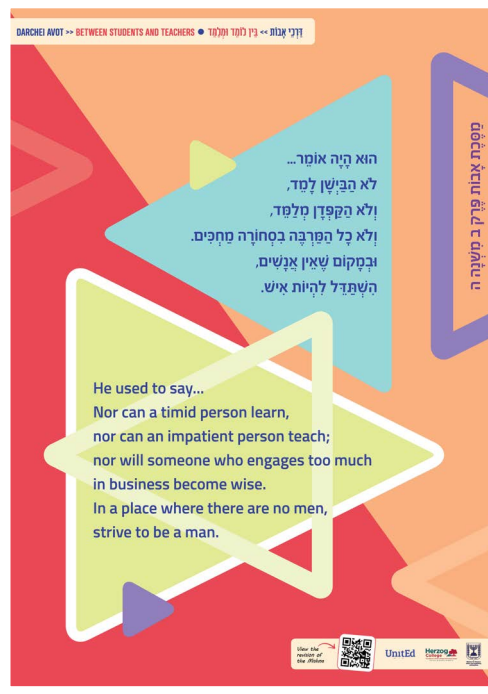




מסכת אבות פרק ב משנה ה: "לא הביטן למד"



The Mishna:

המשנה:

Avot, Chapter 2, Mishna 5

He used to say:

Nor can a timid person learn,
nor can an impatient person teach;
nor will someone who engages too much in business
become wise.
In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man.

אבות ב,ה

"הוא היה אומר...
לא הביטן למד, ולא הקפדון מלמד,
ולא כל המרבה בסחורה מחכים.
ובמקום שאין אנשים,
השתדל להיות איש"

A short explanation on the Mishna:

"Nor can a timid person learn" – the student must ask questions when he doesn't understand and must not be shy, or fear that his friends or the teacher will laugh at him. If he doesn't ask, he won't know.

"Nor can an impatient person teach" – if a teacher gets annoyed easily, his students might be scared to ask questions and will not learn properly.

"Nor will someone who engages too much in business become wise" – even though someone who engages in business learns from experience, the Mishna teaches us that wisdom comes from learning and not only by engaging in too much business.

"In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man" – in a place where there are no leaders, or people are not behaving appropriately, get up and do what needs to be done.

(Also based on Rabbi Even-Israel Steinsaltz's commentary on Pirkei Avot, p. 93-94, courtesy of the Steinsaltz Center).

Level 1

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

(Click or scan the barcode)



- **Active discussion between the students:** "Nor can a timid person learn, nor can an impatient person teach"
 - ❖ The students will discuss why the Mishna recommends that a student not be shy when learning and a teacher not be impatient when teaching.
 - ❖ The students will share life situations where being ashamed prevented them from learning or progressing in life. The teacher will then share insights from the discussion with the class.

Use United's "Think pair share" practice for this activity.

Read more about the practice on: <https://unitedjed.org/practice-page-think-pair-share>

The activity is on the attached student's worksheet.



**Level 2:****"In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man"**

- ❖ Tell the story of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai. The Second Temple was destroyed during his time and there was sincere concern that there would not be a suitable person to continue leading the people. The people were concerned that without the Temple and a leader, there would be no continuation of the People of Israel. Rabban Gamliel was one of the presidents of the Jewish People, but he could not be a leader, because he ran away and hid from the evil Romans.

So, there was no one to take on the role, and then Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai took it upon himself to open a Beit Midrash and Sanhedrin (Beit Din) in the city of Yavneh. He brought a group of sages to there and they determined the laws and continued the leadership of the People of Israel, even without the Temple. He was a man in a place where there were no men.

- ❖ Tell the students about the Righteous Gentiles, who risked their lives during the Second World War and the Holocaust to save Jews. They were men in a place where there were no men.

- **Discussion**

Explain to the students that the Mishna is encouraging us to be "people" and to act in situations where other people are not doing anything. Write the idea on the board:

How can I be a man in a place where there are no men?

Ask the students – how is this sentence connected to my own life? Are there things that I see in my life that are missing and I can be the "man" to complete the missing piece?

Suggestions for possible answers:

- *Volunteering and helping where it is needed.*
 - *Praying for the recovery of a sick person.*
 - *Problems that I can solve or things that are missing in class that I can do.*
 - *Social problems that "lack" attention, which I can solve.*
- ❖ After the students write their ideas on the board, ask them how these ideas can be put into practice.

For example, if a student says he can volunteer where help is needed, ask him: "where do you think you can volunteer?" "When?" , etc.



Example of the board after such a discussion:

"In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man"

Where can I find something "lacking" in life that I can fill?

Volunteering

- Collecting food for poor people
- Cleaning up the neighborhood

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Praying

- Going to synagogue more often

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Helping a friend

- Collecting pencils and offering to friends who don't have
- Befriending a child who is lonely

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In my own home

- Taking responsibility to help my family

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