



not ever having proclaimed, "These are your gods, O Israel."

R' Abba Engelberg draws our attention to the singular role played by women in the period of the Exodus: We recall the Jewish midwives saving the Israelite infants in Egypt, Miriam's leadership in the Shirat HaYam, and (following the Midrash) the self-sacrifice of the Jewish women in Egypt who encouraged their husbands to bring children into the world. No wonder, then, that our rabbis commented: "As a reward for the righteous women who lived in that generation, the Israelites were delivered from Egypt" (Sota 11b). **MP**

## **P'KUDEI**

This week's Parsha reiterates that the people were to donate their personal belongings and their talents towards the building of the Mishkan. But here, much attention is given to the role that the women played in actually contributing to the overall project. Indeed, the women were considered by several commentators to have been more zealous than the men in coming forward to contribute, based, inter alia, on the pasuk: VAYAVO'U HA'ANASHIM AL HANASHIM - 'The men came with the women; everyone whose heart motivated him brought... all sorts of gold ornaments' (translation follows Soncino, Sh'mot 35:22).

The purport of this pasuk is that the women took the initiative to come forth, while the men followed their example. For the Ramban, the men were secondary to the women, partly because the latter gave of their very personal, treasured possessions. Or, perhaps, because the men were perforce atoning for the sin of the Golden Calf by presenting their gold, while the women (according to Rabbeinu Bachya) gave voluntarily,