

Three Hebrew terms are used interchangeably throughout this pericope to describe the state of Pharaoh's heart. The most common is *hazaq* (Exodus 4:21, 9:12, 10:20,27, 14:4,8), but occasionally *qasa* (Exodus 7:3) and *kaved* (Exodus 10:1) are used. **Kaved** literally means heavy, which, as we shall see, has a special significance as applied to the heart in Egyptian mythology. **Hazaq** conveys the sense of tough and strong. **Qasa** means to be difficult and conveys stubbornness. Because they appear to be interchangeable here, they are often translated by the same word -- "to harden" Pharaoh's heart or, sometimes, "to stiffen" his heart. In terms of Egyptian mythology, the best translation may be "to make his heart heavy" (page 48).