



What is Subud?

A brief talk by the founder of Subud, the late Pak Subuh, on April 16th, 1960 in Singapore

Ladies and Gentlemen,

SUBUD is an abbreviation of the words Susila, Budhi and Dharma. Subud is not a new religion nor a sect of any religion; nor is it a teaching. It is only a symbol for the possibility for mankind to follow the right way of living.

Susila means to be able to live according to the Will of God as really true human beings.

Budhi indicates that in every creation, in every creature of God, including man, there is a Divine Power which works within him as well as outside him.

Dharma means the possibility for every creature, including man, to surrender completely to the Will of God, of whom man is only a creation and has, therefore, inevitably to submit to the Will of his Creator.

Susila Budhi Dharma (Subud) means to follow the Will of God with the help of the Divine Power that works both within us and without, by the way of surrendering oneself to the Will of Almighty God.

Susila Budhi Dharma is the symbol of what we are practicing in the spiritual exercise (latihan) of Subud; it means that whatever happens in the spiritual exercise of Subud is entirely the Will of God and comes to us because God wills it for us.

This is exactly according to what has been said in the Holy Books -- the Bible, Qu'ran, and others that may exist; that is, God is close to man or if man has come close to God then God can give man the things man needs, and that man can receive the things that God intends him to have.

What is it that we have to surrender to God? It is not our wealth, the ones we love, nor whatever else we possess, because God has no need of those things. What we have to surrender is our mind, our hearts and our desires, because those are the instruments that form an obstacle to our coming closer to God.

This is what Jesus Christ meant when he said that God will always be with us if we can surrender ourselves to Him and if we can love Him more than anything else, more than ourselves. This means that the love that we have with our hearts and with our feelings is an obstacle that prevents us from coming to the true love of God, because this outer love is only love of things we like to believe we love. But the love that we must have for God must be greater than this.

To the prophet Muhammad was given the revelation that God existed before anything else existed, and that God will be after everything is destroyed. God is farther away than the farthest things there are. He is deeper within than anything else, which means that God has created really everything; and because He created everything He will also take care of everything.

It is also said that God has no form, no speech, no country, no color, because if He would, for instance, have a country there would be more than one God because for every country there would be one God; and if He had a color, there would also be more than one God because every color would need a God. And this is what is meant by saying; "God is One and Master of all."

Also, God created without tools and materials. If man wants to make something, for instance, a table, he needs wood, he needs nails, a hammer and other tools; and to be able to make the atom bomb man needs more tools to break down the material into atoms. But with God it is wholly different. God works without materials or tools. It follows that for man to understand and to know what is in the mind and heart of God, the only thing to do is to surrender himself entirely; because with his own mind and his own desires he will never be able to find God. Only by surrendering himself completely to God, not making use of his mind, his heart or his desire, is it possible for man to come into contact with the Power of God.

This is what we do in the spiritual exercise of Subud -- we surrender ourselves completely; we do not make use of our mind, heart or desires -- but we only accept and receive whatever God sends. So you will understand that Subud is only a symbol of that way of living for man in which he can fulfill the Will of God and carry out the Will of God for himself in this world and the world to come.

Therefore, in the spiritual exercise of Subud we do not have a teaching, there is nothing we have to learn or to do, because all that is required of us is complete surrender. A person who claims to know the way to God is really one who is anticipating God's gifts without having received them.

The only thing we do is surrender ourselves completely and only accept and receive whatever God sends or wants us to have. This is indeed what every prophet has said: "Surrender yourself entirely, submit completely to God, and then God will take care of you and give you guidance." In this spiritual exercise we do not expect anything in particular. We do not make for ourselves any image, but we only receive whatever God may send us.

So this Divine Power, which works in us during the exercise, will bring to each person what is already in himself. For instance, if a person has a loud and strong voice, he will utter sounds that are very loud and strong. But a person who does not have such a loud voice will utter a softer sound. This goes for every part of our body, for every part of our being. Therefore, the exercise (or "latihan" in Indonesian) of two people can never be the same, because everyone is different from everyone else. Therefore, it is clear that there cannot be a theory or a spiritual teaching in Subud because each person is different from another. Whatever he needs and whatever he receives will be different from what somebody else needs and receives. This is why we cannot give any rule or prescription of how to behave when you are in the latihan, because this is something personal for everyone.

Every person will find the way toward God for himself, and what may be the right way for one may be completely wrong for another. Therefore, you must not suppose that you have to follow or become like Muhammad Subuh. You must become your own self and you must develop your inner self if you want to find the way to God. You must not follow or imitate anyone else, because you must find your own way to God. Usually if there is a teacher he teaches his followers to do exactly the same as he does in order to reach what he has reached. But this is really wrong, because not only between a teacher and his followers, but even between two brothers of the same parents, there is already a big difference -- not only in outward appearances but also in their character and in their whole being. So surely you can understand now that what is the right way for a certain teacher to find God is not necessarily the right way for his pupils.

Therefore, Bapak says that it is God Who will lead you toward Himself and what really happens in the latihan is that you will be introduced to your real inner self -- to the real "I". You must not be afraid and you must not be worried because whatever comes to you in your latihan is only what is in you, and it comes from your inner self. It is the real you that arises in the latihan, so you do not have to be worried or afraid.

In Subud there is no discrimination between the different religions because what comes to a person is really what is already there within him. So if a person is a Christian he will meet the real Christ within himself, and if a person is a Buddhist, he will meet the real Buddha within himself. The same if he is a Muslim, he will meet the Muslim within himself. And then, if you really know your inner self, you will be guided by the Divine Power in everything you do, because the Divine Power works in you through yourself, and whether you work in an office or drive a car or do anything else, you will be guided by the Power of God, which is always working within you and outside of you.

Then it will be true what is said in the Qu'ran, that before you undertake anything, you should say: "Bismillah-ir rohman-ir rohim" (In the Name of God, the compassionate, the merciful). This means that you follow God's guidance and you will only do whatever God brings you to do. You will not then be in haste to do something and only afterward remember God and regret what you have done. When God is always before something you are doing, then it must be the right thing to do. And this is also the real meaning of what is done by Christians when they pray before they eat or before they go to sleep. And this also means that you should not do anything without God guiding you, because if you forget God in something you do there will be no help from God if anything goes wrong. The power we see is only to convince us that the Almighty Power of God works not only within us but also in all creation, and even outside of all creation.

That is why in the spiritual exercise of Subud we will not harm our religion, because what we think and what we carry out is only the Will of God, and we only carry out what is already within us. So a person who has a religion will experience in the latihan only according to what is in his religion and according to what is within him.

Some among you may ask where Bapak got all this from, and Bapak answers that he received this when he was in the same situation as you are. He was working, he was still doing his job in the office and whatever else he had to do, and even liking it. All of a sudden everything stopped. His mind stopped working and his heart stopped working and his desires stopped working, and then he received as everybody receives in the latihan. He was not looking for wisdom, he did not have a guru, a teacher. He just received it, and that is what is called "Mu'jitsat-ulla", a divine gift. This comes to a person only while that person is not looking for it, and when he is ready for such a gift then God will bestow that gift on that person.

You may have heard about the healing of Eva Bartok. It was not Bapak who helped her or cured her. But he showed her how to worship God and it was her good fortune that God willed her to get well. So she got well and everything was well with her. But it was not Bapak who cured her. He only showed her the way to worship. The inner healing of a person is only a matter between him and God, and no-one else can interfere. Further, Bapak leaves it to you to decide whether or not you want to come to this spiritual exercise, because in the worship of God there is nothing compulsory. Everyone must be free. But whenever one asks, it will be given.

Good night and thank you.