



# MEJDI TOURS

**Tour:** Kolot Sholom (Voices of Peace) Multiple Narrative Tour

**Dates:** March 21 - 30, 2022\*

\*Optional Pre-Tour Extension of Israel: **March 17 - 21, 2022**

\*Optional Post-Tour Extension of Jordan: **March 30 - April 3, 2022**

## **Description:**

Join Rabbi Elana Rosen-Brown and Congregation Rodef Sholom on a groundbreaking Voices of Peace tour of the Holy Land. This multiple-narrative journey features a two person guiding team comprised of one Israeli and one Palestinian who exemplify successful coexistence. The tour will highlight storytellers and peacemakers in Israel and the West Bank who express themselves through music and the arts, activism, and politics. A goal of the journey will be to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of life lived in the shadow of the conflict and better understand our own feelings and relationship to Israel vis-à-vis this complexity. To this end we will also spend time on approaches to conflict resolution and practice the craft of constructive conflict through dialogue and group processing. We will return to Marin County with skills to lead our own community deeper into compassionate conversation on difficult issues.

Some highlights of the tour include: Being welcomed to Jerusalem by an interethnic youth choir; taking a Four Quarters tour of the Old City of Jerusalem to meet Armenian, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim artistic visionaries; joining a podcaster's tour of an East Jerusalem forgotten palace; harvesting olives with Rabbis for Human Rights and Palestinian farmers in the West Bank; exploring socio-political art along the Seam Line between East and West Jerusalem; seeing how the renowned street artist Banksy has brought world attention to the separation barrier and the impact of the occupation on Palestinians and Israelis; meeting a settler peacemaker; learning how one Tel Avivian has spun graphic design into a viral people-to-people peace movement between Israelis and Iranians; weaving through the alleyways of Jaffa guided by the lyrics and life experience of a multi-ethnic hip hop group; and, visiting a bilingual kindergarten run by a Palestinian Islamic Sufi cleric and his Israeli wife.

Join in prayers for peace with Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Jerusalem. Participate in a Rosh Chodesh service with Women of the Wall. Celebrate Shabbat with song and prayer. And get caught up in the exuberance of an underground Chasidic klezmer performance to usher in the new week after Havdallah.

Join us for this once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage that explores complex issues facing the Middle East, all the while celebrating the hospitality and vibrant cultures of the local communities.



## Itinerary:

**\*Travelers arriving in Jerusalem prior to noon on Monday, March 21 are welcome to join Rabbi Elana for a tour of Yad Vashem. MEJDI Tours can arrange a pre-stay to ensure participation on this tour.**

### **Day 1, Monday, March 21, 2022: Welcome to Jerusalem**

- Arrive into Ben Gurion Airport and transfer to the hotel in Jerusalem on your own. Arrival transfer instructions will be provided and private transportation can be arranged through MEJDI.
- Meet your guiding team comprised of one Israeli and one Palestinian for a group orientation. Rabbi Rosen-Brown will introduce the theme of the trip.
- Be treated to a welcoming 1-on-1 session with members of the Israeli-Palestinian Jerusalem Youth Chorus. The evening's program involves discussion, singing, storytelling and more with Israeli and Palestinian high school students in Jerusalem.

*Hotel: Harmony / Arthur Hotel, Jerusalem*

### **Day 2, Tuesday, March 22, 2022: Artistic Voices from the Four Quarters of the Old City of Jerusalem**

- Enter the Old City at the Dung Gate. At the Kotel (Western Wall) plaza learn about the current state of affairs to create an egalitarian section and get oriented for Thursday's Women of the Wall Rosh Chodesh service. Rabbi Rosen-Brown will teach the group a piece of sacred music for Rosh Chodesh.
- Then ascend to the Temple Mount/Al-Haram al-Sharif and tour the precinct.
- Meet Palestinian rapper and Muslim Quarter resident Muzi Raps. He was arrested in his youth for throwing stones and now is dedicated his life to music. He raps, mostly in Arabic, about the occupation, the police and love.
- After some free time for lunch, learn about the Christian "Stations of the Cross" along the Via Dolorosa and enter the incense-filled halls of the Holy Sepulchre Church, the place identified as both the site of the crucifixion and the tomb of Jesus.
- Weave through the shops and alleyways of the Arab *shuk* (market) in the Old City on your way to Razzouk Ink, a 700-year-old Christian family owned tattoo parlor in the Christian Quarter that originally catered to Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem. Meet the current owner Wissam Razzouk; he has centuries of family stories to tell including his own recent involvement in "Healing Ink," which uses tattooing to help Israeli victims of terrorism and war overcome trauma.
- End the tour in the Armenian Quarter with resident Apo Sahagian, the Armenian Christian lead singer of the popular alternative folk rock band Apo and the Apostles.
- Return to the hotel and have a learning session with Rabbi Dr. Daniel Roth, Director of the Pardes Center for Judaism and Conflict Resolution. He and the guides will help the group process their experiences so far and frame how to have respectful difficult conversations.



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- Have the option of taking a night tour of the Machane Yehuda Shuk market where you will have dinner on your own.

*Hotel:* Harmony / Arthur Hotel, Jerusalem [Breakfast included]

## **Day 3, Wednesday, March 23, 2022: East Jerusalem and the Musrara Neighborhood**

- In the morning, visit East Jerusalem's forgotten palace, Tel El Ful, covered by the very popular Israel Story Podcast episode "King of The Hill" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1aukdwT11Y>). One of the Israel Story podcasters will guide the group through the location describing the myths, history, Jordanian royals, Palestinian families, and Israeli generals associated with the site.
- Have lunch at Sarwa Street Kitchen in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah.
- In the afternoon, visit two socio-political art venues in the neighborhood of Musrara that straddled the Seam Line between Israeli-controlled West Jerusalem and Jordanian-controlled East Jerusalem until after the Six-Day War in 1967. The Museum of the Seam is a socio-political contemporary art museum and the Social Gallery at the Musrara Community Center, part of the Naggat Multidisciplinary School of Art and Society.
- Return to the hotel and hear from two peacemakers, one Israeli and one Palestinian, from the Parents Circle/Families Forum. Both speakers lost close family members in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- Have a group discussion and processing session at the hotel.

*Hotel:* Harmony / Arthur Hotel, Jerusalem [Breakfast and Lunch included]

## **Day 4, Thursday, March 24, 2022: Women of the Wall, Bethlehem, and Interfaith Prayer in Jerusalem**

- Wake up early to attend a Women of the Wall Rosh Chodesh service at the Kotel (Western Wall).
- Have breakfast after the service.
- Enter the West Bank to go to Bethlehem. There, tour the separation barrier up close and discuss both its impact on Israelis and Palestinians and the images you see painted on the wall.
- Visit the Walled Off Hotel, set up and financed by world renowned Street Artist Banksy, to see their museum and art gallery. Have the opportunity to spray-paint a stenciled image onto paper as a souvenir to take home with you (for an additional cost).
- Tour the the Church of the Nativity and Manger Square.
- In the afternoon, have a cultural art walk tour in the Old City of Beit Sahour; there, discover the studios and showrooms of local Palestinian artists.
- Then return to Jerusalem and join with Praying Together in Jerusalem. Praying Together in Jerusalem is a movement whose participants believe in the power of side-by-side prayer to bring friendship, respect and, ultimately, peace between people of all faiths. Meeting once a month, the participating groups hope to be



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joined by members of all faiths who wish to show their love of the Holy City and all of its inhabitants through a public expression of their faith. Participating organizations includes: Tantur Ecumenical Institute, the Elijah Interfaith Institute, Abrahamic Reunion, Interfaith Encounter Association, Kids4Peace, the Sisters of Zion, Microphones for Peace, Pardes Center for Judaism and Conflict Resolution, ADAShA The Jerusalem Center for Interreligious Encounter and Dibbur Hadash.

- Have a free evening.

*Hotel:* Harmony / Arthur Hotel, Jerusalem [Breakfast and Lunch included]

## **Day 5, Friday, March 25, 2022: The Southern West Bank, and Shabbat in Jerusalem**

- After breakfast, travel into the West Bank to Hebron's Old Town. Walk down Shuahada Street. Visit the Women in Hebron Cooperative shop. See the Cave of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs.
- Have lunch together.
- In the afternoon, meet Hadassah Froman, an Orthodox Jewish peacemaker from the West Bank settlement of Tekoa and involved in the Abrahamic Reunion movement. She was the wife of the late Rabbi Menachem Froman, a pioneer in Jewish-Muslim peacemaking in the West Bank settlements.
- Return to the hotel, have a group processing session, and prepare for Shabbat.
- Join with a progressive Jewish congregation for Shabbat services.
- Be hosted by families for Shabbat dinner.

*Hotel:* Harmony / Arthur Hotel, Jerusalem [Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner included]

## **Day 6, Saturday, March 26, 2022: Free Day for Shabbat with Options**

- Have breakfast at the hotel.
- Enjoy the remainder of the day free to relax, celebrate Shabbat, or see more sites in Jerusalem.
  - For those who are interested, arrangements can be made (for an additional fee) to take a day tour to Masada and the Dead Sea.
  - Alternatively, join Rabbi Rosen-Brown for Shabbat morning services with a local congregation.
  - The Palestinian guide will be available to take those who are interested to the L.A. Mayer Institute for Islamic Art [NOTE: Travelers would need to pay for taxis and any entrance fees.].
- Regroup in the late afternoon for a Shabbat text study or discussion and processing session with Rabbi Rosen-Brown.
- Have a light group dinner.
- Spend Saturday evening at the Burnstein Basement Klezmer located in large Yiddish library in the heart of an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood. They begin with Havdallah, serve kugel, and perform live music with comical aspects.

*Hotel:* Harmony / Arthur Hotel, Jerusalem [Breakfast and Dinner included]



## **Day 7, Sunday, March 27, 2022: Northern West Bank**

- Check out of the hotel after breakfast.
- Spend the morning with Palestinian farmers and a representative from Rabbis for Human Rights planting olive trees in a Palestinian village in the northern West Bank.
- Have lunch and a wine tasting at Har Bracha Winery and Restaurant in the settlement of Har Bracha. If available, Rabbi Eliezer Melamed, the community's rabbi and the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Har Bracha will briefly meet the group.
- Spend the afternoon in the Nablus region visiting the Samaritan community of Mount Gerizim.
- Check into the hotel in Taybeh and have the option of taking a tour of Taybeh Winery located in the hotel. The hotel, winery, and nearby brewery are owned by the Khoury family who returned to their home village of Taybeh after spending more than twenty years in the United States.
- After settling in, regroup and have a pre-dinner group discussion and processing session.
- A Palestinian business leader will join the group for dinner at the hotel. The group will be treated to a wine tasting from Taybeh Winery over dinner.

*Hotel:* Taybeh Golden Hotel (<http://www.taybehgoldenhotel.com>) [Breakfast, Lunch and wine, Dinner and wine included]

## **Day 8, Monday, March 28, 2022: Ramallah and Birzeit**

- Spend the morning in the city of Ramallah.
  - Visiting the controversial new Yasser Arafat Museum. Discuss and debate Arafat's complex legacy from multiple perspectives as both an unrepentant terrorist and a national freedom fighter, as both a revered Palestinian statesman and a politician tainted by corruption, and as both a deserving and undeserving Nobel Peace Prize recipient.
  - Meet a Palestinian government representative.
  - Have lunch at Sangria's Restaurant.
- Spend the afternoon visiting the new multi-million dollar Palestinian Museum in Birzeit. The museum is dedicated to preserving and celebrating the history, culture and society of modern Palestine.
- Time permitting, tour the Birzeit Brewery and meet the founders.
- Return to the hotel for dinner.
- Have an evening program with Israeli and Palestinian members of Combatants for Peace, an egalitarian, bi-national, grassroots organization that is committed to non-violent civil disobedience against the Israeli occupation and all forms of violence between the two sides in the state of Israel and the Palestinian territories.
  - This would either be:
    - A theatre performance from members of Combatants for Peace. Their theatre group employs a technique known as forum theatre that was first developed by the Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal as part of the approach he named Theatre of the Oppressed. The group



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re-enact actual scenes from their own lives in front of an audience, who are then encouraged to stop being spectators and become 'spect-actors' - participating in the action.

- Or, a screening of the Combatants for Peace's film *Disturbing the Peace*, followed by a discussion with Nobel Peace Prize nominees Chen Alon and Sulaiman Khatib.

*Hotel:* Taybeh Golden Hotel (<http://www.taybehgoldenhotel.com>) [Breakfast, Lunch, beer and Dinner included]

## **Day 9, Tuesday, March 29, 2022: Technology and Social Media in the Middle East: The Good the Bad, and the Disturbing**

- After breakfast, check out of the hotel and travel to Tel Aviv-Jaffa.
- Visit to the newly redesigned Peres Center for Peace and Innovation in Jaffa. The Center, founded in 1996 by the late President of Israel, Shimon Peres, develops and implements impactful and meaningful programs with a focus on promoting a prosperous Israel, nurturing and highlighting Israeli innovation, and paving the way for shared-living between all of Israel's citizens and lasting peace between Israel and its neighbors.
- Have some free time for lunch.
- In the afternoon, meet Micah Lakin Avni, a prominent Israeli businessman and attorney who became an anti-terrorism activist after his father, Richard Lakin, a retired elementary school principal and a peace activist, was killed by Palestinian attackers on a Jerusalem bus in October 2015. After his father's death, he published an opinion piece in The New York Times that raised public debate on the issue of social media incitement. He subsequently established a movement against incitement on social media titled "Stop Incitement," initiated an Israeli law to regulate incitement on Facebook, gave two speeches at the United Nations, and became a lead plaintiff in lawsuits against Facebook for the website's role in permitting the posting of "incitement to murder and the glorification of violence against innocent civilians."
- Then meet graphic designer Ron Erdy, founder of Peace Factory. In March 2012, as war between Iran and Israel seemed imminent, Ronny Erdy posted a photo of himself and his daughter on Facebook with the caption: "Iranians, we will never bomb your country. We <3 you." This message of hope immediately went viral and gained international notoriety. It gave birth to the ISRAEL LOVES IRAN Facebook community – where people from across the region and the world called for peace, not war. ISRAEL LOVES IRAN later spawned a series of satellite communities and the WE LOVE YOU movement was born. In early 2013, an umbrella body was established – the Peace Factory. Its purpose is to be the engine and the fuel behind the WE LOVE You communities, to connects people around the Middle East, giving them a face and a voice.
- Have a free evening.

*Hotel:* Tal Hotel, Tel Aviv [Breakfast included]



## **Day 10, Wednesday, March 30, 2022: Jaffa**

- Check out after breakfast and store your luggage.
- Take a walking tour of Jaffa through the lens of music with a member of the multi-ethnic hip-hop group System Ali. The tour combines the history of the city of Jaffa in its 5,000 years of existence with a discussion of the conflictual issues of the city in recent decades through textual and musical works performed on the site.
- Have free time for lunch on your own.
- Check out the Yafa Coexistence Bookshop.
- Stop outside of the Jaffa clinic of Physicians for Human Rights-Israel to learn about the communities they serve.
- Visit the Bustan Yaffa Bilingual (Hebrew, Arabic) Kindergarten that operates in the spirit of the Waldorf method and meet with its director Ihab Balha. For more than 18 years, Ihab has been an Islamic cleric and a researcher of the Sufi Movement - the mythical Islamic movement. Ihab is sanctifying values of Islam for Peace and Love which constitute powerful tools to bridge and join hearts between people.
- End the tour with an interactive workshop on "Bringing Israel Home: Talking about Israel in Our Communities," facilitated by an educator from BINA: The Jewish Movement for Social Change.
- Transfer to the airport on your own. We recommend arranging transportation directly with the hotel.

[Breakfast included]