



## Ruach

**By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director**

Back in the day, I was a camper at Camp Ramah in the Berkshires. From the age of 11 until 17, I would spend the last 10 days of every summer at sleep-away camp with my friends from youth group.

I packed the largest suitcase imaginable with an exorbitant amount of clothing, ensuring that this teenage girl would have just the right outfit for every temp and occasion. Sweats for early morning Shacharit (morning prayers) T-shirts for breakfast, shorts for afternoon *chugim* (classes) & sports and sweaters and jeans for Mincha, (afternoon prayers), Maariv (evening prayers) and dinner. And, of course, just the right outfits for the evening programs.

Some people brought bathing suits for the lake activities but that isn't my thing (that's a whole other story for another time). But my absolute favorite part was the ruach sessions and singing. Benschung (after-meal prayers) and singing after every meal was a time when our large camp became one. We sang songs in English and in Hebrew; silly, nonsensical songs (*Oh, Once There Was a Wizard*) and songs about Israel. *Al Kol Eileh, Erev Shel Shoshanim, Bashana Haba'ah, Eretz Zavot Chalav, Mayim* to name a few.

As campers, we were from all parts of Long Island and Queens, NY; even though we were all from the same geographical area, the identity of each town was very different. But what united us was a love of Israel.

On Tuesday we celebrated Yom HaAtzmaut, Israel's Independence Day. Israel is 76 years young. She is fighting for her very existence each and every day. This is nothing new, unfortunately.

What is new is that not only must she send up the Iron Dome to shield her and the residents from the bombs, but she must face the constant barrage of negative comments, opinions and posts by people who really have no education about what is



happening. She must read and see such negativity from the privileged and the ignorant. For me it is the ruach (spirit) that keeps me going. My love of Israel is my guiding light.

As my shirt says:

I Love Israel.

I Want Peace.

I am a Zionist.

Shabbat Shalom!