

Elijah's Cup and Miriam's Cup

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Source:



The fourth cup of wine is poured.

We now draw our attention to the two empty cups on the table—one of which is for Elijah the Prophet, and the other for Miriam the Prophetess. Tradition teaches us that each of these biblical characters plays an important task of bringing redemption. It is said that that Elijah the Prophet visits the homes of Jewish families on Passover, to check to see if we are all truly ready to welcome the stranger, and are thus prepared to enter as a people into the messianic age. To Elijah we each offer a little bit of wine from our own cups, as a symbolic gesture of our readiness for redemption.

To honor Miriam the Prophetess, we each pour not wine, but water into a cup. According to tradition, Miriam sustained the Israelites in the desert with water from her well, and to this day her life-giving waters still flow into wells everywhere, sustaining us all as we work to bring redemption and wait for Elijah.

And so we open the door, pass around the Elijah's and Miriam's cups so that everyone can contribute to them, and sing together their songs of redemption.