

## Gratitude

Brian Berry

Two of the foundations of Judaism are the importance of tradition and family. One of the traditions that my partner, Sharon London, has introduced me to is her family's tradition after they say the Friday night Shabbat prayers. Everybody says three things that they are grateful for. Sometimes they are mundane, everyday things like, "I'm grateful that it's Friday," and other times they are bigger, more monumental things. What I really like about the tradition is that it forces you to stop and think about your week and reflect on the positive things that are happening. With all that is occurring in the news these days, it is too easy to focus on the negative things. It is good to step away from all of that and focus on the good in the world. This tradition has become powerful part of my week, and a tradition that I've really come to enjoy. It is in that spirit that I would like to share three things at this morning for which I am grateful. First, I am grateful that Sharon introduced me to the Kavana community. Second, I'm grateful to Rabbi Rachel and Rabbi Sydney for putting this class together. It has been very rich experience for all of us. And finally, I'm very grateful for all of those in attendance here today to share in this celebration with us. And I would like to add a fourth thing. I am grateful for my fellow class-members. I have learned so much from each of you. I'm going to miss spending time with you each week.

This brings me to the Amidah. During the week, we say 19 prayers. But during Shabbat, we only say 7. This is because during the week we are asking for things. But during Shabbat we are thanking and praising and reflecting rather than focusing on our physical needs.