

The Delray Democrat

Rabbi Barry Silver, Esq.¹

Michael K. Cantwell

“His life was gentle; and the elements
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, this was a man!”

Barry was not merely what Shakespeare called a “man.” He was a mensch, a complete human being – a devoted father and husband, a fierce advocate for the vulnerable and downtrodden, and an inspirational religious leader and co-founder of “Cosmic Judaism.” The elements were mixed in him, although he was not gentle with those who abused their positions of trust or took advantage of the defenseless.

In this issue, dedicated to Barry, we – friends, colleagues, followers, and all of us who were touched and inspired by Barry – remember and celebrate this remarkable human being.

I first met Barry in the summer of 2018, shortly after Donald Trump’s Orwellian-titled American Healthcare Act cleared the House. I joined a large crowd rallying in front of the courthouse in downtown Delray Beach to protest a law that stripped millions of insurance and condemned thousands to premature, preventable deaths. Barry was one of the speakers.

After the rally a group of us were sitting around and talking, and I learned that Barry had conceived the rally only days earlier, along with a few others, including Geoff Kashdan and Mark Schneider. I found it remarkable that he was able to attract such a sizable crowd in such short order.

I’m honored that Barry was a follower of and frequent contributor to *The Delray Democrat* as well as a member of the Democratic Club of Delray Beach for many years. The last time I saw Barry was when he asked for “a minute” to speak at a Club meeting last October.

He wanted to speak about the preliminary vote by the Palm Beach County Commission to open up the Ag Reserve to developers. Two Democrats were in the 4-3 majority voting in favor, and a follow-up hearing was scheduled the next week.

Barry spoke for far longer than a minute, and he was on fire, not only passionately condemning the betrayal of a promise to keep developers out of the last undeveloped part of Palm Beach County but also talking about Cosmic Judaism. You could tell that physically he was not doing well, but he was inspired by a holy spirit.

The next day he circulated an email call-to-arms and Mindy Koch, the chair of the Democratic Executive Committee of Palm Beach County, issued a plea for people to attend the hearing and speak out against the land swap. You can hear Barry speak out at Commission meetings [here](#) and

¹ [The Delray Democrat](#), April 2024, page 1.

at 4:16:10 [here](#) (urging the commissioners to “listen to the horses say ‘nay’”). His voice and passion played a major role in the decision by the two Democrats on the Commission to change their votes.

Barry was also a tireless supporter of Ukraine following Putin’s invasion, and that leads to perhaps the sweetest collaboration with Barry, who had spearheaded a rally in Veterans Park in downtown Delray. Our Club had simultaneously scheduled a sign waving in support of Ukraine at the “Peace Corner” (Atlantic and Swinton Avenues), and Barry asked us to join his rally.

After waving signs we silently marched along Atlantic Avenue with our signs and were cheered and even given standing ovations from diners as we made our way to (and later back from) the Pavilion in Veterans’ Park. In over 60 years of marching and protesting, I have never received a reception like that. None of us had.

The memory of Barry is a blessing. It is also a call to us all that we can and should be doing more.