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Translation:
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The Chemistry Between Us Was Wonderful



I was always in contact with **Yoav**, regularly calling him once every two weeks to ask how he was feeling and to go down memory lane. That's how it was before Rosh Hashana, 2020. I called to wish him a "Happy New Year" and "good health", but he didn't answer... in my heart of hearts I knew something was wrong, but I didn't want to believe that this was the end.

It's hard for me to think that I won't be able to call him anymore. His passing has left me very sad. But I feel that I was greatly privileged to have known one of the great choreographers and one of the mainstays of the Israeli folk dance movement.

I was 14 when I first met **Yoav** through a folk dance instructor who danced in his troupe. She recommended that I go to the studio (then it was called a studio) of **Yoav and Mira Ashriel**, located in the "Ahad Ha'am" School in Tel Aviv and met once a week.

The dance he taught at my first lesson was "Haro'ah Ha'ktana". I was on a high, with his lightness as he danced and led the dances. His unique movement style captivated me. From then on, I made every effort not to miss a class.

The chemistry between us was excellent and I demonstrated couple dances with him (actually




Yoav Ashriel with Izhar Cohen

up until five years ago, at the sessions for veteran dancers held at the "Bikurei Ha'Itim" Center in Tel Aviv). Later on, **Yoav** invited me to participate in the auditions for his troupe and I was accepted. For me this was the pinnacle – to be in the "Pa'amei Machol Dance Troupe". **Yair Rosenblum** ז"ל was the accordionist. We performed at many events, such as Independence Day celebrations, the Beauty Queen Ball, the Jerusalem Parade and more. This was a period that empowered me.

At the same time, I continued to dance in his groups and in the marathons, which is the highlight of folk dancing. And every time I dance one of his dances, I see his face before me. For instance, he choreographed "Yatzanu At", in memory of his wife, **Mira**, who loved that song very much. I was privileged to demonstrate the dance with him at every session at "Bikurei Ha'Itim".

One thing **Yoav** said to me remains with me to this day. When asked how old he was, he always answered: "I'm post army service". So, when people ask me the same question, I respond in the same way. In every conversation, we had joked about this.

It's hard for me to talk about **Yoav** in the past tense, but this is life.

May his memory be for a blessing. 

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