



THE TRIBE SCRIBE

BUMPER YOM KIPPUR EPISODE: YONAH!

IN THE AFTERNOON OF YOM KIPPUR, DURING THE MINCHA SERVICE, WE READ THE BOOK OF YONAH.



IT'S NOT JUST A FISHY TALE! JOIN US AS WE FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE STORY OF YONAH, WHAT IT CAN MEAN TO US AND WHY WE READ IT ON YOM KIPPUR.

YONAH WAS A PROPHET WHICH MEANS THAT GOD SPOKE TO HIM DIRECTLY. (NOW THAT'S PRETTY COOL!) GOD TOLD YONAH TO TRAVEL TO THE CITY OF NINEVEH WITH A MESSAGE FROM GOD. YONAH'S JOB WAS TO TELL THE PEOPLE OF NINEVEH TO STOP THEIR WICKED WAYS AND DO TESHUVA.



THAT SOUNDS STRAIGHTFORWARD! GET THE JOB, DO THE JOB, JOB DONE! OR NOT... INSTEAD OF TRAVELLING TO NINEVEH, YONAH RAN TO THE PORT AND BOARDED A SHIP TO TARSHISH - WHICH IS DEFINITELY NOT NINEVEH. DID HE GET THE WRONG BOAT? WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?

YONAH DIDN'T WANT TO TALK TO THE PEOPLE OF NINEVEH AND HE DIDN'T THINK THEY WOULD LISTEN TO HIM ANYWAY. SO HE RAN AWAY. HE MUST HAVE KNOWN YOU CAN'T RUN FROM GOD!?



Do you ever feel overwhelmed by a job that seems too hard? What do YOU do about it?



SO YONAH IS ON THE TARSHISH SHIP AND GOD IS NOT OK WITH THAT. GOD SENDS A HUGE STORM, WITH GALE FORCE WINDS AND ENORMOUS WAVES. THE SHIP LOOKS LIKE IT IS GOING TO CAPSIZE!

THE SAILORS AND PASSENGERS ARE WORRIED. THEY THROW THE LUGGAGE OVERBOARD TO MAKE THE SHIP LIGHTER AND THEY PRAY TO THEIR GODS. YONAH GOES DOWN TO THE HOLD AND GOES TO SLEEP.



Have you ever gone to sleep to escape from something?

WAKE UP! HOW CAN YOU JUST SLEEP THROUGH THIS? GET UP AND PRAY. MAYBE YOUR GOD WILL SAVE US.



LOOK! THOSE OTHER SHIPS ARE IN CALM WATERS.

MAYBE IT'S A PUNISHMENT FOR SOMEONE ON OUR BOAT.



LET'S DRAW LOTS TO SEE WHOSE FAULT IT IS.

Of course the lottery landed on Yonah...

WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO BRING THIS TERRIBLE TEMPEST JUST OVER OUR SHIP?!



I AM A JEW. I BELIEVE IN HASHEM, THE ONLY GOD, THE GOD OF THE HEAVEN WHO MADE THE SEA AND THE DRY LAND.

SO THEY THREW YONAH OVERBOARD AND SUDDENLY, THE STORM STOPPED.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO GET OUT OF THIS DANGER? IT'S GETTING WORSE...

THROW ME INTO THE SEA!

Yonah was swallowed up by a gigantic fish.

YONAH DOES TESHUVA - REPENTANCE AND ASKS FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO FIX HIS MISTAKE. OHHHH! SO THAT'S WHY WE READ THE BOOK OF YONAH ON YOM KIPPUR!

He sat inside the belly of the fish for three days. Realising his major mistake, Yonah tried to put it right. He prayed to God with all his heart. He accepted responsibility for his behaviour and promised to do better if God would give him another chance.

God was impressed with Yonah and instructs the fish to spit Yonah out on to dry land.

TAKE TWO! ONCE AGAIN, GOD ADDRESSES YONAH AND TELLS HIM TO GO TO NINEVEH AND DO HIS JOB.

Arriving in Nineveh, Yonah announced his mission:

HAVE YOU EVER DONE SOMETHING, BECAUSE YOU HAD TO, NOT BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO?

LISTEN UP! THE CITY OF NINEVEH WILL BE DESTROYED IN 40 DAYS, UNLESS YOU DO TESHUVA AND STOP YOUR WICKED WAYS.

TO YONAH'S SURPRISE, THE PEOPLE OF NINEVEH TOOK NOTICE OF HIS MESSAGE. YOUNG AND OLD, FROM THE KING DOWN, THEY FASTED AND PRAYED AND DID TESHUVA. THEY GENUINELY CHANGED THEIR BEHAVIOUR AND TRIED TO BE BETTER PEOPLE. DISASTER DODGED!

Yonah was really frustrated:

SO YONAH DID HIS JOB, THE PEOPLE DID TESHUVA AND THE CITY WAS SAVED. SOUNDS LIKE A HAPPY ENDING. NOT QUITE...

GOD - HOW COULD YOU JUST FORGIVE THOSE TERRIBLE PEOPLE AFTER ALL THE BAD THINGS THEY'VE DONE?! I KNEW THIS WAS GOING TO HAPPEN, THAT'S WHY I RAN AWAY TO TARSHISH.

Yonah sat outside Nineveh, watching to see what would happen to the city. God made a tree suddenly grow next to him.

Next morning...

GOD, WHY DID YOU TAKE AWAY THAT BEAUTIFUL TREE?



WOW! WHAT A GREAT TREE. IT'S NICE AND TALL AND THE LEAVES ARE GIVING ME EXCELLENT SHADE.



YOU MIND SO MUCH ABOUT THAT TREE WHEN YOU DIDN'T EVEN PUT IN ANY EFFORT TO PLANT IT, OR WATER IT. ONE DAY IT WAS THERE AND THE NEXT DAY IT WAS GONE.

CAN'T YOU SEE THAT I, GOD, MUST CARE ABOUT AND HAVE MERCY ON THE PEOPLE OF NINEVEH? THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE ALL ABLE TO IMPROVE. NOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY I GAVE YOU YOUR MISSION?

ARE YOU OPEN TO LISTENING TO WHAT GOD MIGHT BE TELLING YOU? TRUE, WE CAN'T TALK TO GOD DIRECTLY LIKE YONAH DID BUT WE CAN SEE EXAMPLES OF GOD'S CARE FOR US IF WE'RE OPEN TO LOOKING OUT FOR THEM.



THE MAIN THEME OF THE STORY IS TESHUVA, BOTH YONAH'S AND THE PEOPLE OF NINEVEH. BUT THAT'S NOT ALL. WE SEE YONAH AS A HUMAN BEING FACED WITH TRICKY SITUATIONS. YONAH'S BEHAVIOUR THROUGHOUT THE STORY ENCOURAGES US TO THINK ABOUT HOW WE DEAL WITH CHALLENGES AND GOD IN OUR OWN LIFE.



AND WHAT BETTER TIME THAN YOM KIPPUR TO REFLECT ON THIS?



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