

Rabbi's Column

Somebody recently asked whether anything good has been accomplished at the legislature this session. While the Governor has currently signed only one Bill, there are currently about 75 that have been approved by both chambers and await signatures. Several of those Bills involve correcting certain things that were either incorrect to begin with, or are no longer correct as the year listed has passed. Among the bills that are generally applicable and seem noteworthy to the average person are these: Wyoming Women's Suffrage Day – December 10, 2019 is the 150th anniversary of the day suffrage became law. Learn more about this and celebrate women!

The National Guard historic Armory is now declared a Museum;

Solidifying the possibility of a Family Medicine Residency Program.

There are still a number of good Bills being discussed on the floor, so we'll see what happens.

This week's Torah Portion includes The Big Mistake – otherwise known as the incident of the Golden Calf. It is one of those difficult sections – the people have just been brought out of Egypt by God, who had no visual representation which they followed, and now the need is felt for a statue? You can read the text as rewarding the bloodthirsty Levites for killing a number of the Israelites – for this they get rewarded? And then, just in case enough people have not yet died, everyone has to drink a golden smoothie and whoever gets the stomachache you would expect from such a drink dies, and the people with cast-iron stomachs are considered innocent.

After all this emotional turmoil, Moses picks up the pieces of the original set of statements, and keeps them until the replacement set and its container are both ready.

What, if anything, might we actually learn from all of this?

One of the first things I learn is that I am glad that the earlier sections are no longer examples of normative behavior. We don't usually kill people who are behaving in a manner we think is inappropriate, and we very rarely get rewarded when we do. We no longer believe, for the most part, that surviving being fed poison is proof of anything other than your amazing ability to survive poison for a bit.

A second thing I learn is that the past is always present. It should not be enshrined as if there was no continuing on after it, but it should not be discarded, as it is part of what helped us become who we are. Even when we are wounded from what happened to us in the past, those semi-healed wounds are necessary for who we are. Without them we would be somebody else. Maybe better off, maybe worse off, but decidedly not us.

As we get closer to Purim, let's all try to find something that helps us be somewhat happy, and keep that in mind when life reminds us of everything else.