

Guidelines to the mitzvah of the Arba Minim

For the 7 days of Sukkot excluding Shabbat there is a wonderful mitzvah to perform - *the Mitzvah of the Arba Minim*.

The Arba Minim are:

A Lulav – an unopened date palm branch

An Etrog – a type of citrus fruit

3 Hadassim – myrtle twigs

2 Aravot – willow twigs

The Mitzvah consists of 2 parts:

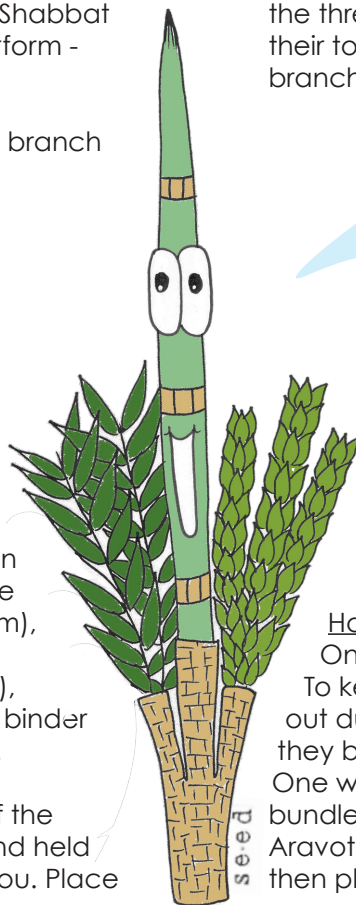
1. making the bracha
2. the shaking

Preparing The Arba Minim for use

The Lulav, Etrog, Hadassim and Aravot must be grasped together in order to form the Arba Minim. Three of the species, the Lulav (date palm), the Hadassim (3 myrtle branches) and the Aravot (2 willow branches), are held together in a 3 branched binder made of woven dried lulav leaves.

The Lulav is placed in the centre of the binder. The bundle is assembled and held so that the Lulav's spine is facing you. Place

the three Hadassim branches on the right, so that their tops are slightly higher than the two Aravot branches on the left.



**The Arba Minim
represent the unity of
the Jewish people.
The very different species
bound together teach us that
unity
is not conformity.
Rather it is the harmony of
diversity.**



How to care for your Arba Minim

One should store the entire set in a cool place. To keep your Aravot and Hadassim from drying out during the holiday, experts recommend that they be stored in moist air when they are not in use. One way to do this is to take the Lulav out of the bundle holder, wrap the bundle still containing the Aravot and Hadassim in a moistened towel, and then place it in a refrigerator until its next use.

The procedure for making brachot and shaking the Arba Minim

- Pick up the bundle of the Lulav, Hadassim and Aravot in the right hand. The Etrog is then picked up in the left hand, with the top of the Etrog (the end with the Pitom) facing down. (Note: For those who are left-handed, pick up the bundle with the left hand and the Etrog with the right.)
- Bring the two hands together. Whilst the bracha is recited the Etrog is held with its top end (with the Pitom) facing downward. The following bracha is made:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ, עַל נְטִילַת לִילָב

Baruch ata Ado-nei Elo-hay-nu melech haolam, asher kiddeshanu be'mitzvotav vetzivanu al netillat lulav

Blessed are You, HASHEM, our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us concerning the taking of the Lulav

- If one is performing the mitzvah for the **first time** on Sukkot the following bracha is added:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְמַן הַזֶּה

Baruch ata Ado-nei Elo-hay-nu melech haolam, she'heche'yanu ve'kiyemanu vehigi'anu la'zeman ha'ze

Blessed are You, HASHEM, our God, King of the universe, Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

- Immediately after reciting the bracha, rotate the Etrog so that the pitom is facing up. While holding the Arba Minim together in both hands, shake in a FORWARD motion, followed by a RIGHT motion, a BEHIND (over the right shoulder) motion, a LEFT motion, an UPWARDS motion and finally a DOWNWARDS motion.

Do not wave the Arba Minim too strongly. It is sufficient to make the leaves of the Lulav rustle a little. Although more vigorous shaking is fun, it could damage the Lulav by splitting its leaves, possibly disqualifying it from further use. HAPPY SHAKING!

Please treat this leaflet with the same respect you would treat a siddur.