

## Land of Success

Monday, June 14, 2021

Joy and Responsibility

Tikkun Olam: Healing the World

I'm hoping to find enjoyment in the Land of Success and Responsibility.

Let me imagine enjoying my tours. And from there imagine enjoying giving a concert, doing a reading, teaching a folk dance class, doing business, studying language, practicing yoga, running, going through a gym workout.

Imagine enjoying anything, and everything.

Imagine enjoying the process, rather than focusing on goals.

How to deal, cope with, and stay on the Enjoyable Path?

I'll start with guitar: There is no way I can ever escape from the audience. I see them in my mind whenever I play. And I know I will want to please them forever.

But once I'm in it, focusing on it, giving the concert, teaching the dance class, practicing yoga, whatever, I do.

So what is the kicker, the weight on my shoulder?

The feeling of responsibility. I have to entertain and take care of them. And I do. After all, they are the guests in my home, and it is my responsibility as a good host.

And the responsibility of taking caring for them will never go away. It is embedded in my tikkun olam, healing-the-world Jewish heritage.

I hate to face it or even think about this heavy weight, but taking care of others is my duty. I've been chosen (along with everybody else) to heal the world. And there is no escape.

Can I get pleasure out of fulfilling these responsibilities?

The bible says King David did it by dancing before the Lord.

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Did I always want to be a writer? (Or did this start after college?)

Or did I always want to be a guitarist? (Also started after college, but a partial violin substitute.)

I could, can, become the artist that I am. (And fulfill the name of James, which is Jacob.) I'm not saying could be, would be, but am.

(And it only took 84 years. To the socially minded, that sounds old and like a lot of years, but for the eternalist, it's really awfully young.

84-95: My artist years. (Do I dare by-pass God by saying such a thing? Well, evidently, I just said it. Will such impudence and arrogance be punished or rewarded? We'll see. But somehow it feels right.)

### Playing "Lagrima" by Francisco Tarrega

The first challenge in my new artistic life is: How to make the guitar cry?

"Lagrima" is the best place to start. After all, it means "tears" in Spanish.

Wednesday, June 16, 2021

### Joy

Woke up with high joy feeling, things falling together, blocked by my a neck and shoulder pain.

Joy, an evident "danger."

How to handle it?

Joy of Hebrew, classical guitar, other.

Joy in my annularis or ring finger as it feels, then plucks the guitar string in a rest or free stroke.

Wow! Love it!

M and I, too: Medius (middle) and indice (index).

P too: Pulgar (thumb)

Joy in my fingertips as they feel and pluck the strings!

A big deal!

The secret classical guitar feeling I have been avoiding for years. (Well, actually I haven't been avoiding it. I've always secretly known I have it, only I never wanted to tell or share it with anyone else.)

But even so, it has "leaked out" for years, hidden behind my smile, and the sparkles of "humor" in my eyes. The secret humor, the secret smile. (Mona Lisa?)

Others feel it, pick it up, despite my "shyness." It's my secret leadership quality, joy and personal God connection.

I've had it all my life.

It's just that I've kept it a secret.

But now it is ready to explode.

I also now know now the meaning, the source, the origins of embarrassment and shame: the fear that you will be discovered. And once discovered, the secret of your hidden enthusiasm (from the Greek en theos: in God), your power-through-joy, will be taken away, squashed, killed by public misunderstanding, scrutiny, and criticism.

But those days are slowly disappearing. I don't give a fuck anymore. Once I know who I am, I'll be who I am, no matter what.

Sunday, June 20, 2021

My "Gavotte en Rondeau" is still infested with speed: the disease of "I must play it fast, and dazzle my opponents." This sees guitar playing as a competition rather than aa personal art.

The goal of guitar playing, thought, is to cleanse myself of divisive competition, and to empty and purify my soul and fill it with the union and unity of love.

This is the message to bring to my next public concert.

Best for me, best for others.

What are the arts but love in a visible or auditory form.

Monday, June 21, 2021

Well, the indecision is over. I must go back to work! No ifs, ands, or buts about it. My long pandemic vacation is ended.

Yes, I'll ache, strain, push, worry, be overwhelmed, embarrassed, humiliated, harassed by fears, blown about by countless details, fall short of my wants and responsibilities, and more.

But truth is, much of this happens even if I don't work.

And mainly, I've solved the motivational problem.

Why work? My prime reason used to be to make money. Period. With that removed, when I realized we now had enough to retire and had gotten through a year and half of life with no income, I wondered what would motivate me to suffer the slings and arrows of the work life, especially since I no longer had to.

Well, when the world returned in the middle of June and folks started to call about tours and folk dancing, I was hit with the real question: Why bother? Why return? Why do anything? Why not just sit around and mope?

And in this indecisive state, countless TMS pains started to plague my body. Buttocks, legs, lower back, then left shoulder, even right shoulder, then neck, and middle back, then left hip and left leg alone. On and on, one after another. When one body part stopped aching, the pains moved on to another. Typical TMS.

And I knew the indecision was killing me. But I suppose I had to go through that self-torture until I realized I had to work.

Why?

Because it's good for me.

I flower in a worry garden. Anxiety makes me shine. Sure, none of it feels good. But giving in to it, not diving into the anxiety pool and grabbing the monsters swimming and swirling within the cesspool of my mind, feels much worse.

Fighting the dragons is much better than giving in to them. Or even by-passing them.

My monsters are there for a reason. They frighten, energize, and push me to fight the opposition and rise to greater heights. This way, not only do I become my own hero, but in the struggle, my aches and pains dissolve! My monsters, after opposing me with all their might, soon begin to retreat. Soon they have fallen by the wayside.

So I am back.

Tuesday, June 22, 2021

Getting Closer to Take Off

Birth of Righteous Rage

I deserve dignity.

What is it but self-love on display?

Without self-love, there can be no universal love. And without universal love, there is no all-is-one illumination.

As for my re-entry TMS, this morning I took another look at my newest left hip pain. This is, needless to say, the pain that could prevent me from folk dancing.

Can I let this demonic misery freeze me in my path to folk dance salvation?

Never!

But how can I stop it?

Righteous rage!

Since performance anxiety clothes all my folk dance classes and performances, I'll now, through the lens of TMS, take another look at it.

What is performance anxiety but acceptance of fear?

How to change this?

Since I believe in free choice, why not choose anger over fear; choose rage over panic.

Is my mind strong enough to make choice?

It is, after all, time for a post-pandemic, radical change in attitude.

What am I angry at?

The usual: potential criticism.

But my fear of criticism has largely disappeared. I've given most of it up, lost in the pandemic winds, displaced by financial security and general confidence. So I now fear only the ghost of criticism.

Time to drop this fear of a haunted house.

And replace it with what?

It's opposite and twin: The anger/rage weapon.

Sounds good.

But what could I be angry at?

Ultimately, myself: for believing this shit.

Ultimately, my mind, for falling in love with an empty suit, giving in to a specter.

At least for today, the everlasting internal battle has been won. Anger, or even better, rage, its most powerful ally, has replaced fear. MY TMS pains dissolve when I dive into this best post-

### Luckily, I Feel Inferior

Luckily, I feel inferior!

Luckily, I am inferior. This drives me on, pushing, nay forcing me to ever try to improve. And this, even if I never reach my goal. Witness my constant practicing of "Alhambra" over the years. I never get it, never master it.

If you were really superior, you would never die,

So of course you're inferior.

Mortality makes it so.

This answers the question of being or becoming.

Thus of whether I feel inferior, or am inferior.

I am definitely both.

If you were really superior, you would never die,

So of course you're inferior.

Mortality makes it so.

### The Twins

Love and Resentment go together.

There is simply no escape.

The Love and Anger twins blend together (only) in action.

The key is: Awareness of this fire within. Accept, know, tolerate, and even (if you can), love the humanity of this conflicting heat.

Then, when it's time to act and it's the right thing, do it anyway.

### My Nature

I can't not do a great job.

It is simply not in my nature.

I can only operate by giving it my all.

Desire for self-improvement, and even to reach "perfection" will (unfortunately?) never stop.

Thus, I'll always be prone to TMS displacement pains.

It is simply my nature.

Awareness of this personal flaw is my only defense.

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

### Forgiveness and Physical Prowess

A sip of coffee, a touch of ibuprofen, and a chilly hope of physical prowess.

Is my new (actually, old) inferiority complex the best way to approach this new day, this new start?

I ask God for strength and forgiveness.

Forgiveness for what? I don't know. . .yet.

Maybe forgiveness for lack of faith.

Through this long, TMS storm period, did I lack faith?

Possibly.

What do I want now? What am I asking for?

A return to physical prowess.

Friday, June 25, 2021

### Meditation

Why has this post-pandemic re-entry period been so hard?

Because I want to re-enter the world with a new attitude.

Giving birth a new attitude is really hard: suffering, dying on the cross of the body, the emptiness, the excruciating distraction (TMS) pains, all while waiting, hoping for some kind of resurrection.

The old body and mind-set must die before a new body and mind- set can be born.

That's where I am today.

But when your heart is open, when you are ready to learn, your teacher will appear.

This morning I "happened" to pick up the Easwaran's pamphlet on meditation which was lying on the dining room table. It came in the mail a few days ago.

Usually, I pay little attention to his pamphlets, which have been mailed to me on a regular basis every few months for years.

But this time I quickly perused its contents. This time his writings on big questions and meditation leapt out at me!

Perhaps meditation on eternal things is what I now need.

So ends a New Leaf