

# 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.