וְעַתָּה יְהוָה קַח נָא אֶת נַפְשִׁי מִמֶּנִּי כִּי טוֹב מוֹתִי מֵחַיָּי. וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה
הַהֵיטֵב חָרָה לָךְ. וַיֵּצֵא יוֹנָה מִן הָעִיר וַיֵּשֶׁב מִקֶּדֶם לָעִיר וַיַּעַשׂ לוֹ שָׁם
סֻכָּה וַיֵּשֶׁב תַּחְתֶּיהָ בַּצֵּל עַד אֲשֶׁר יִרְאֶה מַה־יִּהְיֶה בָּעִיר. וַיְמַן יְהוָה
אֱלֹהִים קִיקָיוֹן וַיַּעַל מֵעַל לְיוֹנָה לִהְיוֹת צֵל עַל רֹאשׁוֹ לְהַצִּיל לוֹ
מֵרָעָתוֹ וַיִּשְׂמַח יוֹנָה עַל הַקִּיקָיוֹן שִׂמְחָה גְדוֹלָה. וַיְמַן הָאֱלֹהִים
תוֹלַעַת בַּעֲלוֹת הַשַּׁחַר לַמָּחֳרָת וַתַּךְ אֶת הַקִּיקָיוֹן וַיִּיבָשׁ. וַיְהִי כְּזָרְחַ
הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיְמַן אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ קָדִים חֲרִישִׁית וַתַּךְ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ עַל רֹאשׁ יוֹנָה
וַיִּתְעַלָּף וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת נַפְשׁוֹ לָמוּת וַיֹּאמֶר טוֹב מוֹתִי מֵחַיָּי. וַיֹּאמֶר
אֱלֹהִים אֶל יוֹנָה הַהֵיטֵב חָרָה לְךָ עַל הַקִּיקָיוֹן וַיֹּאמֶר הֵיטֵב חָרָה לִי
עַד מָוֶת. וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אַתָּה חַסְתָּ עַל הַקִּיקָיוֹן אֲשֶׁר לֹא עָמַלְתָּ בּוֹ
וְלֹא גִדַּלְתּוֹ שֶׁבִּן לַיְלָה הָיָה וּבֶן לַיְלָה אָבָד. וַאֲנִי לֹא אָחוּס עַל נִינְוֵה
הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה אֲשֶׁר יֶשׁ בָּהּ הַרְבֵּה מִשְׁתִּים עֶשְׂרֵה רִבּוֹ אָדָם אֲשֶׁר
לֹא יָדַע בֵּין יְמִינוֹ לִשְׂמֹאלוֹ וּבְהֵמָה רַבָּה.

From the Book of Jonah

The word of the Eternal came to Jonah son of Amittai: Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim judgment upon it; for their wickedness has come before Me.

Jonah started out, however, to flee to Tarshish from the service of the Eternal. He went to Jaffa and found a ship going to Tarshish. He paid the fare and went aboard to sail with the others to Tarshish, away from the service of the Eternal.

But the Eternal cast a mighty wind upon the sea, and such a tempest came upon the sea that the ship was in danger of breaking up. In their fright, the sailors cried out, each to his own god; and they flung the cargo overboard to make the ship lighter. Meanwhile, Jonah had gone into the hold of the vessel, where he lay down and fell asleep. The captain went over to him and cried out: "How can you be sleeping so soundly? Up! Call upon your god! Perhaps your god will be kind to us and we will not perish."

The men said to one another: "Let us cast lots and find out on whose account this misfortune has come upon us." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. They said to him: "Tell us, you who have brought this misfortune upon us, what is your business? Where do you come from? What is your country, and of what people are you?" "I am a Hebrew," he replied. "I worship the Eternal, the God of Heaven, who made both sea and land." The men were greatly terrified, and they asked him: "What have you done?" And when the men learned that he was fleeing from the service of the Eternal, for so he told them, they said to him: "What must we do to you to make the sea calm around us?" For the sea was growing more and more stormy. He answered: "Heave me overboard, for I know that this terrible storm came upon you on my account."

Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to regain the shore, but they could not, for the sea was growing more and more stormy around them. Before throwing him overboard, they cried out to the Eternal: "Please do not let us perish on account of this man. Do not compel us to kill an innocent person! For You, O Eternal, by Your will, have brought this about." And they heaved Jonah overboard, and the sea stopped raging.

The men were greatly in awe of God; they offered a sacrifice to the Eternal, and they made vows.

God provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah; and Jonah remained in the fish's belly three days and three nights. . . Then the Eternal commanded the fish to spew Jonah out upon dry land.

The word of the Eternal came to Jonah a second time: "Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it what I tell you." Jonah went at once to Nineveh in accordance with the command of the Eternal.

Nineveh was an enormously large city, a three days walk across. Jonah started out and made his way into the city the distance of one day's walk, and proclaimed: "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be destroyed!"

And when they heard Jonah's message, the people of Nineveh believed God. They proclaimed a fast of repentance, and all put on sackcloth. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his robe, put on sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he had the word cried through Nineveh: "By decree of the king and his nobles, no person or animal shall taste anything! They shall not graze, and they shall not drink water! They shall be covered with sackcloth and shall cry mightily to God. Let all turn back from their evil ways and from the injustice of which they are guilty. Who knows but that God may turn back and relent, so that we do not perish?"

When God saw what they did, how they were turning back from their evil ways, God renounced the punishment planned for them, and did not carry it out.

This displeased Jonah greatly, and he was grieved. He prayed to the Eternal, saying: "Eternal One! Is this not just what I said would happen when I was still back in my own country? This is why I fled beforehand to Tarshish. For I know that You are a compassionate and gracious God, endlessly patient, abounding in love, renouncing punishment. Take my life, then, for I would rather die than live, knowing that my mission and all that I endured was unnecessary." The Eternal One replied: "Jonah, are you deeply grieved?"

Now Jonah had left the city and found a place east of the city. He made a booth there and sat under it in the shade, until he should see what would happen. [And God decided to teach Jonah the lesson of this experience.] A gourd sprouted which grew up over Jonah, to provide shade for his head and save him from discomfort. Jonah was very happy about the plant. But the next day at dawn God provided a worm, which attacked the plant so that it withered. And when the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind. The sun beat down on Jonah's head, and he became faint. He begged for death, saying: "I would rather die than live." Then God said to Jonah: "Are you so deeply grieved about the death of this gourd?" "Yes," he replied, "so deeply that I want to die." Then the Eternal said: "Look how you care about the plant, which you did not work on nor cultivate. It appeared overnight and perished overnight. Now, should I not care about Nineveh, that great city, and its people, my children whom I created and care for? There are more than a hundred and twenty thousand human beings here, who do not yet know right from wrong, and many other creatures as well!"