

## Breaking Protocol

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**Excerpted and adapted from a *shiur* by Rav Moshe Yitzchok Weg**

<https://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Metzorah-Yachatz.mp3>

At the Seder, at *Yachatz*, we break a matzah in two. The Smag and Rokeiach say to break the top matzah, because it is closest and *ein ma'avirin al hamitzvos* (one may not bypass a mitzvah opportunity). The Bach says that *Yachatz* is not that much of a mitzvah ("*eino mitzvah kol kach*"), so *ein ma'avirin* is not applicable, and the custom is to break the middle matzah.

We can explain the Bach's view of the mitzvah status of *Yachatz* based on the *Rishonim*, including the Machzor Vitri and Rabeinu Yonah, that say the point of *Yachatz* is to imitate a poor man, who typically only has pieces of bread rather than a whole loaf. So the key is *having* a broken matzah rather than *breaking* matzah. But perhaps the other view holds *Yachatz* is a mitzvah because a poor man divides what bread he has in two in case he's short later.

The Pri Megadim may support the second approach, because he says not to use a knife for *Yachatz* because a poor man wouldn't, which indicates that the *ani* breaks his bread rather than obtaining only pieces in the first place. This may also be supported by the Shulchan Aruch, which says to give someone one of the pieces after *Yachatz* to safeguard it for the afikoman, which might be because *Yachatz* requires demonstrating that we, like an *ani*, are saving some of our bread for later.