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

Overview

Siman 648 Seif 1:

A dry *esrog* is invalid and it is considered dry when it does not produce moisture and this can be checked by passing a needle with a thread through the *esrog*. If there is moisture it will be seen on the thread. (An *esrog* from the previous year is certainly dry and invalid.)

- It is not considered *hadar*. If the *esrog* is shriveled [not fully moist but not dry], even if entirely so, it is valid since it retains some moisture. (M.B. 2)
- According to Magen Avrohom one inserts the wide end of the needle which contains the eye and by doing so the thread will also be inserted into the *esrog* and one will be able to determine whether there is moisture in the *esrog* without pushing the needle from one end to the other. Another method is to insert the needle into the *esrog* along its length (from the stem towards the *pitum*) so that it does not have to penetrate the seed region. (M.B. 3)

Siman 648 Seif 2:

An *esrog* that has a hole that runs through it is invalid regardless of the size of the hole. If it does not run through the *esrog* but is the size of an *isur* it is invalid. If there is any deficiency in the *esrog* it is invalid. Some maintain that even when the hole runs through the *esrog* it must also be deficient in order to be invalid and when the hole does not run from one end to the other it must be deficient the size of an *isur* to be invalid. The custom is to rule an *esrog* valid when the hole was made while on the tree by thorns even if, as a result, it is deficient since that is the way that it grows. However, if one sees that the skin and flesh are not intact inside of the hole the *esrog* is invalid according to the first opinion even though the hole does not run through the *esrog*. In a pressing circumstance one may be lenient in accordance with the first opinion and rule that it is valid provided that the hole is not the size of an *isur* nor does it run through the *esrog*.

- If the hole is square or long we calculate whether it would be the size of an *isur* if it were round. (M.B. 7)
- Ma'amar Mordechai agrees that on the second day of Yom Tov one may recite the *beracha* if the hole does not run through the *esrog* and is not the size of an *isur*. (M.B. 8)
- If the *esrog* is not deficient it is valid. If it is deficient and runs through the *esrog* it is invalid regardless of the size of the hole but if it does not run through the *esrog* it is not invalid unless it is the size of an *isur* and we are stringent unless it is a pressing circumstance. (M.B. 9)
- Sometimes it appears as though there is a hole but skin and flesh formed over it and in such a case it is valid. However, if there is no such formation but it is open and the *esrog* is deficient, even though the hole was made by a thorn it is invalid. (M.B. 10)
- If it is uncertain whether the flesh is intact one may be lenient and this is true even when the uncertainty relates to whether the hole reaches the seed region. (M.B. 11)
- One may even recite the *beracha*. (M.B. 12)

Halacha Highlight

Frozen *esrog*

Rema Siman 648 Seif 1

ואתרוג שהוא משנה שעברה

An *esrog* from last year

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') rules that a dry *esrog* is invalid for use for the *mitzvah*. It is considered dry when it no longer has measurable moisture inside and this could be determined by inserting a needle with a thread into the *esrog* and then examining the thread for moisture. The reason it is invalid is that a dry *esrog* is not *hadar* (מ"ב סק"ב). Rema then adds that if one has an *esrog* from the previous year it is certainly dry and invalid for use. Sha'ar HaTziyun (סק"ח) cites authorities who contend that if something is left unsupervised it will certainly be dry within a year. However, if something has proper supervision to retain its moisture, for example, it is immersed in a liquid, it could remain moist for an extended period of time, even beyond a year. He then relates that he personally saw an *esrog* that had been picked more than a year ago and had been properly supervised and protected from the air and upon examination confirmed that it retained a significant amount of moisture and under such conditions it may be used for the *mitzvah* even though it is more than a year old.

Poskim debate whether one may use an *esrog* that was kept in a freezer for an entire year for even though when it is removed from the freezer it appears fresh, it deteriorates in a short period of time afterwards. Rav Moshe Feinstein (אג"מ או"ח ח"א סי קפ"ה) notes that many fruits become ruined when they are frozen and perhaps the reason the *esrog* deteriorates so quickly is indicative of the fact that the inside the *esrog* became ruined as a result of being frozen. He says that to determine the *halacha* definitively one would have to experiment with many *esrogim* to study what happens when they defrost. Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv and Rav Shmuel Halevi Wosner (תורת ד' מינים שו"ת סי כ"ד אות י"א) contend that the reason the *esrog* deteriorates so quickly is due to the extreme temperature change. Since there is nothing inherently wrong with the *esrog* when it is removed from the freezer, it remains fit for use as long as it has not yet deteriorated.