

AN INSIGHT INTO SUPPLICATORY POEMS IN THE ARABIC POETRY OF YORUBA PROVENANCE

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of Nigerian Arabic poetry on the literary landscape of Southwestern Nigeria, focusing on the integration of Arabic and Yoruba cultural elements. It centers on the supplicatory poetry of Shaykh Muhammad 'al-Awwal Abdullah Ayinla, a renowned scholar and prolific writer. Supplicatory poems, known for their devotional nature, are significant in Islamic practices and offer a rich convergence of linguistic, cultural, and religious dimensions within Yoruba society. Shaykh Ayinla's work illustrates this fusion, providing insight into the socio-cultural and spiritual landscape of the Yoruba community. Using a contextual approach, the study explores the intellectual background of the composer and analyses his supplicatory poetry entitled "'al- Istigātha wal-munājāh bi hurūf 'al-Āyah 'al-Karīmah", by utilizing Quranic verses. Findings revealed that this poetic form not only enhances spiritual devotion among Yoruba Muslims but also strengthens their identity by merging Islamic beliefs with cultural heritage. The research further examines the role of such poetry in educational and religious settings, emphasizing its value in imparting spiritual and moral values. This study contributes to Nigerian literary scholarship by shedding light on the creativity and influence of Nigerian Arabic writers, particularly in the development of Arabic scholarship.

Keywords: Arabic, poems, themes, supplication, 'Ulamā'.

ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة تأثير الشعر العربي النيجيري على المشهد الأدبي في جنوب غرب نيجيريا، مع التركيز على دمج العناصر العربية واليوروبا. وهو يركز على الشعر الدعائي للشيخ محمد الأول عبد الله عينا، وهو عالم مشهور وكاتب غزير الإنتاج. تعتبر القصائد الدعائية، المعروفة بطبيعتها التعبدية، مهمة في الممارسات الإسلامية وتقدم تقاربًا غنيًا للأبعاد اللغوية والثقافية والدينية داخل اليوروبا. يوضح عمل الشيخ عينا هذا الاندماج، ويقدم نظرة ثاقبة للمشهد الاجتماعي والثقافي والعمودي لمجتمع اليوروبا. ومن خلال المنهج السياقي، تستكشف الدراسة الخلفية الفكرية للملحن، وتحلل شعره الدعوي المعنون

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"الاستغاثة والمناجاة بحروف الآية الكريمة"، وذلك بالاستفادة من الآيات القرآنية. وكشفت النتائج أن هذا الشكل الشعري لا يعزز التفاني الروحي لدى مسلمي اليوروبا فحسب، بل يعزز هويتهم أيضًا من خلال دمج المعتقدات الإسلامية مع التراث الثقافي. ويتناول البحث أيضًا دور هذا الشعر في الأوساط التعليمية والدينية، مع التأكيد على قيمته في نقل القيم الروحية والأخلاقية. تساهم هذه الدراسة في البحث الأدبي النيجيري من خلال تسليط الضوء على إبداع وتأثير الكتاب العرب النيجيريين، وخاصة في تطوير البحث العربي

الكلمات المخصصة: اللغة العربية؛ القصائد؛ المواضيع؛ الدعاء؛ العلماء.

Introduction

Pragmatic poetry in Arabic literature contains the popular themes such as Zuhd (Asceticism), Al-Hikmah (Wise saying), Al-Wa‘z wal-Irshād (admonition and ethical counseling), Madā'ihul-Nabiyy (Panegyric of the Prophet), Dhikr 'al amākin al-Muqaddasah (Mention of Holy places), and Shi‘rat-Tarīqah (Poems of Sūfi path). The second classification of Arabic poetry among Yoruba 'Ūlamā' especially the ascetics is speculative poetry. This is classified into two: Al-Hubul-Illāhiyy (Divine Love) and Al-Haqīqah al-Muhammadiyah (the Doctrine of Muhammadan Reality (Busari, 2009:43).

Zuhd (Asceticism) is a theme of Arabic literature which discusses death, preaches renunciation of the world because of its transiency. It sings the praise of poverty and admonishes that the real riches are those of the hereafter.

Al-Hikmah (Wise saying) is also a theme of pragmatic poetry that tries to moralize and encourage readers to reflect on the affairs of this world. The writers of this theme use several wise sayings and proverbs to buttress their assertion. Sometimes, they use short words and sentences that are full of meanings. An example of a work which contains wise saying is that of Ali bn. Abī Tālib, the fourth Caliph in his book entitled Nahjul-Balāgha (The method of eloquence). Al-Wa‘z wal-Irshād (Admonition and Ethical counselling) is another theme of pragmatic poetry in Arabic literature which is composed to teach Islamic ethics. This type of poetry which instructs and teaches morals as described by Abdul-

Rahmon, is also known as didactic poetry. Didacticism means instructiveness in literary work, one of the objectives is to provide guidance, especially in ethical, moral or religious matters (Human, 1972:219). It can be obtained from this statement that didactic writing is such a literary work that is purposely aimed at impacting, instructing or teaching a lesson.

Madāihul- Nabiyy (Panegyrics of the Prophet) is a popular theme in the works of Arabic scholars of all ages. They sing the praise of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and eulogize him as well as his followers with very fine poetry. They embark on such with the aim of showing their admiration for the Prophet's qualities and to educate their audience about his virtues. Poets like Ka'b bn. Zuhayr, Ka'b bn. Malik, Hassān bn. Thābit and a host of others are reported to have been the protagonists of this type of Arabic poetry (Ali, 1984:206). Al- Burdah and Hamziyyah of Imam Būsayrī (d.694) contains a lot of panegyric of the Prophet.

Dhikr Al-'amākin al- Muqaddassah (mention of holy places) is a theme in which Yoruba Ulamā' express their yearnings to holy places and their desire to benefit from the blessings in those places. The theme has been described as a further development of the traditional erotic prelude called *Nasīb* with which the Arab poets opened their poems in the past during the period of ignorance, In the *Nasīb*, the ancient Arab poets gave a vivid description of the deserted encampments of their beloved. They also related their experiences, as their she-camels travelled day and night, defiant of all difficulties and hardships, as she travelled in an unfriendly climate (Nicholson, 1969:510). The writers, rather than weeping over the ruins of the deserted encampments of the beloved, do express their yearnings for holy places like Makkah, Madinah and other ancient cities. Their yearning is not really for the places but for those people who lived there in the past, in particular, the Prophet, members of his household and the companions (Nicholson, 1969:510). Shi'r_{al}-Tarīqah (Poem of Sūfī path) is written by muslim scholars and Sūfī teachers for use by members of their order. It is to serve as students' guide or a companion for the disciples. This poem is intended to teach newly initiated and other disciples the true ethics of Tarīqah. It is meant to explain the virtues and doctrines of the order. The language that is employed in this type of poem is always simple and straight forward for easy understanding. The popular work on this theme is Rūhul-Adab of Sheikh Ibrahim Nyass Al- Kawlakhi (d.1975). A leader of Tijaniyyah order who was born in rural Senegal in the year 1900 (Abubakr, 1994:2-6).

Among other themes in the Arabic poems of Yoruba *Ulamā'* is supplicatory poem (*Shi'r al – Tadarru'*) which is written to beseech God for his blessings, guardian, assistance and other good things in the world and the hereafter. They also write *Shi'r al – tawassul* (poems of request) which are supplicatory poems addressed to the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) and saints.

The second classification of Arabic poetry, the speculative contains Divine Love (*l'al- hubbul-illāhiyy* and the doctrine of Muhammadan reality (*'al – haqīqah al-Muhammadiyyah*). This type of poetry is common among Yoruba *Sūfī Ulamā'*. The excessive love of God and an ever-burning desire to meet Him prompt Yoruba *Sūfī Ulamā'* to write this type of poetry. This leads to the excessive love of the Prophet and eventually to the doctrine of Muhammadan reality (*al- haqīqah al-Muhammadiyyah*). *Sūfī Ulamā'* practiced deep love of God and admonished people to follow suit. Mystics like Hassan *al – Basrī*, *Rābi'ah al – Adawiyyah* - the well-known woman mystic and some others preached this love of God seriously. Yoruba *Sūfī Ulamā'* in their poems, express their yearning towards the Prophet in very loving and exciting poetry. To them, the Prophet is more desirable than the whole world and all that it contains. They try to establish the orthodoxy of their love for the Prophet by referring to the Qur'an (Q3:164) and some other Prophetic traditions.

These are reasoning based on inconclusive evidence. The conclusions of speculative *Sūfī* themes are notional, theoretical rather than practical. This type of poetry is related to or concerned with vision. In philosophy, speculative philosophy is the one professing to be founded upon intuitive or a prior insight into the nature of the absolute divine. This is a philosophy of the transcendent or one lacking empirical basis. It is theoretical as opposed to demonstrative philosophy. This is also applied to the speculative Arabic *Sūfī* poetry as they are also based on meditation, reflection and careful thinking. The poems are inexplicable on paper. They are only understood thoroughly by the writers and their likes. This is the more reason why this type of poetry is scarce and scanty, as the *Sūfī* prefer retaining it in their hearts to writing it for public consumption (Busari, K.K., 2009: 168).

Literature Review

The intersection of Arabic poetry and Yoruba culture offers a rich tapestry of literary expression, where supplicatory poems hold a significant place. Scholars have delved into the unique characteristics, cultural significance, and linguistic nuances of these poetic forms, shedding light on their historical context, thematic and stylistic features. This literature review explores key studies and perspectives on supplicatory poems within the Arabic poetry of Yoruba provenance.

Historical Context and Cultural Significance

Researchers such as Toyin Falola and Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah have emphasized the historical connections between the Arab world and Yoruba-speaking regions, highlighting the role of Arabic language and Islamic traditions in shaping Yoruba literature, including poetry. They discuss how Islamic education, and Sufi traditions facilitated the transmission of Arabic poetic forms, including supplicatory poems, into Yoruba culture (Falola, 2006).

Stylistic Analysis and Linguistic Features

Studies by linguists and literary scholars like Kola Owolabi and Adeleke Adeeko have examined the linguistic borrowings, stylistic adaptations, and poetic techniques employed in supplicatory poems within Yoruba Arabic poetry. They explore how Yoruba poets creatively blend Arabic poetic meters, rhyme schemes, and imagery with indigenous Yoruba linguistic elements and cultural motifs to compose poignant supplications (Owolabi, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

The method used in study involves analyzing and studying supplicatory poem found within Arabic poetry originating from the Yoruba culture. This could involve examining the structure, themes, linguistic features, and cultural significance of these poems to gain a deeper understanding of their role within Yoruba Arabic literature. Additionally, the research involves exploring historical and sociocultural contexts to provide a comprehensive insight into the poem and its significance within Yoruba culture. Supplicatory poem, a distinct genre within Arabic poetry, holds significant cultural and literary value in the Yoruba Provenance. This abstract delves into the nuanced exploration of supplicatory poetry within the Arabic tradition as manifested in the Yoruba cultural context.

This study investigates the unique characteristics, thematic elements, and cultural significance of supplicatory poems in Yoruba Arabic poetry. Shaykh Muhammad 'al-Awwal Abdullah Ayinla's poetry depicted cultural integration by blending Yoruba oral traditions with traditional Arabic supplicatory poem. This integration is evident in the use of Arabic script and meter which denote Yoruba expressions and cultural allusions. The supplicatory poem reveals a sophisticated use of language, depicted by rhymes and rhythms. Shaykh Ayinla employs classical Arabic poetic forms while infusing his verses with the spiritual zeal to illustrate Yoruba religious expression. The poetry is rich with spiritual themes, evoking divine qualities and seeking Allah's help and mercy. The supplicatory nature of the work is highlighted by repeated invocations and praises of God, reflecting a deep sense of devotion and humility. The poetry is evidence of the rich tradition of Yoruba Islamic culture. Through the lens of spiritual and theological exploration, we gain an extensive understanding of the exclusive characteristics and significance of his work. It underscores the enduring relevance of supplicatory poetry as a source of spiritual inspiration and cultural expression in the Yoruba Provenance.

Brief History of Shaykh Muhammad 'al-Awwal Abdullah & Baba Lomupo, Otolorin (A Unique Person)

Shaykh Muhammad 'al-Awwal Abdullah was born on 13th April 1926 in Omupo, Ifelodun Local Government area of Kwara state, Nigeria. His father was Abdullah Ayinla who was a prominent Islamic propagator in Omupo during his lifetime. His mother was a princess in Omupo, and she hailed from a ruling house, Mokaiye in the town. Even though Shaykh Awwal, as popularly known, was born with a silver spoon, he was respectable and humble in his disposition to everybody. His education was firmly established on Islam and its culture.

In 1933 Shaykh Awwal started Quranic education under the tutelage of Alfa Salaudeen Aniyalana of Nana's compound, Omupo, Kwara state. He later proceeded to late Alhaji Muhammadul Ameen Babaita to further his Arabic education, Islamic theology and literature. During this period, he discovered himself as a preacher and Arabic language teacher. He had a taste of Arabic and Islamic scholarship under the well-known Islamic scholar, Shaykh Umar Agbaji, Ilorin in 1933, when he started his Quranic education. Shaykh Awwal commenced the memorization of the Qur'an and this was completed

within a short period. He continued with Arabic education under his tutors: Shaykhs Aminu Babaita and Umar Agbaji in Ilorin. Then, he met Shaykh Adam Abdullah al-Ilori as a colleague under their tutor, Shaykh Umar Agbaji of blessed memory. He was introduced to Tijaniyyah order by Shaykh Bala Rabih. In 1949, he proceeded to a great scholar, Shaykh Umar Falike from Kano for further studies in Islamic Jurisprudence and Sufism. In 1951, Shaykh Awwal got married to his first wife and a year later, he met Shaykh Ibrahim Nias who confirmed him as a Muqaddam in Tijaniyyah order. He had leadership qualities right from his childhood in his hometown, Omupo, where he grew up. He later travelled to Lagos and was employed in a British Cafeteria in old Lagos Island. He later co-founded an Islamic organization in 1945 with few other friends who had the same zeal for Islam. He later broadened his Arabic knowledge through Shaykh Umar Falike and he embarked on a journey to Makkah to perform Hajj in 1958. The Arabic school which was established with the cooperation of his colleagues in the name of an Islamic organization known as Khudamul Islam Society was later affiliated to Lagos State University (LASU) to offer Diploma course in Arabic and Islamic Studies.

Shaykh Muhammad 'al-Awwal Omupo established the first Arabic school in Omupo in 1957 which was later converted to a Nursery and Primary School and named Shaykh Muhammad 'al-Awwal International Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Omupo, Kwara State. It was officially commissioned in 1999. He was at the same time the founder and President of Ithad Ansarul-Faedat Tijaniyyah of Nigeria and another educational institute was established at Sango Otta, Ogun State through his influence. In the school, Muslim children had the opportunity to acquire both Arabic and Western education. Shaykh Awwal was well devoted to the propagation of Islam and was also a prolific writer of Arabic/Islamic literature and jurisprudence.

The following are some of his literary works:

- 1- Tanwirul Absār fi Tarīq Ilal Haqq
- 2- Sufun-n-Najāt
- 3- Al-Istiqāmah fil-Islam
- 4- Al-mafāti 'al-Tijāniyyah
- 5- Ta'mulāt Qur'aniyyah
- 6- Al-Harakah 'al-Tijaniyyah fi Nayjiriyyah
- 7- Mawrid 'ar-Ridā

- 8- Fiqh Zakāt
- 9- Asbāb Wahdatul 'Ummah 'al-Islamiyyah
- 10- Shasheu Barham Kawlakh
- 11- 'Al-Kanzul-Kabīr Fil Fadāil Fātīhah 'al-Kitāb
- 12- Shifā 'al-'Amrād fil Basmallah
- 13- Al-Bayān Shāfi fi Fadāil Suratul-Ikhlās
- 14- 'Ālamiyyah 'al-Awwaliyyah
- 15- Fiqh al-'Irth (The Book of inheritance)
- 16- Tashīhul- Hajj wal 'Umrah
- 17- _Al-Ummah _al-Awwaliyyah fil _ad'iyyah wal-munajātul Rabāniyyah linayhl-Munā'
- 18- Durarul-Yaqeen
- 19- _At-Targhīb fis-Salāt _alā-Nabiyyil Habībī
- 20- _Al-Duratul-Bidāh

All the above-mentioned literary works are available in Nigeria and other Islamic countries like Senegal, Egypt and Morocco. They can also be found at www.Awwal.com

Arabic Text of the Supplicatory Poem

قى ذى الدنا وديننا	*	رازقنا لجب لنا
إغفر لنا توابنا	*	بالأسماء وبالصفات
إرحمنا راحمنا	*	بالمصطفى بالمجتبي
أجب لنا سميعنا	*	أنت تجيب من دعاك
ولاتردنا خائبين	*	جئنا إليك سائلين
فيك الوحيد طمعنا	*	عمن سواك ياسنا
في صحونا وسبتنا	*	لاتنسنا في كل خير
إلى سبيل رشدنا	*	هيء لنا من أمرنا

- إجمع لنا شمولنا * أعدلنا جامعنا
ذل الجميع عز القهار * أعزنا عزيزنا
أنت القوي نحن الضعيف * فقونا قوينا
إلهنا رؤوفنا * قد كثرت سئولنا
ليس لنا ربّ سواك * أرسل لنا جوابنا
بدّت عسور دهرنا * لوفرة دنوبنا
لايمحها حي سواك * ألطف بنا لطيفنا
دو ما غنى منك نريد * غيرك ملّ عدّنا
أغننا يا غيائنا * فأغننا غنينا
إنك المعدّ القائم * لما يصدق سمعنا
نضرلنا يوم الجزاء * بنسلنا عيوننا
أتبع لنا زواجنا * دار السلام كريمنا
وهب لنا الخير الكثير * واجبر لنا كسورنا
ربحنا كثيرا نرتجى * وأحي لنا تجارنا
زين لنا حلالنا * وسع لنا رزاقنا
قمت إليك راجيا * منك العفاق والغنا
إشف لنا يا ربنا * بالمرتضى أمرنا
هادى العباد أهدنا * كذا البنا وزوجنا

لا تحرمنا أجرنا *	يوم اللقاء لاتخزنا
هزم لنا جيش العدا *	قد هزروا مضجعنا
مزقهموا شتتهموا *	حتى يئوبوا دوسنا
ونور لنا أو طاننا *	مطرلنا سماءنا
أصلح لنا اخلاقنا *	خضزلنا منبتنا
لا تفتنا خلقنا *	بقحط أرض قومنا
ثمرلنا أشجارنا *	ياربنا يا ربنا
مولاي ذى أباتنا *	بدت بتها سئولنا
راتلها فاغفرله *	ناظمها كذا ونا
أرجو الصلاة والسلام *	على النبي خيرينا
تعمنا وأهلنا *	ثوابها في ديننا

Meaning:

The Ode of seeking succor and secret conversation with Letters of the Glorious verse of the Qur'an "O my Lord, make this City (of Makkah) a place of Security and provide its people with fruits"

1. Our provider, answer us (Our prayer), in this world and hereafter.
2. (We beseech you) with your names and attributes, forgive us (our sins). Our forgiver.
3. (We beseech you) with the chosen one, Mustapha (Muhammad) bless us, our Munificent.
4. You answer whoever calls you, answer us our hearer.
5. We come to you asking, don't turn us down disappointedly.
6. Besides you we are helpless; our hope is in you, the Unique.
7. Don't forget us in all good things, in our day and night.

8. Make our affairs easy for us and guide us to the right path.
9. Bring our people together and bring back our society.
10. We are all surmountable while the Almighty God is powerful, empower us our mighty God.
11. You are powerful and we are the weak, strengthen us, you are our power.
12. Our Lord, our benevolent, our requests are numerous.
13. We have no other God except you, grant us our request.
14. The difficulties of our time are apparent, just because of our sins.
15. No one can efface them except you, be merciful unto us, our Merciful.
16. We expect riches from you all time, besides you, our excuse would become boredom.
17. Help us, our helper, and enrich us our Self-Sufficient.
18. You are the willing, Self-Sufficient for anything that is throbbing our hear.
19. And for what is threatening our land, make it peaceful for us, our source of peace.
20. Make the day of accountability an opulence day for us, and for our progeny who are the flowers of our eyes.
21. Let our wives follow us to the home of peace, our Beneficent.
22. Give us many good things and mend our breaches for us.
23. We want a lot of profit, make our business blossom for us.
24. Beautify our lawful things for us, make us to be well-off, our Provider.
25. I stood up to you with the hope of purity and richness.
26. Cure our diseases for us, our Lord, with the honour of the one you are pleased with.
27. The Guide of His servants, guide us and our children with wives.
28. Do not deprive us of our rewards, don't disgrace us on the Day of Judgment.
29. Scatter the army of enemy for us, they have shaken our couch.
30. Tear them to pieces and disperse them until they dislike our humiliation.
31. Light our nation and let our sky rains.
32. Mend our character for us and let our cultivation become green.
33. Our Lord, do not subject us to trials, by turning the land of our people into a rainless one.
34. Let our trees become fruitful, O our Lord, our Lord.
35. My Lord, these lines of our poem elucidate our requests.
36. Forgive the reciter, the composer and all of us.
37. I wish the Prophet, (the best of us), the peace and blessings (of God).

38. May its reward embrace all of us and our family in the hereafter (Muhammad, A. A: n.d.)

The Content of *Qasīdah 'al – Istighāthah wal – Munājāh bi hurūf 'al' Āyah 'al – Karīmah*

This study focuses on supplicatory poem in the Arabic poetry of Yoruba provenance. The poem is spectacular not only for its length but also for the creativity of the composer in adopting the letters of the part of two verses of the Holy Qur'an: Q13: 35 Q2: 126 Meaning:

—My Lord, make this city (Makkah) a place of peace and security.

And provide its people with fruits.

From each of the 38 lines, the composer of this poem shows that Yoruba Sūfī scholars are also prolific by using Arabic letters in composing lines of poem. This poet has another work wherein he composes poem with the last 2 verses of the Qur'an in chapter 9 verses 128 -129 (*Laqad jā'akum*).

In his supplicatory poem (*Qasīdah 'al – Istighāthah*), Shaykh Awwal, as popularly called by his followers, seek succor from Allah and asks for the forgiveness of sins from God as sins are described as clogs in the wheel of getting one's requests.

The type of this composition reveals the ingenuity of Yoruba Arabic scholars in Arabic writing and blending in keeping with the characteristic styles of Arabic language usage in West Africa. This supplicatory poem composed by Shaykh Awwal Omupo which is taken from two different verses of the Qur'an (Q 2:126 and Q14:35) shows the versatility of the scholars in the recitation of the Qur'an.

Analysis of the Poem

To analyse the supplicatory poem of Shaykh Muhammad 'al-Awwal Abdullah Ayinla entitled "*al-Istighāthah wal-munājāh bi hurūf 'al-Āyah 'al-Karīmah*", we must examine its theological, literary and cultural elements involved. The poem is an example of the rich tradition of Islamic devotional literature, focused on seeking divine help and engaging in confidential supplication through the letters of Quranic verses.

Theological Significance

The theological importance of the poem involves invoking Allah for help in times of distress. It draws attention to the belief in Allah's omnipotence and His role as

the Supreme helper and Sustainer. The poem's reliance on seeking help signifies a deep understanding of human vulnerability and dependence on God's grace and mercy. A private and personal supplication to Allah, which is called 'Munājāh', mostly characterised by a tone of humility and sincerity. This element of the poem mirrors personal relationship with Allah, where the seeker feels comfortable expressing his innermost thoughts and wishes. Using the letters of Quranic verses as a foundation for the poem transmits it with a sense of sanctity and veneration. Each letter is believed to contain divine blessings and spiritual importance, pointing out the miraculous nature of the Qur'an.

The poem follows a structured format where each stanza corresponds to a specific letter from the Quranic verses. This approach shows the precision and care taken in crafting the poem, reflecting the meticulous nature of Quranic recitation and memorization. The language used is rich and stimulating, drawing on classical Arabic literary traditions. The scholar employs rhetorical devices to enhance his emotional and spiritual feelings. Those devices serve as an emphasis on important themes and create rhythmic and melodic quality, assisting in recitation and memorization. There is no gainsaying the fact that the poem belongs to a long tradition of Islamic poetry that utilizes the Qur'an and Hadith as sources of inspiration. This type of work is regularly recited in religious gatherings, during prayers and on special occasions to arouse spiritual reflection and communal harmony. The focus on intimate supplication and the use of poetic forms implies possible Sūfī influences, where poetry and music are integral to spiritual practice. As a Sūfī, Shaykh Muhammad 'al-Awwal Abdullah Ayinla's poetry emphasizes themes of divine love, yearning and the soul's journey towards Allah, which reflects in his poem. The poem serves both as a personal expression of faith and communal act of worship. It strengthens shared beliefs and values, nurturing a sense of collective piety and unity.

Literary Analysis

Themes in the Supplicatory Poem

Some of the recurring themes in the poem are divine mercy and compassion, human frailty and divine power, and spiritual aspiration. These are central attributes in Islamic theology. The seeker seeks not only material assistance but also spiritual empowerment through Allah's forgiveness and His blessings.

The contrast between human frailty and divine power is a common motive, emphasizing the need for total reliance on Allah's wisdom and power. This theme reinforces the submissiveness and humility of the believer. The poem expresses a desire for spiritual closeness to Allah and the aspiration to reach a higher state of piety and devotion. This shows the aspirational nature of Islamic spirituality where the believer persistently seeks to grow in righteousness and faith.

Summary

The supplicatory poem of Shaykh Muhammad 'al-Awwal Abdullah Ayinla is an important work in Islamic devotional literature. The poem uses the letters of Quranic verses as a model for seeking divine help (Istigātha) and engrossed in intimate supplication (Munājah) to Allah. This structured approach reflects the sanctity and miraculous nature of the Qur'an with each letter believed to carry divine mercy and blessings. Theologically, the poems point out themes of human weakness and dependence on Allah's power and mercy. It shows a personal and communal act of worship, nurturing unity and piety among its audience. The language used in the work is rich and stimulating, drawing on classical Arabic traditions and employing rhetorical devices to improve its spiritual impact. The cultural context of the poem includes influences from Islamic devotional practices and Sūfī traditions, stressing divine love, yearning and spiritual aspiration. Succinctly put, Shaykh Muhammad 'al-Awwal Abdullah Ayinla's poem is a profound expression of faith, using poetic form to deepen the connection between the divine and the believer.

Conclusion

The work of Shaykh Muhammad 'al-Awwal Abdullah Ayinla is a genuine expression of seeking divine assistance and engaging in intimate communication with Allah. Using the sacred letters of Quranic verses, he crafts a poem that reflects deep spiritual longing and devotion. The poem stands as a proof to the omnipotence of Allah, the power of words and their ability to connect the believer with the creator. From this work, the scholar not only showcase his mastery of language and spiritual insight but also provides a means for others to engage in such type of poetic composition, drawing inspiration from rich Islamic tradition of prayer and contemplation. This work is a valuable contribution to Islamic literature, enhancing the spiritual lives of those who recite and read it.

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