

(Please feel free to distribute this supplement to any friends who ask about Subud)

WHAT IS SUBUD?

SUBUD is something simply something natural in that its process takes place in anyone who wants it, at his own pace, according to his nature. It is the renewal of contact with the essential force of life, which is positive and constant, but with which we have lost touch.

We seek what we think will make us happy, but we are endlessly mistaken in our actions and thoughts. Only sometimes, when we are very quiet, or in some unusual state, can be suddenly, brilliantly aware of this other life going on. The process of Subud reconnects us and keeps this special awareness alive and active in a way that appears entirely natural.

Subud was founded by an Indonesian, Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo. He is usually referred to by Subud members as “Bapak”, which is an Indonesian word for a respected older man. The experience, the spiritual exercise, which we call by the Indonesian word "latihan", came to him as a revelation, suddenly. He was able to share it, pass it on to others, and it is now known in more than seventy countries and practised by thousands of people. To practise the latihan is to stand relaxed in a group of people, men and women separately, and to allow the process to take place. Many people feel a vibration, most soon feel an impulse to move, to utter sounds, or to sing. The impulse is spontaneous, not suggested or controlled by thought, but during this time a member is fully alert; with mind and desires passive and reacts according to his need at the time.

The latihan continues for about thirty minutes and it is repeated twice a week. The experience varies; indeed it is different for each person. For some the development is gradual and changes are noticed in the outer life before there is much movement in the actual latihan.

The process is one of cleansing, purification, which reaches more and more deeply into every part of one's being.

It is necessary to be a member before one may attend a latihan and for most people a waiting period of three months is asked before joining. This gives opportunities to meet people who have experienced the latihan for some time and to learn from them something of what may be expected and to draw near with respect to a movement which is likely to change one's whole life. The moment of actually joining Subud is when for the first time a person stands with other members who are doing their latihan and receives the contact. This is experienced by some immediately, by others after a while, as a quickening of their inmost being.

Often in life we do not know (as we say) “which way to turn,” we do not know what is right. In Subud we learn to trust, to receive guidance through the latihan. The effect for most shows in a greater understanding of oneself and happier personal relationships; often something newly positive in work experience. Improved health is often a by-

product of the latihan, discrimination about food and drink and in habits of living. There is guidance to find one's right work in life, and so to use one's talents to the best advantage.

For some there is considerable pain. The process of purification brings out problems, reminds forcibly, agonisingly, of past mistakes. Many things have to be faced and, in a way, re-lived before they can be left behind.

The Subud organization is worldwide. There are national and international officers and committees and there are local groups where people meet to exercise. The association has been established in the West for thirty years and is working to help in the world. Subud members are setting up business enterprises, the ultimate aim of which is to support the welfare projects of Subud, especially for children, refugees and old people. Much of this activity is in the Third World.

Religious terminology is often used: Almighty God, submission to the Will of God. In these terms the latihan is experienced and, in time, understood as a true worship of Almighty God, each member receiving it in accordance with his own nature and capacity, and in his own way. Bapak uses this language. In all religions we have words which have evolved through human attempts to identify and describe another dimension of life;- prayer,- surrender and submission to a power greater than we can imagine and yet of which we are a part.

Subud is a process, a receiving, not a teaching nor a religion. It is not a religion. There is no dogma or theories in Subud. Nobody is expected to believe anything, only to recognise and trust what he experiences. People of different religions find their faith deepened and practise the latihan in complete harmony with each other and with those who have no religion.

Susila, Budhi and Dharma are the three Sanskrit words from which the name Subud is derived.

- Susila means to be able to live as true human beings - according to the Will of God.
- Budhi refers to the divine power that works within man as well as around him in the world
- Dharma means the possibility to surrender completely to the Will of God.

Susila, Budhi, Dharma means to follow the Will of God, or the power of the life force that works both within us and without.

Gradually for most people, quite quickly for others, it becomes possible to recognise a little of the immensity of which we are a part and to live to some extent in harmony with it and with other people. This is what Subud is about.

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