

Hashem – who can compare to You?’ (*Tehillim 35:10*). This verse was stated in reference to none other than the four species: The ‘spine’ of the *lulav* resembles the spine of a person; the *hadass* resembles the eye; the *aravah* resembles (the lips of) a mouth; and the *esrog* resembles the heart” (*Vayikra Rabbah 30:14*). Rabbeinu Bechaye explains the significance in terms of obtaining *kapparah* (atonement). These primary organs are responsible for most of man’s functions, including the observance of the commandments – both positive and negative. Having misused these organs by failing to heed certain commandments, a person is able to attain *kapparah* by presenting these *minim* – counterparts of his bodily components – in service before Hashem.

Taking a different tack, the classic volume *Seder Hayom* offers another approach as to the uniqueness of these specific species. The Medrash (*Bereishis Rabbah 10:6*) discusses the affairs of the various kinds of vegetation, stating that Hashem appoints for each blade of grass a Celestial officer charged with ensuring its growth and development: אֵין לָךְ כָּל עֵשֶׂב וְעֵשֶׂב שְׂאֵין: – “Each individual grass has its personal emissary from the Firmament, which strikes it and instructs it to grow.” However, asserts the *Seder Hayom*, from the entire Plant Kingdom there are four exceptions – namely, the *arba minim*. Rather than being handled by Celestial intermediaries, Hashem Himself oversees and furthers their growth with His direct intervention. Taking these specific types on Sukkos thus serves to demonstrate the special and personalized care Hashem affords His designated people; He does not delegate their affairs to any intermediaries, nor does He allow any other entity – including the Satan – to yield any dominion over them.

Based on a dissertation in the *sefer Sifsei Kohein* (authored by one of the sainted disciples of the Arizal), we discover yet another facet to this mitzvah, which he understands (focusing primarily on the *lulav* and *esrog*) as reflecting the notion of *sechar mitzvos* (reward for mitzvos). The *esrog* – referred to by the Torah as the “*pri eitz hadar* – beautiful **fruit** of the tree” (*Vayikra 23:40*) – corresponds to the benefits one may receive even in This World. This is a phenomenon Chazal refer to with the same terminology: אֵלוֹ דְּבָרִים שְׂאָדָם אוֹכֵל פְּרוּתֵיהֶן: – “The following are *mitzvos* from which a person eats their **fruits** in This World, while the principal remains for him in the Next World...” (*Peah 1:1*). The *lulav*, in any event, embodies the reward that awaits a person in Olam Haba. Thus it is that we find the *lulav* to be significantly taller than the *esrog*, reflecting the obvious disparity between the quality of the reward in This World and the Next. The leaves of the *lulav* themselves differ in their height, laid out in layers of ascending order. This arrangement reflects the fact that in Olam Haba itself there are various levels to which the righteous are privy, in proportion to their deeds. Furthermore, the *lulav* is held in the right hand – considered the dominant one – while the *esrog* is taken in the left. This conveys a lesson of priority, demonstrating which world is truly the preferred and primary destination.

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