

Dance of the Month

Holding Hands in the Circle Symbolizes our "Togetherness"



Ephy Kashri

Translation:
Dena Matmon

For me, dance is a way of life. As a child, I really loved to dance at parties, at discotheques and in clubs. In my youth, when I was home alone, I used to dance to the music of a beautiful song and I would create a dance just for the sake of it, to put in the drawer, not knowing I would use it when I reached the age of 50.

My acquaintance with the world of dance and folk dance was only by chance, after the army. As a student at Sapir College, it was suggested that I should live at Kibbutz Bror Hayil in the South, where I worked in the barn and in the kindergarten. One day a kibbutz member said to me, as an aside, that I should come that evening to the dining room. When I walked in, I saw, for the first time in my life, people dancing in a circle to "Israeli folk songs". I joined the circle, totally mesmerized. And from that point on, my life changed. From the age of 23 and until today, I dance only Israeli folk dances.

At age 40 I joined the "Givatayim Dance Troupe", the "Lazarus" Troupe and the "Re'im" Troupe in Holon. We performed at the Karmiel Festival, the Jerusalem Festival, the Nahalal Festival, the Eilat Camp, abroad, and at other places.

At age 50, I was offered the opportunity to register for a folk dance instructors' course. This was a life-changing course.

Upon receipt of certification, I immediately started to teach in November 2019, and despite the difficult times in the country (COVID and the difficult war we're fighting to this very day), I put together a group of special people, unified, beautiful, talented. We meet on the dance floor and dance together.





My motto for the dancers – especially in these times – “our strength is in our unity”. Our way of conveying our unity to the “outside” world is through holding hands in a circle, symbolizing for us and for all those who see us our “togetherness” as a group. We are all brothers. One nation.

It is important for me to remind them, us, all of us, that once people danced in a circle holding hands. And when I am asked, “How do you keep a group of dancers together for this entire period of time?” I answer: By listening, by seeing, by understanding

and knowing each dancer that comes to the [dance] floor. By thanking each and every person in the group, individually and together, because they chose me. They chose to come to me, to my group session and this shouldn’t be taken for granted – that a person will leave his or her own personal matters and come to dance with me.

The road I took also led me to meet dancers from abroad and I was invited to teach, to guide, to dance and to present my dances at “Machol Shorashim” in the Czech Republic. These dancers love Israel; they are enchanting, wonderful and beautiful. I really fell in love with them. In 2023 I taught my dances: “Achoth Ktana” (Little Sister), “Achoth Ke’Shoshana”, and “Regaem (E.K.)”. All three are danced in Israel.

My dances can be found on the “Rokdim” website <https://bit.ly/3Ud65vx>.

Ephy speaks about the dance:

“Achoth Ktana – Little Sister”, danced in Israel and around the world, was chosen to participate in the “Annual Dance Parade” of 2023, directed by **Gadi Bitton**, and was listed as one of the Top Ten. The dance is much loved by dancers and instructors.

I chose the song “Achoth Ktana” because the words really spoke to me and each time I dance this dance, I think of my children, **Matan**, the firstborn, and **Adi**, his little sister. My prayer is that the connection between them as siblings will always be good, and that they will help each other when needed. Another reason [I chose this song] is the very special voice of the singer, **Moshe Peretz**.

“Achoth Ktana, a moving and special song, can be found: <https://bit.ly/49mu8MR>.

In recent years, I have been privileged to bring joy to people on the dance floor. I had the immense privilege of becoming a member of Irgun HaMadrichim Ve’HaYotzrim LeRikudei-Am – the Folk Dance Instructors and Choreographers Organization.

It touches me to be part of the family of dancers, instructors and choreographers in Israel and around the world. For all of this I say thank you!!!

“Our strength is in our unity” and our way of conveying our unity to the “outside” world is through holding hands in a circle, symbolizing for us and for all those who see us our “togetherness” as a group.



Achoth Ktana – Dance Notation

Formation: Circle

Structure: One verse, three sections

Meter: 4/4

Part A: Face CCW

- 1-2 Two steps fwd: R,L.
- 3&4 Step-tog-step fwd: RLR.
- 5-6 Step L fwd and turn to face center, Step R to rt.
- 7&8 In "step-tog-step" rhythm: Step L behind R, R to rt., step L across R.
- 9-12 Face center. Move fwd: Step R fwd, touch L toes alongside R, step L fwd, brush R fwd.
- 13-14 Step R fwd while raising both arms, step L back in place while lowering arms.
- 15-16 Turn to rt. moving back out of center toward the line of the circle with two steps: R,L.
- 17-24 Repeat counts 1-8.
- 25-28 Facing center. Sway sideways: R to rt., hold, sway L, hold.
- 29-32 Sway R-L; full turn to rt. with two steps: R,L.

Part B: Face Center


- 1-4 Move into center. Step fwd: R,L (counts 1-2), R-tog-R (counts 3&4).
- 5-8 Repeat counts 1-4 with opposite footwork continuing into center.
- 9-12 Rock fwd onto R, back on L in place; $\frac{3}{4}$ turn to rt. moving out of center with two steps: R,L to end facing CW.

- 13-14 Moving toward line of circle: Cross R behind L, L to left and pivot left to face center.
- 15-16 Rock: back onto R, fwd on L.
- 17-20 R-tog-R to rt. (17&18); step L across R, back on R in place (19-20).
- 21-24 Repeat counts 17-20 with opposite footwork and direction.
- 25-26 Sway R-L.
- 27-30 Open mayim to rt.: R to rt., cross L over R, R to rt., cross L behind R.
- 31-32 Full turn to rt. on line of circle with two steps: R,L.

Part C: Face Center

- 1-4 Repeat counts 17-20 from Part B.
- 5&6 Turn to left with three steps: LRL to end facing center.
- 7-10 Step R to rt., cross L behind R, R to rt., L across R.
- 11-12 Step R diagonally fwd to rt. on line of circle while extending arms up to the rt., step back on L in place.
- 13-16 R behind L, L to left, R across L placing right hand on heart, step back on L in place.
- 17-18 Sway: R,L.
- 19-20 Step R to rt., L fwd across R while lowering the body.
- 21-22 Step R bwd while straightening the body, touch left toes fwd while extending arms to sides.
- 23&24 Moving into center: L-tog-L fwd.
- 25-26 Step R fwd, L back in place making $\frac{1}{4}$ turn to rt. to face CCW.
- 27-30 Open mayim to rt. moving out of circle and end facing center.
- 31-32 Full turn rt. on the line of the circle with two steps: R,L.
- 33-64 Repeat counts 1-32 (Part C).

Repeat Dance

Ending: Step R to rt. while raising arms to rt. 

Instructions notated by Honey Goldfein

The road I took also led me to meet dancers from abroad and I was invited to teach, to guide, to dance and to present my dances at "Machol Shorashim" in the Czech Republic. These dancers love Israel; they are enchanting, wonderful and beautiful.

Achot Ktana – Little Sister

Lyrics: Moshe Peretz, Avi Ochayon; Music: Moshe Peretz, Avi Ochayon; Singer: Moshe Peretz

Transliteration:

Al te'atzvi achshav, achot ktana
 Tamid rak techaichi
 Al tishmeri balev, achot ktana
 Im yesh lach, tegali

Achshav hasheket mechabek otach, rak at yoda'at
 Hamachshavot ratzot, kim'at yotzet mida'at
 At lo levad, ani itach, achot ktana

Sapri li k'tzat, tehi sh'kufa, k'mo mayim
 Tegali hakol
 Al tishmeri balev, mutar lach gam lipol
 Dabri le'at, yafot hen milotayich

Shlosa yamim
 Einayich mastirot ma shekore bifnim
 At chazakah, ze lo olam shel chalashim
 Tit'ni li yad, pit'chi li she'arayich

Tzayri lach od chiyuch, achot ktana
 Ulai gam bishvili
 Nagni li et shirayich, ahuva
 Achot ktana sheli

Achshav hasheket mechabek otach, rak at yoda'at
 Hamachshavot ratzot, kim'at yotzet mida'at
 At lo levad, ani itach, achot ktana

Sapri li k'tzat, tehi sh'kufa, k'mo mayim
 Tegali hakol
 Al tishmeri balev, mutar lach gam lipol
 Dabri le'at, yafot hen milotayich

Shlosa yamim
 Einayich mastirot ma shekore bifnim
 At chazakah, ze lo olam shel chalashim
 Tit'ni li yad, pit'chi li she'arayich

Translation:

Don't be sad now, little sister
 Only smile always
 Don't hold it in [your] heart, little sister
 If you have it, reveal it

Now the quiet embraces you, only you know
 The thoughts race, almost go out of your mind
 You are not alone, I am with you, little sister

Tell me a little bit, be transparent like water
 Reveal it all
 Don't keep it in [your heart], you too are allowed to fall
 Speak slowly, your words are beautiful

Three days
 Your eyes are hiding what is happening inside
 You are strong, this is not a world for the weak
 Give me [your] hand, open your gates to me.

Draw yourself another smile, little sister
 Perhaps for me as well
 Play your songs for me, beloved
 My little sister

Now the quiet embraces you, only you know
 The thoughts race, almost go out of your mind
 You are not alone, I am with you, little sister

Tell me a little bit, be transparent like water
 Reveal it all
 Don't keep it in [your heart], you too are allowed to fall
 Speak slowly, your words are beautiful

Three days
 Your eyes are hiding what is happening inside
 You are strong, this is not a world for the weak
 Give me [your] hand, open your gates to me.

Lyrics transliteration and translation by **Ruth Goodman**

It is important for me to remind them, us, all of us, that once people danced in a circle holding hands.