

D'var Torah by Rabbi M. Jaroslawicz for Pesach 5775 (2015)

No matter whom I asked, "How was your Seder?" I received more or less the same response. "How could it be bad, being with family?" This got me thinking about the true purpose and goal of the Sedorim.

Two weeks ago, at the Shabbos afternoon Gemarah Shiur, I mentioned that the Torah refers to the B'nei Yisroel as the "Am Segulah" [the chosen nation]. This is derived from the Passuk in the Torah where Hashem declares, "V'hiyeesem LiSegula Mikol Ha'amim" [and you shall be for me a Chosen People from amongst the nations] (Shemot 19:5).

We mentioned that a minimum three points of contact are required for a physical, inanimate object to maintain its own balance. A table cannot stand on only two legs. It requires a minimum of three to maintain any stability.

In the Hebrew language the "Segel" is the punctuation mark that is made up of three dots shaped like an inverted triangle. The number "three" plays a very important role throughout Judaism.

Shelosh Avos. Shalosh Regalim. Shalosh Tefillos B'chol Yom. Shalosh Seudos on Shabbos. Sheloshes yemai hagbalah. Al shelosh devarim ha'Olam o'maid, and many more.

Hashem is telling us that we are the people of the "Segel," the people of the number "three," the people of stability.

There is an expression that I remember hearing that says, in effect: "Remember the past, live in the present and hope for the future."

I want to make a small modification to that expression. "Remember the past, live the present and CAST the future." I truly believe that these "three" steps are the foundation of the existence of the Jewish people.

"V'heegaditah L'vincha" means and You shall tell to your children. This covers two generations. "Asher Hotzee Es Avosainu M'Mitzrayim" [that He took our fathers out of Egypt], this refers to the previous generations. We are dealing here with Past, Present and Future. Our forefathers represent the "past," we are the "present" and our children, the "future." Or, for those of us that are grandparents and great-grandparents, WE are the representation of the "past." We are what our children and grandchildren look up to; see as the link to their heritage and what they aspire to emulate. Our children, now parents themselves, are the "present," and their children, our grandchildren, the "future." A chain is only as strong as its first link and, to them, WE are that first link.

Remember the past: "US." They watch our every move.

Live the present: "THE PARENTS." What they do and how they act, to what they give credence, and on what they place importance.

Cast the future: "THE CHILDREN." You cannot expect children to be more than they observed in you, their parents and their idols.

If you want future generations to respect Tefillah, you can't talk in Shul. If you want them to know how to learn and to have a love for learning Torah, then they need to see you with a Sefer on Shabbos afternoon and not with the Wall Street Journal.

This is the beauty of generations sitting together at a Seder table.

Chazal teach us in Berachos that we are obligated in our Tefillah to connect the "Past," the Geulah from Mitzrayim, to empower our Tefillah of the "Present" in order to bring the ultimate redemption, the Moshiach in the "Future." This is called "Smichas Geulah L'tefillah." The first letters of these three words -- "Samach," "Gimal" and "Lamed" -- spell the word "Segel."

Maybe this is a deeper meaning in the Shalosh Regalim as well.

Pesach is the "Past," when we became a nation.

Shavuos is the "Present," the living Torah.

Succos is the "Future," when we pray to sit in the Succah of the Leviathan in the World-to-Come.

This is the feeling of jubilation that everyone feels when we leave the Seder table. The trick is to keep the fire burning and strong as we leave Pesach and cast the path to bring the Moshiach soon and in our day.

Have a GREAT Yom Tov.