

Two Fathers



Barry Avidan
dancer and
choreographer,

Translation:

Ruth Goodman and
Tzipi Shragai

My father, **Rabbi Avraham Bouhadna z"l**, brought me into the world, raised and educated me in Jewish tradition, Judaism, Zionism, Halacha and Mitzvot. As a result, I became a student at the Nativ Meir Yeshiva High School in Jerusalem.

My second father was my spiritual father, **Yonatan Karmon z"l**, from whom I absorbed the principles of choreography, learned staging, who inspired my creativity and guided my first steps in the Israeli dance world.

It all started when I was a yarmulke wearing soldier who came across a dance session (harkada) at a flight school in Hatzerim where I had been serving. I was fascinated. From there, the road to losing interest in the prestigious course was short and my new road was paved into the world of Israeli dance.

I became an avid fan of dance sessions (harkadot) and marathons and joined the ranks of the "Shalom 80" dance troupe directed by **Gavri Levi z"l**.

I met **Lucy Maman** at one of the marathons. She was sort of a talent scout when she noticed me and vigorously convinced me to join *Lehakat Yerushalayim*, directed by **Yonatan Karmon**.

When I came to the rehearsal, I felt drawn to the heart of the Bohemian... Yonatan was charismatic and magnetic and conducted the troupe with charm. That



Shabbat was Shabbat Bereishit (Genesis), on October 4, 1980, and to this day I remember the steps that Yonatan created in that rehearsal. Still, I didn't feel like I belonged. I felt inadequate. I could not internalize it then and I returned to the Shalom '80 Dance Company.

About a year later, what I call the fateful encounter happened. At the end of my military service, as I was walking on Ibn Gvirol Street in Tel Aviv, I saw Yonatan walking towards me. I was excited, but I kept going, for obvious reasons. But Yonatan called out to me with his "rolling R"... "Barrrry?!" I was surprised that he remembered me; I felt flattered and enthused when he said, "I don't forget a good dancer – ever!"

At that meeting, I told Yonatan that I was dancing with Gavri and would be flying abroad with the troupe.

Yonatan kindly said: "Go, have fun, come back and then come to us." And so, it was.

I returned to Israel and immediately purchased a ticket for a performance of "Lehakat Yerushalayim" at Heichal Hatarbut (Cultural Hall) in Tel Aviv.



Barry Avidan dancing "Rafsodia"

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Yonatan pulled me out of the audience and met me backstage and said, "I have a problem. One of the soloists sprained his foot. Do you think you can replace him and dance in a small solo section, Nitzanim Nir'u Ba'aretz, tonight"??

I was thrown into deep water. And the rest is history. I continued to dance in Lehakat Yerushalayim for another eight years. These were wonderful years when I had the privilege of being in the presence of this great man. These were years in which he molded me as a person and as a choreographer, and even outlined my professional path.



The totality of Yonatan and his dedication to Israeli dance reminded me of my father's innocence and devotion to the Jewish religion.

Over the years, I have learned to integrate the two worlds – the Jewish and the Israeli. I created dances inspired by these two worlds and this is what I have been doing with love to this day.

Years later, my wife also danced with Yonatan. And so, we named our first son **Stav Avraham** after my father and our second born son, **Yonatan**. 