

Hebrew in high demand as coronavirus lockdowns keeps people stuck indoors

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By CODY LEVINE JANUARY 3, 2021 18:26



PERFECTING HEBREW at an ulpan.
(photo credit: NATI SHOHAT/FLASH90)

As the coronavirus continues to reap havoc worldwide and forces people to remain indoors under lockdown, a growing trend of online Hebrew lessons has become more popular, according to a press release from the Hebrew at the Center initiative.

The initiative reported that there has been a large increase in demand for lessons in the Hebrew language, including teaching, historical study and literature. They further noted that hundreds have been attending the initiative's four-part series, *Sicha: Conversations about Hebrew and the Jewish Experience*.

The series is expected to return on January 13 with the inclusion of Jewish Agency Chairman Isaac Herzog and IKO CEO David Koshitzky. They are planning to discuss the importance of [Hebrew](#) as a means for connecting disparate Jewish communities.

"Covid has reminded us that we are part of a global community," said Rabbi Andrew Ergas, CEO of Hebrew at the Center.

"A silver lining of this dark time has been the opportunity to use digital platforms to engage in Hebrew learning – connecting the Jewish people to one another and to the amazing Hebrew culture being produced in the Jewish state," Ergas added.

Along with the Hebrew at the Center initiative, the American Zionist Movement, in partnership with the World Zionist Organization, has also organized Hebrew language conversations for beginners in a class called Tachles (purpose). Ulpan courses have also been offered, while Hebrew College's Ulpan has likewise seen a growth in interest and registration.

Along with adults being interested in [Hebrew](#), children have been learning the language as well via Zoom, such as through Jewish Interactive. The program features interactive games for children to keep them interested.

The Kayitz Kef (Summer Fun) program, which operates 21 Jewish day and overnight camps, has created Hebrew programs for the upcoming summer of 2021 in North America, in order to take advantage of strong interest in the language. This will be done in partnership with the FJC, Jewish Agency, JAFI and Kayitz Kef.

"It's uplifting to see that during these trying times, the community is turning to Hebrew study as a source of inspiration and an opportunity for growth," said Arnee Winshall, Hebrew at the Center's founder and board president. "I have always believed that Hebrew can be a vehicle for bringing our global Jewish community together, and that increased proficiency opens a door for deepening Jewish learning and connection to Israel and its culture."