POST THE TALMUD / DISCUSSION GUIDE

Carob trees, future generations & belonging

Taanit 23a:14–17 | Beta teaching adaptation

THE CORE QUESTION

What do we owe future people, and what do we owe the people standing in front of us?

THE ARGUMENT IN FOUR MOVES

1. Honi wonders about seventy years of dreaming, then questions a carob planter’s long horizon.

2. The planter explains that earlier generations planted for him and he plants for later ones.

3. Honi sleeps seventy years and wakes to find the planter’s grandson gathering fruit and his own family changed.

4. Neither home nor study hall recognizes him. His distress and death bring the narrative from inheritance to the need for companionship.

WHERE THIS GOES NEXT

Return to Psalm 126:1 and reread the story’s opening question. How does the ending complicate its initial wonder about a long sleep?

DISCUSS

1. What do you enjoy today because someone planted, built or taught before you?

2. How does Honi’s experience change the meaning of the planter’s answer?

3. Why can a community remember a teacher’s achievements but fail to welcome the person?

TEACHING NOTE

The ending includes death after a prayer born of distress. Read it sensitively; the closing proverb is literary expression, not guidance. Seventy years is the story’s timeline, not a carob-growing fact.

Source: https://www.sefaria.org/Taanit.23a.14-17

Classroom thread: https://postthetalmud.com/honi/?mode=study&classroom=1

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