

# ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR

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As a child, I always wanted to be the one to open the door for the Prophet Elijah on Passover. It was always so exciting, so full of anticipation. In later years, I recall children sneaking out just before it was time to open the door, only to show up dressed like Elijah, ready to surprise us. The laughter that accompanied Elijah's entrance still rings in my ears. Doors can be wonderful.

As an adult, I often think about the courage it's taken in different moments of Jewish history to open the door to the world around us. Often, there have been frightening things lurking just beyond. Doors can be scary.

***“As we approach the New Year, we muster the hope that the world and what lies ahead will be better than we expect, sooner than we expect.”***

It is especially powerful today to think about opening the door for Elijah in the global moment we are experiencing. On Passover, before the redemption and liberation of the Jewish people, the Israelites were told, **“Mark your doors; shut them and stay inside. There is something harmful outside.”**

It resonates profoundly today, but it is important to note that it is not only a Jewish story this year. It is the world's story. For the past seven months, we've been largely confined to our homes, concerned about the pandemic spiraling through the world — just outside our doors.

**And so, as Rosh Hashanah approaches, we have another door before us — an opening to a new beginning.** There is a sense of hope and renewal as we in New York begin to return to a semblance of normalcy, carrying with us the lessons we've learned from living through a pandemic. As we approach the New Year, we muster the hope that the world and what lies ahead will be better than we expect, sooner than we expect.

The book of Malachi, the final book of the Prophets, criticizes the behavior of the Jewish people in post-exile Jerusalem for not being faithful and just. But at the end of the book, Malachi shares a promise from God: One day we will emerge from all suffering. On that day, God will send Elijah the Prophet to announce that “the great day” is coming. **But what defines that great and awesome day is something we can all take to heart and learn from: On that day, we will return to each other.** Generations will look at each other with love again. We will find light in ourselves and in one another. We will be close together, once again.

Friends, may we cautiously and hopefully step through the door ahead of us into the New Year, and find each other in the light very soon — a modern fulfillment of an ancient promise.

