



**A LETTER AND LIBATION FOR LIMBIKO:
GENTLE SUNLIGHT WARMING THE WORLD**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

Another year has passed, Limbiko, and come and gone again is the special day and month, May 3rd, when your mother and father brought you into being and you began your promising and destined journey which brought you to this sacred circle of good and beauty we share. On that day, we gathered together again, as always to celebrate the beauty and good of your life and the enduring meaningfulness of your legacy. And in the tradition of our ancient Egyptian ancestors, I write you this letter, some of which I read and recited at the Hekalu in celebration and reaffirmation of your enduring meaning to me, to us and to all those whose lives you touched and imbued with good and beauty in numerous ways.

Beloved sister and sacred friend, Limbiko, let it be said countless times we still miss you and will never get used to your absence. Surely, we are not among the short-memory people, nor among those who feel they have done their “duty” at the end of the brief service or ceremony at the grave site. We remember you, as we do all of our ancestors, as an indispensable way of remembering ourselves and being rightfully mindful of all those who brought us into being and contributed mightily and meaningfully to our grounding, growth and commitment to the good.

So, we have come to pour libation for you, to do tambiko, offering sacred water and words of praise, thanks and petition for all the good given and yet to come. We have also brought your favorite foods for *kikoa*, our communal meal, in the sacred practice of sharing and celebrating the good. Here, we have set aside a special plate and honored place for you, beloved sister and

sacred friend. And we make to you and all our ancestors this petition for the Good, your glorious spirits in heaven and continuing, powerful presence on earth.

May you grant us the eternal good of your presence. May you be pleased and satisfied with our strivings to be and do good in and for the world. May you continue to show and open the way forward for us. May you guide and guard us in the work we do and the struggles we wage of which you are always a part. And may you strengthen us in our struggles; keep us steadfast on the righteous and upward paths before us and aid us in achieving the certain and sustained victory in the good things we dare and do in the world.

I must admit I am still learning to live with the fact and feeling of your physical absence and to accept in progressively deeper ways your spiritual presence. For I miss you as I knew you and now must learn another way to relate to you. Certainly, I’m doing this but not as well as I want. It is also no doubt due to my own bodily existence and thus my understandable attachment to the physical and familiar. Then, too I think I have been away too long from the spiritual understandings of my mother and father who were deeply rooted in the spiritual and were able to see signs everywhere, felt presences and dreamed dreams that were rich in revealed and hidden meanings.

Sometimes when I read cultural accounts of continental African beliefs and practices, it reminds me of many people where I grew up whose lives were anchored and flowered in the realm and reality of the spiritual and I saw and still see the beauty in that. But I’ve been away from “down home”

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and “back home” so long. And so with renewed patience and persistence, I pursue this new way and do it with a loving and lasting joy. It is the immeasurable sense of loss of a truly loved one that undermines our strength, plays havoc with our emotions and imposes pain as a persistent companion and consideration no matter where we go or what we do. But we are a strong people, resilient, resourceful and ever ready to endure and prevail, regardless of the unsettling and unexpected things that happen in our lives.

Pictures of you still cover the entire back wall of the Center, left there since your maziko in 2009. We said after the first year we would narrow its spread and put other pictures up so that you would be among others in the midst of the work and struggle to which you gave your life. But it is the sixth year of your transition and we have not done it yet. This year, for our 50th anniversary, we will do it for you and us as a shared and expanded project of which you are a permanent and greatly appreciated part. The 50th anniversary celebration of Us and the Nguzo Saba will be a beautiful gathering, and images, praises and narratives of you will certainly decorate our space and adorn our speech. And we will again remember and honor you with libation and loving memories recalled, raised and shared.

I will finish my book on Malcolm this August. But we—Tiamoyo, Chimbuko and I—still have not returned to San Francisco to have lunch with and for you on the wharf,

and to retrace our steps and laugh at the whirlwind way I took us thru the museums and Monterey Aquarium. My sense is we will do this and all the things we were to do during the year of *ukubuyisa* (2010) next year, in the seventh year of your transition. Again, it takes me and us longer Limbiko, beloved sister and sacred friend.

It is all a process and practice of always thinking good and beauty when you come to mind rather than simply feeling sadness. And again, I’m constantly increasing my ability to feel and see in this new and necessary way. Often when I rise early and open the patio door and let the morning in, I see signs of you and feel your presence in the soft breeze that comes in and gently spreads its freshness around the room. Sometimes, it carries the scent of trees and flowers and other times, it brings the faint smell of sea and salt and beautiful memories of us at the oceans’ edge.

Then come the bird songs celebrating sunrise and less often the calls of seagulls and always memories of our mornings and of the calls and telephone talk, of greetings of peace and goodness, of the work and wishes for the day and the hurried and measured talk during meals and meetings to avoid being late. Then I see your face and feel your presence in the sunlight, rising above the horizon, causing us all to say “it will be a good day today”. And I imagine you rising and warming the world with your presence and making life flourish like the sun.

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