

Rabbi's Column

This week a nice confluence of events gives us several reminders to renew ourselves. This next Shabbat is the first Shabbat of 2016, the first Shabbat of the second book Shemot, and naturally it is the first Shabbat in January.

During the portion last week, the Israelite family made several resolutions (promises, vows, oaths). One of them was kept soon after being made, as Jacob was buried in Canaan within 6 months of his death. One of them was not, as Joseph died before God brought them back from Egypt.

So there is a resolution hanging over the people when this next portion begins. This resolution will continue to hang over them for the rest of the Torah.

Maybe this year we can take a hint from this, and resolve not to let our resolutions hang over us for an extended period of time, and actually follow through on what we resolve.

I don't do January 1 resolutions, for the same reason that I seldom promised our child anything. Reality can intervene at any moment and render the promise or resolution null and void, and I still would feel guilty for a broken promise. If I were to make a resolution or two, it might be these:

When other people express opinions inappropriately, to ignore the inappropriateness and focus on that within the opinion which might be true.

To focus on the filled seats and ignore the empty ones.

To be even more welcoming.

To accept that life can at times also be fun.

Have a happy and safe secular New Year!