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Mishna Berura
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סימן תרמ"ח סעיף י"א-י"ב

Halacha Highlight

Examining an *esrog*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 648 Seif 12

מחטמו ואילך... בכל שהוא

From the *chotem* and onwards… in the slightest amount

Shulchan Aruch (סע' י"ב) rules that from the *chotem* and onwards which is the part of the *esrog* that begins to slope towards the *pitum* a חזזית or any other invalidating appearance disqualifies an *esrog* regardless of the size of the spot. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק מ"ו) explains that this is true only when the spot is readily visible to everyone. However, if it is not readily visible due to its small size and one must gaze carefully to see the spot, it does not invalidate the *esrog*. Shulchan Aruch HaRav (סע' כ"ב) writes that the spot must be visible when one holds the *esrog* in his hands without having to stare at it in order to see it. Additionally, a spot invalidates an *esrog* only if it can be seen by most people at their first glance at the *esrog*. In other words, there are two prerequisites for a small spot on the *chotem* to invalidate an *esrog*. It must be visible when it is held in one's hands at the regular distance, rather than brining it close to one's eyes so that he could examine it closely. Secondly, it must visible at first glance rather than having to stare at it for a period of time before it becomes visible. Therefore, if one has to look at it a couple of times to see the spot, the *esrog* is not invalid (פסקי תשובות אות י"ד).

Rav Akiva Eiger (בתשובות שבסוף ספר דרוש וחידוש) clarifies that these guidelines apply to those disqualifications that relate to whether the *esrog* is *hadar* or not, e.g. חזזית, dryness and colored spots. In these cases we determine the status of the *esrog* by examining it from a regular distance without subjecting it to close scrutiny. However, those disqualifications that relate to whether the *esrog* is whole and complete (לקיחה תמה), for example, if the *esrog* is deficient or punctured, even if one does not notice the deficiency unless he carefully scrutinizes the *esrog* from close by, the *esrog* is invalid since factually the *esrog* is deficient.

Overview

Siman 648 Seif 11:

If one spot covers 50% of the surface, some maintain that it is valid and some maintain that it is invalid.

- Shulchan Aruch refers to where the bottom half, by the stem, is covered with a חזזית. (M.B. 43)
- One should be stringent in accordance with the first opinion since that was the second opinion cited by Shulchan Aruch. Pri Megadim contends that it must be evident that the majority is not covered by a חזזית and if it is known only by measuring the *esrog* it is invalid but Bikurei Yaakov disagrees. (M.B. 44)

Siman 648 Seif 12:

From the *chotem* and beyond, which is the place where the *esrog* begins to slope towards the *pitum*, any חזזית or change of appearance invalidates an *esrog* regardless of its size. Some maintain that even a dry spot invalidates the *esrog* regardless of its size on the *chotem*.

- For example, a black or white spot. (M.B. 45)
- This is true only when it is easily visible but if it cannot be seen unless one examines it closely because it is small, it does not invalidate the *esrog*. (M.B. 46)
- This opinion includes any invalidation due to it not being *hadar*. (M.B. 47)
- Meaning, on the *chotem* but on the rest of the *esrog* it shares the same *halacha* as a חזזית or change of appearance that it is invalid if one spot covers the majority of the *esrog* or has two or three spots even though they do not cover a majority of the *esrog*. (M.B. 48)