

## Our system is broken

For half a century, and without interruption, the ruling Botswana Democratic has won elections at the polling booth. They were able to fashion themselves as champions of democratic practice, unity of cause and tolerance of political dissent. This was the ruling party that cultivated an image as the prefect of pragmatic and prudent economic management, especially when juxtaposed with the majority of African countries.

That was then, this is now. The jewel that sparkled before an admiring international community is fading into a dull pebble. Even back then, below the surface, simmered a host of challenges: the majority of citizens still lived below the poverty datum line, regardless of how it was measured. Credit to the then Government, this problem was always acknowledged.

Those who progressed, very few of them, left the rest of the people inordinately behind, starving the country's children from that great sense of belief: that even they, whoever they were, could achieve the greatest heights and feats – that they could become great farmers or international bankers, that they could build computers or design bridges; that they could find cures for terminally ill or become great doctors; that they could become millionaires or billionaires if they applied themselves and worked honestly. Blame no one for this, we were always going to work together as a country to brew and foment this great sense of belief.

In 2008, and this is just one of several similar incidents, a young man, Mr Kalafatis, lost his life in the hands of a military squad, spraying on him about one and half dozen life bullets. He was unarmed, and put up no resistance to the ensuing soldiers.

It has been more than four years since that event, but not a single leader from our Government enclave has come forward and provided a specific and comprehensive explanation on what happened, that fateful night. It may well be that the lecture is still being crafted, on whether this act was necessary to safeguard the country's interest or whether this action marked a lapse in our system of Governance. For four years many have waited in the lecture room for the delivery of this anticipated lecture. We will not disperse until the lecture is delivered.

Botswana is fortunate that its senior enlisted military men are generally professional in their work. That is why they too are as puzzled as the public is, about what happened in 2008. When generals – professional generals – are not able to account for their own men, or do not know who ordered or who orders their men to such tragic outcomes, then it is certain that there is something wrong with the way our country is being governed. Something in our system is broken.

Some of the most talented men and women in our country work in the civil service – hardworking, dedicated family men and women who sacrifice themselves everyday to build a future for their families and their country. They confide that no matter how hard they work, or how potent the ideas they generate for us, some order from an invisible hand high up in the echelons of the Government enclave will stifle their ideas, or their excellence, if these come in conflict with what has already been decided by a handful of elites in the Office of the President.

They fear that if they do not toe the line, or profess great loyalty to the ruling elite, their careers will stagnate or perish. Their guess is that the next supervisor or superior in their department, will likely own a camouflage uniform and shiny boots, or possess a surname that rings a bell, or that person will enjoy close links with the political elite.

Our system shuns merit and excellence, in Government and in the private sector. If we continue blocking, frustrating, demonizing, alienating, marginalizing our best human resources, we are sinking our nation. But this is exactly what our current governance system is achieving. Something in our system is surely broken.

Something is broken in our system, and the mending will not happen on its own while we sit at home, hoping that a miracle will descend from the skies. Children of this country need to step forward, come together, and say, “No, this is not right. We will not be a part of a system like this. We owe ourselves and our children a foundation for a fairer, functioning and just system.” We are the miracle that so many, living today and tomorrow, are hoping for.

And this is what the children of our Movement have done; they have stepped forward and bellowed, from within, a longing for a fairer system that can lift our country higher. They believe we can do better, much better as a country and as a people. We can begin to build a more responsible government, whose actions are premised on fairness and justice. This is the thread that weaves through the BMD, the BNF and the BPP – it is the realization that our system is broken – we need to repair it – we need to chart a fair path for prosperity for all the people of Botswana.

The consequences of allowing our system to continue falling apart are tremendous. Every great nation derives the power to succeed from harnessing its human talents and creating an environment for them to generate ideas or pursue those dreams.

In the Botswana of today, it does not matter how pristine the caliber of our economists at the Ministry of Finance, many of them hardworking, our system stifles them, and does not bring to bear their talents and zest to “visioneer” the economic future of our country. In fact our economic management system is on “auto-pilot”. We confront new challenges using tools of the past; we allow unresolved problems of the past to accumulate unabated, we ignore possible solutions, because “there are not enough funds in the public kitty”.

Yes, for some things, we probably do just enough economic management to get by: balancing the budgets, giving the central bank some space to contain inflation, managing an exchange rate regime that is compatible with sustainable current account balances, meeting government salary obligations, keeping parastatals on survival mode, planning and implementing a few roads, schools, dams and power station projects; and running a few credit and agricultural schemes.

This will not create wealth for our country, or vigorously bring the majority of our people into the economic mainstream or significantly diversify our productive base or lift the poor majority to a higher standard of living or create indigenous multi-nationals or create an environment for invention or entrepreneurs. There is a missing ingredient in how we manage our economy. In fact our economic management system is broken.

And sure, the little girl in Habu, Nxaunxau, Xanagas, Maporotla, Kareng, and Matseara will probably end up with a primary or secondary school certificate alright, or, although rarely, even a diploma or degree.

But chances are that she will not grow to run a multi-national or establish her own plumbing, carpentry, electrical or computer shop. She will probably not become a cattle baron or an adventurous farmer of sunflower, beans or cotton. She will probably not manufacture food or medicines, nor will she manage a factory floor.

She will probably not be known as a landlord or hotel magnate even as her country is known for its ravishingly beautiful scenery, and vast swathes of land. She will probably not work as a scientist or a law firm partner. She almost certainly will not mine the mineral wealth of her country, the diamond, the gold, the nickel, the uranium, the salt, and the precious stones of the savanna nor will she harvest the flowers of the Kalahari.

Her parents and brothers will probably receive some pocket money from her on Christmas someday, to buy some flour in time for the year-end festivities. On a mighty good day, she might just send enough for cigarettes and a crate of local beer or just enough to buy a door-frame for an ailing door. She might just save a little on blankets in the winter – our system is quite good with the distribution of free blankets.

(Part 2 will explain where we are, how its been working with others, and our plans to repair our broken system)

Ndaba Gaolathe, BMD

The conscientious good voter:

..we often look for the exemplar leader, the true people's representative. this, it is true, should be the minimum standard. rarely though do we turn the tables and seek the exemplar voter, the conscientious voter who is selfless and whose highest conviction is to change the fortunes of his kindred. neither does this voter seek to please. i spent some time with one s...uch citizen this weekend. his name is mr buki - i was moved by him and by his words. wherever you are mr buki, i salute you:

Rre Molwantwa:

Aa, ke wena Rre Gaolathe. Kana maloba ne ke nale ba lekoko la gago, ke ikwadisitse ebile ke emetse karata yame. Ke ne ke ba botsa maloba gore ene Rre Gaolathe o kae, ba nthaya ba re, ke ene yo o ne o nale ene maloba. Ka re la reng banna, ke nale ene kae?..ba re maloba ne le ntse mmogo, ene wa digalase. Banna le raya ene wa digalassenyana, ene yo ne re ja dikgang ka gore bonnake le bone ba kwadisiwe mo sekoleng. Ao gone mole, ke ba botsa..?

Skeki:

E rra, ke nna wa maloba. Go raya gore o ntebetse, nna mme ha ke a go lebala. A o ne wa kwadisa bana jaaka re dumalane?

(..he shakes my hand in high spirits.)

Buki, a wena o ikwadisitse maloba. Buki, wa itse gore re dumalane gore o ye go tlhopha se se mo pelong ya gago, go aga lehatshe la gago, le ba lelapa la gago..ope a seka a go pateletsa go ntlhopha..

Rre Buki

(..Buki looks to the ground, and looks a little embarrassed)

Nnyaa banna, ke eng le ntsha dikgang tse ha le bona Ndaba. Nnyaa banna..

Rre Molwantwa

No monna Buki, mmolele gore mathata a ha kae. Ke eng o sa mo mmolelele gore o latlhile omang...

(Mr Buki interrupts him, and he is not amused)

Rre Buki:

..Nnyaa banna, o ko le inketle. Le raya jang. Ndaba ha a kake a kgona. Ke ntse ke le bona le kopa dilo mo go ene. Yo mongwe o kopa sele. Re kahe mo teng? Re hantred thauzene, le raya gore a reng jaanong? Nyaaya banna, nna ha nkake ka dira dilo tseo. Nna ha ke batle madi mo go Ndaba. Nna ke batla a ye go re ntsha mo mathateng kwa, wa itse gore ke bua ka ga eng. Golo ha monna ha re mo matshamekwaneng...

4. October 24

le seka la helela ba bangwe pelo:

..re lebogela botlhe ba ba ikwaditsitseng, le ba ba tswelletseng ka go dira jalo. ka bonya ka bonya, batho ba a lemoga gore tiro e ga se ya ga ope ha ese ya bone. phefo ya tsholohelo e ya hoka, e mo go yone bana ba lehatshe ba lemogang gore ke bone ba ba tshwereng dinotlele tsa bokamoso jwa lehatshe eseng mapolotiki. batho ke bone ba tshwereng thupa tsa go kgwath...isa mapolotiki. batho

ke bone ba ba tshwereng dilekere tsa go supa gore ke mang yo o tlhwaahetseng. bangwe baa ngongorega ba re "go thusang, batho bao ba tswana hela". ha gona lesaka le eleng la mekodia gotlhe, ke e tsamaile meraka yotlhe. nako le nako, ha o tsaya nako go lebelela ka bopelotelele, o tshokana matlho a gago a kopana le moroba wa mogatla o gogobang le lehatshe, oo kgabisang naga e go tweng e swabile. o utlwa o thanya mo moweng, gore bokamoso ke jo bo namagadi. ha ele gore nna, ndaba gaolathe, ke nna sebedu mo leetong la lehatshe la rona, ikwadiseng gore le tlhophe one moroba o, oo botoka go nale nna. nna ha ke belaele, gore tiro ya lona le tla e tshwara ka matsetseleko. le seka la helela ba bangwe pelo, tshwaragang lotlhe le dire tiro. ebile le go kgorotlha ke robotse ke belaela ha ke kgorotlha.

5. ..had a good time at the traffic-lights this morning:

..friends, i thought i should intimate that i was delighted to greet and talk to commuters at the traffic lights this morning, just after 6 am this morning until about 745 am. i met and saw some old friends from lesedi primary school and from church, many of whom i had not seen in many years. looking at their kids in the back-seats, i thought... their descendants looked just the way i remember their moms at lesedi. it was such a delight to see men and women i didnt know and have never met but who shared with me what is possible in our country, and quoting to me things they say they had heard me say. there were trucks, full of workers, and many of them said to me, jokingly, "ga o kake wa re ha madume hela, diswits di kae", but they are determined and they asked me not to tire, for "we will make it". some drove in luxurious cars, on their handsets, but even they were kind enough to open their windows, and exchanged greetings. may addressed me as "comrade" and from their smiles, i know there is a wind

brewing; there is a wind that is to blow and it will sweep through quietly through every homestead. and alas, do you remember the "matlhoaphage" fellow who interviewed me - what a good fellow ( i think his car needs a bit of service, but please dont tell him).

i have to thank many of the foot-soldiers who joined me, and who spread across the stops in the constituency (bonnington south). almost none of these foot-soldiers are on face-book by the way; very few face-bookers have the kind of inclination to wake up at 5.30 am and do this kind of thing (don't get me wrong, i appreciate your goodwill and i know many of you are far away). i mention this to you, also to remind you, and to administer the hard medicine that we are far from making it if we are not prepared to toil. we must forget about a new Botswana if we are not prepared to step forward in a courageous and inconveniencing fashion.

tomorrow, i am on again, with the foot soldiers. we are indebted to these young dedicated citizens. whether you come or not, we are on.."ha e duma, e ya tsamaya..". aluta

regards,

ndaba, nkosinathi, skeku Gaolathe

6. More posts from October 3 to 4

7.

Ndaba Gaolathe

October 4

Thamane Modie: a special young man who has done us proud

Years ago when I was a student, at all levels of my life, I often travelled to Changate, near the Zimbabwean border, and past Tutume. We quite relished passing through the Modie family (I still do), an enclave of a large constellation of relatives whose head, Moraka Modie, the great patriarch lived. Moraka Modie groomed his children, neph...ews, nieces and children with an unusual hand of discipline and love, little wonder that most of them, my cousins, have turned out the way they have, and most of them graduating in science degrees. There are many of them, but today it is thamane modie that I wish to thrust forth as someone who deserves mention, for his versatile intellect and self application.

Thamane grew up tending goats and, to some extent, cattle. On many occasions we lunched on the same plate, him, I, maphuthela (our other late cousin) and gara (now a teacher). I was difficult to keep up with the speed with thamane's handling of the zengwe, inspired by his undoubtedly healthy appetite. While I appreciated his sense of consideration as he would occasionally govern himself, to allow us to catch up. The meals were always sumptuous, and chef almost always misha, without whose humility we would not have looked as "fresh" as we did. our forays into the bush, as on one occasion when we were summoned to capture and slaughter an ox are legend (will tell you about this one day)

While attending school and tutume primary, then denjembuya CJSS and Tutume McConnel college, Thamane always exhibited flashes of brilliance, as did his many other siblings. He asked piercing

question about my world, about concepts, and often challenged widely held assumptions about the world political system. His friendship with gudo (now a lawyer), was legendary.

Thamane's studied physics and mathematics for his first degree. His recent achievement, which now is the subject of our admiration, is that of a master's science degree specializing in ionization and energy physics. In the united states, this should have qualified him to join the famed national space agency (NASA) or SANSA the South African equivalent. The world before him is infinite, he could become anything anywhere in any field, in any country.

Please, friends, join me in celebrating the high and worthy achievements of thamane modie. He deserves our encouragement and admiration. When he rises into the skies, he does so, in order that all of us may rise with him. He is also one of those responsible citizens who has stepped forward to assist in teaching my classes, free of charge. Thank you Mr Thamane for the person you are – your work ethic and sense of simplicity despite your many talents should be a source of inspiration for all our young. God bless you. skeki

1. September 5

My birthday gift to my friends: I have swallowed it all, and kept moving

I have heard, seen and heard about music stars of the old, and how they set the concert alight,

On the stage, the guitarist tunes his wires, and the soloist clears her throat,

Someone knocks on the microphones, "testing, testing",

Then the drums beat, the crowds roar and then we know the night won't be same,

But alas, there ...is no such concert today,

And I will spare you the "tunings"

For there is no such star or concert on stage

Only an African boy with a tale that must be shared

It is no great tale or lofty story

It is about our tears and joys,

We must learn to drink from same calabash,

For my tale is also your story,

And your story is my song as well

I have lived a full life, I have lived a beautiful life, loved by love,

And importantly I have lived through it, and swallowed all that came my way

I must have begrudged one or two people in my life, I think,

Not for what they did to me, but for how they violated those who were dear to me  
Even then this was for a moment or two, and it is fair to say  
I don't recall the people or the time  
Even when I did recall who they were, I am certain I did put in a good word for them in prayer  
Sure I can safely say I have been privileged to have the family I have had  
A father and mother of biblical significance  
Where else could I have learnt what they taught,  
Through lecture and by the life they led  
Their love illuminating and inspiring  
Their life lived not for themselves but for us and their people  
My sisters and brother were good at causing a storm when they had to  
But all too compensated for, by the way they spoilt and pampered me when they decided to,  
Offering me a happy childhood that many will never have  
I cherished it all, and loved it all  
One Sunday morning at the Methodist church and you don't have to tell my brother this  
I sat next to him while he joked with a few friends  
Our mother, not so slim then, and with a brisk walk  
And this was in the middle of a fiery sermon, Rev Mophuting I recall, in Sotho prose  
It all faded in my brother's tears at the lioness' pinching  
I was humiliated for him, and aggrieved for him  
And even though I did not say sorry, I was immensely sorry for what I thought was an act of injustice at  
an inappropriate time  
My father was not in then, and I left to engage him as soon as we were all home  
What happened to the idea of justice I asked, what happened to patience and tolerance I asked some  
more  
Of course this I did in confidence, the lioness was no pushover, and I think this was understood  
His answers, as always were: neutral, fair, thoughtful and everyone comes out happy  
And in that humiliation, we enjoyed it all, and swallowed it all

Few people know I walked to school everyday, with a shapely, conscientious girl

The colour of her skin like the pearls of the Mediterranean

And a heart that brought out a knowing glow through her eyes, ever smiling with an air about her like the purest milk of human kindness

Never said much to each other on the way, one minute sweets from my pocket to her hand

And the next a lollipop, for me, from her pocket, sweet red lipstick for my lips and tongue

That lasted until third grade, Lesedi Primary School, when a speeding car brought her end

Never attended her funeral, I was too young apparently

Never mentioned her name ever since, Tlotlo Mophuting,

What a lady

And not a day has passed by when I haven't been inspired by the person she was

I have had to swallow it all, and live through it all

Growing up, I must admit, I have always thought I would get a few things achieved

But I never thought Presidents, kings, chiefs, beauty queens (oh yes), men and women of immense wealth and prestige across the world would call for me or call upon me in the way they have done and continue to do

Much less did I, in my wildest dreams, imagine that a wonderful political movement of mass appeal would call upon me to serve it in a position so high I cannot mention it

Importantly for me, and even those who think little of me will bear witness

I have never begged from these men and women for any favour, money or position for myself even when I thought they would gladly have given them

I have never envied to be in their place or to have their possessions. Through it all I cherished only their friendship, their gift of life and the wisdom they spewed.

I have appreciated it all, and lived through it all

There are habits and things I have refused to indulge in

There is no need to say what they are

I have never said this makes me righteous or more morally upright

But I have carried through the courage of my convictions

When reason and emotional sight failed me, faith and conviction carried me

There are times when to have nothing is to have everything, and to have everything is to have nothing

So for me, to lose out on some things has given me everything

I have gained a conscience that is clear and A heart that is at peace with itself

What use is a man or woman who does not live by his or her convictions

And this I lived through it, I walked through it all

.

On school holidays my brother and I were often “dumped” at the cattle-post for the period

Daukome cattle-posts, near jubee-tjwii-paa and gum gum

Sometimes they left us at Changate, our home village, by the Zimbabwean border

Changate the land of monga, potje (special honies), mogwaga, masonja and moroja

A land where the Nshashangana, NkombaNkomba and Mphaphane trees grow on the hills

At the cattlepost we feasted on wild-berries and tracked missing cattle during the day

“White”, the donkey was calm, tamed but slow

Then there was “black-force”, he was fast, but incredibly stubborn and mischievous.

We rode on them when they cooperated

At night we feasted on milk, pap and stories of the oldies

My brother always thought the stories were grossly embellished

But I think I understood enough to decide which parts were excess

But it was at dusk we had the most fun,

Climbing Mahata trees to watch the golden sunset, and to listen to the birds

Not many have seen the savannah hawks, the superb starlings, the weaver birds, sparrows and the gouldian

All in one outing

And we watched it all, and sung through it all

I had other duties

For a few years I cared for a blind uncle – walked him to the bathroom, garden and shops

On a good day I played him records on the gramophone

I listened to him sing to frank Sinatra’s “I did it my way”, and little did I know that many years on, I would sing a similar song to all of you on this day

Uncle had been a teacher, and like my mother, was brought up in the apartheid era of South Africa

The stories he told and the wisdom he spewed were breath-taking

The stories about, and, his love for his long lost children were paralyzing

And when the end finally came for him, I could not watch the casket carry him deep into the earth

But I swallowed it all, and put my right foot, and then my left foot forward.

I wish I could say I survived the years by my own powers, strength and wisdom

The truth is no one knows how I escaped the claws of death through the years while its shadows lurked

My feet might be nifty, but not too nifty to escape a wounded and charging buffalo in a delta –  
somehow I escaped it all

Many times I have dwelled with poisonous snakes in a hut

But none found occasion to take offence at my presence

My brother, sisters and I stole away time to swim in storming rivers infested with predators

But we swam our way to happiness

I have lived my entire life on the “A1” road to the north of our country and cannot count the number of  
dead bodies I have seen on the way

And the people we have had to hurry to hospital

Dressed in a bandana, I have navigated places in Harlem, New York and South East, Washington, at the  
time the murder capital of the world.

Yet I am still standing today, my feet still climb mountains

I survived through it all, and lived through it all

My friends will be horrified to learn that I omitted telling them that I too have had an unpleasant  
experience of a persistent death threat

I considered reporting the matter to the police

But I could not bear the idea of those dear to me knowing about it

But I swallowed it all because I believed my God would protect me

And he would preserve me until I crossed all the bridges he wanted me to

In the end, it came to light that it had all been a mistake and he was sorry that he had threatened to  
take my life

I have had to swallow it all and keep walking through it all

Not many know that I started my uncle duties early at primary school

I fed the baby “purity”, changed her and danced tango with her when she cried

When she fell I went to bed with a blistering wound deep within me, next to my lungs

And when she laughed in the morning I couldn’t contain my joy through the day

The joy of seeing them (my nieces, nephews) and hearing their voices is like the wine I have always denied myself

I cherished it all

I have taught youngsters, big papas and big mamas

Found joy in swimming in their success

And to hear them laugh, sing, and find themselves

And if I should fail to achieve anything that may be dear, then I find great consolation and happiness in knowing that those who are dear to me will achieve that and more

Never attended a great live-concert or passed out time in a night- club,

Call it old-fashioned or tragic,

Here is how I am solving it all

Behind the scenes I am setting up a foundation in my name,

The dream is to scale up the classes to all of Botswana and across Africa

Hoping to bring a mega-star every year to make this possible,

I won’t be just attending the concert, but I will emerge on stage with her (wink, wink)

And from that stage I will tell the world, that my students are coming,

They are coming to make a difference to the world around them

I cannot say I have never been terrified of the thought of my own death

But I have lived through enough seasons, and had one or two epithimy to come to terms with the idea that the end is not always distant

And if I may say so, I am content and believe I have done my best and continue to do my best to an extent that there is no reason to be afraid anymore.

My middle name “Nkosinathi”, it means “God is with us”, and this name is no mistake

I have to confess that I have been inspired by one or perhaps two ladies before

Enough to hope and wish a wedding day could be arranged

But circumstances blew like a hurricane, and even the most seasoned fighter could not win against the seasons

The consolation prize is in knowing she or they are happy where they are

Yes, the years may have piled on, and the experiences at times seem harsh

But my heart and hope remain untainted

Pure love, the untainted love, the perfect love are not just fairy tales

If they are fairy tales, then I too am a fairy tale

Lets wait until the time of the bells and the isle

There we times when I felt imprisoned

And saw no way out despite the desperate prayers and deep thought

And indeed the time came when the way did not come

Only silence can describe what was lost

And even though everything sunk before my eyes

What was gained was just as immeasurable

To know you cannot stand and tell the measure of loss and be understood is the same as to know you cannot stand and tell the measure of what you have had and be understood

I have had to swallow it all, and get on with the times ahead of me.

I have seen a great man come before me and weep like a new-born babe

His words to me "young boy

I have seen you watch a great river dry-up right before your hopeful eyes and I wish for God to be with you"

And I wouldn't have understood what he meant if I hadnt walked with a man who saw his own end,

A man who dictated his obituary to me and asked me to hide it

A man who derived more joy from what he believed was the road ahead of me, than despair about his own end

And if I had not held love before then this was when I did,

A father who cared more for the life of his children than his own

And it explains why when love comes in its purest form, you almost don't want it,

Because it seems to be like a candle

Something must burn in-order for it to give light

To spend a year or two as nurse to a man as rare and as magnificent as my father was is the greatest honour that has ever been bestowed on me

Yes I was a nurse, a fulltime nurse for more than a year.

I have had to swallow it all and keep moving forward.

There are people I have known since my eyes were opened by the heavens

I found them smiling and laughing

They still are to this day

Like the wine I hear about but do not know

Their friendship has blossomed with time

Grown with tragedy and sweetened with supposed scandal

Some of them men, others women

They were there when it mattered most, and even when I did not need them

They have asked nothing of me, nothing, not gifts not money, even when they most needed it and yet they have offered more than gifts

They have prayed for me, and blessed me.

Some of them have lived for me. And I have walked through it all, and swallowed it all.

There were many seasons I spent much of my time on a desk

Night would fall, the moon came out, stars rose and the morning sun rose from the east

And I would still be on my desk

I would forget to take many meals in succession

Examinations were not what kept me on the desk

The questions for me were what use is a student who does not live to feed his curiosity

What use is a servant who does not mount his arsenal with hidden armour that can be used to serve.

Not many I suppose will want to trust what my feet can do

On the dance floor or on the football pitch or on the 100 meter trek

My family was especially pampering nearer every Christmas break

There was no other way to get me to the stage when their friends came

I had a small savings account, and this was a time to make some deposits, if you know what I mean

It's a pity I have to drop the topic

Cant say much about the dancing without being deemed to be blowing my own trumpet

Many are still alive that know about my feet, why should I say more

And we cherished it all, and danced through it all

You don't need the money to go places, well, sometimes you do

Not when I travelled from north to the south of the United States,

You don't want to know where we slept or whether we slept

I have travelled through the Mountains of war-torn countries

And yes, I have been one with the scene of the mighty rivers at Bukavu by the Congo borders and Rwanda borders

I would always receive a thorough parental interview but I had all the answers

You survive well when you give your teachers a taste of their own doctrines

After-all when the family was held at gun-point in apartheid South Africa

It was my parents that always drove us through South Africa even as they knew danger lurked

They told us, my mom's family is ours too and we no choice but to be with them

Our friends are our family too, it doesn't matter whether they come from war-torn Africa

I swallowed it all, and lived through it all

Why should I talk about the suffering I have seen others go through

Or the conditions that I have seen them overcome in their lives

I will let silence reveal it all to you my friends

What sisters I have had, and the brother I have had

I cant, I really cant have hoped for more

Even as one of them (sister) departed prematurely

My nieces are the air I breathe, and so are my nephews

The celebrations of my birthday last year had hardly subsided when my mother was hospitalized at the advice of my doctor-sister

Her campaigning for the movement while on the hospital bed gave all the signs of someone who would heal soon, and so did the doctors say, when they confirmed their intentions to discharge her in a few days time

But on her last night, I had to stop at the door of her room on our way out for the night

I returned to her beside, unable to depart

A handshake and hug for her, just one more time

The morning sun never set for her, despite the clear skies

Silence, and silence alone is appropriate to capture how the world had shattered for this now worn-out heart that resides deep within me

I swallowed it all, and lived through it all

I cant say I have recovered from the departure of my parents and sister, and there is no telling if the storm will ever clear and pave for a clear day

But even if it doesn't, him who is above gives me sight through the storm,

I see my way as clearly as I see the open desert skies

No matter how dark the clouds or how flooding the torrential rains, mine eyes can see the promise-land

And my legs keep taking me there

Did I tell you the air is pregnant with a rumour of my possible run in the 2014 elections,

Let me be the mid-wife of this pregnancy and help conceive a child, a beautiful baby,

The Movement of Mankie and Mma Sokwe, the Movement of MyDays and of Yelloman, the same Movement of Boko and and Motswaledi, the Movement that is the Umbrella has asked that I step forward and be available, perhaps along with others, to serve as a representative in Parliament

should the majority in Gaborone West South, cast into the box, the picture of the Umbrella,

What makes the baby beautiful is not the run by its own,

The beauty is in the idea that men and women have come forward,

Often men and women with nothing to lose, no tenders to fear for or careers to safeguard,

It is them that have pushed my candidacy,

And although this is hard to believe, the most privileged are sitting away quietly, in safe distance, to see what happens of it all, and just so when it all collapses they will have had nothing to do with it,

And this is why I have to run - because people with nothing have put all their eggs in the same basket, their only basket

They desperately crave for a new way of lifting the lives of our people,

This is why I am not afraid,  
Because these people are my heroes,  
And by just standing up for their true convictions, they have won,  
And along in their win they have carried me with  
When some of your friends are way-guards and others are un-employed  
When a billionaire elsewhere in the world counts you among his friends  
When someone cries because you were wrongly accused, not him, not her  
When someone feels unsafe in the safety of their homes because they feel you are unsafe in your travels  
When someone forgets to pray for themselves because they pray for you everyday  
Then why would you ask for more  
For this is everything, this is a full life, this is a life worth living  
Now that I have laid bare my life before you  
You are at liberty to charge me for the crimes I have committed  
I am ready for all the charges, for I have lived it all in good faith  
What use is a man who lives a life and is not willing to face the consequences of his actions.  
I am sorry if the way I have lived has offended anyone  
I know many say I have ignored what they may have said to them  
At times they are unsure if I have really heard what they said to me  
I can assure you I have heard you and my silence is the only medicine  
Tomorrow may not come for me,  
Painful I am certain, for you and i  
But I would be leaving no regrets, but a life lived in full and in love  
And ahead of me, who knows, the heavens are waiting  
It may well be too good to say who I will once more be re-united with  
Help me thank my God, help me thank my family, help me thank my friends  
Help me wish well even those who see nothing worth their while in me  
And help me that you that you live your life in full too and even fuller than my own..

8. Dear Mr Mashaba,

News has reached me that your father failed to resist the ring and draw of the bell yesterday, whose sound only he, and not those around him, heard. He unbuttoned his belt and took off his earthly garment quietly, and departed without announcement, fully understanding that had we known, we would not have allowed his departure. I cannot estimate the quantum of the... cruel pain that you and your family must now endure, and I am quite aware that my words now come when my silence would have been more appropriate. It is my faith that leads me to this breach for whose mercy will come on the day in the near future, when the joy of life and its abundance offers you reprieve from this brutal scotch. The dwelling place to which your father has travelled is the same one that many of our dear ones have since left, and the same one where I hope to encounter them in the most glorious and eternal ceremony. Allow me to share this hope with many of our mutual and new friends who may not have met your father, but who surely will meet him in your selfless and conscientious service to the people of our nation. Them and I sure will look to you, your siblings and many of your like-minds to lead and guide us, in ways your old-man taught, as we seek ways for our people to discover the best in themselves. God be with your, our old-man.

Your brother and friend, Ndaba Gaolathe

9. first day day a primary school:

(this is an extract from my many manuscripts..i really cant finish..unless you allow me to neglect at least one of my other duties (moraka, bmd,umbrella, bnf, bpp, school kids, international assignments, community work). please don't tell my brother and sister what i say of them, neither should you tell my class-mates)..

Mumz woke us up early, as usual. She was a...lways the first to bathe, in the most unholy hours, followed by papa and then by my eldest sisters. Tawana and I are always the last. If he can escape the ritual, Tawana would have been the first to skip the morning bathe. He is exceptionally swift and efficient in the bathroom. He rarely needs more than four minutes to bathe, and no more than ten minutes between waking up and being ready to leave. The morning porridge is compulsory, both the full quantity and the taste. The alternative is a long lecture, with mama as the guest-professor, espousing first, a humanitarian perspective on how many people in the world were suffering, then sounding more like a platoon commander, she quickly informs the violator of the dire consequences which she would implement herself.

Mumz made sure to personally accompany me to the head-teacher's class and then to my classroom. Embarrassing, to be held by the hand, an old man of my advanced age, six years old. Most if not all the kids came on their own; in fact, some even walked themselves from across the street. It didn't help that Mumz makes sure to open up my life story to the headteacher and to everyone that listened-in. The head-teacher, a giant of a lady – graceful, yet intimidating. I had seen her the year before when Mumz tried to enroll me, but classes had been full. The head-teacher had also expressed fear that I had been too young at the time. Tawana and Tendani had also made sure to narrate all about her (the headteacher) to me, underplaying the woman's warmth and overplaying her love for the rod. They almost always omitted the fact that the rod was aimed at wayward renegades.

Ms Molomo was my class-teacher. A be-spectacled mature, patient and welcoming woman. She seemed happy to receive me, and allocated me to sit at a table at the far end of the class. At the table were about two girls and about three fellows. I sat close to Molebatsi, a small-framed light-coloured fellow that seemed timid and somewhat lost. Tall, Phillip was the colour of the moretlwa tree, with a streetwise confidence to him. He was eager to entertain the table on the first day, with his endless stories and mimicking of the latest radio melodies. Gomolemo, also known as "Bedford" carried a heard, with two sharp rounded corners, that many believed sat disproportionately with his body especially his legs. By end of our first break-time, his victims complained of swollen chests or hurting shoulders all on account of his charging head.

Chandapiwa, one of the girls carried herself like a well-groomed and behaved girl, alive to responsibility and duties. Tshogofatso was as shapely and as pleasant as the figure she cut. Her mom was a teacher in the same school. In fact, her mom, I recall, had taught my sister the previous year. It was as if, all the attributes Tendani had ascribed to Mrs Diseko, matched her daughter's. Although I found Tshogofatso's stories captivating, I thought I needed a little distance from her sometimes. I thought it was important to provide an audience to others too, and to accommodate everyone in a manner that everyone felt they were treated fairly. In fact, it bothered me that Molebatsi was the only one that brought a lunch box (most couldn't afford any). I knew most classmates were envious of his situation. Occasionally, I wondered why Mumz couldn't do the same for me. Still, I favoured a less prestigious arrangement, where colleagues shared the same food. Indeed, with my six thebe per day allowance, my buying power afforded me a well-rounded fat-cake, enough for about three people. Phillip's allowance of five thebe was a major boost to our consortium. It was a minor set-back that Phillip's allowance was intermittent, never assured. Phillip and I were of course the core members of the consortium. Molebatsi joined us, whenever he was without his usual lunch-box, but he rarely, if ever, made any financial contribution. My sister thought this a little unfair, and surely expressed it to me. Occasionally she instructed me to sideline anyone who made no genuine effort to make a contribution. It was difficult for me to tell her that it was not that simple. It had occurred to me, that it was not always possible to be treated fairly, although it was always possible to treat others fairly.

Most students, queued at the school kitchen for malutu, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays or dinawa, on Tuesdays and Tuesday. Masego and Gaamangwe (the twins), from the neighbouring standard 1 class were famous for perennially being first at the kitchen queue, with Bedford coming third in line. That is how we recruited Bedford as part of the consortium, to ensure that he brought in the public food, while we bought in a fat-cake and some side spice (available for two thebe). The arrangement worked well...

## 10. Ndaba Gaolathe

July 24

A walk with you across some of the people I meet on the highways, along the church corridors, in Government offices and in the ghettos:

The petrol service attendants (when I pass by the filling station): "hey comrade..comrade..comrade...gompieno le ha ebile go tweng re tsile go kopana le bone..meeting o leng..?"

My response: "ke a leboga comrade, a re lekeng hela rotlhe..tsaya mogala key o.."

Co...mment: indeed they call and roll up their sleeves

At church: "aaaa, hello ndaba. Re a rapela tota, tsatsi le letsatsi, re tlhoka batho ba tshwanang le wena go emela batho ba Modimo, le go fa sekao.."

My response: "ke a leboga thata mma."

Comment: indeed, I know they pray, I do toss and turn, in a good way, in receipt of their prayers

The policemen: "re beile mo go lona rre gaolathe, le seka la tlhobaela, re le eme noken"

Response: "ke a leboga thata rra/mma, le wena Modimo a le tshegetse. Le tsware thata mo tirong, le seka la nyema moko"

Comment: indeed they expedite their service when assisting me, and I appreciate this

Young CEOs in parastatals and private companies (I wouldnt mention them by name): "yes ndaba, how is business?"

My response:"rre teng rra, lona le tsogile jang?" (they are all men)

Comment: yes, you heard me right, nna ke ba botsa matsogo

Ladies who are generally senior by age: "ndaba o nyala leng? Kana jaanong wa itse gore re beile mo go lona, jaana go batla o nyale, dilo tsa gago, di tsamaye sentle"

My response: " kealeboga mma. Dithapelo di sale di simolotse, mm eke nale tsholohelo gore Modimo ha o go ntebala"

Comment: I appreciate the goodwill

My father's acquaintences: "yes monna."

My response: "dumela rra"

Comment: that's it, actually

My father's friends (I think true friends): "young baledzi, how have you been. You don't know how proud we are of you. I wish your father was still alive, he would have been proud. What a loss my son, what a loss.....your father monna....i rare type of man..a rare talent..mme re tla reng, key one tsela ya Modimo"

My response: " e rra....e rra.....e rra....."

Comment: allow me not to comment

My mother's friends: "o kae tendi (my sister)? O kae tawana (my brother)?.nnyaa ngwanaka le eme ka dinao, rona re a itumela tota.."

My Response: "e mma. E mma. E mma"

Comment: allow me not to comment

The army men: “ ke rre gaolathe?...le tshware hela jalo”

My response: “ ke a leboga rra, le lona le seka la nyema moko”

Staunch BDP members in the private sector, law firms: “Howzit.”

My response: “Re teng rra, le kae lona?”

Comment: that is the greeting yes

Bagolo ba BDP – [ no uniformity, ga ke battle go golela bagolo]

BCP members: “hey comrade, le kae, go tsamaya jang. Comrade, we shouldn’t allow rivalry among our people”

Response: “kealeboga comrade, we have to work on this”

Comment: all comrades, we really need to work on this

I will tell you tomorrow what the teachers say, what my brother’s friends say, what they say at the cattle posts, what the journalists say....etc

#### 11. survival at matlho-a-phage

I did not watch matlho-a-phage yesterday as I am away, but I caught wind of a rumour to the effect that I was seen responding to Mr Ramoroka’s probing questions. The rumours may well be true, and thank you to legends of friends (including new friends) who believe I survived the sparring. I also note that others seem unhappy with Mr Ramoroka’s questioning line. I wish... to encourage all of you, on the contrary, to embrace someone of Mr Ramoroka’s approach - we need more people like him, who ask probing questions. That is how our people get to learn more about what we all say we stand for. Actually, I quite liked him, and I found him to be quite fair. I hope we will continue this conversation, this conversation about what is possible and what we can become as a people. Le kamoso ditsala (mme le seka la tshwarwa ke motlakase le palame megala)

#### 12. June 19

A day to celebrate,

He has travelled across the Mediterranean, away from family, on his own expenses and time - foregoing the serenity that this day should have brought for him. He chose to represent his people in Germany this week, once again demonstrating his immense belief in what is possible for our people during our times and after. But it is the story he is bound to tell upon his return that I look forward to. The spice in it, the metaphor and of course the humour is sure to replicate the colour of the life he has led, a life of persistence, tenacity and finding good where it may be difficult to do so. And sure, I have said it before, and my tongue does not go fatigued of it, that I am privileged to be counted among his friends, brothers and comrades. Along with others, together with him, we have walked through it all, with magnificent joy and celebration. To God, whose grace and mercies watch over us, even when we may not be deserving, I transmit through my bosom and spirit, my gratitude for this Serowe-now-turned-

renaissance man, this composer of songs both of the heart and of the future, this leader of the people and of thought, this true friend-to-so-many and this extraordinary human being. Happy birthday Cde. Gomolemo Motswaledi.

Tsala, ebong Ndaba Gaolathe.

N.B. (le seka la lebala ha ele gore le mmakanyetsa moletlo, gore o kgalhegela maungo, maretlwa le ditswa-mmung hela, le iketle ka dinama le matute a a ka hokotsang botho ba gagwe).

13. Sechaba se se kgobokaneg ko Francistown,

Bagolo botlhe, le bakaulengwe botlhe ba ba leng hano, ke bone ele matshwanedi gore ke le kwalele molaetsa o. Tshwanelo mme ene ele gore Mokaulengwe mopalamente Rre Mmolotsi a le lekole gore ga kena go kgona go tla. Mme le a mo itse gore, ha a le mo Francistown, o tlaellwa ke boitumelo jo bogolo, jo ke sa tshepeng gore ha a le mo go bone, o ka nkgopola.

G...akologelwang gore sechaba sa Botswana se beile mo go lona, gore le se golole, le gore le se kaele tsela ya boammaruri, e e tsepameng. Tsela e re mo go yone, key one e siameng, e tla tlisetsang Batswana le ban aba bone bokamoso jo bo duleng diatla. Ke a le kopa, kea le gakolola, ke a le bitsa, ke a le rapela, kea le tobetsa, gore le seka la rumula ba bangwe, kana la tshwenyega ha le rumulwa ke ba bangwe. Mamba wa rona ga se bone, kana motho ope. Mamba wa rona ke lehumale le apereng batho ba lehatshe la rona. Mmaba wa rona ke tshenyo e e jwelellang jaaka kankere mo meamusong ya sechaba. Mmaba wa rona ke gore thuto ya lehatshe la rona ha se e ka re isang kgakala. Mmaba wa rona ke mowa wa go kganela batho ba lehatshe la rona gore ba ka ya golo gongwe ka ditalente tsa bone. Mmaba wa rona ke letshogo le le simolotseng go aga mo dipelong tsa Batswana ha ba akanya go bua mahatlha a bone ka sepe hela se se amang lehatshe la bone. Ke bone bo mmaba rona. Mmaba wa rona ke tsamaiso e e senang maikarebelo le boammaruri ke boeteledipelo jwa goromente ya ga domo-ko-raga. Mme sepe hela se se mo tseleng ya rona ya go tlhagola bommaba ba, le sone re tla se tlhagola, e se ka maikaelelo mme ele ka gore se bokgoreletsi mo go tlhagoleng baba ba rona.

Ka jalo a re itse yeng jaaka batho baba naleng tsholohelo le tshepo ka bokamoso jwa bana ba lehatshe la rona. Ba tla le botsa gore, le solohetsa eng? Karabo ya lona e nne gore re solohetsa go dira ka natla le sechaba go aga thuto e haphegileng e remelelang mo go direng ka diatla. Thuto e ka yone Motswana mongwe le mongwe a tla helelang a nale bokgoni jo bo tseneletseng jwa diatla – go aga, go baakanya didirisiwa tsa motlakase, go itirela le go baakanya dikoloi, go apaa ka botswerere, go tsamaisa dikgwebo ka manontlhotlho, go reka le go rekisetsa baba ko mahatsheng a sele. Thuto e ntseng jaana, ke yone peo ya itsholelo e e kabakanyeng, e golang ka bonako, e e gorogang mo malapeng a otlhe a lehatshe la rona.

Ha ba botsa gape gore le solohetsa eng, le ba bolelele goror re nale tsholohelo ya go dira le sechaba go tlhabolola mo go tseneletseng ka ha itsholelo ya Botswana e agegileng ka teng. Nako e gorogile, gore dikompone dingwe tsa lona, tsa sechaba, di tsamaisiwe ka lenaneo la go di aga gore di ate le mahatshe ka bophara, di hetlhele sechaba dikhumo le ko mahatsheng a sele. Re tlhwaahetse gore re tsenye nako le ditsompelo tsa go thusa dikgwebo tse di emeng ka nosi go tlhabolola dikitso, ditlhare, dithunya, dijo, dino (drinks), dijo, melemo, metsi, ditswa-mmumung le tsotlhe tse di bonwang mo Botswana hela. Re eletsa gore dijo tsa rona le melemo ya rone e itsiwe ke bahumi le bahumanegi ko matsheng a sele. Re tlhwaahetse ditsala gore dithoto le ditiro tsa go rra Goromente di kabakanngwe bogolo le dikomponi tsa

ba ban aba lehatshe le, bogolo jang baba naleng bokgoni, boikarabelo le maikaelelo a go aga dikomponi tsa go sennelaruri.

Ha ba tswelela ba botsa gore le solohetsa eng, le ba rerele gore le ikelela go dira ka natla go aga goromente o tsamaisang dilo ka bonako, ka bonokopila, ka go tsaya Batswana ka dikatekano – Gororomente o gaufi le batho, yo atameditseng ditlamelo ko bathong. Maikaelelo ke go isa dithata le ditsompelo ko batho ba leng teng – dikgaolo-dikgolo di ya go nna le baeteledipele baba tlhopilweng ke lona, bo-Governor le borra/bommaToropo, baba tla kgonang go dira ditiro ka bontsi go sa emelelwa gore b aba ko Gaborone ba reng.

Ha ba ka le botsa dipotso tse dintsi, la tshokana le lebetse dikgang tse, le bue hela gore tsholohetso ya lona ke “tsholohelo le thutho”. Ha ba ka botsa eng gape sa bobedi, le bue gape “thuto le tsholohelo”. Eng gape sa boraro b aka botsa, mme le arabe gape ka bopelotelele, “Thuto le tsholohelo”. Ke yone koma ya rona.

Ga ke itse ka lona, mme nna ke sentse ke dumela gore re tla goroga. Boelang ko Manaka; boelang ko Kgapamadi, boelang ko Donga; boelang ko Area W, boelang ko magaeng a lona le ba bolelele gore dilo tse dintle di mo tseleng ya go apara lehatshe la rona.

Dumedisang Rre Boko, dumedisang Rre Motswaledi, Dumedisang Rre Molapisi, Dumedisang bakaulengwe botlhe, le ba eseng bakaulengwe le ba dumedise, le ba bolelele gore tsotlhe di siame, tsotlhe di siame, sa rona hela ke go letela letsatsi la teng, mme re nne re letile ka boitumelo, boammaruri, tsholohelo.

Kele tsala ya lona,

14. have been invited (on 24 November) by the kgatleng constituency, to commune, over (a fundraising) dinner, with our friends there. The spoiler is that I have also been asked to speak. I remember, as a young boy, attending dinner, on quite an empty stomach, fatigued from our often physically exerting daily routines. I rued the day the microphone had been created, the real culprit that stood before the food and I. The long speeches, I remember, almost always ensued, and I could recite many of them before they were delivered, “indeed it is an honour to have been invited to this auspicious and momentous occasion..”, the speaker would often wax lyrical. How I wish to avoid the repetition of history. No long speeches. We need the food warm. We need to enjoy our meal. I hope those who attend will allow me to ask a few questions though, “education or certification? Wealth in what the hands can mould and character can build or riches in what monetary figures can suggest?...”. I won't take long asking these questions, and then you can be sure I will hurry back to my seat. Seswaa anyone?

That morning, I will also attend a “gig”, can you believe it, in Lobatse, with Lobsec students. They have asked me to share what mine eyes have seen beyond the river of Jordan. I have been practicing a few dance moves.

Same day, I am visiting our Umbrella campaign team 50 km from Lobatse, to see how they are doing. How privileged I am

15. OUR TREASURER-GENERAL RESIGNS, WE ARE STILL THE COMPETENT ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENT

It is true that our movement has lost, over the course of this week, a treasurer general, the honourable MP, Odirile Motlhale. The loss of any leader, member or any foot-soldier is an experience that inflicts wounds within the hearts of our people. It is an event that is also a source of disappointment to all those who have lent their goodwill and hands to the work of our movement, the Botswana Movement for Democracy (and indeed its umbrella partners).

Yet our loss should not be allowed to blind our people of the immense strides that now characterize the work of our members towards providing our country with an alternative government, a government determined to push back the irresponsible habits of the current BDP-led government. The idea of a broad-based government with the requisite personnel and policies to bring out the

best potential in our people is within reach. It takes conviction, character and our combined efforts to lift our country to a higher gear of broad-based economic opportunities and prosperity; de-centralized, effective and fair governance; and greater social harmony.

Taking our country to greater heights requires a change of Government, a change that is preceded by serious preparation around how we do things, how we bring forth the depth of talent within our people, how we work with other community and political formations, how we teach and learn from each other, how we exercise patience and how we focus on the things that matter.

We are aware that the loss of a leader especially on the heels of others who left before him invites criticism, scepticism and cynicism against our efforts. Those who believe we are a mirage without a meaningful stand or that we are operators sponsored by or working for the ruling elite are finding occasion to put on their dancing shoes, to celebrate what they have always hoped is the demise of our marvellous movement. We shouldn't blame them for dancing to a false song, but neither should they (our detractors) imagine that the dance floor is where the future of our people resides.

It is certain that we, those who lead the movement at this moment, are not perfect. We should take responsibility for the circumstances of confusion and chaos that the constant defections are implanting among our people (on all sides of the political divide). The responsibility we should accept though, is not that there are defections at all or that there will be defections or that we should have been able to arrest this tide – no. This is normal, throughout history, in the course of any serious political struggle.

The responsibility we must embrace is that we failed to communicate effectively to our colleagues, our members and the nation that our journey is a perilous one – that it is a journey whose success will entail great losses along its wake, a path that will inflict immense disappointments along the way. There is no way that our movement (and its umbrella partners) can hope to govern an entire nation without experiencing the type of set-backs that we are now facing.

Some of our members find these set-backs disheartening and discouraging. But we should not allow our frustrations to translate into a conveyer-belt of attack against our Former Treasurer-general, Hon Motlhale, for the choices he makes as a leader and citizen. The right to make these decisions, and still be treated fairly based on personal content, is very much part of a system of fairness that we say we wish to inculcate within our nation. We ought to live by this conviction.

Ndaba Gaolathe, BMD.

In fact, although I have rarely interacted on a social basis with Hon Motlhale, I have had occasion in the past to interact with him professionally and in official meetings. I have found him refreshingly balanced, possessing an independent mind free of undue or petty influence. He has not intimated to me his reasons for departure, but we ought to respect his decision, and move on with the work ahead of us. The responsibilities ahead of us are momentous.

We should not lose sight of the responsibility that many citizens have placed on our shoulders. Our lives are not ours anymore - our lives belong to others too. Our people's hopes for their children, their hopes to be granted a chance to prove themselves, their hopes to secure a home, their hopes to further their education, their hopes to realise a business a break-through, their hopes to express

themselves in their languages, their hopes to be the best they can be, and their hopes to be treated fairly, rest with us. This is a responsibility we must see through.

We are fortunate to have the depth of leaders who possess the vision, talent and character; and activists with immeasurable determination and sense of purpose. Despite the criticisms that are being levelled against our party leaders, specifically presidents Boko (of the BNF) and Motswaledi (of the BMD) (and less so president Molapisi of the BPP), I have relished my work with them outside the public glare, which work is just the vaccine that affords me the tranquil nights of sleep every night. We need not worry about, or hurl insults at, the BDP, it will implode on its own. Our assignment is to prepare for this day of implosion, and ensure we are ready when that time comes. This time will come.

We are privileged that our umbrella partners, the BNF and the BPP, their leaders and many of their activities carry with them great faith and love for this nation. Collectively, we must fight to the very end. We must launch our fight in every homestead, in every cattle-post, in every hilltop. We must fight this in every spazza-shop, in every supermarket, in every house, along every road.

We must take the fight along the river-banks of our dry streams, and in the clear channels of the Okavango. We must bring the fight to the Seabelo Express, Motlogelwa Express and AT&T bus liners. We must wield our dreams in the markets, in the schools and in the hospitals. We must keep going. We are the hope of this nation. We must not stop until we take back this country to the people. Ndaba Gaolathe, BMD.

## 16. The remarkable mom

People born the in years up until 1946 are commonly referred to as the veterans.

A generation quite apart from the baby-boomers, that came immediately after, or the generation Y and subsequent generations

Veterans were disciplined, they believed in law and order

Their idea of old-fashioned hard-work, loyalty and principle was firm

Their concept of gender roles, the role of the ...husband and of the wife, was fixed

There can be no doubt that our mother belonged to this great generation of good people

Even in the context of this great generation, she was a towering giant

She was an exceptional woman

Deft, and diligent in domestic chores

Her standards were exacting and punishing for all those who lived with her or those who worked at home

She ironed with precision, cleaned and polished the floors like a factory machine

The windows dusted, laundry washed and meals prepared without fail,

Even with her anhrithic condition,

Bedrooms tidied, clothes folded

Her kists unpacked and packed again, to showcase her wealthy arsenal of linen, curtains, towels, tapperware, enough to furnish a hotel

These things were her pride,

All those who worked for her and failed to meet the standard were shown the door

We were often embarrassed by the way of the firing and the way it was executed

But we all knew it was based on principle, and that it defined her standards

And it was all done in good faith

And my sisters worked in the house like slaves,

So we thought,

All in the name of training, "le tla o ba basadi b aba jwang"

And no doubt they excelled in all their chores, both becoming great masters,

Master-chefs and master house managers, it didn't matter whether that they were destined for lucrative professions or not

All the while, Tawana and I were kept outside washing second hand cars, weeding and pruning the hedge, well before sunrise even in the winter

We watered the garden in buckets, apparently water is expensive in Botswana, we were always reminded,

When we finished ahead of schedule, we were accused of short-cuts

And then handed supplementary assignments to scrub, polish and shine the floors

Sure, for many years, we helped with the dishes too, wiping and packing them

But we never cooked – that is, my brother and I.

My mom had no university degrees,

But by her count, she had more degrees than anyone she knew

My sister, Tendani's science and medical degrees, Tawana's degrees, the late Zingi's degrees and so on and so on, were all hers

It is true, they truly belonged to her

Make no mistake, my mom was as literate as they come

An avid reader and a lover of literature

Not many knew she quoted Shakespeare extravagantly

Among her favourite quotes "Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them"

And sure, she believed her friend, our late father, belonged to those who had achieved greatness

I told her then, that I thought she too belonged to the achievers of greatness

On closer reflection,

Our mom, it turns out, had not only achieved greatness, but she indeed had been born great and had had greatness thrust upon her -

She was born with traits (a heart) that lent her to greatness, a golden hand that was destined to achieve greatness, and I am convinced, God thrust her in a place not of her own choosing, thrusting her on a path of greatness

She has had an illustrious career in her own right,

A typist and secretary by profession, she typed manuscripts for the underground ANC in Lesotho

She was more political than realized, a believer in rights of people and a believer in opportunity for every human being

She knew many stalwarts of the South African struggle in person, and her work at the Swedish embassy put her into personal contact with leaders such as Jonas Savimbi

At Diamond Bostock, IGI and Richard Lyons, she was a devoted secretary who protected her bosses, even physically,

I was witness to a terrible fist fight in which a fired employee started punching Mr Walkin, her boss

She came over with great force to press the perpetrator down

She had an immensely strong will, with her physique she moved and shove large fridges and stoves around to clean her way through the house

Our late father often teased that your mom could have ended a Permanent Secretary if she had been patient with the civil service

“No regrets,” she let him know

“I have produced you to become a Permanent Secretary

I have produced a great doctor in Tendani

I have produced a great engineer in Tawana

I have produced a great teacher in Zingi” ..and so on and so on.

It was always embarrassing when she kept reminding her friends about her husband and her children

Never out of a sense of malice, but purely out of a sense of pride

She had given up her potentially lucrative career for her family

For this, we can never fathom the words to thank her

She was a tank, a love tank

Her faith in the gospel, and the redemptive power of God’s love was the anchor of her strength

She served devotedly as Mmeme was Thapelo throughout our lives

She loved the young Barweetsana she trained, and spoke fondly of them

All the baruti, Moruti Mangole, Moruti Mabusa, Moruti Mosai, Moruti Magashule and others were all part of our family

And this must be said, for she was frank and open, and I guess I should be today

That she fell out with one or two leaders in the church, and I know this is known in the church

She told us these things at home and we sat her down and asked her to smoke the peace-pipe with those one or two leaders

All was done in good faith I assure you, inspired by deep conviction and desire to do things the right way,

She didn’t mean any harm

And I am deeply sorry if any should have felt harmed by it

She possessed the endurance of a Spartan soldier,

Persevered for others, through their illness and bereavements

In her earlier years, they formed a formidable team with aunt Ntana, Mma Bareki, aunt Thuthula Lekalake, and the entire xhosa “mafia”

Dominating in their workmanship at weddings, funerals and church conferences  
Sure our family has always been blessed, but it was not always as smooth as some might assume  
She adapted and learned new skills through the years to supplement her income  
Not always a sweet experience for Sis Zingi, Tendi, Tawana and I  
We fed the chicken at at 4.30 am or at 5 am when we were late  
Then a chinese man taught all of us a technique to weave table clothes,  
Three types of table clothes, the Tendani version, the Tawana version and so on and so one  
My late sister was married then, she married early  
Yet over the years, mums had evolved in some ways  
The rigid disciplinarian had paved way to the open-minded philosopher  
Poked fun at my friends and visitors  
“ke mo shebile ngwanenu, u rata diilo hore..”, and she would laugh  
They relished her company  
And it surprised them just how warm she was,  
And how she radiated a compelling love  
No woman could have taken care of her husband the way she did,  
Or spewed as high sounding words for her husband,  
In his presence and his absence,  
“My friend is a great-man, there is no man like papa  
No one has worked for his people the way my friend has”.  
She studied her bible every night and sang her favourite hymns  
Growing up, she congregated us in her bedroom in the night for prayer  
Quite often at least one of us dozed off in her marathon meditations  
The prayers were always in xhosa, the language she loved and imposed on everyone  
Oh she loved music, gospel songs, the classics and sometimes the romantic  
She spoke of Jim Reeves as if she knew him, sung his songs  
“I ask a beggar along the way

If he could tell me where to stay  
Where I could find real happiness and love that's true  
Across the bridge there's no more sorrow  
Across the bridge there's no more pain  
The sun will shine across the river  
And you'll never be unhappy again  
Follow the footsteps of the King  
Till you hear the voices ring  
They'll be singing out the glory of the Land  
The river Jordan will be near  
The sound of trumpet you will hear  
And you'll behold the most precious place  
Ever known to man"

Mom was feared by those who did know her well  
And revered by those who knew her  
She was a lioness who took the fight to your doorstep  
Always for a principle, always for the truth and for what she believed to be right  
Nothing touched her husband or her children,  
No no no, nothing at all, and no one no matter who they were  
She protected us to the most bitter end  
She understood and knew how unpopular she was (in some places)  
Often remarking that she was in no popularity contest  
She always fought to the end, and finished what she started  
She did all these things in good faith  
Just so to set the record straight, she was easy to underestimate in some ways  
It was easy from a distance to dismiss her awareness on national and international affairs  
Yet her understanding of justice and politics was phenomenal

It was her that lectured Rre Motswaledi and I on the idea of conviction, conviction and service

She prided herself in being an activist of the BMD

Attended our congress, and even on her sick bed last week

“ndiya canvasa lapha..I am campaigning for our Party”

She belonged to the more hardline swade within our Party

And had harsh words for all those who believed in our course but were not willing to fight

Such a voice of firmness and encouragement

My children I am proud of you, we are proud of your courage,

You are doing the right thing

This is not for you, this is for what is good.

Those who knew her will tell of her large heart

An infinite reservoir of love

Reserved for her husband, children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces and the extended family

A special place for barweetsana, bomme bathapelo

A special place for her favourite people

Aunt Squiza, Aunt Thuthula, MmaMogwe, Mma Mathambo, MmaThage, the Manyenengs, The Joubethas, Gapes, Setlobokwes, Ugwen, a ban aba ka MmaThage, Aus'Serwalo, Aunt LuLu

A rare gemstone, a servant of biblical standards, exceptional lover and steward of precious lives

A selfless and sacrificial nurse,

A fierce and protective lioness,

An advisor and counsellor, a teacher, a Spartan and enduring fighter, a servant of God, a believer, a mother, a sister, a humane human being,

Everything she did, she did for others, rarely for her herself

Going forward, I know you pray and care for us

Accept our gratitude

But don't forget to pray for yourselves too, or accept our prayers

Don't forget that the mother has given us quite a bit to bite

Let us bite it, until, if need be, we cant chew it

Let us face it all, let us stand tall

Let us face our share of the journey with courage and conviction

Let us fight for the things we believe in and what is right

Let us serve God and reveal in our lives his love

Let us cast out our fears, and

Let us appreciate we lived with this legend, this legend of selfless love

Mums, you gave us everything, everything

You are my everything, Nomazizi

ndaba gaolathe

17. And the sun this morning gave birth to a new day

and so I face bright faces that yearn to learn of times past

I will spare my friends the formalities and state the state of the life I have led

I have lived a full life, I have lived a beautiful life, loved by love,

And importantly I have lived through it, and swallowed all that came my way

I must have begrudged one or two people in my life, I thin...k,

Not for what they did to me, but for how they violated those who were dear to me

Even then this was for a moment or two, and it is fair to say

I don't recall the people or the time

Even when I did recall who they were, I am certain I did put in a good word for them in prayer

Sure I can safely say i have been privileged to have the family I have had

A father and mother of biblical significance

Where else could I have learnt what they taught,

Through lecture and by the life they led

Their love illuminating and inspiring

Their life lived not for themselves but for us and their people

My sisters and brother were good at causing a storm when they had to

But all too compensated for, by the way they spoilt and pampered me when they decided to,

Offering me a happy childhood that many will never have

I cherished it all, and loved it all

One Sunday morning at the Methodist church and you don't have to tell my brother this

I sat next to him while he joked with a few friends

Our mother, not so slim then, and with a brisk walk

And this was in the middle of a fiery sermon, Rev Mophuting I recall, in Sotho prose

It all faded in my brother's tears at the lioness' pinching

I was humiliated for him, and aggrieved for him

And even though I did not say sorry, I was immensely sorry for what I thought was an act of injustice at an inappropriate time

My father was not in then, and I left to engage him as soon as we were all home

What happened to the idea of justice I asked, what happened to patience and tolerance I asked some more

Of course this I did in confidence, the lioness was no pushover, and I think this was understood

His answers, as always were: neutral, fair, thoughtful and everyone comes out happy

And in that humiliation, we enjoyed it all, and swallowed it all

Few people know I walked to school everyday, with a shapely, conscientious girl

The colour of her skin like the pearls of the Mediterranean

And a heart that brought out a knowing glow through her eyes, ever smiling with an air about her like the purest milk of human kindness

Never said much to each other on the way, one minute sweets from my pocket to her hand

And the next a lollipop, for me, from her pocket, sweet red lipstick for my lips and tongue

That lasted until third grade, Lesedi Primary School, when a speeding car brought her end

Never attended her funeral, I was too young apparently

Never mentioned her name ever since, Tlotlo Mophuting,

What a lady

And not a day has passed by when I haven't been inspired by the person she was

I have had to swallow it all, and live through it all

Growing up, I must admit, I have always thought I would get a few things achieved

But I never thought Presidents, kings, chiefs, beauty queens (oh yes), men and women of immense wealth and prestige across the world would call for me or call upon me in the way they have done and continue to do

Much less did I, in my wildest dreams, imagine that a wonderful political movement of mass appeal would call upon me to serve it in a position so high I cannot mention it

Importantly for me, and even those who think little of me will bear witness

I have never begged from these men and women for any favour, money or position for myself even when I thought they would gladly have given them

I have never envied to be in their place or to have their possessions. Through it all I cherished only their friendship, their gift of life and the wisdom they spewed.

I have appreciated it all, and lived through it all

There are habits and things I have refused to indulge in

There is no need to say what they are

I have never said this makes me righteous or more morally upright

But I have carried through the courage of my convictions

When reason and emotional sight failed me, faith and conviction carried me

There are times when to have nothing is to have everything, and to have everything is to have nothing

So for me, to lose out on some things has given me everything

I have gained a conscience that is clear and A heart that is at peace with itself

What use is a man or woman who does not live by his or her convictions

And this I lived through it, I walked through it all

.

On school holidays my brother and I were often “dumped” at the cattle-post for the period

Daukome cattle-posts, near jubee-tjwii-paa and gum gum

Sometimes they left us at Changate, our home village, by the Zimbabwean border

Changate the land of monga, potje (special honies), mogwaga, masonja and moroja

A land where the Nshashangana, NkombaNkomba and Mphaphane trees grow on the hills

At the cattlepost we feasted on wild-berries and tracked missing cattle during the day

“White”, the donkey was calm, tamed but slow

Then there was “black-force”, he was fast, but incredibly stubborn and mischievous.

We rode on them when they cooperated

At night we feasted on milk, pap and stories of the oldies

My brother always thought the stories were grossly embellished

But I think I understood enough to decide which parts were excess

But it was at dusk we had the most fun,

Climbing Mahata trees to watch the golden sunset, and to listen to the birds

Not many have seen the savannah hawks, the superb starlings, the weaver birds, sparrows and the gouldian

All in one outing

And we watched it all, and sung through it all

I had other duties

For a few years I cared for a blind uncle – walked him to the bathroom, garden and shops

On a good day I played him records on the gramophone

I listened to him sing to frank Sinatra’s “I did it my way”, and little did I know that many years on, I would sing a similar song to all of you on this day

Uncle had been a teacher, and like my mother, was brought up in the apartheid era of South Africa

The stories he told and the wisdom he spewed were breath-taking

The stories about, and, his love for his long lost children were paralyzing

And when the end finally came for him, I could not watch the casket carry him deep into the earth

But I swallowed it all, and put my right foot, and then my left foot forward.

I wish I could say I survived the years by my own powers, strength and wisdom

The truth is no one knows how I escaped the claws of death through the years while its shadows lurked

My feet might be nifty, but not too nifty to escape a wounded and charging buffalo in a delta – somehow I escaped it all

Many times I have dwelled with poisonous snakes in a hut

But none found occasion to take offence at my presence

My brother, sisters and I stole away time to swim in storming rivers infested with predators

But we swam our way to happiness

I have lived my entire life on the "A1" road to the north of our country and cannot count the number of dead bodies I have seen on the way

And the people we have had to hurry to hospital

Dressed in a bandana, I have navigated places in Harlem, New York and South East, Washington, at the time the murder capital of the world.

Yet I am still standing today, my feet still climb mountains

I survived through it all, and lived through it all

My friends will be horrified to learn that I omitted telling them that I too have had an unpleasant experience of a persistent death threat

I considered reporting the matter to the police

But I could not bear the idea of those dear to me knowing about it

But I swallowed it all because I believed my God would protect me

And he would preserve me until I crossed all the bridges he wanted me to

In the end, it came to light that it had all been a mistake and he was sorry that he had threatened to take my life

I have had to swallow it all and keep walking through it all

Not many know that I started my uncle duties early at primary school

I fed the baby "purity", changed her and danced tango with her when she cried

When she fell I went to bed with a blistering wound deep within me, next to my lungs

And when she laughed in the morning I couldn't contain my joy through the day

The joy of seeing them (my nieces, nephews) and hearing their voices is like the wine I have always denied myself

I cherished it all

I have taught youngsters, big papas and big mamas

Found joy in swimming in their success

And to hear them laugh, sing, and find themselves

And if I should fail to achieve anything that may be dear, then I find great consolation and happiness in knowing that those who are dear to me will achieve that and more

I cannot say I have never been terrified of the thought of my own death

But I have lived through enough seasons, and had one or two epithimy to come to terms with the idea that the end is not always distant

And if I may say so, I am content and believe I have done my best and continue to do my best to an extent that there is no reason to be afraid anymore.

My middle name "Nkosinathi", it means "God is with us", and this name is no mistake

I have to confess that I have been inspired by one or perhaps two ladies before

Enough to hope and wish a wedding day could be arranged

But circumstances blew like a hurricane, and even the most seasoned fighter could not win against the seasons

The consolation prize is in knowing she or they are happy where they are

Yes, the years may have piled on, and the experiences at times seem harsh

But my heart and hope remain untainted

Pure love, the untainted love, the perfect love are not just fairy tales

If they are fairy tales, then I too am a fairy tale

Lets wait until the time of the bells and the isle

There we times when I felt imprisoned

And saw no way out despite the desperate prayers and deep thought

And indeed the time came when the way did not come

Only silence can describe what was lost

And even though everything sunk before my eyes

What was gained was just as immeasurable

To know you cannot stand and tell the measure of loss and be understood is the same as to know you cannot stand and tell the measure of what you have had and be understood

I have had to swallow it all, and get on with the times ahead of me.

I have seen a great man come before me and weep like a new-born babe

His words to me "young boy

I have seen you watch a great river dry-up right before your hopeful eyes and I wish for God to be with you"

And I wouldn't have understood what he meant if I hadnt walked with a man who saw his own end,

A man who dictated his obituary to me and asked me to hide it

A man who derived more joy from what he believed was the road ahead of me, than despair about his own end

And if I had not held love before then this was when I did,

A father who cared more for the life of his children than his own

And it explains why when love comes in its purest form, you almost don't want it,

Because it seems to be like a candle

Something must burn in-order for it to give light

To spend a year or two as nurse to a man as rare and as magnificent as my father was is the greatest honour that has ever been bestowed on me

Yes I was a nurse, a fulltime nurse for more than a year.

I have had to swallow it all and keep moving forward.

There are people I have known since my eyes were opened by the heavens

I found them smiling and laughing

They still are to this day

Like the wine I hear about but do not know

Their friendship has blossomed with time

Grown with tragedy and sweetened with supposed scandal

Some of them men, others women

They were there when it mattered most, and even when I did not need them

They have asked nothing of me, nothing, not gifts not money, even when they most needed it and yet they have offered more than gifts

They have prayed for me, and blessed me.

Some of them have lived for me. And I have walked through it all, and swallowed it all.

There were many seasons I spent much of my time on a desk

Night would fall, the moon came out, stars rose and the morning sun rose from the east

And I would still be on my desk

I would forget to take many meals in succession

Examinations were not what kept me on the desk

The questions for me were what use is a student who does not live to feed his curiosity  
What use is a servant who does not mount his arsenal with hidden armour that can be used to serve.  
Not many I suppose will want to trust what my feet can do  
On the dance floor or on the football pitch or on the 100 meter trek  
My family was especially pampering nearer every Christmas break  
There was no other way to get me to the stage when their friends came  
I had a small savings account, and this was a time to make some deposits, if you know what I mean  
It's a pity I have to drop the topic  
Cant say much about the dancing without being deemed to be blowing my own trumpet  
Many are still alive that know about my feet, why should I say more  
And we cherished it all, and danced through it all  
You don't need the money to go places, well, sometimes you do  
Not when I travelled from north to the south of the United States,  
You don't want to know where we slept or whether we slept  
I have travelled through the Mountains of war-torn countries  
And yes, I have been one with the scene of the mighty rivers at Bukavu by the Congo borders and  
Rwanda borders  
I would always receive a thorough parental interview but I had all the answers  
You survive well when you give your teachers a taste of their own doctrines  
After-all when the family was held at gun-point in apartheid South Africa  
It was my parents that always drove us through South Africa even as they knew danger lurked  
They told us, my mom's family is ours too and we no choice but to be with them  
Our friends are our family too, it doesn't matter whether they come from war-torn Africa  
I swallowed it all, and lived through it all  
Why should I talk about the suffering I have seen others go through  
Or the conditions that I have seen them overcome in their lives  
I will let silence reveal it all to you my friends  
What sisters I have had, and the brother I have had

I cant, I really cant have hoped for more  
Even as one of them (sister) departed prematurely  
My nieces are the air I breathe, and so are my nephews  
When some of your friends are way-guards and others are un-employed  
When a billionaire elsewhere in the world counts you among his friends  
When someone cries because you were wrongly accused, not him, not her  
When someone feels unsafe in the safety of their homes because they feel you are unsafe in your travels  
When someone forgets to pray for themselves because they pray for you everyday  
Then why would you ask for more  
For this is everything, this is a full life, this is a life worth living  
Now that I have laid bare my life before you  
You are at liberty to charge me for the crimes I have committed  
I am ready for all the charges, for I have lived it all in good faith  
What use is a man who lives a life and is not willing to face the consequences of his actions.  
I am sorry if the way I have lived has offended anyone  
I know many say I have ignored what they may have said to them  
At times they are unsure if I have really heard what they said to me  
I can assure you I have heard you and my silence is the only medicine  
Tomorrow may not come for me,  
Painful I am certain, for you and i  
But I would be leaving no regrets, but a life lived in full and in love  
And ahead of me, who knows, the heavens are waiting  
It may well be too good to say who I will once more be re-united with  
Help me thank my God, help me thank my family, help me thank my friends  
Help me wish well even those who see nothing worth their while in me  
And help me that you that you live your life in full too and even fuller than my own..

18. 7 August 2012

H.E. Lenin Shope

The High Commission

South African High Commissioner

Gaborone, Botswana

Your Excellency Mr. Lenin Shope

Greetings. The newsprints and television screens around the world show still bodies of departed lives of citizens and policemen at Lonmin's Marikana mine in the Northwest Province of South Africa, following a fatal and tragic shootout in which mine strikers and ...law enforcement officers were involved.

Here in Botswana, over the same window of time as your tragic Marikana experience, our hearts have been torn and speech paralyzed by the recent inexplicable disappearance, while on duty at the Gaborone dam, of the nation's Water Utilities Corporation employees, two of whom were found dead a week later, and one still missing. Our eyes, cheeks and lips form the same riverbed along which your tears and the tears of the orphaned families in the Norwest Province, flow like a mighty perennial river, without whose waters of prayer there cannot be any healing.

I therefore write not as a judge of the circumstances, or a wise-man with answers at a time of confusion. On the contrary, of the many assignments I have carried on behalf of my Movement, none has weakened me as much as to convey words of condolences for the tragic loss of life at Marikana.

Our Movement's members, its president, Mk Gomolemo Motswaledi, our partners in the Botswana National Front and the Botswana People's Party, and our citizens of all ages, of all persuasions and from all stations, seek not to say one more word than is necessary at the expense of wounds that your people still must nurse. Yet these words must be said - to you, your Government, the orphaned families of Lonmin's Marikana workers, the North-west Province community and indeed the beloved people of South Africa with whom we share a rich and timeless heritage - that we derive much comfort in your tenacity of spirit, will, faith and ability to overcome and consistently deposit in ceremonies, all circumstances that have time and again, sought to disposes you of your worthy and countless achievements.

Yours Sincerely

Ndaba Gaolathe

Botswana Movement for Democracy

19. Your honour, the VP, Lt Gen M. Merafhe,

Greetings. News of your decision to retire, at the end of July 2012, from the esteemed role of Vice President of the Republic of Botswana reached our movement early last week. The records will show differences in perspective, on how the future of our people should unfold, between my Movement, the Botswana Movement for Democracy, and the leadership in the c...urrent Government of Botswana of which you are a key part.

These differences in perspective cannot and should not be used to rob you of the immense role you have played in shaping modern day Botswana. Many believe it was your drive, confidence, sense of efficiency and decisiveness that helped build our highly professional army. With your strength of character, diplomatic maturity and colourful use of words as a foreign minister, Botswana increasingly claimed an indelible place on the world stage as an icon of democratic governance on a continent notorious for dysfunctional governance.

I write, therefore, on behalf of the President of the BMD Rre Gomolemo Motswaledi, the NEC, all the members of our party and its sympathizers, and indeed on my own behalf, to express our unreserved gratitude for your illustrious service to the people of Botswana.

Your good health is a life gift that should be jealously preserved and, for this reason, your decision is most appropriate for yourself and for those to whom you are dear. We wish you many more years of good health during which your family, of which I have been and continue to be a part, will cherish you.

sincerely yours,

ndaba gaolathe