

PASSOVER FEATURE  
(Continued from Page 1)

his recorded life in the Bible and his imagery in Jewish lore tell us much about what Judaism strives to accomplish -- in people and in society at large.

It was Elijah who faced up to a cruel king and denounced him for his iniquity and inequity.

So Elijah's feats long ago branded into the Jewish soul the importance of justice. No person should be deemed so high and lofty as to be unaccountable for a failure in fairness.

Thus the Bible. But, in post-Biblical days, Elijah became a symbol of messianism.

In simpler terms, messianism represents the Hebraic conviction that society is not stagnant, and man is capable of moving upwards in his ethical conduct (as Elijah was said to have soared into the heavens at the end of his earthly career).

Elijah became the cue-name for the possibility of upward accomplishments in the moral realm. There are people and philosophies which say men are anchored to their present status, that human nature has us anchored to strife, hostility and inequality.

The figure of Elijah says no to all this. We can become better.

Thousands of stories were spun by our forefathers about Elijah. In most of them he is the friend of the poor, the champion of the oppressed and distressed, the messenger of that better world which we can attain if only we work at eliminating the roadblocks to a finer future.

And Elijah is the unseen guest of the reality of the invisible, a place setting is prepared for Elijah -- and a cup of wine, augury of the human sweetness which will come to the world when it accepts the precepts of Elijah.

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