



Inner Wisdom

INNER WISDOM

BY

Mas Prio Hartono



This acrobat file edition in 2004 by
Undiscovered Worlds Press
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This PDF printed on 21st of June 2004

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Introduction

This is a book which tells about the potential for a spiritual life for man in our present and coming age. The message is conveyed, not through the expression of lofty sentiments and noble ideals, not through any teaching purported to be from the divine levels, but through a description of literal experience as lived by the author, Dr. Prio Hartono.

The book can also be described as a journal of travel adventures undergone by the author while attempting to visit people in various parts of the world to share with them the tribulations of establishing a new form of brotherhood.

Like the notable brotherhoods of the past, whether those of Christian fellowship through meeting in the name of Christ, Jewish, or the Sufic brotherhoods within the realm of Islam, wherein men have joined together in a more fervent search for the divine, this so far small band of men and women in the Subud Brotherhood visited by Dr. Hartono is based on love of God and through this, upon a love of each other.

Only this kind of love and its consequent dogged devotion has kept this small international group of people functioning since the revelatory experience of its founder made it a possibility back in 1933.

Other books, long since printed, have described the “ascension” type of experience of an humble Indonesian book keeper in that year; how in that experience he was caught up to the throne of God and given a gift which he was obligated to share with anyone who asked to also receive it. This gift given to the man, Bapak Muhammad Subuh, was nothing less than a contact with the Light of the Power of God similar to that given in the remote past to the servants and messengers of God that we usually classify as “prophets” and which enabled them to enter into their various missions to mankind.

In this instance the man so caught up and “missionized” (to coin a word) was given the staggering news that this contact with the Power of God was intended by God to be passed on to any Mr. Average Man who might happen to wish for it.

This simple statement explains why there is an organized Brotherhood of Subud to enable the passing along of this contact, and the nourishment of those who are undergoing the resultant experiences of growth and purification entailed in their individual circumstances.

Those who receive this contact can themselves pass it along to still others who may ask for it. It is, however, the experience of the founder and his own received guidance from God in this regard, that this “passing along” had best be done after the “asker” has had a period of about three months of inner preparation for the event. Also, after this event, called the “opening,” members of the brotherhood need a certain amount of “tending” or “looking after” by the more experienced members to make sure the whole experience “takes” and that they are conscious of their new inner situation. This too is why we have organized ourselves into a loving brotherhood, to help take care of each other in our bearing of this momentous contact.

Those who receive this contact are encouraged to exercise it for thirty minutes at a time in a group with other members, the men and women meeting in separate rooms. Such exercises are called by us the “*latihan*,” the Indonesian every-day word for “exercise.”

It was made clear at the beginning to the founder that God, in giving us this new possibility for building our lives here on earth, does not intend the founding of yet one more religion; but rather the founding of a “brotherhood” type of organization, in this case one that would be based on and surround the nourishment and handing on of this contact. We have been led to understand that the prophetic teachings we call religion have all been given. Man’s problem with these teachings and religions is that he has not yet been able to fulfill their requirements and therefore receive their promised benefits. The coming of this contact at this time, we have been told, is to enable man to follow and live his own selected religion, whatever that might be.

These are all of the essential points to understand concerning Subud before being further enlightened on these and many other points by our author’s own living experiences in following his own missions with the body of Subud.

In following these selected episodes and travel happenings of Dr. Hartono we witness what at least one “asker” experienced at different stages of his life within the Subud Brotherhood. We then see him carrying this contact to others in distant lands. We also see him in a variety of roles and positions of responsibility needed within our brotherhood to make it function adequately.

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In following his story, we ourselves then learn, incidentally, what Subud is all about.

If there is anything further I could add to this introduction, it must be my own experience in discovering for myself what kind of man this Dr. Hartono might be. In getting thus more personal I cannot use his formal name but can only refer to him as Mas Prio. “Mas” means elder brother in Indonesian and is a form indicating both respect and intimacy.

I first visited the Subud compound in the village of Cilandak, just outside of Jakarta, Indonesia in the middle of 1966. This was only a few months after the attempted communist coup with the resulting counter stroke led by General Suharto. The compound which housed the small commune type headquarters of international Subud was at this era still maintaining a military guard at night. Almost every night small arms fire could be heard in the surrounding neighborhood and fields. An alliance had been made between the Subud organization and the anti-communist military. As a result, a small detachment of troops were stationed on occasion within the Subud compound. The men Subud members were also issued arms and given some training in their use. Bapak wore a pistol in his belt while on guard duty at night. I was enthralled at all this and felt very privileged to be able to witness Bapak and the Subud members in the compound continuing to live their Subud lives of worship while at the same time acting very practical and ordinary in the face of many dire outward circumstances.

This was the occasion when I first met Mas Prio. He was at that time one of the three Subud members who constituted the “Secretariat” of International Subud. These three men, Sudarto, Brodjolukito and Prio served to process all correspondence to and from Bapak as well as translation work, typing, filing, etc.

During this entire course of emergency Bapak had requested that the Indonesian Subud groups try not to communicate with each other or with headquarters at Cilandak. But a day came while I was there when Bapak told Mas Prio that the time had come to re-establish contact with the larger groups. He asked Mas Prio to travel across Java by car and stay several nights with each group giving talks, doing latihan and conducting testing sessions. Bapak suggested that I go along as a companion for Mas Prio.

During this trip, in the car, in hotel rooms, or eating carp at roadside restaurants, I learned to share Prio’s quiet state of submission and emptiness as a way of preparing for the next group encounter. I observed that in the midst of the group activities he would come alive and spontaneously give them whatever was required, whatever was unique to that group’s needs at that time. But this was all possible because of the preparatory quietness, where if we talked it was always about the simplest, most obvious, things.

In my own life, this trip to Indonesia came at the end of a four year period of intense crisis. The Subud latihan had led me into the most extraordinary inner processes and corresponding outer events. Even at this late date some 20 years later I cannot bring myself to speak openly of all my experiences. At that time I felt I was a volcano that could explode at any moment. If I could have talked openly to anyone—any trusted listener—I felt that I would have released enough pressure to keep the volcano from a future eruption. Mas Prio had by now become for me the most trusted and dear friend. Yet not even to him could I speak.

One day as we rode together in the back seat of the car while being driven to the next Javanese group, Mas Prio seemed to understand both my need to talk and my inability to talk, two forces which canceled each other. His solution was to inadvertently touch my hand, which was resting on the seat, with his little finger, seemingly by accident. This acknowledgement of my state, along with the slight touch, brought me all the relief that was possible for me. There was a wonderful flow out of me to him. The volcano was not now going to erupt, at least not on this trip around Java.

My next encounter with Mas Prio occurred the following year. In 1967 an international congress of Subud was held in Yomiuriland, just outside of Tokyo, Japan. This locale is a kind of Japanese Disneyland. My wife and three young children were with me. We all enjoyed this experience of foreignness enormously. The kids especially relished the whole family sleeping on the floor on one giant straw mat. They pretended we were all Japanese. One night, after sleeping for several hours, I suddenly awakened with the feeling that something was going on that I should look into. I found the clock and discovered it was around 3:00 a.m. Certainly there was nothing official happening at this time. Nevertheless, the feeling was so persistent that I stumbled around the unconscious bodies of my family and so managed to get dressed in the dark.

I then left my room and went down two flights of stairs. On the lower flight I found Mas Prio sitting on the steps talking to a young Subud couple with great animation. I now understood why I

had been awakened. I joined the little group and our conversation continued until near dawn. At this point Mas Prio suggested we go outside and walk about the grounds.

Among other things, Mas Prio mentioned how impressed he was with the sincerity of the Americans here at the congress. This nation, he said, made up almost two thirds of the body attending congress. He expressed a longing to be able to go to the U.S.A. and participate in the Subud life there. As he was saying this I somehow felt that he and I were to be closely linked for the rest of our lives, that we were, in fact, just now getting to really know and understand each other.

Two years later Bapak was giving a talk in Los Angeles when he received that the membership in the U.S.A. stood in need of a visiting senior helper from Indonesia. Bapak put this thought before the assembled company and found that they heartily agreed. Upon Bapak's return to Indonesia he asked Mas Prio to go to the U.S.A. for an extended visit as Bapak's "ambassador." He gave Mas Prio one week to settle his affairs before departing.

Upon his arrival in the U.S., Mas Prio spent a month or so on the West Coast and then came East to visit me at my home in Washington, D.C.

He was accompanied by Lorenzo Music (the voice of Morris the cat in the TV ads, and Garfield the cartoon cat, the elevator man on the Mary Tyler Moore show, Carlton, the door man on the Rhoda show, and numerous other cultural undertakings) who brought his guitar along. He had a tendency to start strumming this instrument whenever any tension showed any signs of rising. I think he was strumming it when Prio explained to me that he wanted to make his headquarters on the East Coast, and he wanted me to be his assistant or manager.

I told Mas Prio that I didn't feel I should do this since Bapak had told me in 1966, during a spontaneous receiving while we were on guard duty together, "You should be teaching and let others do the work," I explained that while I didn't have a clue as to what that saying could possibly mean, I did take it as advice to avoid any offices in Subud in the future.

Mas Prio's displeasure at hearing this rebuff was obvious on his face, although he was kind enough not to say anything further on the subject. Instead, he got up and went to his bedroom for an hour, (leaving Lorenzo and me and my wife to converse among ourselves and listen to a few songs by Lorenzo).

When Mas Prio rejoined us, he was smiling. He told me that he had just been speaking with Bapak. I had to catch myself from pointing out to him that this was impossible since there was no phone in that bedroom. When I saw that Mas Prio had emerged smiling, I thought it was because he had come to accept my refusal.

This was a short lived moment of comfort because then Mas Prio explained he had talked with Bapak via their "inner men," that Bapak had confirmed my words as being true, and he then told Bapak that he had serious need of me in order to function properly in the U.S., I tremulously asked, "And what did Bapak say to that?" Prio answered, "He said it was all right to use you."

Thus was my fate sealed for the next several years, years of tumultuous activity in this hemisphere for Subud.

I had, as of that moment, become Mas Prio's "manager," and my first duty in this regard was to explain to my irate wife just why our cozy little home life based on my cozy little working career was to be abandoned for a few years. I noticed Mas Prio was not all concerned to intervene in that domestic flap. He left it all to me. After all, I was now his manager, and this was a detail I should lift from his shoulders.

One of the first things to occupy Mas Prio after this, and myself as his *aide-de-camp* was the promulgation of the idea of forming regional organizations in the U.S., to fill the great void that existed between our national committee and the local centers. Our country was too widespread geographically to give the centers a sense of belonging to each other. These regions were actually formed in a short period of time, and exist and function to this day. Later Bapak would issue a recommendation that all of the larger countries adopt this same middle layer of organization.

It was during this same era, near the end of 1969 and the beginning of 1970, that I organized the purchase of a youth camp in the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia to serve as Mas Prio's home base and headquarters, and as a safe haven for his wife and two youngest children during his numerous journeys to visit the Subud groups all over this hemisphere.

The name of the camp we purchased was "Skymont." The letterhead on the camp's stationery bore the motto "Skymont, where the mountains meet the sky." Mas Prio loved this place from the beginning. To him it always felt like home, a place he could return to for rest and restoration.

Initially we continued the camp's ordinary business as a place where churches could send their

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young people for one or two weeks during which they conducted their own program under their own supervision. Then Skymont was employed as the site of a special congress for Bapak to be able to be with Subud members for a two week period. Followed this, by popular demand, Skymont became a commune—Subud variety. During this latter phase, Mas Prio emerged as a master musical impresario. He created three separate bands, one of which achieved professional status, the “Skymonters.” There were extended tours, record production, and special shows employing dancers, playlets, poetry, etc. Hamid Hamilton Camp, Lewis Arquette, Rusdi Lane, Rayner De Michael and Lewis Ross are some of the best known musicians with this band.

In the course of these activities, I was amazed to witness Mas Prio becoming transformed musically. He taught music to those already professional musicians. He remembered both the score and words of a large number of Indonesian songs adopted by the group into their act. He, himself, could sing all of these songs beautifully. On one occasion he did this before a non-Subud public, who took him to be a young up-and-coming singing sensation, possibly from Latin America (since he didn’t appear to be quite North American).

The apotheosis for the Skymonters was one night at Carnegie Hall with Judy Collins. I know that this miracle really happened because I was there, backstage, peeping out of a hole at the audience. You see, I was Mas Prio’s manager, and where he went, I could go too.

Now that he has written a book, I am still allowed to tag along by writing this introduction. You will also find me again at the end in the Epilogue.

It has been this way ever since Bapak asked me to go along with Mas Prio on his Javanese tour of the groups—to be his companion.

Livingston Dodson
January 1987

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I am aware that one might only accept and understand the following pages had he received similar experiences. Nevertheless, I feel that I have to share these experiences with whoever cares to read them, and I would not mind at all if the reader regards them as fairy tales.

-Prio Hartono

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Chapter 1

AN UNWANTED MEETING

My parents-in-law had a nice wooden house in Jakarta with a large garden. The garden extended from the alley in front of the house to another alley behind it. In the garden, there were several tropical fruit trees and the fences were covered by evergreen kemuning trees which were regularly trimmed. Besides producing little red berries which are edible, kemuning is also cherished for its fragrance.

As my wife, Rukmiwati, was their only child, my parents-in-law wanted us to stay with them after we got married.

We were married on the 4th of May, 1951, and by June 1953 we already had two children; Sri Hartati, a daughter, born on the 21st of January, 1952 and Laksmonosusilo, a son, born on the 1st of February, 1953.

My parents-in-law were very fond of them and took over the care of our children from the moment of their birth.

I should have been happy to have such a beautiful wife, lovely children and parents-in-law who would give anything in their power and possession for our well being.

However, at that time I was sad and melancholic at the same time because I knew that soon I would have to part from them forever. I was seriously ill with tuberculosis. The doctors had given up hope for my recovery and death might take me any time. My lungs were extensively perforated and when I coughed, which I did frequently, I coughed not only blood, but tissue from the lungs as well. I became very weak; so much so that I could not even move my head and had to be fed through a plastic tube. I was sent to the hospital, but, as the doctors had given up hope, I had decided to go home after staying for a few weeks there. I had chosen to die peacefully at home, in the presence of my family.

In June, 1953, one morning a fellow student of law came to my house. His name was Suardi Wikantaatmadja. Suardi was a handsome looking young man and was popular with the girls. Besides being handsome, he also had a special charm that could easily attract men and women alike. He was the chairman of the Indonesian Progressive Student Movement; and I was, at that time, the hardworking Secretary General of this organization.

Suardi came to tell me that our mutual friend, Masrul Latif Pane, had arranged an appointment for me to meet a dukun (faith healer). Masrul was a lecturer at our University, which was the University of Indonesia in Jakarta. He used to help us with our studies.

I told Suardi that I was not interested in meeting a faith healer. Suardi explained that this appointment had been made and they were now waiting for me. It annoyed me not to have been consulted. He apologized but urged me to meet this man. I agreed to go along simply to pay my respects, but felt no interest in his faith healing practice, and therefore stated that I would only be seeing him once. He shrugged his shoulders and helped me into his car.

The faith healer did not impress me at all; he looked too young to be a wise man. He had neither beard nor moustache, and had not a single wrinkle in his face. He wore a sarong and pajama shirt and stayed in a small house in Jalan Madura, Jakarta.

Masrul Latif introduced him as Pak Subuh and asked me to explain the purpose of my visit. This, too annoyed me since it was not my idea to meet this dukun. However, to avoid hurting an older man's feelings, I told him that the purpose of my visit was to ask his help in calming and quietening my mind. He said, "May Almighty God bless you and cure your body and soul." I was skeptical when I heard this prayer, because I thought physical illness should only be treated by medical doctors.

The three of us sat there with Pak Subuh without making conversation. Being impatient to go home, I was very relieved when finally Suardi made the move to go. When I was about to reach the door, I was shocked again, irritated when Pak Subuh said to me, "Come back tomorrow morning at ten o'clock." It was a custom among the Javanese not to offend an older man, so I felt I could not decline.

That night I could not sleep and was constantly wondering whether or not I should go back again. But not having said no to him, this meant an unspoken agreement to return; a promise. And it meant that he would be waiting for me. So I felt obligated to fulfill my promise. The next morning, reluctantly returning, my attitude was that of a man who honored his commitment, and who did not have the heart to disappoint a faith healer who needed patients to keep his practice going.

I arrived at his house at the appointed time and found Pak Subuh sitting alone on the porch, legs crossed. Inviting me to be seated, he made his way to the living room to move aside the table and chairs, and to spread a few mats on the floor. He then asked me to remove my shoes and come inside.

“You are very weak,” he observed. “Lie down on your back and relax.” Then he said, “Praise the name of Allah and close your eyes.” Pak Subuh began to pace the floor and chant. I did not understand the language. But it sounded like a prayer. Suddenly there was an earthquake. When I opened my eyes, the ceiling was moving round and around. The floor shifted. It went up and suddenly went down again. It went way down deeper than its original surface. I was in terror. It seemed that the height of its fall would never end. The whole house down into a deep and bottomless hole while turning around at a frightening speed. I was terrified and closed my eyes. Suddenly it went up again, higher and higher and higher. And down again turning clockwise and counterclockwise but never on a horizontal level. The shifting continued at odd angles. I was afraid the whole house would crumble and felt I was about to be buried alive. I wanted to run, but as the earth was continuously shifting, it was impossible for me to stand up, let alone run. Besides, I was still very weak. In my despair, I finally just surrendered myself to my fate.

All this time I was busy with myself and forgot about Pak Subuh. Now suddenly I thought about him. I glanced around to see him. To my surprise, I saw him still pacing the floor and chanting. How could he balance himself on the shifting and turning floor, I thought.

It seemed that the earthquake continued on and on endlessly and I just surrendered and closed my eyes. Finally, I heard Pak Subuh say, “Finish!” To my relief, the earthquake stopped. The house had not crumbled and I was still alive.

I opened my eyes and saw Pak Subuh heading towards the porch. Slipping my feet back into my shoes, I stood up and went to join him. When I looked at my watch, I knew that the earthquake had lasted for about 35 minutes.

Before departing I remarked, “That was the longest earthquake I have ever experienced.” He looked at me for a while and then said, “What you have just experienced was not an earthquake; it was a process of the separation of the inner self from the body.” This comment surprised me but I did not say a word; I did not even know what he was talking about. Relieved that I had fulfilled my promise, I was now happy to go home. It seemed to me that he must be new in town. I was the only patient that morning. He certainly needed some encouragement to continue his faith healing practice, I thought.

As I reached the door he once again called out, “Come back the day after tomorrow at the same time!” You can imagine how dismayed I was; I was just about to run away from him—but got caught in the act.

I felt obligated and with the same considerations as before, I reluctantly went of see Pak Subuh again at the appointed time. He repeated the same procedure; he cleared the living room of its furniture, spread a few mats on the floor, and asked me to come in after removing my shoes. Again he told me to lie flat on my back on the floor, and asked me to come in after removing my shoes. Again he told me to lie flat on my back on the floor, praise the name of Allah and close my eyes.

When he started to chant and pace the floor, I suddenly felt that there were thousands of tiny little ants creeping all over my body. These ants were tiny and even smaller than lice. They were like little lights. As they crept through my body, I felt a tingling sensation. They crawled through my feet and my legs. It was most irritating when they crept up to my thighs. They did not stop there but went up and up until my whole body was covered by these ants. It was very disturbing when they ran around my eyes, my nose and ears. I was afraid that they would enter my nostrils, ears and eyes. As I did not wish to disturb Pak Subuh’s concentration, I decided not to brush them off. I just surrendered and accepted whatever might happen to me. Sure enough, those creatures did enter my ears, nostrils and eyes. As I was still wondering what damage they might cause in my inner organs. I suddenly realized that some of them had entered my brain. I was amazed how quickly they got into my brain, and I started to feel the tingling sensation within my head. How could I ever brush them off, I wondered.

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When Pak Subuh said, "Finish," I jumped up and started to brush off all those ants from my body. But they had all disappeared. I looked everywhere, even under the mats, but could find none. However, I could still feel some tingling sensation within my head.

Returning to the porch, I told Pak Subuh that I had been disturbed by ants. "Those were not ants," he said, "but the Light of the Power of God that permeated your body." Once again his explanation surprised me and I did not know what to say.

I took to my leave and hoped that he would not ask me to come back. But the same thing happened; when I was about to reach the door, he said, "Come back the day after tomorrow at the same time." My God! I had fallen into his grasp again!

The day after tomorrow was Idul Fitri. On this day in our country people celebrate the end of the Ramadhan fast, and you are supposed to dress in new clothes and visit your family and relatives. But this faith-healer wanted to do business! It was a very difficult decision for me to make at that time, because I had an obligation to take my wife and two children to visit my parents and ask their forgiveness on this holy day. However, I stuck to my appointment and went again to see Pak Subuh.

On arrival, I saw him in the company of four women. They were sitting in the living room with Pak Subuh who was facing the door. He saw me coming; greeting him, I took my seat on the porch. Five minutes passed. Nothing happened. I became impatient, but waited another five minutes. Nothing happened. After waiting another five minutes, he still ignored me. Then I became very angry. It was a big sacrifice to come at his request, and here I was, wasting a precious Idul Fitri day, being totally ignored. But at that very moment, Pak Subuh stood up. He asked the women to move to another room, and proceeded to carry out the usual routine of preparing the setting.

The way Pak Subuh acted and reacted made me realize that he could read my mind. This disturbed me and interfered with my being able to listen to his chanting. I spent the time censuring myself for my negative thoughts about him, and being ashamed for lacking gratitude to this man who was trying to help me. Now less was embarrassed, realizing that he knew what I was thinking.

At the end of the session he said, "Tomorrow Bapak is going to Palembang. The seed within has been planted and will continue to grow within you. You can do the same thing by yourself at home. Lie down, relax, close your eyes, praise the name of Allah and surrender." I took my leave and went home.

I was not sure that, by myself, I could carry out what he had told me to do. And I did not know what good it could do me, so I did not try it. But four days after my last meeting with Pak Subuh, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, I suddenly felt like doing the thing that he told me to do. I laid flat on my back on a divan in my study, closed my eyes and exclaimed, "Allahu Akbar." Suddenly, I felt a strong vibration shaking my body. And this vibration grew stronger and stronger, and yet stronger, and finally I felt that my body was being lifted, still in a reclining position. From my study my body floated towards my bedroom. Passing through the connecting door, I could feel my body touching the curtains. The door that connected the bedroom and the living room was open, and the front door was also wide open. When I felt the vibration was gaining momentum to take off, I screamed, "No, don't take me away; I have not had my lunch." I thought I would be hungry if this journey was going to take a long time. The vibration responded and slowly lowered me to the floor. Then I felt sorry, because I was curious where it would have taken me. At that moment I was lifted up again. And, again, at the moment when I was about to be launched, I screamed, "No don't take me away." Again I was lowered. Once more, I felt sorry and lifted up again. After I said "No" for the third time, I was transported slowly back to my study and gently put back on the divan.

Opening my eyes, I realized that it was not a dream. Everything looked exactly the same as when I was floating; the open door, the curtains—and the strong vibration was still shaking my body. My heart was beating strongly, and I could see the veins in my arms enlarging as a result of the stronger and more active flow of the blood.

I started thinking: This could not have been the result of the hypnotic power of Pak Subuh. He did not know that I was going to try this at this particular time, and he was now far away in Palembang, in southern Sumatra. While I was wondering about it, a voice and an awareness emerged within me, "What you have just experienced came directly from God. And Pak Subuh is a Man of God." I stood up and made a vow to do whatever I could to work for God.

Now, after many years of experience, I can explain that the message of God is not communicated in the same way that human beings communicate with each other; that is, by word of mouth. Rather, the message of God necessarily comes from within, because a human being is far too small to be able to face God, who is even greater than the whole universe. And as God envelops everything,

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there is an Agent of the Power of Almighty God within us, and hence the message of God can come directly into our awareness from within ourselves, just the way a flower blooms from within a tree. All of our senses are able to witness this. Thus there is no room for doubts.

I wish to add that, when I walked away from Bapak's house after my second visit, I happened to look back and see Ibu Subuh (Bapak's wife, Mrs. Sumari Sumohadiwidjojo (who was customarily called "Ibu" which means "mother," by the members of the Subud Brotherhood) standing beside her husband. I overheard her asking, "Who is this thin and pale young fellow?" Pak Subuh whispered something in her ear which I could not hear. Twelve years later, in 1965, before leaving for the University of Indonesia, in Jakarta, for my inauguration as Doctor of Law and Social Sciences, I knelt in front of Ibu to ask for her blessing. With tears in her eyes, she said, "Oh, I am so happy that you could reach such a high position in society. I really did not expect this of you when I first saw you. Do you remember the days of your first visits to Pak Subuh at Jalan Madura? You were so thin and pale, and when I asked Bapak who you were, he whispered to me, "He is the man whom I am going to send all over the world."

It would have shocked me to death if I had heard it twelve years earlier, but the blow was not so hard when it came in 1965, because by then I had been sent by Pak Subuh on Subud missions abroad since 1959. Still her words moved me so deeply that I joined her in tears.

Chapter 2

FIRST BENEFITS OF THE LATIHAN

Pak Subuh went to Palembang for a couple of weeks and when he returned, I met him again but not for long, because he had to go back to his home in Jogjakarta. Apparently, he had come to Jakarta for a short visit only. In the meantime, I continued to do what he told me to do every other day, which was later known to me as the “latihan” (pronounced lá-té-hán). I also got to know that his movement was called The Subud Spiritual Brotherhood. And Pak Subuh was called simply “Bapak” (father) by his followers.

Before I came to Subud, I was suffering from sleeplessness. My mind would wander aimlessly. And there was a time when I could not sleep at all for six consecutive months. I became very weak physically and mentally and was totally paralyzed a couple of times. This was really a frightening experience. I could not move my hands, my legs, my head. And I could not even call and wake up my wife, who was sleeping right beside me.

The first obvious benefit of the latihan for me was that, after doing it for sometime, I was able to fall asleep, and it became easier and easier for me to do so. I could now sleep day or night, in bed, on a chair, or on a moving train or bus. This sleep was really what I needed for a total physical and mental rest. I felt very grateful to God for this.

Gradually, I regained my strength and health. Actually, it is an understatement to say “gradually,” because I had recovered within six months and after an intensive medical examination, was found fit for military service.

How do you explain this?

Perhaps the following explanation can give you some idea of how the Power of Almighty God worked within me: If I can symbolize my body as the soil, or the land, the Power of God would be the farmer. When I surrendered and submitted myself to God during the latihan, Almighty God did all the farmer’s job within me, such as clearing the land, plowing, raking and the planting, watering, weeding and fertilizing. What was required of me was just to observe it as an onlooker or spectator. This should be the easiest thing to do, because what I had to do was simply to do nothing. It sounded so easy but it could be most difficult for a modern man like me, whose mind had been mixed up and disturbed. It was not easy to quiet the mind and stop it from interfering in the work of the Power of God within me. Every time the mind interfered, the work would be stopped. But even if the Power of God was only given five minutes to work without interference, it could achieve a lot.

During the process of clearing the land, the Light of the Power of God that permeated my body had cleared it of all sorts of sicknesses. It repaired and replaced every single cell which needed repairing and replacing, and threw out unwanted or harmful foreign elements. The seed of the jiwa, or the Inner Self, which was buried deep within me at birth, only needed a touch, or a contact, with the Light of God in order to germinate and grow.

Throughout the first six months, whenever I slept anywhere, anytime, I always had dreams and nightmares. Later I understood that it was a process of purification, or the throwing out of all sorts of influences and negative impressions within the subconscious. After that, for six continuous months I did not dream at all. My sleep was really peaceful and deep. Sometimes it took a long time for me to wake up. I felt as if I were surfacing from the bottom of a deep ocean. After that, I would dream from time to time, but these dreams were usually an indication of what was going to happen to me or around me.

In the meantime, I heard that Subud was having a congress in Jogjakarta. I did not attend but was told that Bapak was asking about me. During the meetings, it was decided to move the headquarters of Subud Indonesia to Jakarta, and Bapak himself also moved his office there. The congress asked Bapak to select and appoint new National Committee members for Subud Indonesia. He appointed me to be Secretary-General. This surprised me because I had only been in Subud for six months. In this new post, I would work closely with Pak Subuh. I was very enthusiastic about Subud and had been spending most of my time, day and night, with Bapak.

Another benefit I received from the latihan was that it became easier for me to study. Maybe this is an incorrect description of what really happened, because at every study session I would get a

headache and end up falling asleep in the chair. But upon awakening, a clear picture of the content of the book I was reading emerged. Besides this, I would also know the way of thinking of the Professor who was in charge of the subject matter that I studied. In this way, it became very easy for me to pass examination after examination. I was attending the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences at the University of Indonesia in Jakarta. Before I came to Subud it had been very difficult for me to study. Although I had passed the first year's examinations, it had really been a hard struggle and had taken a long time. After starting the latihan of Subud, I finished the rest of my studies in record time, and with the least amount of effort. Maybe it would be more appropriate to say that the latihan had made it easy for me to finish my studies. It was a shortcut.

The Indonesian word "latihan" in general terms means exercise. Within the Subud Brotherhood it means the session that we have to receive the contact with the Light of God. Usually we do it in a group in a latihan hall. Such a latihan is called the general latihan, although the word general is usually omitted. In a general latihan the men do it with the men and the women do it separately with women. The two sexes do not get together in the latihan. But the latihan-meaning the experience of receiving the vibration of the Light of God-can also be done privately at home. Members of Subud who have done the latihan for a long time will usually also receive a spontaneous latihan. The vibration of the Light of the Power of God can come to them without being asked at any time of the day and in any place. It might come while sitting, while walking on a street, while watching a movie or while being asleep.

After settling down in Jakarta, besides conducting general latihan with the members of the Subud Brotherhood, Pak Subuh also had all night sessions with some half-dozen members. In such sessions we sat together with Bapak. He would tell us stories about his experiences, and answer questions from the members. Usually, after midnight he would go deeper in his discourse on the spiritual world and would disclose deeper spiritual mysteries which he would not or could not do in a general talk to members. When his audience got sleepy, he would crack a fresh joke.

One one occasion, I told Bapak that I did not like working as a lawyer. I felt that practicing law was not the kind of work I should do. Bapak said: "Yes, you are right." Further, I said that the right job for me to do was teaching. "You are right," said Bapak again. I continued, saying that teaching in High Schools would not be right for me either, because I did not like teaching from a text book. Once again Bapak said: "You are right." The right job for me would be to teach in a University where I could have my own opinions and lecture from my own thesis. Again Bapak said: "Yes, you are right. You should now apply for a job as a lecturer in a university." I did indeed apply for a lecturing job and got an offer to work as a lecturer at the Academy of the Ministry of Home Affairs in Malang, East Java. I was reluctant to accept it, because I would have to live far away from Bapak. But he urged me to accept it and move to East Java, explaining that, besides working for the school, I should also work for Subud. He then appointed me as a "helper." A helper functions as an agent for the transmission of the contact of the Light of the Power of God to new members.

The Academy was a new educational institution for the training of future rulers and administrators in the provinces. I was sent to Malang three months ahead of its official opening to prepare my lectures. I worked very hard at this, sitting at my desk with piles of books, papers, pens and pencils, but I could not do a thing. As the opening date drew nearer and nearer, I became more and more worried. It was an entirely different situation from being a student, or even working in a government office because, as a lecturer, I had to stand in front of the class facing my students. How awkward it would be to stand there without being able to say anything. I tried harder, that is, I sat longer at my desk-but with the same results. I could not read my books; I could not write anything. As a result of this I lost my appetite, grew pale and lost weight. I felt that I was the unhappiest man in the world. For me to be so shamed would be worse than facing death in battle.

Feeling really helpless, I wished I could turn back the clock backward, but even that might not help. Up to the hour before my first lecture, I still had not been able to write one single sentence. Upon entering the classroom, I found that there were four lawyers sitting in the front row. They were graduates from my university who worked in town as judges and attorneys and were here to attend the first lecture of their colleague. How lucky they were, I thought, for not having chosen lecturing as their profession.

I was nervous. I was in a cold sweat. Being cornered in such a situation, there was nothing I could do except surrender to my fate. I closed my eyes and surrendered myself to God. All of a sudden my mouth opened, and I started speaking. My audience thought that I was delivering my lecture; whereas, in fact, I was just like one of them, attentively listening to the words that came

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through my lips. It was a wonderful lecture about humanity. Everybody was impressed, but I was the most impressed of all. After the lecture, my colleagues congratulated me. I smiled but thought that they should address their congratulations to Someone Else.

What a relief!! And suddenly I was hungry. I went home and ate. But even before I finished my meal, the thought came to me, "It was fine today, but what are you going to do for your next lecture?" I could not finish my meal and started worrying again. I had to spend another miserable week trying to prepare a lecture. The second lecture came out the same way. It was a continuation of the first.

I had more confidence when I walked into the classroom for the third lecture. I thought I knew the trick: just stand right there in front of the class, close my eyes and my lips would speak the words. It was as easy as putting coins into a cigarette machine. But after standing there and closing my eyes for five minutes, nothing happened. Could Almighty God's cigarette machine get jammed? I started getting worried and closed my eyes again. After another five minutes, still nothing happened. In the meantime, my students were all staring at me, ready with papers and pens in hand. It was frightening. Again, I was in a cold sweat. My God, what should I do? I closed my eyes again for another five minutes and when still nothing happened, in desperation I walked back and forth in front of the classroom. Suddenly, by accident, I touched a piece of chalk on the base of a huge blackboard. The chalk fell to the floor. I picked it up and started writing, and did not stop until the whole blackboard was filled. Then I walked to the back of the classroom and read what was written. It was an outline of the lectures I was yet to "receive" and deliver.

My first year of working as a lecturer was a constant test of faith, giving lectures without any preparation.

The second year I was more at ease, because I thought that I could at least remember what I had received before. But it turned out that for three consecutive years, I always received something new each time I stood in front of the class. Besides this, from time to time a very interesting session of questions and answers would develop between by students and I. It was interesting because the answers came spontaneously and would sometimes already have slipped past my lips before the students had finished their questions. It was hilarious, and we had a lot of fun. I was amazed that there was always a ready answer for all those questions. These sessions enriched my knowledge considerably.

In later years, I wrote a doctoral dissertation entitled *The Character and Behavior of Man*, based on my three years of lecturing experiences and extensive travel.

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Chapter 3

ENTERING THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

As Secretary-General of the National Organization, I attended to organizational matters. For the record, I would like to mention that the National Committee of Subud Indonesia in 1954 consisted of the following members: Chairman, Achmad; Vice-Chairman, Suleiman Sutawidjaja; Secretary-General, Prio Hartono; Secretary, Kartono; Treasurer, Rana; Assistant Treasurer, Icksan Achmad.

It was a good team. I really enjoyed working with them. At the time this book is being written, there are only two members of the team who are still living—Kartono and me.

When I moved to Malang, I started working as a helper. Within the Subud Spiritual Brotherhood, there are two separate functions: the members of the committee, whose function is to take care of the organizational, or worldly matters; and the helpers, who take care of the spiritual work.

Before my arrival in Malang, a group of helpers there consisted of elderly people. The eldest was Mr. Darmosewoyo, who was, at that time, over eighty years old. My arrival gave the group some fresh blood. As I only had to give two lectures a week and did not have to spend time preparing them, I had a lot of time to work for Subud.

The Javanese traditionally respect the guru, or wise man; they are considered to be a noble people. Perhaps because of this tradition, the contemporary Javanese also respect teachers. The literal translation of “guru” is “teacher.” And as a university professor, I was well accepted in society. Darmosewoyo’s educational background was limited to the elementary; his approach tended to be dogmatic and conservative. But he was a very devoted Subud member. My university training as a lawyer taught me that there are different points of view for everything. Each particular subject can be seen from different angles, hence, I tended to have a more broad minded view concerning Subud. This was well accepted by the members and when they had their regional meeting in East Java, I was elected Regional Chairperson.

As a committee member, I was supposed to give up my function as helper, because Pak Subuh did not want these two functions embodied in one person. When I submitted this matter to Bapak, he suggested that I continue my work as a helper along with the chairperson’s duties. “This is an exception,” he explained.

Since I had much free time, I made frequent visits to Subud members and their families, and during weekends I traveled within the region to visit the centers and isolated members. My enthusiasm brought joy and happiness, and every member was eager to work or do something for Subud. And quite a few intellectuals and many students joined Subud.

When we published our regional magazine, *Aneka Subud* (*Aneka* means “variety”), every member subscribed to it. Many bought additional copies to give to their relatives and friends. Members contributed articles, paper, stencil sheets, and free typing service. One member, who owned a printing shop, contributed the printed covers. Although the magazines were sold for a very low price, we could make a profit because everything was expense-free; we could make a profit because everything was expense-free; we did not even have to buy postage stamps as the copies were hand-delivered by traveling members.

I had put Subud first in my life and everything else second. This also seemed to be the attitude of most of the other members. As a result, we had a very active Subud region. Everyone eagerly looked forward to coming to the meetings, to doing the latihan, and to meeting with their brothers and sisters. Those who felt that the intervals between the twice weekly meetings were too long visited their fellow members in between times to share their experiences. Much later, I became aware that, since all the spiritual work was being done by the Power of God Himself, the job of helper was mainly just to keep the members enthusiastic and happy about going to the latihan. Once they were there to do the latihan, Almighty God would take care of them.

We enjoyed each other so much that we could not go home after the latihan; rather, we would sit together talking about the interesting experiences we had received, and cracking jokes until very late at night.

As the distance between my house and the latihan meeting place was not too far, I used to walk

there. I especially enjoyed walking home late at night. Malang is really a beautiful city, high up on a mesa. The air is cool and dry.

One night, as I was walking home from latihan, I was suddenly struck by fear. I felt the presence of somebody walking behind me, but when I looked back there was no one there. I continued to walk and still felt someone was following me. The street was quiet and deserted. I was very frightened and walked faster and faster, but no matter how fast I walked, the fellow was still on my heels. In my desperation, I ran until I was out of breath. I crept into bed as soon as I got home but I had to wake my wife when I needed to visit the bathroom. "What's the matter with you?" she asked. I responded, "Don't ask any questions; just accompany me to the bathroom and wait for me outside the door." To make sure she would not leave me alone, I did not close the door. Suddenly she screamed. I rushed to her and saw that she was covered with goose pimples. "What is this?" she asked, and I could only say, "I don't know."

This experience of being aware of the presence of someone without being able to see him or her continued for about a month, and it was driving me crazy.

It was my habit to stay up till very late at night and I frequently preferred to sleep on a divan in the front veranda, which had wide glass windows and glass door. I like to be able to see nature outside. When the night had become peaceful and quiet, I would feel the vibration of the latihan. And just to pass the time, I enjoyed listening to music on the phonograph.

The divan was placed with its head toward the porch. One morning at about three o'clock, as I was about to lie down, suddenly, through the back of my head, I saw that there was someone standing on the porch peeping through the window. When I looked more closely, I saw that it was a Japanese soldier. It appeared that one of his legs had been amputated from above the knee. I also noticed that there was no expression of life on his face; he looked like a walking statue or zombie. I was quite absorbed by this, so much so that I did not wonder how it was that I could see through the back of my head. But when I finally realized how strange it was, I began to comprehend that I was looking through the spiritual eye and that what I saw was the soul of a Japanese soldier who died during the war and had not been fortunate enough to have received the spiritual initiation during his lifetime. His inner-self was not alive. Apparently, through the spiritual eye, I could see clearly through the darkness. The whole place seemed illuminated, although all the lights had been switched off and the night was dark, and I was not afraid!

My big question was, "Is the spiritual eye really located at the back of the head?" During my past experiences, I had learned that it was of no use to push a question which I could not answer; it would not take me anywhere. And besides, when the time came, I would know the answer. And I peacefully fell asleep. Sure enough, the answer came a few days later.

At that time I was alone at home; my wife and the children had gone to Jakarta to visit her parents. We had two servants, but they slept in the servants' quarter.

About three o'clock one morning, as I was lying on the divan with my eyes closed, I saw many spirits coming down from Mount Kawi, which could be seen from the porch, stretching out like a sleeping beauty. They were coming toward my house and soon surrounded it. A couple of them entered and seated themselves on chairs. I stood up and received the latihan, which took me toward the spirits that sat on the chairs. They went out. Then I went out and moved around the house. I continued receiving the latihan until all of them went away. I went back into the house and sat down. From my inner awareness, I realized that the spiritual eye has a kind of ball round dimension and, unlike the physical eye, which can see only straight ahead, the spiritual eye can see all around. This explained how I had been able to see the soul of the Japanese soldier even though I was facing the opposite direction.

After this experience I saw many more spirits, too many to mention one by one. But once I was in a position to see them, I was no longer afraid of them. It was just like seeing ordinary people. The difference was that they did not have a physical body. They consisted of light. They existed in different forms and sizes, large and small. The largest I ever saw was as big as a huge mountain. Communication with them was not done through words but through thoughts. They could read my thoughts, and I could understand theirs.

In the meantime, my inner-self had reached the stage of the "coming of age." In the previous chapter, I have explained that, during the first six months of doing the latihan, I always had dreams and nightmares during my sleep. This was followed by a period of dreamless sleep. After that, I still dreamed from time to time, but the dream was usually an indication of what was going to happen to me or around me. The next stage found me having real spiritual experiences during my sleep, and

this was one of them:

One night during my sleep I saw a man, clothed in a doctor's uniform, standing at my bedside. He explained that he had come to circumcise me. I was surprised as this had already been done. Nevertheless, he swiftly did what he had come to do. It was painful and I saw black, impure blood dripping from the foreskin. At the same time, I also felt there were spiritual impurities leaving my body. The resulting pain was still there when I awakened in the morning. Slowly, I stood up and made my way to the bathroom, where I slowly and carefully undressed, expecting to see blood dripping all over the place. The sharp pain of an open wound was still there, but there was no blood.

This was a spiritual circumcision, the sign of coming of age.

Besides the pain, I also became very sensitive. It was quite unfortunate for me that on the day I had to attend a meeting of the faculty. In such a state, I could not stand the vibrations of the thoughts of my colleagues, and went home with a splitting headache.

Three months later, in my sleep I saw myself being engaged to be married to my wife. While experiencing this, the thought came to me, "Why should I be getting engaged to my own wife?" Apparently, this was a spiritual engagement. Then, three months later, again, I had an experience of being wedded to my wife. It was in the context of a spiritual wedding, which should last throughout the hereafter and forever.

The difference between a dream and a spiritual experience during sleep was that a spiritual experience could continue after I awakened, such as the following one:

One morning early, about half-past four, during my sleep the *jiwa* (inner-self) of Bapak came to me. He stood by my bedside and said, with great authority, "Now test: What will become of you in the future?" At that very moment, I saw myself as an ordinary person, dressed in a white short-sleeved shirt and white pants, gradually changing into a priest, wearing a robe and turban. I knew what it meant: I was to become a priest. I knew how boring the life of a priest seemed to me. Suddenly, I became very sad. I woke up, sat on the edge of my bed, and wept, "No Bapak, I do not want to become a priest; I want to become a professor, wearing beautiful suits and ties. I like music and dancing, and to live an ordinary life." Bapak was still standing there and, with the same authority, said, "It is your inner that will become a priest; your outer can still live the ordinary life. And when your inner has become like that, I will send you all over the world." I stopped crying and accepted his words.

During the school holidays in 1960, I went to Jogjakarta to carry out some research. I studied the symbolic meaning of the layout and structure of the palace of the Sultan of Jogjakarta, the symbolic meaning of the Borobudur temple, and many other temples and monuments in that area. When I returned home, I found a cable for me from Bapak asking me to move back to Jakarta to work for the International Spiritual Center of the Subud Brotherhood.

I had known this was coming, but now I felt very sad. It was difficult for me to leave my brothers and sisters with whom I had become so close, and who were sad to see me go. It was also hard to leave my professional career and Malang with its beautiful view, coolness and airiness, its fresh vegetables, fruits and flowers. But, as a soldier, I had to obey the order of my commander.

I paid a visit to Bapak in Jakarta, and he told me, "In Malang, your responsibility is limited to a few students. When you work for our International Brotherhood, your coverage will be the world."

"What about my pension, Bapak?" I asked. "If I continue to work for the government for a few more years, I will be able to retire with a pension."

"Who could give you a better guarantee, man or God?" was Bapak's reply. I nodded my head. In due course, I resigned from my job and returned to Jakarta.

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Chapter 4

THE MEANING OF SUBUD

I carried out my first Subud mission abroad, together with Mr. Wirjohudojo, in 1959. At that time, I was still working in Malang as a lecturer, but took a leave of absence without pay.

We traveled to Singapore, India, and Ceylon, and were on this trip for about three months. In India, we visited Bombay, New Delhi, and Calcutta. From Calcutta, we flew over to Colombo.

During my stay in India, I was sick most of the time. I supposed it was not an ordinary illness, but some kind of an intensive spiritual purification. While in Bombay, I was confined to bed for about two weeks. There was really nothing physically wrong with me except that I was constantly perspiring profusely. In the process, I became weak and very sensitive. Toward the end of this period, for three consecutive nights, I had a very interesting spiritual experience.

It started with the onset of a strong vibration. This vibration took my inner out of my body. Within a split second, I found myself way up there in the sky, where my inner expanded. I could see my house in Malang, and I saw my father-in-law exercising my then-youngest son, Martono, on a walk in the garden. It would have been a frightening experience had it come to me when I was still new in Subud. It was an experience of the soul leaving the body, just as in the case of death. But, thanks to the continuous act of surrender and submission in the latihan, I readily accepted it.

The following night the same thing happened. A powerful vibration, starting at the toes and swiftly moving through my body, released my inner-self out through the top of my head. This time, from "way up there," I was shown my mother and seven other women, who were my direct ancestors.

The third night, when I was taken up again, I was shown the souls of my four sons, yet to be born.

"Through the gift of Almighty God which we call the latihan, you will experience death while you are still alive and, also, the life after death. After you have experienced how life is after death, you will no longer be afraid of death. Death is just like opening a door into another room, or like travelling to another, more interesting place." said Bapak.

In Calcutta, the same kind of sickness as I had suffered in Bombay came back, and this time even worse. I not only perspired profusely, but fluids constantly drained through my ears and nostrils. In addition, I was obliged to make many trips to the bathroom. A splitting headache and miserable stomach ache added to my agony. When we departed India, I recovered as soon as the plane was airborne, and arrived in Ceylon in good shape.

I saw that the Ceylonese members were very enthusiastic and, in 1959, there were hundreds of them. What struck me was that they took everything else very lightly, but Subud very sincerely. They put us up on the second floor of a two-story building on Torrington Avenue in Colombo. When I came downstairs at eight o'clock the next morning, there were many people gathered around; men as well as women. At noon, they were still there. And at four o'clock in the afternoon, there were still many people. I began to suspect that they were like I had been when I was new in Subud, mingling and "doing" Subud all the time, neglecting or forgetting my worldly obligations. I became concerned about them, especially their families, and wondered if they had been fired from their jobs, or had lost their businesses. I had quite my job a few months after I came to Subud, and seldom even attended my classes at the University. I was not even present when my wife gave birth to our child. I could always be found hanging around Bapak's house and, until he sent me away to Malang, my family had to suffer.

I did not blame my wife at all when one day she challenged me, "All right, make your choice now; do you want Subud, or me?" If you stay with Subud, you had better give me a divorce." While I did not give her a divorce, neither did I leave Subud. Rather, I hoped that Almighty God would take care of us, and this God did. Although it had worked out all right for me, I hoped that no one else would have to suffer in the same way my family had.

When I came down again the next day and I still saw them, I greeted them, "Hello! No work?" They all had an answer. One said he had arranged to go back to work after lunch. A third one explained that he had someone else taking caring of his business, and so on. I was somewhat relieved.

Soon I got to know and like them.

As there were many Subud members, we became very busy. Besides the latihan and talks and testings and questions and answers and private interviews, our time was also well filled in with dinner appointments for those who could not get us for dinner or lunch. And, after all those official functions and appointments, late at night, I would slip away for my coffee appointments and all night sessions with those Subud guys.

We would sip our coffee while waiting for the rest of the group to arrive and, when everybody was ready, a convoy of cars fully loaded with Subud members would roll off to go to some picnic site. Sometimes it would be a beach, sometimes even a jungle, where we had all-night sessions in the open. We would return at dawn, and, for me, the official Subud business would start again at breakfast.

I found out that the most difficult task for me was eating. The members had been preparing all kinds of dishes, and they would peep through the curtains to see which dishes we ate. In order not to disappoint any of those women, I would try every single dish, and that was hard.

One might wonder how I could get on without sleep, or with very little. There was a trick. Before I came to Subud, my mind would wander aimlessly. In this state, my body, brain, and nerves, being under the constant grip of the mind, came to feel the strain intensely. To be freed from this tension-causing mental pressure, I needed sleep. But being unable to sleep at all, I became ill.

In the latihan, as a result of the working of the Light of the Power of God within me, my mind gradually loosened its hold on the body, the brain, and the nerves, all of which could then begin to relax and rest and were, in time, freed from the effects of this intense mental pressure.

With the Light of the Power of God, which is the Source of energy and life, permeating all aspects of my body, my strength and vitality returned. Then, instead of becoming tired and sleepy, I began to enjoy new energy, bliss, and happiness. It was, in effect, like being asleep—that is, putting the mind at rest—while yet being awake. Thus, this was the “trick” of being able to go for long hours without actual sleep.

How could I talk and answer questions when my mind was in a virtual “sleep-state,” or put to rest? Indeed, I might look absent-minded; and did forget many things that were not necessary to remember at the moment. This made it even easier for the mind, because it did not have to carry the burden of remembering anything. A mind, void of thought and memories, would be filled with the Light of God. Whenever it was needed, a spontaneous wisdom or inspiration would emerge and thus there was always a ready answer of a question, and also instant inspiration for a talk. A clever mind is full of thoughts and knowledge of learning; an illumined mind is void, but brilliant.

Another thing I experienced during the mission was the realization of the Great Power of God working through me for the benefit of so many Subud members, just as in the case of my lectures in Malang when the words passed involuntarily through my lips. People might think how great I was, being able to generate such powerful vibrations that could be felt by members during the initiations; also, during the latihan, talks, or the moments when we were just sitting quietly together. It was not my own vibrations, but the vibrations of the Power of God. I was just functioning as a channel for this Great Life Force to flow, and I benefitted as much from it as did the others.

My experiences in Malang in dealing with the spirits had also proved very useful during the mission, because it made me aware and alert to their tricks in influencing people’s minds, and to their attempts to obstruct our work.

They could influence members’ minds to drift away from Subud, or to hate each other and cause a fight; or make a helper proud and arrogant, and, thus, impair proper functioning as a channel for the Power of God.

By now, I hope that the readers of this book have become aware, or have realized, that, in Subud, a human person plays a passive role in his or her worship of God. The worship that one experiences in the latihan is a worship provoked by Almighty God to God. This is exactly the meaning of Subud: a worship from God to God. And from God we came, and to God we shall return; hence, the symbol of Subud is in the form of a circle where the beginning meets the end, or where both ends meet.

In the latihan, we receive an experience of being moved by the Power of God. In the beginning, the Power of God only touches us for a few seconds, but it gradually stays with us longer and longer. And as we progress, the vibration of God not only stays with us during the latihan, continues on even when we are not doing the latihan. This means that the Power of God not only moves us to worship God during the latihan, but also moves or guides us during our daily life, in our professional work, in our family life and, last but not least, in the sex act, which determines the quality of our children.

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Subud is a contraction of the three words Susila Budhi Dharma, which means, in effect, “to live according to the Will of God.” And we can only live according to the Will of God if we are moved or guided by God in our life.

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Chapter 5

THE “FISHERMAN”

In 1962 I was sent on a second mission, which extended into 1963. This time I went alone, visiting groups, centers, and isolated members in Singapore, Malaysia, Ceylon, India and Pakistan. Continuing on, I went through Aden to Kenya, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, Mozambique, and Swaziland. I then circled back to Rhodesia and Kenya and, going through Egypt, returned to Pakistan. From there, I went back to India, and then on to Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore. From Singapore, I returned home after a trip of eight month’s duration.

It was a constant test of faith from the start. In those days, Indonesians were not allowed to have any foreign currency; rather, anyone having it had to turn it in to the bank for rupiahs. There was a big difference between the black market rate and the official rate of exchange. It was next to impossible for a private citizen like me to buy foreign currencies at the official rate at the government banks, and to buy it on the black market was illegal. Because of this restriction, an airline ticket was sent to me by Subud Ceylon and I boarded the plane without a single penny to my name. By the Grace of Almighty God, however, I was able to fulfill my mission abroad. As I had left my lecturing job in 1960, I now was traveling as a full-time Subud worker.

This time I was more prepared for the mission and did not fall ill, except for a minor stomach disorder, due to the different kinds of food which I had to eat.

Upon landing in Singapore, it was a great relief to find Major Openshaw-Stayner, Chairman of Subud Singapore, waiting at the airport. Openshaw-Stayner was a major in the British Army. I felt secure seeing him standing there; the more so because I, myself, could not have hired a taxi. With the Chairperson was his wife, together with several other members.

I was invited by the Johor group to visit. Most of them were Muslims, but there were also Christian and Hindu members in the group.

During my stay in Johor, I got to know a Chinese member by the name of Liu. Liu had an interesting story to tell. He said that he had been an atheist. One day, he visited a friend at whose house were gathered several people. He sensed that they were not there for an ordinary visit. People were sitting quietly together; there was no exchange of conversation, and some even had their eyes closed.

“What is it all about?” he asked his friend. “Oh, we have just finished our latihan and are now sitting quietly to relax,” was the answer.

“What is latihan?” Liu asked.

“Well, the latihan is a worship of God,” his friend replied.

“Nonsense! I do not believe in God. There is no such thing as God. You can never prove that God exists,” Liu said disdainfully.

His friend said, “Maybe you can prove it for yourself if you join Subud and do the latihan.”

“Nonsense! I don’t believe it.”

“Well, as an atheist and a Communist, you should not mind making an experiment because I understand that they do believe in the result of an experiment. You should try to do this latihan for three months. If you do not receive any proof within three months you can quit,” his friend told him.

Liu agreed and was opened, or “initiated.” During the opening, which took place in a standing position, Liu fell down, rolled on the floor and wept.

After the latihan, his friend asked: “Well, what do you think about it, Liu?”

“That was a strange experience, but it was not proof of the existence of God.”

“Don’t worry, you still have three months to go,” reminded the friend.

The following day, Liu had a very bad automobile accident. His car was squeezed between a big truck and a bus. He showed me a photograph of the demolished vehicle. It was difficult to imagine that anybody could have escaped alive, but Liu was thrown clear of the car and escaped without a bruise.

“You still do not believe in God, Liu?” asked his friend.

“It had nothing to do with God; I was just thrown out of the car by the impact of the collision,” Liu defended. His friend did not argue.

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A few days later, Liu came back and announced that the night before someone had tried to murder him. He had approached a dark area near the corner of a building when, with a reflex movement, he turned around and saw a man raising his hand ready to stab him with a dagger. But suddenly, the hand of the would-be-assassin trembled and the dagger fell to the ground. The man spoke to Liu and said that, although he had been following him for three weeks waiting for this opportunity to kill him, he now found he could not do it. He explained that he had been commissioned by Liu's rival to kill him, for a fee. He asked to be forgiven and also asked that Liu not tell the police about it.

"Do you now believe in God, Liu?" asked his friend.

"No. I still do not believe in God," he said. But his voice was no longer convincing.

The next time he came, he had another strange story to relate. He had gone with his foreman to a forest to investigate a possible tin mine. As there was only a small footpath, they could not walk side by side. He walked in front, while his foreman followed behind. In the middle of the jungle, he happened to turn around, and, to his amazement, saw his foreman dangling in the grip of an elephant's trunk. The elephant was ready to smash him to the ground. Liu, feeling as if he were doing latihan, stared at the elephant's eyes and the animal slowly put his foreman on the ground and went away. Later, his foreman told Liu that it was the elephant that he had shot earlier and only wounded.

"Do you now believe in God, Liu?" asked his friend.

"I had better believe it! I've had these three accidents within a week, and, through each of them, I felt the latihan vibrations. I do not need another accident to believe in God," he said.

The Openshaw-Stayners drove me from Singapore across the border to visit the groups in Malaysia, and we went as far as Kota Bharu, Kelantan, the northernmost state in Malaysia.

It was really good to have the Vittachis living in Kuala Lumpur at that time. Noryambi and Varindra Vittachi were the couple who brought Subud to Ceylon. They were initiated by Bapak Muhammad Subuh in England on his first visit to the West. I stayed with them during my visit there, and the latihan were also held at their big house.

From Malaysia, I went to Ceylon. There was an experience during my stay in that country which I would like to mention here:

One day, I was taken by a few members for an outing to the Trincomali Bay. It was a beautiful natural bay. We drove up to a hill and, from there, we saw a cave through which the ocean, way down below, could be seen.

"What is this?" I asked my brothers.

"Oh, this is called the Lovers' Cave. There is a story attached to it: Once upon a time, there was a young couple who loved each other very deeply, but they were very disappointed because their parents would not agree to their being married. In their despair, they decided to commit suicide by jumping into the ocean through the cave. It was decided that the girl would jump first and the boy was to follow. The girl jumped and screamed in fear during the fall. Hearing the screams, the boy was shaken and changed his mind and returned home.

The following night, while I was lying down resting, I saw a vision of the Trincomali Bay. I also saw the soul of the girl in her act of suicide. She jumped through the cave screaming, splashed into the ocean and drowned. But soon her soul was up again on top of the hill, and she repeated the same act, has done so continuously since her death.

This, apparently, is a possible consequence of some suicides. May this serve as a reminder that this is not the way to end one's misery but, rather, turn to God and ask for God's help.

In India, I traveled quite extensively. There, I visited Calcutta, Jamshedpur, New Delhi, Bombay, Bulsar, Baroda and Madras. Bulsar was a small town in Gujurat. I stayed at the home of Manek Kotwal, a very devoted woman helper. Her friend and neighbor, Triti, told me a story of how she came to Subud. She said that Manek had been telling her about Subud, but she was not attracted to it. "Why should I, as a Hindu, follow the teaching of an unknown Muslim guru from Indonesia; whereas, there are so many gurus and maharishis in India itself?" she asked. But one night, in a dream, she met a saint dressed in a Western style suit and tie. He had no beard, no moustache, and no long hair. In her dream, the saint said, "Unless you join Subud, you will never come to the stage of self-realization."

Triti said that, in India, self-realization was considered the highest form of spiritual achievement. The following morning, she went to see Manek and told her of the dream, and asked if she had a Subud book. Manek handed her a book and, upon opening it, Triti saw a picture of Pak Subuh. "This is the saint I saw in my dream last night," she exclaimed; whereupon she decided to join Subud.

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When I was in Bulsar, a man and a woman member came from Baroda. We did a latihan, and afterward they invited me to come to Baroda. "There are two friends who are interested in being opened," they said. Manek and I decided to go and, as there were only two people to be opened, we bought round trip train tickets, planning to return home the following day. That same night, as I was lying in bed, I saw a vision of a bay. In the middle of the bay, two people were spreading a fishing net. Upon looking more closely, I saw that they were fishing in the middle of the sea without using a boat, and that they could walk on the surface of the water. Then, I realized that they were not ordinary people but, rather, they consisted of light. While I was wondering about this, I was told they were angels, fishing for souls.

The vision lasted for quite a while and I enjoyed watching it. When it disappeared, I remembered the location of Baroda on the map I had studied. From Bulsar, it was in the same direction as the bay which I had seen in the vision.

When I walked toward the house of one of the Baroda members the following afternoon, I saw that there were many people walking in the same direction. Upon arriving at the house of our brother, I was taken to a room upstairs. While refreshing myself in the bathroom, I heard the sounds of many people moving around downstairs and wondered who they were. Coming downstairs later, I found the living room jammed with people. Most were now sitting cross-legged on the floor, but some had to stand, as there was not space enough for all to sit. In a whisper, I asked our host, "Who are they?"

"I don't know," was his answer.

"You said there were only two people who wanted to be opened."

"Yes, that is true."

"Did you invite them?"

"No."

Then I knew that it was the work of the "fisherman" in my vision the night before.

To this gathering, I gave a talk about Subud, and at the close, I asked, "Is there anyone who wants to receive the contact with the Light of God?" Everyone raised their hand and soon Manek got busy opening the women, and I the men.

Later that night, Manek asked me, "What about the return tickets, Prio?" I said, "You had better cancel our reservations; we cannot leave after just having opened these people." We ended up staying longer than we had expected and opened more than forty people.

This experience reminded me of the way I came to Subud. I was no different from any of them—fish that got caught in the "fisherman's" net.

Triti owned a fancy bullock cart. She would take us for a ride to watch the sunset on the beach. Gazing at the Indian Ocean at sunset made me feel how small I was as a human being. Far away beyond the ocean, my wife and children would be waiting for my return. I missed them, but I had to go on.

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Chapter 6

THE INNER DEVELOPMENT OF MAN

During my stay in West Pakistan, Bill Smith, who worked for the B.O.A.C., hosted me in Karachi, and Prof. Halepota hosted me in Hyderabad.

In Karachi, I was invited by the Adamjee College to talk about Subud, and about a dozen of the lecturers asked me to be opened.

Dr. Halepota was the Dean of the Department of Comparative Religion at the University in Hyderabad; his wife was a lecturer at the local Girl's College. Dr. and Mrs. Halepota invited their friends, all intellectuals, to meet me at their house. Prof. Halepota also arranged for me to talk to the local Rotary Club.

Other Subud families invited me for dinner and for tea. I noticed that the women did not come to sit with me nor serve at the table. All was done by male servants or sons. The women had to stay behind the screen, and when they went out of the house, they were covered from head to toe. Their entire face was covered by a purdah, which had two little holes through which they could see.

One morning, Dr. Halepota returned early from work and said that I was invited to give a talk about the inner development of man to the post-graduate students and professors at the Girls' College.

“When?” I asked.

“This afternoon.”

I asked for guidance from the inner and was told that I should go.

When the professor and I arrived at the Girls' College, I found it surrounded by high walls, and the gate was guarded by security officers. Apparently, the women were free to remove their purdahs within the limits of these high walls and, for the first time, since the coming to Pakistan, I saw the faces of Pakistani women. The expressions were friendly but curious. We were conducted to a large hall where hundreds of women were waiting. After a short introduction by the Dean, I was given the floor, and I spoke to them about the inner development of man. The talk seemed to inspire the professors because that same afternoon, they all came to see me at Dr. Halepota's house. I never knew the response of the students as I never met them again.

After a few more questions, all the professors asked to be opened. That was a problem because we did not have any women helpers. Mrs. Halepota had been opened by Bapak's wife, Ibu, at the Karachi Airport, and that was about the only time she had had a latihan. Again, I asked for guidance from the inner and received the answer to the problem.

I asked the Halepotas to prepare two adjoining rooms for a latihan, then I asked the women to be in one of them. I explained what they should do to begin a latihan, and to stop when I knocked three times on the door. Before I left the room, a woman came to me and stated that she was having her period.

“According to Islamic rules,” she said, “a woman in menstruation is forbidden to do the prayers. I am very eager to receive the contact with the Light of God, but can I do that while I am having my period?”

I felt sorry for her, but I did not want to offend any rule, so I told her to sit quietly outside the room. Dr. Halepota and I went to do the latihan in the other room. It was a very strong latihan and, while it was in progress, I heard all sorts of noises and sounds but, to my surprise, the loudest noise came from the hallway outside the room. As I emerged after the latihan, the woman in the hallway came to me and said, “I received the contact! I received the contact!” And she was still receiving the contact when the latihan was over.

Indeed, one has to observe many rules and regulations, but God knows what God is doing. As the Power of God envelops everything, It is everywhere: on the highest and lowest levels; in the cleanest as well as the dirtiest place. Distinctions are made only by us.

I stayed with Nat Koffsky in Nairobi; with Phillip Legg in Salisbury; and with a bachelor, by the name of Sidney Legg, in Bulawayo. They were pioneers of the spread of Subud in Africa. The South African Government refused me a visa to enter their country, so it was arranged that the

meeting with the South African members be held in Swaziland, which was then still a British protectorate.

From Bulawayo, I flew to Lourenco Marques in Mozambique, where I was met by Richard Lacey, and together we went by car to Swaziland. Richard and his wife Patricia lived in Johannesburg and were the first Subud couple to bring Subud there. It was an interesting drive through the jungle on gravel roads, where thousands upon thousands of game animals stampeded ahead of our approaching vehicle. We did not, however, meet a single human being on the way, Swaziland had a population of only about ten thousand.

The South African members had arranged our meeting at a missionary school, which was vacant because of the holidays. It was located in the middle of a pineapple farm, and the place was known as the Usutu Mission. We found it a primitive place. In the director's apartment, there was only one divan; the members who came had to sleep on the floor, and some slept in their cars. We joked about how the white African Subud members had to sleep on the floor while I, who did not even qualify for a visa to enter their country due to my colored skin, was the only man who slept on a divan. And everybody was genuinely happy.

I noticed that the Power of God that prevailed during the whole three-week gathering was very strong. Members could even feel a strong vibration hitting them as they entered the gate of the farm which was quite a distance from the school. We did not mind the primitive house because it was compensated for by the surrounding natural beauty. The only drawback was that there was no flushing toilet. For me, going to the outhouse was like going to hell. As far as taking a bath was concerned, we could drive a few miles into the jungle at night after latihan to a large pool of natural hot water. None of us had thought to bring along our swim suits on this trip; however, with the women choosing one secluded area and the men another, we were able, under the cover of darkness, to have a refreshing bath, native style.

Swaziland was at that time ruled by a paramount king, who had more than forty wives. Unlike in the West, where slim was beautiful, fat was beautiful there. Hence, the beauty symbol for women was being fat; and, for men, fat wives in numbers was a status symbol.

I had an opportunity to attend a rain-making ceremony, which was organized by the royal family. I saw about one hundred and sixty women doing the ritualistic slow rhythmic dance. Their bodies were covered only by small loin cloths. The paramount king was present, and I was told that those women were his wives and daughters.

After the dance, which took a very long time, a group of men entered the corral chasing a black bull. There was a thunder of savage shouts from the pursuers, as well as from the natives who were packed around the corral. The climax of the ceremony was the killing of the bull which they did with their bare hands. When the bull was dead, the rain really came. I had a splitting headache throughout the ceremony due to the involvement of the spirits in these black magic practices.

When we drove back home, we realized that the rain had only fallen around the place of the ceremony; a few miles from it there was no rain. The success of the rain-making ceremony raised tremendously the prestige of the paramount king.

While at the Usutu Mission, a lady asked for a private interview with me. She said that before she came to Subud, she was practicing astral travel. Her guru was a woman. She told me the following story: "I almost succeeded with the practice of astral travel," she said. "One night, when my astral self had started to leave my body, a man came. He caught my astral self and put it back into my body. While doing so, he told me that I should never do this because it was dangerous. I was really shaken up and frightened. I told my guru about it, she encourage me to continue with it, saying that I had almost succeeded. When I tried it again, the same man came. He, once again, caught my astral self as it left my body and reminded me that I should not continue with this dangerous practice. I went to my guru again and told her that I wanted to quit because I was really frightened. My guru advised me that I should not give it up, especially since I had almost succeeded. She encouraged me to try once more. I did try once more, and the same thing happened again. When my astral self was about to leave my body, the same man came again and put my astral self back into my body. That was enough of a warning for me, and I decided never to try it again."

This woman continued her story, telling me that one day a friend of hers came to visit here from South Africa. When the friend was about to leave, the woman saw a book lying on the car seat which attracted her. She borrowed the book, and when she opened it, she saw a picture of the man who had three times prevented her astral travel. The name of the man was Bapak Muhammad Subuh, and the book she read was *The Path of Subud*, written by Husein Rofé. She decided to join

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Subud and went to South Africa to be opened.

After reading this chapter, the reader may ask, "What is the difference between astral travel and the experience you had when your inner self left your body?"

Astral travel is commanded by the will of the ego; whereas, my experience came unexpectedly. It happened beyond my own will. Besides, in my case, it happened after my inner-self had received the contact with the Light of God and had started to grow or develop.

Before the inner-self developed, it lay buried within me like a seed that had not grown. It contained life within it, but it was still dormant. I was not able to feel or be aware of its existence. When the inner-self started to grow, I began to feel and realize the existence of two persons within me. The first one was the ego, which followed the will of the mind; the second, the inner-self, which would only follow the Will of God.

In the beginning, when the inner-self was still weak, the will of the ego was in command. As the inner-self grew stronger, a struggle started between the ego and the inner-self; that is, between the ego, which followed the mind, and the inner-self, which followed the Will of God.

I will give a simple example of how it happened. One day my ego, following the mind, wanted to go visit my friend, Suroto, a fellow student of law. But my inner-self did not want to go. It felt, to me, like an instinct, or an intuition, that was preventing me from going. My ego was stronger and I went on, only to find that my friend was not at home. I was disappointed and returned home. Arriving there, I was told that Suroto was looking for me and had left fifteen minutes earlier.

This struggle, between following the will of the ego and the will of the inner-self, continued for a long time. Finally, the ego itself realized that it was always safer, easier, and more beneficial to follow the will of the inner-self, which is, in actual fact, following the Guidance of God.

After receiving the contact with the Light of God, the inner-self starts to grow, and it grows in stages. First of all, from a little spark of light, it grows into a bigger and bigger light. As it expands, it also pushes, or throws out, all sorts of dirt and sicknesses from the body. The body has to be prepared as a strong and healthy place for the inner-self to grow.

The inner-self continues to grow into a stage symbolic of a plant that can bear fruits and flowers. When it has reached the stage symbolic of an animal, the inner-self will begin to develop its spiritual senses; that is, the spiritual eye, the spiritual means of hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling. The stage following this is the human level wherein the inner-self develops a mind of its own, which is called the "inner consciousness."

If it is the Will of God, the inner-self of a person can still develop further into a stage usually referred to as the fifth level of spiritual development. At this stage, one's inner-self will have a light, or a halo, around the head which gives him or her the authority to be a true wali or true saint.

The ordinary eyes would not be able to see such halos, but would recognize a saint by his or her behavior and words of wisdom.

The growth of the inner-self does not correspond with age or the time of the year. It can grow fast or slow, depending upon its potential and the Grace of Almighty God. It might also happen that one's inner-self would not grow at all until one's death.

Chapter 7

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

From Swaziland, Sidney Legg and I returned to Bulawayo. He took a long hot-water bath and said, "Nice to be back in civilization!"

My schedule was tight. I had to catch a plane to Nairobi, and then from there to Cairo. But, as it was New Year's Eve, we decided to visit Victoria Falls. Driving through the night, we arrived there at dawn. The Falls are really impressive, and are said to be the highest in the world. Around Victoria Falls there is an area known as "the rain forest," so called because the impact of the waterfall produces a continuous rain. It seemed that we could almost touch the rainbow, it was hanging so low.

While there, we went on a safari boat ride. Along the river, we enjoyed seeing crocodiles and hippopotami. Our joy ride was short, however, as we had to drive home the same afternoon.

The last time I saw the African game animals was from the airplane in Nairobi. As the plane was taking off, giraffes, deer, zebras, wildebeest, and other game animals ran wild in its wake. It was a memorable sight.

In Cairo, I was met at the airport by Dr. Maharoo, who was then the Ambassador from Ceylon. We had known each other when he was the Ceylonese Ambassador to Indonesia, residing in Jakarta. Dr. Maharoo was a very devoted Subud member and a dignified, but humble, gentleman of Moorish origin. He was impressed by the story, which I told him, about our gathering in Swaziland, where the people of different colors and races could be united by the Will of God through Subud.

One evening, he invited several ambassadors in Cairo, to dinner and asked me to speak to them about Subud. Of all the ambassadors who listened to the talk, the only one who was moved to be opened was the Indonesian Ambassador, His Excellency, Sanusi Hardjadinata, who had been Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. He invited me to lunch the following day and asked to be opened. He received the contact instantly and was really moved by the experience.

In the course of my work during this particular mission, I was privileged, on occasions, to have been taken on interesting little side trips. I had such an opportunity while in Cairo, then to Calcutta, and then continued on to Thailand. In Bangkok, I stayed with the Vogels. Hasan Vogel was a native of Switzerland, whereas his wife, Istafiah, was Siamese.

Most of the members, opened in Thailand, were foreigners who happened to work there, or were visiting Thailand for a short period. After staying there for a time, they would move out of Thailand to other places, and the group in Bangkok would dwindle back down to a very few members.

From Bangkok, I flew to Saigon. Vietnam already had a big membership when I arrived. After my arrival, more and more people were opened. Toward the end of my stay, I opened the sixteenth member. You can imagine how busy I was, doing latihan several shifts every day in order that all the members could get their turn at having two latihan per week. Besides that, there were special latihan with the helpers and committee members. I also did special latihan with members who were seriously ill. On top of that, I still had to attend dinner appointments and private interviews.

I had no privacy at all. There was not even privacy on the way to the bathroom in the morning because, in order to reach it, I had to cross the living room. Even in the early morning hours, there were already many members sitting in the living room waiting to get an appointment with me, or just lounging about the house.

One evening, when I emerged from my room, I saw that the living room was crowded with people. I sensed a lot excitement, but I understood nothing of what it was about as they were speaking in Vietnamese. As I sat down, a woman was ushered in, accompanied by her husband, her children, in-laws, and other relatives. Her case was submitted to me: a matter of life and death, I was told. The doctors had discovered a stone as big as a date in her liver, and I was shown X-ray photographs. The doctors said that she had to be operated on immediately; if not, she would die within two days.

I asked, "What did the doctors say would happen if she were operated on immediately?"

"She would probably live for fifteen days!" was the answer.

That was a matter of life and death all right!

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“What do you want me to do?” I questioned.

“We want you to ask the guidance of God: ‘Should this lady be operated on, or not?’”

I was really on the hot seat. Whatever I said would have great consequences. This was too much of a responsibility and I wished for a way to avoid it, but there was no way out; everyone was staring at me. The room became very quiet; I could have heard a pin drop. Quietly, I closed my eyes and turned to God for guidance.

The guidance came: “No operation!”

I opened my eyes and said, “Well, you have asked me to seek guidance of God, and I received it. The guidance said that this woman should not be operated on.”

Suddenly, all hell broke loose. Everybody was jabbering and shouting; everybody was excited. I stood up and asked the women helpers to enter one of the two bedrooms with the sick woman, and the men helpers to join me for a latihan in an adjoining room. My instruction to the helpers was that they should not think about the sick woman while doing their latihan: “You can only receive the latihan well if you surrender and submit everything to God. Do not try to help God, because you would only interfere with God’s work. God knows what God has to do and does not need your help. In this way, you will be able to function as a good channel for the flow of the Power of God.”

As soon as the latihan started, the women helpers made a lot of noise. They screamed, shouted, cried, and stamped their feet on the floor. I, myself, felt a very strong vibration entering my body. Later on, when I knocked three times on the door as a sign to finish the latihan, the lady helpers rushed to me.

In broken English, they all said, “Yes, we strongly received ‘no operation’!”

I told them that we should do another latihan with the sick woman the day after tomorrow, and to myself I said, “If she is still alive.”

I was eager to know what would happen to this woman within the next two days, since the doctors had predicted her death within that length of time should she not have the operation.

Two days later, she showed up, much to my relief. We did a special latihan every other day with her and, two weeks later, the stone had disappeared from her liver. Three weeks later, when I went to the airport to continue my journey, I saw her amongst the crowd that came to see me off. She waved to me with tears in her eyes. I had a deep interest in her situation and always inquired about her whenever I could. By the Grace of Almighty God, she was still alive and healthy three years later when I made my enquiries.

During this mission, whenever I saw a vision of a fish, I always had to open people shortly afterwards. One weekend the members of Vietnam decided to give me a break, and a few of them took me to Dalat, a mountain resort which had a beautiful view and cool fresh air. But the night before I left, I saw fish. There was no Subud group then in Dalat, and the committee thought I could get a rest. We arrived in the evening and went to a hotel.

The next morning, we went for a stroll in a public park. One of the members met up with an acquaintance, and they began to talk. During lunch, several people came to see us in the hotel. I was told that all of them wanted to be opened. I did not want to deprive them of their luck, especially as it would mean ignoring the work of the invisible fisherman. The weekend outing resulted in the opening of a Subud center in Dalat.

The next weekend, the members took me to a beach resort called Vung Tau. A Subud member, who was a medical doctor, owned a bungalow near the beach, and he and his wife hosted us there. On a beautiful morning we happily went paddle boating in the sea. As we paddled shorewards, I noticed many people standing on the beach watching us. Now I became suspicious. Sure enough, they were people who wanted to be opened. And so, another Subud was established, this time in Vung Tau.

It was interesting to see that there were many people who were not interested in coming into Subud, even after knowing about it for many years; whereas, there were others who would instantly ask to be opened the moment they heard of it. Apparently, they were the fish who were caught by the fisherman’s net.

In spite of the fierce fighting that was going on around us, the Subud members in Vietnam devotedly did their latihan. It was a moving experience to observe this.

Finally, the time came to fly home, and I was happy. But then, departing from the plane, I was shocked when I saw my wife, she was so pale and thin. During my absence, she’d had a lot to endure. May Almighty God bless her always.

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Chapter 8

A DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

In 1962 when I was preparing to write a doctoral dissertation, I approached Professor Hazairin about being my advisor. He accepted.

To everyone else, Dr. Hazairin was the most difficult professor. I had a friend who was still unable to pass the exam in a subject taught by him, even after taking it sixteen times; and there were many other students who were having difficulties with him. But I had always been lucky, although I took four exams under him: Indonesian Customary Law, Parts I and II, and Islamic Law, Parts I and II. He returned my papers after a short question and answer session each time. The professor was very sharp and decisive, and could assess his students' abilities at a glance.

My friends thought that I was crazy to choose him as my advisor; no one else had ever done so before. However, Dr. Hazairin was the only professor who had a deep understanding of religion, so I took my chances.

After I had finished writing three chapters, I showed him my work. He went over it thoroughly and questioned almost every single word and sentence.

You may recall that, in the third chapter of this book, I mentioned that the title of my doctoral dissertation was *The Character and Behavior of Man*. I could give Dr. Hazairin a satisfactory answer when he asked about the subject matter, but when he asked me the source of my thesis, I was at a loss; I could not possibly tell him that I had picked it from the air.

He saw my hesitation, and impatiently said, "Come on; from where did you derive this thesis?"

I did not know what to say, but because I was pushed into the corner, I did say, "From reading religious books."

"Which religious books?"

"Books on mysticism."

"Which books on mysticism? You cannot fool me. I have read all available books on mysticism, but none of them say anything about this," he protested.

Now I was desperate but, with an attitude of total surrender, admitted, "My thesis is based upon my own spiritual experience."

"Now," I thought to myself, "he will dismiss me for not being scientific."

But, with this, my professor queried, "What spiritual experience?"

"Subud."

Now, with a sinking feeling, I said to myself, "Well, so much for my effort."

However, Dr. Hazairin went into deep thought, mumbling, "Subud, Subud...Subud. I think I have heard of it, but I cannot recall who mentioned it. What is Subud?"

"Subud is a spiritual experience."

"You mentioned that; but what kind of spiritual experience?"

"It is an experience of having direct contact with the Light of God," I simply stated.

He pursued it: "Is it mysticism? The mystics also claim that they have a direct contact with God."

"No. This is not mysticism. Mysticism is a practice which uses the will power of a human being to achieve its goal; whereas, Subud is exactly the opposite. One can only receive the spiritual experience if one puts aside one's mind and one's will."

"How do you do that?" Dr. Hazairin wanted to know.

"Well," I hesitated, "you will join Subud if you wish to experience it; I don't think I can find enough words to describe it."

To my surprise, the professor answered, "That is right, that is right. It is just as difficult as explaining the taste of a pear to an Indonesian hillbilly who has never eaten or seen one. The best thing to do is to give him a pear and ask him to taste it. Who is the leader of Subud?"

"Bapak Muhammad Subuh."

"Take me to him; I would like to experience it," came forth the unexpected request.

So I asked him, "When?"

"Now!"

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And that same evening I accompanied Dr. Hazairin to meet Pak Subuh. It was beyond my expectation that the professor, who was known as a clever, but eccentric, person would be broad minded and open, even for something as strange as Subud.

Pak Subuh invited me to witness the initiation of Dr. Hazairin, who instantly received the contact. After the latihan he inquired, "Who was fooling around with a torch?" No one had gone into the latihan room with a torch; he must have seen a spiritual light.

I did not go abroad between 1963 and 1967. In fact, none of us from the International Spiritual Center went out. It was a most difficult and dangerous time for us in Indonesia; the period of the Communist build-up that led to the infamous abortive Communist coup d'etat on the thirtieth of September, 1965.

In those days there were Communist intrigues and terror everywhere. The instigators wanted to eliminate high-ranking military officers, intellectuals and religious groups. Subud was included on their black list, and Bapak was summoned for questioning by the public prosecutor. Bapak sent me to represent him. This was one of the most interesting experiences I ever had.

Upon entering the prosecutor's office, I felt a strong vibration. My mind was blank but illuminated. The interesting thing was that I could see my own mind and the mind of the prosecutor.

"Sit down, sit down," said the prosecutor. But those were the only words he was able to speak. His mind was wiped out and became a total blank. The poor fellow was trying very hard to make his mind work, but without success; he could only say, "Yes, yes, yes..." I felt sorry for him and said, "Sir, I have come here to represent Subud."

"Subud...Subud. That is right. Subud...Subud..." he repeated.

"Do you want to know about Subud?" I ventured.

"That is right; that is right."

"Well, Subud is not a religion, nor is it a teaching," I began. "It is a spiritual experience as a result of a direct contact with the Light of God."

"Yes, yes," he stammered.

"Do you want to know the relationship between Subud and the other mystical groups?" I continued.

Again his response was, "That is right; that is right."

"Subud is not connected with any of those mystical groups," I explained, "because Subud is not a mysticism. Mysticism uses the willpower and concentration of the mind; whereas, the spiritual experience of Subud is received by the Grace of Almighty God as a result of our surrender and submission to God."

And now I prompted, "Do you want to know whether Subud is affiliated with a political party?"

"That is right; that is right."

"Subud is a non-political association, and is not a cover for the CIA." I mentioned this because the Communists had accused Subud of being a CIA agency.

And so it went-on and on. The prosecutor, instead of examining and cross-examining me, became in effect, a spectator.

He got his mind back when the question and answer session was over. Then he said, "Look here, the government has put me in charge of this control and supervision of all the existing mystical groups. This is to prevent any malpractice. I have heard your explanation about Subud and I like it. Would you mind giving a talk about Subud to the leaders of the mystical groups here? I have all their names and addresses. And I will be able to organize this meeting in two weeks time."

I had to consent to this and at the appointed time, I gave a talk to the leaders of various mystical groups registered with the government. It turned out to be a talk about the overall view of various stages of human involvement in religious practices, and various kinds of mystical groups which arise from them.

An interesting fact, I observed from the above experience, was that should my mind go into a blank state, then my mind of whomever I faced would also go blank. They would forget the questions which they wanted to ask, and when I faced an audience to give a talk, the minds of the people would get in tune with my mind and thus make it easier for them to accept or understand the talk.

To give a talk about Subud was another experience. It was one of the most difficult things to do, because if the mind interfered, the flow of words would stop, and I would be at a loss.

When the Communist build-up became more intense, the security officers prohibited Subud members from having meetings. To avoid any misunderstandings and suspicion, Bapak asked all the non-Indonesian members to leave the country and for those who were outside the country, not to

come in.

After a gang of masked robbers entered and robbed two of the houses in the Subud compound in Cilandak, Jakarta. Bapak instituted a nightly vigil. About half a dozen male Subud members, most of them living in the compound itself, stayed up all night, every night, with Bapak. These vigils lasted for more than a thousand nights.

The reader may remember my explanation in an earlier chapter of how I was able to survive without sleep. Staying awake together with Bapak was even much easier. During the course of this period, those who had taken part in it found that they had gained, rather than lost, weight. We had also gained a lot of spiritual strength.

Although the vigil was started as an action to safeguard our material possessions, it grew into an intensive spiritual training, and also a time for praying for the safety of the Indonesian nation.

I was fortunate to have been able to be with Bapak during those nights at the International Subud Spiritual Center. Sometimes he kept us spellbound with his stories and explanations until nine or ten o'clock the following morning. And an hour later he would be with us again.

It was also in 1962 that Professor Hazairin offered me a position as his assistant. I consulted Bapak about it. After closing his eyes for a few seconds, he said, "You did not seek this job; on the contrary, this job is seeking you. You had better accept it; it is a gift from God."

I accepted Dr. Hazairin's offer but also explained that I had already planned to go on a Subud tour to several Asian and African countries. I added that perhaps the job should be postponed until my return from the tour, whereupon he suggested, "You had better take the job now. As far as your planned tour is concerned, you can go ahead with it. After all, the University will also benefit from it because it will certainly broaden your outlook and enrich your experience. You can go as a research officer with full pay." This was quite beyond my expectation, and I was most grateful.

Reporting at the University after returning from the tour, I was assigned a lecturing position in Indonesian Customary Law and Islamic Law at an affiliate of the Faculty of Law in Jambi, Sumatra. In this position I commuted to Jambi by plane, spending one week out of each month there. Here I met again my former students from Malang who had been sent back to their province after graduation. Soon we began forming a Subud group in Jambi. Between Jakarta and Jambi, the plane had to make a stop in Palembang, so I was able to visit the Subud group there.

I had resumed my work on my dissertation and, happily, completed it in 1965. Professor Hazairin was satisfied with it, but he came up against opposition from the other professors. The only other one who would accept it was Professor Nasrun. Professor Hazairin never told me about the debates amongst the professors concerning my dissertation. I only heard it from Professor Nasrun, who told me later that the persuasiveness of Professor Hazairin was able to smooth the way for their acceptance of it. Professor Nasrun was a devoted Muslim who had had certain mystical experiences.

It was customary in our University to invite the *civitas* academics and other important guests to an open debate at the inauguration of a doctor of philosophy. Ahead of this ceremony, Professor Hazairin said to me, "In such a forum you are no longer a student, but you stand equal with all members of the Senate of Professors. You have to remember that you are on your own in this. They will try to 'shoot you down', and you will have to fight them back."

I was glad that Professor Hazairin had given me this warning, and now I was prepared for the attack. It was a fierce debate. There was one professor who was sure he could outdo me. I crushed his arguments and he was startled. His face turned red, and then blue. I learned that he died two days later of a heart attack.

There was another professor who criticized my not citing references from existing books; however, I was of the opinion that a dissertation should contain new and original theses; not a compilation of theories derived from other books.

It was a great relief when I finally won my doctorate. I was especially happy for my father; he had done whatever he could to educate his children. "I may not be able to give you material wealth, but I believe that a good education is worth more than money," he had said. I am very grateful to God to have been able to open my father some years before he died.

One night during the thousand-day vigil, those of us who were on guard saw a long reddish light in the sky. When we told Bapak about it, he said, "There will be bloodshed." It was a comet and it stayed in the sky for several nights.

Shortly afterward, on September 30, 1965, the Communist Party launched their coup d'état. They kidnapped seven leading generals of the Indonesian army. One of them, General Abdul Haris Nasution, escaped; they captured his warrant officer instead.

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Under the leadership of General Suharto, the army fought back. When they discovered an abandoned well where the bodies of the generals had been dumped, it was televised nationwide. The whole nation revolted, and a wild hunt for Communists followed. Within a fortnight, about half a million Communists were killed by the people themselves. In the villages, everyone knew everyone else; hence, the Communists were easily spotted and uprooted from these areas.

Soon law and order was restored in the country and Indonesia was freed from the grip of Communism.

Chapter 9

THE LIVING LAW OF GOD

The International Subud Spiritual Brotherhood had its first International Congress in London in 1959. The second such Congress was held in New York in 1963; the third in 1967 in Tokyo. Bapak sent me to Japan three weeks ahead of the Tokyo Congress to help with preparations. On the way out, I visited groups in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Saigon, and Hong Kong. Then I proceeded on to Tokyo. In Japan, I visited groups in Osaka and in other locations. On the way back home, I visited Hong Kong, Manila, and Singapore.

The Congress in Tokyo took place in Yomiurland, a kind of Japanese Disneyland. It was a moving experience to see the delegates standing in turn as their countries were called, one by one. While observing them, the thought came to me: "Here we are-people from different countries, different races, different religions, different political points of view and different walks of life-getting together in an International Congress and feeling that we are members of one family. We are here united by God."

The largest delegation came from the United States; one hundred and twenty-six of them. I was impressed when these delegates were called and they all stood up in unison. But I was moved, too, when only one man would stand up to represent his country.

The Congress was chaired by Varindra Vittachi, who had been the Chairperson of the previous two International Congresses and had now been elected Chairperson of this one. But, for guidance and direction, all of us would turn to Bapak as our parent.

It was mentioned in Chapter Three that there are two separate functions in Subud. There are the committee members, who take care of the business or organizational matters and the helpers' groups, who look after the spiritual work.

During the day, Congress discussed business and organizational matters. At the end of the meetings, the members reported to Bapak the results of their discussions. On occasion, they also asked for Bapak's clarification of certain matters if they did not know how to proceed, and Bapak gave clarification and guidance as needed.

The evenings were devoted to the spiritual life. Latihan were under Bapak's supervision and, after the latihan, Bapak usually gave a talk.

During the Tokyo Congress, Bapak had given ten talks, covering such subjects as: The importance of the Congress; the need for tranquility in discussion; the need for inner quiet, faith and surrender; the difference between the latihan and other spiritual movements; guidance for this world and the hereafter; evidence of God's guidance; the need to work in this world; God's and man's responsibilities; the need for money and organization in Subud; the meaning of Susila, Budhi and Dharma; experience as the teacher in Subud; Bapak's receiving of his mission in 1933; the story of the International Subud Center in Ciladak, Jakarta; the creation and the angels; help to underdeveloped countries; technical cooperation, and appeal to specialists of all kinds to help where needed; communications; and harmony among people.

Experience is the teacher in Subud. This is certainly very true of me in my Subud life. By doing the latihan, I was gradually guided to realize what is right and what is wrong. This realization started on the physical level, just as in simple learning that you will get burned when you touch fire, or feel cold when you hold a piece of ice in your hand.

After doing the latihan for some time, the living law of God went deeper into my system. To give you an example, I will tell you the following experience:

One evening I was invited to dinner by a friend. The dinner consisted of a sausage which I was told was made of beef. Eating it with great relish, I really enjoyed it. However, in the middle of the night, I was awakened with my stomach in revolt. The rest of the night I spent vomiting. I was sick for two days. Upon recovering, I paid a little visit to my friend and, out of curiosity, asked what kind of sausage he had served. Again, I was told, "It was a beef sausage." But his wife overheard it and said, "No, it was a pork sausage." And since that time, whenever I eat pork, even just a small amount, my body rejects it.

The same thing happened when I ate frogs legs; my body reacted in a strong way. From this

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experience, I learned that a body that has been filled by the Light of God has a life of its own and thus, also, a will of its own. Such a body knows what is wrong and what is right, and what is good and what is bad. The mind can no longer control and command it at will.

When we left Indonesia for the United States in 1969, my little Tomito was only nine months old. In the airplane my wife was given a small piece of meat for him. Not realizing just what she had, she fed it to the child, whose system immediately rejected it. It was found to be pork. Having been born to parents who do the latihan, he already had the advantage of the latihan in him.

Another example: I found that, if I made a move to spank any of my children while in a state of anger or annoyance, this being a wrong reason, my arm would not move.

Similarly, should I start off in a wrong direction, my legs would not move.

A further example of the restraints to which a body having the latihan is automatically subject: Several Subud brothers who had been in the habit of loose intimate relationships with women told me that, after receiving the latihan, they could no longer pursue this interest. They found they were physically unable to bring their conquests through to the expected conclusion, and so were obliged to depart in shame.

As the Light of God penetrated deeper and permeated my feeling, I became more and more sensitive. I could feel other people's sadness or sorrow; I could feel other people's happiness. Likewise, I could feel, as well, when people were speaking badly of me, and I knew who they were. I could feel whether a person was telling the truth, or lying.

When the Light of God had permeated my mind, it became so sensitive that it did not even want to have a bad intention. Further, in conversation, the mind would know what to say and what not to say, and the tongue would devotedly cooperate with it.

"The true Qur'an is not the letters printed in the book, but the living law of God which is manifested within human beings, themselves," said Bapak.

The reader may wonder, "Why should I join Subud if by so doing I will be deprived of the thing I enjoy most, which is sex?"

I have to say here that Subud is not the work of a human being, but a manifestation of the Power of God. Whether or not people join Subud is up to them.

Here I would like to explain that there are two factors involved in the sex act: the *body* and the *feeling*. Certainly there is physical enjoyment, but the *feeling within* speaks more for the satisfaction of a sexual intercourse. And, as far as the feelings are concerned, I have experienced a variety of them. Why? Because, when the feeling has become alive after being permeated by the Light of God, it is able to recognize, or distinguish between, the different kinds of *vibrations* that fill and provoke it. These vibrations are referred to as the *life forces*.

They are the life forces which are derived from material objects, and are called the *material* life forces, or the satanic life forces.

There are life forces which are derived from plants, and are called *vegetable* life forces.

There are life forces which are derived from animals, and they are called the animal life forces.

And, lastly, there are life forces which are derived from human beings. These are called the *human* life forces.

What are the characteristics of all these life forces?

For one whose feelings have not come become alive it would be difficult to recognize, or distinguish between, the vibration of the various life forces. However, he or she may be able to observe some manifestation of them in his or her ordinary outer life; for instance, the influence of a material object in the form of a car. After seeing a car on the street, someone might get attracted to it and begin making enquiries. Going to a dealer of such cars, one would obtain all sorts of information about the technical aspects of the car. He or she listens to it all. Of course, all the pep talk of the salesman would be pumped into him or her. One would touch the car, stroke the seat, grip the steering wheel, and be given a chance to try a demonstration car on the road to see for himself or herself how it performs.

During this process a huge amount of material vibration invades one's mind through one's eyes, ears, and all the other senses. This material vibration, or life force, would provoke one's desire to own his car and would influence the mind to find a way to get it.

This person might then, however, start shopping around, looking at more beautiful cars and getting information about them, also. At this point, one could well start feeling some confusion about one's preference.

All this looking may or may not lead to the actual purchase of a car, but in the meantime, the

material forces have had a chance to enter and stir him or her up.

In this modern world, there are millions of material objects, including money, that invade men and women, stir them up, confuse them, depress them and, in some cases, even motivate them toward criminal acts.

And how does the material life forces influence a person's passions? Through the beautiful form of the body of the opposite sex. For a man, for instance, the soft and gentle curves of the female body; the scent, the lips, the voice. And in case of a woman, the feel, the feel of the strength of manly muscles; the deep tones of the masculine voice.

Surprisingly, something as material as money or wealth can supply the impetus toward the sexual act. Now, if the feeling is filled with the material life forces only, such an intercourse would result in a depressed, disappointed, disgusted, and miserable feeling.

The material life force, of course, is not the only life force that fills one's feeling of a person; it is also filled by the vegetable life forces.

And how does the vegetable life force influence feelings?

When surrounded by the green of vegetation, or flora, in the country or in the jungle, one feels quieter and more peaceful. This is why people who live in large cities need to go to the country to get a physical and, what is more important, mental rest. As compared to city dwellers, farmers usually have a more peaceful and patient feeling, and a quieter mind. The vegetable life force does not enter one's feeling by surrounding him or her if also gets into one's system through the vegetables or plants he or she eats.

However, the quiet, peace and patience that are derived from the vegetable life forces are dominated by the nature or character of a plant, which is lethargic and fatalistic. A sexual act motivated by the vegetable life force would lack the elements of fantasy, romance and spirit, or fire. It would be executed as a biological need only.

The animal life force is full of lust and spirit, but can easily lead one astray, as the animal world does not have the consciousness of law and order. Dominated by the animal life force, one can easily be led to commit adultery.

Human beings are influenced by the animal life force through the meat they eat. But just through proximity to animal life, we are influenced by its vibration. Hence, our sexual desires can also be provoked upon observing animals mating.

The human life force works within the conscience. From this we derive the consciousness of law and order, and a sense of responsibility and respect toward our fellow human beings.

Being conscious of law and order goes much deeper than just having the knowledge of law and order. Those who have the knowledge of law and order may still another's property if they see a chance to do so without being caught. The single deterrent here can be fear of the sanction of the law. They do not want to be caught and punished.

But those whose feeling is dominated by the human life force would not want to take the belongings of other people, even if they could do so without being caught; it would go against their conscience.

Love-making as a result of the action of the human life force is "human," with all its love, tenderness and compassion. Both man and woman would be drawn together more and more as husband and wife, and would be willing to be together in prosperity and adversity, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death separates them. But, in fact, if both husband and wife were to receive enlightenment during their lifetime, even death would not take them apart; they would be together "forever."

Love-making motivated by the Light of God is simply heavenly. It lifts one up and away with a feeling of bliss, gratitude and happiness. Exhaustion is not felt after the act; on the contrary, one feels alive and fit. The mind becomes brighter and fired with inspiration. Indeed, I am convinced of the truth of Bapak's words when he said, "A sexual intercourse can be a bridge—to heaven—or to hell."

From the physical standpoint, I should have more greatly enjoyed marital relations when just newly married. However, I would say that our intimate life is more enjoyable now because as a result of the latihan, our feelings are more and more filled with the higher life forces instead of the forces of the lower order, which cause people to get bored with each other and can often lead to separation or divorce. But, on the contrary, in our case, the higher life forces have drawn us closer and closer together until, by the Grace of Almighty God, our two souls have become one-one in

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prosperity and in adversity, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, and even death take us apart. This explains why, in the higher Javanese language, a spouse is called “*garwa*,” which is the abbreviation of “*sigaring nyawa*,” meaning half a soul. The wife is half of the soul of the husband, if their souls have been united by God. In such a state, we do not want to hurt each other because, if the wife gets hurt, the husband will be hurt in exactly the same way.

As sexual intercourse can result in the conception of a child, one should not regard it lightly and be careless about it. Should conception take place at a time when the act is motivated by the material life force (which is also called the satanic life force), the child conceived might bear the character of the material-or satanic-life force. Such a child would have a heart of stone and an evil mind, and would be a criminal.

Having such a child really means hell for the parents. A child can cause his or her parents much trouble and worry, a lot of sorrow and a lot of shame, and the parents cannot get away from him or her because he or she is their own flesh and blood. Besides, the child will always be connected with them spiritually. Even if they were to give this child away for adoption, the spiritual connection could not be broken; they will still feel the effects of the wrong-doing of their child.

And I am sure one would not want to have a sensitive but lethargic and fatalistic child, or a child bearing the character of a beast. You want your child to be really human. It is the lack of this human life force that causes, nowadays, people to care less about their family life. They only think of one's own interest. He or she would not have the human affection for the spouse, children, parents or grandparents. The typical phenomenon of modern society is to send elderly folks to an old people's home. Nobody wants them in their house. Whereas, an old fashion family always wants their elderly parents or grandparents to be with them in the house. In Java, people have great respect and affection for them and would continue to respect and pray for them after they die.

Chapter 10

ACCIDENTS

In 1966 Bapak advised me to buy a farm. Although I had never done any farming before, Bapak said that I would be happy in this work. Soon I found myself the owner of a seventy acre farm adjoining Bapak's farm in Cipanas, West Java, which is about seventy miles southeast of Jakarta.

I was able to buy the property very cheaply, because for many years, since the Japanese occupation in 1942, no had lived on that land. The area had been neglected; deserted due to the terror of the Kartosuwirjo fanatic Muslim rebellion.

Thick vegetation had literally turned the land into a jungle, inhabited by wild boars, monkeys, birds and jungle fowl. It rose about seven hundred meters above sea level, thus producing fresh, cool air. The old road was full of big holes and stones. An old bridge, which had not been maintained, had collapsed from old age.

Indeed, I was very happy at the farm and did not want to pass a weekend without going there. I reached the town of Cipanas by bus, but was obliged to walk the remaining eight miles to the farm. But I enjoyed it. Once there, the view of the surrounding area was beautiful, taking in mountains, valleys and a clear river. In the midst of all this I felt peaceful, happy and close to God. Clearing and cultivating the land gave me a sense of great satisfaction. The road was gradually improved, new roads were built, so that later on we were able to get there by car.

In 1969 I bought a new jeep. While waiting for the jeep to be serviced, I had a chat with the manager of the car dealership. He asked, "Where do you live?" I answered that I lived at the International Subud Center in Cilandak.

"Oh, are you a Subud member?"

I replied that I was.

"That is very interesting because I have always been interested in spiritual matters. I have a *guru*, and he always guides me," he confided.

I asked him who his *guru* was.

"Oh, I am not supposed to tell you that, because he is not a man with a physical body but, whenever he is needed, he comes and gives me advice," he explained. Then, suddenly, his whole body trembled, and he went into a trance. In the trance his voice was taken over by a strong and powerful entity which said, "Don't allow this man to talk you into joining Subud. I will kill him if he does so."

I went into a state of latihan and the spirit that possessed the man went away. Like its voice, it was a strong and powerful spirit. I told the man that his guru was a spirit, but he objected, "No, he is a *dewa* (god) and he is my *guru*."

The following morning I drove to the farm in the jeep. Two other Subud members went along: Brodjolukito, an Indonesian, and Tran Cong Giac Nguyen, a Vietnamese. In the middle of the night, Bapak's inner self came. He said to me, "Prepare yourself to die. I will count to three." I surrendered to God and when Bapak counted, "One, two, three," I was ready. It was easy. I surrendered and accepted my death willingly, and without doubt or hesitation. My soul left my body, but after a while it came back. I opened my eyes and found myself alive. Apparently, it was a test of my surrender and submission.

What is the difference between the relation of the manager of the car dealership and the spirit, who claimed to be his god and *guru*, and the relationship between myself and Bapak?

First of all, the manager of the car dealership had not received enlightenment. This was obvious from the fact that this physical body could be possessed by a spirit. One who is possessed by a spirit could slip into a trance and lose control of himself, his physical body included. He would lose consciousness, and also his memory. After a trance, he would usually feel tired and be in pain.

In my case, I never lost consciousness because, as a result of the contact with the Light of God, my eternal existence, which is the inner self, was alive. The mind may sleep, but inner self will always be awake and conscious. One whose inner self has become alive can not be possessed by a spirit. When Almighty God wishes to communicate with the inner self of a person, God does not need to possess him or her. God communicates with that person through God's own Light which

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exists within the inner self of the person concerned and, rather than losing consciousness, the consciousness of this person will become clearer and brighter as a result of this communication.

When Bapak's inner self communicates with my inner self, his inner self does not possess me. We communicate as two persons in the spiritual world, and we are fully aware of ourselves and the situation around us.

The following day we drove home and took a longer route in order to be able to stop and have lunch at our favorite restaurant, which was located in the middle of rice fields near Sukabumi. This restaurant had a couple of fish ponds stocked with gurames and carp, and we could select our own fish and have it prepared to our liking.

After lunch, we lingered to rest and to enjoy the fresh, cool mountain air while slowly sipping our young-coconut drink. Late in the afternoon, we resumed our leisurely drive home. It was a beautiful sunny day, but now the sun was no longer hot. Suddenly I saw a huge and powerful spirit lifting the back bumper of the jeep and, for no apparent physical reason, the jeep turned over three times. The road was level and straight, there was no rain, no wind, and I was driving only about thirty miles an hour.

As the jeep was turning over, I surrendered and submitted my self to God. Like the night before, I willingly, without doubt or hesitation, accepted my death. Therefore, I was very calm. The interesting thing was the *time element*. It should have taken only a very short time for the jeep to roll over three times but, at that moment, I saw it as a slow-motion movie film of the accident. It seemed to me to last for a very long time, and I was calm and conscious throughout. Then quite suddenly, I saw a spiritual being attacking the spirit that had lifted the jeep. He appeared instantly, faster than the speed of lightning. He struck the spirit and prevented the jeep from rolling over the cliff and falling into Lido Lake. The destructive spirit was thrown far away by the blow and was badly frightened.

When the jeep finally stopped, I was thrown clear of it. While I had willingly accepted my death, I was grateful to God when he spared my life. I started to sit down but, in so doing, found that I could not move my left arm.

"Oh, oh, I've lost my left arm," I thought, "but surrendering and submitting one arm is so much easier than surrendering my life," was my instant thought. I ventured a look at the arm and saw that there was no blood, but it appeared the bone between elbow and shoulder was broken. I decided it would surely heal. "I did not even have to surrender my arm after all," I reflected.

Now I remembered my brand new jeep. "But the jeep is nothing compared to an arm. If I could surrender my arm, why not a brand new jeep?" At that moment, I was aware of the sound of the engine, still running! I slowly brought myself to my feet and switched off the ignition. As I did so, Brodjo and Nguyen were struggling to get out of the vehicle. Soon they were standing beside it and taking stock of their condition, which revealed only some small bruises.

Seeing that all were out of danger, I then sized up the condition of my jeep. "Well, I do not have to surrender my jeep, either; with a new body it can be back on the road."

As the three of us sat by the side of the road, a car came along and stopped. The driver kindly offered us a ride home. I asked if, instead, he could drive me to the hospital near my home in Cilandak. Both Brodjo and Nguyen requested to go directly home.

I had recognized the spirit which tried to kill me; it was the same one which possessed the manager of the car dealership. The spiritual being which had come to the rescue was Bapak's inner self.

Another interesting thing that I experienced in connection with the accident: it may sound strange and I myself did not know why, but while returning to Jakarta from the place of the accident, with one arm broken, I felt as if I were coming back from a victorious battle. This struck me as rather odd as I had fought no battle. Yet the feeling persisted. Having faced death through these experiences had also made me feel much stronger; gave me more courage, and a greater sense of self-confidence.

My wife and children came to see me in the hospital that same evening. Bapak visited me the following day. He said that, at the moment the accident occurred, he had a bad headache.

This brought to memory a near-accident in which I was involved. It was in the early 1960's. We were driving home from a gold mine in Cikotok, West Java. It was a government gold mine, and Bapak's son, Harjono, was working there. Bapak decided to visit him one weekend, and I went along. The accident happened on the old Jakarta-Bogor road on our return trip home. Although it was a main highway, at that time it was still narrow, resembling an American country road. Bapak

was in the back seat with his daughter, Hardijati. The driver was a Subud member, whose name was Sudibjo. I sat next to him, and another Subud member, Sjafrudin, sat next to me.

Sudibjo was driving recklessly that day and was attempting to overtake a fast-moving truck, but the driver would not give way to him. After several unsuccessful attempts to pass, Sudibjo became impatient. He speeded up but the truck moved out to block his way and we were forced onto the shoulder of the road. Suddenly, a telephone pole loomed up in front of us. Here the car went out of control. The thought flooded my mind, "Will this be the end of Bapak's life and mission?" But, to my amazement, the car veered toward the truck and turned completely around, coming to rest facing in the opposite direction.

At the moment the car spun around, missing both the fast moving truck and the telephone pole, again it all felt to me like a slow-motion movie. As in the more recent accident, I went through it in a calm and conscious state.

The space between the truck and the pole was too narrow for the car to pass through, yet the long Chevrolet Impala made a neat U-turn. It was as if someone had lifted it like a toy.

Bapak was smiling, but remarked that he felt as if a heavy weight were pressing down on him. After resting for a few minutes, we resumed our journey. Soon a heavy rain poured down on us and the afternoon was covered by darkness. It was a strange atmosphere; it was as if nature wanted to show her sympathy and pay homage to the man of God who had just narrowly escaped a bad accident. I felt so close to God and was grateful for this experience.

The strange "reaction" of nature brings to mind an earlier such happening:

A few weeks before the abortive Communist *coup d'état*, Bapak was not feeling well. He went to rest in a mountain resort called Sirnagalih, in West Java. By the order of the Prime Minister, Dr. Subandrio, the National Committee of Subud Indonesia was summoned by the Attorney General for Investigation. The Chairman of Subud Indonesia, His Excellency Dr. Achmad Subardjo, who was the first Foreign Minister of the Republic of Indonesia, and his Vice-Chairman, a businessman and a close friend of mine, Sudonohardjo, went to handle this matter. I was sent by Bapak to assist him.

The Attorney General, at the height of his power, exhibited neither respect nor consideration for Dr. Subardjo, who had been one of the founders of the Republic of Indonesia. The official screamed and shouted, and issued an order prohibiting Subud from having any further meetings. Bapak sent Sjafrudin, his son-in-law, to town to fetch me for a first-hand report of the meeting. Arriving at the bungalow where Bapak was staying, I found Sudonohardjo and Dr. Musa Surjanatadjumena, the former Indonesian Ambassador to Ceylon, already there.

I gave Bapak an account of the meeting. Gravely he said, "Bapak is not feeling well; not for any ordinary physical reason, but because the atmosphere in the country has become very hot and explosive."

Dr. Djumena said, "Bapak, I still clearly remember when we were in Ceylon. At that time the Prime Minister (Dr. Bandaranaike) asked you to leave the country within forty-eight hours, as he feared Subud would endanger Buddhism as the state religion. Dr. Bandaranaike was shot to death by a Buddhist monk shortly thereafter. I am really concerned about the fate of Dr. Subandrio now. What will happen to him?"

"Bapak, in person, is not angry with him. But Bapak can not guarantee that Bapak's inner self will accept it. However, Bapak prays for them all," was the answer.

At that very moment a thunderbolt struck and soon a heavy rain was pouring from the sky. The afternoon was covered with darkness. I felt that nature itself was in sympathy with Bapak.

Shortly after this the Communists were defeated and Dr. Subandrio and the Attorney General were sentenced to death.

After buying the farm, I became more and more enthusiastic about the farming enterprise—planting rice, corn, onions, garlic, chili peppers, peanuts, and tobacco. Fifteen people were working for me. A rotavator tractor was acquired and a small cultivator ordered, to be shipped by air from Australia. I added to my operation by leasing an additional seventy acres of farmland from the government.

Upon Bapak's return home from his world tour in 1969, I was unable to be on hand at the airport to greet him as the farm had me very busy. Soon, however, a message came saying that Bapak wanted to see me at once. I went home, to Cilandak and in the evening Bapak came to my house.

"I have promised the Subud members in America that I will send you there. You must get ready to go as soon as you can!" he told me.

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“When, Bapak?” I asked.

“You had better go within a week!”

I was speechless.

Then Bapak said, “This time you are not just going to travel; I want you to stay there for several years as my first ambassador. Take your wife and your two youngest children.”

I found my voice, “What about my farming enterprise, Bapak?”

To this Bapak replied, “You can appoint a manager to take care of it.”

Indeed, we were ready to go within a week; however, we had to wait for the tickets to come from the United States.

When I inquired at the PAN AM office in Jakarta concerning our tickets, the manager said that no message had arrived about them, but he added, “Let me check the telex.” As we approached the machine, at that very moment our ticket information was coming through.

On the 14th of October, 1969, I landed in Honolulu, Hawaii, with my wife, Rukmiwati, our little daughter, Hartiutami, age two and a half, and our nine-month-old son, Sutomo, nicknamed Tomito.

Chapter 11

TRUE CULTURE

A group of Subud members greeted us at the Honolulu airport. We were taken to the Snedeker's apartment, where we had refreshments. Later on, we went to the latihan hall, where, after latihan, I gave a talk.

Our two little children sensed that they were in strange surroundings and, although the group had provided a most suitable baby sitter—a Malaysian girl, who was a probationer in Subud—Harti and Tomito cried constantly until they fell asleep. Upon returning home, we were touched to see little Hartiutami, still with tears on her eyelashes, embracing her baby brother in her sleep. She was very protective of her little brother.

Michele and Ludwig von Royk-Lewinski traveled from their home on the big island of Hawaii—on the Eden-Roc estate, near Mountain View—to Honolulu to greet us. They insisted on that we accompany them home for a visit. On the way we passed a farm, where little Tomito spotted a horse and his immediate cries of “*kuda, kuda*” were heard most insistently throughout the automobile. We stopped and tarried there for more than half an hour while the child watched with fascination the “*kuda*” (horse). He cried bitterly when we resumed our journey. Later on he really became a horse lover, and, at the age of three, joined the *charos* in Mexico on horseback, chasing steers and shouting noisily. In later years, even the wildest thoroughbred would willingly obey his command.

Hartiutami was born during the period of the thousand day vigil and is our ninth child. “Harti” means the *daughter of Hartono*, and “*utami*” means *excellent*. She is a beautiful girl.

Sutomo was born after we finished the thousand-day vigil, and he is our tenth, and youngest child. “*Su*” means *much* and “*utomo*” also means *excellent*. All of our children were given their names by Bapak.

When my wife entered the hospital for the birth of Tomito, the doctors in charge advised me that they would not be responsible for the delivery of the baby, unless I could provide them with at least two litres of blood for her, because she was weak and was delivering her tenth child. There were Subud members from elsewhere visiting Cilandak and when they heard about it, they all went to the hospital and asked that their blood be tested in order that they might donate what they could to Rukmiwati. All of them together gave more than two litres of blood. Throughout the delivery, however, none was needed for her. We were very grateful to God for God's protection. Sutomo was born with a small body, but I could feel that his inner self was larger than mine.

Before I left Indonesia for the United States, the late Ibu Subuh said to me, “I heard that Bapak is sending you to America. Oh, it was very heavy there! I felt as if there were hundreds of hammers hitting my head. I pray that Almighty God will guide and protect you.”

As the plane that took us from Hawaii to mainland U.S.A. circled over Los Angeles, I was impressed by the magnitude of the city. And, yes, I felt a splitting headache. Ibu was right; it was indeed as if hundreds of hammers were hitting my head. At the International Spiritual Center in Cilandak, we were used to living in a light spiritual atmosphere, but out in the material world we were hit by a different kind of vibration. We just had to live with it and get used to it. It is easier if we isolate ourselves in a remote place in a jungle or on the top of a mountain to avoid temptation. But we have to live in this world.

The art of living is not in avoiding temptations, but in mastering them, and we can only master them if we are filled with the Light of God. It is the Light of God that can protect us from temptation and help us to live in the middle of it without being influenced or affected by it. This is called in the Javanese language, *Topo ing rame*, meaning, following an ascetic life in the midst of the turmoil of the world. This is so much more difficult to do but, at the same time, is also so much more rewarding than following an ascetic life in solitude. We are not supposed to run away from this world; rather, it is our obligation to contribute whatever we can for the betterment of it.

The day following our arrival in Los Angeles, I went to the Subud U.S.A. headquarters and began setting up my office there. I found that the organization was in the red, and that even my ticket to this country was bought on credit. I also saw the lack of enthusiasm in the members. At night Bapak's inner self came indicating I should travel. So right away I started out. Two Subud

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members from Vancouver, Canada, were driving home from Los Angeles and invited me to come along. They sent word ahead to Vancouver and Seattle, and soon arrangements were made for a meeting in Seattle for members in the surrounding area to meet with me there. Driving with these two Vancouver members to the North-West was the start of my travels within the United States. I subsequently visited groups, as well as isolated members, throughout the country. Enthusiasm began to build up, and members were happy to participate in group activities.

In order to make the organizational structure work more effectively, I promoted the formation of regional organizations. Thereupon, Subud U.S.A. became subdivided into seven regions; namely, Subud Pacific Islands, Subud California, Subud Pacific Northwest, Subud Rocky Mountain, Subud South, Subud Midwest, and Subud East Coast. When later on Bapak's message came instructing me to see to the formation of regional organizations, the regions had already been formed.

One day Bapak said to me, "What you hear from the outer Bapak by way of explanations is very limited. Later, the time will come when you will meet Bapak in the spiritual world. There it will be the inner self of Bapak speaking to your inner self, and everything will be much clearer to you."

Indeed, although the physical Bapak may be far away, his inner self can be anywhere, and will come and guide me whenever it's necessary.

There was an instance in which Bapak's inner self told me was the opposite of what the outer Bapak said. I brought the subject up and asked Bapak, when what your inner self said is different from what your outer told me, which one should I follow?" He answered: "Of course you should follow the inner Bapak. He is the absolute truth, whereas the outer Bapak is an ordinary person."

Although Subud U.S.A. rented a house for us in Los Angeles, because of our constant travel we were seldom at home. A few months after our arrival in America, it so happened that some of our members in the East Coast Region bought the former children's camp, *Skymont*, near Front Royal, Virginia and, even as it was still being readied for occupancy, we moved there. More and more members felt drawn to Skymont, and so they moved there with their families. Soon the place developed into a Subud community.

Bapak once said, "In the past, religious communities became the source of true culture, which is a gift in the form of an inspiration from God. This inspiration was given to them as a result of their sincere religious life. Due to their devotion, some who lived in these communities received enlightenment.

All arts of self-defense originally came from religious temples or monasteries. After receiving enlightenment, one will receive spontaneous movements. Initially, such movement is coarse and irregular, or unsystematic. Gradually, it will reveal itself as a self-defense movement. An art of self-defense received and developed in this way will always conform to and suit the physical condition of the receiver. In other words, such a self-defense art is tailor-made for the receiver. As the receiver of enlightenment progresses spiritually, the movement that he receives will become more and more graceful and fine, and will develop into the arts of dancing, singing, and making music."

By having a Subud community like Skymont, we hoped to be able to receive and develop true culture.

What is *true culture*?

True culture is not a skill of knowledge achieved through education, learning, and training, but an art which blossoms from within oneself.

How is it possible to know or do something without learning it from someone else? One can always know and do something which is in one's nature, or which is one's own inner talent, just the way a baby sucks the milk from the mother's breast, or a tiger develops the skill, or art, of hunting its prey without learning it from another animal. Or consider how a bird builds its own nest by just following its instinct. And a plant can bear its flowers and fruits by itself, according to its own nature.

The inner talent of human beings should also be able to bloom and develop by itself. But because we human beings have a desire and a mind, such mind and desire often lead us in the wrong direction. When we are yet a baby, we follow our instinct. But as we grow, all sorts of life forces begin to invade us and this goes on more and more through all the things we see, hear, smell, feel and taste. All these life forces, which I have mentioned earlier as the material, vegetable, animal, and human life forces, succeed in burying our own instinct and inner self deeper and deeper within us, so much so that most of us have lost contact with our instinct and inner self and can no longer feel the existence of these attributes within ourselves.

This is the reason why we must return to the state of a baby in order to be able to get in touch

with God. As an infant, our lives were not controlled by the life forces from outside, but guided by God through our instinct. As human beings, we need to receive the contact with the Light of God because only God can help us to return to the state of an innocent, or clean, baby.

How do you receive the contact with the Light of God? Only by the Grace of Almighty God. From time to time, Almighty God has given people of His choice contact with His Light. Although there is no guarantee that one will receive it, every religion has been given a guidance or indication which could lead to the contact. In Islam, for instance, it is indicated that a Muslim should fulfill five religious obligations, which are:

1. the *Syhadah*, or the confession, that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah
2. the *Solat*, or five-times-daily prayers
3. the fasting during the month of *Ramadhan*
4. the *Zakat-fitrah*, or giving of alms to the poor
5. the *Hajj*, or the pilgrimage to Mecca

By sincerely and devotedly fulfilling these five religious obligations, it is hoped that a person will not indulge himself or herself too far in the pleasures and passions of worldly living.

While the Ramadhan fasting is the most difficult thing to do for most people, yet by fasting, from dawn sunset, it is hoped that the desire and passion of a person will weaken.

After fasting for twenty days the inner state of the person who fasts can be in a favorable condition to receive the contact with the Light of God. Receiving this contact during the month of Ramadhan is called receiving the *Lailatul Qadar*. It is advised that one should stay up at night after having fasted for twenty days with the hope that, during the last ten days of the fasting, one might receive the *Lailatul Qadar*, or the contact with the Light of God.

Besides this, a Muslim is also advised not to isolate himself. He is advised to do communal prayers in a Mosque, together with other people, and also to go for a pilgrimage to Mecca with the hope that he might meet with somebody who has received enlightenment, or the contact with the Light of God, who might be instrumental for his or her own enlightenment. Due to the heavier and heavier pressures of modern living, however, it has become more and more difficult for one to be in a state to receive the *Lailatul Qadar*. People are already heavily loaded with the pressure of the lower forces before they are even born, because most were conceived as a result of a sexual intercourse motivated by the lower forces. Hence, in order to save humanity from total destruction, Almighty God sent Subud into the world through the person of His choice: Bapak Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo.

Subud seems to be the answer for the challenge of the modern world. Pak Subuh represents a very strong powerhouse for the Light of God. Through him, a dying man like me could recover and, in fact, be more alive than ever before. Through him, a physical wreck, such as I was, could be made into a seaworthy ship that could cruise the seven seas of the world. To me, this is the living proof of the magnitude of Pak Subuh's mission.

Through Subud, Almighty God does not send *religious teaching* to humankind, because those have been made available to him through God's earlier messages. But through Subud, Almighty God has sent *God's Own Light* into the world to guide men and women out of the darkness; a Light that can shake off the lower life forces from one's inner self; a Light that gives the inner self of a person the touch of life which will enable it to grow from an embryo to the stage of a full-grown person. And when the inner self of a person has become fully grown, the inner talent of that person will begin to develop. It is the developed inner talent that produces true culture; a culture which is alive because it is inspired and filled with the Light of God.

Speaking for myself, I have never been trained and educated as a priest, but I have been guided by God to work and act as a priest, showing people the way to God. Yet before I came to Subud, I could not make public speeches; it was difficult for me just to say a few words to a student conference, even with the help of written notes. Now, however, by the Will of God, I can speak for hours in front of an audience without any notes. No one taught me the secrets of how to do this. And

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through the inner talent, I was able to write a doctoral dissertation without going to other books for my material. All this came from within as a result of the inspiration and guidance from God.

It requires only a few pages for me to describe the development of true culture, but in reality it can take a long time, and one cannot even be sure that one's inner self will reach such maturity during one's lifetime to bear the fruits of true culture.

In Skymont, all of us made an attempt to live in a Subud community with the hope that we would be able to help each other in our spiritual progress. At least, in such a community, one could not escape from doing the regular latihan twice a week. And by being together, the growth of our *jiwa*, or inner self, was stimulated. The residents of the community were inspired to play music, sing, and write songs, choreograph and perform dances, sew, work at handicrafts; act, engage in gardening and farming, start business enterprises, and so on. We all felt that we had gained a lot of strength, and when the time came for us to part, all of us went in the directions and to the places destined for us to be.

Skymont was not our ultimate goal but, rather, a phase in our spiritual development. And some of the fruits of our efforts were displayed at the International Subud Congress in Cilandak, Jakarta in 1971, when the Skymonters put on a show with the band, with songs and dances, and also with story theater and pantomime.

Chapter 12

SPIRITUAL CHEMISTRY

After working within the borders of the United States for about two years, I started traveling farther afield. I visited groups in Canada, and later on I was to travel south of the U.S. border to a number of countries: Mexico, Central America, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru; then Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Surinam, Venezuela.

Prior to traveling through Canada, I had already met some of the Canadian members who had come to visit in Seattle, Chicago, Skymont, and other places in America. But in 1971, I went across the border to their homeland and visited groups in Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, and wherever else there were centers or small groups.

Life there was noticeably more peaceful than in the United States. Generally speaking, people are calmer, quieter, and more peaceful in Canada; the vegetable life force is very strong there. The difference in the vibrations could be felt immediately after crossing the border between the two countries.

Although the area of Canada is somewhat larger than that of the United States, it is less populated. The influence of the natural surroundings are more dominant there than are the influence of the material life forces. On the other hand, these latter forces are more dominant in the large cities of the U.S., such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York.

The human body can be compared to a container. The life forces, which are the souls of the four categories of God's creation here on earth (namely, the material, vegetable, animal, and human life forces) can come and enter the body.

Before I came to Subud my head was fully loaded with the material life forces. After receiving the contact with the Light of God, this Light gradually started permeating my head. As a result, my head became alive. During this process, the contrast became quite noticeable; I felt that the material life force had been a heavy burden in my head. As so much of the material life force had been pressed into it through the years, it had become crystallized there. Seen from the spiritual point of view, a mountain of rock had been resting on my shoulders all those years and it was really very heavy to have such a head to carry around. This mountain of rock had to be cleared out, and only the Light of the Power of God could do this. In the beginning, little pieces of stone were sloughed off; it was as though there were someone in there cutting away the stones with a chisel. Whenever it happened during the latihan, I would get a headache. As time went on, the work of knocking down the mountain of rock began to speed up. This chiseling occurred not only during the latihan, but at almost any time of the day. Sometimes it seemed that a sort of dynamite was being used to blast those rocks, and I would feel that something within my head was exploding. Shortly afterwards I would have a splitting headache.

In my case, the most difficult thing of all was ridding myself of these material life forces that had manifested themselves in this way. It took many years and was very painful. As a result of this process of purification, I not only suffered from those terrible headaches, but the temperature of my head, and around my head only, would rise for no apparent reason.

The material life forces were the cause of my sleeplessness, nervousness, tuberculosis, and times of being almost totally paralyzed.

By the time I moved to Malang, most the "rock" within my head had been removed. Malang was still a quiet place when we lived there. Our house was located in a rice field, and living in the midst of such vegetation, I felt much quieter and much more peaceful even though I was aware that the purification of the material life forces within me was still going on.

One night Bapak's inner self came; he said, "Now test: How do the material life forces affect your brain and nervous system?" Immediately, I saw prickly and hairy flesh growing from my brain and nervous system. This made me remember what he said about communication in the spiritual world: "When my inner self speaks to your inner self, everything will be much clearer." Indeed, when his inner self told me to test, not only did I hear and understand what he said, but I also could see the condition of my own brain and nervous system.

The following morning, I developed a very irritating itch on my buttocks. This disturbing itch got worse and worse and in addition to this, boils also began developing in the same area. There was

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a time when I had nine boils at the same time. One boil, by itself, was agonizingly painful, but nine boils at once was really a merciless torture. I could neither sit nor lie down for three days. When I complained about it to Bapak, he said, "You are lucky that all those material forces can get out of your system in this way. If they had stayed in your head you would have gotten a cancer. And if they had landed in your chest, it would have caused tuberculosis or asthma. You should just accept it with patience." And "patience" meant that I had to patiently wait for nine years until all the itching and boils finally subsided. Each time, a "pebble" from the material life forces was chipped from inside my head, it would then dissolve into a larger volume of the substance of these material life forces, and this traveled down from inside my head, through my chest, and manifested on my bottom in the form of itching and boils.

The disappearance of the material life forces from my head automatically gave way to a place for the vegetable life forces to come in. During this transition, I developed a hobby of raising flowers. Roses of different varieties began thriving in the garden, growing so big and beautiful that people thought they were artificial. Along with this, I also grew indoor ornamental plants, and all of them were healthy and beautiful. Taking care of, and admiring, them was like being in heaven at that time. I would become so absorbed in working with them that I would sometimes forget to eat.

It was such a relief to be rid of those agonizing headaches and of the heavy burden of carrying a big "rock" around in my head and, also, to be free at last of the itching and the boils. My head felt much lighter, and I felt so much more peaceful and quiet. Already, this was a really heavenly feeling as compared with my state of suffering before. This contrast in my feelings was to be experienced again years later upon crossing the border from the United States into Canadian territory.

With regard to the world of plants, there are many varieties and each plant has its own character and influences people in its own way.

The *material life forces* fill the mind of man and woman with thoughts, imaginations, and ideas. The *vegetable life forces* fill the mind of man and woman with thoughts, imaginations, and ideas. The vegetable life forces work more in the human feeling, causing him or her to feel peaceful, calm, and quiet. It is indeed difficult for an ordinary person to believe or understand that vegetables can form their character and behavior, but the explanation is that one has already been formed by nature before being born. While still in the mother's womb, the essence of plants has already been used in one's making, through the food eaten by the mother.

Whereas the meat of the plants was used to form the body of a child, the *soul* of the plants, which we call the vegetable life forces, contributed to the making of the child's character and behavior. As the child's mind would only develop later, how could it possibly know or understand what was going on during the time it was in the mother's womb?

The only way to know or to be aware of a child's origins is through close contact with the eternal, which is the Light of God. For the Light of God, there is no past, present or future. And if we are in close contact with God, God might show us the secret of God's creation, which are embodied in science, and which is nothing more than the knowledge of the law of nature, and the nature of things.

For the little child, science is employed in learning, as stated earlier, that fire is hot and will burn a finger if one should touch it. A child will learn that ice, when held in one's hand, is cold. Later, the child will know that, by heating vegetables and meat on the fire, they will taste better; by heating water on the fire, it can produce steam; by compressing steam in a container, an energy strong enough to move an engine, can be produced. This knowledge of the nature of things and the scientific structure which governs them can go on endlessly.

In humanity's most recent discovery of the secrets of nature, one has come to know that material objects are not inanimate; they are alive, also, like the other creations of God. It has been discovered that within every material object there are millions of molecules, and within the molecules there are the atoms, which contain protons, neutrons, and electrons, and that they are always in motion; that they are alive. What they have not discovered is that, besides the molecules, atoms, protons, neutrons and electrons, the material object also has a soul, or life force. This has been missed because these souls, or life forces, cannot be seen by an ordinary eye. But still they exist. They are a reality in nature which human beings cannot ignore, and they do influence people in their life more than anything else.

The knowledge of material objects is called physics. The knowledge of the world of plants is called zoology. And knowledge of man's body is called anatomy. But one recognizes that a human being is more than just the human body; a person has a mind and a desire and a soul. Hence, the knowledge of human beings could not be limited to anatomy alone. Because one lives in an orderly

society with one's fellow human beings, in order to know and understand others, one has to study law, social science and culture, or humanity. In these areas of study, university students receive the "Master of Arts" degree. Then one who goes further to complete studies that give a deeper understanding of science, receives a degree of "Doctor of Philosophy." They now need only to go a step further to "receive the enlightenment from God," and from there on, to be able to know and understand the secrets of souls, or life forces. Once you have come to know and understand things of this nature, you would then become a "Master in Spiritual Chemistry," knowing something of the life forces which motivate your thought. You would know about the life forces which fill your feelings, and the life forces which arouse your sexual desires. You would come to a state of self-realization which is, in fact, being able to be aware of your own inner self. And this is very important because only then would you be able to live a life of your own. At this point, you will no longer become the slave of the desires of the lower forces, which could lead you astray and drive you further and further away from God; lower forces that would divest you of your human qualities, causing your degeneration into the state of a beast, a passive plant, or even worse, a "criminal," which is a human body with an evil mind and a heart of stone.

When I was in Malang, one night Bapak's inner self came. In this experience, Bapak's inner self wanted to show me how Mr. X, a Subud helper, would die, meaning Bapak wanted to show me the process of how the soul of a man leaves the body when he eventually dies. As usual in the spiritual world explanations do not only come in words, but I could actually see what was said, or explained. And at that moment, I saw how the soul of the person concerned left his body. He was a Subud member who had done the latihan for many years. He accepted his death readily. His inner self had reached the state of the vegetable level—or, the second level of the inner development—and the color of his soul was light green. Although at that time this person was actually still living, that test indicated how his inner self would be when he dies; or, at the moment of his death.

Although that is not the ultimate level for the inner development of a person, still it is already so much better than it is for most people. He had at least received the Grace of Almighty God in the form of enlightenment.

After receiving enlightenment, even at the first level of the inner development is already a great advantage, because the inner self of the person concerned has become alive and will develop from a small spark of light into a bigger light. Later on, this person will be able to be aware of the existence of his or her inner self. In other words, one will have reached the point of self-realization; the realization that, besides the ego, there is another "person" within. This "person" can redirect the self should it start to go in a wrong direction, or start to do something wrong. This action, in the earlier stages, is felt as an instinct. In this modern world where the material life forces are very strong, only very few people can revive this inner perception and, in people nowadays, it no longer functions to a very great degree, yet this is a very important means of communication with God. Through our instinct or intuition, we can receive guidance from God.

As the light, which at first is such a tiny light, begins to expand, it will continue to develop until it envelops the physical body in which it dwells. In the Javanese philosophy, such a situation or state is called "*kodok hangumuri leng*," literally meaning "a frog covering its hole." A thinking mind would say that this is impossible; how can a frog cover the hole in which it lives? Symbolically, this refers to a state of the inner development of a person whose soul has extended beyond the limits of the body. A person whose soul has developed to this degree is able to feel or sense the mind and feeling of other people. This soul or inner self not only give one indications through the instinct or intuition, but also is able to function as a spiritual radar to perceive situations around one.

This reminds me of a talk that I gave to the chiefs of the Hopi Indians on their reservation near Hoteville, Arizona, in the winter of 1971. I spoke through an interpreter, who was a son of one of the chiefs. I said, "My brothers, you should be proud to have wise men as your ancestors." In unison they banged their fists three times on the table as a sign of agreement.

"I observe that your wise ancestors have left you with a tradition to let your beautiful hair grow freely beyond your shoulders."

In unison, they again banged their fists three times on the table.

"I believe you will agree with me that your wise ancestors left you this tradition with a deeper purpose than just vanity."

This time they did not instantly bang their fists on the table but hesitated, looking at each other. One of them nodded his head and the others took it up. When they were ready, again in unison, they banged their fists three times on the table.

Inner Wisdom

“In my humble opinion, your wise ancestors wanted you to search for the truth behind the symbol of long hair.”

This time, they looked at each other again for some time before they dealt the three blows to the table.

“Long hair symbolizes spiritual radar. God has given the snails a set of feelers which act as radar. Your wise ancestors wanted you to develop your spiritual radar, so that you would not walk in darkness in the world like blind people.”

This time, they stood up in unison and, with a mighty force, came down so hard on the table they narrowly escaped breaking it.

The above-mentioned first level of spiritual development can be symbolized as preparing the soil of the spiritual plant so it can grow. In the process, one would be freed or purified from sickness. Thus, the process of the latihan promotes health which, in turn, provides more favorable conditions for the further growth and development of the soul.

So, in Subud, there is no spiritual healing practice. However, by the Grace of Almighty God, those who devotedly do their latihan sooner or later realize improved physical and mental health.

The next level is the growth of the spiritual plant.

A person whose inner self has reached the second level of spiritual development—or, the vegetable level—is in a state to be in constant contact with the Light of God. One’s inner self stands erect like a tree of light. At quiet moments, even when one is not doing latihan, one’s body may spontaneously sway back and forth following the movement of the prayers of one’s inner self. He or she is receiving a spontaneous *dzikr* (prayer); a *dzikr* not done by his or her will, but motivated by the Light of God. Being near such a person, one may feel peaceful and quiet, and one’s headaches and worries might, at least temporarily, disappear. Such a person would do well to be a farmer. He or she can also be instrumental in healing sickness.

Chapter 13

THE SPIRITUAL EYE

Upon crossing the southern border of the United States into Mexico, we found the U.S. customs and immigration offices clean and neat, and the officers were efficient and correct. Even though on the other side of the border, such tidiness and efficiency were not so evident, I felt a new lightness as soon as we entered Mexican territory. Compared with the United States, life in that country is generally happier and lighter, and this is due to a lessening of the pressure of the material forces there. The lust and spirit of the Mexicans is a phenomenon of the working of the animal life forces in their feeling. And this same life force also causes them to be hot in temperament as well as in sexual emotions.

In the previous chapter I mentioned how much lighter I felt when my head was no longer filled with the material life forces and how, later on, upon reaching the next level, the vegetable life forces brought a realization of peacefulness and quietness, and how grateful to God I was for this.

At that time, I knew only the material life forces and the vegetable life forces. Besides that, I also knew the vibration of the latihan, which is the vibration of the Light of God. And I also got to know my own inner self, which had started to impose its will and would, from time to time, oppose the will of my ego.

The time came when I started receiving intimations of the animal life forces. It started with an inclination, while living in Malang, to raise chickens. I bought ten one-day-old chicks and put them in a box with an electric light to keep them warm. After work each day, I enjoyed watching those little chicks with all their amusing little antics.

As these chicks grew, a chicken coop was built for them in the back yard and I continued hovering over them. Time would slip by while I became absorbed in checking on their welfare and observing their growth and development. Often, I found myself having to rush to dress and get to school to give my lecture.

Arriving back home one day, I found one of the chickens dying, and this troubled me. Not knowing what to do for it, I decided to do a latihan. Standing near it and closing my eyes, I started the latihan. My upper body and hands were moving. Suddenly, my right hand grabbed the chicken by its legs, and held it up. It was too near death to even squawk. Dangling as it was, with its head down, a liquid started flowing from the chicken's beak. I then knelt down and began rubbing its gullet and crop. This increased the flow of the liquid for a time, and then it ceased. While still receiving the latihan, I held the chicken upright for some time. When finally I lowered it to the ground and let it loose, I was pleased to see it start walking.

The chicken grew into a big, healthy cockerel but later he caused me a lot of shame. Well, now I question that reviving, whether the way I did it was right or fitting. I had given it to someone in Jogjakarta and later on, when I visited there, I was greatly teased by my friends, who claimed that "Prio's cockerel is always chasing after girls." It was during this same visit that one girl became so frightened of this cockerel that she locked herself in the bathroom. Outside the door, this bothersome bird waited patiently—until he was whisked away.

Of the ten little chicks that I raised, five were cockerels and five were hens. Having my own chickens producing eggs was most satisfying. I felt these eggs had a superior flavor, whether used raw or cooked, and one of my friends always made a point of buying some of them. I did not believe it myself, but he said that they helped him to get some relief from his asthma. Maybe it was his imagination. No matter; he always insisted upon taking some eggs home whenever he came to visit.

Our servant visited relatives in the village when she took her vacation. Upon her return, she brought back a "*kampung*" hen; that is a hen from the village raised in the old-fashioned way. These chickens roam in the garden scratching for their food. Occasionally, they are lucky and are thrown some scraps from the kitchen. In modern U.S.A., chickens raised in this way might be classified as "organic."

Four days after her arrival, this new hen started laying eggs. It is the nature of *kampung* hens to lay an egg for twelve consecutive days and then start "brooding;" that is, they develop a body heat and cease to mate, and they cease, also, to lay eggs. The time has arrived when nature tells them to

“sit” on their eggs and hatch little chicks, and then rear them. This process takes four to six months. Adhering to such a cycle, a hen would only lay about two dozen eggs a year.

After laying an egg every day for twelve days, this hen started brooding. In the village I had observed that, in order to have their hens continue laying eggs instead of following this natural inclination to brood, the owner would dip them a couple of times in the pond, hide their eggs, and after a few weeks they might start laying again. I decided to try this. Lacking a pond, I felt a bucket of water would do. I discovered that if I did it right, I could have organic chickens laying organic eggs throughout the whole year. Raising chickens the *kampung* way was easier and cheaper because they were capable of foraging for their own food.

I had a carpenter build a larger chicken coop, and now our back yard was populated with twenty hens, plus four of the original cockerels.

In addition to my chicken-raising hobby, I also kept some *perkututs*, a breed of bird belonging to the dove family, yet smaller than a dove. These are a favorite with people in Java, and these birds are long lived. I knew of a *perkutut* that three generations of one family had enjoyed.

These birds are very sensitive and can sense what is about to happen. If a bird’s owner understands the indications it gives to one ahead of time, one can be forewarned to expect certain developments. All *perkututs* look the same, only an expert can tell which of them is worth millions of rupiahs. Most, actually, have little or no monetary value, however.

By chance and luck, I happened to come upon an excellent bird. It was easy for me to distinguish a good *perkutut* because I could sense its inner. It is customary in Java to raise the cage of a *perkutut* high up on a bamboo pole in the morning and lower it in the evening, as in the case of raising and lowering a flag. A *perkutut* is evaluated by the quality of its voice; that is, by the clarity, volume, rhythm, syncopation, and by the “gong,” of the bass, at the end of its song.

Perkutut competitions are popular in Java. In such a competition a *perkutut* with a small soul would not stand a chance of winning because he would shy away from singing in the presence of birds with larger souls. However, it might sing all the time at home.

I never entered my special bird in a competition, but it was a very good one, and very sensitive. I had a light and happy feeling when I held it for the first time. Soon I began to understand its indications. When it sang in a certain way, I knew that money was coming. On one particular day when it sang its “money song,” someone showed up a couple of hours later with some money for me. Thirty minutes later, it sang in the same way. I thought it was telling me about something that had already happened, since the money had already come. But two hours later another person came and gave me money. When the bird sang in the same way again at five o’clock in the afternoon, I thought it was pulling my leg but, believe it or not, seven o’clock someone else showed up at the door with some money. This was too much, yet this was not the end of it. At ten in the evening the *perkutut* bird again gave forth with the indication. “This bird must be trying to fool me,” I thought. At midnight, however, another man came bearing money.

One o’clock in the morning came and suddenly, the bird sounded off once again. “Now this is just impossible!” I muttered to myself. “Who in the world would come in the early hours of the morning to bring money to me?” Two hours later my friend, Varindra Vittachi, knocked at my door. He came from New York and his plane was late. I hadn’t even known he was coming. He, too, had some money for me.

Besides chickens and birds, in later years I also had sheep, goats and cows. Additionally, we enjoyed a pond full of fish. Along with this, I also found myself with a new interest: horses.

My first horse was an Argentinean stallion. The Military Academy had imported this stallion for its use but after being in service for a few years, he was discharged due to incurable wounds on all four legs. After changing hands a couple of times, he was acquired by the village head in neighboring Purworejo, in Central Java, the original home of my maternal grandmother.

My son Martono, who lived with this grandmother, wanted a horse. And I liked horses too.

Now, to find a horse for my son, I visited a neighboring village head, who owned a stable of twenty horses. In his stable I was attracted by a gray Arabian stallion, a very handsome horse. Arriving home, I told the elders of my village about it and asked them to have a look. It was well known that they inherited a kind of palmistry for horses. I, myself, was as yet inexperienced in judging horseflesh. After inspecting this stallion, the elders advised me against buying it. I was interested to know why, and they explained, “The signs indicate that he will not live long. If you wish to buy a horse, the brown Argentinean stallion is a better choice.”

I had seen this horse, but as he was thin and sick looking, in addition to the wounds on his legs,

I had discounted him. Now I asked why they were recommending him.

“That horse bears the sign of a knight shooting an arrow. It is a very good sign,” was their counsel.

Having no experience whatsoever, I consulted my inner, which indicated I should follow their advice. So I bought this animal very cheaply.

The village elders boarded and cared for him. They caught three lizards, broiled them on the fire and gave them to the stallion with his feed. Within a fortnight all the wounds had healed and, in time, Donorojo, the name of this horse, regained his strength and health. I was then able to spend time with him and was pleased to see him develop into a really good looking stallion having a dignity all his own. Additionally, he was very gentle with children. Three months later, the gray Arabian stallion died in an accident involving a car. I began to appreciate the horse palmistry of the village elders.

In Central Java, horse racing is really a fiesta for the people. Although they are not well organized, everyone has a lot of fun. On one such occasion, I saw a beautiful chestnut stallion, but when I approached him I got goose pimples all over. I asked my people who the owner was. “Don’t ever try to buy that horse!” they warned. I was curious. “He has the sign of a shroud, which means death,” they informed me.

That day the racecourse was packed with people. The chestnut stallion was a very fast runner, but on that day the race ended in tragedy as the horse broke the railing, and four people were killed.

I took the Argentinean stallion to the farm in West Java. He was so gentle with children that oftentimes four of my little kids could ride on his back at the same time, and he safely took them around for a walk. Once he had regained his health he was very big and strong. I, myself, spent many hours on this horse. I was fond of riding him up to the top of the hill on a moonlit night to enjoy the beautiful scenery all around as he peacefully grazed, stayed sometimes until far past midnight.

Besides Donorojo, later I also had an English thoroughbred stallion named Sapujagad. And my brother Erdy brought 20 local mares from Sumbawa, an island east of Bali. The mares were running loose on the ranch but the two stallions were kept in their stables. One morning, I mounted Donorojo to inspect the ranch. Arriving on top of the hill, I suddenly realized that we were surrounded by twenty mares, and they quickly closed us in. Donorojo became wild and I could no longer control him. It was too late for me to dismount, because the mares were also running wild and had come very close to us. Suddenly, Donorojo mounted one of the mares while I was still sitting on the saddle. He was able to do so without throwing me off his back. After he finished with one, he mounted another mare. This went on one after the other, and in this way he served seven mares with me still on his back. He had really proven to be a knight shooting arrows as predicted by the elders of my village.

I have related how my head was, at one time, heavy with the material life forces. After they had been cleared out, the vegetable life force took their place in my head and the material life forces were then pushed lower down in the body.

When the animal life forces occupied the head, the vegetable life forces were pushed down and occupied the chest, and the material life forces were pushed lower down again; filling the abdomen and downwards.

The animal life forces can give a strong impulse for sexual desire. You do not even have to eat their meat to get it. As stated earlier, one can be influenced by the animal forces by just being in the presence of animals, especially when they are mating. These forces can also enter a human being through another way. A woman can be filled with the animal life forces upon having sexual relations with a man filled with those forces, and vice versa.

Our knowledge is useless unless we can control and direct it properly. A person may very well know that committing adultery is a sin, that it is a violation of law as well as of the moral and ethical code. But if his or her desire is filled with animal life forces, he or she will do it anyway. It is the human life forces that would prevent one from committing adultery.

A life force is finer than air, finer than light. So no man made wall can stop its flow to and fro. We cannot escape from it because we live in a world which contains animal life forces. They are in the vegetables and fruit we eat, and even in the air we breathe. They are even physically present in the form of viruses and bacteria. We have to live with them and yet not be influenced by them.

Developing into the third or animal level means that one’s inner self starts to develop its spiritual senses, such as the spiritual means of seeing, of hearing, of smelling, of feeling, and of tasting.

Inner Wisdom

Only then can the spiritual world be seen, or experienced, and life becomes more interesting because there is now an awareness of spiritual realities. For instance, one can then be aware of what becomes of the soul of a person after death, as well as other spiritual phenomena. Death is then no longer anticipated as a terrifying darkness, because now one can see the hereafter while still in the physical body. Additionally, seeing this acts as a restraint against the temptation of wrong doing, being now aware of the consequences to be borne in the hereafter.

It is of the utmost importance that, besides seeking material progress, one should also make time for his or her spiritual development. Unless one prepares oneself with the spiritual means to live in the hereafter, he or she will enter that life as a blind person and will certainly get lost. Instead of going into the world of the human soul, one might end up in the world of material souls; i.e., the world of satans. And one's life span here on earth is just as short as the wink of an eye compared to the life after death which will go on forever.

Let me elaborate a little more about the spiritual eye. In the fourth chapter, I explained that the spiritual eye has a kind of round dimension; that unlike the physical eye, which can only see directly ahead, the spiritual eye can see all around. From this description, one might get the impression that it is like a sphere and that one could see in all directions through any part of its surface. And that was actually my own impression, too, until I had the following experience, which was a further revelation.

One night as we were driving cross-country from the east to the west coast of mainland U.S.A., I was at the wheel when we entered Arizona. It was about three o'clock in the morning. Soon I began having a strange sensation, which grew stronger and stronger. Then I recognized that it was similar to the vibration of the animal life forces. Coming to a rest area, I pulled in for a break. Resting there, I heard hundreds of Indian war cries and saw the spirits of hundreds of Indians charging towards me. Soon all of these spirits entered my inner self and I could clearly see them. They were the souls of Indian warriors who were imprisoned by the animal life forces.

Now, how does the spiritual eye actually see? It sees an object by enveloping it. It does not see by looking out, but by looking in at the object which it envelops. Needless to say, one can only envelop something which is smaller than oneself; or one can only envelop something if one is bigger than the object one envelops. As a result of receiving the contact with the Light of God, one's inner self will continuously grow bigger and bigger.

To briefly explain the spiritual condition of the Indian warriors: During their lifetime here on earth, these warriors were dominated by the animal life forces. It was these life forces that gave them the courage and strength to fight and to bravely face death in battle. It was also these same forces that enabled them to behave like brave persons, fighting their battle with a sense of honor and dignity. They had employed the same tactics and strategy that an animal does in catching its prey, following its instinct, or intuition, to do so. On the contrary, if a person is dominated by the material life forces, he or she would rather kill an enemy in an ambush; he or she would not dare to face the enemy in open battle. But, however good these characteristics are, they do not come from the inner self of a person; they are but the manifestation of the influence of the animal life force in that person.

Chapter 14

SEVEN CIRCLES

One day, when I was still in Malang, about four o'clock in the afternoon I was lying on the divan when Bapak's inner self came to me. This time he was accompanied by a man in a black robe, and a woman assistant. I stood up. The assistant turned to Bapak for final instructions. Bapak nodded and she beamed a ray of light into my body through the crown of my head.

I did not know what this meant, but I certainly felt different after that. I sat back down and received a *dzikr* (silent prayer). Later, when I met Bapak in Jakarta, I told him about this experience. After closing his eyes for a while, he said, "It means that your inner self has come to the *jasmani* state."

What is the *jasmani* level? It means that the inner self has developed into the state symbolic of a human being, that the inner self has developed a consciousness of its own; a wisdom much broader and deeper than the intellect.

From that time on, my inclination and interest were no longer in being with animals; rather, they were in being with Subud members, doing my work as a helper and taking care of my duties as chairman. Although I continued to raise chickens and keep birds, I no longer found them quite so fascinating.

When the human life forces entered my head, the animal life forces went down into my chest, the vegetable life forces went down into the abdomen, and the material life forces descended into my legs.

In spiritual terminology, the human life force is called the *daya jasmani*, the animal life force, the *daya hewani*; the vegetable life force, the *daya nabadi*; and the material life force, the *daya saitoni*, or the satanic life force. Of all the life forces, the latter is of the very lowest quality, and it can cause a person to behave like a satan—or to be truly evil—if that person is entirely dominated by it.

The four kinds of life forces mentioned above are referred to as the ancillary life forces, or the lower forces which are in truth, alien to human beings but which can invade or infiltrate their mind, their desire, and their feeling. Each of these forces can influence them to behave as they do. As stated above, the satanic life force makes one behave like a satan. The *nabadi* life force makes one behave like a vegetable. The *hewani* life force makes one behave like an animal, and the *jasmani* life force makes a person behave like a human being. And there is a constant struggle between these life forces within, each trying to get hold of that person as their captive. This explains why his or her mind, desire, and feeling keep changing.

City dwellers who are influenced by various kinds of life forces are often in a state of confusion and frustration. Most suffer from the influences of the material life forces entering the nervous system which causes a person to become nervous. Entering the mind, they cause a person to keep thinking aimlessly. They can also plant evil thoughts in one's mind. They can also enter one's desire and cause him or her to become materialistic and egoistic. When they fill the feeling of a person, he or she will feel lonely, melancholy, and depressed. Such a situation is really like being already in hell while still living in this world. It is this kind of a situation that may cause one to commit suicide, not knowing that even suicide may not even be a way out of misery, but rather could keep one in it.

The ancillary life forces of man are not to be confused with the inner self. As I mentioned earlier, these are alien elements, whereas the inner self is our eternal part. It was there before we were born. It stays within us during our lifetime here on earth, and will continue to exist after we die.

The question is, "How does our inner self exist after we die?"

As far as I know there are three possibilities:

The first is the case of those who, during their lifetime, allowed themselves to be controlled and dominated by the ancillary life forces, or the lower forces, accumulating so much of them within themselves that they have crystallized there. If their inner self did not have the opportunity to receive the contact with the Light of God, and therefore, did not get a chance to grow during their lifetime here on earth, it will remain in the form of a seed of a soul, just the way it was before the person was born into this world. (In Javanese philosophy, the size of the seed of the soul is said to be as small as

“*mricha binubut*”; that is, a peeled pepper seed. With the skin peeled away, it becomes even smaller in size.)

This little seed of the soul and its ego will be imprisoned by the crystallized lower forces which had formed an unbreakable wall around it. When such persons die, their physical bodies will decompose, or disintegrate, but the lower forces that have crystallized within them will not disintegrate but will remain compact in the shape of their former physical bodies. Since these life forces (lower forces) are finer than light, they cannot be seen by the ordinary eyes. But these stray souls, imprisoned by the lower forces, continue to hang around in this world and are usually referred to as spirits. The egos, embodied within these spirits, will still remember the lust and pleasures of the physical world—nice food, drink, and sex—but they can no longer enjoy them as the physical means to do so has been destroyed. To see all these nice things dangling in front of you when you are hungry and thirsty is a great suffering. However, apparently, they can enjoy the smell of incense, and this is why some people burn incense to please or invite a spirit. To live in such a condition after death is actually living in hell.

The second possibility is the case of those who, during their lifetime, live a good and decent life. The lower forces do not get strongly concentrated within them. But they were not fortunate enough to receive enlightenment during their lifetime. Of course, there are many reasons for this. It may be due to the most simple reason that these people, feeling content and thinking that they are already living a good, or even a religious life did not feel the urge to seek further. The attitude of self-righteousness may be the cause for the loss of a chance to get in contact with the Light of God. And there are many other reasons.

When such people die, their physical bodies will disintegrate and decompose. But their minds, desires and feeling with all the lower forces in them, including their egos, will also disintegrate. What is left is only their eternal part, or the inner self; an inner self which had not been opened, or was not yet alive and was still in the form of an undeveloped seed. This seed of a soul will return to its place of origin, wherever it came from, and such people’s whole lifetime will have been wasted. But it is certainly better than being imprisoned by the lower forces here on earth.

The third possibility is the case of those who, during their lifetime here on earth, received enlightenment. As a result of receiving this enlightenment, their inner self grows. Simultaneously, they will also be purified of sickness and of lower forces.

The inner self that is only a small spark of light contained by the body and enveloped by the mind, the desires and the feelings, will gradually outgrow its container. The body, the mind, the desires, and the feeling, as well as the ego, will be enveloped by the inner self. This is a state which is symbolized as “*kodok hangumuri leng*,” or “a frog which envelops the hole in which it lives.”

When such people die, their physical bodies will decompose, or disintegrate; however, because their egos, minds, desires, and feeling have been purified and are enveloped by an eternal element, which is their inner self, and they will be preserved forever. Even after death, they will still have the memory of all their experiences here on earth, and they will return to the place of the origin of their inner self with a valuable experience during their lifetime here on earth. And it is with this purpose that Almighty God sends human beings to live on earth: To witness the greatness of God’s creation from the lowest (the material, or satanic world we live in now) to the highest. The highest world for a human being is the world of the human souls, or the fourth heaven.

What is the characteristic of the human life force?

The human life force is the life force that causes one to be human. As a scholar of law, I can say that the human life force is the source of morals and ethics in a civilized human society. And it is this life force that makes human beings law-abiding out of their own free will. The principle of law and legal systems in a society are derived from the nature and characteristics of the human life force.

How does the human life force enter and influence man? It is through sexual intercourse between spouses, and it is through this same channel that their children inherit the human life forces from their parents.

In Javanese philosophy, a husband is referred to as a *guru-laki*; meaning one who is, or should be, the guru to his wife, as well as a husband to her. It is indeed a great responsibility for a man to become a *guru-laki* to his wife, because he has to be able to be an instrument for her purification. It is his responsibility to rid her of the influences of the material life force, or the *daya saitoni*, and the vegetable life force, or the *daya nabadi*; the animal life force, or the *daya hewani*. It is also incumbent upon him to rid her of the *daya jasmani*, the human life force, that the wife inherited from her parents and ancestors.

Inner Wisdom

Why must such a good life force as the human life force also be purified from one's inner self?

However good it is, the human life force is still an alien life force to one's inner self. Unless one is able to free oneself from the influence of the human life force, a life force which also joins the other life forces in imprisoning one's inner self, the inner self cannot be free or independent.

Besides the above mentioned characteristics of the human life force, there is still another which should be mentioned here: the consciousness of a family relationship. Unlike in the case of an animal, the family bond among kin which is derived from the human life force is very strong, and it stretches upwards to several generations; that is, to the ancestors. It also stretches downward to children, great-grandchildren, etc. This, in reality, is a spiritual bond and is so strong that, in the case of a sick child, the father or mother, not having the heart to see their child suffer, will pray to God to transfer the sickness to themselves instead.

It is for this very reason that judges are not supposed to judge their own children, or their close relatives, because they would have a difficult time being impartial in their judgment, due to the influence of the human life force. Likewise, surgeons are not supposed to operate on their own spouses, children, or other close relatives for the reason that they may not be able to control their emotion while performing the operation.

Of course, this feeling and emotion will only be there if the person is filled with the human life force.

After reaching this level of my spiritual development, I was more and more aware of being instrumental in the purification of my wife. Upon engaging in intimate relations, the lower forces in her body would flow into mine, and in my latihan I would be purified of them. This process went on and on until I finally realized that the life forces, which she inherited from her parents and ancestors, were also being stripped away from her inner self. It is for this reason that a woman divests herself of her maiden name and takes the name of her husband at marriage.

There was a time in this process when I felt like a woman. I felt I could no longer act and behave like Prio (the literal meaning of "Prio" is '*macho*'). I became weak. When I visited Bapak in Jakarta and asked him about it, he said, "At this moment the soul of your wife is within you. You feel weak because you are like a woman. When you return to Malang watch closely and you will notice that your wife might behave a bit stupidly, as if she has lost her head. Her soul has, at this time, left her body to be united with yours. There will be a time later on when it will be returned to her body. But then it will no longer be as it was because, in your body, her soul is being reshaped and remolded into Prio Hartono's pattern. Her soul will be reinstated into her own body as Mrs. Prio Hartono, the *garwa*; meaning, half of the soul of Prio Hartono."

Even before returning to Malang, I was now able to realize that my wife had indeed behaved in the manner described by Bapak. She was forgetful, as if she had lost her head. Further, Bapak explained, "The inner self grows in stages and each stage consists of eight spiritual years.

"The first eight years is the stage of childhood. You will recall that, when you were new in Subud, in the latihan you behaved like a very young child, crying, laughing, crawling, mumbling words, and singing songs that have no meaning.

"The second stage takes in the ages between sixteen and twenty-four, the prime age for a woman. A woman does look most attractive at that age, but the soul lacks strength. The nature of a woman is to be a 'receiver.'

"The stage after that includes the ages between twenty-four and thirty-two, the stage in which the soul becomes a man strong and capable. The nature of a man is not to receive but to give. He is the one who gives the seed to the woman, who received it. When a man's soul has become like this, he will be able to return his wife's soul to her own body. With this, he then becomes really a man, outwardly and inwardly: a *guru-laki*. In other words, he is now a true husband and *guru* to his wife, worthy of respect and obedience."

I have explained in an earlier chapter that the spiritual age does not correspond to the age of our physical body. Nor does the length of time taken for the growth of the inner self correspond with the length of time one does, or receives, the latihan. I may be faster, or it may go much slower than the actual years.

Returning to the process of death: Our inner self has many barriers to break through to free itself from its prison; first of all, the physical body. It is true that the physical body will break by itself when decomposed. But the essence, or the content, of the four elements that constituted the body—namely, the earth, water, air and fire—will not allow the soul to leave the body unless the person concerned pays the bill for their service while serving that person here on earth. What they want in

return for their services is to be taken to heaven. If that particular person cannot do this then they will block his or her way out. Ordinary eyes would not be able to see the struggle of the soul leaving the body. But still, one might notice in some cases that a dying person has difficulty in breathing as a result of the struggle to be free from the chain of the essence of air, and that his or her breath gradually moves up from the chest to the throat and finally stops altogether when the essence of the four elements can no longer hold his or her soul back.

In spiritual terminology, the essence of the four elements are called the passions. In accord with the existence of the four elements, there are also four kinds of passions; namely, the passion of greed as the essence of earth; the passion of anger as the essence of water; the passion for solitude, or isolation, as the essence of air; and the passion of patience as the essence of fire.

The colors of those four passions are respectively black, red, yellow, and white. It is for this reason that a spiritual practice which cultivates and exploits the strength and power of the black passion (greed) is called black magic; a spiritual practice which cultivates and exploits the strength and power of the red passion (anger) is called red magic; a spiritual practice which cultivates the strength and power of the yellow passion (solitude, or isolation) is called yellow magic; and a spiritual practice which cultivates and exploits the strength and power of the white passion (patience) is called white magic.

Black magic is also called spiritism, because its practice entails the use of spirits. Red magic is called hypnotism. With the help of the essence of water, one tries to develop a spiritual power to, for instance, lift objects. Yellow magic is referred to as occultism. With the help of the essence of air or wind, one tries to forecast the future. And white magic deals with magnetism. With the help of the essence of fire or light one tries to open a spiritual communication with someone else at a distant place.

Again, with a dying person who has not “paid his or her dues,” the material life forces would also try to hold him or her back. Once in Jakarta, I was approached by a Chinese girl, who was a friend of my sister. She asked me if I could come to her house to say a prayer for her dying father, being aware, apparently, that I was involved in a kind of spiritual group. I assumed that the man just needed a regular prayer to console his mind. But when I entered the house, I found him lying on the floor in a big room which had been cleared of furniture, and the man lay moaning in agony. I asked the girl, “Why do you put your father on the floor?” “This, she replied, “is our custom. We do this because someone who is dying usually rolls back and forth. You see he is also kicking his feet and jerking, and slamming his hands.”

“How long has he been like this?”

“Four days. I hope you can help him so that he can die easily.”

I then realized that this person was struggling to free himself from the grip of the material life forces. I did a latihan for him, and a few hours later he died.

I heard a story in Jogjakarta that a Subud member, a few days before he died, was telling his relatives and friends that he had been seeing all sorts of vegetables and animals coming to him. They all asked him to pay his bills.

In the case of those who have been blessed by God to receive enlightenment, the payment of bills for all services given to them during their lifetime happens during the process of purification. Gradually, the alien life forces are thrown out and returned to their places and origin: The material life forces into the world of material souls; the vegetable life forces into the world of vegetable souls; the animal life forces into the world of animal souls; and the human life forces into the world of human souls. Being able to return to its place of origin is called “returning to heaven.” And those life forces can only return to their heavens through the intermediate action of man. And this is the reason why a man, for instance, can do as he pleases with the materials, vegetables, and animals around him, and, in a certain way, also with women. But he is responsible for taking them to their heavens. Indeed, that man is responsible for taking any woman he sleeps with to heaven. But if he, himself, is unable to go to heaven, how can he possibly take all the others to heaven?

The world, or the earth, is enveloped by a layer of the essence of water, which is called *alam lahut*. Beyond that there is the layer of the essence of air, or the *alam malakut*; and beyond that a layer of the essence of light, or the *alam jabarut*. It is to these respective places that the essence of the four elements, of which I have just spoken, want to be taken after serving man.

This world and all the planets, stars and galaxies and everything else in this universe that consists of material objects, is called the *alam saitioni*. Beyond that, there are no more material objects to be found. So the next level is called the *alam nabadi*, or the world of the vegetable souls. Beyond that,

the *alam hewani*, or the world of the animal souls. And beyond that again, the *alam jasmani*, or the world of the human soul.

Beyond the world of the human soul is the *alam rochani*, or the world of the *rochani* souls.

Beyond the *alam rochani* is the *alam rochmani*, or the world of *rochmani* souls.

Beyond that, the *alam rubani*, or the world of the *rubani* souls.

These seven layers of the worlds, or the seven heavens, are connected to each other by a light. And there are seven lights connecting the seven worlds, or the seven heavens. This is Bapak's explanation of the symbol of Subud which is in the form of seven circles, cut through by seven lines.

To continue: The human life forces also hold back the soul of a dying person. It is difficult for a person whose feeling is filled by the human life forces to leave one's family when dying. Therefore in Java, relatives are told not to cry when a member of the family is dying; they believe that it makes it difficult for the soul of the dying person to leave the body.

Thus, no matter how good the human life force is compared with the other lower forces, still we should not allow ourselves to be controlled by it. We should be able to be free and independent, so that we will be able to be objective in our judgment and evaluation and thus, when it comes time for us to die, to easily go and leave the world and our family.

The above explanation describes how difficult it is for a person to die, and how it is even more difficult for them to return to their place of origin, or their heaven since, before this can take place, they have to take care of so many other souls, taking, or returning, them to their respective heavens. This is why it is very important for people to receive enlightenment, because this is the key to entering heaven.

What is the difference between the life forces and the souls?

If I speak about a material life force, I am referring to an element; whereas a material soul is a being, or an entity. A material life force is a life force derived from a material object. A material soul is an entity or a spiritual being whose origin is from this material universe of the first heaven, or the *alam saitioni*.

This difference can be compared to iron ore and a car in the physical material level. Iron ore is an element; whereas, a car is a complete unit or entity. A car is not the same as iron ore, although it is made of iron ore.

The same is the case with the relation of the vegetable life force and the vegetable soul. A vegetable life force is a life force derived from a vegetable or a plant; whereas, a vegetable soul, or *nabadi* soul, is a soul whose origin is from the second heaven, or the *alam nabadi* (*nabadi* world).

An animal life force is a life force derived from an animal; whereas, an animal soul, or a *hewani* soul, is a soul whose origin is from the third heaven, or the *alam hewani* (*hewani* world).

A human life force is a life force derived from a human being; whereas, a human soul, or a *jasmani* soul, is a soul whose origin is from the fourth heaven, or the *alam jasmani*.

A life force constitutes an ancillary force in human beings, which can influence their minds, desires and feelings. Whereas, the soul is the spiritual content of humankind.

A person's soul can come from the first heaven, or the *alam saitioni*; the second heaven, or the *alam nabadi*; the third heaven, or the *alam hewani*; the fourth heaven, or the *alam jasmani*, or it can come from even higher, depending upon the spiritual condition of the parents at the moment the child was conceived.

The word "soul" is a general term to describe the spiritual content of a person; whereas, the "inner self" indicates a soul that has received the contact with the Light of God, and has developed into a personality.

Thus, within the bodies of an "enlightened person," or those who have received a revelation from God, there are two personalities, namely; the ego, or the ordinary self, which is their worldly personality, and their inner self, which is actually their true and eternal self, their spiritual personality.

The worldly personality can only cope with worldly matters, and it is meant only for this. Using the worldly personality to try to understand spiritual matters will only result in confusion and illusion.

Spiritual matters can only be perceived and experienced by the spiritual personality, the eternal part of man, which is able to get in touch with the eternal world.

A sexual intercourse, motivated and dominated by the material life force, would suck a material soul into conception.

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A sexual intercourse, motivated and dominated by the vegetable life force, would suck a vegetable soul into conception.

A sexual intercourse, motivated and dominated by the animal life force, would suck an animal soul into conception.

A sexual intercourse, motivated and dominated by the human life force, would suck a human soul into conception.

There is no uncertainty as to the cause of anything. Uncertainty means unknowing. Everything happens in accordance with the law of nature, or the law of God. And knowing the law of God is science. There is a physical science and beyond that, there is spiritual science.

Chapter 15

GREAT SOULS

Being with Subud members in Mexico during their National Congress gave me a happy and light feeling. We did our latihan, and I gave a talk, but that was about all we did as far as the Subud routine was concerned. We had our meetings and elected officers, but it was not complicated. In the home of Hosanna Baron, officers were elected with cheers and applause, and when the announcement of the new national committee was made, a mariachi band was standing by ready to sound their trumpets after each new officer's name and function were announced. Everyone cheered and applauded. As soon as the ceremony was over, the band played well-known and popular songs full of spirit and romance. Everyone joyfully danced to the music.

This way of living a Subud life was not bad at all; on the contrary, it was much better than being overly serious and sad, because we really have to relax and be happy in order to receive the latihan well.

As far as business and enterprises are concerned, they have to be done in a different way, strictly following business principles.

In Acapulco, I was taken out to the open sea on a fishing trip. When I stepped into the boat, I felt strongly that I was going to catch a fish.

Little Tomito did not want to get off my lap; he was apprehensive, feeling that something exciting was going to take place. Sure enough, as soon as the boat reached the open sea a big fish tugged at my line. For an hour and a half, I played the line while the captain shouted instructions. The fish leaped into the air a couple of times before it finally surrendered. It was a beautiful marine-blue sailfish, lacking only one inch of being ten feet long. Later a taxidermist rendered the fish suitable for display on my farm in West Java.

The soul of this fish passed through my body on the way to its heaven.

From the Congress in Mexico, we began a long journey to visit Subud centers and isolated members throughout South America.

Colombia, I found, had a large membership which was spread all over the country. When my party was invited for a lunch stop in a remote little village somewhere in the middle of Colombia, I was moved by the way we were looked after. From the main road, members were posted at every crossroad on the way to the house to give directions. And even though the lunch was simple, it was offered in the spirit of love and worship of God.

We drove on to Ecuador from Colombia. Traveling through that country we found the membership small yet enterprising.

During my visit to Peru, I went with a Subud member to Cusco, which was a little town high up in the Andes Mountains. The climate was extremely cold, and the air was so thin that I had difficulty breathing. At a restaurant along the way we were served delicious, tender meat.

Soon I learned that I only needed to eat one meal a day because, apparently, in such a high altitude, the process of digestion is more prolonged.

One night I could not sleep; I was kept awake by the noise and chatter of thousands of people. I went outside the hotel to see who these people were, but there was no one out there in the cold, dark night. Returning to bed, this same commotion continued to disturb me. Presently, however, I began to realize that this was the noise and chatter of the Inca Indians, who had lived there in times long past. Indeed, in that place there were many more spirits than live human beings because, as the Incas died, they came to join the community in the spiritual world and through the years their numbers kept adding up.

The following morning, a Subud brother took me sightseeing, and we went to a square in the middle of town. He told me, "The Indians called this place '*El Puerto Del Sol*' (the gate of the sun). Once a year Inca Indians from all over come here, and they stay up all night, praying until dawn. When the first rays of the sun strike the earth, they all cry with happiness and joy, as they worship the sun as the source of their lives and energies."

I asked my brother, "When does this take place?"

"On the twenty-fourth of June."

"That date," I commented, "coincides with my birthday."

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One evening during the latihan, I noticed that one of the men helpers was absent. On the next latihan evening he was present, and I told him that I had missed him. He said to me, "Oh, Mas Prio, I had to take care of my brother and his family. He is in hospital dying, and he has many children."

"What is wrong with your brother?" I inquired.

"According to the doctors, he has a wild and dangerous cancer, the roots of which have spread all through his lungs. Fluid is rapidly filling his lungs, which are now eighty percent filled. At this rate, he has only about two more days to live."

"Does your brother believe in God," I wanted to know, "and, if so, would he be willing to receive help through the latihan?"

"I will ask him and let you know tomorrow."

The following morning, this brother called to say that he would pick me up at three o'clock in the afternoon. We were joined by another man helper, and we felt fortunate that the patient had a private room. After telling the nurse that we were going to pray and did not want to be disturbed, we did a latihan and, by the grace of Almighty God, we received a strong one. It lasted for about thirty-five minutes. Assuring the sick brother that he would return the day after tomorrow, we left.

Entering the hospital room on the appointed day, we found the patient sitting up, whereas before, he could not even move his body. We were told that about half an hour after we did the latihan, the sick man started coughing, and many liters of fluid were released from his lungs. The doctors could not understand this strange phenomenon; they were now in conference about it. Meanwhile, they said that now there was a chance for the patient to recover.

We proceeded with our latihan, which again lasted for about thirty-five minutes and, as before, it was quite strong. Two days later when we returned, we found the patient walking around in his room. We did another latihan with him. The following day, he was discharged from the hospital. The next day I left Peru and continued on my journey.

Chile had a large and active membership. After my stay among them, I flew over the Andes from Santiago de Chile to Buenos Aires, in Argentina. From the plane, I saw a car moving along in the middle of the snow-capped mountains, and I asked the gentleman sitting next to me whether it was possible to cross the Andes by car. He said that it was possible, but that when there was a heavy snowfall, the road would be closed.

I decided to try this, so later on when I returned to Chile, we drove from Buenos Aires to Santiago. It was a most interesting trip. There were no asphalt roads on the mountain; instead, there were car tracks going through mountain rocks and dry river beds and, in a couple of places, we had to cross clear brooks where there were no bridges. Beyond the tree line, the surface of the mountains resembled the surface of the moon as it appears on the television screen. Rocks were so barren that not even moss would grow on them. Driving along all was so quiet and serene; the sky was hanging low, and I felt close to God. From time to time, we saw the big legendary birds, *el condor*, perched on rocks, or spreading their mighty nine foot wings in the air. After this experience, I always preferred to drive between Chile and Argentina.

When we were in Mexico a lady member had taken Harti and Tomito to school with her child. Ever since then Harti has seemed to enjoy school. It was rather sad when she came to me one day and said, "Daddy, when can I go to school?" Poor girl, she couldn't attend school like the other little children her age because her daddy was constantly traveling. Harti and Tomito were really excellent children; they behaved very sweetly during all my traveling years. When we drove for thousands and thousands of miles in a car, they never complained or cried. But as soon as we would stop at a rest area, both would jump out and run happily for exercise. While in Chile, both children had another chance to go to school for a couple of weeks, and they always had interesting stories to tell about their day when they returned home in the afternoon.

During the Latin American tours, I leaned to sing the native songs and to play the guitar. I was even given lessons by members who were professors of voice and maestros on the guitar.

Another memorable trip was in store for me when I crossed the Rio del Plato from Buenos Aires to Montevideo. Since it was "*solamente para hombres* (only for men)," the women complained. Yet, for practical reasons only men went on this trip. There were two isolated men members in Montevideo, and we were only going to stay there for one night. The accommodations were also inadequate. Four Subud brothers and I boarded a ship around seven-thirty in the evening, and left the harbor thirty minutes later. At eight o'clock the next morning, the ship docked at Montevideo, Uruguay. While this city was only across the river from Buenos Aires, the crossing took twelve hours as the Rio del Plata was 120 kilometers wide.

Brazil is a huge country. It was hard to believe how crowded Sao Paulo was. Walking in the downtown area, one felt packed in like sardines in a can, rubbing and bumping against people as we made our way along.

In Rio de Janeiro, we stayed in the home of a woman helper. Her husband was not yet home when we arrived. When he appeared later on, I was introduced to him. At the moment we shook hands I felt that a mountain of rocks was sitting on me. I got a splitting headache and a sad and melancholy feeling. This man had become so big in the financial world that he no longer financed private companies but, rather, government projects. The material forces had really taken possession of him. Although he had become very rich, his wealth did not make him happy. On the contrary, he was sad, depressed, and, worried all the time.

This Subud sister and I would sit up until the early morning hours talking in the living room, which faced the beautiful bay of Rio de Janeiro. Her husband would join us for awhile in the middle of the night when he could not sleep. "Locos," he said, pointing to his head, meaning that we were crazy staying up all night like that. But soon he became interested in listening to our conversations, and it was not very long before he asked to be opened. His wife viewed this as a real miracle: that her husband, who had no feeling whatsoever because his heart had turned to stone, would want to be opened.

I opened him and gradually his heart melted. One day during lunch he had tears in his eyes. His wife was really amazed to see him crying. She told me she had never seen him cry before, no matter what happened.

In Surinam there were about four hundred Subud members. Almost all of them were Indonesian and were descendants of people brought there by the Dutch. The Indonesian Subud community was started by the arrival of Mr. Bambang Saptodewo and his wife. He was posted there as the Indonesian *charge d'affaires*. Mr. and Mrs. Saptodewo had been opened in Colombo, Ceylon, during one of my visits there. By the time I visited Surinam, Bambang had returned home; however, the Subud members continued to be active. Being in Surinam amongst the Indonesians was like being at home in Java. They still spoke Javanese, and from their homes I could hear Indonesian songs and music played on tape recorders. Their food was still prepared in the Indonesian way. About one hundred and fifty members greeted me at the airport when I arrived. Having someone come from Indonesia was a great thing for them because, even after having lived there for so long, they were still homesick for their ancestral land.

In my talks to the Surinam members, I used the *wayang* symbols to explain Subud. "Wayang" is a shadow play of story-telling, using flat puppets made of leather. There are two songs, and music from the gamelan orchestra. The story was derived from the *Mahabharata* myth, originally from India.

After my return to Indonesia, I again met some of these members who had come to Java for a visit. I took them to Central Java to visit the place of their origin. Their longing to visit Indonesia was not only motivated by the desire to see their ancestral land, but mainly by the instinct to see the graves of their parents and ancestors, and to bring flowers and to pray there.

A custom observed by the Javanese, especially among the villagers, is the *selamatan*. This is a gathering for a meal and a prayer. It is given on the occasion of a birth, a wedding, a death, or to celebrate any sort of very special event. The family giving a *selamatan* wishes others to join with them in special prayer and so prepares a dinner to which relatives and neighbors are invited. The food, depending on the occasion being observed, can be quite elaborate, the meal is served in a decorative way on woven bamboo trays covered with banana leaves. When all is in readiness, the trays are brought in and placed in the center of the room where family and guests have assembled themselves on mats, or rugs, in a circle on the floor.

A hush now falls over this gathering, and the Imam conducts the prayers, after which everyone continues the ritual through the partaking of the food.

According to the Javanese custom, in the event of a death in the family, a *selamatan* is given on the evening of the day of the death. Subsequent *selamatan*s are given on the third, seventh, fortieth, and hundredth days, and on the first and second anniversaries of the death. The last is given on the thousandth day.

Why are so many *selamatan*s given for a deceased person?

Bapak said that this tradition of the *selamatan* is based on what actually happens in the spiritual life after death. He said that once, through his inner life, he followed, or closely observed, the soul of a man who had died. This soul remained in and around the house after departing the body and knew

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and recognized everyone in the house, but he realized that he could not communicate with them. While he could see them, they could not see him; he could hear them but they could not hear him. And they also were not able to feel it when he tapped them on the shoulder.

He observed them holding his body, wrapping it in a shroud, and having a *selamatan*. He joined the funeral procession to the cemetery, watched his body being buried, joined the prayers, and when everybody left the cemetery, he also went home with them. He stayed around in the house for three days, but when he realized that he was totally ignored, he decided to leave and go instead to the cemetery. On this day, the third day, a *selamatan* was given for him.

On the seventh day the soul came back to see his home, and on that day a *selamatan* was given for him.

After the seventh day the man started wandering around, and in so doing he encountered the soul of another man. They met, talked briefly, and he decided to join this other soul. Coming to a river, the soul of the other man, without hesitation, transported himself over the river and arrived on the other side in a split second. The soul of the newly dead man was going back and forth looking for a bridge.

His friend asked, "What are you looking for?"

"A bridge."

"When did you die?"

"About a week ago."

"Oh, no wonder. Listen, now that you no longer have your physical body to carry, you can easily jump over this river. Try it," said his friend.

After hesitating for awhile, he finally decided to try it and to his amazement, it was easily accomplished, and he felt very pleased. These two souls continued together for some time, then his friend said, "Now I have to part from you. I have to go somewhere and you should continue your travels on your own. Remember, you are a dead man now which means you no longer have to carry your physical body around. Now you can travel as fast as the mind can go." And thus he parted.

The man began to enjoy his new life. Wandering around easily, he found it quite simple to convey himself over a mountain; in a split second he was on the other side. On the fortieth day after his death, he returned home to see his family again and a *selamatan* was again given for him. One hundred days after his death he also came back. He came back home on the first and second anniversaries of his death, and the last time he would return would be on the thousandth day.

These *selamatan*s were given to cheer his soul, and this was a way to show him that his family still cared for him and that, in fact, they did not ignore him. And the prayers of many people were said in the hope that Almighty God would bless his soul and forgive him of all his sins during his lifetime here on earth.

Of course, seen from the spiritual point of view, a prayer which comes from the mind could not reach God, because Almighty God has given us a special means to communicate with God. God has given us a mind to think about worldly matters only. Hence, we cannot reach God through our minds, however hard we try. We can only get communication with God if we use our eternal existence, or our inner self. Trying to communicate with God through the mind is like an attempt to use an FM radio to receive a shortwave station far away around the globe. It would not get results.

However, like any other tradition, sometimes, if the conditions are right, it could really work and achieve its goal. A tradition usually originates with a person who has received enlightenment. A practice is begun which, if it continues in use for a long time, will eventually become a tradition. If there is even one person amongst the crowd who has received enlightenment, the soul of the deceased person might really get a spiritual benefit from his or her prayer. There was a Subud member in Skymont who, every so often, would scream and cry hysterically. It was learned that her father had died by committing suicide. Whenever the soul of her father came to her, she would go into crisis. When my wife learned about it, she suggested to the young lady that she give a *selamatan* for her father. As there were many Subud members living in Skymont at that time, these people joined in the meal and the prayers. And it did work; her father got a spiritual uplift.

I had my own experiences with the souls of my parents and ancestors. When my grandfather died I was only one year old, but later my grandmother told me the following story:

"Your grandfather was a really good man; he followed a good spiritual life. As a result, he knew when his death was approaching; he knew it a thousand days before. Then he had another indication a hundred days before. Forty days before his death he received another indication. He bought all that was necessary for his funeral, including the shroud. He gave me detailed instructions about all the

selamatans until the thousandth day after his death. He even bought the goats that should be slaughtered for them.

“On the day of his death, he especially purified himself; he took a bath, washed his hair, shaved his face, and put on new clothes. At four o’clock in the afternoon, he said that he was going to sleep and that he should not be disturbed. That was the last time we saw him alive.

“You, as his grandson, should follow his example. You must do a lot of *prihatin* by fasting from food and drink on Mondays and Thursdays, and during the month of *Ramadhan*. And you should also fast from sleep. Do not go to bed before midnight, and always get up before dawn. If you can do this, you will later become somebody in this world. I have seen a sign on your feet which indicates that you will travel around the world.”

Under my grandmother’s guidance, I started doing *prihatin* when I was twelve years old. Besides fasting from food, drink and sleep, I also did *mutih*, which is eating only plain boiled vegetables, using no spices, salt, or sugar, and eating only in small quantities for forty days.

I remembered that before my grandmother died, she was shivering and suffering from cold. She was in this state until she finally died.

Six months after I was opened in Subud, when I was about to take a nap at four o’clock in the afternoon, I saw her soul, still continuing to shiver and suffer from cold. I first saw her soul at a distance. But soon her soul was drawn to me.

When her soul touched my body, she instantly received the contact with the Light of the Power of God. That was about twelve years after her death. Six months later, I saw her soul again. This time she was radiant with light and was constantly doing the *dzikr* (praying *Allah, Allah, Allah*).

As far as the soul of my grandfather is concerned, one night I saw him traveling as a Subud helper, visiting various cemeteries, to transmit the contact of the Light of the Power of God amongst the souls in the hereafter.

When I was sixteen years old, I began receiving spiritual experiences. At that time, my inclination and urge for the spiritual were very strong, so much so that I decided to quit school. This was in 1946, and my family lived in Jogjakarta, Central Java. I was longing to find a *guru* and, although Pak Subuh was also residing in Jogjakarta at that time, we never met.

With no one to guide me, I worked out my own simple system. I did the Islamic prayers five times a day. After the evening prayer, at eight o’clock in the evening, I would start walking and just walk anywhere my feet led me. During these walks, I felt very close to God. I would return home just before dawn. I then did my morning prayers and locked myself in my room. But I did not sleep. After I had followed this routine for several days, my family certainly got worried. They were concerned that I did not go to school. Perhaps had I gone to school in the normal way, they would not have noticed. I paid them no heed and continued on, following my urge for the spiritual. My nightly walks went on uninterrupted whether it was raining or moonlight.

After doing this for some time, whenever I felt close to God, God responded by showing various kinds of lights in the sky in front of me. And, being so close to God, I never fell ill even though I walked in the rain in my bare feet, and without a raincoat or other protection. Feeling close to God was a happiness and bliss all its own, and it was this bliss and happiness that gave me the spirit and energy to go on without sleep. These nocturnal walks went on for more than six months; meanwhile, the reaction of my family kept building up. They began to consider sending me to a mental hospital, so one evening around nine o’clock, I decided to leave home. I possessed not one penny; nonetheless, I started out afoot to Purworejo, where my grandparents had once lived, sixty kilometers due west of Jogjakarta. An entire night of walking brought me to the town the next day, and here I met up with my uncle, who was heading up a team of road repairers. Surprised at seeing me walking alone, he asked where I was going. I explained that I was on my way to Wonoroto, my grandparent’s home; as my grandmother had also died. I was going to visit their graves. He nodded, but told me to visit him in town after I had visited the tombs.

The village was almost deserted and the bushes and weeds had turned it into a jungle. Many people had died during the three and half years of Japanese occupation. It was a peculiar phenomenon that whatever people planted during those years turned yellow, then brown, and then withered and died. For this reason, so many died of starvation. Others, however, died from *Romusha* (forced labor).

Although a cousin of my grandmother, together with her husband and children, faithfully took care of my grandparents’ home, I did not stay there but at their graves. I staved off hunger with trips into the village now and then to obtain a young coconut, and that was my only food. A clear river

ran near the cemetery, and here I bathed.

I do not remember just how long I stayed there, but at least a fortnight. Then, arriving at my uncle's house in town, I learned that he had received a letter from my father. I surmised that he had written my father after seeing me on the road. My father now requested him to send me back home. After a few days, I left my uncle's house and returned to my home by bus. My mother's eyes shone at the sight of me and presently she suggested I make haste to my father's office, as he was awaiting my return. From him, also, I received a warm welcome.

Now I noticed that the subject of my schooling was being studiously avoided by everyone in the family, as they obviously felt that their previous efforts to point me in that direction were responsible for my subsequent disappearances. My heart melted, I knew that it had always been my parents' wish to give their children a good education. During one of my usual nightly walks, I now decided to please them by completing my education—but in my own unconventional way. Now I needed money for my school books, and it was readily given. A trip to a second-hand book store produced all the books needed to finish my junior high school education. Discontinuing my nightly walks, I concentrated my energies on my studies. Still having the happiness and bliss from being close to God, I was able to study at least twenty hours a day. In only a few months' time, I passed the state examination as an "extraney" (non-school examinee) and received my diploma.

My parents could not believe it when I told them the news, but when I showed them the diploma, I got big hugs of happiness. My own happiness came not so much from getting the diploma as from a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction in being able to please my parents. After successfully completing junior high school, I completed high school in the same way. To my parents' relief and happiness, I earned my high school diploma in a year's time only, instead of the usual three years. Now they encouraged me to enter the University, explaining that they understood my wish to follow the spiritual path of my ancestors, but advised me to postpone it for later years as it was important at this time to get a good education for my future.

I followed their advice, but I really did overdo it; I devoted my time completely to my studies in the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences. Whatever spare time I had was spent in an active involvement in a students' movement. Having decided to postpone my spiritual life for later years, I no longer did my prayers and I forgot God. However, my beloved God still did care for me and left me alone to learn my lesson the hard way. My health deteriorated rapidly and, seen from the physical point of view, I was at the point of death when God finally saved me by guiding me to an unwanted meeting with Pak Subuh.

I had been told by my grandmother, and by other people that, during his young years, my father had also done a lot of prihatin. By the Grace of Almighty God, my father and mother were opened in Subud.

In 1972, while I was in Ottawa, my father died. It was not until two weeks later when I arrived in New York that I learned of it. After reading the letter and the telegram, I did a latihan. During the latihan, the soul of my father entered my body through my head. Indeed, even after being able to get rid of all the life forces, one still cannot return to heaven by one's self; the souls of one's ancestors must also be carried.

Bapak said that a father would automatically be promoted to the level of the spiritual development of his son. This is the reason why, in Java, the father of a governor is also addressed as Your Excellency the Governor, although the father's actual rank may only be that of a village head. And this custom or tradition is based on the truth in the spiritual real.

I was very happy to realize recently that the soul of my mother, who died a little over a year ago, was radiant with light.

When I was in Caracas, Venezuela, the members there took me to the house of Simon Bolivar. It had become a museum where people came to remember and admire and thank him for his deeds as the liberator (*el Libertador*) of Latin America. The following night, I actually met his soul. He came in a horse drawn carriage accompanied by his generals. A company of soldiers were in attendance. I was very happy to be greeted and welcomed to Latin America by him, because it meant my work there would not be hindered by obstacles from the spiritual world.

The character and behavior of an ordinary person is usually formed or influenced by his or her natural and cultural environment, but a person with a great soul is able to free himself and or herself from such influences and to change the world around him or her. His was no doubt a great soul.

In Paris, during the winter of 1973, I met another great soul—that of Napoleon Bonaparte—when I visited his tomb there, I felt and saw that his soul was bigger than the building containing his

tomb. He, too, had brought about important changes in his part of the world.

The power of his soul was able to move and influence millions of people. His courage induced courage amongst his soldiers. And without any training he could produce a comprehensive law and legal system, known later as Code Napoleon.

It is a pity, however, that all of his great successes caused him to overact, and overextend himself. He became arrogant and greedy and thus fell under the grip of the satanic forces. It is so easy for human beings to fall into the hands of the satans.

Once Pak Subuh told me the following story: There was once a very clever prophet. He would always discover every satanic being who wanted to tempt him, in whatever form they disguised themselves. As no one among the satans could make him fall into their traps, they decided to have a meeting. Many came with ideas of how to tempt this clever prophet, but none was considered adequate to break him down. Finally, a real clever guy came forward and asked to be given the chance to do the job. This clever satan did not disguise himself but just came to meet the prophet in his true nature. Upon meeting the prophet he said, "Oh my holy, noble prophet, I do not come here to tempt you because none of us could do so. So many of us have done so many things and tried so many tricks to trap you but no one has ever succeeded. I only come here on behalf of all the satans of this whole world to pay our respects and to compliment you. We have all agreed that there has never been a more clever prophet sent by God to this world. We all agree that you are the best and most clever prophet of all!"

This prophet was taken in by the praise of the satan and was proud of himself, and this pride caused him to fall.

One only needs to open books of history to know that several great souls have been born into this world, and they have brought about significant changes in the world around them. But the greatest change of all has always come with the birth of a prophet. A prophet changes the most potential of all creatures here on earth; he changes the life of man himself.

During my four year stay in the Western Hemisphere, I traveled extensively throughout North and South America. After completing a tour, I always looked forward to returning home again to Skymont—to the restful beauty of the surrounding mountains, and to the welcoming arms of my brothers and sisters there.

I was recalled by Bapak towards the end of 1973. My wife Rukmiwati and our two little children Harti Utami and Sutomo went to Indonesia in September of 1973. I followed a few months later after unwinding my business here.

The Subud community in Skymont gave me a great farewell party which lasted till dawn. Many of them were in tears. It was a real moving experience having to part from them after being together for so long.

But as the saying goes, when there is a beginning, there will also be an ending. Thus ended my four years mission to represent Bapak Muhammad Subud Sumohadiwidjoyo in this Western hemisphere as his ambassador.

EPILOGUE

By Livingston Dodson

Mas Prio has asked me to write a few words of explanation about Skymont, the camp in Virginia that forms the locale for the events described in Chapter XI. As a topic in Subud, it has always stood in need of an explanation. Why does Mas ask me to do the explaining, and not some other 'Joe Blow'? The ultimate answer has got to be because I am the culprit who found and later organized the purchase of this place.

Skymont was an aging camp when it was purchased by some Subud members in 1970. Its hey-day in the 1930's was as a rustic retreat for young people in church groups. There they would spend two weeks of the summer-hiking, canoeing, riding, swimming, studying the Bible, eating fried chicken on Sunday, and remembering it fondly in later years as a place of arcadian peace surrounded by a beautiful vista of mountains, woods and river. The mountains seem to form a protective barrier, isolating one temporarily from the left-behind routine of daily life with its attendant set of mixed influences.

When we bought the camp, we also bought the remnants of its business. The letterhead on the letterhead stationery showed a group of mountains touching some clouds, and the motto, "Skymont, where the mountains meet the sky." Evidently, the previous owners had not been above attaching a symbolic significance to the place, and to their endeavours there. The Hable family (an extended family of uncles, brothers and cousins) had all expended several lifetimes of service to Christian youth at Skymont. It was backbreaking work which yielded a modest income and gave them a sense of fulfillment. When the time came for them to sell out and retire, they were anxious to sell it to someone who continue to use it as a place of service in God's work.

Today, as of this writing, Skymont is a ruined camp, and that is the "good news." The "bad news" is that ownership has passed to an entrepreneur who intends an intensive development. The few people remaining there have received their formal eviction notices. They are living there on borrowed time. What better time, to tell some of its stories and explain some of its mysteries.

The chapter of our Subud community in Skymont is over.

What Skymont was for Mas Prio was a place where he became inspired. The fact that it is also an unsightly ruin is irrelevant. For example, as mentioned in the Introduction, Mas Prio received the inspiration to write this book while he was in Skymont. It was there that the inspiration came to initiate the project, and there that the steady flow of meaning that crystallized each chapter was received. Moreover, the book was the product of more skills than that involved in authorship. There was the support provided by the men, like Robert Stuart, and Mutahar Hickey, who made the large geodesic dome liveable once again by repairing the plumbing and heating and electrical systems; the driving skills of Robert Stuart and Simon Salzmann who managed to keep the logistical lines of communication open with the outside world over Skymont's almost impassable roads during the winter. Marisa Salzmann's Indonesian cooking sustained the team and is known as being sufficient in itself to bring on "mystical experiences of the third kind." Hosanna Stuart provided blankets, sleeping bags, and other general purpose mothering duties. Simon's photography, with the editing and typing skills of Maria Mattox and Hassanah Bligh, completed the veteran Skymont team, which organized itself under guidance, mutually received, to convey some good news to humankind.

Before proceeding to the more weird things in connection with Skymont, it should be pointed out that no one is under any obligation to believe a word of it.

By the way of a flash back in time, I am living in New York City in 1951, and a friend of mine, Watts Biggers, is telling me his dream of the night before. "You were in my dream last night. I saw you in a leather jacket, standing by the side of a country road. You had a brochure in your hand which I asked to read. It said, The Old Professor had read in a book about a certain spot on earth called 'The Place Where The Grass Reaches Up to Heaven.' The Old Professor and I went there and found that the information in the book was exactly correct."

In listening to my friend Watts, I had a sudden shock on hearing the formal name of this place. The reason for the shock was that my memory suddenly opened a door to a dream I had had several years before this.

In my dream, the story started with me riding in a 1930 Model A Ford being driven by some unknown friend. We were driving down a back country road in an area of wooden hills with higher

Inner Wisdom

mountains in the background. We were silently conscious of looking for a certain place that we would recognize if we could only lay eyes on it. At one point, my friend stopped the car and we decided to look further on foot. He went to the right side of the road and I went to the left side. After climbing through a barbed wire fence, I penetrated into the brush. I returned to the car with a feeling of enormous elation. I cried out several times, "I found it! I really found it!"

Evidently, the unknown friend driving the Model A Ford was the "Old Professor" referred to in Watt's dream.

I actually found the place in 1970. The motto, "Skymont where the mountains meet the sky," conveys the same meaning as "The Place Where The Grass Reaches Up to Heaven;" namely, a place where people can reach up in worship of God and where God responds by giving His grace, blessings, and inspiration.

Who is the Old Professor who drove the Model A Ford of 1930?

I drove down from Connecticut to Skymont to join the team who were working on the book.

After the last chapter of the book had been written, Mas came to me and said that he felt relieved as if he had just given birth to a baby. And he also said that he felt like an old man.

These statements opened my eyes and my awareness at the same time. The first thing that struck me was that only then did I realize who the Old Professor in my dreams was. He was standing there in front of me. He was Mas Prio's inner self. Searching with my mind, I could never figure out who this Old Professor was. It never occurred—in my mind—to identify the Old Professor as Mas Prio because physically Mas Prio was young and, as a result of receiving the Light of God, he even looked much younger than his actual age. However, there were moments when he looked old, especially when he was contemplating on a serious matter; and he looked very old when he stood there in front of me after completing the book. Being with the physical Mas Prio, one would never suspect that his inner is a priest and an old professor. Of course, it is now so obvious to me that only an old professor could write such a book. The Model A Ford of 1930 symbolizes Mas Prio's "outer," who was born in 1930.

Mas Prio's book was started on an afternoon the 12th of January and completed on Friday the 26th of February, 1982, at 3:00 p.m. How could a book so "loaded" be written in six weeks? Mas Prio would be the first to say that it was because he did not write it. All he did was pick up a pen, just like he picked up the chalk in front of his class of students a long time ago. He did not write the book the way an ordinary author writes a book. He just gave birth to the book.

As we took a stroll on the white snow one night, in the midst of the thicket on the east side of Skymont looking at the sky, Mas Prio said: "Skymont is now at its best."

The original, physical Skymont experience was limited and localized in time. That time is now receding further and further into the past. Outwardly Skymont is as lost and gone as ever was the case with Camelot.

But to our surprise, we find that the existential Skymont, the real Skymont, has never ceased to exist. It continues invisibly to live and function-with improvements-within our spiritual selves.

Inner Wisdom
(BACK COVER)

Inner Wisdom by Prio Hartono

The inner life which Dr. Hartono describes may be strange to many of his readers, but it is real for him. Each of us must find the way of our inner being. If we do not, our lives will be as superficial as claiming to have been everywhere on earth by taking a round-the-world flight and getting off the aircraft only at stop-over airports.

Varindra Vittachi

Dr. Hartono shares with us his nearly thirty years of direct spiritual encounter with the Power and Light of God. Recently and without any prior planning, he was suddenly inspired to write this book while visiting the United States, where he was staying at Skymont, a community nestled in Virginia's scenic Shenandoah Valley.

The book is in the form of a travelogue. But the distant lands in this case lie in the spiritual world. Scientists, spiritual seekers and curious alike will be deeply engaged by Dr. Hartono's Castaneda-like meetings with the people, places and things of the spiritual world. This is a book that helps us to develop our lost spiritual faculties for seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling and understanding the forgotten kingdom of God within each of us.

Dr. Prio Hartono is a writer, lecturer and successful businessman. He was born in Jakarta, Indonesia in 1930. He has doctorate degrees in Law and in the Social Sciences from the University of Indonesia. A near death experience, a radical healing, travels on behalf of the Subud Spiritual Brotherhood and its founder the late Bapak Muhammad Subuh, all contributed to transforming Dr. Hartono into an enlightened emissary for a new era. He is a visionary for an ever increasing global solidarity to be discovered in faithful obedience to that One, Universal Source of all love and creation.