

Eulogy for Shmuel by Doron Cohen

Less than a year ago Shmuel heard much of what I have to say today when Yael Segev collected greetings on the occasion of his birthday from us, his students. Afterwards Shmuel told me that he was very touched. I ask him to forgive me now for a lack of originality. When Naama, Oded, Saar, Ophir, Maxim and I spoke about what to say today, we knew that, as usual, Shmuel would have asked us not to deliver a eulogy. He never wanted us to organize a meeting in honor of his birthday. Thus, our words today should be understood as an expression of our own internal desire to express ourselves.

I met Shmuel when I was an undergraduate student. He taught the course on statistical mechanics. With no hesitation at all, I chose him to be my advisor. I was his first Ph. D. student. In retrospect, I can tell you that this was perhaps the most important decision of my life! Not only for the choice of the area of interest for my research, but more importantly, because of Shmuel and his support. Shmuel was superb as a researcher and as an advisor. As a researcher he was one of the founders of the field called quantum chaos and dynamical localization. He was one of the few people I knew who was above all of the controversies in our community. His scientific work was accepted by everyone as being solid, unaffected by intrigues, and free of ego involvement. Such a status is very rare, indeed.

I don't know anyone who cared for his students more than Shmuel did. He provided the example by means of which, we, his scientific children, try to guide our students. My success in finding an academic position is due, without a doubt, to the support he gave me all along the way. As it became clear when we were discussing the wording of this eulogy, every one of us feels that we would not have been about to find our way in the academic world without Shmuel. I have been exposed to the strength of his support from the 'other side'. When my phone would ring at strange hours of the night, my wife, Avigail, would

know that it was Shmuel. I can also remark, as an aside, that it was very hard to end a conversation with Shmuel. I assume that anyone who knows Shmuel knows what I mean.

A few years ago, when Shmuel visited us at home, he brought a plant, a red clivia, a member of the narcissus family. Once a year it sprouts a spectacular orange flower. Unfortunately, the flower doesn't last very long. At the beginning of last week, the flower bloomed, and because my wife, Avigail, was in the US, I photographed the flower and sent the photo to her. While this was happening, I wondered to myself if the flower would last until Shmuel's visit, since he intended to visit us in the south during this semester.

I would like to add a few more words, not as a student of Shmuel's, but rather as the head of the Department of Physics at the Ben Gurion University. Shmuel had strong connections with our department. On one hand, two of his scientific parents are in our department, and on the other hand, three of his academic descendants are with us too. He was a master's student of our colleague Alex Gersten, and a doctoral student of our colleague Amnon Aharony. When I was a doctoral student of his, Shmuel served effectively as a second advisor to Mario Feingold, (who was doing his doctorate with Asher Peres). And very recently we added Yevgeny to our faculty. Most of the members of our department knew Shmuel personally and admired him.