

# Memory: The Past Breaks Through Into the Future

*a prologue to the High Holidays and its season of Yizkor/Remembering*

## And Every Person is a Dam

וְכֹל אָדָם הוּא סִכְרָר בֵּין עַבְרָר לְעַתִּיד.  
כַּשְׁהוּא מֵת נִשְׁבֵר הַסִּכְרָר וְהַעֲבָר מַתְפַרֵּץ לְתוֹךְ הַעַתִּיד  
וְאֵין מַקְדָּשׁ וְאֵין מַאֲחֵר. וּמַזְמָנוֹ הוּא אֶחָד  
כְּמוֹ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, זָמָנוֹ אֶחָד.  
וְזִכְרָר הַסִּכְרָר לְבָרֶכָה.

And every person is a dam between past and future.

When he dies the dam is broken and the past breaks through into the future

And there is no early or late. Time is one

Like our God, our time is one.

And the memory of the dam is a blessing.

## And Who Will Remember

וְמַיִּזְכָּר? וּבָמָה מִשְׁמְרִים זְכָרוֹן? בָּמָה מִשְׁמְרִים בְּכָל בָּעוֹלָם,  
מִשְׁמְרִים בְּמַלְחָה וּבְסִכְרָר, בְּחַם גְּבָהָה וּבְחַקְפָּה עַמְקָה  
בְּאֲטִימָה מְחַלְּטָת, בִּיבּוֹשׁ וּבְחַנִּיטָה.  
אֶבְלָל שְׁמֹוֹר הַזְּכָרוֹן הַטוֹּב בִּיּוֹתָר הָוָא  
לְשְׁמֹרוֹ בְּתוֹךְ הַשְּׁכָחָה שֶׁאָפְּ זִכְרָה אֶחָת  
לֹא תּוֹכַל לְעוֹלָם לְחַזֵּר לְתוֹכָה וְלְהַפְּרִיעַ אֶת מִנוּחַת הַנֶּצֶח שֶׁל הַזְּכָרוֹן.

And who will remember? And by what means do we preserve memory? How do we preserve anything in the world?

We preserve with salt and sugar, high heat and deep freeze

With vacuum seal, with drying and embalming.

But the best way of preserving memory is

To protect it within forgetting so that even a single recollection

Will be unable to penetrate and disturb the eternal rest of the memory.

Yehuda Amichai, Translated by Rabbi Steven Sager

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