



# HOW TO USE, MAINTAIN, AND CARE FOR YOUR

## LULAV, ETHROG, HADASSIM AND ARAVOT

**T**he *Shulchan Aruch*, the standard code of Rabbinic law by Rabbi Joseph Caro (1488-1575), gives precise specifications concerning the requirements of form, appearance, and texture of the *Arba Minim*, the Four Species: *Ethrog*, *Lulav*, *Hadassim*, *Aravot*.



## THE ETHROG

*Ethrogim* regarded as being of superior quality are of medium size, their bright yellow surface furrowed and covered with *blitos*, bumps (a feature which distinguishes it from the ordinary lemon). To be considered ritually fit the *ethrog* must be shaped "like a tower" — its bottom larger than its top. The *pitom*, the flowered blossom at the tip of the fruit, and the *uketz*, the stem which is sunk into the broad base, must be examined carefully to make sure that

both are present and intact. (If the *pitom* falls off or is broken during Sukkoth, a rabbi should be consulted. To avoid this problem, many people prefer to use *ethrogim* which grow without *pitoms*). The *pitom* should be directly in line above the *uketz*.

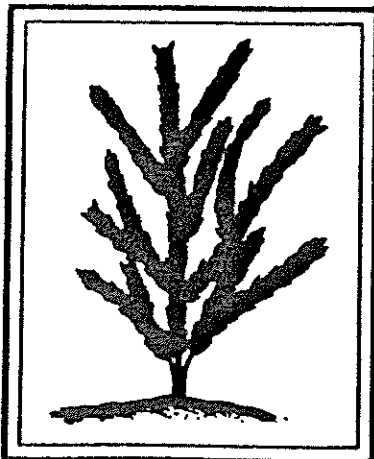
## THE LULAV

The *lulav* is a small, young branch of the date palm. The leaves, two-fold and spear-headed, are linked to a solid central stem. Near the pointed tip of the *lulav*, the spine splits into two double-leaves called *te-yomes*, twins. The points of the *te-yomes* should not be split. The backs of the leaves should be light green, the fronts white.

A select *lulav* has a straight spine, against which the leaves lie flat, covering and overlapping one another.



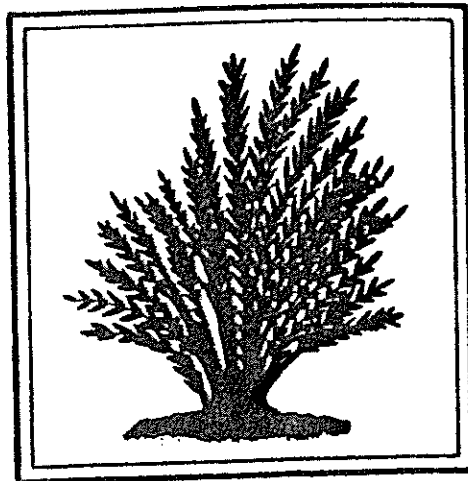
## THE HADASS



The oval leaves of the *hadass* cover the myrtle branch from top to bottom in groups of three, growing from one stem. The top of the branches should not be broken off, and should overlap the stems of the upper leaves. Three *hadassim* are required for the *mitzvah* of the Arba Minim.

# THE ARAVA

As the *arava*, willow, requires a great amount of water, it is commonly found near streams, ponds, or rivers. Select *aravot* have long, slender green leaves with smooth edges, and a straight, reddish stem. Two *aravot* are needed to complete the Arba Minim.



## CARE OF THE ARBA MINIM

Great care should be taken to keep the Four Species from drying up during the seven days of Sukkoth. The *ethrog* is usually wrapped in cotton or flax and kept in a special container of metal, such as silver, or of carved wood. It should not be refrigerated. The *lulav* should be kept dry and cool, and the myrtles and willows should be wrapped in damp paper towelling and refrigerated when not in use.

## ASSEMBLY AND PROCEDURE

The *lulav*, *hadassim*, and *aravot* are placed together in a Y-shaped holder made of palm leaves, with the *lulav* in the center, flanked by the three *hadassim* on the right and the two *aravot* on the left. Three more bands of palm leaves are placed around the body of the *lulav*.

The assembled *lulav* is held in the right hand, with the spine of the *lulav* facing the person. The *ethrog* is taken in the left hand with the *pitom* pointing down. (A left-handed person takes the *lulav* in his left hand and the *ethrog* in his right.) Holding one's hands together, the blessings are recited, and after the blessings are completed, the *ethrog* is turned so that its *pitom* points upward. (The *ethrog* is held upside down until after the blessings have been recited because blessings over mitzvot must be recited prior to the fulfillment of the mitzvah, which in this case occurs when all four species are held in the way that they grow.) After the blessings have been said, the *lulav* and *ethrog*, still touching, are shaken in the following order, three times in each direction: right, back, left, front, up, down.



# THE BLESSINGS

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ד' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ  
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת לולָב.

Boruch ata \*Hashem \*elokeinu melech ha-olum, asher  
kidishunoo b'mitzvosov v'tzeevunoo ahl n'teelas lulav.

Blessed are You, Hashem our G-d, King of the universe,  
Who has sanctified us with His commandments and has  
commanded us concerning the taking of a palm branch.

The following blessing is recited only on the first day that the Four Species are taken:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ד' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.

Boruch ata \*Hashem \*elokeinu melech ha-olum, shehehchiyunoo v'kiymunoo  
v'higiyunoo lazmahn hazeh.

Blessed are You, Hashem our G-d, King of the universe, who has kept us alive,  
sustained us, and brought us to this season.

\*When reciting the blessings, the name of Hashem should be pronounced in the  
approved manner.

*"And you shall  
rejoice in your  
festival...  
and then you  
shall remain  
only joyful."*

Deut. 16:14,15



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