



STUDY OF *Ẹ̀BỌ* (SACRIFICE) IN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS: A HUMANISTIC SCIENCE AS EVIDENT IN *IFÁ* DIVINATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

Ẹ̀bọ - sacrifice, a communication between man and the world of the spirits is one means to alleviate and solve both physical and spiritual problems of humanity. It is an act of offering the life of an animal or person or some objects to the divine power or powers. *Ẹ̀bọ* is an exchange for failures, food for heavenly spirits, the earth, and men. The importance of *Ẹ̀bọ* cannot be over emphasised because it is the main reason why *Ifá* divination is consulted to determine the correct and necessary solution to solve a problem or problems of which *Ifá* is used to diagnosed. *Ẹ̀bọ* is an ancient science of the Yoruba that proffers solution to most of human problems physically and spiritually beginning from the food man consumes on a daily basis to live a healthy life to the ones man offered to appease the spiritual beings for peace to attain desired equilibrium. However, this significant aspect of human life has been neglected, hence myriad of evils plaguing the society as a result of Western civilisation and religions. It is on this note that this paper aims at exploring the importance of *Ẹ̀bọ* as a scientific method of alleviating human problems in the past and its relevance in modern world. Data were gathered through rapid research approach in some Yorubá cities of south-western Nigeria, where phoning and quick in-depth and case analysis interviews were held. The paper recognised that *Ẹ̀bọ* is indispensable in human society and recommends as part of scientific therapeutic mechanism since science is relative.

Keywords: *Ẹ̀bọ*, *Ifá* Divination, Religious Tradition, Humanistic Science.

Introduction

Ẹbọ -Sacrifices are made to deities/gods and other occult group e.g. witches in the spiritual realm. These sacrifices are done to get more power and energy to carry out their necessary activities. Some sacrifices are made at night and some during the day. It is usually instructed as dictate by *Ifá* Oracle that Ẹbọ should be placed most of the time at *Oríta*- a T junction where three-foot path meet. It is believed that *Oríta* is the abode of the spirits, particularly the witches. Sometime, it could be beside the road, beside the stream, inside cutter, on the refuse dump. In short, the placement of Ẹbọ depends on the dictate of *Ifá*.

Man, as a matter of fact desires peace in all areas, he has also discovered, through his instinct or *Ifá* that some of these divinities and spirits are disease and problems couriers that can jeopardize the peace and harmony that man desires. For man to be at peace with himself, his environment and the divinities, he has decided to feed the spiritual beings. Therefore, man placates these spiritual beings with the *ẹbọ* that he offers to them to attain the peace he desires within and outside his environment. The spiritual beings, in return, once they are fed, do the bidding of man. Thus, the desired equilibrium is attained. This supports the Yorubá adage that says *bénun bá je, ojú á ti*- once the mouth is fed, one will be shy to criticize the provider of the food (Kolawole, 2006:16). This is the role that Ẹbọ played in the life of the Yorubá before the infiltration of foreigners with their religions. However, looking at the mode of operation of Ẹbọ, one would discover that it follows scientific laws that validate Ẹbọ as humanistic science. This shall be explained in the body of the work.

What is Ẹbọ -Sacrifice?

Ẹbọ is defined in different ways as viewed by different authors. According to Ìdòwú (Idowu, 1962: 118), Ẹbọ is a means of contact or communication between man and the deity Olodumare the Creator. While Awolàlú (Awolalu & Dopamu, 1979: 132) and Dòpámú defined *ẹbọ* as the act of offering the life of an animal or person or some objects to the divine power or powers. In the view of William Bascom, (William, 1969: 60) the main reason why *Ifá* divination is consulted is to determine the correct *ẹbọ* necessary to solve a problem or problems of which *Ifá* is used to diagnosed. In Salámi's (Salami, 2002: 76) opinion, *ẹbọ* is an exchange for failures, food for heavenly spirits, the earth, and men. In a similar view, Abimbola (Abimbola, 1968: 42) stresses the importance of offering *ẹbọ* which is food for *Èṣù*, the *Babalawo*, as well as *Òrìṣà*, and an assurance on the part of the client that the prayers for which he offers *ẹbọ* has been answered. Awólalú (Awolalu, 1979:134-136) in another book explained that *ẹbọ* is an act of making an offering to a deity or spiritual being which could be inform of animals, food, drinks, living and non-living things. Various authors with various definition all pointing to one direction which is placating, bribing and propitiating the spiritual beings or deities so that we can receive their favour and be in good terms with them.

The Importance of *Ẹbọ*- Sacrifice in the Life of Humanity and the gods as a Healing System

Ẹbọ - sacrifice is crucial to *Ifá* divination as a healing technique because this is basically the reason and purpose for offering it. It is also the reason why divination takes place to diagnose and to know the appropriate *Ẹbọ* to offer for the problem to be eliminated. It is important to offer *ẹbọ* because that is where healing lies since one does not go to a doctor to determine what drug to be used. Rather, one goes there to be diagnosed to know the ailment and to know the kind of drugs to prescribe. In the same manner, a client will go to any competent *Babalawo* to detect the cause of an illness or problem through diagnosing system with the use of *Ifá* before *ẹbọ* to that effect is prescribed. Therefore, *ẹbọ* heals, and at the same time protects against illness. The importance of *Ẹbọ* is seen in the life of the gods where *Ẹbọ* is used to solve personal and collective problems and among human beings for the same purpose. There are lots of references in *Ifá* where the gods like Ogun, Oya, Osun, Sango, Obatala and so on consulted the oracle to solve one problem or the other including *Ọrúnmìlà* himself who is the custodian of *Ifá* oracle. According to *Ifá* in *Ogbèbàrà* (Ifayemi, 1998: 106), Obatala offered *Ẹbọ* to triumph over the witches. Here *Ifá* says;

<i>Ogbèbàrà lààgèti</i>	It was Ogbeara that one used to pound eti
<i>Ẹ̀nṣò orí ẹ̀ loogùn</i>	The edge of it is used to make medicine
<i>A dífá fún Ọ̀sàlá Ọ̀ṣẹ̀rẹ̀màgbò</i>	<i>Ifá</i> divination was performed for Oosala Oseremogbo
<i>Níjọ́ tí nẹ́ nínú ọgún ọ̀tá ẹ́lẹ́yẹ...</i>	On the day he was in the mist of witches' war...

Again, *Ogbè-sà* (Lijadu, 1965: 24) narrates the experience of *Ọrúnmìlà* when four enemies rose up to deal with him.

<i>Iná awo ọ̀jọ̀gbó</i>	Fire is the secret of bush burning
<i>Oòrùn awo ọ̀jọ̀gbó</i>	The sun is the secret of bush burning
<i>Ọ̀ṣupá awo alátànṣere</i>	The moon is the secret of
<i>Ọ̀jò gírìgírì awo ìsálú ọ̀run</i>	Heavy rain is the secret of heavenly beings
<i>Àwọn méré̀rẹ̀rìn ní ẹ̀tá Ọ̀rúnmìlà</i>	The four of them were the enemies of <i>Ọrúnmìlà</i>
<i>Níjọ́ tí wọ́n wípé</i>	On the day they said
<i>Àwọn nṣùnmò bọ́ wá bá Ọ̀rúnmìlà já.</i>	They would converge together to fight <i>Ọrúnmìlà</i>

Ọrúnmìlà consulted *Ifá* oracle and was asked to offer four bowls of pounded yam and three bowls of soup and place them on the road that these enemies will follow to *Ọrúnmìlà*'s home. He heard and offered the items. When fire, sun and moon got to where the *Ẹbọ* was placed, they all carried one bowl of pounded yam and a bowl of soup each. At the end rain got there and met a bowl of pounded yam without soup. He was annoyed and pursued the three. One after the other, he got them killed and at the end, *Ọrúnmìlà* was free from his intending enemies. The same *Ogbè-sà* (Lijadu, 1965, 27) also explained that;

<i>Ifá ní àjowò,</i>	Ifá says we should look together
<i>Mo ní àjowò</i>	I said we should look together
<i>Ó ní ohun a bá jìjò wò níígu'</i>	He says whatever we look together is always normal
<i>A dífá fún Ògún</i>	Cast divination for Ogun
<i>Olódumare rànṣẹ̀ pẹ̀é lóde ọ̀run</i>	Olodumare sent for him from Heaven
<i>Pé kíó yára wá wo ohun kan</i>	That he should quickly come and look at something
<i>Ògún ní ọ̀un kò mà le nìkan lọ ọ̀run</i>	Ogun says he cannot go to heaven alone
<i>Wọ̀n ní Èbọ ni kó rú,</i>	He was asked to offer sacrifice
<i>Ó gbọ́ rírú Èbọ ó rú</i>	He heard and offered it
<i>Ó gbọ́ èrù àtukeṣù ó tú</i>	He made all the rituals he offered
<i>Ó yà lónà</i>	He branched on the way
<i>Ó pe Ota nílé Adó,</i>	He called Ota in Ado
<i>Ó pe Erinmi lóde Ọ̀wọ̀</i>	He called Erinmi in Owo
<i>Ó pe Pẹ̀pẹ́ lóde Àsin</i>	He called Pepe in Asin
<i>Ó pe gbogbo Iruṅmọ̀lẹ́ tí nḡe lónà ọ̀run</i>	He called all the Irunmole in heaven
<i>Ògún kó gbogbo wọ̀n yà nílé Ọ̀rúnmìlà</i>	He went with them to Orunmila's house
<i>Ó ní kí Bara Agbonmìrẹ̀gún</i>	He asked Bara Agbonmiregun
<i>Jòwọ́ bá wọ̀n kálo rẹ̀ wo oun kan lódò</i>	Should please follow them to heaven to look at
<i>Olódumare</i>	something in the presence of Olodumare...

Ifá also explain in *Ọ̀kànràn-Túrùpòn* (Ajaja, 2020: Telephone Interview) that;

<i>Ifá kíkọ́ ní múnì mọ́fá'</i>	Learning Ifá will make one knows Ifá
<i>Ọ̀nà síṣì ní múnì mọ̀nà</i>	Missing one's way will make one knows the way very well
<i>Ọ̀nà tí akò bá rìn rí ní ṣeni ṣìbá ṣìbò</i>	The road that one does not ply before is always confusing
<i>A dífá fún Ọ̀sányìn</i>	Cast divination for Osanyin
<i>Níjọ́ tí Olódumare dégbá sílẹ̀</i>	On the day Olodumare cover a calabash
<i>Npe Ọ̀runmìlà kí ó wá klfá ṣii</i>	He called Orunmila to come and reveal what was there through divination
<i>Tí Ọ̀sányìn ní ọ̀un kà ṣàì báa lọ</i>	And Osanyin says he would follow him
<i>Tí a ní kí ó jọ́kó</i>	He was asked to seat back
<i>Ọ̀ràn wà lórùn rẹ̀</i>	Because he had a pending issue
<i>Ṣùgbọ́n tí kò gbọ́</i>	But refused to listen

Other places in *Ifá* divination where the gods made use of *Èbọ* to solve one problem or the other confronting them either for victory over enemies, financial and economic empowerment and other associated problems are numerous among which are *Irosun Oyeku* (Ifalere, 2014: 234), *Ogbe-Di* (William, 1969: 180), and so on. For instance, *Ogbè Ègùn* (Oladipo & Olajide, 1979: 22-23) explicated that;

<i>Nínú ni inú tíí bíni wá kó tó dójú'</i>	It is from the inner most part that annoyance comes from
<i>Ọ̀yì kò tẹ̀ṣẹ́ kó ènìyàn bírì-bìrì</i>	Dicyness does not sweep one swiftly from the leg

<i>A dá f'ógún Elégbè</i>	Cast divination for Ogun Elegbe
<i>N'íjò tí nre Ilé-Ìrè</i>	On the day he was going to Ire (Ire is a town in the present Ekiti State, Nigeria)
<i>Tí wọn ní kó rúbò ibínú</i>	He was asked to offer sacrifice against anger
<i>Tó kò tíò rú</i>	He refused to offer it
<i>Ó dóún tán</i>	He got there
<i>Ó báwọn nísò ẹmu</i>	He met them at palm wine joint
<i>Ó ní ẹrín kinni wọn nrín</i>	He asked them why they were laughing
<i>Tí wọn ò foun lẹmu mu</i>	Without giving him palm wine to drink
<i>Ó fa irin yọ</i>	He brought out iron
<i>Ó bẹ olórí nínú wọn</i>	He beheaded their leader
<i>Njé torí kí'ògún se pa ẹlẹmu òde ìrè</i>	Why did Ogun kill palm wine cellar at Ire
<i>Nítorí agbè ọfífo</i>	Because of empty guard

In the life of humanity, *Ifá* is consulted to solve economic, political, religious, geographical, health, abundance of wealth, victory over enemies and social security. For instance, *Eji Ogbe* (William, 1969: 112-114) has this to say on business;

<i>Igbó etilé òun ẹgbín</i>	Nearby bush is full of dirt
<i>Àdàpò òwò òun ìyà</i>	Joint business is full of suffering
<i>Yàrá àjùmògbé italẹ ní nínú</i>	Living in the same room
<i>A dá fún Bàbámáàròsé</i>	Divined for Babamarose (father of don't think of poverty)
<i>Babamàròyà</i>	Babamaroya (father of don't think of suffering)
<i>Kí o má fí wàràwàrà dà ire nù</i>	He should not be in haste in other not to throw out his goodness
<i>Babamàròsé nìyí</i>	And this Babamarose
<i>Bí ó bá dá oko</i>	Whatever things he produced in his farm
<i>Nwón jọ nje ni</i>	They will all eat together
<i>Bí wọn bá sè dé ilé</i>	If they get home,
<i>Òun ni yíó gbà ilé</i>	He would be the one to sweep the floor
<i>Òun ni yíó ká ení</i>	He would also be the one to remove their sleeping mat
<i>Títí wọn nse bẹ ẹ, wọn nse bẹ ẹ</i>	They were doing like that for a long time
<i>Àwọn méjọ ní sù nsùn níbikanná</i>	About eight of them were sleeping in the same place
<i>Wọn sì nse òwò pọ</i>	And they were trading together
<i>Òun ni yíó lọ rà,</i>	He would be the one to buy their goods
<i>Òun ni yíó lọ tà</i>	He would be the one to sell
<i>Àwọn ni yíó wá pín owó</i>	They would be the one to share the money
<i>Tí wọn yíó kó tirẹ le lówó</i>	And give him his share
<i>Ìwón tí ó bá wù wón ni wón yíó fun</i>	They will give him whatever they like
<i>Kò jà títí í tí</i>	He did not fight with them for a long time

After a while, they all left one after the other and remained only Babamarose with all the goods and belongings of all of the other friends that left. He inherited them all and became rich. He was happy praising the gods and the gods were praising

Olodumare. Again, *Ifá* has this to say in *Q̄sá Meji* (Fatunla, 2020: Telephone Interview) about one's enemies;

<i>A ní k'òmódé má gbé'lé kò'fá</i>	We said a child should not stay at home to learn <i>Ifá</i>
<i>Qmódé loun ó gbé'lé kò'fá</i>	The child says he would not stay at home to learn <i>Ifá</i>
<i>A ní k'òmódé ó gbé'lé m'érú tú</i>	We said a child should stay at home to know how to appease the gods
<i>Ó loun ó gbé'lé m'érú tú</i>	He says he would not stay at home to learn how to appease the gods
<i>A ní k'òmódé ó gbé'lé m'òkarara Èbò ha</i>	We said a child should stay at home to know the rites of sacrifice
<i>Ó loun ó gbé'lé m'òkarara Èbò ha</i>	He says he would not stay at home to know the rites of sacrifice
<i>Iṣé tí òmódé nf'ojó ṣe</i>	The work that a child was doing by day
<i>Èyí tí nf'oru ṣe</i>	And the one he was doing by night
<i>Ojòkan soṣo l'Èṣù Q̄dàrà gbón dànù</i>	It is only one day that Esu Odara flung them away
<i>Ó wò'gba òjé</i>	He wears 200 pieces of lead
<i>Ò wú lẹyìn ọrùn korondu korondu</i>	The back of his neck is bent
<i>A dífá fún Alángbá abirun paali</i>	Casts divination for Lizard with stiff tail
<i>Èyí tí nrelé Alakòlè ló sawo</i>	Who was going to Alakole's house to divine
<i>Alángbà abirun paali</i>	Lizard with stiff tail,
<i>O rí'fá Alakòlè tí nṣe?</i>	You will see the <i>Ifá</i> divination for Alakole come true
<i>Orìṣà pé kí eni yí ó rúbò eléniní</i>	Orisa says the person should offer sacrifice against enemies

The Nexus between Modern Science and Scientific Evidences in *Ifá* Divination System

The first scientific evidence found in *Ifá* divination is narrated in the creation myths. On this, there are at least about three or four schools of thought. One school of thought explained that it was Orunmila that was given the task of creating the world which he carried out successfully. This is buttressed by *Odu Irosun Q̄sé* that is also known as *Irosun Oṣó* (Ayo, 2008: 219) that says:

<i>Irosun sésó</i>	Irosun seso
<i>Irosun ò sésó</i>	Irosun o seso
<i>A dífá fún Q̄runmílà</i>	Cast divination for Orunmila
<i>Nígbà tí nlọ rée tẹ òde ìsláye dó...</i>	When he was going to found the earth...

This is a point also supported by Adeoye who believed that it was Orunmila that divined for the sixteen principal gods who demanded for the creation of the earth from Olodumare under *Odu Obara Ose* (Adeoye, 1985:12) that goes thus:

<i>Irúlá kọlà láì l'ábe</i>	Dry okra has marks without knife
<i>Q̄pèrè d'òṣù láì s'awòrò Orìṣà</i>	Opeere (a kind of bird) has dreadlock without being a priest of Orisa

<i>Akèrè abì'tò winni</i>	Frog with its constant urination
<i>Awo ilé Oníturè</i>	The priest of Oniture
<i>Ni ó dífá fún Oníturè</i>	Was the one that cast divination for Oniture
<i>Tí nfi omi ojú sògbéré ọmọ</i>	Who was crying for lack of children
<i>Pètèmbolè Òkìrìkìrìbìtì</i>	Petembolè Okirikiribiti
<i>Àwọn lawo ilé Ọrúnmilà</i>	Were the priests in the home of Orunmila
<i>Won se Ifá fún àwọn Àgbààgbà m̀erindínlogún.</i>	They divined for the sixteen elders
<i>Tí wòn lọ sí ọ̀dọ̀ Olódumare</i>	Who went to Olodumare
<i>Wòn lọ rẹ̀è tọ̀pọ̀ Ayé</i>	To request for the creation of the earth
<i>Wòn dá Ayé sọ́rí agbadagbúdu omi</i>	That was crated on water

Another school of thought stated that it was Orisa-nla whose other name is Obatala was the one Olodumare charged with the task of creating the earth by providing him with materials to be used in carrying out the work (Idowu, 1990: 18). Yet another school of thought believed that though Obatala was given the assignment of creating the new world, but on his way to carry out the work, he met some divinities where they were merrying and he got drunk and could not continue on his journey. As a result, Oduduwa, his younger brother hijacked the work from him and created the new world with the materials initially given Obatala by Olodumare (This created a rift between Obatala and Oduduwa of which Edi festival is celebrated in remembrance of the rift. Part of the activities of the festival is for the Ooni to engage in a wrestling context with Ọbalésùn, the head and representative of Obatala worldwide). To establish this fact, *Odu Okanran Owonrin* was quoted by Kolawole (Kolawole, 2003: 6-7) that:

<i>Ọkànràn àjàngbulẹ̀</i>	Okanran ajangbule
<i>Ọmọ onílẹ̀ ló l'àrẹ̀</i>	The landlord is always right
<i>Àìmọlẹ̀ tẹ̀ Àjẹ̀jẹ̀</i>	A careless stranger who trespasses
<i>Ló fà àkúnlẹ̀ rojọ́ wá</i>	Goes on his knees to explain his mistakes
<i>A dífá fún Odùdúwà</i>	Cast Ifá divination for Oduduwa
<i>Baba nre ayé omi</i>	When he was coming to the earth that is full of water
<i>Wòn ní kí Odùdúwà rúbọ̀</i>	He was asked to offer sacrifice
<i>Ifá ní kí Odùdúwà mú sí ayé</i>	Steered with a big chain to the earth
<i>Ifá ní kí Odùdúwà ní apèrẹ̀ iyèpẹ̀</i>	Ifá says he should have a basket of sand
<i>Kí ó ní adìẹ̀ ẹ̀lẹ̀sẹ̀ máruń máruń</i>	He should have a chicken with five digits on each
<i>Kí ó ní ọ̀gà</i>	He should have a chameleon
<i>Kí ó ní àwọn nkan ọ̀gbìn oríṣíríṣi</i>	He should have seedlings for food crops
<i>Kí ó sì mú àwọn èniyàn dání</i>	He should also go with some people
<i>Odùdúwà kò dá ẹ̀já</i>	He obeyed Ifá injunction
<i>Ó gb'Ébọ̀ ó rúbọ̀</i>	He offered all sacrifices
<i>Ó gb'ẹ̀rù àtúkẹ̀sù ó tú</i>	He made all rituals

Those who believe in this line of myth are of the opinion that after pouring the sand on the watery marshy surface, Oduduwa cloned the hen he was given to spread the sand. He did that to make the work done faster than expected. The spot where the

work was carried out is called Ile-Ife till today (Kolawole, 2003: 13). In the modern world today, scientists have successfully cloned domestic animals through the use of embryo splitting and nuclear transfer to produce genetically identical individuals (Carol, 2015: www.pnas.org). This is what Solter called somatic cell hybridization in encyclopaedia of genetics, the procedure used to create Dolly the sheep (www.cmda.org). This involved combining two different cells. That is, cells from two different tissues of the same species, cells from two different species (Selter, 2001: <https://www.sciencedirect.com>). With the success achieved in animals cloning, attempt has also be made on human cloning by these scientists. However, ethical issues prevented this action as evident in Thomson Gale book and the contributors (William, 2005: 37).

Again, Oduduwa used the sand he brought to reclaim the land he needed for the benefit and survival of his people. In the same way, modern man uses modern technology to re-claim land from swamps, oceans and seas. For instance, places like Lekki (<https://www.guarantyproperty.com>), Ikate Elegushi (<https://www.nigeriaproperty.com>), Maroko (<https://www.nigeriaproperty.com>) all in Lagos are all reclaimed lands with the use of modern technology. Also, Rotterdam land was reclaimed in Netherlands, Holland(2020: <https://coastalcare.org>). History also has it that part of Ijebu-Ode was reclaimed from the lagoon that was troubling them through the help of an *Ifá* priest who offered himself as part of the sacrifice used for the lagoon to give way for land till today (Olayemi, 2019:Telephone Interview), just as Ile-Ife was reclaimed from water by Oduduwa.

Furthermore, divination arrangement is like a Deoxyrhibo-Nucleic-Acid (D.N.A) molecule in modern science. According to Kolawole, modern technology, through bio-chemical studies have established that the characteristics of any being have been previously coded in the D.N.A. moles found in both male and female germ cells that combined together to form the unit of life (embryo) called living being with all its character and identity (Kolawole, 2003:17). In the same way, divination through *Òpèlè* clearly shows the resemblance of the D.N.A. particularly *Àmulù Odu* and the imprinting of the *Odu* that comes out on the *opán Ifá* divination tray that is represented by what the Babalawo called *fónrán* which is regarded as spiritual fundamentality in creation (Kolawole, 2003: 29).

Ifá, like science has been solving many problems relating to human beings for ages physically and spiritually through methods different from that of science. From time immemorial, *Ifá* has been a source of solution to economic, political, geographical, and financial, health wise, social, religious as well as spiritual problems to individuals, communities and many cities in Yoruba society before the advent of colonial civilization and in this present era of modernisation. Till date, *Èbò* is still offered to solve some of the problems mentioned above particularly, the spiritual problems relating to ill health (Awosola, 2020: Personal Interview). As postulated by one of the informants, there are no other businesses that *Ifá* has than to take care of all these problems for humanity and to proffer equilibrium and harmony between the physical and the spiritual and between humanity and their creator. Therefore, there are many references relating to these issues in *Ifá* (Yokelepekun, 2020: Personal Interview).

Modern science of genetics has shown that characteristics of parents re-incarnate in the offspring. That is, there are some characters that can be passed from parents to their offspring (Lack of these characters may suggest or bring doubt either

from the family or the father of the child to think such a child is a bastard. Today, D.N.A. test is to the rescue and determinant of such a child paternity). *Ifá* has this to say in response to the issue as found in *Ọ̀yẹ̀kú Pòsẹ́* (Kolawole, 2003: 57):

<i>Kama tete ku Awo ile alayo</i>	Not dying young, the priest of the house of joy
<i>Aiteteku ti se Awo ibanuje</i>	Living long the priest of sorrow
<i>Tiku ba de ka yin Olorun logo Awo olooto</i>	If death comes, we should praise God the priest of righteousness
<i>Awon lo dlfá fun awon agba sanko sanko</i>	They were the ones that cast divination for prominent elders
<i>Nigbati won to Orunmila lo</i>	When they went to Orunmila
<i>Won lo beere lowo Orunmila pe,</i>	To ask Orunmila that
<i>Kilose ti omo eniyan fi nku</i>	Why mankind were dying?
<i>Orunmila ni</i>	Orunmila said
<i>Oore ni Olodumare fi iku se fun omo araye</i>	It was a favour that God did to mankind
<i>O ni omi ngbe won lo rere</i>	He said water carries them away
<i>Omi ngbe won bo rere</i>	Water brings them back
<i>Olokunrun karele</i>	Infirm come home
<i>Wa lo gbawo tuntun bo waye</i>	To re-incarnate in a new body
<i>Nitori omi ti ko san siwaju</i>	Because water that does not flow forward
<i>Omi tiko san seyin</i>	Water that does not flow backward
<i>Iyen ti domi ogodo</i>	Has become stagnant water
<i>Ọ̀gòdò kẹ̀ ré omi ẹ̀gbín.</i>	And stagnant water is filthy water.

This is evidence that people do die and will be re-born to the world again. Thus, necessitates finding out through *Ifá* which of the ancestors has just comes back to the world from their families during *Àkòsẹ́jayé* of the newly born child that has gone to the great beyond to change his or her body to a new one. In addition to this, the parents will begin to look for character traits found in the person *Ifá* claimed has just come back to the world and the newly born child as he or she grows (Olaleye, 2014: 96).

Research in science of the universe achieved a fit in 1960 when American space astronauts visited the moon with a designed space suites and space ship. However, centuries before scientists made their ways to the moon and other planets, Yorubá concept of cosmology and astrology as explained by *Ifá* made it clear that Orunmila usually travelled to heaven with his *Àpèrè Ayórunbò* (an equivalent of modern space ship or the fastest modern jet) whenever he needed some clarifications from Olodumare on certain things on earth (Ayo, 2008:196). Again, all the Irunmole- celestial beings also reside in other planets in outer space and come to the earth at will. When their duties on earth were done, they went back and believed are still there till now. *Nígba tó ntí'kòlẹ̀ ọ̀run bọ̀wá sí'kòlẹ̀ ayé* is very common in so many *Ifá* verses. An indication that it was from outer space that all the Irúnmọ̀lẹ̀ lived and came to the earth to reside and when they completed their assignment, some of them, like Orunmila went back there while some entered ground and some like Ogun, Ọ̀ya, Sango and so on became objects of veneration till today. Also, it is the belief of the Yoruba that

Olodumare the Creator who sent these Irunmole to the earth resides in one of the planets. Furthermore, talking about the space suites that scientists invented to travel to the moon and other outer space, long before that, the Yoruba believed that egungun-masquerade is from outer space planet with dresses that conformed to outer space environment. This is the reason why they are called *Ará Ọ̀run*- native of outer space planet. Therefore, the Yoruba science of that costume had been in existence before the advent of space suites of the Astronauts.

Before the advent of satellite television network, the Yoruba already had technology of using water with the aid of some incantations or *Ifá* verses to view happenings and communicate anywhere around the world without any difficulty. In the same manner, *Àsògbò*, the equivalent of modern hand set (G.S.M) for effective communication to any part of the world has being in existence long before the invention of telephone of any type. This was what Tajudeen Oyewole (Abijà) demonstrated in Wasiu Ajileye film titled *Ìjà Èlẹ́yẹ* where he was communicating with Àjan, the spiritual entity from a distance land (Ajileye, 2017: 1).

Again, Olu Longe explained that *Ifá* divination and computer science are related due to a lot of similarities like the binary digit, representation of numeric values, modulo arithmetic, permutation, coding, Boolean algebra and logic, complementarity of adjacent Ifa-hex code words and so on found in *Ifá* that are also present in computer science. However, he argued that computer science owns its existence to *Ifá* divination since Ifá has been in practice centuries before the existence of computer science (Longe, 1983: 22-28).

Ẹ̀bọ as a Humanistic Science

As earlier said Ẹ̀bọ is important and is very crucial in the life of man physically and spiritually. In the physical life of man, Ẹ̀bọ is important and indispensable. The indispensability of Ẹ̀bọ begins with the food man eats on daily basis without which man will not live a healthy life. This is the reason why *Ifá* says in *Ọ̀wónrín Mèjì* (Abimbola, 1968:73-75) that:

<i>Agbòngbòn awo wọn lóde Ìlorèè...</i>	Agbongbon the priest of Iloree
<i>...Njé kí là nbọ ní'fẹ̀?</i>	...What do we worship at Ife?
<i>Ẹ̀nu wọn làà' bọ ní'fẹ̀</i>	It is their mouth that we worship at Ife
<i>Njẹ mo fúngbá mo f'áwo</i>	I gave to the calabash and bowl
<i>Ẹ̀nu wọn kó màmà rími bá'jà</i>	Their mouth will not attack me
<i>Ẹ̀nun wọn.</i>	Their mouths

Abimbola (Abimbola, 1968: 13) also affirmed that offering of Ẹ̀bọ is an assurance for those who make enquiry from *Ifá* that their prayers had been answered. Spiritually, Ẹ̀bọ is significant so as to attain certain balance between the physical world and the spiritual world. In Islam, there are five pillars upon which the religion rested. These are Shahadah, a belief that there is no other god except Allah and Mohammad is

his messenger, Salah, that is praying five times daily, Zakah which is to give charity, Sawm which is abstains from food and drink during the month of Ramadan and Hajj, that is to make a pilgrimage to mecca at least once in life time (<https://www.cabarrus.k12.nc.us>). In the same manner, there are five equivalents (pillars) that make up the religion of African/Yoruba. These are belief in Olodumare, God the creator, belief in divinities, belief in spirits, belief in ancestors and belief in mysterious powers. The divinities and spirits are believed by the Yoruba occupied some of the planets in the outer space below the one Olodumare occupied. It is from there they usually visit the planet earth for one assignment or the other given to them by the creator.

The divinities are believed to be the group that Olodumare the creator used to establish the world and were also alleged to be the first occupant after the creation. They assisted mankind in every aspect of their lives to the extent that many of them are still remembered till today because they are venerated through offering of *Ẹbọ* of the best food they liked while on earth in appreciation of their helps to human kinds. On the other hand, the spirits that occupied one of the outer space planets are another creature of Olodumare. They are of different kinds and are believed were created by Olodumare to take care of natural things including plants he created for man through the divinities. For them to properly take of this natural environment for which God created them, many of them made natural things like trees, mountains, rivers, hills and so on their abode. From there they move around to oversee the affairs of nature. Evidence of this can be seen from the knowledge of how to use these natural plants that the benevolent spirits among them usually pass across to mankind most especially the hunters who are always in the bush for games. They are so knowledgeable in this field to the extent that it became a saying in Yoruba that *ewé t'áwo ò mọ, ọdẹ ló nja-leaves* (medicinal plants) that herbalists/priests do not know, it is the hunters that usually get them for the herbalists/priests.

These spirits are both benevolent and malevolent types that can make themselves visible and invisible most of the time. They are believed to be part of disease causations including some divinities most importantly if their rules and regulations are violated and disobeyed. Therefore, to maintain a peaceful balance between man and these spiritual beings, mankind decided to offer them *Ẹbọ* of different kinds to placate and win their favour.

This *Ẹbọ*, which is the third arm of divination process, is a humanistic science that proffers solution to all problems physically and spiritually. Most especially the spiritual problem since man recognises the fact that every problem and sicknesses confronting man and ravaging the society emanated from the spiritual. It is only when the spiritual body (in case of individuals) cannot withstand the pressure that one sees the physical manifestation. Therefore, man must have been sick days, weeks or even months before the physical manifestation (Gerber, 1954:17).

It is scientific because it follows and obeys the law of science and technology. For instance, we are told that mobile cell phones (GSM) which is a two-way radio that transmit and the radio that receive that converts voice into an electrical signal function through the air (radio waves) by dialling the names and numbers stored in the phone and the person at the receiving end swing into action when communicated to (<https://pongcase.com>). In the same technique, whenever *Ẹbọ* is offered, the same principle is followed. This is the reason why it is possible for a sick person to get well

or for whatever reason an *Ẹbọ* is offered to respond positively anywhere in the world without necessarily go to the person or the place. Put in another way, a person is sick in London, his family offered *Ẹbọ* in Nigeria on his behalf and the person gets well. The mechanism behind the workability of the offering is nothing different from that of mobile phone (that is, working through the air). What it requires is the name of the person or people concern and the items for the *Ẹbọ* that varies according to the dictate of *Ifá* just as we have different applications in the mobile phones performing different functions (Ajaja, 2020: Telephone Interview).

Conclusion

From the explanations given so far, we have discovered that there is nothing unscientific about *Ifá*, *Ẹbọ* and all things that relate to it. Besides, if what Franz Boas said about ethno-science theory is true that science is relative, then one shall realise that *Ẹbọ* is scientific (Harris, 1968: 15). Therefore, what makes science to one person may not make to another. This may be as a result of cultural, religious, geographical, climatic differences, method of approach or carrying it out and arriving at an answer. Therefore, the fact that *Ẹbọ* is not processed or carried out according to western method does not invalidate it as scientific in nature. Besides, whether *Ẹbọ* is scientific or not, the fact that *Ẹbọ* can solve both physical and spiritual problem at the same time brings out the beauty in it as a two edges sword that can put an end to man's problem rather than one sided approach of most western scientific approach to issues relating to mankind.

Ẹbọ is an indispensable part of man because it is a God given knowledge to humanity regardless race and ethnicity because most of the materials used are derivative of nature created by this same God. The indispensability of *Ẹbọ* as scientific can also be seen in man's daily food consumption that nourishes and give man energy and good health to carry out his daily duties. If a man is sick, the agitation and concern of every relative is for the man to eat no matter how small. If the person can still eat, then there is a hope that such a person will still survive the sickness. This is because of the recognition and importance of food to the survival of the sick person. In the same manner, *Ẹbọ* which is a food to nourish man's spiritual body and the society against sicknesses, epidemics that could ravage and send man to his early grave. This is the reason why the Yoruba usually say *Ẹbọ díẹ, oògùn díẹ ló ngba aláìsàn lá-* little *Ẹbọ*, little medicine rescues a sick person. Finally, *Ẹbọ* is a God given knowledge to humanity to solve man's problem physically and spiritually and since this God is not stupid by given man this knowledge, I still believe it will serve us good purposes by continuing the usage as our own scientific method of alleviating human problems since man cannot do without food on daily basis and man's daily food consumption, whether one likes it or not is an *Ẹbọ* to live a healthy life. Again, since *Ẹbọ* has not violated any scientific laws and principle, then it is a humanistic science and a therapeutic mechanism to alleviate and solve human problems most especially the spiritual problems since man's problems and sicknesses begins from the spiritual before the physical manifestation when the spiritual body can no longer withstand the pressure. After all, as earlier said, ethno-science theory says science is relative.

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