



Research Article

Translation and Analysis of Shaykh Ibrāhīm al - Nufawī al - Qādirī (1918 -1982)'s Elegy on Shaykh Aḥmad Rufai Inda Salātī (1895-1966)

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Abstract

Elegy is one of the earliest popular lyric poem in all cultures that traditionally focused on themes of death, loss, pain and sorrow, following the death of a beloved individual in the society or forfeit of valuable items. It is also considered the most significant and sincere form of poetry due to its emotional intensity, genuineness of experience, and precise depiction. From pre-Islamic times, elegy has occupied a significant position in Arabic literature in its homeland, and in Sudanic Africa, especially among the Yoruba (Southwest Nigeria) since the introduction of Arabic culture into the region. This essay is a translation and analysis of an elegy by Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Nufawī on Shaykh Aḥmad al-Rufai (1895-1966) popularly called Alufa Inda-Salātī. The descriptive analytical method is employed to give a background to the poet and the subject of the elegy, translate the piece, and conduct a fairly detailed examination of its form and content, in the context of the conventional literary devices employed by the author in representing actions, feelings, thoughts and ideas, to enrich the readers' knowledge of the significance of elegy genre in this part of West Africa.

Keywords

Ibrāhīm al-Nufawī, Alfa Inda Salātī, Death, Elegy, Lamentation

1. Introduction

Sometimes, the magnitude of emotion, sorrow, and sadness that arose from loss of beloved ones transforms into an aesthetic structure known as elegy or dirge. The term elegy, according to Mishra, originated from the Greek word "elegeia," meaning poem/song of lament. So, elegy refers to a specific metrical form called the elegiac couplet, used for a variety of topics like love, war, and death, before it become a form of poetry that focuses on expressions of lamentation, sorrow, praising and consolation [16]. Thamer *et-al* further express that elegy carries within it the profound sorrow and grief of the human soul. It is very distinct in language, expressions of

sorrow and true reflection of life [18]. The genre of elegy is a poetic cultivation that common to all human societies, due to its connection with death. Though its performances may differ from one society to another, the fact remains that the underlying aims, themes and contents are largely common. Mizanul-Hak claims that the hagiographical sources suggest that Prophet Adam sang a few couplets of elegy on his son Abel, who was killed by Cain. Similarly, Prophet Muhammad upon the death of his son, delivered a discourse in a style akin to *rithā'*, offering words of comfort to the people. Elegiac poetry also features prominently in Islamic tradition, with both 'Alī

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b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) and Fāṭima bt. Muḥammad recited elegies at the Prophet's grave upon his passing [9].

Since the emergence of Arabic literacy in Sub-Saharan Africa, many significant Arabic literary works have been produced. Yorùbá scholars engaged in verse-making in various subjects which include *al-shi'r al-ghinā'* lyric poetry, *shi'r al-munāsabāt*- occasional poetry, *al-Sh'ru al-talīmī*- didactic poetry and *al-shi'r al-mursal*- loose-rhyme poetry [6, 12]. Elegy is a type of lyrical poetry that has been having a vast patronage among Yorùbá scholars. A typical example is elegy composed by Shaykh, Muhammad bn al-Hajjī Ibrāhīm al-Nufawī al-Ilori, on account of the death of Shaykh Inda Salāṭī.

Shaykh Aḥmad al-Rufai Inda Salāṭī is a mystic with *Qādiriyyah* order, a native of Ilorin, a Nupe tribe, a Maliki doctrine, and an Ash-rite tenet. He was born in 1895. His name was Aḥmad al-Rufai bin Abu-bakr, Being a Nupe, he was called Inda, means father and he added Salāṭī to his epithet as a result of a famous poem which he composed and used to recite most often at any ceremony, which read thus: (*Salāṭī wa Taslīmī wa Azkā Tahiyātī* = '*alā-l Mustafā-l Mukhtār, Khayri-l Bariyyati*) Meaning: [May the salutation and blessing of Allah, as well as purest form of my greeting, be upon the Mustapha the al-Mukhtar the specifically chosen (prophet), the best of all mankind]. His father was Shaykh Abu-Bakr while his mother was Sa'adat bint Shaykh Khalīlullah Gbodofu. The lineage of Shaykh Inda Salāṭī is traced to Nupe tribe, a tribe that originated from Arab world and spread to Timbuktu and to Bula in the present Niger State, then to Ilorin [14]. His grandfather migrated to Ilorin during the reign of the first Emir of Ilorin, Abdus Salam (d. 1842). Shaykh Inda Salāṭī was brought up and started his early education at his maternal home, Gbodofu, with Shaykh Khalīlullah Gbodofu and his uncle Shaykh Muhammad Qāsim Gbodofu, who also exposed him to the elementary knowledge of Arabic and Islamic studies. He was also initiated into *sufi* activities while he was under the tutelage of the duo great scholars. Later he met with Shaykh Nasir Kabārī (d. 1996), who appointed him as his Khalīfah (Representative) in the south west of Nigeria. He was the first person that built *Zawīyyah* under *Qādiriyyah* in front of his house at Ilorin in 1935, which became center for *Qādiriyyah* members in Nigeria in general and Southwest in particular, for the celebration of birthday of Shaykh Abdul-Qadir Jaylani (d. 1166. CE). Shaykh Inda Salāṭī had many students, and followers, by whom the *Qādiriyyah* spread into various parts of the country. He had contributed immensely to the Islam and Sufism. He built other several mosques in different location, such as Ibadan, Abeokuta, Lagos among many others as *zawīyyah* of *Qādiriyyah*. He has poems on various themes, such as Sufism, Mad'h (Eulogy) and history. A number of unprecedented acts (*al-karamat/ al-khawariq al-'adah*) were ascribed to him. Shaykh Nda Salāṭī died on Thursday 7th April, 1966 and survived by children and grandchildren [14].

Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Nufawī was one of the disciples of Shaykh Inda Salāṭī, who served him with loyalty and sincerity. He had planned to visit Shaykh Inda Salāṭī, immediately upon

returning from the holy pilgrimage in 1966. However, the Shaykh had died before he returned. So, he was overwhelmed, like other disciples (*Murīdūn*), with the magnitude of the calamitous loss of his Shaykh, so much that, he could not write any tribute on him. He was later encouraged by some '*Ulamā'*' such as, Shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Ilory, Alhaji Mahali Aroworeki, Iwo, and Ṣāliḥ Mustapha Ali, popularly known as Baba-Idiomo, Ibadan, to compose a *rithā'*, which its text is the focus of this study.

It is, therefore, the primary objective of this study to translate the poem into English language and critically analyse its theme, structure, and literary devices employed by the author in representing actions, feelings, thoughts and ideas, to enrich the readers' knowledge of the significance of elegy genre in Nigeria Arabic literature from Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Nufawī and as well knowing Shaykh Inda Salāṭī as a great Sufi of *Qādiriyyah* order. The methodology employed in this study is historical-analytical approach, employing data from library and relevant literature from various archives.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to make an allusion to some previous relevant works to this study, which include *Suwar min Ṣawāhir Islūbiyyah fī Sh'ir Shaykh Maymāsa al-Nufawī: Dirash Taḥlīliyyah*, [Analytical Study of Rhetoric Devices in Poetical Works of Shaykh Maymāsa al-Nufawī] [15]; "From Intellectual Power of Ilorin, Nigeria: Elegy in the Work of Adam Abdullah al-Ilori (1917-1992)" [11]; "Emotion in elegies composed by Muḥammadu Bello and his sister Nana Asmā'u on their uncle Abdullahi bn Fodio: Comparative Studies" [13]. However, to the best of our knowledge, none of the aforementioned works has the same object with this study. So, this is the gap that this preset study intent to cover.

2. Rithā' in Arabic Literary Theory

The word *rithā'* or *marthiyah*, translated into elegy/threnody/dirge, literally means cries of weakness, feebleness, and bodily pain. Technically, it means mourning the deceased, expressing grief over his departure, depicting the sense of loss resulting from their absence, and bearing the poems typically laden with emotion, inviting contemplation of the realities of life. Sometimes, it extends to lamentation and wailing [10]. Rithā' began in Arab society since the pre-Islamic era, with roots in the laments of professional mourners and the praise for fallen tribal comrades. Notable among early poets of elegy include al-Khansā', who composed elegies for her brothers focusing on the deceased's virtues and call for vengeance. According to Mizanul-Hak, elegy is highly considered an esteemed form of Arabic poetry and an important type of the traditional Arabic qasīdah (odes) [9]. It is also observed by Borg that elegy holds a significant position in Arabic literature; it serves as a vehicle for expressing grief and sorrow following the loss of a beloved individual [3]. Elegy is an ancient literary genre that could be traced back to the pre-Islamic period. Its origin lies in pre-Islamic Arabian society, as part of funeral

rites that women used to bewail their male next of kin in compositions in rhymed prose called *niyāḥas*, which is performed often with other women of the tribe [3]. In the same vein, Sanni and Yunus aptly add that “elegy is a matter of privacy and being a symbol of women’s literary prowess, which later transformed into public business from the early period” [11]. The most important poetess of this genre, al-Khansa’ (d. c. 665 CE), developed this genre from an expression, private in origin, to a panegyric of the pre-Islamic heroic type of man as an example for society in her laments on her two brothers, Sakhr and Mu’awiya, which she recited for an audience at ‘Ukaz.

It is worthy of notice that elegy performance is characteristically of three basic elements, which are; (I) *Nadb:*, (lamentation) expressions of the pain and sorrow over the deceased, (II) *Ta’bīn*, (Eulogy) eulogizing the departed with his virtues and values in the society, and (III) *‘Azā’*: (consolation) finding consolation and comfort at the closing section [8]. It is also worth mentioning that elegy according to Allen, shares some features with other poetic genres, particularly, panegyrics (*Madīh*). Both themes (elegy and panegyric) describe the virtues and characters of a subject in society, but for different purposes, and feelings. The former describes the unique qualities of the deceased with the feelings of sorrow and grief, while the latter extols the achievements of one alive with joy and happiness [1].

Over time, elegy, like other Arabic literary genres, passed through stages of developments and modifications. Its contents, styles and forms were sometimes being reformed due to socio-religious factors. It moved from private performance to public engagement by male poets. Also, during the Islamic era, its performances were changed to conform with the teachings and fundamental principles of Islam. Some customs and traditions attached to mourning practices during the pre-Islamic era, such as loud wailing, and tearing of garment, were banned. The tradition of women bewailing their next of kin in poetical works came to a halt, but professional male poets followed the trend set by al-Khansa’ and began composing *marāthī* on heroes who were not necessarily next of kin, thus developing the genre to a prestigious work of art [4]. During the Abbasid period and beyond, the genre evolved to reflect new social and political contexts, with poets mourning leaders, friends, and family members, and sometimes combining sorrow with praise for political patrons in the pre-Islamic period. Also, the art of elegy is no longer limited to the deceased, it extends to the loss of animal, valuable items and destroyed or conquered city by enemy [3]. Dayq also, mentions Abu Nuwas’s elegy on his dog that died as a result of snake bite was also a good example in this regard. Similarly, the city of Baghdad in Iraq was the first city mourned after having faced destruction toward the end of the power struggle between Amin and his brother Ma’mun. Therefore, Umar bn Abdulmalik al-Mu’tazzy al-Warraq elegized Baghdad thus; (*What exactly happened to you my dear Bagdad? Were you not my beautiful darling in previous years?* [5].

In the modern period, elegy has totally shifted from eulogizing the deceased to philosophical expression that describes the nature of life and death, and personal feelings [13]. Another new form is self-elegy, where a poet would consider himself dead, and compose a poem describing himself with qualities that he thinks deserve him after his death. A typical example is elegy by Abu al-Hassan that was put under his pillow for people to discover after his death. He says;

Table 1. Self-elegy by Abu al-Hassan.

- 1) *Say to my relatives when they see me dead, when they cry and lament for me with sorrow and agony.*
- 2) *Do they cry for the missing soul? Or for the dead body that is before you presently.*
- 3) *Do you think I am a dead person? No, it is not true I swear to God that I am not dead.*
- 4) *I am presently residing in castle, what is before you is just my dead body.*
- 5) *I was like a bird in a cage when I was alive, I thank God who released me from this cage. And built the castle for me in the heaven [13].*

In the Arabic poetry of Nigerian, according to Oladiti the earliest of Yoruba literacy in Arabic was mostly based on poems and letters written to one another discussing religious problems in different parts of the society [17]. So, Folorunsho and Busari further notice that elegiac theme is preponderantly cultivated by some *Ulamā’* [6]. One of the verse-smith among Yoruba scholars is Shaykh Ibrāhīm Salihu al-Nufawī.

3. Shaykh Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ al-Nufawī al-Ilorī (1918-1982): Life and Literary Works

Shaykh Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ al-Nufawī al-Ilorī was a respected and renowned Arabic and Islamic scholar. He was well known for his numerous works in different field of Arabic and Islamic knowledge. He was a prominent leader of *Qadiriyyah* Sufi order in Ilorin, Nigeria. Shaykh Ibrāhīm was born in 1918 in Ilorin to a great Islamic scholar, Shakh Ṣāliḥ, who hailed from Shunga, Nufa in Kwara state, but based in Ilorin, since the regime of the first Emir of Ilorin Abdusalam bn Shaykh Alim bn Junta. His mother was Rabi’ah from Gbodofu. Shaykh Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ al-Nufawī was popularly called Maimāsa. The word *Maimāsa* is from Hausa language and means “titleholder for bread”. He was so nicknamed because, he used to assist his parent in selling bread as a means of livelihood while he was young [15].

Shaykh Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ Maimāsa al-Nufawī started his Islamic education at the early age from his both parents. He

learnt Quranic reading when he was five years old from his mother and the basic knowledge of Islam from his father. After the death of his father in 1926, one of his fathers' friends called Indarabi continued with his training and mentoring. He also studied from other great scholars within and outside the country. Notable among them within his locality were; Shaykh Ibrāhīm Marafa Zamaḥarawī, Shaykh Ibrāhīm Baba Gbodofu, Shaykh Kolokāshā al-Nufawī, Shaykh Aḥmad al-Rufai Inda Salātī, who also initiated him into Sufi *Qādiriyyah* order [7]. In 1977, being a sufi, he travelled with other thirty-three scholars of *Qādiriyyah* order to visit the grave of the Prophet and some saints in Islam. He used that opportunity to contact some scholars in the Arab and Islamic worlds, such as, Saudi Arabia, Beirut, and Baghdad for more knowledge. He established an Arabic school known as "Madrasah Ahbāb al-Mustapha".

Shaykh Ibrāhīm Ṣaliḥ Maimāsa was a great scholar with

many impact and influence within his community and beyond. He was vast in knowledge and mastered Arabic and Islamic sciences such as Grammar, Morphology, Rhetoric, Fiqh, Tafsir and Tawhid. He authored several works in both prose and poetry that addressed social, religious, moral, and sufi matters. Most of the works still remain in manuscript form. On this note, Muhammad Sanni bn al-Hajji Shaykh remarks that "He has written up to twenty-three works in both prose and poetry, on various topics, such as fiqh, morphology, literature and a host of others. Some of his works are; *Fathu al-halāq fī al-riḥlah Ilā misra wa al-hijaz wa-'irāq*, *Raf'u shubhāt an mā fī al-qādiriyyah wa al-tijaniyyah mina al-shatahāt* [15].

Amongst his poetic works are *Kitab jamiu al-khabar al-wathiqah al-kaḥfiyah fī zawiyah alufa Salātī al-jadidah al-'aliyyah*, which contains 285 lines. Similarly, *Qasidah Nuniyyah* on *munajat* (prayer), whose first two lines read thus:

Table 2. Prayer.

يا إلهي أجب لنا = ما دعوتنا أربنا

يا عليما بما بنا = اشف قلبي من الضنا

1) My Lord answer us, upon all our request.

2) You who know what has befallen us, cure my heart from distress.

In another *qasīdah* he composed to seek Allah's favour by the virtues of Shaykh Abdul-Qādir al-Jaylāni.

Table 3. Virtues of Shaykh Abdul-Qādir al-Jaylāni.

صل صلاة وسلم سلام = إلهي على جد الشيخ الجيلاني

يا رب هب لي دخول الجنان = بجاه حبيبك الشيخ الجيلاني

1) May the peace and blessing of Allah be upon the grandfather of al-Shaykh al-Jaylāni.

2) Allah grant me entering the paradise, by the honour of Your friend al-Shaykh al-Jaylani. [15].

All the works of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Salih Maimāsa are considered to be of good literary worthy in terms of their artistic styles and use of lucid imagery to portray intended meanings. One of such works is his elegy on Shaykh Inda Salātī, which is the focus of this study.

4. Text of the Rajaz Poem

This is the text of the elegiac poem composed by Shaykh Ibrāhīm Nufawī Al-Qadiri on Shaykh Rufai Inda Salātī;

Table 4. Arabic Text of the Qasīdah.

1	وقال محمد هو ابن الحاج	يَرْهَامُ التُّنُويُّ الْأَلُورِيُّ الرَّاجِي
2	سبحان من قهرنا بالموت	وليس من مخلوق ذو فوت
3	وكل شيء هالك بلا مری	من عابد أو فاجر من الوری

4	ليس يبقى غير وجه ربنا	حي قيوم دائما له الغنا
5	وحكمه على الأنعام نافذ	بل كل خلق للإله لائذ
6	ثم صلاة الله مع سلام	على نبي منقذ الأنعام
7	وبعد فالتقصّد بهذا النّظم	مرثية جاءت بقدر العلم
8	عن موت شينخي أحمد الرفاعي	ألفا صلات للصلاة الدّاعي
9	نبهني فيها رجـال سادـه	أهل السنـا والفضل والقيادـة
10	أولهم آدم عبد الله	ومحلى أوروكي المباهي
11	بعدهما فاضلنا المسمى	علي بابا مصطفى إيديهوما
12	قد جعل بعض البيوت حبسا	للشيخ حتى طاب منه نفسا
13	وهكذا يُنفق من أمواله	على سبيل عالم بحالـه
14	في كل حين يُرسل إلينا	هدية جزيلة لدينـا
15	بل سيمّا حضّورنا في البيت	ولا تُصادف عنده من فوت
16	لذلك نروح في المزيـة	كما يراه غيره في الرقيـة
17	جزاكم الله بمـا فعلتم	من فعل خير نعم ما قصدتم
18	هذا ونبكي أحمد الرفاعي	ألفا صلاتي ذا الطريق الواعي
19	فقد بكت أرضون والسماء	على صلاتي من له السنـاء
20	نور الزّمان صاحب الهداية	ومن له الإحسان والكفاية
21	العالم العامل التّقـي	الزّاهد الورع التّقـي
22	الواعظ الصالح الفقيه	العامل الصّـفي والتّـبيـه
23	قل راع وساجد وصائم	قل قارئ في مسجد يُلازم
24	مرشدنا إلى طريق من ولى	على جميع الأولياء الجيلى
25	ومن علوم شيخنا صلاتي	التّخو والتفسير في الآيات
26	علم الحديث والأصول لم يزل	يغوص في بحرهما بلا زل
27	والصرف والتجويد والمعاني	كذا البديع تابع البيان
28	من علمه العروض والقوافي	والمنطق علم النجوم الشافي
29	علم الكلام مُتَنقّ لديه	قل كل فنّ ينتهى إليه
30	علم الشريعة عند شينخي يُعلّم	كذا الطريقة والحقيقة يُفهم
31	علّمه الأسرار رب الخلق	إذ قلبه مُنَزَّه بالحق
32	وبعد ذا له الكرامات العلى	والظواهرات الخارقـات في الملا

33	من جاءه وهو بضرب يشكو	فـالله يشفى ضربه ويُعْفُو
34	إن صات بين الفقهاء الحاضري	ن يسكتون ناظرين سامعين
35	ذو الهيبة والهيئة الجميلة	وهو إلى خالقنا وسيلة
36	وهكذا تأسيسه الزاوية	فسي كل بلدة بما برايا
37	وقد بنا الجامع في ليغوس	وقد وقى الله له من بئس
38	قد قام من مسكنيه بُيُوتًا	إلى إسيئ يُرَجَى التثبيتا
39	فوقفت سيارةً وشط السفلا	لما فني بُتْرُها لن ترحالا
40	وقال يا سائقنا صُب فيها	مياها إن فقدت ما يكفيها
41	قال له السواق يا صلاتي	لا يمكن الماء على الآلات
42	قال له الشيخ بإذن الله	فلا تُكُنْ عَمَّا أَمَرْتُ واهي
43	وامتل السواق دُون الشك	وحرك الآلة ماء المُلْك
44	حتى انتهت إلى محل يُقَصَّد	بقـدرة القادر لا تُقَنَّد
45	وكم نرى خوارق العادات	من شيخنا بكثرة الصلاة
46	تُعزِّي إليكم يا إخواني	من فقد من يُرشد بالقرآن
47	أي بني صلاتي فاشكروا	لأنه بكل خير يذكر
48	أيـا جميع خلفا الزاوية	وقاكم الله من الخزايا
49	عليكم بالصبر من وفات	شيخ الشيوخ ألفا صلاتي
50	قَدِسَ إلهي روحه الكريما	رُوح لغير شيخنا نسـيما
51	بجاه من أُرسِلَ بالقرآن	أفضل من أُكِّد بالبرهان
52	تعزيتي أيضاً إلي ذي المجد	الباهر الكاشف ذي الحمد
53	محمد الناصر الكـَرِي	العالم الزاهد الكـُنُوي
54	وهكذا الأستاذ ما لم سيد	ألفندي زاوية الـرشيد
55	عليك يا خليفة صلاتي	بالصبر والغياث بالصلاة
56	واحفظ حقوق الله والإخوان	وتخذ سبيل الحق بالإتقان
57	وامر كما أمرت يا رضي	وأنه كما نُهَيْت يا صفـي
58	أرشدك الله إلى الصواب	من هذه الدنيا إلى المآب
59	أعاننا الله على الإسلام	بجاه من يشفع في الأنام
60	الحمد لله الذي قد اعتلى	على جميع العالمين وعلى
61	على تمام ما الذي قَصَدْتُ	بعلمه وإذنه بـدأت

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تَمَّ صَلَاةَ اللَّهِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ

عَلَى النَّبِيِّ جَاءَنَا بِالصَّوْمِ

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أَيُّهَا سَيِّدُ النَّبِيِّ الْأَعْظَمِ

تَارِيخُهَا خُصَّصْتُ وَقْتُ التَّظْمِ

Translation of the Text

- 1) Muhammad Ibn al-Hajji Ibrāhīm al-Nufawī al-Ilorī, one hoping for Allah's pleasure, says:
- 2) Glory be to Him, Who subdued us with death, (to the extent that) no creature would escape.
- 3) Everyone without doubt shall cease to exist, be he a sinner or a righteous one.
- 4) Nothing would remain except the presence of our Lord, the Living, the self-Subsisting, the ever self-Sufficient.
- 5) His decision is implemented on mankind and every creature seeks refuge with Him.
- 6) May the peace and blessing of Allah be upon the Prophet, who is the saviour of all creatures.
- 7) Indeed, the reason for this composition is to produce an elegy as much as my knowledge.
- 8) On the account of the demise of my Shaykh Ahmad, Alufa Salāṭī, who used to call (people) to the worship of Allah.
- 9) I was urged on this composition by some great men, those who possess integrity, honor and authority:
- 10) Shaykh Ādam Abdullah al-Ilorī, and Al-Hajji Muḥali Aroworeki, the proud one.
- 11) Among them is the respected one, known as Ali Baba Mustapha, who hailed from Idiomo.
- 12) Who with pleasure gave part of his houses as a possession, to Shaykh (Inda Salāṭī).
- 13) That is how he used to spend his wealth in the way of Him (Allah) Who knows his situation.
- 14) Every now and then he would send bounteous gifts to us.
- 15) Especially when visited at home, we never met his absence (or lack of reception).
- 16) He was a benefactor to us, likewise, he was a means of progress to others.
- 17) May Allah reward you all upon your good deeds, what an excellent (reward) you desire (from Allah)!
- 18) This said, we are weeping (over the loss of) Shaykh Ahmad al-Rufa'i, Alufa Salāṭī, a man of a Sufi order, one mindful (of Allah).
- 19) Even Heaven and Earth have mourned the death of Salāṭī, a man of radiance.
- 20) He was the light of his time, a man of right guidance, one of grace and appropriateness.
- 21) He was knowledgeable and worked with his knowledge, he was pious, ascetic, scrupulous and incorruptible.
- 22) A preacher, a devout one, a jurist, a performing sufi and one who is alert (to his duties).
- 23) (If you like) call him one who used to regularly bow, prostrate and fast, (if you like) address him as a reciter (of the Qur'ān), always staying in the mosque.
- 24) Our guide to sufism, who was appointed as a leader for all Qādiriyyah saints.
- 25) Some of the branches of knowledge mastered by our Shaykh Salāṭī are Arabic Grammar, Quranic exegesis.
- 26) Science of Hadith and fundamentals of Shari'ah. He continued to dive deep into both knowledge without slipping.
- 27) Morphology, rules of Quranic recitation, Science of Meaning, Science of Embellishment and Science of Clarity.
- 28) Part of his fields of knowledge are Prosody, Rhyming, Logic and Astrology sufficiently mastered.
- 29) Theology is mastered by him. So, if you like say: He was custodian of all branches of knowledge.
- 30) Our Shaykh mastered Shariah, likewise, both Tariqah (knowledge of sufi order) and Haqiqah (general knowledge) are understood by him.
- 31) The Lord of creation has endowed him with esoteric knowledge, for his heart is pure with truth.
- 32) Given all these, he had great Divine honours and acts visibly perplexing to the people.
- 33) Whoever approached him complaining an affliction, Allah would take away his trouble and pardon him.
- 34) If he talked in the midst of other jurists, they listened to him attentively.
- 35) He is awesome and handsome in outlook, he was a link to our Creator.
- 36) So also is his constitution of sufi circles (zawiyahs) in any town with human inhabitants.
- 37) Indeed, he built a central mosque in Lagos. Surely, Allah has protected him against all evils.
- 38) He embarked on a trip from his home at Abeokuta to Iseyin with the hope of a steady, unhindered journey.
- 39) Suddenly, his car stopped midway when its petrol got used up.
- 40) He said: O my driver! Pour water in it (the tank.), if it lacks what (fuel) is sufficient for it.
- 41) The driver said: O Shaykh Salāṭī, water cannot make engines work.
- 42) Shaykh said to him: By Allah's leave, (it shall move) do not be weak-minded, unconvinced to my bidding.
- 43) Without doubting (further), the driver poured the water, and the engine started / the vehicle moved on.
- 44) (The car moved on) until it reached the destination by the power of the Powerful (Allah), which is irrefutable.
- 45) Many a time we have witnessed extraordinary acts from our Shaykh, due to lots of worship (or lots of invocation of Allah's blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad).

- 46) To you, o brethren, go my condolences over the loss of one who used to guide with the Qur'ān.
- 47) children of Shaykh Salāṭī, be thankful to Allah, for your father is being attributed to virtues (not vices).
- 48) leaders of the various zāwiyahs, may Allah protect you from all sorts of ignominy.
- 49) You have to be patient on account of the death of Shaykh, Alufa Salāṭī, who was the leader of leaders.
- 50) Allah! Make holy his noble soul and allow the breeze (of comfort) into his grave.
- 51) By the honour of him who was sent (as a Messenger) with the Qur'ān, the best of those supported with the proof.
- 52) My condolences are equally extended to the man of glory and the brilliant one, who unveils (the truth) and gives thanks to Allah.
- 53) Muḥammad al-Nāsir al-Kabarī, a scholar, ascetic and Kano-born.
- 54) Also, to Usthā, Mallam Sayyid of (Kano's) Zawiyah al-Findiyyi, the rightly guided.
- 55) Khalifah Salāṭī! You have to be patient (on the demise of Shaykh) and to seek protection from Allah (against all evils) by giving charity.
- 56) Be conscious of Allah and be mindful of the rights of co-members, adhere to the right way with impeccability.
- 57) one Allah is pleased with! Enjoin good doing as you also have been commanded and forbid evil as you have been forbidden, o chosen one!
- 58) May Allah guide you to the right path here and in the hereafter.
- 59) May Allah assist us to remain steadfastness in Islam by the honour of him (Prophet Muhammad) who will be given the grace to intercede for mankind.
- 60) My gratitude is due to Allah, Who is extremely high above all in the worlds.
- 61) On the completion of what (composition of this poem) I intended, which by His knowledge and permission I began.
- 62) Then, may Allah's blessings shower daily upon the Noble Prophet, who came to us with fasting (and other devotional instructions).
- 63) The number of verses in this poem are equal to the number of years spent by the greatest Prophet (63 years). The date of its composition is j d s sh.

5. Discussion/Appraisal of the Poem

5.1. Structural Analysis

The above elegiac poem is composed in 1973 by Shaykh Muḥammad bn al-Hajjī Ibrāhīm al-Nufawī al-Ilorī following the death of Shaykh Inda Salāṭī. The poem is on *rajaz* meter, which is one of the popular metres among the Yoruba verse-makers in Arabic language [12]. The ode contains 63 lines that correspond to the age of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

The chronological style or *abjad* numeral dating method (*al-takhrīḥ bil-sh'ir*) is used to state when the poem was composed as 1393 AH (1973 C. E). This style, according to Sanni reigned during the Decadence period (1258-1798 C. E.), which is also a common feature in Yorubá Arabic verse authorship [12]. In this poem, the author used the word (*Jadsishu*) to document the year of its composition. But this word is made up of four letters viz, J, D, S, Sh. The numeric value in that order is 3, 800, 60 300, and it adds up to 1163. However, it is observed that the aforementioned total number does not tally with the figure: 1393 AH /1973 C. E. legibly written beneath the line by the poet himself as the intended date. This may be a result of miscalculation that required to be corrected while reprint the poem. The poem is modelled on the classical style, indicating the influence of early literary tradition in Arabic literature on Nigerian poets. The author largely follows the established structure of classical Arabic elegy in order to capture the audience's emotion and create a lasting impact in their memory. Stylistically, a slight *Nadb* (lamentation), much *ta'bīn*, (eulogizing) and '*azā*' (consolation) can be gleaned from this poem. This is because of the creedal background of Muslims (and mirrored by Yoruba Muslims), which forbids wailing and lamenting over the death of a Muslim [6].

The reader would also notice that the author refers to himself as Ibrāhīm in the cover page of the poem. This makes us to consider Barhām in the first line of the poem as a prosodic manoeuvre in word usage to obey the dictate of the *rajaz* metre in operation. Thus, we refer to the author as Ibrāhīm in this study.

5.2. Thematic Analysis

Like other Nigeria elegiac poems, the above poem is mono-thematic in nature, but with various components: (I) doxology (II) reference to the facilitators of the poem (III) exhibition of the virtues of the deceased. (IV) consolation and prayer, and (V) words of admonition to the family and disciples.

The first line of the poem introduces the verse-maker as Muḥammad bn al-Hajjī Barhāma al-Nufawī al-Ilorī al-Rajī. This is in line with the common features of the epilogues in the traditional system of Arabic writings in Nigeria as observed by Amuni and Folorunsho [2]. The next four lines, (2—5) are on doxology (praise of Allah) that His power beyond everything and His ability to give and take. This doxology indicates the sufi sentiment in our poet. The verse-smith dedicates line (6) for the invocation on the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who was sent as a guidance to all mankind. It is noticed that verses 7 and 8 clarify the theme of the poem as an elegy on the account of the great loss of Alufa Inda Salāṭī, who was a great sufi of the *Qādiriyyah* order, which at the time dominated Ilorin and the entire Yorubaland [14]. Lines (9-17) talk about the 'Ulama' who encouraged the verse-maker to produce the elegiac poem. They include; Shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Ilorī,

Alhaji Mahali Aroworeki, Iwo, and Ṣaliḥ Mustapha Ali, popularly known as Baba-Idiami, a philanthropist who single-handedly bore the financial burden of the production of the qasīdah (poems). Similarly, lines (18-35) pay tribute to Shaykh Inda Salāṭī. The verse-maker - demonstrating his imaginative gift - sees that not human beings only but also the heavens and the earth sorrowfully mourned his passing. Alufa Inda is also vividly portrayed in several qualifying images. He is eulogized with his vast knowledge, piety, devotion, asceticism, righteousness and guidance. He is tagged a great scholar, who excelled in various aspects of Arabic language and Islamic studies, such as, Arabic Grammar, Morphology, Rhetoric, Prosody, Logic, Fiqh, Tafsīr, Quranic recitation and a host of others. He is also praised for rendering assistance to everyone that approached him lamenting on the loss of all these good virtues with his death. Lines (36-38) mention the specific contributions and legacy of Shaykh Inda Salāṭī to Islam and humanity. A comprehensive enumeration was made of the several mosques that he built, which served as *Zāwiyyah* (meeting place for glorifying Allah) at several places particularly in Ilorin and other towns in Yorubaland, such as Lagos, Abeokuta and Ibadan. Reference is also made to one of his miraculous acts (*al-karamat/ kha-wariq al-'adah*) in lines (39-45) when his car fuel got abruptly used up, where fuel was not available. After a little argument between him and his driver, ordinary water was poured into the motor. And the vehicle continued moving non-stop until it reached the appointed destination. Lines (46-59) are full of consolation and expression of sympathy directed at the family of Shaykh Inda Salāṭī. Similarly, the family members are admonished to exercise patience and be steadfast in maintaining good relationship with Allah and humanity. The condolence was also extended to other great Shaykh of Qādiriyyah order, such as, Shaykh Nāsir Kabarā and Mallam Sayyid al-Findiyyi. The poet comes into the conclusion in lines (60-62) by giving thanks to the Almighty Allah. and prayer for the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his household. In line 63, he mentioned that the poem is sixty-three (63) lines in length, a number which corresponds to the number of years spent by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) on earth. The second hemstitch of the line states when the poem was composed (1393 AH /1973 C. E).

5.3. Artistic and Literary Appraisal

The above poem is probably of a relatively high degree of artistic sophistication, reflecting the poet's familiarity with the Arabic literary tradition. The verse-maker - to the best of his ability - adheres to prosodic and grammatical rules. Furthermore, his choice of words, diction, and use of symbols, imagery and metaphors to portray his imagination and convey his deep emotion of grief over the loss of the sterling qualities epitomized by Shaykh Salāṭī with his death as well as the brilliant memories of the cordial relationship with him are fairly good. For instance; In line (4) of the poem is an instance of Quranic intertextuality. Some expressions were taken from the

Qur'ān to create deep meaning. The underlined set of words in the first hemstitch is taken from Q. 55: 27 (*Yabuqa wajih Rabuka*) while the underlined set in the second hemstitch is also from Q. 2:255 (*al-Hayyun al-Qayyūm*). The style shows the level of the familiarity of the author with the Noble Qur'ān.

حسي قـــــــــــــــيوم = ليس يبقى غير وجه ربنا
دائما له الفنا

Majāz is also noticed in line (18), where the author imagined that heaven and earth equally mourned the death of Shaykh Inda Salāṭī to thus; فقد بكث أرضون والسماء = على صلاتي

من له السناء

The word *bakat* in the aforementioned line literally means to weep, meanwhile, this action is an exclusive attribute of human beings. But, it is used in this context as a figurative expression for heaven and earth. This is called *majāz*.

The author also used symbol to present the image of his subject. Line (23) is a lucid example:

قل الراكع وساجد وصائم = قل قارئ في مسجد يُلازم

Every underlined word in this line symbolizes the piety, devotion and worship embodied by Shaykh Salāṭī, and which are part of the characters of sufis.

6. Conclusion

Attempt has been made in the foregoing study to bring into limelight one of the elegiac poems composed by Muhammad bn al-Hajji Barahima al-Nufawī al-Ilori following the death of Shaykh Inda Salāṭī. The qasīdah was one of the three collected poems on the same subject published in 1973. The qasīdah has been translated into English language with thematic and literary analysis for wider readership. The study revealed the artistic effort of 'ulamā' of Yorubaland particularly on *rithā'*. The composition of *rithā'* is also monothematic in nature as demonstrated in the poetry work of other Yorubā Arabic scholars. It also shows the variety in the features of elegiac writings in Nigeria. The personality of Shaykh Inda Salāṭī as a scholar and sufist that combined the *haqīyah* and *sharī'ah*. The outcomes of this study demonstrated that *rithā'* is not only embodies of a literary genre but also serves as a mirror reflecting the social-cultural expression, conveying emotions, values and experiences, and the aesthetic values of Shaykh Rufai Alufa Inda-Salāṭī.

Author Contributions

Daud Abdul-Azeez Oniyide: Conceptualization, Resources

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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