

Elijah's Cup

Contributed by [Joseph Zitt](#)

Source: Original

We have now drunk three of the four cups of wine.

But, as usual, there was an official disagreement over the number of cups. Rabbi Tarfon (one of the unpronounceable Rabbis who stayed up all night talking) insisted that there should be five cups, because of a fifth promise that God made to the Hebrew slaves.

Tradition settled on four cups, but there's a fifth on the table: the Cup of Elijah.

Legend has it that the prophet Elijah travels the Earth on Passover visiting each Seder and drinking a sip from his cup at each one. (NORAD Radar doesn't track him, though, probably because most of those who would be interested aren't watching TV at the time. And he probably travels more subtly than in the fiery chariot in which he left the earth.)

Elijah is said to be the messenger of God, who never died, and will come back to us to announce the coming of the Messiah. There's also a legend that he visits us in disguise at other times: any time that you unexpectedly meet someone in need of help, that just may be Elijah, checking in on us and seeing if, by how we react, we are ready for the Messiah to arrive.

We'll open the door to our house, echoing how we earlier welcomed all who were in need to celebrate the Passover with us, to welcome Elijah:

אֱלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא, אֱלִיָּהוּ הַתִּשְׁבִּי
אֱלִיָּהוּ, אֱלִיָּהוּ, אֱלִיָּהוּ הַגִּלְעָדִי
בְּמַהְרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ, יָבֹא אֵלֵינוּ.
עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד, עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד

*Eyliyahu ha-navi, Eyliyahu ha-tishbi,
Eyliyahu ha-gil'adi.
Bimheyrach v'yameynu, yavo eyleynu.
im Mashiakh ben David.*

Elijah, the prophet, Elijah, the Tishbite,
Elijah, from Gilead,
Swiftly, in our day, will come to us
With the Messiah, the son of David.