

## Ball of Beauty

### (The Witness State)

Saturday, July 1, 2000

#### It's Me!

Even though he hasn't practiced, Joe drives all the way from New York City for a guitar lesson with me. He comes because of me. Students drive all the way to folk dance class. . . because of me.

The whole room at the Emma Kessler Bat Mitzvah stood up, crowded the dance floor, and began dancing because of me.

I create the accepting atmosphere for my students and customers to open up and be themselves.

Accepting my ability and talent is the mad shoe experience. It is me they love, idealize, and admire! It breaks me down, makes me cry. So beautiful! (It used to be too beautiful. I'd avoid it. But no more. Now I'm looking straight into the maw of the hot ladder.)

Many amazing things are in the process of happening. Among them are:

1. Yoga meditation (which I almost never do) and psychotherapy are starting to combine. This through "meditation" on the passing emotions, and experiencing the witness, "ball of beauty" state.

2. I conquered loneliness and missing through yoga exercise – specifically doing the cobra posture whose heroic position "alleviates depression."

3. The growing "I have something to say" phenomenon.

a. Something to say in writing

b. Something to say in guitar playing.

c. Something to say to others. Witness what I said to Joe during his lesson about

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motivation, practicing, beauty, and how practicing guitar and playing music open the gateway to the soul.

Sunday, July 2, 2000

A New Look At Freedom

I definitely feel (felt) that I should feel sad; otherwise I will lose her.

But suppose she wants me to be free. She embraces, applauds, and cheers my freedom! And loves me more for it! (Although her love, in its higher form, is never-changing.)

At least, she loves my victory over myself.

This quest for freedom is not her quest, but my own. (She has her own quest, too.)

Well, Ma, this sure is a new look at things.

Formerly, sadness was (one of my) connections to you. Without it, I thought you would leave me. I had to keep the lid on, stay sad, down, and low, in order for you to love me.

But I'm rethinking this whole concept, Ma. Perhaps I was wrong; perhaps I was right. I'll never know how you actually felt. But it doesn't matter anymore. I want to be free. I love this feeling of freedom.

And since I love it, I'm sure, when you understand it, you'll love it, too.

Wednesday, July 5, 2000

A Spiritual Practice

A spiritual practice puts one on the road to God.

Can "getting the word out," be a spiritual practice? Was St. Paul doing a spiritual practice as he brought the gospel to others in the ancient world? He thought

so. Yet, it was all sales, the marketing of Christianity. Of course, he didn't consider it "sales" or call it marketing. Rather, he thought of it as "bringing the good news."

Is "bringing the good news" a spiritual practice?

The question I am asking, of course, is: would bringing others the fruits of my writing and guitar playing qualify as good news? And, even if it does, would I get any satisfaction, joy, fun, fulfillment doing it? Would it put me on the road to God? In other words, can "mere" business, the "mere" selling of my work, the "mere" publishing or giving of concerts, do anything positive for my brain?

These, of course, are very old questions. And, as usual, I have no answers. But maybe just the questions are enough. Maybe it is an eternal question, since it is about crossing the bridge between myself and others.

Once again I face the question: why do I hate the effort so? Or do I? Is it something else – the frustration of "wasting my time" working towards a distant goal, focusing on the future rewards for my labor rather than the process itself?

Is there a way I could learn to love the process of sales, marketing, gospel, and "bringing the good news?" Will I ever find a way of turning this means to an end into an end in itself?

I am now at a new stage in life. Does that mean I am ready to face, and deal with, this question?

If I am, I'd like to do it with "death on my shoulder." In other words, squeezing the moment, embracing it with full vigor.

This all sounds good. But what does it mean? Will I ever do it? Will I ever be able to do it?

Why do I go round and round with this same question? And, deep down, deepest of down, what is the real question I am asking?

Is it how to live fully in the moment? And this, whether it be a marketing moment, a sales moment, or a moment of love.

Yes, I have had short periods of arpeggio and tremolo success on the guitar in the past. And success in other areas, too.

But now I am able to maintain the success! I am maintaining the success. (The “ing,” “in the process of”).

Instead of touching the new realm of calm and success and then falling back into the whirlwind, I am now able to stay there.

Friday, July 7, 2000

Play Recuerdos A Seville.

The big M is dying.

A great source of former pleasure is on the wane. It made me sad. . . momentarily.

I saw fear in her voice. (It’s not because of me, not “my fault”. Besides, I can’t cure the world. Slight form of former resentment and dying anger in this statement. Former rages, frustrations, and hurts are just dribbling away.)

What can I do? Listen to her Soul. Momentarily, I wanted to retreat, go backwards into the closet. I was so conscious of wanting to return to the pleasures of the big M. I couldn’t even “fool” myself into a good second-place beating, whipping, and self-loathing fantasy. My former “retreating strength” was vitiated by seeing her fear, hearing the fearing her voice tone. I tried “getting off” on rejection, second-place anger, and return to the old place where, at least, the big M was my big pleasure. The former illusions didn’t work. Instead, I understood, sympathized, and felt compassion for her. Indeed, it was a “visual” expansion, a seeing.

Part of my momentary sadness? Probably.

But I see so much; I’m so far out of the hole. Even my guitar “self-concerts’ are flying fast, easy, and furious. What can I do to “soothe” myself in a new way?

Play Recuerdos A Seville.

The "What Is Wrong With Me?" Question

Lonely on holidays and vacations? Why?

What is loneliness? I miss myself; I am lonely for myself.

Why on holidays?

Some "reasons:" I have no family to visit; no friends call me; no one cares about me, etc. (And this, even though I don't want to see them anyway. Part of me likes this time alone.)

Bottom line possible reasons: The "What is wrong with me?" lid. What is wrong with me that I "have no family, no friends, no one calls me," etc. What is wrong with me that I have to be alone during holidays, etc.

The "What is wrong with me?" lid clamps down on the true self. It camouflages the glory-of-self by creating a black cloud of loneliness, sadness, and depression; it hides the ever-lasting beauty, richness, fullness, harmony, and oneness of the true self.

The "What is wrong with me?" question is a tough one. Unless constantly attacked and dealt with it never goes away. It often rises in full force on holidays when the defenses are down. But, truth is, it has never gone away. It just lies there, lurking in the darkness, ready to pounce on you during the next holiday or jump the moat whenever it sees a crack in your castle's defensive wall.

Do I have the right to make this analysis? Do you mind? Am I peering too much?

Tuesday, July 11, 2000

Intellect. . . and IntellectualsLove Life of the Mind

Going from artist to intellectual: A new self definition. Actually, I have always loved (and admired) the intellect, and even some intellectuals. What are my studies but love of intellect? It's just the use of intellect to rationalize away or deny feelings, and

especially to avoid passion, that I've always hated and despised.

But the combo of intellect and passion, as in the historical writings of W.E.B. Dubois, Max Dimont, and others. . . .wow!

So, I suppose, I love intellect, and my intellect; and even (many, most) intellectuals. I just never had the confidence to be one. Bad marks in school didn't help. But my love of the life of the mind was hidden from public view just as most (all) other aspects of my secret kabbalistic love life of musical sparks and fire.

But through growing awareness, that is changing.

This is such a tremendous shift in how I see myself, such a change in self-definition. Me, an intellect! Even "better:" Me, an intellectual! And this in the best and most passionate sense of the word.

This is a true acceptance of my Jewish heritage, my "rabbinic" blood roots, my passionate love of study and for studies.

Talk about a hidden part of me coming to the fore, a secret chamber made public!

Most interesting is how the history of the world, metaphysics, intellect, studies, theoretical learning, and learning in general apply to me personally.

Just as all politics is local, all studies are personal.

This means I can talk about all the subjects I love to read (and think) about in a kind of a revelation and revolution in self definition that is shaking me to my foundations. It's opening up my whole inner world of mind. It's an acceptance of going public with my entire foundation.

SyrtoS and Seven-Eighths Time

I stopped the folk dance class to explain the musical structure of the Greek syrtos. I took a piece of paper and wrote down the seven-eighth's time signature and four musical measures of the dance. I pointed to the seven and said, "There are seven beats to a measure." Then I wrote down a dotted quarter note followed by two quarter notes. Then I explained how each note or, in this case "beat", was "attached" to a step. There are twelve steps—slow, quick, quick—or 1,2,3, 1,2, 1,2. Or right, left, right; left, right, left; right, left, right; left, right, left. That's the structure, and the way I think when I analyze, then teach, a dance. My students stood around listening. I'm not sure whether they were mesmerized, lost, or bored. Perhaps all three. Then Jeff pointed to the eight at the bottom of the time signature and asked: "What does that mean?" I explained that the eight referred to an eighth-note, and pointed out that each measure had seven eighth notes in it.

That's when I realized my students had no idea at all about the musical and theoretical structure of the dance. This was amazing to me. But, of course, why should they know? They have no training in this. I, on the other hand, have a lifetime of musical training. When I dance I always think in terms of musical measures. It's second nature.

It made me realize how much I have "kept hidden" from my dancers. Perhaps I should teach them theory. How, really, can you survive as a dancer without it?

In any case, this is another example of how I could go public with the way my mind works.

What do I imagine the response to be if I did? Generally, that most people will look at me blankly and go: "Huh?"

### I Just Don't Need It Anymore

On the surface, over-excitement sounds good. After all, it is due to an abundance

of riches: "Look, Ma, bookings and registrants are rolling in, I'm succeeding, I'm becoming a great guitarist, people love me, I'm making oodles of money, etc." You'd think I'd be happy. After all, it seems as if all my dreams are coming true.

But actually, it is not a pleasant feeling. It is somewhat akin to being overwhelmed. After all, you can drown in a sea of riches just as you can learn to float in a sea of misery.

So maybe overwhelmed, and fear of death through suffocation, are what I am experiencing when I "take seriously" this abundance of riches. I try to escape, protect, and defend myself by creating my over-excitement lid.

Thus the lid has not been a bad thing; it's just that it has served its purpose. I am entering a new phase on a new level in a new land. I don't need it anymore.

Friday, July 14, 2000

Disgusted, off-center, going down, slipping back. The expenses threw me. Mario, taxes, computer. Almost \$5000 spent in one day!

It is a grounding. It means: go out and earn some money! Put your talents to work! Not a bad idea. I even like it. After all, that's what my talents are for.

But soon I realize, this down feeling is "more of the usual." It rises because "I'm doing so good I can't stand it." I'm looking for downers to "calm" myself. Thus the return of money worries. I'm looking for an excuse to kill my enthusiasm, to push me back into my room, to dampen my excitement over my growing enlightenment, over my excellent playing of Alhambra and arpeggios in general, over my new and talking self. All these expansive and wonderful growths, things I would never have expected in my life, are now pouring in upon me. I am changing so fast through my growing awareness that I once again "can't stand it." So as a quick return to the past for an old-type refueling, I look of another lid to push me down. Anything will do. Worry about money happens to be one of my best. So I'm choosing that one.



But even as I “chose” it, I know it won’t last. Awareness of why I’m choosing it will soon destroy its power.

I’m just so. . . even too. . . excited about things going so well. . . and this mostly in my mind.

Even the twitching and itching in my body, the muscles dying to move and get out of their straight jacket, the yearning to escape to a cooler realm after playing such hot guitar, all are means of leaving the arena of intense excitement. I’m a gladiator fighting in the Roman arena. My “enemy” is excitement. Yet I can’t wait for the fight to start.

Saturday, July 15, 2000

### Health Fascism.

Health fascism.

The dictatorship of safety.

Health and safety and totalitarian tools.

You will wear a helmet; you will wear a seat belt. It’s for your own good. And if you don’t do it, we’ll punish you because it’s the law.

You cannot smoke; at least, you should not smoke. It’s wrong, evil, and bad for your health. It’s not against the law yet. So instead we’ll use the judicial and sue them into oblivion; we’ll destroy these mean tobacco companies. We’re doing it for you, to protect you from their evil ways and products. We don’t worry about freedom; we don’t even care that cigarettes are legal. Freedom is not as important as health—especially your health. But you’re just too stupid to make the right choices. So we’ll make them for you. Besides, we can make lots of money shaking down these giant, dirty, death-by-smoke companies.

Dante's First Circle of Success

Panic reaches down into the roots – and stops the flow. But there, in the bottom reaches of darkness and strangulation, hope and possibility are born.

The best first grovels, then comes to life, in forms of “my own Segovia,” flying tours, and unshakeable confidence in the real revealed self.

Yes, my body trembles with the trauma of memory. But soon those weeping limp muscles will tighten into a foundation of strength and daring, creating a tower of power, a pillar of tonal self.

What is success but the ability to live in the excitement.

Yes, now I am suffocating in the success box. All routes into the cellar are closed, all paths to the dark, dank, nutrient-rich bottom blocked with awareness. Shortness of breath. So tired. I can hardly take a step without panting.

Panic and a thousand lids hum and thumb at this bottom-caper. No exit. I'm stuck in success, hammered into a metal dungeon of worn out parts. It's awfully light in here. I can't stand it. But there is no place else to go. I'm caught like a rat in a pile of tasty garbage. It's a sewer paradise. Lots of other rats here, too; they're all friends of mine.

This must be Dante's first circle of success.

Wednesday, July 26, 2000

Hey, Ma, do you mind if I love myself more than you? Don't worry, you'll still be second. But do you mind if I come in first?

Well, it finally happened. Last night at my concert I was my own star. I shone not for you, but for myself. Of course, you were present. You always are. You still occasionally flitted in and out of my consciousness. As I say, you're still second. But this time, my focus was superb. I played the Renaissances dances flawlessly and with beautiful tone. The came Capriccio Arabs. That too flowed beautifully although mentally I had a few grazing bouts with the sheer panic of 'I'm doing it!'

Focus, focus, focus, it was wonderful!

Friday, July 28, 2000

What else is there to write about?

Perhaps nothing.

If I have reached the end, where can I begin?

Perhaps I have written all I need to; perhaps the purpose of Journal Writing has been accomplished.

Is there then another way for me to write. . . to continue writing?

There must be. I love the process.

But what should I write about? And how?

Perhaps shamelessly Bulgarian?

The dry and dam history of the modern age.

History through the eyes of a serf.

How to revive the edges once the edges have been reached.

#### Tours. . . and Life

It's amazing, not that things go wrong, but that we can fix so many of them. Besides, when things go wrong, it is often things going right. . . in disguise.

Saturday, July 30, 2000

#### Reading a Magazine

I picture myself giving a guitar concert at Carnegie Hall. What am I doing just before I go out on stage to face the full house? Reading a magazine. Now that's confidence!

Reading a magazine: Before therapy, concerts, weekends, tours, and folk dance teaching.

Monday, July 31, 2000

Going Without A Project

I'm going to Bulgaria without a project.

Even learning Bulgarian seems weak. Maybe I'll feel differently once I get there. For now, I see two weeks of blank mind space ahead of me.

Is "going without a project" similar to "reading a magazine?" Probably. Thus, once again, this shows confidence. As does "standing on one leg" while the kids are here.

True, my body aches and I am so tired. This "so" may reflect a residue of old pre-tour anxieties. I could be wrong here, too. If I look deep down, I cannot find any reason to be anxious about this trip. Only the "habit" of pre-tour anxiety is nibbling, nay gnawing at my mind. *If* I shine the searchlight of self-illumination and knowledge upon it, I really can't even figure out why it is still there. Only old habits of pre-tour anxiety keep it standing. I have lots of old pre-other anxieties, too: pre-concert, pre-dance class teaching, pre-weekend anxieties, etc. But, as I look at them, they are falling away as well, fading into the calm and cloudless sky of "reading a magazine."

Am I really becoming so "laid back?" Is it all an expression of confidence? Reflecting upon it, I can find no other answer but "yes."

It all feels so strange. But once again, even as I look at this "strange" I see the very word and concept is simply a tepid form of minor lid, a means of momentarily escaping from present truth.

And that truth is: no matter how hard I try, I can't work up a good anxiety about this Bulgarian tour. Of course I'm doing all the necessary pre-tour preparation work, making name lists, collecting vouchers, packing my passports, money, clothing, presents, books, and making first and last minute arrangements. This is all standard pre-tour stuff. But where, among these preparations, is the anxiety? I can even tolerate (although with some minor "strange" inner difficulties) the kids being here. Even these "minor strange difficulties" are, when I examine them, practically non-existent. In fact,

they are non-existent. I am simply sailing along, calmly and quietly, doing what is necessary with, as Rush Limbaugh says, “half my brain tied behind my back.”

What does all this mean? We’ll find out.

Tuesday, August 1, 2000

### Claustrophobia Among The Family

I am pulverized and overwhelmed by all these people around me. I can hardly breath. Fears of confinement are crawling in on me. I am drowning in a sea of children, my personal space being converted into a garage for the parked cars of the aristocracy. I am squeezed into a corner, ground down, bound and fettered by their screaming needs.

I have no energy. My entire body aches. When I walk, I feel pains in my feet, knees, and thighs; when I breathe I can feel the air going only halfway down into my lungs – sometimes even only a quarter way. Breathing has become so shallow it resembles the death of the mesozoic seas millions of years ago. Yes, I am living in the geological death zone, frozen in fossil form in my own house, carved and studded in the wall by my infinite and endless pushing energies of family and relatives. All are hovering in, on, and around me. I can’t get out. Stuck in the mud of knitted obligations, responsibilities to the so-called needs of others, bowing and bending to real and imaginary whims.

For the past few days I have felt tingling, even shooting pains in my arms, neck, and shoulders. They feel like screaming. Evidently, they are screaming – for space, peace, the freedom to move about, ex-press themselves, fly, scatter, and run across the free-flowing grass in a burst of song-defying raucous and belching freedom.

And yet, I can’t change this reality. The children will stay here still two more days. I can’t get them out of my sight, hearing, or mind. I want to be left alone to meditate, ruminate, cogitate, find the center of the true self I knew only a few days ago. That focused self has been lost in the shuffle. An intense social life has temporarily

driven it from my home. Well, of course, I know that is impossible. The self cannot leave its home. However, it has been completely submerged and forgotten my this onslaught of friendly family people. And, paradoxically, I do love these people. I enjoy being with them. . . .up to a point. But beyond that point, when I cross the line into the land of Forgetting Who I Am, that's when I start to go crazy. Claustrophobic arrows shoot their way into my heart; clinging vines squeeze my brain, Venus fly traps snap at my thought-filled innards, deadly scorpions sting the peaceful centers of my formerly focused mind.

"They must leave; they must leave!" I unleashed a torrent of anger against this invasion of my privacy. I ranted and raved for awhile. After I did it, I realized that the tingling pains in my arms, shoulders, and legs had indeed been caused by trapped claustrophobic rage turned inward against me. The current of raging electricity was revealed to me without a doubt. This has not yet been true for my shallow breathing and local aches and pains. However, I can surmise that they are caused by the same phenomenon. Lids have been clamped on the energy of my being. Oxygen has been removed. I suffer under the carbon dioxide umbrella.

How do I get out of this trap?

Let's begin by seeing what I've left out.

### On Selfish Acts

I believe in selfish acts. The more selfish the better. If you perform enough selfish acts, you eventually reach the core, your true center where you discover your real self, the selfless universal self, your true home. Then you realize all your selfish acts were really selfless acts in disguise.

### Calling Up The Energy

It's not nervousness. Rather it is calling up the energy.

I'm nervous before my tour. Nervousness and excitement are twins. "Why are

you nervous?" people ask. "What's the matter? Can I help you?" Nervousness is somehow a negative; it must be cured. But when you are excited and people may ask "Why are you excited?" it is never follow with the question: "What's the matter? Can I help you?" Excitement is somehow a positive state in which only happy and cured people exist.

I'm still nervous before my tour. I examined this feeling with the space ship of my mind, and came concluded that, on the deepest level, nervousness and excitement are the same thing: They are forms of energy. "Nervousness" is simply the way this energy feels when you call up.

I considered my tour. Everything is done. There's nothing left to do. . . except worry. But why worry? I can't think of anything left to worry about. Yet I still do. There must be a good reason for this.

I need an extraordinary amount of energy to run this tour. I am in the process of calling it up. Whether I use negative words like "nervousness" and "worry," or a positive word like "excitement," it is still all the same energy. I am mobilizing my inner army, calling my cells, drafting atoms, molecules, neurons, sinews, and other even more powerful invisible cosmic elements that have been asleep in my body for days, months, years, eons. My nervousness is, in reality, a recruitment process. It is uncomfortable because I am not used to so much energy traveling through my system.

Wednesday, August 2, 2000

### Residues

Residues are revisiting.

A sad look, an incipient criticism, the actual accusation, the "get Jim" hour. Why don't you spend more time with the kids? Even when you do, you're not there. You're the only person who is not here when you're here. On and on, and this accompanied by the sad face.

Old ghosts reappear as residues. Why am I making her sad? It is my fault that

she is sad. It is up to me to do something about it. On and on the old voices continue; the residue strikes its ancient sour note.

This is all happening as part of my mind watches. I am aware of my ego's mental movements, the return of the old half-backed miseries, the hard, stiff, pale, encrusted and totally rusted residues. Yet I cannot stop them. Nor do I try. I simply watch them in partial amazement. I thought I got rid of these, I think. Why are they revisiting now? Could it be that I'm nervous and vulnerable because of my upcoming tour to Bulgaria? This explanation seems right. Yet the cloudy residues return in spite of my awareness.

Such is life. It is not my job to stop them. I can only witness and be aware of them. Write about them. And watch them pass.

As I sit in my rocking chair, smoking my imaginary pipe, watching. They are beginning to move on. Once again I realize: How real they were last night: how sad and miserable they made me feel. And now they are fading, disappearing with the rise of the morning sun and the appearance of the new day.

It really makes you wonder what is real.

Thursday, August 3, 2000

Leaving for Bulgaria today.

Without relaxation, guitar playing (and other stuff) won't work. I need relaxation. It is essential for good guitar (and other playing.)

But I also have, and probably need, anxiety.

Somehow the two must be fused together.

I'll use the energy from the anxiety to help me focus on the relaxation.

Will bringing my computer to Bulgaria produce the combination of anxiety and relaxation I am looking for? Will it help me practice anxiety and relaxation (relaxed anxiety)?



The learning and practice of relaxed anxiety is the goal and purpose of this tour.

Just having the computer, carrying and worrying about it, will produce the anxiety. So I already have half the combination. Can I learn to relax in this anxiety? And this, of course, even if I never use the computer at all on the tour.

Bringing the computer is cause for anxiety and annoyance. Do I need this? Maybe.

Better not to bring it. I can, after all, hand-write in my notebook (and later copy it into the computer – if it is so important.)

But bringing the computer is really a way of soothing and relaxing me. It helps make my morning God-connection.

Can't I make this connection writing by hand in my notebook?

Probably. . . .No doubt. It is simply that I must copy it into my computer later on. More work here. Also I can write faster on the computer. The words flow more easily.

But wouldn't it be good "practice" to simply "relearn" to write by hand a few weeks a year? After all, people used to only write by hand. Wouldn't this reconnect me to the past and the great writers of history?

I'm moving towards not bringing my computer.

But I'm panicking because I have no computer. Perhaps I should learn to live and deal with this panic. After all, I can still write.

Perhaps my experiment will be not bringing my computer. It worked for Tunisia.

Sunday, August 6, 2000

SANDANSKI, BULGARIA

My coffee pot broke.

This exposes my morning coffee addiction. It ruins my entire morning miracle schedule. I'm going to have to go off coffee cold turkey. I already have headache.

I took Nescafe packets from the breakfast table. Perhaps they will help. I can make them with hot water from the faucet.

How will I function without my coffee? I'm in a panic, and mad, too. It shows how dependant I am on this drug for my morning happiness. My miracle schedule depends on it. Oh, shit, shit!

In the long run, it could be good for me. After going cold turkey I could get used to it and eventually even get off it.

I just had Nescafe. I'm feeling better already.

Tuesday, August 8, 2000

A blow-terrible shit this morning. Loose, like diarrhea.

Nevertheless, I'm feeling good this morning. The tour and the group is going well.

Our guide, Nevena, is kind hearted, smart, sensitive, and lovely. Our folk dance teachers, Tedi and Emil, are sweet and excellent. Christo, too. Gene is starting to shine. These are good external things that help the tour run smoothly.

But beyond that is my constant, never-ending glow of confidence. It does not leave through bad or good times. True, I was rattled by the late dinner delivery at Bansko. But even though I was baffled, tongue-tied, and startled, and, for a long moment, did not know what to do, I was "rescued" by the supportive comments of Roger, Elizabeth, Val, and Nina, and even quietly Ernesto. They said all we can do is be polite and wait for our food. (Those who do not want to wait can leave.) This was a wonderful "obvious" answer. What I especially liked was the "be polite" part; and this

out of Roger! It shows the sensitive soul behind his mask. Then Gene, Liz, Val, and Nina added supportive comments of their own, showing the largeness of their souls. Our guide, Nevena, was almost crying with frustration.

I like this largeness-of-soul approach. It is the best way; and it is my way.

Also, I like myself for distracting the others from bad-mouthing Roger because he is so “cheap.” Although he claims to be a millionaire he never has any money or wants to pay for anything. When he does, the money trickles out slowly. In any case, not only did I deflect his potential embarrassment with my magic trick, I was able to admit my inner goodness to others and to myself. And this melted me down and made me cry with happiness.

Admitting my inner goodness to myself and to others is truly wonderful. It is going public with my inner goodness. It kills me even to say this. And this with going public with jealousy, animal growls, and the beast in me, all helped to make it a wonderful day.

Wednesday, August 9, 2000

### Love Is The Reason

I’m not angry. Rather, I’m shocked, stunned, amazed, awe-and-wondered. What a reaction to a “nothing” question: Should we bring Emil and Tedi to the Black Sea Coast?

One of the most amazing things about this supposed onslaught from Bob and Chelley is how, on one level, it doesn’t affect me. Part of me, probably the best part of me – no value judgement here (“Best” in terms of higher commitment level) is truly in another world, on another level. And this has been true during the entire tour. That is why I can’t take most of the relationships and things that happen between people seriously. They are, after all, not why I came on, and organized, these tours.

I organized them for love: love of dancing, love of music, language, history, and culture. And yes, love of the people who do it. These people are not only the

Bulgarians but my tourists as well. Thus, on this level, I love my tourists, too. But this love has little to nothing to do with the bickering, hassles, and dynamics of group relations. Dealing with them is a challenge, moving from fun to a pain in the ass, from fun to annoyance. But, bottom line, although relations are definitely something to be dealt with, they are not my prime purpose or reason for coming to Bulgaria.

Love is the reason, on all levels!

Everything else is a footnote, a praenthesis, a distraction that often must be dealt with so it doesn't get in the way of the prime purpose. The surface waters of the lake must be kept calm, not too many waves or ruffles. Why? So you can peer down, see, and remember the infinite bottom where love lies

Love lives and has lived for years in my inner room, the studio of my mind. Now it is going public.

Perhaps I'm not that angry because I don't want anger, or anything else, to distract me from my main purpose; I don't want to be thrown off track, off the path of love.

That I could be so wonderful and think such wonderful love thoughts makes me break down and cry. And to go public with them, too! Wow!

I am also so proud of myself that I can think – and can admit publically – that I think such thoughts of love.

Is this "learning" what the Bulgaraian trip is ultimately all about? Probably.

I want to get away from everyone. It's probably nothing more than total physical exhaustion. I simply needed to get some sleep, a few quiet moments to think and restore myself.

I still love the tour business. It's just hard to remember when you're so tired you

Blend and flow, blend and flow. The cacophonous riots march on.

Thursday, August 10, 2000

Withdrawal From The Basic Love Truth

Woke up feeling sad. First time, first sadness.

Is it because I lost the love and the high of yesterday? Fatigue will temporarily kill things.

Or is it that I feel this incredible tour is ending?

Or is it another lid I have created?

According to my three-year therapy experience it must be a lid.

What lid?

Yesterday I had an incredible expansion. The Gutin discussion, my realization of bottom-line love. How well I handled it all. If this is so, why am I sad? Am I not clamping a lid on them?

Of course, the biggest expansion was going public with "love is the reason."

But I don't feel it this morning. I'm in retreat. Fatigue distracted me. Maybe my fatigue was partially caused by my withdrawal from the basic love truth.

I say "partially" because my body was truly tired. But what does "truly" mean? Does it consist only of physical fatigue? Isn't there also a mental component? In any case, such a clamp down lid on my incredible expansion makes "sense" according to my past history. I only need to remember it to move up again. But remembering is not for me. Reliving is.

Friday, August 11, 2000

Cold, clear, and beautiful morning at Koprivshitisa. I haven't felt cold for a week. What a nice feeling.

My room is right on main street. Very noisy. Is this a good location or what?

Will I be able to sleep?

Nevertheless, I love the cool.

Clear with an underbrush of sadness is the word today. Sadness for tour ending. But could it be a new beginning, too?

You can't be brave and courageous if you're not afraid.

The more slights the better! Bring them on! They are "good" for me. They throw me into the maelstrom, the nauseating, enraging whirlpool of jealousy, envy, competition, and betrayal.

Saturday, August 12, 2000

Calm, beautiful, deceptive, and lovely. Clarity is unfolding. The hard edges are off. Clarity unfolds like a large ball. At first, a sad Bob and Chelley clarity. But, upon acceptance, not bad at all. Bernice's clarity is more difficult.

But what is most sad is losing the Vacation. . . as the tour drips and dribbles to a halt.

Endings and losings. Endings are such a loss. Bitter-sweet among the sea-copies of time.

Monday, August 14, 2000

Varna and the Black Sea Coast

Pride and Yes! In My Word

I finalized and finished the meals. Dinner. Christo.

I am a hero in my own eyes! Let's face it: This feeling is wonderful! I stuck with what I promised. It's worth the money (\$420) I have to pay for it. It's worth all the money. Yes!

Yes! To my wonder.

Yes! To my Mad Shoes, to the wonder of writing it! Yes, to the "I did it!" Yes! To I can stand up and be proud.

Yes!

What a wonderful feeling: Pride in my word!

Formerly I couldn't face the intense pride and happiness that comes from putting together and running this tour. This was also true for my writing and guitar playing. I couldn't stand my goodness.

Tuesday, August 15, 2000

### The Pride and Joy of Accomplishment

I've usually been able to face how bad I feel when I get things wrong. It haunts me; I can't stop thinking about it until I get it right.

But I've rarely, if ever, been able to face how good it feels when I get things right! The incredible pride and joy that follows.

Another "purpose" of this tour is realizing, facing, and living in the pride and joy of accomplishment.

The fire of pride, the river of joy. Personal accomplishment is a thrill I have rarely "given in to." It used to actually give me a headache, or make me sick in unusual ways. The pride and joy were "too much." I reversed them, turning their burning positive energies into negatives and then turning the negatives against myself. This lidded and dampened my enthusiasm and enabled me to stay calm in the fire as the flames of joy, passion, happiness, ecstasy, and bliss licked my body and mind. I was then "comfortable" in this lower position.

But I no longer feel this way. Pride and joy in personal accomplishment are actually an expression of my inner room going public. I can say Yes! In front of others. And this, even among all the barbs of public criticism, put downs, and negatives. I am

ploughing the field even if it is filled with nettles.

The restraining, repression, and trampling upon this pride and joy feeling is the main ingredient that has held me back. True, it was once “useful” in my mental fight for survival. But now it has outlived its usefulness. I no longer need it. I am moving beyond its gates and into the public arena. And it feels great!

### Dinner at Christo’s

As I look over the past, there are many things I can think of that made me feel pride and joy. But, as I say, I rarely allowed myself to experience them fully.

Now I am on a new path. I want to, and am able to, feel and experience them. So, let’s start with the most recent, and work backwards.

#### 1. Dinner at Christo’s

a. Getting our meals from Christo – and this, even if I end up personally paying for all of them – was the breakthrough pride-and-joy-of-accomplishment event, the I-did-it! moment. And this because I could face how proud I was to do it, that I would gladly pay and pay to keep my word, reputation, and name. And this, not so much for others – although certainly that was the original motivation – but rather for my own sense of self worth.

I have sexualized and eroticized “What is wrong with me?”

Could I sexualize “What is right with me?” Could I eroticize pride and joy? Could that be Sylvan’s new direction? Didn’t he say, “Never again!” Wasn’t it a never again to “What is wrong with me?” and the beginning of the search for “What is right with me?” And “What is right with me” leads to pride and joy.

Thus, can pride and joy – and beauty – be sexualized and eroticized?

Thursday, August 17, 2000

Pride, Joy, Beauty, and Expansion



Is there such a thing as sexual expansion? Can one "grow" in such a sphere?  
And this, using pride, joy, and beauty as a base?

How would and could this be done? Tantra? Other? How?

Through my fingers I expand on guitar; through my feet I expand in folk dancing; through my mind I expand in other areas. Aren't penis and gonads instruments of expansion? And, through them, you can reach pride, joy, beauty, and God.

Like hands and feet, the penis is a "body part." Even the mind could be considered a "body part" – a universal or God part.

In any case, through my body parts can't I feel the same pride, joy, beauty, and God?

How about yoga?

How about pictures?

I wanted pictures to keep my freedom. Can there be an expansion through pictures? Why do I think of this now? Am I backing out of another expansion?

Yoga and exercise mantra: "Pride, joy, beauty, God!" Say it.

But when I do the lower body, cobra etc., I get into lust and the growling animal regions. What do they have to do with pride, joy, beauty, and God?

Saturday, August 19, 2000

So, you will not go on my tour because of some miserable people. Now that is a threat. But, even with so-called "good" people, who can really know how they will turn out, how they will act or re-act in new tour situations? Answer: one cannot know. It is part of the adventure. The only certainty is that if you want certainty from people the only way to find it is to stay at home. Well, your decision, if negative, would make me sad. But it is not in my realm.

What else is new? The Budapest one-day extension, added to yesterday's

miserable travel day from Sofia, is a true pain in the ass. Temporary, it is true, but an annoyance, a pain in the ass nevertheless. The hard edges of Agnes, our one-day tour guide, do not help either. But, I suppose the most important question is: how do I keep my mind's eye on pride and joy, accomplishments, ecstasy, God, and all the shining good things of this world while I am mired in the mud of transient annoyances? In other words, how do I remember God while most of my body and mind are submerged in shit? Well, not exactly shit, but at least sewage.

How do I remember the shining while I am in this limbo state? How do I handle the transient annoyances of the limbo state?

First, remember it is transient, etc. . . Well, answering this question is easy. Doing it, is, as usual another story. Perhaps immersion in the details might be a good approach. It ties me to the immediate present, connects me to some small but possible accomplishments in the going public world. It really asks: are there any small mitzvahs I can do for others, for members of my tour group, etc. and thus get my mind off the mentally-created negativity of this limbo state?

After all, it is I who create the negativity. Why do I create it? Part of me must "like" the negativity of the limbo state.

Thus, dive into the limbo state.

Embrace it. See where it leads. Meanwhile, are there any small deeds I can do?

All I can think of is getting airplane seats together. But even here I am somewhat amazed. I wanted to leave for the airport at 8:30, but Agnes said 9:00 would still give up plenty of time. I accepted her idea. But, by doing so, have I threatened the choosing of our seats? She says no; I say maybe. Another annoyance. Inshallah.

Isn't there anything good I can think about this morning? No.

So maybe I'll just focus on misery and go on from there. I'm just plain disgusted and fed up this morning. Let's leave it at that.

I am just disgusted with all the annoyances of yesterday's travel. Why am I disgusted? Because it distracted me from my main purpose: remembering whom I now call God.

Since most, if not all disgust, is self-disgust, I must say I am disgusted with myself for "giving in" to the pressure, for not acting professional, for "scolding" my tourists (two of them) for being late when actually, if I had really cared, I would have spoken to them sooner. I'm also disgusted with myself for "giving in" to the negativity and complaints of lateness (rightful ones) around me. I let myself go; I "gave in" to my the-tour-is-over-vacation-mode mood. I'm also disgusted with losing my perspective, having all the travel annoyances pound the perspective out of me.

So ends a New Leaf.