

Prophet Yunus (as)

Prophet Yunus (Jonah as)

Yunus ibn Matta is a prophet and messenger of God. Yunus is the only one of the Bible's Twelve Minor Prophets to be named in the Qur'an. The tenth chapter of the Qur'an is named after him.

In the Qur'an, Yunus is mentioned several times by name, as an apostle of Allah, and as Dhul-Nun.

Qur'anic mentions

In Surah Al-Anbiya (Qur'an 21:87) and Surah Al-Qalam (Qur'an 68:48), Yunus is called Dhul-Nun ('The One of the Fish'). In Surah An-Nisaa (Qur'an 4:163) and Surah Al-An'am (Qur'an 6:86), he is referred to as "an apostle of Allah." (Surah 37 of the Qur'an: 139-148 tells the full story of Yunus, as).

Jonah was also amongst those sent by Us. When he ran away to a ship fully laden, he agreed to cast lots (a form of gambling that involves the drawing of numbers for a prize), and he was condemned: Then a whale swallowed him, for he had done acts worthy of blame. Had he not repented and glorify Allah, he would certainly have remained inside the whale until the day of Resurrection, but We threw him out on a naked shore in a state of sickness, And We caused to grow over him a spreading plant of the gourd kind. We sent him on a mission to a hundred thousand men or more. They believed; so

We permitted them to enjoy their life for a while (Qur'an, chapter 37 As-Saaffat, verses 139 – 148)

Muslim tradition teaches that Yunus was from the tribe of Binyamin (Prophet Joseph's brother).

Hadithic mentions

Yunus is also mentioned in a few incidents during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad. In some instances, Yunus' name is spoken of with praise and reverence by Muhammad. According to historical narrations about Muhammad's life, after ten years of receiving revelation's, Muhammad went to the city of Ta'if to see if its leaders would allow him to preach his message, but he was thrown out from the city by its people. He took shelter in the garden of Utbah and Shaybah, two members of the Quraysh tribe. They sent their servant, Addas, to serve him grapes for sustenance. Muhammad asked Addas where he was from and the servant replied Nineveh. "The town of Yunus the just, son of Amittai!" Muhammad exclaimed. Addas was shocked because he knew that the pagan Arabs had no knowledge of Yunus. He then asked how Muhammad knew of this man. "We are brothers," Muhammad replied. "Yunus was a Prophet of God and I, too, am a Prophet of God." Addas immediately accepted Islam and kissed the hands and feet of Prophet Muhammad.

One of the sayings of Muhammad, in the collection of Imam Bukhari, says that Muhammad said, "One should not say that I am better than Yunus." Ibn Abi al-Salt, an older contemporary of Muhammad, taught that, had Yunus not

prayed to Allah, he would have remained trapped inside the whale until the day of Resurrection, but, because of his prayer, Yunus "stayed only a few days within the belly of the whale."

The ninth-century Persian historian Al-Tabari records that, while Jonah was inside the whale, "none of his bones or flesh were injured." Al-Tabari also writes that Allah made the body of the whale transparent, allowing Yunus to see the "wonders of the deep" and that Yunus heard all the sea creatures praising Allah.

Kisai Marvazi, a tenth-century poet, records that Yunus' father was seventy years old when Yunus was born and that he died soon afterwards, leaving Yunus' mother with nothing but a wooden spoon, which turned out to be a cornucopia (*symbol of abundance*).

In the Belly of the Whale

Have you ever felt as though things are just too much for you, that you are in a situation you see no way of getting out of? Do you look at problems in our world today and wonder how they can ever be solved? All this, and more, is the story of Prophet Yunus (*peace be upon him*). The mission of Prophet Yunus is a timeless story that tells us there is a way out, if only we had faith. Almighty Allah called Yunus to preach to the people of Nineveh. Nineveh was a great city, the capital of Assyria, but it became a very wicked place. Yunus went to the people there and told them to give up their bad ways and to turn, instead, to Allah, but they wouldn't listen to him, and so Yunus left

them. Yunus was still a man, and so he stormed out of the city when he didn't achieve what he had hoped. He even felt that he knew what these people deserved. Yunus boards a ship. He sets sail far away from the scene of his failure. Once at sea, though, a storm grows up and the crew become terrified. These pagan sailors feel that the gods of the sea must be displeased with them, so they draw lots to throw one man overboard to calm the storm. They draw the lot indicating that Yunus should be thrown overboard. This happens not once, but three times, and the terrified crew throw him overboard thinking that in doing this they will be protecting themselves and their ship. Once in the water, something extraordinary happens. Allah sends a great whale, to swallow Yunus. Once in its belly, Yunus descends to the bottom of the sea, filled with total despair. He is engulfed by darkness: the darkness of the creature's stomach; the darkness of the deep; and, worst of all, the darkness of despair. Even though he was a religious man, he begins to experience doubt, and it is when he is in the depths of despair that things change for him. In the noble Qur'an, we read that Yunus "cried through the darkness." He realized that Almighty Allah, not he, was in control of all things. He cries out, "there is no god but You," and asks for Allah for help. Ibn Kathir has a moving commentary on this part of Yunus's story. He says that once Yunus admits that there is no god but Allah and that only Allah can save him, something wonderful happens. First, the whale begins to sing the praises of Allah, then all the little fish around it, then all the creatures of the sea, each in its own way, until there is a great chorus of praise. The whale swims up to the surface and ejects Yunus onto the shore. Just as Allah had used it to save Yunus from the storm and from drowning in the sea, so He also uses it to bring Yunus safely back to land again. Yunus is feeling sick and is sore as he lies on the sand in the scorching heat. Allah takes even more care of him and causes a plant to grow up over him to cover Yunus with its shade. Once Yunus

recovered from his ordeal and his skin has stopped smarting from the acids in the creature's stomach, he decides to return to Nineveh, to see what has become of the city and its people. When he arrives there, to his great surprise, he sees that the city and its people have not been destroyed, but have all turned to Allah. His message had got through to them. Perhaps when they saw the terrible storm as it grew up in the distance, they saw in it an image of what would happen to them if they did not repent. Who knows why they turned back to Allah, but they did. Yunus, then, after all his adventures, is finally content that his mission had been accomplished. There is so much that the story of Yunus can teach us. First of all, read it yourself in the noble Qur'an. You will find it in the following verses: 4:163, 6:86, 10:98, 21:87, 37:139-148, and 68:48-50. Ponder over the meanings of the words and listen to what they say to you. Yunus's story is timeless. It is for the whole world and it is for each one of us. Nineveh, for example, the great city and the capital of a great empire, doesn't even exist anymore. Scholars say it lies in Iraq on the other side of a river from the city of Mosul, but its temples and monuments have gone. All worldly power will go the same way. Even today's superpowers, who behave as though they are Allah, and believe that everyone must obey them, will one day wither and fade and, like all great empires before them, cease to exist. Remember, Allah is in control. Allah will decide the course of events.

Another lesson from the story of Prophet Yunus (**peace be upon him**) is that we never know the effect our deeds will have on others. We, like Yunus, are commanded to invite others about Islam, but the results might never be known to us. A word we say to one person might touch them deeply, and yet we may never see its effect, but we must keep trying. We never know what effect our da`wah will have. What we must never do, though, is to think that

we are in control or that it is we who call others to Islam. Allah is in control and He, alone, calls others to Himself.

Finally, if you have ever feel as though you are in the belly of a whale, surrounded by darkness and with no way out, do what Prophet Yunus did. (he cried through the darkness - Al-Anbiyaa' 21: 87) and admitted that there is no god but Allah, and that only Allah can rescue one. Never give up. Trust in Allah. He can use us and all situations to do great things beyond our wildest imagination.

Tombs



Photograph of the ruins of the mosque of Yunus, following its destruction by
ISIL

Nineveh's current location is marked by excavations of five gates, parts of walls on four sides, and two large mounds: the hill of Kuyunjik and hill of Nabi Yunus. A mosque atop Nabi Yunus was dedicated to Jonah and contains a shrine, which was revered by both Muslims and Christians as the site of Jonah's tomb. The tomb was a popular pilgrimage site and a symbol of unity

for Jews, Christians, and Muslims across the Middle East. On July 24, 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) destroyed the mosque containing the tomb as part of a campaign to destroy religious sanctuaries it deemed to be idolatrous. After Mosul was taken back from ISIL in January 2017, an ancient Assyrian palace built by Esarhaddon dating to around the first half of the 7th century BCE was discovered beneath the ruined mosque. ISIL had plundered the palace of items to sell on the black market, but some of the artifacts that were more difficult to transport still remained in place.

Other reputed locations of Jonah's tomb include the Arab village of Mashhad, located on the ancient site of Gath-hepher in Israel; the Palestinian West Bank town of Halhul, 5 km (3.1 mi) north of Hebron; and a sanctuary near the city of Sarafand (Sarepta) in Lebanon. Another tradition places the tomb at a hill now called Giv'at Yonah, "Jonah's Hill", at the northern edge of the Israeli town of Ashdod, at a site covered by a modern lighthouse.

A tomb of Jonah can be found in Diyarbakir, Turkey, located behind the mihrab at Fatih Pasha Mosque. Evliya Celebi states in his Seyahatname that he visited the tombs of Jonah.