

The Daily Portion

- Sivan Rahav Meir

Five ideas for the last Shabbat of the year

Translated by Janine Muller Sherr

1. We are about to welcome the last Shabbat of 5785! Our rabbis explain that on the last Shabbat of the year we have the opportunity to repair all the Shabbatot of the past year, but it is also a time for declaring changes you intend to take upon yourself for the coming year. In that spirit, many people have the custom of adding something special to their observance of this Shabbat, such as welcoming Shabbat in earlier or extending it longer; treating the people at home with special consideration; inviting guests who don't have a place to eat on Shabbat, and many other ideas.

2. As on every Shabbat, we will continue with our reading of the weekly parasha. Parashat Nitzavim, the eighth parasha in the Book of D'varim, continues Moshe's final speech to the nation. It is one of the shortest Torah portions, with only 40 verses.

3. The parasha opens with the dramatic words: "You are standing this day, all of you, before HaShem, your God." Despite all your trials and

hardships, you haven't given up, but are standing upright with confidence and strength.

4. Our parasha reminds us that during these days, on the cusp of the new year, we have the opportunity to return to our true selves, both on the personal and national levels. Moshe Rabbeinu explains that our ability to return to ourselves and to improve our ways exists for all time; that the goals he has set for the Jewish people and for each one of us are not far away – but very close to us and thus very attainable:

For this commandment which I command you this day is not concealed from you, nor is it far away. It is not in heaven that you should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us and fetch it for us, to tell [it] to us, so that we can fulfill it? Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say. "Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us and fetch it for us, to tell [it] to us so we could fulfill it? Rather [this] thing is very close to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so you can fulfill it.

5. This Shabbat we will also read the final haftara of the Seven Haftarot of Consolation that are read between Tish'a b'Av and Rosh HaShana. The Haftara discusses joy, redemption, and our return to the land of Israel, and includes God's powerful promise: "For the sake of Zion I will not be

silent, For the sake of Jerusalem I will
not be still.”

**SHABBAT SHALOM, SHANA TOVA,
K'TIVA VACHATIMA TOVA!**

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