

March 2nd, 2018/15 Adar, 5778

Dear chevreh,

The Hey class service has been rescheduled to a later date (and there is weather), so there will NOT be services and a potluck this evening, Friday, March 2nd.

We WILL have Shabbat Zimra services [with joyous singing, Torah reading, meditation and study] tomorrow morning, at 10:00 am Saturday, March 3rd, followed by a dairy/pareve potluck.

Recently we read in the Torah, *“They shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I shall dwell among them.”* [Exodus 25:8] The Mishkan, the portable sanctuary in the wilderness, requires both a detail-oriented person as well as one endowed with artistic talent and vision, a person with high levels of craftsmanship and creativity, to lead the building effort.

In this week’s Torah portion *Ki Tissa*, we read about Betzalel, an architect and artisan. God says to Moses, “I have singled out by name Betzalel” to lead the Jewish people in constructing the Mishkan. Nachmanides (Ramban), a 12th century rabbi from Spain, observed that it was a miracle that God found Betzalel, someone who was expert in so many areas. The Ramban writes, “In Egypt, the Israelites were so ground down by laboring with bricks and mortar that they learned nothing of how to work with gold, silver, and precious stones – they never even saw such things. Even the most skillful of the Israelites, spending all day with his hands in clay and mud, would lose the ability to do delicate, beautiful work. But Betzalel not only was expert in all crafts, but had the wisdom to understand the mystery of the Tabernacle and its furnishings, and everything it symbolized.” (Ramban on Exodus 31:2) It is extremely impressive and inspiring that Betzalel was “endowed with a divine spirit” and that he was so well-suited to lead up the building of the Mishkan. The art school at Hebrew University in Jerusalem is named Betzalel.

But the rabbis also saw God's 'singling out by name' as not just for the extraordinary, as clearly Betzalel was. In the midrash Exodus Rabbah on this parshah, we read,

God showed Moses the Book of Adam, and told him, “At the very first moment of creation, I prepared one person for every task, as the Torah says, ‘I have singled out by name Betzalel.’”

Our Sages are telling us that each of us, in our own way, have been or are to be ‘singled out by name’ by the Holy One. Each of us has a unique task for which we alone have been created. Perhaps we are aware of that gift, perhaps we are still listening for our name to be called to connect us with our purpose in life. We are each of us, in our own way, continuing to build a sanctuary to let the Divine dwell within our hearts and in the world. Like Betzalel, who was filled with a divine spirit of wisdom (*chochma*), understanding (*bina*) and knowledge (*da’at*), let us cultivate these traits in our lives to align ourselves with our unique path, and set ourselves to be able to act in the world in a way that gives most honor to our name.

Shabbat shalom,

Rabbi Diana

***I would like to remind you that I am available to speak and meet with you. I have found that setting individual times with people rather than having specific office hours has worked wonderfully these past few years. My email is: rabbidianamiller@gmail.com and my phone number is: [215-804-6626](tel:215-804-6626).