



The Subud Boston Newsletter

Patience, Sincerity, Submission and Courage

September/October 2000 • Volume 8/Number 1

Editorial

Here in Boston, the men and women alternate between two rooms for doing latihan: one that is small but carpeted and cozy and another that is larger, uncarpeted and used as a pre-school during the day. Quite a while back, there was an incident prior to the women's latihan in the larger room which brought to the fore differing feelings about what constitutes adequate preparation of the latihan space and to what extent the sanctity of the pre-latihan quiet period needs to be upheld. In a nutshell, this is what happened: quiet time had already begun when I and another woman arrived late and created a brief disruption as we moved additional pieces of pre-school furniture to make a little more space. Strong feelings were felt both by those who were trying to be quiet and by those who saw the room as not properly readied. The purpose of this article is not to discuss the particular incident itself, but to convey the thoughts it continues to inspire in me about reverence for quiet time and for the latihan and what it means to prepare the space in which we do

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Latihan and Democracy

Sharif Horthy (October 2000)

Here are some thoughts in response to the discussion about the role of World Subud Council (WSC) and the proposals to amend the World Subud Association (WSA) bylaws. I want to thank all those who have so far participated in the discussion. As I explained earlier, my purpose in encouraging a few countries to beat the 12-months-before-congress deadline with their proposals was precisely to encourage discussion of these issues throughout the Subud community prior to the world congress. I am pleased that the work of the WSC has attracted such enthusiastic interest.

It would be even better if we could discuss these things with less personal animosity. We need to tolerate differences of opinion and examine them in a spirit of enquiry and mutual trust. Otherwise the pursuit of harmony will always mean having to agree about everything, and then we won't progress.

Several people started by questioning my motives. They conjectured that I'd thought these things up because I 'wanted to get my own way', because I support the wings and am against the zone representatives, or because I want to help a few rich members to take over Subud, etc. As far as one can be sure of one's own motives, I believe they guessed wrong on all counts. In fact their guesses don't make a lot of sense.

Firstly, I'm not the one who gets to decide any of this. All of you Subud mem-

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Letter from Marcella Cooke to Subud Boston

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

An astonishing thing has happened. I have become the new chair of Subud Boston! For those of you who were not present for the testing at our annual meeting in September, I experienced a rather dramatic unwillingness to be willing to serve as chair, but that melted away pretty fast. (Until I found out it was a two-year term, not one-year.) Although I started my term stunned and disoriented, I am actually now quite happy to be chair and plan to simply have small goals and make sure all of us on the committee are having a good time!

I sincerely thank the previous committee - Peter Baptiste, Ruslan Henderson (Ruslan again for being able to steer the committee when Peter was unable to complete his term), Lillian Shulman (Lillian again for steering the committee when Ruslan resigned - are you people sure this is a two-year term?), and Viviana Mason. For everything you did, and for all you were able to give to the group during the past year, thank you. And thank you Lillian and Viviana for preparing for and chairing the annual meeting so thoughtfully and graciously. I enjoyed this year's meeting very much and have taken to heart all the recommendations offered by the outgoing committee. These are now at the forefront of the new committee's priorities. I also want to thank all of you who were able to come to the meeting and stayed to witness the testing, for your quiet feeling during the process, and your support afterward which I felt even through the fog of my disbelief. I asked at the meeting and ask

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Susila Dharma Project Proposal

Sonia Owens

In searching for some way that Subud Boston could become involved in a charity of some kind, and not take up much time from our very busy lives, I have come up with the following idea for a Susila Dharma Project.

Viviana Mason and I do some volunteer work at the Corpus Christi Food Pantry in Nashua. This is a non-profit ministry that was started in 1999 by several Catholic parishes in Nashua. They accept donations of food from individuals, local churches, civic groups, schools, and local merchants and offer these donations to any family in Nashua in need of emergency food assistance. In the past year they have provided over 90,000 meals.

Here's my proposal: It might be relatively easy for you to pick up a few extra items while you do your regular shopping at the supermarket. Often there are specials being offered, two for ones etc. If you are able to bring something each time you come to latihan and give it to Viviana or Philip Mason or to me, we would bring your donations to the food pantry. We could have a basket or bag set out for these collections.

All of the following are acceptable: canned and boxed foods of all kinds: Meat, fish, soup, vegetables, tomatoes, sauces, fruit. Coffee, tea, powdered milk, juices. Condiments, beans, rice, spaghetti. Cereals, cookies, crackers. Cleaning products, toothpaste, shampoos, soap, shaving cream, kleenex, baby items.

Subud's help with donations of food would be very welcome.

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once again for your prayers to help me serve you as well as I can.

Your new committee thus far - Viviana Mason (Miss Moneypenny) has agreed to continue as Treasurer, Virendra Samaraweera (Man-of-the-House) is House Magnet, who, God willing, will find a more suitable space for us to do latihan, and Kenton Hensley (Mr. F/X) is our Tape Coordinator. We hope more of you will feel like joining us. You are welcome to offer as much or as little time as you are able to give. It's totally up to you. (See how easy this is?)

The following positions are available:

1. Communications Manager - someone to record minutes of meetings, handle other types of communications, guard the files, etc.

2. Vicechair - I have no idea, but if you have a hit to do it we'll find out what you bring to the job. You might be a big-picture person, a generalist, have an important skill we are lacking, or have just the right personal qualities we need for balance... (perhaps you have a light touch with puff pastry...)

3. Publications Coordinator - someone to take inventory of what we now have in stock; decide what else to have on hand, promote what we have, order and sell books, subscriptions and other Subud publications. (Perhaps occasional read-aloud times might appeal to some, etc.)

4. Special Events/Social Events Coordinator - someone who would spring into action for occasional visits, events or parties, coordinating communications & arrangements for snacks or pot-luck menu, etc.

5. Anything else? What interests you? Susila Dharma, SICA, or SES Representative? (You could always share a job with someone if that feels more comfortable...)

We had our first committee meeting 10.21.00 at Viviana's house. Here are our first "small goals":

1. The committee has four priorities at this time in order to complete the work begun by the outgoing committee. To that end, we will be scheduling meetings to address them.

2. We'll begin with Priority #1: Bylaws. A bylaws subcommittee will meet at the church at 3:00 pm on Sunday, November 19th, to review the last proposed adjustments to the bylaws. Everyone who wants to participate will be welcome. Anyone can decide at the last minute to come (but it would be helpful to know how many to expect so we have enough copies of working bylaws to go around). The subcommittee will meet until it reaches unani-

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News from Lewes

Adrienne Campbell

Hello folks - This is the best news yet!

We completed purchase of our new school building on 25 August. This has been the cause of much celebration, as it is a culmination of two years' dedicated work on the part of many people.

The school opens on 18 September. This has given us three weeks to completely redecorate the classrooms, order and install all furniture and materials, set up the office, register the children and get welcome packs out - and for Felicia to complete hiring and start training staff.

There is a definite buzz about the place... A feeling of adventure, and the potential for something special to happen. This is BRILLIANT!

Our provisional details are as follows: The Lewes New School, Talbot Terrace, Lewes, E Sussex BN7 2DS, England Tel 01435 486486.

Children & Youth at World Congress

Rosanne le Roy

I am helping coordinate and facilitate activities for kids and youth at the World Congress in Kalimantan, July 7-18, 2001.

For children ages 3-13, ISC has appointed Amalia Inger Holm from Denmark to be the child care coordinator. There are also other members in Indonesia who are willing to be part of the organisation (Imron Comey, Salamah Dick). We are looking for more input from members with experience & willingness to organise kids' activities.

For the Youth program (14+) we are working with the International coordinators Mariamah Crona and Henry Horthy and a group of UK Youth to develop ideas and projects. We would like to hear from other youth around the world about what they would like to do/see happening during the Congress. Would you be able to come before the Congress and help to prepare activities or build infrastructure?

There would be 2 venues:

Palangka Raya, where the Congress is being held and where there will be 2 or 3 plots of land especially for shelters, ground games, and possibly a little pool. The kids activities will be happening there.

Rungan Sari, 45 minutes drive from Palangka Raya, where the Subud land is located. There is a latihan hall, some facilities, and a few houses. Again, there is the possibility of building some infrastructure for Youth and Wings activities/workshops: field researches, building eco-houses, participating in development program with the Dayaks, and maybe having a music-cafe and place to just hang-out. The Subud Guest house is also very close and some of the Youth may wish to stay there. A system of buses to and from Rungan will be well planned.

We are looking for urgent input ... thank you!

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the latihan. These are very important issues that merit ongoing attention, and though apologies were made at the time, I hope this article will attest to the continuing significance of these issues.

Several weeks ago, two international helpers Rohanna Castillo and Elias Dumit, visited the Boston group. As we were milling about after the meeting, Rohanna, said in a side conversation words to the effect that: *If we really understood the gift that Bapak brought to us, we would all be on our hands and knees in prayers of thanks to God 24 hours a day.* This statement was particularly meaningful to me because Bapak had already died before I joined Subud, and I'm often a little unsure of what to make of him. Rohanna's words inspired in me a renewed reverence for the latihan that we do. I still don't know intellectually quite what to do with the latihan or Bapak, but as I hear statements like this and stories of other people's experiences with Bapak, I am more and more convinced of how important it is to just do the latihan.

Thoughts of doing the latihan then turn to thoughts about the space in which we meet. I think all of us in Boston agree that our space is woefully inadequate, but I feel very strongly that we need to respect this space every bit as much as if it were the most perfect latihan space in the world. The latihan is such an important part of our life that we ought to be able to do it in a cardboard box if we had to. This is not meant to sound self-contradictory; my point is that we should always be able to do this spiritual exercise that is so vital for our lives even if our situation became extremely dire. Granted, there is nothing that says we have to stay in our current premises,

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mous agreement on the adjusted bylaws. To save money on printing, Marcella will email every member on November 20th (snail mail to those without email) a copy of the resulting draft of proposed bylaws. We will also schedule an official Membership Meeting after latihan on Sunday, December 10th, whose sole purpose will be to review the proposed bylaws, make any further adjustments, incorporate those adjustments, and legally ratify our Bylaws. We will need a quorum to make that happen. And that would most definitely involve cake! Marcella will notify the members about these meetings.

3. Viviana will shortly be filing our yearly corporate tax form to maintain our 501.c.3 tax exempt status in MA.

4. Virendra will start making calls beginning with Unitarian churches to see what other potential latihan space is available. If he hears of something that sounds good, we'll ask if any of the helpers would go with us to check out the space. If we all like it, then as a dewan we'll present the choices to the members.

5. Marcella will contact the helpers about scheduling a dewan day and a kejiwaan day for the members in January; she'll collect and redistribute keys (to the church); and will provide Virendra with brochures.

Stay tuned... your new committee will be reporting to you regularly!

Love, Marcella

Report from UN Peace Summit

Amalia Dickie

This is a report on the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders held in New York on Aug. 28, 2000. Nine Subud members attended the meeting.

The most amazing gathering of multi-coloured holy men and women in their various types of religious garments adorned with ornate headdresses had to be experienced to be believed (altogether around 2000). On my way to the Waldorf Astoria in taxis everyday, the driver would inevitably comment on the scenes that had been witnessed there; some wondering whether a film was being made or something!

On registration almost at the end of a huge queue, Sharif Horthy, Rohana Filippi and I got singled out for some unknown reason and got led to be registered without delay. Alexandra Asseilly, Pat Guerrand, Daniel Cheifetz, his son Gabriel and friend Rachel had also come to attend making the Subud team of 9 perfect.

We assembled for the opening prayers at the U.N. General Assembly which began with an immense vibration of drums performed by the Shumei Taiko Ensemble, the first of many musical performances of traditionally religious character which laced the meeting throughout. Bawa Jain, the general secretary of this summit listed the aims of the conference in his opening speech. These were: (1) to sign a commitment to global peace, (2) to form partnerships of religious groups to support the UN in achieving non-violent solutions for all conflicts, (3) to agree on the eradication of poverty within ones own communities, (4) to work towards the eradication of all weapons on mass destruction by 2025, (5) for each participant to propose practical commitments, and (6) to set up a council of religious advisors to the UN including the necessary facilities at the office of the Secretary General of the U.N. He summed up with the challenge: are we willing to commit ourselves to an extra mile before we go to sleep everyday?

The longest most varied collection of prayers ever spoken in history at one congregation took us through the next three hours followed by another long session of benedictions. Hindus, Buddhists, Shintos, Jains, Zoroastrians, traditional Africans, Koreans, Americans, Sikhs, Brahma Kumaris, Bahais, Yorubas, Jews, Muslims, Christians, with the latter three being represented individually by the various divisions within their religious communities. On the surface there may have seemed to be a competition for the best religion. However it seemed to be confirmed by many of our fellow witnesses that the "feeling" was one of genuine sincerity and hope, and above all, willingness to attempt that which had never been tried before: to join the international community of United Nations in working together towards peace.

Reverend Forbes of New York in his call for dialogue

amongst religions, finally stimulated the assembly in typical Baptist Gospel manner, when all sang a chorus of "Amen" which rocked the General Assembly as it had never been rocked before! In his inaugural speech, secretary general of the U.N. Kofi Annan, who had been described in this week's Time magazine as a "man of faith" who "listens with his entire body," spoke of religion as being potentially a realm of extraordinary power, whether one is with faith or wrestling with doubt, we pray, therefore we are. "Religion helps us make sense of the seemingly senseless. We should look within to see what each religion can do to promote justice, equality and peace." It was stated that no religion can claim the monopoly on human values, but that ultimately religious freedom should be achieved everywhere, allowing practising religious

people the right to worship, work and celebrate their religious holidays. Hopes were expressed that we may be inspired in our efforts with what unites not what divides us as there is no longer room for religious bigotry and intolerance if we are to look forward to a peaceful coexistence in the future. A message from Pope John Paul II, read by Cardinal Arinze, conveyed that the only religion worthy of a name is a religion which leads to peace. "Wars start in hearts, with pride, rancour, hatred and desire for revenge."

pride, rancour, hatred and desire for revenge."

Conflicts have arisen out of injustices suffered by past generations which have not healed, as a hungry man turns into an angry man when manipulated by those with political agendas. The source of conflicts being not in faith but in a failure of faith (Rabbi Scheier). Rabbi Steinsaltz prayed that we be shown what is a difference and what is a dispute. He proposed that the nations of the world agree to a 1% reduction in armaments per year, and redistribute those same funds through the UN towards peace initiatives. Dr. Ted Turner who was honorary chair and initiator of the summit, lifting the mood in between solemn speeches, spoke in simple terms of his conviction that heaven can't be meant only for those of his church as was taught to him, otherwise it would be a "mighty lonely place! There is one God who manifests in different ways. We now know at least that we all come from Africa. Like the bears, our colour depends on where we settled down. The bears near the poles are white and further towards the equator are brown!" S.N. Goenka, Buddhist, quoted the Emperor Ashoka "one should not honour one's own religion and condemn the others; this injures one's own religion." On that note the point was summarised simply when Sri Sri Ravi Shankar of the Art of Living Foundation said metaphorically "don't throw away the banana and just keep the skin!" (religion being the skin and the banana being spirituality)

On the subject of forgiveness and reconciliation, religious leaders were called upon to encourage education not only of their own values but of those from other religions on universal subjects of such as love and nature, so that instead of separating, common grounds for mutual respect can grow.

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There were calls to hold prayers of worship together with other denominations as was witnessed here, at home, and even celebrate holy days with others, as practised among some interfaith communities in the middle east working at “building bridges that unite rather than digging ditches that divide.” Before peace could be achieved it was suggested that one must look within to forgive old wrongs, so as to heal the wounds of our ancestors. South Africa’s example of reconciliation trials were mentioned and how Mandela invited his jailor to sit with him at his inauguration ceremony. Tony Bayfield suggested that most religious people don’t listen very well, whereas the Dalai Lama’s example is instructive: he was witnessed at a three day conference to have simply listened. In looking at reality, Zaki Badawi, Director of the Muslim College, London, pointed out that the religious community is not wiser than other people; it has more blood on its hands than it likes to admit. However that it also has the potential to improve more than others because it can be shamed, and indeed has been shamed. “The UN is despised by every one especially the host country (USA) but it is the only instrument we have, and due to lack of an alternative we must still try to eat soup with a fork until we have a spoon.”

Some of the public politeness evaporated when, after two days, the four-day summit moved from the hall of the United Nations General Assembly into the nearby Waldorf-Astoria Hotel and the assembled leaders began the hard work of discussing in smaller groups how religious communities can tackle such problems as poverty, reconciliation and peace-making, and environmental degradation. If anything, these closed-door sessions proved that religion and spirituality are never separated from the realities of culture, society and politics—particularly during a time of enormous global change. “Religions aren’t holier than other institutions,” said Wendy Tyndale, coordinator of the World Faiths Development Dialogue and the moderator of a Wednesday working session on the issue of poverty. “What we are witnessing is a microcosm of globalisation and a clash of cultures.” Indeed, the session on poverty—at times impassioned, noisy and a little messy—proved just that and more.

The discussions merely touched on issues such as the role of religions in conflict transformation, on poverty and environment issues, as well as on forgiveness and reconciliation—all without enough time to agree on solutions, and providing a revealing glimpse of religious groups sometimes at their best, and sometimes at their worst. One of the few rays of light were witnessed after a session on forgiveness and reconciliation when some rabbis took the hand of an ayatollah and danced singing “Shalom alaikum,” albeit with some hesitation on the part of the ayatollah!

On paper, the four-day summit, which concluded its work Thursday, did little that was either surprising or remarkable.

In a final “Commitment to Global Peace,” the nearly 1,000

leaders representing a wide spectrum of religions pledged their support to ending religious-based violence and respecting each other’s faith traditions.

Still left unsettled was the formation of a kind of global religious advisory group to the United Nations, which hosted the first two days of the conference. As the summit ended, there was talk of selecting a steering committee to oversee the creation of such a panel, though the specifics remained to be worked out.

Indeed, it was not clear how badly the U.N., or its secretary-general, Kofi Annan, even wanted the panel, though both seemed eager for some kind of alliance between the world body and religious leaders.

The decision of the conference organizers not to invite the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan Buddhist leader, to the U.N. portion of the summit out of deference to the Chinese government was a sore point that would not go away. Nobel Peace Prize winner Betty Williams publicly decried the Dalai Lama’s absence, as did a group of indigenous leaders who spoke at the summit’s closing ceremony, calling him “our brother.” Ela Gandhi verbalised what had become

clear that through his absence—the Dalai Lama had become all the more significant than if he had been present as one of many. A group of Tibetan Buddhists eventually spoke to the gathering late Tuesday, reading a statement by the Dalai Lama in support of the goals of the summit, prompting a walkout by Chinese representatives. One of which was ostensibly a catholic cardinal who in his speech earlier had spoken in obviously communist lingo about the long standing tradition in china of religious freedom! The Buddhists said there was no need for identifying the better religion but rather a need for better human beings. Rather than striving to convert from one religion to another one should concentrate on conversion from misery to happiness, from bondage to liberation, from cruelty to compassion. They remind us that when in the holy scriptures it is said “know thyself” it means that if you know yourself at all levels then problems resolve spontaneously.

As he often repeated, Bawa Jain said that however imperfect, the summit had important symbolic value and would lend greater spiritual wisdom to the U.N. at a time when its role was being expanded internationally. Beyond the symbolism, however, was something of lasting value and importance, said David Little, director of the Centre for the Study of Values in Public Life at Harvard University and a member of the Scholars’ Group at Harvard Divinity School, one of the summit’s partners. “Yes, it’s a slow, glacial process, but it’s worth trying because it gets dialogue going; however awkward, at least a start,” Little said of the summit and its attempt to get religious leaders to think more concretely about issues of poverty, conflict resolution and environmental damage. If 2000 representatives of the world’s religious groups could come together in this way, surely the world would follow.

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A group of Tibetan Buddhists eventually spoke to the gathering late Tuesday ... They remind us that when in the holy scriptures it is said “know thyself” it means that if you know yourself at all levels then problems resolve spontaneously.

A Humorous Account of the IH Visit

Brianna Whitesell

Last week two international helpers came to visit Subud Boston, Rohanna Castillo of Columbia and Elias Dumit of Brazil. Brownies, tea, latihan, testing, schmoozing until midnight. Very nice.

Except I don't much care for big group testing. I just don't receive well under those circumstances. So for me, the process is a little tedious. At the start, people debate the wording of the questions (apparently God's pretty literal). Then afterward, people hesitantly and politely discuss what they got for an answer.

Because Rohanna speaks only Spanish, everything had to be translated. And to give you a feel for the setting: we do latihan in a nursery school attached to a church. The place has a long-time resident: a pet hamster who is either "on" or "off." During the testing, I tell you, he was rockin' and rollin' on his exercise wheel. We were all well aware of him, because his wheel makes an unmistakable, insistent squeaky noise that sounds like, "weekie weekie weekie weekie."

To recap the highlights:

Helper: Almighty God...

Translator: spanish stuff

Hampster: weekie weekie weekie weekie

Helper: please allow us to receive

Translator: spanish stuff

Hampster: weekie weekie weekie weekie

Helper: how it is for us in our everyday lives

Translator: spanish stuff

Hampster: weekie weekie weekie weekie

Helper: when we are in tune with our inner guidance

Translator: spanish stuff

Hampster: weekie weekie weekie weekie

Helper: receive

People: Allah Allah Allah

Helper: change

People: rustle rustle rustle

Hampster: weekie weekie weekie weekie

Helper: Almighty God...

Translator: spanish stuff

Hampster: weekie weekie weekie weekie

Helper: please allow us to receive

Translator: spanish stuff

Hampster: weekie weekie weekie weekie

Helper: how it is for us in our everyday lives

Translator: spanish stuff

Hampster: weekie weekie weekie weekie

Helper: when we are *not* in tune with our inner guidance

Translator: spanish stuff

Hampster: weekie weekie weekie weekie

Helper: receive

People: dissonant noises

Helper: Finish. Ok, anyone care to comment on what they received?

Hampster: weekie weekie weekie weekie

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bers do that, through your national delegations at the World Congress. Secondly, since I have never had any intention of being WSA chair for more than one term, the benefit of any changes to the WSA bylaws will be enjoyed by my successor, not by me. Finally, what would be the sense of my supporting the wings and being against the zone reps?

What would make me look good in Subud would be if the council as a whole became a harmonious and effective Subud government; if it could create initiatives that benefit Subud members and the development of Subud all over the world. If I must have a secret agenda, I guess that's it: figuring out how we could become an effective and harmonious organisation.

From my side, I'll take this opportunity to apologise to the rest of the council for not discussing these issues with them thoroughly before bringing them up at various meetings when the 12-month limit was about to strike. In fact I did bring them up at our Shipley meeting, but we didn't have time for a proper discussion. I hope we can make up for that in Mina Clavero.

So, to be very clear, the issue is the role of the helpers and the zone representatives on the council; as far as I'm concerned it's not about the wings at all.

The contribution I found most helpful was the paper of Michael Irwin, one of the drafters of the existing WSA bylaws, where he sets out the logic behind what we have now. In his words, WSA is a temporal organization while helpers deal only with kejiwaan matters. He feels they therefore cannot be directors, because if they voted they would no longer be helpers. Therefore, according to this view, the zone reps are the council because they alone represent the members, while everyone else who attends, including the international helpers, are there in a purely advisory capacity. He also states that the work of the council is administrative detail - purely heart and mind stuff - so how they reach decisions really doesn't matter.

This all sounds wonderful and democratic, but the reality of how it works is quite different, because, as we all know, Subud is not an ordinary organisation. It cannot be separated from our openness to God's guidance, and that is the reason for its existence. I've noticed that in Subud the organisation only works when we keep the latihan central to everything we do. Without that it all becomes quite barren, contentious and meaningless.

That has especially been my experience on the council during the last three years. I'll give you one example, the day in Holland when the council decided where to hold the next world congress. There were three possible places on our list, Bali, Jakarta and Central Kalimantan. There were a lot of strong feelings - passions, to be precise - pulling us towards Kalimantan and away from it, so I first of all invited everyone who wanted to speak in favour of one option or another to make their pitch; I have to admit that for me personally

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Peace Summit - Continued from page 5

Interview with Sharif Horthy representing the World Subud Association:

A: Why did you come here?

Sh: I received an invitation, I tested, and it seemed very important to come not to do anything particular, just to be here. It seems that you and a few other members had the same feeling. Perhaps I was invited because I was at the World Conference on Religions and Peace in Amman last year and my name is now "on the list." And I was at that conference mainly thanks to Simon Guerrand-Hermes who is the treasurer of WCRP.

But I have been involved in interfaith efforts for some time. A few years ago I was invited by Sir Sigmund Sternberg to join the advisory board of the Three Faiths Forum, which he and Dr. Zaki Badawi were starting in the UK, intended as a meeting point for Jews, Christians and Muslims. Sir Sigmund is of Hungarian origin and I think he was tickled to meet a Muslim descendant of Admiral Horthy. I was fresh from doing some testing in which I was given to understand that I had to be more engaged in society as a practising Muslim. So I said, "yes." I must say I have really enjoyed the company these learned and dedicated men and women.

Here in New York it has been especially nice meeting up with you and the others, making us a substantial Subud delegation. I was delighted to meet your uncle and was moved at his sincerity and openness towards Subud. (Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury, of Bangladesh, who has been awarded three peace prizes, was attending the meetings of Heads of Parliaments at the U.N. in the course of the same week of Millennium events.)

A: In general what was your impression of this summit?

Sh: On the outer, intellectual level it was much more chaotic and less productive than the WCRP meeting in Amman. And the representation was completely skewed towards the eastern religions. More than half the people seemed to be wearing orange robes. But I have to say that I felt deeply moved by this meeting as if it had a deeper spiritual significance that was not affected by the disorganisation.

I came away from Amman grateful for the experience but not changed by it, whereas now I feel quite different. Apart from anything else, it is extraordinary to reflect that this is the first time that any sort of religious meeting has ever taken place in the General Assembly.

A: I personally feel the same although I don't have the comparison. I sensed the sincerity of those present willing to begin this process, albeit stuck in the programmed jargon and not knowing any better yet. The common sense of hope and optimism came through with a few "jewels" to be heard quite clearly. (See report) What do you think?

Sh: Yes, exactly! I found myself noting down some of these from time to time. (Included in report) It became clear to me that the role of religions is to educate people about the true nature of peace rather than trying to get involved in the political process.

It was also interesting to note how much more convincingly the Buddhists are able to talk about peace than our Middle Eastern religions. For them peace is their central re-

ality.

A: You seemed to be recognised by many, and you got introduced further to others. What do you find yourself talking about, do you come forward as a Subud ambassador?

Sh: I already knew a lot of people from Amman as well as the Three Faiths Forum, and it was good to deepen these contacts.

When I'm introduced to new people I always try to find out first who they are and listen to their truth. If they then ask what I'm doing here it is much easier to talk about Subud, and they listen more attentively. But this isn't a sales technique. I happen to be fascinated by these things.

When I speak about Subud I just try to be as honest and open as I can. I assume that none of these people are here seeking for another way, so I see my job as simply giving an accurate description. And then, you never know!

A: (We all met for latihan several times this week and finally tested to receive some personal conclusions) How was the testing for you regarding the significance of our presence here?

Sh: We contributed our state of latihan and I feel it made a difference. It is not possible for me to explain in more tangible terms, but clearly the test showed this, and I can confirm for myself personally that I perceive a positive change in myself.

(This was confirmed by all without exception. Daniel added how it was interesting to find himself talking to people who already had known about Subud for some time. It seemed to be commonly agreed that Subud is out there already, we can be confident in showing ourselves and opening up to the world.)

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Kalimantan was at this point my least favourite option in view of all the imponderables involved, but I tried to be as neutral as I could. Next the council retired to discuss the options. This was a real 'heart and mind' discussion where everyone was saying 'but do we know this?' and 'can so and so really do that?' After an hour the discussion was becoming more and more diffuse and seemed to be leading nowhere. So we decided to adjourn for the international helpers to test in front of everyone present.

In the first totally unanimous test the international helpers had ever received, it was quite clear that the right answer was Kalimantan. It was so overwhelming that even the audience could feel it. Having experienced the test myself, I've never since doubted that it is God's will that we should have next year's congress in Palangka Raya. The use of the latihan after doing our homework restored harmony and gave us a clarity that led to effective action. I hate to think what would have happened if we had gone on discussing the matter as if it was an 'administrative detail'.

The work of the council in my view has more to do with things that require vision and wisdom than administrative acumen. In fact whenever we've focussed on administrative details we seem to have come unstuck.

I'm not at all saying that we should only make decisions

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Dates to Remember

Visit www.subudboston.org for the most up-to-date information on current events!

DECEMBER

- 10 Membership meeting after latihan to ratify bylaws - quorum required.
-

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by testing. I have experienced the same sort of harmony and clarity in the council when we were just sitting and discussing something in the right state, close to the latihan. Nor am I saying that we should dispense with our democratic structure in Subud. It provides a skeleton for the whole organisation and also provides a safety net when needed. But when the democratic structure becomes that main thing, let alone the only thing, then we've lost the core of who we are.

So what I am saying is that I would like the bylaws to reflect the fact that the kejiwaan side and the organisational side have equal weight in decisions of the council. That's all. If I've hurt anyone's feelings with any of the above, I ask their forgiveness.

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nor am I suggesting that we shouldn't be pursuing other options. I am only saying that this is the space we have now and unless we are willing to personally take responsibility for securing a better space, we should be grateful for it.

The fact that one of our rooms requires rearrangement each time we use it is something for which the group as a whole should take responsibility, and many people already do. Most people who are dissatisfied with our space generally think it is too small. For this reason, it puzzles me why we do not always feel to clear the entire larger room in order to have as much space as possible, even if just a few of us are there. Ideally, helpers and committee members would arrive at the church early to prepare the room for latihan, regardless of the gender of those who come early and of those presently assigned to do latihan in the room. In fact, the helpers are endeavoring to arrive a little bit early to help create a quiet space in the latihan rooms prior to the scheduled quiet time. Things happen though, and people are bound to be late occasionally, either those who plan to help clear the room or

those members who can barely make it to latihan. For this reason and out of respect for our latihan space and for the latihan itself, I think whoever arrives first should begin setting up the larger room and that the entire room should always be cleared.

To further our respect for the latihan itself, it is crucial to appreciate the fact that different members have different needs when it comes to quiet time before and after latihan. In general, I think we do quite well in terms of initiating quiet time at the appointed hour. Some people require less time than others to both reach and depart their quiet place, and often these people meet for conversation in the kitchen area before and after latihan. Because of the room arrangement this is a very natural place to congregate, but it has been mentioned year after year that voices carry quite clearly from there to the latihan rooms, particularly the smaller latihan room. We have tried to make it a policy not to meet there unless everyone has finished their latihan, but always to no avail. Do most people agree that preserving the quiet before and after latihan is important, or am I expressing a minority opinion? Would it help to post a sign reminding people to not gather there? Why not meet in the smaller play room off the kitchen instead of the kitchen itself?

Respecting others' needs for quiet space goes beyond not talking outside the latihan rooms. It also means taking care not to be disruptive when coming into the latihan room during quiet time or after the latihan has already begun. Many people already do this too. They choose to hang their coats on the hangers in the hallway rather than rustle them into the latihan room. They leave their keys quietly outside the room along with their shoes. They open and close the door gently, taking great care not to bang it. This is as much a matter of common courtesy as it is particular thoughtfulness about the latihan.

But the latihan does deserve particular thoughtfulness. The latihan is a tremendous gift brought to us from God by Bapak and it is unlikely that many of us will ever know in this lifetime exactly how extraordinary this gift is. So it must be on faith that we proceed to practice the latihan with care and respect for our brothers and sisters and for the space in which we meet, however humble or grand. And making common courtesy a companion to our faith can only bring us closer together in our group and on our journey.

The Subud Boston Newsletter

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