SIXTEEN GREAT POEMS OF IFÁ

Ajáké and the Choice of Ori

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The following poem tells the story of how Ori is chosen in Òrun (heaven) and the consequences of this irrevocable choice on every individual. The story concerns three friends — Oríseèkú (the son of Ògún) Orílèémèrè (the son of Ìja) and Afùwàpé (the son of Òrùnmilà) — who were going to the abode of Òlódùmarè to choose Ori. The three friends were warned, probably by people who knew the problems of people going on the long journey, not to stop anywhere on the way but to go directly to the home of Àjàlá, “the potter who makes heads in Òrun”. The two friends, Oríseèkú and Orílèémèrè took the advice seriously and failed to call on their fathers despite the fact that they passed by their fathers’ homes on the way. But Afùwàpé, the son of Òrùnmilà, insisted on seeing his father and thus left his two friends to continue on their journey while he stayed for a while with his father.

Oríseèkú and Orílèémèrè finally reached Àjàlá’s house after a lot of problems on the way. But they did not find him at home. They therefore asked for the store-house of heads and each one made his own choice. Unfortunately, the heads they chose were useless ones with the result that when they arrived on earth, they worked hard but they did not achieve any good results.

When Afùwàpé left his two friends, he went into his father’s house. His father performed divination for him and the Ifà priests who performed the divination asked his father to perform sacrifice with three small bags of salt and three times nine thousand cowries. The Ifà priests gave him part of the money and the salt to take with him on the journey. After travelling for a long time, Afùwàpé got to the house of a gate-keeper and he
asked for the way to Ìjálá’s house but the gate-keeper insisted that he would first of all finish cooking his soup before he would show the way to Afúwápè. While they were cooking the soup, he noticed that the gate-keeper was using ashes instead of salt to sweeten his soup. He therefore introduced salt to the gate-keeper who liked it so much that he told Afúwápè the secret about Ìjálá which led to his choice of a good Ori.

The gate-keeper told Afúwápè that Ìjálá was an incorrigible debtor and that he was always hiding in the ceiling of the house to avoid his creditors. He therefore advised Afúwápè to pay off the debts owed by Ìjálá so that the latter could emerge from his hiding place and attend to him personally while choosing his Ori. When Afúwápè got to Ìjálá’s house, he paid off the creditors he met there and Ìjálá emerged from hiding. The result was that Afúwápè chose a good Ori and when he got to the earth, he became a very prosperous person.

There are a number of important points in this story. First, we see the importance of sacrifice as a means of leading one aright all the time. It was the sacrifice of money and salt which Afúwápè made in his father’s house which led him to make the right choice of Ori in the house of Ìjálá. He introduced the salt to the gate-keeper who liked it so much that he told him what to do at Ìjálá’s house. He used the money to pay off Ìjálá’s creditors thus making it possible for that incorrigible fellow to choose the right type of Ori for him.

Secondly, we see the importance of salt as a ritual and civilizing commodity. The gate-keeper who did not know salt can be regarded as a symbol of ancient and primitive culture while Ìjálá’s introduction of salt to him can be regarded as a powerful civilizing influence.
for which the gate-keeper was so grateful. In the folklore of many cultures of the world, salt is usually regarded as a commodity with important ritual and commercial significance. In this particular story, it could be regarded as the commodity which one must have in order to have the secret and important knowledge which can affect the choice of one’s destiny in life. In other words, salt is synonymous with good, orderly and civilized life while lack of it represents primitive and useless life. This is probably why salt is used during the christening ceremony of Yoruba children. Salt is synonymous with good, happy and sweet life.

Thirdly, this story clearly shows that once the choice of Ori has been made, one has made for oneself a final and irrevokable decision. The only thing that can affect this choice is hard work over a long period of time, the proceeds of which are fed into sacrifice. In other words, the person who has chosen a bad Ori in heaven cannot expect to make any progress in life until he has worked very hard and performed a lot of sacrifice with the proceeds of his hard work. But for the person who chose a good Ori there is no problem at all in achieving a good life. However, he too must work hard since Ori merely represents the potential to achieve success in life.

This extremely fatalistic outlook to life so characteristic of Yoruba belief is redeemed partially by the concept of sacrifice mentioned above. Nevertheless the Yoruba still cling tenaciously to the concept of Ori in explaining success or failure in life. It means therefore that, to a large extent, the individual is not entirely responsible for what he achieves or fails to achieve in life. Belief in Ori may be regarded as a sort of escapism but it certainly has far-reaching social and psychological consequences.
Èbítí, ègbàkè níi yèdítí péé.
A diá fún Òríséèkù, òmọ Ògún;
A bù fún Òrìlèèmèrè, òmọ Ìja;
A diá fún Añùwàpé tíí sòmọ Òrùnmílà,

5 Níjọ tí wọn ìrélè Olódùmarè lọ rèé yanrí.
Àwọn métèetà tí a dárúkọ wọnyí, òrẹ ni wọn.
Nígbà tó dójó kan ni wọn bá gbímọ pò pé
Kí àwọn ó lọ sílè ayé,

10 Kí àwọn ó jọ máa gbèbè;
Bóyá iben lè san àwọn ju ọrùn lọ.
Ni wọn bá fì òrọ náà lọ àwọn àgbàlagbà tó jù
wọn lọ.
Wọn ní bí wọn bá ínlọ sílè ayé,
Wọn ní láti kòkò lọ sì òdò Àjìlà

15 Láti yan ipin nibè.
Wọn ní “èèwọ kan náà ni é ní láti sà o.
Bí è bá ínlọ;
Ẹ kò gbọdọ yà sì ọtún,
Bèè ni è kò gbọdọ yà sì ọsì,

20 Ilé Àjìlà ní kí è máa lọ tààràtà.”
Wọn sò fún wọn pé :
“Bí ènìkàn bá gbúroo babaa rẹ lónà,
Kọ gbọdọ yabè o.”
Wọn ní ilé Àjìlà ní kí wọn ó máa lọ tààrà.
It is the snare which strikes suddenly.
Ifá divination was performed for Òrì-èékú,¹ the son of Ògún;
Ifá divination was performed for Òrìlèèmèrè,² the son of Ìjá;³
Ifá divination was performed for Afùwàpè,⁴ the son of Òrùnmílà;

5  On the day they were going to the abode of Olódümàrè to choose Òrí.
These three people were all friends.
One day, they deliberated together,
And decided that they would go to the earth,
They decided that when they arrived on the earth,

10 They would settle down there,
Hoping that the earth would be better for them than heaven.
They asked for advice from older people,
And they were told that before going to the earth,
They must first of all go to Àjálá⁵

15 To choose Òrí.
They were warned thus, “You must observe one prohibition.
When you are going,
You must not turn to the right,
Neither must you turn to the left.

20 You must go straight to the house of Àjálá.”
They were warned thus,
“Even if one of you hears his father’s voice on the way,
He must not go there.”
They were told to go straight to the house of Àjálá.
Wón ní nígba tí wón bá yànpín tán lódò Àjálá
Ni kí wón ó tôó kòrí sóde ísálayé.
Wcn ní àwón gbó o.
Ni wón bá múra,
Ó dílé Àjálá, álámọ tíi mọrí.

Nígba tí wón rèn sàà,
Wón kan Àfábéré-gúnýán níbi tó gbé úgúnýán pélú okini.
Wón ní è nle o, baba.
Ó ní, “ hôo.”
Wón ní, “ è jọ̀jọ̀,”

Odò Àjálá lăwón úlọ́ọ̀.”
Àfábéré-gúnýán ní àfi bí ó ún bá gúnýán ọ̀n tán
Ni óún tôó leè júwe ònà fún wón.
Ni Àfùwàpè bá gba abérè lòwọ̀ọ̀ rè,
Lò bá ìfìí gúnýán.

Ó gúnýán náà fún odidi òjó méta
Kí ó tôó gün un tán.
Nígba tí ó gúnýán yìí tán,
Ni Àfábéré-gúnýán wáá sọ̀ fún wón wí pé
Kí wón ó máa lò.

Ó ní bí wón bá rèn àììè.
Kí wón ó yà sì apá ọ̀tún.
Ó ní wón ó kan oníbòdè kan m̀bè
They were told that it was after choosing Òrì from Àjálá
That they would go to the earth.
They promised to heed the warning.
They got themselves ready,
And started off on their journey to the house of
Àjálá, the potter who makes heads.

After walking for some distance,
They got to He-who-pounds-yams-with-a-needle
pounding yams with a small needle.
They said, “Father, we greet you.”
The old man replied, “Thank you.”
They pleaded, “Please, Sir,
We are going to the house of Àjálá.”
He-who-pounds-yams-with-a-needle said that he
must first finish pounding his yams
Before he showed them the way.
Afùwàpé took the needle from him,
And started to pound the yams with it.

He pounded the yams for three days
Before he finished the job.
When he finished pounding the yams,
He-who-pounds-yams-with-a-needle told them that
They were free to continue on their journey.

He told them that after travelling some distance,
They should turn to the right.
Where they would find a gate-keeper.
Kí won ó bèrè lówọ̀ rẹ̀,
Yóó sì júwe ọ̀nà fún won.

50 Nígbà tí won rin sàà,
Ni won bá dé ibikan.
Ni Oríṣèékú, ọmọ Ógún, bá dúró sii.
Ọ bèrè sìí gbúròòó babaà rẹ̀,
Bó tí ńmú ápó,

55 Tó ńmú ọfà,
Tó ńmú ọrun.
Oríṣèékú, ọmọ Ógún ní ọ̀nú ó lọ̀
Bá baba ọ̀nú palè ogun mónó.
Ni won bá rán an lètí pé

60 Ọ̀ṣè bí won tí ka èewò fún àwọn
Pè àwọn ọ gbọ̀dọ̀ yà sí ibikan.
Ni Oríṣèékú, ọmọ Ógún, bá ṣísè,
Ó ní kò burú.
Ni won bá ńlọ.

65 Nígbà tí won rin sàà,
Ni won bá kan ilé Òrùnmílà.
Wón ñgbọ́ tí Òrùnmílà ñṣẹpọ̀n Ìṣà poro poro poro.
Ni Afùwàpé bá dúró sii.
Àwọn méjì yókù ní kí ó jé kí àwọn ò máa lọ.
They should ask from that man,
And he would show them the way.

50 After travelling some distance,
They got to a certain place.
Oríṣéékú, the son of Ògún, stood still,
When he heard his father’s movement.
He heard his father taking his quiver,

55 And taking his arrows,
And taking his bow.
Oríṣéékú, the son of Ògún, then said that he would go
To help his father prepare for war.
But his comrades reminded him that

60 They had been warned
Not to call anywhere on the way.
Then, Oríṣéékú, the son of Ògún, moved forward.
He said that was alright,
And they continued on their journey.

65 After travelling some distance,
They came to the house of Òrúnmílà.
They heard Òrúnmílà striking his divining board loudly with his Òróké. 
Afúwàpé then stood still.
The other two urged him to let them go on,
70. Añuwàpè ní òun ò ní lọ mọ, Àfí bí òun bá fojú kan baba òun. 
Ni wón bá rán an léti èewò tí wón kà fún wón. 
Añuwàpè sá kò jálè, Ò ni òun fẹ́ fojú kan baba òun.

75. Ló bá rá giìrì wọlé. 
Ni wón bá ñlọ. 
Nígbà tí Òrùnmílà fojú kan Añuwàpè, Ò bi í níbi tó ñlọ. 
Añuwàpè ní òun ñlọ sóde isálayé ni,

80. Òun sì ni láti kò lọ yanrí lọdọ Àjálá. 
Ni Òrùnmílà bá kò Iṣáa rẹ, 
Ó fi kan Añuwàpè lóri. 
Ìgbà tí yóó da Iṣá náa sílè, 
Ogbèyònlú (Ogbègùndá) ni wón rì.

85. Nígbà tí àwọn babaláwo ilé Òrùnmílà wo Iṣá náa suun, 
Wón ní, “Ìwọ Òrùnmílà, 
Ibikan ni ọmọọ rẹ ọlọ yìí, 
Kọmọ náa ó lè rí ìpín rere mú níbè,

90. Èbò ni kí ó ạ̀sé.” 
Kín ni àwọn ọ ha ń báyì? 
Wón ní kí wón ọ ní egbínrín iyò méta,
70. But Afùwàpé said that he wouldn’t go
Until he had seen his father.
They reminded him of the warning given them.
But Afùwàpé refused completely,
And insisted that he must see his father.

75. He then hurried into the house.
The two others left him,
And continued their journey.
When Ôrúnmilà saw Afùwàpé,
He asked him where he was going.

80. Afùwàpé said that he was going to the earth,
And he must first go to Âjálá to choose Orí.
Ôrúnmilà then took his divinatio ninstruments,
And with them he touched Afùwàpé’s head.
When he cast the instruments on the ground,

85. Ogbèyóñú (otherwise known as Ogbègùndá)
appeared.
When the priests of Ôrúnmilà’s household studied
it carefully,
They said, “You, Ôrúnmilà,
Your son is going on a journey to a certain place.
So that he may choose a good lot there,

90. Let him perform sacrifice”.
When Ôrúnmilà asked what they would use for
sacrifice,
He was told to perform sacrifice with three bags of
salt.
Kó sí ní ègbèègbàafà ọnà méta.
Ni Òrùnmilá bá kó gbogboo rè kalè,

95 Ni wón bá șefá fun Aṣùwàpè
Wón bu diè fun un nínú iyọ náà,
Wón sì fun un ní ègbàaafà nínú ègbàaàsán tí ó rú.
Ni wón bá ní kí Aṣùwàpè ó máa lọ.
Nígbà tí Aṣùwàpè jáde nílé Òrùnmilá,

100 Kò rí Orisèèkù, omo Ògún,
Âti Oríleèémèrè, omo Ìja mó.
Wón tí lọ ní tí wón.
Nígbà tí àwọn méji yínlọ.
Wón kan onibodè àkókó,

105 Wón bèèrè ilé Àjálá lòwọọ rè.
Onibodèé ní ilé Àjálá jìnà sìhììn.
Õ ní bí kò bá jìnà ni,
Õun ìbá fi hàn wón.
Ni wón bá bìnú kúrò lòdò lò rè,

110 Wón bèèrè lòdò ẹlòmíràn.
Ni wón bá délè Àjálá.
Nígbà tí wón délè Àjálá,
Wón ọ bá a nílé.
Ni wón bá jòkòó dè é.
And three times twelve thousand cowries. Òrùnmilà got all the materials ready,

95 And the sacrifice was performed for Afùwàpè. Part of the salt
Together with twelve thousand cowries was given to him.
They then asked Afùwàpè to proceed on his journey. When Afùwàpè came out of Òrùnmilà’s house,

100 He saw neither Orísèkú, the son of Ògún, Nor Orílèèmèrè, the son of Ìjá.
They had gone.
When these two were going,
They got to the keeper of the first gate,

105 And asked for the house of Àjálá.
But the gate-keeper said that Àjálá’s house was too far,
He said if it was not too far,
He would have taken them there.
They left him in anger,

110 And asked another person. At last, they reached Àjálá’s house. When they got to the house of Àjálá, They did not find him at home.
They decided to sit down and wait for him.
115 Nígbà tó di ìójó kejí tí Àjálá ó dé,
        Ni wón bá wí fún àwọn ará iléè rẹ pé
        Nìkan kan làwón wáá ṣe.
        Wón ni àwọn wáá yanrí ni.
        Ni àwọn ará ilé Àjálá bá dáhùn pé

120 “Bó bá ñe pé torí ni,
        Ori mbẹ́ ñlé”
        Ni wón bá mú wón lọ sìbi tí Àjálá mòrí sí,
        Nígbà tí Òríséèkú ó bọ́ sibè,
        Ori tó jé tuntun,

125 Tí Àjálá ó tí sun rará ló mú.
        Nígbà tí Òrílèéémèrè náá ó bọ́ sibè,
        Ori ńlá kan báyií ló gbé
        Láìmò pé ó ń fо sára.
        Ni àwọn mèjèèjí bá gbé oríi wón bòrì.

130 Ni wón bá fọ́n ńn,
        Ì dí ńdẹ ayẹ.
        Ì kù díè kí wón ó dóde ìsálayé,
        Ni ìójó bá dé.
        Ìjò yì rò títí,

135 Ì kọ, kọ dá mó,
        Bèè ni ó ńpa Òríséèkú àti Òrílèéémèrè.
        Nígbà tí ìójó pa Òrí yìi té bèè,
When, on the second day, Ajálá did not return, They told the people of Ajálá’s household That they had come for a certain thing. They said that they had come to choose Orí. The people of Ajálá’s household answered thus, “If that is your mission, Numerous heads are available.” They then took them to Ajálá’s store-house of heads. When Oríseékú entered, He picked a newly-made head Which Ajálá had not fired at all. When Oríléémèrè also entered, He picked one very big head Not knowing that it had cracked. The two of them put on their clay heads, And hurried off On their way to the earth. A little distance before they reached the earth, It started to rain. It rained for a long time, And it refused to stop. Yet it was beating Oríseékú and Oríléémèrè. After the rain had beaten their heads for long,
Ló bá bèrè sì mumi yó.
Bí orí wón nàa bá kẹ yìrìn,

140 Ní ó bàá ri bó sílè pò,
Orí sáá úkè yìrìn
Títí tí ó fi bú légbéé,
Tó fi ri dànú,
Tí gbogboor rèe wáá kù pẹlẹbẹ.

145 Ni wón bá fi bēće wọlé ayé.
Nígba tí wón délè ayé tán,
Wón siṣe siṣe,
Wón ó rérè jè.
Bí wón bá fi éépinì òíwò,

150 Éépinì náà lè túń dá gbèseè kọ̀-kan-àbò
Sí wón lórun.
Nígba tí wón ṣe kíní yíli títí,
Fún bí çdúń méwàá,
Tí wón ó ri ojútùúú rè,

155 Ni wón bá mééji kééta,
Wón looko akònilógbón.
Àwón awoyèròye wáá fi yé wón pé
Orí tí wón mú ní ò dáá.
Wón ní, “Nígba tí ë mbò,
The heads became water-logged.
As a result, the heads expanded,

140 And they started to drop off in bits.
The heads expanded more and more,
Until the sides were completely worn away,
And started to drop off in lobes.
So that what remained was flat and small.

145 It was in that state that they entered the earth.
When they got to the earth,
They worked and worked,
But they had no gain.
If they traded with one half-penny,

150 It might lead them
To a loss of one-and-a-half-pennies.
When they did this
For about ten years
Without any hope of improvement,

155 They added two cowry-shells to three,
And went to consult Ifá priests.
These wise men told them that
The fault was in the bad heads they had chosen.
They asked them, “When you were coming to the earth,
160 Ṇjé Òjó pa yín lọnà?
 Wọn ní, “Bẹ̀è ni.”
 Wọn ní, “Nígbà tí ẹ̀ mbọ̀ wá sílé ayé,
 Orí burúkú lẹ gbé.
 Bí orí náà kò bá ṣe tútù,

165 A ṣe èyí tó ti fó sára.”
 Wọn ní, “Bẹ̀ è ti mbọ̀ lọnà un,
 Tójò ípà yín,
 Ni Orí burúkú tẹ ẹ gbé ñyinrin,
 Tó ñírì dánu.”

170 Wọn ní, “Nígbà tí è ó fì dèlé ayé,
 Orí tẹ ẹ gbé kò jù pelebe lọ mọ.
 Láti ìgbà náá, gbogbo išé tí ẹ íṣe,
 Orí burúkú pelebe un le fì ūdí,
 Ò sì dí ìgbà tí ẹ bá kún un tí tí,

175 Tí ó bá dé déédéé èyí tì ẹ gbé kúrò lóde òrun,
 Kí ẹ tóó màá rí ṣe.”
 Nígbà tí Afuwàpè mbò,
 Tó rin sàà,
 Ò kan oníbodè àkókó.

180 Ò bi i léèrè ilé Àjálá.
 Eléyiun ní àfi bí ọún bá se ọbè tì ọun ìsè tán.
 Ni Afuwàpè bá jókòó tì í,
160 Were you beaten by rain?"
They answered “We were”.
The Ifá priests said, “When you were coming to
the earth,
You chose bad heads.
If they were not unbaked heads,

165 They must have been broken ones.
As you were coming to the earth,
And you were being beaten by rain,
The bad heads you chose were wearing away,
And dropping off in pieces.

170 Before you arrived on the earth,
Your heads had become very flat.
Since then all the gains from your work,
Were being used to replenish the worn-off parts
of your bad heads.
And it is when you have replenished them suffi-
ciently

175 So that they are restored to their original sizes,
That you will begin to prosper very well.”
When Afùwàpè was coming,
He walked some distance,
And got to the keeper of the first gate.

180 He asked from him the way to Ājàlà’s house.
The gate keeper said that he would first finish
cooking his soup.
So, Afùwàpè sat patiently by him,
Ó mbá a á koná.
Ibi tí Afúwàpé ti ñkoná

185 Ló ti rí i pé eérú ni oníbodè mbù sínú qòbè.
Ó ní, “Baba, eérú lè mbù sóbè yìi !”
Babá ní ohun táwọ̀n jẹ ní tawọ̀n nù un.
Ni Afúwàpé bá mú òkan nínú egbínrín iyọọ rè, Ọ bu iyọ nibè,

190 Ọ fi sínú qòbè.
Ló bá ní kí oníbodè ó tó ọ wò.
Nígbà tí oníbodè ó fi kan ènu,
Ọ ní níbo ló ti rí ohun tó dùn tó báyìí ?
Ọ ní njé o lè bun òun níbi iyókù ?

195 Afúwàpé ní kò burú,
Ló bá kó egbínrín iyọ méjèèji fún un.
Nígbà tí wón se qòbè yìjíná,
Ni oníbodè bá dìde,
Ọ saájú,

200 Afúwàpé tè lè e.
Wón rìn títí,
Wón bùrìn bùrìn,
Ni wón bá sún mó ilé Àjálá.
Ni wón bá bèrè síí gbáriwo.
Helping him to kindle the fire.
As Afùwàpé was helping to kindle the fire,

185 He noticed that the gate-keeper was putting ashes into the soup.
He said, “Father, what you are putting into the soup is ordinary ashes”.
But the old man said that that was what he always ate.
Afùwàpé then took one of his bags of salt,
And took a little salt from it,

190 And put it into the soup.
He asked the gate-keeper to taste it.
When he tasted it,
He asked Afùwàpé whence he got such a thing.
He implored Afùwàpé to give him more of it.

195 The latter agreed,
And gave him the two bags of salt.
When they finished cooking the soup,
The gate-keeper stood up.
He led the way,

200 And Afùwàpé followed him.
They walked for long.
They walked and walked.
When they came close to Àjàlá’s house,
They started to hear a loud noise.
205 Ọnóbodè ní, “Ilé Àjálá ni wón tí ŋpáriwo un.”
Ọ ní, “Àjálá ọ sí ñlé nù un,
Ọ ti sá pamó fún olówóo rẹ nù un.
Olówó nàà ní ŋpáriwo báun.”
Ọ bi Afùwàpè bó bá ní owó lówó.

210 Afùwàpè ní bëè ni.
Ọ ní bi Afùwàpè bá fojú kan olówó Àjálá náà,
Kí ó bá Àjálá san owó tí ó jẹ ẹ.
Nígbà tí Afùwàpè délè Àjálá,
Ọ bá èni tí Àjálá jẹ lówó náà

215 Tí íké, tí ñyán bí èsin.
Ni Afùwàpè bá bí i ni iye gbèsè náà.
Ọ ní ègbàasà ni.
Ni Afùwàpè bá tòwó bàpò,
Ló bá san án.

220 Nígbà tí ó san owó náà tán,
Tí olówó náà lọ tán,
Ni Àjálá bá bé sílẹ láti òkè àjá,
Tó sá pamó sí.
Ọ kí Afùwàpè,

225 Afùwàpè náà kí i.
Ọ ní ìjé ọ bá ènikan níhiin?
Afùwàpè ní òun bá a,
The gate-keeper said, "That noise is from Ajálá’s house."
He said, "That shows that Ajálá is not at home. He is in hiding to avoid his creditor. The creditor is the one making that noise". He asked Afùwàpé if he had money on him,

And Afùwàpé said he had. The gate-keeper said that if Afùwàpé saw the creditor, He should help Ajálá to pay up the debt. When Afùwàpé arrived at Ajálá’s house, He found the creditor,

Shouting, neighing like a horse. Afùwàpé then asked him the amount of money involved. The creditor said the amount was twelve thousand cowries. Afùwàpé then opened his bag, Brought out the money, and paid the debt.

After he had paid the money, And the creditor had left, Ajálá jumped down from the ceiling. Where he had hidden himself. He greeted Afùwàpé,

And Afùwàpé also greeted him. He asked whether Afùwàpé found someone in the house, And Afùwàpé said he found someone
Tọ sọ wí pé o jẹ ọ̀nín ni ẹgbàafà. 
Afùwàpẹ ní ìṣùgbọ̀n ọ̀nín ti san owó náà o.

230 Ni Àjàlà bá dúpé lówójù Afùwàpẹ. 
Ó bí i pé kí ṣín ló wáá ọwé. 
Afùwàpẹ ní óun wáá yanrí ní. 
Ni Àjàlà bá mú un, 
Ó ní kó kálọ.

235 Nígbà tí ó yá, 
Wón dé ẹbi tí Àjàlà mọ orí sí. 
Wón bá ọkànlerúgbá orí níbẹ̀. 
Ni Àjàlà bá ju ọpá irin sí ọkan, 
Níṣẹ́ ló bú péè. 

240 Àjàlà ní, “O ọ rí i, 
Èyìun ọ dáà.” 
Ó tún rí èkejì, 
Ó ju ọpá irin sí i, 
Èyìun náàá tún bú péè. 

245 Àjàlà ní èyìun náà ọ dáà. 
Ni wón bá tún ńkáàkiri 
Títí tí Àjàlà fí rí ọkan, 
Ó tún ju ọpá irin sí óun náà, 
Ó dún kango kango, koro koro.
Who said that you (Ajálá) owed him twelve thousand cowries. 
Àfùwápé said he had paid off the money.

230 Ajálá then thanked Àfùwápé,
And asked him what he wanted. 
Àfùwápé said that he had come to select an Orí. 
Ajálá then took him, 
And asked him to come along.

235 After some time, 
They got to Ajálá’s store-house of Orí. 
They found two hundred-and-one¹⁰ Orí there. 
Ajálá threw his iron rod at one, 
And that one broke into pieces.

240 Ajálá said, “Don’t you see? 
That one is not good”. 
He saw another one, 
And threw his iron rod at it. 
That one also broke into pieces.

245 Ajálá said, “That also is not good”. 
So, they went on searching, 
Until Ajálá saw one, 
And he threw his iron rod at that one as well. 
It gave a loud and sonorous sound.
250 Ó tún gbé e,  
Ó jù ú mólè,  
Ó yí gbiiri.  
Ló bá gbé e fún Afùwàpè.  
Afùwàpè ní sè èyí ló dáa?

255 Ajàlá ní bèè ni.  
Ni Afùwàpè bá gbé e karí.  
Ló bá korí sónà òde ìsálayé.  
Ó kù díè kó dóde ìsálayé ní òjó bá dé.  
Ójò yí pò tó bèè gée,  

260 Ó sì pa Afùwàpè etí rèè férèè di.  
Bèè ní ñtaá dànù.  
Koro koro ni orí náàá yè nígbà tí ó délè ayé.  
Nígbà tí Afùwàpè délè ayé tán,  

265 Ló bá bèrè síí sè èwò,  
Ó sì újè òpòlòpò èrè.  
Ó níre ní ànító.  
Ó kólé, ó kààsè.  
Ó ní òpòlòpò aya,  

270 Ó sì bímọ lópòlòpò pèlú.  
Kó bùṣe gàdà,  
Kó bùṣe gèdè,  
Ni wón bá fi joyè Orísanmí.
He then took it,
And threw it on the bare ground,
He gave it to Afùwàpè.
Afùwàpè asked whether that was a good one.

Àjálá said it was good.
Afùwàpè then fixed it on the head,
And started to go towards the earth.
Just as he was about to get to the earth,
it started to rain.
The rain was very heavy,

And it beat Afùwàpè so much that he was almost deaf.
As the rain was beating Afùwàpè’s Orí,
The rain particles were dropping off.
The Orí was quite intact when he arrived on the earth.
When Afùwàpè eventually got to the earth,

He started a trading business,
And he made a lot of profit.
He had enough of good things.
He built a house, and furnished it with decorated doors.
He had many wives,

And he had many children as well.
After some time,
And in due course,
He was honoured with the title of Orísanmí. 11
Nígbà tí Oríṣeékú, ọmọ Ògún,

275 Àti Oríléémèrè, ọmọ Íja, fójú kan Afùwàpè,
Púrú ni wọn bù sèkùn.
Wọn ní, “N ọ mòbi olórí gbé yanrí o,
Mbá lọ yan tèmi.
N ọ mòbi Afùwàpè yanrí o,

280 Mbá lọ yan tèmi.”
Afùwàpè náàá sí dá wọn lóhùn wí pé :
“Ọ ọ mòbi olórí gbé yanrí o,
Ọ bá lọ yan tè.
Ọ ọ mòbi Afùwàpè yanrí o,

285 Ọ bá lọ yan tè.
Ìbíkan náà la ti gbé yanrí o,
Kàdàrá ọ papò ni”.
When Orísèékú, the son of Ògún,
And Orílèémèrè, the son of Òja, saw Afùwàpé,
They burst into tears.
They said, “I don’t know where the lucky ones
chose their Òrí,
I would have gone there to choose mine.
I don’t know where Afùwàpé chose his Òrí,
I would have gone there to choose mine.”
Afùwàpé answered and said,
“You don’t know where the lucky ones chose Òrí,
You would have gone there to choose your own.
You don’t know where Afùwàpé chose his Òrí,
You would have gone there to choose your own.
We chose our Òrí from the same place,
But our destinies are different.”
1. **Oríṣèékú.** A personal name the meaning of which is obscure.

2. **Orílèémèrè.** Another personal name with obscure meaning.

3. **Ìja.** Name of a minor Yoruba god.

4. **Afúwàpè.** Another personal name.

5. **Àjálá.** A common Yoruba personal name.

6. The loud noise mentioned here must have been produced by the hitting of *íròkè* (carved ivory or wooden object of Ifá) on the divining board.

7. The Ifá divination instruments were used to touch Afúwapé’s head so as to communicate the wishes of his *Orí* to the Ifá instruments through which *Ôrúnmílà* acting as a spokesman of *Orí* would reveal the latter’s wishes to the client.

8. **Ogbèyójú.** One of the minor two hundred and forty *Odù*. Its actual name is *Ogbègùndá*, that is a combination of *Ogbè* on the right and *Ógùndá* on the left.

9. The ceiling of a traditional Yoruba building is made of mud spread over a wooden base. It is usually solid enough to hold most household implements which are kept there. It is also solid enough to hold a man repairing the roof or mending any part of the ceiling itself.

10. The number two hundred and one is commonly mentioned in Yoruba mythology. The number of gods in the Yoruba pantheon is variously put at two hundred and one or four hundred and one.

11. **Oríṣamní.** A personal name or name of a title which means “*Orí* has rewarded me abundantly”.

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