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The Public Yoav and the Private Yoav

I had to reorganize my thoughts and my emotions in order to write about **Yoav Ashriel** in the past tense. Finally some words came out of my heart and on to paper.

As far as I'm concerned, there are two **Yoavs** – the public **Yoav Ashriel** and the private **Yoav Ashriel** – my **Yoav**.

The public **Yoav** is a central figure who greatly contributed to the field of Israeli folk dance. His unforgettable hishtalmuyot (workshops for instructors) contributed to all instructors and to all dancers. His training and his mentoring of choreographers, at the beginning of their careers, left his mark on their choices, on the dances they created and on the heritage he has left for dancers. Also, there was **Yoav** of the dance troupes he established and that performed in Israel and abroad.

The veteran dancers among us will surely

remember the harkadot (open dance sessions) led by **Yoav and Mira** on Independence Day at Rabin Square (then Kikar Malchei Yisrael), and above all – the many dances that he choreographed over the years and that have become inalienable assets for all dance sessions (and not just nostalgia groups). I believe they will be danced for many years to come.

Then there was "**my private Yoav**" – the **Yoav** who rescued me from a crisis.

In my childhood and my youth, I danced in the folk dance group of HaNoar HaOved VeHaLomed (Working and Studying Youth Movement) in the then new immigrant city of Beit Shemesh. The day came when the family moved to Petah Tikva. At that time, the Beit Shemesh Youth Movement dance instructor said to me:

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Dance session in Petah Tikva

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inseparable since then. **Yoav's** dance sessions became a lifeline for me after my personal and family tragedy as well as the answer to having a hobby that became part of my very existence.

I already miss the way he received me with a hug every time we met. I miss the hishtalmuyot for choreographers and instructors and the sessions where we danced together.

How I looked forward to celebrating his 90th birthday with him, just as we celebrated his 88th birthday. Unfortunately, we – and **Yoav** – weren't privileged to do this.

Personally, I was enriched by a significant personality who accompanied me in the most important and unforgettable moments of my life. He will continue to accompany me in all the years to come.

May his memory be for a blessing. 🙏



“You will not stop dancing. I'm sending you to one of the greatest dance instructors in Tel Aviv, Yoav Ashriel. Tell him that I sent you.”

Aviv, **Yoav Ashriel**. Tell him that I sent you. He teaches at the Ahad Ha'am School”.

And so on Wednesday, we moved to Petah Tikva and on Friday, a tragedy befell us: my brother, a Golani officer, fell in the course of duty in a retaliation operation. The grief that befell the family and me is indescribable.

Searching for **Yoav Ashriel's** dance sessions in that situation just wasn't realistic. In addition to that, I would have had to travel using three buses to reach the Ahad Ha'am School in Tel Aviv.

But, as a 13 year old girl, I decided to get there anyway. I managed to overcome all the obstacles; I took three buses and made it to the session in Tel Aviv. That was the moment that changed my life...

Yoav “absorbed” me into the group early on and our paths were