

The Mishkan is complete and the overseers are mentioned. Betzalel's partner and/or journeyman is:

**וְאִתּוֹ אֹהֲלִיָּאֵב בֶּן־אֲחִיסָמָךְ לְמִשְׁה־דָּן תָּרַשׁ וְחָשֵׁב וְרָקַם בַּתְּכֵלֶת וּבְאַרְגָּמָן וּבְתוֹלַעַת
הַשָּׁנִי וּבְשֵׁשׁ:**

“And with him was Ohliav son of Achisamach for the tribe of Dan; master craftsman and master weaver, and an embroiderer in blue, purple, crimson yarns, and fine linens.” (Shemos 38:23).

Were these craftsmen specifically inspired with wisdom from HaShem for the building of the Mishkan or were they craftsmen prior? What is the special significance of mentioning Betzalel's right hand man? What is the significance if delineated the colors and the materials?

Gemara Arachin 16b says, *And the Master (Mar) says: Chiram's mother was also from the house of Dan, as the passuk states about him, “The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan” (Divrei Hayamim II 2:13). And it is written with regard to those who constructed the Mishkan, “And with him was Ohliav, the son of Achisamach, of the tribe of Dan...”*

This teaches that Chiram, like Ohliav, continued in the craft work that his father's family and also of his mother's family from Dan, were engaged in. Ohliav followed his family trade.

Gemara Brochos 55a says, *Rabbi Yochanan said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, only grants wisdom to one who already possesses wisdom, as it is stated: “He gives wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to they who know understanding” (Daniel 2:21). Rav Tachalifa, from Eretz Yisrael heard this and repeated it before Rabbi Abbahu. Rabbi Abbahu said to him, ‘You learned proof for this idea from there; we learn it from here, as it is written in praise of the builders of the Mishkan: “And in the hearts of all who are wise-hearted I have placed wisdom” (Shemos 31:6).’*

As the Gemara stated, Ohliav is mentioned earlier, at the commandment to construct the Mishkan. “And, behold, with him I have placed Oholiav the son of Achisamach, of the tribe of Dan, and all the wise hearted into whose hearts I have instilled wisdom, and they shall make everything I have commanded you.” (Shemos 31:6). This statement is given by HaShem while Moshe was on Har Sinai the first time, at the initial instruction for building the Mishkan.

Rashi says, *wise hearted people were mentioned with them. HaShem is saying, ‘I have given them wisdom and they shall make what I instruct.’*

Ibin Ezra says, *our passuk says 'with him' because Olihav was equal to Betzalel in this craftsmanship. Humans are also able to make complicated geometric forms without learning about them beforehand. These men had such talents.*

Gur Areyeh says *from here we also learn that HaShem gives wisdom to those Chachamim that were to come to also learn and interpret Torah. It is out of place here to talk about the later day Chazal. However, it is mentioned here because it is talking about giving wisdom to Betzalel and Ohliav, so it now mentions the other wise men, too.*

Haemek Hadvar says, *HaShem is saying 'I have also granted skill to all who are already skillful.'* In Brochos 55 they (Chazal) said that the Holy One Blessed be He only gave wisdom to those who already had wisdom. The intention of the Gemara is that the root of wisdom is explained by two teachings. First, logic and discernment. Second, learning and researching what others have already learned. And this is the explanation of the passuk in Mishlei (4:7) *"The beginning of wisdom is—acquire wisdom."* With all your acquisitions, acquire discernment. First comes the logical reasoning of the human as he behaves with learning - that he must first gain wisdom of others and afterwards he will be able to acquire wisdom learning one thing from another on his own intuition.

Rashbam says, *all other wise hearted men. These were men who came forward to volunteer to do the work of the Mishkan.*

Rabbeinu Bachaya says, *we read in the name of Rabbi Chanina in the Midrash that no tribe was more exalted than Yehuda and none was less regarded than the tribe of Dan, seeing he was descended from one of the maidservants of Yaakov. HaShem decided that Betzalel and a descendant of Dan should partner with each other so that neither Betzalel nor his tribe should become haughty. (Shemos Rabbah 40:4). All human beings are equal before HaShem. The fact that the Mishkan was built by these two architects was an important lesson teaching this parity between the tribes in their social standing. Interestingly enough, when Melech Shlomo built the Beis HaMikdash this pattern was repeated seeing that the principal participants in constructing it were Shlomo of the tribe of Yehuda, and Chirom the son of a mother from the tribe of Dan.*

The wisdom the Torah talks about is not like prophesy. Prophecy is not necessarily earned nor born with. It is given. The person earns the prophesy, not by acquiring much Torah learning, but usually by personal attributes. Avraham earned it by spreading Hashem's name. Yaakov earned it when he risked everything to take the Brochos from his brother and then ran into exile. Moshe

earned it when he turned aside to see the burning bush that was not being consumed. Others did not earn it. Shimshon was born destined to be a prophet and shofet. Shimshon's mother was made a prophet because he was destined to be born to her. Yermiyahu and Yona both seemed to have had prophesy thrust upon them—inexplicitly. Two people with the same attributes can exist with only one obtaining prophesy. The prophet must be chosen by HaShem, based on time, location, and the need for the prophesy.

Wisdom is different. The men who made the Mishkan had wisdom given to them by HaShem. It seems clear from the Gemaras that these men already had wisdom. HaShem added more. It is also clear from Rashbam and Gur Areyeh that these men worked on their wisdom, or had the natural talents, and then more wisdom was bestowed upon them.

The Torah explains it clearer in other pessukim. Moshe tells Bnei Yisroel that Betzalel is special. “He has imbued him with the spirit of the Lord, with wisdom, with insight, and with knowledge, and with the talent for all manner of craftsmanship.” (Shemos 31:31). It says further, “And He put into his heart the ability to teach, both him and Oholiab.” (Ibid 31:34). Not only were they wise men but they were also men that could teach others. “He imbued them with wisdom of the heart, to do all sorts of work of a craftsman and a master worker and an embroiderer with blue, purple, and crimson wool, and fine linen, and of weavers; those who do every manner of work, and master weavers.” (Ibid 31:35). Their wisdom and talent were special.

The final clue is in the passuk when Moshe called them to work. “And Moshe called Betzalel and Oholiav and every wise hearted man into whose heart HaShem had given wisdom, everyone whose heart lifted him up to approach the work to do it.” (Ibid 36:2). Every man whose heart *lifted him up* to do the work. The key to their attaining the extra wisdom was the desire to learn.

Our passuk and the initial passuk designating the leaders of the Mishkan project, both said Ohliav was “*with*” Betzalel. A true leader makes his workers partners with him. He also looks at Ohliav not as journeyman or underling but an equal. These men had the ability to do and teach. (See ibid 31:34). They could teach the other wise men and then the wise men can be trusted to do the job just as well as the teacher.

The Torah also initially says “*behold* I have put with him, Ohliav.” (Ibid 31:6). Behold is a sign that something is extraordinary here. Yes, Betzalel was to be the master craftsman. However, *behold* with him is Ohliav and the other wise men. They were now all equal. Betzalel surely

delegated the work. Betzalel and Ohliav are mentioned by name as they were the most talented and in charge of assuring the proper instruction from Moshe given by HaShem was followed. They were the ones that received Moshe's instruction and then gave it over to the other craftsmen. However, they made it that every skilled laborer that came to work for them was treated like an equal partner.

We can see what true leadership and wisdom is. Betzalel and Ohliav, certainly, were craftsman by training. They most likely worked as such craftsman in Mitzrayim. The Mitzryiim had the Bnei Yisroel building cities and other work, over the two centuries they were enslaved. That is why they were making bricks. Surely, it wasn't only bricks. The government in Mitzrahyim desired work that required skilled craftsmen. Now it was these men's chance to use their trade and skills for HaShem. Further, should they not be very experienced craftsman, these were men that already had talent for it. All those that want to worship HaShem should do so to the best of their talents.

The passuk mentions the colors and the weave. These men already worked with such material. They were not general skilled labor. They were skilled in the specific needs that the Mishkan required. Additionally, their extra wisdom that was infused into them was not general knowledge, but specifically to accomplish the task at hand.

Now, they were gifted with special wisdom—not because HaShem desired the specific craftsmanship in the Mishkan. It was because these men sought out to work for HaShem. HaShem did not seek men to grant wisdom to. He granted wisdom to the men that came. These wise men sought out to help. They volunteered their time and their talents. When one does that then the inspiration is gifted. Inspiration is like a jar; it needs to go to the well to be filled up. A jar on the shelf will never fill with water. Further, real wisdom comes when the skill is taught to others. Knowledge that can be taught is truly attained knowledge. When it comes to holy work, the best to do the job are those that come to seek the job, volunteer, and also want to work with others on an equal basis. In avodas kodesh there is no superior and inferior. Everyone must be equal, regardless of their specific tasks.