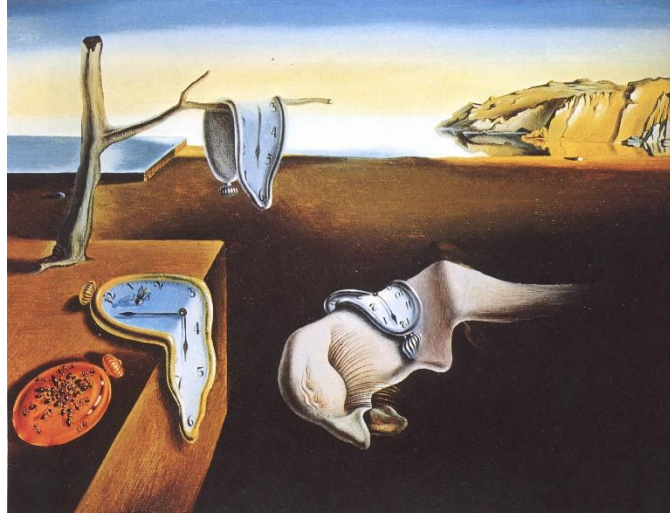


PARSHAT KI TEITZEI
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The Persistence of Memory, Salvador Dali (1931)

WE ARE WHAT WE REMEMBER

1. “Remember what Amalek did to you on the journey...erase the remembrance of Amalek....Do not forget!” (Deuteronomy 25:17-19)
2. Memory is dialogic and arises not only from direct experience but from the intercourse of many minds...Remembering is not the re-excitation of innumerable fixed, lifeless and fragmentary traces. It is an imaginative reconstruction, or construction, built out of the relation of our attitude towards a whole active mass of organized past reactions or experience. . . . It is thus hardly ever really exact. (Oliver Sacks)
3. These replays [of past event] are not quite identical to the original, otherwise we would not know the difference between the genuine experience and the memory. They are mixed with an awareness of the current situation. One corollary of this is that memories are not frozen in time; new information and suggestions may become incorporated into old memories over time. Thus, remembering can be thought of as an act of creative reimagination....
Memory is borne by living societies. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting. (Pierre Nora)
4. In their study, Yearsley and Emmanuel M. Pothos have proposed that quantum probability theory may be used to assign probabilities to how precisely our thoughts, decisions, feelings, memories, and other cognitive variables can be recalled and defined over time. In this view, recalling a memory at one point in time interferes with how we remember perceiving that same memory in the past or how we will perceive it in the future, much in the way a measurement may change the outcome of something being measured. This act

of recall is sometimes called "constructive" because it can change (or construct) the recalled thoughts. In this view, the memory itself is essentially created by the act of remembering. (Lisa Zyga, "In Quantum Theory of Cognition...")

5. Researchers from Duke University's Center for Cognitive Neuroscience exploring the brain structures involved in recalling an emotional memory have found evidence for a self-reinforcing "memory loop" – in which the brain's emotional center triggers the memory center, which in turn further enhances activity in the emotional center. The study also revealed greater amygdala-hippocampal correlation during recollection of emotional pictures than during neutral pictures. One way of explaining the "co-activation" of these two centers was that they could be part of a "synergistic mechanism," in which each activates the other during recall of an emotional memory....Such insights into the nature of emotional memory support a therapeutic process that can affect "reconsolidation" of traumatic memories. Some studies have suggested that when you retrieve a memory it can not only be re-encoded, or reconsolidated, but you can also put it into a labile state in which it can be transformed. While in such labile state, either the memory itself or the person's perspective of it may be altered. ("Emotional Memories Function in Self-Reinforcing Loop," ScienceDaily, 2005)
6. Psychoanalysis is a cure by means of the kind of remembering that makes forgetting possible. (Adam Phillips)
7. Most people think of forgetfulness as a defect. I consider it a great benefit. Being able to forget frees you from the burdens of the past. (Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav)
8. We are what we remember. Nothing is so uniquely one's own as one's memories – not only because they form the transcript of an individual history, but also because that transcript is so idiosyncratically preserved, so personally constructed and maintained. We are how we remember. The act of recollection is fundamentally a creative act as well as an existential act; it is at once self-expression and self-constitution. (Scott Burnham, *Schubert and the Sound of Memory*)