

Beyond Twelve Gates by Rabbi Ze'ev Smason
Parshas Korach June 20, 2014

Welcome to Beyond Twelve Gates

A California man in rehabilitation for drug addiction and with no cash to his name discovered \$125,000 cash in an orange bag, only to return it shortly afterward. Joe Cornell, 52, of Fresno, California, was watering trees at his job at a parking lot across from the Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center when he overheard a vehicle honking at an armored Brink's truck on the corner.

"The car had pulled up next to the truck, like it had dropped something," Joe said. "I look and I see this big orange bag, like a Santa Claus bag. I thought, 'No way, it's got to be clothes or something. Inside, I saw some of the money sticking out, individually wrapped stacks of \$100s. It looked like deposits from businesses.'" Joe took the bag back to a nearby trailer and discovered the cash inside amounted to a whopping \$125,000. He was conflicted momentarily over what to do with the money.

"I thought about it, it was a good-devil-bad-devil thing on your shoulder, but taking the money wouldn't compare to what my grandkids would think of me if I did something like that," Joe said. "This shelter is trying to change my life. I tried to do the right thing." So Joe took the bag of money to his supervisor at the shelter, who then notified police to return the cash. Brink's, the company that lost the money, plans on giving Joe a \$5,000 reward, and the shelter a \$5,000 donation. "Mr. Cornell did the right thing," Brink's spokesman Ed Cunningham said. "For that, we are grateful."

The very first law in the Shulchan Aruch (the Code of Jewish Law) states: "One should not be embarrassed and ashamed [to do the right thing] in front of those who scoff and poke fun at him". We are constantly faced with situations where it's hard to discern exactly what path to follow.. The greatest, sweetest reward, is when we do the right thing.

Parshas Korach Numbers 16:1 - 18:32

This week's Torah portion begins with the infamous rebellion led by Korach against his cousins, Moses and Aaron, claiming that the two of them had usurped power from the rest of the Jewish people. Korach, motivated by jealousy and a desire for honor, rejected Moses' authority and claimed that the appointment of Aaron as *Kohen Gadol* (Head Kohen) was motivated by nepotism. Korach cleverly persuaded 250 judges and others from disaffected groups to become his followers in the rebellion.

A frequent theme in the Torah is: Sooner or later G-d always gets the last word. In Korach's case, it was sooner. What was the result of the rebellion? G-d made the earth open up to swallow Korach, the ringleaders of the rebellion, and their families. Fire consumed the remainder of the 250 rebels. The story of Korach's rebellion concludes with an act of reconciliation -- and surprisingly, a U.S. Presidential reference. The staffs of the leaders of the 12 tribes were placed near the Ark of the Covenant. To prove that the tribe of Levi and Aaron was Divinely chosen, Aaron's staff sprouted leaves, almond blossoms and even almonds. I suppose you could say that this miracle made AaronChief of Staff!

Rabbinic Ruminations

It may be time to update that old joke about the horse walking into a bar -- "Why the long face?" asks the bartender -- and give it a technological twist. Our growing reliance on smartphones and laptops is elongating our faces into jowly, sagging messes, according to cosmetic surgeons and other beauty mavens. Dr. Mervyn Patterson of the *Woodford Medical Aesthetic Clinic* in Essex, England has dubbed the look "smartphone face."

Dr. Patterson explains the ugly risks of too much time spent staring at our smartphones: "If you sit for hours with your head bent slightly forward, staring at your iPhone or laptop screen, you may shorten the neck muscles and increase the gravitational pull on the jowl area, leading to a drooping jawline." Other potential effects of a perpetually titled neck include double chins and marionette lines -- those creases that begin at the corners of the mouth and continue down to the chin. Smartphone face may be more

serious than one would think. In 2012, the *American Association of Plastic Surgeons* reported that chin implants ("chinplants") were the fastest growing trend in cosmetic surgery.

While modern electronics may not be the only deciding factor of your chin definition and sculpted jaw, the danger of smartphone face is yet another reason to consider how much time you spend using technology versus truly engaging in the world around you. Go for a walk without your phone, have dinner without email, sit down and have a conversation in person or write a letter. Slow down, look up, and appreciate the world around you. After all, it's your world -- as the Talmud says, "Each person is obligated to say, 'The world was created for me.'" (Sanhedrin 37A)

Quote of the Week

Investing is simple, but not easy – **Warren Buffet**

Joke of the Week

An old man and a young man are traveling on the train. The young man asks: "Excuse me, what time is it?" The old man does not answer.

"Excuse me, sir, what time is it?" The old man keeps silent.

"Sir, I'm asking you what time is it. Why don't you answer?!"

The old man says: "Son, the next stop is the last on this route. I don't know you, so you must be a stranger. If I answer you now, I'll have to invite you to my home. You're handsome, and I have a beautiful daughter. You will both fall in love and you will want to get married. Tell me, why would I need a son-in-law who can't even afford a watch?"