

"Let it be known that the story of Jonah in the Bible is one which has many spiritual meanings, and which cannot be interpreted literally. In it are contained symbols concerning the states of the traveler toward God in his journey from the world of nature to the Divine World. A portion of the explanation of these symbols was mentioned in the instructions regarding the early chapters of Genesis. It is a method of all the Manifestations, the Prophets of God, to explain the spiritual facts by material parables, so that such may be an universal bounty. The people of Truth perceive the spiritual meanings thereof, while others are satisfied with the outward appearance of the relations. Every one partakes according to his capacity.

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"By Jonah is meant the human spirit; by the three days/signified three different states or kingdoms, as those of the vegetable, animal and human. After spending three days (periods) in these different conditions, the spirit may reach the station of the 'Kingdom' and be freed from the limitations of the lower kingdoms.

"In one of the blessed Tablets, revealed by His Highness, Abdul Baha, to a believer in Persia, whose name was Jonah, and written in the year 1893, he gives, in eloquent words, the following explanation of the parable of Jonah:

'He is KL-Abha! O thou fish of the fathomless ocean! As His Highness, Jonah (Upon him be peace!) became familiar with the interior of the "great fish" of nature and its elements, and suffered from the darkness of the depths of the sea of the world, so he was separated from the World of the Kingdom of Existence where are the Lights of the Placeless, and became a dweller in the world of place. Therefore the real meaning of Jonah is his reality (the essence of man); the fish is the corporeal body, the human temple and his outward form; the sea is the contingent world and the natural, dark qualities. As he was cast into this narrow and dark condition, he cried out from the bottom of his heart: "O Thou Holy Being! Verily I repent unto Thee!" (This caused him to be saved.)

'Thus, thou also, as thou art cast into the depths of the sea, supplicate and beseech to God, so that thou mayst draw nigh unto the shore of safety and enter the shade of the blessed Tree, which is the comfort of the heart and the rest of the soul.'

(Signed) Abdul Baha Abbas.

Translated by
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