

FIRST WORDS

Latihan tonight really surprised me! It began, almost as soon as I stood up, with this loud singing that seemed to come from the very core of my being and then seemed to *soar* up to the wide star-filled sky outside this hall and to the ends of space itself no less... And it carried such happiness with it! The enormity of this experience was such that I had no thoughts of the people around me, or of anything other than what was now happening. I felt so wide, so spacious and so *free*. It was as if I was in contact with a Larger Life that was somehow more *real and alive* than usual. It all felt so gloriously happy and I knew that this happiness was coming from some place inside myself. And this feeling lasted for the whole half-hour as I sang, chanted, danced, ran, laughed, shouted and goodness knows what else. It was so *wonderful and so life-affirming!* And I felt so happy...

As the latihan ended, I became aware of the presence next to me of one of our visitors for this evening. He was a National Helper (see chapter: “More Discontents”) and a near-stranger to me. He spoke to me: “Bapak has said we should not be too quick to begin our latihans because of the influences of the lower forces.” He stood there, briefly. What did he mean? I knew “lower forces” meant something not good. Why did he feel he should say this? He said nothing else and I was momentarily taken aback. I felt initially as if I had been reprimanded. I asked myself: “Have I done something wrong here, then?” But I said nothing because I immediately thought: this latihan that he seems to be criticising was so convincing and so energising and life-affirming for me –and so *good* - that I cannot believe it to be, in any sense, “wrong.” And anyway, as I have recorded in my first book, “Amazing Grace”, had not such latihans transformed my life so that, after some extremely difficult times, it had now become settled, stable and more comfortable than I would have believed not all that long ago? No, I don’t know what he is on about, I thought, and as he never said any more we simply turned away from each other...

Alas, not for the first time I felt a turning away or a lack of congruence between my inner experience of the latihan and my relationship with the members of this Subud which was seen as the “vehicle for the spread and well-being of this latihan.” Be prepared: there will be more of this in this book.

This second book of mine continues the story of my experience of Subud and the latihan (see Inside Cover) for the next three decades of my life after those recorded in my first book: “Amazing Grace”. It has not been all easy, by any means, as you will soon discover if you read further. Here I make the distinction between “Subud” and the “Latihan” because, as you will see, the two have become increasingly separate for me. The first part of this book explains this further. .

I am confident that if you have read my first book you will *not* be prepared for what happens here!

So, I begin with what attracted me to Subud.

I want to say from the outset that what I say here are for me the **essentials** of Subud: if Subud could stick just to these I think it would have a healthier standing in the world! I go to careful lengths to back this up with quotes from Subud’s Founder which may not be of interest to everyone, so I suggest then that you may just want to quickly read the **bold type** and skip over the rest. I include the latter for those who know something of Subud and especially for those present day Subud members who may be unconvinced by what I say and believe it to be something of an eccentric view! As the incident above indicates, as time went on, Subud and I were going to find it more and more difficult to understand each other...But I must not get ahead of my story...

This book begins with my outer and inner lives rather happier than before. As readers of my first book will know, much of this happiness I attribute to the undeniable influence of the Latihan in my life. And this lasted for some years.

During this time I was having more experiences like the one at the beginning of this chapter and the result was that they were going to initiate a difficult intellectual struggle for me as my latihan and life experiences seemed to take me in a completely different direction from the one that members of this organisation called Subud wanted, or expected, from its members – hence the title of this book (words which, as you will see, were actually said to, or rather *shouted* at, me!) All this is recorded here because of its importance to me but I realise that it may not be *that* important to you...So, if you are more concerned with how our inner and outer lives can directly influence each other more personally through this phenomenon called the Latihan (rather than with these intellectual struggles) then you might prefer to begin with the Chapter called: “How To Explain This?” and simply skip over, or merely skim, everything that

has gone before! I just want to give you the choice...Maybe I should say here that even that Chapter may be something of a huge challenge to you...but what can I do? Other than tell it as it is?