

1. Shembe was born in 1870 near Harrismith. He worked on Boer farms, and had a special gift with horses and cattle. But he was told by a voice to climb a certain mountain, and there in a vision he looked down on the earth and saw his own putrefying corpse. He was told that his sexual self-indulgence prevented the union of his spirit with the Great Spirit. When he woke he said, "I have seen Jehovah." He believed that he had been set apart. With great pain he parted with his four wives.

Cartoon: His vision on the mountain of his own putrefying corpse below.

2. He now became a preacher, and found that in addition to his gift with animals he had a gift with men and women, and could heal them of sickness and mental affliction. In 1911 he founded his Church of the Nazarites. Its centre was Ekuphakameni, the Elevated Place, at Inanda.

Cartoon: Shembe outside his church at Ekuphakameni.

3. The voice now called him to the mountain Inhlangakazi, where he was assailed by demons and temptations. But he overcame all and two angels brought him bread and wine. His powers of healing and preaching had marvellously increased.

Cartoon: Shembe on the mountain, being fed by the angels

4. The mountain Inhlangakazi, became a holy place. Every January thousands of Nazarites go there for the Feast of Tabernacles. There is a hush of awe and expectation. Shembe's power over his people was immense, but he hardly ever raised his voice.

Cartoon: The mountain Inhlangakazi with many hundreds of temporary huts, many thousands of people and many scenes of healing. I must leave this to you.

5. Shembe had great influence with the Zulu chiefs. The crowning glory for him was to give his daughter Zondi as a bride to King Solomon. Shembe was no quietist and discussed social and national questions with the chiefs. His social concern is seen in a verse of one of his many hymns:

You lass of Nazareth
 Cry like a flowing stream
 Because of the shame which is yours
 In your own country



Shembe (cont)

5 (cont)

He learned to read and write about the age of forty, so that he could compose hymns.

Cartoon: Shembe blessing a weeping girl. Please note- the Nazarites almost never wore European dress.

Sorry I have no pictures.

6. The second great annual festival of the Nazarites is held at Ekuphakameni in July. The reverence and beauty of its rituals of song and dance draw many spectators. Men and women dance separately, and in separate age groups for many hours. Shembe died in May 1935, succeeded by his son Johannes Galilee. ^{who himself died in 1976.} He was one of the greatest of African prophets.

Cartoon: The dance of the maidens, comely and bare-breasted.