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Mothering the World Right Now!

By Kay Klinkenborg

Climate change, war in Ukraine, starvation in Yemen and Afghanistan to name a few places that is happening. And a world pandemic continues. The world is not the same. We will not be returning to "normal"...whatever that was. Pastor Paul Whitlock on April 3 gave a powerful sermon on FOMO...FLOP... FOMO. I was quite taken with his creativity (log on to www.thepalms.org and look up that sermon). Fun On Moving Forward (FOMO) was his challenge. Now what was I to do with that? Instantly my feminine energy kicked into gear. Mothering. Creation has been "mothering" since the beginning. God speaks of "we" in Genesis; not alone as Creator. Then, other Hebrew Scriptures speak of Sophia, Wisdom; which has been interpreted by highly respected theologians as the feminine side of God.

The Talmud also introduces the term **Shekhinah** to connote God's presence in the world. Though the term is grammatically feminine, in the Talmud, it is not explicitly gendered, though in some passages it refers to moments when God shares in human experiences of loneliness, loss, and exile.¹

In the case of Jewish thought, grammar at times meets theology inasmuch as impersonal Hebrew nouns are gendered, so that words like *hokhmah* (wisdom) and *shekhinah* (presence) over time lent themselves by virtue of their feminine.¹

In fact, the personal name of God, **Yahweh**, which is revealed to Moses in Exodus 3, is a remarkable combination of both female and male grammatical endings. The first part of God's name in Hebrew, "Yah," is feminine, and the last part, "weh," is masculine.²

I am pleased that I can attest to many men I know that use "mothering characteristics" in their relationships and interactions. I am not suggesting that this is a woman's task at all. In fact, I think history and biblical interpretations show us that feminine traits are revered. And our world right now needs that kind of love!

Remember the famous song: "What the World Needs Now is Love, Love, Love." One word most will resonant with to describe that is a verb: mothering.

Since the beginning of time..."mothering"...to nurture...to care for...to watch after has and does occur. It had to have occurred or evolution would not have sustained, extended, or be continuing. As the human species evolves, our archeological discoveries tell us that "mothering" occurred. It is nature's form of care taking, survival of the species.

One major thing I have learned more about these past three years... "getting out of God's way." My instinctual need to control, be in charge is being challenged. I am learning more about the spiritual discipline of surrender. Let God evolve. There is no surprise that we have a pandemic. There have always been pandemics, disasters, wars, a disappearance of life as we understand it. That there is a new virus is not news. Our ownership that this can happen to us is what is new. This is nature. This is the evolving of life in this known Universe.

I have found myself "shoulding;" I should do this; I should say that; I should not be having this fear and anxiety. A sampling of my should list. What about "mothering myself?" What about starting there in order to have the energy and compassion to extend to others? If I can have compassion for my

own journey/feelings during this extraordinary time in history, will not that enable me to understand/ hear and have compassion beyond myself. Then I am ready to extend "mothering."

Only in self-compassion and owning my own emotions in this particular journey will I then have the energy and compassionate response to others to be mothering the world. Mirabai Starr writes in her book Wild Mercy: Living the Fierce and Tender Wisdom of the Women Mystics, "...we need a mothering of the world together right now." We need that feminine energy that is male and female brought forth to face these challenges.

I want to explicitly point out the fact that women who have not born children... mother; men... mother, It is part of our innate design if we own that part of ourselves. A friend taught me a profound lesson about mothering:

One Mother's Day, I was quite depressed; estranged from our son and blaming myself for his adult choices. A friend sent me a text that day that knew of the circumstances. "Kay, you have been mothering people your entire adult life. As a nurse, friend, manager, counselor, consultant and the list goes on. So today, claim all the mothering you have and do. Let that bring comfort."

So I am challenging myself as I write to this audience, let my "mothering show forth;" let my love be visible, and make me an instrument that releases a song of "Love, Love, Love..."

Going on without denying any aspect of the human drama is what strength is all about. We are carved by life into instruments that will release our song, if we can hold each up to the carving.

MARK NEPO

¹"Feminine Images of God": [Yehudah Mirsky](#), [Jewish Women's Archive](#).

²[CBE \(cbeinternational.org\)](#) (Christians for Biblical Equality). "The Feminine Imagery of God in the Hebrew Bible." [Joan P. Schaupp](#) | October 30, 2000.

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