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FINDING THE LIGHT
A Personal Account of Discovering the Meaning of Life

by Siti Muti'ah Lestiono

Forward

I have written this book as a testament and a chronicle of the miracle of Subud. I don't expect anyone to believe or disbelieve it, because I have told it like it was and is. There are some who might say I exaggerated or read things into incidents that were not really there. Maybe I did, but that's the way I saw things at the time.

Subud is a phenomenon for today, yet it's as old as this earth. Perhaps it came into this world at this time because man has deviated from the original intention of being here. People need desperately to see with their own eyes and understand with their own feelings that God is always there, directing and guiding us. All we need to do is tune in.

This is my story. Take from it what you will.

Chapter 1

I'm a native New Yorker. I vowed growing up that I'd never live anywhere else, that New York had everything I'd ever want. Certainly I never thought I'd wind up across the globe in a somewhat secluded complex with people from all over the world.

But I'm rushing ahead of myself. I slipped out at two in the morning in the hospital. The doctor was at home on that cold and icy February. The nurses held me back with towels until the doctor arrived and I almost died--they didn't know any better. I was called Carol Ann Glassman. We lived at 441 West End Avenue in an apartment that took up half the second floor. My father was a dentist, my mother, a mother. My older brother was born three years before me; my younger brother had to wait ten years before coming into this world.

I had a very mundane childhood. When my parents decided to move to Long Island "where the children will have more advantages," I let out my rebel cry, then stopped when I saw it wasn't going anywhere. Before we left I was in an all-French play, and I remember shouting out everybody's lines with the audience smiling. It was then I decided I wanted to be an actress--at age six--to gain all that attention. Even in my child's mind, I knew New York was the place to be if you wanted to be in the theater.

So off I went to Nassau County, which seemed a thousand miles away, but was actually was only 20 miles from the heart of the city. There was everything a child could want, or so my parents kept saying, and here is where I grew up. There was the country club, the picturesque elementary school and the near-perfect senior high. My parents hoped that here I'd meet the man of my dreams (or their dreams) have a big wedding, settle down and live out life as they saw it. Little did they know of the fires that burned within me or the secret life I had in my room, where I acted out every facet of my dream life, of becoming famous, of having everyone idolizing me, of escaping the mediocrity and surface living known as the town of Great Neck.

I tried to like it. I really did. I told myself I was lucky to have all that I did. But something--I didn't know what--was missing. I

thought at the time it was the theater; I found out later that I was mistaken.

I remember when I was still small--about 10--when I had my first spiritual experience, although at the time I didn't know it. When I was ready to go to sleep, suddenly I saw a tiny pinpoint of light. It was fascinating to me and I followed it around the room. I saw this often and wondered what it was. Later, I was told that the soul--when you first see it--is like a tiny pinpoint of light in the universe.

Just hints along the way. I went to summer camp and one year, when I was 14, I tried a summer theater camp in Vermont, where I played a part in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I remember one day I climbed to the top of a hill with a friend and suddenly I started speaking in a different language, and then I said, "Oh, free. Oh, free." I didn't know what it meant. I just knew it made me feel better and that something in me was searching, searching for what at that time, was elusive.

I continued to grow. There were the school plays, where I always had the lead, there were the proms with an off-the-shoulder pink voile dress that stood out and just had enough room to pin on an orchid. I should have been ecstatic like my friends, but as I said, I was restless inside--something was missing.

The first year out of high school I went to the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York, where my classmates were Gena Rowlands and John Cassevetes. I was happy, for from morning till night we ate, breathed and lived the theater. I loved it. I couldn't imagine doing anything else.

Then a friend of mine talked me into going to the University of Georgia. I almost was lynched when I gave a speech on "Discrimination Against the Negro" in speech class. That was in 1952 just before the South exploded, spewing out the racial hatred that had lain dormant for so long. I guess I was one of the first to be so outspoken.

I still wanted to be in the theater, and when the opportunity presented itself I auditioned for the part of Jackie in Noel Coward's *Hay Fever* presented by a professional New York company in the Atlanta Penthouse Theater, a theater in the round.

I got the part. Atlanta is about 50 miles from Athens, where I was going to school, so it was back and forth from Athens to Atlanta by bus for rehearsals.

I remember opening night and the review in the *Atlanta Constitution* which said, "A surprise to everyone was the performance of Carol Glassman a young University of Georgia co-ed who stole several scenes with a skillfully underplayed part." I should have been ecstatic, and I was to a degree, but still, there was that gnawing emptiness, the origins of which I didn't know then, that kept on telling me that there had to be something more.

It was back to New York, Columbia University and the theater. I had a boyfriend--several, in fact, and with the lead in the University play--it was a pre-Broadway tryout--everything was rosy. I managed to get some TV work--nothing big, but it was a start.

Well, the play didn't make it to Broadway, but I got a job in summer stock, touring the Catskills in another play that was destined not to be. And so my life went on. But it was boring-- it had no meaning--and I couldn't see how I could continue day after day.

It was at this stage that I met my future husband through a friend of mine. He was a director at CBS-TV and I was ripe and ready for a lasting relationship. I was still searching, secretly, and Bob Anderson, my husband, introduced me to Reichian therapy (Wilhelm Reich), where I went through traumatic experiences of childhood, and I came to understand better what and who shaped my life. I went through my own birth. It was all a question of expressing the anger, anger that had been sitting inside, covering up the joy of living. But I knew this wasn't it--not yet.

Meanwhile, Bob decide to try a different kind of life, away from the city that I loved. Well, I'd try. We found a nice house in Vermont. At first we kept our apartment in New York and commuted; he was content to go back and forth, but then I got pregnant and didn't enjoy the coming and going every week. He left me in Vermont and it wasn't my idea of a quiet life. Vermont had more suicides than any other state--and I could see why. I didn't have anyone to communicate with, except the woman at the general store who answered everything with one or two words--

"Yep," and "Nope."

At any rate Gena was born on September 26, 1957 in a small hospital in Townshend, Vermont, and I was overjoyed. But this sense of well-being began to fade, for it was then that my marriage started to disintegrate. We went up and down that thruway so often that I knew each curve and twist. Inwardly I was still struggling for something in my life that gave it meaning. I felt like a robot.

I was staying in Vermont with Gena, my only contact with a human being, when a friend of mine and her daughter, Francois and Amelia Kirby, came to visit me. During the course of her stay, she mentioned she'd been "opened" in a movement called Subud and that it was a wonderful experience. Something clicked in me, but I ignored it and shoved it aside. It wasn't time.

Not long after that my relationship with my husband became non-communicative. We decided that it was the moment to separate. I reluctantly went back to my parents' house on Long Island. It was a rough time for both Gena and me. I had Gena in a nursery school while I looked for work in the City. I didn't have any idea what I should do, maybe something connected with the theater, so I took some part-time work and soldiered on.

I'd moved into my own apartment, as my parents sold the house and settled once again in the City. Gena was in a private day care center off Central Park West. And I was looking for a job.

One day I was trudging along Madison Avenue and 51st Street when I met my friend Françoise. I hadn't seen her for many months, so I did a double-take when I first glanced at her. She looked "younger than springtime." She had a peace about her that I couldn't explain. "What's happened to you?" I blurted out right away.

"It's Subud," was all she said.

"Subud, Subud--that's the movement you told me about a couple of years ago," I said.

"That's right," she replied. "C'mon, let's have a cup of coffee and I'll tell you about it."

So that was the beginning of my life. I say "beginning" because it was the beginning of knowing who I was. It was the beginning of my search for the light.

Chapter 2

I was "opened" on July 5, 1961 in New York. I took my three-year-old daughter with me, and she went to Greenwich Village park with a baby-sitter to splash in the fountain.

It happened so fast; at least it seemed to at the time. One week I was entering this hall with a friend and the next I was being opened. It was explained to me that usually it took three months--a probationary period where you find out about Subud by talking with people who'd been in it. In my case, however, they felt that since I'd known about Subud for a couple of years, they'd agreed that I could go ahead.

At least, let me tell you this much. I was newly divorced, getting settled in a new apartment, new job, new city. I was busy enough, but at age 28 I felt there was an emptiness in my life, that no matter how hard I tried there seemed to be a voice deep inside which kept up its relentless questioning: "Who are you? What is the purpose for you in this life? Is this all there is? Do you live and die and that's it?"

Oh, I sought out this and that--Christian Science, Rudolf Steiner, Reichian Therapy--and they were good, but somehow they just missed the point, and this emptiness remained. So I would try this new movement. After all, what did I have to lose?

The day before I was to be "opened," I read a brief synopsis of Subud, explaining what the word symbolized:

Subud is an abbreviation of the term:

Susila--right living of man, concordant with the Will of Almighty God;

Budi--the force of the life power which is within man;

Dharma--submission, trust and sincerity towards Almighty God.

It touched something inside of me.

The day had arrived. I was told the women would be separated

from the men so that everyone would feel free and unencumbered. I was ushered into a carpeted room with no furniture and took off my shoes and jewelry, stood and closed my eyes. With everyone standing quietly, my friend Francoise said:

We are helpers in the spiritual brotherhood of Subud, and we are here to be as witnesses to your wish to worship the One Almighty God. We hope that your wish is truly based on sincerity.

You know that the One Almighty God is the Creator of the whole universe, of all that can be seen as well as all that cannot be seen with our ordinary eyes. God is All-Glorious, All-Knowing and All-Powerful.

Therefore in your worship, to which we bear witness, it would not be right to make use of your own self-willed desires and thoughts. For this reason we hope at this moment you do not concentrate your thoughts, but open your feelings, truly surrender and submit your own will to the Will of God, and be patient and sincere before the glory and greatness of the One Almighty God.

So that your feelings can become calm, we would like you to close your eyes, and to stand quite relaxed and to pay no attention to other people exercising. Also when movement arises within your body, do not resist them and do not feel anxiety, but freely follow whatever arises within you.

With that, it was as if the doors had burst open. I couldn't help myself. I felt as if I had been relieved of a great burden I'd been carrying since I was born. People were latihan-ing all around me and I was aware of them, but my total awareness was deep within myself. Suddenly I was crying and crying and crying as if I would never stop, like a dam had been unearthed--crying to thank God. For underneath the crying I was saying "Thank you, God. Home. Home."

My first latihan went on for about a half hour, and I experienced many things on many levels. It was like the pressure had built up and suddenly it was released. I was fully conscious and in control; but at the same time I was allowed to perceive all that was going on around me. I went down on my knees. This is what I'd been looking for all my life. It was so close, and yet I'd missed

it, so close and yet so far away. It's been here since the beginning of time. This encompassed everything in the universe. It went beyond words. Don't ask me how, but I could understand that this was the Grace of Almighty God.

Someone said "finish."

I opened my eyes and felt washed clean, inside and out. I cried some more and a helper sat quietly with me, letting it all take place.

Later, after I reached home and put my daughter to bed, I thought about the man who was chosen to bring Subud to the world. I didn't know it then, but I was to go to the place where he was born and retrace his steps to make a documentary about him.

Chapter 3

As Bapak once said in one of his hundreds of recorded talks¹, throughout the history of the world, man has been searching for something that connects him with his origins. From the time life began on this planet, it's as if God were saying, "All right, I've given you everything you need for life in this world. Let's see if you can find your way back to me after you've lived a certain time on earth."

However, man remains man, and throughout the ages, he became more influenced by the things in this world and man forgot the realm from which he came, even negating it. He was getting further and further away from the real meaning of life, caught up in his own self-interest and greed.

So God sent the first religion into the world, which said there was only One God, and many people converted to Judaism, through the Prophet Abraham. And Abraham taught the people at that time to worship the One and Only God. People then could listen and obey the teachings that Abraham professed, because their lives were simple, their feelings calm. The Bible was created.

Judaism grew, but more people turned toward this world, and their thoughts to accumulating and possessing all that they could. Fighting escalated. And so God sent another prophet who was the forerunner of the Christian religion. Jesus again directed people towards God and for a while they were satisfied. The New Testament was written with all the wisdom and guidance necessary for a good life.

But strife and hatred between peoples began to show itself until it was out of hand once again. Selfishness was the victor. Then Islam came into the world with the principle that no intermediary is needed between man and his Creator, that man could worship alone if needed. Muhammad was the Messenger, this time through the Koran.

¹Bapak's complete talks are being translated now in several languages and being published by Subud Publications International Ltd. under the auspices of the World Subud Council.

There were other religions that touched man and gave him peace such as Buddhism that required going inward, negating this world and concentrating on self-denial and right thinking, going through the different levels until reaching Nirvana. This was brought by Siddartha Gautama, who through great privation and suffering finally reached his goal.

All these and more did not satisfy man, for religion was based on one man's receiving who gave the fruit of his receiving to anyone who wanted the wisdom and enlightenment. Then people simply followed. Man could no longer accept this. Man could not learn from another, no matter how pure and wise. In the evolution of man, his mind and way of thinking had progressed so far that everything had to be logical and proved before he'd believe.

Man descended into the realm of the lower forces--forces and passions that no amount of teaching could overcome. The world went spiraling downward. As the momentum gained speed, there was no turning back. The 20th century heralded catastrophe, preceded by the industrial revolution. The Depression, World Wars One and Two, the Korean and Vietnam wars, scientific discovery, the computer age and way of thinking drew man further away from his purpose--to return to God.

It was at the beginning of the 20th century when God decided it was appropriate for all mankind to have the contact that was always there, that Man had progressed so far that it was useless to send another religion--the religions had already been sent, together with their prophets and books. There was nothing further man could learn at this time. Man had progressed so far that another man--no matter how holy, how wise--could not teach them, could not help them to change. They needed the direct contact.

And that's when Bapak Muhammad Subuh was born--not to teach, not as a prophet, but to bring the latihan to this world to those who ask for it.

Chapter 4

Bapak² was born at dawn on June 22, 1901 in the isolated village of Kedung Jati in Central Java, Indonesia, not far from the railroad, the town's only link to the outside world.

Bapak's mother, Ibu³ Kursinah had many strange dreams. Then the volcano Kelud erupted, followed by torrential rains. The birth was the beginning of the extraordinary life of a man who always insisted that he was ordinary, coming from simple surroundings in an area that even today reflects a kind of agelessness, as if time remained where it was originally and people lived and died within it flowing to a gentle rhythm--then, like now mostly employed by the railroad, as farmers or teachers. What was extraordinary was that he emerged from this remoteness into the very center of life, as an example to the world of how the Power of God chooses its target.

He was given the name Soekarno, but after suffering a series of serious illnesses, an old man appeared at his house one night and said the name should be changed to Muhammad Subuh⁴. After that he became well. Bapak was brought up by his great uncle, Raden Mas Sumowardoyo, who lived next door. He was loved deeply by his adoring great aunt and uncle, whom Bapak always referred to as his grandparents, which is common in Indonesia.

When he was growing up his grandmother would take him to weddings, but that didn't work out. It seemed the young boy would blurt out that the marriage wouldn't last, or the couple would be happy or that disaster would strike at such and such a time--predictions that would prove to be right. The grandmother stopped taking him to weddings.

Bapak's younger brother, Eyang Pa'at, remembers that Bapak was

² Bapak is Indonesian for "father," and is commonly used as a title of respect. Sometimes shortened to Pak.

³Ibu is a form of address used for an older woman. It means literally "mother."

⁴Subuh means "dawn."

a good child who liked to give way to others. The two boys went to school in Ambarawa, which could only be reached by train, leaving early in the morning and coming home late at night.

After two years Bapak transferred to the newly built government school in Kedung Jati. It wasn't easy, for Bapak could sometimes see things that could not be seen by his friends. He once said it was as if he were restrained from saying improper words, and during lessons, when asked to respond to something which he knew was wrong, it was as if his mouth were stuck so that he was frequently scolded by his teachers.

The cemetery on the hill holds the remains of Bapak's younger brother, Subandi, who died in 1916, his great aunt and beloved great uncle Raden Mas Sumowardoyo.

Bapak received the news of his great uncle's death when he returned to Ambarawa to continue his studies, staying with an uncle who worked for the government there. One night he had a dream which seemed real, when a very old man in black appeared, saying, "In a little while you will leave this place to work and eventually you will receive an unexpected gift from the One Almighty God and become an exalted human being."

It was a startling dream to Bapak, one he would remember later.

However, for now he just wanted to work and study and he was about to secure a position with the railroad. Just 17 and wanting to further his career, he moved to a job in Surabaya, but feeling unsettled there, stayed less than a year, returning to Kedung Jati to rest, then moving on to a job in the Central Java port city of Semarang.

Bapak's greatest wish at the time was to reunite his family, and he was able to bring his parents and his brother and sister there. Bapak worked in the bookkeeping department of the Semarang municipality. He also studied on the side.

In 1923 Bapak's father died. He was a simple man, yet descended from a renowned teacher of Islam, and a Javanese king.

Bapak was always interested in the spiritual side of life, and he was continually searching. One day he went with a friend from

the office to the home of a spiritual teacher who guided his students towards a certain state of consciousness. Within a short time, Bapak had several experiences which the teacher said the others in the group had been waiting for a long time. On his quest for the perfected life, Bapak also met other teachers who told him that Bapak already had what he was seeking, and it only remained for the right time for it to appear.

After work, Bapak would either meet his friends to continue discussions or study bookkeeping, often going for a walk afterwards. One night at a spot just outside the hospital that was being built, at age 24, he was startled by the sudden appearance of a bright white ball of light from above.

The ball of light entered his head, and he shook from head to foot. He thought he was having a heart attack and that he was going to die; he hurried home to await what was going to happen. His mother let him in and silently he went to his room to lie down. His entire body filled with light; he was compelled to stand up and say his Islamic prayers. It was the first latihan.

Every night there were more experiences of the latihan, and he was shown a view that was far and wide. In one he was handed a book and as he flipped through the pages they came alive, people of all creeds and colors, singing, dancing, praying. Another book entered him, and the pages were blank. He was told that he could ask any question and it would be answered. There was more. Much more.

Despite what was happening, he continued on as usual in life. He saw a girl on a train, and there arose within him a feeling of deep love for her. When she got off, he followed and saw her whisked away in a horse and buggy. He searched for her all day and finally found out from the station master that she was the daughter of a religious leader. Bapak finally arranged to meet Rumindah and they married on October 9, 1926. They had five children--Siti Rahayu, Haryono, Hariyadi, who died in his twenties, Suharyo, who passed away when he was five, and Siti Hardiyati. Rumindah died in 1937.

Nine years earlier, a sign appeared in the middle of the night when friends knocked at Bapak's door and exclaimed that a bright sparkling ball of light had fallen from the sky onto the roof of

Bapak's house. People began seeking out Bapak for advice.

Five years later he received as what might be described as the penultimate experience--and it's beyond human imagining--when he left his body and ascended far up until he reached the sun, going past the sun into Almighty God's domain, where he received his mission and many different experiences that were beyond expectation, beyond feeling and thinking and beyond both birth and death in this world.

More and more people came to see Bapak and Bapak went to see them, taking trip after trip around the world until Subud was in 76 countries. They all received and are continuing to receive the contact from the Great Life Force, which he then called the latihan kejiwaan, to be given freely, as Bapak said to all mankind.⁵

⁵Subud is a continually growing movement. There are people coming into Subud every day from around the world. When Bapak died in 1987, he left an ongoing legacy that continues to this day.

Chapter 5

There is no dogma in Subud, no creed and no priesthood.⁶ It cannot be comprehended by the mind of man. All that is required is to submit your own will to the Will of God. It is not new, for the experience is as old as humanity, but there is something new in it, for this appears to be the first time in human history that it has been made so easy for man to receive it.

Bapak has authorized many men and women in every country in which Subud is established to act as his helpers and representatives, to open people and to watch over them after they've been opened.

Experiences in the latihan vary. It is different for everyone. In the beginning, it usually takes the form of physical movement and sounds, which have their origins within each person. As time goes on this deepens and flows through the understanding and awareness. It goes on and on through eternity. There is no teaching and no imposed disciplines, but only the Power of God can penetrate to the necessary level within us, and it is only God Who knows what each of us requires. This is why there is no teaching in Subud by man to man, but God alone is the teacher.

The first stage--the process of purification--is gradual. The Power that works in the latihan is potent, but it will force no one against his will. Its action can never be predicted; each one receives what is right and necessary for himself. The rate of purification varies for each one and cannot be hurried or assisted by any efforts on his own part. All that he can do is accept whatever it is that he receives and to refrain from undoing it by wrong behavior.

⁶From *A First Introduction to Subud* by Roseanne Sawrey-Cookson.

Chapter 6

Back to the nitty-gritty--me.

I thought I might as well write to Bapak for my right name--and that of my daughter. I felt that as everything was wrong with me, that I might as well have the appropriate name. I was having trouble with my back at the time and was going to a chiropractor. But it kept getting worse and worse until one morning I awoke to the astonishing fact that I couldn't move. My mom and dad, who lived crosstown in New York City, came over and arranged for me to go to the hospital, while they took over the care of my daughter.

I was in the hospital for six weeks, and under the doctor's instructions, not moving an inch to give my back a chance to heal. The doctor said this was the only way to avoid an operation--being still. The letter from Indonesia came as I was lying there, thinking that I'd never walk again. It said that I must be called Carol (the name I was born with), I was not to be called Karen (I'd changed it myself when I was in the theater) and that my daughter's name could be changed to Rosalind. A few day's later, I was well and could walk slowly at first, but gradually without thinking. I felt as though I had emerged from an abyss.

Francoise, the same friend who'd brought me to Subud, had helped me secure a job on a romance magazine as a copy reader and assistant editor. She insisted I was a writer, while I'd been trying to make a go of it as an actress. The jobs were far and few between, some television, off-Broadway, summer stock, but I hadn't made it big. I had no choice; I had to work on a steady basis.

My daughter was in a full-time private nursery school, and I picked her up every night. My life had a certain rhythm, and although it was difficult, somehow I liked the daily routine. Especially the twice a week trip to Subud and the latihan. There was never to be another latihan like the first one I experienced, but it didn't matter. Every latihan was different; it was impossible to predict what they would be like, because it had to do with the

needs of the jiwa.⁷

Sometimes I cried; sometimes I laughed. I barked like a puppy and roared like a lion; I danced some ancient dances, sang some songs that I couldn't quite place; talked in a foreign language that sounded like French. On and on it went without an ending and each time I felt renewed, reminding me of something that happened centuries ago. Subud became my life.

I was told that my receiving was rather strong, and to take it easy--once a week was enough for me. I lived for the time when I could go to latihan. It got more intense. Then one night while chatting with a friend at home, suddenly a light entered me and I felt a powerful latihan begin. I was euphoric. I felt as if I knew everything. I loved everyone. The room was filled with light, and there were all these happy "beings" everywhere, smiling, wishing me well.

It continued on for three days. I felt like I was walking on air; it was so light. Everything was perfect and easy. Either I was crazy or I was experiencing what Bapak called a Subud crisis, where the purification is accelerated. People who were ill came to me to be healed. And I healed them. Some asked me questions and I knew the answers I wouldn't have ordinarily known. I decided to write to Bapak to ask him about this phenomena.

I received this letter from Bapak:

Your experiences were actions of purification that were happening to your inner-feeling. True, parts of the things you have received have validity externally, but it should be sufficient for you just to know and listen, as it is unnecessary to think about their validity. Furthermore, it is unnecessary for the one who receives--in this case, yourself.

While receiving such experiences you correctly felt as though affected by brilliant lights. It was as though you were being endowed at that moment with a wide spiritual knowledge. The meaning of this is that your whole inner-feelings and the whole

⁷Soul; inner content.

understanding of your heart and thoughts were submerged in the atmosphere of the Great Life or in the Power of Almighty God.

At the time when you were submerged in such an atmosphere your condition was like a child finding itself in a large room full of various kinds and forms of new things which made this little child think all it saw belonged to it. In reality, this is not so. You are allowed to see because it is shown to you, but you are not entitled to possess any of it except one or two things appropriate for you. Therefore while having this experience, the one who receives (yourself) is required to have a feeling of patience and surrender, without thinking about this or that, because if you do think, your heart will be influenced by lower forces, which make you confused in your heart and feelings.

So you must accept all you have received with patience and surrender. Refrain from telling others about what you received; the fact that you have known them is enough, because the nature of these experiences is a delivery of all you have been thinking about and of things that have been hidden in your imagination.

Regarding your wish to marry, you are advised not to carry this out for the time being. Eventually when you have received the solution of all that is required for your individuality--that is, the completion of this purification that has been happening to you--you may then prepare yourself to marry a man chosen by your inner-feeling which will be awakened by your jiwa.

It took some time for me to digest this letter. In fact, when I re-read it today something new presents itself each time.

I didn't wait for the reply, but was so sure of my receiving that I married the man referred to in the letter. About two months later, I woke up one morning, looked at the stranger next to me, and thought how foolish and hasty I'd been. My daughter, too, was upset. After much discussion, we agreed to a divorce.

It was on with my ordinary life. And I welcomed it. Everything seemed to fall away; the intensity of the experience was gone and what remained, as Bapak had noted, were one or two things that were meant for me. From the outside I'd changed, become more patient, more understanding. From the inside, I felt as if a burden I'd been carrying around had been lifted.

Chapter 7

It was not too long before I was to see Bapak for the first time. He was on one of the many world tours he would make, and he had a brief stopover in Briarcliff, New York, where the World Subud Congress was being held. This takes place once every five years in a different country, where people from all over the world come to see how Subud has developed and to plan for the future. New York was the host this time, and they were able to secure Briarcliff College for the venue.

Rosalind spent the time with her father as I went to my first Subud Congress.

He was about 5'11", and he walked as if each step had meaning. But what I remembered about Bapak after seeing him for the first time was his ability to be all things to all people. And the radiance just seemed to shine from him. Most important, he emanated love so that everyone felt it, and we rose above our petty emotions in an atmosphere of peace and joy.

There were talks and latihan. Every day there was something else planned. The college was a perfect setting for what unfolded. I had never experienced anything like it; people from all over the world gathered, and we all did latihan together, feeling closer than one's own family, yet speaking different languages. It didn't matter in the latihan. Everyone became one. And Bapak, giving and giving, wanting to share this marvelous gift, that had been bestowed on mankind, with others.

We were told we could have an interview with Bapak if we felt it was important. Everyone felt his problem was important, so the time was filled quickly.

I slipped in my name the last minute and found myself waiting along with the others.

"Keep it down to ten minutes," I was told, but when my name was called and I sat down all I could do was cry. Every time I started to speak, I'd get all choked up, and I'd cry some more.

I heard a chuckle and Bapak said through an interpreter: "Baby."

I said I didn't want to be a baby any more. I was tired of being a baby.

Bapak said, "No, your soul is a baby. You are a mother. Your soul." And he went on to say that Subud members are fortunate. "Their souls can be born."

I cried some more with wads of Kleenex clutched tightly in my lap. I was a mess!

I asked about my talent, and he asked what I was doing then. I managed to blurt out that I was working on a magazine, and he said, "Writer." I said, "Actress?" "No," he said emphatically, "You're a writer. Newspaper or magazine."

I never thought of working on a newspaper before. The idea hadn't occurred to me. I put it away for future reference.

Always full of questions--the mark of a reporter?--not long after I thought of one I should have asked, and that was, "Where should I live?" My daughter had been ill continually in New York and I thought it best to check. I wrote a note to Bapak, who was now in Canada, and the reply was, *Miami will be the right place for you and your daughter.*

I was surprised. Bapak had been telling most people "Los Angeles." Why Miami?

I didn't bother to think about this too deeply. After all, he had said, *will be the right place*, and I had plenty of time.

I changed jobs three times, until I was working on a teenage magazine, a new one called *IN*. It was an upbeat, slick publication, and I was assigned my first article--*Becoming a Nurse*--which I attacked with relish, going to a big New York hospital, following a student nurse around. It was fun!

Meanwhile, I began to receive what can be regarded as a whisper in my latihan--*Mi-am-i*. It became stronger and stronger as the weeks went by, and this time I was determined to be patient and "get it right." I wrote to Bapak again, telling him what was

happening and asking if indeed this was the real thing, because I was beginning to realize that some things were real, while others were simply figments of the imagination being discarded. It got stronger and stronger, and I was swaying like a palm tree.

Not long after, Bapak wrote: *Now is the right time for you and your daughter to move to Miami.*

In two weeks I gave up the apartment I had on East 20th Street, quit my job and sold what I could. Together with my eight-year-old daughter I boarded a plane for Miami.

Chapter 8

Subud is for the outer as well as for the inner life, for individual members as well as the brotherhood as a whole. Therefore besides the latihan, it has its organization for worldly matters.

Every Subud group has its own committee and its own helpers' group.

The national bodies are set up in accordance with the laws in each country. In Indonesia it is a *Perkumpulan* (Association), while in Germany it's called a *Verein*. Each country is divided into regions, and each one has a Regional Helper, who helps solve difficult problems that the group presents. The National Helpers, in turn, take care of matters that cannot be solved on the Regional level. And the International Helpers oversee the Group, Regional and National activities.

Every four years, like Briarcliff, an international congress is held. They've taken place in England, the U.S.A. (twice), Japan, Indonesia (twice), Japan and Canada. This year it takes place in Austria. As time went on I realized that the Congress gives the opportunity for Subud members to renew their conviction of the latihan and to report on what's happening in their countries, and where necessary to make decisions about the work to be done in the next four years. In everything, the basis for these decisions is the latihan and what is received in the latihan, rather than argumentation. As a result there is harmony and agreement which amounts to unanimity. This comes from inside and is no way imposed on anyone. People of all races and religions--about 3000 of them--receive the latihan together for two weeks and then return home to put into practice what they have received.

Bapak laid increasing stress on the necessity to balance the inward action of the Power of God as it is received in the latihan with an outward action of that same power through the results of the latihan manifested in the outer world. The first stage was to set up a variety of enterprises, which were established by various groups of Subud members in fields which they qualified or had talent. At least 25% of their profits go to Subud for the purpose of establishing hospitals, schools, orphanages and old-age homes, who also employ Subud members.

In both these stages--enterprises and public service--Subud members who work in them should be guided by what they receive as a result of the latihan. This means that an enterprise run by Subud member has to be honest, humane and must work for the good of the community instead of personal gain. There's nothing wrong with becoming rich, but if people do become rich and are following the guidance of God, their wealth will benefit humanity.

Internationally, there is the International Subud Committee and the World Subud Association, the Muhammad Subuh Foundation, the fruition of Bapak's vision of a Subud association that is active and effective in the world in all fields of human endeavor, which includes financing centers, Subud Houses and school facilities. The funding comes from bequests of Subud members.

So Subud is a network whose organization is linked by an unseen force that manifests in the everyday lives of its members.

Chapter 9

Not knowing anybody, not having a job and very little money, I'd contacted the small Subud group in Miami. One of the members -Howard Welsh--met me at the airport and helped me locate an apartment. What can I say about Howard? He became my best friend. The chief focus of my attention, however, was finding a job, as my finances were dwindling.

I went over to the *Miami Herald* and had a series of tests but was told that they didn't have anything at the moment. I tried the afternoon paper, the *Miami News* and met the secretary to the editor, who said to call back in two weeks, that there might be something then. There was no other place to go for a writing job; this wasn't New York. This was Miami in the 60's.

I thought, 'Okay, God. I'll work at anything. I don't care.' About a week had gone by and I called up the *Miami News* just on a whim. The secretary said, "Can you get over here--fast?"

Howard was home so he picked me up with Rosalind, and drove me over. I was ushered in to the Editor of the Sunday Magazine, and was told to wait. All the time deep within me was, "God, God, God, if this is right, let it be. If not, let that be, too."

The crux of the matter was I landed the job, just having written one article about nursing. The editor told me to report the following Monday on the magazine section, and that I'd need a car. I shook my head as if this were only natural, then quickly I went out the door hoping I looked confident, but shaking inside. I couldn't believe it. I'd actually landed a job, and not just any job, but a plumb on a Pulitzer Prize winning newspaper. Howard was more dumbfounded than I was.

But then I had three days to find a car, and I had about \$25 left.

When I reached home a letter was waiting for me. My brother, who was in college at the time, sent me a letter which said he was so proud of me and he imagined that I'd need a car to get around and here was \$100 towards it.

I managed to buy an old car on time with \$100 down, six months to pay and that was that. I was set to go to work, which I did and plunged into my first day.

I remember my first article. About 'walls.' I had to interview a woman on the city council about a new regulation that said house owners had to erect walls a certain number of feet high. The paper wanted to know what it was all about.

I gave myself a two-hour head start in order to find the place. Then back to the paper in ten minutes! Getting to know the streets was no easy matter. I looked at what I had, which wasn't much, then suddenly remembered Robert Frost's *Mending Wall*. I phoned the public library and spoke to the librarian, who quoted me several passages from the poem, and I selected these to open my story:

*My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines,
I tell him,
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Something there is that doesn't love a wall.*

I found it easy to get into the story that way, and I overheard the editor of the magazine section say when going over my work, "Good story."

Silently, I thanked God.

Chapter 10

The Subud group in Miami was different than the one in New York. There was just a handful of women who did the latihan, and then went home, with very little cohesion. For me, it was difficult. But with my outer life taken care of with the most marvelous job I'd ever had, I decided to just do my latihan and see what happened.

As time went by the group changed. So did my latihan. The group grew, and became close-knit. I started receiving the name "Paula" in my latihan. I didn't think about it much at the time. Just the name "Paula" came.

Then one latihan everything opened up. I saw myself as a little girl, looking sad, and then she was gone. It was as if the heavens opened up and the name "Paula" was there. I sang, "Paula, Paula," and I went down on my knees and wept.

Afterwards, I felt so happy, like a weight had lifted. I told people in the group that my name was "Paula." They looked doubtful and advised me to write to Bapak. I didn't want to write again, but to satisfy everyone, I sent a letter.

I was so excited when I received an answer, I danced around the house. Bapak said, *What you have received in the latihan is true. Carol is the name of a child born of passion, and now the passion is gone so the name may be changed to Paula.*

The next day at the *Miami News* (by that time I was Radio-TV Editor) my by-line was changed from *by Carol Anderson* for the morning edition to *by Paula Anderson* for the afternoon. When asked I just said I received a letter from my dad and he wanted me to go back to my right name. No one questioned me any further.

I'm skipping the story about my life in Miami, because everything for the most part went smoothly, like clockwork. I did fall in love with someone on the paper and we went around together for a while, but somehow it just didn't work out, and every time we'd decide on a way of life, a block appeared, until finally I got the message. Sometimes I have a twinge of regret, but it passes. Maybe if I had married him I'd have stopped growing, or something like that.

This is a little story that I'll always remember, not because of anything special, but because of the poignancy of it. It was when Bapak was in South America and Howard got word that he had cut his trip short and was on the way back to Indonesia, that his son-in-law had died suddenly. They had to make a transit stop in Miami.

Howard called me and said he didn't have any idea what time (or for that matter what day) the party would arrive. I said I'd call him back and did a latihan, asking what time and day Bapak would arrive. Usually we didn't do the latihan for reasons other than to worship God, but I felt that this was a special reason. I was surprised when it came through clear as a bell, "Ten O clock, but the plane will be delayed one hour, so it will land at 11." I was sure it was because Bapak was coming that I received it so clearly.

I called Howard back and the next day; he Rosalind and I, went to the airport at 10, feeling a bit foolish, but we felt, what have we got to lose? We were told that a plane was scheduled at 10 from South America, but that it was an hour late! At precisely 11 O clock, Bapak and party walked into immigration, to be greeted by Howard and me. Quickly we escorted them to another area, where we sat quietly and waited for their flight.

When it was time for them to leave, and as they walked onto the plane, we just stood there transfixed, while an employee who swept up at Miami Airport asked me, "Who is that man?"

"He's a Javanese holy man," I said.

He went off muttering to himself and shaking his head, "I knew he was somebody, I knew he was somebody all right."

The next big latihan event happened when I was preparing to drive up the East Coast with my daughter to Virginia and see Bapak at Skymont, a Subud community. The Miami group had grown and the women had their own room, as did the men; the women were more open and freer than before.

It began very slowly. At first I didn't know what I was receiving. As the latihan went on, it became clearer, but I didn't know what

it all meant. I began the movements for the Islamic prayers, up and down, up and down, and sometimes uttering "Allah." There was no one in the group who was a Muslim, and the nearest mosque was in Washington D.C. I'd had no contact with Muslims prior to this.

I then began to say to myself, 'Paula, Muslim. Paula, Muslim.' This went on and on, becoming stronger, up to the day we left for Virginia. I'd decided what I would do. I would seek out the religious leader of the Islamic Center in Washington, and I would ask to join Islam. That decided I bundled my daughter into the car and took off.

It was a wonderful time with Bapak. Lots of talks in which he would receive--no text, no notes--just receiving. Afterwards we always felt a closeness to one another, a kind of sharing, a kind of harmony. This carried over into the latihan, where the strong indications about becoming a Muslim continued. The latihan were crowded with people of all shapes and sizes and colors. We didn't have any feeling of being separate; on the contrary, we felt a heightened awareness of being 'one.'

I was lucky to get to work in Bapak's house. Originally the group had prepared a place for him about five miles from the Congress, a beautiful home that one of the members donated. Bapak asked if there were a place he could stay on campus, as he "wanted to be near his children." He stayed along with his wife, interpreter and party in a small house that was right on campus, and I had the opportunity to work there. It was a happy time, it always was when Bapak was there--happy and hopeful. The days just sped by. There were talks and latihan with Bapak, where I felt as if I had already crossed over to that other world. And there was the eventual coming back to earth.

The Muslim event became stronger and stronger, especially near Bapak. There was no escape. This was something I had to do. I contacted my brother, who was living in Washington, and asked if he'd be a witness. Without asking any questions, he agreed. He'd had a motorcycle accident and he was hobbling on one leg with the support of a cane. And there was my daughter, who would eventually live and work in Washington, and Howard. I needed them as witnesses. We were quite a sight.

We were ushered in by the imam, the leader of the prayers in the mosque, and with a few brief words he began. All I had to do was profess my faith: *Ashado ala illaha illala, wa ashado ala Muhammad-er Rasullu-lah.* "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God." And that was it. I was a Muslim.

I felt as if I'd been saying it all my life. The words just tumbled out as if I'd rehearsed them over and over. But I hadn't.

The imam looked at me in astonishment. Usually a person had to repeat something that wasn't quite right. But me--well, it was different.

He asked me if I wanted to practice the prayers, and he proceeded to show me. There again I just said them; they were natural. When we finished, some workmen in the mosque were replacing some of the tiles. They presented me with a pile of them, all different colors and shapes. I just stood there as they placed them lovingly into my hands. Howard bought me the Qur'an, my brother smiled, I cried, and that was it.

Chapter 11

It was back to Miami again. And my eventful trip to Los Angeles, It was summer and Rosalind had gone up to Vermont to see her father. I was invited by one of the networks to come to L.A. to review the new shows for the fall season. I said "yes" and there I was with a chauffeur driven car and a huge room at the Gene Autrey Hotel. The reason I'm mentioning this is because you never know when something's going to happen spiritually.

There was a full schedule awaiting me--lunch with Phyllis Diller, a visit to the sets of new shows, and an interview with Lucille Ball. Every moment was taken with some star or new setting. I was tired, there was some time before the first event began. I lay down on the bed and closed my eyes and said, "Thank you, God, for this new experience."

Then in a split second I went out of my body and I was flying free, so fast. I was crossing rivers, valleys, mountains, then I was high up where the light was a beautiful incandescent light, and I wanted to go higher and higher. The moment the "wanting" got into me, I turned and came back. I was back in my body in an instant. Stunned, I felt incomplete, as if I hadn't gone where I was supposed to go. I was disappointed.

But that's how things were and are. God never gives more than we can take, only sometimes we have some funny ideas about where we are. It showed me how far I had to go to surrender.

After I arrived home in Miami, having interviewed everyone from Sally Fields to Lucille Ball, I began to get restless. I'd seen so many stars that one interview sounded like another. They still held a fascination for most people, so I kept on interviewing, writing columns, doing features and peering across the newsroom at the man I loved.

It was sad. I had loved him for four years. He was just about to leave his wife, when he discovered she had cancer. He decided to stay with her. The night he told me this was heartbreaking, and we both knew that we weren't meant to be together. I couldn't bear seeing him at the *News* every day, so I considered the whole situation and thought it best that I leave the newspaper. I got a job at the University of Miami with the publications division, and that

eased the pain.

I've never forgotten him and I've followed his career; we were compatible, we loved each other, yet something has always kept us apart.

It was at the university where I met Linda (now Charlene). She was hired as the new secretary for our group. One day she came into my office and closed the door. She started telling me about her life--divorced, searching for something. (Sound familiar?) Suddenly she looked at me and, eyes wide, she said, "You have something. There's something about you....what is it?"

Surprised, I answered simply, "Why, it's Subud." After briefly explaining about it, that it was not a teaching but was based on surrender to God, she asked if she could come to a meeting. I said it wasn't actually a meeting, but was a gathering of people all worshipping God.

Well, she came and she sat outside the room in which the women were having latihan. Afterwards, she was all starry-eyed, and said that this was what she'd been looking for. Later, she was opened. Today she's in California, still doing the latihan.

There's no telling where or who is waiting to hear. It all happens according to plan, so carefully orchestrated that a person, no matter how clever, couldn't conceive of it.

I decided I'd ask for another name. I loved the name 'Paula.' I just wanted to check if it was still right, now that I'd become Islam. So I wrote again, and this time the letter came back with the name--'Fatidjah.' I was stunned. I didn't see how--but never mind, I'd give it a go.

Time rolled by. I took a trip to England, which didn't work out as I'd planned. But there was something about England that struck a chord inside. Everything about the place seemed so familiar, like I'd been there before.

I'd changed jobs to the Model City Program, a government-run project for the poor black community. It was a challenging job, needing all of my resources.

It was time for the World Congress, and on this occasion it was being held in Indonesia. It was for a month and it was taking place in the Subud complex in Cilandak, a few kilometers from the center of Jakarta. I had planned to take my daughter, but word came that due to limited space, no children were allowed. So I left her with my parents in New York, later to be picked up by some friends in Florida. My heart wrenched to say good-bye, and we both cried when we parted.

Another world. That's what it was in 1971. It was like I'd been lifted up and taken on a dream ride, not having to put forth any effort, just coast along. As we got on a bus at the airport I felt as if I knew the country and people. Along the way, people waved, and made us feel welcome. At that time there weren't many foreigners around, and here we were, a bunch of Americans, all smiles.

We drove for about an hour, past rolling hills and teeming slums, where the people continued to wave and call out greetings, and finally into the Subud complex. I felt as if I'd come home. There were close to 2000 people from around 70 countries. They were my sisters and brothers.

We were shown to our "rooms"--in temporary bamboo two-story houses--cubbyholes, and I was on the second floor. I slept a wonderful sleep and woke up to the sounds of birds singing.

We were called to Bapak's home, just inside the gates to greet Bapak and his family. We were told to say our name and where we were from, then move on. I was almost out the door when everything stopped. I looked around and one member of Bapak's family came up to me and gently led me back to where Bapak was standing. I looked up at Bapak.

"Where are you from?" he asked again. I tried to say 'Miami,' but my throat felt as if it had closed up. Finally out squeaked, "Miami." Bapak threw back his head and laughed. "Miami. Yah, yah....Miami."

Inside me it was like an explosion, and I was singing, 'Eng-a-land, Eng-a-land, I will go to Eng-a-land.' Inside. Outside I appeared normal.

I stumbled out and I was still singing inside. Crazy? Not to me. I knew that Bapak had contacted my inner self. But I didn't know what it meant, although I had an idea.

The President of Indonesia Soeharto opened the Congress in the newly built domed latihan hall that could seat 1200 people. It was a memorable day for everyone, after which it was like being lifted up in a cloud. One day blended into another. Bapak gave talks and there was latihan every night.

Then one day a woman said to me, "You should see Simon Caradoc Evans. You should ask him about a job." Just out of the blue. I thought, 'Where am I going to find him in this crowd?'

Later, I was sitting in a gazebo that held about fifteen people. There were about five of these round kiosks set up on the compound to escape from the sun and to share in the happenings of the day. I looked up and there was Simon Caradoc Evans sitting just across from me. It said so on his badge.

I introduced myself, and we started talking. He said yes, he was looking for someone to work for Subud Publications in England, that it didn't pay very much, and being that I had a daughter it wouldn't be right for me. At that time I was one-minded, and I didn't care about anything except following my path, or what I thought was my path. I convinced him of my intentions and we parted, with the provision that I would telephone him when I arrived in England.

It was getting near to the end of my stay. I didn't see how I could leave Indonesia. I loved it. I didn't want to go. But I knew I had to. 'Eng-a-land' kept on inside me. I made a decision. I would go straight to England. I called friends in Miami who'd offered to sell my things, phoned Philip and Deborah Bentin in London, who agreed to keep my daughter until I got there, and rang Miami again to make arrangements for my daughter to fly to England. It all happened so quickly that I didn't have time to think. If I did I probably wouldn't have gone through with it. Philip and Deborah were in Subud. I'd met them on my previous trip to England and I grew to love and respect them.

I said good-bye to Bapak. He said, "Bapak wishes you a safe journey home. And Bapak hopes you come back to Indonesia."

'Yes, yes, I said inside.

Chapter 12

I arrived in England with the clothes on my back, little to spare and not much money. At immigration they stamped "Three Months" on my passport. After uniting with my daughter and having a rest for a couple of days I phoned Simon. He invited us out to his house in Didcot near Oxford, and my daughter and I took the train out from London, about an hour's ride.

The first year in England I refer to as the Dark Period. You'll see why.

Simon lived with his wife in a typical English manor home, complete with a church and graveyard. This is where I was to work, alone, as Simon was employed as a teacher. Rosalind and I found a bed-sitter in Oxford, about ten kilometers away, and a very kind Subud member--Stanley Noel--gave me a car. Rosalind was enrolled in an English school that had some Americans attending.

Every morning I'd drive to Didcot feeling unreal. The quiet and peace of the English countryside overcame my uncertainty as to what I was doing there. But I was making so little money, Rosalind was sick with the flu, and all I did every day was send people publications, punching their addresses up on a postage machine. There was nothing creative about it. I thought, 'Well, I've probably made a mistake. Better check and make sure.'

I wrote to Bapak again and asked if I should go back to Miami, that I probably made an error in judgment. He wrote back:

*England is better for you than any other country. But you must do prihatin --that is, fast every Monday and Thursday until your hopes become reality.*⁸

8

The Monday and Thursday fast is a Javanese custom. It is believed that if you state your intention the night before, eventually you'll achieve your aim.

I'd tried fasting from time to time, and it worked. I'd done fasting every year in the month of Ramadhan from sunrise to sunset, but somehow this was different, harder. During Ramadhan the entire Islamic world was participating, so you had support from many quarters.

Nothing could be more dreary than the life I was leading then. I discovered that fasting somehow got me through it.

Almost a year had past. I'd gone to the latihan in Oxford, a small group, and I'd moved twice, the first time with a Subud couple, who graciously shared their house with us, and then to a cozy basement flat that was closer to Rosalind's school. It was nice, but dull.

It was growing closer to the time when I had to renew my visa, and I wasn't too sure. I thought maybe this was it, that I'd served my time, and now it was the moment to return to the States. But there was a still, small voice in the latihan, saying "Lon-don, Lon-don."

Simon told me that the job had come to an end and that he was reorganizing the part he played in Subud Publications. Inwardly I felt relief, but outwardly I didn't know what I was going to do.

Just a week before I was to make my final decision, Simon came hurrying in, thrust some proofs for a book into my arms and told me I had to go to London to see Hartley Ramsey at the *Express* as he was to proofread them.

Suddenly, I felt as if a ton of bricks had been lifted from my shoulders, as if I'd been freed from prison.

Everything happened so quickly. Quickly, in that I'd waited a year, fasted on Mondays and Thursdays, endured a dowdy life style, and when it was time, things started opening up. Just across from the *Express* office was IPC Publications, and Hartley suggested I apply for a job there. Without a moment's hesitation I marched over to IPC. It so happened they were starting a new magazine, and I landed a job as Associate Editor on a teenage magazine called *Pink*. I was to do the advice column and generally check everything that went into each weekly issue. I couldn't believe it. Just a week before my visa ran out.

We found a flat in Northwest London and a good school for Rosalind. I joined the Subud group in Central London, and I felt as if I belonged. My job was going well and I had lots of friends. I liked the tempo and feeling of London. My daughter did, too, so everything was A-OK. But in Subud nothing seems to stay the same for very long, at least the way my life had gone.

It started like a whisper in my latihan, so much so that I didn't want to accept it. "Indonesia, Indonesia, Indonesia," over and over again. This went on for months. Then there was a large typewriter--the old variety--in front of me. And I was typing 'I-n-d-o-n-e-s-i-a, I-n-d-o-n-e-s-i-a.' I talked to my friends about it, but no one seemed to know what it meant. All I could do was continue on.

Then one night I began singing, "Indonesia, Indonesia, I will go, I will go-o." Then as if on cue I started to do a Javanese dance, slow and graceful. At the end of the latihan, it was like something in my head opened up and in dropped the word, "Embassy."

It wasn't until a few day's later that it began to make sense. I was asleep and then sat up in bed and said, "Embassy. Indonesian Embassy."

'Indonesian Embassy,' I said to myself. 'So that's what that meant.' But what should I do with it?

I waited a few days and spoke to my journalist friends (all in Subud), whom I met every week for lunch at the BBC cafeteria. Hartley was among them. "So what do you have to lose?" Hartley said. "Write to them."

I waited another few days (I really wasn't anxious about finding out--I was happy with my job, flat, friends, Subud life. So was my daughter. She had found her niche, too.) Something, though, intrigued me about it, and I just had to find out what it was.

Finally I wrote a letter to the Embassy, saying that I was interested in Indonesia and wondered if there was a job. I enclosed a resume. Then I forgot about it, until my next latihan, where it continued to get stronger and stronger.

A few weeks went by, and then one day I received a letter from the Indonesian Embassy, which said to call for an appointment. I thought, 'Well, it's probably a secretarial position and I'm not interested in that.' Besides my job on *Pink* was going well. There was even some talk about me becoming editor. However, something was pushing me from inside, so I called and made the appointment for the next day.

I remember riding in a taxi and suddenly there was a calm feeling pervading the atmosphere. I started singing to myself, 'Indonesia, Indonesia, I will go. I will go-o.'

The taxi arrived at the Embassy, overlooking a park, and catty-corner to the Indonesian Embassy stood the U.S. Embassy, which I noted. When I first entered the Embassy it was like stepping into another country, one that enveloped me with its ancient quiet feeling, its deep roots.

I was ushered into Mr. Kapto Sunoto's office and after the preliminaries, was told that it wasn't a secretarial position. The actual job was writing about Indonesia. The money was half of what I'd been earning on the magazine, and after all, I thought, I do have a daughter to support and my life was good. I told him I would think it over, and I glided out.

It was pow-wow time again as I met with my friends. I was in a quandary. They left it to me, but it all pointed in one direction. I didn't see how I was going to make it salary-wise, but I had to leave that to the powers that be and just proceed.

We have in Subud something called "testing." The purpose is to find out if what you are about to do is right for your inner or not. You can't be certain if the testing is right or not, but it can give you some indication if you're on the right path. Your mind and heart may want one thing while your *jiwa*⁹ wants to steer you another way. There is no coercion. You simply ask a question, and then those present surrender to whatever occurs. You can either test alone or with some helpers. And you feel what is best.

⁹An Indonesian term meaning "soul, spirit."

I decided to test whether this was the right move for me. I didn't want to throw away all I'd gained so far if it wasn't necessary. So we gathered together and I asked the question, then we surrendered to God as best we could. There were six of us there and we all received a feeling of bliss. And I said, "Yes, yes."

"What if I didn't take it and just continued on in my present job?" It was O.K. but there was a heavy feeling accompanying the test.

So it was decided.

I talked it over with my boss at the magazine, and the outcome was that I was offered a free-lance assignment every week, and that was to continue with the advice column. That brought my salary up to a reasonable amount. I called the Embassy and told them "yes."

My first day of work they showed me around the Embassy and then to my office. I sat down at my desk and looked up. Opposite on the wall was a poster, with the words, 'Next Stop, Indonesia.' The man who was stationed next door--Joesi Darik--had a copy of Bapak's book *Susila Budhi Dharma*¹⁰. It seems that Varindra Tarzie Vittachi, a noted journalist for *Newsweek* and other magazines and newspapers, head of the United Nation's Children's Fund and a Subud member, had given it to him. Joesi told me that he was interested in Subud, but that's all.

Rosalind and I moved to a new neighborhood, and coincidentally it turned out to be the section where many Indonesians lived. There was the Indonesian student house just down the street. Suddenly I was seeing Indonesians everywhere.

I wrote some articles about Indonesia and kept up with the advice

10

This is a book that Bapak wrote, and is considered to be the essence of Subud. Bapak received the book in the High Javanese language to the accompaniment of a lovely Javanese melody. It is translated into Indonesian and English. Every time you read it you discover something different. Up until that time, only Subud members had copies of the book.

column. It was about a month into the job when I received a call from a publisher I did some work for about a year before. He asked me to write and edit two books, one on *Batik* and the other on *Crewel Embroidery*. I earned enough from these books to make arrangements for me to visit Wisma Subud. Rosalind didn't want to go. She had other plans that summer to go to Holland with friends and then on to the States to see various relatives. There was an overlap in time, so I planned for Stanley Noel's wife, Lorraine, to come and stay with her for about a week.

Chapter 13

Once more Rosalind and I said good-by, and I was on my way East again. This time it was different, much calmer. When I arrived at the airport in Jakarta, there was someone from the Subud National Committee waiting for me. We had a nice quiet ride to the complex. Everything seemed familiar to me, like I'd come home.

After I'd been there a couple of days I was sitting in my room and the latihan started. I had many experiences that summer, but the one that stands out is about my name. It came quite unexpectedly.

The latihan started and I was led to say my name--Fatidjah. I couldn't. Then I started saying, "Mutiah." At first I didn't know what it was. I said, "Muftiah?" for I had heard that name before. I saw the name written, and then, "No. No 'f. Mutiah." I happened to glance at the mirror in my room and was startled. I looked beautiful. I kept repeating, "Mutiah, Mutiah...."

For the next couple of days the name kept repeating itself inside me. I didn't know what was going on. I decided to ask Bapak directly what this was all about. I arrived at his house to be greeted by Siti Rahayu Wiryohudoyo, Bapak's devoted daughter, whose role in Subud was secured when she had her own experience and met Bapak on another plane of existence. After she had her ascension, she assisted Bapak and he gave her the duty to give names to people. Quiet, calm and unassuming she fully understands Bapak's mission.¹¹

I found myself telling Ibu Rahayu about my experience. She said, "You should grow to love the name 'Fatidjah.'"

I replied that I did, that I didn't want to change my name again. It was such a bother!

11

Since Bapak's death on June 23, 1987, Ibu Siti Rahayu has continued Bapak's work in answering letters from members and giving new names.

She closed her eyes, then said softly, "You may have the name 'Mutiah.'"

A while later I was talking with one of Bapak's granddaughters, Isni Astuti (Tuti), and asked her if she would check with Bapak. The answer was affirmative, but I should spell it 'Muti'ah.'¹²

My visit was almost at an end, but I promised my boss in London that I would inquire about some material he wanted from the Ministry of Information in downtown Jakarta. I took a cab to the office, only to find that the woman I was supposed to see was going to be late.

As I waited in a large hot room, a nice-looking man in his 40's passed through and asked me what I was doing there. When I told him, he asked me to stop for a while in his office, which was air conditioned. I breathed a sigh of relief when entering his office. He ordered a cup of coffee for me and we chatted a while. He seemed very pleasant. I told him I was just visiting Indonesia and was staying at Wisma Subud. He said that was funny, because when he was in Australia, Bapak came through and asked for an interpreter at the Embassy. It was he--Pak Sumadi--who did the job.

Then he leaned forward and said, "You must come to Indonesia to work."

I was speechless. Then I recovered enough to ask, "To do what?"

"Why, to help me," he said. At the time, he was Director of Foreign Information. "I'll check with the Director General to make sure everything is all right. Just call me in about a week."

A week was all I had left. When I phoned again, Sumadi said, "You'll never guess what happened. Within a week I was made Director General, and now I don't have to confer with anyone. I can hire you myself."

¹²Later, I received in my latihan that my name should be preceded by 'Siti,' which means 'woman' in Javanese. Ibu Rahayu said "Okay."

Meantime in the Subud Secretariat a job opened up. This was a coveted position, as it meant translating and typing Bapak's and Ibu Rahayu's replies to members. It also meant Bapak dropping by occasionally to give advice. At the last minute I secured that morning job and with the Department of Information work, that would do quite well. Then I spoke to Ibu Rahayu, who I expected would voice her approval. Instead, she hesitated and said, "What about your daughter?"

I said yes, she was in her last year of high school, but couldn't she finish here? There was silence, and she said, "I think you should consider your daughter."

I was back in England with the news. Rosalind didn't want any part of it. She said she wanted to finish school in England, that she wasn't going to move again. Ibu Rahayu knew all along.

Something else happened. The Indonesian government cabled the Ambassador in England, asking if I might be employed, and without consulting me, the Ambassador wired back, "No. We need her here." I wrote Pak Sumadi and explained the entire episode. I didn't hear a word. And then I received a letter from the Subud Secretariat, saying the job had gone to someone else.

'Oh, well, that's that,' I thought. But still, I wondered what it was all about. I hadn't pushed anything. It all had just happened. With questions left unanswered I went back to work and accepted England as my home. When I finally settled down, everything went smoothly and I was happy.

It was drawing close to Ramadhan, and I'd fasted every year. I found it very beneficial on many levels. I'd been doing the Monday and Thursday fast recently for Rosalind, hoping that she'd graduate and generally find satisfaction and happiness.

It was close to when she was finishing high school that she came to me and said, "I'd like to go to Indonesia. Do you think we can go?"

I was surprised, but I didn't react. All I said was that Ramadhan was coming and I'd look for a way for us to go. It so happened that the Soviet Union's airline Aeroflot had an inexpensive flight,

but even with that, I couldn't swing it. Then without my saying a word, someone at the Embassy came into my office and said that a friend of his had just made a great deal of money and he'd given him a whole bundle. This person, in turn, wanted to share this with me. No strings. Just sharing. It was just enough to cover one return-fare and a stay in Wisma Subud for my daughter and me.

A few nights before we were to leave, Rosalind had a dream that she'd married a boy she met in Cilandak. It was like a real dream, and she woke up and called out to me. She hadn't done this since she was a little girl when she'd say, "Lie down with me." I'd lie down and wait until she was asleep, then get up quietly and go to my room.

This time she sat bolt upright in bed, wide awake, and told me about the boy she would meet.

We were on our way. A group of Subud people had bought tickets, and we all went together. It was a joyful trip.

Chapter 14

We were assigned a small room with a double-decker bed. It didn't matter. Rosalind and I were pleased to be there. She said as we came from the airport, "Now I know what you felt. It's so peaceful here." We drove in the gates, and it was true that you felt tranquil. I've heard taxi drivers exclaim as they entered Wisma Subud, "What is this place?"

I had a similar experience to the one I had in Los Angeles. I was lying on my bed, just beginning to doze off when, whoosh, I was out of my body. Still on this earth, this time I flew all over Indonesia. The spot I remember most clearly was Sulawesi. I flew down alleys and up above trees. I felt so free. I wanted to go up and up, but somehow I remembered my body and became anxious that I wouldn't be able to find it again. The moment I had that thought I was back, feeling disappointed again, that I hadn't passed the test of surrender.

We were fasting, so none of the things that normally bothered us seemed to have much effect. As I mentioned earlier, the Ramadhan fast is unlike fasting at other times. It's a time when all the lower forces (*nafsu*) are diminished, meaning the forces or desires we have for things of this world are lessened. It is a time for sins to be forgiven and a new beginning to be opened up. It was during Ramadhan when Muhammad (S.A.W.) received the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Book of Islam, and it is when many people are aware that they are cleaning themselves from the dirt that they had let in during the year.

It was during one Ramadhan in the last 10 days, when "The Nights of Power" fell, that I wrote down what I was feeling. It was as if a hand took mine and wrote:

*There is no happiness like that which comes from God,
For God is the Creator of all things.
And it is only through the simplicity of the inner feelings
That one finds true bliss.
There is no happiness like that which God gives to those who are
in accord with their true natures;
Not seeking any more,
Just surrendering all in utter simplicity and humbleness,
Waiting or not waiting to do what God Wills.*

*The illusion of man is that he can make or do anything he wishes,
But in Reality man is nothing
And cannot do anything that is true
Except by the direct command and Wish of God.
We must be as nothing,
For that is how God Created us,
And that is how we must return to Him.*

*How else can we be if we are to receive His Grace and Love?
Oh, God, no plea is there within,
No question that can be of any use.*

*It is only by God's Grace and Love
That we can unite ourselves with Him,
We cannot do this with our thoughts
Nor with any wish or desire,
Yet God's Love and complete Understanding
Are always there,
Whether one wishes it or not.
But the wishes cloud and cover the feelings,
And the feelings are the place
Where we can begin to discern this Love.*

*Yet it is only a beginning,
But what a beginning, to have just a glimpse of God's Love,
We could not accept all of God's Mercy,
It would make us disappear,
For this Mercy and Power is what created us,
Only a drop for each,
That is enough.
For God Knows the measure of each one of us.
God knows that if we can be in touch
With even a pinpoint of that drop of Mercy
That we could be happy.*

*How can we know anything of God
But that which He reveals?
We should not want to know,
For that knowingness surely would make us disappear.*

*Of course a part of God's Nature
Is within us.*

*Just enough for each,
Not too much,
Not too little,
Just enough.
It is not for us to ask for any more.
It is a sin to do so.
A lack of faith and trust,
In the One Who created us from nothing,
From nothing.
Each with his own uniqueness,
Oh, what a Plan.
What a Way, beyond all and everything.*

*But what is the use of proclaiming this or that
If Man does not listen or understand?
It is like giving away freshly cooked food
To those who are already full of that which has no nourishment.*

*Nothing new will be sent down,
It has all been said before,
All that needs to be said.*

*All that we know today
Has been known before,
Throughout the Ages
Beginning with Adam,
Yet each has been in stages,
Carefully planned and ordered by God,
So that God could view His Handiwork
In an orderly way.*

*Do you think that God wishes man to sin
When God has placed within man His own drop of Mercy?
No, it is man himself who chooses to sin,
Not realizing, unmindful of what is contained within him.*

*Oh, what a pity,
Like ungrateful children
Who revile the very parents who gave them birth.*

*Thank You, thank You, thank You,
Is what we should say to God
Every waking moment.*

*Oh, what patience is needed
By the men of God
For those who are in ignorance,
Even though they have been given every grace.
Truly it is a pity.*

That was it. It ended abruptly. I know that it was just a small part of the immensity of Knowledge in this universe, so I just take it as showing me that when I'm clear, some things can come through.

Most of the time, though, I'm like everyone else in the world, looking for free-lance jobs to support myself, becoming ill, all the worldly pursuits.

In Subud we come to know that the pursuit of all that we do is accompanied by the *nafsu* or lower forces, which are to be like our friends in this world, helping us to accomplish our achievements in an orderly way. It's when these forces get out-of-hand or start to take over our lives that leads to chaos. When they're in order, you feel at peace.

The *nafsu* comprise the material force, the vegetable, animal and human forces, without which we could not exist in this world. How these forces regulate and influence our lives and how the latihan comes to separate them, putting them in order is what Bapak's book *Susila Budhi Dharma* is about, in part. If you are a Subud member, it is a book that expresses all one has to know and things you cannot fathom, no matter how many times you read it.

As you immerse yourself deeper and deeper into Subud, you realize the many mistakes you've made, mostly out of ignorance, but realizing at the time, there was nothing else you could do.

Chapter 15

In Cilandak, Rosalind was busy preparing her songs for a night of entertainment, and there were plenty of young people there her age, especially from England. One day she came back from rehearsal and announced, "I've met him."

"Who?" I asked.

"The boy I dreamed about in England. I knew it the minute I met him."

From then on events took on a quickening pace. They got closer and closer until he asked her to marry him. I didn't like the idea, but she was determined.

One night I was startled in my sleep and I sat up in bed and said, "Sulfiati."

My daughter woke up just at that minute, exclaiming, "What did you say?"

"Sulfiati," I replied in a stupor. "I wonder what that means."

A few days' later Rosalind announced, "I want a new name. I feel different now. Maybe an Islamic name."

So I asked Ibu Rahayu for a name. She gave us the initial 'S' with the instructions to submit five names beginning with 'S' and she would choose one from among them.

I said, "Look, why don't we put 'Sulfiati' on the list?"

"Yeah, might as well," she replied.

The answer came back swiftly: *Sulfiati, which means 'successful.'*

We just looked at each other.

Meanwhile, before we left, I decided I'd give Pak Sumadi a ring, saying I was sorry the way things had turned out, but that's the way it was. I called his office and his secretary said he was busy, to phone back the next day.

I let it go until we were booking our tickets to London. Suddenly I got the urge to call Pak Sumadi. It was easy. He came on the line quickly and said, "Where have you been? I've been looking all over Jakarta for you. Do you still want to work for me? Then get over here now."

I didn't have time to think. I just did it. I said good-bye to my daughter and went directly to Pak Sumadi's office. He told me that his job had been changed and he was now Director General of Radio, Television and Film and that he was about to be appointed head of the Committee for Culture and Information for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. To put it succinctly, he needed help and I was it. He said this time he wasn't going to let me get away, that he'd arrange all the necessary paperwork.

By this time Sulfiati (I called her that immediately) had graduated, so school wasn't a problem. Besides, we had been talking about her going to drama school and she'd been excited about it. And the plan was that she would study music on the side. The school was near Stratford, but we hadn't got as far as deciding the logistics.

I rushed back to tell Sulfiati, but she had some other news for me. "Mom, I want to get married to Hassan," she said.

My reaction was typical. "Are you sure?" I asked. "You're still so young--only 16--and you've got your whole life ahead of you."

I should have been firmer, but she looked so radiant, and I thought she did have that dream she would meet the boy she was going to marry. At the time I took it literally and didn't attach much importance to the reality of the situation.

Bapak had agreed for me to come back, and Sulfiati--well, we'd see.

We went back to London, not knowing exactly what we'd do, but the seed had been planted. I don't know why it turned out the way it did. Maybe some day I will.

Everything went like clockwork. Sulfiati was married, they'd moved into my apartment and I was off to another life, or another

extension of my life--Indonesia. Would this be the end of my travels?

I didn't know .

Chapter 16

I arrived at the Subud complex with just two suitcases and a hopeful heart and was shown to my small non-air-conditioned room. When I entered the gates a feeling of happiness flooded my whole being, and inwardly I said, 'Home. Home.' Just like in my opening. Not willingly, but it came by itself.

After getting settled I greeted everyone I saw. There were about 200 people in the complex at that time, some in houses with their families, others, like me, in single sparse rooms.

The next morning I made my way up to Bapak's house to meet my host and his family. As I remember, it was quite a normal welcome, with the feeling of, 'Okay, now that you're here get on with it.'

I started my work schedule regime, which included three days at the ANTARA News Agency, and three days with Sumadi at the Information Department. ANTARA was in an area called Pasar Baru, miles from my safe retreat at Wisma Subud. A Volkswagen 'bug' would arrive to pick me up and then the driver would proceed to stuff three good-sized men in it, who lived in various places throughout Jakarta. By the time I arrived at the non-air-conditioned ANTARA building, I was a soggy wet pretzel, ready for what the day would bring. (Today ANTARA is in a contemporary air-conditioned building in downtown Jakarta, with all the modern amenities. I just missed it.)

From the outside it looked as if I was going backwards, but from the point of view of Subud, it was a giant leap forward. In those days the choice place to be was Wisma Subud. Some people would have sacrificed their life's earnings to bask in the atmosphere of peace and true security. All kinds of people--taxi drivers, workmen, food sellers--would remark on what an extraordinary place it was, that it had something, what was it?

During the day I was busy going from one place to another, and learning *Bahasa Indonesia* from a private teacher who came to my room on a motorcycle. At night, I was either in a collapsed state, watching television with some friends, writing letters or having latihan about three times a week and going to Bapak's

talks, sometimes twice a month.

These talks were very special times. Bapak would talk and seem to contact each and every one of us . It was never boring. No. It was alive--alive and vital and meaningful. If you tried to remember something he'd said, it was impossible. What he said bypassed the mind and went straight to the inner.

Sharif Horthy was the translator and it was as smooth as silk. Bapak would talk for a while; Sharif would translate. Muti, Bapak's granddaughter would take notes just in case Sharif forgot something. Sharif was unusual. The grandson of the Hungarian Regent, he'd fled with his mother to England when the communists took power. There he met with Subud, and his fluidity in languages gained him the position of translator to Bapak.

In the meantime I was taking trips to Bali, Yogyakarta for meetings and even to Irian Jaya for a newsletter I was doing for an American oil company. This country is so beautiful, the terraced rice fields of Bali imbued with a Hindu spirit, the ancient wisdom of Yogyakarta and Solo, and Semarang, the town where Bapak lived, where I enjoyed the all-night *wayang kulit* shadow puppet performance, the people of Irian Jaya emerging from a primitive, simple life into a world of sophistication. The richness of the country is unfathomable, and the dichotomy of the government and the people, a questionable link. Maybe it's because the Western idea of 'thinking comes first' is strange to the Easterner, who is attuned to the feelings.

Then I fell ill, and in my naive state, I thought it was intensive purification. It was the month of Ramadhan and I was fasting. I stayed in my room with a high temperature and thirst that I could never have imagined. I didn't die, but came close to it. I found out later that I'd had hepatitis B. During my delirium, I was saying my Islamic prayers and was down on my knees when I heard these words, "You will work in the Secretariat." It was as clear as a bell.

Slowly recovering, I started to walk around the compound to try to revive. I wandered into the Secretariat, a group of four men and a secretary who were busy answering the many letters to Bapak that came from members throughout the world. All of

these needed to be translated for submission to Bapak, then translated again from *Bahasa Indonesia* to English when Bapak had replied. It was cumbersome but necessary.

I happened to meet Faridah McLean, who was on one her rounds of the Guest House. Faridah was an accomplished artist who'd shown her work in New York to rave reviews, but had made the choice to manage the Guest House as an opportunity to stay in Wisma Subud. She continues with her very fine painting. After exchanging the usual pleasantries she told me that she heard Mardiyah Tarantino was leaving the Secretariat, that she and her family were moving to Hawaii. I couldn't believe my ears, because if I hadn't "received" it just a couple of days before, I would have just nodded and gone on my merry way.

Instead, I made my way to Bapak's house and met Ibu Rahayu and asked her what she thought about my working in the Secretariat. She seemed surprised to hear Mardiyah was leaving. She closed her eyes momentarily and said quietly, "Yes. You may work there."

So that was the beginning of a fascinating part of my life, my whole life, in fact. After leaving my work at ANTARA I had enough time to work in the Secretariat mornings. I couldn't keep away from there. I ate, slept, breathed for the precious time I would spend there. I don't know why, but it was as if my whole being belonged. I have never felt anything so firm before or since. There was a lasting quality about it, like no beginning and no ending, and I would blink several times when I walked out of there.

Meantime I was transferred to the national radio station afternoons, where I prepared a few programs each week: *All About Indonesia*, *Listeners' Mailbag* and the News. These I broadcast in English to a worldwide international audience. The mail literally came pouring in--they'd never had so much mail before, from Europe, America, Africa--all over, most of them liking the programs. I kept some of the letters and read them over from time to time.

Chapter 17

Let me say a few words about Indonesia, once described as 'a garland of emeralds flung around the equator.' It is the largest country in Southeast Asia, strategically located between two continents and two oceans. An archipelago, it has over 13,000 islands which cover a distance of some 5,015 km, the same width as the United States.

Some of the islands, each with its own distinct culture, include Java, Bali, Sumatra, Sulawesi, Lombok, Irian Jaya, Sumbawa, Sumba, Flores, Timor and Kalimantan. Kalimantan occupies slightly more than three quarters of the island; the remaining one quarter consists of the territories of Brunei and East Malaysia. Brunei was once the center of a powerful maritime kingdom, and is now a small, independent oil rich sultanate.

Kalimantan is the third largest island in the world after Greenland and New Guinea, and Kalimantan, with a land area of well over 500,000 square kilometers, is the largest of all Indonesian territories.

Bapak had been talking about Kalimantan for a long time. He advised Subud to buy some land there and to start developing it. During the exploratory stage, Bapak took a trip to Kalimantan with his wife, son and daughter-in-law and 10 Subud members. I was lucky enough to be among them, and Bapak remarked that it would be good if I wrote about it. So here it is:

In 1957 when Bapak first brought Subud to Coombe Springs, England, he mentioned in a talk that Bapak had received that one day there would be an international Subud Center and community that would resemble Coombe Springs (Wisma Subud, Cilandak). Bapak also said that later there would be a much larger and more extensive community on Kalimantan. In fact, Bapak remarked, eventually 20 million people would come to live on this presently sparsely populated island.

Bapak felt that the time was right to begin to explore the possibilities of bringing this project to fruition, which will benefit us all. For as Bapak has explained so often, what Bapak does is not for Bapak but for Subud and for the world in general.

Here is a brief journal of Bapak's trip to Central Kalimantan to see what the possibilities are for development:

The Trip

Sunday

When flying over the miles and miles of the tropical green rain forest of Kalimantan, one can't help but wonder if this is what it was like at the beginning of time in this world--so still, vast, quiet, just waiting for man to appear.

Similar impressions were to remain with many of us throughout the two-and-a-half day trip, which began in Jakarta when we took the 1 1/2 hour flight to Banjarmasin, the capital of South Kalimantan, approximately 300 Km from Jakarta.

As we had arrived at 8:30 a.m. and had several hours to wait before catching another plane, we were taken on a short tour of the area with Bapak's car in the lead and two jeeps containing the rest of us trailing behind.

It was impossible to get lost, as there was only one long straight road that stretched for miles into the town of Banjarmasin, and after coming from overcrowded Java, what struck all of us was the scarcity of both people and houses. (The population density of Kalimantan is six people per square kilometer, compared to Java's 1000 per square kilometer.) We had arrived in town along with returning Haj pilgrims from Mecca, and experienced an infrequent traffic jam, the driver explained.

After circling round back on the same road, we bumped along towards Banjar Baru, a newer town near the airport, where we lunched at a motel and Bapak rested a while in one of the rooms.

Finally we were on our way by private plane, which sat 16, to Palangkaraya, the capital of Central Kalimantan. (There were no roads between the two cities, so one had the choice of going by plane or a six-hour motorboat trip.)

During the 40-minute flight, everyone was excited to see the untouched beauty of the island. Viewed from above, it seemed to have the quality of a world that was yet to be occupied and

developed, a place with all the potential for man to create whatever world he chose. Every once in a while we turned and smiled at one another.

A rather gentle landing for a light plane, at a small airport, and then it was off to our accommodation. Luckily we were all staying in the same place, which was rather new and modern. In fact, the entire city of 60,000 had a newish quality to it. In the town center, there was a roundabout with seven roads leading into it. Very few people could be seen, and very few cars.

Bapak was received by the governor of the province that evening at the Governor's Mansion, and we were told later that the governor was especially pleased with Bapak's arrival, as he had been waiting for Bapak to come.

Monday

5 a.m.

The early morning air was so fresh and clean. Huge brown birds with red breasts cooed and swept through the trees around the motel. Later it would be hot, but not as humid as Jakarta, and with the clean pollution-free air, it was a pleasure to be there.

The plan for the day was to look at some land that Bapak was considering buying between Marang and Tangkiling, about 35 km by boat from Palangkaraya. The land is bordered on one side by the Kahayan River and by a road on the other.

The morning journey was to be up the river by speedboat. Arriving at the dock, we were stunned to discover that we had to descend a ten-foot-high straight ladder. As usual, undaunted, Bapak led the way, the ladies with quivering legs next, and finally the rest of the party. We climbed into three speedboats, called taxis, some of us putting on life jackets, and, zoom, we were off, Bapak smiling and waving.

We were completely invigorated by the combination of jungle scenery, which lined both sides of the 150 meter-wide river, the cool fresh air and the mere idea of being there, of having this opportunity to experience the sense of freedom and the joy of seeing Bapak speeding ahead of us so serenely. The only signs of

life we saw were a few monkeys peering out from among the trees and some small boats with one or two Dayaks (natives of the area) waving as we passed by. Along the shore, about every few kilometers, stood a Dayak "village," consisting of two or three houses on stilts (for when the river flooded) and always the silent communication of the wave and smile from those watching us go by.

Bapak appeared to have enjoyed the two-hour trip immensely, and with a broad smile said that this area would be good for tourism, that tourists would love the speedboats as we all did, and it was something to consider for the future. There were unlimited possibilities, Bapak said, for many enterprises. The land is just waiting to be developed.

Bapak was greeted by the head of the village and was told that this particular village would be moving, as the government was building them new houses further inland away from the periodic flooding.

As we were about to trudge off into the jungle towards the proposed land site, Bapak commented that this place was the beginning of nature, and a few of us couldn't help but feel a surge of hope for the possibilities that lay ahead, for what could be more of a challenge than to begin at the beginning, but with modern technology to ease the strain of pioneering so that the fruits of labor could be seen quickly.

We walked single file on the narrow path that twisted and turned for several kilometers before reaching the land we were to view. We had to crawl across logs and slosh through jungle streams, spraying insect repellent and laughing.

Bapak rested on a log under a big shade tree, a shaft of light filtering through the branches, with the only sound that of thousands of tiny chirping insects, somewhat like crickets, bringing a kind of harmony to the environment. A few of us remained behind, resting, too, while the more hearty forged onward. Bapak walked a bit more through to a clearing, where it was rather hot, near a small village of four houses, and rested again.

The others returned with news of the site, which we learned

contained a small hill, on which it was possible to build. Curious villagers and their shy children gathered around Bapak.

Someone brought a rattan chair and suggested that Bapak be carried out, back to the river. Bapak agreed to try, but the terrain was too difficult to maneuver him comfortably. So with the ingenuity of those who live in the forest, the villagers tied two bamboo poles to the feet of the chair, which was now a sedan chair, and with Bapak calmly taking his place, several men carried Bapak, safari-style, back to the river, the rest of us stumbling along to keep up. Some of the men of the village were annoyed that they hadn't had the chance to carry Bapak, but in the end they all crowded around to shake Bapak's hand, thanking him for his visit. Later we were to discover that not one of the villagers would accept any money for their help, as they said it had been a blessing to have been given the opportunity to carry Bapak.

We sped off down the river to Palangkaraya, passing by logging operations, hundreds of logs being pulled slowly down the river by tugboats.

Invigorated again by the sense of freedom and pure river air, we arrived home tired, but satisfied.

Then after a couple of hours, it was off again, this time by car on the only road that came to an abrupt end in the middle of nowhere, but with a lake and a high hill in the background. We passed by only two cars on the 22 kilometer ride, and saw but a handful of people. The feeling of sheer joy kept returning.

That evening the mayor of Palangkaraya came to see Bapak and said that everyone was very pleased that Bapak had come and that he would be happy to help Bapak in any way.

Bapak had decided first to purchase some land around Palangkaraya near the town, as a starting point, and other members would be able to buy plots. However, at this point it was too early to tell exactly what the place would be as some negotiations needed to be carried out first.

Tuesday

The hours sped by, for it was already time to prepare for the return journey, which turned out to be an all-day trip.

We arrived at the small airport in Palangkaraya about 9 a.m. and took off for Banjarmasin at 10:20, landing there at 11. Again we piled into the waiting cars, and this time headed straight for Banjar Baru, to the motel, where Bapak met and talked with the local Subud group (about 12 members).

We all squeezed into a small sitting room off Bapak's bedroom, where Bapak talked about the potential of Kalimantan and the realization of Bapak's receiving nearly 20 years ago. Again Bapak talked about all the enterprises that could be developed there--it was completely open to new ideas--using the expertise in Subud. The island contained everything man needed for building, growing, creating. But one must have the will and spirit to accomplish these things, for without this unafraid spirit, nothing could succeed.

We ate the most delicious lunch we'd had in a long time, prepared by one of the members--dish after dish of delectable food, served with graciousness. Bapak wanted to visit this member's house, so within 10 minutes we were all sitting in a front room, and before leaving, taking a group photo.

Our plane to Jakarta was delayed about three hours, but finally we were all seated comfortably, having a final look from above of Kalimantan.

Some of us felt we had been away six months instead of two days, for it was as if we'd been to another world. As we circled Jakarta, looking down we saw another jungle, a jungle of closely built houses and thousands of people and cars, a kind of shock to the senses.

A torrential rain poured down on our way back to Cilandak from the airport, and we drove home in silence.

Since that historic trip, Subud in Kalimantan has continued to grow. The Muhammad Subuh Foundation has been established

there, a latihan hall and several houses have been built, a water bottling plant owned by a Subud member is in the works, and a tourism project has been started. There's also some agricultural and mining projects that have begun. There are problems, but slowly these are being overcome.

Chapter 18

On the other side of the world, in England, my daughter had given birth to a boy--Lucas--and I got to see him on one of Bapak's trips. These trips were very intense. Bapak would give talks to hundreds of members who came from all parts of the world--some under great hardship--just to hear and see him, to find out more about the miracle of the very simple latihan. Those times we were lifted up to another dimension and nothing mattered except that moment. The universal love you felt was overpowering. If only the rest of the world could come to know the essence of the latihan, to experience and feel it, then the world had hope.

You couldn't change, but the latihan could change you. As Bapak said, people would come to Subud in their own time and in their own way. No amount of persuasion would do it. Only in God's time.

Lucas was precious. There's something about Subud babies that sets them apart. It's a subtle difference, an openness, a purity that is difficult to pinpoint. But the marriage was on a downhill course. I pushed these thoughts aside as I returned to Indonesia.

About a year-and-a half later Mardiyah was born, another gift from God. I was there at the time when Sulfiati gave birth at home and Mardiyah came out smiling. We were all very happy; however the happiness was short-lived. The children were fine, but there was something about Hassan and Sulfiati that didn't seem to set right. I tried talking to both of them, but my words didn't penetrate and just floated around in the air.

I felt uneasy going back to Indonesia. What I didn't know was how quickly the next part of my life would emerge.

Chapter 19

It was back to the other world. As usual I had plenty to keep me busy--writing television scripts, free-lance articles for the *Jakarta Post* and other publications and reports for the government and radio. Then suddenly, as I'd sensed, Sulfiati was at my doorstep, without her children, just her, needing what I and Subud could give her. Her children were staying with their father.

She accompanied me to work at the radio station and someone from the Japanese section asked me if I knew of an English teacher who'd be interested in a job at the Japanese School. I asked Sulfiati and she said, "Why not. I'll try it." She stayed at the school for five years.

Ramadhan came. For the first three nights I dreamed of Lucas. He was no longer a child in the dream, but instead was a mature man. In each dream he approached me and said, "I want to go there. I see no point in going on here."

The third dream was so clear that I talked it over with Bapak's granddaughter, Tuti, and she in turn told Bapak. Bapak replied that they were true dreams and the children should come here.

They did come here, and stayed for 12 years. During that time there were many trials and tests, some of which I passed, others that I failed. Sulfiati came to work with me at TVRI (the State television station that has an English news program.) She then went back to the States and secured a good job with *Voice of America* in Washington D.C.

Since then she climbed the ladder and became Head of the Indonesian Section. They broadcast regularly to Indonesia. I visited them every year in Washington. Sulfiati came to Indonesia as part of her job to interview people and to keep up with what was happening first-hand. "I don't know what it is, but it's a country that I love," she said. "And I'll be back!"

Just when you think 'this is it,' circumstances change. In the meantime, Sulfiati changed her name, with Ibu Rahayu's blessing, to Suzanna Dayne, and secured a job with CNN in Atlanta.

It's beyond us how all this took place. First I received 'CNN' in latihan in Indonesia. Then Suzanna kept receiving it for about a year with the letters CNN all lit up, then Lucas received, "CNN will be soon." Not long after that, Suzanna had to go to a meeting of Women in Television and met someone from CNN, who told her to send in her resume. It's true, she took a test and passed, then was offered a job as editor/writer.

She was made producer, then executive producer in no time flat and voiced some items that I was able to get here. My yearly visits switched to Atlanta.

Mardiyah stumbled into the Portfolio Center, a prestigious art school renown throughout the United States, where she went for three years, studying to be a graphic artist. Lucas is in Los Angeles, training to be an auto engineer.

The end?--not quite. Suzanna started receiving 'Indonesia, Indonesia' and it all happened. They had all three planned to come for the Centennial of Bapak and the World Congress to be held in Bali.

They came all right, but Suzanna and Mardiyah to stay. Both landed jobs in their fields—Suzanna in television; Mardiyah in graphic arts. They lived at Wisma Subud, just a stone's throw from me.

Then the call came again for Suzanna to return to the States. Now she's in Los Angeles, working for NBC, and as one of the National Helpers for Subud.

Mardiyah stayed on, taking a variety of jobs in her field and meeting her husband, Machmudi Rahmad, an Indonesian who all of us love.

As for me, who Bapak gave the last name of Lestiono when I decided to stay in Indonesia, my life goes on.

I continue on in my capacity as Ibu Rahayu's secretary-translator along with a myriad of other jobs. I was the speech writer for Indonesia's Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, edited the then President's autobiography in English called *Soeharto: My*

Thoughts, Words and Deeds, which President Soeharto presented to me, and two other books followed: free-lance features for *The Jakarta Post*, television scripts, documentaries and for two years English editor for Price Waterhouse and for a web site.

I still live in Wisma Subud, in an apartment where I wake up every morning and see the latihan hall, which is directly opposite me.

I have been in Indonesia for almost 30 years. Bapak was the shining light for me all these years, the one who gave meaning to this life and the reality of the hereafter. He gave the latihan that contains the essence of being, of living and growing, of my reason for being, for which I'm continually grateful.

Bapak died in 1987. His body is now buried up in the mountains with his family at a place called *Sukamulia*, about a three-hour drive from Jakarta. Ibu Rahayu has a small house there, and we go up from time to time to visit his gravesite and to spend the night. There are no words to describe the perfect peace found there.

Recently I had an experience in latihan in which I was taken to a place where I was originally created many thousands of years ago. Some pure liquid was poured down my throat. I felt as if all my ancestors in my line were there, smiling, and that I did not have this line any more. A new line had been born, one signifying Subud, one that my descendants would carry on.

The latihan continues. People everywhere are coming to realize that there is more to life than being born, eating, working, getting married, having children and dying. This is what the latihan kejiwaan of Subud reveals, the eternally living, breathing self. This is the uniting factor in all religions, the answer to mankind's struggle to find a reason for being.

The world has changed radically. It will never be as we once knew it. We don't know what's coming tomorrow.

One thing I do recognize. The latihan is so simple, yet miraculous. It's closer to human beings than they know. Perhaps

one day mankind will open up and find the way, a way that leads

to the light.

Addendum

Bapak gave one talk to people interested in Subud in 1960. It sums up what can be absorbed by the average person.

Subud is the abbreviation of the words Susila Budhi Dharma. Subud is not a new religion, nor is it a part of an existing religion. It is far from being a science. Subud is only a symbolic definition of the way of life of the perfect human being.

Susila means to live by fulfilling what has been willed by God, by answering His call to become a true human being. Budhi symbolizes the fact that all creatures created by God, including man, have His power that is working both within and without. Dharma means that all creatures, including man, are willed by God to surrender. It is willed that all His creatures shall surrender to the Will of their Creator,

Susila Budhi Dharma means to fulfill the Will of God founded on His Power, which is working within and without our being, while surrendering to the Will of Almighty God.

Susila Budhi Dharma is a symbolic definition of our behavior in the latihan kejiwaan (spiritual exercise) of Subud, which means that whatever happens in the latihan really is the Will of God and is happening because that is indeed what God Wills to happen in our being. This is in conformity with what has been expressed in the holy scriptures. The Al-Qur'an, the Bible and other holy books say that God is always close to mankind, or that man is very close to God, that God provides everything that is needed by mankind, and that mankind can receive whatever is given by God.

What must we surrender to God? Not our material riches, not the object of our love, not even our belongings, because God does not need any of that. What we have to surrender is the mind, the heart and the nafsu, or lower forces (will power), because these are tools that always hinder us whenever we want to be close to God.

That is what was meant by Jesus Christ when he said that God is always close to us if our surrender to God exceeds everything, including our love of our own self. Therefore, our love from the heart and feelings always becomes a hindrance that obstructs the

true love of God. Material love, which we consider as love, is only directed at material things. Love for God needs to be greater and deeper than material love.

It was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad that God already existed before the whole content of the universe was created, and that God will still exist even after all that is contained in the universe has been destroyed. God is further than anything furthest. He is present deeper inside us than anything deepest within ourselves. This means that God has, in fact, created everything that exists and, because of that, the content of the whole universe is governed by its Creator. Such is God, the source of the universe.

Thus it was decreed that God has no form, no language, no country or color, because, should He have a country, then there would be more than one God, for each country would need to have its own God. That is what is meant by the decree: 'God is only one, and He governs all that exists, rabbul alamin.'

God governs without any tool or material, whereas man, for example, if he wants to make something, he needs a table, wood, nails hammer and other tools. To be able to make an atomic bomb, man needs even more tools. None of this is required by God. Allah creates without any tools or material. It is clear that to understand God's Will there is no other way for man but just to surrender totally, because it is impossible for the heart and mind to meet God.

That is what we do in the latihan kejiwaan. We only surrender without using the mind, the heart and the nafsu, because our obligation is to receive the portion that God allocates to us. Thus it can be understood that Subud is only the symbolic definition of the life of man that always obeys God's Will and carries out His command, both in this world and in the hereafter. That is why when following the latihan kejiwaan of Subud we do not have any lectures, there is nothing that we need to learn because what is demanded is just to surrender totally.

Anyone who says that he knows the way towards God, in fact, is surpassing the gift of God before he has even received it. There is nothing that we need to do except to accept whatever is given by Him, or whatever His Will is for us,

Those are in truth the words of all the prophets. 'If you surrender to God with sincerity and honesty, God will protect and guide you.' In the latihan kejiwaan we are void of our will. We do not have any request. We only accept whatever God gives us.

This will be the situation in the future. It is the Power of God that will work within ourselves when we do the latihan kejiwaan and arouse whatever is already present in our own beings. For example someone who has a loud voice will emit a loud voice, while someone with a soft voice will issue a soft voice. That happens with all parts of our body, whatever is within ourselves. That is why the latihan is different for each person, because everyone is different.

It becomes clearer that in Subud it is not possible for any theory or spiritual teaching to be present, because each person differs from the other. What is required and received by one person is not the same as what is needed and received by another. That is why there is no set rule about what you have to do or how to behave in the latihan, because it is very personal. Everyone will find by himself which way will suit him when worshipping God, and what suits a certain person may cause confusion to someone else. That is why it is wrong for you to think that you have to be exactly like Bapak Muhammad Subuh or to imitate him. We have to shape our own personality if eventually we want to find the way to God.

It is not suitable for us to imitate other people. Each of us has to find and take our own way to God. Usually if one takes a teacher, the student will be taught to do exactly as the teacher does, so that he may achieve whatever has already been achieved by the teacher. In fact, that is wrong, because even between brothers of the same mother there are already many differences, let alone between the teacher and student.

That is why Bapak says that God alone will lead us to Him, such as is truly happening in the latihan kejiwaan, in a way that we are being taught to know our jiwa, to know our own true self. There is no need to be afraid or concerned, because what works in the latihan is nothing else but what already exists in our being, and it happens as a result of our own spirituality. It is our own true self that emerges during the latihan. Therefore we do not need to

worry or be afraid.

In Subud there is no religious discrimination because what grows is the true self that is already present in each human being. Thus, in the spiritual world, Christians will meet the true Christ, Buddhists will meet the true Buddha. The same will be experienced by a Muslim. He will certainly meet with the essence of Islam.

So if we are already really able to recognize the spiritual aspect within us, then we will be guided by the Power of God in everything, because it is the Power of God that is working inside and outside our beings, so that wherever we are, in the office, while driving a car, or whatever we are doing, we will always be guided by the Power of God.

It is so clear what is written in the Koran. 'Before acting say Bismillahir rahmanir rahim.' These words mean that you will follow God's guidance and will only do what is decreed by Him. You won't rush into taking action, only remembering God afterwards so that you will regret and feel sorry for what you have done.

If before starting our work God is always present in our consciousness, then all that we do will be right. That is the meaning of prayers Christians say before meals or before they retire. It also means that we are not allowed to act without the guidance of God, because if we forget God, we will not receive His help if it turns out our action was wrong.

The power that we witness is only to convince us that the Power of Almighty God is working within us, is present not only in our own being, but also in each and every one of His creations. That is why by doing the latihan kejiwaan we will not lose anything of our religion. What we experience and do will come from the Will of God and we will open up what is already present in our selves.

Those who always rely on religion will receive in the latihan an experience that is suitable both to their religion and with what is present within themselves.

Some among you will ask how does Bapak know these things? I will give you Bapak's response as follows: When Bapak received

that, Bapak's situation was similar to yours now. Bapak also worked in an office, carrying out his responsibility and was happy in doing so. Suddenly, all of that stopped, finished, and the mind no longer worked. Then Bapak received, as you will receive, in the latihan. Bapak did not look for any ilmu or knowledge, because Bapak did not have a teacher or tutor. Bapak only received, and that is called Mukjizat Allah or God's Miracle, a Gift from God.

That is only given to those who do not look for it, those who are devoid of self-interest. If someone surrenders unconditionally in his receiving to God's Gift, then God will bestow His Grace. Maybe you have heard that Eva Bartok, the film star, was cured from her illness. It was not Bapak who helped or cured her. Bapak only showed the way to worship God, and she was cured. Eva became healthy and everything ended well. Bapak only showed the way to worship. The health of a person is only between the person and God. No one else can interfere.

Now, whether or not you will follow the latihan kejiwaan, Bapak leaves to you, because there can be no pressure in the worship of God. Everyone must be free. But anyone asking for it shall be given.
