

# ידינו לא שפכו את הדם הזה

## 'Our Hands Did Not Shed this Blood': Leadership at a Time of Community Crisis

### Facilitator Guide

**Who is responsible for accidental death?  
What is the responsibility of leaders at a time of community crisis?**



Kidnapped! We are all Kidnapped! © Shoshke Engelmayer 2023

### Info For Facilitator



#### Target Audience:

Middle or High school students, college students school and adults. Good for leadership sessions of Jewish organizations



#### Length Of Program:

45 minutes



#### Materials & Prep:

- Printed copies of the source sheet

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

The issues of leadership and responsibility are naturally front and center in the story of redeeming the captives. Who is responsible in this case? Have our official leaders taken the necessary course of action? Have we, as individuals and as a community, taken responsibility for those suffering within us?

## FRAMING THE ISSUE

In December 1995 a fire broke out at a textile factory in Massachusetts. In a story told and retold, factory owner Aaron Feuerstein continued to pay his workers even while the factory was not operating and rebuilt the factory in the same area, assuring the workers would continue to be employed.

While Feuerstein was hailed as a mensch, having done the right thing, is this a norm and standard we can demand of every leader? What is the role of the wider community surrounding such a calamity? What might responsibility look like in such trying circumstances?

## LET'S EXPLORE

### Opening

Begin with the story about Aaron Feuerstein above. In this text study session, we will engage with the biblical law of the *egla arufa* - the calf of the broken neck. We will explore this story through the lens of leadership and communal responsibility

### Learning

- *Facilitator invites participants to study the source sheet and the included questions with a partner or in a small group.*

### Discussion

Luzzatto's interpretation stretches the message of this ceremony far beyond the initial lessons implied in the rabbinic interpretation.

- *Recall a time when you experienced or internalized this message of mutual responsibility and share it with the group.*

Not only does Luzzatto widen the circle of those expected to act, he also widens those to whom we are responsible - every single person in our nation. We must be deeply aware of who is in need of what support, aid and strengthening.

## TAKE ACTION!

Inspired by the rabbinic interpretation which demands of the elders to declare their responsibility, what type of action might be appropriate to demand of our different leaders? Consider different types of leaders: political leaders, spiritual leaders, lay leaders. We need not remain focused only on the Israeli leadership (government and army).

### What can our national American government representatives do?

Are our local leaders keeping the plight of the hostages front and center in community wide events? Has the community actually held an event dedicated solely to the plight of the hostages? Have our Rabbis or teachers introduced prayers to the service to make sure the community is aware and engaged?

- Encourage your representatives to keep the issue on the forefront of their agendas. Remind them everyday of their responsibility by going to: [oneminaday.com](http://oneminaday.com). This site provides you with the phone numbers of your local representatives and a sample text to use when you call.

Based on Luzzatto's interpretation which assumes each one of us is responsible towards one another, let's ask ourselves:

### Are we aware of the needs of the families of the hostages?

Some hostages have family in communities across North America and other countries. Might you have such individuals in your community? Have you reached out to them to see how you can support them?

### Some ideas of ways to support families of hostages are:

- Host a gathering of hostage family representatives coming from Israel so they can share their story more broadly.
- Organize a letter writing (or social media) campaign to families of hostages to offer support. Every communication from people around the world shows them they are not alone.
- Can your community provide something for families of hostages related to an upcoming holiday?

## CLOSING INTENTION

We opened our session with Aaron Feuerstein. We asked if his actions were too high of a bar for the masses. Through study of the mitzvah of *Egla Arufa*, we can recognize that perhaps his financial acts may not be demanded of all, however, at least a sense of responsibility must be internalized and acted upon on some level by leaders and indeed the entire community. Let's make sure to keep reminding ourselves and our leaders of this responsibility, until the captives are all returned.