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RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

PARSHAS NETZAVIM-VAYEILECH
GOLDEN PENNIES

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PARSHAS NETZAVIM-VAYEILECH

WITH
RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

GOLDEN PENNIES

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Part I. Choose Life

The Gift of Choice

In this week's *sedrah* the Torah reminds us about the unique privilege and responsibility that mankind has above all of creation: Hakadosh Baruch Hu says **והחיים והמוות נתתי לפניך** – “*I am putting before you the choice between life and death*” (Devarim 30:19).

Now life and death in the words of the Torah mean more than just saving your life or preserving yourself from death. It means to *live forever*. You have the choice of becoming worthy of **חיים**, of living forever, or **המוות** – you have the other choice too. And because no choice we have is as consequential as this one, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is commanding us,

even imploring us, **ובחרת בחיים** – “My children, I beg of you, choose life” (*ibid.*).

“I’m giving you this one-time opportunity to make something from yourself,” He says, “and therefore these two words, ‘Choose Life’ should be your guiding principle all the days of your life. Let them resonate always in your thoughts, reminding you about your life function, your purpose in this world – to choose wisely and gather up as many diamonds as possible while you’re here.”

Big Choices

Of course it can mean choosing big things. If you choose to fill your mind with Bava Kama that’s a very, very great wealth. If you learn all Bava Kama, a big *mazal tov* is owing to you. “*Mazel tov!* You chose well.” If you’ll choose Bava Metzia too, even better. A double *mazel tov*!

And the truth is that **ובחרת בחיים** can mean even more than that because a person can turn his entire life around with one choice. Sometimes he might choose to leave college and go into the *kollel*; It happens. Or better yet, he might move from a small town in the Midwest to Yerushalayim. I knew a story like that; a boy who came from the Midwest, an irreligious family, and he arrived in our shul. He came with all his worldly possessions and now he’s here. Why did he come to New York? He read Rejoice O’ Youth and now he’s looking for the Torah. A true story. And today he’s wearing a big beard in a *kollel* in Yerushalayim somewhere. So absolutely, when he got onto that train and left his hometown to come to Flatbush, that’s called choosing life.

But we shouldn’t make the mistake that that’s all it is. Oh no! **ובחרת בחיים** means choosing small things too and it’s an important subject because actually nothing is small when it comes to choosing what’s right. We could title today’s discussion ‘The Importance of Little Things’; and it has to be discussed at length because mankind today is accustomed to measure everything by weight and size. You know in America everything comes in three sizes; whatever you buy it’s a choice – colossal, jumbo or giant. Actually when you buy it, it fits in a thimble but for American heads it has to be so advertised because that’s how we think; when we see small objects we disregard them, we despise them.

And unfortunately it’s not only when we buy tissue paper; it’s an attitude we have. And therefore when it comes to *mitzvos* too, people imagine that good deeds, if they’re going to mean something, they have to come in carloads, in big sizes.

Don't Scorn the Little Things

However, it's not so. We should remember at all times what *Pirkei Avos* tells us. He says there, **אל תהי מפליג לכל דבר** – *don't push away anything; even the smallest thing you shouldn't scorn* (4:3). Now, on a certain level we understand that. Because let's say you get a scratch; you were working in the garage with some rusty nails or tools and you got a scratch. So he says **אל תהי מפליג לכל דבר** – *don't neglect that small cut*. Go straight into the house and bathe it with peroxide or with iodine. If you don't have that, take some brandy and wash it and put a bandaid over it.

So somebody will say, is that really what the *Pirkei Avos* means? He's speaking about scratches? And the answer is: certainly it means that. It means more than that but it certainly means that too. And yet we have to know that this subject is much broader than the matter of rusty nails and little cuts. Because the matter of small *mitzvos*, of not neglecting, not despising the smallest of good deeds, that's a much more important subject.

A Unique Pushkah

Now, in order to understand this fully we're going to study what our Sages say about a small *mitzvah*. In *Mesechta Avodah Zarah* (17b) we are told as follows: **אל יטיל אדם פרוטה לארנקי של צדקה** – *A man shouldn't drop a penny into a charity box*, **אלא אם כן ממונה עליו כרבי חנינא בן תרדיון** – *unless the gabbai in charge of the pushka is somebody like Rabbi Chanina ben Tradyon*. Rabbi Chanina ben Tradyon was a big *tzaddik* and a *talmid chacham* and he knew best how to handle *tzedakah* money. He knew the *halachos* of charity, who gets first, who gets more, who less. He was also a perspicacious fellow, a good judge of character. And therefore with him you knew your penny was going to go to good use.

Now sometimes you have to put a penny even to places that aren't worth it. If you're on the subway, let's say, and into your car comes a man collecting money, a white man with a red nose. On a colored man you can't see that he has a red nose so I'm talking about a white Irishman with a red nose. Now, a red nose you have to know, costs money to maintain. It's very expensive to keep a red nose going; he has to be going into the liquor store very often. So if you give him a penny, you can be sure it's a 100% waste of money.

Subway Tzedakah

But you should do it anyhow because it's an investment in goodwill. Suppose someone comes up to you on the street and he holds a knife up

against you, *chas veshalom*, and you take out a \$1 or \$5 bill and give it to him. It's a very good investment to foster the goodwill of a bum with a knife. And so if you give this red nose a penny, it's also an investment. It's worth it. You're buying honor for the Jewish people. Everybody will look at you. "Ooh, a Jew with a beard is a man who has *rachmanus*. He dropped money in the man's cup."

So you drop a penny in his metal cup – don't let them see what you're giving, however – and make a big sound, a big clink, and then lean back virtuously to enjoy the admiring gazes of your fellow passengers.

And so you see that sometimes you have to throw away money too. But in general we're learning an important lesson. If you have a *perutah*, a penny, that you want to give to charity, make sure it's going to a good place.

But A Penny?!

Now, we would agree with that idea in general – of course we want our *tzedakah* money to go to good use – but there's something strange about this *maamar*. Because it says **אֵל יִטִּיל פְּרוּטָה**, don't be careless with even a penny. A penny? That seems to us like an exaggeration. Here's a man who bought something at the Five and Dime and he was left with a penny change – and here's a charity box. And he's being warned, "Don't drop that penny into that box unless you are absolutely sure that it's going to be distributed properly. Watch that penny!"

Isn't that a bit much? If it would say that a man shouldn't put a *maneh*, a hundred dollars, in the *kupah shel tzedakah* unless he's sure it will be distributed properly, ok, we'd understand that. But here it's a little copper penny. What could you do with a penny?

An Expensive Penny

And the answer is that a penny is of the utmost importance because it's a mitzvah. A mitzvah, because it's the command of Hashem, is never small. It's a tremendous investment. We don't realize; we think a penny is nothing. Oh no, once it's a mitzvah-penny so now it's not a penny anymore. It's a million dollars.

You know if a man would go out and buy up a whole block of huge apartment houses; let's say somebody was able to corner all the apartment houses on Ocean Parkway from one end to the other. It's not as great of an achievement as giving one penny to *tzedakah*! We don't even hesitate to make that statement! One penny that you put into the

charity box, a good charity box, is more valuable than all the other accomplishments in material success.

Now, I understand that you don't think so; you think I'm exaggerating. But that's only because we don't understand what a small mitzvah means; we're far away from seeing things as they really are. If you want to understand, you should listen to the words of the Mesillas Yescharim when he speaks of the necessity of *zehirus*. *Zehirus* means being careful, being aware of what you're doing, and he introduces the subject by making a statement about *minutiae*. If you don't know Latin, that means 'little things' and the Mesillas Yescharim is describing for the reader why *minutiae* are not really so.

He says as follows: **וכל הפרש קטן** – *Every small difference*; it means even the difference between doing a tiny mitzvah or forgetting about that tiny mitzvah and not doing it, **תבחן תולדתו** – *its result is going to be revealed*, **בהגיע זמן התכלית** – *with a clarity beyond any doubt*, **בברור ודאי** – *when the time comes for the results of these small differences to be demonstrated*.

One Minutiae Minute

You hear that? Even though you don't see it now, the time will come – it means in the World to Come – when you're going to see what a big difference it was that you came to *tefillah* one minute earlier. Let's say they announced that we're going to pray in this and this synagogue at 8:30 and you came 8:29 – you came one minute earlier because you want to show that you have *kavod* for davening, *kavod* for the *beis knesses*. A minute? It's a little thing, you think, like a copper penny. Oh no! You'll find out one day that it wasn't just a penny; you'll see that it was a golden penny. And if you'll learn something for that one minute you'll find out that it was more than a golden penny. You'll discover that it was worth more than a 1933 Saint-Gaudens Double Eagle.

You don't know what that is? Ask someone who knows about rare coins; he'll tell you. Same thing with *mitzvos* – you have to ask someone who knows. And the Mesillas Yescharim knows! And he's telling you that you're making a million dollar investment, not a penny.

Long Term Investments

And that's why the Gemara says you have to be so careful even with a penny *tzedakah* who you give it to. Because a mitzvah, even the smallest one, is worth a million dollars. If you had a million dollars to buy stocks would you give it just to anybody who you meet? If a friend asks you,

“Give me some business. I’m trying to sell stocks.” He’s hard up today, nobody’s buying stocks. So you might do him a favor; if you have plenty of money to spare, you’ll buy maybe five hundred dollars worth of stocks from him. But you wouldn’t give him a million dollars to buy stocks.

A penny *tzedakah*, and every other small mitzvah, is like a million dollars. And that’s included in the great mitzvah of **ובחרת בחיים**. Choose even the smallest things, the smallest opportunities, because nothing is small when it comes to mitzvos. **תבחן תולדותו** – The results will be revealed one day and you’ll find out that the smallest one was of tremendous eternal value.

Part II. Choose Mitzvos

The Satan Attacks

Now, once we understand this idea – it’s not so easy by the way; just because we’re hearing it now doesn’t mean anything yet. It takes thinking; you have to spend time considering these words of the Mesillas Yesharim. And the more you review that idea and the more you say it over to yourself, the more you’ll acquire that attitude.

But you have to keep working at it because there’s always going to be a naysayer telling you otherwise. You know who that is? The *satan*. The *yetzer hara* is always talking inside your head and when it comes to small good deeds, he’s right away on the job: “What’s the use?” he says.

Successful Counterattack

Let’s say, it comes into your head to sit down and learn something between *Minchah* and *Maariv*; or while you’re waiting for a bus or something. So the *yetzer* says “Look, it’ll come any minute. What’s the use of sitting down and learning?”

So you have to be ready for that attack. You have to answer him back: “What are you trying to feed me with such garbage? Are you crazy?! Do you realize that even a small thing in this world, a small mitzvah or even doing a mitzvah with a little more *kavanah l’shem Shomayim*, that’s something that one day **תבחן תולדותו** – *its result is going to be seen*, **בברור ודאי** – *with a clarity that’s beyond any doubt*.

The Kelmers Keep At It

And you have to practice it as much as possible; you have to train yourself to appreciate golden pennies like they did in the yeshiva in

Kelm. You know in Kelm the boys learned all day long and then at the end of the day, late at night, they went home for a well-earned rest.

And then, all of a sudden, after they came home they had to rush back to the *beis medrash* for a special learning *sefer*. They all returned to sit and learn for five minutes. At the end of five minutes they were dismissed.

And what was the purpose? The purpose was to teach that five minutes of Torah learning are very important; to train them to know that when it comes to a mitzvah even a little bit is precious.

It's worth going from here until Pelham Parkway – if they have Torah learning over there – to learn five minutes. Of course if you have someplace here where you can sit and learn all the time that you would waste by traveling, it's a different story; but if the only way was to travel a few hours, no question it would be worth every second.

Praying in Yellowstone

And if only we would learn this lesson, what the mitzvah of **ובחרתם בחיים** includes, then our lives would be transformed because we would get busy salvaging golden pennies. They're only pennies but they're not copper pennies – they're really golden pennies. And we could really become rich from the little minutes and the little *mitzvos* that we throw away; the small opportunities that we scorn because of their smallness.

So let's say you're standing Shemoneh Esrei and you forgot what you're doing. In the meantime you took a round-the-world trip; you were traveling let's say in Eretz Yisroel and then you stopped off at London and you went to France and now you're in Yellowstone Park. And finally you look around, you're already by *hamachazir Shechinaso l'tzion*. “Oh, what happened to me?! Where was I all this time?”

So if you never learned this lesson you'll say, “Well, look; I ruined it already. If I had prayed a full Shemoneh Esrei, *meila*. But what does it help to say one or two *brachos* with *kavanah*? It's nothing. So I'll just gallop through the rest and walk back three steps.” Some are so disgusted they just make one jump back and then they jump forward again. They figure they ruined the whole thing anyhow.

Oh no! Even something small is very very big! So rescue something. *Modim anachnu lach* – say the words slowly. Forget about everyone else. Let them race. You ruined part of your life today; try to salvage something. That little bit that's left, try to save it. *Modim anachnu lach* – we give thanks to You *Hashem elokenu*. Ah, these wonderful words, these

precious words; roll them on your tongue, taste them like honey. Enjoy each word and try to finish up properly.

A Penny For Your Thoughts

Any small thing you do. If you walk in the street, why waste time? Say “From here till the end of the street, the next street, I am going to think about Yetziyas Mitzrayim.” Isn’t that a wonderful thing? It’s not Pesach; it’s Wednesday in the middle of the year.

It’s a golden penny. למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך – *You should remember Yetziyas Mitzrayim all the days of your life* (Devarim 16:3). Of course it means morning and night but during the day time it’s also a mitzvah, an optional mitzvah.

Or the ‘small’ mitzvah of זכרו נפלאותיו אשר עשה – *Remember His wonders that He did* (Tehillim 105:5). As you are riding in the subway holding on to the strap – keep your hand on your wallet of course – you’re thinking, “I want to think about the *mann* that fell in the *Midbar*.”

The *mann* that fell in the *Midbar*?! Who thinks about that? The ones who learned this subject of golden pennies, that’s who. זכרו נפלאותיו אשר עשה – *Remember His wonders*. Another mitzvah, another golden penny.

The Penny Pincher

So here’s a man riding through Manhattan – a lady in her home, same story – and he’s thinking about the *mann* or about the *be’er Miriam* or about Matan Torah. Every day he chooses a different golden coin to pick up. Maybe one on the way to work and one for the way home. It’s a small thing and it’s easy to do.

If you pass by a *mezuzah*, think “It’s a *mitzvas Hashem*, a *mitzvah d’Oraisa*, and the purpose is that we should remember Him. We should remember to learn His Torah – it says there ולמדתם אותם את בניכם, that you should teach Torah to your children and to yourself.”

Or when you are sitting with your family at the Shabbos table having a *seudah*, or in the yeshiva dining room, so everyone is busy. One is busy with his chicken, one is busy with his potatoes, one is busy talking. So maybe make yourself busy for ten seconds – just ten seconds! – and once look at the *mezuzah* nearby. That’s a reminder that Hashem is looking at you.

Did you ever think about that? You don’t have to stop eating; just think. It’s a mitzvah; it’s one of the great ways, if a person does that, to gets the *emunah* that ה' משמים השקיף על בני אדם, that Hashem is looking

down at man always. Even if you will just think about it for a second, it's a mitzvah. **אלו דברים - השמר לך פן תשכח את ה' אלוך - Don't forget Hashem!** **שאיך להם שיעור - There is no minimum how much.**

Drops of Kindness

Or *bein adam lachaveiro*; there are so many opportunities for little mitzvos that are diamonds. Let's say somebody told you his troubles; you don't know what to do, how to help him. So at least say a few words of consolation; tell him, "Look, you will outlive it. It will pass by; don't worry about it." Console him; it doesn't cost any money to say words of encouragement. And do it *l'shem Shomayim*. **מעודר עניים השם - Hashem encourages the humble** so you're thinking, "If Hashem encourages people so I'm going to walk in His ways and encourage people too."

Sometimes when people are discouraged you can write them an anonymous letter. You don't have to sign your name. I do that sometimes. If there's someone in the neighborhood who's having trouble I write a letter to him, praising him, encouraging him. I tell him, "You have a very good name in this neighborhood. People think well of you." I don't sign my name; he should think it's somebody important. And I'm sure it lifts his spirits.

You never thought about that? Just try it once; write a letter to somebody. It will make him feel good. Don't think it is a small thing. To make a fellow Jew feel good?! With 32 cents, sometimes you can do a very big mitzvah.

Picking Up Pennies in Public

Now, this is a project for life; **ובחרת בחיים** is a mitzvah every second and so the examples are endless. You see a man trying to bring a heavy load, let's say from Leiber's chocolate company or the Paskesz candy company. He's carrying a heavy load into a store but he can't open the door. So you step over and you hold the door open for him for a second. **עזוב תעזוב עמו - You helped a fellow Jew.**

Or a person is walking in the street and he dropped a dollar while he's walking. You say, "Mister stop!" It's a mitzvah if it's a *frum* Jew. "Stop! You dropped a dollar." On the spot it's a *mitzvah d'Oraisa, hashavas aveidah*.

That one minute, that one word, that one smile, it's an investment that pays and pays forever and ever. It is of inestimable value that one 'little' mitzvah. You don't see it? The Mesillas Yesharim says, "Have no

fear. The time will come when תבחן תולדותו בברור ודאי – the results are going to be clarified and demonstrated beyond any doubt.”

When the time comes, people will see that all of these copper pennies were not copper but gold. Only today we don't have the eyes to understand it, to see it. We're blind to the great truths of the Torah. We don't have ways of measuring it; but someday you will see how great that difference is.

Part III. Choose Your New Year

Fearing the Satan

In Tehillim (49:6), Dovid Hamelech made the following statement: למה אירא בימי רע – *What should I fear in the days of evil?* It means, what should a man be afraid of when the time comes that he should be afraid.

There are times when a man must be afraid. For instance, suppose a man is going *chas veshalom* to the operating room; that's *bimei ra*. Like the Chachomim say, שהשטן מקטרג בשעת הסכנה – *the satan begins to bring up his accusations in a time of danger*. When things are going smoothly the *satan* still tries, but he is not listened to. But in a time of *sakanah* that's when the *satan* opens a big mouth because he knows that's a glorious opportunity.

The Surgeon's Scalpel

So when a man is now lying on the operating table – of course people go with confidence because they have chosen the best surgeon; he takes a tremendous fee so they have confidence in him. He has studied so many years and has practiced on so many people – what happened to his first patients we don't know, but now, after all of his experience, he certainly justifies confidence in him.

And yet, as a man is reclining on the operating table and now they're administering the anesthesia and they tell him “Breathe in,” so in his last moment he has to be very much afraid. Because even the best surgeon can make a little misstep. All that it requires of him to cut an important artery is if just for a moment he forgets that it's there.

The Slippery Scalpel

You know, they study that. They're forewarned, ‘watch out for this,’ ‘watch out for that,’ because the body is full of important arteries of communication, important blood vessels and important nerves. So the

good surgeon knows all about it. But suppose he has some worry on his mind. Or suppose for a moment something happens; he loses his awareness. The slightest movement of his hand in the wrong direction can *chas veshalom* mean that he closes up the body and he turns to the rest of his colleagues and assistants and he says, "Sorry. I did my best."

Or, as they report in the hospital records: "The operation was successful but the patient died". That's how it's reported; the operation is always successful. The review board after all are kindhearted people and they think you can't make the man alive again anyhow so they might as well be charitable.

Afraid of What?

And therefore a man must be afraid when he's faced with a danger. But what should a man be afraid of when he's lying on the operating table, that's what Dovid asked. He's afraid of the surgeon cutting the wrong artery?

"No," said Dovid. **עון עקבי יסובני** – *It's the sin of my heels that's going to surround me and give me tzaros.* That's what I'm afraid of."

What does that mean, 'the sin of my heels'? So there are two kinds of sins. There are some sins that are up to your head; you know they're big sins because you're sinking up to your head in them. And then there are some little ones; they're only up to your heels.

The Big Small Sin

Now, why is a small sin so big, so important, that it should cause Dovid to be afraid? It's small after all; a small sin should be only a small worry.

The secret of the greatness of an *aveirah*, of why there's no such thing as a small sin is because every sin is against Hakadosh Baruch Hu. It's not the sin; it's who you're sinning against. Because suppose a man goes into Windsor Palace, into the palace of the king of England and he makes a small sin against the King. He doesn't make a big expectoration on the palace rug; just a little bit of spittle he hacks on the palace rug. You know what happens to him?

Potshots at the President

They have bouncers there in the background. Up front you have polite butlers, but behind the wings they have tough fellows too. And if they see that you're collecting in your throat a good shot at the king's rug, before you can do it they already have spotted you. Not like American

secret service who fall asleep and people can take potshots at the president and only then they wake up and start running. In Scotland Yard there's no such thing. They're on the job; they're wide awake.

And you'll get it! It's not a big insult that can make a man lose his head for insulting the king. A little sin against the king is also a sin against the king. And therefore Dovid said, "The sins that are up to my head I'm not worried about because I know about them; I'm frightened about them already. I repented. But *avon akevai*, it's the sin at my heels that's going to be my trouble. **שארם רש בעקביו בעולם הזה** – *It's the sins that a man tramples under his heels*; he thinks they're nothing, **מסובין לו ליום הדין** – *they are the ones that rise up and surround him on the Day of Judgment* (Avodah Zara 18a).

The operating table, that's a day of judgment. As soon as a man is on the operating table, that's his Rosh Hashanah; immediately the *Beis Din shel Malah*, the Heavenly Tribunal, convenes. It could be on *Chanuka*, *Purim*, immediately they convene because they have to pass judgment on this man now. It's a time of *sakanah*.

The New Year's Surgery

Now, when it comes to Rosh Hashanah everybody is on operating tables. Rosh Hashanah is a time of great *sakanah*, of great danger. Whatever happens throughout the year is settled on Rosh Hashanah. If you see any weddings during the year, they were all settled on Rosh Hashanah. And if you pass the Parkside Funeral Parlor on Coney Island Avenue in the middle of the year and you see a hearse parked in front you have to know that the appointment was also made on Rosh Hashanah. And in many cases those appointments, for good and *chas veshalom* for the other way, was made because of *avon akeivai*, small things.

Now Dovid there is talking about *aveiros* but the same is true with *mitzvos*. Because it's not different. Just like an *aveirah* is always big because of the One Who commanded it, same thing with a *mitzvah*. And therefore on the Day of Judgement – whether it's the beginning of the year or the beginning of your stay in the Next World – those small things will be very very important.

Tilting the Scales

You know when the time comes, in the Next World, and a man is standing all alone, frightened before the Great Tribunal; on the Day of Judgment, on the final Day of Judgment, a man is judged for everlasting life if he has more *mitzvahs* or whatever he has more.

And they have a big scale there and they're weighing; the *malachim* are putting his *mitzvahs* on one side, the scale goes down. Other *malachim* come in with big black bags and they put on the other side and it goes down this side. And each time his heart goes up and down. His heart is in his mouth. And finally the *malachim* stand aside and the scale is teetering up and down and it finally comes to a rest.

Oh, it's exact! It's exact!

"Why didn't I learn that one minute that I had?! That one minute could have made all the difference!"

And standing there he sheds tears of fire, tears of remorse, burning tears: "Why didn't I put in that one penny? One more penny could have changed everything! If I'd come one more minute earlier it would have changed everything."

The Rosh Hashanah Scales

And that's how we have to be ready for Rosh Hashanah too. You don't need big things. **לא הלכתי בגדולות ובנפלאות ממני** – *I didn't aspire for things that are too big, things that are beyond me* (Tehillim 131:1). Of course, like I said in the beginning, big things are important; absolutely they are. But **תפסת מרובה לא תפסת** – If you try to grab too much all at once so you'll be left with nothing; it'll fall out of your hand. And therefore it's the pennies, the golden pennies, that you have to be picking up.

And if we save these last pennies before Rosh Hashanah, we put them on the scale we'll be surprised how heavy these pennies weigh. On the Yom Hadin when Hakadosh Baruch Hu is sitting in dread judgment on mankind, if you'll have a few more golden pennies to put on the side of *zechus* you'll be a very fortunate fellow.

Small Shabbos

You know this next Shabbos is the last Shabbos in the year. The last Shabbos! What a great thing it would be if we took this lesson and made our Shabbos just a little bit better. Everybody here of course is a strict observer of Shabbos, but if we made up our minds that this Shabbos we're going to honor and understand a little more than ever before.

You have to remember what Shabbos is when you sit down to eat. Not just to eat in honor of Shabbos, although that's a very good idea. But we'll add a little more this Shabbos: When you sit down and eat so you'll say or think, "I'm eating now in honor of the fact that Hakadosh Baruch Hu created the world out of nothing, that in six days He made the

universe out of nothing.” Ah! And then you eat that piece of *challah*, piece of fish, piece of meat to celebrate that great event; that's the way to celebrate Shabbos.

The Grand Finale

And sing on this Shabbos too. If you don't sing all year round, you have no voice, you're a monotone, sing anyhow. Honor this last Shabbos in the year.

You'll say, “It's nothing. It's only small things.”

Absolutely not! That's what we're learning now; that there's no such thing as small *mitzvos*. And we'll take that lesson into the last week of the year too. The last few days of the year let's remember the little things!

And if you will keep that in mind after Rosh Hashanah and make everything important, *mah tov*, very good! Because that means you learned the great lesson of **ובחרת בחיים** – *Life is for the purpose of choosing to live successfully!* And one of the most valuable choices you can make is to collect golden pennies!

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

Let's Get Practical

Collecting Golden Pennies

During this final week of the year I will make it my business to constantly “choose life” and collect “golden pennies”. Every day I will *bli neder* stop 3 times and spend ten seconds collecting another “small” *mitzvah*. I will also spend 30 seconds each day thinking about the “sins of the heels”, tiny *aveiros* which could *cholilah* make all the difference for my next year.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

87 – Golden Pennies | **113** – Bargains

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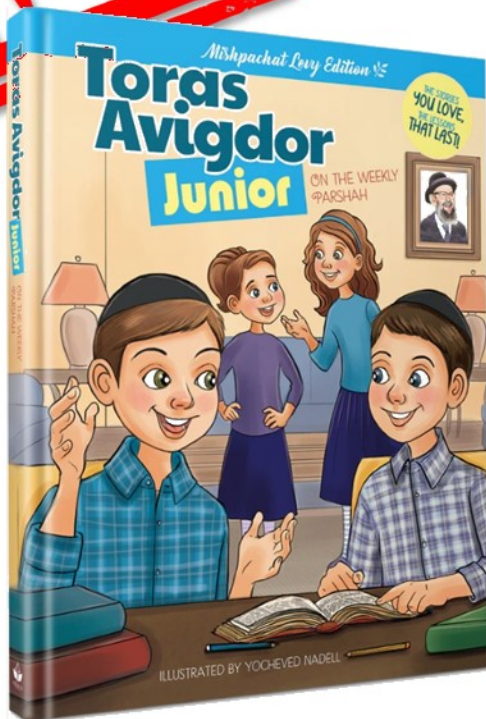
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QUESTION

What is Selichos all about?

ANSWER

Selichos means that a man must make some time for *hisbonenus*, for thinking. **שימו לבבכם על דרכיכם** – Put your minds on your path in life. Are you walking in the right way? When we say Selichos in the month of Elul, so every day we're saying, **נחפשה דרכינו ונחקרה** – let us search out our ways and investigate. All the *frum* Jews are saying that. But do you do it? How many *frum* Jews have stopped and given five minutes to think over the past year? Believe me, very few. Five minutes inventory, five minutes bookkeeping is very little for a whole year of business. It would be a great thing if somebody could boast, "I'm a man! I fulfilled **נחפשה דרכינו ונחקרה**. I spent five minutes thinking of the past full year." It's a very poor little boast, but *halevei v'halevei*.

At least two minutes you should spend! Did you spend two minutes? Even on Yom Kippur, do you spend two minutes thinking about your past year? People are talking, but they don't even know what they're saying. They say, **נחפשה דרכינו** – let's search out our ways and make an inventory, and then they forget about actually doing it. It would be a nice inventory if you spend two minutes on your business. But not even two minutes are spent.

And it's so essential. It's imperative. You must have some time to think. Unless you want to continue in your blindness until you fall over the precipice when it's all over and then it's too late. At the end you'll realize that your life has been wasted for a lack of using your mind. The golden opportunity of life comes once in history – you won't come back again. And that's what Selichos is for; it's meant to wake you up.

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