

Bahambe laba ababili baye bafike ekhaya. Kusuke inhlokomo eyesabekayo lokhu abantu kababangingi lapha emzini kaBhekokwakhe. Kukikize uQimbile nonina kuze kube songathi yisizwe sabantu. Khona manjalo uZulumacansi athumele komakhelwane bakhe ebamema. Bayafika ubakhombisa inkomazi emhlophe ethe qwa esibayeni, uyayihlaba ukungenisa umakoti ekhaya. Ubeshiye-ke esebamemile nabasebukhweni bakhe; isimemo esishiye kuManamuza. Wathi uthi nkente lomnumzane entombini kaMemunce yathi kayimudle imfele. “Yini? Ngiyodla inyama kaZulumacansi mina? Uke unghlolele yise kaDumezweni! Hamba nje wena ofuna imibengo kuyo yonke imizi yabantu lena, kepha inyama kwakho uyishiye ihlihlimuka ezimbizeni.”

Lenkulumo imbunise uManamuza, kuthi ingani ube ethanda kakhulu ukuya edilini likaZulumacansi ngomuso, abese ezwa naye esedanile, kungasasho ukuthi akahambe.

Kujatshulwe kabi lapha kwaZulumacansi uba kubuye umakoti. Pho, inyama inone ungubani, okuzingane ukubone sekucwebezela imilomo ngamafutha. Kubuswe bonke ubusuku kwaZulumacansi, baze balale uma sebediniwe. Balala bonke bengasole lutho; kumnandi nje konke.

ISAHLUKO XIV

Ngalena kwaManamuza kukhihlilwa izililo njengoba kwaZulumacansi kuhlatshiwe. Lithi lapho liyoshona ilanga lokhu intombi kaMemunce isikhale amehlo aze aba bomvu, ithathe isitsha sinamanzi, isithele ngalena kwesilulu, igeze ubuso, ibesule nezandla, ebese ingena exhibeni iphake ukudla. Kuhlatshwe inkuku, inyama enkulu kaManamuza. Ayithathe okaMdanyana aye nayo endlini enkulu afike ayibeke phambi kukayise kanye nombhaqanga nomhluzi ngokhanjana oluncane olungangekomishi.

Uhleli phambi koqwembe uManamuza, yilapho efohlozela iphiko lexogwana lenkuku abamhlabele lona, usheba nombhaqanga. Udla uManamuza nakhu okunguBongiwe phambi kwakhe, udane elokhu ekusikela inyama akunike kudle. Usehlula okaMdanyana uma ethi: “Ingane baba izofunda umkhuba omubi, ifune ukuzodla esitsheni sakho noma unabantu basemzini. Musa ukuyifundisa lomkhuba baba.”

UManamuza aphenyule athi: “Okabani lomntwana?” Asho esukuma eya ngalena kwezindlu, ngalapho edlalela khona uBongiwe afike athi: “Bongi! Woza kumkhulu!” Kuze sekuchaye izandla usuthi kuzophapha. Kufike kuzijike kuyena, akuthathe akwange abese ekubeka ehlobo angene nakho endlini afike akubeke phambi koqwembe, adle nakho. Izithulele nje intombi kaMemunce. Athi noma eseyomangala kuyona okaMdanyana, ifike ingamniki lizwi.

Nanamuhla-ke uManamuza udla uBongiwe uphambi kwakhe. Uthi lapho eliqedile iphiko, esedumele elinye, kungena intombi kaMemunce emnyango. Ingena ifike iyaguqa laphaya ngasemnyango, phezu kwesikhumba. Asho ngenhliziyu uManamuza athi kazi kwenzenjani imhlasele edla, lokhu kayithandi ukuba athikaziswe uma

edla. Naye kuthi ngoba engafuni ukuba elokhu ekhulunyiswa ngendaba kaZulumacansi, aphenyule ngolaka athi: “Wahlala ngasemnyango nini kaDumezweni? Kawuboni ukuthi ungisithile? Uthi-ke ukudla ngizokubona kanjani uma uhleli lapho?”

“Khuluma kahle yise kaDumezweni. Khuluma into ibenye izwakale manje. Sengehlulekile.”

“Ngikhulume ngani manje? Ingani ngiyakutshela ngithi ungisithile.”

“Kangizwa nakuzwa ngomntanami uBajwayele. Kangifuni nakanci umntanami afele lapho ngingazi khona. Ngiyamazi mina uBajwayele. Ngimbonile ukuhamba kwakhe ukuthi usesidelile thina bazali bakhe; naye futhi usezidelile. Mlande yise kaDumezweni. Phindisela izinkomo zikaZulumacansi, kubuye ingane yami.” Isho intombi kaMemunce ziphume zilandelana izinyembezi.

“Uthi uzizwa kahle wena ukuthi uthini?”

“Ngizizwa kahle impela; ngithi landa umntwana.”

“Hhayi bo! Izwe leli akusilo elikaMemunce. Ungeke ufike ubashadise abantu bese futhi uthi unengane!”

“Angishadisanga muntu mina.”

“Ubani owashadisa?”

“Nguwe!”

“Pho, uma ungazange ushadise muntu thula uze ufe kukhulume lowo owashadisa abantu. Yimi okufanele ngikhulume ngoba yimi engabashadisa abantwana.”

Ibelelane lapho intombi kaMemunce ize ingenelwe yisilokozane. Angazi nokuthi laliphelephi uManamuza. Aqhubeke nokudla; kulokhu kungubufohlofohlo amathambo enkuku emlonyeni. Kepha uqinisele nje edla uManamuza usezwile emlonyeni ukuthi ukudla sekuqalile ukuba duma kuyena. Athi iso ukuliphonsa kumkakhe; ambone ekhala ngempela nje. Kuthi ngoba ukhala ngodaba angafuni nakuluzwa uManamuza; lolu lokunciphisa isibaya sakhe, aqinisele. Adle aze aqede, bese kungena okaMdanyana, asuse izitsha aphume.

“Kodwa nina kaDumezweni weswele into ofanele ukuyikhuluma yini? Walingisa ingane umdala?”

“Kangidlali yise kaDumezweni. Landa umntanami.”

Abone uManamuza ukuthi ukwelula amazwi kungeke kumsize. Akhumbule ikhambi lakhe elidala elalimthambisa unina kaDumezweni esemusha — imvubu. Nebala ayihoshe abese ethi: “Musa ukuzongikhulumela imbude nina kaDumezweni. Leyongane othi kayilandwe emzini wayo ibingavuma ukuhamba noZulumacansi ukube ibingamthandi?”

“Ungenza noma yini yise kaDumezweni uma uthi uzongesabisa ngemvubu sengimdala kangaka. Kodwa wena ngithi landa umntanami.”

“Kawunangane lapha; umfazi womuntu lowayana!”

“Wawumthengisa nje wawuthi uzophenduka! usho njalo?”

“Ingani ubuzisenga izinkomo ezalobola uBajwayele? Ngalokho usho ngezenzo uthi umntanakho akusesiye owakho; sekungokaZulumacansi?”

“Okungenani ngingafa kunalokho.”

Limpaphamise ngokunye leli uManamuza. Umkakhe kwakungesiye umuntu osheshe apha the elokufa; futhi engesona nesijaka. Kodwa namuhla ukhuluma ungomunye umuntu. NoManamuza usebasathe uyaqinisela, uyezwa ukuthi kukhona okungalungile kahle lapha kumkakhe namuhla.

Kuthi noma ekubona konke lokhu, angayiboni indlela yokuya kuZulumacansi afike athi ulande ingane yakhe. Esabe kodwa ukuba elule amazwi ngalokhu, ekuchazela intombi kaMemunce. Kuye ngokuya lapho isilokozane sesiqala ukuthamba, aqale ukukhuluma kangcono uManamuza athi: “Phela khona ingane ingalandwa uma sivumelana kahle nina kaDumezweni. Imvubu lena bengingayithatheli wena. Uthi ungathi usumdala kangaka kube yikhathi ngithi ngizokhuluma nawe ngendlovuyangena?”

Sinqamuke isilokozane entombini kaMemunce uma izwa uManamuza ethamba.

“Mlande yise kaDumezweni. Kwaba liphutha elibi lokhu ukuba ingane isiwe lapho yayingafuni ukuya khona. Ake ubheke usizi esesizilethele lona ngalokho. Wena usubuya emajele aseGoli, ungumnumzane ungaka. Nengane yethu isibuya lapho sasiyoze sife singazange silubeke khona. Namuhla sesiyinhlekisa kubo bonke uButhunqe.”

“Mina kangisiyo inhlekisa. Endulo, okhokho bethu, izwe lisabusa, bekuyaye kusuke umnumzane athi kumntanakhe: ‘Mntanami, hamba ungilandele izinkomo kwaSibanibani.’ Izingane zazilalela ngalesosikhathi. Ihambe. Akukho into ensha engiyenzile uBongani ngamthuma kanjalo kumfana kaMaqhude, uMasovenyeza, walalela uBongani, nana-muhla lokhu uhleli kahle umntanami.”

“Wamusa esithenjini. ngimfundisile mina umntanami.”

“Uyakhulekelwa ngikhuluma nje. NoBajwayele bengithi ngimenza umuntu umntanami, kwala ikhanda lakhe. Nakhu-ke nawe usukhuluma okwakho. Kulungile, ngizohamba ngiyokhuluma nomkhwenyana.”

“Izesule izinyembezi intombi kaMemunce bese iphuma. Ahlale yedwa isikhathi eside uManamuza ecabanga ukuthi konje ekuseni kusasa uyofike angene ngaliphi kuZulumacansi, lokhu phela akayanga nasedilini lakhe. Kuze kulalwe uManamuza engalitholi isu lokuqhamukela uZulumacansi. Kuthi ebusuku, ayibone indlela, abese evuka ehlala ngesinqe. Ahlale ahlale kuze kuse. Lithi lapho lithi chaphasha ilanga, angene endleleni eya kuboZulumacansi.”

Ahambe njalo ngendlela emathafeni aze aye awele umfudlana ogudle igquma eliphakathi kwakwakhe nakuboZulumacansi. Abese ekhuphuka egqumeni. Ithi enye inhliziyi akahambe alizungeze igquma ngoba liphakeme kakhulu; azikhuze ngoba ebona ukuthi hleze athathele, ephuze ukufika lapho eya khona. Futhi uhamba nje umzimba uyawuhudula ngoba akazi kahle ukuthi isu lakhe lokulanda uBajwayele liyofike lamukeleke yini kuZulumacansi. Athi lapho efika ekuphambaneni kwezindlela eme. Kuthi ngasentshonalanga abone isithunzi somuntu sivela ngendlela eqhamuka ngakoMasovenyeza. Athi ukubhekisisa, abese ekhuluma kakhulu yedwa athi: “Lokhu ngumkhwenyana kaBongani nje lowaya? Angabe uyaphi ekuseni kangaka? Kepha akahambi ngendlela eya kwami. Futhi akahambi ngendlela eya kwaZulumacansi kumkakhe. Angabe uyaphi?”

Kuthi ngelikade akhumbule uManamuza ukuthi liSonto, uMasovenyeza useyaye azihambele amasonto ngalolusuku. Ayikhwele ngamandla intaba, engafuni ukuba baficane nomkhwenyana wakwakhe. Akhwele, akhwele, aze ajuluke abe manzi. Phezu kwegquma leli-ke lithafa elingengakanani.

Athi lapho ethi dundu, abone kuqhamuka ngalena kulona ithafa, ngasohlangothini oluvela emzini kaBhekokwakhe, uZulumacansi. Bahlangane phakathi nendawo, esiqongweni segquma.

Ethuke uManamuza uma ebona uZulumacansi esendleleni ngalesisikhathi. NoZulumacansi ethuke uma ebona umkhwe wakhe esendleleni ngalesisikhathi. Kukhulume uZulumacansi kuqala.

“Awu, baba, walapha ekuseni kangaka?”

“Wena walapha?”

“Mina ngisasukela phezulu. Wena usukhulile, amazolo nomoya wasekuseni akusakulungele.”

“Cha mkhwenyana, ngize kuwena. Ngigulelwa ngumkhwekazi wakho kabi laphaya ekhaya. Manje ngifuna ukuthuma abantwana, ngapha ngaseMgungundlovu baye eNhlengweni elinomuthi ayaye athi nxa egula okaMemunce ngimphuthume ngawo alulame. Laziwa nguBajwayele kuphela kulababantwana abasekhaya. Ngithi-ke ake ungisize ngaye mntakaBhekokwakhe, lokhu uyakwazi ukuhlupheka kwami kuloyamuzi. Uma ngithi akesime sibone, kuthiwa ngiyayekelela ngoba ngingasamnakile okaMemunce. Sake sakubona thina madoda. Inxa wena usacabanga, uyindoda, bese kuthiwa kawusabanakile abantu. Yilokho nje, mntakaBhekokwakhe okungisuse ebusuku ubona sengilapha. Nawe uyindoda, uyabazi lababantu; ngithi ngilamulele, sengifile.”

“Nami baba, ungibona ngivuke ebusuku nje ngithi ngize kuwena. UBajwayele lapha akaziwa ukuthi ushonephi. Sesimfune sagijima yonke indawo kepha kasimtholi!”

“Awu, usebalekile futhi mkhwenyana?”

“Kusobala baba. Bengithi mhlawumbe uzoza ngasekhaya ngoba uhambe ebusuku. Sesibasathe silandela nemikhondo, phinde ifike iphele egwaqweni. Kuthe ukuba kuthi dwi ngathatha ihhashi, ngagijima ngomgwaqo njalo, kepha-ke angimbonanga. Nabantu engihlangene nabo ngambuza kubo bathi kabazange bambone. Sekuduma ikhanda nje manje, angazi ukuthi ngizomfuna kuphi ngoba njengoba kuliSonto nje kazikho nezitimela.”

“Nasesiteshini akekho? Wo, izongihlupha lentombazane.”

“Phinde baba, akekho.”

“Usuke waya nakwadadewabo oganele kwaQwabe?”

“Ngithumele abantu ekuseni nami ngisagijime ngomgwaqo, nakhona bafike bamlandula. Sesiye sabika nasemaphoyiseni.”

“Yindaba ezokwenziwa njani-ke lena mkhwenyana? Mina kangisacabangi nangawe. Sengizicabangela mina. Ngiyofike ngithini kunina wentombazane ekhaya!”

“Uthi-ke baba angakubeka icala lokuthi nguwe eseqine imihlathi? Uyena ozibonele indlela emfanele; wangena yona engacebisene namuntu.”

“Usho ngoba ungawazi ameva engihleli phezu kwawo kuloyamuzi wena mkhwenyana.”

“Ngiyawazi baba. Uthi bengaka njena abakhwekazi lapha eButhunqe bukaMagayi, ukhona ophatha umkhwenyana wakwakhe njengoba mina ngiphathwa owami umkhwekazi?”

“Akekho mntanami.”

“Izinsizi zamadoda ziyafana kuyo yonke indawo.”

“Kunjalo mntanami.”

“Izinto zoniwa ngamabomu nje mkhwenyana; zoniwa ngumkhwekazi wakho.”

“Wo, kabaphikiswa kakhulu labo. Yibona makhosi omhlaba; yibona nathi esikhonze kubona. Siyilokhu esiyikhona nje yilaba abantu. Uma into bengayifuni sengafunda mina ukuthi kayilungi.”

“Akusikho lokho mkhwenyana. Banamakhanda alukhuni nje.”

“Phinde baba. Uyabona, lababantu bancishwa amandla ezikhwepha mhla bedalwayo. Kwase kuthiwa bona ngoba amandla omzimba kabanawo sebeyozivikela ngezinyembezi. Angakukhalela kanye umuntu wesifazane, uthi uyazazi uyazazi uyindoda, ungazazi lutho.”

“Uthi pho ukube kunjalo ngabe izwe lisalungile behlupheka kangaka abanye abantu besifazane? Shono mnakwethu,” kubuza uZulumacansi.

“Uyabona, ngamakhosi lababantu; ngamakhosi okudalwa, okufanele ukuba sincenge kuwona, sizithobe phambi kwakho ngoba kangikhathali unamandla kangakanani, inhliziyo yomuntu wesifazane kawukwazi ukuyithandisa lokho engakuthandi.”

“Sengicishe ngiyikholwe leyonto mnakwethu ngoba uBajwayele wehlule imithi yami ebengiyethembe kakhulu.”

“Ukudlala nje imithi. Ubuchopho buhlulwa ngobunye ubuchopho kuphela.”

“Musani ukukhohlisana nina bafana. Uyabona wena mfana kaBhekokwakhe uthambe kakhulu. Intombazane lena uyayiyeka nje ichachaze, ikhwele ize izehlele kuwena.

Uboyenza yazi ukuthi uma ikhuluma nawe ikhuluma nomnininimuzi.”

“Uma ifunze unina baba ngingayenzenjani? Ngoba nawe uyasho uthi kawukho ndawo?”

“Ungayishayi phela. Kodwa ubuso bakho buhlale buyincwadi ebhaliwe ukuba ayifunde. Azi naye ukuthi uma usubuthe izinhlonzi kusuke sekonakele. Hhayi lento eniyenzayo nina bafana banamhlanje, lapho abafazi benu sekungoshomi benu.”

“Uthi baba ukuba izinhlonzi ziyasebenza ngabe pho kayisithambile kuwena intombi kaMemunce?”

Athule uManamuza, edlulise amehlo awabhekise ezintabeni ezikude, kube songathi uyacabanga. Kuthi ngelikade athi: “Niyabona bakhwenyana bami, izinsizi zamadoda ziningi. Wena Mnguni uwakhile umuzi wakho, uthule, kawunaziwengu. UmntakaBhekokwakhe yinkosi yomuntu, uzisebenzela eThekwini, uhlushwa yintombazane nje.”

Kuphendule uMasovenyeza: “Ngiwakhe baba ngoba ngasheshe ngafunda ukuthi umuzi kawakhiwa ngezinhlonzi. Ngayilwa impi yezinhlonzi, yangehlula, ngafuna enye indlela. Ngathamba, ngase ngifunda ukuthi umanqoba wesikhali emhlabeni, luthando kuphela. Inxa umuntu esethanda, akanqobeki, kangikhathali noma sekwenziwani.”

“Ngiyezwa nje mkhwenyana; kodwa konke lokhu esikukhulumayo akuyi ndawo ngoba nangu uBajwayele ubalekile, kasimazi lapho eye khona. Ukwehlule konke ukuhlakanipha kwethu singamadoda.”

Kuphendule uZulumacansi. “Wo, yeka imithi yami



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engangiyikhiphela imali eyesabekayo eBhiyafu, eThekwini. Ngikhohliswa zinyanga.”

“Mina ngisola wena mkhwenyana. Wawuthambe kakhulu.”

“Musa ukumdukisa baba; impi yezinhlonzi yimpi eyahlulwayo. Wehlulwa kimi uSabisabafazi.”

Asukume uMasovenyeza, avalelise, abashiye laba abahluphekile bobabili endleni ahambe ehlabela amahubo asesontweni.

“Mkhwenyana, mntanami, angazi-ke ukuthi sizokwenzenjani ngoba nakhu nelanga selize laphakama sikhuluma singayiboni indlela. Okungenani angisale sengihamba ngiya kwakho kuze kucimeke imililo engihangula kowami umuzi.”

“Kepha-ke lokhu anginamuntu nami? Nginomame kuphela? Intombazane lena engelamayo eyendele kuMasovenyeza iyaphindela kwakhe namuhla. Umuntu omkhulu kimina ngingeke ngithande ahlale ekhaya ezophekelwa yisalukazi esingumame.”

“Cha, uqinisile khona. Pho, kasisale sesehlukana mntanami. Icala lisilahlile.”

Azihudule uManamuza ephindela emzini wakhe, ehamba ema ake akhulume yedwa, efuna isu lokuqhamukela intombi kaMemunce. Ahambe kancane noZulumacansi, ecabanga isu lokufuna uBajwayele, baze baye basithele ngesikhathi esifanayo, kube yilowo nalowo ahambe aye kwakhe, bengazi ukuthi konje uma befuna uBajwayele bazoqala ngaphi bagcine ngaphi.

Nanamuhla lokhu akakatholwa uBajwayele!

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