



SUBUD

Subud is a spiritual movement, which began in 1924. It now exists in over seventy countries and numbers about 10,000 members. Subud is an association of people who share a certain inner experience based on surrender to what may be called the Great Life Force, or the power of God. As an outer expression of its aims, the association has set up health, educational and social projects around the world, funded in some cases by business enterprises.

Subud is based primarily on direct experience, not on belief or teaching. There is no leader, nor any hierarchy within the movement. The path of Subud is the path of spiritual completion as a human being; the word Subud itself has a meaning denoting wholeness or completeness. It is also an acronym of the three Sanskrit words *Susila* (right living), *Budhi* (inner life force) and *Dharma* (will of God).

Subud is non political and open to members of all races, nationalities and creeds, without distinction. Since no belief or behaviour system is involved, members of all religions as well as those with no religious beliefs – even atheists - are attracted to Subud. The purpose of Subud is not to supplant religion. Subud is not an alternative to religious practice, but on the contrary produces a deeper understanding of religion and a stronger commitment towards it.

Subud does not engage in any kind of advertising or propaganda, and does not seek to attract members by such means. However, there are books about it, and about the experiences of individuals in Subud. These can usually be obtained from libraries.



Muhammad Subuh

HOW SUBUD BEGAN

In 1924 a Javanese man by the name of Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwijojo spontaneously received a series of spiritual experiences in which he was given an inner contact with what he later came to understand as the Great Life Force, or power of God. This contact did not come to him through his own wish or expectation. Pak Subuh was a simple man without personal ambition, although he was blessed from an early age with unusual powers of perception and understanding.

This spiritual energy returned night after night, initiating a purification of his entire being. After further experiences in the 1930s he became aware that it was his task to transmit this spiritual energy to others. Provided he surrendered his will to the higher power, it happened automatically. Similarly others could pass on the contact in their turn. Pak Subuh understood that he was not to seek people out, but simply to give the contact to anyone who asked for it.

It was in the 1950s that Europeans first came into contact with Subud. In 1957 Pak Subuh was invited to England where hundreds of spiritual seekers joined Subud. The movement became established in the West and spread quickly around the world.

Muhammad Subuh died in 1987. He left many talks, which are now available on tape and in print, and some later ones on video. In these talks he reminds us of the constant closeness and immediate availability of the power of God and the primary importance of the higher spiritual dimension in

human life, which is beyond all thought and human effort, and which can only be approached by means of complete surrender to the grace and power of God. Pak Subuh never claimed that Subud is the only vehicle of this grace, and neither do Subud members. It is true, however, that Subud is the only association whose sole purpose is the transmission to mankind of this contact.

THE LATIHAN

Latihan is a common Indonesian word meaning "training" or "exercise". In the case of Subud it has a specialised meaning. It refers to the spiritual experience which was originally received by Muhammad Subuh and which anyone can now be given. Latihan here means "training and exercise in bringing the content of the inner self to life."

Life is movement. The Subud latihan awakens and develops individual being starting with the lowest level (that of physical movement) and progressing by stages to the awakening and movement of the finer levels of feeling, understanding and conscious awareness. The first latihan attended by a new member is normally experienced as a vibration of subtle energy at some level, followed by the impulse to move, utter sounds, dance, laugh, cry, sing or pray. This movement is a sign that the latihan is working and the individual has been "opened". Movement may not occur for some until after many attendances at the exercise, however, and there are a few who never feel it at all.

The other important function of the latihan is purification. Doing the latihan can make us painfully aware of our faults, and may also cause temporary states of ill-health in which psychological and physical impurities are safely brought out. Every person in the world is unique and different, and the latihan is unique and different for each person that experiences it. No two people manifest latihan movement in the same way. There are no rules for "how to do the latihan"; the higher energy that manifests in the latihan is unconditioned, and cannot be formulated by the human mind. The only arrangements made are that a group of Subud members meets twice a week to receive the latihan for half an hour or so, either in a rented hall or in a Subud-owned property if they have one. The only rule is that men and women should do the latihan separately. This is in order to avoid the distraction of sexual feelings during the latihan.

The effects of the latihan vary greatly. People usually have a feeling of well-being and relaxation after doing latihan. In the longer term, the process for some may bring a peaceful, gradual development in their acceptance of themselves and others and their experience of constant inward wholeness. For others it may initiate dramatic changes in their lives. Often people experience suffering and difficulties at some stage as the purification begun by the latihan takes its course.

ORGANISATION

The association of Subud is democratically organised and its policy and direction are determined by the World Subud Council (WSC), which is made up of representatives of all the nations in Subud. Every four years there

is a world congress held in a different country and organised by the Subud members there.

The executive body, the International Subud Committee (ISC), carries out the day-to-day management of Subud affairs. These affairs revolve around carrying out the aims of Subud as set forth by Pak Subuh, namely looking after the needs of the members — many of whom are in difficult conditions in very poor countries - setting up general welfare projects, providing latihan facilities for groups and setting up business enterprises to support these aims.

Subud is also represented by a national committee in each country, with opportunities for those interested in welfare, education, business and the arts to be involved if they wish. The structure of Subud within each country simply follows the customary legal forms.

JOINING SUBUD

Anyone over the age of seventeen can join Subud. Applicants are asked to wait three months from the time of their formal application until they are opened, in order for them to satisfy themselves that they have no illusions about what Subud can offer, and to be sure that they are embarking upon the latihan from their own sincere wish.

HELPERS

Despite the fact that there is no hierarchy in Subud, some more experienced members are appointed to act as helpers. Their role is voluntary and implies neither spiritual superiority nor authority. Their task is to help the members in whatever ways are needed. They are also responsible for meeting applicants and being present at opening latihan.

FINANCES

There is no fee for joining Subud, nor are there any charges for belonging to the organisation. However, it is necessary to pay for the cost of meeting places, administration and so on. Members contribute towards these costs according to their ability and willingness to do so. There is no compulsion. Many members support Subud welfare projects and invest in joint enterprises, but this is entirely voluntary.

ENTERPRISES

Muhammad Subuh encouraged Subud members to set up businesses, which donate a percentage of their distributable profit to the support of Subud and its aims. Since the spread of Subud internationally, many businesses have been set up and are contributing funds to the movement's charitable work and to its minimal organisation. These enterprises are not the creation of the Subud association as such, but are the work of individual members and groups within the association.

WELFARE

Muhammad Subuh many times stated that it is essential for Subud to undertake social projects such as schools for

neglected children, hospitals or the sick and homes for the elderly who are neglected by their families.

Subud has initiated many such projects, co-ordinated under Susila Dharma International (SDI), the charitable wing of the Subud association. These projects have received funding from organisations like Oxfam, *Terre des Hommes* and NORAD (Norway), as well as from Subud itself.

Welfare projects in many countries include:

- **Collegia Amor (Colombia)**, a school and developing community centre project in the slums of Bogota.
- **Yayasan Usaha Mulia (Indonesia)**, an umbrella for many local welfare projects including a children's village, schools, community centres, vocational training centres and a clinic.
- **Pestalozzi Schools (Ecuador)**, providing a free and active approach to education which particularly benefits the indigenous children.
- **Suhadha (Sri Lanka)**, a day centre and school in the slums of Colombo.
- **American Overseas Medical Aid (USA)**, which sends packages of medical equipment to third world countries.
- **Alfragide (Portugal)**, a community project and school for refugee children
- **International Child Development Programme (ICDP)**, developed by Subud members in Norway and England and sponsored by UNICEF, the Leger Foundation and Save the Children.

FURTHER INFORMATION, PUBLICATIONS & CONTACTS

Among many books published about Subud are:

- **Susila Budhi Dharma** by Muhammad Subuh
- **The Meaning of Subud** by Muhammad Subuh
- **Autobiography** by Muhammad Subuh
- **Living Religion in Subud** by Matthew Sullivan
- **A Special Assignment** by Varindra Vittachi
- **Antidote** by Salamah Pope
- **Subud** by Rashid Lyle
- **A Way Through the World** by Rashid Lyle

These and other books and leaflets about Subud can be obtained from:

Subud Publications International Ltd,
Loudwater Farm, Loudwater Lane,
Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 4HG
Tel/Fax: 01727 858080
e-mail: subud.books@easynet.co.uk

The Subud Britain National Office address changes from time to time, but is located at present at:
23 Ashpole Road, Booking Churchstreet,
Braintree, Essex CM7 5LW
Tel/Fax: 01376 343223

e-mail: subud@easynet.co.uk

Local Subud groups are often listed in telephone directories.