



## The Fruit of The Hadar Tree Sukkos Special

She stood in front of the Brisker Rav, trembling with awe. She was an elderly woman, a devoted Jew. She was currently being sued by her son in a *Din Torah*, her son seeking a Torah ruling from the Brisker Rav.

My father was witness to this most unusual scene. The son commenced with his claims. "I cannot take it anymore," he said in tears, "She refuses to come and live in Israel. I cannot live abroad and cannot assist her in her old age. I demand that my mother move to Jerusalem, enabling me to properly honor her." The Rav was silent. He then turned to the mother: "How do you respond to these claims?" "I can't leave me home town," she replied. The Rav persisted: "What is there that you can't find here in Jerusalem?" in response she began sobbing. "I come from I foreign land, from simple stock. My father, was a unique individual, we were the only observant Jews in the area, and when Sukkos came around one year, my father wanted to acquire an *Esrog*<sup>1</sup> but had a difficult time finding one. My father learned of a non-observant Jew who had a tree in his backyard. The owner agreed to sell my father an *Esrog* for an exorbitant price. My father agreed. He sold our house and we moved into a small shack. With the money he bought the *Esrog*. His joy was boundless. Every time I pass my old house I remember this event and my father's devotion; he died a few days after that holiday. It gives me strength. I can't leave that place."

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My father was very pedantic when searching for beautiful *Esrog*. Our Sages teach us that the *Esrog* denotes to the heart. The tears of Yom Kippur clean of the *Esrog*. "And **you shall take for yourselves** on

the first day, **the fruit of the *hadar tree***, date palm fronds, a branch of a braided tree, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your G-d for a seven day period."<sup>2</sup>

The Talmud teaches us the one should personally own his Four Species. One is also obligated to take "**yourselves**" and elevate it, rejoicing before G-d.

Today, thank G-d, all have access to an *Esrog*. It was not an easy task in the past. One should, therefore, put emphasis on the worship of the heart. The *Esrog* is like the heart, the *Hadas*, a branch of a braided tree, is like the eyes, the *Arava*, willows of the brook is like the mouth, and the *Lulav*, date palm fronds, is like the spinal structure. One must remember to use all his organs and faculties and properly prepare them for the service of G-d. Today we invest less effort in the acquisition of the Four Species, and therefore should invest efforts in the adoration of the heart.

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As the woman exited the home of the Brisker Rav he turned to my father and whispered: "She is correct, devotion for the fulfillment of commandments is held in high regard in the Heavens."

From this episode my father learned the essence of devotion and was dedicated to this Mitzvah throughout his life, even in times of peril.

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<sup>1</sup>A yellow citron or *Citrus medica* used on the week-long holiday of Sukkos, one of the Four Species, four plants mentioned in the Torah (Vayikra23:40) as being relevant to Sukkos. Three types of branches and one type of fruit which are held together and waved in a special ceremony during Sukkos. The waving of the four plants is a mitzvah prescribed by the Torah, and contains symbolic allusions to a Jew's service of G-d.

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<sup>2</sup> Vayikra 23:40.

