

# Why is this year different from all other years?



We encourage you to incorporate this reading into the Four Questions section of your seder.

Mah nishtanah ha-lailah ha-zeh  
mi-kol ha-lailot?

*Why is this night  
different from all other nights?*

We know the traditional answers to this question: On this night, we eat *matzah* and bitter herbs, we dip and we recline. But this is not all, or even most, of what Passover is about.

On most other nights, we allow the news of tragedy in distant places to pass us by. We succumb to compassion fatigue – aware that we cannot possibly respond to every injustice that arises around the world.

On this night, we are reminded that our legacy as the descendants of slaves creates in us a different kind of responsibility – we are to protect the stranger because we were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Let us add a fifth question to this year's seder. Let us ask ourselves,

Aych nishaneh et ha-shanah ha-zot  
mi-kol ha-shanim?

*How can we make this year  
different from all other years?*

This year, this Passover, let us recommit to that sacred responsibility to protect the stranger, particularly those vulnerable strangers in faraway places whose suffering is so often ignored.

Let us infuse the rituals of the seder with action:

- When tasting the *matzah*, the bread of poverty, let us find ways to help the poor and the hungry.
- When eating the *maror*, let us commit to help those whose lives are embittered by disease.
- When dipping to commemorate the blood that protected our ancestors against the Angel of Death, let us pursue protection for those whose lives are threatened by violence and conflict.
- When reclining in celebration of our freedom, let us seek opportunities to help those who are oppressed.

At this season of liberation, join us in working for the liberation of all people. Help us respond to the seder's questions with action and justice. For more information about American Jewish World Service, please visit our Web site at [www.ajws.org](http://www.ajws.org) or call 800.889.7146.