The Book Jonah: Part 1



Alex Hecht ahecht@torontotorah.com

• Who was Jonah?

1. Melachim I 17:17-24 (chabad.org tr.)

(כא) וַיִּתְמֹדֵד עַל הַיֶּלֶד שָׁלשׁ פְּעָמִים וַיִּקְרָא אֶל יְלְנָק וַיֹּאמֵר יְלְנָק אֱלֹקי תָּשֶׁב נָא נֶפֶשׁ הַיֶּלֶד הַנָּה עַל קְרְבּוֹ: (כב) וַיִּשְׁמַע יְלְנָק בְּקוֹל אֵליָהוּ וַתָּשָׁב נֶפֶשׁ הַיֶּלֶד עַל קְרְבּוֹ וַיֶּחִי: (כג) וַיִּקָּח אֵליָהוּ אֶת הַיֶּלֶד וַיֹּרְדָהוּ מִן הָעֲליָה הַבַּיְתָה וַיִּתְנהוּ לְאִמּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵליָהוּ רְאִי חֵי בְּנַךְּ: (כד) וַתּאמֶר הָאשָׁה אֵל אֵליָהוּ עַתָּה זָה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אִישׁ אֱלֹקִים אָתָּה וֹדְבַר יְלְנָק בְּפִיךְּ אֱמֶת.

And he prostrated himself on the boy three times, and he called to the Lord and said, "O Lord, my G-d, restore, please, the soul of this child within him." And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Elijah and the child's soul returned within him, and he lived. And Elijah took the child and he brought him down from the upstairs chamber to the house, and he gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son is alive." And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a Man of G-d and the word of the Lord that is in your mouth, is true."

2. Midrash Socher Tov 26:7 (ArtScroll tr.)

בן צרפת האלמנה הוא יונה בן אמתי. היה צדיק גמור.

The son of the widow of Tzorfat [the child whom Elijah brought back to life] was Jonah. He was a complete *tzaddik*.

3. Abarbanel to Jonah 1:1 (R' Torczyner tr.)

נכתב ספור יונה בתוך כתבי הקדש לא בבחינת נינוה כי אם בבחינת יונה ותוקף חסידותו והנס שנעשה עמו וכדי שנדע שדבר אלקינו יקום לטולה

Jonah's story was recorded among the holy texts not because of Nineveh, but because of Jonah, the strength of his piety and the miracle performed for him, and so that we would know that the word of G-d will stand forever.

• Chronology in history

4. The Book of Jonah, ArtScroll, p. xxvi

The date of Jonah's mission to Nineveh is not known...At any rate, it most certainly took place during the reign of Jeroboam, from 3114-3153 (646-607 B.C.E.).

• Chronology in Jonah's prophetic career

5. Melachim II 14:23-25 (chabad.org tr.)

(כג) בִּשְׁנַת חֲמֵשׁ עֶשָׁרֵה שָׁנָה לַאֲמַצְיָהוּ כָן יוֹאָשׁ מֶלֶךּ יְהוּדָה מֶלֵךּ יָרָבְעָם כֶּן יוֹאָשׁ מֶלֶדּ יִהְנְעָם הָּן יוֹאָשׁ מֶלֶדּ יְהוּדָה מֶלֶדּ יָרָבְעָם כֶּן יוֹאָשׁ מֶלֶדּ יְהוּדָה מֶלֶדּ יָרָבְעָם כֶּן יוֹאָשׁ מֶלֶדּ יְהַבְּעָם בֶּן וְנָט אֲשֶׁר הָחֲטִיא אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל: (כה) הוּא הֵשִׁיב אֶת גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל מְלְבוֹא חֲמֶת עַד יָם הָעֲרָבָה כִּדְבַר יִקֹּנָק אֱלֹקִי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּיַד עַבְדּוֹ יוֹנָה בֶן אֲמִתַּי הַנָּבִיא אֲשֶׁר מִגַּת הַחֵּכֶּר.

In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash the king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash the king of Israel, ruled in Samaria forty-one years. And he did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not turn away from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat that he had caused Israel to sin. He restored the boundary of Israel from the approach to Hamath until the sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, G-d of Israel, which He spoke through his servant Jonah the son of Amittai the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher.

6. Talmud, Yevamot 98a (Koren tr.)

אמר מר: ויהי דבר ה' אל יונה שנית לאמר - שנית דברה עמו שכינה, שלישית לא דברה עמו. והא כתיב: גהוא השיב [את] גבול ישראל מלבא חמת עד ים הערבה כדבר ה'... אשר דבר ביד עבדו יונה בן אמתי הנביא!

The Master said that Rabbi Akiva inferred from the verse "And the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying" that the Divine Presence spoke with him only a second time. However, a third time the Divine Presence did not speak with him. The Gemara asks: Isn't it written with regard to King Jeroboam ben Joash: "He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, the G-d of Israel, which He spoke by the hand of His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet" (II Kings 14:25)? Evidently, Jonah prophesied at least once more.

7. Midrash, Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer 10 (Friedlander tr.)

בחמישי ברח יונה מפני אלקים, ולמה ברח, אלא פעם ראשון שלחו להשיב את גבול ישראל ועמדו דבריו, שנאמר (מלכים ב יד, כה): "הוּא הֵשִׁיב אֶת גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל מִלְבוֹא חֲמֶת" וגו'. פעם שניה שלחו לירושלים להחריבה, כיון שעשו תשובה הקב"ה עשה כרוב חסדיו ונחם על הרעה ולא חרבה, והיו ישראל קוראין אותו נביא שקר. פעם ג' שלחו לנינוה.

On the fifth day Jonah fled before his G-d. Why did he flee?

- Because on the first occasion when (G-d) sent him to restore the border of Israel, his words were fulfilled, as it is said, "And he restored the border of Israel from the approach to Hamath" (II Kings 14:25).
- On the second occasion (G-d) sent him to Jerusalem to (prophesy that He would) destroy it. But the Holy One, blessed be He, did according to the abundance of His tender mercy and repented of the evil (decree), and He did not destroy it; thereupon they called him a lying prophet.
- On the third occasion, (G-d) sent him against Nineveh to destroy it.
- Why is Jonah included in Tanach?

8. Radak to Jonah 1:1 (VBM tr.)

ויש לשאול למה נכתבה נבואה זו בכתבי הקדש וכולה על נינוה שהיתה מאומות העולם ואין בו זכר לישראל ואין בכל הנביאים זולתה כמוהו ונוכל לפרש כי נכתבה להיות מוסר לישראל שהרי עם נכרי שאינם מישראל היה קרוב לתשובה ובפעם הראשונה שהוכיחם הנביא שבו בתשובה שלמה מרעתם וישראל מוכיחים אותם הנביאים השכם והערב ואינם שבים מרשעם...ועוד ללמד שהא-ל יתברך חומל על בעלי תשובה מאיזה עם שיהיו ומוחל להם וכל שכן כשהם רבים.

One may ask: Why was this *sefer* included among the holy books? After all, it is all about Nineveh, which is a gentile nation, and it does not discuss Yisrael at all, and there is no other story in the *Nevi'im* like it. One can suggest that it was written to give *mussar* to Yisrael, because a gentile nation immediately repented after the first time it was rebuked, as opposed to Yisrael, who were rebuked many times but did not repent... And also to teach that G-d has mercy on all those who repent, Jew and gentile, and He forgives all, especially if they are many.

9. Zohar, Shemot pg. 199a (R' Torczyner tr.)

יונה דנחת לספינה דא איהי נשמתא דבר נש, דנחתא להאי עלמא למהוי בגופא דב"נ, אמאי אתקרי יונה, בגין דכיון דאשתתפת בגופא כדין איהי יונה בהאי עלמא, כמה דאתמר (ויקרא כה) ולא תונו איש את עמיתו.

Yonah, who descends into the boat, is the soul of a person which descends to this world to live in the body of a person. Why is it called a "Yonah"? Because once it partners with a body like this, it suffers (*yonah*) in this world, as it is said, "And you shall not cause one another to suffer (*tonu*)."

• Why did G-d dispatch Jonah to Nineveh?

10. Jonah 1:2 (chabad.org tr.)

קוּם לֵךְ אֶל נִינְוֵה הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה וּקְרָא עַלֵיהָ כִּי עַלְתָה רַעַתַם לְפַנַי.

Arise! Go to Nineveh, the great city, and proclaim against it, for their evil has come before Me.

11. The Book of Jonah, ArtScroll, p. 79

Nineveh was the principal city of Assyria, Israel's bitterest enemy, and is mentioned often in Scripture. It lay on the east bank of the Tigris...and as we see below (4:11), its population exceeded 120,000.

12. Ibn Ezra to Jonah 1:2

כי היו יראים השם הימים הקדמונים, רק עתה בימי יונה החלו לעשות רע, ולולי זה שהיו בתחילה אנשי השם לא היה שולח נביאו אליהם. כי היו יראים השב המורה אין כמוה ולא תמצא כתוב ששברו מזבחות בעלים, או גדעו פסילים והנה מזה נלמוד שלא היו עכו"ם. The [Ninevites] were fearers of G-d in earlier days. Only now, in the days of Jonah, did they begin to do evil. Had they not originally been upstanding people, [G-d] would not have sent a prophet to them. We see that they returned with a repentance unlike any other, and we do not find it written that they destroyed idolatrous altars or tore down statues. From this we learn that they were not idolators.

13. Malbim to Jonah 1:2

ולא היה השליחות בשביל נינוה כי לא מצאנו שישלח ה' נביא מישראל להשיב את העכו"ם בתשובה, כי לא דבקה השגחת ה' לשלוח נביא רק בישראל, רק כי היתה ההשגחה על נינוה בשביל ישראל אחר שאשור הוכן להיות שבט אפו של ה' לרדות בו את ישראל שנתחייבו למקום, רצה ה' להשיבם בתשובה כדי שיהיו מוכנים למלאת גזרתו על ישראל, וגם כדי שלא יאמר המתלונן למה התביט בוגדים תחריש כבלע רשע צדיק ממנו, רצה ה' להראות שאשור יש לו זכות יותר מישראל שהם שמעו לדברי הנביא ועשו תשובה וישראל הקשו ערפם משמוע.

[Jonah's] mission was not for the sake of Nineveh, for we do not find that G-d sends prophets from among Israel to bring idolaters to repentance, for [His] Providence is only connected powerfully enough with the Jews to send prophets. G-d's Providence over Nineveh was only for the sake of the Jews: [G-d intended Assyria to be the "rod of his anger" to punish Israel by destroying the Northern Kingdom and exiling the Ten Tribes. Had Assyria remained as wicked as it was in Jonah's time, simple justice would have not permitted that it be G-d's tool to punish Israel, which, wicked though Israel may have become, was still more righteous than the thieving, violent Assyrians. Therefore, G-d dispatched Jonah to cause Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, to repent, and thus become worthy of its mission - ArtScroll commentary to 1:3], and Israel stiffened their necks from hearing.

• Jonah's escape: where and why?

14. Jonah 1:3 (chabad.org tr.)

וַיָּקָם יוֹנָה לְבְרֹחַ תַּרְשִׁישָׁה מִלֹּפְנֵי יְלְנָק נַיֵּרֶד יָפוֹ נַיִּמְצָא אֲנִיָּה בָּאָה תַרְשִׁישׁ וַיִּתַן שְׂכָרָה נַיַּרֶד בָּה לָבוֹא עִמְהֶם תַּרְשִׁישָׁה מִלְפְנֵי יְלְנָק נַיַּרֶד יָפוֹ נַיִּמְצָא אֲנִיָּה בָּאָה תַרְשִׁישׁ וַיִּתַן שְׁכָרָה נַיַּרֶד בָּה לָבוֹא עִמְהֶם תַּרְשִׁישָׁה מִלְפְנֵי יְלְנָק.

And Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from before the Lord, and he went down to Jaffa, found a ship going to Tarshish, paid its fare, and went down into it to come with them to Tarshish from before the Lord.

15. Rashi to Jonah 1:3 (chabad.org tr.)

ים ששמו תרשיש והוא בחוצה לארץ. אמר אברח לי הים שאין השכינה שורה בח"ל אמר לו הקב"ה חייך יש לי שלוחים כיוצא בך לשלוח אחריך ולהביאך משם משל לעבד כהן שברח מן רבו ונכנס לבית הקברות אמר לו רבו יש לי עבדים כיוצא בך לשלוח אחריך ולהביאך משם ומה ראה יונה שלא רצה לילך אל נינוה אמר העכו"ם קרובי תשובה הם אם אומר להם ויעשו תשובה נמצאתי מחייב את ישראל שאין שומעים לדברי הנביאים. I.e, to a sea named Tarshish, which is outside the Holy Land. He said, "I will flee to the sea, for the Shechinah does not rest outside the Holy Land." Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to him, "By your life, I have messengers like you to send after you and fetch you from there." This is illustrated by an allegory of a priest's slave who fled from his master and entered a cemetery [making it impossible for his master to retrieve him]. His master said to him, "I have slaves like you to send after you and fetch you from there." Now what did Jonah see that he did not wish to go to Nineveh? He said, "The gentiles are quick to repent. Should I prophesy to them and they repent, I will be found condemning Israel, who do not heed the words of the prophets." [from Mechilta, Exodus 12:1]

16. Midrash, Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer 10 (R' Torczyner tr.)

דן דין יונה בינו לבין עצמו ואמ' יודע אני שהגוים קריבי תשובה הן עכשו הן עושין תשובה, וד' שולח רוגזו על ישראל ולא עוד אלא די שישראל קורין אותי נביא שקר אלא אף אומות העולם.

Jonah judged for himself, saying, "I know that the nations are close to repentance. Now they will repent, and G-d will send His anger against Israel. Further, it is enough that Israel calls me a false prophet; now, the nations will, too!"

17. Midrash, Mechilta Bo

יונה תבע כבוד הבן ולא כבוד האב.

Jonah defended the honor of the child rather than the honor of the Father.

18. Midrash, Mechilta d'Rabbi Yishmael Bo 1 (R' Torczyner tr.)

תדע שאין השכינה נגלית בחוצה לארץ שנאמר ויקם יונה לברוח תרשישה מלפני ד' (יונה א ג) וכי מלפני ד' הוא בורח. והלא כבר נאמר אָנָה אֵלַךְ מֵרוּחֶדְּ וגו' (תהלים קלט ז - י)...אלא אמר יונה אלך לי בחוצה לארץ מקום שאין השכינה נגלית.

You know that the Shechinah is not revealed outside Israel, as it is written, "And Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from before G-d." Was he truly fleeing from before G-d? It is already written, "Where can I flee from Your spirit" ... Rather, Jonah said, "I will leave Israel, to a place where the Shechinah is not revealed."

19. Midrash, Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer 10 (Friedlander tr.)

ירד יונה ליפו ולא מצא שם אניה לירד בה. והאניה שירד בה יונה היתה רחוקה מיפו מהלך שני ימים, לנסות את יונה. מה עשה הקדוש ברוך הוא, הביא עליה רוח סערה בים והחזירה ליפו, וראה יונה ושמח בלבו, ואמר עכשו אני יודע שדרכי מישרת לפני.

Jonah went down to Jaffa, but he did not find there a ship in which he could embark, for the ship in which Jonah might have embarked was two days' journey away from Jaffa, in order to test Jonah. What did the Holy One, blessed be He, do? He sent against it a mighty wind on the sea and brought it back to Jaffa. Then Jonah saw and rejoiced in his heart, saying, "Now I know that my ways will prosper before me" [i.e., he considered this Divine approval for his action].

• Why are we told that Jonah paid the fare?

20. Radak to Jonah 1:3 (R' Torczyner tr.)

שכר הראוי לו לתת לה אמר לתת או נתנו מתחלה, ובדרש נתן שכר כל הספינה בעבור שתמהר ללכת ולא תמתין לסוחרים ולסחורות בעבור שהיה רוצה לברוח מהר, וסמכו מזה שאין הנבואה שורה אלא על אדם עשיר.

The price that was appropriate for him to give; he said he would pay it, or he paid up front. In *derash* it is taught that he paid the price of the entire boat, so that it would rush to travel and not wait for merchants and merchandise, for he wanted to flee quickly. They used this to support the idea that prophecy is manifest only upon a wealthy person.

• Jonah's descent

21. Jonah 1:4-5 (chabad.org tr.)

(ד) וַיּלְנָק הַטִיל רוּם גְּדוֹלָה אֶל הַיָּם וַיְהִי סַעַר גָּדוֹל בַּיָּם וְהָאֵנָיָה חִשְּׁבָה לְהִשָּׁבֵר: (ה) וַיִּירְאוּ הַמַּלָּחִים וַיִּזְעֲקוּ אִישׁ אֶל אֱלֹהָיו וַיָּטִלוּ אֶת הַכֵּלִים אֲלָירָם וְיוֹנָה יָרִד אֶל יַרְכְּתִי הַסְּפִינָה וַיִּשְׁבַּב וַיֵּרָדִם.

Now the Lord cast a mighty wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, and the ship threatened to be broken up. And the sailors were frightened, and each one cried out to his god, and they cast the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them, and Jonah **went down** to the ship's hold, **lay down**, and fell fast asleep.

22. Prof. Alan Jotkowitz, "Reading Yona with the Rambam, the Rav, and R. Lichtenstein," http://etzion.org.il/

These literary allusions echo R. Soloveitchik's description of the death of the *se'ir hamishtalei'ach*, the sacrificial scapegoat:

The *mishna* in *Yoma* describes the ultimate fate of the scapegoat in the ritual: "It went **backward**, and it **rolled** and **descended** (וּדְהַפּוֹ לַאֲחוֹרְיוּ, וְהוֹא מִהְגּלְגֵּל וְיוֹרֵך) until it was halfway down the mountain, where it became dismembered into many parts." Can there be a more accurate description of what sin itself does to a person? Even before his total descent, he is broken apart, an object victim of gravity. Sin transforms a person into someone who is acted upon or influenced... Regarding sin, an analogy is made to sleep. Sleep is an absolute passive state, in which man is a pure object. The insistent demands of the *shofar*, according to the Rambam, is the imperative to awaken oneself.

23. Jonah 1:7 (chabad.org tr.)

ַניּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל רֵעֵהוּ לְכוּ וְנַפִּילָה גוֹרָלוֹת וְנַדְעָה בְּשֶׁלְמִי הָרָעָה הַזֹּאֹת לָנוּ וַיַּפָּלוּ גוֹרָלוֹת וַנִּפִּל הַגּוֹרָל עַל יוֹנָה.
And they said, each one to his fellow, "Come, let's cast lots, so that we will know because of whom this evil has befallen us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

24. Prof. Alan Jotkowitz, "Reading Yona with the Rambam, the Rav, and R. Lichtenstein," http://etzion.org.il/

The "casting of lots" is also an allusion to the lottery that occurred in the Temple on Yom Kippur to select the *se'ir ha-mishtalei'ach*. In fact, after Yona was chosen, "they picked up Yona and heaved him into the sea" – remarkably parallel to the fate of the scapegoat. Like the scapegoat, Yona was chosen to be cast off from G-d's presence, and like the vessels that were cast of the ship to lighten the load, Yona was reduced to a passive object.

25. Jonah 1:6 (chabad.org tr.)

ניִּקְרֵב אֵלָיו רֵב הַחֹבֵל נִיאׁמֶר לוֹ מַה לְּךְ נִרְדָּם קוּם קָרָא אֶל אֱלֹקיךּ אוּלִי יִתְעַשֵּׁת הָאֱלֹקים לָנוּ וְלֹא נֹאבֵד. And the captain approached him and said to him, "Why do you sleep? Get up, call out to your G-d, perhaps G-d will think about us, and we will not perish."

26. Prof. Alan Jotkowitz, "**Reading Yona with the Rambam, the Rav, and R. Lichtenstein,**" http://etzion.org.il/ The call of the ship captain to Yona to wake up — "How can you sleep so soundly?! Arise, call to your G-d. Perhaps G-d will pay us mind and we will not perish" (ibid. 1:6) — can be seen as analogous to the sound of the *shofar* of Rosh Hashana, the purpose of which is to awaken us from our sinful stupor.

As the Rambam writes:

Even though the blowing of the *shofar* on Rosh Hashana is a divine decree, a hint of its purpose was given to us: to awaken the sleeping from their slumber and the comatose from their stupor in order to search their actions and return with *teshuva*. (*Hilkhot Teshuva 3:4*)

• Fear inspires repentance

27. Jonah 1:5, 10, 16 (chabad.org tr.)

(ה) נַיִּירָאוּ הַמַּלְחִים נַיִּזְעֲקוּ אִישׁ אֶל אֱלֹהָיו נַיָּטַלוּ אֶת הַכֵּלִים אֲשֶׁר בָּאֲנִיָּה אֶל הַיָּם לְהָקֵל מֵעֲלֵיהֶם וְיוֹנָה יָרַד אָל יַרְכְּתֵי הַסְּפִינָה וַיִּשְׁכַּב וַיֵּרְדַם. And the sailors were **frightened**, and each one cried out to his god, and they cast the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them, and Jonah went down to the ship's hold, lay down, and fell fast asleep.

(י) נַיִּירָאוּ הָאָנָשִׁים יִרְאָה גְּדוֹלָה נִיאֹמְרוּ אַלָיו מַה זֹאֹת עֲשִׂיתָ כִּי יָדְעוּ הָאָנָשִׁים כִּי מִלְפְנֵי יְלְנָק הוּא בֹרֵחַ כִּי הִגִּיד לָהֶם And the men were very **frightened**, and they said to him, "What is this that you have done?" For the men knew that he was fleeing from before the Lord, because he had told them

(טז) וַיִּירָאוּ הָאֲנַשִׁים יִרְאַה גִּדוֹלַה אֶת יִקֹנַק וַיִּזְבָּחוּ זֶבַח לִיקֹנַק וַיִּדְרוּ נְדַרִים.

And the men **feared** the Lord exceedingly, and they made sacrifices to the Lord and made vows.

28. Midrash, Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer 10 (Friedlander tr.)

ראו המלחים את כל האותות והנפלאות הגדולות שעשה הקב"ה עם יונה מיד עמדו והשליכו איש את אלהיו בים, שנאמר (יונה ב, ט): "מְשַׁמְּרִים הַּבְלֵי שָׁוְא חַסְדָּם יַעֲזֹבוּ", וחזרו ליפו ועלו לירושלים ומלו את בשר ערלתם, שנאמר (יונה א, טז): "נִיִּירְאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים יִרְאָה גְדוֹלָה "מְשַׁמְּמְרִים הַבְּלֵי שָׁוְא חַסְדָּם יַעֲזֹבוּ", וחזרו ליפו ועלו לירושלים ומלו אלא זה הוא דם ברית שהוא כדם זבח, ונדרו ושלמו להביא איש את אשתו ואת כל אשר לו ליראת אלקי יונה ונדרו ושלמו ועליהם הוא אומר על הגרים גירי הצדק.

The sailors saw all the signs, the miracles, and the great wonders which the Holy One, blessed be He, did unto Jonah, and they stood and every one cast away his god, as it is said, "They that regard lying vanities forsake their own shame" (Jonah 2:8). They returned to Jaffa and went up to Jerusalem and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins, as it is said, "And the men feared the Lord exceedingly; and they offered a sacrifice unto the Lord" (Jonah 1:16). Did they offer sacrifice? But this (sacrifice) refers to the blood of the covenant of circumcision, which is like the blood of a sacrifice. And they made vows every one to bring his children and all belonging to him to the G-d of Jonah; and they made vows and fulfilled them - and it is regarding converts such as these that we mention [in *Shemoneh Esrei*]: "upon the righteous converts..."

29. Prof. Alan Jotkowitz, "Reading Yona with the Rambam, the Rav, and R. Lichtenstein," http://etzion.org.il/

The chapter ends with the sailors "offering a sacrifice to G-d and taking vows." They appear to exemplify the process of *teshuva mei-yira*, repentance from fear, whose impetus is crisis but is nevertheless acceptable and even praiseworthy in the eyes of G-d...

This kind of teshuva seems particularly appropriate for Rosh Hashana, the day of year where the Jewish People in a sense crown G-d as the King of the world and accept his dominion, as beautifully expressed in the *Malkhiyot* prayers of Musaf. Rosh Hashana has a universal aspect to it as well, as the kingship of G-d applies to all the nations of the world. It was this kingship that the sailors recognized and paid homage to with their prayers, sacrifices, and repentance.