

THE BAIS HAVAAD

HALACHA JOURNAL

Family, Business, and Jewish Life through the Prism of Halacha

VOLUME 5781 • ISSUE XXXI • SHABBOS SUKKOS

A PUBLICATION OF THE
BAIS HAVAAD HALACHA CENTER

105 River Ave. #301, Lakewood, NJ 08701
1.888.485.VAAD (8223)
www.baishavaad.org
info@baishavaad.org

Lakewood • Midwest • Brooklyn • South Florida

לע"נ הרב יוסף ישראל
ב"ר משה גרוסמן זצ"ל

Dedicated in loving memory of
HaRav Yosef Grossman zt"l



PICKING FRUIT: A GUIDE TO ESROG SELECTION

By Dayan Yehoshua Grunwald

This guide is intended to serve as a basic primer on what to seek and what to avoid in an esrog. It is not a comprehensive treatment of the subject. When in doubt about the kashrus of an esrog, a rabbinic authority should be consulted.

SPOTS

A black, white, or dark brown spot, or a boil/blister, and according to some, a raised *blettel* (a light brown mark caused by a leaf resting on the esrog during the fruit's growth), invalidates the esrog in either of two circumstances:

- The mark is on the *chotam* (lit., nose; the upper section of the esrog, from the point where the inward slope toward the top

begins); or

- The marks are below the *chotam*, but there are two (or more) of them, positioned such that if one were to draw a line to encircle them it would go most of the way around the esrog.

There are many other types of spots that can pose halachic questions.

SHAPE

An esrog shaped like a ball is invalid. It is a *hidur* (beautification of the mitzvah) for the esrog to have *shekios uvelitos* (valleys and ridges) and for the *pitam* (the protrusion on top) to be aligned with the *uketz* (stem).

COMPLETENESS

If even a minute amount of the fruit beneath the glaze is missing, the esrog is invalid on the first day of Sukkos. (Identifying the point at which the glaze ends and the skin begins requires expertise.) On the remaining days of Sukkos, depending on numerous factors, the esrog may still be kosher. (This year, because the first day falls on Shabbos and the Four Species are not taken until the second day, the esrog can be missing small amounts below the *chotam*. If it is unclear whether anything is missing from the esrog, there is halachic basis to be lenient even on the first day.

PITAM

The *pitam* is the shaft that protrudes from the top of the esrog. An esrog that had a *pitam*—even only during the final stage of its growth—but it has fallen off, cannot be used on the first two days of Yom Tov. If the esrog had a *pitam* early in its development but it fell off while the esrog was still on the tree, its validity is the subject of debate among contemporary *poskim*. However, it is generally accepted that if the *pitam* fell off at a very early stage, the esrog remains kosher. Some are careful to use only an esrog with a *pitam* to avoid these issues.

(There may be visual clues to when the *pitam* came off: If the fruit shows signs of healing at the point of connection to the missing *pitam*, this indicates that it was still on the tree when the *pitam* was lost.)

According to the Aruch Hashulchan, an esrog whose *pitam* has fallen off may be used on Chol Hamo'ed.

(continued on page 2)

Cloud Cover

Q Is there something specific to have in mind when fulfilling the mitzvah of sukkah, apart from intent to fulfill the mitzvah?

A The Torah commands us (Vayikra 23), "You shall dwell in sukkos for seven days." According to *Chazal*, on the first night one is obligated to eat in the sukkah, while on the rest of the holiday one is required only not to eat outside the sukkah, though he fulfills a mitzvah by eating in it.

(continued on page 2)

Q&A from the
BAIS HAVAAD
HALACHA HOTLINE

1.888.485.VAAD(8223)
ask@baishavaad.org

(continued from page 1)

COLOR

When an esrog is dark green and doesn't turn yellow with time, it is a sign that the esrog isn't completely ripe and is unfit for the mitzvah. Once the esrog is partially yellow or light green, it can be assumed that it will turn completely yellow with time, and it is kosher. Still, it should preferably be completely yellow. Some *poskim* even write that the *lechatchila* to use a yellow esrog outweighs all other *hidurim*.

UKETZ

The stem that connects the esrog to the tree is called the *uketz*. On the first day of Sukkos the esrog is invalid if so little *uketz* is attached that it isn't either protruding from or flush with the esrog but sunken.

SIZE

According to the Chazon Ish, an esrog must be large enough to displace 3.53 fluid ounces of water. According to R' Avraham Chaim No'eh, 2.04 fl. oz. is sufficient. Esrogim can sometimes shrink, so one should not purchase one too close to the minimum size.

GRAFTING

One should only purchase an esrog from a trusted source, to ensure that it isn't from a grafted tree, which would likely invalidate it.

FRESHNESS

An esrog that has dried out to the point that if it would emit no juice if cut is invalid. An esrog from the previous year is presumed dried out unless it was artificially preserved.

Q&A from the BAIS HAVAAD HALACHA HOTLINE

1.888.485.VAAD(8223)
ask@baishavaad.org

(continued from page 1)

The Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 625) explains that when the Torah says the reason for the mitzvah is "because I placed the Jewish people in sukkos" it refers to the *ananei hakavod* (Clouds of Glory), and this is what we commemorate on Sukkos.

The meaning of the word "sukkos" in the Torah is actually subject to a dispute in the Gemara (Sukkah 11b): R' Eliezer holds that it refers to the *ananei hakavod* (and this is codified by the Shulchan Aruch), while R' Akiva maintains that it refers to actual sukkos, i.e., huts. The Bach comments that although we would normally rule in accordance with R' Akiva in a dispute with R' Eliezer, in this case we follow R' Eliezer because Targum Onkelos translates sukkos as *ananei hakavod*, and Rashi and the Ramban also interpret it as R' Eliezer. However, one could argue that the Targum cannot serve as proof that the halacha follows R' Eliezer, because Onkelos was a disciple of R' Eliezer and wrote his translation under the tutelage of his teachers, so it stands to reason that he would follow R' Eliezer's view. Indeed, the Rashbam there says that the word sukkos refers to huts, as R' Akiva holds. The Pri Megadim (O.C. 625) cites both opinions and concludes that it is proper for *medakdekim* (those who are scrupulous about mitzvos) to have both opinions in mind (to commemorate both the huts and the *ananei hakavod*).



DAYAN YOSEF
GREENWALD

The Bach says there is a practical halachic difference between the two views: Because the Torah says "so that your generations will know," one must have in mind the reason for the mitzvah of sitting in the sukkah in order to fulfill the mitzvah. This is different from other mitzvos, where thinking about the reason for the mitzvah is not a requirement (with the exceptions of tzitzis and tefillin, regarding each of which the Torah also says "so that...") (Bach, O.C. 8:25).

Despite the importance of having in mind the reason for the mitzvah of sukkah, if one fails to do so, he does not violate the mitzvah to dwell in the sukkah, but he does fail to fulfill the mitzvah to eat bread in the sukkah the first night (according to the Bach; others disagree, see Mishnah Berurah and Piskei Teshuvos *ibid.*). During the rest of Sukkos, he doesn't fulfill the mitzvah, but neither does he violate it.

This is similar to the question of Tosafos (Sukkah 9a) why a stolen sukkah needs to be specifically invalidated rather than invoking the general principle that a *mitzvah haba'ah ba'aveirah* (a mitzvah performed by transgressing an *aveirah*) isn't valid. The Minchas Chinuch answers, though, that there is a difference: In a *mitzvah haba'ah ba'aveirah*, one does not fulfill the mitzvah, but neither does he violate it. But the specific disqualification of a stolen sukkah would actually negate the mitzvah and render it as if one ate in his house. Likewise in our case of not having the proper intention, one has not actually committed an *aveirah*.



Business
Halacha
Services



Bais Din
and Dispute
Resolution



Zichron
Gershon
Kollel for
Dayanus



Medical
Halacha
Center



Kehilla and
Bais Din
Primacy
Initiative



Halachic
Awareness
and
Education

Scan here to receive the weekly email version
of the Halacha Journal or sign up at
www.baishavaad.org/subscribe

Elevate your Inbox.



Join us for low healthcare costs, confidential healthcare guidance
and the freedom to use your choice provider.

440.772.0700 • UnitedRefuah.org



United Refuah
HealthShare is
not an insurance
company and
does not offer
insurance.