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

Overview

Siman 650 Seif 1:

The length of the *hadas* and *aravah* is three *tefachim* and the spine of the *lulav* should be four *tefachim* so that the spine of the *lulav* extends one *tefach* beyond the *hadas*. For these measurements one takes an *amah* of 5 *tefachim* and divides that into 6 parts and then takes three of those for the length of the *hadas* so it turns out that the length of the *hadas* and *aravah* is 2½ *tefachim* which is equal to 10 גודלים and the length of the *lulav* 13 1/3 גודלים. Some maintain that the length of the *hadas and aravah* is 12 גודלים and the length of the *lulav's* spine is 16 גודלים (and *l'chatchila* this is the custom).

- The measurement is the length of the stem without the *leaves*. (M.B. 1)
- According to Shulchan Aruch rather than requiring 3 *tefachim* it is sufficient for it to be 2.5 *tefachim*. (M.B. 3)
- Meaning the width of an average person's thumb and there are four thumbs per *tefach*. (M.B. 4)
- According to this calculation this *tefach* contains 3.3 thumbs. (M.B. 5)
- The extra *tefach* of the *lulav* is a standard *tefach* so that the total is 14 thumbs. (M.B. 6)
- This opinion maintains that all the *tefachim* are measured with 4 thumb *tefachim*. (M.B. 7)
- *B'dieved*, it is sufficient if the *lulav* is 13.3 thumbs and the *hadas* and *aravah* is 10 but smaller than these measurements is invalid even *b'dieved*. Tola'as Yaakov writes that kabbalisticly the spine should face the holder and the face of the *lulav* should be directed outwards and this is our custom. (M.B. 8)

Siman 650 Seif 2:

There is no upper limit. There is an opinion that maintains that even when one adds length to his *hadas* and *aravah* the spine of the *lulav* must extend an additional *tefach* beyond them.

Halacha Highlight

Measuring three *tefachim*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 650 Seif 1
שעור הדס וערבה שלשה טפחים

The measure of the *hadas* and *aravah* is three *tefachim*

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') presents two opinions concerning the method for measuring three *tefachim* which is the minimum length of the *hadasim* and *aravos*. According to the first opinion one takes an *amah* that is comprised of 5 *tefachim* and divides that *amah* into 6 parts (meaning each *tefach* is 5/6 of a regular *tefach*). Three of those size *tefachim* is the minimum length of the *hadasim* and *aravos* which will be 2.5 of our standard *tefacim* (3 x 5/6= 15/6 or 2½). Put differently the minimum length of the *hadasim* and *aravos* is 10 thumbs. Shulchan then cites other authorities, introduced with the words ויש אומרים, that the minimum length for *hadasim* and *aravos* is twelve thumbs which is based on a standard size *tefach* and Rema notes that the custom is in accordance with the latter opinion. Although the general rule in Shulchan Aruch is that when Shulchan Aruch presents a *halacha* and then introduces a dissenting opinion with the words ויש אומרים (סתם ויש) *halacha* follows the first opinion, in this case, one should make an effort to follow the stringent opinion who requires a minimum length of three standard *tefachim* (אור לציון ח"ב במבוא עמף אי אות י' וחזון עובדיה סוכות עמ' שס"ב).

Practically, there is a dispute between Chazon Ish and Rav Avrohom Chaim Noeh concerning the measure of a thumb. According to Chazon Ish it is 2.5 centimeters whereas according to Rav Noeh it is 2 centimeters. Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (יבקש תורה, ארבעת מינים עמ' 22) writes that the custom in Yerushalayim accords with Rav Noeh's measurements. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (הליכות שלמה פסח פ"ט סע' ח' ודבר הלכה אות ט"ז) also confirms that the primary custom is in accordance with the smaller measurement and this is common custom in *Klal Yisroel* but nevertheless, when it comes to a Biblical *mitzvah* one should be stringent and satisfy the measurements of Chazon Ish.