Lulav: Hold, Bless, Shake

To fulfill the commandment of *lulav* and *etrog*, you must hold them together the way they grow: stems down. But since you fulfill the commandment as soon as you hold the *Four Species* together this way, you must first pick up the *etrog* inverted (stem up) and then say the blessing, as follows:

- Hold the *lulav* with the spine facing you and the myrtle on the right, willows on the left, and the *etrog* with the *pitom* (opposite the stem) down;
- Say the blessings for the *lulav;*
- Turn the *etrog* right side up (stem-side down) and hold the *lulav* and *etrog* together; and
- Shake the *Four Species* together.

NOTE Waving (or shaking) the *lulav* is a universally accepted custom with the force of *halacha*. We show that God is present in all directions by waving the *lulav* in the four compass directions, plus up and down. There are various customs of the sequence in which to wave the *lulav*. One common sequence is east; south; west; north; up; down. Wave the *Four Species* three times in each direction.

NOTE Although the *lulav's* spine should face you as you hold it, you have still fulfilled the requirement of *lulav* if the spine was facing away or if the willows and myrtles are on the incorrect sides of the *lulav*.

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