

Message from the Rabbi: Join us in protecting the Ag Reserve as we celebrate Sukkot

This week, Jews celebrate the agricultural festival of Sukkot, with its timeless and universal appreciation of nature and the miracle of food growing forth from the Earth. Sukkot gave rise to Thanksgiving, when our nation's founders reached into the Bible to create an American version of this ancient holiday for all to share. Bronze age humans created agricultural festivals to give thanks and offer propitiation to imaginary gods in hopes of a bountiful harvest and blessings.

While praying to false deities is useless, today, more than ever, we need to cherish our only home, our precious Mother Earth and give thanks for its bounty. If humans wish to survive, a spiritual transformation that returns us to the indigenous view that Earth does not belong to us; we belong to the Earth, is essential. The time has come for people of all religions and of no religion at all to unite in the sacred quest of protecting our planet from the worst form of sacrilege, the destruction of nature.

The Bible instructs us to give the land a rest, just as humans enjoyed a day of rest, and teaches that the crops of our field were not ours alone, but must be shared with the orphan, widow, immigrant, wild beasts, and others who could enter our land to take what they needed. Today's religious conservatives seem unaware that the Bible espouses socialism, environmentalism, and a level of love, compassion and sharing that is the antithesis of the heartless bullying that threatens to bring theocratic tyranny to America and hearkens back to the darkest chapters of human history. Sadly, some rabbis have joined their conservative bedfellows and secular forces of darkness by accepting bribes of a Jewish school and synagogue in exchange for their support of destroying farmland.

We will soon have the opportunity to practice the lessons of Sukkot in the real world by protecting nature and preserving agriculture. County Commissioners voted 5 to 2 in a preliminary vote to pave over paradise by replacing farmland in the Ag Reserve with 1000 homes which will eradicate our local supply of fruit and vegetables. GL Homes has proposed a "swap" for this land and a final vote will take place on October 24. Let's inform Commissioners Weiss, Baxter, Barnett, Bernard and Marino that if they vote again for the swap, the voters of our county will swap them for new commissioners.

You are invited to help send this message loud and clear at a free concert/rally on October 16 at 7:00 at the Movies of Delray, 7421 W. Atlantic Avenue. We will have petitions and a chance to try to help leave the world we give to our children better than we found it, or at least, as a sustainable place to live. We will listen to fantastic musicians, dynamic speakers, inspiring activists and meet new friends.

We will also voice opposition to book bans, abortion restrictions, gun violence and the growing threat of fascism in America. All are welcome to raise their voice and take a stand.

During this harvest festival of Sukkot, let us sow seeds of love for Mother Earth and all its inhabitants so that we may reap the harvest of a healthy planet and a brighter tomorrow.

Together united, we will never be divided. Juntos Unidos, Jamas Vencidos.

With love and shalom,

Rabbi Barry Silver