

CANADA

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I have no doubt that Judaism is the basis for both my personal and professional life and the motivating force of my soul. As a child brought up in the Diaspora, I am indebted to my parents for choosing to educate me at Jewish schools and to send me to Camp Ramah in Canada, where the history of the Jewish people and more importantly, Jewish values, were inculcated into my consciousness and became an integral part of my being. My belief in humanity, in pluralism,

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and in education emanate from the experiences I accrued during those crucial years. I was profoundly influenced by Ramah staff members who, motivated by their Judaism, chose to go to the South to convince black Americans of the importance of voting, thus empowering them to evoke change. It was these same staff members who escorted Martin Luther King's cortege upon his death.

At Camp Ramah on Tish'ah Be'av, after the reading of *Eichab* on the floor of the *beit am*, the staff chose to show pictures and to read poems from the renowned book *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, a collection of children's poetry and drawings from Terezinstadt, the German concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. This was an emotional experience that was to have an everlasting impact on my life. As a nine-year-old, I could not conceptualize the difference between myself, an affluent child in the serene and beautiful surroundings of Camp Ramah and those nine-year-old children who were tortured and brutally murdered, only because they were Jewish. From the depths of my soul, and from the innocence and naivete possible only in one's early years, I vowed to avenge their deaths and to give meaning and pay homage to their lives and deaths.

I never lost sight of my vow, and it is from that promise that I chose to make Israel my home and to bring up my children there. It is the values of Judaism and my identification with basic tenets of our humanity that effected ever-lasting change in me. It is the tradition of prayer, the connection to my God, and Judaism, which I love and cherish, that form the perspective of my essence. It is also the spirit of my own personal interpretation of Judaism that is the driving force of my professional life.