בס"ד

 **Middah Master Lesson 1**

**אַחֲוָה – Achava (Brotherhood, belonging, friendship)**  
Opposite: זָרוּת – Zarus (feeling like an outsider, strangeness).

## Case 1: The New Seatmate

The bell rang, and the boys hurried back into class, still catching their breath from recess. Rebbi clapped his hands. “Boys, we’re switching seats today!” Moshe’s stomach sank when he saw his name on the chart. His new seat was next to Dovid — the quiet new boy who had just moved from another city. Moshe sat down with a sigh and thought to himself, *Oh no. I liked my old partner. We had our jokes and our routine. This is going to be boring.*

Moshe glanced at Dovid. His desk was bare, his eyes moving back and forth like he wasn’t sure where to look, and his hands stayed folded tight. Moshe felt pulled in two directions. Part of him thought, *Stay quiet. Why bother?* But another part whispered, *He doesn’t know anyone. What if he feels alone?* Moshe now had to choose: would he keep to himself, or would he reach out and show Achava?

Solve it: What should Moshe do?

* A) Greet Dovid warmly and offer to share a chumash with him if needed. (✅ Best – This shows true Achava, making the new student feel welcome and part of the class.)
* B) Keep quiet and focus only on his own work. (❌ Not good – This leaves Dovid feeling like an outsider.)
* C) Complain to Rebbi that he doesn’t like the new seat assignment. (❌ Not good – This is self-focused and increases division instead of Achava.)

## Case 2: The Ball Game at Recess

The playground buzzed with shouts. “I pick Shimon!” “Yehuda’s on my team!” The teams were almost full, boys crowding around and pointing. Yisrael bounced his ball, waiting. Then he noticed Levi standing alone by the fence, tapping a ball against the wall. He wasn’t asking to join, but his tight smile gave him away. Yesterday Levi had spent all recess the same way, left out. Yisrael dribbled harder, his mind racing.

The last spot was about to be taken. If Yisrael called Levi now, some boys would roll their eyes — *Why’d you pick him?* he could already hear them saying. But if he stayed quiet, Levi would once again watch from the sidelines. Yisrael felt the pressure: protect his own image, or reach out and give Levi a place to belong?

Solve it: What should Yisrael do?

* A) Stay quiet and let the game start without Levi. (❌ Not good – This shows indifference and increases division.)
* B) Call Levi over and say, “Come on, we need you on our team.” (✅ Best – This shows Achava, making Levi feel included and giving him a place to belong.)
* C) Suggest to the captains that Levi should be added so no one is left out. (✅ Best – This also shows Achava, including Levi in a respectful way that helps the whole group.)

## Teacher’s Note

Achava means making others feel like they belong, even when it’s not easy or convenient. Moshe showed Achava when he had the choice to ignore Dovid but instead could welcome him and help him feel part of the class. Yisrael showed Achava when he could have stayed silent but instead looked for ways to bring Levi into the ball game. Both stories remind us that Achava is not only for close friends — it’s about noticing anyone who feels left out and taking action to include them. When we practice Achava, our class becomes like one big family where no boy is left alone.

## Quick Facilitation Tips

* Inclusion Game: Teacher quietly asks two boys to 'exclude' one student in a pretend game. Afterwards, pause and ask: 'How did it feel to be left out?' Discuss Achava.
* Role-Play: Act out a 'new student scenario.' Some students act welcoming, others ignore. Reflect on how each feels.
* Exit Ticket: Write one way you helped someone feel part of the group today.