

The Use of אָנָה in Jonah 4:2

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The particle אָנָה occurs 13 times in the OT (Gen 50:17; Ex 32:31; 2Kings 20:3// Isa 38:3; Psa 116:4, 16; 118:25 [2x]; Neh 1:5, 11; Dan 9:4; Jon 1:14; 4:2). It may be observed in all cases that אַנָּה is directed from a human to YHWH—the one exception being Gen 50:17, which is obviously directed from inferiors to a superior. All uses except that of Jon 4:2 clearly occur in immediate contexts of desperate reliance upon the delivering action of YHWH (Psa 116:16; 118:25 do so in retrospective gratitude; in the case of Gen 50:17, reliance is upon the relieving action of the superior). The sailors' enlightened, YHWH-cognizant prayer in Jon 1:14 falls in line with this common use, hence the comparison with Jon 4:2 is even more striking. Given the ironic use in 4:2 of other traditionally reverent material and the overall theme of Jonah's resistance towards YHWH, I think אָנָה functions in 4:2 either

1) to contextualize Jonah's protest within a stance of dependence and appropriate (albeit confused) human inferiority, OR

2) to ironically convey Jonah's degree of irreverence in his address to YHWH. The inappropriateness of Jonah's vocabulary would be made even more pronounced by its contrast with that of the sailors in 1:14.

Because the entire narrative seems bent on exposing Jonah's folly—especially in contrast to YHWH in chapter 4, I lean towards the second interpretation of אָנָה for Jon 4:2.

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The verse presents a further exception in its density of petitioning interjections.