



After throwing all the food he had collected into the ship Yunus went in the sea with the wooden puppet in his left arm as a float and the brass plate in his right hand as a paddle. The tide had risen so high that now he had to swim several meters to reach the rope ladder, and he was not a good swimmer yet.

When he was about to reach the ladder he saw a vertical fin approaching swiftly through the waves along the side of the ship. He found through the water that it was a huge shark and aiming at him. Yunus trembled and hastily caught the rope ladder but had not time enough to clear himself from the water; he asked Allah the Omnipotent for help. But the shark shot out of the water with its terrible shining jaws wide agape, causing the prophet to scream. He saw the serrated edges of the sharp triangular teeth of the huge predator. He froze. But then he did something he would have never done if he had time to think. It was as if he were a puppet manipulated by some puppeteer and he only moved accordingly as what the manipulator intended: Yunus, in the blink of an eye, pushed his right arm between the very jaws of the shark with the brass plate held such that one of its diagonal lines came vertical in the mouth. The shark proceeded to bite the arm of the prophet only to feel sharp pains in the upper palate and the tongue, and soon its eyes were veiled in darkness of death, for the upper corner of the plate cut through its tiny brain and came out of its flat forehead; Yunus had pulled back his arm narrowly before the jaws closed. The fact that the shark's bones are soft cartilage and its biting force as strong as a vise contributed to the sudden victory of the prophet over the shark.

The blood spread in the sea on account of the rough wriggling movement of the yet-living body of the dead shark. And the smell of the blood attracted other sharks. Yunus saw more than a few fins approaching at high speeds. He hurried to climb the rope ladder, but a shark leaped up high and grabbed the wooden puppet's only leg. The shark was so heavy that Yunus had to abandon the puppet too, and he climbed up and threw his body overboard without looking back. Then, he hurriedly lifted and hauled in the rope ladder, for he was so terrified and upset that he could not help but fear the sharks might climb the ladder, which of course they are not able to – but such was the dread he had from being face-to-face with the monstrous shark rampant and agape. He heard the sound of the sharks fighting to eat the dead body of their cohort until late night.

Only after the sharks seemed gone, Yunus felt at ease and started eating his supper. When he was full he fell asleep and did not wake up until the sun rich in ultraviolet ray started scorching his skin in the late morning next day.

To his surprise, he found the ship sailing on its own, and could not see any land in all directions. Thus, the ship with only one passenger who did not know how to pull ropes sailed on its own and went swift, driven by the winds, which kept tensing the sails.

The prophet got concerned about the shortage of food and drink. He searched the ship again but there was no

food or water stored. Nor was there any tool that might be useful to catch fish. He knew there were many oysters stuck on the lower parts of the ship; so when he got unbearably hungry, he lowered the rope ladder to go down and get some of them. But the ship was sailing at such a high speed and was thus rolling so much that it was impossible to steady himself on the roughly swinging ladder and he gave up after he was dipped into the rushing water a few times and scratched by the oyster's shells. He went up and spat on the bleeding scratches.

He looked for a rain water reservoir on top of the roofs of the cabin but there were none. So, he decided to make bowls out of two watermelons. He split them in half and made four bowls that could receive and keep some rain water in them once a shower came.

Yunus thought the ship was in the Mediterranean; so, he hoped some friendly ship would find his sooner or later or he would find a land and send a signal for help. He prayed to Allah, but nothing good happened except that the ship kept sailing fast, and he was sure that Allah his god was bringing the ship toward Ninuwa.

Sunny days continued and he did not see any ship or land, so that he had to conclude that he was not in the Mediterranean. Then, he had no knowledge of where he was except that he was bound for Ninuwa. For several days no rain came and the ship got very hot in the daytime; Yunus moved to and fro to find a place to avoid the heat. In the cabin it was hotter than windy outdoors. So, he would stay in the shadow of the vast white sails, which changed places causing him to chase the shadow. Thus he kept sweating and when his gourds ran out of water and the juicy fruits he had taken from the plantation were no more, he started dehydrating. Thirst became the most serious problem. He could only hope for a rainfall.

One mid-day, it was sunny but he could see thick clouds ahead and the sea was dark there. So he thought a shower was coming. He went out of the shadow of the sails to place the watermelon bowls at a part of the ship far enough from the sails so as to allow them to capture as much rain as possible when it rained; but the wooden boards were so heated by the sun that his bare feet were scorched and he started dancing on them. He barely came back into the shade before his soles of the feet were burnt. He thought this heat would damage the watermelon bowls immediately, and thus decided that he would place them outside only during the nighttime.

When a man gets dehydrated he starts seeing things which are not real. So, when Yunus, half asleep late that afternoon, saw a huge funnel-like thing hanging from the sky far away, he thought he was only seeing another unreal thing. But it was going to be a real ocean tornado. The lower narrow end of the funnel extended and dipped in the sea and thus connected the sea and the heaven, and Yunus thought he was seeing an illusion of Jacob's ladder. The giant tornado was approaching; but he did not move. He was fainting with thirst and hunger so that he was unable to come out of the dreaminess.

As the tornado came closer, the sun was hidden by it and its sound became threatening. Soon strong winds attacked the ship and the sails began vibrating. The ship was caught in the tornado and her body was twirled several times. Failing to lift up the ship, the tornado shaft was snapped as if it were a rope trying to raise the ship without success; and the upper half of it receded into heaven and the lower half disappeared.

Everything on the deck was blown away overboard; he was only lucky he had kept the watermelon bowls inside the cabin. Torrents of water began to fall heavily from the sky and it brought down many fish and other sea animals. A fall of a small half-frozen jellyfish upon his face at last roused Yunus to his clear conscience. He opened his mouth to catch the falling water. It tasted briny and he spat out and coughed. But many fish landing on the board was encouraging. He remembered hearing a sailor say that the eyeball of fish contained water and that it was in fact the most delicious part of fish too.

Normally he would be afraid of eating fish raw, but hunger made him barbaric and he picked a small fish and ate it bone and all as if it were a sugarcane. He found seaweeds flowing on the flooded deck and caught some and swallowed it too; it was too salty but hunger was the greatest appetizer. This however made him even more thirsty. He needed water. He must try a big fish's big eyeballs now. But he had been drenched and started shivering. As the fish stopped falling then came down pieces of ice hitting the ship like many pebbles. He retreated into the cabin. The sea water which had been rapidly lifted higher than the fish in the sky by the tornado got very cold and frozen because of the extreme low temperature caused by the low atmospheric pressure. As cold as a fish, Yunus now longed for the sun, which he had until some time ago detested for its scorching heat.

After what seemed many hours, the torrents of ice and rain were let up and sunshine came back with a clear rainbow. Heat came back too and Yunus moved into the shadow of sails again. He knew there were parts of the quarter-deck where the wooden board was covered with brass-plates, and on one of them which were exposed to the sun, he put the big eye balls, which he had gouged out from a fish. Soon the eye balls started singeing where they were in touch with the plate. An appetizing smell carried by the smoke spread, and Yunus turned the balls over and waited another moment to finish the cooking. Then he picked one of them and sucked its hot juice; it tasted sweet to his dry tongue. Then he spat out the tiny spherical lens, and sucked the other eye. After slurping the watery fluid from several other fish in this manner, he then cooked and ate the meat of them. He had never eaten fish as delicious as they were. This way he ate many kinds of fish until he could eat no more.

The fish on the deck started drying in the sun. This way he could preserve them without letting them rot, he thought, and the amount would be enough for him to survive a month or more. He thanked Allah for the fertile day.

Having eaten and drunk his fill, he got sleepy and rested in the shadow of the flying sails. But no sooner had he fallen asleep than he was waked by a loud noise. Quite a few sea-birds were hovering over the ship and their crying, especially the sea-gulls', had waked the prophet. While he was wondering what the fuss was about, they descended upon the board to eat the fish of their choice. An enormous albatross among them was swallowing fish one after another. Yunus shouted and rushed to it to scare it away from the ship but it only hopped away with the game in its beak and did not even fly. Meanwhile the number of the birds increased and he began picking up the fish to secure as many as possible. When he had managed to throw no more than half a dozen of relatively large fishes into the cabin, the fish market was exhausted of the supply. Then, the birds began to leave the ship well satisfied. From the amount of the fish he could retain he thought he would soon starve again, for he knew the falling of fish from heaven was a very rare miraculous phenomenon. He was right; it did not happen again during the rest of his voyage. But shower came occasionally to provide water to him.

In several days he ran out of the fish, and began to starve again. He cracked fish bones, which he had been chewing and sucking to the marrow, into small pieces and ate them. Then in one afternoon, he waked up from a nap to find a land afar. During the sleep the ocean horizon in the direction in which the ship was heading had changed into a profile of a vast low land. He could barely see a tiny gap in the land profile and his ship seemed to be heading toward the gap. The gap increased its size, and Yunus saw the gap was a strait, and high cliffs were on either side of it.

Several boats and dinghies with sails came out of the shadow of the cliff on the right side of the gap, and seemed aiming at Yunus's ship. He thought they were fishermen, and signaled for help. But then a big ship suddenly shot out behind them, and he could see from her threatening flag that they were pirates. Yunus prayed and asked Allah to turn the ship around and away from them. But the godly ship continued to sail toward them. At last the boats and dinghies got to the godly ship and the crew threw ropes with multiple grappling hooks at their ends overboard and began climbing the ship's side. Yunus tried to unhook one of the ropes but, being weighted by the climber, the hook was too firmly engaged for him to undo.

Soon the pirates got on board one after another and bound Yunus hand and foot. They threatened to throw him into the ocean if he did not obey them. They searched through the ship and, finding nobody else there, asked Yunus what had become of the other crew. He could only say that he did not know about that for the ship had been deserted when he found her on a beach of a faraway land. Nor could he tell the name of the land or where he was going, for the godly ship had sailed on its own initiative.

The pirates' mother ship arrived, and the captain and his mates got on board the ship by jumping from their ship. The captain was surprised to know that only a single person who was not a sailor had been sailing the

ship in the vast ocean. Yunus explained to him and his men how he had gotten to a beach of the unknown land carried in a white whale and from there how the godly ship brought him to this side of the ocean. The captain and the others scarcely believed him, except that his fishy smell was too strong to doubt that he really could have been in some sort of a big fish at least for a while. The captain found the godly ship very fine and thought it would make an excellent pirate ship after some carpentry.

Then, the captain and other pirates together with Yunus moved to the pirates' mother ship or respective boats and dinghies, leaving a couple of them on the godly ship; and the two ships were tied together so that the pirate ship could tug the captured ship to their harbor.

However, no matter how hard the men in the pirate ship rowed, and although the wind was favorable for them, they seemed not making progress landward. On the contrary, it seemed as if the godly ship was pulling the pirate ship backward, toward the vast arched ocean horizon. The captain first thought it was because of the current going in that direction, and wondered if he had made a fatal mistake of coming too far into the ocean. For the people in the area those days believed that the earth and the ocean were on a huge round table, the periphery of which was the ocean horizon, and that the sea water was continually falling down over the horizon onto an underground ocean, so that once a ship got too close to the horizon, it would be pulled by the flow of the falling water and could not escape the fall. Thus the captain thought the two ships were now being pulled toward the grand cataract. But, when he went to the bow of the ship, he found that the boats and dinghies were not being pulled in the same direction but were returning toward the land swiftly, which meant that it was not the current that was moving the two ships backward. Thus, he now came to be convinced that the captured ship was actually pulling his ship backward overpowering the drive created by the rowing of his men. It was a situation of tug of war and his team was losing one-sidedly. At this the captain began to suspect that the captured ship was actually a godly one and had an ability to sail on its own initiative, as Yunus had said.

Gradually the speed of the backward motion increased and the pirate ship began to toss up and down dangerously - as a cart-horse does when the cart is pulled backward - while the godly vessel maintained its steady posture. This frightened the pirates and they started praying to Poseidon their god for help and protection.

At the same time, Yunus began preaching Allah the Almighty to them and said that Allah was working this on purpose. He said, "He is supreme over any other god, supreme even over Poseidon! He created the ocean as well as the heaven and the earth, and thus can control them at his will." The pirates suspended their prayer to hear Yunus, who continued, "My friends, do not resist Allah the Most High lest you be destroyed with this ship!"

Hearing this, the captain decided to let go the godly ship. But owing to the rough movement of his ship, he could not walk to the stern of the ship, at which the rope connecting the two ships was tied on this side. He climbed the bow-post of the ship with a rope with multiple grappling hooks at its end and threw it over the sail boom. It hooked at the boom and he pulled the rope to fasten it. Then he held it with his clasped hands and flew swiftly through the air to the stern of the arched ship, crying “Duck your heads!” He landed near the stern and shouted to his mates on the godly ship, “Jump off! Off the deadly ship! or you’ll be brought to the grand cataract and perish!” Immediately he drew his sabre and with it began cutting the tightened rope to let go the godly ship, from which his men started jumping into the sea. When the rope was severed, behold, the godly ship turned around, sailed swiftly away and sank into the sun-setting horizon, while the pirate’s ship was sailing steadily and safely landward.

The captain untied the ropes that bound Yunus’s hands and feet, and ordered the cook to serve him a meal for the prophet could not keep standing due to hunger.

Now, the pirates came to see from the result of the tug of war that the god of Yunus was far more powerful than their god Poseidon, and thus they got disillusioned with the latter. They asked Yunus to preach them more about his god Allah and, when they were convinced of the almightiness of Allah, they asked him to be their priest and be the pleader to the almighty god for their successful piratic attacks. Yunus said pirating was a sin and Allah would never help sinners succeed, so that, if they wanted to be His worshippers, they should first repent and abandon pirating.

Most of the pirates did not disagree with him at heart for they had long been wishing to quit the job anyhow; but they could not, because the priests of their god Poseidon demanded such heavy offering to be made to the god that could only be earned through the practice of piracy at the strait. In accordance with an oracle of Poseidon, according to the priests, the islanders as a whole must offer to the statue of Poseidon every other day twelve bushels of fine flour, thirty sheep and forty gallons of wine, or the equivalents to them, most of which were procured at a port town of Tarshish in exchange for the booty gained through their piracy. The islanders were made by the priests to believe that Poseidon was the protector of pirates and piracy was a form of holy war against pagans. For this, in the island, piracy was considered the most honorable occupation excepting priesthood.

The fact was, however, most of the pirates, except a handful including the captain, were themselves victims of piracy, kidnapped when they were infants by the pirates, who killed or sold away their parents and raised them to become skilled pirates or shipwrights. As these young ones grew up, the original senior pirates themselves had by and by quitted the dangerous occupation and left it to the junior pirates, and those former pirates established priesthood of Poseidon and became priests to exploit the pirates and other islanders.

Hence in the island the priests and their family members occupied a hill top area enclosed by thick walls built of cut stones, extending along all sides except for the back side where a high precipitous cliff fell into the ocean. The edge of this cliff was the highest part of the island, and from there one could see through the strait and the opposite lands. Hence a watchman was always stationed there, who at night would keep the signal fire burning until their pirate ship returned home. Furthermore, there were two catapults stationed there unseen from the sea to shoot large stones when a ship came within the shooting range. About the middle of the enclosure, there was a large lake, half of which was a swamp full of beautiful lotus plant, providing the inhabitants with water as well as lotus fruit. The shrine of Poseidon was built between the lake and the cliff, and an old stone statue of Poseidon sheltered in this shrine faced down the hill and could be seen even from outside the walls. This statue of Poseidon, who is a god of freshwater and the sea, held his trident in his left hand and this weapon was a real one. But no one knew who erected the statue there and who dedicated the trident to the god, except that a legend told that a one-eyed giant came to the island and left them there. The worshippers would approach the deity by climbing a long flight of stone steps from the lakeside.

Most of the islanders such as pirates and shipwrights lived outside the enclosure and mostly in the vicinities of the port. Furthermore, the pirates were divided into two groups, those who were married to daughters of the priests and those who were not. The former were the elite pirates and worked on the mother ship and the latter were assigned to respective boats and dinghies.

Besides the pirates there were slaves that were put at the oars in the mother ship as well as in the boats or dinghies. They were mostly the original inhabitants of the island. These aborigines had had no king or organization beyond families; they loved loving each other and scarcely competed with each other. So, they never would fight. They used to be all farmers, if anything, before the clan of the pirates took over the island from them; they were also all vegetarians, not because of a religion, of which they had none. They used to welcome any stranger to the island with food and drinks. When, decades ago, a merchant ship arrived at the island seeking protection from a pirate ship in pursuit of them, the islanders provided them with food and drinks but no protection, for they would not fight. When the pirates arrived, most of the pursued fought back against them, but were all killed. Those who did not resist were made their slaves. The islanders too were made slaves. The pirates found the island smaller but better than the peninsula in which they had inhabited, because this island was closer to the strait and safer from invasion. Thus they made the island their new home and brought their families there. For the statue of Poseidon, which had already been standing there, the pirates built a shrine to shelter it. Meanwhile, the slaves were used to build up the walls to isolate the hilltop area as a fortress.

For the updated and complete version, please go to:

amazon.com/author/nagamitz-kazuhiro