



THE DAILY

BY SIVAN RAHAV-MEIR

PORTION

# Dreaming Big with Jews in the Persian Gulf

Last Friday afternoon I was at home in Jerusalem for a Zoom encounter. I had been invited to speak at a Kabbalat Shabbat ceremony of the Association of Gulf Jewish communities. I was amazed to discover an organization that brings together the Jewish communities of Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. Wow.

Someone led the singing of Lecha Dodi and Yedid Nefesh and everyone joined in. The weekly Torah portion was read and translated. I was requested to speak on the subject of Rosh Hashanah and I stated that this meeting was proof that we need to dream big as we approach the new year.

Who would have imagined just a few years ago that with a single click on a computer keyboard we could make such an instant, quality video connection between any two places on earth? Indeed, technology keeps leaping ahead at an accelerated pace, way beyond our wildest dreams.

And who would have thought that Houda Nonoo would become the first Jewish ambassador of any Arab country, and Bahrain's first female ambassador to the United States, as well as a diplomatic representative to Canada, Mexico, and Brazil? She spoke of belonging to a fascinating, if

tiny, ancient Jewish community. Others spoke of identifying proudly as Jews in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Just as we saw big dreams come true in the areas of technology and diplomacy, I remarked, so too can big dreams materialize in our personal lives. Rosh Hashanah is an opportunity to update our list of dreams and strengthen our resolve to act on them. We are accustomed to hearing bleak predictions, to lowering our expectations, to inviting dark, self-fulfilling prophecies. Yet this Zoom exchange with Jews in Arab countries offered proof that dreams we never could have dreamed do come true in the best possible way.

So what are our dreams for 5784? ■

Sivan Rahav-Meir is a media personality and lecturer. Married to Yedidya, the mother of five. Lives in Jerusalem, and formerly served as the World Mizrahi Shlichah to North America. Sivan lectures in Israel and overseas about the media, Judaism, Zionism and new media. She was voted by Globes newspaper as most popular female media personality in Israel and by the Jerusalem Post as one of the 50 most influential Jews in the world.