T his time of the Jewish calendar year is very purposeful. It is the season during which we count the time between the second night of Pesach (Passover) and the first night of Shavuot (The Festival of Weeks). This is called “counting the omer” – seven weeks long, to be exact. While Passover celebrates the initial liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt, Shavuot marks the culmination of the process of liberation, when we became an autonomous community with our own laws, standards, and practices.

This is not a simple countdown procedure to mark the passing of time. In fact, we count UP to Shavuot. Some rabbis and scholars suggest that we don’t simply achieve the transformation from our Egypt mentality to our Shavuot one. Rather, our hopes and dreams grow with anticipation over those weeks, and we emerge from our Egypt, the initial liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in seven weeks long, to be exact. While Passover celebrates the passing of time. In fact, we count UP to Shavuot (The Festival of Weeks). This is called “counting the omer” –

Over this last year, many of us have been doing a different type of COUNTING UP – we have amassed the number of days of visiting certain loved ones and between vacations. We can share the number of days, weeks, and months we’ve been wearing masks and sanitizing our hands raw. We can highlight the milestones we have missed and the number of big moments that have passed and will never repeat. We can also cite the number of times we have felt overwhelmed, sad, and hopeless… or, perhaps, we’ve lost count.

However, we can’t give up. Our community has remained strong and vibrant in the face of adversity and we are so close to the finish line. To throw our hands up now demonstrates that the challenges we have faced over the last year and have been able to steward through are no longer important. Nothing is further from the truth. We must continue to care for our community. And, we must continue to be vigilant in our efforts and hopeful for brighter days. Together, WE CAN get through this. Together, WE CAN – and will – ensure our tomorrow is better than today!

Chag Shavuot Sameach!

Take care and keep safe,

Adam Silver
CEO
Calgary Jewish Federation