

# أُنْزِلَ وَ جَعَلَ

utēnzi wa ja'far  
The Ballad of Ja'far

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

bismillāhi ar-rahmani ar-rahīmi  
In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

(١) بِسْمِ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانِ \* پَمَوَن رَحْمَنِ \* نَ الرَّحِيمِ يُونَ \* نَدِي يَلَانْدَمِي

yaloandamiya ndiyo \* yuwani rrahīmu na \* raḥmāni na pamwe \* ikhwāni llāhi bismi

<sup>1</sup> (1) bismillahi ihwani \* pamwe na rahmani \* na rahimu yuwani \* ndiyo yaloandamiya

"In the name of God", my friends along with "the Compassionate" and "the Merciful" -- know that that is what goes first.

(٢) پُلِكَانِ نْدُزَنُغُ \* كَهْنَدَ مَتَمْبِرِ يَنْغُ \* نَوْبَ خَبَرِ زَنْغُ \* قِصَصَ چَلَنِجَرِي

chalonijiriya qīša \* zangu khabari niwape \* yangu matembezi k'henda \* nduzangu pulikani

<sup>2</sup> (2) pulikani nduzangu \* kenda matembezi yangu \* niwape habari zangu \* qisa chalonijiriya

Listen, my brothers, I went on a journey. Let me give you my story, an account of what happened to me.

(٣) نِلِ نَنْدَاءَ نَدِينِ \* كَوْلِ نَ مَتُ جُمِينِ \* مِي أُكَمْتَمَنِ \* كَوَ حَلَالِ كُرْضِي

kuriḍiya ḥalālī kwa \* ukamtamani moyo \* chumbani mṭu na kwali \* ndiyani nendao nili

<sup>3</sup> (3) nili nendao ndiyani \* kwali na mtu<sup>1</sup> chumbani<sup>2</sup> \* moyo ukamtamani \* kwa halali karidhiya<sup>3</sup>

I was going along the road, and there was a person in a room, and my heart desired her, and I was gratified lawfully.

(٤) نَ مَهْرِي يُونَ \* نَلْمَپَ زِيدَنِ \* نَلَنِ پَ چَنْدَنِ \* كَوَهَ كُمْفَلِي

kumvaliya kawahi \* chandani peṭe nalina \* zaydani nalompa \* yuwani mahariye na

<sup>4</sup> (4) na mahariye yuwani \* nalompa zaydani \* nalina peṭe<sup>4</sup> chandani \* kawahi kumvaliya<sup>5</sup>

And know that as for her dowry, which I gave her as well, I had a ring on my finger, and I persuaded her to wear it.

(٥) عَلِي كُتَاكَ كَوَاكَ \* أَنْ رَبِّ مِي وَكَ \* أَكَنْدَ كَوَ مَكَ وَكَ \* مَكْنُ هُمْفُمِي

humfumbiya mkono \* wake mke kwa akenda \* wake moyo ruba una \* kwake kutoka 'alii

<sup>5</sup> (5) 'alii kutoka kwake \* una ruba moyo wake \* akenda kwa mke wake \* mkono humfumbiya<sup>6</sup>

When Ali left [Atiya] his heart was troubled -- when he went to his wife [Fatima], he hid his hand from her.

<sup>1</sup>The woman's name is Atika, but we are not told this until 274d.

<sup>2</sup>Atika probably went indoors to hide from Ali. The custom is for women to hide from men of their own status. Therefore, if they hide when they see a man coming, the man will be pleased, because it is a compliment to him to be considered of noble status. On the other hand, if the woman does not hide, the man may be angry, because he will think she is looking down on him. Thus, women will not hide from lascivious people, but only from those who aren't, because they are worthy of more respect.

<sup>3</sup>Ali did not want to sin by committing adultery with her, so he decides *kuoa kwa siri*, to marry in secret. Among the Swahili it is possible to have an *mke wa siri*, secret wife, if it is thought that the first wife or other people would object. An *mke wa siri* has all the rights of an ordinary wife, except that the marriage is not publicised.

<sup>4</sup>This ring is an important factor in the rest of the story, because it had been given to Ali by his wife Fatima.

<sup>5</sup>Perhaps emend to *kumwatiya*, i.e. I succeeded in leaving it with her.

<sup>6</sup>i.e. to hide the fact that he was not wearing the ring.

(٦) مَوْنِ بِنْتِ رَسُولٍ \* يَلِ هَيْتًا مَلٍ \* كَنَدَ مَوْنِي عَقِلٍ \* خَبَرَ أَكْمَوْمِي

akamwambiya khabari \* 'aqili mwenye kanenda \* hayataamali yali \* rasūli binti mwana  
6 (6) mwana binti rasuli<sup>7</sup> \* yali hayataamali<sup>8</sup> \* kanenda mwenye 'aqili \* habari akamwambiya  
The Lady daughter of the Prophet was unaware of these things [until] someone in the know went and told her the news.

(٧) أَكْنَدَ كِزِي \* فَاطِمَه أَكْمَوْمِي \* شَيْخَ عَلِيٍّ أُوْزِي \* خَبَرَ هُكْسِي

hukisikiya khabari \* uwozee 'alii shēkhe \* akamwambiye fāṭimah \* kizee akenendae  
7 (7) akenendae kizee \* fatimah akamwambiye \* shehe 'alii uwozee \* habari hukisikiya  
The person who went was an old woman, and she said to Fatima: "Sheikh Ali has got married -- have you heard the news?"

(٨) أَكْفَنِي مَشَوْشَ \* فَاطِمَه كَمَكُنْشَ \* عَلَامَ كَمُونْشَ \* أَتْنَعُ أَكْمِي

akamtiya utungu \* kamuonesha 'alāma \* kamkanusha fāṭimah \* mshawasha akafanya  
8 (8) akafanya mshawasha \* fatimah kamkanusha \* 'alama kamuonesha \* utungu akamtiya  
She tried to convince Fatima, but Fatima refused to believe her, but [the old woman] gave her proof, and made her worried.

(٩) مَوْنِ بِنْتِ أَمِينٍ \* هِيَ نَدِي تَمَكِينٍ \* أَلِ نَ پَ چَنْدَنِ \* كَوَهَ كُمْفَلِي

kumvuliya kawahi \* chandani peṭe na ali \* tamkini ndiyo hiyo \* amīni binti mwana  
9 (9) mwana binti amini<sup>9</sup> \* hiyo ndiyo tamkini<sup>10</sup> \* ali na peṭe chandani \* kawahi kumvuliya  
Lady, daughter of the Trustworthy One, [said the old woman], this is true. He had a ring on his finger, and he took it off [to leave it] with her."

(١٠) سَجُو كَهَنَ نِ كُولِ \* مِمِ سِمْتَامَلِ \* أَرْدِپْ كُو رَسُولِ \* بِي تَهْمَزْنَعَتِي

t<sup>h</sup>amzingatiya yeo \* rasūli kwa arudipo \* simtaamali mimi \* kweli ni k<sup>h</sup>anena sijuwi  
10 (10) sijuwi kanena ni kweli \* mimi simtaamali \* arudipo kwa rasuli \* yeo tamzingatiya  
I don't know, said [Fatima], if that is true. I didn't pay him any heed. When he comes back from the Prophet's today, I will ask him.

(١١) أَكْفَنِي هِمَ هِمَ \* أَسِيْوَزَ فَاطِمَه \* حَسَنِ أَكْمُتَمِ \* بَبَاكَ نَمَكُلِي

namkuliya babako \* akamtuma ḥasani \* fāṭimah asiweze \* hima hima akafanya  
11 (11) akafanya hima hima \* asiweze<sup>11</sup> fatimah \* hasani akamtuma \* babako namkuliya<sup>12</sup>  
But Fatima then acted immediately -- she could not restrain herself. She sent Hasan, [saying:] "I am summoning your father."

(١٢) نَمَكُلِي كُو سِرٍ \* أَسِيْكِ بَشِيرٍ \* كَنَدَ أَكْفَسِرٍ \* مَبِلَ زَ تُمُو نَبِي

nabiya ṭumwa za mbele \* akafasiri kenenda \* bashīri asisikiye \* siri kwa namkuliya  
12 (12) namkuliya kwa siri \* asisikiye bashiri \* kenenda akafasiri<sup>13</sup> \* mbele za tumwa nabiya<sup>14</sup>  
I am summoning him secretly, so that the Bearer of Good Tidings does not hear. [But Hasan] went and spoke [openly], in front

<sup>7</sup>i.e. Fatima.

<sup>8</sup>-taamali, observe.

<sup>9</sup>The Prophet was called *al-Amin* from his teenage years onward, because he was reliable and even-handed to all.

<sup>10</sup>tamkini = hakika, kweli

<sup>11</sup>hakuweza kustahimili.

<sup>12</sup>N. -amkulia = S. -itia

<sup>13</sup>-fasiri lit. means "explain".

<sup>14</sup>In other words, the child forgot to give the message privately (*hakusema kwa siri*). In any case, for a man to be called away from the *baraza* by a message from home is very worrying, since it implies some emergency for which his presence is required.

(١٣) كَفَسِرَ مُعِينٌ \* هَمَكُلُو نِيْمَنَ \* أَكْسِكِي أَمِينٌ \* عَجَبُ إِكْمَنْغِي  
ikamngiya 'ajabu \* amīni akisikiya \* nyumbani hamkuliwa \* mu'ayani kafasiri

<sup>13</sup> (13) kafasiri mu'ayani \* hamkuliwa nyumbani \* akisikiya amini \* 'ajabu ikamngiya  
He addressed [Ali] openly [saying:] You are wanted at home. When the Trustworthy One heard this he was filled with wonder.

(١٤) أَكْمُوزَ هَشِمَ \* بِيْ أَنْ فَاطِمَه \* هُكُومَكُو كُوْ هَمَ \* نَائِي سِيْ مَزُويَ  
mazoweya siyo nāyo \* hima kwa hukwamkuwa \* fāṭimah unani yeo \* hashima akamuuza

<sup>14</sup> (14) akamuuza hashima<sup>15</sup> \* yeo unani fatimah \* hukwamkuwa kwa hima \* nayo siyo mazoweya  
The Hashimite asked [Ali]: What is the matter with Fatima today? She wants you in a hurry, and that is not like her.

(١٥) عَلِيْ أَكَيْنُكَ \* أَكْنَدَ كُوْ هَرَكَ \* هَتَ نِيْمَنَ كِفِكَ \* مَوْنَ فَاطِمَ هُلِيْ  
huliya fāṭima mwana \* kifika nyumbani hata \* haraka kwa akanenda \* akainuka 'alii

<sup>15</sup> (15) 'alii akainuka \* akanenda kwa haraka \* hata nyumbani kifika \* mwana fatima huliya  
Ali got up and went in haste until he arrived home. Lady Fatima was crying.

(١٦) هُرْمَ زَكَمَشِكَ \* عَلِيْ كَشَوَشِكَ \* كَمَبَ فَتَمَ پُلِكَ \* أَلْنَلُ نَمْبِيْ  
nambiya ulilonalo \* pulika fatuma kamba \* kashawishika 'alii \* zikamshika huruma

<sup>16</sup> (16) huruma zikamshika \* 'alii kashawishika<sup>16</sup> \* kamba fatuma pulika \* ulilonalo nambiya  
Ali was seized with pity, and became perplexed. He said: Fatima, listen -- tell me what's wrong with you.

(١٧) أَنْ كِتَوَ هُكُومَ \* أَمْ أُمَشِكُوْ نِ حُمَ \* أَكْمَجِبُ فَتَمَ \* كُوْ مَرَضَ سِكُلِيْ  
sikuliya maraḍi kwa \* fatuma akamjibu \* ḥuma ni umeshikwa ama \* hukuuma kitwa una

<sup>17</sup> (17) una kitwa hukuuma \* ama umeshikwa ḥa huma \* akamjibu fatuma \* kwa maradhi sikuliya  
Do you have a headache, or have you a temperature? And Fatima replied: I am not crying because I am ill.

(١٨) مِمَ هَبَ نَلْتِكَ \* وَوْ هُنَ هُتَكَ \* نَ كَمَ كَهْطُ وَتَكَ \* أَسْخَفُ كُنْمِيْ  
kunambiya usikhofu \* wataka k<sup>h</sup>itu kama na \* huteka hunena wewe \* nalitoka hapa mimi

<sup>18</sup> (18) mimi hapa nalitoka \* wewe hunena huteka<sup>17</sup> \* na kama kitu wataka \* usihofu kunambiya  
[Ali said:] When I left here you were talking and laughing. And if there's anything you want, don't be afraid to ask me [for it].

(١٩) وَتَكَ نِنْ نَدِيْنُغُ \* نِيْفِدِ رُحَ يَنْغُ \* مِيْ أَوْتَ مَتْنُغُ \* نَوْ أَكْمَ كَلِيْ  
kuliya ukome nawe \* matungu uwate moyo \* yangu roho niifidi \* nduyangu nini wataka

<sup>19</sup> (19) wataka nini nduyangu \* niifidi<sup>18</sup> roho yangu \* moyo uwate matungu \* nawe ukome kuliya  
What do you want, my dear, so that I may console you, so that your heart will leave aside pain, so that you will stop crying?

<sup>15</sup> The Prophet belonged to the clan of Hashim in the tribe of Quraysh of the Hollow.

<sup>16</sup> -shawishika = -fanya wasiwasi, -fanya tashwish

<sup>17</sup> This is a common expression meaning "you were in a good mood".

<sup>18</sup> niifidi = niokowe. Therefore, lit., "so that I may save my soul, so that I will not be in distress". This expresses humility, and shows that the speaker cares very much about the other person.

(٢٠) فَتَمَّ أَكْتَمَكَ \* پُٹ يَك نَيْتَكَ \* عَلَى أَكْشُتُكَ \* هَوْن لَ كُمُومِي

kumwambiya la haoni \* akashutuka 'alii \* naitaka yako peṭe \* akatamka fatuma

<sup>20</sup> (20) fatuma akatamka \* peṭe yako naitaka \* 'alii akashutuka \* haoni la kumwambiya

Fatima replied: I want your ring. Ali was startled -- he could not see what he could tell her.

(٢١) كِشَ عَلِي حَيْدَر \* نُنُ أَلْفَسِر \* أَنِي أَبُو بَكْر \* تَهَكُونَدَ كُتُولِي

kuṭwaliya t<sup>h</sup>akwenda \* bakari abuu anayo \* alilofasiri neno \* ḥaydari 'alii kisha

<sup>21</sup> (21) kisha 'alii haydari<sup>19</sup> \* neno alilofasiri \* anayo abuu bakari \* takwenda kutwaliya<sup>20</sup>

Then Ali the Lion-like, the utterance that he spoke [was this:] Abu Bakr has it -- I'll go and fetch it.

(٢٢) پُٹ يَك يَ چَنْدَن \* أَبُو بَكْر سِ كِفَن \* نِمْتَوَاءَ تَمَكِن \* كَوُ أَلِيْنَمِي

uliyonambiya kwa \* tamkini nimeṭwaa \* kifani si bakari abuu \* chandani ya yako peṭe

<sup>22</sup> (22) peṭe yako ya chandani \* abuu bakari si kifani \* nimeṭwaa tamkini \* kwa uliyonambiya

[But Fatima said:] "Your ring is for [your] finger -- it will not fit Abu Bakr. "I have discovered the real reason for what you told me.

(٢٣) هُنُ مُوزِن وَ پِل \* مِم سِ كُتَامَل \* أَنْ نَ مَك وَ پِل \* هَبَر نِمِسِكِي

nimesikiya habari \* pili wa mke na una \* sikutaamali mimi \* pili wa ni mwezi hunu

<sup>21</sup> (23) hunu mwezi ni wa pili \* mimi sikutaamali \* una na mke wa pili \* habari nimesikiya

"This is the second month [that you have not worn it] -- I did not realise this before. You have a second wife -- I have heard the news.

(٢٤) نَابُ وَاللَّهِ نَدِينُ \* نِ وَيْ پُوكِ مَك وَنُ \* نِ نَن عَدُو يَنْعُ \* هِي أَلْنَزْلِي

alonizuliya huyo \* yangu 'aduwi nani ni \* wangu mke pweke wee ni \* nduyangu wallāhi naapa

<sup>22</sup> (24) naapa wallahi nduyangu \* ni wee pweke mke wangu<sup>21</sup> \* ni nani 'aduwi yangu \* huyo alonizuliya

[Ali said:] I swear to God, dearest -- you are my only wife. Who is this enemy of mine who has told you this lie about me?"

(٢٥) كَمَجِبُ كَوُ لِسَن \* مُتِي سِمْبَيْن \* پُٹ أُمِي نَن \* أُنَيْپُ تَهَرَضِي

t<sup>h</sup>ariḍiya unipapo \* nani umpee peṭe \* simbaini mṭuye \* lisani kwa kamjibu

<sup>23</sup> (25) kamjibu kwa lisani<sup>22</sup> \* mṭuye simbaini \* peṭe umpee nani \* unipapo taridhiya

She replied eloquently: I will not disclose that person. Who have you given the ring to? [Only] when you give [it to me] will I be satisfied.

<sup>19</sup> haidari, lion. The epithet, "lion-like", is so closely associated with Ali that it is now more of a name than a descriptive metaphor.

<sup>20</sup> Ali tells this lie to gain some time, but it doesn't work.

<sup>21</sup> This is, at best, only half-true. Note that *kusema urongo asitete ni vizuri, si vibaya* – that is, it is justifiable to tell white lies to console your spouse, or in the interests of conciliation and marital harmony. For instance, once a husband arrived home late accompanied by a friend. The wife asked the husband why he was late and became suspicious when he did not reply. The friend saw trouble brewing and stepped in with the lie that the husband had been seeing about getting some money for her as a present, which of course placated her.

<sup>22</sup> lisani perhaps < لسان, *speak eloquently*, note also لسان, *tongue* and لسانِي, *orally*. We could also emend to *hisani*, *kindness, goodness*, i.e. politely. See 250a.

(٢٦) عَلَى أَكْبَيْنِ \* تَهْكَوْمِي تَمْكِنِ \* يَلْنَعِي كِسْمَنِ \* تَهْكَوْنَدَ كُتْلِي

kukutoleya t<sup>h</sup>akwenda \* kisimani yalingiya \* tamkini t<sup>h</sup>akwambiya \* akabaini ‘alii

<sup>24</sup> (26) ‘alii akabaini \* takwambiya tamkini \* yalingiya kisimani<sup>23</sup> \* takwenda kukutoleya  
Ali declared: I will tell you what really happened. It fell into a well -- I’ll go and get it out for you.

(٢٧) هَي نَنْ پَ يَكْ \* مَهْلَ أُيُوسِپْ \* كَمْ هَي مَتْمَكْ \* بِنْعُ سِتْمَوْمِي

sitomwambiya babangu \* matamko haya kama \* uiwesepo mahale \* yako pete nena haya

<sup>25</sup> (27) haya nena<sup>24</sup> pete yako \* mahale uiwesepo \* kama haya matamko \* babangu sitomwambiya<sup>25</sup>  
[Fatima said:] Well, your ring -- say where you have put it, for these words -- I do not [want to] tell my father [about them].”

(٢٨) عَلِي أَكُوْدِكْ \* فَتَمْ كُكْسِرِكْ \* أَلْنُكْ كَتَاكْ \* أَكْنَدَ كُو نَبِي

nabiya kwa akanenda \* katoka aliinuka \* kukasirika fatuma \* akaudhika ‘alii

<sup>26</sup> (28) ‘alii akaudhika \* fatuma kukasirika \* aliinuka katoka \* akanenda kwa nabiya  
Ali was worried that Fatima was angry. He got up and left, and went to the Prophet.

(٢٩) أَكْمُوَزْ هَشِمَ \* أَلِ نَ نِ فَتَمْ \* أَلِكْهَاتْ كَلِمَ \* مْتُمْ أَكْمَوْمِي

akamwambiya mtume \* kalima alik<sup>h</sup>āta \* fatuma nini na ali \* hashima akamuza

<sup>27</sup> (29) akamuza hashima \* ali na nini<sup>26</sup> fatuma \* alikata kalima<sup>27</sup> \* mtume akamwambiya  
The Hashimite asked him: What was wrong with Fatima? [Ali] interrupted him, and told the Prophet:

(٣٠) أَكْمَوْمِي شَرِيفُ \* فَتَمْ مَنِكَلِفُ \* زَيْپُ زِسْزُ خُوفُ \* زَنْغِ نِمْمَتِيلِي

nimemtiliya zingi \* khōfu zisizo ziyapo \* menikalifu fatuma \* sharīfu akamwambiya

<sup>28</sup> (30) akamwambiya sharifu \* fatuma menikalifu \* ziyapo<sup>28</sup> zisizo<sup>29</sup> hofu \* zingi nimemtiliya  
He told the Noble One: Fatima is annoyed with me -- white lies, I have told her many of them.

(٣١) أَلِكِلِي يَا رَسُولَ \* نَمِ نِمْتَنْدَ كُولِ \* كُومِي سِهْمِلِ \* خُوفُ زِمْنَعِي

zimeningiya khōfu \* sihimili kumwambiya \* kweli nimeṭenda nami \* rasūli yā alikiliya

<sup>29</sup> (31) alikiliya<sup>30</sup> ya rasuli \* nami nimeṭenda kweli \* kumwambiya sihimili \* hofu zimeningiya  
[Ali] was weeping: Oh Prophet! I’ve really done it now. I haven’t the nerve to tell her. I’m filled with fear.

(٣٢) تَنْ إِنْئَدَ سَيِدِ \* أُمُونِي أَبْرُدِ \* كَتْنُكَ مُحَمَّدِ \* هَبْ كَأْنَدَمَ نَدِي

ndiya kaandama hapo \* muḥamadi kainuka \* aburudi umuonye \* sayidi enenda tena

<sup>30</sup> (32) tena enenda sayidi \* umuonye aburudi<sup>31</sup> \* kainuka muhamadi \* hapo kaandama ndiya  
So you go, my Lord, and tell her to calm down. Muhammad got up, and then set out on the way [to Ali’s house].

<sup>23</sup> Another lie, again to gain some time, kamuulize Nabiya, so that he can go and ask the Prophet. But Fatima does not fall for this one either.

<sup>24</sup> Or we could emend to huyanena, you still haven’t said.

<sup>25</sup> anamwogopa sana – she is greatly in awe of him.

<sup>26</sup> The northern form of alikuwa na nini, based respectively on two verbs meaning “be”: -li and -wa.

<sup>27</sup> lit. “cut the words”.

<sup>28</sup> -apa, curse, but -tia kiapo, swear an oath, such as nife nili kaffir, may I die an unbeliever. Ali has sworn a few oaths to Fatima out of necessity, but he is not bound by them because he swore them in order to preserve marital harmony.

<sup>29</sup> i.e. oaths that have no frightening consequences.

<sup>30</sup> -liki- is a past continuous tense. See also 48d, 49a.

<sup>31</sup> He is speaking as if iko moto nyumbani, there is a fire at home, and he wants Fatima to apowe, cool down.

(٣٣) أَكْبَدَ أَكْجَلِسَ \* مُيْ أَنْ وَسَّوَسَ \* كَفَفَنِي كَمْ هَئِسَ \* إِنْدِي كُمْوَنَغَلِي

kumwangaliya enendee \* haisi kama kaifanya \* wasiwasi una moyo \* akajilisi akenda

<sup>31</sup> (33) akenda akajilisi<sup>32</sup> \* moyo una wasiwasi \* kaifanya kama haisi \* endee kumwangaliya  
He went [to the house] and sat down. His heart was confused, He pretended he knew nothing, [that] he had just come to look in on her.

(٣٤) كَمْوُلَزَ هَاشِمَ \* وَلَ نَ نِنِ فَتَمَ \* حَسَنَ مَكِّي هَمَ \* عَلِي كُمْوَنَدَمِي

kumwandamiya 'alii \* hima mekuya hasani \* fatuma nini na wali \* hashima kamuuliza

<sup>32</sup> (34) kamuuliza hashima \* wali na nini fatuma \* hasani mekuya hima \* 'alii kumwandamiya<sup>33</sup>  
The Hashimite asked her: Was there anything wrong, Fatima? Hasan came [to us] in a hurry to fetch Ali.

(٣٥) فَتَمَ هَكَكْسِرَ \* أَكْمَوْمِي بِشِيرَ \* عَلِي نَدَكْ هَبَرِ \* يُؤْ نِمَزِسَكِي

nimezisikiya yeo \* habari ndake 'alii \* bashiri akamwambiya \* hakukasiri fatuma

<sup>33</sup> (35) fatuma hakukasiri<sup>34</sup> \* akamwambiya bashiri \* 'alii zake habari \* yeo nimezisikiya  
Fatima did not hesitate, she told the Bearer of Glad Tidings: The news about Ali -- I heard it today.

(٣٦) أَكْمُوَزَ أَمِينِ \* نِ كَمْ هَبَرِ غَنِ \* أُسْمَنْجُجَ نِيْمَنِ \* أَكَجَ أَكْمَامَكُو

ukamuamkuwa ukaja \* nyumbani usimngoje \* gani habari kama ni \* amini akamuuzza

<sup>34</sup> (36) akamuuzza amini \* ni kama habari gani \* usimngoje nyumbani \* ukaja ukamuamkuwa  
The Trustworthy One asked her: What sort of news is it that you couldn't wait for him at home, and ended up sending for him?

(٣٧) أَكْنِمَ فَتَمَ \* كُمْسِتَحَ هَاشِمَ \* يَلْمُتَكَ كَلِمَ \* بَبَكْ أَكْمَوْمِي

akamwambiya babake \* kalima yalomtoka \* hashima kumsitahi \* fatuma akainama

<sup>35</sup> (37) akainama<sup>35</sup> fatuma \* kumsitahi hashima \* yalomtoka kalima<sup>36</sup> \* babake akamwambiya  
Fatima bowed down to show honour to the Hashimite, and words came tumbling out, and she explained [everything] to her father.

(٣٨) يَوْتَ مَنْ هَيَ \* أُسِطُّ نَ مُمِي \* أَكْرُدِشَ كِلِي \* فَاطِمَةُ الزَّهْرِيَّةَ

zzahriyat fatimat \* kiliyo akarudisha \* mumeo na usiteye \* hayo maneno yawate

<sup>36</sup> (38) yawate maneno hayo \* usitete na mumeo \* akarudisha kiliyo \* fatimat zzahriyat  
Leave off these words," [he said]. Don't quarrel with your husband. And he comforted her, Fatima the Radiant.

(٣٩) أَكْمَوْمِي مَوْنَعُ \* أَتَكَبَ رَضِ يَنْعُ \* نِ هَيَ مَنْ يَنْعُ \* يُؤْ أَكِيَسَكِي

ukiyasikiya yuwa \* yangu maneno haya ni \* yangu radi utakapo \* mwanangu akamwambiya

<sup>37</sup> (39) akamwambiya mwanangu \* utakapo radi<sup>37</sup> yangu \* ni haya maneno yangu \* yuwa ukiyasikiya  
He told her: My child, if you want my blessing, this is my advice -- you know, if you'll listen to it.

<sup>32</sup>-jilisi = -keti. The Prophet is being subtle, and pretends he does not know what has happened, so that he can get to the bottom of things.

<sup>33</sup>-andama, follow someone directly, the two of you together, but -andamia, follow someone who has already gone ahead, so that each person is travelling alone, = -fuatia.

<sup>34</sup>i.e. pale pale kampa habari yote, there and then she gave him the whole story.

<sup>35</sup>Good children are shy in front of their parents, and show them respect.

<sup>36</sup>ametokwa na maneno – this occurs when one feels particularly when one feels strongly about something. If you want to emphasise a speaker's volubility, you can say ametokwa na maneno yake na ya kuwazimu, lit. he was come out of by his own words and those of his ancestors.

<sup>37</sup>Move note from 83d to here.

(٤٠) كُنْتُ كَوَكُ فْتَمَ \* يَلْ أَكَيْسُكُمْ \* كِشَ كَفْتُ كَلِمَ \* بَيْكَ أَكْمَوَمِي

akamwambiya babake \* kalima kavuta kisha \* akayasukuma yale \* fatuma kwake kutoka  
38 (40) kutoka kwake fatuma \* yale akayasukuma \* kisha kavuta kalima \* babake akamwambiya  
For her part, Fatima weighed those [words] carefully, then she spoke [these] words, and told her father:

(٤١) أَكْمَوَمِي بَيْتُ \* تُنْ نَ مُم وَنْعُ \* كَيْسَ مَوْفُ يَنْعُ \* سِ مَوْنِي كَيْنْدَلِي

kupendeleya mwenye si \* yangu maovu kabisa \* wangu mume na tunani \* babangu akamwambiya  
39 (41) akamwambiya babangu \* tunani na mume wangu \* kabisa maovu yangu \* si mwenye kupendeleya  
She said: Father, what quarrel do I have with my husband? [It was] my fault entirely, and I am not pleased [to have done it].

(٤٢) نَ مْتُ أَلْنَعُ \* سَسَ نِمْفِكِرِ \* هُتْپَنْدَلِي خَيْرِ \* هَوَزِ كُتُونْغَلِي

kutwangaliya hawezi \* khēri hatupendelei \* nimefikiri sasa \* alonighuri mtu na  
40 (42) na mtu alonighuri \* sasa nimefikiri \* hatupendelei heri \* hawezi kutwangaliya  
And the person who deceived me -- now I have realised she did not want good fortune for us -- she couldn't look at us [without envy].

(٤٣) تَن هُضُمُ مَيْنِ \* مُتِي نِ شَيْطَانِ \* مَلَنَوَ مَلْعُونِ \* نِيَه مَبْثُ كُنْيِي

kuniṭiya mbovu niyah \* mal'ūni mlaniwa \* shayṭāni ni mṭuye \* moyoni huḍumu tena  
41 (43) tena hudhumu moyoni \* mṭuye ni shaytani \* mlaniwa mal'uni \* niyah mbovu kuniṭiya  
And the conclusion in my heart [is that] that person was the Devil, the Cursed One, the Damned One, planting evil intentions in me.

(٤٤) هَي نِمِيخْتِمُ \* نَ مَنَعِن تَهْنُظُمُ \* جَمِيْعَ مِيْفَهْمُ \* نِمِپَنْدَ كَوْمِي

kuwambiya nimependa \* muyafahamu jami'i \* t<sup>h</sup>anuzumu mengine na \* nimeyahhitimu haya  
42 (44) haya nimeyahhitimu<sup>38</sup> \* na mengine tanudhumu<sup>39</sup> \* jami'i muyafahamu<sup>40</sup> \* nimependa kuwambiya  
I have completed these [things], and I will compose other [things], so that all of you may understand them -- I have been pleased to tell you [them].

(٤٥) فَهَمْنِ وَوُنْعَوْنَ \* يُوْ نَوِپَ مَعَنَ \* پَ يَنْعُ يَ عَيْنَ \* حُجَ نَلَوِتِي

naloiwatiya ḥuja \* 'ayna ya yangu pete \* ma'ana niwape yeo \* waungwana fahamuni  
43 (45) fahamuni<sup>41</sup> waungwana \* yeo niwape ma'ana \* pete yangu ya 'ayna<sup>42</sup> \* huja naloiwatiya  
[Ali said:] Pay attention, noble [listeners], so that today I may give you an explanation: my distinctive ring -- the reason I left it behind.

<sup>38</sup>The first part of the ballad, describing the mke wa siri, and the resulting friction between Ali and Fatima, and its resolution, is now complete. The next portion of the tale ("mengine"), describing Ja'far's meeting with his father Ali, and its results, now begins.

<sup>39</sup>nuzumu, compose.

<sup>40</sup>"that you may all understand it", or "that you may understand it all".

<sup>41</sup>It seems that here we should envisage Ali explaining, after the events of the rest of the ballad, about the ring, and why he left it with Atika.

<sup>42</sup>ya aina, one of a kind, i.e. nzuri.



(٤٦) نَلَيْتَ قَصْدٍ \* سِ مَهَبٍ كُنْزٍ \* مَرَّ هُزَاءٍ وَلَدٍ \* أَصِلَ إِكْبَتِي

ikapoteya asili \* walidi huzaa mara \* kunizidi mahaba si \* qasidi naliwata

<sup>44</sup> (46) naliwata qasidi<sup>43</sup> \* si mahaba kunizidi \* mara huzaa walidi \* asili ikapoteya<sup>44</sup>  
I left it for the purpose, not of increasing [her] love for me, [but lest] once the child was born, its heritage should be lost.

(٤٧) بَسِ نَلَيْفِكِرٍ \* نَدِي يَتِ يَلْجِرِ \* أَكْزَوْ جَعْفَرٍ \* وَ مَوْلَانَا عَلِي

'aliya mawlānā wa \* ja'fari akazawa \* yalojiri yote ndiyo \* naloyafikiri basi

<sup>45</sup> (47) basi naloyafikiri<sup>45</sup> \* ndiyo yote yalojiri \* akazawa ja'fari<sup>46</sup> \* wa maulana 'aliya  
Indeed, what I had foreseen was exactly what happened. Ja'far was born, [son of] Lord Ali.

(٤٨) أَكْسِنَعَ كَجَنَ \* نَ بَيْكَ وَكِفَنَ \* كُلُّ أَلَكُمُونِ \* صُورَ زَلِكُمُومِي

zalikimwambiya šūra \* alokimuona kula \* wakifana babake na \* kijana akaisinga

<sup>46</sup> (48) akaisinga<sup>47</sup> kijana \* na babake wakifana \* kula alokimuona \* sura zalikimwambiya  
The boy grew up resembling his father. [To] everyone who saw him, his features said who he was.

(٤٩) وَطٌ وَلِكِنْكَرٍ \* عَلِي هَنَ هَبَرٍ \* هَتَ مُمِي كُو سِرٍ \* أَكْفِكَ كُمُومِي

kumwambiya akafika \* siri kwa mmoya hata \* habari hana 'alii \* walikinukuri waṭu

<sup>47</sup> (49) watu walikidhukuri \* 'alii hana habari \* hata mmoya kwa siri \* akafika kumwambiya  
People were talking about it, [but] Ali knew nothing of it not a single [person] secretly arrived to tell him.

(٥٠) أَلَيْبِنْدَ مَنَانٍ \* كَمُونُ مَعِينٍ \* كُنْ كِسِمَ مَوْتُنِ \* أَكْنَدَ كُجَنْغَلِي

kuchangaliya akenda \* mwiṭuni kisima kuna \* mu'ayani kamuona \* manāni alipopenda

<sup>48</sup> (50) alipopenda<sup>48</sup> manani \* kamuona mu'ayani<sup>49</sup> \* kuna kisima mwituni \* akenda kuchangaliya  
When it pleased Providence [Ali] saw [Ja'far] in the flesh. There was a well in the forest, and [Ali] went to have a look at it.

(٥١) نَاءُ أَكْنَدَ كُو شَكَ \* مَاءِ أَسِيَّتِكَ \* نَاءُ أَلِكْفُنِكَ \* كَوَزِ أَكِيْجَنْدِي

akichendeya kiwazi \* alikifunika nae \* asipoyataka mai \* shaka kwa akenda nae

<sup>49</sup> (51) nae akenda kwa shaka \* mai asipoyataka \* nae alikifunika<sup>50</sup> \* kiwazi akichendeya  
And he went from suspicion, not wanting water. [Although] he had [earlier] covered it, it was open when he got there.

(٥٢) هَبْ عَلِي حَيْدَرٍ \* كَوَزِ نَ كُفِكِرٍ \* وَمَكِي مَكْفِرٍ \* يُوْ كُفْنُلِي

kunifunuliya yeo \* makafiri wamekuya \* kufikiri na kiwaza \* ḥaydari 'alii hapo

<sup>50</sup> (52) hapo 'alii<sup>51</sup> haydari \* kiwaza na kufikiri \* wamekuya makafiri \* yeo kunifunuliya<sup>52</sup>  
Then Ali the Lion-like pondered and considered: Unbelievers have come here to uncover it today in spite of me.

<sup>43</sup> Amu qasidi = Mvita maqusudi.

<sup>44</sup> That is, the child would not know who his father was – this would be very unfortunate, and Ali is anxious for this not to happen

<sup>45</sup> Amu n[i]-al[i]-o = Mvita ni-l[i]-o, subject prefix + past marker + relative marker.

<sup>46</sup> We might surmise that he was named Ja'far after Ali's brother Ja'far.

<sup>47</sup> lit. "he moulded himself" to the appearance of his father.

<sup>48</sup> This translation (hata mmoya, not a single [person]) deals with the Y text, but for the R text we should translate hata mmoya, until a single [person] to deal with the fact that it adds stanzas here describing someone (actually the Devil) coming along to trick Ali.

<sup>49</sup> lit. "clearly".

<sup>50</sup> Because in such a climate water is very valuable.

<sup>51</sup>

<sup>52</sup> To annoy and frustrate him.



(٥٣) كِشْ أَكْتَمَكَ \* نَ يُوْ تَهَكْفُنِكَ \* سِنَ بُدِ تَهْمَشِكَ \* مُتْيِيْ أَمْزُويْ

amezoweya mtuye \* t<sup>h</sup>amshika budi sina \* t<sup>h</sup>akifunika yeo na \* akatamka kisha

<sup>51</sup> (53) kisha akatamka \* na yeo takifunika \* sina budi tamshika \* mtuye amezoweya  
Then he said: I will cover it again today, and doubtless I will catch that person who is behaving like that.

(٥٤) أَجْنَدَكَ هُكْ نِيْمَ \* جَعْفَرِ كَثْغَمَ \* لِّلْ بَاءُ كَسُكُمَ \* مَبِلِ أَكَلْتِيْ

akalatiliya mbali \* kasukuma bao lile \* kaegema ja'fari \* nyuma huku achondoka

<sup>52</sup> (54) achondoka huku nyuma \* ja'fari kaegema<sup>53</sup> \* lile bao kasukuma \* mbali akalatiliya<sup>54</sup>  
When he had gone off [to hide], in the meantime Ja'far approached, pushed off the plank [covering the well], and threw it far away.

(٥٥) مَبِرْ وَكَنُوْ كَوْ هِمَ \* جَعْفَرِ أَكْلِكَ نِيْمَ \* كِشْ نَاءِ كَثْغَمَ \* عَلِيْ هُمُونْغَلِيْ

humwangaliya 'alii \* kaegema nae kisha \* nyuma ukaliko ja'fari \* hima kwa wakanwa mbuzi

<sup>53</sup> (55) mbuzi wakanwa kwa hima \* ja'fari ukaliko nyuma \* kisha nae kaegema \* 'alii humwangaliya  
His goats drank greedily and Jaafar was there behind them. Then he too came forward, and Ali watched him.

(٥٦) أَجْغَمَ كَرْدِدِ \* تُتْشِنْدَنَ قَصِدِ \* كَوْنَدَ يُوْ أَكْرُدِ \* هَلْدِرِكِ أَكِيْ

akiya halidiriki \* akirudi yeo kwanda \* qasidi tutashindana \* karadidi achegema

<sup>54</sup> (56) achegema karadidi<sup>55</sup> \* tutashindana qasidi<sup>56</sup> \* kwanda yeo akirudi \* halidiriki akiya  
As Ja'far approached, he was saying: We will compete tit-for-tat -- if he comes back today, he will not find [the plank] when he gets here.

(٥٧) جَمَبِ هُفْنِيْ نِ بَرِ \* أَيُّبْ أَتَنْكِرِ \* هِلْ لِيْطِ بَنْدَرِ \* نَعْتُ تَهْمَفْنِيْ

t<sup>h</sup>amfinikiya ngoṭa \* bandari lipete hili \* atanikiri ayapo \* biri ni hufanya chamba

<sup>55</sup> (57) chamba<sup>57</sup> hufanya ni<sup>58</sup> biri<sup>59</sup> \* ayapo atanikiri \* hili lipete bandari<sup>60</sup> \* ngoṭa tamfinikiya  
If he is challenging me, when he gets here he will submit to me. I'm at the end of my tether -- I'll teach him a lesson."

(٥٨) مَاءِ كُتْكَ كُتْكَ \* نَ عَلِيْ أَكُتْكَ \* مَكْنُ أَكْمَشِكَ \* جَعْفَرِ كَمُومْبِيْ

kamwambiya ja'fari \* akamshika mkono \* akatoka 'alii na \* kuṭeka kaṭika mai

<sup>56</sup> (58) mai katika kuteka \* na 'alii akatoka \* mkono akamshika \* ja'fari kamwambiya  
[But] while he was drawing water, Ali came out [of hiding] and grabbed him by the arm. Jaafari said to him:

<sup>53</sup>The Swahili belief would be that the boy has been led to that particular place “by the blood”, i.e. because he is a son of his father's, the two have a bodily affinity, and tend to be attracted to each other, like magnets.

<sup>54</sup>-atilia means “drop” in Mvita and “throw” in Amu.

<sup>55</sup>Move note to 183c to here.

<sup>56</sup>lit. we will compete in aim. It seems we should understand a sequence of events prior to the present sequence (beginning in stanza 50), in which Ali's covering of the well and Ja'far's uncovering of it have gone on for some time. They have now both resolved to get to the heart of the matter and teach the other person a lesson.

<sup>57</sup>chamba, if.

<sup>58</sup>This line is unclear. Possibly we should read nibiri, challenge < نبر, raise one's voice, shout.

<sup>59</sup>i.e. if Ali is daring Ja'far to do something.

<sup>60</sup>lit. “this [boat, jahazi] has gained the harbour”, i.e. this state of affairs must come to an end.

(٥٩) وَوُهِشِكِينَ \* مِم سِكُجِ سِنَنِ \* هَتَ أَكُونِ جِنِ \* نَيُّو كُكُومِي

kukusomeya nayuwa \* jini ni ukiwa hata \* sinani sikuchi mimi \* hunishikiyani wewe

<sup>57</sup> (59) wewe hunishikiyani \* mimi sikuchi sinani<sup>61</sup> \* hata ukiwa ni jini \* nayuwa kukusomeya  
Why are you grabbing hold of me? I'm not in the least afraid of you. Even if you were a jinn I would know how to read [the Qur'an] against you.

(٦٠) هَي نِمَزُفَسِرِ \* سِكُونِ كَو سِرِ \* أَكْتَكَ أَظْهَرِ \* نَ زَيْدِ تَهَكُومِي

<sup>h</sup>akwambiya zaydi na \* azhari ukitaka \* siri kwa sikuyanena \* nimezofasiri haya

<sup>58</sup> (60) haya nimezofasiri \* sikuyanena kwa siri \* ukitaka adhhari<sup>62</sup> \* na zaydi<sup>63</sup> takwambiya  
These [things] I have said, I have not spoken secretly -- if you want it in plain terms I will say even more to you."

(٦١) كَمْفُطِي كَو مَبِلِ \* وَكَوَنَ سَاءَ مَبِلِ \* كِشَ كُفْتُ قَوْلِ \* جَعْفَرِ كَمُومِي

kamwambiya ja'fari \* qawli kavuta kisha \* mbili saa wakawana \* mbali kwa kamvutiya

<sup>59</sup> (61) kamvutiya kwa mbali \* wakawana saa mbili<sup>64</sup> \* kisha kavuta qauli \* ja'fari kamwambiya  
He pulled away from [Ali] and they fought for two hours. Eventually he spoke, Ja'far, and addressed him.

(٦٢) كَمُومِي مَبِينِ \* مَوْنِ آدَمِ نَ نَنِ \* بَبَ هَكَ دُونِي \* نَدِپَ أَكُونِي

ukanione ya ndipo \* duniyani hako baba \* nani n adamu mwana \* mbaini kamwambiya

<sup>60</sup> (62) kamwambiya mbaini<sup>65</sup> \* mwana adamu n nani \* baba hako duniyani \* ndipo ukanione ya<sup>66</sup>  
He said to him: Explain to me what sort of person you are. [My] father is no longer in this world, and that is why you are bullying me.

(٦٣) كَمُوزَ هُنَنِ \* وَوِ بَبِكَ نَ نَنِ \* كَمَبَ نِ پَ چَنْدَنِ \* عَلِي كِينْغِي

kayangaliya 'alii \* chandani peṭe ni kamba \* nani ni babako wewe \* hunenani kamuuzi

<sup>61</sup> (63) kamuuzi hunenani \* wewe babako ni nani \* kamba ni peṭe chandani \* 'alii kayangaliya  
[Ali] asked him: What are you saying? Who is your father? [Jaafar] said: He is the ring on my finger. Ali looked at it.

(٦٤) پَ كُونِ كَوَكِ \* كِسَمَ نَ جِنِ لَكِ \* أَرْدِ أَسِكْتِكِ \* نَ مِيْتُ كَمْنِغِي

kumngiya mayuto na \* asikitike arudi \* lake jina na kisoma \* kwake kuiyona peṭe

<sup>62</sup> (64) peṭe kuiyona kwake \* kisoma na jina lake \* arudi asikitike \* na mayuto kumngiya<sup>67</sup>  
Once he saw the ring and read his name [on it], he stepped back greatly saddened and was filled with remorse.

<sup>61</sup> sina-ni emphasises the negative – a person accused of theft may say sikuiba sina-ni, I didn't do any stealing at all. It may be shortened to sini. Thus the poem: kidege na uliwani? / silicha mtu sina-ni. The story is told of a witty tailor from Takaungu. A group of people had dropped into his shop for a chat, and after a while the tailor got up and went out to answer nature's call to urinate. He came back very quickly, which made some of the men there ask him jokingly why he had been so fast. He replied: sina kisonono sini!, I don't have gonorrhea at all!, which was greeted with laughter. The men then said that even if this were the case, he should still have taken longer, since it takes some time to wash (kutama) after going to the toilet. The tailor replied, siṣali sini!, I'm not doing any praying!. This made everyone collapse with laughter – people may not pray, but they certainly would not tell other people that.

<sup>62</sup> azhari = wazi-wazi, zaidi.

<sup>63</sup> This is fighting talk – jeuri!

<sup>64</sup> For a small boy to be able to hold his own against Ali, the champion warrior, is no mean feat.

<sup>65</sup> -m- here = -ni-. See 237b.

<sup>66</sup> i.e. why are you picking on an orphan?

<sup>67</sup> The motif of a father and son unknowingly fighting each other is a recurrent one in literature – the most famous example is that of Sohrab and Rustum. Fortunately, in this case the father recognises his son before any damage has been done.

(٦٥) كِشَ هَپْ أَمُومِي \* سِنْغَلِكُپِجِي \* إِنْ لَكَ هُيْطُوي \* بَيْكَ نَدِي عَلِي

'aliya ndiye babako \* huitwaye lako ina \* singalikupijie \* amwambie hapo kisha

<sup>63</sup> (65) kisha hapo amwambie<sup>68</sup> \* singalikupijie \* ina lako huitwaye \* babako ndiye 'aliya  
Then he told [Ja'far]: I should not have attacked you. As for the name you are to be called, your father is [me], Ali.

(٦٦) نِنْغَلِپْتَز دَمُ \* كَم سِكُكُفَهَمُ \* أَكِشَ كَتَكَلَمُ \* جَعْفَرُ كَمُومِي

kamwambiya ja'fari \* katakalamu akisha \* sikukufahamu kama \* damu ningalipoteza

<sup>64</sup> (66) ningalipoteza<sup>69</sup> damu \* kama sikukufahamu \* akisha katakalamu \* ja'fari kamwambiya  
I would have spilt your blood if I had not recognised you. When he finished speaking, Jaafar spoke to him:

(٦٧) وَو مْتُ هُمُون \* هُمُوزِ لَكَ إِنْ \* هُجُونُ أَجَعِن \* أَلُونُ تَهَكَمِي

t<sup>h</sup>akimbiya uliona \* ujugina hujiona \* ina lake humuuzi \* humuona mtu wewe

<sup>65</sup> (67) wewe mtu humuona \* humuuzi lake ina \* hujiona ujugina<sup>70</sup> \* uliona takimbiya  
When you see someone, you do not even ask his name. You see yourself as a warrior, and you thought I would run away.

(٦٨) كُونَزِ نِپْ پِ يَنْغُ \* إِنْكَ إِي بِنْغُ \* هُنْغَلِوَزَ مَتْنُغُ \* مُولِنِ كُنْطِي

kuniṭiya mwilini \* matungu hungaliweza \* babangu ewe inuka \* yangu peṭe nipa kwanza

<sup>66</sup> (68) kwanza nipa peṭe yangu \* inuka ewe<sup>71</sup> babangu \* hungaliweza matungu \* mwilini kuniṭiya  
First, give me back my ring, and get up, father -- you would not have been able to inflict injuries on my body.

(٦٩) أَكْمُومِي مَمَك \* نَمُيُو سُرْ زَك \* نَاءِ هَپْ أَتْمَك \* إِنْ لَكَ أَمُومِي

amwambiye lake ina \* atamke hapo nae \* zake sura namuyuwa \* mamake akamwambiya

<sup>67</sup> (69) akamwambiya mamake \* namuyuwa sura zake \* nae hapo atamke \* ina lake amwambiye  
[Ali] told him [who] his mother [was]: I recognise her features [in you]. And then [Ja'far] spoke in order to tell [Ali] his name.

(٧٠) كِمُومِي كَفَسِر \* مِمِ هُيْطُو جَعْفَر \* وَ عَلِي حَيْدَر \* نَ مَوَك نَ وَ تِسِي

tisiya wa ni mwaka na \* ḥaydari 'alii wa \* ja'fari huitwa mimi \* kafasiri kimwambiya

<sup>68</sup> (70) kimwambiya kafasiri \* mimi huitwa ja'fari \* wa 'alii haydari \* na mwaka ni wa tisiya  
He spoke, saying: I am called Ja'far, [son] of Ali the Lion-like and I am nine years old.

<sup>68</sup>The following stanzas are a bit unclear. The gist seems to be that Ali says he is Ja'far's father, Ja'far reproaches him for his earlier bullying behaviour, still suspicious and unsure whether or not to believe him, whereupon Ali describes Ja'far's mother to him, which convinces Ja'far.

<sup>69</sup>-poteza = -tupa.

<sup>70</sup>According to Sacleux, ujugina comes from a Galla word meaning "brave, courageous". It is said that Ali sifa yake ni shujaa, Ali is famed as a warrior, and Ja'far inherits this martial attribute, as his spirited fighting shows. Ali was a short man, but very strong. It is said that once he plunged his sword into the ground and challenged others to pull it out, but it was buried so deep that no-one could. Again, it is said that once when Ali was praying in the mosque his friends jokingly took his sandals (which in accordance with ritual he had of course removed before entering the mosque) and placed them on top of the lintel, where Ali, being short, could not reach them. As a retort, Ali took their sandals, grabbed hold of the mosque wall, lifted it up, put the sandals under the wall, and set it down again. Other important Muslims have their own attributes – Uthman, for instance, was known for his shyness.

<sup>71</sup>Ja'far is suspicious.

(٧١) وَتَوَ مَبُزِ مَوْتُنِ \* نَ أَوِيكَ نَدِينِ \* تُونَدُ زُتْ مُنِ \* جَعْفَرِ كَمَوْمَبِي

kamwambiya ja'fari \* muini zeṭu ṭwenende \* ndiyani uwapeke na \* mwiṭuni mbuzi watowe

<sup>69</sup> (71) watowe mbuzi mwituni<sup>72</sup> \* na uwapeke ndiyani \* twenende zetu muini \* ja'fari kamwambiya  
Bring your goats out of the forest, [said Ali], and herd them along the road so that we may go on towards the town. But Ja'far spoke to him

(٧٢) كَمَوْمَبِي نَدَ زَنْغُ \* نِنَ نَ مَوْلِمُ وَنْعُ \* نِمُوغُ نَ مَمَنْغُ \* كِشَ كِشَ نِتَكِي

nitakuya kesho kisha \* mamangu na nimuwage \* wangu mwalimu na nina \* zangu nenda kamwambiya

<sup>70</sup> (72) kamwambiya nenda zangu \* nina na mwalimu wangu<sup>73</sup> \* nimuwage na mamangu \* kisha kesho  
nitakuya

and told him: I am going off -- I have my teacher whom I must take leave of, and my mother. Then I will come tomorrow.

(٧٣) كِشَ كُكِيْمَبُوكُ \* نَ مِيْمَ تَنُّنْكَ \* سَاءَ مِيْ اِكْفِكَ \* بَبَ تَكُوْصِلِي

takuwasiliya baba \* ikifika moya saa \* tainuka mapima na \* kukipambauka kesho

<sup>71</sup> (73) kesho kukipambauka \* na mapima tainuka \* saa moya ikifika<sup>74</sup> \* baba takuwasiliya  
When tomorrow has dawned, I will get up early, and when the first hour comes I will arrive with you, father.

(٧٤) اَكْمَطِبُ قَوْلِ \* اَيْبُ نَدِيْ يَ مَبَلِ \* يَ مَكَهَ نِ يَ كُفْلِ \* اُسْتَكُ كُيْتِي

kupoteya usitake \* kuvuli ya ni makah ya \* mbali ya ndiya uyapo \* qawli akamtibu

<sup>72</sup> (74) akamtibu qauli<sup>75</sup> \* uyapo ndiya ya mbali \* ya makah ni ya kuvuli<sup>76</sup> \* usitake<sup>77</sup> kupoteya<sup>78</sup>  
[Ali] gave [Ja'far] some advice: When you come to the fork in the road, the way to Mecca is the one on the right -- just so you don't get lost.

(٧٥) كَمَرُدِشِي تَمَكُ \* بَسَ هَيِ نَدَ زَكُ \* مَوْلِمُ نَ مَمَكُ \* نَ نَدُزُ نِسَلِمِي

nisalimiya nduzo na \* mamako na mwalimu \* zako nenda haya basi \* tamko kamrudishiya

<sup>73</sup> (75) kamrudishiya<sup>79</sup> tamko \* basi haya nenda zako \* mwalimu na mamako \* na nduzo<sup>80</sup> nisalimiya<sup>81</sup>  
[Ali] replied to [Ja'far]: So, now, off you go, the teacher and your mother and your relatives -- give them my best wishes."

(٧٦) نَاءُ مَوْنَ وَ نَسَبَ \* كَمَوْمَبِي مَرَحَبَا \* نَمَ هُكَ اَقْرَبَ \* اُجْنَدَ نِسَلِمِي

nisalimiya uchenda \* aqraba huko nami \* marḥabā kamwambiya \* nasaba wa mwana nae

<sup>74</sup> (76) nae mwana wa nasaba<sup>82</sup> \* kamwambiya marhaba \* nami huko aqraba \* uchenda nisalimiya  
And [Ja'far], the noble child, told him: Thank you. And from me to your relatives there, when you go [there], greet them for me.

<sup>72</sup> Ali suggests going back with him to Mecca, but Ja'far wishes to take leave of his family first. He must also ask permission of his teacher (122b), since he cannot leave the *chuo*, school, without being allowed. See 79b.

<sup>73</sup> Ja'far has to go to the *chuo*, school, first in order to gain the permission of his teacher. See 79b.

<sup>74</sup> i.e. around 7.00pm.

<sup>75</sup> akampa maneno mazuri, he gave him words of advice.

<sup>76</sup> kuvuli = kulia.

<sup>77</sup> usitake = usije.

<sup>78</sup> Ali gives more directions than the ones here (see 200a/b), but in the event Ja'far forgets them all and almost gets lost in the scrubland (see 202-3).

<sup>79</sup> This seems out of place, since Ja'far has not actually said anything for Ali to reply to. Perhaps we should emend by reading 122, 124, 123, 125.

<sup>80</sup> nduzo < ndugu zako. ndugu can mean "cousin" as well as "brother".

<sup>81</sup> -salimu is used for a person-to-person greeting, and this is the indirect form: "greet them on my behalf".

<sup>82</sup> Ja'far will therefore do what is right and expected of him.

(٧٧) سَلَامُ أَبُو بَكْرٍ \* أَزْوَاجَ نَ ذُرَيَّ \* سُرَّاءَ نَ إِظْهَارٍ \* هُوَ نَوَفَهَمِي

nawafahamiya hao \* izhāri na suzao \* dhuriya na azwāji \* bakari abuu salāmu

<sup>75</sup> (77) salamu abuu bakari \* azwaji<sup>83</sup> na dhuriya \* suzao na idhhari<sup>84</sup> \* hao nawafahamiya<sup>85</sup>

Greetings to Abu Bakr, your wives and children, both close and extended family -- I have heard of them.

(٧٨) بَسِ هَبْ جَعْفَرٍ \* أَكْمَوْمِي كَوْ هِرٍ \* نَ عَلَى حَيْدَرٍ \* مَنْعُ أَكْمَوْمِي

akamuombeya mngu \* haydari 'alii na \* heri kwa akamwambiya \* ja'fari hapo basi

<sup>76</sup> (78) basi hapo ja'fari \* akamwambiya kwa heri \* na 'alii haydari \* mngu akamuombeya<sup>86</sup>

So then Ja'far said goodbye to him, and Ali the Lion-like commended him to God's care.

(٧٩) مُنِنَ كُنْغِي كَوَكٍ \* كَنْدَ كَوَ مَوْلِمٍ وَكٍ \* كَمَبَ هَبَرِ زَكٍ \* كَوَّهَ هَيْسِكِيلِي

hayasikiliya kwao \* zake habari kampa \* wake mwalimu kwa kenda \* kwake kungiya muini

<sup>77</sup> (79) muini kungiya kwake \* kenda kwa mwalimu wake<sup>87</sup> \* kampa habari zake \* kwao hayasikiliya

When [Ja'far] entered his village he went to his teacher's house, and gave him his news -- before going home.

(٨٠) أَكِشَ كُيْنُظُمُ \* أَكَلِي مُعَلِّمُ \* كَمَبَ وَنِطِي هَمُ \* هَيَّ أُمَزْنَمِي

umezonambiya hayo \* hamu waniṭiya kamba \* mu'alimu akaliya \* kuyanuzumu akisha

<sup>78</sup> (80) akisha kuyanudhumu<sup>88</sup> \* akaliya mu'alimu<sup>89</sup> \* kamba wanitiya hamu<sup>90</sup> \* hayo umezonambiya

When he had finished explaining [everything], the teacher wept, and said: You are making me worried with these [things] you have told me.

(٨١) وَنِطِي سَكِيكَ \* نَ وَنِغَ وَ مَوْذِكُ \* وَلَ نَ هُكُ وَنْدَكُ \* سَوَزِ كُكُزِي

kukuziwiya siwezi \* wendako huko na wala \* maudhiko wa wingi na \* sikitiko waniṭiya

<sup>79</sup> (81) wanitiya sikitiko \* na wingi wa maudhiko<sup>91</sup> \* wala na huko wendako \* siwezi kukuziwiya

You are making me sad and and very anxious. Yet that place you are going to -- I cannot keep you back from it.

<sup>83</sup> Azwaj and Zubeir are the two people who were with Abu Bakr when Ja'far met them on the road (174, 175). This part of the story (i.e. how Ja'far came to be at the well) has not been told yet – it is contained in a flashback a little later in the ballad. In Y it would seem that the name Azwaj has been confused with the word for “wife” (understandable in this context), an that *dhuriya*, children, has then been substituted for Zubeir (as making better sense) – note that *dhuriya* does not rhyme.

<sup>84</sup> This reading is uncertain – it seems to mean *nde na ndani*. Perhaps we should adopt that of R, and translate “I know (have heard of) their general qualities”.

<sup>85</sup> -fahamia, know of someone, hear about someone, while not knowing them personally.

<sup>86</sup> lit. “interceded for him to God”. If a parent is punishing a child, and a neighbour is present, the neighbour may plead for the child by saying, *namuombea, namuombea*, I ask mercy for him, I intercede for him. If the child is let off lightly, the neighbour will warn the child not to be naughty again, because he will not plead for him a second time.

<sup>87</sup> These stanzas show the great importance of the teacher in Swahili life. The Islamic teacher is greatly respected and honoured. Ja'far, as a good-mannered child, tells his teacher of his plans even before telling his mother. Among the Swahili, to bring someone his shoes is humiliating, making you look like a servant, but to bring a teacher his shoes is a mark of respect, and not something humiliating. Teachers get prestige, but no money, and the more students they have, the more esteemed they are. It is usual, indeed considered necessary, to stay with the same teacher, and to finish his course of instruction. It is said of one important sheikh that he was forced to move his abode to the next town because of a quarrel. Even though the next town was a fair distance away, all his original students from the first town came to see him there. But after a while, one of them stopped coming. When he next saw this student, the teacher asked him the reason for this, and the student replied that he was prevented from attending the classes because his mother was sick, and, since caring for your parents is a duty in Islam, he had stayed at home to nurse her. The teacher said that because the student was so dutiful he would have a long life, but since he had unfortunately missed the classes he would never be successful in teaching. This prediction turned out to be true.

<sup>88</sup> -nuzumu usually means “compose”, (-tunga), but here it means “explain”, (-eleza).

<sup>89</sup> *anampenda yule mwanafunzi wake*, he is very fond of that pupil of his.

<sup>90</sup> Everybody, even a teacher, is apprehensive about the future.

<sup>91</sup> lit. “you are bringing me sadness and many anxieties”.

(٨٢) سِ رَحْمُ كُئْنَدَن \* نَ هُكُ أَ حَلِّ غَن \* نَاءُ بِيَكُ زَيْن \* نَدِي وَ كُئْنُغَلِي

kuṭanguliya wa ndiye \* ziṭani babako nae \* gani ḥali u huko na \* kuendani raḥimu si

<sup>80</sup> (82) si raḥimu kuendani<sup>92</sup> \* na huko u hali gani \* nae babako zitani \* ndiye wa kutanguliya

*It is not easy to go there, and what sort of situation will you be in there, with your father at war, always in the front line?"*

(٨٣) نَ كُكِكِنْدَ سِتَاك \* كُونِ نِيَوِ نَ هَا \* نِ رَضِ أَلْفُ لَك \* نَ زَيْدِ كِكُوَيِ

kikweteya zaydi na \* laki alfu raḍi ni \* haki ni nayuwa kwani \* sitaki kukikinda na

<sup>81</sup> (83) na kukukinda sitaki<sup>93</sup> \* kwani nayuwa ni haki \* ni radhi<sup>94</sup> alfu laki \* na zaydi kikweteya

*Yet I don't intend to oppose you, because I know it is proper: you have my consent a hundred thousand times, and I give you [even] more [than that].*

(٨٤) أَكْمَوْمِي مَوْلِي \* مَمَكُ أَيْفَهُم \* كَمَجِشَ كَلِم \* كَوَكُ سِيَسِكِلِي

siyasikiliya kwake \* kalimu kamjibisha \* ayafahamu mamako \* mwalimu akamwambiya

<sup>82</sup> (84) akamwambiya mwalimu \* mamako ayafahamu \* kamjibisha ḳaḷaḡu \* kwake siyasikiliya<sup>95</sup>

*The teacher said to him: Is your mother aware of these [things]? And [Ja'far] answered him: "I have not yet gone home.*

(٨٥) كَمَوْمِي إِنْذَ زَك \* أَكْمُولِزِ مَمَك \* أُسَكِرِ مَمَك \* نَاءُ تَكَلْكَومِي

takalokwambiya nae \* matamko usikize \* mamako ukamuulize \* zako enda kamwambiya

<sup>83</sup> (85) kamwambiya enda zako \* ukamuulize mamako<sup>96</sup> \* usikize matamko \* nae takalokwambiya

*And [the teacher] told him: Off you go, and ask your mother. Pay heed to the things that she will tell you.*

(٨٦) كِشَ هِي كَلِم \* هَپْ نَدِي كَيْنْدَم \* مِي أَنْ هَلِمَم \* كَو مَمَكُ أَكْنِغِي

akingiya mamake kwa \* halimama una moyo \* kayandama ndiya hapo \* kalima hiyo akisha

<sup>84</sup> (86) akisha hiyo kalima \* hapo ndiya kayandama \* moyo una halimama<sup>97</sup> \* kwa mamake akingiya

*Once [the teacher] had finished these words, [Ja'far] then continued on his way. His heart was heavy as he went in to his mother's [house].*

(٨٧) كِنْغِي كَوَكُ كِب \* كَو أُيْلَ نَ تَرْتِب \* مَمَكُ كَتْعَجَب \* جَعْفَرِ أَكْمَوْمِي

akamwambiya ja'fari \* kata'ajabu mamake \* taratibu na upole kwa \* kibu kaweka kingiya

<sup>85</sup> (87) kingiya kaweka kibu<sup>98</sup> \* kwa upole na taratibu<sup>99</sup> \* mamake kata'ajabu \* ja'fari akamwambiya

*When he went in he put his stick away quietly and carefully. His mother was surprised, and spoke to Ja'far.*

<sup>92</sup>i.e. the journey is dangerous.

<sup>93</sup>sitaki kushinda na wewe.

<sup>94</sup>radi, consent, blessing, is of great importance to a person, whether it be from his mother, his father, or his teacher. People will become afraid if any of these three persons withhold their radi, since it is held that without radi you cannot prosper – anything you set your hand to will be blighted and fail. The teacher here gives Ja'far his radi – if he had not given it, Ja'far would not have gone – and says that not only will he give his complete consent, but also (83d) that he will not change his mind once Ja'far has gone.

<sup>95</sup>Amu -sika = fika. Compare -sita / fita.

<sup>96</sup>The teacher is teaching Ja'far obedience to his mother.

<sup>97</sup>halimama = wasiwasi.

<sup>98</sup>fimbo ya mbuzi?

<sup>99</sup>Ja'far is trying to sneak back into the house. He is apprehensive about what he is going to tell his mother, and is also hurt that she did not tell him the full story about his past (100-101).



(٨٨) كَمَب سَو جَعْفَر \* وَتُونَش جَوْر \* هُنْغِي كَم كَو سِر \* مْتُ أَمَزْ كِمْبِي

amezokimbiya mṭu \* siri kwa kama hungiya \* jawri waṭuonesha \* ja'fari siwe kamba

<sup>86</sup> (88) kamba siwe ja'fari \* watuonesha jeṭuri \* hungiya kama kwa siri \* mtu amezokimbiya<sup>100</sup>

She said: That's not [like] you, Ja'far -- are you being insolent to us, entering as if secretly, [like] a person who has run away [and is trying to hide]?

(٨٩) نَاصِرِ نِ نَدُغْ يَك \* پَ هَپْ أَتْمَك \* عَيْنِ يَ مَتْ يَك \* هَتَكِ كُتُونْغَلِي

kuṭwangaliya hataki \* yake mato ya 'ayni \* atamke hapo papo \* yake ndugu ni nāsiri

<sup>87</sup> (89) nasiri ni ndugu yake \* papo hapo atamke \* aṇa ya mato yake \* hataki kutwangaliya

Nasir was [Ja'far's] brother, and at that moment he spoke up: To judge by his eyes, he doesn't want to look at us.

(٩٠) اَو مَم سُوذِك \* تَكُومِي حُجْ يَك \* يُوْ اَنْ مَبِرْ وَك \* وَوِلْ وَمَيْتِي

wamepoteya wawili \* wake mbuzi una yeo \* yake huja takwambiya \* siudhike mama ewe

<sup>88</sup> (90) ewe<sup>101</sup> mama siudhike \* takwambiya huja yake<sup>102</sup> \* yeo una mbuzi wake \* wawili wamepoteya

Don't worry, mother -- I'll tell you the reason: today he was with his goats, [and] two of them went missing.

(٩١) وَمَتَكَ صَفْنِ \* مَوْتَنَغْ هَوُونِ \* كِشْ أَتَكَ مَوْتُنِ \* يُوْ نِ كَلِ لَ نَدِي

ndiya la kali ni yuwa \* mwiṭuni atoka kisha \* hawaoni mewatanga \* safuni wametoka

<sup>89</sup> (91) wametoka safuni \* mewatanga<sup>103</sup> hawaoni \* kisha atoka mwiṭuni \* yuwa ni kali la ndiya

They left the herd, they went off and he couldn't find them. And of course he is coming back from the forest -- the sun is fierce on the way.

(٩٢) كَتْنُكْ جَعْفَر \* أَكْمَبِجْ نَاصِر \* زَتَكْتَكْ جَوْر \* يُوْ نِكُوتُونْغَلِي

nikikwangaliya yeo \* jeuri zitakutoka \* nāsiri akampiḡa \* ja'fari kainuka

<sup>90</sup> (92) kainuka ja'fari \* akampiḡa nasiri \* zitakutoka jeuri \* yeo nikikwangaliya<sup>104</sup>

Ja'far got up and hit Nasir: Your impudence will leave you today, I'll see to it.

(٩٣) هَپْ مَمَ أُسَكِر \* كَمَشِكْ جَعْفَر \* اَوِپْ نِ مِي نَاصِر \* هَپْ سِنْغَلِكِمْبِي

singelikimbiya hapo \* nāsiri mii ni iwapo \* ja'fari kamshika \* asikiri mama hapo

<sup>91</sup> (93) hapo mama asikiri \* kamshika ja'fari \* iwapo ni mii nasiri \* hapo singelikimbiya<sup>105</sup>

But his mother would have none of that, and grabbed Ja'far [and said to Nasir:] If I were you, Nasir, I would not have run away just now.

<sup>100</sup> anajifita, he is hiding himself.

<sup>101</sup> = wewe.

<sup>102</sup> Nasir teases Ja'far, saying that he knows why Ja'far is quiet: (1) he lost two of the goats he was herding (90d), which would be a shameful thing, and (2) he is not strong enough to put up with the warmth of the day (91d).

<sup>103</sup> -tanga, scatter, spread out.

<sup>104</sup> If someone is impudent, and you try to remind him that he should behave better by asking him where his manners are, he may say: zimeningia kwa huku, zimetoka kwa huku, they came into me here, and went out there, that is, they went in one ear and out the other. If this is too much for the other person, he may say, like Ja'far: zitakutoka jeuri, zitakuingia adabu, your insolence will leave you, and good manners will enter you, and proceed to teach him a lesson, after which he may say, if successful: umekwisha pata adabu, you have finished getting manners, that is, I've taught you a lesson.

<sup>105</sup> i.e. don't run away from a fight.



(٩٤) نَاصِرِ نِ نَدُغُ يَكُ \* مُوَنَنْغُ مُتُّ وَكُ \* كِشَ نِ عَوْنِ يَكُ \* وَتَ كُمْتَانْغُلِيَا

kumtanguliya wata \* yako 'awni ni kisha \* wako mtofo mwanangu \* yako ndugu ni nāsiri

<sup>92</sup> (94) nasiri ni ndugu yako \* mwanangu mtoto<sup>106</sup> wako \* kisha ni 'auni yako \* wata<sup>107</sup> kumtanguliya  
[To Jaafar she said:] "Nasir is your brother, my son, your younger brother -- you can depend on him [when you need help], so do not attack him.

(٩٥) اَلْنَمِي تِنِ \* اَكُوْلَزُو هَنِنِ \* يَمَكُطَ مُوْنَدَنِ \* هَيِ نِمَزَكُوْمَبِي

nimezokwambiya haya \* mwendani yamekupaṭa \* haneni akiulizwa \* tini aliinamiya

<sup>93</sup> (95) aliinamiya tini \* akiulizwa haneni \* yamekupata mwendani \* haya nimezokwambiya<sup>108</sup>  
[Ja'far] lay down -- he did not answer when spoken to. [Nasir said:] "It was right on the mark, my friend, what I said to you."

(٩٦) هَبْ مَمَكُ اَجِبْ \* نَاصِرِ هُتَادُبْ \* كَوِ وُو نِ هَرَبْ \* نَمِ نَيُو طَبِي

tabiya nayuwa nami \* harabu ni wewe kiwa \* hutaadabu nāsiri \* ajibu mamake hapo

<sup>94</sup> (96) hapo mamake ajibu \* nasiri hutaadabu \* kiwa wewe ni harabu \* nami nayuwa tabiya  
Then his mother retorted: You are ill-mannered, Nasir -- when you are being naughty I can tell from your behaviour.

(٩٧) نَتَكَ زَكُ هَبِرْ \* هَيِ نِبْ جَعْفَرِ \* اُسْ اُسِمَمِ هَرِ \* صُوْرَ زِمَكُطِيَا

zimekupoteya šūra \* hari usimeme uso \* ja'fari nipa haya \* habari zako nataka

<sup>95</sup> (97) nataka zako habari \* haya nipa ja'fari<sup>109</sup> \* uso usimeme hari<sup>110</sup> \* sura zimekupoteya<sup>111</sup>  
[She told Ja'far:] I want [to hear] your news, tell it to me, Ja'far. Your face is flushed, and you are not your ordinary self.

(٩٨) جَعْفَرِ اَكْبَيْنِ \* وَتَكَ هَبِرْ غَنِ \* نِكُوْمَبِي لُغْ غَنِ \* كَوُكُ اِوِ نِ بِي

piya ni iwe kwako \* gani lugha nikwambiye \* gani habari wataka \* akabaini ja'fari

<sup>96</sup> (98) ja'fari akabaini<sup>112</sup> \* wataka habari gani \* nikwambiye lugha gani \* kwako iwe<sup>113</sup> ni piya<sup>114</sup>  
Ja'far said: What news do you want? In what language should I tell you, so that it will be new to you?

(٩٩) كِكُوْمَبِي كِعَرَبْ \* نَيُو اُتَنْجَبْ \* تَنْ نَوْنِ عَجَبْ \* مِمِ مُوْنِيُو كِكُوْمَبِي

kukwambiya mwenyewe mimi \* 'ajabu naona tena \* utanjibu nayuwa \* ki'arabu kikwambiya

<sup>97</sup> (99) kikwambiya ki'arabu \* nayuwa utanjibu \* tena naona 'ajabu \* mimi mwenyewe kukwambiya  
If I tell you in Arabic I know you will answer: "I am perplexed again" [even if] I myself tell you.

(١٠٠) كِكُوْلَزِ اَلِكُ \* بَبْ هُنْمَبِي هَكُ \* تَنْغُ نِنِ مِمْبَ يَكُ \* اَلْفَرِكُ دُنِيَا

duniya alifariki \* yako mimba nina tangu \* hako hunambiya baba \* aliko kikuuliza

<sup>98</sup> (100) kikuuliza aliko \* baba hunambiya hako<sup>115</sup> \* tangu nina mimba yako \* alifariki duniya  
If I ask you [whether] he is alive, my father, you tell me he is not: "When I was still pregnant with you he passed away from this time.

<sup>106</sup>Mvita mdogo, small = Amu mtoto = Gunya mdodi.

<sup>107</sup>Perhaps emend to kumshanguliya. The mother tells Ja'far not to hit Nasir, because he was not serious and he was only teasing. She also reminds him that blood is thicker than water, and that in the last resort your family is your best friend.

<sup>108</sup>Nasir says that his words have affected Ja'far, so there must have been some truth in them. But the mother stops his teasing this time.

<sup>109</sup>She knows something has happened.

<sup>110</sup>hari = jasho.

<sup>111</sup>lit. "[your] features have changed". -poteya here = -geuka, -badilika.

<sup>112</sup>-baini = -sema.

<sup>113</sup>Ja'far is angry that his mother hid the truth about his father from him.

<sup>114</sup>Amu piya = Mvita mpya.

<sup>115</sup>hako is the negative form of yuko, he is there, just as siko is the negative form of niko, I am there.

this world."

(١٠١) كِكُومَبِي يُمْنِ \* أَتَغُوزَ مَنَعْنِ \* أَتَمَبِي وَفْنِ \* خَيْرَ كُنَيْمَزِي

kuinyamaziya khēri \* wafene utanambiya \* mangine utageuza \* yumuini kikwamibiya

<sup>99</sup> (101) kikwamibiya yumuini<sup>116</sup> \* utageuza mangine \* utanambiya wafene \* heri kuinyamaziya  
If I tell you he is in the town, you will change to other [words] -- you will tell me [I've seen someone who] looks like him, and  
it's better to keep quiet about it.

(١٠٢) وَوِهُيَوَ فَرَسِ \* وَلَ مَكَّهَ هُكُيسِ \* وَنَدَلِپِ مَجَلِسِ \* أَكْمُونِ عَلِي

'aliya ukamuona \* majlisi wendelepi \* hukuisi makah wala \* farisi huyawa wewe

<sup>100</sup> (102) wewe huyawa<sup>117</sup> farisi<sup>118</sup> \* wala makah hukuisi \* wendelepi majlisi<sup>119</sup> \* ukamuona 'aliya<sup>120</sup>  
[His mother said:] You are not worldly-wise, nor do you know Mecca -- where did you go among people, that you saw Ali?"

(١٠٣) جَعْفَرِ كَبَيْنِ \* ثُمُونَنَ مَوْتِنِ \* صِفَ زَكِ مُعَيْنِ \* أَكْتَكِ تَكُومَبِي

takwamibiya ukitaka \* mu'ayani zake şifa \* mwiṭuni tumeonana \* kabaini ja'fari

<sup>101</sup> (103) ja'fari kabaini \* tumeonana mwiṭuni \* şifa zake mu'ayani \* ukitaka takwamibiya  
Jaafar said: We met in the forest -- a clear description, if you want it, I will tell you.

(١٠٤) نِسَكِرَ نِرَدِدِ \* كَوِ سِيْ اُنُرْدِ \* كِمَ چَكِ هَكِرِدِ \* كَمَ چَنُغِ اَنَغَلِي

angaliya changu kama \* hakizidi chake kimo \* unirudi siyo kiwa \* niradidi nisikiza

<sup>102</sup> (104) nisikiza niradidi \* kiwa siyo unirudi \* kimo chake hakizidi<sup>121</sup> \* kama changu angaliya  
Listen to me, let me speak -- if it is not him, correct me -- his height is not much taller than my own, look.

(١٠٥) نَ لَ پِلِ نَبَيْنِ \* نَبِيْ زَكِ زَ كَتُونِ \* هَكُمَيِ اُپَانِ \* نَ كَمَ سِيْ نَمَبِي

nambiya siyo kama na \* upaāni hakumeya \* kitwani za zake nyee \* nibaini pili la na

<sup>103</sup> (105) na la pili nibaini \* nyee zake za kitwani \* hakumeya upaani<sup>122</sup> \* na kama siyo nambiya  
And let me tell you the second thing: the hair on his head does not cover his bald patch, and if that is not so, tell me.

(١٠٦) نَ يَ ثَاثُ اُفْهَمُ \* اُنَ تُنْدِي كُرْمُ \* صِفَ زَكِ زَمَتِمُ \* نَ هِزِ نِمَكُومَبِي

nimekwamibiya hizo ni \* zemetimu zake şifa \* kuzimu ya tundu una \* ufahamu ṭāṭu ya na

<sup>104</sup> (106) na ya tatu ufahamu \* una tundu ya kuzimu<sup>123</sup> \* şifa zake zemetimu \* ni hizo nimekwamibiya  
And know the third thing: he has a hole [leading to the] Underworld (?). His description is complete -- it consists of these  
things that I have told you.

<sup>116</sup> i.e. that he has seen someone who might be his father.

<sup>117</sup> < kuwa.

<sup>118</sup> farisi, clever, skilful, originally meant "horseman, rider", for which skill is necessary. Compare farasi, horse, 162b.

<sup>119</sup> majlisi = baraza: a meeting-place where men gather to chat and pass the time.

<sup>120</sup> i.e. your daily life does not take you to the sorts of places where you might meet Ali.

<sup>121</sup> See note to 67c. People believe anecdotes about famous people, even if they are not likely or academically proven – as the many magazines retailing celebrity gossip can attest.

<sup>122</sup> lit. "does not grow on the bald patch [that he has]". ana upaa [mkubwa], he's bald.

<sup>123</sup> The meaning of this line is unclear. tundu means "hole, pit", and kuzimu means "the Underworld" – (kuzimu hakuna nyota, in the Underworld there are no stars) – but the implication here is obscure.

(١٠٧) نِ رَعُوفٌ وَ مَنَنْ \* كِشَ نِ جَعِنَ مَنْ \* نَ أَكْتَكَ مَفَنْ \* هُنْ نِمَكُپِجِي

nimekupijiya hunu \* mfano ukitaka na \* mno jagina ni kisha \* maneno wa ra'ufu ni  
<sup>105</sup> (107) ni ra'ufu<sup>124</sup> wa maneno \* kisha ni jagina<sup>125</sup> mno \* na ukitaka mfano<sup>126</sup> \* hunu nimekupijiya  
*He is courteous of speech, and further, he is a great warrior. If you want a likeness of him, I have given you this one.*

(١٠٨) هَيْ أُنْمِزِيُوْ \* نِ كُولِ نَدِيْ يَلِيْ \* نِپَ جِنْسِ يَوِءُوْ \* هَتَ كُمْفَاهِمِيْ

kumfahamiya hata \* yaweeo jinsi nipa \* yaliyo ndiyo kweli ni \* unambiziyeo hayo  
<sup>106</sup> (108) hayo unambiziyeo \* ni kweli ndiyo yaliyo \* nipa jinsi yaweeo<sup>127</sup> \* hata kumfahamiya  
*[His mother said:] These things you have told me are indeed exactly correct. Tell me how it was that you came to recognise him."*

(١٠٩) تَكُپْ تَنْغُ أُولِ \* هِكْ چَكْ نِ ثَقِلِ \* كِتَنْغَ مَاءِ نِ غَالِ \* نِكْتَكَسَ نِ نَدِيْ

ndiya na nikatakasa \* ghali ni mai kitanga \* thaqili ni chaka hiki \* awali tangu takupa  
<sup>107</sup> (109) takupa tangu awali \* hiki<sup>128</sup> chaka<sup>129</sup> ni thaqili<sup>130</sup> \* kitanga mai ni ghali \* nikatakasa na ndiya<sup>131</sup>  
*[Jaafar said:] "I will give you [the whole story] from the beginning. This drought was severe, and wandering around [looking for] water was difficult, so I travelled further afield.*

(١١٠) صَدِيقِ يَنْغُ قَوْلِ \* نِمَتَنْغَ بَرِ هِلِ \* مَاءِ هَپَنَ مَهَلِ \* نِ خَيْرِ كَيْرِدِيْ

kairudiya khēri ni \* mahali hapana mai \* hili bara nimetanga \* qawli yangu šadiqi  
<sup>108</sup> (110) šadiqi yangu qauli \* nimetanga bara hili \* mai hapana mahali \* ni heri kairudiya  
*Believe my words: I wandered around in the hinterland, but there was no water anywhere, [and I thought] I'd better come back.*

(١١١) هِنْدَ هَوَزَ مُيْنِ \* نِنَنْدَ جَنْبِ غَنِ \* كُوْنَ وَتْ وَنْغَنِ \* وَتْ وَنْدَمَ نَدِيْ

ndiya wendeme waṭaṭu \* wengine waṭu kuona \* gani janibu nenende \* moyoni hiwaza henda  
<sup>109</sup> (111) henda hiwaza moyoni \* ninende janibu<sup>132</sup> gani \* kaona watu wengine<sup>133</sup> \* watatu wendeme  
 ndiya<sup>134</sup>  
*As I went along, pondering in my heart which direction I should take, I saw some people, three of them, coming along the road.*

(١١٢) كَوَعْنَ وَكْ مَبِلِ \* كَنْنَ تَتْمُهْلِ \* مَرَّ نِكِوَصِلِ \* مَاءِ وَتَنْمَبِيْ

watanambiya mai \* nikiwašili mara \* taimuhuli kanena \* mbali wako kawaona  
<sup>110</sup> (112) kawaona wako mbali \* kanena<sup>135</sup> taimuhuli<sup>136</sup> \* mara<sup>137</sup> wakiwašili \* mai watanambiya  
*I saw them when they were far off, and I said to myself that I should wait -- once they get here they can tell me [where to find] water."*

<sup>124</sup> = taratibu, polite.

<sup>125</sup> See 67c.

<sup>126</sup> -piga mfano, give an example of.

<sup>127</sup> Amu yaweeo = Mvita yalivyokuwa.

<sup>128</sup> hiki implies that the mother knows what drought he is referring to, i.e. she has experienced it too.

<sup>129</sup> chaka < -waka, burn.

<sup>130</sup> Because of this, Ja'far had to travel farther than normal with his goats to find water, and this led to his meeting up with Ali.

<sup>131</sup> This comes very close to the English expression "hit the road". -takasa, stride along making a noise when your feet hit the ground.

<sup>132</sup> janibu = upande.

<sup>133</sup> Or we could emend to wageni, strangers.

<sup>134</sup> The three of them were walking along moja kwa moja in Indian file - see the note on -andama.

<sup>135</sup> Note that -nena, speak, say, here means "intend".

<sup>136</sup> -i-muhuli = -ji-ngojesha.

<sup>137</sup> mara here = pengine.

(١١٣) پَن كِفْل كَنَس \* هَت نَاء وَكَيْت \* نَوْن وَكَس \* سَلَام كَوِيسِي

kawapisiya salāmu \* wakinusa niwawene \* wakapiṭa nao hata \* kinyesa kivuli pana

<sup>111</sup> (113) pana kivuli kinyesa \* hata nao wakapita \* niwawene wakīṭuṣa \* salamu kawapisiya<sup>138</sup>

Waiting (?) there in the shade until they had passed, when I had seen them go by I greeted them.

(١١٤) كَمَب مَوْنَدَب مَت \* هَل ن كِنُغ كَ \* هَل نَدْن مُكَيْت \* لَيْط كِنْدُكِي

kupindukiya lipaṭe \* mukēti ndoni hela \* kaṭi kipungu ni hiki \* matiti mwendapi kamba

<sup>112</sup> (114) kamba mwendapi matiti<sup>139</sup> \* hiki ni kipungu kati<sup>140</sup> \* hela<sup>141</sup> ndoni muketi \* lipate kupindukiya<sup>142</sup>

I said: Where are you going in such a hurry? This is high noon -- why don't you come and sit down until the sun goes down a bit?

(١١٥) ن هِل يُو س زُر \* كُنْدَم ن حَطَر \* وَل زُو س أَخِر \* كَم مُتَلِمَتِي

mutalimaṭiya kama \* akhiri si zeo wala \* khaṭari ni kulandama \* zuri si yuwa hili na

<sup>113</sup> (115) na hili yuwa si zuri<sup>143</sup> \* kulandama<sup>144</sup> ni hatari \* wala zeo<sup>145</sup> si ahiri<sup>146</sup> \* kama mutalimaṭiya<sup>147</sup>

You should know that this [sun] is not good [for you] -- to go about in it [for long] is dangerous, nor is the time so late that you will be delayed [if you stop here]."

(١١٦) وَكِسِي كَلِم \* وَكَزُنْغِي نِيَم \* وَوَل وَكَسَم \* مَمِي كَنِيَلِي

kaniiliya mmoya \* wakasimama wawili \* nyuma wakizungukiya \* kalima wakisikiya

<sup>114</sup> (116) wakisikiya kalima \* wakizungukiya nyuma \* wawili wakasimama \* mmoya kaniiliya

When they heard my words, they turned round. Two stood where they were, and one came up to me.

(١١٧) أَكْج أَكْبَن \* كَنُوز نَدُو نَن \* أُو وَتَكِين \* حَطَر كُفِيَكِي

kuṭufikiya khaṭari \* waṭutakiyani aw \* nani ndiwe kaniuza \* akabaini akija

<sup>115</sup> (117) akija akabaini \* kaniuza ndiwe nani<sup>148</sup> \* au watutakiyani \* hatari kuṭufikiya

When he came over he spoke, and asked me: Who are you? And why are you concerned about us, and about danger coming to us?

(١١٨) سِس هُشِك يَك \* وَل س نَدُغ زَك \* أُتِي مَتَمَك \* يَسِن كُتُومَبِي

kuṭwambiya yapeseni \* matamko uetayo \* zako ndugu si wala \* yako haṭushiki sisi

<sup>116</sup> (118) sisi hatushiki yako<sup>149</sup> \* wala si ndugu zako<sup>150</sup> \* uetayo matamko \* yapeseni<sup>151</sup> kutwambiya

We will not take your [advice] -- we are not relatives of yours. The words you have spoken, what good is it to tell us them?"

<sup>138</sup> Amu -pisa salamu = Mvita -toa salamu. The greeting salaam alekum is used only to groups of more than one person.

<sup>139</sup> kama Wazungu, like Europeans!

<sup>140</sup> kipungu-kati = mti-kati, saa sita, jua kali.

<sup>141</sup> Amu hela = Mvita hebu. Ja'far's invitation to the three men is not as polite as it might be, which partly accounts for their response.

<sup>142</sup> We are to understand jua. -pindukia is lit. "change direction", i.e. the sun ascends through the sky until noon, and then begins to decline.

<sup>143</sup> Even though he is only a child, Ja'far gives advice to the men.

<sup>144</sup> -andama = -fuata. See 34d.

<sup>145</sup> Amu zeo, 9/10 = Mvita wakati. Compare njeo in Muyaka.

<sup>146</sup> lit. "end".

<sup>147</sup> -limatiya = -chelewa. In other words, if they stop for a bit, they will not arrive at their destination so late that they will sleep in the next morning.

<sup>148</sup> This is a rude response. They are suspicious because he is being over-familiar, and yet they do not know him.

<sup>149</sup> We understand maneno. This is very rude. There is a saying: usishike maneno ya wanawake, don't take the word of women.

<sup>150</sup> Again, very rude.

<sup>151</sup> ilifaa vipi. -pasa, be obliged to, have to.

(١١٩) وَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا \* مِنْ مَّقْتَرَفِهِمْ \* أَن يُعَذِّبَهُمُ اللَّهُ \* وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ الْكُتُبُ

tabiya tuyuwe kwanda \* tukufahamu twambiye \* qawmu mpoteza ni \* adamu mwana ni wewe  
117 (119) wewe shi mwana adamu \* ni mpoteza qawmu<sup>152</sup> \* twambiye tukufahamu \* kwanda tuyuwe tabiya  
You are not a human being, you are [a spirit] who makes people lose their way. Tell us so that we can know you, let us first  
know your character.

(١٢٠) كَوَجَّهْتُمْ وَجْهَكُمْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ \* وَكُنْتُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ أَكْثَرُ مُبْغِضِينَ \* وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْقَائِلِينَ

nondokeya zangu mbele \* jahili ni wewe kiwa \* rasuli yake dini ni \* qawli kawajibisha  
118 (120) kawajibisha qauli \* ni dini yake rasuli \* kiwa wewe ni jahili<sup>153</sup> \* mbele zangu nondokeya  
I answered them with the words: [My religion] is the religion of the Prophet --- if you are an unbeliever, go away from in front  
of me.

(١٢١) وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مَا يَمْضِي وَأَيُّهَا قَوْمُ لَيْلَى \* وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مَا يَمْضِي وَأَيُّهَا قَوْمُ لَيْلَى

wakaya wawili wote \* zubayri na wewe ndoo \* bakari abuu humwiya \* hufasiri kasikiya  
119 (121) kasikiya hufasiri \* humwita abuu bakari \* ndoo wewe na zubayri<sup>154</sup> \* wote wawili wakaya  
And I heard him speak and call: "Abu Bakr, come here, and you Zubeir! And both of them came over.

(١٢٢) وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مَا يَمْضِي وَأَيُّهَا قَوْمُ لَيْلَى \* وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مَا يَمْضِي وَأَيُّهَا قَوْمُ لَيْلَى

nabiya wake wajhi \* mukimfahama kamba \* wakanitizama uso \* wakasimama wakaya  
120 (122) wakaya wakasimama \* uso wakanitizama \* kamba mukimfahama \* wajhi<sup>155</sup> wake nabiya  
They came over and stood, and looked at my face. [The first man] said: When you look at him closely, his face [resembles] the  
Prophet's.

(١٢٣) وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مَا يَمْضِي وَأَيُّهَا قَوْمُ لَيْلَى \* وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مَا يَمْضِي وَأَيُّهَا قَوْمُ لَيْلَى

hunangaliya wote kwa \* wameta'ajabu mama \* talibu bin 'alii \* hunijibu husikiya  
121 (123) husikiya<sup>156</sup> hunijibu \* 'alii bin talibu \* mama<sup>157</sup> wameta'ajabu \* kwa wote hunangaliya  
When [the others] heard this, [they said:] He reminds me of Ali ibn Talib. Impossible!, they [said] in amazement, as they all  
stared at me.

(١٢٤) وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مَا يَمْضِي وَأَيُّهَا قَوْمُ لَيْلَى \* وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مَا يَمْضِي وَأَيُّهَا قَوْمُ لَيْلَى

tukalisikiya ina \* hufasiri lako nawe \* zuberi huitwa hoyo na \* bakari abuu ni hoyo  
122 (124) hoyo ni abuu bakari \* na hoyo huitwa zuberi \* nawe lako hufasiri<sup>158</sup> \* ina tukalisikiya  
This is Abu Bakr, [said the first man], and this is Zubeir. But you have not spoken your name for us to hear it.

(١٢٥) وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مَا يَمْضِي وَأَيُّهَا قَوْمُ لَيْلَى \* وَكَذَلِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مَا يَمْضِي وَأَيُّهَا قَوْمُ لَيْلَى

nambiya lako ina na \* nataraji sasa nami \* azwaji huitwa mimi \* mbuji akatamka  
123 (125) akatamka mbuji \* mimi huitwa azwaji<sup>159</sup> \* nami sasa nataraji \* na ina lako nambiya  
This gentleman spoke: I am called Azwaj, and I now hope [you] will tell me your name too.

<sup>152</sup> i.e. a jinn or the Devil.

<sup>153</sup> jahili, someone ignorant of the truth, in this case of Islam.

<sup>154</sup> Abu Bakr and Zubeir are two of the masahaba, the Companions of the Prophet.

<sup>155</sup> wajhi = uso.

<sup>156</sup> hu- here = waka-.

<sup>157</sup> mama! is an expression of disbelief.

<sup>158</sup> mbona husemi?, why aren't you speaking?.

<sup>159</sup> azwaji is literally "a couple", so this name is strange.

(١٢٦) كَوْمِي نِمَكِرِ \* نَمِ إِنَّ كُفْسِرِ \* مِمِ نَدِي جَعْفَرِ \* وَ مَوْلَانَا عَلِيَّ

'aliya māwlanā wa \* ja'fari ndiye mimi \* kufasiri ina nami \* nimekiri kawambiya

<sup>124</sup> (126) kawambiya nimekiri \* nami ina kufasiri \* mimi ndiye ja'fari \* wa maulana 'aliyaU+0651

And I told them: I have decided to speak my name too. I am Ja'far, [son] of Lord Ali.

(١٢٧) وَنُؤُزُ تَرْتَبُ \* وَنَدُءُ وَبِ غَرِيبُ \* هَپْ مَمِ كَوَجِبُ \* نِتَكَلُ كَوْمِي

kawambiya nitakalo \* kawajibu mama hapo \* gharibu wapi wendao \* taratibu waniuze

<sup>125</sup> (127) waniuze taratibu \* wendao wapi gharibu<sup>160</sup> \* hapo mama kawajibu \* nitakalo kawambiya

And they asked me politely, Where are you going, stranger? Then, Mother, I answered them: telling them what I had [earlier] intended.

(١٢٨) نِمَتَنُغَ مَاءِ بَرَنِ \* نِمِچْكَ سِيَّوْنِ \* مُبِزُ وَمَلِشَ يَنْ \* سَسَ كُيْتِ هَلِي

haliya kuyuta sasa \* yani wamelisha mbuzi \* siyaoni nimechoka \* barani mai nimetanga

<sup>126</sup> (128) nimetanga mai barani \* nimechoka siyaoni \* mbuzi wamelisha yani \* sasa kwa nyota haliya

I have wandered about [searching for] water in the scrubland -- I am tired and I still haven't seen any. The goats have eaten all the grass, and now they are bleating for want of water.

(١٢٩) هُكُ مَمَزِيطَ \* مَاءِ هَمَكِيكُتَ \* مُبِزُ وَنُغَ وَنَ نِيْتُ \* چَمَبَ مَوِيُو نَمِي

nambiya mwayuwa chamba \* nyota wana wangu mbuzi \* hamkuyakuta mai \* mmezopita huko

<sup>127</sup> (129) huko mmezopita \* mai hamkuyakuta \* mbuzi wangu wana nyota \* chamba mwayuwa nambiya

In that area you've passed through, have you not come upon any water there? My goats are thirsty -- if you know of [a well], tell me."

(١٣٠) وَكَنَجِبُ قَوْلُ \* كَوْمَبِ كِسِمَ سِ مَبِلَ \* لَكِنْ كَنْ ثَقِلَ \* هِي نَدُو كُيْتِي

kuitiya ndoo hiyo \* thaqili kina lakini \* mbali si kisima kwamba \* qawli wakanijibu

<sup>128</sup> (130) wakanijibu qauli \* kwamba kisima si mbali \* lakini kina thaqili \* hiyo ndoo kuitiya<sup>161</sup>

They answered me with word that there was a well not far away. But, [they said,] it is difficult to put the bucket into it.

(١٣١) هِي مَاءِ نِ مَتَمُ \* مَفَنُ وَ زَمَزَمُ \* لَكِنْ سِسِ فَهَمُ \* كُكُونِي هُچَلِي

hucheleya kukuonya \* fahamu sisi lakini \* zamzamu wa mfano \* matamu ni mai hayo

<sup>129</sup> (131) hayo mai ni matamu \* mfano wa zamzamu<sup>162</sup> \* lakini sisi fahamu \* kukuonya hucheleya<sup>163</sup>

The water is sweet, just like Zamzam's, but we, you understand, are afraid to show it to you.

(١٣٢) أَوُپُ أُمِحْتَرِ \* كُكُيْكَ تُتِيرِ \* وَلَ أُسُفْسِرِ \* نِ سِسِ تُلُكُومِي

tolokwambiya sisi ni \* usitufasiri wala \* tutayari kukupeka \* umekhitari uwapo

<sup>130</sup> (132) uwapo umehitari \* kukupeka tutayari \* wala usitufasiri \* ni sisi tulokwambiya

If you want to risk it, we are ready to take you there, but do not mention us, [that] it was us who told you [about it].

<sup>160</sup> gharibu = mgeni.

<sup>161</sup> Because Ali has covered it up.

<sup>162</sup> Zamzam is a sacred spring in Mecca, situated close to the Ka'aba.

<sup>163</sup> tunaogopa. Because they are not sure how Ali will react to someone else using the well.

(١٣٣) وَكَيْنُونِي أُسَيْتَ \* هَبْ نَدِي كَفُوتَ \* كَو مُوْتُنْ وَكَيْتَ \* مَبِي وَكَيْتَلِي

wakanitoleya mbiyo \* wakapiṭa mwiṭuni kwa \* kafuwaṭa ndiya hapo \* usiṭa wakanionya

<sup>131</sup> (133) wakanionya usita<sup>164</sup> \* hapo ndiya kafuwata \* kwa mwituni wakapita \* mḃee wakanitoleya<sup>165</sup>

They showed me the way, and then I followed the path. They went into the forest, and directed me onwards.

(١٣٤) هَتَ كِدُسَ كِسِمَ \* لِبَ بَاءَ كَسُكُمَ \* كَو كَوْفُ كُتِزَمَ \* وَءَ هُنْغَلِي

huniangaliya wao \* kutizama kiwavu kwa \* kasukuma bao lipo \* kisima kidusa hata

<sup>132</sup> (134) hata kidosa<sup>166</sup> kisima \* lipo bao kasukuma \* kwa kiwavu kutizama<sup>167</sup> \* wao huniangaliya

Until, when I came to the well, there was a plank there that I pushed away. They watched me from one side, looking at me.

(١٣٥) جَعْفَرِ أَتَمَكْ \* بُو بَكَرِ سِشُتُكْ \* كِسِمَ سِكْفُنِكْ \* نِتَرْدُ كُكُومَبِي

kukwambiya nitarudi \* sikifunike kisima \* sishutuke bakari buu \* atamke ja'fari

<sup>133</sup> (135) ja'fari atamke<sup>168</sup> \* buu bakari sishutuke \* kisima sikifunike \* nitarudi ṇakwambiya<sup>169</sup>

Ja'far said: Abu Bakr, do not worry -- do not cover the well. I will return, I tell you.

(١٣٦) سِنَ خَوْفُ مِي وَنْعُ \* كُنُو مَاءِ مَبِزِ وَنْعُ \* كَنَ نَنْدَ زَنْعُ \* نَزِتَكَسَ نَ نَدِي

ndiya na nizitakase \* zangu nenda kanena \* wangu mbuzi mai kunwa \* wangu moyo khōfu sina

<sup>134</sup> (136) sina hofu moyo wangu \* kunwa mai mbuzi wangu \* kanena nenda zangu \* nizitakase<sup>170</sup> na ndiya

I have no fear [in] my heart that my goats should drink the water. I said: I am going now, so that I can herd them along the road."

(١٣٧) يُو كُكِيْمَبُوكْ \* نِنَ فُرَهَ هُتَا \* مَلِشَنَ كُوپَا \* مُدَ وَ يُو كُوَا

kuwaa yuwa wa muda \* kiwapeka malishoni \* huteka furaha nina \* kukipambauka yuwa

<sup>135</sup> (137) yuwa kukipambauka \* nina furaha huteka \* malishoni kiwapeka \* muda wa yuwa kuwaa<sup>171</sup>

When the sun rose [next day] I was laughing with joy, and took [the goats] to the pastures when the sun was burning hot.

(١٣٨) أَوَّلِ يَ سَاءَ سِتَ \* هَبْ مَبِزِ كَوُسْتَ \* نُونَ وَمِنَوْتَ \* هُتَرَنَ كُكُمَبِي

kukumbiya na hutura \* wameniwata naona \* kawasuta mbuzi hapo \* sita saa ya awali

<sup>136</sup> (138) awali ya saa sita \* hapo mbuzi kawasuta<sup>172</sup> \* naona<sup>173</sup> wameniwata \* hutura<sup>174</sup> na kukumbiya

Just before the seventh hour (noon), I was then driving the goats along, and I saw that they had broken away from me, running and frisking.

<sup>164</sup> usita = barabara.

<sup>165</sup> -toleya, give directions by accompanying a person to a good place to give them from.

<sup>166</sup> -dosa = -gota, -gogota, knock, rap. As Ja'far walks over the planks covering the well, he hears the resonating sound of the well beneath them.

<sup>167</sup> The meaning of this line is unclear.

<sup>168</sup> Past tense.

<sup>169</sup> Presumably Ja'far means that now he has found this well he will come back each day with his goats, so there is no point covering the well.

<sup>170</sup> -takasa, shake, with nyayo, footsteps understood. The meaning is to shake the road by travelling a lot.

<sup>171</sup> -waa = -waka, burn.

<sup>172</sup> Amu -suta = Mvita -shunga, -fukuza, shoo animals on, drive animals along.

<sup>173</sup> The tense here gives the nuance of "suddenly".

<sup>174</sup> -tura = -ruka, jump, bound.



(١٣٩) كَوْمِي إِنْ دَنْ \* مُوْكِيُو كِسْمَنْ \* لَكِنْ هُفَلَيْنِ \* نَدِمَ وَ كُوْطَكِي

kuwatekeya wa ndimi \* hufaliyani laikini \* kisimani mwakuyuwa \* enendani kawambiya

<sup>137</sup> (139) kawambiya enendani \* mwakuyuwa kisimani \* laikini hufaliyani \* ndimi wa kuwatekeya<sup>175</sup>  
I told them: On you go -- you know where the well is. But what good will it do you, when I'm the only one who can draw water for you?

(١٤٠) وَكَنْدَ وَكِسْمَمَ \* كُفُنِشِيرُ كِسِمَ \* بَاءُ نِكَلِسُكُمَ \* نِمْنُ مَتْ أَكِي

akiya mtu nimone \* nikalisukuma bao \* kisima kufunishiwe \* wakasimama wakenda

<sup>138</sup> (140) wakenda wakasimama \* kufunishiwe kisima<sup>176</sup> \* bao nikalisukuma \* nimone<sup>177</sup> mtu akiya  
They went on and stood where the well had been covered over. I pushed away the plank, and I saw someone coming.

(١٤١) أَكِي أَكْنِشَكَ \* مَاءُ نِسِيَّتِكَ \* مَمَ هَبْ كَتَمَكَ \* يَ غَضَبُ كَمُومِي

kamwambiya ghadabu ya \* katamka hapo mama \* nisiyateka mae \* akanishika akiya

<sup>139</sup> (141) akiya akanishika<sup>178</sup> \* mae nisyateka \* mama<sup>179</sup> hapo katamka \* ya ghadabu kamwambiya  
When he arrived he grabbed hold of me before I had drawn any water. Gosh! At that point I spoke, and addressed him angrily.

(١٤٢) نِكْمُحِمِدِ مَنْعُ \* كُنِّي بِنْعُ \* كَنُوزَ پَتِ يَنْعُ \* چَدَنِ كَمْتَلِي

kamtuleya chandani \* yangu pete kaniuza \* babangu kuneteya \* mngu nikamuhimidi

<sup>140</sup> (142) nikamuhimidi<sup>180</sup> mngu \* kuneteya babangu \* kaniuza pete yangu \* chandani kamtoleya  
I pleaded with God to send me my father. [The man] asked me about the ring on my finger, and I gave it to him.

(١٤٣) پَتِ أَكْتِزَمَ \* كِجَ نَ هَلِمَمَ \* يَسِي يَ نِيمَ \* يَتِ يَكْمُرْدِي

yakamrudiya yote \* nyuma ya yapisiye \* halimama na kapija \* akaitizima pete

<sup>141</sup> (143) pete akaitizima \* kapija na halimama \* yapisiye ya nyuma<sup>181</sup> \* yote yakamrudiya  
He looked at the ring and became anxious. everything that had happened in the past, all of it came back to him.

(١٤٤) جَنَ أَلِيْنُوزَ \* نِسْمُومِي كَتَزَ \* أَكَنْبَ مُؤْجَزَ \* پِي نَ كُنِيْجِي

kunipijiya na piya \* miujiza akanipa \* kaiza nisimwambiye \* aliponiuliza jina

<sup>142</sup> (144) jina aliponiuliza \* nisimwambiye kaiza \* akanipa miujiza<sup>182</sup> \* piya na kunipijiya<sup>183</sup>  
When he asked me my name I wouldn't tell him -- I refused. He told me things he could not have known [unless he was my father] giving me example after example.

<sup>175</sup> i.e. there is no point in the goats running ahead of Ja'far and reaching the well before him, because once they are there they will have to stand and wait for him to get the water for them.

<sup>176</sup> i.e. the well has been covered over again, in spite of Ja'far uncovering it the day before (134d) and telling Abu Bakr that there was no point in covering it (135c). The reason, of course, as we know from the earlier verses is that Ali has come to check on the well, and covered it (53b).

<sup>177</sup> Again, the tense gives the nuance of suddenly – see 138c.

<sup>178</sup> What happens next has already been described in 58 ff.

<sup>179</sup> mama! – see 123c.

<sup>180</sup> cf. 152b.

<sup>181</sup> yale mambo yaliyopita zamani.

<sup>182</sup> i.e. unless he really was Ja'far's father.

<sup>183</sup> -piga mifano, give examples.

(١٤٥) أَنْبِي صُورَ زَكْ \* نَ صِفَ زَئِيمَبَ يَكْ \* هَبْ كَيْتَ تَمَكْ \* إِنْ لَنْغْ كَمُومَبِي

kamwambiya langu ina \* tamko kaeṭa hapo \* yako nyumba za šifa na \* zako šūra unipiye  
143 (145) unipeṣe sura zako \* na sifa za nyumba yako \* hapo kaeta tamko \* ina langu kamwambiya  
He described your features to me, and the characteristics of your house. Then I spoke and told him my name.

(١٤٦) نِكَمُومَبِي نِيَكْ \* نَزَزُوءْ هَكَكْ \* نَ تِسِي زِسُ شَكْ \* نَ وَو تَرَهْ تِي

tiya tarehe wewe na \* shaka zisizo tisiya ni \* hakika nizezeweo \* nyaka nikamwambiya  
144 (146) nikamwambiya nyaka \* nizezeweo<sup>184</sup> hakika \* ni tisiya zisizo shaka \* na wewe tarehe tiya<sup>185</sup>  
I told him [the number of] years since I was born -- definitely it is nine, and no mistake; and you should remember the number.

(١٤٧) خَبَرِ زَكْ تَمَمْ \* نِمَكْ أَفْهَمْ \* تَنَ نَ كُو مَوْلَمْ \* نِمِرْدِ كَمُومَبِي

kumwambiya nimerudi \* mwalimu kwa na tena \* ufahamu nimekupa \* timamu zake khabari  
145 (147) habari zake timamu \* nimekupa ufahamu \* tena na kwa mwalimu \* nimerudi kumwambiya  
The news about him is finished. I have completed it so that you may understand. And via my teacher's [house] I came back to tell him [about it].

(١٤٨) نِمْمُوءْ كُو خَيْرِ \* أَسْبِهَ نِ سَفَرِ \* نُؤْمَبِي كُو جَبَارِ \* نَ رَضِ كُنْيَا

kuniweya raḍi na \* jabāri kwa niombeya \* safari ni asubhi \* khēri kwa nimemuaga  
146 (148) nimemuaga kwa heri \* aṣūbuḥi ni safari \* niombeya kwa jabari \* na radhi kuniweya  
I have said farewell to him. [tomorrow] morning I will set off [to go to my father]. Intercede for me to the Almighty, and give me your blessing.

(١٤٩) تَنَ نُؤْمَبِي مَنَعْ \* تُبْنَدَنَ نَ بِنَعْ \* نَمَ كِشَ مِي وَنَعْ \* تَكِي كُونْعَلِي

kuwangaliya takuya \* wangu mui kisha nami \* babangu na tupendane \* mngu niombeya tena  
147 (149) tena niombeya mngu \* tupendane na babangu \* nami kisha mui wangu \* takuya<sup>186</sup> kuwangaliya  
And intercede for me to God that my father and I will get along well together. And then [the people] in my town I will come and visit them.

(١٥٠) أَكِسِكِي قَوْلِ \* مَمَكْ أَسْجِمِلْ \* أَكْتَرَدَدِ عَقِلْ \* كُو مَكْنَدِ كَيْطِي

kaiṭiya makonde kwa \* 'aqili akataradadi \* asiḥimili mamake \* qawli akisikiya  
148 (150) akisikiya qauli \* mamake asiḥimili \* akataradadi<sup>187</sup> 'aqili \* kwa makonde kaiṭiya  
When she heard these words his mother could not bear it. She went out of her mind and beat herself with her fists.

<sup>184</sup> = nilizozaliwa.

<sup>185</sup> = kumbuka tarehe.

<sup>186</sup> i.e. he will return to his town for periodic visits.

<sup>187</sup> taradadi = -badilika.

(١٥١) كَتَبْتُدَ كَيْنُغَشَ \* تَيْتَ أَكْرُشَ \* هَتَ نَغُو كَمْفَشَ \* إِكَوُ كُمْسَيِ

kumsomeya ikawa \* kamvisha nguwo hata \* akairusha tiyati \* kayingusha kaiṭunda

<sup>149</sup> (151) kaitunda<sup>188</sup> kayingusha \* tiyati akairusha<sup>189</sup> \* hata nguwo kamvisha<sup>190</sup> \* ikawa kumsomeya<sup>191</sup>  
She took and threw herself down, she hurled herself to the ground, so that her clothing came undone, as if she was being read over.

(١٥٢) أَلَيْتَ فَهَمُ \* كَمْحَمِدِ كَرِيمُ \* كِشَ أَكْتَكَلَمُ \* مَنَعُ أَكْمُؤْمِي

akamuombeya mngu \* akatakalamu kisha \* karīmu kamuḥimidi \* fahamu alipopaṭa

<sup>150</sup> (152) alipopata fahamu \* kamuḥimidi karimu \* kisha akatakalamu \* mngu akamuombeya  
When she regained her senses she thanked the Generous One, and then she spoke and prayed to God.

(١٥٣) يَا أَلَلُّهُ مَلْ وَنَعُ \* نِنْصُرِي مَوْنَعُ \* نَ وَطْتُ وَ وَنَزَعُ \* حِفْظِنِ نِطْلِي

niṭiliya ḥifāzini \* wenzangu wa waṭoto na \* mwanangu ninuṣuriya \* wangu mola allāhu yā

<sup>151</sup> (153) ya allāhu mola wangu \* ninuṣuriya mwanangu \* na watoto wa wenzangu<sup>192</sup> \* ḥifadhini nitiliya<sup>193</sup>  
Oh God, my Lord, protect my child for me, and the children of my friends, place them for me in your care.

(١٥٤) إِنْ دَ هُنَ مَضَرَ \* نِرَضِ أَلْفُ مَرَّ \* نَاوْ أَوْ نَ فِكِرَ \* مِي نِمَكُؤْصِي

nimekuuṣiya moyo \* fikira na uwe nāwe \* mara alfu niraḍi \* maḍara huna enenda

<sup>152</sup> (154) enenda huna madhara \* niradhi alfu mara \* nawe uwe na fikira<sup>194</sup> \* mōya<sup>195</sup> nimekuuṣiya  
[To Ja'far she said:] Off you go -- no harm will come to you. I bless you a thousand times. And that you should be sensible is the one [thing] I charge you to do.

(١٥٥) مِمَ أُيْنُوذُ \* سِتْكَوْ نَ غَيْظُ \* إَوْبُ وَتَكَ رَضِ \* نَ كَوَ عَلِي زَنْغِي

zengeya 'alii kwa na \* raḍi wataka iwapo \* ghayzi na sitokuwa \* uyaponiudhi mimi

<sup>153</sup> (155) mimi uyaponiudhi \* sitokuwa na ghaydhi<sup>196</sup> \* iwapo wataka radhi \* na kwa 'alii zengeya<sup>197</sup>  
Even if you were to anger me I would not hold it against you. If you want a blessing [from him], then go and visit Ali.

<sup>188</sup> Amu -tunda = Mvita -twaa.

<sup>189</sup> She does not know what she is doing.

<sup>190</sup> The *kanga* is a wraparound garment, which is knotted, not sewn closed, so if someone is ill, tossing and turning, it can become undone. Ja'far holds it on and re-knots it. Similarly, it is considered unwise for a man to go into the kitchen, because while the woman is working there her *leso*, upper garment, may become undone.

<sup>191</sup> This is somewhat exaggerated in this situation. The point is that her behaviour makes her look as if she is ill, and in such a case a common practice is to read to the sick person from the Qur'an, especially Chapter 36, *Ya Sin*. The main message of this chapter is that human beings are created by God, and wholly dependent upon him. Reading it comforts the sick person and their relatives, and is a sign of sympathy. Reciting the Word of God has beneficial effects in general. For instance, a rich man may pay a *mwaliimu*, Islamic scholar to read the Qur'an over the man's wife every Friday, to keep her safe. If someone is going on a long journey, wellwishers may pass verses from the Qur'an around them while saying *Ngwakuḥifadhi*, may God protect you, and then give them the verses to protect them.

<sup>192</sup> It would be selfish to pray only for yourself or your own children. The proper thing is to pray for others too, e.g. Muslims, or unbelievers who will become Muslims.

<sup>193</sup> In other words, she is giving Ja'far her *radhi* – see 83c. In order to leave, Ja'far must have this. Hence the verse: *mwate asumbuke / hana radhi ya mamake*, let him remain troubled / he does not have the blessing of his mother. Likewise, an unsuccessful person may be referred to as someone *asiyekupata radhi ya babake*, who did not get his father's blessing. However, *watoto wa jeuri* cheeky children, will say things like *radhi yako kaiweke mbuyuni*, stick your blessing in a baobab tree.

<sup>194</sup> In other words, *siwe kama ng'ombe* – don't act stupidly.

<sup>195</sup> We understand *jambo*, i.e. this is the one important thing she asks him to do.

<sup>196</sup> *ghaizi* = *hasira*, crossness, annoyance. A mother is always soft-hearted towards her children, unlike a father.

<sup>197</sup> -zengeya = -tafuta. She is telling him: *fanya bidii kupata radhi ya Ali*, make an effort to secure Ali's blessing.

(١٥٦) اِتُّنِدِ اَوْ نِيُونِ \* كَو بَيْكُ اَوْ تِنِ \* نَ اَتَكْلَبَيْنِ \* كَوَكُ لَو مَرَضِي

mardiya liwe kwako \* atakalobaini na \* tini uwe babako kwa \* nyaoni uwe itunde

<sup>154</sup> (156) itunde uwe nyaoni<sup>198</sup> \* kwa babako uwe tini \* na atakalobaini<sup>199</sup> \* kwako liwe mardhiya<sup>200</sup>

Take care that you be humble and subservient to your father, and [accept] whatever he says to you without demur.

(١٥٧) نَ مُمُّ مُحَمَّدٍ \* هَنَ بَدِ كُكُزِدِ \* اَللَّهُ اللَّهُ جِتَهْدِ \* نَغَاءَ اُيْتُ وَصِي

wasiya upate ngaa \* jitahidi llāha allāha \* kukuzidi budi hana \* muḥamadi mṭume na

<sup>155</sup> (157) na mtume muhamadi \* hana budi kukuzidi<sup>201</sup> \* allaha<sup>202</sup> llaha jitahidi \* ngaa<sup>203</sup> upate wasiya<sup>204</sup>

And the Prophet Muhammad, there is no doubt that he is better than you, so mind you exert yourself to gain even a little wisdom [from him].

(١٥٨) نَاءَ بِنْتِ حَبِيبٍ \* كَتِ نَاءِ كَو ثَوَابٍ \* كَوَكُ اَوْ نَ اَدْبُ \* اُمُطِي نَ كُمُونُغِي

kumwangukiya na umṭii \* adabu na uwe kwake \* thawābu kwa nae keti \* ḥabību binti nae

<sup>156</sup> (158) nae binti habibu<sup>205</sup> \* keti nae kwa thawabu<sup>206</sup> \* kwake uwe na adabu \* umṭii na kumwangukiya<sup>207</sup>

And as for the daughter of the Beloved One, stay with her politely; be courteous towards her, obey her and be humble towards her.

(١٥٩) اَكْتُكَ جَعْفَرٍ \* نَ چَكَلِ كِتِيرٍ \* كَلِ نَ نُدِي نَاصِرٍ \* نَ مَوْلِمُ كَتِي

katokeya mwalimu na \* nāširi nduye na kala \* kitayari chakula na \* ja'fari akatoka

<sup>157</sup> (159) akatoka ja'fari \* na chakula<sup>208</sup> kitayari \* kala na nduye nasiri \* na mwalimu katokeya

Ja'far arose [the next morning] and a meal was ready. He ate with his brother Nasir and then his teacher arrived [while they were eating].

(١٦٠) وَكَتَنَغِي مَكْنُ \* وَتِ وَتُتْ مَفْنُ \* اَكِنَنْ نَ مَنَنْ \* نَدُغِي اَكُمُونِي

akimwambiya nduguye \* maneno na akinena \* mfano waṭaṭu wote \* mikono wakatanganya

<sup>158</sup> (160) wakatanganya mikono<sup>209</sup> \* wote watatu mfano \* akanena na maneno \* nduguye akimwambiya

They all put their hands [in the communal bowl] all three of them as equals. Then [Ja'far] said these words, speaking to his brother:

<sup>198</sup>lit. "take care that you are under his feet". That is, be humble, and also obedient.

<sup>199</sup>-baini, say.

<sup>200</sup>That is, do not refuse anything – the opposite of -legea, be remiss.

<sup>201</sup>i.e. it goes without saying that anakushinda, he is superior to you.

<sup>202</sup>hala = hara, an exhortation to effort, as in hara mbee!, forward!.

<sup>203</sup>ngaa, even without is similar to ingawa, although, even though, but distinct from it. Compare: ngaa hungii ndani ukauliza, even without getting in you can ask, even if you don't get in you can ask and ingawa umengia ndani, lakini ..., even though you get in, yet ..., even if you've got in, still .... In this line, the meaning is that even if Ja'far picks up little or no wisdom, he should still attempt to do it.

<sup>204</sup>wasia is often translated as "last will", but its wider meaning is "wisdom", or "dos and donts".

<sup>205</sup>i.e. Fatima. The Prophet is also known as ḥabību'llah, Beloved of God.

<sup>206</sup>i.e. vizuri, kama mama wa kambo, nicely, as with a stepmother. Because Ja'far will be living in Ali's house, he must be a polite guest.

<sup>207</sup>-angukia, fall down before, prostrate oneself before, = -sujudia, i.e. submit. This would normally be humiliating (the only time you prostrate yourself should be before God), but Ja'far's mother is impressing on him the need for humility.

<sup>208</sup>A meal with someone before they go on a journey is traditional, but watu wakenda mbali, chakula hukosa baraka, if people are going far away, food lacks savour, lit. blessing.

<sup>209</sup>They all eat from the same bowl, since this is a special day – Ja'far is leaving. When you do not know if you will meet again, sharing a meal brings a special feeling of closeness.

(١٦١) أَكْمُومِي نَاصِرٍ \* يُوْ نَدِيْعُ كُوْ خَيْرٍ \* تَكْپُرْدِ سَفَرٍ \* تَمَشْ تَكْلِي

takuleteya tamasha \* safari takaporudi \* khēri kwa nduyangu yeo \* nāširi akamwambiya

<sup>159</sup> (161) akamwambiya nasiri \* yeo nduyangu kwa heri \* takaporudi safari \* tamasha<sup>210</sup> takuleteya  
He told Nasir: Goodbye today, my brother -- when I come back from my journey I will bring you something nice.

(١٦٢) أَكْمَجِبُ أُپْسِ \* نَيْتِي نَ فَرَسٍ \* نَيْمَ هِي سِمْسِ \* نَتَكْ كُمُونْغِي

kumwangaliya nataka \* simuisi huyo nyama \* farasi na nieteya \* upesi akamjibu

<sup>160</sup> (162) akamjibu upesi \* nieteya na farasi \* nyama huyo<sup>211</sup> simuisi<sup>212</sup> \* nataka<sup>213</sup> kumwangaliya  
[Nasir] answered him quickly: Bring me a horse -- I don't know [what] that animal [looks like], I would like to see one.

(١٦٣) كِشَ هَپْ كَتْمَكَ \* أَكْمَبَ مَمَ هُتَكَ \* مَمَكَ أَكْنِكَ \* صَدَكَ كَمْتَلِي

kamtuleya šadaka \* akainuka mamake \* hutoka mama akamba \* katamka hapo kisha

<sup>161</sup> (163) kisha hapo katamka \* akamba mama hutoka<sup>214</sup> \* mamake akainuka \* sadaka<sup>215</sup> kamtuleya  
When he had finished, then [Ja'far] spoke, and said: Mother, I am leaving. His mother got up and gave alms for him.

(١٦٤) هَپْ مَمَكَ أَتَكَ \* إِنْدِ أَمْفُوتَ \* أَكْمُومِي مَتَ \* مَنُغْ أَكْمُومِي

akimuombeya mngu \* maṭe akimtemeya \* amfuwate enende \* atoke mamake hapo

<sup>162</sup> (164) hapo mamake atoke<sup>216</sup> \* enende<sup>217</sup> amfuwate \* akimtemeya mate<sup>218</sup> \* mngu akimuombeya  
Then his mother went out [after him], she went and followed him, spitting at him, praying to God for him.

(١٦٥) هِي نَاصِرٍ مَوْلِمَ \* مَسْمَشَ أَهْتِمَ \* أَمْفُنْدِ نَ عِلِمَ \* عَادَ يَكَ تَكُوْبِي

takweteya yako 'ada \* 'ilimu na umfunde \* ahitimu msomeshe \* mwalimu nāširi huyo

<sup>163</sup> (165) huyo nasiri mwalimu \* msomeshe<sup>219</sup> ahitimu<sup>220</sup> \* umfunde na<sup>221</sup> 'ilimu \* 'ada<sup>222</sup> yako takweteya  
[Then she said:] Teacher, Nasir here, teach him to read [the Qur'an] so that he may complete it. Teach him knowledge. I will pay your fee.

<sup>210</sup> i.e. zawadi, a present.

<sup>211</sup> Mvita huyo = Amu hoyo.

<sup>212</sup> -isa, not know, is only used in the negative.

<sup>213</sup> Nasir considers the horse an exotic animal, which suggests he comes from an isolated village. People may say: yeyeni maskini ameona ngamia -- labda anakaa mji mdogo, that poor fellow there has just seen a camel [for the first time] -- he must live in a little village.

<sup>214</sup> = natoka.

<sup>215</sup> Contrast sadaka with kafara, expiatory offering -- the former is given before doing something, the latter after doing something. The purpose of the sadaka is to protect Ja'far. If a person is ill, you might put money under his pillow, or rice under his bed, and then give that away as alms, in the hope that he will get better. Or to bring blessings to someone, you might circle them three times with the sadaka, and then give it away (compare the note to 151d).

<sup>216</sup> Past tense.

<sup>217</sup> = alienda.

<sup>218</sup> Making gentle spitting sounds (pp-pp-pp) at him, -mtia mate, signifies that she thinks he is sharifu, noble, and to be admired.

<sup>219</sup> Ja'far's mother asks the mwalimu to "cause Nasir to read", i.e. teach him how to read the Qur'an. Being able to read the Qur'an, even without understanding the detailed meaning of the words, is considered a first step in learning. The student will attend the chuo, school, for 3-4 years, and while he is there the mfunzi has wide latitude in terms of discipline -- the student may be chastised with a kikoto, whip made of plaited grass, made by the student himself, if he makes mistakes, and it is said that the only constraint on the mfunzi is that asaze mifupa na mato, he should omit [damaging] the bones and the eyes. The books used will all have brown or tan covers, because white is considered harmful. Taha Hussein's The Stream of Days includes a passage on his similar schooling in Egypt in the early 1900s.

<sup>220</sup> kumaliza Kurani.

<sup>221</sup> This knowledge would include detailed exegesis of the Qur'an, intricate knowledge of fikhi, grammar, awareness of religious ritual, etc.

<sup>222</sup> These fees will be paid in stages once certain portions of the Qur'an have been learned, and can be paid in kind (e.g. in food items such as bisi, roasted corn).

(١٦٦) أَكَيْتَكَ جَعْفَرٍ \* هَبْ كَلِي نَاصِرٍ \* مَمَكْ أَكْفَسِرِ \* أُسِكُ أَتَرْجِي

atarejeya usiku \* akafasiri mamake \* nāširi kaliya hapo \* ja'fari akitoka

<sup>164</sup> (166) akitoka ja'fari \* hapo kaliya nasiri \* mamake akafasiri \* usiku atarejeya<sup>223</sup>  
As Ja'far was setting off then Nasir began to cry. His mother said: [ja'far] will be back by nightfall.

(١٦٧) نَاصِرٍ أَكْتَمَكَ \* نَمِيؤُا إِنْ دَ مَكَه \* كُتُنْغَ هَنْغَلِتَكَ \* أَسِپِيُونِ نَدِي

ndiya asipoiyona \* hangalitoka kutunga \* makah enda namuyuwa \* akatamka nāširi

<sup>165</sup> (167) nasiri akatamka \* namuyuwa enda makah<sup>224</sup> \* kutunga<sup>225</sup> hangalitoka \* asipoiyona ndiya<sup>226</sup>  
Nasir spoke: I know he is going to Mecca. If he were going [to take the animals] to graze he would not take that road.

(١٦٨) أَوْ يَنْ سِكُوكُ \* أَكِمُومِي تَمَكُ \* كَوَغَ وَنَدَنْ وَكُ \* يَتِ نَلِيَسِكِي

naliyasikiya yote \* wako wendani kawage \* tamko ukimwambiya \* sikuwako yana aw

<sup>166</sup> (168) au yana sikuwako \* ukimwambiya tamko \* kawage wendani wako \* yote naliyasikiya  
For was I not there yesterday when you said him [those] words to him: "Go and say goodbye to your friends." I heard everything.

(١٦٩) أَوْ وَنَدَ مُتَنَغَنٍ \* نَغُو هُتَكُلِيَن \* سِكُ زَتِ سِمُونِ \* هَتَ هَيِ كُنَمِي

kunambiya hayo hata \* simuoni zoti siku \* hutukuliyani nguwo \* matungani wenda aw

<sup>167</sup> (169) au wenda matungani \* nguwo hutukuliyani \* siku zote simuoni \* hata hayo kunambiya  
Or if he is going to the pastures, what is he carrying clothes for? I have never seen him [do that before]. So explain these [things] to me.

(١٧٠) جَعْفَرُ كَبَيْنِ \* بَسَ وَلَلِيَن \* أَوْ تُولَاغَنَن \* مَنَنْ نَلُكُومِي

nalokwambiya maneno \* twaliganani aw \* waliliyani basi \* kabaini ja'fari

<sup>168</sup> (170) ja'fari kabaini<sup>227</sup> \* basi waliliyani \* au twaliganani \* maneno nalokwambiya<sup>228</sup>  
Ja'far spoke: So why are you crying? Did we not agree on the things I said to you?

(١٧١) نَ كَمَ هُكِرِيضِكَ \* نَمِي نَسِيَتَكَ \* هُنَ هَتَ كُؤَذَكَ \* سَكِيَتَكَ كُنِيِي

kuniyiya sikitiko \* kuudhika hata huna \* nisyatoka nambiya \* hukiridika kama na

<sup>169</sup> (171) na kama hukiridhika \* nambiya nisyatoka \* huna hata kuudhika<sup>229</sup> \* sikitiko kuniyiya  
And if you are not pleased, tell me before I go. You have no cause to be hurt and make me feel sad.

(١٧٢) أَكَجِبُ تَمَكُ \* سَكِيَزَ هَيِ يَكُ \* سِكُ زَتِ نِكُ \* هَمُنُونِ كَلِي

kuliya hamunioni \* niko zote siku \* yako hayo sikuiza \* tamko akajibu

<sup>170</sup> (172) akajibu tamko \* sikuiza hayo yako \* siku zote niko \* hamunioni kuliya  
[Nasir] answered with the words I don't disagree with these [plans] of yours -- all the days of my life you have never seen me cry.

<sup>223</sup> She tries to comfort the child by saying things like hendi mbali -- atakuja atakuletea peremendi, he is not going far -- he will come back and bring you sweets.

<sup>224</sup> Nasir is not stupid, and sees through her words.

<sup>225</sup> -tunga, graze.

<sup>226</sup> kama hakuona ndia, as if he does not know the right road, i.e. he is going in a completely different direction to his normal route.

<sup>227</sup> -baini, lit. explain.

<sup>228</sup> Refers to 174-5. amkumbusha, umesahau ..., he reminds him, you have forgotten .... He says something like: "You said you wanted a horse -- how can I get one if I don't go?"

<sup>229</sup> haina maana, there's no sense.

(١٧٣) سَسَ هَي نَدَ عَقِلَ \* نِمَزَيَتَامَلِ \* نَ كُو مُتْلِ تُلِ \* زُءَ زَكُ زَ كُنُكِي

kuinukiya za zako zeo \* tuli matuli kuwa na \* nimezoyataamali \* 'aqili nda haya sasa

<sup>171</sup> (173) sasa haya nda 'aqili \* nimezoyataamali \* na kuwa matuli tuli \* zeo zako za kuinukiya<sup>230</sup>  
Now, these [things] are [a matter of] commonsense, [the things] which I observed. I am sad [because] it is time for you to go.

(١٧٤) أَكْمَوْمِي نَدِيكَ \* هِيَ إِنَّكَ أَتُك \* جَعْفَرِ أَتْمَكَ \* كَوْنَدَ مَنُغُ نَوْمِي

niombeya mngu kwanda \* atamke ja'fari \* utoke inuka hi \* nduyake akamwambiya

<sup>172</sup> (174) akamwambiya nduyake<sup>231</sup> \* haya inuka utoke \* ja'fari atamke \* kwanda mngu niombeya  
He told his brother: So, off you go. Ja'far said: First intercede to God for me.

(١٧٥) نَاصِرِ أَكْبَيْنَ \* أَتُكِيكَ مَنَ \* سَلَامَ سَلِمِينَ \* كَو عَفِي نَ عَفُو

'afuwa na 'afiya kwa \* salimīni salāma \* manani atakupeka \* akabaini nāsiri

<sup>173</sup> (175) nasiri akabaini \* atakupeka<sup>232</sup> manani \* salama salimīni \* kwa 'afiya na 'afuwa<sup>233</sup>  
Nasir said: May Providence keep you safe and sound, in health and free from affliction.

(١٧٦) هَبْ نَدِي كَيْنَدَمَ \* كَيْنَدَ كُتْسِمَمَ \* سَاءَ كُو إِكِّمَ \* نَاءَ مَكَهْ أَمْنَعِي

amengi ya makah nae \* ikikoma kuwi saa \* kutosimama kinenda \* kayandama ndiya hapo

<sup>174</sup> (176) hapo ndiya kayandama<sup>234</sup> \* kinenda kutosimama \* saa kuwi ikikoma \* nae makah amengi ya  
Then [Ja'far] set out, going on, not stopping, and at four o'clock he entered Mecca.

(١٧٧) مَكَهْ أَلِجَلِسِ \* كُو بَيْكَ هَكْسِ \* كَمَبَ نَدِي سِتَكْسِ \* كَوْنَدَ تَكْتَلِي

taiketiliya kwanda \* sitakasi ndiya kamba \* hakuisi babake kwa \* alipojilisi makah

<sup>175</sup> (177) makah alipojilisi<sup>235</sup> \* kwa babake hakuisi \* kamba ndiya şitakışi<sup>236</sup> \* kwanda taiketiliya  
When he arrived in Mecca he did not know his father's home. He said: I will not [try to] guess the road, first I will sit myself down.

(١٧٨) أَكَّتِ جَعْفَرِ \* أَكْمُونُ زُبَيْرِ \* وَنَدَمَنَ نَ بَشِيرِ \* مَكْنُ كَمُونَلِي

kamwinuliya mikono \* bashiri na wendemene \* zubēri akamuona \* ja'fari akaketi

<sup>176</sup> (178) akaketi ja'fari \* akamuona zuberi \* wendemene na bashiri \* mikono kamwinuliya<sup>237</sup>  
Ja'far sat down and saw Zubayr -- he was walking along with the Bearer of Good News -- and Ja'far waved to him.

(١٧٩) مَكْنُ كَوُزِمَ \* زُبَيْرِ أَكْسِمَمَ \* أَكْمَوْمِي هَشِمَ \* مَغْنِ وَتْ هُنْغِي

hungiya wetu mgeni \* hashima akamwambiya \* akasimama zubēri \* kautizama mkono

<sup>177</sup> (179) mkono kautizama<sup>238</sup> \* zuberi akasimama \* akamwambiya hashima \* mgeni wetu hungiya<sup>239</sup>  
Zubayr saw the wave and stopped. He told the Hashimite: Our guest has just arrived.

<sup>230</sup> wakati wako wa kutoka. Being sad is natural for Nasir – his brother has stopped being a playmate and has now become a young man.

<sup>231</sup> See 170d.

<sup>232</sup> -peka = -peleka, send. In other words, may God make it possible for you to go.

<sup>233</sup> The verb -afu, preserve, deliver, is the opposite of -tesa, suffer, be afflicted by, e.g. sickness, poverty, love.

<sup>234</sup> fuata ndia.

<sup>235</sup> -jilisi = -keti.

<sup>236</sup> = siioni.

<sup>237</sup> lit. "raised his hands to him".

<sup>238</sup> = akauona.

<sup>239</sup> anaanza kufika sasa, he is arriving just now.



(١٨٠) أَكْمُوزُ أَمِينٍ \* مَغْنِ وَتُ نِ نَنِ \* وَسَكِي هُبَيْنِ \* مَكْنُ نِبِ نَبِي

nabiya nipe mkono \* hubaini wasikiye \* nani ni wetu mgeni \* amini akamuza

<sup>178</sup> (180) akamuza amini \* mgeni wetu ni nani \* wasikiye hubaini \* mkono nipe nabiya<sup>240</sup>  
The Trustworthy One asked: Who is our guest? And they heard [Ja'far] say: Give me your hand, Prophet.

(١٨١) زُبَيْرٌ كَتَعَجَبُ \* وَمُيُوبٌ حَبِيبُ \* جَعْفَرٌ كَمَجِبُ \* وَجْهٌ وَكُ نَبِي

nabiya wake wajhi \* kamjibu ja'fari \* habibu wamuyuwapu \* kata'ajabu zuberi

<sup>179</sup> (181) zuberi kata'ajabu \* wamuyuwapu habibu \* ja'fari kamjibu \* wajhi wake nabiya<sup>241</sup>  
Zubayr was amazed: How do you know the Prophet? Ja'far answered him: His face is that of the Prophet.

(١٨٢) كِشَ هَبْ كَبَيْنِ \* كُو بِنْعُ نِپَكِنِ \* كَمْتُكُو أَمِينِ \* كَنْدَ نَاءِ كُو عَلِي

'aliya kwa nae kenda \* amini kamtukuwa \* nipekeni babangu kwa \* kabaini hapo kisha

<sup>180</sup> (182) kisha hapo kabaini<sup>242</sup> \* kwa babangu nipekeni \* kamtukuwa<sup>243</sup> amini \* kenda nae kwa 'aliya  
Then he said: Could you show me to my father's [house]? The Trustworthy One accompanied him and took him to Ali's [house].

(١٨٣) أَلِيكُونَدَ سَيِّدِ \* كَوَّهْ أَكِيَجْ هُدِ \* فَتَمَ أَكْرَدِدِ \* أَكَمَبَ هَكُ نَبِي

nabiya hako akamba \* akaradidi fatuma \* hodi akapija kwao \* sayyidi alipokwenda

<sup>181</sup> (183) alipokwenda sayyidi \* kwao akapija hodi \* fatuma akaradidi<sup>244</sup> \* akamba hako nabiya<sup>245</sup>  
When the Lord got there he called: Hello! Fatima answered and said: The Prophet is not here.

(١٨٤) أَكْمُوزَ حُسَيْنِ \* أَمْكُوْهُ نِ نْيَانِ \* كَبْنَ أَكَبَيْنِ \* نِ جَدِ يَنْغُ سَكِي

sikiya yangu jadi ni \* akabaini kijana \* nyani ni amkuwao \* husayni akamuza

<sup>182</sup> (184) akamuza<sup>246</sup> husayni \* amkuwao<sup>247</sup> ni nyani \* kijana akabaini \* ni jadi<sup>248</sup> yangu sikiya  
She asked Husayn: Who is calling? And the boy answered: Listen -- it is my grandfather.

(١٨٥) نِ جَدِ يَنْغُ رَسُولِ \* بِي نِ وَتُ وَوَلِ \* كُسِكِيكُو قَوْلِ \* كَتَاكَ كَمُونْعَالِي

kamwngaliya katoka \* qawli kusikiyakwe \* wawili watu na yeye \* rasuli yangu jadi na

<sup>183</sup> (185) ni jadi yangu rasuli \* yeye na watu wawili \* kusikiyakwe qawli \* katoka kamwngaliya  
It is my grandfather the Prophet, he and two people. When she heard these words, [Fatima] went out to see him.

(١٨٦) أَكَيْتَكَ جَعْفَرِ \* كَمُولِزَ خَبَرِ \* أَكِيَكَمَ كَفَسِرِ \* فَتَمَ كَمِيَكِي

kampokeya fatuma \* kafasiri akikoma \* khabari kamuuliza \* ja'fari akitoka

<sup>184</sup> (186) akitoka ja'fari \* kamuuliza habari<sup>249</sup> \* akikoma kafasiri \* fatuma kampokeya<sup>250</sup>  
When she came out, Ja'far asked her how she was. When he had finished speaking Fatima answered him.

<sup>240</sup> Ja'far, despite never having met the Prophet, recognises him immediately.

<sup>241</sup> i.e. *uso wake unamwonyesha*, his countenance identifies him – the Prophet's features show a qualitative difference (*tofauti*) from everyone else's.

<sup>242</sup> *akasema*.

<sup>243</sup> *-enda naye*.

<sup>244</sup> The original Arabic words means "repeat", but in Swahili it is another word for *-sema*, *speak*.

<sup>245</sup> *alifikiri mtu anamtaka Mtume* – Fatima thinks that someone has come to the house looking for the Prophet.

<sup>246</sup> *-uza* = *-uliza*.

<sup>247</sup> = *aitaye*.

<sup>248</sup> = *babu*.

<sup>249</sup> i.e. he asked *hujambo?*

<sup>250</sup> = *-itikia*.

(١٨٧) فَتَمَ كَتَكَلَمَ \* أَكْمُوزَ هَشِمَ \* بَبَ سِيَمَفَهَمَ \* كِبَنَ هُيَ نَبِيَّ  
 nabiya huyu kijana \* siyamfahamu baba \* hashimu akamuuzza \* katakalamu fatuma  
 185 (187) fatuma katakalamu \* akamuuzza hashimu \* baba siyamfahamu \* kijana huyu nabiya  
*Fatima spoke And asked the Hashimite: Father, I still don't recognise this boy, Prophet.*

(١٨٨) سِيَكُ زَبَ سِمُونِ \* إِن لَكَ نَدِي نَن \* مُتَمِ أَكْبَيْنِ \* فَتَمَ أَكْمَوْمِي  
 akamwambiya fatuma \* akabaini mtumi \* nani ndiye lake ina \* simuoni zote siku  
 186 (188) siku zote simuoni \* ina lake ndiye nani \* mtumi akabaini \* fatuma akamwambiya  
*I have never seen him before, What is his name? The Prophet spoke and addressed Fatima.*

(١٨٩) أَكْمَوْمِي بَشِيرِ \* هُيَ نَدِي جَعْفَرِ \* وَ عَلِي حَيْدَرِ \* هِزُ صُورَ هُكَوْمِي  
 hukwambiya šūra hizo \* haydari 'alii wa \* ja'fari ndiye huyu \* bashiri akamwambiya  
 187 (189) akamwambiya bashiri \* huyu ndiye ja'fari \* wa 'alii haydari \* hizo sura hukwambiya<sup>251</sup>  
*The Bringer of Good Tidings told her: This is Ja'far [son] of Ali the Lion-like -- his features would tell you that.*

(١٩٠) هَبْ سَيِّدِ أَمِينِ \* أَكْمُتْ حُسَيْنِ \* إِنَّنْكَ مُسَكِينِ \* بَبْكَ نَمَكُلِي  
 namkuliya babako \* msikitini enenda \* husayni akamtuma \* amini sayidi hapo  
 188 (190) hapo sayidi amini \* akamtuma husayni \* enenda msikitini \* babako namkuliya<sup>252</sup>  
*Then the Lord, the Trustworthy One, sent Husayn: Go to the mosque, and call your father for me.*

(١٩١) هَبْ كَتَكَ حُسَيْنِ \* كَفَكَ مُسَكِينِ \* بَبْ كُنِي مَعْنِ \* تُمُو كُكُونَدَمِي  
 kukwandamiya tumiwe \* mgeni kuiye baba \* msikitini kafika \* husayni katoka hapo  
 189 (191) hapo katoka husayni \* kafika msikitini \* baba kuiye mgeni \* tumiwe kukwandamiya<sup>253</sup>  
*So Husayn went off and arrived at the mosque. Father, a visitor has come -- I have been sent to fetch you.*

(١٩٢) كُنْ كِبَنَ مَزْرُ \* چَنَدَمَنَ نَ بَشِيرِ \* نَ إِن نِ جَعْفَرِ \* نِ هِلْ نِمَكَوْمِي  
 nimekwambiya hilo ni \* ja'fari ni ina na \* bashiri na chendemene \* mzuri kijana kuna  
 190 (192) kuna kijana mzuri \* enendemene<sup>254</sup> na bashiri \* na ina ni ja'fari \* ni hilo nimekwambiya<sup>255</sup>  
*There is a handsome boy there. He came with the Bringer of Good Tidings, and his name is Ja'far -- I have told you everything now.*

(١٩٣) چَنَبُو هِي كَلِمَ \* پَ نَدِي كَيْنَدَمَ \* مَلَنَغَنَ أَكِكَمَ \* سَلَامُ كَوَپِسِي  
 kawapisiya salamu \* akikoma mlangoni \* kayandama ndiya papo \* kalima hiyo chambiwa  
 191 (193) chambiwa hiyo kalima \* papo ndiya kayandama \* mlangoni akikoma \* salamu kawapisiya<sup>256</sup>  
*When these words had been said [Ali] set off immediately. When he reached the door [of his house] he greeted [those inside].*

<sup>251</sup>In the Mombasa expression, umejizaa mwenyewe, he's the spitting image of you.

<sup>252</sup>= nimtia, namwita.

<sup>253</sup>= nimetumwa kukufuatia.

<sup>254</sup>kijana (Class 7) is not a diminutive here.

<sup>255</sup>i.e. I have told you the real cause. He tells the whole story in case Ali gets worried that there has been a crisis at home. Compare 13b.

<sup>256</sup>-pisiya = -pitisha. In other words, he said salaam alekum.

(١٩٤) سَلَامٌ أَكْفَسِرَ \* هَبْ عَلَيَّ حَيْدَرَ \* كَيْتُكَ جَعْفَرَ \* مَكْنُ كَمْيَكِي

kampokeya mkono \* ja'fari kainuka \* haydari 'alii hapo \* akifasiri salamu

<sup>192</sup> (194) salamu akifasiri \* hapo 'alii haydari \* kainuka ja'fari \* mkono kampokeya

While he was greeting [them], Ali the Lion-like, Ja'far got up and took his hand.

(١٩٥) عَلَيَّ كَيْتَ تَمْكَ \* نِ سَلَامَ أُتْكَ \* جُمْلَ وَنَدَنِ وَكَ \* حَالِ زَاءِ نَمْبِي

nambiya zao hali \* wako wendani jumla \* utokako salama ni \* tamko keta 'alii

<sup>193</sup> (195) 'alii keta tamko \* ni salama utokako \* jumla wendani<sup>257</sup> wako \* hali zao nambiya

Ali spoke: Is everything well where you came from? All your relatives, tell me how they are.

(١٩٦) أَكْمَجِبُ كَلَمُ \* نِتْكَ نِ سَلَامَ \* سِيُوِي هُكَ نِيَمَ \* سِيَطِ لَكُومْبِي

lakukwambiya sipati \* nyuma hoko ya siyuwi \* salama ni nitokako \* kalamu akamjibu

<sup>194</sup> (196) akamjibu kalamu \* nitokako ni salama \* siyuwi ya hoko nyuma \* sipati lakukwambiya

And [Ja'far] answered him with the words: Everything is well where I come from, [though] I don't know about after [I left]. I have nothing to tell you [since my departure].

(١٩٧) تَنْ بَبِ مَوْلِمُ \* نَ مَمَ وَكُسَلِمُ \* وَعَلَيْكَ السَّلَامَ \* عَلَيَّ كَيْكِي

kapokeya 'alii \* as-salama wa'alayka \* wakusalimu mama na \* mwalimu baba tena

<sup>195</sup> (197) tena baba mwalimu \* na mama wakusalimu \* wa-alaika as-salama \* 'alii kapokeya

Also, father, [my] teacher and [my] mother greet you. Peace be with you, Ali answered.

(١٩٨) عَلَيَّ أَكْبَيْنِ \* نِمَكُنْجَ نَدَيْنِ \* وَلِتْكَ زَاءِ غَنِ \* مَبْنِ أُمْلِمْبِي

umelimaṭiya mbona \* gani zeo walitoka \* ndiyani nimekungoja \* akabaini 'alii

<sup>196</sup> (198) 'alii akabaini \* nimekungoja ndiyani \* walitoka zeo gani \* mbona umelimaṭiya<sup>258</sup>

Ali spoke: I waited for you on the road -- what time did you set out? Why are you late?

(١٩٩) أَكْمَجِبُ قَوْلِ \* أَصْبَحَ نَلِصَلِ \* لَكِنِ بَبِ نِ مَبَلِ \* إِنْ أَرْفُ وَ نَدِي

ndiya wa urefu ina \* mbali ni baba lakini \* naliṣali aṣubuḥi \* qawli akamjibu

<sup>197</sup> (199) akamjibu qauli \* aṣubuhi nalisali<sup>259</sup> \* lakini baba ni mbali \* ina urefu wa ndiya

[Ja'far] answered him with the words: I prayed in the morning, but, father, it is far -- the road is a long one.

(٢٠٠) نَمَ كَيْتَ پَنْغَنِ \* پَنْ مَتْنَدِ نَدَيْنِ \* يَلِنْتْكَ مَبْنِ \* يَلِ وَلْنَمْبِي

walonambiya yale \* moyoni yalinitoka \* ndiyani mṭende pana \* pangoni kipaṭa nami

<sup>198</sup> (200) nami kipaṭa<sup>260</sup> pangoni \* pana mṭende ndiyani<sup>261</sup> \* yalinitoka moyoni<sup>262</sup> \* yale walonambiya

And when I reached the cave there was the date-tree by the road, but they left my head, the [directions] you had told me.

<sup>257</sup> wendani can also cover friends as well as relatives.

<sup>258</sup> Amu -limatia = Zanzibar, Mvita -chelewa, Mvita -kawia.

<sup>259</sup> i.e. he had got up in time for prayers at 5.00am.

<sup>260</sup> Contrast -pata, arrive at somewhere en route to a destination, and -fika, arrive at the destination.

<sup>261</sup> These points were presumably part of the directions that Ali gave Ja'far in 74.

<sup>262</sup> i.e. nilisahau, I forgot.

(٢٠١) كَيُوتَ يَ كُفْلٍ \* كَانَدَمَ إِلْ مَبَلٍ \* هَتَ كِتَامَلٍ \* سَاءَ اِمْنِيَّتِي

imenipitiya saa \* kitaamali hata \* mbali ilo kaandama \* kuvuli ya kaiwata

<sup>199</sup> (201) kaiwata ya kuvuli \* kaandama ilo mbali \* hata kitaamali \* saa<sup>263</sup> imenipitiya<sup>264</sup>

I left behind the [road] to the right and walked on for a long way until I realised a long time had passed.

(٢٠٢) كِشْ أُونَعِ كَيْتَ \* إِي لَ بَرِ كَيْتَ \* إِلْ نَدِي كَيْتَ \* نِيَمَ نِسِيْرَجِي

nisiporejeya nyuma \* kuiwata ndiya ili \* kapita bara la iyu \* kaeṭa uwinga kisha

<sup>200</sup> (202) kisha uwinga kaeta<sup>265</sup> \* iyu la bara kapita<sup>266</sup> \* ili ndiya kuiwata \* nyuma nisiporejeya<sup>267</sup>

Then I did something stupid -- I walked out into the scrubland and left the road behind, instead of going back.

(٢٠٣) سُرَ نَنْدَاءُ بَرَن \* إِلْ نَدِي سِيْيَن \* هُوْنَ نَكْ بَرَن \* زَتَ زِمْنِيْتِي

zimenipoteya zote \* barani niko huona \* siiyoni ndiya ile \* barani nendao sura

<sup>201</sup> (203) sura<sup>268</sup> nendao barani \* ile ndiya siiyoni \* huona niko barani \* zote<sup>269</sup> zimenipoteya

Wherever I went in the scrubland I couldn't find the road -- I realised I was [lost] in the scrubland, and I had lost track of all [the roads].

(٢٠٤) كِيْجَ فِكِرَ زَنْغُ \* كَلَنْدَمَ غُو لَنْغُ \* نَرْدِي پَل پَنْغُ \* كِشْ نِيَمَ كَرْجِي

karejeya nyuma kisha \* pangu pale narudiya \* langu guu kalandama \* zangu fikira kipija

<sup>202</sup> (204) kipija fikira zangu \* kalandama guu langu \* narudiya pale pangu \* kisha nyuma karejeya

I cudgelled my brains and then retraced my footsteps and returned to my [correct] place and finally I got back.

(٢٠٥) كِشْ كُرْدِي نِيَمَ \* هَپْ نَدِي كَيْنْدَمَ \* پَنِي مْتَنْدَ كَكَمَ \* صَالِ اِمْنِسَمِي

imenisimamiya ṣāla \* kakoma mṭende penye \* kayandama ndiya hapo \* nyuma karudiya kisha

<sup>203</sup> (205) kisha karudiya nyuma \* hapo ndiya kayandama \* penye mtende kakoma \* sala imenisimamiya

At last I turned back and then I followed the road. At the place with the date-tree I stopped -- it was time to pray.

(٢٠٦) أَوَّلِ يَ أَظْهَرُ \* نَدِپْ نِي كَعْبِرُ \* حُجَ يَ كُجَ أَخِيرُ \* مَعَانَ نِمَكُومْبِي

nimekwambiya ma'āna \* akhīri kuja ya huja \* ka'abiri niya ndipo \* azuhuri ya awali

<sup>204</sup> (206) awali ya aduhuri<sup>270</sup> \* ndipo niya ka'abiri<sup>271</sup> \* huja<sup>272</sup> ya kuja ahiri \* ma'ana nimekwambiya

Just after noon was when I set out [again] on the road. Regarding coming late, I have told you the reason.

(٢٠٧) كِمَلَزَ كُيْلِكَ \* عَلِيْ اَكْتَمَكَ \* مَوْنَعُ اِمْسَمْبُكَ \* هَپْ كَنَنْ نَبِي

nabiya kanena hapo \* umesumbuka mwanangu \* akatamka 'alii \* kupulika kimaliza

<sup>205</sup> (207) kimaliza kupulika<sup>273</sup> \* 'alii akatamka \* mwanangu umesumbuka<sup>274</sup> \* hapo kanena nabiya

When he had finished listening Ali spoke: My child, you have been through a lot. Then the Prophet spoke.

<sup>263</sup> saa, hour, is used here to signify the passage of time.

<sup>264</sup> We are to understand, "and I still hadn't found the place I was trying to go to".

<sup>265</sup> i.e. -fanya jinga la kipumbavu, do something blockheaded, lit. "do the stupidity of an idiot".

<sup>266</sup> Where, of course, there are no paths.

<sup>267</sup> i.e. instead of trying to retrace his footsteps.

<sup>268</sup> = namna yeyote, whatever kind.

<sup>269</sup> We understand ndia, paths.

<sup>270</sup> Midday, when the sun is approaching its zenith, or just afterwards.

<sup>271</sup> -abiri < عبر, traverse, cross was used in older Swahili to mean travel from continent to continent in a ship, but now it refers to travel in general.

<sup>272</sup> huja, reason, argument, proof.

<sup>273</sup> -pulika = -sikiza, listen carefully.

<sup>274</sup> umepata taabu.

(٢٠٨) هَبْ كَنْنَ هَشِمَ \* سِ هَبْ كُنِي سَلَامَ \* نَدِي مَزَائِنَدَمَ \* خَطَرِ هُمَزَنْغِي

humzengeya khatari \* mezoiyandama ndiya \* salām kuya haba si \* hashima kanena hapo

206 (208) hapo<sup>275</sup> kanena hashima \* si haba kuya ṣalām<sup>276</sup> \* ndiya mezoiyandama \* hatari humzengeya<sup>277</sup>  
Then the Hashimite spoke: It is no small thing to arrive safely -- [on] the road he came along danger stalked him.

(٢٠٩) أَمَكِنَغَ وَدُودَ \* أَسْؤُونَ مَيْهُودَ \* كُونِ وَتَغْلَمَزِدَ \* وَتُ وَنَغِ سِ مُمِي

mmoya si wangi waṭu \* wangelimzidi kwani \* mayahūdi asiōne \* wadūdi amkinga

207 (209) amemkinga wadudi \* asione mayahudi<sup>278</sup> \* kwani wangelimzidi<sup>279</sup> \* watu wangi si mmoya<sup>280</sup>  
The Loving One protected him so that he met no unbelievers, for they would have overwhelmed him -- one against many.

(٢١٠) فَتَمُ أَكْ كَيْنَ \* أَكْمُوَيْكَ أَمِينِ \* كُو مَكْنُ كَبِينِ \* نَ نَدَنِ كَمَامُكُو

kamuamkuwa ndani na \* kabaini mkono kwa \* amīni akamwepuka \* kiṭini uko fatuma

208 (210) fatuma uko kitini \* akamwepuka amini \* kwa mkono kabaini<sup>281</sup> \* na ndani kamuamkuwa<sup>282</sup>  
Fatima had been sitting down. She moved back from the Trustworthy One and made a sign with her hand and beckoned [Ali] into the inner [room].

(٢١١) مَكْنُ كِيُتِزَمَ \* عَلِي أَكْفَهَمَ \* أَكْمَوْمِي هَشِمَ \* نَدَ نَدَنِ مَرْمِي

moya mara ndani nenda \* hashima akamwambiya \* akafahama 'alii \* kiutizama mkono

209 (211) mkono kiutizama \* 'alii akafahama \* akamwambiya hashima \* nenda ndani mara moya  
When he saw her hand [sign] Ali understood [what it meant]. He told the Hashimite: I am just now going to the inner [room].

(٢١٢) كُو نَدَنِ أَلِيفِكَ \* فَتَمُ أَكْتَمَكَ \* چَكَلِ نِمَكِيكَ \* هَيْتَسَ كُونْدِكُو

kwandikiwa hayatasa \* nimekipika chakula \* akatamka fatuma \* alipofika ndani kwa

210 (212) kwa ndani alipofika \* fatuma akatamka \* chakula nimekipika \* hayatasa kwandikiwa  
When he entered the inner [room] Fatima spoke: I have cooked some food is it not time for it to be served?

(٢١٣) كُونْدَ سِكْمَكِينِكَ \* خَبَرَ أَكْتَمَكَ \* مِي هُمُيْطِكَ \* كُو أَثْقَلَ وَ نَدِي

ndiya wa uthaqili kwa \* humpapatika moyo \* akatamka khabari \* sikumakinika kwanda

211 (213) kwanda ni kumakinika \* habari akatamka<sup>283</sup> \* moyo humpapatika \* kwa uthaqili wa ndiya<sup>284</sup>  
[Ali said:] First he must relax and tell his news -- his heart is fluttering because of the hardships of the journey.

(٢١٤) نَ زَاءُ أَلِزْتُكَ \* أَمَزِيُو هَكِكَ \* نَ سِسِ هُمُيْلِكَ \* مَنِي هُتْوَمِي

hutwambiya manenoye \* humpulika sisi na \* hakika umeziyuwa \* alizotoka zeo na

212 (214) na zeo<sup>285</sup> alizotoka \* umeziyuwa hakika \* na sisi humpulika \* manenoye hutwambiya  
And the time he took [to get here], you know it well, and we are listening to him as he tells us his story.

<sup>275</sup>Note the use of hapo to refer to time instead of place: “at this point”.

<sup>276</sup>ingawa umetaabika, even though you were in distress.

<sup>277</sup>He could have been attacked by robbers, lions, etc.

<sup>278</sup>Although the literal meaning is “Jews”, it is important to note that this word now has a much wider meaning of unbelievers in general, makafiri.

<sup>279</sup>i.e. “they would have been too much for him” – -zidi here = shinda.

<sup>280</sup>mtu mmoya si sawasawa na watu wengi, one person is no match for many.

<sup>281</sup>kumwambia siri, to tell him a secret.

<sup>282</sup>kumwita ndani, to call him into the private quarters.

<sup>283</sup>Ali is trying to put off as long as possible the inevitable point at which Fatima will hear that Ja'far is his son.

<sup>284</sup>i.e. taabu ya ndiani.

<sup>285</sup>Amu zeo = Mvita wakati, Mu njeo.

(٢١٥) عَلِيّ أَكْبَنُ \* هُمُصِيرُ حُسَيْنٍ \* نِمَمْتُ حَسَنٍ \* إِنْ دُ كُمُومَكُو

kumuamkuwa ende \* ḥasani nimemtuma \* ḥusayni humsubiri \* akabaini 'alii

<sup>213</sup> (215) 'alii akabaini \* humsubiri<sup>286</sup> husayni \* nimemtuma hasani \* ende kumuamkuwa<sup>287</sup>

Ali said: we are [still] waiting for Husayn -- I have sent Hasan to go and fetch him.

(٢١٦) عَلِيّ كُنْكَ نَدَنٍ \* أَلَيْكَتِ كَيْنٍ \* أَمْسِكِي حَسَنٍ \* سَلَامٌ هُوَ يَسِي

huwapisiya salāmu \* ḥasani amsikiye \* kiṭini alipoketi \* ndani kutoka 'alii

<sup>214</sup> (216) 'alii kutoka ndani \* alipoketi kitini \* amsikiye hasani \* salamu huwapisiya<sup>288</sup>

Ali came back from the inner [room] and sat down on a chair. He heard Hasan greeting them.

(٢١٧) حَسَنٍ أَكْظُمُ \* كُوَيْسِرَ سَلَامُ \* أَمْرُدِشَ كَلِمُ \* جَعْفَرَ كَمُومَبِي

kamwambiya ja'fari \* kalimu amrudishe \* salāmu kuwapisiza \* akanuzumu ḥasani

<sup>215</sup> (217) hasani akanudhumu \* kuwapisiza salamu \* wamrudishe kalimu \* ja'fari kamwambiya

Hasan spoke and greeted them so that they could return the greeting. He spoke to Ja'far.

(٢١٨) كُوْ أُنْدَنٍ كَوْمَ \* كَمُؤْلَزَ سَلَامَ \* وَلَوْثَ وَكَسِمَ \* وَتَ وَكَمْيَكِي

wakampokeya wote \* wakasima waliopo \* salāma kamuuliza \* kwima undani kwa

<sup>216</sup> (218) kwa undani<sup>289</sup> kwima \* kamuuliza salama \* waliopo wakasema \* wote wakampokeya<sup>290</sup>

With politeness (?) he asked how [Ja'far] was. Those present spoke and all returned his greeting.

(٢١٩) كَمُومَبِي مَتَمَكُ \* نِ سَلَامَ نِتَكَكُ \* سِيُو مَبِي نَنْدَا \* أَيُوْ نِ جَلِي

jaliya ni ayuwae \* nendako mbee siyuwi \* nitokako salāma ni \* matamko kamwambiya

<sup>217</sup> (219) kamwambiya matamko \* ni salama nitokako<sup>291</sup> \* siyuwi mbee nendako \* ayuwae ni jaliya  
[ja'far] spoke [these] words to him: All is well where I come from; I do not know about where I am going -- the one who knows is the Almighty.

(٢٢٠) أَكْتَمَكَ أَمِينٍ \* كَوْمَبِي كُوْ هَرِنٍ \* عَلِيّ أَكْبَنٍ \* مَبْنِ هُتَاكَ نَبِي

nabiya hutoka mbona \* akabaini 'alii \* herini kwa kawambiya \* amīni akatamka

<sup>218</sup> (220) akatamka amini \* kawambiya kwa herini \* 'alii akabaini \* mbona hutoka nabiya

The Trustworthy One spoke and bade them goodbye. Ali spoke: Surely you are not leaving, Prophet?

(٢٢١) مَتَمُ أَكْتَمَكَ \* زُ زِمَاخِرِكَ \* سَاءَ تِسِي هَكَاكَ \* نِيْمَبِنِ سِيرَجِي

siyarejeya nyumbani \* hakika tisiya saa \* zimeakhirika zeo \* akatamka mtume

<sup>219</sup> (221) mtume akatamka \* zeo zimeahirika \* saa tisiya hakika \* nyumbani siyarejeya

The Prophet spoke: the time is late -- it is now the ninth hour for certain, and I have not yet returned home.

<sup>286</sup>-subiri = -ngoja.

<sup>287</sup>This is another attempt to put off the moment of truth.

<sup>288</sup>Hasan has obviously not left yet (assuming Ali has even told him to fetch Husayn), because he is still greeting the visitors.

<sup>289</sup> = kwa taratibu. (?)

<sup>290</sup>i.e. answered wa alekum as-salaam.

<sup>291</sup>This is an echo of 196b, but neatly turns it to refer to time instead of space.

(٢٢٢) كَمَبَ صُبِرَ بَشِيرٍ \* تُمْلِشَ جَعْفَرٍ \* چَكُلْ كِكُ تَيْرٍ \* هَبْ كَكَتِ نَبِيٍّ

nabiya kaketi hapo \* tayari kiko chakula \* ja'fari tumlishe \* bashiri subiri kamba

<sup>220</sup> (222) kamba subiri bashiri \* tumlishe ja'fari<sup>292</sup> \* chakula kiko tayari \* hapo kaketi nabiya  
[Ali] said: Wait, Bringer of Good Tidings, until we have given Ja'far something to eat. The food is ready. So the Prophet sat down.

(٢٢٣) فَتَمَّ أَكْنُكُ \* كَوَّ أُپْسِ نَ هَرَكَ \* تَمَشَ أَكْنُكُ \* نَ مَاءِ كَوَّپَكِي

kawapekeya mai na \* akaiweka tamasha \* haraka na upesi kwa \* akainuka fatuma

<sup>221</sup> (223) fatuma akainuka \* kwa upesi na haraka<sup>293</sup> \* tamasha<sup>294</sup> akaiweka \* na mai<sup>295</sup> kawapekeya  
Fatima got up quickly, in a hurry, and placed delicacies [before them] and brought them water.

(٢٢٤) وَكَكَتِ كَوَّ مَفْنٍ \* وَكَتَنَغْنِي مَكْنُ \* جُمْلَ وَثُ وَ تَنَ \* وَلَ أَسِلَ نَبِيٍّ

nabiya asile wala \* tano wa watu jumla \* mikono wakatanganya \* mfano kwa wakaketi

<sup>222</sup> (224) wakaketi kwa mfano<sup>296</sup> \* wakatanganya mikono<sup>297</sup> \* jumla watu wa tano \* wala asile nabiya  
They sat equally, sharing the same dish, all five of them, though the Prophet did not eat [much].

(٢٢٥) مَرَّ ثَاتُ كَوَّ هَكِكَ \* مَكْنُ أَلُؤْپَكُ \* أَكِشَ أَكْنُكُ \* وَءَ أَكَوْتِي

akawatiya wao \* akainuka akisha \* aliupeka mkono \* hakika kwa tãtu mara

<sup>223</sup> (225) mara tatu kwa hakika \* mkono aliupeka \* akisha akainuka \* wao akawatiya<sup>298</sup>  
Three times indeed he put his hand [into the dish] and then he got up and left [the food] to them.

(٢٢٦) أَكْنُكُ كِيْنِ \* كِيَوَ مَاءِ أَمِينِ \* نَ يَ كُنُو كِكْمَبِنِ \* نَاءِ أَكْسُكُتُو

akasukutuwa nae \* kikombeni kunwa ya na \* amini mai kapowa \* kiñini akainuka

<sup>224</sup> (226) akainuka<sup>299</sup> kitini \* kapowa mai amini \* na ya kunwa kikombeni \* nae akasukutuwa<sup>300</sup>  
He rose from his chair and accepted water, the Trustworthy One, in a cup to drink, and rinsed his mouth.

(٢٢٧) تَمْبُو يَ كُخْتَرِ \* هَبْ كِيَوَ بَشِيرِ \* أَكَوَّآغَ كَوَّ هَرِ \* تُمُو أَكْتِيكِي

akaitokeya tumwa \* heri kwa akawaaga \* bashiri kapowa hapo \* kukhitari ya tambuu

<sup>225</sup> (227) tambuu<sup>301</sup> ya kuhitari<sup>302</sup> \* hapo kapowa bashiri \* akawaaga kwa heri \* tumwa akaitokeya  
Choice tambuu he was then given, the Bearer of Good Tidings, and he bade them farewell -- the Prophet went off.

<sup>292</sup> i.e. tule naye, so that we may share a meal with him. Sharing a meal with someone shows respect.

<sup>293</sup> After being told not to server the food yet, she now has to do it in a hurry.

<sup>294</sup> vitu vizuri vizuri.

<sup>295</sup> This could either be ya kunawa, to wash with, or ya kunwa, to drink. The Swahili custom is not to eat food without water.

<sup>296</sup> i.e. kwa sawasawa.

<sup>297</sup> In other words, they eat together, kula pamoja, which brings baraka, blessings.

<sup>298</sup> In other words, the Prophet stays for a little while for politeness' sake, but leaves as soon as he can.

<sup>299</sup> This and the previous stanza are very vivid depictions of Swahili customs.

<sup>300</sup> After eating, you rinse your mouth with water and spit it out.

<sup>301</sup> tambuu is some lime wrapped in a betel leaf, used like chewing tobacco. Protracted use stains the teeth red. Offering tambuu is a particular feature of northern Swahili culture. However, it is very unlikely that Swatambuu would have been offered in the original Arabian setting of the story, and it is even less likely that the Prophet would have accepted it even if it was.

<sup>302</sup> ya kuteua nzuri.



(٢٢٨) تُمَو أَكِشَ كُتْكَ \* نَاءَ كُلِّ وَمَكُوشَ \* فَتَمَ أَكُتْكَ \* مَاءِ أَكُوپَكِي

akawapekeya mai \* akainuka fatuma \* wamekwisha kula nao \* kutoka akisha tumwa

<sup>226</sup> (228) tumwa akisha kutoka \* nao kula wamekwisha \* fatuma akainuka \* mai akawapekeya  
When the Prophet had left and they had finished eating Fatima got up and offered them water.

(٢٢٩) أَكَيْنَ فَتَمَ \* پَٹْ أَكَيْزَمَ \* يَپِسِي يَ نِيمَ \* يَتَ يَكَمْرُدِي

yakamrudīya yote \* nyuma ya yapisiyo \* akaitizama pte \* fatuma akaiyona

<sup>227</sup> (229) akaiyona fatuma \* pte akaitizama \* yapisiyo ya nyuma \* yote yakamrudīya  
And Fatima saw it -- she caught sight of the ring. What had happened in the past all came back to her.

(٢٣٠) عَلِي أَكْتَمَكَ \* مَبْنِ أَمِيدَلِكْ \* كَمَ أَمَزُودِكْ \* يُوْ نِكِكُونْغَلِي

nikikwangaliya yeo \* umezoudhika kama \* umebadilika mbona \* akatamka 'alii

<sup>228</sup> (230) 'alii akatamka \* mbona umebadilika \* kama umezoudhika<sup>303</sup> \* yeo<sup>304</sup> nikikwangaliya  
Ali spoke: Why has [your mood] changed, as if you are angry, now as I look at you?

(٢٣١) فَتَمَ كَرَدِدْ \* وَوْ هُنْدِ بَعِيدِ \* نَلْنَلْ سِنَ بُدْ \* إِلَّا نَاوْ كُكُومْبِي

kukwambiya nāwe illā \* budi sina nilonalo \* ba'idi hunendi wewe \* akaradidi fatuma

<sup>229</sup> (231) fatuma akaradidi \* wewe hunendi ba'idi<sup>305</sup> \* nilonalo sina budi \* illa nawa kukwambiya  
Fatima replied: You are not leaving yet. [the thing] I have [in my heart], I have no choice but to tell you.

(٢٣٢) أَكِسِكِي حَسَنِ \* كَتَكَ كُلِّ نِيْمَنِ \* أَكْنَدَ كُوْ أَمِينِ \* حَبِرْ أَكُومْبِي

akamwambiya hbr \* amīni kwa akanenda \* nyumbani kule katoka \* ḥasani akisikiya

<sup>230</sup> (232) akisikiya hasani \* katoka kule nyumbani \* akanenda kwa amini \* ḥabarī akamwambiya  
When Hasan heard this he left the house and went to the Trustworthy One and told him the news.

(٢٣٣) حَسَنِ كِشَ كُفِكَ \* كُوْ مْتَمَ كَتَمَكَ \* مِمَ أَمَكْسِرِكَ \* بَبِ يَنْغُ نَكُومْبِي

nakwambiya yangu bibi \* amekasirika mimi \* katamka mtume kwa \* kufika kisha ḥasani

<sup>231</sup> (233) hasani kisha kufika \* kwa mtume katamka \* mimi amekasirika \* bibi<sup>306</sup> yangu nakwambiya  
When Hassan got there he told the Prophet: she is angry, my mother - I'm telling you.

(٢٣٤) أَكُمُوزَ أَمِينِ \* مَكْسِرِكِي نِي \* مُونِيُوْ هَكُبْنِي \* مِي سِكُفَهَمِي

sikufahamiya moya \* hakubaini mwenyewe \* nini mekasirikiya \* amīni akamuza

<sup>232</sup> (234) akamuza amini \* mekasirikiya nini \* mwenyewe shubāini \* moya sikufahamiya  
The Trustworthy One asked him: Why has she got angry? [Hasan said:] Myself I don't know -- I don't understand [a thing about it].

<sup>303</sup> Like ambaye mekasirika, someone who is angry.

<sup>304</sup> In this case, yeo / leo, today, means "now".

<sup>305</sup> baidi = mbali, far, but here it has the meaning "yet". i.e. Ali is going to be there for a while, so she will tell him now.

<sup>306</sup> bibi is a more polite way of saying mama.

(٢٣٥) كُرِدَ كَوْكُ نَدَيْنِ \* أَكْمُونُ حُسَيْنِ \* آتِ مَكِّي مَغْنِ \* هُكُ كَوْتُ نَسَكِي

nasikiya kweṭu huku \* mgeni mekuya āṭi \* ḥusayni akamuona \* ndiyani kwake kurudi

<sup>233</sup> (235) kurudi kwake ndiyani \* akamuona husayni \* ati mekuya mgeni \* huku kwetu nasikiya

As [Hasan] went back along the road he saw Husayn [who said:] So, a visitor has come to our house, I hear.

(٢٣٦) أَكْمَجِبُ حَسَنِ \* مُونِي خَبَرِ مُنِي \* إِنِ بِي تَمَكِنِ \* هِي أَمَزَوْمِي

amezowambiya hoyo \* tamkini yeye ina \* muini khabari mwenye \* ḥasani akamjibu

<sup>234</sup> (236) akamjibu hasani \* mwenye habari muini<sup>307</sup> \* ina yeye<sup>308</sup> tamkini<sup>309</sup> \* hoyo amezowambiya

Hasan answered him: the gossip-monger in the town, [ja'far's] name, certainly, [it is] this person who has told [people] that.

(٢٣٧) أَكَيْتَ مَلْنُغْنِ \* أَكْرَدِ حُسَيْنِ \* آسَ وَمَتَكَيْنِ \* بِنِ أَلَوَيْتِي

aliwapoteya penu \* wamtakiyani āsa \* ḥusayni akaradidi \* mlangoni akapiṭa

<sup>235</sup> (237) akapita mlangoni \* akaradidi husayni \* baṣi wamtakiyani<sup>310</sup> \* penu<sup>311</sup> aliwapoteya<sup>312</sup>

He came to the door [of Ali's house] and told Husayn: So, why are you bothering me? Has he left our house [and gone wandering about]?

(٢٣٨) أَكْمُوزَ بَيْكَ \* أَنْنِ هُنَّ بَوَكُ \* أَكْمَبَ خَيْرِ نَتَكُ \* خَبَرِ زِمْنِي

zimeeneya khabari \* nitoke khēri akamba \* pweke hunena unani \* babake akamuuzā

<sup>236</sup> (238) akamuuzā babake \* unani<sup>313</sup> hunena pweke \* akamba heri nitoke<sup>314</sup> \* habari zimeeneya<sup>315</sup>

His father asked him: What's the matter? You are speaking amongst yourselves. Then [Ali] said: It is best I go out. The news has spread.

(٢٣٩) كُمِپَنَّ خَبَرَ \* جَمِيعَ يَ أَنْصَارِ \* أَمَكِّي جَعْفَرِ \* وَ مَوْلَانَا عَلِي

'aliya mawlānā wa \* ja'fari amekuya \* anṣāri ya jamī'i \* khabari kumepanana

<sup>237</sup> (239) kumepanana habari \* jamī'i ya ansari<sup>316</sup> \* amekuya ja'fari \* wa maulana 'aliya

The news is being passed about among all the Helpers: Ja'far has arrived, [the son] of Lord Ali.

(٢٤٠) هَبْ عَلِي حَيْدَرِ \* نَنْ أَلْفَسِرِ \* أَوْنُغْ أَنْ خَطَرِ \* مَمْبُ يَكْتُمِلِي

yakitumiliya mambo \* khaṭari una uwinga \* alilofasiri neno \* ḥaydari 'alii hapo

<sup>238</sup> (240) hapo 'alii haydari \* neno alilofasiri<sup>317</sup> \* uwinga<sup>318</sup> una hatari \* mambo yakitokweleya

Then Ali the Lionlike, the words that he said [were]: Foolishness is dangerous, if someone does not understand how things are.

<sup>307</sup> Hasan is annoyed because someone is spreading gossip about the fact that Ali has a hitherto-unknown son. To avoid confirming the rumours he does a typically Swahili thing – if someone asks you if such-and-such a rumour is true, you say: “The one who told you is the one who knows – go back and ask him”.

<sup>308</sup> i.e. Ja'far's name.

<sup>309</sup> = *hakika*, certainly.

<sup>310</sup> -m- here = -ni-. i.e. it's no-one else's business.

<sup>311</sup> We understand *pahali*.

<sup>312</sup> The meaning seems to be that there is no justification for any gossip, because it is not as if Ja'far has gone wandering around the town like a child or a pet, giving people cause to talk about it.

<sup>313</sup> = *una nini?*. See 244a, 263b.

<sup>314</sup> We have to assume that Hasan and Husayn have told Ali what they were talking about.

<sup>315</sup> In other words, Ali thinks it would be better to give the word officially, instead of having people gossip about it as a scandal.

<sup>316</sup> *ansari* are the people of Medina who gave sanctuary to the Prophet when he was forced to flee from Mecca in 622 CE.

<sup>317</sup> *Ali anamlaumu mtoto wake*, Ali is criticising his son [Hasan]. i.e. Ali is telling them they should not be upset by gossip.

<sup>318</sup> Cognate with *jinga* in 202a.

(٢٤١) كُونُ كَيْي مَغْنٍ \* هَلْ هُكُوذَيْنِ \* تَمُوكَ هُكُ نِيْمَيْنِ \* مِّنْ هَتَمْبِي

hatotembeya muina \* nyumbani huku tamuweka \* hukuudhiyani hilo \* mgeni kuiye kwenu  
<sup>239</sup> (241) kwenu kuiye mgeni<sup>319</sup> \* hilo hukuudhiyani \* tamuweka huku nyumbani \* muina hatotembeya<sup>320</sup>  
 A visitor has come to your house -- why does this disturb you? Should I keep him here in the house so that he will not wander  
 around the town?

(٢٤٢) فَتَمُ أَكْنُطُمُ \* كُونِ سِ مَوْنِ حَرَمُ \* مَوْنِ هَن تَبَسَمُ \* عَلِي كِمُونْغَلِي

kimwangaliya 'alii \* tabasamu hana mwana \* haramu mwana si kwani \* akanuṭumu fatuma  
<sup>240</sup> (242) fatuma akanudhumu<sup>321</sup> \* kwani si mwana haramu \* mwana<sup>322</sup> hana tabasamu<sup>323</sup> \* 'alii  
 kimwangaliya<sup>324</sup>

Fatima spoke [to the boys]: Why [do you want to hide him]? He is not an illegitimate child. [But] the Lady [Fatima]  
 appeared sad when Ali looked at her.

(٢٤٣) عَلِي هَبْ كَسَمَ \* هَلْ نَدُو فَطَمَ \* أَكْنُكَ كَو هِمَ \* مَكُو كَمُنْدِي

kamuendeya mkewe \* hima kwa akainuka \* faṭuma ndoo hela \* kasema hapo 'alii  
<sup>241</sup> (243) 'alii hapo kasema \* hela<sup>325</sup> ndoo fatuma \* akainuka kwa hima<sup>326</sup> \* mkewe kamuendeya  
 So Ali said: Come now, Fatima. He got up carefully and went to his wife.

(٢٤٤) أَكْمُوزُ أَنْ \* مَبْنِ أَنْ كِسْرَنِ \* فَتَمُ أَكْمَبْ كُنْ \* يَ مَتْنُغْ هُكُومْبِي

hukwambiya matungu ya \* kuni akamba fatuma \* kisirani una mbona \* unani akamuza  
<sup>242</sup> (244) akamuza unani<sup>327</sup> \* mbona una kisirani<sup>328</sup> \* fatuma akamba kwani<sup>329</sup> \* ya matungu<sup>330</sup>  
 hukwambiya

He asked her: What is the matter? Why are you frowning? Fatima said: What is the point of telling you bitter things.

(٢٤٥) أَكْمَجِبُ تَمَكُ \* هِي سِ طَبِي يَكُ \* مِم سِ كَبَنَ چَاكُ \* أَمَبْ هِي هُنْمَبِي

hunambiya hayo amba \* chako kijana si mimi \* yako ṭabiya si hiyo \* tamko akamjibu  
<sup>243</sup> (245) akamjibu tamko \* hiyo si tabiya yako \* mimi si kijana chako<sup>331</sup> \* amba hayo hunambiya  
 [Ali] answered her with the words: This is not like you. I am not your child, say what it is, and tell me.

<sup>319</sup> Ali is asking Hasan: *kwa nini umekasirika?*, why are you angry?. You must know that I have a duty of care to Ja'far – I cannot disown him and leave him to wander around the town by himself.

<sup>320</sup> This is a rhetorical question: Ali is saying that trying to keep Ja'far's existence secret by locking him in the house would be just as bad as disowning him and leaving him to wander about like a beggar.

<sup>321</sup> Fatima supports the point Ali is making to his children.

<sup>322</sup> *mwana* in the previous line meant *child*, but in this line it is used a respectful title, *lady, mistress*.

<sup>323</sup> *amehuzunika*, he has become sad, because everyone seems to be against him.

<sup>324</sup> In spite of supporting Ali's comments, Fatima is still upset about her discovery.

<sup>325</sup> = *hebu*.

<sup>326</sup> = *taratibu*.

<sup>327</sup> = *una nini?*. See 238b, 263b.

<sup>328</sup> *haṭeki*, she is not laughing. If someone is in a bad mood, you might say: *ameamka na kisirani*, he got out of the wrong side of the bed. A *siku wa kisirani* is a "bad hair day", a day on which nothing goes right.

<sup>329</sup> *kwani*, why?.

<sup>330</sup> *bitterness*.

<sup>331</sup> It is said: *mtu mzima, huwezi kumdanganya*, you cannot hoodwink a mature person. Ali is telling Fatima: *usinihade, mimi si mtoto*, don't try to fool me, I am not a child. He knows something is troubling her, and wants her to say what it is.

(٢٤٦) فَتَمَّ أَكْبَيْنَ \* سِ إِلِ پِٹ چَنْدَن \* يَلْنَعِي كِسْمَن \* آتِ زَيْبِ هُتِي

hutiya ziyapo āti \* kisimani yalongiya \* chandani peṭe ile si \* akabaini fatuma  
 244 (246) fatuma akabaini \* si ile pete chandani \* yalongiya kisimani \* ati<sup>332</sup> ziyapo<sup>333</sup> hutiya  
 Fatima spoke: That ring on his finger, is it not [the one] which "fell into the well", as you swore?

(٢٤٧) عَلِي أَكْمَبَ هَكَكَ \* نَدِپُ أَكْكَسِرِكَ \* پَلِ أَنْغِلُوذِكَ \* كَمَ كِلِ نَكُومْبِي

nakwambiya kile kama \* ungeliudhika pale \* ukakasirika ndipo \* hakika akamba 'alii  
 245 (247) 'alii akamba hakika \* ndipo<sup>334</sup> ukakasirika \* pale ungeliudhika \* kama kile<sup>335</sup> nakwambiya<sup>336</sup>  
 Ali said: Indeed, so that's why you are angry -- you would have got angry at that time [as well], if I had told you the truth.

(٢٤٨) نَ سَسَ نَنْغَكُوذِ \* نَدُغُ يَنْغُ وَتَ غَرَضِ \* مُي وَكَ أَوْ رَضِ \* نَ أَتْكَلِ نَمْبِي

nambiya utakalo na \* raḍi uwe wake moyo \* gharaḍi wata yangu ndugu \* nengekuudhi sasa na  
 246 (248) na sasa nengekuudhi \* ndugu yangu wata gharadhi<sup>337</sup> \* moyo wake uwe radhi \* na utakalo  
 nambiya<sup>338</sup>  
 And now, even if I have hurt you, stop being angry, my dear. let your heart be forgiving and tell me what you want.

(٢٤٩) فَتَمَّ كَظَ قَوْلِ \* كِطُ سِ يَ كُلِّ دَلِيلِ \* أَوْبُ أُمْكُبَلِ \* رَضِ نِمْكُولِي

nimekweleya raḍi \* umekubali uwapo \* dalili kula ya si kiṭu \* qawli keṭa fatuma  
 247 (249) fatuma keta qauli \* kitu si ya kula dalili<sup>339</sup> \* uwapo<sup>340</sup> umekubali \* radhi nimekweleya<sup>341</sup>  
 Fatima spoke these words: the matter is of little importance. Since you have now agreed [you were wrong], I forgive you.

(٢٥٠) وَكَكَتِ كَوَ لَسَنِ \* بِي نَ مَوْنَ نِيْمَبِنِ \* نَوَ نَنْدَپَ زَنْنِ \* وَچَنْدَ وَتَ پَمِي

pamoya wote wachenda \* ziṭani nendapo nawe \* nyumbani mwana na yeye \* lisani kwa wakaketi  
 248 (250) wakaketi kwa hisani<sup>342</sup> \* yeye na mwana nyumbani \* naye wendapo zitani \* wachenda wote  
 pamoya<sup>343</sup>  
 They lived happily, [Ali] and the boy, in the house. When [Ali] went to war they both went together.

(٢٥١) جَعْفَرِ نِ مَغْنِ \* هِيْزُويَ زَنْنِ \* مَهَلِ پَ مَيْتِنِ \* عَلِي أَكِمُونْدَلِي

akimwendeleya 'alii \* maytini pa mahala \* ziṭani hayazoweya \* mgeni ni ja'fari  
 249 (251) ja'fari ni mgeni \* hayazoweya zitani \* mahala pa miyaṭeni \* 'alii akimwendeleya<sup>344</sup>  
 Ja'far was a stranger [to war] he was not accustomed to battle -- where there were 200 [opponents] Ali would go to him [to help].

<sup>332</sup>ati here implies that what was said is a lie.

<sup>333</sup>oaths.

<sup>334</sup>that is why.

<sup>335</sup>Amend translation.

<sup>336</sup>In other words, "You would have got angry if I had not told you lies".

<sup>337</sup>gharadhi = hasira.

<sup>338</sup>Ali is trying to mollify his wife.

<sup>339</sup>The meaning of this line is not entirely clear. dalili is usually translated as "sign", but it is also a term for "proof", as used in logic. So the line might be paraphrased as: "between us, the issue (kitu) does not need to be proved on every point, because we love each other".

<sup>340</sup> = ukiwa.

<sup>341</sup> = nimekusamehe, I have forgiven you. The mollification works – Fatima forgives him.

<sup>342</sup>hisani, kindness, goodness.

<sup>343</sup>i.e. Ali took Ja'far with him on his campaigns.

<sup>344</sup>Unlike Ali, Ja'far cannot yet fight 200 opponents alone!

(٢٥٢) هَتَ أَكَيْتُمُ مَوَكَّ \* زَنْنَ اَمَصِيْفَكَ \* سَبَا مِي هَكَكَ \* هَتَنْدَ اَسِيْوُو

asipoyuwa hutinda \* hakika miya sabā \* amesifika zitani \* mwaka akitimu hata

<sup>250</sup> (252) hata akitimu mwaka \* zitani amesifika \* saba miya hakika \* hutinda asipoyuwa<sup>345</sup>

Until at the end of one year he was renowned in battle. Indeed, 700 [opponents] he would cut down with no effort.

(٢٥٣) هَتَ مَوَكَّ اُكِيْزِدِ \* هَبْ اَكُنْدَ جِهَدِ \* لَكَ مِي مِيْهَدِ \* هَكُنْ هَتَ مُمِيْ

mmoya hata hakuna \* mayahudi moya laki \* jihadi akenda hapo \* ukizidi mwaka hata

<sup>251</sup> (253) hata mwaka<sup>346</sup> ukizidi \* hapo akenda jihadi \* laki<sup>347</sup> moya mayahudi<sup>348</sup> \* hakuna hata mmoya

Until, as time went by, when he went on a crusade, of 100,000 unbelievers there was not one [left alive].

(٢٥٤) اَلِيْكَيْ مُنْ \* عَلِيْ اَكْبَيْنْ \* اَكْمُوْمِيْ اَمِنْ \* نِنْ يَمْبُ تَكُوْمِيْ

takwambiya yambo nina \* amini akamwambiya \* akabaini 'alii \* muini alipokuya

<sup>252</sup> (254) alipokuya muini \* 'alii akabaini \* akamwambiya amini \* nina yambo takwambiya

When he came back to the town [after one campaign] Ali spoke and told the Trustworthy One: I have something to tell you.

(٢٥٥) نِيْنْدَ سَسَ بَشِرِ \* اِنْدِ يُوْكَ جَعْفَرِ \* اَكِيْجَ مَكْفَرِ \* هُتَشَ كِيْمُوْنَعَلِيْ

kimwangaliya hutosha \* makufari akapije \* ja'fari pweke ende \* bashiri sasa napenda

<sup>253</sup> (255) napenda sasa bashiri \* ende pweke ja'fari \* akapije makufari \* hutosha<sup>349</sup> kimwangaliya<sup>350</sup>

I would now like, Bringer of Good Tidings, for Ja'fari to go on his own to fight the unbelievers. He is fully able, in my opinion.

(٢٥٦) اَكْشُكَ جِبْرِيلَ \* اَكْمُوْمِيْ رَسُوْلَ \* هَوَكُ سِمْبَ وَوِلَ \* اَكْسَلِمُ نَبِيْ

nabiya akusalimu \* wawili simba haweki \* rasūli akamwambiya \* jibrili akashuka

<sup>254</sup> (256) akashuka jibrili \* akamwambiya rasuli \* haweki<sup>351</sup> simba<sup>352</sup> wawili \* akusalimu nabiya

Gabriel descended and told the Prophet: [God] cannot have two Lions, and he greets you, Prophet.

(٢٥٧) اَكْتَمَكَ اَمِيْنِ \* عَلِيْ تُوْنْدَ نِيْمَبِنِ \* مَوْنُ هُوِيْ يَقِيْنِ \* هُوْفَرِكَ دُنِيْ

duniya huifariki \* yaqīni huyo mwano \* nyumbani twende 'alii \* amīni akatamka

<sup>255</sup> (257) akatamka amini<sup>353</sup> \* 'alii twende nyumbani \* mwano<sup>354</sup> huyo yaqini \* huifariki duniya

The Trustworthy One spoke: Ali, let us go to your house -- this son of yours, it seems, is departing this world.

(٢٥٨) چَمْبُوْ هُوِيْ قَوْلِ \* هَبْ اَسِيْمُهَلِ \* كَيْنُكَ نَ رَسُوْلِ \* هَبْ وَكَنْدَمَ نَدِيْ

ndiya wakandama hapo \* rasūli na kainuka \* asiyamuhali hapo \* qawli hiyo chambiwa

<sup>256</sup> (258) chambiwa hiyo qauli \* hapo asiyamuhali<sup>355</sup> \* kainuka na rasuli \* hapo<sup>356</sup> wakandama ndiya

When he was told these words [Ali] did not linger there -- he got up with the Prophet and then they set out on the road.

<sup>345</sup> i.e. he could do it without realising.

<sup>346</sup> mwaka, year, is used here to mean "time" in general. Compare saa in 201d.

<sup>347</sup> laki < لَكُ 100,000.

<sup>348</sup> See 209b. This word can be used for anyone who is bad or evil.

<sup>349</sup> he is capable of [doing something].

<sup>350</sup> Compare: kila kimwangaliya, naona ana mambo yule, every time I look at him, I see that guy has something.

<sup>351</sup> We understand Mungu, God.

<sup>352</sup> Ali is known as simba wa Mungu.

<sup>353</sup> Unlike Ali, the Prophet immediately understands the implications of the angel's message.

<sup>354</sup> = mwanayo, mwana wako, mtoto wako.

<sup>355</sup> i.e. he did not delay.

<sup>356</sup> i.e. pale pale, then and there.

(٢٥٩) أَكَيْتَ مُلَنِّغْنَ \* فَتَمَّ أَكْبَيْنَ \* أَلْهَتْكَ حَسَنَ \* أَيَّاءُ كُكْوَدَمِي

kukwandamiya uyao \* ḥasani alihutoka \* akabaini fatuma \* mlangoni akipata  
257 (259) akipata mlangoni<sup>357</sup> \* fatuma<sup>358</sup> akabaini \* alihutoka hasani \* uyao kukwandamiya  
When he got to the door Fatima spoke: Hasan has [just] left to go and fetch you.

(٢٦٠) مَوْنُ أَلِپْ كِئِنِ \* نَ حَسَنِ نَ حُسَيْنِ \* غُفْلَ أَكْبَيْنَ \* بَيْنَغُ نَمَكُلِي

namkuliya babangu \* akabaini ghafula \* ḥusayni na ḥasani na \* kiṭini alipo mwano  
258 (260) mwano alipo kitini \* na hasani na husayni \* ghafula akabaini \* babangu namkuliya<sup>359</sup>  
Your son was sitting there with Hasan and Husayn and all of a sudden he said: I need to call my father.

(٢٦١) أَمِئْنُكَ كِئِنِ \* أَمِئْنَدَ فِرْشَنَ \* نَاءِ مَوْنَعَلِينَ \* يَمْبُ لِلْمَزْدِي

lalomzidiya yambo \* mwangaliyini nae \* firashani amepanda \* kiṭini ameinuka  
259 (261) ameinuka kitini \* amepanda firashani \* nae mwangaliyeni \* yambo lalomzidiya<sup>360</sup>  
He got up from the chair and climbed onto the bed. Go and look at him -- what has happened to him?

(٢٦٢) هَبْ أَكْنَدَ بَشِيرِ \* نَ عَلِيَّ حَنْدَرِ \* كِمُونَ جَعْفَرِ \* هَبْ بَيْكَ كَلِي

kaliya babake hapo \* ja'fari kimwona \* ḥaydari 'alii na \* bashiri akenda hapo  
260 (262) hapo akenda bashiri \* na 'alii haydari \* kimwona ja'fari \* hapo babake kaliya  
So the Bringer of Good Tidings went in with Ali the Lion-like. and when he saw Ja'far his father wept.

(٢٦٣) أَكَلِي كَيْنِ \* إِي مَوْنَعُ أَنْ \* أُپْتُونِ يَمْبُ غَنِ \* كَتِكَ كَوْنَدَمَ نَدِي

ndiya kwandam katika \* gani yambo ni upetwe \* unani mwanangu ewe \* kibani akaliya  
261 (263) akaliya kibaini \* ewe mwanangu unani<sup>361</sup> \* upetwe ni yambo gani \* katika kwandama ndiya  
He wept, saying: Oh, my son, what is the matter with you? What misfortune has stricken you as you went on your way?

(٢٦٤) أَكِسِكِي كَلِمَ \* جَعْفَرِ كَفَهَمَ \* كَوَ ضَرْبُ كَئِزَمَ \* مَتَّ أَكْمُونَعَلِي

akamwangaliya mato \* katizama dharubu kwa \* kafahama ja'fari \* kalima akisikiya  
262 (264) akisikiya kalima \* ja'fari kafahama \* kwa dharubu<sup>362</sup> katizama \* mato kamwangaliya  
When he heard these words Ja'far regained consciousness and looked about with difficulty and focussed his eyes on him.

(٢٦٥) كِمُونَعَلِي أَمِينِ \* أَكَمَبَ نِپَ يَسَنِ \* أَكِيكَمَ كُبَيْنِ \* أَمَكُوشَ كُفِي

kuifiya amekwisha \* kubaini akikoma \* yasini nipa akamba \* amini kimwangaliya  
263 (265) kimwangaliya amini \* akamba nipa<sup>363</sup> yasini<sup>364</sup> \* akikoma kubaini \* amekwisha kuifiya  
When he saw the Trustworthy One he said: Read me [the chapter] Ya Sin. By the time he had finished speaking, [Ja'far] was already dead.

<sup>357</sup> i.e. hajangia ndani – he has not gone into the house yet.

<sup>358</sup> In a fairy tale we would immediately conclude that mama wa kambo anamduru, his stepmother is doing him harm, but nothing could be further from the truth in this case – it is God who has determined Ja'far's fate.

<sup>359</sup> i.e. call my father for me.

<sup>360</sup> Or: "what misfortune has overwhelmed him?". Compare kumezidi nini?, what has happened? for something disastrous or catastrophic.

<sup>361</sup> = una nini?. See 238b, 244b.

<sup>362</sup> dharubu = taabu, mashaka

<sup>363</sup> lit. "give me", as a favour. The sick person will also be offered water.

<sup>364</sup> See note to 151d. Chapter 36, Ya Sin, of the Qur'an is read over the sick or dying. It is considered unfortunate to die without having it read over you.

(٢٦٦) هَبْ عَلَيَّ حَيْدَرَ \* يَتِ اسَيْفِكِرِ \* أَكْسِمَمَ بَشِيرِ \* مَصْحَبَ كَوْمِي

kawambiya maṣaḥaba \* bashiri akasimama \* asiyafikiri yote \* ḥaydari 'alii hapo

<sup>264</sup> (266) hapo 'alii haydari \* yote asiyafikiri<sup>365</sup> \* akasimama<sup>366</sup> bashiri \* masahaba kawambiya

Then Ali the Lion-like became insensible to anything. The Bringer of Good Tidings had to do the needful, and spoke to the Companions.

(٢٦٧) كَوْمِي كَيْلِكَ \* نَ جَمِيعَ وَكْتَاكَ \* هَيَّ وَكِشَ كُرِكَ \* عَلَيَّ أُسَيْيُ

asipoyuwa 'alii \* kuzika wakisha haya \* wakatoka jamī'i na \* kipulika kawambiya

<sup>265</sup> (267) kawambiya kipulika \* na jamī'i wakatoka<sup>367</sup> \* haya wakisha kuzika \* 'alii asipoyuwa

He spoke to them and they listened, and they all went out and they completed the burial ceremony, Ali still insensible.

(٢٦٨) أَلْيَكُوشَ كُرِكَ \* مُتْمُ أَكْمُوكَ \* مَنُ أَكْتَمَكَ \* عَلَيَّ أَكْمُومِي

akamwambiya 'alii \* akatamka maneno \* akamuweka mṭumi \* kuzika alipokwisha

<sup>266</sup> (268) alipokwisha kuzika \* mṭumi akamuweka<sup>368</sup> \* maneno akatamka \* 'alii akamwambiya

When he had completed the burial the Prophet sat [Ali] down and spoke [these] words and addressed Ali.

(٢٦٩) كَوْمِي كَيْلِكَ \* صَبِرَ كُوكَ رَبُّكَ \* مَتُ هَنْغَلِكُوكَ \* نَوُ أَكْمُونْغَلِي

ukamwangaliya nawe \* hangalikupoka mṭu \* rabuk kwake ṣubiri \* kipulika kamwambiya

<sup>267</sup> (269) kamwambiya kipulika \* subiri<sup>369</sup> kwake ṣubira \* mtu hangalikupoka<sup>370</sup> \* nawe ukamwangaliya

He told him as [Ali] listened: Have trust in Him, your Lord -- a person may be seized [by death] even if you were to stand watch over him.

(٢٧٠) وَ أَمَّا نِ مَتُ غَنِ \* أَدْمُؤُ دُنَيْنِ \* إِسْپُكُؤُ مَنَّانِ \* نَوُ وَيَفْهَمِي

wayafahamiya nawe \* mannāni isipokuwa \* duniyani adumuwo \* gani mṭu ni ammā wa

<sup>268</sup> (270) wa amma ni mtu gani \* adumuwo<sup>371</sup> duniyani \* isipokuwa mannani<sup>372</sup> \* nawe wayafahamiya

And indeed, what kind of person is it who remains in existence, unless it is God alone, and you know that well.

(٢٧١) عَلَيَّ سِنْدُ مَنْ \* مَمْبُ هُيْجُو مَفْنُ \* كَبُو هَيَّ مَنُ \* عَقِلِ إِكْمَنْغِي

ikamngiya 'aqili \* maneno hayo kapewa \* mfano hupijwa mambo \* mno senende 'alii

<sup>269</sup> (271) 'alii senende mno<sup>373</sup> \* mambo hupijwa mfano \* kapewa<sup>374</sup> hayo maneno \* 'aqili ikamngiya<sup>375</sup>

Ali, don't go on about this too much -- things have turned out like this. And when he was given this advice [Ali] regained his senses.

<sup>365</sup> hajui mambo. Usually only women are in this state after someone has died – the men try to concentrate on making the funeral arrangements. In this case, the Prophet steps in to organise the funeral.

<sup>366</sup> -simama does not mean just “stand up”; it also means “do anything that needs to be done”, i.e. in this case, step into the breach as regards the aftermath of Ja'far's death.

<sup>367</sup> With Ja'far's corpse.

<sup>368</sup> In a chair.

<sup>369</sup> You have to endure whatever God sends you. If someone wanted to take your child, you would not just stand there and look at him, but what else can you do in this case?

<sup>370</sup> Amu -poka = Mvita -pokonya, seize.

<sup>371</sup> -dumu < دَامَ, endure, cognate of daima, always.

<sup>372</sup> ela Mannani tu. Mannani < المَنَّان, the Benevolent One, مَنْ, bestow favours.

<sup>373</sup> usizidi huzuni sana, do not wallow in sadness.

<sup>374</sup> The passive of -pa, give is pawa in Amu, -pawa in Mvita, and -pewa in Zanzibar.

<sup>375</sup> He realised the truth – to be sorrowful is a mistake, as the Prophet has said. This sort of bereavement has always happened – it is the same for everyone, and you cannot help it. The Swahili practice is to console people by saying things like this – if the bereaved family thought that they were the only ones to whom this was happening, they would become very distraught.



(٢٧٢) هَبْ أَكِشْ كُتُو \* زُبَيْرِ كَمَوَمَكُو \* تَكُبْ زَنْغُ بَرُو \* أُپْ كُنِيكِي

kunipekeya upate \* baruwa zangu takupa \* kamwamkuwa zubayri \* kutowa akisha hapo

<sup>270</sup> (272) hapo akisha kutowa<sup>376</sup> \* zubayri kamwamkuwa \* takupa zangu baruwa \* upate kunipekeya  
So when he had calmed down He summoned Zubayr [and said:] I will give you my letters so that you may deliver them for me.

(٢٧٣) هِيَ مِي نَدَ مَمَك \* مِي نَدَ مَوْلِم وَك \* نَ أَجْنَدَ سَتَمَك \* نَن مِي كَوْمِي

kuwambiya moya neno \* sitamke uchenda na \* wake mwalimu nda moya \* mamake nda moya hii

<sup>271</sup> (273) hii moya nda mamake \* moya nda mwalimu wake \* na uchenda sitamke \* neno moya kuwambiya  
This one is for his mother and this one for his teacher, and when you go there do not say one word to tell them [what has happened].

(٢٧٤) زُبَيْرِ أَسْجِلِس \* كِيكِي كَرَتَس \* كَنَدَ نَزْ أُپْس \* كَمِيكِي عَطِي

'atiya kampekeya \* upesi nazo kanenda \* karatasi kapokeya \* asijilisi zubayri

<sup>272</sup> (274) zubayri asijilisi<sup>377</sup> \* kapokeya karatasi \* kanenda nazo upesi \* kampekeya 'atiya<sup>378</sup>  
Zubayr did not delay -- he took the papers and went quickly with them. He delivered one to Atiya [Ja'far's mother].

(٢٧٥) بَرُو كُمُپْ كَوَك \* كِشَ زُبَيْرِ أَتَك \* إِلَ يَ مَوْلِم وَك \* كَنَدَ كُمِيكِي

kumpekeya kenenda \* wake mwalimu ya ile \* atoke zubēri kisha \* kwake kumpa baruwa

<sup>273</sup> (275) baruwa kumpa kwake \* kisha zuberi atoke \* ile ya mwalimu wake \* kenenda kumpekeya  
When he had given her the letter then Zubayr left, and the one for [Ja'far's] teacher he went on to deliver [it] to him.

(٢٧٦) زُبَيْرِ كُتَكَ كَوَك \* بِي أَشْم مَمَك \* أَكُتَكَ يَوَك يَك \* مَتُ أَسِيزَنْغِي

asipozengeya mtu \* yake pweke akatoka \* mamake asome yeye \* kwake kutoka zubayri

<sup>274</sup> (276) zubayri kutoka kwake<sup>379</sup> \* yeye asome mamake \* akatoka pweke yake<sup>380</sup> \* mtu asipozengeya  
When Zubayr had left [Ja'far's] mother read [the letter], and she left home on her own without telling anyone.

(٢٧٧) نَاءِ أَكِينُظُم \* يُو لِمَ هُسَلِم \* وَلَ أَسِيفَهَم \* أُسِكُ هُمَنْغِيلِي

humngiliya usiku \* asipofahamu wala \* husalimu limo yuwa \* akiyanuzumu nae

<sup>275</sup> (277) nae akiyanudhumu \* yuwa limo husalimu<sup>381</sup> \* wala asipofahamu \* usiku humngiliya  
And as she repeated [the contents] the sun was going down, but she did not realise that night was drawing on.

(٢٧٨) نَ هُك نِيمَ زُبَيْرِ \* أَسِپْ تَقْصِيرِ \* كِلَ نِيمَ كَعِيرِ \* كِمَزَنْغِي عَطِي

'atiya kimzengeya \* ki'abiri nyuma kila \* taqširi asipaṭe \* zubēri nyuma huko na

<sup>276</sup> (278) na huko nyuma zuberi \* ašifaṇṇe taqširi<sup>382</sup> \* kila nyūmba ki'abiri<sup>383</sup> \* kimzengeya<sup>384</sup> 'atiya  
And meanwhile Zubayr was doing his best [to find the teacher's house], calling at every house while Atiya was looking for him.

<sup>376</sup>Fix kutuwa

<sup>377</sup>i.e. Zubayr did not sit and wait.

<sup>378</sup>"Atika" is changed to "Atiya" at the end of the line for the sake of the rhyme. See also 278d, 293d, and 304d

<sup>379</sup>i.e. immediately he left.

<sup>380</sup>Usually if a mother is going somewhere and she has a small child she will take the child with her, but in this case Atika is so distraught that she rushes out immediately, forgetting about Nasir.

<sup>381</sup>It is dangerous for a woman to be out alone at night, but she is grief-stricken.

<sup>382</sup>-fanya taksiri, put in the effort, do the needful. Note that the Swahili negative here corresponds to a positive in English.

<sup>383</sup>i.e. going to every house and calling *Hodi!*. Zubeir is trying to find the *mwalimu*'s house, to deliver his second letter (273b, 275). He could not simply ask Atika where it was, because he was told by Ali not to speak to the recipients (273c/d).

<sup>384</sup>anamtafuta.

(٢٧٩) هَتَ نَدِي كِفُوتَ \* كِنَدَ كِتْمُكُتَ \* نِيْمَبَ يَ كُونَدَ كِيَتَ \* مَلْنَعْنِ أَكْنِي

akingiya mlangoni \* kipaṭa kwanda ya nyumba \* kitomkuṭa kinenda \* kifuwata ndiya hata  
<sup>277</sup> (279) hata ndiya kifuwata \* keṇeṇḍa kitomkuta \* nyumba ya kwanda kipata \* mlangoni<sup>385</sup> akingiya  
 So as she followed the road she went on without finding him. When she reached the first house she went in the door.

(٢٨٠) حَمَزَةُ أَكْفَسِرِ \* نَ مَوْلَانَا عُمَرِ \* هِنِ نِ الْفَجْرِ \* صَلَّ إِسْمَمِي

imesimamiya ṣala \* alfajiri ni hini \* ʿumari mawlānā na \* akafasiri ḥamzat  
<sup>278</sup> (280) hamzat akafasiri \* na maulana 'umari \* hini ni alfajiri<sup>386</sup> \* sala imesimamiya<sup>387</sup>  
 Hamza was talking with Lord Umar [in the house]. It was dawn and prayers were about to begin.

(٢٨١) مَوْنَمَكِ كَتَمَكِ \* كَنَنْ نَدِمِ أَتَوَكِ \* چَمَبَ مَتَنِيْلَكِ \* كَو مَوْلَانَا عَلِي

ʿaliya mawlānā kwa \* mtanipileka chama \* atwika ndimi kanena \* katamka mwanamke  
<sup>279</sup> (281) mwanamke katamka \* kanena ndimi atwika \* chama mṭanipeleka \* kwa maulana 'aliya  
 The woman spoke: and said: I am Atiya, perhaps you could show me to Lord Ali's [house]?

(٢٨٢) نَدِي نِمَعِرِ \* نِيْمَبَ سِكُفَسِرِ \* نَدِمِ أُمِ جَعْفَرِ \* كَمَ هَيَ يُولِي

yaweleya haya kama \* jaʿfari umi ndimi \* sikuifasiri nyumba \* nimeʿabiri ndiya  
<sup>280</sup> (282) ndiya nimeʿabiri \* nyumba sikuifasiri<sup>388</sup> \* ndimi umi jaʿfari \* kama haya yaweleya  
 I have come along the road and I don't know the house. I am Jaʿfar's mother if that clarifies things for you.

(٢٨٣) هَبْ حَمَزَ كَتَكَ \* كَو أُپْسِ نَ هَرَكَ \* مَلْنَعْ أَكُوشَكَ \* إِلِ كُمْفُنْغُلِي

kumfunguliya ili \* akaushika mlango \* haraka na upesi kwa \* katoka ḥamza hapo  
<sup>281</sup> (283) hapo hamza katoka \* kwa upesi na haraka \* mlango akaushika \* ili kumfunguliya<sup>389</sup>  
 Then Hamza went out quickly and speedily and took hold of the door to open it for her.

(٢٨٤) نَدِ كِتَكَ كِتَكَ هَمَ \* هَبْ نَدِي هَيْنَدَمَ \* كَو عَلِي أَكِيَكَمَ \* مَلْنَعْ كِمْبِشِي

kimbishiya mlango \* akikoma ʿalii kwa \* hayandama ndiya hapo \* hema kaṭika kitoka nde  
<sup>282</sup> (284) nde kitoka katika hema \* hapo ndiya kaṭaṇḍama \* kwa 'alii akikoma<sup>390</sup> \* mlango kimbishiya  
 Then, leaving the tent, he set out on the way. When he finally came to Ali's [house] he knocked on the door.

(٢٨٥) كَنَنْ أَكِمَلَزَ \* عَلِي نَدِمِ حَمَزَ \* مَعْنِ هُكُولَزَ \* هَبْ كَتَكَ عَلِي

ʿaliya katoka hapo \* hukuuliza mgeni \* ḥamza ndimi ʿalii \* akimaliza kinena  
<sup>283</sup> (285) kinena akimweleza \* 'alii ndimi hamza \* mgeni<sup>391</sup> hukuuliza \* hapo katoka 'aliya  
 And he said, explaining [things] to him: Ali, it's me, Hamza. A visitor is asking for you. Then Ali went out.

<sup>385</sup>In other words, alikwenda usiku kucha, she travelled all night, and arrived at Mecca, where she immediately makes for the first house in the village – this just happens to be one where Hamza and Umar are present. Note that in her distress Atika does not even ask permission to enter (Hodi!).

<sup>386</sup>alfajiri, dawn. In other words, it was time for morning prayers.

<sup>387</sup>yali tayari sala.

<sup>388</sup>-fasiri = -jua.

<sup>389</sup>When someone asks you directions, the Swahili consider it polite to accompany them to their destination, call the person they are looking for, and hand over the visitor to them: nakuletea mgeni wako, I'm bringing your visitor to you.

<sup>390</sup>-koma here means “end up at”. Compare ndia hii imekoma wapi?, where does this road go to?

<sup>391</sup>i.e. kuna mgeni wako hapa.

(٢٨٦) بِي يُبْ مَلْغَن \* هُلِي أَكْبَيْن \* قَبْرِن نِيَكَن \* نَبْدَ كَيْغَلِي

kuyangaliya napenda \* nipekani qaburini \* akibaini huliya \* mlangoni yupo yeye  
284 (286) yeye yupo mlangoni \* huliya akibaini \* qaburini nipekani \* napenda kuyangaliya  
[Atiya] was at the door, weeping and saying: Take me to his grave -- I want to see it.

(٢٨٧) هَبْ عَلِي كَتَا \* مَتَر يَكْمَشُكَ \* هَتَا نَدَا كَتَمَكَ \* مَنَنْ أَكْمَوْمِي

akamwambiya maneno \* katamka nde hata \* yakimshuka matozi \* katoka 'alii hapo  
285 (287) hapo 'alii katoka \* matozi yakimshuka \* hata nde katamka \* maneno akamwambiya  
Then Ali went out, his tears flowing, and outside he spoke, telling her these words.

(٢٨٨) كَمَوْمِي كَنْظُم \* سَنْدَلِي إِسْلَام \* صَبِر كَوَك كَرِيم \* أَمْبِي أَكْلِي

akuleteya ambayo \* karimu kwake şubiri \* isilamu sendelea \* kinuzumu kamwambiya  
286 (288) kamwambiya kinudhumu \* sendelea<sup>392</sup> isilamu \* subiri<sup>393</sup> kwake karimu \* ambayo akuleteya  
He spoke, saying: don't go on so -- submit to God's will, trust in Providence who has brought you here.

(٢٨٩) مِم هِي نِ مَمَك \* نَدِي مَوْنِي كِتَ چَك \* نُونِي قَبْرِي يَك \* نَتَا كَيْغَلِي

kuyangaliya nataka \* yake qaburi nionya \* chake kişi mweni ndiye \* mamake ni huyu mimi  
287 (289) mimi huyu ni mamake \* ndiye mweni kişe<sup>394</sup> chake \* nionya qaburi yake \* nataka kuyangaliya  
[Atiya said:] I am his mother! I bore his birthpangs! Show me his grave -- I want to see it.

(٢٩٠) يُو مَوْنِي مَمَلَكَه \* لَك هُنْدَو كَوَك \* وَلَ مِم سَكْتَك \* أَفْرَك دُنِي

duniya aifariki \* sikutaka mimi wala \* kiweka hondowa lake \* mamlakah mwenye yowa  
288 (290) yuwa mwenye mamlakah \* lake hondowa<sup>395</sup> kiweka<sup>396</sup> \* wala mimi sikutaka \* aifariki duniya  
[Ali said:] Know that the Almighty [his way] is to take people away and bring [them into existence], and I did not want [ja'far] to pass away.

(٢٩١) نَو صَبِر نَدِينُغ \* أُسَيْتِي كَو مَنُغ \* وَلَ هُتَكْسَ فُنُغ \* لَ أَخَرَن دُنِي

duniya na akhera la \* fungu hutokosa wala \* mngu kwa usipotee \* nduyangu şubiri nawe  
289 (291) nawe subiri nduyangu \* usipotee kwa mngu \* wala hutakosa<sup>397</sup> fungu \* la ahera<sup>398</sup> na duniya  
And have trust [in God], my dear, so that you do not go astray from God's [path]. or you will not receive your share in the next world and this one.

<sup>392</sup>i.e. usifanye sana. If you get carried away by grief, you may say something that is *kufu*, i.e. something an unbeliever might say. So a wife at the death of her husband may say that he was her lion, or her pillar in the world, or that she depended on him, and she will be told: don't say that, or you will become a *kafiri*. On the contrary, you have to be loyal to God even in a time of grief, and endure whatever he sends you. Debate on the "problem of evil" (why does a good God allow bad things to happen) is unknown in Islam – God knows best, and we cannot begin to fathom His motives.

<sup>393</sup>Compare 269b.

<sup>394</sup>*kite*, birth pangs. These give a mother a special love (*huruma*) for her child – she will willingly sacrifice herself for the child. We see this even in animals.

<sup>395</sup>We understand *watu*, human beings.

<sup>396</sup>God has the power to do whatever he likes – he sustains people or brings their life to an end, and we are not in a position to understand his motives.

<sup>397</sup>If you *subiri*, you will receive a reward from God: *hutakosa maneno kwa Mungu*, you will not fail [to receive] comfort from God.

<sup>398</sup>It is said: *ukisema mambo mabaya, utapata madhambi kwa Mungu; ukisubiri, utapata malipo mazuri*, if you say irreligious things, God will judge you as having sinned; on the other hand, if you trust [in him], you will be well-rewarded.

(٢٩٢) هُمُؤُ كَيْلِكَ \* مَتَر يَكْمَشُكَ \* هَبْ كَشُكَ عَطِكَ \* أَكْتَمَكَ عَلِي

'aliya akatamka \* 'atika kashuka hapo \* yakimshuka matozi \* kipulika humuowa  
290 (292) humuowa<sup>399</sup> kipulika \* matozi yakimshuka \* hapo kaççoğa 'atika \* akatamka 'aliya  
[Atiya] looked at him, listening, tears falling. Then Atiya stopped [crying] and Ali spoke.

(٢٩٣) هَبْ عَلِي حَيْدَر \* بَسِ نَاءِ كَفَسِر \* مَبْنِ هَكِي زُبَيْر \* أَيِي بَوِكَ عَلِي

'aliya pweke uyiye \* zubēri hakuya mbona \* kafasiri nae basi \* haydari 'alii hapo  
291 (293) hapo 'alii haydari \* basi nae kafasiri \* mbona hakuya zuberi \* uyiye pweke Ḥṭiya  
So Ali the Lion-like spoke to her then: Why did Zubayr not come [with you]? Did you come by yourself, Atiya?

(٢٩٤) أَنُتَيْي بَرُو \* كَيْكَ كُتْفَنُغُو \* أَلِپْ سِكْمُيُو \* وَلَ سِكْمُزَنْغِي

sikumzengeya wala \* sikumuyuwa alipo \* kuifunguwa kaṭika \* baruwa unietee  
292 (294) unietee baruwa \* katika kuifunguwa \* alipo sikumuyuwa \* wala sikumzengeya  
[Atiya said:] He brought me a letter, and when I opened it I took no heed of where he was, and I did not look for him.

(٢٩٥) بَرُو كَيْفَسِر \* نَدِي نَلْعَبِر \* هَنَدَ سَسَ كُفِكِر \* تَنْبِه كُنْغِي

kuningiya tanabuhi \* kufikiri sasa handa \* nalii'abiri ndiya \* kiifasiri baruwa  
293 (295) baruwa kiifasiri \* ndiya ṇali'abiri \* handa<sup>400</sup> sasa kufikiri \* tanabuhi<sup>401</sup> kuningiya  
When I realised what was in the letter I set out on the road -- I am beginning now to realise I put myself in danger.

(٢٩٦) فَطِمَ كَمْكَلِم \* أَكْمَپْ مَجْ تَم \* دُعَ سَبَا تِمَم \* نَدَنِ أَلِيسْمِي

aliyasomeya ndani \* timamu sabā du'a \* tamu maji akampa \* kamkalimu faṭima  
294 (296) fatima kamkalimu \* akampa maji tamu \* du'a saba timamu \* ndani aliyasomeya<sup>402</sup>  
Fatima spoke to her, and gave her sweet water -- seven whole prayers she had read into it.

(٢٩٧) أَكْمَجِبْ كَلِم \* سِيَوِرِي فَتَم \* مُي نِنَ هَلِمَم \* رُوْحَ يَتَكَ كَلِي

kuliya yataka rūḥu \* halimama nina moyo \* fatuma ya siyawezi \* kalima akamjibu  
295 (297) akamjibu kalima \* siyawezi<sup>403</sup> ya fatuma \* moyo nina halimama \* ruhu<sup>404</sup> yataka kuliya  
[Atiya] answered her with the words: I cannot [take it], oh Fatima -- my heart is in confusion, and my soul wants to cry out.

(٢٩٨) صَبِرْ كَو بَوَن وَت \* عَطِكَ مَاءِ سِ كِت \* بِجَ مَتَم مَتَتْ \* يَبِكِيُو تَوُ

taṭuwa yabakiyeo \* maṭaṭu maṭama pija \* kiṭu si mai 'atika \* weṭu bwana kwa ṣubiri  
296 (298) subiri kwa bwana wetu<sup>405</sup> \* 'atika mai si kitu<sup>406</sup> \* pija matama<sup>407</sup> matatu \* yabakiyeo taṭwaa  
[Fatima replied:] Trust in our Lord, Atiya, the water is not something [to eat] -- take three sips, and whatever is left I will take.

<sup>399</sup> anamtizama.

<sup>400</sup> Amu for naanza.

<sup>401</sup> = hatari.

<sup>402</sup> This is anachronistic, in that this would not have been done at the time the story is supposed to take place. The reference is to the practice of reading the Qur'an and then breathing into the water – the efficacy of the verses is piously considered to transfer into the water.

<sup>403</sup> She means *chakula hakinishuki*, I have no heart for eating. If someone dies, he is buried the next day, and the women keen and lament all day and night. They may not eat at all until after the burial. People who are not close relatives of the deceased may make food and bring it secretly, encouraging the bereaved to eat, as if they were sick.

<sup>404</sup> ruhu = roho.

<sup>405</sup> i.e. Mungu.

<sup>406</sup> i.e. it is not food, so if she is fasting because of the bereavement it is reasonable to take it.

<sup>407</sup> -piga tama or -shika tama, take a drink, fill your mouth with liquid.

(٢٩٩) مَاءِ أَسِيبَتِكَ \* مِئْمَنُ كَيْبِكَ \* أَكْثُمَوْنَ عَطِكَ \* فَتَمَّ كَمْيَكِي

kampokeya fatuma \* 'atika na akaatumwa \* kayapeka miyomoni \* asipoyataka mai

<sup>297</sup> (299) mai asipoyataka \* miyomoni kayapeka \* akatumwa na 'atika \* fatuma kampokeya  
Although [Atiya] did not really want the water, she took some into her mouth. [The cup] was given back by Atiya, and Fatima took it. (?)

(٣٠٠) هَبْ كَمْكَلِفِشَ \* وَعَظْ كُؤُنْشَ \* مَاءِ الْيُشْشَ \* مُنْغُ أَكْمُؤْمَبِي

akamuombeya mungu \* alipoyashusha mai \* kumuonesha wa'azi \* kamkalifisha hapo

<sup>298</sup> (300) hapo kamkalifisha<sup>408</sup> \* wa'adhi kumuonesha \* mai alipoyashusha \* mungu akamuombeya  
So Fatima persuaded her and showed her [what to do] by exhortation. When [Atiya] had swallowed the water [Fatima] interceded to God for her.

(٣٠١) بَسِ هَبْ أُمُوزَ \* زَ مَوْنَوَ خَبِرَ \* نَ عَلِيٍّ أُمُولَ \* كِشَ أَكِلِي

akiliya kisha \* amweleze 'alii na \* khabarize mwanawe za \* amuuze hapo basi

<sup>299</sup> (301) basi hapo amuuze \* za mwanawe habarize \* na 'alii amweleze \* kisha akiliya  
Then [Atiya] asked for news of her son, and Ali explained [everything] to her weeping at the end.

(٣٠٢) هَتَ كُكِيْمَبُوكَ \* فَتَمَّ أَكَيْنُكَ \* كَمْيَكِي عَطِكَ \* وَكَلَّ وَتَ پَمِي

pamoya wote wakala \* 'atika kampikiya \* akainuka fatuma \* kukipambauka hata

<sup>300</sup> (302) hata kukipambauka \* fatuma akainuka \* kampikiya 'atika \* wakala wote pamoya  
Until, when dawn came, Fatima got up and cooked [food] for Atiya and they all ate together.

(٣٠٣) عَطِكَ أَكْبَيْنَ \* سَسَ نَمَ كَوَ خَرِنَ \* مَوْنَعُ أَكْ مُيْنِ \* مَتَّ سِكْمُوتِي

sikumuwatiya mtu \* muini uko mwanangu \* kherini kwa nami sasa \* akabaini 'atika

<sup>301</sup> (303) 'atika akabaini \* sasa nami kwa herini \* mwanangu uko muini \* mtu sikumuwatiya  
Atiya said: Now I [bid you] farewell. My son is [back] at home and I left no-one with him.

(٣٠٤) نَ فَتَمَّ أَتَمَكَ \* أَمُومَبِي مُمَ وَكَ \* نَاوَ نَنْدَ كَمْيَكِ \* أَسَنْدَ پُوكَ عَطِي

'atiya pweke asende \* kampeke nenda nāwe \* wake mume amwambiye \* atamke fatuma na

<sup>302</sup> (304) na fatuma atamke \* amwambiye mume wake \* nawa nenda kampeke \* asende pweke 'atiya  
And Fatima spoke and said to her husband: And you go and accompany her so that Atiya [need] not go on her own.

(٣٠٥) عَلِيٍّ كَنْغِي نَدَنَ \* كَوَ مَكْنُ كَبَيْنَ \* أَكَيْنُكَ كَبَيْنَ \* فَتَمَّ أَكْمُونَدِي

akamwendeya fatuma \* kiṭini akainuka \* kabaini mkono kwa \* ndani kangiya 'alii

<sup>303</sup> (305) 'alii kangiya ndani \* kwa mkono kabaini<sup>409</sup> \* akainuka kitini \* fatuma akamwendeya  
Ali went into the inner [room] and signalled [Fatima] with his hand. She rose from her chair, Fatima, and went to him.

(٣٠٦) كَمَبَ چِنْدَ كَمْيَكِ \* فَتَمَّ هُتُؤْدِكَ \* كَوْمَبَ وَتَ هُتَمَكَ \* كَمَ هَيَّ كُنْمَبِي

kunambiya hayo kama \* hutamka watu kwamba \* hutoudhika fatuma \* kimpeka chenda kamba

<sup>304</sup> (306) kamba chenda kimpeka \* fatuma hutoudhika \* kwamba watu hutamka \* kama hayo kunambiya  
He said: If I go and accompany her, Fatima, will you not be angry if people talk [about it] and gossip about me?

<sup>408</sup>-kalifisha = -lazimisha.

<sup>409</sup>He does not want Atika to hear.

(٣٠٧) كَنَنْ شَهِدَ مَنْعٌ \* هَيْمٌ مُنِينَ مَنْعٌ \* سَسَنَ نِ كَمَ نَدِينُغُ \* نَ قَاسِمُ نِ مَمِي

mamoya ni qasimu na \* nduyangu kama ni sasa \* mwangu moyoni hayamo \* mngu shahidi kanena

<sup>305</sup> (307) kanena shahidi mngu \* hayamo moyoni mwangu<sup>410</sup> \* sasa ni kama nduyangu \* na qasimu<sup>411</sup> ni mmoya.

She said: I swear to God, [such things] are not in my heart. [Atiya] is like a sister to me -- exactly the same as Qasim.

(٣٠٨) هَبْ عَلَيَّ كَتَاكَ \* كَنَدَمَنْ نَ عَطَاكَ \* أَكْبَدَ أَكْمِيكَ \* هَتَ كَوَّءُ أَكْنَعِي

akangiya kwao hata \* akampeka akenda \* 'atika na kandamana \* katoka 'alii hapo

<sup>306</sup> (308) hapo 'alii katoka \* kandamana na 'atika<sup>412</sup> \* akenda akampeka \* hata kwao akangiya

So Ali went out and went along with Atiya. He went and accompanied her until he reached her home.

(٣٠٩) هَبْ عَلَيَّ حَيْدَرٍ \* أَكْصَلَ أَظْهَرٍ \* كَنَدَمَنْ نَ زُبَيْرٍ \* مُنِينَ أَكْرَجِي

akarejeya muini \* zubēri na kandamana \* azuhuri akaşali \* haydari 'alii hapo

<sup>307</sup> (309) hapo 'alii haydari \* akasali adhuhuri \* kandamana na zuberi \* muini akarejeya

Then Ali the Lion-like said the midday prayers and walked along with Zubayr and returned to the town.

(٣١٠) نَ هَبْ أَلِيْرِدٍ \* نَدِيْ أَلِيْرِدٍ \* مَنْنُ كِيْجَتَهْدٍ \* مَصْحَبَ كَوْمِي

kiwambiya mşahaba \* kijitahidi maneno \* aliporadidi ndipo \* aliporudi hapo na

<sup>308</sup> (310) na hapo aliporudi \* ndipo aliporadidi \* maneno kijitahidi \* msahaba kiwambiya

And when he returned, it was then that he told [the story], striving for [exact] words, telling the Companions.

(٣١١) هَبْ نِمَاطِي تَمَ \* يَتِي زَنُغُ هُكَمَ \* نَ أَمْبُو وَتَسَمَ \* كَوَزَتَ زَكُولِي

zikaweleya zote kwa \* watasoma ambao na \* hukoma zangu bayti \* tama nimeṭiya hapa

<sup>309</sup> (311) hapa nimeṭiya tama \* bayti zangu hukoma \* na ambao watasoma \* kwa zote zikaweleya

Here I have finished, my verses have come to an end, and whoever reads [them] will be made aware of everything [that happened].

(٣١٢) يَتِي زِيُونِ \* مَتُ أَكْزِيْنِ \* أَصْبَحَ نَ جِيْنِ \* مِي أُسْپِنْغُلِي

usopunguliya moyo \* jiyoni na ašubuhī \* akazibaini mṭu \* ziyuweni baytize

<sup>304</sup> (312) baytize ziyuweni \* mtu akazibaini \* ašubuhī na jiyoni \* moyā usopunguliya

Learn [the poem's] verses, so that a person may say them morning and evening, not omitting one.

(٣١٣) كَوْنَدَ هَتَذَلِيْلِكَ \* مَاطِي هَتَسْمُبِكَ \* نَ أَتْكَلْتَمَكَ \* مَلْ هُمُوفَقِي

humuwafiqiya mola \* atakalotamka na \* hatosumbuka mṭuye \* hatodhalilika kwanda

<sup>305</sup> (313) kwanda hatodhalilika<sup>413</sup> \* mṭuye hatosumbuka \* na atakalotamka \* mola humuwafiqiya<sup>414</sup>

First, he will never be brought low, that person, he will not be troubled, and whatever he asks for the Lord will bring to him.

<sup>410</sup>Fatima, in contrast to her behaviour at the beginning of the ballad, has learnt to be magnanimous.

<sup>411</sup>Qasim was Fatima's brother, and died in infancy. The Prophet had 7 children (3 boys and 4 girls), but they all pre-deceased him except Fatima.

<sup>412</sup>Compare 281b and 298b.

<sup>413</sup>-dhalilika, be humble, be humiliated, no agent specified.

<sup>414</sup>These claims are somewhat overblown – this is not a religious text.

(٣١٤) أُوْمِبِلْ كُوْ وَهَابُ \* أَتَجِبُوْ جَوْبُ \* أَوْ مُتْ نَجَرِبُ \* أَدَلِّلْشِ وَصِيَّ

waṣiya adalilishe \* najaribu mtu aw \* jawabu atajibiwa \* wahābu kwa aombalo

<sup>306</sup> (314) aombalo kwa wahabu \* atajibiwa jawabu \* au mtu ajaribu \* adalilishe wasiya<sup>415</sup>

*Whatever he prays for from the Generous One, he will be vouchsafed an answer, and let the person try [it], that he may demonstrate its wisdom.*

(٣١٥) نِمِپِنْدَ كُكَّرِرِ \* نَنِّي سُمَنِ صَمِيرِ \* أُتْنَدِ وَ جَعْفَرِ \* وَ مَوْلَانَا عَلِيَّ

'aliya mawlānā wa \* ja'fari wa utendi \* ḍamīri somani nanyi \* kukariri nimependa

<sup>307</sup> (315) nimependa kukariri \* nanyi somani dhamiri \* utendi wa ja'fari \* wa maulana 'aliya

*I have been pleased to recite it, and you, read it inwardly -- the Ballad of Ja'far and Lord Ali.*

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<sup>415</sup>In other words, if the reader is doubtful that this is true, let him just try it. See note to 157d.