

اُنْتَزِ وَ جَعْفَرُ

uṭēnzi 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 * پَمَوْنَ رَحْمَنِ * نَ الرَّحِيمِ يُونَ * نَدِي يَلَانْدَمِي

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

¹ (1) bismillahi ihwani * pamwe na rahmani * na rahimu yuwani * ndiyo yaloandamia
"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 مَتَمْبَزِ يَنْغُ * نَوْبَ خَبَرِ زَنْغُ * قِصَصَ چَلَنِجَرِي

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

² (2) pulikani nduzangu * kenda matembezi yangu * niwape habari zangu * qīṣa chalonijiria
Listen, my brothers, I went on a journey. Let me give you my story, an account of what happened to me.

(٣) نِلِ نَنْدَاءَ نَدَيْنِ * كَوْلِ نَ مَتُ جُمَيْنِ * مَيُّ أُكَمْتَمَنِ * كَوَ حَلَالِ كُرْضِي

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

³ (3) nili nendao ndiani * kwali na mtu¹ chumbani² * moyo ukamtamani * kwa ḥalālī karīḍhiā³
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 زَيْدَنِ * نَلَنِ پَ چَنْدَنِ * كَوَهَ كُمْقَلِي

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

⁴ (4) na mahariye yuani * nalompa zaidani * nalina peṭe⁴ chandani * kawahi kumvalia⁵
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 كُتْلَكَ كَوَكُ * أَنْ رَبُّ مَيِّ وَكُ * أَكَنْدَ كَوَ مَكَ وَكُ * مَكْنُ هُمْفُمْبِي

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

⁵ (5) Ali kutoka kwake * una ruba moyo wake * akenda kwa mke wake * mkono humfumbia⁶
When Ali left [Atiya] his heart was troubled -- when he went to his wife [Fatima], he hid his hand from her.

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

²Atika 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.

³Ali 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.

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

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

⁶i.e. to hide the fact that he was not wearing the ring.

(٦) مَوْنٌ بِنْتُ رَسُولٍ * يَلِ هَيْتًا مَلٍ * كَبِنْدَ مَوْنِي عَقِلٍ * خَبَرَ أَكْمَوْمِي

akamwambiya khabari * 'aqili mwenye kanenda * hayataamali yali * rasūli binti mwana
⁶ (6) Mwana binti Rasuli⁷ * yali hayataamali⁸ * kanenda mwenye 'aqili * habari akamwambia
The Lady daughter of the Prophet was unaware of these things [until] someone in the know went and told her the news.

(٧) أَكْبَنْدَ كِزِي * فَاطِمَه أَكْمَوْمِي * شَيْخٌ عَلِيٌّ أُوْزِي * خَبَرَ هُكْسِي

hukisikiya khabari * uwozee 'alii shēkhe * akamwambiye fāṭimah * kizee akenendae
⁷ (7) akenendae kizee * Fatima akamwambia * Shehe Ali uozee * habari hukisikia
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 كَمَكْنَشَ * عَلَامَ كَمُونَشَ * أَتْنَعُ أَكْمُي

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

(٩) مَوْنٌ بِنْتُ أَمِينٍ * هِيَ نَدِي تَمَكِنٍ * أَلِ نَ پَ چَنْدَنٍ * كَوَهَ كُمْفَلِي

kumvuliya kawahi * chandani peṭe na ali * tamkini ndiyo hiyo * amīni binti mwana
⁹ (9) Mwana binti Amini⁹ * hiyo ndiyo tamkini¹⁰ * ali na peṭe chandani * kawahi kumvulia
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 كَوِلٍ * مِم سِمْتَامِلٍ * أَرْدِپْ كَوَ رَسُولٍ * بِي تَهْمَزْنَعَتِي

t^hamzingatiya yeo * rasūli kwa arudipo * simtaamali mimi * kweli ni k^hanena sijuwi
¹⁰ (10) sijui kanena ni kweli * mimi simtaamali * arudipo kwa Rasuli * yeo tamzingatia
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 * حَسَنٍ أَكْمُتَمَ * بِيَكُ نَمَكْلِي

namkuliya babako * akamṭuma ḥasani * fāṭimah asiweze * hima hima akafanya
¹¹ (11) akafanya hima hima * asiweze¹¹ Fatima * Hasani akamtuma * babako namkulia¹²
But Fatima then acted immediately -- she could not restrain herself. She sent Hasan, [saying:] "I am summoning your father."

(١٢) نَمَكْلِي كَوَ سِرٍ * أَسِيْكِ بَشِيرٍ * كَبِنْدَ أَكْفَسِرٍ * مِبِلَ زَ تُمُو نَبِي

nabiya ṭumwa za mbele * akafasiri kenenda * bashīri asisikiye * siri kwa namkuliya
¹² (12) namkulia kwa siri * asisikie Bashiri * kenenda akafasiri¹³ * mbele za Tumwa Nabia¹⁴
I am summoning him secretly, so that the Bearer of Good Tidings does not hear. [But Hasan] went and spoke [openly], in front

⁷i.e. Fatima.

⁸-taamali, observe.

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

¹⁰tamkini = hakika, kweli

¹¹hakuweza kustahimili.

¹²N. -amkulia = S. -itia

¹³-fasiri lit. means "explain".

¹⁴In 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 أَمِينَ * عَجَبُ إِكْمَنْغِي

ikamngiya 'ajabu * amīni akisikiya * nyumbani hamkuliwa * mu'ayani kafasiri

¹³ (13) kafasiri mu'ayani * hamkuliwa nyumbani * akisikia 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

¹⁴ (14) akamuuza Hashima¹⁵ * yeo una-ni Fatima * hukwamkuwa kwa hima * nayo siyo mazoea

The Hashimite asked [Ali]: What is the matter with Fatima today? She wants you in a hurry, and that is not like her.

(١٥) عَلَى أَكَيْنُكَ * أَكْنَدَ كُوْ هَرَكَ * هَتَ نِيْمَنَ كِفِكَ * مَوْنَ فَاطِمَ هُلِيْ

huliya fāṭima mwana * kifika nyumbani hata * haraka kwa akanenda * akainuka 'alii

¹⁵ (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 پِلِكَ * أُلِّلَالُ نَمِيْ

nambiya ulilonalo * pulika fatuma kamba * kashawishika 'alii * zikamshika huruma

¹⁶ (16) huruma zikamshika * 'alii kashawishika¹⁶ * 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

¹⁷ (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^hiṭu kama na * huteka hunena wewe * nalitoka hapa mimi

¹⁸ (18) mimi hapa nalitoka * wewe hunena huteka¹⁷ * 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 نِنَ نَدِيْنُغُ * نِيْفِدِ رُحَ يَنْغُ * مِيْ أَوْتَ مَتْنُغُ * نَوَ أَكْمَ كَلِيْ

kuliya ukome nawe * matungu uwate moyo * yangu roḥo niifidi * nduyangu nini wataka

¹⁹ (19) wataka nini nduyangu * niifidi¹⁸ 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?

¹⁵ The Prophet belonged to the clan of Hashim in the tribe of Quraysh of the Hollow.

¹⁶ -shawishika = -fanya wasiwasi, -fanya tashwish

¹⁷ This is a common expression meaning "you were in a good mood".

¹⁸ 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 * پٽ يَك نَيْتَكَ * عَلَى أَكْشُتُكَ * هَوْن لَ كُمُومِي

kumwambiya la haoni * akashutuka 'alii * naitaka yako peṭe * akatamka fatuma
20 (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 عَلَيَّ حَيْدَرٍ * نَنْ أَلْفَسِرَ * أَنِّي أَبُو بَكْرٍ * تَهَكُونَدَ كُتُولِي

kutwaliya t^hakwenda * bakari abuu anayo * alilofasiri neno * ḥaydari 'alii kisha
21 (21) kisha 'alii haydari¹⁹ * neno alilofasiri * anayo abuu bakari * takwenda kutwaliya²⁰
Then Ali the Lion-like, the utterance that he spoke [was this:] Abu Bakr has it -- I'll go and fetch it.

(٢٢) پٽ يَك يَ چَنْدَن * أَبُو بَكْرٍ سِ كَفَنِ * نِمَتْوَاءَ تَمَكِينِ * كَوُ أَلِيْنَمِي

uliyonambiya kwa * tamkini nimeṭwaa * kifani si bakari abuu * chandani ya yako peṭe
22 (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) هُنْ مُوَزِنَ وَ پِلِ * مِم سِ كُتَامَلِ * أَنْ نَ مَكْ وَ پِلِ * هَبَرِ نِمِسِ كِي

nimesikiya habari * pili wa mke na una * sikutaamali mimi * pili wa ni mwezi hunu
21 (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) نَأَبِ وَاللَّهِ نَدِينُغُ * نِ وَيِ پُوكْ مَكْ وَنُغُ * نِ نَنْ عَدُو يَنْغُ * هِي أَلْنَزُلِي

alonizuliya huyo * yangu 'aduwi nani ni * wangu mke pweke wee ni * nduyangu wallāhi naapa
22 (24) naapa wallahi nduyangu * ni wee pweke mke wangu²¹ * 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 لِسَنِ * مُتِي سِمْبَيْنِ * پٽ اُمِّي نَنْ * اُنَيْپُ تَهَرَضِي

t^hariḍiya unipapo * nani umpee peṭe * simbaini mṭuye * lisani kwa kamjibu
23 (25) kamjibu kwa lisani²² * 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.

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

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

²¹This 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.

²²lisani 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^hakwenda * kisimani yalingiya * tamkini t^hakwambiya * akabaini ‘alii
²⁴ (26) ‘alii akabaini * takwambiya tamkini * yalingiya kisimani²³ * 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 پَتِ يَكْ * مَهْلِ أُيُوسِپْ * كَمْ هَي مَتْمَكْ * بِنْعُ سِتْمَوْمِي

sitomwambiya babangu * matamko haya kama * uiwesepo mahale * yako pete nena haya
²⁵ (27) haya nena²⁴ pete yako * mahale uiwesepo * kama haya matamko * babangu sitomwambiya²⁵
 [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 أَكْؤُذِكْ * فَتَمْ كُكْسِرِكْ * أَلْنُكْ كَتَاكْ * أَكْنَدَ كُوْنَبِي

nabiya kwa akanenda * katoka aliinuka * kukasirika fatuma * akaudhika ‘alii
²⁶ (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) أَكْمُوْزْ هَشِمَ * أَلِ نَ نِ فَتَمْ * أَلِكْهَاتْ كَلِمَ * مُتْمَ أَكْمَوْمِي

akamwambiya mtume * kalima alik^hāta * fatuma nini na ali * hashima akamuza
²⁷ (29) akamuza hashima * ali na nini²⁶ fatuma * alikata kalima²⁷ * mtume kamwambiya
 The Hashimite asked him: What was wrong with Fatima? [Ali] interrupted him, and told the Prophet:

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

nimemtiliya zingi * khōfu zisizo ziyapo * menikalifu fatuma * sharifu kamwambiya
²⁸ (30) kamwambiya sharifu * fatuma menikalifu * ziyapo²⁸ zisizo²⁹ hofu * zingi nimemtiliya
 He told the Noble One: Fatima is annoyed with me -- white lies, I have told her many of them.

(٣١) أَلِكَلِي يَا رَسُولَ * نَمِ نِمْتَدَ كَوْلِ * كُمَوْمِي سِهْمِلِ * خُوفُ زِمْنَعِي

zimeningiya khōfu * sihimili kumwambiya * kweli nimetenda nami * rasūli yā alikiliya
²⁹ (31) alikiliya³⁰ ya rasuli * nami nimetenda 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 * أُمُوْنِي أَبْرُدِ * كَتْنُكَ مُحَمَّدِ * هَبْ كَأْنَدَمَ نَدِي

ndiya kaandama hapo * muḥamadi kainuka * aburudi umuonye * sayidi enenda tena
³⁰ (32) tena enenda sayidi * umuonye aburudi³¹ * 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].

²³ 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.

²⁴ Or we could emend to huyanena, you still haven't said.

²⁵ anamwogopa sana – she is greatly in awe of him.

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

²⁷ lit. “cut the words”.

²⁸ -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.

²⁹ i.e. oaths that have no frightening consequences.

³⁰ -liki- is a past continuous tense. See also 48d, 49a.

³¹ 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 وَسَوَسَ * كَفَفَنِي كَمْ هَئِسَ * إِنْدِي كُمْوَنَعَلِي

kumwangaliya enendee * haisi kama kaifanya * wasiwasi una moyo * akajilisi akenda
³¹ (33) akenda akajilisi³² * 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 مَكِي هَمَ * عَلِي كُمْوَنَدَمِي

kumwandamiya 'alii * hima mekuya hasani * fatuma nini na wali * hashima kamuuliza
³² (34) kamuuliza hashima * wali na nini fatuma * hasani mekuya hima * 'alii kumwandamiya³³
 The Hashimite asked her: Was there anything wrong, Fatima? Hasan came [to us] in a hurry to fetch Ali.

(٣٥) فَتَمَ هَكَسِرَ * أَكْمَوْمِي بِشِيرَ * عَلِي نَدَكْ هَبَرَ * يُوْ نِمَزِسَكِي

nimezisikiya yeo * habari ndake 'alii * bashiri akamwambiya * hakukasiri fatuma
³³ (35) fatuma hakukasiri³⁴ * akamwambiya bashiri * 'alii zaḳe 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 * أُسْمَنْجُ نِيْمَنِ * أَكَجَ أَكْمَامَكُوْ

ukamuamkuwa ukaja * nyumbani usimngoje * gani habari kama ni * amini akamuuza
³⁴ (36) akamuuza 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) أَكْنَمَ فَتَمَ * كُمْسِتَحَ هَاشِمَ * يَلْمَتَكَ كَلِمَ * بَبَكْ أَكْمَوْمِي

akamwambiya babake * kalima yalomtoka * hashima kumsitahi * fatuma akainama
³⁵ (37) akainama³⁵ fatuma * kumsitahi hashima * yalomtoka kalima³⁶ * babake kamwambiya
 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 usiteḥe * hayo maneno yawate
³⁶ (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 * يُوْ أَكِيْسَكِي

ukiyasikiya yuwa * yangu maneno haya ni * yangu radi utakapo * mwanangu akamwambiya
³⁷ (39) akamwambiya mwanangu * utakapo radi³⁷ 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.

³²-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.

³³-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.

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

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

³⁶ametokwa 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.

³⁷Move 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 أَلْنِغُرُ * 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 kunitiya
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 * جَمِيْع مِيْفَهْمُ * نِمِپَنْدَ كَوْمِي

kuwambiya nimependa * muyafahamu jami'i * t^hanuzumu mengine na * nimeyakhitimu haya
42 (44) haya nimeyakhitimu³⁸ * na mengine tanudhumu³⁹ * jami'i muyafahamu⁴⁰ * 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 وَوُنْغَوْنَ * يُوْ نَوِپَ مَعَنَ * پَ يَنْعُ يَ عَيْنَ * حُجَ نَلَوِتِي

naloiwatiya ḥuja * 'ayna ya yangu pete * ma'ana niwape yeo * waungwana fahamuni
43 (45) fahamuni⁴¹ waungwana * yeo niwape ma'ana * pete yangu ya 'ayna⁴² * 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.

³⁸The 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.

³⁹nuzumu, compose.

⁴⁰"that you may all understand it", or "that you may understand it all".

⁴¹It 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.

⁴²ya aina, one of a kind, i.e. nzuri.

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

ikapoteya ašili * walidi huzaa mara * kunizidi mahaba si * qašidi naliwata

⁴⁴ (46) naliwata qašidi⁴³ * si mahaba kunizidi * mara huzaa walidi * asili ikapoteya⁴⁴
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

⁴⁵ (47) basi naloyafikiri⁴⁵ * ndiyo yote yalojiri * akazawa ja'fari⁴⁶ * 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

⁴⁶ (48) akaisinga⁴⁷ 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) وَتٌ وَلِكِنْكَرٍ * عَلِي هَنَ هَبَرٍ * هَتَ مُمِي كُو سِرٍ * أَكْفِكَ كُمُومِي

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

⁴⁷ (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 مَتَانٍ * كَمُونُ مَعِينٍ * كُنْ كِسِمَ مَوْتُنِ * أَكْنَدَ كُجَنْغَلِي

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

⁴⁸ (50) alipopenda⁴⁸ manani * kamuona mu'ayani⁴⁹ * 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 * كِوزِ أَكِيْجَنْدِي

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

⁴⁹ (51) nae akenda kwa shaka * mai asipoyataka * nae alikifunika⁵⁰ * 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 * كِوزَ نَ كُفِيرٍ * وَمَكِي مَكْفِرٍ * يُوْ كُفْنُلِي

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

⁵⁰ (52) hapo 'alii⁵¹ haydari * kiwaza na kufikiri * wamekuya makafiri * yeo kunifunuliya⁵²
Then Ali the Lion-like pondered and considered: Unbelievers have come here to uncover it today in spite of me.

⁴³ Amu qašidi = Mvita maqusudi.

⁴⁴ 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

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

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

⁴⁷ lit. "he moulded himself" to the appearance of his father.

⁴⁸ 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.

⁴⁹ lit. "clearly".

⁵⁰ Because in such a climate water is very valuable.

⁵¹

⁵² To annoy and frustrate him.

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

amezoweya mtuye * t^hamshika budi sina * t^hakifunika yeo na * akatamka kisha

⁵¹ (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 * لِّلِ بَاءِ كَسُكُمَ * مَبِلِ أَكْلَتِيْ

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

⁵² (54) achondoka huku nyuma * ja'fari kaegema⁵³ * lile bao kasukuma * mbali akalatiliya⁵⁴
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

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

(٥٦) أَجْغَمَ كَرْدِدِ * تُتَشْنَدَنَ قَصِدِ * كَوْنَدَ يُوْ أَكْرُدِ * هَلِدِرِكِ أَكِيْ

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

⁵⁴ (56) achegema karadidi⁵⁵ * tutashindana qasidi⁵⁶ * 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 بِرِ * أَيُّ أَتَنِكِرِ * هِلِ لِيْطِ بَنْدَرِ * نَعْتَ تَهْمَفِنِكِيْ

t^hamfinikiya ngoṭa * bandari lipete hili * atanikiri ayapo * biri ni hufanya chamba

⁵⁵ (57) chamba⁵⁷ hufanya ni⁵⁸ biri⁵⁹ * ayapo atanikiri * hili lipete bandari⁶⁰ * 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 كَلِّكَ كَلِّكَ * نَ عَلِيْ أَكْتُكَ * مَكْنُ أَكْمَشِكَ * جَعْفَرِ كَمُومَبِيْ

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

⁵⁶ (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. Ja'fari said to him:

⁵³The 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.

⁵⁴-atilia means "drop" in Mvita and "throw" in Amu.

⁵⁵Move note to 183c to here.

⁵⁶lit. 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.

⁵⁷chamba, if.

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

⁵⁹i.e. if Ali is daring Ja'far to do something.

⁶⁰lit. "this [boat, jahazi] has gained the harbour", i.e. this state of affairs must come to an end.

(٥٩) وَوَيْسِكِينَ * مِمَّ سِجِّ سِنَن * هَتَّ أَكُونِ جِن * نَيُّو كُكُومِي

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

⁵⁷ (59) wewe hunishikiyani * mimi sikuchi sinani⁶¹ * 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 نِمَزُفَسِر * سَكِينَن كَو سِر * أَكِتَكَ أَظْهَر * نَ زَيْدِ تَهَكُومِي

^thakwambiya zaydi na * azhari ukitaka * siri kwa sikuyanena * nimezofasiri haya

⁵⁸ (60) haya nimezofasiri * sikuyanena kwa siri * ukitaka adhhari⁶² * na zaydi⁶³ 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 مَبَل * وَكَوَنَ سَاءَ مَبَل * كِشَ كُفْتُ قَوْل * جَعْفَرِ كَمُومِي

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

⁵⁹ (61) kamvutiya kwa mbali * wakawana saa mbili⁶⁴ * 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 مَبَيْن * مَوْنِ آدَمُ نَ نَن * بَبَ هَكَ دُنَيْن * نَدِپُ أَكُونِي

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

⁶⁰ (62) kamwambiya mbaini⁶⁵ * mwana adamu n nani * baba hako duniyani * ndipo ukanione ya⁶⁶
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 هُنَنَن * وَوَيْسِكِينَ * كَمَبَ نِ پَ چَنَدِن * عَلِي كِينْغَلِي

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

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

(٦٤) پَ كُئِينَ كَوَك * كِسَمَ نَ جِن لَك * أَرْدِ أَسِكْتِك * نَ مَيْتُ كَمْنِغِي

kumngiya mayuto na * asikitike arudi * lake jina na kisoma * kwake kuiyona peje

⁶² (64) peje kuiyona kwake * kisoma na jina lake * arudi asikitike * na mayuto kumngiya⁶⁷
Once he saw the ring and read his name [on it], he stepped back greatly saddened and was filled with remorse.

⁶¹ 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 uli wani? / 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, sişali 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.

⁶² azhari = wazi-wazi, zaidi.

⁶³ This is fighting talk – jeuri!

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

⁶⁵ -m- here = -ni-. See 237b.

⁶⁶ i.e. why are you picking on an orphan?

⁶⁷ 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 أُمُومِي * سِنْعَلِكُجِي * إِنْ لَكَ هُيْطُوي * بَيْكَ نَدِي عَلِي

'aliya ndiye babako * huitwaye lako ina * singalikupijie * amwambie hapo kisha
63 (65) kisha hapo amwambie⁶⁸ * 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) نِنْعَلِيزَ دَمُ * كَمَ سِكُكُفَهُمُ * أَكِشَ كَتَكَلَمُ * جَعْفَرُ كَمُومِي

kamwambiya ja'fari * katakalamu akisha * sikukufahamu kama * damu ningalipoteza
64 (66) ningalipoteza⁶⁹ 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 أَجَعَنْ * أَلُونُ تَهَكَمِي

t^hakimbiya uliona * ujugina hujiona * ina lake humuuzi * humuona mtu wewe
65 (67) wewe mtu humuona * humuuzi lake ina * hujiona ujugina⁷⁰ * 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 بِنْعُ * هُنْعَلُوزَ مَتْنَعُ * مُولِنِ كُنْيِي

kuniya mwilini * matungu hungaliweza * babangu ewe inuka * yangu pete nipa kwanza
66 (68) kwanza nipa pete yangu * inuka ewe⁷¹ babangu * hungaliweza matungu * mwilini kuniya
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 أُمُومِي

amwambiye lake ina * atamke hapo nae * zake sura namuyuwa * mamake akamwambiya
67 (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 مَوْكَ نِ وَ تِسِي

tisiya wa ni mwaka na * haydari 'alii wa * ja'fari huitwa mimi * kafasiri kimwambiya
68 (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.

⁶⁸The 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.

⁶⁹-poteza = -tupa.

⁷⁰According to Sacleux, *ujagina* 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.

⁷¹Ja'far is suspicious.

(٧١) وَتَوَ مَبْرَ مَوْتُنْ * نَ أَوِيكَ نَدَيْنْ * تُونَدَ زُتْ مُيْنْ * جَعْفَرِ كَمَوْمَبِي

kamwambiya ja'fari * muini zeṭu ṭwenende * ndiyani uwapeke na * mwiṭuni mbuzi watowe
⁶⁹ (71) watowe mbuzi mwituni⁷² * 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
⁷⁰ (72) kamwambiya nenda zangu * nina na mwalimu wangu⁷³ * 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 تَنْنُكُ * سَاءَ مِيْ اِكْفِكَ * بَبَ تَكُوْصِلِي

takuwasiliya baba * ikifika moya saa * tainuka mapima na * kukipambauka kesho
⁷¹ (73) kesho kukipambauka * na mapima tainuka * saa moya ikifika⁷⁴ * 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 * اُسْتِكَ كُيْتِي

kupoteya usitake * kuvuli ya ni makah ya * mbali ya ndiya uyapo * qawli akamtibu
⁷² (74) akamtibu qauli⁷⁵ * uyapo ndiya ya mbali * ya makah ni ya kuvuli⁷⁶ * usitake⁷⁷ kupoteya⁷⁸
[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) كَمْرُدِشِي تَمَكُ * بَسَ هَيَ نَدَ زَكُ * مَوْلِمُ نَ مَمَكُ * نَ نَدَزُ نِسْلِمِي

nisalimiya nduzo na * mamako na mwalimu * zako nenda haya basi * tamko kamrudishiya
⁷³ (75) kamrudishiya⁷⁹ tamko * basi haya nenda zako * mwalimu na mamako * na nduzo⁸⁰ nisalimiya⁸¹
[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 نِسْلِمِي

nisalimiya uchenda * aqraba huko nami * marḥabā kamwambiya * nasaba wa mwana nae
⁷⁴ (76) nae mwana wa nasaba⁸² * 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.

⁷² 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.

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

⁷⁴ i.e. around 7.00pm.

⁷⁵ akampa maneno mazuri, he gave him words of advice.

⁷⁶ kuvuli = kulia.

⁷⁷ usitake = usije.

⁷⁸ 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).

⁷⁹ 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.

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

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

⁸² Ja'far will therefore do what is right and expected of him.

(٧٧) سَلَامُ أَبُو بَكْرٍ * أَزْوَاجِ نَ ذُرَيَّ * سُرَّاءِ نَ إِظْهَارٍ * هُوَ نَوَفَهَمِي

nawafahamiya hao * izhāri na suzao * dhuriya na azwāji * bakari abuu salāmu
⁷⁵ (77) salamu abuu bakari * azwaji⁸³ na dhuriya * suzao na idhhari⁸⁴ * hao nawafahamiya⁸⁵
 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
⁷⁶ (78) basi hapo ja'fari * akamwambiya kwa heri * na 'alii haydari * mngu akamuombeya⁸⁶
 So then Ja'far said goodbye to him, and Ali the Lion-like commended him to God's care.

(٧٩) مُنِنِ كُنْغِي كَوَكٍ * كَنْدَ كَو مَوْلِمٍ وَكٍ * كَمَبِ هَبَرِ زَكٍ * كَوَّهْ هَيْسِكِلِي

hayasikiliya kwao * zake habari kampa * wake mwalimu kwa kenda * kwake kungiya muini
⁷⁷ (79) muini kungiya kwake * kenda kwa mwalimu wake⁸⁷ * 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 كَيْنُظُمُ * أَكَلِي مُعَلِّمُ * كَمَبِ وَنِطِي هَمُ * هَي أَمَزْنَمِي

umezonambiya hayo * hamu waniṭiya kamba * mu'alimu akaliya * kuyanuzumu akisha
⁷⁸ (80) akisha kuyanudhumu⁸⁸ * akaliya mu'alimu⁸⁹ * kamba wanitiya hamu⁹⁰ * 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 كُزَوِي

kukuziwiya siwezi * wendako huko na wala * maudhiko wa wingi na * sikitiko waniṭiya
⁷⁹ (81) waniṭiya sikitiko * na wingi wa maudhiko⁹¹ * 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.

⁸³ 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.

⁸⁴ 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”.

⁸⁵ -fahamia, know of someone, hear about someone, while not knowing them personally.

⁸⁶ 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.

⁸⁷ 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.

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

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

⁹⁰ Everybody, even a teacher, is apprehensive about the future.

⁹¹ lit. “you are bringing me sadness and many anxieties”.

(٨٢) س رَحِمُ كُنْدَن * نَ هُكُ أ حَلْ غَن * نَاءُ بِيَكُ زَيْن * نَدِي وَ كُتْغُلِي

kuṭanguliya wa ndiye * ziṭani babako nae * gani ḥali u huko na * kuendani raḥimu si
⁸⁰ (82) si raḥimu kuendani⁹² * 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 سِتَاكِ * كُونِ نِيَوِ نَ هَكُ * نِ رَضِ أَلْفُ لَكِ * نَ زَيْدِ كِكُوَيِ

kikweteya zaydi na * laki alfu raḍi ni * haki ni nayuwa kwani * sitaki kukikinda na
⁸¹ (83) na kukukinda sitaki⁹³ * kwani nayuwa ni haki * ni radhi⁹⁴ 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
⁸² (84) akamwambiya mwalimu * mamako ayafahamu * kamjibisha ḳaḷaḡu * kwake siyasikiliya⁹⁵
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 زَكُ * أَكْمُولِزِ مَمَكُ * أَسَكِرِ مَمَمَكُ * نَاءُ تَكَلْكَومِي

takalokwambiya nae * matamko usikize * mamako ukamuulize * zako enda kamwambiya
⁸³ (85) kamwambiya enda zako * ukamuulize mamako⁹⁶ * 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 أَكْنَعِي

akingiya mamake kwa * halimama una moyo * kayandama ndiya hapo * kalima hiyo akisha
⁸⁴ (86) akisha hiyo kalima * hapo ndiya kayandama * moyo una halimama⁹⁷ * 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) كِنْعِي كَوَكُ كِبُ * كَو أُيْلَ نَ تَرْتِبُ * مَمَكُ كَتَعَجَبُ * جَعْفَرِ أَكْمَوْمِي

akamwambiya ja'fari * kata'ajabu mamake * taratibu na upole kwa * kibu kaweka kingiya
⁸⁵ (87) kingiya kaweka kibu⁹⁸ * kwa upole na taratibu⁹⁹ * 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.

⁹²i.e. the journey is dangerous.

⁹³sitaki kushinda na wewe.

⁹⁴radi, 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.

⁹⁵Amu -sika = fika. Compare -sita / fita.

⁹⁶The teacher is teaching Ja'far obedience to his mother.

⁹⁷halimama = wasiwasi.

⁹⁸fimbo ya mbuzi?

⁹⁹Ja'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 سِرْ جَعْفَر * وَتُونَشْ جَوْر * هُنْغِي كَم كَو سِر * مْتُ اَمَزْ كِمْبِي

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

⁸⁶ (88) kamba siwe ja'fari * watuonesha jeuri * hungiya kama kwa siri * mtu amezokimbiya¹⁰⁰

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 اَتَمَك * عَيْنِ يَ مَتْ يَك * هَتَاكِ كُتُونْغَلِي

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

⁸⁷ (89) nasiri ni ndugu yake * papo hapo atamke * aīṇa 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 سُوْدِك * تَكُوْمِي حُجْ يَك * يُوْ اَنْ مَبِرْ وَك * وَوَلِ وَمَيْتِي

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

⁸⁸ (90) ewe¹⁰¹ mama siudhike * takwambiya huja yake¹⁰² * 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) وَمَتَاكَ صَفْنِ * مَوْتَنَغْ هَوُونِ * كِشَ اَتَاكَ مَوْتَنِ * يُوْ نِ كَلِ لَ نَدِي

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

⁸⁹ (91) wametoka safuni * mewatanga¹⁰³ 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) كَيْنَاكَ جَعْفَر * اَكْمَبِجَ نَاصِر * زَتَكُتَاكَ جَوْر * يُوْ نِيَكُونْغَلِي

nikikwangaliya yeo * jeuri zitakutoka * nāsiri akampija * ja'fari kainuka

⁹⁰ (92) kainuka ja'fari * akampija nasiri * zitakutoka jeuri * yeo nikikwangaliya¹⁰⁴

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

(٩٣) هَپْ مَم اَسِكِر * كَمَشَاكَ جَعْفَر * اَوْپَ نِ مِي نَاصِر * هَپْ سِنْغَلِكِمْبِي

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

⁹¹ (93) hapo mama asikiri * kamshika ja'fari * iwapo ni mii nasiri * hapo singelikimbiya¹⁰⁵

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.

¹⁰⁰ anajifita, he is hiding himself.

¹⁰¹ = wewe.

¹⁰² 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).

¹⁰³ -tanga, scatter, spread out.

¹⁰⁴ 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.

¹⁰⁵ i.e. don't run away from a fight.

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

kumtanguliya wata * yako 'awni ni kisha * wako mtoṭo mwanangu * yako ndugu ni nāširi
⁹² (94) nasiri ni ndugu yako * mwanangu mtoto¹⁰⁶ wako * kisha ni 'auni yako * wata¹⁰⁷ 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 نِمَزَكُوْمِي

nimezokwambiya haya * mwendani yamekupaṭa * haneni akiulizwa * tini aliinamiya
⁹³ (95) aliinamiya tini * akiulizwa haneni * yamekupata mwendani * haya nimezokwambiya¹⁰⁸
 [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 نَيُّو طَبِي

ṭabiya nayuwa nami * harabu ni wewe kiwa * hutaadabu nāširi * ajibu mamake hapo
⁹⁴ (96) hapo mamake ajibu * nasiri hutaadabu * kiwa wewe ni harabu * nami nayuwa ṭabiya
 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 * اُسُ اُسِمَمِ هَرِ * صُوْرَ زِمَكُطِي

zimekupoteya šūra * hari usimeme uso * ja'fari nipa haya * habari zako nataka
⁹⁵ (97) nataka zako habari * haya nipa ja'fari¹⁰⁹ * uso usimeme hari¹¹⁰ * sura zimekupoteya¹¹¹
 [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 * نِكُوْمِي لُغَ غَنِ * كَوُكُ اِوِ نِ بِي

piya ni iwe kwako * gani lugha nikwambiye * gani habari wataka * akabaini ja'fari
⁹⁶ (98) ja'fari akabaini¹¹² * wataka habari gani * nikwambiye lugha gani * kwako iwe¹¹³ ni piya¹¹⁴
 Ja'far said: What news do you want? In what language should I tell you, so that it will be new to you?

(٩٩) كِكُوْمِي كِعَرَبْ * نَيُّو اُتَنِجِبْ * تِنِ نَوْنِ عَجَبْ * مِمِ مُوْنِيُو كِكُوْمِي

kukwambiya mwenyewe mimi * 'ajabu naona tena * utanjibu nayuwa * ki'arabu kikwambiya
⁹⁷ (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 هُنْمِي هَكُ * تَنْغُ نِنِ مِمْبِ يَكُ * اَلْفَرِكُ دُنِيَا

duniya alifariki * yako mimba nina tangu * hako hunambiya baba * aliko kikuuliza
⁹⁸ (100) kikuuliza aliko * baba hunambiya hako¹¹⁵ * 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."

¹⁰⁶Mvita mdogo, small = Amu mtoto = Gunya mdodi.

¹⁰⁷Perhaps 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.

¹⁰⁸Nasir 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.

¹⁰⁹She knows something has happened.

¹¹⁰hari = jasho.

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

¹¹²-baini = -sema.

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

¹¹⁴Amu piya = Mvita mpya.

¹¹⁵hako 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 يُمْن * أَتَغُوزَ مَنَعْن * أَتَمَبِي وَفَن * خَيْرَ كُنَيْمَزِي

kuinyamaziya khēri * wafene utanambiya * mangine utageuza * yumuini kikwambiya

⁹⁹ (101) kikwambiya yumuini¹¹⁶ * 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) وَو هَيَوَ فَرَس * وَلَ مَكَه هُكُيس * وَنَدَلِپ مَجَلِس * أَكْمُون عَلِي

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

¹⁰⁰ (102) wewe huyawa¹¹⁷ farisi¹¹⁸ * wala makah hukuisi * wendelepi majlisi¹¹⁹ * ukamuona 'aliya¹²⁰
[His mother said:] You are not worldly-wise, nor do you know Mecca -- where did you go among people, that you saw Ali?"

(١٠٣) جَعْفَر كَبِين * ثُمُونَن مُوْتَن * صِفَ زَك مُعِين * أَكْتَك تَكُومَبِي

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

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

(١٠٤) نِسَكِرَ نِرَدِد * كَو سِي أُنُرِد * كِمَ چَك هَكِرِد * كَمَ چَنُغُ أَغَلِي

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

¹⁰² (104) nisikiza niradidi * kiwa siyo unirudi * kimo chake hakizidi¹²¹ * 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 پِل نَبِين * نَبِي زَك زَ كَتُون * هَكُمَيِ أَپَان * نَ كَمَ سِي نَمَبِي

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

¹⁰³ (105) na la pili nibaini * nyee zake za kitwani * hakumeya upaani¹²² * 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 أَفْهَم * أَنْ تُنْدِي كُرْم * صِفَ زَك زَمَتِم * نَ هِزْ نِمَكُومَبِي

nimekwambiya hizo ni * zemetimu zake şifa * kuzimu ya tundu una * ufahamu ṭātu ya na

¹⁰⁴ (106) na ya tatu ufahamu * una tundu ya kuzimu¹²³ * şifa zake zemetimu * ni hizo nimekwambiya
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.

¹¹⁶ i.e. that he has seen someone who might be his father.

¹¹⁷ < kuwa.

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

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

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

¹²¹ 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.

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

¹²³ 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 أُكَيْتَكَ مَفَنْ * هُنْ نِمَكُپِجِي

nimekupijiya hunu * mfano ukitaka na * mno jagina ni kisha * maneno wa ra'ufu ni
¹⁰⁵ (107) ni ra'ufu¹²⁴ wa maneno * kisha ni jagina¹²⁵ mno * na ukitaka mfano¹²⁶ * 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 اُنْمَبِزِيُوْ * نِ كَوْلِ نَدِيْ يَلِيْ * نِبَ جِنْسِ يَوِءُوْ * هَتَ كُمْفَهَمِيْ

kumfahamiya hata * yaweeo jinsi nipa * yaliyo ndiyo kweli ni * unambiziyeo hayo
¹⁰⁶ (108) hayo unambiziyeo * ni kweli ndiyo yaliyo * nipa jinsi yaweeo¹²⁷ * 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 اَوَّلِ * هِكْ چَكْ نِ ثَقِلِ * كِتَنْغَ مَاءِ نِ غَالِ * نِكْتَكَسَ نِ نَدِيْ

ndiya na nikatakasa * ghāli ni mai kitanga * thaqili ni chaka hiki * awali tangu takupa
¹⁰⁷ (109) takupa tangu awali * hiki¹²⁸ chaka¹²⁹ ni thaqili¹³⁰ * kitanga mai ni ghali * nikatakasa na ndiya¹³¹
[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 كَبُرْدِيْ

kairudiya khēri ni * mahali hapana mai * hili bara nimetanga * qawli yangu šadiqi
¹⁰⁸ (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 وَنْدِمَ نَدِيْ

ndiya wendeme waṭaṭu * wengine waṭu kuona * gani janibu nenende * moyoni hiwaza henda
¹⁰⁹ (111) henda hiwaza moyoni * nīnende janibu¹³² gani * kaona watu wengine¹³³ * watatu wendeme
 ndiya¹³⁴
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 نِكَوْصِلِ * مَاءِ وَتَنْمَبِيْ

watanambiya mai * nikiwašili mara * taimuhuli kanena * mbali wako kawaona
¹¹⁰ (112) kawaona wako mbali * kanena¹³⁵ taimuhuli¹³⁶ * mara¹³⁷ 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."

¹²⁴ = taratibu, polite.

¹²⁵ See 67c.

¹²⁶ -piga mfano, give an example of.

¹²⁷ Amu yaweeo = Mvita yalivyokuwa.

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

¹²⁹ chaka < -waka, burn.

¹³⁰ 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.

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

¹³² janibu = upande.

¹³³ Or we could emend to wageni, strangers.

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

¹³⁵ Note that -nena, speak, say, here means "intend".

¹³⁶ -i-muhuli = -ji-ngojesha.

¹³⁷ mara here = pengine.

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

kawapisiya salāmu * wakinusa niwawene * wakapiṭa nao hata * kinyesa kivuli pana
¹¹¹ (113) pana kivuli kinyesa * hata nao wakapita * niwawene wakīṭuṣa * salamu kawapisiya¹³⁸
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 * لَيْت كِنْدُكِي

kupindukiya lipaṭe * mukēti ndoni hela * kaṭi kipungu ni hiki * matiti mwendapi kamba
¹¹² (114) kamba mwendapi matiti¹³⁹ * hiki ni kipungu kati¹⁴⁰ * hela¹⁴¹ ndoni muketi * lipate kupindukiya¹⁴²
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) نَ هِل يُو سِ زِر * كُنْدَمَ نِ خَطَر * وَلَ زُو سِ آخِر * كَمَ مُتَلِمَتِي

mutalimaṭiya kama * akhiri si zeo wala * khaṭari ni kulandama * zuri si yuwa hili na
¹¹³ (115) na hili yuwa si zuri¹⁴³ * kulandama¹⁴⁴ ni hatari * wala zeo¹⁴⁵ si ahiri¹⁴⁶ * kama mutalimaṭiya¹⁴⁷
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 * وَكِرُنْغِي نِيَم * وَوَلِ وَكَسَم * مَمِي كِنِيلِي

kaniiliya mmoya * wakasimama wawili * nyuma wakizungukiya * kalima wakisikiya
¹¹⁴ (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) أَكَجَ أَكْبَن * كَنُوزَ نَدَوْن * أَوْ وَتَكِين * خَطَرِ كُفِيكِي

kuṭufikiya khaṭari * waṭutakiyani aw * nani ndiwe kaniuza * akabaini akija
¹¹⁵ (117) akija akabaini * kaniuza ndiwe nani¹⁴⁸ * 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) سِسِ هُتْشِكْ يَك * وَلَ سِ نَدُغْ زَك * أُتِي مَتْمَك * يَسِنِ كُتُومَبِي

kuṭwambiya yapeseni * matamko uetaṭayo * zako ndugu si wala * yako haṭushiki sisi
¹¹⁶ (118) sisi hatushiki yako¹⁴⁹ * wala si ndugu zako¹⁵⁰ * uetaṭayo matamko * yapeseni¹⁵¹ 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?"

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

¹³⁹kama Wazungu, like Europeans!

¹⁴⁰kipungu-kati = mti-kati, saa sita, jua kali.

¹⁴¹Amu 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.

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

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

¹⁴⁴-andama = -fuata. See 34d.

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

¹⁴⁶lit. "end".

¹⁴⁷-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.

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

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

¹⁵⁰Again, very rude.

¹⁵¹ilifaa vipi. -pasa, be obliged to, have to.

(١١٩) وَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا * فِي مَوَاطِنَ الْقَوْمِ * يُؤْمِنُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ * كَوْنًا يُبْطِلُ طَبِي

tabiya tuyuwe kwanda * tukufahamu twambiye * qawmu mpoteza ni * ādamu mwana ni wewe
¹¹⁷ (119) wewe şī mwana adamu * ni mpoteza qawmu¹⁵² * 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) كَوَجِبَ قَوْلُ * نِ دِينِ يَكْ رَسُولِ * كَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ جَاهِلٌ * مَبْلُ رَنْعٌ نُّدْكَي

nondokeya zangu mbele * jahili ni wewe kiwa * rasūli yake dīni ni * qawli kawajibisha
¹¹⁸ (120) kawajibisha qauli * ni dini yake rasuli * kiwa wewe ni jahili¹⁵³ * 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) كَسِيكَى هُفَسِرِ * هُمُوْتُ أَبُو بَكْرٍ * نَدُو وَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ زُبَيْرٌ * وَتَ وَوَيْلٌ وَكِي

wakaya wawili wote * zubayri na wewe ndoo * bakari abuu humwiṭa * hufasiri kasikiya
¹¹⁹ (121) kasikiya hufasiri * humwita abuu bakari * ndoo wewe na zubayri¹⁵⁴ * wote wawili wakaya
 And I heard him speak and call: "Abu Bakr, come here, and you Zubeir! And both of them came over.

(١٢٢) وَكِي وَكَسِمَمَ * أَسْ وَكَيْتَرَمَ * كَمَبْ مُكِمَفَهَمَ * وَجِهْ وَكْ نَبِي

nabiya wake wajhi * mukimfahama kamba * wakanitizama uso * wakasimama wakaya
¹²⁰ (122) wakaya wakasimama * uso wakanitizama * kamba mukimfahama * wajhi¹⁵⁵ 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) هُسيكى هُنَجِبُ * عَلِي بِنِ طَالِبُ * مَمَ وَمَتَعَجَبُ * كَوُتْ هُنَنْغَلِي

hunangaliya wote kwa * wameta'ajabu mama * ṭālibu bin 'alīi * hunijibu husikiya
¹²¹ (123) husikiya¹⁵⁶ hunijibu * 'alīi bin talibu * mama¹⁵⁷ 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) هُوَ نِ أَبُو بَكْرٍ * نَ هُوَ هُتَوُ زُبَيْرُ * نَوَ لَكَ هُفَسِرِ * أَنْ تُكَلِسِي

tukalisikiya ina * hufasiri lako nawe * zuberi huiṭwa hoyo na * bakari abuu ni hoyo
¹²² (124) hoyo ni abuu bakari * na hoyo huitwa zuberi * nawe lako hufasiri¹⁵⁸ * 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) أَكْتَمَكَ مُبِجٌ * مِمَّ هُتَوُ أَزْوَجٌ * نَمَ سَسَ نَتَرَجُ * نَ إِنْ لَكَ نَمِي

nambiya lako ina na * nataraji sasa nami * azwaji huiṭwa mimi * mbuji akatamka
¹²³ (125) akatamka mbuji * mimi huitwa azwaji¹⁵⁹ * 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.

¹⁵² i.e. a jinn or the Devil.

¹⁵³ jahili, someone ignorant of the truth, in this case of Islam.

¹⁵⁴ Abu Bakr and Zubeir are two of the masahaba, the Companions of the Prophet.

¹⁵⁵ wajhi = uso.

¹⁵⁶ hu- here = waka-.

¹⁵⁷ mama! is an expression of disbelief.

¹⁵⁸ mbona husemi?, why aren't you speaking?.

¹⁵⁹ azwaji is literally "a couple", so this name is strange.

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

'aliya□ mawlānā wa * ja'fari ndiye mimi * kufasiri ina nami * nimekiri kawambiya
124 (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 * وَنَدُّ وَبِ غَرِيبُ * هَپْ مَمِ كَوَجِبُ * نِتَكَلُ كَوْمِي

kawambiya nitakalo * kawajibu mama hapo * gharibu wapi wendao * taratibu waniuze
125 (127) waniuze taratibu * wendao wapi gharibu¹⁶⁰ * 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) نِمْتَنَغَ مَاءِ بَرَنِ * نِمِچْكَ سِيُونُ * مَبِرُ وَمِلَشَ يَنِ * سَسَ كُيْتِ هَلِي

haliya kuyuta sasa * yani wamelisha mbuzi * siyaoni nimechoka * barani mai nimetanga
126 (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 مَمَزِيطُ * مَاءِ هَمَكِيكُ * مَبِرُ وَنَغُ وَنَ نِيْتُ * چَمَبَ مَوِيُو نَمِي

nambiya mwayuwa chamba * nyota wana wangu mbuzi * hamkuyakuta mai * mmezopita huko
127 (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 مَبِلُ * لَكِنِ كَنَ ثَقِلُ * هِي نَدُو كُيْتِي

kuitiya ndoo hiyo * thaqili kina lakini * mbali si kisima kwamba * qawli wakanijibu
128 (130) wakanijibu qauli * kwamba kisima si mbali * lakini kina thaqili * hiyo ndoo kuitiya¹⁶¹
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 * لَكِنِ سِسِ فَهَمُ * كُكُونِي هُچَلِي

hucheleya kukuonya * fahamu sisi lakini * zamzamu wa mfano * matamu ni mai hayo
129 (131) hayo mai ni matamu * mfano wa zamzamu¹⁶² * lakini sisi fahamu * kukuonya hucheleya¹⁶³
The water is sweet, just like Zamzam's, but we, you understand, are afraid to show it to you.

(١٣٢) أَوُپُ أُمِحْتَرِ * كُكُپْكَ تُتِيرِ * وَلَ أُسْتُفَسِرِ * نِ سِسِ تُلُكُومِي

tolokwambiya sisi ni * usitufasiri wala * tutayari kukupeka * umekhitari uwapo
130 (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].

¹⁶⁰gharibu = mgeni.

¹⁶¹Because Ali has covered it up.

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

¹⁶³tunaogopa. 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
¹³¹ (133) wakanionya usita¹⁶⁴ * hapo ndiya kafuwata * kwa mwiṭuni wakapita * mḥḥē wakanitoleya¹⁶⁵
They showed me the way, and then I followed the path. They went into the forest, and directed me onwards.

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

huniangaliya wao * kutizama kiwavu kwa * kasukuma bao lipo * kisima kidusa hata
¹³² (134) hata kiduṣa¹⁶⁶ kisima * lipo bao kasukuma * kwa kiwavu kutizama¹⁶⁷ * 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 أَتَمَكَ * بُو بَكَرِ سِشُتُكَ * كِسِمَ سِكْفُنِكَ * نِتَرْدُ كُكُومِي

kukwambiya nitarudi * sikifunike kisima * sishutuke bakari buu * atamke ja'fari
¹³³ (135) ja'fari atamke¹⁶⁸ * buu bakari sishutuke * kisima sikifunike * nitarudi ṇakwambiya¹⁶⁹
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 * كَنَنْ نَنْدَ زَنْعُ * نَزِتَكَسَ نَ نَدِي

ndiya na nizitakase * zangu nenda kanena * wangu mbuzi mai kunwa * wangu moyo khōfu sina
¹³⁴ (136) sina hofu moyo wangu * kunwa mai mbuzi wangu * kanena nenda zangu * nizitakase¹⁷⁰ 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 كُكِيْمَبُوكَ * نِنْ فُرَهَ هُتَكَ * مَلِشَنِ كَوِيكَ * مُدَ وَ يُو كُوَاءَ

kuwaa yuwa wa muda * kiwapeka malishoni * huteka furaha nina * kukipambauka yuwa
¹³⁵ (137) yuwa kukipambauka * nina furaha huteka * malishoni kiwapeka * muda wa yuwa kuwaa¹⁷¹
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 * هُتَرَنْ كُكُمْبِي

kukumbiya na hutura * wameniwata naona * kawasuta mbuzi hapo * sita saa ya awali
¹³⁶ (138) awali ya saa sita * hapo mbuzi kawasuta¹⁷² * naona¹⁷³ wameniwata * hutura¹⁷⁴ 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.

¹⁶⁴ usita = barabara.

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

¹⁶⁶ -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.

¹⁶⁷ The meaning of this line is unclear.

¹⁶⁸ Past tense.

¹⁶⁹ 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.

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

¹⁷¹ -waa = -waka, burn.

¹⁷² Amu -suta = Mvita -shunga, -fukuza, shoo animals on, drive animals along.

¹⁷³ The tense here gives the nuance of "suddenly".

¹⁷⁴ -tura = -ruka, jump, bound.

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

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

¹³⁷ (139) kawambiya enendani * mwakuyuwa kisimani * laikini hufaliyani * ndimi wa kuwatekeya¹⁷⁵
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) وَ كُنْدَ وَ كِسْمَمَ * كُفُنِشِيرَ كِسِمَ * بَاءُ نِكَلِسُكُمَ * نِمْنُ مْتُ أَكِي

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

¹³⁸ (140) wakenda wakasimama * kufunishiwe kisima¹⁷⁶ * bao nikalisukuma * nimone¹⁷⁷ 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 * مَاءِ نِسِيْكَ * مَمَ هَبْ كَتَمَكَ * يَ غَضَبُ كَمَوْمِي

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

¹³⁹ (141) akiya akanishika¹⁷⁸ * mae nisyateka * mama¹⁷⁹ 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 * كِنُوْزَ پُتِ يَنْعُ * چَدَنِ كَمْتَلِي

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

¹⁴⁰ (142) nikamuhimidi¹⁸⁰ 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) پُتِ أَكْتِزَمَ * كِجَ نَ هَلِمَمَ * يِسِي يَ نِيْمَ * يَتِ يَكْمُرْدِي

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

¹⁴¹ (143) pete akaitizima * kapija na halimama * yapisiye ya nyuma¹⁸¹ * 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 أَلِيْنُوْلَزَ * نِسْمَوْمِي كَتَزَ * أَكَنْبَ مُؤْجَزَ * پِي نَ كُنِيْجِي

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

¹⁴² (144) jina aliponiuliza * nisimwambiye kaiza * akanipa miujiza¹⁸² * piya na kunipijiya¹⁸³
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.

(١٤٥) أَنْبِي صُوْرَ زَكُ * نَ صِفَ زَ نِيْمَبَ يَكُ * هَبْ كَيْتَ تَمَكَ * إِنْ لَنْعُ كَمَوْمِي

kamwambiya langu ina * tamko kaeṭa hapo * yako nyumba za šifa na * zako šūra unipiye

¹⁴³ (145) unipee sura zako * na sifa za nyumba yako * hapo kaeta tamko * ina langu kamwambiya

¹⁷⁵i.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.

¹⁷⁶i.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).

¹⁷⁷Again, the tense gives the nuance of *suddenly* – see 138c.

¹⁷⁸What happens next has already been described in 58 ff.

¹⁷⁹mama! – see 123c.

¹⁸⁰cf. 152b.

¹⁸¹yale mambo yaliyopita zamani.

¹⁸²i.e. unless he really was Ja'far's father.

¹⁸³-piga mifano, give examples.

He described your features to me, and the characteristics of your house. Then I spoke and told him my name.

(١٤٦) نِكْمَوْمِي نِيكَ * نَزَزُوْهُ هَكَكَ * نِ تِسِي زِسِرْ شَكَ * نَ وَوْ تَرَهْ طِي

tiya tarehe wewe na * shaka zisizo tisiya ni * hakika nizezoweo * nyaka nikamwambiya

¹⁴⁴ (146) nikamwambiya nyaka * nizewe¹⁸⁴ hakika * ni tisiya zisizo shaka * na wewe tarehe tiya¹⁸⁵
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 زَكَ تَمَم * نِمَكُپْ أَفْهَم * تَنَ نَ كَو مَوْلِم * نِمِرُدِ كُمَوْمِي

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) نِمْمُوْغَ كَو خَيْر * اُسْبِهَ نِ سَفَرِ * نُوْمَبِي كَو جَبَارِ * نَ رَضِ كُنُوِي

kuniweya raḍi na * jabāri kwa niombeya * safari ni asubhi * khēri kwa nimemuaga

¹⁴⁶ (148) nimemuaga kwa heri * aṣuḥuḥi 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 نُوْمَبِي مَنَع * تُبْنَدَنَ نَ بِنَع * نَم كِشَ مِي وَنَع * تَكِي كُونْغَلِي

kuwangaliya takuya * wangu mui kisha nami * babangu na tupendane * mngu niombeya tena

¹⁴⁷ (149) tena niombeya mngu * tupendane na babangu * nami kisha mui wangu * takuya¹⁸⁶ 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) اَكِسِكِي قَوْل * مَمَكِ اَسِحْمِل * اَكْتَرَدَدِ عَقِل * كَو مَكْنَدِ كَيْي

kaiṭiya makonde kwa * 'aqili akataradadi * asihimili mamake * qawli akisikiya

¹⁴⁸ (150) akisikiya qauli * mamake asihimili * akataradadi¹⁸⁷ '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.

(١٥١) كَيْتُنْدَ كَيْنْغَش * تَيْتِ اَكْرُش * هَتَ نَعُو كَمَفْش * اِكُو كُمْسَمِي

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

¹⁴⁹ (151) kaiṭunda¹⁸⁸ kayingusha * tiyati akairusha¹⁸⁹ * hata nguwo kamvisha¹⁹⁰ * ikawa kumsomeya¹⁹¹
She took and threw herself down, she hurled herself to the ground, so that her clothing came undone, as if she was being read

¹⁸⁴ = nilizozaliwa.

¹⁸⁵ = kumbuka tarehe.

¹⁸⁶ i.e. he will return to his town for periodic visits.

¹⁸⁷ taradadi = -badilika.

¹⁸⁸ Amu -tunda = Mvita -twaa.

¹⁸⁹ She does not know what she is doing.

¹⁹⁰ 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 lesa, upper garment, may become undone.

¹⁹¹ 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 mwalimu, 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 Ngwakuhi fadhi, may God protect you, and then give them the verses to protect them.

over.

(١٥٢) اَلَيْسَتْ فَهَمٌ * كَمْحَمِدٍ كَرِيمٌ * كِشْ اَكْتَكَلَمُ * مَنْعُ اَكْمُؤْمَبِي

akamuombeya mngu * akatakalamu kisha * karimu kamuḥimidi * fahamu alipopaṭa

¹⁵⁰ (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 اَللّٰهُ مَلْ وَنْعُ * نِنْصُرِيْ مُوْنَعُ * نَ وَطْتُ وَ وَنْزَنْعُ * حَفَظْنِ نِطْلِيْ

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

¹⁵¹ (153) ya allāhu mola wangu * ninuṣuriya mwanangu * na watoto wa wenzangu¹⁹² * ḥifadhini nitiliya¹⁹³

Oh God, my Lord, protect my child for me, and the children of my friends, place them for me in your care.

(١٥٤) اِنْدَ هُنْ مَضَرَ * نِرَضِ اَلْفُ مَرَ * نَاوْ اَوْ نَ فِكِرَ * مِيْ نِمَكُوْصِيْ

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

¹⁵² (154) enenda huna madhara * niradhi alfu mara * nawe uwe na fikira¹⁹⁴ * mōya¹⁹⁵ nimekuusiya

[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) مِمْ اُيْنُوْدُ * سِتْكَوْ نَ غَيْظِ * اِوْبُ وَتَكَ رَضِ * نَ كَوْ عَلِيْ زَنْغِيْ

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

¹⁵³ (155) mimi uyaponiudhi * sitokuwa na għaydhi¹⁹⁶ * iwapo wataka radhi * na kwa 'alii zengeya¹⁹⁷

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.

(١٥٦) اِتْنَدِ اَوْ نِيُوْنِ * كَوْ بِيْكَ اَوْ تِنِ * نَ اَتَكْلَبِيْنِ * كَوْكَ لَوْ مَرَضِيْ

marḍiya liwe kwako * atakalobaini na * tini uwe babako kwa * nyaoni uwe itunde

¹⁵⁴ (156) itunde uwe nyaoni¹⁹⁸ * kwa babako uwe tini * na atakalobaini¹⁹⁹ * kwako liwe mardhiya²⁰⁰

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

¹⁹² 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.

¹⁹³ 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.

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁹⁹ *-baini*, say.

²⁰⁰ That is, do not refuse anything – the opposite of *-legea*, be remiss.

(١٥٧) نَ مُّمُّ مُحَمَّدٍ * هَنَ بُدِ كُكُزِدِ * اَللّٰهُ اللّٰهُ جِتَهْدِ * نَغَاءُ اُيْتِ وَصِي

waṣiya upaṭe ngaa * jitahidi llāha allāha * kukuzidi budi hana * muḥamadi mṭume na
155 (157) na mtume muhamadi * hana budi kukuzidi²⁰¹ * allaha²⁰² llaha jitahidi * ngaa²⁰³ upate wasiya²⁰⁴
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) نَاءِ بِنْتِ حَبِيبُ * كَتِ نَاءِ كَو تَوَابُ * كَوَكْ أَوْ نَ اَدَبُ * اَمُطِي نَ كُموُنْعِي

kumwangukiya na umṭii * adabu na uwe kwake * thawābu kwa nae keti * ḥabību binti nae
156 (158) nae binti habibu²⁰⁵ * keti nae kwa thawābu²⁰⁶ * kwake uwe na adabu * umṭii na kumwangukiya²⁰⁷
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) اَكْتَاكَ جَعْفَرِ * نَ چَكُلْ كَتِيرِ * كَلْ نَ نَدِي نَاصِرِ * نَ مَوْلِمُ كَتَكِي

katokeya mwalimu na * nāṣiri nduye na kala * kitayari chakula na * ja'fari akatoka
157 (159) akatoka ja'fari * na chakula²⁰⁸ 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) وَكَتَنَعْنِي مَكْنُ * وَتِ وَتُّ مَفْنُ * اَكِنَنْ نَ مَنَنْ * نَدُغِي اَكْمَوْمِي

akimwambiya nduguye * maneno na akinena * mfano waṭaṭu wote * mikono wakatanganya
158 (160) wakatanganya mikono²⁰⁹ * wote watatu mfano * aḱaṇeṇa na maneno * nduguye aḱamwambiya
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:

(١٦١) اَكْمَوْمِي نَاصِرِ * يُوْ نَدِيْنُغْ كَو خَيْرِ * تَكَيْرِدِ سَفَرِ * تَمَشْ تَكَلِّي

takuleṭeya tamasha * safari takaporudi * khēri kwa nduyangu yeo * nāṣiri akamwambiya
159 (161) akamwambiya nasiri * yeo nduyangu kwa heri * takaporudi safari * tamasha²¹⁰ takuleṭeya
He told Nasir: Goodbye today, my brother -- when I come back from my journey I will bring you something nice.

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

²⁰² hala = hara, an exhortation to effort, as in hara mbee!, forward!.

²⁰³ 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.

²⁰⁴ waṣia is often translated as "last will", but its wider meaning is "wisdom", or "dos and don'ts".

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

²⁰⁶ 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.

²⁰⁷ -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.

²⁰⁸ 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.

²⁰⁹ 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.

²¹⁰ i.e. zawadi, a present.

(١٦٢) أَكْمَجِبُ أُپْسِ * نَيْتِي نَ فَرَسٍ * نَيْمَ هِي سِمُئْسِ * نَتَكَ كُمُونْغَلِي

kumwangaliya nataka * simuisi huyo nyama * farasi na nieteya * upesi akamjibu
¹⁶⁰ (162) akamjibu upesi * nieteya na farasi * nyama huyo²¹¹ simuisi²¹² * nataka²¹³ 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 كَتَمَكَ * أَكَمَبَ مَمَ هُتَكَ * مَمَكَ أَكَيْنُكَ * صَدَكَ كَمْتَلِي

kamtoleya şadaka * akainuka mamake * hutoka mama akamba * katamka hapo kisha
¹⁶¹ (163) kisha hapo katamka * akamba mama hutoka²¹⁴ * mamake akainuka * sadaka²¹⁵ kamtoleya
 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 * إِنْدَ أَمْفُوتَ * أَكِمْتَمِي مَطَ * مَنُغَ أَكِمُومِي

akimuombeya mngu * maṭe akimtemeya * amfuwate enende * atoke mamake hapo
¹⁶² (164) hapo mamake atoke²¹⁶ * enende²¹⁷ amfuwate * akimtemeya mate²¹⁸ * mngu akimuombeya
 Then his mother went out [after him], she went and followed him, spitting at him, praying to God for him.

(١٦٥) هِي نَاصِرِ مَوْلِمَ * مَسْمَشَ أَهْتِمَ * أَمْفُنْدَ نَ عِلِمَ * عَادَ يَكَ تَكُونِي

takweteya yako 'ada * 'ilimu na umfunde * ahitimu msomeshe * mwalimu nāşiri huyo
¹⁶³ (165) huyo nasiri mwalimu * msomeshe²¹⁹ ahitimu²²⁰ * umfunde na²²¹ 'ilimu * 'ada²²² 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.

(١٦٦) أَكَيْتَكَ جَعْفَرَ * هَپْ كَلِي نَاصِرِ * مَمَكَ أَكْفَسِرَ * أُسِكُ أَتَرْجِي

atarejeya usiku * akafasiri mamake * nāşiri kaliya hapo * ja'fari akitoka
¹⁶⁴ (166) akitoka ja'fari * hapo kaliya nasiri * mamake akafasiri * usiku atarejeya²²³
 As Ja'far was setting off then Nasir began to cry. His mother said: [ja'far] will be back by nightfall.

²¹¹ Mvita huyo = Amu hoyo.

²¹² -isa, not know, is only used in the negative.

²¹³ 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.

²¹⁴ = natoka.

²¹⁵ 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).

²¹⁶ Past tense.

²¹⁷ = alienda.

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

²¹⁹ 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.

²²⁰ kumaliza Kurani.

²²¹ This knowledge would include detailed exegesis of the Qur'an, intricate knowledge of *fikhri*, grammar, awareness of religious ritual, etc.

²²² 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).

²²³ 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.

(١٦٧) نَاصِرٌ أَكْتَمَكَ * نَمِيؤُا إِنْ دَ مَكَه * كُنْتَعْ هَنْغَلِتَاكَ * أَسِپِيُونِ نَدِي

ndiya asipoiyona * hangalitoka kutunga * makah enda namuyuwa * akatamka nāsiri
¹⁶⁵ (167) nasiri akatamka * namuyuwa enda makah²²⁴ * kutunga²²⁵ hangalitoka * asipoiyona ndiya²²⁶
 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 * كَوَغِ وَنَدَنْ وَكُ * يَتِ نَلِيسِكِي

naliyasikiya yote * wako wendani kawage * tamko ukimwambiya * sikuwako yana aw
¹⁶⁶ (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 مَتْنَعِنْ * نَعُو هُتْكُلَيْنِ * سِكُ زَتِ سِمُونِ * هَتَ هَيِ كُنْمِي

kunambiya hayo hata * simuoni zoti siku * hutukuliyani nguwo * matungani wenda aw
¹⁶⁷ (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 * بَسِ وَلَلَيْنِ * أَوْ تُوَلَاغْنِ * مَنَنْ نَلَكُومِي

nalokwambiya maneno * tʷaliganani aw * waliliyani basi * kabaini ja'fari
¹⁶⁸ (170) ja'fari kabaini²²⁷ * basi waliliyani * au tʷaliganani * maneno nalokwambiya²²⁸
 Ja'far spoke: So why are you crying? Did we not agree on the things I said to you?

(١٧١) نَ كَمَ هُكِرِضِكَ * نَمِي نِسِيَتَاكَ * هُنَ هَتَ كُؤُذِكَ * سِكِتِكَ كُنِي

kuniṭiya sikitiko * kuudhika hata huna * nisyatoka nambiya * hukiridika kama na
¹⁶⁹ (171) na kama hukiridhika * nambiya nisyatoka * huna hata kuudhika²²⁹ * sikitiko kuniṭiya
 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 * سِكُزِ هَيِ يَكُ * سِكُ زَتِ نِكُ * هَمُنُونِ كَلِي

kuliya hamunioni * niko zote siku * yako hayo sikuiza * tamko akajibu
¹⁷⁰ (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.

(١٧٣) سَسَ هَيِ نَدَ عَقِلِ * نِمَزِيَتَامَلِ * نَ كُؤُ مَتْلِ تُلِ * زَهُ زَكُ زَ كُنِي

kuinukiya za zako zeo * tuli matuli kuwa na * nimezoyataamali * 'aqili nda haya sasa
¹⁷¹ (173) sasa haya nda 'aqili * nimezoyataamali * na kuwa matuli tuli * zeo zako za kuinukiya²³⁰
 Now, these [things] are [a matter of] commonsense, [the things] which I observed. I am sad [because] it is time for you to go.

²²⁴ Nasir is not stupid, and sees through her words.

²²⁵ -tunga, graze.

²²⁶ 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.

²²⁷ -baini, lit. explain.

²²⁸ 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?"

²²⁹ haina maana, there's no sense.

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

(١٧٤) أَكْمُومِي نَدِيكَ * هِيَ إِنَّكَ أَتَاكَ * جَعَفَرِ أَتَمَكَ * كَوْنَدَ مَنُغْ نُوْمِي

niombeya mngu kwanda * atamke ja'fari * utoke inuka hi * nduyake akamwambiya
¹⁷² (174) akamwambiya nduyake²³¹ * 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 أَكْبَيْنِ * أَتَكُيْكَ مَنَنْ * سَلَامَ سَلِمِينَ * كَو عَفِي نَ عَفُو

'afuwa na 'afiya kwa * salimīni salāma * manani atakupeka * akabaini nāsiri
¹⁷³ (175) nasiri akabaini * atakupeka²³² manani * salama salimini * kwa 'afiya na 'afuwa²³³
Nasir said: May Providence keep you safe and sound, in health and free from affliction.

(١٧٦) هَپْ نَدِي كَيْنَدَم * كَيْنَدَ كُتْسِمَم * سَاءَ كُو إِكَم * نَاءَ مَكَه أَمْنِي

amengi ya makah nae * ikikoma kuwi saa * kutosimama kinenda * kayandama ndiya hapo
¹⁷⁴ (176) hapo ndiya kayandama²³⁴ * 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) مَكَه أَلِجَلِسِ * كَو بَبَكْ هَكُيسِ * كَمَبَ نَدِي سِتَكَسِ * كَوْنَدَ تَكْتَلِي

taiketiliya kwanda * sitakasi ndiya kamba * hakuisi babake kwa * alipojilisi makah
¹⁷⁵ (177) makah alipojilisi²³⁵ * kwa babake hakuisi * kamba ndiya sitakasi²³⁶ * 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) أَكَّتْ جَعَفَرِ * أَكْمُونُ زُبَيْرِ * وَنَدَمَنْ نَ بَشِيرِ * مَكْنُ كَمُونَلِي

kamwinuliya mikono * bashiri na wendemene * zubēri akamuona * ja'fari akaketi
¹⁷⁶ (178) akaketi ja'fari * akamuona zuberi * wendemene na bashiri * mikono kamwinuliya²³⁷
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 كَوُتَرَم * زُبَيْرِ أَكْسِمَم * أَكْمُومِي هَشِم * مَغْنِ وَتْ هُنْغِي

hungiya wetu mgeni * hashima akamwambiya * akasimama zubēri * kautizama mkono
¹⁷⁷ (179) mkono kautizama²³⁸ * zuberi akasimama * akamwambiya hashima * mgeni wetu hungiya²³⁹
Zubayr saw the wave and stopped. He told the Hashimite: Our quest has just arrived.

(١٨٠) أَكْمُوزُ أَمِينِ * مَغْنِ وَتْ نَ نَنِ * وَسَكِي هُبَيْنِ * مَكْنُ نَبِ نَبِي

nabiya nipe mkono * hubaini wasikiye * nani ni wetu mgeni * amīni akamuza
¹⁷⁸ (180) akamuza amini * mgeni wetu ni nani * wasikiye hubaini * mkono nipe nabiya²⁴⁰
The Trustworthy One asked: Who is our quest? And they heard [Ja'far] say: Give me your hand, Prophet.

²³¹ See 170d.

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

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

²³⁴ fuata ndia.

²³⁵ -jilisi = -keti.

²³⁶ = siioni.

²³⁷ lit. "raised his hands to him".

²³⁸ = akauona.

²³⁹ anaanza kufika sasa, he is arriving just now.

²⁴⁰ Ja'far, despite never having met the Prophet, recognises him immediately.

(١٨١) زُبَيْرٌ كَتَعَبْتُ * وَمُيُوبٌ حَبِيبٌ * جَعَفَرٌ كَمَجِبٌ * وَجْهٌ وَلَهُ نَبِيٌّ

nabiya wake wajhi * kamjibu ja'fari * ḥabību wamuyuwapī * kata'ajabu zubēri

¹⁷⁹ (181) zuberi kata'ajabu * wamuyuwapī ḥabību * ja'fari kamjibu * wajhi wake nabiya²⁴¹
Zubayr was amazed: How do you know the Prophet? Ja'far answered him: His face is that of the Prophet.

(١٨٢) كِشَ هَپْ كَبَيْنَ * كُوَ بَيْنَ نِپَكِنَ * كَمْتُكُو أَمِينِ * كَنْدَ نَاءِ كُوَ عَلَيَّ

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

¹⁸⁰ (182) kisha hapo kabaini²⁴² * kwa babangu nipekeni * kamtukuwa²⁴³ 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) أَلَيْكُونَدَ سَيِّدٍ * كَوَّءُ أَكِيحَ هُدٍ * فَتَمَ أَكْرَدِدٍ * أَكَمَبَ هَكَ نَبِيٍّ

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

¹⁸¹ (183) alipokwenda sayyidi * kwao akapija hodi * fatuma akaradidi²⁴⁴ * akamba hako nabiya²⁴⁵
When the Lord got there he called: Hello! Fatima answered and said: The Prophet is not here.

(١٨٤) أَكْمُوزُ حُسَيْنٍ * أَمْكُوءُ نِ نِيَانِ * كَجَنَ أَكَبَيْنَ * نِ جَدِ يَنْغُ سِكِيَّ

sikiya yangu jadi ni * akabaini kijana * nyāni ni amkuwao * ḥusayni akamuuzā

¹⁸² (184) akamuuzā²⁴⁶ husayni * amkuwao²⁴⁷ ni nyani * kijana akabaini * ni jadi²⁴⁸ yangu sikiya
She asked Husayn: Who is calling? And the boy answered: Listen -- it is my grandfather.

(١٨٥) نِ جَدِ يَنْغُ رَسُولٍ * يِي نِ وَتُ وَوِلٍ * كُسِكِيكُو قَوْلٍ * كَتَاكَ كَمُونَعَلِيَّ

kamwangaliya katoka * qawli kusikiyakwe * wawili watu na yeye * rasūli yangu jadi na

¹⁸³ (185) ḥi jadi yangu rasuli * yeye na watu wawili * kusikiyakwe qauli * katoka kamwangaliya
It is my grandfather the Prophet, he and two people. When she heard these words, [Fatima] went out to see him.

(١٨٦) أَكَيْتَاكَ جَعْفَرٍ * كَمُؤَلِزَ خَبَرٍ * أَكِيكَمَ كَفَسِيرٍ * فَتَمَ كَمِيكِيَّ

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

¹⁸⁴ (186) akitoka ja'fari * kamuuliza habari²⁴⁹ * akikoma kafasiri * fatuma kampokeya²⁵⁰
When she came out, Ja'far asked her how she was. When he had finished speaking Fatima answered him.

(١٨٧) فَتَمَ كَتَاكَلَمُ * أَكْمُوزَ هَشِيمٍ * بَبَ سِيَمَفَاهَمُ * كَجَنَ هُيَّ نَبِيٍّ

nabiya huyu kijana * siyamfahamu baba * hashimu akamuuzā * katakalamu fatuma

¹⁸⁵ (187) fatuma katakalamu * akamuuzā hashimu * baba siyamfahamu * kijana huyu nabiya
Fatima spoke And asked the Hashimite: Father, I still don't recognise this boy, Prophet.

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

²⁴² *akasema*.

²⁴³ *-enda naye*.

²⁴⁴ The original Arabic words means "repeat", but in Swahili it is another word for *-sema*, *speak*.

²⁴⁵ *alifikiri mtu anamtaka Mtume* – Fatima thinks that someone has come to the house looking for the Prophet.

²⁴⁶ *-uza* = *-uliza*.

²⁴⁷ = *aitaye*.

²⁴⁸ = *babu*.

²⁴⁹ i.e. he asked *hujambo?*

²⁵⁰ = *-itikia*.

(١٨٨) سِكَ زُبْ سِمُونِ * إِنَّ لَكَ نَدِي نَنْ * مَتْمُ أَكْبَيْنِ * فَتَمُ أَكْمَوْبِي

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) أَكْمَوْبِي بَشِيرِ * هِيَ نَدِي جَعْفَرِ * وَ عَلِي حَيْدَرِ * هِزْ صُورَ هُكْمَوْبِي

hukwambiya šūra hizo * ḥaydari 'alii wa * ja'fari ndiye huyu * bashīri akamwambiya
¹⁸⁷ (189) akamwambiya bashiri * huyu ndiye ja'fari * wa 'alii haydari * hizo sura hukwambiya²⁵¹
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 * إِنْدَ مَسْكِينِ * بَيْكَ نَمْكُلِي

namkuliya babako * msikitini enenda * ḥusayni akamtuma * amīni sayidi hapo
¹⁸⁸ (190) hapo sayidi amini * akamtuma husayni * enenda msikitini * babako namkuliya²⁵²
Then the Lord, the Trustworthy One, sent Husayn: Go to the mosque, and call your father for me.

(١٩١) هَبْ كَتِكَ حُسَيْنِ * كَفِكَ مَسْكِينِ * بَبْ كُئِي مَعْنِ * تُمُو كُكُونْدَمِي

kukwandamiya ṭumiwe * mgeni kuiye baba * msikitini kafika * ḥusayni katoka hapo
¹⁸⁹ (191) hapo katoka husayni * kafika msikitini * baba kuiye mgeni * tumiwe kukwandamiya²⁵³
So Husayn went off and arrived at the mosque. Father, a visitor has come -- I have been sent to fetch you.

(١٩٢) كُنْ كِجَنَ مَزْرٍ * جَنْدَمَنْ نَ بَشِيرِ * نَ إِنْ نَ جَعْفَرِ * نَ هِلْ نِمَكْمَوْبِي

nimekwambiya hilo ni * ja'fari ni ina na * bashīri na chendemene * mzuri kijana kuna
¹⁹⁰ (192) kuna kijana mzuri * enḍemeṇe²⁵⁴ na bashiri * na ina ni ja'fari * ni hilo nimekwambiya²⁵⁵
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) چَنْبَوِ هِيَ كَلِمَ * پَ نَدِي كَيْنْدَمَ * مَلَنْغَنِ أَكِكَمَ * سَلَامُ كَوَپِسِي

kawapisiya salāmu * akikoma mlangoni * kayandama ndiya papo * kalima hiyo chambiwa
¹⁹¹ (193) chambiwa hiyo kalima * papo ndiya kayandama * mlangoni akikoma * salamu kawapisiya²⁵⁶
When these words had been said [Ali] set off immediately. When he reached the door [of his house] he greeted [those inside].

(١٩٤) سَلَامُ أَكْفَسِرِ * هَبْ عَلِي حَيْدَرِ * كَتِكَ جَعْفَرِ * مَكْنُ كَمْپِكِي

kampokeya mkono * ja'fari kainuka * ḥaydari 'alii hapo * akifasiri salāmu
¹⁹² (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.

²⁵¹ In the Mombasa expression, umejizaa mwenyewe, he's the spitting image of you.

²⁵² = nimtia, namwita.

²⁵³ = nimetumwa kukufuatia.

²⁵⁴ kijana (Class 7) is not a diminutive here.

²⁵⁵ 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.

²⁵⁶ -pisiya = -pitisha. In other words, he said salaam alekum.

(١٩٥) عَلِي كَتَ تَمَكُ * نِ سَلَامَ أُتَكَ * جُمْلَ وَنَدَنِ وَكُ * حَالِ زَاءَ نَمِي

nambiya zao hāli * wako wendani jumla * utokako salāma ni * tamko keṭa 'alii
¹⁹³ (195) 'alii keta tamko * ni salama utokako * jumla wendani²⁵⁷ wako * hali zao nambiya
Ali spoke: Is everything well where you came from? All your relatives, tell me how they are.

(١٩٦) أَكْمَجِبُ كَلَمُ * نِتَكَ نِ سَلَامَ * سِيُوِي هُكُ نِيَمَ * سِيَطِ لَكُومِي

lakukwambiya sipati * nyuma hoko ya siyuwi * salāma ni nitokako * kalamu akamjibu
¹⁹⁴ (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) تَنَ بَبَ مَوْلِمُ * نَ مَمَ وَكُسَلِمُ * وَعَلَيْكَ السَّلَامَ * عَلِي كَيْكِي

kapokeya 'alii * ās-salāma wa'alayka * wakusalimu mama na * mwalimu baba tena
¹⁹⁵ (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) عَلِي أَكْبَنِ * نِمَكُنْجَ نَدِينِ * وَلِتَكَ زَاءَ غَنِ * مَبْنِ أَمِلْمِي

umelimaṭiya mbona * gani zeo walitoka * ndiyani nimekungoja * akabaini 'alii
¹⁹⁶ (198) 'alii akabaini * nimekungoja ndiyani * walitoka zeo gani * mbona umelimaṭiya²⁵⁸
Ali spoke: I waited for you on the road -- what time did you set out? Why are you late?

(١٩٩) أَكْمَجِبُ قَوْلِ * أَصْبَحَ نَلَصَلِ * لَكِنَ بَبَ نِ مَبَلِ * إِنِ أَرَفُ وَ نَدِي

ndiya wa urefu ina * mbali ni baba lakini * naliṣali aṣubuḥi * qawli akamjibu
¹⁹⁷ (199) akamjibu qawli * aṣubuhi nalisali²⁵⁹ * 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 * پَنَ مَبْنَدِ نَدِينِ * يَلِنْتَكَ مِينِ * يَلِ وَلْنَمِي

walonambiya yale * moyoni yalinitoka * ndiyani mṭende pana * pangoni kipaṭa nami
¹⁹⁸ (200) nami kipaṭa²⁶⁰ pangoni * pana mṭende ndiyani²⁶¹ * yalinitoka moyoni²⁶² * 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.

(٢٠١) كَيَوَتَ يِ كُفْلِ * كَأَنْدَمَ إِلِ مَبَلِ * هَتَ كِتَأَمَلِ * سَاءَ إِمْنِي

imenipitiya saa * kitaamali hata * mbali ilo kaandama * kuvuli ya kaiwata
¹⁹⁹ (201) kaiwata ya kuvuli * kaandama ilo mbali * hata kitaamali * saa²⁶³ imenipitiya²⁶⁴
I left behind the [road] to the right and walked on for a long way until I realised a long time had passed.

²⁵⁷ wendani can also cover friends as well as relatives.

²⁵⁸ Amu -limatia = Zanzibar, Mvita -chelewa, Mvita -kawia.

²⁵⁹ i.e. he had got up in time for prayers at 5.00am.

²⁶⁰ Contrast -pata, arrive at somewhere en route to a destination, and -fika, arrive at the destination.

²⁶¹ These points were presumably part of the directions that Ali gave Ja'far in 74.

²⁶² i.e. nilisahau, I forgot.

²⁶³ saa, hour, is used here to signify the passage of time.

²⁶⁴ We are to understand, "and I still hadn't found the place I was trying to go to".

(٢٠٢) كِشْ أُونُغْ كَيْتْ * إِي لَ بَرِ كَيْتْ * إِلِ نَدِي كُوتْ * نِيَمِ نِسِپَرَجِي

nisiporejeya nyuma * kuiwata ndiya ili * kapiṭa bara la iyu * kaeta uwinga kisha
²⁰⁰ (202) kisha uwinga kaeta²⁶⁵ * iyu la bara kapiṭa²⁶⁶ * ili ndiya kuiwata * nyuma nisiporejeya²⁶⁷
Then I did something stupid -- I walked out into the scrubland and left the road behind, instead of going back.

(٢٠٣) سُرَ نَدَاءُ بَرَن * إِلِ نَدِي سِيُون * هُونُ نِكْ بَرَن * زُتْ زِمِنِپَتِي

zimenipoteya zote * barani niko huona * siiyoni ndiya ile * barani nendao sura
²⁰¹ (203) sura²⁶⁸ nendao barani * ile ndiya siiyoni * huona niko barani * zote²⁶⁹ 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) كِيَجَ فِكِرَ زَنُغْ * كَلَنَدَمَ غُو لَنُغْ * نَرْدِي پَلِ پَنُغْ * كِشْ نِيَمِ كَرَجِي

karejeya nyuma kisha * pangu pale narudiya * langu guu kalandama * zangu fikira kipija
²⁰² (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 كَرْدِي نِيَمِ * هَبْ نَدِي كَيْنَدَم * پَنِي مُتَنَدِ كَكَم * صَالِ إِمَنِسَمِي

imenisimamiya šāla * kakoma mṭende penye * kayandama ndiya hapo * nyuma karudiya kisha
²⁰³ (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 أَظْهَرِ * نَدِپْ نِي كَعَبِرِ * حُجَ يَ كُجَ أَخِيرِ * مَعَانَ نِمَكُومِي

nimekwambiya ma'āna * akhīri kuja ya huja * ka'abiri niya ndipo * aḏuhuri ya awali
²⁰⁴ (206) awali ya aduhuri²⁷⁰ * ndipo niya ka'abiri²⁷¹ * huja²⁷² 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 * عَلِي أَكْتَمَكَ * مَوْنُغْ أُمُسْمُبَكَ * هَبْ كَنَنْ نَبِي

nabiya kanena hapo * umesumbuka mwanangu * akatamka 'alii * kupulika kimaliza
²⁰⁵ (207) kimaliza kupulika²⁷³ * 'alii akatamka * mwanangu umesumbuka²⁷⁴ * hapo kanena nabiya
When he had finished listening Ali spoke: My child, you have been through a lot. Then the Prophet spoke.

(٢٠٨) هَبْ كَنَنْ هَشَم * سِ هَبْ كِي سَلَام * نَدِي مَزَايْنَدَم * خَطَرِ هُمَزَنَغِي

humzengeya khaṭari * mezoiyandama ndiya * salām kuya haba si * hashima kanena hapo
²⁰⁶ (208) hapo²⁷⁵ kanena hashima * si haba kuya ṣalām²⁷⁶ * ndiya mezoiyandama * hatari humzengeya²⁷⁷

²⁶⁵ i.e. -fanya jinga la kipumbavu, do something blockheaded, lit. "do the stupidity of an idiot".

²⁶⁶ Where, of course, there are no paths.

²⁶⁷ i.e. instead of trying to retrace his footsteps.

²⁶⁸ = namna yeyote, whatever kind.

²⁶⁹ We understand ndia, paths.

²⁷⁰ Midday, when the sun is approaching its zenith, or just afterwards.

²⁷¹ -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.

²⁷² huja, reason, argument, proof.

²⁷³ -pulika = -sikiza, listen carefully.

²⁷⁴ umepata taabu.

²⁷⁵ Note the use of hapo to refer to time instead of place: "at this point".

²⁷⁶ ingawa umetaabika, even though you were in distress.

²⁷⁷ He could have been attacked by robbers, lions, etc.

Then the Hashimite spoke: It is no small thing to arrive safely -- [on] the road he came along danger stalked him.

(٢٠٩) اَمْكِنَغْ وَدُودٌ * اَسْوُونِ مَيْهُودٍ * كَوْنِ وَنَعْلَمَزِدِ * وَتُ وَنَعِ سِ مَمِي

mmoya si wangi waṭu * wangelimzidi kwani * mayahūdi asiōne * wadūdi amkinga

²⁰⁷ (209) amemkinga wadudi * asione mayahudi²⁷⁸ * kwani wangelimzidi²⁷⁹ * watu wangi si mmoya²⁸⁰

The Loving One protected him so that he met no unbelievers, for they would have overwhelmed him -- one against many.

(٢١٠) فَتَمَّ اُكْ كِتْنِ * اَكْمُوِيْكَ اَمِيْنِ * كُوْ مَكْنُ كَبِيْنِ * نَ نَدَنْ كَمَامْكُوْ

kamuamkuwa ndani na * kabaini mkono kwa * amīni akamwepuka * kiṭini uko fatuma

²⁰⁸ (210) fatuma uko kitini * akamwepuka amini * kwa mkono kabaini²⁸¹ * na ndani kamuamkuwa²⁸²

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 كُوْطَزَمَ * عَلِيْ اَكْفَهَمَ * اَكْمُوْمِيْ هَشِمَ * نَنْدَ نَدَنْ مَرَّ مِي

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) كُوْ نَدَنْ اَلِيْفِكَ * فَتَمَّ اَكْتَمَكَ * چَكْلَ نِيْمَكِيْكَ * هَيْتَسَ كُوْنَدِيْكَوْ

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) كُوْنَدَ سِكْمَكِيْنِكَ * خَبَرَ اَكْتَمَكَ * مِيْ هُمُيْطِيْكَ * كُوْ اُنْقِلَ وَ نَدِيْ

ndiya wa uthaqili kwa * humpapaṭika moyo * akatamka khabari * sikumakinika kwanda

²¹¹ (213) kwanda ni kumapaṭika * habari akatamka²⁸³ * moyo humpapatika * kwa uthaqili wa ndiya²⁸⁴

[Ali said:] First he must relax and tell his news -- his heart is fluttering because of the hardships of the journey.

(٢١٤) نَ زُءُ اَلِزْتُكَ * اُمَزِيُوْ هَكِيْكَ * نَ سِسِ هُمُيْلِكَ * مَنِيْ هُتُوْمِيْ

hutwambiya manenoye * humpulika sisi na * hakika umeziyuwa * alizotoka zeo na

²¹² (214) na zeo²⁸⁵ 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.

²⁷⁸ 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.

²⁷⁹ i.e. “they would have been too much for him” -- -zidi here = shinda.

²⁸⁰ mtu mmoya si sawasawa na watu wengi, one person is no match for many.

²⁸¹ kumwambia siri, to tell him a secret.

²⁸² kumwita ndani, to call him into the private quarters.

²⁸³ Ali is trying to put off as long as possible the inevitable point at which Fatima will hear that Ja'far is his son.

²⁸⁴ i.e. taabu ya ndiani.

²⁸⁵ Amu zeo = Mvita wakati, Mu njeo.

(٢١٥) عَلِيّ أَكْبَنُ * هُمُصِرِ حُسَيْنِ * نِمْمَتُمْ حَسَنِ * إِنْ دِ كُمُومَكُو

kumuamkuwa ende * ḥasani nimemṭuma * ḥusayni humṣubiri * akabaini 'alii
²¹³ (215) 'alii akabaini * humsubiri²⁸⁶ husayni * nimemṭuma hasani * ende kumuamkuwa²⁸⁷
 Ali said: we are [still] waiting for Husayn -- I have sent Hasan to go and fetch him.

(٢١٦) عَلِيّ كُنْكَ نَدَنْ * أَلِيْكَتِ كِتْنِ * أَمْسِكِي حَسَنِ * سَلَامُ هُوَ يَسِي

huwapisiya salāmu * ḥasani amsikiye * kiṭini alipoketi * ndani kutoka 'alii
²¹⁴ (216) 'alii kutoka ndani * alipoketi kitini * amsikiye hasani * salamu huwapisiya²⁸⁸
 Ali came back from the inner [room] and sat down on a chair. He heard Hasan greeting them.

(٢١٧) حَسَنِ أَكْظُمُ * كُوْيسِرَ سَلَامُ * أَمْرُدِشْ كَلِمُ * جَعْفَرِ كَمُومَبِي

kamwambiya ja'fari * kalimu amrudishe * salāmu kuwapisiza * akanuḥumu ḥasani
²¹⁵ (217) hasani akanuḥumu * 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 أُنْدَنْ كَوْمُ * كَمُؤْلَزَ سَلَامُ * وَلَوْثُ وَكَسِمَ * وَتَ وَكَمُيْ

wakampokeya wote * wakasima waliopo * salāma kamuuliza * kwima undani kwa
²¹⁶ (218) kwa undani²⁸⁹ kwima * kamuuliza salama * waliopo wakasema * wote wakampokeya²⁹⁰
 With politeness (?) he asked how [Ja'far] was. Those present spoke and all returned his greeting.

(٢١٩) كَمُومَبِي مَتَمَكُ * نِ سَلَامَ نِتَكَ * سِيُو مَبِي نَنْدَكَ * أَيُوْ نِ جَلِي

jaliya ni ayuwae * nendako mbee siyuwi * nitokako salāma ni * matamko kamwambiya
²¹⁷ (219) kamwambiya matamko * ni salama nitokako²⁹¹ * 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 أَمِينُ * كَوْمَبِي كُوْ هَرِنِ * عَلِيّ أَكْبَنِ * مَبِنَ هُتَكَ نَبِي

nabiya hutoka mbona * akabaini 'alii * herini kwa kawambiya * amīni akatamka
²¹⁸ (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 هَكِكَ * نِيْمَبِنِ سِيرَجِي

siyarejeya nyumbani * hakika tisiya saa * zimeakhirika zeo * akatamka mtume
²¹⁹ (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.

²⁸⁶-subiri = -ngoja.

²⁸⁷This is another attempt to put off the moment of truth.

²⁸⁸Hasan has obviously not left yet (assuming Ali has even told him to fetch Husayn), because he is still greeting the visitors.

²⁸⁹ = kwa taratibu. (?)

²⁹⁰i.e. answered wa alekum as-salaam.

²⁹¹This 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

²²⁰ (222) kamba subiri bashiri * tumlishe ja'fari²⁹² * 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 أَكْنُوكُ * نَ مَاءِ كَوَّپَكِي

kawapekeya mai na * akaiweka tamasha * haraka na upesi kwa * akainuka fatuma

²²¹ (223) fatuma akainuka * kwa upesi na haraka²⁹³ * tamasha²⁹⁴ akaiweka * na mai²⁹⁵ 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

²²² (224) wakaketi kwa mfano²⁹⁶ * wakatanganya mikono²⁹⁷ * 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 أَلُؤُوكُ * أَكِشَ أَكْنُكُ * وَءَ أَكَوْتِي

akawatiya wao * akainuka akisha * aliupeka mkono * hakika kwa tãtu mara

²²³ (225) mara tatu kwa hakika * mkono aliupeka * akisha akainuka * wao akawatiya²⁹⁸
Three times indeed he put his hand [into the dish] and then he got up and left [the food] to them.

(٢٢٦) أَكْنُكُ كِيْنِ * كِيُو مَاءِ أَمِينِ * نَ يَ كُنُو كِكْمَبِنِ * نَاءِ أَكْسُكْتُو

akasukutuwa nae * kikombeni kunwa ya na * amini mai kapowa * kiñini akainuka

²²⁴ (226) akainuka²⁹⁹ kitini * kapowa mai amini * na ya kunwa kikombeni * nae akasukutuwa³⁰⁰
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 كِيُو بَشِيرِ * أَكُوَاغَ كَوَّ هَرِ * تُمُو أَكْتِكِي

akaitokeya tumwa * heri kwa akawaaga * bashiri kapowa hapo * kukhitari ya tambuu

²²⁵ (227) tambuu³⁰¹ ya kuhitari³⁰² * 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.

(٢٢٨) تُمُو أَكِشَ كُنُكُ * نَاءُ كُلِّ وَمَكُوشَ * فَتَمَّ أَكْنُكُ * مَاءِ أَكُوَّپَكِي

akawapekeya mai * akainuka fatuma * wamekwisha kula nao * kutoka akisha tumwa

²²⁶ (228) tumwa akisha kutoka * nao kula wamekwisha * fatuma akainuka * mai akawapekeya

²⁹² i.e. *tule naye*, so that we may share a meal with him. Sharing a meal with someone shows respect.

²⁹³ After being told not to server the food yet, she now has to do it in a hurry.

²⁹⁴ *vitu vizuri vizuri*.

²⁹⁵ This could either be *ya kunawa*, to wash with, or *ya kunwa*, to drink. The Swahili custom is not to eat food without water.

²⁹⁶ i.e. *kwa sawasawa*.

²⁹⁷ In other words, they eat together, *kula pamoja*, which brings *baraka*, blessings.

²⁹⁸ In other words, the Prophet stays for a little while for politeness' sake, but leaves as soon as he can.

²⁹⁹ This and the previous stanza are very vivid depictions of Swahili customs.

³⁰⁰ After eating, you rinse your mouth with water and spit it out.

³⁰¹ *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.

³⁰² *ya kuteua nzuri*.

When the Prophet had left and they had finished eating Fatima got up and offered them water.

(٢٢٩) أَكْثَيْنَ فَتْمَ * پُٹْ أَكْثَرَمَ * يَپِيسِي يَ نِيْمَ * يَتْ يَكْمُرْدِي

yakamrudiya yote * nyuma ya yapisiyo * akaitizama pte * fatuma akaiyona

²²⁷ (229) akaiyona fatuma * peṭe akaitizama * yapisiyo ya nyuma * yote yakamrudiya
And Fatima saw it -- she caught sight of the ring. What had happened in the past all came back to her.

(٢٣٠) عَلَيَّ أَكْتَمَكَ * مَبْنِ أُمْبِدْلَكَ * كَمَ أَمْرُؤُذَكَ * يُوْ نِكِكُونْعَلِي

nikikwangaliya yeo * umezoudhika kama * umebadilika mbona * akatamka 'alii

²²⁸ (230) 'alii akatamka * mbona umebadilika * kama umezoudhika³⁰³ * yeo³⁰⁴ nikikwangaliya
Ali spoke: Why has [your mood] changed, as if you are angry, now as I look at you?

(٢٣١) فَتْمَ كَرْدِدِ * وَوْ هُنْدِ بَعِيدِ * نَلْنَلُ سِنَ بُدِ * إِلَّا نَاوْ كُكُومْبِي

kukwambiya nāwe illā * budi sina nilonalo * ba'idi hunendi wewe * akaradidi fatuma

²²⁹ (231) fatuma akaradidi * wewe hunendi ba'idi³⁰⁵ * nilonalo sina budi * illa nawe kukwambiya
Fatima replied: You are not leaving yet. [the thing] I have [in my heart], I have no choice but to tell you.

(٢٣٢) أَكْسِيكِي حَسَنِ * كَتَاكَ كُلْ نِيْمَبِنِ * أَكْنَدَ كُوْ أَمِينِ * حَبِرْ أَكُومْبِي

akamwambiya ḥbr * amīni kwa akanenda * nyumbani kule katoka * ḥasani akisikiya

²³⁰ (232) akisikiya hasani * katoka kule nyumbani * akanenda kwa amini * ḥaḥari akamwambiya
When Hasan heard this he left the house and went to the Trustworthy One and told him the news.

(٢٣٣) حَسَنِ كِشْ كُفِكَ * كُوْ مْتُمْ كَتَمَكَ * مِمَ أَمَكْسِرِكَ * بَبِ يَنْغُ نَكُومْبِي

nakwambiya yangu bibi * amekasirika mimi * katamka mtume kwa * kufika kisha ḥasani

²³¹ (233) hasani kisha kufika * kwa mtume katamka * mimi amekasirika * bibi³⁰⁶ yangu nakwambiya
When Hassan got there he told the Prophet: she is angry, my mother - I'm telling you.

(٢٣٤) أَكْمُوزَ أَمِينِ * مَكْسِرِكِي نِنِ * مُونِيُوْ هَكُبَيْنِ * مَيِ سِكُفَهَمِي

sikufahamiya moya * hakubaini mwenyewe * nini mekasirikiya * amīni akamuza

²³² (234) akamuza amini * mekasirikiya nini * mwenyewe ṣikuḥaiṇi * 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].

(٢٣٥) كُرْدَ كُوكَ نَدَيْنِ * أَكْمُونُ حُسَيْنِ * آتِ مَكِي مَعْنِ * هُكُ كُوتْ نَسَكِي

nasikiya kweṭu huku * mgeni mekuya āṭi * ḥusayni akamuona * ndiyani kwake kurudi

²³³ (235) kurudi kwake ndiyani * akamuona husayni * ati mekuya mgeni * huku kweṭu nasikiya
As [Hasan] went back along the road he saw Husayn [who said:] So, a visitor has come to our house, I hear.

³⁰³ Like ambaye mekasirika, someone who is angry.

³⁰⁴ In this case, yeo / leo, today, means “now”.

³⁰⁵ 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.

³⁰⁶ bibi is a more polite way of saying mama.

(٢٣٦) أَكْمَجِبُ حَسَنَ * مُوْنِي خَبَرَ مُنِي * إِنَّ بِي تَمَكِّن * هِيَ أَمَزَوَمِي

amezowambiya hoyo * tamkini yeye ina * muini khabari mwenye * hasani akamjibu
²³⁴ (236) akamjibu hasani * mwenye habari muini³⁰⁷ * ina yeye³⁰⁸ tamkini³⁰⁹ * 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 مَلْنَعْن * أَكْرَدِدِ حُسَيْنَ * آسَ وَتَمَكِّن * بِنُ الْوَيْتِي

aliwapoteya penu * wamtakiyani āsa * ḥusayni akaradidi * mlangoni akapiṭa
²³⁵ (237) akapita mlangoni * akaradidi husayni * baṣi wamtakiyani³¹⁰ * penu³¹¹ aliwapoteya³¹²
 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 يَوْكَ * أَكْمَبَ خَيْرِ نِتْكَ * خَبَرَ زِمْنِي

zimeeneya khabari * nitoke khēri akamba * pweke hunena unani * babake akamuuzā
²³⁶ (238) akamuuzā babake * unani³¹³ hunena pweke * akamba heri nitoke³¹⁴ * habari zimeeneya³¹⁵
 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) كُمِينَنَ خَبَرَ * جَمِيعَ يَ أَنْصَارِ * أَمَكِّي جَعْفَرِ * وَ مَوْلَانَا عَلِي

'aliya mawlānā wa * ja'fari amekuya * anṣārī ya jamī'i * khabari kumepanana
²³⁷ (239) kumepanana habari * jamī'i ya ansari³¹⁶ * 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 * أَوْنَعُ أَنْ خَطَرِ * مَمَبْ يَكْتُمَلِي

yakitumiliya mambo * khaṭari una uwinga * alilofasiri neno * ḥaydari 'alii hapo
²³⁸ (240) hapo 'alii haydari * neno alilofasiri³¹⁷ * uwinga³¹⁸ 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.

(٢٤١) كُونُ كُنِّي مَعْنِ * هَلْ هُكُوْدَيْنِ * تَمُوكَ هُكَ نِيْمَنِ * مُنْ هَتَمَبِي

hatotembeya muina * nyumbani huku tamuweka * hukuudhiyani hilo * mgeni kuiye kwenu
²³⁹ (241) kwenu kuiye mgeni³¹⁹ * hilo hukuudhiyani * tamuweka huku nyumbani * muina hatotembeya³²⁰
 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

³⁰⁷ 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”.

³⁰⁸ i.e. Ja'far's name.

³⁰⁹ = *hakika*, certainly.

³¹⁰ -m- here = -ni-. i.e. it's no-one else's business.

³¹¹ We understand *pahali*.

³¹² 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.

³¹³ = *una nini?*. See 244a, 263b.

³¹⁴ We have to assume that Hasan and Husayn have told Ali what they were talking about.

³¹⁵ In other words, Ali thinks it would be better to give the word officially, instead of having people gossip about it as a scandal.

³¹⁶ *ansari* are the people of Medina who gave sanctuary to the Prophet when he was forced to flee from Mecca in 622 CE.

³¹⁷ *Ali anamlaumu mtoto wake*, Ali is criticising his son [Hasan]. i.e. Ali is telling them they should not be upset by gossip.

³¹⁸ Cognate with *jinga* in 202a.

³¹⁹ 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.

³²⁰ 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.

around the town?

(٢٤٢) فَتَمَّ أَكْنُطُمْ * كَوْنِ سِ مَوْنَ حَرْمُ * مَوْنَ هَنْ تَبَسَمُ * عَلَيَّ كِمُونُغَلِي

kimwangaliya 'alii * tabasamu hana mwana * haramu mwana si kwani * akanuṭumu fatuma
240 (242) fatuma akanudhumu³²¹ * kwani si mwana haramu * mwana³²² hana tabasamu³²³ * 'alii
kimwangaliya³²⁴

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) عَلَيَّ هَبْ كَسِمَ * هَلْ نَدُوْ فَطَمَ * أَكْنُكْ كَوْ هَمَ * مَكُوْ كَمُنْدِي

kamuendeya mkewe * hima kwa akainuka * faṭuma ndoo hela * kasema hapo 'alii
241 (243) 'alii hapo kasema * hela³²⁵ ndoo fatuma * akainuka kwa hima³²⁶ * mkewe kamuendeya
So Ali said: Come now, Fatima. He got up carefully and went to his wife.

(٢٤٤) أَكْمُوْزَ أَنْ * مَبْنِ أَنْ كِسِرَنِ * فَتَمَّ أَكْمَبْ كُنْ * يَ مُتُّغْ هُكُوْمِي

hukwambiya matungu ya * kuni akamba fatuma * kisirani una mbona * unani akamuza
242 (244) akamuza unani³²⁷ * mbona una kisirani³²⁸ * fatuma akamba kwani³²⁹ * ya matungu³³⁰
hukwambiya

He asked her: What is the matter? Why are you frowning? Fatima said: What is the point of telling you bitter things.

(٢٤٥) أَكْمَجِبْ تَمَكْ * هِي سِ طِي يَكْ * مِم سِ كِجَنَ جَا * أَمَبْ هِي هُنْمِي

hunambiya hayo amba * chako kijana si mimi * yako ṭabiya si hiyo * tamko akamjibu
243 (245) akamjibu tamko * hiyo si tabiya yako * mimi si kijana chako³³¹ * 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.

(٢٤٦) فَتَمَّ أَكْبِنِ * سِ إِلِ پْ چَنْدَنِ * يَلْنُغِي كِسِمَنِ * آتْ زِيْپْ هُطِي

huṭiya ziyapo āṭi * kisimani yalongiya * chandani peṭe ile si * akabaini fatuma
244 (246) fatuma akabaini * si ile peṭe chandani * yalongiya kisimani * ati³³² ziyapo³³³ hutiya
Fatima spoke: That ring on his finger, is it not [the one] which "fell into the well", as you swore?

³²¹ Fatima supports the point Ali is making to his children.

³²² mwana in the previous line meant *child*, but in this line it is used a respectful title, *lady, mistress*.

³²³ amehuzunika, he has become sad, because everyone seems to be against him.

³²⁴ In spite of supporting Ali's comments, Fatima is still upset about her discovery.

³²⁵ = hebu.

³²⁶ = taratibu.

³²⁷ = una nini?. See 238b, 263b.

³²⁸ 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.

³²⁹ kwani, why?.

³³⁰ bitterness.

³³¹ 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.

³³² ati here implies that what was said is a lie.

³³³ oaths.

(٢٤٧) عَلِيٍّ أَكْمَبَ هَكَكَ * نَدِبُ أَكْكَسِرِكَ * پَلْ أَنْغِلُوذِكَ * كَمَ كِلْ نَكُومِي

nakwambiya kile kama * ungeluudhika pale * ukakasirika ndipo * hakika akamba 'alii
²⁴⁵ (247) 'alii akamba hakika * ndipo³³⁴ ukakasirika * pale ungeluudhika * kama kile³³⁵ nakwambiya³³⁶
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 نَنْغَكُوذُ * نَدُغُ يَنْغُ وَتَ غَرَضُ * مُيْ وَكَ أَوْ رَضُ * نَ أَتْكَلُ نَمِي

nambiya utakalo na * radi uwe wake moyo * gharadi wata yangu ndugu * nengekuudhi sasa na
²⁴⁶ (248) na sasa nengekuudhi * ndugu yangu wata gharadhi³³⁷ * moyo wake uwe radhi * na utakalo
 nambiya³³⁸

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) فَتَمَ كَتْ قَوْلٍ * كَتْ سِ يَ كُلِّ دَلِيلٍ * أَوْپُ أَمْكُبَلٍ * رَضُ نِمْكُولِي

nimekweleya radi * umekubali uwapo * dalili kula ya si kitu * qawli keta fatuma
²⁴⁷ (249) fatuma keta qawli * kitu si ya kula dalili³³⁹ * uwapo³⁴⁰ umekubali * radhi nimekweleya³⁴¹
Fatima spoke these words: the matter is of little importance. Since you have now agreed [you were wrong], I forgive you.

(٢٥٠) وَكَكَتِ كَو لِسَنِ * يَ نَ مَوْنَ يُمَبِنِ * نَو نَنْدَپَ زَنْنِ * وَجَنْدَ وَتَ پَمِي

pamoya wote wachenda * zitani nendapo nawe * nyumbani mwana na yeye * lisani kwa wakaketi
²⁴⁸ (250) wakaketi kwa hisani³⁴² * yeye na mwana nyumbani * naye wendapo zitani * wachenda wote
 pamoya³⁴³

They lived happily, [Ali] and the boy, in the house. When [Ali] went to war they both went together.

(٢٥١) جَعْفَرِ نَ مَغْنِ * هَيَزَوِي زَنْنِ * مَهَلْ پَ مَيِّتِنِ * عَلِيٍّ أَكِمُونَدَلِي

akimwendeleya 'alii * maytini pa mahala * zitani hayazoweya * mgeni ni ja'fari
²⁴⁹ (251) ja'fari ni mgeni * hayazoweya zitani * mahala pa miyataeni * 'alii akimwendeleya³⁴⁴
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].

(٢٥٢) هَتَ أَكِيْتُمُ مَوْكَ * زَنْنِ أَمَصِفِكَ * سَبَا مِي هَكَكَ * هَتَنْدَ أَسِيْوُو

asipoyuwa hutinda * hakika miya sabā * amesifika zitani * mwaka akitimu hata
²⁵⁰ (252) hata akitimu mwaka * zitani amesifika * saba miya hakika * hutinda asipoyuwa³⁴⁵
Until at the end of one year he was renowned in battle. Indeed, 700 [opponents] he would cut down with no effort.

³³⁴ that is why.

³³⁵ Amend translation.

³³⁶ In other words, "You would have got angry if I had not told you lies".

³³⁷ gharadhi = hasira.

³³⁸ Ali is trying to mollify his wife.

³³⁹ 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".

³⁴⁰ = ukiwa.

³⁴¹ = *nimekusamehe*, I have forgiven you. The mollification works – Fatima forgives him.

³⁴² *hisani*, kindness, goodness.

³⁴³ i.e. Ali took Ja'far with him on his campaigns.

³⁴⁴ Unlike Ali, Ja'far cannot yet fight 200 opponents alone!

³⁴⁵ i.e. he could do it without realising.

(٢٥٣) هَتَ مُوَكْ أَكِرِدْ * هَبْ أَكِنْدَ جِهَدِ * لَكِ مُي مِيَهْدِ * هَكُنْ هَتَ مُمَي

mmoya hata hakuna * mayahudi moya laki * jihadi akenda hapo * ukizidi mwaka hata
²⁵¹ (253) hata mwaka³⁴⁶ ukizidi * hapo akenda jihadi * laki³⁴⁷ moya mayahudi³⁴⁸ * 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) أَلِيكِي مُنْ * عَلِي أَكْبَيْنْ * أَكْمُومِي أَمِنْ * نِنْ يَمْبُ تَكُومِي

takwambiya yambo nina * amini akamwambiya * akabaini 'alii * muini alipokuya
²⁵² (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) نَبِنْدَ سَسَ بَشِيرِ * إِنْ دِ يَوْكُ جَعْفَرِ * أَكَبِجْ مَكْفَرِ * هُتَشْ كِمُونْعَلِي

kimwngaliya hutosha * makufari akapije * ja'fari pweke ende * bashiri sasa napenda
²⁵³ (255) napenda sasa bashiri * ende pweke ja'fari * akapije makufari * hutosha³⁴⁹ kimwngaliya³⁵⁰
I would now like, Bringer of Good Tidings, for Ja'far to go on his own to fight the unbelievers. He is fully able, in my opinion.

(٢٥٦) أَكْشُكَ جَبْرِيلِ * أَكْمُومِي رَسُولِ * هَوَكُ سَمْبَ وَوِلِ * أَكْسَلِمُ نَبِي

nabiya akusalimu * wawili simba haweki * rasūli akamwambiya * jibrīli akashuka
²⁵⁴ (256) akashuka jibrili * akamwambiya rasuli * haweki³⁵¹ simba³⁵² wawili * akusalimu nabiya
Gabriel descended and told the Prophet: [God] cannot have two Lions, and he greets you, Prophet.

(٢٥٧) أَكْتَمَكَ أَمِينَ * عَلِي ثُونَدِ نِيْمَنِ * مَوْنُ هِي يَقِينِ * هُتْفَرِكُ دُنِي

duniya huifariki * yaqini huyo mwano * nyumbani twende 'alii * amīni akatamka
²⁵⁵ (257) akatamka amini³⁵³ * 'alii twende nyumbani * mwano³⁵⁴ 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) چَمَبَوَ هِي قَوْلِ * هَبْ أَسِيْمَهْلِ * كَيْنُكَ نَ رَسُولِ * هَبْ وَكَنْدَمَ نَدِي

ndiya wakandama hapo * rasūli na kainuka * asiyamuhali hapo * qawli hiyo chambiwa
²⁵⁶ (258) chambiwa hiyo qawli * hapo asiyamuhali³⁵⁵ * kainuka na rasuli * hapo³⁵⁶ 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.

(٢٥٩) أَكِبَتْ مَلْنَعْنِ * فَتَمَ أَكْبَيْنِ * أَلْهَتُكَ حَسَنِ * أَيَاءُ كُكُونْدَمِي

kukwandamiya uyao * ḥasani alihutoka * akabaini fatuma * mlangoni akipata
²⁵⁷ (259) akipata mlangoni³⁵⁷ * fatuma³⁵⁸ akabaini * alihutoka hasani * uyao kukwandamiya

³⁴⁶ mwaka, year, is used here to mean “time” in general. Compare saa in 201d.

³⁴⁷ laki < لَكْ, 100,000.

³⁴⁸ See 209b. This word can be used for anyone who is bad or evil.

³⁴⁹ he is capable of [doing something].

³⁵⁰ Compare: kila kimwngaliya, naona ana mambo yule, every time I look at him, I see that guy has something.

³⁵¹ We understand Mungu, God.

³⁵² Ali is known as simba wa Mungu.

³⁵³ Unlike Ali, the Prophet immediately understands the implications of the angel's message.

³⁵⁴ = mwanayo, mwana wako, mtoto wako.

³⁵⁵ i.e. he did not delay.

³⁵⁶ i.e. pale pale, then and there.

³⁵⁷ i.e. hajangia ndani – he has not gone into the house yet.

³⁵⁸ In a fairytale 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.

When he got to the door Fatima spoke: Hasan has [just] left to go and fetch you.

(٢٦٠) مَوْنُ أَلِپْ كِئِن * نَ حَسَنِ نَ حُسَيْنِ * غَفْلَ أَكْبَيْنِ * بَيْنَغْ نَمْكُلِي

namkuliya babangu * akabaini ghafula * ḥusayni na ḥasani na * kiṭini alipo mwano

²⁵⁸ (260) mwano alipo kitini * na hasani na husayni * ghafula akabaini * babangu namkuliya³⁵⁹

Your son was sitting there with Hasan and Husayn and all of a sudden he said: I need to call my father.

(٢٦١) أَمِينُكَ كِئِن * أَمِينَدَ فِرْشَنِ * نَاءِ مَوْنَعَلِينَ * يَمْبُ لِلْمَزْدِي

lalomzidiya yambo * mwangaliyini nae * firashani amepanda * kiṭini ameinuka

²⁵⁹ (261) ameinuka kitini * amepanda firashani * nae mwangaliyeni * yambo lalomzidiya³⁶⁰

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 * كِمُونِ 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 كِئِن * إِي مَوْنَنُ أَنْ * أُيْطُونِ يَمْبُ غَنِ * كَيْكَ كَوْنَدَمَ نَدِي

ndiya kwandam kaṭika * gani yambo ni upetwe * unani mwanangu ewe * kibani akaliya

²⁶¹ (263) akaliya kibaini * ewe mwanangu unani³⁶¹ * 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) أَكْسِكِي كَلِمَ * جَعْفَرِ كَفَهَمَ * كَوَ ضَرْبُ كِئِمَ * مَتْ أَكْمُونَعَلِي

akamwangaliya mato * kaṭizama ḍarubu kwa * kafahama ja'fari * kalima akisikiya

²⁶² (264) akisikiya kalima * ja'fari kafahama * kwa dharubu³⁶² kaṭizama * 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 * أَكْمَبَ نِپَ يَسَنِ * أَكِكَمَ كُبَيْنِ * أَمَكُوشَ كُفِي

kuifiya amekwisha * kubaini akikoma * yasini nipa akamba * amīni kimwangaliya

²⁶³ (265) kimwangaliya amini * akamba nipa³⁶³ yasini³⁶⁴ * 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.

³⁵⁹ i.e. call my father for me.

³⁶⁰ Or: "what misfortune has overwhelmed him?". Compare kumezidi nini?, what has happened? for something disastrous or catastrophic.

³⁶¹ = una nini?. See 238b, 244b.

³⁶² dharubu = taabu, mashaka

³⁶³ lit. "give me", as a favour. The sick person will also be offered water.

³⁶⁴ 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 اسَيْفِكِرْ * أَكْسِمَمَ بَشِيرَ * مَصْحَبَ كَوْمِي

kawambiya maṣaḥaba * bashiri akasimama * asiyafikiri yote * ḥaydari 'alii hapo

²⁶⁴ (266) hapo 'alii haydari * yote asiyafikiri³⁶⁵ * akasimama³⁶⁶ 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 وَكَشَ كُرِكَ * عَلَيَّ أُسَيْيُ

asipoyuwa 'alii * kuzika wakisha haya * wakatoka jamī'i na * kipulika kawambiya

²⁶⁵ (267) kawambiya kipulika * na jamī'i wakatoka³⁶⁷ * 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 * مُمْ أَكْمُوكَ * مَنُ أَكْتَمَكَ * عَلَيَّ أَكْمُومِي

akamwambiya 'alii * akatamka maneno * akamuweka mṭumi * kuzika alipokwisha

²⁶⁶ (268) alipokwisha kuzika * mṭumi akamuweka³⁶⁸ * 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 * مْتُ هَنْغَلِكُوكَ * نَوُ أَكْمُونُغَلِي

ukamwangaliya nawe * hangalikupoka mṭu * rabuk kwake ṣubiri * kipulika kamwambiya

²⁶⁷ (269) kamwambiya kipulika * subiri³⁶⁹ kwake ṣabūka * mṭu hangalikupoka³⁷⁰ * 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 مْتُ غَنِ * أَدْمُو دُنَيْنِ * إِسْپُكُو مَنَّانِ * نَوُ وَيَفْهَمِي

wayafahamiya nawe * mannāni isipokuwa * duniyani adumuwo * gani mṭu ni ammā wa

²⁶⁸ (270) wa amma ni mṭu gani * adumuwo³⁷¹ duniyani * isipokuwa mannani³⁷² * 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

²⁶⁹ (271) 'alii senende mno³⁷³ * mambo hupijwa mfano * kapewa³⁷⁴ hayo maneno * 'aqili ikamngiya³⁷⁵

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.

³⁶⁵ 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.

³⁶⁶ -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.

³⁶⁷ With Ja'far's corpse.

³⁶⁸ In a chair.

³⁶⁹ 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?

³⁷⁰ Amu -poka = Mvita -pokonya, seize.

³⁷¹ -dumu < دَامَ, endure, cognate of daima, always.

³⁷² ela Mannani tu. Mannani < المَنَّانُ, the Benevolent One, < مَنْ, bestow favours.

³⁷³ usizidi huzuni sana, do not wallow in sadness.

³⁷⁴ The passive of -pa, give is pawa in Amu, -pawa in Mvita, and -pewa in Zanzibar.

³⁷⁵ 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 كَمَوْمَكُو * تَكُپْ زَنْغُ بَرُو * أُپْٹْ كُنِيكِي

kunipekeya upaṭe * baruwa zangu takupa * kamwamkuwa zubayri * kutowa akisha hapo
²⁷⁰ (272) hapo akisha kutowa³⁷⁶ * 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) هِيْ مِيْ نَدَ مَمَك * مِيْ نَدَ مَوْلِمُ وَك * نَ أَجْنَدَ سِتَمَك * نَنُ مِيْ كَوْمِي

kuwambiya moya neno * sitamke uchenda na * wake mwalimu nda moya * mamake nda moya hii
²⁷¹ (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 أَسْجِلِسِ * كِيكِي كَرَتَسِ * كَنَدَ نَزْ أُپْسِ * كَمِيكِي عَطِي

‘atiya kampekeya * upesi nazo kanenda * karatasi kapokeya * asijilisi zubayri
²⁷² (274) zubayri asijilisi³⁷⁷ * kapokeya karatasi * kanenda nazo upesi * kampekeya ‘atiya³⁷⁸
 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 مَوْلِمُ وَك * كَنَدَ كُمِيكِي

kumpekeya kenenda * wake mwalimu ya ile * atoke zubēri kisha * kwake kumpa baruwa
²⁷³ (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 * بِيْ أَسْمَ مَمَك * أَكُتَكَ يَوَكْ يَك * مَتُ أَسِيْزَنْغِي

asipozengeya mtu * yake pweke akatoka * mamake asome yeye * kwake kutoka zubayri
²⁷⁴ (276) zubayri kutoka kwake³⁷⁹ * yeye asome mamake * akatoka pweke yake³⁸⁰ * 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 أَكِيْنُظُمُ * يُوْ لِمَ هُسْلِمُ * وَلَ أَسِيْفَهَمُ * أَسِكُ هُمَنْغِي

humngiliya usiku * asipofahamu wala * husalimu limo yuwa * akiyanuzumu nae
²⁷⁵ (277) nae akiyanudhumu * yuwa limo husalimu³⁸¹ * 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 هُكْ نِيْمَ زُبَيْرِ * أَسِيْطَ تَقْصِيْرِ * كِلَ نِيْمَ كَعِيْرِ * كِيْمَزَنْغِي عَطِي

‘atiya kimzengeya * ki‘abiri nyuma kila * taqširi asipaṭe * zubēri nyuma huko na
²⁷⁶ (278) na huko nyuma zuberi * ašifaṇṇe taqširi³⁸² * kila nyūmba ki‘abiri³⁸³ * kimzengeya³⁸⁴ ‘atiya
 And meanwhile Zubayr was doing his best [to find the teacher’s house], calling at every house while Atiya was looking for him.

³⁷⁶Fix kutuwa

³⁷⁷i.e. Zubayr did not sit and wait.

³⁷⁸“Atika” is changed to “Atiya” at the end of the line for the sake of the rhyme. See also 278d, 293d, and 304d

³⁷⁹i.e. immediately he left.

³⁸⁰Usually 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.

³⁸¹It is dangerous for a woman to be out alone at night, but she is grief-stricken.

³⁸²-fanya taksiri, put in the effort, do the needful. Note that the Swahili negative here corresponds to a positive in English.

³⁸³i.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).

³⁸⁴anamtafuta.

(٢٧٩) هَتَ نَدِي كِفُوتَ * كِنَدَ كِتْمُكُتَ * نِيْمَبَ يَ كُونَدَ كِيَتَ * مَلْنَعْنُ أَكْنِيِي

akingiya mlangoni * kipaṭa kwanda ya nyumba * kitomkuṭa kinenda * kifuwata ndiya hata
²⁷⁷ (279) hata ndiya kifuwata * keṇeṇḍa kitomkuta * nyumba ya kwanda kipata * mlangoni³⁸⁵ 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 šala * alfajiri ni hini * ‘umari mawlānā na * akafasiri ḥamzat
²⁷⁸ (280) hamzat akafasiri * na maulana ‘umari * hini ni alfajiri³⁸⁶ * sala imesimamiya³⁸⁷
 Hamza was talking with Lord Umar [in the house]. It was dawn and prayers were about to begin.

(٢٨١) مَوْنَمَكِ كَتْمَكِ * كَنَنْ نَدِمِ أَتَوَكِ * چَمَبَ مَتَنِيْلَكِ * كَو مَوْلَانَا عَلِي

‘aliya mawlānā kwa * mtanipileka chamba * atwika ndimi kanena * katamka mwanamke
²⁷⁹ (281) mwanamke katamka * kanena ndimi atwika * chamba 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 * ja‘fari umi ndimi * sikuifasiri nyumba * nime‘abiri ndiya
²⁸⁰ (282) ndiya nime‘abiri * nyumba sikuifasiri³⁸⁸ * ndimi umi ja‘fari * kama haya yaweleya
 I have come along the road and I don't know the house. I am Ja‘far's mother if that clarifies things for you.

(٢٨٣) هَبْ حَمَزَ كَتَكِ * كَو أُپْسِ نَ هَرَكَ * مَلْنَعْ أَكُوشَكَ * إِلِ كُمْفُنْغَلِي

kumfunguliya ili * akaushika mlango * haraka na upesi kwa * katoka ḥamza hapo
²⁸¹ (283) hapo hamza katoka * kwa upesi na haraka * mlango akaushika * ili kumfunguliya³⁸⁹
 Then Hamza went out quickly and speedily and took hold of the door to open it for her.

(٢٨٤) نَدِ كِتَكِ كِتَكِ هَمَ * هَبْ نَدِي هَيْنَدَمَ * كَو عَلِي أَكِيَكَمَ * مَلْنَعْ كِمْبِشِي

kimbishiya mlango * akikoma ‘alii kwa * hayandama ndiya hapo * hema kaṭika kitoka nde
²⁸² (284) nde kitoka katika hema * hapo ndiya kaṭaṇḍama * kwa ‘alii akikoma³⁹⁰ * 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 أَكِمَلَزِ * عَلِي نَدِمِ حَمَزِ * مَعْنِ هُكُولَزِ * هَبْ كَتَكِ عَلِي

‘aliya katoka hapo * hukuuliza mgeni * ḥamza ndimi ‘alii * akimaliza kinena
²⁸³ (285) kinena akimweleza * ‘alii ndimi hamza * mgeni³⁹¹ 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.

³⁸⁵In 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!).

³⁸⁶alfajiri, dawn. In other words, it was time for morning prayers.

³⁸⁷yali tayari sala.

³⁸⁸-fasiri = -jua.

³⁸⁹When 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.

³⁹⁰-koma here means “end up at”. Compare ndia hii imekoma wapi?, where does this road go to?

³⁹¹i.e. kuna mgeni wako hapa.

(٢٨٦) بِي يُبْ مَلْغَن * هُلِي أَكْبَن * قَبْرِن نِيكَن * 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 * مَتَرِ 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 * صَبِرَ كَوَكْ كَرِيم * أَمْبِي أَكْلِي

akuleteya ambayo * karimu kwake şubiri * isilamu sendelee * kinuzumu kamwambiya
²⁸⁶ (288) kamwambiya kinudhumu * sendelee³⁹² isilamu * subiri³⁹³ 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 هُو نِ مَمَك * نَدِي مَوْنِي كِتَ چَك * نُونِي قَبْرِيك * نَتَا كَيْغَلِي

kuyangaliya nataka * yake qaburi nionya * chake kişi mweni ndiye * mamake ni huyu mimi
²⁸⁷ (289) mimi huyu ni mamake * ndiye mweni kîte³⁹⁴ 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 * لَكْ هُنْدَوَ كَوَك * وَلَ مِم سَكْتَك * أَفْرَكْ دُونِي

duniya aifariki * sikutaka mimi wala * kiweka hondowa lake * mamlakah mwenye yowa
²⁸⁸ (290) yuwa mwenye mamlakah * lake hondowa³⁹⁵ kiweka³⁹⁶ * 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 صَبِرَ نَدِينُغ * أُسَيْتِي كَوَ مَنُغ * وَلَ هُتَكْسَ فُنُغ * لَ أَخَرَنَ دُونِي

duniya na akhera la * fungu hutokosa wala * mngu kwa usipotee * nduyangu şubiri nawe
²⁸⁹ (291) nawe subiri nduyangu * usipotee kwa mngu * wala hutakosa³⁹⁷ fungu * la ahera³⁹⁸ 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.

³⁹² 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.

³⁹³ Compare 269b.

³⁹⁴ *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.

³⁹⁵ We understand *watu*, human beings.

³⁹⁶ 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.

³⁹⁷ If you *subiri*, you will receive a reward from God: *hutakosa maneno kwa Mungu*, you will not fail [to receive] comfort from God.

³⁹⁸ 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) humuowa³⁹⁹ kipulika * matozi yakimshuka * hapo kaḥoḥa 'atika * akatamka 'aliya
[Atiya] looked at him, listening, tears falling. Then Atiya stopped [crying] and Ali spoke.

(٢٩٣) هَبْ عَلِي حَيْدَرٍ * بَسِ نَاءِ كَفَسِرٍ * مَبْنِ هَكِي زُبَيْرٍ * أَيُّيْ يُوْكَ عَلِي

'aliya pweke uyiye * zubēri hakuya mbona * kafasiri nae basi * ḥaydari '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) أَنْتَبِي بَرُو * كَيْكَ كُفْنَعُو * أَلِپْ سِكْمِيُو * وَلَ سِكْمَزْنَعِي

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 كَيْفَسِرٍ * نَدِي نَلْعَبِرٍ * هَنْدَ سَسَ كُفِكِرٍ * تَنْبِهَ كُنْعِي

kuningiya tanabuhi * kufikiri sasa handa * nalii'abiri ndiya * kiifasiri baruwa
293 (295) baruwa kiifasiri * ndiya nali'abiri * handa⁴⁰⁰ sasa kufikiri * tanabuhi⁴⁰¹ 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 كَمَكَلِمٍ * أَكَمَپْ مَجِ تَمَ * دُعَ سَبَا تِمَمَ * نَدَنَ أَلِيسْمِي

aliyasomeya ndani * timamu sabā du'a * tamu maji akampa * kamkalimu faṭima
294 (296) fatima kamkalimu * akampa maji tamu * du'a saba timamu * ndani aliyasomeya⁴⁰²
Fatima spoke to her, and gave her sweet water -- seven whole prayers she had read into it.

(٢٩٧) أَكْمَجِبُ كَلِمَ * سِيَوِرِي فَتَمَ * مِي نِنَ هَلِمَمَ * رُوْحُ يَتَكَ كَلِي

kuliya yataka rūḥu * halimama nina moyo * fatuma ya siyawezi * kalima akamjibu
295 (297) akamjibu kalima * siyawezi⁴⁰³ ya fatuma * moyo nina halimama * ruḥu⁴⁰⁴ 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 بَوْنَ وَتْ * عَطِكَ مَاءِ سِ كِتْ * بِجَ مَتَمَ مَتَتْ * يَبِكِيُو تَوُ

taṭuwa yabakiyeo * maṭaṭu maṭama pija * kiṭu si mai 'atika * weṭu bwana kwa ṣubiri
296 (298) subiri kwa bwana wetu⁴⁰⁵ * 'atika mai si kitu⁴⁰⁶ * pija matama⁴⁰⁷ 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.

³⁹⁹ anamtizama.

⁴⁰⁰ Amu for naanza.

⁴⁰¹ = hatari.

⁴⁰² 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.

⁴⁰³ 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.

⁴⁰⁴ ruḥu = roho.

⁴⁰⁵ i.e. Mungu.

⁴⁰⁶ i.e. it is not food, so if she is fasting because of the bereavement it is reasonable to take it.

⁴⁰⁷ -piga tama or -shika tama, take a drink, fill your mouth with liquid.

(٢٩٩) مَاءِ أَسِيبَتِكَ * مِئْمَنَ كَيْبِكَ * أَكْثُمَوْنَ عَطِكَ * فَتَمَّ كَمْيَكِي

kampokeya fatuma * 'atika na akaatumwa * kayapeka miyomoni * asipoyataka mai
²⁹⁷ (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 كَمْكَالِفِشَ * وَعَظْ كُؤُنَشَ * مَاءِ الْيُشُشَ * مُنْعُ أَكْمُؤْمَبِي

akamuombeya mungu * alipoyashusha mai * kumuonesha wa'azi * kamkalifisha hapo
²⁹⁸ (300) hapo kamkalifisha⁴⁰⁸ * 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 * amuuzo hapo basi
²⁹⁹ (301) basi hapo amuuzo * 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 كُكِيْمَبَاوُكَ * فَتَمَّ أَكَيْنُكَ * كَمْيَكِي عَطَكَ * وَكَلَّ وَتَ پَمِي

pamoya wote wakala * 'atika kampikiya * akainuka fatuma * kukipambauka hata
³⁰⁰ (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
³⁰¹ (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 نَنَدَ كَمْيَكِي * أَسَنَدَ پَوَكَ عَطِي

'atiya pweke asende * kampeke nenda nāwe * wake mume amwambiye * atamke fatuma na
³⁰² (304) na fatuma atamke * amwambiye mume wake * nawe 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
³⁰³ (305) 'alii kangiya ndani * kwa mkono kabaini⁴⁰⁹ * 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 چَنَدَ كَمْيَكِي * فَتَمَّ هُتُودُكَ * كَوْمَبَ وَطَ هُتَمَكَ * كَمَ هَيَ كُنْمَبِي

kunambiya hayo kama * hutamka watu kwamba * hutoudhika fatuma * kimpeka chenda kamba
³⁰⁴ (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?

⁴⁰⁸-kalifisha = -lazimisha.

⁴⁰⁹He does not want Atika to hear.

(٣١٤) أُوْمِبِلْ كَوْ وَهَابُ * أَتَجِبُوْ جَوْبُ * أَوْ مُتْ نَجَرِبُ * أَدْلِلْشِ وَصِيَّ

waṣiya adalilishe * najaribu mtu aw * jawabu atajibiwa * wahābu kwa aombalo

³⁰⁶ (314) aombalo kwa wahabu * atajibiwa jawabu * au mtu ajaribu * adalilishe wasiya⁴¹⁵

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

³⁰⁷ (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.

⁴¹⁵In other words, if the reader is doubtful that this is true, let him just try it. See note to 157d.