

APPENDIX 2: HOW CAN WE WIDEN AND DEEPEN OUR LATIHAN EXPERIENCE? OR WHAT IF WE DO NOT FEEL ANYTHING IN THE LATIHAN?

Latihan With Bapak; Yesterday's Latihan; Varindra Vittachi's Experience; How To Be More Mindful Of The latihan; What If You Do Not Feel The Latihan?; A Subud Opening ; Repeating The Name of God; The "Cloud Of Unknowing"; Mindfulness Meditation; The Gambang Tape; Dip Into The Publications ; Julie's Opening; Listening To Bapak; Pauses In The Day; Tasting The Latihan; Saying Your Name In Daily Life; Body Awareness Testing; Surrender And Patience.

Yesterday's Latihan

There were about a hundred men in the large room of the London hotel, maybe more. We had travelled from all over the country to be here and some from further afield. Why? Well, Bapak was here for a short visit and this was latihan night. Now at last, we were standing with our shoes off in front of Bapak who was ahead of us on the stage. The latihan began. But after about five minutes I could hear the latihan around me stopping! What was happening? There was clearly something wrong! Then I could hear Bapak's voice filling the room: "Stop! Stop!" Gradually, the room was strangely quiet. "*Yesterday's latihan...* I don't want to see *yesterday's latihan*," said Bapak, "Prepare again... relax... and begin." What a difference! This time the roof nearly came off the hotel! Everybody's latihan took on a new lease of life. It was lively and really energetic and over within what seemed to be only minutes but was in fact more than half an hour. Afterwards a buzz of excitement remained in the room. Many of us felt rejuvenated, re-energised, aware that something new had occurred (although I am not sure anyone could say what it actually was!)

What on earth was all this about? Bapak told us then that we should "examine" our latihan and we should not "just lay on the floor and go to sleep!" Had anyone actually done that? Perhaps, but I found that hard to believe. But I could see that maybe too many of us had not given much thought to what we were actually doing here. Maybe too many of us had become so familiar with this latihan that we were taking it for granted: sat for a few minutes like we always did, stood up and began as we always did and- worse- latihan as we always did! Did we even notice whether anything new had occurred in our latihan or

not? Were we even bothered? I realised that maybe Bapak was urging us not to be like that but to be more mindful and aware of what was going on in our latihan. Maybe Bapak was addressing a problem here that all of us who latihan may encounter at some stage of our Subud lives when familiarity with the latihan may easily lead to it becoming repetitive and even unconvincing? I remembered a Liberal Democrat councillor I knew who had left Subud for 20 years because although “he made movements and noises they were just repetitive” and “he couldn’t see the point of it.” I wondered, in fact if this might also explain why so many Subud members became content with occasional and irregular latihan rather than the 2 or 3 a week recommended?

In a letter written by Ibu Rahayu, on Bapak’s behalf, in October 1984 and reproduced in the 1980 “Guidance And Advice For Helpers” p 130, Bapak also makes a point of stating:

“You only do the latihan in a routine way, that is, doing the latihan 2 or 3 times a week but not really putting it into practice in your everyday lives”

He recommends: “about 15 minutes latihan every morning.” He says: “test in the morning: “Where is (own name)?” then “Who is (own name)?” then follow your latihan for about 15 minutes.

He also says: “In that simple act perhaps to contribute in a simple yet extraordinary way for the benefit of all, God willing.”

Varindra Vittachi’s Experience

In “A Reporter’s Assignment In Subud,” Varindra Vittachi tells of his “extremely unpleasant experience” which happened in his “fourth year in Subud.”

“Suddenly I ceased to feel any movement outer or inner, during the latihan...I also felt I had lost something that had been very precious to me...Week after week, month after month I sought to regain my familiar sense of the force of the latihan. But it eluded me. At one stage I even concluded that I was the unique case of a man who had to be “re-opened”...The worst aspect of the spell was that gradually I was steering away from the latihan...

“One evening to my enormous gratitude, it returned...The small group in Karachi asked me to participate in the opening of a new member...Twenty minutes after the latihan started he broke into a loud spell of sobbing and,

suddenly, Bill Smith, the other helper in the room and I began to sing. I felt the latihan strongly within me for the first time in over a year...I felt I had learnt what Bapak meant when he told us that a newly opened man may really help someone who had been in Subud longer because the new man might have a much older soul. I also believe that there was another lesson for me in this experience: a helper must help if he is to receive help.” (pp80-83)

What Do You Do If You Are Not A Helper?

If you are not a helper like Varindra you are unlikely to be part of anyone’s opening but you can still latihan with a greater variety of people in the hope of a similar experience occurring for you! Or you can do something which I have always found helpful: seek out someone who is clearly having very strong latihans and latihan with that person. I have never known that to fail: it is so infectious!

How Can We All Be More Mindful Of Our Latihans?

I remembered when I had been first opened I took my latihans very seriously! I would wake up on latihan days and think with pleasure of the latihan ahead of me: I would then remember it several times throughout the day. Also, at first, I would try to relax in a warm bath before going to latihan, if there was time. After latihan I would write up a latihan diary: a record of what I remembered and any observations I made. Yes, I had found that helpful. I even kept count of the number of my latihans (“To-night was my sixth latihan” I began one, eg!) I cannot remember when, or why, I stopped doing this. After this latihan with Bapak, I was to begin again and once more I have found this to be helpful. I now remember a series of articles in one of the early Subud Chronicles called “My First 15 Latihans” which made me smile when I first saw it as I judged it to be a bit naive but I now think that perhaps it is not such a bad idea. Maybe some variety is needed here, too, so that sometimes I might have a monthly review, or longer, rather than every latihan. Or I might simply ask myself after each latihan whether there was anything new at all in this latihan or whether I can identify any effects at all (a change in my feelings, some new ideas, physically relaxed or energised etc) If there isn’t and this continues until one begins to feel bored and naturally begins to come to latihan less frequently, what then?

What Else Can We Do?

First, I have discovered that I need to make sure I am preparing for latihan, in those few minutes before the latihan starts, as carefully as possible. This I do by:

- Physically relaxing as much as I can by letting go of any tensions and being physically “soft”
- Not paying more attention than I have to, to the emotions and thoughts of this time. They are there but I am not now exploring them or particularly commenting on them.
- My intention is to be as open and empty of myself, my ego, and its usual concerns as I can without any strain attached to it at all.
- I want to be receptive to “Something Higher”, or “More,” in my life that is called the latihan.

It is surprising how easy it is to be indifferent to this preparatory time after one has been doing the latihan for awhile! One can get caught up all too easily in conversations with the people around or with oneself internally as one thinks of all sorts of things happening in one’s life outside of the latihan, including people and problems of various kinds. Just for this time one aims at having a respite from all this by not thinking of it any more than spontaneously occurs and thereby clearing the way, as it were, for the latihan.

Second, I have sometimes tested about these problems and found that to be enlightening. Bapak has suggested testing with those “whose testing you trust” but I have sometimes found help in testing from the least likely source! So, again, I would say try all options. One can ask, eg, “May I now receive whatever I need in order to widen and deepen my latihan experience” or “May I receive what it is that is a barrier to my receiving more deeply at this time.” In just about all the testing I have done about widening and deepening my latihan I have been reminded of preparing mindfully as above.

Third, taking some moments as one stands for latihan to internally voice one’s concerns and ask for help has been found by many to be helpful. It can range from merely asking that one receives the best latihan possible for oneself at this time to a rather prayerful stating of one’s doubts, problems, worries etc and then just forgetting them and following whatever happens during the time for latihan.

What If You Do Not Feel The Latihan At All?

“If helpers open someone, they must wait there until that person can receive. Supposing it takes an hour or an hour and a half and that person still cannot receive, then the helpers repeat it again and again on subsequent days, until he or she really can receive.” So said Bapak in Honolulu in 1979.

Be Around Subud People

The famous Hindu saint Ramakrishna was often asked what a person who did not believe in God should do about this. His answer was always disarmingly simple: just be with people who do believe! This is especially applicable to the latihan because the latihan is a “transmission of contact usually from one person to another.” In other words it is mostly passed from person to person. So going out of your way to be with different Subud people may help (that is part of what is meant to happen during the 3 months waiting period) So visiting different groups from one’s own and attending larger latihan at various Regional, National and International events can be really useful.

Some people have been surprised and delighted to experience the latihan after visiting a Subud group for the first time! This happened to me when I drove away from visiting my local group of two men who spoke to me briefly before having their own latihan as I recount in Chapter -. It also happened to a close friend of mine. After I had been opened, he came with me to meet the same two men as I did for my first time. He had to sit in the car park about 100 yards away while the three of us had our usual latihan in the hall. Afterwards I went to collect him to invite him into the hall for coffee and a chat and found him sitting bolt upright, immobile and his face as pale as anything: he had had his own experience of the latihan for his first time! Here are my friend’s own words about his experience. I quote them all- because I like them!

A Subud Opening

“My friend and neighbour John bought “Concerning Subud” by J G Bennett from a bookstall on a local market. One day I borrowed the book and after reading it I discussed my responses with him. This moved him to read it again. He was so impressed he decided to make contact with our nearest Subud group in Ipswich, some 30 miles away. Months later, after much deliberation, he joined. I noticed how devoted he became to attending the twice weekly latihan and I was convinced that an authentic spiritual force was working in his life.

At this time Subud was a closed door to me but I felt that here was an invitation for me to knock and enter. One afternoon I woke from a nap with the sudden conviction that I would ask to join Subud. I stood up to look out of the window and saw outside the one other Subud member (apart from John) living in my locality. He had come on a rare visit to John in the house next door. John was not at home that day, so I spent a few minutes talking to him about Subud. I was struck by the coincidence.

When I later visited the local group a date was set for my opening, after the usual 3 month waiting period. During this period I went several times with John to the meetings and waited in the car park whilst the group were engaged in latihan. Then I met everyone for a coffee and chat. On one such occasion, as I sat alone in my car, I was suddenly hit by a current of energy. It was like an electric shock. Then, for a few minutes, I remained absolutely still. And I knew I had been given something that I deeply needed. This was my opening.

Two weeks later, on an evening in March 1980, I was officially opened by the group. It was the day before my birthday. In the latihan I was moved, without any intention, to lie on the floor. I listened to the sounds of people around me, the singing and movements, and I felt completely relaxed. I had knocked on the Subud door and entered and found myself at home.”

Repeating One Of The Names Of God

Bapak has also suggested that people who are not feeling the latihan strongly should take up the practice of repeating the name of “God” over and over again. I think this might be best done, first, just before the latihan starts, at the beginning of the latihan (when one becomes aware that nothing seems to be happening) and then, at times, during the latihan **if nothing else seems to be happening.**

The Cloud Of Unknowing

This is a 14th. Century Christian mystical text written by an anonymous monk as a guide to the contemplative life. Its core message is: *the prayer of one syllable*. It gives a lot more detail which may help and support what Bapak has suggested above:

“...encapsulate and contain your intention in a single word to help you...So take a little word of just one syllable to help you focus your attention. The shorter the

word the better...Choose a word like “God” or “love” ...and impress it indelibly on your heart ...”

The author also reminds us of “a natural example...which shows us the truth of the matter: a man or woman who is suddenly frightened by a fire or death or something of this sort is in a state of extremity and compelled to cry or pray at once for help. How is this done? Certainly you won’t find a long speech or even using a word of two syllables! Why? Because it would take too long to express his need and agitation. In his great terror, he bursts out with one little monosyllable like “fire” or “help” That, he says, is how you should use your word to express your “cry for help”

This work is easily available nowadays and develops the prayer of one syllable in much helpful detail.

Personally, I have never tried this during my latihan, believing it to be better not to make any self-willed efforts then. However, if I was not conscious of anything happening for a long time I can see I might try it then rather than simply stand there thinking randomly and being bored stiff! A lady I know recently “gave it a year” and then, aware of nothing happening in her latihan, left the group without trying this or any of the other suggestions here. The helpers did not help her she said, not even enquiring why she had stopped going to latihan!

I have however found the advice in this little book extremely helpful to my preparing for latihan in my pre-latihan quiet time. I remember what the author calls the “cloud of forgetting” and this is when I forget, just for this time, everything around me (people, places etc) and all my usual concerns, including habitual thoughts and feelings, even what I know about myself, about the people around me, about Subud, the latihan etc.

After this I become aware of a “cloud of unknowing”: a state of simple awareness in which nothing seems to be happening except, as the Cloud puts it, “that thine intent be nakedly directed unto God.” I sometimes prefer to replace the word God with “the Highest Available To Me” or simply with “latihan”

The “Cloud” also, helpfully, says:

“cease never in thine intent; but beat ever more on this cloud of unknowing that is betwixt thee and thy God with...a loving attention” (p29) And:

“With this word (God or Love) thou shalt beat on this cloud and this darkness above thee. With this word thou shalt sink down all manner of thought under the cloud of forgetting” (p30)

By the time one then stands for latihan all these thoughts also are dropped as one stands as empty (“naked”) as possible and ready to follow whatever prompts come to one...

“Mindfulness Meditation”

A similar state of simple receptivity can be experienced at times **outside the latihan** by a variety of mindfulness exercises that are commonly encouraged by therapists and health practitioners of just about all persuasions nowadays. The research based on neuroscience, brain imaging etc, has shown the very real benefits in physical and emotional well-being and health that can come from 20 minutes of practice of mindfulness a day for about 7 or 8 weeks.

As a means of preparing for latihan some daily practice of mindfulness may help, even for much shorter periods than 20 minutes. Here is a 1 minute mindfulness exercise that may help in relaxing the body ready for latihan and as a means of helping the mind to become more receptive and aware:

Sit as comfortably as possible. You are usually advised to sit upright on a straight-backed chair.

Focus your attention on your breath as it flows in and out of your body. Stay in touch with the different sensations of each in-breath and out-breath. Observe the breath without looking for anything special to happen. There is no need to alter your breathing in any way.

After awhile your mind may wander. When you notice this gently bring your attention back to your breath, without giving yourself a hard time- the act of realising that your mind has wandered and bringing your attention back without criticising yourself is central to the practice of mindfulness meditation.

Your mind may eventually become calm like a still pond – or it may not. Even if you get a sense of absolute stillness, it may only be fleeting. If you feel anything else (anger or exasperation, eg) notice this may be fleeting too. Whatever happens, just allow it to be as it is.

After a minute, let your eyes open and become aware of the room again.

This is adapted from “Mindfulness: A Practical Guide To Finding Peace In A Frantic World (p4) – a book I would recommend if this approach appeals to you. Obviously one can practise this meditation for more than a minute if one wants and have several sessions in a day if time permits. I would again stress that this can be helpful if practised **outside of the latihan and not during the latihan! The latihan is a time for all personal effort to cease as one waits for “Something Else” to happen.** One of the many benefits to come from this is physical and mental relaxation which is helpful in approaching the latihan experience.

The Gambang Recording

Here is another Bapak recommendation: to listen to his playing an Indonesian musical instrument on what is often still called the “Gambang Tape.” I myself can testify to the effectiveness of this although you might profit by my experience! The first time I heard this music I was sitting with a group of other people and I was quite caught out by it. As soon as the music started I felt the latihan well up in me and my arms, head and feet started moving and I began to feel joyously happy. Before things really got going, though, an elderly helper came over to me and whispered (rather loudly!) “Don’t go into latihan, John. Just listen.” I think he was cautioning me because we were in a mixed group (men AND women!) and latihan together was a “no-no!” The result was that instead of feeling the happy expansiveness of the latihan I had to sit still, like a naughty child, and listen as if I was listening to any other piece of music! So, just to be on the safe side listen to it on your own (or with a selected group who will allow you to experience it!) and then if your legs start dancing on their own as if they were tickling you and making you laugh, you will be free to enjoy it!

Dip Into The Publications! Julie’s Opening:

Again, some people have found themselves brought naturally to experiencing the latihan simply by reading about it. This happened to my partner. True, she had been around Subud folk a bit beforehand but she first felt the latihan after reading a Subud book when she was completely on her own on holiday in Turkey. Here are her words:

“I first felt the latihan when I was on holiday in Turkey. I had heard a lot about Subud beforehand and I had brought a pile of 6 books to read while I was away. My initial thoughts had been of how embarrassed I was likely to be if I was

opened. If I went to latihan and nothing happened, that would be embarrassing; if I went and *something* happened I was sure that too would be embarrassing! It was surely a no-win situation?

Anyway, one night I began reading...and I grew more and more “narky” (angry!). I had been told that there were no rules, dogma or theories in Subud but it struck me that these books were riddled with all three! One of the books ended with a Bapak quote and that only made me even more narky. Then, suddenly, quite unexpectedly, something happened! I became aware of an odd feeling in my right hand and then it began to rise upwards *of its own accord!* It felt like I was in a relaxing bath and I had just allowed my hand to float to the top of the water. And my feelings were affected too: I felt excited, surprised and very happy! I noticed that I could stop my hand from moving just by willing to do so. And then if I relaxed it moved again! Strange.

I decided that if I got any time on my own during this holiday I would see if it would happen again. I did not expect this because I was with all of my family. But the next day, while we were all out, my eldest daughter complained of being tired, so in the end it was decided that I should bring her back to the chalet while the others were out. This I did and she went immediately to bed. So I was left on my own again. Sure enough the experience repeated itself! It felt so easy and natural- and good. On returning home I had no hesitation in joining the local group.”

I, too, have found for myself that simply reading someone else’s experiences in Subud or a bit about Subud in any of the Subud publications can lead to the latihan making its presence felt in me. This can also be quite unexpected.

Listening To Bapak’s Talks

Also, very effective for a lot of people, myself included, is just to listen to Bapak’s talks. This works best for me if I just listen to Bapak’s voice in Indonesian rather than reading the translation. The latter all too easily sets me thinking and gets my critical mind going whereas the rich sound of Bapak’s voice seems to resonate more deeply with me so that I have the experience then of Bapak sharing a hugely personal secret with me! Delightful! Invariably, the latihan comes to me then.

Taking Pauses Throughout The Day

When Subud first came to the West, Bapak gave this advice:

“Practise this also before you do your ordinary work, such as in your office. Stop for awhile, even if it is only three to five minutes, so that you may become quiet within yourself; for while you are in this state there may be some indication for you which will facilitate whatever you are about to undertake so that you will both be more successful in your work and also feel satisfied and happy while you are working.”

“That you should exercise beforehand applies not only to this but also to other actions, such as eating; you should not forget to be quiet, though it need not be for long...The same is true for sleeping and other significant actions.” (“Subud And The Active Life p 224)

Many people like myself have found this to be very helpful. It has been both relaxing and inspiring for me at times. For example, when I have been (as I often am!) nervous and uneasy I have sat, and sometimes stood, as if in the pre-latihan quiet for a short time and found my feelings transformed into calmness and confidence. This has happened many, many times, especially at work- before a public event when I have to talk to a large audience of adults, eg. Sometimes, too, I have received a different perspective on things or thought completely new ideas about something during these few moments (as in the idea to contact my Area Education Office when I was homeless even though to my rational mind this was a hopeless thing to do - see Chapter U A Home Of Our Own)

“Tasting The Latihan”

A companion practice to the former one is to actually to go further than just being quiet for brief moments in the day and to actually experience the latihan for a short time every so often during the day. Bapak first asked members to do this at a time when he felt the world to be in a particularly dangerous phase as a means of helping the world. Then people were having short latihan all over the world in lifts, workplaces, toilets etc- wherever one could and whenever one was alone! This has since remained a favourite practice of mine and several people I know.

Saying Your Name In Daily Life

Do not be put off by the apparent simplicity of this because this practice can be surprisingly effective. Consider these words of the poet Lord Tennyson:

“A kind of waking trance I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been alone. This has often come on me through repeating my own name to myself silently till, all at once, as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being; and this is not a confused state but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was almost a laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (as it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life.” Wow!

You Could Try Some Body Awareness Testing

Many experienced and new members have found this particular group of tests especially helpful –and even repeat it every 3 months or so.

RECEIVE

Where are you? Where is “your name?”

Where is your head? How does your head move in response to something negative? How does your head move in response to something positive?

Where are your arms? How do your arms move in response to something negative? How do your arms move in response to something positive?

Where are your legs and feet? How do they move in response to something negative/ positive?

Then:

Now feel your inner head. How does it feel when something is wrong/ then right?

Now feel your inner arms. How do your inner arms feel when something is negative/ positive?

Now feel your inner feeling. How does your inner feeling feel when something is negative/ positive?

Now return to your outer body. How is it when your outer body is in harmony with your inner feeling and inner body?

For people who are not feeling the latihan at all it is sometimes useful to change the wording slightly and say: “Feel the latihan...” in the head, arms, legs and feet, the inner head etc.

Surrender

If you are not receiving strongly or convincingly, or you are having any problems with your latihan experience and you are fortunate enough to be able to talk to someone about them, you will probably be offered 2 suggestions: first to “do some testing” (which may be very helpful) and/or you will be offered one bit of cover-all (ie it can be an answer for everything!) advice: to “surrender” it. Now this can be just the thing or no help at all! I think it is no help at all when it is “surrender” done in a rather quick and off-hand way. I call this *dismissive or passive surrender*.” This is when one simply says: “This is up to God. It is His business and there is no more for me to do about this!” This is said, or thought, in a quick, dismissive way. It *feels* like the problem is dismissed and it is. It encourages an idle, lazy, *laissez-faire* attitude. It is just words. It has no effect: it is like trying to fire an arrow from a bow and the arrow simply falls at one’s feet: it travels no distance! One hardly gives the intention a minute. Then there is *active surrender*. This is where one takes the problem to God (or the Latihan) in a more mindful and focussed way. It is like testing where one says a problem and *waits for a response*. The key to active surrender is that there is a **response**. This can be simply the feeling that the problem has literally been taken away from one (it really feels like that!) In my experience, this usually leaves feelings of huge relief and calmness with a most welcome certainty that the problem is being dealt with. One does- literally- cease worrying about the problem quite naturally when this surrender has been successful. One *knows* it is no longer one’s problem.

I have also found that I have to sometimes make many efforts at surrender before I reach this point. It does not come easily to me and it may not come easily to you. It is worth it, though because the effect can be amazing (see Chapter 8 – for one of my most convincing – and helpful - experiences of this kind of surrender) I think, too, that active surrender has to be more *heartfelt* than dismissive surrender i.e. one has to be involved with it rather more seriously and feelingly than with a quick thought or two! I think it has parallels with what we now know about how intuition and inspiration seem to work.

The Psychology Of Inspiration

First, there is the need for a lot of concentration on everything to do with the problem: “he needs to concentrate his fullest attention and thinking power all round its various facets” and such concentration “may have to be repeated several days, perhaps even for several weeks.” Then:

“when he reaches a position of complete bafflement in his reflections, the wisest course is to become passive instead of remaining positive... to abandon any self-effort at all and take a little mental holiday and turn his thoughts elsewhere...

What the surface consciousness has failed to settle or solve must now be regulated to the deeper mind beneath it... after he has let the question sink away it is more likely to return unexpectedly of its own accord with the solution ready-made” (for a more detailed description of this process see: “The Wisdom Of The Overself” by Paul Brunton pp 222-227)

There are many examples in many people’s experience to testify to the success of this method. I use it to show how active surrender may similarly work! After focussing hard on a situation and getting nowhere, the solution often presents itself when one’s mind is on some mundane task like tying one’s shoes! Yet, the latter only seems to happen after a previous period of hard struggle. This is the very opposite of dismissive surrender which nearly always seems to have no discernible effect.

And Finally:

So, if you wish for a more convincing latihan, or to widen and deepen your latihan experience, my advice would be for you to try whichever of these strategies appeals to you. If all fails then maybe Bapak’s advice to Varindra Vittachi may be helpful in understanding what might be going on for you. Varindra writes in the book quoted above on pages 81-83:

“I had travelled five hundred miles for a latihan but I still felt empty and deserted by the inner force that had sustained my state for four years. This inner depression inevitably spoiled my relationships as I went about like a bear with ten sore teeth in his head. But when I reached the point of feeling that I was irredeemable, I got another opportunity of visiting Bapak in Indonesia and asking him to help me out of my despondency.

Bapak heard me through and said (Prio Hartono interpreting) “In school there is a class for physical exercise and class for mathematics. You like physical exercise. But sometimes necessary to go to mathematics class also.”

One of the oldest helpers in Indonesia explained further how this process occurs. “The latihan acts on various parts of the being of man as it is deemed necessary by the will of God. Sometimes it is the physical body, at other times it is the feelings, at still other times it is the mind and so on. People who receive the first manifestation...in their bodies are, therefore, lucky. At the very start they have overt *proof* of something new taking place...Those in whom the force first starts working in the brain are not so lucky. They cannot see any external manifestation of a force at work. The purification of the brain, however, may be going on while the man himself may declare that he has not felt anything at all. The real difficulty in such a case is that the purification of the brain means the cleansing of the psychological content of the brain – which are a man’s thoughts. What are these thoughts except the ordinary things that he thinks about? So, in the latihan he finds that he continues to think the same ordinary thoughts as he does out of the latihan. He sees no difference between the state of being in latihan and his ordinary state. So he is disappointed. *What he does not realize is that in the state of latihan he actually is sufficiently conscious of these thoughts to discover that they are commonplace thoughts.* In his ordinary state he is not usually conscious of his thoughts. He *is* his thoughts. This is the difference between the two states in such a man. But he himself may not realize this.”

These explanations brought me instantaneous mental relief from the sense of despair I had endured for so many months... But they did not bring back the taste of the latihan. But I now knew I should not worry about it.” Varindra was now prepared to keep going with *patience* and this brought him to the experience described at the beginning of this chapter. There may well be times when, after trying all the suggestions here, we are best advised to remember an old and wise Buddhist saying, “***Patience is the lightning path!***” It may also be the right and creative path - often, as with Varindra, when one least expects it!