

Susila Dharma In Our Groups

I spent a few hours recently with Wilbert Verheyen, a real privilege. Wilbert was Chairman of SDI (then SBIF) from 1983 to 1993. Also we worked together in the mid 70's in the early days of Yayasan Usaha Mulia (YUM), a multi-faceted social enterprise in Java. Wilbert had been told by a doctor last year that he had only two months to live. To me he seemed a bit frail, but radiant and full of life, and he is busy writing his autobiography. We had a wonderful latihan together.

Wilbert is fully aware of the excellent work currently being done by SD Indonesia, YUM, and also by Bardolf Paul with YTS'village development programme in Kalimantan. I told him a bit more about the recent developments in SDIA and he said: **“Yes, great, but...we also need to pay attention to the needs of the old people, sick and needy in our own Subud groups”**.

We have been putting a lot of effort into becoming more professional and into fundraising, and generally raising the quality of everything we do. Maybe some members feel that this is best left to social development types and that this is not a major concern to them. So Wilbert's reminder is important and timely: Is it not very much part of our mission in Subud to encourage members to care for those less fortunate in their groups, and somehow put the idea of caring back at the centre of our in SD work? Would SD Nationals like to take a lead in fostering and nurturing this? This would balance their outward-facing role as fundraising organisations who support and partner with projects in other countries. It is of course up to each of them how they choose their priorities, but we can suggest.

In recent years the SDI Board members and others, especially Kumari Beck, have encouraged testing about caring in general and the inner meaning of Susila Dharma. Please find below a comprehensive list of questions. It would be up to the helpers to choose which ones were relevant at the time.

Perhaps through discussion and testing the helpers and committee in each group could be encouraged to take on this challenge of fostering and nurturing a culture of care, working with helpers to make people feel welcome and included, be mindful of the needs of members such as the elderly, sick, single parents, young people, etc, and put the latihan into practice in making our Subud groups models of the inner Subud.

Some SDs are prevented by their statutes from spending money on our own membership, but as an integral part of the Subud community, why should we not promote a caring culture? This is not primarily a question of money, but of devoting time and attention. Issues of financial support are best left to National Almoning bodies where these exist, and to the newly established International Assistance Group (IAG) which is under the Care Support Team, chaired by Rayner Sutherland, although their remit is wider than that.

Since the WSC instituted 'Care Support Team' was set up in 2003 to focus on this aspect of our Subud life, can we together take up Wilbert's challenge in our groups all round the world and find means of supporting and guiding them and monitor the progress of putting it into practice? Let's try to make it happen.

With love to you all, Sharifin Gardiner, Chairman Susila Dharma International

SUSILA DHARMA TEST QUESTIONS

“Living Susila - leading your life according to your true nature through your surrender and worship of Almighty God.

Doing Dharma - Dharma is a form of surrender or giving which comes from a feeling of gratitude, and can be sharing one's expertise, joy, money - whatever one feels they have enough of.”

- Ibu Rahayu, in a talk in Bali, July 2002

Questions on susila and dharma

What is the quality (or meaning) of susila for me personally?

Where is the susila in me?

How do I put susila into action in my life?

What is the quality (or meaning) of dharma for me personally?

Where is the dharma in me?

How do I put dharma into action in my life?

Questions relating to caring

How do I care for myself?

How would God have me care for myself?

How do I care for people in my family?

How would God have me care ...?

How do I care for people in my local community?

How would God have me care ...?

How do I care for people in my Subud group?

How would God have me care ...?

How do I care for distant others? *(this can be translated to mean – those whom I don't know, or those who are far from me in my feelings*

How would God have me care ...?

How do I care for people in need, who are affected by poverty, ill health, etc?

How would God ...?

What is the quality of the care in me?

What is the nature of my caring when it is graced by God?

What is it in me that blocks me from caring in the right way?

What can help me to care in the right way?

How do I respond to human suffering?

How would God have me be in the face of suffering?

What is the correct place from which God would have me respond to human suffering?

What, if anything, is it that I can do for human suffering in the world?

Questions on helping

How is it for those that I am aiming to help when I am motivated by fulfilling my own needs and wishes?

How is it for those that I am aiming to help when I help from a place of surrender and allow God's will to emerge?

What is my personal role in caring and helping according to susila and dharma?

How do I recognize the right way to help for the correct development of the other?