



מִסְכַּת אָבוֹת פָּרָק א מִשְׁנֵה טו: "אָמַר מְעַט וְעָשָׂה הַרְבֵּה"



The Mishna:

המשנה:

Avot, Chapter 1, Mishna 15

אבות א, טו

Shammai used to say:  
make your [study of the] Torah a fixed practice;  
speak little, but do much;  
and receive all men with a pleasant countenance.

שמאי אומר, עשה תורתך קבע.  
אמר מעט ועשה הרבה,  
והוי מקבל את כל האדם  
בסבר פנים יפות.

A short explanation on the Mishna:

"Make your [study of the] Torah a fixed practice" – Shammai says that one should make the study of Torah a routine part of their life, whether by setting times for Torah study, or by setting goals and objectives, as in regard to other important and basic parts of a person's life.

"Speak little, but do much" – a person should be engaged in daily activities, more than in talking about doing these activities. In addition, it can be understood that one should invest in his activities more than what is expected of him.

"And receive all men with a pleasant countenance" – people must treat others politely and with a smile.

(Also based on Rabbi Even-Israel Steinsaltz's commentary on Pirkei Avot, p. 60, courtesy of the Steinsaltz Center).

## Level 1

- **Memorizing** the Mishna with hand movements.

(Click or scan the barcode)



- **Worksheet** for Havruta "Speak little, but do much"

The students will study in a Havruta (you can learn more about the "Havruta" practice on United's website: <https://unitedjed.org/practice-page-havruta/> and answer the questions about Abraham's behavior and the connection between what he said and what he did.

The activity is on the student's worksheet.

- **Discussion**

The teacher will present the following dilemma to the class:

**What is better?**

- To give a large amount of charity to someone, but in an unfriendly and degrading manner, while saying something insulting?
- Or not to give charity at all, but to talk to a person, encourage him and make him feel good?

Each student (or group of students) should present one side of the debate, and give arguments in favor of their opinion.

Suggestions for possible answers:

*"It is better to give a large amount, but in an unpleasant way, because the person can at least live and eat, which is his greatest need." The other opinion is – "It is better for a person to be hungry and satisfied with little, but to walk around with joy in his heart".*



Each student will receive a note of “Support Opinion A” or “Support Opinion B,” and after the discussion among the students, they will hold a vote. They can also add their own arguments.

(For those interested, the discussion can be expanded to "Debate." You can use the "Debate" strategy; details can be found on the United website:

<https://unitedjed.org/practice-page-debate/>

- The students then gather into one big group and the teacher tells them:

**“Receive all men with a pleasant countenance”**

The Mishna teaches us to welcome guests, and in general to treat people pleasantly.

The Mishna emphasizes the importance of the manner of giving and of hospitality.

Commentator Rav Bartenura explains:

“When you bring in guests to your home, do not give to them while 'your face is buried in the ground'; as anyone who gives and 'his face is buried in the ground' - even if he gave all of the gifts in the world - it is counted for him as if he did not give anything.”

The ”how” you do something is so important. Our Sages say that one should not give as much, but should give with a smile and a pleasant countenance.

- **Exercise**

Take a good deed that you are used to doing on a daily basis, such as helping your parents or a friend, standing up on the bus for an elderly person, helping your younger brother, then add "a good attitude" to it.

- ❖ **Consider:** Has the reaction of the people you helped changed?