

Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have produced a man with the help of the LORD."

NRSV

The human knew Havva his wife,
she became pregnant and bore Kayin.
She said:
Kaniti/I-have-gotten
a man, as has YHVH!

Schocken Bible

While this is not technically a religious holiday, in a way it really is. So why not do it right, and celebrate the **first** Mother's Day ever, right? And, in the original ancient language of Genesis 4, it is actually a bit direct, but so special as well. Let's get the full story here. We see in the same wonderful Book of Genesis, 2 chapters earlier that the LORD God, walking around in a little garden, decides to scoop up some soil and make a human. The LORD God shapes this little figure, breathes in its mouth and nose, and then has it walk around. So, the first human, who is called "human" or *Adam* in Hebrew, Human #1 is in the world!

The LORD God decides that it is not good for the human to be alone. He puts him into a deep sleep and takes out a rib, which is somehow crafted into another human who is the same, made of the same building materials, but somehow not exactly

the same. Adam wakes up from his bypass surgery, and there she is! And *she* is actually called "**Havva**" which sort of means "lifey" as she is called the mother of all the living. So, we have Adam, and we have Havva, two humans, both made by the hands of the LORD God. And then we get our one verse for today.

Yes, the human *knows* Havva his wife and it says she conceives and has a baby. BTW, this is as sacred and special as it can be. The Hebrew Bible only uses this word "know" for the intimate relational connecting of human beings! The word is never used to talk about the mating of animals or other living things. Only humans are designed by God to **know**. So this is never just procreation or mating. So, a baby is born! What does she proclaim after realizing that this human child has come out of her own body? She says technically "Kaniti ish et Adonai," or "I got a Man together with the LORD." So, she then calls the child Kaiyin because it basically means "Got One!"

What an incredible thing this is. We must remember here that she is not at all saying that, *all by herself*, just like the Creator earlier, that by her power she has brought forth a human, just like God. Actually Genesis has her saying with humility and gratitude that now she **got one** together with God. Another BTW here: there is a famous teaching from our ancestors from ancient Israel about babies. Here is the quote: "**There are three copartners in the production of a human being: God, father, and mother.**" Please let me add to this: I don't what why we shouldn't teach this to our children. Men should

teach this to their boys, and women teach this to their girls. People of faith at least, we should teach this. I think it would be a great help to our society. And let me mention with sadness, as I was growing up in church every week, and youth group as well, I never heard one word about human sexuality or about what this whole human procreation thing meant! Not a word, ever. Folks, if we refuse to teach our children, the world will teach them something else, guaranteed.

34 years ago this Wednesday my wife and I experienced this with the birth of our son David. I don't think we ever felt that somehow by our own power or control we created this baby boy. We have always looked at him with this amazement, always quietly wondering "Where exactly did you come from?" We will always feel that way about both of our kids, and all the other children born in this world. Because of this I wish we could change language that we use all the time: People ask, "So, do you HAVE any kids?" How can we talk about *having* something that is truly beyond us, and truly beyond our human power? We don't *have* kids. ***We are blessed with children.*** I highly recommend that we use that language instead.

Mothers, it may not be by your own power alone that children come to life and exist; you certainly play a more important role than the biological father. Before we switch gears here I wanted to mention something truly amazing about the birth of human babies. When my 95-year old mother in law, who is in failing health, had Jill, she not only had Jill. While she carried Jill, she also carried the eggs the would become our Dvid

and Sarah as well, in Jill. I think it is accurate to say that a new baby girl born into the world carries not only her children but also the beginnings of her grandchildren as well. That is absolutely amazing. People should know this. People need to understand that God has created this human process of giving birth as something holy and priceless. Once again, to quote our ancestors in faith, coming out of ancient Israel, there is a saying: **“One who saves a life, saves the world.”** It is almost like they knew that more than one generation of family is inside a person, specifically in a woman.

Speaking of women, let me share a quick thought about my own mother, who watches our Zoom services. I remember my Mom, every morning, all through my childhood, reading her Bible and reading **“The Upper Room.”** When I was in 11th grade, after all those years of watching her, I finally decided to get one. For my 17th birthday she got me a Bible, one of those ones called “The Way.” Her example was important to me. I would bet that for some of you, maybe many of you, the example of your mother in these things mattered as well. I would bet that for at least some of you, if not many of you, that you are here in some ways because it was your mother who set that example for you. And now many mothers within this church continue to set those examples. Kids may not learn from what we say. But many will learn from what we do. They will watch the example that we set. And so many women have set important examples for the children, and maybe even for the men!

Let me close things this morning with a reminder about the work of Anna Jarvis who helped to start what we know as Mother's Day. What was her initial concern in this? She wanted people to honor their elderly and often neglected parents. This is after all Commandment #5 in the 10 Commandments. Sadly in our culture we have to wonder if the parents are actually being honored, or if the dollar is being honored? On this Sunday in May and another in June, maybe we could draw attention to the needs of the elderly, especially those connected to our lives. If we no longer have any in this world, maybe we could honor some others who could use the help and love. As Covid hopefully gets under control, I cannot wait to be able to get back into nursing homes and care facilities, as well as people's homes. In the spirit of Anna Jarvis, we should ask ourselves *what might our parents really need and cherish on these parent honoring days?* Do the men need more ties? Probably not. Do people need more cards? I don't know. I decided that today at 6 pm I am going to be on ZOOM with all my siblings with my Mom, all of us together for an hour to visit and tell stories, and just be together. I am really excited about this, and hopefully having it turn into a weekly event uniting people in Ohio and Georgia and Florida.

Happy Mother's Day. Happy Mother's Day to the first Mother. We would not be here without them, and without the power of God which has breathed life into us. Let's honor our mothers, but let's give some needed perspective to this crucial matter of human procreation and the gift of our children.

Again, if we choose to remain silent in this, the world will raise our children. I believe we all agree that we will do a much better job than the world around us. AMEN.