

“JUST BE AMONGST SUBUD MEMBERS AND EXPRESS YOUR VIEW!”

I felt much encouraged by this and wondered what else I might be doing now?

I was clearly looking at my relationship with Subud in a new light- after so many years! I felt that instead of withdrawing from Subud because I did not share what seemed to be the consensus view, I should now stay and simply say what I believed was true for me and not be concerned about how others reacted. I just felt that my view was a valid one and should be expressed and not so easily suppressed by louder or more strident voices. Especially as I now knew that there were other people who felt exactly the same as me.

This was not always easy, however.

I remember one particularly unpleasant episode when I took my life in my hands (exaggeration!) and asked one of the local lady helpers why they had refused to open someone I knew on the basis of helper testing. They had “tested whether she should be opened and God had said “no”.” I could hardly believe this: were they believing that testing was the “word of God”? I simply could not go along with such an outrageous (to me) claim! Nonetheless, I really wanted to know why these ladies did not just follow Bapak’s advice and open the woman after the usual three months sincerity test? The helper just exploded in front of me: she completely lost her temper and shouted at me so that everyone all over the house heard: “Get out,” she screamed at me, “Go away...Get away from me...How can you call yourself a Subud member...” I was speechless.

People came running over to control the situation. At one point I really felt she was going to physically attack me- so incensed was she! And all I had done was to ask: “Can I ask why the ladies are testing if people should be opened?” I must quickly say at this point that this was the only time I experienced such an extreme reaction! Usually, I met with silent hostility at worst or sometimes merely an obvious avoidance. Surprisingly, there were those, particularly the men in my region, who seemed –on the surface at least- to be friendly and accepting of me and I found that heart-warming and has left me feeling warmly towards them still.

A Proposal For National Congress

A further disappointment came when I responded to a request for a suggestion for something that would inspire a lively workshop at the coming National Congress.

I suggested that the topic of “Subud in the world” be discussed by all the delegates at National Congress.

I was asked if I would be prepared to facilitate the meeting and suggest some ideas for the delegates to consider. These ideas had then to be worded as a proposal and put forward as a resolution after being approved by the whole region.

So I took my proposal to the next Regional Meeting where there was immediate and unanimous disapproval on the basis that the proposal was “too negative.” This was because I had included a section about the major criticisms of Subud I had encountered over the years. The region *unanimously* did not want anything “critical” to be part of the Congress discussions! It was made clear to me in no uncertain terms that nobody was in the slightest bit interested in anything critical that anyone was saying about Subud!

As a result I withdrew my offer to facilitate the workshop and a new facilitator was found and the proposal was completely reworded to remove anything that could be seen as negative or contentious. The result was completely predictable. In the words of one delegate who bothered to evaluate the workshop “it was the same stuff we have been talking about for years. Some of us are really interested in this subject- when are we going to have an intelligent and practical discussion about it?” Very disappointing and for me it was a complete failure: I had plainly been unable to bring about this “intelligent and practical discussion” which some of us felt was now so important.

I tried more articles for the Journal. I had determined that I would carry on with this until I had an article completely rejected- then I would give up. Well, I came close to this as one or two articles were changed and had chunks of (slightly) contentious stuff removed. It was made clear to me that the Journal had a “be positive and encouraging policy” so anything other than this would be “outside its remit”. But, on the plus side, I was also asked if I would write more about my personal experiences in Subud. This I did and these articles were more positively received by the editors with very little comment from anyone else. Finally, the Journal carried an appeal by a newly appointed National Chair who was inviting ideas for “the future of Subud” from members. So I sent mine off

and received an email thanking me very much for them- “they were just the sort of things she had in mind” and she would “get back to me in about a week’s time.” It is now *almost two years later* and ... the *silence is deafening!* Why did she not get back to me as she said she would? It led to my wondering-not for the first time!- why on earth did I bother? And, worse, why, oh why, did I get these receivings in the first place?