

## Come to Pharaoh

In today's *Torah Portion (Parashat Bo)*, *the Almighty* speaks to Moses and says: "*Vayomer Adonai el Moshe, Bo el-Paro ki ani kashiti et-lev Paraoh...*" which is translated in the TLV, CJB and JPS as "*Then Adonai said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh, because I have hardened his heart.'*" In modern Hebrew the word בּוֹ (*Bo*) can indeed mean *to come* or *to go*, depending on context. In many instances in Hebrew, the meaning shifts depending on the *standpoint of the speaker*. I looked in the *DavkaWriter* dictionary and *Bo* translates: *to come*, or *to arrive*. The literal rendition is thus, "*And Yah Adonai said to Moses, Come to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart.*" *Come* is the word used in the LSB (Legacy Standard Bible): "*Then Yah said to Moses, Come to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart*" and in the WYC (Wycliffe Bible) it is: "*And the Lord said to Moses, Enter thou to Pharaoh, for I have made hard the heart of him.*" This should not surprise us since we are all familiar with the song *Bo Ruach Elohim* which is translated *Come, Holy Spirit come*. Does it matter whether it is come or go?

The sense of *come* implies that Moses, as the speaker, is being *invited into a situation*. This reflects a common nuance in Hebrew where *coming* and *going* can be more about the perspective from which the action is seen. In this instance, *The Almighty* commands Moses to *approach* Pharaoh. From the perspective of *The Almighty*, it is appropriate to say *come*, as Moses is approaching Pharaoh under *The Almighty's* direction. Translations like the TLV, CJB, JPS and NKJV use *go* to convey a more *action-oriented instruction* (a command), framing Moses' role in delivering *The Almighty's* message to Pharaoh. This emphasis can resonate more with readers' understanding of the *authoritative action* being called for. The choice of *go* in these translations aims to maintain a sense of *urgency and action* appropriate to the scene's context involving Moses addressing Pharaoh. The implications of *The Almighty's* command can influence theological interpretation. *Come* might reflect *divine invitation or command*, emphasizing *The Almighty's* authority. Conversely, *go* could underscore Moses' *responsibility and the active role* he must take in the unfolding narrative of the Exodus.

Understanding these subtle nuances enriches the reading and interpretation of the biblical text. It might seem that I am nitpicking when I elucidate on the difference between what the translations did with the Hebrew text: *Come to Pharaoh* is a respectful and *brotherly visit of two great men* that had a *brotherly relationship* before *The Almighty's* decision and move to take the children of Israel out of slavery and into freedom out of the dominion of Pharaoh that was acting as if he is *The Almighty's* spokesman. The Hebrew text actually describes a totally different attitude between the *Come to Pharaoh* and *Go to Pharaoh*. *Come to Pharaoh* implies *come to him as a brother, friend, a fellow Egyptian*. *Go to Pharaoh* implies *go as a commander and command's him to let Yah's people go!* The Hebrew has that *softer, more friendly attitude* displayed. We must remember that the present Pharaoh of Egypt knows Moses, they both grew up in the palaces of the Pharaoh. Our *Torah Study* teacher has been deliberately reminding us of the Holiness of *Yah* and how much that matters! The Hebrew text bears that emphasis.

The narrative from Exodus chapters 6 to the end of chapter 10 reveals profound insights into the nature of God, the character of Moses, and the dynamics of divine intervention on behalf of the oppressed. The Nature of *The Almighty* is revealed in each one of the calls from Moses to Pharaoh. The objection and refusal to obey *The Almighty's* commands brought to Egypt (in every case) a more difficult plague and harsher punishment for the cruelty and abuse of those Hebrew slaves, and especially after each refusal to release Israel from Egyptian slavery. We need to understand that *The Almighty* does not change.

When we or our politicians become like Pharaoh we, as a nation that has chosen and almost worship our politicians, must know that the decisions that our governments make that have unholy and immoral practices and the abuse of the poor and suffering will bring upon us and our governments heavy tolls of *The Almighty's* wrath that will affect our lives and the lives of our next generations.

We have *Covenant Relationship* with *The Almighty*: In *Exodus 6:1-8*, *The Almighty* affirms His covenant with the Israelites, reiterating the promise to free them from bondage. This demonstrates His faithfulness to His covenant despite the Israelites' doubts and Moses' initial hesitations. This covenant relationship, like every two-sided agreement, has *blessings when we obey* and *curses when we harden our hearts*, as the Pharaoh of Egypt did in the face of *The Almighty*. We see *Divine Commitment*. *Yah Adonai's* assurance that He will deliver Israel emphasizes His commitment to justice and His role as a *redeemer*. When *Yah Adonai* introduces Himself as in front of the burning bush on the slopes of Mount Sinai, *I Will Be What I Will be* (*Exodus 3:14*), He declares His eternal nature and reliability.

We also note that *The Almighty* has both *Power and Sovereignty* over *all* of nature, both the air and the Sea in the story of the *Exodus*. But we must not forget that He also has *sovereignty over us*, the human race, and also over all of nature on both the surface of this our Earth and under the Sea, and above the heavens. The *TNK* is not the only occasion where *The Almighty* sends plagues and punishments over the inhabitants of this Earth. What the narratives of the *Torah* tell us, especially in this episode of the exodus of the children of Israel, the exodus from slavery in Egypt is nothing in comparison to the plagues that are promised on the Earth and its inhabitants in the *Book of Revelation*.

Judgment Against Idolatry: Each plague correlates with Egyptian deities, showing that *The Almighty* is more powerful than the false gods worshipped by man. For example, the plague of frogs could be seen as a challenge to the goddess *Heket*, associated with fertility and childbirth. These 10 plagues over Egypt are each specifically aimed against one of the main Egyptian Gods and Goddesses. *The Almighty* attacked the spiritual powers that controlled the wealth of Egypt, the natural resources of Egypt, and the very might and riches of Egypt. These days of horror over Egypt were intended to show the weakness and powerless nature of their gods, and their big fancy temples and worship could not affect the power of *Yah Adonai* in the plagues. Meanwhile the Children of Israel were unaffected in Goshen.

Another important thing to note, especially as leaders of *Yah's* people, is *Moses Character*! Leadership of *The Almighty's* people by those who have weak or bad character can only bring horror and disaster on the people of *Yah*. Today, what we see lacking in evangelical leadership is men of strong, pure, clean, passionate, and character that first of all care for the people. Moses cared and even intervened for the people of Israel, even when they sinned big time before *The Almighty*.

Through the unfolding events, *The Almighty* reveals His commitment to justice and His desire for all people—whether the oppressed or the oppressors—to recognize *His authority and power*. Ultimately, this *Torah Portion* serves as a powerful reminder of *The Almighty's* relentless pursuit of justice, His ability to change human hearts, and His overarching plan for redemption. *Shabbat Shalom!*