

# Brokenness

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Source:

The Pesach story begins in a broken world, amidst slavery and oppression. The sound of the breaking of the matza sends us into that fractured existence, only to become whole again when we find the broken half, the afikoman, at the end of the Seder.

This brokenness is not just a physical or political situation: It reminds us of all those hard, damaged places within ourselves. All those narrow places from which we want to break to free. In Hebrew, Egypt is called *Mitzrayim*, reminding us of the word *tzar*, narrow. Thus, in Hassidic thought, Mitzrayim symbolizes the inner straits that trap our souls. Yet even here we can find a unique value, as the Hassidic saying teaches us: "There is nothing more whole – than a broken heart."

We are free, but we remember when we were slaves. We are whole, but we bring to mind those who are broken. The middle matzah is broken, but it is the larger part which is hidden. Because the future will be greater than the past, and tomorrow's Passover nobler than yesterday's exodus. The prospects for the dreamed future are overwhelming to the point of making us mute. So it is in silence, without blessing, that we break and hide the matzah and long for its recovery and our redemption.