

Ten saplings which are spread out, etc. - עשר נטיעות המפוזרות כולי -

Overview

The גמרא cites a משנה that if there are ten saplings planted in a בית סאה (equidistant from each other),¹ one may plow it on the year before שמיטה right up to before ר"ה of שמיטה.² Our תוספות clarifies some of the rulings regarding עשר נטיעות.

בסוכה (דף לד,א) אמר עשר נטיעות וערבה³ וניסוך המים⁴ הלכה למשה מסיני -

In מסכת סוכה, the גמרא states that the rules of ערבה, עשר נטיעות, and the pouring of the water, are derived from a הלכה למשה מסיני -

ודוקא עשר לתוך בית סאה אבל פחות אין צריכין חרישה כל כך⁵ -

And it is specifically ten נטיעות in a בית סאה where one may plow up to ר"ה, however if it is less than ten, the saplings do not require that much plowing -

וכן נמי אם היו בבית סאה יותר מעשר נטיעות אין חורשין לפי שעומדין⁶ ליעקר:

And the same is also true if there were more than ten saplings in a בית סאה, we do not plow them up to ר"ה, since some of them are destined to be uprooted.

Summary

The rule of עשר נטיעות (as well as ערבה וניסוך המים) is a הל"מ. It is applicable only if there are exactly ten saplings for a בית סאה, no more and no less.

Thinking it over

What is the ruling if there are five saplings in half a בית סאה, are we permitted to plow the entire half בית סאה?

¹ A בית סאה is a square which is fifty אמות by fifty אמות (or any area of 2500 square אמות). This means that each sapling has an area of 250 square אמות around it.

² Normally one must refrain from plowing the tree a month before ר"ה, however by saplings it is permitted.

³ In the ערבה they would bring one ערבה besides the ערבות that are together with the לולב.

⁴ This refers to the pouring of water on the מזבה during סוכות in addition to the usual pouring of the wine by the קרבן תמיד.

⁵ Since they have more space to nourish from, they do not require that much plowing, so we do not plow the entire בית סאה, only how much the saplings need (which is underneath the tree and around the tree וסלו).

⁶ There is not sufficient land to support more than ten נטיעות, therefore some of the plantings will need to be uprooted (and we are not sure which ones, therefore we cannot plow this (entire) בית סאה).