



The Value of *l'Dor v'Dor*

She considers a field and buys it, and with the profit of it she plants herself a vineyard
Proverbs 31:16

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A well-known story in the Talmud tells of Honi, a righteous man, who was walking down the road when he saw a man planting a carob tree. Honi said to the man, "How many years will this tree need to produce fruit?" The man answered, "Seventy years." Honi said, "Is it so clear to you that you will live seventy years?" The man answered, "I found carob trees in the world. Just like my ancestors planted for me, I plant for my children." Honi sat to eat some bread, and fell asleep. A pile of rocks and dirt rose around him, and he was hidden from sight. He slept for seventy years. When he woke up, he saw the same man picking carobs from the tree. Honi said to him, "Are you the man who planted this tree?" The man answered, "I am his grandson."

Like Honi, the woman in Proverbs 31 is planting the seeds for future generations in her vineyard. But she is not just planting seeds to yield fruit; she is planting seeds of love, seeds of hope, seeds of hard work, seeds of responsibility, seeds of patience. Through this act of planting a physical vineyard, the woman in Proverbs 31 also plants a vineyard of values from which her future generations will glean.

The value of *l'dor v'dor* – from generation to generation – links our history with that of the past and the future.

Judaism places great importance on memory. When we remember what came before us, and embrace the knowledge gained from those who came before us, all of our stories become as one. *L'dor v'dor* not only means knowing the history of our people and learning from that history, but also learning about and learning from the history of our own families and communities. It is our family that provides the foundations for the lessons we learn. However, it is the responsibility of the entire community to bring up the next generation. We give and live and work and plant not only for our own benefit but for that of those who will come after us, members of our community and beyond.

Tradition teaches that we must leave the world a little bit better than we found it – that the continuity of our people, the stewardship of our earth, the health and safety of all humanity are, in part, our personal obligation. We must ensure a good and fitting inheritance for those who will come after us.

Sharing & Discussion

- What do you want your legacy to be? What will you pass on to your loved ones?
- How can you incorporate the value of *l'dor v'dor* into your programming?

Activities Seasonal and holiday

Legacies: Who are the women from your past or present who created a legacy for you? Are you creating a legacy?

- Bring pictures of significant women in your lives into your sukkah as decorations
- At Passover, convert them into placemats or decorations for the table. Set places for these women at the seder table. They can be women who created a legacy for you or for whom you are trying to create a legacy.

Paper bag dramatics Bring in mementoes that represent women you want to honor. In their voices, speak about the meaning of the holiday you are celebrating.

Sisterhood from Bygone Eras Host a tea, luncheon or dinner honoring women from your past. Have the program reflect a different time in women's history.

Imagine yourselves as a sisterhood from the past. Plan a meeting or even that your mother or grandmother might have attended.**

See Appendix for program guidelines from the *Handbook and Guide for Jewish Women's Organizations*, by Sarah Kussy, National Women's League of the United Synagogue of America (1947) Also, *The Jewish Home Beautiful* (Greenberg, Silverman, National Women's League of the United Synagogue of America (1945)