

# The Inner Flame

## SUKKOS COMPANION

An Experiential Guide to Diving  
Beneath the Surface and Internalizing  
the Inner Flame of the Sukkos Mitzvos

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### HASHEM IS EVERYTHING. HASHEM IS OUR KING.

Despite the facade of nature, our very existence is completely dependent on Hashem. Despite all the distractions, our primary goal is to attach ourselves to Hashem, and to serve Him.

On Rosh Hashanah we saw this truth (*Chochma*), and on Yom Kippur we've deepened that perception (*Binah*). Now, on Sukkos, we are given the opportunity to internalize this so deeply that it prompts us to **feel it with our hearts and express it through our actions** (*Daas*). This is why there are so many action Mitzvos on Sukkos. Let's discover the inner dimension (*Primius*) of each one.

[www.innerflametorah.com](http://www.innerflametorah.com)

Artwork by Emily Camras, [emilyrichdesign.com](http://emilyrichdesign.com)



# Intro to Lulav



## DALED MINIM / THE FOUR SPECIES

### ☉ The Outer Action

We shake the four species — Lulav, Haddasim, Aravos, and Esrog

### 🔥 The Inner Flame

As you shake the Lulav, we are acquiring *Emunah*, internalizing more and more that **there is no reality other than Hashem** (*Ein Od Milvado*). We shake in every direction as we demonstrate that this is true in every single occurrence in every place in the world.

We shake again and again, bringing our *Emunah* to the level of *Daas*, as we ask Hashem to bring our service of Him from a place of knowledge and intellect to a place of emotion and action.

### ☉ A Moment of Mindfulness

As you prepare to do this holy Mitzvah, take a moment to focus your mind and prepare your intent. You may find it easiest to do this in the Sukkah by yourself, without distractions. Take your time, hum a tune that is meaningful to you, or anything else that helps you get in the 'zone.'

### Ask Hashem for Help

*"Hashem, please help me connect to the inner dimension of this Mitzvah, and become closer to You as I fulfill Your will. Let this Mitzvah connect my mind with my heart and body so that my connection to You is not only something I know about on an intellectual level, but something I feel in my heart and express through my actions."*

### A *spark* of Holiness

*"Hashem, as I shake the Lulav over and over, please bring my awareness of You into my whole being deeper and deeper."*

# Shaking the Lulav



## DIRECTIONS

The Four Species are taken every day of Sukkos through Hoshana Rabbah — except on the Sabbath. The Lulav bundle is picked up with the right hand, then the esrog (with the top side facing down) with the left. After the blessings are recited, the Esrog is turned over and the four species are waved in six directions.

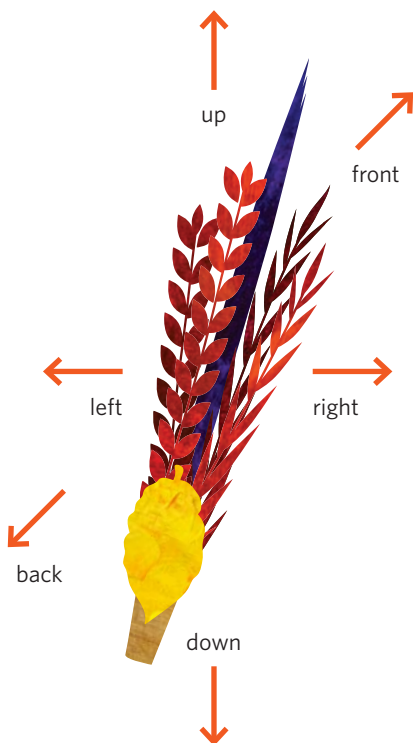
ברוך אתה ה' אלוקינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על נטילת לולב.

*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 palm branch.*

The **first time** during Sukkos that one makes a blessing on the Lulav, one should also bless the following blessing:

ברוך אתה ה' אלוקינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

*Blessed are You, Hashem, our God, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and brought us to this season.*



While shaking your Lulav, extend your hands outwards until they are stretched out, then bring your hands back to you, **touching your heart**. Repeat this three times in each direction.

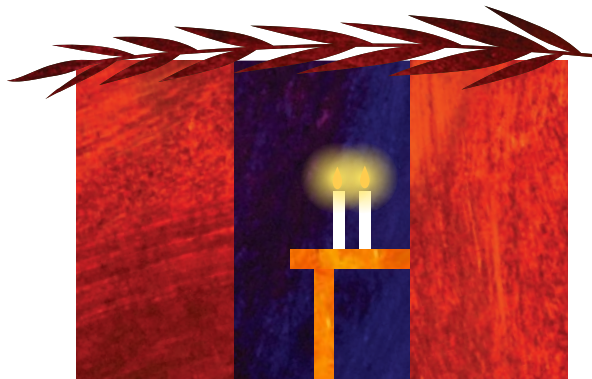
Many shake front-right-back-left-up-down

Some shake right-left-front-up-down-back

**Each time you extend your Lulav outwards, ask Hashem to open the gates of *Emunah* for you.**

**Each time you bring the Lulav back towards you, have in mind to receive this gift, acquiring in yourself a connection to Hashem that you FEEL and ACT ON.**

# Sukkah



© **The Outer Action**  
We sit in the Sukkah

🕯 **The Inner Flame**  
The light of the mitzvah of Sukkah is felt in the heart of everyone who sits in it. **There is a special power in this light.** It has the power to change how we view the world. We begin to view the world through the lens of *Emunah*. This is the realization that Hashem alone runs the world. While on Yom Kippur we needed to exit the world of physical existence to see the truth, on Sukkos we are able to see Hashem through our physical existence.

When we approach physicality through this lens, then our physical lives not only don't distance us from Hashem, but a person can feel Hashem on an even deeper level. We can feel that Hashem is with us not only in the openly spiritual parts of our lives, but in **every** part of our lives.

Sitting in the Sukkah allows us to internalize the knowledge that Hashem is with us all the time. The Sukkah gives us the experience, if we are open to it, of being enveloped in Hashem's light. When we allow ourselves to feel this, we are bringing the Holy *Shechinah* (the Divine Presence) into our lives.

© **A Moment of Mindfulness**  
When you sit in the Sukkah, experience the holiness of Hashem's presence emanating from the walls and roof (*Schach*) of your Sukkah. Feel that **"I am sitting in the presence of Hashem. He is surrounding me with His light and love."**

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The following blessing is said before partaking of a meal in the Sukkah:

ברוך אתה ה' אלוקינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו  
לישב בסכה.

*Blessed are You, Hashem, our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to dwell in the Sukkah.*

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*A spark of Holiness*

**"I will bring the feeling of Hashem surrounding me with His light and love into my life, all year round."**

# Hoshana Rabbah



## PART 1

### 🌀 The Outer Action

We circle the Torah with our four species seven times (*Hoshanos*)

### 🔥 The Inner Flame

An element of the final judgment of Yom Kippur is delayed until Hoshana Rabbah. The judgment that is sealed on Yom Kippur is called *Chasimas Hayesod* (the seal of the foundation), and the judgement that is sealed on Hoshana Rabbah is called *Chasimas Hamalchus* (the seal of kingship). **We are the ones who put the seal on our judgment by making up our minds to come back to Hashem.** Hashem responds by making our judgment match our *teshuva*. On Yom Kippur we sealed our minds to stop getting pleasure from anything other than Hashem (*Kedusha*). On Hoshana Rabbah **we seal ourselves in the areas of faith** (*Emunah*) and prayer. We seal our minds and hearts for a year full of *Emunah*, where we see Hashem in all areas of our lives. And when the going gets tough, we turn to Hashem with *Emunah* and prayer to receive the light of *Ein Od Milvado* (there is nothing other than Hashem).

When a child needs help they yell out "Help me!" This is what we are doing circling the Torah with our Lulav saying the words Hoshana ("Save us") hundreds of times. We are placing a seal on *Malchus*, the world that we live in which does not see Hashem, we are revealing Hashem's existence and connecting the creations, particularly ourselves, back to Hashem. We are praying to Hashem in the most simple, child-like manner for help with this monumental task.

### 🌀 A Moment of Mindfulness

As you circle the Torah with your Lulav, ask Hashem for help with seeing Him in everything (*Emunah*). Ask Hashem like a child, over and over, in a prayer or meditation for help with this.

*A spark* of Holiness

"Hashem, please help me use my special gifts in this world to bring more Godliness into it and help me to see the good in everything."

# Hoshana Rabbah



## PART 2

### 🌀 The Outer Action

We bang a bundle of Aravos on the ground

### 🔥 The Inner Flame

This is minhag that requires a *pnimius* explanation. The Arizal says that it has two components: First, we lift the bundle upwards towards the sky and second we beat it on the ground. The first part is a “kiss” with God and the second part “sweetens the judgment.” The intention of the first part, as we raise the bundle to the sky, is that “we are kissing Hashem, and we are receiving a kiss from Him.”

The idea is that this is an expression of love and connection. We are receiving power from this love and connection with Hashem. Anyone who has a close relationship with a King has great power. This is what we have when we are close to Hashem. Mankind has the power to reveal Hashem in this world. As we do this work, we need to watch out for ego sneaking in. That is why we beat the Aravos on the ground, to break the ego and remove it from our holy work in this world.

### 🌀 A Moment of Mindfulness

When you raise the Aravos bundle, have in mind that you are receiving a kiss from Hashem and as a result, a huge amount of power to do good and bring Godliness into the world. When you hit the ground with it, have in mind to use this power only for the will of Hashem.

*A spark of Holiness*

**“I will use the powers that Hashem has given me only to bring Godliness into this world, without any ego.”**

# Shmini Atzeres

## ☉ The Outer Action

None, we just spend a day with Hashem



## The Inner Flame

**Shmini Atzres is the final goal** of all the work of the high holidays and Succos. On this day, we receive the highest level, the light of *Keser* (crown). It is so lofty that it does not have a vessel (*Kli*) in the form of any special mitzvah. It is pure light. This is the ultimate unification of everything. **On this day, we are able to see with the greatest clarity that there is nothing other than Hashem.** We can see that all that we perceive as reality, is really all Hashem. At this level, a person loses all doubt about Hashem's existence and providence in their life — it becomes obvious and natural. Normally, we walk around seeing nature as the cause of everything and we have to work hard to see Hashem behind the screen. But when *Keser* is shining, then **the light of truth is so bright** that it is hard for us to see any other option — it is clear to us that Hashem is the only reality.

## ☉ A Moment of Mindfulness

Take a moment during the day of Shmini Atzeres to feel how natural it is to believe in Hashem on this special day — to feel His presence around you and within you. To believe without doubt in Hashem's providence over your life and to feel His love for you.

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*A spark of Holiness*

*"Hashem, let us just spend some special time together today,  
feeling close without having to do anything."*

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# Simchas Torah



## ☉ The Outer Action

We spend the day rejoicing and dancing with the Torah

## 🔥 The Inner Flame

The Zohar says that the custom of dancing with the Torah on Simchas Torah is “very lofty because it draws down in a unique way the light of *Keser*.” **We dance with the Torah specifically because the Torah is the guide for how we can be successful in living with Hashem in this world.**

Only the Torah allows us to ignore all the distractions of life that take us away from Him and to enter into a deep connection with Him (*Deveykus*). The Torah also teaches us how to take all those distractions and to bring them into holiness, to show how they too reveal the light of Hashem. We sing and dance with great desire for Hashem.

## ☉ A Moment of Mindfulness

As you dance with the Torah, or around the Torah, think about and rejoice in how you have a guide in your life that teaches you how to get close to Hashem. Bring this feeling down into your whole being — your mind and body — enjoying your connection with Hashem.

*A spark of Holiness*

As you dance,  
let your body feel  
“There is nothing  
other than Hashem  
— *Ein Od Milvado*.”