

مَا مَا مُسْلِمٌ

Mtungaji: Ustadh Mau (Mahmoud Ahmad Abdulkadir), 2005

This poem was written in response to a report in the newspaper *Taifa Jumapili* of 8 May 2005 about how a dog had found an abandoned baby girl in the forest and rescued her, carrying her home in its mouth to the dog's owner. In the face of the general criticism about how a mother could have left her baby like this, the poet argues for greater compassion for the mother, reminding us that we do not know what pressures she was facing.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِمْنِيدِ كُنِينَ قَبْلَ وَنْعِ وَقَاتِ
I have been compelled to talk before my time

سَبَابُ نِمْوَانِ مَا مَا نَعِ هُمَلِيَتِ
because I have seen them condemning my mother

مَا مَا نَعِ مَا كُوسَ هَانِ سِيُوكِ أَمْرَهَتِ
my mother is blameless, she is not the only one who is guilty

كُوسَ هِلِ نَدَ أُمَّتِ
this is everyone's fault

نَدَ أُمَّتِ هِلِ كُوسَ نَ زَانْعُوزِ وَ نَتِ
this is fault of everyone and the leaders of the country

كُوسَ نَدَدَ وَنَ سِيَّاسَ نَ مَا حَكِمُ وَ كُوتِ
the fault belongs to the politicians and the magistrates in the courts

كُوسَ نَدَ وَنِي مَا پِسَ نَ وَ سِيُونِ سَنَتِ
it is the fault of the wealthy and of those who have no money

كُوسَ هِلِ نَدَ أُمَّتِ
this is everyone's fault

٣

مَامَانُغُ سِمَرِيَامُ وَعِمْرَنَ بِنْتِ

my mother is not Maryam the daughter of Imran

مَامَ نِ مَوَانَ أَدُمُ مِشْ هَابَ تِيَاتِ

she is [just] a human being living here on the earth

نَ نِيُوتِنِ مَوَافَهَامُ كُنْ ضَعِيفُ وَقَاتِ

and you all understand there is weakness sometimes

هُشِنْدُوا كُذِّبَتِ

one is incapable of restraining oneself

٤

مَامَا هَكْتَنَدَ پُوكِ نَ لَبْدِ هَاكُكِرِ

[my] mother did not act alone and perhaps she did not consent

أَلِ نَ مُونْدَانِ وَكِ أَلُؤْفَنِي جَاسِرِ

there was a companion of hers who acted as if brave

نَدِيُو مِمِ نَأْمَبِكِ مَامَانُغُ كُمَعَرِ

and that was when I was created to demean my mother

پَاسِنَ يَانُغُ خِيَارِ

without my willing it

٥

ئِكُو كُونِ لَوْمِ لَوْمَ نَ زِتَانْغَانِي

if there is blame let it be spread about

مُكِمْلُئُمُ مَامَا نَاءِ بَابِ مُمَكْنِي

if you blame my mother criticise my father too

نَدِيُو هَائُو يَانَاكُومَ أَبَاغُوزِ مُسِفْنِي

that's when [things] will come to a conclusion don't make a distinction

وَنَوَاكِ مُسِفْنِي

do not oppress women

مِمَّ قَطُّ سَكُبَالٍ مَامَانَعُ كُفْلُكُمْ

I refuse point-blank to criticise my mother

نَ يُّوكُ كُفْلُكُمْ جَلٍ هُوَ نِ كُفْلُكُمْ

and to berate her by herself is to oppress her

كُوَايِ يُّوكُ يَامُبُ هِلٍ أَصِلَانِ هَلِتُمْ

left to herself this issue could not have occurred to start with

هَلُو نِيُوتَ مُوَافَهَامُ

you all understand this

كِتْنَدُ نِكَّ وَوَلٍ أَلِيُو كَايُوكِيَا

it is a joint act -- he offered and she accepted

هُتُّوكُو عَدَلٍ مَامَا يُّوكُ كُفْلُكُمْ

it is not proper to burden my mother alone

هَالِهَتَا جِ دَلِيلٍ وَلَ حُجَّ كُزْنَعِيَا

there is no need of proof or to search for evidence

أَيُو كُلِّ مُمُويَا

every one of us knows

مَنْو هُونِ أَتْنَعُ كِوسِكِي هُنِينِ

we hear too much bitterness listening to people talk

هُمْلُومَ مَامَانَعُ كُوا كُو مَكُوسَ سَانَ

blaming my mother for being at fault

مِمَّ نَ وَنَدَنِ وَنَعُ هَتُّيَاتِ هَاتِ نِنِ

I and those like me do not have even a name

نِ سِنَ أَوْ سِبِنَ

٩

مِنْتَبٍ وَنَعُ مَامَا سَكُوَاكُو هَنِپِنْدِ
my mother abandoned me [but] it was not because she did not love me

نِ بَابَا مِمْسُكُومَ كِسَ كُمُوَاوَكَ لُنْدِ
it was [because] my father pressured her and forced her

نَاءِ كُوَا كُتْ لَوْمَ زَا وَنِي نِدِمَ نَ تَنْدِ
and from fearing blame from gossips and critics

مِنْتَبٍ يَكْ كَانْدِ
she abandoned her light

١٠

نَ اَمِنِ اَنِپِنْدَ مَامَا هَكُنْتُوكِي
I believe she loves me -- my mother does not hate me

نِ لِبِ لِّلُومَشِنْدَ پُمَزِ كُنَزِرُويِ
what prevented her from suffocating me?

تُوكِي سِكُ يَا كُونْدَ دُنِيَانِ مِمِ كُويِ
from the first day I came into this world

نِ رُحَمَ كُنُونِي
it was compassion she felt for me

١١

نَ تَمَانِ نَ تَمَانِ وَنَعُ مَامَا كُمِيَاتَ
I really wish to find my mother

نِ مَوَامِبِي شُكْرَنِ نِ مِپِي أَحْسَنْتَ
so that I can thank her and give her my gratitude

كُوَا كُنِلَكْ تُمْبُونِ هَاتَ سِكُ زِكَاپِتَ
for sustaining me in her womb until the days passed

نَدِي نَامِ كَفُوتَ
I was lucky

١٢ هُمِيجِي سِلُوتِ مَامَانُغْ كُؤَا وَكْ وَمَ

I give my mother a salute for her goodness

كُؤَا كُنُوتَ نِكِتِ مَاتُومُبُونِ كُؤَا سَلَامَ
for letting me stay in her womb in safety

نَ وَلَ سِمَلِتِ كُؤَا اَلْلُوفَنِي مَامَا
and do not blame her either for what she did, my mother,

اَلْتَنَدَ كُؤَا لَزِمَ
she did it from necessity

١٣ مِنتَاتِي تَمْبَارَ كُسُدِ كُنْدِبِتِ
she wrapped me in cloth in order to protect me

نِسِيَاتِ لَمَظَرَ كِنُوكَ كَاثُ نِتِ
so that I should not come to harm, putting me on dry land

بَارِدِ اِنْغِنَكَرَ نِ كَاكُتُؤَا نِ مِئْتِ
the cold would have hurt me and I would have been found dead

اَلْلُوفَنِي سِكَاتِ
what she did was no small thing

١٤ قَبَلِ يَا كُمَلِرَ كُفْنُغْ يَانُغْ قَوْلِ
before finishing and closing my statement

وَلِمُونُغْ نُولِرَ تَزَاوَ مَارَ يَا پِلِ
I ask people -- will I be born a second time?

هَاكُونِ تَكَاءُوزَ كُؤَا وَ مَامَا بَدَلِ
there is no-one who would be able to be my mother in her place

نَشُكُرُ وَفَاضِلِ
I am grateful to my benefactors

وَمَ وَنْ سَاكَاَنِ نَوَ مَبَوَا مَشْهُورِ

I do not dispute your kindness and that of the famous dog

مُمِ نِ تَنْدَ حَسَانِ مُمِ نِ فَنِّي مَازُورِ

you have done me a favour you have done me a good turn

وَنَعَالِكُو دُنْيَانِ وَجَ وَپِنْدَاءُ خِرِ

there are still those in the world who love to do good

تَمَّتْ هَآپَ شَرِّ

I conclude my poem here

محمود احمد عبد القادر

لَا مُ ٩/٥/٢٠٠٥