Shabbat Shalom
from Rabbi Michael Gold

Candle Lighting Time
Fri. Evening 5:17 pm

Services
Saturday Nov. 7 9:30 am
Thursday Morning minyan followed by Bagels and Bible will begin Dec. 3 at 8:30 am.

The midterm elections are finally over. It was a clear victory for the Democratic Party. I will admit that I am worried. There are voices within the Democratic Party that are viciously anti-Israel to the point of being antisemitic. I think of the ad run by the campaign of Democratic Michigan Senator-elect Abdul El-Sayid. His campaign ad shows a couple in the supermarket, unable to afford eggs or bananas. They blame it on America's support of Israel's "genocide" against the Palestinians. The ad ends with the claim that America probably also pays for health care for Israelis. El-Sayid denied that his campaign created the ad, but he also refused to denounce it. (To be fair, there are also voices in the Republican Party that are anti-Israel to the point of being antisemitic. Are you listening, Tucker Carlson.)

On another note, yesterday I saw the movie *Paging Hezbollah*. It was a disturbing movie, but also refreshing to see a documentary that articulated Israel's point of view in the horrible events of the past few years. It shows how Israel placed bombs in the pagers used by the Hezbollah leadership to prevent an imminent attack on Northern Israel.

PARSHAT HAYEI SARA
LOVE AND MARRIAGE

"Isaac then brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he took Rebecca as his wife. Isaac loved her and thus found comfort after his mother's death." (Genesis 24:69)

"Love and marriage, love and marriage, go together like a horse and carriage." So goes the old song. But is it true? Have love and marriage always gone together? Historian Stephanie Coontz, in her 2006 book *Marriage, A History; How Love Conquered Marriage*, wrote how marriage is an ancient human institution. But love as an important ingredient in marriage developed more recently (most likely in the middle of the nineteenth century.) Marriage probably began as a way for two clans to form an alliance.

Before the nineteenth century, people lived in large extended families. If one family member died, others could take over. Marriage was often seen as a way to

legitimate children, tying them to a father so they could inherit land. But in the nineteenth century with the growth of factories in big cities, young men moved away from homes for economic reasons. They searched for wives to help them raise families, often far away from the farm of their extended family. The Enlightenment emphasis on individual rights and personal fulfillment also influenced this turn to love.

Literature of the period also had an effect on this growth of love as a factor in marriage. I saw an article recently which claims that the greatest romantic novel ever written was Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. (A true confession: I have not yet read the book. I will probably watch one of the movie versions.). It is interesting to note that Jane Austen herself never married. She wrote, "Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without affection."

The popular opinion from the nineteenth century to our own day is that love is the most important ingredient for a marriage to succeed. One thinks of the pop song composed by Neil Sedaka and sung by Captain and Tennille, "Love will keep us together." It is a moving song that was a major hit, but unfortunately, often love does not work. Captain and Tennille themselves divorced in 2014. Affection and romance may be vital to marriage. But the social forces of individual fulfillment and feminism created cracks in marriage. For marriage to work, other forces need to be present, particularly a deep belief in marriage as a social institution.

That brings me to this week's portion. Most of the portion tells the story of the arranged marriage between the patriarch Isaac and his wife Rebecca. The entire marriage was decided before Isaac and Rebecca even met. The Torah says that Isaac marries Rebecca, and only afterwards did he love her. The marriage came first and the love afterwards. It is the same idea we see in the Broadway hit show *Fiddler on the Roof*. Tevye asks his wife of twenty-five years Goldie, "Do you love me?" Goldie thinks he is being ridiculous. But Tevye persists. Goldie finally answers, "For twenty-five years I've lived with him, fought with him, starved with him. Twenty-five years my bed is his. If that's not love, what is?" Whether in the Bible or on Broadway, true love often comes after the marriage.

We live in a time when marriage is a fragile institution. Young people are not dating let alone marrying. They are marrying later and divorcing at a high rate. Close to half of children are being raised by a single parents. We need to strengthen marriage. Yes, it takes love. But it also takes a belief in marriage. Yes, in this day and age we can only hope that a bride and groom love one another before their wedding day. But the goal is to continue to grow their love through the years as they build their home together.