

# Leela King

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Funeral Service

**Saturday, April 7, 2012**

### Minister Robert George's Introduction

We are here to celebrate the life of our beloved friend, Leela King.

We are grateful for the privilege of having shared our lives with her.

We welcome Leela's sister Chandra, her brother Mervyn, her niece Sita, and Sita's mother Hazel.

At the death of a friend, we see their life as a whole. With Leela, her life was like a prayer; full of devotion, humble, her eyes and her heart raised towards higher forces. And like her favorite prayer from Francis of Assisi, a prayer she knew by heart, her heart was inscribed with the principles of conscious work. The Work glowed in her and through her.

Let us stand, and honor Leela with our presence.

(Silence)

Thank-you.

### Music: Anicca Bat Adam and Dimos Tsigakos

Camel melody, Anonymous

### Reading: Corrina Craigmill

*St. Francis of Assisi:*

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, forgiveness.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light.

Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive.

It is in forgiving that we are forgiven,

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

### Eulogy: Judith Thiel

#### Leela King, 1938-2012

In appearance Leela was small, delicate and sweet; in being she was firm, gentle, persevering, a pillar. Her life's dedication to her work was deep. Her service to the school was steady and consistent. She was more because she loved the Work, and with that characteristic modest self scrutiny, she understood that the Work expanded her much farther than the limits of her petite body; and this she found wonderful; a small, delicate flower with a deep source of

sweetness and sincerity; a love of the work that made her travel the world to serve. As small as her bodily heart was, she proved that it can contain limitless distance and depth.

Leela was born in a tiny village on the island of Trinidad, an English colony in those days, an hour from the nearest town, and among plantations, hills, valleys, the river that she came to love, and lianas vines hanging from trees which, as she wrote, 'one could swing with delight'.

She was born in April, the same month that she died, resonating with that higher influence that governs all our lives, the sounding of a complete octave. She grew up in a small, rural community, among goats and rice fields. She loved the river and playing cricket with the boys. She grew up hearing the Hindu myths and legends, and realised early that stories although inspiring, often lacked details for a path to attainment.

A leading question, that in turn became a quest for a school. Moving to America, she began to search for the meaning and the destiny of her life. She encountered spiritual groups, but she thought that an esoteric school belonged to an age that had long disappeared. She studied Yoga and found it helped to control mind activity. Yet it was not the complete thing. Yes, she could find peace in the turmoil of the many I's, but she yearned for a connection to something higher. It was while living in Canada that she first met the school, and joined the Detroit center in 1977.

From that point, with a strong internal focus, she found some invaluable keys that she explored and shaped her being. Consistently learning the principles of the Work, she began to move past her personal limits, the limits of her fear. She wrote that there's an inverse relationship between 'inner considering' and presence. Her personal aims focused on sacrificing fear for openness, an openness to other students, to the school, to impressions. She often quoted Shakespeare, that 'Our doubts are traitors' which 'make us lose the good we often might win by fearing to attempt'.

When I first met Leela she was the center director in Toronto with her husband Christopher. She was for me, the esoteric meaning of a 'real woman'; patient, gentle, firm, undaunted, where the inner development of the Work becomes the expression of an external virtue. She was an example one could look up to; my emotional center could safely open and mature in her presence. I found she had a loving nature from which there was no need to inner consider. Her love was a mirror for one to see oneself. Her smile was the reflection.

At the age of 68, after living at Apollo for nine years, Leela thought it was time to 'empty her cup' and she began traveling and supporting centers. She travelled to India, Latin America, the Far East, to Russia, Italy and other European cities. While serving in the role of regional coordinator, she lived in Tel Aviv, Beirut and Istanbul. When Robert's Journeys began in Egypt, she was living in Naples, and joined him with a group of students. Sensing a need, she then moved to Cairo to help support the teaching house, and when the house closed, she moved with Ute to Luxor, to the West bank. They decided on the house because its front garden was full of blooming hibiscus and bougainvillea's, and the roof- top terrace was perfect for watching the Nile, the sunsets and for having tea or dinner with friends and visitors.

Leela wrote a little about her life in Egypt:

‘Friends ask me how I spend my time. I study Arabic with a private tutor, visit the nearby sites sometimes, and the far-off ones with visitors, read about and try to understand the ancient Egyptians and their teachings, study the Islamic culture and teachings, have dinner or tea with friends, sail on the Nile in a felucca and work with whatever friction comes my way.’

Finally, a simple summation: Leela knew that the Work pushes us to our means, and that one evolves not despite friction but because of it. In the final evening of her illness, she was having trouble with her breathing apparatus, yet despite many attempts to persuade her that nothing was wrong, she kept her aim, patiently trying to regulate it, and when it was fixed, she calmly laid back, relaxed and smiled. Her demeanor had remained unchanged throughout the ordeal. Ever the gentle soul, with ever the stalwart mass.

And so, as her father often called her ‘meri sundar larki’ which means, ‘my beautiful daughter’. A beautiful daughter. A daughter of the Work. The daughter of our hearts.

**Music: Anicca Bat Adam and Dimos Tsigakos**

Egypt, Gurdjieff

**Reading: Edith Minne**

*Rumi:*

From the moment you came into the world of being,  
A ladder was placed before you that you might escape.  
First you were mineral, later you turned to plant  
Then you became animal: how should this be a secret to you?  
When you have travelled on from man, you will doubtless become an angel;  
After that, you are done with this earth: your station is in heaven.  
If your body has aged, what matter, when the soul is young?

**Minister’s Conclusion:**

Now it is time to bid our friend farewell.

May Leela’s eagerness to serve inspire us to greater selflessness.

May her commitment to presence inspire us to share more moments of presence with each other.

And may her love for us deepen our love for one another.

Her work is done. Ours is to let her go.

With gratitude, Leela, friend, sister, traveler and example, we thank thee.

**At the Cemetery: Minister’s Introduction**

Here on this beautiful day and in this blessed place, we return Leela’s ashes to the earth. Her play on earth is complete; she is released to her, and our, true home.

Reading: Christopher King

असतो मा सद् गमय ।  
तमसो मा जोतीर् गमय ।  
मृत्यो मा अमृतम् गमय ।

Lead me from untruth to truth  
Lead me from darkness to light  
Lead me from death to immortality

Urn bearer puts urn in the grave.

**Minister's Conclusion**

Minister and company take rose petals.

The earth returns to the earth, and a divine spark returns to its divine source. 'Love comes from eternity, and returns into eternity.' The circle of life is complete.

Minister and company put rose petals into the grave.

Let us join together in saying farewell to Leela.

Rose petals in the grave. The leaving begins.