



**AUSTRALIAN TAMIL
MANAGEMENT SERVICE**

To: The Hon Philip Ruddock

Tamil Tigers & Nelson Mandela

I am more and more in awe of the picture I see through my own Truth – a picture without frills. Yesterday, I participated in the meeting organized by the Consortium of Tamil Associations NSW, followed by another by Sri Lanka Reconciliation Forum Sydney of which I am a direct member. To me it was no coincidence that the two happened on the same day. They were both confirmations of my contribution to the war against racism and at the same time opportunities to merge with minds – at ownership level.

The Consortium of Tamils Associations NSW facilitated a question and answer session with the Hon Philip Ruddock as well as with Dr. Graham Thom – Refugee Coordinator, Amnesty International Australia. The facilitator was Miss Lakshmi Logathanan who was introduced as follows:

[Lakshmi Logathanan is a second year B International Studies/Law student at the University of Western Sydney and is an up and coming voice on social and political issues. A recipient of the 2013 Vice Chancellor's Leadership scholarship, Lakshmi was recently named the inaugural 2014 young woman of the year for her initiative - 'The Laptop project' which assists under privileged students gain access to education and IT resources. In the future, Lakshmi hopes to combine her passions for legal justice and community work to develop projects that promote equal opportunity to all sections of society]

My University of New South Wales colleague Ms Gwen Harrigan stated that Lakshmi was also good looking in addition to all of the above. As a migrant parent – I connected to the parental Energy that has supported Miss Lakshmi Logathanan to achieve this high standard. I have observed the less visible roles through which Mr. Logathanan with his family supported the Australian Tamil community over many years. To my mind, a big part of the self-confidence demonstrated by his daughter is from her father who was/is a facilitator within the Tamil Community.

The serious damage to this parent to child lineage structure was discussed at the second meeting yesterday of the Sri Lanka Reconciliation Forum, Sydney, which included Justice Michael Finnane who shared with us his insight into the effects of war on soldiers and victims. The common observation shared by members of the Forum was that when children who came early directly into public life – including to join the rebels - tended to develop the mentality that their parents had let them down. To my mind therefore, when young ones such as Miss Lakshmi Logathanan connect to the minds of these young ones in Sri Lanka who continue to suffer from the effects of the war - that damage is naturally repaired. This is

achieved through the truly selfless part of our work and sacrifices. As I said to a fellow participant, the contribution from a participant in a group of one whose mind is filled with common interest is far more valuable than the contribution by a hundred individual participants driven by selfish reasons. The former is policy maker and the latter is vote-seeker. Those who are driven by numbers are of the latter group.

The test as Gwen pointed out is whether we value the contribution made by others in that group not only directly to the body of the group but towards the core purpose which is represented by many groups and individuals and not solely by one. When each participant values the work and sacrifice of the other as if s/he had done the work/made the sacrifice, the meeting is self-regulated. Service Energy is high in such sharing. We heal each other. Hardly any immediate visible outcomes are produced through such sharing. The Energy would naturally empower juniors over a long period. As a community elder I blessed Lakshmi from the bottom of my heart – for her humble attitude towards her parents and community elders.

I appreciated also Mr. Ruddock who not only participates actively in Community discussions but also upholds his government's policies. As an individual independent of Government structure Mr. Ruddock highlighted that Amnesty International did not support Mr. Nelson Mandela because Mr. Mandela did not renounce violence. As per his official position, Mr. Ruddock stated that he did reject terrorism – especially when questioned in relation to the stand taken by Prime Minister Tony Abbott in support of the Sri Lankan Government, resulting in Australia not co-sponsoring the UNHRC Resolution.

When I thought about it later – I felt it would have been a tough call for Mr. Ruddock. If violence/terrorism is rejected then it must be rejected irrespective of whether it was by the citizen or the government - LTTE or the Government of Sri Lanka. One who actively rejected violence/terrorism – had the duty to actively participate in the UNHRC Resolution given that it was about war crimes. Otherwise come what may - one must not expressly reject violence / terrorism but remain an observer. To my mind, subconsciously Mr. Ruddock grouped the Tamil Tigers with Mr. Mandela – especially the Tamil Tiger supporters known to Mr. Ruddock. Expressly he brought this out around the same time at the same place. A high level observer would have recognized this common grouping which happened when Mr. Ruddock was close to the line of separation between his membership with Amnesty International on the one hand and Australian Government on the other. In our awareness that we are part of global community – we conclude that when supporters of the Tamil Tigers were/are being punished – so was/is Mr. Mandela's contribution.

Gajalakshmi Paramasivam 02 June 2014