

# afikomen

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Source:

(Four matzot are placed under a cover. One of the two middle *matzot* is broken in half. The smaller part is put back in between the other whole *matzot*, and the larger one is put aside to be used as an *afikomen*.)

## Reader

We break the matzah in half because the story we are about to tell is a story of how a people was broken by slavery. We begin with the break, but we do not conclude our *Seder* until the halves are reunited. The story we are about to tell is a story of how a broken people was made whole by freedom.

The words we will soon speak have been part of the *Seder* ever since its beginning. Through much of our history, we knew the names of those who were hungry - of our neighbors down on their luck, left behind, left out, locked out. Today many of us live distant from the zones of crushing hunger, of homelessness, of poverty. Those in need are often nameless to us, faceless. Yet all of us are required to reach out a hand to those in need, to share our blessings. So we say together:

Group:

**This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.**

**Let all who are who are hungry come and eat.**

**Let all who is needy come and celebrate Pesakh with us!**

**This year we are here. Next year may we all be in the promised land. This year we are still slaves. Next year may we be free.**

## Reader

*Avadim Hayinu*- we were slaves. We *are* slaves.

## Group

We are slaves because today because around the world there remain people in chains, and no one can be truly free while others are in chains.

## Reader

We are slaves because freedom means more than broken chains. Where there is poverty and hunger and homelessness, there is no freedom. Where there is prejudice and bigotry and discrimination, there is no freedom. Where there is violence and torture and war, there is no freedom.

## Group

And where each of us is less than he or she might be, we are not yet free. Where any of us fail to use our freedom to make others free, we are not yet free.

## Reader

If these things are so, who among us can say that he or she is free?

## Group

Therefore, when we say that this year we are slaves but that next year we shall be free, we make a pledge that

it will be so. Ever year we come closer, while acknowledging that the road to freedom is not an easy one.

### **Reader**

This is why, on this holiday when we are commanded to relive the bitter experience of slavery, we place a fourth matzah with the traditional three:

*(The fourth matzah is raised)*

We raise this fourth matzah to remind ourselves that slavery still exists, that people are still being bought and sold as property. We make room at our *Sedertable* and in our hearts for those abroad and in our own country who are now where we have been. We have known such treatment in our own history. Like the women and children enslaved today, we have suffered while others stood by and pretended not to see, not to know. In the end, we have come to know in our very being that none can be free until all are free.

### **Group**

Knowing that all are connected as expressions of the One, we commit and recommit ourselves to work for the freedom of enslaved people throughout the world. May the taste of this 'bread of affliction' remain in our mouths until all can eat in peace and security. We will tell slavemasters and tyrants everywhere to do as Moses commanded Pharaoh: "Shlach et Ami! Let my people go!"