



Haggadah Insight

Haggadah Insight is being sent in place of the weekly Tefillah Tip for sharing at the Seder.

As we sing and eat our way through the night there are plenty of customs and rituals that give definition and meaning to the evening(s).

I would like to focus on one of many poignant moments during the *sedarim*, *Yachatz*. *Yachatz*, meaning dividing, is when the *Seder* leader breaks the middle *Matzoh* into two. The smaller piece is maintained with the other *Matzot*, while the larger one is put aside and eaten before the *benching* (blessing after the meal).

This *Dividing Ceremony* is one of the key moments the children look forward to at the *Seder*. If they somehow manage to acquire the larger piece, the *Afikomen*, a present or reward is usually promised for its return.

On a practical level we understand this - that since we were slaves in Egypt, we eat impoverished style bread (*Matzah*) that did not have a chance to rise. But, there is something much deeper we can learn from this.

HaRav Shimon Schwab z"tl reveals a beautiful insight into *Yachatz* in the name of his father.

He explains that the two pieces of *Matzah* represent two entirely different worlds. The smaller piece on which we pronounce "the bread of affliction," represents *Olam Hazeh* which means the everyday world that we live in. It is the world that has ups and downs, sickness and health, and a myriad of imperfections. The bigger piece that we are commanded to eat *al HaSovah*, AFTER WE ARE SATED, represents *Olam HaBah* - the world to come. The world that everyone has a portion in - if earned. The eternal reward is what one has to look forward to after a life filled of worthy tasks and productive behavior (perhaps that is why we eat it after we are full).

The *Seder* night is unique because it is the only time that so many *Mitzvot* are fulfilled in the night time. Aside from lighting *Chanukah* candles (which is not biblically commanded), holiday *mitzvot* are reserved for the daytime. We shake a *Lulav* in the day, blow a *shofar* in the day, so why do we eat *Matzoh* and read the *Haggadah* at night? Why is this night different?

The answer is because Passover has a *redemptive* quality. It is the holiday that reminds us through ritual and prayer that our exile is only temporary. Our celebration manifests that the same way the Jews were redeemed 3300 years ago from Egypt (at this time), so too will we be redeemed again. It is the time of the year we remind ourselves with comfort that there has been a time and there will be a time when darkness turns into light and night turns into day. That is why we celebrate the Passover *Seder* at night.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Ephraim Epstein, for Tefillah Tips

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