Jewish Tribune – Vayakhel

**Spare Parts**

Imagine you are a caterer. You are starting up a new business and have a few bookings lined up and are off to buy some new cutlery and crockery. Let’s say your maximum crowd is four hundred people. Would you buy exactly that number of plates and bowls, knives and spoons?

Of course not, the reality is you will need many more. With the best will in the world, things break and get lost.

Which makes something in this week’s sedrah a bit strange.

When Klal Yisroel made donations to the Mishkan, they were so generous, that Moshe Rabbeinu had to tell them to stop. They had more than enough.

If you were in charge of the building fund, wouldn’t it be tempting or even good practice to store up some the excess for a rainy day? And why not make some spare keilim?

To make matters worst, the Seforno notes that when it came to the Beis Hamidash, that was exactly what happened! Shlomo Hamelech collected more than was necessary and so did Hordus for the second Beis Hamikdash.

Moreover, the last mishna in Chagigah tells us that says that the Beis Hamikdash had duplicates and even triplicates of keilim in case some became unfit for use.

I saw a fascinating answer from Rav Yissocher Frand. He cites a Da’as Zekeinim mi’Balei HaTosfos which says that really the Aron should have been fully made out of gold, but wood was inserted in the middle to make it lighter.

Even though the Aron carried those who carried it, that wasn’t always the case. There were periods in Jewish History where it had to be carried normally. And carrying an Aron made solely out of solid gold would be difficult, therefore wood partly replaced some gold to lighten the load,

Rabbi Frand explains that perhaps that is why no spare parts were made for the keilim of the Mishkan. Spare parts would need to carried for 40 years in the Midbar, and this would be too onerous. As a result, Moshe Rabbeinu only collected what was actually needed in the Mishkan.

The lesson that emerges from this is important. If someone is schlepping for you, make it as light as possible!

Rabbi Frand relates the well known incident involving Rav Yisroel Salanter who, as a guest in someone’s house, washed netilas yodayim, but only up to his knuckles. When questioned why he didn’t wash up to his wrists as one should ideally do, Rav Yisroel Salanter explained that he saw that a poor girl had been hired to go down to the well to schlepp the water back to the kitchen and he wasn’t going to be a tzaddik on someone else’s cheshbon. Better to rely on an opinion allowing netilas yodayaim to the knuckles than make someone else schlepp for you.

The same Rav Yisroel Salanter, when he was older, was no longer able to bake his own matzah before Pesach and instead asked his talmidim to do so for him. The students asked their Rebbe what chumros he was particular about when baking matzah?

He told them to be careful not to get impatient with the lady who cleans up between every batch of matzah baking. She is a widow and another human being. Although it sometimes gets tense in matzah bakeries, be kind and pleasant. That is my chumrah.

So perhaps it would have made sense to keep some extra donations for a rainy day and even craft duplicate keilim. But doing so would mean someone has to schlepp them. And being machmir on somebody else’s cheshbon is not a chumra worth keeping.

**Rabbi Golker is the Menahel of Hasmonean High School. To listen to his shiurim, go to TorahAnytime.com or JewishPodcasts.Org**