

YACHATZ

Break the middle matzah into two, one piece larger than the other. The larger piece is set aside to serve as Afikomen. The smaller piece is put back, between the two matzahs.

loving-kindness, and the solidarity of Jews toward their fellow Jews, their brothers and sisters, even under the harshest conditions.

II. BREAKING THE MATZAH: BODY AND SOUL

Rav Kook taught that when we break the matzah into two, these two parts symbolize two ways of "Jewish eating," both of which are illustrated during the Seder. One reason we eat is to simply satisfy our hunger – our innate, biological need for food. However, as Jews, we have another need that is also associated with food. We partake of food not only out of necessity but as a means of uplifting our spirits and becoming more attuned to our higher, nobler selves. We refine our souls through the experience of engaging in a meal.

At the Seder, the first time we eat matzah reflects our need for its sustenance; and Jewish law says that we must eat the matzah with an appetite. However, the second time we eat matzah, when we eat the *afikomen*, which is the last taste of the matzah at the end of the meal, it symbolizes our "spiritual sustenance."

Judaism views eating as an act that carries the potential to be a deeply spiritual experience for human beings. A good example of this is how the centerpiece of Shabbat and the festivals are the mandatory meals that not only serve our physical needs and cause us pleasure, but are also a source of spiritual delight. In this way, breaking the matzah into two halves at the beginning of the Seder is a declaration that both aspects are in balance, and in fact, that both have equal validity. We appreciate the physical need for sustenance, particularly so that we will never forget those who do not have sufficient food. We must make sure, through *tzedakah*, to provide for their needs. We also value a higher form of "eating." Namely, the

Kadesh
Urchatz
Karpas
Yachatz
Maggid
Rachtzah
Motzi
Matzah
Marror
Korech
Shulchan
Orech
Tzafun
Barech
Hallel
Nirtzah

aspiration to eat *l'shem Shamayim*, "for the sake of Heaven" – taking in our food as a means of being able to serve God and in this way ennobling the experiences of our lives.

Rabbi Soloveitchik once commented in a similar vein: "The world has learned how to take the animalistic act of eating and make it into an aesthetic act. However, we Jews have learned how to take an aesthetic act and raise it to an act of holiness."

❖ QUESTION: How do we fulfill the spiritual aspects of Jewish eating?

III. BREAKING THE MATZAH – OUR CHILDREN WILL FIX THE WORLD

Reb Shlomo Carlebach has an insight to offer us:

Why do we break the matzah at the beginning of the Seder?

Why do the children bring back the broken piece of matzah at the end of the Seder?

The *afikomen*, the broken matzah represents the brokenness in the world.

There are so many broken hearts . . . broken lives . . . so many tears. We live in a world of *yachatz*, of brokenness. The world is fractured and we need to know that in order to repair it.

But do you know who will fix the world? Do you know who will bring wholeness to the world again?

Our children. Our children will bring back the broken piece to make the world whole again.

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