SUKKOT, and the fantastic four species

“And, you shall take on the first day [of Sukkot] a fruit of a citric tree (etrog), branches of palm-trees (lulab), a branch of myrtle (hadas) and willows of the brook (‘araba), and you shall rejoice before HaShem, your God, for seven days”. (Lev. 23).

THE MITSVA: We are commanded to take the above mentioned four species during the festival of of Sukkot. We take four plants: three branches, and one fruit. One lulab, two ‘arabot, three hadasim and one etrog are taken together each time. This Mitsva is called “the four species” (□□□□□□ □□□□□) or simply, the Mitsva of lulab.

We should hold the lulab, the hadasim, and the ‘arabot in our right hand and the etrog in our left hand. Then, we perform the Mitsva of netilat lulab, which literally means “lifting” the lulab. The four species must be held in the direction that they grow.

On the first day of Sukkot, we must be careful to perform the Mitsva with our own lulab and etrog. During the other days the four species may be borrowed from somebody else.

The Mitzva of the four species is not performed on Shabbat, even when the first day of Sukkot falls on Shabbat.

THE NA’ANU’IM: The Ashkenazi custom is to ‘shake’ (rattle) the lulab while the Sephardic custom is to ‘move it up’ (lena’anea’) in six different directions. The Sephardic custom is to move the four species in the following order: south, north, east, up, down and west. This order was established by Hakhme haQabbala.

In this video we see Rabbi Mordekhay Eliyahu z”l doing the na’anu’im, as the Sephardic tradition holds.