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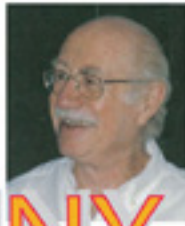
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IFD Organization of  
Instructors & Choreographers

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Translated:

Malka Tischler

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Translated:

Ruth Goodman,  
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Dear Readers,

**Rokdim-Nirkoda #90** comes to you as we are about to celebrate The 26th Karmiel Dance Festival and provides an opportunity for us to step back and reflect on developments that have affected Israeli folk dance since the last Festival. The use of social media has intensified as a means of communicating our ideas and our dances and continues to challenge our ability to modulate the proliferation of new dances. Concurrent with this has been the evolution of Israeli folk dance sessions into social recreational gatherings with a festive dance party atmosphere. While dances are taught at sessions, they are readily accessible online. This international access to dances, coupled with interaction via Facebook, Twitter, Skype and the like, bring our virtual global community together and encourage attendance at Israeli dance workshops and events throughout the world where our virtual community can physically connect. More than ever, it is the responsibility of Israeli dance leaders to carefully select from the newly introduced dances those that are best suited to the character of each session while including a core of timeless favorites. The responsible use of modern technology offers a broader base for us to connect and share our love of Israeli folk dance.

In this issue:

- **Eliyahu Gamliel z"l** is an inspiring article by **Yoav Sidi**. We remember one of the unique giants of the Israeli folk dance movement on whose tombstone his spirit is beautifully described with the inscription: "A man of music and the flute; A lover of mankind, nature and dance."
- **Fred Berk – Reflections on His Legacy**: a variety of authors reflect on the contributions and influence of the "father of Israeli folk dance" in North America. (The article appeared in English in the previous issue, #89.)
- **The Past and the Future of Israeli Folk Dance** presents **Dr. Dan Ronen's** concluding remarks at the launching of his book, "Rikuday Am B'Israel – Folk Dance in Israel" and provides historical insight into the pivotal place of Israeli folk dance in Israeli society.
- **Everyone Deserves to Dance**: Impressions from the Dance Session at the Enosh Association, by **Rubio Chamama**, describes Israeli folk dance in the context of activities for rehabilitation and socialization of those coping with mental illness. (This article had appeared in Hebrew in issue #84, July, 2011.)
- **Lirkod Et HaTeva – To Dance With Nature**, **Miri Krimolovski** writes about a wonderful exhibit in Jerusalem, dedicated to The Omer Festivities on the Kibbutz from the first years of the state to the present. There are still kibbutzim that recreate the atmosphere of these biblical agricultural festivals through music, dance and costumes. (The article appeared in Hebrew in the previous issue, #89.)
- **The Featured Dance of the Month – "Katonti"** (I am Undeserving), **Oren Ashkenazi's** beautiful circle dance, has struck an emotional chord and sense of unity with dancers everywhere.

We extend our warmest wishes for success to the organizers, performers and participants in this year's Karmiel Festival.

Happy Reading and Dancing,

**Ruth Goodman, Danny Uziel, and Yaron Meishar - Editors**



Ruth Goodman



Danny Uziel



Yaron Meishar

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# Eliyahu Gamliel ז"ל

"A man of music and the flute;  
A lover of mankind, nature and dance."

(from His tombstone)



Yoav Sidi

Translated:

Malka Tischler

Photos: Aliza Rozen

**E**liyahu Gamliel, son of Meir and Miriam, was born in Tiberias in 1926 to a traditional religious family. His mother was born in Beit She'an, his father in Tiberias, and following their marriage they moved to Tiberias. Eliyahu was born after the birth of three daughters and many prayers to Eliyahu HaNavi (the prophet). (His grandfather had 14 girls and not one son.)

His maternal grandfather was of Moroccan origin. He made aliyah to Israel around 1880 and owned land in the Beit She'an valley. His paternal grandfather came from the Kurdish region of Iraq. Eliyahu and his brother Emanuel were sent to Talmud Torah (religious school) until he was about age nine. But the boys rebelled, deciding to leave and go to a regular public school. On their own, they registered and transferred to the school and then received parental consent retroactively.

Eliyahu was in the youth movement, Hanoar Haoved (working youth), and moved in the early 1940's to Kibbutz Ramat Yochanan within the framework of Chevrat Hanoar Ha'eret Yisraelit (the Land of Israel Youth Society), whose goal was to help poor families and enable their children to work and study. The three years that Eliyahu spent at Ramat Yochanan left an indelible mark on his entire life. Afterwards he moved on with his group to Kibbutz Alumot.

His musical talent was evident from early childhood. At age 4 or 5 he received a harmonica as a gift and taught himself to play. By age 12, on harmonica and drums, he would play music to accompany the dances "Tcherkassia" and "Krakoviak" at the Tzofim (Scouts) shack in Tiberias. Dance leader **Chaim Rochlik**, from Hapoel Hatza'ir (Young Worker Movement) in Russia, was the one who taught him his first Hebrew song, La'avoda (To Work), written by

**Matityahu Shelem** who would later become a sort of adoptive father to Eliyahu at Ramat Yochanan.

Upon coming to Ramat Yochanan, Eliyahu began studying the flute with flutist **Uri Teplitz**, and in addition to being exposed to classical music he also learned folk music. His youth group leader was in fact composer and songwriter Matityahu Shelem, who taught him Bible, history, music ... and raising sheep.

A close relationship developed between the two, and Eliyahu became like a member of the Shelem family. He worked with sheep much of the time, and in the pasture, he learned to play the shepherd's flute from an Arab shepherd. During the same period, from flutist and singer **Ilka Raveh**, he learned how to make a shepherd's flute from a reed.

Eliyahu's original family name was Jum'ah, which means Friday, and was a very common name among Iraqi Jews. At Ramat Yochanan, Eliyahu chose for himself the name Gamliel.

Eliyahu was active on the kibbutz, making a contribution through dance, playing music, and drumming at the dance evenings held there every Friday. He was very popular and distinguished himself in three areas: musical talent, dancing and acting.

He participated, of course, both in plays which Shelem wrote and in kibbutz holiday ceremonies created cooperatively by Shelem (content, words and music) and choreographer **Leah Bergstein** (dance and movement). At the start of Israel's War of Independence, he was drafted into the Palmach (underground army), and then when Tzahal (the Israeli army, IDF) was established, he served in the Sappers Corps.

In 1949, together with his friend, musician **Aharon Shefi**, Eliyahu was one of the first and leading musicians of the Israeli Army Band

*Eliyahu Gamliel  
at the entrance  
to the social hall in  
Kibbutz Ginegar*



(Tizmoret Tzahal), where he also had the honor of being conductor. After being discharged from the army, the two studied at the Music Teacher Training Program of the Seminar Hakibbutzim College, run by **Emanuel Amiran-Pugachov**. At the same time, they also played together in the Dalia Dance Festival orchestra, directed by **Shamah Yaffa**.

Upon completing his studies, Eliyahu received a music teacher's certificate. He taught for many years in elementary and high schools, such as [Haifa] Municipal High Schools Hey and Daled. In High School Daled in 1968, the students went on strike to be able to continue studying music with Eliyahu, an unconventional teacher who took his students outside in the morning to hear the birds chirping and to identify them by their tweets.

Eliyahu didn't limit himself to formal education. In the early '70s he studied with an Arab teacher in Haifa, learning Arabic music and how to play the oud. This enabled him to later teach music in Arab schools.

In 1952, at the request of Matityahu Shelem, Eliyahu composed the song "Eretz Zavav Chalav U'd'vash" (A land flowing with milk and honey) as a canon for two voices. The song was written as a musical exercise for a lesson in composition at the Teachers College. The song quickly spread throughout Israel and the world, and was performed by many singers such as **Yaffa Yarkoni**, **Shimshon Bar-Noy** and others.

Eliyahu composed several songs, among them "Sh'charchoret Chen" (words by **Bentzo**), "Shir Rikud" (words by **Fanya Bergstein**), and "L'chof Hatel" (words by **Musa Ashkenazi**). He also composed an addition to the song "V'David Yafe Einayim" (by **Matityahu Shelem**) and an addition to "Ahavat Hadassah" to a Yemenite folk melody. (He created a dance to this melody and also wrote music for the second part of the dance.) He directed a chorus at Beit Hagefen (a Jewish-Arab Culture Center) in Haifa which performed his songs and arrangements.

In the 1950's Eliyahu appeared in the film "I Like Mike" which was entered in the 1961 Cannes Film Festival. He also danced and played music with the Inbal Dance Theatre at the invitation of **Sara Levi-Tanai**, the group's founder. Inbal at first included only people from Yemen or Aden, but called on him even though his family came from North Africa. This was because of his handsome appearance and talents as a dancer, actor, singer and musician. From his Inbal experience, Eliyahu brought the special hand movement found in his dance "Dror Yikra", when moving into the center in the second part. Few people execute the movement properly.

In 1949 he married **Carmela**. From this short marriage (4-5 years) the couple had three children: **Smadar** (a flutist), **Zemer** (a talented musician and piano tuner) and **Yafit**.

He performed on the flute many times and also gave private lessons on kibbutzim. Besides playing at the holiday ceremonies at Ramat Yochanan, which he continued to attend faithfully even after he left the kibbutz, Eliyahu played at various dance festivals such as the Dalia Festival, the Democratic Youth Festival in Warsaw (1947) with the orchestra of **Ze'ev Chavatzet**, and in 1959 in Vienna. Later on, while staying in the United States, he played flute on Israeli folk dance records produced by **Fred Berk** – Tikva Records – together with accordionist and arranger **Ami Gilad** (see additional article in this issue). Eliyahu also played flute and drums as accompanist for the dance classes given by **Yardena Cohen**, with

Eliyahu's folk dances are artistic creations. They relate to the content of the song and show Eliyahu's respect for the lyrics. His musicianship is also evident in his special accents, which at times teachers and dancers do not succeed in understanding and executing.



*Eliyahu Gamliel the perpetual spreader of joy until dawn*



*Three generations: Eliyahu Gamliel, Yoav Sidi (black shirt) and Yaron Carmel (white shirt)*

whom he was very close, while his second wife, **Marcia**, was the accompanist on piano.

Although he was an excellent flutist, the instrument that characterized him more than any other – and which he always had with him – was a simple shepherd’s flute which he made with his own hands from a pipe of aluminum, plastic or a reed that he found in a field.

Eliyahu also made different instruments, gave demonstrations of instruments that he made, and held workshops on how to make them. He collected musical instruments from around the world and would perform for children on a flute from the Philippines which is played by blowing through the nose, or on the “Musical Chanukiah” that he built for Chanukah, or a snorkel for diving which he changed into a flute, or a dried fruit made into a flute, etc. He played ocarinas (wind instruments) which he made and also played an accordion, which he learned to fix and tune. At home he would play the oud and other instruments.

In 1961, at a music seminar in Zichron Yaakov, he met an American music student, named Marcia, who later became his wife. Marcia returned to the U.S. to finish her studies. Eliyahu followed her in 1962 to study music and instrument-making. He came to New York with a suitcase full of instruments that he had made himself in order to demonstrate his abilities. The suitcase was stolen from his car, an event which caused him aggravation for many years. In the end he was not accepted

to UCLA to study instrument-making. Instead he learned to repair instruments, a profession he worked at from 1964 in a small workshop on Pevzner Street in Haifa, along with teaching music and leading Israeli folk dance.

Marcia and Eliyahu raised four children: singer **Yasmin** (Lahakat Pikud Hatzafon, Sh’lishiyat Mango, teaching at the Rimon School, vocal ensemble “Vocal”, etc.), **Amir**, and the twins **Nadav** and **Yovel**.

In 1974 he again travelled to the U.S., staying for two years and completing his studies in repairing wind instruments in Sioux City, Iowa. The Band Instrument Repair Program at Western Iowa Tech Community College is the oldest of its kind in the United States and focuses on the repair and restoration of woodwind and brass instruments.

Eliyahu was connected to folk dancing, as to music, since his childhood, as both a dancer and an accompanist. He took part in a course for dance teachers organized by **Gurit Kadman**, taught courses in song and dance for the Nachal (army division), danced with the Lehakat Ha’Poel dance troupe, went to dance sessions of the legendary teacher Fred Berk in New York City, and afterwards even taught at Camp Blue Star which Berk directed.

Eliyahu replaced **Shalom Hermon** at local dance sessions at the Oranim Teachers Seminar at Kiryat Tiv’on, but his main dance session was at Beit Pevzner in Haifa, near his workshop. This was a unique session in which Eliyahu expressed his viewpoint on folk dance, which says that the song and its lyrics must be an inseparable part of the dance.

Eliyahu also danced, led and taught international folk dancing. He took on **Tzafra Tatcher**’s session after she became ill, and continued teaching in her place until he developed heart trouble.

Eliyahu’s folk dances are artistic creations. They relate to the content of the song and show Eliyahu’s respect for the lyrics. His musicianship is also evident in his special accents, which at times teachers and dancers do not succeed in understanding and executing, such as: the finger

Eliyahu didn’t limit himself to formal education. In the early ‘70s he studied with an Arab teacher in Haifa, learning Arabic music and how to play the oud. This enabled him to later teach music in Arab schools.



snaps in the dance “Shnei Shoshanim” are on counts two and six, not on counts one and five as most people do them; or the opening to “Ayelet Ahavim” which begins with “step-pause-cross-pause and then four consecutive steps, which few people do correctly. On the other hand, Eliyahu was also flexible in his approach; for example in “Shnei Shoshanim” which was originally composed without a turn for the girl, he would turn his partner and say, “If the public added a turn there, apparently that’s how it should have been from the beginning”.

Among his well-known dances are: “Eretz Zavot Chalav” (for which he also composed the music), Shnei Shoshanim, Debka Bnot Hakfar, Hakol Biglal Ha’ahava, Ahavat Hadassah (quick) [Ahavat Hadassah #2], Im Nin’alu, Bisdot Beit Lechem, Dror Yikra, Kol Hakavod, Ahava Atika, Ayelet Ahavim, Yam Ushki’ah, Mi Ha’ish, Siman She’ata Tza’ir, Ozreni El Chai, Tziyon Tamati, Hagashashim, Tarantella, Yesh Li Gan, Mei’ever Lanahar, Uva’u Ha’ovdim, Eliyahu Hanavi, Bat Hazman, Ro’eh V’ro’a.

Eliyahu spread his dances in Israel and throughout the world via workshops, teachers’ workshops (hishtalmuyot) and Israeli folk dance teachers’ workshops (ulpanim). He danced at different sessions but mainly sought out sessions where he could do the old dances he loved, although he did not mind new dances, mainly if the lyrics of the song had meaning for him such as in Tefilati, Ana Becho’ach, etc.

He danced at the free sessions on the beach at Haifa, combining them with a walk down the promenade of Dado beach and stopping for music and song. At **Yankele Levy**’s session at Beit Katz he presented his dance “Dror Yikra” for the first time, which was created, according to Yankele, during the break.

Eliyahu took part in Friday-Saturday dancing in Caesaria organized by **Moshe Telem** and **Amnon Shiloh**, and gave them a special character. He regularly arranged a morning walk for the dancers to get to know the surroundings, held drumming workshops, and more.

He was one of the founders of “nostalgia” dance sessions in Israel, at Kibbutz Ginagar led by **Ya’ir Bino**, and the Kabbalat Shabbat



*Eliyahu Gamliel with dancers*

(gathering to greet the Sabbath) he held there became the standard.

He also danced at the Karmiel Festival and in small, neighborhood dance sessions. He danced as a way of life, almost to his last day. Even after two heart attacks, he said he did at least one dance a day and even demonstrated the dance “Hanoded” and asked me if I knew it.

Eliyahu loved to sing. He had a strong, clear and very exact voice. Usually he would start by playing and then go on to singing. Because of his good memory and his love for the subject, over the years Eliyahu became one of the experts on Hebrew song. He knew thousands of songs by heart, included special and rare ones. Of course he knew all of Matityahu Shelem’s songs by heart, including those whose notes were never written down. (Eliyahu helped Matityahu write his books because Matityahu never studied music and didn’t know musical notation.) All of this disappeared when Eliyahu left us.

He was concerned with keeping Hebrew song alive. So, for example, together with singer Ilka Raveh and a group from Ramat Yochanan, he recorded a video of Shelem’s songs, and also recorded special songs for the site “Zemereshet” which deals with Hebrew song from ancient times until the establishment of Israel.

Eliyahu was a member of Chavurat Ha’esh. Chavurat Ha’esh is a group of people who fought in the Palmach, undercover in the Arab division,

Eliyahu was active on the kibbutz, making a contribution through dance, playing music, and drumming at the dance evenings held there every Friday. He was very popular and distinguished himself in three areas: musical talent, dancing and acting.





[Left to right] Eliyahu Gamliel, Sedi (Se'adia) Amishai, Yoav Sidi



Kabbalat Shabbat in Ginegar 2009

the “mista’aravim” – (soldiers who disguised themselves as Arabs to accomplish missions or gain information, etc.) – who used to sit around the campfire, singing shepherds’ songs and other songs. Veterans of chavurat ha’esh still get together regularly to this day for evenings of singing.

In recent years Eliyahu spent a lot of time learning religious poetry (piyutim) and songs with a group that met once a week at Beit Abba Hushi (Abba Hushi Center for Culture and Society) in Haifa, an activity which brought him back to the melodies and music of his childhood, in his father’s house.

At the Karmiel Dance Festival, Eliyahu used to sit with friends every night from 2 a.m. to dawn in a quiet corner at the entrance to the Matnas Community Center to sing, play music, tell stories and jokes, and dance. This activity drew in many other song lovers and became one of the festival’s unofficial charming attractions.

Eliyahu created many corners such as this in different places. For example, in Amnon Shiloh’s Moadon Zemer (Song Club – a sing-along event) he would tell “the story behind the song”,

play music and break into song. In the Reform synagogue which he visited regularly, he became one of the pillars of the community as he combined all of his abilities as a singer, musician, dance teacher and guide, while not defining himself as religious. He was always connected to Jewish texts and demonstrated great knowledge and an outstanding memory, as he could quote whole chapters from the Tanach by heart.

An additional area he excelled in was his knowledge of plant and animal life, and hiking

trails on the Carmel and throughout Israel. He studied a little botany at Tel Aviv University, but acquired most of his knowledge by self-study. He had extremely sharp senses and would see and hear all things in nature. He learned much from questions that he asked shepherds in the pasture and also from books he acquired, or from visits to the University of Haifa library, or from advice from experts in the field such as Prof. Emeritus **Amotz Dafni**, who was his neighbor. He knew the names of thousands of plants and knew them better than known, certified botanists. He loved to participate in school hikes, and also to be a hiking guide, when he would always bring in his knowledgeable explanations and also singing, music and more.

He knew exactly what we are able to eat from nature. He would stop, pick something, eat it himself and give it to others to taste. There was a sort of thorn Eliyahu would pick, remove the peel, make a few holes, make a flute out of it, and after he was finished playing he would eat it. He had the habit of coming to every event or hike before everyone else to survey the place, its plants and animals, and to enjoy nature.

Eliyahu left us before his time, on March 3, 2013, and was buried in the cemetery at Ramat Yochanan where Leah Bergstein, Ilka Raveh and his teacher and spiritual father Matityahu Shelem are also buried.

His burial on the kibbutz was permitted, even though he was not a member, because of his special tie to the Shelem family and to the kibbutz, which he visited often to see friends and his daughter, Smadar, and to participate in holiday celebrations -- and perhaps also because he was truly an ambassador and disseminator of the culture which was formed at Ramat Yochanan, to Israel and throughout the world. ✎

#### Sources:

Article by **Dan Ronen** in the pamphlet “Midor L’dor” of Amutat Rei’im.

Interviews with **Elisha Shelem**, Matityahu’s son, and with **Marcia Gamliel**, his wife.

Article in Rokdim-Nirkoda, April 2006 (Issue 69).

Various articles on the internet.

By

Judith Brin Ingber,  
Ruth Goodman &  
Ruth Schoenberg

With additional  
material  
contributed by  
Ami Gilad

Photos courtesy  
of Judith Brin Ingber  
and the Israeli  
Dance Institute

\* For more details of Berk's  
life and work see, "Victory  
Dances, The Story of Fred  
Berk, A Modern Day  
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Aviv: published by the Israel  
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Fritz Berger  
(Fred Berk)  
in *The Tyrant*,  
Vienna 1934

# Fred Berk – Reflections on His Legacy



**B**orn Fritz (Friedrich) Berger, **Fred Berk** (1911-1980), was a dominant influence in the world of Israeli folk dance in the United States. The following article contains both reminiscences by some of those who touched by Berk and biographical information that briefly describes his life and accomplishments that made him into the unlikely dance visionary he was.

He was born in Vienna during the reign of Franz Joseph I, emperor of Austria (1848–1916) and king of Hungary (1867–1916). Berk had only completed ninth grade when his father apprenticed him to a goldsmiths for whom he worked for five years. This was a job that he hated and from the relentless work at his desk, he became so stooped over that he was advised to take dance lessons to improve his posture. Coincidentally, he attended a free outdoor performance given by the Viennese expressionist modern dancer **Gertrud Kraus** (later a pioneer of modern dance in Israel). It was to Kraus that he turned to consult about dance lessons.

Thus began an unlikely career; Fred began to study dance with her and then he joined her company as well as performing in opera and eventually opening his own dance studio. In 1934, he won a prestigious bronze medal at the Viennese State International Dance Competition, as the most promising solo dancer, in his own dance called, "The Tyrant". (He couched his social criticism of Hitler by depicting a dictator in the figure of the ancient Pharaoh.)

His European career was cut short by the Nazi takeover of Austria which forced him to flee to Switzerland, Holland, England and finally, to

Cuba. There, he performed with a former Kraus dancer, **Claudia Vall Kauffman**, and also ran a dance school from 1939-1941. He entered the United States in 1941 and spent his first few years performing with Vall Kauffman and also with **Hanya Holm** (who was one of the "Big Four" founders of American modern dance; the others included **Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman.**)

Upon naturalization as a United States citizen in 1947, Berger changed his name to Fred Berk. In New York City, he re-established himself with another former Kraus Company member, **Katya Delakova**. By 1950, the dance duo of **Delakova and Berk** was well known for their dances with Jewish themes. They performed throughout the United States, ran a studio in New York City and taught at the **Brandeis-Bardin Institute** summer camps in Simi Valley, California.

Independently, he began to concentrate on his own choreography and also producing other dancers. He created a unique dance series called Stage for Dancers that took place at the Brooklyn Museum, (located in Brooklyn, NY), from 1949 to 1954. He chose dancers from all the different modern dance studios and companies, giving them a chance to appear together in a new spirit, to show their own dances and to earn some money, too. This concert series contributed greatly to the advancement of modern dance in America.

In Manhattan, he also produced dance programs at the American Museum of Natural History and then at the 92nd Street YM-YWHA (Young Men's-Young Women's Hebrew Association located at 92nd Street and Lexington Avenue,





*Fred Berk and Katya Delakova in Make Way for Tomorrow, 1944*

then called the 92nd St Y for short and that is known today as 92Y). There, together with **Doris Humphrey and Bonnie Bird**, he co-founded the Merry-Go-Rounders Dance Company, for which he choreographed “Holiday in Israel” (1953) as well as several other works. (The Merry-Go-Rounders, established in 1952 by the Children’s Dance Department of the 92nd Street Y as a non-profit children’s dance and theater group was made up of adult professional dancers. Its mission was to educate children about dance through educational and entertaining dance performances with multicultural themes, as reflected in the performances and the audiences.)

Starting in 1947, Berk began to lead a Jewish Dance Repertory Group and give classes in Palestinian and Jewish folk dance. (Before the establishment of the independent state of Israel, the folk dances created there were known as Palestinian dances). In 1951, he conducted the weekly Jewish folk dance classes at the 92nd Street Y. The following year, he began The Jewish Dance Division there and, under his direction, he established Israeli folk dance classes for many age groups; a weekly “open” dance session where anyone could just drop in and which attracted hundreds every week; courses in teaching Israeli folk dance; leadership folk dance training programs and performance experiences.

In 1955, at the 92Y, Berk also created, directed and choreographed for Hebraica, a resident Israeli folk dance company. Simultaneously, he also headed the dance institute at The Jewish Theological Seminary, providing rabbinical students with participatory experience in the importance of Jewish and Israeli dance.

Also, in 1952, Berk and Delakova performed their choreography, “Scenes from Jerusalem,” in the first Israeli Folk Dance Festival and Contest held at Hunter College and sponsored by the

Jewish National Fund. The Israeli Folk Dance Festival began as a dance competition in which five youth groups participated with guest artists filling out an evening-long performance.

Two years later, sponsorship was taken over by the American Zionist Youth Council. Berk served as Festival Director from 1954 until his retirement in 1977. He greatly expanded the number of participating groups and the format of the Dance Festival was changed from a competition to a youth festival. In the ensuing years, the Festival was held at diverse venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Felt Forum (The Theater at Madison Square Garden), Avery Fisher Hall (at Lincoln Center), the Beacon Theater and The Town Hall. In addition to running the Festival, in the 1960s and 1970s, he was also conducted annual summer workshops for teachers in Israeli folk dance at Blue Star Camps in Hendersonville, North Carolina.

Berk expanded the activities connecting youth and Israel under the auspices of the American Zionist Youth Foundation (AZYF), conducting a summer Folk Dance Workshop Tour to Israel for folk dance enthusiasts. Through AZYF he founded and directed a separate department that he called the Israel Folk Dance Institute through which he edited “Hora,” a newsletter about Israeli folk dance that he had begun in 1961 as “Bulletin,” and also created a record and book distribution center. Many of the books he wrote were published by the AZYF: “Ha-Rikud –The Jewish Dance” (1972), “The Chassidic Dance” (1975), “Machol Ha’am – Dance of the Jewish People” (1978) and “100 Israeli Folk Dances,” with notated dance instructions, (1977 and 1983). “The Jewish Dance: an anthology of articles” (1960) was published by Exposition Press, NY.

Earlier he had written “Dances of Palestine” (1947) and “Jewish Folk Dance Book” (1948) with his wife, Katya Delakova. Later he collaborated with **Lucy Venable** on the book, “Ten Folk Dances in Labanotation” (1959). (Venable notated his choreography of “Holiday in Israel.”



*First Israel Folk Dance Festival Program Cover*



*Finale, Israel Folk Dance Festival at the Felt Forum, 1974, Photo Izhak Berez*

A full description of the dance along with the musical score, arranged by **Beatrice Rainer**, was published by the Dance Notation Bureau Press in 1977.) Berk had begun to learn Laban's notation in Vienna and he became proficient in its intricacies. Labanotation is a system of analyzing and recording human movement. It is applicable to many dance styles, not only folk dance. Labanotation also helped him to clarify both his verbal instructions for teaching and his written dance descriptions that were included in the Israeli folk dance recordings that he supervised and were produced by Tikva Records.

His career also included teaching an accredited Israeli Folk Dance course, on three levels – beginner, intermediate and advanced, as an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Physical Education at Brooklyn College, CUNY. Remembering that his own formal education had stopped at ninth grade, it is a wonder that he became such an astute, master teacher who could teach teachers, work at the college level, entice children, train amateur as well as professional dancers through inspiring them all to do their best at their appropriate levels.

Recently, **Ami Gilad**, accordionist and music arranger, wrote to us about his experiences producing vinyl sound recordings with Berk. Gilad recalled that he saw Berk teaching on

Wednesday evenings at the 92Y open sessions with a microphone in his hand. "The sessions grew every week and the love of Israeli dance went 'viral'. On the stage of Buittenwieser Hall, surrounded by a mural created by artist **Vincent Maragliotti** (1888-1978), a native of Italy who emigrated to America at the age of 17, Berk would sit on a stool, with demonstrators or young dancers on the floor below the stage showing what he wanted the crowd to do." From above, he directed the whole group through verbal instructions. He was physically limited in what he could do because of an arthritic hip made worse by unsuccessful surgery. His disability never stopped his ardor or his success as a teacher, choreographer or creative force.

Gilad continued, "Alongside Berk were his phonograph and a small collection of folk dance recordings because, at the time, there simply were not many records to choose from. He directed the dancers with his voice and instructed them in various common Israeli dance movement patterns, stepping to different rhythms in circles and lines and soon they were dancing to the sounds of Mayim Mayim, Kuma Echa, Harmonica, Havu Lanu Yayin, Hora Agadati, Machol Ovadia, Debka Gilboa, and Hein Yerunan. These were favorite dances in Israel that Berk learned there on his tour in 1949 with Delakova or afterwards

Berk had only completed ninth grade when his father apprenticed him to a goldsmiths for whom he worked for five years. This was a job that he hated and from the relentless work at his desk, he became so stooped over that he was advised to take dance lessons to improve his posture.





*Israeli Folk Dance Open Session at 92nd Street Y – 1952 (close up)*



*Israeli Dance Open Session at 92nd Street Y – 1952*



*Hebraica Dancers in Market Scene (from the collection of B. Liebhaber)*

on his regular return trips where he would decide which dances to bring back to teach in New York.

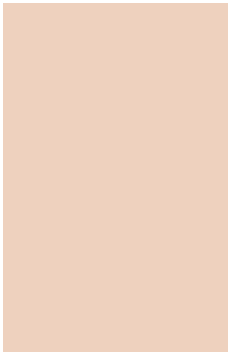
He managed to convey the feeling, to every single person in that room, that these dances were incredibly joyful. They were also able to experience a solidarity that was new to each of them. Occasionally, Berk invited musicians to (come to the session to) play their instrument: accordion, flute, drums or guitar. Live music was indeed very helpful but not always available.

Berk relied heavily on the limited sound recording collection at his disposal; the selection was meager for everyone in those days.

“Berk decided to improve the musical situation for Israeli folk dance. He made contact with Tikva Records (founded in 1947 as an independent Jewish record label) headed by an American Jew, **Allen B. Jacobs**, whose focus had been on producing records of cantorial and Yiddish songs. Berk proposed that he (Jacobs) branch out by creating and promoting Israeli folk dance records.

“This was a magical idea in Jacob’s eyes and he became very supportive of Berk’s newest endeavor. Berk went into high gear and started looking for a team comprised of a musical arranger, musicians and singers for the recordings. Directed by Berk, his new records included melodies adapted for the dances with speeds adjusted to what dancers needed. How did Berk accomplish this? He had dancers actually dancing in the recording studio during the record production to test out the rhythms. Berk also created a booklet of instructions for the dances that accompanied each recording. The records he produced became helpful treasures for everyone teaching Israeli folk dance and everyone dancing to them.”

These 33 1/3 rpm LP recordings included “Debka Israeli folk dances” (**Ami Gilad and Ofra Fuchs** – 1966), “Dance along with Sabras,” (**Ami Gilad**), “Israeli Folk Dance Festival” (**Ami Gilad and Geula ohar**), “Potpourri – Israeli folk dances” (**Ami ilad**), “Panorama Israeli folk dances” (**Ami Gilad**), “Rikudey am Israeli folk dances” (**Ami Gilad**), “Kibbutz style Chassidic dances” (**Ami Gilad, Shai Burstyn and Yossi Shlomer** – 1973), “Israeli Folk Dance Medley – dances for children from nine to ninety” (**Shai Burstyn and Ahuva Tzadok**), “Israeli Folk Dance Party” (**Shai Burstyn**) and Israeli Folk Dance Souvenir (**Shai Burstyn** – 1972). (Tikva also produced “Israeli dances” (**Dvora Lapson, Tikva Ensemble and Tova Ronni** – 1956), “Dance with **Rivka (Sturman)** - Israeli folk dances” and “Dance For Fun - Israeli folk dances” (**Shai Burstyn and Geula Zohar** with descriptions by **Ayala Goren**.)





Danny Uziel and Fred Berk, 1978



Dance Along with Sabras 1963

Berk had previously worked with **Michael Herman** (in the 1950's) and **Elyakum (Shapirra)** and his Israeli Orchestra to produce 78 rpm recordings of "Lech, lech lamidbar," "Vehitifu," "Baroiges Tanz," "Harmonica," "Henei Ma Tov" (**Sarah Harmon**, soprano), "Patch Tanz: Jewish circle dance" and "Tidrehi" and with **Robert Starer** and the **Arno Levitch Ensemble** to produce "Debka," "New Hora (Mi Yivne Hagalil)," "Circle from Sarid," and "Ari, Ara." Berk also assisted with "Hora - songs and dances of Israel" (**Oranim Zabar** Israeli Troupe, featuring **Geula Gill** - 1961) on Elektra Records by writing the booklet of instructions.

**Ami Gilad** continued, "In 1959, Lehakat Karmon (The Karmon Israeli Dance Company) toured the United States and I accompanied the troupe as a musical accompanist on accordion. Berk came to one of the New York performances (held at Radio City Music Hall in New York City), went backstage after the show (an elaborate musical and dance pageant, designed as a salute to Israel and titled 'Happy Land,' New York Times, September 25, 1959) and expressed his amazement at the artistic level presented by the troupe.

"At the same time, he invited the Karmon Group members to stop by to visit one of his Israeli dance sessions at the 92Y. At that meeting, a close professional relationship formed between Berk and me and he suggested that I arrange the music for the next album he planned to produce. You

could say it was laying the cornerstone for a series of recordings produced by Berk which I directed with my musical arrangements and by playing the accordion on all those recordings.

"During one of the years I worked with Berk, he asked me (Ami Gilad) to compose a song based on a Chassidic style melody for a dance he wanted to create for his performing ensemble, Hebraica. It bothered him when dancers 'created' Israeli folk dances in America. He thought that (this) should only be done in Israel. The music I composed I called "Freilach" (a Yiddish word for joyful) and it was included in one of his Tikva recordings. Although Fred created the dance for Hebraica and taught the dance at his sessions at the Y (even though he didn't consider this a folk dance, but more in the style of Expressionist dance), it didn't last long."

One of the Hebraica dancers was **Livia Drapkin Vanaver**. She wrote the following recollections to the editors. "Fred is always (still) with me. He was the major mentor in my life. I met him when I was 14 when he asked me to join the Y Group. After dancing in Cejwin Camp (a Jewish children's camp in Port Jervis, NY), for three summers where I was bitten by the Israeli Dance bug, I totally craved continuing some Israeli dance experience during the (school) year. When I walked in to my first open session at the 92nd St. Y ... this was the beginning of a life changing journey



The finale of Fred Berk's Holiday in Israel





with Fred. After a year with the Y Group, which included performing in the Annual Israel Dance Festival, held in those days at Carnegie Hall, Fred invited me into Hebraica.

“At age 15, I was the youngest member of the group. Hebraica was the perfect company for me; there was a balance between folk and modern dance. It was also a fabulously fun group of people! I remember one weekend; we piled into **Amnon Sklarsky**’s car and drove up to Woodstock, NY where Fred had a weekend/country house and we had the best day! Amnon had played the accordion for the Wednesday night open sessions.

“I became close with several of the dancers in the Company that first year, for example, **Adinah Margolis** (who directed the Y performing group and eventually moved to Be’er Sheva and started her own Hebraica style performing company of teens called “Holit”, that appeared internationally, including Folkmoot USA - The State International Festival of North Carolina). Another was **Bruce Block** (who is still a lifelong friend). Also, just being in Hebraica, a group of dancers many of whom were trained in ballet and modern dance, was a huge influence on me. The summer after my first year in Hebraica, I attended ADF (American Dance Festival held at that time at Connecticut College in New London) with Bruce and another Hebraica dancer; this was also a life changing experience

that guided me toward the next steps of my dance career.

“Besides being my dance mentor, Fred ‘adopted me’. I had just lost my mother at age 12 and was pretty much on my own. Each week, I commuted by subway from Jamaica High School in Queens, often right from cheerleader practice (in my uniform!). Besides rehearsals, I spent time visiting with Fred at his apartment, around the corner from the Y, having lunch and just talking together and listening to

his advice both personal and professional. He was a father figure to me.

“Occasionally, he would receive job requests and he would pass them along. It was through Fred that I volunteered to teach dance weekly in the child psychiatric ward at Mount Sinai hospital; taught Israeli and International Folk Dance for two summers at Usdan Center for the Creative and Performing Arts (a summer school designed to provide opportunities for children to develop artistic skills, regardless of their level of talent) out on Long Island in Wyandanch, NY; set some of his dances on other dance groups in the Metropolitan area; and eventually, at his request, took over the Wednesday night Israeli Dance classes and the Open Session at the 92nd St. Y when Fred moved to Israel.

“So much of Fred’s choreography, his approach to the use of space and lighting, the way he moved large groups of people around the stage, the manner in which he directed the company, his sense of discipline and compassion, the way he brought out the best performance quality that each of us had to give – all had a lasting effect on me and my work today. His emphasis on leadership training is still a big part of my work today with young dancers. **Livia and Bill Vanaver** established The Vanaver Caravan in 1972 through which they conduct in-depth arts-in-education programs throughout the US for both public and private schools and create

He managed to convey the feeling, to every single person in that room, that these dances were incredibly joyful. They were also able to experience a solidarity that was new to each of them.

a curriculum in conjunction with teachers and administrators.

“I don’t think there’s a dance that I’ve ever choreographed that doesn’t have some of Fred’s influence. The way I direct my own company, The Vanaver Caravan, today has so much of his style, empathic quality, devotion and rigor. It was an honor to be so close to Fred and, in some small way, to be carrying on his work in the dance world today.”

Directly and indirectly, Berk had a major influence on many lives. **Lorraine Posner Arcus** wrote, “I have always loved to dance, but Israeli folk dancing became the art form that touched my soul. At the age of 15, my youth group advisor encouraged me to attend a one week NFTY (North American Federation of Temple Youth, a youth movement of Reform Judaism in North America) summer program, “Song and Dance Leadership Seminar,” held at Kutz Camp in Warwick, NY.” Reflecting, she said, “I had never heard of Fred Berk, but that week was to change my life.” It was there that she met Berk and, after the summer, she began her Israeli dance studies with him at the 92nd

Street Y and also she began to teach Israeli dance in her synagogue and youth group.

“In the summer of 1970, I was a member of Fred’s Israel tour through the AZYF. I will never forget sitting on the vast lawn of Kfar Maccabiah, toward the end of the summer, talking to Fred. He needed a female demonstrator for his Wednesday evening open sessions. Why me? His explanation has influenced my work with dancers of all ages, ever since. Fred said, ‘There may be dancers who dance better than you, but you dance with your heart, and that’s most important.’ I have kept this mantra in mind through the past 46 years of teaching Israeli dance.”

As an award winning teacher herself, (Lorraine was a recipient of the 2001 Covenant Award for Excellence in Creative Jewish Education) she stated, “Fred left behind some special gifts for us; they are his danceable and replicable choreographies. Part of his brilliance was to be able to create a scene and tell a story through movement. One of these pieces is his ‘Song of the Ghetto’. A powerful series of movements that could be executed by the novice or professional

“So much of Fred’s choreography, his approach to the use of space and lighting, the way he moved large groups of people around the stage, the manner in which he directed the company, his sense of discipline and compassion, the way he brought out the best performance quality that each of us had to give – all had a lasting effect on me and my work today





(dancer), this performance piece created a visual experience of the emotions and horrors of the Holocaust.

“It became a regular part of my community (Albany, NY) commemorations of Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) and adapted for Tisha Ba’av at Camp Ramah in New England (an overnight Jewish summer camp, for children and teens, located in Palmer, Massachusetts). Each performer and each viewer would leave the program with an indelible artistic image.”

In 2011, in memory of what would have been Berk’s 100th birthday, Lorraine recreated Berk’s choreography titled “Fishing Village” with “Tzamarot,” her teen performance group based at Temple Israel, Albany, NY. “At various dance festivals, the beautiful yet relatively simple steps, hand gestures, costumes and formations provided a visual contrast to many of the more contemporary interpretations of Israeli folk dance. Fred gave us the inspiration and the tools to teach our students and to train the next generation of teachers.”

Berk’s legacy has continued on in many areas. The 92Y Israeli folk dance program, with its full schedule of classes including the favorite open session on Wednesday evenings, is directed by **Ruth Goodman** and **Danny Uziel** (another former member of The Karmon Israeli Dance Company).

The Israel Folk Dance Festival and Festival of the Arts, under the direction of **Ruth Goodman** since 1978, celebrated its 61st year on March 25, 2012. Under her direction, the Festival format was expanded to include multimedia and choral groups. In recent years, the Festival has welcomed out-of-town groups representing the Jewish communities of Albany and Rochester (NY), Boston (MA), California, Chicago (IL), Cleveland (OH), Delaware, Hartford and New Haven (CT), Miami (FL), Missouri, Philadelphia (PA), Washington, D.C., Wisconsin, Canada, Mexico, Turkey and Israel.

Since 1990, the Israeli Dance Institute has



*Ami Gilad and Moshiko at Horati, 1978*

taken on the production of the Israel Folk Dance Festival. Under its sponsorship (in partnership with Jewish National Fund with the support of Bnai Zion and the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York), the Festival now opens with a family Arts Fair that brings together the activities of numerous Jewish organizations, arts and crafts, exhibitors, vendors, interactive presenters and community folk dancing and singing. In 2001, the Jubilee Festival performance was held in the Adams Playhouse at Hofstra University on Long Island in Hempstead, NY, as part of “Horati,” a four day weekend program celebrating fifty years of Israeli folk dance in North America.

For the first time in the USA, Israeli folk dance enthusiasts and performers from all over the world gathered together to celebrate a milestone that marked 50 years of Israeli Folk Dance in America and to celebrate the legacy of Fred Berk, the “father” of the Israeli Folk Dance movement in the United States. The event, “Horati,” (May 31 – June 3, 2001) also brought together pioneers of the Israeli folk dance movement in the USA, a number of Israeli folkdance choreographers who had a profound impact on the formulation of the dance traditions in America and longstanding dance leaders.

A project of the Israel Dance Institute, the

May 31 – June 3, 2001  
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Horati Weekend, directed by **Danny Uziel** and **Ruth Goodman**, offered something for everyone. Participants were treated to a myriad selection of workshops featuring noted authorities in the field including **Moshiko (Moshe Yitzhak Halevy)** and **Yankele Levy** (from Israel) and from the USA, coast to coast, **Shlomo Bachar**, **Israel Yakovee**, **Moshe Eskayo**, **Naftaly Kadosh** and **Danny Uziel** as well as **Ami Gilad**. There were special interest workshops presented by **Judith Brin Ingber** (Sephardic Dance Traditions), **Lorraine Arcus** (Children's Dance Repertoire for Teachers), **Danny Pollock and Ruth Goodman** (Creative use of Children's Dances), **George Kirby** (Darbuka), **Dassie Shuster and Anita Naider** of Simchateinu (Simcha Dances) and **Felix Fibich** (Eastern European Dance Traditions).

During the weekend, the Dance Institute and the dance community honored the Israeli folkdance pioneers in North America, Israeli folkdance choreographers from North America and Israel and a number of long time folkdance leaders who continue to direct and shape the future of the Israeli Folkdance Movement in North America. The group was acknowledged by their peers and presented with certificates of achievement. The jewel of the weekend was the gala 50th Anniversary Folk Dance Festival which took place on Sunday afternoon. The colorful display featured dance and choral groups representing, day schools, youth movements, colleges, and Jewish communities from the USA, Canada and Mexico. The pervading theme that lingered was that the Israeli Folk Dance movement is alive and thriving both here and abroad.

On Sunday, June 20, 2010, as part of a year-long celebration of "75 Years of Dance at 92Y," **Fred Berk** was also honored with a special afternoon tribute held in Bittenwieser Hall, "The Pulse of Jewish Folk Dance: A Program of Historical Reflections". This program was presented by **Ruth Goodman** and **Danny Uziel**,

directors of 92Y's Israeli Dance Division and the Israeli Dance Institute, along with dance historian **Judith Brin Ingber\*** who presented a talk and slide show of Berk's life. Some of his original choreographed dance pieces were reconstructed by **Livia Drapkin Vanaver, Ruth Goodman and Amy Schmidt** ("Holiday in Israel" - 1953) with **Danny Pollock** (folk dance specialist at the Y) and dancers from Goodman's performing troupe, "The Parparim Ensemble" and "The Vanaver Caravan." Afterwards, in remembrance of Berk's inclusive nature, the audience was invited to join the performers in an open dance session.

In 2011, in what would have been Fred's 100th birthday year, "Festival 60" celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Israel Dance Festival with a gala weekend. This weekend marked two milestones – the 60th Annual Israel Folk Dance Festival and 60 years of Israeli Folk Dance at the 92nd Street Y.

Festival 60 began at the 92Y with "Daniyada" (on April 1-2) and featured pioneering legends of Israeli Folk Dance in the USA, **Dani Dassa and Danny Uziel** and, master teacher of the next generation, **Danny Pollock**, in a cornucopia of workshops, cultural explorations and dance parties including a dancing Oneg Shabbat. The weekend included a **Fred Berk** tribute program and a memorabilia exhibition. On Sunday, April 3rd, 2011, the 60th Israel Dance Festival performance, showcasing dancers and musicians from the United States (local tri-state residents, as well as from Albany, Miami and Washington, DC), Canada (Toronto), Venezuela (Caracas) and Israel, was held at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Educational Campus in New York City.

As we reflect on his legacy, we salute **Fred Berk** – an exemplar, whose driving spirit and intense dedication inspired all who were fortunate enough to work with him and to know him and all those who have followed in his footsteps.

Am Yisrael Chai VeRoked!! 

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**Oren Ashkenazi**

Translated by:  
Ruth Goodman

# Katonti

**O**ren Ashkenazi holds a folk dance instructor's certificate (Wingate Institute Ulpan), a diploma in choreography studies and event production, a Bachelor's Degree in Education and Sociology and a Master's Degree in Arts in Education (University of Leeds, England).

Today, Oren is an Israeli dance leader / instructor, dance creator and choreographer for dance troupes which have represented Israel at festivals abroad (Italy, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Switzerland, etc.), choreographer for the Haifa municipality troupe, "Zemer Achva Ve'Shalom," and artistic director of (dance) camps abroad.

For ten years, Oren worked as teacher of creative movement and dance at Kerem Maharal (a moshav near Atlit). For eight years, he served as Artistic Director of "Machol Hungaria" and, for five years, for "Machol Baltica". He also worked as a choreographer for the dance troupes of the Leo Baeck Education Centre in Haifa for five years.

He was also a dancer in the dance troupes "Shalom Haifa" and "Shalom Tel-Aviv"; for two years he was choreographer for the Tirat Ha'Carmel performing choir, "Gvanim", where he set choreographies and staged year end performances at various schools.

For seven years he worked in Haifa as an Israeli dance instructor in dormitories for students and taught at summer camps in European Jewish communities under the auspices of the "Joint" (JDC – Joint Distribution Committee, a leading Jewish humanitarian assistance organization).

Oren grew up in a home that loved Israeli song and dance. His father, **Musa Ashkenazi**, was one of the first folk dance instructors in Haifa, who led many groups in the North and

founded the Haifa dance troupe, "Hora Galim". His mother worked in Haifa as a teacher in the "Ein Hayam" school and was a singer in the Haifa cultural center's "Chavurat Beit Rothschild – Beit Rothschild Singers And Band", led by **Effi Netzer**, and sang with the "Hora Galim" troupe in performances at many festivals around the world.

Oren feels that his love of the field was drawn from his upbringing and, through using many of its activities, he tries to transmit this love to dancers in Israel and within Jewish communities around the world.

## **About the dance he says:**

The first time I heard the song via YouTube, I was very excited and I immediately knew that I wanted to create a dance for the song. Sometimes, many words are not needed to stir the emotions. There are two very powerful verses to the song; the first is taken from the book of Genesis [32/11-12] and the second from Psalm 86/13. I felt that the singer, **Yonatan Razel**, was also expressing his personal prayer, after the tragic event that happened in his family and, at the conclusion, there was a happy ending.

I thought that it would be appropriate to create a dance, accessible to both beginner and advanced dancers, that they can easily learn and perform and thus be reflected in the unity of all.

## **Katonti**

**Dance: Oren Ashkenazi. Meter: 3/4**

**Formation: Circle, hands free**

### **Part I: Face CCW**

- 1 Waltz step fwd starting R.
- 2 Step L fwd, step R to side to face center, step L behind R.
- 3 Full waltz turn and ¼ to right on the line of the circle with a waltz step to end facing CCW.
- 4 Balance fwd on L, back on R, L in place.



- 5 Waltz balance to the right side: R to rt. side, L behind R, R across L.
- 6 Full waltz turn and ¼ into center of circle starting with L.
- 7 Waltz balance fwd (RLR) with arms raised to form a "U" shape.
- 8 Waltz balance bwd (L bwd, R to side to face CCW, L cross in front) with arms lowered.
- 9-12 Repeat counts 1-4.
- 13 Step R fwd, brush L fwd, step L fwd.
- 14 Repeat count 13.
- 15 Face center and repeat count 5 (waltz balance to right).
- 16 Full waltz turn and ¼ to left on the line of circle with waltz step L to end facing CCW.
- 17-32 Repeat Part I but end facing the center.

### Part II: Face Center

- 1 Turn into center with waltz step RLR.
- 2 Continue turning into center with waltz step LRL and end facing center.

- 3-4 Waltz balance fwd starting with R and back starting with L.
- 5 Step R across L, step back on L, step R to rt. while moving the right arm in an arc starting down across body, up and sideward from left to right.
- 6 Repeat count 5 with opposite footwork and arm.
- 7 Moving into center, ½ turn rt. with waltz step R and end with back to center.
- 8 Yem. L bwd.
- 9-16 Repeat 1-8 facing out but end facing center.

### Part III: Face Center.

- 1-2 Waltz balance R-L to rt. and left sides with arms moving sideward.
- 3 Step R to rt. and, while circling rt. arm overhead from the rt. side, drag L to rt. to close next to R.
- 4 ½ turn to rt. to face out of center with a waltz step R.
- 5-8 Repeat 1-4 with opposite footwork. Repeat the dance. Repeat Part I, measures 1-8. ✎

Instructions  
notated by  
Honey Goldfein

## Katonti

**Lyrics: Genesis 32:11-12**  
[part of Jacob's prayer] and **Psalm 86:13**  
**Music/Singer: Yonatan Razel**

Katonti Mikol HaChasadim  
U'Mikol Ha'Emet  
Asher Asita Et Avdecha  
Ki Vimkli Avarti Et Hayarden  
Ata Hayiti LeShnei Machanot

Hatzileini Na  
Hatzileini Na  
Hatzileini Na  
Ki Chasdecha Gadol Alai  
Vehitzalta Nafshi Misheol  
Tachtiya

### I Am Undeserving

I am undeserving of all the favors  
and goodness that You have done for Your  
servant.

For I crossed the Jordan with [nothing but]  
my walking stick and now  
I have become [these] two camps.

Save me, I pray. [He is afraid of Esau].  
Save me, I pray.  
Save me, I pray.

For Your steadfast love toward me is great;  
And You have saved me from the depths of  
Sheol [the underworld].

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Dr. Dan Ronen

Translated:  
Ruth Goodman  
& Ruth Schoenberg

# The Past and the Future of Israeli Folk Dance

Concluding remarks made at the celebration of the launching of the book, "Folk Dance in Israel", on March 23, 2012, The Dance Library of Israel at Beit Ariela Municipal Library of Tel Aviv



In the book, I wonder what is "Israeli" about Israeli folk dance? And why is it important to know? Perhaps, we must dance and not think?

**T**hanks very much and "Rav Brachot – Many Blessings" to each and every one of you who has come to celebrate the launching of the book, "Rikuday Am B'Israel – Folk Dance in Israel", to honor the printed words (and possibly even me), but especially the folk dances themselves.

The phenomenon of creating Israeli folk dances that had not been generated previously is fascinating, intriguing and unique in the context and the message that it brought. "Without folk dance there is no nation," said **Gurit Kadman**. This was an ambitious attempt to contribute to the formulation of an "Israeli nationality" within an "official popular culture." Did it succeed?

To all the questioners of why so much should be written about folk dance, it is said: At first, about 60 years ago, there were six dances that were composed in the country [Israel]; today thousands are dancing and there are countless dances – and the habituated. Is that good or bad? When will we know? Israel herself enumerates the number of dancers and dances. What does this signify?

The purpose of the book is not to summarize a historical phenomenon, socially, culturally, ideologically, but to become better informed, to think about it and to ask questions; as it is said, it is easier to "judge a man by his questions rather than by his answers" (Voltaire).

Are the folk dances of today really folk dances? Were they ever danced by the vatikim (veteran folk dancers) in the bygone days? Or, is it as they say, "It is not what it was". "Yes, we change variables in the dance, the mood is changing and yet, the basic steps remain – why"?

What is Israeli about the folk dance of the Israeli's? What is "Israelistic"?

Do we have an answer or many answers? And perhaps not, in the words of **Prof. Emerita** [of history] **Anita Shapira**: "Even today, Israelistic is not yet a kneaded mixture template and I doubt that you will ever find a similarity".

Is the "Israelistic [quality] shrinking"? Has it disappeared? What is the nature of the dialogue between the past and the present? And as the saying goes: "He who lacks the old will also be unable to have anything new".

Our memories of the vatikim cannot be deleted. Are they just "meetings with ourselves"? Do they still have hope? How do you transfer them to future generations? What does the future of Israeli society hold with so many divided



The book discusses questions that extend beyond the discussion of folk dances themselves and the existential issues relating to Israeli identity or identities

identities? What can be learned from folk dance?

In the book, I wonder what is "Israeli" about Israeli folk dance? And why is it important to know? Perhaps, we must dance and not think?

The book discusses questions that extend beyond the discussion of folk dances themselves and the existential issues relating to Israeli identity or identities. Among them: What is Israeli in Israeli folk dance? What is Israeli culture? What has folk dance contributed to the Israeli "common denominator"? Is it even possible to intentionally create an Israeli common denominator in such a relatively short time and in so heterogeneous society as Israel?

Why, what and how were folk dances created and what are they now? What were the sources of inspiration for the first creators and for the creators of today? What is it about "Israeli folk dance" that is so hard to define and hard to mistake it? What is the place of and what is the contribution of folk dance to the multicultural and recreational culture in Israel? Are the [Israeli] folk dances "Israeli"?


There are many intriguing and interesting questions in the book and the answers, "just as the rest, learn by yourself" (go and study). The dances are Israeli because they were created to contribute to the formulation of an Israeli identity and a common Israeli society. Because they expressed a need of Israelis for common

dances as a means for a shared self-expression. Because we wanted to see them [the dances] as Israeli. Because they were created to connect past experiences, culture, Hebrew language, the Bible (Tanach), Mishnah [the first major written redaction of the Jewish oral traditions], Chassidism, the holidays, seasons of the year, to the dances of the ethnic groups, "the indigenous groups" and to the dances of the minorities; all sources were equal and there was "one circle".

Because their creators looked for answers to the melting pot dilemmas: "unity in diversity", "common ground – despite differences", "continuity within renewal" and more ...

Because they were an expression of the joy of life and creativity, the joy of movement, a sense of commitment and belonging, towards a source of pride, not fear but rather as a source of inspiration, not as "suppression" or as an "escape" but as a powerful stimulus.

Each time the dancers and the dance creators continue to seek, to question and to search for an "Israeli style" that will define Israeli folk dance there still will be the question, "What is Israeli folk dance? And when the question arises, there will also be Israeli folk dances.

And it is said: "Every day a person must dance a dance, sing a song, read a book, see a work of art, listen to music and say something in good taste" (I tried). 



# נוקדים

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