

The Power of Gathering the Ancestors

מְרִים, הָאָחוֹת שֶׁל אָבָא, שֶׁהִיא גַם אֲנִי
בָּאָה לְקַרְא שִׁירִים לְפָנַי.
וְרִבְקָה, אִמָּה, שֶׁגַם הִיא אֲנִי, מְקַשֵּׁיבָה לְשִׁירִים, לוֹגֶמֶת כּוֹסִית
וּמְחַיֶּכֶת.
וְיוֹשְׁבוֹת שְׁלֹשֵׁתָנּוּ, שֶׁכִּלְנוּ אֲנִי
עַד שֶׁאֲנִי קָמָה לְלַכֵּת....

Miriam, my father's sister, who is also me
came to recite poems to me.

And Rivka, her mother, who is also me, listens to the poems, sips a small cup
and smiles.

And the three of us sit, all of us are me
until I get up to go...

(Rivka Miriam translated by Rabbi Steven Sager)

Elijah would come regularly to the Bet Midrash of Rabbi [Yehudah haNassi]. One day—it was Rosh Hodesh—Rabbi waited for him but he didn't come. Later, he said to Elijah: Why did the master fail to come? Elijah said: Until I awakened Abraham, washed his hands and he prayed and then I laid him down again, the same for Isaac and then for Jacob [I ran out of time]. Rabbi said: Why not wake them all at the same time?

Elijah said: I reasoned that their prayer would be so powerful that it would bring the Messiah before his time. Rabbi said to Elijah: And are there those in this world who are like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Elijah said: There is Rabbi Hiyyah and his sons. Rabbi decreed a fast and Rabbi Hiyyah and his sons were appointed to descend to the reader's podium [for on fast days three people led the prayer and not just one]. He recited, *Who causes the wind to blow* and the wind gusted; He recited, *He causes the rain to fall*, and the rain came; when he was about to say, *He revives the dead*, the world trembled. They said in the heavens: Who has revealed mysteries in the world? They said: Elijah. They brought Elijah and whipped him with sixty flaming lashes. Elijah, in the guise of a fiery bear, went into that gathering and scattered them.

(Babylonian Baba Metzia 85b)