



December 16, 2016/16 Kislev 5777

Dear Shir Tikvah:

Jacob had a rough night.

He spent the night tossing and turning, wrestling with his conscience, worried about facing his brother Esau after 20 years as the dawn would break.

It was a torturous night for his soul.

He and Esau parted ways as young men-and Jacob had every reason to believe his much stronger older brother would harm him in the morning-or worse.

Still, Jacob found the courage to wake up as the sun rose in the Eastern sky.

He and Esau reunited-weeping, laughing, filling the giant space of 20 years.

Some people come by their courage easily. Thank God!

Most of us-like our ancestor, Jacob, for whom our people is named-take time and energy to find our courage. It comes in fits and starts.

Sometimes courage is bold, loud, and robustly enthusiastic!

Sometimes courage is quiet, gentle, and tender.

We are in a season of human history where each of us needs to cultivate our moral courage, to bring out into the world our loving and holy voice of resistance to tyranny, hatred, and violence.

What gives you courage?

As you discover your own place of courage as Jacob did that long night before his reunion with Esau, I invite you to share these stories with me and with one another. This isn't easy spiritual work! The sharing of our courage stories gives us all strength and hope to awaken to the new day and to face the blessings and challenges that arise before us.

Shabbat Shalom,
Michael