

"See, Hashem has called by name, Betzalel the son of Uri son of Chur." (35:30)

The *Daas Zekeinim* indicates that Moshe originally believed that he would be the one to build the *Mishkan*. Hashem told Moshe that, on the contrary, Betzalel was a more suitable candidate to build it. It was Betzalel's grandfather, Chur, who had sacrificed his life attempting to dissuade *Bnei Yisrael* from making the Golden Calf. The *Mishkan* serves as an atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf. Therefore, it is appropriate for the grandson of the individual who gave up his life fighting against that sin to be the one to build the *Mishkan*.

This atonement is, indeed, different from all other types of atonement. Usually, one who sins personally seeks penance and attempts to atone for his own misdeeds. In this case, however, it is the individual who did **not** sin -- the individual who is the grandson of the man who did everything to prevent the sin -- who was to be responsible for building the *Mishkan*, which would serve as atonement for the sin.

The *Mishkan* served as the place in which the *Shechinah* would repose. As the source of atonement for *Klal Yisrael's* treasonous sin, it was to be the setting for heightened altruism. Hashem is the essence of altruism, since He needs nothing. Therefore, His *Shechinah* must rest in a place which is founded in pure beneficence. To forgive and to atone is to overlook with magnanimity, to disregard one's selfish tendencies in order to open his heart to those who may have hurt him. Subsequently, the *Mishkan* was built by an individual who would have to overcome his somewhat "justified" desire for revenge in order to act unselfishly on behalf of *Klal Yisrael*.

Indeed, how was Betzalel able to subdue these feelings of animosity to act with the sublime levels of purity essential for creating the *Mishkan*? The *Mishkan* was so pure that it was never destroyed, only hidden, because there were no impure motives involved in its construction. How did Betzalel accomplish this "superhuman" feat?

Horav Henach Leibowitz, Shlita, asserts that Betzalel utilized the remarkable energy inherent in every human being to vanquish the formidable barrier of vengeful feelings. He cites the *Mesilas Yesharim* who reveals that the feelings of vengeance are among the hardest emotions to control since revenge is the only outlet for the anger one has towards someone who has wronged him. Nonetheless, the *Torah* was given to human beings. If the *Torah* prohibits revenge of any kind, then man must be endowed with the capability to master the challenge. Indeed, Betzalel had to summon superhuman strength in order to subdue the feelings of animosity that he naturally would have felt towards *Bnei Yisrael*. He was able to do just that in order to achieve his goal of building the *Mishkan*.

Horav Leibowitz insists that the unique love for *Klal Yisrael* -- that compelled Chur to risk his life in an attempt to prevent his brethren from sinning -- was inherited by his grandson, Betzalel. This

singular emotion was manifest in Betzalel; it was instrumental in Betzalel's ability to override his natural proclivity towards vengeance.

This is a remarkable lesson! If the *Torah* prohibits a specific action or response then we have within our character the ability to meet that challenge. We are invested with the faculty for self-control even beyond that which is usually attributed to us. No longer can we attempt to justify bearing a grudge or seeking revenge. On the contrary, it is Hashem's imperative that we probe our inner self and ferret out the strength to prevail over our natural emotions. By acceding to this challenge, we will not only dominate our emotions, but we will also share in that most holy of endeavors; to nurture peace and harmony among people.