

# Nherera Zvichengete

## Orphan, Fend for Yourself

(Nherera zvichengete **Orphan, fend for yourself** is repeated throughout)

Zvavo vana amai nababa

**Blessed are they that have a mother and a father**

Zvavo vana amai nababa

**Blessed are they that have a mother and a father**

Ini kuroora ndakarooro ndega

**I married by myself**

Pandakasungwa ndakaenda ndega

**When I was arrested, I went alone**

Mutero wangu ndinotera ndega

**I pay my own taxes**

KwaNyachere ndinoenda ndega

**I go alone to Nyachere's**

Zvavo vana amai nababa

**Blessed are they that have a mother and a father**

Guitar solo

Zvavo vana amai nababa

**Blessed are they that have a mother and a father**

Zvavo vana amai nababa

**Blessed are they that have a mother and a father**

Ini kuroora ndakarooro ndega

**I married by myself**

Pandakasungwa ndakaenda ndega

**When I was arrested, I went alone**

Mutero wangu ndinotera ndega

**I pay my own taxes**

Kana kukura ndakakura kwaambuya

**I even grew up at my grandmother's**

Zvavo vana amai nababa

**Blessed are they that have a mother and a father**

Guitar solo

Zvavo vana amai nababa

**Blessed are they that have a mother and a father**

Zvavo vana amai nababa

**Blessed are they that have a mother and a father**

Zvavo vana amai nababa

**Blessed are they that have a mother and a father**

Ini kuroora ndakarooro ndega

**I married by myself**

[Unintelligible]\* ndakaenda ndega  
[Unintelligible], I went alone  
Mutero wangu ndinotera ndega  
I pay my own taxes  
KwaNyachere ndinoenda ndega  
I go alone to Nyachere's  
Kuroora, kuroora...  
Married, married...

The song discusses the fate of an orphan. His parents are late (that is, deceased), so he has to do everything for himself. There is a popular Shona proverb that says "*Nherera inoguta musu wafa amai vayo*" which means "An orphan eats their fill on the day that their mother dies." This means, everyone is concerned about the orphan's wellbeing immediately following the death, checking if they're comfortable, if they've eaten, etc. but, after the funeral, everyone goes back to their lives, and the orphan's wellbeing is no longer anyone's priority.

*Kuroora* refers to the custom of paying the bride-price (*lobola*) for one's wife. A delegation is sent to accompany the prospective groom for the *lobola* negotiations, which is usually made up of an uncle (paternal or maternal, depending on which part of the country you come from), a paternal aunt, and the go-between, who can be a relative or the father's close friend. A brother and a close friend can join as well, but the aforementioned three are the key people in the delegation who are an integral part of the *lobola* process. The groom's parents are responsible for arranging this delegation and seeing the whole process through until the bride is welcomed into the home. So, when the song's narrator says he married alone, he doesn't mean he actually went to pay the bride-price on his own, but that he had to arrange the delegation on his own – likely comprised of friends, work colleagues, or fellow churchgoers – without the involvement of his extended family.

When one is arrested, the tendency is for the whole clan to follow to the police station, to attend all court sessions, and to take turns visiting the prisoner and bringing them food – again with the parents rallying the troops. In this case, the orphan was arrested and went through the whole process on his own with no support from family.

*KwaNyachere* refers to the Director in charge of the Registry Office (that is, Nyachere is the Director's name), where official documents such as birth certificates, National IDs, passports, etc., were obtained. The issue is about acquiring important life documents -- normally the parents go with the child to the registry to obtain these documents. In the absence of the parents – such as in this instance where they probably died before they could get a birth certificate for their child – a close, usually older, family member is required to accompany the applicant and testify to the latter's parentage and genealogy. Here, the singer was saying there was no family member either willing or available to accompany him, and he had to go by himself and provide the required information as best he could.

Regarding the lyric about paying his own taxes: in Zimbabwe, taxes are included in whatever it is you're paying for - it's not a separate charge that you have to figure out and pay separately. For example, sales tax is already included in the shelf price of the product, income tax is taken directly off your payslip, taxes due to the Municipality (e.g., property tax) comes included in your monthly service bill, etc. Typically, children live at home until they start their own families, and all these bills are taken care of by their parents. So, when the singer says he pays his own taxes, he's just saying he does everything himself, since he has no parents to do this for him.

\*It is not clear to anyone involved with this project what Mr. Manatsa is singing here. The consensus

view is that he most likely started to sing the wrong lyric, realized his error, and switched to another word (which ends with “-roora”) midway through.

Language(s): Shona

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