popular two Abrahamic religions that are always in conflicts with one another. How has traditional religion been able to do this and why are they tolerating them that is worthy of emulation is what this paper tried to analysed.

Yorùbá Indigenous Religious Belief System

Yorùbá indigenous religion, like every other religion in Africa, is a religion that sums up the total life. It is central and most significant in the life of the Yorùbá that is difficult to study in isolation of everything they do, say and think. Idowu¹ sums this up when he says that the keynote of the life of the Yorùbá is not in ancestry and deeds of past heroes. Rather, in their religion that forms the basis right from the womb, through birth, infancy, puberty initiation, marriage, funeral, and dictates every step they take in life, including governance, yes governance. This is also evident in their myths of creation, proverbs, meaning of God’s name- Olódumarè, in their speech- *a dúpé lówó Olórun*, pity sayings- *áo jinyin isẹ́ Olórun*, theophoric names given to children based on personal experience and encounters such as Olukoya, Opeolu, Osunbiyi, Sangowale, liturgy and songs. Each day begins with prayer, offering of kola nut and pouring of libation through which the will of the gods and spirits are surmount by means of divination in the temples, shrines, groves and of cause in thousand and one places where the presence and attention of the gods and spirits can be found.

In the religion of the Yorùbá, there are five distinct beliefs. These five beliefs sum up their total life mentioned above earlier. They are belief in Olódumarè-God the Creator, belief in divinities, belief in spirits, belief in ancestors and belief in

¹ E. Bolaji Idowu, 1982, *Olodumare God in Yoruba belief*, Nigeria: Longman Nigeria Limited, 5

mysterious powers that manifested in magic and medicine. These beliefs are categorized to be four by the Lausanne movement who missed out belief in ancestor². Olódùmarè is believed to be the creator of all things both on earth and in heaven. He is the holy one and the one that will judge individuals and the world at large. Olódùmarè is believed by the Yorùbá to be the creator of all things both on earth and in heaven. He is believed to be self-existent. Although this is contrary to the view of Lijadu³ who opined that Olorun was the one that made Olódùmarè the general overseer over all the *Ààrè-Ìyanu* or wonders he created. Therefore, Olódùmarè is the full and complete word that came out of Olorun's word for all the *Aare* (Olódù-Ààrè who is in charge of all the wonders of Olorun for the care of the world and the rest of all the spiritual realms. According to him, Olorun occupies the seventh heavens while Olódùmarè is living in the sixth heavens where he carries out the will and order of Olorun and affairs of heaven and earth. Divinities are little gods whose numbers varies, may be as a result of duplication when people started moving away from their ancestral home Ile-Ife where they believed life began and were given different names in different towns and villages they are found. For example, *Òriṣà Ṣònpònná* is also called *Ọbalúayé*, *Olóde*, *Baba-Àgbà* and *Ìgbóná*⁴. While *Ọbàtálá* is also known and called *Òriṣà-nlá* and about thirty nine different other names such as, *Òriṣà Pópó*, *Òriṣà Ògìyán*, *Òriṣà Ifè*, *Òriṣà Ìjèùn* and so on.⁵ Therefore, actual number of them cannot easily be determined; it has variously been estimated to be 200, 201, 400, 401, 600, 601, 1,700 or even more. Some are widely worshipped, some locally worshipped, while some are individually worshipped. They are part of divine status, because they were brought forth by Him. Therefore, they have all the attributes of the Supreme Being.

Another category of belief of the Yorùbá is spirits who are basically in four different categories. There are primordial spirits or divinities, lesser divinities like historical figures that were defied e.g. Sàngó, Oya, Òmirán and Odùduwà who are

believed came from the East by Johnson⁶. There are also natural phenomena known as environmental spirits. Spirits from the practice of magic and medicine also flourish. They are spiritual beings that below the status of divinities and believed to be above the status of man. They are wandering spirits that move from one place to another and sometimes create abodes for themselves in trees, hills and other habitable natural resources where they may live temporarily and later move on. They may also turn the places to permanent homes until they are displaced by man through the use of powerful magic and medicine⁷. Sometimes too, they may harm their attackers if they are malevolent types⁸. However, if one meets benevolent types among them, they are always beneficial to humanity because they are one of the sources of traditional medicine. Since they live in natural environment, they often have the knowledge of herbal medicine⁹. Some festivals in Yorùbáland are done in remembrance of some of these spiritual beings a good example is the deer woman of Owo of which *Igogo* festival is celebrated in her memory.¹⁰ Some spirits are considered to have been created as a race by themselves. According to Mbiti¹¹ these spirits, like other living creatures, continued to reproduce themselves and add to their numbers. These spirits are of various categories, the major ones are the ghosts, *emèrè*, *àbíkiú*, nature spirits, spirits of witchcraft and guardian spirits. There are also some spirits living under the sea that are benevolent to humanity¹².

The Yorùbá also believe in the active existence of the deceased ancestors, they are called the living dead who mediates in the affairs of the living when the need arises. However, it is not every one who died that is qualified to be called the ancestor. To become an ancestor therefore, the person must have lived well, attained an enviable old age, before he died and left behind good children that would give him a good and befitting burial. The ancestors are both male and female that attained all

² Lausanne Movement Connecting Influencers and Ideas for Global Mission, [Lausanne.org/content/west African-case-study](https://www.lausanne.org/content/west-African-case-study), August 22, 2000, retrieved August 27, 2018.

³ E. A.Lijadu, 1998, *Ifa Mimo Alabalase, Palero Kinni*, Ondo: J.A. Ifeoluwa Printing Press, 1

⁴ C. L. Adeoye, 1085, *Igbagbo ati Esin Yoruba*, Ibadan: Evans Brothers (Nigeria Publishing) Limited, 316

⁵ C.L. Adeoye, *Igbagbo ati Esin Yoruba*, Ibadan: Evans Brothers (Nigeria Publishing) Limited, 95

⁶ Samuel Johnson, 1969, *The History of the Yorubas*, London: Lowe & Braydon (Printers) Ltd, 3

⁷ D. O. Fagunwa, 1965, *Igbo Olodumare*, London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 35-40

⁸ D. O. Fagunwa, 2008, *Irinkerindo Ninu Igbo Elegbeje*, Nigeria: Nelson Publishers Limited, 31-37

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¹⁰ Harold Courlander, 1974, *Tales of Yoruba Gods and Heroes*, USA: Fawcett Premier Books, 150

¹¹ John S. Mbiti, 1967, *African Religions and Philosophy*, London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 80

¹² Mike Omoleye, 1979, *Mystery World Under the Sea*, Ibadan: Omoleye Publishing Company, 27-31

the qualifications mentioned above with a befitting burial as earlier said.

Belief in mysterious powers which can alter the course of nature is also part of what makes up the religion of the Yorùbá.

These mysterious powers are summed up in what we know as incantations, medicine, magic, sorcery and witchcraft. According to Ogunba,¹³ incantation is an attempt by man to control the word by the use of assertions which manifest themselves in positive or negative affirmation with supernatural connections. Olatunji¹⁴ also supported the notion that for man to control both the natural and the supernatural world, and subject them to do his bid, man uses incantation since it is often a matter between the physical world and the spiritual world. Incantation is interpreted in Yorùbá to mean *Ofò*, *Ayájó* or *Ògèdè* which largely depend on the parts of the Yorùbá that one comes from. People from places like Ekiti, Ijesa and Ile -Ife usually call incantation *ògèdè* or *ohùn Ifè*. However, *àyájó* is closely related to *Ifá* because it tells a lot of stories of what has happened in the past that is not frequent in *ofò*. Although aim not saying here that we don't have such in *ofò* but they are not as constant as we have it in *Ifá*. Incantation involves the chanting or uttering of words with magical power which sometime goes with some medicinal preparation that is carried in form of ring, armlet, gourd or needle that works more swiftly than any medicine¹⁵.

Medicine on its is the use of available natural resources in treating and preventing diseases or illnesses. Today, however, medicine has gone beyond the use of natural material, oftentimes artificial materials such as worn-out shoes, bags, clothes and so on are used. A medicine man can be a diviner, a priest and a manufacturer of charms. Sometimes he could be a professional herbalist who knows little about divination. Magic is defined by *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* as the secret power of appearing to make impossible things happen by saying special words or doing special things, something that seems too wonderful to be real. It is a human art which involves the manipulation of certain objects which are believed to have power to cause a supernatural being to produce or prevent a particular result,

which are considered not obtainable by natural means. It is a means of subjecting natural forces to the will of man. This is peculiar with the religion and life of the Yorùbá. Witches are called *Ajé* in Yorùbá. They are said to operate in groups. They can also operate individually. It is believed also that they operate through animals. They are mostly women. But few men can be found among their guild and they are (men) called *Abesè* and are equally called *oşó*. All these belief systems put together form what we called Yorùbá religion and they all work together harmoniously.

Causes of Intolerance in Religions

In some countries of the world, including Nigeria, there is some level of violation of religious freedom and belief in which people are deprived of their freedom of religion and belief. For instance limited Nation's special rapport on religious intolerance that visited Australia in 1997, expressed concern about how Muslims found it difficult to establish new places of worship, even in areas where they are concentrated in spite the fact that Australia is believed to be a secular state. Some even found it irritating and disturbing the call of the muezzin to the faithful for prayer.¹⁶ Coming home to Nigeria here, in some northern parts of the country, activities of Boko Haram are destructive and iconoclastic all in the name of establishing Islamic state and forked to establish Islamic Muslim thus depriving them of their religious freedom right? According to report, in 2015 alone, Boko Haram killed about 6,644 people in the Northern side of Nigeria¹⁷.

Again, the Nigeria government is also contributing her own quota to the intransigence when the members of the ruling class always patronise these religious Centres despite the fact that Nigeria is claimed to be a secular state particularly during elections. Rituals and prayer sessions are organized on their behalf. They patronize them for God's endorsement and are backing for the post they are contesting to make it real and portray them as game candidates that will do the bid of their country and the larger society. If eventually such people get to office, they tend to give preferential treatment in matters that requested prompt and decisive action that could lead to unrest.

¹³ O. Ogunba, 1967, *Ritual Drama of the Ijebu People: A Study of Indigenous Festivals*; PhD thesis, University of Ibadan, 187

¹⁴ O.O. Olatunji, 1970, *Characteristic Features of Yoruba oral poetry*, PhD Thesis, University of Ibadan, 197

¹⁵ Dopamu P. Adejumo, 1977, *The Practice of Magic and Medicine in Yoruba Traditional Religion*, PhD Thesis, University of Ibadan, 555

¹⁶ <http://www.apliref.gov.au.housecommittee-ifadit-religion-rel chap5> (1)

¹⁷ <http://www.rt.com/news/322529-global> terrorism, Retrieved June 15, 2017.

There are also people who are over-zealous in the defense of their religious affiliations. Individuals, groups and property are usually affected in such situations. For instance, in Russian federation, report says unidentified young men attacked worshippers in a Baptist church with pepper gas during a service in Kirovo-chepetsk and the same church was later in that year vandalized by religious extremists. Also in turkey, it was reported that a group of young men who were defending Islam and Turkish nationalism bound, tortured and killed some employees of a Christian publishing house¹⁸. In the same manner, many churches, and people have been killed in Northern Nigeria and property vandalized these religious extremists all in the name of defending their religion. The effect of this is not only limited on the killing and verdalization of property. It is also felt on the economy. For those who are lucky to survive the attack usually find themselves in refugee camps where they would be redundant for the period of the violence and beyond that usually affects their businesses the effect of which is felt on the society economically as a whole¹⁹.

The use of religious symbols is also another source of religious intolerance in Nigeria. Frican religions adherents are often called *abogi bôpè* – worshippers of wood and palm trees. This is as a result of their religious symbols that physically represents and used as expression of their inner feelings of which it was mistook for idols the traditionalists worship African converts to Islam and Christianity did not help matter either. They continued in the tradition and believe of the colonial masters that sees nothing good in the religious worship of African natives. They therefore, according to Babalola²⁰ launched assaults upon customs and beliefs which they found objectionable and those by chances conflict. A similar experience happened in the University of Ibadan in 1985 when the Muslim faithful ordered the removal of a cross symbol that had been there before the mosque was built all in the name of intolerance²¹

Again, some religious leaders have sugar quoted tongues. This is a weapon they relied on to cajole people and psychologically brainwash them through their preaching to make people do unthinkable things. This cajoling, psychological and brainwashing mode of preaching and stereotyping is capable of causing intolerance especially for those who are not religiously matured. A very good example is Lijadu²², a preacher of the gospel of Christ who at the same time studied *Ifá* extensively. He wrote some books on *Ifá*, one of which is *Ifá Ìmólè rẹ tí ísẹ ipínlẹ̀ isìn ní ilẹ̀ Yorùbá* to disgrace and dishonour the religion of the Yorùbá which is capable of causing religious crisis. According to him, to conquer ones enemy is one of the important things in the life of a Yorùbá man and a sign of victory and good things of life. Therefore, anyone that wishes one success in over ones enemy is a good friend. This is seen in *Ògúndá-Òtírà* cited by him.

¹⁸ Tad staliake, Pul Legrendre, Innokenty grekov, Michael Mcchintock and alexis aronowity, 2008, violence based on religious intolerance, www.immangtsfirst.org

¹⁹ Olabimtan, oladele E. Apuwabi, 2018m the effects of religious crisis on economic development, www.hrvars.com retrieved ... 321-330.

²⁰ Babalola e.O., 1976, Christianity in west Africa, an historical analysis, Ado-Ekiti, Bamigboye & co press (Nig.) Ltd, p15.

²¹ Ayo Banjo & E. Kayode Adesogan, 2008, "Chapel Cross Versus Crescent Conflict: its National Implications and Significance", T. N. Tamuno (ed.) *History of Chapel of the Resurrection, University of Ibadan*, Ibadan: Stirling Horden Publishers ltd, 309

²² Lijadu E.M., 1923, *Ifa; Imole re ti ise ipinle isin ni ile Yoruba*, Exeter: James town sad & sons, 58.

<i>Orí rere ní I ṣégún ọ̀tá,</i>	Good head overcomes enemy
<i>Orí àìsàn ní ọ̀tá Í dì ní àdìpa</i>	Bad head is conquered by the enemy
<i>Njé tani bí mi ò</i>	Who gave birth to me
<i>Ogún-turapa</i>	Ogun-turapa
<i>E jé kí wọn má a ṣubú léra wọn</i>	Let them be falling over one another
<i>Kí wọn kí ó má a para wọn</i>	And be killing themselves
<i>Gbogbo ọ̀tá tí mo bá ní kòní yè</i>	All of my enemies will not survive
<i>Pípa ní kí wọn máa para wọn lọ bẹrẹbẹ</i>	They should be killing themselves
<i>Ṣùgbón èmi kò mà mòtá</i>	But I do not know enemies
<i>Èmi kò mà modì ò</i>	I do not know malicious enemies
<i>Tani Í jé orí àìsàn?</i>	Who is bearing uncured head?
<i>Èni à ndì</i>	Somebody that is being charmed
<i>Tí ó ní kò sí èni tí ó le dì òun àdìpa</i>	But claiming that nobody can charm him
<i>Òun ní Í jé orí àìsàn, àdìpa</i>	Is the one that is bearing uncured head
<i>Njé àṣubùlébù màrà ní Tègbè ò</i>	It is overlapping that Tegbe falls
<i>Àṣubùlébù ní kí ọ̀tá máa ṣubú léra wọn</i>	My enemies will fall overlapping themselves
<i>Ọ̀tá mi kòní bárá wọn rẹ</i>	All my enemies shall not be friend
<i>Akọ alángbá kii bárá wọn rẹ bọ̀rọ̀bọ̀rọ̀.</i>	Male lizards do not become friendly easily.

However he debunks this by citing romans 12²⁰ “if your enemy is hungry, give him food”. However, one may be tempted to ask some pertinent questions, that what happens to prayer points that Centres on enemies in many of the churches today? Those who killed Jesus, were they his friends? As a result of these unpleasant and reproachful preaching’s, this made the Christians to be scorned by these traditionalists with a song like;

<i>Babaláwo sun²³ inú ilé</i>	Babalawo sleeps inside the house
<i>Mùsùlùmí sùnta</i>	Musulumi slept outside,
<i>Ìgbàgbó kò ríbi sùn</i>	Christian has no place to sleep
<i>O dinú igbó²⁴.</i>	It was inside the bush

²³ The song is in relation to Yoruba mode of burial. *Sùn* is a Yorùbá word for sleep and in this context; it is used metaphorically to mean death.

²⁴ Igbo here means the commentary/ burial site where Christians usually bury their dead ones that is pattern after the missionaries that brought Christianity to Yorubaland since the Yoruba prefer to bury their dead at home because of their belief in ancestor veneration. By burying the dead at home will give easy access to the dead.

Obstructive and disturbing mode of worship is another factor that is causing religious intolerant. The way and manner some religious groups conduct their services as mentioned earlier at the beginning of this paper is sometimes irritating. Speakers are mounted on top of worship Centres and are made use of at odd hours of the day particularly in residential areas unmindful of those who have health challenges and people of different faith.

Tolerance of Yorùbá Religion as a Recipe for peaceful co-existence among other Religious Groups

Yorùbá religion is a worldwide religion. It is a religion you find where the Yorùbá are found. It is an ancient religion that found its way and survived strongly in places like Brazil where it is referred to as Macumba or Shango, in Cuba it is called Lucumi, while in Afro-Haiti it is called anagos, in Spain it is santiria through Yorùbá men and women sent to British, French, Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the new world as a result of Atlantic slave trade.²⁵ This is further supported by Migene²⁶ that, the Latin America, that is called Santeria, had its birth name and origin in Yorùbá, Nigeria.

Yorùbá religion can also be found in some other parts of African countries like Benin Republic, Togo and so on. However, a greater number are found in south western part of Nigeria. Yorùbá religion is a religion of many gods, goddesses and deified ancestors with Olódùmarè as the head and *Ifá* at the Centre. *Ifá* is the word of Olódùmarè and Òrúnmilà is the custodian of *Ifá* the unifying and binding factor among the numerous gods, the practitioners and Olódùmarè the Supreme Being. The importance of *Ifá* as a unifying factor is seen even before the creation of the world when all the primordial divinities still resided in heaven. They went to Olódùmarè for a permission to create the world of which Olódùmarè granted the request. However before they took the step, *Ifá* was consulted and sacrifice offered²⁷

The importance of *Ifá* was also seen after the establishment of the world. Each time an important issue is to be discussed among the gods, *Ifá* is always consulted for directive. *Ifá* is also the go between the gods on earth here and Olódùmarè in

heaven. Òrúnmilà, the custodian of *Ifá* is the spokesperson of all the gods. No wonder there is no shrines, temples, and sacred grooves where *iwúre* takes place without the presence of *Ifá* through divination to ascertain that the prayers offered in such places had been answered. This is the reason why there is no supremacy or particularism in Yorùbá religion.

One school of thought even believed that it was Òrúnmilà that was commissioned to come and create the earth and when he was coming, he came along with some Heavenly beings called Irúnmòlè²⁸. As a result of the unity and love that have been in existence since then, the practice of traditional Yorùbá religion remained unchanged. This according to Fama²⁹, all the babalawo and Òrìṣà devotees alike continue to turn to the teachings of Òrúnmilà through *Ifá* as the source of correct knowledge and the proper way of traditional worship.

Therefore, there is nothing a Yorùbá man will do without due consultation of *Ifá* for guidance and the wish of the Òrìṣà³⁰. When Christianity came into Yorùbá land therefore, it was *Ifá* that ushered her in and establish her even before the physical contact with the missionary expedition of Henry town send and his team.³¹

It is quite unfortunate that after Christianity was fully established by Yorùbá religion, it was this religion that Christianity first attacked. However, Yorùbá traditional religion is able to tolerate other religions because of the view that when those missionaries were coming, they did not bring their members from wherever they came from. Rather it was part of these traditional worshippers that were taken. Therefore, traditional Yorùbá religion is of the opinion that all these foreign religions are extension of traditional religion of the Yoruba. This is so because when trouble comes, they always rushed home for solution through Yorùbá religious system. Fighting or having any misunderstanding with them therefore, is like fighting with one's body or blood and flesh³². Besides, if they could manage misunderstandings among themselves and co-existed peacefully,

²⁸ Fama Aina Adewale-Somadhi, 1995, *Fundamentals of the Yoruba Religion Orisa Worship*, U.S.A. Ile orunmila publications, xxiii

²⁹ Fama Aina Adewale-Somadhi, 1995, *Fundamentals of the Yoruba Religion Orisa Worship*, xxiv

³⁰ E. Bolaji Idowu, 1982, *Olodumare God in Yoruba Belief*, Nigeria: Longman Nigeria Ltd, 5.

³¹ Adewale S.A., 1978, *The Role of Ifa in the Work of 19th Century Missionaries Orita*, *Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* xii, p23.

³² Okesola Ajongbolo, an Ifa Priest, Oral Interview, 20/10/2017

²⁵ Harold courlander, 1974, *Tales of Yoruba Gods and Heroes*, U.S.A: Fawcett premier books, 19

²⁶ Migene gonzalez wippler, 1981 santeria African magic in latin America, new york original products div. of jamil products corp. 1.

²⁷ C. L. Adeoye, 1985, *Igbagbo ati Esin Yoruba*, Ibadan: Evans Brothers (Nigeria Publishers) Limited, 12-13.

dealing with external aggression should not be a problem as viewed by one of the informants.³³

Again, the knowledge of the two other main religions in the country is not new to the traditionalists. Long before the advent of the two on the chore of Nigeria, *Ifá* had already predicted their coming at the time said something about the two religions. *Ifá* in *Òtúrà Méjì*³⁴ has this to say about Islam;

³³ Awosola Fatoosin, an Ifa Priest, Oral Interview, 20/10/2017

³⁴ Wande Abimbola, 1968, *Ijinle Ohun Enu Ifa Apa Keji*, U.K: W.N., Collins, Sons and Co Limited, 96

<i>Wútúwútú yaáki</i>	Wutuwutu yaaki
<i>Wútúwútú yámbébé</i>	Wutuwutu yambebe
<i>Ká sáré pátápirá</i>	If we run helter shelter
<i>Ká fẹ̀wù Aláari fónkun àmódi</i>	And use Alaari cloth to clean a sick person's mucus
<i>Lékéléké, ẹ̀yẹ̀ ìmòlẹ̀</i>	Egress, the bird of Muslims
<i>Bò bà sórí ọ̀pòtọ̀,</i>	If it perches on top of fig tree
<i>A bà sórí òrombó</i>	It will perch on orange tree
<i>A má a fi gbogbo ara kéwú eléwú kiri</i>	To gather grey with all its body
<i>A difá fún Ọ̀rúnmilà,</i>	Casts divination for Orunmia
<i>Ifá nsunkún òun ò rómọ̀ bí</i>	Ifa was crying for lack of children
<i>Wón ní ẹ̀bọ̀ ní ó wá rú,</i>	He was asked to offer sacrifice
<i>Ó sì rú u.</i>	He offered it
<i>Wón ní ó réku méjì olúwéré;</i>	He was asked to offer two rats
<i>Kó rẹ̀ja méjì abiwẹ̀gbàdà;</i>	Also two fishes
<i>Obidiẹ̀ méjì abẹ̀dọ̀ lùkẹ̀lùkẹ̀;</i>	And two hens
<i>Ewúré méjì abámú rẹ̀dẹ̀rẹ̀dẹ̀;</i>	Two goats with large breast
<i>Einlá méjì tó fì 'wo sòsùkà.</i>	Two bulls with huge horns
<i>Gbogbo rẹ̀ náà ló rú.</i>	He offered everything
<i>Ìgbà tí Ọ̀rúnmilà ó kọ̀ọ̀ bí,</i>	When Ọ̀rúnmilà first gave birth,
<i>Ó bí Gánmbí</i>	He gave birth to Ganmbi
<i>Ìgbà tí ó tún bí,</i>	When he gave birth again,
<i>Ó bí Kálítù</i>	He gave birth to Kalitu
<i>Ìgbà tí ó tún bí</i>	When he gave birth again
<i>Ó bí Dáúdù</i>	He gave birth to Daudu
<i>Èyí tí sọ̀mọ̀ ikéyìn wọn lénje lénje</i>	Who was their last born
<i>Íkú kò pa wọn</i>	Death did not kill them
<i>Arùn kò se wọn.</i>	They were not affected by sickness
<i>Ìgbà tí wọn dàgbà tán</i>	When they grew to maturity
<i>Ọ̀rúnmilà kọ̀ wọn ní didá ọ̀wọ̀</i>	Ọ̀rúnmilà thought them how to cast divination
<i>Wón mọ̀ ọ̀n dá</i>	They knew it.
<i>Ó kọ̀ wọn létítẹ̀ alẹ̀</i>	He thought them how to imprint Odu
<i>Wón mọ̀ ọ̀n tẹ̀</i>	They knew it
<i>Ó kọ̀ wọn ní ọ̀karara ẹ̀bọ̀</i>	He thought them how to offer sacrifice
<i>Wón mọ̀ ọ̀n ha</i>	They knew it
<i>Nígbà tó d'ọ̀jọ̀ kan</i>	On one particular day,
<i>Ni wọn bá ré agbádá a bàbá a wọn</i>	They took their fathers garments
<i>Wón ré gèlẹ̀ iyá a wọn</i>	They took their mothers head gear
<i>Wón wọ̀ agbádá náà</i>	They put on the garments
<i>Wón sì wé gèlẹ̀ náà sórí bàntutu</i>	They tie the head gear
<i>Wón na igi mérin sílẹ̀ níbùú níbùú</i>	They arranged four sticks to form a square
<i>Wón wáá kó sí ààrin àwọn igi náà</i>	They entered the square
<i>Wón nşenu wújẹ̀wújẹ̀</i>	And started moving their mouths
<i>Wón nforì kanlẹ̀</i>	They bow down
<i>Wón ndìde</i>	They stood up
<i>Wón nkúnlẹ̀</i>	They knelt down
<i>Wón sì nnàró</i>	And stood up
<i>Bàbá a wọn sá nwò wọn ní</i>	Their father was just looking at them
<i>Wón nşẹ̀ bẹ̀ẹ̀ lẹ̀máárún márún lójo ójúmó</i>	They were doing like that five times a day
<i>Ó wá á rántí Ifá</i>	The father now remembered the Ifa
<i>Tí àwọn awoó rẹ̀ kí fún un</i>	That his diviners casted for him
<i>Kò bá wọn jà.</i>	He did not quarrel with them.

While odu *Ìretè Méjì*³⁵ and *Òwónrín Méjì*³⁶ have also said something about Jesus before the good news of Christ came to Nigeria through Yorùbáland. Besides, since the Yoruba relied on *Ifá* in whatever they do, they allow *Ifá* to dictate the religion a child will belong. This is known when the *Àkòsèjáyé*³⁷ of such a child is done immediately the child is born. If during the enquiry any of the odu mentioned above comes out, the parents of such a child will not impose indigenous religion on the child.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that we all came to this world before we knew what is called religion. How we got here, we do not know and we were not informed before coming. (Otherwise we would have preferred places like America, Britain, Canada and some other places where life is easier and better than the continent of Africa. Though am not saying here that those places mentioned do not have their own peculiar problems, far from that, they have myriad of problems as well). Where we are from, it was when we got to the earth that we were told. It was when we got to this world that we were introduced to God. We were no party to our coming to the world as said above. Otherwise many would not have come to the shore of Africa if we were consulted before coming. We got to the earth before we were informed that there is a place called heaven that we shall return to after death. Whether God exists or not is a matter of faith. We only hope and believed that one day we shall meet with him and if what all the religions preach is true, we may not have such an opportunity because of his bigness and mightiness. Therefore, fighting for Him is unreasonable because this is one of the major reasons why we cannot tolerate one another. He is big enough, powerful enough and mighty enough to fight for himself unless what all scriptures say about him is different from reality.

The earlier we realize that the Creator that gave us knowledge of religion in diverse ways that would be convenient for everyone to reach him the better for us to know that he is not stupid. As a result of these facts, we should realize that there can't be one religion on earth. Therefore, tolerance should always be our watchword because the God that gave us different means of reaching him conveniently is all wise. This is the reason why

many would be disappointed at the end of the day for fighting for God because God is capable of fighting for himself if need be. Other religious affiliate should take lesson from traditional religion of the Yorùbá through the love, harmony, unity, maturity and understanding that exists among them and let peace reign in Nigeria and the world at large. Finally, ifa says in *Odù Òsè Òtúrá*³⁸ that;

³⁵ Awosola Fatoosin, an Ifa Priest, Oral Interview, 22/09/2018

³⁶ Ayo Salami, 2002, *Ifa a Complete Divination*, Lagos: NIDD Publishing and Printing Limited, 274

³⁷ *Akosejaye* is an enquiry into the future and the destiny of such a child.

³⁸ Ayo Salami, 2008, *Yoruba Religion and Tradition: the Worship*, Lagos: NIDD Publishing and Printing Limited, 22

<i>Dòró pọ̀nmí ò dọ̀ró</i>	Doro ponmi ò doro
<i>Dòró pọ̀nmí o dọ̀ró</i>	Dòró ponmi o doro
<i>Iye ọ̀mọ̀ ò jọ̀mọ̀ ó sùn</i>	The consciousness of a child refused the child a sleep
<i>Ọ̀mọ̀ àtí sùn</i>	The child is all about making love
<i>Ọ̀mọ̀ àtí lóyún</i>	The child is all about becoming pregnant
<i>Ọ̀mọ̀ àtí bímọ̀</i>	The child is all about being born
<i>A dífá fólórí tó forí ara rẹ̀ sílẹ̀ e</i>	Casts divination for the leader who abandoned his own ori
<i>Tó nbọ̀ idí àdó</i>	And was offering sacrifice to a miniature gourd
<i>Tiò tètè mò pé orí eni làwúre eni</i>	He did not know on time that one's head is one's benefactor

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