בס"ד

 **Middah Master Lesson 17**

**חוֹפֶשׁ – Chofesh (Freedom, liberty, responsibility)**
Opposite: חוֹבָה – Chovah (duty, obligation without choice).

## Case 1: Free Time at School

“Boys,” Rebbi said with a smile, “you finished early, so you get twenty minutes of free time.” The classroom filled with noise — some boys grabbed storybooks, some rushed to play checkers, and others shouted across the room. Avi sat at his desk thinking, *Finally, I can do whatever I want!* He reached for a marker but stopped when he noticed his unfinished homework peeking out from his folder.

He whispered to himself, “Chofesh doesn’t mean wasting time. Real freedom is using it wisely.” If he finished now, his evening would be easier, and he could enjoy more time at home. Avi had to decide: join the noise, or use his freedom for something that would help him later.

Solve it: What should Avi do?

* A) Spend the whole time talking loudly and wasting the minutes. (❌ Not good – This shows misuse of freedom.)
* B) Use the time to finish his homework or review learning. (✅ Best – This shows Chofesh with responsibility and purpose.)
* C) Draw pictures the entire time without caring about his responsibilities. (⚠️ Okay – It is a choice, but it misses the higher purpose of Chofesh.)

## Case 2: Choosing Friends

During recess, the janitor walked down the hallway carrying a big trash bag. Suddenly the bag ripped, and papers and snack wrappers scattered across the floor. A few boys burst out laughing. One pointed and shouted, “Ha, he made a mess instead of cleaning one!” The laughter echoed as the janitor bent down to gather the garbage.

Yisrael clutched the book he had just borrowed from the class library. The boys turned toward him, waiting to see if he would laugh along. He noticed the janitor’s tired hands picking up the trash piece by piece. *Chofesh means freedom with responsibility,* Yisrael thought. *I can waste my choice by joining the teasing, or I can use it to show respect and help out.* Now he had to decide.

Solve it: What should Yisrael do?

* A) Stay quiet and walk away without doing anything. (⚠️ Okay – At least he avoids teasing, but it misses the chance to use freedom positively.)
* B) Join the boys who were laughing and teasing. (❌ Not good – This misuses freedom and disrespects someone working hard.)
* C) Stay quiet and walk away without doing anything. (⚠️ Okay – At least he avoids teasing, but it misses the chance to use freedom positively.)

## Teacher’s Note

Chofesh means freedom with responsibility. It’s not about doing whatever we feel like, but about choosing what’s right when we have options. Avi showed Chofesh by using his free time in school to get important work done, and Yisrael showed it by treating the janitor with respect instead of joining the teasing. Without Chofesh, boys waste their choices or use them to hurt others. With Chofesh, our freedom becomes a tool to grow, to help, and to bring kavod to Hashem.

## Quick Facilitation Tips

* Freedom Choice: Give boys two activity options (serious vs. silly). Discuss which one uses freedom better.
* Role-Play: Pretend the class has free time. Let some boys waste it and others use it wisely. Talk about the difference.
* Respect Drill: Ask the boys to imagine how it feels when someone works hard to help (like cleaning or setting up chairs) and others laugh instead of thanking them. Practice showing respect with words or actions.
* Exit Ticket: Each boy writes one way he showed Chofesh today.