

**Past, Present, and Future are One**  
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To *remember*, in Judaism, is about much more than simply recalling the past.

It's about keeping the past *alive*, actively, and deliberately—*now* in the present, *and* for the future.

To *remember*, in Judaism, is to transcend the boundaries of time.

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Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik tells a beautiful story from his childhood about the power of living memory.

Rabbi Soloveitchik's father was a renowned Torah scholar, and his home would constantly be filled with students sitting around the table discussing the sacred books.

The young Joseph remembers sitting quietly in his room, listening to his father and the other scholars study.

They were *vigorous* conversations.

The scholars would discuss a passage in the Talmud about heroes of ages gone by, like Moses, and Hillel, and Rabbi Akiva. ...

And then, they'd argue about interpretations by Rashi, and Rabbenu Tam, and Rambam. ...

And, not only would the scholars argue *about* these giants of Jewish thought; they would argue *with* them—

*Passionately.*

So passionately that the young boy, listening intently through the door, felt as though Akiva and Moses and Rashi and Rambam were sitting *right there* at the table *with* his father.

And these heroes of times gone by became such a presence in the young Joseph's home, and such a presence in his *life*, that he came to think of them as his *friends* and his constant *companions*.

One day, someone who had noticed how intimately and affectionately young Joseph spoke about these great men said to the boy: "You know, Akiva and Rashi and Rambam—they've been dead for centuries."

And the little boy's response was powerful.

He said: “*Dead?! They’re not dead! I just had a conversation with them this morning!*”

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*That’s* what it is to remember.

Rabbi Soloveitchik’s father taught him that to remember is about more than just recalling the past.

To remember means more than just reading their books, and it means more than just talking *about* them...;

- It means talking *with* them. All the time.
- It means inviting them to our table, and making them active participants in the conversation, and looking to them for guidance;
- It means making them our *constant* companions;
- And *believing* it so strongly that we can really *feel* their presence—*tangibly*, and *intimately*.

That’s the Jewish way.

Our ancestors are our *teachers* and our *role models*.

We look to them for guidance, and wisdom, and advice—*every day*.

They’re *not* dead to us. They are very much *alive!*

Because we *remember* them—*not* as people who lived a long time ago, but as people who are *with* us and who are important to us, *now* and in the future.

To *remember*, in Judaism, is to transcend the boundaries of time. Through memory, past, present, and future are *one*.

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Think about the loved ones you’re remembering today:

Your grandparents and great-grandparents. Your mother. Your father. Your sister or your brother. Aunts and uncles. Cousins.

Your child.

They’re *here, now*. Can you feel their presence?

Invite them to sit with you.

Whatever it is you're thinking about on this Yom Kippur, invite *them* into the conversation.

- Maybe you're struggling with a difficult decision you have to make:

Who's the one who was so good at helping you think through these things?

Ask them for advice.

- Maybe you're feeling stressed and overwhelmed at work:

Who's the one who you could just call and dump it all on , and they would listen patiently and let you talk?

Talk to them now.

- Maybe things aren't great at home:

Your child is sick, or having a hard time with friends;

or you and your spouse are in a bad place right now.

Who's the one you want to call and cry to, and just let yourself melt because you know it's safe to be vulnerable with them?

Cry to them now.

They know you better than anyone.

They *shaped* you. They were *there* for you.

And they still *are*.

Because you *remember* them.

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This year, let's do what Rabbi Soloveitchik's father did.

Let's teach our children what it means to remember.

Let's introduce them to our loved ones who have passed:

the people who *shaped* us and *knew* us;

the people we look to, *even now*, for guidance, and comfort, and wisdom—

So that our children will come to *know* them, and *love* them, and *look* to them, too.

Let's teach them that our loved ones *are*, and always *will* be, very much *alive*, as long as we *remember* them—

*not* as people who lived a long time ago, but as people who are *with* us and important to us *now*, and in the future.

Because to remember, in Judaism, is to transcend the boundaries of time.

Through *memory*, past, present, and future are one.