

# SHABBAT GUIDE

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## NITZAVIM

### ABOUT THE STORY OF NITZAVIM

The reading of the Chapter of Nitzavim always falls on the Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah. The word *nitzavim* means "you are standing before." We are now standing before Rosh Hashanah. Reading and connecting to Nitzavim helps prepare us to acquire the right spiritual consciousness to deal with the Ten Days of Judgment from Rosh Hashanah up to and including Yom Kippur. With this support from Nitzavim, we can transform the intense energy of judgment into one of mercy as we reprogram the next 365 days of our life.

### MICHAEL BERG ON NITZAVIM

On Shabbat Nitzavim, we work on overcoming confusion and doubt and connecting instead with certainty in the Light. Rav Ashlag teaches that our holding onto the Desire to Receive for the Self Alone is the lock between us and the ultimate purpose of creation and the ultimate Light of the Creator. We think that confusion means we're not connected. But what Rav Ashlag explains is that every single thing we don't understand, every single thing that happens that contradicts the goodness of the Light of the Creator, has within it a spark of great Light. Such that when we fight through that confusion and doubt and still keep connecting, sharing, and doing the spiritual work, that state of confusion actually becomes an opening to understanding. And this is where we should focus our work on Shabbat Nitzavim.

We have to look through the year, find those locks, think about them, and see if we can find the opening within that lock. And if not, we need to do more work and commit more to the removal of our Desire to Receive for the Self Alone. Because one thing is certain: if we were completely elevated out of our Desire to Receive for the Self Alone, we would see

everything as Light. There would be no darkness or confusion. If there's still something we look back at this year, and don't understand and see it is as darkness, it is because we haven't transformed.

Can we look back on the year and see it all as Light? Can we see all the darkness and confusion as only the Light within it? If not, then let's do some more work. We're asking for greater certainty so that we can see only the Light within the locks, and the strength to do the work that will enable that certainty.

And on this Shabbat we can receive both the strength for greater certainty and to do greater spiritual work. We can receive the gift of seeing those locks as openings, and turning them into great halls of understanding and wisdom in everything that's happened to us, in every aspect of our lives.



### CONSCIOUSNESS FOR NEXT WEEK

The upcoming portion of Vayelech connects us to the Right Column of the Tree of Life, the highest elevated state of consciousness. This week, work on understanding that the physical reality we inhabit is illusory. See if you can make decisions based on the potential spiritual outcome.

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## CANDLE LIGHTING

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We light candles at specific times and with pure intentions in order to establish a connection to the energy available. Like flipping the light switch upon entering a dark room, the simple act of lighting candles initiates a flow of energy.

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## EVENING CONNECTION (KABBALAT SHABBAT)

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On Friday nights, we sing songs, recite kabbalistic prayers, and consume blessed wine and bread. These acts invite the energy of Shabbat into our lives and enhance our connection to the Light.

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## SHABBAT DINNER

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The first of three meals, we bless the wine and bread before enjoying our Shabbat dinner. These kabbalistic blessings help us connect with our inner desire to share.

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## BIRKAT HAMAZON (PRAYERS AFTER EATING)

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After eating the first meal, we engage in the Birkat Hamazon prayer. Reciting this prayer shows our appreciation for the food and our connection to the Light.

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## MORNING CONNECTION (SHACHARIT)

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On Saturday mornings, we gather to recite prayers and meditate on our relationship with the Light. The energy awakened by the Morning Connection awakens the spiritual force of mercy, which helps keep chaos and judgment from our lives.

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## CONSCIOUSNESS LECTURE

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In the Consciousness Lecture, we learn about the portion of the week that will be read during the Torah reading. This lecture helps us truly understand the forthcoming teachings and explains in detail the kabbalistic principles behind the stories.

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## TORAH READING

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The Torah is read aloud, in Hebrew, by a Kabbalah Centre teacher. The stories of the Torah are actually codes that, when decoded, transmit energy and repel negativity for the week to come.

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## AFTERNOON CONNECTION

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In the Afternoon Connection, we engage in prayers that strengthen our connection following the reading of the Torah.

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## SHABBAT LUNCH

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During Shabbat Lunch, we sing a number of songs in Aramaic and Hebrew, many of which were written by history's greatest kabbalists. They help us manifest the Desire to Share aspect of the Morning Connection.

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## THIRD MEAL

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The third meal is the highest point of Shabbat, known for its tremendous healing properties. This includes a blessing for hand washing, a connection with bread, and special prayers and meditations for creating positive change within ourselves and all of humanity.

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## EVENING CONNECTION

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The Evening Connection consists of unique kabbalistic prayer and song. These recitations bring Shabbat to a close and help us determine our energy for the new week to come.

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## HAVDALAH

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Havdalah refers to the verbal declaration made at the end of Shabbat that is recited once the sun sets on Saturday night. We say the Havdalah to demonstrate our appreciation for the Light, and to ask it for spiritual sustenance in the upcoming week.