

BBC RADIO ULSTER

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Friday 6th December 2013

"He is now resting,"

"He is now at peace."

"Our nation has lost his greatest son"

"Our people have lost their father."

The words of South African President Jacob Zuma have resonated across the world overnight.

And in the global reaction to the passing of Nelson Mandela there is a sense that he belonged to all of us.

Kofi Annan says the world has lost "a clear moral compass".

This morning as the world mourns the passing of Nelson Mandela reflect on the wisdom of the words of the great man himself. He said:

"There is no passion to be found playing small—in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living."

Nelson Mandela did not play small. He began life as a cattle boy in a tiny village in South Africa and went on to become an anti apartheid icon and the first black president of South Africa.

Throughout history the biggest avalanches of positive change like the end of apartheid have been triggered by ordinary people who became extraordinary, through acts of courage, integrity and compassion.

Nelson Mandela's leadership not only ensured a peaceful transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa, but in his capacity to move beyond bitterness and to truly forgive his enemies he became a symbol of hope and reconciliation to the world. He transcended national boundaries and remarkably his stature as a world leader grew after he retired from political power.

So listen to the words of Nelson Mandela this morning. He said:

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us."

He said: 'Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine as children do. It's not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own lights shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

So on this day amidst the sadness, as we remember, let's act on the words of Nelson Mandela. Your playing small does not serve the world. So let's do what we can, where we are, to start to change the world for the better one small step at a time.