

When the concept of Virtual Reality was first introduced, I dreamed of putting on gloves and goggles and being transported to a fictional world. You could become a mystical creature, or roam around a fantasy island, all in an effort to making gaming feel more interactive. Virtual reality was never meant to be believable. It was meant to transport you to the unbelievable, into a world of make-believe, using sight and movement to allow you to be a character inside the game.

Somehow, our technology has surpassed this 1980's vision of what technology of the future was supposed to look like. While there are attempts at virtual reality, technological advancements made virtual reality no longer the next big thing. Last week, coders realized that Apple's newest software upgrade, iOS 13.1, contains code for augmented reality smart glasses that have not yet even been announced.

At a Facebook developer conference last week in San Jose, California, Facebook VP Andrew Bosworth confirmed Facebook's plans to work with Ray-ban to develop consumer Augmented Reality eyewear.

Augmented Reality, or AR, is an interactive experience of a real-world environment where the objects that reside in the real world are enhanced by computer-generated perceptual information, sometimes across multiple sensory modalities. AR is a system that fulfills three basic features: a combination of real and virtual worlds, real-time interaction, and accurate 3D registration of virtual and real objects. Augmented reality alters one's ongoing perception of a real-world environment.

Augmented Reality seems to be the future of technology – to alter our perception of the world around us. Imagine, still being able to see a loved one everyday who you never got to say goodbye to, holding the

hand of your spouse while you stroll in the park, still tucking your child in at night, or again hearing the stories your parent would always tell you. Augmented Reality could allow you to hear your loved ones laugh one more time, to feel their warm embrace, to touch their lips, to again smell their cooking. All layered on what we see, it tricks your mind into thinking what you see and what your feel is actually happening.

But part mourning is accepting this reality, as much as we don't want to. Part of mourning is sitting with the permanent tear in our hearts, the deep hole in our souls, because our loved ones are no longer physically with us. As much as we want to trick our minds into believing they are still here, they aren't. As much as we want to create a new augmented reality, part of our mourning is sitting with this reality. And we come together at this time, as community, to mourn together, to sit with that reality.

There is nothing we wouldn't do for a few more seconds with our loved ones, so we could go back and say the things we never said, or to say 'I love you' one last time. Instead, we come together. Rather than creating an augmented reality, a fictional world, we focus on our memories that we carry with us, the real authentic reality of our past, which was real, which *IS* real, because we carry it with us for the future.

Memory is more powerful than any technology coming out of Silicon Valley. It allows us to return to a place and time, to a moment, with our loved ones. Those memories are what we replay in our minds. Those memories keep going. And they keep us going. They are how we get by in this new reality. Because even our loved ones are gone, even though we mourn them and miss them, they are still with us, in our hearts, in our minds, and in our memories.

Yizkor. To remember. We are reminded of the power of memory. So I invite you to close your eyes for a moment. No electronic eyewear necessary. And think back to a special place and a special time with a special person that you remember today. A memory that brings a smile to your face and tears to your eyes. A memory of your spouse, of your parent, of your sibling, of your child, of your friend. A memory of a dear friend or relative. A memory of someone you loved, of someone whom you still LOVE.

Hold unto that memory. Keep that memory with you. Now, as we prepare to begin our Yizkor service, and always. No technology can create memories. No tech company can do what the mind can do. And so we appreciate the power of memory at this moment. Because memory is all that we have. But memory is everything.