TAKING THE LULAV

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
asher kid’shanu b’mitzvotav v’tzivanu al n’ilat lulav.

Praised are You Adonai our God, who rules the universe,
instilling in us the holiness of mitzvot by commanding us to take the lulav.

Each year the following is recited upon taking the lulav for the first time:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
she-hehey enu v’yish’anu v’higi’ani la-azman ha-zeh.

Praised are You Adonai our God, who rules the universe, granting us life, sustaining us,
and enabling us to reach this day.

After the b’rakhah, turn the etrog over, and hold it so the pitam faces up. Shake the lulav three times in each direction: to the front, to the right, behind you (over your right shoulder), to the left, then upward, then down.

A stolen or withered lulav is invalid. Said Rabbi Ammi: “A withered lulav is invalid because it is not ‘goodly’ (Leviticus 23:40). A stolen one is invalid because it is a mitzvah fulfilled by performing a transgression.”... Said the Holy One: “I hate robbery with burnt offerings” (Isaiah 61:8). Let My children learn from Me and keep away from robbery.”

THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY

The Four Species

Just as the etrog has both flavor and fragrance, so there are Israelites who are endowed both with Torah and with good deeds.

Just as the [fruit of the] lulav has flavor but lacks fragrance, so there are Israelites who are endowed with Torah but lack good deeds.

Just as the hadas has fragrance but lacks flavor, so there are Israelites who are endowed with good deeds but lack Torah.

Just as the aravah lacks both flavor and fragrance, so there are Israelites who lack both Torah and good deeds.

What does the Holy One do about them? God does not wish to destroy them. He binds them all together into one group and these atone for those.

Leviticus Rabbah 30:12

“All my bones shall say, ‘Adonai, who is like You?’” (Psalm 35:10). Rabbi Mani taught: This verse refers to the lulav. The spine of the lulav resembles the spine of human beings. The hadas resembles the eye. The aravah resembles the mouth. The etrog resembles the heart. Said David: There are no more important parts of the body than these. They are equivalent to the entire body. Thus it is said: “All my bones shall say, ‘Adonai, who is like You?’”

Leviticus Rabbah 30:14

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