



# Toras Avigdor

Junior

Adapted from the teachings  
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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ויגט

## Separated From the Nations

לכבוד גר צבי בן בלומא  
לרגל יום הולדתו

Freilichen Chanukah!



## Separated From the Nations

Yanky and Moishy were doing their math homework quicker than ever before. Usually it took Mommy forever to get the twins to even start their homework but tonight they were doing their long division as quickly as they could because it had snowed all day and they wanted to go outside and use the snowblower to clear the driveway for Totty's car before he would get home.

As soon as they finished their homework and went outside they noticed the boy next door, Stevey Risnik, helping his father bring things into their house. Yanky and Moishy watched as Stevey helped his father shlep a table into their house while Stevey's older brother, Jeffrey, was carrying a few bottles of soda and a humongous bag of popcorn.

"Hi Stevey!" said Yanky, waving with a smile. "Looks exciting! Are you guys making Sheva Brachos or something?"

"No, no," laughed Stevey. "This is the real thing! We're getting ready for our New Year's party."

"Party?" said Moishy. "What for?"

"What do you mean 'what for'? You're American, aren't you? Tonight is January first! The new year! My parents are even letting me stay up till midnight to watch the ball drop!"

"Ball drop?" said Yanky, "What's that?"

"You're kidding me, Yanky, right? You don't know that in Manhattan they have a really big ball that is like 500 feet in the air and then everybody stands in the street and they count down the last seconds till midnight and the ball drops to the bottom at exactly 12:00?! It's so cool!"

"That sounds so uh, umm," – Moishy was trying to think of a nice word for 'strange' – "um, uh, interesting."

### Later that night at the dinner table

"Totty," Moishy said, "are the Risniks frum?"

"What do you mean?" Totty asked, a curious look on his face.

"Well," said Moishy, "it's just that they wear yarmulkes and go to shul and keep Shabbos and everything, but then they do other things that are like goyish."

“Yeah,” piped up Yanky, “Like making New Year’s parties. And staying up to watch balls fall.”

“Boys,” said Totty. “It’s important for you to realize that this is one of the biggest dangers of living in galus - we are surrounded by goyim who have all kinds of fun and games and entertainment that can be a danger for us.

“We’re the special nation that Hashem chose to be His servants in this world, and we have to keep far away from those types of things. The same way we have a special diet – we only eat kosher food – we also have our special *minhagim*. But the problem is that when we’re in galus for a long time, little by little because everyone around us does these things, it begins to seem normal and even some frum people are not as careful as they should be.

Yanky looked at Totty. “So does that mean we shouldn’t use snowblowers, because that’s what goyim do?”

“No, no, Yanky,” Totty smiled, “Of course we can use inventions of the goyim that will make our lives easier. We don’t have to go to Yeshiva every day



on a horse and buggy just because a goy invented the car. But the goyishe ways of entertainment and fun and games and holidays and celebrations we try to avoid as much as possible.”

“But how should we know what exactly is OK and what’s not?” asked Yanky.

Totty opened up a chumash that was lying at the edge of the table. “That’s why we have tzadikim to guide us. Look here in Parshas Vayigash. It tells us the story of when the Bnei Yisroel came to Mitzrayim. Yosef Hatzadik made sure to settle them in Goshen far away from where the Mitzrim lived. Yosef knew how dangerous it could be for them if they started imitating the Egyptian *minhagim*. If the Bnei Yisroel would have started celebrating Egyptian New Year’s parties or other things like that they probably would have never been saved from Mitzrayim! We would still be there today!

“And that’s why Yosef Hatzadik went out of his way to settle the Bnei Yisroel in Eretz Goshen, far away from the rest of the *Mitzriyim*. And he also told them to say ‘we’re just plain shepherds’, because otherwise they would have been given big important jobs that would put them too close to the *Mitzrim*.

“But Yosef’s family were all big tzadikim!” Moishy said. “Why was he so worried about them doing things like the goyim?”

“Ah,” Totty said, “that’s the thing! Even the good Jews have to be careful because living in Galus can have an effect on all of us. Can you imagine that sane people would stay up late to do foolish things like celebrating the wrong Rosh Hashana or to watch big balls drop?!

“Only when you’re surrounded by so many goyim and you see them doing things, you begin to think it’s normal. It’s not a matter of *frum* or not *frum* – it’s a matter of how special you want to be! Hashem wants us to be as special as we can and the more we separate from the worthless goyishe *minhagim*, the more special we become!”

## Have A Wonderful Shabbos!



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