



# RADICAL REVERSALS

**FROM THE STRAITS, BEYOND THE SEA**

**A Second Nurture Resource for Rosh Hodesh Nisan**

## Psalms 118:5

מן המצר קראתי יה ענני במרחב יה  
From the narrow place I called out to Yah;  
From the expanse, Yah answers me

### Pesachim 117a

אמר רב חסדא אמר רבי יוחנן: "הללויה" ו"כסיה"  
— "ידידיה" — אחת הן. רב אמר: "כסיה" ו"מרחביה"  
אחת הן. רבה אמר: "מרחביה" בלבד.

Rav Hisda said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The word *halleluya* "Praise God" and the word *kesya* "Throne of God" (Exodus 17:16) and the name *Yedidya* "Friend of God" (II Samuel 12:25) are each regarded as a single word, not an amalgamation of two smaller words, i.e., *Hallelu-ya*. Rav said that *kesya* and *merḥavya* "The Expanse of God" (Psalms 118:5) are single words. Rabba said: Only *merḥavya* is a single word.



### Marbeh Lesaper on Pesach Haggadah

שלשה עשר מי יודע. ...יש י"ג ימים מר"ח ניסן עד ערב פסח ומפרש כל יום על מה הוא מורה וקבעו לימי הגאולה וקאמר אחד מי יודע כי בר"ח הוקם המשכן כדאמרינן והשרה הקב"ה שכינתו אף שאלקינו בשמים הוא בארץ

Who knows thirteen? There are thirteen days from R"H Nisan until the eve of Passover. These days of redemption each teach an attribute. On Rosh Hodesh the Tabernacle was dedicated and the Holy One dwelled among the people, "In heaven and on earth."

### Sotah 11b

וכשנגלה הקב"ה על הים הם הכירוהו תחלה שנאמר (שמות טו, ב) זה אלי ואנוהו

And when the Holy Blessed One revealed Himself at the Red Sea, these children recognized Them first, as it is stated: "This is my God, Whom I will beautify."  
(Exodus 15:2)



## Questions and Discussion



### • Psalms 118:5: Straits

- Are human beings, by definition, always in the "narrow place?"
  - How have you experienced this as so and/or not so?
- Is God, by definition (can we say God is defined?), "expanse"? Infinite?
  - How have you experienced this as so and/or not so?
- Have you called out to God from "the narrow place"?
  - Was that experience from a place of:
    - Desperation? Faith? Despair? Hope?
    - Was there a sense of transformation from the calling out?
    - What must one need in order to even call out in the first place?

### • Pesachim 117a: Infinite Expanse

- Why might these two words take on a different, or perhaps higher, significance as one word?
- What is different about *מרחב* God Expanse from *מרחביה* GodExpanse?
- Why might GodExpanse (vs the other examples) be unique?

### • Sotah 11b: Transcending

- The Israelites left Mitzrayim, "narrowness" and are now in a very narrow place—a path between two massive sea walls. Yet, the youngest among them identify—and even beautify!—*מרחביה* *meirchavyah*, "Godexpanse"
  - Have you ever experienced God's presence in such a stark and/or unexpected way?
  - The children not only called out their awareness of God, but also their own power to transform God.
    - Might this be a foreshadowing of the *brit* to come—being God's partners?
      - See Exodus Rabbah 23:8—Hebrew women who gave birth in Egypt demanded God's partnership
  - Describe ways you have felt part of a transformation with God.

### • Marbeh Lesaper on Pesach Haggadah: Structure vs Stricture

- We started in a narrow place, encountered *מרחביה* *meirchavyah*, "Godexpanse" and engaged in relationship. A symbol of that relationship was the Tabernacle. Marbeh Lesaper teaches that each of the thirteen days from RH Nisan to *Pesach* holds an attribute (paralleling the 13 Attributes, Ex 34:6-7). Rosh Hodesh, Day One, is the date on which the Tabernacle was dedicated.
  - We moved from narrow straits to wide expanse and, now, to a Tabernacle where the Holy One dwelled among the people "In heaven and on earth".
    - What is different about the structure of a Tabernacle vs the structure of "a narrow place"?
      - Does the tabernacle, in its limited physicality, a step backward toward a narrow strait?
      - If it's a step forward, how is that the case?
      - Have you experienced confines and contour as freedom?

### • Kids in Foster Care

- How might we see the constellation of Narrow Straits, *Meirchav*, *Meirchav-Yah* and The Tabernacle in light of kids outside of permanent, loving families?
- How might a loving foster or adoptive family glean wisdom from these texts in bringing a child forth?

**Second Nurture creates a community within our community— and expands our vision of what family and belonging truly mean.**

**- Cohort Member**



**Our community can be a place in which fostering and adoption are a norm. Whether you want to foster, adopt, or be part of our community support system, there is a role for you.**

- Our community can be a place in which fostering and adoption are a norm. Whether you want to foster, adopt, or be part of our community support system, there is a role for you
- Families are supported before, during, and after the licensing and adoption processes
- Foster and adopted children have peers in our community with similar backgrounds
- The values of foster and adoption are integrated into our community culture
- Our whole community wraps around the families in support as they become foster and adoptive parents
- We will partner with the best and most well-aligned local social service partners
- We are all enriched—both by our new, young members and our growing capacity as a synagogue to support our foster and adoptive families



**Second Nurture**  
Every Child Deserves a Family and a Community