

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Hamas Is A Threat to the USA

By Yonatan  
Hambourger and  
Tzali Reicher

It is no secret that the Jewish people often have a diversity of perspectives on everything. But when it comes to matters of Jewish law, there are many times where consensus emerges between scholars, even across millennia. In the discussions of the permissibility of violating the sacred laws of Sabbath in times of dire need, we find two prominent figures in the realm of Jewish thought, Maimonides and Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, separated by centuries and distinct backgrounds, in agreement on an extremely timely case:

Maimonides, a medieval scholar, philosopher, and physician who served as the doctor to the Caliph in Egypt, and Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement founded in Russia that continues to thrive today, both render the same legal decision based on this scenario: when the safety of the Jewish community is at stake and enemies have besieged their cities – particularly border towns – there is not only a right but a sacred obligation to defend themselves and their fellow countrymen, even if it means violating the sanctity of the Sabbath.

October 7th, 2023 was a Sabbath. Knowing this, Hamas unleashed a brutal wave of terror and violence on Israel, starting with the border towns and moving as far as they could go before Israel was able to mobilize a response to repel this genocidal threat. For more than 60 days since then, Israel has been busy working to free the innocent hostages Hamas has taken, while also operating to eliminate Hamas and its capability to wage terror against Israel and the innocent residents of Gaza.

But around the world, the response to Hamas' atrocities have been astonishing. While the bodies of Jewish victims were still warm and the remains of others were in the process of being identified by DNA because they were so mutilated, antisemites and critics of Israel were quick to celebrate the massacre as expressions of "resistance" and "decolonization." Others, including in Congress, called for "calm" and a "cease-fire," seeking to neuter Israel's ability to retrieve its citizens and defend its sovereignty before it even began.

Yet despite the terrifying and ominous sight of thousands of terror sympathizers marching in cities around the world, chanting genocidal rhetoric and advocating for the erasure of Israel, the United States – both the administration and the citizens of this great nation that empower them – have been overwhelmingly clear-eyed about the strategic need and moral obligation to allow Israel to complete its goal of completely wiping out Hamas.

That's because in a world of alliances and proxy battles, Israel is Western Civilization's figurative "border town," where dangerous ideas by extremists are tested before being exported to other Western bastions of freedom around the world. By way of example, Israeli airlines were a frequent target of terror-related hijackings before 9/11, while bus and train bombings were a common tactic of Islamic terrorist suicide bombers in Israel before the 2004 train bombings in Madrid, and the bombing of London's subway in 2005.

As major world powers jostle and fight for influence in countries of areas of the globe far beyond their own borders, Israel is a bulwark of American values and interests in a region dominated by Iran, China, and Russia.

While naive and young Americans call for Israel to be hamstringed and restrained, older and wiser people – as proven by the data – understand the need for the United States to empower a forceful response to Hamas' aggression.

If Israel allows Hamas to remain intact after the atrocities they perpetrated, the veil of deterrence that keeps the region calm would be completely off, and the implications of that are terrifying:

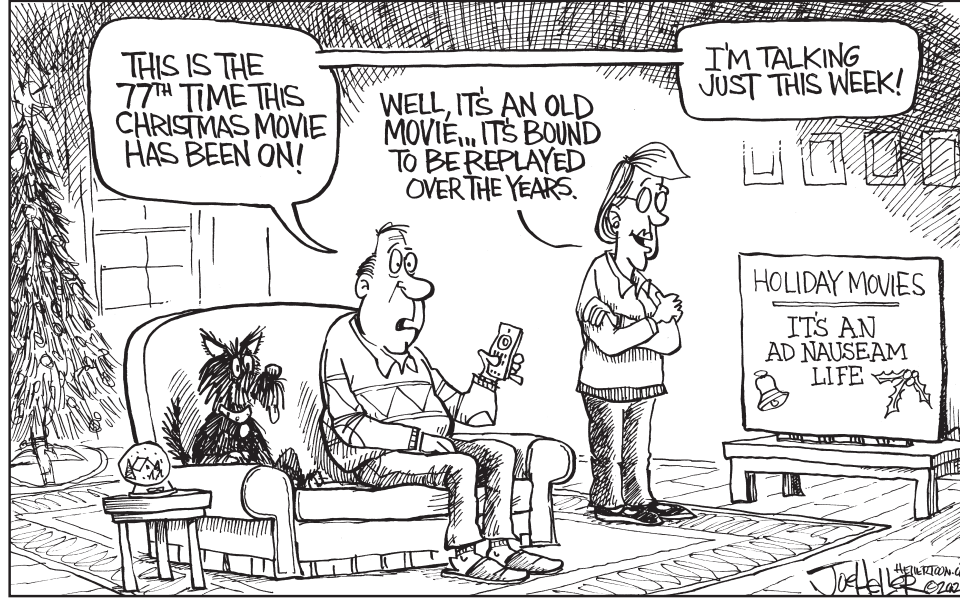
Hamas' fellow Iranian proxy, the far more sophisticated Hezbollah terror organization effectively controlling Lebanon, would be empowered to join the war more than the tepid show of support they are offering now. Israel would then be forced to use its air force to handle that exponentially more dangerous threat, drawing Iran into the conflict. The United States would then be obligated to tangibly join the war with manpower and supplies, which would then invite China and Russia into what is now World War III, G-d forbid.

Even if it doesn't escalate that far, blocking Israel – the United States' staunchest ally in the Middle East – from doing what it needs to ensure Hamas' elimination would send a dangerous message to the United States' adversaries abroad. It essentially tells dictators like Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, and the Mullahs in Iran that America will not stop them from occupying vital allies like Ukraine and Taiwan, and aside from offering tough rhetoric and some arms, they would get away with it.

The world is at a dangerous crossroad, and the United States must empower and support Israel – our ally on the frontlines of our common fight against extremism and terrorism – to ensure the United States' secure place at the head of the world order and the continuation of our open, free, and secure Western civilization.

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

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



## Mast Crop

A word that you may hear from time to time when talking about wildlife in the fall in winter is "mast." What is mast, why is it important, and can we manage it? Let's talk about these things this week.

The phrase mast crop refers to the fruits and nuts produced by woody plants. Mast can be split into two groups, hard and soft mast. Hard mast includes nuts like hickory, beech, black walnut, and acorns (sometimes pronounced 'aikerns' if you are from the south like me). These nuts are generally ready for wildlife consumption in the fall and winter. They are very important for wildlife to have enough food through the winter, before forbs begin growing again in the spring. Soft

UGA extension  
UNION COUNTY  
Watching and Working  
Jacob Williams



mast refers to fleshy fruits from plants like dogwood, blackberry, persimmon, black cherry, wild grapes, sassafras, or poison ivy (yes, poison ivy is a great plant for birds). Soft mast tends to be ready for eating in the late summer and early fall.

Mast crop is very important because it essentially makes up the food that wildlife have to get through winter. Last winter the mast crop from oak trees was very poor. That means wildlife like deer had to find food elsewhere, and generally they found it from your yard. This year the acorn crop has been much better, so hopefully deer damage won't be as severe. Mast crops will vary from year to year, and that is natural. Putting out corn in your yard to supplement the mast crop is unnatural. The weather has a big impact on the mast crop. A late frost or drought can severely affect the amount of mast that is out there in a given year.

Oak acorns make up a big part of the mast crop. All native oak trees can be broken into a white or red subgroup. Species in the white oak will produce acorns every year. Even so, some years will have a bumper crop in what is called a "mast year." Red oaks produce acorns every other year. Wildlife tend to prefer white oak acorns over red oak, as red oak acorns are more bitter. White oaks tend to drop their acorns a little bit earlier than red oaks. Generally, wildlife will eat all the white oak acorns before eating the red.

Is there anything that you can do to support the mast crop? There are a couple of options. The first is to plant more plants that are mast producers. Some mast producing plants are quite attractive, and you may already have them in your landscape. Plants like spicebush, flowering dogwood, or viburnum. The second option is if you have some woods on your property to do some selective thinning. Choosing to leave trees like white oak or post oak, and thin out the other trees around them. The additional sunlight will allow those oaks to become more productive. It may also allow some forbs to start growing on the forest floor.

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

## Codger

We were looking at some old vacation photos of a favorite beach where a spectral forest of driftwood, bathed in morning mist, embellished by long shadows cast by the sun slowly rising out of the ocean, invited young and old to explore its mysteries. Every tide offered new discoveries, and every hour of the day created something unique and ephemeral. We spent many hours wandering that beach, and the old pictures carried an echo of those cherished times.

More recent photos of the beach are not so pleasing to us. Time has taken its toll on the shoreline. The forest of driftwood has mostly disappeared, washed away by higher tides and hurricanes traveling over rising sea levels. The protective dunes have eroded, and high tide now breaches the adjacent marsh. When we first saw the beach in its current state, we were shocked and saddened.

Not long after revisiting memories of the beach we now perceived as dismal, I happened upon a social media post by someone who had just seen it for the first time. To them, it was the most enchanting place on earth. If I didn't know the beach to which they referred, their glowing description would entice me to visit, and their photos revealed a very different place from the one we saw in our own collection.

The lesson landed very close to the mark. Like many native-born and longtime residents in these enchanted hills, I've been here long enough to see many changes: Ridgelines scraped, farms converted to ticky-tacky, silt running in streams, and the lake surrounded by a bathtub ring of docks. Few alive remember the farmland that the lake now covers.

But ask someone new to the area how they perceive the same hills that we see filtered by the lens of our memories. It's still the most beautiful place on earth.

The wisdom is ancient, if often lost between the ages. The Scriptures say, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." In the earthly realm, I think the ability to see all things as new, like a child, is the difference between happiness and misery.

The brain itself, that differencing engine constantly laboring for our survival, can begin to damage our peace of mind as we get older. Memory, crystallized, idealized, can exert a stronger influence than what is right in front of us. It's not like it was when I was young. Things will never be the same. Nothing is as good as it used to be.

Some of us are able to overcome that perception deception and retain a certain childlike innocence which allows our perspective to refresh and renew. That, I believe, is the difference between the delightful older gentleman with the twinkle in his eye and the codger.

I'm not advocating the abandonment of a sincere desire to protect what is natural, beautiful, and peaceful about our area, and ironically, it is often the newcomer who is more protective of these things than the longtime resident who has lost perspective or any resident, new or old, whose highest level of perception is not beauty itself but the potential of that beauty for monetization.

We should always strive to see things as they truly are. Some truths are immutable. Numbers that are factual cannot be wished away by a Pollyanna perspective. But when it comes to happiness and peace of mind, these, my friends, are overwhelmingly matters of perspective, and perspective is determined by our choices.

**Outside The Box**  
By: Don Perry  
worldoutsidethebox.com

## Letters To The Editor

### Heal Our Land

Dear Editor,

It's hard to imagine that the killing of the unborn has taken front and center stage in America. Is it really about a woman's right regarding her own body, or simply a convenient action taken because proper precaution wasn't taken to prevent the pregnancy in the first place – hence the need to abort a human life?

Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come to me, for they are the kingdom of God." He also said that it would be better to have a large millstone hung around a person's neck and drown than to cause a little one to stumble. It sounds like Jesus loves little children. I wonder what he thinks about abortion. Approximately less than 2% of all abortions are because of rape or incest.

God's word is immutable and never changes. All through the Old Testament, Israel was falling away from God's commands and being punished for their disobedience. "One nation, under God" is not what America is today. Look at the shape our country is in. Are we already being punished for the millions of babies we have aborted and our falling away from the precepts of God's Word?

What America needs more than anything a Democrat or Republican can bring to the table is to repent and turn back to God. He will then forgive us and heal our land.

Gene Vickers

### Peace On Earth

Dear Editor,

We have never had total peace on this earth since sin entered the Garden of Eden and all hell broke loose. It has been about 2,000 years since God sent His son, Jesus, to come to earth and die on the cross so mankind could be reconciled back to God. Down through the ages, men and women have promised peace on earth to no avail, and today is no different, as we see more and more wars popping up around our world and wonder if there will be peace on earth someday.

I read the book of Revelation that tells us that we believers in Christ will not go through the Great Tribulation Period where God's wrath is poured out on those who reject our Savior, Jesus Christ.

In chapter 13 of Revelation, Satan will introduce the Antichrist who promises to bring peace, and the people will say "Hallelujah" and put him into office. The antichrist comes in on a false platform of bringing everlasting peace to the world, which is the biggest lie ever told in history. But the people are desperate, so they believe the lie and welcome Satan with open arms of gratitude. According to Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, the antichrist will come disguised as the great humanitarian. He will talk peace, prosperity, and plenty, not to lead us to God, but further from God. He will explain guilt away psychologically, make men shrink in shame if their fellowman say they are not broad-minded and liberal. The antichrist will spread the lie that men will never be better until they make society better.

Folks, this is why it's so important to read God's truth from the bible for yourself and your family to know that if you don't accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord before He returns to gather His own unto Himself, you will have to live through the Worst Tribulation Period that history has ever known. Please heed this message, not from me, but from Jesus Christ Himself, for in Him is all truth, as God cannot lie, so you can take Him at His word and His great promises.

Frank F. Combs

## 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.

## Towns County Community Calendar

<b>First Monday of each month:</b> School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
<b>Every Tuesday:</b> Storytime for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
<b>First Tuesday of each month:</b> Hiaw. City Council... City Hall YH City Council... YH City Hall	6 pm 6:30 pm
<b>Second Tuesday of each month:</b> Conventions & Visitors Board... Civic Center	8:30 am
<b>Second Wednesday of each month:</b> Board of Elections... Elections Office	4 pm
<b>Third Monday of each month:</b> Planning Commission... Temporary Courthouse	6 pm
<b>Third Tuesday of each month:</b> Commissioner's Mtg... Courthouse City of Young Harris Planning Commission... Meeting Room in City Hall TC Water Authority Board Meeting	5:30 pm 5 pm 6 pm

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

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor  
P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546  
Our email address: 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.

**Classifieds SELL!**  
**706-896-4454**



## Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

Kenneth West  
Owner/Publisher

Derek Richards  
Advertising Director

Shawn Jarrard  
General Manager/Editor

Jordan Hyatt  
Office Manager

Todd Forrest  
Staff Writer

Lowell Nicholson  
Photographer

Publication No: 635540

Advertising, News deadlines: Friday at 5 p.m.

Towns County (1 Year) \$30. Out of County (1 Year) \$40. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points. The Towns County Herald is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. Postmaster: Send change of address to: Towns County Herald, P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546.

Office located at: 518 N. Main St. Suite 3 "The Mall", Hiawassee  
Phone: (706) 896-4454 Fax: (706) 896-1745 Email: tcherald@windstream.net  
Or mail to: PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546