Pesach has three divisions of time. The beginning of Pesach is highlighted by the story of our Exodus from Egypt – the Pesach Seder. In its unique fashion, it outlines the path of the Jewish people throughout the ages. The Seder symbolizes the tenacity of Jewish faith – faith in our G-d and in our future, in our history and in our ancestors.

In effect, the Seder reinforces within us the core Jewish belief that our grandparents were not liars and that the tradition of the ages from Egypt and Sinai is true, valid, relevant and vital in all places and times. The timelessness of the words and rituals of the Seder further strengthens our inner beliefs. It provides us with optimism and hope for our future in spite of all of the current dangers and problems.

We have the innate belief that the young ones who sit today at our Seder table will, in good time, conduct their own Seder and thereby guarantee the survival and continuity of the Jewish people. Merely bringing Jewish children into this world at birth is already a declaration of faith in our future and confidence in the eternity of the Jewish people.

Moreover, the living memory of an event that occurred to our people thousands of years ago strengthens that confidence and deepens our determination to continue and succeed no matter what. This above all else is the gift that the Seder table and Pesach night grant us.

The intermediate days of Pesach – Chol HaMoed – represent the ability of Jews and of the Torah to treat the mundane activities of life and the world with holiness and a special reverence. I remember when one of my daughters worked as an actuary in the offices of a large American insurance company. The company graciously allowed her to be absent on the Jewish holidays. However, she was never able to satisfactorily explain to them why on Chol HaMoed she was able to come in to the office and accomplish the work to be done that day.

The world understands that there can be holy days and less than holy days. It finds it difficult to comprehend how a day can be holy and somehow less than completely holy at one and the same time. Pesach teaches us that we are to sanctify the mundane and the unholy regular activities of everyday life.

The trips, tours, meals and outings during the days of Chol HaMoed are different in kind and spirit than those we enjoy during the rest of the year. The fact we are still eating matzah only reinforces this uniqueness. It reminds us of the reason for our Exodus from Egypt and the purpose of our state of freedom – to be a special people, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.

The final day of Pesach commemorates our miraculous deliverance from Pharaoh and his army at Yam Suf. The times the Jewish people have been seemingly on the brink of annihilation are too numerous to count. We have suffered partial annihilation, grievous losses but never total defeat and destruction.

From Pharaoh through Amalek, Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Latin Christians, Moslems, Germans, Soviets, Arabs, some present-day NGOs and many others have tried to destroy the Jewish people. We are resented for our particularism and when we assimilate we are resented even more. Yet every time it appears that history’s curtain is ready to fall on us, something unforeseen occurs and Jewish resilience drives us to survival and renewal.

The drama of Jewish survival at Yam Suf repeats itself in different forms throughout the history of civilization. Though many have wondered about this strange and exceptional phenomenon, no logical or completely rational answer has ever been advanced. The L-rd has split many seas for us over the past three millennia of our existence.

Pesach reminds us of this inexplicable historical truism. Somehow, merely knowing this fact of history is alone sufficient to enable us to continue to build and achieve no matter what our enemies say and do.

Rabbi Berel Wein is Senior Rabbi of Beit Knesset HaNassi in Jerusalem and Director of the Destiny Foundation