

Marriage in Islam: An ideological reading of Abdulsalam Azeez's musical track, *Ìyáálé Al-janaat*

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Abstract

*Studies have examined the portrayal of Islamic marriage from different scholarly perspectives such as Islamic marriage in current global reality and Islamic marriages with western legal status, but significant attention has not been given to the depiction of Islamic marriage in Nigerian music. Little or no research have been conducted to unearth ideological issues in Abdulsalam Azeez's (popularly called Saoty Arewa) musical album, *Ìyáálé Al-janaat*. This paper, therefore, investigates the ideological representation of Islamic marriage by the artiste, with a view to accounting for the portrayal of spouses and their marital roles in the song. Using the toolkits of Lesley Jeffries' Critical Stylistics and van Dijk's discursive moves, the study analyses six purposively extracted excerpts from the song. Two ideological stances found in the song were suppression of women's freedom and promotion of men's dominance. The ideological reading of the song revealed that inasmuch as Islam as a religion reveres the position of a husband, the language of the artiste shows a deliberate attempt to make Muslim women passive in their marriages and to confer on the husband a sanctified position where his wills have to be done and his interests protected notwithstanding the surrounding circumstances. The study submits that marital admonition such as the one done by Abdulsalam Azeez should have a balanced perspective which emphasises the virtues expected of both parties*

in marriage in achieving a happy matrimony rather than emphasizing the strengths of one at the expense of the other.

Keywords: *marriage in Islam, Ìyáálé Al-janaat, critical stylistics, ideology*

Introduction

Marriage is a phenomenon which has been with man from inception. In virtually all societies of the world, marriage is a social expectation and religious obligation. It is an institution which confers honour on its doers in all societies. All of these are in addition to marriage as the legitimate and most acceptable condition for procreation. Marriage which is a prerequisite for the existence of families helps in the construction of social orders in society. This is because family, which is born out of marriage, is “the first and the most important social foundation in which humankind steps and learns the meaning of cooperation, philanthropy and generosity” (Arabian, 2016 p. 2).

In Islam, marriage is a very important institution. Meraj (2018) submits that from an Islamic point of view, marriage is a religious duty, a moral safeguard and a social commitment. Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) is reported to have said “He who marries completes half of his religion; it now rests with him to complete the other half by leading a virtuous life in constant fear of God” (Sohir Bukhari, No 625). Being an established religious obligation in Islam, marriage comes with some specified roles and duties on the parts of the couple and these roles have been highlighted in the literature (Keikhay farzaneh, 2011; Arabian 2016; Meraj 2018). In the words of Meraj (2018, p. 4), there are many passages in the Holy Quran that describe the kindness and equity, compassion and love, sympathy and consideration,

patience and goodwill. Many of these marital roles have been renegotiated in many cultures of the world. This paper, therefore, sets out to investigate the depiction of men and women roles in one of the albums of a Nigerian Islamic singer, AbdulSalam Azeez's (Saoty Arewa) with a view to establishing whether his postulations are in tandem with the Islamic stipulated roles and duties of couples in marriage or whether his stance in the album, *Iyale Al-jannat*, is culturally affected. The choice of AbdulSalam Azeez is tied to his popularity in the circle of Nigerian Islamic singers and the chosen album is selected for the research because it specifically deals with the subject of the virtues of a wife who desires God's paradise. Its focus is, therefore, primarily on marital issues. This study which is against the backdrop of Islamic view on marriage is anchored on the linguistic tools of critical stylistics and van Dijk's discursive moves.

Literature review

Works have investigated marriage as an institution in Islam. These works have been done from various perspectives but a linguistic perspective to such enquiry has not received adequate attention. Meraj (2018) discusses marriage institution in Islamic framework and its roles and significance in current global human society. The paper also suggests a solution to the problems of family issues in the light of Quran and Sunnah. It highlights the essential roles of the couple in a successful marriage from the Quranic perspective and holds that both parties must strive to meet the conditions of proper age, general capability, free consent, honorable intentions and judicious discretion. The paper concludes that the marriage contract should be taken as a serious, permanent bond. However, if it does not work well for any valid reason, it may be terminated in kindness and full honour with equity and respect.

Doma-Kutigi (2019) examines the systems of marriage in Nigeria while placing the spotlight on Islamic marriages that are accompanied by statutory marriage, investigating patterns of marriage registration among the Muslim community in order to understand its possible link with the growing popularity of multi-tiered marriage among Muslims in Nigeria. The author holds that modernisation has contributed reasonably to the increase in the practice of multi-tiered marriage in the contemporary Nigerian society and opines that many Muslims who enter a multi-tiered marriage do so out of necessity due to the absence or weak model of registration of Islamic marriages in the country. The author submits that there is a need for the government to create a unified, efficient and compulsory system for the registration of all types of marriages in Nigeria, which should be adopted throughout the country within the responsibility of the Registry of Marriages.

Arabian (2016) points at the most important rights and duties of couple, including financial and nonfinancial rights which should be regarded by them reciprocally. He posits that financial rights of a couple include inheritance, taking ransom in *Khol'a* divorce and financial conditions while marrying. According to the author, some specific rights for men are: the right of divorce, the right of revoke, right of remarriage, guardianship, obedience, sociability and fostering. This paper does not balance these rights as it evidently foregrounds the duties of women and plays down on the duties of men.

There are also studies on ideologies in Nigerian music. Working within the Fuji genre of Nigerian music, Bamgbose (2016) investigates how Saheed Osupa, a popular Fuji artiste, depicts his superiority and domination to his all-time rival, Wasiu Alabi Pasuma in terms of artistic craftsmanship and material possessions. In another research by Ogungbemi and Bamgbose

(2021), the authors analyse how imageries are deployed for two communicative purposes, in the music of Saheed Osupa, which are self-exaltation and us-them dichotomy. Within another genre of Yoruba music called *Sákàrà*, Sunday (2011) examines an album by Yusuf Olatunji titled *Yègèdè* from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis. Sunday reports the artiste's account of how humans behave when their fellows are in trouble through a description of what vicissitudes of life could engender, specifically revealing the filth in humans' minds.

While all of these works have commented on marriage in Islam and ideologies in Nigerian genres of music, none is a data-driven research on the representation of marriage in a Nigerian Islamic song; hence, the gap that this study sets out to fill. An exploration of the representation of men and women in Islamic marriage in the music of a popular singer like Abdulsalam Azeez will serve as an insight into the marital beliefs of many Nigerians and help critique some of those beliefs in line with the postulations of Islam as a religion. This is important because Nigeria is not a native country for both Islam as a religion and Arabic as a language. Many Nigerian Muslims mainly rely on lectures and songs as their religious guides since they are unable to read the Quran which is the Muslims' holy book and which is mainly written in Arabic.

Theoretical framework

This work is anchored on Lesley Jeffries' Critical Stylistics and the discursive moves of Van Dijk. Critical stylistics is an offshoot of Critical Discourse Analysis which 'assembles the main general functions that a text has in representing reality' (Jeffries, 2010, p.14). Jeffries argues that the aim of her book on critical stylistics is to give the reader a clear set of analytical tools to use in carrying

out the critical analysis of texts, with the aim of uncovering or discovering the underlying ideologies of the texts. It should be noted that any spoken or written words which convey a message, an idea or a thought is a text. Although Critical Stylistics is highly politically engaged (Jeffries & Walker, 2012), it is not linked to one particular political outlook. The song being analysed in this study is, therefore, a text. The critical stylistic toolkits help to establish what a user of language is doing with language beyond the evident face value of such language. According to Bamgbose and Gabriel (2017), critical stylistics captures the major evidence that is available in a text to depict reality. Jeffries (2010) argues that 'language is essentially a finely balanced combination of rules and broken rules, where the fact that there is no one-to-one form-function relationship is the key to many of the most useful and life-enhancing aspects of language, such as the writing of poetry and the use of metaphor in daily life, as well as of the more negative aspects, such as lying and manipulation' (2010, p.44). The critical stylistic toolkits as outlined by Jeffries (2007, 2010) are: naming and describing, representing actions/events/states, equating and contrasting, exemplifying and enumerating, prioritizing, implying and assuming, negating, hypothesizing, presenting other's speech and thoughts, and representing time, space and society. The analysis in this study deploys some of these toolkits to unearth the representation of men and women in the song being analyzed. The toolkits deployed in the analysis are: implying and assuming, representing actions/events/states, exemplifying and enumerating, equating and contrasting and prioritizing. These toolkits were useful in teasing out the inherent ideologies in the data.

Van Dijk's (2004) discursive moves are used within the discussion of critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA is mainly concerned 'with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural

relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language.’(Wodak, 2001:2). Van Dijk’s discursive moves comprises two main discursive strategies of ‘positive self-representation’ (semantic macro-strategy of in-group favouritism and ‘negative other-representation’ (semantic macro-strategy of derogation of out-group) which are materialized through some other discursive moves such as ‘actor description’, ‘authority’, ‘burden’ (‘Topos’), ‘categorization’, ‘comparison’, ‘consensus’, ‘counterfactuals’, ‘disclaimer’, ‘euphemism’, ‘evidentiality’, ‘example’/‘illustration’, ‘generalization’ ‘hyperbole’, ‘implication’, ‘irony’, ‘lexicalization’, ‘metaphor’, ‘self-glorification’, ‘norm expression’, ‘number game’, ‘polarization’, ‘Us-Them’, ‘populism’, ‘presupposition’, ‘vagueness’, ‘victimization. Above are 27 ideological strategies among which the fundamental dichotomy of ‘self-positive representation’ and ‘other negative representation’ stand out. Some of these discursive moves are used to buttress the critical stylistic toolkits in the analysis of the data below.

Methodology

The study analyses the representation of men and women in AbdulSalamAzeez’s (SaotyArewa) musical album, *Ìyáálé al-janaat*. AbdulSalamAzeez is chosen for this study for his popularity among Nigerian Islamic singers and the chosen album is preferred for the research because it centres on the virtues of a wife who desires God’s paradise. Its focus is, therefore, primarily on marital issues. A total of six (6) excerpts were purposively drawn from the album as they depict the artiste’s representation of men and women in Islamic marriage. The music, which is originally in Yoruba, is transcribed and glossed in the analysis for global intelligibility. The data is subjected to a critical stylistic

analysis and findings are drawn from the critical exploration of the musical text.

Data analysis

The analysis in this study is premised on two ideological stances identified by the researchers after carefully listening to the track repeatedly. The inherent ideologies identified are: the suppression of women's freedom and the promotion of men's dominance. These ideologies which play out through identity constructions for men and women in marriage and power relations in matrimony are analysed through critical stylistic toolkits and discursive moves.

Suppression of women's freedom

Studies on ideologies tend to critically infer and decipher ideological underpinnings in texts, whether written or spoken. Ideological stances are not usually evident or explicit in texts. It takes a critical exploration of the instrumentality of language and contextual demystification of usages to account for interests and biases in texts. In the track under investigation, while the lyrics of the artiste will on the surface be taken as a homily, a more careful engagement of the lines reveals attempts at suppressing the freedom and the voice of the woman in marriages by demanding of them to submit to the wills of their spouses without interrogating or holding them accountable for their actions. Matter-of-factly, Islam does not make the man and the woman equal in matrimony. The leadership position is conferred on the husband. However, there has been a tendency among the western Nigerian muslims to over entrench this religious privilege among many Muslim men and the track under investigation buttresses this reality as evidenced in the excerpts presented below.

Excerpt 1

Mi ò rò péwón kù

Wọ̀n ò pọ̀ bọ̀wà

Ìwọ̀nba tó kù

Jẹ́ kí tẹ̀mì ó pẹ̀lu

Ìyàlé AL-jannat

‘I’m not sure there still are

And they are not many if there are

Of the few that there are,

Let mine be among the wife of Al-Janaat’

It is essential to begin with the general perspective to this excerpt which is also the general preoccupation of the track. Al-Janaat is the Islamic term for God’s paradise which is the desire of all Muslim faithful. The general idea of the track is an admonition to Muslim wives on how to make Al-Jannat. Islam places the guardianship of the wives on the husbands (Quran 4: 34) and this is sometimes (mis)interpreted as the husband being a strong determinant of the wife’s chances of getting into paradise on Judgment Day. However, this privilege is presumably over-utilized by many men who now rather see their wives like a subordinate than a partner. In excerpt 1, the critical stylistic toolkit of implying and assuming is deployed by the singer. This tool deals with how knowledge is either treated as background information or implied in texts. Presuppositions are assumptions that are built into the text, and though they are sometimes seen as semantic, rather than pragmatic, they do remain rather elusive as they are not encoded directly by the text, but are the background upon which it is built (Jeffries, 2010:98). In the first line of excerpt 1, the closest translation to the Yoruba rendition is “I’m not sure there still are”. The logical presupposition in this line is that there used to be the

kind of virtuous women he is trying to describe but he doubts if there are still such women, and he proceeds in line 2 to say even if there are, they are very few. While assuming which works with presupposition gives linguistic evidence, implying which is related to implicature gives the implied meaning of utterances which usually cannot be linguistically traced. The text evidently states that there are either no such virtuous women any longer or they are very few, and the implied meaning which is the implicature of this utterance is that most women of the singer's era cannot be described as the virtuous women of Al-Janaat since, according to him, they are either nonexistent or few. This implied meaning is afterwards justified in the other verses of the track. The singer, however, appeals to God, in the last lines, to let his wife be among the few virtuous women that are left in his lifetime. Within van Dijk's (2004) discursive strategies of 'positive self-representation' (semantic macro-strategy of in-group favouritism and 'negative other-representation' (semantic macro-strategy of derogation of out-group), there is the use of the discursive move of generalization as one tends to wonder what percentage of living women the artiste had encountered to have hastily concluded that the virtuous ones are few. While this excerpt which is the chorus of the song may on the surface appear like an innocent appeal on the part of the singer, it does much more to the psyche of the listener as most women have already been implicitly depicted as not having the virtues of those who will make Al-Jannat. This ideology of negative other representation aimed at the suppression of women in marriage is entrenched in other verses as seen in the following excerpts.

Excerpt 2

T'òkọ làsẹ sẹ wọn kù

Tí ò nígbé ìgbésẹ̀, àyàfí bọkọ wí, àyàfí b'òkọ fẹ́

Tó ma ló wòtún lo rò

Dúkìyá tí ò pò, tí ò sì ní le pàṣe o
 àyàfi b'ókò wí,
 àyàfi b'ókò fẹ
 obìnrin tí ó gbà, pẹ̀lú owó tó ní, tí ò sì ní torí rẹ,
 sọ pé k'ókò wọn ó dákẹ́, kòdà b'ókò tálíkà, àdàbí k'ólówó
 obìnrin bí Adijatu, Ìyàwó oníṣénlá

'Are there still those who concede authority to their husband?
 Who will take no step except the husband says or wants it
 Who will be rich and prosperous
 With abundant wealth, and who still will not give orders
 Except the husband says so
 A woman who will be completely submissive with her wealth
 Even if the husband were poor.
 A woman like Adijat, the wife of the Prophet.'

The ideological underpinning in excerpt 2 can be teased out with two toolkits which are representing actions/events/states and equating and contrasting. The first toolkit helps to understand issues through the deployment of different verbal choices. Critical Stylistics borrows from Halliday's concept of processes within the transitivity system. In the words of Simpson (1993, p.88), transitivity "shows how speakers encode in language their mental picture of reality and how they account for their experience of the world around them". Jeffries (2010) holds that we are all susceptible to the nuances of those who speak to us. In line with this, the choice of verbs deployed by the singer is carefully geared towards silencing women and rendering them passive in marriage. Two forms of verbs (processes) which are ideologically deployed in this excerpt are relational and material verbs. Relational processes refer to processes of being' (Simpson, 1993, p. 91), and include a carrier and an attribute. A relational process is used in a

representation to characterize, identify, evaluate, justify or construe a class-membership. In line 1 of excerpt 2, the relational process indicated by the verb 'are' is used to characterize those the musician assumes to be virtuous women and this virtue of Al-Janaat for him is dependent on conceding authority to the husband. He deployed another relational verb 'be', where he talked about a woman being rich and prosperous and contrasts this relational verb with a material verb, where he opines that this affluent woman should not 'give' orders (except the husband says so). The relational verb 'be' is also used to talk about another virtue of a woman who seeks Al-Jannat which is to be completely submissive with her wealth even if the husband were poor. Inasmuch as these virtues are within the preaching of the religion, the singer's verbal choices such as 'be' rich and prosperous yet 'be' completely submissive, 'take' no step except your husband 'says' or 'wants' and 'give' no order except your husband 'says' are deliberate choices at suppressing the voice of women in matrimony. Islam preaches submission on the part of the wife but does not order her silence, especially in what may belong to her. For instance, a rich woman can manage her business and decide how it is run. The reference to a prosperous woman who should do nothing except authorized by the husband is a subtle attempt to promote hegemony. An industrious woman who is successful in her business can have better ideas on how to improve the family finance and it would not be un-Islamic for a husband to also listen to the wife in such area of her expertise. Such clarifications would have created a balanced perspective than an attempt to make the woman appear like one who should at all not be heard in the matrimony and giving the man the impression of one who cannot be questioned.

There is also the use of the toolkit of equating and contrasting which is achieved through some triggers in the excerpt. The singer uses an instance of concessive opposition which Jeffries (2010) expresses hypothetically as ‘despite X, Y; X, yet Y; X still, Y etc.’ In the excerpt, we find instances of ‘the woman is this (rich) yet she is this (submissive)’, ‘despite the fact that she is this (rich), she is still this (silent). These are triggers which have been identified as ideological tools for entrenching stances. Finally, the singer equates the virtuous woman to Prophet Muhammed’s wife and implies that this is the type of woman his female listeners should strive to be. The discursive move of example or illustration is deployed in this excerpt, by presenting Adijat as a model of a virtuous woman to all women. Adijat, the wife of Prophet Muhammed, was a rich woman who was fifteen years older than her husband and more prosperous than he was; yet she humbly allowed Muhammed to be at the helm in both her business and the marriage. The endearment every Muslim lady would have for Adijat is therefore deployed here as a strategy for suppressing the woman’s voice in matrimonies. Ideologically speaking however, one would expect that the singer should enjoin the men too to exhibit the traits of Muhammed which inspired Adijat’s attitude towards him but this is evidently missing in the song which would, therefore, warrant the interpretation that the song is an implicit attempt to suppress the voice of women in marriage. Muhammed, for instance, had no other wife and no record of infidelity until the death of Adijat. Glossing over the latter, therefore, is a partial representation of the marital situation.

Except 3

E gbó sé irú Ajara, iyàwó Ibrahimó, tón w’ómọ tí ò rí
 Tó sì sọ fún báálé rẹ, pẹ kó fẹ Saratu
 Pẹlú inú mímọ. Kò sì dànú Saratu

Ìyálé ilé tòún, tó loun b'òkọ jìyà o
 Tó d'ẹbora si lórùn, ìyálé aláṣejù àti ìyàwó tí wọn fẹ...
 T'iyálé tiyàwó tí wọn ò jòkọ rímú mí
 Ìjògbòn ló n fà
 Ó n gbé ọkọ wọn wọn rù.
 Sé wọn dàbí tijóun, mi ò rò pé wọn kù o

'Can we still have the type of Sarat, the wife of Prophet Abraham
 Who could not conceive and then told the husband to marry
 Ajarat with no bad motive and didn't frustrate Saratu (sic).
 You tell us, wife, you claim to have suffered with your husband
 And you become a terror.
 You overbearing senior wife and the junior wife too
 Both of you are not giving your husband rest, you are always
 making troubles.
 And you are making your husband go lean.
 Are they like those old ones? I'm not sure those are still left.'

Excerpt 3 is another instance of equating and contrasting. One of the forms of contrasting is opposition and Nahajec (2009) explains opposition as putting two events, states or existences into contrast to each other. The singer deploys what can be described as negated opposition which Jeffries (2010) describes in terms of X not being Y; some X, no Y; plenty of X, a lack of Y etc. He implicitly constructs the identity of modern women who can be taken as X and contrasts it with that of Ajarat who can be taken as Y. Just like the postulation of this toolkit, AbdulSalam portends in his track that there are either no such virtuous women or they are in barest minimum. Two discursive moves are deployed in the excerpt. The first is actor description which is used to emphasize the virtues of Ajarat, and the second is evidentiality which is used to buttress to the modern women that total submission to one's

husband is not a new thing and should not be difficult for a virtuous Islamic wife. It should be mentioned that the singer made a mistake with the representation of Abraham's wife as Sarat was the first wife who urged the husband to marry Ajarat. Commenting on the ideological position of the artiste, it is evident that his linguistic resources are all geared towards suppressing the voice of wives as he tends to foreground the virtues of a good wife by backgrounding other important and sensitive sides to the discourse. For instance, Abraham and Sarat had been married for decades before the wife thought of suggesting the idea of another wife to her husband for the sake of child-bearing. Some underlining questions that arise from this situation in relation to present realities are: how many husbands have got genuine reasons to take up a second wife like Abraham had? How many are sensitive to the emotion of the first wife before taking another? How many saw a reason to talk to the wife about their plan to pick a second wife, not to talk about the wife being the one to suggest it? Should Sarat who willingly proposed the idea of a second wife to her husband out of a good consideration of decades of barrenness be likened to a modern wife who is not barren and does not lack in any of the things that should make a man take a second wife? These questions and more are the backgrounded perspective to the topic of polygamy as represented in the song under analysis. The singer shows empathy for the husband who he portrayed as one who is being frustrated by his wives. Again, questions that readily follow this empathy are: to what extent is the frustrated husband alive to his matrimonial duties as a polygamist and what are his roles in the persistent malice of the wives? The backgrounded information in the song is that many a man is not capable and not mindful of the demands of polygamy but is just desirous of the sweetness. It is usually expressed among the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria from where the singer hailed

that Allah says a man can take as many as four wives. While this claim is not in dispute, the conditions attached to doing so are almost always not talked about by many of these proponents of polygamy. So, just as it is experienced in the society, this song is another subtle attempt at suppressing and silencing the woman's voice in Islamic marriages.

Promotion of men's dominance

In this segment of the analysis, we look at aspects of the track where men's dominance and matrimonial hegemony are implied by the artiste. In the excerpts and analysis that follows, the husband is projected as one whose position should be kept sacrosanct notwithstanding any situation and who is seen as a source of spiritual security and blessings for his wife and children.

Excerpt 4

Mo búra wallahi

Mámá mi Ramota Niyilolawa, ló dèdèAkibu,

Mi ò kéré jù, mo n sààrè gan, wọn jé kin gbádùn

Wọn permanent bed fún mi iyen ló hospital,

Tabá lo ta túnbò, níjò kejì ijó kèta, a ó padà síhospital

Lásikò tí mo n sọ yẹn, bàbá mi ti n dàgbà, òtútù ti n pò

Èní operation òla surgery...

Bàbá á kú wọn á yè

Ìyá mi Ramota, kòrò kó máa p'ómọ mi, ọkọ mi ló n pè.

'I swear to Allah,

My mother; RamotaNiyilola,

In my father's house, I wasn't so young at the time,

I used to be very sick. I used to be troubled,

I got a permanent bed in the hospital, when I get discharged, after a few days,

I'll be back to the hospital.

At this time, my father was aging; he was constantly suffering from pneumonia

With constant operations and surgeries like one who may eventually lose his life.

My mother, Ramota, rather than being troubled about her son, she was troubled about her husband.'

In excerpt 4, the artiste presents a scenario from which an inference was drawn in the end. He talks about how his mother struggled with his constant sickness at childhood at a time his father was also aging and was constantly sick. Given the information structure of the verse, the singer presented a scenario where his mother had to make a choice between giving attention to her son or to her husband. The critical stylistic toolkit in use here is prioritizing and it is achieved through subordination. According to Jeffries (2010), the ideological point to make about subordinations is that the lower the level of the subordination, the less amenable the structure is to scrutiny and/or objection or disagreement by the reader/hearer. When there is subordination, the emphasis of the proposition is inevitably on the higher-level clause elements. As seen in the excerpt, the use of 'koron' which translates into 'rather than' is a subordinating item used by the artiste to de-emphasize her mother's preference for him and the preference for his father. Ideologically speaking, the artiste uses this recounted experience to account for the sacrosanct position of the husband, which, in his view, should be prioritized against any other situation. This, as the next excerpts, will show is because the husband is in a position of spiritual authority which can translate into safety and blessing for his wife and children.

Excerpt 5

Ayálégbé ojòun ó sèwon tó lè ẹ
 Àbó ma jás'íkú
 Ọpò èyàn tó mò p'Égbá ni Bàbá wá wà, wón wá bàbá wá síbè
 Wón sọrò sí mà má mi
 Wón sọrò sí Ramata
 Wí pé ó f'omọ sílè
 Ó tẹle ọkọ gbogbo aye
 Bíódún ti fẹ kú nílè
 Bàbá mi á dáhùn, wí pé èyin ò le ẹ só da bẹẹ
 E ò tún fẹ kóun ó ẹ
 Ẹ ó dá re lójú Ramota, pé èmi ni bàbá Bíódún o?
 Kò ní kú, yóò yè
 So dè wá rí Azeez yẹn, tí wón fi n se threaten,
 Nínú alálùbárikà o, omọ mi ni ó wà.

'The tenant of that period did the little they could do
 Would this boy die?
 Many people who knew my father was in Egba came looking for
 him
 They lambasted my mother, Ramota.
 She was accused of abandoning her dying son and following a
 polygamous husband
 My father lamented "is it fair you can't do this and you still accuse
 her of helping out?"
 Are you sure Ramota that I am Biodun's father?
 He won't die but live.
 And you see this Azeez that they are threatening you with,
 He will be one of my most blessed sons.'

In excerpt 5, the singer recounts one of the experiences he had
 as a sickly child when his mother had to leave him with a tenant
 and went with his sick father to Egba (a town in Abeokuta, Ogun

State of Nigeria) where he was being treated. He mentioned how many persons came to Egba to lambast his mother for leaving her son to come take care of a polygamous husband. To that he used the technique of voice to recount his father's reaction who lamented how they would discourage his wife from taking care of him when they would not. Then the father reaffirmed from the mother if he was indeed the artiste's dad and on that ground he declared that he shall be blessed. An ideological reading of this excerpt reveals the construction of the husband as one who is in a position to declare blessings upon his child. The toolkit of prioritising is deployed to foreground how a wife's complete loyalty to husband can translate into blessings for the children as, of course, evident in the blessings enjoyed by the artiste in terms of his fame. While the position of the husband as one who can be a source of blessing to the household is within Islamic belief, there are traces of hegemonic entrenchment in the language of the artiste. First off, the discursive move of hyperbole is seen in the line where the artiste says 'many persons' who knew the father was in Egba came looking for his mother there. One is forced to ponder over how many persons the singer could have been referring to as 'many'. This is most likely a discursive device to attract empathy for the father whom he tried establishing that his mother cared for at his expense. Again, the choice of a wife to abandon a child at home and go take care of a husband is more personal than Islamic. One wonders why she could not have gone with her child and have them taken care of in the same hospital rather than leave a younger child in the care of neighbours to go take care of an older person who could have been taken care of by a number of other persons for the fact that he was a polygamist. These other perspectives to the singer's rendition which he was silent on reveal the deliberate

attempt to promulgate the institution of the husband in Islamic marriage. This is further seen in excerpt 6.

Excerpt 6

Ní tòsí tí ò pé o

Ní Gere Alimi, Alhaja Baraka; AyaSheuRahmoni,

Bàbá Jẹ̀ tẹ̀mi ó dárani, Ọ̀mọ̀ Akalagbin,

Ọ̀kọ̀ ò bínú si rí. Ó wá dijó ijókan, ebí n pa Sheu, mà má wa n dání

Igi ò jo daadaa. Sheu lóúnje n péjù. Mà má bá sọ fún Ọ̀lòhun, péọ̀kọ

mi tí ò bínú rí

Sí mi ti fẹ̀ ma bínú. Wón f'atànpàkò sínáo, ni iná bá fi nsáré jò.

Mujizaanu Ọ̀lòhun pò,

Iná ò j'èşè Baraka. E wo işè Yarobi

'In recent times, in Gere Alimi,

Alhaja Baraka, the wife of Sheikh Ramoni; known as Baba je temi
o dara,

Her husband has never been angry with her. On this fateful day,

The Sheikh was hungry and the wife was cooking

But the woods were not burning well

The husband said the food was being delayed.

The wife then told God that her husband who had never been angry
was getting angry

Then she put her thumb in the fire and it started burning fast.

By the miracle of God, the fire did not burn her thumb.

That was the work of Allah!'

Excerpt 6, like 5, presents an example of a loyal wife who will do anything to satisfy the husband. The artiste shares the story of a Sheikh called Rahmon in a part of Ilorin Emirate (the capital of Kwara State, Nigeria). He reports how the wife of the Sheikh, Alhaja Barakat, whom the Sheikh had never been angry with had to put her thumb in fire to make it burn fast in a bid to avoid the

anger of the husband whom he was cooking for. While it is outside the focus of this paper to ascertain the veracity or otherwise of this story presented by the singer, the verse represented in this excerpt is an instance of the discursive move of evidentiality wherein the singer appeals to the spiritual consciousness of the listeners on the need to go any extent to satisfy one's husband as such act could guarantee a shield from any harm that might be encountered in the course of fulfilling the husband's desire. The implicature of the story given by the artiste is to conscientize the Muslim wives that their husband is a spiritual shield for them and they cannot suffer any harm whatsoever in an attempt to please their husbands. While loyalty and submission to one's husband are unquestionable values in Islam, the singer's evidence which can only be spiritually accepted, except if one experiences such, is geared towards strengthening and promulgating the sanctity of the husband in matrimonies. While the sanctity in itself might not be debated, one could wonder why the artiste is silent on the virtues that confirm such sanctity on them. In Islam, there are expected roles of a husband which will bestow on them such spiritual privileges, and the artiste has decided to be silent on such roles, while only emphasizing the husband as a spiritual shield for the wife. One wonders how many husbands have got the virtues that would make a wife dare to risk their thumbs. The deliberate attempt on the part of the singer to promote the sanctity of the husband has implication for the ideology of promulgating men's dominance in Muslim marriages as such example as given by the singer becomes a reference for many men, even those who might not be matrimonially responsible enough to make certain demands from their wives.

Conclusion

This paper has looked at the institution of marriage in Islam as represented in the song of AbdulSalam Azeez's *Iyale Al-janaat*. The purposively extracted data were subjected to an ideological reading using the instruments of Jeffries' Critical Stylistics and van Dijk's discursive moves. The analysis reveals two major ideologies which are the suppression of women's freedom and the promulgation of men's dominance. The ideological reading of the track reveals that inasmuch as Islam as a religion reveres the position of a husband, the language of the artiste shows a deliberate attempt to make Islamic women passive in their marriages and to confer on the husband a sanctified position where his wills have to be done and his interests protected notwithstanding the surrounding circumstances. The husband is portrayed as one whose spiritual authority is enough shield for his family and also a source of blessing for his household. While this is not to be contested, the singer chose to be quiet on the expected virtues of the husband that confer such spiritual privileges on him while he emphasized the missing virtues in many modern wives when compared to those of the period covered by the Qur'an. This study submits that marital admonition such as the one done by AbdulSalam Azeez should have a balanced perspective which emphasizes the virtues expected of both parties in achieving a happy matrimony rather than emphasizing the strengths of one at the expense of the other.

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