

Venture into Yom Kippur



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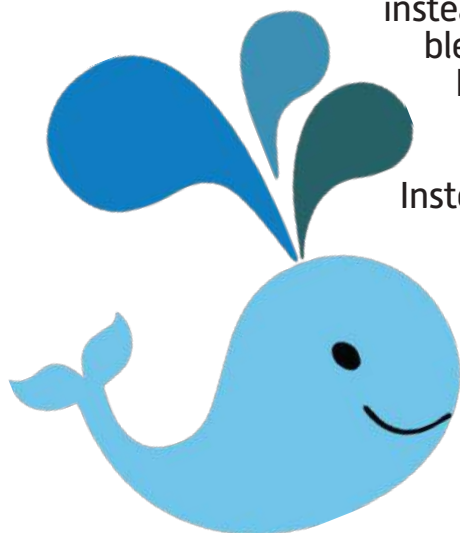
Jewish Value: תשובה | *Teshuvah*

Teshuvah is commonly translated as “repentance,” but it literally means “return.” The three steps of *teshuvah* are: confession, regret, and a promise to change. *Teshuvah* is a form of repair and a commitment for the future. *Teshuvah* can be done any time, but it is especially meaningful during Yom Kippur, a time when we are specifically thinking about mistakes or choices we have made in the past year and how we might do better in the year coming. The Torah story of Jonah and the Big Fish is an example of *teshuvah*.

Jonah and the Big Fish

A long time ago, there was a man named Jonah. God asked Jonah to help some people in a big city called Nineveh. The people of Nineveh were wicked and God wanted Jonah to go warn them that if they didn't atone for their behavior and change their ways, the city would be destroyed.

Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh to bring this message. He didn't believe that God should forgive such wicked people, so he decided to run away and get on a big boat to sail far away instead. But, while Jonah was on the boat, a big storm came. The wind blew and the waves crashed, scaring everyone and he felt guilty; he knew that the storm was his fault because he was running away from God.



Instead of asking God to forgive him, Jonah told the sailors to throw him into the sea. He thought he would rather drown than say he was sorry. But, God would not let Jonah drown. Instead, a huge fish came and swallowed him up! Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights. Jonah looked out through the eyes of the fish and saw the sun's light guiding him and he knew what he needed to do. He promised to do what had been asked of him to do and so, finally, the big fish swam to the shore and spit Jonah out onto the land.

Jonah finally went to Nineveh and told the people there to be kind and make good choices. They listened to Jonah and changed their ways, and as promised, their city was saved. Jonah learned that running away from responsibility is not usually the best choice, but if you rethink that choice, you can be forgiven. The people of Nineveh learned that even if your behavior has been bad, you can turn it around at any time.