

## THE NEW YEAR...

As 2009 begins and we move towards the World Congress in New Zealand, I would like to share a feeling that has been growing within me. It is a feeling of confidence and absolute trust that all is unfolding in accordance with a divine plan that is much grander than anything I can conceive of.

When I joined Subud at nineteen, I was struck by the concept that there is the level of the normal human being (the fourth level enveloping the animal, vegetable and material), and then there is the fifth level of the complete human being, where the element of inner guidance from beyond the heart and mind is added to the more practical tools of the normal human being. In fact, it was the recognition that I could not worship God exclusively through the efforts of my heart and mind, that added the final impulse to my joining Subud in the first place. Here was, I believed, the missing element.

Two years ago, in Bangalore, I asked Ibu Rahayu about this fifth level, the Roh Rohani, as Bapak used to call it. She said, "Yes, this is what we hope to be touched by during the latihan," or so I understood her to say. Then I asked: and when we meet, when we work together? "Yes. It can also be there."

Her words contained an important message for me. While it may be possible, it may not always be the case that my latihan is touched by this higher force. Obviously, the same applies for testing (something both Bapak reminded us of continuously, as does Ibu). This recognition puts another spin on the words, "I received..." Unfortunately, it's not necessarily obvious where my 'receiving' is coming from. My rule of thumb then, is to share what I may feel to the best of my abilities, and trust that if there is any value to what I say, it will reach whoever it needs to reach. If something I say causes major discord or upset, my tendency is to assume that either what I'm saying or how I'm saying it is coming from one of the other forces – not the force of a complete human being –, or that I am unable to communicate it yet, so the timing simply isn't right. Consequently, I won't try to push the idea through: rather I'll try and let it go.

It is in this spirit that I write now...

So, here is what I want to share in relationship to what I said in the first paragraph. My sense is that humanity is part of an evolutionary process that is unfolding according to God's plan. The evolutionary step that is in front of us is the step to becoming complete human beings, and, by nature, the outcome of such a step is beyond the scope of the previous state to really understand or conceive of. In other words, I am incapable at this time of conceiving of what it might be like to live as a complete human being, because a whole dimension of that state comes from beyond the heart and mind. At best I may be able to sense something beyond words and ideas.

The evolutionary process will happen, I believe, regardless of the normal human state acknowledging it or not, and there are probably numerous ways in which God is guiding the plan. The latihan, for example, this incredible gift we have been blessed with, could be compared to one of the keys that can unlock the door to the world of complete human beings; yet, if we choose to unlock it, and how far we open it is completely up to each one of us. The choice is ours alone and, I dare say, nothing anyone else can do or say (whether positive or negative) can take that ultimate choice away from us.

So, what can I choose to do or not?

In the latihan, I can choose to open myself in readiness and willingness, with the deepest surrender of which I am capable. In other words, I can make an intention to allow myself to be touched by the grace that comes from beyond my heart and mind, without expectation or imaginings, and with deep humility and absolute trust in whatever may come. I can choose to do this regularly, with courage and commitment.

Or I can choose not to; or I can choose to do it when it suits my convenience; or I can choose to do it when I'm in the mood, or have nothing better to do.

I might also choose to go regularly to latihan and make a routine of it, getting into a groove that feels comfy and safe; or, I might choose to step fearlessly into the unknown.

As I said, the choice is up to each of us and, as far as I'm concerned, every choice is perfectly fine. I can honestly say that I do not feel I have to worry about other people's choices, because, at the end of the day, I trust in the grand divine plan.

So, what about my daily life, my work, my writing, my relationships, the meetings I attend, the gatherings I enjoy?

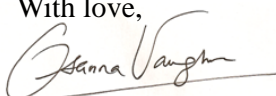
Well, in a sense, I have the same choice. In this world I have been given some excellent tools with which to work, and the different forces to serve me. I choose, however, to acknowledge that I have more than just these tools: I have an opportunity to open up a space for the guidance that may arise from beyond my heart and mind, giving an added, unexpected and new dimension to everything I do. By its nature, I can not pre-empt it, I can not imagine or expect it to be this way or that. At best I may get a sense of something but, until it manifests itself, there is nothing I can do but continue my work in a state of inner quiet, patience and alertness.

It is, however, fundamental for me to acknowledge that this fifth dimension exists, that I can step back from my ego, expectations and desires to grant it space, and that it is in the process of manifesting itself in the world. It is not an exclusivity of Subud. My aspiration, if I can call it that, is to allow a marriage between my normal human self and the higher force to take place.

I invite any who feel moved to do so, to join me in preparing ourselves for all the activities we will be carrying out this year and culminating with the World Congress, by acknowledging the possibility of creating this space for grace to imbue and envelop all we do, as individuals but also together, and putting our trust in that grace while also making the best use possible of our normal working tools.

I pray this new year will be full of blessings for all.

With love,



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