

Morning Mindfulness & Gratitude: Remembering

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In seeking wisdom,
the first step is silence,
the second listening,
the third remembering,
the fourth practicing,
the fifth teaching others.

Rabbi Shlomo ibn Gabirol (ca. 11th C, Cordoba)

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Rabbi Avraham Elya Kaplan

“An unceasing inner gaze toward one’s responsibility leads to remembrance, remembrance leads to concern, concern leads to confidence, confidence leads to strength, and strength leads to serenity and wholeness, internally and externally, in thought and in deed.”

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Etel Adnan, *Night* (b. 1925 Lebanon)

Is memory produced by us, or is it us? Our identity is very likely whatever our memory decides to retain. But let’s not presume that memory is a storage room. It’s not a tool for being able to think, it’s thinking, before thinking. It also makes an (apparently) simple thing like crossing the room, possible. It’s impossible to separate it from what it remembers...

Memory is intelligent. It’s a knowledge seated neither in the senses, nor in the spirit, but in collective memory. It is communal, though deeply personal. Involved with the self, though autonomous. At war with death.

It helps us rampage through the old self, hang on the certitude that it has to be...

Reason and memory move together.

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Rabbi Yisrael Lipschutz (1782–1860, Germany), *Tiferet Yisrael*, commentary on *Pirkei Avot* 2:9

אמר להם, צאו וראו איזוהי דרך ישרה שידבק בה האדם רבי אליעזר אומר, עין טובה.
 רבי יהושע אומר, חבר טוב. רבי יוסי אומר, שכן טוב. רבי שמעון אומר, הרוצה את
 הנולד. רבי אלעזר אומר, לב טוב.

[Rabban Yohanan] said: “Go out and observe which is the right way to which a person should cleave?”

Rabbi Eliezer said, “a good eye.” Rabbi Joshua said, “a good companion.” Rabbi Yose said, “a good neighbor.” Rabbi Shimon said, “foresight.” Rabbi Elazar said, “a good heart.”

To develop “a good eye,” a person should focus on developing the ability to: be content with what they have, rejoice in the success of other people, not be envious, not worry, not get angry... All of these things weaken the power of memory. But when one has the trait of ‘a good eye,’ their memory will be like ‘a cemented pit which never loses a drop’ (i.e., a perfect memory).”

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O loving God,
 help me uncover
 all that is good,
 all that is positive
 in the world.
 Camouflaged though they may be,
 let me find
 those elusive sparks of
 holy light.
 Let me perceive all the beauty
 and truth
 hidden within Your creation.

Rebbe Nachman of Bratslav, *Likutei Moharan* 1:33