



CELEBRATING OUR 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

## Germany to Israel: Highlighting 30 Years of Global Impact

*Led by Rabbi Shlomo Riskin*

May 19-28, 2014

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A country with a rich history and a painful past, Germany evokes powerful emotions. It is not only the symbol of the darkest annals of our history, it is also the birthplace of Ashkenazi Judaism. Heritage sites and national landmarks pay tribute both to deep Jewish roots and to the worst anti-Semitism the world has ever known.

Today, in defiance of Hitler and against all odds, a Jewish renaissance is taking place throughout Germany. Join Rabbi Riskin on a once-in-lifetime journey through the complex history of Germany - the third largest Jewish community in Europe - and witness the extraordinary impact OTS graduates are having in its rejuvenation.

Such an emotionally-charged trip can only culminate in the Jewish homeland. The second leg of our journey will take us to Israel, where we will bridge all we experienced in Germany with the very embodiment of Jewish resilience and the cornerstone of the Jewish future.

### Monday, May 19, 2014 – REVIVAL OUT OF THE ASHES OF TRAGEDY

*Arrival in Munich in the early morning and transfer to the Hotel*

Munich was Hitler's power base. Trace the rise of the Nazi party, visiting the **Hofbräuhaus** (Royal Beer Hall), where they first met, the **Market Place** and the **Odeon Platz**, where Hitler's **Beer Hall Putsch** took place in 1923. See the **Residence Palace**, which was home to the Bavarian royal family as well as the **State Opera House**. We will also see the **Menorah monument** where the main synagogue once stood. The Hebrew inscription on the memorial plaque, "Remember that the enemy scorned you," admonishes visitors to this city to never forget its most difficult past.

Looking forward to a future of hope and renewal, the Jewish community of Munich has just opened a spectacular new complex of institutions in the heart of the old city on **St. Jacobs Square**; a new synagogue, Ohel Jakob,



community center with kindergarten and primary school, and a Jewish museum whose multimedia exhibit examines a rich Jewish history as well as contemporary Jewish life. The Munich Jewish complex symbolizes a community which is experiencing one of the most dynamic changes in the country – a community returning to the heart of the city.

#### Lunch in Einstein Café, in the JCC of Munich



Visit the **Olympiapark** to pay tribute to the 11 Olympic athletes who were kidnapped and killed at the 1972 Summer Olympics.

Continue to **Dachau** - the first of the Nazi concentration camp in Germany in which over 200,000 people were imprisoned and over 30,000 murdered - a third of them Jews.

#### Dinner with Community Leaders

#### *Overnight in Munich*

### **Tuesday, May 20, 2014 – TORAH SCHOLARSHIP AND LEARNING**

*Transfer: Worms, Mainz and Darmstadt en route to Frankfurt*

In **Worms**, we will go to the synagogue where our great Biblical commentator Rashi wrote and taught his transformative insights. We will reflect upon the longstanding impact of his works to this day, as well as learn about what happened to the synagogue on Kristalnacht.

We will walk in the footsteps of German Jewry, visiting one of the oldest Jewish burial sites with gravestones dating back to 1076. There, Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg is buried. We will hear the story of the kidnapping of this great rabbi and how it impacts on modern *halachic* debates about whether the Israeli government may free terrorists in order to redeem captive Israeli soldiers.



#### Boxed lunch

Rabbenu Gershom is the rabbi who forbade Ashkenazi men from marrying more than one wife or reading one another's mail. We will visit his home city of **Mainz** to learn about his life and the decrees he made. We will then trace the history of the community from its early origins,

through the massacres of the crusades and the atrocities under the Nazis to the revival that is now taking place there.

Also in Mainz, we will explore the Gutenberg Press - the world's first printing press - which revolutionized Jewish learning for the People of the Book, followed by a visit to the extraordinary New Synagogue, an embodiment of hope, learning and an unshakable belief in the future.

The Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary traces its origins to a nun who resisted the Nazis in order to demand justice for Jews. In 1947, she established this order to pray for forgiveness for Christian anti-Semitism and to show support for Israel. We will visit their unique community, **Kanaan**, in Darmstadt, laid out as a map of modern Israel, including an area called Efrat. There, we will hear about Ohr Torah Stone's contribution to Christian efforts to dialogue with Jews and support the State of Israel.

Dinner at the Jewish Center in Darmstadt with Ohr Torah Stone rabbis and educators and community leaders

*Overnight in Frankfurt*

## **Wednesday, May 21, 2014 – ISRAEL: A LIGHT UNTO THE NATIONS. WHAT IS THE HIGHER MEANING OF SUFFERING AND PERSECUTION?**

*Transfer to Berlin: Air Berlin 6556 Departs 10:50; Arrives in Berlin at 12:00*



We will drive through the beautiful **Grunewald** district of Berlin, stopping at '**Track 17**,' where we will pay tribute to the 55,000-60,000 Jews who were deported from there – originally to the Litzmannstadt (Lodz) and Warsaw ghettos and, from 1942, to Auschwitz and Theresienstadt.

We will then visit the elegant villa in **Wannsee**, where on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1942, the infamous 'Wannsee Conference' took place to formulate the "Final Solution" for the elimination of the Jewish People. Of the 15 signatories, a full eight held at least one doctorate; how could a culture that placed such emphasis on education possess so little morality?

Boxed Lunch

## The Origin of Reform Judaism: What Can We Learn?

Moses Mendelsohn, the father of the Jewish Enlightenment, set about helping Jews assimilate into German society, language, literature and life. We will visit his grave in the historic **Jewish Quarter** to understand why German Jews were so keen to assimilate and the implications for our own Jewish communities. We will continue our discussion at the site of Berlin's **first synagogue**, the **Old Jewish Cemetery** and **Jewish High School**.

Dinner in Berlin – Special Event: Meet OTS rabbis and educators serving in Eastern Europe, to hear about their experiences and learn about the impact they are making.

*Overnight in Berlin*

## Thursday, May 22, 2014 – HISTORY AND DESTRUCTION

We will continue our tour of Berlin, visiting famous historical landmarks such as:

**Bebelplatz;** site of the infamous Book Burnings in 1933

**Holocaust Memorial** - The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, designed by the American architect Peter Eisenmann, is one of the most evocative and controversial monuments to the Holocaust – featuring the “Field of Stelae,” covered with 2,711 geometrically arranged concrete slabs.



**Checkpoint Charlie** - The best-known Berlin Wall crossing point between East Berlin and West Berlin during the Cold War.

Boxed Lunch

**The Jewish Museum** – Founded in 1933 and closed by the Nazis in 1938, the new Jewish museum was finally opened in 2001.

**The Reichstag Building** - Constructed to house the Parliament of the German Empire, was severely damaged in 1933, in the infamous Reichstag fire.

**The Oranienburger Strasse Synagogue** - Originally consecrated as a synagogue on Rosh Hashanah in 1866, it was vandalized in 1938 during Kristallnacht, torched by Berliners in 1944 and blasted by allied bombs in 1945. We will follow the dramatic story of this synagogue - which encapsulates the story of German Jewry.

After dinner, we will complete the first leg of our mission as we make our way to the airport for the overnight flight to Tel Aviv.



## Friday, May 23, 2014 – "L'YERUSHALAYIM IRCHA TASHUV"

*Early morning arrival at Ben Gurion airport; transfer to the Inbal Hotel.*

Breakfast at leisure at the Inbal and free time to rest and prepare for Shabbat.

We will hold our own joyous **Kabbalat Shabbat** service with Rabbi Riskin followed by Shabbat dinner dinner and Tish

*Overnight at the Inbal Hotel, Jerusalem*

## Shabbat, May 24, 2014 – SHABBAT SHALOM - PARSHAT BAMIDAR



Coffee and cake for those who wish followed by our own **Teffilah**, kiddush and **shiur** by **Rabbi Riskin**.

Shabbat lunch

Free time for well-earned rest and relaxation with the option of a **walking tour of Jerusalem** neighborhoods in the late afternoon.

Seuda shlishit with Rabbi Riskin

**Havdalah overlooking the Old City**, followed by a free evening to enjoy downtown Jerusalem.

*Overnight at the Inbal Hotel, Jerusalem*

## Sunday, May 25, 2014 – THE HILLS OF JUDEA ARE ALIVE WITH THE SOUNDS OF OHR TORAH

**Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat**, will share with our group the problems and possibilities of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem.

A visit to the **Chana and Yaakov Tilles Women's Campus-Midreshet Lindenbaum** in Talpiyot will illuminate the role OTS has been playing in the movement for Jewish women's rights. We will meet women scholars training to be *Dayanot* (Rabbinical Court Judges), women who combine Torah learning with military service, women advocates battling in the trenches on behalf of *agunot*, participants in our program for women with special needs and developmental disabilities, and outstanding post-high school students from all over the world.

## Lunch at the Chana and Yaakov Tilles – Midreshet Lindenbaum College

**Defense Minister Moshe "Bogie" Ya'alon** will provide us with a military briefing on the strategic challenges facing Israel. This will be followed by an in-depth tour of the Security Fence by its architect, **Col (Res) Danny Tirza**. The fence has been credited with preventing terrorist attacks and saving the lives of thousands of Israelis, but also criticized by governments around the world and rerouted by Israel's Supreme Court; Tirza will recount his negotiations with the Palestinians, explain the rationale behind the fence's construction and analyze its effectiveness.



Prepare for the evening's **Gala Celebration at the Jerusalem Theater**

## OTS Gala 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner and Celebration

*Overnight at the Inbal Hotel, Jerusalem*

## **Monday, May 26, 2014 – JERUSALEM'S REUNIFICATION: PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS**

**Ammunition Hill** was the location of a fierce paratroopers' battle during the Six Day War. We will visit the site and meet with its director, Michael Lanir, whose family immigrated from Germany, and who was severely injured in the 1967 battle.

A View from the Heights: We will visit **Beit Aryeh** for a view from "the Balcony of Israel," to appreciate the topographical advantage of the mountains of Samaria over Israel's coast.

### Boxed lunch

A Different Model: Visit **Rawabi**, the first fully-planned Palestinian city, located north of Ramallah, for a glimpse at a synthesis of private investment and national aspirations as well as a source of hope for the future, including meetings with people driving the project.



"From **Shiloh** to Jerusalem: In Search of *Mikdash* & Monarchy." Guided by Midreshet Lindenbaum's Shani Taragin, we will explore the historical and religious stages of *mishkan* (tabernacle) worship from Joshua's time through the establishment of the *mikdash* (temple) under kings David and Solomon. As we walk through the hills of Ephraim, we will

tour the ancient city/tel of Shiloh - the site of the *mikdash* through the Prophet Samuel's time. We will learn the stories of Eli, Elkana, and Chana and appreciate how the *Tanach* comes to life on site. As we follow the move of *Shechinah* from central to southern Israel we will also note the changes in leadership - from judge (Joshua), to prophet (Samuel), to king (David), and examine how and where the seeds of human and divine leadership are planted and developed.

Return to Jerusalem for a free evening.

*Overnight at the Inbal Hotel, Jerusalem*

## Tuesday, May 27, 2014 – MiGUSH ETZION TETZE OHR TORAH



Photojournalist **David Rubinger** was called by President Shimon Peres "photographer of the nation in the making," as he has documented in photographs the history of the State of Israel, from its very beginnings. Rubinger, who was awarded the prestigious Israel Prize in 1997, will recount some of the momentous events, people, leaders, wars and immigrations which he encountered during more than six decades of his life as a photojournalist.

See how Rabbi Riskin's vision has come to life in the **city of Efrat**; hear about the challenges of building a modern religious city and learn about its relationships with the neighboring Arab populations. Visit a local Arab village and witness Israeli-Palestinian friendship and mutual cooperation.

*Lunch at the Dr. Charles and Rella Feldman Neveh Efrat Retreat Center*



Gush Etzion is home to some of Ohr Torah Stone's flagship programs, ranging from high schools to graduate programs. We will visit the

**Israel Henry Beren Campus**, where we will meet and learn with students combining Torah study with military service, as well as students from our Joseph and Gwendolyn Rabbinical Seminary and our Ethel and Adolph Beren Educators Institute studying to be rabbis and educators and preparing for emissarial work in communities all over the world. We will hear from students who are combining an academic degree with their Jewish studies in the Robert M. Beren College.



We will discover additional ways in which Orthodox Judaism is being synthesized with the modern world on a visit to the **Zomet Institute**, where we will witness scientific solutions to *halakhic* challenges inherent in running hospitals, security forces and more.

Dinner at the Gush Etzion Winery

**Rejoice in the liberation of Jerusalem on Yom Yerushalayim!** We will join thousands of Israelis in marking the reunification of the Holy City of Jerusalem in a moonlit walk around the **picturesque walls of the Old City**.

*Overnight at the Inbal Hotel, Jerusalem*

## **Wednesday, May 28, 2014 (Jerusalem Day) – A TALE OF TWO CITIES AND THE REVOLUTION WROUGHT BY OTS IN ISRAEL**

OTS's Hadas students are participants in the first program ever enabling women to combine Torah study with military service in the IDF. We will visit some of these outstanding young women and their high ranking officers on the closed **Gilot Military Base** to hear about their experiences serving in the Intelligence Corps.



We will join one of the OTS Jewish Cultural Facilitators and see firsthand how these engaging men and women are providing secular Israelis – native born as well as immigrants from Ethiopia, the Former Soviet Union, and elsewhere – with an opportunity to connect to their Jewish heritage in a meaningful way, within the comfortable, non-threatening environment of **Community Centers** across Israel.

Free time for lunch and shopping in Tel Aviv

Abraham Silver will be will be guiding us on a mesmerizing tour of **Tel Aviv**, beginning in "Hatachana," the newly-restored train station compound in Southern Tel Aviv, and continuing through Neve Tzedek. The native-Brooklynite paratrooper pioneer-kibbutznik will regale us with personal stories and reflections on Tel Aviv's 100-year history,

Farewell dinner in Tel Aviv

*Transfer to Ben Gurion International Airport for flights back to the United States or back to Jerusalem for those who are staying on.*

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