

# THE PULSE OF SPIRIT



EMISSARIES  
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## IN HONOUR OF NELSON MANDELA

DECEMBER 9, 2013

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It is often said that a man only becomes an adult when his father dies. Our father has died here in South Africa and it is time for us to become adults. Nelson Mandela was not just a father of our nation; he was an inspiration to the world. In his Xhosa tradition, it is believed that each person has a place in community, which is recognised by the entire community.

An individual goes through graduation stages that recognise his growth and will assign him his place in community. The Xhosa tradition marks each stage with a ritual aimed at introducing the individual to his counterparts. Before each stage is performed, an individual spends time with his elder in order to prepare him for the next stage. Nelson Mandela departed as an elder, a sage, one who imparts wisdom, that all may rise to their true potential. It is time for us to take our place in life.

All of us who live in this time are honoured to have been in preparation for our spiritual adulthood, for he taught us how. I am privileged to have begun my journey into physical adulthood in 1994, at the beginning of the democratic South Africa, but now I am able to begin my journey into spiritual adulthood with all people who share and believe in the values and legacy of Nelson Mandela. We are further honoured to have benefitted from him breaking the rules of his own tradition of eldership, because generally the teachings of an African Elder are never written; they are passed from generation to generation through oral tradition. However, as his Xhosa name *Rolihlahla* suggests (breaking the branch), he broke away from what man would want him to become (a Chief just like his father), to become what the Creator would have him be, a father of the Nation and to inspire the world.

Ancient teachings of many of our indigenous cultures have alluded to South Africa being the solar plexus of the world. It is here where the world would get to learn and understand our greatest fears and how to overcome them, to grasp the spiritual truth of honouring ourselves and speaking our truth. It is Marianne Williamson, also repeated by Nelson Mandela, who said that it is not our inadequacy that is our greatest fear but that we are powerful beyond measure. It is through our leadership, trials and tribulations that we would learn how to awaken the warrior, the embodiment of the divine masculine. These qualities of the divine masculine—courage, assertion, focused will, strength, perseverance—are seeded in each one of us. It takes one great man to show us that that level of greatness exists in each one of us.

At the Rivonia trial in 1964, Mandela said that he must immediately deal with the violence, admitting that South Africa belongs to all people who live in it—not one group, whether black or white. This displayed that he was way on his path to uniting, reconciling and displaying that our skin colour, backgrounds, religion and so forth are only illusions that deter us from recognising and embracing our greatness. To remove those barriers would be what would set us all free. To truly set ourselves free, though, is a journey of seeing ourselves as the collective and part of a group, then empowering our true sense of self before taking charge of our external environment to accommodate the power of our spirit. The power of each person's spirit is truly great. Let us reclaim our greatness.

Nelson Mandela's message and gift to the world went beyond freedom for South Africa. His life provided teachings for modern-day living. What is it that we have learnt from his journey to spiritual adulthood and then becoming the sage when he departed the world?

His revolution led him to break away from the structure of Chieftainship, for he believed he was destined for something bigger and needed to find his voice. All of that was opposite to the expression of his truth. The human spirit needed to be challenged, and so he challenged it. Here we learn that we often allow people and circumstances to define our destiny. It is only the Creator who knows our true potential. Had Mandela given in to what man had lined up for him, the world would have been truly robbed of his gifts. What gifts are we robbing the world of because we don't fully express who we are?

In his involution, he fled his home from an arranged marriage, because he knew that that arrangement would not serve his needs or the journey of his soul. The lesson we learn is that marriage is first and foremost a bond with oneself, an internal union of self and soul. He loved

passionately and deeply expressed the intensity of his love, not only in relationships but in his ability to forgive and care, to be compassionate and generous.

His strong expression of self, which we called the “Madiba Magic,” saw the world embrace a president with ethnic shirts, a rhythmic step when he took the stage, and reconciliation through sport. We all have our unique magic. How do we bring this into our daily lives, that people may know who we truly are?

In his evolution, he maintained his principles without compromising the energy of his spirit. In his own words he said, “One of the things I learned when I was negotiating was that until I changed myself, I could not change others.” This was his journey into spiritual adulthood.

After serving just one term, he knew that he needed to progress to his role as Sage and to commit the remaining years to inspiring the world further, for he knew the role was no longer about liberating the South African people but about setting the human spirit free. For as long as we are still filled with bitterness, none of us are free. We are forever grateful for the teachings, for it is in his life that we have truly understood that the Christ light is incarnate in each one of us. All we have to do is allow our light to shine.

*Our daily deeds must produce a reality that will reinforce humanity’s belief in justice, strengthen its confidence in the nobility of the human soul and sustain all our hopes for a glorious life for all. —Nelson Mandela*

*—Iris Canham-Gezane (Johannesburg, South Africa)*

*His Day Is Done*  
*(A Tribute Poem for Nelson Mandela)*

*His day is done.*

*Is done.*

*The news came on the wings of a wind, reluctant to carry its burden.*

*Nelson Mandela’s day is done.*

*The news, expected and still unwelcome, reached us in the United States, and suddenly our world became somber.*

*Our skies were leadened.*

*His day is done.*

*We see you, South African people standing speechless at the slamming of that final door through which no traveler returns.*

*Our spirits reach out to you Bantu, Zulu, Xhosa, Boer.*

*We think of you and your son of Africa, your father, your one more wonder of the world.*

*We send our souls to you as you reflect upon your David armed with a mere stone, facing down the mighty Goliath.*

*Your man of strength, Gideon, emerging triumphant.*

*Although born into the brutal embrace of Apartheid, scarred by the savage atmosphere of racism, unjustly imprisoned in the bloody maws of South African dungeons.*

*Would the man survive? Could the man survive?*

*His answer strengthened men and women around the world.*

*In the Alamo, in San Antonio, Texas, on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, in Chicago's Loop, in New Orleans Mardi Gras, in New York City's Times Square, we watched as the hope of Africa sprang through the prison's doors.*

*His stupendous heart intact, his gargantuan will hale and hearty.*

*He had not been crippled by brutes, nor was his passion for the rights of human beings diminished by twenty-seven years of imprisonment.*

*Even here in America, we felt the cool, refreshing breeze of freedom.*

*When Nelson Mandela took the seat of Presidency in his country where formerly he was not even allowed to vote we were enlarged by tears of pride, as we saw Nelson Mandela's former prison guards invited, courteously, by him to watch from the front rows his inauguration.*

*We saw him accept the world's award in Norway with the grace and gratitude of the Solon in Ancient Roman Courts, and the confidence of African Chiefs from ancient royal stools.*

*No sun outlasts its sunset, but it will rise again and bring the dawn.*

*Yes, Mandela's day is done, yet we, his inheritors, will open the gates wider for reconciliation, and we will respond generously to the cries of Blacks and Whites, Asians, Hispanics, the poor who live piteously on the floor of our planet.*

*He has offered us understanding.*

*We will not withhold forgiveness even from those who do not ask.*

*Nelson Mandela's day is done, we confess it in tearful voices, yet we lift our own to say thank you.*

*Thank you our Gideon, thank you our David, our great courageous man.*

*We will not forget you, we will not dishonor you, we will remember and be glad that you lived among us, that you taught us, and that you loved us all.*

— *Maya Angelou*

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