



# Family & Friends



## Parshas Nitzavim - Vayelech

September 26th 2024 - Elul 23 5784

**ארבעת המינים**

ארבעת מינים	75
ארבעת מינים	135
ארבעת מינים	150
ארבעת מינים	75
ארבעת מינים	115
ארבעת מינים	45
ארבעת מינים	65
ארבעת מינים	55

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### PARSHAS NITZAVIM - VAYELECH RAV MORDCHE GURWITZ

The Torah discusses its availability to those in search of its teachings. **לא בשמים הוא לאמר**, **מי יעלה לנו השמימה**, "It is not in the heaven, so [that you should] say, who should go up to heaven?"

The Baal Haturim explains that the first letters of **מי יעלה לנו השמימה** form the word **מילה**. Whereas last letters of these four words form the word **יהוה**, the name of Hashem. The formation of these two words teaches us that Moshe Rabbeinu was only able to ascend to the heavens and come before Hashem because he was circumcised.

The Daas Zekanim takes this idea one step further and says that Moshe Rabbeinu merited to ascend to the heavens as a result of his circumcision.

What is so special about circumcision that made it a compulsory prerequisite for Moshe to embody, before he

validated his candidacy for accepting the Torah? The Midrash in Shemos (19:5) upon discussing the prohibition of gentiles partaking of the korban pesach, explains this injunction is based upon the fact that they are uncircumcised. "Imagine a king that sponsored a feast for his kingdom. Anyone that lacks their badge of allegiance is not welcome to partake." Nowadays we can understand this concept in terms of homeland security. Nobody would expect a government to allow classified documents in the hands of people that do not retain the proper security clearance. A Jewish male identifies himself as loyal to Hashem by undergoing circumcision.

The Sefer HaChinuch, while explaining the mitzvah of Bris Milah says as follows. After Hashem Yisbarach singled out the Jewish nation as His chosen people, he placed upon their bodies a uniform symbol of their faithfulness to separate them from the other nations. In as much as Klal Yisrael's nefashos were created and are ultimately placed separate from those of gentiles, so to the body should also remain different. Bris Milah is our symbol of faithfulness.

In the 1930s, when Stalin's Soviet regime actively persecuted religious practices, being Jewish was especially dangerous. Jewish observance had to be



Heartfelt Mazel Tov wishes to:

Rabbi & Mrs. Yeshoshua Chaitovsky and Rabbi & Mrs. Yehuda Schatz on Eliyahu's bar mitzvah.

Rabbi & Mrs. Michel Kaplan and Rabbi & Mrs. Shalom Gould on their grandson's Bar Mitzvah.

Rabbi & Mrs. Yosef Rosenberg on their grandson's birth.

Rabbi & Mrs. Shlomo Furst on their son's upcoming wedding.

carried out in secret, and any public display of faith was met with harsh punishment. But for many Jews, the bris milah, was too sacred to be abandoned, no matter the cost.

There was a devout Jewish couple in a small village, who had a baby boy. Despite the threat of arrest or worse, the father insisted that his son would be circumcised on the eighth day. The couple contacted a mohel, who had to travel in secret from town to town, risking his life to perform this sacred mitzvah.

The night before the brit milah, the parents stayed up, terrified, praying and debating whether they were endangering their child's future. If discovered, the entire family could be sent to labor camps, or worse. But as

dawn broke, they reaffirmed their decision: this was a covenant that defined their connection to Hashem Yisbarach throughout history. They could not abandon it.

The mohel arrived at their home in the dead of night, entering through a back door. The ceremony was carried out in absolute silence, with windows sealed and curtains drawn, as everyone held their breath, listening for any suspicious sound from outside. Another Jewish boy had undergone this cherished mitzvah.

This story underscores the profound significance of circumcision in Jewish life. It is not merely a physical act but a declaration of faith, a symbol of an unbreakable bond that has been carried out, even in the face of the greatest dangers, generation after generation.

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## TWENTY DOLLARS

The story is told of a teacher who began the new school year by holding up a crisp new twenty-dollar bill. "Who wants this?" he asked. Just about every hand in the room shot up. "I'm going to give this \$20 to one of you," he said. "But first, I'm going to do this." And, he proceeded to crumple up the bill in his hand. "Who wants it now?" he asked. The hands stayed up. "Really?" he said. "Well what if I do this?" and he dropped the bill on the floor and began to step on it. He paused. Picked up the bill and held it up, crumpled and dirty. "Who wants it now?" he demanded. All the hands went back up. "My friends," he said "you've learned a valuable lesson. When I started the bill was worth \$20. And no matter what I did to



Pics from our Bais Medrash.

it, you still wanted it. Because no matter what happened to that bill, it did not decrease in value." "Many times," he went on, "we are that bill".

We are crushed, we are crumbled. We are dropped and ground into the dirt as if we are worthless. Bad decisions or simply hapless circumstances we cannot control make us feel as if we have no value. But never forget, no matter what has happened to you or will happen to you, you always have value in the eyes of Hashem who loves you."

Rosh Hashanah is a time of reflection on the year that has passed and on the year that is yet to come. This past year has had its share of brokenness. Some people were crumpled and ground down. Spiritual upheavals, economic hardships, devastating illnesses, shocking revelations, and marital struggles. The list goes on and on. Baruch Hashem, it is far from every one of us, but every one of us knows someone who is

suffering.

Our lives are ever so precious and finely balanced. Sometimes this balance is shattered and we tumble and feel lost in the void. But no matter our circumstances, no matter how crumpled and crushed we are, so long as the breath of life is within us, we can give thanks for every facet of life that offers blessing. And from that place of gratitude, we can feel that Hashem Yisbarach is supporting us. Even in our pain, even throughout hardships, our spirits can soar when we realize, focus, and value, all the unsung blessing Hashem gives us.

As we begin a new year, may we turn the page of hardship and start a new chapter of comfort. May Hashem Yisbarach grant us the patience to still the voice of our own despair and find the power within to grow. May Hashem's embrace remind us that no matter how we are crumpled, we are still valued. And may 5785 bring us good health, joy and unbridled bracha to ourselves, our families, and all of Klal Yisrael.