
The Architect...

Rabbi Alon Meltzer

A New Page of Talmud

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Ki Tisa 5782



See, I have singled out by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. I have endowed him with a divine spirit of skill, ability, and knowledge in every kind of craft; **Shemot 31:2-3**¹ try and understand that I did not appoint Betzalel for this task arbitrarily, as it is of the essence that someone who is very senior also in spiritual matters must carry out such a sacred task as fashioning the parts of the Tabernacle. Such a person must not only have in mind the desire to technically execute first class artisanship, but he must constantly be

conscious of performing a Divine commandment.– **Seforno on Shemot 31:2**² Our Rabbis have on this topic a Midrash: *Shemoth Rabbah* 40:2. “G-d showed Moses the

book of the first man and told him: ‘Each person I have given a role from that moment on, and Bezalel too I have given a role already then, as it is said, *See, I have called by name Bezalel.*” **Ramban on Shemot 31:** “Betzalel, son of Uri, son of Chur;” Betzalel’s ancestry is given for 3 generations, whereas that of his assistant Oholiov is only traced to his father. The reason is that Betzalel’s grandfather had become a martyr during the episode of the golden calf, when he tried to prevent the people from dancing around the golden calf. Seeing that the building of the Tabernacle was primarily in order to facilitate atonement for the sin of the golden calf, it is appropriate that the Torah mentions Chur’s name in this connection. **Chizkuni on**

Shemot 31:2⁴ A look at Rashi will reveal that in fact it is remarkable that the Torah did not write: “which Moses commanded Betzalel”, but wrote “which G’d commanded Moses.” This suggests that Betzalel had divined even the sequence of things that Moses had not revealed to him either deliberately or because he had forgotten. For example: Moses had instructed Bezalel to construct the furnishings of the Tabernacle before he had given him details for constructing the structure that was to house these furnishings. (Compare

Jerusalem Talmud *Peyah* 1,1 According to the version there when Moses instructed Betzalel to first construct the furnishings, Betzalel queried this

wondering if Moses had heard it in that order on Mount Sinai.) Upon hearing this, Moses reminded himself that God had in fact told him to construct the structure housing the furnishings first. He complimented Betzalel, saying that apparently he had stood in G’d’s shade at the time G’d had spoken to Moses. As a result, Betzalel constructed the structure, i.e. the boards and “carpets” serving as the ceiling of the Tabernacle, before he proceeded to fashion the furnishings.

Kedushat Levi Pekudei 10⁵

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ראה זקאתי בשם בצלאל
Shemot 28:2