

# RETURNING LOST OBJECTS PART 17

*by Rabbi Yehonasan Gefen*

In the past months we have learnt the basic laws of returning lost objects. In the coming weeks we will discuss a number of practical cases in order to help us apply the laws to our lives.

1. We learned that the obligation to return lost items also applies to helping save another person's money. For example, if a person is the last one to leave the office that he works in, then he should turn off the lights in order to save the owner the expense of unnecessary electricity (this is only true when the owner does not want the lights to remain on through the night).
2. Similarly, if someone sees a car in danger of being damaged by passing vehicles then, if possible, he should push the car out of the way (of course, he is only required to do this if he is not subject to any danger).
3. An item, such as a coat, that was left in a synagogue is not truly lost and should not be taken in order to be returned. Moreover, it should not even be moved. When the owner will finally realize that it is missing he will likely remember where he left it and will come and retrieve it. However, if the item was found lying in an unsecured part of the synagogue then it is considered a lost item. This is because there is a genuine risk that it might be stolen or damaged.
4. If one finds money or any item that has no simun (identifying mark) in a public place such as a synagogue then he is permitted to keep it and is not obligated to hand it over to the institution owners.

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\*Much of the information for this essay is taken from "Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Yisroel Pinchos Bodner.

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