



11 November 2016/10 Cheshvan 5777

Dear Shir Tikvah:

Last night during our multifaith vigil, I shared a Talmudic story about Rabbi Akiva. When Akiva and his students were travelling by sea, they came upon a devastating storm. The winds blew, the waters raged and the tiny wooden ship simply wasn't strong enough against the powerful storm; it broke into pieces.

When people discovered Akiva and his students alive on the shore three days later, they were stunned!

"Rabbi Akiva," they inquired, "how did you all survive such a ferocious storm?"

"When the storm hit and the sky thundered and the seas raged and our ship broke apart, I grabbed on to a piece of wood with one hand and to my student with the other. We faced each torrential wave before us, we never let go, we never gave up our focus to reaching the shore."

I feel, like so many of you, this election is a torrent of grief and despair. My heart is in my throat; finding words to comfort and reassure my children is a consuming task.

I am deeply grateful to the wisdom of our Jewish tradition:

Hold on to each other.

Face the waves, together.

Keep focused on our shared goal: reaching the shore, together.

The blessing of being a part of a 3,000 year old community is that we have faced agonizing, awful times before-and we have survived. We are still here! Our shared values of human dignity, justice, peace, and equality are eternal. Shir Tikvah is a song of hope. Now, more than ever, we must live up to the ethics of our tradition and the name of our founding: to be a sanctuary of hope and a moral force for good in the world, to alleviate suffering wherever we can, to transform our wider community into a place of healing and love and justice.

Yes, there are painful waves ahead. Hold on to each other, fiercely. With a lot of work and a lot of resilience, we'll reach the shore, together.

Shabbat Shalom, Michael