

Telling the Story: Honi Ha-M'agel

Contributed by [Religious Action Center](#)

Source: Earth Justice Seder

At this point in the seder we retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. As you retell the story using your Haggadah, you can use this companion as a resource to consider the environmental perspective on the following sections.

Honi Ha-M'agel Sleeps for Seventy Years

A long time ago, there lived a wise man named Honi Ha-M'agel. One spring day, while on a walk, he noticed a very old man planting a carob tree. Honi asked, "Excuse me sir, but how long does it take for this tree to bear fruit?" The man replied, "In about seventy years, this tree will produce carobs good enough for eating." "Do you think that you will live seventy more years and be able to eat the carob fruit," asked Honi. The man replied, "Oh no! But I remember enjoying carob fruits as a young boy from trees planted by those who wanted to leave a gift for younger people. Just as my parents and grandparents planted trees for me, so I plant trees for my children and grandchildren."

Honi decided it was time to take a rest, and as he slept a rock formation surrounded him, and he slept for seventy years.

When he awoke, Honi noticed a man picking carobs from a tree nearby and asked, "Did you plant this tree?" "No," answered the man. "My grandfather planted it seventy years ago." "I can't believe it," Honi said to himself. "I must have been sleeping for seventy years!" "I'm going to plant a carob tree also," said the man. "See, I have a sapling all ready to plant. Someday my children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy carobs just as I do." Honi remembered the words of the old man. "Just as my parents and grandparents planted trees for me, so do I plant trees for my children and grandchildren."

Adapted from the Babylonian Talmud (Ta'anit 23a)

{ GREENING TIP }

Canfei Nesharim is website that has Torah text with contemporary issues and is a great resource to learn more about the Jewish connection to the environment and Passover: <http://canfeinesharim.org/pesach/>

For more information on the environmental justice, please visit rac.org/enviro.

For all Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism resources, please visit rac.org/Passover.