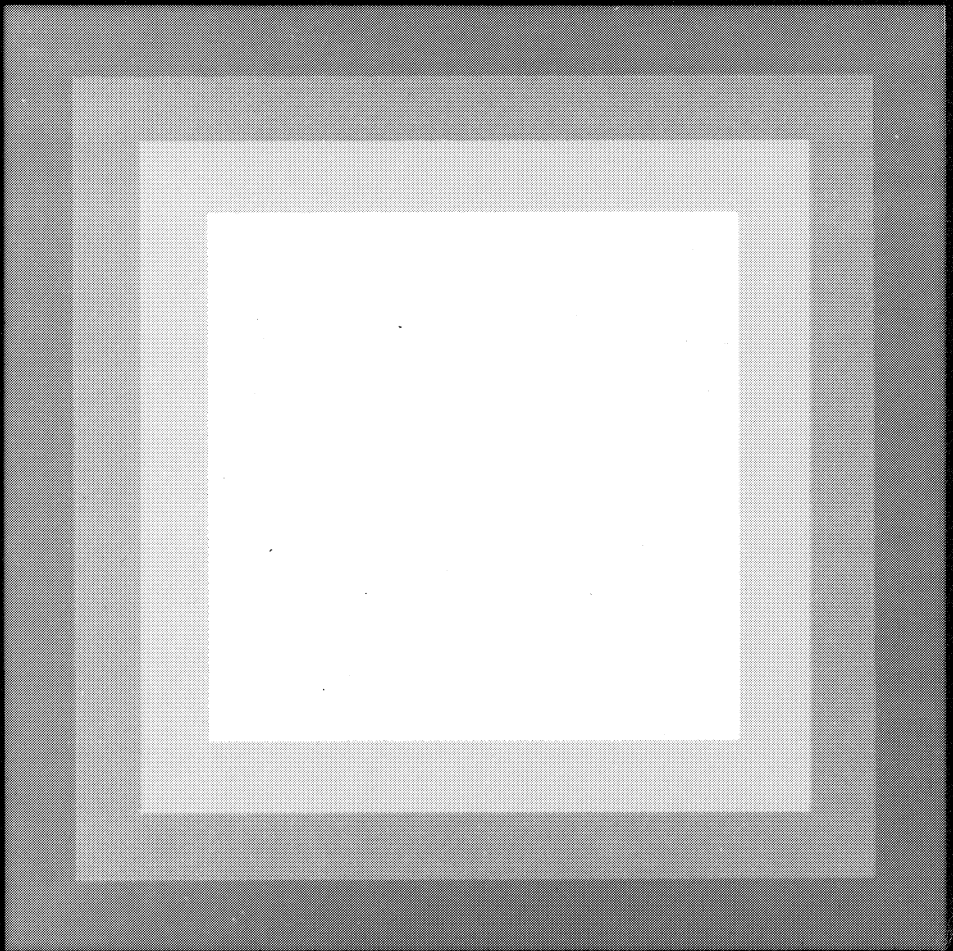


DOMINIC C.H. RIEU

# A LIFE WITHIN A LIFE



AN INTRODUCTION TO SUBUD

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## AN INTRODUCTION TO SUBUD

The movements and sounds made by a young baby are not the product of will-power or thought, but spring spontaneously from an inner life. As the baby grows and the heart and mind develop, this life is overlaid, and can be lost. But it can be rediscovered, so that within the fully developed life of a man or a woman this other life can start to flourish, a life within a life.

It was an Indonesian, known as Bapak, who was shown a way in to this other life which he called *Subud*. This book consists of passages taken from the talks he has delivered over the past twenty-five years in countries all over the world.

**The author** Dominic Rieu — son of the late E.V. Rieu, founder and editor of the Penguin Classics — was educated at Highgate School and Queen's College, Oxford. In 1940 he was commissioned in the West Yorkshire Regiment, and won the Military Cross at the battle of Cheren. After the war he became a schoolmaster, and in 1955 was appointed Headmaster of Simon Langton Grammar School, Canterbury, a post which he held until his retirement in 1977.

Mr. Rieu is married with two grown-up children, and lives with his South African wife in Windsor

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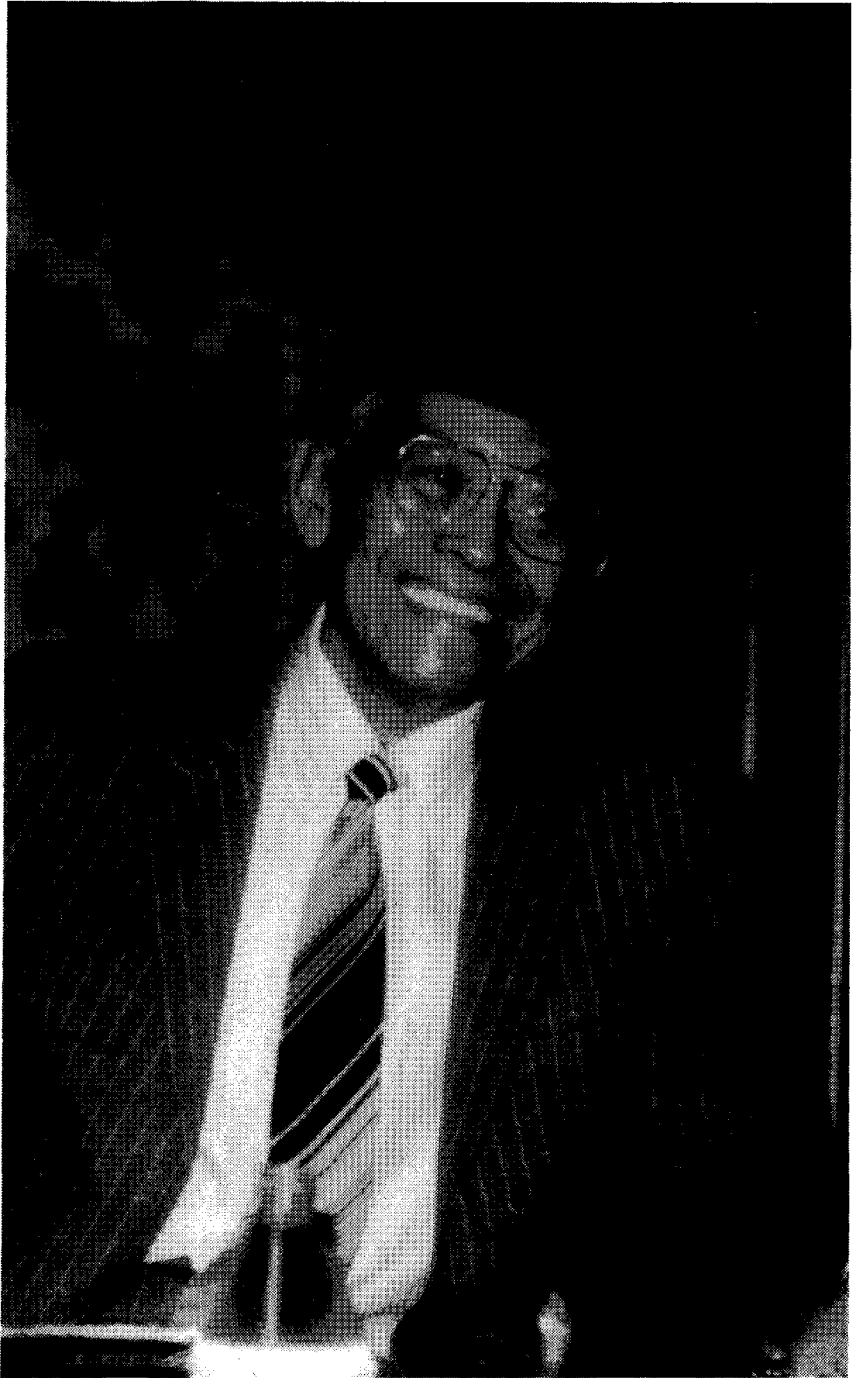
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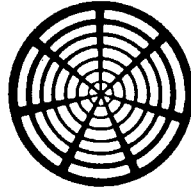
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# A LIFE WITHIN A LIFE



*Bapak in 1981*



**A LIFE WITHIN A LIFE**  
an introduction to Subud

Talks by Bapak Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo  
compiled and edited by Dominic C. H. Rieu



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# *Preface*

This book was written at the suggestion of Bapak. It is primarily for Subud members but, in the words of Bapak when giving approval for its publication, 'If it is read by someone who is not in Subud that does not matter.'

Most Subud members learnt about Subud gradually, walking in at the shallow end and testing the water as they came; this book throws the reader in at the deep end. Those who have had few or none of the experiences described may be so filled with doubt or disbelief that they turn against Subud. It therefore seems right to give a warning to non-Subud readers:

1. If you find the book enjoyable and interesting, read on, but not too much at a time: it is a rich diet.
2. If you find yourself becoming perplexed, lay it aside until the perplexity has cleared.
3. If the book irritates you, put it aside for ever — or until you find yourself drawn back to it.

I have no doubt that these talks of Bapak will interest many people outside Subud: those who have had intimations of the existence of a higher power; those who have been followers of a religion but have not found what they hoped for; those who still are regular followers but feel that there must be more in it; those who have tried some of the many spiritual ways that are available and have ended up in what T. S. Eliot, after some years of studying Eastern philosophy and religion, called 'a state of enlightened mystification'; or even those who have found enlightenment in them; and, I hope, confirmed believers.

I want particularly to draw the attention of certain categories of reader to certain passages, though they may find the occasional word incomprehensible if they have not read the book consecutively:

For all brides and bridegrooms: 'The Harmonious Marriage' (page 145).

For husbands and wives: 'Marriage and the act of love' (page 149).

For Jews: the passage about Abraham and Isaac (page 113).

For Muslims: the chapter on fasting (page 45).

For Jews and Muslims: the account of Muhammad's ascension and his meeting with the Prophet Abraham (page 110).

## PREFACE

For Christians: the talk about the childlike state and the feeding of the five thousand (page 145).

For Buddhists: the extract about the significance of Buddha (page 112).

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I should like to express my thanks to Bapak Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo for permission to use extracts from his published talks; to Sharif Horthy for permission to use his translations of them; and to Subud Publications International and the International Subud Committee by whom they are published.

# Glossary

(Additional glossaries on pp. 15, 45 and 112.)

- Subud      The word is a contraction of three Sanskrit words:  
              *Susila*    Right human behaviour  
              *Budhi*    The power of God within us  
              *Dharma*   Submission to the will of God  
Taken together, they mean: Behaving rightly and living harmoniously in accordance with God's guidance.  
An explanation of the significance of the Subud symbol—seven lines radiating from the centre of seven concentric circles (printed on the title-page)—will be found on page 153.
- Bapak      Father.  
Jiwa        Soul, spirit, inner force.  
Kejiwaan   Spiritual.  
Latihan    (alone or in conjunction with kejiwaan) Literally, exercise or training.  
Nafsu      Passions.  
Opening    The act of passing on or, more correctly, witnessing the passing on of the contact with God.  
Allah       The Islamic (Muslim) word for God.  
Pewarta    Journal.

# *1 Bapak and the origins of Subud*

Bapak's full name is Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo. 'Bapak' is Indonesian for 'Father', and it is the name by which he is known to all in Subud.

Bapak is writing his autobiography, but it will not be published until after his death. There are however many autobiographical passages in his published talks, and these are the major source for the following brief account of some of the main events in Bapak's life.

## **BAPAK DISCOVERS HIS MISSION**

Bapak was born on 22 June 1901, of Muslim parents in humble circumstances, in the village of Kedungjati in central Java.

One evening, when he was twenty-four, he had a spiritual experience that he has described in a talk, adding, in his serious but light way, 'This sounds like a fantasy but actually it really happened, it really happened like that. At the same time Bapak does not want you to believe it [laughter] because it isn't believable actually.' The experience was accompanied by vibrations throughout his whole body, and soon afterwards he found himself making the involuntary spontaneous movements that constitute what we know as the 'latihan kejiwaan'. This contact with God was Bapak's 'opening'. Further revelations followed.

In the course of time Bapak passed on this contact to others, by 'opening' them. Throughout the thirties, forties and fifties Subud — the name he gave to the movement — spread slowly in Indonesia.

## **SUBUD SPREADS TO THE WORLD**

In 1950 a young Englishman, Husein Rofé, a religious seeker, visited Bapak and became the first foreigner to be opened. It was by friends of Rofé that Bapak was invited to England in May 1957. He stayed at Coombe Springs, where the brilliant John Bennett was Director of the Institute for the Comparative Study of History, Philosophy and the Sciences. It so happened that Bapak's stay coincided with an international gathering of the followers of Gurdjieff. Many of them promptly joined Subud and were opened. So it was that, when they dispersed, Subud was carried round the world. Bapak later travelled

## A LIFE WITHIN A LIFE

to Europe, California and Australia, visiting them and the groups they were establishing, and it was thirteen months after leaving Indonesia that he returned home.

### **THE SUBUD CENTRE AT CILANDAK**

On his return Bapak set about meeting the likely needs of Subud as it spread. He bought land at Cilandak — at that time a village on the outskirts of the capital, Jakarta, but now a suburb of the city — and built an office for the secretariat, a latihan hall and a guest-house for overseas visitors. Since then the compound has grown, and now consists of a large, new and splendid latihan hall, a large house for Bapak and his family, many more small guest-houses and about thirty houses lived in by Indonesian members of the Secretariat or overseas residents working there or in Jakarta.

### **FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS**

Cilandak is the base and centre of Subud, and is visited by Subud members from all over the world. Bapak in turn visits the world. Scores, then hundreds, of letters poured in to Cilandak every week, which Bapak or his helpers answered, but Bapak felt the necessity of visiting the overseas groups to give encouragement and advice, to sort out problems, and above all to give explanations about the nature of the latihan. Since his first journey abroad he has visited thirty-three countries, and given about 1,500 talks. The longest tour, in 1977/8, lasted ten months.

Every fourth year there has been a Subud World Congress: in London in 1959, New York in 1963, Tokyo in 1967, Cilandak in 1971, Wolfsburg, Germany in 1975, and in Toronto in 1979. The seventh Congress is to be held in England in 1983.

Two further important developments occurred in the 70s: both were business enterprises which Bapak undertook with the purpose of making Subud financially secure and funding further enterprises, with the ultimate objective of establishing charitable and welfare projects. The first was the creation of a world bank. Bapak broached the idea to his startled listeners at the 1963 World Congress, but the main work on this complicated, difficult but finally successful enterprise was done between 1971 and 1974. The second enterprise was even more adventurous and risky — the construction of a fourteen-storey office building, the S. Widjojo Centre, in the heart of Jakarta. It called for the financial involvement of Subud members all over the world, and cost US\$14 million. (A more detailed account of

## BAPAK AND THE ORIGINS OF SUBUD

these activities and their purpose can be found in chapter 15: Work and enterprises.)

(Subud members will be able to find very full accounts, in Bapak's own words, of his early days and the discovery of his mission in the *Pewarta Special Supplement 5* pp. 73–83 (a talk in Oslo on 24 July 1977); of how Subud came to England and the world in the *Pewarta IX 4* pp. 109–117 (a talk in Leicester on 8 July 1970); and of the founding of Cilandak in *The Growth of Subud* pp. 50–3 (a talk in Tokyo on 26 July 1967).)

### WHO IS BAPAK?

The reader may ask, 'Who and what is Bapak?' I leave it to Bapak to answer.

#### **God is the one who knows**

Some people ask whether Bapak received a revelation from God, as in the case of the prophets. Bapak answers: '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 of 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.'

That, brothers and sisters, is Bapak's answer to anyone who asks, and Bapak feels that it would also be the right answer for you to give about the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, for it is indeed difficult for anyone to understand if he has not yet experienced it for himself. But, strangely enough, if such a person is asked whether he would like to witness the truth of the latihan for himself, he will answer that he would like to think about it first. Then Bapak says to him that anything which is true will certainly not fear anything bad. On the contrary, nothing bad will dare to face the truth.

*Pewarta Supplement 1* pp. 7–9

Cilandak, 11 May 1969

#### **Bapak is just Bapak**

Bapak does not wish to be idolized by you. Well, Bapak is just Bapak. Bapak feels hungry when he does not eat, and Bapak feels sleepy and tired when he does not sleep. Bapak feels hot when exposed to the sunshine, and cold when exposed to cold air and

## A LIFE WITHIN A LIFE

water, and Bapak is still liable to suffer illness and death; there is no difference from you. Simply consider Bapak as the first man who found this way, found what God wills for mankind, for you all.

*Pewarta VI 4* pp. 27–9

London, 24 March 1967

### **Bapak makes no claims for himself**

We should never seek for men to call us wise or to acknowledge Subud as first among movements for the good of mankind. Never! Say only that Subud is like other manifestations of the power of God — even to those who know nothing of God, because it is God who knows. This is why Bapak never claims to be a saint, a prophet or anything like that — never.

*Subud and the Active Life* pp. 72–3

London, 13 August 1959

### **A fallible creature of God**

Bapak himself is just like you; that is, a creature of God who still continues to be affected by mistakes and shortcomings.

*The Growth of Subud* p. 104

Cilandak, 20 August 1967

## **BAPAK'S MISSION**

Bapak makes no claim for himself, but he is entirely clear about the importance of his mission, to which his dedication is total and lifelong.

### **God's instruction to Bapak**

This is what Bapak has been given by God Almighty — Bapak has been given an instruction to pass on the latihan to everybody who asks for it. In other words, to pass on the contact with the power of God Almighty, and then to give instructions and explanations as clear as possible of what this is. That is Bapak's responsibility. But what the membership does with those explanations — that is no longer Bapak's responsibility. Whether the members like to listen to Bapak, whether the members like to put into practice what Bapak is saying — that is their own responsibility. As long as Bapak has carried out his responsibility — that is, to explain to you clearly the meaning of Subud and what your responsibilities are as helpers — beyond that Bapak is free. After that, it is your sin if you do not carry it out, or if you neglect it, or misunderstand it, or something like that.

This is why Bapak still travels as he does now. You must understand that Bapak is quite an old man — Bapak is seventy-six. Bapak has a big family. Bapak has children and grandchildren, and they all say to Bapak: 'Grandfather, why are you going? You

## BAPAK AND THE ORIGINS OF SUBUD

are getting on for eighty. You don't have to travel around the world.'

But Bapak says: 'Yes, because it is my responsibility — and I have to do this.'

Bapak has even said that Bapak surrenders to God. If Bapak is to die, where Bapak is to die, Bapak doesn't care. Where God wants Bapak to die, there it will be. It doesn't have to be at home or anything, because Bapak is not tied to anything. Bapak is not tied to this place or to that person. Bapak leaves it entirely to the power of God. Bapak has also received that if it is God's will, Bapak can be strong for many years more and Bapak maybe at the age of ninety will still be able to travel and talk to you and give you explanations; and maybe Bapak can still come here ten times more to visit you. But that is only if God wills. If God doesn't will — if God wills that tomorrow or the day after Bapak will die — Bapak is completely surrendered and submitted. So it's all God's will.

*Subud World News* 12. 4 p. 3

Chicago, 1 October 1977

### **Bapak's prayer**

Brothers and sisters, Bapak is not someone with great wisdom, with great knowledge. Bapak has never studied very deeply. Bapak has never gone to university or studied hard to gain a lot of knowledge, and yet Bapak has a great deal of understanding and Bapak knows many things that men do not normally understand. This is because of God's will, and no matter what Bapak has received from God Almighty, Bapak has always prayed to God Almighty. When Bapak received so much knowledge and so much understanding from the power of God, Bapak always prayed to God Almighty: 'Oh, God, do not give this to me only, but give this grace to all mankind.' And God has answered Bapak's prayer, because you have all received what Bapak received from God Almighty. Actually, everything that has happened in Subud is God's will. How could it be that Bapak, who had nothing, who had no money whatsoever, could travel round the world? And even if he had the money, that he would be received by people, that he would be listened to, that he would be respected by people in other countries all over the world? How could this happen if it was not the will of God? Not only that — Bapak doesn't come from a country with wide connections, a country that is respected by others. Bapak comes from a country which people mostly have not even heard of.

*Pewartas Special Supplement* 8 p.163 New York, 11 September 1977



## 2 *The talks*

### THE TRANSLATION PROCEDURE

The languages Bapak speaks are high Javanese, Indonesian (a language formulated in this century) and Dutch — Indonesia was until 1945 part of the Dutch Empire, the Dutch East Indies. He knows only a little English. All his talks are delivered in Indonesian. He is always accompanied by an interpreter, who sits by his side. In the early days it was usually Mas Usman, an Indonesian. Since the early 1970s it has been Sharif Horthy, an Englishman of Hungarian descent now living and working in Cilandak.

The procedure is that Bapak speaks in Indonesian and then Sharif translates. What is remarkable is that after Bapak has spoken for anything from one to twenty-five minutes without a break, Sharif meanwhile listening with relaxed concentration, Sharif then speaks it all in English, beautifully clear English. He takes no notes, not even of the main points or the sequence. He says that originally he tried that, but it only confused him. Occasionally he is stumped by a high Javanese, Indonesian or Arabic phrase, word or quotation, and then he looks to the ladies of Bapak's party sitting at the front of the hall and they help him out. Occasionally Bapak detects that Sharif is lost, and leans over for a whispered colloquy. Occasionally too Sharif senses that he has jumped ahead, says so and goes back to the passage he has missed out. Of recent years Muti, one of Bapak's grandchildren, has joined Sharif, taking notes, and Sharif may turn to her two or three times during a session to check the sequence and pick up the thread.

In countries where English is not the main language a second interpreter is needed, and on these occasions Sharif divides up his English translation into manageable portions.

Many of the passages in this book are transcripts of Sharif's on-the-spot translations, taken direct from tape-recordings made at the time. Other passages are the work of a team of translators in the secretariat in Cilandak who use a full transcript of the original Indonesian text. It is a tribute to Sharif that his passages are distinguished from the team's only by a slightly freer, more colloquial and, occasionally, racy style, and a very rare syntactical error. In addition, the 'I' of Bapak's actual speech becomes 'Bapak' in Sharif's translation, but this is not a clear distinguishing mark between the

## THE TALKS

two types of translation since Bapak frequently, indeed usually, refers to himself as 'Bapak'.

The team were responsible for the *Pewartas* and the five books containing the talks from the six World Congresses: *Subud and the Active Life*, *Subud in the World*, *The Growth of Subud*, *Cilandak 71*, *The Way Ahead* and *New Directions*. Sharif's versions come in the *Pewarta Supplements*, *Pewarta Special Supplements* and, for the most part, the issues of *Subud World News*. The reason for using Sharif's versions rather than the team's was speed; the need to get Bapak's talks to the membership quickly.

In the very early days the translating was not so competent. Here is a story told at a Congress of Subud UK by Varindra Vittachi, Chairman of Subud World Council, who comes from Sri Lanka (Ceylon). I have included the two preceding paragraphs, as they contain a description of the effect on him and others of Bapak's first arrival in England.

### Early struggles

I remember that day twenty years ago, seated on the floor in a wooden hall like this, mocked up for the occasion of Bapak's first visit to England in Coombe Springs. We were all seated on the floor, very loyal, very solemn, 400 of us, trying to *remember* ourselves, and only later we realized that there was nothing in us to remember.

But we were seated on the floor hugging our knees very solemnly and Bapak came along. This was the first time I had heard Bapak. He came along with John Bennett and an interpreter called Batara Pane, and I was wondering what kind of new gospel I would hear today. I was really waiting for those rich holy words. And the first thing I ever saw Bapak do in a meeting like this — he looked around at all of us seated there and did . . . [Varindra makes a long solemn face, evoking lots of laughter] . . . it broke us up. He said, 'Worship of God, is it like this? Worship of God should be a joy and not Sunday faces.' And I realized that it was something rich and new and glittering that was coming to us.

I also remember — referring to Dominic Rieu's remarks about the excellence of Sharif's translations — the first translation I ever heard in Subud, from Batara Pane. There was Bapak who talked for ten minutes, words that none of us understood, not one word. Batara Pane, with his eyes closed, began to interpret, and Bapak's ten minutes was translated in one sentence. He said, 'Bapak says that we must not be influenced by plantation forces.' [laughter]

## A LIFE WITHIN A LIFE

And me coming from Sri Lanka. I was thinking of those incredible hordes of tea pluckers. [more laughter] And when I realize how we have come through all that nonsense, surely it is significant proof that Subud must have its own strength to hold cranks like us together.

*Report of UK Congress 1977*  
pp. 38-9

Swanwick, England, 7 July 1977

### **BAPAK AND HIS LISTENERS**

Bapak does not prepare his talks; they come to him ready-made. His manner of speaking, the tone and subject matter of his talks and the effect on his hearers are all of a piece.

On the platform, sitting in an easy chair in front of the microphone, with something to drink at hand (Coca-Cola in the past but nowadays usually tea), Bapak presents a picture of absolute relaxation. His manner is in every respect the opposite of the mental image one has of famous preachers — fervent and impassioned. He has a rich voice, but never raises it. He uses no oratory. He never unleashes emotional forces on his listeners. He smiles and laughs a good deal, and uses his hands, particularly when telling a story.

His manner and delivery are of course a reflection of the subject matter and tone of his talks. He is not a preacher — he is not trying to persuade or convert. He is not a teacher — he has nothing to teach. What he does is to explain and advise — explain the reality of the latihan that he has received and that his hearers in some measure receive, and advise how to make it easier to receive. He does not insist that we believe what he says; in fact he is insistent that we try to find proof in ourselves of the truth of his words.

He never belittles or disparages any individual or group, and never speaks for self-aggrandizement. In all his talks he has never made a contemptuous remark or held up to ridicule any group, institution, religion or cult. That is not to say that he never takes a Subud member or group to task, or speaks as he feels about, for instance, spiritual practices which he regards as dangerous or leading nowhere. He does, with considerable firmness and very little qualification. But there is never a shade of malice. And with people he is always gentle, even when forthright.

#### **Bapak's talks come of their own accord**

When Bapak speaks like this, he never uses a prepared text, because this goes by itself. Even less does he prepare a song like this, for instance [Bapak sings in Javanese]. Bapak does nothing to

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prepare his talks. No; but it comes out of its own accord, just as if it had been prepared, because the way he gives these talks is already arranged. This is how it is.

*Pewarta XIV 1* p. 22

Cilandak, 7 January 1979

### **Bapak does not dare tell a lie**

Bapak says to you all, Bapak would not dare to tell a lie or say anything that is not true. Later on you will be able to witness this, when you have made more progress in the latihan, because if Bapak were to tell an untruth, you would know how it is with Bapak. Bapak assures you of this. Thus Bapak not only fears God, Bapak is also afraid of telling you something which is not true, and so Bapak tells you that which is quite true.

*Pewarta V 6* p. 173

Wolfsburg, West Germany,  
29 April 1967

## THE LANGUAGE AND STYLE OF THE TALKS

A feature of Bapak's style is the simplicity and clarity. The concepts may at times be beyond apprehension but the words are never beyond comprehension. One hardly ever has to read a sentence or paragraph through twice in order to be certain of the meaning. The reader may have noticed this already, perhaps without formulating it, but I would like to quote a brief paragraph as an example:

### **The like-that-ness of the pussy cat**

In the latihan which we have all experienced we know that we receive the guidance — a guidance which is really in accordance with our needs. It's really in accordance with our personality, it's in accordance with our nature, and it never forces us in a direction that is contrary to what we are. And this is the proof because no one can supply this guidance except the power of God. No one outside of yourself can guide you in this way. For example, a cow cannot guide a goat, and a goat cannot guide a pussy cat, and a pussy cat cannot guide a chicken, because their natures are all different. But it's only God who can, because he is One. He has created each one and he understands the nature of each one, and He has made them like that. So He is the one who understands the 'like-that-ness' of each creature that He has created and can therefore guide it along its own path.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 3* p. 49 Totnes, England, 1 July 1977

Not many theological books are written in language *like that*.

Something else that contributes to the lightness of Bapak's talks is

his frequent use of stories, some of them very funny. Here is an example.

### **Bapak sells a diamond**

Now Bapak wants to tell you a story of Bapak's own experience. Bapak had moved from Semarang to Jogja and was living there and happened to be in very, very difficult circumstances. Bapak had no money at all.

In fact, Bapak's situation was so difficult that Ibu was very depressed and asked Bapak, 'How can we possibly find a way out of this situation now? Our situation is so desperate — and yet here we are in a strange town where we don't know anybody, no longer where we used to live and where we had many friends.'

Bapak said: 'No, you mustn't worry and you mustn't get hopeless because, after all, Almighty God is the one who created us and gave us life, so He will surely also show us the way of our life.'

The same day, or the next day, there came a man to Bapak's house who said, 'Pak, I hear you are sometimes buying and selling things. Is it true?'

And Bapak said, 'Yes.'

So he said, 'Well, the point is I have here a diamond . . .' and he took out a diamond and showed it to Bapak. 'I want to sell this,' he said. 'Would you like to buy it?'

Bapak replied, 'Well, what do you think? I have no money at all. How do you expect me to buy a diamond?'

The man said, 'Oh no, you don't understand. I have heard that people sometimes come to your house who want to buy jewellery or want to buy precious stones and so on — so will you buy this from me and then try to sell it to whoever comes, and you can pay me later?'

Bapak said, 'Well, I am willing if you're willing to leave the diamond without my having paid for it.'

The man said, 'Yes, I'm willing to do that.'

Bapak said, 'Why?' and was told,

'Because I trust you.'

So the man left the diamond and then Bapak put it on a shelf somewhere and wondered to himself if ever it would be sold. [Bapak reminds Sharif of something left out] . . . but before the man left he said, 'All right, if you agree I would like to sell it to you for 10,000. Do you agree with that price?'

Bapak said, 'OK, I will pay you 10,000 for it.'

Actually, Bapak had no idea about its value [laughter] because Bapak was not at all an expert in precious stones or diamonds or

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anything like that. So Bapak just said, 'All right.' So the man left the diamond and Bapak put it somewhere on a shelf and wondered to himself . . .

Sure enough, three days later a man came to Bapak's house and said, 'I hear that you have a diamond for sale.' [laughter]

Bapak said, 'Yes, as a matter of fact I have.' And he went and got it and showed it to him.

The man looked at it and said, 'I would like to buy this, if you will give it to me for 25,000.' [laughter]

Bapak was completely shocked, [laughter] because Bapak thought, 'Well, the one who is selling it wants to sell it for 10,000, and another who wants to buy it wants to pay 25,000.' Bapak was so amazed that Bapak just couldn't speak for a moment. So Bapak was kind of quiet.

And, of course, the man interpreted this that Bapak feels it's not enough. [laughter] So he said, 'What about 30,000?' [laughter]

So Bapak said, 'All right.' And so he gave the man the diamond and got 30,000.

And then a few days later the other man came and said, 'Well, has the diamond been sold?'

And Bapak said, 'Yes.'

'How much?'

And Bapak said, 'Well that's neither here nor there — we agreed 10,000.'

The man said, 'Yes, that's right, I'm willing to settle for 10,000.'

So Bapak made just 20,000 profit on something which Bapak himself didn't know why it happened. [laughter]

*Subud World News 11.10 pp. 3-4*

Rotterdam, 15 July 1977

What Bapak says and how he says it naturally conditions his listeners' reactions. Here is a passage in which he describes how he wants people to listen.

### **Quietening the heart**

Bapak hopes that all of you will only listen to what is being said now, and not indulge in any thinking or feeling about it, for this process of inner working takes its own course in you and can produce the facts by which you are able to realize that changes do take place in your nature. This is the way that things should happen in Subud, corresponding to the precept: 'Deeds, not words.' It is deeds that count, not words. So we should not speak much about it, or discuss it, for what is needed is the practice; that is, the latihan. The latihans are important. They should have

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priority and be regarded as fundamental for all of us, so that we may be able rightly to accept the action of the power of God within us.

This, then, is the same as what was said earlier; that these clarifications that Bapak has been giving are really intended to help to quieten the working of your thoughts, your heart and your desires. They are not intended to speed the process or induce a stronger desire in you, nor should they be regarded in this light. Bapak hopes that all of you will listen to these explanations only with a feeling of thankfulness to God, so that in this way your inner feelings, your thinking and your hearts may become purified, thus making it easier for you to receive in the latihan.

*The Meaning of Subud* p. 52

London, 22 August 1959

That explains Bapak's hope for our listening, and that, by and large, is how we eventually learn to listen. Of course we are at times touched by stings of remorse, twinges of conscience, stirrings of hope and so on, and how could it be otherwise? But there is a general feeling of calm. Of course, too, it takes some years for our restless, questioning Western minds to learn to be quiet. This process is assisted by the fact that during at least half of every talk the mind *cannot* be busy speculating on the meaning of the words — that half when Bapak is talking in Indonesian.

Sometimes people become so relaxed and at peace that they do actually fall asleep during a talk, particularly if it is a very long one, say three or four hours, or if it is late at night. But Bapak is not offended. 'Their jiwās,' he once said, 'are not asleep.' So something in us is always attending. The talks are in any case very varied. Bapak sometimes moves around in mime, or tells a funny story with lots of gestures, or sings a Javanese song. Occasionally he stands and shows us what prayer is.

One such occasion was in England in 1977. He stood and his hands reached heavenwards and his mouth uttered the words 'Allah, Allah . . .'. Then his hands descended and were firmly and as if affectionately placed on his chest and front and sides. It was as though the hands that had been raised to God in praise were told by God to bless the one who praised. Every movement was easy, natural and relaxed. His face remained as it always is; it bore no resemblance to a sculptor's portrayal of a saint in ecstasy. It was all astonishing; beyond expectation yet not against expectation. Bapak has said, 'God is natural and normal, so must we be and so must our worship be'.

Here is a passage about Bapak at prayer. It will be clear that the

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interpreter is describing Bapak's actions as well as translating his words.

### **Bapak at prayer**

So, brothers and sisters, we are very fortunate because we have received something from God Almighty that can affect within us this cleansing, this purification, of all the sins and all the mistakes that exist within us. If Bapak says to us that this something is something that we receive in the latihan, then you know what it is. But if Bapak only says, 'It is something,' then you say, 'Well, what thing?' Well, this something is something that you can feel for yourself when you are walking, when you are doing anything. It is a life within your life. It is a movement within your movement. So that in the middle of walking, in the middle of doing anything, you suddenly feel that you are being moved. You are no longer subject, you are no longer moved by the nafsu. And that is what Bapak stood up to illustrate. Bapak illustrated that when Bapak says 'Allahu Akbar'. Then there is a complete emptiness and a complete nothingness. And in that nothingness there comes by itself a movement. If then, in that movement, Bapak starts to say his prayers, then automatically from what Bapak says, the meaning of the prayer becomes its own interpretation. So that every word Bapak said of the Muslim prayers, the meaning of it, and the understanding of what it meant, came with the words. Then immediately Bapak switched, and Bapak walked again. And Bapak could walk again, with his nafsu as an ordinary man. But at any moment Bapak could again worship God Almighty. So at that moment when Bapak worshipped God Almighty, everything to do with this world automatically vanished, so that it only came back when Bapak finished his prayer; that is, when Bapak turned to the right and to the left and said the words which are the ending of the prayer.

Bapak showed that for a Muslim who is truly being graced by God Almighty, from the moment he begins his prayer to the time he ends the prayer, he can remember nothing about the needs of this world. From the beginning to the end he is in a state of bliss. And this state of bliss is actually something that is very important for us. In religion it is said that for man to experience a state of bliss, he is lucky if he can experience it for 15 minutes out of 24 hours. But that state of bliss which he experiences for 15 minutes is the foretaste of what he will experience when he leaves this world — the taste where he is truly in touch with the power of God



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Almighty, such as he will be when he is free from the influence or the pressure of the lower forces and the nafsu which he needs while he is still in this world.

*Pewartia Special Supplement 9*

pp. 211-2

Toronto, 26 September 1977

### 3 *The latihan*

#### ADDITIONAL GLOSSARY

Samadi	The practice of meditation.
The nafsu	The passions.
The lower forces	The four forces, material, vegetable, animal and human, that exist inside and outside man.
Helpers	Those Subud members appointed to 'open' new members and look after the spiritual welfare of the members.

The central act, or way, of worship in Subud is the latihan kejiwaan, usually referred to as just the latihan. Kejiwaan means 'spiritual' (from jiwa, the soul or spirit), and latihan means 'exercise' or 'training'. The one who does the training is God; we just receive. The essence of the latihan is spontaneous movement, not willed by us but occurring through God's will.

Bapak was the first to receive the contact with God that we know as the latihan. He has appointed 'helpers' to transmit the contact at an occasion called the 'opening'. Actually the helpers do not themselves 'open' the new members; God does that. They just witness the opening.

Bapak describes his first latihan in this way: 'But as the vibrations went on, suddenly Bapak got off the bed and started walking. This was the beginning of the latihan, because Bapak thought, "How can I walk without wanting to walk?" Bapak's legs took him to his study. . . .'

Bapak has told this story more than once, and the reason for telling it is to explain that the latihan came spontaneously, as a gift from God, not from another teacher.

Before explaining further what happens in the latihan I want to quote a passage from one of the talks to reassure the reader who may be thinking that the latihan is something odd and alarming. Bapak says that the latihan has always existed in man, and in us. We felt it in our childhood and have forgotten it, but can recapture it.

#### **The latihan is a rediscovery**

In fact the latihan kejiwaan of Subud — which is a thrill or vibration of the inner feeling that you receive, which eventually

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extends to the whole of you and awakens every part of yourself— is not something new, not something new that you now feel; it is something which has existed as long as mankind has existed.

This being so, you need not feel this is a novel thing, something strange, for indeed it has already been present in your lives. It is only because you have for a long time forgotten and neglected something which exists within you that in the end you feel as if it were something new. You certainly have been aware of it in the past, brothers and sisters, for you have experienced it yourselves, but it seems that it easily slips from the memory and is easily forgotten after your birth.

When first born you were still a little baby, not yet able to perceive the shapes of your earthly surroundings, not yet able to distinguish the sounds of this world, not yet able to smell things, and also not yet able to taste what was sweet, what was sour, what was salt, and so on. But you were already able to display happiness and unhappiness and inward suffering. For instance, sometimes your face would seem to be smiling; at times you would look as if hurt or troubled; and sometimes too you would cry.

Yes; as far as the parents of the child are concerned it can be called ordinary for children to be like that, but in fact nothing happens without cause. Thus a newly born baby, who can already cry and can already show a smile on its face, is certainly feeling something. And what is felt at that time is nothing other than changing events that are going on, though in the kejiwaan.

So in other words, brothers and sisters, newly born babies— like you yourselves when first born — are not yet familiar with the earthly world but are already familiar with the sphere of the kejiwaan. Hence it is really true that when you were born your jiwa was already alive and able to be active, even though outwardly you were as yet unable to perceive the forms and so on of your earthly surroundings. Plainly, then, when first born into the world, brothers and sisters, you were closer to your jiwa, though far from observing your worldly environment.

*Pewarta XI 4* pp. 99–100

Johannesburg, 20 May 1972

### SURRENDERING

Subud members meet for latihan in a room or hall where there is an open space. They sit quietly for a few minutes, and then the helper in charge for the evening stands up, and they likewise, with eyes shut and arms easy at the side. The helper says, 'Relax . . . begin', and they stand waiting till they receive whatever they do receive.

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The essential prerequisite to receiving is surrendering to God. But surrendering is not easy, whether a person has had experience of worshipping in church, chapel, temple or mosque, or no experience at all. This first essential is so important that I am including seven passages about it, which need no comment.

### **Surrender without feeling or thought**

So, brothers and sisters, just receive and do the latihan kejiwaan in the usual way. You should not follow your heart, which is full of expectation, such as hoping to be able to receive quickly. It is of no use.

So persist in the latihan. The important thing for you is to surrender to the greatness of God every time you do the latihan kejiwaan. The nature of surrender to God is that you experience no feeling about anything, no thinking about anything, no imagining about anything, no reflecting about anything, but are only aware of your self. When you are doing the latihan it is best to be simply like that, so that there is a strong possibility of your being able to receive the changes that are to be experienced in the latihan.

*Pewarta XIII 4 p. 149*

Cilandak, 1 December 1974

### **Heart and mind are stilled**

You are very fortunate, brothers and sisters. As Bapak has said before, it is fortunate for us that we have received the latihan kejiwaan. It has seemed in our experience as if we have been able to stop the working of the mind. Actually it is not so. It is, in fact, done by the power of God, and we just benefit from it whenever the power of God 'arrives'. The meaning of 'arriving' is, for example, coming in from outside; but, in fact, it is not so. Whenever the power of God is there, at that same moment the heart and mind will cease to function like the morning dew at the moment when the sun starts shining. The sun rises and the early morning dew disappears without being instructed. Yes. It just disappears. It is the same with your heart and mind. As soon as the power of God creeps in, they will stop functioning. Why is it, brothers and sisters? There are quite a few people who always say, 'Surrender'. Quite a few. Every day they go to a place of worship. Why is nothing given to them? Why do they not receive the contact? Why is it? Because the prayer comes from themselves and is not moved by the power of God. So, it is fortunate, brothers and sisters, that the first time we wished to worship God we were guided by Almighty God. Therefore, brothers and sisters, you should not search for God. No. Only surrender to God. Because God is

already there and guides you. Thus, if you search, He is even further away. If you practice samadi then He is still farther away. Yes, Almighty God disappears. You are already guided and directed. It remains for you just to receive. Just receive and take good care of what you have received.

*The Growth of Subud* pp. 97-8                      Cilandak, 20 August 1967

**Heart and mind become spectators**

If you are really alert, you need only follow whatever happens in the latihan kejiwaan, while all the time your heart and mind are like spectators at the cinema. You can and may see everything that happens, but you are unable to change anything by the will of your heart and mind.

*Pewarta VI 4* p. 43                      Message to Congress of Subud Austria,  
1969

**God cannot be sought**

If you receive something in the latihan that is unsought, something founded on the feeling of surrender to the will of Almighty God, try to feel that what is received clearly originates from a source that is not influenced by lower forces, which we usually call wrong. That which is from God, which is not wrong and cannot be sought, is just this something which is free from their influence. Indeed, God cannot possibly be sought, and what is more, when He is sought He is not there; what is there is only the ideas and imaginings of the person concerned. But if He is not sought then He is there, arising automatically in the stillness and calm of the inner feeling.

Clearly, the person who is able to receive what is from God is someone who is truly humble, truly open, truly surrendered to God. Leave it to the will of God. It means having no self-interest at all. That is the reason why Bapak always advises and suggests to you all: do not harbour any wish in your heart when you do the latihan kejiwaan. This is necessary so that you can receive the guidance from God which you really need.

*The Growth of Subud* pp. 78-9                      Tokyo, 1 August 1967

**Surrender as if going to sleep**

The main obstacle in your latihan is your heart and mind. You are thinking too much about problems such as the receivings that exist in the latihan kejiwaan. Therefore, to really feel what ought to be received in the latihan, you should banish every question and problem that is in your heart and mind, and just surrender, as if you were going to sleep.

*Pewarta II 7 & 8* p. 210                      A letter to a member, 1962

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### **As easy as making a baby**

Actually, to reach the kejiwaan, or to have the understanding which God wishes us to have, is something *very, very* easy. This is proof. Do you want to see the proof?

You make a table by thinking. You make a small toy by thinking. But when you make a child you don't think, and that is the work of God. So the smallest thing you make, you have to think about it. But to make a child, the child which is the focus of your heart in this world and something you cannot make by machines or by tools, is very easy. In fact, you can make it just by experiencing bliss.

*Pewartas Special Supplement 11* p. 240      Lima, 1 November 1977

### **How to stop thoughts — don't try**

*Question:* Some members have great difficulty in putting aside their minds during the latihan. What method or mental attitude has to be built in so as to stop thoughts, feelings and desires during the latihan?

*Bapak:* 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.

*Subud in the World* p. 97

New York, 19 July 1963

### **PROOF OF OUR SURRENDER**

How do we know when we *have* surrendered? When we move. It may take a year or five years, a month or a week, or it may happen on the very day of the opening, but when it does happen it is quite unmistakable. The passage that follows makes the point about the proof, and describes in general the vibrations and movements that take place.

### **Unexpected life**

You have all experienced when you were opened that you received a kind of movement which gradually spread to the whole of your body so that finally it awakened all the parts of your body and enabled you to make all sorts of movements. For example, it reached your mouth and enabled you to talk, to shout, to cry, to laugh. It reached your eyes enabling you to see, it reached your nose enabling you to smell, your ears to hear and your feelings to feel. And all these things it brought to your senses and your feelings — it enabled you to feel things that normally you do not feel in your life.

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One can say that all this, this movement, which we have received in the latihan, is something that is unexpected. Most of you before you were opened, you did not suspect that within you there is some kind of life or movement which is beyond your heart and mind, which exists beyond your will. So from this reality, from this experience, we can say categorically that this movement which arises in the latihan is a movement awakened by the power of God — by the power of God which envelops all God's creatures both inwardly and outwardly.

We receive this latihan kejiwaan completely outside our expectation and beyond our foreknowledge or pre-imaginings that we may have had about its nature. It is received out of nothingness, as it were. It comes to us out of the silence. This is what is called 'The voice of the silence', or something that we receive from beyond this world. So, therefore, we can say categorically that what we receive in the latihan is the guidance of the power of God.

Now it is true that there are many people outside of Subud, or groups outside of Subud, who say that what we receive in Subud is not a true spiritual teaching or spiritual knowledge, because they compare the latihan to their own practices and they take exception to the fact that in the latihan we move, we make noise, we act in all sorts of funny ways — there is some behaviour and some action going on, whereas in their meetings, in their latihan, in their exercise, there is a great state of peace, there is silence. For their type of spiritual practices you only need a room where you can be quiet, you don't need a room where you make a lot of noise. Where they practise their latihan there is a feeling of great stillness and, in fact, a stillness that resembles death — and this is what is the commonplace for people who practise samadi, for people who practise meditation and so on. But the case of the latihan is quite different. In the latihan we receive sounds, we make noises, we walk around, we make all sorts of movements and dance and so on, and this they consider is proof therefore that what we receive in the latihan is not something spiritual.

But the fact is that God wills man to receive his grace in a state of life. God leads us through the latihan kejiwaan. What we have received in the latihan kejiwaan is a movement which exists within us, which develops and brings us to a state where we can feel and receive and know things that are beyond what is normal for man. We are brought into an atmosphere of the unexpected, of the strange, of the miraculous — something that is beyond our nafsu and our will and our heart and mind.

*Pewart* Special Supplement 1 p. 2

Bristol, 26 June 1977

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### MOVEMENTS OF THE LATIHAN

It is possible that many people will be surprised or shocked by the following passages, and will consider bizarre the very notion of participating in such a form of worship, of finding themselves singing, shouting, dancing. Bapak contrasts the noise and bustle of the latihan with the stillness and quiet of other ways, and explains what the noises and movements are about.

It is also worthwhile pointing out that one very respectable religion and one very respectable religious movement initially gave rise to shock and ridicule — Christianity and the Quaker movement. The descent of the Spirit at the first Christian Pentecost caused the disciples of the recently crucified Christ to burst forth with so much noise as they glorified God in languages other than their own that some of the bystanders conjectured that they were drunk. The Quakers' name originated in a jeering reference to their movements as they worshipped.

The three passages that follow explain that a person's movements in the latihan correspond to his present inner state; that the movements allow people to master the forces within them; that the movements are an essential part of a cleansing process; and that people's latihan changes in the course of time.

I would hope never to be thought to be explaining Bapak's explanations, but it is worth stressing two of the points he makes. First, he says some people in the latihan 'just lightly jump and skip about'. Indeed in the group latihan there issue mostly contented noises, soft as well as loud, of people chanting or singing, while some are walking about or making dance movements, and others just quietly standing. Secondly, there is Bapak's explanation that if people are at a stage when their jiwa is largely an animal jiwa (see chapter 9, pp. 78–9) some of the noises they make will be those of an animal. We must all in this century be aware of the dark things within us, and Bapak is only giving an account of how we can face and outface them. It resembles Jung's concept of 'the Shadow', man's dark companion with whom he has to come to terms.

#### **Movements of each person different**

As you already know from your own experience, the spiritual latihan of Subud is not the result of following any theories such as are usually followed by many people; but it is the result of complete surrender of one's whole being to the power of Almighty God, with patience, surrender and sincerity.

Only with this attitude of patience, surrender and sincerity can we, by the grace of Almighty God, feel and receive the vibration of



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life. It is first felt softly, but eventually it grows stronger and causes the whole body to move. Because this result is not acquired through our own will, desires, heart and thoughts — in other words while receiving we are in a state in which we do not think about anything and do not wish to use prayers or mantras — then it should be clear that what we receive is certainly free from the influence of the lower forces. These, by their very nature, live off desires, heart and thoughts, the instruments we always use.

We feel and experience, while receiving the latihan, that our desires, heart and thoughts are rendered powerless and unable to interfere. But, even so, our heart and thoughts remain in a good state — that is to say they are not extinguished — and we ourselves are fully conscious. From this it is clear that our heart and thoughts, while in this state, are merely onlookers, whereas our true inner feeling always follows movements from within according to the quality, pattern or rhythm of our individual souls. Because of this, the form of the latihan which we receive and follow differs from person to person. This should be evidence that each person essentially has a different content of his inner feeling; that is to say, the soul.

Because of this evidence which we receive in our latihan, it is impossible for us in Subud to have ideas and theories as to what should be done by those participating in the latihan. This is the reason why in Subud there is no theory or teaching. All that is needed is to quieten all thoughts and desire with trust, sincerity and submission to the will of Almighty God. The truth is that it is only God who can give us guidance and direction; to each according to his soul.

Heart and thoughts do indeed have their own way. They want to speculate about everything and make theories to fit. They even want to do the same with spiritual matters — whereas the soul existed before our physical body, heart and thoughts did. So, it should be quite clear that theories lodged in our heart and thoughts cannot possibly lead and guide our soul, let alone change it.

These are the reasons why we in Subud do not need any other way but the way of complete surrender to the power of Almighty God. We follow only His guidance, which exists within our being. For God knows our true situation — that which we can understand as well as that which is utterly beyond our comprehension.

*Pewarta II 9 & 10 pp. 267-71*

Message to Congress of  
Subud Japan, 1962

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### **Movements reflect the inner self**

What happens in the latihan and what you receive correspond to your inner self. If you are innately frank and good, you will, say, just lightly jump and skip about. If you are hard-hearted, even though you may not want to be, and aggressive, all your movements will reflect it.

This is not guidance from God that has to be followed. It is only the awakening of your inner self — although it is also guidance from God — and belongs to the nafsu. Luckily for you, your nafsu are coming to the surface. Why is that? Because underneath them is the power of God.

*Pewarta Supplement* 7 p. 15

Cilandak, 5 December 1970

### **Movements are a necessary purification**

It is clear that the animal force is something that man cannot avoid in this life. Man cannot live without it because it is, in fact, part of what we need for our lives. This is quite true — that this is why in the latihan we experience movements like animals. As Bapak illustrated — you make noises like animals and you move around like animals; and it is through these movements that eventually the human will come out on top of the animals. This is something that is really essential, and illustrates the fact that we really need movement — that it is through movement that all the mistakes and all the errors and all the dirt which are within us can be cleaned out. Don't think that the latihan which we experience now will always be only like it is now. That is only the very very beginning of the latihan, what we are experiencing now. But what we really need now is the movement in the latihan, because this movement is in the nature of a purification, a cleansing; and actually, it is this which will bring us back to what is right and what is good. For example, it will bring back to life the nerves and all the things within our body, all the nervous system — those parts which have deteriorated, which are dead, which are dirty, will be brought back to life again. This is why movement is essential. Bapak can illustrate it for you. If you wash clothes, you have to move them, you have to rub them. Besides that, there is the soap, and this soap is also a kind of movement which works within the fibres of the clothes you are washing. This is the significance of the latihan kejiwaan, of the movements that we receive in the latihan kejiwaan. This movement is something that is very important for all of us. And this is recognized nowadays by medical science. This is why doctors always advise people, especially children, to do

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sport and to move, because it is through this sport and this movement that all the parts of the body will return again to health, and all the principal organs will become healthy again. But sport is something that is designed by men. In other words, it is thought out by men and you are told — you have to do it like this, and like this, and like this, and like this. But how much more excellent if the sport comes from within you, if it awakens from within you — that is, it is truly in accordance with the needs of each one, because the physical nature of each one is different one from the other, and what we each need is different.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 9* p. 191-2

Montreal,  
17 September 1977

### WHY MEN AND WOMEN DO LATIHAN SEPARATELY

Everyone who has read the extracts in the previous section will understand why men and women are not permitted to have latihan in the same room. Here are Bapak's instructions on the matter, from an early *Pewarta*.

#### **Separation of the sexes**

As you already know, the latihan kejiwaan that we have received brings about a variety of movements and actions. These are in fact very important for us. Since these movements are free from the influence of desires, heart and mind, the members of our entire body become alive and free from worldly pressure. Thus each of them realizes and feels its respective responsibility.

The inner force sometimes produces such a strong movement that the results are strange and sometimes indecorous. Nevertheless, we must not prevent such movements, because they are in accordance with the nature of that person; and, moreover, if we do prevent such movements because they are not decent, then this means that we are still wanting to bring our inner feeling into line with our hearts and mind. But this inner feeling is already separated from the heart and mind by the working within us of the power of God, so that to prevent any movement will prevent the latihan working in us.

This is very disadvantageous for us, because the restoration of our whole inner condition and the correction of the faults of our inner feeling will proceed more slowly, since every movement we receive in the latihan is, in fact, the casting out of faults and impurities from our inner feeling. Thus the more the movements, the quicker the process of purification of the inner feeling.

The reason, then, why the latihan of men and women must be

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kept separate is in order that both sexes may feel free and uninhibited in following whatever movements are indicated, even if these appear to be unseemly.

Moreover, such a separation of the sexes is also desirable because members who are doing the latihan kejiwaan of Subud are still easily influenced by the lower forces, which can cause sexual impulses to arise on both sides.

It is true that some people hold that it is permissible for men and women to practise spiritual exercises in the pursuit of knowledge—even if it pertains to spiritual matters—so long as each one looks to his or her moral attitude and is bent only on attaining the knowledge they seek. Perhaps this can be accepted provided that everyone concerned is indeed able to guard and maintain his sincerity of heart; but is it not more likely, however, that—because the heart is the seat of the passions and the passions themselves can easily become the tools of the lower forces—in the end those taking part in such exercises will unconsciously experience something contrary to morality? For this reason we set up rules that men and women of the Subud brotherhood exercise separately.

*Pewarta I 2 pp. 28–30*

Cilandak, 1960

### THE EVENTUAL EFFECT ON OUR LIVES

The next extract describes the changes that may take place in us as the latihan penetrates to our understanding and consciousness.

#### **The latihan works by itself**

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since the latihan kejiwaan of Subud has thus become embodied in your inner self, you have no need to worry, you have no need to doubt, because God's guidance and direction that is already present in your inner self is something fixed, eternal, unchangeable.

And it will act and go on and work by itself. There is no need to push, no need to help it along with your mind, no need to support it by the use of a clever brain. No need; for help from your mind and heart does not push it along so that it can develop smoothly, but is actually a hindrance. Because, for the jiwa to develop to enable you to have the jiwa of a perfect human being, so that you can return to your rightful world, you need to have a feeling of patience, trust and sincerity, which means to surrender in earnest to Almighty God.

Throughout man's earthly life, if he wants anything, he has to pursue it with all the strength he can, with both mind and heart. But development of the jiwa is not like that. Instead, we have to

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reduce the nafsu in order that the development of our jiwa may go smoothly.

That is how it is, brothers and sisters; so keep on doing the latihan kejiwaan of Subud that you have received. You have no need to think. It is going on by itself. As for your minds, you need to make use of them — meaning that you must give them work to do. What is it that the heart and mind need to do? To deal with worldly requirements, to fulfil the needs of your earthly life. That is why Bapak sets up enterprises for the members who really are capable of carrying out an enterprise. Those who cannot do this should do what they are able to do, but so far as possible we have to work.

*Pewarta X 3* pp. 95-7

Vancouver, 22 April 1972

### THE CONTINUOUS LATIHAN

Up till a few years ago that was the limit of what Bapak had told us about the latihan. It was generally accepted throughout the world that, except in Cilandak, the latihan was something we did together twice a week, and after a while once a week additionally at home. (Cilandak was special — those who returned from that legendary place, that Lothlorien, told us that the latihan seemed to be going on in the hall, and elsewhere, at all times of the day.) Originally those had been Bapak's instructions, and he had given warnings that as the latihan was so powerful anyone who tried to speed up his spiritual development by more frequent latihan risked going into 'crisis'. Of course experienced helpers and members used the instructions as guidelines only, and would do the latihan more often as and when the spirit moved them, and at congresses and other special occasions.

Then suddenly Bapak gave us a new concept, the concept of 'the continuous latihan'. Actually it was not new, for it had been there implicitly from the beginning. For instance it was an open secret that Bapak was 'in latihan' all the time. Also Bapak had in some of his talks explicitly talked about it, but not using the term and not emphasizing it. Then came the 1977 tour, and this is how some of us became aware of the new concept. The story illustrates how 'dull and hard of hearing' one can be, and demonstrates that one takes in only what one is ready for.

It was a summer's day at Winslade House in Egham, the centre for Subud enterprises. Bapak had toured the office and works and afterwards, in the packed drawing-room of one of the directors, invited questions, through his interpreter, Sharif.

The first question was, 'Sometimes when one goes to latihan one's mind is in such a whirl with the pressures and problems of work that it

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takes twenty of the thirty minutes before one can get going. How can one avoid that?"

Bapak's reply began, 'Your question shows that you have not understood the nature of the latihan kejiwaan,' and he proceeded to explain the concept of the continuous latihan. We should begin to become conscious of the latihan in our daily life, in our work and in our leisure, and more and more so, so that the latihan was not something we *did* on Mondays and Thursdays but something that was happening within us increasingly often, until eventually we might be aware of it all the time.

This seemed a splendid answer, but not an answer to the question. It was not until some weeks later that one realized it *was* an answer: if a person can reach a stage of feeling something of the latihan in even a few of his daily activities then the latihan will be hovering around when he goes for the group latihan, and there will be no big leap from his workaday state to a state of full latihan.

By the end of June 1977 Subud members all over the UK had heard of the concept, and by the end of the following February so had members in Holland, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, France, Spain, Portugal, the USA, Canada, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Mexico, Honolulu, Japan, New Zealand, Australia and Malaysia. It was a lengthy tour.

Here are three passages from the talks of this tour in which Bapak explains this concept.

### **The power of God in our everyday lives**

God wills man to receive his grace in a state of life. God leads us through the latihan kejiwaan. What we have received in the latihan kejiwaan is a movement which exists within us, which develops and brings us to a state where we can feel and receive and know things that are beyond what is normal for man. We are brought into an atmosphere of the unexpected, of the strange, of the miraculous — something that is beyond our nafs and our will and our heart and mind.

And all this happens within our normal framework of our life, within all our normal activities, with our normal living being. So it is clear that what is actually God's will for us is to live. God has created us to live, and God's gift to man is received in a state of life, in a state of movement. So this is why Bapak says that the latihan kejiwaan is actually our worship of God in our normal state of life, in our normal state whatever we are doing. For example, it is within us, God's power is within us and is felt within us when we are walking, when we are sitting, when we are reading, when we

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are working, whatever we are doing through our everyday life.

This is our latihan. The latihan is life. It is a life that is within our life and encompasses our whole life. It is something that goes on forever. It has no boundary, and this is why Bapak said that once we have received the latihan, once we are open, the latihan is our possession, it is part of us, it goes with us wherever we are and whatever we do. So that this latihan, this vibration or this movement of life that is within our life, is the grace of God which is called in Islam the *qadar ilham* or the essence of the nature of God, the essence of God's power which is given to us in our normal life as we normally are.

Brothers and sisters, it appears to us when we first start the latihan as though we are taken back to the beginning again; as though we repeat our lessons over again, like revision — that whereas when we were small we learnt to walk, we are *made* to walk again. When we were small we learnt to move our hands, to feel, to write, to do various things. We are taught *again* to use our hands and to feel and to write. We learnt to speak and to sing and make all sorts of sounds. We are taught *again* to speak and to sing and to make sounds. So it looks as though we are taken back to the beginning and we start again. But the purpose of this going back is to begin to teach us the difference, to be able to distinguish between our actions and our movements which are moved by the nafsu, by the heart and mind, and the same actions when we are accompanied and moved by the power of God Almighty, uninfluenced by the nafsu.

This is the meaning and the grace of the latihan kejiwaan: that we are taught to move and to carry out our everyday life but accompanied by the power of God Almighty. So what we have in the latihan kejiwaan is that we can go through our life — everything that we do in our life every day — accompanied by a power which is the power of God Almighty. This is something — that we still use our instrument, our body, our heart and mind and so on, and our understanding — but there is the power of God in the background; and gradually, as we develop, the power of God comes into the foreground as well. So that we understand that we come from God and we go back to God, and this is the meaning of the Muslim saying that we come from God and we return once again to God.

*Pewartu Special Supplement 1* pp. 2-3

Bristol, 26 June 1977

### **The latihan every moment**

Brothers and sisters, in order to be able to experience this

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improvement of your being — in other words, the demolition of this great pile of sin [laughter] — is it enough for us just to do latihan twice a week, that is Mondays and Thursdays or something like that? The answer is No, it's not enough. In order to receive the improvement of our being, is it then necessary to increase our latihan, maybe do it every night — two hours [laughter]? Is that not enough? No, it's not enough. If we want to experience the possibility of improving our being — that is, returning our being to its original state, to clean it out again — we have to receive the latihan every moment, every second, as Bapak showed with his pulse. Every second, every heartbeat, we have to experience latihan. And this is impossible — or is it? Once we have experienced the movement in the latihan, and once that feeling, that contact that we have in the latihan, participates in all the movements that we make throughout our everyday life, then it means that we worship God, that we are experiencing the latihan every second of the day.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 13* p. 289

Santa Monica, USA,  
29 November 1977

### **Remembering God constantly**

In order that you may truly feel, in order that what you hope for can be accomplished, in order that the will of God for man can be accomplished, there is only one way: and that is that you should, as Bapak says, more or less — preferably more — feel the power of God outside of the latihan which you do twice a week. In other words, in the middle of your ordinary everyday work, you should give it a content, you should give your movements, your actions, your activities a content. Of course, you will have to do it with your heart and mind, with your will, with your nafsu, because we are living in this world. We are living in this world, therefore, we are living with our heart and mind, with our physical body, with our senses and so on. These activities that we do are all carried out with our heart and mind, with our will, or whatever. But as we do these things, as we act, as we work, 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. For example, in the case of the ladies, it can be while you are making up your face or doing your hair, when you are doing shopping, when you are cooking, when you are receiving visitors, or even, if possible, and very much to be hoped, when you are going to bed and when you are sleeping. So that



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everything in your life is filled with a content, with the content of the power of God. The result of this will be that you will be guided, you will be guided by the power of God in the midst of what you are doing. You will be saved from doing wrong. For example, supposing on the right of you you hear a noise, or someone speaking, and you would very much like to listen because it is something that you hear suddenly; but because that voice is speaking something that you should not hear, you are turned to the left and you go away from that voice which you would have liked to hear. This is the effect of remembering the power of God Almighty in the midst of your everyday life, in the midst of what you are doing. So the power of God can guide you and help you in whatever you are planning to do.

Now, if you can be in this state, let us say, for four hours out of twenty-four, that is already enough, that is already good. For example, in Islam, the people who are very religious — that is, those who carry out the religious observances — even say it is enough if you do your prayers five times a day. Well, the longest it could take to do your prayers is fifteen minutes — so if they say five, it means that for them it is enough to be in this state of remembering God for seventy-five minutes of the day. Not even two hours. So if you can do it for four hours out of twenty-four, that is already very good. But, of course, if you can do it for more than four hours, that is even better.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 18* pp. 399–400

Melbourne,  
5 February 1978

### GROUP LATIHAN IS ESSENTIAL

In these two passages Bapak explains why the latihan must not become *only* a private affair and why we must take part in the regular group latihan with our fellow members.

#### **For brotherhood**

The latihan that we do on Mondays and Thursdays, or Tuesdays and Fridays, that is arranged by the group, is something special for us to get to know each other, to become a brotherhood, to come together and to be in harmony, to get used to each other's society and provide help for those who need it from those who already have some understanding and who can help. This is, then, the purpose of our group latihan. But *the* latihan is our own property and is within us in whatever we do.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 2* p. 29

Bristol, 27 June 1977

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### **For interest and harmony**

You should understand that the latihan kejiwaan is not something that is limited to what we do twice a week on Sunday and Friday, or whatever the days are that we meet together. That is just a meeting and we have to do latihan together so as to get used to being together and so as to give each other an interest in doing the latihan — because if we always do it alone, then there will come a time when we get bored with it, or we get disturbed by other things, and so on. But when we do it together, it encourages our interest, our incentive, to do the latihan. That's one reason. The other reason why we have to do it together is to teach us to become harmonious; that is, to be harmonious among ourselves and to co-operate, because in this world we *must* live in harmony. We cannot achieve anything in this world if we do not learn to co-operate and work in harmony. That is why, actually, that state of this world depends on us. God has left us to organize this place, and we can only succeed in organizing it, and sorting it out, and making it into a decent place to live, if we work together. Harmony is the first prerequisite to achieving some improvement in the way this world is organized, so that it can become a good place for man to live.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 5* pp. 84–5

Oslo, 24 July 1977

# 4 Testing

There are two main kinds of 'testing' in Subud; our own testing, when the helpers and a member test a problem raised, and Bapak's testing of us.

## OUR OWN TESTING

In the two following extracts Bapak explains what testing is and lays down the way helpers should conduct it.

### Testing is like the latihan

When a helper or a member carries out testing in the spiritual way (kejiwaan) of Subud it is similar to doing the latihan kejiwaan. The difference is that, when testing, the person who tests has a question to ask before doing the latihan, to which he or she then receives an answer in whatever form he is able to receive it. Whereas when one does the latihan it is necessary first to empty oneself of ideas and imaginings, to surrender in trust and sincerity to the will of Almighty God, and then one will receive and follow the guidance and direction that comes from the power of God manifested in the latihan kejiwaan.

This then is the difference between testing and just receiving and following the latihan kejiwaan.

*Pewarta VI 2 p. 3*

Cilandak, September 1968

### How helpers test

With regard to the way of testing to answer a question submitted by a member; if the question is written, the purpose of this is that it must be clearly understood; and if the question is stated orally, then it is necessary to hear the statement clearly. Further, only then the helpers do the test and during the test they just surrender their inner to the power of Almighty God as to what the answer will be. If they can do this, free from the influence of the passions, the helpers are soon able to receive the answer to the question which has been submitted, in the form of movement or expression.

Regarding the testing of any question, if it is submitted by a woman member the test should be done by a woman helper, and if it is submitted by a man member then the test should be done by a man helper.

*Pewarta V 2 p. 61*

Answer to a member's letter,  
2 September 1966

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### RECEIVING ANSWERS

How a person receives answers to questions in testing depends on his stage of development in Subud. In the case of a member who has only just begun receiving and moving in the latihan, the helpers first establish, by testing with him and for him, 'How does X receive Yes?' 'How does X receive No?' Usually though not invariably it will be by means of the everyday ways of signifying these things — by nods, by forward movement or gestures of consent for Yes, and by equally clear indications for No. The helpers then phrase his question or problem in a way that asks for a Yes or No answer, and proceed to test in the way that Bapak has described above.

In course of time a person's latihan will go deeper and rouse or waken other parts of his self, so that he can receive answers to testing in many different ways — by movements of the body, by sounds of the voice, by words or phrases spontaneously entering the consciousness or pictures appearing in the mind's eye. Then it is possible to put questions other than the Yes/No kind, questions beginning, 'What is X's attitude to . . .?' 'What should it be?' 'How will it be if . . .?'

### GUIDELINES FOR TESTING

It is not surprising that after a while this remarkable gift of testing was misused. It was trivialized by the testing of unnecessary questions, and was used by some as a crystal ball, or a substitute for thought, discussion and the exercise of common sense. Naturally Bapak became aware of this, and there appeared in the *Pewarta* 'An announcement from Bapak to all Subud members — concerning testing', in which Bapak drew attention to the high seriousness of the latihan, and gave guidelines about questions for testing. Here are several paragraphs from it.

#### **Testing only spiritual matters**

As you know, the latihan kejiwaan of Subud has its being and comes through the grace of Almighty God. Evidence of this is that its presence stills the thoughts and imagination and causes the working of heart and mind to cease. This is clear proof, and you yourselves have witnessed it.

If the latihan kejiwaan has come into being by the grace of Almighty God, it is only fitting that we should hold it in high respect, and not practise it simply as our hearts wish. For if we only follow the desires of our hearts when we do the latihan, it means that we degrade the guidance and direction of Almighty God, the All-glorious and All-wise.

On the other hand, if we do the latihan kejiwaan and use it

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following the spiritual way, this means that we truly hold in high esteem the guidance and direction of Almighty God, manifested in the latihan kejiwaan which we have received and are practising. It is for this reason that, so far as is possible, we do not employ testing for purposes that fall outside the field of spiritual matters.

If necessary, you may also test in order to be able to know your fate, and what to do so as to be able to change it for the better. But you should not then ask about all your various needs, as if you were questioning a *dukun* (witch-doctor or fortune-teller). This sort of thing is indeed work for a witch-doctor or fortune-teller. But for us, whose primary aim is the worship of Almighty God in accordance with his direction and guidance, such a habit is rather far removed from our original objective.

The fact is that many questions can be weighed and examined with your hearts and minds, such as wanting to move house, to change your work, to discover how to pay your debts, to know how to manage your property, to find a marriage-partner or to improve an unfortunate lot in life. But occasionally, if it is obvious that heart and mind are inadequate to reach a satisfactory conclusion, only then should you ask the helpers to test about such a problem. For if you fall into the habit of asking about all kinds of things, you will eventually get into the way of being just an expert questioner, and you will not understand that the Subud latihan kejiwaan, which exists by the grace of Almighty God, will enable you to know for yourself all that is necessary. It is better, therefore, not to make a habit of testing such problems.

It may be that you feel such questions as these to be very important for you. Well, yes, if you feel that they are important, maybe every kind of problem that becomes a necessity in your life is important. But the essential purpose and content of these questions does not tally or correspond with your intentions at the time when you were about to enter the Spiritual Brotherhood of Subud.

If you will remember the situation at the time when you were about to enter Subud, you were reminded that the Subud latihan exists by and comes through the grace of Almighty God, and is in its essence man's worship of God according to His guidance and direction manifested in the latihan kejiwaan.

This is the purport of what you were told. As for questions of healing, setting right the inner force (*jiwa*) and the purification of the inner feeling, which relate to one's fate in life, all this will proceed of itself, because the improvement of the inner force and

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purification of the inner feeling are carried out in the course of the latihan kejiwaan, which is in truth direction and guidance from Almighty God.

So it is clear that if you really do surrender patiently, sincerely and trustfully to the will of Almighty God, your inner force will be raised up towards a superior level, and your inner feeling will be cleansed of the impurities and faults which are the cause of your misfortune, so that subsequently you will be filled by an inner force of superior quality, and the purity of your inner feeling will cause your fate in life to become a good one.

*Pewarta VI 2 pp. 5-7*

Cilandak, September 1968

Bapak has often had to reiterate this advice. Here is a passage from a more recent talk on the habit of frequently testing about worldly affairs.

### **Ordinary decisions**

When it comes to making decisions about ordinary things in the outer world, then it is also right to take these decisions in an ordinary way — that is, just by thinking about them in the normal way, using the apparatus that we have been given by God Almighty for living in this world. If we always have the feeling, or if we nurture the feeling within ourselves, that no matter what we want to do we must get God's permission first, this will actually not bring us a situation which is light and free and open but, on the contrary, it will bring us into a state that is more and more dark and confused. So Bapak really advises you, in this case, when it comes to making decisions about practical matters, to do it in a normal way and not to do too much testing — because, as Bapak just said, this will not make you feel lighter and more open and more clear within yourself but, on the contrary, will bring you into a state of darkness.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 7 p. 135*      Lausanne, 13 August 1977

That directive is clear, but misconceptions continued. A particular one had arisen in the years when Bapak was urging upon members the need to set up enterprises. Testing began to be used in the whole range of finance and business — which is not the realm of the kejiwaan — and where thought, consultation and experience are the things needed. Yet members venturing on enterprises sometimes turned to the helpers for advice and decisions through testing, even though the helpers as often as not were totally inexperienced in business, and perhaps not very experienced in testing. Bapak once again explained

what was going wrong and suggested a remedy, a different course of action to take. Here are two examples of his explanations:

**Business decisions**

Bapak asks that you give priority now to setting up a group of experts because what Bapak has seen in many places, and has heard, is that a number of Subud enterprises have started and then experience losses and experience failure. Actually, if you want to know *why* this takes place, Bapak's understanding and Bapak's opinion is that it is because these enterprises are carried out by people who lack the knowledge and the expertise in the field they are in. So that the enterprises are undertaken with a feeling of amateurism — the people who are doing them are people who don't know enough about the field they are working in, and so they rely on testing. But the trouble is that the ones who test — it's not sure that their testing is complete or perfect. So the result is that people are chosen to do this and to do that who are not at all suited or fitted for the work they are doing. In other words, they lack the know-how.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 6* p. 115

Blonay, Switzerland,  
15 August 1977

**A group of experts**

In the case of enterprises, questions about enterprises should not be addressed to the helpers, but to the group of experts. Again, Bapak doesn't wish the helpers to meddle in the arrangements about money and financial affairs, because if they do it is sure that sooner or later there will be a split or a conflict between the helpers and committee about how funds should be used and so on. This must be avoided in order to ensure the smooth development and the smooth working of the group.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 11* p. 244

Lima, 1 November 1977

As may be imagined, there is still no complete conformity or uniformity in the matter of deciding about testing. Indeed it is likely that there will always be occasions when the helpers are uncertain whether to test or not, as there will always be questions that seem to fall halfway between appropriate and inappropriate. And sometimes, even when a question falls on the wrong side but the helpers know that the member has thought carefully about the matter but is still at his wits' end, they will decide to accept his request for testing. As helpers they have not only the freedom to decide but the responsibility for deciding. This is implicit in the sentence from the announcement above (p. 34): 'But occasionally if it is obvious that heart and mind

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are inadequate to reach a satisfactory conclusion, only then should you ask the helpers to test about such a problem.'

### TESTING BY BAPAK

This is a different kind of testing from that described above, and is only done by Bapak. I will quote Bapak's explanation of why he tests us and of what is happening in the tests, and will also give a transcript of a recording of his words at a testing session, but first I must describe briefly what actually happens.

Bapak, through his interpreter, invites some of the members to take their place in the hall, standing and not too close together, tells them to relax and then asks them to show, in their latihan, their response to a series of questions or instructions, such as, 'What are your legs for?' 'What are your hands for?' 'Show what is the use of your eyes/mouth/ears/lips, etc.' The members receive in latihan whatever it is that they do receive, and go on for a few seconds or minutes until told to stop, and then are given another test. From time to time in the intervals Bapak comments on the quality of their receiving.

These tests may *seem* fairly simple. Others *seem* more difficult, more advanced, such as: 'How does an American/Japanese/Indonesian/Mexican laugh?' 'How does a soldier/successful businessman/proud woman walk?' 'How do you feel in the presence of a dishonest person?' 'How should your latihan be?'

The reader may find an account of this public testing astonishing. I can assure him that the first experience of watching it can be astounding. Subsequent experiences of participating in it are exhilarating.

I now give two extracts from the talks in which Bapak compares his testing to an examination, and tells how he 'dares' to test such things.

#### **Bapak tests**

Brothers and sisters, actually Bapak was not going to do testing this evening, but because there are members who have just arrived here and who seem to want it very much, Bapak has changed from latihan to testing.

Testing is in fact of more benefit to you, because when testing is done, many parts of your self are aroused or wakened. And testing also includes something of just the same nature as when you are doing the latihan kejiwaan.

That being so, Bapak considers it important to test with you all, because if it is a matter of doing the latihan, you can do that by yourselves in the care of helpers. But when it is a question of



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testing, that is not possible because this testing is like an examination, so only Bapak can conduct it.

*Pewarta XI 4 p. 99*

Johannesburg, 20 May 1972

### **Bapak's authority for testing**

Brothers and sisters, if you look back over what you have heard or what you have seen, have you ever heard of a spiritual teacher who dares to do what Bapak does? Who dares to test with people, for example, 'Feel now, how do the angels dance in heaven?' Or to do things of this kind. Brothers and sisters, Bapak can only do this because it is the will of God — because Bapak has received the authority from God Almighty.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 15 p. 330*

San Francisco,  
6 December 1977

## THE PURPOSE OF BAPAK'S TESTING

In this next passage Bapak reveals the important objective of his testing.

### **Testing trains the jiwa**

This testing is to enable your jiwa to get to know the state of your coarse physical body, which is constantly influenced by nafsu. For it is your jiwa that needs this latihan, in order that the inner self—the jiwa, that is — may become the guide or director of your self as a whole, so that when eventually you die your consciousness of life, your awareness of life, will be no different from your awareness of your state at the time of your earthly life.

For this reason it is very important that your jiwa should get to know your physical body. You will be able to see with your eyes that are not the eyes in your head, and you will be able to hear with ears that are not the ordinary ears.

This is, in fact, what is called the latihan kejiwaan. Of course, the jiwa does not penetrate your coarse physical body if the coarse body is still insensitive, full of nafsu. Thus, as a general rule, you walk because of nafsu, and anything you do is caused by nafsu; you see, hear, smell, speak, eat, and do everything else too because of nafsu.

This is what is being trained, in order that you may walk, use your hands, move and act, and also see, hear, smell, speak and eat by means of your jiwa. For the jiwa is close to God, and the jiwa is able to receive God's mercy and His gift to mankind or to you all. So don't believe, don't feel, that this testing of your latihan kejiwaan which manifests in this way has no content. In reality,

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this is what man seeks on earth, in order to come to know the power of God which envelops the human self both inwardly and outwardly, and in order that he may be able to feel how close to his self is the power of God. This is what is expressed by 'God is always with man.'

*Pewarta XI 6 p. 173*

Leicester, England,  
11 July 1970

### TESTING FOR VERIFICATION

There is a slightly different form of testing conducted by Bapak, testing which has a slightly different purpose, and here the word 'test' has the meaning not of 'set an examination for' but another of its meanings — 'prove', 'verify the quality of'. Bapak is wanting us to receive proof of what he himself has verified. Often in his talks he says that it is not enough for us just to listen to him, just to believe him — we must experience the truth of what he is saying for ourselves. Sometimes he breaks off for a testing session, or there and then, with the members sitting, tells them to relax and receive and feel for themselves the validity of what he has been explaining. Occasionally he will first test for himself, to show us how.

Here is an example of this kind of testing. One of the members had asked a question about Abraham: 'How could Abraham be sure that it was the will of God rather than his own imagination in sacrificing his son?' For reply Bapak talks about Abraham, then as part of his answer tests himself, in front of everyone, asking to receive answers to various questions about Abraham.

#### **Abraham's obedience**

Now, the question of Abraham. The point is that for Abraham, this order to kill his son was a test — a test of how far he had faith in God's power. And God was All-knowing. God knew the nature of Abraham, so God, in giving Abraham an order, knew his character and knew he was a person who was completely honest. In other words, he would do *anything* as long as it was right, even to the point of killing somebody — he was willing to do that as long as it was right. Now this is what Bapak said earlier — the courage to do something because it is right. This was the hallmark of Abraham, so that for him, he had first of all, a tremendous faith in God Almighty and a real courage to do *anything*, no matter what it was, as long as it was right. And this nature is a nature of real justice — complete justice. That is, always to look for what is right, no matter what it involves, what sacrifices it brings. And that was the character of Abraham which God tested at that moment.

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To clarify more about this experience of Abraham — the other point is that Abraham is what Bapak calls the *Hallam Allah* — which means signpost or messenger or sign-giver of God. So, actually, this test to which he was subjected was supposed to be an example to his followers. In other words, an example that devotion to God — through faith and complete surrender to God Almighty — will bring a reward. In other words, will bring the reward of being able to receive God's grace, which is exemplified by the nature of Abraham; that is, one who is truly wise and great and so on. And this was something that was especially done by God to give a sign to humanity at that time.

The case of Moses is different. He was known as the *Halil Allah* — that is, the servant of God — which meant that anything that was God's will, he was able to carry out. Moses was able to do or to act in anything that God wished. It was for this reason that he was able to divide the waters of the Red Sea, which is a symbol that he was able to divide between the feeling that is right and the feeling that is wrong — between right and wrong.

Then Jesus is called the *Roch Allah*, which means child, and child symbolizes one who is loved by God. So his birth took place because of the love of God, because of the will of God.

And then Muhammad is called *Rasul Allah*, which means the nature of God. In other words, the one who carries the nature of God. So again his actions corresponded to the will of God Almighty.

Now Bapak reminds you that Bapak explained to you before that man's being is full of the lower forces — that is, the material (satanic), the vegetable, the animal, the human. Now Bapak tests, 'How is it with the nature of Abraham?' that Bapak tested just now. 'How are his eyes, how is his mouth, how is his head, how is his whole being?' And then, 'Where are the lower forces — that is, the material, vegetable, animal and human — in Abraham?' Bapak receives — they are all below him, they are already all down there. Now because of that, Abraham knew at the time when God commanded him to kill his son that this was the test God meant for him. And Abraham knew that his son would not die through this, and that's why he had the courage to carry out God's command.

But this is completely different with us because, when we test, we are still overwhelmed by the lower forces, so it is not sure that when we test that the result is right, because at that moment we can still be influenced by the lower forces. So very often our testing

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is still askew — it still misses the mark, because we are still influenced by all these things.

But not with Abraham. He knew very clearly at the moment he received this order, 'Yes, this is the test God means for me and I have to do it, but it will not lead to my killing my son.' Because, actually, it is impossible for a man to kill his son. The *Roch*, which Bapak talked about, the one we love — it's impossible for a father to kill his son or for a son to kill his father, *except* if he is influenced by the material forces. That's why you *can* find fathers killing their children, and very often children killing their parents [laughter]. And you say, 'How can it happen, how can it be that someone has it within him to be able to kill his father, or vice versa?' Because they are influenced by the material forces. But it's completely different from Abraham. Maybe Bapak will test this with you some time [laughter] — so that you can bear witness to it. But if Bapak tests with you now, first of all there is no time; and, secondly, it's too hot [laughter].

*Subud World News 11.12 p. 4*

Blonay, Switzerland,  
15 August 1977

Here is an account of part of a testing session conducted by Bapak. On his instructions his questions and the receiving of the members are not recorded on tape: the single word *Testing* stands as an indication. From Bapak's comments one can usually infer what the question or instruction was.

### **A testing session**

You were able to feel in yourselves that there is movement, there is life; movement and life which are there, not because you will them with your hearts and minds, or with what are called the *nafsu*. That is what Bapak was saying the day before yesterday; that God gives human beings a heart and mind and *nafsu* which can be used to serve their lives as long as they live on earth; besides these God also provides a way for mankind by giving us a force within the inner self. This is called the force of the *jiwa* which is able to contact or form a connection with the *jiwas* of God's other creatures. With the *jiwa* you can understand and be aware of the life of material objects and the life of plants, and also the life of animals and of human beings.

That is why Bapak explains that you are extremely fortunate to be able to feel that there is this life present within you. This is what is called faith; not the faith of the heart and mind, but the faith of the inner self which is called *iman*. So eventually when you come to

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the end of your life and are living free from the nafsu, when the nafsu have ceased and you no longer remember where the key to the safe is or where your husband is and that you are his wife — when you forget both, it is then that you will be filled by the knowledge and the memories that are from the jiwa, in the way you were receiving just now.

So these movements that you receive are not because you make them, but they are movements from the inner self, which will gradually indicate your destiny and your true nature, and also the way for you to draw close to the power of God and receive the blessing of the One Almighty God. In order to verify and make clear what Bapak is saying, Bapak will test, so that you can understand it.

[Testing]

If you were able to receive that, it is the jiwa which can give clarification and make the connection. As Bapak explained the day before yesterday: it is the jiwa which is able to connect your inner self with the content of others.

It is clear that the latihan kejiwaan of Subud has given you guidance for all the various needs of human beings. As it eventually reaches further and further and further, you become able to connect your inner feeling with the messengers of God, or with the angels or with people who are already dead, and feel how it is for them there after they have left this world. And as long as you live in this world you will be able to adjust yourself to the people where you are living. So you will be able to live peacefully and happily. Supposing you are living among artists, though you are not an artist yourself, you will still be able to be happy. And the other way round; if you are among people who devote themselves to the worship of God, like nuns for example, you will be able to be happy even though you are not a nun.

[Testing]

Just this part of the testing has taken an hour, brothers and sisters. So if there are four groups, it will take four hours, and Bapak will have to go on till twelve or one o'clock. Since this is not the only night for testing and there will be others, I hope you will feel sufficiently satisfied with that. So Bapak will end this lot of testing and start another. Now will those of you who are neither helpers nor committee members, and who have not yet been tested, please come forward. If there are no more of you, Bapak would like the men to come forward now.

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### [*Energetic testing with the men*]

That is how it is, brothers, if you want to receive the movements of yourself, of your body. Sometimes when people do latihan they just stand still, because that is their latihan in accordance with their own inner selves. At that moment they tend to be quiet and just stand still. But you should realize, as Bapak just said, that they are in contact with their inner, their jiwa, so that it can connect the inner force and energy with something able to move more freely and energetically, like this. Some of you are rather energetic, so that you sweat much more.

### [*Testing*]

You seem to have sweated a good deal, and all your tiredness has gone, so Bapak will end the testing. It is really rather late, so Bapak will close the meeting, and wish you goodnight and sleep well.

*The Way Ahead* pp. 128-30

Wolfsburg, West Germany,  
16 June 1975

### BAPAK'S TESTING OF INDIVIDUALS

Sometimes Bapak will invite a man or a woman to come forward for an individual test, and comment on his or her receiving. Those who accept and submit themselves to what might be imagined to be an embarrassing or alarming experience emerge appreciative of the illumination they receive. Here follows a passage written by a woman Subud member who lived in Cilandak for many years. It is taken from the introduction to the book that records the events and talks of the New York World Congress.

#### **Bapak's New York testing**

Bapak would ask one person from the assembly to stand in the centre, and this person would be tested by Bapak with regard to his (or her) receiving. For instance, legs, arms, nose, mouth might be tested and these would then receive movements independently from the other limbs of the body, free from will and desire. Such testing showed whether the different parts of the body had 'come to life' and could receive. In such tests the limbs did not only receive their own way of manifesting but they also received; when asked, the manifestations of other forms of life, like that of an animal or another person. In this way the person could experience that particular manifestation of life.

The testing did not stop at limbs only. Sometimes a person was asked to receive laughter or weeping, and sometimes both, one after the other. To the onlooker it might at first seem distressing to witness the heart-rending sobs of a person who received such

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weeping. But we soon found out that those who went through such a test experienced a new inner freedom through it, a purification from some inner bondage. The joyful expression after such a test, on the face of the person who had experienced this, was a comfort to us all.

*Subud in the World* p. 16

### TESTING OF APPLICANTS

An extension of Bapak's testing of individual members' inner state is his testing of members for specific positions, e.g. Chairman of Congress or of some committee. He asks the nominees either one by one or together to stand in front of him in the presence of all and show by their latihan how it will be for them to be Chairman. Each person's receiving is usually such that it is clear to the person himself and the helpers and members whether the appointment would be right or wrong. It is not, of course, a matter of anyone being rejected as unworthy as a person, but rather of their being unsuitable at that particular time for that particular position.

Nowadays all national congresses, regional councils and local groups find their chairman in this way, the helpers, in front of all, asking the question and receiving the answer.

# 5 Fasting

## ADDITIONAL GLOSSARY

Ramadhan	The annual thirty-day Muslim fast.
<i>Lailatul qadar</i>	The grace of God or revelation of His power that may be received during Ramadhan.
The Nights of Power	The 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th nights of Ramadhan.
<i>Zakat fitrah</i>	Almsgiving at the end of the fast.
Halal-bil-Halal	The day of celebration and asking forgiveness at the end of the fast.
Prihatin	Self-denial.

## RAMADHAN FOR NON-MUSLIMS

Bapak is a Muslim, and the fast which he observes and mainly talks about is naturally the fast of Ramadhan. He always says, however, that the fast is open to non-Muslims, as in the following passage.

### **The fast is open to all**

These are its results, so it is very important for you to do the fast; for Muslims definitely, because it is indeed laid down by their religion. But others who are not of the Islamic faith are in no way excluded from receiving the gift of God. For God is All-knowing, All-wise and All-powerful. Whoever does something good will obtain something good. Thus although you may not be Muslims, those of you who have fasted in Ramadhan, who have fasted right through for twenty days, will certainly obtain something that will satisfy your feelings.

Brothers and sisters, Bapak is not telling you all that you must fast, especially not those of you whose religion is not Islam — no. He is not telling you to fast as the Muslims — no. But in spite of this, brothers and sisters, you should remember the benefit of the fast. Thus for those of you who are not Muslims, and especially for Subud members who are more inclined to practice than to theory and to receiving rather than striving — meaning that it comes just from the feelings — the fast is clearly of great benefit.

*Pewarta X* 5 pp. 135-7

Cilandak, 27 October 1972



Bapak has advised Subud members to follow the fast of their own religion, but many Christian Subud members do in fact observe Ramadhan (and some Lent as well). What draws them to Ramadhan is described at the end of this chapter. First, however, are passages with accounts of the conditions, the practice and the benefits of the fast.

### NATURE OF THE FAST

The first extract sets out all the details of the fast, its duration, its daily times and what is renounced.

#### **Conditions of the fast**

It is not obligatory for Subud members to fast; whether they do it is left to them. It is indeed true that through fasting you will become more conscious of your real self. The way to fast is as follows:

The first ten days are the period for putting the *nafsu* into a state of inactivity. During this period we begin to be aware of our *nafsu* becoming weaker day by day, and by the ninth day of the fast we feel that they are completely inactive.

The next ten days are the period in which awareness begins to awaken in us that our attitude and behaviour are, as a rule, guided by the content of the self; and this guidance grows daily stronger until by the nineteenth day of the fast we are behaving as if we were in a state of full latihan, but one that is compatible with our daily activities.

The last ten days are the period for receiving the *lailatul qadar*, a grace sent from God on the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th days of the fast. *Lailatul qadar* is not something that descends from above, but is like a force which can change our condition. Some of the Subud members who do the fast feel that after completing it there is a change in their inner feeling. Generally zeal for worshipping God becomes stronger and so does the wish to do prihatin.

The external object of the fast is to deprive the *nafsu* of their strength, which is necessary so as to banish them. Then, by the grace of One God, one will soon be able to feel movements of the inner feeling free from the influence of the *nafsu*. Thereby one can feel the difference between the movements of the inner feeling caused by the *nafsu* and those caused by the *jiwa* of the One Almighty God. Clearly, then, one can say that to fast is to do the latihan kejiwaan.

The duration of the fast is one month, that is for the month of the Ramadhan fast.

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One may eat or drink between Meghreb (the Muslim sunset prayer) and about fifteen minutes before Subuh (the dawn prayer).

One may not eat proscribed foods or pork, nor have sexual relations with one's wife between dawn and the setting of the sun.

The fast begins at 4.00 and ends at 18.00 or at the times fixed by the Imam of the local mosque.

*Pewart* X 5 pp. 163-4 Letter to members in Venezuela, 1972

Two additional points. The first concerning the dates of Ramadhan in the year. There are thirteen months in the Islamic calendar, and the fast goes back about ten days every year. Most Muslim countries are not far from the equator, where the length of day and night remain constant throughout the seasons. In these countries the fast is timed not by the clock (i.e. from 4.00 to 18.00) but by the light — from before first light till sunset, and so the fast lasts the same length of time, about fourteen hours, all the year round. But the further the distance from the equator the greater is the difference between the length of day and night in summer and winter. If one went by the light, the daily fast in winter in northern regions would last only a few hours, but many hours in the summer, and in the land of the midnight sun and midday darkness a fast in summer would involve total abstinence and in winter would permit total indulgence. This is why, where Islam has spread far north or south, the daily fast may be governed by the clock.

The second point is that many decide to give up sexual relations entirely for the thirty days — day *and* night.

In the next two passages Bapak is pointing out the difference between fasting and asceticism. It is interesting that he says that asceticism 'tantalizes' those who practise it.

### **Fasting is not asceticism**

So, in other words, to fast in Ramadhan is very important. Don't think that, if that alone is not enough, you can then make it up by really living as an ascetic. That is a different matter, brothers and sisters. In many cases, people who practise asceticism strengthen their nafsu, strengthen their will. This becomes obvious. Many people who practise asceticism, brothers and sisters, actually veer in a direction that is not the only one they hoped. For there and then the people who practise asceticism will be *diledék*. *Diledék* is to be tantalized. They are prevented from freeing themselves, and their nafsu tantalize them and mislead them, so that they lose their right way. It is not like the fast. The fast — the aim of the people

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who fast — is not to get what is hoped for, other than to worship God, so that their needs in life will be satisfied by God.

*Pewarta XI 4* pp. 121–3

Cilandak, 6 November 1972

### **The fast is ordinary**

It appears that doing the fast according to Islam is not too arduous, does not do violence to ourselves. It is different from the other kinds, where people do violence to themselves and practise austerity which truly mortifies the self, in order to find their way of life. But it is precisely this kind of thing which often goes wrong, because many of those who practise it arrive at a kind of invulnerability, or what we call physical powers — in other words, things that are peculiar, things that the world finds amazing. But with our fast it is not so, there is nothing amazing, it is ordinary. For indeed something that is holy, something that is complete, is ordinary. There is nothing peculiar, nothing amazing.

*Pewarta XIII 1* p. 13

Cilandak, 25 September 1975

### **THE WAY TO FAST**

In the following passages Bapak gives advice on the right attitude towards the fast — to regard it as a test; not to think about food and drink; and to continue working as usual. Then comes a vivid account of the fast in Cilandak, when the drum beats out to mark the end of the daily fast in late afternoon, and it is time for slowly sipping tea. Finally there is a passage instantaneously evoking the East, describing poor people sitting at the roadside stalls, eating and drinking, and so not observing the fast.

### **We need to test ourselves**

For this reason, brothers and sisters, we need to test our own self. Don't try to protect your self from various things — no — let it be put to the test. What is the truth of it? Try it, try it, brothers and sisters. You need to test your own self.

Must it be like that? Of course. If God tests His own nature, how much more should man do so. God created the angels, God created the universe with everything it contains. God has created everything necessary for the lives of the creatures He has made. That, brothers and sisters, is the way God tests the extent of His being. If God does this, why should you not need to do so?

Clearly then, brothers and sisters, you need to test your own self in order to know your own life. So it is willed that you earnestly take account of your life; don't live without accounting, so that

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your life is like the life of something which does not move, which is not activated — that is to say, a material object.

*Pewarta XI 2 p. 45*

Cilandak, 3 November 1972

### **The genuine fast**

So when you fast, get used to being near food and drink, but don't pay much attention to them. That's fasting, that's what it means. If there is a syrup drink, you don't fancy drinking it. If there are cigarettes, you don't fancy smoking them. That is genuine fasting. There are some people who can't bear not to drink, so they just smell the drink. That nullifies the fast. However, it is all right if you just do it as training. Sometimes a person who is not strong enough to bear his thirst, refreshes himself by cooling himself outwardly with ice. All kinds of things are being done. But they are permissible just as training yes, permissible on a small scale.

Since indeed we cannot prevent these obstacles occurring, either in ordinary months or in the month of fasting, it is best for us to be near material things without falling under their influence.

This also accords with what you have received in the latihan, and how you receive it. In your latihan you move about as in your ordinary earthly life.

*Pewarta IX 5 p. 147*

Cilandak, 27 November 1971

### **Work is not to be neglected**

To fast sincerely means not to deceive one's own heart all the time. The fast is the fast: don't make fasting an excuse for not wanting to work, for instance, and for not doing various things you ought to do, because the fast tires and weakens you. Don't make the fast an excuse for not doing what needs to be done. Accept the fast, and let it be felt as an obligation of life, to enable you to test your own inner self.

*Pewarta XI 4 pp. 115-6*

Cilandak, 6 November 1972

### **Everyday life must continue**

So it is clear, brothers and sisters, that the fast is a training which you may not give up. Although you have already done the fast a few times, still you must go on with it. Because by repeating it over and over and over again, you will accustom yourself more, so that you will be more used to it, and if you are more used to it, it means you are more relaxed, and once you are more relaxed, then no matter what you think about, you will always be in a state of worship.

As Bapak tested with you the other day, the prophet

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Muhammad, peace be unto him, did not think only about God. No, he thought about war and whatnot. For if he thought only about God, what would become of the war? No, he thought about war, about the state, about his wives, about his children, he thought about this and about that, he thought about the economy and so on (not forgetting development). But relaxed.

In that way, although you are thinking about whatever it is, your eyes or your seeing can see all around; that is, by themselves. So each member of your being functions individually. So we can say that we don't only have democracy outwardly, but also inside, within our being. This also Bapak will later test or try out with all of you so that you don't only listen to Bapak's words but also to some extent acquire conviction.

*Pewarta XIII 1* p. 19

Cilandak, 29 September 1975

### **Breaking the fast**

Think of it, brothers and sisters, for one whole day or longer, not one drop of water enters your body, not one drop of water. While one who lives in the world, who lives through this period of more than twelve hours, needs water, needs food — even if only a little.

You can be aware of this at the time of the *buka* (breaking of the fast), that is, in the late afternoon. It is already the late afternoon and you are waiting for the drum which goes *tung tung tung*, and the '*Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar*' — wow, while waiting you already feel crisp. And then you drink. Before you drink and while you drink you feel tickled, it is strange: as though something is prepared within you — when you see it you already feel — wow.

And then you drink. Don't eat yet! Just drink. If you ate the moment you heard the *tung tung tung* then you would eat the plate as well as the food — for you have fasted all day — or if not the plate then the glass. Because just to see the water feels so delicious. Then you drink tea, but only three mouthfuls! Don't drink a lot because then everything will go in! Then you feel it going — it all goes in here, it goes in here, it goes in here, you can feel it going through your veins, and this is only three mouthfuls. It feels fresh.

*Subud World News 8.12* p. 2

Cilandak, 6 October 1974

### **Neglecting the fast**

Brothers and sisters, it is thus made clear to us all that in this way the fast is of great benefit and use. For that reason it is to be hoped that any of you who, for various reasons, may perhaps not have been able to carry out the fast in the way it should be done — meaning for the full thirty days — *will* do it next year, if God grants

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you life until then. Don't feel that it is already too late; don't feel that. Do it as long as you live in this world. You will really feel its benefits. And in this way, brothers and sisters, every kind of thing that makes people complain will disappear.

So, clearly, complaints do not arise because it is the will of God for people, or anyone, to have an unhappy fate. That is not the will of God. The will of God is that everything he has created may have the best possible life, safe and happy. If it is not like that, it is because of one's own faults.

If you go into the town, for instance, you can see it is like that. People whose lives are not pleasant, not good, are still sitting there at the *warung* (roadside stalls) in the middle of the day — although it is the fast — smoking, eating and drinking.

That is how it is, brothers and sisters, if you are aware of it. If you were not embarrassed to do so, you might weep at them being like that. They will not feel it for themselves; they do not want to know why they become like that.

Such people, brothers and sisters, are therefore really being irresponsible about their life in this world. That is why religion lays it down that people must not be like that, so that you shall not go on in that way.

Yet indeed, brothers and sisters, what a heavy temptation for mankind are the *nafsu*. If you want to know which is the *nafsu* that is close to your hearts and minds, it is the one that comes from matter, the one called the *nafsu amarah*. Thus people such as the ones Bapak has just described, whom Bapak sometimes sees smoking during the month of the fast, who are not ashamed to sit at the *warung* — who even seem to be doing it deliberately so as to be seen there — those are the people who are really in the power of the material *nafsu*, the *nafsu amarah*. They feel alive only if they can eat and sleep; whereas really, brothers and sisters, their eating and sleeping would always go well if they could understand their life.

That is how they are, brothers and sisters, so at times when they do not have enough — for instance, when they have no money, or lack this or that — then they complain. And their complaints are like curses on themselves: 'So this is the fate of an ugly person like me'. 'What's the use of living if life is like this?' 'God isn't just,' and so on. It is not that God is unjust; the fault is their own.

*Pewart* XI 2 pp. 51-3

Cilandak, 3 November 1972

### THE BENEFITS OF THE FAST

Here follow two passages about the *qadar*, the gift of God's grace

which may descend in the final days of the fast. It does not fall from above 'like a coconut', Bapak says elsewhere, but rather comes as a change in the inner feelings. First there are remorse and contrition. These find expression, in the Islamic religion, in the ceremony of Halal-bil-Halal, asking for forgiveness. Then there are the sense of loving-kindness, and an awareness of how others feel, particularly the poor. These feelings find expression in the giving of alms, the *zakat fitrah*.

### Good feelings

If we count the fast as having begun on Sunday, tonight is the twenty-first night; the twenty-first night, meaning that twenty — not twenty-one — days of fasting have been completed. So those of you who began the fast on Sunday have been fasting for twenty days.

Usually, after fasting for twenty days, you are certainly able to feel the benefit of the fast. Thus tonight, on the eve of the twenty-first day, you should already be able to feel the result of your fast; the result usually called the *lailatul qadar*.

This benefit of the fast, the descent of the *lailatul qadar*, will not cause you to get some money, or have a bigger income or a higher rate of pay, or to obtain an annual bonus — no.

When people receive the *qadar* that is sent down, their hearts and their feelings become good. For instance, out of the inner feeling will grow a feeling of affection, a feeling of love, a feeling of being close to other people, and also a feeling of loving-kindness towards one's fellow men, so that eventually this feeling will be expressed in a readiness to give *zakat fitrah* or alms, which means giving something to other people who are in need.

That characterizes the feeling of people who have carried out the fast and who have been able to receive the *qadar* from God Almighty. That is why people in general, why all of you very much need to fast. It is necessary for you to train yourselves to become people filled with love and loving-kindness for your fellow men, and liking to help people who need help. In [the Islamic] religion this quality is called the fourth pillar, or foundation — that is, *zakat* and *fitrah*.

Besides that, the character of the *qadar* that has been received in the inner feeling also causes you to feel that you yourself have frequently wronged your fellow men, especially your parents and the older members of your family.

And that is why in due course all of you need to go to one another to ask forgiveness for all your wrong deeds, and to have your

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friends and relatives do likewise to you. You also need to ask for blessing and forgiveness from your parents, asking them to forgive you so far as possible for what you may have done to them. For people will not be able to avoid doing wrong; they are bound to do something wrong, though not all the time.

To say *minta ma'af* means to ask forgiveness, to ask forgiveness from one's parents in such a way that it will touch their hearts or the hearts of the other friends and relations to whom you say it — *trenyuh*, as it is expressed in Javanese. With such a feeling, everything you have done, all the wrong you have done to them, is in that moment wiped out. Thus it is really true that the *qadar* you receive as a result of having fasted for these twenty days is of real benefit for human life, of real benefit for the lives of you all.

From the relief and satisfaction to their hearts, the other people will then feel an affection for you which was lacking before you asked their forgiveness; this is truly being helpful. By the grace and mercy of God this also broadens and widens your path in life, so that, for instance, it is in every way easier to make efforts and to accomplish what you set out to do. For it is as if there were no thorny barriers in your way. And that being so, it also means that almost everyone as it were blesses your life; blesses your way in life so long as you live in this world.

Apart from the fact that you will eventually come to feel loving-kindness and will have a feeling of affection towards your fellow men, you will also know and be able to grasp how the *nafsu* go round and about in your inner feeling. In this way you will afterwards cease to be one hundred per cent controlled by the *nafsu* or used as tools of the *nafsu* or tossed around by the *nafsu*. But what is more you will be able to manage them.

And hence you will eventually be able to do things of a worldly nature, such as earning your living, running a business, keeping a shop, and so on, yet your heart and feelings will be full of love towards your fellow men. Thus you will not seek a huge profit when that profit would be harmful to other people.

*Pewarta X* 5 pp. 133-7

Cilandak, 27 October 1972

Two final passages. The first points out another benefit of the fast — we become more honest through not cheating over our fasting. The second makes the additional point that we learn what it is like to be poor.

### **The fast trains us in honesty**

To remember the promise you made in your own heart also trains



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you in the habit of not lying to yourselves, and as that habit grows stronger, you will gradually become persons who do not like to lie and who consequently act honestly in all situations. This is the essential thing for one who fasts, because if his inner feeling is in such a state it will enable him to become a person afraid to do wrong and who has a body like a vessel than can receive the *qadar* from Almighty God, in accordance with his inner self.

*Pewarta Supplement 2* pp. 45-7      Cilandak, 28 December 1968

### **A reliable heart**

Also, brothers and sisters, it is the people who are fasting who know the effect it has on them. Other people do not know. Yes, if someone is watching you, perhaps you will spit, so that he will know you are fasting. But if you do nothing like that he will not know whether you are fasting or not. So it is you yourself who can really tell whether you are fasting. This fast trains you to be the kind of person who has an honest and reliable heart, a well-disciplined heart, a heart that truly accepts. In this way you become accustomed to keep to the truth. Who else is to know if you go into your room, shut the door and drink a glass of syrup water? Who is to know? No one will know. Or if you go into your room and eat half-a-dozen meat-balls, who will know? No one will know.

Thus in fact words mean nothing; it is no good talking about the fast and not doing it. That is useless. Just keep quiet about it. For the one person who knows whether or not you are fasting sincerely is you yourself. Thus this fast really is a training: a training in everything necessary for the life of man. You are trained to become an orderly and well-disciplined person, a straightforward person, someone who can really feel what is right and what is wrong, what is becoming and what is unbecoming. And you are also trained to know what life is like for the poor, what it is like for people who have nothing. You are trained in all these ways, so that the people who do the latihan kejiwaan and do the fast in addition are really trained in the way to live in this world.

*Pewarta X 5* pp. 155-6

Cilandak, October 1973

### **CHRISTIAN SUBUD MEMBERS**

I want to suggest possible reasons why some Christian Subud members observe Ramadhan rather than Lent:

1. It is rigorous: it makes arduous demands.
2. It lays stress on the non-physical as well as the physical. 'The fast,' Bapak says, 'is not just for the stomach but for the heart and mind also.'

## FASTING

3. There is a framework of religious observances and customs that both encourage and provide an outlet for the feelings aroused by fasting.
4. There are many communal activities connected with it, and so it is a shared experience.

Of course as the time of year for it comes round again many have mixed feelings about it. On the one hand there is a reluctance to start on the various self-denials, and apprehension about how it will be this year. On the other people welcome it as a chance to *do* something about their faults, for the fast provides them with a weapon to fight back.

In fact, quite a few Christian Subud members now practise Ramadhan. It is *supposed* to be a test; it *can* be an ordeal; it *is* endlessly interesting; and sometimes, towards the end of the month, very enjoyable. One is aware that a lot is happening to one, that a great deal of experience is being packed into a short time. And if there comes even a glimpse of new awareness, a modicum of lightness, the merest touch of the feathery wing of the *qadar*, that is a bonus that more than compensates for any rigours or lassitude.

The allure of Ramadhan was discovered by those Subud members who as visitors to Cilandak shared in the observances with the local members. And what with Bapak giving those long talks throughout the 'nights of power', and the extreme lightness of the whole atmosphere of the place, more and more visitors came for Ramadhan, and took the practice back home with them.

Here are Bapak's words on the two great fasts.

### **Lent and Ramadhan**

In reality, Lent and Ramadhan have equal value. Christians feel that fasting in Lent is very important for them because it is derived and adapted from what was done and experienced by Jesus Christ.

You say that Jesus Christ carried out the religious observance of fasting in the wilderness for forty days at the time of Lent. This may be taken to mean that Jesus Christ fasted during this time so that his inner feeling might be swept clean of the influence of the *nafsu* causing darkness (wilderness) within.

For Muslims, the religious observance of fasting in the month of Ramadhan is the same. This too is derived and adapted from what was done and experienced by the Prophet Muhammad.

It is told that the Prophet Muhammad fasted in a cave at that time (this too means in darkness). He carried out the religious observance of fasting in the cave so that the inner feeling could be swept clean of the influence of the *nafsu* causing darkness. It is

## A LIFE WITHIN A LIFE

therefore said that the revelation that he was to be the messenger of God came to him in the cave. In other words, it was then that he received the first command of the One God.

This is Bapak's explanation concerning these two religious observances of fasting, as seen from the spiritual point of view. So Bapak feels that Lent and Ramadhan are of equally great and high value.

Furthermore, any individual Christians, or Christians in general, may follow the religious observance of fasting during Ramadhan if they wish to do so, because, although this is not usually customary for Christians, if the fast is observed it is also a method whereby the influence of the *nafsu*, which always constitutes a temptation and a hindrance to the quiet of the inner feeling, can be separated and swept away from the inner feeling. Conversely, it is the same for Muslims who wish to carry out the religious observance of fasting during Lent.

Now, of course, you ask: how is it for us or for Subud members?

Bapak would like you to know that, because our brotherhood of *Susila Budhi Dharma* consists of members of various nationalities and religions, it is best for each member to observe the fast of his own religion unless he wishes to observe another as well.

*Pewartu VII 4 pp. 25-7* A letter to a member in England, 1970

## 6 *Change of name*

Many Subud members sooner or later take a new first name. Some people find this Subud habit odd and irritating. Relatives in particular are hostile to it, and friends regret it. Over against that there are many people who throughout their lives are vaguely dissatisfied with their name — ‘It isn’t really me’ — but who keep it. Many others acquire nicknames or abbreviations which presumably their friends, and probably they themselves, feel fit them better. And of course in some religions people are given or take a new name when they start their new life, like monks and nuns, or the disciple Simon, renamed Peter by Jesus as an indication of his rock-like qualities.

At least half of all Subud members sooner or later write to Bapak asking him to give them a new name and, by an inner process beyond one’s comprehension, he does. He either gives the name direct or, more usually, he gives an initial, asking them to select five names beginning with that letter with which they would be happy. He then chooses one. Almost all, either instantaneously or over the months, are delighted or satisfied with their new name.

Bapak himself was given the name Sukarno by his parents, who later changed it to Subuh; this word means ‘dawn’, but probably has deeper significance.

### **A name has a strong influence**

*Question:* Many people in Subud change their names. Is this necessary? Is it important? How does a change of name affect us — physically, spiritually or both?

*Bapak:* Brothers and sisters, whether this is necessary or not depends on what you wish; if you wish for a new name, Bapak will give you one, and if not Bapak will not do so. There is no compulsion or obligation to change your name, because names are normally given to you by your parents or by people in whom you or your parents have trust. Changing your name, therefore, more or less means withdrawing trust in your parents or in whoever was responsible for your name. Bapak therefore says that it is up to you whether or not you wish to have your name changed, for Bapak never compels anyone; there is certainly no obligation. But a name, in fact, does have a strong influence on the self of man, because when a person is called by his name, he will certainly

respond from his whole being, so that his entire self, when called by name, feels as though it were being woken from sleep, or stirred out of passivity. If a person or child is wrongly named, then when his inner feeling is awakened and rises, it becomes adjusted to a name which does not correspond to his inner self: as a result, in his behaviour, in his ways and actions the inner and outer, that is, the inner feeling of the individual is not in harmony with heart and mind.

*Subud in the World* pp. 56-7

New York, 15 July 1963

### **Name and character**

Brothers and sisters, Bapak has often said that a person's physical body is comparable to a receptacle or a vessel, and that its content is what is called the *jiwa*.

The physical being or person usually bears a name or has been given a name by his parents. In the Javanese language this name is said to be *djeneng* meaning that which is placed within (*jang djumeneng*) or the content of the human body. A person's name, whatever it may be, can have an influence on him. Take the name *Bledeg* or *Dahono*, for example. Although the person named *Bledeg* may originally have had a friendly and simple nature or character, because *Bledeg* means thunder and lightning he is influenced by that name and, without knowing it, takes on the character of a quick-tempered person and does not feel calm in his mind. Similarly, in the case of someone called *Dahono* (fire), even though that person may originally have had a friendly and simple character, because he is influenced by the name *Dahono* and without being aware of it, he takes on the character of one who is inclined to disrupt a calm atmosphere. Because of this, parents of old took great care in giving names to their children and grandchildren.

So, clearly, we can say that a person's name is very important in his life. Yes, it can be important because the name chosen for him can, as it were, change his character from what it was originally. For this reason, people formerly gave a name which conformed to the inner content of the child, that is the child's *jiwa*. The name *Hardjuna*, for instance, signifies that the person so named has a kind and gentle manner, and if a man has the name *Werkudura* it signifies that he is an honest person with strong and firm opinions.

*Pewarta Supplement 4* p. 3

Cilandak, 15 October 1969

## 7 *Difficulties and faults*

This is a short chapter. For the most part Bapak speaks of virtues and how to foster them, and not of vices. A gardener's main concern is the plants and trees, though he keeps an eye on the pests and weeds.

### THE FAULT IS OURS

Bapak frequently says our difficulties arise from our faults. God has given us all we need in this life, both in ourselves and in our circumstances, and if we cannot manage to make a success of it the trouble is in ourselves. This philosophy may be hard to accept emotionally but it is harder still to refute intellectually.

#### **The trouble is in ourselves**

Clearly, then, the work of Subud is indeed a heavy task to carry out, especially for those of you whom Bapak has appointed helpers or committee members, because they have to unify people, or their brothers and sisters, who differ not only in religion but who everywhere differ or disagree with one another. But don't be shaken by that, and don't be disappointed. The way does indeed vary. No road is easy, especially a road leading to excellence, especially a road aiming at the perfection of your life and at truth in your worship of God Almighty.

Where is the seat of the trouble, where is the seat of disturbance? Not only in someone else, or not only in those you wish to unify, but right in your own heart and mind. If faults take hold of your heart and mind, if faults take them over, they become your own enemy.

*Pewarta XII 3* p. 69

Cilandak, 22 June 1974

There are four faults which Bapak most frequently speaks about: impatience, complaining, criticizing and harbouring feelings of hostility.

### IMPATIENCE

Patience, usually coupled with 'acceptance' and 'submission', is for Bapak a leading virtue in the spiritual life, though not in our workaday lives. 'This attitude of patience and acceptance and submission is an attitude which is only reserved for your worship of God Almighty. It is not at all suitable for your efforts to make a living in this world, or to find your needs in this world.' (*Pewarta X 1* p. 10)

## A LIFE WITHIN A LIFE

Here are two passages about *im*patience, the first one illuminated by one of Bapak's animal analogies.

### **The goat and the tiger**

On joining Subud we were told at the opening to surrender to God Almighty, to surrender completely. Surrender means that everything depends on God. We just surrender with patience, trustful acceptance and sincere submission. If after doing latihan for a hundred years we only get a banana fritter that's up to God.

God is all-knowing, brothers and sisters: he knows what our strength is, what our situation or condition is. If we are like goats, say, God will give us what is suitable for goats, not more and not less. If God gave it to a goat to feel as grand as a tiger, the goat would in fact go mad, not realizing that it was truly a goat. It's this we need to be aware of. Don't let what we receive endanger ourselves. God supplies everything needed by human beings on earth. It's our own fault if we can't grasp this, can't feel it and can't accept it.

What is the reason why we can't? As Bapak said just now, the goat does not admit to being a goat, it claims it's a tiger. That's what is wrong. Naturally it can only bleat, yet it wants to seize hold of its prey, so what happens? Well, when it goes to seize its prey, nothing happens; it even damages its own hooves. It's just not a tiger. It wants to bite, to crunch bones like a tiger, but it will even lose its own teeth, as Bapak has. For it isn't a tiger.

*Pewartas XIII 5 p. 173*

Cilandak, 25 July 1976

### **God guides us by stages**

You are guided wherever you go, insofar as you have the strength and are capable — capable of being guided.

This is like the case of a small child. Once the child can walk, you lead it by the hand. So will God lead you, without conflict with your capacity. This is the beginning of development. Thus, if you cannot yet run fast, God will not give you guidance to run fast. No, it is gradual. But that is not how you want it. At times you want to get on quickly, to become clever quickly, rich quickly, proficient quickly, whatever it may be quickly. Yes, your wish is indeed good, but that wish cannot be fulfilled until you have tried it out, tried it out, tried it out.

*Pewartas XII 4 p. 109*

Cilandak, 20 July 1975

## COMPLAINING

Bapak regards complaining as a particularly useless form of activity.

## DIFFICULTIES AND FAULTS

One passage already quoted mentions it — the account of the roadside poor who sit eating and drinking during Ramadhan yet complain to God about their unhappy lot. Here is one more passage:

### **It is the unsuccessful who complain**

God is in truth All-wise, All-just and All-powerful, but there are many who question His justice. But from whom do these criticisms come? They come from people who are poor; from those who always meet with difficulties; from those who are disappointed in the fruits of their labours. Their desires are not fulfilled, and therefore they feel that God is unjust and ask why are they never given a chance and why should all the chances go to the rich and to those of high rank. But God is All-just and in His justice He is no respecter of persons, but is the same for all mankind. He has bestowed everything upon man that is necessary for his life. The fault now lies in man himself. It is because of his own faults that, although he possesses all that is needed and is completely equipped for both his inner and outer life, he is unable either to make use of all this or himself to be made use of — it is because of his own faults.

*Subud and the Active Life* p. 217

London, 25 August 1959

### CRITICIZING

Bapak sometimes links the fault of complaining with that of criticizing; first because people who bewail their misfortunes often look around for someone else to blame, and secondly because a complaint is a kind of criticism — a criticism of oneself for not putting a matter right when one could.

Here is a passage about criticism.

### **Faults in others**

The nature of man is that he always wants to claim himself to be good. He will never say that he is a bad person, that within him are bad powers, bad habits, bad characters. It's very difficult for man to admit his own mistakes, the bad things or the bad side within him.

Let's say you can see an elephant far, far away from you — an elephant in the mountains, maybe hidden behind a bush, and you are still able to see it. But an elephant close to you, close to your own eyes in front of you — you will not be able to see.

Why?

Because you are the elephant. And that's the reason why people see mistakes more easily in other people — but their own mistakes



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they will never see, even if they are big ones.

*Subud World News* 6.10 p. 2

Cilandak, 16 July 1972

In effect, you can't see the elephant for the elephant.

### HOSTILITY

Here are two extracts about the last of the four faults covered in this chapter.

#### **Enmity creates an enemy**

Socially, a nation will enjoy peace and happiness if the people live in harmony with one another — if no enmity is created among them. Enmity is the reason why your lives lack peace, security and happiness. But don't promptly blame the condition on your enemy. You would have no enemy if there were no feelings of hatred and hostility in you yourself.

In short, carrying the feeling of enmity in your heart creates an enemy, so none of you should harbour this feeling.

As Bapak has said, you yourselves are at fault when you are criticized by others. What gives rise to criticism? It arises as a kind of reflection of your own thoughts.

*Cilandak* 1971 p. 161

Cilandak, 23 August 1971

#### **Justifying unpleasant feelings**

The latihan kejiwaan of Subud is a receiving, and what is received proceeds by itself, because it is from the power of the One God. This is just like a seed growing into a plant. After a seed is planted, it grows by itself. Fertilizer is certainly needed to promote its growth, and weeds around the plants must be cleaned out to prevent them obstructing the growth.

And for you the fertilizer is patience, sincerity, trust in God and a high standard of behaviour. It is essential for you to behave well and avoid doing wrong. For example, even though you may dislike somebody else, you should act as usual. It does not hurt you to do that, does it? This is shown by your not feeling affected or pained. Don't justify your unpleasant feelings about another, for you then sully your own inner feeling and taint the development of the gift from God planted in your being.

*Cilandak* 1971 p. 135

Cilandak, 16 August 1971

## 8 Concerning God

### WE CANNOT KNOW GOD

Bapak advises against speculation about the nature of God as being both unavailing and confusing, for the Almighty cannot be grasped or defined by man's mind, and would not be God if He could be.

Here are two passages about the unknowability of God.

#### **Only God knows God**

Indeed, brothers and sisters, God — who in Islam is called Allah — is still discussed and discoursed upon by the philosophers. There are some who say: *God is* like something that can be seen or thought about. There are others who say: *God is not* and what exists is His power. Bapak does not say that either of the two is correct, meaning either those who say that God is or those who say God is not. And Bapak does not say that either of them is wrong, because all this can be known only by someone who has had experience of it. Thus, if you have not yet experienced it, however much you try, you cannot ascertain the right or wrong of it. Experiences which Bapak has received you also have received in some degree. The power of the life force which we have felt, which we have received, is the power of God. As for the name Allah, this means All-embracing. In Indonesian, in Javanese, this is called *Jang Maha Mengku* (The All-embracing). And Allah or God embraces everything that is. That means, if this material object (gesture) is embraced by God, the power of God will penetrate it entirely. Thus, if rightly observed, this material object does not exist. What exists is only the power of God. It is the same also with the nature of man. The nature of man is enveloped by the power of God, entirely penetrated by the Power of God, so that all the physical organs of man including heart and mind are enveloped by the power of Almighty God. Thus, the one who knows God is God alone. Man in this case is nothing but a tool. It is said, brothers and sisters, that God, Allah, has no form, no colour, no time, no place, no nationality, no country. Yet He exists, He knows and is Almighty.

These are words which are difficult to understand. Therefore Bapak says it is as well not to occupy your mind with them. It is better for you to receive what can be received. In doing so you will gradually understand and feel the truth of this.

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Indeed it is difficult, brothers and sisters, to ascertain or to be able to know what is right and what is wrong. In fact, it has already become habitual for man to use his imagination. For instance, yesterday evening Bapak saw one of our brothers in front of the microphone imitating God, and Adam and Eve, as if God were speaking like a large man: 'Adam!'<sup>\*</sup> This is actually just imagination of the mind. But it has become a habit. For many people it is quite usual to picture God like that. This is because of the difficulty of describing God. In fact, God cannot be described.

*The Growth of Subud* pp. 79-80

Tokoyo, 1 August 1967

### God's work and man's

So much for Bapak's explanation, this that Bapak has tried to give you, an explanation about the kejiwaan which can really come into your understanding and which you can feel for yourself. But even so, the problem is that it is still a kind of food for thought. So the danger is that you now go away and just think about it — whereas, in effect, it is something you put into practice. This is why Bapak advises you very much *against* using your mind, turning your mind always towards the power of God: 'How is the power of God; where is God; how does His power work; how can I find it; how can I do this; how can I do that?' Because all this is God's work. It is not our work. It is what they call the divine service or the service of God. This is all God's competence and God's job to take care of our worship, so that the worship of God — which has as its interest, or its aim, our life in the hereafter — is something about which we need not do anything at all. This work is done by God and it goes on by itself. Only it is disturbed if we disturb it, if we put obstacles in its way. If we leave it alone God will do that work Himself — that is the work in our jiwa. What we have to do is to do the second right of man — the first right is the worship of God where man has only to surrender to God and it's God who does within him everything. So there is absolutely no need for man to turn his attention to look for wisdom, to look for spiritual knowledge and all that stuff. That is completely unnecessary because that is God's work.

The second right of man is to use his heart and mind. Now the heart and mind are what need to be used in this world, and this is where man needs to be active and man needs to work. For that, man has to use his heart and mind and all his lower forces as assistants so as to work in this world. And for that, he also has a guide within him which is the same power of God Almighty. So

<sup>\*</sup>In a scene from the play *Green Pastures*.

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that man is then able to fulfil his life both in this world and in the next world.

*Pewartia Special Supplement 4* p. 60

Rotterdam, 15 July 1977

### WE CAN FEEL GOD'S POWER

Although God is beyond the comprehension of our minds there is something that we *can* do in relation to Him, and that is surrender, and then we can know, not Him, but His power.

#### God envelops us

Thus it is clearly unnecessary for a man to practise meditation and asceticism in order to find something that is essential for this life; it is enough to have a feeling of real surrender, patience, submission and sincerity. In that way, if you are granted the grace of Almighty God, you will become aware of what causes you to have the ability to see, to hear, to smell, to talk, to wave your hands, to move your legs, to pay attention to something and to feel. Who is it that does this to you, throughout your whole inner self? It is the power of God which envelops you. In Christianity it is said: God is always with you. God always accompanies man. It is the same in Islam. God envelops you inside and outside. God is actually *very* near to you, very near to man, so that it can be said that God is nearer to you than your sight when you use your own eyes, to see something, nearer than your thoughts when you think of something, and so on. But if man wishes to go towards God, then, oh dear, He is far, far away; that is to say, the distance cannot be measured. Therefore, it is not possible for man to come into the presence of Almighty God unless it is His will. It is always customary to pray for a man who has died, so that his soul may be received by God and may find a place near Him. This is all right because to pray is, in fact, a request that is made in the hope that it may be granted.

It is clear that Almighty God is truly near man. If you genuinely surrender and have patience, submission and sincerity, you will suddenly feel His closeness. Such is the power of Almighty God.

God cannot be described. If you wish to know what God looks like, you must first know what everything that exists in the whole universe looks like. Is God sometimes like a tornado? This may well be because God is Almighty. Is God like thunder? This also may well be. So it can be said that He is like a tornado and it can also be said that He is like thunder. Why is this? It is because God is Almighty and envelops the whole universe. So do not have far-reaching thoughts about where and how God is, whether God has a beard or a moustache. Don't. It is not possible. Just feel what

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envelops you outside and inside. Then later you will eventually know. You will not know how God is in a definite form, but you will know His power which is with you and within you.

*Growth of Subud* pp. 112-3

Tokyo, 20 August 1967

### **God knows us**

That is why in every holy book it is said that before reading it you should first believe that God the Almighty exists and that everything is under His guidance. The closing words too are similar: that only God the Sublime, only God the All-powerful, only He can put right the irreparable.

So, brothers and sisters, there is no alternative way, or there is no way willed by God, other than one that comes from God Himself. Only God can change us human beings and His other creatures, and can put right every sort of thing we need to have put right. Only God the Almighty.

Truly, we cannot know God, for God is not of a kind we can know. Could we know God, He would be ordinary. And if we cannot know God, plainly no one among us can know what God is like. But on the other hand God knows us. God knows man's condition, his mind, his heart, his feelings and his imagination, and everything needed for our life in this world. God knows these things.

As for us, to enable us to receive that the power of God is in us, we are required to surrender everything. What opposes and obstructs us is nothing but our heart and mind.

Our heart and mind are indeed quite exceptional parts of us — very special — for if we were without them we could not live as human beings. Maybe we would have a plant-like life.

But, brothers and sisters, God does not lack wisdom, so that we human beings are able to feel what the power of God that is in us is like.

However, Bapak repeats that God's total power exceeds what is in us. It is like the case of water. If you ask how much water there is — look at the ocean. But if you ask what water is, what it is like, I can put it in a glass. So water can be a glass, a drop, a drip; it can also be all the oceans in the world — even more than that. Such is the power of God. So the power of God that is in us matches our capacity for it.

*Pewarta XIII 4* pp. 127-9

Gilandak, 1 December 1974

### **GOD AND THE DEVILS**

Although Bapak advises us against using the mind to speculate about

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God, he himself sometimes uses logical theological arguments that *satisfy* the mind, and thus do something towards checking its tendency to restless probing. One example is his disposal of the theory that God is at war with the devils: God created the devils, and they cannot be His enemies or they would cease to exist. Which certainly disposes of the devils — as far as God is concerned. Bapak adds, however, 'It is human beings who have enemies.'

Here is the relevant passage. After making the point Bapak goes on to tell a typically light-hearted story about one of his 'enterprises'.

### **God has no enemies**

Of course there is an obstacle in the spiritual life, and that obstacle is your own heart. That is why patience, trust and sincerity are needed. Nothing else matters. Do not say that there is this or that in the way, that there are devils. Don't! Indeed the devils do exist, for they have been made to exist. The one who made them is God. So how can the devils oppose God? God has no enemies; it is human beings who have enemies.

God is the beginning and the end. God existed before there was anything and God will be at the end after everything has ended. That is what is expressed as *Huwal awalu*, God precedes all beginnings; *Huwal akhiru*, God follows all endings; *Huwal batin*, God is within everything that is innermost. Although your thoughts are inside you, deeper inside you there is God more inward than your thoughts. Later on I will test with you. Yes, maybe Bapak is being told to test like that. Does Bapak say just anything he likes? No. Other people may do so, but not Bapak, for Bapak is indeed willed never to be allowed to say anything untrue [...]

Bapak will tell you a story. Before Bapak bought Citalahap\* it was a home of devils, according to the people who live there. The people who live there said that Citalahap was the home of devils. Then the people of Citalahap dreamed that Citalahap was about to be bought by someone who, according to the people there, was said by the devils to be Guru Jagad (the World Teacher). Well, I am not sure who said that. Bapak himself does not proclaim that he is Guru Jagad. No; Bapak Subuh is just Bapak Subuh. There is his signature on his *kartu penduduk* (identity card) Bapak Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo, not Guru Jagad. It was only the devils who were saying that. Then the deal was concluded and Bapak bought the land. Then the devils came again in the people's

\*An estate in West Java.

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dreams, saying, 'Come on, let us all go'; all the grandchildren, all the leading devils, their *bupati* (regents). There were a great many *bupati* there, the regents of the Southern Ocean. They were the subordinates of Nyai Loro Kidul, the Queen of the South Seas (a very famous she-devil), so the story goes. 'Come on,' they said, 'let us move out, because now this place belongs to the Guru Jagad.'

The people there were indeed quite convinced of all of this. They had said that if anyone cut wood there or felled a tree he would become seriously ill or die, until no one dared to cut any wood or to fell a tree. But when Bapak eventually bought the land, the people were brave enough to cut them all down. This was actually to Bapak's disadvantage. He actually lost by it, for because they saw there was nothing to guard the place, people grew bold. So these devils did nothing to Bapak, because Bapak did them no harm. If there were any devils there, they were actually good ones, good in that they brought money. Yes — so Bapak was not short of money. Yes, that is how it was. So if you do not hate the devils, money will follow you. Devils are the same as money, just the same. If you are frightened of devils, money will be frightened of you. Well, if money is frightened of you, you will be in trouble. Yes, if you have no money you will get into a panic.

Well, brothers and sisters, believe that God is All-powerful. God has no enemies. If he had enemies, any enemy would soon be done for, because God is almighty; God envelops everything.

*Pewarta XIII 1* pp. 33–7

Cilandak, 13 October 1975

### GOD AND CIVILIZATION

Bapak uses the same point, the almightiness of God, to dispose of the supposition that aspects of modern civilization are against God's will: they wouldn't exist if they were.

#### **All is decreed by God**

Brothers and sisters, it is indeed very very essential that mankind should receive something like we have received in this latihan now. In other words, the evidence of the power of God Almighty working within us in our life as something real, to balance the situation in the world where men have created all sorts of remarkable things with their heart and mind, to balance the situation where men have been able to create atom bombs, nuclear weapons and missiles and this and that. If the people who make those things had already received, like all of us, the proof within their own being of the guidance of the power of God, as you have

## CONCERNING GOD

felt in the latihan and which we can also receive in our everyday life, then it is sure that all these things which they make, which they invent, will never be used to harm other people, to ruin the lives of other people, or to ruin this world. On the contrary, if the minds of the people who invent, make and handle these weapons at that time were still overpowered and under the influence of the lower forces — in other words, the material force or the satanic force — then they will want to win, they will want to emerge victorious, they will want to have power all to themselves. And it is sure that they will make use of these weapons. They will really use them for destruction, for destruction of their fellow men and of this world.

Brothers and sisters, this is why it is really important, it is really essential for mankind that this that we have received can spread throughout humanity. Because, actually, what we have received so far — atom bombs and so on — this is not the whole story. You may wonder, is it really that atom bombs and all these things are something that man has invented against the will of God, or something that God doesn't understand or doesn't know about, as though man has somehow gone off the rails and done something completely beyond God's ken and God's understanding? Actually, it is not so. God is always prepared to give to mankind whatever man desires. So even though man may claim that all this that he has done is from himself, do you really imagine that man's heart and mind have conceived these things which, let us say, are something quite new and something that God has never thought of or doesn't understand? Is it true that man's heart and mind have also arisen from man himself? Of course, that is what man would like to say, and men who only use their heart and mind say this and claim this — that all this is from ourselves, we have done it all ourselves. But the fact is that all this is created by God, and all this is 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. God can see everything and God knows everything. On the contrary, this that man has created so far is not at all the whole story, or everything that man will achieve. Man will still achieve many things beyond that which he has created now. That is why it is so important that the progress of man's heart and mind and man's achievements be balanced by the evidence or the reality of God's power which we have experienced in this latihan kejiwaan. This is why all religions have been looking for just this something that we have received;



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actually, all religions have tried to find and unite in order to find something of this kind.

It is God's will that man should be harmonious and man should not distinguish between one person and another, or people should not distinguish between each other. For indeed it is of the nature of God — as has been understood and always taught by the prophets and the messengers of God and has been taught in religion — that God has existed before the beginning. In other words, the very beginning of the beginning as far back as we can go — before that was God. And God is at the very end. The last of the last of what will be, there will be God. And within the deepest of what is deep, there is God. And on the very outside of what is the furthest away, there is God. So God encompasses and embraces everything. God is aware of the future and the past, and this is all one to God. So there is nothing new, there is nothing that God does not know or God does not understand. And God gives to man everything that man wants and man needs.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 18* pp. 414–6 Perth, 15 February 1978

### **God and the modern world**

It is clear that the development of human civilization is something that is willed by God Almighty. Do not get the idea that, for example, God is angry that men have invented machines in which they can travel long distances; or that men have invented machines that can take them to the moon; or that man may eventually travel to other planets, and so on, like Jupiter. Because all this is willed by God Almighty. If God were angry about these things then they would simply not happen, because the anger of God is not like the anger of man. In other words, when man is angry at somebody, that somebody can still go on doing whatever he is doing. But if God is angry at something — at that moment it will no longer exist, because God is almighty, and God created this whole universe — this world and all other worlds — just by willing it at that moment instantaneously.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 11* p. 251

Cali, Colombia,  
12 November 1977

## 9 *The life forces and the nafsū (passions)*

### THE FRAMEWORK

I would never try to *explain* what Bapak says but in this chapter I do propose to make a brief summary of what he will be saying; in fact, to give the framework of his account of the forces and the nafsū. This may enable the reader to avoid any initial puzzlement and so give his attention to what really matters. I shall keep the Indonesian word 'nafsū', because 'passions' is not an exact enough synonym. Subud members have actually acquired a sort of affection for the word, perhaps because of their awareness that the nafsū can become our friends as well as our foes.

Bapak says that there is a force within everything created: minerals have a mineral force, plants a vegetable force, animals an animal force and mankind a human force. A man has within him some of all the four forces, which he gets from contact with the world of minerals, plants, animals and other men. When all is well within a man each of the four forces within him enables him to deal with their counterparts in nature: he can understand them because their essence exists within him.

The forces are part of man's endowment from God, and last with him until his death. They are vital to his existence in this world, and attempts to get rid of them or escape from them are mistaken, dangerous and unavailing. The ways in which the forces can be harnessed and the ways in which they can make trouble are explained by Bapak in the passages that follow.

There are also the four nafsū, which, like the forces, are a necessary part of man's endowment. Each nafsū is fed or powered by one of the forces. When all is well with a man — in fact when the jiwa is in control — they give him the power to cope with the problems of living in the world. The animal force, for instance, powers the nafsū of purposefulness and will; the human force powers the nafsū of harmoniousness. When things are wrong in man the material force stirs the nafsū of anger, quarrelsomeness and lovelessness; the vegetable force the nafsū of greed and selfishness; the animal force the nafsū of sensuality, dangerous competitiveness and cruelty; and the human force the nafsū of pride.

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That is as clear as I can make it or know how.

Bapak advises Subud members who cannot follow his explanation of these matters not to be concerned but just go on doing the latihan, and in time sufficient awareness will come to them for their needs of the time.

It is worth saying, finally, that Bapak's explanations about the nafsu and the forces are in accord with our feeling about them. We are aware that they have a good and a bad side. We speak of people being slaves to their passions and, by contrast, of people having a passion for exactitude or fishing. Similarly we appear to endow some objects with a power or 'force' for good or evil, as when we talk of the corrupting power of gold or the soothing power of a country scene.

### THE FOUR FORCES

#### THE MATERIAL FORCE

These passages give an account of the powerful and pervading influence of the material force, its use and its misuse, with examples of people who control or are controlled by it, and how possession of jewels can affect their owner.

Bapak sometimes calls the material force the satanic force. The realm of matter is the realm of Satan, and we need him if we want to acquire money.

It is interesting that Judas was the treasurer of the disciples — an honourable position, of course — but when 'Satan entered into him' he betrayed Jesus.

#### **The material force is essential**

Brothers and sisters, what Bapak has talked to you about so far has been to explain to you how to put into practice what you have received in the latihan kejiwaan. What Bapak wants to talk to you about now is the content of your being. Bapak wants to explain that within your being — actually the word *within* is wrong, because it is not only within or outside, it's just there — your being consists of a certain number of life forces which can be separated one from the other. The first one of these is what is known as the *roh raewani* or the material force. Now this *roh raewani* can be said to be the lowest of the life forces in the scale of things, and it is the one which our heart generally would like to avoid. It is the one where we have a feeling, 'Oh, if only we could get rid of this, put this aside and devote ourselves to something good'. But the problem is that this material life force is something we rely on for our life in this world. In other words, it is through this that we can live our lives in

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this world, because it is this material life force which permits us to tackle our needs in this world. The reason why it's not possible for us just to put this life force aside, is because our heart and mind are almost one hundred per cent bound up with these material forces.

The reason for that is that whatever we plan to make or do, whatever we try to achieve in this world — whether we want to build a house, or buy some clothes, or make this or make that — it is planned by our mind but it is carried out by the material forces. For example, if we want to make a table. The plan is made with our mind; we would like it to be like this or like that, but unless there was a material called wood, we wouldn't even be able to plan it and we wouldn't be able to make it. Actually, the means whereby the table can be made is the wood. And for our mind to be able to plan this, it has to be in very close contact with this material thing, wood, so that our mind can conceive of the table. So it is clear that the connection between the heart and the mind — that is, our wish and our ability to conceive and to make something — is very closely bound up with the material forces.

Now, there are people who try to put aside these material forces. In other words, they have the idea that if we want to worship Almighty God we should get far away from them. So, for example, you have people who live in temples and devote themselves to the worship of God, let us say. They think that by wearing very simple clothes and neglecting their worldly needs, they then go far away from the material and come close to God. This is their idea. In other words, they put aside the material and devote themselves just to being good or something like that. But the fact is that this is wrong, because the material forces themselves are actually a way through which we have to pass in the worship of Almighty God. It is this power which has placed the material forces within us — it is also the power which can guide us to pierce through this wall, this thick wall which is like a wall of steel, which we have to pass in order to reach the worship of Almighty God. In fact, we have to go through this. It is not something that we can put aside. We have to go through it in order to get close to God. So the use of the material forces is part of the way we have to go in order to worship God.

*Subud World News* 13.3 pp. 4–5

Cilandak, 4 February 1979

### **Beggars and the force**

Based on patience, submission and sincerity, your inner feeling will become free from the influence of the nafsu and then you will be able to feel how the life forces work within your self. In it you will be able to control and regulate the connection of the material life

force that is within you with the material life force that is outside you. Do not then say, however, that you can absorb the material life force from outside, although actually the inner and the outer material life force are connected. Take, for example, poor people whose custom it is to beg; clearly the material life force which is within their inner self does not work properly and has not yet a connection with the material life force outside them. Now, why do they seek a living by way of begging? It is because they are driven by hunger. But when they have got what they are seeking and have filled their stomach a little, they soon stop begging and, what is more, they fall asleep just anywhere. This is a sign that the material life force which is within the inner self is not really working. Moreover, the person feels that Almighty God is not just, because others have money, but he himself has no money, although he does not differ from the others. He says, 'Well, if Almighty God is just, show me where the money is.' If he acts like that, he is ordering God to act as a foreman.

Thus you have to remember that these various forces are within you. What are they? They are created within you as servants. This is the Will of God. For if these various forces, the forces of *raewani*, *nabadi*, *chewani* and *jasmani* were not within you, you would just remain like a statue. Yes. For that which is able to look for money is the force of *raewani*, brothers and sisters. If there is no satanic force in you, you cannot find money. Do not abandon Satan, no! 'Shoo, Satan, go away.' Oh, that will get you into trouble. If you are left by Satan, then in ten days you will have no money. What is important for you is the way you must make use of this satanic force. Use the satanic force when you look for money. Use the vegetable force when you plant this or plant that. Use the animal force when you eat meat. Also, use the *jasmani* force when you marry and when you come together with your wife. Thus, these forces are very necessary for your life because with them present you become a complete being, a perfect being, called *Insan kamil* (a perfect human being).

*Growth of Subud* pp. 92-3

Cilandak, 20 August 1967

### **The salesman and the force**

Another kind of specialist is the trader or salesman. If in fact that is his background and he is led and guided by God, selling his goods will not be hard for him, but very easy. Why so? Because the goods he deals in are like friends speaking with him. 'How much should I ask when I sell you?' 'Fifteen rupiahs.' 'That's a bargain. What are

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you worth?' 'Fifteen.' 'Well, then, that's the right price — not too much and not too little.'

If the selling is done from the nafsū, however, it is not like that. Goods bought for ten rupiahs are sold for a thousand; and what is more, many people are keen to buy. Well, that raises the price even higher: 'This costs a thousand rupiahs plus your house.' Well, what sort of house will that be? Troublesome. The trader does not realize that it will not be so easy for the house to be vacated. This is not like talking with a friend.

If people are in fact skilled in trading, they never cease to worship God inwardly while folding fabrics, sarongs, and other things of that sort.

*Pewarta Supplement 7* p. 29

Cilandak, 5 December 1970

### **The businessman and the force**

With regard to the soul, certainly it would be easy for us to think that man would necessarily have the soul of a human, since man is different from animals, plants and material objects. Of course it is true that man has a mind or intellect, while animals, plants and material objects do not. But the self of a man who, due to his own fault, spends his whole life paying more attention to material objects than to his worship of God and trying to live in a way that is in accordance with His will, can easily degenerate and result in the acquirement of a material soul. What is more, if a man has acquired a material soul, then automatically his mind or intellect will be used by this material soul, so that his life and death will entirely depend upon material existence. For this reason we often hear of people who, after losing their material possessions or position, become confused and give way to despair, or meet with a quick death.

*Pewarta IV 4* pp. 123–4

Cilandak, 11 February 1965

### **How jewels influence the wearer**

If Bapak sees, he is not influenced by what he sees, but he influences. But there are many among mankind — perhaps there are some among you here — who are attracted when seeing a beautiful object. The cause of this is the material forces which are dominating and still strongly at work within you, within your eyes, which make you strongly inclined to buy or take possession of the object which you see and consider as good. And when you — the ladies for instance — actually buy a very beautiful object which can be put here or hung there, whereas before you wear it, you walk like this [a gesture of walking], after you are ornamented with it you

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walk in this way [another gesture and a roar of laughter from the audience].

This is how the material forces fill the inner content of man. He forgets that his attitude and behaviour are the result of the influence of the object he is using.

Now this influence may go even deeper. The longer the object is used, the deeper it penetrates to reach the heart. This heart becomes also complaisant. Man's joy in using the expensive and beautiful object makes him despise those who do not possess it [another gesture of despising] . . . oh, he does not like those people any more.

*New York Talks* pp. 25-6

New York, 9 May 1959

### THE VEGETABLE FORCE

The passages that follow put forward the familiar idea of man's dependence on the plant world, and also introduce a less familiar one: that plants are man's willing servants, want to lead a happy life, and find their fulfilment in being eaten by man. These ideas would have been more astonishing and less acceptable to Western readers twenty years ago, but recent books have familiarized us with the concept that plants have feelings and emotions. Some poets apprehended this long ago, of course.

#### **Man's equipment**

But beyond the material forces man still has other inhabitants within his being, and one is the vegetable force. It is the vegetable force that causes the arising of plant life, and it is through the vegetable forces within man that man is able to consume plant life in order to fill out his physical form; that is, his flesh and blood and bones, and so on. Again, no matter what man does, how man wants to separate himself from the influence of the lower forces, man cannot leave behind the vegetable forces, because no matter where man goes — if he becomes a hermit living in a distant place — he still has to eat. But man — and this has happened in the past — can force himself with a very strong will to refrain from every kind of food. True, with that kind of effort man can continue to live without his physical body, but instead of becoming free he becomes, on the contrary, a satanic being — he becomes a ghost. So it is clear that these lower forces are part of man's equipment for living in this world, equipment which he cannot possibly remove

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from his being, nor from which he can free himself while he is living in this world.

*Pewartia Special Supplement 9* pp. 207–8

Toronto,  
26 September 1977

### **Man's servant**

Apart from the material life force, there is also the vegetable life force. It is even more difficult for man to abandon the vegetable life force, because the life of man on earth derives its strength from the vegetables he eats. Thus, if in your life on earth you did not eat vegetables, perhaps you would not be creatures of God such as you now are. Maybe, if you had never eaten vegetables, your life would be just like a shadow. Clearly it is impossible for you to abandon the vegetable life force as long as you are alive on earth. The problem for you is not to be overpowered by it for, according to the divine decree, the vegetable force is also a servant for man's life. In other words, man controls it, as in the case of employees in an office; man is the head of the office while the vegetable forces are his subordinates. Of course, the head of the office would prefer to have intelligent and clever subordinates rather than stupid ones, because if his subordinates are intelligent and clever, he himself will automatically rise to a higher position. For this reason, the lower forces such as the material force and the vegetable force are not obstacles for man's life but, really, excellent servants that can raise his level — provided he remains in his position as the noble life force capable of managing the sub-human forces in a just way, because these forces are no different from human beings who wish for a blessed and happy life. This is in accordance with the old saying that 'Heaven for material objects and vegetables is in man.'

*Growth of Subud* p. 127

Tokyo, 22 August 1967

### **Plants give answers**

Because the cultivation of the land is concerned with plant and vegetable matters, those of you who are engaged in farming should turn to the testing when planting crops, and when you can receive in this way, then it is as if the crop you are going to plant is able to hold a conversation with you. The plant may answer your questions and tell you that in one place it will not grow, but in another it will flourish and there will be a great demand for the crop.

*Subud and the Active Life* p. 95

London, 14 August 1959



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### THE ANIMAL FORCE

The first extract below explains the general principle that men need the animal forces, which they acquire through their food, and the second describes the characteristics of those people who have an animal jiwa beneath a human exterior. Past cultures, Bapak notes, have expressed this duality in their creation of statues and puppets that are half-human, half-animal. Finally, in some stanzas from his Javanese poem, Bapak defines the fate of those whose actions are appropriate for goats and cocks and hens but not for humans.

#### **We need animal forces**

The next one which affects, and is part of, the being of man — the animal forces. The animal forces exist throughout the world, both in their coarse and in their fine form. In their coarse form they can be seen with the physical eyes — that is, animals whose flesh we eat for food. In their fine form, they exist everywhere, in a form that is known to medical science. Even in vegetables, which we feel maybe are free of animal forces, there are innumerable, minute, fine animal forces. We are provided with the animal forces within us which we need in the form of animal food. Because we need animal forces for our strength, for the will to work, for the strength of our will and for our will to achieve, and our ambition, we need these forces — for without them our heart and mind would be weak. This is already known to medical science, because doctors know that animal essences, the essences of animal food, are needed for the body to become strong. Again, the animal forces are something that is part of man's life in this world.

*Pewarta Special Supplement* 9 p. 209 Toronto, 26 September 1977

#### **Animal jiwias**

It is stated in the holy books, and has been said by people who lived long ago who really could quieten their hearts and minds, that outwardly all human beings have similar features, but that inwardly they differ — in the jiwa, that is. This is therefore depicted in Indonesia, especially in Java, in *wayang* [puppet] shows. The body is human, the legs are human, the hands are human, but the head is that of a monkey. Well, that is an example. In another case the body is human, the hands human, the legs human, but the head is a tiger's.

This is to be found not only here. When Bapak was in Latin America, Bapak saw a place where the ancient Indians, the Incas, used to live, where there were carvings, statues, with animal heads but human bodies and legs. And there were others that were not

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just animals, but whose legs were in the form of hoes; in short, their legs were material objects, though the bodies were human.

This shows that, even though the body is human, the jiwa may be animal. If the body is human, meaning that the mind is human, while what rules inside is animal, then of course the heart and mind will follow the way the jiwa is. Although the jiwa is animal, yet the heart and mind are human and their way of thinking will be like that of human beings. But the highest point in them is animal. So they pretend to behave well, but in the long run they wring your neck. They pretend to behave well, but in course of time you will be strangled. Why? Because the jiwa is animal.

*Pewarta XIII* 2 pp. 55-7

Cilandak, 15 February 1976

### **Sinking into the animal world**

Because of that similarity, people emotionally weak — and who, moreover, have never undertaken the training to enable them to be conscious of their human identity — are very easily swayed by the animal force. If this has happened already, then such people, when their end comes, will certainly be lost in the animal world.

That is how it is, could the truth be known; but those still blind to it have no idea of the problem of falling so far below the human level.

Yet so deep a fall afflicts themselves not only in their last moments: even while still living in the human body they no longer behave in a manner becoming to mankind. This is what results from their downfall, so in reality the roles are reversed, with people finding their field of life narrowed, while animals, on the contrary, attain one especially spacious.

In these circumstances the animal force has grown stronger and stronger and can follow up its every desire. Therefore people filled with animal force are characterized by a readiness to follow only the greed of their heart.

Now about the mating of male and female goats; they are like chickens, who are ready to mate with many hens, without discrimination among sister, mother, grandmother or any other.

Although we regard the behaviour of a goat in its world as like that of a cockerel that mates with many hens, actually this is the same thing to them as permanent human marriage is for us.

Thus, if people finally become lost in that world, they will also be happy. However, the happiness they find in that world is not in the least like the happiness in the human world or realm. On the contrary, the feelings of a person filled with goat force are filled with lust.

[...]

The influence of the animal force has such an effect that the men taken in by it are incapable of suspecting the fact. Some even claim that sexual intercourse is only for ridding oneself of desire. In fact, though, they do not rid themselves of it, but only give in to the insistence of their desire.

*Susila Budhi Dharma* pp. 253–7 stanzas 32–40 (1975 edition)

### THE HUMAN FORCE

We come now to the human force, the highest and most powerful of the lower forces. In the first two of these passages Bapak talks of the mutual influence of husband and wife, and how their conduct can influence their children. In the last Bapak describes, in the poetic imagery of the *Susila Budhi Dharma*, two forms of wrong behaviour by which a man, during his wife's pregnancy, can bring harm to him, his wife and to the unborn child.

#### **The human force and marriage**

The origin of the influence of the human forces upon mankind is, in the case of a man, from the being of a woman; and in the case of a woman, from the being of a man. In other words, the influence of the human forces is something that comes in marriage between a husband and a wife; that is, their mutual influence on each other. It is clear that it is through marriage, then, that man can experience the completeness of the human forces. But although marriage of man and woman can be regarded as something important for the completeness of human life — that the wife can be regarded by her husband as a true life partner and companion for his life — nevertheless, she is also a great bother or a great temptation or a great disturbance for his life, and vice versa.

Before, when a man was single, he could do anything he liked. He could go anywhere he wanted, and he didn't have to consult anybody. But once he is married, he has always to take his wife into account, and his wife can overturn all his plans. And vice versa. The wife has to take her husband into account. So it is truly a burden for man — and yet it is something also that is the completion of man's life, because through the action of the human forces between the husband and wife, there can be formed a new being who is called a child, and this child will exhibit the natures of the two parents; that is, the characteristics of the two parents. This shows, then, the power of the human forces — that they are able to create a new being which is a reflection of the two parents. And the

## THE LIFE FORCES AND THE NAFSU (PASSIONS)

child born from parents who are truly harmonious in their marriage, who are truly peaceful in their lives and who are never far from the worship of God, will be a child whose character is described in Islam as a child who will truly give help and assistance and be an example to anyone who needs it, who will always be an asset to society, and who will always be a joy to his parents, raising them up both outwardly and inwardly spiritually in a direction of a complete life and a cleanness of the inner feeling. Such is a child that all people always hope for as a result of their marriage.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 3* pp. 45–6      Edinburgh, 1 July 1977

### **Men and women brought low**

Then, beyond that, man has his physical body, and the forces of this physical body — that is, what is called the *jasmani* forces, the human forces, also affect man very deeply. Man is influenced by the human forces through the influence of woman; and woman, conversely, is influenced by the human forces through man. Indeed the human forces are of all the lower forces the highest — but they are also the most closely interwoven with man's being. And because they are so closely interwoven, they are also the ones that can lead man most astray if man is unlucky. Actually, the force that can bring man lowest, the force that can bring man down furthest in his life, is the influence of a woman. Correspondingly, the force that can bring a woman furthest down in her life, is the influence of a man. This is because the human forces are very deeply interwoven in a man's being — so that the traces of a union, for example, the sexual union which a woman has with a man, can form a very deep error or a very deep mistake or sin within her being. Truly, if Bapak goes on to explain about the human forces, Bapak will be speaking about things that are normally regarded as secret or personal. But, indeed, this is very necessary for us to understand: that if a woman, or let us say a man, who is pure, who has a pure and complete jiwa — that is, whose nature is still high and as it should be — has a sexual union with a woman who carries within her sins and mistakes from her past actions, his state, the state of this man who was originally pure and clean within, can be brought down to the lowest level, to the lowest degree, from the highest to the lowest. Conversely, a woman who within herself is still pure and clean, through union with a man who has behaved wrongly, who has within his being all sorts of dirt and mistakes from the past, can herself be brought right down to an abject state.

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The result of this becomes evident when they have a child. The reality of what has happened will become clear, will show itself when they have a child, because that child will no longer be pure and clean, but will from the moment it is conceived contain within itself the traces of past sins and errors which will be a heavy burden throughout its life from which it cannot escape.

This does not happen once, for one generation, but generation after generation. So let us say we arrive at our state now, finally, after this has repeated itself so many times. This then, brothers and sisters, is the secret why it can be that a person worships God for two or three years in the latihan — or Bapak doesn't want to limit it to the latihan, Bapak just says a man will worship God for two or three years — and he will already show some fruit, some development, some signs of what he has received. Whereas another may worship God for decades, ten, twenty years, and still feel nothing, still feel no progress and still feel as though he's suffering under a heavy burden. This is because of what is within him, which he has inherited from generations and generations of mistakes and errors which have been handed down through his parents and ancestors and so on.

*Pewartu Special Supplement 9 pp. 209-10*

Toronto,  
26 September 1977

### **Damage to the wife**

Likewise in matters of the kejiwaan. Although in reality the forces within a person's self have the nature of ancillaries or aides, if he handles them wrongly through lack of understanding, these aides act in the opposite way and become hindrances or obstacles to his well-being. For that reason many people suffer errors and events they would not wish for.

Similar is the case of a husband, as yet unconscious of the kejiwaan, whose wife is pregnant. At times he behaves wrongly, being apt to have sexual relations with other women. The reason for this is that usually a pregnant woman strongly dislikes complying with her husband's frequent desire for intercourse. So her husband, perhaps unable to control his passion, feels compelled to have intercourse with another woman.

In the end he will feel disappointed, for sexual intercourse with the other woman will pull down the level of his own content. Yet, if only he knew the truth, his wife's refusal is not solely by her own wish, but also by the wish of the child in her womb, who in reality is warning his parents to be patient and to surrender, in order that all the while he is in the womb he will be well and happy.

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Such is the meaning of the wife's refusal, rightly understood. Clearly, then, a warning of this kind must be heeded, so that the condition of the child still in the womb remains good and happy. Then his wife's and his own self will also remain in a state of well-being and happiness. But usually people do not pay attention to this as yet, or do not yet understand it. So they still behave wrongly, as has been described, without being in the least concerned. Some of them even go so far as to consider this just a normal custom, and thus gladly have sexual relations with women who have long been the target of such erotic passion.

That is how the forces in a man's self work, with the result that he does not feel his behaviour is wrong, but even considers it right.

Some men too feel even that such conduct is a mark of superiority, for it is a reminder of their masculinity. Yet in fact it greatly impairs their status as human beings, creatures of high level.

Furthermore, if that is not soon realized, the wrongdoing may go on and on, making it in the end very hard for a man to return to the high level proper to him.

The more so if, after that, he still wants sexual intercourse with his pregnant wife. This intercourse may make his child and wife suffer, as well as himself, with the result that they, who have had no part in all this, also will be affected and burdened by the mistakes he has made.

His child and wife will suffer even more if such behaviour leads to him getting a disease from women who have become targets of erotic passion. For the nature of the disease he carries will ravage his child and wife both physically and spiritually.

That is what will happen. Yet, as may be recalled, his wife certainly never wanted a thing like that to happen. Plainly, then, such conduct is in truth simply maltreatment of the wife and her child; so the hope of getting a child of excellent character cannot possibly be fulfilled.

Do realize, my children, that the *jasmani* force has so powerful an influence on people because, of course, human force is confronted with human force. And what is more, much that happens is not just human force confronting human force, but human force confronting other forces veiled by a human mask. Especially if what veils a woman's nature is a beautiful face, then a man may readily entrust himself to her and so be led anywhere by her. In truth, however, this is not only the woman's fault, but the man's too. Indeed, if seen as it actually is, the fault is mainly rooted in the man.

For this reason it is best as a human being not to neglect the training of the feeling, much spoken of earlier. For through this training of the feeling he becomes adept in how to receive and how to regulate the forces within him. Hence in doing anything, and especially in uniting with his wife, he will find no difficulty in separating the feeling of his inner self from other forces that always gather with it, and he will also be able to direct those forces into the channels where they belong. As this is done, the various needs of these forces are separated; for example, the need of the human force for the human force, and the needs of the other forces for those forces. So, automatically, the human force will face only the human force, and the other forces will face forces of their own kind.

*Susila Budhi Dharma* pp. 299–303 stanzas 29–40 (1975 edition)

### THE FORCES AND DEATH

Now comes one of Bapak's remarkable stories. 'There's a story of people long ago,' he says. It tells of Man, who has made use of the forces during his lifetime but not the right use. They come in turn to his deathbed and plead to be taken to heaven with him, and when he says it's impossible, they try to stop *him* from going there. By contrast Bapak tells of a man who has treated the forces rightly and 'brought them before God'. When he comes to depart this life they are helpful, like household servants who escort a man to the airport and wish him goodbye.

#### **The forces at man's deathbed**

So it can be said that while you are working as, say, a cashier, then, even though people are forbidden to handle money while worshipping God, a person who is constantly receiving guidance and direction from God will never be empty while counting money, but will be filled by his worship of God — 'Allah! Allah!' Even though not spoken aloud, this is already going on in him. Thus although money is termed unholy, it will not be an obstacle to worshipping God Almighty, because the person counting it is not doing so just from himself but under the guidance of God.

It is the same when you are doing other work — writing, for instance, or making something or other. In hammering nails or repairing a chair, supposing you're a carpenter, it is all guided and directed by the power of God which envelops you. This being so, you are not bereft of, not void of your worship of God Almighty, and so everything you do is permissible, is allowed by God Almighty, and will not impede you at the moment God wills you to

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return home, to go back to your source — that is, to leave this world.

That's how it is. So in that way the low forces, whose nature impedes you, obtain from you on the other hand a service, for they are brought, or you bring them, before God. Which can also be said to mean that you take them to heaven. So when eventually you reach the end of your life and leave the world, the low forces are no longer an obstacle but, on the contrary, a help, as with household servants, say, when you are going abroad. They come to see you off and escort you to the airport, and it only remains for you to say goodbye to them, and they wish you a safe journey to your final destination.

It's different for people who are not receiving the latihan: while doing their daily tasks or working at their jobs they are guided by and are following only the impulses of the nafsu or of the mind, so that they are filled only with the nafsu, not with prayer to God Almighty, and in what they do there is nothing of His guidance and direction.

There's a story of people long ago who had received the grace of God Almighty. It tells that when someone is about to die he makes himself ready, because God has called him back to his place of origin. Since his being is occupied by the low forces — the material, vegetable, animal and ordinary human forces — then when he hears something, of course these forces also hear it. For during his earthly life these low forces take part in everything a human being does.

This means that every time a person looks at something, the low forces take part in looking. Where are they? They gather in the seeing. While he listens to the radio they are also joining in. Where are they? In his hearing. Not just in the ears, but also in the hearing. He smells something nice, like scent and other things, and the low forces also take part in smelling it. Where are they? In the smelling. That isn't all, it goes deeper than that. When a husband sleeps with his wife, well, of course he imagines he has privacy, because the door's closed and the light's out even, so it's dark and no one can know. But the low forces, the satanic forces, know. They too know about it, so they too take part in the union.

Human beings aren't aware of how the satanic force hitches on to them. They don't understand, so it's merely an idea to them. People say *A'uzu billahi minas syaitani rajim* — 'I seek refuge with God from the accursed satan' — but the *rajim*, the accursed one, enters into everything. At the moment when someone is about to



comply with God Almighty's summons to go back to the realm of his origin, back to the realm of true human beings, the satanic forces come to him: 'Hey, Man, what are you murmuring to yourself about, where are you going?' 'Oh, God has called me back to where I came from.' 'And then?' 'Well, I'm all set.' 'Don't you remember? You were able to build a house, to have clothes, to make all sorts of things, and live like a human being — and who helped you do all this?' 'Well, who?' 'I — I helped you. Wasn't I in your thinking, wasn't I in your heart, wasn't I in your ideas? Now you're going back to the place prepared for you, and you have a permit to live there, a permit to live in heaven, but am I just going to be left in the lurch? It's not allowed. You can't do it. Come on, pay me back what you owe me. How old are you?' 'Seventy-five'. Well, for seventy-five years you've been making use of me. I've been serving you for seventy-five years (or sixty years if you're sixty). Come on, pay me back.' 'How can I repay you?' 'You must be able to. You're a human being, you're on the fifth of all the levels.' 'Oh, I can't.' 'If you can't, I shall go on blocking your way. Look above you.' 'What's above is shut off by material objects, so that he's in the dark and doesn't know which way to go.

He's just gasping under this load when another force comes along. 'Well, who are you?' 'I'm the vegetable force; I'm the food you've eaten every day. Every day there's been a soft-boiled egg in your egg-cup. Unless there were two eggs for you, it wasn't enough, you weren't satisfied. Two in the morning, two in the evening. And you ate honey. That's just the eggs, without everything else, without the *martabak* (stuffed pancakes).' 'Oh yes, so what?' 'You've got to pay it all back.' 'Oh, I can't.' 'You must be able to, Man.'

That's not all yet; the animal force comes next. 'Hey, Man, what are you up to?' 'I'm getting ready to go back home. Yes, I'm going back.' 'And then: What am I to you?' 'My servant?' 'Yes. Take me to heaven.' 'I can't, there's only room for one man. I can't take you, the vacancy's for a man. I can't take a water buffalo. Can't be done.' 'Look, you could eat me, couldn't you? You ate beef every day, you ate chickens — how many thousands of chickens have you eaten?'

That's not all; now comes the *jasmani*, the ordinary human life force. 'Hey, Man, where are you off to?' 'Well, who are you?' 'Look, I'm your wife. How can you abandon me? Without me you couldn't have had any children. Now you want to go back home and just leave me behind.' That's the wife who was registered in

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the book. The luxury lover has a great many more who aren't entered in the book. Along comes one — 'Hey, Man, what are you doing?' 'I'm going back.' 'You can't. I must be taken to heaven.' 'Alas, I can't even get myself to heaven yet, let alone you.' How many of these unofficial wives are there? All told, there are some twenty-four not recorded in the book.

That's how it is, brothers and sisters, so alas for human beings. It's their fault. They can't yet take their wives to heaven, then, what with those material objects they've collected.

This is the use of the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, so that in the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, since it is guidance and direction from God Almighty, whatever you do is always filled with praise of Him, and hence in union with your wife, in a wife's union with her husband, you are not separated from your worship of God Almighty.

Thus it's like Bapak's illustration just now of the servants coming to see you off at the airport: 'A good journey, sir.' 'Oh yes, goodbye.' 'Goodbye, goodbye.'

*Pewarta XIII* 5 pp. 207–13

Cilandak, 25 July 1976

### A FIFTH FORCE

Very occasionally Bapak speaks of three more forces, the 'higher forces', which together with the four 'lower' ones are represented in the seven circles of the Subud symbol. He tells of these three, and still two more, in a speech at the World Congress in Germany (*The Way Ahead* pp. 37–42). But these are realms in which we can only move if God allows, so there is no point in quoting the passage as we would all end in a confused state.

Here, however, is a passage when Bapak speaks of one higher force, and with this we can end the chapter on a note of high hope.

#### **Another life force**

God does not wish man to be at the mercy of these lower forces — and for that reason God has given man another life force; and this life force is greater and more glorious than anything else that man knows. It is finer than any of the lower forces within man: it is greater and more powerful. And anything that man feels, this life force is finer and higher. The furthest thing that man can imagine, this life force is finer and greater than that. This life force has been given to man so that it can penetrate through all the other things that are within him. Man can feel its action within him, and this action can never be subject to, or affected by, the influence of any of

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the lower forces. Even when man is using his heart and mind, this other force, this other life force, this great life force, is there — deeper and finer and more penetrating than his heart and mind, so that it can always guide him.

It is clear, brothers and sisters, that man is not allowed to neglect the use of his heart and mind. Man is required, by God's will, to make full use of his heart and mind, and really to use them for his life in this world. But even when he is using his heart and mind, this other life force that God has given him, this life force which is All-great and All-powerful and All-glorious, is always there within him.

This is also described if you read the holy books. Those of you who have studied the sacred books will find there a reference to the existence of this power. This is why at the beginning of the Holy Koran, there are the letters *Alif Lam Min*. These letters can neither be translated nor can they be interpreted, for they describe the power of God. These are living letters, letters that are alive, and refer to the greatness and the reality of God's power, which can in no way be described by man, for it is higher than anything that man can imagine, and lower than anything man can imagine. It is lower than the lowest, and higher than the highest, and finer than the finest, and it can penetrate everywhere. It is this which God has given to man to enable him to feel God's power within him. So this force, this life force which man can feel, is indeed the life force of the power of God, and this is why it is called All-glorious and All-powerful. But man does not suspect that this life force which he feels, which is deeper and finer and more subtle than everything else within him, is in fact the All-glorious life force of the power of God.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 9 p. 208 Toronto, 26 September 1977*

## 10 *Birth and death*

The passages in this chapter may be among those that Western minds are least willing to accept. But have our minds produced any more convincing explanations of these mysteries? Bapak would say, has said, that it is the function of the mind to understand the things of this world, that it is an impossibility for it to understand the things of the other world, and that unless the mind can be laid to rest it will prevent man's deeper faculties from sensing the reality of those other-worldly things. Many poets and men of religion would have no trouble in apprehending and accepting what Bapak says about birth and death, and Bapak would have no trouble in apprehending Wordsworth's 'Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood' — the rambling title sums up the theme — or Saint Paul's magnificent words on resurrection, used in the Church of England burial service. I quote a few lines from each.

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.

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, (for the trumpet shall sound,) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality: then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

### **BIRTH**

Briefly, Bapak's account is that our jiwa exists before our birth; at birth God gives it the senses, the heart and mind, the forces and the nafsu powered by the forces; and at death all these are taken away and the jiwa continues without them once again, that is, if it has not been overpowered by the lower forces.

The idea is developed in the first of the following extracts, in which Bapak compares the birth of a baby to the creation of Adam. Bapak in his talks often mentions Adam. Who or what Adam was and is I leave to Bapak to say.

#### **Birth and the creation of Adam**

Brothers and sisters, you know very well that it is always said that Adam was the first man who originated the human race. But actually the word or the name 'Adam' does not yet apply to a human being, because the real meaning of Adam is the origin or the beginning of the beginning. Before Adam there was nothing; and Adam was what God created first before He created anything else.

At that time Adam was not yet a human being; he did not yet have the form of a human being. But it was God's will to create a being such as man in this world, and so God first prepared for Adam a physical body with senses and members such as we have. Then He placed within this physical body a heart and mind. But even then it was not yet complete. In order that it could live in this world, God then gave it the material, vegetable, animal, human and other forces, all of which were to be useful for its life in this world. Only then did God provide Adam with this form; and at that moment God brought Adam down from heaven into this world.

Now, before he was provided with this form Adam did not have a heart and a mind, he did not have a brain, he did not have ears and eyes and a nose. In fact, this is the difference between heaven

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and earth — that before Adam existed in this world he did not have a physical body, he did not have any of these things. Yet Adam had a consciousness of life. When he was still in heaven he was able to see, he was able to hear, he was able to smell and taste and know and understand and be aware of his life; he was able to live in a state of complete happiness. This is what we call heaven, because all this he was able to do; he was able to exist without senses, without a brain, without a heart and mind and without the lower forces. Then God brought Adam and placed him in this world, where he was provided with a heart and mind, with senses and a physical body.

At the beginning, the first moment when he was created in this way, Adam was very very disappointed and cried bitterly, even though he did not know what he was crying about. But God, who is All-knowing and All-merciful, knew and understood the state of Adam at that moment. And God found it right that He should give man a reminder of that state that Adam experienced at that moment. So God repeats this moment of creation every time a baby is born. At the moment when a baby is born, its state and experience at that moment is the same as the state of Adam when he was born. In other words, at that moment the baby is still unable to sense this world. It cannot see, it cannot hear, it cannot smell. It is totally unaware of this world. Yet, on its face you can see that sometimes the baby smiles, sometimes it looks happy, or sometimes it looks frightened or sad, sometimes it laughs, and so on. This is something you have all witnessed, those of you who have had children. Only you didn't understand the purpose or the meaning of this experience of your baby, because you just said to yourself, 'Oh, that's normal. That's how babies always act.' In fact, there is nothing, there is no reality, no action without a cause. If you really wanted to know the cause why this new-born baby acts like that, you should know that at the moment this baby is still in very close touch with the atmosphere of the kejiwaan, with the atmosphere of the jiwa, with the life of the inner, or the life that it experienced when it was still in heaven — just as when Adam was created in this world. What it sees and hears and feels at that moment when it is new-born is still what it used to feel and see and hear and sense when it was still up in heaven, in its original state.

Adam at that moment, as time progressed, gradually began to open his eyes, and began to see the forms of this world. He began to get to know this world and to understand it; gradually he became closer and closer to the atmosphere of this world. But his contact

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with his jiwa, with the world from which he had come, became more and more closed off. This is the same process through which each human being goes, when we were born and when our children were born — that as they progress and as they become more and more aware of this world, so they forget their contact with the world of the jiwa, with the world from which they have come. Even more when they start going to school and start using their minds. In the end they believe in this world — but they do not believe in the existence of God Almighty, because what they believe in by then is only what they can see, what they can hear, what they can sense, as in this world, and the power of God cannot be seen and felt in that way, with the senses.

This is the situation and it is God's will that man should always be reminded of this every time he has a child. The reason why God reminds us in this way, why God has put this reminder in our lives, is that it is not God's will that we should only be reminded by listening to stories or reading holy books, or by listening or hearing or being told something. God wants us to see the proof ourselves, to see the proof in front of our very eyes, so that we can remember in our lives in this world that actually we are always close to the atmosphere of the kejiwaan, we are always close to the atmosphere of heaven or to the world of the inner in which we can sense and know the power of God.

The only reason we do not feel it is because we do not like to be aware of it. We do not like to try to sense it or feel it. God is All-merciful, so that man can always feel the closeness and the guidance of God Almighty in his life; he can always feel the closeness of this world from which he came. The reason why man does not feel this closeness to the other world, to the world from which he came, is because he forgets. He does not like to do that which was done by those people who have received God's grace and were therefore able to become aware, to understand the real nature of life.

Who are these people? They are the Messengers of God. And what is it that they have done in order to become aware of God's presence? What they have done is to surrender, to surrender completely to God Almighty, both their jiwa and their physical body, with a complete feeling of patience, acceptance and submission to God Almighty. So with that surrender, with that act of surrender, they become able to feel again the closeness of the power of God Almighty.

This is the way whereby men, by following that which was

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received by mankind before them in the olden times, can become aware of the closeness of God's power within their lives. Who are these men? Well, if you are a Christian, it is Jesus Christ. If you are a Muslim, it is Prophet Muhammad. If you follow the religion of Abraham or Moses, then it is Abraham and Moses who through their true complete submission to the power of God Almighty were able to become aware of God's power and the closeness of their life in the *jiwa*, in the *kejiwaan*, during their life in this world. Through this attitude they were able to receive God's grace and the *qadar* from God Almighty. Let man, therefore, be aware that God exists and God has authority in this world.

Brothers and sisters, continuing now with the story of Adam after he came into this world: later on, as time passed, Adam became adept at living in this world. He learned how to make himself a shelter, how to plant himself food. He learned about agriculture and about looking after animals. He had children, and his children had children.

It can be said that he learned how to live in this world using his faculties and his senses and his heart and mind. One can say that he was happy living in this world. In fact, because of this happiness, because of his satisfaction, his ability to live well in this world, he forgot completely where he had come from, or his life before he came into this world. So that if someone had come up to him, say, and asked, 'Adam, where did you come from? What is heaven?' he would have replied, 'I don't know.' His memory of heaven, of his life before, was already covered up with his understanding and his knowledge and his sense of this world.

But man is a weak creature; man's nature is of a creature that is very weak and susceptible to many difficulties in his life. For example, if he is exposed to the heat of the sun he very quickly feels too hot. If he is exposed to the cold of winter, he very quickly feels too cold.

As time went on, Adam came to a point in his life when maybe something went wrong. He had some difficulty, and he experienced suffering. This state of suffering went from bad to worse, so that he came to a point where he was really desperate. Maybe he was very ill, or maybe something happened to him that was very difficult or very hard to bear. So he began to complain within himself. He began to feel the unhappiness of life in this world. And because Adam was the first man, and because he had not yet committed many mistakes or many sins, his complaint was



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heard by the angels, and the angels reported it to God Almighty, 'Adam is complaining in his life.'

So God spoke to Adam, 'Adam, have you forgotten that your life in this world was not by your own will? You were not created in this world by your own will but by my will. So when you have a complaint, why don't you ask me? Why don't you ask me for explanations or understandings?'

At that moment Adam suddenly remembered. For the first time he suddenly remembered that indeed it was not by his own will that he was created in this world; that his life did not happen from himself but that he had been placed here by God Almighty. Then Adam said to God, 'Yes, it's true. I feel very depressed. I feel very unhappy. I don't understand the reason why I feel like this, but I know now that it is only God who can give me understanding. It is only You who can clarify or help me to understand what is the matter with my life.'

Then God said to Adam, 'Surrender your life to me. Surrender yourself completely, inwardly and outwardly, to my power. And from that you will be reminded, and you will feel once again the nature or the state of your life in heaven before you came into this world.'

Then Adam did as he was commanded by God; he surrendered completely, everything, with complete faith in the greatness of God Almighty. And, as Bapak said, because Adam was the first man and because he still had not committed many sins and was still rather clean, so he was very quickly able to remember, very quickly able to become aware again of his jiwa and of his true self. And then for the first time since he had been created in this world Adam felt again a vibration within him, within his being, a vibration that was like a life within his life.

God said to him, 'That which you experience now, that which you can feel now, was your life before you came into this world.'

From then on Adam was truly aware of the greatness of God Almighty, of the fact that God was Almighty, and that God ruled in everything, both inwardly and outwardly, both within and without.

That is why we are not allowed to say 'inner teaching' or 'inner way', as people do, for example, who follow a spiritual teacher or something, or as they say in Indonesia, *Kebatinan*, which means inner teaching. Because God is not only in the inner, God is in the inner and in the outer. This is the nature of God which is called *Hawal Batin*, which is God within, and *Hawal Lochir*, which is God

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without, and *Hawal Awal* which is God before anything existed, and *Hawal Achir*, which is God after this whole universe is destroyed — God exists.

This that Adam received at that moment was also received by his descendants. First of all, by the Prophet Abraham. Later on by the Prophet Moses. Later again by Jesus Christ, and later than that again by Prophet Muhammad.

And it has also been received now, by the grace and mercy of Almighty God, by all of us — all of you — who have received the latihan kejiwaan. That which you received when you were first opened, that vibration which you felt within you, which Bapak describes as a life within your life, is that which Adam received at that time when he surrendered himself to God Almighty. It is that which is called the *qadar*, or the *Hadir Ilham* — that is, the gift of grace or the revelation of God Almighty.

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## DEATH

In many of his talks, some already quoted in this book, Bapak speaks of life as something for living, for living successfully and with enjoyment, and not something to be endured miserably or scrambled through hurriedly in the hope of future happiness. On the other hand we have to learn about death before we die. We can do this, by God's grace, in the latihan and in the fast, for if death is existence without the heart and mind and nafsu, and if these are lulled to sleep in the latihan and 'half-paralysed' and 'banished' in the fast, then at those times we can experience something of the state of death while still alive.

### Death before dying

And the meaning of coming into this state, in which thoughts, feelings and passions are brought to a standstill, is that man is dead. Those men who received grace in the days of old, therefore, have repeatedly declared that in order to know and to realize the true, the real life which it is both necessary and possible for man to know, he is required to die before he really does die; that is to say, he should experience death before he really dies. This is symbolized in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which represents the return of life from death.

Herein lies the difficulty for man in trying to achieve this. Because how can he die before he actually dies, when this effort is

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simply based upon his own desire, heart and thinking? Many people have tried to come to this by way of austerities, by depriving themselves of food, drink and such things. But as this effort is based on the mind and the thinking of man, and is not something that comes from the will of God, it is impossible to achieve. That which comes of it inevitably leads to a way which is not right and which is altogether different from what had been found by all the prophets in times past.

It is clear that everything that lies beyond the human can only be achieved by the power of God, and not through the power of man himself. It is indeed the will of God that resurrection — to awaken and return to life from death — is necessary for man, and this is only possible when his inner content is deprived of, becomes empty of, all the forces of his passions, feelings and thoughts. And when in trying to achieve this he still makes use of his mind and thoughts, then instead of finding the right way in which he can effect contact with the greatness of the Life Force which is beyond him, he will, on the contrary, expose himself to the influence, and come under the action, of forces which are below the human level.

*New York Talks* p. 12

New York, 6 May 1959

The following passages tell how Bapak feels man should, and should not, die.

### **The power of God utters His name**

When we die, when we are about to die, all that man has thought about, all our knowledge, all our thinking, all our feelings, everything that we have been attached to in this world, disappear completely. We are, at that moment, in a state of complete darkness — there is nothing left of all that we had in this world. And God has said, 'In that moment I will guide you. In that moment I will give you my guidance.' And it is that that is called faith.

And that, brothers and sisters, is what we have received in the latihan kejiwaan. This has been experienced by Subud members — even if not by every Subud member. But Subud members have experienced that when they are about to die, they are sitting up in a state of calmness, quietness and consciousness. And those who see them hear them saying, '*Allahu Akbar, Allah, Allah, Allah*', and they think that they are saying that. But actually, in that position, at that moment when we are facing death, we have no power. So what is saying it is the power of God at that moment which fills our being. It is this same thing that we receive in the latihan kejiwaan.

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When you are doing latihan and you say, 'Allah, Allah', do you do that intentionally? Do you think about it beforehand? Not at all. It arises spontaneously from within, from this power, this power of God which is the power that will be there at the last moment when you face death and everything else has been taken away from you.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 9* p. 200 Montreal, 19 September 1977

### **'Allah, Allah'**

Some Subud members still feel that enterprises are something to be afraid of, to shy away from because they will somehow reduce our spiritual standing, or make difficulties for our worship of God, 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, the other forces that Bapak has described.

. . . we have already been encompassed by the power of God and we have learned to move with the power of God throughout the day in whatever we do in our work, so that the power of God provides a protection, a barrier or a shield against the influence of the lower forces. Then no matter what happens, no matter how hard we worked in our life, when we come to the moment of our death we will be able to pass forward into the human world. In other words, we will have with us this feeling of 'Allah, Allah, Allah', and it won't then be that when we die we will be going 'dollar, dollar, dollar' [laughter].

*Pewarta Special Supplement 1* p. 11

Bristol, 26 June 1977

### **Preparation for death**

Before a man can die, he must first be sick. Once a man is sick he doesn't like to eat. So God intends that in crossing over from living in the world to living in the hereafter man should be disarmed of his nafsu.

But man does not have the same opinion, his idea is different. That is why, when someone is sick or is about to die, or even if not — he is just sick and he doesn't want to eat — oh, they will feed him through his nose, through his ears, wherever they can get it in. Of course, according to the doctors, that is indeed the right way, for it is a question of health. But according to the will of God it is wrong, for it is really willed by God that when man is ill and facing his death he does not need to eat, in order that his nafsu should not always tempt him. Then when he is at the threshold of death his nafsu has been separated from him. But that is not how man sees it: if possible, just before someone dies, they still prepare him some

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*onde-onde* (a type of snack). So he will die while he is chewing the *onde-onde*.

It is clear then that we truly cannot do without our *nafsu*. Even though we are just about to die, we still get served *onde-onde*. So from the fast which you experience you can learn a lesson and find evidence that this is the content and the use of the fast.

*Subud World News* 8.12 p. 2

Cilandak, 6 October 1974

### AFTER DEATH

Here are two passages about what follows death.

#### A vast understanding

When finally you face death, with the *nafsu* stopped, with thinking stopped, with the ordinary understanding that you normally use every day stopped — with all that stopped, there will arise an enlightenment, a vast understanding that cannot be known by people living in the world.

*Pewarta XII* 3 p. 95

Cilandak, 22 June 1974

#### A far more glorious world

Of course we need a great deal for life in this world. But this is little or nothing, brothers and sisters, compared with your needs after you have left this world. The Messengers of God have already explained that conditions in the life after death are far wider and more glorious and more enduring than in this one. In contrast our present life here in this world can be compared to an overnight stop or to someone on a journey who breaks it for one or two or three days, whereas afterwards, when you have left this world, the time is incomparably longer and can be called immeasurable. Therefore pray to God that you will find your way there in your life after death, and that you will be able to work in that glorious world; a world far more glorious than this, the world that is truly heaven. Those of you who can already receive a little bit can catch a glimpse of that world. There are also some of you who cannot yet receive, but later on they will certainly be able to. Because they cannot yet receive, their faith is of course less, but it does not matter. But those of you who are able to receive must have no doubts.

*Pewarta XIII* 1 p. 39

Cilandak, 3 October 1975

In this final passage Bapak, who has been talking about faith, comes on to the fear of death, and why we should have no fear. Among those listening was a woman recently widowed, whose husband had been

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well-known to Bapak and others present, and to her Bapak speaks these consoling concluding words.

### **Words to a widow**

Brothers and sisters, Bapak has to admit that Mao Tse-tung was right when he said that man can achieve anything if he perseveres. So if he could say that, and could prove it, then how come we are more timid than he is? Because we have the power of God, we are protected and guided by the power of God, so we should have more courage than he had, and we should be able to achieve more than he achieved, with the power of God and with the guidance of God within us. And the reason we should have more courage than he had, and the reason that we should be able to do more than the Communists, for example, is because what people are ultimately afraid of is death, and in our case we know from our latihan kejiwaan what death is. We know that death is only a continuation of our life. Jesus Christ himself said that death is nothing more than a continuation of this life. So if we have faith in God, if we have faith in what we have received in the latihan kejiwaan, then how can we be afraid of anything, since this is the last thing that man is afraid of?

As Bapak said once, to Rosamund van Hien — she maybe feels she had lost her husband, but actually, if she could see, she would realize that in fact it is her life that is still like a charade, because he is in the reality whereas we here are living the life of a charade. So actually when she later joins Edward she will say, 'Oh, I thought that you were lost, that you had disappeared, but now I realize that I was the one who was still in an unreal world.' Because our world is unreal compared to the other one. And when you meet him you will embrace each other and you will say to each other, 'Darling, we are together again.' [Laughter and tears]

*Cassette tape 79 LWE 1*

Lewes, England, 9 September 1979

# 11 *The chain of ancestry*

## GENERATION TO GENERATION

The ties of family, the links that connect us to our ancestors and our descendants, are matters that Bapak speaks of frequently.

These two extracts concern the sins that are passed down from generation to generation. We have in the latihan, Bapak says, a means of gradually purging ourselves of these accumulated sins, and must be careful not to commit and pass on any more.

The tone in which Bapak speaks of these matters is worth noting. It is exemplified in this sentence: 'It is best for you not to take the matter too much to heart, but just accept it as a reminder not to act in the same way.' In fact, the tone is light enough not to leave his hearers oppressed by their own or their ancestors' sins, but grave enough for them to feel the need to behave rightly in future.

### **The sins of our ancestors**

We may like to ask ourselves, 'Why is it that Bapak can always receive easily, and why don't we receive as easily as Bapak?' Or we might ask, 'Why is it that Prophet Abraham, Prophet Moses, Jesus Christ and Muhammad could all receive easily the revelation and the guidance of God Almighty, while we don't — even though we always devote ourselves to God, we always surrender to God, we always think of God, and so on. But, brothers and sisters, *what* is it that always remembers God, always surrenders to God and so on? It is still our heart. It is maybe not yet our jiwa. And, actually, when the heart worships God it is not worship. This is something you will understand yourselves later on, and maybe Bapak will test this with you also — that if it's the heart which praises God, actually it is more like cursing God than praise, because the heart is not the instrument which can worship God, which can praise God, because the heart and the mind are things that do not know anything about God. They do not know the condition or the direction of God, so they cannot praise or worship God. What can praise and worship God is only the jiwa, but it may be that our jiwa is not yet in a position to do so. Why is that? Why is there a difference between us? Bapak will tell you frankly — and Bapak is

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not trying to belittle you or to pour scorn on you or something like that — Bapak is only telling you the truth. The fact is that what we are, what our nature is, consists of what has been handed down to us. So that we may say, 'But Bapak, I have done nothing wrong in my life — O.K., maybe a little wrong, but not really wrong.' But that is you — you don't know about your father. What has your father done? — you have no idea. And he doesn't know what his father has done — and so on and so on. You are the result of all the mistakes and all the errors and all the sins committed by all these generations and generations who have come down to you. So that all these things — maybe they have done something terrible, like they have killed somebody; or they have attacked somebody or restricted the freedom of someone else, or spoken badly of other people or something — all these actions are piled up, so you have inherited a great pile of sin and mistakes and so on. But it's no use for you to accuse and to be bitter about those from whom you have descended, because there is nothing you can do about it. They themselves did not feel at that moment that they were doing wrong. When they were committing these sins, when they were maybe committing murder or committing all the other things that Bapak said, they did not feel at that moment that they were acting wrongly because they were under the influence of the *nafsu*, of the heart and mind and the lower forces. At that moment, they don't feel that they are doing wrong, they feel that they are doing what they have to do.

So, brothers and sisters, we can do nothing but accept our situation; and accept that even though now we have received the *latihan kejiwaan*, it may still take a long time for us to experience the improvement of our being. Even though we have now, luckily, received this *latihan kejiwaan*, which means the improvement of our situation has been speeded up, yet the process whereby all this pile of trouble is demolished is something that is very complex and very deep and takes a long time. Maybe this is something you are not aware of now, you cannot see what has to happen, what you have to go through in order to experience the improvement of your being — but later you will know it. Later on, you will understand what you have had to go through to reach that point. Looking back, you will understand all that had to be put right in your situation when you first received the contact with the power of God Almighty.



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In our situation, where we are now, there is actually nothing that we can do except to surrender and leave everything to the power of God Almighty, because it is only His power that can do this work, that can start delving into our being and putting right what is wrong.

*Pewartia Special Supplement 13* pp. 287-9      Santa Monica, USA,  
29 November 1977

### **Don't blame your ancestors**

If there are still people who have lost their way in seeking their livelihood, it is clearly the fault of their ancestors, who have caused them to have a narrow and disordered inner feeling. But even so, you should not blame your parents, for they themselves were not aware of the wrong conduct in their lives. So there is no reason for you to blame them. On the contrary, you should find a way that enables you to correct the errors they have made. It is fortunate for you that by the grace of Almighty God you can receive His guidance and direction which manifests in the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, so that the faults do not remain endlessly within you. This is the reason, brothers and sisters, why Bapak has often said that the latihan kejiwaan of Subud puts a halt to this, so that the faults in your inner feeling will no longer be transmitted endlessly into the inner feeling of your descendants. In this way, your children will be human beings who have a human inner force, and an inner self with the qualities of *Susila*, *Budhi* and *Dharma*. As for those of you who are already old and whose children were born before you received the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, you should have the feeling of patience and acceptance, surrendering with submission and sincerity to Almighty God so that, through the latihan kejiwaan that you follow, you can bring benefit to your children. Besides this, you should also guide them so that, when they have grown up, they will like to tread in your footsteps and wish to be opened and to follow the Subud latihan.

*The Growth of Subud* p. 129      Cilandak, 22 August 1967

### **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD**

'There is a union of the inner feeling between us and our forbears  
from their time until the present.'

Beliefs concerning prayers *for* the souls of the dead and prayers *to* the

souls of the dead differ widely from faith to faith. Certainly the belief that we can by God's grace actually help our ancestors is an invigorating one, as it gives us both a responsibility and a hope. Bapak is speaking of this belief in the first of the following extracts.

As to the reverse belief, that the souls of the deceased can help *us*, Bapak warns; in the second passage, of the dangers of this in the case of 'unpurified' souls. Obviously the souls of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of Saint Anthony and other saints to whom the devout pray *are* purified. There is no suggestion in Bapak's words of getting in touch with the spirits of the dead in order to receive messages and advice.

### **Helping a dead father**

In the case of your father, who is dead, you were able to help his jiwa because of the development of your own jiwa, and because you are his son. So obviously there is a connection between father and son — if the son is good, the father will also be good. Conversely, if the son is not good, he brings his father to a level that is not good.

Therefore it is necessary for you to do the latihan kejiwaan diligently with full patience, trust and sincerity, because the cleanness and purity of your inner feeling will cause the jiwa of your dead father to be good.

*Pewartu VII 6 pp. 27–9*

Letter to a member in Sri Lanka

### **Souls of the dead**

As Bapak always explains, the souls of the dead (*arwah*) really need descendants who are truly willing to worship Almighty God. This is necessary so that their worship of God can open the right way and purify their ancestors of all the sins they committed while living on this earth. Nevertheless, it is not every descendant who can obtain such grace by worshipping through prayer, because usually the descendant still worships with the nafsu. For this reason, we in Subud are fortunate that our way of worshipping Almighty God is based on direction and guidance from God, so that we only have to follow its course in everything.

In reality, souls of the deceased that have not yet been purified cannot bring peace and calm to their descendants. On the contrary, they will, rather, be harmful for the life of their descendants as it is their habit to be tempters so that their descendants will not be at peace.

This is all, and Bapak only advises you to be calm and to

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surrender everything to the power of Almighty God with patience, trust and sincere submission.

*Pewartia VIII* 2 p. 57 and p. 64 Letter to a member in Japan

Finally there comes an excerpt that is perhaps the most astonishing passage in this book. Those who believe that what is here described is the truth will immediately see that it holds immense possibilities for all mankind from the beginning of time until the end of time.

The talk was delivered some months after the rest of the talks in this book. The text is a transcript of the English translation recorded on the tape.

### A Testing Session

Now Bapak wants to give you more experience to train you or show you how you can help or how you can guide your brothers and sisters when Bapak is not with you. Now this is very important. Bapak would like to use our brother M. as an example. Would you come to the front? Stand there but look that way.

May God give his permission that all nafs should be put aside from M.'s being. Feel with your legs how this world is turning.

#### *Testing*

Were you able to feel that movement of the earth? . . . So you were able from your own reality to know that this world wobbles as it turns. And this is also an example to show that all life vibrates or moves.

Again. Bapak wants to know the name of your father . . . Your father A. before you were opened was he alive or was he dead? If he was dead, how was he, and if he was alive, how was he?

#### *Testing*

[The translator reports M.'s answer, inaudible on tape, to Bapak: 'He was like a stone.']

Now that his son M. has received the latihan kejiwaan how is A.'s situation?

#### *Testing*

[Sounds of chanting, and of laughter from M., then from the hall.]  
And now how do you feel about this, M., now that your father has been as it were brought to heaven through the power of Almighty God?

#### *Testing*

[Sound of happy chanting.]

So it is not a waste of money to have come here from South Africa,

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even though the ticket may have been very expensive [laughter].

Bapak wants to explain this to you. What you have just experienced is not Bapak's orders to you. It is your own experience, it is your own reality that you have experienced.

\* \* \*

[Bapak now asked an experienced woman helper to come forward.]

Relax as though you were just about to do latihan.

Bapak hopes that the nafsu that is always running wild within you and is always pressing on you will now be put aside completely from your inner self. Follow the movement.

*Testing*

[Bapak sings. Sound of chanting.]

Follow the movements of your body with a melody and a rhythm that is really good and demonstrates how your nature has changed and become good.

*Testing*

[Bapak sings. Sound of chanting.]

Receive now within your being how is the state of your father who has already died.

*Testing*

Actually you weren't yet able to receive clearly about the state of your father, who actually is still waiting, is still hoping for your latihan to be deeper and stronger, but there is already the beginning of an improvement in his situation.

\* \* \*

This was just a little excerpt to give you an example, a taste, of the fact that the latihan kejiwaan that you have received is real and true, something with a real meaning.

And this is also a proof for you that your latihan does not only benefit your own self, but also those from whom you are descended. And this is because actually you have gone wrong, or you have come into a state of error or a state of sin, because of them. It is their fault that you are in the state you are in or were in the state you were in. So if in your life in this world you are enabled to rise to a level of a complete life or a good life then you will automatically also have an effect on their state. So that if in the end it is possible for you after you die to go to heaven you will not go to heaven alone but you will bring with you all your ancestors and all

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the people from whom you are descended. And similarly if in this world you can truly become clean and have a good heart then it will also have an effect on your descendants, and you will automatically raise up your descendants. So that if your life in this world can become complete, can become perfect, then their own life will become good because they will be always at peace in their life.

*Cassette tape 81 NYC 2*

New York, 21 June 1981

## *12 Subud and the religions*

‘Nothing that is received in Subud contradicts what has been stated in religion.’

No devout adherent of any of the great religions will find in these passages any disparagement of his religion. Bapak honours all religions. Indeed it seems that Muslims generally honour the great prophets, or founders, of other religions, such as Abraham, Moses and Jesus, more than Jews and Christians honour Muhammad. But Bapak does say that although everything is *there* in the religions, somehow most of their followers miss the reality of it, and this is why something new (though it is also old) is needed, namely Subud.

### SUBUD IS NOT A RELIGION

In the following extracts Bapak is saying, once again, that Subud is not a new religion, and there is no *need* for a new religion, as the great religious teachers have already given men all the rules and advice that they need to lead the good life. Nor is Subud in competition for membership with the established religions: Bapak advises Subud members to turn or return to the religion of their country, which they will approach with fuller understanding.

### **Bapak and the Buddhist**

Subud cannot be said to be a religion or a school of thought. It cannot be called so, for nothing is taught nor is there anything in the nature of a system of ideas in Subud. If, even so, Subud were to be called a school of thought or a system of ideas, it would have to have rules for worshipping God, such as those in religion. Such are the reasons why Subud can accept and include people of assorted races and assorted religions.

This morning Bapak touched on the fact that Subud, or the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, is a technique — the technique, that is, of the truth or the reality of what you already possess. If, for example, what you have been following is the religion of Islam, then in the latihan that you receive and whose path you tread you will be able to discover and obtain the truth or the reality of what you have been studying or following. Taking Islam just as an example, you will be able to find the truth or reality concerning its

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beliefs, its ritual observances, its fast, its alms-giving and its pilgrimage to Mecca. You will be able to receive the truth of all this.

By this means you will then be not merely following your religion, but will be able to know the truth of it. And furthermore you will not easily be deceived nor stray nor diverge from your target. Likewise you who are Christians will presently be able to obtain the truth of what you have heard, of what you have been taught as well as what you have followed.

There was an instance like this when Bapak was in India. While Bapak was there — he does not remember the year, but he was in India some six or seven years ago — he opened a man who had been a Buddhist for years on end, for he himself said that he had followed the religion of Buddha 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 — his spirit or *jiwa* — 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 *samadi* or meditation. Bapak then touched him and told him not to do the latihan *kejiwaan* 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, truly to see in his latihan the form of the Buddha. It was like a statue, but with a strange radiance. Clearly then, although having the nature of a statue, this was also a sign that the one who saw it had reached a certain level. But he was fortunate to have seen its radiance already.

His joy and contentment then led him to say, 'This is what I was seeking, because for me, Bapak, 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 — that is, if you have not yet become one with him or at least had a meeting with him — it can be said that you have not yet truly got to the real place.' 'Oh, is it like that?' 'It is'. So he carried on.

This is just an example. Although someone may be a Buddhist,

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when he has joined Subud he will be able to receive the evidence of what he has understood, of what he has followed and of what he has been taught.

This is the equivalent of what Bapak has experienced. For Bapak is a Muslim, though a *mogol* Muslim. A *mogol* Muslim means a Muslim who is not well versed in the holy books, not knowing just which is which. Yet Bapak can be called a Muslim.

*Pewarta*, XII 5 pp. 135-7

Cilandak, 24 November 1973

### **Subud is a fraternity**

The latihan kejiwaan of Subud is, by its nature, an exercise or training, not a kind of teaching, not some skill and also not some kind of study. Thus this latihan kejiwaan is naturally not a religion. That is why people and races who differ from one another in religion are able to join Subud and become Subud members. This Subud is a *paguyuban* (Javanese 'fraternity'), a meeting place, an association of people who have received mercy from God, who are inspired by God and who automatically receive guidance in their jiwa. That is why there is not the least bit of theory in Subud.

People are always asking what religion Subud is. But Bapak answers and replies that Subud is not a religion. It is the Subud members who have religions. When Subud members who belong to the religion of Islam enter Subud, they receive the latihan in accordance with what is taught in Islam. When Subud members who are Catholics enter Subud, in receiving the latihan kejiwaan they are guided and led by God towards the perfection of the Catholic faith. It is the same for Subud members who are Protestants, and also for members of other religions, such as Buddhists, Hindus and so on.

*The Way Ahead* p. 24

Wolfsburg, West Germany,  
14 June 1975

Although Bapak has in general advised that Subud members should abide by the religion of their country or birth, quite a few Westerners have adopted Islam and taken Muslim names. This was happening in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but is happening much less now. It may be that the impetus came from doing Ramadhan in Cilandak, for many who could afford it used their holidays to fly out to be with Bapak, especially at the time of the fast (see Chapter 5, p. 45).

### **THE GREAT RELIGIONS**

Naturally enough Bapak often talks about religion. Again naturally enough, as he is a Muslim, it is of the Islamic faith and observances



and prayers, of the Koran — from which he sometimes quotes — and of Muhammad that he speaks most frequently.

There is, for instance, an account of Muhammad's Ascension, told in the easy, everyday, sometimes humorous style that Bapak uses even for the most sublime events: '... Then angel Gabriel brought him a horse called a *burag* ... an animal like a horse but, strangely enough, it had the head of a woman, and wore earrings ... The angel Gabriel told Prophet Muhammad to get on the horse ... As he journeyed up he first met the Prophet Abraham, who immediately recognized him and said, "If I am not mistaken you are Muhammad."

And Muhammad said, "Yes."

Then Prophet Abraham was very, very moved and started to cry, because he knew that the Prophet Muhammad was his own descendant and he was very moved that one of his descendants could reach a point where he could ascend to be face to face with God Almighty.' (*Pewartu Special Supplement 8*)

But it is not only of Muhammad that Bapak speaks. He very frequently speaks of Jesus, quoting his sayings and referring to his miracles. And a favourite theme is the particular contribution and significance of the four 'prophets,' Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, at their points of history, and what each brought from God to man. Here, in conveniently compact form, though in the somewhat stiff language of an early translation, is such an account.

### **Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad**

At the time when there were no religions, when there was no order of life for man here upon earth, a message came down which was brought by the Prophet Abraham. At that time man began to believe in the being of God, and to believe also that he himself was created by God. This was because in the period before Abraham, people liked to kill one another and there was no peace and love in the way of life of mankind — man put his trust in what he could believe: that is to say, if a stone could be believed he did so; if it was a tree that could be believed, he put his trust in that tree — it was a period of paganism.

It turned out, in spite of the advice given by Abraham, that there were still many who did not believe in the existence of God and that man was created by Him. This was followed by the coming of another Messenger, the Prophet Moses, who represented the distinction between what is right and what is wrong.

There were symbols in the life of these prophets. With Abraham the answer is 'yes' to the question as to whether he truly brought

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mankind to have faith in the power of God, because this faith is symbolized in the Prophet Abraham, who was ready to sacrifice his own son, his only son who was born when he was already in old age.

At the time of Moses, the prophet who represented the distinction between what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad, what is holy and what is unholy, the symbol was represented in the cleavage of the water so that it became separated. Water, in reality, is the symbol of the feeling of man.

Even though the commands brought by them were so clear and good, yet there were still many who did not follow and conform to their precepts, so that again another Messenger was sent to earth, Jesus, who was symbolized in the crucifixion, which means, in reality, that there *is* life after death, and there *is* heaven and the power of God after death. This was again followed by the Prophet Muhammad who symbolized that all power is in the hands of God, both in the world and in life after death, so that mankind on earth will come to this realization.

It is clear that mankind has received everything necessary in the teaching brought by those men in times past. There is no longer any need to give advice to mankind. Man is no longer able to be told to do this or that, because contemporary man is already clever with his brain, and instead of being given advice he could, on the contrary, give it. If another teaching were to be given, people would say that it is only the old song being sung again, a song which does not fit in with this modern time. There are, indeed, many among contemporary men who, because of the progress made by their brain and mind, deny and disbelieve in the existence of God.

The coming of what all of you now have received is really an infinite grace, for we are no longer simply to follow and conform to advice, but we are now to practise the reality of it so that inevitably we will come to believe, because of the existence of life and its vibrations within our own beings. And the presence of life within you in this way will bring you to realize and experience for yourselves the reality of what has been told by the prophets in the days of old, that God is within you, and that you are always protected and He is always present; and that you should, therefore, worship Him. Remember your own house, the house of God within your own being.

*New York Talks* pp. 27-8

New York, 9 May 1959

Finally here is a passage about Buddha

### **The significance of Buddha**

Now what shows the meaning of Buddha? [Bapak tests] Buddha is shown as being naked. The purpose of this nakedness is to show that he was bare of the nafsu. If there is no nafsu, he will not be able to make this [Bapak touches his clothes]. So this is nafsu. This nakedness is really only symbolic. The most important thing is to be free of the nafsu which always fetters you so that you are unable to feel the closeness of God.

*Subud World News 4.1 p. 3*

Cilandak, 3 December 1969

### **WHY SUBUD IS NEEDED**

‘It is as though God has got up from His throne and has come into the world to act Himself.’

### **ADDITIONAL GLOSSARY**

Shariat	Religious observance
Karekat	The study of religion
Hakekat	The reality of religion

In the following passages Bapak is answering the question: ‘If all the great religions are there, what need is there of anything else?’

In the first passage he has been talking of the observance of religion (shariat), and has then gone on to describe the intellectual study and understanding of religion (karekat), and here comes on to the reality (hakekat).

### **The rarely felt reality**

Now we say the karekat is whatever can be grasped by the human mind, because it is an effort based on the intelligence and the understanding. So the boundary of the karekat is the boundary of the human understanding. Whatever is contained in the karekat must still be able to be grasped by the human understanding. Now it is said that when you take the karekat to its maximum — that is, you study, you study, you study and you get to what is, one can say, the top of the karekat, the limit of what is possible to be grasped by the human mind, the point where there is no longer any more meaning; in other words, you reach a point of zero where your understanding is faced with nothing, when at that moment you receive the help of God Almighty — that is the hakekat, that moment when the zero is filled with the guidance of the power of God. And Bapak says that this latihan that we have received is the

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latihan of the hakekat, because when Bapak first received it Bapak was at that point of zero. Bapak had no will whatsoever. Bapak had no wish, no direction, no aim whatsoever at that point. Bapak was at zero. At that moment Bapak received this latihan which we have all witnessed. So when Bapak received this latihan it was when Bapak was at the point of zero, and this was witnessed, or this was confirmed, by God to Bapak when God Almighty took Bapak out of the world of men, out of this world at that time.

Now this same hakekat was first given to men by God at the time of Abraham; and at that time Abraham received this hakekat, and through this received guidance and teaching and understanding from God Almighty, all of which he passed on to his followers in the form of a book known as the *Zabbur*. And the content of Abraham's message, or Abraham's religion which he passed on to his followers, was a strong and firm faith in God's power — complete and utter faith in God's power and a great courage in following what is right. This power and this courage, this faith and this courage were symbolized in the case of Abraham by the story of his willingness to sacrifice his son, as he was ordered to do by God Almighty. And even in this there is already something unclear because in Islam, of course, it is said that the son was Ishmael, whereas Bapak knows that in Christianity it is considered that he was Isaac, as you can see in the cinema nowadays. So even there it's already not clear what happened. But the fact is that Abraham was able to pass on to his followers everything that he received from God, *except* the hakekat; that is, that was something that only he could receive, and those who were very very close to him. In other words, only a very few people were able to receive the hakekat at that time.

So what Abraham received from God Almighty through the hakekat, was a tremendous courage to follow what is right. Of course, Bapak mentions, courage is of many kinds. There is courage because I am right; there is also courage when I am confused — in other words, we are in a state of confusion and then we have courage at a moment when we don't know what is right and what is wrong. That is a courage that is influenced by the lower forces. So there are many kinds of courage. There's the courage that was received by Abraham for the first time at that time. There's a courage that is due to what is right.

Now in the case of Moses — he was able to pass on to his followers a teaching based on what he received from God, but the gift of the hakekat he could only pass on to those very very close to him.

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And we have the same story in the case of Jesus Christ — that Jesus received the hakekat from God Almighty and He was able to pass on to some of his followers that same hakekat. But there are very few also who are able to receive this. For example, there is the story of Peter. It is said that at one time he saw a man who was paralysed, and Peter said to him, 'Why are you not able to walk?' And the man said, 'Because I have been paralysed for a long time.' And Peter said, 'Do you have faith in God?' So the man said, 'Well, if faith in God can cure me, then certainly I have faith in God — why not?' So Peter said to him, 'Yes, you must really have faith in God.' And the man said, 'Yes, I do.' 'All right, get up and walk.'

At that moment he was able to walk. And this experience is the hallmark of the hakekat; that is, that something miraculous can happen — a manifestation of the miraculous power of God, and that is known as the *murgisak* which was received by all the prophets and all the Messengers of God. For example, we know about Jesus that Jesus could walk on the water, that Jesus brought back to life people who were dead. This is *murgisak*; that is, the sign of the hakekat — the gift of God Almighty.

Now we can see from all these stories that we know already for a long time — we can see and draw the conclusion that the hakekat can be received by very few people — not by the masses. So then why is it that now, today, Bapak passes on the hakekat to anybody who asks for it? Brothers and sisters, Bapak doesn't know. Bapak doesn't know why this is, because Bapak only knows that Bapak does this because this is God's will, and God has given Bapak the permission and the right to do this. Bapak also knows that this is the last, this is the end, or the last possibility — because if, with this, man is not able to receive it, then Bapak doesn't know what God will decide about mankind. But this is the final step because whereas before, in the case of the prophets, God, as it were, sat on His throne and the one who did the work was the Messenger, giving us some advice, and so on — now it is as though God has got up from His throne and has come into the world to act Himself. That is why Bapak, for example, doesn't give a lot of rules and advice about how you should move — you should move like this and like that, and you should believe this and that. Bapak doesn't do any of that. Bapak simply passes on the contact with the power of God: and then Bapak has been told by God that Bapak is free of responsibility. If those who have received the latihan do not follow it, do not do it faithfully, do not receive what God gives them, then

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Bapak has no responsibility because Bapak has already passed on everything that Bapak has received to each of us.

*Pewartas Special Supplement 6* pp. 107–9      Blonay, Switzerland,  
13 August 1977

The next four passages in this section deal with ways in which, Bapak considers, the original teachings of the founders of religions have become distorted. First there is the distortion towards asceticism and meditation, which Bapak contrasts with Jesus' *normal* way of living. Then there is the distortion towards a false view of work and money. Where the priests do not work for their livelihood, but concentrate entirely on the spiritual life, there grows up the feeling that people cannot be both good and successful in the world, and that work is inferior to worship. This feeling, Bapak says, can even come to be embodied in the structure of society, as in the case of the caste system, which results in stagnation for both people and country. In addition, many of the followers of these religions have come to equate non-success with spirituality, and regard it as a virtue to put up with poverty in this world in the belief that they will have happiness in the next. And that gives them another excuse for being lazy.

### **Real religion is normal**

This, then, is the true significance of what you have received in the latihan kejiwaan. This is also what is explained in religion, and this is the purpose and the aim of religion — that which we have received in the latihan kejiwaan. This is why in the great religions, in the sacred books, there is never any advice, or anything that encourages people, or turns people towards practices like meditation or becoming hermits, or giving up their everyday life, or doing something peculiar, or isolating themselves from society and so on. Because people who received the grace of God in the past knew very well that these practices lead not to God, but to Nirvana. And Nirvana is the world of the satanic forces. Because those who practise these techniques, like meditation and concentration and so on, are trying to arrive at a point at which their breathing and everything stops. So they get to a point of complete stillness — and that is death. And that death is the world of the satanic forces. Whereas God's gift to man is not death, but life. Life that spans from this world to the next; it is a life that starts in this world and continues to the next world. And that is the life which is symbolized by what was received by Jesus Christ and the other Messengers of God Almighty.

That is why in the story of the life of Jesus there is never any

mention of Jesus practising meditation or becoming a hermit, or doing asceticism or anything like that. Jesus is described as a man who behaved normally and walked among people in the normal way. But in his walk was the walk of life. And the significance of the story of Jesus is that with Jesus the gift of the grace of God acquired a personification within him, so that it could be seen by all mankind. This is why Jesus could live again, could live after his death. And that is why, as Bapak said earlier (which I forgot to translate) — in religion we are not required to practise meditation or become hermits or to give up our life in this world. We are required to be normal people who work, who wear clothes, who are clean, neat, tidy and normal in every way in our lives.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 9* p. 212 Toronto, 26 September 1977

### **Work not incompatible with worship**

Brothers and sisters, according to tradition, or according to your own instinct or intuition which you have inherited from your ancestors, there is a feeling or an idea or a conviction that the pursuit of the worship of God — the pursuit of the kejiwaan or the life of the inner — is something that is incompatible with earning money, with trying to make a living, or with trying to achieve something in this world. It is felt that the more progress you make in the kejiwaan, the more you devote yourself to the kejiwaan, the more your worldly situation will go backwards, or will decline. This, for example, is characteristic of the belief or the tradition in Java where it is considered that people who devote themselves to the spiritual life cannot be successful outwardly. Their business, or whatever they do, must inevitably suffer and this is the consequence that they have to accept. But, brothers and sisters, this idea is not only prevalent here in Java, because Bapak has become aware of it just as much in Europe and in other parts of the world. People are always asking Bapak, 'But, Bapak, Subud is a spiritual thing. Why do you still expect us, on top of that, to do enterprises and to make money. How can the two be reconciled?'

It is clear that this is not exclusive to one country, but this tradition is truly ingrained in our ideas and in our view of life. This idea or this concept has actually even been fixed or inculcated in our social system. In the East especially, there used to be castes or layers of society where the lowest layer, the first layer, consisted of people who work — that is, people who work in agriculture, for example, and also people who work in artistic matters, and people who work in technological fields or have the cleverness or the skill

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related to technology, and to engineering, and so on. That is level one.

On level two are the people who are engaged in defending the country — soldiers or warriors or knights and so on, the highest or upper limit of which is the king.

The third class are people who also work — but they work exclusively on the kejiwaan; that is, on the worship of God. Their effort and their use of their heart and mind are devoted entirely to the pursuit of the worship of God. They are known as the Brahmin. This is the system that is already built into society, and expresses the view that you cannot worship God and work at the same time. You cannot both devote yourself to God, and also make money. What it says is that you'd better not try — just stick to your own thing.

This third caste, the ones who concentrate, as it were, on the worship of God and finding the way to God, put tremendous effort into this endeavour. They use their heart and mind in many many ways to try and find God. They look and look and look, and look and look. And they imagine. The idea is that if they devote themselves, if they really devote their energy to this, then in the end they will get it. But the fact is that if they find God, then they've found the wrong God. Because if God could be found by the effort of the mind and the heart, then it would mean that we are on the same level as God, that we have achieved something — and we are on that level of the thing we have found. Supposing we have found God, then it means there are actually two Gods. There is God — and the one who has found Him. Because they have to be on the same level — that is, if there is one person who is looking for God. But supposing there are ten people looking for God and finding Him, it means there are then ten Gods, or eleven, let us say. So it is clear, brothers and sisters, that that is not God the Almighty.

Normally, because of the enormous difficulty, the conclusion of these people who are looking for God is that this effort must be incredibly difficult because they don't seem to succeed. Therefore, they devote themselves to this work, usually on their own. They isolate themselves in order to work on this. But the reality is that the way to God is precisely through our normal everyday life. The way to God is something that cannot be looked for and cannot be achieved by the effort of the heart and mind. Actually, the way to the worship of God, or finding the worship of God, or receiving the grace of God, is something that happens spontaneously. It is



something that comes. The *qadar* that we receive is something that comes, as it were. Before we know it, it is there.

This has been our experience in the latihan kejiwaan; that we don't understand why — and suddenly we have received it. That is the hallmark, that is the stamp of the gift of God Almighty.

*Subud World News* 13.3 p. 2

Cilandak, 4 February 1979

### **'Opium of the masses'**

Brothers and sisters, it is sure that you have all read in books and magazines the writings of people who are clever, who call themselves intellectuals, and they have said that religion, or the belief in God Almighty, is like opium. It is like a narcotic which puts people to sleep, because the people who believe in religion, or who believe in God Almighty, no longer like to work, and no longer like to develop themselves. The result is that they bring economic weakness and stagnation to their country and to their nation. So it is true that their countries become weak and backward as a result of their belief and their faith in God Almighty.

Brothers and sisters, this criticism is justified because, in general, people who follow a religion only believe — they do not look for the reality or the proof of what is believed in. They do not follow, they do not try to find the reality, the real meaning of the belief of what they believe in. Generally, those who believe in God, or believe in religion, feel as though they are already in heaven — as though everything is provided for them, and everything is available to them and is already in front of them. Therefore, they make do with whatever they happen to meet with, or with whatever they happen to encounter. The trouble is that they forget that this belief, this idea, is only a picture, an image of man in heaven. When Adam was still in heaven, before he was created in this world, everything was available to him. He was complete. He was able to see, hear, smell, taste, understand — without a physical body, without any form. He was able to travel from one corner of the universe to another, instantly, in the twinkling of an eye. But, brothers and sisters, he was not living in his physical body, he was living in the body which has authority. But when we live in this world, when we live in our physical body, then all that is simply imagination, it is simply something in another world.

The result is that those who already believe in religion and believe in God without trying to find the reality, the proof of what they believe in, feel themselves completely satisfied as though they need nothing more. Therefore, they feel there is no need for

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anything other than to eat, to sleep, to eat, to sleep, to eat, to sleep — and that's all. Only you usually add to that and get married [laughter].

Brothers and sisters, this is a very great error, a very great misunderstanding, because God has created man to live, and not just to die. Therefore, it is not right for man in this world to think only about the next life and only to prepare for death. Man has to use what God has given him in this world. Otherwise, what is the use of this world? Why has God bothered to create this world if it is not used for anything? Who is it who makes something, who makes a tool or who makes some object, and then just throws it away? When you make something it is certainly something to be used.

*Subud World News 12.9*  
*Talks Supplement p. 2*

Mexico, 20 November 1977

### **Worship is not enough**

Brothers and sisters, it is indeed true that in religion we find that those who work — in Christianity, the priests, the parsons, the ministers of religion; and in Islam, let us say, the Ulama, or the elders of the religions — they generally work not expecting a reward or a result in this world, because they consider that the number one duty of a human being is to worship and to serve God Almighty, while his effort to find his living and his necessities in this world is number two. It is there — you have to do it — but it is number two compared to the importance of serving God. So while they work hard and sincerely, they do not expect as a reward for their work a brilliant or a fantastic result, such as one would expect from an enterprise or from an effort or work whose aim is success in this world. This, then, is what is customary among people who belong to the various religions who have the belief that man's number one duty in this world is only to serve God, and that his efforts to succeed and to fulfil his needs in this world are subsidiary to that.

Now, for us in Subud it is somewhat different because in Subud we, as it were, take the middle way. We do not emphasize one to the exclusion of the other, but we consider that the important thing is a balance between our work in this world and the worship of God Almighty. Therefore, there is a small difference or a small distinction between what we do in Subud and what is practised by the people who have followed the great religions in the past. This is why in Subud we are encouraged to practise enterprises; that is, any effort in our lives which contributes to our welfare in this world, whether it be in a situation where we are bound — maybe

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we are civil servants in government service — or we are working as an officer in a large corporation, or we are standing on our own feet. In each case we consider that our work in this world has an importance or a meaning in our worship of God Almighty. We experience in Subud that what is important is not just the worship of God Almighty. In other words, we worship God Almighty not because somehow God requires it of us, or because God needs our worship, but rather because our worship of God Almighty is a duty — and the evaluation of whether we have done our duty or not is not based on whether we always praise God or always remember God, but on the results of what we have done.

So if Bapak compares us, compares the state of a human being with the servant of a king — what the king needs is not that his servant will come every morning and salute, and come back in the afternoon and salute, and then come back in the evening and salute again, because that will not contribute to what needs to be done. What the king needs from his servant is that he should do his duty, that he should carry out the tasks that he has been given. It is through that that he fulfils his duties, and through that that the king will be satisfied with his work. But, of course, in addition to carrying out his work correctly and well, it is also not out of place to salute the king from time to time, because what that saluting means is that the king will be reminded of the existence of his servant [laughter] so that when the time comes to dish out the promotions, he will not be forgotten [laughter].

If we compare that with our situation, or we take this as an analogy of the life of man in this world, then what is needed of us, what God needs of us, is not that every morning we pray, and every midday we pray, and every afternoon we pray, and every evening we pray — but we don't work. Actually, what God needs of us is our work. In other words, what is required of us is to make efforts, to use our heart and mind and everything that we have received, in order to sort out or to organize our life in this world in the best possible way.

In Subud the most important thing is the result of our work. Even more, in Subud our worship of God is received and is guided by the power of God Himself. So what is important for us is not just our worship, but what we then do in this world.

This is why Bapak reminds and encourages the helpers and the members of the committee to work hard — and to work hard in the understanding that this work is not for themselves, but is for God. If you work hard, if you do your duty as helpers, as committee

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members in the Brotherhood, the results will not be that God will give you a promotion or something like that, but God will know what you have done. God will be aware of how you have worked and what are the results of your work. And God's reward to you is not in the form of promotion, but something else. The way God rewards you is that you will find that in your everyday life — whether you happen to be working in the government as a civil servant, or in a big corporation, or whether you happen to be working in any way at all — those around you will always be aware of you; will always be aware of what you are doing; will be aware of you as a person who is sincere in doing your work, in trying to do a good job; sincere and serious in approaching the problems that come up in front of you. So that you will get a name as a person who is truly responsible and truly serious in his attitude to his work.

*Pewartar Special Supplement 14* pp. 297-9

San Francisco,  
3 December 1977

### WHAT SUBUD BRINGS

'It is only a united human race that reflects the oneness of God.'

In these three extracts Bapak tells of the special contribution of Subud to mankind — proof as opposed to mere belief, and the possibility of harmony among different religions. The first is Bapak's reply to an Indian member who had described the difficulties of Subud India, many of which arose because the helpers and members there are still involved in other methods and practices which abound in India.

#### **Proof as opposed to belief**

It is true that this latihan kejiwaan is not in conflict with the various religions — just the opposite. It will unveil the realities of religion which cannot yet be understood, even by those who profess a religion.

As an example Bapak will speak about India. In India many people believe in karma and reincarnation and in mystical trainings such as the practice of samadi. It is just the same here and also everywhere else. All these things are a way or a religious discipline from an era of long ago. In former times man's thinking had not yet reached the extent that it has now when the thinking of man ranges everywhere. Thus today many people have become learned but only believe outwardly in their religion; but inwardly they do not believe in it because they have no evidence or proof.

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With the coming of this latihan kejiwaan of Subud everything that was previously secret in religion will be revealed and people will no longer wish to keep these as secrets. This is how it is because the nature of these religious secrets is such that they cannot be revealed by man, but only by the power of God. God will certainly not do this through the inner self of man on his own, no! But in reality it is the *man who receives* who is able to uncover the secrets which are still locked up in the religions. In this way man will have more devotion to the content of the religions and know truly whether he may take this step or may not take that step.

*Subud World News 4.1 p. 1*

Cilandak, 3 December 1969

### **Subud unites worshippers**

Well, God knows why Subud is only sent or willed at this time. Clearly now is the time for it, that we can receive God's guidance through His grace.

If you like to think about it, or feel about it for a moment, this latihan which we call Susila Budhi Dharma is something that is new, that has only just happened. But it is, in fact, something that existed since there were creatures, or men. For God creates everything accompanied by all that his creature needs. So the birth of God's gift to man was at the time man was born in this world and the birth of the rest of the universe.

In history it has never happened before. If you want to do research or to ask experts, it has never happened before that there was anything able to unite men of different religions. Bapak has never read a book or history which tells that men of different nations and religions can be united so that they are as one. This has only happened now, with the birth of Subud.

You may like to do some research and examine this: is it true or not? Because what has existed in the past in religions is always accompanied by advice that distinguishes one from the other, so that there can never be unity between people of this religion and that religion — while it is *that* which man should have if man really wishes to be a united human race, because it is only a united human race which reflects the oneness of God.

*Subud World News 9.5 p. 2*

Cilandak, 16 March 1975

### **One human family**

Subud has not come to destroy religion; it has come by the will of God, to bring harmony into all religions, so that in their totality they may represent one human family, one aim, one God.

Later on you will be able to prove for yourselves the truth of this

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unity. Although most of you here are people with white skins, you will later be able to experience and to see that in each of you there are other selves; one with a black colour, one with red, one with yellow, one with white and one with brown.

*Subud and the Active Life* pp. 108-9      London, 17 August 1959

## *13 Subud and the cults*

Markedly different from Bapak's attitude to the established religions is his attitude to the cults. He considers them to be unavailing, or confusing, or dangerous. He discourages Subud members from 'mixing', that is combining the latihan with other ways and practices. However, although he speaks absolutely and with no qualification about the cults, when he meets the followers of any cult he treats them with a marvellous courtesy and gentleness, as we shall see.

### MEDITATION (SAMADI)

'If you still use such ways it will remain easy for the angels to tempt you.'

Meditation is nowadays becoming as interesting and important to many Westerners as it has always been in the East. I give passages, without comment, from four of the talks in which Bapak speaks about it.

#### **Bapak and the teacher of meditation**

Bapak would like to tell you of an experience he had a long time ago when he lived in Solo. At that time Bapak met a man who was well practised in esoteric teachings. In fact, the man of whom Bapak speaks had written many books containing teaching about perfection — in other words, a teaching of a kind of guidance to enable a person to find the right way when he dies.

After conversing for a while, Bapak asked him, 'Have you yourself experienced what you have written about in your book containing education or guidance in the teaching on perfection?'

He answered, 'Yes . . . I have experienced it all.'

Bapak asked again, 'If I may be permitted to ask, what is the way or what do you do to receive something like that?'

For a moment, the man looked a little doubtful and then he answered, 'All right, I do not mind at all doing it in front of you,' and he then sat down to practise samadi. It immediately appeared that his breathing was controlled so that soon he did not seem to breathe at all.

Bapak also sat down at the same time, but Bapak then quietened himself and surrendered everything to the power of Almighty God. Suddenly, the old man moved and fell down, weeping and

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asking Almighty God for forgiveness for all his sins. For a while Bapak remained quiet and just let the man weep, and then Bapak stood up and called his name.

When the old man got up and was seated again in his previous place, Bapak asked him, 'What did you feel just now?'

He answered rather hesitantly, 'Yes . . . indeed that was the way I usually practise samadi, but then I felt the presence of something strange which I have never experienced before — that is. I suddenly felt as though I were pulled upwards and then I understood no more and felt nothing until finally you called me. So I must ask you: what really happened to me and how did it happen?'

Bapak replied, 'Such is the limitation of man's understanding derived from information or advice he has studied. Actually, you can reach the realm of death with your practices, which means that you will be dead. But you have not yet reached the point of being able to experience the course of your life, that is, the way your life continues. So when you wept just now and asked Almighty God's forgiveness for your sins, everything happened beyond your understanding. This shows that the strength and breadth of human understanding, with its power of concentration, extends only so far. Beyond that is the power of Almighty God enveloping the self of man outwardly and inwardly, and there too is the jiwa which becomes the content of your inner self, just beginning to be awakened by the power of Almighty God. Thus, you really wept and asked for God's forgiveness just now, but your heart and mind had no power at all, except to observe what was happening. That is why the heart and mind cannot be used to find the life which is called the continuation of life after life on earth. This can only be done and experienced by the jiwa, and the jiwa can only be awakened through the grace of Almighty God. All you have to do is surrender to the power of Almighty God with patience, trustful acceptance and sincere submission. Fortunately, you are old and to some extent already practised in patience and tranquillity, so when you receive God's grace you should just remain surrendered to the power of Almighty God outwardly and inwardly with trustful acceptance and sincere submission. You should not bring methods of any kind into it, like the ones you have studied, because such methods just close the opening of the way to your eternal life.'

After saying this, Bapak left him.

This is a short story from Bapak's journey long ago to illustrate that it is out of place to call the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, which



## A LIFE WITHIN A LIFE

comes and is present through the grace of Almighty God, an *ilmu kebatinan* [esoteric teaching]. It is only fitting to say that it is a latihan kejiwaan received through the guidance and direction of God's power, based on complete surrender to the will of Almighty God.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 3* pp. 19–23

Cilandak,  
15 October 1969

### **Meditation is like chasing your shadow**

As you know, the latihan kejiwaan of Subud exists and comes because of the grace of Almighty God, based on surrender to the power of Almighty God with submission and sincerity.

Thus, the fact that we are able to do the latihan free from the influence of the passions is because of the existence of God's power within us. Subsequently, it only remains for us to follow the will of God.

Now, concerning meditation, it is necessary for a person who is going to meditate, first of all, to empty his mind of thought and imagining. This is necessary so that the whole of his feelings and thoughts can be concentrated in the direction aimed for, and that which is aimed for is Almighty God.

Whereas for you, who have received the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, the One who is aimed for guides and directs you so that you can know your nature and life. So, your desire to do the latihan and meditation is in fact doubling the work. Or, if you are unfortunate, your heart and mind may easily become confused, because it is like chasing your own shadow — you follow it in swift pursuit, whereas the shadow is always accompanying you. Thus, in fact, it will be just the same if you stand still and do not chase after it.

For this reason, it seems that for us, who have received the latihan kejiwaan, the action of meditation is no longer of any use.

*Pewarta VI 3* pp. 19–21

Letter to a member in Sri Lanka

### **Will-power cannot wake the soul**

Brothers and sisters, Bapak has just said that the jiwa is within. Thus when the jiwa awakens, whatever has been covering the jiwa will, of course, participate in the awakening. But because this awakening has its origin from inside, then the movements of the awakening of the jiwa will touch whatever is covering it, and will throw it off. That is the strength which is obtained in the latihan kejiwaan, whereas generally, people try to awaken the jiwa by way of samadi or by way of meditation. Such efforts are efforts of the

## SUBUD AND THE CULTS

heart and mind, which means using the will, willing themselves to become quiet and willing the jiwa to awaken.

But, brothers and sisters, the heart, the mind or the nafsu which form a cover over our selves are really difficult to throw off. For they have a nice home for themselves, a cool place, the best place for you, and so it is not possible merely through the efforts of the heart and mind to break down the nafsu which prevent your jiwa from awakening. But *Alhamdulillah*, as is said in Islam, thanks be to God that you have received the blessing and have received grace or the *qadar* from the One Almighty God. And although the covering is tremendously strong and so closely knit, yet because of the strength of the Almighty, the jiwa can awaken and can break it down. In this way every obstacle, everything forming a hindrance, everything forming an obstruction on the path and making it impossible for you to be able to worship God sincerely, can all be broken down, thanks to the power of the One Almighty God, who has bestowed His blessing upon you.

*The Way Ahead* pp. 64–65

Wolfsburg, West Germany,  
21 June 1975

### **The dangers of 'mixing'**

A helper of the Subud Spiritual Brotherhood is, in reality, like Bapak's helper, so his attitude should be like Bapak's attitude towards the members and also when opening the new members who join Subud.

As you know, the latihan kejiwaan of Subud has its existence and comes, not because it is studied in various ways, but only through the grace of Almighty God. Therefore everything that is received and experienced in the latihan kejiwaan of Subud is due to the grace of Almighty God which is given to the one who receives, so that it can be said that the movements and force which we call the latihan kejiwaan are direction and guidance from the power of Almighty God.

So it is clear that Subud members, in receiving and doing the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, are under the guidance and direction of Almighty God.

If Subud members, in receiving and doing the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, are under the guidance and direction of Almighty God, why do they still need the guidance and direction of man?

Bapak does not forbid anyone who still likes to do so to combine another theory or way with the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, but it is necessary for Bapak to warn people not to do this, because mixing a theory with the latihan kejiwaan of Subud will be dangerous for

the self; the heart and mind will easily become confused, and it will be difficult for them to be quietened again.

The more so for helpers, or for a member who is proposed as a helper — it is clearly not as it should be if he or they still hold to such opinions. Because, with the presence of such a helper, there will easily arise among the Subud members an atmosphere which is not good, since they will feel in a way that is not the way which exists in the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, which is, in fact, direction and guidance from Almighty God.

For the reasons given above, Bapak will not approve if you are proposed as a helper.

You may continue as an ordinary member, because ordinary members do not have the right to open and serve the membership in fulfilling their worship of the greatness of Almighty God through the latihan kejiwaan of Subud.

*Pewart* VI 3 p. 17-9

Letter to the helpers and committee  
and a member of a group in England

### SUPERNORMAL POWERS

Bapak from time to time mentions the practices that enable men to acquire abnormal or 'miraculous' powers, such as the ability to walk on fire, survive under water for long periods, walk on walls like lizards and so on. He never questions the *existence* of such powers, as many Westerners still do; after all, he lives in the East and *knows* they exist. But he says that they come from the lower forces and turn man in wrong directions and not towards God. Whenever men with such powers contemplate joining Subud Bapak warns them that they will lose them, and should not be opened if they prefer to keep them.

#### **Magic practices**

One time Bapak was in Medan, and there a man came to Bapak who wanted to be opened, and he was a man with very great miraculous powers of the kind that Bapak described. In particular, he used to be able to stick to a wall and climb up it like a lizard. In other words, he used to be able to stick to the wall like that without holding on to anything. He was also able, through his magical powers, for example, to jump across quite wide rivers. Now this man was opened, and once after the latihan Bapak noticed that he was very confused and in a state of great agitation.

Bapak asked him, 'What's the matter? Why are you in this condition?'

He replied, 'Bapak, I am worried because I did my latihan fully dressed, with all my clothes on, and in my pocket I always carry

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with me an amulet, which is a little bottle filled with water.'

Bapak asked, 'What's the use of this amulet?'

The man said, 'The use of this amulet is very great because it gives me all sorts of powers. In particular, anything I really want usually comes about. Also, all women always fall in love with me. But during the latihan this bottle has got lost and I don't know what happened to it.'

This is a proof of the fact, which is a general case, that through the latihan, if you happen to have any powers that you acquired before — in other words, through these methods of meditation or spiritism and so on — this will actually disappear. In other words, any miraculous powers which make you very strong or impregnable or something like that, will leave you as a result of doing the latihan.

This belongs in the realm of magic, which Bapak usually refers to in the case of spiritism, hypnotism, magnetism and so on. And all these powers which are normally acquired by people through all sorts of practices and asceticism and self-denial and so on, tend to disappear if we do the latihan kejiwaan. So for this reason Bapak, in the past, has always taken the precaution that before opening someone Bapak always used to ask them, 'Do you have any objection if Bapak asks you something?' If the person agreed, then Bapak would say, 'Well, do you have any powers or any special knowledge, or any special skill or some special magical power which makes you different from other people, or makes you invulnerable, or something like that?' If the person answered, 'Yes, I have this and that power, or I have this and that teaching that I have acquired,' then Bapak would say, 'Well, actually it is better for you not to be opened because it is quite clear that all these powers you have acquired will disappear if you do the latihan kejiwaan — because the latihan kejiwaan is a manifestation of God's will within man, and God's will is that we become ordinary people, just ordinary people, and therefore you are certain to lose these powers that you have acquired. So it's better if you don't get opened and don't join Subud.'

After Bapak talked like this to people, of course there were some who preferred not to be opened; but, on the other hand, there were those who still asked to be opened because they had a real sincere wish that their physical bodies should be cleaned of all these things that they had acquired; so that as a result of finally becoming pure again, or clean again, when the time came for their death they would not then get grabbed or sink into the world of these lower

forces, but would be enabled then to return again to the world of their origin — that is the real human world that is beyond this world.

This that Bapak has described to you is called *Ishtitchrat*. The name *Ishtitchrat* refers to powers and strengths and miraculous capabilities which are acquired by man as a result of an effort of his will, as a result of fasting, as a result of self-deprivation, as a result of going off into lonely places and practising asceticism and so on and so forth. These powers are the result, then, of man's will and the working of man's heart and mind. It is clear from the existence of such things in the world that God permits man, God gives man licence to practise whatever he wants. In other words, God gives man permission and God gives man the opportunity to use his heart and mind and to develop it in any direction that he would like; and that, therefore, brings man to a point such as Bapak has described.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 7* pp. 139–40 Paris, 22 August 1977

#### **Fakirs and fire-walkers**

Brothers and sisters, as Bapak has mentioned before, the worship of God by man is something that is extremely difficult to attain; and because of this difficulty, and seeing the general difficulties of the life of man in this world, many of those who study these matters (that is, spiritual matters) go to extraordinary lengths in their pursuit of the right way to worship God Almighty. They bring to bear on this problem tremendous effort of will, to the extent that they go to great lengths, like practising asceticism and fasting and self-immolation and self-torture, in the hope of achieving something. Now, they themselves are not aware that in these efforts they are actually moved by the material forces, so that through these efforts they actually are going wrong — they are going in a direction which is completely wrong. And through all these efforts that they do they actually deliver themselves up into the jaws of the lower forces, or to put it more clearly, the material forces.

Now, although these people have really gone off the rails — or, it can be said, have lost their way — yet through these practices they receive all sorts of things which are truly amazing. For example — and many of you have heard of these examples — in India fakirs who become completely impervious to the sharp points of nails or other sharp things. They are capable of walking on fire without being hurt, and they are able to dive under the water and stay there, not for one or two minutes, but for hours and sometimes

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even a whole day. Now it is clear, actually, that all these powers that they have acquired are something that is completely wrong and not in line with what is God's will for man. On the other hand, because these things look miraculous and very extraordinary, they impress other people and thereby these fakirs become very proud of what they have achieved, and they advertise their powers as a gift from Almighty God. Indeed it is always the will of the heart and mind of man to be regarded as somebody who is extraordinarily strong, or to be regarded as someone who is miraculous in every way. This is the nature of man's heart and mind.

In case you want to ask, 'Is it not possible through teaching or advice to correct or prevent these people who make an effort, or who study spiritual things, from going wrong and going astray?' in the way that Bapak has just told you, well, the answer is, of course, that there is a great deal of advice from mankind, and for mankind, which is designed to keep man from straying off the right path in approaching God Almighty. But the problem is that the one who tempts man, the one who always turns man away from the right path and makes him unwittingly turn into a way that is wrong or a way that is bad — that is, although he embarks on a way that is right, he suddenly finds himself turning into the wrong direction — the ones who do this tempting are the lower forces which, as Bapak has said, are part of man's being.

*Pewartu Special Supplement* 7 pp. 137–8      Paris, 22 August 1977

Asceticism and samadi that are essentially a part of an avowedly religious quest are considered in Chapter 12, 'Subud and the Religions', (page 107).

# 14 *Love, marriage and sex*

‘At the moment of union there becomes one human being who worships God.’

This chapter begins and ends with passages about the union of man and wife. The first passage provides the context in which the subsequent passages are best understood. The final passage, which is a celebration of love in marriage, rounds off and epitomizes all that has gone before.

## **The secret of life**

There are no secrets in our Spiritual Brotherhood of Subud, brothers and sisters. Everything is open for nothing is concealed. One thing that is kept very secret in this world is the union of man and woman. That is the secret of life, brothers and sisters. Although this is so, people can feel the need to discover it, to seek it out. Men look for a woman to marry, and that is the secret of life, for whoever can feel his true state in this union, this is the same as understanding life, because it is from this union that you came. If that is where you came from, why do you not know it? What is the reason? It is because you are covered over by the *nafsu*. Thus you marry not in order to be able to feel and know the secret of life, but for pleasure, to seek enjoyment. That is how it is.

This is how it is, not that Bapak blames you for it; no. That is how people generally are. Bapak himself did that. All this will be revealed later on. It will be revealed in the *latihan kejiwaan* if and when, by the grace and mercy of the One Almighty God, you are able to receive. This is why Bapak really does hope that you will surrender to God and to the power of the One Almighty God with patience, trust and sincerity.

*New Directions* p. 92

London, 2 September 1979

## **THE TEMPTATIONS OF SEX**

The two passages that follow come from a translation of Bapak's poem in high Javanese. The language has an old-world flavour that perhaps reflects the poetic origin.

### **A temptress**

If she cannot match her behaviour to her pleasing outer features,

## LOVE, MARRIAGE AND SEX

then the attractiveness and good breeding that are hers will not be able to make her life happy.

This is especially so if the matter has gone too far for there to be any chance of remedying it, for she will then bring on herself even greater misfortune, because her charms will increasingly be exploited by the low forces which have filled and swayed her inner feeling and her heart and mind.

As a result, her attractiveness, outwardly radiant, becomes in the end only a veil over the low forces hidden within her. Here lies the danger for a man who acts without earnestly assessing the matter in his feelings, or for the man who is not yet conscious of the way of the kejiwaan. Not a few women who are attractive and perhaps also from good families have gone astray by doing only what pleases their heart, selling themselves to men who want them.

In the presence of such an influence, a man who cannot control his sexual passion feels that an opportunity is offered, and so, without giving a thought to his family, he just yields to the pressure of the low forces that are disguised by a pretty face and a shapely body.

Generally a man's feelings weaken when he faces such a situation. Therefore his inner feeling and his mind can easily be swayed by the low forces so that of course his emotions and thought become powerless to consider further what the consequences will be.

The result is that only after undergoing both outward and inward suffering will he remember that error. But the woman, as soon as she can see that her prey has come to such a state, unhesitatingly abandons him, then contentedly goes on to look for another target as yet unspoilt.

Usually the person easily misled by the influence of low forces veiled by attractive looks is a man still young and lacking in relation to matters of the kejiwaan. Especially if the charmer can entice him with honeyed words, then all his feelings will be more readily taken in, impelling him to give himself up to her outwardly and inwardly.

Yet this case does not differ from the one just mentioned, in that the charmer will not scruple to abandon this young man also when he has experienced a fate like that of the man referred to above.

Such is the outcome of a man's conduct when he follows only his passion or when he is as yet unaware of the way of the kejiwaan; so, without him suspecting it, his fine body becomes in truth simply and solely an organ of the low forces.



In such circumstances the low forces feel extremely fortunate, for they can array themselves in and make use of the qualities of a human body, which are much superior to their own. But for such a man, on the contrary, it means that he is self-destructive and hence is forced to suffer, both outwardly and inwardly, the debasing of his life.

The nature of the outer harm he suffers can be discovered with the aid of physicians; but the inner damage can be perceived only with the help of his own self, if he is able to have his inner feeling trained.

That is why it is found that many of those who undertake the training feel during the latihan as though they are suffering from a bodily ailment and also that they are not making much progress in the latihan.

But it is best for those following the training not to feel this deeply, for it is all in the past, and so it is no use regretting it any longer except by improving their present and future conduct.

Clearly, then, their earlier behaviour was really and truly wrong, thus forcing the self, which ought to be unimpaired, to suffer damage, beginning with the content of the inner feeling and spreading to the outer limits — that is, to the body.

*Susila Budhi Dharma* pp. 321–5 stanzas 34–47 (1975 edition)

### **The dangers of promiscuity**

Before binding themselves in marriage, many young men often like to have sexual relations with women, some even making a habit of it, as though it was considered a recreation because it could relieve sexual passion. To others, to act in this way even seems a necessity, in order to satisfy their sexual desire before they have a permanent, lawful wife.

This is the same sort of mistake as made by men already married who still like to behave in that way. In other words, such conduct is nothing but that of a man who simply spoils and soils his own inner feeling. Of course men who cannot yet realize this regard it as normal, and thus feel it is merely a form of pleasure. But the truth is that such behaviour is extremely dangerous, especially for young men, who by nature, broadly speaking, will when they are married become channels for the seed of those who will come into being later. For pleasure of this kind is not easy to give up — it cannot be done just like that! — and moreover it is not an ordinary pleasure but, incited as it is by low forces, gives rise to boundless inner suffering.

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As stated earlier, the sexual union of men and women is in reality a struggle of forces that determines which of them will win, which will be defeated. So to feel and believe that such an activity is something ordinary and just a pleasure cannot be justified in the least.

So it is best to keep well clear of conduct and habits of that kind, for it is certainly true that they damage one to the *jiwa*.

That is why people who have sexual intercourse are said to be of one *jiwa*. It is quite clear, then, that conduct of that kind is not an amusement, but behaviour that results only in harming the *jiwa*.

A man will therefore feel deep remorse when he is able to perceive for himself all that has happened. For the damage suffered almost throughout his inner feeling can then really be seen.

He will also feel deep remorse when he discovers how his handsome and manly outer qualities, which he has used to lend himself distinction and superiority, have become filled with a low force unfit to be the content of a human inner feeling. Thus the qualities contained in his inner feeling make a picture quite alien to his own view.

So far-reaching are the results of that fault. Clearly, then, his habit of having sexual relations with women whose inner feeling is already ruined spoils almost all his qualities, changing his character to one far different from its original nature.

Even in such a case, however, sometimes a man will not forget the importance of his life — that is, he will still feel the need for a young woman to become his life partner, and will also wish to get a child from that marriage, who may be counted on in time to succeed him or to be a link with his existence. Indeed, men with just that sort of experience are cleverer at choosing good-looking and well-formed girls from nice families.

That really is the right way — the way in which a man would choose a bride. For by marrying a woman like that, first, his heart and feelings will be satisfied because of his wife's outward beauty; second, his heart and feelings will also become peaceful because before him and beside him he will have a wife of good character; lastly, he will have high hopes of begetting a child with the best qualities.

*Susila Budhi Dharma* pp. 309–11 stanzas 51–60 (1975 edition)

### THE RIGHT PARTNER

People are always writing to Bapak for advice about love, marriage and divorce. Young couples, and husbands and wives, also ask to

consult him when he visits their country. His personal advice and his replies to letters are of course confidential, but when the advice is couched in general terms his letters are from time to time published in the *Pewarta*. Here is a small selection.

### **Marriage of souls**

With regard to a marriage partner, what is called a marriage partner of soul with soul is actually very difficult to find, both for a man and for a woman.

Therefore for such a marriage we need to have guidance and direction from the power of Almighty God, and it is just this, fortunately, which we, or the Subud members, receive.

For this reason, supposing that you and the woman you mention really do become husband and wife later, just surrender the closeness of your marriage bonds to the power of Almighty God with patience and submission, with trust and sincerity, for it is really only God who can strengthen your inner, spiritual relationship with her.

Now, it is first necessary for you to feel whether your love relationship with that young woman is really and truly woven into a love and affection that is felt by each of you. If it is, Bapak agrees that your relationship with her be continued and that eventually, when a propitious time comes, you marry her.

*Pewarta VII 1* p. 19

Letter to a member in the USA, 1969

### **Sympathy and affection**

If you ask whether A should marry B, it is actually rather an awkward question to answer. For, in the matter of marriage, it cannot be said definitely that A should marry B. As for marriage, this is something that should take place, but it cannot be stated that A should marry B.

If you ask what is a good way to find a suitable partner, Bapak can give the following clarification:

If you happen to meet and associate with a woman, and while you are with her you always feel as if you were with your mother or your sister, so that your love for the woman in whose company you are is based on sympathy and affection like the sympathy and affection which you feel towards your mother or your sister; and if likewise the woman, from her side, while she is in your company feels as though she were in the company of her father or her brother, so that she feels as if she were with her protector, then it can be said that the woman is very suited to become your permanent life-companion.

## LOVE, MARRIAGE AND SEX

Well now, Bapak asks you, does your relationship with the young woman you mention approach what Bapak has explained above? If it does, then it is fitting for your marriage to her to be carried out as soon as possible. But if it does not and you feel only physical love towards her, Bapak cannot give his agreement. Bapak leaves it to you yourself to make the decision.

*Pewarta VII 1 p. 17* Letter to a member in England, 1969

### **Advice about a lost love**

The event experienced by the woman whom you intended to marry has, in fact, proved that the soul relationship between you was not yet really close and strong. For this reason, you had better just let her go, and look for another woman who truly loves you. The world is wide and does not contain only one woman. So, if you are always firm of feeling and patient, it is certain that you will later easily meet with what you are hoping for.

*Pewarta V 5 p. 153* Letter to a member in Scandinavia who wrote that the woman he hoped to marry had become engaged to another man

## IMPOTENCE

At the end of 1981 Bapak was asked if this chapter could be published separately, before the book as a whole came out. He wrote giving his permission, and added these words:

The latihan kejiwaan encompasses all aspects of our life. The sexual function of a person who is impotent will be reawakened by itself through the latihan kejiwaan, but that new life will already know its boundaries, so that it will manifest in accordance with what is laid down and in line with the will of Almighty God, so that it will not bring harm to the selfhood.

## FIDELITY

### **Guard the wholeness**

Don't love only in words, but prove it in your behaviour, prove it in what you do, so that eventually you will be what the Javanese call *suami-isteri*, a married couple of whom the wife is called the *garwa*, meaning that the woman, the wife, is half of her husband's life or soul. That is why before you are married you are said to be still incomplete, but after marriage are called complete. So until now you have been incomplete, but now you are complete.

Guard this wholeness of your life, therefore. Don't let it be broken so that you become incomplete again. For if once your marriage ceases to be whole, it is done. Ever afterwards it will be

hard to find a balance again, hard to find wholeness again. It will be difficult.

So take care. And put your trust in God Almighty, Who alone can arrange everything and put right what is wrong. For that reason Bapak begs you not to forget your worship of God, since He can change everything that is unchangeable, and only He can truly unite your lives.

That is all. Bapak hopes his brief advice will satisfy the hearts and minds of his children, the bride and bridegroom.

Thank you.

*Pewarta XII 1* pp. 31–3

A wedding talk in Cilandak,  
19 May 1974

### **The faithful couple**

It's different in the case of what we have received in the latihan kejiwaan, because with us our worship of God Almighty 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 that 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, is one with Bapak's seeing. And this is something you can experience yourself. If you are married, a wife need no longer concern herself about her husband, about what her husband will do when she's not looking, because there will be within him the power of God's will — it will be done for him by the power of God, that his behaviour will be arranged and will be limited by the power of God Almighty to what is right and what is proper for him.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 8* p. 184

Woodstock, USA,  
13 September 1977

### **Repairing a breach**

Fortunately, Subud members have received and followed to some extent the way of the latihan kejiwaan so that the condition of their hearts which brings about a breach in the marriage relationship can begin to be made good. Obviously the process of repairing the breach cannot possibly be completed as quickly as you hope, because in the process there are involved the lower life forces which influence the inner feeling. Therefore, in such situations, it is very necessary that you be able to endure it, that is, to have an attitude

of patience towards each other and together surrender to the will of Almighty God with trust and sincerity.

That is the way, if you wish to be able to obtain an improvement in your way of life and happiness in your marriage.

*Pewartā VII 5 p. 5*

Letter to a member in England

### DIVORCE

I have found no instance in Bapak's published talks of his replying to anyone asking about divorce 'Yes, go ahead and divorce.' In the Pewartā talks and letters his advice is always 'No,' and he gives his reasons. There have however been occasions when Bapak has told unhappy couples who have consulted him that in view of the exceptional circumstances he considered divorce or separation to be the right course. Here are passages from two talks and two letters.

#### **Shared blame**

When Bapak receives many letters asking advice on whether a man should divorce his wife, or a wife her husband, they are very much out of place. For God's will is not that a marriage relationship should end in divorce. No, it ends only on death, which is a different matter. You have to be mindful of that from first to last, from beginning to end, and never reach the point of disharmony.

For example, before marrying B., you say, 'Oh, darling, I am yours until death, my heart's in yours.' And if asked to take an oath whether the marriage is for ever or for only a few days, you swear, 'Oh, for ever — until death.' 'Really?' 'Yes, truly,' and you sign your name. Afterwards, five or ten years later, the heart says, 'Oh, it's best to divorce.' Why? 'Ever since I married my wife there's always been a turmoil.' The wife says, 'All the time I've had a husband my life has been nothing but trouble.'

People of the Islamic faith therefore speak the words of the *shahadat* when they marry — *Ash-hadu an lâilâha ilalloh, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadar Rusûlulloh* ('There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger'). For when man is conscious of God he will know everything, he will understand the mysteries of life.

This is the point, brothers and sisters. Before marriage you are ready and willing, your whole self is centred in your wife's heart; and the same is true of your wife, her whole being enters her husband's heart. So both have to answer for whatever occurs later on. If trouble befalls them, it is the fault of both, and both are responsible. It cannot be otherwise. So they themselves must seek

the truth. Clearly not just one is wrong. No, both are at fault and both are accountable.

*Cilandak 71 p. 173*

Cilandak, 23 August 1971

**Remember your early love**

For us, it is clear that we have received something where our life need no longer be ruled by our heart, but by something more permanent. Nevertheless, Bapak still constantly gets letters from Subud members who write: 'Bapak, I have been married for ten years and I have children, but now I suddenly realize that my wife is not my true partner and I can't stand to live with her any more. I know now what my true partner is like — or I have met someone who is just the right person for me — and I must somehow change my situation and leave my wife — and is this all right?' [laughter]

Bapak always answers these people: 'No, because think back — when you first married your wife, did you not love her very very much?' No doubt you even said to her, 'Look, there is nobody in the world but you and me, and I want to live with you for the rest of my life.' As a human being, as a man and as a Subud member, you have to be responsible, you have to have the courage to face the promises and the commitments that you undertook. If you said that you will love your wife till the end, you must now face up to that and take the responsibility for what you have committed yourself to. So now you have to go through with it. If you have made a mistake — then all you can do is to pray to God to give you His help, that what was a mistake can be put right, so that it can become something that is right from something that is wrong.

This, brothers and sisters, is the situation, this is the nature of the heart. But we, through the latihan, have received the possibility of relying not on our heart but on our jiwa, because the jiwa with which we have received the contact in this latihan is something that is eternal. It is something that doesn't change and can lead us through life as a constant guide. This is why it is said that someone who has received the contact with the power of God has, at the very least, received a contact with a teacher; for actually, what man can call teacher is the power of God. It is the power of God that is the teacher of man.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 13 p. 293*

Santa Monica, USA,  
27 November 1977

**The next marriage would be no better**

In marriage, the conditions you describe are experienced by nearly everyone because the marriage relationship usually arises from a

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mutual love brought about by the *nafsu*. Indeed, before marriage — that is, when the two are still single — they feel as though they were one and they even feel willing to live together until they reach old age. But then, after they marry and have been married for some years, an unexpected feeling may arise in their hearts, a feeling of not being suited to each other. This is how it is in a marriage relationship arising only because of the *nafsu* of the heart's love.

Bapak has often said that a true marriage can be made only by God, and because you are both Subud members who receive and follow the way of the *latihan kejiwaan* of Subud, which really is direction and guidance from Almighty God, the only way for you to have a close marriage tie is to surrender everything to God's power.

Of course, in addition to your surrender to the power of Almighty God, you should, as much as possible, be patient with each other and be willing to give in to each other. For if you do not do this you will never have a feeling of oneness and, what is most important, the development of your *jiwa* will always be disturbed because of the fact that you are still easily disturbed by the *nafsu* that dwell in the heart and mind.

Speaking of divorce, people do indeed think that if they divorce they can put their new life in good order. But in reality this is only an idea, because if a person has had a bad marriage, his or her second marriage will usually be bad also. For this reason, it is easier and better to correct and improve the first marriage, of which you have long experience, rather than to make a new marriage a good one.

This is Bapak's advice to you, so Bapak hopes that you will both give up your desire to divorce and that you will follow the advice Bapak has given you in this letter with complete patience, trust and sincere submission.

*Pewarta VIII* 4 pp. 103–4

Letter to a husband and wife  
in California

### **What of the children?**

Although the matter of divorce is sometimes felt to be something normal, nevertheless, for you and your wife, it is hoped that this is something which will never come to pass.

What is the reason for this? It is because you have been married for twenty-two years and from the marriage you have five children. This means that both of you have been blessed by Almighty God in having received the grace of a certain aspect of life which has been formed out of the essence of the inner feelings of both of you



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Therefore, considered from the spiritual point of view, the child reflects the pattern of both parents, which means: everything which is in the child contains the thoughts, interests, ideas and ideals of the parents at the time before the child is formed. That is also the reason why it is also said of the child that it has become the object of love of his or her parents.

The matter of the parents' love of their children is not limited to human beings alone. Even tigers, which attack other animals and devour their flesh, show their love to their young ones, so that wherever the young go they follow them.

Therefore it is clear that the child is truly the heart of the parents and receives their attention, and also that the child has become the tie or bond between the father and the mother. In reality, the child is indeed of two persons, and both of them, the father as well as the mother, acknowledge it. Therefore, what will happen to both of you if the divorce between you and your wife takes place, while your children are five in number and the eldest girl is already twenty-one years of age, and while all your children remain the object of concern of each of you?

Let us suppose that you obtain a divorce now and later marry again, will not the children later come under the care of a stepmother? The same goes for your wife, if she also marries again later on, will not your daughter, a girl of twenty-one years, together with her younger brothers, be in the care of a stepfather? This is what both of you should consider and feel to its full extent.

All that Bapak has explained above concerns only just the outward aspect and not as yet what in reality concerns the spiritual aspect. And it is just this spiritual aspect which will be felt very heavy by both of you later if this divorce should actually take place.

In reality, a married couple has one soul. This means: two souls which have become one. Later on, this marriage brings forth children, and in this case even five children. Although it is said that outwardly they are just children, in reality these children are the bond of the whole family. Therefore, if only one of them falls ill or suffers from one thing or another, the whole family will be disturbed, the more so the father and the mother. Thus, supposing that the ones who suffer are the father and the mother, then what will be felt by the children and what will happen to the inner feelings of the children?

This is what both of you should consider and feel deeply, and not just act hastily in following the passion which is manipulated by the lower forces intending to create a division in the unity of a

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marriage, or to create a division in the wholeness of the human family.

Lastly, Bapak hopes that both of you will come together again in peace and build up the family situation again as well as you can.

This is the end of Bapak's message to you, and may your problem be solved according to the will of Almighty God.

*Pewartu VI 1* pp. 25-7

Letter to a husband in France

### SEXUAL UNION IN MARRIAGE

#### **Quiet and calm before the act**

*Question:* Could Bapak please comment on marriage and sexual relationships:

- (a) for married couples (or future married couples) who were already both in Subud when they got married or are both in Subud before their marriage.
- (b) for married couples who have been married already for several years when they joined Subud, or joined Subud already married.
- (c) for married couples of whom the husband only is in Subud.

*Bapak:* This question requires a rather long answer. Certainly it has already been dealt with in the *Pewartu Kejiwaan Subud*. Perhaps the questioner only asks this because he does not read the *Pewartu* diligently! In general, brothers and sisters, the marriage bond between man and woman is founded on love: on love from heart to heart, which is not yet from soul to soul. Heart and mind usually want something new. Therefore, in general, a marriage based on that kind of love eventually leads to boredom as time goes on. This comes in marriage when love is from heart to heart.

It is different in a marriage between soul and soul. This, however, can take place only when the man and woman have been able to receive a contact with the greatness of God, which is as you have received it in Subud. This is why the spiritual latihan of Subud does not only purify and rectify all faults in the inner feeling, but also the relationship between man and woman and thereby changes the relationship between a married couple: no longer is marriage from heart to heart but from soul to soul. It is for this reason that in Indonesia a married woman is called *garwo*. *Garwo* means half of a soul, thus one soul divided into two — one half in the wife and the other half within the husband. In its true meaning, people who are married are two persons who have become one. Thus if someone called Marilyn marries Antonio, before she marries her name is Marilyn. After marriage she will be called Mrs

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Antonio. One name is used by two people and similarly there is one soul in two persons. When it happens like that, marriage of course can be oneness: not only oneness in heart but in wish, in feeling and in soul, so that their life is always harmonious. If the husband goes to the west, so does the wife go to the west; if the husband goes east, the wife does the same. It is different in marriage from heart to heart when the husband may go to the west, while the wife goes to the east — that happens often enough!

In sexual union between husband and wife, the first essential which is normally within your reach — as Bapak instances it — is that before intercourse you should quieten and calm yourselves as you do when you wish to do the latihan. This is required so that in your union you are not influenced by lower forces which always confuse and dirty the image which is in the inner feeling, and which finally goes into the formation of the child. And if this happens then the child concerned will always be influenced by these lower forces and will lack a good character. It is different if you are calm and quieten yourself with patience before union, and as far as possible remember the greatness of God: then, when a child is born — if a child is conceived from this union — it will be a child with love and compassion for all men and possessing a good and fine character.

This is a way easy for you to follow: but if you wait for the way created through the guidance and education of God, you will of course have to wait several years, for no one knows how long the way of purification through your latihan will take, as this depends on whether the faults which have penetrated into your inner being are heavy or light, whether they have penetrated deep or not. Therefore the easy and normal way which is actually possible for you to follow, is to be calm and quiet, with a feeling of patience, before union. Do not have intercourse when you have just quarrelled. No! and neither have intercourse when you have just had a quarrel with friends or anyone else. No! If possible, do not think of all kinds of things before union, but only have within you a feeling of patience, calmness and quietness, praising the greatness of Almighty God. This is the only method which is easy for us to carry out soon, without having to wait for the time when the guidance of God is completed. For none can know how long that will take.

*Subud in the World* pp. 60–2

New York, 15 July 1963

There is no element in this talk or any other of that feeling about sex that has led some religions to demand celibacy of its priests, and some

adherents of some religions to have views about sex that are summed up in one of the meanings of the word 'puritanical'.

Bapak, in tracing the story of the great prophets and of what each brought to man, says that one of Muhammad's contributions was in this sphere.

### **Marriage as worship**

With Muhammad a new possibility was added for man to worship God, for the union of Muhammad and his wife became in truth an act of worship towards God — the union of man and woman was ordained by God to be a true act of worship. This is shown in the marriage ceremony performed according to the religion of Islam, in which the man and woman, in order to proclaim and confirm that they will become truly husband and wife, must recite the declaration of faith: that there is no other God but God and Muhammad is His Prophet. By this act the couple acknowledge that they owe their existence to God and that they are His witnesses. In this way the teaching of Muhammad was put into practice, and many were those among his followers whose inner purity made the union of husband and wife a true act of worship towards God.

*The Meaning of Subud* pp. 16-17

London, 11 August 1959

It is possible that the history of Christianity would have been different if it had been God's will that Jesus should marry.

### **THE HARMONIOUS MARRIAGE**

Whenever there is a wedding in Cilandak of residents or relatives of residents — which happens quite often — Bapak is naturally invited to be present, and gives a talk at the ceremony. Here is one such talk, given in full. What bride and bridegroom could wish for a better send-off?

#### **Closest friends**

Brothers and sisters, Bapak greets you in the Islamic way:

'Peace be with you, and the blessing of God, and His grace.'

Brothers and sisters, especially the bride and bridegroom — grandchildren Soesilo and Roekmini — the time longed for by this couple has come, the happy day, the wedding day.

In fact, this happy time is a time to which we should pay serious attention, for mankind has an obligation to marry. For indeed by the will of God Almighty all His creatures are predestined to want to take a partner.

By marrying, of course, human beings, God's creatures, can multiply until they fill the world with their kind, that the world may be busy, may prosper and lack nothing. Such is God's will. This is both what the world is for and what human beings are in the world for.

Brothers and sisters, although mankind is destined to marry on earth, so as to be able to grow in number and add to the well-being and prosperity of the world, for human beings themselves marriage is a test, a test for their life. For to a man, once he has a wife, she is a burden, a burden that is not small, not light. For, as the elders say, a wife, though she is your *garwa* — half your life, or half your soul — is also your closest enemy. She can be called an enemy in your arms, or, as it is commonly put today, an enemy under the blanket.

Why is this? She is not an enemy in the usual sense, but one opposed to your wishes. For before you married you could decide for yourself about everything required for your life, you could please yourself. Before marriage you did as you wished. You went where you liked — who was there to forbid you? There was no one to forbid you, so you did what you wanted to do, did just as you pleased. But once you have a wife it is another matter. You want to go somewhere but feel compelled to say so, or compelled to say that you are going off, compelled to let her know you want to go there. And if your wife should not agree, you will certainly not go. And this is just a question of going somewhere, whereas a man's life has all sorts of needs — this, that, and the other.

This, as Bapak has just said, seems an obstacle, but on the contrary, brothers and sisters, if felt more deeply it is in fact a good thing, comparable to a king with his vice-regent or his governor or his prime minister. Everything can be discussed beforehand, so that afterwards all will proceed well or be dealt with well, because it has been thoroughly weighed up.

So, as Bapak said just now, a wife is like your nearest enemy, but there are also times when she is not like that but is your closest friend, to whom you can tell your secrets. Before, while you were unmarried, getting dressed was your own affair; if anybody saw you, well, that was all right. After marrying, however, you may not be seen dressing by other women. Similarly for the wife, her husband would not care for her to be seen dressing by other men.

Clearly then, your wife, besides being the proverbial nearest enemy, is also your closest friend, in whom you can fully confide. There is actually no blood relationship, yet if one dies, the other

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feels bereft. So, brothers and sisters, because husband and wife are necessarily like this, they must discuss everything maturely, in order that later on they will not blame each other — in other words, the husband will not blame the wife nor the wife blame the husband. If matters can always be dealt with and carried out in this way, then husband and wife will know harmony in their marriage. If a marriage is always harmonious while a couple await a child, then, when eventually by God's grace they have a child, the child's nature both inward and outward will truly fulfil the parents' hopes: that is to say, the child will honour his parents, be faithful to them, obey them, and always do what they would wish.

Bapak will go on to enlarge a little more on marriage, brothers and sisters. If a marriage bears fruit — meaning that in time there is a child — and if that child is such as the parents would ask for, then they have a child who grows up following and obeying what his parents tell him to do. But should they have a child who does not do as his parents tell him, they feel that life has rejected them, that in part they have died.

This is what comes of the marriage. So it is important and very necessary for grandchildren Soesilo and Roekmini in their marriage to start now and never cease to take care. As Bapak has indicated, let not the wife become like an enemy in her husband's arms, but become his closest friend in whom he can fully confide.

Brothers and sisters, harmony in marriage affects not only the life of the family, but their setting also — that is to say, their community and the state.

At times, as Bapak has said, parents are forgetful; at times, because of the wife, their actions fall below the right level. Yes; and why? Owing to the needs of life, of course. But if the wife becomes, not her husband's enemy, but his closest friend, sharing all his secrets, then everything can be weighed up, can be sifted beforehand, so that things which might ruin the husband's reputation, which might in the long run disgrace him, can be guarded against.

So, brothers and sisters, Bapak's hope, directed especially to the bridal couple, is that they may be watchful throughout their life, that their life may be carefully considered, to the end that everything they do may be done without shortcomings, or in other words may be done well and be in no way lacking.

And now to touch on the inner self, the kejiwaan. Since a person's external circumstances also affect the content of his self, the goodness and harmony of marriage not only benefit his worldly

life but can also be said to be a good and a key thing for his life in respect of worshipping God Almighty.

As Bapak said a little earlier, the man or the husband seems to hold the power or to be the mainstay. As a matter of fact it is not so, brothers and sisters — you are the same. Thus a husband and wife, or a man and a woman, are equal in marriage. It is not, then, that man, whatever his looks, is dominant, while woman is the place of passion, the place of desire. No. In words, yes, it is interpreted like that, but actually it is not so. They have equal power and equal rights — the same rights. Even so, brothers and sisters, the husband has the principal part or takes the leading role in the marriage.

It is indeed God's will that men should by their nature organize and seek and try to supply the necessities of life from what is available or what exists. It is the woman who makes things, who forms the materials she gets from her husband into the principal things, the things they need, the most important things.

Similarly when there is a child. Knowledgeable people say that a child owes its existence to a man. Of course. But if there were no woman, who would then rear it, prescribe for it, serve and educate it? The woman does this of course. Clearly, then, man and woman or husband and wife have equally heavy responsibilities and equally have special rights in their married life.

This, therefore, is what Bapak prays for grandchildren Soesilo and Roekmini: from now on, in everything they pass through in their marriage, may they love each other, respect each other, help each other, be willing to give to and accept from each other, and to give way to each other. For if they are not willing to give way to each other their marriage is sure to be full of quarrels, with no harmony, no agreement. And without agreement anything may happen.

Bapak has experienced this himself when he was young — while Bapak has now become an old man, being now about seventy-six by the Javanese calendar or seventy-four by the Christian calendar. Bapak has experienced all the requirements of marriage.

If you are always quarrelling, it affects your livelihood and is of course bad for the marriage. So Bapak hopes that the grandchildren, the married couple, will take note of what Bapak has described. It is necessary in order that they may always have the good fortune they hope for and that their life may be peaceful. And if later, by the grace of God, they have a child, that child will have a very good character and will grow up obedient, trusting in

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what his parents tell him to do, and also capable and, furthermore, able to impart knowledge, or to become a leader or to set an example, to his community.

This, brothers and sisters, is what is necessary for people who are marrying, if they are seeking what is right, what is real. So marrying is not like buying goods, which are enjoyed while new and you do not want to be parted from them, but which after some time bore you. This should not happen.

So let marriage not be compared with a material object, but be felt as a life which may not be neglected, may not be disregarded, and may not be left to chance.

Such, brothers and sisters, is Bapak's message to grandchildren Soesilo and Roekmini. Bapak will be brief and say no more, for the time has come for other purposes.

That is all, and thank you.

*Pewarta XII 1* pp. 17-25

Cilandak, 24 December 1974

The literature of the world abounds in descriptions of love, but I know nothing like the passage that follows. Bapak is talking of the act of love between husband and wife, 'the bliss of our being', which he describes as the union of souls, and the worship of God. He speaks not in the language of poetry but in the language of straightforward explanation: that is how it is, he says, or can be. In the marriage service of the Church of England the bridegroom says as he places the ring on the bride's finger, 'With my body I thee worship.' In Bapak's account it is as if they were both together saying to God, 'With our body we Thee worship.'

### **Marriage and the act of love**

Brothers and sisters, if we speak badly about something or criticize something — it needn't be a human being, it could be anything, an object, a material thing — it means that we have already committed a sin. Because that thing — whatever it is we speak about — was created by God Almighty. 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 eat animals, we have to slaughter animals, we have to kill trees — if we want to make a table out of wood we have to kill a tree which is a living thing created by God, decreed by God. Actually, all these things and actions are sinful, so that it can be seen that no matter what man does in this world, he cannot avoid committing sins. So that the belief that some people



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have that providing you follow *exactly* what is laid down in religion — in other words, you follow *exactly* the description of how to worship God and what to do — then you will be free from sin — this is not true. In fact, man cannot live in this world without being affected by sin all the time. But the point is that these sins, or these traces that build up inside man — these are the things that prevent him from being able to feel and be aware of his worship of God Almighty.

Now the possibility for man to correct this situation, or to feel his relationship to God Almighty, can only come about — or he can only get over this situation of all the sin that he has to be part of when he is living in this life — if he can receive something at the moment when he is not influenced by the lower forces. And, actually, the moment when a human being is not influenced by the lower forces is the moment when he unites with the opposite sex. In other words, at the moment of union between man and woman. Because at that *moment* when we experience the union between man and woman, at that moment we are not aware of our needs in this world, of our worries, of our problems and so on. We only feel at that moment 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. But usually it is not like that. Usually, at that moment, the man is only aware of the woman, and the woman is only aware of the man. But, in fact, that moment is provided in order that they can both be aware of God. So for the man, the existence of the woman at that moment is only the equipment, or what he needs, for that. But actually the purpose of it is to be aware of his connection with God Almighty, and vice versa for the woman.

And this is true, not only of man, but of every form of life. That is why, you know, for every form of life there is male and female. Even little insects which fly around, like mosquitoes or fleas or whatever, you always know that there is male and female; and you know that very well because if you see two little mosquitoes you immediately know if they are a man and a woman because when they meet they fly around like this.

So, actually, man and woman, or male and female, exist throughout creation. 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. His span, people say, God's

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life is the life of the universe. But when all the universe has disappeared, God will still exist. So from God down, everything other than God, everything that has been created has male and female. If there was not male and female in everything, this world could not exist. So that, actually, the moment of union of male and female is the opportunity for all creatures to feel their connection with their Creator because at that moment they are free from the influence of any other extraneous forces. This is something that is very much in line with what we receive in the latihan kejiwaan. Therefore, the latihan kejiwaan is actually a source of knowledge and understanding whereby all the secrets of life can be opened up and can become clear and understandable to us. This fact, that Bapak has just told you, is something that is particularly understood or emphasized in the religion of Islam. That is, that man really must *not* put aside the experiencing of the union of man and woman. But the trouble is in Islam sometimes it is taken too far, and people only imitate it outwardly — that is, they do not really understand what is the purpose or what is the real meaning of the teaching of Islam. So it is important for us to understand that this is a secret for us that we can know — that it is through this that we can experience — that what is meant by worship of God, by the words ‘worship of God’ for *man* is, in fact, the union of man and woman.

Therefore, we cannot criticize or we cannot blame a man if he needs a woman, or a woman if she needs a man. Only what is very important is that at the moment of union we must approach it without leaving aside or letting go of our feeling, the feeling of our own being, which is submitted to God Almighty and which remembers and worships God Almighty. Then this union of man and woman will bring us closer to God Almighty. We will experience — very often as though unintentionally, maybe we say something, or we express in some way — the greatness of God Almighty, because at that moment the male and the female become one, so there becomes one human being — one human being who worships God Almighty. It is for this reason that, at that moment, the man can become aware of the thinking and the feeling of the woman, and similarly the woman can become aware of the wishes and the needs of the man. So it will be that at that moment 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

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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 husbands or our wives.

It is true that what Bapak is talking about is what is usually referred to nowadays as sex, but this fact — that is, the union of man and woman — is actually the *basis* or the most important thing in the life of man, because it is the cause or the motive for a man to work hard. In other words, the thing that makes a man willing to work hard in life, and to wish to achieve something in life, is his wife. And through his wife he will receive children. So it is clear that the fundamental or the foundation of man's life in this world is the union between man and woman. A man will not strive to achieve in life unless because of the needs of his wife and his family. That is the reason why, in religion, it is *very* strongly forbidden for a man to have sexual relations with women of bad character, or something like that; and also it is *very* much forbidden for a man to have relations with a woman *other* than the woman who is his wife, because if he does that he will not be able to obtain the reality of the union of man and woman, such as Bapak has described. That is why Bapak advises us Subud members now who have received the latihan kejiwaan — from now on, whenever we experience, whenever we have a union with our husbands or wives, that we should at that moment not bring into it any form of thinking or any problems or anything at all that we have, but rather to put aside completely *everything* other than just to be aware of the power of God and to be aware of ourselves exactly as when we are doing the latihan kejiwaan. If we can do that we will, sooner or later, be able to receive the proof of the reality of the union of the jiwa. That is, as a result of the union, at the moment of the union and afterwards, we will experience a satisfaction which we cannot compare with anything else in this world. From that feeling which we get at the moment of the union of the jiwa, there will arise a true feeling of love between husband and wife, so that they will feel completely united and this will make their life together completely harmonious.

So this is, in fact, the way for us — because *who* are the people who know heaven? The people who know heaven are the people who have been there before. Similarly, a person who knows London or can describe London, is someone who has often visited London. Or an Englishman who knows Paris is someone who has been in Paris often. So someone who knows and understands about

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the life after death is someone who has been there before. And the way to follow if we want to know heaven and to be aware of heaven in this world is to practise the union of husband and wife in the way that Bapak has described, because it is through the jiwa that we can get into contact with other jiwias and the other levels and other things in this world. That is the meaning of the seven circles that are the symbol of Subud — that is, the various levels of the life forces. You see that between them there are also seven lines connecting seven circles, and these are the lines through which the jiwa can get in contact with and experience everything that exists in this world; and it is therefore through the jiwa that man can receive understanding at that moment, as Bapak said, of the union of husband and wife. Because this world is a place of trial for man. This world is a place full of suffering, full of danger, full of trials and accidents and difficulties. But at the *centre* of this life, which is a life of suffering and a life of trial for man, there is also a great peace and a great bliss — *if* we are able to surrender everything at that moment, if we are able to surrender everything to God Almighty and put aside everything else other than our worship of God Almighty. Then in the middle of all this difficulty and all this suffering that exists in this world, we can experience the life in the next world, that is, heaven.

So it is true to say that the union of man and woman is the most important thing in the life of man, because it is at that moment that man and woman can become aware of their relationship and their worship towards God Almighty; and because this is the foundation of man's life in this world, a great deal of attention is paid in religion to the relationship between man and woman. For example, in Islam, when a man and a woman want to marry they have to go through the wedding ceremony, in which it is essential for both the man and woman to say the creed — that is, to say 'I am convinced that there is nothing that deserves to be worshipped except God Almighty.' And they add, 'And I believe that the Prophert Muhammad was the Messenger of God.' And if they do not say this, then the wedding is not legal or not official — and the purpose and reason for this is because in Islam they attach a great importance to the fact that man and woman should *always*, in their relationship, be aware of and remember the power of God Almighty.

Why then is Bapak talking about this now? Why is Bapak referring to this fact in talking to you today? Because in the latihan we receive the worship of God as one, in a state of unity — that is,

## A LIFE WITHIN A LIFE

we do not feel male or female, we do not feel man or woman at that moment. And that is why if in the latihan men and women were together — then *if* they really followed the latihan they would end up having union between male and female, between man and woman. In other words, having sexual relations. And this is something you are not allowed to check for yourselves if it's true or not. But Bapak does not mind if a husband and wife wish to check it for themselves. Then they will understand how it really is.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 6* pp. 117–20

Barcelona,  
27 August 1977

It will be seen that in all the matters covered in this chapter Bapak takes the firm line. How many men, of whatever age, and whatever their own lives have been and are, do not when they consult their best and deepest feelings, agree that he is right, regard it as wrong that sex at the present time is so intrusive, wish that they could be the master of their own sexual impulses, and hope that at the end of their lives they will be at one with their wife? And how many young brides could fail to hope that they will always be like the wife described on page 138, who 'need no longer concern herself about . . . what her husband will do when she's not looking, because there will be within him the power of God's will'?

# *15 Work and enterprises*

‘Don’t think that God does not work. If God did not work this world would vanish.’

## TWO DUTIES OF MAN

The above quotation makes clear Bapak’s view of the importance of work: the following passages enlarge on it. The first contains a clarification that seems to me of immense importance for man.

### **Two distinct faculties**

This idea that when you are involved in the kejiwaan you do not need to work is a big error. One function of man is to worship God Almighty without using his heart and mind, but simply by surrendering and submitting to God Almighty. And this is what we do when we do the latihan kejiwaan. However, besides doing the latihan where we simply need to surrender to God Almighty, we need also to earn our livelihood to meet the needs of our life in this world. But there is no way to earn money and earn our living without working. And we don’t only need to meet the needs of our own life, it’s not just for ourselves, because generally in this world we are accompanied by others. We have a wife, we have children, maybe we have our parents and we need to look after them, we need to meet the needs of this family. And the only way we can do that is by working, by using our heart and mind and working in this world.

Therefore, man in this world has two functions. One is to worship God Almighty: that is, simply, without using the heart and mind, through receiving the guidance of God. The second is to use the heart and mind to work in this world. But the first duty — that is, to worship God — is something where the heart and mind cannot help, where they cannot grasp and cannot do anything in that field. Therefore, it is very important that the heart and mind are channelled in the right direction — that is, away from the kejiwaan and towards this world. The result of that will be that when we do our latihan we will not be disturbed by the heart and mind and the nafsu, because the nafsu would have been satisfied — its needs will have been satisfied through our work in this world, through our enterprises — so that in our latihan we can be completely free and open. In this way also our enterprises will

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benefit, so that more often than not we will be able to be successful. Bapak doesn't say that we will always be successful in everything, but we will tend to be successful because we will have become used to separating these two functions and these two duties of ours.

Bapak tells you quite frankly, what is normal in the world is that people turn themselves to the kejiwaan — but at the same time, they expect from the kejiwaan some worldly benefit. People actually turn to the kejiwaan because they hope their lives will improve, they hope they will do better, they will be more successful, and so on. Although they are turning towards the kejiwaan, what they are hoping for are results in this world. Actually, the work of the kejiwaan is something whose results are in the kejiwaan, they are not in this world. So if we can get used to satisfying our worldly needs by the use of our heart and through work, then in the kejiwaan we will be free to worship God without any hope of reward, without any wish for this or that — but simply to surrender. For example, Bapak said that when people undertake things like occultism and so on — actually they are always hoping for some fruit or some benefit that can be seen in this world. That is why Bapak wanted to explain that through enterprises we get used to understanding the separation and the difference between these two duties and these two functions of man in the world.

*Subud World News 12.9 p. 2*

Mexico, 20 November 1977

The idea that I said I consider important for man can be summed up as follows: we need one set of faculties and qualities for worshipping God and another set for working and earning our living; keeping the two sets separate enables each to function properly. In a few hundred words Bapak demolishes a whole structure of false ideals.

Take, for instance, the concept of the perfect Christian as 'meek and mild', presumably derived from a consideration of one set of qualities shown by Christ, Christ in his humility, Christ 'the Lamb of God'. But that was Christ in relation to God, in his worship of God. In relation to his great task of handling the world he displayed an entirely different set of qualities and faculties, the sort apprehended by T. S. Eliot when he wrote:

In the juvenescence of the year  
Came Christ the tiger.

In the next two extracts, also on the theme of the importance of work, Bapak speaks of primitive tribes. His opinion of them is more robust than that of most anthropologists. Certainly he has no romantic view of the 'noble savage'; that way of life is not good enough for man. Nor is he romantic about the modern trend to return to the

simple peasant life, 'self-sufficiency'; that is not the way ahead for man.

### **The lazy jungle-dwellers**

Even though . . . man has been given this power and this capacity by Almighty God (to create and invent things) nevertheless there are still among human beings people who do not want to work, people who one can reasonably describe as lazy. This is not something new — it's part of man, that man really has two natures. Man has a nature that is diligent and wants to work, and wants to use the heart and mind — and another nature that is lazy. The result of these two natures of man is that always living together there are people who like to work hard and there are people who are lazy. And this situation always gives rise to a separation — that is, that those people who are lazy and who do not like to work are in various ways driven out by those who do like to work and like to work hard, so that they move away. They migrate to places where they are not disturbed by all these people working hard, and when they get to that place a further separation takes place; that is, there are those who are really lazy and really don't work at all, and those who used to be lazy but now start to work hard. So again there is another separation. This, actually, has the result that there are places in the world where there are human beings who have no culture at all — like, for example, if you go to what is called in the West, West New Guinea. There are still people living there who do not wear clothes at all, let alone have any ability to till the soil or to do anything of that kind — they simply exist in the jungle.

Do not imagine that these people are something new, that they are somehow people who got made later on and therefore haven't sort of caught up with the rest of humanity. On the contrary, they are descended from the same people as you and Bapak are descended from — they are descended all from the original man who was first created by God. That is, from mankind as it originally existed. But they belong to the people who separated out because they were lazy, because they didn't want to work, whereas we are descended from people who like to use their heart and mind and like to work hard. If you watch, if you observe how people like this live — they, in fact, are satisfied as long as they have had something to eat. For example, if they go out in the morning and they succeed in catching a fish and eat it, then they are satisfied. After that they just go to sleep because there's nothing more to do. In other words, they do not want, they do not like, to use their heart and mind to develop anything or to make anything. So the result is



that gradually the heart and mind become blunt — in other words, they can't work, they're useless. People like this, people in that state — this quality is handed down from generation to generation until there develops a new quality, which is that they no longer have faith in God Almighty: they just have faith in anything that is around them which they are frightened of. For example, near where they live is a big cave with a dark mouth — and so they are scared. When they look at it, they feel scared. Then they make up all sorts of fantasies about them, so that in this cave their lives some great demon which looks like a man, only it has eyes as big as kettle drums and has teeth — about this long, and so on. Actually, what they do is they make a story to scare themselves, so that gradually they are not only lazy but they are scared; they gradually become people who are too frightened to do anything at all. In other words, they are frightened of themselves. They are frightened of their own actions — and this is the nature of the descendants of people who have got used to avoiding the use of their intelligence and their heart and mind which God gave them.

*Pewart Special Supplement 3* pp. 35–6      Edinburgh, 1 July 1977

### **Guiding undeveloped races**

So at the present time we can still come across races of men who do not wear proper clothes nor build good, proper houses as we can now do here.

Not only men are concerned about the destiny of people of this sort. God always wills that they should not go on endlessly like that. And through what means does God will that they may become aware?

God wills that those who have been able to attain everything shall lead and guide these people and given them to understand, so that they realize they are human beings, no different from you. And you, who have really shown that you are human and made it evident, should not look on them as creatures of another sort. They belong to the same species as you yourselves.

But Bapak hears that there is now a trend to return to bygone ways. Many people in the United States shun the customs of today, not wanting to live in the modern way and hence going far away from crowded places. They like the mountains and the canyons, and do not even wear clothes. They want to revert to man's former condition. This should not be done.

We should not be afraid to face the many things connected with our life in the world, for everything is made and brought by Almighty God for our needs. So we have to try not to be hampered

## WORK AND ENTERPRISES

by all the necessities of our lives — material needs, that is.

*Cilandak 71* p. 198

Cilandak, 28 August 1971

### THE RIGHT WORK

From all the seventy-eight countries in which Subud is established people write to Bapak (nowadays through the helper network) asking what is the right kind of work or the right job for them and, when he is on one of his world tours, go and ask him personally. From their letters alone he can, by some incomprehensible means, give them advice. People have usually taken his advice, and when they have not have usually regretted it. Although he is prepared to give advice he constantly stresses that they should not indefinitely rely on him, but should eventually find guidance through the latihan over the years, or receive guidance by testing with the helpers. Here are two passages on the theme.

#### **Finding your way**

Actually, through your latihan, through the guidance of God, all of you are already receiving much guidance for your life. The only trouble is that you do not trust it yet. The reason you do not trust it is because you are still very much influenced by your heart and mind which easily waylay you, and in which you put too much trust, so that you do not follow and you do not trust and you are even unaware of all the guidance that you are receiving in your life. Because you meet difficulties in your life, you must never then resort to complaining. Complaining is truly a curse on yourself. God has given you complete everything that is within you. God has given you your senses, your heart and mind, so that with these you can find your own way. It is not that Bapak is warning you or something like that, but it is really like that — that, in fact, within you you have everything you need for your life in this world. Look at the birds, taking an example from the world of the animals. The birds fly out in the morning from their nests and they find it easy to find their livelihood, to find their food. Why? Because they work all the time — they look here, they look there. If it is not here they look there, if it is not there they look here. So, finally, they can easily find what they need. It is the same with us, brothers and sisters; if you have all the faculties within you to find the way that is right for you in your life, all you have to do is to put it into practice. You can understand yourself very well that nothing will happen unless you do it: nothing will ever happen unless you make the step, unless you take an action. So if you are following the road that is not happy, that does not satisfy you in your life, then look for another

one. With your mind you can easily find something else. Look for something else until you find the way which is right for you, the way that satisfies you, the way that meets the needs of your life in this world. If a bird can do it, how much more can you do it because you have been given a mind by God Almighty.

For this reason, brothers and sisters, you must never complain — you must act, you must work and you must use your faculties to find what is right for you. If you are in a line which is wrong, if you don't feel happy, if it doesn't meet the needs of your life, look for something better. You have all the faculties to find it. But do not stop what you are doing until you have found a better way. As it is said: Don't take off your old shoes until you have found a new pair.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 18* p. 402 Melbourne, 5 February 1978

#### **Advice on work**

After reading the entire contents of your letter, it seems clear that you are not yet able to do the kind of work which is in accordance with your soul, and which Bapak has told you is the technical side of art. Perhaps the reason for this is that the cleansing of your inner feeling and the growth of your soul have not yet reached that point. It is this that is the main reason why you are not able, or not yet able, to act in accordance with the wish of the soul.

Bapak has often said that a person's inner talent will eventually appear of its own accord after the course of the purification in the inner feeling and the improvement of the soul have been completed on that level, and this can only be done by the power of the One Almighty God, while it is only necessary for the person to surrender patiently and with full trust in the power of Almighty God. So it is clear that in this matter it is necessary that a person, or we Subud people, do the latihan kejiwaan diligently, with patience, submission and sincerity.

Well now, for yourself. If you feel that this is difficult, that is to say: that you are not yet capable of acting in this way, possibly because the needs of your life are very pressing upon you, there is another way that you can take; that is, you can do the kind of work that you really and truly understand and which interests you. Although what has just been mentioned is something ordinary, yet is just something like that which can be understood by the heart and mind.

As an example, Bapak gives you an illustration. For instance, there is someone who studies the technical side of the field of building, and after completing his studies he then works in that field also. Whereas in fact his talent is in the field of farming, being

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a farmer. Even though his talent is really and truly to be a farmer, can he immediately change course and change the view of his heart and mind towards that direction? Of course not; it is difficult for him to put it into practice immediately. For this reason, if you are really not yet able to be patient in awaiting the right time, you can just do the work that you truly understand and which makes you feel happy.

*Pewartia VI 5 p. 31*

Letter to a member in New York

The last passage in this section is specifically about those who after joining Subud become increasingly bored with their job or increasingly lazy in it. To these Bapak gives his advice.

Actually many able and energetic young or youngish men and women do experience feelings of this sort under the impact of the latihan, and having acquired the awareness that their job is not right for them set about finding a different one. It must also be said that in the early years of Subud there were some who reacted in a less purposeful way to the impact of the latihan. They became so enthralled with the marvellous things stirring within them that they gave up all work to allow themselves to concentrate full time on that inner life. Nowadays, since Bapak has talked so much about work and enterprises, this happens less often.

### **Work can be worship**

It happens very often that someone has been working in the government as a civil servant or for a big corporation long before they came into Subud. Then they come into Subud and do the latihan for a few years and come to Bapak and complain. They say, 'Bapak, why is it before I used to be very enthusiastic about my work that I do and now it feels like I am getting lazier and lazier? I find it boring, I no longer make an effort, I am no longer active in my work — what's wrong with me? Am I sick? Or is there something wrong with me, is something going wrong?' And Bapak answers, 'No, what you are experiencing is simply that what you used to do and what you are expected to do by your superior, by your boss or by your company, is quite simply not in accordance with your own inner feeling. So it is as if your own inner feeling rebels against what you have to do.'

In other words, you are not able under those circumstances to follow the guidance, to do the work, because it is not in accordance with what you receive, with what you feel in your inner feeling. It is quite different if the work you do is in accordance with your own will; in other words, like in your own enterprise. Then what you do

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is on your own initiative; in other words, you work according to your own will, according to your own initiative. Even though it is a very small thing, maybe you are only a blacksmith or you are someone who makes little things which you sell, for example. But in that work as a blacksmith, when you are hammering the iron or something, every moment is filled with the worship of God, every movement is filled with the guidance, with the worship of God Almighty. So then that work will be filled with the worship of God. This is what Bapak means by being diligent in your latihan.

This is what is, in fact, required of us; it is this which God requires of us. Do you imagine that God is satisfied if we just worship Him twice a day, or three times a day, or twice a week, or whatever it is? Of course not! Compare it with a human boss — when you are given a job by a director or a manager in a company and you only come every morning to your office and you say, 'Hello, boss!' — and you don't do anything all day. Then in the evening, when your boss is going home you say, 'Goodbye, boss!' or 'Goodbye, master!'. And at the end of the month you receive your salary. Do you think your boss will be satisfied with that? Of course not, because he isn't paying you so that you say hello to him every morning or hello to him every evening. What he wants is work. It is the same with God Almighty. God Almighty wants you to put into practice your work in this world according to your worship of God Almighty. In other words, not just to say, 'Oh God, forgive me. Oh God, forgive me!' That does not satisfy what God wants from humanity. What God wants is that we work — this is the worship of God. This is what in Islam is called *amal*; that is, the practice of the worship of God. This is what is needed for God and this is the meaning of doing enterprises.

This is the nature of the latihan kejiwaan. This *amal* that is required of man by God, that he worships God all the time in the midst of his everyday work, this is the meaning of the latihan.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 17* p. 387 Brisbane, 24 January 1978

### A HISTORICAL NOTE

I need at this point to give a brief historical account of how talk about work was converted into reality, and describe how Bapak, in the countries where Subud was strong, set up the machinery for establishing enterprises, and how he himself did establish some in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia.

Bapak first travelled abroad, to London, in 1957. The first Subud World Congress was held in London in 1959. At the World Congress

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in New York, in 1963, an international organization was set up to advise Subud groups in various countries on establishing enterprises. These enterprises would in the first instance help Subud members in need, and subsequently people not in Subud. At the 1967 Congress in Tokyo Bapak first made public mention of starting a Subud bank. In 1971, at the Congress in Cilindak, a committee and trustees were appointed, and the bank was finally established in 1975. Among its Articles is a condition that at least 25 per cent of all the distributable profits should go to Subud human welfare and charitable activities.

Meanwhile, in 1974, Bapak had announced a new project — the building of a large office block. This is not the place to tell the story of Bapak's efforts, his world tours in which he spoke frequently of this building and enterprises in general, the work of committees and groups everywhere to raise the loans and share capital, and the obstacles that had to be overcome. But in 1981 the building was completed, fourteen storeys high, costing US \$14 million. It is called the S. Widjojo Centre (that being Bapak's name). The bank is on the first floor, the British Council on the second, Shell has two more, and so on.

At the World Congress in Toronto in 1979 Bapak told the British contingent that he would like them to establish an international Subud centre near London, with a large latihan hall, and associated enterprises such as a hotel or conference centre to fund it, to be completed in time for the next World Congress, scheduled to be held in England in 1983. Meanwhile, in the 1970s, projects representative of Subud's ultimate *social* aim had been started, in or near Jakarta — a hospital for the destitute sick and a training centre for some of the thousands of homeless children who roam the streets of the capital.

Readers with an interest in spiritual matters may be able to imagine the surprise and shock which quite a few Subud members felt when they listened to Bapak unfolding his intentions in the sphere of business ventures, or learnt of them through the *Pewartas* or the tapes of the talks. They had come into Subud for spiritual reasons, yet here was Bapak showing all the instincts of an entrepreneur, and inviting them to share in the work, help raise the necessary finance, and start enterprises of their own.

Various things happened. Some members left Subud, disillusioned. Others, with no business training or aptitude, started enterprises, buoyed up by a euphoric conviction that working along with other Subud members they were bound to succeed. Some of these enterprises collapsed. Quite a few other people — older ones well-established in the professions or other satisfactory careers —

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began to wonder whether they should not give up their jobs and embark on some business venture.

When all this started happening, in the early 1970s, Bapak said that these members had misunderstood him, and advised settled members not to start enterprises without careful thought and valid reasons. On his world tours he visited or enquired about and gave advice about enterprises. Of those that had failed, he suggested that the likely reason was 'amateurism', and put forward and pressed the scheme of panels of experts in each country to advise would-be entrepreneurs. In 1976 he defined an 'enterprise' as *any* work done in the right way, though at the same time said he favoured co-operative work when possible.

His words, however, took time to filter through to all groups and members, and as late as his 1977–8 tour he was still having to advise people unfamiliar with the business world against rashly giving up a secure job and starting an enterprise.

### SUBUD IS WORLDLY, BUT WITH A DIFFERENCE

The first passage that follows is from one of those talks in which Bapak was taking pains to emphasize that Subud, though concerned with the material, was not *only* concerned with it. He accepts the charge of worldliness on the grounds that we are in this world, but not *only* in this one. The second passage, taken from a talk delivered as early as 1963, shows that he had always consistently expressed the same view of the interconnection of the material and the spiritual. Of course many had not realised this — not all Subud members read the *Pewartas* carefully — and only became aware of the *material* side of Subud when Bapak began to be insistent and urgent for action.

#### **Mankind in this world**

Brothers and sisters, I hope you will not think that Bapak is now concerned only with worldly matters — no. Of course he has been concerned with them, for otherwise it would be pointless for God to create mankind in this world. God did not create mankind in this world just for us to think about how to die quickly — no. If God had created mankind just for an early death, it would not have been necessary to create mankind in this world. Thus it was in order that he should live in this world that God created man; to live well in the world, to live in a really good way; to live well and nobly with his family; to live in freedom or in peace, and in the end to return safely to God, with nothing lacking; and to find the right way.

*Pewarta X 6* p. 175

Cilandak, 22 June 1973

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### **Simultaneous work and worship**

It may be that there are members who feel, 'Why must the spiritual way be mixed up with money, with enterprises, with undertakings of various kinds. Will that not retard the way of the spirit?' Let Bapak explain it like this: the spiritual latihan of Subud is something for mankind and for the heart of man; it is a new kind of spiritual exercise and man's worship of God, and it has appeared at this time when the mind of man is highly developed. From this we can guess and feel that it is the will of God at the present time that while earning our living and attending to worldly matters, and also while close to, or involved in material things, we shall not forget our worship to God because God is with us in all circumstances. In this, brothers and sisters, Subud is indeed different from other ways. Therefore do not compare it with those others. They are indeed different: in order to have contact with the greatness of God, a man is usually obliged to isolate himself from people, abandon his comforts, and live in some lonely place far away from others — and even, if necessary — so they say — to refrain from marrying because he does not need children in order to be able to reach a high spiritual level. This was the usual way in times past. But now it is otherwise. It may be that it is the will of God — and Bapak himself does not understand this — for Subud has appeared at a time when mankind is certainly wholly preoccupied with affairs of this world. Because of this we need not at all fear that in handling money we shall come to forget God. No! Brothers and sisters, if you have attained to that which is necessary for your inner being, you can then worship God at the same time as you count money — one, two, three, four . . . While writing a book you will not forget to worship God; while driving a car you will not forget to worship God, and so in everything you do. Thus it is clear that the spiritual latihan of Subud is different from other ways, so that we need not worry if we concern ourselves with material things. This means that Subud is not isolated from anything.

*Subud in the World* pp. 85-6

New York, 16 July 1963

### **FOUR REASONS FOR ESTABLISHING ENTERPRISES**

Bapak gives four main reasons for establishing enterprises.

#### **1 TO ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO STAND ON THEIR OWN FEET**

##### **Find your own way**

This is why, brothers and sisters, Bapak advises you to do



enterprises, so that you can learn to stand on your own feet. You can learn to find your own way, and in your enterprises you will find that truly you can do it, truly you can do your enterprise. When you come to a point where you meet with a difficulty, God's help will come to you and will show you the way, so that you will be able to solve the problems as you come to them. But if you don't try, if you don't make a start, then you will not succeed. To be successful in enterprises the important thing is to work together, each one in his own place, each one doing his or her own work according to what they can do, according to their talent and ability. Each of you does his own work, carries out his own work, but pays attention to all the others. You really do your own work but pay attention to each other, so that you work together as one whole, like in a car. In a car you will find many little things — a screw here, a little wire there. And you think, what's the use of a little screw in a big car? But without that little screw the car won't go straight — it will go like that, if you take it out. So if each little screw, each little wire, is in its right place, the car will go well — but if it is not in its right place, the whole will not work. This is what you have to understand — isn't it the same with us? We are given all the parts of our being. Each of them fulfils a function. If one of them is not working, then our whole work is impaired. So with our being as a whole. God has given us all our senses, our heart and mind, our physical organs, so that we can find our own way. We also have God's guidance and we have all these things which permit us to live in this world.

*Pewartia Special Supplement 18* p. 403 Melbourne, 5 February 1978

## 2 TO BUILD SOLID FOUNDATIONS FOR SUBUD

In the early days of Subud there was a strong desire among members to rush out and *do* something for the world. In England, for instance, a home was established for disturbed boys, at Whatcombe House. It was supported by donations from members in the UK, who were not many in number, perhaps 2,000, and not many of those very rich. It did good work for a while and then failed for lack of funds.

In the passage below, taken from an early talk (1963), Bapak speaks of the commendable impulse to help those in need, but advises Subud groups first to find latihan halls and help their own members in need. Charity, in fact, should begin at home. Those who understood Bapak's words and learnt the lesson of Whatcombe House were ready to see the point of Bapak's subsequent emphasis, in the 1970s, that enterprises — including his own enterprises of the bank and the

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Widjojo Centre — and earnings, not donations, should be the source of finance for the welfare projects that would eventually be founded.

### **A sound basis**

There is indeed already in Subud an idea, which is wide in scope and very good, that we should be able to establish places where we can look after the sick and the destitute, where we can care for neglected children and for maladjusted children who cannot be put right in the ordinary way except by people who have received spiritual life from God. Brothers and sisters, this idea is truly pure and very good. But its realization involves many kinds of material sacrifices. For it is impossible for us to create a hospital where a large number of people could be helped without the money to establish and maintain such a place. That is why we have to begin with ourselves, with our own group; we must at present look after our own. You yourselves must be aware that among us there are many people who are out of work so that their life is not normal. So, to start with, we should arrange to meet our own needs. For that is how it is. When at last we are able to meet our own needs, then we can go further afield. If we are so bold as to be in a hurry to help with work outside, while inside there is still sickness and shortages, our help to others cannot be maintained and it will be only half done. Therefore for a start we should use our efforts to create a kind of springboard — which means first of all a place for latihan. How could it be that we render help here, there and everywhere and yet be without enough money for our own latihan premises; that we go out helping sick people while we cannot properly look after the sick children of our own members; that we go off helping other people while there are many needy members in our own group?

Therefore, it is very necessary that, besides our worship of God, a body for organizing enterprises should be established within our brotherhood. Such an organization for enterprises is not intended to make a fortune for a life of luxury and ease — no! Rather, the income of such an enterprise should be paid into some Subūd fund which will thus be able to give help to members who are in need or who are suffering in some form or another. Thus we will have a sound basis among ourselves and we can be helped through ourselves; and when this has been achieved we can go further afield, by founding a hospital, for instance, or by founding a school for poor children, and a school for children who are abnormal and mentally defective. That, then, is where we could be of help. And the teachers in such a school should as far as possible be our own

members who have received the latihan and so can work not only in the outer but also in the inner.

*Subud in the World* pp. 35-6

New York, 9 July 1963

### 3 TO HELP THE NEEDY OF THE WORLD

The three passages in this section set out the practical social and charitable aims of Subud. The first passage is from a talk printed in the *Pewart* under the heading 'A Bank for Mankind'. It is about as good an exposition of the hopes and ideals of Subud in the world as can be found anywhere in the talks. The second extract specifies some of the welfare projects that could be founded. The third makes the realistic point that if we don't stand by the needy of the world it will be dangerous for *us*, but our motive must be right.

#### **Mutual help**

Brothers and sisters, 'Peace be with you and the blessing of God and His grace.'

By the grace of the One Almighty God, Bapak gives praise and thanks to God that the Spiritual Brotherhood of Subud aspires to establish a bank that is in principle a world bank; a world bank for the Subud members now spread throughout the world.

So, in other words, the bank we are setting up is an international bank, covering the whole world, so that it includes shareholders from among Subud members of all races and religions. This being so, it is thus clear that the ideal of our Spiritual Brotherhood of Subud is not only to make ourselves harmonious in the worship of the One Almighty God, not only to unite the feelings implanted within each of us, but also to live in this world in mutual love and affection, helping one another, so that we can form a people's bank for all mankind. Our ideals and aspirations are in this way in accordance with what we receive in following the way of the latihan kejiwaan.

Indeed it is so, that people should be harmonious and they must have mutual affection for one another. This is not necessary in the interests of the One Almighty God, but in the interests of people themselves, in order that their earthly lives will not always be full of anxiety nor will our hearts be filled with the seeds of enmity to one another.

This is also the reason why religion too suggests doing work in the social field, which means enabling you to help. The rich help the poor, those who have give help to those who have not, the clever help the ignorant, the strong help the weak. This is how it

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has to be for all us human beings, brothers and sisters, if we wish our lives to be calm, our lives to be harmonious, our lives to be peaceful.

These are the ideals of our Spiritual Brotherhood of Subud. We do not seek, we do not pursue profits in order to enrich ourselves, in order to become special people or nations that are very rich, and to turn our backs on other peoples who are poor and weak and backward. So all this is very much in accordance with what we have received in the latihan kejiwaan. In our latihan kejiwaan of Subud, we always receive from — we are taught by — the One Almighty God in order that we should love other people. Thus, too, will those others love others.

As Bapak himself has received, God wills that, so long as people still feel their own self to be important, they will not be capable of receiving wisdom from the One Almighty God and so understand what life is. It is the same with nations.

This is why religion very much requires of us a feeling of loving compassion for our fellow-men. This is our aspiration, this is our ideal in the Spiritual Brotherhood of Subud, so that we must not only do the latihan for our own self-interest, but must put into practise the uses of this latihan kejiwaan of Subud. Don't let it happen that because of the latihan kejiwaan of Subud the needs of our earthly life take second place. The reverse is also true: in seeking a living in this world, in earning a living and making money, don't let us neglect or put aside or put behind us our worship of the One Almighty God. Never do that. This is Bapak's message to all Subud members; it is not addressed to other people, but if they receive it, that is all right.

This is how it is, brothers and sisters, that our ideas and our ideals have taken a concrete form, though still in a small way. Yes; for no action is immediately complete and nothing becomes large all at once. That never happens; everything comes from something small. Everything begins small and grows larger; from being small it comes to be large, from being low it comes to be high, from not being it comes to be.

This is a test for us — a test for mankind, in fact. Don't wish for things to happen quickly, to become rich quickly, to become comfortable quickly. If this could be, if it was possible, Bapak would give thanks to God, but nothing is like that. The people who are very rich began by being poor like everyone everywhere. There is no one living who has become rich all at once. No one is like that;

even if they have inherited through their ancestors, the ancestors started off with nothing.

*Pewart* XI 5 pp. 131-3

Cilandak, 1 January 1974

### **Welfare projects**

To say more, brothers and sisters, about the necessity and importance of having enterprises and setting up a Subud bank, the purpose is that the Kejiwaan Brotherhood of Subud may become strong through getting contributions and donations from the enterprises and from the bank itself. Then, it is hoped, we shall really be able to put into effect our ideas formulated at the Subud World Congress. So we shall be able to make latihan premises for every centre, such as here in Washington DC, for instance. Subud Washington will really own a building for the latihan, bigger than this one, and it will also have a place for meetings and a guest-house for visitors. Together with that, we shall be able to establish schools, we shall be able to establish hospitals, we shall be able to establish homes for old people who have no family. All this will require no small amount of money.

And because we shall have established enterprises everywhere, we shall also be able to receive large sums of money from everywhere, from our own undertakings. In this way all the aspirations of the Kejiwaan Brotherhood of Subud will truly be achieved. And Subud will really have a high reputation, because Subud members, besides worshipping God, will be people who are good at serving the community of mankind on earth.

Brothers and sisters, may God always protect you and give you His blessing; may He grant you His help and His guidance. If we can accomplish these things, then our path will widen. Doors will always be open to us. We shall be able to do the latihan wherever we wish. For the actions of Subud will be known beyond Subud; it will be known to be truly the worship of God, and to be really serving the public. In this way Subud will really be fulfilling the responsibility God has willed for it — to prepare conditions in the world for it to become a place where men can make their worship of Almighty God perfect.

Brothers and sisters, we shall also really be able to feel the benefits of the latihan kejiwaan of Subud; especially the helpers. Because the teachers in the schools we set up will themselves be those of our helpers who possess teachers' diplomas, so that they can make use of their experience to guide children into their right direction. In this way it will be impossible for a child to lose its way

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and not be able to find its path in life. We shall also be able to place the doctors among us — helpers who are qualified as doctors — so that they can care for the sick. But because our doctors are doctor-helpers who worship God, the people whose illnesses they treat will really be brought to remembrance of God, so that they will worship Almighty God.

Also, with every enterprise we carry on, we can catch and direct the energies of our Subud members themselves into these enterprises, which means that we shall help to provide work for them. Everything, in short, will turn out well. And it will all have the nature of mutual aid, so that seldom or never will there be any member within the circle of the Kejiwaan Brotherhood of Subud complaining that he or she is out of work or has not got enough for the daily needs of his life.

*Pewarta X 6 pp. 193-5*

Skymont, USA, 17 August 1970

### **Share your blessings**

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 fellow men.

The same thing has been repeatedly expressed and emphasized 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. So Bapak hopes that those of you who are in a position to do so will not give only one dollar a year but perhaps twelve times as much, and that you will say, ‘Not one dollar a year but one dollar a month, or twelve dollars a year.’ This means that you are aware that there are brothers and sisters living in other countries where things are not as they are here.

For this reason Bapak hopes that you will not think of this problem in terms of giving money; but rather in terms of how you can help from where you are; how you can help others who have less than you. For if you are able to act in this way, those who have will be helping those who have not. Then the path of our brotherhood will run straight and we shall stand upright so that

Subud will develop and spread quickly and our brotherhood will become an example to society. It will demonstrate that this brotherhood of ours, as well as worshipping God, is able to undertake tasks and create conditions which can indeed become a social example. This is the meaning and aim of the organization of the Subud spiritual brotherhood and the newly formed body [Subud International Services].

*Subud in the World* pp. 82-3

New York, 16 July 1963

#### 4 TO ENHANCE OUR WORSHIP

The first three reasons for establishing enterprises are straightforward enough. The fourth is more unusual. Bapak is saying that deep involvement in working for a living, so far from impeding man's spiritual development, actually assists it, and the lack of such involvement retards it. This echoes the point made in the first extract in this chapter, that man has one set of faculties for worshipping and another for working. We should keep our heart and mind and nafs busy with work, otherwise they will have the time and energy to make mischief, such as trying to hustle along our spiritual progress.

#### **Enterprises help our worship**

You should understand that normally men and women worship God because they hope thereby to receive a sufficiency in their lives. In other words, one might say that they worship God for material purposes. From worshipping God they hope that their lives will go well. One might say that their worship is directed towards the material. But with us, it is just the other way round. With us, we make the material serve the spiritual, so that we, on the other hand, do enterprises in order to make it possible to worship God. Therefore, it is clear that for us enterprises are not something that will lead us into darkness, or something that will lead us away from our worship of God — on the contrary, for us our enterprises are a bridge whereby we use the material; we manipulate the material, in order to help us to worship God. With us we are aware of two ways: we are aware of how the spiritual helps the material in our enterprises, and then we are aware of how the material helps the spiritual; in other words, helps us to go back again to God.

So it is very important, then, that we should understand that for us the enterprises are something completely different from enterprises done by other people — that is, the enterprises that Bapak tells us to do are not the same as the enterprises that people

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do normally, because those enterprises are moved by the nafs. Let us say, they worship God while their enterprises are still going well. But for those people, once their enterprises are successful and they are making lots of money, they will forget about the worship of God, because they are already — whether they like it or not — covered up by the nafs, by their greed and their wish to make material gain. With us it is different, because from the beginning we are guided by the power of God. We do our enterprises moved by the power of God — therefore, once the enterprises are successful they do not form an obstacle or something in the way of our worship of God Almighty.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 2* p. 28

Bristol, 27 June 1977

### **Worship is in daily work**

And because the guidance and direction of God have been given form and embodied in the latihan kejiwaan of Subud, and truly are present in the ways we act and behave, both waking and sleeping — that is, in everything we do — don't feel, then, that if you are working you are not worshipping. And also don't feel you just want to worship and not do any work: worship is present in all your actions and in all the daily work that you do — all this forms your worship of God. And this being so, you are never without the guidance and direction of God Almighty, and you will always feel it to the full; full guidance and full direction. Nor will you feel any doubt or confusion; you will feel your hearts and minds grow stronger, and your inner self grow stronger.

Bapak therefore hopes you will be able to start your enterprises quickly; even though you may feel you have never undertaken any kind of enterprise, the guidance and direction of God will give you knowledge and understanding beyond your own. In this way you will become the more convinced that your worship of God really is necessary for you so long as you live in this world.

*Pewarta XI 3* pp. 95–6

Cilandak, 12 August 1973

### **THE SPIRIT OF A GOOD ENTERPRISE**

These three extracts need no introduction and no comment.

#### **Eye and mouth**

Every enterprise has to work together: it has to be an organism constructed of many parts, including bookkeeping and selling, including the one who manages it, the one who looks after the production, the one who looks after the sales, the one who looks after the accounts and the finances, and so on. It needs people of



different skills and abilities. And they all have to understand that they are all working for the one enterprise, the one body.

This can be understood by a simile. Take the human body. The eye has a very pleasant job. It only sees the results of what you do. The eye sees the finished product and doesn't have to care about how it's made or how it got to be like that. It can just take note of what has been done. But the feet complain, 'Whatever happens, I always have to walk. I have to walk here, I have to walk there, and the eye only gets all the benefit. It can see everything and has a very nice time up there; it never has to do any work. I'm the one who has to walk everywhere, and if I'm unfortunate I slip and fall. Sometimes I get broken, and then who feels the pain? It's me, not the eye. Really, I have a very tough time.' Or maybe it accuses the mouth, and says, 'You have a fine time. Everywhere you go, you have lunch or you have breakfast [laughter]. You have breakfast here and you have breakfast there [laughter], and all you ever say is — "Oh, that's delicious," [laughter]. But I never get to eat, I only get to walk everywhere.'

Brothers and sisters, this is all very well, but if the different parts of the body can understand that, actually, the success of one is the success of all — that is, each member of our body can only make progress, can only be successful if the whole body is successful, if they all co-operate and help each other — even though the leg cannot eat, suddenly it will be aware, 'How come that I am getting fatter suddenly?' Or maybe the cheeks, who never do much work, suddenly become round like that, and they only know that things are going better. So this simile illustrates that the success of each part is the success of the whole.

This is, therefore, the justice of God Almighty. The simile of the physical body illustrates the justice of God Almighty — that what we do in our work is something that God will know, that God knows what we have done, and we will reap the benefit through the success of the whole, through the success of our enterprise, through the success of our brotherhood. So, then, the one who succeeds is the whole. What we have to be aware of is that we are working together and each one of us is responsible for that success. Quite frankly, if your enterprise has failed, if you have done an enterprise and it has gone down the drain — that is not the fault of anybody but those who have been working in the enterprise. If you want to know whose fault it is that your enterprise has failed — it is the fault of everybody who was working in that enterprise. Because the

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success of the whole is the success of its parts, and the failure of the whole is brought about by the failure of its parts.

What is important for us in our enterprises is to remain always aware that we are members of one brotherhood and we are dependent upon each other, and that God in what He bestows on us is completely just, and God will bestow on us according to what we have done, for God is aware of the work we are doing no matter what it is, because God's power is completely just. If we serve God through enterprises, we must be able to show the results in the form of social justice or social results. That is, when we do enterprises it is not for ourselves, it is not for us alone to get rich, but for the benefit of all. That is, for the benefit of our brothers and sisters, and also so that our brotherhood can produce the necessary funds and the necessary wealth in order to be able to do something outside our brotherhood — in the direction of social justice for the whole of humanity.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 14* pp. 303–4

San Francisco,  
3 December 1977

### **True co-operation**

Brothers and sisters, if in doing an enterprise or any undertaking involving a number of people you wish to be successful, the condition for it is the ability to co-operate, the ability to work together. What does it mean — to work together? It means that what is important in order to be successful is truly to work together, truly to co-operate. If you can really work together, it will lead you to an enormous strength and an enormous power to achieve something. What is the meaning of working together? The meaning of working together is that you give everybody a value — everybody who works has a value. You do not look down on or deprecate someone who maybe isn't clever, or doesn't have any skill, or maybe all he can do is to carry something from here to there. It's fashionable to look down on such people, and to think that co-operation or working together means just working together with clever people. Brothers and sisters, if you do not have people who can carry something from here to there, if you only have people who can make very wonderful machinery or can produce something very valuable, then you will not achieve anything. You need to have the people who can only carry things from one place to another, the people whose abilities are limited, who have no special skill. If you want to be successful you must value people like that, you must teach them. Even people who know nothing, who

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are able to do nothing, you must take them and teach them and show them how to work and to do something that is useful. Then we will truly be a brotherhood and we will be truly united. We will truly be powerful and able to achieve something.

It is like this: imagine an engineer trying to build a house by himself, so that he has to do everything. He has to dig himself, he has to lay the bricks himself and pour the concrete — he has to do everything himself. It is impossible. He cannot do it. The house will not get built. The successful completion of building a house depends on the architect or the engineer, then the site agent, then the site superintendent, then the foreman, then the craftsman or the carpenter or something, then the guy who can only dig, for example. All those people working together can make a house.

It is clear, brothers and sisters, that working together means contact and mutual regard between all the people involved. Not only those who are on the top, those who are clever, those who can manage or organize, but also the simple people doing the work. And if those people are truly taken along — they truly co-operate: in other words, the co-operation isn't just between the people at the top; everybody co-operates, right down to the lowest one — then you will be successful. Usually this is ignored. Usually the need for getting the co-operation of the people down below is considered unimportant — the important thing is that as long as the people on top know what's going on, that's fine. But this is quite untrue. And even more so in our brotherhood, where it is really our responsibility to take those of our brothers who cannot work, those who cannot find work or have no skill or ability — to take them and look after them and teach them until they have produced something that is useful, until they can find something in their lives which they can really do.

This is the meaning and the importance of enterprises for us in this world. Therefore — and especially — you must look after people who are not clever. For example, if an organization does not develop or goes wrong, this is usually because of opposition or criticism from inside — and the people who oppose or criticize from inside are usually the people who are not clever, the ordinary workers, the unskilled workers. Therefore, do not neglect those people. Look after them so that they don't cause the enterprise to fail or break down. Then you will have a truly successful enterprise. It is necessary, therefore, to bring all our members up to the level where they can receive and can put into practice the guidance of God Almighty in their work. Then we will achieve the

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situation where our enterprises will truly be successful, will truly be an example and will also produce the funds that are needed to make Subud strong and successful in the world.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 19* pp. 404–5

Melbourne,  
5 February 1978

### **Working for others**

Why then do we do business, why then do we engage in commerce in Subud? This is what Bapak says is rather strange: and the reason why is because in Subud we are trained and we are taught to worship God in our everyday life. In other words, we are trained to worship God in the normal state, in the state we are in when we work, when we do our business, and so on. So no matter what it is that we do, in our work, in our everyday life, we are taught to worship God Almighty — and that is the content of Subud.

For the farmer who is sowing his land, that is his worship of God. For the architect or for the engineer, when he is building a big building, that is his worship of God. For the lawyer who is defending a case, that is his worship of God. That means that when he defends his case, when he is working as a lawyer, because that is his worship of God, because he is guided by his jiwa, he will know how not to let the regulations and the laws manipulate him to go wrong. On the contrary, he will know and understand the real content and the essence of the law, so that he can determine the case. He can solve the case in a way that is right, in a way that the result is truly just and truly right, and is not just a manipulation of the law in order to produce a result that is wrong or harmful. Similarly for an architect or a builder. When he builds a building, that is his worship of God, the result of which is that he doesn't build that building to extort money or to oppress the person who will buy it from him, or the person who will occupy it. On the contrary, he will build it in such a way that it will help and bring happiness to the person who will live in it.

If we own properties, we will not set our rents so as to cause suffering and hardship to the people who will live there — on the contrary, we will strive and work and arrange things in such a way that we can fix the rent at such a level that those who live there will benefit from it; that by living there their lives will improve. Through living in our building, the people who live there will find that things open out for them, that they are able to do more than they were able to do before. So, as their lives develop and they become more and more successful, they will truly remember and

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praise the owner of their house. Maybe, later, when they are better off, they will come to the owner of the house and say, 'Why don't you put the rent up? Isn't it time that you put the rent up?' — because they will feel so grateful to him. But the owner of the house, because for him this is the worship of God and he is guided by his jiwa to decide something that is truly correct and just according to God's will, will say, 'No, profit is profit, but I have already decided that this is the amount that I am going to take — and for the rest, that is as it should be and this is the rent which I have decided.'

So in everything that we do there will be a balance. When we sell something it will not just benefit the seller, it will also benefit the buyer, so that both the buyer and the seller will be happy and be benefited by what we do.

This is the fruit that we can look forward to — the guidance that comes from the jiwa which is always close to the power of God. The result of that, or the direction in which it takes us, is a society which is harmonious, united and prosperous, where people are close to each other and where they take responsibility together for everything that happens. That is, in general. In particular, it will mean that in this brotherhood of ours, in Subud, we will truly care for each other, we will truly feel for each other, we will truly know the state of each other. For example, if it happens that one of our enterprises fails, everyone will share that failure, will help and try to support the people who have lost out. Not like now when your enterprise fails and everybody turns the other way. Nobody cares. The people who have lost money have lost money. Those who used to work there don't care — 'We didn't lose money, we just worked there.' Later on, when we are truly moved from the jiwa, those who work in an enterprise which has lost money will feel responsible towards the people who put their money in. It is not like that just now. The people who have run the enterprise and have lost the money don't care, whereas the people who have put up the money — they have to carry the burden. So their attitude is, 'OK, I have lost my money, but I'm not going to put any more into a Subud enterprise — that's the last time I'm going to finance a Subud enterprise, because all that happens is that they take more and more of my money. Next time they can look somewhere else.' That is the situation as it is now, but Bapak hopes that that's not how it is going to be.

*Pewarta Special Supplement 14* pp. 304–6

San Francisco,  
3 December 1977

# 16 *The organization of Subud*

Subud is established in about seventy countries. In some of these there are just a few scattered members or groups, in others there is a well-organized national, regional and group structure.

## THE COMMITTEES

Obviously a great deal of organization is needed at all levels, from international down to local group level — translating and circulating Bapak's talks, hosting Bapak and his party on his travels, establishing communications, compiling newsletters, arranging meetings and congresses, hiring or buying halls for latihan, collecting members' donations. All this work is done by committees, with the usual chairman, secretary and treasurer, who are unpaid except that countries with a large membership have a small full-time salaried staff at the national office.

Committee members are appointed for a specific period, usually two years. The chairman is 'tested' in by the helpers (see Chapter 4, page 44 for the procedure) and he collects his committee by asking, or persuading, members to join him. A member need not have been in Subud for a long time before becoming a committee member. It must be said, however, that some committee members new to Subud make very heavy weather of the job until they have learnt to go about it in a better way.

The function and authority of committee members, at whatever level — group, regional, national, etc. — last only as long as their appointment lasts. They then revert to being ordinary members, or they may be appointed helpers or, in the case of those who previously were helpers, return to helper duty.

## THE KEJIWAAN WORK OF HELPERS

All the organizational work described above is, of course, the kind of work that has to be done in every body or institution. Subud also has a kejiwaan side, which entails just as much work at all levels, but of a different nature — explaining Subud to applicants, conducting the opening of new members, serving the group (or region, etc.) in all kejiwaan matters, advising or testing with those who are perplexed,

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helping those who are in difficulty. All this work is done by 'helpers' authorized by Bapak. Bapak regards their work as more onerous, if properly done, than that of the committee members.

Helpers are appointed for life. They will usually have been in Subud for several years. Their suitability is tested by other helpers from their group or region, and their appointment is submitted to Bapak for approval after a probationary period. They have authority to function as helpers anywhere in Subud, though naturally if they move to or visit another group they would wait to be invited by the local helpers before so functioning. Helpers the world over are equal: there is no hierarchy, or rather no permanent hierarchy of *rank*, just a temporary hierarchy of *function*.

Regional, national and international helpers are usually appointed after service at the geographically smaller level, but though more experienced they are not to be regarded, nor to regard themselves, as more advanced spiritually. They are appointed to perform a specific function, and their appointment usually lasts four years, from one World Congress to the next, and then their function ceases and they revert to being helpers at local group level. Alternatively they may take on duties as committee members at one of the various levels, in which case they become 'temporarily inactive helpers'.

Some helpers feel a sense of pride when they are appointed regional or national helper, and a corresponding sense of come-down when their term of duty ends and they revert to group helper. In the following two passages Bapak tells them, and office holders on the organizational side too, that they must *absolutely* not harbour such feelings.

### **All helpers are equal**

Bapak has often explained that helpers, wherever they may be, are all of them equally Bapak's helpers, and act as elder brothers and sisters to the members they take care of; and as Bapak's helpers they also have an international nature which means that if a man or a woman helper moves to another country, they are still regarded there as helpers.

As to the functions of councillors, national or regional helpers, please do not compare these with the functions of cardinals, archbishops or bishops who constitute an official hierarchy in the Christian church. We only need our set-up to oil the wheels of our organization, in order to facilitate communications and to lighten Bapak's increasing burden.

At a special session of the World Subud Council, during the last

## THE ORGANIZATION OF SUBUD

World Congress, Bapak pointed out to the councillors that, in the event of their not being re-elected in four years' time, they should not consider that they have fallen down from heaven to earth. Their position is similar to that of a former Minister, for instance, who once again becomes an ordinary citizen in his R.T. (neighbourhood community). If they are not re-elected, councillors, national and regional helpers return to their functions as group helpers, those who produce and develop the membership. Also, their functions in the posts referred to above can be passed to other capable helpers. It is therefore out of place for regional or national helpers or councillors to feel that they are superior to other helpers. They simply form a link in Bapak's chain of helpers who are embodied in one splendid organization to co-operate with a feeling of true Subud brotherhood, without exhibiting a power or a superiority complex. The organization should not be a frightening ghost but one run for the sake of good order and for the benefit of the brotherhood.

It is in Subud that we find *Sosial Demokrasi Ketuhanan* (Godly social democracy) which, apart from showing wisdom in discussion based on and aimed at social justice, is also guided by the power of the One God. In whatever disagreement you are involved, you will, in the last instance, be able to find the solution through *testing* with sincere submission to Almighty God. No one, therefore, is our supreme controller but the One God, and we try to make every effort in accordance with the will of God. This forms our true worship of Almighty God.

Please do not have any feelings of a power complex — meaning those brothers and sisters who have leading positions either on the organizational side or in the Dewan-Dewan Kejiwaan (Kejiwaan Councils). We have created an organization in order that the wheels of our brotherhood may run smoothly. Thus, for the sake of its development and perfection, Bapak hopes that all of you who have leading positions, whether in the organization or in the sphere of the kejiwaan, will, with true dedication and a feeling of *sabar* (patience), *tawakal ichlas* (sincere trust and submission), tact and wisdom, guide and cherish the members in a feeling of true Subud kejiwaan brotherhood.

For, by so doing, all our ideals — whether for the well-being of our inner in the care of the kejiwaan, or for the well-being of our outer in worldly affairs, i.e. the Subud World Bank, Subud enterprises, Subud houses, hospitals, schools and homes for the elderly and orphans — may be achieved in due course.



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That is all. It only remains for Bapak to pray that Almighty God will bless you so that the Congress you are holding may proceed well and reach conclusions that will satisfy all your hopes.

*Subud World News* 7.2 p. 2    Message to New Zealand Congress,  
6-7 January 1973

### **There must be no pride**

What we receive in the latihan kejiwaan is entirely in the hands of God Almighty. It is quite possible for a helper who is maybe not yet a long time a helper to receive a revelation or the grace of God Almighty. This may be a helper who is just at the local level, but thanks to God's revelation, he is suddenly able to acquire a real wisdom and understanding; while it is possible that helpers who are already doing the latihan for a very long time, and are already sitting at the regional or national level, have not yet received such a revelation from God Almighty. Because of this, and because we cannot know what Almighty God will give to each of us, the helpers therefore have truly *not* to have a feeling of being higher than each other or lower than each other, but simply to wait together for God's grace and God's blessing for them. This is the reason why in the spiritual, in the kejiwaan, it is absolutely forbidden to have a feeling of being higher, of being above other people. This is what is referred to in the spiritual sense as *Tokkaburr*, especially in Islam. It is a quality where people like to make claims or to determine that such-and-such will happen in the future, although they are not quite sure yet whether it will happen or not. In other words, people who like to 'show off'. This is something that is *absolutely* forbidden in religion. The reason why this is so much forbidden is because a feeling of pride or a feeling of being higher is truly an *enormous* obstacle or barrier to receiving any kind of grace from God Almighty. This is why — Bapak again reminds you now, repeats once again — that in your situation as helpers you must not *ever* have a feeling of being higher than another, or something like that. That is why the question of spiritual degree among helpers is a great secret which we never think about or discuss because, actually, as helpers we are all equal, all on the same level, all equally high and equally low. It is Bapak's wish that in the kejiwaan everybody should have their turn, that nobody feels left out, or something like that. So for that reason there will always be a change, and after four years there will be elections and the national helpers will be replaced and so on. Then all the people who have been national helpers will feel depressed because they have to go down to the local level, and they feel, 'I have gone down very far,

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and my spiritual degree has fallen right down,' and so on. Because, as Bapak said, the question of spiritual degree is something that is very real, and when we receive the revelation of God or, let's say, we become complete men, complete human beings through God's grace, then that is something that we will really know for ourselves in this life. And when we have reached that stage where we are complete human beings, at that moment all distinctions between life and death will disappear for us, or the boundary between life and death will become as something that doesn't exist.

Bapak has a strong feeling that somewhere he has already explained this to you about the need for the organization of the helpers; that is, that Bapak has made this scale of helpers — the local helpers, the regional helpers and the national helpers — so as to lighten the burden of the group helpers, because really the work of the helpers is all the same, all helpers are on the same level and have the same authority, and are equally high and equally low. But, at the same time, without this organization of regional helpers and national helpers, the burden of the group helpers really becomes too heavy and too difficult to carry. This division of work, or this division of functions, that Bapak has described, is not at all aimed at giving you a feeling of position or rank, so that then you have the feeling — supposing you are a national helper — 'Yes, I am the one who has the maximum authority to make decisions in the kejiwaan.' Then the ones in the region feel, 'I have not as much authority as the national level, but I still have quite a bit of authority to make decisions in kejiwaan matters.' And then the local helpers have the feeling, 'Well, I'm not responsible for anything because all the decisions are made by the national and regional helpers who have much more authority to make decisions, so I simply follow whatever they say and that's my job finished.' That is completely wrong because, actually, all the helpers are equally responsible towards the progress of the Subud Brotherhood.

*Subud World News 11.12* p. 2

Hamburg, 6 August 1977

Bapak repeatedly stresses that the work of the helpers and the work of the committees are quite different, and helpers and committee members must not trespass on each other's areas or meddle in each other's affairs. Here is a short passage about this.

### **The dividing line**

In a situation where the helpers and the committee members are not clear about the dividing line between their responsibilities,

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there will arise difficulties and differences of opinion and all sorts of quarrels between the two sides.

*Subud World News 11.12* p. 1

Hamburg, 6 August 1977

### THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

A final brief note on the international organization. There is a World Subud Council, with its International Subud Committee. This committee's location and entire personnel change every four years, at each World Congress. This ensures that no country can regard itself as having any sort of monopoly, and that various countries in turn are given the responsibility and the opportunity.

The heart and power of Subud is of course wherever Bapak is. That is usually Cilandak, where he has his family and secretariat to help him.

# 17 *The achievable state*

## THE CHILDLIKE STATE

Jesus said, 'Whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.' But what is the state of little children, and how can one become like them? Bapak gives an answer to both questions in this passage.

### **Like a baby**

Brothers and sisters, people of old, men of old who preoccupied themselves with this proble of why man forgets — why man forgets about the world of his origin — always came to a certain conclusion. They always said, 'What is necessary is that man must return to his state when he was born, to his state when he was like a newborn baby, when he was still in contact with the world of his jiwa.' Brothers and sisters, this is very easy to say in words, but it is something very very difficult to accomplish, because these words, actually, are directed beyond the heart and mind or the thinking of man. Indeed, in the old days it was possible for man — because man was still far from the influence of the lower forces. It was still easy for him to receive something, to receive a vibration of life that came from beyond his heart and mind. Therefore, it was easy for him to receive something that put him again in contact with this world of his origin. But for us it is something that seems very strange. For us, in our times, the idea of going back — supposing we are already old men or old women — and becoming like a baby seems impossible, or an extraordinary idea. But, in actual fact, this strange idea is exactly what we receive in the latihan kejiwaan. Why is it in the latihan we are taken through again movements and actions which we first received and which we first did when we were small children? We learn to laugh, we learn to cry, we learn to shout. All these things we learned when we were small Why is it, then, when we are opened and start the latihan kejiwaan, that we are taught all over again to do all these things? What we are taught in the latihan is to sense the difference in these movements — the difference when we move because of our heart and mind, because of our will or our wish or our nafsu, and when we move and act because of the will of God Almighty. In other words, the movement that comes from our jiwa — that is, our original being. Therefore

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when we are able to feel, and if we really have done our latihan, we experience that the movements come from the guidance of God Almighty in our everyday life.

*Pewartia Special Supplement 12 p. 269 Mexico, 19 November 1977*

In the next passage Bapak speaks of Jesus, 'the child of God' who, because he was 'empty', could be filled by God, and who therefore had in him 'all the riches that exist', so that in his giving, whether to one or to thousands, he had enough to satisfy everyone. The passage sheds light on Jesus' words: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.'

### **How emptiness is filled**

In the latihan we have the evidence and proof that the progress and the development of our soul can proceed quickly and properly when we truly submit to Almighty God with real sincerity and with our whole heart and mind. Only with our submission can we receive, for submission entails emptiness. 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 a very poor person 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 of God cannot enter. It is different if your house is empty. If your house is already empty, God gives to you and this receiving from God will make ready that which is in your house — in other words, in yourself. Then you will know and understand the difference between the content — the content of thinking and desires — and the content of the gift of God. So we are not surprised at the words of Jesus Christ: 'All that is on earth and all that is beyond the earth is within me.' This means that whatever riches there are, they exist within him. How could this be? It is because the bodily nature of Jesus Christ was empty and so filled with the power of God that he could know everything which cannot ordinarily be known.

Do not be mistaken, brothers and sisters, and think that when someone gives gladly 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. When Jesus went up into the mountain,

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thousands of people followed him and because those thousands were very hungry and had nothing to eat, they asked him, 'Jesus, if you are really the child of God, beloved of God, you will surely be able to give us food for we are hungry.' Well, how could Jesus give food to thousands of people who followed him when he himself had none, and had brought none with him? Then, without knowing how it happened, Jesus was given a piece of bread, just one piece of bread, hardly enough for one person. But through the grace of God, it could be broken again and again and given to the thousands who followed him, and what they received satisfied them — truly a miracle. This is a symbol and an example for us because what was done by Jesus is indeed symbolic. 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 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.

*Subud in the World* pp. 39–41

New York, 9 July 1963

The final extract in this section is another account of the state of childhood.

### **The state of childhood**

If you ask of what use is the mind if it cannot be used to think about spiritual life, then Bapak answers that since this is beyond the concern of the human mind, heart and desires, it is clear that only the power of God operates in the life of the spirit. You should not forget that it was only through his surrender and faith in God that Jesus in the end became a light to the world, so that His counsel is of the highest value to mankind. All this was achieved not by learning or through following any theory, but only by following after God.

Be sure, then, that the way in which your senses come into contact with the soul, leading you towards God, is by re-entering the state you experienced as a small child, free from the influences of the external world. It is by the guidance and direction of Almighty God and by liberation from worldly influences that it is possible for you to achieve the condition of the perfected human being. When this is accomplished, then all your inner feelings —

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mind, heart and all the five senses — will be filled by the grace of God, acting through the perfected human soul, and so you will be able to use your functions aright, according to the requirements of human life. And if we were to ascribe human attributes to God, we could say that He will then be very pleased and happy, for in this state man can worship Him in all he does, at all times and in all places; and it will be ever clearer and more evident to you how real is the love of God towards man, and also the love of man towards God.

*Subud and the Active Life* pp. 39–40      London, 10 August 1959

### HARMONIOUS LIFE

Here is a brief vision of what, in time, we could achieve.

#### **Less quarrelling**

Before you were opened, you quarrelled not with people of other nations but just with your wife or with your husband. You quarrelled all the time. And with your neighbour, you often felt angry and often you had a feeling of greed, or a feeling of being offended, and so on. Now you don't — maybe just a little. Anyway, much less. So this is enough of a proof or evidence for you that through this latihan kejiwaan, if it can spread, if it can spread to those who are rich and forget the poor, to those who are intelligent and take advantage of those who are not, to those who are powerful and oppress the weak — they will be reminded so that they will, of themselves, learn to be responsible for the needs of others, so that this world can really begin to become a place such as God wills. This, then, is the real proof of the latihan kejiwaan — that through this latihan we learn to live together in harmony, and we learn to be able to be at peace with one another and to live together harmoniously in society.

*Pewartas Special Supplement* 6 p. 43      Edinburgh, 1 July 1977

### GLIMPSES OF HEAVEN

Next come two extracts on one of Bapak's favourite themes — heaven is not just for after death but for now. Once again he refers to Christ and what his resurrection symbolizes. And finally there is Bapak's prayer.

#### **An overnight stop**

The messengers of God have already explained that conditions in the life after death are far wider and more glorious and more enduring than in this one. In contrast our present life here in this

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world can be compared to an overnight stop or to someone on a journey who breaks it for one or two or three days, whereas afterwards, when you have left this world, the time is incomparably longer and can be called immeasurable. Therefore pray to God that you will find your way there in your life after death, and that you will be able to work in that glorious world; a world far more glorious than this, the world that is truly heaven. Those of you who can already receive a little bit can catch a glimpse of that world. There are also some of you who cannot yet receive, but later on they will certainly be able to. Because they cannot yet receive, their faith is of course less, but it does not matter. But those of you who are able to receive must have no doubts.

*Pewartia XIII 1* p. 39

Cilandak, 3 October 1975

### **Your individuality will remain alive**

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.

This is symbolized in the individuality of Jesus Christ. He rose again from the dead to return to the heavenly world without any change of what had become his individuality. In that way was shown his true condition while living here; that he moved about not because of his own desire and thought but because he was being moved by the will and power of God, and that he spoke and gave advice not because of his desire and thought, but because of the will and power of God which had pervaded his individuality; so that his outer and inner individuality had become one and the same in holiness.

*New York Talks* pp. 17-18

New York, 6 May 1959

### **Bapak's Prayer**

Oh God, do not let me come alone to heaven, but let me come with my brothers and sisters, with all my kind, with all those who have received the latihan kejiwaan of Subud.

*Subud World News 13.8&9*

Toronto, 16 August 1979



## EPILOGUE

### WE THE MEMBERS

People may ask, 'What good does Subud do you? Are you any better for being in Subud?' But this we cannot say, or perhaps it is too early for us to say, and anyway we may not be the people who ought to be saying. In the early 1970s Bapak kept telling us, as he went on his overseas tours, that he could observe few of us who showed signs of 'reaping the fruits of the latihan', and also estimated that very few were fully 'purified'. Though a little more encouraging now, he still says we are only just out of the primary school stage.

Many however do consider that their lives have been straightened out and enriched, and do feel stirrings of 'a life within a life', and the reader will easily imagine as a result what varying degrees of respect, affection and love we feel towards the man who enabled these changes to take place.

A final point must be made: the world, as Bapak frequently says, will not pay attention to Subud until we the members begin to achieve its main worldly objective — the founding and funding of various kinds of welfare projects.

## HOW TO JOIN SUBUD

There is no entrance fee.

There is no membership fee.

There is no tuition fee, because there is no tuition: you learn by doing the latihan. The organization is financed by donations from the members— the well-off giving more to make up for those who can give little, or nothing — and also increasingly by allocation of some of the profits of enterprises run by Subud members.

There is a lower age limit; you must be eighteen.

The procedure for joining is as follows. You look in the telephone directory to find, under 'Subud', the name and address of the secretary of your nearest group. If you can find nothing, write to the publishers of this book: Humanus Limited, 55 The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5TE, England. They will put you in touch with a helper of the nearest group — a man if you are a man, a woman if you are a woman.

When you meet that helper you will have a chance to put any questions you want about Subud, and he, perhaps with the assistance of other helpers you may then meet, will do his best to answer them. There is then a three-month waiting period (dispensed with if you are 63 or over), during which the helpers will want to make certain that you are serious about your wish to join Subud, and you will have the time to make equally certain about your wish to join. After that comes the 'opening'.

The opening ceremony is one of extreme simplicity. The helpers stand with you, and the helper in charge speaks the opening words. Then you all begin the latihan.