



# Congregation Beit Tikvah

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## **A MESSAGE FROM RABBI HEIFETZ**

Dear Friends,

As we begin the season of the High Holy Days, I want to send you the warmest wishes for the new year of 5781.

**The main symbol of the season is the shofar, the ram's horn.** The audible blast of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, and every day of the month of Elul before then, is intended to awaken our spirits. It loudly reminds us to seek a purpose beyond the busy demands of our day-to-day schedules.

It's easy to get lost in the many needs, wants, responsibilities and distractions of our lives, and potentially to lose focus on higher meaning that should motivate and infuse our existence over the long run. **The shofar call jolts us to alertness, to reset our focus on the big picture of a meaningful life's journey.**

This year, because of the coronavirus pandemic, I take new interest in a particular detail of Jewish law about the shofar. Jewish law guides observant Jews to hear the shofar blast each day of Elul and on Rosh Hashanah. However, it does not require that we be present in the room where the shofar is blown when we hear it. Remarkably, for thousands of years our tradition has recognized that we can hear the shofar from a distance, from another room or location in some circumstances, and still feel the intended awakening of the spirit.

**This year in particular, we need the ability to hear the shofar's call – and engage in the traditions of the season – from a distance. For the sake of everyone's safety during the pandemic, our Beit Tikvah services and other events will be held online and not in person.**

We're planning a number of spiritual engagement opportunities, starting with the beginning of the month of Elul on August 21st. The Beit Tikvah events and services will occur over Zoom. The Elul events will offer short 'stepping stone' opportunities to engage the mind and senses in the themes of the season. The Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services will lead us toward renewal in the new year.

Please join us for as many of our 'stepping stone' events and services as you can, during Elul and on the High Holy Days themselves. **I look forward to connecting with you online during this time, so that together we can heed the call of the shofar to awaken our souls.**

*Shanah tovah,*

Rabbi Doug Heifetz