**“They Trembled and Stood Afar Off” (Exodus 20:14)**

Suggestions for Using Digital Tools to Teach About Israel and to Connect Others to It

Currently many of us are being asked to perform our emissarial work including education and developing a connection to Israel, through means that we do not fully comprehend and that require that we employ virtual interaction in lieu of personal interaction. Indeed, this is a departure from the way that we normally operate. Yet there is no reason to worry. The internet and virtual space can serve as an environment for meaningful experiences and learning. This environment offers the emissarial world interactivity, simulations, and games; makes things more relevant to participants and gets them more involved; makes timing easier through creation of synchronous and asynchronous modalities; and also offers ways to educate in relaxed and entertaining ways. **We encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity (even if it has been forced upon you) to gain experience using new and relevant 21st century tools and to create a positive experience for participants to connect with Israel, even if the experience is not face to face.**

In the document before you, you will find a number of suggestions for ways to take advantage of the challenging opportunity posed by the need to serve as emissaries educating and developing relationships from **a distance.** The document seeks to do the following: introduce you to Jewish educational thought about “virtual” community activity; suggest technological tools that will enable you to converse and organize events “from afar;” and offer a sampling of virtual activities that emissaries can put into use immediately.

**The educational supervisors of the various emissarial tracks and Dagan Livny, Director of the Emissary Community Network in the School for Shlichut (Emissaries), are available to help you consider, prepare, and carry out activities in an online environment.**

**What Does Socially Distanced Jewish Communal Activity Look Like?**

Due to impaired mobility, inconvenient timing, or a lack of interest, many Jews do not visit synagogues, schools, or communal institutions. Consequently, even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of Jewish communities were discussing ways to address this issue and were implementing responses that involved the development of Jewish communal life in virtual space. This document provides information and links about the topic that can be used as a springboard for conversation, as well as a number of examples of Jewish communal life in virtual space:

* This link will take you to a short article drawn from the 2014-2015 Annual Assessment of the Jewish People Policy Institute that describes the phenomenon of virtual Jewish communal activity and the challenges that it creates for Jewish institutions (the article is available in both Hebrew and English).
* In the online virtual world offered by “Second Life,” users can freely don a virtual identity, and build, explore, and chat with other ‘residents,’ including those belonging to a Jewish community. This community possesses synagogues, yeshivas, museums, a virtual Jerusalem and even ‘Israel Island,’ which advertises itself as “home to a community of people from around the word who have an interest in Israel, Judaism, and the Jewish people.”
* Ourjewishcommunity.org is a virtual Jewish community that “isn’t afraid to challenge convention.” It offers live stream broadcasts of Sabbath services, podcasts and blogs, as well as additional materials.
* Is a virtual prayer quorum possible? At an international seminar for halakhic study held at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 2019, scholars addressed this issue from the perspective of Jewish religious law. To view the keynote lecture and to access links to additional related resources, click on the following link.
* A number of communities in the United State offer live streaming of their religious services. The following article from the online magazine Tablet surveys this phenomenon.

What Technological Tools are Recommended for Socially Distanced Conversations and Events?

We are all surrounded by technology. Indeed, over the course of time, substantial resources have been invested in initiatives that have integrated technology into education. Unlike other fields which also integrated technology, however, education primarily employed technology as a means for leveraging extent structures and processes of teaching and learning. Contemporary reality offers you a real opportunity to start changing this situation. Below you will find information about a number of free, accessible, and relevant tools:

* **TES Blendspace** is a website for creating interactive lessons in which you can incorporate video, links, and files. You can find a link to a training video on use of the website here; here is a link to the website itself.
* **PowToon** enables one to easily prepare unique and interesting video clips featuring animation, pictures, music, and recordings. One can upload the video clips to YouTube and share them. A link to the site can be found here and a link to ideas about how to use it can be found here.
* **Padlet** makes it possible to create post-it-like notes that can be placed on a virtual bulletin board and filled with information. This tool can be used to introduce or summarize topics, to document aggregated knowledge, to brainstorm, and to share information, as well as for other purposes. You can connect to this tool here. To better understand the possible uses for this tool, you can follow this link.
* With **Quizizz**, you can create online quizzes or find inspiration from other quizzes that were created on other topics. For a link to the website, press here.
* **Wizer** allows one to create an interactive worksheet that integrates a variety of activities, such as responding to questions, writing on pictures, matching materials in exercises, filling in tables, classifying, and drawing. Once you create a worksheet, you can generate a link to it that can be used by others to easily access it. For more on use of this tool, follow this link; for a link to the website, click here.
* Yes, yes, **Spotify**, the app you have on your smartphone! You can prepare playlists and send them to participants as the basis for a class, for their pleasure, as a way to expose them to Israeli music and more.

**There are also digital tools that can be employed to hold meetings, events, discussions and conversations online in real time:**

* First and foremost, some good tips for managing live online meetings can be found here.
* Using the free personal version of **Zoom,** you can host up to 100 participants for up to forty minutes for free. The platform also allows screensharing and chat. Its subscription plans allow one to divide a large group into smaller breakout groups.
* One can host up to 25 participants using one’s personal **Google Hangout** without any time restriction. It is recommended for discussion groups and conversations.
* 50 participants can simultaneously take part in a video chat on **Skype**. This requires that you to download the application.
* A group of 25 participants who all have identification permissions can meet with the help of **JITSI**. The platform includes video, an interactive whiteboard, recording, screen sharing, live streaming, shared viewing on YouTube, and an option for panel discussions.

**Are There Extant Resources That Can Be Employed from a Distance?**

Below is a list that supplies ideas about available resources that you can adopt or modify for creation of online activities or events, as well as resources that are ready for immediate use. You can share this information with activists, community members, students, and other constituencies, or you can use it to create virtual events or meetings with members of these groups.

* Following the spread of COVID-19, **Ulpan-Or** has offered free access to all of its Hebrew teaching materials. On its website, one can find film clips and teaching booklets that are appropriate for distance learning.
* **Makom** is offering an online course that is appropriate for college students and young people on the topic of Challenging Israel Education. Those who are interested should contact Dagan at the Emissary School.
* Interactive flashcards for Hebrew language study can be found on **Duolingo**’s website tinycards which offers comprehensible quizzes.
* Prepared “quizlets” about Israel. To use one, one must register for free on the **Quizlet** website. You can choose between various quizzes and games about Israel.
* A prepared quiz on Israel. To use one, one must register for free on the **Quizizz** website. One can take part independently or as part of a group with LIVE (like Kahoot!). You can see the names of all group participants and compete against them.
* The website futurelearn.com offers a free online English-language course on Antisemitism from its beginnings until today to all registered users. There are multiple ways to take the course. One can extract specific film clips and watch them together with others through screen sharing, or people can register for the course as a group. When done this way, the course can function like a book club. Individuals can take the whole course or part of it independently, and then set a time to meet online to discuss the material studied together with other members of their group.
* **3D Israel** offers virtual tours of various Israeli places. These tours can be integrated into virtual meetings, they can serve as part of an online course, or they perform other functions.
* Tel Aviv University offers a free online course on the history of Modern Israel. Here too one can extract specific film clips and view them together with others through screen sharing, or one can register together with others as part of a group and employ the previously discussed book club model.
* The **Israel Unpacked** channel on YouTube offers short film clips about Israel and Judaism that can be used to stimulate discussion or as part of a class.
* **Jewish Interactive** offers games and short films about Hebrew and Israel that are available for immediate use, as well as the opportunity to create your own online games.
* The podcast channel of **Israel Story** offers episodes in Hebrew and English that can serve as the basis for discussions and conversations about varied aspects of Israeli culture and society. The podcasts are produced employing a radio play format and they are a lot of fun to listen to.

Best wishes for good health and creative and pleasurable action!