

Yunus (Jonah) - The Whale Swallows Jonah

The whale found Jonah floating on the waves before it. It swallowed Jonah into its furious stomach and shut its ivory teeth on him as if they were white bolts locking the door of his prison. The whale dived to the bottom of the sea, the sea that runs in the abyss of darkness.

Three layers of darkness enveloped him, one above the other: the darkness of the whale's stomach, the darkness of the bottom of the sea, the darkness of the night. Jonah imagined himself to be dead, but his senses became alert when he found he could move. He knew that he was alive and imprisoned in the midst of three layers of darkness. His heart was moved by remembering Allah. His tongue was released soon after saying: "La ilaha illa Anta (none has the right to be worshipped but You (O, Allah), Glorified (and Exalted) be You above all that (evil) they associate with You. Truly, I have been of the wrong-doers."
Surah 21:87

Jonah continued praying to Allah, repeating this invocation. Fishes, whales, sea-weeds, and all the creatures that lived in the sea heard the voice of Jonah praying, heard the celebration of Allah's praises issuing from the whale's stomach. All these creatures gathered around the whale and began to celebrate the praises of Allah in their turn, each in its own way and in its own language.

The whale also participated in celebrating the praises of Allah and understood that it had swallowed a prophet. Therefore it felt afraid; however, it said to itself: "Why should I be afraid? Allah commanded me to swallow him."

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