



About Subud

LÉONARD LASSALLE

In my experience Subud can be explained in many different ways. I hope that this explanation will help the reader to get a clear feeling of what it is about.

Subud is not a religion, nor a technique, nor any kind of system, but it is directly related to the experience of the person practising it. Therefore each person can only talk about it from his or her own experience.

Subud is a very ancient word. It means 'complete'. Complete in the sense that nothing is missing, nothing can be added or taken away. Everything needed is there. It does not mean 'completed' as if something had been made or finished, for at the same time it expresses movement, growth, evolution. Through the practice of Subud each person evolves in accordance with his or her own nature, in harmony with their own deep inner being.

Let us return to the time in our life when we were young children, before we understood the relative sense of words. All human beings at the beginning of their life have been through this experience: one of being 'conscious' without the interference of words.

This was a state in which there were no associations, comparisons or judgment: simply observation, attention, presence. This aware and receptive state in the young child was not due to the parents' will or effort. There clearly is a consciousness at the beginning of every human life.

Each one of us goes through a similar evolution, from embryo to infancy and childhood. We cannot avoid this. Every movement and development, be it physical, emotional, mental or spiritual, is tied to our true inner nature, in an evolution of life that we would call natural.

In infancy this inner awareness disappears little by little as everything in the outer world becomes more attractive. It seems that most human beings lose

contact with their original awareness, their finer feelings. The pull of the material world, especially today, has undoubtedly much to do with this.

The practice of Subud reawakens our natural evolution so that our latent potential can find a harmonious development in our whole being. I have noticed that many Subud members throughout the world have rediscovered this original awareness of 'being' growing within them. It is as if the original consciousness which has been asleep reawakens, little by little, sometimes slowly at first, and begins to grow. The spiritual awareness that has generally been so neglected really exists within us, even if dormant, and is accessible and can be awakened.

Through our practice it is possible to create an inner space, in which this initial consciousness allows us to develop in a similar way to that of our early childhood. It can only happen, though, if during the practice we are in a state of great humility and sincerity, attentiveness and receptiveness, but at the same time letting the process take its course and following everything that surfaces from deep within us, whether it is sound, movement, feelings or simply a state of being. This state of receptivity and following allows us to reach the awareness of our deep inner feelings, and through it, to follow an inner guidance which comes not from our desires, ego or thoughts, but from our original true nature.

Subud is universal and accessible to all. It is in harmony with the different religions of the world, with different faiths, even with non-believers, because the inner being does not have a belief in anything; it is beyond differences.

In order to be at one with our inner being nothing must come in between. In our practice there are no words, no dogma, no teacher; simply, through a contact, we can find the original guidance from within.

Our practice consists of meeting two or three times a week, each session lasting 30 to 40 minutes. Through a state of quiet we make room for the inner space that is necessary for our awareness to reach our inner being. It then manifests itself through different experiences, perhaps physically by sound or spontaneous movements; inwardly through emotions or thoughts; or spiritually through the more subtle vibrations of one's own inner being. Each person receives in accordance with his or her own nature.

During the sessions men and women are separate. We have realised that this is appropriate due to the different nature of men and women. Most members who practise regularly find that, little by little, a consciousness awakens in their inner

feelings which will gently change and enlarge their whole being, making them more receptive to others. Then, after a certain time they develop the capacity to find equilibrium between their inner and outer selves.

Because it does not come from without but from deep within, this practice can give life to all parts of our being that were dormant, even those parts that we thought were awake. It can bring to the surface our good qualities, while at the same time making us aware of our shortcomings, which can then be corrected. This comes about according to our capacity, to our real need to change and awaken. It is an evolution which does not come from our desires or will, but from a natural and spontaneous inner process.

That is why Subud members do not need a teacher or a technique from the outside but simply a complete letting go in trust and sincerity during our sessions. These can be done alone but experience shows that in a group the effect of the presence of others helps the process of bringing awareness to the inner being. After the session we generally feel calm and have a sense of deep well-being.

Personally, Subud has helped me to discover and use the potential dormant within me, so that my actions, my movements and my way of living are more in agreement with my true nature. For me it is a perpetual rebirth, where everyday life and inner life are in harmony. I have observed that when there is inner harmony it is reflected in our outer behaviour.

Here is a short history of Subud and a little about its organisation. It was an Indonesian, Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo, who first had a series of spontaneous experiences that changed his life and himself, to the point that he became a remarkably wise and knowledgeable person, greatly loved by many. It became clear to him that this deep change, which was so, complete, and beneficial to himself and those close to him, was accessible to all of mankind. In 1956 and 1957 Subud quickly spread from Indonesia throughout the world to more than 75 countries. An international organisation exists to serve the needs of our members, mainly to provide facilities to meet in local groups and at large congresses.

It is often found that the humanitarian qualities of our members evolve; for this, we have created different organisations to help them use those qualities. For example, an organisation to help families and the young, another for

encouraging enterprises, another for human welfare, another for assisting the blossoming of the creative expression of individuals, in groups and in society.

I feel I must tell the reader that the terminology used by the majority of Subud members comes from the fact that at the beginning, when Subud came out of Indonesia, all the explanations given in talks were translated from Indonesian and high Javanese. The language that Bapak (Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo) used came from Indo-Javanese and Muslim origins. A 'Subud language' then appeared containing a few Indonesian and Javanese words.

I will close this short explanation in the hope that it is clear to you. I have found that the reality of the experience is well beyond and above any words. It has brought a new dimension to my inner and outer life.

Published by Subud Publications International Ltd.