

ROBERT LYLE

# *A WAY THROUGH THE WORLD*

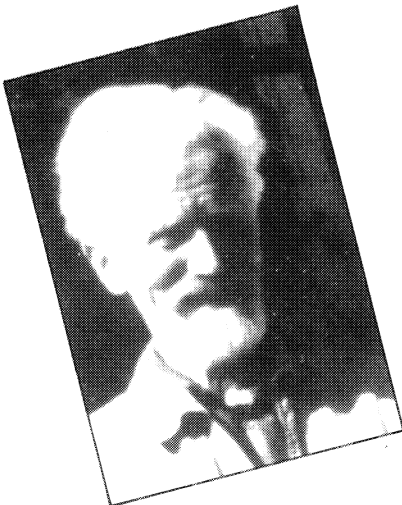


# *A WAY THROUGH THE WORLD*

Robert Lyle's second book 'A WAY THROUGH THE WORLD' is a remarkable sequel to his first book, which was an introduction to the spiritual brotherhood of SUBUD.

In 'A WAY THROUGH THE WORLD' Robert Lyle, using his own experiences and the explanations of Bapak, the founder of SUBUD, puts a link between spiritual and everyday life and leads the reader through the most crucial moments of man's existence. This book is a 'guide to life' for those who recognize life as a unity, in which the inner and outer life are one.

SUBUD is a way of living, not a theory or a teaching. It is a receiving. Man receives from God that which enables him to grow and develop in a way that corresponds with what is contained within man's 'being'.



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# A WAY THROUGH THE WORLD

*Robert Lyle*

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THE WORLD

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*CIP-gegevens Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Haag*

*Lyle, Robert*

*A way through the world/Robert Lyle.*

*Hillegom: Altamira*

*Met lit. opg.*

*ISBN 90-6963-001-X*

*SISO 289 UDC 289 UGI 553*

*Trefw.: SUBUD.*

*© Altamira 1985*

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*ISBN 90-6963-001-X*

*Design and typography by Roland Sillem*

*Typeset in 14 point Bembo Roman/Bembo Italic*

*Printed by Fairprint, Rotterdam Holland*

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank R.M. Bapak Muhammad Subuh for permission to quote from his talks; Mr. Sjarif Horthy for permission to use his translations of these talks; Mr. Sudarto Martohudojo for permission to quote from his contributions to the *Pewartu Kejiwaan Subud*; the Compton Press and Element Books Ltd. for permission to quote from 'Through Music to the Self', by Peter Michael Hamel; Century Hutchinson Ltd. for permission to quote from 'The Dancing Wu-Li Masters', by Gary Zukav; and Curtis Brown for permission to quote from 'The Seven Mysteries of Life', by Guy Murchie. Lastly, I wish to thank Rodjana Moffatt for so patiently typing my manuscript.

Robert Lyle

## INTRODUCTION

WE LIVE in a time of transition. Everything is in flux. Our authorities have been undermined, our familiar landmarks swept away. In such a time of troubles, how do we find our way? How do we find ourselves?

This book is an attempt to find an answer to these questions and to provide a kind of 'guide-book to living' in this present age.

I am not so presumptuous, however, as to imagine that I myself can provide a guide-book to living; in any case I believe that each one of us has to find his own individual way through the world. But I do believe, because it has been my experience, that such guidance - adjusted to the needs of each and every individual - can be found through the practice of a spiritual exercise which came into the world (for it was not created or invented by any man) almost fifty years ago.

This book is therefore a 'guide-book to living' based on the particular experience of one man who has practised this exercise for many years, very much tempered and balanced, however, by explanations and guidance given by the first man in our time to receive and practise the exercise, and one who is, in addition, the founder and spiritual guide of an association which has grown up round this exercise and has come to be known as Subud.

The first question the reader will ask, therefore, is,



”What is Subud?” This is not an easy question to answer, being akin to such a question as ”What is Sugar?” No verbal answer to this last question can be as satisfactory as giving the questioner a lump of sugar and saying, ”Try that”; and the same is true of Subud.

Nevertheless, some explanation is necessary, lest the reader be confused by unfamiliar and undefined terms. In a previous book - ”SUBUD” - I tried to answer the question, ”What is Subud?” in simple, general terms using, almost exclusively, the explanations of the founder of Subud, the Javanese, Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo. But many readers may not be familiar with this book and I therefore feel that it would be best to begin with a few clarifications - all of them in the words of Muhammad Subuh himself - so as to provide the necessary terms of reference and set the scene for what follows. For clarity’s sake I would add that Muhammad Subuh refers to himself as ’Bapak’, an Indonesian word meaning father which is used when addressing a respected elder person. The name Subud - which is not related to the name Subuh - is an abbreviation of three Sanskrit words, Susila, Budhi and Dharma, which are defined as follows:

”Susila denotes those qualities which give rise to a character, conduct and actions which are truly human and in accordance with the Will of God.

”Budhi means that in all creatures, including man, there dwells an inner force, to draw us towards our proper path, the path that leads to God.

”Dharma signifies sincerity, surrender and submission to God which are awakened in man by the Will of God Himself.” (1)

*Subud is founded upon a spiritual exercise, called the latihan kejiwaan - Indonesian words meaning, respectively, drill or*

training, and spiritual - which was first received by Bapak himself in 1924. Then:

*"Once Bapak has planted the seed the tree grows by itself. Equally, this is not a teaching but a receiving; man receives from Almighty God that which will enable his jiwa\* to grow and develop in a way that corresponds with what is contained within the self of man ..."* (2) *"The latihan kejiwaan of Subud is, in truth, worship of man towards God, awakened in us by the power of God at the moment this same power arrests the interference of our thinking minds, our hearts and desires."* (3)

*"The purpose of the latihan kejiwaan is to guide and bring you up so that your individuality, outwardly and inwardly, can become clean, pure and healthy according to the will of God."* (4)

The ability to receive this exercise is granted to anyone willing to surrender in the presence of one who has already received it and is authorised to witness its transmission. Clearly, therefore, Subud exists because of Bapak, who was the first to receive it, but

*"Subud is the unity and union of mankind in worship of the One God. It is not some Indonesian form of knowledge which is brought by Bapak to England, America, Europe and other countries. It is nothing of the kind, for it is God's will that men should be awakened one by one, from within themselves, without any incompatibility with what is in them ..."* (5)

and so,

*"Every person will find for himself the right way towards God, and what may be the right way for one may be completely wrong for another. Therefore, you must not suppose that you have to follow or become like Muhammad Subuh. You must*

\* Jiwa is often translated as 'soul', but this is not correct since jiwa means the entire content of a person. I have retained the word jiwa throughout this book. The word for spiritual, Kejiwaan, is derived from jiwa.

*become your own self and you must develop your inner self if you want to find the way to God.” (6)*

We are here, then, to find the true Self, and this becomes possible through the action of the latihan. In Bapak's words:

*”To know his genuine essence, that is his jiwa, a man must first be able to distinguish between the nature of his heart - comprising the heart, thoughts, mind, cleverness, character, imagination, ideas, ambitions, desires, and so on - and the nature of his feelings; that is his inner feelings, the true individuality of man ...*

*”Once the heart can recognize and understand this separation, then the 'I' will be able to know or realise who it is that activates or masters 'my' instrument or 'my' heart.*

*”When this is so, the wrongness of the wrong will be seen and the 'I' can distinguish between his true jiwa and the jiwias that are not his - in other words, between his human jiwa and the jiwias that are not human.*

*”Once this is achieved, his human jiwa will work and manifest more clearly within him. And when this level is reached, it can be said that the man who is suffering from the sickness of the jiwa will be cured.*

*”Furthermore, when the reality of the masquerading jiwias, which are really non-human, is clearly seen, they will not be cast away or destroyed but instead will be mastered and governed. The reason is that these jiwias are needed by man as instruments, even if they are animal or other sub-human jiwias.” (7)*

This brings us, next, to the need to understand the constitution of man according to the experience of what is received in the latihan:

*”There are probably many among you, men or women, who are not yet aware that within yourself, within your inner feeling,*

*there are various forces or souls (roch) which always constitute the inner content or the body of man."*

*"These diverse forces that form the inner content of man are there by the will of God for man, so that their presence in him may enable him to live and work as a being who is God's deputy, as a being for whom it is God's will that he should achieve felicity and well-being both in this world and in the life after death.*

*"The different powers that are within man and in the whole of life are seven in number, beginning from the lowest and going to the highest, and these constitute the Great Life.*

*"The three lower powers are below the human level. They are still within the sphere which can be controlled by man, accessible to his mind and his thinking. The three which are higher have power over man; they are beyond the thinking and the heart of man, and they go altogether beyond what is human." (8)*

*"These forces that exert their influences upon man are, first, the material ones. When these forces work in man, dominate his being and also direct his brain and his understanding, then this man will behave as one who is indifferent to and untouched by the sufferings of his fellowmen - he does not look upon them as God's creatures, and is not even aware of his own sins. His inner content being dominated by material forces, such a man will, without scruple or remorse, do harm to other people even to the point of injuring or killing them.*

*"These lower forces are always present in man. When he is dominated by the vegetable forces, he will become angry and will have no concern with anything but his own interests.*

*"When the inner content of a man is dominated by the animal forces - Batak will take only the main characteristics and exclude their other manifestations - then this man will be a man of passions, he is filled with desire for woman; and a woman is filled with desire for man.*

*"When it is the human forces that dominate the inner content of a man, then he puts his trust more in his own ability; he refuses*

to admit the existence of God, thus denying that he is created by the Almighty.

*"Whereas when the power higher than man, the Rochani power, comes to influence the self of man, he will be conscious of and know that there is the Power of God, and he will be constantly aware of and know that there is a continuation of life which is more blissful than life on this earth.*

*"... it is not necessary for Bapak to explain about the Powers higher than The Rochani, the appropriate power for man, because there can be no picture at all that can illustrate the existence of these higher powers of which Bapak now speaks. You will be unable to prove the existence of the powers which are higher than the human, so long as you still make use of your thoughts, mind and desire in order to approach them." (9)*

I joined Subud in January, 1960, and have experienced the action of the latihan for twenty-four years. As I began by saying, what follows is based upon this experience. But I also use, whenever possible - indeed, this use is very much a result of my experience - quotations from the explanations given by the Spiritual Guide of Subud, Bapak Muhammad Subuh, because I have become convinced that they not only corroborate and clarify our own receiving but extend and enlarge this and, further, open the windows of understanding upon the wider vistas that lie above and beyond. With regard to these explanations, Bapak himself has said:

*"Before Bapak begins with his explanations about spiritual requirements and conditions, he wants, first of all, to remind you that these talks which he gives are not a teaching, but are simply information about what may be experienced by yourselves in the course of the latihan. And therefore you should not assimilate these talks with your minds, and you should not make mental pictures from them of what will happen." (10)*

Finally, concerning Bapak himself, I feel that it is sufficient to quote his own explanations, first as regards his status:

*“Whether or not it should be called a revelation is something known only to God. As for myself, I only see and bear witness to the truth which I received, beyond all expectation, and in receiving which my heart and mind ceased to work, although I was conscious and aware of the glory of the One Almighty God. Whether I should be called a prophet or anything of that kind I cannot tell, for all this lies in the Power of God. For myself, I only believe in the existence of the One Almighty God and surrender to His Will with patience, trust and sincere submission.” (11)*

And secondly, as regards his function:

*“In all this Bapak’s function is like that of a school servant, who sets out the books, opens the door, cleans the rooms and arranges the tables and chairs. When you are all in the classroom, the teacher will come and give the lessons; and the teacher is not Bapak, but God Himself. Bapak is not a teacher but only the servant of God. This is in truth Bapak’s position in this spiritual work of Subud; under the power of God and in His hands.” (12)*

## CHAPTER I

# BIRTH

WHEN WE are born into this world, whether easily or, as in my case, traumatically, we arrive here utterly dependent and owning nothing at all: we are not even conscious of our new environment except in terms of sensations of pleasure or pain, of satisfaction or desire. And we have no conscious recollection of what went before, either in the womb, or beyond. It seems, however, that we are not mere unconscious bundles of shifting sensations. Bapak has many times referred to the state of a new-born baby, for instance:

”Why does a new-born baby cry? And why does a new-born baby sometimes wear a happy expression on its face, and why does it sometimes look frightened? ... What is the reason for this? It is because a new-born baby is still linked with the spiritual world, so that it knows more about that and is closer to that life before its eyes begin to open on to this world ...” (1)

This contact with the spiritual world is not always lost or completely forgotten. The English mystic, Thomas Traherne, has much to say about it in his ”Centuries of Meditation”, for example, in the passage beginning: ”How like an angel came I down!” or in the famous paragraph that begins with the words: ”The corn was orient and immortal wheat ...” But the most remarkable reference that I know of occurs in the ”Ode

on Intimations of Immortality” where, either intuitively or in fact Wordsworth was able to recall that:

*”Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life’s Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing Boy,  
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,  
He sees it in his joy;  
The Youth, who daily farther from the east  
Must travel, still is Nature’s Priest,  
And by the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended;  
At length the Man perceives it die away,  
And fade into the light of common day.”*

There have been other, similar experiences, though none, perhaps, expressed in such luminous words.

But if this experience is indeed true, our birth into this world is preceded by an earlier birth. It would seem that we begin our earthly existence not when we emerge from the womb and take our first breath, nor yet at some stage of embryonic growth, but when we are conceived. The physical facts of conception can be gleaned from any good textbook on biology, but what is conception in the light of spiritual experience?

In 1976 I attended a talk given by Bapak to a group at Wendhausen, in West Germany, when, in reply to a



question, Bapak said that the character of a child is determined at the moment of conception; determined by the state of the parents at that time. Sexual union acts, then, as a kind of focusing agent to draw into the seed the jiwa of the being-to-be. There is, therefore, for each of us, a state before birth and a state before conception. This can be experienced through sexual union itself, if this is done correctly:

*“... sexual union is, in its essence, an act of worship towards God and never an act of satisfaction for the desires of man only. Therefore, true sexual union is not an act done for pleasure; it is a repetition of receiving and experiencing the state of man before and at the moment when he was created, and before and after he returns to that state.” (2)*

From this it would appear - at least, it so appears to me - that we choose freely (or are impelled to choose) our own parents and therefore our own destiny, and so can hardly blame them for our faults or for our fate. It is as if we looked for - or were drawn to - a lens which corresponded to our own state in that other world or 'plane' of existence and were 'conceived' and finally born into the very circumstances which held those possibilities which we needed for our growth and development.

But what of those who, because of a defective chromosome, for example, are born handicapped or disabled? (Such a case falls within my personal experience and responsibility.) In the first place, I have noticed how often these 'unfortunate' people show qualities of character of the highest kind. This could be due to the special efforts they must make to meet the challenge of their limitations; but it also seems, at least in part, to be inborn, as though such genetic failures were accompanied by a compensating factor. The

power of suffering to transform - and, if rightly undergone - to transform into something higher, is a strange fact that has been highlighted in our day, which has seen such appalling sufferings inflicted upon so many apparently innocent people. We need only read the accounts of Victor Frankl and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, to take two extreme but well-known examples, to come face to face with the creative power of suffering. 'What is to give light must endure burning.' Or, to take a very different example, a similar power of transcendence has been reported in the much publicised case of the 'Thalidomide Children'.

So again I ask myself, if we choose our own parents and therefore our own natures and our own destiny, do we not also choose our own suffering? And are we not born into the condition and with the advantages and handicaps which we, personally, need for our further evolution?

So far we have been considering limitations which, it is assumed, are transmitted, that is to say, appear or develop as hereditary factors. I have heard it said that such defects as cause severe handicaps, physical or mental, are the result of sins or grave errors on the part of our ancestors. Very obvious examples are those held to stem from the abuse of alcohol, drugs or sex. But there are other cases where the damage results from the actual state of the parents at the 'moment of truth' - the moment of conception. In this respect, Bapak recently gave an explanation which covers both aspects of this question; suggesting, on the one hand, that we suffer from the faults of our ancestors and, on the other that we in turn can act in such a way as to transmit suffering to our descendents:

*''... The problem being, why does it happen that children are*

born with birth defects with no apparent cause. In other words, the parents have not done anything wrong, and are not aware of any reason for it, yet their child is born deformed in some way; a cripple from birth or something like that. And so they come and ask why this is so?' Bapak, what has caused this?' And they may even say, 'I have never harmed other people; I have never done anything bad in my life: so why?'

"Bapak wants to explain about this. When a child is born deformed in some way, there is certainly a reason for it and there is a cause, but it is very difficult for human beings to see these causes. Brothers and Sisters, anything of this kind is always the result of man's own mistakes. That is, human beings are prone to do bad things in their lives such as hurting other people, killing other people, speaking badly of other people, concentrating on the faults of other people and the shortcomings of other people, and all these actions that men do operate according to a law that is called by the experts, Karma. That is, they have an effect on their children. This is the effect of man's own actions and man's own mistakes. That is why it happens that young people who have got married and the marriage is good, and they are both good people, can still have a child who is deformed, let us say, and they come to Bapak and say: 'Bapak, why has this happened?'

"Of course, Bapak can see the reason, but it is not always easy to inform someone of that reason. So, all Bapak wants to do now is to give some advice, especially to the young people who have not yet married, or who are still thinking of having children: that you should avoid certain things. For example, especially young people who like to think about people who are bad, or do horrible things. And they not only think about these things but they think about them very, very deeply. So that it becomes an obsession and all this comes into you. It forms a kind of lens which focuses certain kinds of forces or certain kinds of things within your being, so that when you go on and have a child that child comes out deformed, because of your own actions, because you have attracted to yourself things that are bad. And this is something very

*important which you have to understand: it is really true.*

*”It is something young people are very fond of. For example, they watch films where people are doing horrendous things to each other, and then they think about this, and they feel that this is a kind of education; that through doing this they learn something, but actually exactly the opposite is true. Through doing this they attract to themselves all sorts of harmful things which then manifest in the children who are born. So, Bapak warns you against doing this. And Bapak has experienced this himself, it is not something about which Bapak is just theorising ... it is really true.*

*”Actually, it is very important that we should avoid the enjoyment that comes from contemplating the faults of other people, or the nasty things that people do to others, and from the enjoyment of thinking about others and criticising them or seeing their faults. Actually, you don't need to do that. It serves no purpose. What is important is yourself. Think about yourself. Try to improve yourself. It is not necessary to worry about others and worry about what is going on in other places; that is something different. So, brothers and sisters, this is Bapak's advice to you, and this advice does not need to be limited to young people only. It is just as valid for those who are older, those of you who are going to be grandparents. You also don't want to have grandchildren who are influenced by these things, so there is no reason why you should indulge yourselves in such things if you are old.*

*”Another thing, the proof of this is that very often there is a correlation between a lot of deformed children or children with defects being born and the countries where they are born because these places are places where in the past there has been a great deal of cruelty, where there have been wars, where people were killed in very cruel ways and so on. This sometimes comes through after several generations. So you have to be aware of this. And this is why it is very important, in our lives, to try to behave really well and correctly.” (3)*

We have been considering those very obvious handicaps and defects which appear in those whom we hold to be disabled. But we are all of us flawed to a greater or lesser degree, even if these flaws are not immediately visible. In fact, Bapak has said repeatedly that such flaws grow more serious and more numerous as generation succeeds generation, so that the overall inner condition of humanity tends to decline and must continue to decline unless something happens, or something is done to arrest the decline, to remove the flaws and restore our human condition - hence the appearance on earth of the Prophets and the Messengers of God. It seems that, each time the condition of humanity - or of a significant number - is raised, but then, as time goes by, man degenerates under the progressive attrition of material influences, because, as Bapak never ceases to remind us, "man remains man".

In a talk which he gave at Tokyo in 1967 (4) Bapak spoke of a legend which tells how some among the angels - those beings created out of light - grew jealous of man, that apparently inferior creation, because through God's grace he could return to his Creator more easily and swiftly than they. God gave permission to these jealous angels to tempt man, but " ... the men whom you can tempt are those who always pursue and follow their nafsu.\* Those are the men you can tempt, because they live in the realm of the power and capacity of the heart and mind. But beyond that you cannot do it, for beyond the heart and mind of man there is My Power enfolding him." And Bapak went on to comment: "From the ordinary point of view, why is it that God gives to man such far-reaching Grace? It is because in his life on earth man always suffers." (5) Therefore, although it is our duty, as it is our instinct, to

\* Nafsu, meaning passion.

try to alleviate suffering where and when we can, it is not for us to question it or to cry, "Oh, why was I born?" But rather to ask, "Oh, who am I that I was born?"

From ancient times wise men have insisted that it is very difficult to be born here on earth and also very desirable from the point of view of spiritual growth: human birth is a great privilege and a great opportunity. Today this is something that we no longer feel or understand, so that we meet those who wish they had never been born, or who dedicate their lives - and their sometimes considerable talents - to proving that they are meaningless. Ought we not, on the contrary, to go down on our knees and thank God for the gift of this golden chance and beseech Him to guide us to the Straight Path?

But to be born of woman is not the only kind of birth we may experience during our life on earth: as Jesus insisted to a bewildered Nicodemus, we must be 'born again' and, in fact, unless we are so reborn, we cannot even see, let alone enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. On another occasion Jesus said: "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" and, if we take the two statements together, we seem to have a symbolic description of the process of integration, of finding and becoming the Self. If we pursue these matters with the mind, however, we will be taken on a long journey which will lead us out of our way only, in the end, to return to our point of departure.

In the light of the latihan of Subud I understand Christ's words: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" to mean that one can only find the Self through the inner-feeling and the action of the power of God: and that the key is surrender.

But in the spiritual life, as has often been remarked, every step involves a death and a rebirth. Mr. Sudarto Martohudojo, one of Bapak's first helpers in Indonesia, reports an explanation given to him by Bapak after a bewildering experience:

*"It is true, son, that whilst we are walking in our spiritual path, we will often come across heartbreaking and frightening experiences.*

*"Therefore, the most important thing in following the latihan kejiwaan is to have great courage and conviction and to believe fully in the power of Almighty God.*

*"To reach the perfect state in the spiritual life, we have to undergo several processes of dying, that is, being dead whilst still being alive.*

*"Every time we die, we will experience being reborn, but in a higher or more perfect state, spiritually.*

*"To be able to pass these trials, one has to have great courage and conviction. If we are not strong enough to face this, the process of death and rebirth in the spirit cannot proceed smoothly". (6)*

On my first visit to the Subud Spiritual Centre at Cilandak, near Jakarta, in 1976, I had an experience which seems to be related to this process. It was unusually hot during that visit and, one afternoon, on waking from a siesta, I saw in front of me, not the wall of my room but an unfamiliar landscape. In the foreground were the stumps of what appeared to be burned-out trees, black and splintered. The rest of the landscape consisted of a yellow desert, like rolling sand dunes. The sky was covered by alternate red and white rays which emanated from a large white sun on the right. This sun was pulsating and after a few moments it expelled from its centre a tiny brown object which slowly revolved as it drew nearer until it revealed itself

as a brown human baby. Then the whole scene disappeared and my normal surroundings returned.

This seemed to me to be a symbolic representation of my own inner state, where the black elements represented the material content, the yellow desert the animal force, the red rays the vegetable force and the white sun, the human; while the brown baby clearly portrayed the birth of something new. This correlation of colour and influence is traditionally Javanese. There is a reference to these same colours in the "Lakon Dewarutji", a classical wayang play in which Bima meets his true self. (7) I have on several occasions heard Bapak refer to this Lakon to which he seems to attach importance. In it these colours refer to the forces in man, the black, red and yellow representing the sub-human forces.

This question of the four principal passions which constitute the ordinary human being has been clarified by Bapak as follows:

*"... the heart and mind are homes of the passions, which are four in number: the passion of greed (aluamah), the passion of wrath (amarah), the passion of desires (keinginan) and the passion of wisdom (kedjatmikaan). The latter means goodwill in giving and taking, and being unaffected by pleasure when praised or by sadness when criticised ..."* (8)

We have now reached a point where we stand at the frontier between the subject of birth and that which brings it about - the relations between men and women, or the trinity of man, woman and child. Before turning to this I would like to quote some words of Bapak which set all that we have been considering in their true perspective:

*"Brothers and Sisters, when you look at our life in this world,*



*it looks as if we came out of nothing, get born and have our life in this world, and then go back into nothing again.*

*”The truth, which you will know later, is that we come out of being and return to being. We come from reality and we return to reality.*

*”The true evidence of this, and the product of it, is the latihan kejiwaan.” (9)*

## CHAPTER II

# MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD

WE LIVE at a time when all traditional values have been widely called in question; when, for the majority, there are no longer moral certainties but only moral quicksands, or no morals at all; when no one, church or layman, speaks with authority; when there is no agreement among the learned and eminent upon questions of vital importance - vital, because the answers determine how we shall live our lives.

Nowhere is this collapse of values and standards more apparent than in the sphere of the relations between man and woman, of sex, marriage and the family. Divorce has been made easier and easier. Pre-marital sex - at a very early age - and contraception are commonplace. Abortion is being made legal in more and more countries. The sexual act has been devalued and widely degraded. Sexual 'freedom' is considered the normal prerogative of human beings. In general, this permissiveness, this 'emancipation', is held to be desirable, or at least inevitable. There is of course opposition to these tendencies, but it grows weaker as time goes by, if only because, in this world, it is easier to go down hill rather than to climb.

It is possible to discuss this question in historical, materialistic, sociological, religious or metaphysical terms, but I do not feel that this is the right way. Concealed under the abstract words there is too much

suffering, too much confusion, bewilderment and genuine doubt. There is also the problem of surviving, of simply coping with a life that grows yearly more complicated and more hazardous.

Before we condemn anything at all, we should know why we condemn it - it is not sufficient to do so because our fathers did so. And before we offer a solution we must know why it can solve the problem - it is not sufficient to quote an authority (if such can be found or admitted); we must be able to subject a claim to the test of experiment. This is especially true nowadays when people quite rightly refuse to take anything on trust or else - for we live in a world of opposites - are too gullible and uncritical. It is especially true if we wish to offer the young, who feel themselves deceived and betrayed, something honest and real.

In the introduction to this book I said that I would write about living in this world in the light of my experience of the latihan kejiwaan of Subud and, more especially, in the light of Bapak's explanations based upon this experience. Clearly, I do not expect anyone to take my statements on trust; but neither does Bapak Muhammad Subuh, who has frequently repudiated this kind of authority, urging us to be critical and to test everything for ourselves, because to be convinced we need the verification of personal experience. Therefore all that is said or quoted here is offered with this qualification: that it can and ought to be put to the test by anyone who is looking for evidence and is willing to submit to the simple commitment required of those who do the latihan kejiwaan. Equally and in all fairness, it ought not to be dismissed by those who have not undergone - or are unwilling to undergo - the experience.

To return to our subject. I believe it is still generally

held that men and women should marry and have children. What is very much in dispute is how they should live together and under what terms, and also if and how they should regulate the size and go about the upbringing of their families. Is marriage indissoluble and, if not, under what conditions should it be dissolved? This is closely linked to another question: "What is the purpose of marriage?"

In the past the purpose was held to be primarily the procreation and rearing of children - a purpose admirably realised by many species of bird and animal as well as by human beings. Mutual care and companionship were also recognised as ancillary purposes. Today the tendency is to reverse the priorities and give precedence to the mutual support and sexual satisfaction of the parties at the expense, very often, of the children's well-being or even, often enough, of their exclusion.

The quality of any society - of life on earth - depends on the quality of the men and women who inhabit it. If life here is to be good - or even tolerable - it is desirable that those born into this world should be of as high a quality as possible: a factor over which most people today suppose that they have no control and towards which, therefore, they have no responsibility.

In the last chapter we saw that the quality of the child we bring into the world depends upon our state and our attitude at the moment of conception - a state which is in fact twofold, involving our level as beings and our actual condition. Today, most of us are not concerned with, or even conscious of either of these facts. We say that we love someone when in reality we only want to sleep with them. In such a case we are being 'taken over' by our lower forces:

*”When these influence and rule the inner feeling of a man - his mind is unaware of this influence also - then he will pursue the satisfaction of his senses and desires, primarily in the way of sexual intercourse. But he does not seek for the real meaning and aim of this intercourse, nor look upon it as a command from God to be received by human beings; he will merely seek the satisfaction of his own desires. It is not, therefore, surprising that the result of such an intercourse is not what could be hoped for from beings of truly human stature. The result is that such a man and woman give birth to a human being with a jiwa belonging to a low level, which will in future bring misfortune upon the child.”*  
(1)

Evidently, when we act in this way, we cannot be blamed, for we are not conscious of our fault. In such a case our marriage - if our desire ends in marriage - is ordained by our hearts and minds in which these forces reside: it is not ordained by our truly human selves, or by a human jiwa. Such a marriage is not, from a spiritual point of view, a real marriage; it is a legal contract, and the institutions of civil marriage and the divorce court exist in unconscious recognition of this fact. Nevertheless, should the couple concerned desire to, and succeed in finding a way to purify themselves and raise the level of their inner selves, then such a marriage may become a true marriage, whereupon the question of its dissolubility no longer arises, for it is then, no matter how it began, a 'marriage made in heaven'. It is for this reason that Bapak advises those who have begun the training of the latihan not to seek divorce except in very rare instances: on the contrary, speaking at the wedding of two such people, he said:

*”So at present you feel you are able and willing to do anything. Feeling like that, you are willing to take responsibility and truly*

fulfil it. By that means you will eventually experience a balanced life.

*”There is good and there is bad, there is right and there is wrong, there is sufficiency and there is shortage. That is indeed the portion of human life on earth. No one living on earth just lives happily. No one. At times even the happy ones feel unhappy.*

*”So it is certain that people living on earth, married people living on earth, will experience ups and downs in their life. But all this must be taken into account; you must have the courage to be responsible in all this, or to recognise in earnest that it has to be so for mankind. Only for God is it not so.” (2)*

The degree of responsibility depends upon the degree of consciousness. Those able to enter upon a true marriage, although bound by a more binding contract, avoid the consequences of certain wrong actions and are therefore 'freer' than those who imagine they are 'free' to do as they please. Such people also feel free not to marry at all, but to follow their desires without considering others. Again there are those who, by inclination or for some other reason, prefer to remain unmarried and, lastly, there are those who, for religious reasons, remain celibate.

When asked to comment upon the large number of unmarried women in the world, Bapak replied:

*”Regarding this rather large number of women who are unmarried and/or allow themselves to become spinsters, Bapak cannot say whether this is good or not.*

*”Bapak says this because being unmarried results from their will and man usually wishes to be free in his or her actions and in exercising his or her will. Therefore, the judgement as to whether this is good or not should be left to the persons concerned. But from the point of view of Subud as it is based on the experiences received in the latihan kejiwaan, it is necessary that man should*

*marry, so that through marriage new human beings can be born to inhabit this earth ...*

*”The purpose served by marriage is that husband and wife should be able to experience and receive their own state of being before the human seed arrives, when it arrives, and when the child is eventually born. All this, Bapak would like to repeat, is for us in Subud the result of the experiences received in the latihan, and mentioning this does not imply criticism of others in any way.*

*”If he can really feel and receive, the renewal of experiences of this kind, through having a number of children, will enable man to know and understand his way of life.*

*”Those who have not arrived at this state still have plenty of time to make efforts to find a way in which they can receive a latihan kejiwaan from the power of God, as can be found in Subud, so that they may eventually come to know and understand what is the real purpose of marriage.” (3)*

The question of celibacy is different. Bapak has stated firmly that the convictions and decisions of others should be respected. It would therefore be quite out of place if I were to comment upon, for example, the desirability or otherwise, of religious celibacy. For those in Subud, however, and from the point of view of the experience of the latihan, celibacy, as a requirement or receiving of the inner-self is extremely rare. The reason is that men and women have been created to have children - this is obvious from their form, and so: ”A man who does not have a wife can be compared to a man who can write, but does not have anything to write on. He is in the same position as a man who does not know how to write at all.” (4)

To sum up at this point: we may conclude that the purpose of marriage is first, to produce children to people this world and, above all, children of a high quality, something which, after all, we can control

under the direction of the power of God. Secondly, it is so that men and women may experience, through sexual union, the truth of their existence, in terms of how they were before they were born and how they will be after they die: this can be an experience of bliss and, in itself, can provide a proof of our immortality and of another existence. The reason why these aims should be fulfilled in the context of marriage, why people should not simply 'shack up' together - to use a popular and expressive term - is because we have to take responsibility for the consequences of our actions before God and also before society, before our fellowmen, for what we do. The outer and the inner should be in harmony, just as a human body ought to be inhabited by a human jiwa. The reason why we should approach the sexual act with reverence and guided by the inner feeling and not by the heart and mind - the passions - is because, if it is carried out as willed by God, it is a sacred act, an act which leads to happiness, fulfilment and prosperity, whereas, if it is done as it so often is done, it brings with it, all too frequently, unhappiness, frustration and suffering:

*"Seen from the viewpoint of the heart, it looks as if it is a very easy matter.*

*"Because, who does not know how to do sexual intercourse? But generally, people do it carelessly, just like a man who eats when he is hungry. There are even some who already eat before they are hungry, just to follow their passion.*

*"Such action should be avoided, because it is evident that it is not moved by the inner feeling, but only by the passion or the will of the heart ...*

*"... Seen from the spiritual point of view, one may feel a very great sexual desire but, if this great sexual desire is caused by a rakshasa nafsu (a wayang character, representing a great but low*



passion) which engenders fire, such desire should be quenched entirely.

”When this *rakshasa nafs* has been destroyed, there will come a *kesatria*, that is, the *wayang* figure which symbolises the true human being or the true inner self, that comes up and moves the male sexual organ.

”To be clearer, brothers, the way to become noble in *jiwa* is through the sexual union between man and woman; but this act can also cause man to fall into the abyss if he performs it in the wrong way.” (5)

We really have no idea of the consequences of our actions! How many of us imagine they may fall into the abyss as a result of sleeping with a woman? Or consider themselves responsible for a delinquent?

”*Bapak* would like to give the following example, concerning ‘A’ and ‘B’. ‘A’ is a man, ‘B’ is a woman. ‘A’ has a very bad character, in other words, he always likes to quarrel, to hit other people, and has no feeling of compassion towards his fellowmen; he also likes to put others in the wrong.

”Such behaviour brings into existence a lens in the inner life which is very bad. When the man has sexual union with his wife, there is created a seed of man, the nature of a new human being, that will be born from this union. But this union makes possible an imprint or a place which can open the way for the material force only. Only the material force can enter into it; a higher force than this cannot enter because the lens in the inner life is too narrow.

”Let us take the simplest example, not speaking of the *jiwa*, but only of the heart. For instance, in the case of a marriage: the husband knows his wife has been pregnant just one or two months; one of this couple hates someone. The child that is born will resemble the character of the hated person at least 50% or almost entirely. Therefore *Bapak* hopes that those of you who are still young during such a time never have the feeling of hatred towards anyone.

*”On the other hand, those who feel respect, kindness and love towards someone, are not so much influenced by it, and the child that is born will at the most resemble up to 10% the condition of the person towards whom one has a loving feeling. For, between the power of kindness and the power of hatred, the stronger one is hatred. Truly, the power of hatred is like something that is burning; it really boils, because it burns with the flaming fire of nafsu (passion), whereas kindness towards people is without passion and so its force is less.*

*”This is only to serve as an example to make clear something that man can comprehend in the ordinary way with his thinking. The fault which lies in the jiwa, however, is deeper and finer, so that the thinking and the heart of man cannot comprehend it. Therefore the fault of the jiwa which is within us cannot possibly be improved unless it is by God Himself, for God is the Creator, God is the craftsman of all creation.” (6)*

On the other hand if sex, the sexual act, is approached and performed as God wills, that is, as an act of worship, it is transformed from a transitory pleasure into something wonderful and miraculous, something able not only to produce noble children, but to bring joy and wholeness and nobility into the characters and lives of those who perform it. It also brings with it the possibility of real freedom, of being able to order our lives in a new, wider and more fruitful way, to be corrected when we go wrong and, even, to be able to choose the nature of the child whom we desire.

All these possibilities are strikingly illustrated by the experiences of the Subud member, already mentioned, Mr. Sudarto Martohudojo who, while he was receiving these experiences in his married life, was fortunate enough to be living near Bapak and was thus able to receive explanations concerning the various aspects of his experience.

For example, one day, when his wife was two months

pregnant, he was called to Bapak's house. When he arrived, "I saw that Bapak was cleaning a big flower-pot. After looking more carefully, I saw that there was a picture of a baby boy in the middle of the flower-pot and that Bapak was cleaning the baby's picture. At that moment I received an indication that what Bapak was doing symbolised the condition of myself and my family." (7)

Bapak asked Sudarto to wait in the sitting-room and then, after a question about Subud, told him the following story from the wayang version of the Mahabharata:

*"Once upon a time, there was a young man who came to Ardjuna and claimed to be his son. Ardjuna refused to recognise him. They became involved in a dispute and finally fought each other. It seemed that Ardjuna used all the weapons he possessed to try to kill him, but even with all his weapons he did not succeed.*

*"Finally Ardjuna had to recognise the young man as his son, because only his son could stand against his weapons." (8)*

Sudarto remembered his wife's pregnancy and understood the meaning of Bapak's message. He returned home and told his wife all that he had experienced. They both did latihan. In his latihan Sudarto received that he should go to his wife. "She was worried and afraid. She told me that during her latihan she saw a knight fighting a huge giant, and finally the knight succeeded in killing the giant with a dagger. The strange thing was that at the moment the knight plunged the dagger into the giant's chest, my wife felt as if the child within her was also pierced with a dagger." That night Sudarto's wife had a haemorrhage and the next morning she had a miscarriage. After three days she was allowed home from hospital which surprised the doctors as ten days is the usual period in such cases.

”Another strange thing was that the doctor’s bill was for exactly the amount of money I possessed at that time.”

Sudarto told all this to Bapak, who said: ”Bapak gives praise to God that you could receive what Bapak meant. Bapak has told you several times that sexual union is a sacred act, because at that time one becomes the channel of God for the bringing into existence of a child. Therefore you should be careful not to come to your wife driven by passion. If this may be compared to a man who writes, your first writing was not correct, therefore it was wiped out by your inner self.” (9)

After a time Sudarto had another deep experience:

*”One night I felt as if my head was enveloped by a very nice sensation. It had become my habit to do a latihan if anything unusual happened to me. During this latihan, I felt as if my inner-self was entirely changed. It was as if another soul was entering into me, filling my entire being and a lovely sensation enveloped my body. Then this feeling moved, very slowly and smoothly. It became concentrated in my sexual organ and there developed a very powerful sexual urge within me. My body began to simulate sexual movements.” (10)*

After three such experiences, Sudarto still did not know their meaning and went to Bapak for clarification. Bapak laughed and gave the following explanation:

*”The aim of these experiences was to give you a lesson in writing - writing living words with a living pen in a living book. The pleasant sensation which you felt flowing within you was actually the human seed. This was actually an opportunity given to you to know the character and behaviour of the child.*

*”As a child comes into the world through his father, so the father ought to know the character and behaviour of the coming*

child. In this way, he can refuse to receive a seed of low quality and receive the seed if it is of good quality.

*"If you observe carefully when you experience such a feeling, you will notice that your wife also shares this same feeling. If you and your wife come together under these conditions, then this is an act moved and willed by God. At the same time, you will also receive a powerfully lovely feeling.*

*"Most people are intoxicated by the sweet sensations during the sexual act and so forget themselves. Those in whom the latihan has penetrated deeply enough will finally be able to stand and pass through this intoxicating sensation and will even be able to observe where this comes from and to control it. Most parents are so absorbed during the sexual act that they cannot differentiate or choose the good seeds from the bad ones.*

*"Therefore it is no wonder that among children of clever people, with high positions in society, there are some who commit indecent acts and even crimes." (11)*

Some time later Sudarto again experienced that 'peculiar and lovely feeling'. At midnight his wife came to him and said that she too had been enveloped by the same feeling.

"Then I remembered what Bapak had told me. When performing the sacred task, both my wife and myself were surprised because, besides being enveloped by an unusually glorious feeling, we both felt as if we were not in our bedroom, but somewhere else - out of this world. All about us, everywhere we looked, we saw various kinds of flowers which gave forth a very fragrant smell, and the stars seemed to be very close to us. When the sacred task had been completed, then the sensation began to fade, and all these visions grew dull and finally disappeared.

"I was not sleepy at all that night, and in the morning I felt very fit and fresh and had more enthusiasm and

power to work with than was usual.

”After relating all of this to Bapak, he gave me the following commentary:

*”Indeed, son, at that time you were not in this world. This was indeed necessary so that, in performing the sacred task, you would not be disturbed and affected by the satanic beings.\* Bapak gives praise to God that you have received such an experience, and this could also increase Bapak’s own confidence. It means that Bapak will have more confidence in what he has received if other Subud members also receive similar experiences, even if they are not of the same measure ...*

*”It is necessary to add that if a sexual act is moved by the passions, then after the act the persons concerned will feel as if their strength is diminished, and in fact their strength really does decrease. If the sexual act is moved by the jiwa, then after the completion of the act, the persons concerned will not miss any strength or power. On the contrary, they will feel more than normally fit and fresh. That is why the Islamic religion allows a man to have four wives. But in fact, this could only be applied to those who have really reached the perfect human stage, which is called Insan Kamil, because the spiritual power of a perfect human soul is four times that of the normal human power.” (12)*

Sudarto’s wife became pregnant, and he again sought Bapak’s advice:

*”It is better that during the pregnancy of your wife you should not go out of your house too often and only if it is really necessary.” (13)*

He followed this advice strictly. One night, when doing his latihan he had a vision of his home with its various rooms; but the arrangement of the furniture was different. The next morning he rearranged it as he had

\* i.e. Material forces.

seen it in his vision and, as a result, his wife became more peaceful and more diligent in carrying out her worship of God. She, too, had a vision, in latihan, of seven kinds of vegetables and, during the following week, cooked in turn each of the seven vegetables she had seen. When told of these things, Bapak explained:

*''What you have done is right and you should continue in this way. Such is the way of God in giving His guidance to you both in your domestic and family life. If, during this time, you often left the house for unimportant matters, then you would not have been able to receive this guidance.*

*''These experiences are actually God's guidance to both of you in educating the child that is still in his mother's womb. It is most important to give the proper food which the baby needs for its growth and also to maintain a peaceful atmosphere in the house ... If you could fulfil these two conditions, the baby which is still in the mother's womb will derive the most benefit and this is actually the way to educate a baby before it is born. Besides, you should always be patient and you must not take an interest in, and do, improper things. You should always follow the guidance which you receive during the latihan and you should have faith that God will always give you His guidance when it is really needed.''* (14)

To end, Sudarto gives an example of the protection granted to those who surrender:

*''One evening, without any apparent reason, my wife went to sleep at five o'clock and slept very deeply. I was rather surprised since it was not her habit to do so. Then I discovered the reason. While my wife slept, a terrible accident occurred. One of our neighbour's children fell from a tall tree. Many people screamed, and it was a chaotic situation. I gave praise to God that my wife was spared from being witness to this horrible accident. In this way the baby in her womb was saved from the influence of the*

*shock that might have occurred had my wife witnessed this tragic event.” (15)*

Here it may be objected that I have chosen a special and unrepresentative case, but this is not altogether so. Such experiences have not been confined to Sudarto and his wife. What is special in this instance is first, that these experiences took place while the couple concerned were living near Bapak and so were able to receive, at every stage, his enlightening explanations and, secondly, that Sudarto wrote about them and published his account, so that we can all benefit.

But it is true that such experiences are still rather rare because they depend on the quality of the people concerned and also on their degree of surrender. It is also true that experiences of quite a different kind are encountered - marriages which suffer setbacks and difficulties, loss and suffering, although the partners are doing the latihan. Because marriage, for most of us, as Bapak has said, "is truly a test for the life of the bride and bridegroom, because neither for a woman with a husband nor for a man with a wife is it a smooth journey, but one of much difficulty." (16)

Of course, guidance about the nature of marriage can be received in very different and often less spectacular ways. My son, who joined Subud, quite independently, soon after I did, and while he was living in Italy, had a dream in which he and his wife were looking for a house to live in. They were shown over a number of Tuscan farmhouses. On a table in the living-room of one of these, a rather tumble-down building, there was a sewing-machine. It was made of gold and, as my son examined it, he saw that it was made with a technology far in advance of anything known on earth and therefore must have come from beyond this world. He



said to the agent, "If this goes with the house, then we'll take it."

A sewing-machine joins things together and therefore, in this instance, symbolises marriage. And this one is made of the precious metal gold, and by a super-human technology, because the true marriage is made in heaven and not on earth.

## CHAPTER III

# THE WAY INTO LIFE

IN OUR FIRST chapter we found that the character of a child is determined at conception. This does not mean that we cannot be influenced or affected by our upbringing, our schooling and our environment in general; of course we can be, and are: but it does mean that our essential nature is so determined, so that, in a crisis, or under extreme pressure, this nature, irrespective of subsequent training or living conditions, will reveal and manifest itself.

I also believe, because this has been my experience, that we cannot change ourselves, by which I mean our essential selves; only our Creator can do this, if we desire such change and if we are prepared to submit ourselves to the process. We can, however, change ourselves externally, so that we appear different to others; we can create or acquire a persona, but this will not survive the great tests, such as deep suffering, marriage, or war. Likewise we cannot basically change our children by taking thought or making efforts, but only through our worship of God if we have indeed found a way, such as exists in Subud, which can show us how to worship, through submission and experience rather than through external observance and what is called 'faith'.

In this world the normal period of growth is from conception through birth, childhood and youth, to

adulthood and theoretical maturity; but each of these general phases can be subdivided. The biologists tell us that the embryo passes through the several stages of evolution in its growth from the fertilised cell to the human baby - that we are, as it were, plants, fishes and mammals before we emerge as homo sapiens. Spiritual experience confirms this process, although it expresses it differently:

*''Bapak has said that an unborn baby passes through nine different natures: the nature of material objects (one month's pregnancy) when the baby has a form like a thing: the nature of plants (two months' pregnancy) when the baby has a form like a plant: the nature of animals (three months' pregnancy) when the baby has a form like an animal: the nature of a human being (four months' pregnancy) when the baby has the form of a human being, but is still incomplete: the nature of feeling (five months' pregnancy) when the baby has the form of a human being, and the sexual organs are now visible: the nature of the inner feeling (six months' pregnancy) when the baby has the form of a human being, and the sexual organs and heart, including blood vessels, are visible: the nature of a complete human being (seven months' pregnancy) when the baby has the form of a human being, and the sexual organs, heart, including the blood vessels, brain and nervous system are visible: the nature of perfecting the inner parts (eight months' pregnancy) such as bones, organs, senses, etc., and the nature of perfecting the outer parts (nine months' pregnancy) such as nails, hair, etc.''* (1)

The influences which are brought to bear on the unborn child through the parents; the influences of early childhood through upbringing and environment and the child-parent relationship, and the influences of education are all considered of the greatest importance today by all who give serious consideration to anything at all: but opinions are very much divided on many

aspects of this process. We are all concerned that our children should grow up to be beautiful, healthy, intelligent and successful, but we all know that in very many cases these aims are very difficult to achieve; we do not really know what to do and so we often seem powerless to influence the course of events: we are simply rather puzzled spectators, sometimes pleased and happy; as often bewildered and sad. In fact, as we have seen, by the time we are faced with the problem of bringing up and educating a child the foundations have already - and without our conscious participation - been laid. The best we can hope to do is influence, alleviate, correct or encourage, as the case may be, but in the nature of things this action cannot go very deep, at least, it cannot go to the root of the matter. It can be otherwise, however, if we can find a way to receive guidance from within, through renewing the lost contact with our true Self, wherein real help and true knowledge is to be found. Because, just as a child below a certain age is not held to be legally responsible - (his or her parents are responsible before our man-made law) - so, spiritually speaking, "children from birth to puberty are the responsibility of their parents, both as regards their life on earth and also the life after death... Therefore, if the parents work - that is, if they really come to the worship of God and are able to receive the contact with the Power of God... that means that as well as the purification of their own defects, those of their children are also purified." (2)

These problems are compounded for us in our day because of the vastly greater number of external influences which touch our lives, especially on account of the proliferation of the media. We are bombarded through books, newspapers, films, radio and television and we are concerned, most of us, with the effects of all

this upon our children. At the same time, we want our children to grow up to take their place in society, to lead 'normal' lives; we do not feel free - even if we are able - to bring them up to be misfits and eccentrics. If we can find our way to receive true guidance, however, then, "... there is no need to be concerned or worried about your children. Your own exercises, although they may appear to be yours alone, will also affect your close relations." (3)

In other respects, and within reason, we can therefore do as others in society do, and behave 'normally'. Even so, we ought to resist the more extreme forms of 'permissiveness' if only out of what is called enlightened self-interest, since it is clear for all to see that their fruits are bitter. As Bapak has commented:

*"With regard to the bringing up of children there are two ways. The first is by precept and example, by giving them good advice in accordance with the teachings of religion and all that is really good and sound in human laws and customs. The second way, which is even stronger and which can have a really deep effect on them, comes from your spiritual exercises; as Bapak said earlier, these will influence the jiwa of your children in such a way that their characters are changed without their being aware of it."*  
(4)

We are still in that period of growth between birth and puberty when children are in every sense the responsibility of their parents. It is during this period that we have to consider the question of education and schooling. True, most of us do not have much choice in the matter nowadays - unless we are rich, our children will pass through the gates of the primary and end up in the comprehensive, the university or the technical college. But we must not complain for this situation is of our own making. In any case we can, if we are

fortunate, bring an inner and, if necessary, corrective influence to bear:

*"With regard to the question of sending children to school, and of the kind of education they require, their education and the curriculum they follow should be like that of other children; that is, it should be in accordance with the laws and customs of the respective countries in which they live ... You must not be worried about this, though, since you - the parents of the children - are following the latihan kejiwaan of Subud; you are strong and have the power to prevent the pressure of outside influences which might damage the jiwa of your children, as Bapak has said."* (5)

Bapak then went on to say that if we are able to found Subud schools in which the teachers are people who follow the latihan, then the curriculum would be just the same as in any other school, in accordance with the laws of the country: the vital difference would consist in the influence of teachers who were themselves being guided and directed by the latihan. (6)

It is with the onset of puberty and during the years that follow that most of our difficulties, as parents or as adolescents, arise. This is indeed a time of momentous consequence and far more so than we normally realise:

*"... When the young being reaches the threshold of puberty and becomes able to have the experience of love, a powerful life force descends upon him or her to accomplish the development of maturity. This is why it is taught in every religion that it is only when the child attains puberty that the worship of God becomes obligatory for him; up to that time the responsibility rests with his parents. That this time has come can be seen when a boy begins to find pleasure in the sight of a woman or a girl begins to enjoy the sight of a man. It is clear, therefore, that until then the responsibility remains with the parents to receive a change in the level of the jiwa of the child - and this is as it should be - but after*

*they have reached maturity, the responsibility rests directly upon the young man or woman.” (7)*

The difficulties we have - and the sufferings and loneliness that, through our ignorance and incomprehension we inflict on the bewildered young - are largely due to this misapprehension concerning human development:

*”It is said in all religions that after the age of puberty a man should be responsible and stand on his own feet. He then has the obligation himself to worship God, and he is no longer the responsibility of his parents.*

*”If a child is developing rightly, he reaches puberty at about fifteen years of age; and therefore after reaching this age children may marry. But man has his own laws, and considers such marriages to be premature: under these laws it is held that man should not marry until about the age of eighteen; while among the richer and better-educated, it is usually not considered desirable to marry until after twenty-one.*

*”This shows that man has made his own laws in place of the laws of nature. God does indeed allow free-will to man, who is responsible for all he does, but in fact man has gone astray and departed from the Will and Desire of God. If then, man has followed a wrong way, he should be responsible; that is, he should be able to correct the faults and mistakes into which he has fallen.” (8)*

For many of us the beginning of school life is our first prolonged contact with society, with an outside and often hostile world. The desire to conform is a general phenomenon; it is imposed upon us, but it in one way corresponds to an inner need which is none other than to find the right way into life. What is so important about this feeling is what we desire or are required to conform to: when man’s customs and conventions are not based

upon inner truth - or only upon the degenerate remnants of it - then great damage to the inner life may result. Hence the rebellion and antisocial behaviour which is so much a feature of our life today: it is an unconscious protest against the forcible distortion or destruction of personality, matching violence with violence, a violence which our society hypocritically condemns at the same time as it nourishes it.

Among the worst manifestations of this discordance is the widespread use of drugs, which, for the most part, are used either as a means to escape from intolerable tensions (narcotic) or as a means of transcendence (hallucinatory). The first leads to almost certain and devastating addiction and the second to experiences of doubtful or at least relative validity. The significance of a transcendental experience depends upon who and what we are. To a man at the material level of being an experience of the plant world, via mushrooms, cacti, or whatever, may seem 'heavenly' whereas to one at the animal level it would seem to be the opposite. Such means of transcending ordinary life would appear to be prohibited for another reason, that they damage the physical body and even more the brain. In addition they often produce behaviour which is self-destructive or indiscriminatingly aggressive. What are we to think of a tree that bears such fruits? And of course we are concerned that our children should not take this path or, if they have done so, that they should be rescued before it is too late.

There seems to be only one way - through contact with and submission to the great force of life, the Power of God. Through this our children may be protected from these influences or, if they are already affected by them, may be rescued from them. Beyond that, there is nothing to do but have recourse to whatever treatments



may be available in the ordinary way, through the medical profession, clinics and hospitals. Drug addicts have been cured through the latihan, although brain damage cannot be repaired. I feel that the most important aspect is that it - the latihan - provides both the relief from tension and the experience of transcendence, that is, it provides the experience which those who have recourse to drugs were seeking, but in a normal and authentic form.

If children are under the age at which they may receive the contact and do latihan - 17 years old - and if they are affected by drugs, then:

*"... the method of helping them must be a way that is commonly used, that is, they should be helped by medical specialists... If they are cured, then just make an effort to find a way that these children do not return to their habit of using drugs... They should be given the understanding of the reasons and results of drug abuse in a deep and profound way... If this help is carried out by Subud members, as we already do in the latihan, so in an indirect way it is possible to influence these children greatly..." (9)*

In contrast to such ways of seeking release, the latihan is normal and ordinary, hallmarks of the true spiritual life. As Bapak once remarked, 'God is normal'. It is we and our society which is abnormal and extraordinary. It is by a return to reality that we must find our way through the wood.

Neither the religious teachers nor the secular educators have been able to find satisfactory answers to these problems. It is not that their precepts are necessarily wrong, but that they lack inner content. Why should we accept statements on faith, because they are made by a priest or an expert? We have witnessed so many horrors, so many broken promises. Nowadays we

want not precept, but proof. We will not believe that sugar is sweet unless we have tasted it. If the religions have, for a majority, 'failed', it is not because their teachings are wrong - or even out of date - but because they have lost contact with their source; they have the lamp but there is no oil in it, so how can it give light?

In the same sense, if I quote Muhammad Subuh in answer to these vital questions, it is not because I expect his explanations to be taken on faith, but because I know that they can be put to the proof. 'Seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.' (10)

*"God is all-just and all-wise; He knows the needs of man, including the need to receive clear indications from Him, so that human beings may be saved from falling even further from the level of the true human jiwa.*

*"There is, in reality, no time at which man does not receive the guidance of God, provided that he can really quieten the activity of his heart, feelings and thoughts and thus be able to become fully aware of his being, his actions and his deeds; for the Power of God envelops the whole being of man." (11)*

Today education amounts to the acquisition of sufficient information and training to enable one to earn a living in society as it is at present constituted, according to whatever aptitudes one may have shown during the course of one's school career. At all times education has a particular orientation, according to the needs of the society which provides it. (In 19th century England, for example, education was oriented towards the production of colonial administrators.) It is therefore restricted in its scope, although today efforts are being made to extend this. But the initiative still comes from the wrong place and therefore cannot lead the pupil to the discovery of himself or of his real

resources: thus, though some succeed, many fall by the wayside:

*”Education as it is now is based on the nafsu. Bapak hopes that before long we will see a new kind of education based on the jiwa, the true individuality of each person - not on the nafsu. Bapak knows that, in a small way, this has been started. Perhaps it is in California or England that there are already Subud schools which are beginning to pioneer in this direction. Maybe it’s not the real thing, but it’s starting to go in that direction.*

*”In one of the schools, perhaps, they may set out before a child various fields of study or areas of learning and let the child choose what he likes. Well, Bapak says that this is not really ideal yet, because this choosing is still not based on the jiwa. This method is a step forward; but Bapak hopes that, sooner or later, it will be possible to have a school where the subjects that the children will do will be based on their jiwias, their individualities. Then when they grow up, they will no longer be in a state where they feel useless in society and reach a kind of dead end where they become becalmed in their life; where they’ve studied something and become skilled at it and then find that it’s not something they can really excel at, and, for this reason, never succeed at anything.”*  
(12)

But then Bapak carried this explanation much further, on into adult life and out into the world:

*”Because we have not yet got this education, Bapak emphasises that we should do enterprises. Bapak doesn’t mean by enterprises that you all become traders or merchants or that all of you find your living through sitting in an office at a desk and doing sums or something like that. That’s not what Bapak is saying. Enterprise is what there is within you that you are good at; what there is within you that is your real talent. You find that out and you do it. That’s enterprise.*

*”The qualities of faith in God and love for our fellow human*

*beings are the essentials, the ingredients, needed to find the key to the development of our inner being, our nature and our true talent in this world. This is why Bapak reminds you that you have to do something related to looking after your fellow human beings; something charitable; something demonstrating a social responsibility. That's God's will. It's the way to a world at peace; a prosperous world; a just world. Add to the word social, the word democracy and you reach an image or picture of a society where there is a true and just sharing of all the benefits received from Almighty God. A society where prosperity is enjoyed by everyone. Social democracy, in short. This is the way God wills it to be.” (13)*

I remember reading about a man who had spent many years in prison for robbery with violence. In prison he had taken up painting for which he discovered a real talent and in which he found fulfilment and satisfaction. In his article this man described how now, on his release, he was going to make a career as a painter, how he was already preparing to hold an exhibition and how, as soon as he had begun to paint in prison, all violent feelings had left him. Instead he felt self-respect and self-confidence, and the peace which comes from the exercise of one's rightful work.

It is also easy to understand the connection between this form of education, based on true individuality and talent, and social democracy, because work no longer carries with it social overtones, no stigma and no 'status', and because those who are fulfilled feel able and willing to help and guide others.

For most of us this is still the realm of the ideal. There probably exist obstacles to its realisation. For example, we may not be ready to live and work according to our true talent; or our circumstances may be such as to preclude its development. Economic necessity may tie

us to an existing job, for one does not become a painter overnight and, meantime, we have to eat. These are things we have to accept, while awaiting the opportunity to move in the right direction:

*"... it will not take place in a short time, and it is not easy to achieve. On the contrary, it will take some time because it also depends upon the strength of your inner self which has just begun to grow."* (14)

And Bapak goes on to liken the process to the growth of plants which can only bear fruit when they have grown big and strong.

We should not be surprised that there is so much unhappiness, bewilderment and frustration in modern life. To be able to act according to what we are is really vitally important to our well-being, to the whole course of our life:

*"Maybe you do certain work. Do you do it because you have been drawn to it by other people, even though you are not specially talented for it? This happens to many people, whose lives are unhappy even though they have plenty of money, a high position and good fortune. This is because what they receive is not in harmony with what they do in life.*

*"... the latihan kejiwaan leads you to know your inner-self, your own inner nature. That means, you will come to know what your real talent is, how you should live and how you should work at something in harmony with your feelings and your jiwa."* (15)

This does not mean that if one begins to do the latihan all one's life problems will be solved. It may take a long time for one even to be able to find the right path. It all depends upon the state of the person and upon his capacity for surrender. But, because it provides evidence, it also brings hope:

*"Now, with the advent of the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, we*

come to the time of receiving evidence, by being able to experience the existence of the One God.

*"You can already experience this and have reached the level of evidence, but you do not yet know enough about the life of the jiwa and the state of the jiwa.*

*"If a man already knows the origin of his jiwa, he will not get lost; no. As with birds, every bird flies out early in the morning and of course finds food. But if a man goes off every morning, he is not certain to find food. Some day he does not find food to eat. Why? Because he has lost his way, he has gone in the wrong direction. Why does he go wrong? Because he imitates all sorts of ways and means in order to find food, in order to find his direction." (16)*

It may be objected that birds - and animals - are 'programmed' and therefore do not have the same problem: but so are we, only we are, most of us, unable to contact our inner data banks. Psychological and aptitude tests may achieve a great deal, but they cannot touch the inner self; for example, they would conclude that Tarzan was the son of an ape - we will ignore the purely physiological aspect - whereas he is in fact a human being. (17) Only a way which can lead us to the discovery of our true inner selves can connect us with the source of real guidance and knowledge or, conversely, "... an action whose source is not the inner-self both endangers and darkens the course of life". (18)

By the time we reach adulthood we ought to be able to have found - and helped our children to find - the right direction in which to go to live rightly in this world. But there are two distinct sides to our nature: the spiritual and eternal, or the Self; and the earthly and temporal, or the Ego. Bapak has repeated with insistence, that we are not put into this world with bodies, hearts, minds, faculties and abilities for no

reason; they are there to be developed and used to the full and ought not to be allowed to atrophy. And their development and use is our responsibility:

*”What we have been given for fulfilling the needs of our life in this world is our heart and mind. Almighty God knows that in living here in the world our need is not only to worship Him and then return once again to heaven or our world of origin. God knows that we also need to maintain ourselves here on earth and to fulfil all the needs of our bodies and our worldly lives. For this God has given us our intelligence and ability to make and provide all we need.*

*”So do not make the mistake of thinking that just by doing the latihan you will be able to achieve glory and greatness in this world. Do not imagine that simply by doing the latihan you will acquire a nice house, nice clothes, a big car and all the other nice things we may like to have here.*

*”Because the latihan only gives us the guidance. It shows the way to follow in our life - a way leading out of this world and into the next.*

*”Our needs for life in this world must be fulfilled by the use of our heart, mind and nafsu which we have been given by Almighty God for that express purpose.” (19)*

As regards the other side of us, the spiritual and eternal: this is something we cannot provide for by taking thought or exercising our will. Here, we have only to surrender:

*”... we have received something which can be called the content of everything. This ‘content of everything’ gives us a life-within-our-life which reminds us of our connection with the power of God. It provides us with a bridge between us and Almighty God ... By God’s will we have been able to receive the closeness of the Power of Almighty God within our own being. The way we receive this is something we do not even need to think*

*about in order to follow it, because it is the work of Almighty God.*

*"It is Almighty God Himself who makes us, who guides us step by step in the way in which we have to go in order to return once again to Him.*

*"This is something you can confirm for yourselves." (20)*

There are human beings now - and history also provides many examples - who have known from an early age exactly what they wanted and were able to do: they have we say, a 'vocation'. They are very fortunate. And there are also those who have intuitively or consciously understood the dual nature of man and his consequent duties and responsibilities. The 'way into life' is not simply a matter of acquiring a balanced personality, a good education and a knowledge of the kind of work and way of life which is in accordance with the individuality. The way into life - and perhaps this is the most important stepping-stone on this way - involves also an acceptance of oneself as one is, an acceptance of life in all its diversity, in its ugly as well as in its beautiful aspects, an acceptance of guilt and suffering as well as of serenity and joy as the price we have to pay for being alive here; an acceptance of the one-ness of Life and of our kinship with - and responsibility towards - all living things; an acceptance above all of our common humanity, of our fellow-men and women, and of our obligation to live as members of this common body. We have to accept, and to find our way into life by consciously taking on responsibility according to our capacity. This may be achieved in many ways, some great and some small - by a heroic deed, for example, or by marriage and parenthood; by dedicated creative work, or discovery; by assuming a position in society or by simple service to the



community; last but not least, by love. Life is a gift for which we must pay and pay willingly. Life does not owe us anything: it is the other way round. The way into life is found through commitment.

*”The best and most fitting way to live is by working to meet the needs of your existence by bringing the feelings throughout your body to life, so that every part of it feels responsible for your role as a human being, whose specialised parts together form a unity.*

*”That way is best and really fitting for the life of a noble creature, and it also enables him to fulfil his commitment to put his life in order and meet its every need, both inner and outer...”*  
(21)

## CHAPTER IV

# WORK AND WEALTH

FOR MOST OF US the greater part of our adult life must be taken up with earning our daily bread, and our choice of occupation is often very limited. Those who have a discernible talent and have been able to develop it hope that they may be able to combine the two and earn their living by doing what they love to do; yet it is not always possible and they do not always succeed. Either way, it is essential for all of us to have enough money to live on.

Since money-making, for its own sake or for the sake of something better, plays such a large part in all our lives, it is very important to understand the action of the various life forces that act upon us. I have already quoted a general explanation of the nature of these forces from a talk given by Bapak, but in the present context I feel that it is necessary to go into this in more detail, the more so as the subject is altogether unfamiliar.

Today, most people are not even aware of the existence of such forces, still less of their function, and yet they play a dominant part in all our worldly activities, in many cases so dominant a part that they exclude the development of our inner selves, without which, all the same, we cannot receive genuine guidance:

*"The reason why a man who devotes himself entirely to money-making has no time for the worship of God and lacks the*

*inner serenity that comes from a feeling of thankfulness towards Him, is because the whole of such a man's being is completely dominated by the material forces. It can be said that for such a man material possessions are his God. But those of you who have begun gradually to be able to distinguish between the various forces acting within you will become aware by degrees and feel the way in which material forces should be associated with material objects. You will also see how vegetable forces go with the vegetable world, animal forces with the animal world, human forces with the human world and that the perfect human jiwa - the Rochani - goes straight to God and worships Him." (1)*

Of course a man dominated by material forces - if he be also intelligent and energetic - may be very successful indeed, make a fortune and rise 'high' in society; but he achieves this success at great cost to himself in other respects and, in the process, will probably have caused great harm and suffering to his fellow-men:

*"To give you a little understanding of the nature of these lower jiwias occupying man's being, Bapak will give as an example the material jiwa: when a man is under the dominion of the material forces his character - character is defined as the spontaneous actions which man's heart and mind can neither prevent nor comprehend - is such that he likes to humiliate others or to hurt them and then blame them or other people; nor will he acknowledge decency in other people's conduct; he is always right and he must have his way, and in this his nature is like that of a material object, which knows no friends left or right, but pursues its own existence regardless." (2)*

As this explanation constitutes a succinct outline of a psychology of types, I feel it would be as well to continue it with Bapak's further explanation of the characteristics of the next three levels of life:

*"Then there is the vegetable jiwa, which is higher on the ladder*

of life than the material jiwa. When the vegetable jiwa holds sway in man's inner being, he is characterised by greed, so that he pursues his own interest and works for his own benefit alone, without scruples or feelings of pity when seeing his friend miserable, humiliated, or suffering. All he cares for is to gain the upper hand in a struggle." (3)

That such is the state of the vegetable world we may observe for ourselves by considering any patch of vegetation or, for example, a wood, where the plants or trees compete ruthlessly for the life-giving sunlight or, in the other direction, spread their roots in search of nutrients or water with what, in the human world, would be considered total selfishness. That, nevertheless, an ecological balance is usually achieved when natural processes are left to themselves is due to an overall control exercised from beyond this earth and even from beyond the atmosphere - from the sun, for example, and from the relative size, position and motion of the earth itself. To continue:

*"Third comes the animal jiwa, which is yet higher than the material and vegetable jiwās. When the animal jiwa governs man's inner being, he will be characterised - again without being aware of it, for his whole character is truly permeated by this force throughout - by a tendency to pursue and to work for his pleasure and the gratification of his own feelings, particularly in the sexual relationship between man and woman. He is fond of sexual intercourse without giving a thought to the consequences.*

*"Fourth is the jasmani or human force. When this force dominates man's inner being, his character will tend to set store by his brain and mind, to take pride in his intelligence; consequently he will have no faith in the greatness of God or in God himself, in other words he has no faith, in God who yet made him and gave him life in this world.*

*"The fifth force is called rochaniah,, and is the force characte-*

*ristic of a creature higher than ordinary man, that is of a perfect being. When this force reigns in man's inner being, he is, throughout his life, constantly mindful of the greatness of God, of the Almighty God Who created him; his life, therefore, contains many moments in which he can receive the gift of God in the measure in which he is able to receive it.” (4)*

Although so many dangers and temptations beset us on our way this does not mean that we should try to avoid them by, for example, retiring to a hermitage in the forest or going 'back to nature'. We are obliged to fulfil our worldly obligations which means that we must, first, find a way which will enable us to know and distinguish between these various forces that are always active within us and, secondly, learn to master and use them for our own benefit and that of our families and fellowmen. Thus we should learn to deal with money and material objects by using the material forces; with plants and vegetable food, by using the vegetable forces; to relate to animals by using the animal forces; to human beings by using the human forces; and to live our spiritual life with the help of forces higher than the human.

In a word, all we do in life ought to be accompanied by worship. In this way we will not only be purified and protected from the lower forces, but guided in their proper use. If we can live in this way, as becomes possible by receiving such an exercise as exists in Subud, then we will see the false basis of the antagonism between the religions and the intellectuals, for, "... To live in this way, as in Subud, can demonstrate that both the spiritual and intellectual protagonists, who mutually despise one another, are wrong; because neither the one nor the other can yet make use of what is present in them.” (5)

Therefore no one should be blamed or despised for

wanting to make money. We cannot live, or do anything worth while without it. What matters is, first, how it is made and secondly, what we do with it when we have it.

The popular caricature of the tycoon has caused money-making to be held in small repute, especially by those who do not have very much. Yet among many undoubtedly ruthless and selfish types are to be found men who, having made vast fortunes, use them to endow hospitals, universities, and cultural and scientific foundations for the benefit of all. Moreover, even though the amassing of material wealth - and least of all for its own sake - be far from our aim or desire, we can learn much from these rich men, especially in respect of hard work and a great willingness to suffer privation in order to achieve their ends.

Of course these qualities do not only apply to money-making, but to any successful endeavour or discovery. If we want to succeed we must not only be prepared to work hard but to make real and painful sacrifices; to practise a form of secular asceticism. There are many examples to choose from. Among the most picturesque is that of the 16th century potter, Bernard Palissy, who was brought up in his father's trade of glassworker and then left home - a very poor home - at the age of eighteen to seek his fortune. For ten years he wandered, doing various jobs. He then married and settled down. Three children added to his burdens and forced him to think of ways of making more money. He took up painting and enamelling. Then, the chance sight of an Italian enamel, probably a Della Robbia, fired him with the desire to emulate it and discover the secret of its white glaze. He had to go by guess-work, carrying out experiment after experiment. He persevered for years, expending his money and energy on earthen pots and

furnaces until he and his bewildered family were faced with ruin. He kept starvation at bay by taking intermittent jobs, but always returned to his main purpose only, each time, to fail. He decided on a last great effort. Three hundred pieces of pottery, covered with his compounds, were placed in the furnace. When it was opened, one of these had acquired the white glaze. He decided to build his own furnace. This took a further eight months. When it was completed, he filled it with his pots and lit it. For six days and nights he sat by the furnace, feeding it with fuel. Still the enamel did not melt. He decided on new materials. He borrowed money to buy new pots. Once again he fired the furnace. Fuel began to run short and he had no money to buy more. He therefore had recourse to the wooden palings round his garden. Still the enamel did not melt. He then fed the furnace with furniture from his house, to his family's consternation. His neighbours thought he had gone out of his mind. He had been working almost continuously for a month. He was almost ruined. But his last great effort succeeded. The brown jars, when they emerged were covered with the beautiful white glaze which, later - and after many intervening setbacks - made Palissy rich and famous.

It had taken him sixteen years of concentrated work. Even then he did not rest, but always tried to improve his work; to achieve perfection. His pieces are now regarded as masterpieces of the art and fetch enormous prices. (6)

Turning points in the life of this man, who had no formal education and taught himself to read and write, were his going out into the world at the age of eighteen; his marriage, which compelled him to work as hard as he was able in order to support his wife and children; and the use he made of a sight of an Italian plaque which

would have elicited no more than admiration from most men. There is also very much in evidence the element of abstinence or what in Indonesian is called *prihatin*, an element that is present at some time during the process of any outstanding achievement. It may be deliberately practised, or it may occur as a side-effect of total dedication to an objective:

*"Indeed, a reduction in eating and sleeping, marital relations and all kinds of pleasures is very necessary, for that is in fact a way to make it possible to obtain an improvement in one's fortunes in life ... Bapak is aware that everyone wishes for a life of ease and abundance, but if people will not follow the path of prihatin in the way that Bapak has just indicated, such a wish will remain no more than a hope".*

*"Bapak will take an illustration from ordinary life where there are prosperous people, clever and well-known people, highly-placed people, wise people. But these have become prosperous because they have previously been thrifty in all things, resolutely denying themselves all extravagant pleasures, which only follow the *nafsu*; they have become clever and famous because they have diligently and persistently pursued knowledge that can benefit human existence, they have become wise because they have been patient, calm, peaceful, trusting and sincere. These last qualities are to be found in the Prophets and Messengers of Almighty God, Sa. In fact, even though they were Prophets and Messengers of God, yet they were not exempt from experiencing constant suffering and the practice of *prihatin* at an earlier stage of their lives." (7)*

*Apart from man's obvious need of food, clothes and a roof over his head, the fact that work is one of his principal functions in his life on earth may be concluded from the fact that he has been endowed with limbs, heart, lungs, senses and brain: clearly they are meant to be in constant use. Spiritual experience bears this out in a striking way, for the *larihan*, unlike such things as medita-*



tion, activates, eventually, every part of the body. It proves to man that his function is to move and act; to work: (8)

*"The most important thing is that you should truly want to work. Don't live without working. Don't say you work in order to live. While alive you have to work. Why? Because Almighty God created this world, this universe, and all that there is in it. The universe was made by God and clearly God works ceaselessly. But you do not know, you cannot understand, how it is with God or how He works. Were God to stop working, this world and the other worlds you see in the firmament would exist no more."* (9)

But the spiritual exercise not only shows us that we ought to work; it also shows us how to work:

*"... the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, which is essentially worship of the One God, makes you realise that you have to work as part of your worldly life, besides following the latihan. Providing for your livelihood depends on using or working with your whole self. And to avoid difficulties and hardship, and to ensure the happiness and well-being of your lives, your conduct should be especially good.*

*"That is why, in our Spiritual Brotherhood of Susila Budhi Dharma, as well as faithfully following the latihan kejiwaan, we have to work. And since the behaviour and movements of your entire self are actuated from within, you can discern to some degree which movements are from the inner, empty of the desires of heart and mind, and which come from those desires. This awareness will enable you to do work aligned with the will of the inner, the jiwa. You will thus be able to feel that your actions are always accompanied by a will free from nafsu, that is to say by guidance.*

*"Such guidance is precisely what we all seek, so that all our actions may reflect the inner guided by the jiwa, and the jiwa guided by the power of God.*

*"With the jiwa accompanying and sharing in your actions, these will not be constantly influenced or dominated by the nafsu.*

*When they are, the desires have no limit. You will always wish for all kinds of things. For example, you may hope for a small house or a certain amount of money before you have either. But when your hopes have been fulfilled, and you have a small house and a little money, you will not stop at that but will want still more.*

*”And so it goes on without end. That is the nature of the nafs when they continuously dominate your inner-feeling. So you are indeed fortunate to have the guidance of the inner-feeling, pointing the way so that you can avoid excesses that would be harmful to others as well as yourself.” (10)*

But it is not only essential to work - we must also work in the right way, otherwise, as Bapak says in the passage cited above, we will not be able to receive the guidance that we need, and all our efforts will eventually be frustrated. Some years ago Bapak wrote a story, from which I have already quoted, to illustrate, in fictional form, some of his explanations. In the following conversation, taken from that story, this question of the relation between the nature of a person's jiwa and the work he undertakes, is discussed.

*”Djaka Wisnadi went on: ‘Brother, if a person whose jiwa isn't that of a trader makes efforts to acquire a knowledge of trade and applies himself with enthusiasm, then when he later engages in trade, will he not succeed?’*

*” ‘Well ...’ said Ki Karjana. ‘Actually it isn't possible for him to succeed. It's true one gets the impression that his actions as a trader are satisfactory and sometimes he even appears to be more capable than others, but in the end, he'll find himself back with his original capital or, even without any trace of his capital at all.*

*” ‘If his jiwa is not that of a merchant and he engages in trade, his actions are only imitations of his neighbours’ which he carries out in the belief that thereby life will flourish. He does so without first considering what other occupation existing in this world*

could awaken the spirit of his jiwa. Because of this his actions will not have the results expected, and the time taken will be wasted. Such a man doesn't appreciate the value of his efforts.'

"Djaka Wisnadi interrupted: 'Do the merchants, who when they make a great profit needlessly indulge in enjoying themselves, and the street-vendors who remain street-vendors all their lives, belong to the category you mentioned before, that is those who don't have merchants' jiwas yet act as traders?'"

"'Yes', replied Ki Karjana. 'I would say the situation is the same. Because if a man with a merchant's soul acts as a merchant the condition can be compared to that of a cow facing grass; whether it be cut or in a green field, how pleased it will be and how peaceful in mind because it knows that in this situation it can find happiness and contentment, that is to say the wherewithal for its very existence is at hand.'

"'So, actually, if a merchant has a merchant's jiwa then his engagement in trade is a pleasure for him and the nature of his work as a trader is the source of his satisfaction and happiness to such an extent that, so far as he is concerned, all the bliss in the world is to be found there.'

"'In truth the nature of life is progressive or, more clearly, it is extensive and in its entirety complete; thus a man acting in harmony with his jiwa, and so unimpeded by a heart lost in enjoyment, will, for sure, be able to add to his knowledge so that, ever more and more his circumstances will prosper and flourish.'" (11)

Bapak has repeatedly stressed the dangers of imitating others both in the spiritual life and in the sphere of our worldly activities. Each of us must find his own truth and do his own thing. What is received in the latihan kejiwaan strikingly confirms the conclusions of Emerson in his famous essay on Self-Reliance, thus:

"There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that

*though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given him to till. The power that resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried.” (12)*

And again:

*”Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine Providence has found for you; the society of your contemporaries, the connexion of events.” (13)*

We have been concerned for the most part with worldly work and the making of a living, but we must never forget that large dimension in which this takes place. We may be able to receive real guidance in our everyday lives, but this guidance is itself a by-product of our other, and principal duty - the worship of the One God by submission to His will:

*”In fact, God has endowed man on the one hand with the means to satisfy the needs of his life in this world, and, on the other hand, with the means to fulfil his worship of God; hence a man has only to follow God’s guidance that manifests within himself.” (14)*

## CHAPTER V

# IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

TODAY we are much concerned with health, which is an indication of our lack of it. The truly healthy person does not talk about health; like the happy one, he is not even conscious of his condition. There are more doctors and medical specialists than ever before, including a vast number who treat illness of the mind. There are also many more hospitals and clinics which, even so, cannot provide for the innumerable patients requiring treatment. Every village has its pharmacy, stocked with the proliferating products of the pharmaceutical industry, the profits from which are astronomical. There are also many contrary developments in the direction of natural, homeopathic and holistic medicine. Books on these subjects are best-sellers. But our health does not improve; only the repair services become more efficient.

In the English language, the words 'health', 'wholeness' and 'holiness' have the same root, a clear indication of the basis of health and the cause of disease.

Those who have experience of the latihan kejiwaan have observed, in themselves and in others that, although this is not its function or its aim, it frequently brings about a change for the better in the physical and mental health of the person concerned and sometimes, apparently, effects remarkable cures. This observable fact tends to confirm the feeling that, despite all the

advances and discoveries in medical science in recent times, we do not understand the real cause of disease. For why should the latihan bring these changes? We do not do anything ourselves:

*"... you need do nothing in the latihan but receive - you need no direction from your mind or your heart. Freed from them, you will be free to experience God's power at work within you, you will feel more consciousness and awareness of that which God's will has ordained for you. You will even become aware of how and why a man walks with his feet. It's true that we know feet are used for walking, but in addition to this you will learn of that Power which initiates walking. In seeing, you will learn of that which countenances the act of seeing, or of that Power which underlies and supports thinking and imagination. In this way you will be able to work within you along certain lines which will prevent you from doing useless work. By doing this you will never harm any of the organs of your body. As the will of God becomes apparent to him, man will become steadfast in worship, provided with necessities. Many people have met with sickness and other misfortunes because the working of the senses, heart and intellect are so strong that much attention and energy is diverted away from their proper usage. In the resultant lack of coordination and through the misuse of parts of his being, man brings upon himself conflict and illness."* (1)

Illness of this kind, then, is something that we bring upon ourselves; it results from our own wrong actions. (A fact perceived by Samuel Butler who, in "Erewhon" invented a country where criminals are sent to hospital and the sick to prison!) Conversely, we can avoid it if we can find a way to worship and receive guidance or even, maybe, if we can contrive to be quiet:

*"Bapak knew from his grandfather about his great-grandfather who was a hundred and fifteen when he died, while Bapak's*

grandfather himself died at the age of a hundred and four. When Bapak was little he once asked his grandfather how he had lived to be so old, and whether he had ever been ill. 'Ill with what?' his grandfather asked. 'Ill with cholera or malaria or any other kind of disease?'. 'Oh, yes', answered his grandfather. 'But when I remained quiet and drank hot water, I soon recovered.' And so it was; in the old days people could easily get well again if they were affected by some sickness. And the reason for this, as Bapak has now come to realise, was because their remedy was to quieten their emotions, their thoughts and their desires. And indeed, this was easy for people in the old days, but it is not easy for contemporary man. You can tell him to quieten his thoughts, but they will keep on turning and running in all directions, and instead of getting better the sickness will increase, because his heart and mind are filled with doubts and anxiety." (2)

Our condition is not that of Bapak's forefathers, or even of our own. We are naturally deeply concerned with the problem of health and disease because we are, almost all of us, sick and disintegrated. We have to begin all over again and find a way to bring ourselves back to that condition, to the state of wholeness, or integration, or that true marriage of inner and outer. So all our elaborate medical science can only patch up and alleviate, it cannot cure:

"For instance, if a doctor can bring about recovery in his patient, this is not really a cure, but only in the nature of an improvement or repair. The body whose condition has been thus improved still remains an imperfect object, and would continue to be so even though its condition were relieved or improved a thousand times over, because its very origin derives from a wrong action."

"The doctor, therefore, is only a repairer, mending an imperfect object; but he cannot improve its basic quality, since it was already faulty when it came into existence. To improve its quality

*is not the province of doctors or of any human being; it is the work of God alone.” (3)*

For this reason even those branches of the art such as homeopathy and holistic medicine, although they recognise that to remove the symptoms is not to effect a cure, cannot bring about the change that they desire. In the same connection it is interesting to note that in the field of mental illness those schools of psychotherapy which are most convincing are those associated with the names of C.G. Jung and Viktor Frankl: and both recognise the role of the divine in any authentic cure. Two of Viktor Frankl's books are entitled "The Unconscious God" and "The Doctor and the Soul", while the title of one of Jung's most widely read works, "Modern Man in Search of a Soul" testifies to the inner lack and disorder which is our problem:

*"The situation of mankind today is not the same as it was in the past, when man was not so strongly influenced by the lower forces nor so inclined to follow only the dictates of his desires. At the present time it can be said that man is wholly immersed in the attractions and conditions of the world. Furthermore, he is completely under the influence of the lower forces within him, so that in all his behaviour and actions he follows the desires and wishes of these lower forces which have control of him.*

*"In order to rectify the whole human situation there is nothing we can do but turn our steps towards God. We must return to the power of God, and we must obey God's commands which are present within us." (4)*

This present situation is something that we have inherited from the faults of our ancestors; which we have passed on, with interest, to our children because of our misunderstanding of the nature of sexual union, and



which we have compounded by our subsequent mistakes and wrong actions during our own lives:

*''It is therefore essential for man to be able to receive the contact with the power of God. When he has received it, he will then further receive the realisation or awakening from within; that is, the working of the Holy Spirit within him. This working transfers everything in him to its proper sphere; it will transmute what is wrong into what is right; it will change one thing into another, and so on with everything affecting the life of a man, so that his jiwa and his being, will be safeguarded from every harmful pressure and influence. The powerful Life Force operates within the being of man to eliminate everything harmful that has become rooted in him as a result of his past life.''* (5)

Such a process, if we are able to submit to its working, will have the nature of an elimination, or purification. It will therefore often be painful, will indeed be like an illness. (6) But this illness, although it may manifest in the same way - have the same symptoms - is not the same as illness as we have come to understand this. There is an important distinction to be made here:

*''It was common knowledge in olden times - it is recorded in the scriptures - that there are two kinds of illness. The first is a real illness which arises because something is out of order or because of some injury or deprivation. The second kind is sent from God, and is caused by the fact that He is already working to correct and improve the inner being of man; though the man himself will also experience this as an ordinary illness ... A disturbance which leads to regeneration is the work of God, and one which leads to destruction is the work of the thoughts, desires and feelings of man. And the reason why the disturbances caused by human agency lead to destruction and not to regeneration is because man is unable to escape from the sickness of desires, the sickness of possessions and the sickness of anger; in other words, he is always*

*driven to seek as much as possible his own personal advantage.”*  
(7)

A clear and important conclusion to be drawn from this is that we - and also our medical advisers - need to be able to recognise and distinguish between these two kinds of illness. An ordinary illness ought to be cured, or treated, in the ordinary way:

*”The complexity, the increasing complexity of man’s illnesses and problems comes about from his own actions, from his behaviour and from what he eats ... And, as a result of more illnesses, there are more doctors; and, as a result of more doctors, there are more illnesses. This is as it should be, because the illnesses that man creates, the illnesses that man experiences as an inevitable result of his way of life, are something that man has to solve himself. In other words, it is right that to cure the illnesses that man experiences nowadays he has no choice but to follow the way of science. In other words, the way of the understanding of the mind; and through science to be able to correct and put right these things that man has experienced...”* (8)

There is also healing through the kejiwaan:

*”...But what you can heal in the kejiwaan are illnesses of the kejiwaan - and what are illnesses of the kejiwaan? The illnesses in the kejiwaan are the illnesses in man’s character. So, what can be healed through the kejiwaan is the illness of the jiwa, which is the illness of man’s character.”* (9)

But, as we have seen, these illnesses of the jiwa usually take the same form as ordinary illnesses. Our responsibility, and especially our responsibility as doctors, is therefore very great; for the doctor ought to try to cure an ordinary illness with all the means available, but he should not try to cure an illness that is sent from God, to treat a disorder of the jiwa, because in this case, to treat it in such a way as to arrest or remove

the symptoms would in effect be to arrest the process of elimination and purification and thus retard the patient's development. The true doctor should know when to heal and when to refrain from healing - because a greater healer than he is at work. But no doctor can do this, can possess this knowledge, unless he himself is able to receive. (10)

There is an old allegorical story, found in various forms in various cultures, that likens the situation of people like ourselves to that of an absentee owner, who has abandoned his property to his servants who gradually take over the whole place, grow more and more undisciplined, drink, quarrel, misuse his goods and in general create chaos and disorder. Then something moves the owner to return and reassert his authority. But this is now difficult; his servants are rebellious and do not want to lose their freedom or return to their own quarters and their proper functions. The house or property is ourselves. The servants are the lower forces, and the rightful owner, who returns, is the awakened jiwa:

*"With regard to the nature of this work taking place within us, it is the correction and rearrangement of all the various forces which have formerly oppressed us and governed our inner feelings in such a way as to lead us into error. All this has to be purified, so that our human nature may return to being ruled by our true human jiwa, which will lead it on the path of true regeneration."*  
(11)

It will have been remarked that Bapak refers to the food we eat as being among the causes of illness. Of course we all know that greed has harmful consequences, but we are not usually aware of the more subtle influences involved. Thus the contemporary cult of 'whole food' presupposes that the quality of the food

is all important, whereas it is not only what we eat but how we prepare and eat it that brings harm or benefit to our bodies and minds or, to put it another way, it is not only a question of what is eaten but of who eats. Upon this depends whether we nourish ourselves or only the lower forces that inhabit us. For example in the case of food derived from plants:

*"You must realise that actually the essences of the power in plant-life are already present in mankind, though in a form that cannot be detected by the ordinary eyes, but only by an inner-feeling that is truly pure - clean and clear and quite free from the influence of thinking. So when the essences of food from plants enter man's body, to form, nourish and strengthen it, their entry signifies a meeting with the essences already there.*

*"Truly, then, this is a meeting between external and internal, as between the outer life and the inner. So if what comes from outside is not suited to what is inside, an unpleasant feeling will arise that will readily make the human body unwell."* (12)

Food, therefore, does not only provide us with proteins, calories and vitamins; it also acts as a vehicle for the forces it contains so that the desired meeting between what is outside and what is inside may be brought about, and their meeting takes place in man when he eats, which means that, in reality, man when eating is only a medium for the force of the plant essences outside him to meet the force of those within him.

*"The human being who enacts that role has carried out his obligation in this matter properly, and may truly be called a high and enlightened creature of God.*

*"The wisdom of such a person is rightly praised by the participants - that is, the essences, both from inside and from outside, of the power in plant-life - because he has been able, after*

*they have long awaited his help, to open the path to bliss for them. ... accomplishing this (i.e. bringing about this meeting) will enable you to know how life is arranged in the plant world, and also how the influence of its force on mankind can be so dangerous, even though all these forces are intended to take part in your life as a creature of high level.” (13)*

The desire of a plant essence is in fact the same as man's, i.e. "to find the right way to live in order that, when their end comes, they may return to the glory of the eternal world.

*”So if you do not reach your real level - meaning the level at which you can put your ancillary forces in their right places - naturally you will not be able to rise higher; that is, to the greater, noble life meant for humanity.*

*”So their situation, my children, is like that of the force of material objects ... The difference between the two forces is that the material force affects only thinking, whereas the force of plant essences affects the feeling throughout man's body.*

*”But although both these forces have so close a link with man, and blend with him, they are only his ancillaries.” (14)*

Therefore, apart from eating food to maintain his life and strength man has a duty and a service to perform towards the lower forces, material, vegetable and animal, that sustain and serve him. His job, in return for their making possible and fertile his life here on earth - for he cannot live here at all without them - is to 'take them to heaven'.

But how, in everyday terms, can we do this?

The process of nutrition may be divided into three phases: the planting and cultivation of food; its preparation; and its consumption. The first two require a knowledge acquired by study and practice; but all three require a certain attitude on the part of those

concerned: an attitude of patience, calmness and love. Someone able to receive it can feel where plants should be planted, where they want to go in order to flourish. And in respect of animal food, in particular, we should remember that our duty can only be carried out if we are in fact human and not merely human bodies with a sub-human content. Agitated thoughts and feelings do not help the preparation of food; besides, they affect its quality even to the point of being transmitted to those who eat it. Conversely, feelings of gentleness, love and goodwill will help in its preparation and benefit the consumer. In short, food prepared in the right way, which is none other than a state of surrender, is alive and is charged with the current of life. I have myself experienced that the benefits of the latihan can be transmitted through food and also through medicine: it seems that these can become carriers of the inner vibration. And we ought to eat, too, with respect and reverence - for we are carrying out a holy task - and with calm and peaceful feelings. So we may understand why in the past, and still today in religious communities, it was customary to say grace before and after meals, not only to give praise and thanks to the Provider, but also, by quietening our thoughts and feelings, to be in the right state to carry out our duties as a channel; for then,

*"... if you can do as advised, and open the way for these forces so that they can easily meet their counterparts, they will serve you in repayment, meaning that food will always come to you; you will never go short of it in your life." (15)*

For the sake of right living and for the true well-being of ourselves and our descendants, we have to come to know and feel how these forces act within us, and also distinguish between them.

*"We can regulate these forces in an orderly way and channel them in the right directions.*

*"Satisfying the animal force in this way opens a path for man, to enable him to go further and increase his stature as a leading creature.*

*"So, in other words, although this action by man has the nature simply of giving help, it nevertheless does not exclude the interests of his own inner self.*

*"On the other hand, a person will find the way dark or will dwell in darkness if he is incapable of regulating those forces in the manner described above.*

*"In a darkness like that, a man's inner feeling may get into such a turmoil that the outlook proper to his human status can be said to be utterly lost." (16)*

This means too, as I understand it, that we are here as servants, and that our own health and well-being depends upon the service we render to others, very much including the plants and animals who share this earth with us.

All who have received and practised the latihan kejiwaan can, to a greater or lesser extent, begin to feel and experience the truth of all that is explained above. But much of what is now revealed to us concerning the real nature of health and disease is not new, although it may be expressed in a new way, or in different terms. Of old, too, men were able to receive such knowledge. That great physician, Paracelsus, for example, said that both health and disease come from God and that we ought to distinguish between those diseases which come in the course of nature and those which God sends upon us as a punishment, a correction, a warning, or a lesson in humility.

Because of this God can of course cure us when and as He pleases, but it may be that He brings this about

through man himself: the miracle is worked through, not by the physician.

Paracelsus stressed that illness is a form of purification - a purgatory, he called it. Therefore, such illness has a determined span which cannot be shortened other than by God's will. The physician can heal when the time is ripe, but only then. There is a difference between earthly and celestial medicine, and it consists in this: that man must work with and be subject to natural forces, while spiritual medicine is free of these.



## CHAPTER VI

# MAN IN SOCIETY

AS WE have seen, it is a matter of experience that the receiving of the latihan kejiwaan takes the form of movements which, adjusted to the capacity and character of the subject, exercise, purify, and bring to life every part of the human body. This process serves, not only to indicate, improve and guide our natural abilities, but also to reveal how we should be and act if we are to live as true human beings in this world. Thus they not only lead to better health, right work and good personal relationships, but show us how these things should be used to help us take our rightful place in society. We do not only have, as we saw in the last chapter, responsibilities towards ourselves, our families and the forces which constitute our own bodies, hearts and minds - and also the physical world around us - but also a responsibility, of which we gradually become conscious, to units beyond the family unit, to our neighbour, that is, to our society and, ultimately, to mankind and to the other living things and creatures without whom we could not live. So we discover that we are not only here to receive, but also to give; that, indeed, we cannot grow beyond a certain point, or attain true health, unless we do give. In a word, we have social obligations: it is not what life owes to us that is at issue, but what we owe to life:

*“... your worship of the One God includes not only your daily*

prayers, but the obligation to do the work which the One God has given you. For instance, if you are given a hoe, then of course you work with that hoe; if you are given a pencil or a pen, then of course you work with the pencil or the pen. The One God has created you in the form of human beings, complete with all your organs, so you should work with all your physical organs and use all parts of your body. In this way you will worship the One Who created them or gave them to you, Almighty God. Naturally, the work or use of all parts of your body must be in accordance with their individual function; for instance, the eyes for seeing, the ears for hearing, the nose for smelling, the mouth for talking and eating, the hands and feet for touching, holding, sitting, walking and running, the sex organs for sexual union, the feeling centre for feeling and the brain for thinking. Of course, these organs must be used in the best way, which will not cause them harm, but rather bring well-being and benefit to you and others; for example, by imparting understanding to the ignorant, helping one in need of help, and so on. Actions such as these are noble deeds which show that you have a noble character, and with such actions you also worship Almighty God, because you can use all parts of your body together for the needs of human life, so that peace, justice and prosperity will prevail in society.” (1)

The first ever to receive the latihan kejiwaan as we know it - Y.M. Bapak himself\* - asked permission of God to share it with others, and this was granted on one condition: that he should not seek recipients but should share it with those who came to him of their own free will and asked. The implication is that, when we receive something special or have more than a sufficiency of anything, we have an absolute obligation to share it with others. But giving is like healing, in that the giver, like the healer, should know what he is doing. In some

\* Y.M. is an abbreviation of Yang Mulia, a title of great respect, meaning literally 'Who is noble'.

quarters today 'charity' is looked at askance, as being a relic of the age of social distinctions and patronage. Those who feel this way hold that all such matters - the relief of suffering and poverty and so forth - are the responsibility of the state. But this is a materialistic view that misses the point. For real charity is to a great extent a channel, a means whereby people may be brought into contact with a way which will enable them to receive guidance and so be able to help themselves, be able to stand on their own feet inwardly and outwardly. But nowadays no one is going to take this on trust, or be convinced by talk and fine words and intentions. They judge only by results. Therefore to communicate with others, to open a way for them which they are then free to follow or not, as they will, it is necessary to be concrete, to be practical, to put first things first. Who will pay attention to a preacher if he does not have enough money to go to church?

*"... we should not forget that, since man's inner feelings have come to be excessively dominated by the material forces, mankind in general will not believe in anything unless they can see tangible fruits to be gathered, such as health and ease in earning one's living ..."* *"... it is not the Will of God that man should be oppressed or forced down to a level at which he cannot exercise his right to work and provide himself with worldly necessities; but rather, as should be clear, it is His Will that man should understand and come to awareness of his own proper use and that of his body.*

*"You have already begun to receive guidance from God in this way, although the process is not yet complete. This lays upon you the responsibility of opening the way for others who have yet to find the right path; this should be looked upon as an obligation ... The way to open possibilities for other people is by bearing witness and showing an example in yourselves ..."* (2)

It follows that to the extent that we help others we help ourselves; but here we have to be careful. Those who expend all their time and energies helping people who live in some distant land at the expense of their own household and children who, in consequence, live in squalor and neglect, have been ruthlessly caricatured by Dickens in the person of Mrs. Jellaby. Clearly, this is not how we are supposed to act. We should first put ourselves and our households in order and then, out of a surplus, help others. For there is a kind of 'help' which is a form of projection, forced upon others when it should in fact be turned back upon the 'helper'. Or it springs from a heart which is far from disinterested, with unfortunate consequences:

*"The giving that really springs out of sincerity, through the will of God, is not confined to one's own relatives or friends but should depend upon the spontaneous necessity for that action to be performed disinterestedly, even to a person who is a perfect stranger to you. For if we give without awareness of the true nature of the giving, then, although it may take the form of helping others, yet they may not receive it with a truly grateful heart, and may in return curse the giver ...*

*"It is clear that helping other people is really important and praiseworthy, but it should never be done without considered judgement of its consequences; for help given to other people, when it is misplaced, may become - on the contrary - poison to those being helped." (3)*

Real help - including of course material help - is geared to spiritual reality, to the reality of receiving and worship because the ultimate aim behind real help is "to guide people to the worship of God, thus enabling them to know and experience for themselves the way to live rightly both in this life and the life hereafter ..." (4)

Therefore, such help must come from the same

source to which it hopes to lead others - from the worship of God. But as Bapak has explained, it begins at the bottom and goes upwards; begins from the outside and goes inwards:

*"What is described above corresponds to what was demonstrated in Jesus Christ - that the achievement of a healthy jiwa and its ultimate perfection begins with improving physical health. Therefore Jesus always worked for and healed the sick and rectified the hearts of men, because if that is not accomplished the jiwa cannot be changed."* (5)

In the spirit, sharing and giving, those consequences of love, are ever-present. But when 'giving' is inhibited, or self-interested, or indiscriminating and even harmful, then we can be sure it comes from another source: once again, as with other activities, we return to the need to know from where we act and by what force we are activated. Why are the rich so reluctant to give to the poor? The oddest aspect of it is that common sense, or simply enlightened self-interest should compel us to do the opposite. If we, or they, do not embrace so obvious a solution, it is because we are not free, but are bound by the material forces which have enslaved us. The conclusion has often been drawn that therefore poverty is better than wealth, and also safer, for what are revolutions if not a proof of Heraclitus's dictum that 'Strife is justice'? But this is running away from our human responsibility and destiny:

*"If we are truly submitted to God so that we become empty, all our 'property' disappears and that which constitutes this 'property' within us is nothing more, nothing less and nothing other than our thinking and our heart. Our thinking and our hearts are our property - our worldly wealth. If we leave heart and thoughts behind us, we become very poor people in this world."*

*We renounce them so that we can receive from God. How can God put something into you if, within, you are still full of material possessions? If you are still full of desire and thought, the gift from God cannot enter. It is different if your house is empty ... (then) God gives to you and this receiving from God will make ready what is in your house, in other words, in yourself. Then you will know the difference between the content of thinking and desires and the content of the gift of God ...*

*”In your own interest, for the progress of your own jiwa and inner feeling, you need to improve yourselves, and the method of correction is none other than worship of God and work for the social needs of our human society ...*

*”Do not be mistaken ... and think that when someone gives gladly that he will come to poverty and misery. Not at all! Someone who truly gives with sincerity - with sincerity, brothers! - will receive many times what he has given. Jesus is again the example ... how could Jesus give food to thousands of people who followed him when he himself had none? ... This is a symbol and an example for us ... Jesus was willing to give to mankind, to others, and so when he gave to one person he received enough for one; when he gave to a thousand he received enough for a thousand, and when he gave to ten thousand he received also enough for ten thousand. That is why Bapak said just now: do not be mistaken and think that if you are willing to give, you will then become poor - no! If you really give with all your heart and with real sincerity, you will be able to receive more than you have given. This is indeed what Bapak himself has experienced in his life and in the lives of other people ...*

*”... the strong need to help the weak, the rich need to help the poor, the intelligent need to help the less intelligent, in a truly humanitarian way and with a genuine feeling of love for our fellowman.*

*”The same thing has been repeatedly expressed and emphasised by the Messengers - by the Prophets and by Jesus himself - 'Share your blessings and your well-being with those*

*that have none, so that you may attain lasting happiness.' Truly, brothers and sisters, although you yourselves may be rich and live in luxury, yet if on either side of you there are people who live in want, it is dangerous, because these poor people around you are always waiting for the chance to take from you your steadily accumulating wealth. It is another matter if you always give to the poor who are around you; then your well-being will last and continue perhaps for tens or even hundreds of years ..."* (6)

So I have to share - whatever I have to share - or give - whatever I have to give - but with real sincerity, with real love for my fellowmen. But do I have real sincerity? And can I feel real love? Real sincerity means to have no pain or sense of loss in giving or if something is taken away from one; and real love is a love that arises spontaneously, without will or desire and untouched by envy, jealousy or greed; without vanity or egotism; without self-interest. It is not an emotion but a state of being. And how am I to come to this? As Bapak has said: a table cannot change itself, only the carpenter can do this. I cannot change my being, only my Creator can do this; I must submit myself to Him.

In the meantime, I have to begin at the beginning, to start at the bottom and work upwards, to do whatever lies to hand, to do what I can do:

*"Don't they understand that man has to eat? Don't they understand that man cannot live by worshipping God alone?"*

*"Have they not noticed that, to eat, man must work?"*

*"The fact is: we can only worship God with what He has given us. And what He has created for us is our being. So, whatever we do with our being can be the worship of God."* (7)

So we return to a conclusion that is by no means new or original: that charity begins at home; that the best way to help others is to help oneself. Real help, real

sincerity, real love come out of the fullness of being and not out of a dryness of spirit or a sickness of the heart. If we do not manifest those qualities of sincerity and love, then our inner-self is defective and in need of repair. For this to take place we have to seek and find a way; we have to take ourselves as we are and our life - and all life - as it is. And we have to be prepared to suffer; we must not avoid suffering or, when faced with a choice, take the easy way out. But, if we could only know who or what we are, truly are, within, the suffering we dread or shun would appear in a different light. We would welcome it as a blind man would welcome an operation, however painful, that could restore his sight.

After I myself joined Subud I followed the latihan kejiwaan with a group in London for three months, and then suddenly stopped going. For a month I stayed away. At the end of this month, early one morning - it was just at dawn - I had a terrifying dream.

I was walking up a grassy hillside on a fine, sunny day. The sky was a clear blue and the countryside was formed of gentle, sloping, olive-green hills. Other people, in groups of twos and threes, were walking in the same direction. We all had the same purpose - to visit the scene of a recent apparition of the Virgin Mary, hoping, perhaps, for another vision.

I, however, was wholly sceptical, and I reminded myself that I did not believe in such things. At that moment I noticed, out of the corner of my eye, a disturbance in the sky - the sort of roughening of the surface that occurs when a gust of wind ruffles an otherwise calm sea. I did not turn my head to look, however, but dismissed it as an optical illusion. Nevertheless, the phenomenon persisted and even grew in extent. At length, still sceptical, but intrigued in spite of myself, I felt compelled to look straight at it.



A patch of the sky, high overhead, looked as though it had turned to water. It was composed of slightly choppy waves exactly like those of the sea. The patch grew in size and then, suddenly, the waves in the centre rolled back to reveal the seated figure of Christ. By this time I had forgotten my doubts and was wholly absorbed in the vision. I was much surprised to see how conventional was Christ's appearance: he had long golden hair, a golden beard, and long, white, flowing robes. I saw that he was looking straight at me and I was finally held by those eyes until everything else was excluded.

The figure grew larger and seemed to draw nearer. At last I realised that that terrible gaze - for it was not kind or gentle or loving, but was the gaze of an omniscient and impersonal judge - was looking, not into my face or at 'me', but through my eyes and straight down into the very depths of my soul. I knew that nothing could now protect my inmost soul, with all its secrets, from the divine light that now illuminated it. I became conscious of what I really was, of the terrible truth, and the shock was so great that I fainted: I actually lost consciousness. When I came round I was fully awake, but I could still hear, echoing round the walls of my bedroom, the awful cry, the howl of anguish, that I uttered before fainting away.

After this experience, the first impact of which, unlike that of most dreams, has never faded, I returned to following the latihan regularly and in this, at least, have never since defaulted.

I am convinced that such an encounter with the reality of our situation is essential to the understanding of our fellowman and that only through knowing and loving the Self can one come to the knowledge and love of one's neighbour.

Many years later, during the Fast of Ramadhan, I visited a hospital in Jakarta, run by men and women who were following the latihan. I have seen poverty and misery in my life and have often, like those who preceded the Good Samaritan, passed by on the other side ... But here, in this small and ill-equipped hospital, run 'on a shoestring' as the saying goes, there was greater misery than I had ever seen. The inmates were not only, for the most part, very ill, but all showed the effects of long malnutrition and extreme poverty. Before, I had been moved and felt sorry for the destitute, crippled or suffering people I had seen; but this feeling passes and they are forgotten. That kind of sympathy is as the barren figtree. This time it was different. My feelings so overwhelmed me that I could hardly contain them and I find it very difficult now, years later, to write about them. It was as though my heart had been opened, so that it was able to accept suffering and desired to do something about it: for I do not think that most of us are 'hard-hearted'; I believe our hearts remain closed in the presence of suffering because they are not strong enough to share it. But this change in me, let us call it a crack in the armour, was the first step towards my neighbour, a step I owe to the latihan alone, since I did not ask for or expect it.

## CHAPTER VII

# ENCOUNTER WITH THE SELF

IN AION (1) Jung concluded that, for Western man, Christ is a symbol of the Self, and the dream that I described towards the end of the last chapter suggests to me that he is probably right. But what is the Self? Jung has gone into this question with characteristic thoroughness and erudition, but I do not want to enter into a psychological discussion here as this would lead us into the realm of theories and definitions. I would rather try to answer the question in simple everyday terms, related, wherever possible, to experience, just as my dream constitutes an experiment - albeit an involuntary one - against which Jung's theory of Christ as a symbol of the Self was tested.

Most of us associate the Self with what we call 'I'. 'I am', 'I like', 'I do', 'I was born at Leatherhead in the year 1920', 'I was educated at such and such a school', 'I am a mechanic', etc. Our selves are made up of our existence, our thoughts, our emotions, our opinions, our experiences, our habits, our likes and dislikes, the contents of our memories. This constitutes for us our identity. We identify ourselves with all these things and with our bodies in particular, which contain them. To most of us the idea that there is another self, another 'I', does not occur, or if it does it takes the form of a personality disorder such as schizophrenia. For clarity's sake I will from now on refer to this 'I' described above as the Ego.

The Ego consists of the contents of consciousness. Thus when I am asleep, the Ego does not exist, i.e. I am not aware of my 'I' except, in a rather different sense, when I am dreaming. But when I wake up, my thoughts return, my emotions return, my memory returns, I am conscious of my body and of the world - all of which, in effect, ceased to exist when I fell asleep. Thus 'I' only have an Ego when 'I' am conscious: if my mind were to stop working, without my falling asleep, my Ego too would stop working, it would cease to exist. (Unconsciousness can of course be produced other than by falling asleep, by drugs or anaesthetics or a blow on the head, but the result is the same.)

But those who follow the latihan kejiwaan have experienced just this: that the thoughts come to a stop, that the emotions of the heart are stilled, that the body moves of its own accord (i.e. it is moved) and not impelled by the will, that, in a word, the Ego, for the time being, ceases to exist. The result, however, is not as expected, for we remain conscious; we are aware of what is happening without being able to direct or control it. (Any attempt to do so brings the whole experience to a stop.) Therefore, in this case, the centre of consciousness is not in, or is not, the Ego, but some other entity. It is like this:

*"... to become aware of the kejiwaan and make contact again with the Great Life men do not need to use their minds. On the contrary, they should stop the process of their thinking and imagining. For only by so doing can a person receive something from beyond his reach that at length attracts a vibration of energy felt within the self. Clearly, then, the sole way to make contact with the Great Life, or with the Power of God, is for a man to surrender sincerely and earnestly. And this surrender must not be in word only, but must penetrate throughout his inner feeling until*

he truly feels that he believes in, praises and worships no one but Almighty God (Allah).

*”When he can really do this, at that moment he will also feel powerless, but with no sense of loss, and still conscious.*

*”That is to say, he will feel powerless, because at that moment the strength of his nafs, heart and mind will have gone from him; and he will still feel complete because his inner feeling will then be filled with something that comes from the Great Life; finally, he will feel conscious because of the revival of his human jiwa.” (2)*

Elsewhere, Bapak has said *”the jiwa means the content of every nature”*. (3) And again, in more detail:

*”Bapak describes the jiwa as an atmosphere. The jiwa is an atmosphere surrounding you, enveloping you, just as you are enveloped by a bright light when you stand in the sunshine at midday, or by darkness in the middle of the night when there is no sun.*

*”Your body is a place, just a place. Even so, it has its heart, its brain and its feelings, but all form just a place, a vessel. Anything alive is always enveloped by the life-force of the jiwis ... If the state of the vessel, or your body, is narrow, that is because it has always been completely filled with nafs, leaving no space at all for the atmosphere of the high, sublime life. Thus your innerself is occupied by the low life-force called the material life-force.” (4)*

So we can have more than one jiwa, our content may consist of several layers. Of course, here on earth, we can never be rid of the material force because we cannot live here without it; but we may hope to reach a situation where it - and eventually its companion forces - occupies its rightful place as a tool and not as a master. This process begins when we are able to receive the contact with the great force of life and experience *”the revival of our human jiwa”*.

We would expect, therefore, at some stage in this

process, to become aware of a new centre of consciousness, of a separation between the human and non-human:

*"Bapak has said that the jiwa will develop by itself.*

*"Your conduct, when it is behaviour worthy of a human being, is like a fertiliser, a manure, whereby the jiwa develops unhampered. That is the fertiliser, together with patience, trust and sincere surrender to the One God.*

*"Those are the fertilisers that produce a quick development or progress of the jiwa, to the point where you can discern the difference between me (the ego) and the 'I' that empowers me. The ego, the self empowered by 'I', is what lives in this world. It ends on death and disintegrates and returns to its sources - earth, water, air and fire." (5)*

My first experience of this other centre took the form of a dream, as vivid as the first I described but, fortunately, less terrifying.

I saw my everyday self, my ego, standing ankle-deep in a stream, set in a wooded glade. A few yards in front of 'me' the stream tumbled over a waterfall into a small lake.

The observer in this case was what I felt to be my real self, a consciousness that looked out over the scene from an enormous 'eye-socket' like the entrance to a cave. This 'real self' had a feeling of patience, knowledge, strength and tolerant amusement. In this form I recognised the habitually anxious expression on the face of my ordinary self. The latter appeared to be in his usual state of doubt and hesitation, mixed with fear. The question in this case was whether or not to continue downstream and over the waterfall. My 'real self' watched this inner struggle for several minutes and then said, gently: 'Go on, then - don't be afraid!'

This, for me, was no ordinary dream; the separation

between the two selves was vivid and real. It was the separation of the substance from the shadow. Ordinarily, we take the shadow for the reality, we identify with our bodies, with our physical selves, and consequently lead a severely limited unsubstantial existence. But our real 'I' is something altogether wider and different; it is detached, understanding, timeless and, relatively, omniscient. But it is also impersonal. At that moment, in that form, I had no feeling of personality or identity; mine was, temporarily, a consciousness of a more universal kind.

Some years later I had a similar experience, but this time in the waking state, so the second served to confirm the reality of the first.

It occurred on the morning following the end of the Ramadhan fast. That morning I awoke in an unusual state. I found myself in a very large space, in a transparent sphere like a huge soap-bubble. I had a wonderful feeling of strength and, above all, of freedom. This sphere, which was also 'me' or my 'body', seemed to be floating in space. Far below, I could see, as before in the dream, my ordinary self, but now become very small and insignificant, rather silly, and of no value. I did not see all the details of my past life, but the past was all there, somehow included in that diminutive and rather contemptible figure. Looking down upon it - upon 'myself' - I felt that it was not worth bothering about; it was ridiculous but, especially, unreal. When I saw what 'I' was and all that 'I' had done, this new I wished to repudiate that other 'I'. "Why should I ever return to that?", I asked myself. But then there arose within me the feeling: Wait, surely you are responsible for all that 'you' did, down there? So, you must go back and live out the consequences of all that you were and of all that you did!

There the experience ended, and I found myself back in my usual 'self' and surroundings, although I still retained, for some time, a feeling that I was somehow outside of and larger than my body and that I had somehow been liberated, had been granted a moment of much deeper self-knowledge, a taste of true freedom. It appeared to be an experience of separation, of the separation of the true inner-self from the 'false' self of the body. In this state real knowledge - relatively speaking - is possible, and therefore knowledge of what to do and of what not to do; of right and wrong; of good and evil.

I also see this experience as being linked to - indeed, made possible by - the training received in the latihan kejiwaan:

*"You yourselves can certainly know and understand that at some future time the body will disintegrate and return to earth, water, air and fire. But unless you are able to control your jiwa, none of your ability or of your personal awareness of your lifetime can enter and penetrate your jiwa, and you will be unable to feel anything at all after death. The jiwa is therefore being trained so that you will be able to feel, and be able to have a jiwa that really understands everything, as you now do by means of the coarse physical body while living on earth."* (6)

The reason why it is so important, so vital to know the 'Self', is that it is the way - the only way - to God:

*"Clearly, the latihan kejiwaan is from God and is really God's work. God works according to His nature. What is the nature of God and how is it? God's nature exists, enveloping the Universe and manifesting throughout it - in mankind, too, that is, in you.*

*"... But if Bapak says God's nature is in you, do not mistakenly think that God is like you. Not at all. God's nature is*



not only in you or in human beings, it is also in the microphone in front of Bapak. It is in tables, chairs, houses and everything around, as well as in trees, animals and so on. In short, all you see, hear, smell, know and understand partakes of God's nature. However, His nature is not only in them, in other words, not only in human beings, animals, plants and materials; it is also beyond earth and beyond the visible universe ...

"... Allah is the All-Embracing, the All-Powerful. In Dutch He is called Alhelel (the All-in-All); it means, God is throughout everything, there is no other. Such is God.

"If you try to get a picture of what God is like, you may ask if He is like you. Yes. Is He like a goat? Yes. Is He like a water buffalo? Yes, like that too. God can become one with anything He has created.

"So, brothers and sisters, man's way to God must go through man's own self. That is enough. The way to God is not through a cave or a tree that are considered sacred ... Do not try to go to God through anything except yourself, through your own self.

"To go to God through another human being is wrong. This is not the way to be aware of one's own inner-self." (7)

Likewise we cannot go to God through the ordinary self, through the ego; through thought or emotion; through the mind or the heart:

"In the latihan you have received, you are awakened and brought up by the working of the power of God. Awakened from sleep, your individuality is being brought to life again, so that when you die your individuality will remain alive for ever with the ability of apprehending, seeing, and listening in a way which is far more clear, brilliant and real than anything experienced with the senses of this coarse physical body ...

"... With regard to progress, this certainly depends upon your individual state. Therefore, Bapak hopes that you will not think much about spiritual matters, for this thinking hinders and obstructs the development of your jiwa, which has been awakened

and is growing. But you should, on the other hand, make use of your thought for the daily needs in the normal way.

*"For, spiritual progress is not the result of the working of the mind, desires and thinking - these functions of ours should work for the fulfilment of worldly obligations.*

*"So that when we die, when thoughts and mind cease to function, the jiwa will then take over all functions, so that we can continue a blissful life after death."* (8)

It has often been said that we find ourselves by forgetting ourselves, that we come to self-realisation through commitment to a cause greater than ourselves or through a love deep enough to bring about self-transcendence. The reason why this happens is that through this self-forgetfulness we open ourselves to influences that are higher and nobler; influences that bring about change and growth.

The influence that is higher than human beings, that is, higher than the human level of being, is that of the roh rohani, the spirit of the perfect human jiwa:

*"... the roh rohani can only be reached by human beings when they have been able to abandon their nafsu and have left their human nature behind; as long as they are still unable to abandon human nature (if Pak Subuh for instance, still retains his 'Pak Subuhness', so to say), they will not be able to rise to the level of the roh rohani. Pak Subuh can enter the roh rohani only when he is able to leave his 'Pak Subuhness' behind. This is by way of a standard. Thus so long as you are still pursuing your own interests, the highest you can reach is yourself; that is, the highest you can reach is the roh jasmani (the level of the ordinary human being)." (9)*

At this point I can only refer once again to my own experience, or otherwise I shall begin indulging in that useless pursuit, metaphysical speculation. But before I

recount this last and, for me, illuminating experience, I would like to quote a further clarification of Bapak:

*"To know his genuine essence, that is his jiwa, a man must first be able to distinguish between the nature of his heart - comprising the heart, thoughts, minds, ambitions, desires, and so on - and the nature of his feelings; that is, his inner feelings, the true individuality of man.*

*"When the distinction between these two qualities is made, it is possible for the 'I' to recognise and understand the situation, when the heart, thoughts, mind and so on are activated by his essence, which is the jiwa.*

*"Once the heart can recognise and understand this separation, then the 'I' will be able to know or realise who it is who activates or masters 'my' instrument or 'my' heart.*

*"When this is so, the wrongness of the wrong will be seen and the 'I' can distinguish between his true jiwa and the jiwias that are not his - in other words, between his human jiwa and the jiwias that are non-human.*

*"Once this is achieved, his human jiwa will work and manifest more clearly within him. And when this level is reached, it can be said that the man who is suffering from the sickness of the jiwa will be cured.*

*"Furthermore, when the reality of the masquerading jiwias, which are really non-human, is clearly seen, they will not be cast away or destroyed but instead will be mastered and governed. The reason is that these jiwias are needed by man as instruments, even if they are animal or other sub-human jiwias.*

*"Going further, a man whose jiwa is truly human - the jiwa of Rochani - can also include the human jiwa itself as subordinate.*

*"The truth is, there is only one true human jiwa in this world; to the inner feelings it is very great, enveloping the whole of mankind in this world." (10)*

It was my great good fortune to catch a brief glimpse of the reality behind these explanations; that is, of the

reality of a receiving far wider and deeper than my own. In particular, my experience revealed to me something of the quality of this separation, and especially, something of the reality of the statement that there is only one true human jiwa.

In fact, it is very hard to describe this experience in words, because while undergoing it I lost all sense of separate existence, of having an 'I', or of being 'me'. Only as the experience began to fade did my individual consciousness begin once more to emerge and be aware of a sense of separateness.

It happened one morning, about the hour of dawn. I awoke, but without any consciousness of 'I'. Body, mind, feelings, ego, all had disappeared or, rather, they had been dissolved in something altogether greater, as a raindrop is merged in the ocean into which it falls. All around and within there was nothing but white light, shining, tremulous, yet calm as the summer sea. As the colour white contains all colours, so this ocean of light contained all consciousness and all being. The raindrop that falls into the ocean certainly loses all individual existence, but only to be absorbed into a far greater being, one so great that in it all individuality as we know it instantly ceases to exist, but not all being - for its being has become a part of infinite being. And this infinite was - it is - only bliss, only radiance, only perfect peace. In that state there are no more problems and no more questions, and no 'person' to ask them. It is the only Being, the One, without beginning and without end. There is nothing else, or nothing that is not contained in it, even as the raindrop was born of the ocean to which it returned and in which it was reabsorbed. It is the only reality, all else is a dream and an illusion.

But gradually my ordinary 'I' consciousness began to

come back. I became conscious of the ocean and of the feelings I have tried to describe. I heard a voice within me exclaim: 'That I Am'. At the same time I became aware that there is only One; that we are not separate beings, but one being; and with this realisation I saw all human relationships clearly. I felt love for all beings, because there is only one being and that being is love. Compared to this one reality all our human relationships, however deep, fade into insignificance. Ultimately, all externals are unreal and unnecessary. There is only One Self, and each one of us is that Self. Is it not natural, inevitable then, that one should love one's neighbour as oneself? He is oneself.

## CHAPTER VIII

# BROTHERHOOD

ALTHOUGH the idea of the brotherhood of man is very ancient, and although many speak of 'man' and 'humanity', these remain largely abstract concepts, because in reality we still think, and act, in terms of nationalities and races, separated by language, custom, colour, religion and ideology. From the biologists, however, we can learn that we are much more closely related - all of us men and women here on earth - than we suppose:

*'Although few of his members seem to realise it, men's relation to himself is fairly easy to measure and is surprisingly close. In fact, no human being (of any race) can be less closely related to any other human being than approximately fiftieth cousin, and most of us (no matter what colour our neighbours) are a lot closer. Indeed this low magnitude for the lineal compass of mankind is accepted by the leading geneticists I have consulted from J.B.S. Haldane to Theodosius Dobzhansky to Sir Julian Huxley), and it means simply that the family trees of all of us, of whatever origin or trait, must meet and merge into one genetic tree of all humanity by the time they have spread into our ancestries for about fifty generations.'* (1)

From this it follows - as our author points out - that there are no pure or unrelated races. All the peoples on earth belong to a single species - the races are subspecies - that is, homo sapiens, a biological fact which 'is also

science's own measure of the brotherhood of man". (2)  
This relatively close biological relationship also means that "all of us literally have some white, some black, some yellow and some other kinds of heredity". (3)

Striking confirmation of the above comes through spiritual experience and, surely, the biologists and geneticists at least, among us, will not find the following clarification by Bapak, in the light of his own receiving, so very strange:

*"Jiwa ... is a life force which fills, awakens, brings into being, and works upon sukma, which is the subtle counterpart of the physical body - actually this subtle body, sukma is not only one, but five. Therefore it is referred to as five brothers, whose natures correspond to various colours: the first one, black; the second, red; the third, yellow; the fourth, white; and the fifth, brown.*

*"Therefore, although your own skin is white, you may occasionally meet beings in the latihan which look exactly like yourself, but are blackish in colour, and again you may meet beings which are red, yellow, white or brown. It is said that the five brothers have their place and dwelling in the heart of man and there give rise to the passions ... greed ... arrogance; desire ... and awareness ... the fifth, however, is not a passion but purity, and is a combination of all and constitutes a unity. And those natures being thus, it may happen that when you see a shape in your own likeness, you may find that not only is his skin black, red, yellow, white or brown, but that his whole being through to the inner core is of the same colour. This is evidence that the whole of mankind in this world, black, red, yellow, white and brown, is really one. There is one mankind and it has one origin.*

*"Bapak has seen himself black like a Negro; he has seen himself like a Red Indian; he has also seen himself yellow like a Chinese or a Japanese ... Bapak has also seen himself just as he usually looks, but quite white like a European, as white as a*

*Norwegian and Bapak has also seen himself with the colour that is proper for him.*

*''Thus God has given man evidence that, although there are the black, the red, the white, the yellow and the brown, yet they are all brothers to one another, at one, united in the being of man.''*

(4)

I believe that all of us, deep within, have this knowledge, but that it is not accessible: we are cut off from the source by the activity of heart and mind, for by these we live and move. Fear, greed, suspicion, rivalry, hostility - these divisive emotions all arise in the heart. To measure, classify, categorise, - these divisive activities are functions of mind. We are all acquainted with people - including ourselves - who have deep 'humanitarian' feelings but are unable to be kind or agreeable in their own homes. Such humanitarianism is purely mental and can never lead to unity. Like charity, brotherhood, or humanity, begins at home, and home here means, first of all, within ourselves.

How can a man who cannot live at peace or in harmony with himself live at peace or in harmony with others? And what divides us within, as well as without, is the uncontrolled activity of the nafs: there cannot be love, or understanding or harmony where fear, greed and anger predominate. Humanity is not only divided - or disintegrated - on racial lines, by colour, custom and language. These are, as it were, vertical divisions. There are also horizontal divisions, especially economic and social. And there are mixtures of the two as when a ruling class is based upon a stratum of foreign slaves - or even native slaves - or a kind of unity is imposed by foreign conquest. There are also religious divisions, which cut across and to some extent negate or overcome the other divisions until the religion



concerned reaches the limits of expansion permitted by its inner energy, or comes up against the territory of another religion.

Clearly, we will never realise in fact, what is so obvious in theory, the unity of man, of all humanity, by taking thought, however profound: or by desiring it, however passionately. Humanity as a living being and not only as a concept, an abstract idea, can only be realised when what is human in us takes precedence over all that is non-human. Human beings quarrel, fall out and harm each other to the extent that they are not human, or more precisely, to the extent that their content is non-human. A group of 'humans' who were exclusively filled with the material force, would not rest until they had destroyed one another.

Once again, we have to know our content:

*"Truly, in the kejiwaan - as is willed by God - a separation should take place within man, a chemical separation between that which activates and that which is acted upon. Then you will gradually become able to see what part of you was previously master within you, and which part should finally become properly the guide within man.*

*"The jiwās are the guides within man, and the jiwās arise from their respective worlds, and the particular nature of the activity of whichever force becomes man's main content will stimulate the whole of his inner being which manifests as his character. And as you become aware of the change of leadership among the jiwās within you, you will also realise that you are becoming able to receive a change in your character.*

*"For the thinking, the heart and the desires of man are merely tools in the employ of the forces which become man's content. When man's content has changed to that which is ideal for man, i.e., the human jiwa within man, then his thought, his heart and*

*his desires will automatically be used as befits the human force or human jiwa.*

*”And when man is filled by the human jiwa, his thinking, heart, and desires will also automatically lead him towards the greatness of God. (And) this means that man, with all his inner being and all his organs will become unified in worship before the greatness of God.” (5)*

Thus we have to begin by putting ourselves in order, instead of projecting our disorder into society and the rest of the world; only then can we love our neighbour and the rest of mankind. But to set ourselves in order we need to find a way through which we can receive and experience a change in our inner content and in our characters.

That the latihan kejiwaan of Subud is such a way, most of those who have followed it would be willing to testify; but this kind of testimony is not necessary; the reality is evident from the fact that, through the latihan, people, men and women of different races, colours, religions, social background and so on, are able to receive and to worship God together in harmony, and thereafter to work together with understanding and with common aims:

*”As far as we have experienced, during that time that we, who belong to different nations, are doing the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, most of us have the feeling of being in our own family circle, that is to say among our own kin or nation.*

*”That is why we, of different nationalities, while doing and receiving together the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, do not feel strangers to one another and do not feel as though we were with strangers or other people, but on the contrary as though we were among our own brothers and sisters.” (6)*

Bapak, who gave this explanation more than twenty

years ago, then went on to say that, to begin with, most people still feel this only in the latihan; in their daily relations they will still feel like strangers to one another, this being due to the persisting influence of the heart and mind which reasserts itself after the latihan itself is over. Such feelings of estrangement exist not only among people of different nationalities, but also among nationals or even among members of the same family, especially if there exist differing social or economic conditions. (7) But eventually, as our inner-feeling is awakened and our jiwa develops, this situation will change, until we begin "to possess a feeling of unity between us, so that for most of us, there will be no feeling of division or discrimination ... the feeling of unity is, essentially, the ability to share what has been received, experienced and suffered by all of us. As a result we will be able to act in a way which has the nature of mutual help, mutual love, mutual appreciation and in other ways which really make it possible for us to realise our eternal union." (8) And this feeling will grow until it is also felt after and outside the latihan until "at last it will also influence our ordinary human relations at all times". (9) Which is another way of saying that the latihan exerts an ever wider influence until the action is not confined to those times when the exercise is performed but fills an ever increasing area of life until, at length, everything is latihan.

I myself had a totally unexpected experience in the outer world which proved to me that the latihan has the power to break down even apparently insuperable barriers to brotherhood.

This happened at Bahrein, on the Persian Gulf, during a stop on my way home from a visit to Cilandak. At the end of this refuelling stop we were called to return to our airplane and to do so had to pass down one

of those narrow passageways which connect the terminal directly with the door of the plane. As I entered this passageway I saw at the other end an Arab guard, in uniform and fully armed. I had only taken a few steps when I saw that he was smiling directly at me, not a polite or conventional smile, but a real smile full of warmth and feeling. After I had recovered from my surprise, I returned his smile. I was indeed surprised because, apart from anything else, I am fair and nordic in appearance and could never be mistaken for an Arab. But as I drew nearer, the guard's smile only grew more friendly and his eyes shone with a pure and brotherly affection. Then, as I passed him, he said, very quietly: 'Assalamu Aleikum' (Peace be with you) and I had a feeling of profound happiness and of real and true brotherhood, compared to which the external factors that separated us seemed trivial and unreal. I felt that no Arab would ever be a stranger to me again.

I was surprised, I was overwhelmed - yet what happened ought not to be anything extraordinary, it is in fact ordinary, the normal condition of mankind as God willed us to be:

*"What has happened in Subud is really not something new, what is new is only that it is being received now. But it is something that existed when man appeared on this earth. How could man forget what he had, what was truly brought down when God created this world? Because as the days, the months and the years go by, with the change of epochs, man's thinking quickly progresses, so that with the quickening of his thinking, man forgets his jiwa, forgets God, and forgets that life is created by God and that everything he has within him is protected and willed by the Power of God."* (10)

We communicate with our fellowman and woman through all our senses and faculties. The result will

depend upon their condition and upon how we use them. We may shake hands with someone or strike them. We may listen to malicious gossip or close our ears to it. We may write lies or the truth, speak good or evil. We may plan how to deceive someone or how to help them. The use we make of our gifts will depend upon our inner content, our character, upon what is master in us, upon who we are, for our senses and faculties are channels, to give out and to receive. If the channels are imperfect and the content narrow and low, the result of our actions will be negative and destructive:

*”When we look, brothers and sisters, at the development of the influence of the nafs on the life of man, we see it plainly in the case of someone who happens to be very intelligent and who accustoms himself to living a life of luxury and wealth. Such a person automatically grows wealthier and wealthier and, once he becomes wealthy, the influence of the nafs is such that it causes him to lose touch with and forget about those around him who are still poor, who do not have anything.*

*”The same holds true for those who are intelligent and grow cleverer and cleverer; the cleverer they become the less they remember those about them and the less they care. It is the same for people who achieve high positions in society: the higher they rise the less they think about those who are weak and who need their protection.*

*”This answers the question we pose to ourselves, ‘Why is the world always in a state of unrest? This is why the world always experiences instability and chaos.*

*”Such is the effect and influence of the nafs when it rides upon and burdens the life of man.*

*”It is this state which concerns so many thinking people, and which prods them to try to find some way to bridge this huge gap between the rich and the poor; in other words, a way to restrain*

*the greed of the nafs which exists in human beings.*

*"But the fact is that the efforts of such people to bridge the gap are bound to fail because the influence of the working of the nafs can only be restrained with the help of the power of God. Nobody can restrain the nafs without the help of Almighty God. And this can only happen if man actually receives this help and receives forgiveness for his sins. Only then can the power of God within his being exert restraint on the nafs which rule there.*

*"This can happen if man receives from God awareness of his jiwa, a vibration of life within his being which is free from the influence of heart and mind.*

*"It is this vibration of life, free from the nafs, which has now, at this time, been sent down into the world by the power of Almighty God." (11)*

It is however the differences between religion and fanatically held beliefs that result in one of the strangest, as well as one of the deepest obstacles to brotherhood. For religions preach love and brotherhood of man under a common Father. As has often been remarked, there is but One God, and yet ... Here again, in the historical development of every religion, the nafs have taken over until the fine qualities which the religions seek to inculcate become confined within the compass of a certain set of beliefs or dogmas. Beyond this pale lie the heretics. Hence religious wars, between one faith and another, or even within sects of the same faith as, today, in Northern Ireland, or between Iran and Iraq. The fact, therefore, that members of different and formerly or actually hostile religions can worship God together is of fundamental importance for the realisation of the real and true brotherhood of man.

*"This is the character of this latihan kejiwaan of Subud, brothers and sisters; it is something that human beings have been seeking for thousands of years. Of course you are all capable of*

reading books, reading history. Has it ever happened in the history of this world that people of different races have been able to come together? Different races can meet, yes, but can different religions meet? Now an effort is being made not to unite the religions into one but so that each shall understand the usefulness of the others; so that there shall not be enmity between them, but so that the way of their worship of the One God shall be made straightforward. Up to now, this situation has never obtained. That is why this latihan, which Bapak calls the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, has now appeared; a latihan which can make brothers of people belonging to different races and religions, and bring them close to one another. You yourselves can feel this and experience it, when in the latihan someone who is a Muslim has no feeling of being different or isolated or cut off from people of other religions. This is how it is. This is like a sign that God wishes human beings to be in harmony with one another, not to be out of harmony because of their religions. What need was there to establish religions if mankind was not to be harmonious? Thus this is what is called the religion of Allah, of God. How could it be possible for the religion of Allah to cause people to fight with one another? It is clear, brothers and sisters, that the religion of Allah intends human beings to live in harmony in this world, so that the world shall be tranquil, just, prosperous and peaceful.”  
(12)

This chapter has been concerned with the brotherhood of man and has stressed the one-ness of humanity. But brotherhood has a wider meaning still, for man is not alone here on earth or in the universe. There have been men - and even peoples - who have been able to experience the unity of all things, from guinea-pigs to stars. The Eskimos and North American Indians speak of the Wolf as their brother, and St. Francis of Assisi, who preached to the birds, spoke of

'Brother Fire'. Love and compassion know no boundaries and have no limits.



## CHAPTER IX

# WAR AND PEACE

WAR IS A prime example of the passions of fear, greed, anger and arrogance run riot. But it is not as simple as that. War also evokes heroism, courage, self-sacrifice, mutual help and a unity of spirit that overrides personal, social and economic differences; the finest qualities of humankind. Strange too, how many great generals and admirals have been men of nobility and vision; how often professional soldiers are cultured and peace-loving.

This apparent contradiction can be explained partly by the dual nature - offensive and defensive - of war. The Duke of Wellington, for example, never fought an offensive action in his life. But low actions and behaviour, as well as noble actions and behaviour, are found on both sides in any conflict.

Animals of the same sub-species, when they fight, show considerable restraint; they rarely fight to the death; to establish ascendancy is sufficient. Primitive people too, settle their conflicts with remarkably little bloodshed. Modern or 'civilised' man, on the other hand, not only strives for total victory - or 'unconditional surrender' - he is also vengeful. Even so, in the not so distant past, destruction of life and property was often very limited and decisive battles which have determined the fate of the people concerned for decades have often been fought over a small area of

country and confined to professional armies. It is generally held that the rapid advance of technology is the principal factor in the increase in scope, intensity, violence and brutality of warfare. But the development of technology runs parallel to and is a product of the development of man's mind. And it is through man's mind that the material, or satanic force influences him. Modern warfare, in all its frightfulness, is a result of the usurpation of man's mind by forces which, instead of being his servants have become his masters.

Most of us are not even aware that we are influenced in our thoughts, feelings and actions by these forces. Yet the evidence is everywhere and of daily or hourly occurrence. We all know - we are sometimes to be numbered among them - those drivers of motorcars who, instead of driving their cars are driven by them. The difference in deportment between the owner of a Rolls Royce and the owner of a Mini is a matter of observation. We all feel more confident with money in our pockets or braver with a gun in our hands. Yet, even if we are or we become aware of this influence, it retains its hold over us:

*"... it would seem that a person could repel the influence of the material force with ease. In fact it is not so. For although material objects have been created and fashioned by man, their power of attraction has in truth so affected his mind and penetrated his feelings that, if cut off from his possessions, he often feels as though deprived of half his soul.*

*"Really, if one remembers that all these things owe their existence to man, it certainly seems beyond belief that they should have so much power over him. Yet it is precisely because they are creations of his heart and mind and energy that they do exert this attraction on human feelings ...*

*"It is to be hoped also that a man will not be influenced by*

*material things; on the contrary, he has to be able to control them. The way for you to realise this is by doing your latihan patiently and sincerely. For from the training will come evidence, little by little, of how the material force works in your feelings, so that you may channel it in its rightful direction. This awareness will then lead to your self and the material force working in cooperation - though with different duties - so that you will not need to discard or avoid possessions.” (1)*

Bapak then turns to the specific question of weapons and their effect on man:

*”Now to go on to how the material force of other things influences a man - a sharp weapon for example. Rightly, this is only a means to repel approaching danger, not in the least an instrument for killing people. But when the possessor of such a weapon is heedless or incautious the influence of its force, transforming his feelings, is truly dangerous for him, for it makes him feel very strong and powerful, with the result that he is ready to use his weapon not to ward off approaching danger but against anybody he wants to overpower or master ...” (2)*

Then Bapak says that a man who allows such an influence to take a hold will become one who habitually quarrels without due cause. But,

*”Even so, because he still has a human nature, he will still have a chance to improve his condition if he finds a way that can train him to reach his inner self. The pressure of the material force on him will then grow weaker and weaker with the strengthening of his human jiwa, which can then correct his bad habits.” (3)*

Clearly, the more numerous, intricate and powerful the weapons at man's disposal the more dangerous this influence becomes, until we reach the situation that exists today when the arsenals of nuclear weapons

amassed by the great powers frighten and bewilder even their possessors:

*"Man has discovered nuclear power. It was God's will that it was time for man to discover it. It's nothing new. It has existed since the creation of the world. It's simply that, recently man has discovered its existence. Of course, once man is allowed to discover something, he then proceeds to try to use it according to the dictates of his own heart and mind. He does not first measure what is the real need, use, purpose of this, and how to handle it aright. He simply employs it according to the ideas of his own heart and mind. The result is that man himself becomes afraid of the thing he has himself devised."* (4)

We private individuals who have apparently no power to influence the course of events, have two principal concerns. We hope, in the first place, that nuclear war will not break out, that some way will be found to avert it; and, then, we are concerned to find the best way to order our own lives, the right attitude to adopt, whatever the circumstances.

I have written that we apparently have no power to influence the course of events because I believe that in reality every one can make a contribution to peace, not by taking part in demonstrations which are often as aggressive in spirit as the forces they oppose, but by creating peace around us and, first of all, in our own hearts. Obviously, if a sufficient number of us were able to do this, the situation would be transformed. Apart from this possibility - or duty - there is no halfway house between complete surrender to the will of God on the one hand, and gnawing and paralysing anxiety on the other:

*"... this attitude of complete surrender is what gives one an*

extraordinary strength; with that attitude you can receive anything and you can do anything.

”But if you want to worry then you will have plenty to worry about. Not a day goes by without people discussing ... whether there will be a war or not, who will win it, whether it can be avoided or not, whether it is better to avoid it by rearming or by throwing away the weapons, or whatever. If you really want to worry about it then you can satisfy yourself to your heart’s content. But if you truly surrender with patience, acceptance and submission, then there are no worries, because everything is in God’s hands. And this is something that you have to understand. The things we worry about, the things we think about, are measured by our own heart and mind. And our heart and mind are limited. They do not know the whole picture. They cannot see the truth and the totality of what faces mankind. So, as long as we use our minds to think about these things, we will always be worried, we will always be confounded by our own intelligence because our intelligence is not wide enough to see the whole world.” (5)

In any case, when we worry, we worry about the wrong things; we worry about weapons when we ought to be worrying about ourselves:

” ... during Bapak’s journey abroad Bapak advised all the members that this Subud should truly be possessed by many people.

”Because nuclear power, atom bombs and other weapons cause no danger, brothers and sisters. It is people who are dangerous. Even if there are a hundred pistols on that table, if nobody fiddles with them, how can they go off? So it is clear that what is dangerous is the person, not the thing.

”That’s why we’re allowed to make anything we like: God allows it, God blesses it ...

” ... So this is the point, brothers and sisters. If this latihan kejiwaan of Subud can make people capable of self-control, then if

*there is something that is wrong and that is not willed by God, they will truly not do it and they will then not use all these weapons that we already possess.*

*"Think now, brothers and sisters, certainly you can see it for yourself. Nuclear weapons, atom bombs, etc: throw them away, they make trouble; bury them, they make trouble; dump them in the sea, they make trouble; keep them, they make trouble; use them, they make still more trouble. So then?*

*"Yes, that's the question; what then? Just do nothing? Just treat them as part of your property, as part of your inventory?*

*"Well, obviously that's impossible too.*

*"... it is all up to God. Because if World War III does take place, many human beings will disappear, will be killed ...*

*"So you see, there is no other way than to make human beings aware, so that they can possess this latihan as we have. So that they develop a feeling of love for their fellowmen. They will then be aware: 'If I send this over there, it will kill people.'*

*"So our life in this world will eventually not consist in killing each other but we will truly make this world into a place which is holy, into a place which is useful for the life of man. Unless, that is - and we hope of course that God will not act like that - unless Almighty God gives up and says: 'I have made this nice place but these people just keep messing it up - I might as well just wipe it out.' If he then lets the ocean cover everything ..." (6)*

We have been considering the worst of all possible scenarios, but there are lesser forms of armed conflict, not to mention the increasing presence of violence in the form of terrorism and armed crime. Since the last world war there has never been a year without war in some part of the world or without terrorist acts.

As regards wars between nations, it could happen to any of us to be called upon to take part in such conflicts in some capacity, or, other. What ought our attitude to be?

Some years ago the following question was put to Bapak: 'What should we do if we are,compelled to join the Armed Forces and participate in the fighting of national wars?' To this Bapak replied:

*"Brothers and sisters, man's life on earth requires that he should order it properly. Man-made regulations are necessary for man, and so laws and decrees established in a country are obviously binding on society, having been made by man himself. Such laws have been created by you yourselves and so you have to obey them. Of course, you have not literally made these laws yourselves, for you were born after they were passed: yet they have been established by your own countrymen or by your forbears, so that it can be said that all these laws are yours as well.*

*"Laws relating to the army or the armed services derive from you yourselves. They are created for the purpose of strength or for overcoming and warding off any danger that threatens you - so you must obey them for they are your own laws. This is indeed a characteristic of a nation, because no country can exist without citizens nor citizens without a country, for a nation is composed of its subjects.*

*"From the spiritual point of view you are not forbidden to do military service. It cannot be avoided because the service law stems from you; it is a man-made regulation to be obeyed. So you should not commit any offence against your country, against the laws prevailing in your country. Again, in some countries if a person is ordered to do military service and refuses to do so, he is prosecuted and may forfeit his citizenship. All this, too, is something enacted by you - both what is binding on your society and what is not. In other words, it is your own doing, so you must be consistent and obey the laws for which you yourselves are responsible. This is Bapak's way of saying that there is no objection in Subud to your joining the armed forces in order to*

*follow the call of duty to your country, which means to comply with your own laws.*

*”Speaking to those members who have not yet joined the army, but may be called up, there are many soldiers in Subud groups and many Subud members in military service. Bapak would like to say this - only by way of illustration, for Bapak hopes that there will be no war. But if there should be a war, a Subud member may be guided from within. He may not know what this guidance is, but generally it is for his well-being; at the least it may show him a way not to come to grief. This has happened often in Indonesia. There were once some soldiers who followed the latihan. While they were on duty on one occasion a bomb or shell was about to fall just where they were. About fifteen minutes before the explosion - which would, of course have been fatal if it had happened there at that moment - they had a very clear indication, and their legs began to take them away from that place. For besides being soldiers and carrying arms, they also did latihan in the evening just like other members. And really it was so that they left the place which was about to be shelled or bombed. The explosion was audible when they were some distance off and in the end they learned and saw for themselves that that place had been bombed. This is just an example. Bapak certainly does not hope that you will be involved in a war and experience this, no! But, fortunately in Subud, with the spiritual latihan, it is as if one knows beforehand that something will happen; also if it does happen and one is in difficulties, since contact with the greatness of God has been received, you will always receive guidance and direction which will enable you to turn to the way willed by God.” (7)*

That indications of impending danger may indeed be received through, for example, one's legs, I have myself experienced in a small way, when mine refused to go on walking when a snake - which I had not seen - lay across my path. But in battle it is more difficult to receive



owing to the stress and turmoil and noise that are all around one. Nevertheless, I have read a lively and picturesque account by a Nigerian Subud member of his experiences during the Nigerian Civil War, which underlines the truth of what is quoted above. The following extract from his account may serve as testimony (the original English has been retained):

*”It happened so at Onitsha sector in the same year ... again at Onono sector and at forest where some of our officers was planning to send three men to shoot me dead but they have failed to get me dead; but the three young men came to me and revealed the whole plan to me as God may have it. And told me that they are not willing to take oppression against me, but this I know within me there is something working miraculously in me. During that material time I am doing my Latihan often and often in the forest at war front. In conclusion my experiences in war I came to understand that any member of Subud should continue his or her latihan because there is a great force working ... I continue to say that I will live in Subud and die in Subud, because it is true way of live ...” (8)*

This is of the present time. But we look to another time - may it not be long in coming - when the differences of race, nationality and creed that separate us and become causes of conflict shall have been transcended. This is possible and foreseeable, because those who have encountered a way to make contact with their inner-selves have found that, as a result of their following that way, those differences disappear. In the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, for example, and also in due course and as a consequence, outside of it, we are no longer conscious that those around us belong to different nationalities, are of a different colour of skin, or hold different religious beliefs from ourselves. Such things belong to the external and illusory and not to the

internal and real world of mankind. These feelings, and also the way of life and the attitudes which they encourage, very much bear out what Bapak said in one of his explanations:

*"In religion we are told that, besides worshipping God, we have to collect funds for charitable endeavours. This traditional attitude manifests a conviction that, in fact, mankind is one; that it is our duty to help our fellowmen; and that it is incumbent on people in the world not only to think of themselves, but to think of their community, and of human beings all over the world.*

*"In other words, we must be aware of humanity, not nationality.*

*"We must be aware of human beings, not countries.*

*"For as long as we are aware of nationalities, countries and races, there will always be friction, there will always be conflict in the world. Conflict in the world always arises through the nafsu ... Such conflict comes from the wish to be on top, the wish to be better than others, the worry about where we will get this or that*

*...*

*"Now it is in fact impossible for man to set boundaries to, to restrain or confine his own nafsu, his passions. If the boundary does not come from God, it won't work: for Almighty God is the only One who can curb man's nafsu or passions ...*

*"God recognises no nations, no nationalities. God only recognises one human race.*

*"Such is the greatness and the power of Almighty God that truly He provides everything mankind needs ... God is aware of everything that is going on with man ... Man as a single race".*

*"You, too, must be like that: you must never think of races and nationalities, you must only think of the one human race. You must only think of people and human beings. Then you will be able to have influence in this world, to set examples which help prevent wars and avoid conflicts, terror and all the frightening things we see.*

*"All such frightening things come from our consideration of what is material. Those who think about nations and races are basing themselves solely on the material forces ...*

*"Man's situation now is something man has brought on himself, through the misuse of all that God has given him. And this is, as Bapak has said, rather funny: man is frightened of the situation he has made for himself, frightened of war, because (as man says) 'If we use these weapons now certainly millions upon millions of people will be destroyed. And that could happen if something goes wrong'. Indeed, none of us can deny that the situation of the world is like that: everybody is walking on thin ice because of what man himself has created.*

*"Yet God's power envelops everything man does. God can provide man with everything that he needs. With God's power, man never need feel worried, never need feel short of anything. All man need do is simply to surrender to God's Power." (9)*

## CHAPTER X

# SCIENCE AND RELIGION

UNLESS WE LIVE, naked, in a cave in some out-of-the-way location, never leaving it except to gather roots and berries, science and its offspring technology play a very prominent part in our lives and pose problems and raise questions which need to be answered. Even if we have no scientific training, or knowledge, we are affected by the discoveries in science and technology in the way we think and feel, work and play; and we benefit or otherwise from them in most of our everyday activities.

At the outset we need to be clear as to what we mean by science and its adjective, scientific.

This is a very difficult question which has occupied the most eminent philosophers of science, but even to summarise their discussion would take us far out of our way. I therefore propose to risk misunderstanding by being concise.

Science is concerned with those aspects of the universe and its contents which are accessible to the senses and the mind of man. It attempts to increase our knowledge of the world - which includes matter, plants, animals and men - and to explain the phenomena that are encountered; in a word, to find out how it works. It does this by observation, deduction and experiment, but also by formulating theories or hypotheses to explain events and to solve problems, which theories must in turn be tested.

Thus, if I say, "water boils at a temperature of 100 degrees C. at sea level" I am making a scientific statement. Anyone, with a minimum of equipment, can repeat my experiment and corroborate my statement. If, on the other hand, I say "God exists" or "There is no God", these statements or assertions are not testable. No one can carry out an experiment which could possibly prove or refute either of them. These statements are not scientific, but metaphysical. (Of course there are gradations between these extremes, but the demarcation line is clear to common sense.)

In the West - where science as we know it was born and grew up - a conflict between religion and science began in mediaeval times, was accentuated during the Renaissance and came to a head in the 19th century when the theory of evolution, in particular, was widely held to have overturned the dogmas of the churchmen.

This conflict, although it went so deep and affected so many people, was in reality an illusory one which resulted from a failure to observe the demarcation line between science and metaphysics. Let us take Darwin's Theory of the Origin of Species and the Book of Genesis which give apparently contradictory accounts of how life appeared on earth.\*

Those who clung to a literal interpretation of scripture were soon confounded and made to look ridiculous by their opponents - who often were not so much the scientists themselves as those who drew conclusions from the former's discoveries - simply because they themselves did not understand the meaning of the book they were defending and upon

\* Darwin's theories of Evolution and the Origin of Species have been for many years - and still are - regarded as unassailable dogmas in scientific circles. The real weaknesses of the Darwinian position have, however, been devastatingly exposed by Hoyle & Wickramasinghe in "Evolution from Space" - perhaps the greatest contribution to the reconciliation of science and religion to have appeared since 1859.

which they based their view of the Cosmos. These accounts of the appearance and development of life on earth are not contradictory but complementary, so long as we understand that they are talking about quite different things. The theory of evolution is a scientific theory formulated to explain the appearance and development of life on earth; it does not concern itself with anything outside its terms of reference, that which is accessible through the senses to the human mind; it avoids metaphysical assertion or speculation.

The book of Genesis on the other hand, is a document concerned with the inner rather than the outer life, although it employs the effects of the one to symbolise the other. Thus, the Tree of Knowledge is not an apple-tree, as some suppose, nor yet a persimmon (pomme de paradis) as others maintain, but a symbol of transformation from instinctive to moral consciousness.

The Churchmen ought never to have allowed themselves to be put on trial in the court of scientific rationalism. They ought to have realised that such a court had no jurisdiction to try their case. And vice versa: the scientist - or his followers - should not step over the boundary into metaphysics and make statements concerning the nature of God - including the statement that He doesn't exist - for such statements cannot be tested.

The fact that the existence or non-existence of God cannot be the subject of rational proof or disproof is itself a demonstration that God cannot be studied or apprehended by the mind:

*"The essence of God is to be, that is to be without having been called into being, but simply because to be is His nature. He has power but is not subject to power; He is eternal, imperishable and*

*immutable. He was before anything else had its beginning and He will be after everything else has passed away.*

*"He is subtler than the finest and more substantial than the coarsest; He gives, but to Him nothing can be given; He wills, but He cannot be willed. He is boundless and omnipresent, which means that He dwells in no particular place, for His power envelops everything which He has created. God has no race or language of His own.*

*"The nature of God is thus different from the nature of anything else: imagination, feeling, or thought cannot fathom it. His being is utterly different from the nature of the creatures created by Him. He sees, understands, hears, smells, speaks and feels without any instrument or organ. He knows events before they happen just as He knows all that has happened.*

*"On the other hand, consider the nature of the creatures which God has created - man, for instance: man can think by means of his brain, he can wish something by means of his heart, he can sense by means of his bodily organs; he can see by means of his eyes and hear by means of his ears - in short, man functions by means of his instruments. His activities are essentially limited by the organs he possesses, which are confined to his visible body.*

*"Such is the difference between creature and Creator, and this essential difference in nature between the two makes it impossible for man to think about or understand God, His being and His power. Man can only receive the Will of God or the gift from God when he is able to bring to a standstill everything that is within himself. Before God the true position of man can only be that of a recipient; and in receiving from God, he will be freed from all tensions and all obstructions that have been blocking his inner feelings ...*

*"... the more man goes out to seek God, the greater the distance he puts between God and himself; and the deeper he immerses himself in the search for God, the deeper he falls away from God. Hence the best way to follow is this only: that man with everything there is within him should be still, calm, silent,*

*conscious and at peace. Only thus will man be able to receive and feel the contact with Life - the Life Force which pervades all worlds and man's whole being."* (1)

Such assertions would be classified or regarded by certain scientists and philosophers as 'meaningless' on the grounds that concepts are definable in terms of one's own observations. But it is one thing to say that a statement is not scientific and quite another to say that it is meaningless. Such a view, if widely accepted - which, fortunately, it is not - would confine the spirit of man within the strait-jacket of a 'constitution system' so narrow as to render life unbearable and, indeed, meaningless. A similar reaction no doubt prompted A.N. Whitehead to observe that 'scientists who are animated by the purpose of proving themselves purposeless form an interesting subject of study'. It is really to be lamented that noble Science has so often been reduced to the lesser science of measurement and Philosophy to the logical analysis of elementary propositions.

The question at issue is in fact whether there exists any 'observational or perceptual' experience other than that experienced by the senses and the mind in terms of 'empirical science'. Many people, including many eminent scientists, would answer that such experience does exist, but the latter, at any rate, would say that it does not fall within their terms of reference. Certainly the dogmas of religion, for example that of the Immaculate Conception, cannot be subjected to any kind of scientific test; they can only be taken 'on faith'. Therefore, in general, religion and science constitute two separate and mutually exclusive worlds. Science is always able to provide - indeed it must provide - evidence for its assertions, whereas Religion in effect



demands the unconditional acceptance of faith. But modern man finds this last demand excessive. He has been disappointed and disillusioned so often that he has become mistrustful and demands evidence even in the sphere of faith.

It is just this, evidence, that those who follow the latihan kejiwaan of Subud claim that it provides, that is, that it provides evidence of the existence of faculties and perceptions other than those of the bodily senses and the rational intellect and, as a result, evidence of the truth of metaphysical concepts and statements, or, in other words, evidence of the truth - or otherwise - of mystical experiences and revelations.

Large claims are made on behalf of the latihan, but they are claims which can - and ought to be tested:

*"This is of necessity a very brief explanation for you to listen to - Bapak does not intend or wish you to try to understand it; for you should not believe this merely because Bapak has said so and before it has become a part of your own experience. Such believing would be very harmful to you. That is why Bapak constantly advises you to receive for yourselves through the latihan and to experience within yourselves." (2)*

Or, again:

*"... Bapak need not explain much because, no matter how clearly he explained, you would still not know whether it were true or not, because you have not yet felt and experienced it for yourselves. This is exactly what you need to do. Subud requires you to verify and see for yourselves, because you will not be satisfied with anything you have not verified. This is most necessary." (3)*

The main claim made on behalf of the latihan kejiwaan of Subud is very great, and the condition on which this latihan may be received is very simple:

*“... your only contribution towards receiving the latihan kejiwaan of Subud is just to surrender to Almighty God, then God will give guidance to each one of you.”*

It may be objected that this is begging the question: for how can I surrender to something in, which I do not believe? In practice even this condition may be waived, provided that there is, on the part of the aspirant, evidence of openmindedness in the form of a desire, or a readiness to believe in the One God.

So, what in effect is being said is: 'If you are willing to fulfil certain simple conditions, then a certain result will follow or be obtained, a result which, although basically the same in all cases, will in practice be received in accordance with your own individual nature and capacity.' Thereafter, such an explanation as the following will be felt, rather than read with suspended judgement, puzzlement or irritation, depending on the attitude of the reader:

*“It is here necessary for Bapak to state that Subud, or the latihan, which you have received, must not be misunderstood or misinterpreted: it should not be taken, in thought or feeling, for a new religion. Its true nature is that of a renewal of the Grace of God given to mankind.*

*“Why this renewal? For this reason: the men who were granted this gift in olden times, who received the gift of the grace of God, were strong in faith and close to God, and aware of His guidance. But owing to the conditions with which man had to contend through the generations down to the present century, this former way of receiving has gradually become blocked and is no longer available, so that man, though not of his own doing, has become unable to receive. And he is no longer able to understand or even to be aware of what is happening within himself.*

*“This is the condition prevailing in the present age and you ... are in a position to understand that it is due to material progress, to*

*progress in technology and mechanisation, the ever-changing circumstances of life, and the new inventions which are created and refined by man as his thinking progresses. As a result of this rapid progress of thinking, man willingly, deliberately, or not deliberately, is closed against and forgets that there is something in his inner being which can truly give guidance and direction to his life.*

*"With this awakening - that is the grace of God, given to mankind, which you have received in your spiritual exercises - it is willed by God that man should once more be able to remember that God has given him something which exists in his inner being, and which in Islam is called the Qalbu of man. This something cannot be described, but it works in man by itself, independent of his thinking, willing and wishing ... In Islam it is also called the Presence of the Power of God in man.*

*"It is this power of God which is buried within the being of man. It is not received by you - it is present and active now within you all, and brings with it an awakening beyond expectation and beyond understanding.*

*"Summing up what Bapak has just said, Subud is not a new religion, but a renewal to help man against sliding too far into obliviousness of the glory of God, for such obliviousness would finally lead to the most dreadful catastrophe for man's existence. For a man without faith in God will not trust his fellow beings either and eventually men will look upon one another merely as animals. When such men gain power, they want more and more power, and, without mercy, oppress those whom they conquer, and these, once defeated, are pressed downwards, lower and lower, deeper and deeper, for from man's inner being the feeling of love has vanished.*

*"What Bapak has received, and what you, too, have received, is truly the grace of God given to man. It is now at work within us in our latihan kejiwaan, in a way beyond our thinking, wishing and willing; do not neglect it, do not let it slip, do not turn away from it, ever again, for if this is not present, man will continue*

*living in confusion, as the search for God is not easy. No, it is not easy for man to know God.” (4)*

In the past the great religions have appealed to faith and also to reason - in Christianity through St. Thomas Aquinas, for example; in Islam through Al-Ghazali - but they have never been able to offer evidence in the form of spiritual experience. This is not to criticise the religions: they were not required to do this, or the means would have been provided. But when the great religions were sent down, or revealed, men were not as they are today. Therefore, today, we have the latihan which, in so far as it provides evidence through experience accessible to anyone prepared to submit to the conditions required by the experiment, may be said to constitute a bridge between the islands of religion and science.

At this point it would not be amiss to remind ourselves of the part which 'inspiration' or receiving has played in the greatest scientific discoveries. However much hard work, study, careful observation and sheer intellectual effort has contributed to such discoveries, they have really only been able to prepare the ground or the place where a fragment of truth can then manifest. This happened with Einstein, who received a momentous solution to a problem only when he temporarily abandoned his work to play the violin, when, that is, his mind was to all intents and purposes not working at all.\*

And it was this great physicist who once said: "The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can

\* cf. Bapak: "Such will also be the case with other specialists - an architect, for instance. At the moment he meets a difficulty which prevents him having a clear picture of what he has been doing, he then quietens his inner, so that soon he will get the answer from within." (5)

experience is the sensation of the mystical.' Or, this process may be reversed, as occurred with Einstein's predecessors, Newton and Maxwell, both of whom 'received' their discoveries almost in the form of visions, certainly as immense intuitions and only then set to work to formulate the logical structures necessary to explain them. And again it was Newton who remarked apropos of his gravitational theory, 'The main business of natural philosophy is ... to deduce causes from effects till we come to the very first cause which is certainly not mechanical.'

Since these men lived, a great revolution has taken place in science and, more particularly in physics, a revolution associated with the development of quantum physics.

One of the first and most important conclusions of this new physics - and we should remember that the Quantum Theory is very powerful: it has never yet failed to pass a test - is to the effect that the former and rigidly maintained division between 'subjective' and 'objective' no longer holds good:

*'The old physics assumes that there is an external world which exists apart from us. It further assumes that we can observe, measure, and speculate about the external world without changing it. According to the old physics, the external world is indifferent to us and to our needs ...*

*'The concept of scientific objectivity rests upon the assumption of an external world which is 'out there' as opposed to an 'I' which is 'in here' ... The task of the scientist is to observe the 'out there' as objectively as possible. To observe something objectively means to see it as it would appear to an observer who has no prejudices about what he observes.*

*'The problem that went unnoticed for three centuries is that a person who carries such an attitude certainly is prejudiced. His*

*prejudice is to be "objective", that is to be without an opinion. In fact, it is impossible to be without an opinion ...*

*'The new physics, quantum mechanics, tells us clearly that it is not possible to observe reality without changing it ...*

*'According to quantum mechanics there is no such thing as objectivity. We cannot eliminate ourselves from the picture ...*

*'Quantum mechanics tells us how a group of particles will behave, but the only thing that it can say about an individual particle is how it probably will behave ...*

*'The Copenhagen Interpretation was the first consistent formulation of quantum mechanics ...*

*'The extraordinary importance of the Copenhagen Interpretation lies in the fact that for the first time, scientists attempting to formulate a consistent physics were forced by their own findings to acknowledge that a complete understanding of reality lies beyond the capabilities of rational thought.'* (6)

Quantum physics is concerned with the behaviour of subatomic particles. But the physicists have to ask themselves whether these particles in fact exist, because the independent existence of such a particle cannot be demonstrated. It is asserted, rather, that there are 'tendencies to exist'. Thus metaphysics, which was so firmly and unceremoniously bundled out of the front door, has returned with a vengeance by the back.

These brief quotations and comments concerning Quantum physics are not inserted here to 'prove' anything. The door has been flung wide open and anything is possible or even probable. But from this we may see that, involuntarily but inevitably, the gap between religion and science, or at least between spiritual experience and science, has been appreciably narrowed, if not bridged.

But the bridge is psychological. Science remains science; religion remains religion. Mind remains mind

and spirit remains spirit. Indeed, I believe that the metaphysical conclusions drawn from, and the comparisons made with certain Eastern spiritual traditions by some commentators are profoundly misleading. What concerns us most deeply here and now is the fact that science has come up against an invisible barrier or boundary, which one may call the frontier of the mind. The apprehension of reality beyond this point is not possible for the mind; it requires an instrument of a different order. It is through the *jiwa* that it is possible for men to know things that are beyond the reach of the mind. At the present time, for example, there is a great deal of speculation concerning the possibility of life on other planets in the universe. So far, man has only been able to carry out tests on a very small scale. He has landed on the moon; he has sent probes to Venus, Mars, Mercury and Jupiter and Saturn. No sign of life as our senses record and our minds understand it, has been found. But,

*“... the scientists have now discovered the existence of the planets, worlds far bigger than this earth. Of course, it is true that these had already been discovered before now, in the sense that mankind knew of their existence, but they were not very clearly understood. Nowadays it is clear, and human beings can understand with their minds that beyond this earth there are other earths, other worlds, far greater than this.*

*“If a vessel exists, of course its contents exist. It would be strange if there were a vessel without any contents. Thus the contents exist, as on what is called the planet Jupiter. Human beings are now trying to send instruments as far as Jupiter, so as to be able to discover what is contained there. But, of course, it is not possible for human beings to know these contents, because different places have different conditions. ... Thus other worlds, other planets, have other conditions, and the conditions there*

*cannot be known by those here, but only by those there. And those there are not as those here who are called human beings; they are not as they are here. Yes - perhaps they have their own name for themselves. But all ... of these exist by the decree of God, and it is God who has created them all.*

*”What has happened and what exists in the kejiwaan shows that life will recognise life by way of life ... that is the jiwa. Thus through their jiwa human beings will be able to know, able to feel, how life is in all those places that are different from here ...” (7)*

It is becoming clear that, far from being opposed or contradictory, science and religion are complementary, on condition that they work within their appointed spheres and use their instruments as they were meant to be used: the mind in the material world, the jiwa where the mind can no longer go:

*” ... we should not go on and on in our mistaken ways, so that our descendants come to a dead end. We have to make a start now. This is why God has now given us His gifts. Formerly it was different, there was not much going on. People thought only as far as a camel could walk. Now we live in the jet age ... clearly, then, the way we think now should not be as in former times. We must balance things, so that the way of the kejiwaan goes side by side with the way of science.” (8)*

We ought to use our minds, and all our faculties, to the fullest possible extent, in all things pertaining to this world, to the world that we may touch and see and apprehend with the intellect. This is our worldly task, to make this world a better, a fit place for human beings to live in by the use of all the instruments that God has given us. But beyond that our minds are useless; indeed, they become obstacles:

*”Why is it that the knowledge and science achieved by thought-processes cannot bring us to God and cannot be used for*



*finding the way to Him? The reason is ... that the nature of God is utterly different from that of man ... You can form your own judgement on the strength of this evidence: man's knowledge and understanding are confined within his brain: his wishes and imaginings within his heart and emotions; but when man dies, his brain, heart and emotions will be shattered and vanish and everything dependent on their functioning will collapse and vanish as well.*

*"Now this latihan, this worship of God, is a way given to man so that he may find something that can be understood, felt and assimilated without having to rely on the instruments man commonly uses. And it is clear that God can bestow grace only upon a man who has completely stilled his own powers and emptied himself of all influences. This means, that when man dies and all in him has vanished, God will give him a consciousness, a knowledge and an understanding far beyond those he had on earth. Therefore all of you who are following these exercises should refrain from thinking and speculating about them and merely accept that which is given to your inner self, keeping it free from all thought, desire and passion. Thus whatever you will eventually receive will be beyond your expectations, and untainted by your thoughts and desires." (9)*

But although the mind cannot be used in the spiritual sphere, through the jiwa we can receive guidance for our lives and work here. The jiwa is able to direct and illuminate our minds and our hearts. Thus, as we have seen, great advances, very much including scientific discoveries, can be received through the inner self and then applied to our existence in the world. This is why great discoveries are so often accompanied by some picturesque legend; for example, that of James Watt, dreamily observing the steam issuing from the spout of a kettle of boiling water; or that of Isaac Newton, enlightened by the fall of an apple from the branch of a tree.

Nowadays, we are surrounded by the effects and fruits of scientific discovery, by the machines and artifacts of applied science. Many people regret this development and many hold science and scientists responsible for the dangerous condition of the world. But science is not to blame. All these things are good if they are put to good use. We ought not to turn our backs on progress, retreat to the backwoods and return to a primitive way of life. This is retrogressive and solves nothing; because the fault is in ourselves and not in the outer world. To correct this situation we have to find a way to contact our inner selves and thereby receive guidance, so that finally science and religion, knowing themselves, may work together for the benefit of humanity in the marriage of inner and outer, the children of which are peace, prosperity and harmony.

## CHAPTER XI

# THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

WHEN WE consider the subject of war and the advance of science and technology, which has sadly contributed so much to the evils of modern warfare, there must inevitably arise in our minds a deep question concerning evil and suffering. These things have brought the whole subject into relief, reinforced by the horrors we have witnessed in this century; but the question has always been there, for natural disasters, deadly disease, cruelty and social disharmony and injustice have seemingly been a constant element in the life of man on earth.

On a more personal level, all of us at some time in our lives pass through periods of suffering, physical or mental, and most of us are driven to ask why this should be. We also read of cities destroyed by earthquakes, of thousands made homeless by floods; of millions of innocent people suffering and dying of malnutrition; of thousands killed on the road or struck down by mysterious diseases such as cancer - any one of us can extend this list.

How often then, do we not hear people ask, 'If God is good why does he allow such things?' Or even, 'Since such things happen all the time how can there be a God?'

There have been many attempts to provide an answer

to such questions and to the problem of evil and its origin, but man remains unsatisfied.

It would be best, to begin with, briefly to review the solutions that have so far been offered.

First of all we have to deal with two kinds of evil, what we call 'acts of God', which cause suffering and death but are not, apparently, brought about by anything that we do; and then that evil which results from our own actions or wrong-doing as men and women. This second kind of evil is itself of two kinds; moral evil and the evil which results from our ignorance or our mistakes.

Leaving till later the question of 'acts of God', let us consider for a moment the second kind of evil. Moral evil results from the uncontrolled action of the nafsu, the passions of anger, arrogance, greed and so forth, which are characteristic of an egotism which takes no account of the well-being of others. As we know, such passions are part of our human constitution and the vital question is whether they control us or are controlled by a human jiwa. That they indeed form a part of man's equipment may lie behind the Christian dogma of 'original sin', a dogma denied by Islam. The contradiction could be only apparent since, from the point of view we have adopted, both are right and both are wrong.

The evils that result from errors of judgement, from our mistakes, are usually closely related to moral evil, since it could be argued that our mistakes result from our greed, from impatience and anger, or from pride. At first sight, evils caused by ignorance would seem to belong to a different category. To blame someone who does not know what he is doing seems to many to be harsh and unfeeling. But, if we remember that we do in fact possess an inner instrument by which we may know

right from wrong and good from bad, we are culpable if we neglect to use it; unless, as certainly is now the case more often than not, we have no contact with it and do not even know that it exists.

Between moral evil and the so-called evils of natural catastrophe, lies the ambivalent category of disease. Today this is usually regarded as an unmitigated misfortune, but as we saw earlier, we are to a certain extent responsible for our physical and mental health, and, in certain cases, must suffer illness or even disablement as a form of expiation: to the extent that it is understood as such and suffered with an attitude of patience and submission, it must be regarded as a painful blessing.

Natural catastrophes, or 'acts of God', are different. They are aspects of the life of the planet, a part of 'nature'; they do not strike a normal person as in any way malevolent and, although they often cause great suffering and loss of life, they are of so impersonal a character that most of us accept them as elements in an environment which is partly friendly and partly hostile. No doubt there are worlds where such things do not occur - but then those worlds would not be like our world nor could their inhabitants resemble ourselves. I have, however, heard Bapak say that the present unusually disturbed state of the earth and the unpredictable climatic changes of our time are due to the effects of the excessive activity of man's passions.

So we come to the crux of the matter which is the relationship between God and evil. The great religions of man have interpreted this in various ways. In Zoroastrianism we find the dual principles of light and dark, or good and evil engaged in mortal combat. In Buddhism, evil in all its aspects, including death, is held to be the inevitable result of birth, of 'coming-to-be'

and it can only be avoided by escape from the wheel of karma, or life and death. In Christianity, the most widely held interpretation is that of the Scholastics, to the effect that evil is the absence of good. This view would hardly satisfy anyone today who, faced only with the evils of his own century, is simply unable to accept such an interpretation. To us, today, evil is all too real. In Islam, it is held that human beings are created pure and thereafter are free to choose between good and evil, but God (Allah) is the first Cause of all things and therefore permits evil to exist as a test for man.

The philosophers in their turn have put forward various hypotheses to account for the presence of evil. For example: that God may not be wholly good, or omnipotent. In the first case, both good and evil originate in God; in the second, He is opposed to evil but unable to overcome it. Philosophically, these propositions are shaky; more importantly, to suffering humanity they are either ridiculous or appalling.

But what do we mean by evil? To some disease is evil, death is evil, poverty is evil, even life is evil. To others, war is evil, crime is evil, unemployment is evil, wealth is evil. It all depends upon the point of view or, in other words, evil, in this sense, is relative. And in all the above mentioned cases the situation is ambivalent. For example, a 'bad' death may be evil; a 'good' death good: wealth may be evil if used to evil ends, or good if used to help others. But when we speak of evil, especially in relation to God, we instinctively mean something more than this - something which strikes at the roots of our existence and threatens to pull us down, not by destroying the body however fearful or unpleasant this prospect may be, but by destroying, or deflecting from its rightful way, the being, the inner-feeling of man. Thus, when we see someone - especially someone we

love - destroyed by alcohol or drugs, we feel a deep sense of loss and anguish: something potentially fine and noble has fallen from grace, has been degraded. And because we also, like the victim, are human, we are affected by his fall. Humanity has been diminished, just as it is also exalted by heroism or self-sacrifice. And this evil is specific to us human beings; plants and animals (and angels!) do not rise or fall, they remain always in their own natures. Chesterton very wittily illustrated this when he said that we will pat a man on the shoulder and say 'Come on, be a man!' but we do not pat a crocodile on the shoulder and say, 'Come on, be a crocodile!' Therefore, for us, evil is that which threatens, diminishes or destroys our human nature, our human-ness, and reduces us to the level of animals - but without their innocence! - at the level of instinctual desire, or of plants, at the level of ruthless competition, or of material objects at the level of indiscriminating destructiveness or almost total insensibility:

*"People whose feelings have been deceived by the power of matter go so far astray that they are no longer able to distinguish between what in themselves must be master and what has to be ruled and used.*

*"... the master must be aware to what extent his servant (the heart and mind) is clever. And he must know also what the habits of this servant are. For unless he understands this servant's cleverness, the master can easily be fooled by it and will inevitably sink into a trough of misery.*

*"For this reason, many people, at the end of their life's journey, regret the outcome of their actions. The cause is solely their own misdeeds, for they simply followed the impulses of the heart and mind without knowing their source, and were unaware that they came from a force other than their human inner self."*

(1)

It is not surprising therefore, that the forces of matter should be called 'satanic' or that these forces should be associated with 'devils', for such, if they are not controlled and rightly used, do they become:

*"Bapak is going to speak first of the characteristics of that force which is called sjetoniah, satanic, i.e., the force of matter. When the properties of this force pervade the inner being of man, his heart and his mind, he loses all feeling of compassion, kills, harms, and injures other people, and enjoys misleading them or causing them damage or suffering. But he does not stop there - he does it even to his own brother, for the sake of money or material things. He does not hesitate to mislead his own brother ... and to harm him, even to kill him. When the characteristics of the satanic force prevail in the nafsu of man, then this passion is called angkara, arrogance." (2)*

This material force is the force which most affects man, especially through his mind, and it is also the most dangerous and harmful for him. But the Devil has other weapons in his armoury: the vegetable force, characterised by the passion of supiah, desire. What used to be called 'temptation by the devil' is in fact the tendency of these lower forces to manifest in and dominate the feeling of man. To be able to control a human heart and brain, vastly superior instruments, is of the greatest advantage to the material force and although the results are wholly destructive, this is not because this force intended evil: it acted according to its own nature which lacks all discrimination. Again, alcoholism, a form of greed, is a good example of the vegetable force out of control, as is unbridled sexual promiscuity of the animal force given command of a human heart and body. With the human force itself we



are in another world, but one where pride may still bring about a fall:

*”The fourth life force is that which properly belongs to man, and is called jasmaniah. When this force prevails in the inner being of man, he will have the character mutmainah - as it is called in Arabic - which means that he is able to act as a man should, to be sincere and willing to help his fellow living creatures. He feels compassionate towards his fellow-men. Only, he still thinks very highly of his particular gift, his intellectual powers and their excellence, so that he does not believe in the existence of God, but only in himself and in his cleverness, and thus becomes his own God. He considers that he himself is God and refuses to believe that he has been created by God.” (3)*

Only with the fifth force do we enter a realm which is free of what we call evil, because it is higher than the human force, ”and it cannot be fathomed by the intellect, the emotions or desires; all we can do about this life force is to surrender to it. Beings endowed with this force understand our conditions better than we do. This is the life force that is called rohaniah. If it prevails in us , if it pervades our inner feelings, we shall be able to receive and feel how life is in this world, and also how is that nobler life beyond this world.” (4)

Bapak here went on to mention the sixth and seventh forces, but pointed out that, since even the fifth force is beyond our thought, any attempt to visualise the others is bound to fail; we cannot possibly know them; but,

*”Even so, we have already sufficient evidence that the power working within us - the latihan which you have all received - is a mighty, a noble force, and higher than the fifth force. Obviously then, in the latihan, receiving the latihan, we can be taught and*

*guided by this high and noble force which knows our shortcomings, our weaknesses, and our faults far better than we know them ourselves.” (5)*

Evil, therefore, is the misuse of forces or instruments which were created by God and given to us to enable us to live here in this world. It is something out of place. As Bapak has explained so many times, without the material force we could not have houses, clothes, tools, money or any of the numerous things which distinguish human life on earth; without the vegetable force we would not be able to maintain our bodies; without the animal force we would have no desire, no ambition, be unable to strive and struggle. And we have to make full use of all these instruments; we have to think, feel, and desire in order to provide here for ourselves and our families, in order to do the work we are equipped to do “always provided that we do nothing to harm other people”. (6)

The question then arises as to how we can live as we ought to live, if all our faculties are already filled by the lower forces and not by a human content. Indeed, in this case we cannot live as we ought to live, unless we can find a way by which we can receive the ordering, guidance and the purification that we need. If we can do this, then thereafter what happens is no longer our responsibility because “spiritual matters are not the work of man and do not have the same character as man’s work, but have the characteristics of the work of God”. (7)

In the beginning, then, God created man and equipped him with the lower forces so that he would be able to live in this world and, using these instruments in the right way, using his brain and his heart and his

physical properties he would be able to create a life and a world fit for human beings to inhabit. But he also equipped him with a spark or a current of His Own power so that he need never be lost, never lack guidance; so long as he could maintain contact with this current, he need never go astray. Using the material force, he would be able to build houses, to clothe himself, to defend himself, to make tools and also beautiful artifacts, eventually to create complicated machines to transport himself from one part of the world to another, to communicate rapidly over great distances, to make life easier and finer, even to explore not only the earth in all its aspects but worlds beyond this earth. Using the vegetable forces he would be able to cultivate the earth and grow food to nourish his body and mind. Using the animal force he would have the desire, the strength and the courage to work, to progress, and to overcome difficulties. Using the human force he would be able to marry and have children of good quality, able to carry on the work of man, and also to help his fellowmen. Then, through the spark of the divine in him he would be able to worship his Creator, be able to receive guidance, be able to receive from influences and forces higher than man, so that he might, if God wills, be raised above and beyond his human stature.

But he is also given freedom of choice within the limits of the laws which govern his existence. Therefore he can use rightly and appropriately the instruments he has been given and do 'good'; or misuse them, or let himself be used by them, and do 'evil'.

So, evil is not an illusion, it is not the absence of good, it is the misuse of good. Thus, a knife may be used to cut bread or to cut one's neighbour's throat. Food may be used to give nourishment and health, or to poison and

cause illness, and so on. Seen in this light, the terrible events of our time are clearly an example of possession by demonic forces, by the material force allowed to run completely out of control. Then, with the help of a human brain, human cleverness and human faculties in general at its command, but without feeling, or discrimination, there is obviously no limit to the harm it can do or the suffering it can cause. I have myself heard Bapak say in a talk that if men are completely possessed by the satanic or material forces then they will not rest until they have completely destroyed one another. When we think of the gang warfare, the tortures and the terrorism of our time, the truth of this becomes evident. The evil of modern warfare which is generally agreed to be worse than at any time in the past, is due to the development of technology unrestrained by a human jiwa and to the resulting total depersonalisation and dehumanisation of war, when men no longer face each other with courage and fortitude in a test of strength and endurance, but press electronic buttons which cause the destruction of cities with all their inhabitants thousands of miles away.

Of course, we are concerned with the question of good and evil as it appears to us here on earth. What constitutes good and evil for Creation as a whole, or even for the human race, is beyond our grasp and is not our concern.

For us it is sufficient to comprehend that evil as we know it, no matter how terrible the forms it takes and has taken, is in no way incompatible with a God Who is Almighty, All-Good and All-Loving, for it is the result of the abuse and misuse of His gifts to us, gifts which are in themselves blessings, but which can be transformed into curses if we do not respect that freedom which is the highest gift of all.

But we have largely forfeited this gift. We are no longer able to exercise our freedom. We have shut ourselves off from its source. We have disposed ourselves to suffer and to cause evil:

*”Since it is the lower forces which are master within man”. But the latihan kejiwaan of Subud is an unending gift from God, and God will clear away everything that is not right in man, for the essence of man should be filled by the human jiwa. Thus it is really a gift of grace from God that you can become conscious of this and receive the working of God within yourselves, so that in the end the faults will not perpetuate themselves and spread beyond yourselves. Then it can later be said of your children that they start as noble human beings, because all faults have been cleansed during the time of their parents.*

*”Such are the conditions in which you will finally receive and see that the working of the power of God within your being is not limited to the jiwa, but reaches outward, which means that it reaches into the details, into the smallest parts: it reaches your walking, your working, your seeing, your hearing and your smelling, your talking and so forth. All of it will constantly be pervaded by the force of the power of God, so that truly not only your mind and brain will know the power of God, but also your hair and fingers and every organ of yours will know that the power of God is constantly guiding us, that His power is always behind us. God is always with us, so we cannot possibly deny His existence. God is eternal and guides us, and cares for us and becomes the shepherd of man and of all His creatures, in accordance with what has been said by the prophets and by Jesus himself, that God always accompanies you, God always accompanies the self of man.” (8)*

## CHAPTER XII

# KEBUDAJAAN PRIBADI

THE TITLE of this chapter is an Indonesian expression meaning 'culture of the inner-self' as opposed to culture of the heart and mind. The latter is what we have come to understand by the word culture, which the Oxford dictionary defines as 'improvement by (mental or physical) training; intellectual development', but which in a more general sense refers to the development of all the arts and sciences of man. The root of this word is, however, the word 'cult', from the Latin, cultus, meaning a 'system of religious worship'.

It is natural that, in an age and in a civilisation which has almost entirely lost contact with the inner-self, culture should be the expression of thought and emotion rather than of the true individuality of man. In our Western civilisation, in particular, it is generally necessary to go back in time to experience the manifestation of the latter.

True culture - as the root 'cult' implies - has its source in the inner-self and not in the heart or mind.

*"The source is the inner-life and it is received in an inner feeling that has risen free of the sway of the auxiliary forces. It is a culture filled continuously with the life force. What is why the work you do will be a means for your worship of Almighty God."*

Commenting upon what had been recited in a class in New York, Rev. Dr. Beale said:

*”After these songs have been sung, they are accompanied and followed by movements which are called dance. Indeed, God wills that man, the true individuality of man, should give birth to art, a genuine culture that can serve as a means to regenerate the inner being of man, for vibrations and movements originating from the self of man are very necessary indeed, in order to bring about the well-being of his whole self.*

*”It is for this purpose that there are many people who pursue the various arts that exist in this world, looking for their inner significance, in the hope that by means of the arts man will be able to find a way in which to effect contact with the Greatness of God.*

*”From this test (i.e., the latihan referred to above) it will be evident to those of you who have children - and those without may verify this by seeing a new-born baby that does not know of the enjoyment of this world - that if it listens to such singing it may feel like falling asleep or have a sense of well-being; after this, when it wakes up, it makes spontaneous movements as a result of the singing, in which it in no way imitates others, for these movements originate from within itself. This illustrates the fact that these songs exist within man himself and have their origin in the human jiwa.*

*”The condition of adults and grown-ups is different from that of a child, for even though they heard such singing a thousand times, their thinking would continue to revolve. But in these spiritual exercises all of you are enabled to experience your own state in childhood, and this comes about spontaneously, quite unexpectedly, and directly. This clearly indicates that you are grown-ups in mind and external appearance, but still children with regard to the human jiwa.*

*”It follows that, being of a childlike jiwa, one is not yet able to understand the significance of God’s gift that has been bestowed, for it is as yet impossible for this little child, this baby, to make use of his understanding in the true sense of the word. Therefore, if you will make use of your logical thinking with regard to your*

*spiritual progress, this means you are hindering the development of the jiwa ...*

*"... When it is from the true jiwa, then that song is able to go directly to and awaken the inner self.*

*"Such singing is different from songs composed by thoughts and emotions, which serve to stir up excitement, overflowing with passions, so that instead of quietening the mind, thoughts and desires, they stir them up. For example, the mambo and other songs which Bapak hears.*

*"When you begin to experience in your exercises the sounds which are the songs of the soul, they are melodies which run parallel with the regeneration of the inner feeling. For this reason people were recommended that the reading of the holy books which contain advice should be accompanied by songs, for these are a means of regenerating and awakening the inner feeling and resurrecting the jiwa of man." (2)*

At one time the regenerative , healing and opening power of the arts, and particularly of the art of music, were generally recognised as, for example, in the doctrine of the ethos in ancient Greek music (3), or in the stories of the effects produced by the classical composers of Carnatic music - men such as Sri Purandaradasa or Sri Tyagaraja (4) - and also in the West, as with the use of plain-song in the ritual of the Catholic Church or, much later, as in the following touching story illustrating the power of improvisation at the command of Beethoven:

*'He had a lady friend of noble rank. Upon the loss of her favourite child her sorrow was inconsolable. Most of her friends called on her, but not Beethoven. Some time later, she received an invitation to visit him. Her regard for him was so high that she overcame her mortification and responded. The composer said not a word, but beckoned her to a chair near him and played on the piano for a time, and sat silent. Tears flowed from her eyes, and*



*she could scarce express the varied feelings of sympathy, sorrow, consolation, hope and joy that the music of the master conveyed to her. She felt she was lifted to the abode of eternal bliss and that she even got a glimpse of her departed child.' (5)*

In recent years a consciousness of what has been lost has arisen, especially among young people, who are reacting against the intellectualism which overcame the arts and are in search of feeling and meaning. This is particularly true of music and has affected both popular and 'classical' music. These tendencies are thoroughly examined in a book by the German composer Peter Michael Hamel which has the significant title "Through Music to the Self". A few quotations will suffice to provide concrete examples of what Bapak refers to in the second paragraph of the explanation quoted above. Thus, in a section entitled 'Tone-colour as the vehicle of the spiritual', and referring to the attempts to combine European and Asian musical elements to form a kind of 'musical meditation', the author quotes:

*'This new music demands 'pure listening', i.e., a form of listening which is free from all the old accustomed intellectual and emotional ingredients. It is in this pure hearing of the sound and of its shape that the strong stimulating power of the music lies. Tone-colour music is the most musical of music, because it is the music of the elemental nature of sound'. (6)*

Or again, quoting - in a section called 'spiritual jazz' - the saxophonist John Coltrane:

*'Praise be the name of the Lord. Thought waves - heat waves - all vibrations lead to God ... God breathes through us so completely, so gently, we hardly feel it ... He is our All ... Thank you, God'. (7)*

In this same context it is interesting to note first, the influence that the art of spontaneous improvisation has been brought back into music making in the West.

Nevertheless, there is still much calculation in all this, although it springs from a deep, instinctive urge to find and return to the true source of feeling and inspiration; and there is also a high element of imitation, since the whole new movement is very largely based on the discovery of Asian models - Tibetan, Indian and Indonesian in particular; we have not yet, therefore, come to that spontaneity which "in no way imitates others, for these movements originate within the self". For, even as Beethoven wrote on the score of the 9th symphony, 'From the heart it has come, to the heart it shall penetrate', so music which has its origin in the human jiwa will "go directly to and awaken the inner self".

The melodies that are received in the latihan are indeed totally spontaneous and unexpected. They are as spontaneous as bird-song, which Bapak has cited as an example of true culture\*; and like all that is truly spontaneous, they are unexpected, although they often bear a resemblance to religious chant, that which accompanies the reading of the Qoran, for example, or the Ambrosian or Gregorian music of the Church or, most haunting of all, the deep and holy chant of the Russian Orthodox Church which, to me at least, does indeed seem to be a "means of regenerating and awakening the inner feeling".

Such things cannot be created by taking thought; they have to be received in all humility and as anonymously

\* It is interesting to recall that Paul Dukas, the teacher of Olivier Messiaen, once told his pupil, 'Study the birds, they are great masters'. And not only birds. The howling of wolves, too, has come to be understood as an animal equivalent of choral song, which we may feel as true culture, i.e., as an act of worship. (8)

as the gong-makers of Asia or the bell-makers of old Europe created their gongs and bells, and fashioned or cast their instruments with a pure and calm feeling, so that they were able to touch and awaken the feelings of others and recall them to prayer.

I have spoken of music because it is the most immediate and spontaneous of the arts, requiring nothing for its physical manifestation but the human voice. But the same distinction between the inner and the outer applies to the other arts and also, in a different way, to the sciences, as we have seen in the case of certain great scientific pioneers. There is a difference in kind between the ordinary book, no matter how well composed, and the literature of revelation.

I always used to have great difficulty in reading the Bible and even greater difficulty in reading the Qoran. Then I heard Bapak explain during a talk at Paris, many years ago, that when we read the Holy Books - the Bible and the Qoran - we should not read them with our minds, trying to understand the meaning of the words; we should read them in a state of quietness, allowing the words to pass straight into the inner feeling. From then on, I was able to read both, many times, with ease, and with an understanding belonging to the feeling and not to the mind. Because their content was received, and not invented or composed, they must be received by the reader and not examined or pondered. The same thing applies to other works which have been the perennial inspiration of large sections of mankind. The Indian epic, Ramayana, for example, was certainly received by its legendary 'author', Valmiki; it originates in a source so deep and pure that it has been able to nourish the spirit of successive generations of men to such an extent that its characters, and especially that of its hero, Rama, have become accepted ideals of humanity and of human conduct.

All the arts are combined in that extraordinary creation, the Wayang puppet theatre of Java, and particularly in that form where shadows are cast upon a screen by flat leather puppets manipulated by a dalang, or puppet-master:

*'The Wayang and the gamelan are like sugar and its sweetness; it's not possible to separate one from the other.*

*'The Wayang is really a holy art form. Therefore, its performance has to be in harmony with the spiritual content. The music of the gamelan orchestra tells us the way to receive the meaning of the symbols in the wayang. That is, with our feelings. But not with ordinary feelings. Rather, with feelings which have already become orderly.*

*'If you watch the wayang with your mind, you will become bored fast. Your mind will say, "There are simply not people on earth with noses as long as those puppets have."*

*'But if you watch with your feelings, and let this deepen to your inner-feeling, you'll find that the wayang will live for you.*

*"Isn't it strange", Bapak once said to us, "how things that start out as nothing more than shadows can suddenly become so alive - like real beings."*

*'The gamelan begins the wayang.*

*'If you feel the music, your heart and mind will gradually grow quiet. And then, if you are careful, your inner-feeling may suddenly arise.*

*'At this time, you may be able to receive indications for your life, and that of our brotherhood, through the stories Bapak has chosen to be performed.*

*'In Subud, we find no symbols - but realities. But through the latihan in Subud we can receive the reality of what was, in former times, expressed through wayang symbols.*

*'The wayang was really created by the Muslim saint, Sunan Kalidjaga ...*

*'Bapak has ... said that Sunan Kalidjaga really received the truths he expressed in the wayang.*

*'The wali took old Hindu legends which people had painted on rolls of paper. He broke up the stories into sequences. He added new characters. And flat wooden puppets were made.*

*'The puppet-shadows were cast on a white curtain lit from behind by a lamp. And 'wayang'-shadows were all that the audience was supposed to see.*

*'People say that this white curtain came from an ancestor rite of ancient Java. When there was an important problem like a marriage the head of the family would invoke the spirits of the dead. Their ghostly shadows would flit across the curtain while the whole family witnessed.*

*'Sunan Kalidjaga synthesized this ancient stage-craft with the Hindu tales, and infused both with the spiritual truths he had received.*

*'That's why the Indian Ramayana and Mahabharata and their Indonesian versions are so different.*

*"And that is why", Bapak has said, "the wayang is still alive today - because the source was pure."*

*'The essence of all the tales is finding the way to God: and this is expressed in symbols.*

*'The tales today can be performed in dance - wayang orang. With masks - wayang topeng. With carved wooden puppets - Wayang golek. And even old rolled drawings - wayang beber.*

*'But wayang kulit, with its perforated leather puppets, is closest to the source. And the heart of the wayang kulit is the dalang.*

*'The dalang is a man trained in specialised arts. A master mimic - he does the voices of scores of wayang characters. A musician - he directs the gamelan with a foot-rattle. A puppeteer - manipulating as many as four or five leather figures at a time.*

*'But most of all, the dalang should be a man of real insight: versed in the symbols of the tales, and able to lace his dialogue with wit and comment pertinent to every aspect of society.*

*'In the old days people never went to a dalang and said, "I'd like you to perform this or that story." On the contrary, the man of the house would invite the dalang to present wayang for his family and friends. But he would leave the story to the dalang.*

*'The dalang would quieten himself and try to feel the real situation of his host. And then he would choose a wayang that best expressed it.*

*'Come evening, the dalang would take up his position behind the white curtain. And there he stayed, from dusk till dawn, never resting.*

*'Behind him, the gamelan. And behind the musicians, women and children, servants and villagers, would watch. The lamplight would catch the golden filigree and coloured patterns of the puppets for the backstage audience.*

*'But on the silhouette-side of the curtain, there was nothing to do but watch shadows, listen to the music and ponder the narration.*

*'Towards morning the play would end, and a humorous explanatory epilogue would express the message the dalang intended his host to receive.*

*'That's how the wayang 'unfolded wisdom'. And that is what the word 'dalang' really means.*

*'The dalang represents the power of God. The lamp is the Sun. The white screen is the universe. It's the blank page that receives shadows of the truth. The interpretation of these shadows is up to the person watching. The spade-shaped Gunungan is the world.*

*'Watch the dalang at the start of the play. He'll whirl the Gunungan about so that we can see both sides. When the Gunungan first appears, it's like watching the Power of God creating the world. And when the delicately carved symbol turns, you can see the earth rotate - once a day in the light of the sun.*

*'In fact, the Gunungan represents the whole content of the world. When it appears in a play, it can mean oceans, mountains, storms, floods, fires, dangers, plagues - all kinds of phenomena.*

*'And this is the way the Gunungan symbolizes the heart - the heart of a man, a country or the entire earth. Watch the Gunungan when a war is on and a kingdom is in trouble. The dalang will tilt the Gunungan till it's way off balance.*

*'The box containing the 144 wayang puppets is our body. The puppet heroes are the Pandawa brothers. Some say these five brothers represent the senses. But they also symbolize the higher parts of the human being - parts guided by God. Yudistira or Puntadewa is like the inner-self - and his state is of surrender. Bima can be called the will of the inner-self and Arjuna, the inner-feeling.*

*'Bapak has said, "If you like, you can test and find out for each wayang character where it is in your body. But the most important thing for you is for all 144 to become alive!"*

*'When the puppets are arranged half on the right and half on the left side of the curtain, they describe the positive and negative forces which act on man during his life. Everything that happens in the world is portrayed by the puppets from the left. And all things accomplished by the will of the inner-self, from the right. This means two wills; one for worldly matters and one for spiritual matters.*

*'In ancient times, if catastrophe befell a kingdom, the Sultan and people of the land would fast. Then wayang would be performed and gamelan played. And because of their content, the sounds and shadows formed weapons to fight the force of evil.*

*'One Sultan, so another story goes, loved to sit at night and watch the shadows cast by bamboo within his bedroom garden.*

*"Ah, there is Arjuna", he would murmur as he watched. "And there - Shinta! How slim and graceful she is tonight. How I wish I could hear her voice ..."*

*'It came to pass that the Sultan called all the master musicians and sculptors of his kingdom and set them a test.*

*'After many months, the work was complete. Just beside the bamboo garden, and all about the Sultan's bed, was a delicate arrangement of sculpted stone. The night of the full moon, as*

*'wayang' danced in the bamboo grove, lake water was loosed over the stonework. Out of the sound of rippling, falling water sprang the music of a gamelan orchestra.*

*'This music is really four sounds. Listen for them at the opening of the wayang ...*

*Ketul ...*

*Kenong ...*

*Kempul ...*

*Gong.*

*Ketul - you meet God's power. Kenong - you touch God's power. Kempul - you are one with God's power. Gong - your action is for God' (9)*

I have quoted at length because I feel that this account, better than anything else I know, conveys the difference between a culture originating in the inner-self, the human jiwa, and the culture of the heart and mind which dominates our civilisation and our times. And today, in addition, we have not only the culture of heart and mind - which, after all, can be very beautiful - but the culture of the sick heart and mind, in books, in paintings, in films, on television. No wonder that our young people turn away in disgust, turn to the East, to mysticism, to drugs, to the remote and exotic. But they do not need to take such dangerous ways or travel so far. The answer is inside themselves, where all answers, like the Sleeping Beauty, lie waiting for the kiss of the Prince that will awaken them.

The manifestations of true culture need not take complicated or recondite forms. And they make use of all the natural abilities, faculties and talents of man. It only requires a contact with the source of truth and beauty - and then the courage and conviction to be oneself and to dispense with all imitations, the kind of courage and sense of responsibility shown by the



composer Anton Bruckner when he said to his friend Dr. Josef Kluger: 'They want me to write differently. I could too, but I may not. Out of thousands God in His mercy chose me and endowed me with talent, me of all persons. Some day I will have to account to Him. And then how would I stand before our Lord if I followed the others and not Him?' (10)

All our activities can and ought to be guided. All things come from God and return to Him. We are, at best, not creators - as we like to think and claim - but channels. Our freedom, our choice and our responsibility lies in the kind of channel we elect to be and the quality of force that can manifest through us determines the culture to which we can give expression.

The manifestations of true culture can be as simple as they are astounding. On the one hand, the song of a blackbird, or an eagle's cry; on the other, I have seen Bapak stand on a stage and receive how the people of various nations walk: How does an Englishman walk? How does a German walk? How does a man from Solo (in Java) walk? Bapak received in the form of movements, simply walking and swinging his arms, without uttering a word. The result was not only hilariously funny, but beautiful as well; it was funny and beautiful all at once because it was perfectly true, an authentic portrayal of the real nature of each people as this is revealed in the way they walk. (11)

Culture then is simply a product of our being ourselves, and true culture, the culture of the inner-self, results from our acting in harmony with and from our true individuality. The form it takes will depend upon the talents we possess. Towards these gifts, as Bruckner so firmly felt, we have a deep responsibility. But responsibility, as has so often been pointed out, is intimately linked to freedom, and freedom, pace the

Atlantic Charter, is not a freedom from this or that, but a freedom to assume responsibility. And our responsibility is to bear witness to the truth that is in us.

Nothing that has been said above should lead one to suppose that feeling is all and that, because true culture is of the inner-self and not of heart and mind, we should neglect the care and development of these instruments. The contrary is the truth, but they are, and must remain, instruments:

*“... please do not misunderstand ... and deliberately negate the zeal of the heart and mind, thus weakening your efforts to live a life of the best kind here on earth. The root of the problem is this, that you need to understand the difference in kind between the forces associated with your life and the force of man’s inner self. Once these forces have been put into order, people will be able to conduct their lives as befits human beings called noble creatures.*

*”There is nothing wrong in having a well-developed mind. On the contrary, as many people as possible need to acquire advanced and wide-ranging knowledge, provided such knowledge really becomes a means for them to live as God ordains and a means to better the lives of their fellow-men. Doing this will enable them to reach the level of creatures who can broaden the scope of their life to benefit society.*

*”That is the use of men of ability, so that with their knowledge they may fill the world with all the arts and skills helpful to human society, and that the light of these, shining radiantly, may enable society to live in peace and prosperity.” (12)*

## CHAPTER XIII

# DEATH

WE COME to the end of our life as we began it; owning nothing, naked, and alone. As we can all so easily verify, we leave behind our physical bodies, our hearts with all their emotions, our minds with all their thoughts. Nothing of this do we take with us. Is there anything else? Many people, in this materialistic age, do not think so.

Before we come to the evidence of the nature of death as it is received in the latihan, let us consider a few testimonies of those who have been at the point of death, or who were clinically dead but were then resuscitated.

The victor of Gettysburg, General Meade, during a moment of lucidity during his terminal coma whispered, 'I am about crossing a beautiful wide river, and the opposite shore is coming nearer and nearer.' (1) This vision of water, either in the form of a river or an expanse of shadowy ocean, is very frequent in connection with death. Goya, shortly before he died, painted a picture which shows a dog appearing above the horizon of a vast expanse of dark water. The dog is an unconscious symbol of death. I myself once dreamed of this dark and shadowy ocean: in the foreground, drawn up on the shore, was an open boat, in which stood a dog with his back to me and his forepaws on the gunwale of the boat. His head was slightly turned to the

right, so that I could partly see his profile. When I awoke I understood this dream to refer to a death, not my own, since the dog had his back to me, but of someone near to me, since I could partly see his face. A few days later, I heard that an uncle of mine had died at exactly the time I had had this dream. Ramakrishna also said to those gathered around him, shortly before he died, that he had to cross a large expanse of water.

The experience of dying and being outside one's body which, however, one can still see, is of remarkably frequent occurrence, especially during surgical operations. Here is a case of a woman whose heart stopped beating for several minutes while she lay on the operating table:

*'... the extraordinary thing is that, despite being under a general anaesthetic, she acquired an uncannily vivid memory of having observed the operating room during those critical minutes from an indescribably spaceless position that somehow enabled her to see all four walls, ceiling and floor simultaneously, including her own lifeless body on the table as if from above or outside, and she could fully recall the tense conversation between the surgeons and nurses as they worked to get her heart beating again.'* (2)

An even more remarkable experience - because the patient had been certified as dead and his body removed to the morgue - is the following:

*'About thirty-one years ago, at Onitsha in the Eastern province of the Federation of Nigeria, I was admitted into the General Hospital, critically ill. My body was reduced almost to a skeleton and affected by paralysis with its attendant complications. Only my heart, brain and eyes escaped the ravages of the illness.*

*'I was placed on the danger list and my chances of survival*

were very doubtful. Neither solid nor liquid food could pass through my throat. The doctor gave me less than an hour to live.

'As I lay waiting for his prediction to be fulfilled, a friend came to visit me. He encouraged me to battle, to fight for my life, as it was not his wish that I should leave him so early in life. I closed my eyes and turned my thoughts within and prayed to God to spare my life so that I might cultivate those virtues and powers that would help me to secure emancipation for my immortal soul.

'When I opened my eyes, my friend had gone. In his place, standing at the side of my bed, was a Catholic priest who pleaded with me to allow him to convert me to Catholicism so that I might receive the last Sacrament - Extreme Unction - before death swept me from this life to a new existence.

I told the priest that I was not prepared to surrender to Death at that moment. I did not possess those virtues which would be my only assets in the life after death. What I needed most, I said, was Divine healing, and if he was not in a position to help me in this way, then he should not concern himself with my death ...

'The hour passed and I still clung to life. My struggle with death was aided by my faith that God would answer my prayer ... This combat lasted over a fortnight and, although resolute in my faith and determined to conquer death, my body was growing weaker and weaker every day. Finally, the darkness of death descended upon me one night, about 9.30. I observed that the spiritual counterpart of my physical body was standing, with full consciousness, by the side of the bed. I started to speculate on the reasons for this division - the phenomenon which indicated to me what Death really was.

'In that etheric atmosphere, I observed that some of the other ward patients were awake. I went near to them and spoke, but they could neither see nor hear me. Another peculiar experience which came to me in this state was that I could see through the walls and the ceiling.

'A few minutes after I was separated from my physical body the nurse on night duty entered the ward. Observing that my body

was lifeless he drew the blanket over it until its face was covered. Then I left the room.

'While journeying through the air to the province of the Unknown, I sighted in the distance a walled city and set course for it. I circled the city three times but could not find the gateway to enter.

'Then I met another spirit, travelling to the same city, so I accompanied him. This time the gate was opened by a porter who, after checking my partner's name on the list of names on the scroll he was holding, admitted him. I tried to enter also, but he stopped me and asked for my name. He scrutinized the names on the list but he did not find mine. Therefore he refused to let me enter.

'I started to wander in that vast etheric plane alone until I sighted two entities far off. I went ... to join them. As I approached, I recognised one of them, a Dr. Kwegyir Aggrey. "Archibald", he exclaimed. "You look so tubercular. What's the matter with you?"

'I told him of my situation and of my illness. Then he introduced me to his spiritual partner, one Bishop James Johnson. The Bishop, seeing my pitiable condition, invited me to draw near to him and asked if I really could not swallow anything. I told him this was truly the case. Then he touched my throat and uttered, "You are cured", with divine authority. I returned immediately into my physical body which was then lying on a cement slab in the mortuary, amid other corpses on the ground. It was dawn and the birds were chirping happily. I swallowed my spit to certify that I could now swallow and felt no more pain in my throat.

'A few minutes later, the door of the mortuary opened, and the head nurse came in, leading a group of people ... coming to remove my corpse. They withdrew in amazement and confusion on discovering that I was alive. The next persons I saw were the hospital servants with a stretcher. I was carried back to the ward. I called for food, as by this time I was quite hungry ...' (3)

During the next few weeks, when he had other

experiences, the patient was convalescent and finally, to the astonishment of doctors and nurses, was released, completely cured. During the ensuing thirty-one years he studied at various occult centres in an attempt to gain the spiritual and moral qualities he considered necessary 'to contact my overself ... but from my own experience, such attainments were difficult and, finally, proved elusive and unattainable, as a pursuit after a gilded rainbow'. His search came to an end when he was opened in Subud in January 1962, at Kaduna in Northern Nigeria. (4)

Many after-death experiences have been reported especially in spiritualist literature, but they are generally totally unconvincing because of the banality of the circumstances - they seem no more than a pale and shadowy reflection of life on earth at its least interesting. But the nature of dying and the state that succeeds this change depends on the condition of the subject:

*"Man's ability to understand his own situation can only emerge if he is given consciousness of his inner feeling, and this consciousness is something that can be most easily seen or measured at the moment when a man faces death.*

*"A man whose life has been completely ruled by the nafs and who has not received the grace of Almighty God and the awareness of the jiwa in his life, when he is about to die forgets everything.*

*"He is not able to express or to remember any of the things he used to think about. He is not able to express any of the things he used to strive for or any of the things that used to be his ideals.*

*"He is aware of nothing but darkness.*

*"This is completely different from a person who has experienced the consciousness of his jiwa, who has within him*

*what is called faith, that is, the consciousness of the inner feeling awakened by the power of Almighty God.*

*”Such a person in facing his last breath or his last moment of life is more conscious than he is when he is fully alive. With his last breath he is able to say, ‘Allah-u-Akbar’ (God is Great) - at the moment when he is about to die.*

*”This is the difference that we have received in the benefit of the latihan kejiwaan and this is why it is extremely important that you really follow and practise your latihan.” (5)*

To ‘know thyself’ is an absolute requirement; we must be able to become conscious and to be able to separate the Self from the ego:

*”... when you are able to receive, you are also able to know and to measure your faults and your good qualities. For Bapak to explain it clearly, so that you can understand, is impossible if you cannot yet receive and witness it for yourselves.*

*”Just now Bapak said that your faults and the things not right in the course or condition of your present inner-feeling begin with what you inherited and go on to include your own actions as well, the things you yourselves have done - a cumulative process. Through this accumulation, and also because the faults in your inner-feeling were of long standing, one can say it is not possible to separate them from what is right, just as with sugar and its sweetness; if you take the sweetness, you have to take the sugar as well.*

*”So if you really have set things right, you have to die; having reached your highest point, you die.*

*”This is why the many people who become ascetics of their own will and use force in order to separate themselves from the nafsu can never achieve this until the day they die. What happens to them then, if they could go on like this until they died? They become devils; they become tempters or deceivers. They possess people and make them do this and that. They are what we call spooks, ghosts.” (6)*



Once again, we cannot travel the spiritual path by using our minds or by an effort of will: to do so takes us seriously astray and binds us to the non-human worlds; we must use the right instrument in the right place, then all may be well:

*”In fact, God has endowed man on the one hand with the means to satisfy the needs of his life in this world and, on the other hand, with the means to fulfil his worship of God; hence man has only to follow God’s guidance that manifests within himself. This is the reason why man’s worship of God is called Godsdienst (in Dutch). The meaning of Godsdienst is: the work of God. Thus, in truth we men should submit to the command of God. As for our heart and mind, we use them for our worldly requirements. So, when finally we have reached the border of death, when the mind and heart are no longer able to function, the ‘I’ of the jiwa that has been given understanding by God will receive new work and new duties for the continuation of its life after death. Therefore, brothers and sisters, do not continue to doubt, because it is clear that by the Grace of God you are receiving guidance for the two ways just described, the one that leads to the world, and the other that leads to the hereafter.” (7)*

When body, heart and mind are abandoned in the grave, it is the jiwa that survives and it is by the jiwa that we are able to live. (8) But in order that this may come about we have to have ordered things aright during our life here on earth:

*”This is quite different from the situation of a man who concentrates entirely on the life after death. For us in Subud it is necessary to fulfil our worldly obligations while we live on earth, and at the same time we receive in our jiwa, our being, our feeling, what is the will of God. Thus, when we come to die we continue to live through the change in condition. This can be compared with the retirement of a man who has someone else to take over*

*and carry on his work. The work should therefore never be carelessly abandoned upon retirement, with no one to carry it on. In the case of death, it is the other being of the same person that has to continue to live and work in the next world. This can only be accomplished if the division of work has been completed during his life on earth; that is, if material objects were dealt with by material forces, if the vegetable world and vegetable food were met and dealt with by the vegetable forces, if animals and animal food were met by animal forces, if bodily human contacts were made through human forces and if all that concerns the life after death was done by the perfect human soul. When these forces in man have worked together harmoniously during his life, then his obligations in this life will end with his death.” (9)*

To do this we have to be able to separate one thing from another, not from our will and thought, but guided from within. And this task, of putting things in their right places, must be accomplished during this life. There is no further opportunity after death since then the ego, the heart and the intellect die and cease to function, unless “they have been pervaded and penetrated by the life force that surrounds and should enter into them”. (10) If this can happen then there grows within us a mind within the mind, a heart within the heart, senses within the senses:

*“... awakened from sleep, your individuality is being brought to life again, so that when you die, your individuality will remain alive forever, with the ability of apprehending, seeing and listening in a way which is far more clear, brilliant and real than anything experienced with the senses of this coarse physical body.” (11)*

That we have the possibility to set our house in order before the hour of death is really an incalculable blessing. The process of purification involved is the

equivalent of the purgatory - or even the hell - of the religions. It has become customary, even among churchmen, to deny the existence of such states and to ask, 'If God is love, how could He create a hell?' But this is to beg the question:

*"... you who have received the latihan, have been trained from the beginning, when first you were opened, to be free from your personal interests, trained to be without conceit and without pride. You have evidence of this when in the latihan there may be a brother being scolded by himself - by his own jiwa. Sometimes he may beat his head so that his heart becomes very frightened and he calls for forgiveness ...*

*"This situation corresponds with a story told in the record of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammed (hadith). During the Prophet's Ascension to heaven he came to a place where he saw someone, or rather the jiwa of someone, behaving very strangely. He was beating his head until it broke, and screaming with pain. Not long after that, his head was made whole again. Then he beat it again until it was broken. Then it was made whole again. Again he beat it and so it went on. There is also the picture of a woman (or rather, of her jiwa) who was cutting her own lips and tongue. She screamed with pain and asked for forgiveness. After that, her lips and tongue were restored again. Then she cut them again and this continued until the Prophet asked the Angel: 'Please, Angel, what's the matter with these fellow creatures? They have asked for forgiveness and yet they carry on like this.' The Angel replied: 'If the Prophet wishes to know, it is the person's own wrong-doing. Everything a person does will affect him or her later when he dies.' God does not punish man as man punishes man. No, If God were to do the beating it would no longer be God. God punishes man by way of letting man do it himself ..." (12)*

When I first read this I was forcefully reminded of the dream I told at the beginning of this book. I

understood how the jiwa is its own judge, at the last hour; how our passions punish us; and how the impure jiwa, far from longing for Paradise, flees that searching light, seeking to hide itself in an obscurity more in keeping with its own condition. We are not 'sent' to 'Purgatory' or to 'Hell'; we go there.

But fortunately, if we can receive in this life we can also suffer this purification here and now:

*"Bapak once attended to a brother who did the latihan until he got into a crisis. Before entering Subud he was a contractor. When he was in a crisis he ate stones, gravel and sand. He sucked stones while walking in the high street. His brother said to Bapak: 'Please, Bapak, bring this to an end. Help him from this, Bapak. How can Subud let a man become like this?' So I was blamed, because he said that Subud made him like that. No, brothers, not Subud, but he himself ..."* (13)

In a letter to his father, Mozart once wrote, "... Death, properly understood is the real ultimate object of our life." We can now comprehend that this does not mean that we have to think about death all the time (any more than Mozart did); on the contrary, we have to live our lives to the full, but, always, guided by what is received in the inner-self through the worship of God. Thus, we take care of our lives here, and God takes care of our purification and spiritual development. By doing this we also act responsibly towards those ancillary forces that are part of us here on earth and to which we are under an obligation, which, if it is not discharged, will hold us back at the end:

*"... the latihan which you have been following for a long time is truly a grace and a blessing, so that you can benefit the development of your own jiwias, and you can also benefit the life-forces which are your companions. For these life-forces, your*

*companions and auxiliaries in life, also wish to go up to heaven; not only you yourselves. But because they have been made to occupy, to inherit, yourselves, to inhabit the human self, they are obliged to ask human beings to make them some return for their faithful services. And the reverse of that is that human beings have been able to raise their companions to heaven; that is, the auxiliary life-forces which inhabit their selves.” (14)*

But death touches us not only directly, but also through bereavement, through the death of relations, loved ones, friends and neighbours. If we believe in an after-life we are naturally deeply concerned for them. In Christianity and Islam in particular, we are admonished and given the opportunity to pray for the souls of the dead, to have masses or memorial services held for them, to hold vigils, and so forth. When we are able to receive something of the reality of death, such procedures are not abrogated, for they belong to the practices of religion which, if we have a religion, we ought to follow; but the inner reality is different:

*”The way you wish for God’s help is simply by doing your own latihan; whether that wish is granted or not depends entirely on God. In doing the latihan kejiwaan in this way you will also receive what is necessary for your own development; but if you intend to ask forgiveness for the dead person in your latihan it will not make any difference for him. Therefore, just do the latihan kejiwaan so that you may receive what is necessary for you; this means that it may not only be of help for the dead person, but you yourself may also receive in this way. And all that depends upon the mercy and grace of God alone.*

*”It is not necessary to do the latihan in the presence of the body, for the way to God - the spiritual world - is unlimited by time or space; it covers the whole world, the whole universe. The custom of praying near the corpse is only to show other people that*

*what is being done is directed towards the dead; it is for the eyes of men to see, not for the eyes of God.” (15)*

Some years ago it happened that I was awakened from a heavy sleep in the early hours of the morning and compelled to rise from my bed and say my prayers. Having done so, I returned to bed and went to sleep again. Later that day I received a telegram saying that my mother had died - at the very hour, it transpired, as I had been made to get up and pray. I flew to England for the funeral and was surprised that I felt no grief or sadness - indeed, I had to console those who came to offer me condolence - but, on the contrary, very light and peaceful. Some time afterwards, I had a dream. I was back in the house of my childhood. It was now pure white, inside and out. I went into my mother's room and found her lying in bed, dressed in white, and looking as she had looked when I first knew her. When she saw me, she said, 'You do not need me any more.' And I awoke.

It sometimes happens, however, that the dead help us, instead of the other way round. The following experience, recounted by Sudarto Martohudojo, illustrates this very vividly.

*'When my fourth child was born I asked Bapak what his name should be. As Bapak gave me the name of Soenarjo, which means 'light', he looked very serious, and at the same time I experienced a shock, so I asked Bapak why he looked so serious. After a moment's silence Bapak said. "There is not a balance between his body and its content (isi dan raga) and Bapak will pray that God may let you keep your child.'*

*'I felt from Bapak's words that the child would die, and indeed the child became ill when it was thirty-five days old. Despite our efforts to help him he remained ill until he was two years old ...*

*'Before the child died, my wife in her latihan, received indications of this happening, and she saw a pale-green light and*

*an old man wearing a tabard ... At seven minutes to three o'clock, the morning that our child died, there was a fine aroma hanging in the room, and close above his head there was a pale-green light the size of an apple which rose slowly and disappeared. At that moment he stopped breathing.*

*'At four minutes to three o'clock many stars began falling on our baby's head and disappearing immediately, and I saw that our child was alive again. He looked first at his Mother and then at me, and cried, then crossing his hands on his chest and straightening his legs he said 'I will come back'. It was then exactly three o'clock.*

*'For seven days the fine aroma remained in the room, and people coming to see the baby were astonished at his appearance, not pale, and just as if he were sleeping.*

*'As he was taken to the cemetery, the man carrying him was startled to hear a voice from inside, say 'Yes, indeed'. While hearing this the man thought of God.*

*'In the evening, when I was doing the latihan, I was awakened by an old man wearing a tabard, whose face was that of my baby Soenarjo, and he said, 'Father, go on with the latihan and worshipping God. I will always pray to God that He will give you His Grace. Do not leave Subud whatever happens, because this is the right way.' He then disappeared ...*

*'The moment of our child's death was the same month, day and hour as his birth.*

*'When Bapak returned from abroad I told him what had happened and he said, "You have much to learn from your late son, in fact in age he is older than you are. You are fortunate to have such a child because later you will be raised by him, as the law of God is that a son must help his father to reach heaven."'*  
(16)

So we come to the time when the nafs begins to grow weaker, when the body is no longer as it was in the days of our youth but becomes something of a burden

which we will be glad to leave behind; when our feelings turn towards the unknown and also to the panorama of the past, to what St. Augustine called the broad meadows of memory.

How fortunate we are if we can look back on a life lived to the full, on talents put to good use, on potentialities actualised, on fulfilment in work and in personal relationships: how fortunate if we can say 'I have done what I could'.

And how fortunate if we were able, by the grace of God, to find a way to worship Him with patience, submission and sincerity, and so make possible a new and wider and nobler life in the boundless land of the beyond. How fortunate if, like Helen Keller, born blind and deaf, we have been able to surmount our lesser difficulties and come to that integrity and fullness of being which she so beautifully expressed:

*'I know my friends not by their physical appearance but by their spirit. Consequently death does not separate me from my loved ones. At any moment I can bring them around me to cheer my loneliness. Therefore, to me, there is no such thing as death in the sense that life has ceased ... The inner or 'mystic' sense, if you will, gives me the vision of the unseen ... Here in the midst of everyday air, I sense the rush of ethereal rains. I am conscious of the splendour that binds all things of earth to all things of heaven. Immured by silence and darkness, I possess the light which shall give me vision a thousandfold when death sets me free.'* (17)

So we have almost reached the end of our journey; almost, but not quite, for none can experience physical death and return to write about it. It seems to be a condition of life on earth that there should be something we call Death and something we call Time - and that that should remain inscrutable, irrevocable, and yet the only certainties.



In this chapter I have quoted various testimonies and I have drawn upon the explanations of Bapak Muhammad Subuh, but these are still the experiences or explanations of others. Now I must stand alone.

If I consult, as I should, only my own experience, then I have to confess that I know nothing, except that the death and dissolution of this 'I', like that of the body with which it is associated, is no loss to be dreaded, but a blissful relief, the spontaneous casting off of equipment that is no longer needed; whereupon that in us which cries out for release and reunion may go free and turn homewards - for the end of the way is not death but more life.

**”He has turned the shadow of death into the morning.”**

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