

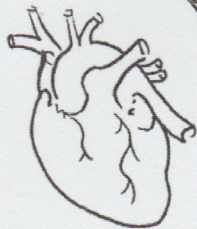
WILLOW

relates to the lips through which we speak out for others.



LULAV

represents the spine with which we stand strong.



ETROG

symbolizes the heart with which we feel for others.



MYRTLE

refers to the eyes with which we see those who are overlooked.



Lulav and Etrog

Symbolism of the 4 Species

Family Discussion Questions:

1. What are some ways we can use our lips (represented by the willow) for good deeds or for bad purposes?
2. The Etrog represents the heart, where we hold our most beloved people and causes. Who are the people who are most important to your heart?
3. The palm represents the spine – standing up tall for what we believe in! Have you ever stood up for something or someone?
4. The Myrtle represents our eyes – what do you hope to see in the coming year?

Sources for Further Study...

Four Kinds of Jewish People:

The four species are likened to different categories in the Jewish people. The Etrog, which has both taste and smell, is likened to those that study Torah and do mitzvot. The palm branch, which has taste, but no smell, is likened to those who have only Torah study. The myrtle, which has smell but no taste, is likened to those who have only mitzvot. The willow, which has neither taste nor smell, is likened to those who are without Torah study and without mitzvot. And Hashem says "bind them all together and let them atone one for the other."... (Vayikra Rabba 30:12)

Four Tools of Devotion:

And there is also another matter with these four things - that they are similar to precious limbs in a person (see Vayikra Rabba 30:14). As the citron is similar to the heart, which is the dwelling place of the intellect, to hint that one should serve the Creator with one's intellect; the lulav is similar to the backbone, which is the essence of a person, to hint that one should straighten themselves completely for God's service, blessed be God; the myrtle [leaves are] similar to the eyes, to hint that one should not stray after their eyes 'on the day of the rejoicing of the heart'; and the willow [leaves are] similar to the lips, with which one completes all acts of speech, to hint that we should put a muzzle to our mouth, calibrate our words and fear God, Blessed be, even at a time of joy. (Sefer Hachinukh 324:4)

Don't Think Too Hard:

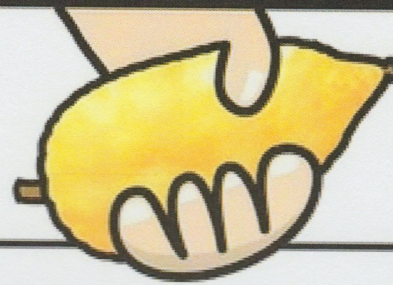
In some ways, the mitzvah of the lulav and etrog presents a bit of a challenge to moderns accustomed to rituals that are transparent in their meaning and easily decipherable. Still, one of the dangers in contemporary Judaism is precisely that we have become overly cerebral in our approach to religion. After the intense High Holiday period of prayer and introspective thought, Sukkot appeals to our senses. We build the sukkah with our hands, and we smell the four species and shake them back and forth as a sign of our exuberant sense of thanksgiving to God for all that we have in this world. Judaism makes demands both on the intellect and the spirit, both on the brain and on the heart, and Sukkot is a vibrant reminder of this lesson. (The Arba'ah Minim, Alan Lucas (Rabbinical Assembly))

Sukkot

סוכות

You shall live in booths
for seven days.

Vayikra 23:42



1. The Four Species



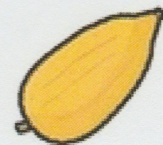
Lulav (palm) לולב



Arava (willow) ארבה



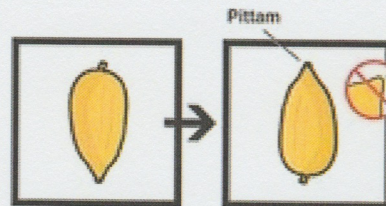
Hadas (myrtle) הדס



Etrog (citrus) אטרוג

2. Getting Started

The lulav, hadas, and arava are held together in the right hand; the spine of the lulav faces you, with two aravot on the left and three hadasim on the right. The etrog is held in the left hand, touching the lulav. Before the blessing, the pittam of the etrog is turned down; after the blessing and while waving the lulav, the pittam is turned up. Stand facing Jerusalem (east).



3. The Blessing

ברוך אתה יי אלהנו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על נטילת לולב.

Baruch atah, Adonai eloheyinu, melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al netilat lulav.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, sovereign of the universe, who has made us holy by mitzvot and has commanded us to take hold of the lulav.

4. Waving the Lulav

Wave or shake the lulav in six directions, slowly and deliberately, three times: in front of you (east), to the right (south), to the back over your shoulder (west), to the left (north), above you (to heaven), and below you (to earth).

