"Was that Elijah?"

By Rabbi David Wolpe

Each year, my younger brother Danny would open the door for Elijah at the Seder.

One year, one of my older brothers, Paul, waited outside, walking in when Danny opened the door. Danny was shocked. The next year, Danny made sure that all of us were safely around the table before opening the door. However, Paul had placed our dog right outside, and the dog came charging through the door. Once again, Danny was completely taken aback.

The following year, amid laughter and joking warnings, Danny made sure that every living thing in the Wolpe household was safely inside. This time Paul leaned a broom up against the door so that it fell in when the door was opened.

But the next year Paul did nothing. Danny opened the door and all was silent. We had not given up on all practical jokes, but this one no longer had a point. When Danny was young enough to expect Elijah, we could startle him. Now he had grown too old to believe that Elijah might really walk in the door; he could no longer be shocked by dogs, or brooms, or brothers. The belief in Elijah's return was a special kind of hope. For Danny, that hope was gone.

Yet Danny became a Rabbi (Paul, go figure, became an ethicist). You can recreate the hope of redemption as an adult. Open the door. Redemption, after all, takes many forms in this beleaguered world.