The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן תרמ"ז סעיף א'-ב'

Overview

Siman 647 Seif 1:

The ערבי נחל mentioned in the Torah is the species that is known by that name. Its leaves are long like a river, the edge of leaves are smooth and its stem is red (even if right now it is green it is valid). **Since most species grow by a river it is called ערבי נחל but even if it grows in the wilderness or on a mountain it is valid. There is a species that is similar to the aravah except that its leaves are round, the edge of the leaf resembles a saw and the stem is not red. This species is called צפצפה and is invalid. There is a variety of aravah whose edge is not smooth but it is also does not resemble a saw but has very small ridges resembling a small sickle and it is valid for use.**

- As long as it is not white it is considered red. Although presently it is green since it would turn red if left in the sun it is considered red. Pri Megadim maintains that if a species is missing any one of the three characteristics it is invalid for use. (M.B. 2)
- Some maintain that it is preferred to obtain an aravah that grew near a river but Taz implies that this is not important. (M.B. 3)

Siman 647 Seif 2:

If an aravah dried, if most of the leaves fell off or if the top of the branch was clipped it is invalid. If it is withered or if a minority of leaves fell off it is valid. Rambam maintains that if the top was clipped it is valid.

- Shulchan Aruch refers to where most of the leaves dried. (M.B. 7)
- One must be cautious since one can severe leaves placing the aravos in the basket or while shaking the lulav. (M.B. 8)
- This applies to the three tefachim necessary for a valid aravah. Magid Mishnah maintains that if the majority of leaves dangle, are cracked, or split they are invalid and Magen Avrohom writes that one should be stringent about these matters. (M.B. 9)
- The issue is when the stem is clipped, not when the upper leaves are clipped. The issue when the aravah is dry or clipped is that it is not hadar and there is a dispute whether the issue when the majority of leaves come off is that it is no longer an aravah or is it no longer hadar. (M.B. 10)
- There is a disagreement whether one may take an aravah with withered leaves even l'chatchila and since aravos are readily available one should adopt a stringent approach. (M.B. 11)
- We follow the first opinion. (M.B. 12)

Halacha Highlight

If the top of the aravah was clipped

Shulchan Aruch Siman 647 Seif 2

או שנקטם ראשו

Or of the top was clipped

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ב') presents three circumstances that render an aravah invalid. If the aravah is dry, meaning the majority of leaves are dry (מ"ב סק"ז), if the majority of leaves were severed or if the top of the stem was clipped. Mishnah Berurah (סק"י) clarifies that it is only if the stem is clipped is the aravah invalid, but if the leaves were clipped, even the leaves at the top of the aravah, they are treated no differently than leaves anywhere else on the aravah and it is not invalid unless the majority of all the leaves were severed.

Teshuvos V'Hanhagos (ח"ג סי' קפ"ז) writes that out of concern that the top of the aravah may have been clipped, one should obtain an aravah whose lavluv is still intact. In the normal growth of the aravah a small leaf which will eventually grow larger grows out of the very top of the stem and that small leaf is called the lavluv. The presence of the lavluv assures one that the stem was not clipped and if the lavluv is missing it raises the concern that part of the stem was clipped off together with the lavluv. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (הליכות שלמה סוכות פ"י סע' י"ד ודבר הלכה אות כ"ב) wrote that one need not be concerned that if the lavluv is missing that some of the stem was clipped off as well. Instead it is assumed that the lavluv fell off as the branch was growing the same way we assume that an esrog without a pitum lost the pitum in the normal course of its growth. He rules, however, that missing the lavluv is no worse than any other missing leaf about which Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"א) rules that since aravos are readily available one should make an effort to obtain aravos that are not missing any leaves. Teshuvas Even Yisroel (ח"ט בהערותיו על מ"ב סי' תר"נ סע' א') rules that since if one cannot discern that the top of the stem was clipped the aravah remains valid, certainly if only the lavluv is missing the aravah is valid since it is difficult to discern that the lavluv is missing and he contends that until the last generation no effort was made to obtain an aravah specifically with the lavluv still present.