

“Wena phela nokudayisa nje ngengane yakho ungakwenza uma bekununosela ngezinkomo. Ngikhohlwe ukuthi ukhona umuntu owake wathengwa engelona ijazi lamasotsha.”

“Hhayi-ke uzoke uzibulale ngendlala izingane zakho.”

“Likhona nje ikwabo. Kanti zazalwa yinyoni yini lezingane? Angithi zinoyise, udla amabele? Zinomfowabo, usebenza imali enjengemali eGoli?”

“Kuyothiwa ekabani leyongane egugela ekhaya?”

“Kuyobe kungaqali ngaye lokho. Akukho okwake kwambulala ukuba abantu basho njalo ngaye.”

Athule futhi uManamuza. Aphinde athi: “Mh! Zinkulu izindaba,” abese ethula isikhathi eside.

“Ziyolokhu zaba nkulu nje inxa kusuka abanumzane bangene ezindabeni zezingane, bedayisa ngabantababo. Mina owami angidayisi ngaye engelona ijazi.”

“Lisiko lethu lemvelo ukulobola.”

“Uthi-ke sengingabulala umntanami ngoba ngithi ngifuna ilobolo?”

“Nami ngimkhulisile lomuntu, ngamondla. Kufuneka nomkhwenyana akubone lokho; akubonge.”

“Ukube kuya ngami ngabe seliyafa liphele nya nalo lelilobolo. Wonke lomonakalo ophakathi kwezwe ubangwa yilo. Amadoda asehlala phansi athamele ilanga liphuma lize lishone uba egabe ngokuthi abantabawo bazolotsholwa. Amanye ahlohlozela izingane zawo ebumnyameni, ngoba ehalela izinkomo zabanye abantu. Amanye aze azonde

abantabawo ngoba bengayingenisi imali noma izinkomo masinya. Ngikhuluma njena zigcwele izingane zabantu emadolobheni esezaxoshwa emakubo zixoshwa oyise nabanewabo ngoba kuthiwa zenqaba ukugana, zingenise izinkomo.”

“Lisiko lakithi nina kaBongani.”

“Silwane sini sona isiko? Nitholani-ke ngesiko lakini? Ake nicabange yise kaDumezweni ningamadoda. Ake ubheke nje ukuthi zingaki izingane ezizalela emakhaya ngenxa yelobolo. Lihle lelosiko uma libanga lokho?”

“Musa ukungitshela ngezigangi.”

“Abantabethu laba. Akuzona izigangi. Kuyasika kithina uma becekeleka phansi kanjena ngoba nina nimi ngokuthi nifuna ilobolo. Ithi ingane uma isikhulile, kufike isikhathi uMdali wayo athi yoba nomuzi. Ngenxa yobuphofu besizwe esimnyama nganxanye, nokwesinda kwelobolo nganxanye, ingane yomfana ikufice kwesinda kabi ukuba ithathe umfazi, ishade, ithole abantwana ngokufanele. Abafana sebeyesaba ukushada ngoba ilobolo liyasinda. Yikho lokhu lifa ngezingane ezitholelwa emakhaya.

Nakhu nami sengikubona kuzongivelela kowami umuzi – umntanami ezoboshwa ngoqhoto ngoba kujahwe ilobolo.”

“Iyeke lendaba nina kaBongani. Ayisakulingene. Sekungeyami.”

“Yingene phela kulungile. Kodwa-ke uZulumacansi lona; uyokuphendukela esiswini njengotshwala. Uyongikhumbula yise kaBongani.”

“Musa ukusonga kanjena nina kaBongani emzini wami. Uma ingane imthanda uZulumacansi, izomgana. Nami

futhi ngifuna imgane. Uma kungeyami izolalela umthetho wami.”

“Qha phela, kakade umnimumuzi nguwe.”

“Yilokho engikushoyo. Uyavama ukuba ukukhohlwe.”

“Ungcofa igama lami nje uma usho njalo. Angizanga namuzi mhla ngishiya okaMemunce.”

“Yilokho engifuna ukwazi. OkaNomadinane lomuzi; uthi mina ngaphakathi nangaphandle. Ingane engaphakathi kwawo lomuzi kufanele ihloniphe owami umthetho. Uma ingeke ikwenze lokho mayiphume ngesango ihambe, ibheke eMkhumbane.”

“Uthi pho ngabe isakhiwe imizi ukube kuhanjwa ngaleyondlela?”

“Uma izwi lomnumzane lingeze laba yilutho, pho, umuzi kungaba umuzi wani? Kulona okaNomadinane ngifuna izwi lami lihlonishwe; libe umthetho.”

Siyoyicela ivuthiwe.....”

“Izovuthwa, thula nje ubukele.”

“Kasazi wena okaNomadinane.”

## ISAHLUKO VI

Uthi ukuba azanelise uManamuza ukuthi impela uZulumacansi usha amashushu ngentombi yakhe, sekuthi ngakusihlwa kuthile ubiza yona intombazane nonina, ebabizela endlini enkulu. Uma ekuzwa lokhu okaMemunce aqale ngokunxifela phansi, kuthi ngelikade asukume aye lapho ebizelwa khona. Uyafika laphaya uBajwayele unele wezwa ebizwa, wasuka ngelikhulu ijubane. Lelijubane libangwa luvalo. UManamuza umuzi wakhe wayewuphethe ngemvubu. Uma ebiza ingane, afune ize isikhefuzela kuyena ukukhombisa ukuthi ibe igijima. Uma sekonakele ngempela emzini wakhe wayengaze abe esabuza ukuthi konje induku uyifaka kubani. Ibidla noma ubani lowo athuke ehlangana naye esathukuthele. Engakhethi noma intombazane seyendile.

Kwakuke kwathi uBongani, intombazane yakhe eyayendele kuMasovenyeza, ehambele ekhaya, ngalanga limbe wathukuthela uManamuza. Wahosha imvubu emxhakeni, wayigaxa kuzo zonke izingane, zaphuma zabanga umnyango. Naye waphuma ezilandela, eziphundla ngemvubu. Ugijima njalo uyathetha. Ebaleni wazithela phezu kwayo indodakazi ithwele umgqomo ithi iya emfuleni, akabe esabuza, yakhala kuwona umgqomo imvubu, waye walahleka phansi. Yathi ithi nkente intombazane, ithi phela ibuza ukuthi sekwenzenjani kokaNomadinane, imvubu yakhala kuyona ehloambe. Yasho ubungqayingqayi intombazane ibaleka iyongena exhibeni!

Lesisenzo saba sibana impela ngoba uManamuza waze waqhuba imbuzi eseyoxolisa kuMasovenyeza nabakwaQwabe. Uthathela ngejubane njena uBajwayele usenevuso lokuthi konje elinguyise hleze afike kulona sekubhiza imvubu emoyeni.

“Uphi unyoko?” kubuza uManamuza.

“Uyeza baba.”

“Uza ulizulu yini?”

Abese ethula uBajwayele. UManamuza konke lokhu ukukhuluma ulele ngomhlane embhedeni, ushaye amanhlakomuzi. Uhleli phansi uBajwayele phezu kwesicephu ngasohlangothini oluhlala abantu besifazane endlini. Ebese ingene intombi kaMemunce.

“Kade ngikubizile nina kaDumezweni?”

“Uthi-ke yise kaDumezweni bese ngingashiya imisebenzi yonakala, ngoba nawe kawajahe ndawo, ngoba nakhu usacambalele?”

“Yilokho engingakufuni. Ukuba ngilokhu ngitshelwa ngumfazi ukuthi angenze lokhu ngesikhathi esingukuthi emzini kaNomadinane.”

UBajwayele amuthi jeqe unina, ingaze yamphendula uyise intombi kaMemunce. Athule isikhathi eside uManamuza engakhulumi, kusehla igwebu. Kuthi ngelikade avuke embhedeni, ahlale ngezinqe abese ewuvulile umlomo.

“Bajwayele, mntanami, ngifuna ukukhuluma nawe.”

“Yebo, baba.”

“Usukhulile manje, Nomadinane. Ngifuna-ke mntanami ukuba ungilandele izinkomo kwabozalo lukaBhekokwakhe. Mina yihlo sengicabange ngabona ukuthi laphaya kulomfana kaBhekokwakhe, uZulumacansi, ungafike ukhonzele thina inkonzo enhle. Yilokho-ke engikubizele khona.”

“Ngiyezwa baba.”

“Nangu nonyoko ulalele naye. Nakuyena sengiyikhulumile lendaba, ngasho ngathi indaba efanele ukuba inqunywe yimina. Kodwa-ke ngumzali wakho naye. Uzophefumula naye.”

“Kuliqiniso lokhu okushiwo nguyihlo Bajwayele ukuthi usukhulile. Kuliqiniso futhi ukuthi kulisiko lakithi elihle ukuba ingane ikhonjiswe umuntu ophilile, ingazilahli ehuzwini elizodlala ngayo. Kepha-ke kukhona mina okungixakayo. Lomuntu okhonjwa nguyihlo angimboni kahle. Okokuqala ukhulele edolobheni. Abantu abanjalo mina angibathandi. Baba nemikhutshana eminingi engasile. Omunye uhlala iminyaka kuthiwa uyasebenza eThekwini kanti usazitholela ingojuswana ayifuyele eMkhumbane. Ingane emgane ngokomthetho emakhaya iqhomolozwe, ithi muntu uyobuya ize ikhathale. Mina owami umntwana akadinge lutho. Ngingeke ngithi ngilibona ihuzu linembobo ekhaleni bengithi ngizomsizela khona uBajwayele.”

“Akunjalo nina kaDumezweni. UZulumacansi ngumfana oziphetha kahle kakhulu. Bonke abafana asebenza nabo eThekwini bayasho ukuthi akusiye umfana ohamba kakhulu. Uphuma ekhishini kwamlungu aye endlini yakhe. Uma ephuma lapho usuke eya engomeni. Kayikho enye indawo ayihambayo. Akukho lutho olubi alwenzayo eThekwini.”

“Okwesibili-ke, uZulumacansi yisitha somkhwenyana. Khona izolo lokhu kade beyisene ezinkantolo, umkhwenyana wadliwa izimali ezesabekayo. Nanamuhla lokhu ezinye zazo usazikhipha. Kubuhlungu kimina ngoba uBongani lezizimali ukuphuma kwazo kuzombulala ngendlala umntanami – konke lokho bekubangwe nguZulumacansi ngamabomu.”

“Yena uMasovenyeza wayengasazikhiphi ngani izinkomo zikaZulumacansi?”

“Ezakhe wayezisebenzephi?”

“Angithi uQimbile uzalwa nguBhekokwakhe? UZulumacansi yindlalifa kaBhekokwakhe?”

“Yikho lokhu ngilizonda njena ilobolo leli. Kusuke ulova njena, noma lihuzu laseMkhumbane, libhungukele eThekwini iminyaka lingathumeli mali ekhaya, lingawondli namantombazane akwabo. Mhla kufa uyise libuye selizoqoqa izinkomo zamabheka.”

“UZulumacansi akasilo ihuzu.”

“Angisho ukuthi uyilona. Kepha-ke awumubi lomthetho wenu.”

“Lisiko lesizwe, mntakaMemunce. Isiko lisiko.”

“Noma lixabanisa abantu?”

“Selokhu kwathi nhlo, abantu bayaxabana. Noma ungaze uliqede ilobolo, bayolokhu bexabana njena abantu.”

“Angiyiboni kahle mina lento.”

“Umthetho wenzelwa ukuba uhlonishwe.”

“Kunjalo impela, kepha-ke umthetho nawo kawusho ukuthi inhliziyoyomuntu kayithande okungafanele. Uthini yena uBajwayele? Mina angithandi ukuba aphoqelelwe uma engamfuni lomfana kaBhekokwakhe.”

“Khuluma Bajwayele. Nango unyoko ebuza.”

“Uyangikhulumisa yena uZulumacansi.”

“Wakubona yilesiyasiphoxo mntanami.”

“Musa ukuthikazisa ingane isakhuluma nina kaDumezweni. Qhubeka Bajwayele.”

“Ngiyakuzwa lokhu okushiwo ngubaba. Kepha-ke nabaseMayezeni bafuna ukuza ekhaya nabo. Basho njalo.”

Beze kubani? Yini yona abantu baseMayezeni? Bangabhekana nomfo kaBhekokwakhe? Angithi wakhhipha amakhulu amabili ompondo ngelanga elisenhloko wathenga izinkomo zagcwala isibaya? Yindoda uqobo lwayo leyo mntanami. Nodadewenu balalela engibathuma khona. Nanamuhla bahleli kahle.”

“Kepha-ke baba uZulumacansi unolaka.”

“Akulutho lokho mntanami. Onke amadoda anolaka. Umendo uyakhonzelwa.”

“Futhi usemdala kakhulu kunami.”

“Ngiyakuthuma, ungumntanami, ngithi ngilande izinkomo emzini kaBhekokwakhe. Musa ukubika imbiba, ubike ibuzi. Into engifuna uyikhulume wena ukuthi malungiselelo mani okufanele enziwe ukuze wenze lokhu engikuthuma khona.”

“Phela, yise kaDumezweni naye uBajwayele akuseyona ingane. Naye unenhliziyoy. Uma ubucu bungalingani entanyeni, wena ubufaka ngenkani, buyogqashuka.”

Nguwe lona nina kaDumezweni okhweza ingane phezu kwami. Ngithi ngiyitshela umthetho wami, wena ube uthi kayinhlathathe. Ukwenzelani lokho? Lengane mina ngifuna yakhe umuzi ojiyile njengoba zonke izingane zami ziyakhile.”

“Angisho njalo, Nomadinane. Bengikukhombisa ukuthi kulezizinto umuntu wesifazane naye ubuswa yinhliziyoy.”

“Kulona owami umuzi konke kubuswa yimina. Obuswa ngeyakhe inhliziyi angaphuma manje ayokwakha owakhe umuzi.”

“Qha-ke bengingaqondile ukuba kuze kufika lapho.”

“Lungiselela wena Bajwayele ukuba ungilandele izinkomo kwaBhekokwakhe.” Asukume abafulathele, adumele ipipi alokhele qede abese elala ngomhlane embhedeni. Babone lababesimame ukuthi sekuphelile abe ebabizele khona. Baphume.

Baphuma njena akasababhekile uManamuza. Uselokhu eshunqisa lokhu akubhemayo. Kuthi ngelikade ehlike embhedeni, akhulume yedwa ethetha.

“Kungabe kakwenziwa lutho. OkaNomadinane lomuzi.” Anikele odongeni lwendlu, ngenhla kombhede, adumele imvubu.

“We Bajwayele.”

“Baba!”

Eze egijima. Ungena emnyango usachiphiza izinyembezi, azesule masinya. Pho, izinyembezi zesimame ziyesuleka yini kalula? Aze angene phakathi endlini amehlo esebomvu, nesilokozane singakapheli.

“Okuyiyonanto oyikhalelayo manje yini?”

“UZulumacansi mdala kunami.”

Athukuthele uManamuza eswele ukuthi konje yiluphi ulimi angakhuluma ngalo ukuzwakalisa ukufuthelana kwakhe. Athuke esebhobokele esiNgisini, athi:

“Lwabishi!”

Akhale ngamandla uBajwayele. Ayidedele imvubu uManamuza, ikhale ehlobo, ikhale ezimbanjeni kuBajwayele kusuke esinamathambo. Lokhu umi ngasemnyango uManamuza, azenzele akuthandayo kuBajwayele.

“Ini? Ngikutshela okwami wena ungitshela okwakho? Angithi bese nicabanga ukweqa nalesisilimana esinguPotolozini niye eGoli?”

“Akunjalo baba.”

“Uthini?” Ayigaxe ngamandla imvubu uManamuza. “Ingani nabuyiswa uZulumacansi seniyogxoba ipasi lokuba weqe wena uye eGoli.”

“Sasivakasha nje; sasingayi eGoli.”

“Pho, wabalekelani uPotolozini?”

“Wayeselwa uZulumacansi.”

“Khona lapho ayelwa, ukhona umuntu osile ongabaleka ashiye umfazi wakhe kufiwa? Awuboni ngani ngakho khona lokho ukuthi lomfokazana waseMayezeni akumuntu walutho?”

“Ngiyamthanda baba.”

“Thanda uZulumacansi kusukela manje. Bopha yonke imithwalo yakho. Ngizokuphelekezela uyogana kwaBhekokwakhe. Uma ngikuyeka sengibonile lelihuzwana elinguPotolozini lizokweqa nawe.”

Uyaqeda lapho uphuma nemvubu ayaluze ebaleni. Sonke

isimame sakwakhe sithule sithi du, ngoba wayengaphendulwa uma esecanasa ebaleni enze njalo. Nayo imbala intombi kaMemunce ihobe exhibeni namadodakazi. Isidane ilokhu iphuma ibuye ingene njena, isiza uBajwayele ngoba nangu uyise useze wathukuthela kakhulu. Uma esenjena yazi nayo intombi kaMemunce ukuthi akukho lutho olunye olungenziwa. Okungasiza kuphela ukuba kwenziwe lokho akushoyo.

“Kulungile Bajwayele, sale usuhamba mntanami. Uyintombazane. Umhlaba lona ubuswa ngamadoda.”

Bangahambi ngalelolanga. Ngakusasa bamphелеkezele.

Lendaba isuse enkulu imvungamo lena eButhunqe. Abanye bamsole kakhulu uManamuza ngesenzo sakhe, ukuba intombi iyinhle kangaka yena ayiganise songathi ibe yaliwa. Abanye bathi ulingise umfokazana kanti ufuye kangaka. Abanye bathi ukuma kwabo abantu abacebile. Uyaye athande songathi yonke imfuyo yomhlaba lena isingaba ngeyakhe noma ngayiphi indlela.

Okokuqala ajabule afe uZulumacansi. Ngosuku olulandelayo ashaye isithole asise kwaManamuza. Kufike kube kuhle konke. Kuthi noma intombi kaMemunce imbuka ngeziqo zamehlo, angaze anaka, acabange ukuthi yizinto zakhona lezo. Kukhulunywe-ke kubuswe, kuvunyelwane nangelobolo. Lapho sekukhulunywa ngalo, uManamuza akhukhumale ubone njena nawe ukuthi nanso into kaNomadinane. Avumele phezulu uManamuza uma laba abozalo lukaBhekokwakhe becela ukuba kusheshe kuyiwe ukuyobhala umshado ngoba nabo banovalo ngoPotolozzi. Indaba ese igcwele obukaMagayi sekungukuthi abaseMayezeni bafuna ukweqa noBajwayele baye esilungwini.

Nempela kuthi ngesonto elilandelayo kuyiwe enkantolo,

babhalwe. Kubuywe-ke sekuthiwa kuzohlelelwa usuku lomgidi ngempela.

Ngalezonsuku uManamuza kube songathi unezimpiko, lokhu kunele kwayiwa enkantolo uZulumacansi wabuye washaya ishumi lonke neyodwa evayo, wabuye wabeke ezine ngaphezulu, lezi wathi kazime uManamuza, ngoba uBajwayele engumntanenduna kaDumdumu, wazisa kwaManamuza. Lapho zagcwala esibayeni somntakaNomadinane kwasongathi sizoqhuma sona. Wajabula uManamuza kwasongathi ayikho into enhle eyake yamehlela emhlabeni eyedlula lena. Kwalungiselelwa lapha kwakhe, kuhlinzekwa usuku olukhulu.

Ngalena kuboZulumacansi nakhona konakele. Sekwehle noQimbile isalukazi esingunina ukuze luyafika usuku lokungenisa umakoti ekhaya ngempela, konke sekulunge ngendlela efanele umuzi kaBhekokwakhe.

Ufika ubiza unina, umbizela ngasese.

“Mama, kepha angijabuli kahle ngalomsindo kaZulumacansi. Kukhona okungahambanga kahle,” kusho uQimbile.

“Phela mntanami uma intombi ibangwe njengoba kade kubangwe umakoti nje, kuningi okonakalayo.”

“Umakoti kumphathe kabi impela lokhu ukuba kuthiwe ube esefuna ukweqa noPotolozzi.”

“Thina sazi ukuthi lokho kuliqiniso.”

“Nezwa ngobani?”

“Awu, indaba uma isikhulunywa yibo bonke abantu wena ungasho ukuthi uyizwe ngobani?”

“Ngisho ngoba phela izwi manje selithi babanjwa uZulumacansi sebeyokhwela isitimela, wabuya yena watshela uManamuza. Ubona uManamuza esebhabhama kangaka nje.”

“Qha, mntanami, uZulumacansi akazange akwenze lokho.”

“OkaMemunce nezintombi zakwakhe basho njalo. Nalena engigane nayo isho njalo.”

“Badlala ngoZulumacansi njena. Bafuna ukumnyundela entombini.”

“Nayo iyakholwa ukuthi kuhambe kanjena ngoba emawaleni akhe uyise uyilethe ngenduku lapha kwethu.”

“Pho singabe sisenzani mntanami, lokhu sekonakele? Okufanele ukuba sikwenze thina ukuba samukele umakoti ngazo zombili, simjwayeze ekhaya. Labo abahlebayo sibayeke ngoba uma siphike nabo kuyodilika umuzi kaBhekokwakhe. Kodwa-ke kungamanga aphindiwe ukuthi uZulumacansi wake wakhulumani ngoBajwayele noPotoloji kuManamuza. Into esiyaziyo thina ukuthi uPotoloji waphoxa uZulumacansi. Pho-ke ngoba owakwenu uyamazi nawe, akabe esabuza. Endaweni yokuba angabaleki, okungenani alimale, wasuka uPotoloji wathatha ngejubane washiya intombi ngemuva. Nanso thina into esiyaziyo.”

“Kubi impela nje ngoba nentombi yakhona lena engigane nayo kwaQwabe ifunga iyagomela ithi iyoke ibone eke wahlala kwaphela izinyanga zombili.”

“Umthetho wakhona-ke nje lowo mntanami. Labo abaliwe bayaye bazwele. Nomndeni wakubontombi imbala kawuyi nganhlanye. Uma besho njalo thina kufanele ukuba sithule singathi nda. Sinqobile, intombi isisekhaya.”

Kuhlatshwe izinkomo, kujatshulwe, kusinwe kube njeya lapha kwaboZulumacansi. Kuthi kungaphela konke bahlakazeke abantu. Asebenze njengabo bonke abantu uBajwayele. Kuthi noma engasheshi ukweywayela, kodwa kuthi ngoba unina kaZulumacansi enomusa, kungabi lukhuni kangako. Kuhluphe zona njena izinkulumo zabantu abalokhu beqhubekile ukudonsa base lena nalena.

Ikakhulu zihluphe uZulumacansi. Kuthi noma esechaza kuBajwayele ukuthi akazange ake abonane noyise noma axoxeni nanoma ubani omunye, avume nje uBajwayele kodwa kubonakale ukuthi lendaba imphele kabi. Kantike futhi nokuphuma emzini kayise, ezongena lapha kokaBhekokwakhe kwaba buhlungu, kwalulaza isithunzi sakhe; wangenisa okwentombi eyaliwayo, ayazi kamhlophe ukuthi angangena lapho ethanda khona kubongwe eButhunqe.

Kuthi noma esesese kakhulu, inhliziyo ithi uma ikhumbula lezizinto; ekhumbula ukuthi konke lokhu kwenzeka ngoba uyise ejahe ilobolo noma kanjani, ebese ezwa kufika isifithifithana songathi sizomisa inhliziyo. Uma eyedwa, noma phakathi kobusuku, asikhihlile isililo, ezama ukuba inhliziyo ingabe isaba nabo lobubuhlungu ebuzwayo.

Konke lokhu kumhluphe kakhulu kabi uZulumacansi. Athi uma ekhumbula ukuthi behlukana kahle kanjani noBajwayele mhla eshaya uPotoloji ezwe kufika umunyu. Azikhuze uma kufika kuye umcabango wokuthi umuntu oxove konke lokhu nguManamuza – ngamawala akhe. Ukuba mhlawumbe wayengabhadazelanga eshaywe luvalo lwehemuhemu lokweqa, ngabe bekuzolunga konke ngendlela. Ekwazisa-ke ukuthi lowo nalowowesifazane yinkosi ngokwakhe ngezinto ezithandwa yinhliziyo yakhe, ancenge lapha kuBajwayele; abhunquze kuze kusale umshudulo.

Kepha athi noma esekwazile konke lokhu, inhliziyi yakhe ingaze yancibilika; angaze eneliswa ukuthi akukho ngozi engabe isamvelela. Ezwe ebanozwela; kuthi noma bekhuluma noBajwayele bebodwa, kube khona ukubandelana angazi ukuthi kubangwa yini. Kummangalise lokhu ngoba kokwakhe ukwazi uBajwayele wayezikhethela yena ukuba eze emzini kaBhekokwakhe; wayengazange ake ezwe ngokwenzeka kwaManamuza ukuze eze uBajwayele. Pho-ke, abantu basemakhaya! Kufunwe izinyanga, kushunqiswe, kuchinswe kube njeya – uba phela kuchithwa lokhu abakholwa ngokuthi yimithi kaPotoloji. Kuye ngokuya uQimbile alikhumbule elentombi kaMemunce; naye ayelizwe ngentombi kaManamuza ayegane nayo. Akhumbule ukuthi yathi intombi iyinkosi ngenhliziyo yayo.

Ashaywe luvalo uma ekhumbula lokhu. Kepha kube lukhuni ukuba abakhombise laba abakubo izingozi zalezizwi ngoba umakoti usesekhaya. Athi uma ethi usola songathi likhona iphutha elikhona, bamtshele ngezinkomo ezalobola; bamtshele ukuthi wagana uBajwayele; bamtshele lokhu nalokhuya, isigcino naye uQimbile athule, ebona ukuthi loluvalo analo yena abanalo kakhulu laba bakubo. Kodwa kuthi uma eyedwa awakhumbule amazwi kazakwabo naye ayewathathe kunina, umkaManamuza.

Avuke njengabo bonke omakoti uBajwayele, lapho kuthi ntwe enzansi, anikele emfuleni, abuye namanzi. Asuke lapho ezwe etsheni egaya ukudla abase, apheke. Uyavuka wonke umuzi kaBhekokwakhe usebangingelela ngekhofi elishunqayo. Kwathi kungakabi nsuku wonke umuzi wase usho uthi intombi kaManamuza ikhuthela njengoba iyinhle. Isalukazi esingunina kaZulumacansi kuthi kasife nje ukuthanda umakoti wakwaso nokukhuthala kwakhe.

Nasekuthenzi kwazi yena. Bonke abantu bamangale njena ngoba kobukaMagayi kwakwaziwa ukuthi abantu abahle

kuvama ukuba babe ngamavila, balibale ukuma phambi kwesibuko, beziphaqula ubuso kuze kushone ilanga. Njengabo bonke abantu besifazane abahle, intombi kaManamuza nayo yayisithanda kabi isibuko. Uma sikhona isikhathi, ihambe nayo iyophuhla phambi kwaso. Kodwa kungalimali nowodwa umsebenzi ngoba yayiyihlela yonke ngenkathi ivuka ekuseni.

Kuqhubeke kwaqhubeka kwalalwa kahle ngalanga limbe. Kwasa ekuseni, laba bakoZulumacansi baze baphaphama ikhofi lingakangeni. Banamathela ezingutsheni, besabusa phela ngoba belinde ukuba baze bavuswe ngumakoti ngekhofi. Baqwayiza, baqwayiza, phinde umakoti. Bavuka bayaluza.

“Uphi umakoti? Uphi umakoti?” Phinde uBajwayele. Bagijime baye emfuleni, nalapho bamfice engekho. Bathi abanye uyotheza. Sifike isikhathi sokubuya, do umakoti! Baqale bakhombise ubuso obumuncu bonke manje lapha ekhaya. Kuthunywe abantu baphuthume ngakoManamuza ukuyobika lomhlola. Bayabuya nakhona bathi akazange alubeke ngalapho uBajwayele. Asho uQimbile athi: “Ngavele ngayisola lento.” Kuvele umvelivelana athi uhlangane noBajwayele imithwalo okusobala ukuthi ubeyokhwela isitimela. Basho bonke kanyekanye lapha kuboZulumacansi bathi: “UPotoloji!”



## ISAHLUKO VII.

Kwazi yena uZulumacansi ukuthi kusile ngelinye ilanga. Bathi bembona ekhaya wayephumela phandle, wabanga esibayeni. Wazibuka wazibuka izinkomo, wehlika waya esangweni, walivula, wangena ngaphakathi. Wabanga esitholeni esasizalwe siliwele nesinye ahamba wayobika ngaso uBajwayele kwaManamuza. Wasibuka wasibuka kwase kwahlembezela izinyembezi emehlweni. Akhumbule izinkomo zakhe. Angenelwe ngumunyu omkhulu – ube zinhlobo ezimbili. Owokuqala kube ukuba ekhumbula ukuthi izinkomo zakhe hleze kube sezilahlekile. Kufike isifuthufuthwana kuthi akasuke ngaso lesosikhathi abange kwaManamuza alande izinkomo zakhe. Abuye kulokhu, athi lokho akusiwo umthetho. Olwesibili uvalo kube olokuba ebona ukuthi intombi kaManamuza imalile. Noma yiyiphi intombi yayingamala nje uZulumacansi kungabi ndaba zalutho. Kodwa lena wayefa ngayo. Efa njena futhi esaba nehlazo lokuthi ukuhamba kwayo kuzosusa inhlekisa eyesabekayo ngaye, kuze kufike nasendabeni yomuthi wasekhemisi nesilevu. Okwesithathu esaba nakho nje ukuba kuthiwe intombi imale ngoba ibona ukuthi uPotolozu yinsizwa engcono kunaye.

Eme laphaya esibayeni kuze kube songathi kukhona inzululwane emngenele. Manje ezwe konke sekufuthelana kuyena, uvalo, nokuthukuthela, nokudumala nokuwa kobuqha bakhe. Athi uyaphenduka ebheka ngasekhaya, kube songathi bonke babuka yena. Aphume esibayeni, avale isango. Enyuke kancane eya elawini. Lelo nalelonyathelo eya phambili limkhanyisele indlela okufanele ahambe ngayo ukuzikhipha kulolubishi asengene kulona.

Lapho-ke ilanga selithe caphasha phezu kwezintaba zaseButhunqe; seliqalile ukwakha amathunzi amade ngezindlu. Asibone isilevu sakhe siside singangengalo ethunzini. Athi ukusiphulula, elokhu ebheke khona njalo

esithunzini. Usiphulula njalo uyacabanga; uyabila lapha ngaphakathi.

Athi emi ebaleni aphenduke abheke ngasemfuleni, kube songathi uzoyibona intombi kaManamuza iqhamuka emfuleni. Wayeyaye avuke ekuseni ayoma esibayeni, kube songathi ubuka izinkomo, kanti ubuka igugu lakhe livela emfuleni. Namuhla ulaka olubangwa ukuphunyuka kwegugu lakhe lugqamuke amalangabi abe ngangawo-thando lwakhe. Kwacinana imicabango ephikisanayo emqondweni. Wazibuza ukuthi uma eqhamuka lapho uBajwayele konje yena angenze njani. Uma ebe ebalekile, angamamukela yini? Enye inhliziyo ithi angamamukela. Kubuya kugunye ubuqha bakwaZulu, athi angamxosha. Kuthi lapho ecabanga uPotolozu ezwe kubila ingazi, athi angamlimaza kabi. Enalemicabango aye angene elawini. Umbhalwana lona azithe ngqu ngawo awujike laphaya, adumele isikhindi sakakhakhi kanye nejazi lesisotsha ayelithenge eThekwini. Anele agqoke aqede adumele imvubu newisa, afake izimbadada, aphume. Emnyango ahlangeane nodadewabo, eza emphathele amanzi ngomcengezi: “Hhawu, yini kangaka? Wagqoka? Nanka amanzi. Uyaphi ekuseni kangaka? Usungahamba ungadlile pho?”

UZulumacansi awachilizele ecaleni amanzi, abuthe izinhlonzi zibe zimbili, abone udadewabo ukuthi ayingangaye. Edlule njalo uZulumacansi aye aphume ngesango. Uthe ukuba asithele ngalena kwegquma wahlilikhla ubuso ngamazolo, wesula ngomsila wehembe, waphindela endleleni wadlwathizela elibhekise kwaManamuza.

Udlwathizela nje inhliziyo isigaya izibozi ngoba sewuke wamshaya ezindlebeni umoyana wokhuthi uBajwayele useBenoni lapho ebalekele khona. Akwaziwa ukuthi waya kubani lapho. Uthukutheliswa umcabango wokuthi

ngamawala kaManamuza onke lawa abhidlise wonke umsebenzi omuhle abe esewenzile. Ukhumbula namhla behlukana kahle, intombi ithi akabo ke afike ekhaya. Konke lokhu imvubu kaManamuza yakuphendula izibi – usekuzwile. Kepha elifike limqedele yileli eseligcwele eButhunqe lokuthi uZulumacansi wabamba uBajwayele eseqa noPotolizi, yikho lokhu aze amshaya nje uPotolizi.

Athi esahamba zonke lezizinto zigcwele emqondweni ezwe kufika kuye umcabango wokuthi uma engake uManamuza aqhamuke lapho, angamenza kabi ngemvubu. Kwale kodwa lapha ngaphakathi. Lilokhu likhona elincanyana elithi uma ikhona indlela yokubuyisa uBajwayele angambuyisa. Kepha kukuphi eBenoni? Ngoba selokhu azalwa yena ngumuntu waseThekwini? IGoli leli akalazi nokuthi lingakuphi nomhlaba. Ahambe ahambe ucwengeke umqondo; kumkhanye kuthi bha ukuthi umuntu okufanele ukuba aye eBenoni alande uBajwayele nguye kanye uManamuza oxove loludaba. Futhi-ke uManamuza ngendlela akhonze ngayo izinkomo, uyoncama ukuba afe noma enzeni kunokuba abone ngisho eyodwa inkomo iphuma esibayeni sakhe.

Leli lokuthuma uManamuza lamenza wakhohlwa zinkomo ezilahlekile. Azi futhi ukuthi uManamuza ligwala lendoda, wayesethi uyonele aqhamuke ngakhona azibuthe zonke izinhlonzi zakhe. Lokho, ezitshela yena, kuyombangela okukhulu ukwesaba uManamuza. Kepha athi lapho esathi uziduduzile ngalokho lumuthi heqe olwentombi kaMemunce. Akhumbule ukuthi noma engaze azibuthe zonke izinhlonzi uma ehlangane kuqala nesalukazi sikaManamuza nanhlonzana lezo kazisoze zenza lutho.

Akhumbule mhla esibingelela kusemsindweni kugcwele izintombi. Sasisuke samphendula ngomoya abandayo sathi: “Ho! kwenzenjani na namuhla weZulumancansi? Ngabingelelwa nguwe? Woshi, uzwe kuthi ake ube

ngumuntu nawe?” Akhumbule ngokucacile ukuthi wezwa imizwa yonke igodola kwaba songathi kugijir. a iqhwa kuyo yonke imithambo yegazi kuye. Wathi ethi ubheka izintombi, zasuke zahleka zonke. Wezwa kumfoma ikhala, wathuthumela laze lashona. Nanamuhla wathi uma eyicabanga leyondaba wezwa esegodola. Kodwa ngokuthukuthela ayese fike kukhona wahamba waya phambili.

Wahambahamba lwabuye lwavuka uvalo lwentombi kaMemunce. Wathi lapho ethi uluchitha ngezinhlonzi kwaba songathi useyayibona imswacela ithi: “Habe! Nansi imihloka kaMemunce bo! Yini yona lena engibuthela izinhlonzi? Nami ucabanga ukuthi ngingumkhwenyana yini?”

Abuye asuke, aye phambili, lapho esezwa amadolo eseqala ukuqina. Athi lapho ephuma ehlashananeni awubone umuzi kaManamuza usegqumeni. Muhle uyesabeka umuzi walomnumzane, amabala ahlala eshanelwe emhlophe ethe qwa. Uthi uma uya kwaManamuza uvame ukuhlangana nemiqobo yezinsizwa ngasemthonjeni ngoba uManamuza lona wayezele izintombi zigcwele umuzi. Zizinhle zonke, ungaze wale wena uthi zihlamba ngobisi. Kuthiwa uma kuthiwa vela muntu omuhle, kuvele ezikaManamuza kaNomadinane waseButhunqe bukaMagayi. Eziqhenya kabi ngazo uyise uManamuza. Athi ehleli, lokhu zilithoba, zine esezendile, lezi ezinhlanu abe elokhu ezibala ngeminwe, lena athi iyokhula iyomlandela izinkomo kwabani, lena kwabani, ukuyomenzela ugazi khona. Akhethe izikhulu zaseButhunqe. Athi uyothi uma eseganiselene nazo izikhulu zaseButhunqe abese ehla phansi, bonke abantu bakhulekele yena, engasenukuthintwa muntu ngoba izikhulu zezwe zithathe abantabakhe. Yena engasimze aye lapho kwendele khona intombi yakhe, akhulume nomkhwenyana uma kungumkhwenyana