

Poetry as a Vehicle for the Promotion of Socio-political and Economic Development: The Examples of Sulaiman Wali and Salihu Kwantagora

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Abstract

Poetry in our society performs several roles which range from community based needs to micro-individual specific functions. These functions can further be classified into aesthetics, social commentary, historical, cultural, educational and social control. This paper studies Sulaiman Wali's *Gargadi don Falkawa* "A Warning to be Wakeful" and Salihu Kwantagora's *Wakar Hana Zalunci* "Poem Against Oppression" in which both admonish society to adhere to good morals because a nation can only be built and sustained by exemplary men and women. Furthermore, they criticize the ills and evils which abet the dwindling condition of society towards failure. The poets also use their poems as a weapon to redeem this bad situation in order to promote socio-economic and political development.

Introduction

Literature, oral or written, always interrogates the history, experiences, worldview and sensibilities of a people. Literature is also the greatest tool in the representation of reality as well as an effective medium for social criticism that promotes literacy and a culture that is indispensable to human socio-economic and political development. Moreover, it is an effective tool of communication because it records, informs, enlightens, teaches, entertains and generally raises the consciousness of people about themselves and their environment. Writers have often chosen literature as a potent weapon against injustice, oppression and bad governance in our society so as to foster nation building. For instance, Niyi Osundare in *Village Voices* expresses his displeasure at the failure of leadership and the permanent state of transition in Nigeria. The poet attacks injustice, inequality, insecurity and corruption in his society and uses the collection to make sharp commentary on the class structure and the wide gap between the rich and

the poor as a result of the low moral standards of political elites. He is of the opinion that the greed of the Nigerian political elites gnaw at the fabrics of the Nigerian nation. Abubakar Gimba's *This Land of Ours* shows the despair and bureaucratic failure of the Nigerian nation. He stresses that growth and development in all facets of the society depend on the vehement fight against immorality, immobile and unprogressive bunch of politicians' corruption, and poverty. Just like Abubakar Gimba and Niyi Osundare, Sulaiman Wali and Salihu Kwantagora's poems express their disenchantment with the declining moral standards of the day, most especially as regards leadership and posit that Nigeria's greatest enemies against socio-political and economic development remain bribery, corruption and injustice.

Poetry

Poetry, like any other concept, defies a precise definition. Those who define poetry view it from different perspectives because it is an art formed through imagination. John Anthony Cuddon in Charles Bodunde (230) view poetry "as superior form of creation" and innovatively define it "as a comprehensive term which can be taken to cover any kind of metrical composition." For William Wordsworth in Bodunde (230), poetry is "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." In the opinion of Edgar Allan Poe in Karl Shapiro (19), poetry is "the rhythmical creation of beauty." Mathew Arnold, as Silvanus A. Igwebuike posits (8), simply sees poetry as "nothing less than the most perfect speech of man, that, in which he comes nearest to being able to utter truth." Percy Bysshe Shelly in Philip Bordinat (234-240) submits that poetry is the "expression of imagination" and the "very image of life expressed in its eternal truth." And lastly Osundare defines poetry in *Songs of the Marketplace* as:

A lifespring which
gathers timbre the more
throats it pucks harbinger
of action the more minds
it stirs (3)

He sees it at the level of language and message, and believes in accessibility of language and message to his target audience in order to propel them into social or political action.

In view of the first definition by Cuddon who sees poetry as a kind of metrical composition, one is aware that poets need not subject their works to any kind of metrical form. One can see the trends in modern poetry now in the blank verse; poets are at liberty to absolve themselves from fixed compositional schemes of earlier periods. In addition, Romanus Egudu (37) disagrees with William Wordsworth's definition because he is of the opinion that "poetry deals with not just feelings, but also with all the other aspects of the very essence of life itself." Egudu (38) further questions Edger Allan Poe's definition of poetry. As he observes, poetry may generate beauty or be rhythmical but "we are compelled to repeat the eternally harassing philosophical question as to whether beauty exists in a vacuum and in itself. For some of the truths expressed in poetry are bitter and annoying, rather than beautiful; though the way they are expressed should be beautiful." Egudu seems to only agree with Mathew Arnold's definition because it "seems to realize the essential interpretive function of poetry". Furthermore, Arnold in Igwebuike (4) attests that "more and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us." P.B Shelly's definition is in consonance with Arnold's view because both accept the fact that poetry pursues truth about life. Osundare is of the opinion that poetry as it reflects life has the capability of moving and provoking people into social or political actions.

From the above definitions and arguments, one can conclude that poetry should bear the imprint of society; and about life and how one responds to it. Sulaiman Wali and Salihu Kwantagora try to capture the realities of Nigerian society and stress the issues of immorality, corruption and injustice as onslaught elements that obstruct the socio-economic and political development of the nation. Sulaiman and Kwantagora believe that nation building or development will not thrive in a culture of corruption, immorality, greed and avarice. Nigeria must, therefore, deal with these plagues if socio-economic and political developments are to be achieved.

The Nature of Hausa Poetry

In Hausa, the terms "verse", "poetry" and "song" are synonymous. Each one of the terms can be translated by the word *waka* or *wake*. Though the Hausa society does not very much differentiate between the three terms, they still have oral and written poetry. Hausa oral poetry, *Wakokin Hausa na Baka* dates back to

the time of pre-jihad *Habe* rulers. The poetry which is secular in nature consists mainly of praise and the art of praise singing called *kida*, *waka* or *roko*. *Roko* is an old established institution in the royal courts of Western Sudan. According to Abubakar Habib Daba (4), “an eleventh century Arab geographer- Al Bakri referred to the existence of praise poetry/singing with talking drum (*kalangu*) at the court of Goa, which he visited sometime during his life time.” Thus, praise poetry/singing existed for centuries in the courts of the kings in the western Sudan in general and Hausa land up to the 1804 Jihad of Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo. Of the content of a praise poetry/song, Dandatti Abdulkadir explains that:

A praise-line is a concise, often metaphoric come-like statement accentuating the positive qualities of persons, social roles, events in which people participate, or objects found to be beautiful in the surrounding environment. A praise song is compendium of praise lines. (105)

Praise poetry/songs consist of *wakar maza* – war poetry or songs performed during war between two sections of a community or during hunting, *wakar aiki* – work verse, *wakokin sana'a* – songs for professions, *wakokin bori* – songs for the spirit or *bori* cult, *wakar reno* – nursing songs, *wakokin 'yanmata* or *gada* – girls’ song, *wakokin yara* or *tatsuniya* songs – children or folktale songs. All these categories of poetry/songs are accompanied with or without different musical instruments and are coloured with loads of images and symbols. The poetry/songs are according to a specific subject matter by the kind of instrument used or style of vocalization. Isidore Okpewho is of the opinion that:

The citizens of a community are perhaps better qualified than outsiders to determine into what aspect of their life a particular song fits in; there will be no point for instance in grouping a song under a category such as praise poetry when people who sing it would prefer to group it under funeral dirge. (127)

The Hausa written poetry – *wakokin addini* or religious poetry/songs started during the period of the Jihad in 1804. The religious poems were chanted both in Hausa and Fulfulde languages to preach Islam. During that period, Hausa oral songs, being un-Islamic, were discouraged. According to Marvyn Hiskett:

Hausa literate verse - that is, written as opposed to purely oral verse - was wholly Islamic, both in content and purpose at least until c.1900. Even after that date, on those occasions when a Hausa poet wrote verses on secular subjects, Islamic morals and attitudes continued to colour it.

(1)

Religious poetry in Hausa tradition is more or less used as a weapon in the battle for the hearts and minds of the people. The content of this poetry is that of *wa'azi* – preaching/teaching of good moral conducts and prophetic panegyric. Graham Furniss (197) further states that “the strongly didactic tone to *wa'azi* poetry has provided one of the distinctive features of poetry writing down to the present day.” The messages inherent in these poems are the creation of an ideal Islamic state where justice prevails, oppression is unacceptable, and all believers regardless of ethnic background or language, are equal and a functional administrative institution. This notion of an ideal state provides the basis for the assessment of the administration or government. If the government does not measure up, it is legitimate or even mandatory to oppose it, seek for its reform or overthrow it because it is inimical to the growth and development of the community. Furniss (214) postulates that even though modern Hausa poetry takes on new roles, new topics and new forms, it is still laced with moral discourse, power and ability to take on the many aspects of society, be it social, political, economical or cultural in relation to the growth and progress of the community.

In essence, the poems explain that it is in the light of these moral ethics that the level of human development is attained; and with it all forms of development can be achieved in a nation, be it social, economic or political. Writers such as Abubakar Gimba and Chinua Achebe also adopt morality which they expect to guide people towards growth and development of their society.

Theoretical Framework

The postcolonial theory to the study of literature will be used in this paper. The theory describes and interrogates post-independence problems in Africa. Thus, the situation in Nigeria long after independence is that of instability, poverty, greed, blackmail and poor leadership. The Nigerian political space is turbulent and unbearable. Nigerians are at the mercy of tyrants who have enthroned themselves in the name of democracy. Lastly, there exists the rat race for wealth by both the rich and the poor which leaves the society underdeveloped. Therefore, postcolonial Nigeria must tackle the problem of immorality if economic transformation and national development are to be achieved.

Analysis of the Poems

Sulaiman Wali and Salihu kwantagora hold the opinion that development will not flourish in the visage of immorality, corruption, bribery and greed. They lament the declining standards of the day and show their disdain for injustice, oppression and corruption. Their poems advocate for morality in personal and public behaviour because it is very important to the development of any nation, for example, Nigeria.

The poem by Sulaiman Wali, *Gargadi don Falkawa*, “A Warning to be Wakeful”, is a wake -up call from the slumber of hollowness, it examines why society has gone topsy-turvy and the pivotal role played by immorality in its destruction. The society is blind to progressive transformation and drenched in confusion and deceit. He says in the first twelve lines of his poem:

Lord preserve us what shall I say?
Our time is out of joint.
The sane have gone insane,
Those on the path of Sunnah have gone astray. Those
with vision find they can no longer see clearly, Those
on the right road have strayed. The doctor with the
cure for disease, Has been struck down and is sure to
die. There is no trust any more, no love of truth,
Everyone is engaged in crookedness.
There is no goodness in men’s hearts,
Everyone is involved in plots and intrigues. (Furniss 217)

In lines 13-58 of his poem, he laments how the society sees truth as a plague and people will rather pursue their heart desire in the form of sycophancy, aggrandizement for money, women, houses, cars and other ostentatious finery rather than adopt honesty and uprightness. The society has lost focus, sense of direction and decency. The point he makes here is that nation building is the product of conscious statecraft and does not sprout by coincidence. Finally, he questions in lines 59-68:

Is the way for us my friends,
All our actions set at naught?
Will this path bring us Directly
to happiness?

In God's name Nigeria,
What can we do and what can we say?
We must be self-critical and pursue the truth,
Follow the true path without straying.
We must like the pounder of grain, stand firm,
Our time is short and soon will pass. (Furniss 219)

The poet calls on Nigerians as a whole, both the rulers and the ruled, to wake up to their responsibilities, face the essential challenges of growth and stoically pursue the truth before it is too late. The state of the nation should be of utmost importance to us because if it is in a sane state we stand the chance of socioeconomic and political progress, but if otherwise, then we are heading straight to failure.

The first twenty lines of Salihu Kwamtagora's *Wakar Hana Zalunci*, "Poem Against Oppression" affirm the punishment that awaits all oppressors in the society, whether the leader or the led. There are various facets of oppression in the Nigerian society that suffocates economic transformation and national development. The politicians make pledges which never see the light of the day, are careless at the plight of the electorate, selfish, greedy, deceptive, exploitative and full of arrogance. All they do is ravage the national treasury and get engrossed in their ostentatious lifestyle so much so that they do not notice the level of infrastructural decay around them. Oppression also takes place in our educational and health institutions. The incessant strike action by teachers, doctors and judges in a nation cripples the economy. Students stay at home while the sick are unattended to. The only solution for government is to improve the conditions of the health and education sectors. Moreover, he warns against the collection of bribe because it is another form of corruption which brings a lot of calamity to the nation and disrupts growth and development. Lines twenty-one to fifty still condemn bribe because it is the bane of socio-economic and political underdevelopment. The entire society is guilty of corruption; it takes place in our offices, schools, hospitals, courts and even institutions of governance. He also pleads with the rich, strong and powerful not to devour the poor, weak and fragile. Also, in lines 33-40 of his poem, he implores the society to differentiate between the lawful and unlawful because it is the gateway to a corrupt free society.

The small man being devoured,
By the powerful as if he were no more than a titbit.

Being unconcerned at things that happen,
Be they sweet or bitter,
Lawful or unlawful, honey or poison,
Treating them all alike, drawing no distinction.
Accepting bribes and corrupt gifts,
They are all part of what makes for oppression. (Furniss 221)

Lines 55-70 of Kwantagora's poem suggest that when diligence and commitment to duty are upheld by government officials/politicians, and when the instruments of law interpretation and enforcement are not compromised, the society moves towards development. In this instance, the law enforcement agencies and the judiciary will be honest and virtuous. Consequently, this prevents them from swinging judgment to the advantage of the highest bidder.

The virtuous man who works,
Carrying out his responsibilities correctly,
Is rewarded by the salary
Which he receives to do with as he wishes
He is content with that as a righteous man,
And so is of great importance. He will
have no interest in taking bribes, Let
alone in acting oppressively.
What should concern the honest policeman Other than the pursuit of his
duties?
To prevent the criminal from committing crime The
only answer is a honest policeman.
Judges also know
The evil effects of oppression.
The honest judge,
What could lead him to want to accept a bribe? (Furniss 223)

From the foregoing, one can see that both poets tackle socio- economic and political problems in Nigeria. Both poets are advocates of national development through morality in the realm of personal and public behaviour.

Conclusion

Sulaiman Wali and Salihu Kwantagora, through their poems, examine the phenomenon of moral degeneration which undermines the development of the Nigerian society. They further assert that no nation can move forward when the

instruments of law enforcement and interpretation have been compromised. With reference to Wali's and Kwantagora's roles as poets, Modu Uchechukwu (382) postulates that:

It is by addressing the negative issues that a writer makes him/herself useful to a society he/she belong and this changed commitment from a writer then necessitates his/her role as a social critic. Social criticism therefore avails a writer the opportunity of not just speaking out against any deemed negative/positive phenomenon but also solutions to such problems.

Thus, the poets capture the predicament of their nation and reprimand the society for failing to live up to its objective and ideals through their poetry. All the poets advocate is the promotion of Nigeria's socio-economic and political development.

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APPENDIX

“Gargadi don Falkawa” na Sulaiman Wali

*Zamanin nan namu ya rikice.
Mahalkanta sun haukace.
Mabiya sun dau fice
Mai basira duk ta dakushe,
Mai bin hanya ya karkace.
Likitan cuta mai magani,
Cuta ta ka dashi zai mace.
Ba amana ba son gaskiya,
Kowa sai zambace-zambace.
Ba alheri bisa zuciya, Kowa
sai kullace-kullace.
Jahilci ya yi yawa gama
Ilimin Allah ya mace,
Har an binne shi wajen gari,
Mai zuwa nema nasa ya bace.
Babu mai aiki bisa zuciya
Daya, don Allah, sai don a ce.
Imani yak are, gama
So domin Allah ya mace,
Sai don samu don azrzi,ki,
Yadda za 'ayi zance zance.
Ba a son zancen gaskiya, In
kana yi kai ne mai fice. Kai
ne sususu sakarai, Wayon ka
kadan ka haukace.
In kace Allah, ko Annabi,
Su ne suka ce kuma sai a ce Kai
ne kafi kowa ko kuwa?
Wa ya ce ka fada, sarkin fice?
Kowa burinsa ya san kudi,
Ga gida ga mota ga mace
Ko ya hau rali sai ya kaikaice,
Yai wajen Sabon Gari ya bace.
A ciki wanka a cikin diras*

*Da kayan kwambace-kwambace.
Yana nishadi ga giya,
Ya san ni 'ima ya haukace.
A wajen hotel da wajen giya,
Nan zai kare a gaban mace.
Sai rawa sai ihu fasikai,
Gabansa gadi ba dakaceu.
In sun sha sun bugu sai su yi
Sururun zancensu a haukace.
Kyautansu maroka karuwai,
'Yan iska 'ya 'yan tarkace.
Zakka Sallah duka basu yi, Sai
dai kyautar a fadi a ce. Kai
mutum yau ka rasa hankali, Ka
susuce ka haukace.
Jahilci yai maka runduna, Ya
hana ka kasan ka karkace.
Kaki shawarto ka fandare,
Ibilis ya sa ka karkace.
Matan kuwa sune karuwai,
Makiya Allah mazawa fice. Kan
dai mace ta zama karuwa, Ta
lalace tir! Ba mace.
Ayya haka za mu yi 'yan' uwa,
Aikinmu dukansa a barkace?
Anyu haka she ne za ya kai Mu
limana ba wata karkace?
Ya ilahi mu Nijeriya, Me za mu yiko
me za mu ce? Mu yi wa kanmu fada,
mu bi gaskiya, Mu bi kan hanya ba
karkace. Mu tsaya tsayuwani mai yin
daka, Lokacinmu kadan ne zai wuce.
Mu sani duk kowa zaya je Gun
hisabi ranar gaskiya. Na gode Allah
nai yabo A gare shi a nan zan dakata.
Tsira da amincin Rabbana Ga
Rasulu daya hana yin fice.
Ka zo a cane wa yayi
Wakan nan, malam, sai ka ce
Na 'ibi Wali sunansa ne, Kuma
kurawa unguwarsu ce.*

*Tamat, yau wakata ta cika, Allah
sa mu mu bar son yin fice.*

Translation

“A Warning to be Wakeful” by Sulaiman Wali

Lord preserve us what shall I say? Our time is out
of joint.

The sane have gone insane,

Those on the path of the Sunna have gone astray.

Those with vision find they can no longer see clearly,

Those on the right road have strayed. The doctor
with the cure for disease, Has been struck down and
is sure to die. There is no trust any more, no love of
the truth, Everyone is engaged in crookedness.

There is no goodness in men's hearts,

Everyone is involved in plots and intrigues.

Ignorance is everywhere.

And religious knowledge is dead, Dead
and buried beyond the boundaries, And
he who seeks it is lost.

No one acts according to the dictates of their heart alone

And in God's name, but rather for their reputation.

Faith is finished, and furthermore,

True friendship is no more,

Friendship is just a means of gain and enrichment, And
a way to make a name.

They don't like the truth to be told, If
you speak it you are the one out of line.

You are the fool and the idiot, Naïve
losing your mind.

If you say that it is God, or the prophet,

Who has said these things, then they reply

How is it that you are better than everyone else?

Who told you to say these things, you freak?

Everyone is out to make money, houses cars and women.

Even out on his bicycle taking the long way round, Off
to Sabon Gari and to lose himself.

All clean and in his smartest clothes, all his ostentatious finery. His
pleasure is in alcohol,

He feels so good, it's gone to his head. In clubs and bars,
Is where he ends up, with a woman. Dancing and
shouting shamelessly,
Brazen, and without a moment's pause for thought.
When thoroughly drunk they pursue Their crazy
foolish conversations.
Their charity goes to musicians and prostitutes, Delinquents
and riff-raff.
They neither give alms nor pray, They give away
only to make a reputation. Hey, my friend, you
have lost your commonsense, Turned into an idiot,
gone mad.
Ignorance has laid siege to you
And stopped you from seeing how you have gone wrong.
You have rejected advice and turned away, The devil has
set you wrong.
And these women are prostitutes,
She is pitifully ruined. She is no longer a woman.
Is this the way for us, my friends, All our actions
are set at naught?
Will this path bring us, directly to happiness?
In God's name, we here in Nigeria, What can
we do and what can we say? We must be self-
critical and pursue the truth, Follow the true
path without straying. We must, like the
pounder of grain, stand firm, Our time is short
and soon will pass.
Let us remember that everyone will come
To the place of reckoning on that day of truth.
I thank God and I give praise. To Him and here I will stop.
May salvation and the trust of the lord God Be upon his
Prophet who has forbidden us to stray.
If they ask you who wrote this poem, then, mallam, tell them
His name is Na'ibi Wali, and he lives in Kurawa quarter.
This is the end, and now my poem is finished, Lord
preserve us from going astray.

"Wakar Hana Zalunci" na Salihu Kwantagora
Allah Rahamanu Mafifici,

*Ka jikanmu ka yafe laifinmu, Ka
rufe zunubanmu da adalci. Ku
taho ga waka kankanuwa,
Shi dai zalunci cuta ne,
Tsanani cutar har ta baci
Laifin dashi ke kai mai yin sa
Shiga wuta to, sau zalunci.
Allahu gwani yai alkawali, Zai
babbaka duk mai zalunci.
Kwasshake ciki da tuwon zulmu,
Zai dibgi wuta a cikin kunci.
Zai shake ciki da wuta hakkan, A
gaban Sarki mara zalunci.
Kwacce rashawa tace cima
Zai dibgi wuta a cikin kunci
Muggan laifofin munana,
Mai ja ma kasa wahala kunci, In
sun yi yawa don abinsu,
A cikinsu da laifin zalunci.
In mai fatawa ya zo gunka,
Ya ce, 'menene zalunci?'
Shaida masa yanke ka bar tsoro,
Saba wa tafarkin adalci Da aje
abu ba ma 'ajinai ba,
To, yin haka shi ne zalunci'.
Haka ketare inda ka ce a tsaya,
Da rashin kafuwa kan inganci.
Da zamowa mai karamin karfi
Gun mai karfi wainar cinci
Da rashin lura komi ya taho,
Mai zaki ne ko mai daci, Da halas da
haram da zuma da guba, Duk dai ne
ba wani bambanci. Karbar rashawa
kyautar hanci, Kirga shi ga kunshin
zalinci. Kowa aka ba ko wanda ya
bai, Zunubinsu guda ba bambanci.
Haka saukkake kakkauran sha'ani Domin
kwadayin karbar hanci,
Haka karfafa sassukan sha'ani
A kulle da sharrin ha'inci*

*To, kunga wadannan munanan
Abuba su ne zalunci
Duk mai fitinan jama'a bisa kan
B'arna har yai musu zalunci, Ya
risku cikin wahala tabbas Ya
turmutsa kansa cikin kunci.
Kowai haka zai ga fa sakayya,
Don ko ya aikata zalunci,
Duk mai aiki, mutum kirki,
Da yake aikin sa da adalci
Ladansa na aikin albashi,
Da yake amsa ya ci ba daci
Ya hankunra kansa farin bawa
Wannan na tare da inganci.
Ba zai kula amsar rashawa ba
Balle ya zamo mai zalunci
Dan sandan kirki ma ya tsare
Illa aikinsa na adalci?
Hana mai son yin mai laifi, laifi,
Sai dan sanda mai adaici
Haka alkalai suma sun sani
Mummunan aikin zalunci
Domin shi alkalin kirki Mik
kaishi ga son karban hanci?
Sun san kowa aka zalunta
Don fin karfi ko makirci
In ya kara a wurin Allah,
Ya ce 'Allah mai adalci'
Hakkina a wuyan wane,
Ka bi mani mai yin
Hakika bada dadewa ba,
Zai risku kawai acikin kunci
Faufau wahalar wani bata zama
Hutun wani cude da zalunci.
Sun san haka, to mai zai kaisu?
Su tabbata Allah bai barci,
Sun san Komai Allah ya fada
Zai ida fadarsa da adalci*

*Kuma sunga fadar Allah hakkan,
Me zai rude su su so hanci. Sun
san acikin Alkurani
Ai an yi hanin yin zalunci Aya
metan da guda sittin Da daya
Magana kan zalunci. Allah ya
tanadi yin kuna
Da wuta ga mutum mai zalunci
Kuma ya hana yin baiwar nasar
Wurin jama'a mai zalunci Ni
Saihu ga tau 'yar waka,
Wajen maganar zalunci.*

Translation

“Poem Against Oppression” by Salihu Kwantagora

The Merciful, the most High The just and righteous ruler.
Have mercy on us our errors,
Cover over our sins with righteousness.
Gather round for here is a short poem, In
which I will talk of the sin of oppression.
Oppression is a disease.
So serious has it become that we are in crises.
The crime which leads its perpetrator
Straight to hell-fire is oppression
God the Omniscient has promised
To bake all those who oppress
Whoever fills his stomach with the product of oppression
Will truly feel confinement in the fires
He will eat his fill of hell-fire
Before the lord who is innocent of all oppression
Whoever sees bribe as his meat and drink
Will truly feel confinement in the fires
That brings down calamity and pressure upon the land,
If they and their evil effects are everywhere to be seen
Then amongst them will be the crime of oppression
If someone comes to you and asks What is
oppression?
Tell him straight do not be afraid,

Straying from the path of justice,
And assigning things not to their correct places
Doing that is oppression
Failing to accept the word of God When
He said, „Desist from all oppression Going
beyond the limits that have been set, And
failing to take a firm stand.
The small man being devoured
By the powerful as if he were no more than a titbit.
Being unconcerned at things that happen,
Be they sweet or bitter
Lawful or unlawful, honey or poison Treating
them all alike, drawing no distinction.
Accepting bribes and corrupt gifts,
They are all part of what makes for oppression. He
who receives or he, who gives,
Their sin is equal, there is no distinction
Making light of something serious
Out of a desire to be offered a bribe;
Or making too much out of a minor incident
With intent to extort, these evil things
Are what constitutes
Anyone who troubles others and
Does them harm through oppressing them,
Any who behave so will receive their just desserts For
having acted oppressively.
The virtuous man who works,
Carrying out his responsibilities correctly
Is rewarded by the salary
Which he receives to do with as he wishes
He is content with that, as a righteous man, And
to be so is of great importance
He will have no interest in taking bribes.
Let alone in acting oppressively. What should
concern the honest policeman Other than the
honest pursuit of his duties? To prevent the
criminal from committing crime The only
answer is an honest policeman.
Judges also know the evil effects of oppression.
The honest judge, what could lead them to want to accept a bribe?
They know that whoever is oppressed

By superior force or trickery,
If that person lays his complaint before God
And says, „O righteous God,
I have been grievously wronged, Pursue for
me the one who has oppressed me“, Then
soon and for sure and certain,
The oppressor will find himself directly in torment
Never will one man's trouble be to another man's
Gain if oppression lies at the heart of it.
They know this to be true, so why should they do it? Let
them be sure that God does not sleep.
They know that God's word
He will justly fulfill.
And they know the certainty of God's word,
What could so delude them that they seek bribes?
They know that in the Holy Koran Oppressive
acts have been forbidden. It is the two hundred
and sixty-first verse Which speaks of oppression.
God has prepared burning
And fire for the person who oppresses others.
And he has refused the gift of victory To the
people who practice oppression. I am Salihu
and this is my small poem
About the need to defeat oppression