

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

לרפואה שלימה ליוסף יצחק בן ברכה

SUKKOS

Are You a Hammer or a Nail?

What is the value of another Jew?

Sukkos is a time of unity comradery, and brotherly love. We sit together in the Sukkah, we dance together every night at Simchas Beis Hashoeva and with the Torah on Simchas Torah, we eat delicious food and sing songs. We of course daven together and bring together the Arba Minim, the Four Kinds, the Lulav, Esrog, Haddasim and Aravot.

The taking together of the Arba Minim is a biblical commandment "And you should take for yourselves, a beautiful fruit of the tree (Esrog), a date palm frond (Lulav), a sprig from a bush (that looks) braided (Haddasim) and willows of the brook (Aravos)."

Our sages have attributed symbolism to this Mitzvah, specifically with regards to unity of the Jewish people.

Torah knowledge is the flavor of Judaism and doing Mitzvahs is the fragrance. As far as fragrance and flavor is concerned, there are four Kinds of Jews.

**IT IS TIME TO
EMBRACE
EVERY JEW, FOR
EACH ONE IS OF
INFINITE VALUE.**

First there is the Lulav. An unopen date palm frond, leaves united together, straight and tall.

The dates that grow on the date palm are flavorful but do not have a distinct smell. This is the one we say the blessing on "Al Netilas Lulav." It symbolizes our Torah scholars, who's main occupation is studying Torah, the flavor of Judaism, just as dates have flavor. True, they too, do many Mitzvahs, but their main involvement is in Torah study, and are recognized for that. Tall beacons of light we look to for guidance and leadership.

The Esrog. A citron, pretty, fragrant and flavorful. The Esrog stays on the tree year round, uniting the seasons. This symbolizes the very well rounded Jew who studies Torah regularly and fulfills Mitzvahs with joy and love.

Haddasim. Myrtles, who's stem is woody and thick and who's leaves smell so good. Its leaves are clustered in united groups of three, with the top of the leaves of the bottom cluster covering the bottom of the leaves of the higher cluster. They have the appearance of being braided. Haddasim are symbolic of those of us who love doing Mitzvahs and strengthen all the Jews around them, with their Mitzvahs and kindness. They learn Torah as well, but much less, they are busy "doing."

Aravos. Willows of the brook, commonly have redish stems, with clusters of two leaves up its stems. They grow bunched



together and united and in abundance. They have neither taste nor distinct smell. Aravos are symbolic of those of us who's involvement in Torah and Mitzvahs are minimal.

Which of these Four Kinds is most important? It would seem to be the Lulav, symbolic of Torah scholars. If the Lulav is the top tier, why does the verse mention it second, after the Esrog?

Would you rather be a hammer or a nail?

On one hand, a nail is useless without a hammer. However, together they build something sturdy. With the hammer's influence, the nail is guided into its rightful place and the nail will continue to serve its purpose, long after the hammer is gone, holding the piece together.

Without the nail the hammer would be miserably locked up in its tool box, accomplishing nothing. With nails it can build many wonderful things.

In the end a hammer is useless without a nail and vice versa.

This is true for the Four Kinds. Remove any one of the four and you have only three, and they are useless, no Mitzvah can be done with three.

(Interesting note: Only Aravos have any Jewish religious use on their own. On our third most holy day, Hoshana Rabba, we use five Aravos at the culmination of the service. During the Sukkos holiday the alter in the Temple was decorated with long Aravos.)

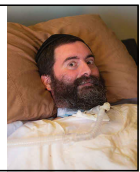
When the Torah speaks of the daughters of Tzelafchad, it mentions them out of order, to symbolize that they were equally great.

Same for the Four Kinds, the Torah changes the order, to teach us they are equal in value.

Same is for every Jew. Every one of us is necessary, we each have a unique part in the Jewish mission. The mission is incomplete without every Jew's contribution. So the Torah scholar needs the well rounded Jew and the lay person and they all need the less observant Jew.

The value of every Jew is infinite. It is time to embrace every Jew. The Lulav, Esrog the Haddasim and especially the Aravos. When we are united we complete each other. When we are united in brotherly love, Hashem is overjoyed, our unity, to Him, is irresistible. Therefore, our unity is what will bring Moshiach. May he come soon.

Despite facing one of life's most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe's Shluchim to Temecula, California.



WISHING YOU AND YOURS A HAPPY AND HEALTHY SUKKOS!

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