

**ANSWER:** Nineveh, a township in the region of Mousel

## **SŪRAH AL-ANBIYĀ': VERSES 87-88**

**And (remember) *Dhunnūn* (the man of the fish, namely Yūnus), when he walked away in anger and thought that We will never put him to trouble. Then, he called (Us) in depths of darkness saying, "There is no god but You. Pure are You. Indeed I was among the wrongdoers." [87]**

**So We responded to him and rescued him from the distress. And this is how We rescue the believers. [88]**

## **COMMENTARY**

The story of Sayyidnā Yūnus Ibn Mattā 'alayhis salām appears in the Qur'ān in Sūrah Yūnus, Sūrah Al-Anbiyā', Sūrah aṣ-Ṣaffāt, and Sūrah Nūn. At some places he is mentioned by his real name and at others by the title as *Dhunnūn* or *Ṣaḥibul Ḥūt*. The meaning of Nūn and Ḥūt both is fish. Thus, *Dhunnūn* and *Ṣaḥibul Ḥūt* can be translated as man of the fish. Sayyidnā Yūnus 'alayhis salām remained inside the stomach of a fish for a few days in very odd circumstances by the will of Allah. It is because of this episode that he is sometimes referred to as *Dhunnūn* or *Ṣaḥib al-Ḥūt*.

## **The Story of Yūnus 'alayhis salām**

According to the commentary by Ibn Kathīr, Sayyidnā Yūnus 'alayhis salām was sent to preach Allah's message among the people of Nineveh which is a township in the region of Mousel. Sayyidnā Yūnus 'alayhis salām invited them towards Islam and asked them to follow the true religion and perform good deeds, but they rejected his call and behaved in an arrogant and defiant manner. Being dejected and annoyed, Yūnus 'alayhis salām left the place after warning them that Allah's wrath would descend upon them within three days. After he had departed from the township, the people realized that his warning might come true. (According to some versions they had actually seen the signs of the impending disaster). So they repented and asked pardon for their sins and the entire population retired to a forest with their cattle and animals. Then they started lamenting and bewailing and invoked Allah's forgiveness and protection. Allah Ta'ālā accepted their sincere contrition and wailing over their sins and released them from the fear of the impending disaster. While all these events were taking place, Sayyidnā Yūnus 'alayhis salām waited expecting the news about the destruction of his people. But when he learnt that the storm had passed and his people were safe and sound, he worried that they would regard him as a liar. According to some versions, it was customary with his people to execute a person if he was proved a liar. (Maḏharī). Sayyidnā Yūnus 'alayhis salām therefore, feared for his life and decided to go away to some other place rather than returning to his own people. He came across a river on his way and boarded a boat to cross it. While crossing the river it so happened that the boat was caught in a whirlpool and was in danger of sinking. The boatmen decided that if one of the passengers was off loaded from the boat the

## DAY 21

chances were that the rest of them would be saved from drowning. So they cast lots to decide as to who should be off-loaded. As luck would have it they drew the name of Sayyidnā Yūnus ‘alayhis salām. It seems that the boatmen were aware of his exalted position and they refused to throw him in the river. The lot was drawn a second and then a third time and his name was drawn on both occasions. This episode has been mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur’ān in the following words: **(and cast lots, and was of the rebutted - 37:141)**. Thereupon Sayyidnā Yūnus ‘alayhis salām got up, took off the extra clothes which he was wearing and threw himself in the river. Immediately a fish from the Caspian Sea arrived on the scene as commanded by Allah Ta’ālā and swallowed Yūnus ‘alayhis salām. (as reported by Ibn Mas’ūd raḍī’allāhu ‘anhu). The fish was further commanded by Allah Ta’ālā that he was not to be taken for food, that no harm was to be done to his body (both flesh and bones) and that he was only to be held as a prisoner in its stomach for a few days. (Ibn Kathīr).

**(he walked away in anger 21:87)** It is obvious that the anger was against his own people. Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās raḍī’allāhu ‘anhu has explained it as such.

**The prayer of Yūnus ‘alayhis salām is invoked by all people at all times and for all their needs (And this is how We rescue the believers - 21:87.)** That is, just as We released Yūnus ‘alayhis salām from his misery and distress, so do We deliver other believers (mu’minīn) when they turn towards Us repenting their sins sincerely.

According to a hadith of the Holy Prophet ﷺ if a Muslim prays to Allah Ta’ālā for the grant of a wish in the words used by Yūnus ‘alayhis salaam when he was in the stomach of the fish **(21:87)** He would accept his prayer and grant his wish. (Aḥmad, Tirmidī, Maḥzarī)

The supplication of Dhun-Nun when he was in the belly of the fish:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ