



SUNDAY, MARCH 7

3:30 – 4:30 PM

Passover, the Book of Exodus and Revolution *with Riv-Ellen Prell, Professor Emerita of American Studies, University of Minnesota, and Steven Foldes, research consultant.*

We will explore what the Israelite rebellion can teach us about modern revolutions and how those revolutions might be helpful in understanding the Book of Exodus. How do we understand leadership, commitment, and building solidarity in making radical change?

Song of Songs: A Queer Exploration of Power, Covenant, and Consent *with Laynie Solomon, Associate Rosh Yeshiva & Director of Transformative Leadership, SVARA, and Mir Graham, Director, J-Pride.*

The Song of Songs is a queer love song between God and the Jewish people and is said to be one of the holiest texts in the Jewish canon. We'll explore the queer power of this text, and what it offers to us as we imagine a way of being in relationship with God that honors liberation, boundaries, and subversive power dynamics.

Are We Ever Freed from Slavery? *with Mara Benjamin, Irene Kaplan Leiwant Professor of Jewish Studies and Chair of Jewish Studies, Mount Holyoke College.*

Our sages call Passover the “Feast of Freedom.” But the story of our freedom is, in fact, a story of accepting the burden of obligation. In this session, we will explore how this paradoxical idea of “freedom as servitude” finds expression in the textual tradition and in our lives.

MONDAY, MARCH 8

9:30 – 10:30 AM

Celebrating Liberation Without Cursing Affliction *with Rabbi David Thomas, Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Beth El of Sudbury MA.*

Can celebrating the joy of liberation teach us to appreciate the affliction that gave rise to it? The Hasidic Master, R’ Yehudah Leib Alter of Ger, known as the S’fat Emet, argues that God is manifest in *all* being. Therefore, if everything is God, then everything is all good! Really? In this session we will consider (and challenge) the S’fat Emet’s ideas in light of our own afflictions and liberations.

Nature and History Are Battling in Our Haggadah *with Rabbi Yosi Gordon, Talmud Torah of St. Paul.*

The two holidays of Pesach and Matza began long before the Exoduses from Egypt. Their traces haunt the Haggadah. Let’s explore the conflicts just below the surface of the Seder and see how that inquiry can give us clarity in understanding how Jewish visions are evolving today.

THURSDAY, MARCH 11

7:00 – 8:00 PM

Passover – Spiced Up *with Zehorit Heilicher, writer, teacher, chef – Mideast to Midwest.*

Bring color and flavor to your Passover table this year! Wake up your taste buds with Middle Eastern spice mixes to color and flavor your holiday meal! Expand your understanding and use of spices and learn how to use them to make your food shine! Menu: Citrus salad w/olives, Roasted asparagus with Za’atar dressing, Saucy Yemenite Hawajej pan roasted chicken thighs, Fresh herb quinoa.

Pharaoh's Hardened Heart, and Ours *with Louis Newman, Dean of Academic Advising and Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Stanford University.*

Throughout the Exodus story, we hear repeatedly that God hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not liberate the Israelites. This perplexing and troubling aspect of the story has attracted the attention of commentators from ancient times to the present. How are we to understand Pharaoh's obstinance? Why does the story of our liberation depend on depriving Pharaoh of free will? And what if all of us have something of Pharaoh in us?

Chanting to Our Own Freedom *with Cantor Audrey Abrams, Beth El Synagogue.*

Chant is a powerful medium for internal energy shifts – often working on places of constriction of which we are not aware. In the comfort of your own home, we will sing and chant phrases from our liturgy, exploring our own narrow passages (Mitzrayim) and work toward releasing into a sense of freedom. No singing experience necessary.