



Jewels of Elul V

2009 Inspirations on the Art of Forgiving 5770

Elul 12

Hide And Seek

Aliza Kline

"Ready or not...here I come!" As the mother of three girls, this is a familiar refrain in my household. When we play, I think about my own childhood experiences...the anxiety of being the "hider," the search beginning before I was "ready."

The chagim are coming, ready or not. Every year, I remember to get ready a little too late, sometimes not until halfway through the liturgy on Rosh Hashana. I need to schedule a reminder on my Google calendar, "Don't forget to prepare your soul for the New Year!"

As the director of a mikveh, I'd prefer a splash of water. Of course, there's tashlich - tossing crumbs into water, symbolically casting away sins. But that often feels like taking inventory of my shortcomings. I don't feel transformed afterward; in fact, sometimes I feel rotten.

Rabbi Dan Judson taught me about a Kurdish tradition of full-body tashlich, throwing your whole self into water. Given my job, this is especially appealing.

So, this year, I will prepare for the chagim by blocking out an hour in my crazy schedule for an immersion. I will prepare slowly and thoughtfully, removing all obstacles between myself and the water. I will reflect on the stuff I'd like to release, ask forgiveness for repeating myself every year, and let myself sink in.

Maybe because it is so complete, maybe because it requires my whole self... After this ritual, I know that I will be awake.

Open.

Ready.

Aliza Kline is the Executive Director of Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters Community Mikveh and Education Center. www.mayyimhayyim.org

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