

# Ma Nishtana

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Source:

מה נִשְׁתַּנָּה, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה

מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת

שֶׁבִּכְּל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין

חֲמֵץ וּמַצָּה

הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה, כָּלוּ מַצָּה

Mah Nishtana halayla hazeh mikol haleylot? Mikol haleylot?

Sheb-ch-ol haleylot anu o-ch-lim ch-ametz umatzah, ch-ametz umatzah.

Halaylah hazeh, halaylah hazeh kulo matzah. (x2)

Question 1: Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights we have bread or rolls or challah at every meal. Why on this night do we have no bread, but only matzah?

Cong: Our forefathers fled from Egypt in great haste. They had no time to bake their dough. But the hot sun baked it into flat, unleavened bread, which they called "matzah." To remember this, we eat only matzah on Passover

שֶׁבִּכְּל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין

שְׂאֵר יִרְקוֹת

הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה, כָּלוּ מָרֹר

Sheb-ch-ol haleylot anu o-ch-lim she-ar yerakot. She-ar yerakot.

Halayla hazeh, halayla hazeh maror. (x2)

Question 2: On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables; why on this night do we eat bitter herbs especially?

Cong: Our forefathers led bitter lives as slaves in Egypt. Not to forget their suffering, we eat bitter herbs on Passover.

שֶׁבִּכְּל הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ

מִטְּבִילִין אֶפִּילוּ פְּעַם אַחַת

הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה, שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים

Sheb-ch-ol haleylot eyn anu matbilin afilu pa-am e-ch-at. Afilu pa-am e-ch-at.

Halayla hazeh, halayla hazeh sh'tae p'amim. (x2)

Question 3: On all other nights we do not dip one food in another. Why on this night do we dip parsley into salt water and bitter herbs into haroset.

Cong: We dip parsley in salt water to remind us of the green that comes to life in springtime. We dip the bitter herbs in the sweet haroset as a sign of hope. This mixture of bitter and sweet is to combine the bitterness of slavery and the sweetness of freedom.

שְׁבַּח־הַלֵּלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין

בֵּין יוֹשְׁבֵין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין

הַלְּיָלָה הַזֶּה, כָּלֵנוּ מְסֻבִּין

Sheb-ch-ol haleylot anu o-ch-lim beyn yoshvin uveyn mesubin. Beyn yoshvin uveyn mesubin.

Halayla hazeh, halayla hazeh kulanu mesubin. (x2)

Question 4: On all other nights everyone sits up straight at the table. Why on this night so we recline at the table?

Cong: In olden times reclining at the table was the sign of a free man. We recline at the table to remember that on this night, hundreds of years ago; our forefathers were freed from slavery. To relax and be comfortable is certainly a sign that we live as free people.

Leader: I am glad that you asked these questions, for although the story is old, it is always new. We must repeat it year-after-year that we may not forget the blessing of freedom and the history of our people.

My forefathers believed man can change the world. They also believed God created man. You must believe in God to believe man can change the world. Our forefathers taught us to speak and to sing, and they loved stories. When we tell ours, we hear their voices. They are what links the survivor to their memory. God created man because he loved stories. Pesach is our time to tell stories. Let us, then, relate the story of Pesach once again.