

Chapter 9: And You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea:

This attribute is the goodness of the Holy One, Blessed Be He. For when the children of Israel sinned, he delivered them into the hands of Pharo. But when they repented, why should He have punished Pharo, or Sancheriv or Haman and others like them? Yet the Holy One, Blessed Be He, is not content with saying to the children of Israel, "Repent!" and then no further evil will befall them, for Haman, Pharo or Sancheriv will be removed from them. This is not enough; instead, the iniquity of Haman reverts onto his own head, and so, too with Pharo and Sancheriv.

The reason the Holy One, Blessed Be He, conducts Himself in this manner is to be found in the secret contained in the verse "The goat will bear all the sins of Israel upon it to the land of Gezerah..." (*Vayikra 16:22*). The explanation is that the goat itself bears the punishment for their sins! Now this is very hard to understand, for if Israel sinned, why should the goat be responsible?

This is understood as follows: When a person confesses with the intention of accepting upon himself the cleansing of his sin – as King David states: "Cleanse me thoroughly of my wrongdoing..." (*Tehillim 51:4*), and as we pray "Erase my sin in Your great compassion" – he hopes his punishment will be light in order that it not interfere with his Torah study. As we say in our prayers: "...but not by way of severe suffering." This was also King David's intentions when he stated, "You are just with regard to all that befalls me", expressing a willingness to accept suffering upon himself for those sins that can be purged only by means of severe affliction or death. And so it is – when a person confesses his wrongdoing in *vidduy*, the Holy One, Blessed Be He, immediately decrees severe suffering upon him for his sins. Then Samae-I appears to claim his due, for this is the portion allotted him, as the *Zohar on "Pikudei"* explains. But all the person's sins ultimately devolve upon his head. This way, Israel is purified. This is just like the goat that bore the sins of Israel to its death in Gezerah.

The reason for this is that the Holy One, Blessed Be He, decreed upon His world that all who punish Israel will be annihilated. That's why any animal that is party to a transgression must be killed. Similarly, the stones used to carry out the sentence of those condemned to death by stoning, and the sword used to carry out the sentence of those condemned to decapitation, must be buried in order to nullify their existence and power after they have carried out the judgment.

This is also the secret of the statue Nevuchadnetzar saw in his dream (*Daniel 2:32-34*):_ When the people of Israel were given into the hand of the Babylonian king, symbolized by "a head of gold" this same king was eventually subjugated by the king of Persia, symbolized by "a silver chest and arms," who was in turn expelled by another nation, and so on, until Israel descended to the "legs..of iron and clay." And what will be the final happy ending? Eventually, the Holy One, Blessed Be He, will execute favourable judgment upon Israel, as it is written: "...I will spend My arrows upon them" (*Devarim 32:23*), meaning that the arrows will be spent but not on Israel. "And then the parts of iron, clay, brass, silver and gold together will be crushed.." (*Daniel 2:35*). First, it is written, "And he smote the idol to its legs" (*ibid. 2:34*), implying that there was nothing left of the idol but its legs, the head, arms, and torso having lost all their power. Nevertheless, later it is written, "together [they] will be crushed" (*ibid. 2:35*), for in the future, the Holy One, Blessed Be He, will indict Samae-I and all his evil agents, who carry out his deeds and He will execute justice upon them.

This is the attribute of "and You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," implying that the Holy One, Blessed Be He, will send forth the attribute of judgment to cast down those who are called "the depts. Of the sea" as the verse states: "The wicked are like the troubled sea, for it cannot rest, and its waters cast up mud and mire" (*Yeshayahu 57:20*). This refers to those who execute judgment on Israel: He will return their recompense upon their own heads, for after the people of Israel receive their judgment, the Holy One, Blessed Be He, regrets His original demand that they be shamed. And this is not all, for "...I was only a little angry, and [the nations of the world] helped make it worse" (*Zechariah 1:15*).

A person also ought to behave this way with his fellow. Even if the latter is wicked and crushed through suffering, he should not despise him, for "having been whipped, he is like your brother." On the contrary, he should draw close the downcast and those who are punished have compassion for them and save them from their enemies. He should not say, "His sin caused his suffering," but he should have compassion upon him in accordance with this attribute.

- **Main Point: Stand By Others Who Are Suffering, Even Though They Brought the Suffering Upon Themselves.**