



Season's Greetings!

Thank you to all the people who have responded to our recent appeals for finance to keep Subud Voice going. You have certainly made our Christmas. More than \$4000 has come in, enough to keep us going until the World Congress next year which will also be our 27th Anniversary of Subud Voice. We hope that you too will have a very good holiday and festive season

From the Subud Voice team, Harris, Iaina, Marcus, Kitka, Samuel and Melinda.

Did Bapak ever refer to Christmas? Thanks to the invaluable Subud Library, I found this passage. Bapak recalls that after his experience of Ascension when he had returned to earth...

And, perhaps so as to be witness to Bapak's journey, Bapak's mother woke in the middle of the night. She wanted to go through to the back of the house, but she did not dare, because when she opened her eyes it was as if she were not in her room but up in the sky, up in the air. So then she went back to sleep. And Bapak's mother smelt a very beautiful fragrance. This was a proof. And his mother saw that the room was full of light, full of globes of light, like when Christians celebrate Christmas Day. This really did happen. Bapak is not lying, for Bapak cannot lie.

That, brothers and sisters, was like proof in the kedjiwaan. And such a thing as that is not something that one can strive for or seek for by any means whatever, but it happens one hundred percent because of God; one hundred per cent by the grace of the One Almighty God...

You can take as an example what has been received by the prophets, such as Christ himself. Where did Christ obtain any learning? And if he obtained it, who taught him and where did he go to school? These matters are not mentioned, because in fact Christ did not go to any school, nor in fact did he have any teacher. It was the same with the other prophets, such as the prophet Muhammad. To what school did Muhammad go, and who was his teacher? He had none either, nor are they mentioned. Thus Muhammad himself did not go to school either. Why did the Prophet come to be someone really wise, really possessing a more than ordinary ability?

Also in the case of Christ; his ability was beyond the ordinary, more than that of other people, so that even up to the present millions of people still have faith in him, even though they have been to school. (72 WAS 1)

From "The latihan, enterprises and the bank"
Washington DC, U.S.A.



A few years ago the editor of Subud Voice had a job as Santa in a shopping mall. I was assisted by many young women dressed in green, my elves. Even so it was quite exhausting. But of course there were many blessings. The love and trust of little children, renewed in every generation, and in every new child born, and the love and care that comes from their mothers. Two of the beautiful things about being on earth.

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In the Rif Mountains

An article by Hannah de Roo, Susila Dharma Representative in the Netherlands, about her walking tour in the Rif mountains of Morocco, October 18-25, 2013. Where she not only walked but also discovered a social welfare project...

Saïd Elkkadouri, who has been living in the Netherlands now for 35 years, was born near the village of Tazaghine in the northern Rif mountains of Morocco. Two years ago he began bringing small groups of people to this beautiful area for a week of hiking. He has used the money that remains after his costs have been paid, for the benefit of local families in need.

When Saïd was 9 years of age, he was brought to the airport with his family, not knowing that he would continue his life in a totally different country. Many families from northern Morocco moved to the Netherlands and Germany (and later also to Spain), in order to find work. However, nobody could take away the great memories of Saïd's unspoiled and happy childhood and some years ago he decided to help some of those who stayed behind and live in grave poverty.

The area of the Rif offers a great and impressive variety of landscapes and is almost totally undiscovered by tourists so far. Olives, figs and pomegranates can be eaten fresh from the trees; donkeys walk around freely and 9 months of the year it is summer and one can swim in the Mediterranean sea. Some parts are green, with strong-smelling herbs and flowers, while other parts are too dry to have anything growing in them, unless one could apply extensive irrigation systems, which are simply too expensive for the population to implement on a large scale.

The Moroccan government has long ignored this area and even stimulated emigration of the Berbers, who had long fought for their independence in the Rif, but without success. Only recently there have been some efforts on the part of the government to support the needs of the people that have stayed and survived in this large and underdeveloped region.

We learned that many children make long walks every day, up to 10 miles one way, crossing the mountains on their way to school. When the girls reach the age of puberty, they are often kept home for safety and for economic reasons. Transportation by bus has been arranged, but for many families €180 a year for that service is beyond their budget – while the government provides free schooling, it does not provide transportation. Moreover, the little buses with 9 seats are often transporting up to 40 children at a time, with most of them standing, which is far from safe!

The high school of Tazaghine set up a foundation to start tackling these problems, and a group of skilled and enthusiastic volunteers is working very hard to support children and their families, in order to make education possible for everyone. They need funding for more buses, and to support families with little or no income, including widowed single mothers and families with a sick parent.

With Malala's current world campaign for education in mind, we know that battling a combination of poverty and conservative culture is a major challenge. Tazaghine seems a good place for Susila Dharma to get involved with these very same issues. Supported by Hillel Natanson (SDIA's special-media and Facebook page >



Saïd with local kid.



Tazaghine



Hiking in the Rif.

“Hoping for fruitful collaboration”

coordinator), I had two meetings with the committee of this foundation and several teachers of the school. In spite of some typical Moroccan chaotic circumstances, we had a pleasant and informative exchange and laid down the bases to starting work together. With the help of Saïd and a private donation, a general fund was created to give discounts on transportation to 7 families this year, who would otherwise see their children drop out of school.

My hope is that this initiative will grow into a fruitful collaboration, in part because many immigrants from the Rif are living in the Netherlands, and therefore we already have a significant relationship. Of course, basic education is not the only issue in the Rif; health care is another important area where help is badly needed. But supporting this particular foundation in Tazaghine and its dedicated staff will be a great start to help the population become stronger and more self-sufficient in the future.



Meeting with manager, treasurer and director of the Tazaghine Foundation for Education.

But supporting this particular foundation in Tazaghine and its dedicated staff will be a great start to help the population become stronger and more self-sufficient in the future. ●

Helping the Philippines

A message from Susila Dharma International...



People salvage what they can after the devastating typhoon in the Philippines.



As you all have been aware, there has been terrible devastation in the Philippines due to Typhoon Haiyan and many people there are in need of relief. Some Subud members have been asking how they can help, so on behalf of WSA and SDIA, we would like to send out the message on page 3. We will advance \$5000 from our Emergency Fund for this purpose.

As this message will go out to all countries, you may receive inquiries from Subud members in your country. If you can, please help direct Subud members to an appropriate relief organisation. If your SD national is collecting funds to send on that is great, but if not, we can recommend the Red Cross, Save the Children, UNICEF, World Food Programme and many other experienced relief delivery organisations. Also note that your government may be offering to match donations for the Typhoon Haiyan relief during this period.

Dear Subud Brothers and Sisters,

As SDIA is responsible, on behalf of WSA, for Subud's emergency and disaster response, several Subud members have been asking how they can send funds to help those whose lives have been seriously affected by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

SDIA does not have members active in the Philippines, so we will be sending any member donations received through the Red Cross which has a strong field presence in the country. On behalf of SDIA and WSA, we will be advancing \$5000 from our Emergency Relief fund that will be matched by the Canadian Government to become \$10,000 for food, water, shelter and basic assistance to the survivors.

You are therefore welcome to send funds:

- directly to the Red Cross or other charity with an effective disaster response in the Philippines;
- through SDIA at the link below to our Emergency Relief Fund earmarked for Typhoon Haiyan;
- Go to: <http://www.susiladharma.org/~susil853/support-sdia>
- or through your SD national organisation.

You can contribute to the SDIA Emergency Fund managed on behalf of World Subud Association on our website.

Several national governments have put in place matching grant schemes so please speak to your SD National organisation to see how to maximize the impact of your donations.

At the same time, as the Christmas season is fast approaching, we take this opportunity to remind you that there are many SD projects run by Subud members that also need your support. Feel free to ask us or your SD national how you can help.

Many thanks and best regards,
Hamida Thomas
for SDIA

Always in My Heart

Heloise Jackson writes about the Muhammad Subuh Foundation AGM in Poio and standing down as a Trustee...

I had last been in Poio four years ago and as my taxi approached the massive fortress-like building, the memory of that week spent with my former International helper colleagues, came flooding back.

I dropped my bag at the reception and joined everyone for lunch. I was half a day late for our Muhammad Subuh Foundation team building sessions which had been scheduled for the first couple of days of its week long Annual General meeting, which was now underway.

I caught up with what had happened during the morning session I had missed, and found out that the discussion had centred on what each of us trustees understood by bringing the latihan in our work and how we were putting this into practice. The latihan had certainly guided me on this journey!

I had left home a day early to spend the night in London to be on time for my morning flight. I had arrived at Heathrow Airport in good time and was waiting to board. I felt so tired from a long standing health condition, that I was wondering how I was going to last the week. Suddenly, there was an announcement; our plane had been delayed by half an hour.

“Oh, I’ll still make my transfer from Madrid to Santiago,” I thought. I had one and a half hour to change planes, which was ample.

An announcement came again and this time, the plane was going to be taking off one hour late. “This time, I will really have to rush when I land in Madrid as it is going to be very tight,” I thought. It was the last thing I needed, since I really could not take the stress. I asked for God’s help.

At last we boarded but now the plane was stuck in a queue for take-off ... I dozed off letting it all wash over me and we were soon landing in Madrid. I looked at my watch; it was precisely the time when my transfer was taking off. I had missed my plane to Santiago and so joined the queue of passengers sharing the same fate.

In the event, I was re-booked in a four star hotel, evening meal and breakfast included, courtesy of the airline. I smiled at my good fortune and thanked God. I arrived in Poio the next day, fresh from having had a good night’s rest and an unhurried departure. >



Heloise Jackson and her husband Maxwell. I took this photo of them when I met them in Rungan Sari a couple of years ago. I formed an impression of a most friendly and dedicated woman.

Heloise in her former incarnation as an International Helper with Yasmin and Amina in Malawi. In a report published in SV some years ago Heloise gave a valuable insight into what the work of an International Helper is like. She wrote, for instance, “Amina’s opening was unusual in that I felt like being in a vortex for a few seconds. It was quite special for her too and as we were leaving the double garage which had been adapted as a latihan hall for the occasion, we could hear a rumble of thunder. I mentioned that the elements were welcoming a newly opened soul and we laughed

That night, the storm was so fierce between 2 and 4 am, that it felt like the lower forces were jostling for power to make way for a new order of events. There were so many people opened now and receiving the latihan in those two houses that the whole atmosphere was changed.

Heloise in her former incarnation as an International Helper with Yasmin, Amina and Abdul in Malawi.





The meeting in Poio.

At the Meeting

The team building session had been organised by Bachtiar (MSF chair) and Mahmud Nestman who had been invited to lead the sessions. It had been a difficult two years where the very fastidious and meticulous members of the team were confronted with those who were more broad-brush and flexible.

The International helpers had been invited to participate – as they always were to all our meetings – but unfortunately could not attend this time since they too were also in their own annual meeting of the full international dewan. We regretted their absence but continued with our session. There had been some tense moments in the past and even now, it was tough at times. We often broke off for latihan and testing with questions such as “What qualities do we each bring to our work?” “What is blocking us from working as we should?”

Over nearly three days, despite our difficulties, we did not lose respect for one another. We often felt Bapak was in the room and at one point, an international helper sent a message saying they were supporting us despite their physical absence. We were grateful.

When we resolved to end these sessions, we broke off with a latihan, asking for direction. Every one of us made a resolution and conscious effort, to accept his or her own shortcoming and God’s guidance, however difficult this might prove to be.

The AGM proper started the next day and immediately, one could feel that something tangible had happened. A new resolve, and dare I say, love was now felt between all of us. The atmosphere in that first day of our meeting proper was light, with an incredible feeling of generosity and brotherliness. It was like a miracle. We felt uplifted and were grateful to God and to Bapak.

We went through the agenda more smoothly than expected. In due course, we attended the testing for my replacement. In a preceding latihan, under the guidance of the international helpers, we had been asked to receive “What are the qualities of a trustee of the Muhammad Subuh Foundation?”

I had been quite shaken to receive “You have the qualities of a trustee” and yet now I was standing down! We proceeded to be witnesses to the testing of my replacement in front of the directors of the WSA. Michael Heathcote from the UK was to replace me. I was very pleased for him.

My Receiving Still Disturbed Me

However, my own receiving in the general latihan still disturbed me and I mentioned it to my colleagues. They made various suggestions and I really felt they wanted me to stay but I knew that I was far too exhausted to continue with the work but I also knew that I would be with them in my thoughts and feelings.

However, I decided to do some testing some time later about my own voluntary departure. >

I started by asking Bapak's forgiveness; after all, Bapak was my boss! I perceived Bapak's voice as if saying, "Ya! ya! Human frailty" and a feeling of deep peace washed over me with no regrets attached to it...

“ Deep peace washed over me ”

The end of the AGM arrived quite quickly and the good will and feeling which we had all felt at the beginning of the week had continued. It was time to say my goodbyes. Everyone reflected on that week which had been so extraordinary and words such as letting go, surrender and trust in Almighty God were heard.

I felt so close to each and every one of the members of the board that it was difficult to realise that I was no longer part of this wonderful team where each one was so dedicated and was bringing so much to the Foundation.

I have learnt much in these last couple of years; I shall miss Bachtiar for his detailed and meticulous explanations, Olvia for her in depth knowledge of MSF, Hannah for her clarity, Lailani for her attention to details, Lawrence for his kindness, Lillian for her helpfulness, Luqman for his enthusiasm, and finally Rayner for his humanity and incredible capacity for work.

I thank the international helpers, who accompany MSF with their monthly latihan and Skype meetings, Elwyn, our trusted accountant, the national liaisons, and back home, Dorothea Hamida Rogers in particular, as well as all the translators and the many people who have been involved in helping the Subud brotherhood know and understand what this Foundation is. It has been a real privilege for me to work for the Foundation that bears Bapak's name; you will always be in my heart.

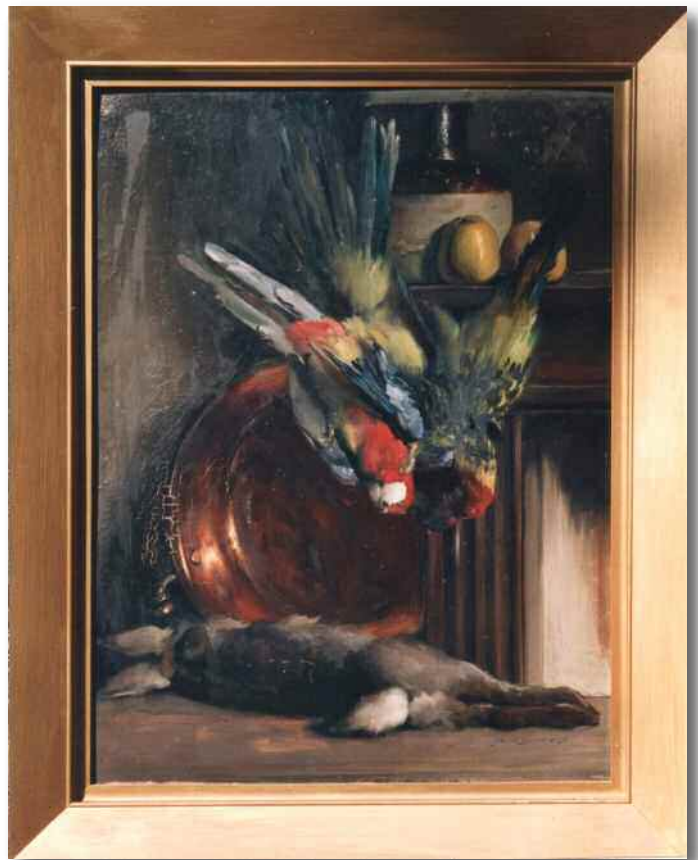
Heloise Jackson, MSF trustee from June 2011 – August 2013 ●

An Artist's Life

Raymond van Sommers has produced a book about his father, Jack Sommers, the artist and writer. As well as his father's writing and illustration it includes an account by Raymond's mother of the period when the family lived as vagabonds travelling the Australian countryside in a horse-drawn wagon. In his Prelude to the book, Raymond writes...

If you were to visit my cottage on Waiheke Island, New Zealand, you would be justified in wondering why the painting on this book cover hangs among the numerous prints of well-known artists. Simply it is the only painting by our father which my sister and I were able to trace from the scores of his work exhibited in successful exhibitions after WW1. Nor could he help our search, as he died in 1934.

His death, when I was only six, meant that I have no memories of him. It was therefore unexpected that around August 2012 there grew within me an urge to know more about him. I looked at his photograph with increasing interest and wondered why I was drawn to the unlikely subject matter of the painting: a dead rabbit and two dead parrots! August gave way to September and the lawn among the fruit trees greened with fresh spring growth. Then one day from the kitchen window I saw a young rabbit, the first I had seen on the Island. He returned every day throughout the month, grazing timidly on the grass near the edge >



Still Life by Jack Sommers.

of his retreat—the dark woods that form the boundary of the garden.

Around this time I received an email from the NSW State Library advising me that they had found a parcel of 118 pages of my father's letters, verses and sketches from North Africa, Gallipoli and France while he was serving as an Anzac in WW1. This fed my awakened interest and I soon had copies from which to build an impression of his nature and character. Sadly my rabbit stopped coming. Disappointment however gave way to amazement when two Australian parrots (rare on this island) came into the garden and stayed long enough for me to sketch their colours and markings. They were the same species as those in my father's painting! These synchronistic events gave rise to this book.

Hussein Rawlings writes in review of the book...

'A fascinating account of the life and death of one of Australia's gifted artists and sons, told in several voices: Jack's own prose and poetry, Tess's childhood reminiscences, Raymond's research providing background and chronology, and finally, Kate's own memoir – a beautifully crafted, dramatic, and compelling narrative where she and Jack with two young sons and Tess, travelled through Victoria and NSW living in a horse-drawn caravan for the last four years of his life, in search of a health-bestowing climate and freedom from convention.'

Extract from *The Wagon Journey* by Kate Sommers

'For us, delays were always an anxious time. We put up the tent and settled in to wait. Jack was too ill to get up. I left him and the boys in the back of the wagon. Although we were all well equipped with high rubber boots and solid rain coats, it was hard to get in and out of the wagon without getting bedding wet. The driving rain would penetrate every little crack. It was a miserable time.

'One morning Tess got on her pony and rode to the nearby homestead. It was separated from her by a rushing torrent. She tied her horse to a rail and found a wire rope flying fox over the creek. She got herself across on her own and to the station. I always admired her courage. It was no mean feat for a girl of eleven. The owners were amazed to see her and loaded her with food, taking her over the creek and helping her on to her horse. They refused all payment for this and Tess returned triumphant.

'On the fourth day the weather improved. The water level in the creeks dropped, and as soon as the washaway was mended, the workmen got a tractor and hauled us out. We continued, though with gloomy forebodings from the men, who warned us that the hill up to the next station was unmade and just pure mud. However, when we got there we found that, as it was steep, the water had drained off and, having had no traffic for days, the surface was perfect.

'Near Woolbrook on the road to Walcha, I had a frightening experience with the wagon. I was driving with the boys in the back, where they played quite happily. They loved the trip. They were brown as berries from head to foot and hadn't a day's illness since they left Melbourne. The road >

“ There grew within me an urge to know more about him ”



Jack Sommers was a frequent illustrator of genre tales including detective and adventure stories. “Weatherley’s keen eye picked out the trail of a big snake”, 1908

was cut out into the hillside along the river, only a few metres from the water. As we came to a place where the railway crossed overhead I suddenly realised our wagon was too high to pass under the bridge. I stopped the horses just as the wagon touched the bridge. I was now in a difficult situation. The road was narrow, the new horse didn't like double harness and wouldn't back up and if the wagon slewed around I'd be in the river. The wagon had the tendency to slew sideways whichever way the pole pushed it.

“Delays were always an anxious time”

‘Only by getting out and slowly easing the horses back centimetres at a time was I able to get out. I backed up far enough to find a place where by climbing a steep hill I could cross the railway and return down the other side to the road again. The road climbed steeply up to the top of the Great Dividing Range at Walcha Road. At the pass we could look back on a vast panorama to the west and see traces of the road we had travelled winding through the endless foothills of this mountain range. It was now twenty kilometres of easy going.

‘At Walcha, the new road lay before us cut through virgin forest and mountains, without a township or major settlement, for one hundred and eighty kilometres to the coast. An easy distance for a car, but travelling with horses it was a logistics problem to carry enough food and water. It meant intensive inquiries to determine possible camp sites and rearranging our gear so as to carry sufficient supplies. We would have to take long unbroken spells of work followed by long rests for the horses. Normally for a long journey we found that an average of fifteen to twenty five kilometres a day was good. We could do twice this amount in one day, but then we'd have to rest our horses the next day. Now we were faced with travelling fifty kilometres a day. Our first stop was to be a large shearing shed.’

Finally, an extract from *Barrier Miner (Broken Hill)*, Thursday 26 August 1909

AN ARTIST'S LAMENT: Some interesting remarks on the position of Australian artists were made at the Victorian artists' smoke night by Mr. Jack Sommers, the well-known artist. He said: When a medical student finishes his course at the university he can get a billet on one of the Japanese liners if he fails to get started in practice, but the artist has no such chance. He has to go through as long a course as any student at the university, but when he starts the real business of life he finds that there is nothing to do but design advertisements.

After spending three years in getting the correct tone of the edge of a ginger jar he discovers that the only work available is to draw posters depicting the unshrinkable quality of somebody's durable undershirts. What delightful interviews we have had with princes of industry, who have always assured us that they did not want any art on their posters, but something 'nice', something pretty to please the public. During this battling period we still paint and send our pictures to the Victorian artists' exhibition.

We hear a lot about "feeling atmosphere," and some people even exclaim, "What a lovely frame." (Laughter.) But in spite of the advice of our Governor-General and Governors, Australians still show no wild desire to buy the works of their own artists.

Raymond van Sommers can be contacted at raymondvansommers@ozemail.com.au ●

Subud Singles

Internet dating guide – it's as easy as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

- 1, Go to www.okcupid.com - a free to use website allowing you to search users by interest.
2. Follow the registration instructions – choose a username, provide a date of birth, location and email address.
3. Upload a picture and fill in your profile. Under the heading "The six things I could never do without" include "The Subud Latihan spiritual exercise". >

4. Select "Matches". There is a search box on the top right. Enter "Subud" and press search. This will give you a list of all the other single Subud members registered. You can view their profiles.

5. If you like someone, send them a message, have a conversation, meet them at World Congress, fall in love and get married.

Notes:

- All the usual warnings apply when putting your personal information online. Never provide information to strangers that you wouldn't want your friends, family and employers to see.
- If you meet someone for a date, always take care of your personal safety.
- Don't forget to register for World Congress – it will be the best place to meet other Subud members in real life. <http://subudworldcongress2014.com>

More from Varindra

Final extract from a talk given by Varindra Vittachi to young Subud members at a Zone 7 gathering. Varindra was the Chairman of the World Subud Association, a job he held for thirty years, from 1963 to 1993. The gathering, hosted by Subud Montreal, was held in the first week of July 1992 at a convention center just outside Montreal, Canada...

Question: Most of my friends know about Subud but no one seems to listen to me when I talk about Subud because I am young, whereas older persons get listened to more readily. When I tell my friends that I am in a movement, a spiritual path, that I have received the Great Life Force, they look at me as if to say, "What planet are you from!"

Varindra: If you remember, I did point out that you should tell people what Subud is to you. You must use your own language, your own semantics, your own 'mod' language. But, of course, you must know what you are saying. That is why I suggested that young members like you might want to use the one-page explanation about Subud that I used in my book, A Memoir of Subud.

Question: The movements that I make in latihan, if I think about them first before I do them, are they really from the Life Force?

Varindra: Why don't you guys ask your helpers questions like this? I mean this is the kind of question that should be the first to be dealt with by the helpers. You know, when Bapak first received the latihan, he opened six of his friends, old cronies of his. They used to do the latihan together. The movements that Bapak made in the latihan, he used to teach them these movements, so that they did exactly what Bapak did. And then he was kind of knocked on the head from within and told, "Hey, let them do their own number!"

When I first went to Indonesia in 1957, the year I came to Subud, the Indonesian guys used to have a series of mats laid out in the hall, and they lay down on these mats during latihan as though it was a set practice. But that all changed over the years, so that people are now doing their own thing.

The main thing, as Bapak was always saying to us (and I, an old person, do urge you younger members to think about this, to accept it), was that only sincerity counts, only sincerity counts. I mean, what is the use of doing something bogus, what's the point?

I remember one day in London at a mass latihan with the men, a group of 700 guys, I came in with Bapak as his interpreter, and Bapak told me to say "Begin". Immediately I said that, a storm >



Varindra Vittachi at a reception at the UN.

of noise arose, particularly from the guys who always sat in the front so that Bapak could actually see their latihan. Bapak said, “Finish!” Then he said, “Bapak does not want to see yesterday’s latihan.”

A Stunning Story

Then Bapak told us a stunning story that I pass on to you in the hope that it may be useful to you, as you begin your latihan.

He told us about the Indonesian public drama – the shadow-puppet drama, taken from Hindu epics. Bapak said that the first thing that appears on the shadow puppet screen is a triangular shadow. And the shadow just stays there for 5 to 6 minutes, with the audience quietly waiting. And then, when the gamelan orchestra leads the vibrato, the vibrations, the shadow then goes from side to side, La’ila ha illallah, La’ila ha illallah, La’ila ha illallah, and the drama then begins.

You wait, you wait for the latihan to take hold, to begin. Why can’t we be patient and wait until something happens?

Question. What changes have you seen in Subud since Bapak left this world?

Varindra: Of course, many things have changed. Because Bapak is not with us physically, there have to be changes. He was such a force in our lives as a person. But some of us, my friends and I, we had prepared ourselves for this. I am going to tell you a story.

When my wife, who is now dead, and I lived in Cilandak, our son, Imran, then a small child, now a strapping 26-year old, when my wife used to take an afternoon siesta, he sometimes used to vanish, and three or four times, after looking for him all over the compound, my wife found him in Bapak’s bedroom, lying beside Bapak during the afternoon siesta.

Once, when he became ‘lost’ again, Bapak carried him out of his bedroom, all the while stroking our child’s hair, and giving him to me said, “Nice boy, Varindra”. And we replied, “Yes, Bapak, we are very proud of him”. Then Bapak said, “You must learn to die into him before he dies on you”.

I was staggered, because it seemed to me that Bapak was saying that my boy was going to die. Bapak saw my expression, and he said, “No, Bapak does not mean that. Everything you love, you must experience its death before it happens”. And since that time, I try to do that with everything in my life. And the latihan helps me with that.

Every time I was re-appointed Chair of WSA, in spite of my attempts to resign, I would say to Bapak, “Why, Bapak? Why not someone else? I am not an administrator, I don’t like organization.” And Bapak replied, “That’s precisely why it must be done [Varindra’s re-appointment] – to keep the organization down to a minimum”. [A small part is inaudible.]

When Bapak Died

So when Bapak died, by great good fortune we had (and I am really speaking to my younger brothers and sisters) this fact, that Bapak had been wise enough to say constantly – constantly and very forcibly – that there is no successor to Bapak. I have been studying the end of the lives of the prophets and what happened after they died. All hell broke loose in their families as to who should succeed. Bapak always said that there is no successor to Bapak. The latihan is Bapak’s bequest – nothing else.

The latihan is the successor. And we are very fortunate that we have Ibu Rahayu. Siti Rahayu is a really sweet soul, and a really tough one about things like Bapak’s bequest. She will never let it be polluted. All attempts to regard her as a kind of successor to Bapak she rejects totally. But there are still people who are trying to do this, trying to make her into a kind of authority, which she rejects all the time. Because, remember, leaders are made by followers.

So there was no problem with Bapak’s family [remainder of sentence is inaudible].

Bapak has given us also a kind of framework for a Subud organization. Bapak was a great constitutionalist. He really understood the relatedness of things.

And so, at the Congress in Sydney, Australia, the very first Congress without Bapak, I thought >

“ Learn to die
into him
before
he dies on you. ”

that there would be just a scattering of people, a scattering of Subud members. Since Subud people came to Congresses because Bapak was there, I thought it would be a bleak, a very bleak, Congress.

On the contrary: a great number of people turned up because they were all anxious to carry out their responsibility now that Bapak was no longer there. How to get together to make ourselves a way of being in Subud, a framework for being.

And that is what happened. So some institutions were set up: the Subud Constitution, the Subud Association was registered, the World Subud Council was set up to be the governing body of Subud between Congresses, and Wings like SDIA, SICA, Youth, Enterprises, were set up. And the helpers were brought into this, the International Helpers. [Inaudible]...there has been no productive work over the last four years because there is very little content [in these institutions] in them yet.

We have been very busy writing institutions, providing instruments, so that we really have not attended to the content. [inaudible section] But that is what I hope we will do at the World Congress at Amanecer. But the content is already beginning to take place at Amanecer because so many young people are beginning to [inaudible] come who are coming not with frameworks and constitutions but with work, with substance.

When You Have Nothing Better To Do

This is why I watch the Subud Youth Association with a great deal of cynical amusement as they work on a constitution for Subud youth. You build constitutions when you have nothing better to do [inaudible]. One of the things I told Muchtar [Martins] at the Madrid meeting was to now start working on a political process that will see young people get on to delegations. It must be done. So I am suggesting that if you can (you don't have to flog your parents to do this) you find yourself work at Amanecer to prepare for the World Congress. Marzuki Andujar is here, the Chairman of Subud Colombia is here, Muchtar Martins, who is the architect at Amanecer, is there. Maybe they can help you [find work at Amanecer]. Maybe they can use you. You can be helpful. Maybe you can get something for yourself in the sense of really understanding something about content.

Is Marzuki Andujar here? Can you possibly send someone to Marzuki to say that the young people here want to meet him. And Muchtar also, if possible. Is Muchtar here? I saw him a moment ago.

Question from young member: During this Congress I have several times talked to a lot of people about what are appropriate questions to ask for testing or receiving. I just wondered what your views are on what is appropriate.

I am going to give you my personal opinion. It has no authority whatever; it has no validity whatever – to anyone except me. So please don't quote me and say, Varindra said this as a new law.

Do you guys know a spiritual problem? [Someone from the audience calls out "Crisis".] Ah, yes, that is correct. A crisis is a spiritual problem. Any others? Are you perhaps interested in knowing whether eventually you will get to the seventh or the eighth heaven? Since I am not going to make the first heaven, I am not interested in the sixth or seventh.

There are precious few "spiritual problems". Is going to the latihan or not going to the latihan a spiritual problem? So all these things we call spiritual problems are very earthy affairs, very human. [Inaudible].

I remember when a man came to a group of helpers, among which I was, and asked whether he should take his family on a trip to Portugal or to the South of France this year. So I told him, "Why don't you go to a travel agent?" I think it is very clear that this sort of thing is rubbish. Why should they bring it to the spiritual level?

Balaam's Ass

I think questions about children, about health, about education, questions about the latihan, questions, maybe, about dreams: these seem to me questions that are appropriate to test. You know, I am very reluctant to test. My private, personal opinion is that far too much testing is done in Subud.

People are getting out of the habit of tackling their own problems, trying to pass it on to the >

“
*There is far
too much
testing in
Subud*
”

spiritual realm by testing. I test only when I come to a crossroads, a fork in the road, where I can't make up my mind [in which direction to go].

I remind you of Balaam's ass. Balaam was the guy in the Bible who had his ass tied to a rope between two equally attractive bundles of hay. The ass couldn't make up its mind between these two bundles and as a result died of starvation. I think that the latihan as used in testing burns very high octane gas, and should be used very conservatively.

Question: I am just curious: before we are born, we are said to have chosen our parents. I am just curious about where that sort of guidance comes from, and what goes on before we are born. I hope you can answer that.

Varindra: Let me say I know very little about that. Having said that, I will say something about it. I think that the most useful thing for us is this, not useful so much as useful for our understanding.

(Interruption from young member who asked the question: I think I sort of lucked out. I popped into this place, and here I am. Wow. Neat!)

Varindra: I also feel very lucky like that. I had the most stunning parents of all time.

The Moment of Conception

What Bapak said to us is that the most important moment for us is the moment of conception, the moment of conception as a seed, the moment you are conceived – not the date of your birth. The state of mind of your parents when you were conceived [is very important]. I am sure that this is right.

And now biological science has confirmed this. That is, that after conception all life begins. Eighty percent of what you are was fixed at that point, the point of conception. Eighty percent of us is fixed at the time of conception.

[Question from the young member who asked the original question is inaudible, but likely along the lines of, What makes up the other twenty percent?]

[Varindra answers:] Environment, education, mis-education, rotten company, rotten school, rotten teachers ... and good ones.

Now, what do you do about this? You can't do anything about your parents' condition at that time. What [you can do] is watch yourself when the time comes for you. That is why Bapak always told us that before we have sex not to do the latihan but to be quiet. Quiet for a short time.

So that it happens that you do not have sex simply because it happens to be available – which is what happens most of the time. Or, because we are in a state of excitement, having seen something, having watched a movie or something. Some little excitement, some little titillation – a neural itch. That's the nafsu. How do you calm that before you have sex [inaudible].

One of my sons had a very neurotic existence, a very neurotic life for the first few years of his life. He had a rage within him, an incredible rage inside him. And I know why that was so because my wife and I when he was being conceived were in a rotten state of our lives. And she had this rage [within her].

It is very useful for you guys going out into this mad world as [future] parents to remember what Bapak said about this. This is not 'holy joe' talking, not smarmy, mousey talk. It's reality.

Question: So when we are opened, is that sort of along the same lines as being born? My mother said that she was born when she was opened. I am just wondering if it is the same thing for you?

Varindra: You were born in Subud? You were born after your parents came to Subud? Well, >

“
*How do you
calm the nafsu
before you
have sex?*
”

I don't know what her semantics mean when she says she was born after she was opened. However, I do understand [the thought behind what she said], because it really is like a second chance, you know. You remember what Christ said, that unless a person is reborn he cannot enter heaven. You get a renovation, an inner renovation. You have the advantage of being born of parents who were in Subud. But it has to be nurtured, the gift you received at birth has to be nurtured. [inaudible section follows].

Sometimes it is better to be opened after you have finished your studies. I once asked Bapak that since we are now putting our house in order inside, why does Bapak not open my children so that they don't have to gather all this muck and then have to shed it?

Bapak replied that to open my daughter would be fine. She is a child. She will receive directly and all she will want to do is to say, "Allah u' Akbar". Wonderful for her spiritual life, but rotten for this life. People will think that she is stoned, that she is balmy. Because there is nothing inside her to resist, no ballast.

Editor's Note: At this point Muchtar Martins appeared, and the meeting was turned over to him and to Marzuki Andujar. The two of them discussed the work that was being done to make Amanecer the site of the World Congress and how young members could help in that work. ●

Passing of Kadarijah Gardiner

Sharifin Gardiner writes...

Kadarijah passed over peacefully in her sleep a 12.10 UK time today at the St Peter and St James Hospice

Her two daughters, Rasmini and Robin were with her. I was there shortly before and shortly after, as I was collecting Ridhwan Is'harc from the station. He led us in Muslim prayers and Zhikr by Kadarijah's body. The room was full of flowers and great feeling of peace.

Many thanks to all of you who have sent such lovely messages and prayers .
We come from Almighty God and to Him is our returning.
Forgive me those of you who has seen my prayer below already

Much love, Sharifin

A prayer for Kadarijah Ave atque Vale (Hail and farewell)

Go gently my love, softly up into the light
To a place where there is neither day nor night
Soar with the angels, float away so high,
Where we'll meet again, Inshallah, so it's never quite goodbye.
As you leave this world behind: the pain and all the struggle
It's lonely back here with just the cat to huggle.
Bless you my beloved, beautiful, brave Kadarijah

SG 10/11/13

Kadriyah's poem "Dying by Degrees" included in *The God's Eye*, the recent collection of Subud poems by Emmanuel Williams was read at her funeral...

Dying by Degrees

Kadriyah's pensées 10-Dec 2010

"Take your time,
Slow if you please
Take your time.
Take it with ease."
This song from my youth
Has wisdom yet,
And "yet" has wisdom too.
For time is running out
I felt it, I feel it through
My fingers' very fiber.
I enjoy the sound of his breathing
Beside me on the bed.
Exhausted he is by the shock
Of seeing me, feeling me, so near collapse.
I'll be still, with the weight of the tray on my knees,
But no weight in my heart,
Just the knowledge that I'm still here
That's weight enough, God knows.
Weight enough for me to sleep.
Reading Eliot's *Little Gidding* together
Was a link to life and a taste of heaven,
Both world and senses linked.
My veins are in a sort of recovering shock still.
An odd feeling when I move, or if I don't.
I sense their independent life.
Are they wondering what's happened?
Did they think their work was done?
That they could "knock off" now?
But oh, I see is that why I am still to go on?
For if I stopped and went into the beyond,
They wouldn't.
So they keep on working,
Always working for more than
Eighty years!
Poor things, all of them
The veins, tissues, arteries, lungs heart and all of them,
I don't blame you for conking out occasionally
But you see, we will have to move on soon
So we had better (much better!) sort ourselves out
Now and get to our proper place, all of us
So we can really "go home" all of us, by
God's Almighty Grace.

KG

Sincerity

David McCormack sent this quotation...

"If you can come to Subud in all sincerity; if when you are in Subud you can bring to bear your fullest trust, even in adversity and when life is not going so smoothly; if, when nothing seems to be happening or if progress is less swift than you had hoped, you can exhibit patience; and finally if throughout you can, in all humility, contribute a true spirit of submission – if, then, you can develop all these qualities, your progress must beyond all doubt be sure, even though at times it may seem slow.

“It is odd that a whole book on Subud can be condensed into seven words – the Latihan, receiving, sincerity, trust, patience, submission and ...the Latihan.”

From "What is Subud" Edward van Hien Page 86.

Christmas is on the Cards

The introduction from Marcus Bolt's book 'Christmas is on the Cards' – a collection of family and commercial cards created by Marcus over the last 50 years...

I'm not at all religious in the sense of 'having a religion'. I don't go to church, read the Bible or even subscribe to the concept of Christ being the Son of God (aren't we all sons and daughters of God?), yet Christmas still holds some ineffable mystery for me. Did go to a Church of England Primary School, though, as well as attending Sunday School fairly regularly and even went to a Catholic Grammar until I was 12, all of which has, no doubt, left its mark.

So, Christmas has always been important to me.

I remember, as a child, the belief in Santa Claus, writing letters to be burnt and sent up the chimney (and later using the Post Office service of sending letters to the North Pole – and getting a reply!). Ah, the sheer magic and excitement and beneficence charging the air. And I recall, as clear as day, my brother and I riding on Santa's sleigh one night before Christmas – a palpable waking dream, probably triggered by excitement and the Post Office vanside posters of the same subject that our postman Dad had hung around the walls of our shared bedroom.

Our Dad's job as a postman became so intense in the run up up to the 24th, it meant our homelife was affected as he brought home bags of mail to sort and damaged parcels (often containing broken bottles of spirits, which would hang in the kitchen, dripping their contents into cups ranged below), and because he worked longer and longer hours, regaling us over supper with stories from 'the sorting office' about the millions of cards and parcels sorted and delivered. In those far-flung times, there used to be both Christmas Day and Boxing Day Morning deliveries, and I remember eagerly anticipating his return to help count his 'tips' and Christmas 'boxes' (they often totalled over £30 – a small fortune then). This glimpse of a wider world, where people sent cards and presents and gave money seemed veritably cornucopian to my young, unformed mind.

But, oh, the anticipation, the literal counting of the hours then minutes to that moment when one would awake, very early in the morning, and move one's feet to hear the rustle of presents at the end of the bed... and the nuts and the tangerine at 3am... ambrosia, food of the Gods.

I also vividly remember the last day of term before the Christmas holidays when I was nine years old. We were ushered into the school assembly hall and shown a series of black and white films and cartoons all about Christmas. I can still see an image of the black and white films being projected onto the small screen and hear the scratchy sound track pounding out carols. But more importantly, I can reconjure the feelings I had of sheer joy, which were augmented to an almost unbearable intensity by the fact I had on a pair of leather gloves and in my hand a plastic facsimile of a 'Dan Dare paralysing pistol' – I was truly in heaven that day. >



A favourite created in 2006 – simple, elegant typography gets the message across

Later, as a teenager, there was always a promise in the air at Christmas – of joyous nights out, everyone full of good cheer, warm and happy (until too much booze took over, that is) and always, always the chance of meeting a special, Christmas girl...

In my early twenties, Christmas became the pleasure of choosing, wrapping and giving presents to friends, girlfriends, parents and family (the giving as important today as it ever was).

And I've always loved, and still do, the paraphernalia; the Christmas tree and decorations; the lights, candles and crackers; the traditional food, especially the flaming pudding and, of course – Christmas cards...

Another intense pleasure, when a student, was working for the Post Office as a Christmas temp during the vacation, either as member of a gang of students in the back of a huge lorry, delivering parcels (the laughs, the singing of rude songs – 'Four and Twenty Virgins Came Down from Inverness...'; 'Oh, we're off to see the wild west show...' – the sheer sense of exuberance and celebration as Christmas approached), or with a 'round' of my own.

One round especially stands out, centred on the village of Old Welwyn, close to where my parents lived. There was a particular house I delivered to – large-ish, Georgian, overgrown with ivy; it had a gravel drive and a huge wooden front door with a brass knocker. Every day, the house received copious cards and parcels from the UK and overseas. When the door was opened after my knock, I peered inside to see an open fire blazing, a huge decorated tree and holly and ivy festooning the interior. This house, palpably full of familial warmth, energy and joy, became an aspirational icon for me from those moments on.

Then, in my late twenties/early thirties there came a period where Christmas meant nothing but a holiday; a break from college, from work, from routine. I remember, while teaching in a private prep school, balking at having to teach the Christmas story, arguing with the Headmaster, demanding, 'Why should we teach this mumbo-jumbo to kids?' And later even arguing with my Subud/Quaker landlords about 'this mythological nonsense'.

That night I had a dream. An angelic figure came to me and said she would tell me what the Christmas story really meant.

At the time, I had been a Subud member for a couple of years. Subud, I believe, is possibly/probably a direct contact with whomsoever, or whatever, created the universe (or even possibly something psychologically inherent in our systems – a kind of built-in safety valve – and part of the evolutionary process – who knows?). Something which enables one, after many years of 'exercises' (aka the 'latihan' by its members), to become one's real self, through the shrugging off of all the posturing little selves, both inherited, adopted and self-created. And it works, but don't ask me how or why. After forty five years, I still haven't a clue, but continue to practise it wholeheartedly and feel a whole lot better for it.

The founder of Subud was, as a young, Indonesian man, steeped in Sufism, the mystical aspect of Islam. The Sufi paradigm states that the physical world (including our bodies and all our 'little selves') is made up of four 'lower' forces: the material, the vegetable, the animal and the human. Higher forces exist (such as those which make up the energies of the soul or spirit, the angels, the Tao, the Christian Holy Spirit, and so on), and we all have this higher, spiritual force in us, albeit mostly hidden deep within our worldly selves. And this is deemed to be the human soul, or that little bit of our Creator in us all.

The model states that the 'soul' should be in control, but that we allow the lesser forces to dominate our body, mind, emotions and passions – hence money-lust, aggression, competitiveness, the will to power, sexual perversion and so on at the most desultory end of the scale, and just selfishness, laziness and all our psychological hangups at the other. These forces are, on the one hand seen as 'Satanic', and possibly are the 'Devil', the Deadly and Mortal Sins of the Abrahamic religions and perhaps the karma of the East (they are also, I believe, the depressions, neuroses and superiority/inferiority complexes of modern psychotherapy); on the other hand, they are seen as ancillaries – essential for living and operating in this world, for how could we live and progress if we didn't possess a mind, ambition, greed, fear, aggression? (But it must be tempered with compassion and love.) The problems only arise when these lower forces dominate us, according to the construct. This dominance can manifest and be exemplified in humans as, for example, those with a heart of stone who would kill for money (material), those who are only interested in the well-being of themselves and their families (vegetable – analogous to a plant grabbing >



Another favourite created in 2003 – in the UK we have 2 levels of postal service – 1st and 2nd class. As the word Christmas has the letters 'ist' in it, using the stamp and adding a festive hat to Her Majesty's portrait again gets the Christmas message across creatively.

all the sunlight or water to the detriment of its neighbours), and those who will take what is not theirs through aggression and competitiveness (analogous to the way an animal will take another's food, or kill in order to defend its territory or mate). Then, the way an intelligent person will only believe in his or her humanity, denying the existence of a God/Creator, is believed to denote a person ruled by the lesser human force alone, and so on. (I'm writing this brief introduction to Subud, because that's the language the 'dream angel' spoke to me in – naturally, how else could she communicate? It was all I knew and what I was steeped in at the time; today I see it all as a useful construct, like astrology, or the hours on a clock, rather than an immutable 'truth' – but it helps me 'make it through the night').

Thus the angel said to me in my dream, 'In the Christmas story, the town and the inn represent your material mind, which is filled with its comings and goings, its guests (analogous to thoughts, concepts and ideas) and the normal day-to-day business of living. There is no room at the inn for Christ to be born.

'Christ can only be born in your heart, which is represented by the stable. It is simple, rustic, and symbolically contains the the vegetable forces (the wood, straw, hay and the manger), the animal forces (the oxen and asses) as well as the human (Mary and Joseph, the Shepherds and Wise Men).

'The Baby Jesus represents the birth of the soul and all must bow down (surrender, or follow) in order to bring peace to earth (representing inner harmony in oneself).

'The gifts the Wise Men bring – gold, frankincense and myrrh,' she concluded, 'symbolise the gift of life – with its riches, suffering and bitter-sweetness.' And then I awoke.

The experience didn't turn me into a born-again Christian, but it did rekindle a love of Christmas as I began to see it as a 'heart thing' rather than an intellectual pursuit. The kids in my class wondered what hit them the next day.

But it was after I married and had children (and now grandchildren) that the miracle of Christmas really hit home again...

And thus, once more, I embraced the 'Spirit of Christmas' and began to celebrate it again, with all the trimmings, including Christmas cards.

The cards in this book span the last 50 years. It's an odd thing, looking back at them, because I can remember doing each one as though it were yesterday, and yet the time has shot by in big, chunky, blurred lumps. There are some gaps in card production from 65 – 67, 70 – 74, 76 – 77 and 80– 81 (the atheist, wilderness years, or have I just forgotten them and have no record? In fact, if it wasn't for my Mum's keeping just about everything my brother and I sent her, many of the early cards would be missing, too, as it never occurred to me I'd create such a book as this).

Because I truly believe one should 'do unto others as one would be done by', I get a very warm feeling when I receive cards from old friends and family, so I hope others feel the same when they get one from me.

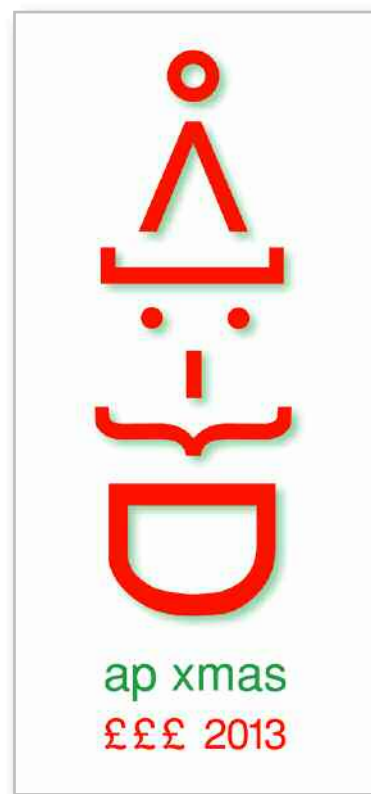
After the 35-plus personal cards in this collection, I've also added in a series of cards I illustrated and produced for my brother (to his ideas) for his building company, Renovation, based in Bristol. For seven years on the trot, he came up with some corking double-takes relating his restoration building services to Christmas, which he allowed me carte blanche to interpret, design and illustrate as I saw fit.

Finally, I've added in some Christmas cards done for commercial clients, and latterly, e-cards. I've created many more, but no longer have copies (I only went digital some fifteen years ago).

One of the most important things when creating a personalised family card, is not to make a rod for your own back (unless you can afford the luxury of professional print). So how to produce 150 or more cards each year has a bearing on the design of the final product (fitness for purpose and function follows form in action, what?). I indulge myself with a technical description and rationale alongside each illustration.

My aim is to add many more before I either become too senile to come up with ideas, or before shuffling off the old mortal coil.

Christmas is on the Cards: *Marcus Bolt. Available from www.lulu.com*



Last year's card – cashing in on the vogue for text messaging, making a simplistic Santa with the trad greeting, 'Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.'



And one I created for my carpenter brother...

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