

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Money Is Today's Manna

Money Is Today's Manna from Heaven
By Yonatan Hambourger and Tzali Reicher
The Children of Israel

had been through a lot since G-d led them out of Egypt in "shock and awe" fashion, as Jewish communities will read this week in the portion of the Torah that describes the exodus. After two centuries of slavery, Moses was leading the Israelites back to their indigenous homeland of Israel. On the way, they crossed the Red Sea in miraculous fashion and were now beginning their 40-year trek through the desert when a most practical question arose: what would they eat in the barren and desolate wasteland on their long way home?

The answer: the mysterious and miraculous manna from Heaven.

Moses explained to his people that every morning, this thin bread would fall from the skies above in specific portion sizes, and it would sustain them for the whole day, and that any leftovers would spoil. It would taste like anything they could conjure in their mind – all they had to do was think it, and so it would taste.

The renowned mystic and sage of 19th century Russia, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of the Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidic movement, was wont of saying that "we must live with the times," explaining that we must not only read the Torah portion of the week as an intellectual exercise, but seek to apply its lessons to our current day and personal realities.

So, what can we learn from the Biblical story of holy bread falling from the skies?

It's more relatable than you might think.

Our Country is a remarkable miracle. Born with the revolutionary spirit of our Founding Fathers, for 250 years our nation has stood as a beacon of hope, freedom, and possibility, leading it to become the most prosperous and admired nation in the history of the world.

There are those who see their own prosperity as the gift from G-d that it is. These people humbly recognize the fortunate position they're in from G-d having blessed their own hard work; and they pay this gift forward. They give charity, support their community institutions, and share with others less privileged, and never take their blessings for granted. Sure, they enjoy themselves and even live large, but they still value the important things and have their priorities in order.

But sometimes G-d blesses those people who don't appreciate their prosperity for the gift that it is. The Bible speaks of this arrogance in Isaiah 10, describing people who don't credit G-d and say, "With the strength of my hand I accomplished it, and with my wisdom, for I am clever." This sort of "successful" person only facilitates the culture of materialism, consumerism and "keeping up with the Joneses" that has challenged recent generations, particularly the youth.

The lesson from this week's Torah portion is that we must ensure that our relationship with money and material success is healthy and generous, and that we see it for the blessing it is.

It is no different than manna from Heaven, a blessing that will sustain us and turn into whatever we desire it to be, whether we use it to support our family, celebrate a happy occasion, or even go away on a special vacation to rejuvenate our mind and soul. But like manna which became spoiled when people hoarded it out of lack of trust in G-d's providence, money also becomes spoiled when it is abused, while corrupting those whom G-d entrusted this blessing with.

Believers know that G-d has determined their path and will help them in their efforts. In return He wants to see you do your part and open a channel by which to receive His blessing. For most people, that means working hard and applying yourself to earn this blessing, while being generous, charitable and humble to show yourself to be a worthy recipient.

And if there is anything I know about the people of this great State, it's that this lesson is something you already live with.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:
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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 commentators should be addressed to the Editor; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.*

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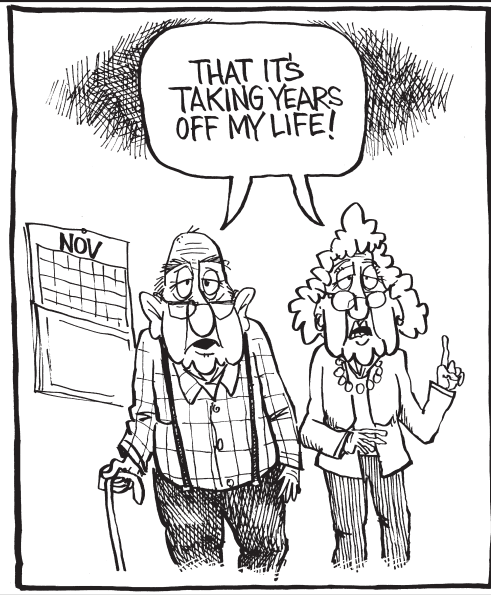
Towns County Community Calendar	
First Monday of each month: School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
Every Tuesday: Storytime for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
First Tuesday of each month: Hiaw. City Council... City Hall YH City Council... YH City Hall	6 pm 6:30 pm
Second Tuesday of each month: Conventions & Visitors Board... Civic Center	8:30 am
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... Meeting Room in City Hall TC Water Authority Board Meeting	5:30 pm 5 pm 6 pm

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Another Run Through the Jungle

*"Thought I heard a rumblin';
Callin' to my name;
Two hundred million guns
are loaded;
Satan cries, 'Take aim!'"* –
John Fogerty

"If you're gonna fight, fight like you are the third monkey on the ramp to Noah's ark and it's starting to rain." Tim Kennedy, MMA Fighter

Monkey fights are brutal, and it's not a pretty sight even when they are just expressing anger. When angry, monkeys have a tendency to pick up and throw anything within reach, including things they may have excreted.

Sometimes, humans argue like angry monkeys, latching onto any conceivable weakness or mistake and hurling it like a projectile. "You always..." "Every time you..." "Just like you did two Thanksgivings ago..." Grievances we claim to have forgiven can be wielded like weapons.

These weapons have little or nothing to do with the issue at hand. They are not wielded by reason or a desire for justice. The goal is not communication or understanding, but like the monkey, the intent is to wound and by wounding to silence what may be family, friend, or neighbor, but in the arena, indeed the jungle of emotion, is now our adversary.

Politics is very much like monkeys fighting. It has always been this way, but now the monkeys fight empowered by technology and goaded by a ruling class that controls the arena with sophisticated means of manipulation and deception. Everywhere we turn we find an opportunity to become and to remain angry or fearful.

This is why I don't write about politics anymore...and why I'm writing about it now. It's very simple, but very difficult to ignore it or set it aside and go about the business of chopping wood and carrying water in gratitude for being alive. Politics, fear, and anger, they seek you out. Even if you cut the power to every pixel in the house and switch off every radio, they will come up your driveway in your relative's car. They find you in the breakroom at work or in line at the grocery store. They can even lurk on the steps outside the church.

For that reason, we posit that at least an awareness of what may present itself can help us avoid the pitfalls. If we know there is a hook in the bait, we might just avoid getting caught, and right now the political process is chumming the water as fast as it can manage.

For several elections now we have been so busy taking the bait and hurling excrement in fear and anger that we find ourselves in the unenviable position of having to choose between two lame duck presidents, old men who might better serve the country by going home and enjoying their wealth and their grandchildren in peace.

No matter who gets elected, the losing side will escalate the continuing conflict. In the absence of a Congress perpetually snared on the treble hook of lobbyist, party, and voter, the coercive power of the Administrative State will continue to grow through the Executive Branch, its tool of choice.

The democrat, if re-elected, will continue his "whole of government" approach of leapfrogging Congress, and the unelected bureaucrats of the Department of Education will help enforce climate goals, for example, while the Department of Transportation will be concerned about pronouns.

The republican will use the same tools to undo as quickly as possible everything that the democrat did, and neither of them nor their future successors are likely to surrender any powers gained.

The challenges we face require leadership that seeks to de-escalate, to heal, to find common ground and common goals, and not one candidate with those intentions or abilities has emerged from the monkey fight to be noticed by the voting population enough to move the needle.

In my opinion, the republicans have an inkling of an awareness that the ruling class is intent on seeing the fight club continue, but they have forgotten something very important. Instead of offering better alternatives they have concentrated on attacking and judging both the personal choices and the persons of those who believe differently. Those conservatives who claim to be Christian should know that is not our job.

Democrats believe they have the moral high ground and are equally guilty of attacking person and personal choice. They seem unaware or unconcerned that they are currently aligned with the ruling class that manages the fight club, and this Administrative State considers them to be little more than human capital, a resource that can be replaced, first by immigration, and eventually by artificial intelligence. They might be shocked to discover how quickly the borders can be secured as soon as robots are capable of doing the millions of "dirty jobs" required to keep an economy viable.

In this election year, to paraphrase the song, "Two hundred million mouths are loaded; Satan cries 'take aim!'" We are a nation deceived. Perhaps you will join me in a resolution to try to meet anyone we may encounter who is consumed with partisan politics with as much empathy and compassion as we can muster, no matter what they might be flinging.

Now I've got wood to chop and water to carry, and the sun is shining out from behind the clouds.

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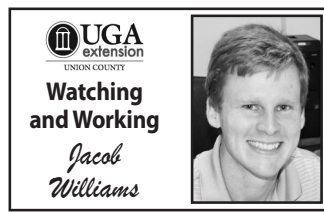
Outside The Box

By: Don Perry

worldoutsidethebox.com

Brood Cicadas

Cicadas are in the news again, because there are going to be two broods emerging this year. Some of you make recall the cicadas that we had emerge in 2021. Let's talk about cicadas and what you can expect from the emergence this year.



UGA Extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams

Cicadas are an insect that feeds off of plant roots for most of their life. Most of their life is spent underground in the nymph stage. We actually have cicadas every year. These are called annual cicadas. Annual cicadas will spend three to five years underground feeding. Brood cicadas only emerge every 13 or 17 years depending on the species of cicada that they are. Cicadas do not eat the leaves off of plants and cause the whole tree to become defoliated. Some people think that they do, but generally they are getting cicadas confused with plagues of locust. A cicada's mouth is really more like a needle. They stick it into the roots of the plants while they are underground and suck the juices out of the plant.

Cicadas will emerge from the ground once soil temperatures have reached 64 degrees Fahrenheit. For us that usually happens at the end of April or beginning of May. When a cicada emerges, it is in its adult form. At that point their main goal is to mate to ensure the survival of the next generation. After cicadas mate, the females will lay their eggs in the tips of branches of trees. Those eggs will hatch and the nymph cicadas will drop to the ground and work their way into the soil. They'll spend the 3 to 17 years of their life underground feeding on plant roots, before they emerge again. The sound that you hear when the adults are out is the males looking for a mate. They have a special organ that allows them to make their sound.

When the eggs hatch out of the tree branches it will cause damage to the tree. Typically, the damage is not too severe. However, I have seen damage on fruit trees that needed to be pruned out because the tips of some branches had been killed. Cicadas prefer hardwoods over evergreen trees. My observation from the 2021 emergence was that white oak was the preferred tree species.

2024 is a special year for cicadas because it is not very often that we have more than one brood emerging in a year. There are 12 broods of 17-year cicadas and three broods of 13-year cicadas. In 2021 we had the brood X emerge. All broods are designated by a Roman numeral. This year we will have the brood XIII and XIX emerging. The last time that both of these broods emerged in the same year was in 1803. It is likely that we will have cicadas from brood XIX. Brood XIII will emerge further north in Illinois, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Iowa. There will likely be some overlap between the two broods in Illinois and Iowa. It's not really clear if this emergence will be a similar size as the one from 2021.

In most cases you don't need to do anything to protect yourself from cicadas. The damage that they cause will most likely just be cosmetic. They do not harm people. They will only be around for a couple of weeks and then they will return to the ground.

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

Letters To The Editor

Do What Is Needed

Dear Editor,

It seems this month's Grand Jury has indicted 14 people for drug possession in our county. It will be interesting to see how many of them actually make it to court. My bet is that a majority of them will be plead out or have their charges reduced to jaywalking.

I must express my concern to the District Attorney that we are tired of this drug problem in our county, and a slap on the wrist of these offenders is not sitting well with the residents. We need to get rid of the problem. Our Sheriff's Office is doing an excellent job of getting them off the street, but if we don't prosecute them properly, the problem will only grow like Parrot Feather. Step up to the plate and do what is needed, as we are aware of the reduced sentences that have been meted out before.

Larry S. Chandler

Our Living Democracy

Dear Editor,

A new year, 2024, is here, offering a time for reflection as well as hopeful resolutions for the days ahead. The nightly news could dampen one's spirits with news of continuing wars in Ukraine and the Holy Lands, volcanic eruptions in Iceland, earthquakes in Turkey and Afghanistan, and unresolved immigration issues not only on our southern border but around the globe. Authoritarian governments are gaining strength and democracy is being threatened at home and abroad.

Rather than despair, this is the time for Americans to reflect on the freedoms we have enjoyed under a democracy created "of the people, by the people and for the people." In his book "Healing the Heart of Democracy," author Parker Palmer writes, "Like all things human, democracy begins in the human heart. We decide on the answers to the questions that either set us in a democratic direction or not." Terry Tempest Williams, author and environmental activist, so eloquently writes, "The human heart is the first home of democracy, it is where we embrace our questions: Can we be equitable? Can we be generous? Can we listen with our whole beings, not just our minds, and offer our attention rather than our opinion? And do we have enough resolve in our hearts to act courageously, relentlessly, without giving up, trusting our fellow citizens to join us in our determined pursuit of a living democracy?"

As we enter 2024, an election year, it is wise to reflect on Tempest-Williams' questions in pursuit of a living democracy. If there is ever a time when Americans need to come together, working towards the betterment of all, it is now. Is it possible to be equitable and generous towards others who may be different from us? Can we become good listeners, offering our attention rather than our opinions? Can we be relentless in our resolve to carefully study the positions of those who would run for public office, regardless of their political party, to determine who will best serve the people and support our democracy? The freedom we cherish is worth the effort needed to preserve it. Working together, from the heart, is the only way forward.

Jennifer Cordier

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