

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE  
(GRADUATE PROGRAMME)**

**A THEMATIC APPROACH TO THE MÄNZUMAS (POEMS) OF  
SHEIKH MUHAMMAD YASSIN (1895-1972): IN SOUTH WOLLO**

**BY  
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**June, 2010  
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APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS

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## **Abstract**

The general objective of this study is to collect and analyze the major themes of the Mänzumas of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin (1895-1972 G.C.), who was one the great Muslim leaders and scholars in South Wollo. Mänzuma is a religious song, which has been practiced by Ethiopian Muslims in a ritual process called Hadra. The specific objectives of the study are to introduce literary works buried for many years and not known even to persons in literature, to identify the major themes suggested in the poems, and to encourage other researchers on these kinds of genres in general and Muslim poets in particular.

The methods employed in collecting data are of two types: participant observation and interview. The first method enables the researcher to record texts at the moment of their actual performance. Besides, interviewing religious elders and the poet's family also help the researcher to understand the poet's biography, and the Islamic and local terms of this genre. The poems are collected by audio visual recording through field work.

Based on the objectives and methods, the thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one deals with the background of the study including the short biography of the poet. The second chapter is given to literature review, the third and fourth chapters are about the major themes in the collected Mänzumas, and the last chapter provides a short conclusion.

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin touches on certain religious themes through his poems. He raises various points related to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), such as the high status and rank of the Prophet compared to other Prophets, the biography and miracles of the Prophet, the qualities of the family of the Prophet. He emphasizes that the Prophet's grand intercession on the Resurrection Day and the Prophet's 'Hawd (cistern) in the next world are special favors that God (Allah) will give to his most beloved Prophet, Muhammad (pbuh).

Beyond praising Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and holy persons, the poet discusses the pillars of Iman (belief), especially Tawhid (Islamic Theology) and the minor and major signs that indicate the approach of the Day of Resurrection. The poet also talks about the life after death; in the grave, on the Resurrection Day, the punishment and the reward in the next world based on the holy book of Islam, Quran, and Hadith. The major events that happened in Muhammad's Prophethood and the heroes of Islam are the focus of the poet. The poet also gives direct religious and moral instructions through his poems.

Islamic scholars teach Islam and the history of Islam insightfully and impressively using this genre based on the holy book of the religion, Quran. Hence, Mänzumas entertain various religious contents beyond praising holy persons especially Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

## Key to Transliteration

### Vowels

ā	ä...as in 'Mädih
u	u...as in 'Umar'
i	i...as in 'Isra'
a	a...as in 'Kafir
e	e...as in Amen
ä	ë...as in Miäraj

### Consonants

š	š...as in 'Arš'
č	ch...as in 'gacha'
j	j...as in 'Jibril'
t	't...as in 'Abu 'Talib'
č	Č...as in Čat'
g	g...as in 'gabi'
H	H...as in...'Hawd

## Abbreviations

A.H. - Anno hijra (Islamic calendar)

A.D. - Anno Domini

Pbuh - Peace be upon him

P - Poem

L - Line

## Introduction

Although it is not well recorded and studied, Ethiopia is rich in oral poetry due to its cultural, regional and ethnic diversity. Religious oral poetry is common in the earlier religions of the country and is part of this oral literature. There is a genre called Mänzuma, which has been experienced by Ethiopian Muslims, but not well studied in connection with the history of Ethiopian literature. Mänzuma is a general name given to any song sung, in a religious meeting called "Hadra." Assefa (1987:10) defines that "Hadra" is simply a meeting of Muslims to thank, Praise, or pray to Allah". Mänzuma is one of such praise songs sung on Hadra.

This research focuses on the Mänzumas (poems) of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin (1895-1972 G.C.). He was one of the Muslim leaders and scholars, who have contributed a lot to the religion by constructing a mosque in South Wollo, particularly at Meslay village, 5 km from Mekdela Mountain, and by teaching Quran and the religion to the community. This Muslim poet was popular in the Muslim community, and his mosque and tomb, as a popular shrine, will be visited by many Muslims around the area annually.

Even though Sheikh Muhammad Yassin died 38 years ago, the mosque is giving the services of the Sheikh based on the promise he had made in his verse as follow:

**የአንቱ ኸድራ እኮ ነው የአሪፍ ጀነት ፣**

**ነቢ አንቱን መወደድነው የኛ መድሃኒት ፣**

**ልጄን እተካለሁ እኔ እንኳ ብሞት ፣**

It is your hadra for those wise persons;

The prophet, liking you is our solution;

I will replace my son to take over even if I die;

Therefore, the Sheikh's first son, Sheikh 'Saliad taken his place when Sheikh Muhammad Yassin died in 1972, and his grandson, Sheikh Sultan Salih has also replaced his father and is still leading the mosque.

This research is a literary textual analysis of the poet's works which are in Amharic language. Emphasis is made on analyzing the themes which are portrayed in the poems.

There are various reasons for this research to be conducted. The first one is the little attention given to the field of oral literature so far. The second is related to the attitude of the people towards this Islamic oral poetry. Most people think Mänzumas do not entertain beyond praising.

The researcher is also afraid that Mänzuma and Muslim poets will be forgotten unless research of this kind remind by preserving their works. Therefore, this study attempts to remind one of the Muslim poets, Sheikh Muhammad Yassin (1895-1972). By considering his contributions to the society and the religion, the government is planning to make his shrine a historical place at national level.

The general objective of this study is to collect and analyze the major themes of the Mänzumas (poems) of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin. The specific objectives of the study are to introduce literary works buried for many years and not familiarized even to persons in literature, to identify the major themes portrayed through the poems, and to encourage other researchers to study on these kinds of genres in general and Muslim poets in particular.

The methods employed in collecting data are two types: participant observation and Interview. The first method enables the researcher to record texts at the moment of their actual performance, and interviewing religious elders and the Sheikh's family also helps to understand about the Sheikh's biography, and the Islamic and local terms of this genre (Mänzuma). The poems are collected through field work.

The present study is limited to the ten poems of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin collected through field work. It is a thematic analysis of the Sheikh's works which are in Amharic language only.

The thesis has five chapters. The first chapter provides background to the study. It discusses the short biography of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin and the methodology followed by the researcher.

The second chapter is dedicated to literature review. Hence, it provides clear description about oral literature in general and Mänzuma (Islamic poetry) in particular. This part also includes explanation about the ceremonial process done while Mänzuma is performed and a review of the previous research studies related to this particular religious poetry.

The third and fourth chapters are given to the main body of the study, that is, thematic analysis of the ten collected poems of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin.

Then, a short conclusion is provided in the last chapter of the thesis. A bibliography, glossary of terms, list of informants and the ten poems (Mänzumas) of the Sheikh used in the analysis part are attached at the end the thesis.

### Appendix-III

#### List of Informants

No	Name	Date of Interview	Age	Place
1.	Munira Muhammad	Feb.27,2010	58	Masha
2.	Muhammad Eshetu	Feb.28,2010	40	Masha
3.	Sheikh Sultan Umar	Feb.21,2010	35	Meslay
4.	Sheikh Ahmad Beshir	Feb.22,2010	80	Meslay
5.	Sheikh Seid Yemer	Jan.3,2009	65	Kaliti
6.	Sheikh Yakut A/Meged	Mar.2,2010	50	Dessie
7.	Sheikh Kemal Yesuf	May15,2010	40	Addis Ababa
8.	Sheikh Muhammad Kemal	Sep.10,2009	47	Sebeta

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Sakolov, Y. M. (1971). *Russian Folklore*. Detroit: Folklore Associates.

Tibabu, S. (1984). Ya Haji Hamid Manzumawech Yizat. Unpublished BA Thesis (in Amharic ).

## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

Name.....

Signature.....

Place: Addis Ababa University

Date of Submission.....

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my advisor, Mr. Tesfaye G/Mariam for his insightful guidance and constructive comments on the work from the very beginning to the end of this thesis.

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# APPENDIX I

## POEM I

አላህ አላህ አላሁ ፣  
አላህ አላህ አላሁ ፣  
አላህ አላህ አላሁ ፣  
አንተ ማረን አንዲሁ

ባሮችህ ካንተ መጡ፣ 1  
ኸይር ስራ እንኳ ሊያጡ፣  
አይገዳቸው ሸርጡ፣  
አንተ ዘንዳ ሲሮኹ፣  
አባክህ አሳምረው፣ 5  
ኸልቁን አታስቸግረው፣  
ቀልቡን ወዳንተ አዘረው፣  
ኸይር አንዲሁራ አዘረው፣  
ስጠን ካንተ መውደድ፣  
ኸይርን አንድንለምድ፣ 10  
በሙሀመድ አህመድ፣  
ሰው በበለጠው ጃሁ፣  
ልታቀናውም ሁሉንም፣  
አይቸግርህም ምንም፣  
ዛሬስ ፈራሁ እኔንም፣ 15  
ሲያስለቅቀኝ ባባሁ  
እኔስ ከጆየህ ነበር፣  
ትንሽ እማትነገር፣  
አድርጋት ወደፊት ገር፣  
ያረቢ የአላሁ፣ 20  
በነቢ አስሃቦች፣  
በሆኑት አይነቶች፣  
በሳቸው ዘሮች፣  
ሁኝ ልምጣ እየዳሁ፣  
አህለል በይቶች እናንተን፣ 25  
ጠራናችሁ ባቃተን፣  
መዕሪፋ ሢር ይጋተን፣  
አይበለን የተነሳሁ፣  
ባውሊያውችህም ሁላ፣  
ባረካቸው አጅላ፣ 30  
አርግልን የተሳለ፣  
ገንዘብ አንበል አጣሁ፣  
አዘህ በተነሱት፣  
ደግሞ በተረሱት፣  
ቶሎ በሚደርሱት፣ 35  
ለጂዲፍ ላብላሁ፣  
በዚያ በተመረጠው፣  
ሂጃቡን በገለጠው፣  
ሙላውን ባሰለጠው፣  
አምሳያውን ባጣሁ፣ 40  
ሙሀመዱል አሚን፣  
የሰጠኹን ተምኪን፣  
ያደከመኝ እኔን፣  
ሁኝ የተጠማሁ፣  
ብትወጡ ከዐርሽ፣ 45  
አልፈሁ ያንን ፍራሽ፣  
አበጀሁልን ዐይሽ፣  
አዘህ ለእኛ አሳባሁ፣  
እዛ ስፍራ ሰው የለም፣  
በጎላ ፊት ዘላለም፣  
መላይካ ሊተዐሊም፣  
ስትወርዱ ተጠጋሁ፣  
ኢብራሂም ስትወርዱ፣  
ቢያገኙህ ከመንገዱ፣  
ለእኛ ምክር ሰደዱ፣ 55

ጠቀሙን አባትሁ።  
 ሙሳ የአላህ ወዳጅ፤  
 ስትወጡ ሚዕራጅ፤  
 ነገሩህ የሚበጅ፤  
 አዝነህ ለኡመትሁ።60  
 አላህ ያሳድጋቸው፤  
 ትልቅ መቃም ይስጣቸው  
 ሁሉም አዛኞች ናቸው፤  
 አንቱን ለሚወድሁ።  
 የጌታችን መላይካ፤ 65  
 በዐርሽ አገር ሲንጋጋ፤  
 ያንቱን መቃም መች ነካ፤  
 አልከጀለም ፈርቶሁ።  
 ፊት ያለፈው ቢወራ፤  
 የለሁም ባልንጀራ 70  
 እኔም ኪታብ ብቀራ፤  
 የአንቱን አምላዬ አላየሁ።  
 ዛፍ ስር ቢዩህ ቡኸይራ፤  
 አርሂብ ብሎ ተጣራ፤  
 ድግስ ሊያበላ እንጀራ ፤ 75  
 ፊትኩን አይቶ ቢያውቁሁ።  
 ይህ ሰው ቢሆን የጉድነው፤  
 አንድ ጊዜ ቢያዩ ያመነው፤  
 የቅርቡን ሲሸፍነው፤  
 ሰውነት ሲፈትሁ። 80  
 መላኩሁን ወረቀት፤  
 ደግ ተናገረ አውቆት፤  
 ለተቀረው እርቆት፤  
 እየጠናው ሸእንሁ።  
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 አላህ ባነገሰው በመክሉቁ ላይ፣

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 በሌላቸው ቢጤ ባጡት ባልንጅራ፣  
 ቀልብ የሚያስነሸጣቸው ወሬያቸው ሲወራ፣  
 ወበዕድ ሐዘ አሁን የሻሁት መንገር፣ 10  
 ተውሂድ መበየን ነው ለሚይዝ ምክር፣  
 ያንቢያየመላይካ የቀዳን ቀደር፣  
 ከአነዚህም ሌላ ደግሞ እጅግ ነገር፣  
 ከቀብርም መዲያ ያለውን ኸበር፣  
 ከጎዳዳናው ላይ ቢደከመኝ ተኝቼ፣ 15

ድንገት ቀሰቀሱኝ ትልቅ ወንድሞቼ  
ላዘግም ባውራው መንገድ ውድማ ሳልሄድ ስቼ፤  
ምክር ይወደባል ዓልም ላዋሰው፤  
ይሰማኛል ካለ ከሺ አንደኛው ሰው፤  
ሰምቶ ለሚይዝ ሰው ጌታችን ይማረው ፣20  
እቀበለዋለሁ ለሚወረውረው።

ሞት አለብኝ ላለ ጌታን ለሚፈራ  
ጆነት ለሚከፈል ነገር በአኼራ  
ተውሂድን አጥርቶ አስቀድሞ ይቅራ፤  
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ባጥ ያሰግድ ግዳ ምን ጊዜም አይቆም፤  
እንደትንሽ ነገር እንደሚታላፍ።  
ተውሂድ ሲቀራ አየሁ በጎን በትርፍ

ስንት ሰው ነበሩ እጅግ ፈን ያውቁ፤  
በተቀረው ሻቅለው ተውሂድ ሳያደቁ፤30  
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ቢሆንም ለጌታ በባርያም ቅዋ አይደል፤  
አላህ ለሻለት ነው ዳረንገት ነው ዕድል፤  
ጌታዬ መላልኝ አማኔ እንዳይጎድል፤

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ልንገርህ አሁንን ፍሬውን ነገር፤  
ኢማኑን ለሰጠህ ጌታህን አሸከር፤  
ሰው መዘለምን ተው አትለፍ ድንበር፤  
ጆልን ጠባይ ሁላ ከቀልብህ ውሰጥ አውጣ፤ 40  
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እጅጉ ይኸው ነው ኢማን የሚያስመልጥ፤  
የዱንያውን ትተህ ለአኼራህ ሁን ብልጥ፤

ለሚቀበለኝ ሰው ነሲሃ እሰጣለሁ፤  
መላው ቢቀናልኝ እኔ እከጅላለሁ፤ 45  
አላህ ሳይሻው ቢሆን እንዴት እችላለሁ፤  
ኢነከ ለተህዲ ያለውን አልፋለሁ።፤  
ባቡላሂል አዕዘም የገባሁት አሁድ፤  
እነግራለሁ ብዬ የቂያማን ጉድ፤

እስኪልናገረው ከታቡ አንዳዘዘኝ፤  
እባክህ ጌታዬ ስናገር አግዘኝ፤  
የወቅቱ ማጠሩ ምላሴን ሳይዘኝ፤  
ለሰው ይመስለዋል ወዲያ ሲናገር  
ቃል የሚያንጨረጭፍ ሀድራ የሚያገር፤  
ዓይኔስ ማረፊያው ነው ከጫማዬ ስር፤  
የቂያማን ምልክት የሆኑትን ሰግራ፤  
ጥቂት ልናገረው ቢሆንልኝ ዘክራ፤

የነቢ መላክ ነው አንዱ ምልክቱ፤  
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ያላወቀው ሰው ነው ሁክሙን የሚፈርደው፤  
አቅሱ በመሰለው ጅሀሉ እየጋረደው፤  
ዒልሙን መጠየቁ ሆኖ የሚያዋርደው፤  
ደግሞ ምልክቱ መብዛቱ ነው ዘና፤  
ነፍሱን የሚያሸንፍ አይገኝም ደህና፤ 65  
እማኒነት ጠፍቶ መያዝ ነው ኸያና፤  
ዝናቡ እያነሳ መብዛቱ ዳመና።

ሹመት መያዙ ነው ሰብይና ሴት፤  
መፍክከርም ነው በማተላቅ ቤት፤  
ደግሞ በአዱንያ ወግ እመሰጅድ ጩኸት፤ 70  
ሚስቱን መገዛት ነው ቀርቶ አባት እናት፤  
ሰው መወደዱ ነው ሽሩ እየተፈራ፤  
ውስጡ የቋጠረው ከይዱ እንዳያፈራ፤  
ቀልቡ ሳይገናኝ ላዩን ባልንጀራ፤  
ሹመት የያዘ ሰው በገንዘብ መፍረዱ፤ 75  
ነቢ የተናገሩት ይኸ ነው ደግሞ አንዱ፤  
ሴቱ መብዛቱ ነው እያንሰ ወንዱ፤

ሰውም ማብዛቱ ነው ሸክዋና ዋይታ፤  
አንድ መሆኑ ነው የሱቁ ሽራታ፤  
ደንዩ ሰው ነው የሰዎች ዓይነታ፤80  
ጨረቃ መለወጥ መራት መንቀጥቀጥ

ከሪባ አንድ እኮ ሰው መጥፋቱ አሚያመልጥ  
 ቁርካን መቀራቱ በደጋግ ድምጽ፤  
 መፅናና ፍራቻ የለ ቀልቡ ውስጥ  
 መነሳቱ አንዱ ነው በረካ ከእርዚቅ 85  
 ከዘመድ ከወዳጅ መቅረት መናፈቅ  
 ከቀልብ ላይ እዝነት ጨርሶ መውለቅ  
 መጠላት ነው ደግሞ ለሚናገር ሐቅ  
 ተገፎ ሃያው መቆም ሆነ ምልጥ  
 እንዲያው መሰብሰብ ነው ለቡና መጠጥ፤ 90  
 ከሂሰድና ከሜት የለ እዚያ እሚያመልጥ  
 ሙቀት መሆኑ ነው ቀዝቃዛ ወራት፤  
 ደግሞ ቀዝቃዛው ወር መሆኑ ነው ሙቀት፤  
 አንዱ ማጠሩ ነው ሲሄዱት መራት።  
 እዱንያን ፈላጊ ሆኖ ሰው ጨርሶ 95  
 ደግሞ መታጣቱ ነው ያኼራ ሰው አንሶ፤  
 ዒባዳ ማድረግ ነው ዱንያን ተንተርሶ  
 እዱንያን መፈለግ በአኼራ ስራ  
 ዒልም ለአላህ ሳይሆን መቅራት ነው ሲቀራ  
 ዒልሙን የሚያስቀረው ይህ ነው ሳያፈራ 100  
 ዓመቱ ወር መምሰል ነው ፈጥኖ ሲሮጥ  
 ወሩ እንደሳምንት ሳምንቱ አንድ አንድ ቀን  
 የቡኻሪ ሐዲስ ይህን አሳወቀን።

POEM III

አላጉሙ ሶሊ ዐላ ሙሐመዴ  
 ነቢ ዘይኔ ነቢ ዘይኔ  
 ያቁረተል ዐይኔ

እስኪላውድሰው በናፋቂው አፍ፤ 1 የቦ  
 የጠይባን ሙሽራ የጠይባን ሽሪፍ፤  
 ቀልባችን ተነሳ መደዱን ሊያጎርፍ፤  
 ልወዘወዘው እንጅ እንደምን ልረፍ፤  
 የኔቶችን ወዳጅ ጌታው ነቢ ዘይኔ፤  
 እስኪላነሳላው ያንን ዐይነ ኩሌ፤ 5  
 የነደምራን ወንድም ያሚናን ጆላሌ፤  
 የነራዲን ሚዜ ያሊማ ከላሌ፤  
 ሸውቁ እንኳን በጋሻው ይገላል በጀሌ፤  
 የመውደዱ ዘማች ተንዝ አለ ለዐይኔ፤  
 ቀልቤን ብሰልለው ማይ ተሻገረ፤ 10  
 ወንጀሌ አንቢ አለ አንጂ እየገረገረ፤  
 ነፍስያና ሐዋ እያደናገረ፤  
 የሸውቁ ውልታ በዛ እያሰገረ፤  
 ብደርሱልን እንጂ ያደጃል ሁሠይኔ፤  
 ውዱ ናፍቆችን ያንገበገው፤ 15  
 ለሱ ነው ቀልባችን የሚንገበገበው፤  
 ጀማሉ በሆዴ እንደሱ ያየው፤  
 ሂርዜ መድሃኒቱ ማረፊያ ነው ላይኔ፤  
 የአላህ አፈንጉስ የአላህ ቤትወደድ፤  
 አረ የት ይገኛል እንደሙሀመድ፤  
 ወዳጅ እሚረዳው ሲገቡ ከለሀድ፤  
 ገልበጥ ገልበጥ ይላል ጀማሉ በሆዴ፤  
 ነቢ አባ ፋጢማ ጌጤ መኮነኔ፤  
 የሀድራው ሁመያ ቢጠጣ ቢጠጣ  
 ጋንም አልጎደለ ጥምም አላወጣ፤ 25  
 ወደ እሱ ያልመራው ምነኛ ፊጣ አጣ፤  
 ሠደውን እንሂድ አደብ እንዳናጣ፤  
 ጠይፋን ለመደና ይቃብዛል ዓይኔ፤  
 ጥንፍፋ ሙስጠፋ ሙሀመድ አራጋው፤  
 ካለነቢ ማነው ሸብር እሚያራጋው፤ 30  
 ተወደድኩኝ ብሎ ሌት ቀን ያልዘነጋው፤  
 የጥሜቱን ሌሊት ላዊዳው ያነጋው፤  
 ከሌው ጦሩን ስሎ አፍጣል ወደ እኔ፤  
 ዐቂቅ ላይ ሲዘልቁ የሚታየው ቁባው፤  
 የሸሪዓው ቁንዲ እንዴት አለሁ አንባው፤ 35  
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ዘይነብ የወለዱት ወሬውን ስንሰማ

አንድ አልይ ነው አንዲቱ ኡማማ  
ሙራሂቅ ሁነው ነው አሊይ ሲሞቱማ  
ረሱል አማማን ይወዱ ነበር  
ሸኮኮ ብለው ነው ሶላት ሲከብሩ  
ይቀበላላ ምድር ሲያበቁ ከምድር

አልይ ያገቧቸው ፋጢማት ቢሞቱ  
ወስያ ተናግረው ይህችው አክስቲቱ  
ሳይድ አሊይ ሞቱ ኢማማ ሳይፈቱ  
መዕይራን አገቡ ከአሊይ በኋላ  
ፈቅደው አልይ መረጠው ከሰው ሁላ  
እንዳይወስደዎት ከቁረይሾች ሌላ

ሲትና ሩቅያ የነብያችን ልጅ  
ኡስማን ሀበሻ አሳቸው ሂጅ  
ከነጃሽ ዘንዱ እስቲመጣ ፈረጅ  
እንኳን ሩቅ አገር ወጥተው አያውቁ ደጅ

ሀበሻ መሬቱ የደረሱ በዚያ ለምኝታ  
መልኩ ኹኖብዎት ትጥቅ የሚያስፈታ  
አልመለስ በሉ ዱዓ አረገላቸው  
አንድ ጊዜ ሁሉንም አላህ አጠፋቸው  
የገቡለት ጌታ መቸ ሲረሳቸው

በወህይ ነው ካለህ ዑስማን ሲያገቡዎት  
2 ጊዜ ሂጅራ አበሻ ያመጡዎት  
አብደላን እዚህ ወለድዎት

በድር ተዘመተ ሩቅያን ታመው  
ዑስማን ድሉን ሰሙ ሲቀበሩ አስታመው  
ነቢም በድር ሰሙ ጉድ አርጁን አይደክሙ

አልሃምዱሊላሂ ደፍኑ በናት አሉ  
ሚነል መክሩማቲ ሌላም አላከሉ  
መርዶው ሆነ አንዴ ደስታው የድሉ

መዲና ከሄዱ ሩቅያ ሞቱ  
ሃያ ዓመት ከአስር ወር ተርፏቸው ከአመቱ

ዑስማን አለቀሱ ሩቅያን ቢያጡ  
የነቢ አማችነት ቢቀር ቢቆረጥ  
ነቢ ጋር ቆመው ሳይሹ ቢቀመጡ  
ነቢ አሉ ዑስማን ጅብሪል አሁን መጡ  
ተአላህ ታህል ኩልሱምን ሊሰጡ

ዑስማንን አግብተው ኩልሱማ ሳይወለዱ  
የኖሩትን ኑረው ወደ አኼራ ሄዱ

ቀልቤን የናቀው ወሬውን ስንሰማ  
ካሚል የሆኑትን ሲትና ፋጢማ  
እንደነ ኸድጃ እንደነ መሬማ  
እንደነ አስያ የአላቸው ክራማ  
የወልይ ካሚሎች ናቸው አራቱማ

ፋጢማን ይወዳል ነቢን የወደደ

የነቢ ዙርያ በርስዎ ወረደ ወደታች እያደር እየበዛ ሄደ  
 ተዓመት ተርፏቸው መዲና ከገቡ  
 ሲትና ፋጢማ ከአልይ ጋር ተጋቡ  
 ልክዋቸው ሄደው መንገድ ሳያስሉ  
 እዚህ ነብያችን አጎብተው ኸጠቡ  
     ኸጥባውን ቀሩት አርገው ደግሞ ጋራ  
     በወህይ ሆነና የሚሰሩት ስራ  
     ሰጥተው ሲያስሩ ሂክህ የለም ቀን ቅጠራ  
 ተወልደው ሃያ አመት ኸነው ከስምንት  
 በቂዕ ተቀበሩ ሲቲ ፋጢማት  
 አሊ በቂዕ አባስ ሰገድበዎት  
     ሌላ ሴት አልያዙ ሰጊድ አልይ  
     ሁለቱን ሞት መጥቶ በግድ እስኪለይ  
     ስድስት ወልደው ሞቱ የለም የቀረ ሀይ  
 ከአልይ በቀር ሌላ ባል አያውቁ  
 ከአለፉ አባትም አልታዩም ሲስቁ  
 ወራቱም አልበዛ ላኪን ሊሰጥቁ  
 ቀልብ የሚያኸርቀው ስምዎ ሲነሳ  
 ምን ይሆን ነገሩ ሲሩ ራቀኝ ሳ  
 መንጫው ዘሩ የሰው ጐሣ  
 ፍቅሬ እውነት እንደሆን እውይ ሳይረሳ።

POEM VII

የአረቢ ሶሊ ወሰሊ መዐላ  
 የአረቢ ሶሊ ወሰሊ መዐላ  
 ዘይኑል ዐለሚን ታጁል ቱደላ

    ሽምሱል ፋቁል ዐለም የመሰለው  
     ሁልጊዜ ዘላለም ባህሩ ነው የሞላ  
 መሠረት የሆኑት ለዓለሙ ካብ  
     ሁሉን የጠበቁት ከአዱንያ አዛብ  
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     ሲነግሩት ይርቃል በሌላ  
     ክዐርሽ ጆምሮ ኢላ ተኸተስተሩ  
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 ዐፊነው ይዘውን በፊት በስተኋላ  
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     ከባህን አውጣን ከእነሳቸው በላ  
 አለቁ ጣጣቸው ወደ አንተ የሂሩት  
     የገባ ሩኸቸው ዓለመልጆበሩት  
     የማይማውቁውት ሸይጧን የማያውቁት ሌላ 20  
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 መች ይታክተዋል ደግ መብል የበላ  
     ወይ አስረሳቸው የፊቱን ምስኑት  
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     ጥቂት ልብ ሰጥቶ ለአስተነተነው  
     አንደኛው ዝም ብሎ አንደኛው ሲበላ  
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 በቡላሂል አዘም ደጃፋ ሰፋ  
     የሚያስተራርቁ ለከፋ ለአጠፋ  
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እንደ እንኳ ሳይቀር ሁሉን የተሟላ  
ለርስዎ ኸለቀው ያንን ሁሉ ኸልቅ  
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ወዳጅ ያላቸው ተራምደው አለፉት በኑሩ ቃጥላ  
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ከደህና ሺህ ይዘህ ሸይሻን ከሚባረር  
በኋላ የሚያጠጣ ሸራበን ዱላል  
እንዲህ ከሆንክ በኋላ ብታደርግ ሶላዎት 50  
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ይኸ አይሆንም ቢሆን ተውኝ አታትበኝ  
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ሶላዎት ቢያደርገው ኑሩን ወዴት አይቶት  
ሶላዎት ቢያደርግ ይመስላል የጠላ  
በነቢ መሃባ የተቃጠሉት  
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.....  
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በኪታቡ መስራት ቢያቅትህ እንኳ አቅሙ  
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ይገል ነበር ቁርኣን አንዳንዱ ሱራ  
ዛሬ ብንቀራው ፈውቀል አናድር  
አህያ አይረግት ብትጫን ዳውላ  
መክሬያለሁ እኔ ባልይዘው  
አዱኒም ነሲሃ ይኸር በሚለው  
አባክህ አድርገን እንዳንሆን ወላላ  
ቀብር ያህል ነገር ወደ ፊት አትራ  
እንደምን ደስ ይላል ዱንያ ማደሩ  
እንደዛሬው አዳር የሌለበት መላ  
አሉበት መላኢኮች የሚያስፈሩ አዛ ዘንድ  
የሚጠይቁት ከጌታ ከተውሃድ  
እባብ ያለበት ነው ጊንጡ የሚባላ  
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የመለሰ እንደሆን ይህና ያኖሩታል  
ዘመድ ቤተሰቡ በዱንያ ረስቶታል  
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አይከፋ የከፋ ሁኖ የሚያስጠላ  
ተዚያ በላይ ሁኖ ጋልበኝ ይሰዋል  
በታች ነበርና በዱንያ ላይ ሳለ  
ወደ ጀሃነም ይዘት ይሄዳል  
ደግ እንደሆን ስራው ይለዋል አብሽር  
እኔ ነኝ በዱንያ የሰራኸኝ ኸይር  
የሚያምር ኑር ሾኖ ሳይቀሉ የቀላ  
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ቁያማ ስንላት ሰሚ ትንሽ ናት  
መክራዋ ብዙ ሰባሺ ዓመት  
ለቅሶኛዋ ብዙ ስራውን ሲሞላ

ሰው ሲነበር አንዱ በአንዱ ነፍስ  
 እየዋጠው ላቡ አንገቱ ድረስ  
 ይንበር ስንዝር ቀርባ እራሱ እየፈላ  
 ጆንበር ስንዝር ቀርባ እራሱ እየፈላ  
 የተሰጡት ነቢ መቀምም ማሙድ  
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 አንደዜ ከደጋ አንደዜ ከቆላ  
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 ቀልብህ ቆንጆ ነች የሆነች ሳዱላ  
 ልብህ የዘነጋ ሰወንጀል የተኛ  
 ሲነግሩት ያደርጋል የሞኝ ሀላተኛ  
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 አዩ ጉድ ለነፍሴ ለሰው ስለጥ መላ  
 አዱንያ አልተያዘ አኼራ አልተያዘ  
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 ዒለም ለመንገር ነው የሚሻቅለው  
 እንደሚለፈልፍ ያሰከረው ጠላ  
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 እተወዋለሁ እኔስ አልማስንም  
 ብነግረው ብነግረው አይገባውም ምንም  
 እንደተንገላታ እንደራበው ጋላ  
 የአኼራ ሰዎች አንዳንድ ቢኖሩ  
 የሚሄዱበት አጡ በጣም ተቸገሩ  
 እንደማይድ ሰው እንደማይሞት ሁላ  
 አይዟችሁ ወንድሜ እንመክክር  
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POEM VIII

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 ጌታዎን በዱንናያ እሱዎ ብቻ አዩ  
 አርጉዎት መቀረብ የኸድራው ቀምጣላ  
 ዛፍ ባህር ሆኖ ባህሩ ቢሆን መድ  
 ምንድን ማለቁ አለው የአንቱማ መደድ  
 በአንቱ ሁብ ይቆማሉ ጉልበቱ የላላ  
 ቢጠልቁት ያልቃል ወይ አባይና ጣና  
 ያልቀመሰው ይኖራል በጤና  
 ዕድሜን ይሸኛል እንደው በሰኸል በለላ  
 የአሪፎች ቀለብ ለእኛ ምኞታችን  
 ጌታ ቢያዝንልን ነው ቢለቀን ታባችን  
 ብንወጣ ከማሰብ ለጅስም ለገላ  
 ስሞዎ ላጠፋ ለሚያስተራርቀው  
 ለኸይረኛ ደግሞ ደረጃ የሚያዛልቀው  
 የሚይጣፍጥ ሁኖ ከማር ከወለላ  
 ለሚጠራዎት በናፈቆት ከቀልቡ  
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 ለሚለምኑሁ እባክሁ ስጡት  
 ለአርሱ ቢርቀው ለአንቱ ነው ጥቂት  
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 ምስጋናው አያልቅም በሌትም በቀን  
 በደህና ያኖረን በጠፋው ዘመን

ቁጥሩንም አንዘልቀው የሱን ኒዕማውን  
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አምሳያም ሸሪካ ባለንጤም የለው  
እንኳን ታባትና የተጠረበው

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ያየዋል ይሰማል ያንም ያንንም

ቢሆን ሽልቁ ትልቅ ቢሆን ሙጭቅላ

ብትወዛወዝ መሬትን ሽልቋት  
ጎራን ሽለቀና በላይ ጫነባት  
ጌሙቶ ሚበልጥ የጎራው ብዛት  
ለሂክማው ነው እንጂ አይደል ቸግሮት  
ቀጥ ብላ ቆመች ሳትሆን ዘንባላ

በሽልቁ አጃሊብ የሚያደርግ ተፈኩር

ይበቃዋል ያለው የሰፈረው በምድር

ከምናየው ሌላ ኪታቡ ሲነግር

አጅግ መሽሉቅ አለው የሚያደነጋግር

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ዙልም የሌለው ጌታ ሲሰራው በሂክመት

ስራችን አይጠቅመው አይጠጣ አይበላ

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ሰው ምን አቅም አለው ክፍርሃት በቀር

እንክጅልለዋለን ቢያዘንልን በቸር

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የሚያበዙት ናቸው ሂስድና ሀሜት

ሰው የሚዘልሙ የያዙት ኩራት

በተውሂድ አቁጃ የሚሸክኩት

የሌላቸው ፍሬ የደጋ ማሽላ

ከቁድራው ፊት ላይ አኼራ ሰንቆም

ስራና ተውሂድ ነው እዛ የሚጠቅም

ተውሂድን አጥርተን እንታዳለም

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የሽይር አጥር ሰርተህ ቁመን በአምርህ

አንተን እንድንፈራ ቀልባችን አውቆህ

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እንዳይበዛብን የሰፈር ተዓብ

ለረሀመት መግቢያ በሆኑት በዋብ

የሁሴን አያቶች የቀረው ክርበላ

በነቢዮች አንተ በላካቸው

በወልዮችህ ሁብህ ባስረሳቸው

ከአንተ ሌላ ያለን ሹርብህ አስክሮቸው

አርግልን እንዲዘሩ ወደኛ ፊታቸው

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በመ ጎራ

የሚነጋገሩት በመሽሉቁ ቁድረት

ወደ አንተ የዞሩት ሁሉንም ትተውት

ዘመኑም የሄደው ፈነዐ ሆኖ ላንተ

ተዘክር በቀር

በሚነጋገሩት ደግሞ ባሉ ዝም

ለሰው የሚርቀው ሽለታቸውማ

ቢያዘኩልን ቢመጡ መርኸበ ወሀባ

ዲባዳ ብናደርግ ኢልም ብንቀራ 90  
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ምን ይገኝበታል ለእንዲህ ያለው ስራ  
ተስነት በቀር ክሰውም ካለህ  
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አይቸግርም ነበር አዱንያ አኼራ  
ሩቁን ቀርብ አርጎ ጥንዑን የገራ  
የኸን ተናግሮታል በቁርአን ሰጠራ  
ነይት ተቁላህ ታለው እስቲሞላ

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እንደምን ያስምራል ዛሬ ተተፈራ  
ይጠቅመው ነበር ዛሬ ቢቀርበው  
የአኼራን ነገር ቢመካከረው  
ለዐይነታው አገሩ ለቀሪ ቦታው  
ለአዱንያ እንኳ ምክር ሲጠቅም እያየው  
ፈርሳ ለምትቀረው አንድ ቀን ሳትሞላ  
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ለሚቶብት ባርያ ላሳመረ እርቅ  
እዝነቱ ቅርብ ነው አይደለም ሩቅ  
ሲምርም ጨርሷ ሲሰጥምትልቅ  
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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1. Islam and Muslims In Ethiopia**

Islam was introduced to Ethiopia at the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in 615 A.D... Beginning from that it has become an important religion all over the country. Even though Ethiopian Muslims as part of the population of Ethiopia have played an important historical, economic, cultural and social role, their history is ignored or given very little attention by indigenous and foreign scholars. John Abbik (1998) argues that Ethiopian leaders have always considered Islam as a secondary and inferior religion despite its ancient history and base in the country. Islam often suffered from suppression and discrimination due to its emergence in the shadow of Christianity. This has had its own impact on social opportunities, religious and civil rights and the pattern of self-organization of Ethiopian Muslims.

Although it is hardly possible to get explicit, complete and reliable historical and cultural evidence about Ethiopia in such discrimination, it is important to study the contributions made by Muslims towards their country. Abreham Demoz (1972) states that it is difficult to believe Islam, after so many years of presence in Ethiopia, has not provided any contribution to the country. Studying Ethiopian Muslims' literature (oral or written) is one means of studying their aspects.

Hussein (1990:62) argues that the prelude of Islam was from the end of ninth century to the thirteenth century and related to "the arrival of Arab emigrants" consisting of preachers, political dissidents and teachers- and their residence as individuals in the peripheral areas of south eastern Wollo bordering on Ifat (Northern Showa) and Awsa, and to the Ulama (religious scholars). According to Hussein, even though the conquest of Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim has played a great role to Islamic diffusion in Wollo in the second half of 16<sup>th</sup> c." The success of Islam in Wollo was consolidated in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by the Sufi teachers. Sufism is a religious doctrine and practice founded by a class of Ulama (Ar. Islamic scholars) in the 10<sup>th</sup> c. The Sufi scholars propagated Islam by persuasion. According to Hussien Ahmad (1990:63), some Muslim Scholars who visited the 'Hijaz' (for pilgrimage) or Yemen and Sudan (for advanced religious training ) founded

‘Zawiyat’ (Ar. mausoleums) that serve as centers of teaching in various parts of Wollo when they returned to Ethiopia.

Many students and ulama (Ar. Islamic scholars) used to come from the surrounding villages and distant areas to the teaching centers and these became higher Islamic learning seats. Shrines also were used to compose, publicate and disseminate local religious texts especially Islamic oral poetry. These teachers taught the fundamentals of Islam through vernacular languages like Amharic, Affan Oromo, and so on using poetic verse to proselytize the uneducated public. Hence, they compose the poems (Manzumas) in vernacular languages.

The composition and recital of this poetry in shrines is related to the newly emerged religious practices and rituals such as the annual celebration of the Mawlid (the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)) and the regular hadra.

Therefore, studying the works of Muslim poets helps to know them and the Muslims' history and contribution to their country.

## **1.2. A Short Biography of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin**

When we think of studying an individual's work, it will be relevant to study the individual's biography. Therefore, considering the individual's family background, his early time, the major achievements he has accomplished in his lifetime, his place in the community, and soon should be part of the researcher's work because the individual's work is strongly related to his life incidence and his biography. It also enables to see the individual's accomplishments and his biography inseparably.

The value given to an individual by the community varies according to his works. However, his works should be collected and preserved, because we can know and understand one's generation historical and cultural resources through the works done during that particular time. Therefore, the researcher has tried to dig and present the short biography of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin, who was a popular Muslim scholar (1895-1972).

### **1.2.1 The Sheikh's Residence**

Sheikh Muhammad's mosque and tomb are found in South Wollo, Tanta District. According to Tanta District Cultural and Tourism Office, Tanta town is 140 km from Dessie. The district is bounded by Delanta and Ambassel in the North, Kutabar in the East, Leganbo and Gayenet in South and Mekdela in West. Out of the expanse of the district, 54% of its area is mountainous, 32% is plain, and 14% is full of gorges. The total population of the area is about 174, 650; 86,078 of them are men, whereas 88,572 are women. Out of the total population, 60% of them are Muslims, whereas the rest are Christians.

The mosque of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin is found at Meslay village, 16 km from Tanta town, 4 km from Mekdela Mountain, and 4 km from Beshelo River. Teaching religious lessons and conducting Hadra are the major activities practiced at the mosque. Sheikh Muhammad Yassin was replaced by his first son, Sheikh Salih Muhammad, on the event of his death in 1972. Sheikh Salih died ten years ago, and his son, Sheikh Sultan Salih has taken over his father's place. The previous activities are still continued at the mosque now. Hence, there are regular hadra every Monday, and annually at different festivals at the mosque. The two Eids (Ar. Islamic holidays): Eid-äl-Adha and Eid-äl-Fatir, and Mawlid (the birth day of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) are the days on which hadra takes place annually.

The tomb of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin is found some 5 kms from the Sheikh's mosque and 500 m from the tomb of Fitawrari Gebreye (one of the advisor and friend of Emperor Tewodros of Ethiopia (1818:1868)). Sheikh's tomb has been visited by the surrounding people on every Friday weekly and by many people from different parts of the country in January, May, and October annually. According to Tanta District Cultural and Tourism officer, Mr. Muhammad Yemam, people pray to ward off their social and natural problems such as draught and epidemic diseases and for persons to settle their conflict (quarrel) and renew their friendship. People who have got solution due to the bärakah (Ar.blessing) of the Sheikh bring cattle, especially goats, and slaughter. Up to sixty goats are slaughtered every Friday and eaten by the people who go there.

### 1.2.2. His Family Background

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin was born from his father, Sheikh Yassin Ahmad, and his mother, Fatima Salih, who are from Amhara families. His parents were living in South Wollo, at Genet village which is found 5 km from the Sheikh's mosque. His mother's father, Sheikh Salih Faqih Ali Muz had migrated from Tigray, Walqayet, and he was an alim (religious scholar) and a wali (holymen).

According to my interviewee (W/o Munira Muhammad: 2010) Sheikh Muhammad Yassin had also got the divine power from his grand father, Sheikh Salih Faqih Ali muz, Sheikh Salih had prophesied about the birth of Shiekh Muhammad Yassin that he would be an important person for the community. He composed the verse below when Sheikh Muhammad Yassin was in his mother's womb.

**አርግዘሻል አሉ የኸልቁን ዐይነታ**

**ሙሀመድ በይው የወለድኸው ለታ**

They say, "You have the people's model in your womb",  
Name him "Muhammad" when you deliver him.

Therefore, his grand father had known and told everything about Sheikh Muhammad Yassin before the sheikh's birth.

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin had two wives. He married his first wife, W/o Aminat Yassin, and got his first son Sheikh Salih Muhammad, when he was 20 years old. She gave birth to five sons and two daughters; Salih, Abdul Meged, Muhammad Taha, Muhammad Toyb, Ahmad, Ahmadal Hadi, Nefisa, and Zemzem.

The Sheikh's second wife, W/o Zeyneb Ali, was from a village called "Amed Warka". She was a patient and her parents had brought her to Sheikh Muhammad Yassin for her problem. After a few weeks, she was cured and married the Sheikh. She gave birth to three daughters and a son; Rihana, Asma, Munira, and Abdul Kafi.

### **1.2.3 His Early Life**

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin was bright, intelligent, and wise in his childhood. My informant (Sheikh Seid Yemer: 2010) argued that learning is not the only means to master the Islamic knowledge, but it is also a fahim (Ar. some kind of gift from God).

Knowing Sheikh Muhammad Yassin's giftedness and divine power, his teacher, Sheikh Āali gave special attention to him. Unlike the other students, Sheikh Āali would stand up and listen when Sheikh Muhammad Yassin was reading for correction.

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin had learned the whole Islamic lessons like Fiqqih (the first exercise textbook in Islam religion), Tefsir (Ar. Translation), hadith (Ar. Islamic reference books), and so on from Sheikh Āali. As my Informant (Munira Muhammad:2010), Sheikh Muhammad Yassin worked as a weaver and produced cultural clothes in order to provide for his mother and his wife. He was skillful in his job. He used to finish a cultural cloth "gabi" per day whereas others finished it in five days and the people would consider him as a magician. Then a person named "Ali Tahir" who was a landlord in that region had given him large scale of land to establish a mosque and to teach his derasa (Ar. students).

### **1.2.4. The Sheikh's Physical Appearance and Behavior**

According to an informant (Sheikh Ahmad Beshir: 2010), Sheikh Muhammad Yassin was huge physically, but very flexible. His hair was like wet wool and he had bushy eyebrows. He was likeable to the people around him. Generally, he was very handsome. It was easy to put the Sheikh's photograph, but the Sheikh did not have any picture of himself due to the Islamic law (Sheikh Ahmad Beshir: 2010).

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin was a sociable and a charismatic person. He did not laugh rather smiled, and never felt angry no matter what happened. He respected everyone around him and was also respected by the people. The sheikh did not like comfortable life. He was very generous and honest. He felt very sorry even stopped smiling after his teacher's death, Sheik Cali.

The Sheikh did not like lie and liars. When one of the Sheikh's friends, Sheikh Yassin Asfaw, heard about the second marriage of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin, he said, "How can

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin marry two wives?" Sheikh Muhammad Yassin had heard this and he called his friend and asked him; "why had he said that I could not marry two wives?" His friend answered, "A person with two wives should be a liar to live peacefully with his wives, but how can you make it since you do not like lie and liars?" But Sheikh Muhammad Yassin said, "of course, you are right, but Allah will help me." All in all, he was an honest, truthful, wise, virtuous and generous person.

#### **1.2.5. The Sheikh in the Community**

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin was a very respected and accepted person in the community of Wollo and the nearby provinces in general and Meslay area in particular. There was no elder better than him in the town to resolve conflict among persons. He prayed to God when there is a serious trouble like epidemic diseases and shortage of rain. He also used to cure sick persons by simple hand touching and looking. The Sheikh was considered as a big tree to the community. As the tree is important for many lives to provide food and shelter, this Sheikh is for the poor and weak people. The Sheikh was very merciful and generous. People from different parts of the country including Gondar, Gojjam, Metema, and so on come to visit his tomb after his death. The number of people who come to the tomb is increasing from time to time. These visitors are Muslims as well as Christians.

In my fieldwork, according to my informant, Muhammad Eshetu, the people who visit the Sheikh's tomb said that the Sheikh became more important for them even after his death in that they could tell their problems freely at his tomb and got solution from the Sheikh's divine power. Some people were ashamed of speaking out their problems in front of the Sheikh when he was alive.

Generally, Sheikh Muhammad Yassin was an alim (Islamic scholar), teacher, generous and virtuous person, protector of the poor and the helpless, and a guide to many people including his students.

### **1.2.6. Miracles of the Sheikh**

When sheikh Muhammad Yassin was a derassa (Ar. Student), he used to give services to another wali (holymen) named Seid Hussein, at Bahoch village found in Mekdela region (area). Once Seid Hussein commanded his derasa to make coffee, but the student answered that there was no coffee. Seid Hussein said that a hero with coffee was coming to ignite his torch. Immediately Sheikh Muhammad Yassin arrived there with bundles of wood and coffee. Seid Hussein asked him, "Do you want to inherit your father or teacher karamah (divine power)?" Sheikh Muhammad Yassin answered, "I will get theirs, but I want your own." Seid Hussein told his students not to burn the wood that Sheikh Muhammad had brought and he blessed the Sheikh by saying "Yenekahew Hulu Esat ayenkaw" which means "what you have touched be inflammable." Related to this, my informants have told me many surprising stories. To mention, once the Sheikh has touched the dough for bread, and his mother put the dough on a 'mitad' (Am. Cultural oven for baking) to bake bread, but miraculously the dough could not be baked even though bundles of wood burned for many hours. Finally, his father asked his wife whether Sheikh Muhammad Yassin had touched the dough. They know that the dough is touched by the Sheikh. Then, they took up the dough with the Mitad (Am. Cultural oven for baking) and threw it away since what the Sheikh has touched would not burn, or cooked by fire.

In another instance, a person had come with coffee to the hadra (religious meeting) of the Sheikh and the person prayed together along the Sheikh. The coffee was still in his pocket when they prayed. Then, the person took out the coffee and gave for roasting. But the coffee beans remained raw for long time on fire. Finally, the people knew that the coffee remained raw because the coffee was in his pocket when they had prayed. Therefore, the people believed that a person who prayed with Sheikh Muhammad Yassin would not be punished by fire even in aheira (Ar. the next world).

The Sheikh himself had asked Allah to make his power of this world also to continue the next world as follows:

የዱንያውን ሹመት ለአኼራ አድርግልኝ፤

ሞት የሚያቋርጠው እንዳይሆንብኝ፤

Allow me to have this worldly majesty to the next world

Not to be broken by death.

It tells us that the people who came to the sheikh would get solution in this world, but the Sheikh was worried about the people's destination after death. The people believed that the sheikh had power to keep them away from fire in the next world by interceding with Allah.

The other miracle is related to Sheikh Muhammad's Kasf (Ar.telepathy) to the attack of his enemy. When Sheikh Muhammad Yassin had begun establishing his house and mosque at Meslay, the people of the area were not interested in and tried to attack the Sheikh. The people agreed with a Debtera (Am. Magician) named Aleka Menker to burn his house and mosque, but when Aleka Menker had attempted to burn by his magic, the fire burnt at Tanta village, which is 17km from the Sheikh's residence. He tried four times and the fire was at Tanta all the time. Finally, Aleka Menker had told them about the Sheikh's karamah (Ar. an especial mystic blessing) and gone to the Sheikh; he accepted Islam there and had learned Quran from the Sheikh.

According to informants (Sheikh Seid Yemer: 2010), the severe epidemic diseases such as Malaria would not lash out at the surrounding areas of the Sheikh's residence, it is because of his blessing.

The miracles of the Sheikh are enormous but time and place will block us to mention all.

### **1.2.7. The Sheik's Literary Works**

When we come to Sheikh Muhammad Yassin's literary works, the exact time when he had begun composing and singing Mänzumas (poems) is not known. Since he did not take any modern education, we could understand from his works that he was a gifted person of wisdom and knowledge by nature. When the Sheikh (poet) composed Manzumas, he had to be alone.

The poems of the Sheikh are found in written scripts as well as orally using Amharic and Arabic languages. All the Ulama (Ar. religious scholars) and elders around Meslay village at present can recite the Sheikh's poems by heart. They sing them in a hadra. The Sheikh wrote a lot in prose and verse, but he gave special attention to verse.

The ideas and stories of the poems are not fictitious, rather they are actual (real) events taken from Quran, and the Sirah (Ar. History, deeds, achievements, and characters) of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). It implies that the poems are aimed at teaching the religion, Islam.

### **1.2.8. The Death of the Sheikh**

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin had devoted his life for the service of Allah and the religion. He had been suffering from the captivation of madly loving Allah and the prophet Muhammad (pbuh). He had taught Quran and Islam to thousands of youngsters and worshipped Allah. He composed and sung his attractive mänzumas that had the capacity to teach the religion.

Generally, his extreme love for Allah and the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) made him real servant of Allah to his death day and night restlessly. This deep love of Allah and the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) made him sick for six months and finally he died at the age of seventy seven 1972.

According to my informant (Munira Muhammad: 2010), there are many surprising things related to the Sheikh's death. For example, three white birds with red legs which had not been seen before around the region came from the west and sat around the Sheikh's jenaiza (Ar. Dead body) when the people were making sālatal jenaiza (Ar. praying for dead person), and immediately when the praying ended, the birds flew away.

Even though Sheikh Muhammad Yassin had died thirty eight years ago, his good deeds still makes him alive. He is buried at 'Lay Aroge' village near to his father's tomb. As it is explained earlier, his tomb is visited by many people from different parts of the country.

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

Studying the Manzumas of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin contributes to recording and preserving one of the Ethiopia's Islamic literatures that is part of the oral literature of the country. It is also a contribution to the study of Ethiopian oral poetry.

Studying the poems of Sheikh Muhamad Yassin is widening our view of the traditional religious teaching. It helps to understand how this Muslim poet perceives and express his world, and teaches the people.

This Muslim Scholar can influence, at least, the followers of Islam religion. Therefore studying the poems of its influential members is like studying the source of the influence. Through this study, we can see the social, economical, and political condition of the community and the literary ideology of the society.

The compilation will serve as a source of material for further researches.

### **1.4. Methodology and Limitations of the Study**

The researcher intends to study this Islamic folklore since he is from a Muslim family and was brought up under the influence of this kind of religious ceremonies in his family and relatives home. Hence, he had the chance of appreciating this religious poetry beginning from childhood. He has decided to do his MA thesis on this issue before a year. The task of conducting the study was taken earlier in 2009. One day, in Jan. 2009, the researcher met Sheikh Seid Yemer in weekly hadra held at the home of his relative named Wudu Hassan in Addis Ababa. Sheikh Seid Yemer was an abagar in the hadra. After the hadra, the researcher had a chance of discussion with this religious person. This provided the researcher an opportunity to discuss his plan of studying Manzuma. This time the Sheikh showed much interest in the plan and told the researcher to make it on the poems of his teacher, Sheikh Muhammad Yassin. Sheikh Seid Yemer also promised to help the researcher in showing the shrine of the Sheikh and in collecting data. Since Sheikh Seid was with Sheikh Muhammad Yassin for around 30 years as a dersesa, he knew all the family members of the Sheikh very well. Hence, he assured the researcher that he would not face difficulties to collect the desired poems (Manzuams) at the shrine of the Sheikh.

The researcher and Sheikh Seid agreed to go to the shrine on various occasions where this poetry is recited.

On Nov.23, 2010, the researcher has prepared a 'canon' digital camera, twenty pairs of the small dry batteries for the camera, jelabia (white dress) and kofieyet (Ar, the Muslim's cape) and begun the journey to South Wollo, Meslay village where the Sheikh's mosque is found, 157 km from Dessie. The researcher and Sheikh arrived at Tanta town, 140 km from Dessie, at 11 O'clock in the morning. Then they had to wait two days at Tanta to get a car to the mosque, because there was no regular transportation to the village. Hence, they arrived at the mosque on the fourth day.

Sheikh Seid has introduced the researcher to the community of the shrine, especially to the Imam (Leader) of the mosque, Sheikh Sultan Sali'h, grandson of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin, and to the Mādih (Ar. Singer) of the Mänzumas, Sheikh Ahmad Beshir. He told them everything about the researcher including what he would do at the mosque. He persuaded the persons in the mosque to see the researcher's aim of being there positively and to consider him as a brother.

The actual duty of collecting data from the fieldwork began on Nov.26, 2010, the eve of Eid-äl Adha and lasted on the next day, the main holiday. The hadra in which Mänzumas were performed took place from 8 O'clock in the evening and lasted at Fegir (Ar. dusk) praying time. The researcher collected four Amharic Mänzumas in these two days.

The other occasion where Mänzuma is performed was on Mawlid (the birth day of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Hence, the researcher collected the poems from Feb.24, 2010-Feb.28, 2010 on Mawlid festival held at the shrine. The researcher participated and collected the weekly hadra of the shrine on Feb.29, 2010. The researcher could record twelve Amharic Mänzumas on these days.

The mosque of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin at Meslay village is one of the popular centers where local pilgrimages are performed during the annual festival of Mawlid. According to informants (W/o Munira Muhammad and Muhammad Eshetu: 2010), the people who come

to this occasion are mostly from different parts of Wollo, Gojjam, Gondar especially Begemedir, Berara, Dawat, Bedadi, and few from Addis Ababa.

Another occasion for Mänzumas is one of the Islamic holidays, i.e. Eid-äl Fatir. As my informant (Sheikh Seid Yemer: 2009), since the Mänzumas on Eid äf Fatir, and on Eid-äl Adha are the same, the researcher went to field work for data collection only on Eid-äl Adha.

The researcher used two major methods: video recording and interview. Video recording is the main method used to collect Mänzumas (poems) in their natural setting on various occasions as participant observant. The researcher made these recordings for 22 hours on seven ceremonies, two on Eid-äl Adha, four on Mawlid, and one on a weekly hadra. These recordings hold about 16 Mänzumas. The researcher has selected 10 poems from the collected 16 Mänzumas. The selection is made based on the issues the poems' touch on. Hence, he found the rest six poems as repetitive and entertaining similar contents.

Interview is the other technique used by the researcher to collect data. The researcher made interviews with Sheikh Sultan Salih, the Imam (Ar. Leader) of the mosque, and Sheikh Ahmad Beshir, the Mädh (Ar. Singer), at Meslay village. Sheikh Sultan informed the researcher to meet the last daughter of the poet, Munira Muhammad, in Masha town, 152km from Dessie, for further information. Then the researcher called on his previous friend Jamal Ibrahim who was there before. Jamal told the researcher that he had left that area but he gave the telephone number of his best friend, Dawud Mussa who could help the researcher. The researcher phoned to Ato Dawud and told him everything about the research.

Dawud Mussa had looked for and found the daughter of the Sheikh before the researcher went to the town. When the researcher arrived at the town, he met Dawud Mussa and went together to W/o Munira's home. Dawud Mussa had played a great role to introduce the researcher with Munira Muhammad and to facilitate things for interview with the woman.

Then the researcher had three hadra in the woman's home in the presence of her husband, Ato Muhammad Eshetu. The researcher made the interviews during these hadras.

The interview with W/ro Munira Muhammad helped the researcher to develop the short biography of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin. The researcher spent four hours in the afternoon for three days with the interviewees. The researcher prepared new questions in the evening and provided to them. The researcher took notes while the interviewees gave response.

The data collected for this thesis by employing the method of video recording should be transcribed for literary analysis.

The researcher had first tried to write all the poems recorded by listening and watching attentively. Then he also asked ulama (Ar. Religious scholars) to transcribe the words and phrases which the researcher could not transcribe.

The poems of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin are full of Arabic words and in the local accent. Therefore, listening and understanding these poems was not the first difficulty that the researcher faced during transcription. But the researcher attempted to solve this by working with a religious scholar, Sheikh Kemal Yesuf (May 15-30, 2010) in Addis Ababa.

The shortage of time and money allocated to the field work was the other difficulty, especially the time given by DFLL to the fieldwork to conduct a research that involves recording songs, observing actual performances and understanding the contents of the poems was not enough. Actually, the researcher minimized his burden in such a way that he had gone to the field work on Nov.26, 2010, on one of the holidays of Muslims, Eid-äl Adha, and collected certain poems early on this festival.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1. Oral Literature

The aim of this section is to provide theoretical background by defining and reviewing materials on the study of oral literature in general and Mānzuma, a religious poetry, in particular. Literature, in a broader sense, can be categorized into two: oral literature and written literature. Oral literature is used to transfer culture or tradition from one generation to another orally, especially before written form.

The terms folklore and oral literature are rather ambiguous. Okepwho (1992) shows that even though some people use these words interchangeably, oral literature is part of folklore. This implies that folklore is a broader term than oral literature.

Dorson (1972) argues that folklore embodies verbal and material arts, customs and other forms of culture. According to him, there are four categories of folklore, namely: verbal art, material culture, performing folk arts, and social folk customs.

Cuddon (1998:322) also states that folklore as "a general and some what vague term which includes folk song, ballad, fairy tales, drama, proverbs, riddles, or charm and legends." Cuddon explains that folklore is the artistic invention of primitive and illiterate people and therefore, much of it belongs to oral tradition.

M.H. Abrams (1981) defines that *Folklore is a broader term, which refers to verbal materials and social rituals mainly transmitted by word of mouth, rather than in written form. He also adds that:*

*It includes among other things legends, superstitions, songs, tales, proverbs, riddles, spells, nursery rhymes; pseudo scientific lore about the weather, plants, and animals; customarily activities at births, and deaths; traditional dances and forms of drama which are performed on holidays or at communal gatherings, (66)*

This implies that folklore refers to the verbal heritage of people transmitted from one generation to the next by word of mouth.

On the other hand, Dorson (1972:2) takes into account oral literature as part of folklore, "under this rubric (oral literature) fall spoken, sung, and voiced forms of traditional utterances that show repetitive patterns." Nandwa and Bukenya (1983) as cited by Okepwho (1992:4) define that oral literature is utterances such as spoken, recited or sung with an admirable composition and performance. It also involves perfect utterance, clear creativity and brilliant expression.

In general, the term folklore seems inclusive and encircles the culture that people have been handling down from one generation to another by word of mouth rather than in written form. Oral literature, on the other hand, is considered as a subset of folklore that includes only the verbal aspects such as folktales, proverbs, sayings, riddles, songs, and the like.

## **2.2. Mänzuma (Islamic Poetry)**

Mänzuma is a religious song with an author, title, chorus, participants, in some cases handclaps and drum, which has been practiced by Ethiopian Muslims in a ritual process called Hadra. This genre is highly the concern of the Ulama (Ar. religious scholars), who have got the highest level of Islamic education. Every Alim (Ar. a religious scholar) could not compose it. Among the Ulama, few of them have skills which the art of poetry needs. They are locally known as Mädihs (Ar. the one who praises). This title long lasts officially and permanently for the poets. These composers, Mädihs, know religious texts, the history and deeds of certain significant Awlaya (Ar. holymen) and Arabic language very well. They also have good memory and melodious voice. According to Barhanu Gebeyehu (1997), two types of poets compose these oral poems: specialists locally called Mädihs, and experts who are mostly uneducated or at most least educated persons. Experts sing when the Mädihs are not found.

Mänzuma in the case of specialist poets is composed in written forms, but experts usually compose their songs orally because they are mostly less educated. Even though the written form prevails in the composition of Mänzuma, the performance and deliverance of it is largely oral. The Mädih memorizes his script and sings his song at a Hadra (Ar. religious

meeting). Finnegan (1970) and Miruka (1994) argue that interaction between oral and written literature and the overlapping nature of the oral and written mode in performance and utterance are common in oral poetry. Oral composition is often common among the uneducated poets than the Mädihs, but both of them deliver their composition orally.

Related to this, folklorists assert that oral literature is also characterized by improvisation. Since the works of oral literature are recited and performed orally, it is difficult to say that the performer, Mädihs and experts in the Mänzuma case, can recite the contents of the works word by word without modification. With regard to this, Sakulin (1919) in Sakolov (1971:21) states, "the old poetic heritage is subject to modification; every more or less talented narrator, singer, story teller, and so forth, leaves the imprint of his creative spirit on those works changing their forms, their composition, and in part their subject." Fearing this, anyone can not perform a Mänzuma unless he has got permission from the Mädih, the specialist, who has composed that particular Mänzuma. The Mädih also permits when the individual sings it perfectly either in content or voice wise.

The other characteristic of oral literature is related to performance and occasion. As it is known, oral literature is an oral and group activity, performed on certain occasions for a specific purpose. Thus, every form of oral literature becomes more meaningful when it is performed in a specific occasion. Mänzuma is also performed on a specific occasion like Waddajja (a weekly meeting of limited number of participants), and Mawlid (Ar. the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)) at a specific purposeful ceremonial process called 'Hadra'. Here, Finnegan (1970) states that the importance of the actual performance is one of the main features of oral literature. As to her (1970:2), "oral literature is by definition dependent on a performer who formulates it in words on a specific occasion-there is no other way in which it can be realized as a literary product." Since Mänzuma is performed by either Mädihs or Experts only when Muslims come together either to greet each other or to pray at a particular time and place. It also fulfills the feature of oral literature in this regard.

All in all, oral literature, particularly Mänzuma has been playing a vital role in the traditional society and is still playing an important role in the modern society in various ways. Mänzumas are mainly used to provide moral instruction, to shape the society, to inspire love, respect, love, loyalty, persistence and so forth. Oral literature including Mänzuma plays a role of recording the historical practices of states and heads. It also helps as a tool of propaganda in convincing a given audience. According to Finnegan (1970:141), praise poetry is used to record the "praise names, victories, characteristics and exploit chiefs." Poets use Mänzuma to praise Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and influential Awlaya (Ar. Holy men) and their victories. Through the biography of the Prophet, the Muslim poets teach the religion and moral values.

### **2.3. Hadra**

Hadra is religious ritual meetings of Muslims to thank, praise, or pray to Allah. Mänzuma is recited and performed in the Muslim community generally, and in the shrines particularly any time through out the year in communal and group worshipping occasions. Berhanu Gebeyehu (1997:30) states that there are five main occasions whereby Mänzuma takes place, and "Festivals of Eid-äl-adha, Eid-äl-Fatir, the Ramadan nights and the Mawlid (Ar. the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)) can be considered as formal occasions where recital of oral poetry takes place." Eid-äl-adha is one of the festivals which commemorate the faith of Prophet Ibrahim and his son, Isma'el, and this occurs on the 10<sup>th</sup> months of Islamic calendar. Eid-äl-Fatir is a festival of the breaking of the fast of Ramadan. It occurs on the 12<sup>th</sup> month of Islamic calendar, Shāwal. The other occasion on which Mänzuma is performed is the holy month of Ramadan, in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar which is a month of fasting. Since most Muslims make dua (Ar. Call upon God) every night at the nearby shrine or in their homes; Mawlid, the birthday of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh), is the greatest religious festival for the Muslims in the country. Like the other shrines in Wollo, the shrine of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin entertains a large

number of people coming from different parts of the country during the week of Mawlid, the mentioned Muslim's holiday, and the Ramadan nights. Wadajja is performed for environmental and natural problems by group prayers. Wadajja can be held in individual homes and consists of minimum of three persons. It can occur on any of the days of the week. The Wadajja Hadra at Shaikh Muhammad Yassin's shrine is held every Monday.

The above mentioned festivals and occasions-Eid-äl-adha, Eid-äl-Fatir, Ramadan nights, Mawlid and Wadajja, may involve a ritual process called 'Hadra'. Hadra is a purposeful meeting of Muslims culminating with Mänzuma. It involves sets of ritual acts which are fixed, organized and repeatable. There are things which are like 'Cat, coffee and incense, accompanied with activities like blessings and singing Mänzumas used to stimulate the participants on a Hadra.

Hadra takes place on the days of Eid-äl-Adha and Eid-äl-Fatir, Ramadan nights, and during the Mawlid week in the shrine of Shaikh Muhammad Yassin. Although Hadra is held in the afternoons, most people prefer to meet in the evenings because the hadra will not be interrupted by the daily prayer called 'Sälat'. If it is in the afternoon, the people in the hadra are required to stop and make the daily prayer, Sälat.

The place where hadra takes place should be clean; especially homes should be well kept and furnished. The furniture would be taken out of the hadra room and the floor should be covered with green grass. The place where the participants sit may be covered either with sheepskin or a mat. The other room, or part of the hadra room may be partitioned for the women and for those who make coffee. Men and women do not pray together in a mosque; they do not also sit together in a hadra.

The people in a hadra are mostly Muslims, but it is not something which is strictly forbidden for others. Non-Muslims, who respect and know a Hadra and the religion will be active participants in a Hadra; especially those persons coming on Mawlid (the birth day of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)) from various distant places.

The people in a hadra should make wudu (a religious ablution) before they come and sit in the home where the hadra takes place. 'Wudu' is a religious washing performed by every Muslim before the daily prayer and a hadra. An ablution is washing of a few parts of their body in a definite pattern. They wash their hands, mouths, noses, faces, arms and legs three times each. It is believed that an ablution is a process of cleansing their souls from sins. Islam says that belief begins from cleanness, and water is a symbol for purification.

After making an ablution, the participants often wears clean clothes, usually a white dress called "Jelabia", or the white cultural toga known as "gabi" in a hadra. The hadra usually starts early in the evening, around eight o'clock after the participants have had dinner.

There is a person called the 'Abagar', who leads the ceremonial process. The Abagar is a Sheikh who knows Islamic religion very well. This individual knows Qur'an, other Islamic books, miracles and histories of holy men in the religion. The duties of the Abagar in a hadra are; opening the ceremony, giving blessings, offering Cat and supervising the total ceremonial act. The Abagar may also invite other participants to recite the Qu'ran, to narrate moralizing tales, or to sing religious songs.

The title goes to the Abagar genealogically from father to son in a particular village. The title will not serve out of his living place.

Any member of the group, mostly the one who is the oldest could be elected to be an Abagar, for that particular meeting in a hadra where there is no Abagar. The 'Wali' (Ar. a holyman) and the 'Mädih' (Ar. a poet and singer) have to get permission from the Abagar to give blessings and to recount tales.

'Hädam (Ar. Servant) is a person who serves the participants in a hadra. The'h ädam may be a man or a woman, who makes coffee. In a hadra held in a home, mostly the 'hädam is the one who prepares the hadra, or his wife. On occasions involving a large number of participants, there are more than one ädams, performing different tasks like making coffee and distributing cat from the Abagar to the participants. In shrine Hadräs, the

'Hādams are assigned on a voluntary basis. Some provide such labor service in return for the relief they get from their physical and mental sickness.

Coffee is the first thing which is served in a hadra for the participants. The whole process of preparing coffee roasting, grinding the coffee beans using pan and mortar for pounding roasted coffee beans, putting the coffee powder into the boiling water in the coffee pot (Am. Jābana) and pouring the coffee to cups will be done. When the coffee boils, the 'Hādam puts burning charcoal on the gācha (Am. an incense burner made of clay) and adds some incense over it. The incense will give the room a good scent and hence inspires the participants.

The 'Hādam again adds some incense over the gācha and she/he says 'Abol jaba' which means 'here is the first round coffee'. Immediately the Abagar begins giving his blessings. The Abagar begins uttering his blessing without problem and without break. His hands move continuously while he gives blessings. It seems that he is taking the blessing from his left hand to his right and he sows it as a seed. The 'Hadam and the other participants also receive the blessing by opening and closing their hands as if they are taking something concrete and by saying "Amen! Amen!" In the blessing, the Abagar may wish success, long life, health, peace, or victory to the host or hostess if it is a home hadra, and the blessing directly goes to all the participants if it is a hadra with large number of participants held in a shrine on Mawlid.

The 'Hādam goes to his/her 'jabana' (Am. coffee pot) and fill each cup with the brewed coffee immediately after the blessing is over. ~~The hadam~~ serves all the participants beginning from the Abagar. After the first round, the 'jabana' is filled by water and boiled for the second round.

Next to the first round coffee ceremony, the Ċat' ceremony begins with the blessing of the Abagar. If it is a home hadra, the host is locally termed 'Awracha', which means the one who brings the instrument of a hadra, that is, 'Ċat'. The "Awracha" or the host takes the Ċat to the Abagar and says "Kanbat jaba", which literally means "here is the Cat for the hadra".

The things offered to the hadra like coffee and Āat refer symbolically to submission to God and is taken as thanks giving.

While the "Awraha" offers the Āat, the Ḥādam adds incense on the "gacha", the Abagar distributes some amount of Āat to each participant. The "Awraha" takes his share first.

In a hadra with several participants like the Mawlid hadra, each person brings Āat and offers to the Abagar, and then the Abagar gives some Āat back meanwhile blessing each individual. After the Abagar distributes the Āat to all members, the participants begin chewing their share (Āat) with silence. The silence in the room continues like this until the second round of coffee.

If the Abagar refrains from distributing the Āat until the end of the coffee ceremony, it means that the meeting (hadra) will not continue. Hence, the group is forced to disperse. That means the Abagar distributes the Āat to the members only if he is satisfied with the cleanliness of the room and of the members of the hadra, with the quality and quantity of the items bought for the hadra with the discipline of each member. The Abagar has absolute authority to send away a member considered to be against the accepted norm such as decency and wakefulness. The Abagar will distribute the Āat only if he is satisfied with the atmosphere of the room.

There is a complete silence when the coffee ceremony is over, but each member continues chewing his Āat. The chewing of the Āat continues for more than an hour during which time all the members seem to be in a meditative mood. This mood prevails until the Abagar breaks the silence by saying "Allah huma Salli" which indicates the beginning of a shorter prayer called, Ramsa. It is a collection of panegyric poems in praise of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the Awlaya (Ar.holyman). Ramsa usually lasts 25 to 30 minutes. The person who recites the Ramsa and the participants get up from their seats and clap their hands.

These activities; Ramsa, blessings, the Āat and the coffee ceremonies, burning incense, different actions and the like are believed to manifest presence of the Holy Spirit. In other words, Ramsa is a way to the hadra to attract some sort of divine help. The Ramsa ends

with a blessing and followed by a long-lasting silence. The Abagar also gives out the Āt to each participant. The state of meditation involves looking inward and each participant sinks into him/herself.

After this, the Abagar claps his hand so as to take the participants to the next devotional narration called Qissa. Qissa (Ar. Narration or story) is a story tale about the deeds and lives of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and other Awlaya. It includes episodes from the life and miracles of the prophet (pbuh) and Awlaya. The Abagar narrates moralizing tales. Qissa can be told either by the Abagar or by a Wali (Ar. a holyman) or by a Mādih (Ar. a poet and singer). It may be told by all the three, taking turns, one after the other. The one who tells the qissa can also quote a passage from the Qur'an or Hadith.

Again when the Qissa ends, the room will be filled by complete silence. Then at one point, the Abagar begins humming to indicate the starting of Mānzuma. The performance of Mānzuma differs highly from one form of Mānzuma to the other. The activities of the participants vary according to the different forms of the Mānzuma. According to Assefa Mammo (1987), there are two types of mānzuma based on the participation of the audience; 'Mānzuma Baqu chita' refers to Mānzuma by sitting down, and 'Mānzuma Baqum' refers to Mānzuma by standing up. The former requires the participants to sit and listen attentively to the recitation that helps to meditate, whereas the other requires the audience to actively participate by singing the chorus, clapping their hands, dancing, and so on. Some forms need to be narrated whereas others need to be uttered impressively or sung. Some require the audience to sing the refrains whereas others are solo. Some need hand claps and drum, whereas others do not.

Generally, the performance of Mānzuma is a culminating point of a hadra. Finally, the participants go out from the hadra in the morning, at dusk.

In conclusion, hadra is a ritual performance that embodies blessings, recital of Mänzuma, narration of stories and dances in a definite and organized sequence.

#### **2.4. Review of Related Works (Researches)**

This is to give a review of some of the researches conducted in the field of Islamic oral poetry. This helps the researcher to develop background information on the study area and ideas in order to fill gaps raised in the section of the statement of the problem.

Even though sufficient research studies have not been conducted on this genre, the students of the Department of English Language and Literature (DEFL) at the AAU have attempted to know Islamic folklore beginning from the early 1970. Most of the local as well as foreign scholars who studied Mänzuma (Islamic poetry) focused on the features of the genre in general, not on the works of individual poets. This review focuses on the research works, which are closely related to this particular work.

Not less than ten papers were done as partial fulfillment for the first degree since the above-mentioned year. Among these, Kirubel (1994), Abebe (1989), and Halima (1984) focus on Islamic oral poetry, which is concerned with few religious leaders. Others such as Bogale (1980), Mohammad (1992), Muhammad (1996) and Tibabu(1984) who study Islamic oral poetry with main focus on collecting and documenting compositions of individual poets. The first three scholars focus on the poems of Muslim scholars in Wollo region long ago and Tibabu (1984) makes his study on the poems from recorded cassettes, which are available in the market. They differ from the present study in that they are done in Amharic for BA, and they focus on the major features of the genre, whereas this one deals with thematic analysis.

Yoseph (1989), Mekonnen (1990), Umer (1990) and Muhammad (1994) attempted to study the literary importance of this religious oral poetry in its social setting. They could not provide a clear and detail description about the place and time where the oral poetry takes place, and did not consider the role of individual participants at a particular place and time. They provided themes, which are common and clear to the poems they have collected.

Muhammad (1984) analyzed on the poems of one of the popular and previous religious leader named Sheikh Āli in Wollo.

The accessible studies in English in AAU at DFLL are Assefa's (1987) and Berhanu's (1997) MA theses.

Assefa's (1987) thesis contains about thirteen Mānzumas from four different shrines of Wollo region and discusses about their social background, content and forms, and a conclusion, within 46 pages. Assefa (1987) names Mānzumas to all songs sung in a Hadra. According to him, there are two types of Mānzumas called 'Mānzuma Baqum' (refers to a song sung primarily to praise Allah, prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and other prophets), whereas 'Mānzuma Baquchita', is a song sung for meditation.

He has described briefly how he has collected the Mānzumas in his introduction. He writes that he has collected by participants' observation using hidden tape recorder, that is, without the notice of the poets and the participants. He also uses personal discussions with the composers to support the collected data by a tape recorder. He has done simultaneously; singing the chorus and clapping as a participant, and pressing and controlling the tape recorder.

Assefa (1987) explains that women and children will not participate in a hadra. This is very wrong in that women participate actively in a hadra, but they do not sit together with the men. This means either women will be in a partitioned part of the hadra room, or the room next to the men, but the room enables them to follow the hadra.

Berhanu Gebeyehu (1998) explains Islamic oral poetry from the aspect of its social setting. The theoretical part of this research provides information about the poets, composition, performance, transmission, and classification of Islamic oral poetry in Wollo area. The research also emphasizes the different occasions of poetry recitals. In the analysis part, Berhanu focuses on the contextual meaning of the poems by classifying them into various genres.

Berhanu's (1997) thesis is 118 pages in double space and unlike oral poetry studies; it does not incorporate poems at the end of the paper. It begins with introduction, discusses things within four chapters and ends by conclusion. He writes an important background in the first chapter. This includes historical setting in relation to the spread of Islam and the different shrines in Wollo, literature review and field experience. Especially on the field experience, he states the methods employed and the problems related to the fieldwork.

The second chapter of the study discusses the different occasions and ceremonies in which Islamic oral poetry is performed. It explains about the five different occasions in which Hadra takes place: Eid-äl-adha, Eid-äl-Fatir, Rammadan, Mawlid and the Wadajja. This section also provides an interesting description about the series of activities in a Hadra, when Islamic oral poetry is recited.

The thesis attempts to explain the nature of Islamic poets in Wollo, the composition of Ajäm, the performance and transmission of Ajäm by giving attention for each subject topic in the third chapter. This part discusses the two types of poets; specialist poets, they are locally called Mädihs and the expert poets, who are not well learned. The Mädih has usually the skill to prepare their songs in Amharic and Arabic languages, but experts usually prepare their songs orally.

Both Berhanu (1997) and Assefa (1987) have primarily aimed at the social setting of this genre. They have made great effort on the occasion, transmission, performance, and form of it. Nevertheless, the present study mainly emphasizes on the themes portrayed through this genre. The intended themes here in this study are praising the Prophets and holy men, Tawhid (Islamic theology), the life after death, the signs of the Resurrection Day, and so on.

A few anthropologists have made research on Islamic oral poetry in the Ethiopian context especially in earliest times. The first scholar who carried out a research related to this genre is Enrico Cerulli (1926). Cerulli (1926) discusses the importance of Islamic poetry in the propagation of Islam.

The other significant anthropologist who has attempted to study Islamic oral poetry is Allula Punkhurst. Allula (1994a) has primarily aimed at the social function of this genre. He has analyzed great labor on the contents, contexts and composition of Islamic oral poetry in his paper entitled "Indigenizing Islam in Wollo: Ajam, Amharic verse written in Arabic script." He describes local terms like 'Ajam' and vocabulary of Islamic poetry.

Minako Ishihara (1996) had conducted a study on this poetry composed in Oromo society, in S.W. Ethiopia focusing on its social function. The poems that are taken into account, the special emphasis given, and the language of the poems are the major points which differentiate the above papers and this thesis. Hence, the researcher attempts to fill this gap found in the studies.

The research studies on this genre have tried to study Islamic oral poetry in relation to its social context. They focus on the major features of Mänzumas in Wollo, generic classification and social setting whereas this one is concerned more on thematic analysis and on an individual poet's work. Therefore, the researcher intends to fill this gap by collecting and analyzing the Mänzumas of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin(1995-1972).

## CHAPTER THREE

### A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED POEMS

#### 3. The Contributions of Prophet Muhammad and Other

##### Heroes to Islam

The poems of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin are religious following Finnegan(1976) for the poems' contents are either about God or the prophets, or they give direct religious instruction, and the poems are also performed on religious occasions by religious specialists. Among the major religious themes the Sheikh touches on these mänzumas are: praising Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), beliefs, history of Islam, life after death, and worship.

##### 3.1. Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) In Islam

According to Muhammad (2006), the qualities of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) are described well in the Holy Quran and Hadith. Sheikh Muhammad Yassin praises the Prophet's qualities such as strong personality, steadfast faith, his miracles, and his earliest in creation and great achievements.

##### 3.1.1. The Prophet's Physical Appearance and Behavior

The poet praises the Prophet's physical appearance and conduct many times through his poems (PIII L 60-64, L29-33, L49-54, PIII L29-32, PIII L44-53, etc). Some of these rhymes read as follow:

*የመዲናውን ባየነው አይነን፣ PIII L112-115*

*በነር አረንጓዴ የተካለውን፣*

*ጸጉሩ የሚመስለው የሃር ጉንጉን፣*

*ፊቱ ከጨረቃ የሚያበራውን።*

We wish we could see the eyes of the Man of Medina;

This is lined by green light eye-liner;

His hair looks like locks of wool;

His face shines brighter than the moon.

ስፍራ ያደረገው በናፋቂው ሆኖ፣ PIII L 60-64

ሁልጊዜ መርዶ ነው እእሱን የሚወድ፣

እእንደሱ የሚያምር ማንም ማን አይወልድ፣

ሽፊቅ ነው ፍህፍህ ለባድ ለዘመድ።

Whom he makes his residence in the of heart of his lover;

It is always crying for those who loved him;

No one can deliver as handsome as him.

He is generous and merciful to all;

አይኖቹን ተኩሎ ነው የተወለደው፣

በፊት ወደደና ሁሉን አስወደደው፣

He was born having wore eye by eye-liner;

Whom Allah likes him early and makes all to like him.

The above citations explain the beauty of the Prophet's eyes, hair, face and generally his loveable nature to the people around him. The poet describes that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the most handsome and bravest, the brightest faced, and most generous and kind. The description the poet has given about the Prophet's appearance and behavior is supported by the Holy Quran and books of Sira (biography of the Prophet). Muhammad (2006) writes about the Prophet as follow:

*The prophet had a smiling face that made him loveable to the people who submitted to him and followed him.*

*He was also wise, discerning and patient. He had no interest in the worldly pleasures. He was the example of modesty.*

*He was kind to all (214).*

Allah also praises the Prophet by saying that “And verily, you (o’ Muhammad) are on an exalted (standard of) character.” (Quran 68:4). This moral qualification of the Prophet in itself is a miracle and helps him to be accepted by his companions as a Prophet. Allah also says that “...and had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from you” (Quran 3:159).

Muhammad (1999) argues that the Prophet's perfect moral is main evidence that made many people to believe in Muhammad (pbuh) before they have seen a tangible miracle. Among these people; khadija (the Prophet's first wife), Abu Bakr, Ali and others, accepted the Prophet's message, Islam, immediately due to the Prophet's early reliable conduct.

The poet praises the most kind and exalted Prophet in his smart poetic language, that is, selected and few words in a stanza, and perfectly balanced and related stanzas.

### **3.1.2 The Prophet's Earliest in Creation and Greatness Achievements**

The poet mentions the prophecies in the books of revelation such as Towrat (Torah) and Injeet (Gospel) as follows:

የሁዳቹ በተወራት፣ PI L140-145

አግኝቶአቸዉ ከራት፣

ስምሁን ለመቅራት፣

አወቀዉ ለሹመትሁ፣

ከተወራት ላይ ቢያጠፉት፣

ሹመትዎን መኝ ገፉት፣

The Jews in Torah;

Have felt proud;

To read your name;

They know your majesty;

Although they eradicate it from Torah;

They cannot throw out your majesty.

The above extract tells us that the name of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is mentioned in Torah, the book of God to the Jews through Prophet Musa (Moses), even though the Jews fail to accept Muhammad (pbuh) as a Messenger of Allah and Islam as a religion. The prophecies (glad tidings) are the predictions and information given by the former Prophets and Messengers in their books about the arrival of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). This is supported by Allah in His Holy Quran as follows:

The prophet who can neither read nor write  
(i.e. Muhammad) whom they find written with  
them in with them in the Torah and Injeel (Quran 7:157).

In another verse, the Quran says:  
Those to whom we gave the scripture (Jews and  
Christians) recognize him (Muhammad) or the  
Kabba at Mäkka as they recognize their sons. (2:146).

The poet praises the Prophet by stating what is told in the Holy Quran, that is, the people of the scripture know the Prophet very well because of his signs and allusion made about him in their books.

Then the poet continues explaining about the earliest and greatness of Muhammad's creation (birth). The poet praises by saying:

**ፊት ያለፈው በወራ፣** PI L69-72

**የለሁም ባልንጀራ፣**

**እኔም ከታላብ ብቀራ፣**

**ያንቱን አምሳያ አላየሁም፣**

From what is told about the previous;

You do not have any resemblance;

While I also read books;

I have not seen like you.

In the above extract, the poet underlines the greatness of the Prophet. He also says that the light of Muhammad was created before anything and the presence of the Prophet behind the success of all the other Prophets before him from PI L208 to L239. He speaks about the philosophical view about the creation of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), that is, first of all, Allah created the Arî (divine throne), the angels, and the Prophets from the branches of that light. Hence, the Prophet is the starting point of creation and this implies that the Prophet is the elder to all the creation, but the last in manifestation. The Prophet's leadership was declared by God when He gathered all the souls (spirits) of mankind before this world. The poet tells us that the prophet's leadership was declared before 50,000 years (PVII L34-37).

Therefore, Allah declared that everybody who will be born in the later worldly epoch of Muhammad should believe in him (as Allah's Messenger), obey and be administered by him. For instance, the poet says;

ስሙህ ተከትቦ ሲታይ፣ PI L101-104

በአደም ቀለበት ላይ ፣

ለካ ፊት ነህ አንድላይ፣

ሳይኸለቅ ጂስሙሁ።።

When it is seen your name written;

On Adam's ring;

You were earlier;

Before your body came in this world.

Hence, this extract illustrates that the Prophet's name was written on Adam's ring, it is to say that he is the father of human beings, Adam, knows the prophet spiritually although the Prophet was not there physically. Hence, Adam accepted Muhammad's Prophethood.

The Holy Quran and Hadith support this view that the Prophet is a light sent to this world as a light of guidance. Allah says this "indeed there has come to you from Allah a light (Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)) and a plain book (this book)" (Quran -15:45-46). Allah also says to the Prophet.

"And I made you the first of the prophets in creation  
and the last of them in mission" (Iyad bin Musa binIyad  
-239-240).

The poet then continues about the reason behind the Prophets' success. Allah gave the light that which became Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to all the Prophets and the success of the Prophets due to that transcend light which was passed to them from Adam. Allah asked the angels and Satan to make prayer for Adam was due to the presence of that light in Adam. It implies that it is only through (believing in) Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) that anybody can achieve high status and rank. The poet therefore praises the Prophet by mentioning the

previous Prophets such as Ibrahim (Abraham), Yesuf (Josef), Dawed, Sulayman (Solomon) and Esa (Jesus) in his poem (PI L208-238).

### 3.1.3. Allah's Honor to Muhammad (pbuh)

The poet underlines that the Prophet's grand intercession on the Resurrection Day and the Prophet's Hawd (cistern) in the next world are special favors that Allah will give to his most beloved Prophet (PVII L104-106, PX L 261-262, PIII L19-22, etc...).

#### 3.1.3.1 The Prophet's Grand Intercession on the Day of Resurrection

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin praises the Prophet indicating that He is most beloved to Allah by narrating that Muhammad (pbuh) will be the first person for whom the grave will be split open by angels (PX L105-115) and by stating Muhammad's grand intercession on the Day of Resurrection (PIII L104-106). All the Prophets will fear Allah and worry about their souls except Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) on that Day. The poet puts it as follows:

ሚካኤል ጅብሪል እስራፊል ደርሰው፣ PX L5-112  
ከነቢ. ቀብር ላይ እርሶን ቀስቅሰው፣  
ቡራቅ ላይ አዉጥተው ደህና ልብስ አልብሰው፣  
ይወስዷቸዋል ሳይነሳ አንድ ሰው፣  
ቢጠይቁ ነቢ. ጅብሪልን ሲነሱ፣  
አሙቶቹ ሁላ ወደየት ደረሱ፣  
ይላሉ ጅብሪል የተነሳም የለ፣  
ታኦንተ በቀር ሌላ ገና ነው እእያለ፣

Mikael, Jibril, Israfeel reach the grave of the Prophet;  
They make him wake up;  
They will make him wear good clothes and to mount on Burak;  
They will take him before the wake of anyone;  
When the prophet asks Jibril;  
“Where are my people?  
Jibril says, “No one wakes up  
Except you”

According to the poet's explanation in the above extract, the first person for whom his grave will be split on will be Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Therefore, the poet praises the Prophet by explaining his highest rank and that He is beloved by Allah among the inhabitants of the earth; to be raised first and give grand intercession on the Day of Resurrection.

### **3.1.3.2. 'Hawd (cistern) of the Prophet**

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin speaks about the 'Hawd (cistern) of the Prophet from Allah while he praises the Prophet (PX L 240-265). The poet explains that Allah will honor his slave Muhammad in that great gathering on the Resurrection Day by giving him a huge, vast cistern. This is how the poet puts it artistically:

የነቢ. ኸውድ አለ አኼራ የሚጠጣ፣ PXL240-244

ተማር የጣፈጠ ከውተት የነጣ፣

ሽታዉ ነዉ ከሚስኩል አስከር፣

መጠጫዉ ተኮከብ ነዉ አክሰር፣

There is the prophet's cistern which is;

Sweeter than honey and whiter than milk;

The smell is from musk;

The vessels for drinking will look like the stars;

It will be drunk in the next world.

The poet adds that this cistern is having water whiter than milk and sweeter than honey, with fragrance finer than musk; the vessels for drinking will be like the stars of the sky. This good water will spring from the river of Al-käwsar, which Allah has given to this Prophet in paradise. The ummah (people) of the chosen Prophet will come to drink from it and whoever would drink from it would never feel thirsty again. The poet also expresses that it will spring out in paradise at a place called Fäwsal, and its length is a month's journey. The four companions of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), namely; Abu Bakr, Ali, Umer, and Usman will sit at the four corners of the source. Those who turn from the

command of the Prophet will not get from it. This liquid is expressed by the poet as related to the Prophet as follows:

**የጅነቱ ምንጭ ከወሰር የሚሉት፣ PX L261-262**

**ለነቢ መለዩ ነወ የሰጠውት፣**

The source of paradise which is called, Kāwsar;

That Allah has given it to the Prophet for his honour.

As the poet presented in the above extract, Allah will give this 'Hawd to the Prophet to show the prophet's prestige. The poet also describes that the cistern will be a lot to be given for all the Prophets and Ummah of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

### **3.1.4. Praising the Prophet through His Family**

The poet talks about the family of the prophet through PVI. He mentions all the names of the members of the Prophet's family; his forefathers to twenty steps, his uncles, his aunts, his wives and his children. The poet praises all the Prophet's family members by remembering their good deeds and spiritual purity. The poet tells us that knowing the names of the Prophet's forefathers to twenty steps is an obligation for a Muslim and it is also part of a belief. The poet repeatedly prays to Allah to fulfill his wish through the beloved and righteous family of Prophet Muhammad. He also praises the Prophet in relation to his family as follows:

**አብዱልሙጦሊብ፣ ሀሺም፣ አብዱልመናን፣ PXL11-13**

**እእነዚህ ስር ናቸው ለዛ ትልቅ ዛፍ፣**

**ጥላውን ላጠላው በአለሙል አክናፍ፣**

Abdul Mutalib, Hashem, Abdulmanf;

They are the roots of the big tree;

Whom he gives his shade to the whole world.

Hence, the poet calls that the Prophet is a big tree that he gives a shade to the whole world and the root of this tree is his families. This poem states the forefathers of the Prophet beginning from his father, Abdālla to his twenty forefathers, Adnan. The Prophet's

forefathers are Hashim, Abdul Mena, Kusay, Kilab, Murah, Luay, Galib, Fār, Malik, Nedr, Kinana’h, Huzayma’h, Medreka, Elias, Mudar, Nezar, Mead, and Adnan.

The poet addresses the number of the Prophet’s uncles, wives, and children; his uncles were twelve, his wives were also twelve, and his children were seven in number, and the poet also mentions all their names. He also discusses the Prophet’s family’s charity, sincerity faithfulness, good mannered, and the importance of knowing and reminding the Prophet’s family.

The poet wants to teach that the Prophet’s high status and rank by Allah, and a Muslim should love and follow him to be loved by Allah and to be rewarded in paradise in the life hereafter.

### **3.1.5. Miracles of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)**

Muëjzah (Ar. Miracle) – is remarkable and extraordinary event that seems impossible to explain by means of the known laws of nature. These challenges or miracles had never happened till Allah manifested the Prophet and permitted him to do before the world, for the sake of mankind so that they will learn and profit from it and believe in Allah and obey His Messenger. Muhammad (2006) argues that the Almighty God enables the prophets to show miracles.

Among the miracles of the Prophet, Sheikh Muhammad Yassin presents the divine journey of the Prophet known as ‘Isra’ and ‘Miëraj’ ( PI L 45-68,PI L116-119). The poet describes it as follows:

ብትወጡ ከአርሺ፣ PI L 45-48

አልፈሁ ያንን ፍራሽ፣

አበጀሁልን አይሽ፣

እዚህ ለኛ አስበሁ፡፡

እዛ ስፍራ ሰው የለም፣

በኋላ ፊት ዘላለም፣

መላይካ ሊተገለጽ ፣  
ስትወርዱ ተጠጋሁ።

ኢብራሂም ስትወርዱ ፣  
ቢያገኙህ ከመንገዱ ፣  
ለኛ ምክር ሰደዱ ፣  
ጠቀሙን አባቱሁ።  
ሙሳ ያላህ ወዳጅ ፣  
ስትወጡ ሚዕራጅ ፣  
ነገሩህ የሚበጅ ፣  
አዝነው ለአመትሁ።

While you go up to Arû;  
Beyond that mattress;  
You ease our life;  
You worry about us here.

There is no person who reaches there; PIL 45-68  
Angels come;  
To learn from you;  
While you come back.

When you come down;  
You meet Ibrahim on the street;  
He sends advice for us;  
He, your father, makes us beneficial.

Moses, the beloved of Allah;  
Tells you the good;  
In worrying to your people;  
When you go up, Miraj.

ኢሳ በወጡ ሰማይ ፣ PI L 223-235  
ሄዱ እኮ አንቱም ከዛ በላይ ፣

ወል የማይል ቀልብ ላይ ፣

ስንት ጉድ አሳየሁ።

While Esa (Jesus) goes up to the sky;

You have gone above that;

Allah has shown much astonishment for you;

That cannot be imagined in mind.

The above extract talks about the Prophet's divine journey within limited words of the poet.

About these journeys, Isra and Miraj, Bilal (2005, 37) states as follow:

*'Isra' literally means a journey by night and 'Mi'raj'*

*literally means an elevator or a ladder, i.e., an*

*instrument which lifts something up. But in Islam,*

*Isra refers to a miraculous night- journey made*

*by the last prophet (pbuh) from Mäkka to Jerusalem,*

*and Mi'raj refers to the vehicle which took the*

*prophet (pbuh) from Jerusalem up to and out of the*

*universe, through the seven heavens, and in to*

*the direct presence of Allah.*

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin has put these miraculous divine journey of the Prophet first to the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem and to the seven heavens where the Prophets found, and then to beyond the seventh heaven, in poetic language.

According to Bilal (2005), at midnight of Monday, the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Rajab, angel Jibril descended into the Prophet's room and woke up the Prophet. Jibril took hold of the prophet's hand and led him outside of his house to the gate of Kabba. The Prophet found a Buraq (a strange unearthly animal, it was smaller than a mule but larger than a donkey, having a wing on each of its hind legs). The prophet entered the mosque and prayed there in.

The Prophet then left the mosque and the Mi'raj (lift) was brought to him. It shot up into the heavens and out of the solar system (PI L45-48). Jibril and the Prophet reached the end of the universe and arrived at the boundary of the lowest heaven. The Prophet met the prophets beginning from the lowest heaven; the Prophet got Adam at the lowest heaven, Jibril then took him up to the second heaven where he met and greeted Prophet Idris, up to the fifth where he met and greeted Prophet Harun, and up to the sixth where he met Prophet Moses and finally he met Prophet Ibrahim (PI L53-60). Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) observed approximately seventy thousand angels, entering this heavenly house of worship without seeing any of them leave (PI L 65-68). Jibril then led the prophet to the lote-tree of the boundary, known as Sidrätul Muntaha, which is full of unimaginable things by someone, the prophet described as having leaves like the ears of elephants and fruits as large as earthen-ware jugs (PI L232-234, PII L 116-119). The lote tree marked the spot, beyond which even Jibril could not go, but Allah permitted the Prophet to go beyond it and spoke to Him directly (PI L 49-52). Then Allah made Säläh (prayer) compulsory fifty times per day for the prophet and his followers. On the Prophet's return, he passed by Prophet Musa and Ibrahim who asked him what worship had been prescribed for him. When the Prophet informed him, Musa said, "Your people are not capable of doing fifty daily prayers. I swear by Allah, so go back to your lord and ask Him to make things lighter for your people." (PII L53-60). The Prophet went back to Allah, and accepted from Him the order to perform five prayers everyday for him and his followers.

Finally, he returned to his home in Mäkka where he found his bed still warm. These divine journeys of the Prophet described by the poet within limited words aesthetically are also supported by the Holy Quran in chapter 53.

And indeed he (Muhammad) saw Jibril at a second descent  
(i.e. another time). Near Sidrätul Muntaha (a lote-tree of  
the utmost boundary over the seventh heaven beyond which  
none can pass).(13)

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin also mentions the other miracles that Allah has given to Prophet Muhammad as a sign of his truthfulness. From the miracles mentioned by the poet below (PI L120-123) is about the water springing from the Prophet's fingers.

**ከእጅሁ ወሃ ፈለቀ፣** PI L120-123

**የዕቃወ ወሃ ካለቀ፣**

**ያን ጠጥቶ ዘለቀ፣**

**የዘመተወ ጭፍራሁ።**

Water springs out from your hand;  
When the water in the container is finished;  
The army that go to the raid;  
Reached there by drinking this water.

The story was on the day of “Hudaiba” campaign in the time of the Prophet. The Prophet was with a group of his companions about 1500 in number and faced shortage of water for wudu (ablution) and drink, he ordered them to bring a bowl, and put his fingers in it. Then water started springing from his fingers until the whole group members drank and also performed ablutions from the water. Therefore, the Sheikh puts this story using single stanza as you can see above.

The poet talks about a camel suffered by its owner in PI L269-272.

**ጮኸ ላንተ ግመሉ፣** PI L269-272

**ወግ ያልነበር አመሉ፣**

**ሃጃወ ወጣ በመሉ፣**

**ችጋሩን ሲነግሩሁ።**

The camel shouts for you;  
It could not speak by its nature;  
Its wish all fulfilled;  
When it tells you its problem.

According to the above extract which is also supported by Hadith, a camel, which cannot speak by its nature, complained its overload and the shortage of food by the owner to the

Prophet. The Prophet called the owner of the camel and gave some money for it. He took the camel and made it free from the owner's oppression.

The poet states that rain dropped due to the Prophet's pray in PII L 248-251 section. While the Prophet invoked Allah to send rain for a place where it had got the last rain seven years ago, the rain began running down immediately, and the place became fertile afterwards.

The poet also describes the longing of the trunk and the sword of 'Ukasha' in PI L 265-268 and PI L 252-255 section.

Generally, the poet raises different points concerning Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Such as the status and rank of the Prophet compared to that of other Prophets, the benefits that humankind get and will get because of his birth, the history of the Prophet and his family, the greatness of his companions, and soon.

### **3.2. Heroes and History of Islam**

#### **3.2.1. The Heroes of Islam**

The poet begins by describing the most intimate companion of the Prophet named Abu BÄkr in section PIII L142-171. Abu BÄkr was mostly known for his deep Iman (belief) and extreme love for the Prophet. The poet discusses the sacrifice Abu BÄkr payed when he was travelling to Medina with the Prophet. At that time, Abu BÄkr had stretched out his leg and got bitten by the snake that came to attack the Prophet. Abu BÄkr's day and night effort for the well being of the Prophet is described here. Abu BÄkr did not care about the pleasure of this world, and he was very tearful while he thought about grave and the Day of Resurrection. It is put as follows (PIII L176-179):

አልጋ እእኮ አይቆምም ያለ አራት እግር፣

ነቢም ነበረዎት አራት ወንበር፣

አንጋፋቸው ሲዲቅ ዳግመኛ ዑመር፣

ሶስተኛቸው ዑስማን ዐልዩ ሀይደር።

As a bed cannot stand without four legs;

The Prophet also had four seats;

Abu BÄkr is the leading, Umär is the second;

Their third is Usman and Aleyu 'Haydär.

According to the above extract, Abu Bäkär, Umär, Usman and Aliy were the four important persons for the Prophet and the religion. Umär was the second Kälif (leader) next to Abu Bäkär after the Prophet's death. As to the poet, Islam became strong and belief rose up when Umär accepted Islam. The poet also describes that Umär was the wing of Islam who ran restlessly for the religion.

Usman was the third Kälif in the history of Islam and one of the vital companions of the Prophet as it is told by the poet in PIII L197-211. Usman's life was simple and he feared Allah very much, and was generous especially for the needy of 'Tebuk' city.

Then the poet talks about the courage of Ali in his poem, PII L212-245. Ali was the fourth Käliph next to Usman and he was known specially for his bravery in Islamic history. These stanzas explain his courage in the campaign of 'Hybär'. The poet also mentions Ali's horse and sword named 'Anbeley' and 'Zulfikar' respectively.

The poet says that the above four heroes of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), namely; Abu Bäkär, Umär, Usman and Ali will sit on the four corners of the source of häwd of the Prophet in the next world, which is a cistern (liquid) that Allah will honor His Messenger, Muhammad (pbuh) for the people on the Day of Resurrection in section PX L 254-258. The poet also explains that those who hate one of these individuals will not get from this häwd on that day. Hamza is the other hero of Islam who is alluded to by the poet (PIV L112-124).

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin then reminds us of the other heroes such as Abdul Rehman, Abdällah, Zubayer, Halid, Abas, 'Awla, Dorar, and Abu Sufian, and mentions their particular attributes and exemplary characters and deeds (PIII L 245-258).

Hence, the poet attempts to preach the people by introducing the most significant persons and their contributions as models to follow so that the people will be real believers, and to achieve superior morality like them.

### 3.2.2. The Major Campaigns in Islamic Period

The major campaigns performed between the believers who flew to Medina and the pagans of Mäkka (Quraish) are known as ‘Bädr’ and ‘‘Uhud’’ as the poet’s description (PIV L1-55). The first conflict, Bädr, was held at Wadi Bädr, two miles to the south west of Medina, in the month of Ramadan, in the second year of Hijra.

The battle lasted more than 18 hours and finally the Quraish fled to Mäkka. Forty nine of the unbelievers had fallen and almost an equal number of them were captured. Fourteen men died from the side of the believers.

The poet mainly stresses on the other battle i.e. ‘Uhud’ which took place a year after of ‘Bädr’. He tells us that the believers won at Bädr and the heroes of this battle were Ali and Hamza.

In Mäkka Muhammad’s victory at Bädr had annoyed intense bitterness among the Quraish. A whole month passed before laments were sung for the dead. The motive was to deny Muhammad’s victory as long as possible. Abu Sofian, the leader of the unbelievers, swore that he would not turn his head until he had obtained revenge. The Quraish were prepared to begin serious action against the believers. A well equipped army of 3,000 men moved from Mäkka a year after the battle of Bädr. A host of women followed the army in the belief that they would serve to motivate on the fighting spirit of the warriors, and the wife of Abu Sofian, Hindu, along with women used tambourines as the poet’s description in section PIV L 34-39.

ሶስት ሺህ ሆኑና መጡ ቁረይሾች፣ PIV L34-36

ሂንዱ እንደሆነ አልቀረችም ስብስባ ሴቶች፣

ከረምቦ እንደሆነ መታች እንደዘፈነች፡፡

The Quraish are three thousand when they come;

Even Hindu with women has come;

And sung using tambourines.

When the believers heard about the Quraish’s army, the Prophet’s army moved to Uhud Mountain and settled on the slopes. The Prophet arranged his men so that no shoulder

should protrude from the ranks. He stopped the archers behind the army, and gave orders that under no conditions were they to move from their posts (P IV L40-43).

At first Muhammad (pbuh) was successful as the poet says (PIV L 70-75). The Quraish began to flee and Abu Sofian was in danger of his life. When they saw this, the archers could no longer remain quiet but rushed forward to share in the robbery. According to section PIV L83-87, Ekrima and Halid conquered this place suddenly the victory was turned to the Quraish, and the believers began to flee in all directions. The Prophet was injured at six points and Hamza was killed there (PIV L91-93). Then the Quraish began to withdraw without making a real attempt to exploit their victory. The daughter of the Prophet, Fatima, and the wife of the prophet, Aisha, and the companions of the Prophet had come to the injured Prophet, and supported him (PIV L112-124). Before the army departed the battlefield was searched and the dead were robbed and mutilated. Hindu, the wife of Abu Sofian, employed a person named Wahshey to kill the heroic Hamza. Hindu went ahead and cut off the noses and ears of the dead. Among the dead was Hamza, the uncle of the Prophet, who had killed Hindu's father at Bādr. His murderer, Wa'hshay left, the liver of the dead man for Hindu (PIV L125-139).

Finally, the remaining companions of the Prophet Abu Bākr, Umār, Usman, Ali, Sead, Muaz, and Abu Dujana had saved the Prophet and Islam even though Hamza was killed there (PIV L 140-155).

### **3.2.3. The Major Events in Muhammad's Prophethood**

The poet, in poem V, mentions the major works of the Prophet in his Prophethood. The first two stanzas discuss birth and early years of the Prophet. When the Prophet was born at dusk from his mother, Aminat, evil was fired and angels were gathered in the room. Like the other Prophets, the poet tells us that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was a herdsman in his youth. The poet then states that Allah makes the Prophets shepherd to be merciful to their people.

When Muhammad was 25, he married his uncle's daughter, Ḥādija, who was a widow of a merchant, the noblest and richest woman among the Quraish. Muhammad was the one who

ran her business. She was impressed by his reliability, and she was the one to propose marriage. Muhammad was 25 and she was forty at that time according to the poet (PV L14-16).

When Muhammad was 35, the four clans of Mäkka began the duty of rebuilding the walls of Kabba. As the walls rose from the ground, and the time came to place the Ḥajr Aswad (the sacred black stone) in its place in the east wall, they differed as to who would have the honor of laying it in place. Competition was so seen that it almost led to a new civil war. Finally, they agreed that the stone was to be put by Muhammad (pbuh) and he did (PV L17-21).

Therefore, the year approached when the time was ripe for Islam. Muhammad (pbuh) was by that time forty years old, an independent, and a respected man. It is said that among his countrymen, he was known by his nick name Al-Amin (Ar. the reliable). As the time drew near when Allah desired to make Muhammad (pbuh) his Prophet, the holy element and its approach first became noticeable in his dreams. The dreams waited for six months (PV L22-24).

Muhammad (pbuh) used to go on Mountain paths and in ravines far from the city. In the year that Muhammad (pbuh) was called to be a Prophet, he went to Mountain Hira with his family for religious exercises. One night angel Jibril came and told Muhammad (pbuh) that he was elected to be a Prophet by Allah. Then afterwards, Jibril with revelations from Allah had begun to come to Muhammad (pbuh).

Then the poet told us about three major events that happened after ten years of his Prophethood in the extracts below. The events were the death of his uncle, Abu Ḥalib, who loved him very much and gave him protection from the unbelievers. Then death of his beloved wife, Ḥadija, and his short Journey with Zeyd (his previous servant) to a place called ḤTaif after three months of Ḥadija's death (PV L25-28).

**ነቢ. ከተላኩ ሆኖ አስር አመት ፣**

**አቡጣሊብ ሞቱ የአሊ አባት ፣**

**ነቢ. ያለቀሱት አዝነዉ ለእሱ ሞት ፣**

**በዚህ ዓመት ሞቱ ከድጀተል ከብራ።**

Ten years after the sending the Prophet;  
Abu Talib, the father of Ali, died;  
The Prophet felt sorry in his death;  
‘Hadija died in the same year.

**እእሜቱ ከድጃ ሞተው ሲሆነው ሶስት ወር፣ PV L31-33**

**እዘይዴ ጋር ሄዱ ወደ ጧዲፍ አገር፣**

**የአላህን ትዕዛዝ እዛ አገር ለመገባር።**

While 3 months after the death of ‘Hädiya;  
To pronounce Allah’s command;  
The prophet went to ‘Taif’ town with Zeyed;

This journey was to pronounce the commands of Allah to the tribe of ‘Thaqif’. Then this section says that the Thaqif refused the Prophet’s call before three years of ‘Hijra (migration to Medina).

The poet in the next stanza discusses what happened when Muhammad (pbuh) was coming back to Mäkka from ‘Taif’. While the Prophet was praying at a valley of ‘~~Nica~~’, many jinns accepted Islam by listening to the prophet’s verse in his prayer. This event is also supported by the Holy Quran and the Jinns say, “it guides to the right path, and we have believed there in, and we shall never join (in worship) anything with our Lord (Allah).”(Quran, 72:2).

The poet then speaks in his poem, PV L51-53 that the tribe of ‘Abdul-Ashul’ accepted the religion because they knew the Prophet in prophecy and they were waiting for his coming.

It was on the 12<sup>th</sup> year of his Prophethood that most of Muslims had begun to migrate from Mäkka to Medina due to the attack of the unbelievers. This journey was the turning point in the history of Islam and is known as ‘Hijra’.

The ‘Mu’hajjer’ (Ar. Emigrants) were very welcomed by the dwellers of Medina who had accepted Islam before the Prophet arrived at Medina. The ‘Ansor’ (Ar. Hosts) shared what

they had to the emigrants. It was also during the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Prophethood that 'Isra' had taken place. 'Isra' is the Prophet's night journey from Kabba to Jerusalem. The poet explains that this is a great favor to Muhammad (pbuh) which no one can get. Even though Prophet Mussa wished this, it happened to Muhammad (pbuh) only. This section also discusses the arrival of Muhammad (pbuh) as mentioned in the earlier scriptures known as Torah and Gospel.

This section adds that the operations made on the Prophet by angel Jibril were 5 times, and the first was during the Prophet's childhood and the second is at the night of 'Isra'. Then the poet leaves the other three operations without mentioning for the people to find by themselves.

Then the poet states the two major issues that happened a year after Hijrah. Azan (the call to prayer) and Jihad (religious war) of Islam were imposed on Muslims during this time. Even though Hamza, Ubaydah, and Seed with their riders went out of Medina based on the Prophet's command to protect them from the Quraish's attack; they came back without engaging the enemy. In the same year, Muhammad (pbuh) married Aishah, daughter of his uncle, Abu Bākr, the daily prayer increased from two to four, and the Jumma Salah (Ar. Friday prayer) by 'hu'tba (Ar. religious lesson) was declared.

Next, the poet mentions the deeds of the Prophet during the second year of Hijra (PV L99-114). Zākka (Ar. charity) and fasting of Ramadan were imposed on the Muslims. Ali married the Prophet's daughter, Fatima, and the direction of prayer turned from Jerusalem to Makka at this time. Zakkatal Fiṭār (the charity on holyday) and Sālatal Eid (Ar. holyday prayer) had also begun here. This year was also a year in which the battle of 'Bādr' had taken place. The poet also informs that the victory was gone to Muslims.

From PV L115 to L120, the poet notices the significant deeds during the third year of Hijra. These were, alcohol became haram (forbidden), and Hassan, the son of Ali, was born, and Uhud campaign took place during this time.

The poet also mentions that campaign of 'Beni Al-Mustelik' was held at the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the Prophet's Hijra (PV L125-128).

During the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Hijra, even though it was not accomplished, the Prophet along with the believers began to move from Medina to Mäkka for pilgrimage. After a year, Abu-Hurayra, the Prophet's uncle, became Muslim, and Maria and Daldul among the Muslim women came to Medina. The Prophet wrote letters to the influential and known kings at that time like Heraclites of Persia, Kisra of Faris, and Negus Nejashi of Abysinia to accept Islam religion. The poet also talks about Nejashi's acceptance of the Prophet and the religion, and the'Häybar campaign. All these events are discussed by the poet from PV L128 to L142.

According to the poet's work, PV L143-155, during the 8th year of Hijra, Mäkka was opened, Ibrahim (son of the Prophet) was born, and Zeyneb (daughter of the prophet) died. The conflict between the believers and the tribes of 'Hunayn' and "Taif" happened in this victorious year.

Campaign of Tebuk, the pilgrimage of Abu Bäkr Sadik, the destruction of mosque Adirar, the death of 'Umu Kulsum' (daughter of the Prophet), and Nejashi's death were the foremost events that happened a year after the conquest of Mäkka.

The poet puts the major events in Islam during the tenth year of Hijra, such as; 'Haġtul wadda (Ar. the farewell pilgrimage), the death of the Prophet, the Prophet's Friday prayer with 100,000 believers at Mäkka, and the leadership of Abu-Bakr. Therefore, the chequered history of Islam had passed is clearly and artistically described in this section.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. THE MAJOR ISSUES REFLECTED IN SELECTED MÄNZUMA POEMS

Beyond discussing the great achievements of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the other heroes of Islam, the poet focuses on beliefs, the life after death, and worship.

#### 4.1. Belief

The poet emphasizes on oneness of God and on the Resurrection Day among the pillars of belief in Islam.

##### 4.1.1. Tawhid

Tawhid- refers to witness in oneness of God. Bilal (2005, 21) writes as follows about Tawhid:

*Literally Tawhid means to make something one or to call it one in English when something is made one it is called a unity however Islamically Tawhid means to believe that Allah is one and only God in all of the things that we do to please him. For example, prayer should be to Allah, sacrifice should only be done in Allah's name, charity should only be given for Allah's pleasure, and Jihad should only be for the sake of Allah's religion.*

Hence, it implies that Muslims accept Allah as being the only real power in the universe. Allah caused all things to exist when there was nothing, thus he is called Al- 'Häliq(Ar. the creator).

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin has taught us about Tawhid many times in his poems especially through his second and third poems. The poet stresses the importance of Tawhid for those who fear God as follows:

**ሞት አለብኝ ላለ ጌታን ለሚፈራ፣ PII L22-25**

**ጀነት ለሚከፈል ነገ በአኼራ፣**

**ተወላድን አጥርቶ አስቀድሞ ይቅራ፣**

**ተወላድ መሰረት ነወ. ለተቀረወ. ኢልም፡፡**

Who fears Allah and says, “I will die”;

Who want paradise in the next world?

He has to study first the oneness of God;

This is the base for the other ilm.

Then the poet continues discussing the importance of Tawhid (PII L22-25). The poet says that each ilm (a religious knowledge) comes after Tawhid. Tawhid and what a man did in this world are the only important things that help him on the Resurrection Day.

Describing Allah’s names and attributes is part of Tawhid (Bilal: 2005). The poet also describes Allah’s attribute in his literary work in section-PVIII L 25-50.

**ሙላውን ኸላቂ የሌለዉ መሰላ፣**

**ዛቱና ሲፈቱ ስሙ ቀዳም ነዉ ፣**

**ፈርድ ያረገብን ይሄን ማወቅ ነዉ፣**

**አምላጅ ሽሪካ ባላንጤም የለዉ፡፡**

The creator of everything, no one seems like him;

He is second to none in physical, attributes, and names;

Allah makes compulsion on us to know about Tawhid;

He has neither resemblance nor partner, nor competent.

According to the above extract, Allah is the creator of everything and is the first in every aspect. He has neither resemblance nor partner, and has no any fault in His deed. The poet continues that Allah rises up the sky, and the universe without any support. Allah knows and follows all his creatures whether it is huge or small. After creating earth, Allah puts Mountains on earth not to move back and forth.

The poet also states that Allah neither eats nor drinks, and His wisdom cannot be criticized by anyone (PVIII L 48-49).Therefore the poet underlines that Allah is the only real power

in the universe that should be worshipped and asked for help. The poet advises the people through his poems to know Tawhid before anything. The poet reminds that Allah makes things easy in here and after here for those who know Tawhid and worship him only in section-PV1II L95-99.

Finally, the poet asks the people to be witnesses for him while he speaks about Tawhid as follows:

**ተውሂድን ስናገር የሰማኝ ሁላ ሰወ፣** PII L35-36

**ምስክር ይሁኑኝ አላህ ፊት ሳደርሰወ፣**

Those who hear me while I speak about Tawhid;

Be witness for me when I pronounce it in the presence of Allah.

Hence, the poet tells us that a Muslim should know Allah's power and attributes. A Muslim also should fear and worship Allah.

#### **4.1.2. The Signs of the Day of Resurrection**

Muslims attest to the truth of everything Allah or His Messenger said about death and divine matters. Allah has not created mankind and jinn uselessly, rather to worship Him and promised paradise as a reward to those who obey Him and His Messengers, and hell-fire to those who do not obey Him and His Messengers. He has set a certain period for the whole universe, whose end will be the Final Hour (time of resurrection). This time of Resurrection is a deep secret to all, but God alone. However, the Prophet has foretold some signs of its approach.

These are minor and major signs of the Reckoning of Judgment. The minor signs happen before the majors.

##### **4.1.2.1. The Minor Signs of the Resurrection Day**

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin states the minor signs that indicate the approach of the Day of Judgment. The Sheikh begins by saying, "Let me

talk about the signs of Resurrection if Allah considers it as zikr (ritual recitation) for me”. Let us see two stanzas PII L59-60 and PII L64-67:

**የነቢ መላክ ነው አንዱ ምልክቱ፤  
ኢልሙ መጥፋቱ ነው አህሎች አየሞቱ፤**

**ደግሞ ምልክቱ መብዛቱ ነው ዚናህ፤  
ነፍሱን የሚያሸንፍ አይገኝም ደህና፤  
አማኒነት ጠፍቶ መያዘነው ህያና፤  
ዝናቡ አያነሰ መብዛቱ ደመና፡፡**

The sending of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is one of the signs;  
Lack of religious knowledge and death of scholars;

Prevalence of fornication is the other sign;  
No one can control his soul (emotion);  
Loss of faith and prevailing of denial;  
There will be high cloud but a little rain.

The signs mentioned by the poet above in his poem were told by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) 1400 years. Among these minor signs is: the sending of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), swift passing of time, prevalence of fornication, lack of ilm, prevalence of high cloud but low rain, decay of faith among the people, the appointment of the meanest and unqualified to positions of authority, the competition of unfitted persons in the erection of tall building, prevalence of secular talks in mosques, tumults and seditions in the people, giving more respect to wives than fathers and mothers, prevalence of unfaithful friendship and corruption, prevalence of oppression and injustice, widespread of market places (shops), severance of family and friendship ties ,becoming the dry season wet and the wet dry, prevalence of backbiting and spiting.

Wealth and honor will be entrusted to the treacherous, while the honest and trustworthy will be hated, and women will be more than men in number will at the Final Hour of this world.

The sheikh tells one of the pillars of faith, i.e. belief in the resurrection day using some signs of its approach. He also mentioned that the source of these signs is **Bh**ari Hadith. Nearly all of these signs are happening now, and the major signs that will happen after the minors will signal the end of all creatures and creations.

#### **4.1.2.2. The Major Signs of the Resurrection Day**

Sheiks Muhammad Yassin has mentioned about six major signs which will happen surely before the Resurrection Day: these are; the coming of Däjjal (the Pseudo-Christ), the beast, the descent of Prophet Esa(Jesus), the rising of the sun from the west, and the arrival of Ya\_jooj and Ma\_jooj. According to the poet in section PIX L1-5 of his poem, the coming of Kälifa Mähdi is controversial among the scholars about whether it is among the minor or the major signs.

##### **4.1.2.2.1. The Coming of Kälifa Mähdi**

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin tells us that at the end of the time Allah will send a Muslim Kälifa who will be wise and just will control the affairs of the people in this section of the Mänzuma (PIX L1-47). The poet mentions the name of this ruler i.e. Mähdi and the leader will come to the throne to fill the earth with justice after it has been filled with injustice and oppression. Let us see an extract from the poet's Mänzuma:

የሞተው ይመኛል ዱኒያ መመለስ፣ PIX L24-25

ሰው ያን ጊዜ ይለዋል አጅግ ደስ፣

ምን ይሆናል ወቅቱ ጥቂት አለች አነስ፣

ዘጠኝ ዓመት አታልፍ ያውም እዛ ብትደርስ።

The dead Wishes to come to this world again;

The people will be happy then;

But the time will become a little bit short;

It will not exceed nine years;

According to the above extract, this leader will fill the earth with joy and justice at most for nine years, or less than that, even those who died wish to come again.

The poet also describes that Mähdi will be accompanied by 3000 angels and the whole world will be his empire. Mähdi's physical appearance is also described in this section. Mähdi will have much beard, a hooked nose, receding hair, and his face is as Arabs, and his physical is as Jews. Generally Mähdi is very handsome like Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), but he is not as perfect as the Prophet in conduct. Then the sheikh says that Mähdi will be born either in Medina or in west, and he suggests that the time of Mähdi's birth is at hand.

#### **4.1.2.2.2. The Coming of Däjjal**

Sheik Muhammad Yassin begins by asking Allah to keep him and the people from Däjjal's tribulation. Then he describes Däjjal as one eyed and between his eyes it is written kafir (Ar. Unbeliever). Däjjal is tall and ugly, and he is a little bit curved.

When Däjjal comes, the sun will be once red and the other time black, the earth will slide, the length of a day will be as a year and prayer will be by watching the hour (PIX L62-123). The Däjjal will claim to be divine and he will produce extraordinary feats to propagate his falsehood. The poet explains that Däjjal will travel around the earth for 40 days and will not leave any city without entering it except Mäkka and Medina. The poet says:

ሁለት ባህር አሉት የሚከተሉት፣ PIX L83-86

የአንዱ ስም ነዉ ጀነት፣

ያንዱ ስም እሳት፣

ጀነት የዶለው ይሆናል እሳት፣

እእሳቱ የዶለው ይሆናል ለእረፍት፡፡

He has two seas which follows him;

The name of the first one is paradise;

And the other one is fire;

Those who enter in his paradise will be for fire;

Those who enter in his fire will be safe.

Therefore, according to the extract, Dājjal will have seas of a paradise and hell, but his hell (fire) will be paradise and his paradise will be hell. The other thing which Dājjal confuses the people with will be when Dājjal commands a dead person; a Satan will appear in the form of the dead person. The Sheikh concludes that the Muslims will be in a great trouble, and they will hope for a righteous ruler.

#### **4.1.2.2.3. The Descent of Prophet Esa (Jesus)**

As Allah in holy Quran (4; 157) has told us Prophet Esa was not dead, rather he was taken up to heaven by Allah. This holy book also adds that Esa will descend, and this descent will be a sign that the Hour is close at hand, “and he (Esa/Jesus) [son of Maryam / Mary)] shall be a known sign for (the coming of) the Hour (Quran, 43:61).

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin states this Esa’s descent and the way of his descent with in limited lines in his maānzuma, PIX L124-157. The poet mentions that Prophet Esa descends from the second heaven with seventy thousand angels; he will come down wearing two garments, dyed with saffron, green cloth on his head, with a sword and an attractive spear by his hands on a paradise horse. While Esa comes, he will call all the people to come to him. Mahdi will arrive first. They will make the dusk prayer together. Then Dājjal will see Esa, he will runaway. Prophet Esa will catch him at a place called Ludd (Lod) and kill him. Then Prophet Esa will rule the earth for 40 years. These years will be years of peace and love, even wild animals can live with goats, and a child can play with a snake in love. The poet tells us that Prophet Esa will lead Māhdi, and finally Māhdi will die at Betel Mekdes.

#### **4.1.2.2.4. Emergence of Ya- jooj and Ma-jooj**

Among the major signs of the Last Hour is the emergence of Ya-jooj and Ma-jooj according to the Sheikh's explanation in his mānzuma, PIX L158-190. The Sheikh states that Ya-jooj and Ma-jooj are the children of Prophet Noah from the species called 'Yefes'. They will hasten to spread corruption on the earth. The poet explains what will happen before Ya-jooj and Ma-jooj will be released. Prophet Esa will get revelation from Allah which says: "I have sent many creatures so take my slaves up into the Mountain At-toor (Sinai) so that they will be safe." Then Allah will send these creatures, which will come pouring down from every high place.

The Prophet of Allah, Esa and the believers will be besieged on At -toor and will be so hard-pressed (PIX L181-182). The Prophet will beseech Allah, and Allah will send up on these creatures a worm in their necks and they will all die as one. While the earth will be filled with putrefaction and stench, Allah will send big birds which will carry the dead and throw them to unknown place. Then Allah will send rain to wash and clean the earth.

Then, the poet talks about the coming down of Esa and the believers from Mount Sina, and the productivity and prosperity of the earth afterwards (PIX L191-193).

The poet also describes the pilgrimage of Prophet Esa and the Prophet's residence at Medina. Esa also will deliver a son named Muhammad, and finally he will be buried near to Prophet Muhammad's companions, Abu Bakr's and Umar's grave.

#### **4.1.2.2.5. The Emergence of the Beast**

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin has told us about Dabetul Ard (a kind of beast), whose emergence is considered as one of the major signs of the Last Hour. Allah says about it:

*And when the word (of torment) is fulfilled against  
them we shall bring out from the earth a beast  
for them, to speak to them because mankind believed  
not with certainty in our Ayaat [Verses of the Quran  
and Prophet Muhammad] (Quran, 27:82).*

Prophet Esa will observe this beast first while making pilgrimage in Makka. Then the poet describes this animal saying that it is 30 meters long, and it has also two wings for flying. Everybody fears while this beast comes. The poet explains that this beast will come and mark on the forehead of each people. The beast writes ‘a Muslim’ on a man’s face if he is a believer, and ‘a kafir’ (unbeliever) on the one who does not believe in Allah (PIX L 200-209).

#### **4.1.2.2.6. The Rising of the Sun from the West**

The Sheikh mentions among the clear signs which will point to the onset of the Hour will be the rising of the sun from the West. The poet adds that the people see when the sun rises and they will all believe, but that will be the time that faith will not benefit a person if he did not believe before, or did not derive any good from his faith. This rising of the sun is well described by the poet in section-PIX L210-221.

According to the poet’s description from PIX L 228-256, the destruction of Kabba by persons from Abyssinia, the removal of the Quran, death of good people, and the destruction of living things will take place after the sun rises from the west.

The poet mentions the minor and major signs that show the approach of the Resurrection Day. He also advises the people to be strong in worshipping Allah at that time.

### **4.2. Life after Death**

The poet focuses on creating awareness about the life after death which is the main concern of Quran and the teaching of the Prophets.

#### **4.2.1. Death and Grave**

The Sheikh reminds the people what is told in the holy Quran about death, grave and the Day of Resurrection that are inevitable for everyone. As to the poet’s explanation in PVIII L 51- 53, mankind loses his power when death comes to him. This implies that a man will not have any choice, or power to escape death, rather he will be nervous. The poet emphasizes that death is horrible.

The poet also underlines about the questions of Allah's angels that will be provided for the dead in the grave in his poem ( PVIII L 73-85). He says about this as follows:

አሉበት መላይኮች የሚያስፈሩ እዛ ዘንድ፣  
የሚጠይቁት ከጌታ ከተው ሂድ፣  
እባብ ያለበት ነው ጊንጦ የሚባላ።

የጠፋው እእንደሆን ከሚጠይቁት፣  
ምን ያል መከራ ነው ያይደለ ጥቂት፣  
ይመቱታል እእዛው በአዛሉ ዱላ።

የመለሰ እእንደሆን ደሀና ያኖሩታል፣  
ዘመድ ቤተሰቡ በዱንያ ረስቶታል፣  
ከሰራው በቀር ከሌላው ምናለ።

There are horrible angels there;  
Whom they will ask him about oneness of God;  
There is a snake and biting termite;

It he cannot answer what he is asked;  
What kind of panic it is! This is not a little;  
They will kick him by a club;

If he answers correctly they will keep him safely;  
His relatives and family have forgotten him in this world;  
There is nothing in the grave except his deeds.

Here the poet discusses about the pains which souls face after death. There are furious angels who provide questions for the dead the first question is about Tawhid. There are also biting termites and snakes, and a club for those who cannot provide the exact responses. But if the person is a believer and can provide the expected answers, he will be kept well until the Resurrection Day. The Sheikh describes that grave is a terrible place where every

body lives alone except his/her deeds in his/her life time, even his/her family will forget him/her in this world. The poet then advises the people to believe and do good deeds in this world to be safe from the fear and question of death and grave.

#### **4.2.2. The Day of Resurrection**

The poet reminds the people repeatedly about the Resurrection Day in his poems (PVIII L98-103, PX L70-80, etc...). Let us see how he puts the intense grief of that Day (PVIII L98-103):

**ቂያማ ስንላት ስሟ ትንሽናት፣**

**መከራዋ ብዙ ሰባ ሺህ አመት፣**

When we say ‘resurrection’, its name is little;

Its grief is extreme for seventy thousand;

**ለቅሶኛዎ ብዙ ስራውን ሲሞላ፣**

**ሰው ሲነባበር አንዱ ባንዱ ነፍስ፣**

**አየዋጠው ላቡ አንገቱ ድረስ፣**

**ጀንበር ስንዝር ቀርባ ራሱ አየፈላ።**

The crying people will be high when they will be rewarded by their deeds;

They will be crowded one over the other;

They will be sunk to their necks by their sweat;

The sun will come near a span from their hands.

The poet explains the fear of the people on that Day. He tells them that they will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment, and their deeds will be their only credit at that time. The poet adds that their evil deeds will come as an ugly, horrible and dark animal to the sinners (unjust) which take them to hell, and the Virtuous will get their good deeds as appealing and light red colored horse to take them to paradise (PVIII L 85-97).

The extract states that the sun will be brought near until it is only the distance of a span from the people’s heads. The people will melt and suffer in extreme distress because of the heat. They will also be crowded together, pushing, shoving one another. Sweat will come

pouring out of them until it sinks them to their necks. This day will last seventy thousand years. This is not the poet's imagination about the Resurrection Day; rather the Hadith puts it as follows:

Sweat will reach the mouth of the kafir like rains on  
the day of resurrection because that day will be seen as  
70 thousand years. (Bu'hari:2862)

Mankind will be gathered on the Resurrection Day.

#### **4.2.2.1. Gathering of Mankind on the Resurrection Day**

The poet describes, that humankind will be gathered barefoot and naked at Jerusalem in section PX L1-71. The people will be thirsty and hungry at the instant of gathering except those who help (feed and provide clothes) the needy in this world. Then the poet also describes the place where humankind will be gathered and asked. He is amused by the broadness and whiteness of this place, and it is called 'Abdul Beydes'.

A man will go to the gathering place as he was in the before world either in physical or in voice. But those who enter paradise will be in their 33 years old and they will be in Adam's height. The sheikh also discusses that grave and resurrection will be horrible for the unbelievers, but not for the believers.

#### **4.2.2.2. Allah's shade on the Resurrection Day**

When the sun comes near the people's heads, there will be no shade for anyone apart from the shade, of the Throne of the Lord of the worlds. A group of the best among them will be at peace in the shade of the Throne of the Most Merciful. The sheikh mentions these best people in his manzuma, section PxL80-95.

Therefore, those who get the shade of the Throne are

- i) a just ruler, who established justice and fairness among the people
- ii) the young man who grew up worshipping his lord, so he remained pure all his life

- iii) the man who makes prayer at mosque
- iv) two men who love one another for the sake of Allah, meeting and parting for that reason
- v) a man invited (to sin) by a woman of high beauty, but he says, ‘I fear Allah’
- vi) who gives charity so secretly
- vii) a man tears for Allah’s fear when he becomes alone

Hence, the mentioned people will get Allah’s Throne on the Resurrection Day.

#### **4.2.2.3. Balance and Sirat**

The poet then discusses how Allah will settle the score between the oppressed and his oppressor, so that there will be no outstanding wrongs among people on the Day of Resurrection in section PX L 111-135. He reminds the people about salah (prayer) and bloodshed which will be seen first on that Day.

The Sheikh tells that some people will enter paradise without being brought into account, but they are a small group numbering not more than seventy thousand, among these; Abu Bakr, Seid Oumer, and Abu Selimat are mentioned. These people will have intercession on that Day according to the poet’s manzuma, section PXL150-156.

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin talks about the balance that will come after the reckoning on the Resurrection Day from PX L167-188 in his poem. The deeds of mankind will be weighed in it on this Day by angels; Jibril and Israfil, and Allah will observe them. So, the weighing will be to determine their values so that reward or punishment may be awarded accordingly.

The poet then speaks about Sirat (it is a bridge that will be over Hell to paradise). It will be like the edge of a sword. He describes that the length of this bridge will take 3000 years but the believers will pass over it within the twinkling of an eye, like lighting or the wind or birds, and like fine horses and camels.

**ጆሃንም ላይ ቁማ የሚሏት ሲራጥ፣ PX L190-194**

**የምታንገዳገድ አለችብን ስርጥ፣**

ቁመቷ እንኳ ረጅም ቶሎ አትቆረጥ፤

የሚቀር ሰወ. ከሷ የለም የሚያመልጥ።

The so called ‘Sirat’ will stand on Hell;

It is a bridge which makes us to stagger;

Its length is too long;

No one can escape without passing over it.

Hence, everybody will be required to go over it. The poet stresses on the speed at which people cross; it will be different according to their deeds. Those who do not have any good deed in this world will be piled up in Hell and those who do a little good deed will go slowly and will be saved. The poet also says that the Sirat’s width will be different according to the person’s deed. (PX L190-L241).

Generally, the poet attempts to teach that the destiny of human being should not be this world, and to remind the difficulties, long process and journey of hereafter

### **.4.3. Worship**

#### **4.3.1. Invocation**

Sheikh Muhammad Yassin is observed in most of his manzumas while invoking Allah. The poet beseeches Allah to fulfill the Muslims’ wish through His beloved Prophet Muhammad, His beloved slaves and the Prophet’s family. He begins with discussing about the Muslims failure to do good deeds and continues asking him to accept their pray without expecting any rule (PI L1-40).

The poet also begs Allah to make the Muslims true believers and good doers unwillingly even though they are surrounded by many problems which block them to do good deeds as follows (PVI L48-49):

ኸይር አሰራን አንተ በግድ ሳንሻ፤

በዝቶብናልና ዙሪያውን ማስረሻ፤

Since we are surrounded by many things not to be virtuous;  
Allow us to do good without our will.

The poet also beseeches Allah through his beloved prophet Muhammad and the prophet's family to give faith for the Muslims, and to give peace for their country through his extract (PX L23-27) below:

እእለምንሃለሁ በኤልያስ በሙራድ፣  
ሙራዴን አርግልኝ ባልከህ ሳልቸገር፣  
ቀልቤ ካሰበው አፌ ሳይናገር፣  
በኒዛር በማአድ ስጠን በአድናን፣  
ለቀልባችን ኢማን ለሃገሩ አማን።

I will beg you through Elias, Murad;  
To fulfill my wish without problem;  
The wish in my mind, I have not expressed.  
Give us belief to our souls, peace to our country;  
Through Nedr, Maad, Adnan.

The poet then asks Allah to guide the people on the believers' way, and also to love these believers even though they are not as strong as them in worshipping Allah. He also adds begging Allah to provide the 'Awd (cistern) of the prophet to the people as follows (PX L265-269):

ተረሱላችን ኸውድ ጌታዬ አንተ አጠጣን፣  
ከሙዕሚኖች ገዋን እባክህ አታውጣን፣  
ተነሱ ዲባዳ ብንሆን እንኳን ያጣን፣  
እነሱን መወደድ ያረቢ አታሳጣን፣  
በስራችን ጥፋት አታርገን ከሸይጣን።

Please make us to drink the prophet's cistern;  
Don't make us to leave from the believer's truck;  
Although we are not like them in worshipping;  
Don't make us to lose liking them;

Don't make us with Devil due to our faulty deed.

The sheikh also asks Allah to give him the love of Prophet Muhammad to distribute for those needy people who come to the Hadra of the sheikh in section PI L152-188. The poet continues begging Allah to make the people His best slaves, who worship Allah day and night.

#### **4.3.2. Thanksgiving**

As Sheikh Muhammad Yassin invokes Allah, he also thanks Allah for what He has given him and his followers through his Manzuma, PII L1-3; for example:

አልሃምዱሊላኪ ይገባዉ ምስጋና፣  
ኢማኑን የሰጠን የሻልን ፊት ገና፣  
ምን አቅም ነበረን ቢተወን ሳንቀና፣

Thanks to God for;  
Whom He has given us belief early;  
We would have no power if he left us with out showing the right way.

አልሃምዱሊላኪ ነቢን የሰጠን፣ PVIII L21-23  
ምስጋናው አያልቅም በሌትም በቀን፣  
በደህና ያኖረን በጠፋው ዘመን፣

Thanks God for whom he has given;  
The thanks should be day and night;  
For whom He makes us to live safely in this difficult time.

As the first extract explains, the poet thanks Allah for whom He has chosen the Muslims and given them faith and expresses that the Muslims' belief is Allah's favor.

The poet thanks Allah and continues expressing Muslims indebtedness to Allah for He favored them by giving Prophet Muhammad, and for He helped them to live peacefully at this difficult time, as extract two says.

Generally, the poet invokes Allah to give real belief for the people who make good deeds in this world, and to provide them the 'Hawd (cistern) of the prophet in the next world. The poet also thanks Allah for providing Prophet Muhammad and the religion of Islam.

### 4.3.3. Giving Advice

Related to good counsel and advice, the poet underlines the importance of it among the believers in his poems (PII L18-20, PVIII L114-117, and so on). He stresses on that giving the right advice and counsel is an obligation for a religious scholar, and he also tells that his elders have showed him the right way (PIIL15-17). The poet is repeatedly observed while advising the people concerning the “do”s and “don’t”s through his poems. He reminds the bad conducts that Islam forbids not doing and a believer should take care of.

Let us see the extract below (PII L37-43):

ልንገርህ አሁንስ ፍሬውን ነገር፤  
ሰው መዘለምን ተው አትለፍ ድንበር፤  
ከራትን ሂስድን ተው በሰው ላይ ባለዕጣ፤  
አጅጉ ይሀው ነው አማን የሚያስመልጥ፤  
የዱንያውን ትተህ ለአሄራህ ሁን ብልጥ።

Let me tell you the main point;  
Don't make wrong on others, don't pass others boundary;  
Stop proud and spiting on the others' good fortune;  
These are the foremost matters, which make to lose belief;  
Ignore this world, and be wise to your next world.

Hence, the Sheikh advises the people to take out the bad behavior in their minds and not to do wrong on others. He also tells them not to be proud and spit on others' good fortune and to give more attention for their next world than this one as the above extract tells us.

The poet also advises them to control their souls, which command them to do what Allah forbids, and not to do good in his poem, PVII L125-126. The primary thing that someone should do is controlling his soul and emotion, providing the expenses of his family, and

then guiding the family on the right way. For the poet, the other religious acts are next to this.

The sheikh explains that a person having bad behaviors such as pride and spiting on the others luck will die as an unbeliever, and will not be credited in the next world for their good deeds.

On the other hand, the poet teaches the people to do things for the sake of Allah only as follow:

**ስራችን ከሆነ ለጌታችን ለአላህ፣ PVIII L95-98  
አይቸግርም ነበር አዱንያ አኼራ፣  
ሩቁን ቅርብ አርጎ ጥንቡን የገራ፣  
ይህን ተናግሮታል በቁርዓን ሰጠራ።**

If our deeds are for sake of Allah;  
There will not be difficult here and after here.  
The one who make the far near and the difficult simple;  
He told it in His holy Quran.

If the people believe in Allah and do things only for the sake of Him, Allah will ease their trouble in this and the next world. According to the above extract, Allah will make what is far near, and what is difficult simple for those who do things for the sake of Him.

The poet also advises the people at least to keep away from doing what Allah does not permit in order to be safe from Allah's punishment in the next world if they fail to be strong in worshipping.

Generally, the poet emphasizes on teaching Muslim character in Islam so that a Muslim will be able to prevent doing wrong on others. A Muslim should not also boast and rely on his own good deeds such as prayer and charity, but on Allah only.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. CONCLUSION**

The objective of this study is to assess the major themes of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin's Mänzumas. Mänzuma is a religious oral poetry, which has been experienced by Ethiopian Muslims in a religious meeting called 'Hadra'. Mänzuma is concern of the Ulama, who have the highest level of Islamic education. Sheikh Muhammad Yassin (1895-1972) was among the popular Islamic Scholars who had the experience of versifying and singing this genre.

The poet touches on certain religious themes through the ten selected Mänzumas. In most of his poems, the poet discusses various points related to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), such as the physical appearance and the high status and position of the Prophet compared to that of other Prophets, the advantages that mankind get and will get because of his birth, the biography of the Prophet, the miracles of the Prophet, and the qualities and names of the forefathers and family of the Prophet. He underlines that the Prophet's grand intercession on the Resurrection Day and the Prophet's 'Hawd (cistern) in the next world are special favors that Allah will give to His most beloved Prophet, Muhammad (pbuh). In connection with it, the poet explains the exalted status and the respect given by Allah Himself to the Prophet and he preaches the people that a Muslim should love, respect, and follow this Prophet.

Beyond praising, the poet talks about the pillars of belief in Islam, especially Tawhid (Islamic Theology) and the Resurrection Day. He emphasizes on the oneness of God, His divine properties and the attributes of Allah. In connection with resurrection Day, God (Allah) has set a certain period for the whole universe, whose end will be the Final Hour (time of resurrection). This time of resurrection is a deep secret to all, but God alone. However, the Prophet has foretold some signs of its approach. These are minor and major signs of the Reckoning of Judgment. The sending of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), prevalence of fornication, swift passing of time, prevalence of corruption and unfaithful

friendship are among the minor signs of the Last Hour mentioned by the poet. The poet also explains the six major signs of the Day of Judgment, these are; the coming of Mahdi (a Muslim Leader), the coming of Dajjal, the descent of Prophet Esa(Jesus), emergence of Ya-jooj and Ma-jooj, the emergence of a beast, and the rising of the Sun from the west.

The poet also discusses about the life after death; in the grave, on the Resurrection Day, the punishment and the reward in the next world based on the holy book of Islam, Quran, and Hadith. He generally focuses on the questions and grief mankind faces with these inevitable events.

The heroes of Islam are the other focus of the poet. The poet stresses on the deep belief and love for Allah and the Prophet, their status and success. Hence, the poet teaches the people to take these heroes as their models for imitation.

The poet advises the people to be genuine, truthful, and trustworthy, and also advises them to control their spirit and obey Allah's order, by warning them the bad consequences of pretention and hypocrisy. Hence, the poet's contribution to Islamic religion and the country's oral literature is significant that should not be passed without mentioning. The other prominent features of the Mänzumas of Sheikh Muhammad Yassin can be assessed by other researchers. The poet also has manuscripts of Mänzuma in Amharic and Arabic language for further study.

Generally, Islamic scholars teach Islam and history of Islam to the society through this genre in artistic language impressively. Hence, Mänzumas convey various religious contents beyond praising holy persons.

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Awlaya ( sing. Wali)- holy men  
Abbagar – the leader of a religions meeting  
Bāraka –earthly special virtue  
Hadrat - (sing Hadra)- religious meetings  
Azan – a call for prayer  
Alim (plu. Ulama ) – a religious scholar  
Tawrat –Torah  
Injeel –Gospel  
Ḥawd – a cistern of the prophet in the next world  
Kalifa –leader  
Deressa - student  
Jihad - struggle for the sake of Allah  
Fajr –dusk  
Jibril – Gabriel  
Hijra- emigration  
Hadith - sayings and deeds of Prophet Muhammad  
Quran – the holy book of Islam  
Tawhid - belief in the oneness of Allah  
Zakah – charity, alms  
Kafir\_unbeliever  
Iman-belief  
Imam-religious leader  
Ummah-people