



***Yachatz* – Breaking the Middle Matzah**

A Reminder of the Still-Unbroken Chains of the Agunot

During this part of our Seder, *Yachatz*, we split the middle matzah in half. As we divide this matzah, we are reminded of all that is broken in our world and our community. In Israel, all marriage and divorce is handled by the nation's religious courts. Under religious law, a Jewish woman may not receive a final writ of divorce, or *get*, without her husband's permission. As a result, thousands of *agunot* in Israel are unable to divorce, remarry, and move on with their lives because their husbands have disappeared or refused to grant them their *get*, often as a vehicle for extortion. These *agunot* are still chained to their marriage — unable to free themselves.

We set aside this half of the broken matzah to hide for the *afikomen*, the dessert matzah, which we will search for at the end of the meal. As we do so, let us think of our sisters, the *agunot*, who too often suffer in the shadows of our community, hidden from view.

Our Seder will only be complete when we find the *afikomen* and bring it back to our table. We are reminded that it is our obligation to seek out ways to make whole what is broken in our world.

(Hold up the middle matzah) This is the bread of affliction, which our ancestors ate as they fled the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat; let all who are in bondage know the sweetness of freedom that we celebrate at Passover. When any are imprisoned, all of us are slaves; next year may we be free.