



Yaacov Lerner, Rabbi  
Shmuel Ismach, Rabbi

# Young Israel of Great Neck

236 Middle Neck Road • Great Neck, New York 11021 • Tel: 516-829-6040 • Fax: 516-213-5196/516-487-4831 • E-Mail: office@yign.org

To Our Dear Kehila,

When I was asked in May of 2019 if I would be willing to serve a leadership role at the Young Israel of Great Neck, it was suggested that it would be an easy job. After all, the Shul was on a strong financial footing, our membership and attendance were robust and we had a successful routine that had endured for several decades. Fast forward to spring of 2020, and it goes without saying that these are unprecedented times for our Shul, our community, our country and indeed for all the world. If someone had told me last year that we would be shutting down the Shul, shutting businesses, schools, restaurants, theaters and countless other facilities for fear of a deadly disease, I would have thought them insane. If they had told me that some community leaders and political leaders in America would demand defunding the police and demand the tearing down of statues and monuments of historical figures that were considered heroes for centuries, I would think the person delusional. Who could have imagined the end of social gatherings, spending holidays and life cycle events alone without family and friends, the end of handshakes and shared office spaces and so many other things that we all took for granted. Indeed it is times like these that we all need to come together and ensure the survival of our shuls, our yeshivot and our religious way of life.

This is a year of many changes for our Shul. For the first time, we have to imagine our community without the leadership of our beloved Rabbi and Rebitzen Lerner. It is the first time that we've had to limit the attendance in our shul to a fraction of what we are used to in order to protect everyone's health and safety. We have to plan for an uncertain future where we have to safely accommodate our Kehila for Shabbat, Chaggim and Yomim Norayim, while maintaining the highest standards of social distancing. But we are indeed very fortunate and well prepared to meet these challenges. As Rabbi Lerner described last week, there came a time when Moshe Rabeinu had to pass the role of leadership to the next generation. He felt very confident in the capable leadership of Yehushua Bin-Nun to take the Benei Yisrael through the next chapter in our history. So too, Rabbi and Rebitzen Ismach have proven themselves to be very capable and dedicated to this tremendous task ahead. We know that this transition will be a smooth one. We are also fortunate to have some of the finest medical and logistics professionals in our membership. With the advice of our re-opening team, we have and will continue to follow strict protocols to ensure our safe return to Shul. I can confidently say that the best years for our shul and our Kehila lie ahead of us.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Avi and Allegra Goldberg for their dedication and commitment to our shul. Avi has worked on the front line and behind the scenes to navigate

some very difficult decisions over the past few months, and he did it with professionalism, intelligence and patience. Allegra not only played an important supporting role in this leadership but spent countless hours and days seeing to the needs of our Kehila and the greater community through her timely and important acts of chessed in these trying times. We have been very fortunate to benefit from the hard work of this very special couple. I'd also like to thank our dedicated Board of Trustees members and our various committee members and leaders who have made our programming and our return to shul possible. Hatzlacha Rabbah to those who are retiring, those dedicated members who are continuing in their roles and a welcome to our new Board Members who will be serving for the first time. But, of course, being a member of a shul is not a spectator sport. We would love to see every member involved in supporting the shul. Whether you can support the Shul financially or volunteer in whatever capacity that will suit you best, please reach out to me or any member of the board to get started.

Bella and I are incredibly fortunate to have raised our family in this community, and for the past 20 plus years, to have considered the Young Israel of Great Neck to be our family's second home. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time with comments and suggestions on how we can help serve the Kehila in the best way possible. I look forward to serving as President and thank you all for your continued friendship and support, and Be'ezrat Hashem, we should see all of you very soon in the happiest of times.

Regards,

David Basaleli  
President  
Young Israel of Great Neck