

## Redeeming Captives Text Study

### Introduction

It is an important mitzvah to redeem captives. Where does this law come from, when does it apply, and to what extent does one have to go in order to redeem captives? These ideas will be explored through the text study below.

### Objectives

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Define who is a captive
- Identify the reasons why we are responsible for the captives
- Analyze different situations and methods required to help a captive
- Make connections between these texts and the movement to free Soviet Jewry

### Essential Questions

- Who is a captive?
- Why does one have to save a captive?
- How far does one have to go in order to save a captive?

Big Ideas	Jews are responsible for one another (solidarity).
	You can make a difference.
Content	To explain the Jewish values that led Jewish people to fight for Soviet Jewish rights.
Skills	Analyze Text
Meaning	To reflect on your obligation to help (Jewish/all) people in need.
	To reflect on the power of a common (Jewish) voice.



**Duration:** 1 hour text study and 1 hour discussion Meeting

**Materials:** Source Sheet and Guided Questions, included

### **Procedure**

1. **Review:** Review the history of Refuseniks and their plight as captives of the Soviet government. Explain that Jewish text has a lot to say about our responsibilities toward captives and how we are to put that responsibility into action.
2. **Read the texts**
3. **Guided Discussion:** See the guided questions to make connections between the texts and the history.
  - How does the first case of redeeming captives set the groundwork for this as a Jewish value? What does Avram do that is above and beyond?
  - Why do the texts differentiate between helping the poor and helping captives? Do you agree that one is of greater importance than another?
  - The Mishne Torah talks about not redeeming a captive for more or less than his value. Can you really put a value on a human life? What does the text say about the consequences of doing so?
  - What does the last text say about paying captors for their prisoners? Do you think the story would have been different had important rabbis not been aboard the plane? Should the story be different?
  - Which groups or individuals helped to advocate for the release of Soviet captives? How did they do so?
  - There were many diplomats, human rights activists and politicians that worked to help free Refuseniks. But “regular people” also become involved throughout the Jewish world. How did the Jewish people around the world mobilize to do something about these captives?
  - Which of these texts could have convinced Jews around the world that they must take action? Which would convince you?