

The Golden Calf and the Building of the Mishkan - Which came first?  
Parashat Ki Tisa, 5782

Rash 31:18

<p>ויתן אל משה וגו' AND HE GAVE UNTO MOSES etc. — There is no “earlier” or “later” (no chronological order) in the events related in the Torah: in fact the incident of the golden calf (related in ch. 31) happened a considerable time before the command regarding the work of the Tabernacle was given (ch. 25 and the following chapters). For on the seventeenth of Tammuz were the Tablets broken (when the people were worshipping the calf) and on the Day of Atonement God became reconciled with Israel (after Moses had prayed 80 days for forgiveness; so that it is very unlikely that the command for the building of the Tabernacle should have been given before that day) and on the next day, the eleventh of Tishri (cf. Rashi on Exodus 33:11, at the end of comment on המחנה אל ושב), they began to bring their contributions for the Tabernacle which was set up on the first of Nisan. (From the seventeenth of Tammuz until the eleventh of Tishri are almost three months — ימים רבים) (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 31).</p>	<p><b>ויתן אל משה וגו'. אין מקדם ומאחר בתורה – מעשה העגל קדם לצווי מלאכת המשכן ימים רבים היה – שהרי בי"ז בתמוז נשתברו הלוחות, וביום הכפרים נתרצה הקב"ה לישראל, ולמחרת התחילו בנדבת המשכן והוקם באחד בניסן (תנחומא):</b></p>
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Shemot 29:1

<p>This is what you shall do to them in consecrating them to serve Me as priests: Take a young bull of the herd and two rams without blemish;</p>	<p><b>וזה הדבר אשר תעשה להם לקדש אתם לכהן לי לקח פר אחד בן־בקר ואילים שנים תמימים:</b></p>
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Rashi

<p>ONE BULLOCK — to atone for the incident of worshipping the golden calf which is of the bullock species</p>	<p><b>פר אחד. לכפר על מעשה העגל שהוא פר:</b></p>
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### Midrash Tanhuma T'tzaveh 10

Aaron was scared that God might want to severely punish him. Therefore God told Moses to appoint Aaron to High Priest, so that he would know that God forgives him.

Ramban, 35:1

<p>It is possible that this occurred on the day following his descent from the mountain, and he told all of them the subject of the Tabernacle which he had been previously commanded, before the breaking of the Tablets. For since the Holy One, blessed be He, became reconciled with them and gave Moses the second Tablets, and also made a new covenant that G-d would go in their midst. He thereby returned to His previous relationship with them, and to the love of their “wedding,” and it was obvious that His Presence would be in their midst just as He had commanded him at first, even as He said, <i>And let them make Me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell amongst them.</i> Therefore Moses now commanded them all that he had been told at first.</p>	<p>ואמר לכולם ענין המשכן אשר נצטוו בו מתחלה קודם שבור הלוחות, כי כיון שנתרצה להם הקב"ה ונתן לו הלוחות שניות וכת עמו ברית חדשה שילך השם בקרבם, הנה חזרו לקדמותם ולאהבת כלולותם, ובידוע שתהיה שכינתו בתוכם כענין שצוהו תחלה, כמו שאמר (שמות כ"ה:ח) ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם, ולכן צוה אותם משה עתה בכל מה שנצטוו מתחלה:</p>
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Tehillim 95:2

let us come into His presence with praise; let us raise a shout for Him in song!	נְקַדְמָה פָּנָיו בְּתוֹדָה בְּזִמְרוֹת נִרְיֶע לּוֹ:
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**Midrash Tehillim 95:2** - The offering of thanksgiving in the Temple did not serve as atonement. The only purpose of the thanksgiving offering was giving thanks.