PESAH: The Eight Commandments of Pesah

Pesah is less than a month away. The first Pesah Seder will be held B'H Monday night, April 10, 2017. The laws and traditions of Pesah are so many and so diverse that our Rabbis indicated that 30 days before Pesah we should start studying the laws and customs of Pesah. So, we're already a little bit behind schedule

Today, we are going to review the "Biblical" Mitsvot of Pesah. That is, the seminal laws of this festival, from which all other details and Halakhot of Pesah emerge.

In his introduction to MT Hilkhot Pesah, Maimonides describes one by one the commandments of the festival, listing a total of 8 biblical Mitsvot related to Pesah. It is important to note that this list does NOT include the Mitsvot related to the Pesah sacrifice (qorban Pesah).

There are three positive commandments and five prohibitions related to Pesah.

THE THREE POSITIVE COMMANDMENTS OF PESAH ARE

1 □□□ □□□□□. Eating matsa on the first night of Pesah (in the Diaspora, it automatically becomes the obligation to eat matsa during the first two nights of the festival). For the rest of Pesah, it is forbidden to eat hamets, but there is no formal obligation to eat matsa.

2 □□□□ □□□□□. Tell our children during the first night of Pesah (in the Diaspora, the first two nights) the story of our slavery in Egypt and our miraculous redemption. This story is narrated in the Haggada of Pesah. This Mitsva includes many other Mitsvot and traditions, such as drinking the four cups of wine, eating the maror, etc.

3 □□□ □□□□□. Renounce to the possession of our hamets on the eve of Passover, that is the 14th of Nisan (Monday April 10th) before noon. In the coming days, we will explain this Mitsva in detail.

THE FIVE PROHIBITIONS OF PESAH ARE

4 □□□ □□□□□ □□□□□. The prohibition of eating hamets during Pesah. This prohibition also includes se-or, or natural yeast.

5 □□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□. The prohibition against eating any food containing hamets during Pesah. The Gemara cites as examples of food containing hamets the Kutah haBabli, a type of cottage cheese (cottage= □□□□?) which contained bits of bread, and shekhar haMadi, an alcoholic beverage made from grain, like beer.

6 □□□□-□□. The prohibition of owning hamets during Pesah, regardless of where that hamets is found.

7 □□□□- □□. The prohibition of owning hamets during Pesah. As the reader can see, these two Mitsvot, 6 and 7 are in fact identical, there is no difference between them and they apply exactly in the same way. This is an exceptional case in the entire Tora.

8 □□□□ □□□□ □□□ □□□ □□□ □□□ □□□□□ □□□□□. The prohibition of eating hamets on Pesah eve from noon. The rabbis extended this prohibition to two hours before noon. So on Monday April 10th hamets can be consumed only until the end of the fourth hour of the day. It is important mentioning that these "hours" are not fixed 60 minutes hours, but "daylight hours" which are obtained by dividing by twelve the daylight period of the day (from dawn to dusk).

In the coming days B'H we will have the opportunity to define and explain in depth each one of the eight Mitsvot of Pesah