

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Deflection

The Timeless Strategy of Deflection By Yonatan Hambourger and Tzali Reicher



In today's political climate, we've become used to seeing public figures dodging difficult questions or shifting their positions on key issues. It's something that some politicians looking to be placed in leadership positions do to navigate complex situations without committing to a definitive stance...

Interestingly, this tactic isn't new and can be understood through various examples in the Torah, where leaders and individuals also failed the challenge of responding to difficult questions and situations.

One of the earliest instances in the Torah where someone avoids a direct answer occurs in the story of Cain and Abel. After Cain kills his brother Abel, G-d asks him, "Where is Abel your brother?" (Genesis 4:9). Instead of answering directly, Cain replies, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"

This kind of deflection can be seen in modern politics as well. For instance, when politicians are confronted with uncomfortable questions about their past actions or statements, they often attempt to deflect by questioning the relevance of the question, by redirecting the conversation to a different topic, or by avoiding the questioners entirely.

Another example from the Torah is found in the story of the Golden Calf (Exodus 32). When Moses descends from Mount Sinai and sees the Israelites worshipping the Golden Calf, he confronts Aaron, demanding an explanation. Aaron's response is less than straightforward. He tells Moses, "You know the people, that they are set on evil... I threw it [gold] into the fire, and out came this calf" (Exodus 32:22-24).

This story reflects a common tactic in politics, where leaders may distance themselves from controversial decisions or actions by attributing them to other members of their team, or to external forces, rather than taking full responsibility. By doing so, they seek to preserve their credibility while avoiding the potential fallout from admitting fault or making a firm commitment.

And finally, in the story of King Saul, we find another example of a leader avoiding direct confrontation with a difficult situation. When the prophet Samuel confronts Saul after the battle with the Amalekites, Saul initially insists that he has followed G-d's command. However, when pressed, he admits that he spared the best of the sheep and cattle to offer as sacrifices, despite being instructed to destroy everything (1 Samuel 15:13-15).

This illustrates how leaders might attempt to justify their actions by presenting them in a favorable light, even when those actions contradict their stated principles or commitments. In politics, we often see leaders shifting their positions or offering justifications that align with the current mood or expectations of their audience, even if it means deviating from their original stance.

In each of these Torah examples, we see individuals confronted with difficult questions or situations, and their responses often involve some form of avoidance, deflection, or shifting of responsibility, and in today's political arena, similar tactics are frequently employed. Some politicians look to avoid direct answers, shift blame, or change their positions depending on the audience or the circumstances.

As engaged citizens, it is incumbent on us to hold our leaders to account. The leadership lessons from the Torah remind us that true leadership requires honesty, responsibility, and a willingness to confront difficult truths, even when it is uncomfortable or risky. When leaders fail to meet these standards, it falls to the public to demand transparency and integrity from those we entrust with power.

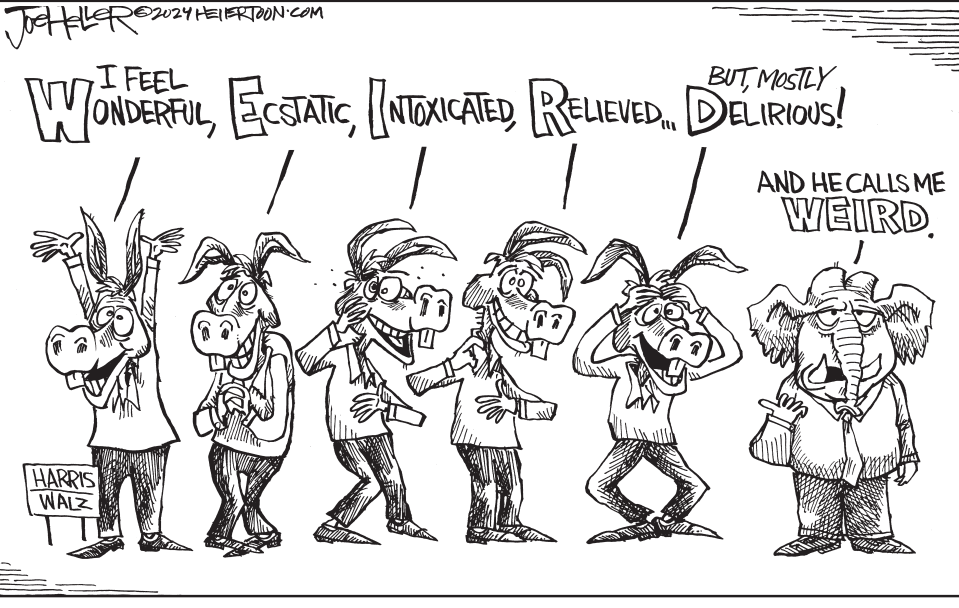
Traditionally, the press served this role by providing "the free exchange of information that is accurate, fair, and thorough," as stated in the preamble of the Society of Professional Journalists. The preamble goes on to say that "professional journalists believe that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy."

Just as G-d called out Cain, Moses confronted Aaron, and Samuel rebuked Saul, it is our duty to question and challenge our leaders. This is not just about holding them accountable, but also about ensuring that our leaders embody the values we wish to see in our society - values of hope, responsibility, and integrity. Only by doing so can we hope to foster a political environment where leaders are guided by principles rather than expedience, and where the public's trust is genuinely earned.

We would love to hear your comments. Please reach out to y@tasteof Torah.org.

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Pettable Peeves

A "peeve" is of course a minor annoyance that someone finds particularly irritating. The word originates from the 14th century "peyveshe," which meant "perverse or capricious." "Pet peeve" was popularized by cartoonist, Frank King, in the early 20th century.

I'm not particularly peeved this morning, but one glance at the headlines suggests an immediate retreat, or shall we say, "strategic withdrawal" to humor. Humor in some form is going to be increasingly vital to our mental health in the days to come, now that the Overton window has been shattered and a beguiled public is saturated in gaslit fallacy.

Thus we will reserve our mocking of the headlines today for our small group of friends who we observe to be still possessed of their rationality. Instead we shall focus on peeves that are common to most, if not all of us. God knows we need something upon which we can all agree.

Let's begin with a peeve that is increasingly shared by those of us who depend on the Post Office for rural deliveries, and state categorically that this does not include the fine, devoted employees and carriers who are our friends and neighbors. No, our annoyance is reserved exclusively for the Postmaster General whose stated policy is to make the Post Office more efficient by increasing prices, reducing services, and prioritizing high traffic (urban) areas.

My package left Texas on a Monday and on the same day, it arrived in Palmetto, Georgia at the now-famous USPS Regional Processing and Distribution Center. The next day it was moved to Atlanta. On Wednesday, it went back to Palmetto and on that same day, it returned to Atlanta. On Thursday, the package traveled to Palmetto again, where it rested for two more days. On Saturday it managed to escape all that processing and distributing, was transferred back to Atlanta where it hitched a ride on a truck bound for Hiawassee.

In observing the journey of my package according to official USPS tracking information, and in consideration of the fact that my package took a single day to travel 900 miles, four days to escape the Palmetto-Atlanta oscillation, then another day to go the final 100 miles of delivery, I can only conclude that the definition of the word "efficient" has changed.

Perhaps the extra days were required for my parcel to become part of the "high traffic" in the urban area between Atlanta and Palmetto and thus to become prioritized.

I can almost see many of you nodding in agreement. Given time, I'm sure we could discover a lot of common peevish ground: The driver who rides your bumper when you're already exceeding the speed limit, the shopper who blocks half the aisle with her cart and the other half with her person, the unbreakable plastic that now surrounds most of the items we purchase, the appliance that breaks the week after the warranty runs out.

There is probably an endless list of pet peeves we have in common, and that list is dwarfed by the list common to our humanity, all that we share as sons and daughters, parents and grandparents, people who love our friends and families and want peace and prosperity for our children.

The efforts to divide us and sow discord in this election year are formidable. Aside from faith, humor is our best defense against them, for as Thomas Moore observed in the 16th century, "The devil, the proud spirit, cannot endure to be mocked."

Letters To The Editor

Choices

Dear Editor,

From the time we are born, we are being fashioned and crafted by those around us and the environment in which we live. Take a moment and revisit your childhood memories. Someone, a mother or father, a grandparent, a teacher, or perhaps a Sunday School teacher will come to mind as someone who had a definite impact on your life. As a young person, we don't choose our environment, or the people who are impacting our lives. As we transition to adulthood, our world changes and we have choices to make that will impact us in the present, and some of the things we do, or don't do, often have a lifetime effect.

Thoreau said it best with his poem, "The Road Not Taken." Daily, as adults, we are faced with decisions regarding things that may or may not be life-changing. We choose what road we take and who, or what will shape our lives going forward. In the Bible, in Isaiah and Jeremiah, we find God being referenced as the potter and mankind considered the clay. The places we go, the things we do, or don't do, and the people we associate with, also shape our lives on a daily basis. It would be far better to let God be the potter, knowing that He only desires what is good for each of us. What road will we take today? The choice is ours to make.

Gene Vickers

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.

Oh, Deer

I think that this year we have had more deer damage than most years. I think that there are several underlying causes for this, which only compound each other. One of those are unique to this year and others are not.

My own personal observation is that I have seen deer more active during times of day when I normally would not have seen them. Crossing roads and running through fields, when I would have expected them to be in shelter.

I think that one of the big causes for deer venturing out more and feeding on plants around your house this year is the drought that we have had. Drought conditions are better than they were in July, but most of the counties in far north

Georgia are still classified as abnormally dry. These dry conditions have suppressed the growth of a lot of the browse that deer would normally be able to find in wild places. Deer still need the food, and so they wonder into your yard and feed on the plants. Deer are not grazers like cattle. They will eat some grass, but their preference is to eat things that are slightly off the ground. They prefer to move through an area eating a variety of different things. Cattle will slowly work their way through an area eating the grass down.

If you feed deer or you have a neighbor that feeds deer that will significantly increase the chances that deer cause damage to the plants at your house. Feeding deer brings more into your neighborhood. If you frequently read this column you have probably seen me talk about it before. Feeding deer so that you can watch them, robs the deer of their wildness. They are wild animals. Humans putting feed out for them takes that away from them. It can also cause health concerns. Deer feeding in close proximity at a feed station allows the spread of diseases like CWD (which has not been reported in Georgia yet). It is not illegal, but I strongly do not recommend feeding deer. Feeding deer is legal on private property with permission from the landowner. It is illegal on public land.

Habitat loss is another reason why deer are making your garden an all you can eat buffet. When I say habitat loss, it is probably not in the way that you are thinking. We have lots of woods for deer to live in. However, the vast majority of our national forest only provides one type of habitat, and that is mature hardwood forest. Deer, and other wildlife like grouse, need a diversity of habitats including young and mature forest that our national forest does not provide. Young forest typically has a lot of brush and shrubs. Since the deer can't find that type of habitat on the national forest, they leave to find it in your yard. To address this situation more burns and responsible timber harvesting are needed on public land. An analogy that I have heard to explain this is to think of your house. Your house has different rooms like a kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom that all serve a different purpose. The young forest and mature forest are like the different rooms in your house, each serve a different purpose, and all are needed to make the house or the forest habitable.

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

Return to Normalcy

Many Americans yearn for what our country had four years ago.

Our economy was strong, our borders were secure, and our communities were safe. Moreover, our nation was respected - and feared - on the world stage.

Life was normal. Fast-forward four years, America is in a completely different place.

Since the Biden-Harris Administration took over the reins, our country has faced a myriad of crises. Raging inflation has burdened families, the intentional illegal invasion has devastated communities, and government overreach has trampled on our freedoms. From the botched Afghanistan withdrawal and Russia's invasion of Ukraine to Iran and Iranian proxies' war with Israel and ongoing unrest in the Middle East, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris' weakness on the world stage has been catastrophic for America and our allies.

Time and time again, the Left's harmful policies and radical agenda change our nation for the worse. Unfortunately, the Biden-Harris White House has altered America well beyond our wallets and our standing on the world stage.

Over the last few years, we've witnessed the Left attempt to unravel the fabric of our nation, defy basic biology, and veto the rule of law. Government agencies, social media companies, and the left-wing media shamelessly censor our free speech and rewrite our history. Democratic politicians refuse to define "woman," celebrate males competing in women's sports, and advance woke gender ideology on young children. Liberal lawmakers in Washington continuously oppose commonsense legislation on everything from deporting illegal aliens who assault law enforcement officers to ensuring only American citizens vote in American elections.

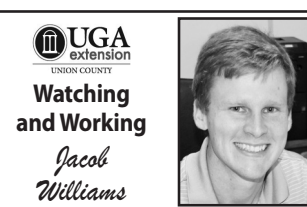
In other words, the radical Left has slowly chipped away at normalcy.

Don't just take my word for it. Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, who was recently tapped to be Kamala Harris' running mate, has fully embraced and promoted the extremist policies that are tearing our country apart.

As Minnesota's Governor, Walz set up a hotline to report residents who violated tyrannical COVID-19 mandates, signed a bill requiring public schools to supply menstrual products in boys' bathrooms, and turned a blind eye in the summer of 2020 as rioters looted and burned Minneapolis. Last year, he signed a bill into law that provides driver's licenses to illegal aliens. Alarming, Walz also proudly claimed that "one person's socialism is another person's neighborliness."

These policies, rhetoric, and values don't reflect what the American people demand and deserve. Our country longs for affordable groceries, secure borders, and safe communities - not socialism, charcoaled cities, and tampons in boys' bathrooms.

Simply put, Americans want a return to normalcy. Republicans are committed to providing this normalcy through policies that deliver an economy that's strong, a border that's secure, and a nation that's safe. Meanwhile, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are brainstorming new ways to unjustly drag our country further to the radical, irrational, and bizarre left.



Watching and Working Jacob Williams

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By: Don Perry worldoutsidethebox.com



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