



Book of Jonah

Messages/Lessons of the Book:

All humans have the potential for teshuvah

We are all accountable for our own actions, and at times those of others.

Spiritual Rebirth is possible

An omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent Gd is a reality

Elements of Irony/Humor:

Jonah – not your typical prophet

runs away from Gd

5 word prophecy

The people listened and repented

Spiritual rebirth as a result of being swallowed by a fish

Exaggeration – Great city; great fish

The king commands repentance – Can teshuva be externally motivated?

Midrashim:

“Pick me up and heave me” (1:12) They cast him [into the sea] up to his knees, and the sea stopped raging; they brought him [back up] to them and the sea grew stormy. They cast him in up to his navel, and the sea stopped raging; they brought him up to them, and the sea grew stormy. They put him in up to his neck, and the sea stopped raging; again they brought him up to them, and the sea grew stormy. They threw him in altogether and the sea immediately stopped its raging (Pirke d’Rabbi Eliezer 10)



2:1 Dag 2:2 Daga

Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish without praying. The Holy One said: I made a broad space for him in the belly of a male fish in order that he not be distressed and he isn't praying! I will prepare a fish that is pregnant with three hundred and sixty five thousands and tens of thousands of little fish in order that he be distressed and pray before me. This is because the Holy One desires the prayers of the righteous. In that hour the Holy One brought a pregnant fish and she said to the other fish: the Holy One sent me to swallow up the prophet who is in your belly. If you will spit him out, good. If not I will swallow you with him. He said to her: who knows if what you say is true? She replied: leviathan. They went to leviathan and she said to him: leviathan, king over all the fish of the sea! Do you not know that the Holy One sent me to this fish to swallow the prophet who is in his belly? He said to her: yes. The fish said to leviathan: when? He replied: in the last three hours, when the Holy One descends to play with me. Thus I heard. He immediately spit out Yonah. The female fish right away swallowed him and he was in great distress because of the confinement and the filth. He immediately focused his heart in prayer, as it says "And Jonah prayed to the Lord his God, from the belly of the fish." (Jonah 2:2) Immediately the Holy One gestured to the fish and she vomited Yonah nine hundred and sixty eight porsa to dry land. (Yalkut Shimoni 550)