ELUL STORIES
Sharing our stories, sharing lives, creating community

Elul is the month leading up to Rosh HaShanah. Each day during the month, a different Temple Beth Torah congregant will share a High Holiday reflection to help us prepare for this season of prayer, repentance and tzedakah.

Wherever I May Roam
Wayne Barnstone

In 1973, at the age of 16, I became a 'Wandering Jew', spending one year in Tokyo as an exchange student living with a Japanese family and attending a Japanese public high school.

As the crisp fall air ripened the persimmons, I felt the pull of the High Holidays, a yen to be with my people. On a very limited budget, with my precocious negotiating skills, I was able to obtain a deeply discounted High Holiday tickets at the only synagogue in Tokyo. I felt at 'home' although thousands of miles away from my family and home.

Judaism is a faith of holy time and not holy place, so, as a 'stranger in a strange land', I have felt at home celebrating High Holidays and other Jewish holidays in Florence, Singapore, Tel Aviv, and Honolulu, among other cities.

But as Dorothy says, there is no place like home, and TBT has been our family's home for almost two decades, providing us with the embrace of joy, solace, celebration, community service and fellowship.

And no matter where life takes me, it's nice to know I will always be welcomed back home- at TBT.

Wayne Barnston is a Clinical Social Worker and Assistant Director of a non-profit Mental Health Clinic. His wife Terry and their children, Jamie and David, are among his many blessings.

Would you like to share your story? It can be a High Holiday memory, a first
experience or a ritual that is special to you at this time of year. Send your stories to ravsusie@gmail.com
If you missed any of the previous Elul Stories you can go to www.tbtny.org (media galleries/elul stories).