

The Authentic Path

[Cover /Page 1]

Poems of Nana [Asmā' u], daughter of Shehu Usmanu.¹

The Absolute Truth, the Authentic Path,
The Fearful Nature of Judgment Day,
and the Criteria for the Judgment Day

Distributed by the History Bureau

Sokoto

P.M.B (Private Mail Box), 3180

Sokoto

¹ This is the cover page for the entire collection of three poems.

[Page 2]

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. May God's Blessings be upon the Noble Messenger [Muhammad]. Poem of Asmā' u, daughter of the Shaykh, the Renewer of the Faith, The Light of the Era, 'Uthmān ibn Fodio. May Allah cover him with His mercy. Amen.

Let us thank the Noble One, the Most High Ruler, and let us follow His true guidance.

He created us and sent to us the exalted Muhammad,
who came and removed us from the darkness and total loss
and gave us the light with his sunnah.² Praise be to Muhammad!

Since [the Lord] created him for us to bring us faith, let us praise

Him, the Merciful, the One who loves [so much] Muhammad.

He came with the Quran and explained everything to us.

The Lord has ruled that we should all follow Ahmad!³

He has revealed to us the truth that we have all heard.

Only a nonbeliever would reject the path of Muhammad.

May God save us and guide us so that we may follow

the path of the shariah⁴ and comply with the teachings of Ahmad.

May God's blessings be upon him forever,

and may peace be upon him, he who has surpasses all. Praise be to Muhammad!

May peace be upon the members of his household, his companions and subsequent generations,

and upon all the generations that came afterwards following the path of Muhammad.

² Traditions and teachings of Prophet Muhammad.

³ *Ahmad* is another name for the Prophet Muhammad.

⁴ A path consistent with Islamic law and jurisprudence.

Listen to this song, my friends. To all of you, be careful

along the path! Avoid straying away from Muhammad!

Let us repent, refrain from sin, and fear the Lord.

Let us perform righteous deeds so that we may meet with Ahmad.

[Page 3]

Let us perform our required prayers perfectly. They are compulsory for all of us,

for they come before all forms of worship, as taught by Ahmad.

Know that if [required prayers] are observed correctly, the faith as a whole will be enhanced.

In the eyes of Allah, my friends, according to Ahmad,

[Allah] will pay close attention to the performance of these prayers among the deeds

of His servants to see those who have become true followers of Muhammad.

Let us give the alms [zakat] as required of those with the means to do so, and perform

pilgrimage [to Mecca] for those able to do it, and fast [during the month of Ramadan].

These are compulsory for true Muslims

who believe in Allah and Muhammad.

Similarly, perform ablutions and janaba,⁵ and purify yourself

after relieving yourself. All these are compulsory, according to Ahmad.

If there is a genuine reason, it is permissible to perform taimama,⁶

for it is part of the sunnah of Ahmad.

Lack of water, illness, as well as infirmity

⁵ *Janaba* is the ritual cleansing/bath required after sexual activity to purify oneself.

⁶ *Taimama* comes from the Arabic word *tayammum*, the Islamic act of dry ritual purification using purified sand, a rock or dust. It is performed in lieu of ritual washing in the absence of clean water or in instances where one is sick and using water could affect the health of the person. The Quran endorses *tayammum* in the following verse: "...And if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women [i.e., had sexual intercourse] and find no water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and your hands [with it]. Indeed, Allah is ever-Pardoning and Forgiving" (Quran 4:43).

are reasons to use sand to perform taimama, as taught by Muhammad.

Ensure the cleanliness of your clothes and bodies,

and purify your faith so that you may meet with Ahmad.

Seek out religious knowledge, and do not stray away

from the path [of righteousness]. Do not stray away on Judgment Day from Ahmad.

It is through knowledge that one follows God and the Prophet.

The knowledge in the sunnah will lead us to Ahmad.

Let's work hard to stock up provisions for the afterlife

[during] our stay in this world so that we may meet with Muhammad.

Know that dhikr, study, and performing other voluntary acts of worship

together with fasting will take us to Ahmad.⁷

Perform special supplications, engage in voluntary prayers, and do your best

in praying regularly upon our Prophet Muhammad.

Persevere in the face of the challenges of worship, and persevere

in the face of poverty, and honor Ahmad.

Also, be patient with God's will

that He prescribes for us. This is what will take us to Ahmad.

[Page 4]

Complying with all God's injunctions, whether easy or difficult,

will surely make Muslims more respected and enhance the reputation of Ahmad.

Equally, you, Muslims, should wish for others,

⁷ Here the poet used *zikiri* from the Arabic word *Dhikr* (litanies followers of Sufi orders recite), the word "study" to refer to studying the Quran, traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (the sunnah) and other forms of Islamic religious knowledge, and *nafilah* to refer to supererogatory acts, ritual acts that are not compulsory.

what you wish for yourselves. This was the character of Muhammad.

Give alms as your wealth allows,

and the resources you give away will increase abundantly, thanks to Muhammad.

When the Judgment Day comes, be ready for the panic

and the fear that will affect everyone, except the most exalted, Muhammad.

On that day there will be no mother or father —

let alone a brother — who can assist you, only Muhammad.

That day will seem like it is five thousand years long!

Let us fear the Lord and follow Ahmad.

On that day, people will not be stirring but silent,

due to their fear of the wrath of the Lord who sent Ahmad.

[On that day], the Lord will have a wrath that He never had before.

The King, the One who sent Ahmad, will be truly angry on that day.

For some people, sweat will drip down around their mouth,

like a bridle, due to their offenses [in life] to Muhammad.

The sun will boil the heads and brains of

the wicked people who persisted in their rejection of Muhammad.

They will be in miserable condition, experiencing hunger and thirst.

These conditions will apply to those who deviated from the path of Muhammad.

Hellfire will be burning with the frightening sounds of thunder

such that everyone will be terrified -- except the exalted Muhammad.

All people will see the sins they had committed revealed,

for there is nothing one can hide from Allah -- The Beloved One of Ahmad.

Know that the bellies of usurers will swell up such that they will surpass gourds
in size, and will be shown to Ahmad.

They will be resurrected just like those under the control of Satan.

The Quran has mentioned their character to Ahmad.⁸

[Page 5]

The stench of the adulterer will surpass the stench of all latrines [put together].

He will be driven far away from Ahmad.

Know that gossipers and hypocrites,

and those who bear false witness will not be saved by Ahmad.

Their tongues will hang out all at once, and they will be exposed.

They will not be saved by Ahmad.

And the arrogant of this world and all transgressors,

these people will certainly not be with Ahmad.

Also, those who worship for ostentation, regardless of how much they worship,

their acts will fade away, as they were not approved by Ahmada.

And the embezzler, the one who takes bribes, the one who commits any unlawful acts,

know that they will not receive intercession from Ahmad.

And murders as well as fraudulent people-- they should know

that they do not belong to the community of the Prophet Ahmad.

Likewise, those who treat the words of their parents with contempt, and those who spread rumors,

and the envious – none of them will be saved by Ahmad.

⁸ Interest is considered a kind of illicit wealth and the Quran denounces usury in no uncertain terms. Those practicing usury are described as follows: "[...] for taking usury when they had been forbidden to do so; and for wrongfully devouring other people's property. For those of them who reject the truth, We have prepared an agonizing torment" (Q 4:161).

Hellfire will snatch away thieves while they are standing.

Likewise, those who snatched away people's properties will not be guided to [meet] Ahmad.
Non believers will be led directly to hell without further ado,
even before the resurrection, due to their hate for Ahmad.

Standing in increasing and extreme terror,
believers will call upon the noble Muhammad.

They will go to Adam and then go to Noah [to ask for help]
and both will tell them: "Today only Prophet Muhammad [can be the intercessor]!"

[Adam and Noah] will say: "Go now to Our Beloved Lord [Allah]. He is angry.
Today, the beloved is none other than the noble Muhammad."

They will say: "Go to Moses and Jesus." And both will come
but will say: "Today, there is no way out except through Muhammad."

Everybody will come to see the noblest of all beings, and he [Ahmad] will say:
"Today, I am the only one to intercede for you before God."

[Page 6]

[Muhammad] will then come before the Lord who is angry. When he arrives,
he will praise the Lord and then prostrate himself before Him.

Then [Allah] will say to him: "Ask and you will be given everything you ask for."
Those who venerate Muhammad shall receive [what they request].

[Muhammad] will then say to Him: "Oh Lord of all people!"
The Most Gracious Lord will say: "I grant you intercession, Muhammad."

[The Lord] will then reveal the records of [our] deeds.
Those who will be saved will be those interceded by Ahmad.

Those whose [righteous] deeds outweigh will go

on that day to be together with Ahmad.

Those whose unrighteous deeds outweigh

on that day will perish, unless Ahmad makes intercession for them.

Some will receive the records [of their deeds] in the right hand,

and others in their left hand. The latter will be far from Ahmad.⁹

Intercession will be granted to some eminent persons, those who followed

the path of the sunnah and followed Ahmad.

These include prophets and all the pious ones [in the world],

as well as saints and scholars who followed Ahmad.

Indeed, the earth will be folded, and then the bridge of Siradī¹⁰

will be placed above hellfire. Then we shall climb on it along with Ahmad.

[Siradī] is finer than the hair of the head,

and sharper than a sword. We have heard this from Muhammad.

It is said that Siradī has seven humps. Indeed, it is said that

on the first bump, some people will be separated from Muhammad.

Without sincere faith, there is no crossing over [hellfire].

Let us turn to Allah, oh my people, and to Muhammad,

as there is no path to salvation except by crossing Siradī.

This is the will of the Lord, as he, Ahmad, told us.

On the second hump, one will be asked about obligatory prayers,

and on the third about required alms. Oh, let us follow Muhammad.

⁹ See Quran 69: 19-33; 84:7-14; and 90:19.

¹⁰ *Siradī* the Hausa word for *al-Ṣirāt* is the razor-sharp bridge above hellfire over which people must pass after death in order to enter paradise. It is believed that this will be put into place on Judgement Day.

On the fourth, one will be asked about fasting, and about the pilgrimage [to Mecca] on the fifth.

On the sixth bump, one will be asked about ablutions and your prayers upon Muhammad.

On the seventh hump, Nana [Asma'u] will be asked about her fulfilling

of filial ties. We should repent and follow Ahmad!

[Page 7]

Some will pass quickly [through the Siradī] without any difficulty,

like lightning, to be together with Ahmad.

Some will sit on it as if on a large stallion, and others

will cross it with lightning speed as they come to Muhammad.

Some will be on foot, walking

along the Siradī until they come to Muhammad.

Some will pull themselves along on their bellies, and some will crawl.

For those on their bellies, they may fall [into hellfire], according to Ahmad.

On the seventh hump of Siradī is where the hypocrites

will fall off into hellfire! Oh, let us accept the truth of Ahmad.

They will be deceived as they deceived people before the Lord

in their earthly life, and as they deceived the faithful who are with Muhammad.

Those whose [righteous and unrighteous] deeds are equal in scale,¹¹

will be the ones taken to Larafu,¹² according to Muhammad.

The saved ones will be taken to Kawsara¹³ to drink the waters

¹¹ The poet means those whose good deeds and bad deeds are equal on the scale, i.e., neither their good deeds exceed the bad deeds, nor their bad deeds exceed the good ones.

¹² *Larafu* (from the Arabic word *al-A'raf*) is a borderland between heaven and hell in Islamic eschatology where those whose sins and righteous deeds are evenly balanced will stay.

¹³ *Kawsara* or *Al-Kanthal* refers to a stream or a river in Paradise. It is believed to be one of the exclusive gifts that God has bestowed upon Prophet Muhammad.

of the lake of our exalted Prophet Muhammad.

As for anyone who violated the teachings of the Prophet, they will be driven away.

They will not drink the waters of Kawsara with Ahmad.

And those who used to offer help to anyone who asked for help,

they will reach the place where important people will ask for help from Muhammad.

[The waters of Kawsara] are sweeter than honey and milk, and more sweet-smelling

than musk perfume; so we have heard from Muhammad.

This water is clearer than milk. Who can

even begin to provide an example that describes Kawsara? Only Muhammad can.

There are ladles for drinking made of diamonds.

Their number is as abundant as that of prophets, if they are counted.¹⁴

Its breadth is such that it would take a month to cross.

Whoever drinks the water of Kawsara will join Ahmad.

It is here where people will offer congratulations to one another, and cheerfully dance

with happiness for being saved and seeing the light of Muhammad.

They will drink honey and then proceed together to enter Paradise,

the Abode of Peace, the city of those who love Muhammad.

[Page 8]

Whoever drinks the water will never be thirsty again.

They will be in peace, knowing that they are saved, and are with Ahmad.

May Allah allow us to drink [the water of Kawsara] that day and save us all

in the name of our exalted Prophet Muhammad.

¹⁴ There are numerous prophets in Islam. For the list of some, see Quran 6:83-89.

Let us repent and be righteous, my people, so that we can escape

the dangers [of this life], for the sake of the exalted Muhammad.

Let us throw away this world, for it is not a home but only a slave village!

Let us choose the home of Paradise, for it is the true home

where we will sit together in fellowship, drink milk and honey,

and be among the blessed in the company of Ahmad.

There, there is no death! Death will be gone, and we shall live forever!¹⁵

We shall all live perpetually in adoration and peace!

We shall all live perpetually in adoration and peace!

We shall live in Paradise where we shall see Muhammad

in the shade, with a rich variety of food

that is beyond comparison-- all of this, we learned from Ahmad.

Our homes will be made of gold, our clothes of silk,

and we will drink from the water of Salsabil,¹⁶ with Ahmad.

His body [the body of the Prophet] would be like rubies and coral,

in a robe adorned with jewels and topaz.

[The inheritors of Paradise]¹⁷ will neither be sad nor worry.

They will be generous and kind to each other forever as they see Ahmad.

They will all have the same age--equivalent to the *Hūru*.¹⁸

They will be generous and kind to each other forever as they see Ahmad.

¹⁵ *Sarmadan* is an Arabic term meaning continuously or perpetually as in the following verse: (O Prophet), tell them: "Did you consider: if Allah were to make the night perpetual over you till the Day of Judgement, is there a god other than Allah who can bring forth light for you? Do you not hear?" (Quran, 28: 71).

¹⁶ *Salsabil* or *Salsabeel* is a fountain in Paradise. See Quran: (76:17-18).

¹⁷ See Quran 23:1-11; 43:72-73; and 19:63.

¹⁸ *Hūru* here means young beautiful women of Paradise with alluring white eyes.

The walls [of Paradise] are made of silver and the great halls of diamonds.

Some of them are made of gold, according to Ahmad.

The soil of Paradise is made from gold dust and saffron.

Its scent is like musk, according to Muhammad.

The joy that is greater than all of Paradise,

is the sight of Allah, the King who elected Ahmad.

When we see Allah, we will forget all about Paradise,

for the joy of gazing upon Him who sent Ahmad.

People would gather there and stay to enjoy

the sight of the Most High who created Muhammad.

[Page 9]

There will be certain birds whose beautiful voices surpass the

sounds of the *goge*¹⁹ in sweetness. Everybody will hear them, together with Ahmad.

Those who have listened to the *goges* of this world,

will not be able to hear them there with Ahmad.

May we all be allowed to see our exalted one [Muhammad].

He will lead us to the Most High who loves Muhammad.

May Allah fulfill this wish that we have

for the sake of the dignity of our Prophet Muhammad.

May He forgive the sins I have committed, and

may He let me benefit from the favor of the exalted Muhammad,

for the sake of Shehu Jaili²⁰ of Ahmad,

¹⁹ *Goge* is a large one or two-stringed fiddle, with the body constructed of a gourd and played with a bow.

²⁰ Here the poet refers to *Shaykh 'Abdul Qādir Gilānī*, founder of the Qadiriyya Sufi order.

of the two Al-Rufa'i²¹ as well as other Sufi leaders of Ahmad,
and for the glory of Shaykh 'Uthmān Fodiyyu

who has the ladder that leads from here up to Ahmad.

By their grace, grant us success, oh Lord!

By the dignity of our exalted Prophet Muhammad,

The Siradī will be demolished along with the footprints on it,

and true religion will be elevated in honor of Muhammad.

Oh Lord, erase unbelief everywhere, both from the east and the west,

and from the right and left for the sake of Muhammad.²²

Atiku²³ will be brought to us in a home of joy and honor,

by God, The Almighty, who created Muhammad

to join the Muslim community that is prosperous and healthy

for the sake of the glory of the exalted Muhammad.

Anyone who asks Muhammad for something will receive it

from Allah. Surely, Muhammad has surpassed all.

My heart is enlightened with happiness,

with the joy of uttering the name of the exalted Muhammad.

This is my provision for my life here in this world.

I have completed this praise poem to seek intercession from Ahmad.

²¹ Here *Nana Asma'u* refers to two of her relatives who lead the Sokoto caliphate: 1) *Abmad Al-Rufa'i* (the son of Sultan Muhammad Bello who became the fourth Sultan of Sokoto), and 2) his uncle *Abmad Al-Rufa'i* (the son of *Usman dan Fodio* who became later the sixth Sultan of Sokoto).

²² Here, the poet means North and South because in Arabic, which is how they are described. On the whole, the verses indicate that the poet prays for the spread of Islam and the erasure of nonbelief everywhere in the world.

²³ Here *Nana Asma'u* refers to her brother *Sultan Abubakar Atiku*, a son of *Usman dan Fodio*. *Atiku* is another name for those named *Abubakar* in Hausaland.

Indeed, people, you have heard this song, which is now completed.

May Allah accept it, for the sake of the exalted Muhammad.

[Page 10]

May He forgive my mother, father and siblings,

and all Muslims. May He allow us to see the exalted one, Muhammad.

And may He [forgive] our families together with all our neighbors,

including those who love us for the sake of our Prophet Muhammad.

If anyone asks who composed this song, tell them all

it is Nana, the daughter of Shehu, who loves Muhammad.

As for you, my people, endeavor to follow her steps

so that you may be on the right path to Muhammad.

When believers hear preaching, they know how to

benefit from it, following the traditions of Muhammad.

I thank Allah and pray upon the Prophet. May peace

be upon the exalted messenger Muhammad,

and upon his household members, companions, the generation after them,

and upon all the generations who have followed the path of Muhammad.

[The poem was composed] in the seventh year based on Bina'u Rushdi,²⁴

according to the Ramzi dating system using the Hijra of the Chosen one, Muhammad.

For your information, the total number of the verses in the poem is

one hundred thirty-two. I urge you to follow Ahmad.

²⁴ *Nana Asma'u* uses a code that is difficult to crack. Our best interpretation is that she used a chronogram to date the poem. Each consonant in the word *Bina'u Rushdi* has numerical value: $b = 2$; $n = 50$; $r = 200$; $sh = 1000$; and $d = 4$. This means *AH 1256*. Since she said the poem was composed in the seventh year, we add 7 to *AH 1256*. This suggests that she wrote the poem in *AH 1263*, i.e. *CE 1845*.

The poem has been completed with gratitude to Allah and His assistance.

May His peace and blessings be upon

our master, Muhammad.

May peace be upon him.