

4. **Yakhatz** (Yajatz) - Breaking of the Middle Matzah *Page 7-8*



Yakhatz ... Breaking the Middle Matzah ... יָחַצ

Leader takes the middle Matzah and breaks it in two, leaving one half between the two whole ones, and wrapping the other half in a linen cloth as the "Afikoman."

Leader

What do these three *matzot* represent, and why is the middle piece broken, wrapped, and put away until later?

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3's Not A Crowd!

Lots of Things Come in 3's...

- Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot
- Past, Present, Future
- Length, Breadth, Depth
- Father, Son, Ruach haKodesh
- Torah, Navim, Ketuvim
- Body, Soul, Spirit
- Liquid, Ice, Vapor
- (Prayer) Morning, Noon, Night
- Knife, Fork, Spoon
- Moe, Larry, Curly

How many 3's can you think of?

Mysteries of the *Matzah* Trio!

One very important three-some is observed as the three *matzot* are wrapped together at Passover. Although there are numerous explanations given for this ceremony, the rabbis refer to these three as a "Unity." Some traditions teach that these three *matzot* represent the patriarchal unity as seen in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Others believe it refers to the unity displayed as *Ha Shem* (God), *Ha Cohen* (the mediating priest), and *Ha Am* (the people [of Israel]). The *matzah*, especially when broken, symbolizes affliction, and is referred to in the Scriptures as the "bread of affliction." Ironically, *matzah* is

also used as a symbol of redemption, and is traditionally referred to as the "bread of faith." It serves as a unique Passover paradox, reminding us of the brokenness and sorrow of slavery, as well as the joyous celebration of God's redemptive work.

Why is the middle piece of *matzah* broken at the beginning of the *Seder*, wrapped, saved as the *Afikoman*, and eaten at the end of the *Seder* as the dessert? For one thing, it helps us to identify with the destitute state of our enslaved people. Only someone who is poor and uncertain of where his next meal is coming from, would tend to adopt the practice of breaking off a small piece now, and saving the rest for later.

There is an Orthodox Jewish messianic tradition, stating that the remaining piece of *matzah* "will serve as dessert at that great *Seder*, when Messiah will have come and the world will no longer know of famine and poverty." It also refers to the lamb that was slain on Passover, whose substitutionary blood was applied to the doorposts of the homes, so the Angel of Death would pass over and spare the firstborn children of Israel. The command was to "eat all of it," leaving none of it till morning.

Leader

We will elaborate more on this mystery when the *Afikoman* comes back into the picture at the end of our *Seder*, just after our festive *Pesach* meal.

The leader wraps the Afikoman, and sets it aside for later. Traditionally, right after the meal, the children search for the Afikoman. Then the leader negotiates with the child who found it, so it can be redeemed just prior to the closing portions of the Seder.