

# Yachatz

Contributed by [Muslim-Jewish Solidarity Committee](#)

## Source:

The Israelites left Egypt in a haste and did not have time to let their bread dough rise, that is why during Passover we eat matzah, unleavened flatbread.

Three matzahs are stacked on the seder table; the middle matzah of the three will now be broken in half. The larger piece is hidden somewhere in the house. Later, the children get to search for it, and whoever finds it gets a prize. The hidden broken piece is called the Afikoman, which is the Greek word for dessert and will be later eaten as the dessert. Why would we eat a broken matzah as our dessert? To represent that although we have become free, we must still remember the feeling of oppression and hope for full freedom and redemption to come.

## MISHA'ROTAM

Many Sephardi/Arabic Jewish communities practice the tradition of *Mish'arotam* where each person gets a chance to personally act out leaving Egypt. They play out the scene and say:

### **Misharotam şerourot BeSimlotam 'al Shikhmam. U'benei Yisra'el 'asou Kidbar Moshe**

All that remained was bundled in their clothing on their backs, and the children of Israel did as Moshe said

Each person takes a turn placing a bag of matzah over their shoulder. They are asked questions in Arabic which they respond in Hebrew:

### **MinWen Jaye? Where are you coming from?**

MiMişrayim -- From Egypt!

### **LaWeyin Rayeḥ? Where are you going?**

LeYerushalayim -- To Jerusalem!

### **Ishu zawatak? What are you carrying?**

Matzah u Maror -- Matzah and Bitter Herbs

This moment allows each person to place themselves back in time and replay a scene: The Jews are wandering the desert, they come upon some locals. The locals all speak Arabic but the Jews are speaking Hebrew, the language that they kept through generations of enslavement. It's clear from the exchange that both groups can understand each other, but the Jews here choose to exert their Judaism proudly, *for perhaps the first time in their lives, because they are free.*

In many families, this tradition is also time to have fun and get creative. People will often make up their own crazy or funny answers to the questions while going around the table. Let's try this out and come up with our own responses to learn about each other.

## **Activity**

Partner with someone you don't know and answer the following questions in turn:

**MinWen Jaye? Where are you coming from?**

**LaWeyin Rayeḥ? Where are you going/What is your hope?**

**Ishu Zawatak? What do you carry with you?**