



Eli (Eliyau) Ronen
Translation:
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Mutual Appreciation

My longstanding friendship (of about 50 years), with **Yoav** and folk dance began on a Friday evening when I accompanied my brother to the "Ohel" Theater (near the Tel Aviv cinema). The evening, which combined folk dance with community singing, was led by the **Ashriel** couple; the first dance I learned was "Sigal", a dance choreographed by **Shauli Rosenfeld** (z"l). Since that day we, met every week at the harkada (dance session) at the Dubnov School in Tel Aviv.

As a student in the seventh and eighth grades at the Dubnov School, my parents had paid for the construction of a sports hall at the school; however, back then I did not imagine that later on I would start my dance career in this very hall.

When **Yoav** had to undergo [successful] brain surgery, **Mira** (**Yoav's** wife), asked me to come to help with the equipment as well as to bring her to the dance sessions. I was even asked to replace him at his dance session in Rishon LeZion. At that time, I also traveled with him to dance sessions where he was a guest choreographer in Givat Haviva and at other dance sessions.



Greeting card of thanks and appreciation for Yoav Ashriel



From the right: Yoav Ashriel, Danny Uziel and Eli Ronen



Yoav Ashriel (on the left) congratulates Avi Peretz on his being elected Chairman of the Irgun

In 1978, I showed **Yoav** my first dance, "Lifnot Erev – Towards Evening". He did not agree to accept it for his hishtalmut (workshop for teachers) because I had previously introduced this dance at a conference of the Mador LeRikudei Am – Folk Dance Section of the Histadrut, that was held two years earlier at "Ohalo" near the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee). Nonetheless, after another two years, the dance was presented at **Yoav's** hishtalmut.

I then showed **Yoav** the couple dance, "Geshem Yored – Rain Falls"), that he did not accept. He said that, "the dance begins with the inside foot and dances should not start with the inside foot...". My attempts to persuade him by providing examples of existing dances in which this occurs did help me.

There were dances of mine that **Yoav** accepted only after two or three years because I did not agree to change anything; in the end, **Yoav** agreed and received them as I had wanted without any changes, (e.g., "Shlosa Tranim La'Oniya – Three Masts for the Ship", "Sofa Shel Kayitz – End of Summer"), and there were dances that **Yoav** loved from the very first moment and accepted them immediately", e.g., "Hapaytan – The Poet", "Leil Aviv – Spring Evening" and Amru Li – They Told Me".

One of the most exciting moments I experienced with him was when he told me that the dance, "Ani Ve'Shiri – Me And My Song", "is a real folk dance that will last forever".

I would like to note that, during the past two decades, we had become very close. I was privileged that **Yoav** hosted me as a "guest choreographer" at his harkadot; indeed, I was deeply moved that he greatly appreciated me.