

Finding Ourselves in the Middle of Nowhere

(This article was published May 14, 2017.)

Once we are thrown out, or walk out of our “Egypt”, what is known, what is familiar, what is habit -- *is wiped away*. We wonder, where are we, where do we go, what will happen now? In the Biblical context, we enter the *Midbar, Wilderness* in Hebrew. What’s interesting is that in the Biblical context, when many important individuals and groups encounter their Higher Power, a Deity, or their Highest Self – *regardless of which* -- everyone and everything is changed – *everything is different*. The trajectory of life goes in another, unexpected direction.

My observation is that we all go through this process in our own way – on our own journeys. It allows us the freedom and courage to begin again, even in the middle of the Midbar! Sometimes, we find ourselves in the middle of nowhere, *and it’s right there in the middle of nowhere that we find ourselves!*

The toughest and most painful thing I do is, work with people who’ve lost a child, and worse, their only child. All the future dreams, hopes, wishes, expectations and anticipations are smashed to pieces. *Their role of “Mom and Dad” no longer seems to apply.* That is like being in the middle of nowhere!

In my research and observations, I’m many times amazed by the choice of response to these terrible traumas. Not only the courage to move forward, but the creativity and dedication to telling their story and finding meaning and purpose in life again -- *by making a difference in the lives of others*. I want to share a story gleaned from one of these recent books.

A man lost his twenty-two year old son in an automobile accident. Over the course of his grieving, he wrote a collection of poems about his journey through his loss. He published them in a book called, “*Life As a Novice*.” When asked about his choice of response, he said writing the book was “*the best way of keeping his son’s continued presence in his life*.” For him, it was “*In the Middle of Nowhere*” – “*the Place Where He found Himself*.”

In Jewish tradition, our custom is to say, “*May Their Memory Be for a Blessing*.” The best way of doing that is to let the loss lead us through the Midbar -- *to do Life giving, Life changing, Life enhancing actions in the name of, or in memory of the one we have lost.*

It motivates us to find a way to trust in life again. Not everyone will choose these types of responses. Each person must search and be open to whatever it is that tugs upon their heart and soul -- *and be willing to follow it*.

Though we all struggle with the loss of our loved one in the physical world, *we keep alive their continued presence in our lives by doing some of those things they loved and thought were important.* It gives us a sense of purpose and keeps those who are no longer here closer to us. So, the next time you find yourself “*In the Middle of Nowhere*,” you just may “*Find Your Way and Yourself!*”

Doing TOV and Choosing Life!
Rabbi Jeffrey Leynor

[Visit Rabbi Leynor's Page on the BHC Website](#)
Videos ~ Music ~ Articles ~ Blogs

In His Remembrance

*May Rabbi Leynor's memories inspire us to seek those qualities of mind
and heart which we shared when we walked life's journey together.*

*May we help to bring closer to fulfillment
Rabbi Leynor's highest ideals and noblest strivings.*

*May Rabbi Leynor's memories deepen our loyalty
to those things which we valued and shared -
faithfulness, love, SHALOM and devotion.*

*As long as we live,
Rabbi Leynor's memories too will live;
for they are now a part of us, as we remember them.*

(Inspired from prayers found in Yitzhor Reflections - [The New Mahzor](#) – The Prayer Book Press)