



Educator's Guide

HaLamed Heh: The 35 Soldiers Who Never Returned Home

This episode tells a little-known story of Jewish heroism and grit during Israel's War of Independence. Under cover of night, 35 young Jewish men set out to deliver supplies to the people in the cut-off Etzion Bloc, south of Jerusalem. Tragically, they were discovered en route and massacred by local Arab villagers. This video tells the dramatic, tragic, and ultimately uplifting story of the "Lamed Heh," the convoy of 35.

Video:

<https://unpacked.education/video/halamed-heh-the-35-soldiers-who-never-returned-home/>

Further Reading

1. Daniel Gordis, *Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn*, chapter 7,
2. Martin Gilbert, *Israel: A History*, chapters 9-10
3. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-battle-for-gush-etzion-1947-1948>
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CR3-sczuyZU>,

Review - Did the students understand the material?

1. Who were the 35 of the "Convoy of 35"?
2. What happened to these 35, and to the civilians left behind?
3. The 35 were killed while delivering supplies to what area of the country?
 - a. Heborn
 - b. Gush Etzion (correct)
 - c. Kfar Saba



- d. Beit El
- 4. In what year did Israel regain control of this area?
 - a. 1948
 - b. 1956
 - c. 1967 (correct)
 - d. 1973
- 5. Name two things you learned about Israel's War of Independence through this video.

Discussion Questions

1. One of the stories told about this convoy of 35 is that the 35 soldiers saw an Arab shepherd on the way, but chose not to hurt him, yet it was this shepherd who informed the villagers who then ambushed the soldiers. It is very likely this story is apocryphal. Why do you think this story became so famous in Israeli history?
2. Why do you think this story has become such a legend in Israel's collective memory?
3. Many Jews fled their host countries in response to persecution and pogroms. What do you think it meant to Jews living in Israel at the time to see Jews massacred in the land of Israel, too?

Reflection Questions

1. The concept of "purity of arms" emerged in many ways out of this story. The concept of Purity of Arms is that:

The IDF servicemen and women will use their weapons and force only for the purpose of their mission, only to the necessary extent and will maintain their humanity even during combat. IDF soldiers will not use their weapons and force to harm human beings who are not combatants or prisoners of war, and will do all in their power to avoid causing harm to their lives, bodies, dignity and property.



Many supporters of Israel point to the army's concept of "Purity of Arms" to show the nobility and moral compass of the Israeli military. When you look at the Israeli army, do you think of the Israeli soldiers as soldiers who show exemplary moral behaviour? What makes you think that way?

2. This story radiates heroism. What do you think makes a hero? Who do you consider a hero, today?
3. The Haganah employed havlagah, restraint, and refrained from taking revenge. Today, the IDF code reads: "The soldier... will maintain his humanity even in combat... and shall not employ his weaponry and power in order to harm non-combatants or prisoners of war..." For what reasons do you either agree or disagree with this policy?
4. An important theme in this story is brotherhood. Dozens were willing to risk their lives, and ultimately sacrifice them, to help their fellow Jew. Where in your life do you experience brotherhood? Who would you sacrifice for?