

The December Dilemma

By Lynn

The readings concerning this topic upset me. I never realized before that I could not be a committed Jew and have a tree during the holidays. The readings made me see that a tree is a direct conflict to Judaism. I also realized for the first time that I had to give up Christmas. I'm sure this is a very difficult thing for me.

Giving up Christmas does not make me feel that my children will be deprived of the wonderful joys of the season. Lights and decorations abound at that time of year and my children will visit my parents every Christmas and unwrap presents from under the tree. They will not feel deprived because they will never know the feeling of having Christmas in their home.

Giving up Christmas is a loss to me. It's a loss that fills me with great sadness. I am the only one that will feel the emptiness and deprivation of not having Christmas. Howard was never comfortable with a tree in Christmas is leaving our home?????. As I said before, my children will never know.

They will never know what it feels like to walk through the cold mud searching for the perfect tree, they will never hear their father angry because the tree is too large for the stand, they will never learn the art of watering the tree without getting any of the gifts wet.

They will never know the feeling of getting the boxes of decorations out of the attic, they will never know the fun and joys of decorating a tree, they will never tell stories about each precious ornament, they will never sing carols in front of a roaring fire while they trim the tree.

My children will never feel the dismay that comes when the tree falls over, they will never know the feeling of being a teenager in love in front of the fire and the tree, they will never know the joys of watching for Santa Claus, or recount the story of when Santa knocked on the window and told them to go to bed.

My children will never leave out cookies and milk for Santa, they will never feel the peace of sitting by the fire with the Christmas tree lights on and carols playing softly in the background. My children will always think of December 24 as my birthday and not Christmas Eve. They will probably never know that my middle name is Carol for a Christmas carol and that my mother wanted to name me Noel.

My children will never smell the sweet scent of pine as they walk into our home. My children will never know the special feelings that the season generates. My children will never know Christmas. My children will not feel deprived because they will know the joys of being Jewish and the warmth and love that abounds in their family and their home. My children will never feel a loss. But I will.

How I long for the day when the loss of Christmas and my tree will not hurt so much. When my memories will be sweet memories instead of bittersweet.

Despite all of these emotions, the question of a tree or no tree is an easy one. The literature makes it clear that trees are not a part of the Jewish religion. I am committed to being a Jew and that commitment means no tree. I can be thankful that as I mourn the loss of Christmas and cry for that loss, there are two big arms to hold me and to remind me that I haven't lost Christmas, I've found a new and beautiful way of life.