

IN THE BEGINNING: Justice and Mercy

by Mary Kay Buchmelter

In the beginning was the Law, and the Law was a Woman. Her name was Justice and she arose out of Chaos and brought order from Chaos. Without her the world could not have survived. She was the greatest, most powerful, most beautiful of all the goddesses and gods. Justice was strong and fair, wise and all knowing. She looked at the order that she had wrought and saw that it was good and that she was needed, and she was proud.

Justice traveled the world administering her decisions and bringing order wherever she appeared. She was accompanied on her travels by Mercy. Mercy was her constant companion and Justice made no decisions without her counsel. Justice and Mercy loved one another, not as a man and a woman love one another, but as two women love each other. They shared secrets, they saw into each others souls. One felt pain when the other was hurt. Each rejoiced for the other when there was happiness. They were the best of friends.

It came to be that there were more and more people who were in need of Justice. She could not be there for everyone who called upon her and that troubled her. Some gods might not have been as troubled as Justice, but she felt a responsibility to those people who needed her. Justice went to Mother Earth for counsel. Mother Earth had been Justice's mentor and had advised her periodically. Justice discussed her perplexing situation. She related her frustration at not being able to be in all of the places where she was needed. Mother Earth listened and offered her advice. "If you were able to write down your decisions", she said, "you wouldn't have to be in so many places at once. You must learn the skill of the written word. Go to the god of the written word. He is in the East. Convince him to teach you writing of the word and you will be able to continue your work. But beware, my

daughter, Yahwah* is a powerful and cunning god. He is jealous of all other gods and proclaims himself as the Greatest God of all. He forbids the mere mention of any other god in his presence." Justice replied that she intended to approach Yahwah as an equal. Undoubtedly he would know of her accomplishments and would respect her. And after all, she wanted this skill not to enhance her own power, but to aid and assist others. Surely he would understand this. Mother Earth blessed her, and Justice set out with confidence to seek the great god in the East. She left Mercy in charge for a year. The year of Mercy's reign became known as the Jubilee Year, for all the slaves were freed and debts forgiven.

Justice arrived at the mountain where Yahwah was enthroned. She approached him with dignity and acknowledged his greatness. She explained to him that she needed to know the secret of the written word in order to continue her work. She asked him to share his knowledge so that she might be able to use it to help the people who needed her. Yahwah saw that Justice was strong and wise and beautiful. He knew that she was loved and honored throughout the world and he wished to possess her. He listened to Justice plead her case but he had no intention of handing over his knowledge to this goddess. She would then be more powerful than he and that was intolerable. The world was to be His, not hers. The more Justice talked, the more lustful Yahwah became. He told her that he would not teach her the skill of writing, that it was not a skill that a woman could know. He pretended to be concerned about her problem, but all the time was contriving a plan to seduce her. Yahwah told her that he needed time to think about this dilemma and encouraged Justice to stay at his Temple until he could devise a suitable plan. Justice believed him and agreed to wait, hoping that he truly meant to help her. It soon became apparent, however, that Yahwah's plan was merely to impress Justice with his power so that she would willingly submit to him. When it became obvious to him that she was not in awe of him and would not give herself to him, he approached her with his plan. He said that since he could not teach this skill to her, she would have to yield to him

* The traditional spelling of Yahweh has been intentionally altered by the author.

and he would impart the knowledge of the written word by making love to her. Justice was repulsed by the idea of laying with this pompous, self-serving god, but she realized that she would never be able to acquire this knowledge any other way. Yahwah, like most conceited gods, believed that once this goddess had experienced his presence, she would belong to him forever, along with all her powers.

Justice trusted Yahwah, but was deceived. The result of this liason was not knowledge within Justice, but offspring. She gave birth to twins, Moses and Hammurabbi. They were possessed of their father's power of the written word and his deceitful and ambitious nature, but they were also possessed of their mother's energy and passion. They were able to multiply and increase their numbers immediately and in a short time there were many and they were all men and they were called scribes. Their fate was to write down the decisions of Justice and to distribute them throughout the world. Justice returned to Mercy and they were once more united in their mission to bring order throughout the world.

The god of the written word became offended by Justice's rejection. How dare she use him and then return to Mercy! He who had schemed to cheat had been cheated. Yahwah was jealous of the friendship Justice had with Mercy. He could not believe that two women could love each other.

Yahwah called a council of the scribes and preyed upon their pride and discontent. He pointed out to them that Justice's decisions were not consistent and that they were dependent on her for new decisions. He goaded them and taunted them, telling them that they were mere servants to the Goddesses--they, who had a power that the Goddesses could never possess. He pointed out that if Mercy were not involved in the decisions of Justice, the decisions would be consistent and the scribes would be the only ones with access to them. He urged them to get rid of Mercy and thus undercut the power of Justice. The scribes began to scheme against Mercy. Several scribes approached her when she was alone and told her that they brought a message from the underworld. They told her that she was greatly needed there--that there were many souls there who were in need of Mercy, but who feared Justice. They appealed to her most vulnerable quality, her need to help, and

convinced her that she must leave immediately--that Charon was ready to ferry her across the Styx. Meanwhile, the scribes, at the urging of Yahwah had bribed Charon to abandon Mercy in the underworld. Yahwah thought that without Mercy to influence her, Justice would come back to him.

When Justice found out that Mercy was gone and what had happened to her, she was horrified. She cried out in pain and rage at the deceit and trickery that had been perpetrated by Yahwah. In sadness and frustration she began to cry, and once she began she could not stop. Justice cried until her eyes became clouded over and she could not see at all. She became blind. When she realized what had happened, she bound her sightless eyes with a cloth. She began to wander the earth offering her empty scales in the hope that she would find someone to administer justice.

The scribes learned that they were in control of the law--but only the law they had written down. They couldn't make sense out of Justice's words so they began to dispense justice by creating legal fictions. The scribes tried to maintain control of the law. They didn't want anyone to know that Justice and Mercy were gone. The scribes made the Law into a religion with sacred rituals, sacred language (like *nolo contendere*, *quid pro quo*, and *replevin*), sacred books and sacred three-piece vestments--all designed to take the place of Justice. They called themselves lawyers and built temples, called Halls of Justice, and put statues of Justice on the outside with her words engraved over the entrances. No access is permitted to the temples except for the initiated. The qualities of the goddesses Mercy and Justice--their honesty and devotion to those in need--are no longer respected. Only those with the qualities of Yahwah--the need for power and adoration--are accepted for the three-year initiation into the sacred rituals of the law, the initiation into the special ritual that preserves the secret--JUSTICE NO LONGER REIGNS.