

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Thank You, America

By Yonatan Hamberger and Tzali Reicher

On the most spiritually significant day of the Hasidic calendar in the winter of 1986, the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory – the most influential rabbi in modern history – surprised the thousands gathered in his New York synagogue by beginning to speak about... Thanksgiving.

Normally known for his giving of Torah insights or the Jewish perspective on current events, the Rebbe, who spearheaded the global renaissance of world Jewry after the Holocaust, instead praised the uniqueness of the United States. He highlighted how the country's original settlers immediately proclaimed a holiday of thanksgiving to God upon their arrival, expressing gratitude for a secure land and freedom from religious oppression.

In the centuries since Thanksgiving was first celebrated, it has evolved to a yearly tradition to express our appreciation to God for all the blessings in our lives. There's a lot to be thankful for: family, health, security, among others, but what is sometimes understated is the privilege of being a citizen of the United States of America.

Living in this country offers countless reasons to be thankful, and this blessing continues to enrich our lives in numerous ways. Through what can only be described as divine providence, we found ourselves born in a land – or made our way to a land – that champions freedom and democracy, something that people born in oppressed nations can only yearn for.

But as a rabbi and Jewish citizen of our great nation there is another reason why I'm grateful to and for America: its unwavering support of Israel and America's Jewish citizenry. As the aftermath of the awful Hamas massacre of innocent Israeli civilians on October 7th continues to roil Israel and the Jewish community around the world, America and its citizens have been an overwhelming beacon of support for our most vital ally in the Middle East, and those whom it represents.

One of the most tangible forms of support is the robust military aid provided by the United States to Israel, recognizing Israel's integrity as an ally and its position as the "tip of the spear" against international terrorism. The United States has supplied Israel with weapons, and intelligence, ensuring that it can defend itself against potential aggressors. Diplomatically, the United States has been a staunch advocate for Israel on the world stage, using its influence to protect Israel from biased resolutions and condemnations in morally bankrupt international forums.

While it's true that the President and the U.S. Congress have been exceptional in showing support for Israel amidst pushback from a fringe-but-loud minority, it's important to note that a country is only as good as its citizens, and our country's citizens have been so kind and supportive.

The messages and support I've personally experienced and been seeing across our great state and nation reaffirms my belief in the morality and righteousness of the everyday kindhearted American. Despite what the media will tell you about America being in decline, the American people are overwhelmingly on the side of stamping out global terrorism in tandem with its allies, projecting U.S. power on the world stage to thwart the global ambitions of our adversaries, reestablishing the vision of our founding fathers to check the spread of neo-fascism and nihilism currently in vogue, and doing what it takes to ensure a safe and prosperous future for all Americans.

In the context of Thanksgiving, the Rebbe's perspective on gratitude takes on a special significance. America, with its support for Israel, embodies the spirit of "Medinah shel Chesed" (a nation of kindness). The United States has consistently shown kindness and support for Israel and the Jewish people, and that has never been taken for granted.

So, during this holiday season, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to America for its unwavering core principles and support of Israel. The United States of America, by virtue of its people, is a beacon of hope and example for the rest of the world. Thank you, America, for being a true friend to the Jewish people, and long may the great experiment that is the United States of America continue.

I would love to hear your thoughts on this week's column. Please email me at yonatan@chabadruralgeorgia.com. *Wishing you G-d's abundant blessings,*

Rabbi Yonatan Hamberger  
Yonatan Hamberger 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.

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

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor  
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Do You Smell Gas?

It's political season again. The wiser among us are more concerned with hunting season, or Christmas decorations, or just about any other activity that produces a tangible result for the effort invested.

Unfortunately, wisdom, never abundant for humanity, is increasingly rare in this world, so we'll use this opportunity to review some of the tools we have that can provide a prophylactic effect in our inevitable exposure to all things political.

First things first. Relax. Some of us are past weary of, as my sister-in-law says, "the tyranny of urgency." Civilization itself is at stake every time we vote? I don't think so.

The most weary of us are confident that national elections are carried by a "cartel" anyhow. It's the same Democrat/Republican cartel which has narrowed our choices to a single two-sided coin all of our adult lives.

Think about it. Every four years the cartel pours gasoline on the embers of our fundamental disagreements: Abortion, guns, social differences, etc. The political pendulum appears to swing back and forth, but the hands of the clock don't move. The fiat currency continues to steadily transfer the wealth of the productive to the parasitic class. The bomb business continues to boom. Distracted and enfeebled by our gaslit differences, learned helplessness becomes real.

It is indeed learned helplessness which maintains this status quo, like an animal caged all of its life that stays in the pen even when the gate is open. We have tools to break up the cartel, but they are not widely known or utilized. Search the term, "Convention of States" if you're curious.

Only a true grassroots effort will bring any significant change, but don't look to any elected officials to make a difference. Consider the deeply flawed non-politician, Donald Trump. He sought to dismantle large portions of the entrenched Administrative State, and then his unforgivable sin: Attempting to normalize relations with the Russians.

Trump was never supposed to win. He was to be the sacrificial goat, an unelectable opponent who would guarantee a win for Hillary Clinton. His electoral victory and the popular vote behind that shocked the establishment, and they have worked hard to ensure that nothing like that can ever happen again.

If you have been properly conditioned, you will read the above paragraph as an endorsement of Trump. It isn't. Rather, it's an attempt to gain perspective on the political process, but we are programmed to view all things as a dichotomy.

Which brings us back to the current political season. The debates have begun, and morbid curiosity urges me to observe at least part of the spectacle. I'm convinced that if I watch political debates long enough I might actually catch a glimpse of one of the participants catching a fly with his or her tongue.

It is somewhat of a relief to still be able to use the pronouns, "his" and "her" in this context with confidence. And that brings us to our next subject for review: gaslighting.

It's worth quoting Webster in its entirety here. Gaslighting is the "psychological manipulation of a person usually over an extended period of time that causes the victim to question the validity of their own thoughts, perception of reality, or memories and typically leads to confusion, loss of confidence and self-esteem, uncertainty of one's emotional or mental stability, and a dependency on the perpetrator."

You're racist and privileged because you're white, and there is nothing for you to do but confess, genuflect and relinquish your wealth and power to someone more deserving. You are a victim because you are a person of color. You are incapable of providing for yourself because all the odds are stacked against you, and you are owed compensation. Black or white, if you disagree with any part of a progressive paradigm, you are "phobic."

You get the picture. The gaslighting is brilliant. Submit because you're bad and wrong. Or get angry because you have been wronged. Or get angry because the other side hates you and wants to take away what you have, or prevent you from getting what you should have. With a voting population either ambivalent or divided into camps, the cartel continues unchallenged.

Gaslighting is not limited to American politics. Consider the United Nations' recent scold of developed nations, Americans in particular, to eat less meat in order to reduce greenhouse gases (GHG) and save the planet. We're selfish, bad and wrong because we take more than our share and in doing so we cause everyone else to suffer.

Sometimes all it takes to expose a gaslighting campaign is a bit of fact, like a drop of Dawn dish soap clears a greasy film on a sink full of water. The entire US agriculture sector contributes only 1.4% of total global greenhouse emissions. It is one of if not the most efficient ag sectors on the planet and has made great strides in reducing GHG production. By comparison, China produces almost three times the GHG emissions as the US and is the world's largest producer of pork and the third-largest beef producer.

There are times when it appears that the "cartel" extends far beyond the Democrat/Republican dichotomy. It doesn't take a conspiracy when global business interests and aspirations to power are aligned by similar goals, but that is a rabbit hole for another time.

In the meantime, stay alert when you begin to smell gas, though with new technology there may be a greener method of gaslighting in the works. Don't forget your other basic tools when you're exposed to politics. Remember the logical fallacy: The ad hominem attack, the strawman argument, the slippery slope.

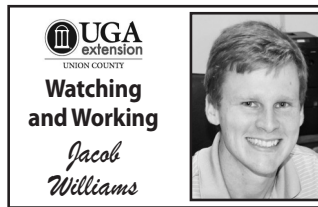
Better still, get up off the couch. Put on that raincoat and take a walk in the rain and feel it soaking into the ground, replenishing the water table, putting out the fires, cleaning the air. Buy a real Christmas card, not a pixel one, and surprise someone with it. Don't like Christmas cards? You must be Christmaphobic. Do I smell gas?

Outside The Box

By: Don Perry  
worldoutsidethebox.com

Mistletoe

Around this time of year mistletoe is sometimes a popular decoration in people's homes. You'll see it hanging above doorways for use by romantically inclined couples. Nowadays you can buy plastic mistletoe at stores to put up in your house. Let's talk about the effect that mistletoe can have on trees in the nature.



UGA extension  
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Jacob Williams

The origins of hanging mistletoe come from Norse mythology and Celtic Druids. According to Norse mythology the mistletoe berries brought the Norse god Baldur back to life.

You can find mistletoe outside on trees year-round as it is an evergreen plant. Usually in December it will become more noticeable because trees are bare after dropping their leaves. If you see a green bundle of leaves in the branches of tree around this time of year, chances are that it's mistletoe. In the plant world mistletoe is considered a parasitic plant. Mistletoe will send its root, called the haustorium, into the bark of a host tree. The mistletoe will take nutrients and water from the host tree.

Mistletoe is usually found in the southern United States, because it is susceptible to freezing temperatures, ranging from Virginia over to Texas and down to Florida. It can infect more than 105 different species of trees. Some trees often infected by mistletoe are maples, buckeyes, birch, hickory, oaks, and a whole bunch more.

Mistletoe can be shaded out by surrounding branches. Therefore, fast growing trees that can cover mistletoe from above will have success in preventing infection.

Mistletoe creates a large draw for water and nutrients on the tree. Mistletoe will pull these things to itself away from the roots of the tree. This process can lead to a lot of stress on the tree, especially in a drought. Mistletoe tissue will have 1.6 times more nitrogen, 2.3 times more potassium, and 2.5 times more phosphorus than the host tree tissue. During times of drought mistletoe water and nutrient uptake from the tree will increase while the rest of the tree is in decline. Research has shown that moderately infected trees can have a 66% mortality rate after a severe drought period. Mistletoe is able to pull water from the tree more effectively than the tree can pull the water up.

Mistletoe infections can be very common. Trees that are taller than surrounding trees and trees that are not densely packed in with other trees are most likely to be infected. Infections will be begin at the top of the tree and move downward and inward over time. Advanced symptoms on the tree of infection can be branch die-back, reduced tree growth, increased stress, and in massive infestations, tree death.

Early intervention is critical when dealing with mistletoe infection. If you simply remove the mistletoe shoot it will mostly likely grow back, so repeated removal would be necessary. Pruning tree branches that are infected is an effective method of removing mistletoe. Remove the branch at least 14 inches below the point of infection. Ethephon is as chemical application that is a plant growth regulator that can be used to control mistletoe. Whenever you apply any chemical, read the label before application.

Control of mistletoe on old and socially significant trees can be important. Having a mistletoe infection does not necessarily mean that death is imminent for a tree, but mistletoe can have a drastic impact on the tree's ability to thrive. If you have any questions about mistletoe contact your local Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Letters To The Editor

Snookered by the CCP

Dear Editor,

China's Xi Jinping got the recognition he wanted on his recent trip to San Francisco, in place of Joe Biden referring to him as a "dictator." I guess it takes one to know one. While at the summit, Xi received a standing ovation while attending a banquet hosted by some of America's top business executives.

Shortly thereafter, Xi negotiated an anti-fossil fuel agreement that will most surely weaken the U.S. We later learned that Biden agreed to decrease more American fossil fuel production in order to benefit his renewable energy policy. This agreement involves the U.S. doubling down on wind and solar power. And of course, the majority of the lithium batteries and windmill blades to support this policy are made in China.

In other words, Beijing just won a big manufacturing contract at the expense of American taxpayers, all while the Chinese Community Party (CCP) is approving new coal power projects at the equivalent of two plants every week. Again, the Biden administration has been snookered by the CCP.

Tim Groza

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	6 pm
	YH City Council... YH City Hall	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	5:30 pm
	City of Young Harris Planning Commission... Meeting Room in City Hall	5 pm
	TC Water Authority Board Meeting	6 pm

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  
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