

THE STORY OF SUMIKO PART 2 *The turning point*

We continue the story of Sumiko to its conclusion...

Her Emotions As My Emotions

After several more months, things took an unpredicted turn. Sumiko started to show signs of change. Where once she had hinted that she was ready to give herself to me, now she started to revise her thoughts on our relationship and was ambiguous in her attitude.

Fundamentally, her feelings for me had been both socially and morally unacceptable. Now, the times are different, but in those days, ethics bound people in a powerful way.

I had continually been vague in my response to her and never held out any prospect for the future, and eventually, this internal conflict had arisen within her. Ultimately, reason won, and she made the decision to stop loving me.

But although she was very strong-willed, to try and suppress the love she felt was a supremely difficult task. That was to be expected. Even if she didn't know it, that love had been born out of the marriage of our souls. And so, this heralded for me a time of suffering. As I shared her emotional life, her internal struggle between will and emotion, now came back tenfold to me.

My emotions began to swing violently. Again, and again, I felt the effects internally. Just as I had started to become accustomed to a tranquil inner life, gained through the latihan, I was exposed to wave after wave of intense emotions which I had no way of avoiding.

I suffered bitterly from this. Unable to stifle the love she felt for me, Sumiko then tried even harder to strengthen her will to overcome it, with an even more devastating effect on me.

In the relationship with Sumiko, I experienced her emotions as my emotions. But when it came to her attempts to use her will to suppress her emotions, I felt it like a physical oppression. The area of my body from my neck to my chest felt like I was being clamped in a vice.

Sometimes I could barely breathe, and even while standing on a station platform, was not able to move for several minutes. There was no way for me to escape this state. My suffering was so great, I felt I was in hell.

I wanted to explain that the love she felt for me was part of God's Will and therefore not a crime, and that to try and dispel it with her own force was impossible. However, believing that to converse with me would cause her love to flare up again, she avoided me assiduously and would not talk to me at all.

Finally, I felt that I could not bear this state anymore. I prayed that my connection with Sumiko's soul be cut off. But my prayers were in vain. I also tried to bring my relationship with her to an end through latihan, but I could not succeed. It seemed to me that I was surrounded by an impenetrable barrier, with no way through.

Turning Point

And then, one day, there came a turning point. Suddenly an entirely new thought came to me. If Sumiko's soul and my soul were as one, it did not matter how much I begged God to separate us, it would not happen.

And so, there was really only one thing I could do. That was to surrender both my soul, and Sumiko's soul to which it was bound, entirely to the Divine Power of the Almighty. That was a gesture of supreme surrender for me.

I still remember the strange feeling that came over me. Until then, I had been practising the latihan in order to improve my own soul. But now, if I were to give over my soul entirely to God, whatever happened to it would no longer have anything to do with me.

Would I then continue to do the latihan? What would I be doing it for? I wondered. The answer, 'to worship God,'

was one that I was to discover somewhat later.

However this turned out to be the beginning of the end, for then the situation started to change rapidly; it was as if time had been standing still but had now begun moving, and with incredible speed. ►

My Wife's Responses

First, my wife, who for the past two years had not been aware of Sumiko's existence, suddenly, for some strange reason, became aware of it and started to question me. I explained what had occurred in my latihan, but needless to say, my wife thought this was crazy and could not believe me.

She wanted to run to one of my friends for advice but, to make a long story short, from my point of view, that friend was the worst choice she could have made.

However, I was unable to convey this to my wife.

It is hard to explain what happened over the next few days, but I was enveloped by a strange feeling. It was as if a spiritual drama was unfolding somewhere in the clouds and I could feel it but could not influence its process nor be involved in the plot.

However, I knew that it had something to do with me and that the outcome would have an effect on the outer world. Several days passed, with the drama unfolding little by little, every day somewhere in mid-air.

Then, one day, when it felt as though this drama was drawing to a close, there was a change in my wife's attitude and she informed me that basically, she would accept what was happening between Sumiko and I.

For three days after that, I was urged from within, to sleep with my wife every night. These times were not the result of desire but were quiet exchanges that occurred in a state of latihan. On the third night, I found myself in a landscape in a different dimension.

The atmosphere was serene, bathed in the pre-dawn light and while the fields in front of my eyes were still dark, I could see mountains stretching far ahead on the distant horizon. A faint blue light from the mountain ridge heralded dawn and everything was filled with a heavenly, majestic calm.

Transformation

The following morning, when I looked at my wife, I was amazed. Something about her had changed. It was as if light from inside her was now shining in her face. It felt as though she had become a completely different person overnight.

While the glow that I could see radiating from her did not last, the feeling that she was now different stayed with me. It was clear that change had occurred within her at a fundamental level.

The awkwardness that I had felt between us before had disappeared completely. Our quarrels became infrequent and we started to experience a harmonious relationship as a married couple.

At the same time I also underwent a transformation. Before then, whenever I met a beautiful woman, I was not able to stop the impulse that I wanted to get her attention or that I wanted to get close to her.

Since the general belief is that all men do the same, I thought so too, and never paid particular attention to it. But after my wife's transformation, those thoughts completely disappeared quite naturally. If I saw a beautiful woman, I would think her beautiful but my mind would be moved no further than that. I was amazed, as I had never thought this possible.

The problem had been solved. (Sumiko eventually got married and was blessed with a son and a happy life.) But the sensitivity I had experienced towards Sumiko's emotional states remained with me in a weaker form and as something I now experience towards everyone.

This ability, that allows me to instantly feel any strong emotions that are directed at me, has been particularly instrumental in helping me to maintain harmonious relationships with others throughout my life.

Once the problem had been solved, I realized that I would never want to repeat that experience again, regardless of how much happiness was heaped upon me. That is how painful the experience had been.

On the other hand, even if I were offered all the happiness in the world, I would not want to go back to where I was before. The gifts I was given through that experience, including my own personal transformation, were too precious for that.

God makes the impossible possible

Continuing Rozak Tatebe's Subud story about his spiritual bond with Sumiko...

What had happened was both a trial and a blessing. I could not help but consider myself lucky that I had been able to overcome the sense of living on a tightrope for two years, where one false step would send me into the abyss.

Nevertheless, I thought that if this experience had been to purify me, and if the latihan could bring such suffering, then how could I go on to recommend Subud to anyone!

In fact, I held that thought for several years until I was truly able to realize that God's guidance is in accordance with the condition of each individual and I had no need to be concerned with whatever that person experienced or whatever path they walked.

While my problem had been solved, many puzzles remained unsolved. Why had the souls of Sumiko and me been bound together? Why did I receive that answer to my test? How had it been possible that the bond between us, so unbreakable, was in fact broken and the problem solved? How was it that my wife was transformed overnight? There was plenty I simply did not understand.

The answers to these questions were given to me about two years later, when I first visited Indonesia. At the time, construction was underway for a house for Bapak in the International Subud Centre being established in a suburb of Jakarta called Cilandak. At the request of the international Subud office in the USA, Subud Japan purchased construction materials in Japan and sent these to Indonesia.

Together with another member I then went there to see the project, but needless to say, I had another purpose, and that was to visit Bapak. When I arrived, I found that Bapak was living temporarily on the first floor of the guest-house and we were to stay in the corner room on the ground floor. We had a brief stay of only five days, but were able to enjoy a very fulfilling time; every day we met Bapak and conversed with members of Bapak's secretariat.

Bapak's Explanation

On the evening before we were due to return to Japan, we came to say goodbye to Bapak. After some small talk Bapak asked me if I had any questions. While I had not had any particular question in mind at the time, I did not want to waste such a good opportunity, so I asked him three. The final question concerned my recent experience.

I left out the details but the story spanned two years and ended up being fairly lengthy. Bapak's secretary, Usman, translated into Indonesian. Bapak listened quietly and when the story had finished said, "Was that young woman a Subud member?"

I replied that she was not. Bapak glanced upwards for one or two seconds, and then explained: "In the spiritual domain, that woman was actually your real wife, but in this world, you were already legally married. But because of your patience and your surrender to God, God had mercy on you (and here Bapak crossed his arms one over the other), and exchanged their souls."

With this brief but extraordinary explanation, the events of the past that had been jumbled up inside me instantly fell into place like a jigsaw puzzle forming one complete picture. I understood everything. That was obviously the essence of the matter, and no other explanation was possible. Beside me, Usman murmured, “God makes the impossible, possible.”

A Clear Distinction

Bapak said, “You and your wife will have a more harmonious life together in the future.” He went on, “There must be a clear distinction made between the spiritual world and this one. You cannot mix what happens in the spiritual world with the things of this world.”

This was very precious advice. For various reasons, I was lucky enough to have avoided mixing them. To undergo a spiritual experience and then bring that into worldly affairs as a springboard for action is a dangerously easy trap to fall into for many of those who choose to walk the spiritual path. It often leads to misunderstanding and involves other people in the confusion.

This point, however, does require some further explanation. According to my own experiences, human beings can live whilst straddling the two worlds of the spiritual and the earthly domains; but strictly speaking, this will only apply to those whose souls are already awake.

It appears that people whose souls are asleep lead lives that are restricted to the material world on this earth. This world has its own conditions and laws, and whatever occurs here, including events in the lives of human beings, is controlled and restricted by these conditions. Human beings can use their five senses and the reasoning, imaginative, and logical powers of their brains to study, understand, and use the conditions and laws of this world. Current scientific knowledge is one of the outcomes.

However, the spiritual world is governed by completely different conditions, and it is pointless to try and understand it through our five senses and our brains. That is why we cannot know about the after-life. ▶

However, people whose souls have experienced an awakening can indeed have a connection to the spiritual world. While the knowledge one gains through spiritual experience is still limited, people who start living in a way that bridges both the spiritual and the material will be able to discover correlations that exist between these two very different domains.

An important aspect of this, is that not everything in the spiritual world is automatically reflected in a corresponding form in the material world. Therefore, truths or events that belong to the spiritual world can be realized in this world as realities but much later, or even in an entirely different form, or it could be that they are never manifested and have their ending in this world.

For example, while the development of a person’s soul can affect that person’s life here, this usually manifests as a personality change that is invisible to others. In my case, I had witnessed and experienced my marriage of souls with Sumiko in the latihan, but that was something in the spiritual world. Therefore, the conditions that could allow such a marriage in the material world were missing, and the reality rendered it impossible.

If I had tried to marry Sumiko in this world, to mirror the spiritual union, at the very least I would have ended up hurting myself, hurting my wife and child, and hurting Sumiko. Since I did not do that, God had mercy on me, making the impossible possible in a way that only He can and allowing this world to reflect the spiritual one. Bapak’s insight was based on these circumstances.

A Sudden Vibration

Once we had finished talking we shook Bapak’s hand to say goodbye. And then, as I grasped his hand a sudden vibration passed through me like a shower from above. The vibration was so powerful; I could not even open my eyes during that handshake.

But there was a clear distinction between this vibration and the vibration I feel during a latihan. The vibration in lati-

han is like something neutral and transparent; but the vibration from Bapak that penetrated my being was so filled with a sense of bliss that I could only think of it as coming straight from Heaven. I feel this was a special blessing that Bapak gave me, in relation to the experience I had told him, as I was never to experience anything like it again.

I had once heard from a Subud member in Indonesia, that separate from the physical Bapak, a spiritual Bapak had a continual existence in some heavenly dimension.

Until then, I had not paid this much attention, seeing it as a way of showing respect to Bapak, or maybe just as the member's personal hypothesis. But from that moment, I began to see it as the truth. I have no idea how that could be possible, but the vibration I felt at that time was so filled with sweetness and beauty, that I could think of no other explanation.

Looking back, I can see that this was when I first experienced for myself, something of Bapak's spiritual magnitude. The feeling of exaltation was still with me even as I boarded the airplane. Nor did I feel the least bit fatigued on the long journey home. *(To be continued...)*