

Politics, Passions, and the Latihan (cont.)

BY HARRIS BOEBEL

I used to belong to a political party. It presented a generalized philosophical point of view which pretty much matched my own, and every four years produced a document called "the platform" that was supposed to present a legislative program to implement the philosophy. I had been educated in the public school system to believe that this was the ideal way to conduct the business of government in a great democracy.

But as time went by, it didn't seem that when either party was 'in control' that economic conditions changed much or that I could personally feel that the values I believed in were being implemented to any great degree. But I had had my college education, and did major in Political Science, or pay that much attention to political affairs, assuming that those people involved on the national level had the same concerns as my local official who responded to my complaints about the potholes in the street.

Then I joined Subud, a spiritual association which promised me a contact with the One Almighty God, and delivered.

I felt it. A vibration that was palpable, unmistakable, and could be repeated strongly every time I surrendered to this spiritual exercise. Then I was informed about this spiritual process by the leader of Subud, who introduced some concepts that I had never heard of in academia. He said that human beings are gifted with the energy to live in this world but that these selfsame energies that enabled us to function also wished to control us and that at this stage in the game of life for mankind, they were dominant throughout the world and that our individual souls were undeveloped and out of touch with this reality, and the great gift we had received through him would do the work of this development, and that we could check our soul's progress and have experiences that would validate what he said if we were patient and diligent, but not all of us would progress at the same rate. Our understanding would be tailored to our ability and capacity by this spiritual force, this vibration, as we continued availing ourselves.

Then he went on to characterize these energies as passions and as Satanic, useful in this world as our servants, but we had to learn to recognize them and control them, otherwise they would dominate us and blind us to the reality of their mastery of our thoughts and wishes. I felt this was a really good roadmap to the region of the next world, which I was told (and could experience in a tiny way) and which was much finer than this coarse one I inhabited while being 'alive' here. Whoa! Material forces? Vegetable forces? Animal forces? Human forces? In a hierarchy with hierarchies within them? Never heard of that in my liberal arts education. And what I felt and thought was me, but I was not in control of me? Nonsense. Isn't it?

Furthermore, this Pak Subuh calmly explained that these forces were in control of my mind and heart; that my mind and heart were lying to me, always did and always would try to, making me believe that what I sincerely thought, felt, and observed was not at all true, and he showed me the proof of this through simple receivings via this spiritual exercise he named the Latihan Kejiwaan. So I had proof. How simple? He asked if I was sitting on my chair, or if the chair was sitting on me. Now I could see the chair underneath me, and could feel my butt resting on it, but this Latihan revealed to me, with certainty, that this contraption was sitting on me. This was the power of the Material force, and I could check on my relationship to these forces any time I wished, and as I developed these finer sensibilities, my checking would be more accurate.

So my viewpoint about how I, and others, behaved, was completely open to question, and my righteous (and negative) attitudes toward 'women drivers' for example, was not at all "right" but silly, and other attitudes I had were self serving negative power wielding forces that controlled me, and often were destructive to the general welfare, and my specific welfare. OhmyGod! Or OMG as we are accustomed to texting. What can I believe? If 'I' am controlled by invisible forces, and everything 'I' think or feel is suspect, than who am 'I' and what can 'I' believe or know that is 'True' or 'Real'? Good question. The answer, unfortunately, is Patience, Submission (to this vibration within) and Sincerity, and it is not certain that I will find this answer swiftly, or slowly, or at all.

Can you see where we are going here? If by palpable experience I have ascertained that what 'I' believe is 'me' is, not, or may not, be 'me' and may or may not be the noble creature 'I' believe I am, then what about the rest of my kind? If it is true for me, is it true for them? Yes. Yep. You betcha. God is just. The rules of the game (earthly life) are the same for all. We are all subject to these energies, these Satanic passions we are told about by a man who proved it, and which (probably) we can prove for ourselves.

This is not to say that the technological accomplishments of all of us (mankind) are bad, they are not, they are the product of using the material forces for shelter and sustenance, but how we use them is where we see what controls who. And in the world of politics and ambition for powerful and prestigious places we see the workings of these Satanic forces most nakedly. Consider presidential elections, a clear example because of the amount of scrutiny that has been brought to bear on them in this electronic age. If a candidate wishes to obtain this office he must raise enormous amounts of money, some of which come with certain implicit obligations, and this is spent on a campaign staff and advertisements to 'influence' the voters, not to 'inform' the voters (it hasn't been that way since the Magna Carta and before) and the staff now consists of individuals who study reports and demographics and statistics to find out what the voter 'wants' and then compose a specific message or slant to appeal to them. And they are very skilled at what they do. So the predilections and attitudes of ethnic groups, occupational groups, social and economic groups are studied in minute detail by people who are paid, often quite

handsomely, to report potential 'issues' and 'attitudes' which are passed on to clever people who craft speeches and advertisements which are promoted as the beliefs of the candidate. He does not say his own words or voice his own opinions; he is told what to say, where to say it, how to say it, and his appearance down to his clothing and posture is arranged by 'experts' and 'advisors'.

All of this is true and has been revealed to us, especially in recent times when public relations firms and advertising agencies are large and influential organizations. So if any candidate is going to compete for the office of President, he must do what the other candidates do, no exceptions, his handlers, purchased by him, take control, and he then does what is necessary to get elected. Such mundane concepts as right and wrong, integrity, ethics, are all prey to the manipulation deemed necessary at the moment.

Once in office, another staff is created. The complexities of the job are obviously too great for any one person in any given day. So the staff has to analyze, digest, and advise the president on events, legislation, foreign affairs, the activities of a myriad of agencies that are under his direct and indirect supervision. So every activity of the president is supervised and scheduled, and others report his 'thoughts' to us, and he is increasingly guided and informed by his staff as to the texture and content of the world beyond his office. What he may have known of 'reality' and the rest of us, his 'constituency', constantly gives way to the 'reality' as defined and pronounced by staff and advisors.

So who advises all the people involved in this furious enterprise. Not who, but what, - Satanic forces - which have a tight grip on everyone, and the more clever and diligent the individual, the more convinced he/she is of the certitude of their thoughts and feelings. So it matters little who the politicians are, or what party or philosophy they pronounce, all the way down to my alderman, they are in the grip of these forces which give them the energy to work and live.

OMG. Indeed, then how come our nation functions at all? These passions are not really out to destroy us, the individuals they influence, but the more they dominate, the less any system or group is able to function with love and respect and concern for one another, and systems and their nations come and go, and wars come and go, and famines and plagues come and go.

Bleak? Seemingly so, these energies in us are strong, and they tell us it is at least pretty good, and those with power and wealth are told it is really very good. After all, we are full of feelings and we function well. But we who have experienced the vibration of the Kejiwaan, (not necessarily limited to Subud members) can know what is true or not, and this is the solution to our contaminated political process. Pak Subuh taught us how to choose our committee members, the people who function like politicians and are responsible for worldly matters. Was it by ringing, emotional speeches, promises to do this or that? Nope. It was to become calm and peaceful, putting our feelings aside, and asking these individuals to show through

their Kejiwaan state, how qualified they were, or are, to take on this responsibility at this time.

Well, that sure “ain’t gonna happen” in our political world. But, the answer for us is not to be controlled by these less than human forces who promote politicians by demonizing others in any group dedicated to a particular ideology, and seek to use our emotions and “rational” processes to polarize our thinking. How then to proceed? The question was put to Pak Subuh years ago. His answer was that the best we could do in our imperfect state ourselves was to quieten ourselves, either before, or while in the voting booth and try and receive who was the best person for the particular job, and choose that name. I have tried to do this for a number of years with varying degrees of success. Some of the time I was influenced by the slogans, postures and promises, and a few times I caught myself reacting to a candidate’s name that may have revealed his ethnicity and triggered a leftover prejudice, not yet cleaned out in my own heart. So I would place my finger over the name and ask if this person was the best for the job.

I did not expect to change anything, or would I expect several hundred Subud members to make a difference in any election, especially because the bigger the job the less the victor is able to do by himself, and relies on people firmly in the grip of these satanic forces. But it seems to make *me* a better person, more in control of my own forces, with more possibility of personal growth, performing actions freer from domination and more useful for my life and those with whom I interact. To paraphrase Neil Armstrong, “One tiny step for mankind, a larger one for me.”

If this course of action cannot produce much of any effect, what can? Is there anything that can affect the worldly situation. I think so, but that is a matter for another day.

Disclaimer: These are the thoughts of myself in my imperfect state and not necessarily endorsed by God

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