The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן תרמ"ה סעיף ח'-ט'

Overview

Siman 645 Seif 8:

If there are thorns on the spine, if it shriveled and became hard or if it is bent forward and gives the appearance of a hunchback, it is invalid. Similarly, if it is bent to one if its sides it is invalid but if it is bent backwards it is valid since this is the normal way for it to grow.

- Shulchan Aruch refers to where it is bent like a sickle. (M.B. 33)
- It is bent forward so that the spine appears like the spine of a hunchback. (M.B. 34)
- It is invalid since it is not hadar. (M.B. 36)
- In other words it is bent backwards. (M.B. 37)

Siman 645 Seif 9:

If the top is bent the lulav is invalid but only if the spine is bent but if the leaves are bent which is common in many lulavim, it is valid.

- It is bent like a cane regardless of whether forward or backward. (M.B. 38)
- It is not considered hadar. (M.B. 39)
- Rosh prefers when the leaves are bent since one can be certain that the tiyomes is not split. Levush limits this to where the tiyomes is bent but not when most of the leaves are bent over but Taz does not draw that distinction. When another lulav is available one should not use one whose majority of leaves are bent. (M.B. 40)
- This is true when the top of the leaf is bent but not if the majority of the leaf is bent since that is not hadar. The same is true regarding the tiyomes. (M.B. 41)
- Although there are authorities that adopt a stringent position the custom is to be lenient in accordance with Shulchan Aruch. (M.B. 42)

Halacha Highlight

A bent lulav

Shulchan Aruch Siman 645 Seif 8

או שהוא עקום

Or if it is bent

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ח') groups together a number of factors that could invalidate one's lulav. One of the issues that he addresses is if the spine of the lulav is bent. He explains that if the spine bends forwards (as one holds the lulav with the spine facing him the lulav would be bent away from him) it is invalid since it resembles the back of hunchback. Similarly, if it bends to one of the sides the lulav is invalid. The reason a lulav bent in any of these directions is invalid is that it is not hadar and it doesn't matter whether the lulav bent while on the tree or whether it became bent after it was severed from the tree (חיים וברכה אות רל"ח). The only case in which a bent lulav is valid is if it is bent backwards (towards the person holding it). The reason it is valid is that it is normal for a lulav to bend backwards. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק ל"ב) explains that a lulav that is bent is valid unless it is bent like the head of a cane, meaning that it is bent so that the top is facing downwards. If a lulav is bent only slightly the lulav is valid (חיים וברכה אות רל"ט).

Sefer Chaim U'Vracha (אות ר"מ) raises the question of whether it is acceptable to straighten a bent lulav in order to make it valid for use for the mitzvah. For example, if one were to tie it to a stick for a few days or place it in a press to straighten it, would it be valid. The basis for his uncertainty is that a parallel is drawn between the four species and the halachos of tereifos and just like an animal that was rendered a tereifah cannot be treated, so too, if one of the four species became invalid perhaps it cannot be repaired. On the other hand a tereifah relates to the life of the animal as opposed to this invalidation which relates to its beauty, perhaps it could be made beautiful again. He then cites Sefer Halachos Ketanos who writes that if one could repair a lulav by placing it in a press he should do so.