

FEBRUARY 28, 2011

## Parashat Pekudei

### Proper Provisions

These are the accounts of the Tabernacle (Exodus 38:21)

אלה פקודי המשכן (שמות לח:כא)

While the Midrash (Tanchuma 4) notes that Moses gave the people a complete and full account of how their donations to the construction of the Tabernacle were utilized, such a precise inventory seems to contradict an earlier text which states that when the people donated, “The stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and extra” (Exodus 36:7). How could there have been a complete accounting of each item and a surplus? S’forno (on 36:7) explains that the word “extra” means that the Israelites had enough materials to complete the task, “In a matter in which they would not need to minimize their work out of worry lest they run out of material.” Therefore, the full amount that they collected was not literally extra, but rather because the people had given so generously, Bezalel was able to properly complete the work without concern.

When working on an important project, skimping on resources can result in dangerous shortfalls. For this reason, Moses ensured that Bezalel had enough materials to properly complete the construction of the Tabernacle. It is also for this reason that members of Congress have been calling for America to fully fund our commitments to foreign aid to Israel.

Recently, 67 freshmen Republican House members sent a letter to the Republican leadership voicing strong support for full funding of aid to Israel despite an austere spending environment. The [letter](#), which was spearheaded by Representatives Bob Dold (R-IL) and Austin Scott (R-GA), states that the lawmakers’ support for Israel’s security assistance rests on their “recognition that the national security of the United States is directly tied to the strength and security of the state of Israel.” The Republican letter follows a letter from seven Democratic Senators to the chairmen of the House Appropriations and Budget committees. The [JTA](#) quotes the letter as stating, “At a time when U.S. foreign aid is being utilized to strengthen our partnerships around the world, particularly in the Middle East where our relationships are more important than ever, we urge you to commit to maintain full foreign aid funding to Israel.” For more on foreign aid, click [here](#).

Like Moses, who ensured that Bezalel had enough material to properly and fully construct the Tabernacle, members of Congress have sent an important message that America must fully fund its foreign aid to Israel. In doing so, they are working to ensure Israel’s ability to confidently defend and protect itself in an increasingly volatile Middle East. ■

### Confronting Accusers

As were rendered according to the word of Moses (Exodus 38:21)

אשר פקד על פי משה (שמות לח:כא)

Why did Moses feel the need to give a complete accounting of the money spent in the construction of the Tabernacle? According to the Yalkut Meam Loez (Pekudei Chapter 2), he learned that people were speaking behind his back: “They would...tell a parable: It’s impossible for someone who stirs honey not to get his hands sticky...No one dared to request an accounting from him directly, and their speech was only behind his back. But he did not wish for them to

speak behind his back.” As such, according to the Midrash, Moses initiated the accounting of his own accord in order to directly confront his accusers, and not allow their slanderous accusations to go unanswered.

Moses went on the offensive and gave a full accounting of his expenditures in order to disprove the unfounded claims against him. Unfortunately, despite numerous steps taken to ease Palestinian life and work towards reviving the peace process, Israel continues to find herself the victim of unfounded claims in the international community.

While the dangers to Israel that get the most attention are the immediate military threats, there is also an international campaign to delegitimize the Jewish state. Delegitimization is an attack on the state of Israel, one in which the strategy of slander and lies is designed to isolate Israel. This is most evident in the United Nations (U.N.). While the U.N. played a crucial role in the creation of the state of Israel, U.N. history has been marked by persistent antagonism toward the Jewish state. The U.N. has passed more resolutions aimed at isolating Israel than resolutions condemning genocide, warfare, and human rights violations throughout the world. Over the past two years, examples of the continued efforts to weaponize international law include the [Goldstone Report](#), the actions of the [U.N. Human Rights Council](#) and the document released by the [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty review conference](#). As further efforts to delegitimize Israel occur, AIPAC will continue to call on the administration to defend Israel in the United Nations. To support such efforts, visit [www.aipac.org/TakeAction](http://www.aipac.org/TakeAction) on a regular basis.

Just as Moses took his case directly to the people to address the rumors being spread behind his back, we must be vigilant in ensuring that Israel—a nation committed to peace and a democracy standing alone in a dangerous region—is able to resist the efforts of those who seek to undermine her legitimacy. ■

## Sharing Knowledge

**Bezalel...made all that God commanded (Exodus 38:22) (שמות לה:כב) 'עשה את כל אשר צוה ה'**

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While Bezalel served as the foreman and leader coordinating the challenge of constructing the Tabernacle, he obviously did not build the entire structure and its contents on his own. Why then does the Torah specifically give him credit for building the Tabernacle? Ramban (on 38:22) explains that it was because Bezalel served as the instructor to all the artisans and craftsmen. With Bezalel’s knowledge serving as the catalyst for the construction, the Torah singled him out as the driving force behind the immense project in honor of the importance of his role.

The fact that Bezalel received recognition for his instruction of others reminds us of our own responsibility to spread our knowledge and skills. The modern state of Israel lives up to this ideal, following Bezalel’s example by sharing her hard-learned lessons of security with other nations, especially the United States.

For more than six decades the reality of life in Israel has forced Israelis to defend themselves against constant terrorist threats. As a result, the Jewish state has become a leader in designing techniques and technologies in the arenas of homeland security and counter-terrorism. Thankfully, Israel is working with the United States government to develop further technologies and equipment aimed at thwarting terrorism and safeguarding citizens from both countries. On a recent visit to Israel, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano toured numerous Israeli security sites, and received “a comprehensive briefing on Israeli airport security that covered the spectrum from intelligence to the perimeter security of the airport to checkpoint screening and everything in between,” [Fox News](#) reported. Describing the partnership between Israel and the United States on security matters, Napolitano said that “The continued collaboration between the United States and Israel is critical to ensuring our shared security in the face of new and evolving threats.” For more on the U.S.-Israel strategic partnership, visit [www.aipac.org/StrategicPartner](http://www.aipac.org/StrategicPartner).

In sharing her expertise in homeland security, Israel is following the Jewish people’s long history of teaching which was exemplified by Bezalel in the desert. It is that incredible commitment to share knowledge that continues to set Israel apart—one tiny nation finding a way to do great things for so many. ■

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