



Toras Avigdor

Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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קִטְפֵּיִם

Following the Majority

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Following the Majority

“Boys,” Rebbe Munk was saying, “tomorrow I won’t be here and Rabbi Krohn will be teaching you instead. But don’t let that keep you from *shteiging!*”

“Enjoy your lunch!” he added, as the bell rang and the boys ran out of the classroom.

“Guys, did you hear that?” Yitzzy said excitedly. “‘Rabbi Krohn’ - do you know who that is?”

“Paysach Krohn? The famous speaker?” asked Aharon.

“No, he’s not a substitute teacher,” said Yitzzy. “It’s Hudi Krohn - you know who sits on the left side of the *shul* on *Shabbos*?”

“But he’s not even married - he just became a *choson* last week!” said Dovy.

“Exactly,” said Yitzzy. “He’s never taught before. Do you know what that means?”

All of the boys giggled in excitement at the idea of a brand new substitute teacher.

“Okay,” Yitzzy said. “Everyone needs to make paper airplanes. A lot of them. Let’s hope ‘Rabbi Krohn’ has experience working as an air traffic controller!”

The boys laughed and Aharon laughed with them, but he didn’t feel that great. Was this a good idea? But at the same time, he didn’t feel comfortable with not doing what his friends were doing.

Everyone ate lunch quickly and returned to the classroom early so they could start making paper airplanes.

“Nu, Aharon...” Yitzzy said. “Why aren’t you folding?”

“I was uh... just getting started.” Aharon said hastily as he began pulling paper out of his desk and folding them.

Suddenly the classroom door opened and Rebbe Munk entered with his back to the class, carrying a large box.

“Pssst! Rebbe’s here! Put it away!” hissed Yitzzy and all of the boys quickly stashed their paper airplanes in their bags.

But Aharon wasn’t quick enough and before he could slip all of his airplanes into his knapsack, Rebbe Munk had turned around.

“Hi boys,” he said with a smile “what are you doing back in the classroom so early?”

Rebbe Munk’s smile faded slightly as he saw the half-folded paper airplane trembling in Aharon’s hand.

“Aharon,” he said kindly. “What’s this?”

Aharon turned red. He didn’t know what to say.

“You don’t have to answer me,” Rebbe Munk said as he walked over and gently took the airplane away. “I can see what’s going on. This is because you’re having a substitute tomorrow, right?”

Aharon sat silently, ashamed.



Rebbe Munk then walked around the room, confiscating the poorly hidden paper airplanes that were sticking out of desks, bags, and pockets.

“Boys,” Rebbe Munk said. “I don’t have to tell you what a terrible idea it is to embarrass a new substitute teacher. You probably just got caught up in the excitement and now that you’re thinking about it, I’m sure you won’t actually be throwing these during class tomorrow.”

The boys were both shocked and relieved that Rebbe Munk wasn’t going to punish them. They now realized how silly their idea was.

Yitzy in particular was looking very uncomfortable. After a minute, he raised his hand.

“Rebbe,” he said. “I feel bad. This was my idea and I should take responsibility. And Aharon and some of the other boys didn’t even look interested and I think they only did it because everyone else was doing it.”

Shocked, Aharon looked up and nodded slightly.

“Wow, Yitzy!” exclaimed Rebbe Munk. “You have no idea how incredible it is that you had the courage to say that. But I want to say something about this point.

“Often you see a lot of other people doing things and you feel that you should do it because everyone else is doing it. After all, in this week’s Parsha it says **אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים לְהֵטֹת** - You should follow what most of the people are doing. However the same posuk also says **לֹא תַהֲיֶה אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים לְרַעוֹת** - Do not do what everyone is doing when they’re doing something wrong!

“Rav Avigdor Miller made it a point to explain this and teach us that when the Torah says to go after what most of the people are doing - it means to follow what most of the Torah leaders are saying! But *chas veshalom* to follow others when they are doing something that is not correct.

“I know this is something that is not easy for young boys. And there is nothing wrong with doing what your friends are doing, for example to join in a game of frisbee or to go for a nice walk in the park with everyone. But it is so important for us to make sure that when it comes to something that is wrong that we do not follow, no matter how many people are doing that thing.”

“Now,” added Rebbe Munk. “These paper airplanes look pretty good! I wouldn’t want them to go to waste, so why don’t we take them outside until class starts and see who’s airplanes fly the furthest?”

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