



Rakefet Ashriel
Translation:
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Parting Tribute To My Father

Dearest Aba (Dad)!

I can't believe I'm never going to see your blue eyes again, your broad smile and the goodness in the light of your face. I can't hear your voice and I can't talk to you and tell you about your grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The last month when you were in the hospital was the hardest of my life. I just wanted you to come out of this alive, but apparently life is bigger than us. You meant so much to me and I did my best for you to come out of surgery and recover. I take solace in the fact that you did not suffer and merited to pass away as a tzadik because you were a truly righteous man.

Despite the fact that you were an innovator in your field, breaking with convention, so talented, a kind of artist, a genius in your field and never arrogant; you were always humble, always one of the people who had conversations at eye level. All human beings were equal in your eyes and that too, you passed on to us.

I have always been very attached to you, but since Ima (Mom) passed away, the bond between us has grown stronger. I cannot talk about you without referring to Ima as well. You two were as one entity; you were great parents to me and thanks to you, I was blessed with a happy childhood.

I was born and raised in a home where songs and dances were a routine of life. I grew up in a special home, an open and liberal home. We were always approached by young artists who you took under your wings to care for and nurture. I will not forget how you helped them put their dances together and you and Ima danced together with them in the living room of our house.

You and Ima completed each other and blended into one another harmoniously; Ima was the teacher, the graceful instructor while you were the choreographer and creator behind the dances.

At your funeral, the song "Yatzanu At – We Left Softly" was played; it was the last dance you created in memory of Ima who loved the song so much. This is the song that connects the two of you.

As a child, when I would come to the harkadot (dance sessions) of you and Ima and watched you dance together, I did not realize at the time how "great" and groundbreaking you were in your field; only when I grew up did I understand the meaning of your work – your art.

From a very young age, I was influenced by you and learned to dance. You invested a lot of time and effort in me and your desire has borne fruit. Some will say that it's in the genes and maybe it's the environmental impact in general and perhaps it is both factors together.

As a young girl I performed with dance groups in Europe, completed a folk dance instructors course given by the Va'ad HaPoel with honors and later became the object of your pride when I was a dancer in my own right at the "Bat Dor" Studio and then graduated with outstanding honors in teaching dance at Seminar HaKibbutzim.

I taught classical ballet, modern and jazz and after receiving two academic degrees, I was a lecturer at Wingate College. I cannot forget how you bragged about me in front of everyone noting the fact that your daughter teaches at Wingate.

You weren't an ordinary father like all the fathers. You were a special father, young, a friend who was fun to be with. Although you were completely immersed in developing your career as a choreographer, working with dance troupes, dance classes and huge dance sessions as well as a training center for instructors, you have always been dedicated to family, Ima and us, your children and grandchildren. You have always been very attentive and compromising in every way. What you have done for us was above and beyond; you have always invested in us – children and grandchildren – pampering us with trips, restaurants and entertainment.


You were a young and special grandfather, "the grandfather". For my children you were a significant figure in their lives and you often pampered them and spent time with them.

You were an open-minded father who was interested in a variety of areas that were not directly related to the folk dance profession. Areas such as: architecture, geography, history, music, culture and art and all out of interest, curiosity and self-learning. As a result, you had a big impact on me while on the trips we took together as a part of the family.

You loved traveling very much, as I know. At every opportunity, when you did not work, we would travel and spend time in different places in Israel and around the world. From those places you drew inspiration to create new dances. I so enjoyed traveling with you and hearing stories about the new places. Your knowledge was inexhaustible; you were literally a walking encyclopedia.

Whenever you would dance with me and demonstrate dances with me in the center of the circle, I would be in the clouds. I was so proud of you, because you were so special and unique. To me you were the perfect father on earth.

Aba, I say goodbye to you knowing that you are now in good hands. You are together with Ima and you both are taking care of each other. You and Ima are both in my heart forever and for all eternity. From my viewpoint, you are invincible.

My love for both of you is endless! 



Yoav Ashriel