

HEKIMA AND BUSARA – ARE THEY DIFFERENT CONCEPTS AND HOW DO THEY RELATE TO UTU?

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Swahili literature provides us with a useful insight into the meanings of the words *busara*, *hekima* and *utu*. Understanding these words helps us to see the relationship between different types of wisdom, intelligence and thought as seen by Swahili speaking people.

Introduction

Swahili literature makes apparent the importance many Swahili speaking people place on values such as wisdom, knowledge and intelligence. Yet there is not a single, clear definition of values such as wisdom. For particular notions of wisdom, particular words are often used, most notably *hekima* and *busara*. A greater understanding of such terms should lead to a greater understanding of Swahili concepts of humanity, defined as *utu*, which emphasise what it means to be a human being and to live a good life but are also, like wisdom, not clearly defined or single notions.¹

Swahili literature has a rich expression and diversity of interpretations of wisdom and humanity and how they relate to each other. Individual authors have brought their own interpretations of wisdom which provide unique insights into how wisdom relates to *utu*. As well as studying definitions given in dictionaries and consulting the opinions of Sheikh Yahya Ali Omar, I have analysed a range of different forms of Swahili literature relevant to this subject. This included proverbs, two influential novels, *Kufikirika* by Shaaban Robert and *Ziraili na Zirani* by William Mkufya, and examples of Ahmad Nassir bin Juma Bhalo's poetry. While not aiming for an all encompassing outline of what *hekima* and *busara* mean, I want to highlight how they relate to *utu* and thus differ from each other. Rather than interpreting *hekima* and *busara* as two versions of the same thing,² it is important to understand the ways in which *hekima* and *busara* are two very distinct branches of a common source, which is *utu*.

Utu is closely linked to moral concepts of goodness in which reference is made to human solidarity (Kresse 2007: 140). Given the nature of such a concept, *utu* has traditionally been and, for many people even today, is linked to religion. For the majority of Swahili people this religious link is in reference to Islam. Yet *utu* provides guidance on how to live a moral life rather than it being a specifically religious concept (ibid.: 143). Similar notions of humanity

¹ I am grateful to Alena Rettova for her support and encouragement as I developed my ideas on this topic and to Sheikh Yahya Ali Omar for his advice and interest. As well as those mentioned in other references, I would like to thank all the participants of the 2008 Swahili Colloquium in Bayreuth, Germany, for their feedback following the presentation I gave based on this paper.

² I would like to thank Said A.M. Khamis for bringing this valuable critique to my attention during the Swahili Colloquium in Bayreuth, Germany, 02/05/2008 and I trust that my paper adequately answers this issue.

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are found in other African Bantu languages such as Xhosa with *ubuntu*³ and Shona with *unhu*.⁴ With the example of *ubuntu*, such notions of humanity have clearly been very well integrated into values based on Christianity (Tutu 2004: 25-29).

Conceptions of *utu* have also included those found in the political ideology of *Ujamaa* as well as secular notions as found in William Mkufya's novels. In addition to common social knowledge of what is right and wrong and whether someone has or lacks *utu*, an individual's perception of *utu* develops from and in turn influences social concepts of *utu* (Kresse 2007: 140). It reflects a person's social upbringing and background.⁵ Indeed because of this, there have been major developments within Swahili literature which relate to particular definitions of *utu* (Rettova 2007: 99). This emphasises the importance of understanding how *utu* is conveyed in Swahili literature in relation to concepts such as wisdom.

However, it is not always clear what the exact meanings of words based on knowledge, wisdom and intelligence convey and what distinction there is between them. The issue becomes more complicated with ambiguous definitions of *hekima* and *busara* given by dictionaries, learning resources and other reference material.

Meanings Given in the Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu

The definitions found in the dictionary Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu, 'Standard Swahili Dictionary' (TUKI 1981), an authoritative source, highlight the extent of such ambiguity. When looking at other terms used for concepts of thought, wisdom and intelligence, such as *akili*, *maarifa* and *ubongo*, there is also little distinction made in meanings.

Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu defines *hekima* as "1. *akili*, *busara*, *maarifa*, *werevu*. 2. *ujanja*: *Tumia ~*" (p. 78). The first three definitions of *hekima* are simply words which are frequently translated to mean the same as *hekima*. Other definitions, including *werevu* and *ujanja*, suggest that there is an element of cunning in *hekima*. *Kutumia hekima*, where *hekima* means *ujanja*, gives the impression of craftiness and cunning, which would be useful in certain situations.

Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu defines *busara* as "*akili au werevu wa kuweza kuchagua au kufikiria jambo linalofaa; akili au werevu wa kutenda jambo kwa utaratibu na kufikiria; hekima, tabasuri*" (p. 25). *Busara* is also defined by ambiguous concepts such as *akili*, *werevu* and *hekima*. This dictionary interprets *busara* as the ability to choose or think about useful issues and to act something out with thought and procedure. *Tabasuri* implies that *busara* is a state or quality of wisdom and prudence.

³ According to A Concise Xhosa – English Dictionary (McLaren 1955: 118).

⁴ According to the Standard Shona Dictionary (Hannan 2000: 701).

⁵ I am grateful for Farouk Topan's helpful comments concerning this issue during the Swahili Colloquium in Bayreuth, Germany, 02/05/2008.

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For *akili* Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu gives the definition “1. *Fahamu, hekima, ujuzi, welekevu, busara, maarifa, werevu*. 2. *uwezo, ujanja, uamuzi, uteuzi*” (p. 5). Again, many concepts already featured from previous definitions of other terms are found including *hekima, busara* and *maarifa*. Ideas of cunning are also found again with terms such as *werevu* and *ujanja* while *uamuzi* and *ujuzi* imply that *akili* is associated with judgement, skill and expertise.

Maarifa is defined by Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu as “1. *njia inayotumiwa kujitoa katika shida ama kuweza kupata kitu; hekima*. 2. *elimu, ujuzi*” (p. 147). As well as featuring *hekima* and *ujuzi*, it states that *maarifa* is a way of withdrawing oneself from trouble or the ability to get something. It also highlights education, *elimu*, as an aspect of *maarifa*.

Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu defines *bongo* as “1. *bonge laini la nyama-nyama lenye mishipa ya fahamu lililomo kichwani. Pia ubongo*. 2. *kitu tepetepe kama shahamu iliyomo mifupani*. 3. *akili: Chemsha ~ fanyisha kazi akili; fikiri na kujibu fumbo, kitendawili: Piga ~ tafakuri, fikiri, taamuli*”. *Bongo* and *ubongo* are clearly defined as the organ of the brain and are closely associated with *akili*. These terms are also used for thinking, thought and meditation as well as solving puzzles, mysteries and riddles.

Proverbs

Swahili proverbs provide some further insight into specific uses and meanings of terms which are not given a highly specific meaning in resources such as dictionaries. There are many proverbs concerning *akili* and several of them illustrate the value of *akili*, such as *Akili ni mali* (Knappert 1997: 31), in which *akili* is equated to wealth or is at least seen as a means to acquire wealth. Thus someone with *akili* will not lack wealth as expressed in the proverb *Mwenye akili hakosi mali* (ibid.: 114). It is a clearly valued characteristic, as one proverb says that the best qualities for someone to have are *akili* and *haya* which can be interpreted as modesty, respect or humility (Scheven 1998: 419). Someone who is not associated with *akili* is seen as someone to avoid and should not be followed, such as *Mtu asiye akili, sifuatane naye* (ibid.: 216).

However, it is clear that there is no standard *akili* and that it is highly individualistic. The proverb *Akili ni nywele, kila mtu ana zake* (ibid.: 109) compares *akili* to hair in that everyone has their own *akili*. This proverb is also used to express respect for other people’s opinions and that everyone will follow their own *akili* (ibid.) *Akili yachotwa katika mkutano* (ibid.) says that *akili* can be ‘scooped up’ in a meeting. This concept is similar to the English saying ‘Two heads are better than one’.

Akili is also something which can be lost. A whole community can be said to lose *akili* by not recognising the distinct qualities of *akili*. *Jinga likikwerekuka akili hakuna tena* (Knappert 1997: 50) says that when fools are not recognised as fools then no one has *akili* (ibid.). Alcohol can ‘absorb’ *akili* as expressed in *Kadiri wafyonza pombe nayo yakufyonza akili* (Scheven 1981: 158) – alcohol absorbed will in turn absorb one’s *akili*.

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At times *akili* can also be a source of madness or weakness, *Akili ya mtu ndiyo wazimu wake* (ibid.: 129). The proverb *Akili nyingi huondoa maarifa* (ibid.) makes clear that *akili* is distinct from *maarifa* in that lots of *akili* removes *maarifa*. This also shows that too much *akili* can be as much of a disadvantage as having too little *akili*. Thus *akili* alone is not enough for a good life and someone who has potential in terms of *akili* could meet his downfall in terms of *maarifa*.

The proverb *Mambo iko maarifa haiku nguvu* (Knappert 1997: 75) explains that *maarifa* rather than strength or force is the way to carry out things. A similar meaning is given with *Mambo maarifa, si nguvu* (Scheven 1981: 425) which suggests that *maarifa* is the best way to go about solving issues that come up in life. Strength or force, *nguvu*, is something which is based on emotions and can be disruptive. This is illustrated with the theme of love in which *maarifa* is the knowledge or wisdom which is said to be lost when in love, for example, *Mwenye kupenda ni chura wala hana maarifa* (Knappert 1997: 117) which says that someone who loves is a frog and does not have *maarifa*. *Maarifa* seems to be a wisdom and sense of judgement which develops with new life experiences you gain as you get older, perhaps a reason for the respect given to elders in Swahili culture. The proverb *Uzoefu ndio mama wa maarifa* (Scheven 1981: 196) says that experience is the mother of *maarifa*.

Hekima is also a quality of great value, the proverb *Hekima heri kuliko lulu* (Knappert 1997: 47) makes clear that it is of more value than pearls. It equates *hekima* with greater success and happiness than high value material possessions such as pearls can offer or represent. This is similar to notions of *utu* which undermine the importance of materialism. *Hekima* encompasses qualities which other proverbs mark out as important or valuable, such as patience. A good example of this is the proverb *Saburi, heshima nusu ya hekima* (ibid.: 141) which says that patience and respect, two qualities which are praised in many Swahili proverbs, is half of *hekima*. This would suggest that *hekima* provides important foundations for a person's *utu*. The proverb *Hekima, salama* (Scheven 1981: 424) sums *hekima* as being equated to or a cause of safety and peace.

Concerning *busara*, the proverb *Mwenye busara mara hunasihika* (ibid.: 112) suggests that qualities such as *busara* are still not enough for someone not to need advice (ibid.). This is a similar idea found in concepts of *utu* in which we gain by interacting with others (Kresse 2007: 149).

Novels

There are Swahili novels which use terms such as *hekima* and *busara* with a specific, if subtle, meaning that have a particular relevance according to a certain context. The two novels I will focus on are Shaaban Robert's *Kufikirika* and William Mkufya's *Ziraili na Zirani*. The distinct meanings of words such as *busara* and *hekima* have important implications for our understanding of concepts of *utu* as well as aiding our knowledge of terms of values such as wisdom.

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In Shaaban Robert's novel *Kufikirika*, the king of the country *Kufikirika* seeks the help of different groups of *waganga*, specialists, in order to have a child. It is the leader of the group of forecasters who foresee the birth of the king's son but that he will become very ill. In order to cure him, it will be necessary to sacrifice a cunning person, *mwerevu*, and a foolish person, *mjinga* (Robert 1968: 12-13). The queen later becomes pregnant and the leader of forecasters is praised for his expertise and greatness and identified as Utubusara Ujingahasara (p. 17-19). The first teacher of the son of the king teaches the son foreign ways rather than the expected curriculum which leads to the king expelling the first teacher (p. 25). The second teacher teaches the king's son the expected curriculum without allowing time for other activities, eventually leading to the son becoming ill (p. 27-29). When the king's son is ill, the authorities take a cunning person, *mwerevu*, and a foolish person, *mjinga* for the sacrifice as prophesied, despite much controversy. The authorities choose a shop owner as a cunning person and a farmer as a foolish person. After proving that he is not a *mjinga*, at the time when the sacrifice has to start, the farmer advises that the King's son should go to a hospital. The hospital is a foreign treatment which heals the king's son. It is only at the end of the novel that the first teacher and the farmer are identified as Utubusara.

Concerning Utubusara, the only character in the novel to have a name, Shaaban Robert makes a linkage between *busara* and *utu*. Shaaban Robert often used character names to express an attribute or description of a certain character in his novels such as *Kusadikika* and *Adili na Nduguze* (Ngonyani 2001: 126). Thus by the end of many of his novels readers can have the impression that they are reading about human attributes which have been personified (p. 131). The allegorical nature of the name Utubusara suggests that *busara* is a constituent part of *utu*. It suggests that this is the ability to accept new foreign ways of doing things which are of value and to recognise all the contributions the people of the world have to offer, not just those in high places in the great country of *Kufikirika*. As a teacher of the king's son Utubusara teaches him foreign ways rather than the expected curriculum. As a farmer, Utubusara is seen by the authorities as a *mjinga* while a shopkeeper is taken by the authorities who see him as an *mwerevu*. Utubusara makes a plea to the council that challenges the perceptions of the authorities concerning socio-economic roles and their associated levels of wisdom. This emphasises a value of *utu* in recognising everyone as equals and not looking down on, or making assumptions about someone because of his or her social status, welfare or occupation (Kresse 2007: 142). Hospital treatment heals the King's son, who at the end of the novel, outlines the different positions Utubusara has been in within the 16 years since his birth. This shows that Utubusara continued to live a good life and did not give up on things of value despite the hardships and differing situations he faced. This is a theme found in many Swahili novels and poems in that wealth, authority, status or the body does not give a person *utu* (Rettova 2007: 124). His last name Ujingahasara is significant in that last names associate a person with a particular society or lineage (Ngonyani 2001: 131). *Ujinga* can be interpreted as ignorance or foolishness, a characteristic which is clearly opposite to *utu*. *Hasara* is a cost or

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loss, suggesting that Ujingahasara represents the ignorance of those in power in *Kufikirika* which is at a major cost, potentially leading to the death of the king's son.

William Mkufya's novel *Ziraili na Zirani* provides very useful insights about concepts of *hekima* and *busara*. In this novel, an African atheist, Fikirini Zirani, dies in a war and is sent to Hell where he joins the atheist Dhahara camp of materialist philosophers (Mkufya 1999: 68). There he follows the teachings of atheist Communists and joins them in a rebellion with devils including Lusifa against God and Heaven via a war of ideas. This war of ideas involves the notion that God, religion, and concepts of the afterlife are merely ideas which can be removed if people do not believe in them (p. 115). After an epic battle in Heaven, the world is destroyed and the universe becomes recreated (p. 223, 228).

Zirani makes use of concepts such as *hekima* and *busara* to argue for his beliefs. Before being taken to the afterlife by Ziraili, the angel of death, he explains why he opposes the concept of Heaven to the devil Lusifa with the sentence "*Mtu hutafakari na kujenga busara juu juu, huku akingoja kufa wakati wo wote*" (p. 41) – 'a person only develops superficial *busara*, while he waits to die at any time'. *Busara juu juu* illustrates that some forms of *busara* can be distinguished from each other. This would suggest that higher forms of *busara* include rational philosophical thinking about concepts such as the purpose and meaning of one's life, which directly links to notions of *utu*. This distinguishes *busara* and *utu* generally as a sign of an accomplished person.

Shortly afterwards when Lusifa is about to take Zirani to a new location, Zirani hears a voice that uses a phrase which is repeated in Zirani's thoughts (p. 44). This phrase is "*Ukiidekeza hekima, hutaweza kufumbua*" (p. 43) – 'if you spoil *hekima*, you will not solve'. In the devils' camp, Zirani is given an argument to use in order to justify human sin. This argument is comprised of seven points. The third point is "... *mwili umepewa akili, lakini akili hii inahitaji elimu na muda wa kutosha kuweza kujenga busara ya kuzitawala tamaa, kuielekeza hiari na hatimaye kushindana na dhambi*" (p. 52). This argues that the body was given *akili* but *akili* needs education and enough time so that it can develop *busara* to manage desire. Due to freewill a person is eventually overcome with sin. Thus *busara* is a wisdom, at least at its most developed stage, which theoretically can counter temptations to sin which are given to us by freewill. In this novel sin is seen as acts which go against religion or religious teachings such as faith, worship and righteousness (p. 229). These are due to the human failures of controlling desire and free will (p. 230).

The fourth point develops its argument from the third point, using a phrase which highlights the similarities and close relationship between *hekima* and *busara*. "... *muda wa uhai wa mwanadamu ni mdogo mno kuipata elimu hii na kujenga hekima inayostahili kuikomaza akili yake*" (p. 230). It says that the period of human life is too short to gain this education and to develop *hekima* which is a sign of a maturation of that person's *akili*. This suggests that someone with *busara* has *hekima* and that the forms of wisdom they represent are similar valued aspects of *akili*. Yet in this argument *hekima* is seen more as a sign that someone's *akili*

has matured while *busara* is the product of such a maturation which can then be used to achieve great things such as overcoming sin.

The fifth point is “*mazingira ya binadamu pia ni mabaya, hutofautiana au yana mikanganyiko na migawanyiko mingi inayoathiri mtiririko sahihi wa uelimikaji wake na ukomavu wa busara yake*” (p. 230). This states that the bad environment humans live in causes confusion and divisions which affect the correct flow of education and maturity of a person’s *busara*. *Busara* is dependent on and vulnerable to the external environment. This issue makes an interesting comparison with the saying *Mtu ni utu* – which could be interpreted to mean a person makes up and is made up of something much greater than him or herself.

When consulted about my research, Sheikh Yahya Ali Omar, a specialist on Swahili manuscripts written in the Arabic script, said that *hekima* and *busara* are very similar terms but *hekima* has several different second meanings compared with *busara*. He highlighted that both words originate from the Arabic *hikma* and *baswira*.⁶ He explained that in Arabic *hikma* is a particular wisdom such as that associated with proverbs. However, he stressed that *hekima* in Swahili has developed its own meanings distinct from *hikma*. Interestingly, this divergence of meaning must have occurred sometime after the early history of Swahili prose in which a literary genre *nenola hekima* is seen to have closely followed the definition of *hikma* (Rollins 1983: 103). In Swahili *hekima* also means a trick with a purpose done by a person wanting something. What is crucial are the notions ‘on account of’ and ‘underlying reason’ which originate from the word *hikma*. Thus *hekima* is not necessarily linked to values based on *utu* such as *Mtu ni utu* which stresses the moral characteristics of *utu* (Rettova 2007: 101). This could also be related to the phrase “If you spoil *hekima*, you will not solve”. This is perhaps one reason why Shaaban Robert did not give the character Utubusara the name Utuhekima as good moral deeds are not as central to cunning as they are to *utu*. Indeed a central idea of *utu* is not to use people for material gain, in which *hekima* could be advantageous (Kresse 2007: 150). *Busara* is much closer in meaning to its original Arabic term *baswira*, both being used to mean a ‘good mind’. *Baswira* is related to the Arabic term *basura* – meaning ‘to look’ or ‘to see’.⁷ This means that *busara* is a form of mental perception which provides insight and understanding.⁸ Sheikh Yahya argues that *hekima* can mean trick while *busara* is closer in meaning to concepts such as *akili*. However, he also states that *busara* is not the same as *akili* – to lack *busara* is not the same as to lack *akili*.⁹

Poetry

For poetry, I have chosen to focus on the work of one of the most famous contemporary Swahili poets, Ahmad Nassir bin Juma Bhalo. Ahmad Nassir was born in Mombasa, Kenya in

⁶ Interview with Sheikh Yahya Ali Omar, 5th February, 2008

⁷ Interview with Sheikh Yahya Ali Omar, 3rd March, 2008.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Interview with Sheikh Yahya Omar, 5th February, 2008.

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1936. He has composed a large number of poems which have a traditional character and rich vocabulary (Bhalo 1966: xviii). As well as his Kimvita, Mombasa, dialect, he has a mastery over a wide variety of different forms of Swahili, including the antique Kingozi Swahili, which provides him a linguistic scope to create poems of great depth and literary constructions (Kresse 2007: 153). He is also very well known for his composition of popular t'arab verses (ibid.). As well as his great skill in poetry, he expresses widely held values of great importance to society rather than solely individual opinions as a creative writer in a Western context would do so (Bhalo 1966: xi-xii).

The poetry of Ahmad Nassir bin Juma Bhalo provides interesting examples of *hekima* and *busara* in two of his poems which are about love. One of these is his poem *Kulla nnachokiuma* – ‘Everything I Take a Bite At’, which is about a lover’s bad luck. It is based on the poet’s experiences of love and misfortune as a young man (ibid.: 95). He uses metaphors to describe himself and three women in which at the end of each stanza he concludes that “*kulla nnachokiuma hutolewa mdomoni*” – ‘everything I take bite at is taken out of my mouth’ (ibid.: 102-103). In one paragraph of this poem he seeks a person with *hekima* and another with *fahama* to give him the best advice to solve his misfortunes. *Hekima* is an ability to find solutions, or at least to address properly, matters which concern love:

<i>Nakujilia Perera</i>	<i>malenga mwenye hekima</i>
<i>na wewe Bwana Sitara</i>	<i>alimu mwenye fahama</i>
<i>nipani shauri bora</i>	<i>nipate tuza mtima</i>
<i>kulla nnachokiuma</i>	<i>hutolewa mdomoni. (Bhalo 1966: 104)</i>

I come to you, Perera	o wise minstrel (minstrel with <i>hekima</i>) ¹⁰
and to you, Mr Sitara	o learned and knowledgeable one (with <i>fahama</i>) ¹¹
give me the best advice	so that I can settle my heart
everything I take a bite at	is taken out of my mouth. ¹²

In the other poem about love, *Baina Manga na Mwitu* – ‘Tame Dove or Wild Dove?’, the narrator of the poem agonises over which of two very enchanting but different women is the best. The qualities and nature of these two ‘doves’ are described, highlighting his inability to distinguish between them. The narrator seeks the advice of people with *busara* – *watu wenye busara* (Bhalo 1966: 140), to help him to judge whether a ‘tame dove’ or a ‘wild dove’ is better while describing the two ‘doves’.

¹⁰ My addition.

¹¹ My addition.

¹² L. Harries’ translation, in Bhalo 1966: 105.

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Waungwana wenye enzi hodi hodi hodi ndani
ndimi kijana mfunzi nimekuja darasani
nawauliza wapenzi jamii ya ikhwani
zaidi mwema n'nani baina ya manga na mwitu (ibid.: 136)

O freemen of power I beg you give me entrance
it is I, a youthful learner I have come to the classroom
I ask you, my dear friends all of you brethren
which is the better a tame dove or a wild one?¹³

These people are described at the beginning as *Waungwana wenye enzi*, *waungwana* being the plural of *muungwana* which in this context is a respectful title for someone of high status. *Enzi* is a term for power, suggesting that their *busara* has allowed them to accomplish great things. He in contrast presents himself as a young student who has come to a classroom for advice about 'doves'. These people of high status have the obligation to advise or teach others who are not as gifted or developed in terms of *busara*. As Ahmed Sheikh Nabhany and Amira Msellem Said explain, *busara* enables someone to assess another person's character. They also describe *busara* as a quality often associated with elders although even children are also capable of having *busara*.¹⁴

We can say that both *hekima* and *busara* are notions with powerful meanings and great depth. They both relate to conceptions of *utu* in important ways. Like *utu*, which is made up of good acts, *busara* and *hekima* are made up of and interdependent on important qualities such as *akili*, patience and experience as conveyed in the wisdom of *maarifa*. *Busara* can relate to *utu* in that they represent an understanding that is open to foreign ideas and that all people are equal. *Busara* is gained with experiences as a person's life develops and brings expectations such as giving others advice. *Busara* is what manages desires and temptations that come with free will which if we act upon will result in a loss of *utu*. This also includes *ujinga*, foolishness, which is in opposition to *utu* and *busara*, hence the name Utubusara Ujingahasara.

Hekima relates to *utu* in that they represent admired qualities of a person. *Hekima* can be used to solve social problems such as matters concerning love, which in turn can benefit *utu*. However it can also be a means to lose *utu*, for example, if it involves using people for material gains. Yet at the same time *hekima*, like *utu*, is a value which is above the benefits gained from materialism. It represents more a sign and ability of mature wisdom rather than the implications and achievements of such wisdom, which *busara* represents.

¹³ L. Harries' translation, in Bhalo 1966: 137.

¹⁴ I am thankful to Clarissa Vierke for sharing her notes with me from her interviews with Ahmed Sheikh Nabahany and Amira Msellem Said.

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To conclude, the meanings of *hekima* and *busara* have similarities but there are important distinctions between them. Swahili literature provides an invaluable insight into interpreting *busara* and *hekima* and notions of wisdom, intelligence and thought. It also provides a greater depth of understanding for concepts of *utu*. *Utu* can extend to all spheres of life and *hekima* and *busara* are two branches of *utu*, two means by which a person interacts with *utu*. Different authors and writers of literature have used their own interpretations of distinctions between *hekima* and *busara* which illustrates how individuals understand and relate to concepts of *utu*. These insights from Swahili literature show a relationship between different types of wisdom and philosophical ideas of what makes a person a human being.

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