

# Subud

## An Indonesian Spiritual Movement

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# Subud

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**Subud** (pronounced [<sup>s</sup>ʊbʊd]) is an international spiritual movement that began in Indonesia in the 1920s, founded by Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo.<sup>[2]</sup>

The basis of Subud is a spiritual exercise commonly referred to as the *latihan kejiwaan*, which was said by Muhammad Subuh to represent guidance from "the Power of God" or "the Great Life Force". He claimed that Subud is not a new teaching or religion but only that the latihan kejiwaan represents a kind of proof that humanity is looking for. He recommended that Subud members practice a religion but left them to make their own choice of religion. Some members have converted to Islam, but others have found their faith in and practise of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, for example, have deepened after practicing the latihan.<sup>[3]</sup>

There are now Subud groups in about 83 countries, with a worldwide membership of about 10,000.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Etymology

The name "Subud" is an acronym that stands for three Javanese words, Susila Budhi Dharma, which are derived from the Sanskrit terms *suzila*, *bodhi* and *dharma*.<sup>[5]</sup>

The meaning depends on the context in which they are being used:

- The original Sanskrit root words;
- Modern Indonesian language;
- Explanations and definition as given by Pak Subuh, the founder of Subud in his talks to members.

## Sanskrit

- *Suzila*: "well-disposed", "having an amiable disposition", "good-tempered".<sup>[1]</sup>
- *Bodhi*: the understanding possessed by a Buddha regarding the nature of things. It is traditionally translated into English with the word enlightenment and literally means awakened. *Bodhi* is knowledge of the causal mechanism by which beings incarnate into material form and experience suffering. Although its most common usage is in the context of Buddhism, *bodhi* is also present as a concept in other Indian philosophies and traditions.
- *Dharma*: the Law that "upholds, supports or maintains the regulatory order of the universe", *Dharma* has the Sanskrit root *dhri*, which means "that without which nothing can stand"<sup>[6]</sup> or "that which maintains the stability and harmony of the universe." Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism all have the idea of *dharma* at their core, where it points to the purification and moral transformation of human beings. *Dharma* is not the same as Religion. Though differing in some particulars, all concur that the goal of human life is *moksha* or *nirvana*, in which the ultimate nature of *dharma* (as cosmic law) is apprehended experientially.

## Pak Subuh

Pak Subuh gives the following definitions:<sup>[7]</sup>

- *Susila*: the good character of man in accordance with the Will of Almighty God
- *Budhi*: the force of the inner self within man
- *Dharma*: surrender, trust and sincerity towards Almighty God

## History

Pak Subuh explained (in talks to Subud members given beginning in the 1940s) that during 1925 he was taking a late-night walk when he had an unexpected and unusual experience. He said he found himself enveloped in a brilliant light, and looked up to see what seemed like the sun falling directly onto his body, and he thought that he was having a heart attack. He said he went directly home, lay down on his bed, and prepared to die with the feeling that maybe it was his time, and that he could not fight it, so he surrendered himself to God.

According to the story, however, instead of dying he was moved from within to stand up and perform movements similar to his normal Muslim prayer routine. It seemed that he was not moving through his own volition; but was being guided by what he interpreted as the power of God. This same kind of experience reportedly happened to him for a few hours each night over a period of about 1000 days during which he slept little but was able to continue working full-time. He said he experienced a kind of 'inner teaching' whereby he was given to understand a variety of things spontaneously.

As these experiences proceeded, Pak Subuh explained, he gained spontaneous insight into people and situations that he did not possess before. Around 1933, as he reported, he received that if other people were physically near him while he was in a state of 'latihan', then the experience would begin in them also. While still in his early thirties, Pak Subuh's reputation as someone with spiritual insight apparently grew, and people went to him to be 'opened'. They in turn could open others, and this is how Subud eventually spread around the world.



*Husein Rofé in 1955 in Hong Kong*

In Jakarta, Husein Rofé, an English linguist who had been living in Indonesia since 1950, met Pak Subuh. Rofé had been searching for a spiritual path and became the first non-Indonesian to be opened. Subud moved outside of Indonesia when Rofé attended a religious congress in Japan in 1954. Subud first spread internationally into Japan, followed by Hong Kong and Cyprus. In 1957, Rofé (who was then in London) suggested that Pak Subuh visit Britain. Pak Subuh accepted the invitation and visited the home of John G. Bennett in Coombe Springs. It was at this time that many UK followers of G. I. Gurdjieff were initiated into Subud (including Bennett himself, though he later left the group). Over the next 14 months Pak Subuh visited many countries before returning to Indonesia.

## Symbol

The Subud symbol was envisioned by Pak Subuh in 1959. The design consists of seven concentric circles and seven spokes, which, in traditional Javanese mysticism, represent seven levels of life forces as well as the Great Life Force that connects them. Each circle grows wider, the further out from the center, and each spoke narrows as it approaches the center. The space between the circles remains constant.

The symbol is often printed in black and white when color printing is not available. When colors are used, usually the circles and spokes are gold and the background is dark blue to black. However, the symbol is also sometimes blue on white or white on blue. The World Subud Association has registered this design, as well as the name "Subud", as a trade, service or collective membership mark in many countries.

## Practices

### Aim

The core of Subud is the latihan experience. The latihan is a vivid encounter which is fresh, alive and personal. It evolves and deepens over time. It is hard to pin down in words.

Pak Subuh gives the following descriptions of *Subud*.<sup>[7]</sup>

This is the symbol of a person who has a calm and peaceful inner feeling and who is able to receive the contact with the Great Holy Life Force.

As the spiritual training (latihan kedjiwaan) of Subud is free from the influence of the passions, desires and thinking, and is truly awakened by the Power of Almighty God, the aim of Subud is naturally toward perfection of character according to the Will of the One Who awakens it, namely: Almighty God.

It is also necessary to explain that Subud is neither a kind of religion nor a teaching, but is a spiritual experience awakened by the Power of God leading to spiritual reality free from the influence of the passions, desires and thinking.

## The Spiritual Training (Latihan Kejiwaan)

The central practice of Subud is the *latihan kejiwaan* (literally "spiritual exercise" or "training of the spirit"<sup>[8]</sup>) or simply 'the latihan'. This exercise is not thought about, learned or trained for; it is unique for each person and the ability to 'receive' it is passed on by being in the presence of another practicing member at the 'opening' (see below). About twice a week, Subud members go to a local center to participate in a group latihan, men and women separately.<sup>[9]</sup> The experience takes place in a room or a hall with open space. After a period of sitting quietly, the members are typically asked to stand and relax by a 'helper' (see below), who then announces the start of the exercise.<sup>[10][11]</sup>

In the practice of the exercise, members are typically advised to follow 'what arises from within', not expecting anything in advance. One is recommended not to focus on any image or recite any mantra, nor to mix the exercise with other activities like meditation or use of drugs, but simply to intend to surrender to the Divine or the transcendent good or the will of God. (The term "God" is used here with a broad and inclusive intention. An individual is at liberty to substitute interpretations that they feel more in tune with.) One is not to pay attention to others in the room, each of whom is doing his or her own latihan. During the exercise, practitioners may find that, in terms of physical and emotional expression, they involuntarily move, make sounds, walk around, dance, jump, skip, laugh, cry or whatever. The experience varies greatly for different people, but the practitioner is always wholly conscious throughout and free to stop the exercise at any time.

Many Subud members believe that this experience, apparently arising from within each person, provides them with something of what they currently need in life. For some, the latihan may appear to initially involve a 'purification' which possibly permits subsequently deeper experience. Members may describe their latihan as leaving them feeling "cleansed", "centered", "at peace", or "energized". The latihan is sometimes said to 'work' 24 hours a day, not only when one is explicitly "doing" it.<sup>[12]</sup> Supposedly, the regular practice of the latihan will enable people to experience positive development in various aspects of their daily life and being. The official website talks of "a deepening of the natural connection with wisdom, one's higher self, the divine, or God, depending on one's preferred terminology". (see links)

Although the latihan can be practiced alone, members are advised to participate regularly, ideally twice a week, in a group latihan. When a member has enough experience to reliably sense the appropriate time to finish his or her latihan session, he or she may add perhaps one more weekly session of the latihan at home.

While the suggestions of Subud's founder are held as valuable by many members, there is no requirement to believe anything, and the latihan is open to individuals of all faiths - or none. Subud officially endorses no doctrine regarding the latihan's nature or benefits.

## The Opening

The 'opening' refers to a person's first latihan, which is specially arranged to pass on the 'contact', metaphorically resembling a candle flame that lights a new candle with no difference in quality of the flame. Only after the formal opening process, in most cases, is a person able to receive for himself or herself, and is then welcome to participate in the group latihan. In the opening, the person is accompanied by one or more experienced members called 'helpers', and is asked to simply stand and relax with the helpers standing nearby. A simple statement or agreed set of 'opening words' is read by one of the helpers that acknowledges the person's wish to receive the contact. The helpers then begin the exercise as they would normally do. The contact is passed on to the new member without effort or intention on the part of anyone present. This is the moment of the person's first connection with the latihan kejiwaan of Subud.

## Testing

Testing is a distinct variety of the latihan directed toward receiving guidance or insight on a particular issue. Some question or request for clarification is acknowledged, and then the exercise is performed with openness to the issue. The original word for testing used by Muhammad Subud was "terimah," which is Indonesian for "receiving". Many people who have been practicing the latihan for some time claim to be able to recognize indications or intuitions 'from their inner feeling' in response to questions that are put forward.

Such indications may take various forms, including sounds, visions, vibrations and/or spontaneous physical movements similar to, though perhaps more intense than, those experienced in the usual latihan. However, it appears that such indications often defy intellectual analysis and that the supposed guidance can be obscured or biased by the mental or emotional attitudes of those present. Testing is generally viewed as an instrument for helping to clarify issues in the present, but may lead to confusion if treated as a kind of fortune-telling. Nevertheless, many Subud members claim to benefit from testing in terms of resolving issues.

Testing is normally used to help select helpers, and often committee members, throughout the World Subud Association. Pak Subuh's book "Susila Budhi Dharma" cites examples of situations in which testing may be useful, including self-training in putting any benefits of the latihan into practice. (Throughout Muhammad Subuh's book "Susila Budhi Dharma", which was written in 1952, testing is always referred to as "feeling" or "receiving". The first time "testing" was called by that name was in 1957 by John G. Bennett.)

## Fasting

Individual Subud members often voluntarily engage in occasional fasting as Pak Subuh recommended. Each year, some members fast at the same time as the Muslim fast of Ramadan which Pak Subuh, himself a Muslim, claimed to be suitable for non-Muslims. Others fast during Lent or simply on a regular, private basis. In this context, fasting is regarded by many Subud members as spiritually edifying, although its practice is not expected.

## Rules

Pak Subuh provided advice and guidance in his talks to provide direction to members as their latihan deepens. Although in general there are no rules in the practice of the latihan, a couple of important practices that might be called 'rules' are that men and women do not do latihan together, and non-members may not attend the latihan exercise without first receiving the contact referred to above, known as their opening.

Subud's founder wanted the latihan to be accessible to people of all cultures, faiths and ethnicities. Respect for the diversity of personal backgrounds and the uniqueness of each individual, along with a general absence of "thou shalt nots", are aspects of the organization that have been attractive to many members.

## The Subud Association

Members who wish to take on organizational responsibility in Subud can volunteer as a committee member or as a helper. Each responsibility can be performed at the local, regional, national, and international levels. Members often move from one responsibility to another, as needed.

The broadest organizational responsibility rests with the World Subud Association, which organizes a World Congress every four years and consists of the Subud World Council, Subud representatives from each country, and individual members who wish to participate, although only representatives can vote. The headquarters of the international organization moves to a different country every four years.

## Helpers

Each level of the association has members called 'helpers' whose role is to coordinate the timing of group latihan, witness the opening of new members, speak to those interested in the latihan, be available to discuss problems relating to the latihan, and sometimes attend to the latihan needs of isolated or indisposed Subud members. Helpers are usually selected from members who are willing to perform the duties, and selection generally occurs through testing. In no way does selection mean that a person is more spiritually advanced than a member who is not a helper.

Helpers exist at the local, regional (in some countries), national and international levels. Helpers' geographical status relates to the regional or national supportive duties they are expected to provide – otherwise, there are no geographical restrictions on where a helper is considered to be a helper. A local helper from London who travels to Jakarta, for example, will be seen as a helper there, and can do testing or participate in a new member's opening in the same way as any Indonesian helper.

There are normally 18 international helpers—nine men and nine women. Three men and three women are assigned to each of the three areas in Subud:

1. Area I covers Zones 1 & 2 (Australasia and Asia)
2. Area II covers Zones 3, 4, 5, and 6 (Europe and Africa)
3. Area III covers Zones 7, 8 & 9 (the Americas)

The international helpers are members of the World Subud Council. They serve on a voluntary basis for a four year term, which runs from World Congress to World Congress. There is no distinction in rank between local, national, or international helpers. Nor is there a difference in status between helpers, committee or members. Being a helper is seen not as a talent but as a service role.

## Ibu Rahayu

Ibu Siti Rahayu Wiryohudoyo is Pak Subuh's eldest daughter. She is regarded by some members as a 'spiritual guide', a phrase formerly applied to Pak Subuh. After his death, Ibu Siti Rahayu said that she had had a dream in which she met Pak Subuh, and that in the course of this dream he had designated her as his successor. In a recorded talk given by her on 5 March 2010 to a National Gathering in Semarang, Indonesia, Ibu Siti Rahayu explains how she came to be appointed 'spiritual advisor' by the Subud International Congress, although she does not say which resolution of which congress was involved.

## Committees

Most Subud groups have a committee, typically including a chairperson, vice-chair, treasurer and secretary. This committee is responsible for making sure there is a place to do group latihan, communications, budgets, and supporting the mutual efforts of members at the local group. A similar structure functions at the regional (in certain countries), national, zonal and international levels.

The international executive is the International Subud Committee (ISC). Apart from ensuring communication, publishing, budgeting, archives and support of affiliates, it organizes a World Congress every four years. The ISC chairperson sits on the World Subud Council.

For purposes of a practical organizational structure, the Subud association is divided into nine multinational zones, more or less as follows:

- Zones 1 & 2 – Australasia and Asia
  - Zone 3 – includes 8 countries of western Europe
  - Zone 4 – central and eastern European countries
  - Zones 5 & 6 – Francophone and Anglophone African countries, respectively
  - Zone 7 – USA, Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Jamaica, Surinam, and the Caribbean
  - Zone 8 – the upper part of South America
-



- Zone 9 – the lower part of South America

Each Zone has its own four representatives that are the voting members on the World Subud Council. They also serve as volunteers a four year term like helpers. They are selected at Zone Meetings.

The chairperson of the World Subud Association serves a four-year term from one World Congress to the next and is also the chairperson of the World Subud Council. The World Subud Council is responsible for ensuring that decisions made at World Congress are carried through. The current Chairperson is Luke Penseny,<sup>[13]</sup> who was appointed at the 2010 World Congress in Christchurch, New Zealand.

There are ongoing discussions about improving the World Subud Association structure. Subud Switzerland, for example, is exploring a nonleadership (egalitarian) model of organisation.

## Affiliates

Subud affiliates (sometimes called 'wings') are subsidiary organizations that focus on specific projects at a national or international level. They are technically independent organizations but have overlapping boards of trustees. They include:

- Susila Dharma International Association (SDI or SDIA) – humanitarian projects
- Subud International Cultural Association (SICA) – networking cultural activities
- Subud Enterprise Services International (SES or SESI) – networks between entrepreneurial activities
- Subud Youth Association (SYA) – networks among younger Subud members
- Subud International Health Organisation (SIHA) – incorporates both mainstream and alternative approaches

Some chairpersons of these affiliates also sit on the World Subud Council and serve a four-year term.

In addition to the above affiliates, a foundation – the Muhammad Subuh Foundation (MSF) – has been set up, whose main work is helping groups acquire their own latihan premises.

Informal networks and interest groups initiated by members include a Peace Network, a Spiritual Support Network (Yahoo group) and several Facebook groups.

## Enterprises

When Subud first spread outside Indonesia, Pak Subuh talked mainly about the spiritual exercise. He started to encourage Subud members to engage in enterprises and donate a proportion of profits to welfare projects and to maintaining the Subud organisation. He explained that the fact of the latihan 'bringing to life' the physical body indicates that worship need not be viewed as narrowly as prayer in places of worship; that people's ordinary lives, when following and guided by the Power of God, are ongoing worship, such that there is a dynamic interplay between "material" life and "spiritual" life. Therefore his encouragement for Subud members to engage in enterprise is seen in the context of putting the latihan into practice.

## Membership

Membership is open to any person over 17 years of age, irrespective of the person's religion or lack of religion. (As Pak Subuh saw it, the latihan is for "all of mankind.") The exception is that someone suffering from a serious mental illness may not be initiated as a member.

There is normally a waiting period of up to three months before a person may be opened. During this period, the enquirer is expected to meet a few times with the local helpers so that he or she can have questions answered and doubts clarified.

There is no membership fee, but most Subud members contribute, for example, to the rent or upkeep of premises where they meet.

## Latihan practice and 'crisis'

Pak Subuh used the word 'crisis' to refer to the state which may be entered by a Subud member (practicing the latihan) "in whom the contents of the inner feeling, heart and mind are being exposed to the surface". In one kind of crisis, this is said to occur in a violent way such that the person "forgets all good manners and social behaviour".<sup>[14]</sup>

The *Lancet* medical journal in 1961-62 published four letters on apparent states of psychological crisis associated with Subud membership. The letter of R. Mackarness took issue with the view of G. Jaffe that Subud crises are psychogenic.<sup>[15]</sup> A study of psychiatric illness in Subud in England reported anxiety, depression, delusional thoughts, and hallucinations, as well as neurotic, self-degrading, aggressive and violent forms of behavior among three patients hospitalized after participating in Subud.<sup>[16]</sup> The study says: "They seem to have been unable to cope with the stresses of the Latihan and because of their inability to approach it with moderation participated more and more, thus potentiating their anxiety and distress and enmeshing themselves in a vicious cycle." (p.75) The study explains: "In conclusion, it seems likely that these individuals were suffering from psychologic conflicts prior to their participation in Subud, and that these latent processes were exacerbated by their participation in the sect." (p.77)

It is a long-standing policy of Subud that people suffering from mental illness should not be opened to the latihan.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Notes

- [1] <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Template:Subud&action=edit>
- [2] The name Subud was first used in the 1940s when Subud was legally registered.
- [3] Matthew Barry Sullivan. *Living Religion in Subud*. 1991
- [4] Hunt (2003), p. 122
- [5] SubudBritain, *About Subud* (<http://www.subud.org.uk/about-subud.html>)
- [6] Dharma Is Not The Same As Religion ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rajiv-malhotra/dharma-religion\\_b\\_875314.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rajiv-malhotra/dharma-religion_b_875314.html))
- [7] Pak Subuh (1966).
- [8] Chryssides (1999), p. 261
- [9] Webb (1995), pp. 269–270
- [10] Chryssides (1999), p. 263
- [11] Webb (1995), p. 270
- [12] Chryssides (1999), p. 269
- [13] Subud Worldnews, *Hotlinks* (<http://subudworldnews.com/hotlinks/index.php>)
- [14] Sumohadiwidjojo, Muhammad Subuh. *Pewarta Kejiwaan Subud*, Vol VII, No 3, p. 3. (letter A-805), 1970. In *Bapak's Advice & Guidance For Helpers (1988 edition)*. Dewan of International Helpers (Eds). Hailsham, UK: Subud Publications International. p. 119.
- [15] Mackarness, R. & Boardman, R.H. (1962). Subud crises. *Lancet*, Vol 279, Issue 7239: 1125-1126; Jaffe, G. (1962). Subud crises. *Lancet*, Vol 279, Issue 7238: 1073; Janzen, E.K. (1962). Subud crises. *Lancet*, Vol 279, Issue 7235: 916; Kiev, A. & Francis, J. (1961). Subud and Disturbed Behaviour. *Lancet*, Vol 278, Issue 7218: 1452.
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#### Web-sources

#### External links

- Official website (<http://www.subud.com/>)
  - Official website (<http://www.subud.org/>)
  - Subud ([http://www.dmoz.org/Society/Religion\\_and\\_Spirituality/Mysticism/Subud/](http://www.dmoz.org/Society/Religion_and_Spirituality/Mysticism/Subud/)) on the Open Directory Project
  - Subud Vision (<http://www.subudvision.org>). Unofficial site publishing critiques of Subud by Subud members. 100 articles readable online.
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# Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo

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**Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo** (born 1901 in Java, Indonesia; died 1987). As a young man Muhammad Subuh who received a series of intense experiences that he believed gave him contact with a spiritual energy from a higher power. By the 1930s, he believed that it was his task to transmit this energy - which he called *latihan kejiwaan* (Indonesian for "spiritual exercise") - to others, but that he was not to seek people out but simply to wait for those who asked for it.

In 1956, Pak Subuh, or "Bapak" as he was called by members of Subud (the word "Bapak" is Indonesian for respected father), was invited to England by J. G. Bennett, where many Westerners joined Subud. He was then asked to go to other countries such as the United States and Australia. In this way, Subud spread rapidly around the world.

When he died in 1987 he left many talks on tape, video and in print, which Subud uses to guide the organization he founded.

## Ascension To The Highest Heaven

Muhammad Subuh wrote in his autobiography that, about the year 1932, he had a visionary visit to the highest heaven, the "Seventh Heaven".

By his account, one night he felt drowsy and went to lay down in bed. Instead of falling asleep, he felt himself "lengthen, widen and expand into a sphere" and then entered a great space. He saw a group of stars far away and was told that it was the universe he had left behind. He then traveled at great speed through a great expanse and beyond were "mountain-like cones of light, seven of them, one stacked upon another". He described how he entered the cones of light one after another until he entered the seventh, the last. Then he returned to earth and saw what looked like stars in the sky but later realized they were the lights of Semarang, the hometown where he lived. He even tarried a little over the rooftop of his own house trying to lift up some roof tiles with his fingers but instead found himself inside his own room. It was about the time of Subuh or dawn.

In his description Muhammad Subuh implied the seventh cone of light represents the highest heaven. It is likely because of this description of his ascension that Muhammad Subuh insisted that his autobiography be published only after his death though it was completed much earlier.

## World Travels

Following his visit to Britain in 1957, Muhammad Subuh is estimated to have travelled 594,320 miles outside Indonesia, visiting Subud groups which were formed around the world over the following 30 years until his death in 1987.<sup>[1]</sup> On these trips he gave explanations about the nature of the Latihan spiritual exercise and the purpose and meaning of the spiritual association of Subud. Approximately 1,400 of these talks were recorded,<sup>[2]</sup> with provisional translations to English made available at the time, and are in the process of being republished by Subud Publications International. As a result there are now groups in over 70 countries, with a worldwide membership of about 10,000.

## Notes

[1] Brochure, "Bapak's Extraordinary Journey" (SPI 2007)

[2] Bapak's Talks, Volume 1 (SPI 1993), Publisher's Introduction

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## External links

- Subud Publications International (<http://www.subudbooks.net/>) Organisation dedicated to translating and publishing talks by Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo

# Latihan

Part of a series on
<b>Subud</b>
<b>People</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo ("Bapak")</li> </ul>
<b>Main practice</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Latihan</li> </ul>
<b>Institutions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Subud Association</li> <li>Muhammad Subuh Foundation</li> </ul>
<b>Affiliates</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Susila Dharma Int'l Association</li> <li>Subud Int'l Cultural Association</li> <li>Subud Enterprise Services</li> <li>Subud Youth Association</li> </ul>
<b>Special places</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Java</li> <li>Kalimantan</li> </ul>
<b>Related topics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subud and religion</li> <li>Javanese beliefs</li> <li>Helper</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>v</li> <li>t</li> <li>e<sup>[1]</sup></li> </ul>

**Latihan** (from Indonesian *latihan kejiwaan*; "spiritual exercise") is a form of spiritual or psychological practice. It is the principal practice of the Subud organization.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

## Origin

The origin of the practice is associated with Javanese "kebatinan" or "kejawen" traditions.<sup>[3]</sup>

## The practice

*Latihan kejiwaan*, or simply *the latihan* means "spiritual exercise", or "training of the spirit".<sup>[4]</sup> This exercise is not thought about, learned or trained for; it is unique for each person and the ability to 'receive' it is passed on by being in the presence of another practicing member at the 'opening'. About twice a week, Subud members go to a local center to participate in a group latihan, men and women separately.<sup>[5]</sup> The experience takes place in a room or a hall with open space. After a period of sitting quietly, the members are typically asked to stand and relax by a 'helper', who then announces the start of the exercise.<sup>[6][7]</sup>

Practitioners are advised to surrender to the Divine and follow 'what arises from within', not expecting anything in advance. One is recommended not to focus on any image or recite any mantra, nor to mix the exercise with other activities like meditation or use of drugs, but simply to intend to surrender to the Divine or the will of God. (The term "God" is used here with a broad and inclusive intention. An individual is at liberty to substitute interpretations that they feel more in tune with.) One is not to pay attention to others in the room, each of whom is doing his or her own latihan.<sup>[7]</sup> During the exercise, practitioners may find that, in terms of physical and emotional expression, they involuntarily move, make sounds, walk around, dance, jump, skip, laugh, cry or whatever.<sup>[8][6]</sup> The experience varies greatly for different people, but the practitioner is always wholly conscious throughout and free to stop the exercise at any time.

Outwardly the exercise often manifests as physical movement and vocal activity that vary greatly both over time and between individuals.<sup>[7]</sup> It proceeds spontaneously, involving neither teacher nor method,<sup>[1]</sup> being unstructured except for basic rules relating to group practice.<sup>[6]</sup>

Personal capacity to engage in *latihan* the first time, in what is called the "opening", is said to be transmitted by the presence of experienced practitioners.<sup>[1]</sup> It usually entails an attitude of patience and trust, typically with some preparatory relaxation of thoughts and feelings,<sup>[9]</sup> and involves the whole human being, not just body, emotions, mind or any other single facet.<sup>[10]</sup>

It is regarded by practitioners as being of spiritual or of psychological benefit, depending on personal interpretation and individual experience<sup>[11][8][12]</sup> though apparently it does not affect all practitioners and may affect some detrimentally.<sup>[13][14]</sup> Many practitioners see *latihan* as a way of direct access to a mystical experience that is compatible with a busy modern lifestyle.

Accounts of first encounters with latihan are found in the anthology *Antidote: Experience of a Spiritual Energy* (1998) by anthropologist and Subud member Salamah Pope.

## Use in Subud

While the opinions of Subud's founder are often cited among its members,<sup>[7]</sup> the organization officially endorses no doctrine regarding latihan's nature or benefits.<sup>[8]</sup> Practitioners tend to agree that the exercise is best experienced with minimal theorizing or mental imagery.<sup>[15]</sup>

Although *latihan* can be practiced alone,<sup>[7]</sup> Subud arranges regular practice in group settings. Normally sessions are held two or three times a week and last up to thirty minutes, with the two sexes segregated.<sup>[16]</sup> Subud offers formal pragmatic, preliminary advice in relation to commencing the practice.<sup>[7]</sup> Non-members are not allowed to witness Subud *latihan* sessions as they are considered private.<sup>[7]</sup>

Subud's founder speculated that the spontaneous prayer movements which characterise *latihan* are similar in character to early meetings of the Religious Society of Friends which gave rise to the name Quakers.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Notes

[1] Webb 1995, p. 268.

[2] Chryssides 1999, p. 262.

[3] Webb 1995, p. 272.

[4] Chryssides 1999, p. 261.

[5] Webb 1995, p. 269–270.

[6] Chryssides 1999, p. 263.

[7] Webb 1995, p. 270.

[8] Hunt 2003, p. 122.

[9] Chryssides 1999, p. 152.

[10] Geels 1997, p. 148.

[11] Geels 1997, p. 148–160, 196–205.

[12] Webb 1995, p. 263.

[13] Briedis 2009, p. 228.

[14] Geels 1997, p. 150, 164.

[15] Chryssides 1999, p. 150.

[16] Webb 1995, p. 269-270.

[17] It also resembles reports of followers of H. W. L. Poonja and Andrew Cohen, who also report spontaneous awakening while being in their presence.

## References

## Sources

### Published sources

- Briedis, Hassanah (2009), *The Latihan of Subud, Dissociation and the Neurology of Spiritual Experience*. In: *Subud Authors, Subud Vision Volume 2*, [www.subudvision.org](http://www.subudvision.org)
- Chryssides, George D. (1999), *Exploring New Religions*, London and New York: Continuum, ISBN 0-8264-5959-5
- Geels, Antoon (1997), *Subud and the Javanese mystical tradition*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, ISBN 0-7007-0623-2
- Hunt, Stephen J. (2003), *Alternative Religions: A Sociological Introduction*, Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, ISBN 0-7546-3410-8
- Pope, Salamah, ed. (1998), *Antidote: Experience of a Spiritual Energy*, UK: Subud International Publications, ISBN 1-8698-2203-X
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### Web-sources

Links 2,3 and 4 are dead.

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# Helper (Subud)

Part of a series on
<b>Subud</b>
<b>People</b>
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<b>Main practice</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Latihan</li> </ul>
<b>Institutions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Subud Association</li> <li>Muhammad Subuh Foundation</li> </ul>
<b>Affiliates</b>
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<b>Special places</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Java</li> <li>Kalimantan</li> </ul>
<b>Related topics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subud and religion</li> <li>Javanese beliefs</li> <li>Helper</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>v</li> <li>t</li> <li>e<sup>[1]</sup></li> </ul>

Within Subud, a "helper" (Indonesian: *pembantu pelatih*, meaning "helping to train" or "assistant trainer") is a person who fills a certain support role. The nature of this role, and the actual performance of those who fill it, are subjects of some controversy within Subud.

Most Subud groups have helpers, who are responsible for assisting other members in various ways, as well as simply timing the latihan. Helpers exist at the local, regional, national, and international levels within the Subud organization.

Ideally, a helper should have at least seven years of practicing the latihan and to be generally 'loved and respected' by their fellow members. One becomes a helper by asking the helpers to "test", or receive, whether the person has the capacity to fulfill the helper job at that point in time. That is, the helpers make a decision based on what they receive in their testing, and with as little mental thought and personal opinion as is humanly possible.

A focus of criticism is the role some helpers adopt as spiritual and personal counselors. Their ability and understanding apparently vary considerably. Reviewing the internet one can see a whole variety of balanced and not so balanced opinions of helpers. Helpers are as imperfect as the next person, and as is natural in any position of 'authority' interpersonal clashes involving helpers and other helpers and helpers and members do occur.

According to the Subud USA National By-Laws (posted at [www.subudusa.org](http://www.subudusa.org)), Helpers serve six main functions. Note that these functions apply only to the By-Laws, and that other functions are specified in other places, such as Bapak's "Advice and Guidance for Helpers" (see link below):

1. Verify that members are active in the national (not-for-profit) organization, thereby giving membership status (Article 3, Section 1);
2. Removing membership status (Article 3, Section 2);
3. Reinstating membership status (Article 3, Section 3);
4. Supervising the national census (Article 5, Section 2);
5. Serving as members in standing national committees (Article 6, Section 6); and
6. Consulting with the National Board of Directors in certain situations regarding filling vacancies of the Officers of the Corporation (Article 7, Section 3).

Note that the relationships between the Helpers (but not the duties and responsibilities of the Helpers) are found in Article 11.

Officially, helpers are there to help Bapak, the founder of Subud, by supporting the Subud association in his absence. They have the responsibility to explain what Subud is to any interested person, to facilitate a person's first receiving (opening), and to serve members in deepening their receiving and applying it in their lives. Bapak has said frequently that being a helper is absolutely not a sign of spiritual superiority and that it is possible that some non-helpers are spiritually superior to the helpers. Similarly, there is no spiritual hierarchy of helpers: international helpers, national helpers and local helpers are simply designated as such for practical purposes.

## Susila Dharma International Association

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Part of a series on
<b>Subud</b>
<b>People</b>
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<b>Special places</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Java</li> <li>• Kalimantan</li> </ul>
<b>Related topics</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subud and religion</li> <li>• Javanese beliefs</li> <li>• Helper</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	v t e <sup>[1]</sup>

**Susila Dharma International Association (SDIA)** is a member-based association of 24 national organizations, 18 national contacts, and 60 projects from 29 countries who are engaged in a range of social and humanitarian activities. SDIA is a U.S.-registered charitable, nonprofit organization that has special status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and UNICEF.

As the social welfare arm of Subud, SDIA is an independent organization with its own budget. In 2004 its total expenditures were USD 185,702. At the same time, it is also a networking association which connects donors to projects which they support. Thus the total amount of aid is difficult to calculate.

## History

SDIA was founded in 1969 as sdg

an affiliate of the World Subud Association.

## Projects

SDIA supports projects related to health, community development, emergency aid, and children's services. Recipients are located in Indonesia, Brazil, Sudan, Colombia, Norway, Congo, Cuba, Ecuador, India, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Argentina.

## External links

- Official site<sup>[1]</sup>

## References

[1] <http://www.susiladharm.org>

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# Subud International Cultural Association

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The **Subud International Cultural Association** (SICA) was founded in 1983 by a group of artists, educators, and cultural activists attending an international gathering of Subud members in the UK. They represented creative disciplines across all sectors, and they came from many nations. Their initial intention was:

- To establish a communication network for Subud members working in creative fields to share experiences and best practices;
- To provide opportunities for collaborative projects and mentorship;
- To build greater public awareness and support for the role of arts and culture in the development of Subud and the world.

The founder of Subud, Bapak Mhd. Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo, welcomed this new initiative, but advised SICA to embrace a very broad definition of culture as culture is not just about the arts. “The arts can show the way,” he said, “but culture includes all aspects of human endeavor.”

Since its beginnings, SICA has organized numerous exhibitions, workshops, youth camps, performances, concerts, conferences, and publications throughout the world. It has produced international cultural festivals featuring world-class artists and performers in Sydney, Australia in 1988; Spokane, Washington, USA in 1998. and Innsbruck, Austria in 2004. SICA also helped provide cultural events and activities at World Subud Congresses in Amanacer, Colombia in 1993; Bali, Indonesia in 2001; and in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2010.

SICA's mission is to advance and celebrate activities that grow out of the development of one's soul — one's genuine inner gifts or talents. SICA serves its mission by providing programs and services to individuals and organizations working for the public benefit in the fields of art, culture, and creativity. SICA provides information, training, networking, and support services as well as opportunities to engage with regional, national, and international cultural initiatives and events.

The Subud International Cultural Association was incorporated in the USA as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization in 1993. Affiliated with the World Subud Association, SICA has subsidiary branches in the UK, the USA, Canada, and Australia, plus representatives in India, Chile, Indonesia, Colombia, Germany, France, and Italy. SICA serves a worldwide Subud membership as well as the general public in the many communities where it operates. A volunteer Board of Directors coordinates its activities.

SICA's main office is presently in Austin, Texas, USA.

## External links

- History <sup>[1]</sup> Official website;
  - *Out Into This World*, Talks give my Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo at the Seventh Subud World Congress held at Anugraha, 8–19 August 1983. Published by Subud Publications International, England 1984; pp 72–75.
  - "Subud World", Souvenir Issue, October 1983: "Subud International Cultural Association, A First Step for Subud Artists," by Simon Blond, pp 66–67, Subud Publications International, England for the International Subud Committee.
  - Current Mission and scope of work: About SICA <sup>[2]</sup>; Official website.
  - SICA Facebook page <sup>[3]</sup>;
  - Homepage <sup>[4]</sup> Official website.
  - SUBUD <sup>[5]</sup> Official source page for The World Subud Association and Subud affiliate organizations.
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## References

- [1] <http://www.subud-sica.org/index.php?hkat=2&ukat=2>
- [2] <http://www.subud-sica.org/index.php?hkat=2&ukat=1>
- [3] <http://www.facebook.com/SICAorg>
- [4] <http://www.subud-sica.org>
- [5] <http://www.subud.org/>

## Subud Enterprise Services

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Part of a series on
<b>Subud</b>
<b>People</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo ("Bapak")</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• v</li> <li>• t</li> <li>• e<sup>[1]</sup></li> </ul>

**Subud Enterprise Services (S.E.S.)** is one of the "wings" of the spiritual organization Subud. It is not an independent entity, but a division controlled by the World Subud Association. Its purpose is to assist Subud members in their entrepreneurial activities.

Subud's founder, Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo (called Bapak) encouraged Subud followers to develop "enterprises" (Indonesian: *usaha*, "efforts"). This was to demonstrate that Subud has practical advantages, and so that more Subud members would have the means to support Subud financially and have a work-life balance that would allow travel on behalf of Subud.

## External links

- SES Britain <sup>[1]</sup>

## References

[1] <http://www.subud.org.uk/organisation/ses.html>

# Subud Youth Association

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Part of a series on
<b>Subud</b>
<b>People</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo ("Bapak")</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
v t e <sup>[1]</sup>

**Subud Youth Association (S.Y.A.)** is a branch within the World Subud Association, and one of four "wings" of Subud. It was founded in 1983, at the urging of Subud founder Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo, called Bapak. His intent was to allow Subud youth to plan their own activities. Its main purpose is that of helping young Subud members network with one another.

SYA publishes a newsletter, *Youth Times*.

# Article Sources and Contributors

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