

FIRST WORDS

This book is about some inner experiences and outer changes that began for me when I was in my mid-thirties. They have proved not only life-changing but also life-transforming. And they have continued until now as I approach my seventies - and still sometimes as dramatically and often completely unexpectedly as ever. In this book I tell the first part of my story only. I tell it in a series of articles, some of which were published in the "Subud Journal," but most have not been published before.

So why tell it? And why on earth should you read it?

Well, it has taken me a long time to be persuaded to write these things. In fact, most of what I write here happened over three decades ago! So important is it to me, however, that I remember it all as if it happened yesterday. And should my memory fail, however slightly, I can refer to a written record, a personal Journal, which I kept as these things happened. I wrote every detail down at the time or shortly after. I never thought this would ever be for eyes other than my own, however. Until now I have kept my personal and public lives largely separate. I realise that this was largely because of fear- of being thought odd, or worse, mad! Other people's opinions mattered more to me than they do now.

These experiences happened! So, first, I am simply bearing witness to them, even though they may seem at first (*and last!*) glance to be unusual, perhaps to the point, sometimes, of seeming to be unbelievable. They truly happened as they are told here and for most of them there have been witnesses other than myself who will testify to the truth of much of it.

But more than this, I have noticed that when something special or important has happened to me, I have usually felt grateful and sometimes that gratitude has led me to almost *need* to share it. I have noticed this particularly in my happiest moments. Then I would find myself *wanting to share this happiness with everyone in the whole world!* There have been times when not sharing it has led to a cloud descending on my own feelings and I have felt a sadness and a compassion for others which I do not usually feel. This has grown over the years so that I now feel

that I have been given so much that I have a need to give “something back.” By telling all this, I give myself the feeling that I am paying back a debt in some way.

This has not been my own feeling alone. It has also been the feeling of a handful of influential people in my life. For example, some time ago, I met a gifted intuitive man who, although he had never met me before and knew me only as “John”, suddenly said that I “should get that writing done. Those experiences are important to you *and may be to others.*” It was hearing that last bit that led me to make more copious notes at the time these things happened. So, I think there is some compassion prompting this writing, also. If what I have discovered has done so much for me, it is surely possible that it may also similarly help others? I sincerely hope so because, as I record here, *it can make such a HUGE difference* to a life. I do not think this can only happen to me!

In his book “Concerning Subud,” John Bennett writes that we have “an obligation to share with others what we ourselves value” and this “obligation can only be discharged if we are ready to disclose our experiences.” We pay our debt, he says, by making “public one’s own- often very private reasons- for following a course of action.” This still resonates strongly with me. And this I try to do in what follows.

He also writes of the dervishes in a way that seems to sum up the attitude I am struggling to express here:

“They (i.e. the dervishes) were in no hurry to speak...but they also seemed to have no desire to hold anything back...I did not yet understand that dervishes are not allowed to have secrets” (p 30)

So, here I am sharing my most intimate and private experiences because I feel impelled to do so by an intuition that I have come to trust and because I believe, if such life-changing experiences can happen to such an ordinary person as me, they can clearly happen to anyone. I want to say from the outset that there is absolutely nothing special about me. I am as flawed as the next person and probably more so in some ways. As you get to know me through my writings, the more obvious will my “warts” become. I hope you will take heart because of this. I freely admit that I am in the “special needs” group where any spirituality is concerned. I am an ordinary man with an ordinary life which I have lived in a better way because of these experiences. True, some of these experiences have seemed extraordinary but

that is not to say they cannot happen to anyone. In fact, that “anyone” could well be **YOU!** But I am getting ahead of myself: let us start at the very beginning and then you can make up your own mind. Are you prepared to give it a go? It might just be worth your while...