

the things we do on the seder
ask, "What makes this night
referred to in the question "every
night we will dip it twice." The
in *haroset*.

The Exodus began and ended
sold him into slavery. They
(Gen. 37:31) and brought it
attacked and killed by a wild
as the beginning of the long
aveled to Egypt and eventu-

es of hyssop, dipping them
them on the doorframes of
houses during the final plague,

as, itself sweet, is dipped in
ped in the sweet *haroset* and
ts remind us that freedom,
treat others. Slavery, which

YAHATZ / SPLITTING THE MIDDLE MATZA


Of the three *matzot*, the upper and lower represent the *lehem mishneh*, the double portion of manna that fell before Sabbaths and festivals in the wilderness so the Israelites would not have to gather food on the holy day itself. The third – the middle matza – represents the special duty to eat unleavened bread on Pesah.

There are two reasons we break it in half. The first is that it is described as "the bread of oppression" or, as the sages interpreted it, "the bread of a poor person." One who is so poor that he does not know where his next meal is coming from does not eat all his food at once. He divides it into two, saving half for later.

The second is that, with the destruction of the Temple, matza takes the place of the Paschal offering. Just as that lamb was eaten at the end of the meal – so as to be experienced as holy food, not just food eaten to satisfy hunger – so we reserve half the matza (the *afikoman*) to be eaten at the end of the meal. The custom that children hide the *afikoman* is part of the spirit of the seder service, which contains many elements designed to attract and sustain the interest of a child.

However, there is also a third significance to breaking the middle matza. Matza represents two apparently contradictory ideas. At the beginning of the

◀ seder



seder we describe it as "the bread of oppression our fathers ate in the land of Egypt." Ibn Ezra explains that slaves were given unleavened bread because, being hard, it takes longer to digest. It removes hunger for longer than ordinary bread. Later in the seder, we describe it as the bread the Israelites ate as they were leaving Egypt, in too much of a hurry to allow the dough to rise. We divide the matza, therefore, to show that it has two symbolisms. Now, at the beginning of the seder, it is the bread of oppression. Later, once we have relived the Exodus, it becomes the bread of freedom. The difference between freedom and slavery lies not in the quality of bread we eat, but in the state of mind in which we eat it.

MAGGID / TELLING

This is the beginning of the seder narrative, known as Maggid, from the word haggada, "relate," "recount," "declare," "proclaim." The story of the Exodus is known as the Haggada because of the verse "You shall tell (*vehigadeta*) your child on that day, '[I do this] because of what the LORD did for me when I went out of

Egypt'" (Ex. 13:8). The word *hagad* means "bind," "relate," "recount," "declare," "proclaim." The story of the Exodus is known as the Haggada because of the verse "You shall tell (*sipur*) of the future. It connects the past to the future. It connects the continuity of the story. Our people have a future."

THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE SEDER
This is a strange story, the land of Egypt, it to offer the human insight into the things: it is the first things: it is the first left Egypt in liberation. freedom is the will of the people. Primo Levi said: