

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## In G-d We Trust

Bill couldn't sleep. A loan he borrowed from his neighbor was due the next day, and he couldn't pay it back. His wife also couldn't sleep—because of all Bill's tossing and turning. Eventually, she opened the bedroom window and yelled to the neighbor, "Remember the thousand dollars my husband owes you? Well, you're not getting it tomorrow! Good night!" Smiling, she turned to her husband and said, "Let him worry about it, and let's get some sleep!"

How can we be sure everything will turn out OK? How can we trust we'll get what we need when it's ultimately G-d who decides our fate? And how can we know that He won't hold our past transgressions against us? After all, G-d knows how many there are.

Traditional religious wisdom advocates serenity. We should remember there's a Big Boss who has a plan, and whether or not we find G-d's plan agreeable, we should understand that He wants only the best for us. This kind of faith helps us stay composed during trying times. The Torah suggests, however, that we can have a much deeper connection—genuine trust in G-d.

Trust, as opposed to faith, doesn't just mean we believe everything is "for the best" in some theoretical sense. It means being certain that things will turn out well in a way we can understand and appreciate.

The great Torah Sages tell us, "Think positively, and it will be good." This doesn't mean we should relax because things will be good. It means if we relax, things will be good! This isn't just wordplay. They're telling us we have the power to improve our lives. The key is to have unwavering faith that G-d can and will assist us.

G-d plans His actions according to our mindset. As noted in Psalm 32:10, "For the one who trusts in G-d, kindness shall surround him, and as the prophet Jeremiah says, "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and the Lord will be his security" (17:7). When you develop deep-rooted trust in G-d, you earn His compassion, making you fit to receive blessings even if you're imperfect. You might be unworthy, but your trust can stir G-d to alter the outcome.

You always possess the capacity to trust G-d. In order to make it concrete, you need to develop your spiritual muscles. Many people strengthen their trust by reading chapter 16 of the Book of Exodus every day. That passage describes how G-d provided daily sustenance to the Children of Israel in the form of manna from Heaven. It's also helpful to recite from the Book of Psalms every day. The litmus test to determine your progress is the degree to which you experience anxiety when faced with personal challenges.

But even people with complete trust in G-d can be afflicted with pain, suffering, and worse. How can we reconcile this with the premise that trust in G-d will lead to a positive outcome? Maintaining unwavering trust and embracing challenges with love has been the key to the Jewish people's survival for millennia, against all odds. We do our utmost to move forward confidently and accept unforeseen outcomes with love. And if need be, we confront G-d and ask why he caused such a tragedy. We know we do not know enough to comprehend the answer, but we must believe and care enough to ask the question.

Trust in G-d is not a last resort when all options have been exhausted. It is an internal process that enables us to understand that anything is truly possible for G-d. Trust begins with faith that G-d orchestrates everything, big and small, in the world. But once we take this leap of faith, we can develop something even deeper, a trust that connects us with G-d's power.

Trusting G-d means knowing he is on your side to guide you through challenges so that things will work out better than you could ever imagine.

Experiencing happiness, tranquility, and self-assurance is not merely more pleasurable and efficient than feeling disheartened and anxious. It sustains a positive outlook and faith in G-d that will ultimately enhance your life in concrete ways.

Your responsibility is to remain composed and free from worry, allowing G-d to choose the path to support and care for you.

I would love to hear your thoughts on this week's column. Please email me at [yonatan@chabadruralgeorgia.com](mailto:yonatan@chabadruralgeorgia.com). *Wishing you G-d's abundant blessings, Rabbi Yonatan Hambourger*

**Echos from Sinai**  
"Torah for Everyone"  
Rabbi Yonatan Hambourger



## Leave the Leaves

Leaves are beginning to fall from the trees. Soon they will be littered all over the ground. However, we shouldn't think of leaves as litter. They are a natural product that is beneficial in a lot of ways. Let's talk about some of the benefits that leaves provide, and why leaving them is good for the environment.

In the fall most, people will get out their rakes and leaf blowers to remove the leaves from their yards. The end result is a yard that looks very tidy and neat, but also a yard that has removed a crucial element of the nutrient cycle and disrupted the life cycle of many beneficial insects. I would argue that there are some places where you should remove the leaves. Like your driveway or walkways because they can create a hazard. I have also raked a small portion of my yard because my daughter loves a good leaf pile, and I'm not going to keep that happiness from her. But in the rest of the yard and the surrounding woods it's beneficial to leave those leaves in place.

Fallen leaves create organic matter for the soil. As the leaves break down they return the nutrients that they are holding back to the soil. This is an important part of the nutrient cycle. In the spring trees will withdraw nutrients from the ground and start to make those leaves. In the fall when the leaves drop, the leaves are still holding the nutrients. Each individual leaf may not have a lot of nutrients, but collectively their nutrient load is important. Allowing those leaves to return their nutrients to the soil completes the nutrient cycle. Leaving the leaves in plant beds around your house is a good thing for the plants. It will also help reduce weeds, since it serves as a mulch layer. A light layer of leaves over grass will benefit the grass too. On grass, if the leaves are too thick, it can damage the grass.

Another great benefit of leaving the leaves is that it helps beneficial insects. Lots of insects will lay their eggs in the leaves. Butterflies and moths will lay eggs in the leaves to emerge next year. Bumblebees, Luna moths, and swallowtail butterflies will over winter just under the soil line. A layer of leaf mulch protects these important pollinators.

Lots of animals rely on the leaves too. Turtles, toads, birds, salamanders, and small mammals use the leaves for food, shelter, and nesting material. All of these critters need a place to spend the winter.

If you have more leaves than you can handle consider putting the extra around trees, ornamental plants, and in garden beds as a natural mulch. It's better to not shred the leaves as this will destroy any insects or eggs that are in the leaves.

Grass for lawns is the largest irrigated 'crop' in the US at over 40 million acres. That's more than irrigated corn or soybean. If everyone made sure that their lawn was a welcome habitat for pollinators and other critters it would make a huge difference. If you have questions about your leaves, contact your County Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

Thursday, October 12 at 4 PM the Towns-Union Master Gardener Association will have their monthly meeting at the Hiwassee City Hall upstairs training room. Ray Covington, Superintendent of the Blairsville Experiment Station, will be presenting on the work that they do. This event is open to the public.

**UGA extension**  
Watching and Working  
Jacob Williams



## Along the Last Mile

Yesterday was a beautiful day, and I got to spend it at home, more or less. I was required to be there between the hours of 7 AM and 7 PM in case our telecom service provider's technician drove by. Usually, they call to give a heads up, but we didn't have a dial tone. If they did drive by, between 7 AM and 7 PM, and we weren't home, the automated voice system had threatened to charge us \$50 as a penalty. If your phone is out, and you're not self-employed or retired, I suppose you're out of luck. And 50 bucks.

The problem began like a squeaky wheel. Someone would call, and we would pick up. Both parties would hear a screeching sound, like an old fax machine trying to establish a connection. Then an automated voice would repeat, "Enter code. Enter code." "Steve" over in Bangalore suggested the problem might be my old answering machine, so I bought a new one.

The problem persisted. Technicians came and went. The problem went away and then came back. Then calls started dropping out. Next, at random times during the day or night, we would have no dial tone. I got a call from a tech saying that they were waiting for parts. Another month went by.

At first, we thought we were alone, but we found out that several of our neighbors were experiencing the same problems. Whatever our brave new world brings, I submit that we will survive it by getting to know our neighbors.

I miss being able to call Cornelia when I had a phone issue and talk to someone whose voice I recognized. I'm not saying that "James" in Hyderabad and "Chloe" in the Dominican Republic were not helpful. They were actually quite friendly. There's just something satisfying about doing business with a neighbor and knowing that everyone involved has skin in the game.

We'll call our fictional telecommunications company "Static by Gustpuddle." Gustpuddle was formed in 2006 when another fictional local provider, "Tellall," merged with still another provider spawned from GTE. Before that, our area was served by the non-fictional entity, Standard Telephone Company, out of Cornelia, Georgia, for 95 years, from 1904 to 1999.

So how did I talk to James and Chloe without a dial tone and with no cell service in our valley? Good question. The answer is Wi-Fi calling, which usually works quite well unless you pick up the smartphone or look at it. In any event, that quit working too when the internet service went down. It's also provided by Gustpuddle and breezes in on the same (old) copper lines the pioneers used.

That's part of the problem. We have miles of old copper lines in the mountains, and not just in NE Georgia – 100 million Americans still have landlines. That's bad news for the telecoms because the FCC requires them to provide service for anyone who requests it, regardless of location. As a result, areas with a lot of old copper have been passed around like a game of corporate "hot potato," bundled by the bigger players and sold to smaller providers at what must have seemed like bargain prices until lightning struck.

Electricity loves to explore anything that will provide it passage, and miles of copper surrounded by damp cotton sheathed in cracked lead alloy are an irresistible attraction when lightning hits the ground. It will run as far as it is able, sometimes for miles, before it's stopped by a severed connection – usually the melted wires in your splice box or the DSLAM or even your phone, modem, router, stereo, or the lightbulb in your refrigerator.

Whatever the case, the guys in the trucks, whether they hailed from Gustpuddle, Tellall, or Standard, have always come to the rescue. I had a friend who got to wear three different telecom uniforms before he retired, serving the same customers. At least they don't have to commute from Hyderabad, though the companies they work for would probably outsource their contributions or replace them with robots if they could manage it. They are the same neighbors and friends who have always rolled out when there was trouble, and no matter how frustrating the corporations who pay their salaries might be, it's not the fault of the guy who goes where James tells Chloe to tell him to go.

There is a glimmer of hope for copper customers. Slowly and as surely as a soured economy can manage, the telecoms are replacing copper with fiber optic lines. Even the always benevolent government is aware of the problem and has provided millions of dollars in grants for "last mile" high-speed internet service for people just like us who are underserved by the 21st Century. Of course, that's a bit like the last mile of the Colorado River as it trickles into Mexico, unless you happen to live on a pig trail leading to the estate of a board member of a company who received a grant.

In other words, this may take a while, but by the time we do get reliable phone and high-speed internet, I hope to have at least the level of service as my friend who lives in Sierra Leone in Africa.

Our technician never came by, but today we do have dial tone AND internet service. I feel like we should all celebrate. The guys have been working on this on and off for about 3 months. Some people have even stopped trying to call us, so you see, there is always a silver lining. Or a lead one. And by the way, you might want to avoid investing in any of the companies possessed of a lot of old copper lines. Remember that lead sheathing we mentioned earlier? That's a problem for the soil and the water supply. A huge problem.

## Outside The Box

By: *Don Perry*  
[worldoutsidethebox.com](http://worldoutsidethebox.com)

## Letters To The Editor

### Thank You Aldi

Dear Editor,

I volunteer at a local food pantry and am working towards eliminating the use of plastic bags. Last week, I stopped at Aldi and explained that I wanted to buy 50 reusable grocery bags to give away. They're only 69 cents each. The wonderful folks at Aldi wanted to support my effort and offered a Buy One, Get One program. I was able to get 100 bags for the food pantry.

Thank you Aldi for being a strong supporter of our community.  
**Robert Hume**

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor  
PO Box 365, Hiwassee, GA 30546.  
Our email address: [tcherald@windstream.net](mailto:tcherald@windstream.net).

Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc. Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.\*

*Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.*

## 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.

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