

S O Y - J S C



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PRACTICAL GUIDE
TO THE
FOUR SPECIES

Unless specified otherwise, citations from Rashi, Tosfot, Rif, Ran, and Rosh can be found in their commentaries on Masechet Sukkah. Citations from the Rambam are from Hilchot Lulav, and citations from the Tur and Shulchan Aruch are in Orach Chaim.

Lulav

1. One should buy a lulav with a hechsher in order to be sure that it came from a date palm tree and not a Canary palm.¹
2. The lulav must have leaves that cover the spine² and a spine of at least 4 tefachim.³
3. It is preferable to buy a lulav with leaves that are not separated from the spine. If, however, the leaves are somewhat separated from the spine, the lulav is acceptable as long as the leaves are not drooping downwards.⁴
4. If the majority of the middle leaf is split, according to Ashkenazim the lulav is invalid,

1. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe O.C. 4:123) holds that a branch of a Canary palm tree, which does not produce edible dates, is not considered a lulav. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (cited in Halichot Shlomo 10:9), however, argues that the date palm and Canary palm are of the same species. Rav Hershel Schachter ("Halachos of Daled Minim," min. 15) favors the former approach. The Halachos of the Four Species (p. 100) details how to distinguish a Canary palm branch from the regular date palm branch; one indication is that the spine of the Canary palm is very flexible.

2. The Gemara (Sukkah 32a) explains that a lulav whose leaves do not cover its spine is invalid. This is codified by the Rambam (8:4), Tur, and Shulchan Aruch (645:4). The Beir Halacha (645:1 s.v. V'adayin) cites a view that a lulav is invalid only if the majority of the spine is uncovered, but he leaves the matter unresolved. The Chazon Ish (146:21), however, sides with those who require the entire spine to be covered.

3. Rabbi Yochanan's opinion in the Gemara (Sukkah 32b) is that the spine of the lulav must be a minimum of 4 tefachim. Based on Tosfot (32b s.v. Tzei), the Tur (650:1) holds that the lulav need be only 13.3 etzba'ot (rather than 16) since Rabbi Tarfon allowed using the smaller tefachim to measure the lulav. The Ramban differs slightly and requires 14 etzba'ot. The Beit Yosef (650:1), however, infers from the fact that the Rif and Rambam do not cite Rabbi Tarfon that they hold that 16 etzba'ot are required. The

Shulchan Aruch (650:1) quotes all three opinions and seems to side with the Tur. The Rama, though, writes that the minhag is to follow the Rambam. Chazon Ovadia (p. 362) writes that it is preferable to be strict for the opinion of the Rambam.

There is great dispute about the length of a tefach: Rav Avraham Chaim Na'eh holds it is 3.2 inches, Rav Moshe Feinstein and the Aruch Hashulchan hold it is 3.6 inches, and the Chazon Ish holds it is 3.8 inches. See Rabbi Chaim Jachter's essay in Kol Torah (Parshat Ki Tavo Vol. 13 Num. 2).

4. The Mishna (Sukkah 29b) states that a lulav with parted leaves is valid, while a lulav with leaves split completely is invalid. Rashi (29b s.v. Nifratz, as understood by Tosfot) explains that the lulav is invalid only if the leaves are actually detached from the spine. Tosfot, however, question Rashi's approach. In a sense similar to Rashi, the Rif (15a) and Rambam (8:3) explain that the Mishna invalidates a lulav that has leaves split to the point that the leaves drooped downwards. The Shulchan Aruch (645:1) quotes the opinion of Rambam and Rif; the Beit Yosef quotes from the Ran that everyone would agree that by a lulav where the leaves fell off, it would be invalid, albeit for other reasons.

The Maggid Mishneh (Hilchot Lulav 8:3) cites the view of the Geonim that although a lulav with parted leaves is acceptable, it is preferable to get a lulav with leaves that are not separated from the spine. The Rama (645:1)

while some Sephardic poskim are lenient.⁵ It is preferable to get a lulav that is completely closed, if it is easy to get one.⁶

5. Ideally, one should have a completely straight lulav. If the spine of the lulav is bent, it is still acceptable unless it is as bent as a sickle. One should avoid using a lulav where the majority or all of the top leaves are bent like a reed.⁷

codifies this position and adds that it is preferable to have a lulav with leaves that are completely bound straight with the spine. The Taz (645:1-2) strongly questions the Geonim and Rama and concludes that a lulav with slightly parted leaves is acceptable even l'chatchila. The Mishna Brurah (645:3) and Kaf Hachaim (645:7), though, cite several achronim who side with the Rama.

The Gemara (Sukkah 32a) states that if the leaves of lulav are stiff like wood, the lulav is invalid. Rashi (s.v. Charut, explained by the Beit Yosef 645:2) explains that when the lulav is left on the tree for a long time, its leaves harden so much so that it is impossible to bind them to the spine. Although this Gemara is quoted by the Tur and Rama (645:2), the Rambam and Shulchan Aruch make no mention of it. See Pri Megadim (E" A 645:1), who explains how the Rambam understood the Gemara.

5. The second version of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi's opinion (Sukkah 32a) is that a lulav with a split tiyomet is invalid. Rashi (s.v. Tiyomet) explains that the tiyomet is the highest middle two leaves extending directly out of the top of the spine. Tosfot (Bava Kama 96b) cite the Geonim as agreeing with Rashi but note that according to this explanation it would be almost impossible to find a valid lulav, as almost every lulav in Tosfot's area grew with one middle leaf rather than two. Tosfot, though, explain that even Rashi and the Geonim would agree that a lulav that did not grow with two middle leaves is valid; the only problem referred to in the Gemara is if a lulav grew with two middle leaves that subsequently split.

The Terumat Hadeshen (Responsa 96) cites one version of Rashi (Bava Kama 96a s.v. Hatiyomet) that the tiyomet is the single tallest

middle leaf. The Terumat Hadeshen writes that the minhag is in accordance with this explanation. The Rama 645:3 writes that the Ashkenazic minhag follows the Terumat Hadeshen. Mishna Brurah (645:16) adds that one should not use a lulav if the majority of the middle leaf is split. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichot Shlomo 10:1) explained that that minhag is not concerned for the opinion of the Geonim who required a "double" tiyomet.

The Rif (15a) and Rambam (8:4) explain that every leaf is really doubled over, and the point at which these sides meet is called the tiyomet. The Rosh (3:6) explains that according to the Rif, if the majority of the length of the majority of the leaves split, the lulav would be invalid. The Shulchan Aruch 645:3 codifies the opinion of the Rif. Chazon Ovadia (Sukkot p. 297-8) codifies the opinion of the Rama even for Sephardim, while the Ish Matzliach (on Rama *ibid.*) rules that if there is no other lulav, Sephardim may rely on the Rambam.

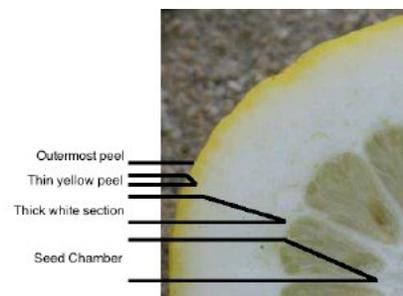
Interestingly, the Maamar Mordechai (645:4) writes that one should not check the middle leaf too forcefully, as it may split in the process; if it does not look split upon glancing at it, it is valid. This view is quoted by the Kaf Hachaim (645:24).

6. Rama 645:3 writes that it is preferable to get a lulav that is completely closed to be strict for the opinion of those who hold that if the middle leaf is even partially split, the lulav is invalid. Chazon Ovadia (p. 300) agrees. Mishna Brurah 645:18-9 writes that if only the minority of the middle leaf is split one need not be strict unless another lulav is available to him.

7. The Gemara (32a) states that a bent lulav is invalid if it is as bent ("akum") like a sickle. The Gemara adds that if the leaves of the lulav are

Etrog

1. It is important to buy an etrog that has a reliable hechsher in order to be sure that is not grafted.⁸
2. An etrog must be at least the size of an egg.⁹
3. A hole of any size invalidates the etrog. Many poskim hold that it is not an issue if only a piece of the outermost peel is removed, while some say that it is acceptable even if a piece of the thin yellow peel is removed.¹⁰



bent backwards towards the spine, it is nevertheless valid, since that is the normal way for it to grow. The Rambam (8:3) and Shulchan Aruch (645:8) codify this Gemara.

The Gemara also says that a lulav whose leaves are bent (“kafuf”) is invalid. The Rosh (Responsa 24:10) explains that it is invalid only if the leaves and the spine both are bent; if the leaves alone are bent, it is valid. In fact, the Rosh mentions that he preferred a lulav with the middle leaf bent in order to ensure that it was not split. Tur and Shulchan Aruch (645:9) rule in accordance with the Rosh. The Mishna Brurah (645:40) limits the Rosh’s leniency to where only the middle leaf is bent and not if majority of the leaves are bent. The Chida (Machzik Bracha 645:4) writes that ideally the lulav should be completely straight.

8. The Rama (Responsa 226) writes that an etrog that is the product of an etrog tree grafted with a lemon tree is invalid because it no longer qualifies as an etrog. The Levush (649:4) writes likewise but for a different reason. He asserts that a grafted etrog is invalid since it was created in violation of kilayim (grafting trees of different species) even if a non-Jew did it. The Shevut Yaakov (1:36) disagrees with the Levush’s reasoning, since we hold that non-Jews are not obligated in the laws of kilayim. The Shevut Yaakov quotes a story in which the Shach permitted making a bracha upon a grafted etrog, but he adds that the Shach later retracted. In sum, almost all poskim consider a grafted etrog to be invalid, including the Magen Avraham (648:23), Taz (648:3), and Chazon Ovadia (p. 223). Rabbi

Zvi Sobolofsky (“The Laws of the Daled Minim,” min. 3) advised getting an etrog with a reliable hechsher in order to make sure that it is not grafted.

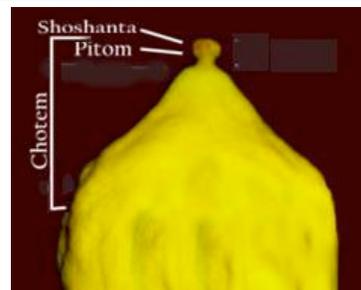
9. See Mishna (Sukkah 34b), Rambam (7:8), and Shulchan Aruch (648:22).

10. The Mishna (34b), according to Rashi, states that an etrog that is punctured and lacking even a little bit is invalid. If, however, it is punctured but not lacking, it remains valid. The Gemara (36a) limits the leniency of the Mishna to where the hole does not penetrate all the way through the etrog and the hole is not the size of an issar coin. The Rosh (3:18) agrees with Rashi. Rabbeinu Chananeil, though, maintains that the Gemara’s limitation was regarding the stringency of the Mishna. Thus, in his view, the Gemara means that an etrog that is punctured and lacking is invalid only if the hole goes all the way through or is at least the size of an issar coin.

The Rambam (8:7, as understood by the Beit Yosef 648:2) explains the Mishna as meaning if an etrog is punctured **or** lacking it is invalid, unlike Rashi. For all practical purposes, though, the Rambam agrees with Rashi, because he explains the Gemara as referring to the first case, like Rabbeinu Chananeil, thus limiting the stringency of the Mishna to where the hole goes all the way through or is the size of an issar coin. Though the Rif (17b) is not clear, the Beit Yosef suggests that he agrees with the Rambam.

The Gemara (35b), according to the explanation of the Rabbeinu Chananeil and Rosh (3:17), establishes that an etrog that is peeled in

4. If the pitom falls off or the stem on the bottom of the etrog is completely removed, the etrog is invalid.¹¹
5. Some poskim invalidate an etrog that has black dots found on its chotam, while others deem it valid.¹²
6. An etrog that is completely green is invalid. If, however, if it started to become yellow, it is valid.¹³



its majority is invalid, while an etrog that has only a minority peeled is valid. The Ran (17a s.v. Niklaf) explains that the Gemara is discussing a case where the outermost peel (which is thin like frost) is removed. If, however, the thin yellow peel is removed, the etrog would be invalid, as it is an etrog that is lacking. The Rambam (8:7, as understood by the Bach) agrees that it is valid only if none of the thin yellow peel was removed. The Rashba (Responsa 1:58), however, says that it is invalid only if part of the thick white section is removed (see the Machon Yerushalayim edition of the Tur 648 note 13).

The Bach concludes that the view of the Ran should be normative. Shaar Hatziyun (648:27) elaborates upon the Bach (see also Beur Halacha 645:2). The Chazon Ish (147:1), however, claims that there never was a dispute and everyone really subscribes to the view of the Rashba. See Mishna Brurah (648:26), who discusses the status of an etrog if the area where the outermost peel was removed became discolored.

The Terumat Hadeshen (Responsa 99) writes that if a hole was made while the etrog was growing but the flesh and peel subsequently grew over it, it is valid. Rama (648:2) agrees.

11. The Mishna (34b) establishes that if the pitom fell off an etrog, the etrog is invalid, but if the oketz fell off, it is valid. The Gemara (35b) explains that the pitom is the rod-like protrusion (“buchanto”). Rashi (s.v. Tani) cites a dispute between his teachers about how to explain what the pitom and oketz are. Rabbeinu Yaakov explained pitom as the protrusion on top of the etrog and the oketz as the thick stem on the bottom. Rabbeinu Yitzchak, however, explained that oketz refers to the outer part of the thick stem on the bottom, while pitom refers to the

inner part of that stem, meaning that the etrog would be invalid only if the stem on the bottom is totally removed, even the part that penetrates the etrog. Rashi sides with Rabbeinu Yaakov.

The Rabbeinu Chananeil (36a) explains that the Gemara was not explaining the Mishna at all but rather adding another potential disqualification. According to his view, the pitom is on the top of the etrog and “buchanto” is on bottom. He adds that the oketz is the outer part of the stem on bottom, and if that is removed, the etrog remains valid. The Rif (17b) and Rambam (8:7) agree. The Rosh (3:16) writes that the minhag was to follow Rabbeinu Chananeil. Shulchan Aruch (648:7-8) concurs. Mishna Brurah (648:31) writes that if the bud on top of the pitom falls off, one should avoid using the etrog unless it is the nicest one available.

The Rosh adds that if the etrog grew without a pitom in the first place, it is valid. Rama (648:7) codifies this. Mishna Brurah (648:32) explains that the reason an etrog without a pitom is invalid is either because its lacking or is not “haddar.” Accordingly, if an etrog grew that way initially, it is valid.

12. The Mishna (34b) explains that an etrog upon which there is a protruding growth (“chazazit”) that covers the majority of the etrog is invalid. The Gemara (35b) adds that if the growth is found in two or three separate places, it invalidates the etrog, since it appears “spotted.” Additionally, the Gemara states, if the growth is found on the chotam, it invalidates the etrog regardless of its size. The Rosh (3:20) writes that a discoloration of white or black has the same status as a growth. Therefore, the Tur and Shulchan Aruch (648:12) write that a discoloration of any size on the chotam would invalidate the etrog.

7. See note for a list of other ideal qualities. Besides for the qualities that Chazal specified, the niceness of an etrog includes its subjective beauty.¹⁴

What is the chotam? Rashi (35b s.v. Ubechotmo) explains that the line at which the etrog begins to slope inwards is the chotam. See Halachos of the Four Minim (p. 10) for a diagram. The Rosh explains that the Rif holds that the chotam is the entire slope up to its pitom. The Beit Yosef (648:12) writes that the minhag was to be strict for both Rashi and the Rif. The Be'ur Halacha (648 s.v. Mimakom) explains that the Rif, and by implication Shulchan Aruch, agree that the pitom itself is included in the chotam.

The Pituche' Arba'at HaMinim (p. 266-7) discusses black dots that are caused by bug sprays that farmers use. He suggests two reasons to be lenient. First, he argues (based on the Terumat Hadeshen responsa 99) that since these black dots are part of the normal appearance of the etrog, they do not present a problem. Furthermore, the black dots are external to the etrog. Nonetheless, he concludes that one should be strict unless the dot can be removed. Similarly, Rav Dovid Miller ("Hilchot Arba Minim") and Halachos of the Four Species (p. 22) say that a black dot on the upper part of the etrog invalidates it.

Rabbi Zvi Sobolovsky (*ibid.* min 4-5), however, explained that most of the etrogim we have do not have any issue with discoloration; the little black dots are just specks of dirt. Similarly, Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg ("A Practical Guide to Purchasing Daled Minim," min. 32-3) quotes Rav Hershel Schachter as saying that black dots invalidate the etrog only if they develop because of rotting, which is not usually the case. Mishna Brurah (648:46) writes that a discoloration disqualifies an etrog only if it is noticeable upon a normal glance without staring at it carefully.

13. The Mishna (34b) cites Rabbi Yehuda's view that an etrog that is as green as grass is invalid. The Rosh (3:21) cites Tosfot's assertion that an etrog that is green but will turn yellow over time

is valid, since it must be a complete fruit in order for it to turn yellow. Shulchan Aruch (648:21) codifies this view. Mishna Brurah (648:65) writes that the Achronim decided that one should not rely on the fact that the etrog might potentially turn yellow later on unless it has begun to start doing so. Chazon Ovadia (p. 256) agrees. Rabbi Hershel Schachter ("The Halachos of the Daled Minim," min. 33-5) cited the Mishkenot Yaakov's opinion that the etrog is invalid even if it started to yellow.

14. Bumpy: Rama (Responsa 126) writes that the differences between a grafted etrog and a real etrog include: 1) A real one is bumpy, while a grafted one is smooth. 2) A real one has an indented oketz, while a grafted one has an oketz that protrudes. 3) A real one has a thick peel with very little juice, while a grafted one has a thin peel and a lot of juice. The Tiferet Yisrael (Mishnayot Sukka 3:6) says that a person ideally should look for an etrog that is very bumpy and has an indented oketz. Nitei Gavriel (p. 140) as well as Kashrut Arba'at Haminim (p. 8) codify this view.

Ball-like: The Gemara (36a) says that an etrog that is round like a ball is invalid. This is quoted by Tur and Shulchan Aruch (648:18). Mishna Brurah (648:59) explains that a round etrog is invalid since it is not a normal shape of an etrog. Be'ur Halacha (648:18) elaborates that it is not necessary to be stringent for the opinion of Tosfot that a cylindrical etrog is invalid, since most authorities disagree. Kaf Hachaim (648:113), however, says that ideally, one should accommodate this view of Tosfot.

Tower-like: Tiferet Yisrael (Yachin Sukkah 3:6) writes that ideally, the etrog should be like a tower, meaning thick at the bottom and thin on top. Nitei Gavriel (p. 140) and Arba'at Haminim Lamedharim (p. 252) agree.

Symmetrical: Tiferet Yisrael (*ibid.*) writes that ideally, the pitom should be lined up with the oketz. Kashrut Arba'at Haminim (p. 8) agrees.

Hadasim

1. One should use three hadasim for the mitzvah. Each hadas should be at least 3 tefachim in length.¹⁵
2. The hadas should have rows of three leaves spanning the length of the branch. One can check for these rows at arm's length.¹⁶
3. If leaves fell off such that rows of three leaves cover only a majority of the branch (or a majority of the length requirement for the mitzvah if one has a long branch), the hadas is acceptable.¹⁷
4. If the leaves become dry to the point where they easily wither away when one presses a fingernail to them and they lose their green color, the hadas is pasul. If, however, three green leaves in a row at the top of the hadas remain, the hadas is valid.¹⁸

Arbaat Haminim Lamehadrin (p. 177) cites Rav Nissim Karelitz, who says that this criterion is met if the pitom and oketz are approximately lined up.

Aesthetic beauty: Chazon Ovadia (p. 278) quotes the Maamar Mordechai, who asserts that besides for the properties that Chazal specified, the beauty of an etrog depends on the subjective view of the individual. Accordingly, Rabbi Mordechai Willig (quoted by Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg *ibid.* min. 44-6) would ask his wife to pick the nicest-looking etrog from amongst the valid etrogim.

15. Rambam (7:7) and Shulchan Aruch (651:1) rule in accordance with Rabbi Yishmael, who requires three hadasim and two aravot. The Rama adds that in extenuating circumstances, one may use just one hadas. Regarding their sizes, Shulchan Aruch (650:1) rules like Tosfot that the minimum size for both hadasim and aravot is 10 etzba'ot; however, he also mentions the Rif's opinion of 12 etzba'ot (see note 3).

16. The Gemara (32b) considers a hadas with rows of two leaves and one leaf on top to be a hadas shoteh, or "unstable" hadas. The Gemara understands the requirement for rows of three leaves (meshulashim) to be the explanation of "avot," the Torah's description of the hadas.

Halichot Shlomo (*ibid.*) rules that the determining factor for meshulashim is the location of the stems of the leaves. Additionally, he explains that a row of leaves is considered

meshulash if the three stems are in close proximity such that it would be possible to draw a horizontal

circumference of the branch that would intersect with all three stems (see diagram).

Rav Yigal Ariel (Techumin 11:177) understands that it is sufficient if the leaves are roughly in rows of three and do not blatantly deviate from rows. Rav Chaim Jachter (*ibid.*) notes that the common practice of some gedolim was to analyze the hadas at arm's length to make this determination. Yalkut Yosef (646:8) rules that ideally the leaves should cover the entire branch.

The Rama (646:3) quotes a minhag to be lenient if there are two leaves above another two leaves, though the Mishna Brurah (646:15) rules that one should ideally not rely on this minhag. Yalkut Yosef (646:2) writes that such a hadas is invalid.

17. Shulchan Aruch (646:5) rules that one ideally should have the leaves be in rows of three for the entire length of the hadas; nevertheless, one fulfills his obligation if the leaves are in rows of three for the majority of the branch. Mishna Brurah (646:18) states that this majority refers to a majority of the minimum size of a hadas branch. Thus, since the hadas should be 12 etzba'ot, a majority would only require no more



Aravot

1. One should use two aravot branches for the mitzvah. Each aravah should be at least 3 tefachim in length.¹⁵
2. The leaves of the aravah should preferably be long and narrow with smooth edges. If the edges of the leaves have small serrations, the aravah is nonetheless valid. If, however, the stem is white, the leaves are rounded, or the edges of the leaves have large serrations, the aravah is invalid.¹⁹
3. If most of the leaves of an aravah dried out to the extent that they lost their green color, the aravah is pasul. If, however, the leaves only withered and did not completely dry out, the aravah may still be used.²⁰
4. If a majority of the leaves fall off the aravah, it is invalid.²¹

than 6 etzba'ot, even if the hadas is larger than its necessary 12 etzba'ot.

If only two leaves remain in each row for a majority of the hadas, Mishna Brurah (*ibid.*) rules that one may be lenient in extenuating circumstances.

18. Shulchan Aruch (646:7) explains that for the leaves to be considered dry, they must have turned white. Mishna Brurah (646:20) notes that if they have turned white, they certainly will wither when touched. If it is difficult to determine whether one's hadas is dry, Mishna Brurah says that one can test it by putting it in water for a day or two and checking to see if it returns to its initial moist state. Shulchan Aruch (646:8) notes that if three moist leaves remain in a row at the top of the hadas, the hadas is valid. Mishna Brurah (646:21) explains that having three leaves on top allows the hadas to retain its status of hadar.

19. The Mishna (33b) writes that a tzaftzefa is not the same species as an aravah. The Gemara (34a) writes that an aravah has long and narrow leaves with smooth edges, whereas a tzaftzefa has round leaves with serrated, saw-like edges. Mishna Brurah 647:2 writes that if the aravah has any of the features of a tzaftzefa it is invalid. The Gemara then says that there is a certain aravah that is valid even though the edges of its leaves are serrated. Rashi (s.v. Vehatanya) explains that if all of the serrations face inward, it is acceptable. The Rambam (7:4), however,

explains that if the edges have small serrations, it is acceptable. The Tur (647:1) follows the explanation of Rashi, whereas Shulchan Aruch (647:1) follows that of the Rambam. Aruch HaShulchan (647:4) rules that one may follow either view.

20. The Mishna (33b) writes that a dry aravah is disqualified, while a withered one is valid. The Rif (16a), Rambam (8:1), and Rosh (3:13) all codify this Mishna as halacha. To clarify the boundary described by the Mishna, Rambam explains that an aravah is valid as long as it is not completely dry. Tur and Shulchan Aruch (647:2) codify this as the halacha. Mishna Brurah (647:7) and Chazon Ovadia (p. 317) clarify that an aravah is disqualified once a majority of its leaves have become dried out. Shaar Hatziyun (647:6) quotes Bikkurei Yaakov, who says that to be considered dried out an aravah must lose all of its green color. Chazon Ovadia, however, says that the aravah must turn white.

21. The Mishna (33b) states that if a minority of an aravah's leaves fall off, it remains valid. The Rosh (3:13) infers that if a majority of the leaves fall off, the aravah will be invalid. The Tur (647:1), however, cites the Baal Hatur as saying that as long as one leaf remains attached, the aravah is still usable. Shulchan Aruch (647:2) rules in accordance with the Rosh. Mishna Brurah (647:9) clarifies that this will only invalidate the aravah if a majority of the leaves

5. Although most aravot grow by the water, an aravah is valid no matter where it grew. Some say that it is preferable to use aravot that grew by a river, whereas others say that there is no such preference.²²

For Further Reading

‘Ades, Avraham Hayim., and Daniel Worenklein. *The Four Minim: A Practical Illustrated Guide*.

Nanuet, NY: Feldheim, 2004. Print.

Ben-Hayim, Avraham Ben David. *Pituhe Arba‘at Ha-minim*. Jerusalem: 2011. Print.

Shtern, Yehie‘l Mikhal., and Dovid Oratz. *Halachos of the Four Species*. Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1994. Print.

within the minimum 3 tefachim fall off. Chazon Ovadia (p. 318) writes that there is no difference between the leaves falling off on their own and someone pulling them off.

22. The Gemara (33b) states that although the Torah says “arvei nachal,” meaning branches of a willow that grows by a river, Chazal explained that the pasuk also allows an aravah that did not grow near a river. Rashi (s.v. Arvei) writes that while an aravah that grew by the water is preferable, one nonetheless fulfills his obligation with an aravah that grew elsewhere. Rav Hershel Schachter (“The Halachos of the Daled Minim,” min 50) explained that having aravot that grew by a river is a hidur since it also fulfills the simple interpretation of the pasuk (a similar idea is expressed in the Ritva Yevamot 103b). Tosfot (34a s.v. Verabbanan) suggests that this Gemara follows Rabbi Akiva’s opinion and the halacha does not follow Rabbi Akiva. Therefore, Tosfot recommends using aravot only if they grew by a river.

The Rosh (3:13) writes that it seems that the Rif agrees with Tosfot, as he does not quote the Gemara on 33b. Nonetheless, the Rosh records that the minhag was to use aravot even if they did not grow by a river. To defend the minhag, the Rosh rejects the view of Tosfot, and instead argues that the Gemara was agreed upon by all opinions. The Tur (647) writes that although most authorities maintain that having an aravah that grew by the water is preferable, the Rosh and Rambam (7:3) seem to hold that aravah wherever it grew is totally acceptable.

Shulchan Aruch (647:1) quotes the language

of the Rambam in ruling that all aravot are acceptable for use. Even though the Beit Yosef (647:2) quotes Rav Eliyahu Mizrachi’s view that the Rambam agrees with Rashi that it is preferable to use an aravah that grew by a river, the Beit Yosef himself disagrees with this interpretation. Furthermore, the Taz (647:2) goes so far as to suggest that it is better to take an aravah that did not grow by the water so as to show that we accept Chazal’s interpretation of the pasuk. Mishna Brurah (647:3) concludes that some say it is preferable to use aravot that grew by water. Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (136:5) and Kaf Hachaim (647:6) agree.

This project is a joint initiative between Halachipedia and SOY-JSC to provide the talmidim of YU and RIETS a practical guide to choosing the Arbah Minim before Sukkot. This is the first of many hopeful publications that will allow the Talmidim to take the learning in the YU Batei Midrash home with them when they go off on vacation.

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