



As Thanksgiving fast approaches, I, like many of you, are thinking about the word *gratitude*. What does it mean to be grateful at a time when the world is filled with uncertainty, fear and polarization? What does it mean to be grateful when it is unclear who will have health insurance, green cards, or jobs in the coming year? What does it mean to be grateful, every year, not only in years when things are going well?

Judaism teaches us that every morning we are to wake up and say the prayer "Modeh Ani." The prayer is:

**מוֹדֵה/מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ/רוּחַ חַי וְקַיִם, שֶׁהֶחְזַרְתָּ בִּי  
נִשְׁמָתִי בְּחֶמְלָה. רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ.**

***Modeh/Modah anee lefanecha melech/ruach chai vekayam,  
she-he-chezarta bee nishma tee b'chemla, raba emunatecha.***

I offer thanks to You, living and eternal King/Spirit, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great.

"Modeh Ani" is to be the first thing out of our mouth before we rise out of bed, before we say "good morning," before we brush our teeth or drink our coffee. Before we have any conscious clue about what this coming morning is going to be, we are to proclaim our gratitude for a new day. I am grateful, Gd, that today I have the opportunity to live, to talk, to laugh, to learn, to demonstrate, to transform and to teach.

Judaism reminds us that the gifts we get are not the house we live in

or the cars we drive but the oxygen we breathe and the connections we make.

What am I, Sonya Starr, grateful for this Thanksgiving? First and foremost, I am grateful to be alive. I am blessed with a partner to share life with, children I love, an extended family I enjoy, way too much food to eat, a warm home to return to, a profession of leading a community to wake up to each day that connects me to so many and so much, a sacred community to create with and the opportunity to work to make this world better than it would be if I did not wake up this morning. Modah Anee, Thank you Gd for this Thanksgiving, this blessed day to remind myself of the foundation on which I will continue to build in the coming months, the scaffolding that will be there to support the challenges our world will present, and the community in which we can do the sacred work of tikkun olam/fixing the world, every day, we are blessed to wake up together.

What are you grateful for? What gives your life meaning? What will you do with your sacred day?

Come and celebrate Shabbat with us, November 25 at 7:30pm at the Meeting House, where we will share, celebrate, and give thanks for being here together this year.

Rabbi Sonya Starr

