

# Break the Middle Matzah

Contributed by [Jewish Guy](#)

Source: Velveteen Rabbi

[Open the door as a sign of hospitality; lift up matzah for all to see.]

Are all who are hungry truly able to eat anywhere, let alone with us? How many of us would really invite a hungry stranger into our house today? How can we correct the systemic problems that create hunger, poverty, and oppression? (Rabbah Emily Aviv Kapor).

## The Bread of Affliction

This is the bread of affliction

which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.

Let all who are hungry come and eat;

let all who are needy come and celebrate the Passover with us.

Now we are here; next year may we be in the Land of Israel.

Now we are slaves; next year may we be free.

[Close the door. Break a middle matzah and wrap the larger half in a cloth; it is the afikoman.]

## Pirkei Imahot 1:1 (Sayings of the Mothers 1:1)

On this night of doorways, the bread of our ancestors waits on our table.

It is easy to think of this round flat bread as a full moon, except the moon was once part of this planet and was ripped away and the seas keep longing for it and leaping upward.

The whole is already broken. The ball of the earth has its shifting tectonic plates; the skin has its pores where the air bores in. Everything whole in the world has an edge where it broke off something or was cut away. The bread we are about to break is already broken.

We want to think it and we are perfect, but the loaf is an illusion, a compromise with the shattering of light.

Yet maybe it's in slow breaking that wholeness happens. The bud of the apple tree fragments into beauty and the stem of the iris tears its way through the soil. The heart breaks as it grows.

You could call that wholeness: the movement of life toward a fuller version of itself, the egg releasing its core into the world, the tree lurching its way toward branches.

It's the splitting of the sea that lets us out of Egypt: severed from the old self we thought invincible, we run toward a future that shatters the moment we enter it, becoming the multiple and unknown present. Bless the world that breaks to let you through it, Bless the gift of the grain that smashes its molecules to feed you over & over.

This Passover night, time is cracking open. Wholeness is not the egg; it's the tap tap tap of the wet-winged baby bird trying to get out. Break the bread at the feast of liberation. Go ahead. Do it. The whole is already broken, and so are you, and freedom has to have its jagged edges. But keep one half for later, because this story isn't whole, and isn't over. (Rabbi Jill Hammer)