



GRATITUDE IS A CHOICE

# GRATITUDE IS A CHOICE

I remember the first time I lit Shabbat candles three days after our beloved shul burned down. I remember watching the flames dance in my candlesticks and trying hard not to associate the flames with the smell of the ash and smoke that I breathed in when my husband had eventually come home from that devastating night. It was hard to imagine that we would ever be able to look at fire again without fear, tears and pain. Yet a year later, almost to the day of the fire, we were gifted with a baby boy. Born a few days before Chanukah, we named him Neriya (candle or torch of G-d).

Over the year, we saw how a fire united our community, brought with it a sense of purpose, resilience and an inner drive to continue no matter what. When I light my candles now, I choose to focus on gratitude, for the G-d-given miracles of my children and the wonderful community I have the privilege of being a part of. May your Shabbat candles dance as they usher in the magical glow of Shabbat and may your home always be blessed with the warmth and happiness that gratitude brings.

AVIVA THURGOOD | JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA