

# חמודי שי על התורה והמועדים

# Chamudei Shai on the Torah and Holidays

by Dr. Joseph Geliebter

## Topics Covered

### The Holiday of Pesach

#### I

- **A deeper understanding of the mitzvah to relate the story of the Exodus from Egypt/Sippur Yetzias Mitzraym**
- **Comparing the mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzraym to the remembrance of Shabbos**
- **Staying awake all night because miracles were performed for us by day and by night**
- **The miracles that Klal Yisrael saw in Egypt were on a level akin to the creation of the world**
- **Klal Yisrael saw miracles that the Avos did not see in their own lifetimes**
- **The foundation of Sippur Yetzias Mitzraym is faith in Hashem**

#### II

## The Holiday of Pesach & The Seventh Day of Pesach

For any questions, comments, or to join the mailing list, contact the author at [chamudeishai@gmail.com](mailto:chamudeishai@gmail.com)

## The Holiday of Pesach

#### I

The Rambam wrote (Sefer HaMitzvos, Positive Commandment 157), "We were commanded to recount the Exodus from Egypt on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan, at the beginning of the night." This refers to the mitzvos to tell how Hashem took vengeance on our behalf, and our obligation to praise Hashem and our duty to recount the Exodus from Egypt. And the more we recount, "the more praiseworthy it is."

### **The mitzvah to recount all the miracles He performed for us**

"And you shall tell your son,' one might have thought this begins from Rosh Chodesh, therefore, the Torah says, 'On that day.' If 'on that day,' perhaps during daylight? Therefore, the pasuk says, 'Because of this.' 'Because of this,' means only at a time when matzah and maror are placed before you." That is, from the beginning of the night, you are obligated to tell the story.

The Rambam further explains that the importance lies in teaching the children. Even if one has no children, he must ask himself. "Even if we are all wise, we are all understanding, we all know the entire Torah, מצוה עלינו

**we recount His miracles and wonders**

‣ **Like the blessing on Chanukah: "In those days, at this time"**

‣ **The Levush explained that we recount His miracles that He performed for our ancestors**

‣ **The miracle of Klal Yisrael's existence today parallels and exceeds the miracle of the Exodus from Egypt**

- **The order of the mitzvos and the Haggadah is to pass down from father to son**
- **The central theme of the Seder is praise and song; therefore, it concludes with Songs of Songs - שיר השירים**

### III

- **The reason for opening the door at "Pour out Your wrath" שפוך חמתך**
- **The future redemption will occur with open revelation**
- **A reason for the Cup of Eliyahu, who will come to herald the redemption**
- **The Seder night is a protection for the entire year**
- **The reason for saving a piece of the afikoman as protection for the entire year**



## The Seventh Day of Pesach

### I

- **The journey to the sea, a test of faith of Klal Yisrael**

it is a commandment upon us to recount the Exodus from Egypt." מצרים ביציאת מצרים

And in the Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz U'Matzah* 7:1), he adds that it is a commandment to recount the miracles and wonders: "It is a positive Torah commandment to recount the miracles and wonders that were performed for our ancestors in Egypt on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan, as it is said, 'Remember this day when you went out of Egypt,' just as it is said, 'Remember the Shabbos day...!' And anyone who elaborates on the events that occurred and transpired, the more praiseworthy it is."

### **Everything is included within the principle of faith in Hashem**

When we delve into the matter, according to our understanding in the way of *d'rash* (homiletical interpretation), one may say that the foundation of the entire Seder night is faith in Hashem. In the *Aseres Ha Dibros / Ten Commandments*, "I am Hashem" is the utterance focused upon faith that we heard directly from Hakadosh Baruch Hu Himself. He waited to tell us this before the creation of the world "I am Hashem

your G-d who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery."

It is possible that this is why He brought us down to Egypt so that He could take us out of Egypt and through that we would believe in Hashem and see the hand of Hashem, signs and wonders, miracles and marvels. All these miracles that He performed for us are so that we might recognize His kindness every day, but especially on the Seder night. It is His will that we show gratitude and acknowledge that He saved us and performed all these miracles, by recounting them to our children.

In my humble opinion, the wiser and more discerning a person is, the greater his obligation to investigate these miracles deeply and reach deeper levels of faith in Hashem. According to the holy Zohar, the matzah alludes to the commandment of faith.

### **The miraculous acts of the Exodus as a parallel to Creation**

וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משובח "And anyone who increases recounting the Exodus from Egypt, the more praiseworthy it is." We stay awake all night because the miracles and wonders occurred at night as well.

**in their leader Moshe**

- ▶ **The Egyptians sank in the mud, measure for measure, for having tortured *Bnei Yisrael* in Egypt**
- ▶ **While Klal Yisrael walked on dry land, the Egyptians sank in mud**
- ▶ **The reason we repeat the pasuk "Hashem yimloch."**
- ▶ **The reason we provide the Aramaic translation of the pasuk "Hashem yimloch."**
- ▶ **To explain that it does not refer to the future but eternal present**
- ▶ **Another reason for this in the words of Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (the Arizal)**

**II**

- ▶ **Each day of Pesach, a person ascends higher in his faith in Hashem**
- ▶ **This is the reason the Seventh day is not a festival in its own right but a continuation**
- ▶ **Two things as difficult as Krias Yam Suf, livelihood and matchmaking**
- ▶ **Why matchmaking is compared to Krias Yam Suf**
- ▶ **Both in the Yetzias Mitzrayim and shidduchim depend on Emunah**
- ▶ **Why Chazal learned from Nachshon that one examines the brothers of**

Nature itself was altered on our behalf. Therefore, we must show gratitude to Hashem, blessed be He, for His love for us. This was the purpose of our being in Egypt, and the Holy One fulfilled His promise to the Avos, as stated in Parashas Vayeira. He kept His promise and took us out.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu showed Moshe miracles and wonders that Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov did not see, akin to the acts of creation. The laws of nature would change for the sake of all Klal Yisrael. This demonstrated their importance. The whole world saw My mighty hand, so that you will believe in Me and show gratitude.

In Krias Shema, we say, "I am Hashem your G-d who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your G-d; I am Hashem your G-d. True." This is similar to, "I am Hashem your G-d who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery."

On the Seder night, there is a special mitzvah to recount the miracles and wonders.

**II**

**The miracle of our present survival is greater than the Exodus of Egypt**

In the Haggadah, we say, "And this is what has stood for our ancestors and for us, for not only one has stood against us to destroy us, but in every generation they stand against us to destroy us, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu, saves us from their hand. " And it must be investigated: Who is "this" that has stood? In the simple sense, it refers to what the author of the Haggadah said: "Blessed is He who keeps His promise to Klal Yisrael, blessed is He." "This" refers to the promise that Hashem keeps for all of Klal Yisrael, which stands for us and our ancestors forever.

This raises a question. Why is it necessary to mention the miracles of other generations besides the recounting of the miracles of the Exodus? According to the Rambam, the essence of the mitzvah is to tell of the miracles and wonders that occurred in Egypt. The Haggadah deals with recounting the Exodus from Egypt as its central narrative, so why do we talk about our salvation in

**a potential bride**

- ▶ **Livelihood and matchmaking are matters requiring many acts of connection**
- ▶ **Man was cursed with "thorns and thistles" and "by the sweat of your brow"**
- ▶ **In marriage, we find "He settles the solitary in a home"**
- ▶ **Through faith in Hashem, these two things become natural**

each generation at this early point in the seder?

**A commandment to acknowledge the good He does for us in every generation**

In my humble opinion, there is an additional special commandment here, which is the recognition of the good, to recount the miracles and wonders that occurred in other times as well. And anyone who increases recounting the miracles and wonders, the more praiseworthy it is. Not only the miracles that happened in Egypt, but the miracles and wonders that Hashem performed for us in all generations, up to our own days.

As we say on Chanukah, "Who performed miracles for our ancestors in those days, at this time," referring to the time of lighting the menorah in the Beis HaMikdash. And I had the merit to align this with the words of the *Levush*, who explained that the meaning of "in those days" is "Who performed miracles for our ancestors in those days"—during Chanukah—as well as "at this time." We must recognize the miracles that Hashem performs for us today, every single day, as

we say in the *Shemoneh Esrei*, "ועל ניסוך שבכל יום עמנו" - "For Your miracles that are with us every day." This applies to us as individuals and to all of Klal Yisrael collectively.

And as Rabbi Yaakov Emden wrote in his Siddur, the very miracle of the existence of Klal Yisrael today is greater than the miracle of the Exodus from Egypt, the splitting of the Yam Suf, and the other miracles and Ten Plagues. He wrote this over two hundred and fifty years ago, and in my humble opinion, this is what we mean when we say "And this that has stood for our ancestors and for us" at the beginning of the Haggadah—to give praise and thanks to Hashem, blessed be He, for the very fact of our existence here. For if Hashem had not saved us in every generation, we would not be able to conduct the Seder to remember the Exodus from Egypt.

**The miracle of our existence is greater than the Exodus from Egypt**

And this is what we say in the Haggadah: "In every generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he himself

came out of Egypt." It is a commandment to see ourselves as if we experienced the miracles, and we, as children of parents who survived the Holocaust, can identify with this statement. All of Klal Yisrael can identify with the fact that we are here, that we survived after all the hardships, and that Jewish identity has been passed down from generation to generation through the Seder night.

והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא  
 לאמר - "And you shall tell your son on that day, saying." Every father, every parent passes it on to their children. This imagery we have that our parents passed it to us, and their parents passed it to them has been transmitted in this way through all the generations. Therefore, when we close our eyes, we can imagine as if we ourselves came out of Egypt.

When we recite the blessing לפיכך אנהנו חייבים  
 וכו' "Therefore, we are obligated to thank, praise, glorify, exalt, honor, bless, extol, and acclaim Him who performed all these miracles for our ancestors and for us. He brought us from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from mourning to a festival, from

darkness to great light, and from bondage to redemption. And we will sing before Him on a new level of song: Hallelukah." We must bring forth within ourselves song and praise, acclaim and melody, to thank You and to praise You. This is the essence of the Seder. This is the Hallel. We eat our seder meal in the middle of the Hallel. We can say, the entire Seder is one long Hallel, and therefore the Seder concludes with the Shir HaShirim/Song of Songs. This is the essence of the Seder, song and praise, acclaim and melody to Hashem, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, for Your miracles and wonders.



### III

#### **Opening the door to show that the redemption will come in open revelation**

The *Sefas Emes* writes (5652),

We open the door at "שפוך חמתך" - 'Pour out Your wrath' to allude that in the future, the redemption will be in open revelation. For in Egypt, it was said, 'You shall not go out... from the entrance of your house ... until morning, "but in the future redemption, we will

be permitted to behold the downfall of the wicked publicly."

This is explained further in light of the words of the Rema (480:1), "There are those who say that one should recite *Shefoch Chamascha* before *Lo Lanu*, and open the door to remember that it is a night of protection, *leil shimurim*, and through the merit of his faith, Mashiach will come and pour out His wrath on the idolaters." Through this merit the Mashiach will come.

The custom is to fill the Cup of Eliyahu before saying "*Shefoch Chamascha al ha'goyim*." This hints that Eliyahu comes to bring the Mashiach; Eliyahu is the beginning of redemption, and this is a night of protection.

The *Sefas Emes* further writes (*ibid.*, nearby), "ליל שימורים הוא וגו' - "A night of guarding... for their generations. From the night of Pesach, their remains protection for all the days of the year. Just as then it was a guarded night for the generations, so too every year, there remains from this night a protection for all the days of the year. And this is hinted at by the afikomen, to leave a portion

of the matzah for the whole year." As it is also stated in the pasuk in *Devarim*: "So that you remember the day you left the land of Egypt all the days of your life."

### **Protection for the entire year through the Seder night**

In our communities, it is customary for some to take a portion of the afikomen from the second Seder night (first night in Israel) and keep it for the following year. I always thought this was a segulah (auspicious practice) that we should merit to reach the next year, but according to the *Sefas Emes*, it may be that the basis of this custom is the protection that extends throughout the year.

Although the "night of protection" is the first night of the Seder, nevertheless, since there is a mitzvah to remember Yetzias Mitzrayim every day, if we declare these words with deep gratitude for the miracles and wonders, we can earn and prolong that protection through our prayers even without the segula of the matzah.



## **The Seventh Day of Pesach**

### **I**

#### **The journey to the Yam Suf: A test of faith in Moshe Rabbeinu**

In our holy Torah (*Shemos* 14:2):

"Speak to the Bnei Yisrael and let them turn back and encamp before Pi-Hachiros, between Migdol and the sea, before Baal-Tzephon; you shall encamp opposite it, by the sea."

The *Sefas Emes* notes that since Klal Yisrael traveled by following the cloud, what was the reason that Hashem commanded Moshe to turn back? After all, they were following the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, so what need was there for Moshe to command them to reverse direction (toward the direction of the Egyptian army)?

The *Sefas Emes* answers that this was a test of faith for Klal Yisrael. Hashem did not show them the way through the cloud; rather, He wanted to see whether the Jewish

people would follow their leader, Moshe Rabbeinu.

One may add that this resembles following the commander of an army, for indeed, Moshe was the commander of Klal Yisrael. It was necessary to test whether they would accept his leadership or challenge it, as he was a new prophet to them. This matter became a cornerstone, not only for that generation, the generation of the wilderness, but for all future generations who would continue to believe that משה אמת ותורתו אמת - "Moshe is true and his Torah is true." Through this trial, they reached the point of ויאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו - "And they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant."

#### **Measure for measure, even before the Egyptians drowned in the Yam Suf**

One of Pharaoh's decrees was to withhold straw, while nevertheless requiring the same quota of bricks to be produced, the bricks hardened like stones and used for building. Now, clay without straw remains mere mud. Klal Yisrael, in addition to their backbreaking labor, now had to gather straw themselves and knead the

clay with the straw into bricks without reducing their quota at all.

In my humble opinion, this is another example how Hakadosh Baruch Hu repaid the Egyptians measure for measure at the splitting of the Yam Suf. The Egyptians were repaid for their cruelty when they sank deep into the mud, while Klal Yisrael walked ביבשה "on dry land in the midst of the sea" upon a hard, paved path.

It also occurred to me that this is part of the special praise in Az Yashir: "For the horse of Pharaoh with his chariots and horsemen went into the sea, and the Bnei Yisroel walked on dry land in the midst of the sea." As Ibn Ezra explains, this was a miracle within a miracle, that at the very same time Klal Yisrael walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, the Egyptians were mired in the mud.

### **Why do we repeat the pasuk ה' ימלוך לעולם ועד**

With this, we can understand what the Rishonim questioned regarding the reason that the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah* established the Az Yashir (Song of the Sea) in our daily prayers, within

the Pesukei Dezimra (*pesukim of Praise*), even though the essence of that section is "Ashrei" and "Hallelukah," concluding with "כל הנשמה תהלל יה הללויה" - "Every soul shall praise Hashem, Hallelukah" twice, and we added ה' ברוך ה' "Blessed be Hashem forever, Amen and Amen," since of these are Pesukei Dezimra, verses of praise.

However, what we add "וכרות עמו הברית" - "And He made a covenant with him," which ends with בתוך הים ביבשה - "In the midst of the sea on dry land," and continues with אז ישיר משה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - "Then Moshe and the Bnei Yisroel sang," forming the new conclusion of the Pesukei Dezimra, requires explanation.

The commentators explain that we repeat the pasuk ה' ימלוך לעולם ועד "Hashem will reign forever and ever," just as we repeat כל הנשמה תהלל יה הללויה - "Every soul shall praise Hashem, Hallelukah," to mark the end of the Pesukei Dezimra, the section of Hallelukah psalms. We then repeat ה' ימלוך לעולם ועד - "Hashem will reign forever and ever" as the new conclusion of the extended Pesukei Dezimra.

Yet if so, why do we do we continue again with the verse, כי בא סוס פרעה ברכבו, "For the horse of Pharaoh went in" after we repeat ה' ימלוך?

### **Why the Targum is recited for "Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed"**

On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we say a "ה' מלך ה' מלך ה' ימלוך, Piyut" - "Hashem reigns, Hashem has reigned, Hashem will reign forever and ever." In the context of that prayer, "Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed" is in the future tense. Is this also the meaning in the original context of the pasuk in the Az Yashir? In Az Yashir, after "Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed" we add the Targum translation: ה' מלכותיה קאים לעלם ולעלמיא - "Hashem's kingdom stands forever and for all eternity" (in Aramaic).

It should be noted that we do not generally find Aramaic in prayer, especially in individual prayer. Much has been written about whether it is permissible to pray in Aramaic. As Rebbi Yochanan is quoted in the Talmud (Shabbos 12b) that when praying for one's needs it's best not to pray in Aramaic since the angels do not understand Aramaic. When praying

individually, we need the help of the angels to elevate our prayers to heaven. There is a dispute about whether it is permitted to pray in Aramaic during individual prayer without a minyan. This requires further clarification regarding the Targum of "Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed."

### **The meaning of "le'olam va'ed" in the Az Yashir**

It may be explained in two ways: First, so that a person does not confuse "Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed" in the context of "Az yashir Moshe" with "Hashem melech, Hashem malach, Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed" in its future-oriented meaning. Therefore, we say Targum to clarify that "Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed" means something akin to יהא שמיא רבא מברך לעלם ולעלמיא - Amen, may His great Name be blessed forever and for all eternity." "Hashem's yimloch le'olam va'ed" means not that Hashem will reign in the future; His reign is eternal, always was, is, and will be, at all times.

### **This repetition explained as shnayim mikra ve'echad targum**

Accordingly, we can introduce innovation: The purpose of repeating "Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed" is not because it is the end of Pesukei Dezimra, but rather they inserted the Targum here to explain to us the meaning of "Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed," that it does not refer to the future but to eternity. We repeat this verse and then supply the Targum in the way we do *shnayim mikra ve'echad targum* "two pesukim and one translation" in our weekly study of the Torah portion.

### **The opinion of Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (the Arizal)**

I shared this idea with a great Torah scholar, and I was overjoyed when he told me that I had aligned with the opinion of the Arizal. The reason for the Targum "Hashem's kingdom stands forever and for all eternity" is not as part of the prayer itself, but to show us the correct intention. When we say "Hashem yimloch le'olam va'ed" in prayer, in the Az Yashir, we now know its meaning and say the pasuk twice as "two pesukim and one translation." Therefore, even when praying individually, it is

permissible to say the Targum.



## **II**

### **Seventh Day of Pesach: The Highest Level of Faith**

In *Chamudei Shai* on Pesach, we explained that the entire Seder night, at its core, is based on **faith** in Hashem: "I am Hashem your G-d who brought you out of the land of Egypt."

And now, as we stand on the seventh day of Pesach and Shiras HaYam, this day serves as a great sign and symbol of faith in Hashem. For our sages, of blessed memory, said: "A maidservant at the sea saw what Yechezkel ben Buzi the kohen did not see." Yechezkel Hanavi, who beheld lofty and sublime visions and reached high levels of prophecy, did not see what a maidservant saw at the Yam Suf. The Hand of Hashem was so openly revealed that everyone saw this; all achieved such a high level of faith in Hashem that even a maidservant possessed complete faith.

Pesach is the only festival about which our sages said that its final day is not a holiday in its own

right, but a continuation of the first day, and therefore not a distinct holiday requiring the *Shehecheyanu* blessing. We may suggest that based on the above, from the beginning of Pesach, which is a festival of faith, we ascend higher and higher in the levels of faith until we reach the seventh day of Pesach. The seventh day of Pesach thereby represents the highest level of faith, as a direct progression of elevation from the first day of Pesach.

To help us achieve this special connection to the miracles of splitting the Yam Suf, we reflect on the miracles and wonders through the song, *Az Yashir*, the Shiras Hayam. Through kavanah, each time we read these words, we gain new understanding about what happened to our ancestors and to us as a people. Just as it was said at the Seder regarding the exodus from Egypt, "בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים" "In every generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he came out of Egypt," so too with the splitting of the Yam Suf, we must see ourselves as if we saw the splitting of the Yam Suf, and experienced what the

maidservant at the sea saw, what all of Klal Yisrael experienced, all the miracles and wonders. "And the Bnei Yisroel walked on dry land in the midst of the sea."

**The reason  
matchmaking and  
livelihood were  
compared to the  
splitting of the Yam Suf**

We find in the words of our sages that two things were compared to the splitting of the Yam Suf: "A person's matchmaking is as difficult as the splitting of the Yam Suf" (Sotah 2a), and "A person's livelihood is as difficult as the splitting of the Yam Suf" (Pesachim 119a). The reason for comparing these two specific things requires explanation.

This can be clarified when we consider that at the splitting of the Yam Suf, the Jewish people sacrificed greatly of themselves. They were understandably afraid to turn around and proceed back towards the enemy, yet through their **faith** in their leader Moshe, without seeing any pillar of cloud or pillar of fire, even though it seemed he was leading them into danger, he said he was directed by Hashem and they moved forward.

**When Nachshon  
jumped first into the  
Sea, he earned the  
merit that in  
matchmaking we  
learned from him the  
law of examining the  
bride's brothers**

And near the sea, Nachshon ben Aminadav jumped into the sea, with the water reaching up to his nose, taking leadership in this act. The Torah specifies that Aharon married Elisheva, "the sister of Nachshon ben Aminadav." Chazal derive from this that in *shidduchim* or matchmaking, one should examine the bride's lineage through her brothers. Since "a person's matchmaking is as difficult as the splitting of the Yam Suf," and Nachshon was the first to demonstrate the strength of emunah in Hashem at the splitting of the Yam Suf, he merited that in matchmaking, which is likened to the splitting of the Yam Suf, we see specifically from him the principle, that one looks at the brothers when considering a match.

Still, this does not fully explain why *shidduchim* is compared to the splitting of the Yam Suf. However, in the case of Nachshon ben Aminadav, his good qualities and unwavering faith, helped

merit that his sister married Aharon HaKohen.

For in matchmaking, the connection is between two separate souls, as Scripture says, מושיב יחידים ביהמה, "He settles the solitary in a home." When they are husband and wife, the Shechinah dwells between them. Establishing *shalom bayis*, peace in the home between two individuals who were strangers requires the presence of the Shechinah between them. This is akin to bringing the Shechinah into the Mishkan. It is not a simple matter. Just as the splitting of the Sea required much faith and fervent prayers for the miracle to occur, so too, for the Shechinah to bring two strangers together, to marry them, and to establish harmony in the home that merits to bring the Shechinah into their house, requires much tefillah and emunah.

### The connection between livelihood and the Splitting of the Sea

Likewise, it may further be explained in light of another statement of Chazal: "A person's livelihood is as difficult as the splitting of the Sea." After the sin of Adam HaRishon, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, "And thorns and thistles it shall sprout for you, and you shall eat the grass of the field. By the sweat of your brow, you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for from it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return." Livelihood will come through the sweat of your brow; nothing will grow effortlessly anymore. Man must toil, plow the land, water it, and labor for his sustenance. It would no longer grow on its own, ready for consumption.

We all know the importance of the verse in tefilla את ירך ומשביע לכל חי תפילה "You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing." This pasuk must be said with kavanah, deep intention, for we are asking Hashem to provide us with livelihood. It does not come naturally but through much prayer. We are obligated to put in our *hishtadlus*, our effort, through "the sweat of your brow," yet at the same time to be founded on our emunah.

"A person's livelihood is as difficult as the splitting of the Sea." Just as with the splitting of the Sea we merited salvation through faith and prayer, so too in matters of livelihood. Every day, we must return again, with renewed intention and declare: "You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing."



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