

## “DO WE NEED TO OPEN THE DOOR?”

At a memorable moment in the Seder, we approach the door and open it for the prophet Elijah to announce the coming of the Messiah.

Each year we remind ourselves that Elijah is chosen for this task because Elijah does not die -- The Bible recounts his ascent to heaven in a whirlwind and a chariot. But if someone is powerful enough to escape death, and miraculously reach heaven, would he really be foiled by a closed door? Do we indeed have to open it for Elijah to join us?

Recall the haftorah we read for Shabbat Hagadol, the Shabbat that precedes Passover: There the prophet Malachi proclaims that in Messianic times, “the hearts of parents will be turned to children, and the hearts of children to their parents.” In other words, a messianic age is predicated on harmony within the family.

So we open the door not to make it possible for Elijah to enter, but to show that we are ready. Passover is the quintessential family holiday. Everyone gathers together. We sing, we pray, we eat, and understand the powerful bonds that have kept our people throughout the generations. We open the door so that Elijah can look in, to prove to the prophet that we are worthy of his blessing.