

Drasha Shvi'i shel Pesach 15.04.2020

Today we celebrated Shvi'i Shel Pesach, Tonight we are celebrating Achron Shel Pesach, a holiday that only we in the diaspora have. this is the last day of Pesach.

Shvi'i Shel Pesach is the only holiday that although it's a Biblical holiday, we don't say the Bracha of Shehecheyanu because it's considered part of Pesach.

but what are we actually celebrating tonight? if the first day of Pesach was to celebrate going out of Egypt, after all the 10 plagues Pharaoh let the Israelites leave to go serve God three days away in the desert, after 3 days Pharaoh was told that they do not intend to come back so he went out with his army to get them back by force.

on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of Nissan, Pharaoh and his army reached the Israelites and "closed on them from all 3 sides with only the side of the red sea was free in front of them. We all know how the story ended, Moshe held his staff high up, the sea split in two, the Israelites went through and when the Egyptian army wanted to go through the sea as well, the water closed on them and they all drowned.

so this is what we celebrate today, the miracle of the splitting of the sea.

there are many communities that have the tradition to stay up all night and say praise or learn Torah to say thanks for this miracle, it is also the custom to sing the Az Yashir tonight which was then said after going through the sea.

Another tradition from the holy Ba'al Shem tov is to have an extra meal tomorrow evening because the Ba'al shem tov said that from tomorrow night the light of the Mashiach starts to shine. this meal is traditionally called "Seudat Ba'al Shem Tov" or in some communities "Seudat Mashiach".

why is this holiday so important? we already celebrated being let out of exile in the beginning of Pessach, but leaving Egypt itself is not enough, of course we have to let go of our old habits and we have to go far away from them, but there is another step, crossing over the sea into a new situation, the Midrash tells us: אין המצוה נקראת אלא על שם גומרה, a good deed is only called on the name of the person who finished it, we have to start doing something good as well. this is the first time that the Israelites recognized God, they said thanks, although they already saw all the miracles in Egypt, although they were freed from slavery, this is the first time they acknowledge it and say thanks. and from this point on starts the journey to receive the Torah.

this is important lesson we need to learn, starting something good is nice, going in the right direction is important, but the real praise is said once we pull through, once we finish what we started. and that's why the word Az in the beginning of Az Yashir is in future tense, to say that this is the song we will sing in the future in the days of Mashiach but also that every step we take in life has a future, and the "end game", the future of everything we do, that will be the reason for us to sing.

after Alenu we will sing together the Az Yashir.