

Huruma: Social Roles and Responsibility

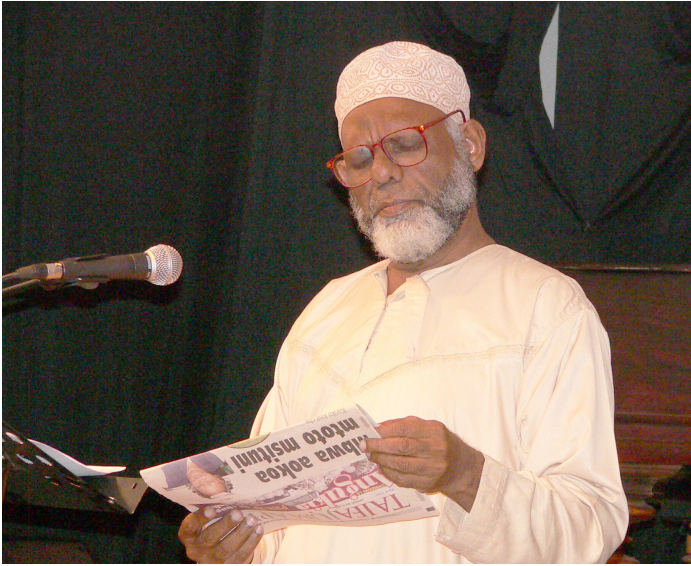


FIGURE 16 Ustadh Mahmoud Mau reading *Mama msimlaumu* at the Jukwaani Festival in Nairobi in 2009; in his hand the newspaper report which inspired his composition

1 *Mama msimlaumu* (“Don’t Blame My Mother”)

Ustadh Mau wrote this poem in 2006 after finding an article in the *Taifa* newspaper about a dog rescuing an abandoned baby girl who had been left in the Ngong forest. The dog carried the baby to its owner, who at first thought that the baby was dead. Ustadh Mau reads the newspaper every day; touched by the baby’s story, he decided to write a poem about it to defend the rights of women, who are commonly blamed for such acts. He has performed the poem twice for audiences. Before reading the poem, he reads them the newspaper article and asks the audience, whom do you blame for such an act? Normally, he says, the audience blames the mother. His intention is to change people’s perspectives and to place the deed in a broader social context: not only the mother, but also society is to be held responsible.¹

1 On the occasion of the first conference on Swahili literature at the University of Naples, organ-

1. *Imenibidi kunena, kabla wangu wakati
Sababu nimewaona, mamangu humlaiti
Mamangu makosa hana, sipweke amezohiti'
Kosa hili nda ummati*

I have been compelled to speak prior to my time
Because I have seen you condemning my mother.
My mother is not the one to blame; it is not her fault alone.
It is society's fault.

I -hiti < Ar. syn.: *-fanya makosa* "make a mistake."

2. *Nda ummati hili kosa, na ziyongozi wa nti
Kosa nda wana siyasa, na mahakimu wa koti
Kosa nda wenye mapesa, na wasiyo na senti
Kosa hili nda ummati*

It is the fault of society, and the leaders of the country.
It is the fault of the politicians and the judges in the court.
It is the fault of those who have money and those without a cent.
It is society's fault.

3. *Mamangu si Mariyamu, wa Imrani binti
Mama ni mwanaadamu, meishi hapa tiyati
Na nyuteni mwafahamu, kuna dhaifu wakati
Hushindwa kuidhibiti*

My mother is not Maryam, the daughter of Imran.
My mother is a human being, living here on earth.
As all of you know, there are times of weakness
In which we fail to control ourselves.

4. *Mama hakutenda pweke, na labda hakukiri
Ali na mwendani wake, aloifanya jasiri
Ndipo mimi niumbike, mamangu kumuaziri'
Pasi na yangu khiari*

ized by Flavia Aiello and Roberto Gaudio in 2016, this poem was also read aloud, with a translation into Italian by Annachiara Raia under the title "Non incolpate la madre."

My mother did not do it alone, and probably not voluntarily.
 She had a partner who feigned adventurousness.
 That is how I came into being, putting shame on her—
 Against my own will.

1 *kumuaziri*—Mau: *kuntia katika aibu* (“to put shame on s.o.”).

5. *Ikiwa kuna lawama, lawama na zitanganye*
Mukimlaumu mama, naye baba mumkanye
1 Ndipo hapo yatakoma, ubaguzi musifanye
Wanawake musifinye

If there is someone to be blamed, this blame should be distributed
 equally.
 If you accuse the mother, the father also should be blamed.
 Only then can this be prevented; don't be biased
 And place the blame on women alone.

1 In this third line, he is referring to extramarital pregnancy. From his point of view, one can only stop men from dallying with women by making them legally responsible for their acts and not placing the blame solely on women, who thus become socially marginalized.

6. *Mimi kattu sikubali, mamangu kumlaumu*
Na pweke kumkejeli, huwa ni kumdhulumu
Kwaye pweke yambo hili, aswilani halitimu
Hilo nyute mwafahamu

I do not agree if you blame my mother
 And ridicule only her, because this is an injustice.
 She could never have done this by herself.
 You all know that.

7. *Kitendo ni cha wawili, alipowa kapokeya*
Haitokuwa adili, mama pweke kumwemeya
Halihitaji dalili, wala huja kuzengeya
Ayuwa kulla mmoya

This can only be done by two people: the one who received [the offer],
also accepted it.

It's unfair to place the onus only on my mother.

No evidence is necessary nor need any proof be found.

Everybody knows it.

8. *Mno huwona utungu, kiwasikiya hunena*
Humlaumu mamangu, kwa kuwa mkosa sana
Mimi na wendani wangu, hatupati hata ina
Ni Sina au Sibina

I feel so much bitterness if I hear people talking,

Blaming my mother as the only wrongdoer.

My fellow sufferers and I, we are not even named—

Only Sina or Sibina.¹

¹ These two names are telling: Sina, “I don’t have [sc. a father],” and Sibina, “it is not surprising,” i.e. “it is not a surprise that these things happen.” These are female names given to children who are born outside of wedlock.

9. *Menitupa wangu mama, si kwa kuwa hanipendi*
Ni baba memsukuma, kisa kumwawika landi'
Naye kwa kucha lawama, za wenye ndimi na tundi
Menitupa yake kandi

My mother threw me away, but not because she had no love for me.

It was the father who pushed her, putting the hangman’s noose around
her neck.

It was just from fear of being accused by scandalmongers and chatter-
boxes

That she threw me, her treasure, away.

¹ *landi* “noose”; *wenye tundi* (< -*tunda* “to find out”) “chatterboxes.”

10. *Naamini anipenda, mama hakunitukiya*
Ni lipi lilomshinda, pumzi kuniziwiya
Tokeya siku ya kwanda, duniani mimi kuya
Ni ruhuma kunoneya

I believe she loved me. My mother did not hate me.
 What else would have prevented her from suffocating me right away?
 From the first day I came into the world,
 She felt compassion for me.

11. *Natamani natamani, wangu mama kumpata
 Nimwambiye shukurani, nimpe ahasanta
 Kwa kunilicha tumboni, hata siku zikapita
 Ndiya nami kafuwata*

I wish, I wish, to find my mother,
 So that I can thank her and show her my gratitude
 For keeping me in her womb, until the time was due for me
 To find my way out.

12. *Humpijiya siloti, mamangu kwa wake wema
 Wakuniwata niketi, matumboni kwa salama
 Na wala simlaiti, kwa alilolifanya mama
 Alitenda kwa lazima*

I salute my mother for her kindness
 To let me stay safely in her womb.
 And I do not blame my mother for what she did.
 She was forced to do so.

1 *siloti* < Eng. "salute."

13. *Menitatiya tambara, kusudi kunidhibiti
 Nisipate la madhara, kiniweka kavu nti
 Baridi ingenikera, nikakutwa ni maiti
 Alofanya si katiti*

She wrapped me in a piece of cloth to protect me
 So that I would not be harmed when she placed me on the bare
 ground.
 For if the cold had struck me, I would have been found dead.
 What she did was not trifling.

14. *Kabla ya kumaliza, kufunga yangu kauli*
Walimwengu nauliza, tazawa mara ya pili
Hakuna takaoweza, kuwa wa mama badali
Nashukuru wafadhili

Before I finish and conclude my speech,
 I ask you human beings: can I possibly be born a second time?
 There is no one to replace my mother.
 Still, I thank all my saviors.

15. *Wema wenu siukani, na wa mbwa mashuhuri*
Mumenitenda hisani, mumenifanya mazuri
Wangaliko duniyani, waja wapendao kheri
Tammati hapa shairi

I cannot deny your kindness, nor that of the famous dog.
 You have done me a favor and you have done good to me.
 There are still people in the world who are altruistic.
 Here my poem ends.

2 *Jilbabu* (“Veil”)

Ustadh Mau composed this poem in the 1980s, when a group of women was campaigning for the proper veiling of Muslim women. They were of the opinion that women were not properly veiled, and they propagated the use of a (typically black) veil called the *jilbabu*, made of two parts: one piece wrapped around the hips, and another around the shoulders. This was supposed to replace the so-called *buibui ya Kiswahili*, which is one piece of cloth, sewn into a loop, and which women typically wore in a loose way. The “Annaswiha” movement was started mostly by women from Lamu who had studied in Nairobi, where they met other (mostly Somali) women and returned to Lamu with new ideas about proper clothing. Mama Azra, Ustadh Mau’s wife, was the chairperson of the group. The poem was also performed at Mkomani Primary School, where Ustadh Mau has given lectures on moral conduct (*maadili*) every Thursday (in the Islamic Pastoral Program) for decades, ever since the 8-4-4 school system was introduced. This is one of the poems in this collection that has a dialogical structure, based on a conversation between a young girl, called only *binti* (“daughter”), and her father, *baba*. As the poem unfolds, the reader can see that while the girl is curious and feels

ready to start wearing her veil, the father expresses his hesitation toward his daughter's wish.

1. *Binti:*
Babangu tangu kitambo
Kwako nalitaka yambo
Imekuwa kama nyimbo
Kula siku nakwambiya

Daughter:
 My father, for a while now
 I have wanted something from you.
 It plays on repeat in my head
 Every day, I tell you.

2. *Baba:*
Ewe binti sikiza
Mimi hilo sitoweza
Haja yako kutimiza
Sivezi kukutendeya

Father:
 My daughter, listen—
 I can't do that.
 I can't satisfy your need.
 I can't do it for you.

3. *Binti:*
Baba kituche¹ si ghali
Wala si cha mengi mali
Alifu na mia mbili
Hazizidi hata moja

Daughter:
 Father, this thing is not expensive;
 It is not a lot of money.
 One thousand two hundred—
 It is no more than that.

¹ *kituche = kitu hicho*

4. *Baba:*
Mwanangu hukufahamu
Mimi sioni ugumu
Wa kutowa tas'limu
Si bakhili kwa rupiya

Father:
 My daughter, you haven't understood me.
 I don't see any problem
 In paying;
 I am not a miser when it comes to money.

5. *Binti:*
Basi baba ni kwa nini
Kwamba haiwezekani
Ikiwa yake thamani
Siyo ilokulemeya

Daughter:
 So, father, why then?
 Why is it not possible
 If its price
 Is not the thing that prevents you?

6. *Baba:*
Mwanangu mimi naona
Hilo halina maana
Wewe ungalii kijana
Ni mwando kuinukiya

Father:
 My daughter, I see
 That this is not meaningful.
 You are still a child;
 You have only just begun growing up.

7. *Binti:*
Baba hela pulikiza
Suali nakuuliza
Wewe litakupendeza
Mimi mwano kipoteya
- Daughter:
 Father, listen
 To the question I am asking you:
 Would you want me,
 Your daughter, to go astray?
8. *Baba:*
Utapoteya kwa nini
Wewe hapa si mgeni
Hata usiku kizani
Ndiya zote zakweleya
- Father:
 Why should you go astray?
 You are not a foreigner here.
 Even on the darkest night,
 You know all the roads.
9. *Binti:*
Si kupoteya ndiyani
Ni kumwandama shetani
Ni kungiya madhambini
Kutenda yaso na ndiya
- Daughter:
 I do not mean getting lost on the road,
 But following Satan.
 It means to sin—
 To do what is not right.
10. *Baba:*
Hilo mimi silitaki
Na kabisa siridhiki
Mambo yaso alaiki
Kwetu hatukuzoeya
- Father:
 I don't want that.
 And I do not agree at all with
 These things that do not befit us,
 That we are not used to.
11. *Binti:*
Kama hayo wayaona
Ni mambo yaso maana
Nipa ningali kijana
Nipate kulizoeya
- Daughter:
 If you think
 That these concerns are meaningless,
 Expose me to them while I am still young,
 So that I may get used to them.
12. *Waswahili twalinena*
Uwongo^I hupatikana
Ulimai^{II} na mwenana^{III}
Uweze kusinyangiya
- We, the Swahili, used to say
 The clay
 Needs to be wet and soft
 So that you can model it.

^I *uwongo* Am. "clay" (Std. *udongo*). | ^{II} See meth.: *uwongo hupatikana ulimai*. | ^{III} *mwenana* "kitu laini, kitu ambacho hakijakomaa" (Mau).

13. *Nami kitovaa sasa*
Wakati utapotasa
Sitoliweza kabisa
Kiwa sitolizoweya If I am not wearing it now,
When the time comes
I will not be able to wear it at all,
If I do not get used to it now.
14. *Baba:*
Mwana hilo si lazima
Bora usimame wima
Ndiya njema kuandama
Na mbovu kuikimbiya Father:
My daughter, this is not a must;
You better stand firm,
Following the right path,
Running away from evil.
15. *Binti:*
Baba shuga ndiyo kinga
Na waovu hukutenga
Baba kitovaa shuga
Mate watanimiziya Daughter:
Father, the veil is a protection.
It keeps one away from bad people.
Father, if I do not wear a veil,
They will desire me.
16. *Kizunguka wazi wazi*
Kuna wengi majambazi
Wabakaji siku hizi
Miini wameeneya If I stroll around without it—
There are many robbers
And rapists these days.
They have increased in the towns.
17. *Lakini kiisitiri*
Kama ya Mola Amri
Nitaepuka khatari
Salamani nitangiya But if I cover myself
According to God's will,
I will avoid danger
And be on the safe side.
18. *Baba:*
Basi enenda dukani
Kaangalie fesheni
Zitokazo Arabuni
Nipate kununuliya Father:
So go to the shop
And look at the fashions
Coming from Arabia,
So that I may buy it for you.
19. *Binti:*
Baba shuga si fesheni
Mashuga ya madukani
Siyo kwenye Qurani
Mola aliyotwambiya Daughter:
The veil is not a fashion item.
The veils from the shops
Are not those of the Qur'an,
Which God told us about.

1 *shuga* Am. "sheet," here "veil" (Std. *shuka*)

20. *Baba:* Father:
Kwani wewe utakalo Which one do you want?
Ni lile liambiwalo Like the one called
Junijuni' hilo ndilo "This is Junijuni"
Kwa mbali akitokeya When s/he appears from afar?

1 In this stanza, *junijuni* refers to a figure that forms part of a children's game typically played during Ramadan. A rough bag is placed over a child's head so that s/he cannot see anything. Afterwards, other children make fun of him/her, shouting "Junijuni lataka bembe" ("Junijuni wants *bembe* food"). (*bembe* food is a kind of food consumed during Ramadan.) Thus, in this stanza, the father makes fun of the daughter's wish, since the *junijuni* is an ugly bag. It has become a common derogatory term, used to refer to the veil by those who do not approve of it.

21. *Binti:* Daughter:
Baba sifanye dhikaka Father, do not joke—
Hilo ndilo la hakika That one is the right one,
Mola analolitaka The one God wants,
Shuga analoridhiya The one God agrees with.
22. *Amri yake Wahabu* The command of the Generous One
Ni kuvaa jilbabu Is to wear the veil.
Angaliya ah'zabu Look at the *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb*—
Imenena wazi aya The verse says so clearly¹.

1 The reference is to sura 33:59, which reads as follows: "O Prophet, say to thy wives and daughters and the believing women, that they draw their veil close to them; so it is likelier they will be known, and not hurt. God is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate" (Abr., 434).

23. *Baba:* Father:
Mwanangu nasikitika My daughter, I am sorry.
Wendiyo watakuteka Your companions will laugh at you,
Na kwa joto kadhalika And the heat
Utazidi kuumiya Will make you suffer even more.
24. *Binti:* Daughter:
Kitekwa siandi mimi I am not the first to be laughed at.
Hata wake wa mitumi Even the Prophets' wives
Walikiliwa kwa ndimi Were slandered
Na kuzuliwa mabaya And defamed¹.

1 See for instance Qur. 24:2.

25. *Ama kunena ni joto* And as for the heat,
Joto ni kitu kitoto Heat is a minor thing
Kuliko akhira moto Compared to the hellfire
Mtu kwenenda kungiya One will be thrown in.
26. *Baba:* Father:
Mwanangu umenishinda My daughter, you have defeated me
Hoja zako kuzivunda With your counterarguments;
Ingawa nimeipinda Though I made an effort,
Sikuweza hata moyo I did not succeed, not even once.
27. *Kalishone jilbabu* Go and sew your veil.
Uvae wangu muhibu Wear it, my beloved daughter,
Kwani radhi za Wahabu Since it is necessary
Yapasa kuzizengeya To seek to please God.
28. *Binti:* Daughter:
Nakushukuru babangu I thank you, my father,
Kunikubaliya yangu For giving me your permission.
Hini amri nda Mungu This is God's order;
Ndiye amezotwambiya He is the one who told us so.

3 *Mchezo wa kuigiza* (“Play”)

This is a poem in *wimbo* form that Ustadh Mau composed in 2011, and his daughter Azra Mau prepared the first translation, which we have revised here. It was inspired by a prose version of the same story that he read in an Arabic textbook for class six in Saudi Arabia, where the story bore the title *Bayna al-ghanī na al-faqīr* (“Between the Rich and the Poor”). Because he liked the content, he decided to adapt it to poetic form in Swahili. He presented his adaptation to his own pupils at the madrasa as a poetry exercise for reading and comprehension. As in the poem *Jilbabu*, this poem is one of several composed in the form of a dialogue, a “play” (*mchezo*) in verse form. In the play, the two voices—that of the Miser, on the one hand, and the Pauper (also referred to as “Shekhe”), on the other—are not rounded characters, but are allegories of richness and poverty. They represent groups defined by their socioeconomic differences and their outlooks—in the form of the miser and the poor man—rather than individuals. This dialogic form allows for an exchange of arguments to finally arrive at a conclusion that includes the moral message that the audience should keep in mind.

1. *Bakhili:*
Mali yangu, mimi nakupenda sana
Wewe kwangu, hushinda mke na wana
Nautungu, kwako mwingi nauwona

Miser [addressing his wealth]:
 My wealth, I love you so much.
 You are better than my wife and children.
 I suffer so much for you.

2. *Yangu raha, ni mali kuyatizama*
Si mzaha, haya ninayoyasema
Ndiyo jaha, kwenye duniya nzima

My pleasure is looking at my wealth.
 It's not a joke, what I am saying:
 This is the greatest joy in the whole world.

3. *Masikini:*
Ewe bwana, tajiri mwenye nafasi
Tangu yana, mimi riziki siisi
Hela fanya, hisani wema hukosi

Pauper:
 O master, rich man who can afford a lot,
 Since yesterday I have not eaten.
 Please, do me a favor, and you will not lack any blessing.

4. *Ukinipa, na mimi kitu katiti*
Takulipa, Mola ziviye senti
Tangu hapa, na baada ya mauti

If you also give me a little bit,
 God will pay you, your savings will grow
 Here in this world, and also after death.

5. *Bakhili:*
Enda zako, sinitiliye nuhusi
Haja yako, wataka zangu fulusi
Na sumbuko, nilopata huliisi

Miser:

Go away; do not bring me bad luck.
Your wish [is that] you want my money,
But you don't know the troubles I have endured.

6. *Nondokeya, sisimame mbee yangu*
Takutiya, cha kitwa hiki kirungu
Nakwambiya, kutowa mali utungu

Disappear from my sight; do not stand before me.
I will hit you on the head with this club.
I am telling you, giving money away is painful.

7. *Masikini:*
Mabakhili, wenye mali huteseka
Yao hali, ni kama sisi hakika
Kula hali, ni mali huyarundika

Pauper:

Misers who have wealth are in trouble.
Their state is just like ours:
They do not eat; instead, their only ambition is to amass wealth.

8. *Hufaani, zake nyingi miliyoni*
Masikini, hawafanyii hisani
Zibengini, mwenyewe huzitamani

How are his millions of any use to him?
To the poor, they are of no benefit;
They just stay in the bank, because the owner wants them there.

9. *Shekhe:*
Hodi bwana, ewe nduyake Karuni¹¹
Nimeona, nikutowe uwingani
Wakusanya, mali wamwekeya nani

Sheikh:

Hodi master, oh brother of Karuni,
I thought that I had helped you out of your ignorance.
You are collecting wealth, but for whom are you saving it?

1 *hodi* a call-word used by someone outside the door who wants to enter a house; similar to knocking at someone's door. | 11 The rich tyrant Qarun, who appears in the Qur'an, sura 28:76–84, is the prototypical careless and powerful man who is interested solely in high rank and wealth, exploiting others. He does not think about the afterlife, but merely tries to accumulate as much wealth and status as he can in this world. There is also a reference to him in stz. 100 of the poem *Hapo zamani za yana*.

10. *Angaliya, mali mengi umeweka*
Zingatiya, kuna wengi huteseka
Wanaliya, kwa kuwazidi mashaka

Look, you have kept a lot of wealth;
 Consider how many people are suffering.
 They are crying in their great sorrow.

11. *Mayatima, waliokosa mababa*
Kina mama, wasokua na akiba
Fanya hima, uwape japo kibaba

Orphans who have lost their fathers,
 And mothers who have no savings—
 Make an effort; at least give them a dime.

12. *Na maradhi, wangine huwasumbuwa*
Na baadhi, hamudu kupata dawa
Mwenye hadhi, towa utabarikiwa

And sickness: some are afflicted by it,
 And some cannot even afford to buy medicine.
 Oh, you of high honor, donate and you shall be blessed.

13. *Bakhili:*
Yangu mali, ndiyo wewe wayataka
Si kauli, hiyo uliyotamka
Na akili, nadhani imekuruka

Miser:
 My wealth, that is what you want.
 It is not proper, what you have just said,
 And I think you are out of your mind.

14. *Wanekeza, mimi kutowa sadaka*
Nimeiza, sitaki na sitotaka
Nitasoza, shauri lako kishika

You tell me to give alms;
 I refuse—I do not and shall never want to.
 I will perish if I take your advice.

15. *Wanidhiki, kwa maneno ya upuzi*
Siyataki, hayo yako siyawezi
Sigeuki, mali yangu sipotezi

You are annoying me with your useless words.
 I do not accept them; I cannot stand them.
 I will not change; I shall not lose my wealth.

16. *Nitokeya, nyumbani kwangu haraka*
Nondokeya, usisimame dakika
Yako niya, ni mimi kufilisika

Get out of my house quickly.
 Vanish; do not stand before me, even for a second.
 Your intention is to bankrupt me.

17. *Shekhe:*
Umekosa, walodhani wewe siyo
Zako pesa, siyo mimi nitakao
Takutesa, ufahamu siku hiyo

Sheikh:
 You have erred; what you think is not true.
 Your money is not what I want;
 It will burden you, remember, on Judgment Day.

18. *Mepofuka, wewe kwa kupenda mali*
Kuongoka, kwako ni kama muhali
Takumbuka, kiadiya zilizali'

You are blinded by your love of wealth.
 Becoming righteous is not possible for you—
 You will remember when the earthquake comes, right on time.

I zilizali “earthquake.” This too is a reference to Judgment Day, when the earth will tremble (see also sura 99).

19. *Yako dini, umetupa kwa duniya*
Na motoni, maliyo yatakutiya
Mayutoni, siku hiyo^t tasaliya

Your religion: you have given it up for love of this world.
 It is into hellfire that your wealth will throw you;
 You will remain in regret on that day.

I siku hiyo “that day,” another reference to Judgment Day.

20. *Mali yako, yatakuwa ndizo kuni*
Nyama yako, yakiiyoka motoni
Nasumbuko, likikutesa mwendani

Your wealth will be firewood in hell;
 Your flesh will be roasted in the fire,
 And pain will put you in agony, my friend.

21. *Bakhili:*
Tumo langu, la nyezi nyingi na nyaka
Ruhu yangu, ile ndiyo huchomeka
Bure yangu, bure nalihadaika

Miser:
 My savings of many months and years are gone—
 And my soul is burning.
 Alas, for nothing, I have been deceived!

22. *Yamekwenda mali, mebaki mayuto*
Zote zanda, huuma kiliya mato
Imevunda, jahazi ya langu pato

My wealth has disappeared; only regrets remain.
 I bite my nails in regret, crying many tears.
 It has been broken, the dhow that brought me my income.

23. *Laitani, nangalikula vizuri*
Muilini, kavaa nikanawiri
Ni shetani, ndiye aliyonighuri

If I had known, I would have eaten well;
 I would have put shining clothes on my body.
 It was Satan who deceived me.

24. *Masikini:*
Tulingene, tumekuwa hali moya
Na lingine, huna lililosaliya
Twandamane, tushike moya ndiya

Pauper:
 We have become equals; we are in the same state.
 Anything else? You have nothing that has remained.
 Let us walk together; we take the same path.

25. *Hafaidi, mtu bakhili kwa mali*
Ni hasidi, mwenyewe kwa yake hali
Akizidi, humrusha na akili

He will not derive any benefit, a miser saving his wealth.
 He is envious; he does not allow anything, even to himself.
 If he overdoes it, it can even make him lose his senses.

4 *Haki za watoto* (“Children’s Rights”)

Ustadh Mau wrote this 257-stanza poem in May 2001. At the time, his last-born son, Aboud, to whom he dedicated the poem, was three years old. In total, Ustadh Mau has eleven children from two wives, as well as thirty-four grandchildren. His first wife, Mama Tunda, gave birth to three girls and five boys. The second wife, Mama Azra, gave birth to two girls before finally giving birth to Aboud. According to Ustadh Mau, he composed the poem after having read various books in English and Arabic on childcare and developmental psychology. He gradually became aware of children’s special needs and concerns. He recognized his own failures, misconceptions, and mistakes, as well as problems in society at large. Furthermore, according to him, his first wife was too rude toward the children, while his second wife was very dedicated to her work. She first worked as a schoolteacher and later at the Lamu Museum, so she did not have much time for the children. Ustadh Mau says that he was very close with the children. As he recounts, even at the hospital, the nurses would give the babies to him so that he could hold them. Even nowadays, his grandchildren always come to his library, where they get sweets or some small coins from him.

Ustadh Mau himself was brought up by his paternal uncle. He has five siblings. All the others were brought up by his mother and their father. But since his uncle’s children did not survive, his father decided to give Mahmoud to his uncle to raise him. His uncle treated him well; he was never beaten, in contrast to many other children at the time. He also arranged for his education and made him study. His wife was well learned in the Qur’an, so Mahmoud already knew how to read the Qur’an before starting school.

Furthermore, Ustadh Mau is also a teacher, and loves to teach children at the madrasa. He is a member of the committee (*wizara*) for children’s rights in Lamu, which now seems to be largely defunct. Previously, he also used to be called to court if there were cases of child abuse or, in cases of divorce, when a father would not provide for his children.

On the one hand, the poem is also a didactic and personal poem, a *wasiya* dedicated to his son Aboud—like the one Ustadh Mau’s father composed for him (see *Hapo zamani za jana*). On the other hand, the poem is not a typical *wasiya*, addressing children and advising them on how to live in the world. Rather, it speaks to a wider audience, and more particularly the parents, not



A recorded audio version of the poem is freely available online at <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.20200514>.

the children. His concern for the children and his way of addressing the parents has been noted as quite unusual by his Lamuan audience, since typically it is the children who are taught through such poems.

In the poem, he makes a plea to treat children based on their needs and rights (see also Vierke's contribution "How Ought We to Live?" in Part 1 of this volume). He systematically goes through various elements of children's life-worlds, progressing by age group. He starts by considering babies and infants before moving on to children and adolescents. Later in the poem, he makes a plea for educating children properly, which reflects his general concern with proper education as the key to individual and societal progress. The media in particular has a bad influence on children in his view: it makes children go astray and lose interest in studying. In the poem, he does not refer to social media or the internet, as in 2001, the former did not exist and the latter hardly played a role in everyday life in Lamu. In the context of the poem, it is TV that he is condemning: satellite TV, which came with many additional channels, arrived in Lamu in the 1990s. According to him, the TV programs not only caused children to lose focus on their studies, but also introduced them to harmful content.

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | <i>Bismillahi Latwifu</i>
<i>Kwa ina lake tukufu</i>
<i>Naanda kuyaswanifu</i>
<i>Ya Rabbi nitimiziya</i> | In the name of God, the Kind One,
In His glorious name,
I begin composing.
May you, God, help me complete this! |
| 2. | <i>Nitimiziya yatimu</i>
<i>Rabbi niliyozimu</i>
<i>Nieleze wafahamu</i>
<i>Watakao kusikiya</i> | God, make it complete,
What I intend to compose,
So that I can reach
Those who listen to my words. |
| 3. | <i>Shabaha na langu lengo</i>
<i>Nataka tunga utungo</i>
<i>Asaa uziwe pengo</i>
<i>Kwenye maudhui haya</i> | My target and my aim
Is to compose a poem;
Maybe it can fill a gap
When it comes to this topic. |
| 4. | <i>Nitakayo kuyanena</i>
<i>Ni mambo kuhusu wana</i>
<i>Khususwa walo wanuna</i>
<i>Haki zao za shariya</i> | What I am about to say
Concerns children,
Especially the young ones:
It is about their legal rights. |

5. *Haki za walo watoto* The rights of those who are young
Ni kuu mno si toto Are essential and not minor,
Zimepowa na uzito And religious and secular laws also
Kwa dini kanuni piya Grant them importance.
6. *Nami tatiya mkazo* And I also emphasize their rights
Kuzitaya haki hizo By mentioning those
Kwenye shariya ambazo Of the sharia laws that
Mola amewapangiya God has put in place for children.
7. *Tazizungumza haki* I will talk about the rights
Alizowapa Khallaki That the Creator has bestowed on
Hawa wana makhuluki Children created by Him
Kwenye hadithi na aya Through the hadith of the Prophet and the
 Qur'ānic verses.
8. *Hadithi sitoandika* I will not quote the hadith
Aya sitoazitamka Nor recite the verses,
Muwanga wake hakika But certainly they enlighten
Ndiwo taomulikiya My perspective on the topic.
9. *Uislamu ni dini* Islam is a religion
Mno inayothamini That values
Wana tangu matumboni Children, from the time they are in the
Bali kabula kungiya womb
 And even before their conception.
10. *Ni haki ya alo mwano* It is the right of your child
Kumpa mama mfano To have an ideal mother,
Aliyo mzuri mno Who is excellent
Si kwa sura kwa tabiya Not in appearance, but in character.
11. *Kabla ya kuamuwa* Before deciding
Ni upi wa kumuowa Whom you will marry,
Upike ukipakuwa' Consider it carefully
Mama mwema kwangaliya And look for the qualities of a good mother.

I *upike ukipakue* idiomatic for “consider carefully”; as Mau notes (*ufikirie sana, kwa maki-ni*), literally “cook [your thoughts] before you serve them.”

12. *Ni lazima ufikiri*
Mambo yatakayojiri
Kiwatunuku Qahhari
Wana akawaptiya You should try to imagine
How things will be
If the Powerful One rewards you
With children.
13. *Fikiri uwaze mno*
Kuhusu mama wa wano
Usiwe wako mkono'
Kizani utautiya Ponder carefully
The mother of your future children;
Don't select her hastily
Or blindly.
- i -tia mkono gizani* "to do something without first thinking about it."
14. *Usiutiye kizani*
Kwa kuteuwa mwendani
Alokungiya matoni
Moyo wako kavutiya Don't choose blindly
By selecting a partner
Who attracted you at first sight
And seduced your heart.
15. *Mama mno ni muhimu*
Taka mama alotimu
Wana wasikulaumu
Mambo takapo weleya The mother is very important.
Look for a perfect mother
So that the children will not blame you
When they reach the age of understanding.
16. *Mteuwe mama bora*
Si kwa kabila na sura
Bali ni kwa njema sera
Mwenye dini na tabiya Choose the best mother,
Not for her tribe nor for her beauty,
But for her good conduct
In religion and etiquette.
17. *Wape mama wa fakhari*
Mwenye mayezi mazuri
Wanao waifakhiri
Kwa mama kuivuniya Give them an admirable mother
Who can raise them well,
So that your children can be proud
Of their mother.
18. *Siwape mama mtango'*
Na mwenye tabiya jongo
Hoyo tawatiya pengo
Ya milele kusaliya Don't give them a mother who likes to stroll
about,
One with a bad character;
She will leave a hole
That will remain forever.

i mtango < -tanga "to stroll about." "Se promener de long en large, errer ou aller çà-et-là, à l'aventure de côté et d'autre; vagabonder." (Scl. 866).

19. *Wape mama mtulivu* Give them a calm mother
Asiyo mtepetevu Who is not idle,
Muyuzi alo mwerevu But knowledgeable and smart—
Si mama wa kuukiya And not a mother who likes to shout.
20. *Alokomaa akili* Someone who is mature;
Aso mengi mashughuli Who is not too busy,
Tawatunga kwelikweli But will truly look after
Wana na kuangaliya And take care of your children.
21. *Ni bora kiwa mesoma* It is better if she is educated,
Wala sambini lazima But I do not say this is a must—
Kwani alosoma mama Because an educated mother
Ni mengi yatamweleza Understands a lot more.
22. *Mama akiwajibika* If she is concerned about them,
Na wana hunufaika The children will benefit,
Na mambo mengi hunyoka And many things will go well
Yakandama sawa ndiye And take the right course.
23. *Kwani mama ni mwalimu* Because a mother is
Wa kwanda mno muhimu A child's first important teacher.
Athariye nda kuudumu She makes a lasting impact
Kwa wanawe husaliya On her children.
24. *Kiwata athari njema* If she has a good influence,
Itasaliya daima It will always remain.
Na piya mbovu alama Likewise, negative impressions
Hayondoki hubakiya Don't disappear, but remain.
25. *Nimeyafanya marefu* I've elaborated extensively
Ya mama kuwaarifu Upon the qualities of a mother:
Mama kiwa mwuongofu If the mother is virtuous,
Huongoka na dhuriya The children will be too.
26. *Ya pili haki ya mwana* The second right of a child
Kizawa handikwa ina Is to be given a name after birth:
Binti au kijana Girl or boy,
Lake la kukusudiya Children should have their own name.

27. *Ina haandikwi lolote*
Ni haki yake apate
Ina kama wende wote
Ambalo tafurahiya Children should not be given just any name:
 It is their right to have a name
 Like all other children,
 One that will make them happy.
28. *Simwandike ina ovu*
Kwake itakuwa kovu¹
Na ya moyo maumivu
Siku zote tasikiya Don't give them a bad name
 That will remain like a scar
 And cause pain in their heart
 Every time they hear it.
- ¹ *kovu* "scar." "Cicatrice, balafre; *Mwenye k.*, balafre. *Mtu wa makovu-kovu*, personne toute couverte de cicatrices" (Scl. 443).
29. *Mpe ina lilo zuri*
Kwa wende aifakhiri
Kuitwa awe hajeri
Bali huliteremeya Give them a good name,
 To be proud of around other children—
 When called, they will not be ashamed
 But be happy about it.
30. *Ni haki kumwandikisha*
Mwana kumuorodhesha
Sive tamuhangaisha
Sikuze zikiadiya It is their right to be documented,
 To be listed in the census,
 So that it will not cause them trouble
 In the future.
31. *Ni haki kumsajili*
Rasmi kwa sirikali
Wanawake na wavuli
Ni haki kwa wote piya It is their right to be registered
 Officially at the local administration.
 Girls and boys alike—
 It is the right of each of them.
32. *Hili yambo ni muhimu*
Kwa watu wote fahamu
Nawe usione wumu¹
Mwanao kumwandikiya This issue is important
 For everyone, understand—
 Don't think that it is difficult
 To register your child.
- ¹ *wumu* Am. "hardness" (Std. *ugumu*)
33. *Mmwandikiye karatasi*
Mwano kizawa upesi
Usipoteze nafasi
Kisa utaiyutiya Have a certificate issued
 Right after the birth of your child;
 Don't waste any time,
 Otherwise you will regret it later.

34. *Kitoandika haraka* If you don't get them registered early,
Hata mwano katukuka And wait until they are grown up,
Ni mno utasumbuka You'll have great difficulty
Baadaye kuzengeya Getting it later.
35. *Ni haki kulla mwanati* It is the right of every citizen
Kizawa kupowa cheti To have a birth certificate;
Khaswa kwa wetu wakati Especially nowadays,
Ni dharura mambo haya This is necessary.
36. *Ni haki yake kupendwa* It is their right to be loved,
Na kwa mapenzi kuundwa To be brought up with love:
Wazazi wengi hushindwa Many parents fail
Haya kuwatimiziya To do this.
37. *Wana wahitaji hili* Children need
Mapenzi ya kwelikweli A lot of love.
Mapenzi na maakuli Between love and food,
Mapenzi hutanguliya Love comes first.
38. *Tuwaoneshe ruhusa* Let us show them softheartedness
Na kuwapenda daima And let us always love them;
Kwa wote baba na mama Children demand this
Wana hili huzengeya From both father and mother.
39. *Tuwaoneshe imani* Let us show them kindness;
Twambe nao kwa makini Let us talk to them gently.
Tusizowee wendani Let us not adopt the bad habit, my friends,
Wetu wana kurukiya Of shouting at our children.
40. *Wana wakiwa wanuna* When the children are still small,
Hilo hawapendi sana They don't like this at all.
Akiukiwa huwona When they are shouted at, they feel
Ni mno memuoneya That you are abusing them.
41. *Wana wakizungumza* When children address us,
Yataka kuwasikiza We should listen to them.
Wana tukiwapuuza When we ignore them,
Huwapa fikira mbaya We make them feel bad.

42. *Wana na tuwasikize
Watakayo watweleze
Wana na tusiwapuze
Hiyo si njema tabiya* Let us listen to our children
And let them explain to us what they want.
We should not neglect them;
This is not a good habit.
43. *Tukiwapuza zijana
Huwavunda moyo sana
Ni dharura wakinena
Akilini kuwatiya* If we neglect the children,
We discourage them greatly.
It is a must to pay attention
When they talk to us.
44. *Na wana wetu tuteze
Kwa ziswa tuwapumbaze
Mazoweya tuyakuze
Na kwao kukaribiya* Let us play with our children;
Let us entertain them with stories.
Let us build good bonds
And let us be close to them.
45. *Wana na tuwakumbate
Yuuyuu tuwangate
Tuwaoneshe ya kite
Mahaba na mazoweya* Let us hug them,
And let us carry them high on our shoulders.
Let us show them unconditional love,
Affection, and closeness.
46. *Tuwape wana wakati
Sisi na wao tuketi
Tunene yapo katiti
Tashamiri mazoweya* Let us dedicate time to our children.
We should spend time with them;
Let us talk to them, even if it is only for a short while,
To strengthen our bonds.
47. *Tuwape wana nafasi
Wao kuteza na sisi
Kusudi nao wahisi
Hisabuni huwatiya* Let us give them a chance
To play with us
So that they feel
They are taken seriously.
48. *Tuwabusu wana wetu
Ni sunna ya tumwa wetu
Tangu zingali zitutu'
Mpaka kuinukiya* Let us kiss our children:
This is according to our Prophet's rules,
From the time when they are still small
Until they grow up.

1 *kitutu* (pl. *zitutu*) Am. "small child" (Std. *mtoto mdogo*; pl. *watoto wadogo*)

49. *Tungayaona matoto* Even if we think this is of minor importance,
Yana ndani na ukweto' These things run deep.
Athariye ni mzito Their impact is great:
Hayondoki hubakiya They do not vanish, but linger.
- I *ukweto* "depth."
50. *Wana haya wapatao* The children who experience this
Si sawa na wakosao Are different from those who don't;
Hawafani wana hao They do not resemble each other
Kwa nyendo na kwa tabiya In behavior or character.
51. *Wana haya wakipata* When children receive this,
Hukuwa pasi matata They grow up without difficulties,
Akili humetameta With bright minds
Kimawazo hutuliya And mentally stable.
52. *Mwana haya akosapo* If a child lacks this,
Kasoro nyingi huwepo There will be deficiencies:
Wana hunenda mapopo Those children go astray;
Hawandami sawa ndiya They don't follow the right path.
53. *Ndipo wawapo wakora* That is how they become troublemakers
Wazazi wakawakera Who upset their parents.
Tewengo' mara kwa mara Trouble again and again—
Na hawatindi udhiya They don't stop causing problems.
- I *tewengo* Am. "trouble" (Std. *maudhiko*)
54. *Mwana mapendi kikosa* If children lack love,
Enga mte kutonosa' They are like a seedling that is not watered.
Ukitokufa kabisa If they do not die,
Utasononeka¹¹ ghaya They will suffer a lot.

I -*nosa* Baj. = -*nosha* Am. "to water" | II -*sononeka* "to suffer" (Mau: *kutokuwa na raha* "to be without happiness")

55. *Atasononeka mno*
Kikosa mapendi mwano
Hono wa mte mfano
Zidi kuufikiriya They will suffer a lot,
If your children lack love.
Take the example of the seedling,
And keep pondering it.
56. *Mwana kitokwisa mwako*
Kupata mapendi yako
Huwa hesi babaiko
Kwenye moya kutuliya If children do not quench their thirst
For your love,
They will not be able to stop worrying
And calm down.
57. *Hatui hatamakani*
Hastakiri nyumbani
Na hata penye wendani
Mara huzuwa balaya The children will not be calm and settled;
They will not find comfort at home,
And even among their friends
They will suddenly pick quarrels.
58. *Huwa kama ibilisi*
Au kama mwanachisi
Zikiri¹ kwake hazisi
Kitinda handa zipiya [Such children] are like the devil,
Or like the bastard who is also the child of a
bastard.
Their misdeeds never end,
As soon as they stop, they begin again.
- ¹ *zikiri* Am. "mischief" (Std. *vitimbi*)
59. *Hayo yote ni athari*
Ya alopata dothari
Ya makosa yalojiri
Muda wa kuinukiya This is all the result
Of their experiences of being stigmatized
And being mistreated
In early childhood.
60. *Basi natutahadhari*
Tuwepuwe na khatwari
Wana tuyee uzuri
Bila kuwakaripiya So, let us be careful:
Let us protect them from danger.
Let us bring them up well
Without mistreating them.
61. *Na haki nyingine tena*
Alo amuru Rabbana
Ni kula kwa wetu wana
Kurwa na kuvaa piya And our children also have a right,
According to God's command,
To be nourished
And dressed.

62. *Mwana akisa kuzawa
Ni haki yake kupowa
Ya kushibisha maziwa
Kwa amri ya Jaliya* When a child is born,
It is the child's right
To be fed with enough milk:
This is the order of the Magnificent One.
63. *Maziwa haswa ya mama
Mwana kunwa ni lazima
Ya mamake yakikoma
Ya ng'ombe husaidiya* Especially mother's milk,
The child needs to drink.
If the mother's milk dries up,
That of the cow will help.
64. *Maziwa ya mama yake
Ni dharura kuu kwake
Akishiba kwayo pweke
Huwa na njema afiya* The mother's milk
Is of the utmost priority.
If children drink only this milk,
They will stay in good health.
65. *Wala sipende kumpa
Mwana maziwa kwa tupa
Dakitari huzitupa
Hawapendi kusikiya* Don't prefer to feed your baby
With milk from the bottle.
Even doctors throw this away;
They do not like to hear of it.
66. *Tupa si chombo kizuri
Ina na nyingi khatari
Mwana hesi utiriri
Tupa akiizoweya* The bottle is not a good container:
It brings many dangers.
Children do not stop whining
If they get used to bottles.
67. *Na tupa husababisha
Maradhi na hurarisha
Si sahali kuiyosha
Burashi unatumiya* And the bottle causes
Sickness and diarrhea;
It is not easy to clean it,
Even if you use a brush.
68. *Sharuti kuichemsha
Na kisa kuikausha
Mwana hukubabaisha
Lini utatenda haya* You have to boil
And dry it
While your child is fussing.
How will you manage all this at once?
69. *Tena ya mama maziwa
Ameyaumba Moliwa
Si moto hayakupowa
Ni tayari kutumiya* Furthermore, the mother's milk
That God has provided
Is neither too hot nor too cold,
But ready for consumption.

70. *Hayana nyingi harara*
Si baridi ya kukera
Mwana hukuwa imara
Ya mama akitumiya It is neither too hot
Nor harmfully cold;
Children grow strong
If fed with mother's milk.
71. *Yameumbwa kwa kipimo*
Haja zake zote zimo
Hakuna kiso kuwemo
Madini sukari piya The milk is well balanced
And provides for all their needs.
There is nothing lacking;
It contains minerals and sugar as well.
72. *Huhitaji kuyaonda*
Wala kudara kwachanda
Popote unapokwenda
Huwa na wewe pamoja You do not need to taste it,
Nor use a finger to test its temperature;
Everywhere you go,
You have it with you.
73. *Huwa ndani mwa matiti*
Tayari kula wakati
Mwana taabu hapati
Na mama huna udhiya It is in the breasts,
Ready at any time;
The child does not need to suffer,
And you, mother, are never in trouble.
74. *Kuyasahau huwezi*
Wala hayakupi kazi
Kimwakiza mitilizi
Huwa ichandama ndiye You cannot forget it,
And it does not cause much work.
As soon as you put the baby to your breast,
the milk starts to flow
And finds its way.
75. *Wala hayana gharama*
Kununuwa si lazima
Neema yake Karima
Wana amewaekeya It does not bear any cost;
You do not need to buy it.
The Generous One, in His bounty
Has provided it for the children.
76. *Basi kwani kuwawasa*
Wana wetu kuwamsa
Kab'la ya mwida kwisa
Kwa urembo kutapiya So why do you deprive them,
Weaning our children
Before the time has come¹
Out of fear of losing attractiveness?

¹ In the Islamic context of Lamu, it is common to breastfeed children for two years.

77. *Mamama huwadhulumu* The mothers inflict harm
Wana pasi kufahamu On their children unconsciously,
Ati ujana udumu Believing their youth should remain,
Yasimeme kusaliya And keeping their breasts' form.
78. *Mwana piya kadhalika* Likewise, it is the right of children
Ni hakiye kumpeka To be taken to the clinic
Kwa tarikhi kutochoka Regularly, without their parents tiring of it,
Kupima kudunga piya So that they may be vaccinated and
weighed.
79. *Mpeke chanjo apate* Take them to be vaccinated
Na ratiba afuwate Following the schedule.
Sindano moya siwate Don't miss even one vaccination;
Ni muhimu kutumiya It is important to get them.
80. *Usidharau sindano* Don't neglect the injections
Za ziweo na mikono In the thighs and arms;
Ni kinga hizo kwa mwano They protect your children
Muwili husaidi ya And help their bodies.
81. *Mwana umpe chakula* Give your children food
Na palo pema kulala And a proper place to sleep.
Ni hakize kwa jumla In sum, these are the rights
Sisi mbwa kuwatendeya We should provide for them.
82. *Wape chakula kizuri* Give them healthy food
Nguo za kuwasitiri And proper clothes;
Wapokowe' wanawiri Wash them so that they may shine
Ulinde yao afi ya And to protect their health.
- 1 -pokowa Am. "to wash" (Std. -ogeshu)
83. *Wana kula wahitaji* Children need food
Na ya kunwa safi maji And clean drinking water.
Afiya bora haji Good health does not come
Illa kwa kuizengeya Unless you make an effort.

90. *Mai sana ni muhimu* Water is of utmost importance
Kwa sisi wana adamu For us human beings.
Sipende mno ya tamu Don't give too much preference to juice;
Yalo swafi angaliya Look for clean water.
91. *Wana wape mai swafi* Give your children clean water.
Wala sambe mbona sifi Don't say, "Why? I have not died
Nami hunwa mai ghafi From drinking dirty water
Nyaka toka nyaka ngiya Year in and year out."
92. *Yuwa wana ni dhaifu* You should know, children are sensitive;
Tumbo zao ni khaifu Their intestines are feeble.
Mai yakiwa machafu When the water is dirty,
Mara huzuwa balaya It can cause sudden problems.
93. *Na uchafu si tototo* And this dirt is not a mud puddle
Kuwa taona kwa mato That you can see with the naked eye;
Kuna zilulu zitoto There are tiny bacteria
Kwazo maradhi heneya Through which sickness spreads.
94. *Zitutu mno zibombwe¹* These germs are so tiny,
Ukiteka kwa kikombe When you scoop up water in a cup,
Huziyoni nazo kumbe You cannot see them.
Zimo tele huoweya But—alas—plenty are swimming in it.
- ¹ *kibombwe* (pl. *zibombwe*) Am. "tiny germ."
95. *Hizo mno ni khatari* They are so dangerous;
Watu sana hukhasiri They harm many people.
Sharuti kutahadhari You must be careful;
Mara hukushambuliya They attack you suddenly.
96. *Maradhi yakimswibu* If sickness befalls the child,
Mwana yangawa hububu Even if it is a small thing,
Fanya kula taratibu Make every effort
Penye dawa kutapiya To run to a health center.

97. *Uwee siudharau* Don't ignore illness;
Mtoto huwa mkuu A small thing can grow big,¹
Ukawa na wayukuu And can be passed to grandchildren
Na zitukuu zikaya And even great-grandchildren.
- 1 An illness that is not cured can have long-term effects.
98. *Na mwana kiwa huhara* And if children have diarrhea,
Mpe mai kulla mara Constantly give them water,
Na dawa zilizo bora And don't delay
Sichelewe kuzengeya Looking for good medicine.
99. *Hata kama hutapika* Even if they vomit after drinking,
Mpe mai kadhalika Continue giving them water.
Yangawa mengi hutoka Even if a lot comes out again,
Machache yatasaliya Some will remain.
100. *Mai yakiwa katiti* If the water is not enough,
Muilini ni mauti This means death for the body.
Bila ya mai huketi Listen, without water
Muda mrefu sikiya You cannot survive for long.
101. *Wana kupowa ilimu* Understand, to have an education
Ni haki kuu fahamu Is a great right for children.
Ilimu nguzo muhimu Education is an important pillar
kwa wana waadamiya For all human beings.
102. *Ilimu kitu dharura* Education of all kind
Kwa jamii yake sura Is absolutely necessary.
Ilimu akiba bora Education is a good investment
Ya mwana kumuwatiya To make for your child.
103. *Wana lazima wasome* Children must learn
Maarifa wayatume To gain knowledge;
Wayezi tufanye shime Parents, let us make an effort
Ilimu kuwapatiya To offer them education.

104. *Wana tuwasomesheni*
Uwinga tuepusheni
Wana tusimamiyeni
Kuwekeza sawa ndiya
 Let us teach our children
 To do away with ignorance.
 Let us support our children
 To show them the right way.
105. *Ilimu wana wapate*
Ilimu namna zote
Tusiwafanye mapite
Ilimu kuwaziwiya
 They should receive education—
 Education of all kinds.
 Let us not make them dummies
 By depriving them of education.
106. *Wana tusomeshe dini*
Na msingi Qur'ani
Wakisaa uwingani
Dini itatupoteya
 Let us give our children a religious educa-
 tion
 Whose foundation is the Qur'ān.
 If they remain ignorant,
 We will lose our religion.
107. *Hilo ni kuu jukumu*
Wazazi tulifahamu
Na mungu tatuhukumu
Tukiwakhini dhuriya
 This is a large responsibility
 That we, the parents, should be aware of.
 God will judge us
 If we deprive our children.
108. *Na ilimu za maisha*
Lazima kuwasomesha
Waweze kuifundisha
Wao kuisimamiya
 We also have to train them
 In the skills of everyday life
 So that they learn
 To rely on themselves.
109. *Tuwasomeshe skuli*
Tusioneni ni ghali
Ni adui ujahili
Tuupijeni pamoya
 Let us send them to school,
 And let us not think it is too expensive.
 Ignorance is our enemy;
 Let us fight it together.
110. *Ujahili ni khatwari*
Kuu mno lake shari
Hata akili hodari
Kwa uwinga hupoteya
 Ignorance is a danger;
 Its ills are great.
 Even a sharp mind
 Becomes useless without education.
111. *Tuwafunde za mikono*
Kazi ni nafuu mno
Msumeno na sindano
Wazowee kutumiya
 Let us train them in handicrafts
 That are very useful;
 They should get used to handling
 A saw and a needle.

112. *Wana wakilimika*
Nafuu hiyo hakika
Huweneya bila shaka
Na kwetu husikiliya If our children are educated,
 For sure, the benefits
 Will certainly spread
 So that we can also profit from them.
113. *Tuwapeni makawanda'*
Masomoni mbee kwenda
Wakisoma shindashinda
Faidaye hupoteya Let us give them opportunities
 So they can make progress.
 If they learn irregularly,
 There will be no benefit.
- i kawanda "arena, square" (Std. uwanja mkubwa)*
114. *Faida hatutoona*
Ila wakisoma sana
Wende mbali wetu wana
Sharqi na gharbiya We will not see any good results
 Unless they work hard.
 Our children should travel far,
 To the West and to the East.
115. *Kwenye hizi zetu zama*
Hauthamiiniwi umma
Illa kiwa wamesoma
Zaidi kupindukiya In our era,
 People aren't valued
 Unless they are learned
 And well-educated.
116. *Ilimu hiyau sasa*
Ndiyo hongoza siyasa
Ndiyo chando cha mapesa
Hufunguwa zote ndiya Now it is education
 That guides politics.
 It is the source of wealth;
 It opens all the doors.
117. *Hela ngaliya Japani*
Ina ina duiyani
Nti nyingi uzunguni
Mate hiyo humiziya Take Japan as an example:
 It has a global reputation.
 Many countries in the West
 Envy it.
118. *Walipata kwa uyuzi*
Na kwa ufundi wa kazi
Ilimu hizi na hizi
Kitambo walizengeya They have achieved this through knowledge
 And skillfulness in their work.
 They started long ago
 To look for various kinds of knowledge.

119. *Na nti zilo tajiri*
Ni zipi hela fikiri
Ni zile zilonawiri
Kwa ilimu kwendeleya
 As for the rich countries,
 Which are they? Just give it a thought!
 They shine
 Due to advanced education.
120. *Na lingine nambe sasa*
Si haki na ni makosa
Walowana kuwatesa
Ngumu kazi kuwatiya
 Let me talk about another matter now.
 It is not fair—it is a crime
 To abuse children
 And leave hard work for them.
121. *Wana tusilazimishe*
Wala tusikalifishe
Wana tusiwateushe
Kama punda ni hatiya
 Let us not force our children,
 Nor overburden them.
 Let us not chase them
 Like donkeys; this is a mistake.
122. *Wana wataka wakati*
Wateze teze katiti
Kuwakaza kama nati
Huwavuruga tabiya
 The children want the time
 To play a little;
 Tightening them like a bolt
 Means destroying their character.
123. *Kuwapa kazi nzito*
Wana wangali watoto
Na kwa tamaa ya pato
Ni yambo lisilo ndiya
 Making them work hard
 While they are still young
 Because you want more income
 Is not the right way.
124. *Wala sambu ni makosa*
Wana kutumwa yapasa
Si kwa tamaa ya pesa
Ni kuwapa mazoweya
 I do not mean that it is a mistake
 To send children on errands;
 However, not out of greed for money,
 But to gradually get them used to it.
125. *Mwana si bibi arusi*
Hapei wala haosi
Kintuma kwa kiyasi
Huwi umemuoneya
 A child is not a bride
 Who does not sweep nor clean the dishes.
 If you send them on small errands,
 You are not abusing them.
126. *Kazi za kwao nyumbani*
Na hata wake jirani
Akintuma dukani
Sawa kintumikiya
 Domestic work is fine for them.
 And even if the neighbor
 Sends them to the shop,
 It is alright to be at her service.

127. *Kazi kiwa atafanya* If they do work
Kama bajiya kuzanya Like selling *bajiya*¹,
Hatuwezi kulikanya We cannot reject it,
Kwani ni yambo la ndiya Because it's the right thing to do.
128. *Mpangiye kwa wakati* Plan the time for them
Afanye kazi katiti So that they do only a little work
Na tena awe hawati And do not miss
Masomo kuhudhuriya Any lessons.
129. *Bajiya zikitotoka* If not all the *bajiya* are sold,
Ziyazi zikimwaika And the potatoes fall to the ground,
Au mwende kampoka And a friend steals from them—
Simziwiye kungiya Don't ban them from the house.
130. *Simwambiye nenda zako* Don't tell them, "Go away—
Sitaki maneno yako I don't want your excuses.
Rudi koko utokako Return to where you came from
Pesa ukitoneteya If you do not bring me money."
131. *Huwa umemwekezani* What lesson are you trying
Mwana una ndiya gani To teach your child?
Ya kupatiya mapeni Why should children earn money for
Nae hukutegemeya you?
 They should rather depend on you.
132. *Mwenye kumpa ni wewe* You are the one who should give to them;
Kiya kwako umtowe Instead, when they come to you, you chase
Ende pwani katondowe them away.
Deni yako kulipiya Should they go to the port to collect salvage
 To pay your debts?²

¹ In former times, when *mashua* ("a kind of boat of boards for embarking or disembarking goods"; Krp. 205) arrived on the beach and goods were discharged, if some happened to fall on the ground, children were allowed to pick them up without being scolded or having to pay. Ustadh Mau still remembers how he went to the beach when he was a child, hoping to find a banana or some dates that had fallen from a *mashua* coming from Somalia or Arabia.

133. *Huwa memfunda nini
Huyo mwano masikini
Huyamtiya ndiyani
Huyamwambiya poteya* What have you taught them,
Your poor children?
Have you not put them out on the streets?
Have you not made them go astray?
134. *Mwana kitenda la jongo
Kurudiwa ni kwa ngongo
Simrudi kwa zigongo
Na makonde kumtiya* If your children misbehave,
Respond to them with one lash of a
whip.
Don't beat them with a stick
Or with punches.
135. *Hata ukighadhibika
Subira mno yataka
Mkono siwe haraka
Kilo mbee kwatiliya* Even if you are enraged,
You need to be patient.
Your hand should not be too quick
To slap whoever is in front of you.
136. *Mwana utamkhasiri
Umtiye na dothari
Ya milele na dahari
Nawe uiyute piya* You will intimidate
And humiliate your child
Once and forever,
And you will also regret it.
137. *Mwana adabu mfunde
kutangamana na wende
Watu wote awapende
Na kuwa safi ya niya* Teach your children good manners,
How to behave with peers,
So that they like all kinds of people
Because of their good intentions.
138. *Mfunde kutangamana
Na wakuu na wanuna
Aitenge kimuona
Sitaha humondoleya* Teach them how to interact
With adults and with children.
Teach them: if they find that someone has
disgraced them,
They should better stay away.
139. *Ayuwe kuna mipaka
Haifai kuiruka
Kwa amri ya Rabbuka
Na kwa mila na shariya* That is why they should know that there are
boundaries,
That one is not allowed to transgress
By God's command
And custom and law.

140. *Mfundu mwana mfunde* Teach the children, teach them
Yalo mema ayatende To do only good,
Mbeu njema uzipande So that you may plant good seeds
Tangu akiinukiya From childhood onward.
141. *Mfundishe kwa zitendo* Teach them by your good example,
Kwa ulo mzuri mwendo Through your good deeds.
Maneno yasiwe kando Your words should not contradict,
Yende sambamba pamoya But be in harmony with them.
142. *Maneno na yako hali* Your words and your behavior
Yaandamane mawili Should go together;
Yeye simuase hili Don't forbid something
Wewe ukaendelea That you continue doing.
143. *Kiwa hayatofanana* If your words don't match your actions,
Basi hayana maana They have no meaning.
Maneno ungayanena Although you speak,
Yangani yatapoteya Your words will vanish into thin air.
144. *Hayatowata athari* They will not have a good effect
Kwa mwano ilo mzuri On your child,
Bali itakuwa kheri So it is better
Hayo kutomtaiya Not to say them at all.
145. *Sifa hini ni lazima* This concern is essential
Kwa kula mfunda mema For anyone who teaches good behavior,
Awe baba awe mama Be they a father or a mother—
Mwalimu hukaza niya And it is more important still for the
teacher.
146. *Zijana wana akili* Children are clever,
Na mambo hutaamali And observe things.
Wana zipimo zikali They have a sharp way
Za watu kuwapimiya Of assessing people.
147. *Wanazo zao mizani* They have their own way of
Za kumuyuwa fulani Knowing someone:
Hutuondosha ndiyani "Do they wish to betray us,
Au kweli hutwambiya Or are they telling us the truth?"

148. *Haki nimezozinena*
Nda wote walo zijana
Awe mume au mwana
Ni hakiye kwa shariya
 The rights that I have mentioned
 Are for all children,
 Be they boys or girls—
 These are their rights guaranteed by law.
149. *Awe mume au mke*
Haki hizi yeye ndake
Tuwape tusiwapoke
Wenyewe kufurahiya
 Be the child a boy or a girl,
 These rights are theirs.
 Let us grant them and not deprive them,
 So that they can enjoy them.
150. *Nilotaya kwa bayana*
Ndizo maarufu sana
Kuna na nyingine tena
Napenda kuzishiriya
 The ones I have mentioned explicitly
 Are those that are well known.
 There are others
 That I would like to point out.
151. *Kuna mambo maalumu*
Mzazi kuyafahamu
Mno hayo ni muhimu
Sana humsaidi ya
 There are some issues
 That a parent should know,
 That are very important,
 And will help them very much.
152. *Marafiki kuwayuwa*
Wa mwano kuwatambuwa
Hili yambo limepowa
Muhimu nambari moya
 To know your child's friends
 And assess them
 Is very important.
 It should be number one on your agenda.
153. *Marafiki huathiri*
Kwa wema au kwa shari
Rafiki waso wazuri
Humpa utwa twabiya
 Friends have influence,
 For better or worse.
 Friends who are no good
 Will have a bad influence on their character.
154. *Rafiki kiwa waovu*
Fanya kuwa uwerevu
Umwepuwe si kwa nguvu
Kwa busara kutumiya
 If their friends are bad,
 Be clever:
 Do not separate them by force,
 But act wisely.

155. *Yaso mema humfunda
Na mazuri huyaponda
Na kisa kuuma zanda
Ndilo litalosaliya* They will teach your children
what is not good
And destroy their good behavior,
And in the end, it is only regret
That will remain.
156. *Wa mwanao maswahibu
Kuwa na wao karibu
Uziyuwe taratibu
Tabiya na nyendo piya* So be close with
Your child's friends
So that you get to know them well,
Both their character and their conduct.
157. *Ukiziona si njema
Mwepuwe mwano salama
Kab'la huyaziama
Zanda kwa kuiyutiya* When you see they aren't good,
Find a gentle way to keep your child
away
Before you bite
Your nails in regret.
158. *Muweke mwano kitako
Umpe shauri lako
Kwa matamu matamko
Umuekeze ya ndiya* Make your child sit down,
And give him your advice.
With sweet words,
Show him the right way.
159. *Na wala wewe sichoke
Mnaswihi aepuke
Marafiki asishike
Wa nyendo za kupoteya* Don't get tired;
Persevere in your advice to avoid
Having friends
With bad conduct.
160. *Marafiki ni lazima
Kwa umri maaluma
Nazengee walo wema
Tapata yapo mmoya* Friends are very important
At a certain age;
Let your children find good ones.
They will find at least one.
161. *Mtu huhitaji watu
Hili ndilo umbo letu
Metuumba Mola wetu
Ni kiungo metutiya* Everyone needs people.
This is our nature;
This is how our God has created us.
It is a part of the human nature that He put
into us.

162. *Hutokeya kwa nadira* It happens sometimes,
Si ghalibu kula mara But it is not very common,
Mtu watu humkera That someone is afraid of people
Penye watu hukimbiya And avoids crowds.
163. *Ni kasoro maalumu* It is a particular defect
Tunazo wanaadamu That we human beings have,
Na kwa wangine hudumu And for some it remains
Zikawa ni mazoweya And becomes habitual.
164. *Marafiki wanautwa* Friends are infectious;
Hukungiya kama mtwa They infest you like termites.
Mara na wewe hukutwa Suddenly, you find
Shimoni metumbukiya You have fallen into a pit.
165. *Na marafiki baadhi* And some friends
Wenye nyendo za kuudhi With annoying conduct
Utwā kama wa maradhi Are infectious like a disease;
Hukupasa mara moya They pass it on to you immediately.
166. *Mwenye afiya mtwae* Take a healthy person,
Pa wawee umtie Leave him among sick people,
Wangaliye takuwaē And see what happens:
Afiya tawaatiya Will he pass his health on to them?
167. *Utaona bila shaka* Of course, you will see
Maradhi yatamshika That sickness will befall him;
Afiya haitotoka Health cannot spread
Na waweze kuwaingiya And infect the sick.
168. *Basi hini ndiyo hali* This is how it is
Ya marafiki batwili With bad friends:
Alo mwema hubadili The good one is infected
Wakawa ni hali moya And they all become the same.
169. *Na manginge ya kisasa* And another modern thing
Ya haribuwo kabisa That is completely destructive
Ni zifaya za anasa Are the media of entertainment
Miini zimezongiya That have spread to every town.

170. *Khususaya haya madishi* Especially TV programs
Hufuja hayabakishi That ruin everything, leaving nothing of
Yangiyapo hayabishi value:
Hufuza moya kwa moya You have easy access to them,
 You can get them directly from home.
171. *Madishi ni mitaimbo* Satellite TV is a crowbar
Huvunda mazuri mambo That smashes all morality.
Ni zaidi ya ulimbo It is worse than a bird trap;
Hukunasa mara moya It seizes you immediately.
172. *Ni zitu haya hondosha* It curbs good values
Maovu huamirisha And enforces evil,
Nyendo mbovu hufundisha Teaching bad manners
Na huweneza balaya And spreading mischief.
173. *Madishi mambo hufuja* Satellite TV damages
Yalo mema moja moja All that is good, one thing after another.
Ipo kuu mno haja It is of great importance
Wana kuwateuliya To choose the right programs for your chil-
 dren.
174. *Imekuwa ni dharura* It has become necessary
Kuteuwa kwa busara To carefully select
Ni zipindi gani bora Good programs
Za faida kwangaliya That are beneficial to watch.
175. *Kuna baadhi zichache* There are a few programs
Ni zizuri tusiziche That are good; let us not hesitate to watch
Ziyovu tusiwaliche them,
Wana kuzishuhudiya But we should not allow our children
 To watch the bad ones.
176. *Madishi yana malengo* The central aim of TV
Kuu ni tabiya jongo Is to promote immorality
Kuzeneza kwa mipango And to spread it according
Zitapakaze duniya To well-made plans worldwide.

191. *Kwa mayowe na ukali*
Haitogeuka hali
Mwana kimpa kivuli
Atakalo tarudiya
 Through shouting and anger,
 The situation does not change.
 As soon as you turn your back on your children,
 They will continue doing what they want.
192. *Mwanao mbembeleze*
Yake ndani akweleze
Na wewe yako mwekeze
Na kumuonya ya ndiya
 Comfort your children
 So that they can explain their inner thoughts to you,
 And tell them yours,
 And direct them on the right path.
193. *Mwanao mno kikucha*
Mbee yako atacha
Akiuvira ukucha
Tarudiya mazoweya
 If your children are afraid of you,
 They will stop doing things in front of you.
 But just around the corner,
 They will resume the old habits.
194. *Yambo kuu na muhimu*
Ni mwano kukuhishimu
Hapo takuwa na hamu
Hapendi kukukoseya
 The most important thing
 Is that your children respect you.
 Then they will make an effort,
 For they do not wish to disappoint you.
195. *Na hishima kuipata*
Kwa wana ni kufuwata
Ndiya sawa tukapita
Namna ya kuwayeya
 To get respect
 From your children, we have to
 Follow the right path
 In bringing them up.
196. *Mayezi ni kuu somo*
La mizani na zipimo
La hitaji misimamo
Na miko kulishikiya
 Upbringing is a lesson of the utmost importance.
 It requires good judging and evaluating
 As well as principles,
 And you also have to stick to your rules.
197. *Yuwa mayezi ni fani*
Yenye tandu na fununi
Na muyezi ni fanani
Kipawa huhitajiya
 You have to know, upbringing is an art
 That has many forms and modes,
 And the parent is an artist
 Who needs talent.

198. *Kula mtu si nahuza
Wa safari kuziweza
Wangine mara husoza
Kwa kupita kombo ndiya* Not everybody is a captain
Who is able to navigate.
Some suddenly hit a rock
Because they take the wrong course.
199. *Si kula mke ni mama
Mama ni sharuti kwima
Kwa mambo yalo lazima
Wana kuwasimamiya* Not every woman is a good mother.
A mother needs to be steadfast
In the things that are necessary
For supporting the children.
200. *Mayezi yataka miko
Yana kazi na sumbuko
Mara hutuka zituko
Mtu asotarajiya* Upbringing requires restrictions.
It means work and struggle.
Problems may suddenly emerge
That one did not expect.
201. *Sasa muhukoma pwani
Katika hunu uneni
Nina zifungu fulani
Napenda kumaliziya* Now I am about to reach
The harbor with my talk,
But I have some remarks
I would like to finish with.
202. *Nikianda la awali
Taka tuombe Jalali
Walo na njema amali
Wana kututunukiya* To start with my first remark:
We should pray to God
To grant us children
Of good habits.
203. *Na ninenalo la pili
Ni wana tuwakubali
Tuwatwae kwa miwili
Mno kufurahikiya* And my second remark
Is that we should accept our children
And receive them happily,
With open arms.
204. *Mungu akitupa mwana
Tumkongowe sana
Tusiwe hununanuna
Mwana tutamtukiya* If God gives us children,
We should welcome them
Without grumbling,
Which would mean despising the child.
205. *Tusifanye kisirani
Untha na dhukurani
Ni tunu yake Manani
Wote mbwa kufurahiya* We should not be annoyed,
Be the child a boy or a girl—
All are gifts from God
That we should be happy about.

206. *Tukiwa upande shingo*
Na nyoyo tele kinyongo
Mwana takuwa terengo
Utiriri na udhiya
 If we hang our heads,
 With hearts full of anger,
 The child will be a burden,
 Torment and annoyance.
207. *Lazima tufurahike*
Kwa waume na kwa wake
Kwani wote tukumbuke
Ni tunu yake Jaliya
 We should be happy
 No matter if the child is a boy or a girl,
 Because we should remember
 That all of them are gifts from God.
208. *Wana mema tuzoweze*
Tabiya njema tukuze
Wana tusiwendekeze
Rebe mno kuwatiya
 We should accustom our children to good
 habits
 And build their characters.
 Let us not spoil our children
 Or give them too much freedom.
209. *Mwana kimpa ahadi*
Sivunde jitahidi
Utimize kwa kasidi
Aone memtendeya
 If you give your children a promise,
 Don't break it; make an effort
 To fulfill it
 So that they see you did it for them.
210. *Mwana ukimzoweza*
Ahadi kutotimiza
Nawe shere takuteza
Wakati ukiadiya
 If your children get used
 To you breaking promises,
 They will also play tricks on you
 In due course.
211. *Kheri umwambiye kweli*
Yambo ukitokubali
Mambo huwa ni sahali
Urongo hatozoweya
 It is better to be frank with them
 In case you don't agree.
 Things will be easier,
 And they will not get used to lies.
212. *Mwana mtiye mahaba*
Kumpenda Mola Raba
Hiiyo ni kuu akiba
Mwana utayomwatiya
 Plant in your child
 The love of God;
 This is a great treasure
 That you will pass on to your child.
213. *Mzoweze na kuswali*
Ili isive thakili
Kikuwa hatokabili
Nalo kitoinukiya
 Accustom them to praying
 So that it will not be difficult.
 When grown up, they will reject it
 If they did not grow up with it.

214. *Kiwa angali ni mwana*
Swali nae hukuona
Tapoelewa maana
Hatowata mazoweya
 When they are still young,
 Pray so that they can see you.
 Later, when they are able to understand its
 meaning,
 They will not give up this habit
215. *Haja zake zitimize*
Mapeni simziwize
Mwate aizoweze
Kama watu kutumiya
 Fulfill their needs;
 Don't refuse to give them money.
 Let them learn to spend money
 As others do.
216. *Mfundishe na kuweka*
Akiba kitu kitaka
Asiwe mbwa kusumbuka
Aweze kuipatiya
 Teach them to save,
 So that when they want something,
 They will not be in trouble
 But can buy it on their own.
217. *Kiwa kumi utampa*
Nasitumiye kwa pupa
Mwambiye zitiye hapa
Mbili mbili takwekeya
 If you give them ten coins,
 They should not spend them hastily.
 Tell them, "Put two in the savings box;
 I will keep them for you."
218. *Nitakwekeya akiba*
Uyuwe haba na haba
Mara huyaza kibaba
Sikuye husaidiya
 "I will keep your savings.
 You should know, little by little
 Fills up the measure.
 It will be of use one day."
219. *Mfunde na ukarimu*
Kwa wende wanaadamu
Khaswa walo yake damu
Ruhuma kuwaoneya
 Teach them generosity
 Toward their fellow human beings.
 Especially those of the same blood,
 They should care for them.
220. *Simfunde ubakhili*
Katawaliwa na mali
Na piya ubaridhuli
Simliche kuzoweya
 Don't teach them greediness
 So that they will be ruled by material con-
 cerns,
 But also don't allow them
 To get used to wasting money.

221. *Ushujaa mzoweze* Get them used to courage
Hiyo twabiya akuze So that it grows in them.
Na mno umuhimize And emphasize strongly
Dhuluma kutoridhiya That they should not endure oppres-
sion.
222. *Asiridhike dhuluma* They should not agree
Kuonewa wake umma To their people being oppressed,
Na wanyonge kusimama But standing by the weak
Iwe ni yake twabiya Should be their character.
223. *Nasitupe haki yake* They should not throw away their rights,
Na ya mtu nasitake Nor should they deprive someone else of
Natwae kilicho chake theirs.
Cha wangine kuwatiya Your children should take what is theirs,
And leave others with their rights.
224. *Tabiya ya unyanganyi* Make sure they do not develop
Hakikisha haifanyi The habit of taking what is not theirs.
Usinene simkanyi Don't say, "They will stop it when they grow
up,
Tawata kiinukiya So I do not need to forbid them."
225. *Mkanye tangu ni mwana* Stop them while they still are children.
Kitenda mkanye tena If they repeat it, forbid it again
Ili kusudi maana With the intention
Sipende kunyanganyiya Of making them dislike stealing.
226. *Tena mpe mazowezi* Furthermore, train them,
Tangu ali mumaizi As soon as they start to understand things,¹
Kuzitenda njema kazi To do meaningful tasks
Jamii kusaidiya That help the community.
- 1 Acc. to Ustadh Mau, a child starts to understand things at around the age of seven.
227. *Mfunde awe imara* Teach them to be confident
Penye wende kutojera So that they are not shy in front of their
Kutowa yake fikira peers,
Au uovu kuziwiya To tell them their thoughts
And to stop evil deeds.

228. *Mpe sana mazowezi
Ya kufanya uwamuzi
Mwenyewe asiajizi
Wangine kutegemeya* Train them well
To make their own decisions
So that they shall not be incapable of decid-
ing
Without depending on others.
229. *Na mzazi jitahidi
Kuzifahamu zaidi
Tabiya za aw'ladi
Kazi takupungukiya* Parent, make an effort
To better understand
The nature of children;
This will make their upbringing easier.
230. *Soma kwa kutaamali
Mbali mbali zao hali
Kwako takuwa sahali
Kurakibisha tabiya* Read thoroughly
About their various ways of being;
It will be easier for you
To correct your child's behavior.
231. *Na ukitoyuwa kwenda
Na wano watakushinda
Ubaki kuuma zanda
Na kwa matozi kuliya* And if you don't know how to handle
them,
You will find yourself in over your head.
You will bite your nails in regret
And cry many tears.
232. *Uliza yao maoni
Kwa mambo ya kinyum-
bani
Mfano chakula gani
Yeo mutapendeleya* Ask for their opinion
On matters at home,
Like what kind of food
Would you like to eat today?
233. *Zoweya kuwashawiri
Wakupe lao shauri
Hili mno ni uzuri
Na hamasa huwatiya* Make it your habit to consult them
So that they give you their opinion.
This habit is very good,
And encourages openness toward you.
234. *Huwapa mawazo bora
Na hupanuwa fikira
Kiwa wao kula mara
Shaurini tawatiya* It will give them confidence
And will broaden their mind
If you always
Involve them in your decision-making.

235. *Wao wataiyamini* They will believe in themselves
Waone wana thamani And will recognize their own value.
Na kuiyona ni duni They will never consider
Kwao halitotokeya Themselves inferior or underestimated.

236. *Zijana wape jukumu* Give children responsibility;
Hili kwao ni muhimu For them this is important.
Huwafanya sumsumu It makes them self-disciplined
Shupavu huinukiya And makes them more persistent.

237. *Uzitunge tafauti* Take into consideration
Za umri na wakati The children's age, as well as the time¹;
Alo na nyaka katiti Children of a few years are
Si kama mtanguliya Not like their elder brother or sister.

¹ "Time" referring to age of the child, but also the historical context and its moral standards.

238. *Karibu ya kupevuka* When they become adolescents,
Wana nyendo hugeuka The behavior of your children changes.
Jitahidi kuwepuka Make an effort to avoid
Nguvu kuwatumiliya Using violence against them.

239. *Sivatumiliye nguvu* Don't use force on them,
Nena nao kwa werevu But talk to them wisely.
Huwa mno ni wayavu Adolescents are hot-tempered
Na ghururi huwangiwa And overestimate themselves.

240. *Hawaiyoni ni wana* They don't consider themselves children,
Bali walotimu sana But as fully developed.
Ni kamili huiyona They see themselves as complete and
Ni watu wametimiya As mature human beings¹.

¹ *Baleghe*, "puberty," is supposed to start at the age of fourteen. According to Ustadh Mau, this is the time when children and adults quarrel the most.

241. *Wana wafanyie sawa* Treat your children as equals;
Asili kutobaguwa Never discriminate against them at all.
Wana utawatomowa You will hurt your children
Sawa kitowatendeya If you do not treat them equally.

242. *Ukiwapenda wengine
Kwa ulimi usinene
Kwa zitendo wasiyone
Au utaiyutiya* If you like some more than others,
Don't express it openly,
And do not let your actions show it
either,
Otherwise you will regret it.
243. *Hilo wakilifahamu
Takuwa mbeu ya sumu
Umeyaa za kudumu
Hazondoki husaliya* Because if they realize it,
This will be the seed of poison.
You will have planted lasting seeds.
They don't vanish; they linger.
244. *Naafanyao mazuri
Mtuze tena dhahiri
Atendao takiswiri
Mweleze yake hatiya* And the ones who do good,
Praise them openly.
And the wrongdoers,
Explain their errors to them.
245. *Mwana kikosa adabu
Kumrudi ni wajibu
Lakini kwa taratibu
Na kumwekeza ya ndiya* If children misbehave,
It is necessary to discipline them,
But in a careful way,
And show them the right way.
246. *Kikosa mpe nafasi
Arakibishe upesi
Wala siwete mjusi
Kosa kumkaririya* If they have made a mistake,
Give them a chance to correct it.
Don't scold them
Or be resentful
247. *Simwambie kula mara
Zangaliye zake sura
Kwani hilo humkera
Usuguni humtiya* Don't speak ill of them all the time,
Or compare their appearance unfavorably
to that of others,
Because this hurts them
And makes their bad behavior chronic.
248. *Simwambiye jana jizi
Au hoyo kikojozi
Huathiri ila hizi
Kula mara kusikiya* Don't call them big thief
Or a bed-wetter!
These abuses affect them
Every time they hear them.

249. *Humtonesha jaraha* It will irritate their wound,
Moyoni hawi na raha And they will not be at ease.
Hata kama kwa mzaha Even if you do it jokingly,
Yeye hatofurahiya They will not be happy about it.
250. *Kuna makosa mangine* And if other mistakes occur
Ni membamba si manene That are slight and not serious,
Fumba mato siyaone Close your eyes; don't look at them.
Ifanye hukusikiya Pretend you did not hear them.
251. *Jaribu kuikukusa* Try to ignore
Kwa baadhi ya makosa Some of the mistakes.
Ni ya mayezi siyasa This is the best policy for upbringing;
Wayuzi huitumiya The experienced make use of it.
252. *Hapa ndipo kikomoni* Here is the end.
Naomba kwenu nyuteni I beg all of you,
Mukiyona punguwani If you see any blemishes,
Radhi mutaniwelelya Forgive me.
253. *Hakuna mja kamili* There is no perfect human being.
Kutokosa ni muhali It is impossible not to make mistakes.
Nawaomba tafadhali I beg you, please
Nanyi kunisaidiya Help me.
254. *Msaada kwenu nataka* I want help from all of you
Muwezao kuandika Who can write:
Yale mutayokumbuka Whatever you consider important,
Nanyi mbee kwendeleya Continue writing about it in the future.
255. *Nimekoma wasalamu* I have come to the end, *wasalamu*.
Aloandika nudhumu The one who composed this poem
Ni Mahamudu isimu Is called Mahmoud by name,
Mwenye kite na dhuriya And feels deeply for children.

256. *Nimeandika kusudi* I wrote this *utendi* intentionally
Utendi uwe zawadi To offer it as a gift
Kwa bibi' yangu Aboudi To my grandfather Aboud,
Mama alonizaliya The father of my mother.

1 bibi (Am.) also “grandfather” (Std. babu). Aboud was also the name of Ustadh Mau’s maternal grandfather.

257. *Namtunuku utendi* I present this *utendi*
Aboudi changu kipendi To my beloved son, Aboud.
Wala mimi hili sandi I am not the first one to write a poem for his
Baba menitanguliya child;
My father did it before me.

The difference between this *utendi* and Ustadh Mau’s other *wasiya* is that in this poem, he advises parents on how to deal with children, rather than advising the children on how to deal with the world.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
 هَاكِ زَا وَ تَوْتِ
 بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ لَطِیْفِ كَوَاتِنِ لَاكِ تَكْفِ
 نَانْدَ كِیْضِنِ یَارِیْ نِ تِیْمِزِ یَا
 نِ تِیْمِزِ یَا تِیْمِ رِیْ نِ لِیُو عِزْمِ
 نِ لِیُو وَ فَمِ وَ تَخَا لُحْسِ كِیَا
 شَبَاهُ نِ كِنِغُ لِنِغُ فَتَاكِ تِیْغُ اْتِیْغُ
 اَسَا اُرُ وِ پِنِغُ كُو نِیْ مَوْضُوعِ هَا یَا
 فَتَخَا یُو كِیَا یِیْ نِ مَامِیْ كِیْسُ وَ اَنْ
 كِیْسُ وَ اَلُو وَ اَنْوَنْ هَاكِ زَا اُرُ شَارِ یَا
 هَاكِ زَا وَ اَلُو وَ اَنْوَنْ نِ كُو مَنُوسِ سُوْتِ
 زِ مِیْوَنْ اُرُتِ كُو اِدِیْ كِیْوَنْ پِیَا
 نَامِ تَابِیْ مَكَارُ كِیْ تِیْبِ هَاKِ مِزِ
 كُو نِیْ شَارِ یَا اَمْبَارُ مَوْلِ اَمُویَا نِغِیَا
 تَارِ رُ نِغْمِزِ هَاKِ اِلِزُ وِ یِ خَلَاKِ
 هَاوَ وَ اَنْ مَحْلُوكِ كُو نِیْ حَدِیْثِ نِ اِیَا
 حَدِیْثِ سِئُوْرَا نِیْكَ اَمِیْ سِئُوْرَا تَا مَكَ
 مَوَانِغُ وَ اَكِ هَاKِ نِیْ وَ تَا اُمْلِیْ كِیَا

FIGURE 17 First page of the manuscript of "Haki za Watoto" in Ustadh Mau's handwriting

5 *Wasiya wa mabanati* (“Advice to Young Women”)

Wasiya wa mabanati was composed in 1974 and is Ustadh Mau’s first long poem, of 143 stanzas; he was inspired by the urge to comment on the degradation of customs on Lamu, especially among the youth, sparked, according to him, by the rise of a Western-style modernity reaching their shores. It can be regarded as a didactic poem like the famous *Utendi wa Mwana Kupona*. Yet the poem is not in the classical meter of the *utendi* genre, but was composed in a meter that, as the poet himself remarks, is close to the *dura al-mandhuma* form, made of twelve syllables per line with both an internal and external rhyme. There are very few poems composed in this meter—the classical *Al-Inkishafi* is one exception—as it is so difficult to write. If one also considers that Ustadh Mau composed it without even being aware of the rules of prosody and still only in his twenties, the poem speaks to his innate talent.

The plot of this poem, which largely takes on the form of a realist narrative, follows a tragic story: a cruel man fornicates with a young woman, impregnating her and then abandoning her. The incident causes a tragedy for the young woman and her loved ones. The poet shows great sensitivity in matters of the female psyche, by delving into the woman’s psychological and emotional journey, which leads her almost to commit suicide. There is a didactic tone to the voice of the first-person narrator, who predicts the tragedy and warns young women not to be fooled by men like the protagonist. A series of direct speeches constitute the poem, and the narrator lets the man as well as the women’s relatives talk about the drama from their own perspectives. Yet, the first-person narrator and the other characters’ voices are all silenced in the last part of the poem, in which the woman herself confesses her own tragic history, and begs her savior—the elderly man who has stopped her from committing suicide—to take a book and pen and write her story down so that others may be aware of such dangers. The final goal of the poem and its didactic message is presented in stz. 125, which reads, “Let us complete this writing so as to advise them (the young women).”

The final section of the poem features a flashback and the woman’s wish that her own story may spread among her peers. It explains the reasons why the poem is titled and addressed not to a single woman, but more broadly to “young women,” referred to as *mabanati* “daughters,” *binti Hawaa* “daughters of



Recordings of recitations of the poem are freely available online at <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.20200889>.

Eve,” or as the inclusive “we,” e.g., *sisi banati* “it is us women.” It was precisely this category of young women, that, a decade earlier, the Arabic writer and reformer Sheikh Ali Tantawi was addressing when he composed his pamphlet *Ya-binti* (“Oh My Daughter”), which Ustadh Mau had read and was inspired by. Like the Arabic pamphlet, which spread widely in the Muslim world, the Swahili poem has been very popular on Lamu, and beyond the archipelago up to the coast of Mombasa: the poem, finally gives a voice to powerless women in a modern world where they are threatened by injustice, marginalization, and exploitation much more than men, who even take advantage of women’s weak position. The poem’s popularity is also due to the recorded versions of it—performed by the singers Mohammad Kadara, el-Shatry, and Bi Ridhai—that have circulated so widely among Swahili Muslim publics.²

The *Wasiya wa mabanati* reflects what Ustadh Mau calls the *mambo ya kidunia* (“ways of life”). *Duniya*, the Swahili term for “world” as well as “life,” is a frequent term in the poem, referring to the experiences, challenges, and temptations that all human beings have in this world. In fact, the poem is at times imbued with a critical, sometimes even condenscending or cynical tone toward the cruel people living in this world (cf. stz. 22, *Kumbe duniyani watu ni wabaya* “Alas this world is full of terrible people”), but is also a plea for the poet’s fellow man to be more human (cf. stz. 17, *Kuwa insani mwana Adamiya* “Be human, son of Adam!”). As always in his poems and sermons, he emphasizes hope and possibility of a better future. Although the world (*duniya*) is characterized by human failure and ultimately death (stz. 75, “This is the way of the world; Death is a reality created by God”), Ustadh Mau underlines the possibility of improvement for both society and the individual, and gives guidelines for a better future. The poem’s first ten stanzas were previously translated and published by Mahazi and Kresse;³ Azra Mau has continued their work. It should be noted that the poet sometimes switches between singular and plural addresses (for instance, from verse 2 to verse 3), which is difficult to convey in the English translation.

2 All these recorded versions are freely available at <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.20200889>

3 See Kai Kresse, “Enduring Relevance: Samples of Oral Poetry on the Swahili Coast,” *Wasafiri* 66 (2011): 46–49.

1. *Sikiza mwanangu* *nikupe waswiya*
Mimi ulimwengu *ninauweleya*
Mingi miyaka yangu¹ *katika duniya*
Nawe haya yangu *hela¹¹ zingatiya*

Listen my child, let me advise you.
 I am well versed in the ways of the world.
 Many are the years I have spent here on this earth,
 So please heed to what I am about to tell you.

¹ This *kipande* has one syllable more than it should; its reading could be adjusted to Kiamu by using the term *nyaka* rather than the Std. *miaka*, which would reduce the noun from three to two syllables, thus fitting the six-syllable *kipande*. | ¹¹ *hela* interjection, syn.: *hebu*

2. *Nawata¹ ujana* *sito urudiya¹¹*
Mengi nimeona *nakuyasikiya*
Atekao sana *mwisowe huliya*
Ukitaka ona *nawe angaliya*

My youth is behind me, never to return.
 There is much that I have seen and heard.
 For the one who laughs a lot ends up crying;
 If you wish to understand, you need to contemplate.

¹ *-ata* Am. “to leave” (Std. *-acha*) | ¹¹ *sitourudiya*—Negative future tense written by the poet as two separate syntagma: *si* neg. 1st-pers. sg., *to* neg. future temporal marker infix + *urudiya* obj. infix + verb.

3. *Wengi wamenena* *hamu kusikiya*
Wamesema sana *koo zikapweya*
Faida hapana *ilio tokeya*
Usiku mtana¹ *muna jiaswiya*

Many have spoken, but you didn’t listen.
 They continued to talk until their throats were hoarse,
 But that was all in vain;
 Night and day, you continue to sin.

¹ *mtana* Am. “daylight” (Std. *mchana*)

4. *Maovu mabaya yana endeleya*
Kula miyaka huya michinjo mipiya
Munajivaliya mavazi mabaya
Muna elekeya kwenda dudumiya

Wrong and bad things continue to happen;
 With each coming year, new trends appear.
 You dress indecently,
 Heading right into destruction.

5. *Watu wa Mombasa waliki twambiya¹*
Shetwani wa sasa Amu hajangiya
Wakija kuposa wake kuzengeya
Ghafula mkasa ume tungiliya

The people of Mombasa kept telling us,
 “The devil of modernity hasn’t reached Amu yet”;
 So they came here in search of brides to propose to,
 And all of sudden tragedy befell us.

¹ As the poet explains, “us” is an inclusive we and refers in this passage to the people of Lamu.

6. *Tumevuwa nguo wazi twatembeya¹*
Tumetupa zuo¹¹ twalokisomeya
Tumeshinda hao walotanguliya
Wana mama zao wataka kuliya

We have undressed, walking without a veil.
 We have forsaken the scriptures that we so diligently studied.
 Our actions have surpassed those who took up these habits before us,
 Making mothers weep over their children’s transgressions.

¹ As the poet explains, “we” means the people of Lamu in this passage. | ¹¹ *zuo* Am. “traditional old books for Islamic learning” (Std. pl. *vyuo*).

7. *Binti Hawaa kwa Mola rejeya*
Sandame hawaa itakutongeya
Hawa tokutwaa ukishapoteya
Wana kuhadaa wata kukimbiya

Oh daughter of Eve, return to your God.
 Do not follow your desires; they will get you into trouble.
 They¹ will not take you in once you have gone astray;
 They are deceiving you and they will desert you.

¹ “They” refers to “men” in this passage.

8. *Tahadhari sana* *na kumridhiya*
Hata ukiona *mwendo analiya*
Hawana maana *hao nakwambiya*
Mukisa' pambana *atashika ndiya*

Be very cautious about fulfilling men's desires.
 Even if you see him, crying tears of sorrow,
 They are worthless, I am telling you—
 He will desert you as soon as you have fornicated.

¹ *mukisa* Am. “when you (pl.) finish” (Std. *mtakapokwisha*)

9. *Mara utaona* *mimba mekutiya*
Hapo huyo Bwana *atakuambiya*
Usijali sana *sisi tu pamoya*
Ukizaa mwana *takusaidiya*

You will suddenly realize that he has impregnated you.
 That is when the man will tell you,
 “Don't worry, we are together;
 Once you have the baby, I will help you.”

10. *Kitumbo kipana* *chaanza tokeya*
Mzigo wa Bwana *una kulemeya*
Takwambiya nana *kwaheri sikiya*
Hapo utanena *siku kudhaniya*

And then the belly starts to show;
 The man's burden is overwhelming.
 He will tell you, “Woman, good bye,”
 Then you will say, “I didn't think that of you.”

11. *Fahali' endao* *ameshika ndiya*
Uko zake kwao *apija nambiya*
Alinipa ngao'¹¹ *kampasuliya*
Na wiki ijao *ainda mpiya*

The bull has taken off, following on his trail;
 He has returned home, announcing to the world,
 "She gave me her shield and I broke it into pieces";
 And the coming week, he hunts for a new one.

I *fahali* lit. "bull." Mau: "This is a metaphor for referring to a careless man, a presumptuous man." It also symbolizes strength, male sexual prowess, and rampant masculinity. | 11 This *kipande* features *ngao* ("shield") as a metaphor of the woman's virginity.

12. *Uinuke hima* *ufuwate ndiya*
Wenda ukikoma *tumbo la kwemeya*
Na ukisimama *waona udhiya*
Umuwite Mama *kuto kusikiya*

You stand determined, forging the way.
 You stagger along; the belly has burdened you.
 When you take a break, you ache;
 You call your mother, but she does not hear.

13. *Umo safarini* *wenda mzengeya*
Na watu ndiyani *wana kwangaliya*
Wateka kwandani *nadhiri piya*
Umo matumboni *mwana wa bandiya*

You have embarked on a journey, going to search for him,
 And people on the street are giving you stares.
 They laugh both overtly and in secret;
 Are you carrying a doll in your belly?

14. *Umranga sana* *nakumwangaliya*
Wende kumuona *na bui' mpiya*
Ukitaka nena *amekurukiya*
Mimba hiyonana *mimi sikutiya*

And after much scouting and looking for him,
 You go to find him with a new lover.
 When you attempt to speak, he barks out at you,
 "That pregnancy, lady, is not mine.

1 *bui* "friend." *Mau*: especially with reference to friendship among women.

15. *Mimi sikubali* *utalo nambiya*
Si mimi awali *nilokata ndiya*
Kuna mafahali *walo tanguliya*
Nami kikabili *nikadudumiya*

I shall not accept anything you tell me;
 I was not the first to pass through.
 There were other bulls that came before me,
 And when I approached, I just sank in.

16. *Tena hapa mbele* *hebu nondokeya*
Katafute yule *alokuanziya*
Mengi makelele *ukampijiya*
Ndio tamu ile *leo vumiliya*

Get away from me;
 Go and find the one who did it!"
 You moaned so loudly for him;
 Because of that pleasure, you now have to bear with this.

17. *Hapo masikini* *uwande kuliya*
Ni wewe fulani *ulotenda haya*
Mngine sidhani *kwangu alikuya*
Kuwa insani *mwana Adamiya*

At this point, poor you, you start crying:
 "You are the one who did this!
 Don't think that anyone else came to me;
 Be human, son of Adam!"

18. *Tena umrai'* *na kumwangukiya*
Wewe haijai *kunitenda haya*
Kwani huniyui *ni mwando wa kuya*
Umekama tui *chicha'¹ wanatiya*

You beg him and fall at his feet:

"It's not right to do this to me;

Don't you know me? Is it your first time to come and see me?

Have you squeezed out the coconut milk and left me with the dry flakes?"

1 *kumrai mtu* "to coax/soothe someone" (see also Std. *kumbembeleza* "to calm a child down") | 11 *chicha* Kiung. "grated coconut"; Krapf: "the squeezed substance of a coconut, the scraped cocoa-nut after the oil has been squeezed out; it is sometimes rubbed on the hand to clean them of smut or dirt; but more generally it is cast away as refuse" (Krp. 39). In medical and metaphorical language, also used to refer to smegma.

19. *Hapo kwa ghadhabu* *atakwangaliya*
Hakupi jawabu *kofi takutiya*
Si la taratibu *atakwatiliya*
Zizidi taabu *kwako na udhiya*

At that point he will look at you angrily;

Without giving you an answer, he will slap you.

A hard slap he will throw at you;

This will increase your troubles and aches.

20. *Ndipo hapo sasa* *akili kungiya*
Yalo ya makosa *kuyafikiriya*
Mwida' umekwisa *walotanguliya*
Ni kama mapesa *ukiyatumiya*

And now is when you come to realize:

You contemplate on all the wrongdoings.

Time is up, and what is gone can't come back;

It's like money once you have spent it.

1 *mwida* Am. "time" (Std. *muda*)

21. *Maji yamekwisa* *kukumwagikiya'*
Ni zile anasa *zilokutongeya'¹*
Hayafai sasa *ungazingatiya'¹¹*
Umekuwa kiswa *watu wakutaya*

You have already spilled the water;
 It's those pleasures that got you in trouble.
 It's of no use now, despite your contemplation;
 You have become a story that people gossip about.

I Mau uses the metaphor of water to explain that what has happened cannot be changed, and has had an impact on the woman. | I *kutongeya* syn.: *kuletea shida* "to cause trouble." | III *ungazingatia* "even if you think about it now."

22. *Hapo mke shani* *uwande rejeya*
Na mwako moyoni *unashawiriya'*
Nangojeya nini *sendi kujiftya*
Kumbe duniyani *watu ni wabaya*

Now you, beautiful woman, start to depart,
 And in your head, your thoughts go back and forth:
 "What am I waiting for? Why don't I just go and die?
 Alas, this world is full of terrible people."

I *shawiriya* "doubts," referring to thoughts, also expressed by the Swahili utterance *nifanye nisifanye* "shall I do it or not," showing hesitation and insecurity.

23. *Ushawiri sana* *na kufikiriya*
Moyoni wanena *ni pana duniya*
Mimi ninaona *kheri kukimbiya*
Nitaepukana *na maneno haya*

You constantly ponder and continue to think;
 You tell your heart, "This world is vast;
 It is better to run away.
 I will distance myself from these rumors."

24. *Ingawa wanenda* *huiyoni ndiya*
Mawazo kwa inda' *yanakuiliya*
Hili ukitinda *na lingine huya*
Sana utakonda *kwa mawazo haya*

Even as you walk, the road is blurred.
 Your head is clouded with too many thoughts;
 As each one ends, another begins.
 You will lose a lot of weight from these worries.

i inda "insensitivity," "spite," "meanness of spirit"; here, *mawazo wa inda* "to have too many thoughts," "to be pensive," "to mull over problems."

25. *Mara kwa ghafula* *Itakuingiya*
Fikra ya kula *sumu kujifya*
Au kwenda Shela *pwani kujitiya*
Ukiwaza Mola *wabadili niya*

Then, all of a sudden, it dawns on you:
 A suicidal thought of ingesting poison,
 Or going to Shela to drown yourself.
 But when you think of God, you change your mind.

26. *Kipai cha jaha* *kimekupoteya*
Huna la furaha *katika duniya*
Na mambo ya raha *hutaki sikiya*
Kwa Mola Ilaha *sasa wajutiya*

You have lost your sense of worth.
 You are unhappy in this world,
 And have lost interest in all joyful things.
 You now direct your regrets to the Lord.

27. *Sana unajuta* *na kuzingatia*
Umekisha pita *wakati wa haya*
Na wako ukuta *ulijivundiya*
Ni mwezi wa sita *sasa yatimya*

You now regret and continue to ponder;
 The time for this is now long gone,
 And you tore down your own wall.
 The sixth month is now underway.

28. *Sasa ya dhihiri* *nde yatokeya*
Siyo tena siri *wote yaweleya*
Una tahayari' *watu wakimbiya*
*Yaja kuaziri'*¹ *tamu mara moyo*

[The pregnancy] is now becoming evident and starting to show.
 It is not a secret anymore; everyone is now aware of it.
 You are ashamed, and people are deserting you;
 The one-time pleasure has come back to disgrace you.

¹ *tahayari* “feel ashamed, feel shy.” | ¹ *yaja* implies the nonexplicit subject *mambo* “things”;
kuaziri “to calumniate, despise” (Krp. 17).

29. *Zamami mamako* *amelisikiya*
Kwa masikitiko *kaja kukwambiya*
Nini shida yako *hebu nelezeya*
Mbona sasa meko *unayakimbiya*

Your mother had heard it a while back.
 With sadness, she came to inquire,
 “What is troubling you? Please explain to me,
 Why are you running away from the kitchen?”

30. *Umwambie Mama* *uwate udhiya*
Mimi ni mzima *ni kamili ziya'*
Mimi nimesoma *mambo yaneleya*
Na wanaosema *wanisingiziya*

You tell your mother, “Stop bothering me.
 I am well; I am not missing a limb.
 I am educated and I have a handle on things.
 Those who are talking about me are just slandering me.”

¹ *ziya* “part of the body” (Std. *kia*); *kia cha muli* “flesh” (Krp. 135). See also its use in stz. 56 below.

31. *Tatamka tena* *mama kukwambiya*
Mbona nakuona *wajitapikiya*
Zile nguo pana *wazipendeleya*
Na hutoki tena *nde' kutembeya*

Your mother spoke up again to inquire:
 “Why do I see that you are vomiting?
 You now prefer baggy clothes,
 And I don’t see you going out for walks.”

I *nde* “outside” (Std. *nje*)

32. *Mama nipulika* *nitalokwambiya*
Yai’ uloweka *ukaniusiya*
Amekuja nyoka¹¹ *amenidomeya*
Limebaki kaka¹¹¹ *sasa laoleya*

“Mom, please pay attention to what I am about to tell you:
 The egg that you bestowed upon me to protect,
 A snake came and bit it.
 All that is left now is an empty floating shell.”

I *yai*—Literally an edible egg, used in this context to refer to the woman’s ovary. | II *nyoka*—Used as a metaphor of evilness to refer to the cruel man who fooled the woman. | III *kaka* “egg’s shell, also known as *gamba la yai*” (Krp. 125).

33. *Paka hapa Mama* *umeshamwambiya*
Aliyoko nyuma *ni baba hayaya*
Mekwenda kutoma¹ *kamba kuzamiya*
Au ni kulima *tonge¹¹ kuzengeya*

At this point you, have informed your mother.
 The only one still unaware of the news is your father, who is yet to return.
 He has gone diving for prawns
 Or is farming in search of sustenance.

I *kutoma* Baj. “to fish” (Std. *kuvua samaki*) | II *tonge* “lump of food” > *tonge la wali* designates, for instance, a handful of boiled rice, taken and compressed with the hand before it is put in the mouth; *tonge* alone refers to a “morsel, bit, soap,” similar to the term *pumba*, which rather refers to something claylike, for instance *pumba la udongo* “clod of clay” (Krp. 377).

34. *Au ni mwalimu* *ajisomesheya*
Huja kwao Amu *mwaka mara moya*
Mwezi ukitimu *pesa huweteya*
Uwengete^t hamu *kama ya duniya*

Or maybe he is a teacher who is teaching;
 He comes home to Amu once every year,
 Bringing home money at the end of every month.
 He is carrying a burden with the weight of the world.

^t *uwengete* perfect form of *-angata* “to carry.”

35. *Yeye kula mtu* *huwa kimwambiya*
Ninae bintu *kama kamariya*
Sitompa mtu *ila kwa rupiya^t*
Ni alifu tatu *zilizotimiya*

He boasts to everyone, telling them,
 “I have a daughter like the moon;
 I will not give her hand except for rupees
 In the amount of three full thousands.”

^t *rupiya* “rupee.” As Mau says, this Indian currency was used on Lamu before the shilling arrived; the rupee was considered to be more valuable at the time, the equivalent of saying “US dollar” today, as Azra Mau says. The term is used in this line for its rhyme in *-ya*, which was needed here; in another context, a more fitting term would be *pesa* “money.”

36. *Haisi hadhani* *yaliotokeya*
Mwake akilini *halijamngiya*
Ajuwa nyumbani *mambo hendeleya*
Anayo yakini *mwane metuliya*

He doesn’t know, and he doesn’t have a clue what has happened.
 In his mind, it has not dawned on him;
 He knows that things are going well back home.
 He is sure that his daughter is well settled.

37. *Mara kwa ghafula* *amemuendeya*
Bwana wa jamala *aliotimiya*
Ya kwanda kaula *akamuambiya*
Sinipe muhula^t *jawabu neteya*

All of a sudden, he came to him:
 A perfect, handsome gentleman.
 And the first thing that he told him was,
 “Don’t take too long to give me a response.”

I *muhula* (Ar.) nowadays used to designate a term at university. “An appointed space of time when borrowed goods are to be returned to its owner” (Krp. 264).

38. *Namtaka mwano* *ulonisifya*
Sizinde’ mkono *nakupa pokeya*
Ni alifu tano *mahari^{II} ni haya*
Na mfunjo tano^{III} *Amu nitakuya*

“I am asking for the hand of your daughter, the one you have praised.
 Don’t hold back your consent; please take what I am giving you,
 Five thousand dirhams as a dowry payment,
 And in the fifth month I will come to Amu.”

I *-zinda* (Std. *-dinda*), syn.: *-kaza* “to refuse” | II According to Mau, with regard to dowry (*mahari*), it is nowadays distributed among the elder relatives (*wazee*); the dowry mainly concerns the bride’s side, which has to care of buying utensils and appliances for her. | III *mfunjo tano*—The month is referred to based on the Islamic calendar. As Mau tells us, in the past, weddings used to take place in the sixth month, or before the month of Ramadan, while nowadays they mainly occur in December, August, and April (these are the months when schools are closed, outside the three terms).

39. *Baba kakubali* *hayo karidhiya*
Kanyosha miwili *akazipokeya*
Zali ni kamili *zilizotimiya*
Katowa kauli *ya kufurahiya*

The father agreed, and was satisfied with that.
 He extended his two hands to receive the money;
 The amount was complete, not missing [a cent].
 He extended words of happiness.

I *kanyosha miwili* implies the obj. *mikono* “the two hands.” The verb is also used with reference to *miguu* “feet,” with the meaning “to stretch one’s feet,” walking; also it applies to *nguo* “clothes,” with the meaning “to hang the laundry,” in opposition to *-kunjakunja nguo* “to fold the laundry.”

40. *Baba kasafiri* *kenda kuzengeya*
Kulla cha fakhari *mwane kamweteya*
Kaliyaza gari *shehena' katiya*
Mkewe habari *hajampekeya*

The father traveled in search of
 Everything that was fancy enough to bring to his daughter;
 He filled his vehicle to the brim,
 But didn't inform his wife.

1 *shehena* (Ar.) "freight, load, cargo"

41. *Baba akifika* *nyumbani kingiya*
Mwane mefunguka *amejizaliya*
Akafanya shaka *aliposikiya*
Kama mwana paka' *chumbani huliya*

When the father arrived and entered the house,
 His daughter was in labor for delivery;
 He was doubtful when he heard
 A kitten-like cry coming from the room.

1 *kama mwana paka* alludes a sound like the one made by a kitten, vaguely like that of a child.

42. *Mama akatoka* *kumuelezeya*
Sana kashutuka *aliposikiya*
Mwisho hajafika *kumuhadithiya*
Baba mekauka' *mewaga duniya*

The mother came out to explain to him.
 He was shocked when he heard the news;
 Before she could finish telling the story,
 The father had a stroke and died on the spot.

1 The verb *-kauka* lit. "to get dry" is used here to convey the image of a heart that has stopped pumping.

43. *Akababaika* *akiona haya*
Mama kaanguka *na akazimiya*
Hawezi tamka *wala kusogeya*
Amebadilika *hata rangi piya*

She was frightened when she witnessed this.
 The mother fell and lost consciousness;
 She couldn't utter a sound or move an inch.
 Even the color of her face had changed.

44. *Na hapo nyumbani* *mwingine hakuya*
wali ni thineni *mebaki mmoya*
Na mwana nyongani' *anamliliya*
Mui matumboni *umemsaliya*

And at home, there was no one else;
 They were two, but only one is left,
 With a baby at her perineum
 And the placenta still in her uterus.

1 *nyonga* “perineum”; as explained by Azra Mau, who holds a specialization in gynecology, this term designates the area between the anus and the vulva in the female body.

45. *Bado hayayuwa* *yaliotokeya*
Amejitanuwa' *angali'*¹ *ngojeya*
Kuja kutolewa *zilizobakiya*
Na aliyezawa *azidi kuliya*

She was still unaware of what had transpired,
 Her legs wide apart while she was still waiting
 For what was left inside to be cleaned and removed,
 And the newborn kept on crying.

1 *-jitanua*—As explained by Azra Mau, this verb means “to divaricate one's legs like when practicing splits.” | 11 *angali* stands here for *bado* “still, yet.”

46. *Kwalina kizere'* *kikipita ndiya*
Hiko kitiriri' *akakisikiya*
Ruhu isikiri *kenda kutungiya*
Hayo mandhari *kayashuhudiya*

There was an old woman passing by;
 She heard the continued cries of the baby.
 Her heart was not at ease, so she went and peeped in;
 She witnessed the scene.

1 *kizere* is used to refer to a very old person (*mzee sana* “very old”), usually a woman. | 11 *kitiriri* something that disturbs; as Mau explains, *mtu ambaye wasumbua, mtu aliyekuwa msumbufu*, “a person who disturbs, a person who is a disturbance.”

47. *Bibi kadangana* *kwa kuona haya*
Na akili hana *imempoteya*
Mekuwa hunena *kwa lugha mpiya*
Hajui maana *anajisemeya'*

The old woman was confused at this sight;
 It was as if she had lost her mind.
 She started speaking in a foreign language;
 She did not comprehend what she was mumbling.

1 -*jisemeya* lit. “to utter words without knowing their meaning.”

48. *Uko kitandani* *mzazi huliya*
Zilo matumboni *zampa udhiya*
Mwake akilini *hayajamngiya*
Msiba nyumbani *uliotokeya*

The new mother was on the bed, crying;
 What was left in her uterus was causing her harm.
 She was yet to acknowledge in her mind
 The sad events that had befallen their home.

49. *Ilahi Mwenyezi* *hapo kamtiya*
Akili ajuzi *ilompoteya*
Kenda kwa mzazi *kamuangaliya*
Kamaliza kazi *zilizobakiya*

At that moment, God restored
 The sense of the old woman that had been lost.
 She went to the new mother to check on her;
 She took care of what was left of the delivery.

50. *Kisa kumtowa* *zilizosaliya*
Ndipo hapo kawa *meanda tuliya*
Kisa kachondowa *kiumbe kipiya*
Chenda kipokowa *na kuchadhiniya'*

Once she removed the retained placenta,
 She started feeling better.
 She took the new baby,
 Cleaned him, and called *adhan* for him.

↑ *kuchadhiniya* "to call *adhan* for the baby (*kijitoto*)"; here, *-adhiniya* refers to the ritual practice of reciting the call of the muezzin into the child's ear.

51. *Hapa nimekoma'* *ya mimba kutaya*
Tarudi kwa Mama *kwenda mwangaliya*
Nipate kusema *lililotokeya*
Ameshatuhama *au mesaliya*

I have now finished recounting the pregnancy;
 We will now go back to check on the mother
 So that I can say what happened to her.
 Has she left us already, or is she still alive?

↑ This is the first-person narrator speaking.

52. *Kwake nikifika'* *kamshuhudiya*
Hawezi inuka *mekosa afiya*
Ndipo kamshika *kamsaidiya*
Nae kitamka *kaanza kuliya*

When I reached her,
 She was unable to get back up; she had become weak.
 Then I took hold of her to help her up;
 When she wanted to speak, she started to weep.

↑ This too is the first-person narrator, whom we have to imagine as having paid a visit to the mother and describing the state she was in.

53. *Akaliya sana* *na kuomboleya*
Nami kimuona *sikujiziwiya*
Kamwambiya nana *ndio kiduniya*
Watu hupambana *na zaidi haya*

She wept so much, and lamented,
 And the sight of her, I couldn't hold back;
 I told her, "Lady, such is life.
 People are faced with tougher challenges than these."

54. *Na wake binti* *aliposikiya*
Ya mama sauti *yazidi kuliya*
Ziliyo' za dhati *zimekazaniya*
Kaja kutafiti *nde katokeya*

And when the daughter heard
 The sound of her mother crying ever more hysterically—
 It had become loud, effusive weeping—
 She came out to see what was happening.

1 *ziliyo* "weeping, crying" (Std. *kilio*)

55. *Kule kuja kwake* *nde kutungiya*
Na kwa mato yake *akashuhudiya*
Kuwa ni babake *aliojifiya*
Na akili yake *ilimpoteya*

When she came to look outside,
 She witnessed with her own eyes
 That it was her father who had passed away.
 She lost her mind.

56. *Kisu kaangata* *taka kujitiya*
Kawahi kutaka *baadhi ya ziya'*
Hapo akapita *kijana mmoya*
Akamkamata *ndani kamtiya*

She took a knife to kill herself with;
 She managed to cut some parts of her body.
 At that moment, a young man passed;
 He got a hold of her and returned her to the house.

1 This term has already occurred above, in stz. 30. In the context of this stanza, Mau recalls the Swahili saying *tabia ni kia* "habit is like a part of your body."

57. *Na huko chumbani* *alipoingiya*
Hakuketi tini *na akatuliya*
Ni hapo jununi *ilimzidiya*
Akapanda jini *na mzuka piya*

When she entered the room,
 She did not settle down,
 And at that moment her madness only increased;
 She began acting as if she was possessed.

58. *Hapo kasimama* *akakazaniya*
Na mazishi mama *kayaandaliya*
Majirani wema *kumsaidiya*
Yakawa timama *mambo mara moyo*

At that point, the mother stood fast, trying to be strong.
 She organized the funeral;
 With the help of her good neighbors,
 Everything was completed in time.

59. *Wakisa kuzika* *na kumsomeya*
Watu wakashuka *wakandama ndiya*
Wakamalizika *sibaki mmoya*
Hapo zilifika *zombo zikangiya*

After the burial and reciting of the Qur'ān,
 The people left and went on their way.
 They all left, with no one remaining.
 At that point was when the furniture¹ arrived at the home.

1 This is referring to the furniture that the father had bought.

60. *Mama kashutuka* *zikimfikiya*
Hakuyatamka *mume kama haya*
Wala hakwandika *wakashuhudiya*
Illa ni Rabuka *mewahifadhiya*

The mother was shocked at the arrival of the furniture;
Her husband hadn't informed her of this.
Nor did he write any testament;
It was the Lord that protected them.

61. *Kasema hamali* *mama kumwambiya*
Kochi siti mbili *na stuli piya*
Na kitanda ali' *alizipakiya*
Na piya nauli *amezilipiya*

The porter began telling the mother,
A two-seater sofa with stools
And a high-quality bed had been shipped,
And [her husband] had already paid the transport fee.

1 *ali* (Ar.) "great, superior" (Std. *bora*)

62. *Mama kafikiri* *akaangaliya*
Mambo ya kadari *yalomfikiya*
Zaidi ya siri *hazikumweleya*
Kasema ni kheri *yamekuwa haya*

The mother looked at it, and contemplated
How destiny had unfolded for her.
She didn't understand much of the secret¹;
She said, "It is for the best that it happened this way.

1 The husband's secret of the furniture.

63. *Lau alikuwa* *baba mesaliya*
Mwane angeuwa *kisu kamtiya*
Na yeye akawa *adhabuni piya*
Ilahi Moliwa *yote yamweleya*

Had her father survived,
 He would have stabbed his daughter and killed her,
 And he would have punished himself too.
 The Lord Most High understands best.”

64. *Kisha stakiri* *mama kutuliya*
Hakutaakhari *dawa kuzengeya*
Na madakitari *alokisikiya*
Wali mahodari *aliwaendeya*

When the mother calmed down,
 She didn't delay in search of medicine;
 And of all the doctors that she had heard of,
 She chose the best ones and went to consult them.

65. *Akahangaika*¹ *kuwaandamiya*
Walokisifika *dawa zaweleya*
Muwishowe Rabuka *kamjaaliya*
Mwane kutopoka *akili kangiya*

She went back and forth in search of doctors,
 The praiseworthy ones who were competent.
 In the end, God made it happen:
 Her daughter was cured, and her sanity returned.

¹ *-hangaika* syn.: *kupata shida* “to have troubles” > *mahangaiko* “troubles.”

66. *Mara siku moja* *akamuiliya*
Kijana mmoja *akamuambiya*
Mimi nimekuja *mke fuwatiya*
Sivezi kungoja *nataka rejeya*

One day, there came
 A young man, who told her,
 “I have come for my wife.
 I cannot wait any longer; I want to return.”

67. *Mama katamka* *akamuambiya*
Wewe ulofika *sijakueleya*
Wapi umetoka *hebu nelezeya*
Lini ulitaka *mambo kama haya?*

The mother spoke, asking him,
 “You who have just arrived; I don’t understand.
 Where are you from? Please explain to me,
 When did you make this request?”

68. *Kijana mgeni* *mbele kasogeya*
Kwa yake lisani *mama kamwambiya*
Mimi ni fulani *jina kalitaya*
Na kwao nyumbani *akamutajiya*

The young guest came forward,
 And with these words he told the mother,
 “I am so-and-so”; he mentioned his name
 And he told her where he was from.

69. *Mama karadidi* *mwana kumwambiya*
Yako makusudi *bado kuneleya*
Katika fiwadi *hayajatuliya*
Neleza zaidi *henda yakangiya*

The mother reiterated to the young man,
 “Your intention is not clear to me;
 It has not settled in my heart.
 Please explain further so that I might comprehend it.”

70. *Kaanda ghulamu* *kumuhadithiya*
Ya tangu kadimu¹ *kamtondoleya*
Hata dirhamu¹¹ *akamtaiya*
Mama kafahamu *alilolijiya*

The young man began telling her.
 He explained his story from the beginning,
 And he mentioned even the dirhams he paid;
 Then the mother understood what he had come for.

¹*kadimu* (Ar.) “beginning” (Std. *mwanzo*) | ¹¹*dirhamu* (Ar.) stands for an old unit of weight, corresponding to the Greek and Persian drachma (Scl. 168–169); see Qur. 12:20 and the note below.

71. *Hapo kainama* *kaanda kuliya*
Hana lakusema *huyo kumwambiya*
Bintiye mwema *mekuwisha poteya*
Wala dirihama' *hazikusaliya*

She then bowed her head and began weeping;
 She had nothing to say to him.
 Her pious daughter had transgressed,
 And the money was spent.

i dirihama—The common Swahilized form is *dirahamu*; in this line, the ending in *-ma* is used to conform to the internal rhyme in *-ma*.

72. *Kasubiri sana* *jibu kungojeya*
Hata akiyona *mambo yendeleya*
Hapo akanena *kujiuliziya*
Kwani yule Bwana *hakuwaambiya*

He was very patient, awaiting her answer,
 Until he realized that the scene was going on.
 He then spoke to inquire,
 “Didn’t your husband inform you?”

73. *Sikiza mwanangu* *sasa takwambiya*
Mimi mume wangu *hakunielezeya*
Akifika kwangu *bado kutuliya*
Ajali ya Mngu *ilimfikiya*

“Listen my child, I will now tell you:
 My husband didn’t inform me.
 When he arrived at my home, before he could settle in,
 God’s decree befell him.”

74. *Kijana mgeni* *hapo akaliya*
Matozi usoni *yaka mueneya*
Mwisowe nguoni *yakamuingiya*
Hata majirani *wakamsikiya*

The young guest began weeping,
 His face filled with tears,
 And by the end, [tears] were falling on his clothes.
 Even the neighbors heard him crying.

75. *Katowa kauli* *huku analiya*
Hini ndiyo hali *yahini duniya*
Mauti ni kweli *meumba Jalīya*
Wake na rijali *yatawafikiya*

Between his cries, he uttered,
 “This is the way of this world;
 Death is a reality created by God.
 It will befall both women and men.”

76. *Kisa kabaini* *hapo kawambiya*
Sasa kwaherini *kwetu narejeya*
Na jamii deni *nimewawatiya*
Nanyi kumbukani *duwa kunombeya'*

He then spoke clearly, and told them,
 “I now bid you farewell; I shall return home,
 And I have forgiven the family’s debt.
 Please remember to pray for me.”

1 *duwa* (Ar. *du‘ā'*) (Std. *dua*). With this term, in conjunction with the verb *kuomba* “to pray,” a Swahili Muslim devotee enacts his or her supplication to God.

77. *Kapanda garini* *kajisafiriya*
Na huku nyumbani *mama kasaliya*
Umo huzunini *hatindi kuliya*
Hata duniyani *kukamtukiya*

He got into his vehicle and traveled back,
 And the mother was left back home;
 She was in so much sadness, she couldn’t stop crying,
 And she hated to exist in the world.

78. *Ingawa aishi* *hataki duniya*
Hajifurahishi *hata siku moya*
Wala hajilishi *akajishibiya*
Kama kifurushi *amejitatiya'*

Even though she is alive, she rejects the world.
 She doesn't enjoy herself, not even for a day.
 Nor does she eat to satisfaction;
 Like a bundle, she has tied herself.

1 -*jitatiya* "to fold, bend, tangle, wrap." As Mau says, the verb expresses the image of someone who "curls himself up like a weak person who is depressed" (*kujikunjakunja kama mnyonge asiye na raha*); another way to describe its meaning is *kitu ambacho kimevunjika vunjika*, namely "a thing that has been broken."

79. *Mpaka ajali* *ikamfikiya*
Kandama rijali *alotanguliya*
Mengi yao mali *alimetumiya*
Kasaza kalili *mwane kamwatiya*

She remained like that until death came for her.
 She went after her husband who had preceded her;
 Having spent most of their wealth,
 She left only a little to her daughter.

80. *Mzaa haramu* *pweke kasaliya*
Na ngome' adhimu *alotegemeya*
Ali wake umu'¹ *amemondokeya*
Zikazidi hamu *hapo za duniya*

The illegitimate parent was left alone,
 And the great strength that she had leaned on
 Was her mother, and she too had left her.
 Her worries of the world increased at that point.

1 Here used as a metaphor with reference to the girl's mother. | 11 *umu* (Ar.) "mother" (Std. *mama*). The choice of using the Arabic form in this line is for the sake of the internal rhyme in *-mu*.

81. *Huyo' mwanamke* *akiangaliya*
Mebakiya pweke *na wake udhiya*
Kijitoto chake *cha mwaka mmoya*
Yeye ni mamake *na baba pamoya*

It now dawns on the woman that
 She is alone with her suffering;
 With her, a one-year-old infant
 To whom she is both mother and father.

↑ *huyo* "that" (Std. *huyu*)

82. *Wote watu wake* *wamemkimbiya*
Na makosa yake *alowakoseya*
Ni kuteya kwake *shimoni kangiya*
Akaza wake *mwana haramiya*

All of her kin have deserted her,
 And the mistake that she had wronged them with
 Was to slip and fall into a ditch
 And give birth to an illegitimate child.

83. *Sana kafikiri* *kazengeya ndiya*
Mwisho kakhitari *kwenda kujifiya*
Shetwani mshari *hilo kamwambiya*
Kangata swaghiri' *akashika ndiya*

She pondered for long, looking for a solution.
 Finally, she decided to commit suicide.
 The evil Satan persuaded her to do so;
 Carrying her young one, she went on her way.

↑ *swaghiri* (Ar.) "small" (Std. *mdogo*)

84. *Akenda haraka* *mbio kikimbiya*
Henda kizungura *watu changaliya*
Wasije mshika *wakamziwiya*
Kabla kufika *penye yake niya*

She went hastily, running fast.
 She kept on turning to check for people
 So that they didn't get hold of her and restrain
 Her from reaching her goal.

85. *Ngomeni kifika* *hakushawiriya*¹
Alirukaruka *kajiatiliya*
Mwane kamshika *kamkumbatiya*
Kizama kizuka *na yeye pamoya*

Upon arriving at the seawall, she didn't think twice:
 She jumped and threw herself into the sea,
 Holding her child in a tight embrace,
 Together submerging in the water and coming up again.

¹ *shauria* (Ar.). As explained by Mau, in Swahili, the meaning of this root is "to consider, not to have decided yet"; for instance, if you say *mimi nashawiriya kwenda Mambasa*, it translates to "I have not yet decided whether to go to Mombasa" (i.e., I am still thinking about whether to go to Mombasa).

86. *Kwalina kuhuli*¹ *kipita ndiya*
Kaona kwa mbali *kitu chaoleya*
Kakita amali *na kuchangaliya*
Kajuwa muili *mwana adamiya*

There was a middle-aged man passing by.
 He saw something floating from afar;
 He carefully looked and examined it.
 He recognized it to be a human body.

¹ *kuhuli* (Ar.) "middle-aged person" (Std. *mzee*)

87. *Majini kashuka* *na nguo pamoya*
Kenda kwa haraka *kumfuwatiya*
Hata akifika *kamshuhudiya*
*Ruhu muhutoka*¹ *kuwaga duniya*

He descended into the water with his clothes on.
 He went hurriedly to get her;
 Upon reaching her he observed that
 Her soul was about to leave her and abandon this world.

1 *muhutoka* Am. "to be about to leave," a verb with a locative subject prefix (*mu-*) used in Kiamu to express "to be about to." See also *Hafi asiye timiwa*, stz. 7.

88. *Hapo kamshika* *na mwane pamoya*
Dau kalitaka *kumsaidiya*
Nalolikafika *kwenda mpokeya*
Ndani kawaweka *na yeye kangiya*

At that point, he got a hold of her and her child.
 He signaled for the dhow to come to their rescue,
 And it arrived to get them;
 He put them inside and then he boarded too.

89. *Kisha wapandisha* *nae kurukiya*
Akawatapisha *mai kayamwaya*
Akahakikisha *haya kusaliya*
Hapo kamwamsha *fahamu kangiya*

After he had gotten them into the boat and he too had jumped in,
 He induced vomiting to remove the water they swallowed.
 He made sure none remained;
 That is when he woke her up, returning her to consciousness.

90. *Bwana kwa makini* *akamuandiya*
Kataka undani *ulomfikiya*
Kwa sababu gani *amefanya haya*
Hata baharini *kenda kujitiya*

The man began talking to her attentively,
 Wanting to know depths of what had befallen her.
 Why was it that she did this,
 To the point of throwing herself into the ocean?

91. *Akamba mwanangu usione haya*
Yote ya matungu mimi nelezeya
Kwa uwezo wangu takusaidiya
Kulla lema Mngu atatwegesheya

He told her, "My daughter, don't be ashamed;
 You can tell me all the bitterness that's bothering you.
 I will help you to the best of my ability,
 And God will bring forth all goodness."

92. *Kamwambia Babu ukitaka haya*
Tafuta kitabu na kalamu piya
Kiswa' ukutubu kipate eneya
Kisije wasibu wanoinukiya

She told him: "Oh grandfather, if you are interested in this,
 Go find a book and a pen.
 Then write the story so that it may spread,
 So that the same thing doesn't befall those who are still growing up.

1 *kiswa* (Ar. *qiṣṣah*) "story" (Std. *kisa* or *hadithi*)

93. *Naanda usemi babu kukwambiya*
Nalizawa mimi pwekee mmoya
Wala wangu umi hakujipatiya
Mngine ghulami wala bintiya

I am starting this speech to tell you, oh grandfather,
 I was born as the only child,
 And my mother didn't get
 Any other boy or girl.

94. *Mama na babangu wote kwa pamoya*
Nyonda mola wangu alimewatiya
Mkononi mwangu wakanitiliya
Kulla haja yangu nilokizengeya

Both my mother and father in unison,
 God had given them immense love for me.
 They delivered into my hands
 Each and every need that I sought.

95. *Salina taabu* *na wala udhiya*
Bila ya hisabu *wakaniatiya*
Mali ya ajabu *nikiyatezeya*
Sina matulubu *yasiotimiya*

I had neither any problems nor any suffering.
 Without counting, they left lots of money for me,
 Immense amounts of wealth to toy with;
 I had no wish that didn't come true.

1 *salina* Am. "I did not not have" (Std. *sikuwa na*)

96. *Kipata akili* *mambo kuneleya*
Katiwa skuli *kenda jisomeya*
Chumba cha awali *nikakianziya*
Wala sikufeli *hata mara moyo*

When I became of age and started to comprehend things,
 I was taken to school to pursue my studies.
 From the first grade I started,
 And not even once did I fail.

97. *Kasoma kwa hamu* *nikakazaniya'*
Ili nikhitimu *nipate ingiya*
Chuo cha walimu *na kuendeleya*
Nenzeze ilimu *nilojipatiya*

I studied passionately and hard,
 To graduate and enroll
 In the teachers' college to further my studies,
 To spread the knowledge I received.

1 *-kazaniya* syn.: *kufanya kwa bidi* "to put effort into sth."

98. *Lakini babangu* *hakuniridhiya*
Na mipango yangu *hakufurahiya*
Kasema mwanangu *nyumbani rejeya*
Kama radhi yangu' *unaizengeya*

But my father didn't accept this,
 And wasn't happy with my plans.
 He said, 'My child, please return home
 If you are searching for my blessings.'

I *radhi* "blessings, approvals." In stz. 22–23 of the *Utendi wa Mwana Kupona*, the approvals are recalled to Mwana Kupona's daughter and considered to be five in number: the approval of God, the Prophet, father, mother, and husband. The stanzas reads as follows: *Mama pulika maneno / kiumbe ni radhi tano / ndipo apate usono / wa akhera na dunia*, stz. 22; *Nda Mngu na Mtumewe / baba na mama wayuwe / na ya tano nda mumewe / mno imekaririwa*, stz. 23; "Listen to me, my dear; a woman requires the approval of five before she has peace in this world and the next: Of God and His Prophet; of father and mother, as you know; and the fifth of her husband as has been said again and again".⁴

99. *Kakoseya budi* *kabadili niya*
Nyumbani karudi *kenda jikaliya*
Katika fuwadi *huzuni kangiya*
Yangu makusudi *yalipofifya*

I had no other choice but to change my plan.
 I went back home and settled down there;
 In my heart, there was a sadness
 When my goals began to fade.

100. *Na siku za kwanza* *nyumbani kungiya*
Sana kajikaza *ndani katuliya*
Kaanza jifunza *mambo moya moya*
Yote kamaliza *yakanieleya*

And from the first day I arrived home,
 I tried my best to feel settled inside.
 I started to learn one thing after the other:
 I completed everything, and I mastered it all.

4 John Williamson T. Allen, *Tendi: Six Examples of a Swahili Classical Verse Form with Translations & Notes*. (New York: Africana Pub. Corp. 1971), 70–71.

101. *Pale jiranini* *kwalina jariya*
Tangu skulini *twaliko pamoya*
Akija nyumbani *kuniangaliya*
Kinena fulani' *twende kutembeya*

In the neighborhood, there was a young woman;
 Ever since our school days, we would be together.
 She used to come home to visit me;
 She said 'So-and-so, let's go out for a walk.'

1 *fulani* (Ar.) "such-and-such man or thing," "quidam, quaedam" (Krp. 73).

102. *Katowa kauli* *kamrudishiya*
Tena kwa ukali *nikimuambiya*
Na mara ya pili *sambe kama haya*
Mimi afadhali *hapa kubakiya*

I uttered some words in response to her,
 And harshly I told her,
 'Don't ever say that again;
 It's better for me to stay here.'

103. *Tukitoka sana* *nde kutembeya*
Twenda kupambana *na watu wabaya*
Wasio maana *wasoona haya*
Mengi tutaona *tusoyaridhiya*

If we go meandering a lot,
 We will meet bad people,
 Without worth or shame,
 And we will see a lot that we disagree with.

104. *Lakini swahibu'* *kanikazaniya*
Kanza niatibu *na kunangukiya*
Katika kalibu *imani kangiya*
Kasema twayibu *twende mara moya*

But my friend kept insisting.
 She started making me feel guilty, begging me,
 And my heart softened for her.
 I said, 'Alright, let's go, just this once.'

1 swahibu Ar. "friend" (Std. *rafiki*).

105. *Sute tukatoka* *tukandama ndi ya*
Tukenda haraka *tupate rejeya*
Hata tukifika *tulokusudiya*
Ni wa kula nyaka *watu walokuya*

We left and went on our way.
 We went hastily, to be able to hurry back.
 And when we arrived at our destination,
 There were people of all ages.

106. *Kwaliko na watu* *walotimiliya*
Na wana watoto *handa inukiya*
Ni ufu kwa tutu' *wamejikaliya*
Kamba twenzetu *siyawezi haya*

There were mature people,
 And young budding adolescents;
 Like an ill-assorted group, they were sitting.
 I told her, 'Let us return; I can't stand this.'

1 *ufu* "rasped cocoa-nut which has not yet strained (*kununua*) or filtered" (Krp. 394); *tutu* "dish of cowpeas that have been boiled with maize or millet and sometimes mixed with grated coconut juice" (Mam. 768). *Tutu* and *ufu* become mixed in one dish. The metaphorical meaning here is that there is a melee of all kinds of people, including untrustworthy ones.

107. *Kanambiya ngoja* *kwanza angaliya*
Tunaanza kuja *wataka rejeya*
Ukisha ziyoja *kuzishuhudiya*
Wewe hutotaja *twende kunambiya*

She told me, 'Wait, first have a look!
 We have just arrived, and you already want to return.
 Once you witness the wonders,
 You will not say that you want to return.'

108. *Yakanipendeza* *mimi mambo haya*
Nami kajikaza *kibobwe¹ kangiya*
Kawa ninataza *na kushangiliya*
Linkingiya jiza *tukajirudiya*

I was pleased with these events;
 I too made an effort, and tightened my *kibobwe*.
 I was dancing and cheering on;
 When darkness befell upon us, we went back.

¹ *kibobwe* Am. "a strip of cloth, like a *kanga*, worn tightly around the waist by women during dances" (Std. *kibwebwe*).

109. *Na hapo ndiyani* *sasa twarejeya*
Kaja insani *kanifuwatiya*
Akamba fulani *hebu ningojeya*
Neno la moyoni *nataka kwambiya*

While on our way back,
 A man came and approached me.
 He told me, 'Oh so-and-so, please wait for me;
 I want to tell you something from my heart.'

110. *Maneno matamu* *aliniambiya*
Nusura¹ fahamu *kuja nipoteya*
Nikatabasamu *kamkubaliya*
Asali na sumu *nikanwa pamoya*

He told me very sweet things;
 I almost passed out.
 I smiled and accepted his request;
 I drank both honey and poison together.

¹ *nusura* "about, nearly"; "a little within a hair's breadth" (Krp. 287).

111. *Siku hiyo nami* *niliporejeya*
Kaanda usemi *mama kumwambiya*
Ni wengi kaumi! *pwani walokuya*
Na hata Warumi! *walihudhuriya*

And on that day, when I returned,
 I began talking, recounting to my mother:
 ‘Many people had come to the seafront;
 Even white people were there.’

I *kaumi* (Ar.) “people,” “crowd” (Std. *watu*) | II *Warumi* lit. “Romans,” but here referring to *Wazungu* “white people,” mostly tourists, according to Ustadh Mau. Interestingly, the conceptual blending of “Romans” and “white people” already has a long history. In the oldest known *utendi*, the *Utendi wa Tambuka*, the enemies of the Prophet and his allies are referred to as *Warumi* or *Warumu*, here referring to Byzantine Christians. In later poetry, the term is used interchangeably with Christians, eventually losing its religious connotation to refer to white people in general.

112. *Kashika uradi* *kiukaririya*
Henda nikirudi *kimuandamiya*
Sijali baridi *na wala udhiya*
Mambo yakazidi *mama kasikiya*

I held fast to this routine, and continued repeating it,
 Going back and forth in pursuit of the man.
 I didn’t mind the cold or the challenges I endured;
 Things intensified, and my mother heard about them.

113. *Kanikanya sana* *na kuniziwiya*
Akamba kijana *si njema duniya*
Hayana maana *hayo nakwambiya*
Utajitukana *na sisi pamoya*

She constantly warned me and tried to stop me;
 She said, ‘Oh child, the world isn’t a good place.
 Those things are worthless, I am telling you.
 You will bring trouble on yourself and on us, too.’

114. *Mimi asilani* *sikumsikiya*
Walinikitwani *wawili pamoya*
Shetwani na jini *menisimamiya*
Mwangu akilini *wameniingiya*

Never did I listen to her.
 They had possessed my head, the two together:
 Satan and the devil stood before me.
 They had completely overtaken my sanity.

115. *Na miwili nyezi* *ikisa timiya*
Muhibu mpenzi *alinikimbiya*
Kanatiya kazi *ya mimba kuleya*
Na kina shangazi *wakanitukiya*

After two full months,
 My dear lover left me.
 He left me with the burden of caring for his pregnancy,
 And the family of my paternal aunt hated me.

116. *Na wote kaumu* *kanigeukiya*
Ila wangu umu *hakunikimbiya*
Majuto adhimu *yakanifikiya*
Kakonda kwa hamu *na mwingi udhiya*

And the whole community disowned me,
 Except my mother—she never left me.
 Immense regret befell me;
 I became emaciated from all the trouble and worry.

117. *Yule mvulana* *alotenda haya*
Mimi kimuona *alidikimbiya*
Muwisowe kanena *wanisingiziya¹*
Si wangu kijana *mimba sikutiya*

The boy who did this,
 Every time I saw him, he would run away.
 He finally said, 'You are pinning this on me
 That baby isn't mine; I did not impregnate you.'

¹ *kusingiziya* syn.: *kumzulia urongo* "pinning a lie on someone"

118. *Kastahamili* *nikavumiliya*
Ala kulli hali *nikajiziwiya*
Mpaka ajali *ilipotimiya*
Mwana ni rijali *nilojizaliya*

I put up with it, and I was patient.
 In all matters, I put up with it.
 Until the day arrived that
 I delivered a baby boy.

119. *Na wala babangu* *hakujuwa haya*
Mambo ya matungu *yaliotokeya*
Ali Takaungu' *kijisomesheya*
Ninae mwanangu *watu kiwambiya*

And my father wasn't even aware of them,
 The bitter events that occurred.
 He was in Takaungu, teaching;
 'I have a daughter,' he kept telling people with pride.

1 *Takaungu* "is the name of a large village close to Kilifi bay in Kenya; it was there the Marsue (Mazrui) dynasty fled after the capture of Mombasa by the Imam of Muscat. The place-name of this village indicates *maji ya utungu*, referring to its previously brackish water that later became drinkable" (Krp. 355).

120. *Mume nikapata* *kanikubaliya*
Na yaliyopita *hakuyasikiya*
Kenda kaangata *zitu kuneteya*
Khabari kipata *papo kajifiya*

I got a spouse, and my father accepted him.
 What had happened, he had not heard about.
 He went and bought furniture for me;
 When he heard the news, he died instantly

121. *Akabaki mama* *pweke kasaliya*
Huzuni daima *zisomwondokeya*
Mpaka kakoma *nae kajifiya*
Kabakiya nyuma *na mwana pamoya*

My mother remained all by herself.
 She was always sad; it never left her,
 Until she too met her end and passed away.
 I remained behind, together with the child.

122. *Nami kaamuwa* *niwage duniya*
Nipate pumuwa *na hunu udhiya*
Lakini Moliwa *hakujaliya*
Ukaja nokowa *nipate saliya*

So I too decided to leave this world
 So that I too can be relieved from these pains.
 But God did not will it;
 You came and saved me, and I remained alive.

123. *Hiki ndicho kiswa* *kilonijiriya*
Chote nimekwisa *kukuhadithiya*
Ni mimi mkosa *nilomridhiya*
Mwane ibilisa *kunika ribiya*

This is the tragedy that befell me;
 I have finished recounting it to you.
 I am the wrongdoer who gave in
 And allowed Satan's child to come near me."

124. *Umefanya wema* *hili kunambiya*
Yote ulosema *nimeyasikiya*
Nami tasimama *kukusaidiya*
Sitokusukuma *hata mara moya*

[The man speaking:] "You have done well by telling me this.
 I have heard everything you said.
 I will stand firm to help you;
 I will not push you away even once.

125. *Lakini nataka* *kwako yambo moya*
Machache tamka *wendo kuwambiya*
Yasije wafika *nao kama haya*
Utimu waraka *tuwape wasiya*

But I want one thing from you:
 Say a few things to inform others
 So that the same fate doesn't befall them.
 Let us complete this writing so as to advise them."

126. *Ninakushukuri* *hili kunambiya*
Nami tadhukuri *machache tataya*
Wala si kathiri *tayowataiya*
Wajitahadhari *wakiyasikiya*

[The woman speaking:] "I am grateful to you for telling me this,
 And I will speak out, mentioning a few things—
 And it is not much that I will mention,
 So that they can be careful when they hear this.

127. *Mwana mwanamke* *katika duniya*
Yeye hadhi yake *ya kujivuniya*
Ni umwali wake *kujihifadhiya*
Nde asitoke *kwenda kupoteya*

A girl in this world,
 Her virtue to be proud of
 Is to preserve her virginity.
 She should not go out wandering.

128. *Hiko ni kipai* *Mngu mekutiya*
Mtu hakitwai *akakitezeya*
Kawapa mabui *wakupita ndiya*
Wala hachambui *akachatiliya*

This is a gift given to you by God
 A person shouldn't take it and play with it,
 Giving it to friends passing by,
 Nor should she remove it and let it go.

129. *Kihifadhi sana* *na kuchangaliya*
Sifanye ujana *kikakupoteya*
Muwekee bwana *aje shuhudiya*
Apate kunena *nimejivuniya*

Protect it well and take care of it.
 Don't hang around with boys, lest you lose it;
 Keep it for your husband so that he can witness it,
 So that he can say, "I am so proud."

130. *Wala sighurike* *ukawasikiya*
Wale wanawake *waliopoteya*
Yao usishike *wakikuambiya*
Hao lana yake *Mngu mewatiya*

Don't get tempted to listen
 To those women who have lost their way.
 Don't trust what they tell you;
 They are cursed by God.

131. *Ni sisi banati* *wazi tawambiya*
Tujengao nti *na kuvunda piya*
Tukijidhibiti *na kujiziwiya*
Ni hono wakati *wa kuendeleya*

It is we, the girls, I am openly telling you,
 Who build the country, and we destroy it too.
 If we are firm and restrain ourselves,
 Only then, we can progress.

132. *Na tuiwatapo* *ilo sawa ndiya*
Tukawa upepo *hatwendi kumoya*
Aw kama tapo' *zote twapakiya*
Ndipo nchi hapo *tunajivundiya*

And when we forsake the right path,
 We become like the wind; we fly in all directions.
 Or like in a packsaddle, we pack in everything;
 At that time, we will break down the country.

1 *tapo* "bât d'âne en sparterie, forme besace" (Scl. 871).

133. *Musighurikeni* *wakiwaambiya*
Ati uzunguni *kumeendeleya*
Kwa kutupa dini *na kuitukiya*
Wao ruhubani *wataka kuliya*

Don't be fooled when they tell you
That the West is progressive
Because they disregard religion and hate it.
Their religious leaders want to cry.

134. *Mila ya kizungu* *mingi ni mibaya*
Wote ulimwengu *wametufujiya*
Wamefanya jungu' *watakatutiya*
Tuzidi utungu *kwa kuteketeya*

Most Western customs are bad;
They have ruined the whole world for us.
They have prepared a boiling pot, ready to throw us in
To intensify our pain, burning us.

1 *jungu* "an earthen cooking pot" (Std. *chungu*) (Krp. 42); *chombo cha kupikia mithili ya sufuria ambacho hutengenzwa kwa udongo* "a pot to cook in, like a *sufuria*, but made of clay" (see also the picture in Kak. 148).

135. *Hapa namaliza* *mwise nawambiya*
Nimewaeleza *yote mimi haya*
Ili kuwafunza *mambo ya duniya*
Musije kuteza *na watu wabaya*

I hereby conclude telling you the end.
I have explained all this to you
So as to teach you the ways of the world,
So you don't mess around with evil people.

136. *Ukiyona mtu* *aanda kwambiya*
Mara mbili tatu *maneno mabaya*
Mwambie sukutu' *asiposikiya*
Kivue kiyatu *na kumpijiya''*

If someone starts telling you
 Misguiding words, twice or thrice,
 Tell the person to shut up—and if he doesn't listen,
 Take off your shoe and hit him with it.

1 *sukutu* (Ar.) “keep silent” (Std. *-nyamaza*). | 11 Hemistich adapted from what is also found in al-Ṭanṭawi's *Yā-bintī*.

137. *Atapokuona* *hukumridhiya*
Hapo huyo bwana *tazunguwa' nīya*
Kama mbwa maana *nyumbani takuya*
Atake owana *kama kishariya*

When he sees that you didn't give in,
 Then that man will change his intentions.
 If he is worthy, he will come home,
 And he will ask you to marry him according to law.”

1 *-zunguwa* syn.: *badilisha* “to change.”

138. *Asanta sana* *kwa ulowambiya*
Yako ya maana *ulolezeya*
Wenziyo zijana *wapate sikiya*
Inshaallah Rabana *tatutimiziya*

[The elder person now answers:] “Thank you so much for what you have told them,
 The meaningful advice that you have explained
 So that your fellow youth can hear it.
 God willing, the Lord will convey it for us.

139. *Wewe huna mtu* *aliosaliya*
Wala huna kitu *katika duniya*
Kheri twende kwetu *tukae pamoya*
Na mwano kitutu *tutakuyeleya*

You have no one left for you,
 Nor do you have anything in this world.
 It's better that we go home and live together,
 And your little child, we shall care for him.

140. *Mimi nina mke* *twaishi pamoya*
Na kijana chake *alina mmoya*
Amekwenda zake *mewaga duniya*
Na badili yake *wewe umekuya*

I have a wife; we live together,
 And had one child.
 She has passed away and left this world,
 And in her place, you have come.”

141. *Ninakushukuri* *yako njema niya*
Kwa kunisitiri *katika duniya*
Nami ni tayari *kukuitikiya*
Kwa zote amri *utazonambiya*

[The woman:] “I am grateful for your good intentions
 Of protecting me in this world,
 And I am ready to heed your word
 In every demand you shall ask of me.”

142. *Hapa nimekoma* *kuwapa wasiya*
Kwa hini nudhuma *nilowandikiya*
Ilahi Karima *tatuonya ndiya*
ya kuiyandama *ilo sawasiya*

Here I conclude, giving you advice
 Through this composition I have written for you.
 God the Most Gracious will show us the way,
 The one that is straight and must be followed.

143. *Ndimi Mahmoudi* *nilo sema haya*
Mwane Ahmadi *Amu mzaliya*
Namukinirudi *nilipokoseya*
Furaha tazidi *mukiniambiya*

It is me, Mahmoudi, who has conveyed this.
 The son of Ahmadi, born in Lamu.
 And if you correct me where I have erred,
 I will be very delighted if you tell me.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
وَ وِصِیَا وَ مَا بَانَاتِ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ	بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
مِمَّ الْعَمُوْنَعُ	مِمَّ الْعَمُوْنَعُ
نَبِیْعَ نَبَاكَ رَانَعُ	نَبِیْعَ نَبَاكَ رَانَعُ
نَا وَ هَا یَا یَا نَعُ	نَا وَ هَا یَا یَا نَعُ
نَوَاتِ اُجَان	نَوَاتِ اُجَان
مَنْعِنَ مَوْن	مَنْعِنَ مَوْن
اَنْحَادِ سَان	اَنْحَادِ سَان
اُرْكَنَاكُ اُن	اُرْكَنَاكُ اُن
و نَعُ وَ اَمْنِیْنَ	و نَعُ وَ اَمْنِیْنَ
وَ مَدِیْنَ سَان	وَ مَدِیْنَ سَان
فَیْدَهَیَانَ	فَیْدَهَیَانَ
اُسْدُ مَتَانَ	اُسْدُ مَتَانَ
مَا تُوْفَا مِیَا یَا	مَا تُوْفَا مِیَا یَا
كَلَّ مِیَاكَ هُوَا	كَلَّ مِیَاكَ هُوَا
مَوْنَهَ جِیَالِیَا	مَوْنَهَ جِیَالِیَا
مَوْنَهَ اِلَیْهَا	مَوْنَهَ اِلَیْهَا

FIGURE 18 First page of the manuscript of the “Wasiya ya Mabanati” in Ustadh Mau’s handwriting