

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Truly Indivisible

By Yonatan
Hambourger and
Tzali Reicher

Last week, Jewish communities read a dramatic Torah portion from the Book of Numbers in synagogues around the world.

We read how Balak, the king of Moab, became alarmed by the growing presence and success of the Israelites as they journeyed back home towards the Land of Israel. Eagerly fearing they would overrun his kingdom, Balak sent messengers to Balaam of Aram, a renowned evil prophet, and requested Balaam come to Moab to curse the Israelites. Initially, Balaam sought G-d's guidance and was told not to go or curse the Israelites, for they are blessed, and so he refused.

Undeterred, Balak sent a more distinguished delegation with promises of greater rewards. Balaam again consulted with G-d and was granted permission to go but was warned he would only be able to say exactly what G-d put in his mouth.

On his donkey ride there, the animal saw an angel of G-d blocking the path. Three times the donkey veered off the road or stopped, and three times Balaam struck it in anger. Finally, G-d opened the donkey's mouth, and it proceeded to question Balaam. Then G-d opened Balaam's eyes to see the angel, who warned him again to speak only what G-d commands.

In Moab, Balak took Balaam to various high places overlooking the Israelite camp, hoping to aid in the cursing of the Children of Israel. However, each time Balaam attempted to curse the Israelites, G-d inspired him to bless them instead. Three times Balaam blessed the Israelites, extolling their virtues and foretelling their future greatness. Frustrated, Balak chastised Balaam for blessing his enemies. Balaam replied he can only speak the words G-d puts in his mouth. Before leaving, Balaam prophesied the future downfall of Moab and other nations opposed to Israel.

It is a story of how G-d provides for the people who cleave to Him, and how He can literally turn curses into blessings. But the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory, the most influential rabbi in modern history, noted a deeper message.

There are two leading figures in the Torah that are mentioned as coming from the territory of Aram, present-day northwest Iraq. The first is the Patriarch Abraham, while the other is our antagonist Balaam. And without suggesting any comparison in holiness or morality between them, the Rebbe noted some parallels between the pair.

In Genesis, when G-d tested Abraham by seeing how he would respond to being asked to sacrifice his only son Isaac, we are told that Abraham "rose early" and "saddled his donkey" himself, showing his eagerness and passion to obey G-d's will, even though he didn't understand it. By contrast, in our story of Balaam, we are again told that he "saddled his donkey." But here, we learn, it wasn't because he was inspired by positive feelings to go on his mission. Rather, it was because he was overwhelmed by hate, to the point he had no regard for his own dignity in his rush to express that hatred.

Two people, from the same place, doing the same action, for very different reasons.

We also learn in Genesis how Abraham begged G-d to rescue the condemned cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Despite knowing of their evil and depravity, Abraham saw the good in other people and believed we are all capable of good and redemption. On the other hand, Balaam fought with G-d to allow him to curse and see the bad in other people.

The lessons we can learn from these two men in our current political climate are obvious.

We are all from the same "territory," the United States of America, which was founded on the belief that we are all free to practice our own faith and express our beliefs in peace and unity. But in recent times, that promise has been eroded by bitter partisanship and political divisiveness.

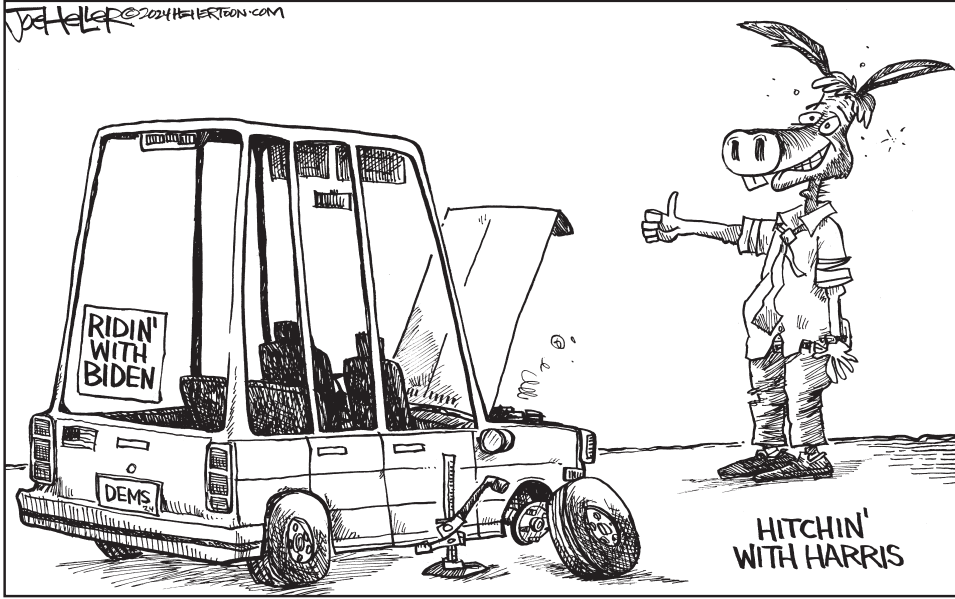
Both political parties indulge in overblown rhetoric and the manipulative misstatement of facts. Just such hyperbolic speech, echoed in the media, led to a crazy person getting very close to inciting a civil war just last week. Mercifully and miraculously, this radicalized man failed in his mission.

If the former president is humble enough to recognize the Divine hand, we all saw last Saturday, then we can as well.

If the assailant represents the hateful Balaam of our society, then we must step up and be Abraham. We must not continue to fall prey to the way politicians and the media manipulate us to hate each other. It's imperative that we recognize each other's goodness, with a sincere desire for a peaceful and prosperous future for one another. We must recognize we live in this great land together and must remain indivisible. When each and every one embraces his and her inner Abraham, a kinder, saner, and more United States of America is guaranteed.

Yonatan Hambourger is a Rabbi and writer serving spiritual seekers of all persuasions on behalf of Chabad of Rural Georgia. Tzali Reicher is a Rabbi and writer serving communities throughout the regional South.

Echos from Sinai
"Torah for Everyone"
Rabbi Yonatan Hambourger



"We Rise Together, Or We Fall Apart"

We all like to consider ourselves educated, if not by traditional institutions then by life experience, and ideally by combining some elements of both. Education means acquiring information that we did not have before. Continuing education means updating old information with new and adjusting our beliefs accordingly. Therein lies wisdom, and therein lies one of the biggest challenges we face in trying to understand the world.

Changing our minds can be difficult. Emotion comes into play, and while that, too, is a component of wisdom, emotion can also be like the dust and grime that slows down the motor and causes it to overheat.

Politics recognizes the fact that most people under most circumstances are slow to change their minds about anything. This is why political campaigns only target the faithful as far as is necessary to inspire them to get out and vote. Fear and anger can be extremely motivating, and by characterizing the opponent as a threat, voters are inspired, or frightened, into going to the polls.

Campaigns also target the smaller but pivotal number of voters who are still capable of changing their minds. Fear and anger can motivate them as well, but also effective is the creation of a narrative which, when it is relentlessly pursued, can become part of a paradigm – a lens through which we interpret the world. It can happen without our noticing it, and when the undecided voter goes into the booth and has a "feeling" that they should vote a certain way, then the narrative has been successful.

An observer of politics, the business of politics and the politics of business, may also notice an additional element which affects the outcome of elections. There is an "apolitical" element, a shifting cooperation between bureaucrats and unelected officials of the administrative and national security states and the corporate interests with which they are bonded. These interests attach just as easily to democrat as to republican administrations with a goal of maintaining power and protecting the status quo.

Hannah Arendt was a German-American historian and philosopher who fled the Nazis before settling in the US in 1950. She observed and analyzed the rise of totalitarianism in Germany and commented on the "banality of evil," through which ordinary people are capable of participating in great harm. Her observations are applicable to our own times.

In commenting on how power seeks to perpetuate itself Arendt wrote, "This constant lying is not aimed at making the people believe a lie, but at ensuring that no one believes anything anymore. A people that can no longer distinguish between truth and lies cannot distinguish between right and wrong. And such a people, deprived of the power to think and judge, is, without knowing and willing it, completely subjected to the rule of lies. With such a people, you can do whatever you want."

This has been one of the ugliest political campaigns in living memory, and that applies to both sides of the divide. I've seen conservatives who claim to adhere to Christian values making cruel jokes about an elderly man struggling with dementia. Let me remind you that Christian values also inform us that God will judge the actions of the man and the damage they may have caused to the nation, not you. Your only responsibility is to vote for or against a continuation of those policies, and to pray for the man who occupies the office even, or especially if you consider him your enemy. He is also a human being, someone's husband, father and grandfather.

We could fill up page after page discussing the ugliness aimed at the former president, and the litany of partial truths, innuendos and outright lies aimed at him, over the past 8 years. Admittedly, he was never my first choice to lead the nation and when he and Hillary Clinton announced their candidacies I quipped that should they become the nominees I would publish recipes in this column. I hope you liked the brownies.

As recently as a few weeks ago I was resigned to choosing a lesser evil or leaving blank the choice for president in November, and wishing that someone else had stepped up so that these two old fellas could retire. I have new information now, and I'm somewhat relieved to find that I'm still capable of changing my mind.

New information arrived when I saw a man that, though an elder, was still possessed of the vigor and the courage to stand up in the face of danger to encourage the nation to continue the fight. After being attacked verbally and with lawfare for eight years, and then physically in an assassination attempt, he struck a note of conciliation in his acceptance speech and called upon the nation to put our differences aside.

It occurs to me that, his past moral failures and ambiguities aside, we could do worse than having someone possessed of both grit and determination as well as an ability to reconcile differences when it comes to negotiating with our adversaries in a dangerous world.

It also occurs to me that, if we disregard the personalities and the peccadilloes of the candidates, the chasm between the policies promoted by the left and the right is wide. The left has become, in my opinion, the chosen vehicle of the unelected state. I believe it has been drawn toward a platform of oligarchic socialism, where power continues to concentrate in the hands of the few who then take it upon themselves to address the inequalities in a society. "Democracy" is promoted as an end rather than a means toward maintaining a healthy republic.

No matter how we vote in November, the former president told the truth in his acceptance speech for the republican nomination. He said, "We rise together or we fall apart." This has been true for well over 2000 years, echoing the words from Matthew which tell us, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand."

Outside The Box
By: Don Perry
worldoutsidethebox.com

Sweet Corn

It's hard to beat the taste of fresh sweet corn. Sweet corn in the summer that was just picked is hard to beat. Even though it gets stuck in my teeth I won't complain because each kernel is bursting with flavor. While there are many different varieties of sweet corn some still ring as old favorites like Silver King, Silver Queen, or Peaches and Cream. Let's talk about sweet corn today, some of the differences and some of the challenges with growing it.

UGA Extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



One of the biggest challenges to growing sweet corn is the corn earworm. This is a caterpillar that will eat the kernels at the end of the cob. They are laid as eggs on the silks of the ear and make their way inside the husk while they are still very small. Once inside they begin to eat and grow. They get to be about 3/4 of an inch long. It is very common to see their damage on sweet corn that was grown locally. If you see damage from them on the ear, don't panic. Simply break or cut off the damaged portion and eat the rest of the ear. To prevent corn earworm damage requires a lot of insecticide spray. So, if you see some damage you can take that as confirmation that the grower did not use a lot of insecticides to grow the corn.

There are three main classes of sweet corn: standard sugary, sugar enhanced, and supersweet. Standard sugary contains many of the classic varieties that people are familiar with like Silver Queen. One of the limitations of this class is that the sugars convert from sugar to starch within a few days after harvest, so they have a very short shelf life. Sugar enhanced varieties have a more tender and creamy texture. These varieties also have more sugar in them so the shelf life is a few days longer than the standard sugar. Bodacious and Temptation are two examples of varieties in this class. This class is usually used for direct retail or wholesale. The supersweet class has seeds that look more wrinkled. The conversion of sugar to starch in this class is slower, so the corn can be stored for a bit longer. Up to 10 days of storage. The kernels can be a bit tougher. Obsession, Devotion, and Xtra-Tender are some examples of varieties in this class. There are some varieties that are synergistic, meaning they have been bred using a combination of the other classes.

Corn needs to be grown in isolation to maintain kernel color and sweetness. Either varieties should be isolated by 250 feet or the planting timing should be done so that they tassle 14 days apart. Yellow pollen is the dominant color in corn. So, to maintain white varieties they need to be isolated from yellow varieties. Yellow pollen will change the color of white varieties, but white pollen will not affect the color of bicolor or yellow corn varieties.

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

Prayers for President Trump

President Trump isn't just a fighter – he's a survivor.

On July 13 during a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, a deranged individual attempted to assassinate President Donald J. Trump – marking the first time in 43 years that a president or presidential candidate has been shot.

On a rooftop less than 150 meters from the crowd, a 20-year-old man fired multiple shots toward the stage before being neutralized by counter snipers. Remarkably, one of the bullets grazed President Trump's ear – missing his head by roughly half an inch.

Seconds later – with blood streaming across his face and surrounded by U.S. Secret Service agents – President Trump rose from the ground and pumped his fist in the air. This now iconic moment and image perfectly illustrate President Trump's strength, resilience and fighting spirit.

I'm incredibly thankful for God's hand of protection over President Trump during Saturday's terrifying assassination attempt. Please join me in praying for his swift recovery as well as for continued protection for him, his family, his staff, and all attendees at this week's 2024 Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

My heart and prayers go out to the family and friends of Corey Comperatore. As you may know, Corey was tragically killed from the sniper's bullets intended for President Trump. The volunteer firefighter died a hero – shielded his wife and daughter from the senseless violence. May Corey rest in peace, and may God comfort his loved ones during this unimaginably difficult time.

Please also join me in praying for the full recovery of those who were injured during the rally, as well as in thanking the law enforcement officers and first responders who responded at the scene.

Folks, there is no denying there were catastrophic security failures. Like you, I'm deeply saddened and disturbed that these lethal shortfalls occurred. As we await more information from local, state and federal authorities, one thing is certain: U.S. Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle must resign.

In addition to the multiple ongoing investigations into the assassination attempt on President Trump, we need rapid congressional oversight. I'm pleased that committees of jurisdiction in both the House and Senate have announced probes and hearings into this matter, and I trust these swift, thorough investigations will uncover the truth.

After all, Americans deserve answers and accountability – not cover-ups and obfuscation.

Congress must leave no stone unturned in our pursuit of truth, transparency and justice. It's imperative that we move quickly in order to inform the public before the election and to ensure this evil never happens again.

I certainly have more thoughts to share with you, including the impact of the Left's dangerous rhetoric. But for now, I encourage you to join me in praying for President Trump and the future of our country.

Now more than ever, we must stand united in getting America back on track.

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United States Congressman
Representative Andrew Clyde



Towns County Community Calendar

First Monday of each month: School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
Every Tuesday: Storytime for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
First Tuesday of each month: Hiaw. City Council... City Hall YH City Council... YH City Hall	6 pm 6:30 pm
Second Wednesday of each month: Board of Elections... Elections Office	4 pm
Third Monday of each month: Planning Commission... Temporary Courthouse	6 pm
Third Tuesday of each month: Commissioner's Mtg... Courthouse City of Young Harris Planning Commission...	5:30 pm
Meeting Room in City Hall	5 pm
TC Water Authority Board Meeting	6 pm

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