

The Five Questions

Contributed by [JQ International](#)

Source: JQ International GLBT Haggadah

The MaNishtana traditionally asks us, "What is unique or different about tonight?" and, "Why do we eat Matzah, why do we dip and eat Bitter Herbs not just once, but twice and why do we recline?" These elements are symbolic themes that mirror the reflection our ancestor's liberation from slavery, the hardships they experienced and the oppression that infringed on their freedoms. Tonight at our GLBT Passover Seder we incorporate a fifth question and answer. "What is unique or different about tonight's seder, why tonight do we have Pride?" Pride is a very symbolic word in the GLBT community. We use this word often and tonight we have the opportunity to demonstrate how proud we are of our sexual orientation and gender identity.

מה נשׂתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה

הלילה הזה קלו מצה

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות

הלילה הזה מרור

שבכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת

הלילה הזה שתי פעמים

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין

הלילה הזה קלנו מסבין

Mah nish-ta-na ha-lai-lah ha-zeh mi-kol ha-lei-lot!

Sheh-beh-chol ha-lei-lot a-nu och-lin ha-metz u-matzah. Ha-lai-lah ha-zeh, ku-lo matzah?

Sheh-beh-chol ha-lei-lot a-nu och-lin sh'ar y'ra-kot. Ha-lai-lah ha-zeh, maror?

Sheh-beh-chol ha-lei-lot ein a-nu mat-bi-lin a-fi-lu pa-am e-hat. Ha-lai-lah ha-zeh, sh-tei fi-ah-mim?

Sheh-beh-chol ha-lei-lot a-nu och-lin bayn yosh-vin ou-vein mis-u-bin. Ha-lai-lah ha-zeh, ku-la-nu mis- u-bin?

Why is this night different from all other nights?

On all other nights we eat either leavened bread or *matzah*. Why, on this night, do we eat only *matzah*?

On all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs. Why, on this night, do we eat only bitter herbs?

On all other nights we do not dip herbs. Why, on this night, do we dip them twice?

On all other nights we eat sitting or reclining on pillows. Why, on this night, do we eat only reclining upon pillows?

The fifth question:

Sheh-beh-chol ha-lei-lot sed-er a-nu o-seem sed-er ma-sar-ti. Ha-lai-lah ha-zeh, ku-la-nu ga-im?

On all other Seder nights we do a traditional Seder. Why, on this night, do we have Pride?

The Five Answers

Speaker 1: We were slaves in Egypt. Our ancestor in flight from Egypt did not have time to let the dough rise. With not a moment to spare they snatched up the dough they had prepared and fled. But the hot sun beat as

they carried the dough along with them and baked it into the flat unleavened bread we call *matzah*.

Speaker 2: The first time we dip our greens to taste the brine of enslavement. We also dip to remind ourselves of all life and growth, of earth and sea, which gives us sustenance and comes to life again in the springtime.

Speaker 3: The second time we dip the *maror* into the *charoet*. The *charoet* reminds us of the mortar that our ancestors mixed as slaves in Egypt. But our charoet is made of fruit and nuts, to show us that our ancestors were able to withstand the bitterness of slavery because it was sweetened by the hope of freedom.

Speaker 4: Slaves were not allowed to rest, not even while they ate. Since our ancestors were freed from slavery, we recline to remind ourselves that we, like our ancestors, can overcome bondage in our own time. We also recline to remind ourselves that rest and rejuvenation are vital to continuing our struggles. We should take pleasure in reclining, even as we share our difficult history.

Speaker 5: We are proud to be gay, straight, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer and everything else under the rainbow. And all of us together here, add meaning to an age old Jewish tradition and for that we have pride. As a community we have come far, and while we are not done with our struggle, we should reflect proudly on our accomplishments as we celebrate here tonight at our GLBT Passover Seder.