

USV: Tribute to a Legend

The always present richness in a human life is to serve others without expecting something in return. We do this to ease their pain and suffering. Benefactors consider these benefactions their highest duty. Money, silver, gold, diamonds and all other unnecessary material things are considered unimportant to these benefactors. They assume that all material things come from the earth and will perish into the earth again. Only the soul, that takes with it both the good and the bad, remains forever. That is why one should only do good so that the soul does not have to take with it the bad. Rama, Krishna, Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed and many others had to bear many problems, pain and suffering to serve their fellow man. By enduring so much misery they have shown their fellow man various ways that all the people in this world could follow to be peaceful and happy (Mahatma Gandhi).

Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King were powerful world leaders. Their strongest weapon was love and compassion by which they could get through to the hearts and souls of people worldwide. Their goal was peace, solidarity, unity and harmony for mankind in all sincerity.

Nelson Mandela devoted his life to the fight against apartheid, a system of oppression of the African people. He fought against white domination and against black domination. His ideal was a democratic and free society in which all people could live in harmony and with equal opportunities for all. As master strategist, he always chose the means that served this objective best.

During 27 years of solitary confinement on Robben Island, the Alcatraz of South Africa, everything was taken from him and the only thing he saw were the sea and the sky. However, despite the many years of torture, they could not extinguish the flame of justice that had awoken in him. After all, a flame awoken in a person and guided by the capacity of compassion is an "elevated" soul that knows no bounds, not even the walls of a prison.

Because of the power of compassion (care and commitment towards others) he developed a formidable inner strength that enabled him to make his own fears and problems secondary to the higher goal in which his tranquility of mind rests.

To reach this higher goal, namely the fight against the system of apartheid, no compromises are possible. This was also evident from his tenacity during negotiations. He chose to rather remain in prison longer in order to reach this higher goal.

During his detention on Robben Island, he realized that armed resistance was not the right way to reach this higher goal but the principle of non-violent resistance.

He made wise life lessons (from, among others, Buddhism and Christianity) his own where it is stated that hate and revenge are utterly negative emotions, that the person harboring these feelings experiences more damage than the person to whom these feelings are directed. Animosity could eventually only be overcome by positivity. Mandela and Gandhi were two of a handful of political leaders who practiced these ideas consistently.

Nelson Mandela devoted his life to peace and reconciliation and may be considered the **“Mahatma”** (great soul) of the this century, a **Benefactor!**

The Union of Surinamese Women offers its condolences to the people of South Africa on this great loss and expresses its gratitude to the “Mahatma” of South Africa for his legacy to the world, namely his efforts to promote human value. It hopes that everyone and, more in particular, the world leaders, will cherish the legacy of Nelson Mandela and will guard and keep the world peace as homage to this legendary personality.

Union of Surinamese Women (USV)

Asha Mungra (Chair)