

Welcome to Beyond Twelve Gates

Lynn Jones was loading baggage at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport last month when she saw an emaciated dog that had cuts and sores on its body and paws. The dog was in a pet carrier tagged for a flight to Texas. Concerned that the dog couldn't survive the flight, Ms. Jones refused to put the dog on the airplane. However, her supervisor insisted that the dog's condition was none of her business and told her to load it. When Ms. Jones still refused to load the dog, she was fired. "(My supervisor) kept yelling, 'That's it. You're done. You are out of here. Go home,'" Ms. Jones said. "I left."

The next day the baggage handling contractor offered to rehire Lynn Jones with back pay and an apology, and the company's president praised her courage to stand up for the animal. Sally Leible, president and CEO of the St. Louis-based company, said, "We applaud Ms. Lynn Jones' courage to report the unfavorable condition of the animal she encountered, and we encourage others to be as vigilant as she was." The company will also make a three-year financial contribution to the Nevada Humane Society to educate people about animal mistreatment. Ms. Leible said her bighearted employee was "trying to protect the dog and I think she was courageous in doing that. I really, truly hope she will come back."

It has been said that "Courage isn't the absence of fear; rather, it is the ability to take action in the face of fear." Courage is necessary to get through certain moments of our lives. For some it takes courage to speak in public or to meet new people. A different level of courage is needed to stand up for the weak and oppressed. In the face of such challenges, remember the following: "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for HaShem your G-d, He it is that goes with you; He will not fail you, nor forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:6)

Parshas Vayeishev Genesis 37:1-- 40:23

Jacob's favoritism toward Joseph incites his brother's hatred. Their jealousy increases when Joseph tells them about two dreams which indicate that they will one day be subservient to him. Jacob sends Joseph to check up on his brothers, and upon seeing him approaching they plot to kill him. Reuben convinces the brothers not to kill Joseph, but is unable to totally save him as the brothers sell Joseph into slavery in Egypt. After dipping Joseph's coat in blood, they return to their father who assumes that his beloved son was torn apart by a savage beast.

The Torah then digresses to relate the story of Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar. The narrative then returns to Joseph in Egypt, where he becomes an extremely successful slave and is placed in charge of his master's household. His master's wife repeatedly tries to seduce Joseph, and when he refuses he is thrown into prison. Ten years later, Pharaoh's chief butler and baker are placed into the same prison. One night they each have a perplexing dream that Joseph accurately interprets, setting the stage for his release from prison.

Rabbinic Ruminations

Looking to make an easy \$1 million? The 'Origin-of-Life Science Foundation' is seeking proposals to explain how the first self-replicating, DNA-based bacterium could have emerged from a pre-biotic swamp roughly 3.5 billion years ago. "Ah," you might think, "I'll just quote a few verses from the beginning of Genesis and walk away with the prize money." But as Johnny Carson might have said, "Not so fast, Cro-Magnon breath!" The rules require your proposal to suggest a totally undirected, naturalistic process. In other words, mentioning 'G-d', 'Torah' or 'Bible' will be an automatic disqualifier. Such a limitation makes the 'easy \$1 million' not quite so easy to win.

Nobel Prize winning microbiologist Francois Jacob said, "The spontaneous appearance of RNA chains on the lifeless earth would have been a near miracle." Dr. Stanley Miller, also a Nobel Laureate, said, " there is not a shred of evidence that life began in an organic soup here on Earth." English astronomer and mathematician Sir Fred Hoyle compared the random emergence of even the simplest cell to the likelihood that "a tornado sweeping through a junk-yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein." Hoyle also compared the chance of obtaining even a single functioning protein by chance combination of amino acids to a solar system full of blind men solving Rubik's Cube simultaneously.

Imagine walking along a beach and finding a functional watch; is it conceivable that something so complex could have accidentally fit its parts together and then begin to work correctly? We would conclude that the watch must have had an intelligent and imaginative designer to conceive the idea and bring it to fruition. When we consider the vast and intricate Universe, we see something infinitely more complex than a watch. Who designed the Universe? "HaShem, G-d, the Most High, Maker of heaven and earth." (Genesis 14:22)

Quote of the Week

Only choose in marriage a man whom you would choose as a friend if he were a woman. -- Joseph Joubert (1754 - 1824, French essayist)

Joke of the Week

Yankel Cohen was taking an oral exam in his English as a Second Language class. He was asked to spell "cultivate," and he spelled it correctly. He was then asked to use the word in a sentence. With a big smile Yankel said: "Last vinter on a very cold day, I vas vaiting for a bus, but it vas too cultivate, so I took the subvay home."

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