



**Greenburgh Hebrew Center**

Jay M. Stein, Rabbi

הרב יוחנן מיכאל שטיין

Spring 5779

Dear Friends,

When Vespasian turned to Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai (and said): “Ask something of me and I will grant it,” Rav Yochanan answered at once, “Give me Yavneh (yeshiva) and its sages.” The Talmud goes on to relate that at the time Rav Yochanan thought to himself, “Perhaps he will not do all that (spare Jerusalem and the Temple) and then I will not have saved even this little bit.” Vespasian would reject so enormous a request as the sparing of Jerusalem, and the Jewish people would lose both it and the sages of Yavneh. Rav Soliveichik explains, “Rav Yochanan had to render his decision instantaneously. The decision was intuitive. Who at the time could foresee how Vespasian would react to a plea to spare Jerusalem? This difficult question, perhaps the most difficult question in Jewish history, was one that Rav Yochanan had to decide by himself, without consultation with colleagues, in a fleeting moment! He was therefore never certain that he had decided correctly.

No request, no matter how big or how little, is ever met with a “no” by Dr. Lori Sloane. And this year truly tested her strength and untiring commitment to our community. In the wake of one of the great tragedies of our history, the mass shooting in the synagogue in Pittsburgh, Lori showed what true leadership and dedication is all about. We are truly blessed to have her at the helm in this difficult time.

Lori has made thoughtful and deliberative choices when that was needed and she has made gut, instinctive responses when those were required. All the while, she maintained her characteristic kindness and generosity. From seeing the renovation of the rabbinic residence through to fruition; to spearheading the SPARK Initiative; to implementing a congregation-wide survey, Lori has been focused and determined.

From the kitchen to the Bimah, from the board room to the office, she has been a remarkable representative of our holy community, raising us up along the way. It is not easy to be the president of a synagogue; in many ways it is thankless. Therefore, when given the opportunity to say “Thank you”, we do so with sincerity, gratitude and affection.

Thank you, Lori. I have learned so much from you. Our shul has gained so much because of you. To Mark, thank you for sharing Lori with us.

Warmly,

Rabbi Jay M. Stein