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שבת פרשת וישלח י"ג כסלו תשע"א

## Lesson #11: Take Care of Your Things

(Prepared by Rabbi Azriel Bodner)

One of the greatest inventions of the last decade or so was the lost car finder beeper thing. This device is also technically known as a remote car alarm (which is now incorporated into more advanced keyless entry remote systems), but the reality is that many people only need this device when they cannot remember exactly where they parked (or to turn off the car alarm when a passing lightning storm threatens to steal your car).

It seems that new technologies are constantly being developed to assist us in finding our lost personal possessions such as house and car keys (although perhaps we can use an advanced GPS system for missing socks? Somehow, one of the messages that we are constantly trying to instill in our children - that they should take better care of their things - is often lost on adults as well.

The truth is that adults do take better care of their things than children, and generally when an adult can't find something it is because a child walked off with it. Still, that excuse doesn't seem convincing when offered by a child. "Where is your homework?" "I put it somewhere and now I can't find it." "Where did you put it?" "On the couch, but I think the baby must have gotten to it." Does this sound familiar?

If something is important to a person they will do what is necessary to ensure that it is available and thriving. Chaza"l often use as an example the phrase Mi Shetarach, meaning the one who toils on Erev Shabbos will be able to eat when Shabbos arrives. The word Tircha means to toil, to work hard. It is not enough to do the basics, but hard work is required in order to make sure that the efforts are not in vain.

This lesson is the basic lesson of Zehiros, being guarded, that nothing should come between a person and his goals. It requires foresight to envision possible obstacles, and hindsight to learn from past failures. It is true in regards to a person's interests and needs, and is extremely important in regards to a person's spiritual development. If one were to view his accomplishments in Ruchniyos as objects what would he do to make sure that they would not get lost?

We can apply this idea to the struggle to refine one's character as well. A person who is trying to better himself faces constant struggles and challenges. Whether he is trying to control his temper, or not be lazy, or to interact with people more pleasantly, he needs to prepare himself for situations that may make his struggle more difficult.

A person once came to the Steipler to ask his advice. He arrived home from work every Friday close to Shabbos and the house was never really ready. He didn't blame his wife as the preparations were overwhelming her, but he was frustrated and wanted some suggestions as to how he could control and conquer his frustration. The Steipler told him that the answer was simple; all he had to do was take a broom (and contribute to the preparation efforts). If something is really important then it is incumbent on a person to be zealous and take all actions necessary to ensure that it is accomplished.