

A COLLECTION OF 100 MBEERE PROVERBS KENYA



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NAIROBI KENYA

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

My Dear Parents

AND TO

All the readers and African culture lovers, who find ancestral wisdom, guidance and inspiration to be of benefit in their daily lives, and the lives of the future generations.

INTRODUCTION

The *Mbeere* people are one of the Bantu ethnic groups of Kenya in East Africa. They speak the *Kimbeere* dialect of the Embu language. There is a lexical similarity of 85%. They live on the south-eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya. This area is surrounded by several hills: Kiambere, Kianjiru, Kianyangwa and Kiambita.

Their myth of origin states that they trekked from *Rukanga* (the ocean), beyond the Balana (Borana) lands, past the eastern Kenya border, believed to be the modern Ethiopia. They then moved along the Tana River, upstream to *Igamba Ng'ombe* (literally: *where the sound of cows is heard*). They moved further along the *Thuci* River, and settled at *Kiambere* hill (*kirima kia andu a mbere* – the hill of the first inhabitants), which they named so because it had been deserted, and they were the first people to settle there. During their stay they encountered raids from the surrounding tribes which were hostile; the Kamba and Maasai (*ukavi*). They were also attacked by a European race they called *Rura*, believed to have been the Portuguese. They fought them back successfully, ensuring their lands were not taken away from them.

The *Wambeere* have two root clans: *Mururi* and *Ndamata*. The clan system provided a support system, a sense of belonging and cohesion, because it consisted of a people who could trace their lineage to a common ancestor. A governing team called *Athamaki* was the highest council of elders with absolute authority and good sense of justice. Generation age-sets (*nthuke*) made laws and handled religious matters such as community rituals and sacrifices. The main ones were two: *Thathi* and *Nyangi*. Religion was traditional. They believed in supernatural powers and the superior power *Mwene Nyaga* (*owner of brightness*) lived on Kirinyaga (Mt. Kenya). Clans had their individual shrines. Prophets and Seers foretold on matters such as weather, raids and administration matters. Medicine men healed the sick with herbs and oil from the ram. Christianity and modern education was introduced to the tribe in 1934, through the tribesmen who went to work in the sisal and coffee plantations in Kikuyu land.

The *Wambeere* did not have a stratified society, but lived in communities with mutual interdependence as families, social units and individuals. Originally they were hunter-gatherers, but turned to farming and pastoral activities due to interaction with the Maasai, Kamba and Kikuyu who bordered their land. Land was individually owned, but adjacent encouraging collective farming. Some families were polygamous, but harmony reigned because all the wives were treated equally. All their huts were built in one compound to serve all members of the family. Their entrances faced the main communal compound, which promoted association with each other. Initiation ceremonies were a cultural pillar, giving the initiates the education they needed in preparation for adulthood. Marriage, cultivating, harvesting, herding, dancing and storytelling were communal activities enjoyed by all, adults and children. Today, the *Wambeere* have embraced a modern lifestyle, although culture and traditions still influence them greatly.

The Tana River runs along the southern border of the Mbeere land. The Seven Forks hydro-electricity generating dams are constructed on this river, generating income and job opportunities. The Mwea Game Reserve extends to these dams, providing water for wildlife, and economic benefits from tourism. Sand harvesting and quarries are large economic ventures, providing high quality building materials for the surrounding region.

THE MBEERE ETHNOGRACAL LOCATION IN KENYA



NB: The Mbeere occupy the cream-yellow region.

A COLLECTION OF MBEERE (KENYA) PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

1. *Akua utune ta nguku*

English: He has died innocently like the red beaked, red-crested bird.

Kiswahili: Amekufa bila makosa kama yule ndege mwenye mdomo na tundu nyekundu.

Teaching: It is used to show that someone gets victimized or misjudged by their appearance, when they are innocent.

Bible parallel: John 7:24 *“Do not judge by appearance, but judge with right judgment.”*
Mathew 7:1-5 *“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged”*

2. *Cia mucii ti como!*

English: Family matters are not exposed to everyone.

Kiswahili: Mambo ya jamii hayafai kuzungumzwa nje ya boma.

Teaching: It teaches that family issues should not be told to outsiders. Keep private issues between those concerned with them.

Bible parallel: Psalm 25:20 *“Oh guard my life and deliver me; let me not be put to shame for I take refuge in thee.”*

3. *Gucura kwa yage tikuo gutwika.*

English: The heavy hanging of the fruit does not mean it will fall from the tree.

Kiswahili: Kuvunjika kwa mwiko sio mwisho wa kupika.

Teaching: Serious problems or sickness should not cause you to despair. There is always a chance to make things change to be better.

Bible parallel: Exodus 14:13 *“Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring today.”*

4. *Guoya niyo yengivirie ngoyo.*

English: Fear caused the increase number of “ngoyo” birds.

Kiswahili: Uoga ulizidisha idadi ya ndege ‘ngoyo’.

Teaching: It is used to encourage people to be careful about everything they do. ‘fear’ doing wrong things. Being careful gives you a longer and peaceful life.

Bible parallel: Mathew 25:46 *“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment ; but the righteous into life eternal.”*

5. ***Gutiri muthamaki utagutagwa.***

English: There is no king who is not gossiped about.

Kiswahili: Kila mfalme husengenywa.

Teaching: People in authority are prone to slander and criticism. One should not be distracted by such talk, but should focus on their endeavours.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 11:13 *He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing hidden.*”

6. ***Gutiri muthenya ukecaga ta wingi.***

English: No day dawns like another.

Kiswahili: Kila siku hukeshwa tofauti na ingine.

Teaching: it is used to encourage people to realize that situations are not constant. They change throughout life. They can change from bad to good and vice versa.

Bible parallel: Philippians 4:6 *“Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanks giving let your requests be made known to God.”*
Proverbs 27:1 *“Do not boast about tomorrow for you do not know what a day may bring forth.”*

7. ***Gutiri mwii na mucuthiriria.***

English: There is no difference between a thief and his accomplice.

Kiswahili: Hakuna mwizi na msaidizi wake. Wote ni wezi.

Teaching: It is used to teach that evil is evil whatever the distinction, and is not acceptable. An associate of an evil doer is all as bad.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 13:20 *“He who walks with wise men becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”*

Romans 1:32 *“Though they know God’s decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them.”*

8. ***Gutiri nthitho ya mundu umwe.***

English: There is no secret of one person.

Kiswahili: Hakuna siri ya mtu mmoja.

Teaching: It is used to warn that a person will usually tell another about an issue which is meant to be kept secret. The second party will forget and tell it out to another. It hence becomes public knowledge.

Bible parallel: Luke 8:17 *“For nothing is hid that shall not be made manifest, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light”*

9. *Gutiri undu utari kiambiriria kiaguo.*

English: Everything has its origin.

Kiswahili: Kila jambo lina mwanzo wake.

Teaching: All issues have a starting point; a source where they all begin.

Bible parallel: Genesis 1:1 *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”*

Genesis 2:7 *“...then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”*

10. *Gutiri utuku utakecaga.*

English: Every night dawns to day.

Kiswahili: Kila usiku hukusha kuwa mchana. (Baada ya dhiki faraja).

Teaching: It encourages that problems and difficulties may be present, but are never permanent. They come to an end at some time.

Bible parallel: 2 Peter 3:9 *“The Lord is not slow about his promises as some count slowness, but is forbearing towards you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance.”*

11. *Gikaro kimwe gitocagwa mbui.*

English: One cannot collect feathers from one place.

Kiswahili: Manyoya ya ndege hayaokotwi mahali pamoja.

Teaching: One should not be fixated on one opinion or activity (endeavour), but should be flexible in order to be more successful.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 25:15 *“With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone.”*

12. *Ikirega kuura igwatagia rukungi.*

English: When the rain fails to pour, it blames the wind.

Kiswahili: Mvua ikikosa kunyesha hulaumu upepo.

Teaching: Lame excuses do not solve problems. Always give feasible reasons for failure to perform a duty or fulfill an expectation. Never blame the circumstances.

Bible parallel: Genesis 3:13 *“Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”*

13. *Imenyagwa yari iria yakua.*

English: It is when the cow dies that you realize it provided milk.

Kiswahili: Ng’ombe akifa ndio hujulikana alikuwa akitoa maziwa.

Teaching: It teaches that the value of a person, animal or asset is only realized when they are no longer available to be useful. Nothing should be taken for granted.

Bible parallel: Luke 2:49 *“And he said to them, ‘Why were you looking for me: Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?’*

14. Iri ngure ndici iriuko.

English: When chased suddenly from the watering hole by an enemy, it does not remember its regular crossing.

Kiswahili: Ikitimuliwa na adui, huwa haikumbuki kivukio ambacho imezoea.

Teaching: It teaches that when a problem arises, and urgent help is required, a person seeks for assistance from all areas; even from strangers.

Bible parallel: Hebrews 13:16 *“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”*

15. Kanua werire!

English: Mouth you bite yourself.

Kiswahili: Mdomo hujuma. (Ulimi unauma kuliko meno.)

Teaching: Some people damage themselves by what they speak – or cause other people anguish and misery. Therefore, one should think twice before expressing their thoughts.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 10:19 *“When words are too many, transgression is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is prudent.”*

16. Kanya gatuneni mwamukaniro.

English: A gourd gets smooth because of being passed around by many hands.

Kiswahili: Nipe nikupe; faida hutokana na kushirikiana.

Teaching: Something becomes useful and meaningful when it is shared among many. Friendship strengthens by sharing and doing things for each other.

Bible parallel: 1 Corinthians 12:26 *“If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.”*

17. Kanyiri kainagua ni mwene.

English: A tail feather can only be waved by its owner.

Kiswahili: Manyoya yam kia hutingishwa na mwenyewe.

Teaching: It is used to warn that only the person concerned with a matter bothers with it. An outsider cannot be concerned deeply. So someone should not wait for others to do things for them.

Bible parallel: Romans 14:12 *“So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.”*

18. Kari guoya kenukire ng'ina; kari urume kenukirie ng'ina ruvara

English: The coward ran back to his mother; the brave one went back to her with scratches.

Kiswahili: Aliyenauoga hutoroka na kumrudia mamake; aliye shujaa humrudia baada ya vita.

Teaching: Self-defence is not the same as making a cowardly retreat. Care and caution are always advisable because it is the law of nature.

Bible parallel: Ephesians 6:14-17 *“Stand therefore, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”*

19. Kathunya ka mwana munyi kauragira njarari.

English: A child loses his treasured item as he holds it in his hand.

Kiswahili: Mtoto hupoteza kitu anacho kidhamini kikiwa mkononi mwake.

Teaching: A young/inexperienced person has little wisdom to enable him to take care of his property.

Bible parallel: Jeremiah 1:6 *“Then I said “Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth.”*

1 Kings 3:7 *“O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.”*

20. Kavuthia kavarurukirie mwatu.

English: Assuming causes the ruins of the beehive.

Kiswahili: Kukosa kshughulika uharibu mzinga wa nyuki.

Teaching: It teaches that careless behaviour can result in very serious problems.

Bible parallel: Ephesians 5:15-17 *“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”*

21. Kiara kimwe gitiuragaga ndaa.

English: One finger cannot crush a louse.

Kiswahili: Kidole kimoja hakiui chawa.

Teaching: One cannot be successful doing things alone. Collaboration with other people results in greater success. Unity is strength.

Bible parallel: Ecclesiastes 4:9 *“Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow; but if woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up.”*

22. Kienjagwa uria mwene akwenda.

English: The head is shaved as the owner wishes.

Kiswahili: Kichwa hunyolewa vile mwenyewe atakavyo.

Teaching: Choice about any matter in life is made only by oneself, in all situations, whether good or bad. Others cannot make a final decision for you.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 19:21 *“Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.”*

23. Kiguuta kigwatagia muro.

English: A lazy worker blames his tools.

Kiswahili: Mvivu huvilaumu vyombo vya kazi.

Teaching: One should not give lame excuses when he fails to perform or to achieve a goal. One should accept his weaknesses/inabilities.

Bible parallel: John 10:33 *“The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.”*

24. Kindu kioneku gitiikagirwa muvuthia.

English: What is available to you should not be taken for granted.

Kiswahili: Usukidharau kidogo unachokipata.

Teaching: Value and seize the opportunity you get because it may never present itself again. What is available is more valuable and useful to you than what you wish for.

Bible parallel: Psalms 118:22 *“The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.”* Verse 24 *“This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”*

25. Kiratu gitumagwa na ikinyo ria mwene.

English: The shoe is fitted according to the size of the wearer.

Kiswahili: Kiatu hupimwa kutumia wayo wa yule atakayekivaa.

Teaching: One should assume only the responsibilities which befit him and not beyond one's abilities, because he will fail in the endeavours.

Bible parallel: Philippians 4:13 *“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”*

26. Kirema arume nikigariure.

English: Nothing is impossible to men.

Kiswahili: Hakuna jambo lisilowezezana.

Teaching: All problems can be solved, however difficult, by manipulating solutions which are available.

Bible parallel: Mathew 19:26 *“But Jesus looked at them and said to them “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”*

27. Kirimu ni ta mwatu.

English: A fool is like a beehive.

Kiswahili: Mjinga ni kama mzinga wa nyuki.

Teaching: It teaches that a person needs to have foresight, not live without ambition. Even when one is already comfortable, have plans for even a better future.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 18:2 *“A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinions.”*

28. Kironda kia mwene gitinungaga.

English: One’s own wound does not smell.

Kiswahili: Chako kikioza hakikunukii. (*Nyani haoni kundule*)

Teaching: Nobody sees their own weaknesses and defects however serious they may be, but is quick to see those of others. It is also used to teach that people should value what is theirs, even if it is not the best.

Bible parallel: Mathew 7:3 *“Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?”*

29. Kivoto kiunaga uta mutunge.

English: A just answer breaks a set bow.

Kiswahili: Maneno matamu humtoa nyoka pangoni.

Teaching: Revenge is appeased by reasonableness. A soft answer turns away wrath.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 16:24 *“Pleasant words are like a honey comb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.”*

30. Kunuva gutiricagwa.

English: Selfishness cannot be eaten.

Kiswahili: Uchoyo hauna faida yoyote.

Teaching: Being mean does not benefit a person in any way. Sharing is most beneficial.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 23:6-8 *“Do not eat the bread of a man who is stingy; do not desire his delicacies; for he is like one who is inwardly reckoning “Eat and drink” he says to you; but his heart is not with you.”*

31. Kuria muno ni kuoria nda.

English: Gluttony rots the stomach.

Kiswahili: Ulafi huuliwa na tamaa yake.

Teaching: Do not be greedy in anything.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 23:4-5 *“Do not toil to acquire wealth; be wise enough to desist. When your eyes light upon it, it is gone; for suddenly it takes to itself wings, flying like an eagle towards heaven.”*

32. Kurivwa nai gukirite gutavwa.

English: Better to be paid in bits, than let your assets be taken away from you.

Kiswahili: Heri kupata kidogo kuliko kukosa kabisa. (*Heri nitakula na nini kuliko nitakula nini*).

Teaching: It is preferable to be paid a debt slowly however long it takes, than not to be paid at all; reclaim and accept what is offered as payment, than to lose everything (bad debt).

Bible parallel: Psalm 37:21 *“The wicked borrows but does not pay back, but the righteous is generous and gives.”*

33. Kuthekua ti kwendwa.

English: To be smiled at is not to be loved.

Kiswahili: Ukipewa tabasamu sio kupendwa.

Teaching: One should be careful of pretences in other people. They may pretend to be your friends, but they are foe.

Bible parallel: Mark 7:6-7 *“And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.”*

34. Kuthii gutigiragia mundu acoka.

English: Departure does not prevent one from returning.

Kiswahili: Kuanza safari hakumkatalii msafiri kurudi.

Teaching: It is used when teaching that a person can change his mind about their opinion about a matter, or a decision they may have made previously.

Bible parallel: Jeremiah 29: 14 *“I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.”*

35. Kuthii mbere ti gutava.

English: Arriving ahead does not mean success in the raid.

Kiswahili: Kutangulia sio kufaulu kupata.

Teaching: Doing things ahead of other people does not assure you of achieving your goal. What is important is doing things the right way.

Bible parallel: Colossians 3:17 *“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”*

36. *Kuuga na gwika.*

English: Say it and do it.

Kiswahili: Muungwana ni vitendo.

Teaching: It teaches that a person should act upon what he says, not just saying things. (Actions speak louder than words)

Bible parallel: James 2:17 *“So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead”*

37. *Kwaria wega gukirite kuvecana.*

English: Speaking well is better than offering gifts.

Kiswahili: Heri maneno matamu kuliko zawadi zingine.

Teaching: Polite/kind words are more valuable than offering tangible gifts to a person.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 15:1 *“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”*

38. *Ma ndikucaga.*

English: Truth never dies.

Kiswahili: Ukweli hudumu.

Teaching: It is used to encourage people to always tell the truth. The truth always prevails. It cannot be hidden and will finally stand out from lies and untruths.

Bible parallel: 2 Kings 12:15 *“And they did not ask an accounting from the men into whose hand they delivered the money to pay out to the workmen, for they dealt honestly.”*

39. *Mbiti ndithinjagirwa kairi.*

English: No hyena deserves to be entertained twice.

Kiswahili: Fisi hafai kuandaliwa mara ya pili.

Teaching: One should not keep repeating their mistakes. It is acceptable to err the first time, but not a repeat.

Bible parallel: Hebrews 10:26-27 *“For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries.”*

40. Mbogo nyingi itiri nyama.

English: A herd of buffaloes has no meat.

Kiswahili: Nyati wengi hawana matokeo mema.

Teaching: Organizing an unruly crowd, to work productively, is impossible. One has to divide them into smaller groups in order to be able to take control. Fewer people undertaking a duty are more productive than a large number.

Bible parallel: Mark 15:11-13 *“But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead. And Pilate said again to them, “Then what shall I do with the man whom you call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again “Crucify him.”*”

41. Mburia ithwire mai mayo.

English: A rhino hates the sight of its faeces.

Kiswahili: Kikulacho ki nguoni mwako.

Teaching: It is used to teach that one should beware of those persons associated or related to you, because they may not wish to help you succeed in your endeavours. They can ruin you, pretending to be in your support.

Bible parallel: Genesis 37: 18-20 (Joseph followed his brothers to Dothan). *“They saw him afar off, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. They said to one another, “Here comes the dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild beast has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams.”*

42. Mburia kiara ivuragia kaviu ga kumithinja.

English: The finger teases the knife which will slaughter it.

Kiswahili: Mchimba kaburi huingia mwenyewe.

Teaching: It is used to teach that when one does bad/wrongful things intending to harm other people, he harms himself instead.

Bible parallel: Daniel 6:24 (After Daniel was found innocent and was taken out of the den of lions) *“And the king commanded, and those men who had accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions – they, their children, and their wives; and before they reached the bottom of the den the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.”*

43. Mucera na mukundu akundukaga taguo.

English: Anyone who associates with a bad person also becomes bad. (*Birds of a feather flock together*).

Kiswahili: Rafiki wa muovu ni muovu pia.

Teaching: A person gets negatively influenced in behavior and character by the bad people he associates with in his daily life.

Bible parallel: 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 “*Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Be’lial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?*”

44. Muketha utuku ndaici kinoru.

English: One who harvests at night does not know the healthy millet.

Kiswahili: Anayevuna usiku hajui kimono.

Teaching: It teaches that whatever a person in need has available to him should be appreciated, since there is no alternative; he does not have anything else.

Bible parallel: John 6:37 “*All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*”

45. Mundu mugo ndari ngumo kwao.

English: A medicineman has no fame in his home.

Kiswahili: Mganga hana sifa kwao.

Teaching: Familiarity makes someone fail to appreciate the abilities of another person.

Bible parallel: 2 Kings 5:10-11 Prophet Elisha sent a messenger to Naaman saying “*Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean.*” Naaman was angry and went away....

Luke 4:24 “*Trully, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country.*”

46. Muria na kavaca namenyaga muria na njara nuravia.

English: The one who eats with a spoon does not know the one using fingers is burning.

Kiswahili: Anayekula kwa kijiko husahau kwamba anayekula kwa vidole anachomeka.

Teaching: It is used when teaching about a person who is having a comfortable life, but who does not remember to assist those who are in need of his support.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 19:4 “*Wealth brings many new friends, but a poor man is deserted by his friend.*”

47. Muria weka akucaga weka.

English: One who eats alone dies alone.

Kiswahili: Nyati mwenda pweke, windo rahisi la mwindaji.

Teaching: When one lives in isolation, he does not get help from other people when he needs it. Association with other people is necessary for one to succeed in his endeavours. Be generous and share your wealth.

Bible parallel: 1 Timothy 5:8 *“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”*

48. Murimi tiwe uricaga.

English: The one who tends the crop is not the one who consumes.

Kiswahili: Mkulima hali peke yake.

Teaching: It teaches that one should learn to share their successes with others. Let others benefit from your work too.

Bible parallel: Ruth 2:15-16 *(When Ruth got up to glean)“...Boaz instructed his young men , saying “Let her even glean among the sheaves, and not reproach her. And also pull out some from the bundles for her, and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her.”*

49. Murimia ndari karo (muro) gatuvu.

English: One who tills the land does not consider any hoe as brunt.

Kiswahili: Mkokoto wa jembe si bure, hata alime pole pole hatimaye atafanikiwa.

Teaching: It teaches that one has to work very hard and tirelessly to earn a living by whatever means.

Bible parallel: Colossians 3:23-24 *“Whatever your task, work heartily as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward, you are serving the Lord Christ.”*

50. Murume wa aka airi ndathekaga.

English: The husband of two wives does not laugh.

Kiswahili: Bwana wa mabibi wawili huwa hacheiki.

Teaching: A polygamous marriage has a double share of problems and disputes. Hence there is no joy in their lives usually.

Bible parallel: Mathew 6: 24 *“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other...”*

51. Muthii eci kuria aumite, nwati ndeci kuria athiite.

English: The traveler knows where he is coming from, not where he is going.

Kiswahili: Msafiri hujua atokako, lakini siaendako.

Teaching: It is used to teach that one cannot predict the results of their plans, until they are accomplished. You can hope and see a good things ahead, but things can change.

Bible parallel: Mathew 6:25 *“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”*

52. Muthii ndaumbikaga irigu.

English: The traveler does not bury his banana in the fire.

Kiswahili: Msafiri ni aliye pwani. Fanya mambo mapema badala ya kungojea kulifanya hapo mwisho.

Teaching: Do not undertake another duty before completing the previous one. Do not leave unfinished/unresolved matters pending. Other circumstances interfere and can prevent you from completing.

Bible parallel: 2 Corinthians 8:11 *“So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have.”*

53. Mutinu nduri njamba.

English: Misfortune knows no hero.

Kiswahili: Mikosi haina shujaa.

Teaching: It is used to encourage people that misfortunes/troubles and bad luck can befall anybody, regardless of status, gender or age. Everyone can expect to experience misfortune sometime in their life, but will overcome it.

Bible parallel: 1 Corinthians 10:13 *“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common too man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”*

54. Muvoi ndauragia gukathima.

English: A beggar does not need to extract fats from meat.

Kiswahili: Anayeomba omba ahitaji kuchoma mafuta kutoka kwa nyama.

Teaching: It teaches that a person with nothing does not have a choice about what he is offered. At least he has something at hand. So a person who asks for help should not disregard whatever he is given.

Bible parallel: Acts 15:8 “*And God who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he had to us.*”

55. Muuri ari njira yake.

English: One who is bound to stray follows a defined path.

Kiswahili: Asiye sikia la mkuu huvunjika guu.

Teaching: It is used to warn a person who does not heed advice that he will get into problems.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 13:1 “*A wise son hears his father’s instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.*”

56. Mwakiriria nyungu igiri imwe nirunguraga.

English: One who cooks two pots never fails to burn one.

Kiswahili: Mwangaza mbili moja humponyoka.

Teaching: It warns that person cannot pay attention to two things at the same time. It advises that one should make priority to handle one thing at a time, and it will be successful.

Bible parallel: Ecclesiastes 3:1 (- 9) “*For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven.....*”

57. Mwana muugi ndari muvere wa ndeto.

English: An intelligent child does not have to be instructed in too many words.

Kiswahili: Mwana mwerevu hafanunuliwi mambo kwa maneno mengi.

Teaching: It teaches that Intelligence and wisdom helps a person to understand matters easily and quickly.

Bible parallel: Revelations 3:22 “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*”

58. Mwana ni toria wingi.

English: All children are of similar value.

Kiswahili: Watoto wote ni sawa.

Teaching: It teaches that children should not be discriminated. They are all valuable to the family/community, regardless of their background, abilities and physical appearance.

Bible parallel: Psalms 127:3 “*Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb, a reward.*”

59. Mwana uri matu aricaga matu make.

English: An obedient child benefits from his obedience.

Kiswahili: Mwana mtiivu hufaidika maishani.

Teaching: A person who heeds advice succeeds in his endeavours. People want to associate with him and also to assist him.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 3:1-2 *“My son do not forget my teaching, but in your heart keep my commandments for length of days and years of life and abundance will they give you.”*

60. Mwere mwega umenyagwa na ngetho.

English: A good millet crop is known by its yields.

Kiswahili: Mazao mazuri hujulikana wakati wa kuchuma maweale.

Teaching: Matters are judged to be good at the end when they are completed. It is used when teaching that one should not judge others before scrutinizing and understanding them fully.

Bible parallel: 1 Samuel 16:7 *“But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature ,because I have rejected him; for the Lord sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”*

61. Mwetereri ndanogaga.

English: One who waits does not tire.

Kiswahili: Anaye subiri hachoki.

Teaching: It is used to teach that a person needs to be patient in order to be rewarded by achieving an objective. .

Bible parallel: James 5:7 *“Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receives the early and the late rain.”*

62. Nauma kia makanga nathii kia macikari.

English: I have come from an unruly situation to one of extreme rules and order. (From the fire into the frying pan)

Kiswahili: Nimetoka kwa makanga nikaenda kwa askari.

Teaching: It is used to express change of situation from bad to worse. One may think they are in a bad situation and seek an alternative one. Surprisingly, they find that the alternative is even worse.

Bible parallel: James 1:12 *“Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him.”*

63. Ndinakworota ni kara keveta.

English: I have not pointed at you; its my finger which bent.

Kiswahili: Sijakunyoshea kidole; kimejikunja.

Teaching: The pointing of an accusing finger at someone does not really disclose the details of what mistakes he has done. It is used as a warning that one needs to correct their mistakes and not repeat them in future.

Bible parallel: 2 Timothy 4:2 *“Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”*

2 Thessalonians 3:15 *“Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.”*

64. Ndiocagwa na mata ta nthua.

English: You cannot trap me with saliva the way you do a flea.

Kiswahili: Huwezi kunishika na mate kama kiroboto. (Huwezi kunishawishi kutenda jambo kama sitaki.)

Teaching: Do not let anyone coerce you into doing the things you do not wish to be involved in; or let others take you for granted.

Bible parallel: Romans 1:28 *“And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God. God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.”*

65. Ndugacuke ithiga wikarire manji.

English: Do not gossip or plan evil about a rock when you are sitting in water.

Kiswahili: Usisengenye jiwe kama umekalia maji.

Teaching: It teaches that one should not gossip or plan evil against someone when their relative is present. They will report to them. Therefore, do not discuss or plan evil against anyone.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 3:29 *“Do not plan evil against your neighbor who dwells trustingly beside you”*

James 4:11 *“Do not speak evil against one another....”*

66. Ndukagurwe ni nja mwaro.

English: Do not be attracted by the outward appearance of a homestead.

Kiswahili: Hakuna kizuri kisicho na dosari. Usidanganyike na sura ya mtu au kitu.

Teaching: Outward appearance is misleading. A person or situation may seem appealing or comfortable, but it is not so. *(All that glitters is not gold).*

Bible parallel: Psalm 12:2 *“Everyone utters lies to his neighbour with flattering lips and a double heart they speak.”*

67. Ndukanatheke nthongo ndunavitia kumigia.

English: Do not laugh at a mono-eye because you can become one.

Kiswahili: Achekaye kilema hafi hakijamfika.

Teaching: Do not enjoy other people's misfortunes. They could befall you too.

Bible parallel: Philippians 2:3 *"Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."*

68. Ndutecagwa utemukandie.

English: The bone is only thrown away after it is cracked to reach the marrow.

Kiswahili: Mfupa hautupwi hadi uvunjwe.

Teaching: It is used in encouragement that someone should not give up on an issue before they have struggled to seek an alternative solution to solve the problem.

Bible parallel: Ephesians 2:4-6 *"But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus..."*

69. Ngi imwe yoragia muthuri.

English: One fly spoils the soup.

Kiswahili: Inzi mmoja huharibu supu.

Teaching: It is used when warning that a minor mistake can spoil all good plans. One person's mistake can cause a major failure of a good intention.

Bible parallel: Ezekiel 28:15 *"You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you."*

70. Ngiariria kiri nthi wana kiri itara nikiregua.

English: When I speak to the one below, even the one in the rafter hears.

Kiswahili: Nikiongea na aliye chini hata aliye juu anasikia.

Teaching: It warns that a person should not secretly curse or speak negatively of another because he will know at a certain time. Someone may hear you and will be displeased, then go to inform. Even if you speak indirectly without indicating that you were discussing him. *(Even walls have ears).*

Bible parallel: Proverbs 25:9-10 *"Argue your case with your neighbour himself, and do not disclose another's secret: lest he who hears you bring shame upon you, and your ill repute have no end"*

71. Ngingo ndikiraga kiongo.

English: The neck does not go above the head.

Kiswahili: Shingo haipiti kichwa.

Teaching: Respect those in authority/your superiors because you cannot compete or be equal with them. Also respect those who are older than you.

Bible parallel: Colossians 3:22 *“Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not with eye service as men pleasures but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord.”*

72. Ngomi ndivagia mwatu.

English: The chisel does not damage the beehive.

Kiswahili: Kifaa kinachotumika kuchonga mzinga hakiuharibu.

Teaching: It teaches that when one is being corrected, he should realize he is being assisted and not being harmed. Accept corrections and positive criticism.

Bible parallel: Isaiah 8:11 *“For the Lord spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me and warned me not to walk in the way of these people,…”*

Job 5:17 *“Behold happy is the man whom God approves, therefore despise not the chastening of the Almighty.”*

73. Ngwaci ya mwana wene niyo ivoragia mwaki.

English: The sweet potato of another’s child is the one used to put off the fire.

Kiswahili: Kiazi cha mototo wa mwengine ndicho huzima moto.

Teaching: One does not see the errors in oneself, but sees those of other people. They feel self-righteous.

Bible parallel: Romans 14:10 *“Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;”*

74. Ngwiririria rwitiki, kienyu kiri munengerwa.

English: I long to eat the crumbs; the bigger chunk belongs to another.

Kiswahili: Nangoja kula makombo; kipande kina mwenyewe.

Teaching: It warns against discriminating against people. It is not right to favour one person and especially openly; treat them equally.

Bible parallel: Galatians 3:28 *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

Luke 16:20 *“And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table:..”*

75. Nigitu na ndumo.

English: The calabash/gourd is leaking at the seams.

Kiswahili: Bufuu la buyu lina mwaga kwenye pindo zake.

Teaching: It is used to express that a problem that presented itself has become more serious; it has not improved or changed. A situation which seems not to be solvable.

Bible parallel: Mathew 11:28-30 *“Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

76. Nikava kumenwa kuri kuthiganwa.

English: You would rather be disliked naturally than to be judged.

Kiswahili: Afadhali unichukie bila sababu, badala ya kunihukumu.

Teaching: It is used as a warning to teach that when people know too much about your weaknesses or bad habits, they can use them against you, in order to ensure you fail.

Bible parallel: Luke 17:3 *“Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him...”*

Romans 2:3 *“Do you suppose, O man, that when you judge those who do such things, and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God?”*

77. Njamba ti ikere.

English: Do not judge a warrior by the strength of his muscles.

Kiswahili: Usidharau wembamba wa reli, kwani gari la moshi hupitia juu yake.

Teaching: The strength of the body must be matched with the strength of the mind. Mental strength is more valuable than physical strength.

Bible parallel: 1 Samuel 17:47 *“...and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord’s and he will give you into our hand.”*

78. Njara nyingi imenanagira nyunguri.

English: Many hands disagree when at the cooking pot.

Kiswahili: Mikono mingi haiwezi kushirikiana kwenye chungu cha kupikia.

Teaching: It teaches about sharing. It warns that people are able to work together as a team in many activities for a common goal. However, disagreements usually arise when they have to share the wealth/profits acquired. Some must want to be selfish.

Bible parallel: Philippians 2:4 *“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

Acts 2:44 *“And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and distributed them to all, as any had need.”*

79. Njira ndikanagia muthii.

English: The path does not stop the walker from making the journey.

Kiswahili: Njia haikanyi msafiri kuendelea na safari.

Teaching: It is used as a warning against planning and doing unacceptable things, regardless of one being dissuaded from it.

Bible parallel: 2 Chronicles 7:19-20 *“But if you turn aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will pluck you up from the land which I have given you; and this house, which I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all people.”*

80. Njira ndivurukagia mugendi.

English: The footpath does not offer rest to the sojourner.

Kiswahili: Njia haimpumzishi msafiri./Aingiae msituni atarejea na kuni.

Teaching: It teaches that other people or barriers cannot and should not stop a person from working hard to earn a comfortable living.

Bible parallel: 1Thessalonians 4:11-12 *“And to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.”*

81. Nthucira ndithiraga mauru.

English: The inspection of a beehive never lacks disagreements.

Kiswahili: Ukaguzi wa mzinga haukosi vurugu.

Teaching: It is used as a warning that when you send someone to perform any duty on your behalf, you will usually find that it was not performed perfectly, to meet your expectations, as you would have done yourself. It therefore, encourages a person to rely on themselves in order to get satisfaction of their work.

Bible parallel: 2Timothy 3:17 *“That the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”*

Hebrew6:10 *“For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.”*

82. Nyungu ithekaga rugio.

English: The pot laughs at the half calabash.

Kiswahili: Ajabu ya ngamia kucheka tundu la ng’ombe.

Teaching: One laughs and teases the one with weaknesses, and does not see his own; which may be the same or worse.

Bible parallel: Mathew 7:3 *“Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?”*

83. Riua ritietagiririra muthii.

English: The sun does not wait for the traveler.

Kiswahili: Jua halimsubiri msafiri.

Teaching: Seize an opportunity when it presents itself. When you delay, it passes you by. If one chooses to undertake an endeavour let him do so without first doubting and wasting time. Others will take his chance and do it for themselves.

Bible parallel: Judges 9:33 *“Then in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, rise early and rush upon the city; and when he and the men that are with him come out against you, you may do to them as occasion offers.”*

84. Ruku ruri itara ruthekaga ruri riko.

English: The firewood in the rafters laughs at the one in the fire.

Kiswahili: Usifurahie shida za mwenzio. Kesho huenda ukapatikana pia.

Teaching: Do not enjoy another’s misfortune. It may soon befall you.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 1:26 *“I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when panic strikes you...”*

85. Runji rutwaraga mbutia.

English: A river drowns even the best swimmer.

Kiswahili: Hata anayejua kuogelea sana hufa maji.

Teaching: It is used as a warning that even the person who has the best knowledge can make mistakes and gets into problems.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 1:7 *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instructions.”*

86. Rurigi rwetagiriria mukwa

English: A string waits to become a rope.

Kiswahili: Uzi hungojea kuwa kamba.

Teaching: It is used to encourage a person that whatever small or insignificant thing or asset you have is useful, as you wait to make bigger accomplishments in life.

Bible parallel: Romans 8:25 *“But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”*

87. Rurigi rwetagiriria mukwa

English: A string waits to become a rope.

Kiswahili: Rudi pale mwanzo ukajiunde upya.

Teaching: This is used to advise a person when they are involved in negative acts or unacceptable decisions, to rethink, and change positively.

Bible parallel: Acts 3:19 *“Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”*

88. Toro ndiri murata.

English: Sleep has no friend.

Kiswahili: Usingizi hauna rafiki.

Teaching: Idleness and laziness does not build one’s progress. A hard worker finds favour with other people, but a lazy/idle person has no associates.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 6:10 *“A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a vagabond, and want like an armed man.”*

89. Ugaciara ngiongagia.

English: You will give birth as I breastfeed.

Kiswahili: Utazaa wakati nitakuwa nikinyonyesha.

Teaching: It is used as a warning not to fail to help others when they need your help. When a person refuses to assist another, then when they themselves need it, they will not get it, because the other person will not be in a position to help or may not be willing.

Bible parallel: Mathew 5:38 *“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’”*

90. Ukonjagwa uri mwigu

English: A stick is shaped when it is green.

Kiswahili: usipo ziba ufa, utajenga ukuta.

Teaching: It is used to teach that problems should be corrected/solved at their initial stages. Waiting makes it difficult to rectify. Applicable when referring also to behavior change.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 22:6 *“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”*

91. Ungiona gacau ka ngia kari na mata mugongo niko gecunite.

English: If you see an orphan calf with saliva on the back, it has licked itself.

Kiswahili: Ukiona ndama asiye kuwa na mama akiwa na mate kwa mgongo wake, niyeye amejilamba.

Teaching: It teaches that a prosperous orphan acquires his wealth through his own efforts and hard work. It encourages people to work hard to acquire their wealth, and good opportunities.

Bible parallel: 1 Timothy 4:10 *“For to this end we toil and strive because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the savior of all men especially of those who believe.”*

92. Urimu ni gara.

English: Foolishness makes one drag behind and not see ahead.

Kiswahili: Ujinga huvuta mtu nyuma na kukosa maono.

Teaching: It teaches that a person needs to be alert, knowledgeable and interested in matters, to be able to achieve anything in life.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 18:2 *"A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion."*

93. Utenderu uri nja nducicagwa.

English: A slippery doorstep cannot be avoided.

Kiswahili: Huwezi kuepuka utelevu nje ya mlango wa nyumba yako.

Teaching: It teaches that association with other people is essential in life. Support of one another, regardless of differences towards each other brings together a community or family.

Bible parallel: 1 Thessalonians 5:14 *"And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with them all."*

94. Uthingu ukirite utonga.

English: Being virtuous is better than being rich.

Kiswahili: Utu wema ni bora kuliko mali.

Teaching: Intrinsic worth is preferable to material success. True good human nature in a person is more valuable than good physical appearance.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 22:1 *"True virtue is in God's ways."*

95. Utuku ndutumagwa nguo.

English: One does not mend clothes in the dark.

Kiswahili: Hufai kushona nguo gizani.

Teaching: It teaches that one has to do all things openly and not in hiding. Secretive and dishonest activities will usually go wrong and trouble will be caused.

Bible parallel: Numbers 32:23 *"....But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out."*

96. Wanaruona wanarumenya.

English: One who has seen has knowledge.

Kiswahili: Aliyeona anafhamu zaidi.

Teaching: It teaches tht one who has had an experience of something understands its consequences or can foresee them. He can, therefore, be prepared for any eventuality.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 24:5 *“A wise man is full of strength, and a man of knowledge enhances his might.”*

97. Wona kene ritho konoko; wona gaku ritho cioko.

English: When you see someone’s items, your eyes pop out; when you see your items they do not.

Kiswahili: Vyako huvioni; vyawenyewe wavikondolea macho.

Teaching: It is used as a warning that a person should not covet what is not yours. Work to acquire your own things. Coveting leads to sin and causes you harm.

Bible parallel: Romans 13:9-10 *“The commandments, ‘you shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet.....”*

98. Yaciara mathatha yongagia tuonthe.

English: When it delivers twins, it breastfeeds both.

Kiswahili: Ikizaa mapacha hunyonyesha wote.

Teaching: It teaches that one should not discriminate between people; favouring one and leaving the other. Treat all people the same way regardless of who they are.

Bible parallel: Galatians 5:14 *“For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*

Acts 10:34 *“And Peter opened his mouth and said, ‘Trully I perceive that God shows no partiality.”*

99. Yakuura yuraga ikianagirua.

English: A goat bound to stray will do so even when its herder is calling it back.

Kiswahili: Mbuzi mpotevu huwa hasikii sauti ya mchungaji anapoitwa.

Teaching: It warns that a person meant to stray will do so regardless of any guidance and advice given to them. They will disregard it and choose to behave in their own unacceptable way.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 19:27 *“Cease, my son, to hear instructions only to stray from the words of knowledge.”*

Isaiah 53:6 *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way...”*

100. Yura riria yugi riricaga yura riria iritu.

English: The clever hunger feeds on the foolish hungers.

Kiswahili: Njaa ile iko na werevu hula ile haina ujanja.

Teaching: It teaches as a warning for people to be aware that they may be swindled by tricksters to share their wealth, which they have saved to secure their future. Care should therefore be taken to ensure one does not lose their valuables.

Bible parallel: Mathew 7:6 *“Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.”*

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