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.

High Holiday Memories
Allison and Stacie Tenenbaum

For us, the meaning of Rosh Hashanah has evolved over the years. When we were younger, it felt like more of an obligation to go to temple. Our parents insisted that we go, but at our first opportunity we would sneak away from the service just to see our friends, our crushes and our peers. When necessary, we would use our "secret weapon:" joining the babysitters in the classrooms to drink apple juice, eat animal crackers and color with the kiddies.

Once we went to college, we started to look forward to the high holidays and coming back to Temple Beth Torah. TBT became the place to have a reunion with all of our friends from high school. It was also our way of re-connecting with the community. After attending the morning service, we enjoyed walking "the line" to say hello to everyone we knew waiting for the afternoon service. Our day continued at the diner, where we went every year with the same three families and where we laughed over good food and reviewed the sermon.

Now, attending the service is a tradition that has significant value to us, but in new ways. It has become less about our friends and more about spending time with our family. It has also become a time to reflect on our spirituality and the message of the service. The prayers have taken on a more personal meaning. The sermons have provided new perspectives on philosophy and wisdom that we carry with us as we mature. Judaism is a growing part of our identity: in our relationships with ourselves and with others and in the traditions in which we continue to participate.
We love being in a room filled with people singing the same songs and celebrating the New Year together. We look forward to hearing the shofar and applauding the long blow after the Tekiah Gedolah. It feels great to be a part of this community and makes us proud of our religion and its culture.

And, for old time's sake:
"Mr. Pine - we're sorry you couldn't be here to see the final result. We look forward to finding the answers to these and other questions in our future studies at Temple Beth Torah."

Allison and Stacie are alumni of our Religious School. They became B'nai Mitzvah in 2001 and 2003. Today Allison is an attorney and Stacie has just graduated with her MSW.

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.