

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

The Need for Israel...

"The Need for Israel in a Modern World"
By Yonatan Hambourger and Tzali Reicher

Echos from Sinai
"Torah for Everyone"
Rabbi Yonatan Hambourger



In recent weeks, Jewish communities worldwide have been captivated by the timeless tale of Jacob and Joseph as narrated in the latter portion of the Book of Genesis, as they are studied in the weekly Torah portions each week.

The classic story goes that after being sent to Egypt by his envious brothers that were jealous of his close bond with their father Jacob, Joseph underwent a remarkable transformation. The experience he gained from a life of adversity coupled with divine providence enabled Joseph to become a trusted advisor and administrator in his adopted homeland, ascending to the position of viceroy thanks to Pharaoh's recognition of his wisdom. Joseph's sage counsel was instrumental in safeguarding Egypt from the devastating seven-year famine that would have otherwise ravaged the nation. This dire period ultimately led Joseph's brothers to leave their land of Israel for Egypt to seek his assistance, resulting in a sincere apology and mending of relations, followed by a heartfelt reunion with his father, who never gave up hope of reuniting with his son throughout the 17 years he was missing.

Moreover, this period of hardship and resilience culminated in the establishment of a vibrant Jewish community in Egypt. This community not only thrived but also garnered the respect and appreciation of their Egyptian neighbors, who acknowledged the Jews' vital role in helping establish Egypt as a prosperous nation and the recognized superpower of the day. This legacy endured for centuries, marking a chapter of peace and prosperity for the extended family of Jacob and Joseph in a foreign land.

But in this week's Torah portion, the first of the book of Exodus, the Jews experience a radical change in fortunes. There arises a new king "who did not know Joseph," which the sages interpret to mean he did not acknowledge the contribution Joseph and the Jews made to Egypt and sought to enslave and enact policies targeting the Jewish community of his time.

Such has been the story of the Jewish people throughout history.

Time and again throughout history, the Jewish community is welcomed for their wisdom and contributions, and celebrated for a number of years, before 'a new king arises' and the classic tropes begin playing on the minds of those who have always sought to harm the Jewish people. The Jewish people's contributions are then twisted against them and framed as a malicious attempt to control the rest of the population. Public resentment is stirred and before long, the Jewish community is attacked and expelled, and forced to start this cycle all over again.

Until the establishment of the modern state of Israel in 1948, Jews were thrown out of ancient Egypt, medieval Babylonia, and modern Europe. Between the year 250 and the year 1948 - a period of 1,700 years - Jews in Europe experienced an average of one expulsion every 21 years.

Fresh off the largest annihilation of Jewish people in history, thanks in large part to the leadership of the U.S.A., the world - in a rare moment of compassion for the Jewish people - recognized the need for the Jewish people to have a state of their own in their ancestral homeland, smack in the middle of 22 mostly hostile Arab countries. For the first time in 2,000 years, the Jewish people lived autonomously in their homeland and had a state that would serve as the home of a displaced people and could be responsible for ensuring the protection of their own coreligionists. Never again would the Jews be subject to the whims of a volatile leader and citizenry.

Faced with so many existential wars and attacks since its re-establishment in 1948, what is Israel's secret? How have they managed to repeatedly defeat their enemies and fend off the world's continuous demonization and obsession with its legitimacy, while simultaneously absorbing hundreds of thousands of penniless Jewish refugees threatened with mass slaughter by the Arab countries where they were living for 2,000 years?

Well, it's a mixture of faith and fortitude, and a recognition of that fact that then-Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir told now-President Joe Biden in 1973: "We have nowhere else to go."

Those who say there is no need for Israel as a Jewish country in a modern world in favor of a pluralistic and naive "one-state solution" ignore the realities of escalating antisemitism in Europe and around the world, and the role Israel plays in ensuring the safety of the global Jewish population.

Antisemitism has been on the rise in Europe and beyond. Jewish communities, particularly in France, have witnessed a mass exodus due to the alarming surge in antisemitism. In England, the occurrence of over 50 daily antisemitic incidents, including large rallies promoting hatred and division, has been deeply unsettling. Australia, too, has seen troubling events that underscore the ongoing threats faced by Jewish populations, with riots featuring chants of "gas the Jews" capturing worldwide headlines.

The United States is a truly friendly and welcoming country thanks to the ethos of our founding fathers, the divinely inspired U.S. Constitution, and the demonstrative support from the 'faith-based' community, and so many others. Jews have flourished in this great country and have made enormous contributions as well. We pray that all of us who love our great country will stand united against the onslaught of those that want to end the American way of life that we all cherish, and that the Jewish people will remain secure as well. Jews in many other places around the world are safer for Israel's existence and the knowledge there will always be a home for them when the tides turn, as history tells us they always do.

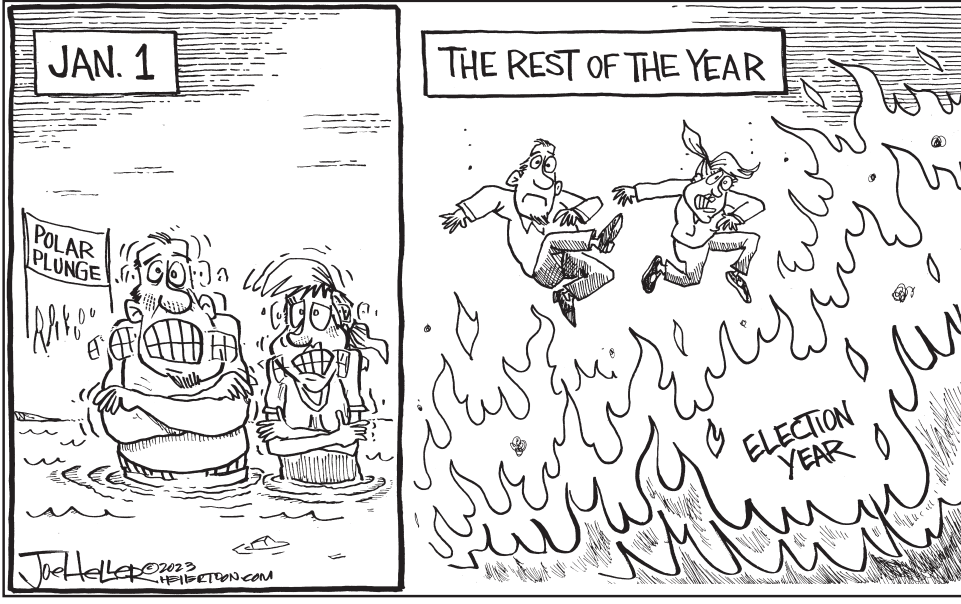
Yonatan Hambourger is an Atlanta-based rabbi working with Chabad of Rural Georgia to teach the richness of Judaism, while Tzali Reicher is a rabbi and writer currently residing in New York.

Guest Columns

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper.

If so, please write.

Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.



Legacy

During my younger days I was told many stories about my ancestors. These stories dealt with many varied subjects; some told of far-off places like the old world, some told of happy events like weddings or births of children, some were funny and some were sad, and some of the stories dealt with my family's past. These stories are a legacy from my ancestors. From this legacy come many lessons. There are things we can learn from our past because if we do not learn from the past we are sure to repeat the same mistakes many of our ancestors experienced.

There are a couple of things I have always wondered about in regard to my family history. First, I wondered if all the stories I have heard about being descended from the Cherokee are true, and second, I wondered why my family is so blessed by God? Regarding the second question, there are both scoundrels and saints in my family. Some of these people made liquor, some were instrumental in the persecution of others during the Middle Ages and some were pirates. But, on the other hand, some of my ancestors were Doctors during the time of the Plague, some were ministers of the Gospel and some were prayer warriors. My Mom was raised by a prayer warrior.

I remember learning something many years ago in Genetics 101. I learned that we are the way we are for two reasons: Reason No. 1 is that we acquired certain traits from our parents, and Reason No. 2 is that our environment influences those traits. Basically, this means we inherit things like eye color, right-hand dominance, being curly-haired vs. straight-haired from our parents. But the environment in which we are raised also has a tremendous influence on what makes us tick.

During the past few months I have been researching my family history and found some information that answered both of the earlier questions. Below are the answers for which I have been looking.

Hiram Baker was born in 1805 in North Carolina. Sometime after the Indian Removal, he and his family moved to the area around what is now Towns, Union and Clay County. He is listed as living in both Union County, Georgia, and Swain County, North Carolina, in the 1850 census. He must have been counted twice during that census. But, the problem is that Union County and Swain County do not meet. However, they did until the late 1850s. Prior to this time Towns County and Clay County did not exist. Therefore, my 3X Great-Grandfather lived somewhere around the county lines between what is now Towns County and Clay County. I suspect it is in the present location of the Southern Nantahala Mountains close to High Tower Bald. Shortly after the 1850 census his wife named Mary died and is buried somewhere in these mountains. Many of his children remained in the area.

But Hiram moved with his youngest children to Marion County, Alabama. While living there he met and married a lady by the name of Martha Borden. Her parents were David and Sara Borden. They had been living close to his parents in what is now the Sipsey Wilderness in a place called Borden Creek. David was 3/4 Cherokee and Sara was full-blooded Cherokee. So, my Grandmaw Adams was correct when she told me her family had descended from the Cherokee. But, that is not all of the story.

David and Sara had a very large family, meaning they had many children. But, he is also listed as a minister. So, now I can see more of a connection. They were the in-laws of Hiram Baker. Hiram was the grandfather of my great-grandfather, Charlie, who was married to Alvie Motes Baker.

When my Mom and Dad began dating, they went to a family dinner at the Baker home where Mommy Baker (Alvie) asked Dad the following question, "Son, are you a heathen?" Dad responded, "No, I am a Cummings." She smiled at Dad and explained that she had been praying for years that her granddaughter would marry a Baptist Preacher. Dad was a long way from being a preacher. He was taught to be a good person. But, his family did not attend church regularly. Later after I was born Dad was converted and became a preacher because of the prayers of Mommy Baker. And she was influenced by the first preacher in our family which was a Cherokee Indian by the name of David Borden. His influence upon our family has lasted five generations.

The Cherokee people were ripped from their homeland and forced to another place now called Oklahoma in the 1830s. Some of them escaped and tried to live normal lives among the whites, and their genetics live on in many of us now. There is a place not too far from my grandparents home called the Rockbridge. It is a natural limestone arch that has Cherokee carvings on the rocks under it. These are much like ones would see at Trackrock Gap. An old story among my relatives is that during the Indian Removal, one Cherokee woman ran across the bridge through the woods while carrying her baby and screaming as she ran from the soldiers. Now, sometimes late at night, I am told you can still hear her screams as she runs across the Rockbridge. This must have been a really sad time.

I am glad that my ancestor Hiram made his way to North Alabama and met Martha Jane Borden, whose parents somehow escaped the awful Cherokee Removal and the Trail of Tears in the 1830s. David and Sara Borden must have prayed for their children and grandchildren, because their influence on my family's life, physically and spiritually, has lasted for generations. They influenced their grandson Charlie and his wife Alvie, who influenced my Mom and Dad, which had a great influence upon me.

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Blueberry Pruning

Blueberries grow pretty well in Georgia. Rabbiteye blueberries are native to the southeast, so they're well adapted to our climate. Let's talk specifically about pruning blueberries.

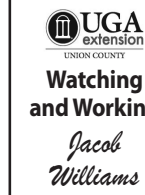
Blueberries don't need to be pruned every year to be fruitful. However, if you start doing some cane renewal pruning every year on a mature plant the bushes will be more fruitful and have more longevity. The ideal time to prune blueberries is late winter because the plants are dormant. February is late winter for us in the mountains. Plants in their dormant state are going to be less prone to infection or stress from the pruning.

Blueberry is a multi-stemmed bush. Each one of the stems that comes out of the ground is called a cane. Cane renewal pruning is removing old canes from the plant so that there is space for new canes to grow. Ideally, under cane renewal pruning you'll remove old canes each year so that in five years all the canes on the plant will be completely different. Each year go through the plant and cut out the oldest canes that you find. Also, remove any diseased or dead canes. Ideally, you don't want to remove more than 25% of the canes in a single year. If you have a blueberry bush that hasn't been pruned for a couple of years it may take a couple years to get it back into shape. If you have a blueberry bush that hasn't been pruned for many, many years cane renewal pruning probably isn't going to get the plants back into shape. In that situation, I'd recommend something that may seem very drastic, but is better for the plants in the end. Mow the bushes down to the ground. Mature plants will be able to take this hit, and put up new suckers, that turn into canes. This is going to give you fresh growth, and a new healthier plant. You'll go without blueberries for a couple of years. Therefore, if you have several plants that need to be mowed, you could do a couple a year, until they are all back under control.

New plants should be pruned to have the healthiest plants. Prune back 2/3 of the top growth on bare root plants, and 1/2 of the top growth on potted plants. If the new plant has many canes prune out all but 1-3 of the best looking ones. You also don't want a first year plant to produce fruit, so pick off any flower buds. If you prune plants like this the first year, the second year won't need much pruning. In the second year pick off flower buds again, and remove any diseased canes. The third year, remove diseased canes, but you can leave the flower buds on vigorous shoots. The fourth year, the plant should be able to handle full crop, but if you have some weak looking canes, thin out the buds to prevent over fruiting, which can cause permanent bending of canes from the weight.

Each year after harvest is completed cut plants back so that they don't become too tall. Tall plants are more difficult to harvest for people; bears and birds probably won't have that same problem.

If you have questions about pruning blueberries, contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.



Letters To The Editor

Re: "Clyde Gets It Wrong Again"

Dear Editor,

As we've asked before, does anyone with an ounce of sense think that any U.S. Senator or Congressdoobie would even bring to the floor a resolution to cut Social Security or Medicare? It would be permanent political suicide. The only people seriously talking like that are Leftists trying to throw that and make it stick to Conservatives. If we were \$34 trillion in debt, we wouldn't see that pass or even considered in D.C. Oops, we are \$34 trillion in debt. Proves my point though.

Heck, Congress would vote for term limits or a line-item veto first, and those ain't happening. Just scare the good folks on fixed incomes. And most Americans are smart enough to see that electric vehicles are impractical, expensive, environmentally dirty and dangerous. They go very fast for 200 miles on a warm day and then need plugged in for a few hours after you get to the end of the queue. You can buy a fuel-efficient luxury car for the same price and drive two states over on a tank of gas and refill that tank in five minutes. The rare earth metals and other goo for the battery packs are ransacked from other countries that don't worry about pollution or damaged employees.

Ask any first responder what they think about putting out a fire at an accident involving these lead sleds. They are very heavy, high voltage/high amperage and tend to explode at odd intervals. As soon as the Left gets us all driving these goofy vehicles, they will pull the plug on vehicle and recharge availability, and we will all live in a Utopian City like Atlanta taking robot "Ubers" to church if they are allowed to be open for services.

That's why the "EVs" are piling up in dealer back lots. "Beep beep."

J. Murray Tarter

Applauding Rep. Clyde's Efforts

Dear Editor,

I would like to reply to last week's editorial criticizing Congressman Clyde's opposition to funding Biden's "new green energy scam." All of the supposed expansion of new U.S. manufacturing capacity as well as subsequent job creation that the writer envisions is all based on the government using taxpayer money to fund the production of new cars that nobody wants.

Of course, following the leftist model of fascist control, the production of gas-fueled vehicles will be regulated out of business by imposing economically prohibitive, stringent new fuel efficiency requirements on gas powered cars. In other words, the writer totally ignores the tenants of free market capitalism whereby the people get to freely choose what cars they want to buy.

I say let U.S. consumers decide whether or not they want to buy electric vehicles based on production economics that are not weighted by the full force of the United States government. I, for one, do not want to use U.S. taxpayer dollars to subsidize the production of EVs, nor am I in favor of subsidizing your purchase of one through direct tax credits. Additionally, why should taxpayers be required to fund the mass construction of EV charging stations in order to make it convenient for you to drive? Perhaps we should impose massive taxes and surcharges on EV car purchases in order to build these, as well as the imposition of some sort of tax on these drivers in order to make up for the lost revenue resultant from lower state and federal gas tax receipts... after all, since we constantly hear about paying one's "fair share," why should drivers of gas-powered vehicles be required to pay for any of this?

In summation, I applaud Congressman Clyde's efforts to fight the Biden Administration's flagrant, wasteful expenditure of U.S. taxpayer dollars! Keep up the good work, congressman!

Kevin P. Cannon

Towns County Herald

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