

RESOLVED: LIFE BEYOND THE ALHAMBRA

Thursday, November 22, 2018

Writing

Stan Lee says he loves what he writes, loves his writing. .

Am I the same?

Why do I go to writing class? I love to hear Barry read my writing. Period. Oh, sure, it's nice to hear what others in class write, and feel there's a community of writers around me supporting writing itself, and even what I write.

But bottom line is: I love to hear what I write. Deep down it's all good and true. That others hear it read, and like it, simply adds to the wonderful energy mix of my pleasure.

Is this true for other things I do? This morning, I think it is. Only modesty and humility keep me from admitting it. And what are modesty and humility but mostly fear of criticism, happy barriers that others often respect and admire? Thus, I get kudos for restraining my love of self and my creations.

Friday, November 23, 2018

A Chill of Gratitude

I woke up the day after Thanksgiving filled with a new determination to aim higher and take the challenge of harder. This, coupled with coffee and a good night's sleep, helped me feel, while I was reading Hebrew, what I believe is my first ever "chill of gratitude." It flowed through my body and strangely filled my soul.

Gratitude: I wonder if that is what my Life Beyond the Alhambra New Leaf is and will be all about.

How, for example, could I feel gratitude for pain?

Maybe see pain as my teacher, which indeed it is; thus gratitude for my pain, because I know it will teach me something.

For example, gratitude for the strange twitches in my legs, even the cramps. “Twitch of gratitude” and “gratitude cramps.”

Strange ideas indeed. But they did organically emerge in my mind. They must have their own truth and mean something. And, since they are mine, only I can interpret what they mean. I choose their meaning.

The Continent of New Guitarland

This is a slow analysis of a totally new approach. How does it feel to play guitar where every note is free to going in any direction it wants, where there is no pressure to play anything a certain way, no hidden goals of improvement or change or future audience approval?

How does it feel to play guitar perfectly free?

Saturday, November 24, 2018

Leading the Infant Vision Life

The child-like sensual pleasure and joy of touching, feeling, playing the guitar, running

in the grass, stretching in yoga lion pose, pulling hard on the chinning bar, feeling my throat vibrate while singing, even the sensual pleasure of touring, looking around a city, walking rapidly through its naked streets, feeling the atmosphere against my skin, its air and sights sensually bathing my eyes: Yes, the sensual pleasure, feeling the world through all pores and organs of the body—that is the essence of Infant Vision and that is where I want to go, to be, to rediscover and regain. That is my present, ancient and modern quest.

Basically, Infant Vision is a reorientation of my life. Learning how to return, reconnect, renaissance, be reborn, live again in the old and new, ancient and modern way; bringing the best of childhood to adulthood.

Writing. . .and Infant Vision

If the fools are really the wise ones, then I'm getting close to perfect.

Also this speaks well for my fiction and babble writing.

Sensual Pleasure and the Dopamine Flowing Infant Vision Life

My big challenge is how to enjoy my tours, guitar playing, running, gym, yoga, singing, all I do. How to follow my dopamine release program.

My activities are either fear based and fun based.

Most of what I do concerning money is fear based. Of course, this includes the stock market. Up market, up stocks, feel like “fun” but are actually relief: I am once again saved from the brink of poverty and the terror such a fear brings. (Again, this is a post-marriage

fear, an “It’s my job to take care of the woman, to dispel all her needs and worries” fear.

Most of what I call art and exercise is fun based. No one to take care of here. I can do it all alone or with other “playmates.” It my form of play in its best sense.

Sunday, November 25, 2018

What is the down stock market, and lack of tour registration teaching me?

I could be flawed by arrogance? Financial arrogance. The idea that I have enough money, and I could retire (if I wanted to.)

Is financial arrogance my present and next mountain?

What is the opposite of arrogance

Is it Fear? And the concomitant motivation that fear give you?

Is it humility before the mountain?

Or a combination of both?

Unfortunately, I can’t go back to my old fears, and the old motivations they gave me.

But perhaps I could go on to new fears, and their concomitant new motivations.

On Finishing

Is it better to “go that extra mile,” push ahead to the finish line, give in to my “completion compulsion”?

This approach is more difficult, harder

Or is it better when “tired,” to give in to the “relaxation compulsion,” give up the

activity, move on to something else?

This approach is less difficult, easier.

Answer: "Going the extra mile," pushing to the finish line, is better. Why?

Because in the process, you discover strengths you never knew you had. You'll end up feeling victorious, and shining in glory. (And this, even if you lose!)

Guitar:

All Directions and Tempos Are Okay

They're All Okay

Okay, I reached the Alhambra perfection point.

Now what?

It's fun to play Alhambra slow; it's fun to play it fast.

It's fun to play Alhambra, and anything else, slow, fast, or any tempo, or any direction.

There's no pressure or reason to play slow, fast, or go in any direction.

It just really doesn't matter anymore.

Any direction and tempo is okay.

They're all okay.

Wednesday, November 28, 2018

Benefits of Great Mental Focus

I can control my leg cramps, and muscles, through great mental focus.

I can also control my pains, and turn them into positives, also through great mental focus.

Reconciling Old and New Worlds

Bringing Peace to my Heart

A few moments later: I just crossed the line: I played “Alhambra” at a “reasonable” pace.

What does “reasonable” mean? It relates to the old world of speed. My playing of “Alhambra” and “reasonable” speed means I played it at a tempo which could stand next to Segovia. (I played it not like Segovia, but in the same room as Segovia.)

Thus I took a step toward reconciliation between my old world of guitar playing, with its constant pressure to play “Alhambra” fast like Segovia.

Old and new, present and past worlds must be reconciled before there is peace.

Entering and Committing to the Dopamine Release Program

Maybe the excitement is too much; maybe its crippling me.

But cripple or not, I must admit, I am getting somewhere!

I’ve captured the “Alhambra.” Yes, I’m afraid I might slip backward, and fall into the old neighborhood way of playing. But my fear keeps lessening! My fear may even be that I’m losing my fear! Now there’s a twist!

What would living fearless be like? Walking through the old neighborhood fearlessly,

only focusing on finding the positive in all events and every feeling? Is that where I'm headed? I hope so.

Actually, I know so! There is really no other place for me to go. Yes, I'm in. I'm totally committed to my Dopamine Release Program. I just have to get used to it.

Knees Are About Submission

Knees are about submission.

Squats, sitting on my ankles, giving in, kneeling (knee-ling), submitting to the higher forces.

There's something very wise about this, but I don't know yet what it is.

Saturday, December 1, 2018

HaShem is Smiling

The Fun-In-Itself Road

I'm still trying to perfect things, even though I know the hopes on this road are totally useless.

I'm ever aiming to get better, even though I know the outer results, expression and performing for others will never be perfect and thus is also totally useless.

And yet I keep doing it.

Perhaps the human drive for improvement and self-perfection is simply a Kantian good-in-itself, or as I rename it, a fun-in-itself. And there's no cosmic pay off except nailing

myself to the present, with the energy flash of pleasure.

Yes, the only reason I can see for traveling the perfection road is for the pleasure and fun of it. The fun of pleasure.

Is a fun-in-itself life good for humanity?

Yes.

A b'simcha, fun-in-itself life brings me pleasure and sometimes brings pleasure to others as well.

So it's a win-win for both sides.

Meanwhile HaShem is smiling.

Monday, December 3, 2018

Beyond Challenges?

By removing my multi-year "Alhambra" speed challenge, I also removed a grand source of motivation. The quest to play faster, interpreted as "getting better," motivated me to practice. For years!

Now I say, Why practice, if I can now play? Why practice "Alhambra" and tremolo, if I can now play it? (And slowly now counts as playing it.)

It reminds me of when several years ago after our grand and successful Greek tour, I realized I had "enough" money and thus had "conquered" my long-time financial fears of poverty and destruction. Then too, when my financial motivations crumbled, I felt very down; again, I had lost a grand, and post-marriage "lifetime" source of motivation.

Now, I have “conquered” my “Alhambra” fears (Note: “conquered” is in quotes because all conquests are temporary, until the next one appears), what, if anything, will rise in its place?

In other words, now what?

Am I beyond challenges?

I doubt it. Even if true, would I want such an existence?

Do I need a new challenge to inspire me as well as distract my mind from “eating me up?”

How about taking care of my body? Or do I need a “higher purpose,” one that distracts me from my material self?

Shall I look in my miracle schedule?

Or beyond?

Could the next stage is one beyond challenges?

And what does “beyond” mean?

Does it mean” “Take it one day at a time” or “Be in the moment?” All good things.

Indeed, this would be a “new” approach and attitude toward life, one totally different from the past.

Wednesday, December 5, 2018

The Wisdom of Slow

A Positive View of Slow

When you go slow, you really descend into the fire. And it's awfully hot there. That's why I avoid it and have avoided it. Only the kabbalists can go and dwell there. And one must be over forty to even reach that point of wisdom.

Yes, the wisdom of slow: Indeed, this is the positive view of it.

When you play guitar slow, even very slow, you make discoveries—for example, why the bass buzzed when I played the two notes together in Bach “Gavotte en Rondeau.” It buzzed because I was not exerting enough steady pressure on my left hand second finger. I relaxed it after I played the two notes, and the relaxation caused the string to buzz. Only when playing very slowly did I discover this, the roots of why.

It takes great focus to go slow.

And, paradoxically, when you descend into the fires of slow, you discover the roots of fast. Or put another way, with another metaphor, when you sink into the river of slow, you discover the fountain of fast.

Friday, December 7, 2018

Release, Surrender, Excitement, and Freedom

Can my body take release? Ha!

Excitement versus anxiety and energy block.

Shall I ever perform again? I can't make up my mind, mired in the paralysis of no decision, whipsawed between yes and no.

Yes, to release and surrender.

But how will that affect my “to perform or not to perform” decision?

Perhaps, with excitement at the center, performing itself will become secondary and “besides the point.”

“Fast” and Exciting

“Fast” is way to wake up “excitement,” which is the bottom line. (Perhaps “fast” gets the heart pumping.)

“Excitement” equals release, surrender, fun, joy.

Excitement is primary, number one, first.

Performing is secondary, and thus, besides the point. (The audience is thus also “besides the point,” although I realize they can offer the performer great energy. But at this low point in my infant development, even considering the audience is besides the point. My focus has to be on energy, release, surrender, excitement. Find and achieve that, and I have arrived. Everything else is “besides the point.”

Phantom Audience

I have created a phantom audience in my mind (I’ll name it “blanket”) that acts as a cover, a block to my inner excitement, my wild running on the lawn.

It is my job to remove that cover and release my wild animals.

Remove the cover, and the essence leaps forth.

What a new thought: the audience being “beside the point” means that I have focused on the blanket rather than the body—my body—underneath it.

Year of Release

I wonder if this is the year of release. Wouldn't that be a miracle. But truth is, everything is lined up to be so. Perhaps this first quarter, the three months or so of September-December is to clear the wall, and break the dam.

This would make it a hopeful and beautiful day. And all the trials, Alhambra shoulder aches and Spanish leg pains of the past quarter would have served their purposes and be drifting into the past.

Climbing the walls before the prison break.

Fear is Mother of Desire for Perfection

Why the desire to be perfect, to play the classical guitar perfectly?

Fear. So I won't be attacked by others.

If I play perfectly, the audience will not criticize me, attack me. As you know, every note in classical music is written down. So the discerning audience knows every note; they will immediately know if I miss one, leave one out, or flub one. They're watching and listening to every note I play and ready to leap on me at the slightest infraction. Therefore, I've got to play “perfectly” in order to defend myself.

This is all such total bullshit.

But true, nevertheless.

However, if the audience is now “besides the point.” I no longer have anything to fear from them.

Saturday, December 8, 2018

Decision

Riding up to Darien, it all came together.

Not only do I need to perform, but maybe the truth is, I want to perform. And I am now able to.

Truth is, I may never even give a concert. But that is not the point, and is also besides the point. In my mind, I cannot live in indecision anymore. Indecision has torn up my body and mind.

And as I think about it, I don't even have to play “Alhambra,” “Leyenda,” flamenco, Bach, or any of those pieces at my concert. All I have to do is know I can play them. And now I know I can.

What kind of concert?

Perhaps the same World of Guitar type concert I used to give many years ago. A mix of classical guitar, flamenco guitar, folk songs, stories, ad libs, group songs, humor, and fantasy. Perhaps, after all, that's my style, that's what I do, and who I am.

Sunday, December 9, 2018

Perform in Any Direction

Ironically and paradoxically, now that I can play “Alhambra,” “Leyenda,” flamenco, and all the other biggies, I don’t have to perform them! Or I can.

In other words, somehow I have broken into the Realm of Confidence. I am now free to choose! On stage, I can do whatever I want, perform whatever I want.

JoyAbolishing the Headache Habit

I have a slight headache this morning. I’m half blind with it. And, to my knowledge, I’m not even angry.

Perhaps I am happy! Yes, that’s it. I’m in wahoo land. And pushing it down, denying it. Truth is, what a great victory was yesterday and all its thinking!

How am I starting the celebration? With a headache. An old habit when joy pops its head in. Let’s see if I can turn that around today.

New Guitar Playing and Alhambra Experience

It’s just so much fun having my fingers fly!

Monday, December 10, 2018

“Alhambra”: I’m opening up and discovering a new power through the process of exciting, and the fun of fast. No purpose to it, just plain fun.

This is the true Infant Vision, And it's so easy!

The worst is at the bottom, before it turns into the best. This means: stick with it, no matter what, no matter how bleak the prospects and hopeless the cause seems to be.

It's happening with my hands in guitar; I wonder if it will also happen with my legs.

Depression

It is "traditional" that, when I wake up with no purpose, I wake up depressed.

Here's how to change that tradition: Go to sleep thinking and planning tomorrow's purpose; plan to fulfill it when I wake up. In other words, use the power of my unconscious to its fullest.

I can just as soon find a good reason to be depressed or worry as I can always find a good reason not to be depressed or not to worry.

Thus it is in within my power to choose.

(But it takes lots of effort and work.)

It is not good to be depressed. It doesn't feel good, and it's not good for your health.
(No dopamine release.)

Well, why not? When it's cooked and ready.

A bit later:

I can choose:

I am a good guitarist, very good guitarist, or a great guitarist.

Since I can choose, I might as well choose the best. So I'll choose great.

That would put me in the same league as the other greats like Segovia and Bream. But that's okay. Stepping into that great space will not diminish their greatness. There's room for all of us. Besides, we're all great in our own way.

Now I have to ask: How will I, as a great guitarist, play?

Well, since I can finally play guitar, and it is so much fun, maybe all I want to do is play guitar all day. Just like I played violin all day during my teenage years. That plus basketball.

What a lovely existence that was! Perhaps it's time for a return.

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

My playing is so beautiful, clear, and competent. I cry for happiness.

Normalize my fine guitar playing.

Is anger dripping through my fast fast fingers as I play Bach's Gavotte en Rondeau?

Strange how anger and rage have never come up in any of my guitar playing. And they

are such a large part of my personality. Maybe my nausea is a hint of their emergence.

Indeed, if anger and rage emerged somewhere in my playing it would be new. But it is certainly “reasonable” that they should. I wonder where they’ve been all these years?

Wednesday, December 12, 2018

Sleep, Sleep, Sleep, and Do Nothing for Awhile

Putting My Legs and Guitar Together

Maybe I’ve gone as far as I can go on the guitar, and I need to stop for awhile.

Maybe I need a break to absorb the changes, crisis, pains, and traumas of the past Spanish three months. (Spanish for the Spanish classical guitar.)

My guitar wall has crashed. Something big has happened. I need to absorb it, and somehow adjust to what feels like a grand transition: Somehow broken the trauma chain. I’m free.

I’m rather stunned. I don’t know what to do with this transition and change.

I don’t even know how to take a break.

What is a break? How do you do it? Do I just sit in the house and do nothing? Walk many times around the block? Visit the city? Take a long trip?

I could use some kind of change, but I don’t know how to take it.

Something is wrong and strange, and I don’t know what it is.

Maybe I just need to sleep and sleep and do nothing for awhile. That seems about right.

Maybe the unity of sleep will put my legs and guitar together.

Anger, Playing Fast, Running Wild on the Lawn

And the Trauma Stop!

(As in Stop Running Wild on the Lawn)

Maybe playing guitar so fast upsets my equilibrium and somehow makes me angry.

Maybe the anger comes from memories of my mother stopping me from running wild on the farm lawn when I was four years old.

Evidently, that moment was a major trauma in my life. Somehow, through the power of my imagination, I created a scenery and plot that restrained my emotions and corked my brain in a lifetime of restraint and holding back. I also wonder how much it formed my personality, my immediate reactions to turmoil (outer calm), which somehow soothes my travelers and followers when I lead them in tours, folk dancing, and even performances.

Wow, did I just psychoanalyze myself. And well, too!

I just hit the root of my headache and nausea on Monday, which came after the best and fastest-ever guitar playing!

Because without the anger, stoppage, and rage, what's the big deal about playing fast, running fast, or going fast? There is none. You simply go as fast as you can, and when you can't do it anymore, you stop.

Can I blame it on my mother? Why not?

Can I blame it on my imagination? Why not?

Can I blame it on anything or anyone else? Why not?

It's fun to blame others.

But whether I blame them or not, I'm still stuck with the stoppage. And I'm the only one who can loosen those chains.

Thursday, December 13, 2018

I can't believe it, but I do believe it: "Alhambra" and its attendant twisted directions and misdirections, internal traumas and tortures, unresolved problems, and more, all are over. My many-ear "Alhambra" adventure and misadventure, with its attendant performance questions and problems, have all been resolved.

So ends a New Leaf.