

It's a New Holiday! Worksheet

Read through the sources and then complete the questions below.

Source #1: [Devarim 13:1](#)

אֵת כָּל הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר אֶנְכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם אֹתוֹ תִשְׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת לֹא תִסֹּף עָלָיו וְלֹא תִגְרַע מִמֶּנּוּ:

Every matter which I command you, observe to do it: you will not add to it, nor diminish from it.

1. What are the two prohibitions that are mentioned in this *pasuk*?

a. _____

b. _____

2. “Every matter which I command you”—Who is the “I” in this *pasuk*? Who is commanding?

Source #2: [Rashi on this pasuk](#):

לֹא תִסֹּף עָלָיו. הַמִּשָּׁה טִטְפוֹת, הַמִּשָּׁה מִיָּנִין בְּלוּלָב, אַרְבַּע בְּרָכוֹת לְבִרְכַּת כֹּהֲנִים (ספרי):

As, for instance, to place five chapters in the *tefillin*, to employ five species of fruit and plants in the fulfillment of the command of *lulav*, to recite four instead of three *berakhot* in the *Birkat Kohanim* (*Sifrei Devarim* 82:4; cf. Rashi on *Devarim* 4:2).

3. List the 3 examples of “adding” that Rashi cites here:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Thought Questions:

- Do you think that “more is better?” Explain why you think this way.
- The Torah seems to feel that more is NOT better. Why do you think that is?

Source #3: [Devarim 17:10](#)

וַעֲשִׂיתָ עַל פִּי הַדִּבֶּר אֲשֶׁר יִגִּידוּ לָךְ מִן הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' וְשִׁמְרָתָ לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר יוֹרֹךְ:

You should do according to the sentence, which they of that place which God will choose will tell you; and you will observe to do according to all that they inform you.

4. Who are the “they” in this *pasuk*?

5. What is the mitzvah in this *pasuk*?

Source #4: [Devarim 17:11](#)

עַל פִּי הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר יוֹרֹךְ וְעַל הַמִּשְׁפָּט אֲשֶׁר יֹאמְרוּ לָךְ תַּעֲשֶׂה לֹא תִסּוּר מִן הַדִּבֶּר אֲשֶׁר יִגִּידוּ לָךְ יָמִין וּשְׂמָאל:

According to the rulings of the Torah which they will teach you, and according to the judgment which they will tell you, you will do: you will not deviate from the rulings which they will tell you, to the right hand, or to the left.

6. What is the *mitzvat aseih* (positive commandment) in this *pasuk*?

7. What is the *mitzvat lo ta'aseh* (negative command/prohibition) in this *pasuk*?

Source #5: [Rashi Devarim 17:11](#)

יָמִין וּשְׂמָאל. אֶפְלוֹ אוֹמֵר לָךְ עַל יָמִין שֶׁהוּא שְׂמָאל וְעַל שְׂמָאל שֶׁהוּא יָמִין, וְכָל שֶׁכֵּן שֶׁאוֹמֵר לָךְ עַל יָמִין יָמִין וְעַל שְׂמָאל שְׂמָאל (ספרי):

Even if he (the judge) tells you about what appears to you to be right that it is left, or about what appears to you to be left that it is right, you have to obey him; how much the more is this so if actually he tells you about what is right that it is right and about what is left that it is left (cf. *Sifrei Devarim* 154:5).

8. In this Rashi, what do the words “right” and “left” mean?

9. If you think something is “left” and the judge tells you that it is “right,” what do you do?

10. Who decides what the “rules” are?

11. What is the *mitzvah aseih* in this *pasuk*?

Source #6:

Note: The sources below are intended for more advanced and/or older students. Read through the following source(s) to help you better understand how we resolve the potential conflicts between the *mitzvot* of *bal tosif* and *lo tasur*.

- [Talmud Shabbat 23a](#) – relating to Chanukah and the *berakha* on the menorah.
- [Torah Temimah on Devarim 17:11](#)

Thought Questions

- How does the mitzvah to listen to the judges/rabbis potentially conflict with bal tosif?*
- Why is it important for the judges and rabbis to have this kind of authority?*

Source #7: [Megillat Esther, 9:20-32](#)

12. Who is doing the “writing” in each of the following *pesukim*?

- pasuk 20*

- pasuk 23*

- pasuk 29*

- pasuk 32*

13. There seems to be a lot of repetition in these *pesukim*. Give one example:

14. Why do you think there is so much repetition and a change in who is doing the writing?

a. repetition:

b. change in who's writing:

15. In *pasuk* 29, it says that the book was written a “second time.” Why do you think that happened?

Thought Questions:

- a. *Do you think that the rabbis accepted this new holiday right away? Why or why not?*
- b. *Why do you think the rabbis were willing to make a new holiday?*
- c. *Why can we say a berakha that includes “asher kideshanu b’mitzvotav v’tzivanu” on a holiday or a practice (in this case, reading the megillah) that’s NOT in the Torah?*

Source #8: Rabbi Eliezer Melamed, [Peninei Halacha, Chapter 4, section 5](#)

16. Under what circumstances is it a mitzvah to establish a new holiday?

17. How does the holiday of Pesach help the rabbis learn this?

18. How do Purim and Chanukah fulfill this condition?

a. Purim:

b. Chanukah:

19. Have there been other “new” holidays throughout Jewish history? Explain your answer.

20. What was the reasoning for establishing Yom HaAtzmaut as a “new” holiday?

Thought Questions:

- a. *How do we see halakha-in-action in modern times?*
- b. *How do we see the importance of the land of Israel (Eretz Yisrael) in Judaism?*
- c. *How do we see the importance of the State of Israel (Medinat Yisrael) in Judaism?*
- d. *In what ways is Israel part of your identity as a Jew?*