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What am I thankful for?

Gratitude is something people talk about often, but as I've gotten older, I've realized it's more than just saying "thank you." It's about noticing the miniscule things that give my life meaning, even when I'm busy or stressed. As a 14-year-old, I'm still figuring out who I want to become, but there are a few things that already stand out as the foundation of my life: my belief in God, my connection to Judaism, and the love and support of my family and friends. These three things help guide my choices, shape my identity, and remind me of what's truly important.

First, I'm grateful for God because believing in a higher power helps me feel centered, especially during times when everything feels rocky. Growing up comes with a lot of questions—about friends, about school, and even about myself. When I pray or pause to reflect, I feel a sense of calm that's hard to find anywhere else. It reminds me that there is something bigger than my problems and that I have someone to turn to, even if it's just silently, and I know no matter what He will always listen. My faith also pushes me to be a better person, to treat others with respect, and to try to make the best choices in any scenario. Knowing God is there gives me strength and hope when I need it most.

I'm also deeply thankful for Judaism, which is not only my religion but an entire culture and history that I get to be part of. Our traditions—like keeping the Shabbat and festivals, learning Torah, and doing mitzvot—make me feel connected to something ancient and meaningful. I love the feeling of being surrounded by family and community during these moments, knowing that Jews across the world are celebrating the same things and speaking the same prayers. Judaism teaches me important values like kindness, justice, and responsibility, and I try to carry those lessons into my everyday life. Being Jewish isn't just something I am; it's something that helps guide the kind of person I want to become.

Most of all, I'm grateful for my family and friends, because they are the people who know me better than anyone and love me no matter what. They support me when I'm stressed, cheer me on when I succeed, and help me learn from my mistakes. Even when we argue or get on each other's nerves, I know that the love underneath never changes. Our time together—whether we're having a big holiday meal, going on a trip, or just talking in the car—makes me feel understood and safe. Not everyone has a family they can rely on, and I try to appreciate every moment I get with mine. They're the ones who have shaped my values and helped me become the person I am today.

In conclusion, being grateful for God, Judaism, and my family and friends helps me stay grounded in what really matters. These parts of my life give me strength, belonging, and love, even when life feels overwhelming. Whether it's ranting to my parents or calling and doing homework with my friends, I always feel their support and understanding. They remind me that I'm part of something bigger than myself and that I have people and beliefs I can always turn to.

As I keep growing and discovering who I am, I know that these three gifts will continue to guide me and support me, and for that, I am truly thankful.