

Celestial Endorphins

Friday, December 1, 2000

Celestial Endorphins Revisited

Last night's dancing went great. Good leading, lots of good vibrations. The ice has cracked.

Although my left and right instep didn't hurt my right heel spur hurt mucho. I'm worried about tonight's class. That's a hard floor at the JCC. How to handle the pain?

My heel heel spur is an annoyance. So are my right and left instep pains. In general, my feet are annoyances.

Let's "focus" on two aspects of the heel spur.

1. The pain itself. It exists on the annoyance level.
2. The fear of the pain. Present and fear of future pain are both at work on my feet. It is my job to create a new mental attitude by translating these pains into annoyances.

Run the Augusta, Georgia Weekend as an exercise: Practice my attitude towards pain.

It is physical pain. But since physical pain is translated through the brain, it is also mental pain.

All pain is mental, and ultimately, spiritual. I must remember this.

What could the spiritual cause of heel spur pain be?

What also are the cures, the best attitudes in handling them?

First is translating pain into annoyance. Second is seeing pain as some kind of message from God, as a kind of spiritual training program. I have to have the pain in order to transcend it. This is my personal kabbalistic view.

When I focus on the dance and my mind is on the cosmic down-to-earth

vibrations and celestial endorphins, my feet do not hurt. They “only” hurt when the celestial endorphins are no longer working.

Aha, celestial endorphins can cure (temporarily, at least) the pain. They translate it first into “annoyance”. Then they destroy it all together.

Can the celestial endorphins do a long-term job?

Why not?

But my mind has to stay on them.

The Jim Gold Pain Release program is: cure myself through spiritual means: let the celestial endorphins send messages from my mind into my feet.

Raise calliyoga from mere physical movement to a spiritual practice. Bring the celestial endorphins down from heaven and fill my body with them!

This is the essence of my yoga, calliyoga, and other practices.

Now do it! Go out and practice.

It works. I just have to remember it in the present.

Celestial endorphins are the artist’s way. Artistic yoga.

Saturday, December 1, 2000

Stay in the Wahoo!

Why fight it?

So far this Weekend has been a wahoo experience. I can even knock out the “so far.” Why futurize?

Stay in the Wahoo! Now there’s a good phrase to go along with celestial endorphins.

Even my heel and feet feel better. Well. . . at least functional. But why presentize? Why cast any shadow of doubt? This trip to Georgia is about living Pain

Free. That means living in the celestial endorphins, staying in the Wahoo!

Qualifiers like “so far,” “at least,” “functional,” or “we’ll see,” are really subtle forms of doubt.

Truth is, yesterday was my the first day in the new neighborhood, pain-free life. Today is the second. It takes practice. Endorphin practice. Staying in the Wahoo! practice.

Today is still day number two.

Let’s look at my headache with these views in mind.

It is probably caused by pre-bed shoulder and leg-over-head exercises. What to do? Work on loosening forward bends and especially on neck area.

There is also the possible old neighborhood return if anger and fear with the question: “Will I make it?” during the weekend.

What should I do? This is old neighborhood stuff. It “no longer applies” to me. It was based on living without celestial endorphins or staying in the Wahoo! (SITW). It needs to glide into my New Practice.

This practice always (All Ways) starts now.

Sunday, December 3, 2000

Playing and singing my old songs is like meeting old friends.

My own songs are so good. But I used to refuse to see my talents and the fruits of my talents, namely, my song friends.

That attitude is coming to an end.

Resurrect the old repertoire. Meet and embrace these old friends. They are part of the New Neighborhood of celestial endorphin ruling the Land of Wahoo.

Monday, December 4, 2000

I just got a letter from St. Paul’s Church saying I must have tax exempt status or I cannot run Monday night classes there. This is absolutely terrible. Some idiot city

official has found some ruling in the local tax laws. But basically, this means that the government is trying to put me out of business. If such a ruling goes through, it means I will not be able to rent space anywhere. It will obviously apply to all religious organizations, churches and synagogues.

What can I do?

First, I thought about calling the JCC in Paramus and the church in Tenafly to find a new Monday night space.

Or I could look into trying to get the folk dance part of my business put in a tax exempt status, a Not For Profit folk dance organization.

I'll call Bob Baumol (maybe even Bob Fuchs).

See if I can turn this miserable fucking government idiot rulings into something useful and "positive." I hate the government and this is just further proof of the narrow idiots who work in it.

I am so fucking mad, so fucking furious at this idiocy! It's going to be a long fight, a one-two month struggle for folk dance business survival. Plus, this issue is bigger than I am. It could and will put all small organizations that rent religious spaces out of business. If this is a law, it threatens everyone. Absolutely disgusting! Talk about anger and righteous indignation!

Tuesday, December 5, 2000

A Closet Choreographer Steps Out

Looking at Myself as a Master

Such adulation in Georgia. And, of course, I did a great job. I was "getting my due." It was my right. I was entitled to such respect, admiration, adulation. Wow!

"My right," and "getting my due," are compliments on a new level.

In Georgia I was treated like a master. I was the teacher's teacher. Bob learned it

“all” from me. He had started at just about zero, learning how to folk dance at my “feet.” Then he had slowly become my right hand man, my best helper. He taught with me on folk dance weekends; he lectured; he grew and blossomed in the newly developing north Jersey folk dance world, much of which I started.

I am a master of this folk dance thing. If not me, who else? I’ve gone on all the trips. I was there, in Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, Romania, and more. I choreograph and lead with confidence because I know.

Nevertheless, I am not used to looking at myself as a master. It certainly takes confidence to do it. Well, I have the confidence, and I am doing it.

The voice of this new On My Own journal is certainly one of confidence, security, stability, and mucho wahoos.

Bob also reminded me of many things I once said but I have since “forgotten.” Well, if not forgotten, at least they have sunk to the bottom of the pot. Seeing the group he has created, his attitude towards it, the fine dancers he has taught, was actually an affirmation of all the things I’ve done. Imagine that! My pupil going out on his own and expanding the world. I started it, he expanded it. On the weekend, it felt like we both finished it.

One of the things I realize, and that Bob once again reminded me of was: international folk dancing is a new art form. It is an American phenomenon, developed in America, well, first Germany. Look at the word “folk”. But it needed America to expand. All other countries only dance their own ethnic dancing. We, because we are the melting pot where so many cultures mix and blend, have created a venue where all these dances can meet and blend together, and, in the process, creating a new international folk dance form. In this form, we first remove the dances from their native culture, take out the social, party, food, drinking, family, live music, and celebration for a special-event (wedding, etc.) atmosphere, and keep only the dance itself.

The original folk dance is thus, somewhat “naked” when it arrives in America. We take this unclothed, “naked” dance, and place it in a rented room, play records,

tapes, or CD's of it, and teach the steps to Americans who are not even part of these cultures. Thus is it totally new.

Why is this "new form" idea so important for me to know? Because it gives me "permission" to choreograph dances. Without it, I say to myself, how can I, a "mere" American, a foreigner, dare present a dance from "their" country and culture? I am not a native speaker; I did not grow up in the country. How can I say, this is a dance from that country? And this, even though, after many years of travel and study, I know their dance styles very well.

The answer to this creative, artistic, and choreographic question is: in America, we are creating a new international folk dance form. Thus, I am "free" to create anything I like. Naturally, I try to learn as much as I can about these cultures, how they move, dance, think, eat, sleep, etc. But, no matter how much I know, I will never be "them." I will only be me, an American who loves their dances. But, as an artist, creator, and lover, I can create "new" dances, and place them in the new American international folk dance form.

Thus I no longer have to be a closet choreographer. I can come out in the open. When teaching a dance, my own creation, I can even announce it to the group! Wow, that is a tremendous step towards freedom. Imagine, admitting publically that I choreographed it! For this realization alone, I have mucho to thank Bob and Chelley for their invitation to Georgia.

Seeing Myself; How Others See Me

There is often a big different between the way I see myself and the way "the world" sees me.

I see myself as just a guy from the Bronx. However, most of the public, the "outside world," as witnessed by the Augusta, Georgia folk dance group, see me as a master folk dance teacher, guitarist, singer, organizer, sophisticate, and performer; I'm a master in my field.

A moment ago, as I read the National Folk Dance journal, I realized that, even though most of their members have never met me, they may, nevertheless, see me as a master tour leader and organizer. Well, why not? I've put in years of advertising.

Although I believe the above is true, nevertheless, I am just not used to thinking of myself in this way.

How slow. . . and amazing. . . is a metamorphosis.

Wednesday, December 6, 2000

Study and the Sailing State

Until now, most of my reading and study have been done in order to escape from this world.

It has also had a purpose: educating myself, improving myself, elevating myself.

However, now that I have educated and improved myself enough to receive celestial endorphins, and elevated myself enough to enter the land of wahoo—the question now being only how to sustain all this—where do reading and study fit in?

Rather than becoming a means to reach upwards and outwards, how can my reading and study experience become part of the wahoo?

How can it become a good-in-itself, that sustains itself because of itself, and has no purpose besides maintaining and staying in touch with the energy-charged bliss of the sailing state?

Take languages: the main reason I started studying them was the purpose of surviving, functioning better, and being more competent and comfortable on my tours. When I finally became more comfortable, language study was a way of putting me in tour country mode, preparing for the journey, and even psyching me up in order to sell it. (Notice I did not say “sail” it.)

This was the old way. It is no longer applicable. I am in a transitional study state. I am looking for another purpose to study. Actually, I am looking for a purpose without a purpose, a purposeless study state that carries within it its own bliss, celestial

endorphins, and wahoos.

Body Decay As Inspiration
or Why Push-Ups?

In the Runner's World article "Late Blooming" by Mark Bloom, a runner who started upper body exercising after fifty, he writes about the fact that men's bodies start decaying rapidly after fifty. I "liked" this fact. Why? It somehow pushed me, inspired me, to do more push-ups. My fifties were important. I do them with satisfaction.

That is because I am also looking for another reason to exercise, to do yoga, running, and calliyoga.

One thing I might do is separate my tours from my study. I might "go back" to my original idea of spending a year on each country. Thus, this year I might focus only on Hungarian in spite of the fact I'm going to Tunisia, Bulgaria, and Morocco. This way I could become more comfortable in the language, and perhaps, actually enjoy it as a good-it-itself, independent from the tours and activities around it.

Friday, December 8, 2000

Is the deep-within-me voice the "new" concept of God? If yes, then I can read the bible again, and other God-filled works. Hashem becomes more "personal."

I realize that I am searching for a "new" concept of God because I want to return to study – in the Jewish style: study of God. I am looking for a new reason, an "excuse," to study once again. I can't go back to former study patterns, the antique "old neighborhood" ways. And yet, I want to study. I love (loved) the process, especially when it was filled with the higher, elevating forms.

No question there is a new voice cooking within me, the sailing voice, the mad shoe, celestial endorphin, wahoo, running-wild-on-the-lawn, full-of-richness, pain-free voice. It thrives on maintaining the higher vibrations of joy and fulfillment.

I ask again: Is this the "new" voice of God growing within me? Even as I ask, I

know it is. As the reading said: God keeps growing me. His last form was one of self-improvement through study. Now it is inner joy and conviction, confidence and sailing. I need no books to explain, tell me, or show me the way to this inner kingdom. And yet, I am starting to miss books, starting to miss the "process of God" study. Of course, the old way is dry, scattered with broken sticks, dull, unfulfilling (because it has already served its purpose, already been fulfilled), and cannot be done in the old way.

Perhaps I am at the border of entering the New Way. Just as I am crossing the border of a new relationship with women, am I also crossing the border of a new relationship with God. Perhaps the next God incarnation will be Woman! Or "Wo" plus "man" which would combine both man and woman.

In any case, this kind of intellectual word play points to the inner core I am approaching: a new, or rather, renewed way of looking at the Lord as I stand on a higher rung of Jacob's ladder; a new way of meeting and greeting Him on the next level.

Saturday, December 9, 2000

Slips Are Part Of The Game

I woke up this morning feeling quite down; I left folk dancing last night feeling quite down; I left therapy yesterday morning feeling quite down.

Why am I? I am no longer "used" to this feeling.

Does it have anything to do with the fact that so few came dancing last night? No. How about my decision to go run my tour to Egypt despite low registration due to the Middle East situation? No. That decision was a victory.

Truth is, nothing has changed, nothing but an idea, or rather, a realization. It is: my good feeling and good feelings have little, actually nothing, to do with how people around me feel, act or react to me; they have nothing to do with the audience, and whether few or many come folk dancing, cheer me in a concert, or whatever. No, my good feelings are independent of "everything." They are intrapsychic, and exist simply

in my head.

This realization, actually one of tremendous strength, independence, and vitality, made me feel alone. It brought back the original sadness of being “On My Own.” I know it is a slip back into the old neighborhood. Only this time I am surprised by it. I know the path of Jacob’s ladder is never straight. Rather, you move up a rung or two, then back one, then up two more, then back three, then up four, etc. The slow and temporary slip into sadness this morning is a perfect example of the zigzag path upwards.

Sure, it was a small folk dance class in Darien. So what? That has nothing to do with my feelings. . . unless I let it. No reason why I can’t have as wonderful, creative, dynamic a class with a few people as with many. It is only a question of my attitude, which, if I discount slips, is, these days, very positive.

How about my Egyptian tour? Sure, for a moment I felt overwhelmed by all the sales (sails) calls I’d have to make now that it was a go. But remember: I am a sails man and not a sales man. Celestial endorphins descend to dissolve the overwhelmed bug. Overwhelmed has no place in sails.

How about the On My Own lonely and sad feeling? A slip backwards into the old neighborhood. Live it, realize it, and go through it. Slips, although annoying, are part of the Jacob’s ladder climbing game.

This good feeling, the sails man feeling born during the NOMAD festival, is really “On My Own.” It is my own creation. Although I can feel compassion for others, it has nothing to do with others. I am all alone with it. For today, this makes me feel distant, isolated, and sad.

I know it is a return to the old neighborhood. Nevertheless, return I must, to revisit and reinterpret a few forgotten places.

Revisiting the Old Neighborhood

I have a few vestiges of sadness. Partly, I am sad because I miss my old sadness.

I'm taking a short visit to the old neighborhood.

Is this bad? Natural? Is the old neighborhood something I'll never forget even though I no longer live there? Will I revisit it periodically to remind myself of who I was, where I am, and who I will become? Is it like parents? Each time we go visit we see them differently.

On one level, this sadness feels like a slip into the old neighborhood. Perhaps it has a new meaning I am not yet aware of.

There is some fear with it along with a touch of excitement engendered by the fear.

I don't understand any of this yet.

Plus my back hurts this morning. . . and last night. A sure sign of something brewing. . . .

I wonder if this back pain, and even the subtle return to the old neighborhood, have something to do with our upcoming Christmas vacation visit to David, Jeannie, Zack, and Zane.

It is time to prepare, physically, and mostly mentally, for this upcoming event.

Going to Egypt seems easy compared to it.

In fact, I know my back pain and sadness is due to the Santa Fe visit. On one level, it's like going to prison for a week.

What can I do to make it more bearable? Could I even make it "pleasant?" Or is that too much to ask?

Obviously it is the Santa Fe living conditions, not my kids. I enjoy their company and love them dearly.

I don't know why I'm down. I know I can handle every upcoming situation.

Evidently, it is not the situations themselves.

It must be something else.

But what?

Will I ever be able to figure it out? Or will it simply pass, like a transient annoyance, and be forgotten?

My job today! That's why I was down. It's Sunday. It should be my day of rest. Although today's is an easy one, no job should be looked upon as "easy." They are all hard. That's the pain, glory, and fun in them.

Bring my microphone, guitar, and group songs, too. Who can say where this job will lead on both inward and outward aspects of the journey?

Monday, December 11, 2000

What A Strange Place To Be

Totally flat. All the steam has been knocked out of me. I got back from yesterday's booking at Annette Machac's birthday totally drained. True, it was a great party. I led "easily," beautifully. We had good dancing with many nice people having a great time. Plus excellent food.

I came home, took a hot bath, and, after that, flattened out for the night.

Hot baths do that to me. But also, I have no spark this morning. Well, who ever heard of a flattened person having spark?

I'm not complaining, just puzzled.

Hearing that "talking about myself is good for my state of development" also brought me down a bit. Here I am, for the first time in my life, talking, even boasting, by finally "telling the truth about myself," and I hear it is "merely" a state of development. I thought it was the final state of arrival I had always hoped to achieve. I had finally "arrived."

It is the "merely" word that brought me down. I realize I'm the one who added

that word. Yet, I just love talking about myself, admitting publically that I do things so well, have confidence, and can shine before others.

Again, I'll say, I've always known this privately. It is the going public with this private perception that is new for me. I'm so happy and proud of myself that I can now do it.

In retrospect, the "merely" part isn't so bad. It is mostly an annoyance.

I have nothing to study in the new place I am in. I am disappointed by this. I am not sad about it, only puzzled.

Perhaps I am in the flat place between wallops.

Flatness: Losing My Old Source

If I've lost my in-room source, and am now living outside, where and how will I revitalize myself? Studies used to be a source of revitalization. So were writing, guitar practice, and all my miracles schedule activities. They were all done "in private."

I'm losing that "in-private" source.

I'm gaining a "going public, gone public" source.

How this will work out? I do not yet know.

But, just as the Gutin Weekend in Georgia was an opening blast into my new public life, yesterday's flatness from my successful folk dance leading at Annette's birthday party was a first step towards a realization that "going public" is my new direction.

Self-improvement through study was a former source of motivation.

But I have "improved." I am presenting myself to the public as "acceptably" improved. Although I may play differently, talk, and teach dancing differently, there will no longer be "improvement" (in my old "getting better" sense of the word.)

My in-room artistic chamber now stands in the public square. Whatever new motivations I develop will, somehow, have to come from living in the public arena.

Tuesday, December 12, 2000

The Loss of Pain as my "Former" Creative Stimulant

Back to pains in my instep, mostly the left. Also my right heel spur, the joints in my knees, lower back, and shoulders.

What a mess. I thought I had licked it. The "never lick it" approach might be more realistic.

How about "Never lick it-always fight it."

I still think these pains are related to my mental state. My mind has truly fallen apart. I was very down yesterday. Why? Because everything is going so well!

It started when I came home yesterday from Annette Machac's birthday party folk dance teaching job. Great dancing, great job: big success. I was tired but elated. After such a job, I usually want to retreat into a corner for a rest and to lick my wounds. Yes, that is the expression I use: "Lick my wounds."

Then I realized: What wounds? I don't have any wounds. All I have is elations, and pats on the back for a good job. Not only do I have no pain to heal, but I don't even have to bring myself down from my elation because it wasn't an "I'm going through the roof" elation. It was more a good feeling for a job well done. Pleasant, nice, easy, comfortable. This is definitely not the language of pain.

Dave says I have creatively taken the pain of my early trauma and turned it into a creative stimulant. Thus I use pain, mostly mental but some physical, to drive me forward, to motivate me to walk the highway of life. Without pain as my driving force, I feel somewhat lost.

However, slowly, through the therapeutic process, I am coming to understand this early trauma. In doing so, I am losing my cover. I am slowly learning to live without pain. I am also trying to find a new source of motivation, one without pain. So far I haven't found it. I am living in a semi-vacuum.

I'm angry about losing my pain-filled stimulant. This driving force haunted me day and night. In its usual put-down form, it became my main stimulant. Bowing

down in second place “pushed me” to become better, to rise up the ladder, to grapple, scream, and grasp for the first place ring. I was always reaching. But whenever I grabbed the prize and won, I ended up feeling low. Why? By winning, I was losing my motivational pain-filled, second-place creative stimulant.

I have nothing to look forward to now. When I come home from a successful job, how will I soothe myself? Why will I soothe myself? I no longer have the “need.” I am soothed already. There are no “wounds to heal,” no need to retreat to a pain-filled corner.

I’ve lost my stimulant, my soothing mechanism, my old addiction. Yet these are lifetime habits. Glad as my intellectual self is to give them up, to lose them, my emotional self stills yearns for them. They are sorely missed.

My body is reacting to the sorely missed, especially the “sorely.” Indeed, it is sore. The strange mental anguish at losing my pain stimulant, my “sorely missed,” is reflected in bodily aches, namely, my foot pains.

What a brilliant psychological explanation. It is indeed hard to stand on new feet. I’m in the fight. I’m trying.

I feel somewhat like a fool to have said my feet have stopped hurting, to have believed that licking the problem was so easy. I was fooled by my hopes. But perhaps it is possible but is a timing question. All struggles take time and take shape in the mold of patience.

There may also be a physical aspect to my foot pain, but I have no idea what it is. I don’t even know where to begin looking. I simply do not think that way. In fact, even saying there is a physical aspect shows me I have had a momentary lapse of faith in my true beliefs which are: “all” physical pain originates in the mind which lives in the spirit. I hurt because my celestial endorphins are missing. I have temporarily lost the wahoo and have descending into shit. In fact, that is probably what I am standing in, and why my feet hurt. Shit has never cured bad feet although it may indeed fertilize

juicy new emotions and ideas about how to cure them.

Strange, I have never seen myself as a lover of pain. I have mostly accepted my “public” image of a fun loving, upbeat guy. But, although I hate to admit it, as I uncover myself, I can see that, although I hate to admit it, a deep part of me needs, wants, and “loves” the stimulation of pain. Using it is my creative addiction.

Rage at Losing My Pain Stimulant

I am angry! I’m thoroughly pissed at losing this wonderful, lifelong friend, my pain-filled, creativity stimulant that soothed and stimulated me, and kept me happily in my room. I’m stamping in fury! No wonder my heel and instep hurt. I want to kill the bastards who are taking away my pain, robbing me of this most important means and vital reason for survival. My lifelong drug is slipping away. Damn them for taking it!

That’s why I haven’t been able to stand success: it robs me of my best friend. It also breaks down the walls of my soothing, stimulating in-room retreat.

I wonder if my left instep pain is a form of fury. I’m afraid to even think such thoughts. Could I be right?

Thursday, December 14, 2000

Commonplace

I hate to even think about what I thought and Dave said: I am walking out of here with a new body and a new life.

But it’s true. The implications of this success are enormous. But they feel “commonplace.”

Does this mean, among other things, that the miracles in my miracle schedule are becoming “commonplace?” Isn’t this a contradiction? Isn’t the very nature of a miracle

not to be commonplace?

Perhaps the nature of my new “gone public” level is that what yesterday passed as a miracle is today experienced as commonplace.

Or, perhaps I am just beginning to accept living on a daily miraculous level.

I like the idea leading a new life filled with daily “commonplace miracles.”

Mine!

Alhambra – and all the other guitar pieces – must be mine!

Every note I play on the guitar is mine!

Is this sense of ownership, rightful possession, even entitlement, the next step of “On My Own?”

No doubt it is.

Rightful ownership of notes – even while playing Bach – is a completely different guitar playing experience.

How about my aching body?

I would like to think it comes from overuse. Pushing myself a little beyond. It is a more positive interpretation than my body is falling apart due to arthritis, periodontitis, misanthropitis, muscle strains and sprains, and general disintegration through the aging process.

I may be all wrong on my interpretation, but so what? I’d rather be positive about my aches and pains than negative. Besides, I could be right, too.

On the other hand, use it or not, my body aches in the morning. However, if I do not use it, it aches even more! Therefore, use, and even overuse, help both physically and psychologically. In the long run. (See my new Runner’s Journal).

Plus I am building a new body in which to house the new man who is now

running on new feet.

How about the idea that my aches and pains are mine! They are the new notes being played by my body.

Mine! is such a radically different way of looking at the notes – and everything else in life.

It is a sense of entitlement, rightful ownership, digging into the essential me, touching and staying with the fundamental “I”.

Could it be the foundation and fundamental principle, the essential self of the “On My Own” search?

Sunday, December 17, 2000

Guitar Bookings

Now that these guitar notes are truly mine! I have a deep urge to bring them to others. I don’t know what this means yet. But it is a sleeping, growing, urge to outward. Perhaps, now that they are mine, I want to “share” them. Although it is a bring them public urge, it is somehow of the next level.

I don’t understand it yet, but I do feel it growing.

Perhaps I’ll be using the time I have saved by “losing” the Bedford and Bloomfield groups, to getting guitar (and folk dance) bookings in clubs, organizations, schools, etc. This would, of course, be very useful, wonderful, and profitable.

This is somehow a “scary” thought. I’ll think about it in Santa Fe and etc. Perhaps it has to do with opening my wound, scraping off the scab tissue of my scar.

It’s not even so much that I am getting or playing better on the guitar. It’s rather I’m able to do what I could always do, but with more confidence.

A more confident sense of self.

No one is looking over my shouldr anymore. The notes are mine.

Monday, December 18, 2000

Weeping with Joy

I'm very moved this morning, but I don't know what is moving me.

I feel somewhat teary, on the verge of weepy. It started last night after the Rosenbaum birthday party.

Am I weepy for joy or sadness? Does one weep for something else? Can there be more than two emotions? I don't know. But for me, there are only two emotions causing one to weep: joy or sadness.

Perhaps, on one level, they are the same. Sadness comes from loss. Joy also comes from loss: the loss of sadness. Also the loss of ego.

My weepiness must come from joy. I played the guitar with such confidence and beauty at the party. Cindy Rosenbaum and Al Cohen both came over and commented about it. Naturally, I thanked them. But even their lovely comments were no match for the superb feeling of inner joy I felt over my playing. It was mine! The notes were mine! The strength, power, and beauty of the playing was mine!

And with the certain knowledge that notes, music, and playing were mine, came the desire to play, give, and "share" my notes with others. And this on a totally new level. Perhaps I was experiencing the "oneness of the notes," the deep understanding that truly, they belong to everyone. Yes, every One! And this, even though One is All and All is One.

Obviously, this is just word play. Nevertheless, the feeling was there. A new one, indeed. What did I find by diving as deeply as I could into my inner self? Others. There they were, all part of me. Amazing, indeed. As notes, they all stood holding hands in one great celestial folk dance circle at the edge of the sound hole of my guitar. There, deep in my soul they clustered together in one great harmony.

The confidence of mine melted and blended into the going public of theirs.

Yes, last night's teary feeling with its inner weeping were from joy. I cried from the unity of amazement.

What an amazing truth I have discovered: on one level, sadness and joy are the same! Both are based on loss. Joy is based on loss of the ego; sadness is based on loss to (through) the ego.

I know what this means, but I'm not sure I said it well.

Tuesday, December 19, 2000

Belly Buttons in the Land of Egypt

What will I find when I look deep behind my belly button? A Jew? Now there is a wonderful, funny, even inspiring answer. Whether it is true or not is, of course, besides the point. Plus, there is no way of finding out except by asking myself. Who else would or could know? I am the solo explorer of my belly button and the Land Beyond Belly Button.

I am very close to Judaism. In my heart, I am a Jew. If this is true, then why couldn't I also be a Jew in my belly button? Or at least deep behind it. It is as plausible as anything else, even as possible as the sun turning into a faucet or a star sinking into a water closet.

Wouldn't it be a marvelous new way to re-enter my world of studies through Judaism and the bible? Thus I would study Egypt through Judaism, through Exodus and the bible. I would look at the history of Egypt through its influence on the Jews, study Arabic, and even some hieroglyphics because their existence somehow effected the Jews. Thus Egyptian and Arabic studies as tied to Jewish history and studies directly effect and affect my deepest and most central core. And where is that core? Deep behind my belly button, of course.

Naturally, my belly button itself, the entrance to this central core, is so sensitive I

can hardly touch it. This is because I am a sensitive, hidden Jew. Almost a Marrano, in fact. I have hidden my core Judaism for years, in fact, for most if not all of my life. It has been hidden in the dark storehouse cave deep behind my belly button.

I can never figure out why God chose my belly button behind which to hide His treasures. Perhaps it is a result of reincarnation. Perhaps my soul once belonged to a slave in ancient Egypt. Perhaps I was tortured, repressed, and criticized in more ways that my present lifetime mother could ever dream of. I may never truly know the answers to these questions. But for today at least, they supply a good reason to return to study: Egyptian study, Arabic (and Hebrew) study, Semitic language study.

I may indeed be onto some kind of a study rebirth here. I may even be looking into one of my past lives as a Jew in ancient Egypt. If this is so, it certainly perks my interest. No doubt, I am always interested in myself, in who I am. Well, if I am, or once was, an Egyptian, and/or a Jew in Egypt, then certainly I would want to learn about my past life.

Could Egypt be or at least represent the hidden Land of Belly Button? No question, to a certain extent, my belly button is my master. I am somewhat of a slave to it. Could this be part of my ancient Egyptian bondage that has been carried over to this present life? Why not?

Wednesday, December 20, 2000

Doing My Miracle Schedule In Public

Leaving for Santa Fe with parts aching. Shoulders and feet, plus everything feels stiff.

Has arthritis of the brain settled into arthritis of the parts?

Part of me feels like it is going to prison. One week of really stiff living inside in cramped quarters where it is difficult to do all the things I love doing. Miracle schedule will be partially cramped and on hold.

No wonder I am stiff all over. Who wants to face prison and such frustration?

And I was so grateful yesterday about my guitar playing.

Is there anything I can do about my situation, or at least, anything different I can think? It is, after all, like so much else, an attitude thing.

First, at all costs, I must figure out a way of doing my miracle schedule. Even if I have to do it in public! Well, this will be hard. But the other choice, to not do it, or pull back on it, is even worse.

The miracle schedule done in public is my challenge on this Santa Fe trip.

This means playing guitar in their living room, doing yoga in their living room, writing in their living room, even some study in their living room. Running I don't have to worry about, since I'll hardly be doing it anyway.

Writing, yoga, (running), guitar, study. Is this "all" there is to my miracle schedule? Am I not leaving something out?

And for this trip, I am eliminating running. Plus I'm putting study on the back burner. Thus, I only have the trinity of writing, guitar, and yoga to consider.

Monday, December 25, 2000

Triathlon Schedule

I finished editing Barry's revision of my 214 pages of New Leaf 2.

Part of me wants to celebrate.

There is nothing like living in the present.

I am in editing mode. I've got nothing to say writing-wise this morning. Perhaps I should read instead.

Actually, would you believe it, I miss editing. I wish I had more pages of New Leaf to look at. So here's what I'll do. When I get back to Teaneck I'll reread the original New Leaf 2. It will both help me understand how Barry is organizing the leaves, and I might also find some entries he has left out that I want to keep.

I am also in a new project mode.

Well, as my mind warms up, my fingers follow.

One of the best places I can search for wisdom and a proper lifestyle is my own New Leaf Journal! It has wonderful attitudes and approaches. So good. I wish I had written them. And I have! Nevertheless, they feel like a voice from somewhere else.

Reading my New Leaf Journal often reminds me of positive thoughts and approaches that I have forgotten. Such as: happiness, even ecstasy, is based on total focus and concentration. Now, of course, this is an “obvious” good idea. But even though I wrote it, and it is mine, I keep forgetting. Thus if I benefit from reading my own words, imagine how others would benefit! Well, here is another reason my New Leaf should be – and will be – published.

Let’s look at focus and concentration in the new, up-to-date manner.

In terms of new projects, On this Santa Fe trip my schedule has been: rise at 4:30 or 5:00 a.m., drink coffee, make entries in “On My Own,” and edit New Leaf Journal 2. Then I do calliyoga.

What is new here? I’ve been doing this yoga for one-and-a-half to two-hours! Even this is nothing new. New is: I’d like to add a two hour routine to my life. After considering such a “luxury” for almost two years. now somehow, it seems okay. Also, I would add an hour of running, or even two, perhaps on alternate days. I’m not sure how I would “fit all this” into my busy Teaneck schedule. But I see how important it is. I want to put this return-to-Teaneck, triathlon approach into my life.

The triathlon athlete trains for three events: running a marathon, swimming two miles, and bicycling a hundred miles.

My triathlon would be: running (whatever number of miles, but based on one to two hours), calliyoga (which replaces swimming and bike riding), and folk dancing. (I guess I could include folk dancing as a third aspect. That would make it a triathlon.)

Training in this manner is such a time-consuming top priority. In order to do it, I have to think “retirement.” Perhaps this is just a mental trick I am using to “rationalize” my desire for this kind of intense training. I love such training. It is a

good-in-itself. It has no purpose except the joy and ecstasy attained through total focus and concentration on its exercise. As a philosophy, it is good for whatever I do in life.

How can I, an artist, spend so much time focusing on my body? How can I rationalize devoting so many hours on simply cultivating my physical form? Sure, I can see spending such large amounts of intense practice time on guitar, violin, writing, or such “worthwhile” pursuits as study or promoting my business. But to spend it “merely” on my body, to rationalize it through the search for ecstasy and fulfillment, seems so icky and “untrue.”

What is going on here?

Is it a thinly disguised form of disdain for athletes, athletics, sports, and beyond that, the body itself? Is it the old puritan ethic returning in invisible form? Is it my family values of arts and intellect über alles which I too have adopted?

Probably it is all of these. However, the time of their demise has come. I need to take a fresh look at athletics. True, I have always loved athletics and physical things. Body activity, physical movement, is often my path to ecstasy and fulfillment. Witness my four-year-old, running-wild-on-the-lawn, followed by my pre-teen love of baseball, and teenage love of basketball. Truth is, for me, the arts (violin and music) and sports have always fed each other. What is folk dance in particular (and dance in general) but a the combination of arts and sports, beauty expressed through the body.

Aha, a lovely definition: dance is beauty expressed through the body. It perfectly combines sport with art.

In any case, I am searching for a reason, a rationalization, to do what I want to do anyway. I want to pursue my physical love. I love my body and the feelings it gives me. I love the feelings that running, calliyoga, and the fulfillment of my “new” triathlon schedule gives me. Why not simply go with it and shut up?

Tuesday, December 26, 2000

Progress Will Come!

Going to the movies, seeing a movie even on video at home, depresses me.

“Depress” is a word I hardly use these days.

So, truth is, I’m not depressed. I’m just looking for a mental spark, a “down” to jump start my morning writing. Enough of this. I don’t need it.

Onwards and sideways.

Look at this victory: not one fight with Bernice. She said: “You’re withdrawing. Pay attention to the kids; do something with them.” My reaction to this showed, not only my progress, but beyond that, a reason to hope for future progress in all the things I am working on. First I felt shock. That someone would dare say something like that to me! I was stunned, so much so I didn’t even respond. But I thought about it. I saw how the former pressure of such a controlling statement would have ruined, not only my vacation, but my desire for a spontaneous relationship with Zack and Zane. Most of all, I wanted to be myself with them. “Myself” includes, not only active participation with them but also moments of repose, withdrawal, meditation, study, contemplation, letting myself roam among the inner workings of my mind and, most important for my development, doing all this in public.

Well, I noticed deeply that now I could do it. And easily, so easily. There was no question at all. Although I said nothing about this to Bernice – actually, due to my shock and surprise, I missed the moment of speaking up – I did ruminate about it mucho. And in these ruminations, I noted my progress.

This has taken over two years. It hasn’t come easily, and it hasn’t come quickly. But it has come!

What does this mean for the other aims in my life? What about publishing, guitar concerts, even language study, yoga, and running?

It means I will achieve what I want. . . only slowly. Some progress may take months, years, even decades, or a lifetime. Or many lifetimes. But no matter how long, progress will come! Impatience is my one block.

Progress is a long range view.

It is an important truth to remember.

"On My Own Classic" Guitar Playing!

It is taking me a "lifetime," nay, "forever" to develop my own style of classic guitar playing. Up to now I have been trying to copy the masters, whether guitar masters like Segovia and Bream, flamencan masters like Sabicas, Motoya, Serrano, and Escudero, or former violin masters like Heifitz, piano masters like Horowitz, and others, more than I can think of. I have been playing in their shadow.

My classical music world and my playing in it has been a place of shadows. My own true playing self has not been known, found, or even considered. There has been no classic guitar playing "On My Own."

That is about to change.

Imagine, it begins with this trip to Santa Fe and my reading of Horowitz.

I am also ready, ready to play like me. The grand rubato, tempo freedom, and exaggeration are the first keys to both my past and to unlocking its prison doors and stepping out in the free world of self-expression and playing "on my own."

This is a major step!

I am ready to take it.

Are Performers Creators?

This will also necessitate a new look at the performers of classical music, and the classical repertoire.

Until now, although most of them have been and are virtuosos, geniuses, proteges, etc., nevertheless, I have seen them as "mere instruments" of the composer. The composer as creator of the music is top god. Performers are "only" interpreters. Thus I have considered them to be secondary to the god.

God is the Creator.

Composers as creators are the closest “imitation” to God. They are closest to expressing the God within. Performers are one step further away.

This is my old view.

Now for the new view: Can performers be considered creative, too? Indeed, they are re-creative; they are interpreters. But can they be considered creative in their own right? If they were, they would be simply “using” the repertoire of composed music as a stick, a bridge, a means to express their own godhead.

Are performers creators?

Are they “mere puppets” of composers who are the “true” creators?

Or can they be creators, too?

Part Of Me

Part of me does not want to give up the power Barry has over the editing of my New Leaf Journal.

Part of me does not want to give up the power that others have over me.

Part of me does not want to become too powerful.

Why? What will happen?

I'll end up all alone, of course.

Mama revisited.

I really cry when I read The Complete Idiot's Guide to Jewish History and Culture, by Rabbi Blech, because it is so beautiful to belong to and be part of such a wonder-filled tradition.

Plus, if I read New Leaf, there is no doubt of the higher power in any part of it. God is so deeply ingrained in my heart despite communism and my “secular” upbringing.

The secular upbringing is just a stupid, narrow, literal, concrete interpretation of

the wondrous, miraculous, higher, "musical" powers of God. It sees only the literal word instead of the glorious mystery of the invisible kabbalistic Word.

Saturday, December 30, 2000

Death

I was feeling pretty good until death came along.

Death is a way of bringing me down.

Let's give it its due. Yet, in the bigger picture it is still an annoyance, although a major one.

It is a jolt in the stomach. Nevertheless, it is still no reason to kill the joy, marvel, and awe that fills my living heart.

Compassion for the dead and dying, yes! Compassion for my death and dying, yes!

But also compassion for my living and breathing, and for the remembrance and experience of the spirit, that fire of life that burns forever in and through the body.

Don't overeat, either. It kills the spirit.

The "Ninety-Nine Solution"

But really I am down because I smacked myself so hard on the head after therapy. It was an incredible session. In it, I realize that a slow miracle is occurring. My personality, or at least my approach to life, is changing almost beyond recognition. All my dreams are coming true. This is indeed a scary but wonderful thing.

These are my dreams of accomplishment, inner vision, attitude, and life style.

The "ninety-nine solution" to guitar and other kinds of practice. A "meditation in motion."

What is it?

As expressed in Horowitz:

Horowitz and Leonid Hambro have rented summer homes at Fire Island. They

live near each other. Hambro sneaks over to Horowitz's home, stands near his window in order to listen to him practice.

Hambro hears him practicing a difficult section of a piece, one that runs up and down the keyboard. "After awhile I started counting how many times he repeated it, and I stopped at ninety-nine."

Mr. Death

Indeed Mr. Death can scare and frighten me. . . a push me back. But, isn't it "just another scare," "just another fright" in a long list of scares and frights which serve to push down my jumping joy, push me back into myself, push me over the edge and out of my inner, joyous, jumping, running-wild-on-the-lawn, fire-of-the-spirit self.

Doesn't Mr. Death promote the "Why bother?" and "What's the use?" question? Haven't I heard this question countless times before, and this even where there is Old Man Death isn't involved at all?

Isn't he just another rationalization to give up, give in, and give out?

In other words, isn't Death "just another excuse?"

Probably.

Pay attention; remember him. But don't give in.

It is also important to remember what will die and what will live.

Of course, the body will die. But the spirit lives on. . . forever.

Death is another test to "help you remember" this truth.

Death may put a lid on your coffin, but it is only the body that lies in it. The spirit, lasting forever, soars above, and then moves on to the next.

One must pass many tests to believe and realize this truth.

Exercise, food, toilet care, etc. all help to maintain the temple of the body. When this temple crumbles and is destroyed, the spirit stays on to build a new one.

The temple is your temporary residence.

The spirit is your permanent home.

It is good to remember this.

The power of the soul is expressed through the body.

The power never goes away, and neither does its agent, the soul. However, a body, like an electric wire, can fall off its pole and be replaced.

Miracle Questions

I guess it is sort of a denial of God when I have so much trouble accepting the awe and wonder experience.

Could I accept miracles as part of my daily fare?

If I did, would it diminish their wonder?

If their wonder was diminished, would I accept them as miracles?

Do I need the jolt and thrill of the miracle experience to motivate and drive me onwards, to remind me that God exists? Can I do without them? Would that diminish my belief in God?

Are not miracles and the miracle experience my "proof" that God exists?

Will I believe he exists if I lose my desire, need, and experience of His periodic proofs?

Or, can I simply accept that miracles are the nature of God, and move on from there?

Wouldn't that be kind of a dull life?

Or would it?

Actually, by asking these miracle questions, I am trying to find a way to stay in

the miracle, awe-and-wonder experience.

Also, by asking them, I already know the answer: I have no choice but to stay in the miracle experience. The addict's jolt life with its addictive spikes, its jolting highs and lows, is fading, fading. . . gone.

Can awe and wonder simply be "accepted" as part of daily life?

Won't they lose their special quality, their awe-and-wonder?

Won't they "become like everything else?"

Of course, since all-is-One, "everything else" is God. In that case, if awe and wonder are accepted as being part of everything else, and, in fact, being everything else, then what is the problem?

It is then obvious that awe and wonder are everything else.

So what is the problem?

If awe and wonder are everything, then it is I who have been missing the boat. My small ego has been unable to see or accept this basic truth. There is no separation. All is awe and wonder.

Life is not divided into non-awe-and-wonder events and awe-and-wonder events. All events are awe-and-wonder events. Only my limited vision has failed to see this.

Perhaps it is time for a New Leaf.