

PARSHAT BO 5782
EXODUS 10:1-13:16
4 SHEVAT 5782/6 JANUARY 2022



Tara Protecting from the Eight Fears
Pigments on cloth, Kham Province

CONFRONTING THE GREAT SEA SERPENT

1. וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה (Exodus 10:1)

Why does it say, “Come to Pharaoh”? It should have said, “Go to Pharaoh.” God brought Moses into a chamber within a chamber, to the supernal and mighty serpent from which many levels evolve which Moses feared to approach himself... When the blessed Holy One saw that Moses was afraid, the blessed Holy One waged war against him [Pharaoh].
(Zohar 2:34a)

2. Thus said the Eternal God:
I am going to deal with you, O Pharaoh king of Egypt,
Mighty sea serpent, sprawling in your streams,
Who said,
“My Nile is my own;
I made it for myself.”
(Ezekiel 29:3)

3. “In you must go.”
“What’s in there?”
“Only what you take with you.”
(Yoda and Luke at the Dagobah cave, *The Empire Strikes Back*)

4. Beasts are dumb and stupid; one eats another;
Up weary paths, down cliffs, they climb and fall,
In panic, terror-stricken, trembling with fear,
Full of caution – one cannot conceive their sufferings.
(*Sutra of Tara*)

5. It is said that before entering the sea
a river trembles with fear.

She looks back at the path she has traveled,
from the peaks of the mountains,
the long winding road crossing forests and villages.

And in front of her,
she sees an ocean so vast,
that to enter
there seems nothing more than to disappear forever.

But there is no other way.
The river cannot go back.

Nobody can go back.
To go back is impossible in existence.

The river needs to take the risk
of entering the ocean
because only then will fear disappear,
because that’s where the river will know
it’s not about disappearing into the ocean,
but of becoming the ocean.

(“Fear,” Khalil Gibran)