In Honor of Rabbi Hayyim Angel, on his 25 Years of Rabbinic Service

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Rabbi Marc D. Angel is Director of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals.

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By Rabbi Marc D. Angel

When Rabbi Hayyim Angel was still a rabbinical student, he wrote a short statement responding to the question: Who are religious Jews? "Religious Jews are those whose hearts smile when their mouths do. Religious Jews feel pain in another's misery, joy in another's happiness. They know that perfection is impossible, yet they strive for it. They are trees rooted in the earth with their branches extending towards the heavens. Religious Jews are cisterns who do not lose a drop; they are springs of water which steadily increase. They observe the commandments with an adult's intelligence and a child's enthusiasm. They act in a manner that is a credit to themselves and which earns them the respect of both Jew and non-Jew. They are prepared to sacrifice for God, their people, their laws, and their homeland. Religious Jews are a unified mass of sand, yet individual stars who shine on the world."

Anyone who could write such a description of a religious Jew must be a remarkably insightful person. Anyone who could live up to that description must be an "angel." Rabbi Hayyim Angel has done both!

As we commemorate Rabbi Hayyim Angel's 25th anniversary of rabbinic service, we salute him not only for an amazing career as rabbi and teacher…but for being an exemplar of what a religious Jew should be. He is a clear-thinking and erudite rabbinic scholar. He is an inspiring, creative and challenging educator. He is a kind, sincere and thoughtful human being.

During the past quarter century, he has had a profound influence on thousands of students through his classes at Yeshiva University, through his sermons and lectures at various synagogues and schools, through his many publications, and through his work as National Scholar of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals. He has a gift of conveying scholarly material in a lively, interesting manner. He engages students, makes them think, expands their knowledge and perspectives. How fortunate are all of us who have had the privilege of learning from him and with him.

It has been a special source of *nahat* for me to be able to work with my son Hayyim over these many years. He has been an ongoing source of pride and joy to his mother and me, to his siblings, nephews and nieces. And he is blessed with his wonderful wife, Maxine, and their precious children: Aviva Hayya, Dahlia Rachel, Mordechai Pinhas, and Eliyahu David.

May the Almighty bless Rabbi Hayyim Angel with many more years of good health and happiness, outstanding leadership to the Jewish People, and dedicated service to the entire community. May he and his family be blessed with all good things.