



GLIMPSES
OF
REALITY

**FROM THE TALKS AND REMEMBERED
SAYINGS OF MUHAMMAD SUBUH**

Collected and edited by Dirk Campbell
Foreword by Raymond Lee

SHAPES OF REALITY

from the talks and
remembrances
of M. Muhammad Subud

Shapes of Reality is a presentation of some of Bapak's ideas and 'short form' statements. Extracts have been taken from Bapak's talks and from some of the many books which recount his sayings, such as Varindra Vittachi's trilogy A Special Assignment and Husain Kofe's The Path of Subud.

It is hoped that this book will help to regenerate interest in Bapak's talks (something which he emphasised as important for Subud members and which has fallen into decline since his death) and his books Susila Budhi Dharma and the Autobiography. Not because Bapak is to be imitated or followed – he himself constantly advised against that – but because Bapak's words can help to open our inward path in worshipping God according to the way of Subud.



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from the talks and remembered sayings
of Muhammad Subuh

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A perspective on Bapak's talks

I would like to share a recent experience concerning Bapak's talks.

Until a few months ago, even after many years of following the *latihan*, I continued to hold the attitude that if Bapak had spoken English the talks would have been clearer. If Bapak had been raised in a Western culture, the symbolism and content would have been different. I held a conception that while the talks represented eternal truth, this truth was clouded by a mist of Javanese culture and mysticism complicated by the use of Islamic terminology. Accordingly, I have spent a lot of time attempting to correlate Bapak's talks with New Age doctrines and concepts.

Then, a few months ago, by the grace of God, I went through an experience after which I came to understand and see the talks in a completely new light. I now perceive them as beautifully woven, priceless tapestries. Each talk is perfectly structured, full of beauty and complete in itself. The content of each talk flows in an almost miraculous fashion.

I went on to understand that what Bapak was conveying – or rather what was conveyed through Bapak – was nothing less than a completely accurate, highly specific and detailed account of the structure of life, spoken through someone who had observed that reality at first hand.

No longer do the talks appear to be repetitive, occasionally rambling and often unclear. This I now understand to be more to do with the capacity of the translator as well as my own unwillingness and inability to understand and accept the content of the talks.

I find now that if I want to really absorb or benefit from a talk, then I need to disengage my intellect and read it with a quiet, open and aware feeling. For me the talks must be experienced and not thought about.

Glimpses presents to the reader some delightful threads from the hundreds of tapestries Bapak gave to us. My hope is that by picking up a thread or two, the reader will be drawn to the tapestries and come, as I have, to treasure these most remarkable accounts of reality.

Raymond Lee, Jakarta, April 1997

(Raymond translated for Bapak from October 1986 until Bapak's death)

Introduction

Bapak constantly exhorted Subud members to do the *latihan* and to continue doing it. His talks consisted primarily of this message, and of explanations about the *latihan*: what it is, what it is for, what we can gain from it. It seems that Bapak knew that if it were not for this advice, repeated over and over again, we would forget the real nature and purpose of the *latihan*. Why is that? I am intrigued by this question. For myself I know that it is all too easy for me to forget the importance of the *latihan* state where everything is left aside, my fears and worries, the concentration of my thought, and I simply follow, without questioning, the movements that I feel in my body and my being. Why, when I am not in this state, do I forget about it and lose interest in it? Even my thinking mind which relies for everything on its own power knows perfectly well that what it can receive in that state is impossible to arrive at by its own effort.

I think the answer lies in the different natures of the two worlds: this world of ordinary experience in which thought, feeling and imagination are predominant, and the other world, where there is a different kind of experience altogether. It is that world that we enter when we surrender ourselves completely and follow the movements of the *latihan*. The strange thing is that the two worlds are mutually exclusive and mutually incomprehensible. This world has no understanding of that world, and that world has no interest in this world. So the inhabitant of this world (which I am when I am not in *latihan*) has no understanding of that world and does not appreciate what can be found there, and the inhabitant of that world (which I am when I am in *latihan*) has no interest in this world and does not appreciate what exists here.

When I am in *latihan* I cannot understand why I should ever be motivated to feel desires, appetites of various kinds, self-interest, likes and dislikes, anger, fear and worry and all the rest of the feelings that form my experience outside the *latihan*. All that I feel as real is the existence of my own being without any attraction to

anything. On the other hand, when I am not in *latihan*, that state of complete freedom from desire has no reality for me, and I find it hard to remember that it exists and that I can choose to enter it. So I need to be reminded and given an incentive to continue to experience the “other” world which my “this-world” self does not acknowledge.

That reminder, for me, is where Bapak’s talks are essential. The source of the *latihan*, the power of the Great Life, is too subtle for my ordinary understanding. I need someone to plumb the subtlety for me, and help my understanding to open up. Bapak’s talks have this effect on me.

It may be felt that a “potted” version of Bapak is not the best way to present his words, and that reading the talks whole is preferable to reading edited extracts. While this is true, a great deal of reading is required in order to appreciate the vast range of Bapak’s understanding about spiritual and worldly matters, and this is a task that many people do not have the opportunity to undertake. In the following pages the reader may become acquainted with the more well-known (and some less well-known) elements of the practical wisdom that came to us through Bapak’s receiving.

There must be many people in the Subud world who have never read or listened to Bapak’s talks, probably in Africa or in countries where books and tapes are difficult to obtain as well as in Western groups where the practice of reading and listening to Bapak has fallen out of use. I am sure that the *latihan* can be perfectly real and convincing without Bapak’s explanations. But I am also sure that a great deal can be gained, and much confusion avoided, by connecting with what Bapak has to say. I strongly recommend that to every Subud member who has the opportunity.

It has been pointed out that one can usually find, somewhere in Bapak’s talks, something which directly contradicts something that he says elsewhere. This problem is more apparent than real. If I were to explain to you the best route to London from where I live, it would be quite a different instruction from the one I would give

if you were starting from Rickmansworth. The two explanations seem contradictory, but not when it is understood that they have different applications.

Sharif Horthy said something interesting, which is that many people assume that what Bapak said individually to people was “higher” than what he said in his talks, because the talks were for people in general and were in some way less charged than his comments to individuals. In fact the opposite is true. Bapak’s talks contain the high receiving. Everything of importance that he said is in them. My own experience, however, is that it’s not that easy just to read them and gain something! We are used to reading newspapers and novels, and Bapak’s talks are not that sort of read. The talks can quickly become boring, because the ordinary mind which is used to entertainment quickly switches off. But it’s interesting to notice that whereas after reading a newspaper or an average novel one routinely remembers little or nothing of what one has read, after reading a talk by Bapak, things remain – not necessarily in the forefront of the conscious mind – to pop up at a later moment.

This book contains some of the nuggets which I have collected while browsing through the old Subud books and periodicals that have in my house. I am sure that there are many more nuggets in other published material, *Pewartas* and so on, which I don’t have. There are also, frustratingly, a number of very interesting and valuable quotations which I could not include, although I remember them well enough, because I couldn’t get details of date and place. Nevertheless, there is enough material here for a first volume, and maybe the others will come to light along with additional material for a second volume at a later date.

I ask forgiveness of any readers who may associate me only with humour and are disappointed that this is not a joke book (although there are some jokes in it), and also if there is anything in the book which causes offence.

Dirk Campbell, Punnetts Town, May 1997

NOTE

Extracts from translations of talks have sometimes been edited down. The reason for this is that Bapak's style of speaking was conversational rather than literary, and his spoken Indonesian was idiosyncratic and often impossible to render into a satisfactory colloquial English equivalent. The talks were always unprepared, and Bapak's style of speaking often required several sentences and a good deal of repetition and variation to make a single point. In order to express those points in clear English, some condensation has occasionally been thought necessary. Modifications have nevertheless been kept to a minimum, and references are given whereby the reader may check the exact wording of the (sometimes provisional) translations.

Personal published accounts of Bapak's words have not been altered.

All the excerpts and quotations given are felt to be of general relevance. Things which Bapak said to specific groups of people and which are obviously not intended as a general prescription have been excluded, as have certain pieces of advice to helpers and committee members, such as those contained in previously published books of excerpts.

A few terms that Bapak employed have, as is customary, been left in the original Indonesian, since corresponding words do not exist in English. These are:

Náfsu [from Arabic *nafs*]

Energy of the ordinary self,
desire, passion

Jiwa [from Sanskrit *jiva*]

Spiritual content of the self,
inner self

Kejiwaan [adjective formed
from *jiwa*]

To do with the inner content of
man, spiritual

Latihan

Exercise or training, in the Subud sense, by surrender to the power of God with patience [*sabr*], trustful acceptance [*tawwakul*] and willingness to let go [*ikhlas*]

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A definition of Subud

Subud is not a religion, because if it were a religion, then it would not be possible for Subud to receive people into itself who still practise their respective religions. In addition, Subud receives people who have no religion.

Subud is not a religion, but a receiving that arises from beyond the influence and effort of the heart and mind and the *nafsu*. This receiving can be described as simply the practice of what is hoped for and looked for by the various religions and what is looked for outside of religion.

Subud can be said to encompass all the religions, all the spiritual teachings that exist, and all the various forms of inner training.

Subud is not a method and does not contain a single way which we all have to follow; rather, each one of us receives the way to worship Almighty God according to our own individual inner nature. All we have to do is follow what we receive.

Bapak's talk, Woodstock, 25 June 1981

Two obligations

As well as worshipping God, man must work in this world. All the messengers of God have given this example; besides worshipping God, they have also worked in the normal way. God himself works all the time. If God did not work, this world would not exist.

Bapak's talk, Melbourne, 5 February 1978

Proof

You know from your own experience that when you receive the *latihan kejiwaan* you are unaware of your everyday needs; nor are you, at that moment, oppressed by the cares, worries, problems and difficulties that you may have in your life. On the contrary, what you feel is a feeling of peace, of satisfaction, and of having no particular want except just to follow whatever movements you are receiving in yourself.

This is actually the proof, the evidence, that at that moment we are uninfluenced by all the lower forces and their various *nafsu*. Because of that, through doing the *latihan* our *jiwa* can always continue to progress and develop undisturbed and unhindered by all these things that normally obstruct it.

Bapak's talk, Lisbon, 5 September 1977

God holds the copyright

Actually we should not say the *latihan kejiwaan* “of Subud”. It makes it sound as if it is only in Subud that you can receive God’s grace, the guidance of God, or the revelation of God. Which is not the case. The fact is that anyone who surrenders to God with patience, acceptance and sincerity can receive the *latihan kejiwaan*. It is not the copyright of Subud. Nobody can lay claim to God.

Bapak’s talk, Cilandak, 11 June 1986

The teacher within

If you follow a human teacher, your own nature disappears and you are no longer yourself. If you follow the teaching of Almighty God, that is, something where you are in touch, you are following that which is within you, your own nature.

Bapak’s talk, Cilandak, 31 May 1986

Experience is more important

I asked Bapak what had happened to his previous books (he had written several before *Susila Budhi Dharma*). He said they had existed only in manuscript, had been circulated among his pupils, and had eventually been lost. He seemed to attach little importance to his writings, saying that people liked to believe more in books than in experience.

“If you produce a lot of literature,” he observed, “people will go to that for the truth they are seeking.”

Husein Rofé, *The Path of Subud*

Being and not-being

It is this connection that you will need when you come to the end of your life, so that you will still be guided. The boundary then between life and death will disappear. It will simply be a transition from not being to being. It will be all the same. You will find that in the *not being* you *are*.

By contrast, very often in your ordinary state of *being*, you *are not*. Because you are not aware of yourself, you are not aware of your life. So even though you live, actually you don't exist.

Bapak's talk, Melbourne, 5 February 1978

Sufism and Subud

In Sufism one is taught the *tarekh* [theory] of how to find the way that is willed by God and where God is; while in Subud there is no such teaching at all, apart from just surrendering to the will of Almighty God.

According to the teachings of the Prophets of God, God cannot be looked for but God should never be forgotten. These words mean that it is wrong to look for God, but it is also wrong not to look for God. The correct way is that we should just surrender with submission and sincerity to Him, because God is all-knowing and He is already there before you look for Him.

Pewarta Kejiwaan Subud, October 1966

Part of Bapak's answer to a letter from Georges Appaix

The vibration of life

What we receive in the *latihan*, the *khatir ilham* [vibration of life] is actually the meaning of life. If there is no vibration, there is no life. If you express it with your voice it is like a “rrrr, rrrr, rrrr”. It is this which you can feel if you are able to receive it in your *latihan*. This is why Bapak asks if you have felt it. Bapak wants to know if you have begun to make progress yet. If you receive and are asleep in bed you will feel this constant vibration, and it is that which Bapak refers to as the vibration of life. It pervades everything and you should be able to feel it through the *latihan kejiwaan*.

Bapak's talk, Hoboken, 18 June 1981

The real change

Advice never changed man. How many prophets have there been? How much excellent teaching and advice have they brought? And yet everybody is still the same.

Man can be changed only if he is changed entirely [Bapak moves his hand as if turning a knob, making a complete rotation]. You have to change the *whole* of man: the entity [Bapak points to his body] *and* the content, the man and his *jiwa*. These have to be changed simultaneously. Only then can you get a real change. You cannot do it with advice. Only God can do it.

From memory, a talk to Sharif Horthy and Luqman McKingley at Bank Susila Bakti, 1 January 1982

Bapak's role

In all this, Bapak's function is that of a school servant who sets out the books, opens the door, cleans the room and arranges the tables and chairs. When you are in the classroom the teacher will come in and give the lessons, and the teacher is not Bapak but God himself. Bapak is not a teacher, but only a servant of God.

Bapak's talk, London, 19 August 1959

Results

Suppose we surrender, those of us who truly surrender, and we obtain something. Is it really from God the Almighty? Some people ask this. Neither Bapak nor you can confirm whether it is so or not. God alone can confirm it. We can only see the results, what comes of it later.

Nevertheless Bapak hopes you won't take this too far and [feel that you] have no say in the matter. Don't do that. Otherwise, if previously you were not good at getting angry, you would then become good at it! So we have to be on our guard.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 1 December 1974

The ten percent factor

Bapak said, "Ten percent of those coming to us will prove to be good material and we have to take the other ninety percent in order to attract the former."

Husein Rofé, *The Path of Subud*

The Four Hearts

There are four kinds of heart. The first, or lowest, is like earth. That is to say that if something makes an impression on it, the impression stays like something stamped into the earth.

The second kind or level of heart is like water. If something makes an impact on water, turbulence is caused which eventually settles back into calmness. This is the heart of the truly patient man.

The third kind of heart has the nature of air. Nothing can make any impression on a heart like this; a knife trying to cut it will only pass straight through without affecting it.

The fourth kind of heart has the nature of fire or light. Not only will nothing make any impression on this heart, but on the contrary it will have a purifying effect, so that, for example, the one trying to cause harm will feel remorse in advance of his action. A human being with a heart of light can transform whatever he or she comes into contact with.

Bapak's talk, Toronto 1979

NOTE it has not been possible yet to pinpoint the exact talk which this quote comes from, although the place and year are known, and the quote has been published elsewhere.

Looking in the wrong place

Most people join Subud because they have no job, or they have no money, or they are looking for a husband or a wife, or they are looking for a better social position.

Bapak's talk, Paris, 22 August 1977

Truth and the world

There is a saying in Javanese literature that we are going through a crazy time, and if you want to have a share, you have to join in the craziness, otherwise you won't get anything; but the problem is that if you join in the craziness, you'll go crazy too. The man who wrote that was a wise man, but he was a pauper in spite of his wisdom (or because of his wisdom). You cannot become rich if you only tell the truth.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 1 December 1974

Hierarchies of the imagination

In the *kejiwaan* we cannot say who receives what. It could very easily be that a helper* who is at the group level can receive something very deep and very important and very wide from God's power, which gives him or her a real understanding and a real wisdom. And it could be that the national helper is still in a state of darkness and confusion.

Bapak sees, for example, that sometimes a national helper reaches the end of his term and is then replaced by someone else, and in returning to be a group helper he feels like someone who has been banished from Olympus! And the helper who has been appointed in his place feels like he has been promoted to the rank of the gods. So these feelings will immediately give rise – as has very often been the case – to jealousy, misunderstandings and quarrels between helpers.

The helpers' organization is [only] a division of responsibility, a division of labour, to spread the burden.

Bapak's talk, Blonay, 15 August 1977

* Someone appointed to carry out practical duties connected with the spiritual side of Subud

Keep enough for yourself

Often I recalled the strange advice which Pak Subuh gave me when I met him for the first time: “The greatest obstacle to your spiritual progress will be your desire to help others. How can you do business with limited capital if you are always giving away the reserves which you yourself need in order to trade?”

Husein Rofé, *The Path of Subud*

Satanic beings

Although people are always praying to God, “O God, please free us from the influence of the satanic,” or “Please don’t let us come into contact with satanic beings,” actually, if that prayer were answered you would have no money, because money belongs to the satanic world.

And that’s only the *roh raewani* [material life force]. What about the *roh nabadi* [vegetable life force]? If you did not have the *roh nabadi* within you you could not eat. You could not live. You could not have a physical body.

We do not live in this world alone, nor simply from our own power and strength and personality. We live together with our friends, the lower forces. So we have to be aware of them, we have to know how to live with them and how to deal with them.

Bapak’s talk, Vancouver, 11 July 1981

Responsibility of enterprises

Enterprises are an absolute condition and a necessity for Subud, so that eventually Subud can really begin to participate in charitable work, in projects with a feeling of social work and social responsibility. Without money we cannot do that; for that we need enterprises.

Bapak's talk, Blonay, 15 August 1977

Good intentions

We should never undertake anything in a haphazard way, merely from a desire to help our fellow men. Helping other people is important and praiseworthy, but it should never be done without a considered judgment of its consequences; for help given to other people, when it is misplaced, may become, on the contrary, poison to those being helped.

Bapak's talk, London, 11 August 1959

Fear is from the *nafsu*

There are plenty of clever people in Germany. Why does it happen, then, that when they have to speak in front of a lot of people, many of them seem to be frightened? It is because they are shut in by their own *nafsu*. Why is Bapak not frightened? It is because Bapak is not shut in. Bapak merely receives to speak and goes right ahead.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 15 February 1976

Seeing the Buddha

When Bapak was in India some six or seven years ago he opened someone who had followed the Buddhist religion for twenty-seven years. And all the time he had been following that religion he had longed to be able to see the reality of the Buddha in his spiritual form, but his wish had not been fulfilled.

Then, after he had met Bapak and Bapak had opened him, he at first did the *latihan* according to his usual practice of sitting still in a state of *samadhi* or meditation.

Bapak then touched him and told him not to do the *latihan* in that way. Bapak bade him stand up, and then told him to surrender, not to think about anything and not to meditate. He obeyed, and was able to receive; that is, he felt movement within himself.

This went on until he had done the *latihan* on five days. In his view he was extremely fortunate, because in only five days he had been able to see in his *latihan* the form of the Buddha. It was like a statue, but with a strange radiance.

His joy and contentment then led him to say, "This is what I was seeking, because for me to have been able to see the Buddha once is enough for my whole lifetime."

Then Bapak told him, "It is not really enough. You barely knew and could scarcely see the statue. That is to say, you could scarcely see whether it was living or not. Even though you have been able to see his radiance, if you have not yet combined with him or at least had a [proper] meeting with him, it can be said that you have not yet got to the real place." "Oh, is it like that?" "It is." So he carried on.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 24 November 1973

Be present

It remains for you to be present in your inner selves. If you are really in the right place in yourself you will be able to answer any question that is asked.

Bapak's talk, 16 February 1980

The ascetic way

It is not rare that a man who practises asceticism wishes in the beginning to be filled with a good life force but may later become a cruel person, so much so that he may even use his influence over other people to ruin them or to make them fall ill and die. Therefore if you intend to practise asceticism you should first be able to know the nature of the life force that rules within you, for, if it is a low level one, the asceticism you practise will only strengthen that force.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 2 October 1966

Fasting

There is an outer means, and though not within the framework of worshipping God in the *kejiwaan*, it nevertheless seems very necessary in order to lessen suffering in life – that is, to fast every Monday and Thursday. The way to do this is not to eat, drink or smoke from five o'clock in the morning until six o'clock in the evening.

From a letter to a member in Australia, *Pewarta Kejiwaan Subud*, July 1973

It's got to be right

Bapak said, "When you are thinking about the future, envisioning a course of action, whether it be a business, marriage or any kind of project, if everything looks rosy and you can see no problems arising, you know that at that moment you are totally motivated by your *nafsu* ."

Source: Luqman McKingley

Fatalism

Do not always be so ready to speak of patience and resignation, as if circumstances were inevitable and decreed by God. Such remarks are out of place. They come mainly from facile talk which, as yet, is without understanding of the true meaning of fate. Talk like that, moreover, is truly a curse on your own self and will most likely affect your innocent descendants.

Susila Budhi Dharma

Sexual segregation and the *latihan*

In your worship of Almighty God your inner nature must be completely free from the *nafsu*. If men and women do the *latihan* together simultaneously in the same place, it will easily attract the influence of the *nafsu*. This will cause both men and women to experience a turmoil of the *nafsu asmara* [passionate love] which they will be powerless to prevent.

From a letter to a member in Ireland, *Pewarta Kejiwaan Subud*,
February 1970

Different laws for different levels

It still frequently happens that, for example, in his *latihan*, a man may receive that so-and-so, another Subud member, is his real wife or partner. And maybe she also receives the same thing in *latihan* – but the trouble is she may be already married to someone else! This is something that is very dangerous, and Bapak has to speak about it very clearly, because the thing that penetrates everywhere and can become one with everything is the *jiwa* – but the physical body is localised. So what is possible for the *jiwa* is not possible for the physical body. It is not necessary for the body always to follow what is received by the *jiwa*.

Bapak's talk, Barcelona, 27 August 1977

Two paths of development

Bapak once told a story about two sons of Adam; not Cain and Abel, but another two sons whom he called Saïd Anwar and Saïd Anwas. It is published in transcriptions of Bapak's 1977-78 World Tour talks.

In brief, the story deals with the two basic approaches to life: one which sees life as a gift from God and a preparation for the final return to God, and the other which sees self-development by means of one's own effort as the key to power.

In this story, Saïd Anwar is the humble son who follows the way of his father Adam in submitting to God and asking for nothing but closeness to God's power, and for no knowledge but knowledge of God. Saïd Anwas, by contrast, becomes aware that there resides God-given power in his being, and that he has control of this power. With God's permission, he sets about developing his own powers by means of asceticism and self-torture to the point where he is freed from all earthly needs and

becomes a non-corporeal being. So he asks Adam to change his name to Sang Hyang Sis – the root word from which “Zeus” is derived. By dint of further effort and concentration Anwas becomes a being of light. He is now a highly powerful being who considers himself to be God, and in fact brings into being other gods and creates his own heaven and hell. He calls many human nations into his service and gives rise to many religions such as those of the ancient polytheistic world. Nevertheless, for all his might and glory, he is still a being of this world, bound to this world for ever by his own prodigious efforts in attaining power in this world. He cannot, like Adam and Anwar, ascend to the abode of the true God. Although his rule here is omnipotent, it will end when this world ends.

Bapak ends the story with a warning. There are many people, he says, who follow the way of Anwas, of developing one’s own powers by means of asceticism. There are even people who practise the monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – who follow this path. No-one is stopping you from trying this, if you want to, and if you become a great being – well, okay. But what you should first consider is this: are you strong-willed enough? Do you possess the tremendous self-discipline of Saïd Anwas? What if you end up becoming just a low-grade satan who merely roams around the world?

Taken from Adam and his Children, a compilation of material from Bapak’s 1977-78 World Tour talks by Luqman McKingley

Why worry about it?

Bombay, January 1960. The sitting-room of Bomon Behram’s apartment on Nepeansea Road overlooking the ocean. Bapak, clad for the tropics in slacks and shirtsleeves, was sitting knees crossed as usual, on a long sofa reading a letter from London.

“Another book on Subud,” he remarked smiling. “This letter

suggests that Bapak should intercede and stop its publication on the grounds that it contains material which could be damaging to Subud*. But why should Bapak interfere? Subud is not Bapak's work. It is not man's work. How can any man damage it? If it can be endangered by man, then it is not from God. And if it is not from God, why should Bapak worry?"

Varindra Vittachi, *A Special Assignment*

Division of labour

The foot says to itself, "God is not just. I have been put too low. I always have to do the walking, but when I have gone to fetch the sugar it's the mouth that eats it. I never get anything!" And similarly the hand: "I have to pick things up and put them down. I have to count the money and everything. And if I happen to obtain something that is very beautiful, like a jewel, it's the eye that enjoys it and it's not fair."

But then the answer comes from the inner feeling: "No, because through doing all your work well you are contributing to the total nature of the human being. So your work is needed; each supports the whole so that the whole may succeed and become as one unit. If each one does his own work in accordance with what he can do, then nothing will be heavy or difficult."

Bapak's talk, Swanwick, 9 July 1977

* The book was *Reflections on Subud* by Husein Rofé. The letter was from John Bennett, who tried to suppress the book anyway by buying up all the available copies.

No need for envy

You may think that people who have great wealth are very fortunate. Yet, if you really knew, out of twenty-four hours a day maybe not for one minute does a wealthy man enjoy peace of mind. That state will always elude them because they are constantly disturbed by all the things that they have and the things they have to do.

You have received the one thing the whole world is looking for – and yet they cannot find it, no matter how hard they look.

Bapak's talk, New York, 11 September 1977

Sin is inevitable

If we speak badly about something – it needn't be a human being it could be anything, an object, a material thing – it means that we have committed a sin. Because whatever we are speaking about was created by Almighty God. By a sin Bapak means something that leaves a trace within our being.

And that is not all. In living our life we have to make things, we have to wear clothes, we have to eat, we have to kill animals and plants – if we want to make a table out of wood we have to kill a tree which is a living thing whose existence is decreed by God. No matter what man does in this world he cannot avoid committing sins.

So the belief that some people have that if you follow exactly what is laid down in religion, how to worship God and what to do, you will be free from sin – this is not true. But the point is that these sins, or these traces that build up inside man, are what prevents him from being able to feel and be aware of his worship of God.

Bapak's talk, Barcelona, 27 August 1977

Purification

Purification is a stripping away of all kinds of things that have been buried in the inner feeling for a long time. People who experience a period of purification usually feel as if they are able to find a new understanding, whereas this is all something that has lain buried for a long time within them. When people undergo this period of purification, therefore, it is usually a heavy experience for them.

The nature of purification is of three kinds. A person may be left quiet and calm, as if in their ordinary state. Or he or she may behave in an unusual way, but still quiet and calm. Or the person receiving purification may appear to be out of their mind – their actions are alarming and sometimes horrifying, their speech is nonsensical and they repeatedly say strange things.

States of purification are certain to occur as long as you are following the *latihan kejiwaan* of Subud. Indeed this is just what is necessary for the self of each of you, so that all the various imaginings and ideas buried in the inner feeling which cause you to behave less than well can be done away with, and the development of your true *jiwa* can proceed quickly.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 11 May 1969

Life before death

In the *latihan* we are aware that, although we already know how to walk, we are trained again to walk. The purpose of this is that we can understand the difference between the two kinds of walking. The first is walking with our *nafsu*. That is the walking we have always known, the walking we have always done. It is walking because “I want to”.

If we receive another kind of walk which does not arise because “I want to”, but because “I am made to walk”, this is what we receive in the *latihan kejiwaan*. That is the power of Almighty God. That is the walk which comes from the *jiwa*, and is not intended for the needs of this world. Then at the end of our life, when these legs are dead, the content of the legs is still there. We are still alive. We are not affected by what has happened, by the loss of our physical body.

Bapak's talk, Hoboken, 18 June 1981

Using the *latihan* in everyday life

In order that what you hope for can be accomplished, you should, as Bapak says, more or less – preferably more – feel the power of God *outside* the *latihan* which you do twice a week. The activities that we do in this world are all carried out with our heart and mind, with our will and so on.

But as we do these things, then we remember beforehand, or during our action, that state we are in when we are about to do the *latihan kejiwaan*. In other words we are in a state of remembering God Almighty, as when we are about to start the *latihan*. This can be in the middle of anything.

The result of this will be that you will be guided by the Power of God in the midst of what you are doing.

Bapak's talk, Melbourne, 5 February 1978

Religious practice

It is very important to understand and not mislead people by saying "The *latihan* is enough, you don't have to practise your religion." If this happens it will lead to a decline in your *jiwa*, a decline in the spiritual.

Besides doing your *latihan*, you must not neglect the practice of your religion and whatever your religion prescribes. This way your outer also benefits; your physical body, your outer everyday activities, your work and your relationships with other people.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 11 November 1986

The real Qu'ran

The real Qu'ran which is the word of God is not a book. It can only be a living movement within the being of man.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 18 June 1986

Guidance

The idea exists in religion that if you want to get closer to God you have to pray all the time, you never cease to pray. But this is still something wrong, because it is something you are forcing, which is not natural.

It's different in the case of what we have received in the *latihan kejiwaan*, because our worship of God can be there all the time – while we are drinking, while we are listening to the singer on the television, while we see a pretty girl (if we happen to be a man).

And this is something you can experience. For example, Bapak. If Bapak sees a woman who is pretty – because that woman is no use to Bapak because she's not Bapak's wife [laughter] and she's the wife of somebody else, so Bapak's eyes automatically turn away. It's not because Bapak wants to, but because the power of God is already contained in, is one with Bapak's seeing.

Bapak's talk, Woodstock, 13 September 1977

Punishment by angels

Angels do not belong to the human race. So if they strike people, it is not with a knife or a hammer or with their hands. The way an angel strikes a man is not the way one man strikes another, but in due course is indicated through a man's own faults. For example he may suddenly fall sick or someone may unexpectedly injure him by what they say, something like that. That is the way it happens. So it is not the angels themselves who [directly] carry it out.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 20 February 1972

Choose your company

Draw close to people of ability, draw close to good-hearted people, draw close to people who remain patient, trusting in God and sincerely submitting to Him. Draw close to people with insight, and finally draw close to the power of God Almighty.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 22 June 1974

Spirituality and imagination

Don't be influenced when people talk to you using the words "go deeper and deeper and deeper", because there is no such thing as deeper and shallower in the *kejiwaan*. Actually, when we experience the *kejiwaan* we are able to experience what is deep in a normal state, in an ordinary way. There is no such thing as "deep and shallow". That belongs to the thinking and imagination.

Bapak's talk, Melbourne, 5 February 1978

Don't complain, act

If you keep complaining it means that you are putting a curse on yourself, so that you cannot make progress. It is like putting smoke in your eyes. The more you complain, the less you will be able to see your way forward. The way to find your right path is to *act*.

Doctors nowadays have found that many very serious illnesses have their origin in the mind. These illnesses are actually the result of complaining over a long period of time. You complain because your heart is always complaining; and once it has reached the form of an illness, then it is even more difficult and harmful for your life.

Bapak's talk, Melbourne, 5 February 1978

Start with the physical

The achievement of a healthy soul 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 soul cannot be changed.

Bapak's talk, London, 11 August 1959

Claims

The one who claims to be spiritual or clean is the one who is dirty. It is the one who no longer claims to be clean who is really clean, because there is no longer any dirt within him which wants to claim.

From memory, a talk to Sharif Horthy and Luqman McKingley at Bank Susila Bakti, 1 January 1982

The mirror of the feelings

If your inner feeling has been really cleaned, so that you have no feelings of dislike and no feelings of jealousy towards anyone, and you don't feel different from anyone else, this cleanness of the inner feeling is like a mirror. Whenever you are with people they will like you, and love you, and feel close to you. If people don't like you, it means you don't yet really like others. Your own feeling is reflected in the feelings of others towards you.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 29 May 1986

The big question

Once during Bapak's visit to Marseilles, I asked him one of my off-the-wall questions: "What happens to a man when he dies?" I remember being ready to be slapped down but not in quite the way it happened. "Varindra, you as a reporter should learn to ask sharper questions," Bapak said (Usman interpreting). "What's the point of asking what happens to a man when he dies? Which man? What happens to one man when he dies will be very different from what happens to another man when he dies." It was now obvious to me that my question was inane and I felt very abashed and hung my head.

After a while, Bapak relented and said, "You are not ready to receive and understand the full answer. But Bapak will tell you something you can understand. Bapak will speak in very broad terms and if you speak or write about it you should always point out that it is a broad explanation. An explanation for now, not the whole explanation.

"There are three broad categories of possibilities for human beings after death.

"The first and largest category is people who are so completely influenced by the material forces of the earth that when they die,

their *jiwas* are so heavily encrusted with material forces that they revert to the material earth along with their bodies.”

I must have looked horrified at this prospect, not only for them but for myself too – just in case – for Bapak immediately added, “But there is always God’s mercy. One of their progeny, within seven generations, may receive the grace of God, and that person’s worship can influence the soul of the earth-bound ancestor and enable him or her to begin progress to the origin.

“The second category is the people who have worshipped God as sincerely as they can. They attend the mosque, church or temple, regularly perform their formal worship and are referred to as ‘God-fearing’ men and women. Their *jiwas* may not be as heavily encrusted by the material forces and, when they die, they do not return to the earth but hover about on its surface. They are what people often see as ‘ghosts’.

“These people have two possibilities of redeeming themselves. One of their progeny within seven generations may come in contact with the grace of God, and this will touch them and set them off on their way to the true human world.

“The second possibility for this category is that of rebirth. If a man and a woman, in a state of being similar to that of the dead person while he or she was on earth, are entering into the procreative act, the ‘hoverer’ could enter the crucible of that union and become the soul of the child who may be born from it. That child might come into contact with the grace of God in its lifetime and, at death, will begin the journey to the true human world.

“The third category is the smallest, and includes some people who have received contact with the power of God during their lifetime. Depending on the sincerity of this person’s surrender and the degree of purification reached in his or her lifetime, their soul, when separated from the body, will soon be on its ascendance to the true human world. It will not remain in this earth’s atmosphere but will go beyond the solar system, making its way eventually to the origin.”

Bapak stopped and, feeling the solemnness his explanation had caused in Usman and me, he joked: "No guarantees!"

And then he repeated his warning that he was speaking broadly and that this was only a partial explanation.

Varindra Vittachi, *A Special Assignment*

Following your religion

If you follow a particular religion, and if you love others, then you will never feel that the religion you are following is the best, or is superior to the others. No, with this kind of love whatever you do, including your religion, you will just carry it out; and in carrying it out you will feel that it is a religion as everyone else's, and you will just follow it to the best of your ability. It is this attitude which will put you in touch with the content of the complete man [*insan kamil*], the feeling that is truly universal.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 21 June 1986

God is beyond religion itself

Jesus Christ was able to heal the sick and even bring people back to life. And not only that. Even someone who called Jesus' name could be cured just by calling his name.

People say, "Well, if that's the case, and since there is no record of Prophet Muhammad ever curing someone who was sick or having brought people back to life, it must mean that what Jesus received was better than what Muhammad received.

The truth is not like that. Prophet Muhammad was completely different from Jesus, and what he received was in accordance with his nature. That's why Prophet Muhammad was called *Rasullah* or God's Messenger. Jesus Christ was known as *Roh*

Allah [Spirit of God] meaning the Child of God. That's why it's not wrong if Christians refer to Jesus Christ as the Son of God. But once again, the heart and mind misunderstand. They say "Oh, yes, if he's the Son, then he is the same as God."

So then suddenly you have got *two* gods. But God is far greater, far wider than any prophet has ever been able to receive. The measure of what Jesus Christ could receive was himself. The measure of what Prophet Muhammad received was the measure of himself. What God himself is goes enormously beyond anything that any human being can receive, whether or not he is a messenger of God or a prophet.

Similarly, it's easy for human beings to say, "The last receiving from God was Prophet Muhammad's. After Prophet Muhammad nobody will receive any new revelations any more, because his was the completion, the final revelation of God."

But God is far, far greater than what was received by Prophet Muhammad. And God's revelation will be bestowed anywhere and any time that God pleases.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 18 June 1986

Balanced feelings

Times and seasons are in balance; the proportions of decline and recovery, low tide and high tide, are the same. Many people are not aware of this. In times of happiness they expect to go on being happy and in times of misery they expect to go on being miserable. They should look for the balance in life, which only God can give. If you feel like that, you simply accept; you are not joyful about that, but just as usual.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 2 July 1985

Mankind comes from far away

When I asked Bapak whether Darwin was right or wrong, Bapak replied (Anwar Zakir interpreting), “Darwin was right. But his followers were not so right. Darwin was a humble man who believed in the existence and power of God. But his followers did not see that there is a vast gulf between the most advanced ape and the least advanced human being. So they interpolated a ‘missing link’ to bridge the gap. This link will always be missing.” He explained that when man’s physical body had been ‘prepared’, the human soul arrived from the true human world beyond our solar system and lodged in that body. That was how Adam was born.

I told this story to Arthur C. Clarke, the science fiction writer, who was a friend and neighbour in Colombo. He had asked me to tell him what Pak Subuh had said about creation and the origin of the species. Arthur heard me out and, as I expected, his only response was a scientific snort. Years later, I saw his *2001: A Space Odyssey* in which the apes touched a monolith that had come from beyond Jupiter and received the impulse which transformed them into human beings.

When I challenged him, jokingly, about plagiarism, Arthur was honest enough to remember the story I had told him.

Varindra Vittachi, *A Special Assignment*

Escaping from the present

It is a commonplace that people who study spiritual wisdom, or spiritual knowledge, always turn their attention to the past. They study conditions and atmospheres that existed in the olden days and thereby try to recapture something that existed before. They try to go backwards from now into something that existed previously.

Now this is something that is clearly not in accordance with God's will. God creates everything to go forward and to progress. A tree grows from below upwards; you will never find a tree growing from above downwards.

Bapak's talk, London, 24 June 1977

Hell is this world

This power of life which we have within us can span between heaven and hell, whereas the *nafsu* can only exist in hell – that is, in this world.

Bapak's talk, Bristol, 27 June 1977

Direct knowledge

When Bapak visited us in Ceylon someone asked him about the present state of the soul of a spiritual teacher whom some of us had followed for many years. Bapak asked me to stand up and test this. I closed my eyes, relaxed and suddenly felt an enormous overpowering weight on me. I felt like a log. There was no choice or pretence about it. My fall was heavy and graceless.

Bapak said, rather sadly it seemed to me, "Still here, in this world."

Varindra Vittachi, *A Special Assignment*

The origin of sport

In ancient times, sport was an expression of human culture. Each branch of culture was a starting point for human beings to know the power of God which envelops them and exists within them.

Most sport as it is carried out today does not have its origin in the human soul. For this reason it will not regenerate or clean the self, but may on the contrary sometimes cause harm to participants, and has the effect of increasing and strengthening the desires, merely for the pleasure and enjoyment of the spectators.

Bapak's talk, Sydney, 4 June 1958

Approach with caution

If you test [receive] about something from the point of view of the *kejiwaan*, then what you will receive is that everything is easy, there are no problems, there is nothing difficult, everything comes by itself. That is when you view things from the *kejiwaan*; the point of view of the *kejiwaan* is like that. But don't get the impression that the world of work, the material world, is like that.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 31 May 1986

Technical term

“Enterprise” does not mean running after money or becoming a businessman. Enterprise is any effort that you make to meet the needs of your life in this world, provided that in your work you are able to receive, to do your work with a content.

Bapak’s talk, Melbourne, 5 February 1978

Fate and Destiny

Bapak spoke to us about the true meaning of fasting. He began with an explanation, a parable of fate and destiny (Usman interpreting).

“God sends us His postmen to deliver what we need to live in this world – a suitable wife or husband, children, a house, a job appropriate to our talents, transport for ourselves and our children. The postman’s bag contains everything for all our needs and he is willing to deliver them on time.

“But, influenced by our hearts and minds, we are impatient and ask for this and that ceaselessly and are dissatisfied all the time. So we thrash about, creating a dense fog of passion around us so that the postman cannot find his way to us.

“What God wills for us is our destiny. Destiny is what *should* happen to us. Fate is what *does* happen to us because our hearts and minds, which are influenced by the lower forces, make it difficult for human beings to surrender to God’s will for them to reach their destiny. So their lives are ruled by fate.

“Bapak advises Subud members to fast, because when you are not ruled by your appetites, the fog around you becomes less dense and the postman may be able to find his way to you.”

Varindra Vittachi, *A Special Assignment*

The content of human beings

There are four walls in the body or self of man. The first wall is the coarse or physical body. The second is the body of the feelings. The third is the body of the understanding, and the fourth the body of awareness. Bapak draws it like this [Bapak draws four concentric circles, of which the outer is indicated as the first, or coarsest wall].

Actually, the force or vibration you received and experienced at the time of your opening and which you feel during your training [*latihan*], is not really something strange, it is not some unknown or foreign force, but existed before this physical form came into being. The force that Bapak is referring to is within everything that is inside and outside of all that is outside. It is before everything that is before, and comes after everything that is after.

If, then, it has always existed and is not strange to man, why does man still feel it as something strange, and still feel he cannot receive it clearly?

It is because man's self has become enveloped by forces below the human being, which should in fact be partners in man's life.

The forces Bapak refers to are: the material force, or the nature of minerals, of what exists in this world, in the earth, both what is seen as well as not yet seen; second the force of plants; third the force of animals; and fourth the force of humans themselves. These forces are really like man's partners, to enable him to arrange his life and act rightly.

Besides these forces that have become man's partners, the human being, by God's will, also has the desires [*nafsu*] he needs to arouse in him the spirit to work and be active. The nest of these desires is in man's heart, that is, in the heart of man's will.

There are four kinds of desire or passion. The first is called *aluumah*, the desire or wish to win; the second is *amarah*, the desire to become rich or to acquire wealth for oneself; the third is *supiah*, or the wish to become, oneself, the most famous and well-

known; and the fourth is *mutmainah*, the nature of the heart that wishes oneself to be the most wise.

Man needs to possess such desires so that he does not remain motionless like a material object, or like a plant, or an animal, or like a human being without learning.

Besides this, within man's self, that is to say in the body of feelings, man also possesses four kinds of feeling. First there is the feeling that likes to accept, meaning patience; second, there is the feeling that surrenders; third, there is the feeling that is *tawwakul*, that gives without expecting anything in return; and fourth, there is *ikhlas*, which means the feeling that God alone is the owner of everything.

Of these two series, namely the four kinds of desire and the four kinds of inner feeling, the first group has its nest in the heart of the will or "little heart", and the second has its nest in the heart that is called *hati sanubari* [inner heart].

The series of accessories Bapak has just described work for and awaken the self of man so that they can fulfil the needs of man's life in this world. But man is forced to use his intelligence and to make efforts to ensure his safety and well-being. So, gradually, due to the influence of the pressures of life that constantly beset him and demand his attention, he is forced to forget his patience [*sabr*], his trustful acceptance [*tawwakul*], his surrender and sincere submission [*ikhlas*] to God.

Bapak's talk, The Hague, 29 September 1957

Magic

Magic is a kind of belief that is accompanied by mantras, prayers and supplications. It is different [from the Subud way]. It can be said that it is not holy. Of course you can pray that you should become rich, but if you pray continuously only for this then there is some mantra that goes with it. So you have the aim of getting

rich, but at the expense of your feeling and *jiwa* – because your feeling and your *jiwa* is handed over to your aim of becoming wealthy. So you will become wealthy, but later, when you die, that is where you will go.

In Java they have what they call *reog* – there are lots of these things here using mantras, and also energy and movement. Movements and energy can also be manifested by a person who has been possessed; because he has been using a mantra, he is entered by something in that way.

So you should not too easily believe in anything, but have faith in your own self, facing Almighty God.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 16 March 1975

The benefit of the religious fast

The true fast consists not only in not eating, drinking or smoking each day, but at the same time the heart and mind should not be feeling or thinking any nonsense; nor should you become angry or act from the *nafsu*. That cancels out your fast.

The fast is in fact intended to be total. You should be empty – really empty. In this way it is possible for you to receive the *Qodar* [gift of God].

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 31 October 1972

How true understanding comes

Do not try to insert your thinking and understanding deep into your inner feeling, because they will not succeed. It is not possible for the thinking mind to plumb those depths, unless it is the will of God Himself. Then there will be a pouring from the fount within and the doors will open, our coarse forms will open, and the door will open wide from within the real inner self.

Bapak's talk, London, 27 November 1957

What is doing the eating?

In general people are never "at home". They are always wandering about, even when they are sitting down. Even while a person is eating he or she will often be talking about something, so it is not he or she that is doing the eating, but the story or topic of conversation.

Bapak's talk, Sydney, 30 May 1958

Deceptive appearances

It really is the work of the mind to be thinking all the time. It is like our brothers in Yogya; they look very calm and peaceful as they sit there smoking, but their imaginations are going round and round. Yes; that is proved when they jump if I go up and speak to them. They are startled. What makes them do that? They answer that they have a lot to think about at the moment, and so if someone comes up and speaks to them it is as if they had been hit by a bomb! Whereas if someone is really calm and peaceful, nothing will startle him.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 5 November 1978

The problem of attention

A question arose which was with me, unsolved, for many years. It was: What do I do if my attention wanders during the *latihan*? Attention is always with us and, uncontrolled, it wanders into daydreams or thinking. In the *latihan* for a brief time I am present and soon I am lost again. I remember saying to Laura (my wife) many years ago: Where do you place your attention in the *latihan*? She answered: Oh, I listen to the music. Well, that was one way, but I still asked where it should be.

Only in the last year has the answer come home to me. Bapak said: "What is important is to be at home, to be in your own place, which really means being in your physical body. It is essential to be at home, to be in your own place so that God can reach you."

There it is and I wish it were written up in letters of gold.

Raymund Gawen, *Subud Journal* February 1990. Quotation from Bapak's talk in Cilandak, 21 June 1986

Don't try

Bapak was asked the following question: "Some members have great difficulty in putting aside their minds during the *latihan*. What mental attitude has to be built in so as to stop thoughts, feelings and desires during the *latihan*?"

Bapak replied: "It is not necessary for you to prevent thought, just let it be! Because gradually you will experience the separation between thinking and feeling, and then the thinking which is constantly at work will stop by itself."

Bapak's eighth talk at the second Subud World Congress, New York, 19 July 1963

The seven life forces

In all holy books it is always said that when God created man, God gave him equipment to live in this world. That is, a heart and mind and a whole series of lower forces with which to work and to meet the needs of his life in this world.

The first of these forces, and the one which influences man most is the material force. This is usually described as the *raewani* level, or the satanic level, and this is part of man's being.

The next is the vegetable [*nabati*] force, which is also a part of man's being. This is what gives rise to the growth of plants which can become the food of man. When man eats these vegetable forms, they give him the form of his body which consists of bones and flesh and blood.

There is also in man's being the the animal [*khewani*] force, which we know through our eating of animal flesh. But besides that there are also all the little microscopic animals that live inside plants and even in the air we breathe. And we need this force, the animal force, very much for our life because it is this which gives us the willpower and the strength to work.

As well as this, there is as a part of man's being the life force of the human [*jasmani*] level, which we cannot make contact with through eating, because humans are of the same nature as ourselves, but this force influences us through the contact of the sexes*.

Besides the human force there is also – we cannot say “within” man, but surrounding and enveloping and guiding man – the life force of the *rohani* level. The force of this level is something that can enable man to find his way to a life that is beyond the life in this world.

The nature of the *rohani* force is that it has no interest whatsoever in anything in this world.

* The *jasmani* force means wide-ranging feelings and comprehension about earthly matters (*Susila Budhi Dharma*)

Some of us maybe, those who are already more advanced, have experienced sometimes the influence of this force, when it is as though we have absolutely no interest any more in possessing anything from this world. To face this kind of experience one needs a very firm heart, because at that moment one feels as though one is about to die.

And then surrounding man and enveloping him is the life force of the *rachmani* level, which is the force which can give man the ability to have faith in the power of God Almighty.

And then there is the life force of the *rabbani*, which also envelops man. The *rabbani* is the life force that has complete authority and is known as the life force of the Messengers of God, such as Jesus Christ, Prophet Muhammad, Prophet Moses, Abraham and so on.

Well, it is very easy to explain these higher forces, as Bapak has just done. But this is all theory. To experience these forces is still a very long way off from us. The reason is that to experience these higher forces you have first of all to give up something that is very difficult to give up, and that is our ego, our "I". Because who is there who is willing to be debased, to be poor, to be stupid, to be neglected? Normally, no matter what we do, we still wish to be rich, to be clever, at least to possess something and not to be completely destitute.

Bapak's talk, Wolfsburg, 27 July 1977

The *roh ilofi* and the *roh kudus*

God still needs something so that human beings can know that it is God who has power, that it is God who protects them, that it is God who has created them. For this he has created the spirit that is called [in Islam] the *roh ilofi*, which is perhaps in Christianity what is called the Holy Spirit. The *roh ilofi* is like a messenger from God; it is the spirit which resembles the nature of the One

Almighty God and of His power; so that it is embodied and manifested in all of you, and people can see it and understand it and they can also touch it and be touched by it. This holy life force is present in every life force, and that is why it said that the *roh ilofi* is king of all the life forces.

Besides this, God gives still another way to mankind – that is, the *roh kudus*. This is what is called the angelic life force, the life force of the angels. The power of God has so ordered matters that that these two life forces are to be understood as holding power: one, the *roh ilofi*, is seated within every nature, and within every life force; whereas the other, the *roh kudus*, is outside every life force, outside every nature. Thus you can be touched by or touch the power of God both inside and outside your selves.

Bapak's talk, Oslo, 20 July 1977

Poverty can be an attitude

The attitude of poverty is one which assumes that your resources are limited, that if what you have disappears, you will never get anything more. Don't go around with an attitude of poverty, but have an attitude within your heart which is alive.

Bapak's talk, Singapore, 12 June 1982

It rubs off

If one is close to a rich man, gradually something rubs off the rich man; even if not a million, it might be ten or a hundred thousand! If one is near a clown, gradually one becomes able to clown. If one is near a clever person, gradually one becomes maybe halfway clever. But if we are close to God, gradually we receive something from God which is beyond the ordinary. That is why religion comes first. Religion is the basis for people to become truly human beings.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 15 February 1976

Know the importance for yourself

In Subud there is no particular pressure on anyone either that they must practise their own religion or that they should not. Everything is left to your own self; in particular you should be free to follow what is normal in the society to which you belong, so that your name in society will not be ruined.

If, for example, you came to Subud and you suddenly stopped going to church, those of your [churchgoing] friends who are not in Subud would feel disappointed and unhappy with you. So therefore this is left entirely to you, how you wish to proceed with the practices of your religion. But what is important is that as you go on in the *latihan* you will yourself know when it is necessary to do your worship in the outer way of your religion and when it is of no use. So therefore this is the important thing – you should be able to feel it for yourself and not be influenced by anyone; you should know for yourself what is right and wrong.

Bapak's talk, Norwich, 23 June 1977

Editor's note: This is the relevant part of the talk that is cited by some Subud members in support of a disinclination to practise religion ...

The attributes of God

The only one who is not male or female is God Almighty, because God has no sex, God has no age, God has no colour – God has no attributes at all.

Bapak's talk, Barcelona, 27 August 1977

God has no enemies

It is not as people say: that the satanic force is the “enemy” of God. How can the *setans*, the devils, become the enemies of God or how can God seek for an enemy? If God has enemies, antagonists, of course there is a balance; and thus if the satanic force were regarded as an enemy it would be equal to God, because it would be in opposition. If it is not an enemy, it cannot possibly be so.

God has no enemies, for the *setans* were also created by the One Almighty God. All the life forces are enveloped, occupied, filled by the power of God.

Bapak's talk, Oslo, 20 July 1977

The uses of music

I had the privilege of performing music before Bapak several times. The last time was at his house in Cilandak in 1984, when I asked if I might play him some Irish traditional music on the *uilleann* pipes, an instrument with which I had fallen in love and had spent some years learning to play. He seemed genuinely interested and gave permission.

Before I began, Bapak explained (Raymond Lee interpreting) that “true” music comes from a place in you that is completely

empty. If you can play music from this empty place, what you play will not be imitation. It will be new; music that you have never heard before. In addition, it will be attractive to other people.

After I had played a couple of tunes, and Bapak had made some comments, he asked me: "Have you ever cured anyone by playing this instrument?" "Not as far as I know," I said, in a weak effort at humour. "Bapak had the experience of curing his wife* by playing the *gambang* [Javanese xylophone] to her," Bapak said. "At the same time Bapak's playing seemed attractive to people, and a recording was made and distributed all over the world, which was not Bapak's intention at all!" He laughed.

I asked Bapak: "Did you ever have a teacher on the *gambang*?" "No, never," he said. "When you are already in contact with your inner, you are your own best teacher."

Dirk Campbell, from memory

Part of the process

When I went to Bapak's house to take my leave of him on my first visit to Indonesia, Bapak asked me, "What is the chief impression you carry away with you from Jakarta?"

"Brotherhood, Bapak," I replied. "I have just had a glimpse of what real brotherhood means. Our group is not a brotherhood. There is so much quarrelling. I don't know what's happening to us. I am one of the worst!"

Bapak laughed and said: "There is no reason to worry or to envy the group in Jakarta. You should have been here to observe this group a few years ago at the start. Much worse than you in Colombo!"

Bapak's explanation of the process which nearly every group in the world has experienced was translucently simple: "Consider a

* Ibu Sumari, Bapak's second wife, who died in 1971

well of water with plenty of mud and dirt at the bottom. You begin to clean it. You scoop a handful of mud off the bottom and throw it on the bank. The water, which was clear before, is now disturbed and muddy. But the well is already a little cleaner.”

Varindra Vittachi, *A Special Assignment*

Reality

With us everything is reality – there is no story, no pretence. You can see from your own life what your situation is.

It is always said that if you want to meet an angel you have to be an angel. Everything depends on reality. There is no chance that you can go to heaven after you die if you have not experienced heaven before – even if it is only a taste, a sample. So whatever you believe is true, you have to prove it to yourself. It is this ability to prove it to yourself that is the fruit of the spiritual exercise [*latihan kejiwaan*].

Bapak's talk, Sydney, 9 May 1982

The key to spiritual progress

There is bad feeling between the helpers because the national helpers have the feeling and have even announced that they are on the level of the *dewas* and are followed everywhere by large numbers of angels who help them in everything that they do; while the regional helpers are kind of half-*dewas* or demi-gods who are helped by one or two angels; but the group helpers are nothing of the kind and do not have any angels, not even the grandson of an angel to accompany them.

If it were really like that, it would be all right. But the truth is that it is very often the opposite.

What Bapak wants you to realize very clearly is that in the *kejiwaan* there is no room for competition. Because in the end the One who knows about who is higher and more advanced is only God Almighty. If you try to compete, or if you try to practise a kind of one-upmanship, then the result is that you go backwards. In the *kejiwaan*, the more we want to push ahead, the further we fall behind. While, if we want to make progress, the condition for that is patience, acceptance and submission.

Actually it is those helpers (if we can say that) who are patient, who accept and are submissive, who will make progress fast. Those who try to put themselves forward will, on the contrary, tend to decline.

Bapak's talk, Singapore, 15 February 1978

Hidden knowledge

It is not itself a life force, but is an illuminator or an enlightener for every life force on every level; the name of this is the *roh ilofi*. The moment when there is no influence of any kind within man the *roh ilofi* will work, and the moment the *roh ilofi* works all other influences are stilled and removed.

The existence of this *roh ilofi* has always been, in all ages, a great and deep secret because it was always considered very dangerous for people who could not keep the secrets of life to themselves.

So the evidence or the symptoms of the working of this *roh ilofi* can be felt when it is willed by God. This is the vibration of life which is received by all of us when we are opened in Subud and when we do the *latihan*.

You have all seen pictures of Jesus where he is portrayed as though there is a radiance emanating from him. It is this radiance which is the *roh ilofi*, or, as it is called in Christianity, the Holy Spirit.

Hearing this, many of you may feel we are talking about things which are beyond us, which are too high for us. But although this is a very great secret, Bapak does not want to keep it secret, because Bapak knows that we have to have clear information so that we should not act at random, but that we should be able to act correctly.

Bapak's talk, Wolfsburg, 27 July 1977

If a man could be God

If the whole power and reality of God were to enter into man, the earth itself would disappear, for His power is incomparably greater than anything He has created.

Bapak's talk, London 17 August 1959

A secret of life

At the moment when we experience the union between man and woman, we are not aware of our needs in this world, our worries, problems and so on. We only feel the bliss of our being. And this is something Bapak tells you – actually it is a secret of life, but Bapak feels it necessary to explain this to you – so you have a rather wider understanding of life than heretofore. It is at that moment that we have the opportunity to remember our Creator, or to feel our bond with the Creator.

So it will be at that moment that we can receive a real understanding and knowledge from the power of God Almighty, exactly as we can when we are doing our *latihan kejiwaan*. This is why, in the *latihan* – if we do our *latihan* and we can become truly quiet so that we remember nothing except the power of God Almighty, and are not influenced or disturbed by anything else –

we receive a feeling which is a bliss that has no comparison, and is in no way less than that which we experience at the moment of union with our husband or wife.

Bapak's talk, Barcelona, 27 August 1977

The enemy under the blanket

Yet another life-force which forms an obstacle in your lives is the *jasmaniah* or human life-force. This is apparent in the relationship between women and men. The union of men with women is what is called "knowing one another", "influencing one another" or "eating one another". In this way too, your worship is always being hindered by human beings. If you are a man it is hindered by women; if you are a woman it is hindered by men.

Bapak's talk, Oslo, 20 July 1977

What eats who

Receive now. There is some bread in front of you which you are going to eat. Is it you who eats the bread or is it the bread that eats you? [Bapak laughs] It is the bread which still eats you. But in fact it should be possible for you to bring that bread to its heaven. You have that responsibility towards it.*

Bapak's talk, Vancouver, 20 July 1981

* Taken from two parts of the same talk

How enterprises help us after death

Some Subud members still feel that enterprises are something to shy away from because they will somehow reduce our spiritual standing or make difficulties for our spiritual life. It's just the opposite. It is through doing enterprises that we can learn how not to be influenced by the material forces and all the other forces that Bapak has described.

Before receiving the *latihan*, if for example a person always works on buildings, laying bricks and plastering and so on, all his attention is turned towards this all his life and he is under the influence and the power of the material forces. When he reaches the boundary of his life and he dies, he will go into that work which he does; or, as Bapak says, I myself who am a building contractor, when I died I would simply go on building and building, unaware that I was dead. And that will not only go on for a few years but for all eternity, until this world disappears.

This is what people of old have explained, and actually it is very easy to check. It is always confirmed by people who practise spiritualism and hypnotism. This business is something very low and very easy to understand. It is just getting into contact with people who have departed but who are still hanging around.

When we have learned to move with the power of God throughout the day in our work, then, no matter how hard we have worked in our life, when we come to our death we will be able to move forward into the human world... when we come to the moment of death we have paid our debt to the lower forces.

Bapak's talk, Bristol, 26 June 1977

Nuclear power is not against God's will

You may wonder, is it really true that atom bombs and all these things that man has invented are against the will of God, as though man has somehow gone off the rails and done something completely beyond God's knowledge and God's understanding?

Actually, it is not so. God is always prepared to give to man whatever he desires. So even though man may claim that he has done all this from himself, do you imagine that man's heart and mind have conceived these things which are something quite new that God has never thought of? Have man's heart and mind also arisen from man himself?

Of course, men who use only their heart and mind say this, that this is all from ourselves, that we have done it all ourselves. But the fact is that all this is created by God and decreed by God – man's being, man's heart and mind and everything within it. So all these things which man has created and which man regards as new – to God they are not new. On the contrary, all this that man has invented so far is not the whole story. Man will achieve many things beyond what he has invented now.

Bapak's talk, Perth, Australia, 15 February 1978

Higher action

The nature of God's work within you is that you are not aware of it. Progress occurs and suddenly you are aware that something has changed within you. You are not aware of the process. Suddenly I can do this, feel that or receive this. That is the proof or the hallmark of God's work – it is unexpected and unconscious.

Bapak's talk, Hoboken, 18 June 1981

Determination

Nothing that man can achieve can be achieved without sacrifice without bitterness, without suffering. There is no exception to this at all.

The people who first developed the aeroplane went through many hardships. Many people lost their lives in trying to make the aeroplane work. If people had become scared, if because of the fact that somebody crashed they had thought, "Oh no, it's too dangerous, we mustn't try to perfect the aeroplane," then maybe today we would not have aeroplanes; we would still be going everywhere by train.

Bapak's talk, Lausanne, 13 August 1977

After-death experience

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

He is not able to express or 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 in his life 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 is more conscious than he is when he is physically alive. With his last breath he is able to say "*Allahu akbar* [God is almighty]" at the moment when he is about to die.

Bapak's talk, Los Angeles, 25 July 1981

One more piece of advice

If Bapak were to go on giving you advice, you would listen only to Bapak. The important thing is that you should experience it yourselves. What is right is your own experience. As for advice, well, there are books and books filled with advice, and many people who give advice. Perfection is not something that can be studied in books. It comes as a result of inner peace, acceptance and surrender [to Almighty God].

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 29 May 1986

SOME APHORISMS

God will not give you anything unless you move. If you just sit still you will never receive anything from God.

Bapak's talk, Los Angeles, 28 June 1981

There is no such thing as a man who is good or a man who is right. The only one who is good and the only one who is right is God Almighty.

Bapak's talk, Brisbane, 24 January 1978

If you claim to know God it means there are two Gods: you and God.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 16 March 1975

One should not be too serious. It makes the young soon age and the old soon die. It is better not to die too soon.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 1 December 1974

Most mistakes are made by people when they are very, very happy.

Bapak's talk, London, 10 April 1981

For a human being to seek for God is like someone looking for his own seeing. How is it? If he runs fast, it goes with him; if he stays still, it stays with him.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 7 January 1979

If a king refrains from food for a week it counts for as much as if you refrain for a year.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 24 August 1978

Heaven is where everything fits.

Source: Sharif Horthy and Luqman McKingley, 1 January 1982

As soon as you feel ill, you are worried, you quickly run to the doctor and are afraid. Just this feeling of fear and worry will easily make you more ill.

Bapak's talk, Planegg, 6 August 1964

If you want to be loved, you must love others; if you want to be helped, you must help others.

Bapak's talk, Lausanne, 13 August 1977

True understanding comes at the moment when we are not trying to understand.

Bapak's talk, Paris, 22 August 1977

Your real capital is not money, but your own good reputation.

Bapak's talk, Cilandak, 4 November 1972

If there is a war, material things suddenly lose their value. Instead what becomes valuable is food.

Bapak's talk, Sao Paolo, 28 May, 1981

You can come to surrender only when your heart is emptied and void of everything, even your wish to surrender.

Bapak's talk, London, 29 August 1959