THE EIGHT MITSVOT OF PESACH

This list of eight mitzvot is based on the introduction of Maimonides to *Hilkhot Pesach*, and it does **not** include the mitzvot related to the Pesach sacrifice (*Korban Pesach*).

There are **three positive commandments** (things we do) and **five prohibitions** (things we must not do) connected to Pesach.

□ THE 3 POSITIVE COMMANDMENTS

1. □□□ □□□□□

□ **Eating Matzah**

On the first night of Pesach we eat matzah.
(In the Diaspora we eat matzah on the first **two** nights.)

Matzah reminds us that the Jewish people left Egypt very quickly, before their bread had time to rise.

During the rest of Pesach it is forbidden to eat chametz, but technically there is no formal obligation to continue eating matzah.

2. □□□□ □□□□□

□ **Telling Our Children the Story**

On the first night of Pesach (in the Diaspora, the first two nights) we tell our children the story of:

➡□ the slavery in Egypt
➡□ how HaShem redeemed us

We do this by reading and explaining the **Haggadah** at the Seder.

This mitzvah includes many beautiful traditions:

 Drinking the four cups of wine
 Reclining like free people
 Eating maror (bitter herbs) to remember the bitterness of slavery
 Eating charoset, which reminds us of the bricks our ancestors made in Egypt
 Asking the Four Questions and discussing the story of the Exodus

All these traditions help us tell the story and remember what happened.

3. □□□ □□□□□

□Disowning and Removing Chametz

Before Pesach, we must disown any chametz that belongs to us (Bitul).

The Rabbis added that we must also physically remove chametz from our property—our homes, cars, offices, etc. (Bi'ur).

How do we get rid of our chametz? We can:

 Remove it from our homes
 Throw it in the garbage outside the house
 Burn it
 Feed it to birds or fish (in a lake or river)
 Give it as a gift or sell it to a non-Jew

This should be done on the **eve of Pesach, on the 14th of Nisan**, in the late morning.

 In 2026:

On Tuesday, **March 31** at night, we do the **Bedikat Chametz**; we search the house for chametz.

The next day, Wednesday, April 1, is Erev Pesach. We must finish eating chametz by 10:00 AM and remove it (biur) and declare it ownerless (bitul) by 11:00 AM .

THE 5 PROHIBITIONS

4. איסור אכילת חמץ

Not Eating Chametz or Se’or

During Pesach we are not allowed to eat chametz.

Chametz is food made from these five grains:

- wheat
- barley
- rye
- oats
- spelt

If these grains ferment or rise, they become chametz.

Se’or is sourdough, used to make bread during the year. We may not keep this dough during Pesach.

5. איסור אכילת תערובת חמץ

Not Eating Food that Contains Chametz

It is also forbidden to eat any food that contains chametz or natural yeast during Pesach.

The Gemara gives examples of foods that contained mixtures of chametz, such as:

- **Kutach ha-Bavli** – a type of cottage-like cheese that contained small pieces of bread.

▯ **Shekhar ha-Madi** – a drink made from grain, similar to beer.

6. בל יראה

▯▯ Chametz or Se’or Should Not Be Seen

During Pesach we may not possess chametz anywhere that belongs to us.

Chametz should not be visible in our homes.

7. בל ימצא

▯▯ Chametz or Se’or Should Not Be Found

Chametz also should not be found in our possession during Pesach.

These two mitzvot (6 and 7) are actually identical.
They teach the same idea in two ways.

The Sages refer to them together with the famous words:

בל יראה בל ימצא
“Chametz should not be seen and not be found in your possession during Pesach.”

8. איסור אכילת חמץ ערב פסח אחר חצות היום

▯▯▯ Not Eating Chametz on the Eve of Pesach

On the day before Pesach we must stop eating chametz at midday.

The Rabbis moved this prohibition earlier, so chametz may only be eaten **until the end of the fourth hour of the day**.

These hours are daylight hours, calculated by dividing the time from sunrise to sunset into twelve parts.

▯ **In 2026:**

This rule applies on **April 1**, Erev Pesach, the day before the Seder.

In many communities, such as **UMJCA**, the established practice is that chametz may be eaten only **until 10:00 a.m.** On that day, all activities related to chametz—such as selling it, giving it away, or eliminating it—must be completed **by 11:00 a.m.**