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From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

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The Finder

Arriving at his destination a *yeshiva* student realized that he had left his *tefillin* on the bus. All his efforts to find the lost tefillin were unsuccessful. Two months went by till **Mr. Shashi Karko** (67), a resident of Jerusalem, heard about the matter.

"I started inquiring and found out that the bus the student travelled on was sold to an Arab company and at that time it was in a garage in Taybeh" he relates.¹

If you haven't lost anything on the public transport in the last ten years, you wouldn't know that until about two years ago Shashi Karko was supervisor of Customer Service in Egged. His name has become a symbol of the finding of lost objects. Even after retiring he uses his talents and connections to find items that have been lost on public transport and return them to their owners.

The most valuable object that he was able to return was an envelope. L.M. a resident of Beit Shemesh, travelled from his home to Jerusalem. In his pocket he had an envelope containing 46,000 shekels (nearly \$15,000). Alighting from the bus he realized that the envelope was not in his pocket.

He hastened to Egged's Lost and Found department in Jerusalem where he met Karko.

"Karko calmed me down and invited me into his office," tells L.M. in a letter he published. "In no time the envelope was found. Karko didn't rest until he was sure the whole sum was returned to me."

Today as well, after retirement, he receives more than a hundred request weekly asking for help in finding lost items. Without a computer and with impaired sight he manages to do the unbelievable.

"I merit to return 95% of the losses that I am asked to find," says Karko. "It is an occupation that occurs the whole week including Friday. Till today I have located close to 400 pairs of lost tefillin. Once it happened that a parrot in a cage was left on a bus and I succeeded in finding it."

Karko's secret begins with listening. "First of all I listen and try to absorb every detail. Then I suggest to the seeker to say the quotation of our Sages that is known to be propitious to help find lost items.

¹ A Muslim village 15km northeast of Jerusalem, near Ramallah.

“אמר רבי בנימין הכול בחזקת סומין עד שהקב"ה מאיר את עיניהם”

"Said Rabbi Benjamin, 'Everyone is like blind until the Holy One, blessed is He, opens one's eyes.'

Immediately after that I start my inquiries. Very often I go myself to the bus in question and search for the lost article. I have a good relationship with the transport companies: lost and found charity organizations, police stations and more, who enlist to help.

Here is an international story. "A woman from Toronto turned to me, her grandson lost his tefillin on the bus to Haifa. It turned out that the bus in question already continued to Eilat. I contacted the driver who checked the bus and found the tefillin. I immediately got in touch with another driver who was leaving Eilat to drive to Jerusalem and I asked him to take the tefillin with him. In Jerusalem the tefillin were transferred to a bus driving to Haifa and that same evening the grandson got his tefillin back."

Mr. Karko wants to thank all those who participate in this task. He says that he will be glad to assist in any request (his phone number 054-446-78877) as long as G-d gives him strength.

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Source: Translated by **C. R. Benami**, long-time editorial assistant for [www.AscentOfSafed.com](http://www.AscentOfSafed.com), from a back-page article in the popular Israeli weekly, *Sichat HaShavua*. Edited and supplemented by R. Yerachmiel Tilles.

*Connection*—this Week's Torah reading: Returning lost objects (Ex. 23:4 – see also Deut. 22:1-3).