

WHAT BEING JEWISH MEANS TO ME



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To me, being Jewish means having help in answering life's most fundamental questions, such as, "How did I come to this place?" and, "Now that I am here, how should I live?"

My faith, which has anchored my life, begins with a joyful gratitude that there is a God who created the universe and then, because He continued to care for what He created, gave us laws and values to order and improve our lives. God also gave us a purpose and a destiny—to do justice and to protect, indeed to perfect, the human community and natural environment. In trying to live according to these principles, I am helped by daily prayer and religious rituals such as observance of the Sabbath—a time to stop and appreciate all that God has given us. I also find strength and humility in being linked to something so much larger and longer-lasting than myself.

To me, being Jewish also means the joy of being part of a unique ethnic culture and reveling in its history and humor, its language and literature, its music and moods, its festivals and foods.

Being Jewish in America also means feeling a special love for this country, which has provided such unprecedented freedom and opportunity to the millions who have come and lived here. My parents raised me to believe that I did not have to mute my religious faith or ethnic identity to be a good American, that, on the contrary, America invites all its people to be what they are and believe what they wish. In truth, it is from our individual diversity and shared faith in God that we Americans draw our greatest strength and hope.

The American Jewish Committee is proud to present this message, the second in a series, on the meaning of being Jewish today. The Jewish community offers an abundant diversity of intellectual, spiritual and cultural opportunities that can enrich and deepen one's life. Jewish living, we believe, provides rootedness in the present and a link to our history and destiny.

We encourage all Jews to explore the many paths to being a Jew in contemporary America, and to experience the joy and beauty of the Jewish heritage.

For information on a variety of programs and organizations which can help you develop your connection to Jewish life, write or call us at (212) 751-4000, ext. 267.



The American Jewish Committee

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The American Jewish Committee is dedicated to strengthening the Jewish community, enriching the quality of Jewish life, and enhancing the creative vitality of the Jewish people. AJC advocates public policy positions rooted in American democratic values and the perspectives of the Jewish heritage. Founded in 1906, it is the pioneer human relations agency in the U.S.

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