

Dance of the Month

Tzipor Zahav – Bird of Gold



Michael Barzelai

Translation:
Ruth Goodman

Michael Barzelai, 33, lives in Or Akiva [near Haifa]. He is the father of 4-year old **Danielle**. Michael began dancing at the age of 8 with **Itzik Ben Ami** in Kiryat Haim, following in the footsteps of his mother who used to dance.

As a child, he had also danced with **Dede Lusky**, **Yossi Peretz** and **Chanan Dadon**. At the age of 13, he already had begun to learn how to arrange music in general, and for dances in particular, with the encouragement and guidance of Dede Lusky.

Over the years, he continued to dance, concurrent with his high school studies, his military service and with his academic studies.

During his military service, he substituted for dance leaders in various dance sessions (harkadot) and then, in 2010, he first experienced the profession for about a year – when he worked with **Elad Perel** at the harkada (dance session) held at the Technion in Haifa.

Later, he had the opportunity to collaborate with other well-known markidim (dance leaders) such as **Yaron Carmel**, **Ohad Atia** and others.

As a dance participant, he always loved the challenge in folk dance and always wanted to learn more dances and more styles. Even today, at every opportunity, Michael travels to various marathons and to different dance sessions to dance a wide variety of dances.

He choreographed his first dance in 2015, to the song, “Ima – Mother”, lyrics by **Nissim Saroussi** with the cover song by **Harel Moyal**. The dance is called, “Ima Sheli – My Mother”.

During the summer of 2015, at the initiative and with the support of his two friends, **Chen Shporen** and **Ohad Atia**, he traveled for the first time to teach his own dances as well as those of others at Gvanim [Israeli] Dance Camp in the United States, where he taught the [circle] dance, “La Trumpeta – The Trumpet”, to music performed by the Israeli trumpeter, **Arik Davidov**.

Since then, he has choreographed many other dances that are danced in both Israel and around the world and you can see them here: [Rokdim](#). The last dance taught in Israel and abroad is Tzipor Zahav – Bird of Gold – melody composed and performed in a new rendition by **Aya Korem**, to the words of **Chaim Nachman Bialik** in his classic poem, Bein N’har Prat Un’har Chidekel – Between the Euphrates River and the Tigris River”.





I heard the song, "Tzipor Zahav", just by chance for the first time, on the Spotify app. Already by the first hearing, I had goosebumps and really liked the lyrics, melody and moving performance by Aya Korem.

About the dance, he tells us:

I heard the song, "Tzipor Zahav", just by chance for the first time, on the Spotify app. Already by the first hearing, I had goosebumps and really liked the lyrics, melody and moving performance by **Aya Korem**.

I was thrilled to find out that the lyrics were by Chaim Nachman Bialik. As soon as I got home, I enthusiastically told my partner, **Michal Shimshi**, that I wanted to choreograph a dance to a song by Chaim Nachman Bialik. I knew that she, working on doctorate in Hebrew poetry, would be as enthusiastic as I was about this possibility.

Already at the first hearing of the song, the steps were in my mind and they were almost like the dance we're dancing today.

Although the meter of the song is 6/8, I chose a different and changing rhythm for the dance steps connecting to the dynamics and development of the song.

The song is about a woman who sends a golden bird to find her beloved. To me, the song also represents hope and perseverance, but also a certain naivety that there is in romance, using many metaphors.

Many steps in the song express its words. For example, to the words "Say to him, the garden is blooming; it is locked and there is none to open it", is expressed by the closed hand movements that then open and are inviting.

Also, at the beginning of the chorus, only the right hand is raised, then the left hand and finally both hands. It connects to the image of the bird flying to catch the beloved and bring him back.

At the end of the chorus, the lyrics are: "And underneath the brick of my flesh, my pillow burns every night". A phrase that describes the speaker's despair. In this section, the hands move down low, contrasting with the "ascent" of the bird.

As with every dance I release, here too, I'm filled with pride to see the entire country and the whole world dancing the movements I've invented in my mind. It's a great honor that is hard to describe in words, to be part of working in a field that is so close and important to me.

You can view the dance here: <https://bit.ly/3xkVH84>

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Tzipor Zahav – Bird Of Gold

Meter: 6/8 (dance rhythm based on “step-tog-step”, counted “1and-a-2”.)

Notation: Each count = 3/8. Part IA, counts 1&2 below, detail the rhythm that continues with subsequent counts that include “&” unless otherwise described.

Formation: Circle

Part IA: Face CCW

1&2 Three steps fwd RLR [R=2/8, L – 1/8, R=3/8 counted as: “1&” (R), “a” (L), “2” (R)].

3-4 Step L across R and pivot left on L to face center; step R across L.

5&6 Yem. L bwd swinging arms bwd and fwd to shoulder level.

7&8 Yem. R bwd swinging arms bwd and fwd raising them high (above head).

9&10 Step L bwd, R to Rt., step L across R and face CCW.

11&12 Full turn Rt. moving fwd on the line of the circle with three steps RLR.

13-14 Step L across R extending left arm fwd with palm facing up; Step R across L extending rt. arm fwd and placing rt. hand above left with palm facing up.

15-16 Yem. L bwd.

Part IB: Face CCW

1&2& Quick mayim step to left moving toward center [R over L (2/8), L to left (1/8), R behind L (2/8), L to left (1/8).] Arms cross at chest level on count 2.

3 Step R across L while lifting left leg to left in an arc and extending arms to sides.

4&5& Quick mayim step to rt. moving out of center. [L over R (2/8), R to Rt. (1/8), L behind R (2/8), R to Rt. (1/8).] Arms cross at chest level on count 4.

6& Step L across R while lifting right leg to Rt. in an arc and extending arms to sides; pivot on L to left to face center.

7&8& Cross R over L bending body slightly fwd and crossing wrists fwd (count 7 = 1/8); step L bwd in place (& = 2/8); step R bwd straightening body and extending arms bwd to sides (count 8 = 1/8); step L fwd in place (& = 2/8).

9&10 R-tog-R fwd moving toward center with arms circling fwd- upward -out to sides- fwd and up.

11&12& Sway onto L to left (count 11 = 2/8; shift weight onto R to Rt. (& = 1/8); Rock fwd onto L (count 12 = 2/8); step R bwd (& = 1/8).

13-14 Bring hands together at waist level with rt. palm over left, elbows to sides. Two steps bwd L,R pushing hands slightly downward with each step.

15&16 Yem. L bwd.

17&18 Sway R to Rt. shift weight onto L to left, close R next to L. Right arm accompanies the movement by circling upward- to the right and inward ending with palm of rt. hand at chest.

Repeat Parts IA & IB (first time through the dance).

Part II: Face CCW

1&2 Moving fwd CCW with left hand on left hip: RLR pivoting 1/2 turn Rt. on last step to face CW. Right arm moves in a circular motion accompanying the steps with a 1&1/2 rotation from low to high: down-fwd-up- around across body, fwd and up.

3&4 Continue turning Rt. on the line of the circle: Step L bwd turning to rt., R to rt., L across R to face CCW with rt. hand at rt. hip and left arm raised upward.

5&6 Step R bwd on line of circle pivoting left to face CW, step L fwd, step R across L and pivot 3/4 turn left to face center while bringing arms up overhead.

7&8 Three steps RLR moving fwd toward center while opening arms to sides.

9&10 With elbows bent and rt. wrist above

left: Yem. R turning slightly to left and moving bwd toward line of circle; snap fingers on last step.

11&12 With elbows bent and rt. wrist above left: Yem. L turning slightly to Rt. and moving bwd toward line of circle; snap fingers on last step.

13&14 Step R to rt. and turn to left with L,R raising arms overhead.


15& Sway: L-R while opening arms to sides.

16&17& Mayim step to rt. moving CCW on line of circle (L over R, R to Rt., L behind R, R to Rt.)

18 Step L across R.

Repeat Part IA & IB

Repeat Part II 2X

Repeat Part IA to end with L fwd, rt. hand on rt. hip and left arm extended upward. 

Instructions notated by Honey Goldfein and Ruth Goodman



Michael at Camp Bitnua in Eilat

Tzipor Zahav – Bird of Gold

Lyrics: **Chaim Nachman Bialik** (Hayim Nahman Bialik)

Music: **Aya Koren**

Singer: **Aya Koren**

Bein n'har Prat un'har Chidekel, al hahar mitamer dekel
Uvadekel bein afa'av tishkon lah duchifat zahav

Tzipor zahav ufi chugi, tz'i uvakshi li ben zugi
Uva'asher timtza'ihu, kifti oto va'havi'ihu

Ach im ein lach chut hashani, dabri shalom el chatani
Ma tagidi lo hagidi, nafshi yotzet el yedidi

Imri lo hagan porei'ach, na'ul hu ve'ein pote'ach
Rimon paz sham yesh bein alav, ach ein mi sheyevarech alav

Ve'od tagidi lo – mitati, asche laila be'dim'ati
U'mitachat livnat b'sari nisraf midei laila kari

Ve'im yema'en, shim'i razi, hakol muchan be'argazi
Shesh va'meshi u've'meltachati esrim kutonet rikmat machati

U've'mach'vo'a, zahav rekuma, kvar mechaka ha'hinuma
Nedani mushlash, nechona ani ve'lama echaru pa'amei chatani

Ve'od tagidi lo – mitati, asche laila be'dim'ati
U'mitachat livnat b'sari nisraf midei laila kari

Transliteration: Ruth Goodman and Benny Levy



Michael with Dudu Barzilay



Michael at the session

Between the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers, on the hill ascends a palm tree
In the palm tree, between its branches, a golden Hoopoe dwells

Bird of gold, fly, circle, go out and seek my mate for me
Whenever you find him, capture and bring him to me

But if you lack a thread of crimson, speak peace to my groom
What should you say to him, say – my soul goes out to my beloved

Say to him, the garden is blooming; it is locked and there is none to open it
A golden pomegranate is there within its leaves, but there isn't anyone to say a blessing over it

And say to him further – my bed, I swim through the night in my tears
And underneath the brick of my flesh, my pillow burns every night

And if he will refuse, hear my secret, all is prepared in my crate
Linen and silk, and in my wardrobe are twenty robes embroidered by my needle

And in its hiding place, embroidered gold, the veil is already waiting
My dowry is tripled, I am ready and why are the steps of my groom delayed?

And say to him further – my bed, I swim through the night in my tears
And underneath the brick of my flesh, my pillow burns every night

Lyrics translated by Ruth Goodman and Shani Aducalesi