

# HOUSTON HILLEL PERSPECTIVES

Led by Rabbi Kenny Weiss

May 15 - 25, 2023

Draft: May 10, 2023

## Day 1: Monday, May 15, 2023

### DEPARTURE

- Departure from Houston on flight
- Departure from on flight TK 0034

## Day 2: Tuesday, May 16, 2023

### ARRIVAL

- 9:55 PM (TK 0864): Arrival at **Ben Gurion International Airport**, with assistance by a Makor Educational Journeys representative. (Please save the cards which you receive at Passport Control for the duration of the trip. These are your Israeli B2 tourist visas and are required when checking in to hotels).
- Travel to **Jerusalem**.
- Check in to the hotel.
- **Snack** at the hotel.

**Overnight: Shani Hotel, Jerusalem**

## Day 3: Wednesday, May 17, 2023

### JERUSALEM – OLD AND NEW

- Breakfast at the hotel (gather packed lunch requests for Shabbat).
- *Welcome to the Region: Israelis, Palestinians and What to Expect*, with Scholar **Paul Liptz** (meeting room).
- Stop at the **Goldman Promenade** for an introductory view of Jerusalem and the region.
- Enter the **Old City** via **Jaffa Gate** for an introduction to the complexities of Jerusalem and the region from the rooftops of the Old City, exploring the multi-ethnic weave and the layers of complexity as seen from above, followed by a guided walk through the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, with lunch on your own.
- Continue with a short walk through the meandering alleyways to the **Western Wall Plaza** at the base of the **Temple Mount – Haram el Sharif**.
- *Seen and Not Seen*, guided walk from the Old City to the hotel, exploring seen and un-seen lines between Jews and Arabs in contemporary Jerusalem.
- Group processing session, followed by dinner on your own.

**Overnight: Shani Hotel, Jerusalem**



**Day 4: Thursday, May 18, 2023**

**MEMORIES FOR THE FUTURE**

- *The Memory of the Holocaust in Contemporary Israeli Society*, with **Sharon Kangisser-Cohen** (Meeting room at hotel).
- Depart for **Yad Vashem**.
- Visit **Yad Vashem**, Israel's national memorial for the Holocaust, including the Avenue of the Righteous, the Holocaust History Museum, and the Children's Memorial.
- Possible visit to the graves of **Yitzhak Rabin** and **Shimon Peres** on **Mount Herzl**, for a glimpse at the personal and national roles that play in the modern State of Israel.
- Look out from the **Mount of Olives** then walk down along its **ancient Jewish Cemetery** to the **Garden of Gethsemane**, taking in enroute stunning views of the walls of the Old City, Temple Mount, Dome of the Rock and Judean Desert.
- Free time for Jerusalem exploration.
- **Processing session**
- Dinner on own

**Overnight: Shani Hotel, Jerusalem**

**Day 5: Friday, May 19, 2023**

**ABNORMAL NORMALITY**

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Depart hotel for the **Gaza Border** region.
- Travel south and stop for an introduction to and overview of the northern Gaza Strip, including a briefing overlooking Gaza from the **Assaf Siboni Overlook** with **Grisha Jakobovitch**.
- Continue to **Sderot** for a window into the socio-economic challenges faced by its residents in the shadow of the missile attacks from Gaza, followed by lunch in Sderot with local students at **Humus Shel Tehina restaurant**.
- Return to Jerusalem
- Visit the **Western Wall** as thousands of Jerusalemites and guests converge to welcome in the Sabbath.
- Festive **Sabbath dinner** at the hotel.
- **Group Processing Session**.

**Overnight: Shani Hotel, Jerusalem**



**Day 6: Saturday, May 20, 2023**

**SABBATH IN JERUSALEM**

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Return to the **Old City** for a walking tour through the **Christian and Muslim Quarters**, including the **Church of the Holy Sepulcher**. Continue exploring the Old City with Rabbi Weiss, packed lunch enroute.
- Walk back to the hotel through the eclectic **Nevi'im (the Prophets) Street**.
- *Understanding Palestinian Society* with journalist **Haviv Gur**. Meeting room at hotel.
- **Group processing session**.
- Free time for rest and relaxation.
- Optional Catholic Mass at the Notre Dame Cathedral.
- **Havdalah**, the transition ceremony from the Sabbath to the rest of the week.
- Free evening to explore downtown Jerusalem with dinner on own or optional cultural event (TBA) or a visit to the **Beer Bazar** in old **Radio Building (Shaarei Tzedek)**.

**Overnight: Shani Hotel, Jerusalem**

**Day 7: Sunday, May 21, 2023**

**A WINDOW INTO PALESTINIAN SOCIETY I**

- Early breakfast at the hotel.
- Early morning visit to the **Temple Mount – Haram al Sharif** with Moslem guide Ibrahim Gazzawi.
- Drive to Bethlehem (Security – Crownox).
- Enter **Bethlehem** for a guided walk along the graffiti covered walls of the Seam Zone Barrier with Palestinian guide **Noor Awad**. Then visit the **Church of the Nativity** in **Manger Square**.
- Lunch on own
- **A Settler Voice: My Home in the Land of Israel** - Visit Efrat, an Israeli settlement south of Bethlehem and meet its mayor **Oded Revivi**.
- Return to Jerusalem.
- *Israel and the Palestinians @2023: Where Do We Stand*, a conclusion of the day with geopolitical expert **Iftah Burman**.
- **Group processing session** – (Meeting room at hotel).
- Dinner on own.

**Overnight: Shani Hotel, Jerusalem**



**Day 8: Monday, May 22, 2023**

**A WINDOW INTO PALESTINIAN SOCIETY II**

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Depart for Ramallah (Security – Cownox).
- Visit **Ramallah**, the current capital of the Palestinian Authority with Palestinian guide **Riman Barakat** for a look at the infrastructure for Palestinian statehood, including a meeting with **Dr. Amal Jadou** of the Palestinian Authority.
- Drive to the village of **Taybeh** to visit the **Taybeh Brewery** for beer tasting and a discussion with members of the Khoury Family, who founded the brewery after returning to Taybeh from the United States as a result of the Oslo Accords, includes lunch at **Taybeh Hotel**.
- Travel to **northern Israel**.
- Check in to the hotel.
- Dinner at hotel.
- **20:00 Israel's Geopolitical Challenges**, with **Maj. (res.) Avraham Levine** of the **Alma Research and Education Center** – **MEETING ROOM** at hotel **20:00 – 21:00**
- **Group processing session**

**Overnight: Selina Kinneret**

**Day 9: Tuesday, May 23, 2023**

**NORTHERN EXPOSURES**

- Breakfast at the hotel and check out.
- Visit major **Christian holy sites** in **Sea of Galilee** region starting at **Capernaum**, where Jesus taught and gathered his first disciples, including its an **ancient synagogue**.
- Then continue to the **Mount of the Beatitudes**, where Jesus delivered the **Sermon on the Mount**.
- Jeep tour in the Golan Heights with Ilan Shulman, including an enroute geopolitical briefing for a look at the complex relationships that have formed in the Middle East, Europe and the United States in the wake of the Syrian Civil War.
- Visit the Druze village of **Buq'ata** and the home of **Naseeba Samara** for a glimpse into the world of the Druze community on the Golan and ramifications to the community in the wake of the Syrian Civil War, **with lunch**.
- Look out at Syria from the **Kuneitra Observation Point** and meet **Lt. Col. (ret.) Eyal Dror**, who commanded "**Operation Good Neighbor**", providing humanitarian aid to Syrians in need.
- Drive south to Tel Aviv on the Trans-Israel Highway.
- Check in to hotel.
- Dinner at the hotel, followed by a **group processing session**

**Overnight: Metropolitan, Tel Aviv**



**Day 10: Wednesday, May 24, 2023**

**TEL AVIV: THEN AND NOW**

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Guided walk in **Old Jaffa**, tracing its story from the days of the Bible to modern times.
- Visit the **Orchard of Abraham** day care center and meet with Ihab and Ora Balha, who as Muslim and Jew, share their life's work in the creation and development of interfaith living and educational projects.
- *Innovation and Creativity: 1909-2019* - A guided walk along **Rothschild Blvd.** using stories of the past and buildings of the present to explore the spirit of innovation that created Tel Aviv, from the historic pioneering **Ahuzat Bayit** neighborhood to the global innovation hub that it has become today.
- Visit the **Batae Center for Ethiopian Jewish Heritage** for a multi-sensory experience with **Ashager Arraro**, including a taste of traditional Ethiopian cooking.
- Lunch on your own.
- Guided tour in the **Florentine** neighborhood, Tel Aviv's most bohemian and upbeat neighborhood, and learn about contemporary Israeli culture through urban art: writing on the wall, graffiti, bumper stickers, and even painted garbage bins.
- Concluding **group processing session**.
- Farewell dinner at **Maganda Restaurant** in Tel Aviv's old **Yemenite Quarter**.

**Overnight: Metropolitan, Tel Aviv**

**Day 11: Thursday, May 25, 2023**

- Breakfast at the hotel and check out.
- Depart for Ben Gurion Airport for return flight.
- **Flight TK 0785 at 10:40 am.**

*Please Note:*

- *All speakers and programs are tentative until confirmed in writing.*
- *Entry into Palestinian area A (Ramallah, Jericho, Bethlehem, Rawabi) is dependent on the current security situation and relationship between the PA and Israel.*

