



## STRENGTHEN YOUR WORSHIP

*Ibu Rahayu has sent this message as a response to Coronavirus. It is a quotation from Bapak's book Songs and Prayers of Bapak, the full text of which is available at [www.subudlibrary.net](http://www.subudlibrary.net)*



*Ibu Rahayu (Photo by Sahlan McKingley).*



*Bapak (Photo by Mikhail David).*

*Allah has given His teaching to man:  
Make an effort to strengthen your faith,  
Now when the world is experiencing a crisis.  
Strengthen your faith by way of worship  
Which is the only way for all of you.  
It can deflect dangers and catastrophes  
That would overtake you.  
This is what was taught by the Prophets,  
Among them Jesus Christ and Prophet Muhammad.  
Never put aside the power of God  
Which is in each one of you.  
In truth God loves all His creatures  
And will always protect, lead and guide each one of you.  
Therefore strengthen your worship of Almighty God.  
Alhamdu lillahi rabbil a'lamin  
May God be just and loving to His creatures.*

### SUBMISSIONS AND DONATIONS

Submissions to Subud Voice on any aspect of Subud life are welcomed. Send to Harris Smart, [subudvoice@gmail.com](mailto:subudvoice@gmail.com) We rely on donations to keep Subud Voice going. You can donate by going to the PAYMENTS button which is located in the toolbar at the top of the page. [www.subudvoice.net](http://www.subudvoice.net)

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# A MESSAGE AT THIS TIME OF PANDEMIC

*From Nahum Harlap, WSA Chair...*

Dear All,

By now most of us if not all are under restrictions preventing us from gathering at our halls for latihan.

Please let us congregate in time, if not in space - let's continue with our regular latihan at home, at the usual time.

In countries where there is just one time zone, perhaps the national helpers can set the time for a latihan when we congregate nationally so that we all do latihan at the same time. The extraordinary events around us touch us all and create opportunities to learn about ourselves and surrender that which needs surrendering.

Please use your time at home to read Bapak's talks, reflect and introspect - let this be a time when we double down on our commitment to grow and develop as human beings.

Please let us look after one another, make sure that those of us who may be frail or isolated are taken care of. Just as we can arrange to have latihan at the same time, we can organise conference calls through Skype or Zoom to keep in touch and verify that we are all safe and well taken care of.

May we all come out of this test healthy – and better human beings.  
God bless, Nahum



# Lockdown

*By Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM, April 13th 2020...*

Yes there is fear.  
Yes there is isolation.  
Yes there is panic buying.  
Yes there is sickness.  
Yes there is even death.  
But...

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise  
You can hear the birds again.  
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet  
The sky is no longer thick with fumes  
But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi  
people are singing to each other  
across the empty squares,  
keeping their windows open  
so that those who are alone  
may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland  
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.  
Today a young woman I know  
is busy spreading fliers with her number  
through the neighbourhood  
So that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples  
are preparing to welcome  
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary  
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting  
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way  
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality  
To how big we really are.  
To how little control we really have.  
To what really matters.  
To Love.

So we pray and we remember that  
Yes there is fear.  
But there does not have to be hate.  
Yes there is isolation.  
But there does not have to be loneliness.  
Yes there is panic buying.  
But there does not have to be meanness.  
Yes there is sickness.  
But there does not have to be disease of the soul  
Yes there is even death.  
But there can always be a rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.  
Today, breathe.  
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic >



## Brother Richard

I am a Capuchin Franciscan priest-friar, living and working in Ireland (mostly). Currently I am the Guardian of Ards Friary in Donegal which includes a large residential retreat centre. (More at [www.ardsfriary.ie](http://www.ardsfriary.ie)) I also teach Christian meditation and mindfulness and work with the Sanctuary Spirituality Centre in inner city Dublin. [www.sanctuary.ie](http://www.sanctuary.ie)

## GERMAN CONGRESS POSTPONED

The national team of Subud Germany has decided now that Subud Germany's national congress will be postponed to an indefinite date in the future. At this point in time it is not possible to say when this might be.

<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>  
Excellent analysis worldwide and country by country. It shows something the media don't mention: 472,000 approx cases so far (@ 26/03/2020), but 115,000 recovered. (336,000 active cases; 322,00 mild / 14,000 serious or critical; the worry is it's guys like us (over 70s etc) that are at risk.

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The birds are singing again  
The sky is clearing,  
Spring is coming,  
And we are always encompassed by Love.  
Open the windows of your soul  
And though you may not be able  
to touch across the empty square,  
Sing.

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## THE AUTO-IMMUNE OF NATURE

*Sahlan Momo writes...*

Hello Harris, hope you all are fine.

Just felt sensible to share with our community my five cents take on the situation. Thank you for the great work you are doing, stay connected, bug hug. Sahlan

Shifting the plane, changing the paradigm.

The call is loud and clear: Crisis! The gradual transition from one level to the next, a symptom of change, the burst of a given equilibrium thriving to gain a new balance.

The old is fading away, the new is emerging. The trial and error mechanism is challenging the environment, memory is turning experience into knowledge to boost creativity as a problem-solver. A collective shift to higher awareness, collective intelligence, collectiveness, connectedness, transmutation, technology, inter-being, solidarity... moving forward.

In this perspective, Covid-19 is nothing but the auto-immune response of Nature to the current global mindset to disrupt simultaneously the current social, cultural and economic fabrics, a systemic change, the surge of the feminine – women are less affected than man – collective enlightenment, more than resilient, autofragile.

There is a sense that what all we can do are conscious actions, and that awareness and culture come first than markets. So keep calm and stay tuned to high frequency, do the latihan, remotely or synchronised – time is an illusion of the thinking mind ;-), – take good care, stay safe and awake, it will pass and we will be stronger than ever

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## ASSISI UPDATE

*Hannah de Roo, Zone 3 Representative, writes...*

Buon giorno! While waiting to see how the situation with the corona virus will develop in the next few months, we keep working on preparations for the Assisi gathering for August.

The decision to hold the gathering at the planned dates, or to postpone to a later date, will not be taken before the end of May. We have a solid cancellation policy in place and full refunds are guaranteed until July 1st.

Zone 3 KC's who stayed in Assisi for a KC meeting in February enjoyed a happy time there. They appreciated the welcoming staff, the peaceful atmosphere in and around Domus Pacis and the beautiful old town of Assisi.

After coming back, they encouraged everyone at home and in their groups to book for our gathering! However, registrations have come to a standstill because of the current situation and we decided to prolong the early bird fee deadline to June 15th for now. There is no need to cancel your registration at this time, as full refunds are assured, and we will keep you informed of any changes and decisions.

The programme is already well underway, and this is what we've worked on so far: Raphaella Sapir has agreed to set up a family program and will be supported by Audrey Lonergan and her family from Australia. They are still looking for one more experienced programme leader.

We plan to hire a soccer field for outdoor sports (special request from the Bustillos R.), and an indoor swimming pool is nearby. We are also planning an art exhibition inside the hotel. Shuttles will be organised to pick you up from the airports of Rome and Perugia. You will receive an email closer to your date



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*We keep working on  
preparations for the Assisi  
gathering in August...*

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of arrival, to sign up for these services.

One of the highlights will be the International Day with a presentation by the World Congress Organising Team 2022/23, proposing a location for the next world congress in Kalimantan, as well as a question and answer session with the WSA chair and executive team.

New MSF trustees will be tested and elected at Assisi; please note that the deadline for nominations is April 10. Other than delegates meetings there will be many activities organised by the wings, as well as various workshops: Enterprise incubation, Quest tasters, SIHA activities, Centerprises/SubudSpaces, Women in Enterprise, Mental illness and crisis/difficult behaviour in Subud, Youth activities, Susila Dharma presentations, Subud educators, and more!

On one of the evenings we will have a performance by Louiza Sofianopoulou, a professional singer from Greece. We're also planning to copy the format of a 'Culture Couch', by interviewing several members in front of an audience about their life and experiences as a Subud member.

And of course, there will be excursions to several places of interest in this beautiful part of Italy. For a draft programme, please go to our website: [subudassisi2020.org](http://subudassisi2020.org)

At the moment of writing we have registered over 300 participants, including around 30 children. Members from ALL nine zones in our Subud community have registered, many from Britain and the USA, but also from Australia, Indonesia, Canada and Latin-America. We still have rooms available in Domus Pacis, specially for families and little groups (4 -6 persons), while people who prefer a single or double room will be allocated in nearby hotels at walking distance (max. 5 minutes). Meals will be taken all together in the restaurant of our main hotel.

Let's hope – God willing – we can meet in person this August. ●

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## SPONSORING!

### *A GREAT WAY TO SUPPORT SUBUD... AND OURSELVES*

*Robiyan Easty, Assisi Sponsoring Campaign coordinator, writes...*

However sincerely we want to follow Bapak's advice on giving to Subud, making that step to open our wallets or our cheque books is sometimes not so easy. We have bills to pay and life has become expensive. 'I'll do it tomorrow... or maybe next week when my salary or pension arrives. Better wait to see what unexpected expenses come up.'

Hannah de Roo, Zone 3 Rep, was thinking of how to raise money for delegates and others to attend the Bi-Zonal meeting in Assisi, Italy. She initiated a Sponsorship Campaign, which is already getting a lot of support and might be a much easier way for most of us to contribute. You could offer almost anything, from a stay in your BnB, to unique wearable works of art, or a set of your books. Here is a new way to contribute that could be rolled out in other zones if it is successful, and it has made a very promising start.

In essence it is very simple. You take something you think would be valuable to others and don't mind parting with and offer the sale proceeds to Subud. The advertising will be done for you and you will get some valuable free publicity as well as great satisfaction, like that coming from giving presents to loved ones (Don't we love Subud (-:?)

WE HAVE ALREADY HAD 8 OFFERS TO SPONSOR the bi-zonal meeting in ASSISI, ITALY. Go to the meeting website to view them: <https://www.subudassisi2020.org/>

Pics and full details of all the offers are on the meeting website, and we are expecting more to roll in.

You can join in this fast moving campaign in two ways...

1. You can contribute something of value for sale
2. You can buy one of the existing offers.

This is a challenging time, with WSA having to cut all its budget lines by 50% on average, including IH travel. For sure we can be equal to the challenge and this is one way of rising to it.

Here is the website URL again <https://www.subudassisi2020.org/>

Be aware that all the offers are limited and may even have been purchased by the time you read this. First come, first served, so don't delay if one of them really attracts you.

NOTE: The meeting is at the beginning of August, so we have great hopes that the Covid-19 pandemic will be over by then. If by any chance the meeting had to be cancelled, the proceeds from this campaign would be applied to other Subud projects, meetings, etc. ●



# COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

*A second chance for women and girls in the DR Congo*

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), illiteracy and lack of quality education are huge contributors to women's poverty. In rural areas, this problem is particularly acute: teenage marriage and pregnancy are common, and schools are costly, unsafe and overcrowded, leading many girls to abandon their studies at a very early age.

This is why Susila Dharma has begun plans to build Community Learning Centers (CLCs) in the Congo. These will provide quality basic education, specialized skills training and support to women and girls who want to set up their own businesses. In a recent trip to the DRC, Virginia Hamida Thomas (SDIA Executive Director) supported Susila Dharma Congo to hold events in several villages with a view to getting community members' input on the need for and design of the proposed Centers.

SDIA and SD Congo are being supported by SD Canada, SD Britain, SD USA and the Buchanan International Fund to build the Centers, but still need to raise half the money for them. The cost of building one Community Learning Center is \$100,000, and SDIA's goal is to build three.

To celebrate International Women's Day on 8th April, SDIA launched an appeal to fundraise for these CLCs – and it is not too late to chip in! Your donation – of any size, large or small! – will be matched dollar for dollar – up to the fundraising goal of \$150,000 USD. You can donate via this link:

<https://www.susiladharma.org/international-womans-day-2020/> Thank you!



*Women in Kisantu express their joy for the Community Learning Centre. Photo: Papy Kabondo*



*Ema Gonzalez Thomas.*



*Young women at an event to gain insight into community needs for CLCs. Photo: Raphaele Chapleau*

## A QUEST EXPERIENCE

*Andrew Holloway writes about his experience of the YES Quest and plans for the future...*

In December/January I was booked onto the Quest Facilitators Training programme in Australia followed by the Quest itself. After all I reasoned, if I am going to be involved in helping with the Quest programme in some way I had better be able to speak from first-hand experience.

I believed that Quest was not for older folk like me, rather it was for young people seeking direction and meaning for their lives. I learnt later this is far from the truth.

To start at the beginning, I got an email out of the blue from Peter Jenkins inviting me to participate in the developing the Quest programme. I was intrigued. This led to me attending a meeting in Orgiva in May 2019 with around twenty people, mainly members of the Orgiva group, like me exploring their understanding of the Quest and their relationship to the programme.

Peter Jenkins and Roland Fraval were both attending and had come all the way from Australia to be present. Something clicked inside so here I am some months later on a long haul flight to Brisbane.

The venue, Sine Cera, comprised a group of wooden cabins with verandas, overlooking the rainforest in the Border Ranges national park in NSW, two hours south of Brisbane. It had a creek we could swim in, and in the morning the melodic calls of the Bell Birds filled the valley. See <https://www.sinecera.org.au/>

Over the course of eight days sixteen of us came together in what was for me, and I believe all of us, a >



*We were all courageous, authentic, vulnerable and magnificent...*



profound and deeply affecting experience. Our ages ranged from late twenties to eighty. For a short while we left ordinary life behind and entered into an immersive experience.

The programme is carefully designed by Peter Jenkins, Marcus Mackay, Marlena Bassler and others and continues to evolve. It uses myth, storytelling, ceremony, visualisation, affirmation, intention and agreement to create a space that is safe for all participants to journey together, a journey of reflection on what is, an exploration of what is yet to be, and an understanding of what is necessary for each to build a bridge between the two realities.

We all had 'aha!' moments when something clicked, mingled with moments of sadness and regret, and moments of joy and hilarity. We told stories, danced a lot, sang, howled at the moon, and went on an adventure together. We became more present with each other as time passed and the pressures and worries of life fell away and a feeling of community grew.

Do I hear you saying, 'that is definitely not for me!' Well of course it is a little scary and challenging, but becomes much easier when you make an intention to suspend the familiar judgements of self: 'I can't do that', or 'I might look stupid', and commit to immerse oneself in the experience. After all when everyone is in the same boat 'what's to lose?' and better still, 'what's to gain?'

What emerges is an understanding that underlies our shared human experience; when we give ourselves permission to become vulnerable and be truly present, we become able to reveal an authentic, sometimes hidden part of ourselves, and in shining our light we give others permission to do so as well. It is infectious, in fact it is highly contagious. During our time at Sine Cera we all shone and shared our 'aha moments' together. We were all courageous, authentic, vulnerable and magnificent.

The Facilitator Training was very challenging for all of us and brought us closer to an understanding of what we each bring, and what we each need to leave behind if we are to be effective in this work. It is a difficult job and preparation and experience is essential. We all came to appreciate and admire Roland and Marlena, whose skill and commitment to the Quest process was extraordinary.

Having experienced a Quest for myself, I would like to run a Quest here in the UK, open to all. For old and young, for those seeking direction in their lives, or perhaps for those who need time to reflect and refocus. I thought later in the year perhaps around Autumn time. There are grants available for those who may need help. If you are interested, please contact me. M: 07740 874208 or E: [andrew@greenoakcarpentry.co.uk](mailto:andrew@greenoakcarpentry.co.uk)

Some of the Quest team will be present in the big gathering in Assisi and will be discussing our plans there at this time. Do come and join us.



*Andrew Holloway.*



*At Sine Cera, a creek to swim in.*

## LATEST FROM MSF

*From the MSF e-news...*

The trustees and staff of the Muhammad Subud Foundation (MSF) would like to update you on developments over the past several months.

MSF held its 2019 annual meeting in October at Wisma Subud in Cilandak, Indonesia, concurrent with the meeting of the World Subud Council (WSC). This gave MSF the opportunity to present details of the Foundation's mission and operations to the new Zone Reps (who serve as Directors of the World Subud Association and members of the WSC), and to hear their concerns.

The trustees spent a great deal of time reviewing grant applications and awarded housing grants to Subud Alpujarra, Spain with up to USD 20,000, and Subud Portland, Oregon, USA with USD 8,000.

In addition, MSF awarded USD 4,600 to a Susila Dharma-supported project, "I Protect Me," based in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. "I Protect Me" offers resilience and self-defense training to children under age 11 in

after-school programs. We give special thanks to Susila Dharma International who supported and collaborated in the evaluation of all projects submitted, thus facilitating the final decision made by MSF.

Trustees and staff members spent many days reviewing the Foundation's budget and investment strategy for 2020, at a time when many economists are forecasting a possible global slowdown.

Michael Heathcote (Treasurer) and Helene Jelman (Portfolio Manager) worked in a ten-year spending projection where we concluded that if MSF continues to distribute funds at its current level, with low-interest rates and no guarantee of future bequests, there will be no growth in the endowments, and MSF will begin to severely deplete its principal. We believe this scenario would breach trustees' legal and fiduciary responsibility, as well as the trust put in MSF by donors over the decades.

This sobering financial reality was presented to the WSC, as was the resulting 2020 MSF budget. Of necessity, the new budget significantly reduces projected grant allocations to WSA activities such as international helper travel and international archives. In a private meeting, Ibu Rahayu advised MSF that it cannot be the primary funder of World Subud Association activities.

The trustees did, however, approve USD 60,000 for housing grants which correspond to a reduction of 47% with respect to the amount budgeted in 2019, and USD 3,000 for translation services to support non-english speaking trustees, if a volunteer translator cannot be found.

**A few organizational notes:** MSF trustees approved Renato Sotelo from Santiago de Chile, to serve another year under contract as the MSF Executive Director. And we bade a sad but grateful farewell to Lillian Shulman. Over the past 12 years, Subud members around the world have come to know and appreciate Lillian's diligent work as MSF's grant administrator. She resigned on December 31, 2019.

Also, Lydia Farrand resigned her position as MSF recording secretary in order to devote more time to her work with the WSA Finance Committee, and as Communications Coordinator for Subud USA.

Many of their responsibilities will now be taken on by Renato as well as a new independent contractor, Amanda Rivera from Santiago de Chile, who began as MSF's Administrative Consultant in 2020.

Finally, the call has gone out for nominations of new trustees. There is a new selection process this year. Review of nominees and recommendations for candidates will be conducted by a committee consisting of Zone Reps/WSA Directors and current/continuing MSF trustees. The deadline for applications is April 10.

The application and details about the required supporting documents have been posted on the Muhammad Subuh Foundation website and have been sent to national committees around the world. Testing by the international helpers, and a final vote by the zone reps, will take place later this year.

We hope to be in more frequent contact with Subud members around the world this year, and encourage everyone to visit the MSF website to learn more about the Foundation that bears Bapak's name, whose mission is to safeguard the long-term assets of Subud and continue the mission that Bapak was given.

Please visit us at <https://www.msubuhfoundation.org>

We wish everyone a happy, blessed 2020, with good health, happiness, and peace!





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## THE WCOT MEETS WITH RUNGAN SARI STAKEHOLDERS

*Osanna Vaughn, WCOT Communications Coordinator, writes...*

On Saturday, February 22, 2020, members of the World Congress Organising Team met with representatives of the various Subud entities functioning within or close to Rungan Sari. The purpose was to get a sense of how each of these entities could support with facilities and services the option of the World Congress being centred around Rungan Sari (rather than in the city of Palangka Raya).

The representatives present came from the Bina Cita Utama (school), Borneo International Football Foundation, PTPCB (MSF Centre, etc., and land holders), Rungan Sari Meeting Center and Resort, Yayasan Usaha Mulia (social/agriculture projects), Yayasan Tambuhak Sinta (social/governance projects), Kalimantan Huma Betang (construction), Borneo Escape (tourism), WOW Borneo (tourism), Yayasan Permakultur Kalimantan (agriculture), the Rungan Sari Subud group, as well as Hannah Baerveldt, the WSA Treasurer; and there was full consensus in support of hosting the congress around Rungan Sari.

All agreed that attending members would have a unique experience here, with a congress centred around the latihan and putting the latihan into practice, in a beautiful setting surrounded by nature, home to a large Subud group and community, with members active in every field imaginable.

After each representative spoke about what they can offer at this point, they also commented on future plans of growth and expansion that could directly impact hosting the congress. The WCOT will be sending out a survey for all these entities to fill out, covering all the logistics, potential costs and so on.

By the end of June 2020, the WCOT aims to submit optional proposals for where in Central Kalimantan the congress could be held, for the World Subud Council to make its decision. The intention is then to officially launch the 2022 World Congress in Kalimantan during the Zone 3 & 4 Gathering in Assisi this coming August.



*WCOT coordinator Rusdi Bustillo speaks with shareholders at the Rungan Sari Resort and Meeting Center.*

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## EXPERIENCING THE WORLD LATIHAN

*Anisah Furness, Chair of Subud Melbourne, writes...*

Yesterday, a few of us participated in the World Latihan at Clarinda. It was at 7:00am and felt quite adventurous to set the alarm so early and begin the drive along Springvale Rd.

I was almost the only car in the semi dark hearing the sound of birds, so surprising! A few of us arrived at the property to see the beginnings of a sunrise. It was a lovely experience and then to know that we were joining in a latihan with overseas family, Subud family and friends.

The breakfast of Bircher muesli with berries and nuts, brioche buns with apricots and cream cheese called Czech Kolaches, good coffee and tea was enjoyed alongside and a calm, quiet chat together. This was followed by a few words from Susila Budhi Dharma and then the day began.

The link: <https://www.subudworldnews.com/events.html>

Next month it will be at 1:00pm, April 5th. Maybe we can make this a monthly event in the calendar.

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## KSG NEWSLETTER

*Andrew Clague writes to introduce the latest issue of the Kalimantan Support Group Newsletter...*

Greetings All, Not too much text this time but I hope the photos from my Jan/Feb visit will give some idea of life and activities in Rungan Sari.



*Photo: Sehat Cruises – Launch of a New Ocean-Going Sailing Boat, The Sehat Elona (Photo Ferdinand)*

To see the Newsletter, click here...

<https://www.subudvoice.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/KSG-Visit-Report2020.pdf>

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## WORLD CONGRESS LOGO SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE EXTENDED

*The WCOT informs...*

We are very grateful to those members who have already submitted World Congress Kalimantan 2022 logo design proposals, but unfortunately, we have still received too few to have a broad enough selection for the jury to choose from.

We're not sure why this is, but maybe the word has not spread as much as we would like, so we are appealing to you all to help us: maybe by speaking specifically to Subud members you know who are graphic artists. Also, for yourself or anyone you may suggest this to, please remember that there's nothing saying that you can't submit more than one idea.

Anyway, all things considered, we have decided to extend the submissions deadline to April 15, 2020, and we really hope this will bring in many more logo designs.

For details of the basic requirements and guidelines, please check the information on the Subud World Congress 2022 Kalimantan Facebook page, or ask for details from [osanna.wcot2022@subud.org](mailto:osanna.wcot2022@subud.org) ●

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## THE ATMOSPHERE IN 1950

*The second in a series of three articles by Anthony Bright-Paul about the arrival of the latihan in the UK in 1957...*

No, this is not about Climate, but about the atmosphere immediately after the War. I cannot remember the exact dates, but I do well remember that rationing was just about ceasing by

that time. After the war had ended in 1945 food rationing had continued for a longish time. By 1950 food rationing was off.

Huge posters of 'The Outlaw' were showing at the Odeon, Marble Arch. Wimbledon was back on, and Asboth the Hungarian was the last competitor to wear long trousers, as he beat Sturgess the South African and one of the favourites for the title. I should know, as I was there on my first visit to Wimbledon.

Hyde Park corner drew great crowds as members of the Peace Pledge Union mounted their soap boxes and gave the crowd an earful. But the euphoria of after war years was still very strong. A lot of soldiers had their new issued suits and were looking for work. What the hell were they to do after six years of war and no qualifications to speak of? Many turned to selling Life Insurance or the new-fangled Dictaphones with a circular red band on which to record.

In the field of the spirit the Theosophists were claiming that Krishnamurti was the new Avatar, if not the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, while Krishnamurti himself was quietly playing down all such extravagant claims.

Sri Ramakrishna in India had died in Dakshineswar, near Calcutta, but his pupil Swami Vivekananda had travelled to the United States to the Parliament of Religions, where he was the star turn. Aldous Huxley and Gerald Heard were writing about the Vedanta Philosophy, so the idea that all religions lead to God was born. Mysticism was the in thing.

Somehow or other I got to meetings of a Swami Ghananda. I had thought then that I would that I would go to India, put on an Ochre Robe and become a Sannyasin, but Swami Ghananda was wont to dissuade me.

At his meetings I met with Lewis Parker and Arend Vos. Lewis was eating carrots at the time while working in the City. Everyday he walked from Earls Court where he lived to the City. When he walked back, he spent some time in meditating on what might have disturbed him during the day. He claimed to have raised Kundalini, making the Chakras go hot then cold. Arend Vos had found a teacher and was tying himself in knots becoming adept at all the most difficult of the HathaYoga postures or asanas.

In London, Watkins Bookshop in the Charing Cross Road was a Mecca for all Seekers. While I had been a teacher for one term in a Prep School in Sheffield, I had joined in with a Friends Group, the Quakers, the Society of Friends. With them I was to go walking in the Derbyshire Dales and it was there that one Friend had >



*The first Subud World Congress at Coombe Springs in 1959.*

loaned me 'In Search of the Miraculous' by P.D. Ouspensky.

I read this book by forced apriles within four days. I had to invigilate for a pupil taking an exam at half term, while the school was closed, and on account of my reading late into the night I arose late and missed the pupil first of all.

When I arose however the pupil did his exam all right and all went well. However, when the Headmaster returned, I was summoned to his study. When I confessed that I had arisen late his wrath knew no ends. 'You are a failure' he yelled, 'a miserable failure.' However, that did not stop my taking his very good-looking secretary to the cinema – so much for 'Woman and Gold'.

It was dear Mr Watkins himself of Watkins Bookshop who told me of a certain John Godolphin Bennett who had a number of pupils in a large house near Kingston-on-Thames and gave me the address. The result was that I arrived one Sunday as instructed, together with my friends Lewis Parker, Charles Higham and later on Arend Vos.

On our first visit I met the ever-enigmatic Pierre Elliot. Then we joined a group of men sawing up logs, while we were instructed to keep our attention on the sensation of our left foot. When the bell rang for lunch, we joined with some forty or fifty people in the dining room at trestle tables. Then Mr Bennett arrived and sat in huge red chair, with his wife Polly at his side. There was no chatter as everyone was engaged in some mysterious exercises of which we wot not.

### The Work

So began my excursion into the Work and which lead to my being invited to live at Coombe Springs itself. I took to living in a community like a duck to water. The exercises that we were given to do each fortnight at our Group Meetings I did assiduously. There was always a morning exercise, which took about twenty minutes, and then exercises throughout the day, like remembering oneself upon the hour every hour till 6PM.

Why am I telling you all this since this is an article for Subud Voice? It is to give you who are new in Subud some idea of the atmosphere back in 1950.

Mr Gurdjieff had just died in Fontainebleau at his Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man. Mr Ouspensky had broken away from Gurdjieff and had his own pupils at Lyne, which incidentally included Ronimund von Bissing. There were several other Groups entirely independent.

Once a year we all went up to London to the Orthodox Russian Church, where there were no pews, and we all stood in the middle with candles, while the priest conducted the service in memory of Georgy Ivanovich Gurdjieff.

On these occasions a file of about eight ladies would enter, headed by Miss Jane Heap. Then would follow Maurice Nicholls' group, then that of Dr Kenneth Walker. None of these Groups smiled at or talked to one another, especially not to John Bennett's young men. Why? In the Work we were not allowed to divulge our exercises. We were sworn to secrecy, as it were.

John Bennett however had committed a cardinal sin. He had lectured publicly at Denison House in the Vauxhall Bridge Road. He had gathered some hundreds of followers in a short while. From the point of view of Ronimund von Bissing he was a loose cannon, who had been kicked out of the Ouspensky Groups and who had taken upon himself to publicise the Work and above all the massive tome called 'All and Everything.' He had not observed secrecy.

### Fast Forward now to 1957

The various leaders of the Groups were lost without the dynamic leadership of M. Gurdjieff himself. They had heard of a strange movement in Indonesia. Rogge is still alive and can add his witness. Husein Rofé had been opened in Jogjakarta – here was the man the followers of Pak Subuh were expecting.

Husein Rofé after being opened sometime went first to Japan, where he opened several members – I believe that Rin Jubishi is still alive today. Then he went to Hong Kong. Then following a letter from Bapak, Hussein went on a momentous journey to Cyprus. This was in answer to a letter from Meredith Starr. He >



*Bapak and Ibu at Coombe Springs.*

“ *Bennett gave a lecture, the like of which I had never heard before,...* ”

opened Meredith. Actually, much later when I had become very friendly with Husein he told me about this opening.

From there Husein proceeded to England where he opened Ronimund von Bissing and he in turn opened his wife. Bennett heard on the grapevine of this movement in Java and he met Husein in the Channel Islands.

Bennett did not really care for the Levantine looking Rofé with his gold watches and his sardonic air. He flew to America to consult with Madam Ouspensky, who was still alive. He returned home via Manchester, where I met with him, and where he ordered two huge lamb chops with the Maitre Hotel looking on.

He entrusted me with getting together a public meeting in Manchester. We were to discard all normal precautions and do everything possible to publicise this meeting. Little did I know that by this time Bennett had already been opened by Husein Rofé. I may be little adrift here in the exact chronological order.

By this time in 1957 I was a sort of de facto leader of the Manchester Group. The active members rallied round so that when Bennett returned, he gave a lecture the like of which I had never heard before, to a crowd of over two hundred people.

Pierre Elliot and Vivien used to visit the Manchester Group occasionally in order to teach M. Gurdjieff's movements. So, it happened that on this weekend I travelled down to London with Pierre in his accustomed enigmatic mode.

There would be a visitor at Coombe Springs, he declared. I guessed at Madame de Salzman, the leader of the French Groups in Paris. Perhaps Lise Tracoll who was taking the movement classes? Or Alfred Etievan-Etieval? No, Pierre would give no clue, save that he evinced a strange liking for Indonesian music.

At the Group meeting on Saturday afternoon Elizabeth was at pains to explain that Help had arrived! that M. Gurdjieff had always been interested in India, but not British India, but Dutch India or Indonesia. We were at an impasse. I was not, but she assured me that this new exercise could be compared to the opening of the Higher Emotional Centre. It was, she declared, right up my street.

### The Opening

Although a few others like Bob Prestie had been opened up in Rofé's flat, on the Sunday night I found that I was in a group of fifteen, who were to attend the first latihan kejiwaan at Coombe Springs, since we had to catch trains to far-off places.

So after a short talk by Mr Bennett himself, who told us to take off our shoes and watches, we went into the dining room that had been cleared of all the tables, and a whole lot of rugs were laid across the floor. Pak Subuh was in the room already, together with Icksan and Husein Rofé and one other Indonesian.

“ I was in such a turmoil, I decided to say nothing... ”

We were formed into a rough circle, told to stand loose and to close our eyes. Pak Subuh spoke a few words, which I don't remember exactly, save for the fact that he mentioned 'worshipping God'. God? We never mentioned God at Coombe. We talked about self-remembering, self-observation and of the possibility of having one's own 'I' after prolonged Work on oneself. What was all this about God?

After the shortest of preambles Bapak said in English I believe, 'Begin'. Then it began. Not quietly, not serenely, but an immediate uproar of voices speaking in foreign tongues, which sounded Arabic, in what seemed to me to be an agony of supplication.

I knew instantly that I was present at a Great Force, but instead of standing loose I tensed up. In the meantime, the friends whom I had known particularly well over a period of seven years, began to pad about, someone wept aloud as if his soul was torn in two, while yet another laughed as at an enormous joke.

Suddenly there was one word 'Finish.' We opened our eyes, filed out of the room, avoiding the enquiring glances of those gathered in the hall.

I could not speak. I boarded the train for Waterloo, crossed London and caught the night train to Manchester. What was I to tell the Group in Manchester? I was in such a turmoil that I decided to say nothing.

In spite of my anguish, in spite of my misgivings, I caught the train back south every weekend, for about six weeks. Then it happened, but that must be my next article.

[anthony.bright@ntlworld.com](mailto:anthony.bright@ntlworld.com)



*The Djamichunatra, a nine-sided building designed according to Gurdjieff principles. Later used for Subud latihans and Bapak talks.*

# COWLEY ROAD

*Story by Sebastian Paemen...*

I popped into Bodrum for a bowl of lentil soup after sunset prayers at Central Oxford mosque tonight. Bodrum is a small and lively Turkish family restaurant where the tables are so close to each other that it is nearly impossible not to talk to the person sitting next to you. ‘



The food is good and cheap, and the waiters are friendly which are the reasons why it's very popular and always full of people. There is a big urn with Turkish tea which flows freely all day long and a glass is put on your table without having to ask for it.

You'll find a cross-section of the Muslim world in Bodrum: Turks, Pakistanis, Malaysians, Arabs, etc, while it's also popular with Eastern- and Southern Europeans. Students like it too. ‘

I was just starting on my soup when this elderly Italian next to me said "Sei Italiano?" -'Are you Italian?' I am familiar with this question as I seem to look Italian - courtesy of my mother's Italian genes. I had it a lot when I was younger but not so much nowadays.

"You look so familiar" he said and kept trying to have a conversation in Italian. "Where is your family from? I am from Abruzzo."

"Well", I said, "part of my family comes from Como, but that was 200 years ago", after which he gave up speaking Italian and we continued in English.

He pointed out how similar this Turkish restaurant was to places in the South of Italy; the informality and lively noisiness, even some of the food. "Have you tried the lamb shanks? Delizioso!"

After a while a young man who'd been talking to one of the waiters at the back of the restaurant came up to us and said "Shall we go dad?"

"This is my son Marcello. Please meet my new friend Sebastiano. Maybe I'll see you here next week, yes?" he said before he left.

"Insha'Allah" I nearly replied but just in time realised this was the wrong cultural context.

I finished my tea and left not long afterwards. Outside on my way to the mosque's car park I passed by a small group of drug addicts who often hang out on the corner of Cowley Rd and Manzil Way.

"Good evening sir" one of them, a gangly fellow in his mid-twenties, said. I have a reasonably developed sixth sense and tend to intuitively feel when I should stay away from people. This time I just felt calm and relaxed, so I stopped and greeted him back.

"Do you like Cowley Road?" he said. I confirmed. "Do you go up town a lot?" (I assumed he meant North Oxford, the affluent part of town of Inspector Morse fame.)

"No, not so much" I replied, "I prefer Cowley".

"Yes, me too. Life is more real here, innit? People are more real here. You're a good man sir, take care."

"You're a good man too", I said, "you take care as well".

He smiled. I liked him and we shook hands after which I continued walking to my car. I felt filled with a warm feeling by this little encounter. Just a small touch of common humanity which connected us for a brief moment.

Outwardly our lives couldn't have been more different but underneath we are just two human beings trying to cope with life in this world the best we can in our own way.

Typically, Cowley Road, these unexpected things happen there. I agreed with him, life is somehow more real in places like this. That's why I like it so much. ●

# TUPENNY OPERA

"It's challenging to categorize us. We struggle with it ourselves."

Thus say the Australian musical duo, Tupenny Opera, who have just released their second CD of original music, "Tell Them We're Dreaming". More than just a duo, Tupenny Opera is a concept, an idea, a dream.

Tupenny Opera are Maya Sapir and Dave Weir, who met far from their birthplaces (he Australia, she Israel), married and made sweet music thereafter.

"Audiences from Australia to Europe, to the Middle East and America



have enjoyed Tupenny Opera's quirky eclectic mix of self-penned songs. From Burlesque opera to highly inventive pop, from the romantic to the political, this is music that traverses broad stylistic landscapes. Maya Sapir's voice is the instrument of her feelings; Dave Weir weaves voice and guitar to create rich and inventive textures. Together they harmonise to paint vivid pictures of beauty and mystery, love, loss and hope." The Echo, Byron Bay.

"Those who haven't experienced the force of Tupenny Opera will discover an act of intensity and quality that resists easy categorisation. Emotions run through their songs via two expressive vocals and inventive guitars and bass, with some operatic splashes and theatrical 'fizz' thrown in for good measure."

### Ukitopia Arts Collective

Dave and Maya met in the mid-90s at Southern Cross University, where they were both doing their BA in Contemporary Music. A musical connection was born and a love child as well.

A few years ago, they broadened the terms of their commitment to encompass their musical duo, Tupenny Opera. From their formation for the 'Epiphany Arts' event at Stokers Siding, Australia, Tupenny Opera took their quirky eclectic mix of self-penned songs to France in 2008. There they delighted Gallic sensibilities at the Festival Le Camailis and a variety of venues around the country.

Audiences from Australia to Europe, in the Middle East and America have enjoyed their quirky eclectic mix of self-penned songs. From Burlesque opera to highly inventive pop, from the romantic to the political, this is passionate music that traverses broad stylistic landscapes.

Maya Sapir's voice is the instrument of her feelings; Dave Weir weaves voice and guitar to create rich and inventive textures. Together they harmonise to paint vivid pictures of beauty and mystery, love, loss and hope.

For the past several years this couple have been mixing an eccentric brew of original songs. In a live setting, two vocals, guitars and bass weave compelling textures and melodies behind lyrics that celebrate life, ponder the universe, rail against madness and bow at the feet of beauty.

Their second album, "Tell Them We're Dreaming" again brings a diverse range of styles and attitudes, this time enriched by full studio production. Some of the songs are symphonic soundscapes in their musical complexity while others remind you of simple folk tunes. Some songs are haunting evocations of mythic journeys of the spirit while others focus on current political and social issues. The only way to "get" this uncategorizable duo is hear their music.

To hear "Tell Them We're Dreaming" go to [tupennyopera.bandcamp.com](http://tupennyopera.bandcamp.com)



Tupenny Opera are Maya Sapir and Dave Weir.

## IZELLAH INDONESIAN DEBUT

Izella made her Indonesian debut in January this year, releasing 'Hello', written for her by Melly Goeslaw, one of Indonesia's leading singer/songwriters and a household name.

In doing so, Izella became the first ever Australian to record and release a song in Bahasa, The release received extensive media attention throughout Indonesia - on radio, TV, print and online.

The music video for 'Hello' is available on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrhGNTenqvc>



## A LESSON IN RAMADAN

*Rachman Mitchell writes...*

Shortly after we arrived at Wisma Subud in late 1967 we were called by Bapak at 3 am in the morning to gather in the old latihan hall. It was the 21st day of Ramadan and Bapak explained that this was the day when the Prophet Muhammad, who was fasting in a cave alone outside the city of Mecca first began receiving the Quran 14 centuries ago.

A few days later while we were gathered together before latihan he asked Asikin Alwi and myself to stand

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up and receive both the reason to do the fast and the benefit.

I felt an intensification of my latihan and at the same time of worship and said so. Bapak simply added it is to purify your character.

He then asked me to test the reason to fast Mondays and Thursdays and I felt a sense of strengthening and determination in my feelings. Bapak said that this fasting is to help you in this life to attain something you want or need.

I decided then to do this kind of fasting until I found a way to work and stay in Indonesia close to Bapak. My aim was achieved six months later.

I have followed Ramadan over the following 52 years except once.

My experience has been both unpleasant and very pleasant and blissful, and the two are related. It takes a while before my feelings become quiet and I give up distractions and focus on what really needs to be done as a certain fatigue steal over me.

Then in the middle of Ramadan I feel a certain heaviness or obstruction to the wish in me to ascend a little to a lighter place in my Self. This obstruction I sense is due to a lack of generosity and the ability to give, to love and understand others. "I" do not like what is revealed but nevertheless it causes cleansing movements to arise both physically and in my feelings just as in the latihan.

These go deeper and wider than usual as they eventually touch my brain. God or Allah is no longer a word or a concept but a living Beneficence that makes me bow my head which is empty of its usual thoughts.

A feeling of contrition arises with an intention to take more care with my behaviour and restrain judgmental thoughts and words and to allow the compassion that is within me (and in my name) to be manifested.

There are many words of advice with the consequent testing that have come from Bapak to help us live a deeper, fuller and wider life but for me that gift he gave me those 52 years ago is the most important. ●

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## CONSIDERING OBSERVING RAMADAN?

The month of Ramadan in 2020 runs from April 23 to May 23 [approximately!]. Those intending to fast should check with local Islamic authorities about the times of fasting in their area.

Below is a compilation of information about it, "Subud style", and also there is information at the bottom about Bapak talks.

Note to all: we are not sending out this information because we are urging people to do Ramadan, or because Subud espouses one religion over another. Bapak recommended that fasting has value for us individually, and we know that some members observe Lent instead of Ramadan, or do their own private form of fasting.

*(See Bapak's letter to a member on this topic, at the end of this message)*

[For those observing the fast of Ramadan – Explanations of the Ramadan Calendar](#)  
*Compiled from explanations given by Bapak, by Mas Sudarto and by Mas Prio*

Eve of Ramadan: The way to observe Ramadan is to take a full bath, including hair washing, and also cutting the hair and the nails, the evening before the fast. Then, after you are clean, to state your wish to observe Ramadan as a sincere expression of your worship of Almighty God. Then stay up at night, preferably spending the night together with other Subud brothers and sisters, in the home of a member who is also observing Ramadan.

Around three o'clock in the morning, you should take breakfast and you should brush your teeth no later than 4:30 in the morning, and after this, no more smoking, not even gargling till 6:30 PM or 7:00 PM - along about sunset. (The local mosque can clarify as to the hour for breaking the fast.)

To break the fast, start slowly by drinking warm tea and a light snack; you can eat your dinner about half an hour or an hour later. Bapak also recommends no sexual union during the whole month of Ramadan. It is also beneficial to sleep as little as possible during Ramadan, not only on Nights of Power.

During the month of Ramadan: it is not permitted to have sexual intercourse, and our fasting must also include abstention from the following:

- a) We must not use our ears to listen to gossip, quarrels or bad words.
- b) We must not use our mouth to say anything wrong or unkind.
- c) We must not use the emotions to reach the emotions or passions of others.
- d) We must not use our eyes in a way that is not good or nice.
- e) We must not use the heart and mind to imagine or think about unhappy things, fantasies or unrealities.
- f) We must not eat or drink or smoke anything between dawn and sunset each day.

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During the month of Ramadan, we have to fast thirty days, and during the thirty days of fasting we go through three important periods:

The first ten days (ending evening of 9th day Ramadan):

This is a period of putting the passion in an inactive state. During this period we are made aware that our passions become weaker and weaker day by day, and on the 9th day of fasting, it is felt that our passion is completely inactive.

The second ten days (ending evening of 19th day Ramadan):

This is a period of becoming aware that in general our attitude and actions are guided by our inner-self and the guidance day by day becomes stronger and stronger and on the 19th day of fasting our actions are as if in a complete latihan state, but in harmony with our daily activities.

The last ten days (ending evening of 30th Ramadan):

This is a period of receiving the lailatu 'lkadar (the Nights of Power), and this is sent by God on the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th days of fasting. This lailatu 'lkadar is not something that falls from above, but it forms a certain power which can change our state.

Most of the Subud members who fasted felt, after completing the fasting, that there were changes to their inner. Mostly, their spirit to worship became stronger and stronger and also the intention of doing 'prihatin' became stronger and stronger.

LAILATUL-QADR (The evening preceding 27th day Ramadan): Although it is generally accepted in the Moslem community that the last ten days of Ramadan are days of receiving, this particular evening is celebrated with special prayer, in the Moslem community, because it is thought that this is the day upon which the Messenger Muhammad received the verses of the Qu'ran.

TAK-BARAN: (30th day Ramadan): The last day of fasting. Sundown marks the end of the month.

IDUL-FITRI:

The Night of Forgiveness. At the end of Ramadan, we again take a full bath and put on new clothes, and then we should go to our family and our friends and ask forgiveness for whatever sin we have done. This is a time of special celebration and thanks to Almighty God.

1. To print out Bapak talks, or listen to or download talks, go to [www.subudlibrary.net](http://www.subudlibrary.net)

You can do a search, using key words, so you can ask for Ramadan Talks.

With thanks to Leonard Dixon for the compilation of the info from Bapak, Mas Sudarto and Mas Prio.

*Lent and Ramadhan – Letter to a member in England, Pewarta, April 1970*

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

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

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

It is told that the Prophet Muhammad fasted in a cave at that time ( this too means in darkness ). He carried out the religious observance of fasting in the cave so that the inner feeling could be swept clean of the influence of the nafsu causing darkness. It is therefore said that the revelation that he was to be the Messenger of God came to him in the cave. In other words, it was then that he received the first command of the One God.

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

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

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

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



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Concerning the explanation you may want about prihatin: This actually is cutting down one's pleasures in eating, sleeping and other enjoyments. For, if one practices prihatin, the heart is accustomed not to be deceived all the time by the nafsu. If the nafsu, which arise in the heart and mind, are not given their way so much ( that is, if one restricts the pleasures of eating and sleeping and restrains the nafsu of anger and greed which drive away all contentment ) then the nafsu will automatically weaken, and a feeling of patience, surrender, trust and sincere submission will become manifest.

Prihatin may be practiced by anyone wishing to do so, anyone who hopes to become a person of patience who surrenders with trust and sincere submission to the Will of Almighty God. Usually when a person can really carry this out his situation will be one of well being and happiness.

This kind of prihatin may be done by way of fasting every Monday and Thursday, without saur ( that means without eating in the middle of the night ) or by cutting down on one's food every day; for instance, if one is accustomed to having beefsteak and potatoes, then one eats only potatoes and vegetables, provided one does not take too much of these either. One can also cut down on sleep; not sleeping often with one's wife and not sleeping before midnight.

This is done in the hope that one's life situation, or one's lot in life, may improve; also so that one's inner feeling, which still continues to feel dark or hindered by the influence of the nafsu, may become calm and quiet and the influence of the nafsu, which always interferes with the calm and quiet of the inner feeling, may be avoided.

This is why Bapak always says that a good and noble life can be achieved only if one really practices prihatin beforehand. It must be remembered that even Jesus Christ and the Prophet Muhammad did this. How much more does an ordinary person need it. One should not be quick to complain so often, or to feel despair just because one lacks things in life, nor should one feel overjoyed if one happens to have unusually good fortune.

This is Bapak's answer to your question. Bapak gives praise and thanks to Almighty God and hopes that you will accept the above explanation in a good way. From Bapak ●

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## FASTING IN RAMADAN

*The month of Ramadan in 2020 runs from April 23 to May 23 [approximately!].*

*This extract about Marcus Bolt's experience of fasting comes from his book Saving Grace – Fifty Years in Subud...*

Fasting in Lent and Ramadan is a completely different kettle of fish from fasting at other times! In the Koran I think it says, 'When you fast, I am the reward.' 'I' here being God, of course.

In this kind of ritual fast it is essential to expect nothing, to want nothing. It is about surrender. And it goes on for a seemingly very long time!

Bapak said that Lent and Ramadan are of equal value. Lent is a little more difficult to talk about because it has been deconstructed and mucked about a bit over the centuries. I do believe a 'Diet' convened in the ninth century (I love the idea of a Diet on fasting) decreed that fasting should be left up to the individual.

Lent traditionally seems to be about cutting down, or cutting out, certain kinds of food; mainly, all protein and animal products, perhaps just having one meal a day of vegetables. That's how the Orthodox churches do it. Lent goes on for longer than forty days. Christ fasted for 40 days and nights in the desert, but Lent lasts for 46 as one doesn't count the Sundays in between. I think you can eat normally on those days.

“ *It is essential to expect nothing, to want nothing...* ”

Most Christians that I know tend to cut out something they love, like coffee, or chocolate, or sugar in their tea. I have tried Lent. I once gave up coffee, tea and cigarettes. A friend said he'd given up a spoonful of sugar in his tea. 'Is that all?' I scoffed self-righteously. 'I wanted to do something I knew I could keep,' he said, slightly hurt. Two weeks later, I gave up, completely defeated. He carried on to the end – ha!

As Lent relates to Christ's fasting for 40 days in the desert, so too does Ramadan relate to Mohammad's 30-day fast in a cave. It was then he received the Holy Koran. Bapak has pointed out that the desert and the cave are, in reality, symbols for the inner.

Ramadan is actually the name of the month that the fast is carried out in. Like Lent, it's a movable fast (pun intended), but much more so. The Islamic calendar is a lunar based one, so is approximately ten days shorter than our Western solar-based division of the year. Consequently, Ramadan is, to us in the West, ten days earlier each year.

In fact, many other Subud members and I did our first Ramadan starting in late November 1969. In 1999, we completed what is called a Great Cycle, as Ramadan fell again in late November – another 11 years to go >

for the second Great Cycle. One year, it fell over the Christmas period. My wife and I coped by taking a few days off to celebrate Christmas with our family. It did seem slightly odd having a feast in the middle of a fast!

### Ramadan Became Popular

Ramadan became popular among some Subud members, because Bapak was a Muslim and fasted every year, usually staying home during this month, except during the Canadian Subud World Congress held in Toronto.

Many Westerners began to go and spend the month in Cilandak, a Subud complex containing Bapak's house and guest hoses, just outside Jakarta. Bapak usually gave talks during the 'nights of power' (more on them later), explaining just how valuable fasting could be. The news filtered back and some of us 'gave it a whirl'.

The format for the fast is fixed. In the Koran it says you fast from dawn to dusk. This creates problems when you leave the Far East. In Indonesia, for example, dawn is invariably four thirty and sunset six o'clock, whereas in the UK, in summer it's three thirty to ten and in the winter seven to four.

“ *The format for the fast is fixed...* ”

Most real Muslims stick to the actual dawns and dusks. Most Subud members follow Indonesian time. It does feel wrong, somehow, fasting in the dark, so some of us slightly rewrite the rules and tend to fast five-ish to five-ish in the winter months. Well, I do. Bapak recommended 12 to 14 hours. It's certainly a lot easier in the summer than the winter.

Unlike prihatin, a pre-dawn meal, called saur, is important. It's quite extraordinary that, nowadays, I finish



*Marcus with the two youngest of his five grandsons.*

my pre-dawn meal, go and clean my teeth and immediately, as five o'clock strikes, I feel as though I'm fasting. Even on day one. I'm never sure if this is an internal equivalent of muscle memory or if it's because millions of Muslims are fasting worldwide, or what?

Then, similar to prihatin described earlier, no food or drink all day. Nil by mouth and nil by anything else, either! No sex, no gossip, no chattering allowed. Watching TV or reading to while away the time is out. No amusements to avoid the feeling of fasting, basically. Bad thoughts, getting angry, arguing are all forbidden as they simply negate the fast. This is not to say that these things don't happen.

During the First Ten Days

During the first ten days particularly they seem to rear their ugly heads with alarming frequency. I used to feel as though there was super-fertile hot-house inside myself. The seed of

irritation at being cut up on the road while I was driving would grow into a tree of rage within seconds, only my natural cowardice stopping me from hitting someone. Or a flash of leg would blossom rapidly into a garden of sexual fantasies.

I say 'I used to' but the truth is I still have to be very much on my guard. I assume that this apparent over-reaction happens because we do not have the energy, while fasting, to hold our normal veneer of civility in place.

The day should really be spent just being quiet. Ideally, one shouldn't work. It's only one month out of the whole year, after all. In many Muslim countries there is a general shutdown of trading, with only essential services operating.

“ *We just have to do our best. We have to trust our feelings...* ”

That's difficult in the West, unless you're a freelancer. If not, you have to more or less go about your ordinary business and make allowances where you can. I wonder how a boxer would get on? I once played football, in goal, during Ramadan (a commitment I had to follow through). I kept apologising to the opposing forwards every time I got the ball first!

We just have to do our best. We have to trust our feelings. You know when something isn't right.

There is, though, a higher level of fasting beyond just gritting your teeth, fighting and ignoring desires. Bapak told us to test this out. He suggested we should go and look at and smell food. If we didn't even want the food, we had then moved on to this level and were at last observing the fast correctly.

Sometimes, if you're feeling really good in the sense of being centred (which manifests for me as feeling >

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light and extremely contented) you completely forget about breaking the fast.

When the time comes to break it (it's a lovely expression 'to break your fast' and, of course, that's where the English word 'breakfast' comes from), I have discovered, from experience, that a little water, some lemon tea and a few dates are all I can take. And then I need at least another hour before I can eat.

If I do it all at once, I feel so heavy. You can feel the food essences washing over you like a drug. Then all the good feelings dissipate. In the evenings it's best to be normal but try not to go wild on the food or entertainment. For the same reason, some Subud members observing the fast will refrain from sex for the whole month, as well. This does add a certain piquancy to the end of the fast celebrations, I have to admit!

Bapak told us, and I can now see that it's true, that the first ten days of the fast are for the nafs to come to terms with what you're up to and to get used to it. The next ten are a kind of retraining and paving the way for change. The last ten are when the changes can happen.

*In the next issue of Subud Voice we will publish the rest of Marcus's story of fasting in Ramadan.* ●

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## A BLESSING IN RAMADAN

*Mardiyah Tarantino writes...*

It was a happy day towards the end of Ramadan. I had congratulated myself at having accomplished up until then, if I did say so myself, a pretty good fast. And so, I decided to do something I had been meaning to do, which was to go visit Ismana.

This entailed going on a long walk up crowded, noisy Fatmawati street, past the three-wheeled betjaks, the rickety warungs, the gas and fumes of old cars and trucks up to Ismana's lovely house. My presence must have surprised her, as she had no reason expect me. Of course, she graciously let me in.

“ Take me home to  
Wisma Subud... ”

I could sense a large question mark looming above her head. What could I possibly want?

I told her that I was sore in need of a special latihan and a test with her (the reason escapes me now) and would she accommodate me.

It was a lovely latihan indeed, and I was even happier as I thanked her, said goodbye and started down the same old Fatmawati – skipping a little, humming a tune and praising God for having allowed this special encounter with a lady I felt so close to .

My heart was filled with gratefulness, when Whammo! I was struck hard from behind from what I was sure was a truck. It sent me flying into a side street where I landed face down a good many yards from the impact. Looking up very, very slowly at the taxi driver standing next to me, I realized it hadn't been a truck.

To my surprise, the man hadn't sped off, but had actually stopped and was helping me up. He was sweating like a wombat and began wringing his hands.

“Ma'af, Nona,” he said, “I'll take you immediately to Hospital Fatmawati, down the road.”

I shrank away from him in alarm. It was a well-known fact that the chances of leaving Hospital Fatmawati alive were slim. It was a place where human life was not considered a valuable commodity. The population in Jakarta was increasing at a rate that knew no limit, and so, to the hospital staff, it made much more sense to let patients bleed out and expire in the waiting room.

I was terrified he'd insist. “No, no, Please! Not Fatmawati,” I begged. He looked taken aback. What was he going to do with this 'Bulet' (white female) who would certainly bring him bad luck in the end?

“Take me home to Wisma Subud”, I implored, and so he did, almost to my door on Skid Row. By then the pain had hit me. The peaceful Ramadan afternoon was shattered, by my howls punctuated - so my children tell me - by unprintable expletives hardly in keeping with the sanctity of the month.

After prodding around my body, we found there seemed to be nothing actually broken. The excruciating pain during the following days was not caused by broken bones, but by two gravel-embedded skinned knees and hands.

The moral of this story? I imagine the Javanese would say, “Never be too sad or too happy,” and I would add: Don't count your Ramadan blessings before they hatch. ●

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## LEBARAN

*Dr Rachman Mitchell reflects on the meaning of “the first day after the end of Ramadan”...*

This word indicates both a day and a month. It comes after the month of Ramadan. So, it is the first day after the end of Ramadan.

The word itself is derived from the word “lebar” meaning wide, which signifies the opening or widening of the human heart to experience generosity and to be able to genuinely and spontaneously give and forgive >

and be forgiven.

Since many of us find these three feelings and actions quite difficult to experience and do, how does it come about?

I myself have always been a little mean and also disinclined to admit that anything that I have said or done could have been wrong or offended anyone and therefore have been too proud to seek out those I have spoken ill of and ask their forgiveness.

Well the answer lies in the practice of fasting in the previous month of Ramadan.

Most of us know that this is a simple discipline of going without food and water between sunrise and sunset, in most cases, only sixteen hours (what is fact is now recommended by doctors to stay in good health and resist the onset of diabetes). There is in fact another restraint more difficult to carry out that is to fast the wish to find fault and criticize others. Both require an effort of intention, prayer and one's own will.

“Of course, this is a taste of heaven...”

I decided to practice this when I first heard about it on my arrival in Indonesia in 1967. I did not find the fasting of food and drink so difficult but the fasting of my likes and dislikes of other people's behaviour much more difficult and indeed a cause for much chagrin. However, as the bodily fatigue increased so did a certain inner tranquility which caused “me” to feel closer to my “self” and closer to others. More important than this was the certainty that the Power from which everything comes including ourselves, exists.

Slowly also was the realization that the effort to fast was no longer coming from my personal will but from this other Will and Power which I then knew and now know exists within me and everyone who is a possible human being.

So, my heart did begin to widen (menjadi lebih lebar) I began to experience more the need to give, the need to be forgiven and to forgive especially with my family and my friends. I found myself falling in love with my wife again.

Of course, this is a taste of Heaven. The life and needs of the material world press again on the failure of the heart to keep to the straight path. This is why I have tried to practice Ramadan ever since. Like a house which needs a spring clean, so our own Being does as well especially when witnessing so much strife around.

## THE HOLY VIBRATION

*Written by Ilaina Lennard, 1933-2018, founder of Subud Voice...*

One day when the Lord was inspecting His handiwork in the Universe, He came across a tiny planet that was looking a bit sick.

“What's the matter with Planet Earth?” he asked himself. “I have tried giving it the Ten Commandments, and I've also given it Prophets, but the people there still go on fighting and generally misbehaving. What else can I do with them?”

And then He had an idea: “I know - I'll try giving them The Purifying Vibration. Even though they won't understand how it happens, I will make it so that they can pass it on to anyone who asks. And if that doesn't work, I may have to give up on them.”

So, then the Lord caused a few people on Planet Earth, starting with Bapak, to feel the Purifying Vibration.

With most of those who received it, an improvement in their characters took a long time, because of the heaviness of their own faults and those of their ancestors, but a few received quite quickly and soon they began to spread the Holy Vibration all over the world.

The Lord then asked Himself: “Will this, my last Gift, now make the planet more peaceful?”

For a while He just watched, and then made a note in His diary: “Get more people to receive this later. Not ready yet.”

And for us, on Planet Earth, I think that's where Subud is at this time.



*Ilaina Lennard, 1933-2018, founder of Subud Voice.*

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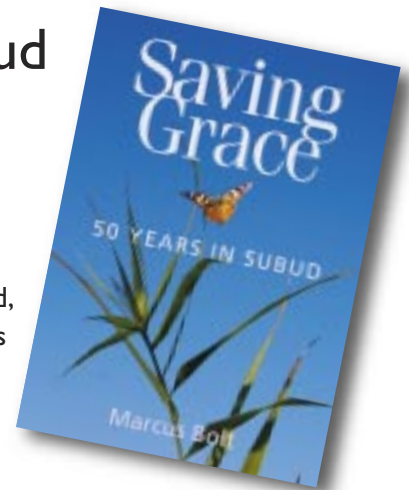
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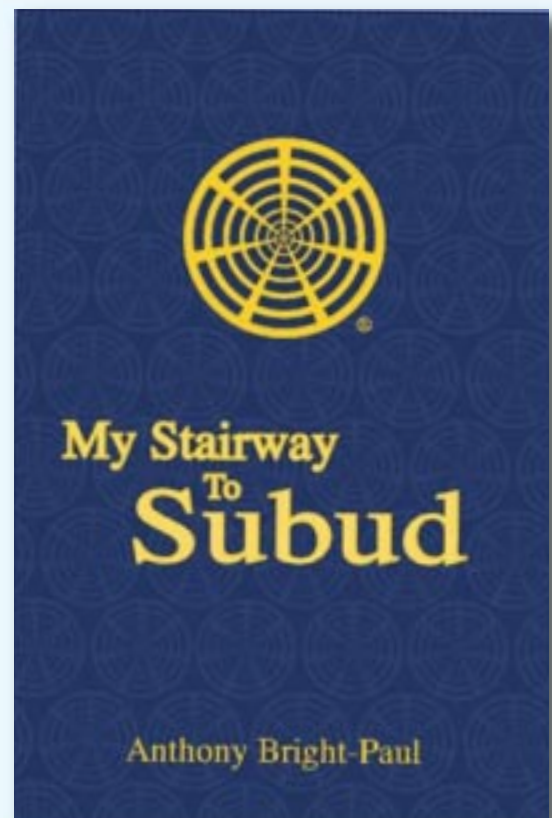
Much of *My Stairway to Subud* first appeared as the record of a young man in the early 1950's searching for values and inner understanding. At various times he was an admirer of Mahatma Gandhi, a student with the Sri Ramakrishna Vedanta Society, then a follower of G.I.Gurdjieff for seven years under the direction of J.G.Bennett, author of *The Dramatic Universe* and *What are we living for?* His search reached an explosive climax when Pak Subuh, the founder of the international spiritual movement Subud, came to England in 1957.

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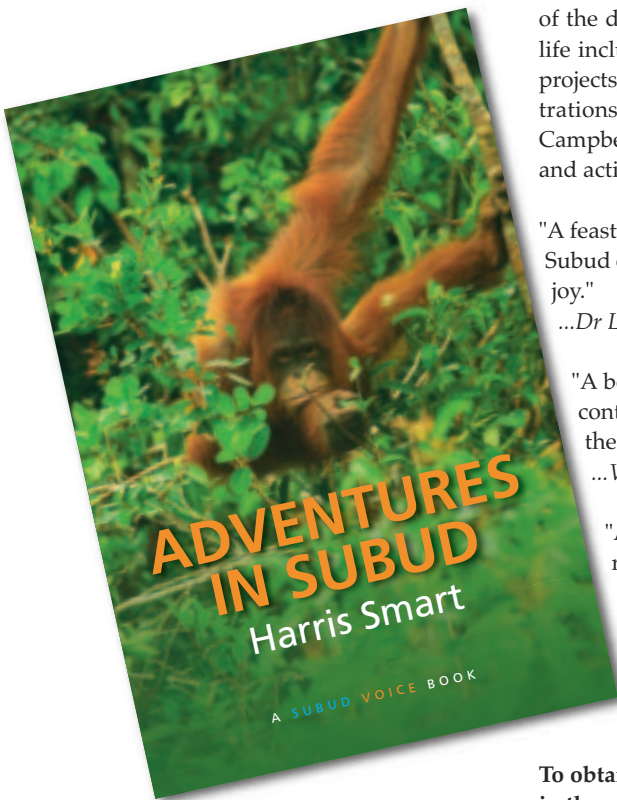
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