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NORMAN LAMM
Hotel Pierre, N.Y.C.

Testimonial Dinner to Rabbi Jung
June 3, 1962

PRESENTATION OF "THE LEO JUNG JUBILEE VOLUME"
(homiletic portion only)

In the preparation of this book, "The Leo Jung Jubilee Volume," which I have the honor to present to Rabbi Jung this evening, we commissioned an artist to prepare a drawing which is used on the binding. It is a somewhat surrealistic picture of a prophet, Elijah, holding a book. Merged into the actual drawing is a Hebrew inscription from the Second Book of Kings, 18:46, which reads ve'yad ha-Shem haytah el Eliyahu, "and the hand of the Lord was to Elijah." That is an idiom that means that the prophet Elijah was under divine inspiration.

I believe that this verse summarizes the tributes that the previous speakers have so eloquently paid to ~~our~~ own own Eliyahu, our beloved Rabbi Leo Jung. We feel that his unequalled record of service to Torah and the world Jewry is a result of a life-long divine inspiration drawing upon the wells of Torah of both parents and teachers, amongst whom were counted some of the greatest Jews of the past generation.

Allow me to draw your attention in particular to the peculiar idiom, "and the hand of the Lord was el Eliyahu, to Elijah." Normally the biblical expression for divine inspiration is al, "the hand of the Lord was on prophet," not el, "to the prophet." Thus, with the prophet Ezekiel and others we read va-tehi alav sham yad ha-Shem, "the hand of the Lord was upon him there."

What is the difference? I believe it is this: when we use the expression al, that God's hand was on or over the prophet, we mean that God works His design in human affairs through this individual; but the man himself remains passive and insignificant. The prophet, over whom the hand of God has been placed, is only a mouthpiece for God's message. His own personality cannot be asserted, it has been suffocated. It might just as well have been somebody else whom God chose for this mission. The prophet's character and personality are submerged in his duty. He is used by God, he never asserts

his unique self. He is the fortunate accident of predistined history.

But when we use the expression el, the hand of God was to the prophet, we mean that the prophet retains his personality. He becomes not a pawn, but a partner of G-d, a co-worker in the divine drama.

Such was indeed the case with Elijah. His own indomitable courage and zeal were joined to the hands of God in changing the course of Jewish and world history. Not for a moment can we forget the vibrant and vivacious personality of the prophet, even as he carried out the will of God.

The same is true of contemporary affairs. Some people, by accident or circumstance, find themselves in the right place at the right time. A man may find himself a Rabbi of a Congregation just as the neighborhood is improving and religious commitment is increasing. History and sociology move through him. Their forces focus through him as if he were a passive lens. He contributes little of his own. People may appear as Presidents of organizations or institutions, of schools and movements, at the propitious junctures of history. Luckily they become the passive instruments for executing the divine will. The hand of the Lord is al, on, them.

Not so with our beloved Rabbi Leo Eliyahu Jung. It is true that he was one of the first English speaking Rabbis when the times demanded such. He was called to the pulpit of one of the most vibrant and wonderful congregations which numbered amongst its leaders some of the most colorful and influential figures in New York, American, and world Jewry. Yet he was much more than a lucky man, a happy choice of fortuitous circumstances.

Rabbi Jung did not ride on the waves of history. He directed them. He channeled them. To the tides of his times contributed of the significant currents of his own personality. To the Rabbinate he gave dignity, charm and a sense of abiding optimism that its sacred mission could be accomplished in this country. He established the highest ethical standards of the

American Rabbinate. To his congregation and to the laity in general he presented a new and refreshing image as a Rabbi of unimpeachable Orthodoxy combined with broad general culture and all the niceties of a well-bred English gentleman: the ultimate in Torah im Derekh Eretz.

To the Jewry of his day, he gave elegance, integrity, and the firmness of his character. Much of what is of abiding value in modern American Orthodoxy bears the indelible imprint of his own precious and unique personality. Ve'yad ha-Shem haitah el Eliyahu. The hand of the Lord was not upon but extended to our Eliyahu.

Rabbi Jung, in presenting to you "The Leo Jung Jubilee Volume" in affection and in esteem, I want to wish you, Mrs. Jung, your children and children's children, many many years of continued healthy, happiness, and serenity.

I want you to know that if your congregation feels that, for these past forty years, you have, figureatively, led it by the hand as a father tenderly and lovingly leads his child, then you have been eminently successful because your other hand has been firmly grasped by that of Almighty God.