The Verbal Act in The Poetic Language of Apology and Conversion: From Stylistics to Performative

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Abstract: This paper aims to explain how the language used in poetry of apology and conversion addressed to the Prophet to perform a change of religious and political loyalty fulfills the conditions of the normal speech act as explained by the twentieth-century linguistic theorist John Langshaw Austin (d. 1960). The paper analyzes the ritual performative language of a madīḥ nabawī (praise poem to the Prophet Muḥammad) composed by mukhaḍram poet 'Abdullāh Ibn al-Zibi'rā (d. 15636/) to show how this type of poem functions not only to carry propositional content, noting the praiseworthy qualities of the Prophet, as many other poems do, but also to perform the act of apology and conversion that has a perlocutionary consequence, "acceptance and forgiveness." This reveals how the power of the performative utterance in the madīḥ nabawī poem, which has special communicative features within the text, carries out the madīḥ nabawī language above and beyond its referential content.[1]

Keywords: madīḥ nabawī, Prophet Muḥammad, Ibn al-Zibi'rā, Apology, Conversion, Speech Act, Performative Language, Performance, Supplication.

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الفعل اللفظي في اللغة الشعرية للاعتذار والتحول: من الأسلوبية إلى الأدائية

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ملخص: تهدف هذه الورقة إلى شرح الآلية اللغوية للغة المستخدمة في شعر الاعتذار والتحول الموجه للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في لغة القصائد التي تعبر عن اعتناق الدين الجديد والولاء السياسي له وتوضيح مدى مطابقة تلك الآلية اللغوية لشروط فعل الكلام العادي كما أوضحها المنظر اللغوي في القرن العشرين جون أوستن (د. 1960). وتحلل الورقة اللغة الأدائية الشعائرية لنص شعري ألفه الشاعر المخضرم عبد الله بن الزبعرى (ت 636/15) لإظهار كيف أن هذا النوع من القصائد لا يحمل محتوى يثني على الممدوح النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم كما تفعل العديد من قصائد المديح النبوي الأخرى، ولكنه يؤدي فعلا أدائيا يرتبط بالاعتذار وتترتب عليه عاقبة «القبول والمغفرة». ويكشف هذا كيف أن قوة الكلام الأدائي في لغة المديح النبوي تحمل سمات تواصلية خاصة داخل النص تتجاوز الطبيعة المرجعية لألفاظ ذلك النص.

كلمات مفتاحية: اللغة الشعرية، أفعال الكلام، اللغة الأدائية، المحتوى الافتراضي، الأداء، التوسل.

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Several poets use a system of language that will primarily, to use Jakobson's words, "focus on the message for its own sake" (Jakobson, 1987, pp. 66-71) in such a way to attract the attention of the addressee and to understand the poet's feelings and thoughts, etc. Concerning the literary communications effect, Adrian Pilkington explains,

The poet's central problem, as Seamus Heanery (1980) phrased it […], is one of putting 'feeling into words.' By this, Heaney clearly is not referring to the communication of thoughts about feelings […] He is referring to the communication of feelings that the writer intends to communicate. But this is a problem for anyone who uses language poetically or rhetorically (Pilkington, 2000, p. 164).

However, some poets, such as the *mukhadram* 'Abdullāh ibn al-Zibi'rā (d. 15/636)[1], followed different directions to put action into their poetic words in order to craft exceptional poetic utterances and produce a successful consequence.

The success of an utterance depends on the rules and conditions that a performative utterance must meet to be a successful, or "happy/felicitous speech act", in Austin's terminology:

A.1 There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,

A.2 The particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.

B.1 The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and

completely.

(y.1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on

the part of the participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further,

(y.2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently (Austin, 1975, p. 14-15).

A performative utterance, according to Austin, is considered successful or unsuccessful rather than true or false. He says, "they do not 'describe' or 'report', are not 'true or false'; and the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action" (Austin, 1975, p. 5). John Searle describes how we do things with words, saying, "We tell people how things are (Assertives), we try to get them to do things (Directives), we commit ourselves to doing things (Commissives), we express our feelings and attitudes (Expressives) and we bring about changes in the world through our utterances (Declarations)" (Searle, 1985, p. 8, 19).

In recent years, there has been considerable interest in applying speech-act and performative theories to classical Arabic poetry. For example, to study the functional and performative aspects of classical poetry, in her analysis of classical Arabic poetry, Suzanne Stetkevych uses Austin's theory together with Marcel Mauss's formulations of gift exchange (Mauss, 1967) to study the ritual exchange between poet "giver" and patron "receiver." She explores how some classical panegyrics were successful performative statements and performances that obligated the patron to reward the poet with "a return-gift" (see Stetkevych, 1993, 2002, 2013 and 2018). There are various modern researchers who apply speech act theory to pre-Islamic, Islamic, Abbasid, Andalusia, and modern poetry from different points of view, especially to show the obligations of the poet in certain contexts, such as political, religious, etc. (see Gruendler, 2000, 2003, and 2008; Al-Mallah, 2003; Al-Musa, 2011; Alajmi, 2012; Binmayaba, 2018). In addition, Stetkevych and others have related critical literary works that study madīḥ nabawī (praise poems to the Prophet Muḥammad) from performative perspectives (see Stetkevych, 2010; Alshareif, 2013; Slyomovics, 2018; and al-Shanquitiy, 2019). Overall, these works put an emphasis on both historical and literary views of the poetry and analyze the themes of performative language and performance as a general framework, bridging the gap between literature and linguistics.

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1. 'Abdullāh ibn al-Zibi'rā ibn Qays ibn 'Uday ibn Sa'd ibn Sahm al-Qurashī al-Sahmī was one of the fiercest people against the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, and his companions. He was one of Quraysh's best poets. He attacked Muslims with his poetry. After the conquest of Mecca (9/629), Ibn al-Zibi'rā converted to Islam. According to Isma'īl Ibin 'Umar Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), "'Abdullah Ibn al-Zibi'rā al-Sahmaī was the greatest enemy of Islam and was from the poets who have used their utterances in the dispelling of Muslims, then Allāh bestowed His Grace upon him with repentance, and he turned and returned to Islam, and claimed its victory and defended it." Ibn Kathīr, 1986, v. 4 p. 309). For more on ibn al-Zibi'rā, see (Ibn al-Athīr, 2016; al-'Asqalānī,1992).

The aim of this research is to broaden the current knowledge about the performative aspect of *madīḥ nabawī* by analyzing the language of apology and conversion of a poem, which has not been studied in Arabic nor in English from this modern linguistic perspective. It explores the performative language of Ibn al-Zibi'rā's *madīḥ nabawī* poem (Anxieties and Worries Prevented Me from Sleep), in which he declared his apology and conversion to Islam. The argument aims to explain how Ibn al-Zibi'rā's poem is a complete/qualified performative act of apology and conversion that fulfills the suitable conditions of a felicitous speech act. It explains how the analysis of this poem requires the interpreter to begin with the smallest unit in the text (stylistics) to shed light on the performative act of the whole poem.

For the sake of discussion, the paper is divided into three parts: first, the historical context in which the poem was composed; second, the analysis of the poem that reveals the performance of the poet's journey to the patron/Prophet, his act of apology and his supplication to the Prophet; third, the Prophet's acknowledgement and acceptance of the poet's supplication.

For the first part, it is worth mentioning here that the dominant purpose behind literary anecdotes (*akhbār*), that are narrated with the classical poem (*qaṣida*), in general, is not only to help the reader clarify the ambiguity of the literary text, but also to gain a better understanding of the poet's intention (Stetkevych, 2002, p. 49). However, some modern critics treat the *akhbār* as a literary text more than a historical one. According to Stetkevych, together the anecdotal materials and poetry offer a textual base to examine the ways in which the original oral poetry of the pre-Islamic period was "transmitted, preserved, selected, and molded by Muslim hands into a literary corpus and a cultural construct that served to advance the interests of an Arabo-Islamic political, religious, and literary-cultural hegemony" (Stetkevych, 2002, p. 1).[2]

First: The Historical Context

The historian and hagiographer Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq (d. 151/768) has narrated that when the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, conquered Mecca, the two Qurayshī poets, Hubayara ibn Abī

Wahb and 'Abdullāh Ibn al-Ziba'rā, fled to Najrān fearing the Prophet (Al-Ṭabarī, 1967, v.3 p.64; see, Ibn Isḥāq, 1978). In his *al-Sīra al-Nabawyya*, the Egyptian scholar Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Malik Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833) mentions the story of Ibn al-Zibi'rā's conversion to Islam in the same historical context of the famous story of the conversion of Ka'b ibn Zuhayr's (d. 26/646) and his famous poem (Su'ād Has Departed) in the year 9/630.[3] However, Ibn al-Zibi'rā preceded Ka'b in announcing his conversion through his performative poem (Anxieties and Worries Prevented Me from Sleep). Ibn Hishām recounts:

Ibn Isḥāq narrated that Sa'īd ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ḥassān ibn Thābit told me that: Ḥassān Ibn
Thābit threw ibn al-Zibi'rā, when he was in Najrān, with no more than one line:
May God not make you lose a man, your hate toward him led you
to [live in] Najrān in a little interrupted and depraved life[4] […]
So when this line reached ibn al-Zibi'rā, he went out to the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, then he converted to Islam and said:

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2. Stetkevych also explores how the art of qaṣida converts a historical event into ritual or mythical context by changing it from "an ephemeral and transient occurrence to a permanent and transcendent message" (Stetkevych, 2002, p. 49).

3. The story Ka'b Ibn of Zuhayr's conversion with his poem is narrated in classical historical and religious books, such as in Al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya by the Egyptian scholar ibn Hishām (d. 213/828). Bujayr [Ka'b's brother] wrote to Ka'b:
The Prophet is intent upon killing all of the polytheist poets who attack him, and Ibn al-Zaba'rā and Hubayrah ibn Abī Wahb [two poets of the Quraysh tribe] have fled. So, if you have any use for your life, then turn to the Messenger of God, for he does not kill anyone who comes to him repentant. If you won't do this, then flee to safety." When Bujayr's message reached him, Ka'b became greatly distressed and anxious, and those in his tribe spread alarming news about him, saying, "He is as good as dead," and the Banū Muzaynah [his clan] refused to shelter him. So he made his way to Medina and stayed with an acquaintance of his there. Then he came to the Apostle of God. The Prophet did not recognize him, so he sat down before him and said, "O Apostle of God, if I were to bring you Ka'b ibn Zuhayr, repentant and submitting to Islam, would you accept him?" "Yes," he replied. Then he said, "I am Ka'b." Suddenly one of the 'Anṣār [Medinese Helpers] leapt up and cried, "Let me cut off his head!" But the Prophet restrained him, whereupon Ka'b recited his panegyric to the Prophet [Translated by Stetkevych, 2010, p. 35].

4. The Diwan includes the following two lines in addition to the line narrated by ibn Isḥāq,
Your spear has been worn out in wars and become poor and unused with a crack.
God was wrathful upon al-Zibi'rā and his son, and [for them] an evil punishment is lasting in life (Ibn Thābit, 1994, p. 212).

1) Anxieties and worries prevented me from sleep
while the night dimness is thick and jet black,

2) because of what I have received about [the Prophet] Aḥmad blamed me,
So, I passed the night as if I had fever!

3) O, the best one who the sturdy she-camel has carried [him/the Prophet] on
its limbs and hips, hands-free and with brute force,

4) I truly apologized to you [the Prophet] about what I did when I was roaming astray.

5) The days when [the tribe of] Sahm led me to the most seductive path,
and [the tribe of] Makhzūm commanded me to do it,

6) I was delaying the causes of death
while the plan of the seducers was leading me, and their matter was ominous.

7) So, today my heart believes in the Prophet Muḥammad,
and he who wrongs this is deprived.

8) The enmity has passed, and its causes have gone,
and bonds and forbearing between us have grown instead.

9) Forgive my slip; may both my parents be a ransom for you,
indeed, you are the most merciful, and have shown mercy [by God]

10) And you have a sign from the knowledge of the King,
a bright light and a sealed ring.

11) He gave you with love the high rank of His convincing proof,
and God's convincing proof is great.

12) I bear witness that your religion is certain and truthful,
and you, among God's servants, are the greatest.

13) And God witnesses that Aḥmad is a chosen one

The head of the righteous people, and generous.
14) A master of [the Banū] Hāshim whose buildings have reached high
a branch that reaches up to the apex and is rooted down (Ibn Hishām, 1955, p. 418-420).[5]

This poem cannot be read as a performative utterance of apology and conversion by itself without mentioning the poet's conversion story and considering it in the context of the poet's successful performative utterance. As Austin argues, "the occasion of an utterance matters seriously, and that words used are to some extent to be 'explained' by the 'context' in which they are designed to be or have actually been spoken in a linguistic interchange" (Austin, 1975, p. 100).

It is important to mention here that Ḥassān ibn Thābit's line,
"May God not make you lose a man, your hate toward him led you
to [live in] Najrān in a little interrupted and depraved life," (Ibn Hishām, 1955, p. 418)
shows a successful performative utterance of "incitement", an illocutionary act intended to get the addressee to do something, (see Kurzon, 1998). Ḥassān indirectly incited Ibn al-Zibi'rā by praying that he would never lose the Prophet, so that Ibn al-Zibi'rā would have to face the consequences of his decision to hate the Prophet, which resulted in him living a miserable life in Najrān. This perlocutionary act has an actual effect on the poet's performative utterance of apology to the Prophet. In fact, Ḥassān ibn Thābit's line, as understood in the narration of the historical anecdote above, functions as an integral part of the successful performance of Ibn al-Zibi'rā's poem as a conventional poem of apology (i'tidhāriyya) and conversion to Islam. Therefore, this story cannot be completed without mentioning this line.

Second: The Analysis of the Poem
In terms of the ritual pattern of the poem's (qaṣīda)

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5   It is worth mentioning here that ibn Hishām attributed the poem to Ibn al-Zibi'rā, although he said at the end of his narration, "Some scholars deny the poem's attribution [the poem] to him [Ibn al-Zibi'rā]" (Ibn Hishām, 1955, p. 420). Regardless of the authenticity of the attribution of this poem to Ibn al-Zibi'rā, the performative language of the poem provides an early source for poetry used seriously to not only say something, but also do something: "apology and performance of conversion."

structure, Ibn al-Zibiʻrāʼs poem resembles, to some extent, other famous poems of apology that were constructed in three sections (elegiac prelude (*nasīb*), journey (*raḥīl*), apology (*iʻtidhār*) and praise (*madīḥ*)), such as al-Nābigha al-Dhubyānīʼs (d. 570-600 C.E.) (O Abode of Mayya) (Stetkevych, 2002, p.17-47) and Kaʻbʼs (Suʻād Has Departed) that can be read in light of Arnold van Gennepʼs (d. 1957) tripartite model of the rite of passage (separation-liminality-reaggregation).[6] According to Stetkevych, the purpose of the tripartite structure of the classical poem (*qaṣīda*) is to convey "a change in the status of the poet vis-à-vis the patron. It is thus the most appropriate poetic vehicle for expressing a transfer of allegiance" (Stetkevych, 2002, p. 143). Unlike al-Nābigha and Kaʻb, van Gennepʼs tripartite structure can be, to some extent, applied to Ibn al-Zibiʻrāʼs poem in a different way as follows: Liminality: the state of anxieties and worries about the Prophet blaming the poet for his wrongdoings (lines 1-4); Separation: the poetʼs state of separation from his previous tribal loyalties (Sahm and Makhzūm) (lines 5-6); Aggregation: the poetʼs last state in which he performs his apology and announces his new loyalty to the Prophet and praises the Prophet (lines 7-14). This structure inversion may be a result of the psychological distress that the poet underwent in conveying the message of changing his loyalty from the tribe of Quraysh to Islam polity. This structural inversion, to some extent, resembles what can be found in other *Mukhaḍram* (bridging

the *Jāhiliyya* [Age of Ignorance] and Islam) poems, in which the poet manipulates the traditional themes and structure of the pre-Islamic poem (*qaṣīda*) for his own purposes. For example, in his poem (Look well, my friend, donʼt you see a cloud by lightning-flash), the *Mukhaḍram* poet Ibn Muqbil makes some changes to the structure of the traditional *qaṣīda* that reflects his emotional transformation from *Jāhiliyya* to Islam. As J. Stetkevych points out regarding the structural of the *Mukhaḍram qaṣīda* especially that of Ibn Muqbil, "the *Mukhaḍram* Ibn Muqbil, not only predates, but theoretically bypasses Ibn Qutaybahʼs rhetorical-reductionist *qaṣīdah-simulacrum*.[7] We thus escape the *nasīb*-trap that Ibn Qutaybah has set up for us in our theoretical commerce with the *nasīb*, beyond the "concupiscence" of Ibn Qutaybah, but not beyond the "carnal knowledge" as *eros* of the ultimate hermeneutic proposition of the under-standing of poetry by Roland Barthes" (see, J. Stetkevych, 2006, p. 352).

The supplicatory aspect of Ibn al-Zibiʻrāʼs poem can be noticed also in the three elements of lyric-elegiac prelude (*nasīb*), self-abasement, submission, and supplication (Stetkevych, 2010, p. 14), which are reflected in ibn Zibʻarīʼs poemʼs structure. Unlike Kaʻbʼs (Suʻād Has Departed) which is long and dense in its rhetorical language, Ibn al-Zibiʻrāʼs poem is composed in straightforward language that delivers a clear message of apology to the Prophet. In addition, the poemʼs supplicatory structure reflects, to some extent, the urgent need of the poet for the mercy of the addressee, the one who supplicated to the Prophet, to accept the poetʼs repentance and conversion to Islam. Although the poemʼs theme is apology and conversion, looking closely at the thematic elements of Ibn Zibʻarīʼs poem, (a) it starts with an expression of anxiety and worry represented in nasībic elements (lines 1-2),

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6   Victor W. Turner outlines van Gennepʼs three phases of rites of passage: separation, margin or limen, and reaggregation.

The first phase (of separation) comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or groups either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a "state"), or from both. During the intervening ʻliminalʼ period, the characteristics of the ritual subject (the "passenger") are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. In the third phase (reaggregation or reincorporation), the passage is consummated. The ritual subject, individual or corporate, is in a relatively stable state once more and, by virtue of this, has rights and obligations vis-a-vis others of a clearly defined and ʻstructuralʼ type; he is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such positions. (Turner, 1997, p. 94-95; Gennep, 2004).

Many scholars have applied van Gennepʼs three phases of rites of passage theory to pre-Islamic, Islamic, Abbasid, Andalusian, and Modern poetry from different angles. Stetkevych is perhaps the most distinguished one to use van Gennepʼs theory in her analyses of classical Arabic poetry (Stetkevych, 1993; 2002).

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7   Ibn Qutaybaʼs (d. 889) says about the triparts structer of the conventional qaṣīda,

to compose a qaṣīda, the poet begins by mentioning abandoned encampments; he weeps, laments, and begs his companion to stop, which may make this an occasion to speak of those who have departed. To this he joins the nasīb, and complains about the force of his passion and the pain of separation. Once he is assured that he will be heard, he mounts up in his poem and complains of hardship, sleeplessness, and night journeying. When he is sure that he has convinced his addressee of his right to hope for a reward, he begins the madīḥ, in which he urges the Mamdūḥ to incite him to generosity.

Abū Muḥammad ʻAbd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutayba, al-Shiʻr wa-al-Shuʻarāʼ (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1964), 75.

followed by (b) elements of the journey (line 3). Then, (c) the poet presents his request and performs an apology and conversion to the Prophet to show his self-abasement and submission through describing his previous social status (the tribal loyalties of Jāhiliyya) followed by supplication (lines 4-9). Finally, (d) he praises the one who supplicated to the Prophet (lines 10-14). In fact, all these themes are united under the umbrella of madīḥ nabawī, praise, as explained in the following discussion:

a) *Nasībic* **elements: An Expression of Anxiety and Worry (lines 1-2)**

Ibn al-Zibiʻrā opens his poem with a description of his psychological trauma, as he is anxious and worried over a great matter that has dominated him and prevented him from sleeping. He depicts his night as a dark night, and he likens his feeling in this situation with the feeling of fever when he receives the news that the Prophet (Aḥmad) has blamed him (line 2). Although the poet, in these opening two lines and throughout the whole poem, never explicitly specifies the nature of his wrongdoing or the Prophet's verbal rebuke, it can be concluded from the referential language in lines 1-2, which affirms the context of the message (Jakobson, 1987, pp. 66-71), and the poem cannot be separated from its historical context. In this context, the poet suffered from mixed feelings of fear resulting from the Prophet's threat to all the polytheist poets who attacked him and hope for the Prophet's mercy and forgiveness.

 The theme of blame in the opening two lines functions to form the purpose of the poem as a ritual, performative apologetic poem that relies on the ritual of giving the poem to get the reward of forgiveness and acceptance in return. Stetkevych explains this process in Muauss's formulation of archaic gift exchange, saying it «is fully applicable to the ritual exchange of poem for prize that is characteristic of Arabic praise poetry—whether court or tribal panegyric or prophetic praise» (Stetkevych, 2010, p. 6). The poem also demonstrates the poet‹s seriousness and reflects his performance of repentance and submission, as seen in the use of performative sentences with a certain function or illocutionary force (e.g., request for mercy, apology, and conversion). These performative sentences led to the perlocutionary consequence of the addressee/ the one who supplicated for the Prophet‹s forgiveness.

Unlike most madīḥ nabawī poems, in which the patron's name appears in the praise section (Stetkevych, 2010), the poet declares the name of his addressee (Aḥmad) early here in line 2. This mention of the Prophet‹s name aims not only to introduce the addressee, «the Prophet,» but also to hint at the purpose of the poem: praise (madīḥ). In fact, there is a natural connection or, to use ibn Jinnī's terms, common meaning, or main concept (maʻnā Jāmiʻ) (Ibn Jinnī, 1952, v.3) between the meaning of the name, Aḥmad (derived from the root (ḥ, m, d) and the subject of the poem, praise (madīḥ) (derived from the root m, d, ḥ). The name Aḥmad refers to the one who does the act of praise (ḥamd) for the Most Praiseworthy/God[1] and, therefore, the name Aḥmad bears the attribute of the Prophet in its meaning; that is, the Prophet is the best in praising God[2] and the poet hopes to be the best one in praising the Messenger of God

[1] In lexicon the name Aḥmad is "(a man, Ṣ) came to a state, or result, such as was praised, or commended, or approved; properly, his affair, or case, came to such a state or result." (Lane, 1874, v.1 p. 640)

[2] Ibn Manẓūr in Lisān al-ʻArab said that "Al-Azharī said: So, praise God! Praise be to him and be thankful for his blessings that included all, and praise is more general than gratitude" (Ibn Manẓūr, 1993, v. 2,117).

Ibn al-Zibiʻrā opens his poem with a description of his psychological trauma, as he is anxious and worried over a great matter that has dominated him and prevented him from sleeping. He depicts his night as a dark night, and he likens his feeling in this situation with the feeling of fever when he receives the news that the Prophet (Aḥmad) has blamed him (line 2). Although the poet, in these opening two lines and throughout the whole poem, never explicitly specifies the nature of his wrongdoing or the Prophet's verbal rebuke, it can be concluded from the referential language in lines 1-2, which affirms the context of the message (Jakobson, 1987, pp. 66-71), and the poem cannot be separated from its historical context. In this context, the poet suffered from mixed feelings of fear resulting from the Prophet's threat to all the polytheist poets who attacked him and hope for the Prophet's mercy and forgiveness.

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in return. Stetkevych explains this process in Muauss's formulation of archaic gift exchange, saying it «is fully applicable to the ritual exchange of poem for prize that is characteristic of Arabic praise poetry—whether court or tribal panegyric or prophetic praise» (Stetkevych, 2010, p. 6). The poem also demonstrates the poet›s seriousness and reflects his performance of repentance and submission, as seen in the use of performative sentences with a certain function or illocutionary force (e.g., request for mercy, apology, and conversion). These performative sentences led to the perlocutionary consequence of the addressee/ the one who supplicated for the Prophet›s forgiveness.

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[1] In lexicon the name Aḥmad is "(a man, Ṣ) came to a state, or result, such as was praised, or commended, or approved; properly, his affair, or case, came to such a state or result." (Lane, 1874, v.1 p. 640)
[2] Ibn Manẓūr in Lisān al-'Arab said that "Al-Azharī said: So, praise God! Praise be to him and be thankful for his blessings that included all, and praise is more general than gratitude" (Ibn Manẓūr, 1993, v. 2,117).

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b) **Elements of Journey (line 3)**
In contrast with the traditional panegyric ode, in which the journey section is long and full of adventure and suffering (liminal phase), there is no journey section here, just a mention of the element of the she-camel (al-nāqa) that is poetically used as the vehicle by which the poet completes his journey (liminal phase) and moves to his target (reaggregation with the tribe). However, the poet in the present poem evokes the she-camel without its traditional poetic function. To some extent, it is similar to the journey of brigand poets of the Jāhiliyya and early Islamic period (Ṣu'lūk), in which the poet does not ride the she-camel that represents the mount of the tribal polity and the symbol of the reaggregated passenger (see Stetkevych, 1984). As Stetkevych explains, "the passenger mounted on the she-camel completes the passage, whereas the pedestrian passenger fails. To be without this symbol of the tribal polity is to be without hope of reincorporation, to be without tribal support and direction" (see Stetkevych, 1984, p. 673). Unlike the traditional panegyric ode, in which the poet is the one who rides the strong camel that carries him to the patron's (mamdūḥ) place and paves the way for the poet to praise the mamdūḥ, Ibn al-Zibi'rā, in the third line, makes the patron (the Prophet) the one who rides the strong she-camel so as to praise him for being the best one ever to mount a she-camel.

Moreover, the description of the she-camel as "hand free" (*surḥu al-yadayni*) in this context of praising the

8   In lexicon the name Aḥmad is "(a man, Ṣ) came to a state, or result, such as was praised, or commended, or approved; properly, his affair, or case, came to such a state or result." (Lane, 1874, v.1 p. 640)
9   Ibn Manẓūr in Lisān al-'Arab said that "Al-Azharī said: So, praise God! Praise be to him and be thankful for his blessings that included all, and praise is more general than gratitude" (Ibn Manẓūr, 1993, v. 2,117).

Prophet fits the poet's purpose of asking forgiveness. This special code for the virtue of the performance of supplication in line 3 functions as a bridge to start the performance of the spiritual communication with the one supplicated to/the Prophet through the vocative formula (O the best) (*yā-khayra*) (line 3),[10] as well as a supplicatory manner to directly address the one supplicated to/the Prophet saying, "I truly apologized to you" (line 4).

c) Presentation of the Request and Performing an Apology to the Prophet (lines 4-9)

Ibn al-Zibiʿrā begins directly his argument and communication with the one supplicated to/the Prophet by stating straightforwardly his apology and admitting his great sin, saying, "I truly apologized to you (Innī la muʿtatathirunʾīlayka)" (line 4). Using Searle's term, the language in this line is an expressive (Searle, 1985, p. 8, 19) utterance of apology. Searle explains, "the illocutionary point of expressives such as apologizing... is simply to express an intentional state, the sincerity condition of the speech act, about some state of affairs which is presupposed to be obtained" (Searle, 1983, p. 173). Thus, to express his sincere confession of guilt to the one supplicated to/the Prophet, the poet refers to himself with the implied pronoun (I) in (ʾinnī) (line 4). Furthermore, he formulates his apology by using more than one expression of emphasis (muʾakkidāt): Inna and al-lām with the explicit formula of apology "I truly apologized to you (muʿtatadhirun)" to emphasize the subject of the context of the sentence.

Moreover, to give his utterance a performance aspect, he used the second-person pronoun "-ka" in the prepositional phrase "to you" (ʾīlayka) (line 4), which explicitly shows the direction of the poet's act of apology, which is pointing to the high authority

10 The features of this spiritual communication can be identified considering the six factors of an effective verbal communication as follows:

Context
(the historical narrative of the poet's apology and conversion)
Message
(the performative act of apology and conversion)
Addresser/the Poet --Address-
ee/the Prophet
Contact
(the performance of the ritual of supplication)
Code
(the sincerity of the poet's feeling, thought, and intention in per-
forming apology and conversion)
See (Jakobson, 1987, p. 66-71).

addressee/the Prophet. This is also an indication that the poet indeed begins the spiritual and actual contact between himself and the prophet. His apology is supported by using the linguistic formula of active voice (ism al-fāʿil) that describes the doer of an action and carries the meaning of continuity in his saying, "I truly apologized to you (muʿtatadhirun)" with an explicit statement of confession of sin in "about what I have done (min al-ladhī asdaītu)" (line 4). Thus, the poet in line 4 relies on an approach to confession and supplication that eases the way for him to defend himself before the Prophet by performing a change of loyalty and requesting forgiveness.

The renunciation of an old religion for a more powerful new religion needs a necessary component; for this act, an appropriately powerful verbal performance equivalent to the event performance. As Richard Bauman explains, "there are, first of all, events for which it is a criterial attribute, such that performance is a necessary component for a particular event to count as a valid instance of the class" (Bauman, 1984, p. 27). In Ibn al-Zibiʿrā's case, performing an apology is a necessary component for the event of conversion and praising the Prophet. To perform his apology, Ibn al-Zibiʿrā follows the three steps of (1) evoking the past before (2) speaking about the present and (3) concluding with the hope of forgiveness.

Step One: *Talking about the Past:* the poet uses the indefinite word "days" (*ayyam*) (line 5) to evoke his past before conversion to Islam, when he was following the religion of his tribe. He acknowledges that he has done wrongdoings to the Prophet, but without his real intention, because Sahm and Makhzūm forced him to do it and he had to obey the commands of his tribe and follow their paths (line 5-6). To show the truthfulness of this declaration of apology to the addressee, the poet cuts off his ties with his old loyalty/Sahm and Makhzūm by describing their path as a seductive path (line 5), describing them as seducers (lines 5-6) and saying their matter was ominous (line 6). In this way, the poet wants to show his innocence and to present himself as a victim of his tribe's wrongdoings, and to appeal to pity through condemning his previous loyalty to the wrongdoings and confessing the motive behind them. This technique is comparable to F. Naiden's third step of supplication, according to which "the third often features either a request like acquittal or pardon, an argument from fairness, or an appeal to pity that only

an innocent can make" (Naiden, 2006, p.104). Thus, the poet indirectly denies his previous wrong acts and maintains his own innocence. This way is considered an essential icon for the framework of supplication and self-abasement.

It is worth noting here that the poetic performative ritual method of apology typically entails a direct denial of the accusation and swearing of an oath, such as that used in renowned conventional poem of apology (*i'tidhāriyya*). Examples include that of al-Nābigha in his poem of redemption to al-Nuʿmān ibn al-Mundher (580-602) (O Abode of Mayya) and Kaʿb's (Suʿād Has Departed). Stetkevych explains, "The denial in this respect becomes not so much a lie as a ritual recantation or abjuration of the alleged misdeed" (Stetkevych, 2002, p. 39; Stetkevych, 2010, p. 54). However, in the case of ibn al-Zibʿra, the poetic ritual of apology and conversion does not have, from the supplicant/the wrongdoer, a direct denial of the wrongdoing to beg for mercy, but rather it uses the active voice of the poet to demonstrate his confession of guilt in order to petition for pity from the one supplicated to/the Prophet with the hope of achieving forgiveness (lines 4-6). Indeed, the poet's apology and admission of remorse in lines 4-6 is a preliminary manner of the performative act of supplication to reach the argumentative step that could lead to the Prophet's fairness and forgiveness.

Step Two: *Talking about the Present:* The poet initiates his speech about the present with the definite word "today" (*alyawm*) to declare his belief in the Prophet and disbelief in his tribe's faith saying,

7) So, today my heart believes in the Prophet Muḥammad,

and he who wrongs this is deprived,

This language alteration from speaking about his past to representing his present and future status is vital in this section of the poem in that it reflects the poet's actual intention for the conversion, that from now on his heart believes only in the Prophet (Muḥammad). In addition, the poet's declaration using the present tense "believes" (*āmana*) eases the way for him to direct the speech to the addressee/the Prophet. Indeed, by uttering "my heart believes in the Prophet Muḥammad," here Ibn al-Zibiʿrā performs the first ritual of conversion to Islam. This representation before the Prophet in line 7 is parallel to the performative utterance of the two pillars of faith or the testimony of faith: (I bear witness that there is no god but God, and I testify that Muḥammad is the Messenger of God), which was a requisite performative act for conversion to be performed before the Prophet during the time of the poet.

Thus, the language used in line 7 is *commissive* performative language. It is as if the poet says, "Today I promise you [the Prophet] that I believe in you." According to Searle, unlike statements, *commissives* have "world-to-word direction of fit and…have an additional form of casual self-reference" (Searle, 1983, p. 196). Therefore, with his utterance in line 7, the poet signals to the addressee/the Prophet two things: that he utters a serious and literal utterance, and that he commits himself to the truthful conditions of his utterance, "the propositional content." In other words, by uttering "today my heart believes in the Prophet Muḥammad," the poet brings it about that his heart honestly believes in the Prophet by way of representing it (line 7) (world-to-word direction of fit). As a result, the poet's utterance (line 7) changes his world from the world of *Jāhiliyya* to the world of Islam, and his loyalty from his tribe's Sahm and Makhzūm to the Prophet Muḥammad.

In addition, the poet gives one more piece of evidence that he truly believes in the Prophet by using, to use Searle's terms, the *assertives*[11] language, asserting to the deniers the truth of the existence of the Prophet saying, "he who wrongs this [the Prophet] is deprived," (line 7).[12] This utterance in line 7 meets the conditions of Searle's assertion rules,[13] since the poet announces his belief and becomes positioned to provide proof for the truth of his utterance.

The poet in line 8 goes a step beyond declaring his new

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11 In his explanation of Searle's theory, Vanderveken states that "Assertive illocutionary acts like assertions, conjectures and hypotheses have the words-to-things direction of fit. They are satisfied when the propositional content corresponds to a fact which exists in the world" (Vanderveken, 2002, p.143).

12 This verse evokes the Qur'anic verse, *fa-lladhīna ʾāmanū bihī wa-ʿazzarūhu wa-naṣarūhu wa-ttabaʿū n-nūra lladhī ʾunzila maʿahū ʾulāʾika humu l-mufliḥūn.* (al-Qurʾān 7:157)

13 Searle argues,

an assertion is a type of illocutionary act that conforms to certain quite specific semantic and pragmatic rules which are:

1. The essential rule: the maker of an assertion commits himself to the truth of the expressed proposition.

2. The preparatory rules: the speaker must be in a position to provide evidence or reasons for the truth of the expressed proposition.

3. The expressed proposition must not be obviously true to both the speaker and the hearer in the context of utterance.

4. The sincerity rule: the speaker commits himself to a belief in the truth of the expressed proposition (Searle, 1985, p. 62).

belief, presenting himself as a companion of the Prophet who has strong bonds with the patron saying,

8) The enmity has passed, and its causes have gone, and bonds and forbearing between us have grown instead.

This transition from the past to present relationship in line 8 reflects the transformation of his emotion from enmity to love.

By uttering line 8, the poet is confirming his rejection of the practice of his old faith, the *Jāhiliyya* (the enmity…, and its causes), and promising to be a supporter of the Prophet (bonds and forbearing). Searle explains, "What I promise is the fulfillment of my promise, but to fulfill my promise I have to do the thing I promised and my having promised to do it has to function as a reason for doing it" (Searle, 1983, p. 171).What is quite important to note here is that, converting to Islam involved, for the poet, the performance of the transfer of allegiance to the Prophet, the rejection of the practice of *Jāhiliyya*, and cutting off any relationship to the inherited political power of the poet's tribe that stood against the Prophet in the past, in favor of a new religion and love bonds with the Prophet (line 8).

Step Three: Request Forgiveness: the imperative verb "forgive" (*'ighfir*) is used with the object "my slip" (*zalalī*) when the poet says:

9) Forgive my slip; may my both parents be a ransom for you,

indeed, you are the most merciful, and have shown mercy [by God].

It reflects the main purpose of the poem, to perform the act of supplication for mercy. This performative language that, to use Searle's term, has a *directive*[14] dimension is used to declare the poet's urgent need for the patron's act of forgiveness and illocutionary acts. It is also expressive[15] utterance that shows the poet's sincerity condition, that he did wrong to the addressee/ the Prophet, and he takes the responsibility for it. In this regard, the praise in the second hemistich, "indeed, you are the most merciful, and have shown mercy [by God]" (line 9) is a way to encounter the Prophet with his special character trait (*rāḥim*), and his high rank status to God (*marḥūm*) to attain a certain effect on

the Prophet that is "forgiveness." This functions as the poet's final attempt hoping to obtain an extraordinary response from the Prophet, his mercy, and acceptance. Thus, although the poet, in general, uses clear and straightforward language in the whole poem to convey his apology, a pure request. The apology language used in line 9 makes this line, (using Stetkeyvch's term), the "ritual core" of the supplicatory ode that relies on highly performative language (Stetkevych, 2010, p. 10). Indeed, these poetic steps of evoking the past, speaking about the present and concluding with the hope of forgiveness in the future eases the way for the poet to praise the Prophet in the following section, which eventually leads to the fourth step of supplication (receiving a response from the supplicandus).

d) Praising the One Supplicated to/the Prophet (lines 10-14)

After all, having expressed belief in the Prophet and confessed guilt, the poet proceeds to the supplication and praise section of his supplicatory ode. The praise in this section is related to the topic of the superiority of the intercessor, the Prophet, to the One supplicated to, God. The language used in this section is referential in function affirming the context of the message, referring directly or indirectly to Qur'anic verses or the Prophet's *ḥadīths* to maximize the Prophet's value, describe his high rank and noble status to God [16] and declare the special traits that God has bestowed upon him.

The poet starts with praising the Prophet's bright light (line 10), which evokes the Muḥammadan light (*al-Nūr Muḥammadī*) or the belief in Muḥammad's pre-existence in the form of a divine light. It is a reference to a *ḥadīth* narrated by ibn ʿAbbās, "that the spirit of the Prophet was a light in the hands of God two thousand years before He created Adam. That light glorified Him and the angels were glorified by his glorification" (Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, 1992, p.43; ʿIyāḍ, 2014, v.1 p.92). Then, he alludes to the Prophet's "sealed ring" (line 10), which evokes the Qurʾānic verse, *mā kāna muḥammadun ʾabā ʾaḥadin min rijālikum wa-lākin rasūla llāhi wa-khātama n-nabiyyīna wa-kāna llāhu bi-kulli shayʾin ʿalīma* (Muḥammad is not the father of any one of your men, but the Messenger of God, and the Seal of the Prophets; God has knowledge of everything.) (al-Qurʾān 33:40) In addition, the poet in line 11 alludes

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14 Illocutionary acts designed to get the addressee to do something, e.g., requesting, commanding, pleading, inviting, daring (Pratt, 1977, p. 81).

15 Illocutionary acts that express only the speaker's psychological state, e.g., congratulating, thanking, deploring, condoling, welcoming (Pratt, 1977, p. 81).

16 For more about the Prophet's special high rank, see (ʿIyāḍ, 2014; 1992).

to the Prophet's high rank for having God's love and His convincing proof. It is a reference to the Qur'anic verse, *Yā 'ayyuha annasu qad jā'kum burhānun min rabbikum wa-anzalnā 'ilaykum nūran mubīna* (O men, a proof has now come to you from your Lord; We have sent down to you a manifest light.) (al-Qur'ān 4:174) The poet continues the same strategy to praise the Prophet's connection with God through the use of his epithet "Mustafa", meaning he is chosen by God. This line is a reference to the Quran'ān verse that tells about Prophet Aḥmad as the chosen one by God to be His messenger after Jesus, *wa-'idh qāla 'īsā bnu maryama yā-banī 'isrā'īla 'innī rasūlu llāhi 'ilaykum muṣaddiqan li-mā bayna yadayya mina t-tawrāti wa-mubashshiran bi-rasūlin yàtī min ba'dī smuhū 'aḥmadu* (And when Jesus son of Mary said, Children of Israel, I am indeed the Messenger of God to you, confirming the Torah that is before me, and giving good tidings of a Messenger who shall come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad). (al-Qur'ān 61:6) Then, the poet uses the word "*karīm*" in line 13, hinting to his hope for the Prophet's acceptance and generous forgiveness.[17]

The poem is concluded with a verse that carries continuous praise of the Prophet by honoring the superiority of the Prophet's lineage, Banū Hāshim, through drawing a comparison between the high rank of the Prophet's lineage and a high and solid branch that reaches up to the apex and is rooted down. The phrase (A master of [the Banū] Hāshim) (line 14), indicates the *ḥadīth* that Wathila ibn al-Asqa' narrated: "I heard the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said, 'verily God granted eminence to Kināna from amongst the descendants of Ismā'īl, and he granted eminence to the Quraysh amongst Kināna, and he granted eminence to Banū Hāshim amongst the Quraysh, and he granted me eminence among the tribe of Banū Hāshim'" (Muslim, book 43, *ḥadīth* 2276, 1080).

In this final section, the prosaic and simple language and diction used by the poet resembles the prosaic language used in other *madīḥ nabawī* of this type, such as the praise section of Ka'b's (Su'ād Has Departed), about which Stetkevych says,

It is the apparent "simplicity" of this section [the praise section of Ka'b's poem] that gives it its power;

its striking effect is due precisely to its contrast to the "poeticity"—the richness of specifically poetic diction, the allusiveness, the multivalence— of the traditional elegiac prelude and journey section that precede it. But its very simplicity is, of course, nothing but a poetic conceit (Stetkevych, 2002, p. 65).

Thus, the use of unambiguous and simple poetic language eases the way for the poet to seal his supplicatory communication with the Prophet (lines 10-14).

The Prophet's Acceptance of the Poet's Supplication:
The language of Ibn a-Zib'arī's short poem indicates that it is performative, by which the poet conveys his apology, repentance and performs conversion. Ibn al-Zibi'rā's poetic performance of his apology would not be complete without getting the acceptance of the Prophet that was obtained according to the anecdote (*akhbār*) narrated by Muḥammad ibn Sa'd saying, "When Ibn al-Zibi'rā got Ḥassān ibn Thābit's verses, he took a journey to Medina and came to the Prophet to perform repentance. The Prophet looked at Ibn al-Zibi'rā and said, 'This is Ibn al-Zibi'rā, come with a face which has light in it'" (Ibn Sa'd, 2001, v.6 p.109). Then, Ibn al-Zibi'rā announced his conversion to Islam before the Prophet. And he said when he became Muslim: [the poem above].

Thus, Ibn al-Zibi'rā's poem with the anecdote of his conversion to Islam is much like (the Mantle poem) (*burda*) of Ka'b, which was also composed on the occasion of his conversion to Islam, and he performed it before the Prophet, and the Prophet bestowed upon Ka'b his mantle (*burda*).[18] Stetkevych interprets the exchange of a poem from the poet and a *burda* from the Prophet in light of the ritual of the gift exchange saying, "the *qasida* functions as a symbolic gift in a ritual of allegiance or fealty, and the robe or the mantle then functions as the symbolic counter gift." As for Ibn al-Zibi'rā's poem, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī narrated that the Prophet accepted Ibn al-Zibi'rā's praise poem and awarded him with a mantle (*ḥullā*) (al-'Asqalānī, 1992, v.4 p.87) Similar to the case of Ka'b, this prophetic gift of the mantle for the poem led Ibn al-Zibi'rā's poem to be a successful poetic performance.

To conclude, this short poem properly meets Austin's <u>performative</u> utterances rules and conditions. The

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17   Jabir Ibn 'Abdullah reported: "It never happened that Allah's Messenger, peace and blessing upon him, was asked for anything and he said: No." (Muslim, book 43, *ḥadīth* 76)

For more on the anecdote of the donation of the   ١٨
.(mantle, see (Stetkevych, 2010, p. 62

poet followed the accepted conventional procedure to perform the apology and conversion correctly and completely. He shows sincere intention, as he truly wanted to act out his apology and conversion when composing the poetic praise. In turn, the Prophet is the appropriate one with the power to accept the poet's words within the external institution of language, and to accept the poet's poetic apology and conversion. Thus, the poem is a successful speech act since the context, the persons and the circumstances are proper for its performance.

A close look at the historical story of Ibn al-Zibiʿrāʾs conversion, narrated above, and the interior structure of the poem reveal that the poet composes his performative poem of apology (iʿtidhāriya) under the specific circumstance of performing it as a ceremonial ode of conversion before the Prophet. He believed that his poem could convey his intentional states, "belief, fear, and hope", to do something outside of language, that is, to change his status emotionally, spiritually, and politically—from enmity to love, from polytheism to Islam, and from loyalty to the Quraysh tribe in Mecca to the new power of the Prophet in Medina.

The study shows that this poem cannot be understood as a qualified and complete performative act of apology and conversion without mentioning its historical context. Also, it is obvious that the special ritual supplicatory methods used by the poet within the poem are used intentionally to show the poet's sincere feeling, thought, and intention to get the addressee's or the Prophet's acknowledgement and acceptance.

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