

In this week's Torah portion, we read the beginning of the Israelites liberation from slavery. Egypt is ruled by Pharaoh - a totalitarian god-king with a hard heart, driven by his own agenda, and blind to the suffering of his people from blood, fire, hail, and darkness that plague Egypt because of Pharaoh's choices and actions.

In the Torah story, God intervenes. But we are not in a Torah story.

I believe that the way God acts in our Torah stories is the way a parent might act with a toddler - intervening in tangible ways because that is the only way a toddler can understand.

Developmentally, the Israelites as a people are in that toddler stage - needing to physically see and feel God's presence - they still need to experience many things before they become a mature people that can deal with nuance and complexity.

The Jewish people is no longer at the toddler stage, and we can no longer expect God to fight our battles, or make things all better. It is up to us. The teachings of Torah have replaced miracle and spectacle from God - and so we bear the responsibility of Tikkun Olam, which is why we are here today - to find our own ways to stand up to Pharaoh because God will not do it for us. But what we can seek from God is motivation, inspiration, imagination and courage. And if not from God, then from one another.

Let's get to work.