



9 September 2016/ 6 Elul 5776

Dear Shir Tikvah:

My first year of college had barely begun when the news of Jacob Wetterling's (z"l) abduction captured the hearts and souls of Minnesotans. For 27 years, we agonized with the Wetterlings, hoped, prayed, organized, searched, fundraised, pleaded...

And this week, we learned the gruesome details of his murder in October 1989.

What heartbreak!

Like so many of you, my heart is in my throat-Jacob was the Wetterling's son and brother-and because they so lovingly and generously shared their love and his story with all of us, we grieve with them as a community.

Judaism is a religious tradition whose core belief centers on tikvah-hope. From Abraham's first conversation with the Divine to "Go Forth!" we've operated as a people who believe deeply and powerfully that tomorrow will be better than today, that despair is not a word in our religious lexicon, that even in the face of unspeakable grief-with resoluteness that borders on the absurd-we still believe in compassion and decency and hope.

Our Torah portion this week teaches about the pursuit of justice. It was for moments like these-when we might feel the acute absence of justice in a world that murders a beautiful 11 year old boy-that Judaism demands we seek peace and pursue justice.

Sometimes justice comes in courtroom.

And sometimes, it comes from the Torah of a mother who for 27 years ached for her son, all the while keeping her heart open wide to tenderness and compassion.

Let Patty Wetterling's prayer and call to compassionate justice be our living Torah this Shabbat.

"Everyone wants to know what they can do to help us.

Say a prayer.

Light a candle.

Be with friends.

Play with your children.

Giggle.

Hold Hands.

Eat ice cream.

Create joy.

Help your neighbor.

That is what will bring me comfort today."

Jacob-may your light continue to shine and may your memory be a blessing. May all your loved ones know comfort in the days ahead.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Michael Adam Latz