



Congregation Beit Tikvah

THE JEWISH RECONSTRUCTIONIST SYNAGOGUE IN ROLAND PARK

A MESSAGE FROM RABBI HEIFETZ

Dear Friends,

Welcome to Beit Tikvah. I wish you a *shannah tovah*, a good new year of 5780!

You might notice that most classic greetings for the Jewish New Year focus on wishing one another a *good* year, in either Hebrew (*shannah tovah*) or Yiddish (*gut yor*). These traditional greetings are notably different from the secular New Year, when people usually wish one another a *happy* New Year.

Why the difference? I believe that, when we wish one another a *happy* new year, we are talking about a goal that is somewhat beyond our control. Happiness can be elusive and ephemeral. It might depend on many conditions outside of our hands. Weather, fortune, and the actions of others often impact our tendency to feel happy. I consider happiness to be a 'good gig if you can get it', but not the most reliable of goals.

On the other hand, the terminology behind the classic Jewish New Year greetings suggests a different approach. When we wish one another a *good* year, we are describing a more inclusive set of fulfilling objectives. A good year might certainly include happiness, but it might also focus on growth, significant challenges, meaningful projects and steps of many kinds. Each of us can choose to embark upon a good year--a year of growth and meaning--regardless of the weather and personal fortune along the way.

I certainly hope that the year of 5780 will be a happy year for you and your loved ones. Even more, though, I hope that it will be a *good* year, a year of meaning and growth. I hope that the Beit Tikvah community can support you along the way.

Shannah tovah,

Rabbi Doug Heifetz