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סימן תרמ"ח סעיף כ"ב

Halacha Highlight

An *esrog* that shrivels

Shulchan Aruch Siman 648 Seif 22
שעור אתרוג קטן
The minimum size of an *esrog*

Shulchan Aruch writes that the minimum size for an *esrog* is the size of an egg. If an *esrog* is smaller than an egg it is invalid. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק ס"ו) explains that even if we know that the *esrog* is not unripe and will not grow any further, it is nevertheless, invalid since it is not considered a completed fruit. If an *esrog* is the size of an egg, even though it is not fully ripe it is valid provided that it is not green as grass (מ"ב ס"ק ס"ז). Biur Halacha (ד"ה פסול) in the name of Chaye Adam rules that if an *esrog* began larger than an egg but over the course of Sukkos shriveled to smaller than an egg it becomes invalid since at the time is shrinks to a size smaller than an egg it is no longer *hadar*. Sha'arei Teshuvah (ס"ק כ"ב) addresses the case of an *esrog* that is the size of an egg but one knows that over the course of Sukkos it will shrink to smaller than an egg and rules that the validity of the *esrog* is measured each time one will take the *esrog* to fulfill the *mitzvah*. As long as presently it is the minimal size it is valid even though shortly it will no longer be the correct size.

Chazon Ish (או"ח סי' קמ"ח סק"ב) rejects this position and contends that even after it shrivels it remains fit for use for the *mitzvah*. The Gemara relates that R' Meir maintains that even an *esrog* the size of a nut is valid and even according to R' Yehudah who argues that it must be minimally the size of an egg, his reasoning is that if it is smaller than an egg it is not a completed fruit. Accordingly, if it reached the minimum size, thereby indicating that it is a completed fruit, who is to say that if it subsequently shrinks that it should become invalid for use? See also Mikrai Kodesh (סוכות ח"ב סי' כ"ט) who cites authorities who offer another possible reason why an *esrog* that shrinks is invalid, namely, that at such a small size it is not discernable that one took an *esrog* but other authorities indicate that this issue is not relevant.

Overview

Siman 648 Seif 22:

The measure of a small *esrog* is that if it is smaller than an egg it is invalid but if it is the size of an egg, even if it is yet unripe and fruit is not completed, it is valid. If it is larger than an egg it is valid.

- Even if we determine that it is not unripe in the sense that it will not grow any more, nevertheless, if it is smaller than an egg it is not considered complete but if it is that size it is considered a fruit even though it has not ripened and would have continued to grow. (M.B. 66)
- It must not be green as a leek since it would not be considered complete if it would not change to the color of an *esrog*. (M.B. 67)
- Even if it is so large that one must transport it on his shoulder it is valid since as long as one possesses all four species they are not essential to one another and one may take the *lulav* and then the *esrog*. (M.B. 68)