

## Concert and Israel Leaf

Thursday, February 12, 2009

Am I Any Good?

Right Shoulder and Performing

Am I any good?

It's the most heart-breaking question. I ask it over and over again, deal with it in every encounter. This ever-dangerous question goes back to childhood. And it never goes away!

Yesterday, I met Rick for the gym experience. We talked about many things including my right shoulder.

Suppose my right shoulder is psychological?

How to practice and cure it simultaneously. Think psychological.

I took a slight break. Then it hit me. Suddenly, I knew that my right shoulder and returning to performing are related! Working out the details is the question, and where I am presently.

Truth is, I have to return to performance in some way. Until I figure it out, and how to do it, my shoulder will continue to bother, annoy, and hurt me.

So, as a start, whenever my right shoulder hurts, think performing.

Building up my muscles, going to the gym, running, etc. is all very good. I like it, and I'll do it. But it has nothing to do with my shoulder!

Sarno's approach is right again. In the back of my mind, I've always sensed it is right. It's taken over two years (maybe more) to figure it out, and go through the process of working it out.

Playing the violin brought up childhood (teenage) fears and angers about performing in general, playing the violin in particular, etc. Traumas revisited. That is what created my shoulder problem! (Probably also sciatica, left knee, etc.)

Note also, how all these problems began, not when I started writing the folk dance book (as I previously thought), but, rather, when I returned to playing the violin! Both began last January! Both relate to performing anxiety. Surface performance anxiety in my then upcoming Raleigh workshop date; deeper long term performance anxiety as I revisited the traumas of my past through violin lessons.

In fact, I wonder if, psychologically, the whole mess of the last two years has been about dealing with performance anxiety!

It's not a physical problem, it's a mental problem. Or rather, it's a mental problem expressed through my body, experienced in physical terms.

But figuring it out, working through it, takes so long. This blind trip, wandering through the dark, empty, tree-besotted forest went on and on. Baffled, lost, and discouraging, I wondered: Would it ever end or lead somewhere?

Deep down, I always asked the same question: Am I any good? Am I loveable? Can I be loved? What heart-rending questions; what torturous and difficult questions to deal with. It makes me fall down on my knees, plead with Mommy, "Please, say I am good. Please, please, please! I'm begging you. I'll do anything. It's all in your hands." Terrible, pain-wrenching, horrible, indeed. I cry even as I say this. No wonder I distracted myself by scattering "new and exciting" pains throughout my body.

This all makes so much sense!

"Am I any good? Am I loveable? Can I be loved?" are life threatening. If the answers are negative, you are bad, unlovable, and, like Cain, totally rejected by God and the world. You are completely destroyed!

Life threatening questions, indeed. No wonder I created physical pain distractions! I can even say inventing these survival techniques was smart, even wise. In my mind, it was a matter of life or death. I made the decision: Better to live in distracting pain, than die.

Cry-Mode Mother

I can't dump or drop the equation between success and sadness. Does this really go back to Ma? Again? Can't I ever finish with this mode of thought?

Success equals losing Ma's love, and by losing it, losing all my motivation. Failure means I'm still with her, still loved and in her arms.

Is the above really possible? What's the matter with me? It takes so long, and I can't solve these problems. (Put down mode.)

Success in Alhambra means I'll lose Ma's love.

I cry as I realize these thoughts.

Yet I realize later that Ma is a mode of thought; she is my invention. I create and hold her in my own mind.

Monday, February 16, 2009

### Student!

I keep searching for a new, post-transition, and post-seventy goal. A new and next direction in life. Maybe at this advanced age, my general purpose, goal, and path should and will be: Become a student; be a student! Learn, study, adventure through the catacombs, cataclysms, and catechisms of the mind.

(Catechism: From Gk. katechizein "teach orally, instruct by word of mouth, from kata "thoroughly" + echein "to sound.")

Back to college! Return to school in every way.

Let curiosity lead the way.

I love it!

Talk about a return to motivation! What could be better?

(Curious: "Eager to know." From L. curiosus "careful, diligent, curious," akin to cura "care.")

Curious and care are etymologically related.

What about cure? Related to Hebrew halootz: health, vigor. R to L change. But

also related to cure. The triple C's. All three bring good health to body and mind.

Wednesday, February 18, 2009

Guitar: First morning hour dedicated to technique. Playing VL Choros last night, I rediscovered right hand, right wrist and right fingers relaxation-deeper technique. The sound is harder, tougher, louder, deeper.

(Practice it as warm-up with scales and arpeggios?)

Strong, powerful, fast-finger arpeggio practice is best.

Alhambra: So much fun letting the bass role, knocking the right fingers off, letting them fly hard and fast. I can't stand it. I must stop.

Thursday, February 19, 2009

#### Financial Cost of Motivation and Excitement

Of course, it happened indirectly, almost "by accident." Nevertheless, it did take place. Through and during the stock trading period. During this period, (angrily, I call it the stock market debacle period), I'd say it cost me 10Gs in the stock market trading to get my motivation and excitement back. Is that a rationalization? Perhaps. But, rationalization or not, true or not, and as much as I hate to lose the money, I'd have to say, it was worth it.

(And truth is, so far it's "only" 6 Gs. Although the process is not over yet.)

I was mad and down yesterday partly because of my losses, and the future disappearance of the stock market as a source of thrills, excitement, and even motivation. But notice, the word I'm using is "partly." Intellectually, I realize that loss of the market, giving up my trading, is and will be a future source of freedom. My mind will now be open and free to do the things I do best. I realize this "intellectually."

But something else made me mad yesterday. (And my down followed my mad,

thus making it a curable form of depression.)

What was it? I do not know. Did I partly blame myself for getting into the market in the first place? For thus wasting and losing so much money? Guilt and shame? Perhaps.

Even though I realize I "had to go through it," I still hate to lose the money, hate to "pay for my education." Can't I learn my lesson and get my money back at the same time? That's what my father would have done. He'd scare and warn me after my wrong doing, that I was going to jail. Then he'd take me out for an ice cream soda. Thus did I learn I could have my cake and eat it too; learn my lesson and not really pay for it. I was ten years old at the time, and I learned something about life. Hmmm. Not necessarily a "realistic" teaching from my father. In real life, there are real consequences. My anger at losing all this money is forcing me to feel them now. Of course, I covered up my anger with a down. But I can't cover it up with this phony depression for long. I know I'm mad, mad at myself! I blame myself for being such a fool, for falling into the stock market, gambling and trading trap. And believing I could succeed at it, and wasting so much valuable time studying and trying to "learn" about the stock market and trading again. How could I have been such a fool? The answer is: easily.

So I'm totally mad at myself. Furious, in fact. Have I learned anything from my debacle? I'm relearning the fact that I once knew very well: that the market is personally not good for my mind, and for me. I waste my time and energy in it. Deep down, I hope I also have a bit more self-knowledge: I know the most important thing for me to have is motivation and excitement. Without these great energy creators, my life is empty and dead. Killed by "success," I had been looking for these lost dreams for the past two years. Entry into the stock market, and the following debacle, were part of my transition back to a truer, more vital, in controllable source of motivation, enthusiasm, excitement, and satisfaction. And this namely through my arts.

I'm in the process of changing directions. I'm returning to Art. Music, writing,

(even dance with body as instrument), other. I'm now in the process of returning to asking the great questions: What is playing a piece artistically? What does being an artist mean? What does leading the artistic life mean?

The truth is that also, the hoped for money that would come at the end of the so-called and dreamed -of stock market success, meant little or nothing to me. It only symbolized a form of meaningless winning. Of course, I realized this, but did it anyway. The only thing I can say is this process and period is now coming to an end.

### Back to the Artistic Life

Back to the artistic life.

I had to pay for it! I hate paying.

But I have only myself to blame.

Part of me wants to blame my father for bringing me up "unrealistically," protecting me, not letting me pay the consequences. But I can't blame him. I love him too much, and always thanked him for his teaching. I wish I could blame someone else, but I can't. I'm totally responsible. I can only blame myself.

Blame away! Let blame and self-flagellation run its course. Instead of getting down or depressed, get mad! Here's a case where a little self-flagellation is a good idea!

### Anger and Mourning

Split between mad and sad. Mad I lost all that money. Sad I am losing the stock market ups and downs, giving up the thrills and chills of trading. Sure, in the long run, I know it's good for me. But I'm sad and mad, nevertheless.

I am in mourning for the market, and the short-lived, up-and-down trading life which once so energized and excited me.

The final stages of a dying idea.

I guess I'll have to cry before I can move on.

Back to the artistic life. Business/artistic life.

The tour business: Truth is, it's an artistic tour. About folk arts, people arts, the Arts (aretz).

Unity of vision achieved.

(What a tremendous and subtle lifetime accomplishment. It just plopped out of my mind "by accident.")

Maybe I can now find motivation and excitement in the arts and artistic life.

The focus on money (financial survival), although obviously important, will not play as great a role in my life.

Thank You in Korean: Gam Sa Ham Ni Da.

### Disgust and Nausea

On the way out. Sold more of my stocks today.

I'm totally nauseated by the market, disgusted with Obama who doesn't know anything about economics, what he's doing, and is messing up the recovery (reflected in the down market), and for all money I've lost.

Late afternoon:

### Freedom!

I sold some stocks yesterday. This morning I sold the rest.

I just sold all my stocks!

Yes, I feel sad. But I also feel free! I just paid \$9000 for my freedom. Was it worth it? Too early to tell. But a growing part of me feels like celebrating.

What will I do with my new found (mental) freedom?

1. Immediately, I can see myself getting back on the phone calling my clients and selling my tours!

(How do I celebrate?)

2. I no longer have to be mentally involved, or pay attention to the miseries, bad mouthing, pessimism, down philosophy (as reflected in the downward direction of the stock market), and total mishandling of our economy by the Obama administration. I am free to separate off, and go my own way. What happens to the stock market, and the economic world, in general, is of little concern or value to me. I'm busy making my own world.

Friday, February 20, 2009

### Annoyance, Motivation, and Excitement

I feel it's back to square one, back to earn a living "by the sweat of my brow."

Although this gives me a bit of discomfort, it's not a value judgement. I'm not saying make money "by the sweat of my brow" is good or bad. But today it certainly feels like a fact.

What changes does this fact bring to my mind?

First, I have to make money through my work. This is definitely not a bad thing, although it is vaguely annoying. Why do I knock it with "annoying?" Probably a brief return to the old neighborhood. Actually, in this renewed state of me, I should thank my annoyance for this new form of motivation and even excitement.

Yes, annoyance: my new form of motivation!

How about the put down word "even?" That too is a brief return to the old neighborhood. Actually, in this renewed state of me, I know, I real-ize, that excitement is a willing and eager partner of motivation!

Motivation and excitement are twins! So be it. This is a fundamental truth of the renewal state, this renewed state of me.

Thus the fading trilogy of annoyance, motivation, and excitement. I say fading



because, once I get into it, I expect the annoyance part to fade away.

What I call “annoyance” is really the old neighborhood form of worry, fear, even terror, but in diminished state.

### Three Hours of Exercise a Day

(a la Amos)

Big changes in my life style and thinking:

Think three hours a day of exercises, a la Amos.

This is a special gift to me. It resolves the question: Can I, dare I, devote three hours a day to (the pleasure of) exercising? Can I afford to give myself this wonderful gift? After years questioning, I finally have the answer: Yes!

My three hours will be either in the morning, or both morning and afternoon. (I might even throw in evening.) And I’ll include my folk dance class teaching these three hours.

Of course, I’ll also have the special daily gift of guitar and violin practice.

### Avoidance and the Stock Market

In fact, I might even say most of my stock market involvement was a way of avoiding this new source of motivation!

I might even say most of my “old neighborhood” worries and fears about money were mental constructs I invented as a means of avoiding motivation and excitement.

Dave M would agree.

Maybe excitement, and its hand maiden, motivation, is such powerful force it takes seventy years to learn how to handle it.

An Unleashed Torrent of Wonder!

Imagine being able to apply all this (for the first time in my life) to my classical guitar playing! Wow. What a direction to go in!

An unleashed torrent of wonder! (Good title for a book.)

(Unleashing a Torrent of Wonder: Good title, too.)

By dropping the stock market, I dropped a big hindrance to development.

### Venezuelan Waltz

Step into the role, and play it as a romantic Latin American lover. There is something sad about this (music), so full of death and unhappiness. Is that the story of Venezuela and Latin America in general? Maybe. Full of hot music but tinged with sadness.

### Villa-Lobos: Choros

For years I felt it should be hot Brazilian sambo dancer. But it has many of the same qualities as Venezuelan Waltz. No total joy (except for a few measures of break out in part three). An underlying sadness that holds it back. The Choros "dance: never quite makes it to the wild and happy release of freedom. Ever holding back, trying, rising a bit, then falling back, it keeps trying to break free, but perhaps the mood, quality, and even experience of Brazil is chained to a sadness and frustration.

### Burst of Interest

I'm reading about the life of Villa-Lobos. In the process, I'm thinking about running a tour to Brazil for the express personal purpose of learning more about Villa-Lobos. To play his music better, deeper, with more knowledge and feeling, by learning more about his music and life, is my motivation for organizing such a tour. Where this will lead, I do not yet know. Nevertheless, I burst into tears, crying with happiness over this birth (of motivation) and burst of interest!

Saturday, February 21, 2009

The government is in chaos; Obama and his administration don't know what they're doing; there is no leadership whatsoever; the stock market is plummeting. The main reason for this is that the government refuses to let failures fail. It has lots of (our) money to bail them out. What a total, utter, and disgusting mess!

Some day America and the government losers will get back on track. But with this administration running blindly around like cockroaches, it may take years. And it may take even more years to recover from all the damage they do.

Well, so be it. I can't do much about it. All I can do is follow my own life. I did just that: Thursday I sold all my stocks!

I am (Thank God) out. "Free" at last. Free to do controlled things that I like, even love.

What are they? What now? What next?

### The Debacle of Big: The Future is Local

Peggy Noonan wrote a great article in the Wall Street Journal. Basically, she says now people are truly frightened and it isn't just the stock market; rather it is systematic collapse. "How are you coping with collapse anxiety?" (Cory Doctorow) is the question. Are you starting a new business? "When the world turns crazy, the crazy turn pro."

Knowledge that the crisis this time is not only economic but political. We have to change both cultures, economic and political.

However, although dynamism has been leached out of our system for now, it has not disappeared from the human brain or heart. "Our political and economic regeneration will happen locally. It will take place in someone's kitchen or garage (like Gates, Jobs, Wozniak, etc.) The comeback will be from the ground up and it will start with innovation. No one trusts big anymore. In the future, everything will be local. That's where the magic will be. And no amount of pessimism will stop it once it starts."

Where am I in this new equation? Well, truth is, I have already done this. I live in my garage, and my kitchen. My total business model is already local. Thus I have nothing “new” to do but keep going on my solo, local, individual, innovative path.

Plus I have a little money saved up to get me through hard times. But beyond that, basically, for me, not that much has changed. On the one hand, as an entrepreneur, I am always unemployed until I get the next registration or job. That has always been my life. So what’s new? Not that much.

### End of Transition

Due to my “success” transition blues with its temporary loss of motivation and excitement, I’ve experienced a slight period of stock market distraction. Along with this distraction has come some needed learning losses, evidently, my necessary “college education” financial “payments.” But that post-transitional period has ended. It’s all over.

I’m in the post-modern “What now? What next?” stage or period. (Note the word “stage.” Does it have something to do with performance and performing?)

### Stock Market Distraction Interlude,

In fact, except for the time during the brief stock market distraction interlude (SMDI syndrome), the pessimistic, depressing, doom-and-gloom, down attitude that surrounds me in newspapers, and on radio and TV doesn’t really affect me that much. In fact, now that the SMDI syndrome period is over, I can watch the economic and political debacle as a media entertainment show, a movie. In fact, even as I say this, I realize I’m getting kind of bored with the whole movie.

I’ve got a good life going. Time to return, get back into it. Time to move on.

My transition concluded with my stock market distraction.

Return to the local.

That's why I so loved Ed Rand's reading and talk. It foretold my real interest and future in the fields of writing, music, performing, arts, and even exercise.

So, I'm now in "What's next, new, and now?"

Onwards and sideways!

Sunday, February 22, 2009

### Body Waking Up

Training with Rick: My first session was Friday. Today is Sunday. My body aches the good ache in many new places, just as Rick said it would. On one level, it feels like my body, mostly my upper body, is waking up, rising, arising, getting ready to walk, run, and play again.

This is good, hopeful, and positive.

Monday, February 23, 2009

### Up in the Morning

Mornings often start of YoReD when they could just as well be KhaYal. What a puzzle.

Is this worth mentioning? Probably not. But I wanted something to write about, and dump my deepest sense of personhood across the keyboard.

If there is a spooky Ayin Lamed in giant AL form, why not just begin every morning by filling myself with His presence? Now there's a big up!

This would answer my problems.

Remember and practice it.

Reading God-centered Old Testament Hebrew: a good reminder and start. Or even New Testament Greek.

Fill myself with His presence, then push these powers through the day: If such a

new morning habit is the hidden purpose and gift of leading my tour of Israel, that's pretty tov (good).

### Dual Motivation Sources: Dual Citizenship

Perhaps I had dual motivation sources: Love of music, and love of recognition. The former is easy to understand; the latter starts with mother, and, through desire to win and please the audience, ultimately concerns her. (And this could be any kind of audience, concert goers, travelers, folk dancers, family, other.)

This might explain why success was such a disappointment to me. A double bind: Win success, lose the love; stay a failure, keep the love.

What are the emotional results of life (living the Gemini life) in a double bind? Indecision, anger, "double" focus – that is, lack of focus, frustration, squashed enthusiasm, suppression of excitement.

My love of Music related to love of God and puts me on the higher path to Glory.

My need for audience (and mother's) admiration, respect, and "love," constantly annoys, worries, angers, and frustrates me; it throws me off focus, concentrates my mind on a lower things, a descending "desire to please others" path. Basically, I hate it. Yet, partly I am its prisoner.

Yet I have leadership qualities and an innate talent for dealing with people.

I am stuck with dual citizenship.

Stop whining about it. Stop complaining.

### Using Transience as a Motivator

I want and need motivation. The transience of life can be either depressing, or act as a motivator.

Should I use the fear of time passing as a motivator, use it as a realistic and

motivating fear? I could choose to live in constant fear and motivating awe of this realistic phenomenon.

Am I onto something here? Or is this a mere mental game, a useless pursuit?

### Most Challenging and Fun?

Suppose I discover that doing things for other people is (now) the most challenging and fun thing I can do.

Ultimately, in the back of my mind, was I always doing things for others, with the long range purpose of affecting and pleasing the audience? Has this always been a secret purpose?

My next audience is client/travelers on my upcoming Israel Tour. How to affect and please them: Next most challenging/fun thing I can do.

### Practicing and Playing as One

After warming up, is there really such a difference between practicing and playing? Shouldn't I squeeze them both together, merge them as one? After all, so-called "practicing" is a slow and focused form of playing, while "playing" is a quicker, emotional, and lively form of practicing. Learn to live in both modes. There is no reason not to see them as unified.

### An R and D Year?

Re tours: Sale-wise I've called and contacted everyone, put out all the ads, done everything I can think of doing. Maybe, except for mop-up operations, my tour sales are finished for the year. And this with very low sales. Maybe, aided by the economic downturn, that's what this year is all about: low sales.

What to do about it? Maybe there is nothing I can do; maybe there is nothing can think of doing, or even want to do.

Sales-wise, I'm totally out of gas and deflated; I've exhausted all my avenues and am completely out of new or even old ideas.

Maybe this year is supposed to be a "resting" year, an R and D year: 2009: the research and development year.

What would I research? What would I grow? Good questions. Maybe these are the questions I should be asking.

First, accept the shocking fact that I've completed all my ads, calls, and tour sales. Except for minor mop-ups, I'm finished with tour sales for this year.

I am totally empty. . . but ready to move on.

What should I do with the year? That is the question.

Eventually, something, some money-making idea, will come along. But, in the meantime, use this spring, summer, and even the rest of the year as a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity to:

1. Practice guitar and violin and song
2. Exercise: Run, calliyoga, gym.
3. Perfect Hebrew
4. (Write?. . . or sell my books!)
5. Promote folk dance classes, workshops, etc.
6. Local concerts and programs
7. Nothing. Maybe this is my chance to "do nothing," go with the flow, float around day to day, do the things I like, and see what happens.

### Unfulfilled Dream

One of my unfulfilled dreams has always been to become a hermit, a monk, a recluse, practicing my instrument, a la Glenn Gould, far from the world, alone and glorious in my mountain cabin. I also had an Albert Einstein vision of myself hunched over a desk, sitting alone in the attic, with one desk lamp focused on my physics books, as I study the secrets of the universe.



Yarmulka: Yareh Malka-the fear of the throne. Meaning that a person wears a head cover to remind him of the fear he should have towards G-d. From there the word evolved into Yarmulka in Yiddish, but most Jews today say kipa. Kipa, in Hebrew means a dome, and since the kipa (yarmulka) looks like a dome, it adopted the name kipa.

Yes!

Wow, I can't believe how great I'm playing flamenco. It's frightening and awesome. (But what is awesome but frightening.)

Worship God with awe(some) and wonder.

Is this part of my new worship form? Yes!

Trembling like the burning bush, I've lost control on the up side. Or is it victory celebration mode? Yes! Roaring and on fire. So intense. . . too intense.

"This too shall pass." Relieving to know.

Sunday, March 8, 2009

Arrogant Experiment

I am on the wrong side of my body, and have been so for over a year. The slide began when I started writing my folk dancing book last January, 2008. From there, it slowly moved downward until I finished my book, performed my folk dance workshop at Raleigh, and gave my Tenafly Senior Center concert a few weeks later, May 30<sup>th</sup> or so. Then the whole thing accelerated; my body started falling apart, sliding downhill in several ways and places: sciatica developed in the right leg, soon followed by right shoulder pain (or was it left?, I don't really remember. But then it definitely switched to right shoulder.) Then came left knee. (When did that start? I don't quite remember.) In summary, since my October Greek tour. I've been afflicted with mainly left knee and right shoulder problems, with some right hip thrown in.

All this brought me first to physical therapy (basically a waste), and finally to training with Rick (the beginning of my upward rebirth journey.)

The metamorphosis and change of my body. How and why did I let it slide in the first place?

For some reason, I lost faith in my body, and even (partially) in the Sarno method, which had always worked so well to protect and help in the past.

Why did I lose faith? Was it part of the experiment I conducted with my body when I tried to slow down, and eventually give up all my yogic exercises for a year just to “see what would happen,” to test myself, to see if I could survive? Maybe.

Was all this an experiment in hubris? Was I testing God and my luck? Possibly. What a stupid, dumb, nauseating, arrogant experiment! Imagine, me trying to test the Lord. What a nerve! It is so ridiculous as to be laughable. But I believe, that is what I was doing. Such arrogance, hubris, and stupidity! I can’t believe I would do such an idiotic thing. But I did.

Rather than accepting the grace of God and glory of His powers working through me, I tried to raise up my ego. Using intellectual powers buttressed by some kind of strange emotional need, I fought Him by inflicting ego-created fog of doubt upon myself. This gray cloud of doubt slowly grew thicker, turned black, and covered up the light.

Indeed, it also started with my competition with L. Which send me into a dark swirl of folk dance, leadership, and directional doubt. Perhaps I was even working out childhood competition problem with my sister. In any case, for the whole year, I fell into a dark, directionless, questioning funk.

The crashing of left knee, right shoulder, right hip, less visible and other hidden parts are the result of this black, foggy period. I’m just beginning to pull out of it.

The divine connection crumbled: My miracle schedule fell apart, especially its miracle aspect.

Time to return to miracles again.

### Destroying Old Worlds

Pain leads to focus.

Pain also create discouragement which leads to depression. Could desire and need for depression create discouragement which, in turn, leads to pain?

Why would we need depression?

Depression creates destructive energy. It destroys old worlds, propels and enhances cycles of birth, growth, decay, death, and rebirth, clears the field, prepares the eye to see, and the mind to create a new world.

The cycle continues.

### The Miracle of Heat and Focus

Sudden heat, warmth, and focus in the right hand, especially in and near the base of the index finger. Can the miracle of such focused heat come (to me) only with the help of God?

Deliverance of the perfect and perfected Leyenda and Alhambra. Perhaps only an acceptance, remembrance, and focus on divine power can help me through this forty-year (Mosaic) transformation.

After all, I am going to Israel!

Divine guidance and help in my guitar playing.

Maybe in my Septuagint years, I've gone just about as far as my frail human body and ego can go. I've drained my separate, measurable, limited, down-to-earth human capacities. (I've tried every guitar arpeggio and scale technique I can think of.) "Been there, done that." At this point, it may be time for divine help, guidance, power, and light.

Maybe that's what my Israel tour is all about.

Guitar: Divine help, guidance, miraculous power of miracles.

Lord, I'd love to return as a guitarist.  
Can I ask for, pray for, the grace of such a blessing?  
Could I? Should I? Dare I?  
Am I asking about worthiness here? Probably.

Friday, March 13, 2009

Israel Pre-Tour Limbo:

Gathering Energy Mode

All controls and disciplines have fallen away; I descend into a chaotic limbo of pre-Israel tour existence. With guts carved out, and hopes, goals, and plans flattened and gobbled up by a vast soulless vacuum, a smothering cloud of nothingness seizes my emotional core, and even my rational mind quietly dribbles and floats away.

Nothing. Nothingness. Empty spaces, flattened towers, shiftless sands.

This is obviously the pre-tour limbo life. I've been through it countless times before. It never seems to end. Once again I ask: Is there anything I can, or should, do about it?

All is still, waiting, suspended in deadly animation. "Suspended in deadly animation." I like that. A tiger in training, getting ready to spring, gathering energy, focusing its forces, waiting to function, perform, and fly in the upcoming grand event.

Why is this feeling always so uncomfortable? Partly because I don't recognize what it is. I do now. Will that focus make it "better?"

Or perhaps that is simply its nature. It is supposed to be uncomfortable. But I can't accept discomfort as a mode of existence. Understanding should loosen, focus, and sanctify it. Well, now I understand it. . . .

It's an energy-gathering state of mind, a form of pre-performance anxiety lite. It is unfocused.

Does it create anxiety because it is vague and unfocused? Maybe. If that is the case, the best way to handle pre-tour anxiety and the limbo state is: focus my mind on

something.

And it really doesn't matter what it is!

### Leaving

I broke apart, started crying. I just hate it, hate it, hate it! I hate leaving home, leaving wife, family, and loved ones, leaving my desk, books, guitar, violin, running, gym training, and folk dance teaching—leaving the life style I love to voyage into emptiness and nothingness.

I hate it, hate it, hate it! And yet I do it.

I fear I may never see these things I love again. I'm throwing myself to the winds of destiny, losing all controls. Where will this voyage lead? I put myself in higher hands. I release self, ego, possessions, all my loves to Higher Forces.

Can I relax, fall easily into such Hands? Certainly, this would show faith in fate.

Do I really have a choice? No. My tour to Israel—leaving the house in such intense fashion—only highlights this Truth.

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

### Sign of the Knee

#### Gateway to the Next Level

Chai day. (Haide)

Rick and Dr. Gose have both confirmed that there is nothing structurally, physically, or organically “wrong” with my left knee. Right shoulder, too. In Sarnioian fashion, I have always “known” this to be true. I've sensed that left knee (and even right shoulder) are physical metaphors for some kind of resistance.

Resistance to what?

Truth is that, deep in my heart, I have always “known” the answer. It is resistance to joy! I also know it takes time to work out this problem; it may take weeks, months, even years to incorporate it into my body, thought processes, mind, spirit, and being.

Can I begin working it out here in Israel? I asked this question as I hobbled along the streets of Tel Aviv on my way to Rehov Dizengoff.

I even knew the answer to the question: Yes.

Where to go from here?

Pass beyond mere knowledge; float and fly into the waiting arms of HaShem.

Easier said than done. Nevertheless, it is the only place to go. Perhaps I can start by being thankful for receiving a sign: the Sign of the Knee. It is my Pain Gateway into some kind of transformation, understanding, even wisdom.

Sign of the Knee: Gateway to the next level.

### New Vision

It is fitting that Israel, the country of God and home of my ancient kabbalah vision serves as birthplace of a new, wider, mature, and fuller one.

God has given me leadership talent. He has given me the ability to organize and lead tours, folk dancing, give performances, and make a living as an entrepreneur in these enterprises. No question, He has not given me the ability to make money in the stock market. The stock market always gave me the vague, devil's hope that I would make money, earn an easy living, and achieve a worry-free life. But really, what kind of freedom would it have given me? The freedom to avoid fulfilling my talents!

I should thank my worry about money. And I will. God gave me that worry as an old motivational form. Finally, "success" destroyed the old form. Time for a new one.

Perhaps the new one will be based on a firmer and deeper understanding of what God wants from me.

I have always seen myself as an artist who happens, by chance, to fall into leadership positions. An "accidental leader."

Re-evaluating this leadership talent is a good way to begin the search for a new vision.

Am I a secret descendant of Moses? Is mine a Mosaic vision? I often think about him when leading a tour. Is my role similar to his?

Ask my knee.

Friday, March 20, 2009

Love of the Dance!

First night in Jerusalem.

A Balkan dance evening with Jehuda and Dunav. Ah, how I loved it! What a night!

I loved the Balkan music, the wild dancing, the camaraderie, and especially the wonder and importance of my teaching! Could this importance be my main discovery in Israel, the primary personal meaning and purpose of this tour?

I love the creating and giving, as I teach my dances! What a total thrill! I love the applause, recognition, and the streams of love pouring from others. What a public glory!

So much of me hates to admit this. Could reverse reaction to this joy be what caused my cold? A mild sore throat, then sniffles started after the dancing! Was the ensuing river of snot really a river of tears? Breakthrough after a lifetime repression of joy?

Sunday, March 22, 2009

Went Israeli dancing last night. Not bad. Actually, better than I thought.

I am loving this tour. The dancing is 90% of the reason.

Woke up this morning: No pain in right shoulder or left knee! Feeling good, normal. What happened?

I'd like to think that knee stretches before bed helped. As for shoulder, I don't know. No computer, violin, or push-ups during tour? Other? None of the above?

I'm hoping both "cures" come from some "conclusion" I have come to in my

mind.

### Details and Awareness

The day I dreaded is coming. Petra, Eilat flight, flights to Istanbul and New York, no sleep for forty-eight hours.

Actually, believe it or not, now that it's here, I'm looking forward to it.

Looking forward to the challenge! I wonder what will go wrong, or right. I'll handle it.

"Expect the worse, hope for the best." I've gone a step better: I expect nothing! As I expect nothing I work hard on upcoming details and awareness.

I've turned dream fear, and trembling into looking forward to the challenge! What alchemy!

Not bad for one tour.

As a start, I must say that dealing with the Israhotel dinner billing problem was fun. It stimulated and woke up my brain.

### Dealing with problems is fun

Interesting how the word "motivation" is dribbling away, and being replaced by the post-Israel: "Looking forward to the challenge."

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

### On Hebrew, Arabic

Israel is the ideal country to learn both Hebrew and Arabic.

Years ago, when I first began these languages, they seemed strange, different, "foreign," hard.

Now they no longer feel that strange. What was once hard now appears doable and "easy." I just have to put time into them.

I like the challenge of doing something difficult.



My next challenge is doing things with ease.

Note the high level coughing and snot-creation that came with these sudden thoughts of "ease." Why did I get sick in Jerusalem in the first place? I know the sneezing and coughing from my cold was a form of cleansing. Could this new "ease" idea be part of the cause for its creation? To help cleanse and free my system of old thought patters, to free it from my former path?

Am I now moving into the world of "ease?" Probably.

### New Start Program

Very down. Post tour. Getting disgusted about money, too. I want to move beyond Israel, total focus on tours, the misery, sadness, and anger at low registration for Balkan Journey and Turkey.

I want to return to my old, good life, the one I had before the Israel tour.

What did that consist of? Well, aside from its annoyances (right shoulder and left knee), and no thoughts or worries about money, I was getting back and totally into performance and exercise! And loving it!

So obviously, it is time to get back to performance and exercise!

Also, thanks to my Israel tour, I've added love of folk dance, and study of Hebrew and Arabic. (I hope this lasts. It's so much fun to use and push my brain again.)

### New Body/Mind Building Goal and Purpose

If the body and mind are not ready for it, too much joy (actually, ecstasy) can make you sick.

Build up my physical body and mental strength in order to handle upcoming dance (and other) joy.

Saturday, April 4, 2009

### Entrepreneurship

Looking beyond Israel.

Maybe I should redefine myself as an entrepreneur. Make entrepreneurship my central core and theme. All my other activities are branches stemming from that philosophic trunk.

I believe in freedom, individual initiative, and creativity. Entrepreneurship is its foundation.

If I saw myself first as an entrepreneur, an artistic entrepreneur who also just happened to be an artist, who teaches folk dancing, plays guitar, writes books, does bookings, runs tours, etc., how would that change affect my attitude towards life? How would it affect my motivations?

I am looking for a philosophy, a belief, a word or term that describes the core volition attitude that corresponds to the inner core of me. Entrepreneurship may well be that post-Israel word.

### Ease

I played passages of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto and the complete Saint-Saens' Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso on the violin last night. Both felt strangely easy. Especially the fast passages, the speedy aspects. Practicing full throttle open on guitar Alhambra, Leyenda, and scales is also bearing fruit.

One of my post-Israel gifts is ease. It feels "easy," certainly easier, to run a tour, play the guitar or violin, run a folk dance class, other.

The new ease feels strange, different, vaguely uncomfortable. Somehow also, it feels like I don't deserve it. Shouldn't I be working hard as I used to?

### Folk Dance and L

Squats and macho really go together. If I am losing my ability to squat, I am losing my macho. Leading Reka with Michael by my side, doing the squats together, is

my great folk dance symbol of macho. By admitting to him, and mostly to myself, that, due to LK., I can't do the squats, I am admitting to myself (and him) that I am not only fallible, but less macho to boot. What a blow to my ego! But it is not a blow to my folk dance career since only three or four of us ever do Reka. In truth, probably nobody cares about this. . . but me, my macho ego and me. But knowing this does not diminish the power of the LK annoyance, injury, and defect.

But ultimately, that is my big folk dance fear. It is why the difficulty in LK. terrifies me. A loss of masculinity, ego, macho. A big personal blow. But not a real threat to my career.

How absolutely ridiculous is the psychological power my macho ego has over me. Indeed, with all the good things I have going for me, it is "funny," humorous, laughable to see how this little, puny, infant, macho ego can bring me down.

I have a good sense of humor; I revel in the absurd. I constantly use the mental skills running my tours.

Now apply it to my present situation: Presently, the Lord is playing an LK joke on me. He's gone for the funny. It's good enough for Him, so it will be good enough for me.

Since the only thing I have control over is my attitude, accept the Lord's joke. Go for the funny. See the absurd humor in my situation.

### Slight and Subtle as Substantial

Guitar: I wonder if technical (and technological) improvements in guitar can be fostered "at my age." Of course, even as I ask this question, I know the answer. It is: Yes, and Of Course!

But what are they?

Well, in my speedy one position scale, a slightly raised pulse and blood increase coupled with a slight and subtle greater flow and relaxation. In my arpeggio, slightly

the same.

“Slight and subtle” are the key word.

But “slight and subtle” may be quite substantial.

Tuesday, April 14, 2009

The strange thing is part of me, a good part of me, wanted this year to be a slow tour year. And, strangely, it is! My wishes came true; the year I imagined and “planned” came into existence.

Although Israel had good registration, actually the best ever for Israel, it really belonged to 2008. The upcoming 99% cancellation possibility for this summer’s Balkan Journey tour is actually almost welcome to me. It will give me the first free summer in years, and final and fulfilling chance to breathe, develop new roads and trends, and strengthen myself to spring-jump not only in Turkey in October, but the entire 2010 season. I’ve got three great tours in 2010: Israel in March, Bulgaria with Koprivshitsa in August, and the “complete” Greece in October. Plus the usual “side” tours to Norway, Hungary, and Poland.

By cancelling the losing Balkan Journey tour, I will free my mind for the summer and focus on Turkey this October, and the entire 2010 season.

Thus, in a sense, my wishes came true: A slow 2009, preparing my muscles for a spring forward and upwards for Turkey this fall, and entire 2010 season.

Guitar: I’m hovering above the fatty triangle space just above the connection between thumb and index finger; floating, observing, witnessing, even cheering from the desert triangle just above my right hand.

The same strength in the finger tip found in yesterday’s strong violin bow!

Guitar finger tip equals (and is counterpart to) violin bow.

Soul of strength in finger tips. Extension is the bow.

Center and source are the Hovering.

I've moved a vague inch forward.

Friday, April 17, 2009

Left Knee and Fear of Death

or What a Kick in the Knee Death is!

My right shoulder improved in Israel. Since my return, it has gotten even better. Is my weight training with Rick helping? Was it the rest I gave it in Israel? Something else? Is it simply a placebo effect?

I want to believe my weight training is slowly growing my muscles and thus having its improvement effect. I'm sure it is slowly growing my muscles. But is that really why my shoulder feels better? Or is it a placebo, created partially by Rick's saying it will get better combined with my "belief" that it might? Sarnoian placebo, or "real?"

And, if this is happening with my shoulder, why is it not improving my left knee? Why does my left knee stay the same? Note: My left knee problem started after I "cured" my sciatica. Could it be a Sarnoian transfer, a case of pain moving from one region to another? The brain never gives up.

Perhaps nothing is really "wrong" with my knee, just as nothing was really "wrong" when I had sciatica. Time for another Sarnoian conference with myself.

It's also possible that I have "worked through" much, most, (all?) of the psychological trauma involved with returning to the violin. Teenage violin lessons and Riverdalian growing up years have been revisited and resolved. This, coupled with the "placebo" of weight training is slowly bringing my right shoulder back to painless normal function.

This is not yet so with my knee.

Let's look again at its sciatica predecessor. It started right after I finished the Raleigh workshop and Tenafly concert. Psychologically, I traced it to fears of folk dance incapacity, really a disguised fear of old age, helplessness, physical frailty, and

ultimately, death itself.

It's coming, no question about it. What's coming? Death. Eventually, it will hit. Ten, twenty, thirty years, whatever and whenever. There is no stopping it. There is only facing it. Which I refuse to consciously do. So I do it unconsciously. And the terror of ending all I love, of disappearing from this earth, of my ego, wife, friends, loves, all being swallowed up by the uncompromising, blind, dispassionate, and unfeeling earth reflected itself in and through sciatica, which, when "cured," moved, in its painful rolling ball, into my left knee.

Death. Everything I know and love ending. It is so sad. I cry and cry.

Fear of death. That's how I now explain it. Am I right?

Perhaps raising the question itself is my next form of denial.

Long ago, in my forties, I dealt with the fear of death by reading about, discovery, and eventually believing in reincarnation. Belief in the beauty of its possibility helped relieve my fears of death.

I'm at the same place now. The post-seventy fear of death, with its accompanying old age and frailty, is rising to my conscious surface, roaring and ready to spring, facing me again. I had dealt with it by creating the shield of sciatica. When, after several months, that pain no longer held, failing to continually convince me, I kicked it into my knee.

I ask the same question again: What good is all the money I've earned, what good are my musical skills, the books I've written, the fun people derive from my dance classes, tours, and events? What good is anything if eventually, Old Man Death takes everything I love away?

Vanity of vanities. Read Job again.

What a kick in the knee death is!

Is post-seventy the Last Hurrah stage? Probably.

But, of course, living in the present is the ultimate art form. Every day is the last hurrah.

Tell that to my knee!

Exercises are not going to help my knee.

But dealing with death might.

My seventy-second birthday comes in May.

Now, one month before, at age seventy-two, the "My God, I'm seventy!" feeling suddenly hit.

It is really true? Can such a thing happen to me? It sounds so old, over-the-hill, finished, done, cooked, ended.

Well, I'm facing it. No wonder I fear, run away, deny, and try to hide it under my knee cap.

But frogs under the green sod eventually jump out.

You can't keep a good amphibian down.

Death, wearing its green suit with a smile, keeps jumping.

Saturday, April 18, 2009

### "Evolving"

Could I be "evolving" into a travel agent? Selling tours (for commission) from other companies? Orbis, Kutrubes, others?

Is that the next travel direction I shall go?

What does "evolving into a travel agent" mean? Why do I use such a positive word: "evolving?"

On one level, evolving means expanding my reach. Without little effort, I could jump to many more countries. I could even sell them countries I have never been to, like China, countries in the Far East, South America, and more. Without leading the tours myself, I could add places like Albania, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia in the Caucasus, etc . If the registration got big enough, I might even decide to join or lead it myself. Meanwhile though, by evolving in such a travel agent manner, I'd be expanding my reach.

That's what "evolving" means to me.

How would the system work?

No doubt, I'd have to collect all the monies myself, then send the total balance, minus commissions, to the tour companies I work with.

I am bordering on a "new" business, or rather, an expansion of the old one. I had this idea long ago: JGI running two kinds of tours, folk tours and "regular" tours. Perhaps now the time has come, the timing is right. I'm simply ready to do it.

Evolution rings a bell. Expansion, indeed.

Sunday, April 19, 2009

### Intensity Model

I need a revolution in attitude, and I'm at the edge of creating one. It's not what I do, but how do it. Performing my actions haphazardly, with low to no focus, rote and routinely, is one way. Performing them with total focus, creativity, and intensity is another. Intensity is the way to go. Intensity: That's the change.

Of course, I've "known" about intensity for years. But knowing and doing, applying the principles of intensity, are two different matters.

I rediscovered this in the gym Friday when Rick pushed me to finish my eight pull-up exercises. I thought I'd never make it. I said to myself, "I'm at the edge of dying. I can't stand this, I'm giving up." But he pushed for the final two. . . and I pushed. Suddenly and somehow, I reached into a deep, dark, and unknown place in myself, found an heretofore unknown strength, sucked its strange juice, and finished the pull ups! I made it!

I shall remember this moment of intensity, this reaching deep into myself. It is the intensity model I shall work with in the future. I'll apply it, not only to weight training, but other activities as well.

Yesterday I tried it in running, Hebrew, and violin. It worked! I ran an hour, broke through left knee pain, did speed training, and ran beautifully. I did a focused



twenty-minutes of Arabic writing practice, forty-five minutes of Hebrew, took a small break, then added another half hour of Hebrew. Later I practiced twenty minutes of speed violin practice on passages of Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso. It worked. All good.

So ends a New Leaf.