

January 19, 2018

Dear BQLI Region Friends,

In this week's Torah portion, Bo, we read "They had faith in *Adonai* and in God's servant Moses." How long can people have faith when miracles do not work? The Israelites, enslaved in Egypt for hundreds of years, were not privy to daily briefings on the day's accomplishments or on how Pharaoh was slowly succumbing to Moses's demands with each successive plague. All they knew was their own reality...that in spite of their prayers and God's obvious miracles, they were still slaves. So, where did the Israelites get the faith to continue to believe? How do *you* get the faith to continue to believe?

Each of us prays for our own miracles. We pray for our loved ones, suffering from illnesses or pain, to be cured. We pray that our children know happiness, prosperity, and peace. And, we pray that all Jews be able to feel that we personally left Egypt...that our lives began with our freedom from Egypt. This last prayer, actually a **commandment** from God, is crucial, because unlike during the time of the Exodus, the proof of God's overt presence, through miracles, has gradually diminished throughout the ages. This commandment, to remember the Exodus from Egypt (as we do during our Passover Seders each year) reminds us to appreciate the less obvious miracles that occur in our lives. It reminds us to seek out God's presence in the ordinary, daily reality of our lives.

The fact that the Jewish people are here to recall the Exodus is as miraculous as the Exodus was itself! What the Exodus represents is the establishment of a unique relationship between God and His people. That is the true ongoing miracle! In ancient times we were given a memory to carry with us forever. As long as we bear witness to this memory, we also testify to the fact of a living God in all our lives.

It is easy to have faith in miracles when you can see them with your own eyes. But, it is hard, very hard, to have faith in miracles and in God when we are repeatedly disappointed. So, we remember: the Israelites did it, and we can, too!

B'Shalom,
Grace