



Shabbat B'har-B'chukotai 5777 /May 19, 2017

Dear Shir Tikvah:

On Sunday, my parents, Judi and Larry, celebrate 50 years of marriage. Tonight, I have the privilege and honor of blessing them. The Torah portion this week-B'har-B'chukotai-speaks of a mountain. Sometimes, we climb and climb and climb and wonder what its all for. And then we reach the mountain peak and gaze unto the valley below and our only choice is to gasp in awe.

This is one of those moments.

In 1967, my parents married at 19 and 20-it was two days before my dad's 21st birthday and they needed their parent's permission to serve alcohol at the wedding.

Soon after they married, they moved to Texas where my dad went through basic training for the Army and then went off as a soldier to Vietnam. My mother trained at the local hospital to draw blood-earning \$1.00 an hour.

My dad came back safely-thank God-and they returned to Minnesota, bought a little home, had kids and set out making a life for themselves and their family.

There have been serious health challenges, the deaths of their parents, and the inevitable ups and downs of life over five decades.

And there have been great joys-ask either of them about what makes them happy and they will gladly share stories of their granddaughters, Noa and Liat.

From my parents, I've learned my most precious Torah:

- There is always enough food for one more guest.
- Introduce yourself to everyone.
- Every person has value, whether they are a millionaire or day laborer.
- VOTE!
- Chocolate solves most of the world's problems.
- Never be afraid to love.

To my parents who live their wedding vows every day-to behold each other in joy and tenderness, in compassion and faith-I am grateful to try to live up to your example. Thank you for teaching us that the only thing that truly matters in life is love.

Shabbat Shalom,  
Michael