



Congregation Beit Tikvah

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A MESSAGE FROM RABBI HEIFETZ

Dear Beit Tikvah Friends and Guests,

Welcome to Beit Tikvah. I wish you a *shannah tovah*, a good new year of 5783!

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. Many everyday uncertainties, like weather fluctuations and traffic conditions, might impact our happiness. All the more so right now, major uncertainties like the fluctuations in the COVID pandemic, the direction of our country and the future of democracy can impact our happiness.

However, the wish for a *good* year doesn't depend on any of these uncertainties, great or small. A good year might certainly include happiness, but it might also focus on growth, significant challenges, meaningful projects and important steps of many kinds. Each of us can choose to embark upon a good year--a year of growth and meaning--regardless of events of the world around us.

I certainly hope that the year of 5783 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