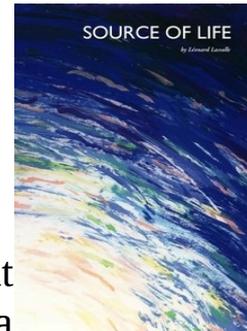


Source of Life by Léonard Lassalle
published by Via Books, August 2012



Reviewed by Marcus Bolt

Léonard Lassalle has pulled off a remarkable feat with this new book, and if I hadn't already been a member, I would most definitely have wanted to find out about and receive the latihan after reading it – he makes it sound so exciting, rekindling anew the enthusiasm I felt in my early days when it seemed we were all on a spiritual adventure together.

But there again, he was the first person I spoke to about Subud when an enquirer, and, as Bapak once indicated, when a helper is doing his/her job properly, the enquirer will 'feel something spontaneously', I can report that I most certainly did when talking to Léonard about the latihan for the first time some 44 years ago over a candlelit supper in his garden.

I confess to being, after four decades of latihan, one of those rare things in Subud – an agnostic – and someone still having problems with the 'G' word and all the unfortunate, archaic baggage it brings with it. Léonard manages to convey a sense of deep spirituality, of 'mystical other-worldliness' and awe of the unknown without one 'religious' reference (except when describing an extraordinary experience with Bapak) – in fact the title, 'Source of Life', says it all to me and is a term I'm completely comfortable with and will use from now on. In turn, this makes it the ideal book for the non-Abrahamic religious enquirer, yet will sit happily with and read truthfully to members of all faiths or none.

The book is well written in a flowing, easy-read, intimate style (how I admire those who can write fluently in a language not their mother tongue) and charts, in the early chapters, Léonard's life from his upbringing on an island off the French coast, being educated at Summerhill Free School and becoming a student at

the Central School of Arts in London. And this is where he met Mélinda, the woman with whom he raised seven children and to whom he is still married 53 years later (another rare thing in Subud, it has to be said). It was through his wife-to-be that Leonard discovered Subud and eventually taking the journey to Coombe Springs to be opened by Bapak.

The following chapters tell the story of how he uncovered innate skills as antique dealer, businessman and interior designer; of how he became an International Helper spiced with amazing stories of his travels in Poland, Russia and Africa, and ends with his returning to painting in his idyllic French farmhouse, where he and Mélinda still live today.

The whole story of his life (and what a life it's been so far) is infused with the latihan and the guidance it brings and is an exemplar for us all.

This book will delight long-timers with its stories of Bapak and Subud's past, and will be equally fascinating to 'post-Bapak' members and, I believe, will re-energise any Subud member reading it. I also believe the book will feel total satisfying to any seeker looking for that mystical, magical 'something', as we all once were – it's an ideal book for an enquirer, in other words.

For your copy, go to:

<http://www.lulu.com/shop/léonard-lassalle/source-of-life/paperback/product-20336644.html>

: www.subudbooks.com : www.amazon.com (or any good bookstore.)

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