

# NJE - NEMPELA

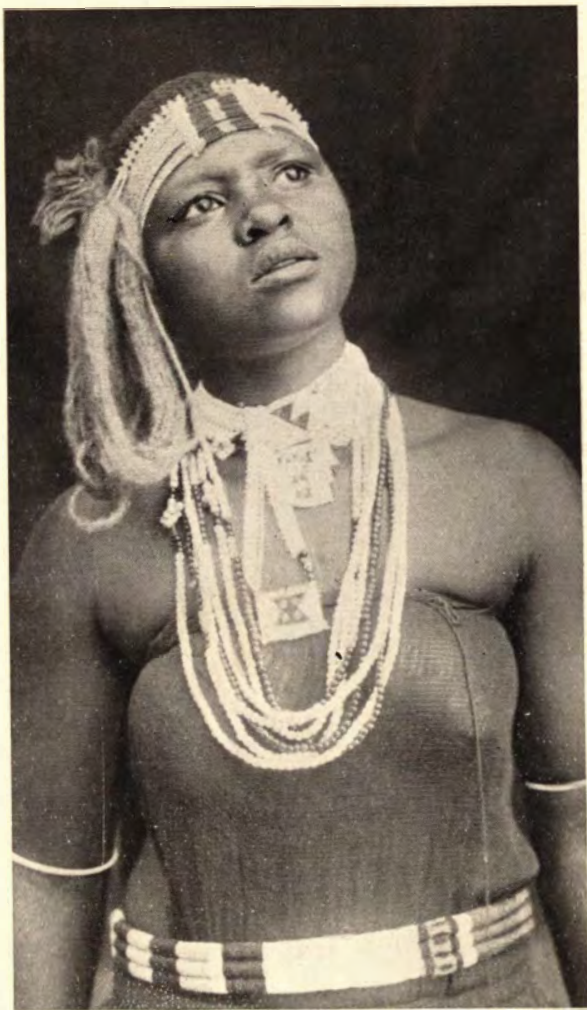
NGU

B. WALLET VILAKAZI, M. A. (RAND)

DEPARTMENT OF BANTU STUDIES

WITWATERSRAND UNIVERSITY

MARIANHILL MISSION PRESS



*"Wo, mihle umntwana womuntu,  
we madoda!"*

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“We sympathise in the great moments of history, in the great discoveries, the great resistances, the great posterities of men; because there law was found, and the blow was struck for us, as we ourselves in that place would have done or applauded.”

EMERSON in his “ESSAY on HISTORY”.

1944

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## I B I K A

Kulencwadi ngibala indaba yothando lwenziswa nentombi. Ukuyibala kwami ngiyilumbanisa nodaba olukhulu lwempi kaBambatha kaMancinza. Amagaba enqwaba yabantu engikhuluma ngabo lapha ngiwasusa enhloko-nje ngoba ngawo ngifuna ukuhlobisa indaba yami. OkaMancinza ngimbeke kulendaba ngoba ezinsukwini zanamuhla siyakhohlwa yilabo abafa befela umqondo ongenakumbululwa muntu uma thina babali afamnyama singawumisi phambi kwezinye izizwe, khona kuyothi noma sesafa kuthiwe sasizalwa ngamaqhawe.

Amaqhawe kwelempucuko asikabinawo: linye, mabili, mathathu, kodwa ukuhlabana kwawo kuyize uma uwabanqanisa nokuhlupheka kweningi lezinsizwa ezinjengoMvundlana kaMenziwa; oMankulumana; oShaka. Nasesifazaneni sakithi akukho nayedwa esingambeka ecaleni kwawoBibi kaNdlela; oMnkabayi kaJama nawoMonase. Into eyenza lokhu yingoba sikhula singazi ukuthi bakhona abasandulele kwaZulu, abazimilo zafo zingenamcothu phakathi kwesizwe nasezindlini zawoyisemkhulu. Sibafula bephethe imikhonto namahawu, omame bebince izidwaba sibafele ngamathe ngoba sithi ayikho into abafeyazi.

Lencwadi ngiyibalela wonke umuntu wakwaZulu nalafo abadafula kwaZulu bakwaMzilikazi, nabafalekela eSwazini nakwaSoshangane, naphansi kwaBaca. Ngiyibale ngibafuka bonke nanxa ngazi ukuthi mhla-wumbe nezingane zethu ziyokuyifunda esikoleni nge-linye ilanga; kodwa nxa ngithatha usifa ngibala phambi kwami kuhlala isizwe esimnyama, hhayi abantwana ngoba ngizimisele ukubalela abantu abaqonde ukwakha inkinga yezincwadi zesiZulu (Zulu Literature). Lenki-



nga ayakhiwa ngezincwadi zesikole ngoBa umqondo wezincwadi zesikole uhlambulukile ulinganiselwe izingane ezincane zona ezidlala ngoChakijana umphephethi wezinduku zaBafo; zithi lapho zixoxelwa ngoShaka zibone kuye isidlwangudlwangu esasimele ukubulala abantu kuphela. Kanti umfo wasoSuthu uMofolo akabali kanjalo. Ubala ngoShaka njengoba eyinkosi eBusa isizwe, nezizwe, nezizwana ezinamadoda anemiqondo njengathi, mhlawumbe ngaphezu kwethu thina esifundisiwe.

Ngalamazwi ngiyayibeka lencwadi ebandla, lapho iphethe khona ukujabula nokuhlupheka, ngikubala njengoba ngikuzwa noma ngikubona.

Izindawo zonke eziphathwa kulencwadi ngike ngazibona ngawami amehlo, namanxiwa emizi, namahlathi okwakucashwa kuwona sengike ngadabula kuwona ngihambe ngifuna ulwazi lwakwaZulu. Ngake ngalala izinsukwana kwelakwaZondi elalibuswa umfo kaMancinza uBambatha, ngabona namanxiwa kayise uMancinza.

Izibongo ezinye ngizakhele zona ngazipha amaqhawe engiwa bulungele indaba yami, kodwa ezamakhozi aziwayo ngizinikeziwe ekuhambeni kwami. EzikaMafukuzela ngizakhele.

Yimina wakwenu,

B. W. Vilakazi.

Johannesburg,

January 18th, 1943.

## NJE - NEMPELA

### ISAHLUKO I.

Laliyoshona ilanga. Intshonalanga ibomvu njengegazi lapho UMALAMBULE ehamba ezijukujelela izinyoni, wambona UNOMCEBO emi ngasekukhanyeni kwelanga. UNomcebo wayesethunzini ngoBa ilanga lalimxhophama emehlweni uMalambule; kodwa ngesimo sakhe wabona uMalambule ukuthi laphaya kumi intombi. Igama layo kwakungubani? Wayengayazi. Njengoba uNomcebo wayemi nelanga elibomvu, engabonakali kahle, uMalambule naye wema wayibuka lentombazana kwaBa sengathi ikhona into kuyona emkhumbuzo umlilo obomvu ubaswe eziko, abantu behleli bewothena.

Wazenza ongayinakile intombazana, waqhubeka ezishayela izinyoni zakhe; kodwa kwathi lapho esehambile ibangana wavusa ungcoda wathi uyamphonsa wagwija wabeka phezulu, walandelisa ngesesibili isagila naso saphaphalaza, ungcoda waphuma phansi kwaso watshuza waye wahlala phezulu kwesiduli, wacula. Lento yamthukuthelisa uMalambule wagijima wacoshisa izagila zakhe, wathi uyathathela, ungcoda wandiza waye watshobela emhosheni. Waphenduka uMalambule wakhumbula ukuthi ikhona intombi ebimi okhalweni ibekene nenhlamvu ebomvu yelanga. Waqalaza, wayibona imi njengesithombe, ibayi layo lishaywa ngumoya liphonseka ngala nangalapha, labukeka sengathi amalanga omlilo ebebethaka othatheni. Lentombazana yaletha umlilo ebuchosheni bukaMalambule wezwa engenelwa yibindi, wacinana.

UMalambule wayekade ehamba lonke ilanga ngangayizolo ephuma emsebenzini lapho wayekade eyobamba itoho. Manje wayekade elele emzaneni awaziyo lapho abantu bakuBo bejwayele ukulala khona ngaseDUMBE. UMalambule wayeqhamuka ngaseBabatini kade ehamba



odukadeni lwamathantala ezwe langaseSwazini lapho umoya oqhamuka entshonalanga ushisa kwale nokuba uhambe, nelanga lala nokuba unyathele phansi ehlobo. Nanamuhla wayesekhathele kodwa wayelula amadolo. Wayethi uya ngasemmfuleni eyogeza nomzimba, wayesebona lentombi. Nayo kwaba sengathi ize ngasemmfuleni. Wayifuka esaba sengathi ngabe nayo iyambuka kodwa wabona ukuthi kayimboni nempela. Kwathi lapho isondela wezwa utshani bufohlaka phansi kwezinyawo nezigi kwaba sengathi ezendoda. Wazinqinisa uMalambule kodwa wezwa isithunzi sentombazana simsinda, inhliziyoyakhe yamtshela ukuthi lentombazana ezayo iyimpilo uqobo lwayo, impilo ehamba ngemilenze emibili, ephefumulayo, enyakaza phezu kobuso bomhlaba, iguqula engakuguqula uma ithuke ihlangana nakho. Wathi lapho eqalaza emacaleni wangabona lutho oluphilayo ngaphandle kwentombazana leyo. Kude le, ngasempumalanga kwakudla izinkomo zalomuzi lapho efikele khona. Ngaseningizimu kwakudla izinkomo—mhlawumbe zakubo kalentombazana ezayo iqonde kuye kepha ihamba sengathi kayimboni.

Esikhundleni sokuaba ahambe wahlala phansi ecaleni kwendlela, yasondela intombazana kuye yafike yathi, "Sakubona", naye wathi, "Ngibona wena".

Kwasekuba lukhuni ukuba ngubani ozokhuluma, kwathula kwathi du, noMalambule kwangathi naye uyamangala ukuba uthuliswe yini, nentombazana yabumbeka umlomo yathula. Kwathi ziye emqondweni kaMalambule wakhumbula ukuthi konje kulomhlaba kukhona imingcwinqhamuka ngisho nasemini, ivele kubantu kanti amadlozi abantu bakubo abangasekho; kukhona abafuna ukuba akwenze nokuba mhlawumbe ahlabe. Pho lapha endle, ezweni labaQulusi yena engowasoThukela-nje, amadlozi akubo angamvelela kanjani kude kangaka na? Wabuye waphakamisa amehlo wayibuka intombazana, wayibona imi imlindile. Wabuye wayibukisisa kodwa akayazanga ukuthi ingeyaphi nokuba ifana nobani kubantu bakubo. Nayo intombazana yabona ukuthi uphazamisekile emqondweni wakhe, yaseyikhuluma ithi:

"Ngithunywa ngubaba. Ubaaba uthi mangikubize unгахambiyekude kulomhlaba ngoba kukhona izilwane ezinjengezimpisi namankentshane."

Kuthe lapha intombazana ikhuluma wayibona ukuthi iyakhefuzela sengathi inephika. Kwabonakala ukuthi kade igijima. Kuthe engakakhulumi yase yona kuqala ikhuluma futhi.

"Ngabe kufike umfowethu kuwena kodwa sithe sisuka ekhaya naye sathatha ngejubane ngamshiya nanguya, awumbeke, akasakwazi nakunyakaza ukukhathala."

Nempela uMalambule waguquka wambeka umfowabo kaNomcebo wabona edafuzela, eza, esekhathele.

"Hhayi, ungakholwa wena, uqamba amanga uNomcebo, ukuma kwakhe, uyangiqinela ngoba emdala kimina; futhi enamandla kunami. Mina futhi bengisalalele into ebishiwo ngubaba kwathi engakaqedi, yena uNomcebo wayesethatha ngejubane eza kuwe."

Wahleka uMalambule, kwaba yinkathi ebonayo ukuthi kanti lentombazana eyakulomuzi lapho efikele khona koNkominophondo wakwaNxumalo. Wahleka, okokuqala ezihleka yena ngoba ubesethukile ngokubona lelitshitshi elikhuze impisi liza kuye naye esethi ngizobonwa yini, ngaze ngawabeka amabili. Okwesibili wahleka ngoba ebona intombazana esikhule kangaka isaziphathisa okomntwana ijaha nomfowabo omncane iza kuye ingamesabi njengomfo wesilisa, futhi njengoba uMalambule wayeseyinsizwa engakaganwa. Lokhu kwakubonakala nakubani ukuthi uMalambule yinsizwa nokuthi ubuya emsebenzini-nje uya ekhaya eyozibonela izintombi zakhe. Naye waze wakhuluma kulentombi.

"Pho wena unguubani igama lakho, lokhu ubukeka ungazi?"

"Mina nginguNomcebo, igama lami lelo. Umfowethu lona nguZazini. Qha mina igama lakho kangilazi ngiyakwazi-nje wena ngamehlo njengoba ngikubonile ufika emini uthwele imithwalo. Futhi ngame ngakubona ngenkathi udlula uqonde emsebenzini ngasesilungwini ngonyaka odlule."

"Minake bengingakwazi, ngibona qhikiza-nje liza kimi, ngacishe ngaphosisa ngathi, mtanethu."



Intombazana yaphendula amehlo yambeka yanga-  
hleka kodwa yathi:

“Kuthiwe masibuye nawe, nomfowethu nanguya  
egijima eseyobuyisa izinkomo, ilanga selishonile.”

Nempela ilanga laselishonile. Phezulu amala ezulu  
aye**emvu** emnceleni womhla**ba**, ndawozozimbili entsho-  
nalanga nasempumalanga. UMalambule wakhumbula  
emuva eBabatini lapho ngalesisikhathi imishini yezi-  
ndunduma ikhala ibuyisa abasebenza emigodini yezi-  
mayini, ingenisa abanye futhi abazosebenza unsukwini.  
EBabatini lapho ngalesisikhathi abantu batheleke emi-  
gwaqweni beqonde emagogogweni abo abalala kuwo,  
kuse bevuka beyosebenza; eBabatini lapho abantu be-  
ngabuswa nkosi yaluhlanga, kuphela umthetho uwubona  
kumlungu nalapho kuqhamuka iphoyisa lakhe. Ehhe,  
umqondo wakubona konke lokhu lapho kubomvu entsho-  
nalanga, ukuhwelela sekuzosondela kulethe umnyama.  
Waguquka wabona ehamba elandela uNomcebo, kwa**be**  
yinkathi amehlo akhe embonayo ukuthi qha, beku-  
ngabe akaphosisile khona ethe, “Sakubona mtane-  
thu.” Akuyona ingane le, ngumuntu oseqinile. Lapha  
kwaZulu umuntu uze athunge isicoco kuthiwa yingane,  
nowesifazane uze aqothuke inkehl kulokhu kuthiwa  
yingane. Wayesekhuluma uMalambule.

“Konje uthe igama lakho uMalambule?”

“Ehhe, igama lami nginguNomcebo. Ukuthi Nomcebo  
ngaqanjwa ngo**ba** uba**ba** waya esilungwini wayosebenza  
uthe ebuya wathenga eziningi izinkomo wathatha  
umame kwa**ba** yinkosikazi yakhe yesithathu. Umame  
wazala mina nomfowethu lowaya uZazini.”

“Liqondisa ukuthini igama lakho?”

Yathi intombazana, “liqondisa ukuthi uba**ba** ngumu-  
ntu omi kahle, akadingi okuyiswa emlonyeni, nokoku-  
fihla umzimba. Sonke siyadla size sibeke ethala kwe-  
thu.”

Nempela uMalambule kwathi esebabatini wangena  
esikoleni sokufunda isipele kusihlwa wezwa ngelinye  
ilanga kuxoxwa kuthiwa umcebo uqhamuka enyakatho  
nasentshonalanga. Naye wayeqhamuka enyakatho  
ukuyosebenza, nakhu namuhla ebona uNomcebo nge-  
langa lentshonalanga.

Kusemnandi bexoxa wezwa izwi lomuntu wesilisa  
lithi:

“Hha**bo**! ngize ngithume abantwana-nje sengesaba  
ukuthi ungase welule ifanga kuze kuhwelele kanti le-  
ndawo imbana.” Kusho umnumzane uNkominophondo,  
encike ngesibaya sezinkomo kade ezibuka ukuthi zi-  
buye kahle zonke yini.

“Sisazi yini thina lokhu sesijwayele elabelungu eli-  
nomusi nothuli,” kusho uMalambule.

“Ngiyazi phela ngoba nami ngihlale isikhathi esiningi  
eBabatini naseGoli, ngabuya sengikhohliwe. Kuthe  
ngelinye ilanga nami ngihamba ngelula imilenze nga-  
hlangana nobabangibone wemamba.”

“Hhayi suka**bo**!” kusho uMalambule.

“Uthini lo?” kuphendula uNxumalo, ukhuluma njalo  
sebeyahamba baqonde ngasendlini yesintu enkulu, pha-  
kathi kulokoza umlilo eziko. Kwathi lapho ephonsa  
amehlo endlini, nakho futhi uMalambule usebona uNo-  
mcebo eguqe ngamadolo efolile sengathi ikhona into  
ayimbozayo. Ekhanda wayefake umgazi wobuhlalu  
okuthe lapho bushaywa ngumlilo nabo bakhanya umlilo  
obomvu ekhanda lentombazana. Beza, besondela  
endlini uNxumalo noMalambule. Useqhubeka umnu-  
mzane ekhuluma ethi:

“Ngathi ngethuka-nje yayisimi phambi kwami, nga-  
qale ngathi uthi-nje, kodwa kwathi lapho igwija phansi  
etshanini ngasola ngathi luthi luni lolu olucwila phansi.  
Ngaphenduka ngathatha ngesiqubu.”

“Usubone ngani ukuthi imamba?” kubuza uMala-  
mbule.

“Akuzothi sengibaleka ngizwe kunuka uswela lwayo  
ngithi ngisanake lokho, ngiyezwa isiyangikhuza khona  
lapho la ngisuke khona. Okukhombise ukuthi ukuba-  
nje angisukanga ngabe namhla ngilapha.”

Yasho insizwa endala yakhomba phansi emhlabathini  
ngenduku.

Bangena endlini maqede waphuma uNomcebo, wa-  
nyamalala. Ngesikhathi ephuma, wahamba ngecala  
okwakuhleli kulo uMalambule, kwathi ingani izingubo  
zakhe uziquqile kodwa ibayi elalilenga ehlo mbe lam-  
thinta idolo uMalambule, wezwa umzimba wakhe



umshiya. Wazi buza ukuthi kwenziwa yini uku ba le-  
ntombazana izwi bane nenhliziyo yakhe ngaloluhlobo  
noma ethi uyayizi ba njalo ku ba khona okunye okumpha-  
zamisayo ihlale njalo isenhliziyweni yakhe.

Engakaqedi ukucabanga konke lokhu ngesikhathi  
esincane-nje, uNxumalo wayesedla, wathi kuye, "Ukha-  
thele mntanami, uya bonakala, kuhle udle uyolala."

Wamnikeza ukhezo lwakhe, wadla uMalambule, kwa-  
sekufika umfana lo uZazini wamthatha wamyisa ela-  
wini lezi nsizwa, lapho kulala khona nabahambi bendle-  
la. Wayifumanisa imithwalo yakhe iboshwe njengoba  
injalo ibekwe emsamo. Wayithatha umfana wamnika  
isikhwabukhwa bu, wendlala uMalambule, wasombulula  
umpisimpisi wakhe, wathi ukuqoshama, ubuthongo bu-  
ngekho. Phandle wezwa izingane zidlala nabafana  
bexoxa izinda ba za bo njengoba izinsizwa zazingekho  
nazo selokhu zaya emsebenzini, ezinye ziyokweshela  
kude.

Waphuma uMalambule waya phandle. Inyanga ya-  
yisanda kuphuma kodwa isenamathunzi phakathi kwe-  
zihlala. Kwakushaya umoyana wenyakatho ongema-  
khaza kodwa oletha njalo ufusimbana olusengathi yi-  
ntuthu. Waphuma uMalambule wayibuka lenyanga,  
phansi kwayo kude empumalanga wa bona iziqongo  
zo bombo zithe thushu, thushu, thushu, ziphakeme phe-  
zulu ezulwini. Phakathi kwazo kukhona izikhala oku-  
ngathi zingamawa. Phansi kwalezizinta ba kwakugcwe-  
le amathunzi kumnyama kungabonakali lutho. Ne-  
mpela kwakufanele. Izwe lamaThonga linomnyama,  
ligcwele abantu abaphatha imithi emibi; kulona kukhona  
imigede ehlala imikhovu eyathumba oba bamkhulu,  
yehlula amaqhawe kaZulu ayelwela okaNda ba. Hhayi  
siyawesaba amaThonga!

Waphendula amehlo wabeka entshonalanga, nakho-  
na wa bona okunye. Imizi kaNxumalo yonke yayinga-  
lapho kodwa njengoba umqondo wakhe wawungekho  
kuyo, akayibonanga. Wa bona kude izinta ba ezibeke  
eLangwane. Emasho beni azo wa bona imishwe yemi-  
lilo, ivutha sengathi kukhona abababula utshani belu-  
ngisela ukulima, noma abashisa amahlungu ezinkomo  
belungisela uku ba kune izulu khona kuzokhula uhla za.

Inhliziyo yakhe yaqala futhi ukuzula ikhumbule ukuthi  
konje eBabatini ngalesosikhathi umuzi uthe hleke izi bani  
zikagesi ezikhanyisa umuzi wonke, nokuthi naye uku ba  
ukhona-nje nga be esikhundleni soku ba ahlale emnya-  
meni onjengalo ahlezi kuwo nga be uhlezi ezibanini zika-  
gesi esixukwini sezinsizwa eziningi zezizwe ngezizwe  
zomhla ba. Wawubuka umlilo uya ngokuya ucima waze  
wakhumbula ukuthi kazi uNomcebo nga be uphi njengo-  
ba nanku umlilo usucima-nje. Kungenzeka yini uku ba  
naye upheshulwe ngumoya wempumalanga noma wa-  
nyakatho waye waphonseka eduze kwalomlilo. Wa-  
wumkhumbuzwa ukushona kwelanga lapho ebone uNo-  
mcebo eza eqonde kuye, umoya wenyakatho ubebezisa  
ibayi lakhe, nokuthi kukhona isithunzi esithize esilingisa  
esamadlozi kulomntwana.

Kwaya ngokuya ehlezi phandle elalele kwaze kwam-  
sela ukuthi sekuhlwe kakhulu makayolala, ibanga li-  
khulu owayezolihamba ngakusasa. Wasukuma maqede  
kwethukainja eyayisosebeni lothango ngasezithumeni,  
yabavumula, wathi ukuyigema ngesandla, yaqhasha  
yamkhonkotha ya buya isimphonsa, wa banda ngomphe-  
me welawu. Wathi lapho engena ngendlu wezwa izwi  
lomfana limhleka lithi,

"Hhayi musa uku baleka, izokuluma, ube uyathe na-  
ngomuso uyaphuma phandle ikulume."

Wamangala uMalambule ukuthi kanti lapha bonke  
abantu abakalali. Wasondela uZazini ehamba nayo  
inja yakwa bo, naye uMalambule waphuma wahleka  
wathi,

"Ingethusile. Besengozela ngenxa yokukhathala."  
Wathi umfana,

"Nanti ithambo khona uzoyipha ingakuxwayi nango-  
muso." Washo emnikeza lelo thambo, walithatha uMa-  
lambule, wasondela kumfana nenja yathi ukugwavumu-  
la wayikhuza umfana ethi,

"Tkhombise ithambo lelo usondele."

Nempela wayikhombisa ithambo yathula, yasondela  
kancane, wayeseliphonsa phansi, yalithatha ya baleka  
nalo. Bangena endlini, wazelula phansi uMalambule  
walala. Ubuthongo bamhaqa, wathi zu, emva kwesi-  
khashana waqala ukuhonqa.



Ekulaleni kwakhe uMalambule waphupha. Kwaḡa-sengathi usendlini lapho esebenza khona. Esikhundleni sokuḡa kuḡekhona abanye abantu alala naḡo, kwaḡabase-ngathi uyedwa. Kwavela iShangane owayengezwani nalo lahlala ezinyaweni zomqengqo wamapulungwe owayelala kuwo. Wabuyathe uyalikhahlela iShangane lelo langakhahleleka lathula-nje, ngoḡa izinyawo zakhe zingafinyeleli kulo. Kwaḡabuye kwathi ziḡe. Waziḡona sengathi ukhwele enqoleni yezinkabi kodwa zonke lezizinkabi uyazazi ngezikayise. Wayiḡona eyifolosi lakwaḡo uVelenzansi eyayithandwa nguyise kakhulu, nenye futhi uNgiyolalaphi eyayimnyama igqize enqeni. Kwathi lapho ziyofika ezibukweni zawaklaya amanzi. Zithe ziphakathi, kwaḡa sengathi uthi lwesiswebu seluphethwe nguyi uMalambule, uhlezi phezulu. ḡathe bethuka wawugcwala ummfula, weza namaḡibi amanzi abayingqubungqubu agcwala ihlimbithwa. Wethuka uMalambule, wazikhuza izinkabi ezimemeza ngamagama ezishaya ngesiswebu ukuḡa zidonse ngokushesha. Naye wayizwa inqola phansi kwezinyawo zakhe ihlelemba sengathi ipheshulwa ngamanzi, kuthe lapho eseme-meza ngelokugcina eshayela, wadlukunyezwa ngumuntu wathi: “Vuka! Yini?”

Wavuka kobukhulu uḡuthongo uMalambule. Wavuka egedezela umzimba wonke uMalambule, waqalaza ezelula izingalo. Waḡuza uZazini wathi, “Yini, ukhala-nje?”

“Qhaḡo akulutho, mfana, ngiyaphupha. Hawu wangingisiza besengiphupha ngiphakathi kwesikaBadakazi,” kusho uMalambule.

“Pho, umuntu nxa ephupha uye akhale yini?” Kuḡuza uZazini.

“Qha, bengiphupha kabi. Bengingakhali bengime-meza, ngiḡona ngizomuka namanzi.”

Wavuka uMalambule wahlala phansi phezu kocansi wacikica amehlo, wazithi mbo ikhanda phakathi kwe-zingalo zakhe. Umfana wahlala naye wambuka ngokukhanyana okwakusekhona kungena ngentunja yomnyango njengoḡa phandle kwakukhona nenyanga. Wambuka naye waze wafikelwa uḡuthongo umfana, wozela walala.

## ISAHLUKO II.

Wavuka ekuseni uMalambule wezwa umzimba wakhe udungekile wathi qha kuhle ayowuqabula ngamanzi emmfuleni. Nempela wehla wafika wawakhapheza amanzi emzimbeni, umzimba wathi qabu, wakhuphuka. Wathi lapho ekhuphukayo umzimba usufudumala futhi kwaḡuza ukudangala obekumphethe. Wahhlala phansi etshanini phezu kwesiqundu wahlaḡa ikhefu. Wathi yena uhleli kanti uselele. Laze lathi ukuphakama ilanga ephezu kwalesosidindi sotshani ezunywe uḡuthongo.

Kuthe uNomceḡo edlula eya emanzini ephethe isigubu wambona uMalambule elele, wafike-nje wadlula wabeka phansi ngoḡa wayethi uthamele-nje ilanga uzobuye avuke. Wafika emmfuleni, wakha amanzi wakhuphuka. Wadlula kuye wambukisisa, wamfica emlonyeni, kuphuma izingwebu, wethuka, wabeka phansi igobongo, wasondela wamnyakazisa kodwa akaphendulanga. UNomceḡo wethuka waqonda ekhaya wayobika kunina lokho akuḡonile. Unina wabikela umnumzane wehla nempela uNxumalo wayobona ukuthi kwenzenjani. Ukufika kwakhe waḡona ukuthi uMalambule uyagula ungenwe ugudlulwandle: umkhuhlane owawukade uqeda abantu eduze koPhongolo wehla waze wafika eDumbe nakwaNongoma, kwezwakala ukuthi naso-Thukela uye wafika washaya wabuqa nalapho. Samthwala uMalambule ḡaye sambeka endlini bamenzela amakhambi okuphuzwa nokuhambisa.

Phakathi kobusuku ḡaleyomini yokugula kwakhe uMalambule, njengoḡa wayebekwe ngunina kaNomceḡo nenye inkosikazi, samuzwa ekhuluma yedwa okohlanya, ebediswa umkhuhlane lo owase umngene ekhanda, samuzwa ehumuza yedwa, sengathi kukhona akhuluma naḡo.

“Ukhalile umshini weJosefa,” waqala kanje ukukhuluma. Samangala ukuthi ukhuluma nobani, waqhubeka.

“Kodwa kanizwa yini? Okungukuthi namhlanje akuyiwa yini emsebenzini? Niyangehlula nina. Nani-landela obani kodwa lokhu thina sesayishaya imbola yadaḡuka, kwaqhekezeka amatshe emgodini sasala



thina sinjengoba nisifo-ha-nje." Washo maqede wahleka wathi,

"Ha! Yekanini."

Babukana abesifazane omunye wathi,

"Muhle lomkhuhlane uma usumngene ekhanda ngoba uma bembemisa indalucwatha uzodamuka; nokho ange-sabi manje."

Omunye wathi: "Qha, njengoba lomkhuhlane utha-thelwana, ngiyesaba ngalomuntu."

Wathi owesifazane (unina kaNomcebo):

"Uyingozi kuphela kulafo abangazange ubaphathe. Noma bekungenjalo kodwa umntwana wezizwe lo ube-zokwenziwa njani?"

"Ubuza lowombuzo-nje, thina abakithi ababegula ngamhlane abelungu beshisa imizi yakithi eTshanini, naseHlobane naseNgotshe, sabenzenjani? Ingani abantu sebhukene phakathi abanye bevuna amaNgisi abanye bevuna amaBunu, ngaleyompi yamaBunu, oNomcebo laba bengamantombazanyana, sabaleka sashiya ogogo begozobele emaxhiseni? Sasinganquma-nga yini eziswini zafo?" Kubuza owesifazane.

"Ehhe, ngiyavuma, wena kaSonkomose," kusho unina kaNomcebo.

"Uma uvuma pho singalokhu sikhathazwa ngumuntu wezizwe singethole lutho ngaye?"

"Angazi, kaSonkomose," kusho unina kaNomcebo.

"Konje khona nxa simshiyile singajeziswa ngu-bani ngaphandle komnumzane?"

"Akakho ongasijezisa. Kodwa pho abadala babegondisani nxa bethi kubantwana, 'UKUHLWA KUYO KUQOQA,' babuye bathi 'UNYAWO KALUNAMPU-MULO?' Ngiyesaba." Washo maqede wasukuma wayomthinta uMalambule njengoba wafukeka sengathi uthanda ukuguqulwa ocansini. Wathi lapho emthinta, wabubula ngenxa yobuhlungu, kodwa isandla sakhe sesifazane, sobumame samenza uku-ba lapho emthinta, ezwele isihe aguqule amehlo ambeke, wayesethi uMa-lambule,

"Nguwena kanti mame?"

"Yebo, mtanami, yimina."

"Ehhe, bengithi, uNozitimela kanti uwena."

Leligama likaNozitimela akalazanga unina kaNo-mcebo njengoba wayeqala nokulizwa. Kuyena kwa-ba-sengathi omunye wezintombi zikaMalambule eziseBa-batini; kodwa wangaqonda ukuthi pho yena ukuba ambize ngokuthi "mame"-nje ukuthathaphi lokho. Kuthe kunjalo wakhuluma okaSonkomose.

"Konje uthe lomuntu uqhamuka lapho kumbiwa khona imali?"

"Yebo uqhamuka khona."

"ONozitimela laba yizona zintombi zakhona—unga-thini na Sonkomose, funa uvuke ngikubone uhamba ngalezi." Washo okaSonkomose esukuma ethintitha isidwaba sakhe ekhomba ezinyaweni. Wasondela wa-zobona ukuthi uguquke walala kanjani. Ukusondela kwakhe noMalambule wavula amehlo wabuye wabuka ngasekukhanyeni wathi:

"Mame, izinkomo zikababa sezibuyile? Ngifuna uku-yosenga, ngivuseni, ngiyayizwa inkomazi yakwethu ikhalima, nansiya yehlela emmfuleni." Washo ekhomba odongeni lapho ilanga lishaya khona njengoba kwase-kusemini, washo wahleka, wabuye waphendula amehlo wabuka unina kaNomcebo, wathi:

"Ningilaliseleni lapha? Qhabo kangiguli. Ikhona insizwa eyake yagula ingangami-nje?"

Waphendula okaSonkomose wathi:

"Nanso phela."

Wahleka uMalambule wathi,

"Sizobona phela, ngizovuka." Washo njalo maqede wasitshinga laphaya isiphuku owayembeswe ngaso, wasuka wahlala ngezinqe, wabambelela odongeni, wa-guqa ngamadolo, wasukuma wathi, phuhla. Uthe esathi umi, wathi khinindi washayeka ngamadolo wawa phansi. Waphuthuma unina kaNomcebo wamcosha wambe-ka ocansini wamlalisa. Wathi okaSonkomose:

"Yeka imihlola, ngifunga ubaba. Ungabe umphethe kahle owakulelizwe umkhuhlane uku-ba angase avuke, ame, azihambele?"

Angena ezindlebeni zikaMalambule lawamazwi, kwa-bangathi ingqondo yakhe iyabuya. Amehlo akhe agcwala izinyembezi, kwamnyama, wangabona lutho. Wakhala njengomntwana ezingalweni zikanina. Aku-



bage njengomntwana yena okhala nangezwi ambo-ngoze kodwa kwehla imvula yezinyembezi zaconsela ocansini.

NokaSonkomose naye waku buka lokhu kwammangalisa uku ba umuntu omdala kangaka futhi engowesilisa uku ba akhale njengomntwanyana.

Unina kaNomcebo emva koku ba ambeke phansi ocansini waphendukela kumnakwabo wathi:

“Kuyiqiniso uku ba ngempela unyawo kalunampulo.”

“Ukusho ngani lokho?”

“Ngikusho ngo ba, umuntu omdala kangaka, futhi wesilisa, wake wambona ekhala?”

“Qha mina angizange ngimbone, ngiyamangala”, kusho okaSonkomose.

“Uma pho kukhala amadoda ekuhambeni, lapho onina bengekho khona, thina besifazane singenzenjani?”

“Thina besifazane siyabazi ubuhlungu, ngakhoke kasikhali kalula noma sigula. Kawuboni kodwa wena ukuthi yigwala leli alizange libu bone ubuhlungu? Kawubonanga nasekuseni ukuthi ngesikhathi simthatha emzimbeni wakhe lapha bekungekho namcothu wenduku lapho washaywa khona owa bo bengeweka?”

“Mhlawumbe,” kusho unina kaNomcebo. “Kodwa kangivumelani nawe lapho uthi umuntu ukhaliswa kuphela ubuhlungu bokugula noma yingenxa yoku ba eyigwala. Akuyena umuntu wokuqala wesilisa esengike ngambona ekhala lo. Mina ngazalwa nezinsizwa. Enyena nxa icasukile uma umuntu ekhuluma amazwi anobuswana kuyo, ikhale izibulale izivalele elawini; enye ubone ngakho ukuthi, washi, konakele sekuzoliwa kuthathe lwane izinduku ngoku ba ubone izinyembezi kuqala. Omunye ngenxa yenhliziyi ebuhlungu uyakhala.”

“Pho, uca banga ukuthi ungizwile mina into engiyikhulumile ngaye?”

Esikhundleni soku ba amphendule into ayibuzayo wasuke waphuma unina kaNomcebo, waya phandle, wamemeza wathi:

“We Nomcebo, we Nomcebo!”

Wasabela uNomcebo wathi,

“Ma!”

Uthe esemi unina elinde uNomcebo uku ba afike, kwa-sekuqhamuka okaSonkomose ephuma endlini wathi:

“Ngiyesaba ukuhlala ngedwa nalomuntu. Funa agcwaneke ngingedwa besengenzenjani? Futhi ngiyasola kuthi lapho engibu ka ngibenesazelo sengathi ungizwile ngesikhathi ngithi uyigwala. Kuhle kuhlale wena, mina ngizoyakolungisa ukudla komnumzane, nathi sidle, sekusondele isikhathi soku ba naye abuye ebandla njengo ba bebiziwe enkosini.”

“Hhayi kulungile, hamba uyolungisa ukudla lokho usilethele nathi. Ukhumbule ukuthi lomuntu ogulayo yena ungamlungisela amasi, angavutshiwe njengo ba lomkhuhlane uyalana nento elukhuni.” Nempela waha mba okaSonkomose wathi ethi sululu kwakufika uNomcebo.

“Sengifikile mame,” kusho uNomcebo. “Kade ngithi ngisusa ukhula laphaya ezintangeni zakho eseziphumile. Lemvula ebina ngesonto elidlulile ihlumise ukhula olukhulu kabi, selungangawe.” Washo ehleka.

Wayesethi unina:

“Beka lapha, uzokuya laphaya elawini ubeke lomuntu ogulayo. Ungesabi ngo ba ngeke akwenze lutho. Umbonile ekuseni sengathi ingqondo yakhe kayithathi kahle.”

Wathi umntwana:

“Ngiyesaba, okaSonkomose yena ubalekeleni?”

“Ngisho njalo; kuphelile yenza lokho engikutshela khona.” Wathula umntwana nonina wafulathela.

Wangena endlini uNomcebo, inhliziyi yakhe ishayela phezu lwakwethuka nokwesaba. Wangena wahlala ngasemnyango kodwa wangalenza ithunzi njengo ba ilanga laselithambeme. Ogulayo naye wayelelelele enganyakazi, ebukeka sengathi ukhathele. Kwathi emva kwesikhathi wadonsa isikhwehlela, walula umlenze, wanyakaza, kwabasengathi ikhona into emvusayo. Kwabasengathi uthola amandla athile emzimbeni wakhe.

Njengo ba ilanga laselithambeme imisebe yalo yayifinyelela endlini lapho, ihlaba ichusha phakathi kwezintango zothango lwesifaya, iletha amathunzana amancane endlini, kodwa njalo lalibonakala libomvu. Ngenisebe yalelilanga uNomcebo wabona emsamo wendlu izinduku ezidiyiweyo zaba fowabo, namawisa ayizindi-



linga elenga odongeni. Wabuka nobuhlalu babafowabo ababuthola buvela ezintombini zabo. Babulenga obunye bukhanya uhlaza, obunye bukhanya umgazi. Enhliziyweni yakhe wakhohlwa isiguli endlini wakhumbula ukuthi konje lapho oPhongolo naseDumbe kukhona izinsizwa ezimeshelayo nokuthi uma engakhetha enye yazo nayo iyobeka ukuba ayenzele ubuhlalu obunjeya. Lomcabango wezwa umcasula enhliziyweni, wathi esalwa nawo wezwa izwi lithi,

“Hawu ilanga seliyoshona futhi.”

Wethuka uNomcebo wathi,

“Ehhe seliyoshona.”

“Nozitimela, sondela mntakababa, ungiphuzise amanzi kade ngihamba, sengize ngoma amankanka.” Washo elula isandla.

UNomcebo wezwa leligama likadadewabo kaMalambule, uNozitimela walithanda ngoba waqonda kahle ukuthi uMalambule ucaabanga ukuthi usefike ekhaya ukhuluma nabakubo.

Wasukuma uNomcebo waya ngasemsamo lapho isigubu soselwa sasiphethe khona amanzi wasithatha wachathazela kwesinye esincane wawabeka amanzi eduze kukaMalambule waqheluka wabuyela endaweni yakhe lapho wayehleli khona. Wawathatha amanzi uMalambule wawaphuza. Wavula amehlo wabuye wayibukisisa ndawo alele kuyo, wathula.

Kwezwakala phandle izigi zomuntu eza, zaya zasondela, wangena; kanti unina kaNomcebo uletha ukudla. Wafika wakubeka phansi wathi:

“Phangisa umuphe ngoba mina ngisasheshisela uyihlo. Nakhu baphuma ebandla zikhona izindaaba ezinkulu abakade bezitshelwa khona. Uselambe kakhulu.”

“Kulungile,” sekusho uNomcebo wakuthatha ukudla. Ngaphambi kwalokho waphuma phandle wayothatha izinkuni nezibi. Ekuphumeni kwakhe wahlangana nomfowabo uZazini esevalele izinkomo ezobona udadewabo.

“Kwalunga,” sekusho uNomcebo, “hamba uyongokhela umlilo laphaya kwamamomkhulu kwaSonkomose, usheshe phela Zazini.”

Akaphendulanga uZazini, waphenduka wagijima waye wangena kwaninomkhulu, wathi nya, wathi nya, waphuma nesikhuni esivuthayo, eseza ehamba egijima.

“Nasike, Nomcebo. Woza umame uthe mangizokuhlalisa ngoba mhlawumbe funa wesafe, njengoba yena usaxinyekile,” kusho uZazini.

“Woza khona wena uzofika ubase umlilo, izibi sengiziqoqile nezinkuni ngaziletha. Ngesikhathi wena ubasa umlilo mina ngizobe ngipha ukudla uMalambule ngoba uyagula. Ubusuzwile ukuthi uyagula na?”

“Ingani ngibaonile omame behamba beyomthwala ekuseni. Futhi sengizwile ukuthi ufonwe nguwenalapho ebeselele khona esephelelwe ngamandla.” Kusho uZazini.

“Kodwa ukuba kangimbonanga ngabe ugcine ngokwenzenjani?” Washo wahleka.

NoZazini wahleka. Waqhubeka nokubasa umlilo, wathi lapho usuwokhelekile, uNomcebo wathatha udiwo oluphethe amasi angavutshiwe walusondeza eduze kocansi lukaMalambule wathi:

“Vuka, nakhu ukudla kwakho, sekulungile.”

Wanyakaza uMalambule wathi:

“Hawu, sengilambe kabi. Noma sengifike ekhaya ningilambise kangaka, sengathi ngisezizweni Nozitimela? Hawu nikwenzelani lokhu?”

Wahleka uNomcebo wabuka uZazini naye kanti uyizwile into ekhulunywa nguMalambule wayesethi,

“Ubani uNozitimela?”

Ukudla wakusondeza uNomcebo wamnikeza ukhezo lokuaba adle, kodwa isandla sikaMalambule sasibuthaka siqhaqhazela singenamandla kwafuneka ukuba uNomcebo amfunze. Waqala wesaba uNomcebo kwathi lapho uZazini ebona lokhu wasondela waluthatha ukhezo esandleni sika dadewabo wamfunza yena ngokwakhe uMalambule.

Kuthe ukuba adle maqede uMalambule wavuka nge mpela ebuthongweni, obabumcofile, waqalaza futhi yonke indlu sengathi uyamangala, wayesekhuluma.

“Uwena lo Zazini? Hawu bengithi ngisekhaya kuya kanjani ukuba ngilapha futhi?”

Wathi uZazini,



“Kawuhambanga ekuseni ngoḡa usuke wangenwa umkhuhlane wakulalisa phansi kodwa kade ukhuluma sonke lesisikhathi.”

“ḡengikhuluma noḡani?”

“ḡewukhuluma-nje, wedwa kwesinye isikhathi uḡuye uḡize uNozitimela.”

“ḡengibiza uNozitimela?”

“Thina kasishongo lutho ngoḡa leligama kasilazi kulomhlaḡa.”

“Ningalazi kanjani igama lomuntu eningazange nimḡone. UNozitimela kade ngamḡcina. UNozitimela lo yinkosazana kaḡaḡa, sonke esiyifungayo okuthi nxa sesiphathe igama layo sonke funa sithimule, nezinduku zingathathwa,” washo wathula uMalambule.

Eduze komlilo wayethule naye uNomḡeḡo sengathi uyozela elokhu echwaḡaza umlilo ewuvusa. Kodwa waze wafuna uḡuḡa naye aphenḡule kulendaḡa ekade ixoxwa; kodwa ngaphambi kokuḡa aphenḡule wezwa unina esemḡiza phandle, wasaḡela, waphuma.

UMalambule wayekade engamḡoni sonke lesisikhathi kodwa kwathi lapho esephumile wathi:

“Zazini.”

Wasaḡela uZazini wathi, “Yeḡo.”

“Udadewenu ngempela lo, noma uzalwa kwenye indlu?”

Wathi uZazini,

“Ngudadewethu ngempela, ngelama yena kumame esiswini.”

“Mfana sondela kimina sixoxe. Mhlawumbe uma ngoḡe ngibengcono ngiyokuxoxela okuningi kwasemhlabeni ongazange ukubone.”

Wasondela umfana, wathi ukuchwaḡaza kancane umlilo, wasondela kuMalambule. Wakhuluma futhi uMalambule wathi:

“Mfana, ngitshela sesihleḡa nawe soḡabili sisodwa: Udadewenu uqomephi?”

“Usho uNomḡeḡo?”

“Ngisho yena ngempela,” kusho uMalambule. Wathi umfana:

“Uḡengakaqomi, ngabe ngiyazi uma kunjalo. Kodwa ikhona insizwa engiye ngiyibone imlalele emmfuleni

njalo ḡese imdlukumeza, imvimbela lapho eyokha amanzi.”

“Wena wenze njani nxa ubona lokho?”

“Ngingenze njani yani, ngiyingane-nje? Ingani wena nakhu unḡibiza uthi, ‘mfana’-nje?”

“Beka laphake mfana wami. Ngisagula, kangazi ukuthi ngiyophila nini, noma ngiyoze ngaphila yini. Kodwa nanku umyalezo wami. Uze utshele uNomḡeḡo nxa uhlangana naye, umtshela ukuthi NGIYAMTHANDA.”

Wathula umfana wamḡuka emehlweni kwafika ukuthukuthela wathi:

“Wena kawuzishleli ngani yena?”

Akaphendulanga uMalambule ngoḡa wayekade ekhuluma isikhathi esikhulu umzimba usukhathele. Wathula umfana wambeka, wamfumanisa naye uMalambule ethule embekile. ḡagqolozelana; kwaya ngokuya umlilo waḡohla eziko inkwezane yomlotha yalala phezu kwelahle. Amehlo aqundeka amandla awo aphela kodwa ubuthongo ḡeḡungakafiki ukuwaḡopha, kuphela ayelokhu ekhangekile ilahle elisakhanya lufifi emlotheni. Kwasekuqala ukuḡaḡukhali izindleḡe zona ezibona nasemnyameni. Zalalelisa endlini zangezwa lutho; zadlulela phambili zakhangwa izinja ezikhonkothayo phesheya kommfula sengathi ikhona into eziyihhohhileyo zilokhu zikhonkothele futhi. Kwelinye igqoma izingane zazihlaḡelela ziphethe ingoma eyayisemlonyeni yaḡo bonke, ziyihaya ngamazwi aphakeme kodwa isize yavuthwa. Zithi — —

	m :-r	d : d	m :-	m :-	r : m f :-	m :-r d : d	m :- r :-
	d' :-s	s : s	d' :- d' :-	l : t d :-	t :-l s : s	d' :- t :-	
	s :-f	m : m	s :- s :-	f : s l :-	s :-f m : m	s :- f :-	

We - zi-nkomo zi - dl'e - nhla komzi ngokweswel' - amathafa

d :-	- :-	:-	
s :-	- :-	:-	
r :-	- :-	:-	

Hamba Mnyame-zeli  
d : s, |l, s, |d, d, ||



Wayilalela uMalambule leyongoma waze wakhohlwa yizinhlungu ezazimphethe emzimbeni wathula equbile sengathi ulele, wayesezwa uZazini esehonqa ecansini lwakhe. Waphendula amehlo wabuka eziko. Ilahle laselicimile. Wabuye walalela phandle, nokuhlabelela kwezingane kude nakho kwasekuthule kwathi du. Waphonsa amehlo ngesibofo sesicaba esasivale umnyango wabona ukukhanya okuncane. Ngalokhokukhanya wabona ukuthi inyanga isiphumile. Kwashaya umoyana omakhaza, wadonsa ingubo owayeyembethe wazigubuzela wasongana, wamema ubuthongo ukufo buzomthatha budlale ngaye. Nempela bamfikela, zaya.

### ISAHLUKO III.

Ibandla laselihlangene eBadeni emzini wenkosi uNdida kaMlokothwa ofusa amaBade, ukudabuka kwawo ayeqhamuka ngaseSwazini. UNdida wayengene kwelakwaZulu ngokuzokhonza kuCetshwayo ngesikhathi izwe selinyakeme, lixukuziswa abelungu umhlabo usungaqondakali lapho umi khona. Eduze kwakhe kwakuhlezi uKlwana kaNgcino induna yomphakathi wamaBade. Kwakukhona nabanye abanumzane oMkwatimani kaNongila kaYandela wakwaKunene; noNgwadla kaYandela; noNtende kaKhwane ababethi yinsizwa emasongomabili, noBekaphansi kaKhwane abathi unjengesambane; noNgiweni kaSoxhalasa kaHlungwini kaNgula wakwaNdlela, abathi izintombi zimcela inyama, namanye amaqhawe nabanumzane ababekade belwa impi yaseTshanini lapho kwaklebula khona uCetshwayo noZibebu. Kwakugcwele izinsizwa zoSuthu ezazisaphethwe yiqungo, zake zachitha amathumbu abafu zawabona bewasekela ngezandla. Wena owake walihamba elaseTshanini eligcwele izihlahla zomunga nomtholo, eligcwele isihlabathi notshani obude besiqunga, nobuthambile bensinda. Uyaye ufo amagquma anamadwala lapho kukhwela khona izimbuzi zigxanxula zeqana, ezinye zilele zetshisa zozela njengomlindi wensimu owozela kanti oboshobana bayamendisa emthini bafuna ukufo alale bangene bayidle insimu.

Kwakunjalo ke izinsizwa zazibuthene.

Kwathi lapho eqhamuka uNdida lasukuma ibandla lakhuleka lahlala phansi. Amakhehla ayehleli phambili phezu kwezihlangu, amanye eziphathele amaqhanga. Wakhuluma uKlwana wathi:

“Ibandla!”

Kwasekuthula kuthi cwaka, nababekudana basondela, kwathi ukuthi nyakanyaka bonke bezihlela behlala ngezindawo zabo. Waqhubeka uKlwana.

“Inkosi inibizile nina bandla elikhulu ukufo kesizofakana imilomo ngezindaba zezwe. Kufike izindaba iapha eziqhamuka phakathi kwaZulu nasesilungwini. Minake anginamandla okuzikhuluma, ngicela umnumzane uqobo lwakhe anichazele zona.”

“Qha akukho ndaba nina bakwaBade, kodwa kukhona izindaba ezinyakambisa umhlabo.”

Kuphendule elinye ikhehla lithi:

“Siyezwa wena wakomkhulu.”

Athi uNdida:

“Niyazi ukuthi izwe lonke lakwaZulu senalinika abelungu kanisenazwe nina ngokwenu. Ziningi izinto ezi khombisa lokhu. Kulo leli laseDumbe namhla akusekho abanumzane abazimeleyo bengakhonzile kumlungu. Lokhukukhonza sekusilethele izinto eziningi okufanelwe zibekwe ngamadoda angazifulatheli.”

Washo onke lawamazwi ibandla lathula langaphe ndula, kwangaabikho nokhwehlayo, wathi lapho ewabuka amadoda wafumanisa ebeke phansi okwentombi ikhuluma nesoka, uze uthi kawalalele kanti ezwa yonke into, ayeyimungunya ngezingqondo zawo. Wawubona noma iyiphi indoda efika muva uyifone inyonyoba iye ifike lapho ithanda ukuhlala khona, izihlalele ngokuthula. Wase eqhubeka umnumzane ethi:

“Kuthe ngaphambi kokulwa kwempi yamaBunu namaNgisi kwaqhamuka umhlola kulomhlabo, umhlola engingazange ngiwazi, ngisho nobabamkhulu abazange bawubone. Kuthe emini ilanga libalele kwaBonakala ithunzi livela ngaseningizimu. Okokuqala omame bathatha izingane, baphuthuma ukuzikhoselisa endlini nabelusi baqoqa izinkomo ngofo nakhu izulu libuyisa. Kuthe kunjalo nempela bezwa imvunge sengathi eyesi-



vinguvungu siza kude, siza nomoya. Galalelisa. Lowomsindo wasondela uza njalo, ngokwesabekayo. Inhlamvu yacisha kwahlwa emini, kodwa sabeka, sabeka sithi lololuthuli olucisha ilanga lizofika nomoya kodwa qha. Saphuma phandle sacinga phezulu kodwa safumanisa kuqaqele esibakabakeni izinkumbi ekade sasi-zizwa ngendaba zindiza zibeke esilungwini.”

Washo uNdida wathula, amehlo akhe wawabekisa phezulu sengathi nempela lezizinkumbi uyazibona zindiza njengoba wazibona kuqala. Waphenduka, ephe-ndukisa amehlo akhe ebandla wathi:

“Ubani osakhumbula lowomhlola?”

Lathi ibandla:

“Siyawukhumbula wena kaNxumalo.”

“Ubani ongasho okwakuqondwe yilomhlola?”

Ibandla lonke lathula lacabanga, sengathi kaliwuzwanga umbuzo, amadoda onke abukana ebusweni. Kwasekuvungama omunye ebandla ethi:

“Nakho kubuzwa madoda nathula na?”

Wathi omunye kuye lo:

“Wena awuyona yini indoda, ungaziphendulela?”

Abanye baqala ukuxoxa ngabafili nangazixukwana sengathi indaba ixoxwa yibandla lonke kanti umnumzane ubuze umbuzo; kwaze kwasuka ikhehla elidala elalikade lizibemela ugwayi lathi:

“Wena mnumzane, balibele indaba yabo laba. Thina sazibona izinkumbi lezo. Ubani lapha phakathi kwethu ongazibonanga? Yini siphenduke izilima-nje sengathi siboshwe imilomo? Kanti kuthethwa icala yini noma kuxoxwa indaba ebulala izwe? Ingani sihleli-nje ngalowonyaka kanivunanga ngisho ukhobe lolu. Ngisho nanamuhla, wena wakomkhulu emafusini lapha siyazalala isikhonyane. Ngiyaphela lapho, ake baqhube, sengibavulele isango lokukhuluma.”

Lathi lhlala phansi lelikhehla amakhanda amadoda onke ayesehlakeme nezindlebe zawo sezilalele ndawozonke, ngoaba indaba yayisihlokoziwe; kwasukuma elinye ikhehla lathi:

“Uqinisile okaMashayilanga nxa ethi ukhona yini lapha owake walubona ukhobe lolu. Ngalowonyaka akakho owake wavuna, saphila sonke ngokuhamba si-

funa izimbondwe nezikhwali. Abanumzane abanezinkomo basindiswa ukudla amasi, kodwa akakho owasinda, ngokudla kwamasi. Masimu mani lawa thina esiwalimayo lokhu izwe selithathiwe lathathwa kanye nenkosi uCetshwayo? Ingani phela sekulinywa iziqintana-nje ngasezihlanjeni, noma ngemuva kwemizi. Nanilwelani nina izwe lize life-nje?”

“Hhayi suka, awusakhulumi khona, besithi sisalalele, kanti usungena ezobulima”, kusho omunye umunxa webandla, kwathi ngemuva kwabakhona olithintayo lelikhehla ngenduku. Labeka, walikhombisa ukuaba lhlale phansi. Nempela lahlala phansi.

Umqondo wabantu wawehlukene ngoaba kwakukhona ababesafuthelwa ngamanxeba aseSandlwana nasoLundi, nabanye abasebezidele amathambo belindele noma yikuphi okubi okwakungasekivele ngoaba abanye basebela-hlekelwe yimizi yabo, amanxiwa awoyise esengaziwa, abanye basebezwa imithetho abangayaziyo yokuba kuphunywe emakhaya kuyosetshenzwa emapulazini abelungu izikhathi ezithile zonyaka, ngalokho yena nabantabakhe nomuzi wonke bathole ukudla kwesisu kuphela. Pho, ukuphilela inhlobo enjena kwakubasiza ngani? Umbuzo owabuzwa yilabo abake babamba ijozi eSandlwana mhla izinsizwa zikhaliswa umkhonto zingawuzwa esandleni, zawuyeka zaphendukela emawiseni, zaqandula ngawo, Zulu, ziqandula aze avaveka, lapho ezinye zaze zafuna ukumudla ngamazinyo umlungu ngenxa yokufudumala kwegazi. Labake wawungeke ubaphunge ukhulumelane ngezikhathi ezizayo. Kubona okuzayo kwakungekhona okwabo, kuphela babephilela okwanamuhla, abakubonayo ngamehlo abo; bethokozelela okudlule abakubonileyo kwenziwa izizukulwane sawoyise nesakuzwa ngendaba ukuthi kwenziwa kudala ngoyisemkhulu.

Phakathi kulo lelobandla kwakukhona abanye ababekade nabo belwile eNdondakusuka phesheya kwezihlabathi zoThukela lapho amanzi oThukela ebulana khona namadlambi olwandle; lapho iziwa zikhala zibabaza kuze kuse zikhuza umhlaba. Kwakukhona abafuna bazebakhathala befunana noMbuyazi otakase njengeboyi, okwathi lapho behluleka ukumthola baphe-



nduka bazithwala emhlane izihlangu babaleka ubusuku nemini baze bazowela uPhongolo. Kuthe kunjalo belwa izimpi zombango neyaseTshanini, kodwa babuye izimpilo zabo beziphethe ngezandla. Indaba yempi kuBo yayinjengephupho lelumbo lona elikulandela ebusuku noma uphuma uthi uyolalaphi naphi, kobe awuwavalile amehlo walala beselilapha kuwe, uvuke ujuluka amaconsi amakhaza. Laboke yiBo ababuzayo ukuthi uZulu wayelwelani aze aphucwe izwe na?

Kwasukuma omunye wathi:

“Ubuza kahle ubaba lowayana uNqakamatshe ngoBa mhlawumbe ukuBa kasilwanga ngabe kasinjena. Ingani okaNdaBa kusabuswa wayeshilo ukuthi liyohanjwa yizinkonjane. Esikhundleni sokuBa sikhale sicela emadlozini ukuBa sisizwe, sihlabi sikhumbule obabamkhulu, konke lokhu sesikulahlile, siduke nemikhuba yezinkonjane. Nakho phela namuhla zidlula phezu kwenu zinigubuzela ngamathunzi. Wake wezwa ilanga lichiswa izinkumbi kube mnyama emhlabeni wonke, kodwa nibe nithi izindaba zenu ziyolunga? Wake wezwa ukuthi izinkunzi ezidlula isibili ziyahlalelana esibayeni sinye kulunge? Ingani uZulu wonke ubuswa ngamaqambiqambi amakhosi kuwo onke amagquma lawa, kodwa onke lawamakhosi kuthiwa abusa isizwe sinye. Mhlambi-muni owake wabuswa yizinkunzi ezingaka waphila? Ingani nina laba kade niklebulana ngemikhonto ngempi kaZibebu nanamuhla nisaBizana nithi, lona nguSuthu, lona nguMandlakazi, lona nguNgenetsheni, lona yiziGqoza. Ningawakha kanjani umhlaba kunjalo na?”

Washo amehlo akhe esebomvu esegcwele igazi ngoBa njengoba wayekhuluma-nje wayebona yonke into eyenzakalile neyenzakalayo kwaZulu. Ebahawukela bonke abahleli lapho beqoqene njengabafana behlezi endle bosa izinyoni abakade beziqoqa ezifeni zabo. Wathi ehlala phansi ibandla lase lithule lilalele. Wabuye walibuka futhi, wasukuma ngoBa engekho owayengathi uzokhuluma, waqhubeka wathi:

“Nisukela izindaba ezikude kakhulu, khona namhla lokhu izangoma zenu ziyanitshela-nje ukuthi kukhona

enye indaba ezobulala izwe? Khona phakathi kwethu lapha zikhona, ake ziphume zisitshele.” Wahhlala phansi.

UNdida naye lendaBa yamngena ngoBa wayekade ebuka sengathi akanakile isikhundla sobunumzane sisamthweze ilunda. Kodwa nxa ezwa ukuthi kanti kukhona phakathi kwebandla abangaluthandi loluhlelo lwamakhosi angamaqambiqambi, naye wethuka, we-wwaya. Wayesethi:

“Ningenzani namuhla ukuBa amakhosi lawo aniphe- theyo anganiphathi? Aniboni yini ukuthi izikhathi ziyahamba na?”

Wasukuma omunye ogama lakhe lingaziwa wathi:

“Ukhulume kahle uwethu lowaya uNduluzane. Amakhosi lawa amaninginingi abulala izwe. Asisazi ukuBa sizosho kuBani ukuthi ‘BAYEDE’, ngoBa bonke sekungobayed. Nazi izinkomo zifa, konje lesisifo nisithini?”

Laphendula ibandla lathi:

“Ulandapense!”

“Lesisifo kade saqala. Sizwa kuthiwa ikhona indoda enguHulumeni ezosiqeda. Kodwa lendaBa iyahlekisa ngoBa ziphelile izinkomo, ezabantu nabelungu, kazisadliwa nangcuBa ngoBa kuthiwa ingcuBa yazo ingukufa.”

Wathi uNdida, umnumzane:

“Kawuboni yini ukuBa ikhona into ekhona emhlabeni wonke na? Akusilapha kodwa kwaZulu kodwa nakuBelungu lento ixobisile.” Wathi omunye:

“Sazi ngani ukuBa nabo ibaxobisile? Noma ibaxobisile bona kodwa kubona izinkomo kazisho lutho. Kithina izinkomo ziyikho konke. Inkomo kimina muntu omnyama isho umcebo, umthombo wokuceba nobunumzane bami. Inkomo isho ukudla ngoBa mina nabafazi bami, nezingane zami uma izinkumbi zibubisa umhlaba, kazi namandla okububisa utshani namanzi ommfula lapho ngalusela ngakhona ngithole ubisi ezinkomeni zami. Uma ngifuna inyama ngibonge amadlozi ngihlaba inkomo yami, ngibonge ngayo phezu kwalokho ngidle ngesuthe inyama. Ngenkomo-nje yodwa ngiyakwazi ukulobola ngilobole umfazi ngibuye ngize ekhaya, ngihlale ngibuse. Nake nezwaphi ukuthi abantu, izinsizwa eziyisishomo njengalezi enizibona lapha kazikaganwa ngoBa ziswele izinkomo oyise kabanazinkomo zokuBa-



lobolela na? Izintombi zenu zigugela emakhaya. Zizogana nina, noma zizogana thina? Hha! Lafa elawobaba, lalingenje, ngifunga uQhwanqasile elele kwa-Gingindlovu”, washo wahlala phansi.

Wabona izifuba zezinsizwa ziphefumulela phezulu, sengathi zinamaphika kanti qha, zenziwa ukuqumbelana. Umqondo wazo zazingenakuwusho ngoaba oyise babekhona, bevimbile. Umthetho wawungazivumeli ukuaba zisukume enkundleni zikhulume oyise bekhona. Kodwa esikhundleni sokuaba zithukuthele zabukana maqede zahleka, zihlekela phakathi.

Yase ikhuluma inkosi ithi:

“Namhla izinkomo zinawo umcebiso kodwa phela khumbulani ukuthi nomhlaba usuguqukile. Kukhona imali yabelungu okuyiyona iphethe umhlaba manje. Singenzani ngaphandle kwemali?”

Uthe engakaliqedi yathi enye indoda uMashayilanga: “Ngalokho wena kaNxumalo usuqondise ukuthi lomoya wokuthi amadodana ethu makaye eDayimani naseBabatini naseGoli, uyahamba nawo? Okungukuthi wonke umqondo oshiwoyo uhambisana nawo wena ungacebisi namadoda na?”

Wathi uNdida:

“Angisho njalo, wena kaMashayilanga. Kodwa kufanele siphile, silobole, sicebe. Uma umcebiso omusha kuyimali, pho, sizokwenzenjani na? Unganginika yini indodakazi yakho ngingayilobole?”

Yathi enye indoda:

“Izalwe nguBani leyondodakazi engasiswa kumuntu, ayithathe engalobole?”

Wathi uNdida:

“Awuzwake!”

Kwasekunqanda omunye obekade elalele engasho lutho wathi:

“Mina bandla sengizohamba. Kade ngilalele ninqakulisana. Bengizwe sengathi kukhona izithunywa ezizizuka kwaZulu ezizositshela izindaba ezinye. Zonke lezi enizixoxayo zidlule. Sonke silahlekelwe amabele ethu, salahlekelwa izinkomo zethu, pho, manje singenze njani?” Wahhlala phansi.

“Uqinisile, ehhe uqinisile, sizele lokho lapha thina”, kusho iningi lebandla, elinye seliyaluza selithatha izagila selifuna ukuhamba.

Wayesethi uKlwana:

“Ake nithule nihlale phansi. Umsindo! Umsindo! Hlalani phansi nonke.”

Nempela ibandla labuye lathi yatha kwaBaba sengathi kalizange lisukume. Kwasekusukuma uNdida uqobo lwakhe ethi:

“Nempela kunjalo. Nampaya labo-banumzane, nabo ngiyabona sebeyakhohlwa-nje ukuthi kanti sebeyoze bakhulume nini.”

Seyithi enye indoda ebandla:

“Mabasukume phela sibeze.”

Seyisukuma enye indoda eyayilusungulwana-nje, incane, imnyama sengathi kade yayishiswa amalanga ehlobo nobusika yathi:

“Wo, ngiyakhuleka nina BasemaBadeni. Ngiyezwa enikukhulumayo. Ngilapha-nje ngihamba njengexusa lenkosi, ngidwengula izwe njengomoya wona ophephethwa uhambe ungazi lapho uyophelela khona, kodwa uhanjiswa umniniwo ukuaba uye emagumbini omane omhlaba. Ngithunywe abanumzane kwaZulu ukuaba ngiye ngifike, nomfowethu lona ezweni lakwaMjantshi kaThobela, kwaSalukazi esimabelemade, esimunyisa ngaphesheya kommfula. Umhlola ohaqo izwe kwaZulu usumkhulu; inkosi kayisakwazi ukuaba ibenesithunzi; izulu seliyazidlalela-nje ngezindlu nangaabantu; abantu sebeyizimbuzane-nje kabasenamalusi.

“Phezu kwalokhu kuthiwa sekufanele wonke umuntu oseyinsizwa nomnumzane womuzi athelele ikhanda.”

Wathi lapho esho lokho ibandla lonke lathi:

“O W U !”

Omunye wasukuma wathi:

“Kuthelelewe amakhanda? AwoBani lawomakhanda? Kanti lelikhanda lami elomuntu yini? Kangilini kwanga nguMvelinqangi ukuaba sengizolithelela manje?”

Lashukuma lonke ibandla ngoaba lingezwa lendaBaxoxwayo ukuaba mhlola-muni lona wokuaba abantu bezothelela ikhanda.



“Pho”, sekukhuluma amakhehla, “nina niyokwenzani kwaMjantshi kaThobela nemali yamakhanda nisishiya lapha eduze thina engase lendaBa isithinte?”

Waphendula lona oyinxusa wathi,

“Kaniboni yini ukuthi ukuqhamuka kwemihlola eminingi enjenga lena ekade niyisho kuBangwa ukuBa amakhosi engasaqiniswa, ngisho neNkatha kaZulu kayisa-ziwa.”

Lasho iBandla lathi:

“YeBo, yeBo nempela Inkatha kaZulu!”

Kwabuye kwathulwa kwathi cwaka, amadoda abukana emehlweni ngoBa nempela yiwona ngezandla zawo, nangezilimi zawo, nangezenzo zawo abulala izwe la-kwaZulu laBa amaqambiqambi ngokuvuma uquqaba lwamakhosi, asilahlisa Inkatha kaZulu eletha ubunye nokuzwana emhlabeni wonke.

Yaqhubeka indoda yathi:

“Izindawo esizozihamba kasizazi ngakhoke abanumzane bathe, kuze sifumane inhlanhla ohambeni lwethu kuhle lapho siyothi gozololo khona sithelwe ngenyongo, sigcatshwe ngayo, sidlulele phambili nalapho phambili senziwe njalo khona siyothi sifinyelela kwaMjantshi sibe sithwele amandla emithi yamadlozi ezizwe zakithi esidlule kuzona.”

Kwasuka omunye eningini owaye kade elalele engasho lutho wathi:

“Banamanga laBa-bantu yiBo laBa abathakathi abafafaza ububi emhlabeni, umhlabi usungaka-nje. Kodwa nibaBukelani?”

Kwathi zimbu iBandla ukwethuka lethuswa yilawo-mazwi abanye bakhwantaBala abanye bahlala phezu kwezimpiselo bazivivinya kodwa ngaphambi kokuba benze utho, waqhubeka lomuntu wathi:

“Sazi ngani ukuBa baphuma kuBanumzane baKwa-Zulu? Sipi isibonakaliso?”

“QhaBo nina bakomkhulu. Kithina ukufa kuyize, kodwa kinina ukufa kuyinto enkulu,” kusho elinye inxusa ebelikade lithule. “Thina kwaZulu igazi umdlalo, umkhonto lona ongena ezibilinini zomuntu unjengoswazi okhwiqa ngalo umtanakho. Umkhonto ungangenzani lokhu ungachitha lapha, ngiyoziphumulela nawoBaBa-

mkhulu. NicaBanga ukuthi ningethusa thina, thina esesake saphuza igazi lamadoda lishisa? Hawu! Ba-thini laBa-bantu benkosi? Mina ngingu “Nozaza We-Zulu:”

“Useqa laph’umkhay’ ukhona:

Wega ntangwana zakoMakhasa,

Uxhakalaz’umuntu ngomkhonto kaSifo:

Uzibula ngendod’enkulw’ engangoyise,

UMgankla bath’ugugile kanti musha!”

Wathi esathi uyaqhubeka, iBandla laqubula lonke limenanela umuntu wezizwe lathi:

“Zisho, zisho, Nozaza weZulu!”

Bathi abanye:

“Niyadlala phela, nihlale nithi kukhona amaqhawe nezinsizwa kwelakithi. Aniboni izinsizwa ezanceliswa ngenduku, ezibodla umBoBo wezingazi zamadoda. Ninake benithi niyabethusa kanti nizithintela olunenkume. Ubani phakathi kwenu ongase aphume manje athi uyasina sekunje?”

Kwasuka ezinye izinsizwa zaya kuNozaza weZulu zamxhawula khona lapho eBandla. Wasuke wahlala phansi khona lapho ebehlezi khona uNozaza wazithulele sengathi akenzanga lutho.

“Mina ngizobahlabisa umthondolo osuchakaza amanqina nezinselo.” Kusho impunga eyayihlezi ngenzansi kukaNdida, yabuye yathi:

“Amahloni lawa okokuBa amaqhawe anjena angani- kwa lutho ehamba ezweni lakithi. UkuBa kwakusedala kokoko, bekufanele sikhipe izinsizwa eziqatha ziBaphekezele.”

KwasekuBakhona ubuxokoxoko eBandla kwazise ukuthi muningi umoya owawusuphethe abantu ngezindaba eziningi ezasezixukuzise izwe. Basebeqala ukuzibuza izinto eziningi, okunye bekukholwa okunye ba-kucaBangele. Ikakhulu amehlo aBo ayebeke ngasenkosini yohlanga uDinizulu ukuthi yena uthini uma umhlabi uhamba kanjena. Uma izwe lingasavuni kudla yena uthini. Ingani kuqala imikhosi yokweshwamisa izwe iBiginwa yinkosi yezwe, pho namuhla nguBani osika uselwa aluchinse empumalanga, aluchinse entshonala-nga. Ukushiya izinto ezindala akuyikho yini okuBa-



ngela umhlabo amashwa amaningi kangaka. Imiqondo yabantu yakhathazeka kakhulu kodwa engekho ongase achaze ukuthi kungenziwa lokhu nalokhu. Amakhosi amaningi kangaka babengawathandi, pho, lokhu wonke umuntu wayethanda ukuaba kuthiwe yinkosi. Yiwona amakhosi lawa okubekwa, hhayi lawa oselwa okuyiwona ayebulala isizwe. Ukuabanga kwakusuka kuwo ethunaza ubukhosi bakwaZulu. Yiyona lento eyayenza uNdida kubelukhuni nokuabamba umhlango webandla, kuthi noma kusuka umuntu wezizwe, iqhawe elinjengoNozaza weZulu-nje abantu bonke balihaqe balizwele ngothando ngoba lalibakhumbuza okudala osengathi bakulahlile. Nezangoma zabo abantu zazikhala ngokudala. Onina bencelisa izingane zabo babecula ngokudala; nabazanyana behaya beduduza abantwana ezimbelekweni babehaya ngokudala; abafana endle balusile, bephakathi ehlathini begawula izinduku wawuzwa kukhala uncelemba begawula namazwi abo elapha phezulu eshikisha ngokudala.

Okudala lokhu kwakuyini? Angazi. Okudala kwakusho ukucima kwamakhosi ohlanga; kwakuqondisa ukuziqhenya kwaabantu ababebinca basemaphandleni ngobuzwe babo, bengafani nenzalo yasesikoleni yasemakholweni yona eyayicabanga sengathi kayimnyama imhlophe ngoba ingononhlevu; kwakumele umphefumulo obopha isizwe kuthi lapho noma omunye ethi "bayede", zonke izishomo, nezigaaba ngezigaaba ziphendule zithi "bayede." Ziphinde lokhuya okuthe uNozaza weZulu ekhuluma wathi esaqhubeka ibandla lakhula lonke lathi:

"Zisho, zisho, Nozaza weZulu."

Leyonto ebangele ibandla limenanele lingamazi. Ngenye indlela okudala kwakumele leyonto ephethwe yiNkatha kaZulu.

Kunjaloke kwathi lapho ibandla lichithekayo uNozaza nomngane wakhe wahamba nabanye abanumzane bebaxoxisa indaba eshisayo, noNkominophondo wathwala izagila zakhe wabuyela ekhaya. Eseyongena ngesango uNomcebo wamhlangabeza wathi:

"Ubukeka ukhathele. Umame usekulungisele izinto ezimnandi."

"Unjani lomfokazi ogulayo?". KuBuza uNkomino-phondo kumntanakhe.

"Ngizwe umame ethi, noma kukuabi kodwa akusafani nayizolo ngoba akasabedi akhulume yedwa njengohlabanya", kusho uNomcebo.

Bakhuluma njalo bayahamba basondela ngasendlini kanina, wayewangena uyise wahlala phansi. UNomcebo wadlulela kwamanye amantombazana ukuyodlala nawo.

Emagqumeni amaningi, eduze nakude kwakukhuphuka amadoda nezinsizwa ezivela emhlanganweni womnumzane uNdida. Bonke babekhuluma abakuzwileyo nabakufonileyo.

#### ISAHLUKO IV.

Kwabayizinsuku ezithile uMalambule waqala ukutotoba, waziqinisa naye waqala ukulandela amadoda uma exoxa ibandla noma ekhuluma izindaba zomhlabo. Kokunye ukutotoba kwakhe sonke isimame sasiyohlakula emasimini wathuka ethi nqamanqa noNomcebo egcekeni.

Wathi kuNomcebo:

"Sakubona", sengathi ubingelela umuntu wezizwe. NoNomcebo wathi:

"Sakubona."

"Ake ume khona lapho ngibuze." Kusho uMalambule. Nempela intombazana yama. Wafika kuyo wathi:

"Kade ngamthuma uZazini kuwe."

"Pho?" kusho intombazana.

"Kangizwa ukuthi ubuya nempendulo."

"Impendulo yani?" kusho intombazana inganake nakunaka ukuthi ikhuluma nani. NoMalambule ingani wayethambise umzimba ethi ngaze ngayifika iyodwana, wethuka yilolu-hlobo lokuphendula owayengakujwayele.

Wathi:

"Impendulo yamazwi ami."

"Amazwi akho athini? Nginanda bani namazwi akho owakhuluma noZazini, kanti mina ngingumfana yini lapho ngizophendula amazwi enu ninoZazini?"

Washo wamshikilela wafuna ukuhamba egcwele ukucasuka, wabuye wambeka wathi:



“Hamba uye kuZazini uyofuna impendulo yakho mina lapha anginayo.”

“Qhabo Nomcebo, hawu nkosazana kukuhle nalapho ukhuluma, uzonelani ngokuthatha ngolaka mina nginalwi nawe? Usufuna ukungiqhatha nomuzi wakwenu ungibona ngisagula? Khona nxa bengixosha namhlange ngingenzenjani? Khulumela phansi.”

Wathi ekhuluma intombazana yasimze yambuka-nje kwaBasengathi iyisiduli sona esingenamlomo. Yasuke yambuza yathi:

“Usuqedile ukukhuluma?”

Wathi uMalambule:

“Qha.”

Yathula yambuka, noMalambule wathula wayibuka kwaBa kude ukuBa akhulume wathatha wathi:

“Kangikaqini kahle, Nomcebo, amathambo ami asagedezela, kanti lo-mkhuhlane wakini unjani?”

Wahleka uNomcebo wathi:

“Ingani sengike ngakuzwa uzibonga kuZazini uthi wena kangaka, nakangaka. Nsizwa yini lena eboqozwa umkhuhlane thina siwehlula nje?”

Wathi uMalambule:

“Ukugula akunansizwa, akunantombi kuthatha ku-beke phansi. Nawe uyazi kwelakithi kuzalwa izinsizwa. Hhayi ulunsizwana kodwa izinsizwa zempela. Noma ufika kwelakithi uphuma uya emmfuleni uyoziBonela ukuthi ngafika kwelikaBisi, lenhlama yobusha lapho kungahlali mvula emzimbeni.” Yamnquma umlomo intombazana yathi:

“Ngiyobe ngiyokwenzani ezweni laBafokazana? Ngingafa nokufa.”

“Ukhuluma kahle ngoBa wena uzalelwe emhlanene-umbeleko. Unyoko lo nguyena oyokusikela kwelinonileyo athi, nansi indoda mntanami ngikunike.”

“Khona eseswelekile amadoda uyacaBanga ukuthi ngingashiya leli lombuso, lapho sikhomba ngophakathi, sichwaBaza, ngiye ezweni lakwaZulu, nokusho elincikene nelaseSilungwini? Suka lapha!”

Wathi lapho ebona uMalambule ukuthi intombi le isiyakhohlwa ukuthi uyayiqomisa nolakana lwayo isi-

lukhohlwe wathambisa izwi ngoBa yona yayigedeza yehlisa izwe naBantu baKubo kwaZulu wayesethi:

“Zikhona izinsizwa kwaZulu. Uma zingekho pho, yini ukuBa kuthi enkundleni iqhawe lakithi lajakaja amadoda akini nezinsizwa Basuka Bonke Bayolixhawula. Izinhliziyi zaBo zangenwa yitwetwe. Uthi kungathi kwaZulu umuntu afike akhulume-nje ebandla?”

“Lapha kwelakithi siyawabonga amaqhawe, akuthi ngoBa amaqhawe ekhombisa isiBindi thina siwabulale. UBugwala nobulokazane bukaShaka lokho. Kuwena kusekhona lelo-gazi loBuShaka ngiyakubona.”

“YeBo lelo-gazi likhona kimi, futhi ngiyaziqhenya ngalo. Yilo elithi kimina mangikutshele ngisagula-nje ukuthi, ngiyakuthanda Nomcebo mntakaNxumalo.”

Washo lawomazwi maqede waphfumula wathi ukusondela njengoba wayesadondolozela ngesagila, kodwa intombazana yema yambuka phakathi ezinhlamvini zamehlo, esikhundleni sokuBa imphendule yema, wasondela. Wathi ukusondela waphakamisa isandla sakhe efuna ukuyibamba ehlobo kodwa intombazana yema yambuka ingaqwayizi amehlo ayo aze agcwala amanzi, amanzi aphenuka izinyembezi ezishisayo, zehla ezihlathini. Kodwa ayizange intombazana icwazime. Yasuka lapho yathi:

“Uma ungibuka-nje uthi mina ngingowokuthanda wena? Wena unguBani? Uthi ngoBa ulapha kwethu sikutholile udlula ngendlela bese uthi ngoBa ugozobaliswe ngukugula, abadala bengekho wenake usuthola ithuBa lokungeshela, khona lapha kwethu? Wena unguBaniNJE NEMPELA?”

Yasho yafulathela intombazana yasithela ngendlu eyayiya kuyo, uMalambule wasale eBambe ongaphansi wezwa umzimba wakhe umshiya kwaBayikhani ezwayo emathanjeni akhe ukuthi kanti uyagula akakaqini.

UMalambule wayevela eBabatini. EBabatini lapha izintombi zaziqhambakathi. Kwakukhona okokuqala, ezakwaNgungunyana kwaSoshangana ezazithi mazi-fuze zona lezi zakwaZulu kodwa zona zazimnyama njengelahle kuthi lapho usuzijwayele zibuye zithandekile. Lezi zazingagqoki zidwaba, kodwa, zazithatha ibayi leli eligqokwa kwaZulu zilifingcize imiphetho omunye



phezu komunye njengoba izidwaŋa zenziwa. Kuthi emphethweni waleli-bayi zithungela uŋuhlalu zibeze incwadi ethize, kuŋe yiŋona oŋunika isisindo engutsheni lena enjengesidwaŋa. Lapha emilenzeni zazigqiza ngo-busenge obugcwala isitho sonke busithi cikithi, besekuba sengathi zehluleka nokuhamba. Ikhona incwadi yakwa-Zulu ezazisayiphethe, yilena yokuvula izindlebe zifake iziqhazana ezincane.

Kwakukhona futhi eBabatini izintombi zamaSwazi ezitekezayo, nazo ziyiphethe yonke yakwaZulu ngisho nokuchaza kwakhona. Kukhona ezabeSuthu ezimehlo angaka ezithanda ukugqoka ziconse ebezimbiza uMalambule zithi uliTebela amangale ngoŋa yena akaNdefela. Athi nxa exwaya ephika zithi kuye uliShaka: avume. Kukhona khona lapho nezamaXhoza ezifuze ezabeTshwana ngogazi olumpofu ezibanga ubuhle betulwa nekhwane. Zonke lezi uMalambule bekuthi nxa esephuma emsebenzini eyozifunela okuphuzwayo, azibuke maqede zichobonyeke, naye ezwe umzimba umvumela. Pho engubani umfo kaMalambule kaGodide kaNdimundwane,

*"Unomagwaphu-gwaphu,*

*Ukugwaza ngukuphanga*

*We Mbuyana!"* iqhawe elalwa eNdondakusuka laŋaleka layokhonza kwaMandlakazi, laŋuye laŋuyela kwaZulu.

Lapho intombazana imphathe kanjena, imbuzo ukuthi ungubani, wezwa kubuya bonke oyisemkhulu, waŋavumbulula bonke emalibeni eŋabala ngeziŋongo zaŋo eŋathatha aŋatshinge ngamunye ngamunye waze wafika kuyo yonke indlu yakwaŋo ekanye noyisemkhulu kwaŋanye onina. Waŋafumanisa bonke ŋengamaqhawe. Uŋani lapha ezweni lamaBade owayengaphikisana noyisemkhulu wakhe uNdimundwane lokhu neziŋongo zakhe zazizikhulumela. Wayengagwazi wayegwaphuzela, aphakamise umkhonto kuwe indoda, ukugwaza kwakhe enganiki sikhathi eziphanga izitha.

Yena luqoŋo lwakhe wayeyinsizwa ngoŋa eBabatini uŋeqhamuka kukhale izintombi, izintombi ezinhle, nezintombi ezinjengodade; izintombi zezizwe ezadaŋuka nomhlaŋa njengenyonni; izintombi zawonina ezizitho

zingaka zifuthwa itiyane nesinkwa somlungu; izintombi ezigqokayo ezisika ingqephu. UNomceŋo wayekwazi ukusika iyadi, lona igama elithi "iyadi" wayelazi? Yena wakoŋani? Phezu kwalokho, uNomceŋo uthe kuyena,

"Wena unguŋaninje nempela?"

Wazihlolisa, wahlola nezintombi avela kuzo. Waŋibona zizula emigwaqweni yomhlaŋa omusha lapho uŋaba nomame engelutho. Lapho insizwa ithi entombazaneni:

"Ngiyakuthanda."

Intombazana ichobonyeke, ijaŋbule ngoŋa kanti kukhona emhlaŋeni umuntu osayithandayo. Kayinaku-linga imphathe kaŋi umuntu wesilisa ngoŋa funa andize ahambe unina angatholi imali yokudla, notshwala loŋu unina aŋuchithe eŋuvuŋela phansi kwamagogogo eŋusuku funa ŋubuntshe ŋungathengwa. Hhaŋo! Umntwana uzokwenzenjani? Esilungwini kufunwa imali kuqala, okunye kulandele.

UMalambule wakoŋona konke lokhu.

Wezwa uNomceŋo embuzo ethi:

"Wena unguŋaninje nempela?"

Waguquka wahamba waphindela endlini alala kuyo. Wahlala ngasemnyango, waŋona kude kuza izinkomo sezizosengwa, izimazi zigijima zehlala emmfuleni zitshekedula, ezinye zikhaliŋa zikhalela amathole. Phakathi kwazo kwakukhona izimbuzi zihamba nempango enkulu eseyanqanda yaze yayimbedula, ikanye nemithondolo esengathi nayo iyintanga yayo. Eceleni uMalambule waŋona idlanzana lezimvu, zihambe zicsha utshani imisila yazo eyizibukuza ihambe izwiŋbeka ngapha nangapha igcwele amafutha, zikhala zithi:

"Mme - - e - - e - - eh!"

Nezinye eceleni ziphendula zithi,

"Mme - - e - - e - - eh!" Kwaŋamnandi.

UMalambule wawuzwa umbuzo wentombazana ithi,

"Wena unguŋaninje nempela?"

Wancencetha ezindlebeni lombuzo.

Nempela lentombazana yayingaswele lutho lwakhe. Yayinokudla okuningi ezinkomeni zikayise. Uyise kwakungumnumzane engakhonzi kwamanye amadoda.



Pho intombazana yona yayizokhonzani kuyena? Noma yena wakoMalambule wayezalwa ngamaqhawe kodwa ngendlela owayekade eziphethe ngayo eBabatini wayengelona iqhawe yena ngokwakhe. Alikho iqhawe elihambe lichitha isikhathi salo nayo yonke imisuzwane yomhlaŝa lena. Noma kuthiwa insizwa iyisoka, kushiwo ngoŝa iŝambe izintombi zakobani okuthi noma ziqhamuka nomuntu abone ukuthi, qha, uzele unina owazala lomntwana. Izintombi zakobani njalo kazilwi zinwebulane njengalezi uMalambule akade ezibona eBabatini. Nentombi ekhwelezayo, isikhwele sayo isigcina endlini kunina isivalele esigujini sakwaŝo ngoŝa funa odadewaŝo abadala bayidukluze bayikhiphe umoya, kungabi ndabazalutho.

Zonke lezi-zinto zaphuma zingena emqondweni kaMalambule naye waqala ukuzidelela manje ukuthi nempela intombazana iqinisile. Kukhona intombazana eyayinamatele kukho, okwasekungekho kuMalambule. Lokhu ukuziqhenya kobuntu ngesimilo sayo sobuntombi. Akuyena uNomceŝo owayeyisa uMalambule engamboni ukuthi uyini, kodwa yisimilo sikaNomceŝo esasibukela phansi isimilo sikaMalambule okuyisona sasincike enhlalweni yezintombi ayezijwayele eBabatini. Ingani uMalambule wayecasukile yinkulumo kaNomceŝo. Wazifumanisa esedambile esezisola ukuthi ubekhulumelani lokhu ngaŝe elindele amagama abuya nomfowaŝo uZazini.

Hhayike uMalambule wahlala isikhashana esingangamasonto amaibili lapha kwaNkominophondo waqina. Wayeseyobona umnumzane eyovalelisa. Waya khona sekuntambama wamfumanisa ehlezi esigcakinini kukhona indoda enye eyayimcwala isicoco uNkominophondo. Wakhuleka wathi:

“E, baŝa, Nxumalo!”

Wavuma uNkominophondo wathi:

“Hawu kade ngakugcina mntanami Malambule, sengithi umkhuhlane walapha sewakugwinya. Ngibona wena. Kwenzenjani namuhla waŝamadolo-qinile?”

“Qha, baŝa, ngiyabona ukuthi sengiyobangcono ngoŝa sengizwa nginamandla okuhamba. Sengizovalelisa, Nxumalo, ngibonga impatho ongiphathe ngayo.” Uthe

engakaqedi uNkominophondo wamemeza enye yamantombazana akhe uNomanzi wathi:

“Tshela unyoko lowo alethe lapho lowomancishana sengiyaqeda lapha ekhanda.”

Wayesethi:

“Qha, angikunqumi ŝelu ulimi mntanami, ngilalele, qhubeka.”

Waqhubeka uMalambule wathi:

“Kangazi ukuthi ngingabonga ngani umusa wakho. Ikakhulu ngibonga umame unina kaNomceŝo noZazini, ubengiphethe njengomntanakhe ngigulela ezandleni zakhe engiphapha sekukuŝi.”

Wathi esho njalo, wafika owesifazane nokhamba luqhilika amagweŝu walubeka waguqa ngamadolo omabili, walubeka phambi komnumzane wathatha isikhetho wagovuza, wathi ukuphungula wayesethula.

Ummumzane wayeseqedile isicoco sakhe, waluthatha ukhamba waluthi mbe emlonyeni, wadlulisela kulona omcwaya isicoco naye waphuza lwadlulela kuMalambule naye waphuza. Wayesethi uNkominophondo:

“Ngiyezwa mntanami ukuthi usuyahamba, pho, ungaŝe usahlala nelanga kengihlaŝe nembuzi uthole umphako wendlela. Ngizwa nganangu lomnumzane nokuthi laŝa-ŝantu ŝakini kwaZulu sebefikile ŝevela le kwelakwaMjantshi bayodlula lapha ngomhlomunye seŝe qonde ekhaya. Ungahambisana naŝo ungalinyazwa yizinswelaŝoya ngoŝa umhlaŝa sewonakele manje.”

“Ngiyezwa baŝa,” kusho uMalambule. “Ekuŝongeni kwami bengithanda ukuŝa ngikhombise ngento ebonakalayo uze ungikhumbule khona kothi noma umhlaŝa sewabuba mhlawumbe abantaŝakho sithuke sihlangani naŝo, sibungazane ŝakhumbule ukuthi ngake ngadlulela kwaŝo.”

Wathi esho njalo wayelokhu ekhipha impahla afike eyigodlile ekhwapheni isongiwe.

Laphaya kude kwakudla izinkomo zaluswe ngoZazini namabungwana abanye abafana, ŝekhuluma ŝexokozela. UNomceŝo wayelaphaya enzansi egeza amagula nezinkanjana zokudlela. Unina wayesendlini.

UMalambule wayisombulula impahla esongiweyo wayendlela phambi komnumzane wathi:



“Baba, nasoke isipho sakho, engikunika sona ngibonga. Leli-tshali bengiqonde ukuBa ngiyolinika ubaBa kodwa umoya wami ungitshela ukuBa ngilishiye lapha kuwena ngoBa ukuBa kangisizakalanga lapha bengingeke ngiphile ukuBa ngiyoyixoxela abakithi indaba.”

UNkominophondo akethukanga ukuBa aphiwe le-ngubo. Kunokuba akhulume wathi:

“Awudlulisele lapha kimi mfana, lolo-khamba.”

Usho njalo ukhuluma kuye uMalambule.

Waluthatha ukhamba ezandleni zikaMalambule walubethela emlonyeni, waphuza isikhathi, walubeka phansi eluphulula ngesandla wayesethi enkosikazini yakhe eyayihlezi ecaleni selokhu ilethe utshwala ithule:

“MaSonkomose ake ubize laphaya endlini uMaDubiyana ake azongibonisa naye nanku umhlola.”

“YeBo, Nxumalo”, kusho okaSonkomose, washo wasukuma washesha waqonda ngasendlini kanina kaNomcebo wafika wama ngaphandle wathi:

“Wena kaDubiyana, ukhona-nje lapha endlini?”

“YeBo ngikhona”, kusho okaDubiyana unina kaNomcebo, wayesephuma endlini eza kunina kaBembesile, wathi:

“Yini?”

“Umnumzane uyakubiza uthi ake uze kuye, uzombonisa umhlola.”

“Umhlola muni emini lokhu, nihambe nisikhathaza?” kusho uMaDubiyana.

“Phela lo-mfokazi useyahamba ulaphaya esigcakini ikhona into afuna ukuyipha umnumzane.”

“Awuyibonanga wena ukuthi iyini?”

“Qha kangiyibonanga ngoBa kangizihluphi ngezinto zabantu ngihambe ngizilunguza. Ngibone-nje intwana isongwe umfuqulwana”, kusho okaSonkomose.

“Kodwa ungabe usabeka ukuthi mfuqulu muni wona lowo, abafokazi sebegangile-nje, behambe begila imikhuba wonke umhlaBa.”

“Angawugila yini phela lo-mfokazi umkhuba lokhu kuthe efika ningamazi namsingatha waBa yindodana wagulela kinina?”

“Kodwa uthi wena ngokwakho umuntu egula kufanele

simlahle ngaphandle adliwe yizilwane? Wena ngokwakhohungathanda ukwenziwa lokho?”

Bakhuluma baze basondela ngakumnumzane wayesethi uMaSonkomose:

“Izindaba kazihlali phansi noma zigqitshwa sibuye sizizwe.” Bahamba baye bahlala phambi komnumzane baguqa ngamadolo. Umnumzane wayesekhuluma:

“Ake ubeke mntakaDubiyana isipho sami engisinikwa yilo-mfana. OkaSonkomose usibonile ngasengithi akakubize nawe ubone, ningibongele, mina kanginamlomo, mfana wezizwe. Kaningi abantu bedlula lapha, balale baphathwe imikhuhlane sibelaphe silahlekelwe izinto eziningi kwaBanye kodwa singabongwa ngalutho. Yikho lokhu ngithi mina lento ingumhlola.”

“Hawu siyakubongela Nxumalo kulo-mfana wezizwe, impela sengathi iNkosi ingaba naye sibuye simbone ephila njengoba sizwa kuthiwa useyahamba”, kusho unina kaNomcebo.

“Nami, mame, kanginamandla nawokubonga ngoBa ubungiphethe njengomntanakho.”

“E, bekani lapha MaDubiyana nawe kaSonkomose, ngifuna nitshale uMaphulana laphaya exhibeni lakhe ukuBa abuyise izimbuzi abambe umthondolo noma yimuphi awubona ukhuluphele, awuhlabe, awuhlinze, sidle sibuse. Enye inyama iyoba umkhusu kaMalambule ahambe edla endleleni. Wena kaDubiyana thatha itshali lami leli ulisonge ulibeke endlini ngifuna ligcineke lingathintwa lutho.”

Walithatha itshali uMaDubiyana walisonga wahambanalo wayongena endlini elandelwa uMaSonkomose.

## I S A H L U K O V .

Kwakusendlini kusihlwa kuhlezi khona uMaDubiyana nendodakazi yakhe uNomcebo. UMaDubiyana wayeluka isikhwaBukhwaBu sakhe sekhwani ngoBa wayefuna ukuthengisa athole igeja lokulima njengoba elakhe lase-lilidala. UNomcebo wayephotha intambo yesikhonko unina owayethunga ngayo isikhwaBukhwaBu sakhe. Nxa ubabuka wawufumanisa ukuthi labaBantu bayezwana isibili. Kwakubalwe emehlweni abo lokhu-ku-



zwana. Babengakhulumi kodwa babevungama ingoma yezintombi ezindala uMaDubiyana owayizwa kuninakhulu ethi basina ngayo kuMpande. Wayeyithanda ngakhoke wayifundisa indodakazi yakhe. Njalo ngakusihlwa nxa behlezi emlilweni babeyebayihaye, kwenye inkathi kuBe khona noZazini yena aqubulise okwamakhehla ekhomba phansi naphezulu ngezagila. Wayesethi unina:

“Uyibonile ingubo kayihlo ayinikwe nguMalambule?”

Wathi uNomcebo:

“Inguboni?”

“InguBo yokulala”, kusho unina.

“Ngingajabula ukuyibona ngoBa mhlawumbe iyibayinje elingasizi lutho.”

“Hawu uthini lo?” Ungasho kanjani ukuthi ingubo kayihlo iyibayi elingelutho?”

“Qhabe mame, kangisho njalo. Mina ngiqondisa ukuthi uMalambule lona angase kuBe mhlawumbe umkhohlisile uBaBa.”

“Kuhle umuntu azidelele yena ngamehlo. Hamba uye laphaya emsamo, kulowaya-mphongolo uzofumanisa phakathi itshali lelo.”

Yasukuma intombazana yaqonda lapho kusho khona unina, yafika yavula ebokisaneni elaselaBa mnyama ngumusi wendlu ngaphandle kodwa phakathi lalimhlophe. Yatatulula yalibona itshali lelo, yathi ingakakhulumi ize nalo, amehlo ayo esevulekile ngukumangala wathi unina:

“Nawe usungenwe ngumoya kaMaSonkomose yena ozondana nomuntu lingekho necala amzondela lona? Kodwa nenziwa yini ukwenza into embi kangaka?”

“Qha, mina kangimzondi.”

“Pho?” kubuza unina.

“Ikhona into engiyinengwayo kuyena. Ngizwa okaSonkomose ethi lolu-hlobo lwabantu olunjengoMalambule luBi, lunamanga, luyakhohlisa.”

“Yena MaSonkomose lowo izinhlobo zabantu lezi wayezibonaphi? Umuntu ozenza isazi sayo yonke into lena, uyanengeka yena uqobo lwakhe. Kawuboni ukuthi kwenziwa ngoBa mhlawumbe uSebeke ukuBa akhulumi-se indodakazi yakwakhe uBembesile?”

“Kangazi ngoBa umame lona nami ungikhulumela izinyoni ngalo-muntu engingamaziyo.” Wathi esho njalo wayelibeka itshali kunina, walelula, baliBuka wayesethi uNomcebo:

“Kodwa labiza malini leli-tshali?”

“Angazi mntanami ngoBa izinto zabelungu ziyadula. Kwenye inkathi ngabona uBaBa eshaya izinkomo ezimbili ngetshali elalithi malilingane nalo leli kodwa lona lingelingaka.”

“Hawu, lezi-zinto zibiza kangaka?”

Bakhuluma njalo sebeyalisonga itshali bayalibeka.

Laphaya phandle phansi kwesibaya kwakuthunqa imililo. UMaphulana namanye amadoda sebeyigingqile intondolo enkulu beyihlinza, abafana bedla amantsho-ntsho. Imbiza yayisithunqa ububende endlini kwaMaSonkomose njengoba wayeyiphekupheku ngasekuphekeni, indodakazi yakhe uBembesile imsize okaSonkomose nayo igqigqizeia.

Kuthe lapho selimathunzi uZazini wafika nabafokazi laba bakwaZulu ababili, oNozaza. Kwahlalwa phandle ibandla lixoxa zonke ezempi ezindala nokuhlabana kwaBo, nangendaba yohambo lwaBo beya kwaMjantshi benqamula udukathole lwamahlathi; bewela amachibi amangalisayo amanye ayebakhumbuza izinganekwane zenanabulembu, ngoBa kwakungathi kawanyakazi, ehlale ethule ethe du.

Kwesinye isikhathi bebehlelwa balale endle bezwe kuBubula amabubesi, nezimpisi kude baze babase umlilo. Ngelinye ilanga belele eduze nelinye lalawa-machibi babona kudla izinkomo kudana etshanini obuhle obuluhlaza. Kuthe phakathi kobusuku bezwa kukhonya inkunzi ngasechibini, ibovumula sengathi ikhonyela enye. Kulo-mhlambi wezinkomo kwakukhona inkunzi futhi, nayo yaqala ukukhonya izwa enye ikhonya. Bavula amehlo baqhwebana ngoBa babekade bezwa ngendaba ukuthi kukhona inkunzi yamanzi, namhla nanso imi phambi kwaBo. Inkunzi le yenkomo, izwa enye inkunzi ngasechibini, yaqala ukukhonya nayo yazishiya izinkomazi yeza ngasechibini. Zasezibambene kwaBa ubudweshudweshu zishudulisana osebeni lwechibi. Emva kwesikhashana bezwa ikhala enye sengathi



isigwaziwe. Zasondela ezinye izinkomo zizwa le ikhala, futhi zizwa kunuka igazi zihambe ziza zigijima zibonga. Babukisisa abafokazi laba bazebayibona lena enye inkunzi eyimpoxyana ihamba phakathi kwezimazi nezinkaabi ezasezigcwele ngasechibini. Izimpondo zayo zazicije kabi, neshoba lilide, kodwa umzimba umncane isindwa yilunda. Lapha esijingweni kwakuyephuzela uboya obuyinsephunsephu. Bayibukisisa kanti ngempela yiyonankunzi yamanzi abafeyizwa ngendaba.

Zaxoxwa eziningi izindaaba kwaze kwahlwa kakhulu, bangenisa kulendlu elala uMalambule abafokazi, ngalalo-linga bephekezelwa nguMaphulana. Sebehlezi endlini uMalambule wakhuluma noMaphulana wathi:

“Maphulana, ngizohamba ngomhlomunye. Kodwa ngifuna okokuaba ngihambe ngikushiye nomyalezo.”

“Ngasekuaba umyalezo muni Malambule?”

“Uyabona Maphulana intombi yakwenu lena ngiyayithanda.”

“Phela ziningi izintombi lapha ekhaya. Thina siyazala kulomhlabane. Insizwa idlula igawule induku”, washo wahleka uMaphulana.

Laphaya emsamo wendlu kwakulele umfo kaNozaza weZulu nomngane wakhe, sebezumekile uFuthongo. Njengoba uMaphulana noMalambule babezihlalele ndawonye bendlale basondelana baxoxa ngamazwi aphansi bengaphazanyiswa lutho, futhi bengaphazamisi muntu.

“Qhabo inye intombi mina eyangingena ngifika-nje lapha kwenu, uNomcebo. Sengike ngakhuluma nayo izikhashana ezithize, kodwa kangikhothlwa ngelinye ilanga ithi kimina—‘Wena unguabaninje nempela?’ lelozwi linjengesilonda nanamhla lokhu kimina.”

“Yasho njalo na?”

“Yebo Maphulana, yasho njalo.”

“Okunye?”

“Ingabuye ithini okunye uma ingibuze ngimi phambi kwayo, ithi ngingubani, sengathi ngicashe ezidindini zotshani?” kusho uMalambule.

“Wena waphendula wathini lapho isho njalo kuwena intokazi yakwethu? Kanti isikhulile, bengingazi”, kusho uMaphulana njalo.

“Mina ngasimze ngavaleka umlomo ngaqumbelana, ngaswela izwi. Kodwa ngayitshela ukuthi ngizalwa yiqhawe. Ubaaba yiqhawe.”

“Ngiyezwa, mfana”, kusho uMaphulana wamshaya ngesandla emahlombe, ethokoze kabi ukuaba kanti naye lukhulu alwaziyo noma abantu laba bemthatha njenge-siphoxwana somuzi. Wahleka, wabuye wahleka futhi. Wayesethi:

“Kodwa wezwaphi ukuthi izintombi lezi zalapha nakwaZulu zimqoma umuntu ngoaba ezisho ubuqhawe bawoyise noyisemkhulu? Noma yena uqobo lwakhe eyiqhawe akufanele, azisho azibabaze ngoaba kuzofika imbangi yakhe eceleni izendlale phansi entombini, ikhulume ngothando; ibike izinhlopheko zayo; izenze umuntu ongase afet khona manje uma intombi ingasamqomi.

“Ngelinye ilanga ngabona insizwa ilahla isihlangu sayo phansi phambi kwentombi, izinyembezi zathi mu zehla, yathi entombini ‘mtanethu kothiwa ngibulawe nguwe ngemithi yakwenu’. Yathi intombi ‘imithi kangiyiphathi’. Insizwa yathi ‘wake wangibona ngikhala ngingaka-nje? Ngikhaliswa uthando, luyangiphundla, luzongihlanyisa, ngihawukele mntwana wabantu’, washo ecosha isihlangu sakhe phansi ezenza ogulayo. Wahamba waphukazela. Intombi yathi kodwa kuzothi-wani uma kufunyaniswa ikhala. Insizwa yasondela yayibamba ngesandla, sathamba isandla, wavaleka umlomo amehlo abeka phansi entombini. Wathula umntwana wensizwa, wasidedela isandla walungisa ihawu lakhe waliphulula, wathintitha ibeshu lakhe waqhwisha wahamba. Wayewayoshona entabeni. Wafika wathuma odadewabo ukuaba bamlandele ubuhlalu bakhe kuyona intombi ngomuso.”

Lapho uMalambule wathula walalela uMaphulana sengathi uyaqala ukumbona ngoaba sonke lesi-sikhathi kuyena sekuyisilima esidlala abantwana basekhaya, nokuaba uMaphulane akanakukhuluma into enomqondo. Kodwa nakhu namuhla uMaphulane umvule amehlo ezintweni abengazazi. UMaphulana wayifundaphi mhliziyoyentombi? Wayesethi uMalambule:

“Maphulana, wake waqonywa?”



“Usho mina? Qha.”

“Pho lokhu-kwazi ukuthathaphi na?”

“Okokuqala angizifuni izintombi ngoBa funa abantu bathi ngihlakaniphile, ngizondwe umhlaBa, ngihambe ngithwalene nezinduku ngoBa ngizohlaselwa. Kanti uma ngizishaya isilima ngiyohlala ngiphephile.”

“Qha Maphulane angikholwa. Pho, ngingenzenjani lapha kweyakwenu?”

“Phela ungaBuye uBuze kimina lokhu wena uthe kukhona umyalezo onawo kimina?”

“Qha Maphulane angikholwa. Pho, ngingenzenjani?”

“Ehhe, uBusathathwe ugqozi lothando lukuthwele wakhohlwa ukucabanga. UyaBona kusasa kukhona idili elikhulu kwamnumzane kuzobe kubusiswa laBa-bafo oBaBona belele lapha. Izinsizwa nezintombi ziyobe zibuthene, ziyobe zigqoke zithe shi, empahleni. Ziyosina kujatshulwe uBone-nje nawe ukuthi amaBade ngabantu aBanjani. Ngithe kuwe kuyazalwa kuleli. UyongiBuza ungiphale ulimi ukuthi nginamanga yini.”

“Kodwa noma kunjalo Maphulane, awuphenduli umbuzo wami. Ngithe mina ngingenzenjani lapha entombini yakwenu. Ngiyayithanda. Nokuhamba lokhu angazi ukuthi ngihamba kanjani. Inhliziyo yami iyosalela lapha eDumbe.”

“Kuyobe akuqali ngawe, mfana wasekhaya. Ungibona-nje mina uthe ngilapha ngoBa ngingowokuzalwa lapha? Uke ungizwe khona kanye ngitekeza? Suka lapha mfana wezizwe. UmhlaBa kawuhanjwa ngokuhlakanipha. Thina ziphoxo siyolokhu sasinda nina nibuxekwa ngemikhonto ngoBa amakhanda nihamba niwaphakamisile. Mina ngangiyinceku esigodlweni sikaMpande esasesibuswa nguCetshwayo uyise engasasizi lutho. Kuthe abelungu ukuBa bamthumbe uCetshwayo thina zincekwana sasala obala sachitheka nomhlaBa, sesaba ngokuBa abelungu funa nathi basenze kabi. Minake ngabaleka ngaze ngafika kulomhlaBa. Unina wentombi lena ekufehla amathambo wayeshelwa yimina ngifika kulomhlaBa; kodwa ngenxa yokuBa ngingena lutho, ngifika ngiphundlekile, wathathwa ngumnumzana.”

“Kodwa phela wayengeke akufanele uyambona-nje ukuthi kwakungumdladlambe.”

“Yize lokho, nami ngangiyimina ngokwami. Ucabanga ukuthi ngingakhohlwa? Wo kawazi mina Malambule. UkuBa uyihlo ngiyamazi ngabe ngithi mfo kaBani.”

“UbaBa nguGodide kaNdimundwane.”

“YeBoke mfo kaNdimundwane, ngizokuBiza ngoyihlo-mkhulu yena ongasekho.”

“Pho, ungangelani Maphulane na?”

“Lutho; kodwa ake ngibeke. UyaBona eningini kusasa kuyobe kuphethuzela amehlo abantu engacijile. Ngakhoke kothi lapho sekusinwa ngikubizele yona ngoBa njengoBa usuke wayikhulumisa wena, ngokwakho izokuxwaya ngempela. Khumbula futhi ukuBa akuwena wedwa oyithandayo. Ziningi izinsizwa eziyifunayo kulo lona leli, ziyayeshela. AmathuBa funa mhlawumbe abe nzima uma engekho ongakulandela yona.”

Nempela kwasa ngomuso, uNozaza nomngane wakhe bakhuphukela kwamnumzane ukuBa bayodla idili laBo. Kwasekugcwele kwamnumzane uNdida, sebenyathelana ngezinyawo abantu; usi lwenyama selugcwele wonke umoya; isimame sesigqigqizela emabodweni sekunjeya.

Kwathi ilanga seliphakeme ibandla seliphiwa kanye nezinsizwa zasezigcwele izintombi. Amehlo kaMalambule acingana noNomceBo kuphela kuyo yonke inqwaBa yezintombi eyayikhona. Emva kokucinga isikhathi eside wambona emva komuzi emi nyene intombazana bebukela. Kwasekudingeka okokuBa izinsizwa zisine ngezigaBa zazo. Zasina zaqeda, kwaBa kuhle ngempela; kodwa uMalambule yena umqondo wakhe wawungekho lapho. Kuthe esami eCabanga ngendlela owayezoyihamba ngakusasa ekuseni, nanjengoBa ilanga laseliya ngomtsha wendoda wezwa umuntu emqhweba ngemuva, wathi jeqe kanti uMaphulana. Wamqhweba maqede wafulathela sengathi akenzanga lutho. Ngalokho wabona uMalambule ukuthi lokhukuqhwetshwa kunemfihlo akufanele amlandele ezinyaweni uMaphulana. Ngakhoke wambona lapho eshona ngakhona, naye wayesethi nyelele waphuma ngelinye icala baye bahlangana ngasembileni owase ukhulile. Wathi uMaphulana:

“Hamba ngalendlela, uthathe izinyawo.”



Wathi uMalambule:

“Umdlalo ngiwushiye kanjani?”

Kodwa uMaphulana akalindanga emva kokuβa amnike lawomazwi, waguquka waphindela emgidweni wayoziphuzela utshwala umuntu wotshwala. UMalambule wema ecaβanga emangala ukuthi ngabe yini ukuβa uMaphulane amenze kanje, wayesesola ukuthi mhlawumbe ikhona ingozi ambalekisela yona. Nempela wathatha lendlela ayikhonjiswe uMaphulana wahamba washesha. Kwaβe akahambile naβanga, nakhu phambi kwakhe amantombazana amabili ayahamba. Wawaβukisisa enye yawo kanti uNomceβo. Wona kodwa ayengakamβoni. Wayeseyikhani eβonayo ukuthi uMaphulana ubemqhwebelani. Waqunga isibindi. Wasondela, wezwa ukuthi amantombazana aseyavalelisana. Wezwa uNomceβo ethi:

“Angazi phela.”

“Awazi kanjani lokhu yena uyazinqamleza ngawe.”

Wathi uNomceβo:

“Hamba kahle Nomp! Ngiyalithanda lelogama lakho, kunelokuthi, Nomanzi.”

“Sala kahle Nomceβo ungakhohlwa.” Wahlala phansi uMalambule ngoβa amantombazana ayengakamβoni futhi eβona ukuthi uNomceβo useyaβuya. Wabaβuya nempela uNomceβo lentombazana yanyamalala ithwele igobongo ebikade ithwele ngalo utshwala iβulethe kwamnumzane. Weza wasondela uNomceβo, uMalambule wambuka, waβuye wamβona emuhle ngokunye namuhla ngoβa wayengazange amβone ehlobile. Wathi ukusondela uNomceβo umzimba wakhe wezwela ukuthi ukhona umuntu ombukayo. Wathi ukuqalaza wayesemβonile uMalambule, wathuka uNomceβo wathi dlengelele wathi:

“Wangethusa!”

“Wethuswa yini ngizihlalele-nje?”

Wathula uNomceβo wayevusa amehlo ethi: “Uyajaβula uyahamba kusasa usuyobona aβakini.”

“Yeβo ngalezizikhathi ngiyobe ngilibuquza kude sengikukhomba njeya eMahlabathini lapho siyokwehlukana khona nalaβaβafo βakithi kwaZulu βona βoshona

ezindaweni zaβo nami ngiqonde eMfule lapho ngiyolala khona.”

“Uyajaβula.”

“Qha, angijaβuli. Inye into engenza ngingejaβuli, ngishiya wena lapha. Ngikutshelile ngomfowenu uZazini ukuthi ngiyakuthanda, nami ngomlomo wami ngasho emehlweni nasezindlebeni zakho ngathi ngiyakuthanda. Wena wangibaβuka phansi wangibaβuka phezulu, wangangibaβona ngashaβalala njengomoya wawusuthi:

“Wena unguβani-nje nempela?”

“Pho manje usuzifumanisile ukuthi unguβani?”

“Ehhe sengizifumanisile ukuthi nginguβani. Bengingazazi kodwa namuhla sengiyazazi. Mina igama lami nginguLutho, umhambi wendlela nomlalandle. Lapho ilanga liyoshona lifunyanisa endle ngingedwa. Inhlamvu iβomvu, kodwa ngeke iβomvu njengenhliziyoyami lapho ngikubona. Okokuqala mhla ngikubonayo kwakuyiso lesisikhathi ilanga seliyoshona, wawuyaphi?”

“Mina ngangithunye ubaβa ukuβa ngiyokubiza.”

“Engibaβelani?”

“Ngoba ilanga laselishonile izwe lalapha ungalazi uzolimala.”

“Namike, ilanga selishonile, noma seliyoshona ngizokubiza ubuyele ekhaya funa ulimale. Nangaphandle kwalokho ilanga selingishonele mina enhliziyweni yami ngoβa sengihamba kusasa. Enhliziyweni yami wena ubunjengelanga noma imisebe yakho ibikhanyela abanye kodwa bekuthi lapho ngikubuka ngizwe ngidela. Ubu-njengonvezi kimina lapho izinhlungu zalesisifo sakini zingcindezele bekuthi lapho ngicabanga wena ngizwe zishabalala, njengoβa unyezi uxosha umnyama ebusuku. Namhla sengiyahamba, Nomceβo, yeβo sengiyahamba. Namhla kangisho ukuthi ngiyakuthanda funa uthi,

“Wena unguβani-nje nempela?” Kodwa njengoβa igama lami nginguLutho, eyothando ngiyayiyeka sengithi:

“Nomceβo vuma uyophekela umame. Nakho kuphela. Angifuni ungithande, ungathanda lafo abanamagama. Mina anginagama, kodwa, vuma uyophekela umame.”

“Uthini umusho njalo?”

Wathi uMalambule:



“Ngikweshelala umame.”

Yathi intombazane:

“Sekuhlwile, mangihambe ngizoze ngibizwe besengithethiswa kuthiwe kade ngilibelephi.”

Wathi ususa unyawo uyahamba, wavimba endleleni uMalambule wathi:

“Nomcebo, ngiyakuthanda, konke okwami ngikunika wena, ngingena lutho nokho ngiznika mina uqobo lwami; noma ngingumuntu wezizwe ongamazayo, kodwa abadala bathi *‘induku enhle egawulwa ezizweni’*, nami ngilanda izinyathelo zabadala.”

Intombazana yathula, yathi iqala futhi ukuhamba, uMalambule wavimba endleleni, wathi uyisa isandla kuyo yasinikina ngehlombe, yathula. Wezwa emzimbeni wakhe umfo kaNdimundwane engenwa iqungo alizwe limngena ngesikhathi uMaphulane emxoxela indaba yokweshela kusihlwa becambalele endlini. Weza igazi lakhe lishisa sengathi izibilini zakhe ziphekiwe ingwefu yazo iye iphuphume enhloko. Kwasephuzela izinwele zakhe, welula isandla wayivimbela intombazana lapho ithi iyahamba kanti usebamba ubuhlalu bayo obabulenga engalweni, bakhumuka. Bawa phansi. Kodwa ayibuphuthumanga ukuza ibucoshe. Kwathi esabuphethe esandleni ethi uyayinikeza, bezwa umuntu ekhwehlela ngenhla kwaabo, wathi jeqe uMalambule kanti uMaphulana. Wathi amehlo ewabuyisa ethi ntombazana ubulapha yase kade intombazana yashaya utshani.

ISAHLUKO VI.

Kuthe befika ebusuku endlini uMalambule akathandanga ukuza ayolala namadoda akuza lawa akwaZulu ayezohamba nawo aye kwaZulu. Waya endlini kaMaphulana. Wathi efika wathi uMaphulana:

“Besengikubekile.”

Wangena uMalambule wahlala phansi wacinga ebumnyameni amehlo akhe esaqundekile kodwa wangabona lutho, wayesethi:

“Ameblo ami akaBoni.”

Wathi uMaphulana:

“Yelula isandla ngikubambe, khona ngizokuhola ngikuhlalise lapha.”

Nempela waselula isandla uMalambule wasibamba uMaphulana wamdonsa wayesethi:

“Sekulungile, hlala lapha phansi, kukhona ucansi.”

Wahlala phansi uMalambule. UMaphulana wayesehlala phansi naye wathatha igudu lakhe, washaya umlotha eziko kwavela ilahle, walithatha ngesandla walifaka embizeni elicindezela. Kwathi lapho esebona ukuthi insangu isiwubambile umlilo embizeni walifeka emlonyeni igudu wadonsa, wadonsa, lasho phakathi lathi

“qho, qho, qho.”

Walilalela umfo kaMaphulana wakhohlwa nokuthi uMalambule ukhona. Uthe lapho esedonse kakhulu intuthu yangena esifufeni wakhwehlela sengathi isifuba sakhe sinomgodi. Kwaphela lokho wabamba futhi, yavuma inkomo yakwaBo eyayinqandile, yathi ukuvuma wayibonga uMaphulana ethi:

*“Kunesiwombe we mlingani,  
Okukhulu okuzayo,  
Sithi silibema lapha-nje,  
Sesilibema noMgwazizakhaqhaqi,  
Uqhaqhelwa abezizwe.  
Unovakasha yedwana,  
Isihlahla esiband’amagwala,  
SikaMangisi.  
Umqhathi wempi azilwele,  
Umgqabula nsimbi,  
Akukho nsimbi zabelungu,  
Ngoba nazo ziyephuka”*

amehlo akhe lapho asekhala izinyembezi, uMalambule uyawabona, sekuxubene kuye nokunengwa ukuza kanti usho ukuthini nxa ethi ubesembekile uma esalibele yigudu. Wathi esacabanga lokho wabuye wakhwehlela uMaphulana wathi:

“Uxole njalo Malambule ngisazitholisa amandla, ngiqine ngoba kade ngimi yonke imini ngibeke umsebenzi womnumzane.”

“Igudu leli litholisa amandla?”

“Angazi.”



“Pho usholoni ukuthi ubemela ukuthola amandla ngoBa kade usebenza?”

“Abanye bathi bayaliqalekisa igudu leli ngiliphethe-nje. Abanye banele balithinte maqede bavuke uklangu-klangu okokuBa ungeke usaBathinta njenempela; abanye balidla banonophale uzwe sebevuleleka emlo-nyeni seBekhuluma njalo baBemnandi. Mina neningi laBantu silidla igazi liqungeke lidlale yonke imithambo yomzimba, kuBe yikhani uqala ukusebenza.”

“Ngiyezwa” kusho uMalambule ethanda okokuBa basheshe baXoxe ekaNomceBo, okuyiyona ndaba ayizele lapha endlini. Wayesethi uMaphulana:

“Qha, kawuzwa. Ake ukhohlwe indaba yentombi ulalele lapha. Intombi ayiBaleki nayo iyaxoxwa-nje ngesikhathi sayo.”

“YeBo ngilalele.”

“UyaBona Malambule, nawe uqobo lwakho ingani uvela emigodini lapho kumbiwa khona imali? Ingani abantu bashayana netshe beliqhekeza kuze kuyoshona ilanga isando silokhu sikhale lokho? Bangalithinta yini uma bengazange bathole amandla? UcaBanga ukuthi amandla baWathola ngophuthu lolu abalunikwa njalo-njalo, noma ngamahewu kuphela? Akunjalo mngane. Baqala bathi khose emagosini aBo bathinte amagudu aBo, bathole amandla.”

Washo maqede walimbembethela umfo kaMaphulana, laqhoqhozela. Wambuka uMalambule ngoBa kwase-kusengathi usephenduke isilwane. Naye wayazi ukuthi lezizinsizwa ezithinta insangu zinekhanda lazo. Wayekhuluma uMaphulana ethi:

“Uyakhumbula ukuthi ngithe kuwena izolo kusihlwa mina ngangiyinceku kusabuswa?”

“YeBo, ngiyakhumbula.”

“UyaBonake sizoba nenhleBo nawe. Umntwana wenkosi uDinizulu ngangimthanda esengumfana, yimina engangimfundisa ukungcweka nokuvika. Namhla ngizwa kuthiwa useyindoda eqinile uyaBusa esikhundle-ni sikayise. Yeka umntanenkosi.”

Washo umoya wakhe washona phansi, sengathi uyam-hawukela uDinizulu.

“UyaBona mfana wami, lawamadoda amaBili mina ngiyawazi. Ngimdala kuwona elama abelama thina, sithe sibuthwa wona ayekleza. Uqinisile lona ukuthi unguNozaza weZulu, noma ezibonga ethi:

*“Useqa laph'umkhay' ukhona:  
Weqa ntangwana zakoMakhasa,  
Uxhakalaz'umuntu ngomkhonto kaSifo:  
Uzibula ngendod'enkulw' engangoyise,  
UMgankla bath'ugugile kanti musha!”*

Thina siyaBazi bonke laBo, futhi yimina engiqale ukusho ngimenanela enkundleni laphaya ngathi,

“Zisho, zisho Nozaza weZulu.” Ibandla lonke langi-vumela lathi:

“Zisho, zisho, Nozaza weZulu.”

“Lapha ngiBaBona nami sengivukwe isizungu sase-khaya, mfana, sengiyahamba. Ngihamba nani kanisa-ngishiyile.”

Wethuka uMalambule wathi:

“Hawu wena unгахamba kanjani lokhu uyithemba lami, uzosala lapha ubeke ukuthi lentombi engiyithanda-yo kayithathwa muntu?”

“Kusho bani lokho? Uthi ngingowokusala lapha, inkosi ilwelwe nguBani? AwuBoni ukuthi uma kuthu-nywa amadoda kanjena eyolanda imithi kwaMjantshi kaThobela, kwaSalukazi simabele-made, kusuke ku-khona okonakele okuzolungiswa? Uthi mina nginga-fela lapha oPhongolo, yini uPhongolo? Khona nxa bethi lugwele ludla izindwani luyafika oThukela olu-gcwala ngomoya? Mina bani engingalahlwa lapha ngifise okwenja?”

“QhaBo lalala, Maphulana, nami ngimncane-nje ngi-nomqondo. Uma ngithi beka intombi yami lena ngisho ukuthi ngizobuya.”

“Ubani intombi yakho lapha?”

“Ngisho yona lena yakwenu.”

“Ikuthande nini?”

“Ayikangithandi.”

“Pho usholoni ukuthi intombi yakho?”

“Ngisho ngoBa ngizokulwa nayo ize ingithande, ngi-yishade, Maphulana.”



“Akusizi lutho ukuḅa silinde ingomuso singazi okungehlakala. Mina ngiyahamba, angikukhulumi okunye.”

“Qhaḅo awunakuhamba nami ngoḅa funa kuthiwe bengize lapha njengomshokoḅezi.”

ḅaxaḅana impela ḅathi aḅathathelane nemikhonto khona lapho endlini uMaphulane engasezwa lutho, esefuna ukuhamba, esesukumile nokusukuma endlini. Wathatha uMalambule wamḅamba wamshaya phansi, ḅabuqzisana, yaze insizwa yalinqoḅa ikhehla lathamba laselilokhu ligquma-nje ngaphansi lathi:

“Sala usungiyeka usungahlule, mfan.”

“Ngizokwakha iqhinga, Maphulana. Nanti: kunganjani siyithathe intombi lena seqe nayo?”

“Isikuvumile yini?”

“Qha ayikangivumi, kodwa beka lapha.”

Washo emkhombisa ubuhlalu ḅayo, isibeḅa esilengiswa entanyeni. Wasithatha uMaphulana, wathi:

“Usithathephi lesisibeḅa?”

“Ngisithathe kuyona.”

“Qha, noma uyaphucile isibeḅa sayo, kasazi ukuthi ayizukuceḅa yini kuḅazali ḅayo. Uma ikucebile --- yawuchitha umuthi inkonyane! Kodwa noma ingakuceḅanga, awuḅoni yini ukuḅa imthanda unina sengathi iyancela kuyena, ingahlukana kanjani naye? Ngeke yehlukana.”

“Qhaḅo ngithi mina kaseqe nayo.”

“Ake ume-ke. Uma seqa nayo kusho ukuthi uyise uyonele ezwe ukuthi kayiḅonakali maqede athungathe umkhondo wayo. Ngeke kumthathe isikhathi ukuḅona ukuthi intombazana ihambe nathi. Khona manjalo uyohlomisa izinsizwa zalesisifunda zisilandele, seḅesificile sekuyodingeka ukuḅa sizilwele. Konje siḅangaki?”

“Siḅane kuphela. Yilaḅa aḅabili, nawe nami,” kusho uMalambule.

“Ngeke kwenzeka. Namadlozi azosilahla ngoḅa, laḅa aḅabili kaḅavunyelwe ukuḅa ḅathi ḅethwele imithi emikhulu yesizwe ḅaḅe futhi ḅeletha ekhaya izindaḅa zemibango esuswa yisifazane. Awazi yini ukuthi imithi nesifazane kakuzwani na? Ingani kwaZulu imyama yezinyanga bekuḅa yizimpohlo zingathathi. Noma zithathile ḅezizila kakhulu.”

“Pho, sizokwenzenjani? Sekuye ezwini lami lokuthi wena uzosala lapha ekhaya ngiyofika ngikulande ngoḅa ngizimisele ngoNomceḅo lo.”

Washo wathula uMaphulane sengathi akezwa lutho, wasuka lapho wavusa umlilo, wawuchwabaza, wathunqa, kwagcwala umusi endlini.

Wasukuma uMalambule wathi:

“Maphulane sengiyahamba, sengiyolala. Ngeke sisaḅonana ngoḅa siyovuka ebusukwaneni singene indlela. Kodwa ngiqinisile ngithi ngeke kuphele zinyanga ungiḅone ngithi qatha. Uyalibona igquma laphaya? Nxa ngifika, ngiyophemba umlilo kulo ngiwenze amakloḅo amathathu. Ngalokhoke uyobona ukuthi sengifikile. Ungaḅe usaphuma lapha elawini lakho. Uma kungenjalo uphume phandle nawe uḅase umlilo wothe sengathi kumakhaza. Ngiyofika mina, noma kuyofika oḅaḅa noma aḅakithi ḅezocela lentombi ngoḅa siyobe sesingekho isikhathi sokuyeshela.”

“Kukhona okukhohlwayo, Malambule. Uma mhla-wumbe, kanti uzothi uthi shelele ḅekufika umuntu eyicela, uyise emthanda, ḅese emganisela yona, siyokwenzana njani lapho?”

“Kuḅuyela ezwini lami lokuḅa seqe nayo lentombazana. Kodwa usuchazile ubunzima ḅalento; akufanele nokuḅa siyicabange. Noma kunjalo Maphulana, lowo oyithathileyo uyoyiḅuyisela kimina ngodli, uma kanti kuyizinkani.”

“Xhawulake, mfan, indlela enhle ukhonze naphambili.”

ḅaxhawulisana, aqina amathupha, ḅaḅukana, waphuma uMalambule waqonda endlini owayezolala kuyo naḅafokazi ḅakuḅo kwaZulu. Walala.

Kwathi lapho ethi ḅumnandi ubuthongo wezwa umuntu emthinta emahlombe kanti uNozaza weZulu useyamvusa.

“Vuka, sesiyahamba,” kusho uNozaza. Washo maqede wangalindela mpendulo, wafulathela waqinisa imithwalo yakhe, wendlula ukhukho waluḅeka emsamo, wagoqa inguḅo yakhe wayiḅopha ngomchilo wesikhumba wayigaxa emhlane. Nalomunye umnumzane naye wayenza kanjalo ekhwishizela.



UMalambule wezwa sengathi angathi, qha, maba-hambe uyobuya abalandele. Inhliziyo yakhe yezwa ubuhlungu obukhulu kakhulu. Okukhulu wayezoshiya uNomcebo engazi noma uyobuye ambone yini; kodwa ithemba lakhe labalinye kuMaphulane. Wezwa isizungu sokuaba angasuki kulendawo abantu bakhona babemthanda, uma naye ezimisela ukuhlala phakathi kwaabo, babengamvuma njengoba bamvuma uMaphulane; kodwa wathi lapho ecabanga ngoyise nonina, wezwa esevukile esehamba, ukhukho akazi ukuthi walwendlula nini, nokuthi imithwalo yakhe wayigaxa nini emahlombe. Wazibona eselandela amakhehla lawa amabili.

Izinsizwa ezindala lezi wezwa kukhala ibeshu kuphela lishaywa imilenze zihamba. Lababantu babengakhulumisani, noMalambule wathi, ngiyo be ngonakele uma ngikhulumile. Baphuma ngendlela eqonde entabeni inquma ilinika isandla sokudla iHlofane. Banqamula emajukujukwini bedlula ngaphandle kwezindlu bekhonkothwa izinja zakhona abanye abababonayo uzwe bethi:

“Khunku,”

Bona bakhwife, umnyama bawushiye kuBona.

Laphuma ikhwezi sebesondele eNkongolwane, kwasa beyiwela. YiBo labaya benquma kwelakwaNgenetsheni ilanga selishisa, baze bahlala phansi sebesondele ezweni nasemahlathini aseNgome. Basombulula imigodla yaBo lathi elinye ikhehla:

“Weu, siyahamba wethu.”

Wathi uNozaza:

“Sengingasho ukuthi kuyobe sesilapha ngalesisikhati. Awubonike kuhle ukuvuka ebusukwaneni, ngabe siphil manje ukuaba asiphuthumanga ukuvuka ebusuku?”

Wathula lomnumzane ngoBa wayesabuka izinyawo zakhe, waphubuka wahleka wathi:

“Wo Zulu, sezaze zaBa-nje izinyawo zami indlela. Zingikhumbuza ngihamba ezweni laBeSuthu aBaLoBedu. KwesikaMjantshi kaThobela. Ngangihlale ngizwa ngendaba kodwa namhla ngiyazi, sengiyofa ngimdala.”

“Ungayiphathi leyo wethu,” kusho uNozaza. Wake wakuBona ukuaba umhlaBa uBuswe umfazi, akhulekelwe,

esatshwe ngaphezu kwamadoda? Qha, ngike ngalihamba izwe. Kodwa kusho ukuthini ukuBa sifike siphuma kwaZulu basilindise phandle isikhathi esingaka bengasinike nakudla?”

“Izwe libuswa ngemithetho-ngemithetho. Nakhona umthetho wakhona”, kusho elinye ikhehla. “Kodwa njengokuzwa kwami thina basihloniphile ngoBa sona isalukazi esimabele-made sisibonile sakhuluma naso. Kodwa nganengwa nxa bethi singamaNdebele. Abazi yini ukuthi sehlukene?”

“KuBona wonke umuntu okhuluma ulimi lwakwaZulu kuthiwa yiNdebele. QhaBo umfo kaMashobana lona kwakuliqhawe. Wafika kwaxhaphazela amathumbu emadodeni abeyathe ayabinca imitsha yaxega. Awuboni yini abanye sebethunga izicoco. Yekanini indaba yemikhonto! Uthi kodwa babefikile abakwaZulu?”

“Kambe waBona ukuthi kwakukhona ababefake izicoco? Washo ngaBona Nozaza, kodwa kwathi lapho ngibuza kwaBa sengathi laba abafake izicoco insalela yakwaNgungunyana ekhonze enkosini yaBaNkuna okungathi naBo bangamaMbuka akithi kwaZulu njengoSoshangane-nje.”

Wathi uNozaza:

“Wo, mngane! Bayawashaya amathambo ngifunge uMantombi. WaBona sithi singena-nje umfazi wakhona wasiqengqa ngamagama nemizi yethu ukuma kwayo nokuthi sizeleni? Wathi konke esikulandile usekulungisile? Wasiyala ukuBa siphuthume emakhaya ngoBa umhlabathi wonakele?”

“Wethu, kusho ukuthini lokhukonakala komhlabathi? Sabe siyafike lapho izwe lakhala ngokudala. Kukhomba khona ukuthi inkosi uDinizulu, ngaye-nje kuphela izwe liyosindiswa.”

Wathi uNozaza:

“Imithi esanikwa yona usayikhumbula ukusetshenzi-swa kwayo? Ukuhlakanipha kwalomfazi kuyangiphamba. Okokuqala akathandi ukuBa amehlo akhe ahlangane nawaBantu. Ukhuluma angakubeki, abelokhu amehlo ewacijise phansi.”

Selithi ikhehla elinye:



“Basho ngakhona, ukuthi kukwaMaBelamade. Wake walibona nelilodwa iqhwagi leli khona? Kodwa izinyoni ziningi zigwele. Kushiwo ngakhona ukuthi uye lomfazi owaletsa isikhonyane kwaZulu, nokuba izulu lingabe lisana lokhu.”

Abuze uNozaza athi:

“Kuthiwa kwenza kanjani lokho?”

“Kawazi?” kubuza ikhehla.

“Isikhonyane lesi siphuma ethuneni likaMakhasana, okunguyena owayesifuyile njengezinkomo zakhe. Kunzima ukuthi lokhu kwakumi kanjani. Kodwa afachazayo bathi, uMakhasana lona wayemi kahle kodwa enomona, futhi ethakatha. Ngakhoke wathi ukufa kwakhe waphendula zonke izinkomo zakhe zaaba yisikhonyane. Awuboni yini isikhonyane sonke sinezimpondo-nje?”

“Pho, kuya kanjani ukuba size kwaZulu isikhonyane sikaMakhasana na?” Kubuza uNozaza. Wathi umnumzane:

“Uqinisile. Okokuqala thina Zulu sibulele inkosi yethu yohlanga ngezandla zikaDingana noMhlangana behlangene noMbopha. Inkosi lena yayishiye ichwane layo phakathi endlunkulu kodwa iningi lingazi lifihlelwa. Wabusa uDingana, wabusa noMpande. Umpande wayehlakaniphile, wayazi ukuthi uMbuyazi kakuwakhe kodwa wamphatha kahle wamthanda ukuba athathe isikhundla sikaShaka okwakungesakhe ngempela. Kodwa nina Zulu nehlukana phakathi ngenxa kaMasi-phula nakha umkhumbi woSuthu abanye bakha owezi-Gqoza. Nayibulala futhi inkosi yenu eNdondakusuka. Namhla niphethwe uCetshwayo noZibebu inzondo phakathi kukaMandlakazi noSuthu isagcwele. Lomfazi uyakwazi lokhu. Isikhonyane lesi besihlupha yena. Manje wasiloya wasithumela kinina, nina enihlale nixabana nodwa mandla kaZulu. Nenzalo yenu ixabana yodwa, ilumana njengezinja.

Wathi uNozaza:

“Yebo ngiyezwa konke lokho kuyiqiniso ngempela. Silibele ukuxoxa ezakwaZulu, lomfana sesimkhohliwe.”

“Qha, kulungile, boaba, nakimi izindaaba zakwaZulu zimnandi ziyathandeka. Njengoaba ngithule-nje ngizwa

imizwelo yobuZulu kimina; ngizwa sengathi zikhona izinto engizishiyile ezimnandi okumanje umphefumulo wami uzomelele. Nikhuluma nangezwe lakwaMjantshi. Nami ngaye ngafika eduze kwakhona ngadela ngibona ubuhlakani bezinyanga zakhona eziphatha umphezulu. Ngathi ngiyobe kangiveli khona uma ngingatholanga uphondo.”

“Hawu, mfana kanti uyindoda; kwenziwa njalo uma umuntu ehamba umhlaba uhlanganisa izinhlanga zonke emzimbeni kuye kuze angakhutshazwa lutho olungamehlela.

“Kodwa noma sengike ngahamba”, kukhuluma uMalambule, “kangikaze ngilibone izwe elihle njenge-lakwaZulu. Ake nibeke laphaya emsingeni weNgome, intuthu ethunqa njalo iphuma emanzini sengathi umfula uyaphefumula. Phezulu kwamahlathi sengathi obaba-mkhulu bendlala isiphuku esimnyama, amahlathi akaluhlaza, azothile, amnandi noma uwabuka ezingebungebini zezigodi ezikake iNgome. Konje laphaya nithe kukwaNgenetsheni?”

Washo ekhomba kudana phesheya ngasentshonalanga ebeke iningizimu.

Lathi ikhehla:

“Yebo kukwaNgenetsheni, umuzi wamaqhawe, okwathi lapho uSuthu lulokhu luxhokoloza labo ababezwana noMbuyazi neziGqoza, wala uHhamu umfo kaMpande ukuaba kuthiwe kuye ukhulumisa okomfazi. Wachitheka waze wafika kuleli. Phesheya le, lapha kuvimbe khona ufasimbe kukwaNongoma. Njengoaba sesikhathele sizolala kuleyamizi.” Washo ekhomba imizi ekude eyayakhe egqumeni ngenzansi kwayo kuBonakala imishudulo yesibomvu lapho invula seyavula khona imisele nemigede, nalapho imizila yezinkomo ibonakala idwebe ikhuphuka futhi ibeke, enzansi. Emva kwesikhathi balala khona lapho phansi komthunzi ngoaba ilanga lalibalele. Bavuka selithambeme ilanga bahamba baqonda kulowomuzi.

Bafika ilanga selishonile bakhuleka, bahlala njengoaba kwasekuyimizi abayaziyo. Kwabakukhulu ukujabula komnumzane nabanye bomuzi ukubona ukuthi uNozaza



nomngane wakhe bahambe kahle endleleni ende kangaka. Omunye ehleba wathi:

“Uye lona omunye wakhona le kwaMabelemade na?” Washo ekhomba uMalambule. Wahleka uNozaza wathi:

“Qha lona omunye wabafana bakhona lapha kwaZulu ovela eBabatini ukuyosebenza.”

“Kuphi khona eBabatini?”

“Kukude eBabatini, ngaphambili kwezwe laseSwazini.”

Hhayike bahlala, banikezwa ukudla. Emva kokudla kwaqalwa ukuxoxa indaba, abantu bebuza ngezwe la kwaMjantshi, bemangala ukuthi ngempela oNozaza baphuma khona. Nabo laba bantu bakulemizi yakwa-Magwaza babaxoxela izindaba ezihlasimulisa umzimba.

Imimoya yase iminingi kakhulu exoxwa ngabantu, ngezimangaliso ezenzakala kwaZulu nasesilungwini. Zonke lezizimangaliso nemimoya yayixoxwa ibekane nenkosi uDinizulu. Into emangalisayo kakhulu kwadume ukuthi kukhona umyalo wokuthi:

*“Zonke izingulube nezinkuku ezimhlophe mazibulawe. Nazo zonke izitsha nezingcazi zesilungu mazizilwe zitahlwe zingasetshenziswa. Wonke ongakwenzi lokhu umuzi wakhe uyoshaywa ngumphezulu nokuba uma izwe lingalaleli kuzoduma izulu elingazange libonwe linyazime lehlise isichotho, kufe konke. Lelizulu liyokwedlula leliya elalethwa inkosi yabeSuthu mhla isitimela singeniswa emhlabathini wayo.”*

Kwathi lapho beyixoxa kwaBanda amathumbu ko-Nozaza, kodwa uMalambule akaqondanga incazelo yalomyalo, noma naye waqala ukubona lesosiphepho nezulu elidumayo libulala yonke into ngenxa yokuba abantu besebenzisa izitsha zesilungu. Emhlane wakhe wakhumbula ukuthi ugaxe ibikili ahambe ekha ngalo amanzi, nethunga lethusi afaka kulo umphakwana wakhe.

“Pho senenza njani nina kulokho?” ku buza umnumzane ohamba noNozaza.

“Kawuboni yini inyama iyiziphihli nezinja zingasayinakile-nje ukuthi qha konakele? Izwe lonke linje. Kodwa uma sizwa abasesilungwini bahlekisa ngathi.”

“Wo, laho bafa bume okomthakathi. NisabaBala nokubaBala phakathi kwesizwe; laho abazithatha nje ngabelungu?” kusho uMalambule.

UMagwaza usethi:

“Sikhuluma-nje lapha enkosini uDinizulu kade kufike izithunywa ezivela kude emakhosini omhlabha. Phakathi kwalezi kuthiwa uSomveli wangapha eMkhambathini, nezithunywa ezivela koMntambo noNdunge waseMngeni eduze namaQadi, nezinye izinduna oSikhukhukhu no-Tilongo bangaseLovu, bezitheleke lapha zizozwa ukuthi lendaBa iyiqiniso yini. Ezinye beziqhamuka eMsinga nasemaMbedwini, ngikhuluma-nje ngasekuBe ziningi esezifikile sangazifona, ezinye zihamba ubusuku ziphindele ubusuku ngoBa izwe selilibi alisaBuswa yithina, selibuswa ngabelungu.

“Uthini na?” Kusho uNozaza.

“Wo, yeBo”, kuphendula uMagwaza.

“Izizwe ziyathuthumela. Nathi ekuhambeni kwethu le emazweni angenhla sithe sithi siyayithinta lendaBa esake sayizwa ikhulunywa ukuthi kuthiwa sizothelela amakhanda, abantu basi buza umbuzo nathi lapha kwaZulu esawubuzayo ukuthi, singaze sithelele amakhanda-nje ngawabo yini kungawethu njena? Sathi siyakhuluma abantu baqunga bathwala imihlwenga. Buzani nanguya uMalambule ukuthi bacishe basenzenjani.”

UMagwaza waphendula amehlo kuMalambule wathi:

“Awuxoxe mfo wakithi nawe owakuBonayo nowaku-zwayo.”

Wathi uMalambule:

“Qha, kayizekeki leyo ngoBa nami ngangisaphethwe umkhuhlane wakhona le sezwa kuthiwa kufuneka iBanda. Sahlala silalele kuxoxwa, sabona ukuthi abanye emadodeni bacabanga ukuthi laba bantu bayizinhlo-  
li, bathi maBabadle ngamazinyo nabo basinda ngokubandezela.”

“Kwakufanele banidle ngamazinyo”, kusho uMagwaza.

Amangale uNozaza nomngane wakhe noMalambule ngoBa uMagwaza ekhuluma kanje athi umnumzane lo kuNozaza:

“Hawu uthini sithi masibulawe ngabantu?”



“Ngiqinisile. Izwe selonakele lonke. Sizwa kuthiwa izimantshi zangapha emazweni asoKhahlamba naseNtabazwe abambe amahlongandlebe abeSuthu ababili ahambe efafaza izinkulamo zothuthuva kuabantu ukuthi izwe lonke malihlangane.”

“Hawu”, kumangala uNozaza weZulu, “bayabagambela abeSuthu. Nake nezwaphi ukuthi kwake kwasuka isizwe esinye sivela eminceleni yaso ngaphandle, sazohlwanyela uthuthuva lapha kwaZulu? Amanga lawa ngiqinisile.”

“Ngingakuvumela”, kusho umnumzane ohamba noNozaza weZulu. “Ingani khona lapha kwaZulu kukhona abachumisa ukuthi *‘ubukhosi buthathwa ngezikhali’*. Nani lowomunxa ochumisa lenkulumo niyawazi. Ingani khona izolo lokhu nina benithi uManzolwandle makathathe izikhali aphuce uDinizulu ubukhosi. Ingani khona lapho iningi lenu laselishaya amahlombe selithi, Ehhe, ehhe, ngoba khona mandulo uQwabe wakhishwa ebukhosini nguZulu, kwehla kweza kuShaka owabulala uSigujana wadla ubukhosi; noDingana wamnyonyobela uShaka kwaDukuza; kanjalo uMpande wahlangana nabelungu waxosha uDingane, nanguya eyofela eSwazini. UCetshwayo wabuthatha ubukhosi kuMbuyazi eNdongakusuka - - - pho uManzolwandle angebuthathe ngani kuDinizulu?”

“Uqinisile”, kusho uMagwaza.

“Kaniboni yini ukuthi lezizenzo zenu zivulela izitha indawo yokungena zifukamele phakathi kwenu na?” kusho umnumzane lo.

“Yebo”, kusho uMagwaza. “Sibadala namhla kodwa kasizange sikubona lokhu okuqembula uZulu kuleminyaya yanamuhla.”

UNozaza weZulu wayesehonqa ngenxa yokuaba wayekhathele ngempela. UMalambule yena wayelalele lezizinda ezindala nezintsha. Zimxhathisa umqondo. Yena wayengazi ukuthi uma uthuthuva lolu okukhulunywa ngalo nxa lusuka uyosekela ngaphi. Kwaaba yikhani ebonayo ukuthi kanti insizwa, ayizalelwa ukuaba ikhule isebenze kuphela bese ishelana nezintombi. Kukhona futhi nezinda ezinkulu zombuso okuthi nxa amadoda ewodwa axoxe zona sonke isikhathi owe-

sifazane akangeni lapha; ungena ngoba ezoletha ukudla nalapho ebiziwe kukhona okubuzwa kuye.

UMagwaza wabanikeza izindawo zokulala, balala. UMalambule walala ubuthongo obukhulu wabuye waphupha, ephupha uNomcebo sengathi uthathwa ngamanzi alowayamfula owake waphupha ngawo, wathi uyagxuma ugxumela emanzini ukuaba amenyule, kodwa alenge-nje emkhathini. Phansi laphaya uNomcebo uyakwaliza, uyaqhwaba. Wethuka, wavuka ubuthongo baphela, waqhasha, wamangala ukuthi lokho ngabe kusho ukuthini.

## ISAHLUKO VII.

Nangaphambili kokuaba uMalambule afike eDumbe kwaNkominophondo, imizi emibili, owakwaabo kaNomcebo nowakwaabo kaBembesile, yayingezwani ngokuthe cikithi. Manje ukufika kukaMalambule kwenze izinto zaqhubekela phambili ukuaba lemizi ingezwani okwempela. Akusikho ukuthi abantu babengazi ukuthi uMalambule useyashela lapha kuNomcebo. Babazi ngempela. Futhi kwathi lapho amantombazana esebone ubuhlalu basentanyeni kuNomcebo bungasabonakali futhi noMalambule esehamble, baqala ukusola. Banyenyeza.

Unina kaBembesile wayezigabisa ngentombi yakwakhake kodwa unina kaNomcebo yena waye ngumuntu ozithulelayo. Kwahlalwa njalo zaze zakhala izintombi zozimbili, waona umuntu sekulokhu kuqhamuka izinsizwa-nje zizokweshela, onina belunguza ngezikhala zemihlanga ukuthi iyiphi enqakwa yizinsizwa kakhulu.

Amantombazana lawa ayenabangane bawo, nabo bayisuka lento yobumbangi phakathi kwezintombi zikaNkominophondo, manje kwaze kwacishe ukungezwani kwazo kwafika ezindlebeni zikayise.

Kuthe ngelinye ilanga unina kaNomcebo ezibukula itshe lokugaya, wavumbulula isikhwama somonya si-songe amakhubalo. Kwasekunindwa ngaphezulu ngezazi sengathi elomuntu. Wakhuza wababaza unina kaNomcebo wathi:

“Nomcebo”, kusho unina, “woza uzobona lomhlola!”  
Wethuka uNomcebo kwathi makaquleke wathi:



“Mame, sithakathiwe. Yimisebenzi kaBembesile lena ehlangene nonina. Ayikho enye into abayifunayo kodwa ukuBa baneliswe nxa bezwa kuthiwa sifile. Lawama-khubalo awokuBa sife thina sobabili, singewatshwe.”

Wayesesuka khonamanjalo uNomcebo eya komakhe-lwane lapho kwakuhlala khona isanusi esingawashayi amathambo kodwa senza umhlola. Safika sabizwa lesisanusi ukuBa sisheshe sizochitha lomhlola sikhwe-bule izikhuni zibeke lapho ziqhamuka khona. KwaBe kasifikile isanusi sawabutha onke amakhubalo sawafa-faza ngentelezi okuthiwa nguMabuyanazo. Wayese-hlala uNomcebo umoya wakhe ukhathazekile wathi:

“Mame, sengikhathele yiyo yonke lemihlola. Yini yona ubuhle? YiBo lobu obusilethela wonke lomsindo, nengxabano nomona. Kuhle ungiphe izikhumba zibe-mbili-nje zemfene. Ngalezizikhumba ngizozifihla ngi-zigubuzele ngingabonwa muntu kuze kufike isikhathi sokushada kukaBembesile. Yileyo kuphela indlela esi-ngathulisa ngayo lomsindo.”

Ngalo lelolanga uNomcebo wancenga umfowaBo ukuBa amfunele izikhumba lezo, zihlinzwe kahle khona eyoBa namandla okuzigqoka. Zinganqunywa ama-khanda, ngisho nemilenze ikhishwe kahle. Yena uyo-zigqoka angabonakali lutho. Kuphela uyobuka ngazo izigqobe zamehlo emfene, aphefumule ngalo ikhala elide lemfene. Lomqondo wamthokozisa uNomcebo. Nempe-la abafowaBo bazithola izikhumba lezo. Lapho esezig-qokile kwaBa sengathi intombazana eyisifumbu noma eyaphuke iqolo, abantu bangathanda ngisho nokumbuka.

Lendaba yayeyafinyelela ezindlebeni zikanina kaBe-mbesile. Wahleka wafa, wagadlela yedwa endlini. Abanye besifazane abangenamona beza kunina kaNo-mcebo bamsola ukuthi umntwana bamvumeleleni ukuBa aziphoxe ngohlobo olunje. Kodwa unina kaNomcebo wasuke wathula ngoBa wayengesiye umuntu okhulumayo, wayethula-nje.

Emva kwalokhu kwaBa khona ukuthula okukhulu phakathi komuzi kaNkominophondo njengoba inye intombi eyase yaziwa kuphela nguBembesile. Esazigqo-kile izikhumba lezi uNomcebo kwafika izinduna ezimbi-li ziqhamuka kwelinye izwe lakwaZulu ngaseNgome,

zithunywe inkosi yakhona ukuBa zizofuna izintombi ezimbili ezizogana indodana yayo. Wasukela phezulu unina kaBembesile wathi:

“Nangu owami umntwana. Nguyena mfazi wenkosi noma umbuka-nje. Akekho lapha kulomuzi ongaqhathani nisa naye noma sekuthiwani.”

Washo emthatha ngengalo, abanye besifazane bebuka, wamthatha uBembesile wambeka, emmisa phambi kwezinduna. Zabuka izinduna zadonsa izintshengula ezicocweni zazo, zaqala ukubema. Zayibuka intokazi imi phambi kwazo zathi:

“Ngempela mame akusho wena, kusho ukuzala ngoBa nathi siyabona inhle lentombi yakho.”

Ayeseqhubeka amakhehla ezinduna ebuza enkosini, uyise kaBembesile ethi:

“Akekho yini omunye kubantabakho omuhle njengalona na? Naye sifuna ukumbona.”

Bathi:

“YeBo ukhona kodwa akathandi ukuBonwa ngoBa uzifihle ngezikhumba zezimfene.”

Ethuka amakhehla, ayeka ukubema athi:

“Mhlola muni lowo? Ingani izimfene kuthakathwa ngazo, pho, intombazana ingagqoka kanjani izikhumba zemfene? Nithi iyaphila ekhanda layo?”

Bahleka abanye, amantombazane ayelanda uBembesile ahleka usulu ngoBa wona ayeyazi indaba yesikhumba somonya. Wayesethi omunye:

“Qha, nina bantu benkosi, umntwana lo uyaphila emqondweni wakhe, usangenwe ubushinga bokukhula.

Amantombazana lawa omshungu kaBembesile asuka agegetheka onke ehleka usulu. Amakhehla lawa nawo angaqonda ukuthi okuyikhona khona yikuphi ayesethi:

“Singajabula ukuBa naye simbone.”

Nempela walandwa uNomcebo endlini yakwaBo, kwathi lapho eqhamuka abantu besaba namakhehla lawa nawo ashiywa yimizimba. AyeseCabanga ukuthi lomntwana ubulewe mhlawumbe uphosiwe. Kodwa ngaphambi kwalokho ayefuna ukukhuluma naye ezwe ukuthi into ayiphendulayo inomqondo yini noma ngeyokubeda. Athi amakhehla:



“Uzifihleleni ebusweni mntanami, nasemzimbeni?” Asho njalo ayambuka ngoBa uNomcebo wayesezidonsile izikhumba lezi zawubopha umzimba wakhe khona kuzothi noma ezifihlile isimo somzimba wakhe sibonakale ukuthi, qha, laphaya kucashe intombi. Kwathi noma beyibuka esifubeni kwaBonakala ukuthi nansi intombi izenza imbulu. Ahleka amakhehla athi:

“Susa izikhumba lezi sikuBona ubuso. Izingalo zakho nezitho zakho zithi umuhle. Kodwa yini? Sikhombise ubuso bakho mntanami.”

Wathi uNomcebo kugcwele iningi:

“Qha, boBaBa. Ofuna ukungishada akathathe mina luqobo lwami, hhayi, ukuBa athande ubuso bami.”

“Kodwa uyenzelani into yobulima lena?” kusho elinye ikhehla.

“Ngenza ukuzithokozisa”, kuphendula uNomcebo.

“Mhlawumbe uyisilima, unguNdleBembi”, kusho elinye lamakhehla khona uNomcebo ezothukuthela besezivula.

“Qha, boBaBa, kangisona isilima, ngiyaphila.”

Alinga amakhehla ukumcuphuluza ngezinkulumo khona ezocasuka abesezivula, kodwa uNomcebo akathandanga nempela ukuBa lawamakhehla amBona.

Asuke athi:

“Siyahluleka ukumvula noma sesenzani.”

Ayesebuyela eceleni ukuBa akhulume odwa ukuBa amthathe noma qha, uNomcebo na. OMaBili amakhehla ayemangaliswa indlela akhuluma ngayo uNomcebo emBona ukuthi kukhona ukuhlakanipha okukhulu akufihlileyo, futhi nalokhukuzibeka kwakhe phansi kumenza athandeke. Kwathi ngaphambi kokuBa ahambe amakhehla lawa ayobika enkosini yakuBo, nokuBa amantombazana alandele amtshela uNkominophondo ukuthi afuna ukuBona abafowaBo bamantombazana. Babizwa basondela. Lathi elinye ikhehla likhuluma kumfowaBo kaBembesile.

“Wena uzohamba uyokwakha isibaya esikhulu, usiphice ngamahlala aqinileyo ngoBa inkosi sizofika siyitshele ukuBa ikuthumele umhlambi wezinkomo ngodawenu.”

Ukuzwa lwamazwi uMaSonkomose unina kaBembesile kwathi makafe ukujabula nayo intokazi yasuluza yaqhikinyeka ithokoza ngenxa yalawamazwi. Lithe lelikhehla liphendukela kumfowaBo kaNomcebo uZazini alishongo lutho. Indaba yaphela khona lapho; kodwa ayesebuye ekhumbula ukuthi kuhle avume-nje ukumthatha uNomcebo kodwa angazibophi ngalutho lokuBa izinkomo ziyoba ngaka kuyena ngoBa funa kanti baziBophela ogodweni. Lathike ikhehla:

“Kudadewenu”, Bekhuluma noZazini, “siyokunika izinkomo ezingamashumi amaBili.”

Lokhu kwamanelisa uZazini kunokuBa udadewaBo asale phansi okwamafinyila.

Izinduna lezi zaseziphindela enkosini yazo zifike ziyibika lento yezintombi ezimbili. Kodwa kwathi lapho bezwa ngendaba kaNomcebo inkosi yathi:

“Akukho ntombazana enobuBo obuhle nomzimba obukekayo engase izifihle ingabonwa. Kukhona okunye okukhona. Kodwa khumbulani lokhu”, kusho inkosi isithukuthele ngempela.

“Uma lentombazana eniyilethela umntanami iyisilima, iyimbi, ingumhlola ngempela, Wo kinina!” Yasho iBakhomba ngomkhonto, amakhehla aqhaq hazela ngoBa nawo abuBona ubulima bawo ukuBa asuke athathe into-mbi engayazi nabuso bayo.

Kuthe lapho amakhehla esehambile lapha kwaNxumalo indaba yasale yaBankulu impela. UNomcebo noma wayekade anelisiwe ukuBa azifihle kodwa manje kwathi lapho sekuBuya uZazini ebandla nezwi lokuBa uBembesile kuthiwe akwakiwe isibaya esikhulu ngaye, kwathiwa ngoNomcebo kuyokhishwa amashumi amaBili kuphela, imiqondo yaguquka. Inyani uNomcebo lapha kwaNkominophondo uzalwa yintandokazi. Pho kungenzeka kanjani ukuBa aBe ngaphansi komntwana womfazi wengqadi? Nangaphande kwalokho uNomcebo akadlulwa nguBembesile ngobuhle. Wacasuka uZazini wathi:

“Nomcebo, yizindaba zakho zonke lezi.”

Wathi uNomcebo:

“Yizindaba zami kanjani? Yimina yini engithe uBe-



mbesile nonina maBangene lapha endlini bangibulale, hhayi mina ngedwa, kodwa yonke indlu yakwethu?"

"Kanjani?" Kubuza uZazini ngoBa wayengazi.

"Kawazi?" Kubuza uNomcebo. "Buza kumame lapha."

Wathula uMaDubiyana, kodwa uZazini waphendula amehlo kuyena wambuka, wayeseqala ukukhuluma ngomoya ophansi wathi,

"Khona izolo lokhu kuthe ngisibukula itshe lokugaya ngafica phansi kwalo isikhumba somonya sigcwele amakhubalo, sanihwa ngegazi."

"Nithini?" Kusho uZazini.

"Sisho njalo", kusho uNomcebo.

"Pho nenzenjani?"

"Sisuke lapho sabiza lesiyasanusi salaphaya seza neno sazokwenza izaba kuba yikhani sihlelela phansi."

"Nike nayibika lendaBa komunye wesilisa? Sengishoke umuntu onjengoMaphulana?"

"Wou! Yinike yona uMaphulana ongase abikelwe izindaba ezinje? Konje ususizakele ukuthi umngane wakho lo uyinto?" Kusho uNomcebo ngendlela yokunengwa.

"Indlazi inonela phakathi", kusho uZazini. "Uma ungazi uMaphulana, kawazi nolunci, uyothuka ngelinye ilanga uzithela ezingcijini. Ngisaya kuye."

Nempela waphuma uZazini waya kuMaphulana lapho wayelala khona.

Kuthe sebesele bodwa unina nendodakazi wathi uMaDubiyana: "Njengoba ngomthetho wemvelo awunamandla okwenzajani, uzombekaphi lomuntu lokhu sengathi kukhona okukhona phakathi kwakho nayo?"

"Usho muphi umuntu mame?" Washo uNomcebo esisusa isikhumba sakhe ebusweni njengoba endlini kuba wayengasifaki. Kwasekuqhamuka ubuso bakhe, kwathi unina makazibulale ukubona ubuso obunje buzotsholwa yinkosi ngezinkomo ezingamashumi amabili kuphela. Wayesethi uNomcebo:

"Usho lona owadlula lapha? Kangazi mame ngoBa yena ngiyamazi ngangimthanda; kodwa pho singenzenjani? Ukubuya kwakhe kangikwazi noma uyobuya

yini ngoBa nakuBo kukude ngempela; kodwa nginethe-mba ukuthi uyofika ngelinye ilanga."

"Akusizi ukufika kwakhe indaba isidlule ngoBa angenzani? Ngabe kungcono ukuBa akazubekana nendodana yenkosi, ukuBa ubekene nomuntukazana", kusho unina kaNomcebo. "Nokushadela ebukhosini lokhu kulusizi ngoBa umuntu akahlali ngokuthula, kuyabangwa, kuyaliwa, kuyanephulwana. Ukushadela ebukhosini lokhu nayo yonke inhlalo yakhona — — — ngukufa."

"Ehhe, ngiyezwa, mame, futhi leyonto ngiyayazi. Enye yezinto eyenza okokuBa ngingathandi nokuthanda ukuya komkhulu. Ngenye indlela lezizikhumba zami zingase zingisindise; kodwa uma zingangisindisi, ngiyosinda mina ngokwami ngelinye ilanga ngimbone uMalambule noma edlula lapha, ngeqe naye, ngiqonde ezweni lakuBo noma ngiye ezweni laseBabatini."

Kwathi besakhuluma kanjalo kukuhle, kwezwakala ukungqongqoza emnyango, wangena uZazini ehamba noMaphulana. Wafika wahlala ethunzini uMaphulana wathi,

"Sanibona mame, kwenzenjani njengoba uZazini engitshela-nje?"

Hhayi kwathula kwangaphendula muntu, wayesethi uZazini:

"Kunjengoba kade ngikutshela, Maphulana. Nangaphezu kwalokho, (nawe futhi mhlawumbe uyazi) udadewethu lona useyisihlekiso lapha emzini kaBaBa. Wake wayizwa into yokuBa udadewethu angalotsholwa ngezinkomo ezilishumi ziphindwe kabili, ethathwa yinkosi, kungasho nokusho ukuthi uthathwa ngumuntukazana, kuthi uBembesile yena alotsholwe ngesibaya sonke? Kukhona umnyama kulendaBa."

"Lesosikhwama esaphuma phansi kwetshe, wena Nomcebo wasithinta noma sathintwa ngumame wakho kuphela?" Kubuza into kaMaphulana.

"Qha, mina kangisithintanga ngezami izandla kodwa umame yena wasithinta nxashana evula itshe."

Kwaba sengathi uMaphulana leyonto iyamjabulisa. Wayesethi:



“Uma wena ungasithintanga kusalungile. Kodwa ngaphambi kokuḅa senze okunye makesibeke izindaḅa.”

Washo eqaqulula emhlane umgodlana ojwayele njalo ukuphathwa yilabaḅantu esiye sithi ḅayizilima. Wawuqqa phakathi kwaphuma amathambo amathathu aneziyingi ezimnyama kwelinye icala, ngakwelinye emhlophe njengoba ayelucecevana. Waqala wawashaya esandleni sakhe, wawashaya futhi, wayesewaphonsa phansi, ewafunda, ewafunda, wayesethi kunina kaNomceḅo, nawe waphonse phansi. Kodwa ngaphambi kokuḅa uwaphonse qala uwakhwife ngamathe akho, ulume nansi indalucwatha, ubusukhuluma wedwa enhliziyweni yakho ubuze uthi:

“Nina makhosi aphezulu nithini? Zithini izindaḅa zami, ezingukuthi, ezithi, zithi, zithi.”

Nempela owesifazana wenza njengoba etshelwa wayesewaphonsa phansi amathambo omathathu. Kuthe amabili akhombisa okumnyama elilodwa laphendula okumhlophe. Wawabuka uMaphulana wayesewafunda wathi:

“Yeḅoke mame. Lapha amathambo akhuluma izindaḅa zawo athi wena wazalwa unenhlanhla kodwa ngokungena kwakho kulomuzi inhlanhla yakho yaya ngokuya incipha. Kodwa namhla kayisekho. Ukuthinta kwakho lesiyasikhwama akubanga yingozi engako njengoba wena ucaḅanga. Kodwa umuntu obeyingozi kuwena yilona enimḅizileyo wazonelapha ukuḅa akhwebule izikhuni. Lesosikhwama nimdedele wahamba naso — asho njalo amathambo.”

Ukhuluma njalo umfo kaMaphulana ubeke phansi emathanjeni akhe kuthi noma eqondisa kulowo aqondisa kuye, kuphela amkhombe ngomunwe aḅe yena efunda imihlola yamathambo akhe. Lapho seḅethe khexe imilomo.

“ḅesivelaphi lesosikhwama? Sitssheleni mathambo.” Kusho into kaMaphulana. “Kuthiwa sivela kumfazi omnyamana okhona lapha. Esithathaphi? Usithatha kuyo inyanga yenu engena iphuma lapha endlini. Ngikhuluma-nje inyanga leyo ilapha kwamfazi lowo iyelapha, ilumba amalumbo okuḅulala nina. Asho njalo amathambo, nkosikazi. Engikukhulumayo akuveli kimina

kuvela kwaḅaphezulu aḅanginika lokhukuhlakanipha enginakho.”

Washo njalo wawaqoqa amathambo lawa amathathu wawabeka eceleni wavusa amehlo wababuka uNomceḅo nonina. ḅona ḅebelokhu ḅekhexe imilomo ḅengazi aḅangase ḅakusho ngoba ḅona uMaphulana ḅekuyisilimana saḅo sokuthunywa noma-phi lapho ḅefuna ukumthuma khona.

Nesikhwanyana lesi asithwalayo aḅazange ḅasicaba-engele lutho. Uzazini yena njengoba wayesemazi uMaphulana wasimze waguqula amehlo wabeka kunina nakudadewabo wabuye wabeka kuMaphulana. UMaphulana yena ayikho into eyayimmangalisa njengoba wayazi ukuthi uyisilima somuzi, kuyena akubekwe lutho ngaphandle kobuphoxo. Noma ezimbela imithi ḅebaye ḅathi, wo, uma nithatha umuthi kaMaphulana uyothi uninika lo, kanti uthathe lowaya. Wazini njenempela uMaphulana? Wayiḅona lento uMaphulana wayesethi kuNomceḅo thatha nawe ngifone. Yenza njengoba umame enzile uziḅuzele ezakho izindaḅa. Wawathatha uNomceḅo amathambo wawanyakazisa, wawathela phansi. Asuke ema enye into. Onke aḅamnyama; wathula uMaphulana, wawafunda yedwa isikhashana wayesethi:

“Phinda futhi mntanami, uwathathe uwathele.”

Wawathatha futhi uNomceḅo wawabeka ezandleni zakhe, wawaphephetha ngomoya, wawathela phansi. Awa olunye uhloḅo manje. Amabili aphenduka aḅamhlophe kwathi leli elinye lawa lucezu. Wehluleka ukuziḅamba uMaphulana, wasuke wahleka wathi:

“Awuzwake! Nakhoke eḅengikufuna.” Wayesethula ethi du, sengathi akazange akhulume. Wawabuka amathambo onke waphendukela kuNomceḅo wathi:

“Ugangile ntombazana kaNkominophondo.”

ḅamangala ukuzwa uMaphulana eḅiza umnumzane ngegama, ḅawavulisisa amehlo ḅembuka ukuthi akahlanyi yini njengazo zonke iziphoxo okuthi nxa umuntu eziphatha kahle ziphenduke manje sengathi yizona ezinkulu kunaḅanini somuzi. Wayesengathi umqondo wabo uyawuḅona uMaphulana wayesethi:

“Ngiqinisile uma ngithi ugangile ntombazana kaNkominophondo. Kodwa angizukutshela ukuthi ngani.



Kuhle uZazini ahambe nami ngifuna nobathathu nginithi fahlafahla izinhlanga kuwo onke amalungu; lomthakathi oniphethe kengizwe ukuthi iyothi yethwasa leyonyanga bekuthiwani. Yeka imihlola ngimfunge uNgenzeni kwabakababa, eseBanganomo kwelakwaMandlakazi.”

Nempela bathi ukuphuma noZazini.

Wasala uMaDubiyana nendodakazi. Wathi,

“Nansi imihlola mntanami, uyacabanga ukuthi kanti lesisanusi ngame yiso lesi esifulala umuzi wami. Ukuthi ngame yiso lesi esiletha imihlola lapha ekhaya?”

Wathi uNomcebo:

“Angimangali yilokho mame. Umuntu wezizwe angangena kanjani lapha ekhaya — — esithathephi sona isibindi sokuAngena lapha ekhaya? Munye umuntu ongena lapha ekhaya, kuphela yiso lesisanusi sakho.”

“Mamo”, kuabaza uMaDubiyana. “Akenimuzwe, we MaDubiyana nonke, kanti lesisanusi sifuywe yimi yini kanti. Ngizomxosha kanjani umuntu engathi ngigana lapha ekhaya wayehamba kulomuzi? Qha mntanami, mhlawumbe uMaphulane uyabeda. Yonke leminyaka kade engasishayeli ngani ngezindaaba zakwami? Ubezifihleleni kuze kube namuhla, avele ngoaba sesifulewe?” Uthe ethi useyaphendula uNomcebo, zezwakala izigi phandle, wavula uZazini wathi:

“Uqinisile uMaphulana. Kuthe yena ehamba eyothatha imithi yakhe mina ngacasha ngihambe ngikhokhoba ngaye ngayofika ngakwabo kaBembesile. Ngiboneni? U bani lo ohlezi endlini noMaSonkomose uma kungesanusu lesi esizenza umhlobo walapha ekhaya? Angizwanga, ukuthi bathini, kwale noma sengithi ngisondele ezintingweni zendlu ngilinga ukulalela. Sebekhuluma ngamazwi amancane ngangoba ngithe akusizi lutho, ngabuya ngabuya nakhu sifika lapha noMaphulana.”

Washo njalo wayengena uMaphulana.

Wafika nodengezi, walubeka eziko. Wabagumulisa, waqala ngoZazini wamhlaba izinhlanga, weza kunina wamhlaba izinhlanga kuwo wonke amalungu; weza kuNomcebo naye wenza kanjalo. Kwathi lapho eseqedile wathi,

“Kangifuni ukuaba wena uzisuse lezizikhumba zakho. Ungesabi zisebenzise-nje. Akukho lutho oluyokwehla-

kalela ngisho nasemzini lapho niyoya khona. Nanku umuthi njalo ufake entanyeni kuthi noma uyaphi uhambe nawo; kuthi lapho uzohlangana noBembesile uwuphathe esandleni, umbize ngegama, ubone ukuthi kuyogcinaphi.” Washo njalo eyinika intombazana iqhuzwana elalizolenga kanye nobuhlalu lingabonakali kodwa ukuthi lingumuthi. Wayesethatha umuthi omunye ephuma nawo eyowumbela phandle kwesicaba sendlu yakwabo Nomcebo, wabuya omunye wawubophezela ezintingweni ezithize endlini. Wayesebanika umuthi omunye ogxotshiweyo esethi bayophalaza ngawo bageze ngawo kodwa amanzi lawo angcolileyo bangawachithi ngaphandle kothango lwendlu, bawachithe ngaphakathi. Wagcina ngokuthi:

“Lowo ngumuthi wamadlozi.”

Lapha eziko udengezi lwase lubomvu. Waphendukela kulo wathela umqotho othile womuthi oxutshwe namafutha esilwane, wathi maBasondele bonke bahogele. Nempela bakwenza lokho. Wayesethi,

“Qha, ningabuye nesabe; kusuka namhlanje nizolala ubuthongo. Lemithi enginiphatha ngayo yizinsizi zamakhosi, kakudlalwa ngazo. Selokhu ngafika kulomhlaba ngiyaqala ukuvula izikhwama zami. Nakho ngikwenza lokho ngenxa yabantabakho MaDubiyana, ngokwakho wena ngame — — — qha. Okunye okufanele ngikuyale ngakho ukuaba, uma lesisanusi senu sifika lapha sehla-kalelwa yinto, wena omunye wabantabakho bayokwenzana-nje. Uthathe uswazi uluphimisele ngamathe usishaye kakhulu ekhanda uthi — — — mayivukeinja! — — — siyovuka sithi gabavu. Besenisitshela ukuthi sikhipe into embi esiyiphetheyo. Uma ningasheshi ukusivusa siyokufa.”

Washo lokho uMaphulana wavalalisa wahamba ephelekezelwa nguZazini.

Laphaya eziko izimbiza zasezibile zaze zapheliswa ngumlilo wazo, kwalala ungwengwezi lomlotha ngaphezu kwamalahle. Wasukuma uMaDubiyana waqonda ezimbizeni wapheka ethi,

“Angive sengilambile mntanami sekwala noma nginyakazise imilenze yodwa le.”



Wathula uNomcebo. Waphaka unina ummbila namathanga, wasondela nakho ekuphethe ngesithebe wakupholisa ukudla ekwenekile.

Wayesethi uNomcebo:

“Mame!”

Wathi unina:

“Mntanami.”

Wabuye wathula uNomcebo. Sengathi kukhona akucabangayo, amehlo akhe agxila esithebeni sokudla owayezokudla. Wayesethi:

“Mame, uMaphulana uthi konke lokhu asenzela khona ingenxa yami noZazini. Kusho ukuthini lokho?”

UMaDubiyana wayengathandi ukuBa lento umntwana ayibuze. Futhi, wayecabanga ukuthi leyonhlamvu eku-khulumeni kukaMaphulana uNomcebo akayibambanga. Kodwa njengoba uNomcebo eyibambile, sekufanele manje ayichaze, nanjengoba uNomcebo akasemntwana wokufihlelwa izinto azibuzayo.

“Uqinisile uMaphulana mntanami”, kusho uMaDubiyana. “Kufanele athi ukuBa kuya ngokwami bekufanele angasisizi. Ngesikhathi ngiyintombi ngingakagcagceli lapha kuyihlo uMaphulana wake wangibona wangeshela. Kodwa mina ngibona isiphoxwana sidlala ngami nezinkomo singenazo, leyondaba kangiyishayanga mkhuba. Kusukela ngesikhathi sokushada kwami uMaphulana waba yisikhonzi salapha ekhaya. Angikaze ngizwe kuthiwa uyeshela, nomaphi. Ngikhumbula mhla ngigcagcayo. Kwathi lapho eqeda ukuthethelela lona owayekhulumela uyihlo, kwasuka yena uMaphulana lona wagiya. Kwagcina ngalelolanga ukuBa ngimbone enguyena, aze akhulume namhlanje — — kanti akakhohliwe.”

Wathi uNomcebo:

“Kanti kulungile. Besengishaywe uvalo ngithi magqubu-mani lawa uMaphulana akhuluma ngawo. Emva kokuBa ngithole lemithi ngizwa umzimba wami uthi gidi, ngithola nesibindi. Kazi umuntu uzolala yini.”

Washo njalo wasondela ngasesithebeni sokudla wasidonsa, badla nonina. Sebeqedile, uNomcebo watha-

tha amacansi wendlala, nonina wabuyisela emnyango wavala waqinisa.

Kwadlula izinsuku kuthe nya, lwafika usuku olwalunqunyiwe ukuBa kuyofika abantu balande udwendwe iwezintombi lapha kwaNxumalo. Ngempela kwathi ntambama aqhamuka wona lawomakhehla aseNgome, umuntu wabona-nje ukuthi namuhla kunamuhla. Kwashona ilanga umusi usuthe mbo sekugingqike izinkabi nezimbuzi, kuhlatshiswa izintombi nezinsizwa kuzokusa zihamba. Wabona phandle kusa ngakusasa kwenekiwe zonke izinto zokuhloba lezi zezinsizwa nezezintombi, ezinye zithuntuthwa uthuli. Isimame sona sasibopha imithwalo yamadodakazi.

Kwathi ntambama ngomuso kwabuthanwa kwaphuma imiqhumo lapha kwaNkominophondo, isifazane sesiki-kiza, kuphuma izintombi. UNomcebo wayekhala, kodwa intokazi yakwabo uBembesile wayename esho ehlekisa zonke izintombi ezazimphekezela.

Bahamba ubusuku bonke bewela imimfula bedabula emahlathini kwaze kwaba phakathi kobusuku izinsizwa zamemeza kwabaphambili zathi:

“Khumu madoda, sesimadolo-nzima.”

Nempela kwahlaliwa phansi kwalungiswa kwalalwa. Kulalwa-nje amaqembu mabili, kuyabonakala ukuthi laba bakwaNomcebo nalabo bakwaBembesile kayizwani kahle.

Kwasa bahamba laze layoshona amahlathi aseNgome bewakhomba ezintuthwini. Kuthe lapho kuthi hwelele, bahlangana nomshungu wezinsizwa zakwaZulu, zihlome ziphelele zidle nezidlukulu, zaphonsa amahawu azo anemiBala kwathi lapha ehloambe zagaxa izikhumba zengwe zasezifaka amashoba. Zithe ukuBa zibaBone zema zonke kungathi zingamashumi amathathu, zabukana nezintombi, zazikhuza zacela utshwala. Zema izintombi zaziphuzisa izinsizwa zabonga zathi:

“Ningabaphi bantanethu niBahle kangaka?”

Zangalinda impendulo zashaya amakhwelo zashaya utshani, zehla nesigodi zangena indlela yona lena oZazini ababeze ngayo. Bazibona zikhwela amagquma zihlabelela ihubo lezwe lazo zithi:



*"Inkosi yahlul'izizwe,  
Wangibon'uBambatha,  
Sibashise, ke sizwe,  
Hhe yaye!"*

Zasho izinsizwa zayezayoshona, sekuzwakala kuphela "uHhe yaye!" Kwathi ukuba zidlule nehufo lazo zigu-buzelwe ngumnyama wathi uZazini kowafo:

"Wo madoda, niyalizwa igama lezinsizwa zakwa-Zulu? Sekuyezwakala ukuthi sesifike kwelomdaba. Kusephuzela izinwele noma uzwa izinsizwa zibingelela izintombi ziphungula utshwala bethu emagobongweni, kusuke kube mnandi khona lokho kungafiki mona."

Wathi omunye,

"Nami ngizithandle lezinsizwa. Igosa lazo kube sengathi ngake ngalibona, kodwa ngeke ngisho ukuthi ngalibonaphi."

Omunye futhi athi:

"Hhayike lapho uyaphosisa. Uthi kungathi kulomhlabha lapha singeze ngafika nakhona uthi ungazi umuntu noma yena angazi wena?"

Basebehleka bonke indaba isiphela khona lapho. Umnyama wasondela, baqala ukubasa umlilo amaqoqo ngamaqoqo. Eqoqweni lezintombi zikaNomcebo kwakukhona amagagu angesiwo amagagu okukhuluma kodwa amagagu okuhaya ingoma. Kwathi umlilo usumnandi izinsizwa zixoxa ezazo izindaba zezwa ihufo sezilokhele izintokazi, kodwa lingakavuthwa kahle kufumaniseka ukuthi ziyalixhuma izigaba ngezigaba zalo njengoba zilizwile. Kwaya ngokuya, lavuthwa, izinsizwa zalilalela zezwa lithi:

*"Inkosi yahlul'izizwe."*

kuthi ingani sebeyibambile leyonhlansi babuye bayiyeke baqale okunye, baphikisane, omunye athi,

"Eya, sukani lapha, niyabimba nina lapho." Besekulekwa, uzwe sebeyixhuma inhlansi yesibili ize iyume bathi,

*"Wangibon'uBambatha."*

babuye baxabane bodwa. Laphaya balihaya njalo ihufo abanye bosa inyama bosela abafowafo, abanye bosa ummbila bawuletha kubafowafo, kuyakhulunywa kuya-

hlekwa khona lapho, bayayixhuma enye inhlamvu ye-hufo sebefike lapho kuthi

*"Sibashise ke sizwe."*

Sebeyehluleka ukuxhuma inhlamvu yokugcina okuyiyona eshiwo ngamaqhawe nezinsizwa. Baliqala phansi manje lelihufo balihaya, laze lavutha lemukelwa nayizinsizwa zihulula ummbila, zalishaya sezifaka nokwazo lokhu phela abaQulusi bangamagagu nonina wafo uMnkaBayi owaBakhayo waenza isizwe naye wayeligagu.

Izinsizwa zayixhuma inhlansi yokugcina wezwa se-zithi,

*"Hhe yaye!"*

Kwathi ingani ibutho likaBembesile belinganake lutho lidliwa ukuzithwala ngoBa Nakhu phela lona liphekezela inkosazana ezogcwalisa isibaya, nalo laze lathatheka lavuma lelihufo abalizwe lihutshwa yizinsizwa. Basondelana baze botha mlilweni-munye bayihaya lengoma, abanye ebuthweni likaNomcebo baqala ukusina bengana lutho ngebutho likaBembesile okuyilona elalizisondeze eduze nafo. Kwezwakala ezigodini amazwi abesilisa nesifazane bebumbene behaya kanyekanye bethi:

*"Inkosi yahlul'izizwe,  
Wangibon'uBambatha,  
Sibashise, ke sizwe,  
Hhe yaye!"*

Walithanda lelihufo uNomcebo naye ekhwahlazela ngezikhumba zemfene wangena phakathi kwentsha eyayimphekezela wasina, enamile njengabo bonke.

Kuthe lapho sekuyolalwa uNomcebo wasondela kumngane wakhe uNomanzi okunguyena owayelokhu emeshelela umfowafo kodwa uNomcebo indaba enje ngaleyo engayingeni. Kuthe lapho sebehlezi ndawonye wathi uNomcebo:

"Nomanzi, ngiyahamba ngiyakogcagcela kulenkosi. Kodwa noma kuyinkosi, kangiyithandi."

"Ungasho kanjani ukuthi indodana yenkosi kawuyithandi?" Kusho uNomanzi. "Konje kunjalo lapha emhlabeni abazalelwe inhlamvu yibona abangayiboni futhi kabayithandi lapho isondela kubona."



“Usho ukuthini uma ukhuluma ngenhlanhla lokhu inhlanhla itholakala yonke indawo?” KuBuza uNomcebo. “Thina esizalwa emizini lapho uzwa abantu bethi — nkosazana, nkosazana, kuyasinenga ngisho nalokho uma kungakuletheli intokozo emphefumulweni.”

“Usho ngani?” KuBuza uNomanzi.

“Yinike yona lena ukuBa sithi sizalwa ndodanye nodadewethu uBembesile kodwa singaphathani kahle?”

“YeBo kambe, lento yenu isukaphi?” KuBuza uNomanzi. “Nawe ngenxa yokumesaba usuzigubuzele ngezikhumba zezilonyana ezinomnyama njengalezi zemfene — kodwa uzenzelani isilima?”

“Angisona isilima, Nomanzi, kodwa engikwenzayo ngiyakwazi. UBembesile lo, myeke azenzele akuthandayo kusengaye nanini lokhukusina kwakhe kuyoba nephethelo kume kuBizwe abanye basine enkundleni yakhe. Konke lokhu ukwenza ngoBa ethembe isanusi lesiya obulokhu nawe usibona sivakasha kwethu. Yiso lesi esingithela ngomnyama sengize ngacishe ukufa-nje.”

“Uthini Nomcebo na?”

“Ngiqinisile.”

Bakhuluma uNomcebo emchazela yonke into lesisanusi esimenza yona wayesethi uNomcebo kuNomanzi:

“Ehhe, ngiyaya khona kwankosi lapha kodwa umqondo wami kawungitsheli ngizohlala khona ngigcagce ngibe umkankosi. Sengathi ikhona into ezokwehlakala noma ngingagcagca kodwa kangiyukucina khona.”

“Usho ukuthini nxa usho njalo Nomcebo?”

“Impela ngiqinisile. Ngibe ngiyalale ngibone umuntu othile emuka nami. Lomuntu kangimazi uzifihlile”, kusho uNomcebo.

“Ukhona yini umuntu ngaphandle komfowethu owake wakumisa kaBana?”

“Qha akakho umuntu owake wangimisa kaBi. Kodwa ngiyasola sengathi ukhona, uyakhumbula lowayamuntu owake wadlula kwethu eqhamuka ekusebenzeni, wafike wagula egulela kwethu?”

Wathi uNomanzi ephendula uNomcebo:

“Ngimkhumbula noma ngingemkhombe ebusweni.”

“Uyenamuntu owake wangikhulumisa inhliziyi yami yageBa kodwa njengoba engumuntu wezizwe ngiyazi

kwaphela, kwaphela kuyena kodwa mina kangikakho-hlwa nguyena. Wayethe uyobuya ngelinye ilanga azongilanda kodwa nakhu kuze kube namuhla. Namhla ngihamba ngiyoshadela lapho ngangingaqonde ukushadela khona.” Kusho uNomcebo.

“Akusasizi ngoBa noma ethanda akasenakwenza lutho endodaneni yenkosi”, kukhuluma uNomanzi elinga ukudambisa inhliziyi kaNomcebo. Wayesethi uNomcebo,

“Ulilalelisisile ihubo ebelihutshwa yilezizinsizwa ezidlule lapha zakwaZulu?”

“YeBo ngililalelisisile. Ingani yimina engithe masilihaye size sisine ngalo konkosi lapho sekuphuma wena?”

“Kanti uwena Nomanzi? Hawu lihle licoBe inhliziyi lingene npengoju lungenamphimbo. Sengathi umuntu angalokhu elizwa.

“Uqinisile Nomcebo ngiyavuma.”

“Kodwa mhlawumbe kawulizwanga kahle njengami. Sengathi ikhona into ephakathi kwami nalelohuBo Nomanzi. Sengathi ikhona into engibophezela kulo ngilithande inhliziyi yami igxile kulo. Akwenziwa ngoBa phakathi kwalezizinsizwa ezidlule lapha kukhona ethe mayifane noMalambule.”

“Ubani uMalambule? Limnandi lelogama sengathi eleqhawe. YeBo, awuzwe noma umuntu elibiza — ‘Malambule!’ Hawu limnandi Nomcebo. Kodwa ubani yena lo?”

“UMalambule?” sekuBuza uNomcebo ezibuzisa. “UMalambule yiyona lensizwa eyadlula kithi, yagula yayisiphila isidlulela phambili kwelakuBo. Yathi kuBo kungasoThukela kodwa hhayi kude kakhulu naseNkandla. Impela enye yezinsizwa kulezi ezidlule kithina lapha inhliziyi yami ingitshela ukuthi inguMalambule. Awubeke nokuhloBa kwazo. Kwelakithi izinsizwa kazivunuli kanjena. Nokwesabeka kwazo zithi Zulu.”

“Pho ngasekuBe bayaphi?” KuBuza uNomanzi.

“Uma kuyibona angingabazi bathi balande mina. Qha kodwa lokhu akunakwenzeka ugubeda-nje. Masilale sekuhlwile. Awubeke sekuyithina sodwa esingakalali.”

Kwathi lapho bebeka amacala onke, bafumanisa bonke abahamba nabo sebelele abanye sebehonqa. Phakathi komnyama kwakuBonakala umlilo ulokoza



kude ezintabeni kuyiwona wodwa umlilo owawukhombisa ukuthi laphaya nalaphaya kukhona umuzi. Umoya wolwandle ophephetha njalo ezweni lakwaZulu, wawushaya sengathi yisivunguvungu, uletha emakhaleni afo iphunga lamakhaba asevuthiwe ezifeni nasemasimini awomame; kwenye inkathi kwakunuka nephunga leminduze nelikamakhonjana okhula emaxhaphozini. Inkunzi endala yedwi yayiklaklabuka enzansi nommfula sengathi iyasola omkayo aBayiphathelanga ukudla. Lomoya wolwandle ubumnandi bawo nxa wake wawuzwa kuBa sengathi amathongo aphephetha umhlaba axosha okubi ngoBa noma izulu selihlomele ukuduma, umbani seliwuphonsa ehla nasenzansi nxa kuqhamuka lomoya wolwandle konke kuyahlakazeka kushabalale. Pho, singamangala kanjani uma kwathi lowomoya ushaya bonke balala bafikelwa ubuthongo obumangalisayo, bethuka ngoBa sekusile, sekukhanya ikhwezi enzansi.

Bavuka bahamba. Bahamba, bahamba, bahamba, kwathi lapho ilanga selishisa amakhehla awukhomba umuzi wenkosi kudanyana, ayesethi:

“Ninake aninakungena ekhaya. Nizohlala khona lapha nize nibizwe kusihlwa seniyonikezwa izindlu enizongenisa kuzona.

Asho njalo amakhehla ehamba.

Ekufikeni kwawo kwankosi nafo base kade belubonile udwendwe sebethukile sekuyaluzwa lapha ekhaya sekukhethwe nezinsizwa ezizohamba zilande udwendwe zilungenise ezindlini zalo. Izinkomo ezazizoshaywa zihlatshiswe abasemzini nazo zasezikhethiwe. Kodwa inye into eyayiphethe kabi wonke umuntu sengathi kuzokwehlakala okubi uma lentombi egqoke izikhumba ifunyaniswa inesici ngoBa abanumzane laba baBezobulawa.

Kuthe ukuBa umthimba ungene egcekeni lapho uzongenisa khona kwaya inkosi uqobo lwayo namakhosikazi, onina bomfana bezobuka lezizintombi ezimbili ezazizogana lapha ekhaya. Bafika bamukha uBembesile, bamthanda bonke bethi:

“Weu, cha, kukhethiweke lapha, intombi ngempela.”

Baguquka beza kuNomcebo bambona efihlwe yizikhumba lezi zemfene, inkosi yeza kuye yathi:

“Mntanami ngicela ukukuBona.”

“Qha, wena waPhakathi”, kusho uNomcebo ngalo izwi lakhe lokuzithoba, “kangibukhombisi muntu ubuso bami. Ngiyokuzembula kusasa ekuseni sekuzogcagwa.”

Yehluleka inkosi ukuBa ingenzenjani, yaphindela emuva idumele. Yaxoxwa indaba kamakothi lena, iningi libabaza ubuhle bukaBembesile abanye bethi umhlola lona ukuBa intombi inqabe ukwambula ubuso bayo.

Kuthe ekuseni ngakusasa mhla kuzogcagwa zaphu-ma zonke izintombi zaya emmfuleni zahlukana futhi ngezigaBa zazo, esikaBembesile sayogeza kwelaso izibuko, nesikaNomcebo naso saya kwelinye izibuko. UNomcebo waya phansi kwedwala elikhulu lapho kwakumile izindoni zigcwele umuthi omkhulu. Izintombi zaphangelana ziyodla izindoni. NoNomcebo naye walandela inhliziyo yakhe yenamile kodwa eshaywa uvalo lokuBa namuhla ushiya unina noyise. Kuthe ukuBa bazidle izindoni basebhelela emanzini bebukuda. UNomcebo wazitshinga phansi izikhumba, watshela omunye wamantombazane akhe wathi makazibophele itshe elisindayo azicwilise emanzini zishone phansi. Basebengena empahleni bethi shi. Ubuhlalu babudlana imilala ezintombini zaBaQulusi, zibugqoke zibutebisile imizimba zikhombisa ngayo khona kuzothiwa:

“Uyayibona leyaya, wethu? Wo, yaze yanhle.”  
Omame ubabone bedlula eduze kwazo khona bezokhetha bekhethela amadodana afo ubezwe bethi:

“Lidla lilodwana bantaBami.”

Ngempela zakhuphuka izintombi emmfuleni amehlo onke lapha ekhaya ayebeke lentombi ekade izifihlile.

Kuthe esegqokile uNomcebo ontangayakhe bama bamBuka esephelele isinqindi somkhonto azosina ngaso, ebince izintambo zobuhlalu obumhlophe okhalo, wayesezibincisa isidwaba senkonkoni. Wathi lona owayezommissa:

“Hawu Nomcebo waze wamuhle! Kazi kuzothi wani njengoba uzomedlula uBembesile. Hawu waze wamuhle, niyangibonisa-nje bandla!”

Eza amanye amantombazana azombabaza uNomcebo, emlungisa yonke imvunulo yakhe ethokoza kuthi maka-



zifulale nxa ebona uNomcebo emuhle kangaka. Aye-semthatha amantombazana embeka phambili ukuBa awahole, aqala ukuhaya ihubo lawo elaliletha umunyu ngoBa amantombazana ayazi ukuthi avalelisa umngane wawo nokuthi namhla kuphelile ukuBa ayotshakadula nabo azenamise njengabo, nokuBa bazomlahla emzini abangazi nokuBa uzothokoza yini kuwona.

Kuthe emasangweni bahlangana nebutho likaBembesile naye ehamba elihola egqokile econsa ehambela phezulu ngoBa azi ukuthi unqobile, kwaBa nguyena owakhanga amehlo ezibukeli esangweni zasho zathi:

“Iyo lentombi efike yasincama izolo. Wo, umntwana wenkosi uthathile. Bonke bamshayela ihlombe bamjambulela wadlula.

Ameblo abantu abuye akhangwa yilelibutho elizayo eliholwa nguNomcebo lihambe lihay ihubo lalo linganake muntu. Kwathi lapho eseqhamuka obala uNomcebo kwahwaza yonke indawo, nabaBepethe amagobongo otshwala baWathi fuqa phansi banikela esangweni ukuBona isimanga sikamakothi ofaka izikhumba zemfene. Kodwa baBonani! Wezwa bonke bethi:

“Yanhle intombi yomuntu! Yilanga uqobo lwalo. Kodwa ukhona umuntu owake waBamuhle kanje emhlabeni!”

Basondela bonke, isimame sesingakikizi sesithi mhlola, sishanela amageceke ngeziphuku zaso, kwathi nalaBa ababekikizelela uBembesile baBuya manje bezwa lesisaho emva kwaBo, nabo umlomo bangawuvala bebona uNomcebo.

Kuthe lapho inkosi isibaBona omakothi bendodana yayo, yasondela eduze kuNomcebo ihamba nezinduna zayo namakhehla lawa okuyiwona akhetha uBembesile noNomcebo, yathi emakhehleni:

“Ukuze nikhombise ukuhlakanipha nobudoda benu, uNomcebo muhle ngaphezu kokuthini. Kuhlale niye endle nifike nishaye izinkomo zekhethelo namaduna ingabi bikho inkomo endala phakathi kwazo, niziyise kuNkominophondo zilobole lomntwana wakhe. Amashumi amabili lawa abalwayo kuqala anele ukuBa aloBole uBembesile. UNomcebo akufanele alotsholwe ngenani elake lalobola noma yiphi intombi yenkosi kulomhlabani.”

Kwenziwa njengokuyala kwenkosi izinkomo lezo zashaywa zaqhutshwa zihamba nezinsizwa engasajabuli uZazini, ngoBa sengathi isaga sabadala siqinisile nxa bethi:

“Isina muva liyabukwa.”

Kwathi lapho seziphuma izinsizwa zalithatha ihubo leli ezalizwa endleleni sezibongela uNomcebo naye esesina phakathi kwentsha yakubo esesinela okokugcina wezwa zithi:

*“Inkosi yahlul’izizwe,  
Wangibon’uBambatha,  
Sibashise, ke sizwe,  
Hhe yaye!”*

Amakhehla ayelalele abukana ukuthi leligama lisho ukuthini, lokhu uBambatha bayamazi. Kodwa lokho kwaBuye kwakhohleka ingoma isimnandi.

## ISAHLUKO VIII.

Evuka kwaMagwaza lapho wayelele khona uMalambule nabanumzane laba ababili wahamba ngesokusa wayewawela iMfolozi emhlophe wadaBula amahlathi nemifudlana wafika eMfolozi emnyama wayiwelela ngaseduze kwamanxiwa oMgungundlovu inxiwa elidala lomuzi kaDingana: lapho kwaBulawela khona amaQadasi; lapho oNdlela kaSompisi baBeyizinduna zikaZulu wonke uphelele; lapho isigodlo sezintokazi sasibuthwe phansi kukaBibi kaSompisi; lapho kuthiwa izinduku zakhona zaziBomvu. Hhayi loMgungundlovu wabelungu ongaseMkhambathini njengoba abanye bethu sebedideka — qha. Ngisho uMgungundlovu omdala kaZulu owawuphethwe amakhosi namaqhawe lapho amandla kaZulu awohlokela khona.

LoMgungundlovu waseNatali into yanamuhla eqanjwe njengesikhumbuziso somuzi omdala wakwaZulu. UMalambule wadlula lapha walala emzaneni othize. Kwasa ewela uMhlathuze esemadolo alula; wafika ekhaya eduze kwaseNkandla ngasoThukela.

Izwe lalilihle libukeka, konke kumnandi. Unina wathokoza kakhulu ukumbona noyise wamjambulela nge-



mpela. Kuthe esehlale izinsukwana wafiza umfowafo uChithumuzi kanye nabanye ngesikhathi sokuxoxa indaba usethi:

“Bafowethu ningibuze ukuthi kangithathi ngani nje-ngofo sengimdala futhi izinkomo ngingazo.”

Wathi uChithumuzi:

“Nempela mfowethu thina sesithathile. Mina ukufika lapha ngathatha, nomfowethu lona uQethuka naye se-wathatha.”

“Niqinisile, uma nisho njalo”, kusho uMalambule. “Kodwa isizathu sami sinye sokufo ngingathatheli izinto phezulu.”

“Ngasekufo yini?” Kufuza uQethuka.

“Indaba yami ilukhuni. Ngifuna okokuqala kesikhombise ukuthi singamaqhawe. Ubuqhawe yinto engasaziwa lapha kwelakithi.” Kusho uMalambule ebafoka bonke. Kwafumaniseka ukuthi abafowafo bayamthanda futhi bayamhlonipha ngofo naye wayebahlonipha. Wafuza uChithumuzi wathi:

“Ubuqhawe singabukhombisa kanjani mfowethu? Wadlala gokukhuluma phela wena izwe selafa?”

Wafuza uMalambule wathi:

“Konje ezinsukwini ezindala uma kuzwakala ukuthi kukhona umuntu ofuye izinkomo ezinhle esifundeni esithile okungesona esakini kwakuyekwenziweni?”

Wathi omunye wafafowafo:

“Zaziye zidliwe, uma benenkani bafike bazozilanda, uma bengamagwala kufo zidliwe njalo.”

“Uqinisile uBangani, ngiyamvumela”, kusho omunye.

Wayesethi uMalambule ebona ukuthi umqondo wakhe bayawulandela:

“Pho kungenziwa njani uma mina ngibone izinkomo ezinjalo emazweni akude. Zingedliwe?”

Waphendula omunye wafafowafo uMasimini wathi:

“Qha lapho mfowethu ngofo izwe kakusesilo elethu, seladliwa ngabelungu, ngafe siziholela amanzi ngomsele. Inye into namuhla ephangwa iphangeke ngofo inezinyawo zayo nekhandla layo nomqondo wokuzinqumela?”

Bathi abanye:

“Yini yona leyo?”

“Intombi”, kusho uMasimini.

“Ushaya emhloleli”, kusho uMalambule. Ngizofuza umbuzo. Njengofa niyizinsizwa zikabafa ozalwa yiqhawe nobafamkhulu babengamaqhawe ningangiphekezela siyesifike emzaneni othize silande intombi yami khona siyithumbe siyilethe lapha?”

Wathi uChithumuzi:

“Thina mfowethu kasicushwa. Wena mhlawumbe ukhuluma into oyicabangelayo iphelele khona lapho. Thina sikhuluma kwenzeka. Iphi lapho ikhona leyo-ntombi?”

“Musani ukuthathela phezulu ngofo funa kanti mhlawumbe kulukhuni”, kusho uMalambule.

“Ehhe, nempela kulukhuni ukufo singaya ngofo mhlawumbe kanti kukude. Futhi nizwile ukuthi ufofo uthe uzovakashela inkosi uSigananda ake ayozwa lezizindaba ezigcwele umhlofo.” Kusho uQethuka. “Ekuhambeni kwakhe uthe uzothatha wena mnewethu”, washo ekhomba uMalambule.

“Futhi angiboni ukuthi wena ungahamba kanjani njengofa ungakaphumuli-nje. Thina sihlala ekhaya njalo sinamandla, indaba kayinawe ngofo wena uma uhamba funa uyilethele umnyama. Kuhle kuphume thina silande intombi leyo noma iphi”, kusho uChithumuzi.

“Noma ningafo ngamaqhawe madoda kodwa intombi niyoyibona kanjani nomuzi wakwafufo niwufone kanjani?” Kufuza uMalambule ngofo yena wayengaboni ukuthi abafowafo bangahamba kanjani bodwana bayebafike kude kangaka eDumbe ngaphandle kwakhe. Kodwa wafufo wakhumbula ukuthi akuyena yedwa oyaziyo indlela yaseBabatini. Nabafowafo lafo nabo sebekubaya eBabatini nakwezinye izindawo. Noma mhlawumbe bengazange balale kufo kaNomcefo kodwa mhlawumbe bayawazi umuzi wakhona uma umuntu ebayalela bangawufona. Wayesethi:

“Sengikhumbule. Abanye benu bafike baye eBabatini. Nifike nilalephi uma nidlula eDumbe?”

“Silala emizini eminingi, leyo esihlwelwa kuyona sibe sesiyangena njalo. Kodwa mhlawumbe uma uyibala eminye yalemizi singayazi”, kusho uQethuka.



“Qha, kasizucandelisana ngemizi singathethi-macala. Mina ngiqondise emzini wakwaNxumalo, kaNkomino-phondo. Kufanele nimazi ngoba umnumzane odumileyo kulelozwe”, kukhuluma uMalambule.

“Pho singayazi kanjani intombi ezintombini eziningi na?” kubuza uMasimini.

“Likhona isu engashiya ngilakhile. Niyabona kulowo-muzi kuhlala isiphoxwana sendoda. Kodwa ningacabangi ukuthi yisiphoxo ngempela ngoba uzenza isiphoxo-nje lomuntu. Ngathi kuyena ngiyofika ngihlale phezu kwegquma elibekene nomuzi ngaseningizimu. Lapho sekushona ilanga nomnyama usubuyisile ngathi kuyena ngiyobasa umlilo egqumeni lelo besengibeka lapha ekhaya ukuthi impendulo ngiyayithola yini. Naye uyobasa umlilo wezibi sengathi ushisa amaBifi. Besengehla ngiza kuye. Kodwa uma ewubase umlilo wezibi wawucima, kobe kusho ukuthi yena uza kimina.” Kukhuluma uMalambule.

Abesethatha uChithumuzi athi:

“Kade ngithule-nje kade ngicabanga ukuthi konje lomuzi enikhuluma ngawo ngabe yimuphi. Sengiwebonile manje. Awusho wona lona onezindlu eziyisihlanu, namakhosikazi amathathu; kodwa inkosikazi yona inabantwana ngithi babili, intombi nomfana. Komunye umuzi futhi kukhona intombi inhle nayo isukile-nje inabafowabo. Nesiphoxo lesa ngiyasibona. Negama laso nanti lingithi phecekezi, konje bathi ubani bandla?”

Athi uMasimini:

“Sengathi uMaphalana, angikhumbuli kahle kodwa.”

“Hhayi uMaphuhlane”, kusho uQethuka.

“Niyaphosisa nonke, igama laso uMaphuhlane. Ucishe walithola uMasimini. Akusekhoke okunye.”

“Pho siyofika senze njani, lokhu asiqhubi nazinkomone?” kubuza uQethuka.

“Izinkomo zani, lokhu indaba isiqediwe. Kanti siyakolobola noma siyakophanga? Niyangehlula nina”, kusho uChithumuzi.

Wahlakazeka umhlangano wezinsizwa ngokunquma ilanga lokusuka kubangwe eDumbe. Imimoya yabantu yayigcwele indaba yemali yamakhanda. Izinsizwa lezi zazithokoza ukuBa zihambe ngoba zasezazi ukuthi

inkosi yazo ikhiphe isinqumo yathi akukho muntu kwe-sayo isifunda oyokhipha imali yamakhanda, okungcono kuchitheke igazi.

Emva kwezinsukwana zasuka izinsizwa zaqonda eDumbe, zaphuma ngehuBo ezalizwa kwaNtunjambili kusinwa kuthiwa:

“Inkosi yahlul’izizwe,

Wangibon’uBambatha,

Sibashise, ke sizwe,

Hhe yaye!”

Zaphuma izinsizwa, baphuma onina baziBukela ziphuma, zilande uNomcebo kaNkominophondo.

Kuthe ngakusasa besohanjeni lwaBo lathi liyoshona bahlangana nesicheme sezintombi sengathi siya embon-dweni, bazikhuza impisi bema phambi kwazo bacela utshwala. Zama izintombi nezinsizwa zama, zaphungu-la emagobongweni ezintombini. Wayesethi uChithumuzi:

“Bafowethu singabe sisabaBuza ukuthi ngelamani? Noma ngelamadoda noma ngelabafazi na?”

Wathi uMasimini:

“Qha bafowethu leyondaBa kayilungile senifuna ukuzithela ngamashwa, kodwa anifoni yini nokuthi bahamba nesangoma nasiya sifake izikhumba?”

Washo njalo maqede, babonga bangena indlela, yiBo labaya bekhwela intaba, uQethuka wasewaliqala ihuBo labo lokuphuma ekhaya, balihaya bawela ummfula bashona ezigidini, baye balala ngasemizini eseduze. Bathi ukuzibika umnumzane wabahlabisa imbuzi balala, bethokozile ngempela, wayesethi njengoba ilanga libi liyashisa bangasuka emini bangene eDumbe liyoshona. Nabo bavuma.

Emini yangakusasa baphuma bahamba bengatsheli muntu ukuthi yini abayilanda eDumbe kuthi noma bebuzwa bathi bathunywe yinkosi yakuBo. Endleleni lapho amagquma aseDumbe esevele obala nalelogquma abazobasa umlilo kulo selibonakala wathi uChithumuzi kubafowabo:

“Sengibone elinye isu mina. Niyababona abantu kuzo zonke izindawo esidlula kuzo ukuthi bahlalele phezulu ngemali yamakhanda? Nathi njengoba sihamba-nje



sengathi sithunywe nguHulumeni ukuBa sizwe imimoya yaBantu ngaloludaBa. Bayakholwa ngempela ukuBa sithunywe yinkosi.”

Wathi uQethuka:

“Uqinisile mfowethu. Kodwa ikhona indawo lapho sidlule khona eQhudeni umuzi wakwaSithole. Noma ngingakhumbuli kahle umnumzane wakhona. Kuthe lapho sithi sithunywe yinkosi yakithi uSigananda wasibekisisa, kodwa wabuye wathi, singabafana. Ukuthi singabafana lokhu kusho ukuthini?”

UBangani wathi:

“Phela kithi akwenzeki ukuBa inkosi ithume izinsizwa uma ithumela indaba ethile komunye umhlaBa. Kuthunywa amadoda.”

“Futhi nibonile-nje ukuthi kuthe lapho sihaya ihubo lethu sesiphuma sisho sithi,

*“Inkosi yahlul’izizwe,  
Wangibon’uBambatha,  
Sibashise, ke sizwe,  
Hhe yaye!”*

waphuma phandle wasiqhweba sengathi ikhona into afuna ukuyikhuluma nathi kodwa thina kasimnakanga sihambe saqhubekela phambili? Ikhona indaba enalomnumzane”, kukhuluma uMasimini.

Bakhuluma bonke-nje uthule uChithumuzi ucaBanga elakhe isu ngendaba yokubuya noNomceBo. Kodwa kuthe lapho sebethinta lomnumzane wakwaSithole eQhudeni wabuza wathi:

“Nithi lomnumzane ngowaphi?”

Wathi uMasimini,

“NgowakwaSithole.”

“Nguyena lomuntu okuxoxwa ngaye yonke indawo kwaZulu nasesilungwini ukuthi kade eyinhloko enkulu yamaBunu; nguyena owaziyo kakhulu ngezibamu nokuthi uma kuke kwatholwa yena kungabe ngempela imali yamakhanda kayisathelwanga naphakade. Nguyena lona ubaBa nenkosi uSigananda ababexoxa ngaye mhla siqaba ukuthela imali yamakhanda eMpanza. Nguyena lona uChakijana kaGezindaka wakwaSithole.”

Basebemangala abanye bathi:

“Uthi kodwa kungaba nguyena owacebisa amaNgisi wawakhombisa izidinsi zemali yamaBunu, kanye nezi-bamu nombayimbayi?”

Wathi uChithumuzi:

“Akasekho omunye nguye lona. Wo! KwabakuBi ngoba lendaba siyiBona lapha. EQhudeni kuphi silapha-nje? Bengiyomtshela ukuthi uyadingeka komkhulu. Qha akusenacala.”

Bakhuluma njalo sebesondele ukuBa bafike kulelo-gquma abazoma kulo bangabe besadlula, lapho bezobasa khona umlilo wokukhombisa uMaphulana ukuthi sebefikile. Bangenisa emmfuleni bahlala khona ngoba funa baBonwe ngabantu bethuke ukuthi lesisixuku sezinsizwa sihlomile-nje ngabe sizokwenzani kulomhlaBa. Wayesebatshela uChithumuzi ngesu lakhe abethe uselitholile. Wathi yena kufanele bangawubasi umlilo, yena luqobo lwakhe uzohamba aye angene kulomuzi abe ngumuntu wokuhamba indaba yonke ayihlole ngoMaphulana, ngoba uma bebasa umlilo egqumeni abantu bazokuwubona, bathi umlilo wempi njengoba impi kuphela okuthi lapho ingenise khona ibase amakloBa omlilo. Bathula bemlalele abafowabo bengaphenduli. Bagcina ngokumvumela.

Nempela kwasekumnyama, wayingena indlela uChithumuzi kwathi abantu bengakalali kungakahlwi ngokuphelele impela wayesondela emzini kaNkominophondo. Engakangeni wahlangatshezwa ngumfanyana wathi kuye:

“UMaphulana uthi woza kuyena ulandele mina ungakhulumisi muntu.”

Kwathi lapho embuka lomfanyana uChithumuzi wamBona ukuthi umfana owalusayo ngoba imilenzana lena yayigcwele udaka, konke emhlane lapha kwakungathi kade kuzihuqa ngensizi, kubukeka kuluphumpusana lomfana kodwa kuhlakaniphile kuyingqeqe. Kwamhola uChithumuzi kwaye kwangena naye endlwaneni eyayingelutho, phakathi kuBonakala sengathi akukho muntu. Kwakumbeka lokhu okungumfana kwaphuma. Kuthe kubuya kwakubuya neziBi nezinswani nelahle lomlilo kwavala umnyango kwabasa. Lapha endlini kwabophana umusi kwathula kwathi du wangabanamandla nawoku-



phefumula uChithumuzi wathi uyakhwehlela kwangam-siza lutho. Kuthe ngesikade wavuleka umnyango kwangena indojezana igaxe isikhwama ehloambe yathi:

“Hawu mfana, kawuvuli ngani emnyango lokhu umusi usungaka njena?” Washo njalo ewuvula umnyango.

Umfana waziphendulela wathi,

“Ingani uwena othe ngiqaphele lomuntu angabonwa muntu, ngakhoke ngisuke mina ngavala emnyango.”

Wangena wangahlala phansi uMaphulana wathi:

“Ngiyazi ukuthi wena awusiye uMalambule nokuthi uthunywe nguye. Xhawula uxhawule. Wenze kahle ukuḅa ungawubasi umlilo egqumeni esasithembisene lona noMalambule. Cishe impela ungangifici lapha mhla-wumbe konke konakale ngoḅa uMalambule kade ngam-lindela ngisho nezithunywa zakhe. Kangihleli, nawe kawusezuhlala.”

Wathi uChithumuzi:

“Konke lokhu okukhulumayo usukwazi ngani ngami?”

Wathi uMaphulana:

“Ngikwaze lokho ngaphambi kokuḅa ufike nalapha. Nokuthi likhona ibutho lezinsizwa ofike nalo, konke lokho ngiyakwazi. Manjena, isiwuchithile umuthi inkonyane. Intombi leyo isithathwe inkosi yangapha eNgome. Into okufanele siyenze yilena. Masiphume siyilandele khona kuyothi lapho bengakaqedi ukugcagcisa nezindlu zaḅo omakothi bengakazisindi thina sithi qatha, siyithumbe intombi sihambe nayo. Kanihlangananga yini naḅo endleleni?”

“Yeḅo likhona idlanzi lezinsizwa nezintombi esihlangane nazo izolo lapho ilanga selishonile. Bekuyiviyonje elihamba nesangoma ebesibince isikhumba”, kusho uChithumuzi.

Kuthe ukuḅa asho lokho, wahleka uMaphulana wathi:

“Akusona isangoma lesa. Yiyonantombi kaMalambule leyo.”

Wakhombisa ukumangala uChithumuzi kodwa ngaphambi kokuḅa akhulume uMaphulana wayesesemsamo ethatha izikhali zakhe, wathatha neziceshana ezisongi-we ziphethe insangu negudu lakhe, wakuphonsa kumfana wathi makakuthathe apathe izijulana zakhe alande-

le uChithumuzi lapho eya khona angakhulumi lutho. Umlilo awushiye uvutha angenzi lutho. Wamtshela uChithumuzi ukuḅa aḅe ehamba eya kubantu bakhe naye uzofika. Waphuma uMaphulana waqonda endlini kwaḅo kaNomceḅo wafika wangqongqoza wamvulela uMaDubiyana, wabuye wavala. Uthe ethi makahlale phansi wathi uMaphulana, qha akasahleli ngoḅa uya-phuthuma. Nakhu sekufike izinsizwa zakwaZulu ezilande uNomceḅo wathi uMaDubiyana:

“Mhlola muni lowoke manje?”

Wathi uMaphulana:

“Qha kakuwona umhlola lowo. Wena hlala phansi ungayikhulumi kumuntu lendaba, nokuthi uyangazi ukuthi ngiyephi. Sengiyobuya nezinye izindaba, mhla-wumbe senginguMaphulana omunye.”

Washo ephuma esishaya isivalo, wachitheka. Kakumthathanga sikhathi wafika ezinsizweni lapho zonke zasezimi sezilindele ukuhamba. Umfanyana lona wathi lapho edlula ngendlu alala kuyo nabanye abafana wabonwa umngane wakhe naye umngane wakhe wathatha esakhe isijula nehawu wathi uzophekezela uwaḅo ba-buyisane kanyekanye. Baḅengazi ukuthi bayathunjwa emakhaya ngeke baḅuye bakubone futhi.

Kakukhulumanga muntu, basuke baphenduka baḅe-na indlela. Bekake lokhu laselipholile libetha umoya. Inyanga yaphuma phezu kwezintaba zoḅombo kude ngaseMpumalanga, yaphuma iyindilinga yebola eḅomvu yaya yaguquka yafana nethusi elikhanyela phakathi, washo omunye wabafana exoxa indaba ayizwa ikhulunywa wathi:

“Akenibeke weNdaḅankulu, nanguya umfazi othwele izinkuni enyangeni, namanje usazithwele, ulandelwa aḅantabakhe.” Waphenduka nempela omunye wabafana wayiḅuka inyanga wathi:

“Hawu ḅandla bayahlupheka.”

Bathi bephenduka, izinsizwa noMaphulana zaseziku-dana, bathathela ngamajubane sekukhona nokwesaba ngoḅa kwasekuhlwile ngempela. Kwezinye izindawo baḅebuya bathathele ngamajubane. Kuthe lapho amadolo eseqala ukuxega nokukhathala sekuḅaxinile ba-li-



qala ihubo labo owayengalazi uMaphulana nabafanyana ababili uNdaBankulu noHlomeyakhe. Basho bathi:

*"Inkosi yahlul'izizwe,  
Wangibon'uBambatha,  
Sibashise, ke sizwe,  
Hhe yaye!"*

Zabuye zathola amandla izinsizwa zawaphakamisa amadolo zanyathela. Kwathi phakathi kobusuku impela lapho umthala uguquka nezinkanyezi seziqala ukudilikela phansi olwandle, wathi uMaphulana, makulalwe. Nempela bacinga iziqundu ezinotshani obukhulu, bazi-shutheka phansi balala, bebeke amahawu abo bawenza zona iziphuku.

Ukusa kwaziwa yiho lapho ikhwezi liphumayo, bavuka, kwasa bedlula lapho bahlangana khona nomthimba wasondela uChithumuzi ngakuMaphulana wathi:

"Kwakulaphake lapha sahlangukhona khona nabo abantu bakini. Wo, yeka ukuaba sasazi."

Washo welula izinyawo, wayesethi uMaphulana:

"Nxa senifika laphaya kuleyantaaba sizothatha indlela enqumayo, khona sizofika kulomuzi kusihlwa khona namhlanje. Singafike sicele ukudla kuleyamizi sidle ngaphambi kokuaba sihambe."

Nempela bafika emizini leyo bahlala ngaphandle wangena uMaphulana wazibika ekhehleni lakhona bezwa lithi:

"Nguwe lona *Nodakada*, hhawu kanti baqinisile abathi abake babonana bayobuye babonane? Sewaguga wethu? Sikhosiphi lokhu nakhu khona namhlanje sizwa kuthiwa kade kufike umfo wakwaZondi lapho komkhulu ezinyaneni lenkosi, ezobuza izindaaba zalemali yamakhanda." Wabuye wabuka ngaphandle wabona isicheme sezinsizwa wathi:

"Ngenani ngaphakathi bantaBami, niphumule."

Nempela zangena izinsizwa zavulelwa emalawini zendlalalwa izicephu, zabusa. Bahlala laphaya oMaphulana nomnumzane. UMaphulana wabuza wathi:

"Lomfo wakwaZondi okhuluma ngaye ngowaphi."

Wathi umnumzane,

"Igama lakhe kuthiwa nguBambatha kaMancinza osehithhe abelungu ngapha eMgundlovana."

Wathula uMaphulana leligama elithi Bambatha kwaBa sengathi uke walizwa kodwa akazi ukuthi ngabe ulazelaphi. WacaBanga wayesekhumbula ukuthi ulizwe ngehobo ebelihutshwa yizinsizwa lezi ahamba nazo. Wayesephuma eyoqhweba uChithumuzi, wabuya naye wathi:

"Lelihubo lenu enilhubayo liphatha uBambatha?"

Wathi uChithumuzi:

"Yebo likhuluma ngaye."

"Ubani yena lona enihuba ngaye?"

Wathi uChithumuzi esemangele ukuthi ngabe bam-buzelani:

"UBambatha lona inkosi yakwaZondi ngaseMgundlovana, umfo kaMancinza."

Uthe ukuaba asho njalo wathi uMaphulana:

"Salusuthula, usuqedile. Masilalele laphake sobabili."

"Akuyena yedwa umfo kaMancinza olapha ngoBa kufike futhi lapha komkhulu uChakijana kaGezindaka owaziwayo kakhulu ngezindaBa zempi", kusho umnumzane lo. "Kuthiwa yinhlanhla kakhulu ukuhlangana kwalawamaqhawe ngoBa sizwa kuthiwa khona ngapha eMgundlovana kuqale umfo kaSigananda kwathi inkantolo igcwele, sekuthelelwa yona imali yamakhanda lawa, wathi yena nabantu bakhe akanamali. KwaBe kakushilo lokho zasuka phansi izinsizwa zagiya zisho isaga sazo zithi:

*"Yayize, yayize Mazulu!"*

"Kwathi ukuaba zisho njalo onongqayi abamnyama bahkwantaBala basimama ngezinsika zenkantolo, zaBe zihamba izinsizwa zihuba, ziqonde emakhaya. Kwala ngisho uSishishili induna yakhona ngapha kwaNtunjambili esukuma eyithela nabantu bakhe, amaBandle amanye athula-nje ambuka." Kukhuluma umnumzane lo.

"USishishili lona akuyena yini lo indodana yakhe egcagcisayo kuzo lezizinsuku na?" Kubuza uMaphulana. Lapho uChithumuzi uthule ngoBa engafuni ukuaba aphendule. Kodwa enhliziyweni yakhe wayemangala ukuthi lomuntu abathunywe kuyena, uMaphulana, uyi-silima kanjani uma kanti abanumzane bezindawo beme-



themba bekhuluma naye ngokuhlonipha okungaka. Kwavela ukucasuka kuyena ngoBa ezwa igama lika-Sishishili okwathi inkosi yakuBo iwuchitha umhlango wokuthelela amakhanda yena waphuma wayothela. Kuthe usagijima nalezizindaBa umqondo wakhe wayizwa impendulo yomnumzane ethi:

“Nempela kunjalo. Yena sithi sinyakaziswa yizindaBa zomhlabathi nezomBuso aBe engenisa izindwendwe. Ngikhuluma-nje awuBoni nawe ukuthi lapha kukhala ibungane?”

“Kambe besengizobuza ngoBa emzini omkhulu ongaka selokhu sifikile kasikaBoni onjengensizwa noma ethi shalu-nje”, kusho uChithumuzi.

“Okusho ukuthi lapha koSishishili kakusekude kangako”, kusho uMaphulana.

Wathi umnumzane:

“Phuma phandle ngikukhombise indlela enqumayo ngoBa nakhu senilapha, kwaNongoma senikushiye emuva. UyaBona leyantatshana? SekuyiSandlwana njalo. Nizophuma lapha nenyuse umhosha lona ngawo umngqangwana lona, uyoye unibeke kude njalo. Kothi lapho nifika ngaphansi kwaleliyahlathi niphume ngapha kwalo, besenibona ithafa elendlaleke ngakwesokudla. Ningaqondi kulo, kodwa nigudle igquma ngakwesokhohlo isandla. Nothi nithi qhamu besenifika emzini ka-Sishishili. NiyowuBona umuzi wenduna. Phela thina lapha onke lawamakhosana ahamba ebekwa ngabelungu kasisasho ukuthi ngamakhozi sithi izinduna njengoBa kwakushiwo koBaBa noBaBamkhulu.”

WaBonga uMaphulana wayesethi, qha, kuhle baha-mbe ngoBa bayashesha. Ngaphambi kokuBa baphume esangweni, umnumzane waziBuka izinsizwa wathi:

“Nodakada, wethu, ubangephi nekhethelo lezinsizwa ezinje na? Lokhu ziyabonakala ukuthi zihlomile ziqonde into eziyiqondile.”

Wathi uMaphulana:

“Hhayi nathi sifuna ukuyobona udwendwe.”

Wathi umnumzane:

“Ludwendwe luni oluBonwa sekwadliwa inyama yomngenisandlini. Hawu ngiyasola ngoBa kukhona wena ohamba imizila yakho ingalandwa.”

Washo njalo baBeyoshona emhosheni aBakhombise wona. Ilanga lalilihle liqhame kuzo zonke izindawo. Amahlungu onke ayeluhlaza ephephethwa inyakatho ububone bubunguzela buDe buphendula izindwani zaBo zikhombise okumhlophe, buBuye buvuke buBeluhlaza sengathi ukhona umuntu olokhu ebuphulula ngesandla eBuwisa eBuwusa. Phakathi kwaBo utshani kwakukhule izihlahla zelala namabeqekazi amahlamvu nawo egu-ka nomoya. Lapha nalaphaya kwakukhona izimbali ezinde ezibomvu ziqhakaze phezu kwezihlahla zecena lilihle ngisho nameva alo. Phezu kwezimbali kwakundiza izincwinci ezimnyama ezinamabala aBomvu entanyeni, nemilomo emide eyizinsungulo, zincela uju ezimbalini. Zonke lezizinto izinsizwa zaziBona. Noma zingenamlomo wokuzithakazela kodwa ukuthokoza kwazo kophela ngaphakathi njengengozi.

Thina naBanye siyesicaBange ukuthi izihliziyi nemiphfumulo yaBantu bangaphandle kayikwazi ukuzwela imizwelo yothando lwezinto zemvelo nezomdaBa ezibekwe phambi kwaBo yizandla zamadlozi, akhulisa uhleza lomhlaBa, ehambisa imifula ukuBa iye olwandle; futhi eluBamba ulwandle ukuBa lungagwali lugubuzele umhlaBa; amadlozi aBambe ngeminwe yawo izinkanyezi ezihlobisa izulu selokhu imini kaMhlaBa yadalwa. YeBo, aBantu bakithi lezizinto bayazazi, bayazichaza bazilobe emphefumulweni yaBo, ziphume ngoBa uBezwe behaya ingoma. Lengoma ibika ukuthokoza, ibika ukuhlupheka; ibika konke ngisho ukuBonga nokuphindisela. Pho, zakhombisa kanjani ukuBa lezizinto zizingene ezinhliziyweni zazo lezizinsizwa? Izigodi nemihosha ezazinquma kuyona zezwa ihubo likaBambatha zilishukumbisa phansi izinsizwa, zilenyula, ziliphendula, zilimungunya ngoBa lisegazini nangoBa sezizwa ukuthi mhlawumbe ngase zingabuyi zonke kulendlela eziyihambayo; ngoBa yindlela esihlangene nokuchitheka kwegazi. Noma kunjalo zazi-khona izizathu zokuBa lelogazi liyochitheka.

Esokuqala isizathu ngukuBa umfowaBo uMalambule ethe maBamlandele intombi ayithandayo ize kuye.

Esesibili isizathu ngukuBa uyise wensizwa uyisitha sikaSigananda noBambatha nawo wonke uZulu ophili-



leyo; ngoBa phela ukhona uZulu ofileyo, ovuma into entsha, noma kungeyoBulima. USishishili baseBemthukuthelele ngoBa ngesenzo sakhe wayechaka amanye amakhosi ezenza muhle kuHulumeni, bonke abanye kwaBa ngabantu ababi.

Zahamba izinsizwa noMaphulana nabafana ababili abazenza udifi lukaMaphulana. Wezwa ngakho ukuthi kuza izinsizwa, wezwa isaho sehubo lazo livumela inyakatho, notshani, nezincwincwi nakho konke komdabu, zisho zithi:

*“Inkosi yahlul’izizwe,  
Wangibon’uBambatha,  
Sibashise, ke sizwe,  
Hhe yaye!”*

Baye bafika ethafeni ebelishiwo ngumnumzane lowo, baligwegwesa baqonda egqumaneni. Kwathi belithinta-nje igquma bahlangane nesimame esiyidlanzana sesibuya odwendweni sithwele inyama ngamaqoma, ngezinye izandla siphethe amagobongo. Sanele sabaBona beza, sathi dlengelele sema. Abanye kusona bagudluka endleleni bebukeka seBethuke kabi, wathi uMaphulana kuChithumuzi:

“UyabaBona laBomame ukuthi benzani?”

Waphendula wathi:

“Sengathi ikhona into ebathusayo, ngaBe yini?”

Wathi uMaphulana:

“Mhlawumbe umoya usuye washaya komkhulu ukuthi ukhona umnyama ozayo. Izanusi zabanumzane zinamandla kungase-nje ukuBa kade sinukiwe!”

Basondela oMaphulana, wayesenyenyeza kuBo bonke ukuthi bangawakhulumisi lawamakhosikazi kodwa uma eBingelela abovuma ngomoya ophansi kodwa bangakhulumi. Nempela bathi ukusondela maqede aphume futhi endleleni amakhosikazi asho kanyekanye athi:

“Sanibona bo.”

Bathi,

“Sibona nina.”

Kwangathi akanelisiwe amakhosikazi futhi sekungathi asequnge isibindi kwaphela ukwesaba, ayesethi:

“LuBangiswephi na, ilanga selishona-nje?” Kwathi nya lapha ngakoMaphulana neButho lakhe, waze wakhuluma uMaphulana wathi:

“Siya ngapha oThukela ngaseMpanza.” KwaBe behamba kuBonisa ukuthi bake bema, funa amakhosikazi abuze eminye imibuzo ezobaBamba ngoBa izindlela zakulelizwe baBengazazi kahle. Baqhubeka, nama-khosikazi nawo asale asukuma angena eyawo indlela.

Kwathi seBejika ngegqumana eBebekade belinquma, bathi ukwelula iBangana endaweni enotshani obukhulile beshuma phansi kwezihlahla zemithi yamagulukunqa, bawubona umuzi omkhulu onamagceke amakhulu, uphithizela abantu phakathi kwawo.

Kwakuyilanga lokuBa kuhlatshwa umngenisandlini— ilanga elilandela elokugcagca. Izinsizwa zahlala phansi ukuBa zicabange isu lokuBa zizokwenze njani. Abanye abanesibindi phakathi kwaBo faceBa ukuthi kungakuhle bathi ukuthi gozololo balinde ukuBa kuze kuhlwe kunciphe isixuku sabantu abagcwele lapha emzini khona bezongena umuzi bawuhaqe bawuhlasele, babulale yonke into ephakathi kusinde abesifazane bodwa abaphakathi; abanye bathi okuyiyonanto enhle ukuBa kuthunye ababili noma oyedwa phakathi kwaBo ahambe ayozidlisa satshanyana eduze komuzi lona aze abone mhlawumbe umfana kulaBa abelusa khona. Kuyothi lapho umfana esembonile amtshela ukuBa abize impeleki kamakoti ize kuye. Nxa isifikile impeleki yena uzoyitshela yonke indaba ukuma kwayo.

Bahlala phansi isikhathi eside bexoxa indaba yokungena emzini nokuthatha umakoti, kodwa kaBaltho- langa isu lokuthi konke abakwenzayo bangakwenza kanjani. Ngesikade omunye esixukwini wakhumbula ukuthi kukhona uMaphulana ongase naye aliphonse izwi kulendaba. Naye wayeyilalele indaba yokungena lomuzi kodwa waphendula wathi:

“Mina nginomunye umqondo ngoBa umfana lona, umfowaBo wentombi uhambe inhliziyo yakhe ingathandi uma udadewaBo kuthiwa angathola izinkomo ezincane enanini kunalezi ezizothlwa udadewaBo abagcagca kanye naye kulenkosi. Ngakhoke uma ngifika ngihlokoza yena ngenduku noma eBekhona umuntu



ongangiqhwebela yena eningini ngingathokoza; ngimtshele ukuthi nakhu lapho sikhona.”

“Qha, lelosu lilungile madoda”, kusho uChithumuzi, “kodwa isikhathi sikhulu ukuBa imiqondo yaBantu ngabe iguqukile manje. Umfana lo mhlawumbe bafike bamfumbathisa lukhulu lapha konkosi, umqondo wakhe wathatheka. Ngisho intombi iye khona ingathandi kuzothi nxa isibona umbuso ezongena kuwona nayo futhi iguqule inhliziyi. Mina ngihamba nalomqondo wokuvimbezela, lapho sekuqala ukuBamnyama abantu sebegundeke amehlo.”

“YeBo lowomqondo wakho ulungile Chithumuzi”, kusho omunye waBafowaBo. “Kodwa konke lokho singakwenza kanjani singazi ukuBa amandla aBo anjani?”

Wawalalela uMaphulana lawamazwi wawaBona ukuthi nawo akaChithumuzi alungile ngoBa umuntu lona ungumalaleguquka. Angalala elungise lokhu abuye avuke esenume okunye. Naye wakoMaphulana wayengazi ukuthi uZazini njengoBa bekhuluma-nje usecabangani. Ngakhoke wathi:

“Kuhle nilinde kancane ngoBa mina ngiyezwana nomfana lona wakwaBo kantombazana. Ngizohamba ngifike ngimdonse umoya ngizwe ukuthi yena unamqondo muni njengoBa udadewaBo esegcagcile-nje. Siyeyzwana nomfana lona. Noma ethuka ethi ngibeKwa yini lapha kuyobalula kimina ukumchazela konke ngaphandle kokuBa ngize ngikhiphe isifuBa sendaBa ukuthi senilapha nina.”

Esho njalo uMaphulana wathatha isihlangu sakhe nengcula, newisa noboko lwakhe wanyamalala. Wahamba ibangana waze wasondela ngasemzini wenkosi. Wawufuka umuzi lona ukwaxhiwa kwawo ehambe ehogela umoya ukuthi abakuBo ngabe baphi. WaBona ekugcineni ukuthi uzoBonwa ngoBa uhamba-nje uhlo-mile, futhi uhlobile impahla yamaqhawe. Wanyelela wahamba wayogumula yonke imvunulo wayifihla ngesihlahla wasala nebeshu lodwa nesinene, wathatha uboko waBangumuntu odondolozelayo. WaBuye wasondela ngasemzini waBona abafana bezosela inyama yaBo, wasewaqonda khona ehambisa okwesilima khona

abafana bengezumxwaya. Wafika wazothisa umlilo wacela kuBo amantshontsho aBo lawa. Wayesethi, qha, yena uBezozicelela inyama emthimbeni. Abafana baseBenengwa bethi kuhle omunye waBo amthathe uMaphulana amyise emthimbeni lowo awufunayo bona abanandaBa nemithimba. Nempela bamnika umfanyana owamhola njalo emchushisa ngezindlu waze waBona abakuBo behlezi. WawaBona futhi amaqembu omabili, wayeseqonda kuleli likaBembesile ngoBa iningi lapho lalingamazi.

Kwakuhleziwe kothiwa umlilo nawo usucimile usukhanyela phakathi ungasabonakali. Wafika wahlala ngomhonqana owawuseduze walalela okuxoxwayo.

Wabanenhlahlala ngoBa baBephezu kwendaBa yelobolo elibeKwe yinkosi bekhononda ukuthi kungaya kanjani ukuBa uBembesile alotsholwe ngenani elingaphansi kwelikaNomceBo njengoBa kuthe besuka ekhaya kwakuthiwe uBembesile uyolotsholwa ngenani elikhulu na? BaXoxa bephikisana baze bavumelana abanye ukuthi khona kusukeni uNomceBo wayemuhle kakhulu kunoBembesile, akungathi ngoBa wathatha wazona ngoku-faka izikhumba besekuBa sengathi wayemubi.

Lokhukukhuluma kwamqondisa uMaphulana ukuthi izikhuni zigweBukile, uBembesile wehlulekile njengoBa wayeshilo ukuthi kuyoba njalo. Yenake esekuzwile lokhu wayesehlehla eBuyela eceleni eseyoqaphela ngasendlini lapho kwakuhleli khona ibutho likaNomceBo. Wahlala, wahlala eqaphele ukuthi uzoBona umuntu angamethemba amqhweBe eze kuyena ukuBa amyaleze kodwa akaBonanga muntu. Kwathi ngesikade waBona intombazanyana iphuma iswacela ngendlu wayesesondela enzela ukuBa kuthi lapho isibuya ayiqhweBe ayiyaleze. Nempela akuthathanga isikhathi intombazanyana leyo yaqhamuka, wathi uMaphulana:

“Mmina lapha mntanami ngikuyaleze.”

Yathi qikilili intombazanyana, yema, wathi uMaphulana:

“Nguwena ohamba nomakoti mntanami?”

“YeBo yimina, BaBa.”

“Hambake, ufike unyenyezele impeleki kamakoti uthi, ukhona umuntu kwaBasekhaya ofuna ukuyibona;



mayisheshe khona manje. Uyitshele iyodwa kungezwa muntu ngisho umakoti uqobo lwakhe. Uyitshele ukuthi ngizokuma khona lapha la ungishiya khona.”

Wasuka umntwana wangena endlini.

Kuyaxoxwa lapha phandle abanye bayagadlela, kuyabonakala ukuthi abantu baningi futhi sebesuthi, akakho obeke ukuthi lomuntu omi endaweni ethize ne-thize ngowaphi uzokwenzani. Bonke abantu benamile. Abanye bayadlula-nje nakuye uMaphulana bangamnaki bazihambe ngezindlela zabo. UMaphulana yena akanyakazanga wema, amehlo akhe ebeke emnyango wendlu lapho kungene khona intombazanyana. Walinda isikhashana emi, kwasekuxega amadolo, wahlala phansi, wagqolozela njalo emnyango. Kwathi ngesikade wabona ithunzi lisitheza umnyango, labuye lagudluka laphumela phandle, lancika ngendlu ngemuva kwayo lathula. Wabona uMaphulana ukuthi impeleki kaNomcebo ngempela, isilinde isibonakaliso sokusho ukuthi uMaphulana uphi, wayesesondela uMaphulana wathi:

“Qhobo, ungethuki nkosazana, yimina uMaphulana.”

Yethuka intombazana yathi:

“Ubekwa yini lapha, futhi ngalesisikhathi?”

Wathi uMaphulana:

“Sondela lapha, sithi ukucasha singaphazanyiswa lutho.”

Bathi ukugudluka endleleni, wambamba ngengalo uMaphulana wathi:

“Beka lapha, nkosazana, izindaaba zimbi ngempela. Wena noNomcebo lungelani ukuhamba nathi khona manje.”

“Sizohamba nani siphume lapha. Ukuthi kuyiwaphi, ngeke ngakutshela manje ngoaba nami angazi. Wena uma uthanda ukusala ungazisalela ngokwakho; kodwa uma usikhiphele uNomcebo kuyoba kwanele. Noma kunjalo khumbula ukuthi nxa uNomcebo esengabonakali abantu bazombuza kuwena. Uyobanjwa ungahambi aze atholakale. Njengoba ngibona-nje mina uNomcebo eke waphuma lapha wahamba, ngeke futhi aphinde abonwe yiso lomuntu walomuzi.” Kukhuluma uMaphulana.

Yaphendula intombazana yathi:

“Qha, Maphulana, ufuna ukungithethisa amacala, ngime phambi kwesigcawu ngiphendule imibuzo yamadoda, ngingazange ngizwe nokuthi umame wake wema nakanye ebandla waphendula phambi kwamadoda? Qha, Maphulana.”

“Pho, uthini kulomqondo wokuaba wena noNomcebo, sihambe nani? Uma kunjalo, ngeke kubebikho oyoma ebandla aphenndule imibuzo yamadoda: wena uyobe uhambile, noNomcebo uyobe engekho.” Kusho uMaphulana.

“Qha, into enjengaleyo kanginakuyenza. Umame ngimshiye nobani?” Kusho intombazana.

“Hhayike kulungile. Inye into engizokutshela yona. Bengithi ngiceba icebo lokuaba usinde wena nomngane wakho. Uma iseluleko sami ungasithathi uze ungakhali ngami uzisole nxa nivelelwa okunivelelayo. Namhlanje kusihlwa uma wena ungaphumi nomakoti, lomuzi sizokuwuthelekela siwenzele imbo, sishaye sicoboshise imbokodo nesisekelo. Uma ungase uhambe nami khona manje ufike laphaya kuleliyagquma, uyaabona kuleliyahlahlathi eliseduze nendlela eqhamuka ngalapha, (mhla-wumbe nahamba ngayo leyondlela mhla niza lapha) uyothi nxa ufika khona ufumanise isixuku saleziyazi-nsizwa enahlangana nazo mhla niza lapha. Akuzona zodwa manje, sezihlangene nezinye. Mhla niziabona zidlula ngani njeya, zazithi zilande uNomcebo zafica senihambile. Zithukuthele ziyafa, igazi ngokwazo ngabe selichithekile kodwa ngizikhuzile.” Kukhuluma uMaphulana.

Ngesikhathi ekhuluma, intombazana yayisithule ithe du, ingasaphenduli. Yayixakekile ukuthi ingathini kulendaba. Ikhanda layo laliduma. Nasezinganekwaneni yayike izwe ukuthi omakoti babethunjwa ezixukwini, abantu bebekile, kuhlekwa engekho owaziya ukuthi kukhona abamgaqelayo. Kwathi lapho ibuka intombazana, ibona izixuku zabantu ezingaka okwakuzokusa zibulewe noma zilele izinqekle yathi:

“Yeka umame owangizalayo, akazi ukuthi ngikobunjani ubunzima!”



Wayizwa uMaphulana, kwaBasengathi nomqondo wayo uyawufunda, wathi:

“Ngawe wedwa-nje ufuna ukuBa sonke lesisizwe sabantu sibube siphele? Awazi yini ukuthi nawe uqobo lwakho uzolala ngesijula? Hamba uyohleBela uNomcebo lokhu, niphume nithi shelele noBabili, omunye kasimfuni. Usho ukuthi kukhona mina Maphulana, ngihamba nabantu bakaMalambule. Uyokhohlwa yilokho?”

Yathi intombazana:

“Ngeke.”

Wafulathela uMaphulana, waklaya eningini waphumela ngaphandle kothango. Wema ukufuka ukuthi akakho yini umuntu ombukayo; wahosha umoya waphfumula, wayesethi ukuhlabisa ikhefu, wahamba waphubekela phambili eqonde ngasesihlahleni lapho wayefihle khona isihlangu sakhe nengcula nemvunulo yakhe. Wafika khona wakufaka, wangena umzila aze ngawo.

Ekufikeni kwakhe kwaBakuBo uMaphulana waBafica sebeyaluzwa uChithumuzi esethi kuhle balungele ukuhlalabela, nokuthi uMaphulana mhlawumbe usebahlamukile wangena kwaBakuBo wabatshela yonke indaba abeze ngayo. Basesebasa nokuthi funa mhlawumbe bahlalalewe bengazi lutho sebefuna nokusuka kulenkundla uMaphulana abashiye kuyo, sebeyohlala kwenye balindele isikhathi sokungenela umuzi wenkosi bawucikaze ngekikhonto. UMaphulana ufike lapho sebesuka beshayana izikhundla. Usethi:

“Sekwenzenjani, nanyakaza na?”

Usho njalo akakafiki phakathi kweBanda. Nabo sebethuka bema, uQethuka usethi:

“Nangu uMaphulana! Bengivele ngasho ngathi masingathatheli izinto phezu. Masihlale phansi sizwe ukuthi ufika nandaBazini?”

Nempela lonke idlanzi lezinsizwa lahlala phansi labuka uChithumuzi yena wangabanaka, wahlala kuqala sengathi yibona owaBo laba ebeBethi makuhanjwe yena engathandi. Wayesethi:

“Hhawu Maphulana, kade uhambile. Basesithi usuyoshokobezwa ngathi kwaBakini. UkuBa uke walibala, ubungeke usasibona ngoBa besesisuka lapha sesishayana izikhundla.”

“Yini ukuBa nikhulumise okwaBafana niBadala?” KuBuza uMaphulana. “Kanti lento eniyizele ifana nokugawula izinduku yini, noma into enoBucayi? Ingani nizothatha umkamuntu niBaleke naye? Anazi yini ukuthi lento enizoyenza ngukufa uqobo lwakho, ngoBa niHamba phezu kwezimbemba zemikhonto yaBezizwe. Anazi yini ukuthi nizodunga amadlozi omuzi wenkosi, nizobekana nomnyama okufanele niklaye ezibukweni lawo? Aninakuwela kulelizibuko ngaphandle kokuba amadlozi akini onke eniphekezela, futhi ezohlangana nawakuBo kantombi lena enifuna ukuyikhipha isigcagca.” Konke lokhu kukhulunywa nguMaphulana.

“Qha, nsizwa endala, musa ukuthukuthela ngoBa thina besesithukile”, kusho uQethuka.

“EzindaBeni ezinjengalezi kufanele umuntu anyathele ngokukhetha amaBala”, kusho uMaphulana. “Okokuqala bekufanele ngizifihle ngaphambi kokuba ngingene emzini wenkosi ngoBa funa abakithi bangibone, noma funa ngisolelwe njengomuntu obengakaBonwa lapha emgcagcweni. Okwesibili ngilahle yonke imvunulwana lena ngahamba ngiphethe uboko, ngizigqokele ibeshu lami kuphela. Bengithanda ukuhosha umoya futhi wezinto zonke njengoba kugcagciswa izintombi ezimbili zakithi. Kazizwani lezizintombi, kusuka khona ekhaya bezingakhulumisani ngoBa onina abakhulumisani. Ukuthola indaba kahle ngalona esimfunayo ngiye ngaqonda ngaseqembini lalentombi esingayifuni, ngalalelisisa izinkulamo zabo bengangiboni. Indaba yenzekile!” KuBabaza yena belu uMaphulana.

Kuthi lapho esho njalo bethuke bonke, baphathe izihlangu zabo sengathi isiyaphakwa, BaBuye Bazibeke phansi, Baqalaze ndawozonke. Abesethi uChithumuzi:

“Kanjani?”

“Nami njalo bese ngizobuza”, kusho uMasimini, abanye bethule. KuBe sengathi uMaphulana uyathula abeseKhuluma:

“Intombi esiyilandile iyona efike yakhiwa yadlula lena ephume ekhaya kuthiwa iyobuya nesibaya sonke sezinkomo. Inkosi ifike yayilobola yadlulisela kwathi lena izinduna ebeziyikhulumele yalotsholwa ngamaShumi amaBili kuphela.”



“Pho niyoyikhwela kanjani leyontombi madoda?”  
Kubuza omunye wezinsizwa. “Nami ngiyiyona nginge-  
beke ngemuva ngishiye umbuso.”

Wathi uBangani:

“Iyona du efunekayo, yona leyo elotsholwa ngezifa-  
yabaya zamakhosi. Kanti umfowethu yena akansizwa  
yini? Futhi khona lokho ukuβa sithi inkosi lena esize  
kuyo, sikuthaphaphi lokhu uswela lwamakhosi lunye,  
lakwaZulu? Awu sukani, thanini niyesaba ukuthathela  
umfowethu intombi; sisuke sonke sigoduke.”

“Kugoduke thina, Bangani?” Kubuza uChithumuzi.  
“Qha, thina kasigoduki intombi singahambi nayo. Ku-  
nokugoduka kuyogoduka amadlozi ethu, ayosibika ema-  
khaya, thina zidumbu zethu sisele lapha emagangeni  
asoNgoye. Bengithe mina kuhle sihlasela umuzi lona;  
kodwa nina niyesaba.”

“Seniyaphosisa lapho, ngoβa indaba yami kanikayi-  
zwa yonke, kodwa senihilana ngamazwi niBangani”,  
kusho uMaphulana. Basebethula bonke belalela into  
ezoxoxwa nguMaphulana.

“Emva kokuβa ngizwe konke ngisuke ngayoqaphela  
ngasemnyango lapho umakoti lona esimfunayo elele  
khona. Akubanga isikhathi kwaqhamuka intombaza-  
nyana yakhe umakoti, ngayiqhweba yeza yafike nga-  
yitshela ukuβa ingibizele impeleki. Nayo angilindanga  
isikhathi eside kakhulu yaqhamuka, ngakhuluma nayo  
njengentombazana engiyaziyo, futhi kuβe kuyintomba-  
zana eyazi isifuβa sikaNomcebo — — ngisho intombi  
lena esize lapha ngayo. Ngikhulumile nempeleki ngayi-  
bekela ngamaβala. Kangazike nxa isifike kumninindaba  
ukuthi yena uyothini. Ngimtshelile nendawo esikuyo  
ukuthi angaphuma aqonde ngaphi. Akukho okunye  
ukuβa silinde kuphela. Uma amathongo akithi esibekile  
kulungile, kodwa uma esifulathele sizohlala phansi  
icebo lizakhe.”

Esho njalo zonke izinsizwa zahlala phansi zaphumula,  
kwayikhani bezwayo ukuthi balambile, bathukulula  
imiphako ababeyiphethe baβelana badla. Izindlebe  
zaβo njalo zazilalele izigi zomuntu ozayo enyonyoβa.  
Amehlo aβo abuka njalo emzini wenkosi lapho kwakwe-  
nanyiwe, kuxokozelwa kuβonakala ukuthi kuphuzwa

utshwala sekubukudwa ezimpisweni; nabanye abazena-  
mele bashaya umgadlelo ngoβa kusinisa umntwana  
wenkosi. Zahlala izinsizwa zabuka, zezwa imiphimbo  
yoma, yomela utshwala; kodwa umthetho wawungazi-  
vumele ukuthi zingasuka lapho.

## ISAHLUKO IX.

Wanele wafulathela maqede uMaphulana uNomanzi,  
intombazana eyayiphelezela uNomcebo nayo yafulathe-  
la, yabutha ibayi layo yakhothama yangena endlini.  
Yenyuka nendlu yayeyafika kuNomcebo lapho waye-  
hleli khona ezigubuzele ngenguβo yakhe. Wathi uku-  
fika khona uNomcebo wamqhweba wasondela eduze,  
bembathisana nguβonye. Wathi uNomcebo:

“Hawu sonke lesisikhathi esingaka kade usuyephi?”

Kodwa uNomanzi akaphendulanga. Esikhundleni  
salokho wasondela kuyena, wahlala njengaye eneβe imi-  
lenze wayesengathi uyacamela kuNomcebo njengomu-  
ntu okhathelayo, khona ezokhuluma kahle endlebeni  
kungezwa muntu, futhi inkulumo yaβo ingasolisi muntu.  
Waqala wathi:

“Uyakhumbula ukuthi ngelanga nakho sihlezi phansi  
laphaya mhla siza lapha, kwadlula kithina isixuku se-  
zinsizwa sishaya ihuβo?”

Wathi uNomcebo:

“Ngiyakhumbula kahle.”

“Wathini kimina?”

“Ngakutshela ukuthi kangisona isilima, nokuthi konke  
ukwenza kukaBembesile akulutho. Awuβonike namhla-  
nje ukuthi ugcinaphi?”

Waphendula uNomanzi wathi:

“Ngiyaβona, washo; nakhu namuhla sekwenzakele,  
uphike kulokhuyakuqhenya kwakhe? Akukho kodwa  
okunye owakukhuluma kimina? Caβanga funa mhla-  
wumbe usukhohliwe.”

Bathula soβabili, uNomcebo ecaβanga kodwa watha-  
tha phansi konke okwehlakala ngaleyomini wakuphe-  
ndula konke ekhanda lakhe, kodwa akakhumbulanga  
lutho nempela. Amasango enkumbulo akhe ayevuleka



kukho konke kodwa lapho elinga ukucabanga into enye ayishoyo kuNomanzi kwakufika lapho kuthi khuhle, kuhlwe emini. Wayesethi kuNomanzi uNomcebo:

“Qha, angiboni lutho engalukhulumayo ngaphandle kwalokhu esengikutshele khona. Uma mhlawumbe wena ungihola ngemibuzo ethile ngingakhumbula, kodwa angiboni lutho.”

UNomanzi akathandanga ukumwalazisa uNomcebo; kodwa wabona ukuthi kuhle ukuaba amphonse imibuzwana ethize. Ngakhoke wathi:

“Njengoba usugcageile-nje injani inhliziyi yakho ukuthokoza?”

“Impela ngithokoza kabi; kodwa nxa ungangishiya manje njengoba kade usathe shelele-nje ngifikelwa uvalo engingalwazi ukuthi olwani.”

Athi uNomanzi,

“Ngiyezwa, qhuba phambili.”

Athi uNomcebo,

“Akukho okunye.”

“Ungasho kanjani ukuthi uyathokoza, lokhu uBembesile nangu emhlane wakho?”

“UBembesile anginanda naye. Uzozakhela owakhe umuzi, nami ngibeke owami kuphela.” Kusho uNomcebo.

“Yebo ngiyezwa. Okungukuthi usho ukuthi umfokazi lona owathi ngelinye ilanga uyofika azokulanda usukhohliwe ngaye? Unamangake namhla ngoaba nangu phandle, usefikile ulande wena.”

“Awu, uthini Nomanzi?” Washo lawamazwi ngokwethuka okukhulu uNomcebo. Engazi wazibona esiyiholisile imilenze yakhe, ingubo yambulula imilenze kaNomanzi, yasala obala, wathatha wazisonga ekhanda sengathi uyakhohlwa ukuthi ukhehlile. Wenzisa okomntwana eshaywa umoya omakhaza ebusweni, asuke adonse ingubo ngokushesha azivale lonke ikhanda. Wabona lokukwethuka uNomanzi, wabuza wathi:

“Indaba yalomfokazi kanti sewuyikhohlwe yini?”

Esikhundleni sokuaba aphenandle lokho uNomcebo wathatha eyakhe indaba wathi:

“Lokho ukwazi kanjani?”

“Njengoba ungiyibona ngiphuma phandle-nje uthi ngivelaphi? Akuwena yini okade ungisola uthi kade

ngilithaziswe yini phandle? Ingani nang'umntwana efika engiqhweba ethi kimina ukhona umuntu ophandle ofuna ukungibona; okungukuthi ubungamboni?”

“Njengoba kade ngigcagca-nje, umqondo wami sengathi kawuthathi kahle. Ngizwa ngikhathele. Kwesinye isikhathi unga bona ngiqhunsule amehlo uze uthi ngiyabona kanti kangiboni lutho. Ingqondo yami ikhathele. Ngiqale ngakhathazwa indaba kaBembesile, yangicoba umphefumulo; ngahamba indlela ende ngisuka eDumbe nakhu namuhla ngidlule oNgoye, manje umzimba wami ucofekile; indaba yonke yokugcagca kwami nokusina nokumiswa kwethu izolo kungidumisa inhloko manje. Kanti ngiyinsimbi yini yona engezwele kukhathala?”

“Uzoba yinsimbike namuhla ngoaba, nang'umfokazi phandle.”

“Kodwa umbone kanjani? Ngiyazi ukuthi kawumazi”, kusho uNomcebo.

“Ukuphuma kwami phandle”, kusho uNomanzi, “ngifumanise indoda-nje ende eseyiqala ubumpunga. Ngethuka kodwa ngasheshe ngayikhumbula. Uma ucabanga uthi ufani? Qagela.”

Wathi uNomcebo,

“Kasikho isikhathi sokuqagelisana manje, qhuba indaba”, washo ngokushisa kwenhliziyi kuxubene nokulangazela indaba lena.

Wathi uNomanzi:

“UMaphulana!”

Wathi uNomcebo:

“UMaphulana?”

Waphinda uNomanzi wathi:

“Uqobo lwakhe uMaphulana.”

Wathula uNomcebo, noNomanzi, naye wathula kwathi fithi ifu elimnyama labagubuzela. Kwakuyoba enye indaba ukuaba igama likaMaphulana kalizange liphathwe; kodwa wanele waliphatha uNomanzi lavula amasango amaningi ayevaliwe engqondweni kaNomcebo. Ukuthi Maphulana kwakumkhumbuzwa unina ekhaya esele yedwa engazi ukuthi njengoba uMaphulana elapha-nje ngabe usele nobani; ukuthi Maphulana kwakumkhumbuzwa izikhumba zakhe zemfene abehlekwa



ngazo kodwa aphunyeleliswe yizona wagcagca kahle kunamuhla; igama likaMaphulana lalimkhumbuza uMalambule.

Yonke lento yagijima ekhanda likaNomcebo njenge-nhlansi yonyazi idweba emafini ezulu phezulu, kubuye kuBe mnyama. Besekundindizela izulu phezulu. Uku-ndindizela kwezulu kuyena kwaBa umbuzo awufaka kuNomanzi wathi:

“UMaphulana uthi mangenzi?”

“Akusekho okunye. Ukuphuma lapha endlini si-hambe. Uma uhamba nami ngiyohamba. Noma wena unghambani, mina ngiyahamba. ABadala bathi *‘Indoda kayifeli ocansini, ifela ezibini’*. Lesosaga bathi siqondene namadoda, kodwa namuhla ngizizwa ngiyindoda nami.” Kusho uNomanzi.

Wathi uNomcebo:

“Lesosaga sishiwo ezindaBeni zempi, siphathelene namadoda emizi. Wena usiphatha kanjani-nje nempela.”

“Ngithe mina uma wena usala lapha unghambani, mina ngiyahamba. LendaBa inxazimbili. Uma uphuma ulandela uMaphulana usindisa bonke laBaBantu aBa-lapha konkosi. Kodwa uma wena unghambani ukuphuma ulandele uMaphulana kuyokusa Bekhomba ngeminwe ukuthi lapha kwakwakhe umuzi othize owabuqwa aBantu aBaBengaziwa ngenxa yentombi eyayigcagcele khona. UMaphulana ungitshelile konke lokhu.”

“Obani laBaBantu aBazoshaya Babuqe umuzi lo?” Kubuza uNomcebo.

“Uyabona, Nomcebo, isikhathi sokuphikisana kanginaso. Wena usudliwe yizintelezi lapha. Akukhulumi wena kukhuluma yizintelezi ozeqileyo zalapha konkosi. Kuqale kwanguwena othe useza lapha wangitshela ukuthi sengathi ikhona into ezokwehlakala noma ungh-cagca lapha konkosi kawukucina khona. Kanti lawomazwi wawuwakhuluma ugwaneka yini? Lezo-zinsizwa ezakucoba amathambo ngehuBo lazo, nathi saze salithatha sasina ngalo, yizo lezi ezilapha phandle. Zihamba noMaphulana. Nawe waziBona. Noma zazi-thandeka kakhulu kodwa emehlweni azo kwakuvutha umlilo, izihlangu zazo ziqukethe amazwi aBafazi ne-zingane ngisho nawesilisa, bonke Bekhala, imikhonto

uyabo iwa ibenyezela kodwa iyosukuma ibomvu isicakwe yizingazi zamadoda. Ukukhethwa kwazo lezozinsizwa nawe waziBona zidlula.”

Wathula uNomcebo, wangaphendula lutho.

Wagcina ngokuthi uNomanzi:

“Sengiyalala. Kothi bonke sebelele lapha, mina ngi-phume. Ngiyokuqhweba ngozipho. Kuhle konke engi-kudingayo kulapha.”

Washo njalo uNomanzi wazisonga ngengubo, no-Nomcebo wathula wangaphendula. Isikhathi sokuBa anqume sasesifikile; kodwa kwaBanzima.

Izulu phandle lalisile, lilihle izinkanyezi zonke zichithekile emkhathini wezulu ziqhweba okusemhlabeni ngokucwazimula kwazo. Enzansi emfuleni amanzi aye-khala phezu kwamadwala nasezingoxini sengathi phakathi kuwona kukhona imikhovu echwensayo ikhwifa amagwebu, ihudula njalo amanzi iwabekisa olwandle. Ayehaza amanzi umzila wawo ukhanye nakude. Uza-volo phansi emafukwini ehlathi eligudle umfula naye wayephethe ingoma yakhe esengela aBantabakhe. Endlini bonke basebelele, Becobekile; kodwa munye umuntu owayengalele. UNomanzi. Wayebeke ngawayizolo ezwa konke, izandla zakhe ezelula, eqoqa anamandla okukuqoqa.

## ISAHLUKO X.

UMalambule wayengowaseMaChubeni abuswa ngu-Sigananda. USigananda lo uzalwa nguZokufa wakwa-Shezi owayakhe eMome ngaseNkandla. Ngesikhathi sekuBikwa ngemali yamakhandla uSigananda kwaseku-yikhehla eseliqinile. Izinduna zakhe naBanye-nje phakathi kwesizwe sakhe baseBethanda sengathi angagudluzwa kubekwe esikhundleni sakhe indodana yakhe uNdaBaningi. Ikhona into eyayibanga lokho. UNda-baningi lona yena wayesemusha izindaBa esazithathela phezulu igazi lishisa emthanjeni yakhe. IzindaBa eza-ziphethe isizwe sakwaZulu zazishisa nazo zidinga amakhanda ashisayo. Pho, amakhehla amadala aye-ngaziqonda kanjani izindaBa zemithetho emisha wona esegugile na? Ingani kuthe lapho uNdaBaningi ebekwa



icala eMgundlovana lokuthi akafikanga enkantolo ebizwa ngesamanisa, yena wayifela ngamathe leyonda-ba. Futhi nasemihlanganweni kwakuthi nxa kuphathwa abelungu uNdafaningi ku-be bamthuma uku-ba athathe imikhonto alwe. Akusikho ukuthi uSigananda wayengeqhawe, qha; wayeyingwazi, aziwa, kodwa sekubekwene ubuso nobuso nomlungu wayeqoma ukuzithulela afulathele angenzi lutho. Uma wayengeqhawe izimbongi zazingasho kanjani ukuthi:

*“Mgwazi kadabuli,  
Umgoq’ovimbel’amathol’amhlophe,  
Obengadlel’izinkob’ebodweni,  
Obedlel’esicocweni:  
UNdabazifikakuqala kumfana kaZonjica.*

*Uziziba zibomvu,  
Ophakel’izinhlanzi zingalambile,  
Waphakel’izingwenya zingalambile  
Umjijyezi wophindo,  
Opheth’izihlangw’ezibili,  
Esinye sicitshwa uZibebu kwabakaMaphitha,  
Esinye sacitshwa uPiti kwabaphuma phesheya*

*Uhlekis’omhle kisayo,  
Usifutshana sengane yasebuphukuphukwini;  
UMatshuzatshuz’ozimamba,  
uSehla ngandawana yakhe yedwana;  
uZilima zikaZokufa,  
Abathi zisemuva kanti ziphambili.  
Usinga lwentul’umathung’isidwaba.”*

Naye wayezazi ukuthi uliqhawe ngakhoke wayengathandi uku-ba agudluzwe kalula, ikakhulu uma lokhukugudluzwa kuzohamba ngomthetho wabelungu. Nonnumzane uSandasi naye waku-bona lokhu uku-ba akufanele uku-ba bafune abaseMaChufeni ukumfaka ezinkulumeni zesizwe ngoku-ba bethi izwi lokugudluzwa uSigananda maliphume kuye. Yena wathi qha, makuhlangane isizwe izwi liphume kuso lize kuHulumeni, ku-be uHulumeni osesukela emazwini aseMachufeni. Pho lokhu abantu abacushisa izindaba ezingahambi kahle phakathi kwabelungu nabantu abathandi ukuvela

obala, naleyondaba yokugudlulwa kukaSigananda yacwila. Ezindlebeni zikaSigananda isiza nyovane, sekungabelungu abafuna ukufaka uNdafaningi esikhundleni. Lomqondo wayona inhliziyi kaSigananda, wayeseqala ukuzonda abelungu.

Umhlangano lona owawumemayo efuna amadoda esizwe kwasekungoba wayesengenwe ukufa alwe nabelungu abamkhipha esikhundleni. UMalambule naye waya noyise enkosini ukuyolalela izindaba ukuma kwazo. Lapha kwankosi kwakubuthene izishomo zamadoda zonke zihlomile. Kuthe lapho ibandla seliphelele lonke induna kaSigananda uLunyana kaLuhungu wakhuluma ebeka indaba ebandla wathi:

*“Ake nithule umsindo! Njengoba ibandla seliphelele, zikhona izindaba ezinkulu eziphathelene noHulumeni, nathi, nabantu basesiLungwini. Nibona lapha-nje sibuthanele uku-ba sibophe izwi libe linye, sazi lapho simi ngakhona.”*

Wakhuluma uLunyana, ibandla lathula-nje lambuka, ingani wayebeke impendulo kodwa kakubangabikho namunye owaphendulayo.

*“Izindaba sezizinkulu, noma niphendula noma ningaphenduli. Silapha-nje sinamanxusa avela esiLungwini lapho amambuka asehlome khona uku-ba sibulawe thina esisanamatehele emibusweni yakithi. Lawama mbuka enzisa okwezizwe zasemaMbedwini zona okwathi sihlanganisa uZulu wonke kuDingana eMzinyathi, zathatha izibamu zaqhushuza thina, sehlulwa nombuso wakithi wawa. Kuthe noma uCetshwayo ethi uyawuvusa lowombuso kwasuka abasesiLungwini bahloma baphelele basiza abelungu uku-ba kubulawe thina. Pho nimangala kanjani uma sehlulwa na? Ingani yinina enixazula amadlozi phakathi amanye niwabekise esizweni sonke amanye kodwa niwaphendulise izikhuni alwe nathi na? Ingani khona namhlanje, imali yama-khanda isimenyezalwe kasazi ukuthi simiphi?”*

Kwasukuma uMehlokazulu ozalwa uSihayo okwathi esengumfana wethulwa nguyise enkosini uCetshwayo. Umsebenzi wakhe esigodlweni kwakungukukha amanzi enkosi ephatha isigubu. Wachuma waze wabekwa induna yeNgo-bamakhozi, wathi ngoku-banjwa kwenkosi



iweliswa wawela naye waya esiLungwini. Wayehamba namadoda amabili uMavukuthu kaSothondose, noMthela kaNgoza. Wasukuma wathi:

“Thina basesiLungwini silapha-nje ngoBa besesithi nina senilibumbile izwi, sesizothatha lona senze njengokusho kwenu. Elethu thina ngasesiLungwini sithumele kwaZulu kuDinizulu sathi: ‘Hawu, thina nkosi asisafuni abelungu sifuna wena nkosi yethu’, kodwa impendulo besingakayitholi ngoBa izigijimi namanxusa ahambe umhlabo wonke. Nakini silapha njengezigijimi, sithi thina kwelasesiLungwini ‘*Lemali yamakhandla asiyitheli kungonakala kanye*’.”

KwaBe akashongo uMehlokazulu, ibandla lonke lahlokoma lathi:

“Elethu!”

Wezwa kuvungama yonke indawo sengathi kudedelwe isihlwa sezinyosi siphuma sibuduzela sibulana ngezimpiko. Ingani kwakukade kuthule kuthe cwaka, wezwa kunxapha phansi naphezulu; abanye bethimula njengezimpongo nanjengezinyamazane zethukile endle; abanye baqala nokufinya behlikihla izandla bezesula emabeshwini abo abanye bezesulela ezihlangwini nabanye bephulula ngazo izimpiselo zaBo bezicwebezela.

Kwathi ingani umhlangano usufuna ukuhlakazeka wasukuma uSigananda uqobo lwakhe wathi:

“Ake nikahle.”

Ibandla lonke lahlala phansi kwasukuma imbongi yamusho, yamusho yenanela konke osekwenziwe yasho wathi:

“Mgwazi kadaBuli!”

Ibandla laphendula lathi:

“Bayede!”

Useqhweba indoda-nje eyayiseyinsizwa, eyayihleli phansi kanye namadoda amanye. Yayiluswazi ithe klwi yomile sengathi ibulawa yilanga. Kodwa kuthi nxa usuyibukisisile ubuye uthi qha, yisigilamkhuba lesi. Kanti nempela uqinisile. Kwakunguyena Chakijane kaGezindaka, kaNomaqongqotho kaJobe wakwaSithole. Wathi ukusukuma uChakijane kwamoyizela izinsizwa ezindala ezazihleli eduze kwakhe, kwathi uLunyana wahleka, inkosi yambuka yahwaqa, yase

imqhweba ngomunwe, wasondela kuyo inkosi; yathi ukuhleba kuyena, nempela wasukuma uLunyana wathi: “Ngaphambi kokuba nihlakazeke kuhle nimazi lomuntu ophakathi kwethu namuhla, ikakhulu ngoBa naye uNdaBezitha emenamele.”

Wathi lapho esho njalo ibandla laquBula lathi:

“Bayede!”

“Lomfana, lo”, kusho uLunyana ekhomba uChakijane ngokudla komkhonto, “lomfana, lo, nguyena Chakijane ekade nanizwa ngaye nasezindaBeni ukuthi kukhona uChakijane kaGezindaka,

*“UMthwalis’abantw’amacala,  
UNongen’endlin’emnyameni,  
Umqhathi wemp’azilwele,  
Umand’angawabadala,  
Imbedlambedan’imizi yamadoda yabola,  
Ngob’ibed’uSishishili ezalwa nguMnqandi.”*

Wathi ufuna ukumnquma lapho, ibandla elase livuse amakhanda lilalele laKhala lathi:

“Musho!”

Wala uLunyana wathi:

“Qha, angimazi kwakuyaphi mina, ngazi zona lezozinhloko, sengiphelile njalo. Akazisho yena. Iqhawe liyazazi izibongo zalo.”

Washo njalo wahleka uChakijane walibuka ibandla lonke, ingani kwakukhona izingengelezi zamadoda kulona, akafikelwanga ukwesaba. Wathi ingani ubesakade esukumile, wabasengathi uyasondela phakathi kwalo ibandla. UMehlokazulu wathi ukuthinta uMavukuthu, noMthela wanyenze ethi:

“Nguyena Chakijane lona, uSigilamkhuba eyivuma, izigilamkhuba ziyiphika-nje?”

Wathi uMavukuthu,

“Wewu ngangithi sengimdala.” UMthela wathi:

“Uqobo lwakhe.”

Wahleka futhi uChakijane wathi eqala ukukhuluma:

“Qha, boBaba, yimina lowo, okade eshiwo ngundunakulu. Yiminake lowo”, washo ezikhomba esifubeni. “Abanye ngoBuciko baBo bangisho ngazo izinhlamvu ekade zilandelwa yinduna, abanye bazixhuma bathi:



*“UMabizw'asabele njengengane,  
USigila-mikhuba eyivuma.  
Zonk'izigila-mikhuba ziyiphika.  
Umgwaz'onqwabelayo,  
Ogwaz'ethetha njengonina.”*

Wathi lapho esho njalo, kwathi amakhehla ngenxa yokuthukuthela athi:

“Suka mfana wawugwazaphi?” Amakhehla akasho ngoBa ethukuthela umfana ekhuluma amanga. Kodwa athathwa nguBumnandi Bezibongo, afuna ukuzizwela wona ngokwawo ukuthi ngempela lezizindaBa azizwayo ngoChakijane zingamaqiniso na. Athi ingani ayamBuzaya ayahleka. Amanye awake azibona izimpi, izinsizwa zikhwela zigingqika phambi kwawombayimbayi nezi-bamu, asethule-nje enkeme imilomo eBambe ongaphansi. Ayazi ukuthi kuseyiwona nawo ayegwaza agebise nje-ngamanzi empophoma; kodwa namuhla izikhathi zase-zidedelene.

Wayesewuphendula umbuzo uChakijane wathi:

“Ukugwaza khona sengagwaza kwakhathala izingalo, kwaBamhlophe nanamuhla kukhalwa ngami, emaNgisini nakumaQadasi. Lapho ihlangana khona kwaBamhlophe kukhalwa ngami; naseMgungundlovu ngilapha-nje kukhalwa ngami ukuthi yimina engiqhatha impi yama-khanda; namakhosi nezinduna ezimnyama kulolukhu-ve the akhala ngami ukuthi izibamu ayozitholaphi. Yiminake lowo; ofuna mina nakhu lapha ngikhona. Ngilapha mina:

*“Hlehla-nyova njengomthakathi,  
Intshelelezan'eshel'amasosha kwaBobo,  
Imvungamvunga edin'amajaji,  
UMgqum'undawonye nonongqayi.  
uDondolozela ngezin'odakeni,  
uSehla ngekhandla laph'oManyathi,  
Behla khona ngezinyawo.*

*Umgwaz'ophindelayo,  
Owathuk'izanya  
Onjengevaka.  
Unxeb'alibonwa ngabalandakazi,  
UChakijan'ohlal'ezijungujungwini zamadoda.*

*Umhlamba bempheh'amaqana njengesibuda,  
Usiqobe singameva kaMahlamb'ahlale.  
Maye! Maye! Ngiyokufa.”*

Wathi egcina lapho amadoda amadala amanye aye-sengenwe usinga athwala izagila ahamba sengathi umhlangano sewuhlakazekile. WawaBona uChakijane ukuthi amadoda asedelile akasadingi lutho lwakhe lobufakazi wayesehlala phansi.

Wathi uSigananda:

“Senidelile na?”

Amadoda onke athi:

“Bayede!”

Wayesukuma uChakijane wathi:

“Manje sengizofika endabeni enkulu. Ngiyazi ukuthi nxa sengikuleli laseMome angisekude nendawo lapho kuhlala khona uBambatha kaMancinza wakwaZondi. Nango umuntu engimfunayo, njengoBa sengizwile ukuthi abelungu seBamkhipha esikhundleni sikayise BaBeka uyisekazi uMagwaBaBa ukuBa aPhathele uFunizwe umfowaBo kaBambatha. Futhi ngizwile ukuthi iningi lakwaZondi liyamfuna ukuBa abuyele esikhundleni. Yenake okaMancinza useyiqhathile ngoBa ukuBaleka kwakhe ngaseMgungundlovana uqonde kwaZulu. Ngi-funa bona aBanjengami aBaqhathi bezimpi BaNgabaleki, Bazilwe. Inkosi yakini sengiyitholile nezindaBa zayo sizizwile kwaZulu ukuthi kwathi noma izinceleBana ezinjengoSishishili imali yamakhanda ziyithela kodwa nina BaKwaNcube nathi imali aninayo. Hhawu ziyigiyela izinsizwa, nesaga sazo siyasazi lapho zithi:

*“Yayize, yayize MaZulu!”*

KwaBe akashilo uChakijane, zasithatha isaga izi-nsizwa, zagiya zithokoza ngoBa sezibona uChakijane, zathi:

*“Yayize, yayize MaZulu!”*

Ilanga laseliyoshona, inhlamvu yalo iBomvu. Inyanga kwakuyilapho iphumayo, iyinhle imangalisa, ikhanga amehlo omuntu ezihambela . . . Emagqumeni ngama-gquma izinkomo zasezibuya ziqonde ngasezibayeni; nalezo eziseduze nezibaya zazidlela osebeni lwezinta-ngo zemizi aBafana bezivimbela ukuBa zingafohli zi-



ngene emasimini. Izimazi zonke zazihamba namathole uwabone etshekedula eshiya onina engena phakathi kwezimbuzi. Kude emimfuleni lapho umnyama wawusugcwele khona emahlathini amnyama agcwele amahlozi, nameva amangalisayo, omzungulu nomhluhlwe; phakathi kulawomahlozi kwakukhala amakhonde ebiza imizi yawo ukuBa kuzolalwa. Izinswempe emihosheni nasemafusini zazikhala nazo phansi kweziqundu ziqhwanda izikhwali zokudla nezikhundla ezizolala kuzona. Kuyo yonke lemisindo wawuzwa ukuvungama kwamadoda esechitheka ephuma ebandla emungunya izindaBa ekade zixoxwa khona. Onke ayephuma ngazwi linye lokuthi kunokuBa kuthelwe imali yamakhandla, kungcono kufiwe. YeBo abantu khona mandulo baBekuxolela ukufa balahlekelwe impilo yaBo kuleli, khona bezothola impilo yaBo ephelele nengcono ezweni elizayo lawoBaBamkhulu namathongo. Lapho kungekho zimpi, nandlala, nantela, namibalaBala yezizwe; kuphela ukuthula-nje. Ezweni lamathongo!

Phakathi emzini wenkosi izinsizwa azithandanga ukuchitheka kanye noyise. Zasala zihaya ihuBo elaselichitheke nomhlaBa. Zonake zazilisinela, zingenzi njengo-Chithumuzi nabafoWaBo bona aBaBelihaya behamba bengahleli phansi. Wawuzwa zisho zithi:

*“Inkosi yahlul’izizwe,  
Wangibon’uBambatha,  
Sibashise ke sizwe,  
Hhe yaye!”*

Wayethule umfo kaGezindaka eBaBuka ngoBa iningi lalezizinsizwa zazingazange ziyazi impi zisuswa ifundululo lokunqaba ukuthela zingazange zibone umkhonto ungena uqaqa isikhumba somuntu, uDaBula inyama uyahlukanisa kuthi kulowomsele uBone kumpompoza igazi eliBomvu lishisa liphuma emithanjeni. Zazizwa ngendaBa ukuthi umkhonto ungena ezibilini zendoda uze ugoBele phakathi. Zazithathwa yiqungo lokuhaya ihuBo lempi. UChakijane wazibuka wazithanda. Wathi:

“Ngokuvunula kwazo zingikhumbuza izinsizwa engihlangane nazo ngomgwaqo odlula entshonalanga nakwaNongoma. Nazo bezihloBe kanje. Into engithintile

kuzona ukuBa zihuBe lelihuBo. NgiyesaBa mhlawumbe BekuyiButho likaBambatha.”

“Qha”, kusho uSigananda, “uBambatha akanakuBa kwenye indawo ngaphandle kwalapha eMome.”

“Pho, lezozinsizwa bezilithathephi ihuBo engilizwa lapha ngalesisikhathi esiphathelene noBambatha.” KuBuza uChakijane.

“AmahuBo lawa ahamba nomoya wena kaGezindaka. Nathi besikesihuBe elikhulu likaDingana sisebasha uma sesiqinise nemisipha sisho sithi:

*“Zwan’isidumo sempi,  
Inkos’inqab’ukuphum’endlini.  
Ndaba yempi!  
MaBaboboZ’ingazi,  
Hlab’abezizwe,  
Wo yaye! wo yaye!”*

Uze wena ongaziyo usuthatheka usuthi yigama lethu esisina ngalo kanti qha. NaBoke laBoBantu ohlangane naBo, BeBelihlaBelela-nje ngoBa belizwile.”

Kuthe besakhuluma kwezwaKala inceku ikhuleka emnyango ngoBa phela kwakukhona izixuku zamakhehla emi ngamane nangamathathu efakana imilomo ngendaBa kaBambatha. Bayidedela yangena emnyango, yagaqa ngamadolo, yaye yahlala phezu kwezithende ihlikihla izandla. Endlini kwathula bonke BaBuka inceku lena ekhulekayo. Yazibika ukuthi esangweni kukhona abantu aBafuna ukukhuluma nenkosi uSigananda. Bayashesha bayaphuthuma ngoBa baphuma ngaseMgundlovana. Kwathi iBuzwa inceku ukuthi BaNgobani yathi yona kayazi ngoBa BaBukeka bengabanumzane behloniphekile. Wayesethi uSigananda inceku leyo mayiBangenise endlini. Kuthe ukuBa ithi shelele inceku wathi uChakijane:

“Ikhandla lami lingitshela ukuthi laBaBafo aBakwaZondi, baphuma kuye okaMancinza.”

“Hhawu wakhuluma umqondo okimina wena kaGezindaBa. Hhayi nokho sizobaBona, sizwe nabeze ngakho.”

Besaxoxa, kwasekuzwakala izigi phandle inceku naBo abantu aBaBefuna ukuBona uSigananda. Kwaku-



ngamakhehla amaBili ehamba nendoda-nje eyayisiqinile kodwa yona ingendala njengoSigananda, ithi mayibe intanga kaChakijane. Kuthe ukuBa bangene, banga-khuleka. Ubuso baBo baBungabonakali ngoBa kwasekuhwelele, nomlilo lo owawubasiwe wawungakhanyi ngokwanele ukuBa baBonakale. Bahlala phansi laselithi elinye ikhehla:

“Wo, sesikhulekile nina bakwaNcuBe.” Lasho lizilungisa lidonsa izinjoBo zalo, liphulula ibeshu, lihlala lizinza ocansini, lathi futhi selihleli, liqalaza endlini:

“Weu, waze wakhathala umuntu kwathi makakhale njengengane encane, angakhali nangoyise akhale ngonina.” Lisho njalo kalinake lutho ikhehla likhuluma lodwa. Bahleka laba abasendlini ingani baBengathi abanakile basavuse izinhlonzi zokuBa abantu bangene bangakhuleki. Kodwa uma kuthi bengakhulekile babuye bazikhulumele ngokuBona — — indaba yayisiyeqe amadolo, esikhundleni sokuBa ithukuthelise yayisuke ihlekise umuntu. Ngakhoke waBuza uSigananda wathi:

“Kuhanyukwaphi?”

Laphendula ikhehla elidala lathi:

“Kuphunywa le ngaseMgundlovana kwaZondi.”

“Kugondwephi?” KuBuza uChakijane.

“Qha, mnumzane size khona lapha, kwaNcuBe enkosini yakhona. Sihamba nomntwana wenkosi kaMancinza. Noma kungasemntwana wankosi walutho, ngoBa phela sekusezweni laBelungu, kulalwa sibeke lona, kuyasa bona seBebekelowa. Thina sihamba nomntwana wenkosi, kaManciza. Uye lona.” Lasho limkhomba phakathi kwawo amakhehla. UBambatha uhleli akanyakazi, uthule-nje amehlo yilokhu ewahlome kuChakijane wangawagudluza. Naye uChakijane useze waBona ukuthi uBambatha lona uBukana naye, kwaBakhona nokuzinyeza ukuthi ngaBe mhlawumbe umfanisa nomuntu wakwakhe yini, njengoBa baningi abantu bakwaZondi aBaBalekile bamhlamuka uBambatha, abanye bathanda ukumthengisa nakuBelungu. Mhlawumbe uBambatha ucaBanga ukuthi ungomunye waBo. Kuthe kusenjalo wathi uSigananda:

“Hawu, wena kaMancinza kangikuBoni, kumnyama, namehlo asequndekile ukuguga. Mfana kawusezi na-

kimi uzoxhawula sengikuzwele izindaba ezingaka zobuqhawe?” Washo ehleka uSigananda ngoBa kwakuyi-sinteli kulaBo abajwayeleyo. Wasukuma uBambatha weza kuSigananda wathi:

“Ngibona wena baBa. Ngisazi yini lokhu izinto sezi-guqukile-nje. Umngane wakho kakusemngane”, washo emxhawula eqhubeka nokukhuluma ethi, “okunguyena mngane wakho namuhla ngumuntu wezizwe.”

Wathi uSigananda:

“Usho kahle ngoBa salusuxhawula nalowomuntu wezizwe oseceleni kwami lapha. Mhlawumbe uke uzwe ngendaba ukuthi kukhona uChakijane kaGezindaka wodumo ezimpini zamaBunu namaNgisi. Uyenake lona olapha kimina namuhla.”

Washo njalo maqede uBambatha waselula isandla ngokungabaza wasinika uChakijane noChakijane esakhe waselula belokhu bebekene emehlweni bengakhulumisani. Zazezahlangana izandla zangomothelana, imizimba yaBo yasondelana, ingani uChakijane wayehleli phansi, wasukuma emgqikini walinganisana noBambatha owayemi. Waphakamisa isandla sakhe sekhohlo uBambatha wasibeka emahlombe akaChakijane wasiqinisa wathi:

“Nguwena ngempela uChakijane na?”

Akaphendulanga uChakijane wadimene wambuka wathela umzimba phansi, waBuye waBuza uBambatha wathi:

“Nangempela na?”

Wathi uChakijane:

“Akasekho omunye. Yimina.”

*“Unongen'endlin'emnyameni,  
Umqhathi wemp'azilwele.”*

“Akasekho omunye yimina lowo.”

BaBuye bathula baBukana, izandla zaBo zathi dedelele, baBuyela ezindaweni zaBo bahlala phansi.

Laphake kwahlangana amaqhawe amaBili odumo lwezimpi zokugcina ezaliwa nguZulu emnzansi we-Afilika, izizwe zonke sezadela zaBeka phansi amahawu nomkhonto. Amaqhawe okugcina akhombisa ukuthi uBuqhawe uZulu wayephiwe bona eBuphiwe ngamathongo khona kwasekudalweni. Angisho uBuqhawe obu-



bonwa emagwaleni alwa ngezibamu, nangombayimbayi, nangemishini endiza phezulu eyabikezelwa ngumfo kaSenzangakhona esezifela kwaDukuza. Qha! Ngisho ubuqhawe bendoda ifukana neny e indoda kuliwa. Ubuqhawe obuyekela phansi abantu besifazane bangabulawa baqothulwe nezingane bezincelisa, babulawe ngemvula yezinhlamvu eziqhuma ziphohloze, zisakaze konke okuphilayo nokungezwayo. Hhawu magwala!

OkaMancinza nokaGezindaka yiwona amaqhawe okugcina umlungu owasinisa ngethambo lawo. Nxa uzwa ngomfo kaThakhwini (Tarquin the Proud) ezindabeni ezindala zaseRoma owakhombisa ubuqhawe bamakhosi obuRoma kwaze kwagcina, esizwa ngumkhenyana wakhe uMamilusi (Mamilius) neny inkosi uLaphosena (Lars Porsena), naweke uboqonda ukuthi emaqhaweni okugcina kwezombuso kaZulu, kwaqhama umfo kaMancinza,

*“Bambath’umhlan’unamagwala,  
ULanga phuma sikothe,  
Kade sikothel’emafini,  
UMagaduzel’owabonel’empunzini.  
USilwane nkunzimbili kweNhlengana.”*

Qha, inkosi kayiqedwa iyathathwa-nje kuthi lapho kumnandi iyekwe.

Ehhe, lapha kwaSigananda kwahlangana amaqhawe lawo okugcina. Akubanga sikhathi uBambatha wabathshela ukuthi yena useyalwa eMgundlovana njengoba eshiyile-nje besekukubi, kusha imizi yabelungu neyamambuka. UChakijane afesebuza athi:

“Impi yakho ingakanani?”

Athi uBambatha:

“Ingamaviyo angamashumi amane, ngaphezu kwalokho ngethembe uSilwane induna yasesiLungwini okunguyena onabantu abangangezwe.”

Afube uChakijane:

“Njengoba naku sikubona-nje ukuthi ufuna ukuba sihlange nawe, wena kaMancinza, usucabange lisulini.”

Wahleka uBambatha owayeqalisa ukuba abekane

namadoda ayembuza ngokwenza kwakhe engamthatheli phezulu njengabalandeli bakhe. Wathatha wathi:

“Mina kanginasu ngaphandle kokuba nginitshelile ukuthi emuva le, eMgundlovana imizi yabelungu iyasha. Ngilapha-nje ngizocela isu lokuqhuba kuwena kaGezindaka ngoba ngizwile izimanga ozenzileyo ngempi yamaBunu ngokuba konke owakulingayo waphumelela kukho konke.”

Athi uChakijane:

“Qha, wena kaMancinza ngifuna ukuzwa umqondo wakho kuqala, nalokho ongifunela khona. Nxa sengizwile owakho umqondo namasu okuhambisa kwakho, nami ngizokhipha owami umqondo uwazi.” Nempela uBambatha wabona ukuthi ubekene nelinye iqili, kungcono alale phansi avume ngoba indaba yomlilo owayewuqale eMgundlovane yayinkulu, yayingadinga umqondo wendoda eyodwa, kanti yayidinga iningi, nalo iningi lelo liyiphathe ngokucophelela nangobucayi.

Wayesephendula ethi:

“Abelungu abakho nempela, bayingcosana ngoba laba abaneno abasahlangene nabangaphesheya kolwandle. NamaBunu awezwani namaNgisi.”

Ase amangale uChakijane athi:

“Uqinisile wena kaMancinza na? Wazi ngani ukuthi izilokazane kazihlangene. Ingani uyazi, mhlawumbe uyakhumbula amazwi kaSomsewu mhla elande abantwana bakaMonase, ewasho kuCetshwayo. Uyakhumbula ukuthi wathini?”

Wathi okaMancinza,

“Angiwazi Gezindaka.”

“USomsewu wathi esuka-nje, phakathi komkhandlu, wabiza inkosi ngegama wathi, ‘uyabona mfana kaMpande, uthini? Uma ubulala mina uyobe ubulala imbila emhlophe. Kuyohamba kuze kuthinteke nezingaphesheya kolwandle. Zonke ziyophuma ziyofuna ithambo lenye imbili; ziyolifuna zize zilithole.’ Wayesho ukuthini ngalokho?” Wabuza uChakijane wathula namakhehla ayelalele kuqhudelisana izazi nawo abona ukuthi kungawo ukuphendula ngoba uCetshwayo wayekade efusa wona. Kwaphendula leli elalifike noBambatha kade lithule lingakhulumi lutho, lathi:



“Wayeqondisa ukuthi lowo obulala umlungu, aka bulele lowomlungu yedwana, kodwa usebulele bonke abanye abelungu, nala bo angazange ababone, na bo sebeyomfuna befuna ukuphindisela.”

“Uqinisile ba ba.” Kusho uChakijane. “Ngakhoke njengoba esegwazile oka Mancinza washisa nemizi yezi-lokazana, umlilo sewokhekile kawusenakucinywa. Oka Mancinza yimbiba emnyama. Nezimbiba ezimnyama sekufanele ziphume emigodini yazo zizovikela enye imbiba emnyama, ngoba izindlela zalezizimbiba ezimhlophe sizazi singazazi. Kodwa ukuhlakanipha kwazo kuqukethwe yizenzo namazwi aka Somsewu umfo ka Sonjica. Uyise walowomlungu wayehlakani- phile, bakwethu. Nake naku bona uku ba umlungu afike asishayanise ngamakhandla asitshela ukuthi sonke singa- makhosi oswela, masibuse sonke ngoba siyalingana no- Cetshwayo? Konke lokhu ukwenzela okoku ba sixaba ne- sodwana, sibangisane ubukhosi, nezikhundla zasesi- Lungwini. Nempela kunjalo, kwasa-nje, siyanephulana sibanga ukuthandwa ngabelungu, ubudoda nobuqhawe abusekho.”

Washo njalo, wathula uChakijane, ikhehla lakwa- Zondi lathi: “Kade ngangithanda ukumbona lomfana. Sengifuna uku bona uyise omzalayo nganeliswe. Lokhu- kuhlakanipha okungaka ukuthathaphi ungakaxubi nakuxuba-nje ekhanda? Ingani thina esingamadoda indaba ka Somsewu kasiyichazi njengoba uyichaza-nje? Iyasahlula, kodwa siyanephulana nakhona lapho.”

Kuthe sekungathi kusakhohlakele uBambatha aku- zele lapha kuSigananda wathatha oka Mancinza wathi: “Namuhla kuliwa ngezibamu. Sonke lesisikhathi kade ngilwa indaba yazo. Izibamu zigcwele; zigcwele izindlu ezimbili. Enye indlu ise Mgundlovana, enye iseduze nomuzi wami.”

Kwabe akaligwinyile lelo, wahleka uChakijane wathi, “Nampoke thina esibafunayo, kungalokhu kukhulu- nywa into engayindawo. Kodwa nansi indaba embi: zingatholakala kanjani lezozibamu na?”

Wathi uBambatha:

“Lokho kulula ngoba ukhona umuntu wami osebenza esitolo esiseduze komuzi wami eMpanza. Yilapho lapho

kukhona izibamu ngempela. Phezu kwalokho kukhona nendlu yomsizi eduzana.”

La buza iqili elidala uChakijane lathi:

“Kuyokwenziwa njani endlini yomsizi lokhu wona wala ukuthintwa-nje ubese uqhuma njalo.”

Wayesethi oka Mancinza:

“Qha kulungile lokho ngoba umsizi kawusizi lutho indlu leyo singayiyeka enomsizi singayithinti, siqonde kuphela lapho kukhona izibamu.”

Wathula uChakijane elalele okukade kukhulunywa nguBambatha wayesethatha ethi:

“Njengoba esitolo leso kukhona abelungu izibamu ziyotholakala kanjani?”

“Kulula lokho ngoba siyothi sifika-nje kuqhwetshwe abantu laba abasebenzayo bese thina sithuma izinsizwa zekhethele zifike zibambe abelungu laba, kungabinda- bazalutho”, kukhuluma uBambatha.

Wayesebona naye uChakijane ukuthi icebo likaBa- mbatha lilungile futhi liyinto ekade wayeyicabanga akuyinto ayithathela phezulu wayeseyenza. Into eyam- misa isibindi nguku ba uBambatha unabantu bakhe abasebenza kubelungu basesitolo eMpanza. Futhike laba bantu ubethembile.

Indaba yokuthola izibamu kwa bayiyona esemiqondwe- ni yabo bonke kwaze kwa ba phakathi kobusuku ixoxwa ingapheli, kodwa kwavunyelwana ukuthi kusa ngaku- sasa kuyohanjwa lapho selintambama ilanga kuqondwe eMpanza. Kwalalwa emzini wonke kwathulisa kwathi nya. Wawuzwa ngakho ukuthi kukhona amakhosi aleleyo ngoba kwakuthula kuthule kuzwakale imbongi ibiza amakhosi ohlanga amadala akwaZulu, iwathathe, iwathathe, ibuye ithule kube sengathi sekulelwe, kodwa kuthi futhi emva kwesikhathi uzwe enye ithatha mhla- wumbe amakhosi akwaNcube iwathatha phansi iwa- phonse phezulu, nayo ibuye ilale. Kothi ubuthongo bu- mnandi uzwe kuqamunda enye futhi imbongi yelula ezi bongweni zamakhosi akwaZondi ngoba phela phandle lapha kwakubuthene amaviyo ngamaviyo. UBambatha wayefike nawakhe amaviyo ama bili ayemphekezela.

Ezindlini lapha utshwala babuxhaphakile kusindwa ngabo, inyama yenkomo kuyizigingqane. Izinyanga



zokwelapha impi zaseziwakhe abayinqwaba amakhambi ayizintelezi zempi seziwalungisa ziwenzela ikusasa lapho zizoqinisa khona izinsizwa ngaphambi kokuaba ziphume.

Kuthe ekuseni kwaqalwa ukwelapha impi, kwathathwa amakhosi ancindiswa agcatshwa ngamakhubalo akhona, kwadlulelwa ezinduneni nazo zenziwa kanjalo zaphindela endlini. Sebesendlini uBambatha noSigananda noChakijane nezinduna kwafumaniseka ukuaba kutholakale insizwa eyethembekileyo ihambe nezinye zakwaZondi. Lensizwa kufanele ikwazi ukulinga ukukhuluma isiNgisi khona kuzoba sengathi yona iphuma eMgungundlovu emakholweni ngoaba phela abantu baseMgungundlovu eZideni bona babesiza abelungu bengathandi *imikhuba yamakhafula*. Lensizwa yiyona ezocela nendawo yokulala lapho, kwenzelwe khona izoqhweba abantu laba bakwaZondi ibatshele ukuthi seluhlangene, besekeuthi nalona olala esitolo amfune amthole naye atshelwe ukuthi abeke lapho izibamu zingakhona ngoaba ziyafunwa.

Ibandla lakhomba yena uChakijane ojwayele kakhulu izindaaba ezinjalo. Wena wakoChakijane wazilandulela ngoaba esaba ukuthi uyaziwa kakhulu phakathi kwaBelungu. Futhi noma yiliphi iBunu lalingambona limbeke phansi ngenhlamvu ngoaba eyinhlole eyahlamukayo yangena ngasemaNgisini. Futhike lapha endabeni yemali yamakhanda kwasekudume ukuthi uChakijane lona uhlangene nenkosi yohlanga uDinizulu ngoaba wayengomunye wezinsila zakhe. Nokuthi ubengu olungase lususe impi kuyoaba yena uDinizulu uphakathi ngenxa yokuaba ezwana noChakijane. Nempela lathi ukuzwa lokho ibandla lathula laneliswa. Wathula, wathula uSigananda wathi:

“Ngasengimtholile mina umuntu ongawusebenza lomsebenzi. Kukhona umfana lapha wakwaMakhathini, uyise uyinduna yami. Usandakufika ephuma ngapha eBabatini emisebenzini yabelungu; nguyena ongahamba azenze ophuma eMgungundlovu. Ake umine lapha Lunyana.” Washo njalo induna yakhe uLunyana kaLuhungu wathi locu weza kuyena, wathi:

“Sengifikile.”

“Hamba uye emabuthweni ezinsizwa uyobiza uMalambule, ngisho lomfana kaMakhathini.”

Wasuka uLunyana waphuma phandle waqhweba omunye kogqayinyanga weza kuyena wamthuma ukuaba ayobiza uMalambule. Kwathi nya, kwathi nya, naaba abanumzane besazixoxela kumungunywa yona indaba yezibamu wayesebuyile ugqayinyanga noMalambule wamnikeza ezandleni zikaLunyana, wakhuleka ugqayinyanga wathi:

“O, wena wangenhla.” Wathula uLunyana wathatha wafulathela, uMalambule wamlandela. Ukungena kwakhe endlini uLunyana wambika umfana. Kwathi ukuaba angene uMalambule amakhosi nezinduna athula cwaka, bonke baqinisa izinhlonzi, lapho uMalambule uvalo lwalungasamphethe kwasekuthi makawe phansi. Amadolo ayeseshayana ebulawa yisazelo sokuthi uvela esilungwini lapho abantu sebezishaya abelungu sebenzathandi ukubinca amabeshu, nalapho abantu sebesibukela phansi isithembu, nokuthi futhi abantu basesilungwini bonke balwa nombuso wohlanga bafuna umbuso wabelungu abangaqondi nokuthi uyothi uphi uke uphi.

Wathi ukuaba athi, “BAYEDE”, amehlo kaChakijane aqonda kwakaBambatha, wathi uChakijane:

“Nithi kuyolunga kahle mphakathi, lokhu loludaba lukhulu na?”

Wathi uSigananda:

“Uthini Lunyana?”

“Angazi mnumzane, umfana lo”, esho ekhomba uMalambule, “ufuze uyise ngoaba kubafowabo bonke nalaaba ebengibathemba nguyena yedwa olapha enkundleni. Nguyena othe efika wahambisana noyise ezindabeni zezwe. Khona lokho-nje kuphela kusho into enkulu kakhulu”, kusho uLunyana.

Athi uBambatha:

“Amadolo akhe asaqinile-nje? Awasathanjiswa yimfamumfamu yezinkwa zawomaqumbana emadolobeni, lokhu phela laba baphenduka abafazi kube yibona abaphekayo, bageze nezingubo zawomaqumbana nezizingane? Uthi busekhona ubudoda lapha?” Washo emthinta imisipha yezinkonyane, neyemilenze; kodwa



uMalambule akanyakazanga, kwathi lapho emthinta izihluzi zezitho wabekisa amehlo phansi wambuka lomuntu angamazayo, kodwa aBe elokhu emtoboza izitho sengathi uyisilwane esizohlatshwa. Uthe esukumisa ikhanda uBambatha amehlo akhe ahlangu naka-Malambule bathana halamuzi, wabeka eceleni uBambatha kodwa wangadela, wabuya wawaphendukisa amehlo ukuBa abubuke kahle uBuso bukaMalambule, wamfica esalokhu embekile ngawayizolo engaqwayizi. Wathi uBambatha:

“Qha mlingani, ubukeka sengathi angahamba nezami izinsizwa.” Wawasho lawamazwi ehlala phansi emgqini wakhe wabuye wahwaqabala ukuBa athi eyinkosi umuntukazana abekane naye kodwa kuzonde yena. No-Malambule wabona ukuthi kanti lomuntu omthintayo yinkosi amehlo akhe wawathambisa, kwathi lapho uBambatha esebuyela futhi ukumbeka washalaza wabeka njalo phansi. Lesisenzo sikaMalambule samthokozi za uBambatha. Wayesethi uChakijane:

“Sekulungileke, masinqume isikhathi sokuphuma lapha. Wenake kaZokufa tshela lomfana okuyikhona simfunela khona.” Nempela uSigananda wamtshela uMalambule ukuthi kudingeka ahambe nezinsizwa ezithize ayobamba umlungu wasesitolo eMpanza. Nabo bazobe bekhona kodwa yena nezinsizwa lezo uzongena kuqala endlini axoxe nabantu abasebenzayo kuBe sengathi uphuma eMgungundlovu. Abatshela abantu ukuthi uyinxusa likaMancinza nokuthi bona maBazazi zonke izibamu lapho zikhona ngoBa zizofuneka ngoBa lobubusuku. Kuhle bona baphume bahambe ngaso lesosikhathi baqonde ngaseMpanza bahlele lonke lelo-zwe.

Kwathi ukuBa uMalambule ahambe, isibindi sesithe gidi ngoBa nakhu kukhonjiswa ukuthi uyethenjwa, uChakijane noBambatha nabo babopha ngoBa kwakudingeka ukuBa ngaphambi kokuBa kuhlaselwe isitolo saseMpanza, kekuyobonwa uMgombane induna kaBambatha okuyiyona okwathi noma abelungu beBeka uFunizwe yona yanamathela kumfo kaMancinza. Okwesibili kwakufanele kuBanjwe yena uFunizwe umfowabo ka-

Bambatha noMagwabaBa uyisekazi wakhe futhi uBambatha ngoBa yibona ababengambuka.

Bafika kuMgombane induna kaBambatha sekuhlwile, kodwa kwabonakala ukuthi abantu baqoqene emzini wakhe, bathi ukumbona uBambatha ehamba noChakijane bonke bakhuleka bathi:

“Bayede!”

Lala iqhawe elidala ukuBa abantu balo balazise kangaka ukuBa liyinkosi. Labatshela ukuthi maBaliBize bathi, “Zondi”, njengomuntukazana. Kwathi ukuBa bambone ukuthi nempela nguyena umfo kaMancinza, baqala ukudlala abantwana babantu, kugiya izinsizwa kuBe ngathi ziphonsiwe, zibongana, zihaya amahubo nezinkondlo ezindala zawoMancinza, zawoJangeni, zawoMagenge, zawoZacela, zawoNomashumi, zawoGasa namanye amakhosi amadala. Kwagiywa naye okaMancinza waze wangenwa usinga, kwaluma izinwele ekhanda, kwaluma unyawo, wathatha isihlangu sakhe, wayesesukile, basho abantu bakhe nomphakathi owa-wubukela, basho bathi:

“Yesuka, yahlala!  
Yesuka, yahlala!”

Pho basho kuBani lokhu uBambatha kwakulishinga. Uthe ethi uyaqeda ukugiya kwasuka imbongi yakhe yaBonga omunye wawokoko benkosi uJangeni, wathi:

“Kangkanani!  
Nasentendeni yomkhonto angahlala,  
Umanda-sithebeni onjengenyama.  
UVico akagezanga unyakamisile,  
Ubuye nensil'emfuleni.  
ISikhangan'esikhang'umuntw'ekude,  
Ngoba sikhang'uNomhlosela wakwaMlambo.  
Umphuhlane ophuhlez'imfundeni,  
BekungezoMkhambathi neLoza.  
Inhlabathi yoMngeni engifike,  
Beyihlela ngahlela.  
Amanz'omkhambathi naweLoza.  
Amany'ayewuka,  
Amany'ayenyuka.”



Wayesebathulisa umfo kaMancinza. Lapho sekulhlatshwe wena nkomo, nawe wena mbuzi, inyama sekuyimithala. UBambatha usephuma noMgombane noChakijane beyofuna izintelezi zempi owazikhonjiswa nguyise. Zazimile eduze kwethuna lakhe; wafika wabakhombisa ithuna likayise, wanqampuna izintelezi azidingayo wabuya.

Basuka lapho baqonda eMpanza bahlangana nomunye walaabantu ababehamba noMalambule ehamba egijima ekhefuzela bathi:

“Yini?”

Wathi: “Weu, useyonile indaba lomfo wakwaNcube enisinike yena. Kuthe lapho thina umlungu sesimthatha ngeklwa ngaphambi kokuaba kufike abanye (ngoba phela sekukhona abanye abahlomile esebefikile) wathi yena umlungu akayekwe. Pho, thina njengoba kuthi wena singenzi lutho ngaphandle kwakhe sayeka sa-thula.”

“Pho manje yena uphi?” KuBuza uChakijane.

“Ngivele ngamsola lapho ngimbuka amehlo akhe ukuthi akuzulunga lutho”, sekusho okaMancinza.

“Nani niyashesha ukwethemba abantu ningabazi, nibethwese imisebenzi enzima”, sekukhuluma uChakijane. “Pho sizokwenzenjani?”

“Akukho ukwenza ngokunye, Mayibambe: Khona phambili, zinsizwa ezinkulu!” Kusho uBambatha. Bathi besondela ingani kumnyama, kwaqhamuka onongqayi nabelungu abambalwa. Yahlangana, bacoboshisa abakwaZulu, kwathi lapho ezinye izinsizwa sezifuna ukuqeda konke nasesifazaneni, wathi okaGezindaka:

“Akusibo ubuqhawe lofo, maBangabulawa abesifazane.”

Wathi ukuzwa lokho owesifazane omhlophe wathatha isikhwama esasigcwele imali wasiphonsa kuChakijane, wathatha okaGezindaka wajikijela emgodlweni wakhe. Ababoni laba abanye. Sekuphuthunywa esitolo. Okokuqala kwathathwa izibamu, namavolovolo. Kwabonwa nezisevo zemali kodwa zivaliwe. Babebeyathe bayazivula zathi nkwe. Wathukuthela omunye owake wahamba namasosha amhlophe wabona noku-

qhunyiswa kukadalimede, wathukuthela waqonda endlini kadalimede namadoda amane. Wafika khona wavula wathatha intambo kadalimede weza nayo, wayifaka embotsheni yesihluthulelo, wanameka ngebumba, wokhela umlilo. Waduma udalimede, zathi gembeqe izivalo, imali yathi saka phansi. Zabutha izinsizwa.

Sezibuthile izinsizwa zaqonda ngasesitolo. Zafika impahla igcwele. Zakhwela phezulu zandulula, kuyileyo izikhethela okuthandwa yiyona, ifaka ikhipha ngokuthanda kwayo. Zithe zisuka lapho zangenela amabodlela kagologo. Zaphuza amehlo abeka emuva, kwathi lezo eziphuthelweyo zafika muva zangenela amathini ziwabona emakhulu ecwebezela, zawabobosa, zaphuza, zaphuza, kanti seziphuza nophalafini. Akubanga ndabazalutho. Abanye besalibele lapha esitolo wayedlula uChakijane noBambatha beqonde kuMagwababa noFunizwe bethi bayobavimbezela. Kwanqunywa ukuthi baze bangabulawa, babanjwe balethwe emkhandlwini kuzozwakala ukuthi bakwenzelani ukuaba bathi bemnyama bathengise ngegazi labo ezilokazaneni na.

Kanti bona lendaaba bayakhe-nje sekukhona abazogwegwesa baqonde kuFunizwe bamdonse ngendlebe bathi, wafa. Weqa, uFunizwe waqonda eMgundlovana wayobikela abelungu ukuthi uBambatha lora abamxoshayo wabalekela kwaZulu, nangu esebuyile esezobisa eMpanza. OkukaMagwababa kwaaba okunye ngoba yena akadonswanga muntu. Bamvimbezela esalele, wangena qede uChakijane wadumela uzankosi owawulenga odongeni, wawukinatela ezandleni zikaMagwababa, kwafe bayamqhuba njalo. Wazikhalela uMagwababa wathi:

“Ningibophelani lokhu anginakubaleka sengingumuntu omdala osemadolonzima. Nemali anginayo madoda engabe phela ningibambela yona; kukhona kuphela opondwe abayishumi”, washo ebakhombisa emsamo lapho kwakukhona ibokisanyana lamapulangwe. Waqonda khona uChakijane walivula ibokisi wathatha imali leyo ebomvu egisele amahhashi, waphonsa emxakeni, baphuma naye uMagwababa.



Kwathi sebehlangana noBambatha, wabuza kuChakijane ukuthi uFunizwe umbekephi. Kodwa noma echaza ethini uChakijane uBambatha akakholwanga ukuthi bamfice esebalekile uFunizwe. Ngenxa yokudumala uBambatha, ukuthi uFunizwe akabanjwanga yena wasala esethi uyisekazi uMagwaba akankubulawa ngoba uma kwenziwa njalo funa koniwe izintelezi zempi ngoba uMagwaba sekunguyena yise osesele kuphela. NoMagwaba wahloma wahlangana mshungumunye nabo walwa nabelungu.

Ekubalekeni kwakhe uFunizwe kubonakala ukuthi waye wafika eMgundlovana wafika kubelungu ngoba bathe bephenduka kwaMagwaba oBambatha noChakijane babeqonda khona futhi ngaseMpanza. Ngalo lelolanga lokubuya kubo bahlangana nempi yamaNgisi, bayilalela ngaseLoza emhosheni omubana. Kuthe lapho leyompi isingene yaphelela emhoshaneni lowo bayibedukela, kwashulungana amahashi ababethi bawagibele abelungu, awisa phansi amasosha, kwa-kuhuza uthuli phezulu, zasho izinsizwa ezinkulu zathi:

“Ngadla ngingaqali ngenkomo yakwethu, we babo!”

Wayedwa obuzayo ethi:

“Wawuyaphi? Sengikhona lapho.”

Hhawu, babaqedaqeda abelungu, babuyela enqabeni ababecashi kuyo eMome. EMome lapha izwe ligcwele izihlahla, limnyama alakhiwe muntu. Uma useMpanza ubuka empumalanga ubona unqanqama lwamatshe amhlophe nabomvu, neziwa ongaziqala liphuma ilanga kodwa uyozikhwela lisemakhanda. Ziyesabeka ngoba phakathi kuzona kuvuleke amageba amakhulu lapho kungangena khona isizwe sonke nezinkomo. Lawamagebe awabonakali ngoba kuvimbe izihlahla ngaphambili.

Abelungu babengazazi zonke izinqaba ezazicasha abantu ababelokhu bebahlasela babathelekele bengaqondi futhi bengazelele. Kuthe sebefika enqabeni kwahlalwa phansi kwabalwa izibamu eziphangiweyo. Bafica sezevile emashumini amathathu, ngenxa yokujabula umfo kaGezindaka ingani yena umuntu ozithulelayo ongangenwa usinga kalula, kodwa ngaleyomini wagiya basho bathi:

“Kwagwaz’uyise,  
Kwagwaz’indodane!  
Chakijana!  
Ugwaza kanjani?”

Bambonga njalo ngoba kulempi yasemhosheni eMpanza kwagwaza amadoda kwaze kwathi udibi lwawo nalo lwabeka phansi amacansi lwacoboshisa noma yini eyayedlule koyise nabafowabo.

## ISAHLUKO XI.

Kuthe lapho eseqede konke ukuqoqa izinto azidingayo ukuaba ege uNomanzi, wafikelwa isithongwana samlahla phansi. Kwabe akalele kwafika oninakhulu ephusheni wathi kuye: “Uyangazi mina?” Intombazana yathi: “Angikwazi, unguhani na?” Wathi uninakhulu: “Mina nginguMamhuhulu, unyokokhulu.” Intombazana yamangala ngoba uninakhulu yayimazi ukuthi kade wafa nokuthi yayingamazi, yayizwa ngaye ngendaba kuphela. Yayisithi: “Pho, lokhu wena sewafa uyaphi na?” Sathi isalukazi: “Ngize kuwe.” Wamangala uNomanzi, khona belu ephusheni wayesethi: “Ufike kanjani lapha lokhu kulendawo kusezizweni, kukude kangaka nekhaya na?” Samhleka isalukazi sathi kuyena sisondela simphatha ekhanda: “Ngihamba nawe yonke indawo ngoba ungumntanami. Mhla uzalwayo walethwa kimina ngakutha leligama likaNomanzi ngoba uNomanzi lona osevigama lakho namhlanje kwakuyigama likamame ozala mina. Ngenxa yokukuthanda ngikubona umncane ubomvana ufana nomame, mina ngasengikutha igama lokuthi Nomanzi.”

Wathula uNomanzi ekhohlwa ukuthi uzothini wasimene wasibuka-nje isalukazi; kodwa wasizwa njalo isandla sesalukazi sibambe emagxalabeni akhe. Naso sambona uNomanzi ukuthi akananto yokuyisho sathatha sathi: “Ngithunywe oyihlomkhulu bathi kuhle uphume uhambe ungachithi isikhathi ngoba amathuba akho okuphila ayingcosana.”

Wathi lapho uninakhulu esho njalo, wethuka uNomanzi wezwa lesisandla esimbambe emagxalabeni siqina



nezinzipho zaso ziqina sengathi zingena enyameni yamahlombe njengezinzipho zesilwane sasendle. Wezwela ubuhlungu ehloombe waphaphama, kanti isandla sikaNomcebo sinamathele ehloombe sesinamathele kangangoba akanakusisusa kalula ngaphandle kokuaba amvuse ebuthongweni abulele uNomcebo. Kodwa wathi lapho esephapheme kwaBayilapho umqondo wakhe uvukayo uqala ukusa ngokunye. Wafuna ukuyithatha kalula indaba lena yephupho ngoba engazi lapho engaphuma abalekele khona izwe laseNkandla engalazi. Kwathi lapho umqondo wakhe usa ngokunye esephaphama ngoba esezwa imisinjwana endlini, abantu behonqa bezumekile ebuthongweni, nokukhwashaza kwamagundane ophahleni lwendlu amanye ekhala kucwicwiza amazinyane awo — — kwaBayilapho inkumbulo yakhe ivukayo; ekhumbula ukuthi ndaweni ethize khona lapha kulomuzi kaSishishili kulele uMaphulana nemigqomo yezinsizwa okungathi uma engase aphume angene indlela njengoba ebetsheliwe impilo yakhe iyokwephepha.

Esakhuluma yedwa kanjalo waphendula amehlo walandelisa lapho kukhala khona amagundane kodwa akabonanga lutho ngoba kwakumnyama; wawehlisa amehlo wawaletha phansi emhlabathini wabona umlilo eziko usucimile kodwa kusaBonakala inhlangana ithi loko-loko umbala obomvu. Wathula uNomanzi, walalela phandle wangezwa lutho. Wabuye walalelisisa wezwa imazi ikhonya kudana sengathi izinkomo bezingabuyile, nalokho kwangamangalisa ngoba kade kukhona umgcagco abafana bebeduke namantshontsho, nabasengi bebebuqana notshwala badakwa, bakhohlwa.

Manje wayesevuke ngempela. Wasizwa isandla sikaNomcebo simbambile simngomothele. Wathi uyanyakaza wezwa noNomcebo naye enyakaza manje esephefumula kancane. Wathi uyagudluka ocansini noNomcebo kwaBangathi uyamuzwa. Waqala ukusola, wayesenyenyeza wathi:

“Nomcebo!”

Wathi uNomcebo: “Khuluma ngiyezwa.”

“Kanti kawulele yini? Uvuke nini?”

Wathatha uNomcebo wambamba umlomo ukuaba athule ngoba kwakuzokhuluma yena.

“Sekufanele siphume, sinyenye.” Kusho uNomcebo. Lawamazwi ammangalisa uNomanzi ngoba yena wayecabanga ukuthi uyena yedwa owayezokweqa, kodwa manje uNomcebo olale engafuni ukuhamba sekunguyena osefuna ukuhamba. Wasuka lapho uNomcebo wagaqa phansi waqonda ngasemnyango esezisophe wonke umzimba ngeziphuku ezimbili. Emva kwakhe kwakulandela uNomanzi naye egaqa ngamadolo. Bafike basidonsa isivalo, sala ukuvuleka. Baphuthaza lapho ibazelo elibambileyo ngabe likhona, baze bali-thinta, balixegisa, savuleka isivalo, baphuma. Uku-phuma kwabo bagudla indlu, bangaphumela obala baze bema ngemuva kwayo, basebesithela ngengobo yombila. eyayingenalutho kodwa phakathi kwakukhona izigubu nezinkamba ezazingasetshenziswa. Bathi ukucasha ngengobo bema. UNomcebo washaya ikhwelo kancane, kwaqhamuka intombazanyana yakhe eyayihamba naye izokumhlalisa. Yayithwele umfuqulwana wezinto yafika kuNomcebo iyathazela yethukile.

Kuthe lapho sebephuma ngentunja yothango sebezothatha indlela eqhamuke uMaphulana, izinyawo zabo seziqala ukuqina ngoba bengabonwa muntu, kwaqhamuka izinsizwa ezimbili zishesha zize kuBo zafike zathi:

“Niyaphi, ningobani nina?”

Bethuka bathi abashayeke phansi, ngempela intombazanyana eyayibaphekezela yashayeka phansi ngoba yayikade yethukile ikhishwa phandle yodwana yathi isalindile kwasekuphuma uNomcebo noNomanzi. Besashayekile bengazi ukuthi bazokwenzenjani, kwa-phendula yena uNomcebo wathi:

“Yithina, nina ningobani?”

Zathi izinsizwa,

“Yinina-nje ningobani? Aninamagama yini?”

Babuye bathula oNomcebo. Kodwa ekukhulumeni kwabo wezwa uNomkhosi ukuthi omunye walezinsizwa ngumfowabo. Wayesequnga isibindi, wabeka phambili ngoba azi ukuthi uZazini akanakumenza lutho. Wathi uZazini:



“Ingani ningabantu besifazane-nje? Ningobani? Khulumani ningalimali ngoBa niphuma endlini ehlezi abantu bakithi. Uma ningakhulumi siningena nge-nduku.”

Wabona uNomcebo ukuthi uZazini uqinisile, uma engasheshi ukukhuluma induku izongena ngempela. Wayesethi:

“Hawu, Zazini, awusangazi?”

UZazini walizwa izwi likadadewabo washesha wasondela kuye wathi:

“Ngalesisikhathi uyaphi Nomcebo, uhamba nemi-thwalo-nje? Obani laba ohamba nabo, kodwa uyaphi?”

Intombazana ayiphendulanga yamuthi ngci esihlakaleni esasiphethe iwisa, wamdonsa bahamba, wayeseneyezâ kuyena uNomcebo wathi:

“Musa ukukhuluma kakhulu, funa kuvuke abantu abaleleyo. Woza ngikutshele, sihambe.”

Bahamba ibanga kwathi lapho sebefika enzansi ngasemfuleni, sebezokhuphuka baqonde endaweni lapho kucashe khona uMaphulana nezinsizwa ahamba nazo, bema bonke lokhu uZazini nensizwa le abahamba nayo nabo basebelandela njengeziphoxo bengazi lapho kuyiwa khona. Bathe ukuma uNomcebo elinganisene noZazini wayesethi uNomcebo:

“Wena Zazini yini ekuBeka phandle ngalesisikhathi. Ngitshele ungafihli lutho kimina.”

Wathi uZazini:

“Uyabona, ukuba kwami phandle kuyimfihlo engaziwa muntu ngaphandle kwami noMaphulana.”

Wathi ukusho lokho, amantombazana aqhwebana ngoBa wona ayesethi kanti kulungile sebefonene uMaphulana noZazini. Kanti qha, akunjalo. UZazini wayekhuluma ngendaba yakhe yedwa noMaphulana. Wayesethi uNomcebo:

“Qhabo, khuluma, angizwa ukuthi uthini.”

“Ngeke uzwe ukuthi ngithini ngoBa ngikhuluma umqondo wamadoda wena uyintombazana. UMaphulana wathi mangokubeka ngikuqaphele njalo ikakhulu ngamalanga omcagco lona, ngoBa funa ulahleke. Nempela nakhu ngikuBona ukuthi uyalahleka.” Kusho uZazini. “Ngathi lapho ngimbuza wathi mangingam-

buzi, yena uyazi, nami ngawuhlaba inhlali okaNxumalo. Manje ngiphendule, uyaphi?”

“Ngaphambi kokuba ngikuphendule — — ngoBa ungichithisa isikhathi — — ngizokubuza umbuzo. Izinkomo lezi okuthiwa ngilotsholwe ngazo usuzithumele ekhaya?”

Washesha waphendula uZazini:

“Zihambe khona kwayizolo ngoBa bengingenakuzi-lindisa.”

“Wo, mfowethu, yawuchitha umuthi inkonyane. Mina sengiyahamba.” Kusho uNomcebo, washo wahlala phansi sengathi kuvuka ukukhathala kuyena emzimbeni. NoZazini ngenxa yokuzwa loludaba olwathusayo kangaka kwaxega amadolo naye wenza njengodadewabo wahlala phansi, nalaba ababalandelayo nabo bahlala phansi. UZazini wambuka emehlweni udadewabo wasuka wathi:

“Uthi awuhlanyi kodwa?”

“Uma kukhona ohlanyayo nguwana ongiBuza lowombuzo kodwa mina, qha, Uma ngithi ngiyahamba ngisho ngoBa ngithi ngiyahamba. Futhi akakho onganqibamba angivimbele, mfowethu, ngiphume ngiphumile laphaya.” Washo ekhomba emzini kaSishishili namehlo kaZazini aphenduka abuka lapho kukhomba khona udadewabo, amehlo akhe abuka anduluza okomuntu ephuphutheka ehambela sakuphushweni. Wathula wabeka phansi futhi uZazini, waphakamisa ikhanda wabuka udadewabo, wathi udadewabo:

“Ngiqinisile.”

Kwesuka uNomanzi sekungathi uyakhathala ukuhlala phansi wasukuma wathi kuBona:

“Isikhathi siyahamba. Uma nilifele ukuthinzisana, mina engingezanga ukuzogana lapha, sengiyindlela. Ukusa sengathi kusekude-nje, sekukhona lapha eduze. Niyayibona indonsa lapho isikhona? Bekani nomthala lapho usuguquke wema khona. Ubusuku buhambile.” Washo enyathela kancane engena indlela, wanyathela waze wabayibangana kancane ehamba yedwa nentombazana ethwalele uNomcebo nayo yabeka kancane ngemuva kukaNomanzi; insizwa eyayihamba noZazini nayo yabeka kancane emva kwentombazanyana, ba-



shaya uhele belandelana kodwa bengayazi into abayenzayo.

Bathe bethuka basebebodwa oZazini noNomcebo udadewabo. Wakhuluma uZazini wathi:

“Kodwa awuhlanyi Nomcebo?”

Wathi uNomcebo:

“Uma ekhona ongahlanyiyo, lowoke yimina lona,” washo ezishaya isifuba, ebuka umfowabo phakathi namehlo.

“Ungahamba kanjani usungumfazi womuntu, Nomcebo. Ingani wena ungumfazi wenkosi. Ungakwenza kanjani ukububisa umhlabo uqhathe thina nabantu bezizwe na? Awazi yini ukuthi ngesikhathi kufunyaniswa ukuthi awusekho kuyophuma isizwe sonke siyofuna? Siyofuna size sikuthole.” Kusho uZazini.

“Singafuna, mntakababa; kodwa mina ngiyindlela. Angizange ngiyithande indodana yenkosi mina, ngisho ingaqhamuka lapha phakathi kwezinsizwa ngingeke ngiyikhombe nokuthi okuyiyona ndodana yenkosi iyiphi. Pho, ukugana kuni khona lokho?” Kubuza uNomcebo. “Kusizani lokhu okwenzayo? Wawungabaleki ngani endleleni siza lapha umgcagco ungakenziwa nokwenziwa?”

“Ngangingenakukwenza lokho.” Kusho intombazana.

“Kusizani ukubaleka kwakho, ingekho nandawo obalekela kuyo?”

Wasuka wanengwa uZazini, wayesethi:

“Ngiyabona ukuthi lomuntu, uMalambule lo, owadlula ekhaya nguyena lona owakuphonsa yikho-nje usululutheka ungasazi nalapho uyakhona, nanto oyeenzayo. Ukuaba kwakungumuntu ngabe wabuya wazokulobola, wakuthatha wahamba nawe, Nomcebo. Kodwa manje wanele wafika kwabakubo, wakhohlwa, Nomcebo, wakhumbula izikhowe zakhe ezindala. Hawu, wangidumaza ngangimthanda nakangaka, noMalambule wayengithanda kangaka. Ngisho nabadala babebukeka bemthanda kabi.” Washo izwi lakhe laphela, lashona phansi ngenxa yomoya odangeleayo.

Wathi lapho uNomcebo ebona ukuthi umfowabo inhliziyi yakhe iphela ithemba nomoya ushona phansi wayesethi:

“Nina bantu besilisa nifana neziphukuphuku. Nishesha ukuthatheka ezintweni lapho abesifazane benikhohlisa khona, nihambe nivale amehlo njengezimpupputhe; kodwa uma nimelene nodwa noma ningethembeka kanjani kodwa anethembani nina nodwa. Yingakho-nje kwaze kwathiwa, ‘ikhohlisana ihlomile’ ngoaba anikwazi ukubonelana”, kusho uNomcebo.

Manje bakhuluma sebeyahamba bobabili, sengathi balandela uNomanzi nentombazana nensizwa lena ehambisana noZazini. Wayesephendula uZazini ethi:

“Konke okushoyo akusho lutho ngoaba ubala lodwa. Kothi kusa wena ube ubekwe yizingcije zemikhonto.”

“Uboqaphela ingabe uzisho wena, nemihlobo yakho lena ekunika izinkomo zamalobolo”, kusho uNomcebo.

“Ukhulumela futhi”, kuphendula uZazini esenengiwe ngoaba embinqa ngezinkomo zelobolo.

“Ushaye phansi. Ngoaba ucabanga ukuthi ngihambanje angazi lapho ngiya khona? UMaphulana wayesholoni ukuthi ufongilinda? Wayeboneni kangaka olwaluzokwehlakala. UMaphulana kanti nizwana kangakanje, anitshelani konke, nikhuluma nifihlelane? Amadoda yizilima zempela.”

“Uphethe indaba wena”, kusho uZazini, “awuphumi ngani nayo ulokhu ungigedlela phakathi-nje? Uthi angikuboni yini ukuthi uyangidoba?”

“UMaphulana akakutshelanga konke. Wakhohlwa ukuthi namuhla uyobe elapha engilandile.”

“Uthini? UMaphulana ulapha?”

Yahleka intombazana esikhundleni sokuba impheandle. Yangena indlela yathi iyahamba uZazini wayibamba ngengalo wathi:

“Ngiyabuza. UMaphulana ulapha na?”

“Woza ulandele mina”, yasho intombazana inikina ihlombe leli uZazini owayeyibamba ngalo.

Kwathi lapho iphenduka babuye bathi khimilili, bema, balalela. Kwezwakalainja ikhonkotha ngokwelelesa emizini ekudana kodwa engenhla komuzi omkhulu wenkosi uSishishili. Yakhonkotha kwafe ishilo. Ithe ithula kwathatha ezinye zakweminye imizi nazo zakhonkotha kwabasengathi ukhona umuntu ezimxoshayo noma abantu abadlula ngakuleyomizi



bayabaleka. Zikhonkothe zakhonkotha izinja zaze zathula. Bathe zithule, babona amathunzi sengathi yizinkomo ziqhutshwa ngumuntu, kodwa lezizinkomo ukuhamba kwazo zizungeza umuzi, ziyawuhaqa wonke. Bema oNomcebo bazibuka lezizinkomo, bakhohlwa ukuthi bayahamba, nokuthi abanye laba abahamba nabo sebebashiyele.

Kuthe kunjalo bezwa izwi abalejwayeleyo lithi:

“Kodwa aniboni yini? Nisameleni lapha lokho nansi impi phambi kwenu, isibulala abantu. Hawu Nomcebo, nawe uyindoda, Zazini?”

Akako owabatshelayo ukuthi ngu bani okhulumayo ngo ba izwi likaMaphulana babelazi kahle noma emnyameni. Nangaphambi koku ba baphendule, noku ba bakhombise ukumangala nokujabula kwo be bezwa ukughuma kwesibamu siqhumela phakathi emzini wenkosi. Bathe siqhumile sabuye saphinda futhi sasho, kwagqamuka umlilo kuleyondlu esisho kuyo. Kwezwakala izigi zabantu bebuduzela. Kwenye indawo kwamemeza abanye abantu, kuzwakala amadoda ekhuluma ngamazwi aphantsi.

Njengoba izwe lakwaZulu babelazi baqonda ukuthi seluhlangene, kuyafiwa lapho. Babebona kahle futhi ngo ba basebedundubele ngaphesheya komfudlana, amazwi esezwakala kahle. Uku ba babone ukuthi khona ababulawayo bezwa omunye ethi:

“Uyangigwaza ngingaziphethe ezami?”

Wathi omunye:

“Sengifikile. Yinina laba enisiqhatha nabelungu ngemali yamakhandu?”

Kwabakuphela njalo bathatha izinyawo oMaphulana noNomcebo noZazini. Kodwa izindlebe za bo zawezwa amazwi abantu ababe bulalana. Babulalana-nje kade kubuswa kugcagea umntwana wenkosi. Kade izinsizwa zisina zenamile kukuhle kudelile. Ezinye zificwa yimpi-nje zidakiwe ziqethukile, noma sekushaywa imikhosi zona azazi ukuthi kwenziwani. Ngiyabona ukuthi zethuka ngo ba sezimi phambi kwamathongo awoyise-mkhulu zingazange ziwuzwe umkhonto ukuthi ungene kanjani enyameni, waxosha umphefumulo emzimbeni. Bafa abantwana babantu befela into abangayaziyo,

bezifikela bevela eDumbe nendaba yemali yamakhandu bengayazi nokuthi iqala ngaphi igcinephi.

Ekuseni kuthe kusa abantu basebelele izigingqane kukhalwa yilabo abasinde ngokubaleka. Into emangalisayo ukuthi umuzi kaSishishili ubulewe ngubani. Izinto ezinjena lezi zasezejwayelekile kwaZulu. Ngesikhathi umhla ba usuwahlukeno phakathi abanye besaziqhenya ngobuzwe ba bo besaphupha amaphupho ezikhathi ezindala kubusa inkosi iyinye, abanye basebethole ithuba loku ba isizwe basahlukanise phakathi ngokuhwakela ezinda beni zakwaZulu bazithathe bayozibika ngokuzihlanekezela embusweni wabamhlophe. Kodwa obani ababenza lokhu? Lesisenzo saqalwa ngabantu ababethi bangamakholwa benzela uku ba ngakho bakhombise ukuthi izindlela zobumnyama bayazilahla. Kubona umbuso wakwaZulu wawungubumnyama; nemithetho ebopha isizwe yayiphethe ubumnyama. Izikhundla zobuduna basesiLungwini kubona zasisho into enkulu. Phakathi kwalaba kwakukhona ababelunywa ngunembeza ebatshela ukuthi into abayenzayo imbi. Bona basebebonile ukuthi kungaba yisizwe kanjani uma siphethwe okokuqala yinhlanhlanhla yamakhosi ezinkwa lawa abekwe yimpucuko, besekuthi futhi phezu kwawo kuhlale amanye amakhosi ezinye izizwe. Indaba kaJanitoni bona babengayithandi. Ubunyoka bakhe nokugibela uCetshwayo ezitheni za bo, kwabenza ukuthi bathande uku buyela kwaZulu. Babe nezibamu, benomunyu noDinizulu.

Baqala ukuzibiza ngamagama ababewathathe esiLungwini. Abanye ba bo babezibiza ngokuthi bayi-Zikawoti. Laba babengasabeki kakhulu ngo ba babe-hamba umhla ba wonke behlola ukuma kwezwe ukuthi linjani sabuyele ezinduneni kwaZulu sabike ukuthi elasekuthinithini limi kanje, nelasekuthini liyayivuma imali yamakhandu, nokuthi umnumzane othile uyavumelana nabelungu uzonda inkosi yohlanga. Elinye iqumbi lazibiza ngokuthi yiNkomndani. Leliqumbi lalesabeka ngempela ngo ba lona lalingakhulumi. Into elaliyenza laliphuma mhlawumbe kuphume phakathi kwalo babebathathu besuka khona belu esiLungwini baphume sengathi kuyiwa koringela kwaZulu noma



kuyiphi-nje indawo. Ekuzingeleni kwaBo kanti seBemzwile umnumzane olwa noZulu ovumela aBelungu— bathathe badlule ngaye kungabi ndabazalutho.

UkuBa uSishishili asuke ayothela imali yamakhandla kwaBaphatha kabi kakhulu abantu kwaZulu. Nezinye izinduna ezinjengoSibindi okwathi uBambatha ethume izigijimi kuyena wazibamba wazinikela kuBelungu; wathi futhi uzovimbela zonke izimpi zikaBambatha kuthi uma engase amBambe, amBambe amyise eMgungundlovu ayoboshwa. Abanye balawamakhosi oMveli. USishishilike ufa kanjena-nje udliwa yiNkomndani engazange yaziwe nokwaziwa ukuthi ingobani. Kwakubonakala ngakho ukuthi kudlule yona uma kusale kudindilize umnumzane kulesosifunda.

UmhlaBa wahlala kaBana ngenxa yeNkomndani ngoBa izinduna lezi ezazikhonzile esiLungwini zaze zabuza kuSandasi (Sir Charles Saunders) emva kwamasonto amaBili eBulewe uSishishili, ukuthi kulokhukuhlala amaphaphu ephezulu, sizokwenzenjani. KwaBe kuyathe kwathiwa umuntu ufile akwaziwa ukuthi ubulewe ngobani.

Ngenxa yokuba inkosi uDinizulu engathandeki kulabaBantumzane abayizincelebana esiLungwini, kwaduma nokuthi iNkomndani leNa, (noma labaBantu abaqeda abantumzane), umoya wokuthungatha izitha zakwaZulu bawuthatha phakathi oSuthu kuye uDinizulu nondunankulu kayise uMankulumani. Lokhukhuluma kwakwaziwa kakhulu, kwezinye izindawo bekuphumesela kodwa kwezinye kusahletshwa. Nakulo icala lakobelungu belu kwakubakhona abantu abathunywayo ukuba babubise abantu abathile uma bengabathathola. Indaba kaMxokozeli wasemaNtshalini owayethunye umlungu uWili kaVela ukuba azobulala uChakijane emva kwempi yaseMpanza yenza ukuba neNkomndani iqhubo owayo umsebenzi. UMxokozeli lona kwathiwa makangene edlanzini likaChakijane noBambatha azenze umngane kuthi nxa ethola ithuba amdubule uChakijane. Uma ekwenzile lokho uzosikelwa kulona izwe likaChakijane abeyinduna. Pho umuntu omnyama esethenjiswa isikhundla, wanikela khona! KwaBe akahlalanga nazinsuku, iqhawe elidala umfo ka-

Gezindaka waphupha elele, eBona uMxokozeli emdubula... LendaBa wayixoxa kuBambatha nezinduna ezinye zayizwa zayikhuluma. Ezinye zalezizinduna azimazi noMxokozeli lowo. Nanguya esezwa uMxokozeli washaya utshani zemuka. Kwathi noma eseyocingwa emzini wakhe eMamba, wangabonwa.

Ukufa kukaSishishili kwakuvele kuzibika ngoBa khona kwayizolo uChakijane wayekade emlalele emihosheni eseduze komuzi wakhe kodwa ngenxa yokuba esaba ukuba yena ngokwakhe angene amthathe kanye ngevolovolo, wathumela omunye wezincedu zakhe uNjombolwana ukuba angene lapha emzini lapho abanye betekula besuthi utshwala, yena angene njengesithunywa sikaManzolwandle ukuthi ulethe incwadi. Kuthe noma ugqayinyanga ethi,

“Ungubani, uthunyweni?”

Wathi uNjombolwana:

“Ngithunywe ngumntwana uqobo lwakhe uthi mangilethe izindaba ezinkulu lapha kumnumzane.”

Yafuna ukubuzisisa induna kodwa uSishishili waphe ndula ngolaka wathi:

“Awuzwa yini ukuthi uthunywe izindaba ezinkulu? Usuthi makatshela wena ngikhona, ngizwa, unqake konke kumfana? Ubokuyeka lokho ungaphindi.”

Yakhweca umsila nenduna wangena uNjombolwana endlini noSishishili. Kwafumaniseka ukuthi akakho owazi ukufunda lencwadi-mbumbulu efika noNjombolwana ngoBa intombazana eyayikwazi ukufunda yayingekho. Ngakho ke uSishishili wathi incwadi mayifundwe nguye uNjombolwana. Wayithatha umthakathi omdala efunda ubala ngoBa nakhu wayekwazi konke ukuzwana kukaSishishili noManzolwandle. Wayazi ukuthi uDinizulu abamthandi bona bazikhonzele esiLungwini. Wayifunda wathi:

“NgiBuza ukuthi usuzwile-nje ukuthi uHulumeni uthi zonke lezozinkomo esaziphanga kubashokobezi kufanele sizibuyisele emuva sicishe umlilo wochuku na? Ngithike mina kuhle sihambe siye kwaHulumeni sikhulume izwi libe linye.”

Wamangala noSishishili izwi eliphethwe yincwadi wathi:



“Bala uphetho izindaaba, nami besengizwile lendaaba ngoba futhi uHulumeni uthumele izwi elinye elikhuluma njalo. Sekuthiwa zonke iziphakanyiswa zingaphumeli phandle ebusuku ngoba uChakijane usebaqedile abanumzane manje. Sihleli kabi impela, mfana.”

Kuthe ukuqasho njalo walala phansi uNjombolwana wangathanda ukukhombisa ukuthi nguyena luqobo ozosebenza umsebenzi kaChakijane. Wahlala, kusinwa phandle, kujatshulwa yena wahlala wathula lapha endlini njengesithunye somntwana uManzolwandle. NoSishishili naye wahlala umoya wakhe wenamile ukuqasho ehlezi nesithunye. Abanumzane bonke badakwa bazikhumbulela amacansi abo ezindlini zabo bayingcosana nabezwayo kuqhuma ivolovololo elabulala uSishishili. Bayingcosane ababona impi eyayisifike noChakijane isihaqe umuzi ngoba uChakijane wayeseceba ngokuthi akusekho lutho uNjombolwana usebanjiwe wabulawa ebona engasabuyi.

Nendodana yenkosi yafa ngomkhonto wenhlukano phakathi kweziphakanyiswa nalabo ababelwela ubuzwe bukaZulu.

Umsindo wokuqasho kukaSishishili nabantu bakhe wawuzwa uNomcebo esekudundubaleni kwegquma elingaphesheya, wafikelwa ngumunye ofikela bonke abantu besifazane, wathi:

“Baphela abantu!”

UNomanzi akaphendulanga ngoba uMaphulana wayesesondela nabo lapho kwakulinde khona uNomanzi nensizwa nentombazanyana. Bonke bathi ukumbuka, kodwa bangasho lutho.

Wabasheshisa uMaphulana, bathi bethi qhamu bafikela ezinsizweni lezi zakubo kaMalambule, kwasukuma uChithumuzi kuqala wathi:

“Okunguyena esimlandile kulaaba, ngumuphi?”

Washo ethintitha ibeshu lakhe esondela kuMaphulana amehlo egeme kuzo zozimbili izintombi engazi okuyiyona yona. Kwasuka uQethuka wathi:

“Uma silande izintombi, noma intombi yomfowethu pho, lezinsizwa zona zilubangisephi? Izinsizwa kasi-zifuni.”

Uthe esho njalo basondela bonke ngasezintombini bechiliza uZazini nalena enye insizwa, sengathi abalutho ngendlela ababaphatha ngayo, baqonda kuMaphulana naye ebona ukuthi sebethwe ukuqasho nokunqoba wathi:

“Ake nikahle, bafana. Izintombi ziyabaleka yini? Futhike wena, (igama lakho angikalazi) musa ukuthi ngifika nabantu ubaphathe ngaleyondlela ungasazi ukuthi ngobani.”

“Ngiyakhathala khona ukuthi bangobani, nginandabani nabo”, kusho uQethuka.

“Hawu, ukhuluma kanjani wethu. Kwabasengathi ukhuluma nabafazi-nje?” Kuqasho uZazini. “Ucabanga ukuthi khona usuyiqhawe kwelakini, pho, uyiqhawe yonke indawo yini? Ngifunga uNomcebo nangu phambi kwami, ngingafa ngifele khona lokho, noma ungayinsizwa engangezintaba.” Washo esondela kuye uZazini ekhokhe impiselo yakhe, kodwa uChithumuzi wathi:

“Wenzani Qethuka? Usuqamba ukulwa? Awuzubekana nalensizwa yezizwe, uzobekana nami uqobo lwami.” Washo emkhapsheza umfowabo uQethuka edonsa uZazini ngoba umuzwe efunga uNomcebo emkhomba. Igama lentombi yomfowabo wayelazi ukuthi nguNomcebo, uthe ukuqasho ayibone, wathi kuyo:

“Nguwena uNomcebo, mntakabaaba? Wo, yeka umfowethu uMalambule.” Washo umoya wakhe washona phansi. “Uthe ngize ngifike ngibuye nawe ngingakushiya, ngife nabafowethu laba kunokuba ngibuye ngingabuyi nawe.” Washo ebakhomba abafowabo bonke. Basondela bonke bayibuka intombi kaMalambule, bonke bathi:

“Wo, muhle umntwana womuntu, we madoda!”

Lawomazwi amcofa uNomcebo, waphelilela yizo zonke izinsizi zakhe zokukhathala, okwakumphethe emzimbeni izinsuku zilandelana ubuthongo engabutholi kahle. Inhliziyo yakhe yathokoza yadela. KuChithumuzi wabona inswebu kaMalambule, nalapho ethatha ukukhuluma wayemkhumbuza uMalambule okwasekuyisikhathi amgcina. Wambuka uChithumuzi wezwa inhliziyo yakhe ithi cosololo yaneliswa ngoba kuyena



wayezothola isiphephelo njengoba engumfowabo ka-Malambule.

Kabakhulumanga isikhathi esikhulu uMaphulana wathi kuhle kuhanjwe. Kwathi lapho uZazini ebuza ethi kuzohanjwa kubekwephi bathi abanewabo baka-Malambule kuzoqondwa ekhaya kuho. UZazini wathi kuChithumuzi:

“Ningakwenza kanjani ukuaba nithathe udadewethu kimina, kanti futhi nimsuse endodeni yakhe eseganile?”

Wathi uChithumuzi, sekuhanjwa njalo:

“Angizwa ukuthi uthini.”

Waphinda uZazini wathi:

“Ningakwenza kanjani nithi niya nodadewethu kwelakini engalotsholwe nakulotsholwa na?”

Waphendula uQethuka esekelwa nguMasimini wathi:

“Ukuthatha umfazi kukabili wena mfowethu; uma ungazi ngizokutshela.” Wathi uZazini:

“Ngingajabula uma ungitshela.”

Wathi uMasimini:

“Uqinisile umfowethu. Okokuqala umfazi uthathwa ngelobolo umuntu aye kubazali bayo intombazana akhulume nayo.”

“Okwesibili pho?” Kusho uZazini.

Indlela iyahubeka belu abanye sebeyibangana, abanye laba abakhulumayo bahamba namantombazana, bahamba ngokuncenga. UMaphulana ukwabaphambili ungomunye wabahola indlela.

Ase aphenyule uQethuka athi:

“Okwesibili umfazi uyathathwa ngenkani uma yena ezithandela umuntu lona ozomthatha ngenkani bevumelana nentombi leyo. Udadewenu nguyena ozithandela umfowethu ngakhoke thina silapha-nje ngoba sizogcwelisa isifiso sakhe. Sesilapha ngoba silaphake, wena wakwaNxumalo, akusekho ukwenza ngokunye.”

Kuthe ukuaba asho lawamazwi naye uZazini wazibonela ukuthi abafokazi baqinisile ngoba udadewabo nguyena oziphumele endlini bengambizanga. Enye into eyabuye yamshaya, ukuthi le emuva koSishishili bashiye amazala, akusekho muntu okhona. Noma ekhona kukhona lowo odle ngokubaleka wacela empunzini. Pho udadewabo wayengaze akhulunyelwe ukuthini ukuthi

uganile. Wathula uZazini ngoba ebona ukuthi nempela wahlulekile, uhlulwa ngamazwi, nangezenzo.

Indlela yahubeka kwaze kwabonakala ukuthi enzansi sekuyantwela. Wena oke uye kwaZulu lapho sekuzothatha ukusa uye uzwe ngakho ukuthi sekuyavuleka emasangweni empumalanga ngokuqala kokushaya komoya wolwandle ushaye sengathi yisivunguvungu. Uzwe kunkwela udwani, namaqabunga emithi abezezele njalo, lapho kuthi lala ungavuki. Ngaleyonkathi basebehambe ifanga impela, sebekubukela njengalapha-ya koSishishili.

Amantombazana aqala ukuxega amadolo manje ngoba ayesakhathazwe nawukusina emgagcweni kanti futhi abekade ngangayizolo efika ephuma eDumbe. Zaphambuka ezinye izinsizwa zifona umhlambi wezinkomo ulele ethafeni, zafika zabokoda ngomkhonto isithole esasikhuluphele, zasilahla phansi, zasiphuthuma zisihlinza. Abanye laba ababehamba namantombazana bawaphasa ngezingalo bahamba nawo bewahlenga baqhubekela phambili beshiya laba abahlinzayo. Kwathi kusa yiho labaya kude kude sebeshonile ngemihosha bethwele inyama. Abanye kanti futhi babuye baphambuka bayofula nommbila emasimini abadlula kuwo.

Kwathi kuqambe kusa nwi wathi uMaphulana mabangene ehlathini balale, kuze bathole nokudla ngoba babelambile bengalalanga kahle.

Amantombazana ngenxa yokukhathala bawathatha bawasiphulela utshani bewendlelela, basha ubuthongo. Abawaphazamisanga. Kodwa kwathi lapho ilanga seliphumile wathi uChithumuzi usayowahlola ewaphathele ummbila owasewosiwe, nemibengo yenyama. Wafumanisa elele kwesikaBadakazi, wasondela enzela ukubukela eduze intombi yomfowabo ngoba uyibone kusihlwa. Wasondela wayibona ilele ivale amehlo, amashiya nezinkophe zayo zingangamashoba ezinkabi. Unwele lwayo lungamagoda, nesitho sayo singummbumbu lu siyephuzela uboya. Yayilele icamele phezu kukaNomanzi. Waphendukisa amehlo wawabekisa kuNomanzi wayibona intokazi nayo izelwe kunina izilahle phansi ikhathele; yayilele icamele phezu kwengalo,



umphefumulo wakhe uChithumuzi wathi dlu, imingene-  
la yemicaſango yamhamba yahamba wezwa umlomo  
usuphumesela uthi:

“Ngaze ngayithanda lentombi, webaſo!”

Wathi ukuwasho lawomazwi wethuka uNomanzi  
wavula amehlo, wathi ukwethuka kwakhe wavusa  
uNomcebo, wayethambisa umzimba uChithumuzi ethi:

“Hawu, uxolo zintombi bengingazi ukuthi nisalele,  
nanku ummbila, hlafunani, nehlise nganansi inyama  
senginilethele. Seliyashisa nelanga.”

Washo njalo maqede wayibeka phansi inyama nom-  
mbila wafulathela inhliziyi yakhe ishaya ithi gxu-gxu-  
gxu, ngenxa yothando olwaselumngene ngoNomanzi.  
Wathi efulathela amantombazana nawo ayephindela  
phansi kuſo, yikho lokho futhi eſuthongweni, alala  
athi ja. Ayengakhathele khona okwalapha.

Nalaphaya ezinsizweni kwathi ukuſa zidle ziqede  
ezinye zalala phezu kwezikhali zazo, basha uſuthongo.  
Ezinye ezazingakhathele, zaphumela phandle kwehlathi  
zathi zisayofuna utshwala emizini eseduzana.

Kulesosifunda kwakungakabi yena uSigananda, nga-  
khoke kwakufanele bahambe ngokuqaphela. Futhi  
baſesathuswe nawukuſona ukububa komuzi kaSishi-  
shili, aſantu aſawububisile bengazi ukuthi baqhamu-  
kaphi. Phakathi kwaſabelele kwakukhona noZazini.

Kuthe lapho sekusemini enkulu, wavuka uZazini  
waya kuMaphulana wafike wathi:

“Maphulana njengoſa izindaſa zimi kanje, sengiya-  
bona ukuthi mina mangiqonde ekhaya ngiphambuke  
ngingahambi nani.”

Wathula elalele uMaphulana wasuka wathi:

“Ngiyezwa.”

“Kubi ukuſa aſadala ekhaya bangayazi indaſa  
yomnumzane uSishishili ngoſa nezwe sekwaſa ngela-  
belungu, funa amagama ethu aphaheke ukuſa nathi  
sasiphakathi.”

Wathi uMaphulana elalele kuZazini,

“Ngiyezwa.”

“Pho wena, noma uzwa uthini owakho umqondo  
kulendaſa na?” Kubuza uZazini.

“Ngingathini yani? Mina anginakuphinda emuva  
kanye nawe ngishiye udadewenu elapha naſantu  
bezizwe. Mina ngizohamba noNomcebo ngibone isigcino  
salendaſa. Wena ungaphindela emuva ufike uyifike  
kahle indaſa ungayixovi ngoſa ukuyixova kwakho  
kuyosho into embi kakhulu.”

Waſuza ukuthi indaſa angase ayixove kanjani lokhu  
uyazi yonke. Uyazi ukuthi ukuſa uMaphulana aka-  
zange ameluleke ukuſa aze abeke udadewaſo ngaſe  
naye uyisibucu khona le emzini kaSishishili. Lento  
yayimkhanyela kahle. Uma yena imkhanyela kahle  
aſanye ingeke ibakhanyele njengaye ngoſa bona ngeke  
baſi ukuthi bangaze baſe ngezala-nje aſakoSishishili  
baſulawa nguſani. Yini ukuſa kufike uMaphulana  
nedlanzi laſafokazi kuyasa kuqothulwe umuzi womnu-  
mzane? Akakho owayazi ngoChakijane noNjombolwana  
namanye amadlanzi eNkomndani awayelokhu emele  
ukububisana naſanumzane. Naſo oMaphulana baſe-  
ngenakuwuphendula lowombuzo. Futhi baſehamba  
engozini emangalisayo ngoſa okokuqala baſengase  
baſhlaſelwe noma ngasiphi isikhathi kuthiwe yiſona  
abaſulele umnumzane. Okwesibili izwe laſeliphethwe  
yizizwe ezimhlophe, ukuſulawa komunye waſanumzane  
abaſebekwe yiſona abelungu kwakunjengokuſulala  
imbiba emhlophe eyashiwo ngumfana kaSonjica phambi  
kukaCetshwayo mhla ethi ulande aſantwana baſa-  
Monase.

OChithumuzi baſengase baſanjwe baſekwe icala  
lokuſulala umuzi kaSishishili, nobufakazi bonke ſuba-  
lahle ngoſa ubufakazi obukhulu ukuſa uNomcebo  
owayeganele khona kwaSishishili nangu wayephakathi  
kwaſo. Yini ukuſa kufe uSishishili naſantu baſke bona  
baſfanyaniswe nomakoti wakhona na?

Lezizinto noma uMaphulana ekhuluma noZazini ba-  
ſengabekisile kuzona noma zazingamaqiniso bona  
baſengaziboni ziſacashaſe, kumnandi kuphela ukuthi  
baſindile ekuſulaweni nokuthi uZazini uzogoduka,  
uMaphulana aphekezele intombazana ize ibone isoka  
layo uMalambule.

Kwathi emuva kokuſa baſoxe baſadelisane wesuka  
uZazini waqonda kudadewaſo uNomcebo eſeyovalelisa



ngoba esehamba eya ekhaya. Wafika wawafica amantombazana edla ummbila wawo nenyama ebilethwe nguChithumuzi ekuseni — — — — — ayaxoxa. Wafika wawabingelela wahlala phansi etshanini.

“Hawu kubangwephi wathwala izihlangu nezinduku Zazini?” Kubuza uNomcebo.

Wathi uZazini,

“Sengiyindlela njengoba ungibona-nje.”

“Yindlela uyaphi na?” Kubuza uNomanzi.

“Ngiyindlela ngiqonda eDumbe ekhaya, kuaba nomame.”

Wathi ukusho njalo, noNomanzi wathi:

“Awusangishiyanga nami, sengihamba nawe Zazini. Pho, lensizwa ohamba nayo, izogoduka nayo na?”

“Yebo, iyahamba.” Kuphendula uZazini ephendula udadewabo.

“Sengizwile Zazini. Pho mina ungishiya nobani lapha ehlane likaNoziwawa na?”

“Ukhona uMaphulana, uthe yena akahambi uzohlala akubeke ukuthi abafokazi laba abahamba nawe bakuyisaphi.” Kuphendula uZazini.

“Ngiyezwa mntakaaba. Ungishiya kanzima Zazini ngoba noNomanzi uyilona ludondolo lwami usengihlamba naye ehlane. Ungahamba wena ufike ungikhonzele kumame, umtshela ukuthi njengoba nabadala basho ukuthi ukugana kuyinkatha yenkangala, kuyiqiniso, yilapho ngizwayo ukuthi ngiyakogana ngoba ngisiphula utshani baleyonkatha kulelihlane langase-Nkandla”, washo ebeka phansi efikelwa umunyu.

Ngesikhathi esekhulumile umfowabo wabuye wacabanga ngokwesibili ukuthi kodwa udadewabo umshiya ehlane-nje umshiyelani aye ekhaya sengathi usancela; kanti useyindoda. Wathi lapho ebeka eceleni wafumanisa uNomanzi eqoqa imithwalo yakhe ngoba naku sekuyahanjwa.

Yafika lena. enye insizwa yathi:

“Uyaphi uNomanzi, ngabona eqoqa imithwalo? Ngasekuze ufuna ukuhamba nathi yini?”

Wathi uNomanzi,

“Anisangishiyile-nje ngempela.”

Yahleka insizwa sengathi ukhona oyikitazayo, yabuka uZazini yabuza yathi:

“UNomanzi lona uhamba nawe? Nguwe othi makashiye uNomcebo ahambe elandelana nathi? Mina angikwazi lokho. Kungathi sizohamba siphumputha indlela, nendlela leyo singayazi ukuthi iphuma ibekaphi, kube futhi sibekene nentombazana, nokwenza ikhathele. Ingani khona ngokuthatha kokusa lokhu uNomanzi ubesehamba, ephasiwe esewumthwalo. Endleleni ende kangaka uzophaswa ngubani, pho?”

Washo umntwana wensizwa watshaka amathe wacacina ngokuthi:

“Nansi imihlola!”

Kwathula kwathi du. UZazini wathatha izikhali zakhe wasukuma wathi:

“Nomcebo sengiyahamba, masingalibazisani ngoba ikude indlela.”

“Yebo mfowethu usuyahamba, uze uhambe kahle. Amadlozi awoNdwandwe akulonde endleleni ufike kahle ekhaya kumame — — — uze ungikhonzele kumame.”

Washo amazwi okugcina wakhala uNomcebo, wakhala ezimaconsi, wasukuma weza kuZazini wathi:

“Kodwa mfowethu uqinisile uyahamba? Uyahamba uyobona umame? Umame na?” Washo ebibitheka ekhala ngoba kwasekufike usizi lokushiywa ngumfowabo esekhumbula unina owamzalayo wamncelisa, wamkhulisa ngothando lwenyama nomphfumulo. Wasondela wamngomothela umfowabo izandla zakhe zanamathela kuye zathi ngo, sengathi ngeke abuye asuke kuyena. Wazixazulula kancane uZazini izandla ngesikhathi intombazana isalibele ukukhala, waze wazibamba zozombili phakathi kwezakhe izandla, wahlehla waziyekethisa, zawa. Yabuye yaziphakamisa intombazana izandla zayo, izikhuphula izivala amehlo ngoba egcwele izinyembezi. Yakhala yaze yema yasuka lapho yathi:

“Hambani Zazini noNomanzi, indlela enhle.”

Wasuka wahleka uZazini wathi:



“Mina angihambi nentombazana ngihamba nomngane wami, uma kungenjalo ngihamba ngedwa, noma ngihambe nawe.”

Wathi uNomcebo:

“Phela mina angihambi yilapho ngiyakogana manje.”

Ekushweni kwakhe lawamazwi umzimba wakhe waqina, ukuthamba lokhu obekulethwe ukukhala kwaphela wazizwa esenguyena uNomcebo, intombi kaMalambule. Wakhumbula ilanga lapho uyise wamthuma kuMalambule seliyoshona kuvutha imililo eSomvu kude amahlungu esha, amalanga elokoza ekudeni. Namhla uMalambule esegula ethuma uZazini ukuBa amtshele ukuthi uyamthanda. Konke lokhu kwammissa isibindi esesabekayo ikakhulu ngoBa nakhu namhla uMalambule uthume abafowaBo ukuBa bazomlanda bamsindise ekuganeni umuntu obengamqondile ukuBa amgane.

WakuBona lokhu uZazini, wathatha isihlangu sakhe wachitheka.

UNomanzi eBona ukuthi uZazini nomngane wakhe bayamshiya wahlala phansi wakhala naye ukuBa ashiywe engazi ukuthi uzoyaphi. Wakhala ehleli phezu kwesidindi sotshani engamkhulumisi uNomcebo, naye uNomcebo wabuka-nje. Kuthe besabukana, kwaqhamuka yena uChithumuzi wayeseBona nokuthi uNomanzi uyakhala waqonda kuyena wafike wathi:

“Ukhalelani mntanomuntu?”

Lawamazwi wawasho ngomoya ophansi ngoBa amahawe anomunyu nesihe esikhulu kuBantu besifazane. Ayehluleka ukuBekezelela izinyembezi. Siyakwazi lokhu nakuShaka ngoBa kuthe ingani kufe unina abantu sebekhala, isililo sabo samenza ukuBa angene endlini angaphumi phandle. Kwaze kwaqhamuka elinye ikhehla laqunga isibindi lathi uShaka akagwinye itshe ngoBa unina akasnakumbuyisa kwaBaphansi. Lelizwi lammisa isibindi uShaka waqala ukujivaza izinduna zakhe wathi yini ukuBa zimbuKe ebulala izwe na?

Lokhukujivaza kwakhe uShaka wayengenziwa ngoBa nempela eBona ukuthi ubulala izwe — — qha. Kuyena wakoShaka kwakungelutho ukuBona wonke umhlaba usulele phansi ucaca ufile. Kodwa inye into owayeyibalekela waze wazivalela endlini: ngukuBona nokuzwa

abantu besifazane Bekhala. Izwi lomuntu wesifazane lifi, lineminjunju nemizwelo efike ihlakaze sonke isakhiwo somuntu wesilisa, aphenduke isilima nesiphukuphuku. Athi uyenza kanti akayazi into ayenzayo. Uma kungenjalo kuyangani ukuBa uNandi unina kaShaka, noBibi kaNdlela waseMgungundlovu wodumo, noMnkabayi kaJama waBaQulusi, noMonase inkosikazi kaMpande unina kaMbuyazi, bathola amagama angaka kwaZulu na? Nakuzo izilokazane lezi ezimhlophe khona kwasemandulweni kuzwakala amagama awoDido, nawoKhilopatra (Cleopatra) nawoKhekhe (Circe) omilingo yakhe, ngiyifanisa nekaNomkhubulwane. Lezizintombi yizona ezakha igama likaZulu, zaBopha isizwe lapho kuthi masihlakazeke. Zazalela uZulu amaqhawe, ezinye zaBangabaluleki bamakhosi njengoBibi, ezinye zaBangumhloBiso nodumo loBukhosi nesigodlo soBuZulu. Yizo lezi izintombi zayizolo! Engazizwa zibuzwa yiNkondlo kaZulu ngangezwa muntu ephendula. Kushiwo Bona oMnkabayi laBo noMonase, noNomchoBa.

Khona ngaso lesosikhathi sikaDinizulu ingani okunguyena muntu owathi ngazo izindaBa zothando lolu wehlisa inkelenkele kwaZulu, kwaBa ngumuntu wesifazane, uSiyekiwe inkosikazi yakhe uBambatha kaMancinza. Wathi ingani ubekiwe ngasese yinkosi uDinizulu ukuBa ahlale khona kuze kuphele udweshu lwaBashokoBezi, kwaBonakala ukuthi yona inkosi isaye ngaseMgungundlovu, kodwa ukuBuya kwayo yafumanisa uSiyekiwe esebalekile waqonda kuSandasi. KuyaBonakala ukuthi nezinduna zenkosi uDinizulu uqobo nazo zasezingathe-mbekile. Enye yazo yena ukuBa uSiyekiwe anqabe ukuBuyela oSuthu kodwa aqonde kuSandasi ngoBa yona yazi ukuthi ngokwenza njalo izobe isiyonakele indaba, nokuthi ukuwisela inkosi ehlaZweni sekulula. Induna le yayimzonda okaMancinza ngoBa yona isibona umfazi emuhle — — ngisho yena uSiyekiwe. Njengegama lakhe uSiyekiwe akazange ayivume induna le. Khona izozisindisa olakeni lukaDinizulu, nokuBa inkosikazi ingamtsheli uDinizulu noBambatha, yaceBa lelicobo lokuba yethuswe inkosikazi kaMancinza khona izofuna isiphephelo kubelungu. Induna lena yayingazi



ukuthi uBambatha ufele eNkandla. NoSiyekiwe naye wayengazi.

Kwagcina kanjanike? Pho umuntu wesifazane engazange eme ebandla nokubekana nabelungu engeMphezeni yena okwathi sekumi kaBi kwaDukuza, athi amahlehla akwaQwabe:

*"Phika Mphezani kuyaphikwa kulendlu.  
Yek'abelungu ukudlala!"*

Wasuka owesifazane wachaka konke ngoBambatha. Yilaphake lapho abelungu bagxila khona ngecala lokulahla inkosi uDinizulu. Uma sibuka kahle, siyabona emnyombeni wayo yonke indaba, sibona owesifazane eyisithezile indaba ngesithunzi esenziwa yizenzo nolimi lwakhe. USiyekiwe noma yena wayengaqonde lutho olubi, futhi akenzanga lutho olubi lokukhombisa ukungethembeki — — nokho inkulamo yakhe yonke eMgungundlovu yafika yayichithisa umuthi inkonyane.

Nezindaba eziningi zezimpi nezingxabano usuke ekhona owesifazane. NoChithumuzi nabafowabo babe-sendle-nje beshiye emakhaya, kwakungenxa yomuntu wesifazane — — yena uNomcebo lo.

Ngakhoke kwathi lapho esho njalo uChithumuzi ethi:  
"Ukhalelani mntanomuntu?"

NoNomanzi walizwa lelozwi elizela ukumduduza, kwathi ingani kufanele aphen-dule wathula. Wabuye wabuza uChithumuzi wathi:

"Ukhalelani mntanomuntu?"

Wakhophoza uNomanzi ukuBa aze abonwe yinsizwa ekhala. Wazesula izinyembezi wabeka phansi. Wathi ngenxa yokuba efuna ukumduduza isandla sakhe uChithumuzi wasibeka emahlombe kaNomanzi, wathi ngokwesula izinyembezi emehlweni, uChithumuzi wamhola wamletha kuNomcebo wafike wathi kuye:

"Dadewethu, umngane wakho uyakhala. Ukhumbula ekhaya, mncelise useyingane."

Lelizwi lokuthi 'dadewethu' walithatha lamngena enhliziyweni uNomcebo, lona lodwa lammisa isibindi sokuthi kanti kuChithumuzi unomfowabo owedlula uZazini. Akabuyanga esabeka nalapho kushona khona uZazini nomngane wakhe. Okunye okwamhle-kisayo kwamlethela insini ukuBa uChithumuzi athi makancelise

uNomanzi ngoBa etetema. NoNomanzi naye wafikelwa amahloni ngempela okuba aze aziphathe njengomntwana. Ngakhoke waziphendulela wathi:

"Ayincelise intombi enkulu njengami ayenze njani njenempela?"

Wathi uChithumuzi:

"Ikhona intombi enkulu eke ikhale, iteteniswe yize njengawe?"

Wathi esho lelozwi, uNomanzi wamuthi jeqe ngamehlo, kanti umntanensizwa ulisho eliqondile ukuthi lizoyijeqezisa. Wathi ephenduka wafumanisa kade ambuka uChithumuzi, intombi nayo yezwela yathi:

"Uyangiqalake mina, angithandi."

Wathi uChithumuzi:

"Ngikuqala uyigula lesithole yini?"

Yabuya yamukha ngeziqo zamehlo intombazana kanti umntanensizwa kade wayibeka: Wayethisa amehlo uNomanzi.

Kuthe izindaba zimnandi zidelile waqhamuka uMaphulana ezidlisa satshanyana wathi:

"Kanti akusahanjwa yini?"

Wathi esho njalo wabeka ngasentshonalanga, nempela ilanga laseliya ngomutsha wendoda, phansi kwemithi sekukhona amathunzi abika ukuthi selizoshona. Waphendula uChithumuzi wathi:

"Sesiyabopha nami besengizotshela amantombazana ukuBa alungele ukuhamba, uyazi phela nawe ukuthi isifazane ngabantu abasukela kade."

Washo lawomazwi maqede uMaphulana wanyamalala, wabuyela lapho wayephuma khona wayobema ugwayi wakhe, waqoqa okwakhe. Nezinsizwa zonke zaseziBuyile ekuvakasheni kwazo, zabuya ezinye zihlwaBusile, sezikhulumela futhi. Akakho owayengangaBaza ukuthi ngaleyonkathi sezilindele konke okuhle nokuBi.

Lathi selishona babewahlakaza amaziko ababekade bebese kuwona abanye sebepethe izihlangu ngezandla. Kuyo yonke lenkathi uMaphulana akakhulumi lutho uthule. Usefikelwa naye ukuthula okufikela abantu abadala behlezi eningini labantu abasha. Naye izindaba zezinsizwa lezi zazingazange zimngene kakhulu. Na-



muhla njengoba esekhulile-nje zasezimpume ngempela. Inye into eyayimchithisa isikhathi, ukubema nokuzibonela izindaaba zomhlabane emathanjeni akhe.

Ukuhlwa kwangena, wezwa esihlanjeni esasingenza-nsi kwayo kukhala amaselesele ezwakala ekhala njalo ehlobo enanele ihlobo. Kwakukhona imvunge yawomiyane bephuma emafukwini sebeqala ukuzingela yonke into enegazi abangayimuncayo besuthe. Nabo bathi sebesuka kuleyondawo basebexosha yifona omiyane. Enzansi ehlathini bakhonkothwa ikhonde lenkawu, lakhonkotha njalo balizwa noma sebekude nesiwa ababe kade beseduze kwaso.

Wahamba inhliziyi yakhe ishayela phezulu uNomcebo ngoba azi ukuthi ekugcineni kohambo lwakhe kukhona uMalambule. Izwi likaChithumuzi lokuthi "dade-wethu" lalisahleli enhliziyweni yakhe limlandela limnika isiduduzo njalo. Wonke umuntu wayenamile. Njengoba izinsizwa zasezike zathinta amanzi ampofo wazizwa sezivungama izingoma eziningi zasemaChubeni, zizivungamela phansi zingaphumeseli amazwi ngoba kwakuseseduze nemizi yabantu. Kodwa kuthe ukuaba zifone ukuthi sezithe qakaqa emathafeni zaphumela obala, seziquansa amagquma namaqele, waliqala omunye wezinsizwa ihubo lakuho ababezwakala ngalo ukuthi nampo beza:

*"Inkosi yahlul'izizwe,  
Wangibon'uBambatha,  
Sibashise ke sizwe,  
Hhe yaye!"*

Zalishaya izinsizwa kwathi nalowo owayengakalali waphumela phandle walalela izinsizwa zihaya ihubo leqhawe; nalowo owayeselele wavuka wembatha isiphuku wathi, labo abahlabelelayo bahlabelelaphi? Kazi ngabaphi? Nalowo ozayo ozohlangana nabo naye wazizwela ukuthi, weu, laboaba beza nalukhulu, waqheluka endleleni. Kulaabo ababevelamelana nabelungu bema ngezindlu ngoba sebecabanga ukuthi uBambatha noChakijane sebefikile. Abanezibindi bahloma balungela ukulwa Amagwala abalekela emahlathini kodwa adumala ukuhona ukuthi esikhundleni sokuaba amazwi adonsekele ngasemizini yawo, ayagwegwesa ayisika

emaceleni imizi. Laba abahaya ingoma bahambela ngaphandle kwayo yonke imizi. Kuthe noma amazwi eya ngokuya ecima, kodwa izinhlamvu zengoma zasala ezindlebeni zabantu ukuthi kuhaywa ngomfo ka-Mancinza:

*"Ubuhwanqa buduke nenhliziyo,  
Obunye buduka nemizimba.  
USifukufuku silukhakhayi  
Lwengane yakwamfaz'ofelwayo,  
uManz'amnyam'elangen!"*

Kwathi kuphakathi kobusuku, lapho sekuphume unyezi ukhanya uthe nge bazibona izintaaba zasema-Chubeni sezivela. Waxegisa izitho uChithumuzi enzela ukusondela eduze kwamantombazana wafike wathi kuNomcebo:

"Dadewethu! Sekuseduze ekhaya. Uyayibona leyan-taba ephambi kwakho? Ngaphansi kwayo ngumuzi wakithi. Laphayake sizokumbona uMalambule umfowethu", washo ekhombile ngeklwa lakhe, lathi ukuthi benye, benye ekukhanyeni kwenyanga, noNomcebo wabona ukuthi kukhuluma iqhawe.

Uthe eqeda lapho uChithumuzi wayehlehlela kuNommanzi wasondela wathi:

*"Mntanomuntu, selokhu ngikubone ekuseni ulele, udadewethu ecamele kuwe inhliziyi yami ithe mangifengenxa yakho. Umngane wakho uzogana umfowethu, wena kuhle usala usuvuma mina. Akusekho kweshelana. Umhlabane ufile, nawe uyazibonela. Yiba ngumame, ngisenguyihlo."*

Washo wayibuka intombazana, yabe yilokhu ibeke phansi. Wasondela kuyona uChithumuzi, kodwa yona yamgwegwesela, yamncintsha amehlo. Waphendukela kuNomcebo uChithumuzi wathi:

"Dadewethu, woza uzoncelisa umngane wakho, funaze akhale."

Wahleka uNomcebo wathi kuChithumuzi:

*"Uthando phela alukhethi ludwani oluwela kulona!"*

Waphenduka uNomanzi wambuka uNomcebo ngoba eqonda into ayishoyo, wathi ubuka uChithumuzi wamfica emlindle, wahleka uNomanzi wathi:

"Sengeqiwe yilona."



ISAHLUKO XII.

Ukufumanisa ukuthi izwe lonke lakwaZulu nasesi-Lungwini lahlukene, uBambatha noChakijane nabo bonke ababengayithandi imali yamakhanda befuna amasu okukhombisa ubuzwe babo. Okokuqala kwa-kufanele bashanele endlini, basuse izitha zesizwe ezazimnyama. Sekuchaziwe ngaphambili ukuthi selokhu kwasuka kuCetshwayo eweliswa izwe lakwaZulu labiwa phakathi izifunda zabayishumi nantathu, kwathiwa wonke umnumzane ophakanyisiwe unamandla nogazi olungangolwabo bendlu kaZulu: kwasuka lapha-ke ukwahlukana phakathi kwakwaZulu. Akubangabikho namunye owathi, hawu madoda, niyangibonela-nje na? Kungaya kanjani silingane sonke, nakoko eman-dulweni imibuso namakhanda ayo ingazange ilingane na? Bonke ababekwayo, bagoba amakhanda bathi ngibona yini.

Lento isiyahlupha nanamuhla ngoba nezingane sezi-khula zazi ukuthi sinamakhosi angabalwa; lokho kusho ukuthi noma ngingalalela yiphi kusalungile, noma ngingalalelanga lutho konke lokho kulungile. Lomthetho womfo kaSonjica uSomsewu, kwathi lapho usemuhle wabongeka kubantukazana ababebona ukukhushulelwa ezikhundleni kodwa kulaabo ababethanda isizwe bawubuka bawukhophozelela, banqunywa imilomo. Okuyibonabantu ababulala izwe ngalesisikhathi yibona laba abasebethi bangabelungu, nemiqondo yabo izikhohlisa ngokuthi ingabelungu, ngoba sebegqoka isilungu, bedla nokudla kwabelungu. Ubukhosi lobu obusha kwakungobabo bebujabulela.

Angisho ukuthi bonke babenjalo. Zikhona izilwane ezalumela uhlanga lukaZulu nayo yonke imfundo yazo. Phakathi kwezilwane ezama ngothando lwesizwe umuntu angemkhohlwe umfo kaBeni kaNcaphayi kwaLuthuli kwelaseMvoti. Sizwa kuthiwa nguyena owayengumbali kaDinizulu kwenye inkathi, wabuye wabakhona nase-Mahhashini seku-busa uSolomoni umfo kaDinizulu, osanda ukufa khona zolo-nje. Ezifundisweni zodumo ezathanda isizwe selokhu kwaBanini singamshiya kanjani umfo kaJemusi kwelamaQadi, uMafukuzela:

*“Mntwan'uyantenga,  
Ngikubeletha wangigwibikela,  
Ngoba ngithe ngingumlungu,  
Wangiphuz'okwamanzi.  
Mthamo ngibe ngiyahlafune  
Wangibinda ngakuphimisa,  
Oth'usuka wavus'uHlange:  
Wawukubonaph'ukusus'amawa?  
Ngiwabuke ngagebenyeka, Zulu.”*

Lonake, oselokhu wapehezelana nabo abendlunkulu ebahlenga eluleka lapho kudinga ukwelukwa khona? YiBo laba nabanjengabo abangaphathwa uma kukhulunywa ngokunikela uhlanga ezitheni. Kunalokho bona bayazinikela luqobo lwabo kubengcono kuhlinzwe bona kusinde umhlabo kaZulu.

Kutheke uku-ba kubonakale ukuthi umhlabo wahlukene, phakathi, kwavela amashinga ikakhulu kwelakwaZulu aphen-duka abashokobezi neNkomndani. Labake babeqaphela bonke abahlu-bukayo bephambana nengqondo kaZulu babasudukise uma kwenzeka. Babeyebaphume kube sengathi kuphunywa inqina, ikakhulu labo ababenganeno koThukela, baphume bathi bayakozingela kwaZulu, kanti ukhona umnumzane ososhiweyo, kuyezwakala-nje sekuxoxwa indaba. Baningi abanumzane ababeNyamalala kanjena bangaziwa ukuthi bashonephi.

Amandla omlungu ayesengene kakhulu kwaZulu, kwazise nokuthi naye umlungu akahlezi kahle kulelizwe lomzansi uma uZulu enganqotshwa aphulwe onke amaphiko andiza ngawo. Kwakwesatshwa ukuthi uma uZulu engabanjwa ngezimpondo zozimbili uzoqoqa zonke ezinye izizwana azifake umoya wobunye zim-cwase umlungu njengesizwe esifikile ukuzokona umhlabo. Ekwenzeni konke kwahlukanisa isizwe sikaZulu umlungu wasizwa yimiqondo namakhanda amaningi akaZulu ayethanda ukukhuphukela endlini engenhla. Nanamuhla ukukhuphukela endlini engenhla kulula uma uthengisa ngohlanga lwakini ukhomba amanxeba abuhlungu okungadingeki aphole.

Pho noMalambule yini kuthi ethunyiwe yinkosi yakhe uSgananda ngenxa yokuba ethenjwa kodwa yena ukuthenjwa kwakhe akuphendule induva?



' Kuthe ukuḅa ḅaphume lapha kwaSigananda oMalambule nezinye izinsizwa ḅaqonda khona eMpanza. Endleleni ḅehamba uMalambule wezwa kuncencetha ezindlebeni zakhe inkulumo yamadoda ekhuluma noSigananda ngamazwi ashiwo uSomsewu ukuthi oḅulala imbila emhlophe usuke okhe olunenkume, nokuthi ezinye izimbiḅa ziyophuma kuwo wonke amacala zizofuna ithambo lembiḅa eḅuleweyo. ḅahamba laḅa aḅanye-nje yena ucaḅanga ngalawamazwi.

Kwaḅuya kuyena izinto eziningi owake waziḅona zehlakala eBabatini phakathi ezinkomponi nasezinkompulazi lapho aḅantu ḅebeke ḅaḅulale omunye phakathi kwamaḅili ḅamdonse ḅemhudula ḅayeḅamphonse noma emgodini omdala ongasembiwa. Kutholakale ukuthi umuntu othile unyamalele kodwa kungaziwa ukuthi washonaphi. Aḅakuḅo ḅawufune umkhondo, kodwa ḅangawutholi lapho ushone khona. Kusuke izinhloli nofokisi ḅaphume ḅehambe ḅefuna yonke indawo, ḅaze ḅezwe iphungana liphuma ngandaweni ethize, ḅaqonde khona, ḅafumanise umuntu kade waḅa ngamathambo.

ḅasolele esinkompulazi esithize. ḅayasuka lapho ḅazidlisa satshanyana naḅo ḅephuza utshwala ḅadakwe kuqala; kanti lapho sekubedwa kubede ḅona kuqala; nalapho sekuthengwa utshwala ḅuthengwe yiḅo kuqala ḅaphenduke omaliyavuzwa nezigeḅengu zoqoḅo. Kuthi lapho ḅonke ofeleḅa seḅephuze ḅaze ḅacwila nangobuso seḅebukuda ezinsisheni aqale omunye wawofokisi ukuxoxa izindaḅa zobugeḅengu okuthi kwathi ekuthinithini kunje, kunjeya, yena wathatha ummese wabolokoqa umuntu. Ngokwesaba ukuḅanjwa ezweni labelungu wamthatha lomuntu wayewamphosa emmfuleni, akwaḅandaḅazalutho.

Ayixoxe maqede, kusuke nalona omunye ahamba naye, naye athathe eyakhe yoḅugeḅengu oḅudlula loḅu afuzwile.

Uzwenike, ziyesuka izilima sezingenwe utshwala emakhanda zixoxe ukuthi ekuthinithini zake zaḅamba umuntu zamḅulala kanje, kwaḅanje, zamthatha zamfihla noma zambela ekuthinithini. ḅahleke ḅafe ofokisi, ḅayigcone indaba yalomuntu naye aze ayixoxele okokuḅa ayikhiphe amathumbu. Kothi seḅeḅona ukuthi

nempela nguye lomuntu, ḅayinqume phakathi indaba ḅathi kuhle iqedelwe ngelinye ilanga. ḅalinqume ilanga lokuhlangana kuphuzwe nalendaḅa kuzwakale isigcino sayo.

ḅayasuka ofokisi ḅaqonda kwelakuḅo ḅayafika ḅathi:

"Hawu sesibatholile, kade sibadonsa sibasenga, ḅase-ngeka. Siyohlangana naḅo ngelanga elithize ekuthinithini." Nempela ngalelolanga kuḅe yikho. Kuyothi ḅona ḅephuza ḅedakwa, kanti emnyango sekuhlezi aḅanye ofokisi noma amaphoyisa azoḅaḅamba ḅonke kanyekanye ngenkathi indaba lena ixoxwa.

Izilima lezi ezinecala zona kazazi ukuthi nalaḅa aḅaḅanjwe naḅo ngamaphoyisa. Futhi ngukuhlakanipha yini esilungwini, lokhu wona amaphoyisa lawa yiwona azophathwa ngendluzula kuḅe futhi yiwona alwayo engafuni ukufakwa ozankosi. Beka! Ungaḅe ukuḅonile esiLungwini! Pho, kuyafikwa naphambili izigeḅengu zahlukaniswe kuthi ofokisi laḅa ḅathathwe kuthiwe ḅazovalelwa kweyaḅo indlu ngoḅa ḅeḅabi ngempela kanti, sekungukudedelwa kwaḅo.

Liḅaqule icala laḅa aḅanye liḅalahle, ḅakhonjwe entanjeni. Yeka esiLungwini ukudlala!

UMalambule wayekwazi lokhu. Kwavuka konke emqondweni wakhe waziḅona esenequngu lokubulala umuntu, nokwenza kuḅengumlungu. Waziḅona esehamba ecasha ngoḅa uma eke waḅanjwa useyinhlamvu.

Laḅoḅantu owayehamba naḅo waḅaḅuka waḅafanisa naḅantwana aḅathathwa yinhliziyi, nolaka ḅaphume ḅenze izinto ezinkulu, kuthi uma seḅeḅanjwa ḅezenza ḅakhohlwe ukuthi seḅesukwe yini ḅaze ḅazenze.

Endleleni wagwiḅika wathi:

"Madoda, mina lendaḅa yokuyoḅulala umlungu nokuḅa sithathe izibamu zakhe mina angiyenzi."

"Hawu, uthini Malambule na?" Kuḅuza laḅa aḅanye.

"Qha ngiqinisile angiyenzi. Amazwi okuthi aḅelungu ḅayolifuna ithambo lembiḅa yakuḅo liyangisebenza. Nina anizange nihlale nabelungu laḅa. Mina ngivela phakathi kwaḅo izindlela zaḅo ezinye ngiyaziqonda kodwa eziningi angiziqondi, futhi angisho ukuthi ngiyoziqonda nanini."



“Usho ukuthi thina usuzosishiya sodwa sife na?”  
KuBuza omunye.

“Ngiya bona ukuthi kuya kulokho. Le, ezweni elingaphambi kwasebuthonga, eBabatini, bengike ngibone bejonge ukuthola umuntu omnyama ebulele omunye umuntu omnyama; bamfune baze bamthole. Kangakananike uma thina siyobulala umlungu? Angikhathali noma singambulala sihambe seduke nezwe singaziwa nalapho sibeke khona, isilokazane lesi esimhlophe siyosifuna size sijuluke imihlandla sithi siyabaleka ngoba phela sesahlulwa.”

Washo lawamazwi uMalambule yaxega imilenze namadolo athamba kula ba ababehamba naye uMalambule. Omunye wabuza wathi:

“Uqinisile na?”

Wathi uMalambule,

“Anginteli uma ngisho njalo.”

Yathi enye insizwa eyayihamba noMalambule:

“Qha, uqinisile wena kaMdlampisi, ingani siyayizwa indaba kaBongoza ukuthi kwathi emva kokuba awakhohlise amaQadasi, amncindela isithupha athi ayoze ambone. Amfuna, amfuna, Ntandose kaBaBa, aze amthola. Amenzeni?”

Yathi enye insizwa,

“Kuthiwa ambophezela emahhashini. Kwakude kude, kwathi lapho efika ekhaya ambophezela esondweni lenqola azikholisa ngaye, kuyilelo nayilelo lizixebulela kuyena waze wakhipha ulimi uBongoza wafa.”

“Qha uqinisile.” Kusho okaMdlampisi; “nokho uqinisile izwi lenkosi, yizwi lenkosi thina zithunywa zayo akufanele sileqe. Ukuleqa ngukufiphaza isizwe sonke, ngoba inkosi imele izwe lonke.”

“Mina senginqumile angiyi lapho”, kusho uMalambule.

Wathi eliqeda, yamphendukela insizwa yathi:

“Kanti uqonde nokuhlubukisa thina, nawe usuyimbuka kanti? Ukuhlala nabelungu lokhu sekwakona, sewadla kakhulu amathe abo, ngifunga uNtandose.”

Yaphakamisa iwisa layo yambeka, yathi ukulivivinya noMalambule wabambisisa isihlangu sakhe ngoba

esebona ingozi phambi kwakhe. Yambuka insizwa yathi:

“Yikho-nje usuthi uqinisa nesihlangwana sakho? Ngoba ucaBanga ukuthi kungathi ngihhobela ngaleli lami iwisa kusale kumi yini lapho lishaye khona?”

Washo esondela okaMdlampisi ehleka lokhukuhleka umuntu ahlale esinekile, wathi:

“We, we, yeka mina!”

Wasondela, uMalambule wahlehla, naye wazibonela ukuthi ikhanda lewisa likaMdlampisi lingafohla noma ethi uvikile. Wambuka ebusweni, ebekisisa wabu bona ubuso bakhe sebumnyama bugqunqile njengesikhumba sonwabu kade luchukuluzwa, waguquka, wafulathela, wanyamalala emnyameni. Wezwa izigi uMdlampisi zishona enzansi, uMalambule echitheka ngoba nempela impisi endala yayizomudla ngoba yayikade ibadla abanye, yenake lokhu nempi wayengazange ayiphume ngaphambili, yayizomsobozela.

Kwathi ukuba afulathele uMalambule yasale yahleka yathi:

“Yekanini uNtandose — — lomfana amabele usawathanda?” Washo ebeka lezi ezinye izinsizwa ababehamba nazo. Wabuye waqhubeka wathi:

“Akukaze nakanye ngigalele ngaleliwisa kusale kumi lapho ngishaye khona; kanti akuMshabisabolanga yini io?” Washo iwisa lakhe elivivinya ehleka yedwa. Wabuye wathi:

“Leli, bowethu, lake la bona eSandlwana lapho kwathi isibambene eyamaNgisi nekaCetshwayo ngagwaza ngaze ngafika mahlaya kumlungu, ngezwa umkhonto wami sengathi ubuthuntu, ngawuyeka ngawubuyisela ngapha, ngadomula lona, ngagandaya kwalala izigingqane. Nike nizwe khona kuxoxwa ukuthi umlungu samchoBoza ngembulunga lena wakhalisa okwengulube, ngifunga uNtandose kaBaBa. Kwakuyithike labo si-phethe bona oMshabisabolanga laba.”

Washo futhi elivivinya iwisa lakhe uMdlampisi, kanti ulivivinya-nje lizokudla futhi eMpanza. Ladla okokugcina eNkandla lapho umbayimbayi wawusucoboshisa umuntu ekude kungadingeki noma aze asondele eduze. Wawa umfo kaMdlampisi eya phambili wawela



eduze kukaBambatha kaMancinza. Kuleyompi kwafa amaqhawe, efa kowamagcino ezinsizweni zikaZulu, ngisho umfo kaMancinza, washiya uDinizulu inkosi yakhe owayethi uyamulwela. Wafa, nayo yangahlala naminyaka yamlandela kuleyompi yaseNkandla abanye bayibiza ngokuthi eyaseMome, lapho kwafa uMehlo-kazulu:

*“Umqali wangwazi phambi kweSandlwana,  
Uqubuka sammfula gcwala,  
Uzulu lenza kabi laduma lingahlomile.  
UNKungu zehla ngamandl'eHlobane.  
Umgwazi kaqhaqhi,  
Uqhaqhelwa zinyoni nonhlanguhloshana.”*

Kwafa amadodana kaMancinza oMashumi, noMdeliwe; kwafa amadodana kaGodide oSikebe noLudwani, noQililaBanjwa. Kwafa naphakathi kwaBakwaMfungelwa ingani yena wayeyimbuka embukele kubelungu kodwa abantu bakhe abanye bakuphika lokho basiza okaMancinza. Phakathi kwaBo kwafa umfo kaMathanda, kwafa induna yaBo uThayiza, kwafa uSiphethu noSihlanu noMnwana, amaqhawe kwaBakwaMfungelwa. Kwafa iqhawe uMzameni kaBabahaye:

*“USilevu umazal'eziny'izilevu,  
USinga lukamesisi umathung'isidwaba.”*

Amaqhawe lawo!

Uma kwafa amaqhawe anjengalawa, kungasabalwa imfabanga eningi eyayingenazibongo eyafa yendlala ucansi, pho uMalambule yena wayeyokwaziwa ngubani njengempela?

Wadlufulunda lapho maqede uMalambule washibika wehla ngokhalo oluvundla ummfula, iLoza, waye wawela wangena indlela yezinqola eqonde ngaseMgungundlovana ngoBa ethi uqonde ukuthola isiphephelo ngakhona angabanjwa ngabalandeli baKaBambatha. Kwathi esehambile waBona ukuthi sekuhlwile, nezwe lakhona laligcwele izinkungu kade aligcina, wangena esikhotheni walala emva kokuBa azishutheke phansi kwefuku. Walala kahle wangaphazanyiswa yilutho. Kodwa wayecabanga ukuthi lento yokuba abaleke isizwe

sakubo engasisizanga yayilungile yini, nokuthi uma esefika eMgungundlovana uzothi uyaphi, uqhamukaphi.

Lemicabango yamcindezela phansi wadakwa ukungazi ukuthi uzosuka lapho aqondephi. Ngenxa yokuba engazi lapho wayengaqonda khona wathi uzoqonda eMgundlovana. Nempela waqonda khona wafika lapho ilanga seliphakeme umuzi uxhakazela kugcwele amasosha nabelungu bexwayile, umuntu ehamba asobebele ngoBa kwakuthi noma umlungu ekuthintile-nje kube sekuphelile njalo, nokukulahla phansi ngenhlamvu kuyize-nje.

Waya ngasenkantolo yakhona wafika wazidlisa sathanyana amaphoyisa amkhankula athi:

*“Woza lapha wena.”*

Pho lokhu uyawazi amaphoyisa abantu ukuthi noku-bizwa lokhu sekuyimpi, waya eseshekezela, wafika wema. Labuya lathi:

*“Awukhuleki ngani, awazi yini ukuthi lapha kusemthethweni?”*

Wasobela naye uMalambule wathi,  
*“Baba!”*

Uthe esho njalo kanti nakhu kadlula unongqayi-nje wasenkantolo uthwele izincwadi zakhona uzikhipha kwelinye ihhovisi ziya kwelinye, lase lisukuma njalo iphoyisa lansondo lithi:

*“Bayede!”*

NoMalambule ecabanga ukuthi unongqayi lona sekuyiyona inkosi, naye wakhuleka. Lathatha iphoyisa lomuntu lamhlohlozoza lathi:

*“Yinina laba eneyisayo, okuthi ngoBa nifake amabulukwana bese nisiqhatha nabelungu okuyibona amakhosi ethu.”*

Lasho njalo lamgqula ngesidunu sewisa wezwa uMalambule kufuquka isisi solaka phansi emsukweni wenhliziyo kodwa umphefumulo wakhe wamtshela ukuthi icala likuye ekhanda lakhe ngoBa akakho umuntu ombezileyo wathi makeze ngasenkantolo.

Uhlale wahlala ngaphakathi unongqayi wabuye waphuma efake imbilijisi namaklawosi acwebezelayo, nesigqoko esaphulele nhlanye, wambuka uMalambule, ngoBa ekhumbula ukuthi izwe labelungu leli lihanjwa



ylaḅo aḅanezilimi aḅakhuluma lokhu, ḅaphixe, ḅavume lokhu, ḅaphixe. Waḅona ukuthi unongqayi lona yiBunu, hawu, waveteza umfo kaMalambule. Saqhuma ngamakhala emḅingelela umlungu, uḅasi kwaḅanguḅasi, kwasuka kwahlwa emini ephoyiseni lakwaZulu, isiveteveve sesinuka emakhaleni. Pho, uyazazi izindlela zakobe-lungu uMalambule ngoḅa wake wahlala isikhathi eside eBabatini. Ukhuluma njalo umlungu useyamamatheka, yena uyalandela waze wathi gozololo ngasemnyango lapho umlungu engena khona, waguqa phansi, wazikhonzela.

Umlungu wathula-nje, waḅuye waphuma futhi waya kulo lelihovisi aḅeye kulo nakuqala waḅuye futhi uMalambule washaya indesheni. Wamamatheka umlungu wamqhweba wathi makangene endlini. Wangena uMalambule, wakhuleka. Lamḅuza iphoyisa lapho evela khona, washo ukuthi uvela esifundeni sika-Sigananda, nokuthi uḅalekile khona ngoḅa yena esandakufika evela ngapha eGoli, aḅantu benkosi yakubo ḅayamsolela sengathi uzobathutha aḅayise kubelungu. Ngakhoke ḅesekucetshwe neceḅo lokuḅa asudukiswe. Kwaḅakhona aḅamtshelayo, weqa. Manje ufika lapha-nje uzocela umsebenzi wokusiza kuloludweshu lukaBambatha. Yena akavumelani nalo, angase ame ngakubelungu.

Unongqayi wamḅuka phansi wamḅuka phezulu wathula, kwaḅakhona ukumsola lomuntu unongqayi ngoḅa aḅantu ḅakwaZulu wayeḅazi ukuthi funa mhlawumbe uMalambule lona ufuna ukumholela oPhathe kuḅuye kuphinde esikaḅongoza. Wathi ephoyiseni lomuntu leli elalimphathe kaḅi uMalambule, wathi malimthathe uMalambule limphathe kahle, athole ukudla, alaliswe kahle.

Waphuma lapho uMalambule esethwele umsila eseya kuleliphoyisa. Wanele walibona maqede kwafutha endaweni lapho iphoyisa limqgule khona waqala ukuḅanesiḅango kulona. Nalo alikhulumanga lisimze lathi:

“Woza lapha.”

Walandela uMalambule, ḅasithela ngemuva kwekantolo, ḅahamba ḅaze ḅafika ekamu, izindlu-nje

ezingamalawu. ḅathe ukufika khona iphoyisa leli elaseliqinile lamhlalisa phansi lathi:

“Uqhamukaphi mfana, ungokaḅani?”

UMalambule wathula walibuka iphoyisa ngoḅa kulona kwasekukhona ukuzisola selicaḅanga ukuthi lithinte umuntu ongathintwayo, mhlawumbe uliphoyisa elikhulu elivela kwenye indawo, mhlawumbe uMalambule uyinxusa lakwaHulumeni elithunywe izindaḅa ezinkulu. Kuthe ingani uyakuḅona lokhu uMalambule wangathanda ukuḅa alibozomele iphoyisa uma selethukile. Esikhundleni sokuliphendula wathula-nje walibuka. Kuthe ngesikade wathi kulona:

“Kulendawo ongigqule kuyō kuyafutha ngenxa yobuhlungu. Ngithule-nje ngicaḅanga ubuhlungu obungiphetheyo.”

Wathula uMalambule, nephoyisa lathula. Lithe lithatha lalingena indlela libuyela enkantolo njengoḅa kwasekuzoshaya nesikhathi samadina. UMalambule wasala ekamu walala ngoḅa wayekhathele, wavuka ngoḅa seḅemnikeza amahewu nophushwana olwalusethungeni, wadla waḅuyela phansi. Kuthe lapho ilanga libantubahle kwafika izwi ekamu ukuthi uMalambule uyadingeka ngasenkantolo. Wasuka khona lapho waqonda enkantolo. Wathi esaqhamuka walibona lelikhehla lakwaZulu eliyiphoyisa limḅuka, limqaphelisa nokususa kwakhe phansi unyawo. Naye waḅona ukuthi ikhona indaḅa ephakathi kwakhe nalelikhehla, wathi lapho esondela latsaka amathe lamkhomba ngomunwe kuwo umnyango awufone kungena unongqayi ngesikhathi efika. Wafika kuwo umnyango wangqongqoza, kwathula kwathi nya. Kuthe emva kwesikhathi kwaphuma kuwo umnyango iphoyisa lomuntu lathi makangene.

Esengene uMalambule amehlo akhe akhangwa ozankosi aḅayizixhoḅo ḅelenga ezindongeni, nemikhonto namahawu ayindondela kunqwatshelwe emsamo wendlu. Phezu kwamahawu amanye kwakukhona namaḅeshu eḅekiwe kuḅonakala ukuthi ake agqokwa yizinsizwa. Kuthe amehlo akhe esanamathele kulezizinto, wezwa izwi limḅuza lithi:



“Ithi inkosi nguweni uMalambule na?” KuBuza iphoyisa lomuntu ngendluzula.

Wathi uMalambule,

“Yimina uMalambule.”

“Ithi inkosi ngempela uyakwazi ukuveteza ulimi lwaBo na?”

“YeBo, isiNgisi ngiyasizwa nesiBunu ngiyasizwa naso, ngoba ngike ngaseben . . .”, wathi engakaliqedi lelo iphoyisa lathi:

“Thula! Inkosi ayiphendulwa kanjalo. Yona iBuza ukuthi ulimi uyalwazi na? Musa ukwelula.”

Wathula uMalambule eBuka iphoyisa limfutha isizathu salokho engasazi, wayesephendula wathi:

“YeBo ngiyalwazi.”

Wathi ukusho njalo, iphoyisa lamnyonkoloza ngamehlo lenzela ukumsafisa, naye wazibekela phansi.

Lithe lithatha iphoyisa lomlungu lalivulela isiBunu kuMalambule, naye wathi ukuqabuka, walihloma ngaso. LaBuye lamhloma ngomunye umbuzo, naye walibeka khona lapho futhi ngolimi lwakhona. Unongqayi lona umbuzo njalo ubeke phansi. Wabona ukuthi qha, uMalambule uyasikhipha isiBunu siqhuma nangamakhala, wayesethi:

“UChakijane kaGezindaka uyamazi na?”

Wathi uMalambule,

“Qha.”

“UBambatha kaMancinza uyamazi na?”

Wathi uMalambule,

“Naye futhi, qha.”

“Abashokobezi na?”

“Yini yona leyo?” KuBuza uMalambule. Uthe esabuzile laselengene iphoyisa lomuntu selithi:

“Uyazenzisa, nkosi, uyabazi abashokobezi angebazi kanjani efundisiwe-nje?”

Lathi lisho njalo iphoyisa lomuntu waphenduka uMalambule walibuka phansi naphezulu, wathula. Laqhubeka iphoyisa lomlungu, lathi:

“Ikhona indaba esifuna ukukuthuma yona. Uyakwazi ukushayela inqola yezimbongolo, iminyuzi?”

Wathi uMalambule,

“Ngingalinga nkosi.”

Wathi uNongqayi:

“Uzoshayela inqola ezothutha izimpahla iziqondise eMahlabathini, ngendlela enquma kwaNtunjambili. Uma ufika eMahlabathini ufumanisa ukuthi udingeka uqhubekela phambili kwaNongoma, uyokwenza njalo. Lomsebenzi engikunika wona ungase uphele eMahlabathini uma impi kuyiqiniso ukuthi iphelile ngokulwa kwaseMome.”

Wabuza uMalambule wathi:

“Uma impi iphela izimbongolo lezi nazo ngiyozishiya khona eMahlabathini na?”

Wathi unongqayi:

“Uyozwa khona. Ngakhoke phuma khonamanje uhambe naleliphoyisa uyozilungisela ukuhamba. Kudingeka ekuseni liyaphuma ilanga usukude. Nezimbongolo nenqola konke sekulungile.”

Waphuma uMalambule elandela iphoyisa leli okwakhungathi alimthandi. Lahamba naye layelafika ekamu. Ukufika kwaBo khona lathi iphoyisa kuyena:

“Hlala lapha mfana, ngikhulume nawe.”

Wahlala phansi uMalambule.

“Uyawazi ngempela lomsebenzi okuthiwa hamba uyowenza ngalapha eMahlabathini na?”

Wathi uMalambule:

“Umsebenzi wokushayela izimbongolo ngiyawazi, nendlela yokuya eMahlabathini ngiyayazi ngoba sekukaningi ngiyakhona ngidlula lapho ngiya emsebenzini noma ngihamba nezinye izinsizwa siyakokweshela.”

Lathula iphoyisa. Lasuka lathi:

“YeBoke; uyamazi lona wesifazane ozokhwezwa engoleni yakho uhambe naye uye umlahle ngakuBo na?”

UMalambule wathula ngoba ubengakezwa lutho ngabantu ebebezokhwela engoleni yakhe. Wayazi ukuthi kuzo zonke izinqola eziphumayo noma ziqondephi kuye kukhwele abantu bahambe naBo, ezindleleni bazehlele baqonde lapho beqonde khona. Akakushayanga mkhulu ukukhwela komuntu wesifazane. Ngakhoke waphendula wathi:

“Angimazi.”

“Uqinisile na?” Kusho iphoyisa.

Wathi uMalambule,



“Hawu wangibuza ngokucophelela okungaka ngalomuntu wesifazane yini ngaye?”

Lathula iphoyisa ngoβα selibona ukuthi uMalambule useyalibuza nokuthi kufanele liphendule ukuze liphendule kwakufanele lizibeke phansi lokhuyakuqhosha ebelinakho uMalambule efika likulahle likhulume naye njengendoda enye kwenye. Lathatha laphonsa esikhwameni salo isandla, saphuma neshungu likagwayi elihlotshisiwe ngempela ngobuhlalu obuluhlaza nobumhlophe nobubomvu. Lapha entanyeni yeshungu kwakuthungelwe umvungquluzi wesilengiso naso esihlotshiswe ngobuhlalu obumhlophe kuphela. Lesisilengiso iphoyisa lalisigaxe embotsheni yedlebe lebantshi lalo elimnyama elinezinkinobo zethusi, kwathi lapha okhalo lelibantshi lathi gamfu ngebande elikhulu lesikhumba elilenga ozankosi.

Lalithatha ishungu lalo iphoyisa lalivula lathi ukulishaya ngomunwe lachathaza ugwayi labema laselibuza lithi:

“Uyamazi uBambatha kaMancinza, inkosi yakwaZondi ngalaphaya kulawayamagquma owabonayo na?”

Wathi uMalambule,  
“Ngiyamazi ngempela.”

“Usho ukuthini nxa uthi uyamazi ngempela?”

Wathi uMalambule,

“Ngisho ukuthi ngiyamazi, noma eqhamuka lapha ngingabanamandla okumkhomba ngimahlukanise kwamanye amadoda ngoβα ngiyamazi.”

“Wake wambona ngawakho amehlo na?”

“Yebo ngisanda kumbona kuyo lenyanga ephelile.”  
Kusho uMalambule.

Labuye lakhhipha intshengula yalo iphoyisa lakha lapha eshungwinj labema lathi:

“Laphaya kuleziyazindlu kukhona umkaMancinza. Kusasa kuthiwa uzokhwezwa enqoleni yakho uhambe naye agoduke, aqonde khona ngaseMahlabathini. Akufanele ukuβα ahambe ebonakala ukuthi ungumkankosi, kufanele afihlwe aze aye afike kwabakuβo. UHulumeni, mfana, ukwethwesa umsebenzi onzima ngoβα bona abantu bakithi bazokubona bakubulale okokuqala ngoβα uhamba nomkankosi, izinduna zenkosi zingekho

ngisho nezichaka zayo. Okwesibili unjengembuka namuhla ngoβα uzosebenzela abelungu ngesikhathi esibi sokulwa nabo.”

“Pho wena njengoba ulapha-nje usuyimbuka nge mpela nakubantu bakini na? Ingani ubukeka usumdala. Ungawuguqula kanjani umqondo wakho ushiye uZulu usebenze umlungu na?”

“Uqinisile. Kuhle ungibuze kanjalo ngoβα sengimdala. Umlungu ngiyamsebenzela ngoβα ngithanda ukumazi nokuthi uze asehlule-nje ngoβα ephethe liphi ikhubalo yena thina esingenalo na. Mina ngizele lokho lapha.”

“Ukusho ukuthi ngithe ngifika-nje lapha wangiphatha ngendlela ongiphathe ngayo ngoβα uthi ngizothengisa isizwe sakwaZulu na?”

Lathula ikhehla. Labuye lambuka ngoβα selicabanga ukuthi uzosuka uMalambule ayoliceβα kubelungu ukuthi leliphoyisa liyinhloli. Alizele ukusebenzela umlungu lizohlola ukuma kwaβo. Wayesethi uMalambule ebona ukuthi ikhehla aliphenduli:

“Qha ngokubuza kanjalo angiqonde kukulimaza. Nami umlungu ngiyathanda ukumsebenzela ngimazi. Sengisebenze isikhathi phansi komlungu kodwa uyangehlula ukumazi — yisilwane. Ungasifunda kanjani isilwane? Sikhuluma ulimi olushwabene olukwitzayo, nomqondo owelula lololulimi ukuβα lukhulume, mina ngithi ushwabene. Kodwa izenzo zaβo ziyaphica, βαβα.”

“Ziphicaphi?” Kuβuza ikhehla.

“Ziphica lapho sebethinta ezokubusa thina bantu abamnyama. Ukubusa kwaβo kungukusicindezela phansi. Beka ukuβα inkosi uDinizulu aphantsiwe okweziphakanyiswa, nawe njengoba uyiphoyisa-nje uthathwa njengomkhulu umuntu lo naphezu kwakhe uqobo. Kulezizindawo zenu sifundiswa ukweyisana, nokuphathana ngendlovuyangena. Mina lento angiyazi ingangehlula, βαβα.”

“Mina anginjalo. Uyangazi mina? Uyangazi kanjani ungumntwana-nje? Mina ngike ngahamba ezimpini zamaBunu namaNgisi, ngiyinhloli. Ngikhulele emaBunwini ngikhonze khona emapulazini. Ngake ngahlala noChakijane kaGezindaka, ngafunda kuyena ubuciko ezintweni eziningi zokushayanisa abelungu



ngamakhanda. Uzongibuzza uthi ngizokwenzani lapha? Yebo ungabe nalapho usaqinisile. Ngilapha ngoaba ngifuna ukuhlola izindaba. Sekukade ngifuna ukuhamba kodwa indlela ayikho. Ukufika kwakho kungikhubazile ngempela, kodwa ubuyaphi?"

Lasho iphoyisa lathula. NoMalambule wathula. Walifuka iphoyisa. Ebusweni balo kwakukhona izintshwaqa zemivingqa ezinhlonzini okuthi lapho liphakamisa amehlo izinhlonzi ziphakame zibe yimisele ngemisele. Lemisele ibala ukuhlupheka, nokukhwela kwehliwa ezindongeni zokuhamba komhlabha, umuntu elwa nokuphila nokufa, nokushiya izwe lingcono kunokuba wazalwa walifika linjalo. Kulemivingqa uMalambule wabona oShaka bekhwela izinsonge zomnzansi weAfrika behlulahlula izizwe, ingabe ngomuso bayohlaselelaphi; wabona oDingana esizibeni saseMavivane okuthiwa sizonzobeke ngokuminzisa amadoda ashone, aze ashone nezicoco zawo; kuzona lezozinhlonzi wabona oMpande beza nezinkomo zawoNomampo emndlunkulu wakhe, wazidla wazibanqa nezawoMalambule kaSobuza eSwazini okunguyena owayeqanjwe ngaye; wabona uCetshwayo ohamba emahlathini amnyama konke ngisho nemizi yawo; wacina ngoMbuyazi ewa eNdo ndakusuka nabanewabo. Konke lokhu ukubona emqondweni wakhe ngesikhashana esincane iphoyisa likhuluma naye.

"Kungaya kanjani ukuba ukufika kwami kukukhubaze, ngihlangene kanjani nawe?" Kubuza uMalambule.

"Besekunqunywe ukuba kube yimina engizophekezela inkosikazi kaMancinza ize ifike ekhaya kwabakubo. Kodwa mina bengingezukuhamba ngenqola, bengizozihambela-nje phansi nenkosikazi nabantwana bayo, intombazanyana esiqala ukuhlosa nomfanyana oyelamayo. Nabo bakhona lapha."

Wathi uMalambule,

"Konke lokhu okukhulumayo angikuzwa kahle. Uqondisa ukuthini ngakho?"

Iphoyisa lathi:

"Useyingane ngempela. Kawuqondi ukuthi ngithini?"

"Qha angiqondi. Kanti wena amehlo akho usuwagondise enkosikazini yenkosi yini?" Kubuza uMalambule elibeke emehlweni ikhehla.

Nalo lawavusa amehlo lambuka uMalambule. Lathleka lathi:

"Ngivele ngabona ukuthi uzongicabangela kanjalo ngoaba usemusha. Imiqondo yenu nina bantu abasha isabeke kubantu besifazane. Ngingaka-nje anginasi-khathi nezintombi khona kwasefunsizweni bami. Ngikhonze inkosi yesizwe mina. Nabo bonke abaqondene nemibuso nabo ngibakhonzile. Yikho-nje bengifuna ukuba kube yimina engiphekezela inkosikazi kaMancinza, ngoaba ngiyazi ukuthi ezandleni zami unokwephephela."

"Yilokho-nje kuphela okwenza ukuba uthande ukuba kube nguwena oyiphekezelayo, nokuaba uhlabeke uma inkosikazi yenkosi izohamba nami na?" Kubuza uMalambule.

Lathi iphoyisa, —

"Qha, akuyilokho kuphela, kukhona okunye."

"Lokho okunye kuyini?" Kubuza uMalambule.

"Sengikhathele ukusebenza, umvuzo wakho ngingawuboni. Ngifuna ukugoduka ngiyobona inkosi." Kusho iphoyisa.

"Ngiyezwa", kusho uMalambule.

"Ngokuhamba kwami ngiphekezela inkosikazi lena, besengithole ithuba lokuba ngibonane nenkosi uDinizulu. Ngiyafika khona sengizakhela esami isizathu sokuba ngingabuyi nxa sengike ngafika-nje eMahlabathini." Kusho iphoyisa.

"Yini oyijahe kangaka enkosini?"

"Izindaba inkosi ziyimele kabi kakhulu. Kodwa yona ayiqondi. Kodwa ngaphandle kokuba ngikutshela mfana, kuhle ngikufungise ukuthi awunakutshela muntu loludaba." Kusho iphoyisa.

Nempela wafunga uMalambule, wathi:

"Ngifunga udadewethu uNtombenhle."

Wathi uqedile uMalambule ngokufunga udadewabo. Kodwa iphoyisa lathi:

"Qha angikholwa yilokhokufunga, kuhle ufunge ngamadlozi akini."



Wavuma uMalambule wathi:

“Ngifunga abaphansi.”

Laye libuya lithulula ugwayi iphoyisa libema, liwukha ngentshengula. Lakhuluma lathi:

“Inkosi abelungu sebeyivimbezele. Futhi angiboni ukuthi izophuma kanjani. Kuthiwa yiyona esemuva kwalo lonke loluthuli lwempi yamakhanda sekuze lonke izwe lilwe nombuso wamaNgisi-nje. Inkosikazi kaBambatha yiyona ekhiphe ubufakazi obuzoyimela kabi inkosi.”

“Hawu uthini baba na?”

“Sengishilo — — uqobo lwayo inkosikazi.”

“Kanjani; lokhu ngumuntu wesifazane na?”

Lahleka iphoyisa lathi:

“Ingani laphaya enkantolo wena uthe abelungu uyabazi? Kanti uhlala nabo-nje bebengakufundisi yini konke? Awazi ukuthi isifazane lesi kubelungu yisona mbophisaantu? Ebandla nasesigcawini sakobelungu umuntu wesifazane uyangena. Funa akuthele ngomlotha emehlweni — — Cetshwayo! Nanguke uSiyekiwe usesithele sonke singamadoda-nje, wasithela ngomlotha. Siyewuthintitha kanjani?”

“Ngubani uSiyekiwe?” KuBuza uMalambule.

“USiyekiwe yiyo inkosikazi kaMancinza lena engikhuluma ngayo.”

“Isithele kanjani ngomlotha na?”

“Iphapha-nje izokwenzani? Iqhamukaphi?” KuBuza iphoyisa.

“Angazi.” Kusho uMalambule.

“Nalokho awukwazi? Uqhamukaphi lo?” KuBabaza iphoyisa.

“Qha impela angazi.”

Lathi lithatha iphoyisa lathi:

“USiyekiwe lona kuthe inkosi, uDinizulu esavakashele eMgungudlovu, yena Siyekiwe ecashiswe khona oSuthu, uBambatha esalwa nabelungu kanye namanye amaqhawe, weqa uSiyekiwe waqonda kuSandasi wazibika ukuthi unguhani. Wabuzwa ukuthi uqhamukaphi. Yena wathi uqhamuka oSuthu. Bethuka abelungu, indaba kaSiyekiwe abayikholwanga ngoBa uma yena

eqhamuka oSuthu kufanele achaze ukuthi ungene kanjani oSuthu.

“Pho umuntu wesifazane engazi lutho wachaza konke ukuthi kwathi emva kokuBa uBambatha ahlasele eMpanza nokuBa amaphoyisa lapho eqala ukuBa afune ukumbamba, yena uBambatha naye uSiyekiwe nabantwana laba ababili babaleka baqonda oSuthu kuDinizulu. Ekufikeni kwakhe kwaZulu wemukelwa njenge-sikhulu nenkosikazi yaphathwa njengesigodlo. OSuthu waBona uMankulumane induna enkulu kaDinizulu kanye noMgwaqo enye futhi induna yenkosi.

“Okamancinza wamtshela uSiyekiwe ukuthi inkosi imthethisile ukuthi yini avumele abelungu bamphathe kabi nokuBa uyigwala, kwakufanele alwe. Wabuza yena wakoBambatha ukuthi angalwa kanjani nabelungu na?”

“Inkosi yambuza yathi:

‘Awunabantu yini?’

Yena wathi,

‘Bayingcosane noma bekhona.’

Inkosi yathi,

“Noma beyingcosane kwakufaneleke ningqulane. Uma ucaBanga uthi impi yakwaZulu yasuka kanjani? UcaBanga ukuthi sayibamba ngoBa siphethe izintelezi zempi? Qha.”

“Yaqhubeka inkosikazi kaMancinza ichaza, lapho abelungu sebekhene imilomo.

“Into enkulu lomfazi usuke akhiphe amazwi ngamazwi njengoba aphuma emilonyeni yezinduna nowenkosi uDinizulu.

“UcaBanga ukuthini uma esesho namazwi ashiwo nguMankulumane lapho wasukuma endlini wathi kuBambatha:

‘Asikhulumami lutho thina. Sikunika nangu umakhala-na (esho isibamu esimlomombili). Hamba uye esiLungwini, uyoyihlomisa. Hamba noNgqengqengqe nangu niqonde kuChakijane. Nxa seniyihlomisile niyokhosela eNkandla. Ningesabi ukuthi impi isuswe yinina — — qha! Yithina esiyophendula leyo.

“Uyabonake mfana, yimisebenzi yomuntu wesifazane leyo. Wadedelwa wangena esigcawini samadoda ngoBa



ethenjwa kodwa namuhla kunjani? Bonke abethemba kakhulu umuntu wesifazane bagcina kabi. Lapho sekudingeka abeyisiphephelo sakho, uyahlamuka uhambe nomshungu wezitha. Amaqhawe anikelwe yibona. Nango phela, angimhlebi namuhla uDinizulu uyinyama yabezizwe. Kade babemhalela. NgoBufakazi balomfazi bodwa, ngisho nentambo ingase imlengise. Yizo lezizinto ezingenza ngibazonde abantu besifazane. Ngiyobazonda ngize ngife.”

Lasho njalo maqede iphoyisa uMalambule wabuye walibuka ngoBa, manje esebona okuyiyonanto eyenze ukuBa iphoyisa limphathe kabi. Wayesesola uMalambule ukuthi iphoyisa leli belizomenza kabi endleleni uSiyekiwe, kuBe kancane lingambulalanga. Nakulokho uMalambule wafunda isifundo salaBo abathanda isizwe sakuBo ngempela. Iphoyisa leli lalingumuntu wesibili elalingafuni lutho ngisho nokuzwa ngabantu besifazane. Ngesikhathi eseDumbe waBona uMaphulana naye waxoxa okwakhe ngabantu besifazane, nakhu namuhla uhlangana nephoyisa, nalo lixoxa okwalo ngabantu besifazane.

Kwasekuqala ukuhwelela nemigwaqo yomuZi waseMgundlovana yayisimnyama. Emagqumeni kwakulokoza imililwana yabantu abakhumule izinqola khona belinde ukuBa kuse bangene namafulaha ezinkuni nawokudla okuzothengiswa edolobeni. Eduzane-nje ngasempumalanga kwasenkantolo kwakukhona umfudlana chamba khona. Eduze kwawo kwakukhona isikwata sakhe khona amatende aso amhlophe, sihaya inkondlo yaseMangweni. Wawuthi uma ulalele uzwe-nje ukuthi isifangene egazini seliyabila, uzwe izigi abantu beshaya phansi besina ihlombe selikhuze phezulu. Uthuli wawulubona lusuka phansi lubonakala ngemililo eyayibasiwe.

Wathi ehleli uMalambule wazizwa naye eseyivuma ingoma yezizwe, yamkhumbuza ukundindizela kwezulu lapho izinsizwa sezisina, wezwa seziyishayela amakhwelo nalokho kwamkhumbuza umoya unkwela phezu kodwani namanzi ehaza ehamba emimfuleni yakwaZulu, owake wayiwela, njengoPhongolo neMfolozi; waBona kude kwelakuBo imithi intengemula ihamba

nomoya amaqabaBuga ayo elila eqhaq hazeliswa ngamaKhaza.

Wazibuza ukuthi ngalengkathi yena ebalekele eMgundlovana intombi yakhe uNomcebo yona ngabe iphi. WayeBe esacaBange ngoNomcebo nengoma yesikwata enzansi ngasemfuleni nayo kuBe sengathi iyakhwela iphikisana nemicabango yakhe. Wezwa amazwi ezinsizwa ephuma esifubeni sengathi sivulekile wathi nxa elalela wezwa kancane insizwa eyayipheka ecaleni kwakhe nayo isivuma. Ingoma wayilalela yaze yamcoba amathambo yamngena emnkantsheni, yahamba negazi lakhe wonke umzimba. Wathi lapho esathule wezwa insizwa lena ebiziphekela ithi:

“Wo — — — hhe!!”

Waqala ukucabanga ukuthi abantu laBa abafana noMaphulana nephoyisa abazi lutho. Aziphelelanga kuBona ngoBa inkumbulo yomphefumulo lapho insizwa ikade ikhumbule intombi yayo, ayinakulinganiswa nalutho. Umphefumulo kuBa sengathi uboshiwe ngezibopho kodwa ufuna ukugqashula, awunakuphumula uze ufike lapho lowo omthandayo ehleli khona. Uma wena-ke wensizwa ubulawa yimicabango enjalo, kuyoba njanike kulenyontombi ozibophezele kuyo na? Akakho owaziyo — — — nguNomkhuBulwane kuphela ongaPhendula lowombuzo.

Wathi ethuka kanti iphoyisa kade lihambile, walibona selibuya nezinguBo zokulala ompisimpisi bamaphoyisa abamnyama abanemishwe ebomvu. Langena lilandelwa enye insizwa iphethe amathunga amaBili. Elinye laliphethe iphalishi lishisa elinye liphethe amahewu. Wadla uMalambule waqeda lapho wendlala wazitshinga phansi, walala.

Ngesokusa wavuswa iminyuzi wakhonjiswa yona umfana oseiyibungu-nje eseyifophela. Naye wayibophela waqede maqede kwafika unongqayi omhlophe wamnika izincwadi ayofika azinike enkantolo eMahlabathini.

Esakhuluma nonongqayi kwaBe kukhwela enqoleni abesifazane ababili netombazanyana. Umfana abafehamba naye wakhwela kamuva yena.



Wasithatha isiswebu uMalambule wathi esayame ngothi lokushayela lafika iphoyisa leli abekhuluma nalo ngayizolo lazoxhawula lathi:

“Uhambe kahle mfana, indlela enhle, angibuyanga ngisaku buza nagama lakho izolo ukuthi ungowaphi.”

Wathi uMalambule,

“NginguMalambule, usale kahle, baBa.”

Lathi iphoyisa,

“Nampa abantu ababili ozohamba naBo bakusize. Bahlomile uhambe ungesabi lutho.”

Wathi uMalambule:

“NgiyaBonga.”

Saqhuma isiswebu yasuka iminyuzi kwaBa sengathi ibeka ngomgwaqo wakwaMaphumulo oqonde kwaDukuza. Yathi lapho isidudubele ezibomvini ezingaphesheya yajika yathatha umgwaqo osandleni sobunxele, kwathi lona oya kwaDukuza bawunika esokuphonsa. Yathunqa iminyuzi lokhu nenqola igwele amasaka okudla ihamba ngokunyelela ayigenqezeli. Kwathi ilanga seliphumile lapho seliqala ukufudumala uThukela baBeluBukela njenganjeya. Kuthe emini bagumula badedela iminyuzi yadla njengoBa yaseyijulukile namaphango ayo esefohlile. Ngalenkathi wathola isikhathi sokuBa akakhulume nenkosikazi kaMancinza nabantwana. Izinsizwa lezi ezimbili nebungu elalifa mba intambo yezimbongolo wayekade exoxa-nje naBo endleleni, kodwa engazange akhulume lutho noSiyekiwe nabantaBakhe.

Wathi lapho embuka wamBona ukuthi yinkosikazi yesiphakanyiswa ngempela. Ugazi lukaSiyekiwe lwaluzothile lunesithunzi. Nenhloko yakhe yayicwalwe kahle, enamehlo amancane afihlwe yizindindi eziphake-me nesimongo esiphumelele. Izwi lakhe lalilincane, kungeyena umuntu owayethanda ukukhuluma. Kwakungathi kukhona njalo ifu adukuza ngaphansi kwalo; lelifu sengathi elomnyama othize kodwa engalazi ukuthi ngelani.

Ngesikhathi besuka eMgundlovana impi yaseMome yaseyilwile. Kwakwaziwa ukuthi isilwile abantu baqothulwa; kodwa kwakudume ukuthi uBambatha nezinduna zakhe ubaleke wangena eNkandla. Iqiniso

ukuthi okaMancinza wayekade waziphumulela. Idlozi lakhe yilo leli elaligubuzele uSiyekiwe ngomnyama owayengazi ukuthi ngowani. Intelala yekhanda kuyena yayingasakhulunywa kuphela wayesehlenga laBo abasalwa nayo ebuka laBo abasina ngethambo lakhe.

Wasondelake uMalambule wayibingelela inkosikazi wathi:

“Sakubona mame, selokhu ukhwelile angikubingelelanga, ngibuze nokuthi uqondephi.”

“YeBo sakubona, mntanami.” Kusho uSiyekiwe.

Noma uSiyekiwe wayengemdala kangangoBa athi kuMalambule “mntanami”, kodwa umthetho wakithi kwaZulu uthi, nxa umuntu wesifazane esegcagcile, ngalo lelolanga uthatha isinyathelo sobudala azibize athi: “mame.” Kwelempucuko ungaBe usumthukile owesifazane ngisho eseqala imixhiliBa uma uthe. kuye “mame”. *Sakubona sakubeletha kwelempucuko!*

Wakhuluma uMalambule wathi:

“Uyokwehlaphi?”

“Angazi mntanami, kodwa ngiqonde ekhaya kithi eMpanza. Umgwaqo sengikude nawo kodwa sengizophambuka khona lapha ngiqonde kulawayamagquma. Ngiyolala khona komalume ngizwe nezindaba zendoda yami ngoBa umphefumulo wami awuphumule ngaye. Amaphupho ami ayangiyaluzisa selokhu ngaya eMgundlovana ngiyiswa abelungu bangibuza izinto ezithile.”

“Zintozini lezi abaku buza zona esezikuhlupha namuhla mame na?” Kusho uMalambule.

“Mntanami, ungabaqonda yini abelungu. Ngingakanje angizange ngime esigcawini ngithethe icala; kodwa namuhla sengathi ngizophendula okuningi ngendoda yami. Ngangithi ngiyayisindisa ngokuthshela abelungu ukuthi akuyona esuse loludweshu lwemali yamakhanda kanti sengichaka igama lenkosi uDinizulu. Manje sengathi kuzoBanjwa indoda yami nenkosi uDinizulu noChakijane nabanye esiLungwini.”

“Ukuzwephi lokho mame na?”

Wathi owesifazane:

“Ngiphuma eMgungundlovu lapho kwathi emuva kokuBa ngikhulume konke engikwaziyo ngabonana namadoda athile asebenza khona komkhulu, angisola



kakhulu, ngendlela engikhulume ngayo. Kwathi sengi-zohanjiswa ngilethwe lapha eMgundlovana ngezwa sekuthiwa onongqayi sebephumile ukuyobamba inkosi. Uma inkosi ifanjwa noMankulumana uzobanjwa nendoda yami futhi ifanjwe — — mina ngisale ngenzenjani?”

Washo lawamazwi maqede kwehla izinyembezi zaba yingcozane, wathatha ichopho letshali owayeligqokile, wesula lezozinyembezi wathula:

UMalambule wathi:

“Qha ungazihluphi kangako ngoBa uHulumeni angakufonelela.”

“Angazi mntanami, ngoBa eMgungundlovu bengithi leyondoda enguHulumeni ngiyokhonjiswa yona, kodwa angizange ngiyibone. Uma ngingayibonanga ngize ngilethwe ngezindaba ezinkulu zokusiza yena uHulumeni lowo, pho, angavela angibone kanjani uma sengize ngezinhlupheko zami, zona zingamthinti nokuthi qhiki na?”

“Uqinisile lapho mame.”

Washo lawamazwi uSiyekiwe noMalambule wabanga ngoBa wayebalekile eMpanza kuyothathwa izibamu ngoBa ezosiza abelungu; kodwa namuhla umuntu wesifazane obasize ngaluluhlobo akuBonakali ndawo ukuthi usizo uzoluthola. Naye waBona ukuthi usebenza umsebenzi wezinhlanga ezimuka nomoya. UkuBuyela kwabakuBo kwakunzima ngoBa wayengabulawa, wayenjengomhluBuki. Phambi kwakhe futhi uSiyekiwe wayenjengomhluBuki, noma yena engazi kodwa uma izwe lakwaZulu like lamlaBalaBela, lalingamqedela khona lapho. Ngakhoke uMalambule wathi kuye:

“Nami nginjengawe-nje. Abakithi bangangibona ngibulawe noma ngingabaphi ngoBa nganqaba ukuyogqekeza esitolo eMpanza.”

“Usho eMpanza lapha kwesakwaZondi na?”

“Ngisho sona ebesibuswa yinkosi okaMancinza.”

Wathi uSiyekiwe,

“Yisitolo sakithi lesa. Noma kwethu kukude ngempela nalapho. Uthi nxa usesitolo ubuke empumalanga eziweni. Kithike kungale kweziwa lezo. Njengoba silapha-nje ngikhomba ngithi.”

Washo ekhomba ngasentshonalanga.

Wayesethi uMalambule uzothatha omunye wezinzizwa lezi ahamba nazo, imphekezele uSiyekiwe, kuthi emva kwesonto baBuye bahlangane khona kuyo leyondawo ngoBa naye waye nomyalezo wokuBa uyiswe kuyise nonina nakuBafowabo.

WaBonga uSiyekiwe wathi:

“Nalapho wathi ungaBe uyangisiza kakhulu, sengi-hiupheke ngempela selokhu kwaqala lokhukulwa.”

Wasuka lapho uMalambule waqonda kwenye yalezinzizwa wayitshela into okufanele iyenze. Wayiyalela nangomuzi wakuBo okufanele iye ifike kuwo kuthi emva kwesonto ifike imlinde kulendawo lapho behlukanele khona. UMalambule wayitshela insizwa lena ukuthi kufanele, ikhulume noyise imchazele ukuthi usebenzani, nokuthi uyesaba ukuBa angaBuyela ekhaya ngoBa abantu bangambulala. Usezimisele ukufuna indawo esiLungwini ahlale khona ngokukhululeka. Uma abafowabo baBuya nayo intombi yakhe kuhle bayilethe kuye ayithathe. Uma bengakafiki noma baFela ekuhambeni baZe bamtshele. Kodwa uma befika nayo baZe bayilethe kuye eMgundlovana emaphoyiseni. Ngalamazwi wavalelisa uMalambule, ensizweni nakuSiyekiwe, wabophela wahamba.

Endleleni indaba kaBambatha yayixoxwa yonke indawo emizini aBadlula kuyo, bonke bebonga ubuqhawe bakhe nokuthi kunokuBa akhothamele umlungu waBaleka wangena eNkandla. KwaZulu kwakungasekho ukulwa nabelungu kwasekukhona uBuxokoxoko bezinkulamo eziphikisanayo ikakhulu ngoBa kwase kuzwakele nokuthi izindaba zimbi oSuthu. Inkosi ithathe ngabelungu kwathiwa mayikhiphe uBambatha noChakijane.

Kwezwakala nokuthi uBambatha akakaphumi ehlahthini ugweve khona noChakijane sewaBaleka waqonda eButhonga ngasePutukezi.

Wahamba belala bevuka baye badlula eNtonjaneni bawela iMfolozi beqonde oLundi, behambe bebona amazala empi lapho yayikade ibambene khona eyakwaZulu kuCetshwayo, bakhwela igquma elikhuphukela eMahlabathini, bafika baphumula. Inqola bayethula ekamu lakhona. Kulendawo uMalambule wahlangabe-



zana noSandasi. owayemuzwa ngendaba kuthiwa ungmzingeli omkhulu, abantu sebamnika negama lokuthi uMashiqela, esenezibongo nokwenza:

*“Uphondo lwenkulumana.”*

Esekhuluma nabantu ekamu wazibonela naye ukuthi amandla akwaZulu noma bese kungathi ayavuka, asefike ekugcineni kuDinizulu nasemaqhaweni anjengo-Bambatha kaMancinza. Wabona uMalambule ukuthi oBambatha laba yibona magcino endlu yamaqhawe kaZulu eyayizalwe ngezimbemba zomkhonto, ezinkundleni zegazi. Wezwa igazi kuyena libila ngoba engazi into owayengayenza. Okunye futhi inhliziyi yakhe imudla ngoba kwathi enethuba lokuaba akhombise ubuqhawe bakhe eMpanza wabaleka ingani wayehamba namaqhawe anjengoMdlampisi. Kodwa lawomaqhawe ngalelolanganga ayephi na? Wayazi ukuthi eMome ashaywa abuqwa yizinhlamvu zabelungu. Kodwa afela iqiniso ngoba afela umhlabathi wakuho nobuzwe, nabafazi bawo, nabantabawo.

Yikuphi okunye okudlula ukuaba ufele umhlabathi wakini; ufele isifazane sakini uma sino buntu emathanjani aso; ufele abantwana bohlanga? Nxa usufile bayozwa ngawe, kuxoxwa ngisho phezu kwezinkamba, nasezincwadini zenhlakanipho namuhla. Ubani ongamazi uBambatha kaMancinza?

*“Amagcino kaZulu,  
USiphundu kawuboni,  
Ukuaba wawubona siphundu,  
Ngabe kwabalek' abafazi.*

*Ubuso benkwazi  
Ukuphenduka kwayo,  
Ladum'izulu?”*

Uma lusekhona uhlanga lukaZulu, naye okaMancinza uyobakhona phakathi kwalo, kukhulunywa ngaye nxa sekuphathwa amaqhawe.

Lemizwa uMalambule wayizwa yamngena enhliziyweni ukuaba kanti isizwe sithandwa kangaka ngabantu bakwaZulu noma bebodwa, noma sebabungukela kubelungu.

## ISAHLUKO XIII.

Ukufika kwakhe ekhaya uSiyekiwe wafika abakuho bamangala. Bambuza ukuthi uvelaphi. Waphendula ukuthi uvela eMgungundlovu. Bamangala ukuthi eMgungundlovu wayelandeni lokhu bona babazi ukuthi ukwaZulu lapho aphuma eqonde khona nenkosi uBambatha; kodwa abadala abathandanga ukumhlukumeza ngemiBuzo, bakhombisa sengathi banelisiwe ngukuchaza kwakhe kodwa bafela phakathi. Naye uSiyekiwe akamangalanga uma engezwa zindaba ezinkulu ngeNdoda yakhe ngoba ukuphuma kwakhe esizweni sakwaZondi kwaBakufi. UBambatha wayexoshwa ngumfo wabo uFunizwe ehlangene noMagwababa ngemuva kwayo kuhleli abelungu.

Indaba yokulwa kwaseNgome abantu kayizange ibakhanyele ngoba kuho bonke abawayo amagama abo siyawazi; kodwa nxa sekuBalwa sizwa kuthiwa kwawa oMavukuthu owayebusa eMsinga ezwana kakhulu noMehlokazulu. Notisha bezikole ababefundisiwe impela okuyibona babehlangene noBambatha khona kwaseMpanza, uPawula noMozisi. Izibongo zaBo kasizazi kahle.

Akusimangalisi lokhu ukuaba abantu bakwaZulu bangakhiphi ingqikithi yendaba yenkosi yabo ngoba ukufa komuntu omkhulu kuyimfihlo njalo kwelakithi. Kwakungengqala yokufa kwenkosi kwaZulu, ngoba abantu bakhuluma ngokunjalo ngethambo likaSenzangakhona mhla kubanga uCetshwayo noMbuyazi eNdondakusuka. Wafa maqede uMbuyazi badlula baqinisa bathi njalonjalo bathi uMbuyazi akafanga usekhona ufihlwe ngamaNgisi ukuaba kugoduke uyise qede asale ebeka yena abe yinkosi yakwaZulu esikhundleni sikaMpande. Nezikhulu zonke zakwaZulu zaqinisa zagemela zithi uMbuyazi ufihlwe ngabelungu.

NakokaMancinza kwahlale kushiwo kuthiwa wabaleka wangena eNkandla, ingachazwa indaba yakhe ukuthi eMome wabaleka wacasha nawobani. Kunjaloke asimangali uma uSiyekiwe namanye amakhosikazi akhe uBambatha sihlanguka nawo engazigundile izinwele ephuca namakhanda. Ayeyilokhu ebeke njalo ukuBuya



kwenkosi, kuze kube namuhla asizwa nokuthi amadlozi abo asabuyiswa yini eNkandla.

Izwe lisaphethwe yiwo lowomnyama wentela yama-khanda kungakaziwa abathelileyo nabangakatheli kwezwakala ukuthi inkosi uDinizulu ifanjiwe. Ukuibanjwa kwakhe kwaBa yimfihlo kubantu abaningi ikakhulu eSilungwini lapho iningi lezinduna neziphakanyiswa, kwathi ukuzwa kwalo isimemezelo sentela lathumela kuDinizulu ukuthi kuzo kwenziwani. Impendulo yabuya ngokushesha kwathiwa uthi okaNdaBa: "Leyomali ebizwa nguHulumeni kubafana akusiyo ebizwa kubaninimizi abathela imali minyaka yonke, kodwa ibizwa kubafana kuphela. Abaninimizi mabakhumbule baqonde ukuthi imvama yabafana abasayiyisi imali koyise, sebezidlela imali yabo. Ngakhoke uHulumeni wenze kahle ukuthelisa abafana." Kuthiwake uDinizulu wakhipha uhlamvu lukampondwe walunika inceku yakhe ukuBa iyomthelela, ukuBa abonise ukuthi akalwi nemali yama-khanda.

Kuthe noma bonke bebuya nezwi elivela kumNtwana ukuthi imali mayithelwe kodwa abantu bangadela kahle bakhononda, baziqambela ezaBo izinkulumo ezayumelana namakhanda abo nezazingafaka inkosi enkulumeni. Bakhona ababekwenza lokhu ngesibomu.

Nasekuibanjweni kwayo inkosi akuzwakali ukuthi ukhona umsindo owake wabakhona, wasukela phezulu waya naBo abelungu laBo kwaNongoma enkantolo. KwasekuBa ngukuBoshwa kwakhe njalo. Icala alithethelwangwa kwaNongoma, lathethelwa eMgungundlovana enkundleni kaBambatha wakwaZondi. AbakwaZulu noma indaba yokuboshwa kwenkosi yayingaBo kodwa laBo ababeyithanda ngezinhliziyo bagcwala bangangezihlabathi zolwandle. Babephuma kuyo yonke indawo bezolalela amazwi enkosi eyayiphendula ngawo, nokuzwa icala inkosi ebekwa lona.

Khona phambi kokuibanjwa kwayo inkosi yabona umhlanganiso wamaButho amhlophe ngakwaNongoma, nanjengoBa yayinamehlo nezindlebe zayo yabona ukuthi kukhona okukhona. Ngakhoke yathumela amazwi emantshini yakwaNongoma yathi:

"Ngizwa kuthiwa uHulumeni uqonde ukuBa angizume angithathe emzini wami, ngaphambi kukaKhisimusi. Lento angiyiqondi ukuthi ithini, futhi ngithanda ukwazi ukuthi iyiqiniso yini, njengoBa ngingazi isono mina engisenzileyo.

Uma uHulumeni ecaBanga ukuthi ngonile yini pho ngingathethiswa icala ngijeziswe uma icala lingilahla ngihlawule na? Kuyangimangalisa futhi ukuzwa ukuthi nenkantolo yakwaNongoma isigcwele amaButho. Kukanise amaphoyisa kuwo wonke amacala. Ngokwami ukwazi akukho into eyonakele kulesisifunda. Lapho konakele khona kusesifundeni saseNkandla, noma kunjalo anginandaBa nokwehlakala lapho; owami umqondo owokuthi zonke lezizigaba zabantu ababulawayo lapho, ingenxa kaHulumeni, ngoBa ethathe izinkomo zabashokobezi wazinika abanye abantu kuso lesisifunda, nokuthi abanini balezizinkomo kuthi maBafe uma bebona lezizinkomo sezisezandleni zabanye abantu."

Lakhuluma kanjalo ke izinyane lenkosi. NoHulumeni uqobo wayesezwile ngokubulawa kwawoTshikana, noMnqandi, noGence kwelaseMahlabathini. Futhi kwaBuye kwaBulawa uSishishili, indaba yakhe yezwakala kude naseduze. IzindaBa zase zigcwele-nje, umhlaba wonke zihamba nabasiki bebunda namahemuhemu. Lowo obone unongqayi eshona ngasemzini wendoda wayesuke azakhele indaba yakhe athi,

"Wo, sekupheliwe koSoBanifani."

Nalowo obone amasosha efolile abesethi,

"Wo, ngizwe izinhlamvu seziqhuma koBanifani, ngikhuluma-nje bayambelwa", esho ezikhulumela.

Kanjalo ke kuthe noma inkosi uDinizulu ebiza izinsizwa ukuzohlakula amasimu akhe, njengoBa phela kungumthetho ukuBa kwenziwa njalo yonke iminyaka ehlobo, kwasuka abanamehlo nemilomo yokuqaphuza baya kubelungu bathi, impela uDinizulu uyahloma. Nangelanga mhla kaSeptember 30, 1907, kudlula ungqovela uFairlie edlula oSuthu ehlola ukuthi akukho lutho yini olungaye ngandlela oSuthu, abantu bakhombisa ukuxwaya okungavamile. Yini baxwaye? Kwakuqala ukuBa babone inkosi ingenelwa ingazange ibikezelelwe.



Nabelungu bakubona lokhokuxwaya, babuza kubasiki besunda namahemuhemu, kodwa ngoaba bazi ukuthi lento izomisa kabi inkosi baphendule bathi:

“Abantu laba bebebeke noma yini, bese kusuka uthuthuva ngoaba noma nibone ingcosane-nje emzini wenkosi, bekulele isikhonyane ngaphandle odongeni.” Hhayi abantu abamnyama!

Khona lapho belu kwabakhona naba esebeya emantshini beyothi inkosi kade inyangwa ilungiselelwa impi, bekulethwe inyanga yaseMampondweni neyasoSuthu, nokuthi futhi kade kwenziwa imikhosi efana naleyaya yezikhathi zikaShaka. Bakhona abelungu ababezwana noDinizulu njengoMashiqela, “*Uphondo lwenkulumana*”, nomunye iBunu laseFilidi uMeya, nabo baqinisa bathi uDinizulu kalwi noHulumeni.

Kwakuyizikhathi ezinjenake lapho uMalambule wafika eMahlabathini nenqola yeminyuzi, wafika wayigumula. Ukuhlala kwakhe engakezwa ukuthi ubuyela emuva noma qha, wazewayeza nabantu laba abahamba namasosha wezwa okuningi kubona. Wezwa ngokuboshwa kwenkosi inhliziyo yakhe yahlabeke kakhulu kodwa wangazi ukuthi angenza njani. Ebusuku wayengalali noma abanye belele, yena wayecabanga ukuthi uzokwenzenjani.

Okwalesosikhathi wayesamkhohliwe uNomcebo inhliziyo yakhe ithathene nezombuso nokuthi yena uyindoda okufanele yenze utho ezintweni ezinjena. Kodwa ukuaba kuze kwenziwe utho kufanele okokuqala bona abantu abamnyama bahlangane, bezwane ngomqondo wezinto zobuzwe noma bengavumelani kokuningi kwemizi nezifunda. Okunye yilokhu ukuaba uMalambule wayazi ukuthi kulezozikhathi ihawu nomkhonto, newisa, konke lokhu akusasizi lutho nxa kubekene nezibamu lokhukubona kwakhe okwakungabakhanyeli abanye abamnyama, kwenza ukuaba ukufa yena akubone kuseduze phambi kwesibamu, noma kuthiwa zikhona izintelezi zempi. Wayazi ukuthi inhlamvu ingeke iphambuke lapho ikhonjwe khona noma kuthiwa izintelezi zona zingayiphambukisa. Lokhukubona kwakhe kwamxosha naseMpanza wabaleka washiya ezinye izinsizwa.

Kwasa ngelinye ilanga kwezwakala ukuthi abasadingeki kangako ngoaba impi iphelile noma uBambatha esacashe eNkandla. Baholelwa, bachtitaka. UMalambule wafikelwa umqondo wabamunye, wokugoduka ahambe ayolalela indaba yenkosi nokuthethwa kwecala layo. Okwesibili ukuyodlula emzini lapho inkosikazi kaMancinza yakhe khona ukuaba abone ukuthi yafika kahle yini ekhaya na.

Nempela kwabanjalo wahlangana nabanye, zesuka. Endleleni lapha kwakukhulunywa ngamaqhawe kaBambatha ahamba oChakijane, noNjombololo, amaqhawe ahamba oMhlola kaJikajika wakwaNgobese, nawoMahambanendlwana. Kodwa ukuxoxa kubo bonke lababantu ababephindela emakhaya iningi liqonde eMgundlovana lalingaphumeseli ukuthi lawamaqhawe baxoxa ngawo-nje ngoaba bewababaza ubuqhawe noma baxoxa inganekwane-nje. Babehamba-nje besabana ngoaba izwe lase ligcwele izinhlozi, omantshingeyana okwakungathi wena uzikhulumela kanti njalo usuwonile. Ikakhulu yena uMalambule lona babemesaba uqobo, kuthi nxa engaboni bamkhombe ngenjumbane, abanye bamuthi ngxi ngeso bese imilomo ivaleka. Babengamazi ikakhulu babemesabela ukuthi ufike nenqola yakwaHulumeni. Uma engathenjwe kwaHulumeni ubengeke anikezwa inqola ayishaye.

Naye uMalambule kwakungemuntu okhulumayo nje-ngoaba wayengakuwayele. Kuthe lapha ilanga seliyoshona bonke bakhetha izindawo zokulala, kwabaswa umlilo kosiwa inyama, kwadliwa. Yilenkathi lapho uMalambule wamkhumbula uNomcebo ngoaba ezwa izinsizwa ezinye zixoxa izintombi zazo. Walalela engalalele umqondo wakhe uthintekile enye insizwa yaze yathi:

“Awusho nawe wethu, walokhu uthule-nje awuqonyiwe yini?”

Wathi uMalambule:

“Qha ngisalalele kuxoxwa ngizwa kumnandi ngibeke indlebe. Eyami indaba injengenganekwane.”

“Hhawu uthini wethu na?” Kusho omunye.

“Ake sithule. Thatha wethu ngoaba izinganekwane zothando ziyafuletha ubuthongo ngisho umuntu ebe-



ngalele uze alale. Nesishimane sizwa sesithwele iqholo silalele izindaaba zamasoka. Kuthi ngokulalela kwaso sihambe siyoxoxela ezinye ukuthi ekuthinithini sasiqonywe kanje nakanje, intombi yaso inje nakanje." Kusho enye insizwa igudlisele.

Wathi uMalambule:

"Ehhe zinjalo izishimane. Kodwake mina anginjalo. Ubushimane into ekude nami. Abanye bathi bezelula ngobusoka bafo kanti basukela izintombi ezigudle uthango lwakubo. Ezakude emaphandleni kube besaba ukuyozisukela bazeshele."

"Uqinisile wethu kunjalo", kusho enye insizwa eyalalele.

"Ehhe ngiqinisile ngoaba nokuba lapha kwami-nje kunzima." Uthe ukuba asho njalo uMalambule zaxwaya ngokunye izinsizwa, zambukisisa ngoaba bezivele zimsola ukuthi ngahe uyinhloli.

Yathi enye insizwa: "Ngithenike kinina, nina nangiphikisa?"

"Kanti ngempela uyinhloli yini, Malambule?" Kusho ishingala lensizwa.

Wathi uMalambule:

"Qha."

"Pho?" Kubuza yona belu insizwa.

"Ngiphendula amazwi enu. Kade nginizwa lonke ilanga nixoxa ngoChakijane kaGezindaka iqhawwe lakwaSithole, nikhuluma nangoBambatha kaMancinza wakwaZondi, nangoSigananda. Mina bonke laba ngiyabazi. Angibazeli ngabelungu ngibazela enkundleni yakithi, emaChufeni, nakwelakwaZondi. NeziBongo zafo ngiyazazi. Lapho kuhlaselwa eMpanza ngangikhona, angizwanga ngendaba, ngazibukela mina ngamehlo ami."

Uthe esathi uyaqhuba izinsizwa, nezazilalele zihlalele kude zasondela ukuze zizizwele ngezindlebe. Yathi enye ukuba izwe indaba yaseMpanza:

"Hhawu suka, wethu, sengiyakwazi manje. Nguwena lona okuxoxwa ngawe ukuthi kwathi nxa sekuzogqekwezwa wangenwa yitwetwe wabaleka? Impela nguwenogoba indaba yakho sayizwa. Thinake sayibamba."

"Nxa seniyifambile kwaBanjani?" Kubuza uMalambule.

"Akwandaba zalutho."

"Uqinisile ngoaba nangenela isitolo somlungu nathi niphuza ugologo nazintantisa ngophalafini, nagqoka nandulula phansi — kwangaabandaba zalutho. Pho namhla lapha phakathi kwethu ufunani lokhu wena uzibiza uthi ungumshokobezi na?" Wabuza uMalambule engayibeki lensizwa akhuluma nayo. Ezinye izinsizwa zazithule zilalele lendaaba eyisimanga. Kuthe ukuba abone ukuthi insizwa ayiphenduli, wachwabaza umlilo, wathi ukusuka izinhansi, kwathi gqamu ilangabi, wathi ukuvusa amehlo wabona amehlo ezinsizwa embe-kile wayesethi kulensizwa:

"Abashokobezi baseNkandla namhlanje, ngikhuluma-nje. Mina nganyibilika ngahluBuka ngenxa yokuba ngikhumbula amazwi akaSomsewu owawakhuluma esigcawini kwaZulu wathi kuCetshwayo umlungu lona uyimbila emhlophe. Uma embulala ziyofika ezinye ziyofuna ithambo lakhe zilifune zize zilithole. Lento mina ngiyayazi, umlungu sengihlale naye inkathi, nge-mpela umlungu uyimbila."

"Qha iyakhuluma lensizwa iyekeni madoda kuhle ukulalela labo abanemilomo eyehlukile kweyethu. Ngalokho siyafunda. Lomfo mina ngimuzwe eqhumisa ulimi lwezilokazane, ngezwa luphuma ngamakhala ngathula. Wawuhlalaphi nabelungu?" Kusho insizwa eyayikade ilalele eningini.

UMalambule naye wabona ukuthi qha, iningi liya ngaye, wathi:

"Qha bafowethu, ngisebenzile phansi emgodini yegoli le eBabatini. Ngihlale iminyaka khona. Besike sibulale umlungu khona sithi indaba ngeke yanukwa naku-nukwa. Kodwa afike umlungu asishayanise ngama-khanda, uzwe sesichakana sodwa sebuphelile ubuqha-wuqhawu esithe sakha ifindo lokubulala umlungu sasinabo. Baningi engangisebenza nabo ngibaBona beyolengiswa ngenxa yethambo elilodwa lembila emhlophe.

"Hhawu uqinisile lomntwana wabantu madoda mlaleni. Nathi silapha-nje siyaphi? Iningi lethu liyaphi? Ingani siyolalela icala lenkosi uDinizulu okuthiwa ngu-yena ophhle lolukhuvethe lwemali yamakhanda?"



Kusho ikhehla elalilalele. Labuya lathi, "NicaBanga ukuthi ngabelungu yini aBaBambe uCetshwayo? Qha, akubona abelungu, yithina ngemilomo nangezenzo zethu. Umlungu akanacala." Kusho ikhehla.

Yathi enye insizwa:

"Qha, masiqhuba ezezintombi. Wethu uthi uke wafika le kwelaseBabatini? Ngizwa kuthiwa lapho kuxhaphake izintombi zezizwe ngezizwe. Ezinhle zinjengelanga liphuma, ezimpofukazi, ezigqoka amasholokazi amnyama nabomvu, namaduku osilika. Kuthiwa zimehlo angaka, yisho wethu sizwe."

Wasuka wahleka uMalambule wakhumbula izwi lika-Nomcebo lapha wathi kuye "*Wena unguBani-nje nempela?*" Wazibona eseseDumbe ezweni lezizwe lapho wake waphathwa khona umkhuhlane, waze wathandwa uNomcebo. Waphuthaza ekhukhwini wezwa ubuhlalu lofo abuthatha kuNomcebo busekhona ekhukhwini elingaphakathi. Wabuye wahleka wathi kubona:

"Ngomunye umhlabo lowo, nina niwuzwa ngendaBa, thina sivela khona. Ehhe, uqinisile uma ukhuluma ngalezozintombi. Yebo zikhona izintombi eBabatini. NeBabatini yiBabatini ngazo lezozintombi. Nxa wazi isaga sabadala esithi '*ikhiwane elibomvu libol'indeni*', lezozintombi okhuluma ngazo ngamakhiwane, wethu. Intombi yami nguNomcebo; ngeyale eDumbe eduze noPhongolo. Mhlawumbe namuhla isekhaya; mhlawumbe seyagana kumuntu omunye; mhlawumbe seyafa ibulawa imikhonto yabashokobezi — angazi. Kodwa mhla ngiyeshelayo ngibuya le eBabatini yathi kimina, '*Wena unguBani-nje nempela?*' Lelozwi langingena emphefumulweni langidla. Ngangivela eBabatini. Selokhu kwalesosikhathi ngilwa nomqondo wami ukuthi yini intombi yakithi kwaZulu akulula ukuyehlula isheshe ikuthande. Ukuyivumisa kungumzukuluzuku, umgwaqo wothando kwaZulu uyaqansa. Angikaze ngiyibone intombi esuka imthanda umuntu engajulukanga. EBabatini zonke izindlela ziyehlala, mfowethu."

"Hhawu usho njalo wethu na?" Kusho omunye.

"Qha uqinisile mfana. Nathi sabuya khona lapho." Kusho ikhehla elinye. Hhayi ngezintombi zakwaZulu!

Zikhona yini eziyofika kuzo Mpandekekhona!" Lasho lathatha izinduku zalo layolala.

Yathi lensizwa eyayibuzile:

"Thinake yilapho siya khona."

Wathi uMalambule:

"Hamba wethu amasango aya eBabatini avuliwe."

Bathula iningi labukana. Manje kwasekuhlwile sekumnyama, umlilo usubomvu. Bonke baya ngamathunzi abo bazisonga ngompisimpisi nangamazazi amakhulu amnyama, abanye bazisonga ngeziphuku — basha ubuthongo.

Ukusa kwaziwa yibona bayingena indlela. YiBo labaya beqonde kwaNtunjambili, bedlula. Baqala manje ukuhlungeka abanye sebeqonde emakhaya abo abanye beqhubekela phambili ngoBa beqonde ukubona isiqalo secala lenkosi eMgundlovana. Ingani uMalambule wayeqonde ukuphambuka aqonde abeke ngendlela aye lapho kwaya khona uSiyekiwe kwathi lapho ezwa ngecala likaDinizulu, wasale wayeka ukuphambuka wangena umshungu wamakhehla ngoBa efuna ukuyobona inkosi yakwaZulu nezinduna zayo, mhlawumbe angahle abone noChakijane noBambatha noSigananda noyise; mhlawumbe ezwe ukuthi abafowabo benze njani nokuthi bamfumanisa yini uNomcebo.

Kodwa ngesikhathi ehamba wafikelwa ukwesaba okukhulu ngoBa bonke abantu bakuBo babengeke bambeke ngamehlo obuntu. Yena wayelimbuka efanelwe ukuBa abulawe. Kwamfikelwa ukuthi makaphindele emuva; kodwa wabuye wazikhuza wakhumbula ukuthi laphaya enkantolo kukhona umngane wakhe — leliyaphoyisa eliyikhehla elafika kwangathi limphatha kabi kodwa isigcino babangabangane. Kulona wayeqonde ukuthola sonke isiphephelo ayengasidinga.

Njengoba sebesondele ngaseMgundlovana, baqala ukubona amadlanzana abantu ehamba eya ngakhona. Kwathi beqhamuka ngasentaBeni lokhuphela uMgundlovana uphansi esigodini baBona kugcwele abantu. Bathi bezongena ngomgwaqo oqonde kwaDukuza nakwaMaphumulo baBona onongqayi bem, abanye begibeke amahhashi behla benyuka, bashaywa uvalo baqala ukuzwa ukuthi nempela kulahleke ithambo lembila



emhlophe. Ezinye seziphumile zifuna ukulithola. Kwadlala imitsha emadodeni.

Kwathi ukungena kwaño phakathi komuzi bavalelisa, kwayilowo waziyela kwañakuño. UMalambule waqonda ekamu, wafika kuyiziyalu kodwa walibona ikhehla lakhe lephoyisa wayesehlehla eqonda lapho lilala khona. Lithe lifika ntambama emva kokuña kovalwe inkantolo laqhamuka lambona uMalambule. Langakhombisa ukuthi liyambona, leza-nje. Kwathi ukuña lifike lavula lamngenisa lavalala umnyango lathi:

“Uphumaphi?”

Wathi uMalambule: “Khona le eMahlabathini. Phela umsebenzi wafika waphelela khona ngasengibuya.”

“Inkosikazi yenkosi uSiyekiwe?”

Wathi uMalambule:

“Yafike yehla lapho yathi mangiyehlise khona nabantwana nempela ngayehlixa kwañakuphela njalo. Bengithi ngizodlula khona njengoba ngiza lapha-nje; kodwa ngathathwa yizindaña lezi engizwa kuthiwa zimbi.”

“Weu, usho zona yini? Zimbi ngempela akusho wena kuyazisho njengoba ubona-nje abantu begcwele izindwani.” Kusho ikhehla libeke phansi.

“Washoke baña.” Kukhuluma uMalambule.

“Ngavele ngasho khona kufika umkaMancinza lapha ngizwa kuthiwa uvela eMgungudlovu, uthunyelwe khona evela oSuthu. Ngasho ngathi yawuchitha umuthi inkonyane. Ngoña abantu besifazane ngiyañazi bayimibulalazwe. Izwe linje-nje ngaño, ngoña kuñe kusa-suke umsindo naño ngezidwañakazana ubaño phakathi.”

Wathula uMalambule ngoña yena umqondo wakhe wawugcwele ukwesaña kokuñonwa ngañakuño. Wayesethi:

“Ubona-nje ngithule baña, inhliziyo yami iyesaña. Ngesaña sengathi añakithi bazongibona, mhlawumbe yena ubaña ongizalayo angibulale, noma ngibulawe omunye ecaleni. Ngiyañesaña abantu bañaSigananda.”

“Usaña abantu bañaSigananda? Ubesaña ukuthini?” Kusho ikhehla.

“Ngiyañesaña ngoña phela yiyonankosi yami uSigananda.” Kusho uMalambule.

“Akukho nankosi yakho ngoña yona noma kuyinkosi ngempela kodwa akazalanga lutho.” Kukhuluma ikhehla.

“Hhawu uthini baña, lokhu uSigananda unesishomo sezinsizwa, impi uqoño lwayo?”

“Awazi yini ukuthi ngesikhathi impi ilwa eNkandla kwathi impi icashile kwasuka umfo kaSigananda wahlangana nabelungu. Ingani impi yonke kaBambatha yayengwa ngumfo kaSigananda wathi kuhle impi iphume lapho icashe khona iye endaweni ethile.” Kuxoxa ikhehla.

“Lomfo uthi ayiyokwenzani impi lapho lokhu ilungile ihlezi ehlathini?” Kuñuza uMalambule.

“Awuzukuzwa yini?” Kusho ikhehla. “Kuthe lapho ithi ukufika khona kanti eyabelungu isibañakile, sebe-phakathi. Bathi bethuka abantu kwasekuduma umbayimbayi, bashaywa baqothuka nya. Qha, uSigananda akazalanga lutho. Kwakuyoba ngcono ukuña lomfo wenza njengawe wasuka wañaleka waphuma empini wahamba wayozikhonzela kubelungu. Umlomo awufak’inhlati.”

“Pho icala limi kanjani lapha enkosini?”

Lathi ikhehla: “Angazi. Lapha esiLungwini amacala athethwa ngamanga. Uthi abameli laña bañika ezinkantolo bazokwenzani? Bañhudelisana ngamanga ilanga lize lishone, Mpande. NañakwaZulu naño sebewafundile amanga lawa. Bañune ummeli, uma ngizwa akamunye.” Esasho njalo wayememeza elinye iphoyisa elalikudana okwakungathi liseyinsizwa, wathi kulo:

“Konje amagama abameli okuthiwa bamele umntanenkosi ngoñani? Yisho ngizwe.”

Lathi iphoyisa “Uthi ngizobañkumbula sekuduma ingqondo-nje. Kodwa ngicabanga ukuthi nguMsi-Shayina (Mr. W. P. Schreiner, K. C.) ofunwe nguDlwe-dlwe kaSoñantu. Kanye naye kukhona uMfushane (Mr. Eugene Renaud), uqweqwe lapha olukade lwaluma enkundleni yamacala. Kuthiwa umuntu luphuma naye noma intambo isilenga ekhanda. Futhi kukhona noLubembedu (Mr. R. C. A. Samuelson).”



“Hhawu wazala uSoabantu kulomfana wakhe uDlwe-dlwe.” Kusho ikhehla.

“Nguḡani uSoabantu lona enikhuluma ngaye?” Ku-buza uMalambule.

“USoabantu umfundisi omdala omhlophe oselokhu waluthanda uhlanga olumnyama. Kusukela ngesikhathi oJantoni befuna ukulucisha beqhatha uCetshwayo nabelungu. OJantoni uzwa kuthiwa yiziphakanyiswa kwaZulu, sebengcofa nohlanga olumnyama baphemba imbewu emhloshana, yinto leyo ngomthetho waḡafundisi engathandekiyo. Nani senaduka nezwe-nje anikutha-ndi. Akunjalo?” Kuḡuza ikhehla. Wathi uMalambule, “Yeḡo kunjalo.”

Nempela icala likaDinizulu langena eMgundlovana. Laliphethwe yizinkunzi zibekene emehlweni, zibuzana ziphendulana zifuthana. AḡakwaZulu baḡebuthene ngisho nongoso waḡo. UZulu wayeḡulalana yedwana ngoḡa ofakazi aḡanamandla baḡevela kwaZulu. Kuthe sekubizwa ofakazi uMalambule waḡona sekuqhamuka noyise efakazela abelungu. Kodwa kwathi ubufakazi baḡke bungakapheli yaphuma inkantolo ukuyodla emini. Nantambama wangena uyise ebokisini. Ngale-nkathi uMalambule wangena wayohlalela ngaphambili endaweni lapho ayengabonakala kalula. Wahlala-nje wathula. Ngenkathi uyise ekhuluma wakhwehlela njalonjalo, khona ezokhangeka abeke ngakuye. Nempela wabeka amehlo aḡo ahlangana. Uyise wethuka. Ummeli ukuḡona lokhu kwethuka wathi:

“Lomuntu uqamba amanga, nokukhuluma kwakhe kuyamceḡa.”

Wathi uyise kaMalambule:

“Ngethuswa umntanami, makhosi, nanguya.” Washo ekhomba ngomunwe uMalambule. “Naye angangifakazela ukuthi uMancinza noChakijane ngiyaḡazi kodwa mina ngangilwa naḡo, naye waze waḡaleka ekhaya ebalekela khona ukuḡa naye angase abulawe uma mina ngingavumelani nokulwa kwemali yamakhanda.”

Wathi ukusho njalo onke amehlo abantu nabelungu abeka lapho ikhehla likhomba khona. Aḡaḡehleli phansi phezu kwamabeshu basukuma; naḡabengaboni kahle belula izintamo balunguza. Aḡaḡeyazi indaḡa

yokuḡaleka kukaMalambule bankema imilomo, baḡhunsula amehlo.

NoMalambule wethuka esethe:

“Qha, mina angikwazi lokho, ngiyaphika makhosi.”

Indlu yaḡuye yathula ngokunye. Kwasekuthiwa akungene yena uMalambule ebokisini, kuzwakale ukuthi wazini yena. Nempela wayesephakathi. Wathi uMalambule:

“Mina angikwazi lokhu okukhulunywa nguḡaba. Sekuyisikhathi ngaḡaleka ekhaya ngeza lapha. Indaḡa kaBambatha kaMancinza, noChakijane ngiyazi kancane. Ngikhumbula ngelinye ilanga befika ekhaya kulungiselwa ukuyogqokeza isitolo somlungu eMpanza. Uḡaba lona lomqondo wokugqokeza wayewuthanda, ngaze mina ngakhethwa ngenxa yokuthanda kwakhe, ukuḡa ngihamḡe naḡanye owethu siyogqokeza isitolo leso.”

“Okungukuthi ungomunye waḡagqokezi na?” Kuḡuza ummeli.

“Qha angishongo njalo.”

“Chaza”, sekusho ummeli ngokufutheka.

“Sahambake nowethu laḡo, kodwa kwathi ngisendleleni ngaḡahlubuka ngaḡaleka, nakhu ngilapha manje.” Kukhuluma uMalambule.

“Wawubahlubukelani?” Kuḡuza ummeli kaDinizulu.

“Okokuqala ngangesaḡa khona lokhu kwamacala, ngoḡa ngazi ukuthi ngelinye ilanga lendaḡa iyomiswa ezinkantolo. Okwesibili ngangisola ukuthi lendaḡa oBambatha noChakijane bayithatha emakhanda aḡo. Noma ḡona baḡfike baḡhi baḡvela oSuthu, kodwa akugculisanga ukusho kwaḡo ngoḡa maningi amahemuhemu siwezwa ngenkosi kanti asuka emoyeni-nje.”

Wathi ukuḡa asho njalo, indlu yonke kaZulu yathi:

“Awuzwake, mfana!”

Emva kwakhe kwasukuma uNgobozone kaVukuza wakwaMpungose, iMboza kuCetshwayo, owayeḡekwe uHulumeni abeyinduna eMahlaḡathini:

*UD!odl'ongensiba,  
Usezela lubedw'eSwazini  
Ugwaz'indod'angayizeleli,  
KwabakaNgobe*



*Uxamu weziziba,  
UMathanga dabul'ulwandle,  
Igeja likaNsimbini  
Elilolwe nguMdinjana,  
Okufe amahhashi kwaf'izimbongolo."*

Yenake uNgobozone wayekhulumela uDinizulu, wakhuluma iqiniso alaziyo wathi:

"Sonke thina bantu sasingavumi ukuBa kuthelwe lemali, ukuphela yena uDinizulu yedwa owathi asiyi-thele. Sonke sasifuna ukulwa; kodwa yena wala." Wakhuluma nokunye okukhulu ekhombisa ufuqotho bakhe noma emi phambi kwaBelungu.

Phezu kwakho konke lokhu ubufakazi obabulethwa yizitha zenkosi uDinizulu, zivela khona belu kwaZulu yibona obenza ukuBa adingiswe ayiswe oBalule, laphake abonana khona noBota (Gen. Louis Botha) owannika indawo yokuhlala. Wayitha yena luqobo lwakhe uDinizulu wathi kukwa*Thengisangaye*. Esho ngoba phela thina bakwaZulu sathengisa ngaye umntwana wenkosi, ezizweni. Wahhala lapha oBalule iminyaka ethile noma esexinywa yisifo sikayisemkhulu uMpande sokuphathwa ngumlenze, wahhala-nje khona egula njalo. Wafela khona oBalule. Nanguya uDlwebu yena belu kaSobantu, wasuka wasilanda isidumbu wasiletha kanye nabanye bakwaZulu, basifikisa kwa-Nobamba.

Kuyilaphoke futhi kulele khona amagcino emakhosini kaZulu, uDinizulu. Onke amakhosi ezinhlanga athanda izizwe zawo afa kanje. Afela ekudingeni — — akungqala ngoDinizulu. Alele kwaNobamba amagcino kaZulu endlini kaSenzangakhona:

*"Umgwazi kaqhaqhi,  
Uqhaqhelwa zinyoni.  
Umkhonto kaShaka noDingane  
Ingwenya edlela okhunjini lommfula,  
Ngaphezulu isab'ukuhlathwa,  
Ithikamezwe yimisebe yelanga.*

*Inkunz'ebomvu kaShaka,  
Ebeth'iyahlaba,  
Kant'ithibel'imihlambi yamadoda."*

Kuthe seliphelile icala, sekusuka nezivunguvungu zokunqunywa kwezinsizwa zabantu, nezinye zadutshulwa ngesibamu ngenxa yobushokobezi. UMalambule waBonana noyise bahlala phansi, ikhehla lakhala limbona ngoba laselithi kade wafa. Kwathi lapho uMalambule embuza ngonina ekhaya, ikhehla lathi: "Qha, izindaba zomkhaya azixoxelwa endle ngoba fune zihambe nomoya zingabi nasizotha." Wabuza futhi ngabafowabo oChithumuzi, noMasimini nezinye izinsizwa zakwabo, kodwa ikhehla lamthela ngemvula yezinyembezi langakhuluma lutho. Lathatha ugwayi labema kuphela. Naye uMalambule ebona ukuthi akusizi lutho ukulokhu eBuzana nomuntu omdala, emkhalisa izinyembezi wathi:

"Pho baba, awusho ngani ukuthi sekwafiwa ekhaya? Kuhle sihlale lapha singayi ndawo ngoba uma siye ekhaya siyozivusela usizi, ukufika sishaywe ngama-bungane, namanxiwa asegcwele udonqabathwa, nezibaya ezikhamisile."

Lambuka ikhehla kwangathi aliyizwa into ekhulunywa yilomfana, lathi:

"Mina wakobani engingahlala lapha? Kanti indawo yethu yini lena sekungumhlaba wabelungu njena? Kuhle khona ukuBa sengimdala senginje. Ngifuna ukugoduka ngiye emanxiweni awobabamkhulu, ngifele khona. Hhawu kumnandi ukufela phakathi kwamadlozi, ngilale ubuthongo obumnandi, laphoke ngiyohlangu ngana nobabamkhulu, ngibone amaqhawe amakhulu oMenziwa kaMvundlana

*"Inyon'edlezinye; Akakh'umunt'ongaqom'izulu!"*

*"Ngihlale noZulu kaNogandaya:*

*"UZulu ladum'obala, lapho kungemunga kungemthole!"*

"Ninake nisale lapha nahluliwe. Thina siyoyilwa naphansi lapho iyohlangubezana ngemikhonto, izibamu zingekho. Konje abelungu bona balahlwa-nje ngama-bokisi? Uyongibuzake. Ningimbele nemikhonto yami kuwo amanxiwa awobabamkhulu. Lunga, kuhle sihambe kusasa mntanami, amadolo aselukhuni."

Lasho njalo ikhehla uMalambule waBonana phansi emqondweni wakhe umlilo wokufa ulokoza njengemililo ayibona eDumbe ebusuku, ilokoza kude iya ngokuya



icima sengathi ayokhelwanga muntu ophilayo. Wabona amathongo evuka ensimini yamangwaba awoyisemkhu-lu, efake izidlodlo, neziyephu, nemikhonto evutha imililo yenzondo nobuqhawe egwaza abezizwe abathathe izwe labo. Nempela lokhu okukhulunywa nguyise kungaba yiqiniso ngoaba yini kwenye inkathi sizwa umhlabi udikiza, undindizela ngaphansi, sengathi kukhona abawufukulayo, kodwa behluleke, kubuye kuthule kuthi du? Yini ukuaba umhlabi uphume imi-mfula zonke izintaba, lemimfula igoboze njalo ungunaphakade, uma kungezinyembezi zalaaba abagwazwa ngamaqhawe ezweni labaphansi. Ingani kuthiwa lithatha osemnyango limphonse emsamo? Yini konke okuphilisa umuntu kuqhuma phansi, ukudla nezithelo, nemifino, namabele? Qha, izwe labaphansi likhona. Iyobuye ihlangabezane nakhona.

Yimicabango kaMalambule lena. Wathi esezwa ecabanga kanje ubuthongo bamzuma phansi. Nalaphaya kude emsamo wekamu lamaphoyisa uyise wayesehonqa obudala.

#### ISAHLUKO XIV.

UZazini wathi lapho ehamba endleleni wahlangana nabanye abantu abaningi ababebaleka bebalekela lokhuku bulawa kukaSishishili okumangalisayo. Babengazi lapho bebalekela khona. Babechitheka nezwenje. Kodwa wezwa bekhuluma wayibuzisisa indaba yokubaleka kwaabo, wayesebona ukuthi kuhle angayichazi lendaaba yokubaleka kwakhe kulababantu ngoaba funa kanti bethuke mhlawumbe baphendukele yena. Kuthe lapho sebexoxile wathi kuabo:

“Qha bakithi kuhle siye kwelakithi lapho izwe lisathule khona selokhu amaBunu alwa namaNgisi kusathule kusathe nya. NamaSwazi nawo akahluphi ngoaba esaba abakwaZulu. Manjeke selokhu kwafa uMswazi, inkosi yawo kuthule. Phela uMswazi lona wahlakani-pha.”

“Wahlakanipha ngani? Kukhona ukuhlakanipha kubantu abatekezayo lokhu nemiqondo yabo iyate-

keza?” Kubuza owayesenengiwe ngoaba amaSwazi engawathandi.

“Qhabo uMswazi wayehlakaniphile ngoaba wabona ukuthi abakwaZulu bamphethe kabi wayeseshushumbisa amanxusa akhe aya eMgungundlovu kuSomsewu ka-Sonjica ukuthi umganisela intombi yakhe uTifokati.” Uthe engakaqedi wamnquma umlomo lomfokazi onengiweyo wathi:

“Awuzwake, izilima-ndini, azazi yini ukuthi izilokozana lezi zithatha umfazi ngamunye? Negama lentokazi lelo njalo akusiyena uTifokati, nguZifokazi.” Washo wathula. Kodwa wathi omunye efuna indaba yena, wathi:

“Wenza njani uSomsewu?”

Waqhubeka uZazini wathi:

“USomsewu wayithatha intombazana leyo.”

“Wayigana?” Kubuza omunye.

“Qha.” Kusho uZazini.

“Yagcina ngokwenzenjani?”

Wathi uZazini:

“Wayilobola maqede wayinika inceku yakhe uNgoza owayehlala eMkhambathini. Kusukela kulesosikhathi amaNgisi ayezwana namaSwazi. Kwelakithi eDumbe nizohlala kahle ngokuthula, ngoaba izwe alinazikhwi-shikhwishi njengaleli.” Bahamba bahamba kwathi lapho sebesezuze nasekhaya omunye umfokazi njengoaba babeyidlanzana wathi:

“Pho, wena mfana sihamba nawe-nje uphumaphi?”

Lombuzo wayekade ewulindele uZazini, ngoaba esaba ukuthi ngase bamenze kabi abantu laba. Ngakhoke wathi:

“Ngangithunywe nguaba ngalapha eMahlabathini ukuaba ngiyomfunela umuthi enyangeni yakwaNgobazana. Umuthi wokubethela ngoaba sihlushwa yizulu endaweni yakithi eyizinkangala.”

Hhayike beneliswa ukukhuluma kukaZazini bahamba, bahamba basondela ekhaya. UZazini wawukhomba umuzi wakuwo wathi nankuya. Kuthe sebesondela kwaphuma abantu emzini lowo babalunguza, babuye bangena endlini sengathi bethukile. Kuthe ukungena kwaabo kwase kuqhamuka ikhehla livela endlini, lila-



ndelwa ngabanye abantu besilisa baphumela phandle babuka. Wayesethi omunye kuZazini:

“Sebesibonile bayasinga ukuthi singobani, sengathi bethukile ukuthi sivelaphi, mhlawumbe siyimpi.”

Wathi omunye omdala:

“Ikhona impi engenela imizi ngalesisikhathi ilanga seliyoshona-nje? Kazi khona igangile. Abafo bangeyigwaze bayixoshe yini?”

Waphendula uZazini wathi:

“Qha, kuleli lakithi kujwayelekile ukuBa kuqhamuke abafokazi bendlela badlule baqonde le eBabatini emgodini; mhlawumbe bacabanga ukuthi siyibona laboafokazi.”

Besakhuluma kanjalo, kwaqhamuka izinja zabakhonkotha. Baziyeka-nje bangazikhuza. Kodwa kuthe uma lena enyeinja ikhonkotha isondela ibazungeza yakhonkotha yaxhuma itshikiza umsila, ibuye ibagagamele, njalo ihlehle ivungama sengathi iphunga iyalizwa. Wayeseyibiza uZazini, yatshikiza umsila yalala phansi ibuquza, itshekedula ibuye ize kuye, ibaleke iya ekhaya, ngenxa yokujabula. Wayesethi omunye wesifazane owayephume phandle ebuka:

“Ukhona phakathi kwalabaabantu owaziwa yinja.”

Kuthe kusenjalo bambona uZazini, wayesethi uyise: “NguZazini.” Ekushweni kwakhe lokho wangena endlini kwamanye amadoda wayoziphuzela utshwala. NoZazini wangqongqoza wakhuleka. Waphuma futhi uyise wathi:

“Uphumaphi Zazini? Baphi abanye abantwana?”

Esikhundleni sokuBa aphenjule uZazini wahlala phansi khona lapho. Kwabuthana wonke umuzi wakuBo nonina, nawonina bezinye izindlu kanye nonakaBembesile. Wathi kuBona:

“Silambe sifile sipheni ukudla.”

UZazini akashongo ukuthi, “ngilambe ngifile, ngipheni ukudla.” Kodwa wathi, “Silambe sifile, sipheni ukudla.” Ngalokho wabakhombisa abakwaBo ukuthi labaabantu ahamba naBo bakanye naye, akubona abezizwe. Ngakhoke batatazela bebalethela igobongo lotshwala. Kwasuka yena unina kaZazini wabutha utshwala ephangeleni wabuthela ezinkambeni ezimbili.

Aphuza lawamadoda ahamba noZazini. Sebephakathi kokuphuza aphuma nalawamadoda asendlini apuza noyise kaZazini azohlala phandle. Umuzi wonke wawusugcwele lapha phandle ubuka labaabantu abafika noZazini, ehamba yedwa.

Labuye laphinda ikhehla elinguyise lathi:

“Hhawu, Zazini wafika wedwa, baphi abanye abantwana na?”

Wathi uZazini:

“Abekho.”

“Baphi na?” Kusho uyise.

Nonina wathi:

“Ungasheshi wena sizwe!”

Wathi uZazini:

“Ngiqinisile abekho. Indaba yabo inzima, ayixoxeki. Nalaba engihamba naBo abayazi. Endleleni kuthe noma bengibuza bethi ngivelaphi, ngathi mina ngangithunywe nguBa ngalapha enyangeni eMahlabathini, Kanti ngiyabakhohlisa.”

“Okuyikhona qiniso yikuphi?” Kubuza uyise, namanye amadoda ayefuna ukwazi ngabantabaBo ababephelikezele uNomcebo, nawo ayesexwayile notshwala esebuyekile. WakuBona lokhu uZazini ngakhoke wafuna ukuyixoxa indaba lena ayikhethe amaBala. Wayesethi:

“UNomcebo noNomanzi, bakhona bayaphila, bathathwa yizinsizwa zakwaZulu, zahamba naBo kanye noMaphulana. Lezizinsizwa nani nazibona noma nake nezwa ngazo. Zathi qu lapha emva kokuba sihambe siphume nomthimba kanti zilandela thina, zizothatha uNomcebo.”

“Zaziphuma kobani?” Kubuza uyise.

“Zazithunywe uMalambule, lona owake wagulela lapha.” Kusho uZazini. Esekushilo lokho uyise namanye amadoda athula abeka phansi, enye indoda yathi,

“Savela sasola ukuBa abantu bafike esifundeni sakithi bahuBe ihuBo lempi, kuyasa sesibuza ukuthi baphi, bashonephi, singazi lutho, kodwa kunyamalale uMaphulana.”

Yathi isho njalo indoda isimame sonke sagquma, esinye sabubula ngoBa sesibona ukuthi abantwana baBo



basemajukujukwini noma mhlawumbe sebafa badliwa ngamanqe. Wakuzwa lokhu kububula uZazini kwa-bayikhona ebonayo ukuthi indaba inkulu. Kulula ukubuyela ekhaya kodwa kunzima ukuchaza ukuthi ufuyiswa yini yedwa abanye bengekho-nje na? Uthe engakakhulumi wathi unakaBembesile:

“Okungukuthi akubuyanga kusagcagcwa yini?”

“Laphoke omunye walafofa angazikhulumela njengokwazi kwakhe njengoba babekhona emgcagcweni kaNomcebo noBembesile.” Kusho uZazini.

Kukhulunywa lawamadoda asamangele ngofa yonke lento ekhulunywayo ayizwa sabuthongweni sengathi alele, aqabuka ebuthongweni obukhulu. Kuthe engakasanguluki uZazini wayesethi makukhulume omunye wawo. Omunye wawo wathi:

“Thina besisalalele, simangele nemilomo yethu ivaleke okwezimungulu. Singaphendula kanjani?”

“Qha ukusho kwami yingoba emgcagcweni amadoda lawa ayekhona, azibonela ngamehlo awo.” Kusho uZazini.

“Thina bakithi asibonanga lutho. Into esimangalisayo ngukuthi kanti abalobokazi laba bafevela lapha. Nokuthi umthimba lona wawuphuma lapha ekhaya. Impela siyamangala banumzane.” Kukhuluma elinye ikhehla.

“Pho njengoba senibona-nje, sixoxeleni enakuBonayo, sisale sesizwa ngofa yizibixibixi zawoBambatha kaMancinza nezawo Chakijane kaGezindaka, sesizizwile. Xoxani sisale sesilalela.” Kusho indoda yaseDumbe.

“Yeboke, umgcagco wawumuhle ngokumangalisayo, bekake kugcagca umntwana wenkosi uSishishili. Sabusa kakhulu kwaze kwaba phakathi kobusuku, salala. Sekulelwe lapho kuphuma ikhwezi enzansi sabona sekuduma abantu-nje, kungakhalwa nakukhalwa. Sethuka sathathela ukuaba sibone ukuthi yini, kanti impi isingene. Kwathi siqala ukukhala isifazane, nezinsizwa namadoda eqala ukuthatha imikhonto kwase kufe iningi. Lempi ehlaselayo yayibazi abantu bonke lapho bekhona ngofa yaqala khona enkosini nesigodlo, yagwaza yabixa. Nathi silapha-nje ngofa sabaleka kwasa sicinga ukuthi yini. Kodwa kwakungabekeki, sabaleka kwathi endle-

leni sathi ngamanqa nalomfana, wayesethi masiye kwe-lakubo lapho izwe lisathule khona. Ngempela samlandela naku sesisilapha namhlanje.”

Ukhuluma-nje lomuntu omame sebelapha phezulu, sekukhalwa isililo ngofa phela kufiwe. Kwakhala yonke imizi ngofa iningi lalihambile. Munye umuntu ongakhalanga—ngunina kaZazini. Owahlala phansi walalela inhliziyo yakhe ibuhlungu ngofa kuthiwa umntanake kuthiwa uyaphila, kodwa ebengekho phakathi kwa-bafuyayo. Kungcono ukuzwa ukuthi umuntu akakho kuthiwe ufile ubonwe phakathi kweningi walahlwa. Kodwa uma kuthiwa umuntu ukhona, kuzwakale ukuthi uhamba ngazo zozimbili kodwa ebengabonwa nokuthi uma eyobonwa akwazi muntu. Wahlala phansi unina kaNomcebo wathula edliwa yizinhlungu zomphefumulo ezishisa kakhulu kunezomzimba. Wasuka wathi:

“Pho, Zazini, wazi ngani ukuthi uNomcebo noNomanzi noMaphulana bayaphila na?”

“Lokhoke ngikwazi ngofa ngisuke kubona sixatshani-swa elokuthi mangibuye naye. Yena wathi qha, waphuma ekhaya eyogana angabuyela kanjani ekhaya futhi na?”

“Ukusinda lokhu usinda kanjani abanye bebulawa na?” Kubuza uyise.

“Ukusinda nami kusangimangalisa. Kodwa ngazi lokho ukuthi uMaphulane wathi ukuaba afike nezinsizwa lezi zakwaboMalambule, zona zacasha ehlathini, kwathi ebusuku yena wangena emzini lowo, wafuna waze wangingithola, wabonana nentombazanyana okuyiyona eyayiphelekezele uNomcebo, wayibiza wathi mayiyofika iqhwebe uNomanzi. Nempela yamqhweba waphuma. Wafika wamyala wathi umuzi lowo uzobujiswa ngalobobusuku, kuhle aqhwebe uNomcebo baphume. Nempela baphuma. Ngafo lobobusuku izinsizwa zahamba nabo zaya ezweni lakubo. Mina ngokwami angesabi lutho ngoNomcebo, noNomanzi nomntwana lowo. Lezinsizwa ziyamthanda uNomcebo zithi lapho zimbiza zithi “dadewethu”. Ngakhoke ingozi ayikho.”

Kuthe lapho sekuqediwe ukukhala, sekugcwele umuzi wonke, namadoda esekhohliwe ukuthi kufiwe, wathi omunye wesifazane:



“Ungabe usasixoxela ukuthi indaba yomshado yaba-njani, lokhu phela izintombi zozombili zahamba lapha ziphikisene? Akusenacala phela noma enye seyafa, kunjalo nakuNomcebo indoda yamlehlekela naye. Yisho sizwe mfana thina sasithanda ukuzwa kuxoxwa ngezintombi kade zibulelene ngempahla.”

Wathi uZazini:

“Qha, leyondaba ngiyoyixoxa ngelinye ilanga, umoya wami sewakhohlwa, nomzimba wami sewuphumule. Okwamanje umzimba nomphefumulo wami usadungekile.”

Kwathi sekuhlwile abantu bahlakazeka nabafokazi laba abafike noZazini banikwa indawo yokulala. Uyise kaZazini wababika nakumnumzane wendawo ukuaba abanike nendawo yokwakha. UZazini wahamba wazi-yela kunina lapho kwakukhona ukuthula nokudla nendawo yokulala ubuthongo.

Laphaya emuva izinto zazizimbi ngoaba phela impi kaBambatha yayisiliwa ngempela kanye neyaseMome sekusondele nokuabanjwa kukaDinizulu. Abantu kude babezwa indaba isixoxwa isinandiswe yawubani! Amaqiniso wona babengawazi! Bayingcosane abantu ababazi amaqiniso ngoaba ababaningi ababefika eMgundlovana, naseNkandla naseMome, nakwaMaphumulo. OSuthu ayikho into owawungase uyithole. Kwakukwamkutu.

Nokuabanjwa nokuthethwa kwecala lenkosi, ize ilahlwe bayingcosane ababekuxoxa njengoaba kufanele ukuaba bakuxoxe. NoChithumuzi nabafowaabo endleleni babehambe bebutha imfukumfuku yezindaba okwathi sekufikwa emakhaya bafumanisa izindaba lezo zimi ngenye indlela emakhaya. Noku baleka kukaMalambule eMpanza bathe beza-nje ngasekhaya bakuthola kumi ngenye indlela. Ekuzweni kwaabo kwakuhlazisa ngoaba ngisho sebefika ekhaya akukho umuntu owayazi ukuthi uMalambule uze abaleke-nje empini yini. Noyise uqobo lwakhe kwamxaka lokhu.

Noma befika izinto zibamele kabi umkhaya wonke wakikiza wayijabulela lentombi yezizwe evela eDumbe izogana lapha ekhaya. Ngenxa yokuthi uMalambule engaziwa, uNomcebo wahlatshiswa inkabi enkulu emhlophe wangeniswa ngayo ekhaya kwathi lapha kubuzwa

kuthiwa umakoti lona uzokwenziwa njani njengoaba uMalambule engaziwa futhi engabonwa lapho ekhona, yena uqobo lwakhe waziphendulela wathi:

“Njengoaba uMalambule engekho ngizohlala khona lapha ekhaya ngibe umntwana wakhona lapha, ngoaba anginakuphindela emuva kwelakithi, ngaphuma ngiyogana uma ngibuyela emuva kungabayihlazo phezu kwami lokho. Ngidedeleni ngihlale nodadewethu”, wathi esho njalo wakhomba odadewabo bakaMalambule noChithumuzi nabanye. Wathi lapha esho njalo uNomcebo izintombi ezinye zamukha ngamehlo, kwathi yena udadewabo kaMalambule, uMaloza wamgaxa isandla entanyeni esinye isandla sakhe wasibeka esifubeni sakhe waphulula ubuhlalu bakhe obabenzelwe ukuaba agcagce ngoabo.

UMaloza wayenothandó lwenziswa kuNomcebo, mhlawumbe nomfowaabo uMalambule wayengamthandi uNomcebo kangaka. Esigcakini babehlala ndawonye bebhotha ubusenga, noma bethunga ubuhlalu obunemibala. Uma kuyokhiwa amanzi ingcazi kaNomcebo yayiphathwa nguMaloza ayikhelele amanzi ayigcwalise, abeseyithwesa uNomcebo. UMaloza wayenomona ngoNomcebo ecabanga ukuthi funa ngelinye ilanga ahambe ayogana kwenye indawo. Ngakhoke wabuza wathi:

“Kodwa uqinisile uma uthi uyohlala nami njalo uma umfowethu engafiki, ngeke ugane noma kanjani?”

Wathi uNomcebo:

“Izwi lami nesithembiso sami ngiyosigcina. Mina ngangingeke ngagana ngisho indodana kaSishishili, ukuhamba lokhu ngiya khona ngangiphekezela udadewethu lona owafayo uBembesile. Into engangiyoyenza yayiyoba yisimanga ngoaba kwakuyothi mhla ethi uza kwami ngimubuqe ngesijula kuyasa ngemukile mina angisekho ngeduka nezwe.”

“Hhawu uthini Nomcebo? Kanti unehliziyo embi yini?” Kusho uMaloza.

“Qha anginayo inhliziyo embi, kodwa nginesibindi sokwenza izinto uma into ngingayithandi angiyithandi; kodwa angikhombisi kubantu. Munye umuntu engingamutshela yona nguMaphulane.”

“Pho mina uyongifihlela nami?”



Wathi lapho esho njalo uMaloza wamthatha ngesandla uNomcebo wathi maBasukume bavakashe amkhombise izindawo zakubo: amahlathi lapho kuthezwa khona ukuze naye aphume ayotheza, amkhombise nezinkomo zakubo nemifala yazo khona engeke akhumbule ezakubo, namathafa lapho kudla khona izimbuzi namachwane azo, nemithondolo emikhulu eseyagoqa nezimpondo, ehamba ivika phakathi kwezihlahla funa izimpondo zigaxele, imithondolo nezimpongo ezizwakala kude ngamaququ azo ukuthi weu, nampo phela ofeleba, lapho uzwa khona izinselo zikhala zichakaza sengathi amaqakala namadolo alezizilwane ephukile.

Waphuma naye uMaloza wayesephendula uNomcebo esethi:

“Ukhona umuntu oke akhohlise indoda yakhe khona sekunjani? Namadlozi angamfulathela, Maloza. Wena ngingeke ngikukhohlise uyindoda yami, funa kanti ngiyazisitheza ngomnyama.” Washo wathula. Wezwa isandla sikaMaloza sibamba siqinisa. Waphenduka wambuka emehlweni wathi uMaloza:

“Ehhe, ngibuke uqinisile uma usho njalo na? Funga ngabaphansi.”

“Ngiyafunga Maloza, ngibiza abaphansi.” Basebethula bahamba njalo beqonde ngasendle bebukana nezinkomo zasekhaya, bebukana namagquma nezintaba nemifula egobozayo.

Wayesethi uMaloza:

“Nami ngiyafunga ngabaphansi, ngeke ngiphume emzini kaaba ngithi ngiyogana ngikushiye lapha wedwa. Siyohlala lapha ekhaya sondle umame nobaba uma esebuyile enkantolo eMgundlovana.”

“Ngiyezwa, Maloza, impela ngiyabona ukuthi uyangithanda.”

Kuthe kusenjalo kwavuka inqomfi phambi kwaBo, lavuka labeka phezulu, likhala litshiloza lendlale amaphiko, wayesethi uMaloza:

“Uyayazi lenyoni Nomcebo?”

“Ehhe ngiyayazi ingani inqomfi-nje leli?”

“Libika bani pho?” Kusho uMaloza.

Babuye bahambe, sekuntambama, ilanga kade lishisa kabi. Kwase kushaya umoya wolwandle uphetha

phezu kotshani. Base behlala phansi baphumula, ehlanje kwehlathi. Besahlezi phansi kwezwakala ukunyathuza ngenzansi ehlathini sengathi ukhona umuntu ohamba khona phakathi. Balalela, kwase kuthi thushu uMaphulane waphuma qede wabaBona, wahleka. Nabo bahleka, uNomcebo wathi,

“Hhawu, Maphulane, nalapha ubunyanga awukaBonyeki. Ngangithi uyofika lapha uphumule.”

Wathi uMaphulane,

“Lonake namhlanjena ozomncelisela lapha ngowaphi Nomcebo? Ingane yakho owawuyincelisa endleleni siza lapha sewayincelisa yakhula, usuphethe enye manje?”

Wathi uNomcebo:

“Phela izalukazi ziyabathanda abantwana. Lowo wasendleleni sengamdulisela koChithumuzi, sengizonce ngilande itshali lami-nje kumkhongi, kodwa ngibona nakhu sekuzogcagcwa ngingalitholanga.”

Bonke bahleka, noMaphulane wasondela wazobaBukela eduze wathi ukufika wathi:

“Weu, ukuBa ngangizele lentombi yayiyokwendela kubantaBami, Nomcebo”, washo ephathaphatha uMaloza, bentelisana, wadlula.

Kuthe kusenjalo wathi uMaloza:

“Awubeke laphaya kude Nomcebo, maqondana nenhlamvu yelanga ebomvu, kukhona abantu abezayo, bahamba sengathi bakhathele, phakathi kwaBo kukhona umuntu otatanyiswayo sengathi usemdala noma useqinile.”

Nempela wabukisisa uNomcebo, ebukisisa labaBantu abeza kude. Yena wayekujwayele ukuBona abantu beza kanje beqhamuka kude ngoBa wayevela eDumbe lapho izwe linamagcaki, amathantala-nje omhlabi akhombisa umuntu esekude, uyeza-nje usehlonyelwe; wayesethi uNomcebo:

“LabaBantu abaqhamuka kanje bangikhumbuza kude kwelakithi.” Washo wathula wafiphalisa amehlo, wathatha ibayi lakhe elalilenga limboze amahlombe nesifuba sakhe, waliphonsa emhlane, lalenga njengeminqwamba esiyibona ithwelwe yizifundiswa zemfundo, imibalaBala emalunda. Wo! Lomqwamba ziwuthwala



izintokazi zikaZulu uzifanele ngoBa phela ziyizihlandlakazi, zihamba zibidle uBona kudlala amatheBe. Uzweke ukuthi wafika kwaZulu, noma izwe seloniwa yizinyoni ezimhlophe ezaBikwa yiLembe.

Wathi ukulenze njalo ibayi wafikelwa ukuthukuthela kobuhle; ubuso bakhe bakhanya ilanga, negazi lakhe lagijima imithambo yonke yakhe yomzimba, wabukeka njengotshani behlōbo obuluhlaza bufumuka utalagu ekuseni lapho ilanga lithatha ukushisa; waphenduka wabamuhle njengamanzi ommfula ebusuku eshanelwa unyezi ekhanga iqakala lamafu amhlophe. WakuBona lokhu uMaloza wasondela kuyena wambamba ngazandla zozimbili wathi,

“Kodwa umuhle Nomcebo!”

UNomcebo wathula. Mhlawumbe akezwanga lento ekhulunywa uMaloza. Wasuka kuphela wathi:

“Uyazi ukuthi kwelakithi siBabona njalo abantu beqhamuka kanje. Abanye beza sebezihola sebekhathele yindlela ey'eBabatini; abanye basuke bethunywe ngamakhosi akwaZulu beyofuna imithi nezinyamazane eSwazini nakwaMjantshi. Ilanga lalinje mhla ngibona umfowenu uMalambule, Maloza. Ilanga lalinje.” Washo umoya wakhe wakhathala, wayesemdonsela phansi, uMaloza sebehlala phezu kwesidindi esikhulu sotshani. Wathula lapho sebhleli phansi kwaze kwakhuluma uMaloza.

“Pho usufuna ukugoduka yini? Unesizungu lapha kwelakithi?”

“Qha anginasizungu ngaleyondlela oyishoyo, Maloza. Kodwa inhliziyi yami ikhumbula ilanga mhla sihamba nomfowethu uZazini siyobuka izinkomo zikaBaBa. Ngalelolanga laliyoshona ilanga njengoBa uBona-nje. NgamBona umfowenu uMalambule, ngamBona ngamthanda kodwa ngangingenakumtshela, ngingensizwa yona itshela intombi. Kodwa ngangimzonda lapho engekho phambi kwami, ngoBa ngangimBona sengathi moya wakhe ugwele ukuthi uvela eBabatini lapho kukhona izintombi zezinhlobo ngezinhlobo.”

“Suka lapha Nomcebo yini yona leyo oyikhulumayo? Ingani ngisho eMgundlovana lapha sike siye sizibone lezontombi. Ukhuluma ngeMiwasiwana lena sengathi

ayidli, eseyaqedwa yizinkwa nezibondlo zakobelungu? Musa ukungicasula. Yini yona leyo-nje nempela?”

“Ngangimthatha ngaleyondlela.” Kusho uNomcebo. “Uphi umfowenu uZazini, ungakanani?” Kubuza uMaloza.

“Ha suka, ungeyibone insizwa kaBaBa, engumdlovu, okuthi nxa sihamba nayo kuthiwe ngiyizenze, noma ngingaka-nje. Ungayibona uzifele, Maloza. AngimBongi ngoBa engowakwethu. Hawu umame wazala.”

“Nami umame wazala kuMalambule.”

Wahleka uNomcebo, wasiphula utshani wabuphatha ngesandla wayesephendula amehlo ebeka uMaloza wathi:

“Uma kwenzeka ngelinye ilanga siyovakashela kithi. Ngifuna uke uyobona umfowethu uzidelele ngamehlo. Uma kwenzeka ngelinye ilanga umfowenu abuye ngim-gane, nawe futhi ngiyokuganisela umfowethu uZazini.”

“Uyangithanda yini, Nomcebo?”

“YeBo ngiyakuthanda, Maloza.”

Basebesukuma esethi uNomcebo:

“Bashonephi laBaBantu eBebeza laphaya?”

“Kambe bashonephi?”

Baqalaza yonke indawo kodwa ababonanga lutho. Futhi kwase kuqala ukuhwelela, basebebuya njalo, beqonda ekhaya. UkuBuya kwaBo bahamba kancane. Sebeqala ukusondela ngasekhaya bahlangana noNomanzi eza kuBona ehamba nenye intombazana, wafike waqonda kuNomcebo, wamdonsela eceleni wambamba ikhanda, wathi ukunyenyeza into endlebeni yakhe, wethuka waxhuma uNomcebo wathi:

“Hheya suka!”

Wathi uNomanzi,

“Ngiqinisile”, washo ekhomba endlini engenhla yakwaBo Maloza. Wabuye wathi:

“Nini?”

Wathi uNomanzi:

“Khona manje.”

Basuka lapho bathatha izinyawo baqonda ezindlini zaBo, ngoBa uMaloza lo nentombazana le eyayifike noNomanzi base benyamalele, baqonda emakwaBo.

Lapho efika endlini kwaBo uMaloza wafumanisa



kugcwele abantu wamangala ukuthi yini. Kodwa wabona unina eshesha eletha amanzi ashisayo. Wathi lapho ebukisisa wabona noMaphulane nenye indoda. Kwathiwa yena makaphume nempela waphuma. Endlini kwakuthotshwa uyise efika esezithwele evela enkantolo eMgundlovana. Nguye lo obebbonwa nguNomcebo noMaloza eqhamuka nabantu bemtatamisa ekushoneni kwelanga. Phakathi kwalabaabantu kukhona noMalambule.

Kuthe ukuba kufike noMaphulane naye enze izaba kwaBa yikhona bephefumulayo nabantu endlini. Yiyo lenkathi lapho uMalambule naye waphuma phandle waya elawini kubafowabo. Wathi ephuma-nje wayenqakwa ngumfowabo uChithumuzi wathi kuye:

“Wasithumake mfowethu entombini! SakuBona mfana omdala!” Washo baxhawulisana; lapho sekugcwele bonke abafowabo ababephume inqina kaNomcebo, bagcwala bembungaza abanye sebekhwela ngisho nasemahlombe. Bethi:

“Nithi nguye ngempela uMalambule, akudlozi lakhe kodwa?”

Abanye bathi:

“Nguye ngempela.”

Babebemdonsa beya naye ngaselawini kodwa yena wathi:

“Qha ake ningiyeke bafowethu anginakungena endlini, ngidle nokudla. UbaBa usengitshelile ukuthi intombi yami ilapha. Kunjalo madoda?”

Waphendula uMasimini wathi:

“Sabuya nayo sayithi qatha lapha, ngifunga uZokwenzani wakwethu.”

Bonke bafunga odadewabo waze wahleka naye uMalambule. Wayesethi uChithumuzi:

“Sengiyayilanda woza Malambule, uzofika ume laphaya ecaleni.”

Nempela wangena uChithumuzi elawini lawodadewabo wafika waqhweba uNomcebo, elawini. Kodwa yena akathandanga. Wathi lapho emthinta ngengalo wamuzwa eqhaq hazela ngenxa yokwesaba nokwethuka. Ubuso bakhe bonke bagcwala amahloni. WakuBona lokhu uChithumuzi wathi:

“Woza dadewethu umfowethu usefikile, nangu phandle ufuna ukukuBona.” Kodwa uNomcebo wazindezindela amadolo enzima ukuba asukele phezulu aye kuMalambule ngoBa nakhu wayesefikile. Wahlala phansi eduze kwakhe uChithumuzi wamncenga ukuba aphume kodwa yena wafikelwa amahloni wala unomphelo. Kuthe esamncenga kwezwakala izwi selime-meza uChithumuzi, wasabela waphuma. Uthe esathi thayithayi efuna uMalambule, wangambona wayesethi nqamanqa nomfana lo ombizayo wathi kuyena:

“UMalambule usebuyele emuva laphaya lapho kugula khona ubaba, ubuye wabizwa. Manje ubaba usesifuna sonke siqoqane kuyena, useyayalela.”

“Hhawu uthini mfana?”

“Ngiqinisile”, kusho umfana.

Kwaba ukungena kwakhe endlini uChithumuzi wayotshela odadewabo lendaba ayizwa ngalomfana. Balalela izinhliziyo zabo zangenwa uvalo, bashaqeka-nje. Waphuma uChithumuzi wagijima waye wafika lapho uyise ekhona, wangena wahlala phansi eduzane kukaMalambule. Endlini lapha kwasekugcwele onina bezindlu ngezindlu, behlezi bethimbile. Umnumzane wayelele phansi egquma ocansini. Nomfo kaMaphulane naye wayekhona ehlezi efuka.

Kuthe ukuba angene qede uChithumuzi wathi uyise:

“Malambule!”

Wesabela uMalambule.

“Sengifikile ekhaya na?”

Wathi uMalambule:

“Sewufikile ngempela ekhaya, baBa.”

Kwabuye kwathula endlini, nomlilo kwaBa sengathi nawo uyacima, amalahle awohlokela phakathi, wasuka omunye wawomame wawuchwabaza, wabeka isigodo phezu kwawo, wathunqa intuthu, kwasuka omunye futhi umame waqonda ngasemnyango wathi ukuvula, kwashaya umoya, nentuthu yaphakama. Yaphakama yanamathela phezulu ezintungweni zophahla, yangena phakathi koqunga, yashuma, yanyamalala, kwasekuba-ngcono endlini.

Wabuye wanyakaza uyise kaMalambule wathi mabamphakamise, bamsingathe. Benze njalo. Wakhuluma.



“Uma niqinisile ukuthi ngisekhaya lapha baphi oMandangwana, noSomgcuyana, noMagebuza?”

Basho bonke onina kaMalambule bathi:

“Sikhona baBa.”

Wayesekhuluma futhi esethi:

“Manje sengibona ukuthi sengiyahamba. Ngiya koShaka amaqhawe amadala. Ngiyezwa kukhala ihawu izinsizwa zihlabelela zizwana amandla. Ezindlebeni zami ngizwa izinsizwa imikhonto ithi khencece, neziwombe, kuqutshulwa izaga zawoBaBamkhulu namaqhawe engiwezwa ngendaba.” Wathi ukusho lokho ngezwi elikhameleleyo, nomoya omncane, wayesebuye ethi,

“Nginikeni umutsha wami ngigqoke, sengiyahamba ninginike konke okwami kokuhloBa, ngiyazizwa izaga, sezisondele neziggi zingivala izindlebe, sengiyahamba.”

Washo njalo maqede wasukuma, wagxuma, noMalambule nabafofawo bethuka bathi ukumphasa ngezingalo. Bawuzwa umzimba wakhe uthamba njengendwangu, ukhithikela ezingalweni zaBo, base BemBamba Bemqinisa, Bemphakamisa BamBeka phansi. Yalala insizwa endala. Yalala loBoButhongo oBayinglanganisa namaqhawe oShaka kaSenzangakhona nawoMvundlana kaMenziwa. Mhlawumbe phakathi kwaloboButhongo waBona into kaMancinza

“Amagcino kaZulu.”

Wayibona uBuso bayo buphenduka njengenkwazi kuzoduma izulu. Mhlawumbe wahlangatshezwa yizinsizwa ezafela imali yamakhandla oSikhotha kaZizwe kwaQwaBe.

“Umahambangabuyi,  
Umafel'ezizweni ngokufel'izizwe,  
Uthambo alaziwa nayizintandane zikaZizwe.  
OkaZizwe ubengaxabene namuntu,  
Ubebuz'umbuzo kwabamhlophe  
Ngemali yamakhandla.”

WaBona noMeseni kaMusi:

“UMmemezi wempi  
Ngaphakathi oSuthu,  
Inkonjan'encane kaMjebeli  
Ekhale laze langomutsha wendoda;  
Isihluthu sensizwa singumthuseli  
Esathusela amantombazana eyogeza:  
AKWA&ANDA&A ZALUTHO.”

Yalalake insizwa endala, kwadlula izinsuku ezimbili bayitshala, bayitshala emanxiweni awoyisemkhulu. Ilanga lona laBe liphuma lishona njengemihla namalanga. NoMalambule nguyena kanye noyisekazi owahlaba inkomo yokwehliswa kukayise, kwathi emva kwesikhathi waBageza izandla bonke aBaBekhona emngcwatsheni kayise.

Kuso sonke lesisikhathi wayesemnyama engathandi ngisho nokumbona uNomceBo. Ngokwempela wayesemkhohliwe. Kodwa emva kokugeza izandla waya ukombona uNomceBo. Baphuma boBabili baya bahlala ngaphandle komuzi baxoxa ezaBo.

“Angikholwa”, kusho uNomceBo. “Kimina sengathi ngisephusheni. Noma silapha-nje sihleli sengathi kuzofika umuntu futhi azokubiza sahlukane.”

Wathi uMalambule:

“Qha. Sekugcine kugcinile. Uma kuvela okunye sekuyofica abanye. Mina qha.”

“Angizwa ukuthi uthini uma usho njalo”, kusho uNomceBo.

“Ngisho ngoba mina ngiyahamba.”

“Uhamba uyaphi?”

Wathi uMalambule: “Indawo yami ayikho lapha. UkuBaleka kwami eMpanza ngingathandi ukuyogqokeza, ngiyaBona ukuthi akunantethelelo kuBantu baKithi.”

“Ukhuluma indaba nxa usho njalo. Nami noma ngingumuntu wesifazane-nje, nginamehlo ngiyaBona. Ne-zindlebe zami zivulekile. Kodwa musa ukuhamba ngokunyelela, ngoba mina ungangishiyaphi?”

“Ngingabuya ngizokulanda futhi.”

“Hhawu qha, usufuna kuBuye kungiphinde okwase-Dumbe ungihiye futhi?”



Washo emthela ngemvula yezinyembezi, enamathela kuyena ngomoya wokuncenga.

“Angiyiboni enye indlela yokuthi ngingaphunyuka kanjani kulaabantu, Nomcebo.”

“Uyafuna ngikunike owami umqondo?”

Wathi uMalambule:

“Yebo woza nawo lowomqondo.”

“Uyazi ukuthi nami kunzima ukuaba ngingaphindela ekhaya likababa, okungenani ngingezi nomyeni wami weqiniso? Okuhle ukuaba ubize abafowenu ubatshele kahle, bese ubachazela phakathi zonke izinkomo zefa likababa njengoba esengekho, wena uthathe lezo ongase uzithengise uthole imali sihambe.”

“Sizohamba siyephi?”

“Ingani wena uvela eMgundlovana? Bakhona abantu obaziyo lapho. Siyofika khona siyosebenza phansi kwabelungu, emapulazini noma khona lapho edolobeni. Uma sindawonye, nalapho sesiphuma sesiphiwe abantwana, kuyosithokozisa uma sindawonye.”

UMalambule waphendula amehlo akhe wawabekisa kuNomcebo. Amehlo agcwele ukumangala nokuthokoza ukuaba kanti uNomcebo uthule-nje umqondo wakhe ucabanga izinto eziningi ezibalulekile. Wambamba ngesandla wasizwa sihaqazela, wayesemangala ukuthi kanti lomqondo uphumaphi lo, uNomcebo okade ewukhuluma uma kanti eyigwala kangaboba eqhaqazeli swa ukuthintwa isandla sakhe-nje kuphela. Wayengazi uMalambule ukuthi umqondo awuphumi emzimbeni womuntu, futhi awuphumi ekuthambeni kwezandla namehlo, kodwa uphuma ebuchosheni bomuntu nase-mcabangweni. Ngakhoke wayesekhuluma esethi:

“Usungikhumbuza into enkulu. Akuswelekile nokuaba ngize ngithathe ngisho nayinye yezinkomo zikababa ngoba nemali engabuya nayo le eBabatini angikayithinti nokuyithinta. Ihleli njengoba yayinjalo.”

Emva kwalokho basukuma, uMalambule waxhawula, noNomcebo wasibamba isandla sikaMalambule sengathi

akakholwa kahle ukuthi angeke amshiye. Bahlukana uNomcebo waqonda elawini lezintombi noMalambule waqonda elawini lezinsizwa labafowafo. Kwathatha izinsuku ezithize umkhaya wahlangana noMalambule wayendlala indaba yakhe koyise bonke bephelele, kanye nabafowafo. Samangala kakhulu ukuthi angathi eyinkosana ashiye umuzi kayise aphume ayozula emazweni angaziwayo.

Omunye wawoyise wathi:

“Lomfana sewadliswa ngamathe abelungu.”

UMalambule wathi:

“Qha baba, uyaphosisa akunjalo.”

Omunye wathi:

“Kodwa aniboni yini nina ukuthi lentombi lena elapha ekhaya yiyo lena ebanga lokho.”

Lelo laphendulwa nguChithumuzi wathi:

“Yini ukuaba ninganqumi indaba yomfowethu nilokhu nifunana nembangiyokufuna kwakhe ukuhamba lapha ekhaya. Yayikhona lentombi eMpanza mhla ehlamukayo uMalambule? Khona ukuaba amathe abelungu wawadla uMalambule, akukhona okuhle kuze nguyena ozocaba indlela yenhlalo yethu namuhla njengoba sesahlulwe-nje?”

Wathukuthela lo omunye uyise wathi:

“Thula wena wazini uyingane-nje?”

Wathi uChithumuzi:

“Ngazi ukuthi nami ngiyamvumela uMalambule. Njengoba ehamba-nje nami ngibopha imithwalo kanye naye. Sesikhathele. Abantwana babantu balele eNkandla nase-Mome-nje, bengabuyiswanga nasemakhaya, neminye imizi ivaliwe ayisenakuphinde ivulwe, kungenxa yezipikeleli ezinjengani bobaba. Thina siyahamba.”

“Ufungabuya uthini lokhu nawe ulandela sona lesa. Ingani nansi intombi ilapha ekhaya nakuwe izokuthumba”, kusho uyise.



“Bengifuna lona lelo njalo”, kusho uChithumuzi, wayephuma: umuzi wachitheka njengegama lakhe.

Kwasa bebhophha bechitheka oMalambule noChithumuzi nezintombi zaabo. Phakathi kwaabo kwangena uMalozu, uMaphulane waaba nguyise waabo. Kwaphunywa kwaqondwa esiLungwini. Kubona amaqhawe ayizolo, kwakungawayizolo; okudlule kwakudlule. Amaqhawe kwakungamathumbu kaZulu, oBambatha kaMancinza nabanye; bona baphuma bayoba ngamazibulo kaZulu esiLungwini, nempucuko.

Yini eyayingabavimbela-nje nempela?