

It feels like the *chagim* (holy days) within our community are getting better and better. Shavuot has just ended but I feel it so connected with our community Passover Seder. Due to some limitations with our synagogue kitchen, it had been several years since we had a public Passover Seder. This year we were blessed with a generous donation and some labor of love which enabled us to upgrade the kitchen to handle a larger crowd. Our Passover was full of song and story, kids searching high and low in the shul for the afikomen, and an evening that got more and more joyous toward the end. With stomping and clapping and a little dancing on the chairs, our joy was overflowing. One member called the experience "off the hook." No, it wasn't the four cups of wine! The joy of a community at one with the essence of the Holy Day is a pure joy with only Hashem as the intoxicant. Isaiah says, "*with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation* ." Passover for us was an experience with Yeshua's overflowing joy as we dipped into his deep wells.

As we journeyed from Passover toward Shavuot these holy sparks were joined by the counting of the omer. The two holidays represent our path from Redemption to Revelation and are linked by a 49 day march from Egypt to Sinai. During that time our people ascended out of their oppression and were prepared and purified to receive the Torah at Sinai. This has been our journey. The omer count represents a nightly reflection and anticipation of the event at the Mountain of Hashem.



During the time of the omer count as the Shabbat days got longer and longer, I watched as our community lingered at the shul on Shabbat afternoons. After shacharit service and our oneg lunch, the community became a place of song and study, of lively debate, and Shabbat walks to the park. The kids didn't want to go home. The younglings, tweens, and teens also lingered together hanging out either at our *beit midrash* (a house next door dedicated to study and events), or the shul, or playing games on the lawn. The days gave way to night and were ended with the light of havdalah as the new week began.

Our community here in Seattle is over 40 years old and was founded on the vision of upholding a core community which makes Jewish life in Yeshua relevant in our modern day and the source of spiritual and emotional transformation.