

## Iwofa Alaba: Enu re ni o Pa o!

Iwofa Alaba to ri Akuuju (skeleton) lori igi, kaka ko dake e nu re ko ma ba tie lo, n se lo m ba Akuuju soro pe, ‘Akuuju kin a lo n wa l’ori igi to s’orun ko bi e ni ti aye ti su?’

Kia, Akuuju dahun o ni ‘Iwofa Alaba! B’oju ri, enu a dake! Ewo lo kan e n be ti mo ba wa lori igi. O je sora fun enu re ko ma ba pa o!’

Iwofa Alaba ko se meni ko se meji, otun wipe ‘Ahhhhh! Oni ni gbogbo araye ma ri asiri ire Akuuju to n gbe ori igi soro bi ara aye. Ile baale ni mo n lo bayi! Gbogbo ara ilu ni yoo ri ohun ti oju mi ri!’

Akuuju tun fesi wipe ‘Iwofa Alaba, moni enu re ni o pa o. Ayafi to o ba yi iwa re pada!’ Kia ni Iwofa Alaba gba ile Baale Oko Ilu lo.

O de ibe o ba Baale ati gbogbo awon olooye lori ijoko. O naa felefele, o n wipe ‘Karaole o Baba, mo ri eemo l’ona oko oga mi loni. Mori Akuuju lori igi nibi to gbe n soro bi eniyan. Mo wi fun pe un o so fun gbogbo araye oun ti mo ri. O ni kin so! Idi ni eyi ti mo fi gba afin yin wa kin wa wi fun yin, oun ti oju mi ri o.’

Gbogbo awon agbaagba to wa ‘n ikale wo oju ara won, won si tun wo oju Baale Oko Ilu. Oro sununkun so ori agba k’odo. Won pa imoran po won fi oro si Baale lenu so. Baale oko Ilu dide o ni: ‘Modeyi, Iwofa Alaba abi kin won pe o? N je ododo ni oro

ti o so yi bi? Tori ti a ba ba o de idi igi, ti ako ba ri Akuuju to n soro, bibe ni a o be ori re o! Mo wi re abi un o wii re?’ Gbogbo awon agbaagba ibe ni: ‘E wii re!’

Bayi ni won da ojo meta pe ki gbogbo ara ilu pe si aafin Baale Oko Ilu. Ojo pe o. Won pe Iwofa Alaba, won tu bi pe se ododo ni oro to so. Kia ni Iwofa Alaba dide, otun so loju gbogbo ara ilu pe: ‘Mo ri eemo lono oko oga mi ni ijerin! Mori Akuuju lori igi nibi to gbe n soro bi eniyan. Mo wi fun pe un o so fun gbogbo araye oun ti mo ri. O ni kin so! Idi ni eyi ti mo fi gba afin wa kin wa wi fun gbogbo arayeo, oun ti oju mi ri re o! Gbogbo ilu ni ‘Ahhhhh! Iwofa Alaba, o so eyi tan!’

Ka ma ba opo lo ile oloro, Baale Oko Ilu pa ase pe ki gbogbo ara ilu niso ni idi igi, ki Iwofa Alaba lo fi Akuuju han awon. Were, won mu ori le ona oko, laipe lai jina, won de idi igi. Looto ni won ma ba Akuuju lori igi o. Baale wi fun Iwofa Alaba pe, ‘Ore wa, oya a fe gbo oro lenu Akuuju re o!’

Iwofa Alaba sun mo idi igi, o boju woke, o si ke si Akuuju wipe ‘Ire Akuuju ti n gbe ori igi soro, nle o. Mo ti wi fun gbogbo ilu o. Won fe gbo oro enu re o!’

Paga! Akuuju ko, ko soro o! Jini jini mu Iwofa Alaba, o un wo pako-pako! Otun kigbe loun rara pe ‘Ire Akuuju, se o ni s’oro ni? Sebi emi pelu re s’oro nijerin nihin!’

Akuuju ko, ko gbin o, depo ti yoo f’ohun. Wayi, Iwofa Alaba wa ranti ikilo Akuuju ojo si pe: ‘Iwofa Alaba! Boju ri, enu a dake!’ Aso o bo Omoye mo, Omoye ti rin

ihoho wo oja! Kia, Baale Oko Ilu pase fun Abeni Lori pe ki o be ori Iwofa Alaba. Kia ni ohun fa ida re yo ninu ako, afi feu! Ranhin ranhin ni ori Iwofa Alaba n ja nile. Lesekeke ni Akuuju mira pipipi lori igi, o si rerin kaakaakaa! Eru ba gbogbo eni to n be nibe lojo naa. Akuuju wa so fun won pe, 'E ma se беру, e ma se foya. Ee ri Iwofa Alaba, k'oti kun si ikilo ni o. Aigboran lo so di ero orun. A wi fun pe ko sora fun enu, Olubobotiribo, baba ebo. Enu re lo paa! Mo si wi fun to o. O fi aake ko'ri. Ehn, oun ti oju alaigboran n ri naa nun! Eyin ara ilu to ku, ki efi oro Iwofa Alaba ko ogban nio. E sora fun enu yin. Bo ju ri, enu a dake ohun lo d'ifa fun Iwofa Alaba to ri emi Akuuju lori igi to ni 'nle o Akuuju ewo lo n se lori igi o.....'

Eyin ore mi, enu wa ko ni pa wa o...E sora fun enu o. Ki oro koowa ma ba wa da bi ti Iwofa Alaba o!

English Translation:

Iwofa Alaba: Mind your words to avoid destruction!

Iwofa Alaba found Akuuju (Skeleton) on a tree branch, instead of him to keep quiet and proceed with his journey, he said to the skeleton, 'Hey you Skeleton, what do you seek on the tree branch? Why are you acting like one who is fed up with life?'

Akuuju responded instantly ‘Iwofa Alaba! Why not mind your business! Does it matter to you if am on a tree branch? Watch your mouth so it doesn’t kill you!’

Iwofa Alaba perturbed, exclaimed: ‘What! Today, the whole world must hear about you, Akuuju living on the tree branch and speaking like a man. I’m off to the Chief’s Palace right away! All citizens must see what I have just seen and heard! ’

Akuuju also retorted, ‘Iwofa Alaba, this mouth of yours will put you in serious trouble soon, unless you change your behaviour!’ Iwofa Alaba headed straight to the Chief’s Palace.

He got to the Palace and met the Chief and the Elders in Council deliberating. As a sign of obeisance to the King, he prostrated and greets ‘*Karaole Baba!* I saw a terrible thing on my way to my master’s farm today. I saw Akuuju (Skeleton) on a tree branch, where it was speaking as a man would. I told it that I would reveal this to the world and it challenged me to go ahead. This is the more reason I have come to the palace to inform His Royal Highness and the Elders about what I have just encountered!’

All the Elders were surprised at such declaration from Iwofa Alaba, they glanced at one another and all looked towards the Chief. Silence reigned over the entire palace. His Royal Highness, the Chief, rose from his stool in his majesty and addressed Iwofa Alaba ‘Look here lad! Iwofa Alaba or whatever you name is. Are you sure of

what you just said? If we get to the tree and we can't find your friend, the Skeleton talking, you shall be beheaded!' Addressing the Elders, the Chief asked 'Have I spoken your minds?' They answered in unison 'Yes Your Majesty'

They concluded that after three days, all the citizens should gather at the palace and from there proceed to the forest to attest to Iwofa Alaba's claim. On the appointed day, the Chief once again asked Iwofa Alaba, whether his words were true. Iwofa Alaba confidently declared before everybody that day that he was saying the truth. 'I saw this Akuuju (Skeleton) on the way to my master's farm three days ago! It even spoke to me like a man, and I told it that the world must know about our meeting. It even challenged me to reveal the incidence! That was why I rushed to the palace to report to the Chief and the Elders so that the whole world would know about it.' The villagers exclaimed in surprise 'Really! Iwofa Alaba, this unbelievable!'

Without further ado, the Chief ordered everybody to proceed to the forest so that Iwofa Alaba could show them Akuuju – the talking Skeleton. They all hurried towards the farm, and soon, they got to the tree and saw Akuuju truly. The chief addressed Iwofa Alaba, 'Now lad, we'd like to hear your friend Akuuju talk as you've claimed!'

Iwofa Alaba moved close to the tree, looked up and said: ‘O ye Akuuju on the tree branch, I have informed the entire people of my village about you and now they want to hear your words!’

Alas! Akuuju did not respond! Iwofa Alaba was so worried. He moved closer to the tree and shouted ‘Hey Akuuju, why the silence? It is impossible! Didn’t you speak with me a couple of days ago?’

Akuuju, neither moved nor made a sound. Now, Iwofa Alaba remembered the warnings by Akuuju the other day when it said ‘Iwofa Alaba! Mind what comes out from your mouth.’ But it’s too late! The Chief ordered the execution of Iwofa Alaba and thus the end of his life.

Immediately after Iwofa Alaba was beheaded, Akuuju moved and laughed raucously! Everybody was terrified. Akuuju told them: ‘Do not be afraid, do not be afraid. As for Iwofa Alaba, he wouldn’t heed to my warnings. Disobedience led to his demise. We told him to beware of his utterances, *Olubobotiribo* the most important of rituals. He wouldn’t listen, he is disobedient! Indeed, this is a great lesson to the rest of you humans, don’t allow your utterances to lead to your destruction like Iwofa Alaba. Watch your words! You need not talk about everything you’ve seen so that you don’t end up like Iwofa Alaba, who saw me Akuuju on the tree branch (talking) and couldn’t keep it all to himself!’

My friends, may our mouths not lead to our destruction. Let's all take heed and be careful what we say so we don't end up like Iwofa Alaba!

Some bed time story....! Any volunteer to translate this Yoruba folklore into other languages for the benefit of our friends who couldn't read the story in the language in which it is written. I will much appreciate it, if I can get people to translate please.

Less I forget...My paternal grandpa told us this story long time ago in the early 1980's! Adieu Grand Pa Alhaji Agboola Garuba! I miss you pampering me then! May Allah admit you into Aljannat Firdaus. He died on Eid-adha Day 1987!

*As adapted from Oral rendition by Tajudeen Adeyemi Garuba*