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By the Hakham
Rabbi Ya'aqob Menashe, 'a"h

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5784/2023 Sukkoth/Simḥath Torah

5784 סְכוֹת / שְׂמֵחַת תּוֹרָה

Is There a Minimum Weight for the Ethrogh

The Ethrogh must weigh at least KeBeishah (2 ozs., or 58 grams). If it weighs any less than this, it is Pasul (unfit for ritual use). Even if it is not yet fully ripe, as long as it has the minimum weight, it is Kasher. There is no maximum weight.

Over the days of the Festival, the Ethrogh tends to shrivel up somewhat and lose a little of its weight. One must be careful, therefore, to ensure that the Ethrogh that one uses has a weight, initially, which is higher than 58 grams (2 ounces), so that, even on the last day, it will still have the minimum weight.

There are those who are particular to use an Ethrogh whose weight is at least 100 grams (about 3.5 ounces). One must be particular to ensure that the Ethrogh has the minimum weight on the first, and also all the remaining days of Sukkoth.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh 648:22. Maamar Mordekhai [Eliyahu], Hagim, 52:69)

The Commandment of Sukkah in Practical Terms

The Shulḥan 'Arukh comments that the commandment of Sukkah consists of dwelling in the Sukkah. This includes eating and drinking, sleeping, living there for the entire seven days, night and day, in the same way that one lives in one's house during the rest of the year. During these seven days one should make the Sukkah one's permanent residence and one's house a temporary one.

One should not take pots and pans that one would not take to his dining table, into the Sukkah. Even though there is an opinion that permits it, it is appropriate to be strict in this regard. There is an opinion that if items that are considered to be repulsive are in the Sukkah, then as long as they are there the Sukkah is Pasul (ritually unfit) and one may not recite the blessing on it.

As such, once one has finished eating, one should remove all the dirty eating plates and utensils. One should likewise remove any utensil that contains something that would be considered repulsive.

(See Shulḥan 'Arukh, O.H., 639:1. Mishnah Berurah, ibid., 4-5. Kaf Haḥayyim, ibid., Oth 16)



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Waiting to Answer Amen to the Blessing

The congregation must not answer "Amen" to the blessing of the 'Oleh who is called to the Torah, till he has fully finished the Berakha (blessing). The one who is doing the actual reading may not start reading till the congregation has finished responding "Amen". Even if they take a while responding "Amen", he may not start the reading till they have finished.

Since everyone is obligated to hear the reading, the Hazzan must wait even for the few who stretch out the "Amen", and must not start till they have finished, so that they will also hear the full reading. The Hazzan also answers "Amen" with them and should pause slightly after saying "Amen" and starting the reading.

It's appropriate to add that it is important for the congregation to also answer "Barukh Hu, Ubarukh Shemo" when G-d's Name is mentioned.

(See Shulhan 'Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim, 141:5. Kaf Haḥayyim, ibid., 24. Mishnah Berurah, ibid., 17)

Can the Hazzan Start the Prayer of His Own Accord?

The official Hazzan of the Synagogue may go up to the Teba by himself to lead the prayers. He does not have to wait to be asked or instructed by others to do so.

If the Hazzan of the Synagogue did not wish to continue to be the prayer leader (Shaliyah Shibbur), even though he was liked by the congregation, and they then appointed someone else to be Hazzan in his place, if the first Hazzan wants to lead the prayers, he may do so.

He does not need to ask the permission of the congregation, because he could still be the Hazzan if he wished. He must, however, get the permission of the new Hazzan. There is an opinion, however, that he should also obtain permission from the congregation.

(See Shulhan 'Arukh, O.Ḥ. 53:15. Kaf Haḥayyim, 15, Oth 68, 16, Oth 69. Mishnah Berurah, 53:44)

Women's Corner - by Rabbanith Ruth Menashe 'a"h

The Importance of the Commandment of Hafrashath Hallah (Part 2)

G-d gave the Miṣwah (commandment) of Hafrashath Hallah (הפרשת חלה - separating a portion of the dough) to the Children of Israel right after the sin of the Ten Spies. Although the entire generation was severely punished (all the men from the age 20 would die in the desert), G-d gave them a commandment that they would keep as soon as they entered the Land of Israel, instilling in them a new sense of hope. They realized that by Hashem telling them that they would be obligated to do this Miṣwah as soon as they came to the Land of Israel, that He was obviously promising them that they would, in fact, enter the land of Israel. This gave them hope at this time of terrible distress.

Furthermore, there were other commandments that were given to the Children of Israel when they were in the desert, and Hashem told them that those מצוות were also to be done only in the land of Israel. For example, giving Terumah, 1/10th of what we have to the Kohen. The instruction concerning the Bikkurim, when we see the first fruit or the first produce that grows, we also have to give as a present to the Kohen.

However, all these commandments came into effect 14 years after the Jews went to the Land of Israel. In other words, when they came to the Land of Israel, they had to fight for the land of Israel and divide it among the different tribes. Therefore, these other commandments that were given to them to do in the Land of Israel started only 14 years after they actually went into the land of Israel. The only exception was the Miṣwah of Hafrashath Hallah, which came into effect as soon as Benei Yisrael entered the land of Israel.