

"THE JERUSALEM SYNDROME"

(an inexplicable intoxication with a place)

A One Woman Slide Night

by

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A bare stage in darkness.

Fade up airport sounds mixed with Israeli music

Slides of Ben Gurion airport.

People arriving

Bustle, customs, confusion, reunions

A Palestinian driver is putting luggage on a bus.

Pilgrims board the bus.

Problems of getting a wheelchair on

Shosh enters the bus, removes her back pack, takes the microphone and faces the group (audience), doing a quick head count.

She is wearing trousers, sandals, a short sleeved shirt, a photographer's vest with many pockets clipped to which is an official tour guide's ID card with photograph, a belt with a mobile and a container with water.

The music and airport sounds fade

Shosh

Shalom everybody, and welcome to Israel.

Are we all on board Reverend ?

-

Then if everthing's all right, I'll tell the bus driver we can go. OK ?

(to Abed, the driver, in Hebrew)

Besseder Abed, kulam po, efshar linsoah.

("OK Abed, everybody's here, we can go")

Whenever Shosh speaks Hebrew or Arabic the English translation flashes up on a screen simultaneously

Shosh

(back to the group)

My name is Susan- or Shoshan, if you want to try and get your tongue around the Hebrew.

I'm your guide and I'll be with you for the entire trip.

Slide of a map of Israel indicating the proposed route of the tour: Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Jericho, the Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, Caesarea

Shosh

As you know from your very full itinerary we will be covering all the important Christian sites over the next

8 days, starting with Jerusalem and then travelling north to the Galilee
 I want to say already now that we may have to juggle the order slightly, but don't worry, nothing will be left out and I'll let you know in advance of any changes.

All this, of course, is only possible with the help of our very capable driver, Abed.

*She acknowledges Abed with a smile.
 He waves back.*

slides of the road going up to Jerusalem

Shosh

So you're from Wales.
 And your leader, Reverend Morgan Thomas tells me you're a choir.

-
 Where's that ?
 From Bangor !
 Is Tom Jones from there ?
 By the way some of the churches we're visiting have magnificent acoustics.
 There will be lots of opportunities for you to exercise the vocal chords.
 I really look forward to hearing you sing.

-
 So how are you all feeling ?

-
 Tired ?

-
 A bomb scare.
 On the plane ?
 Euston station.
 I thought the IRA were giving it a rest.

-
 Ohhh ..
 You almost missed the flight
 Well you're safe now, you're in Israel.

-
 No- it's true.

-
 OK, what do you think the greatest danger is to you right here and now ?
 No bacon and eggs for the next ten days, right ?
 No seriously, you're thinking how am I going to survive without a decent cup of tea.

-
 Alright, alright I know you're worried about the bombs.
 The knife attacks
 A stone through the bus window.
 Terrorists.

War with Syria.
 Chronic diaphorrea.
 Uh uh.

(shaking her head)

Wrong. Wrong and wrong.
 Let me tell you that the greatest danger to anyone in
 Israel right now is. . . wait for it-
 Crazy drivers.
 Lousy roads
 Middle Eastern tempers.
 No patience,
 Huge egos.
 Smash, Prang, Accident.

(slamming a fist into her palm)

Do you know, we've lost heaps more people on the roads
 in Israel than in all the wars and bombings put
 together.

But you didn't know that.

But you can all relax because Abed has a perfect track
 record.

Haven't you Abed ?

(in Hebrew)

Amarti lahem, she atta munkhe be tafkid shell nahag
 (I told them you're an expert in your role as a driver.)

Abed says he hasn't lost a passenger since Easter.

(she laughs)

By the way, Abed does understand a little bit of
 English so please don't hesitate to inform us if the
 air conditioning is too high or too low or you can't
 hear me on the mike or you'd rather have a bit of a
 snooze and not hear me at all or

If you need a toilet stop

But don't leave it to the last minute.

We don't want any accidents.

(remembering something funny)

Remind me to tell you a funny story about one of my
 tourists and a bottle of water from the Sea of Galilee.

We don't want any accidents, do we Abed ?!

Because we know who is going to have to clean it up.

Just to put you into the picture.

I was born in Australia.

As if you couldn't tell from my beautifully rounded
 vowels.

I made Aliyah in 1984.

That means I moved up to a higher spiritual plane.

That's what they call immigrating to Israel.

I lived here full time for seven years.

Now I split my time between both countries, six months

Australia and six months Israel.

Bit of a yo yo.

Susan in one and Shoshan in the other.

Although I'm Jewish, my parents sent me to a Church of England Girls' Grammar School with hats, white shirts, scratchy collars, tie, blazers, grey regulation underpants, gloves, tunic, tights and leather shoes, in that very unBritish heat.
But because I was Jewish.

Am Jewish,

My father used to pull me out of school for the Jewish High Holidays.

I liked being different.

Mostly I liked the Holidays.

I could have been exempted from Religious Instructions RI ?

In my case Divinity classes.

But my father thought it wouldn't hurt to learn something about Christianity.

And anyway, he said I'd hear some good stories
Dad was also sent to a boarding school in England in the 1930s.

It was part of my grandfather's plan to extricate his family from Germany.

I even remember drawing Jesus riding a donkey into Jerusalem.

We had to go to church at least three times a year.

I took Communion once,
To see what it tasted like.
Only once.

It didn't taste all that good.

So, I know the stories,

I know your hymns.

And I'm really looking forward to singing with you.

(responding to a question)

Yes, I've got dual citizenship, that means an Australian and an Israeli passport.

(Shosh checks her watch)

OK, then.

Normally the trip up to Jerusalem takes 45 minutes.

But because there are always traffic jams at this hour- especially getting into the city.. Abed and I thought we could have a short coffee break near the Arab village of Abu Gosh.

-

Gosh!

(playing stand up comedian)

Was that a sigh of relief for the coffee or the chance to use the loo ? Boom boom !

(she laughs)

Ah yes, there's always someone who forgets to go at the airport.

Don't worry, your bladders are my first concern.

Throughout this entire trip I promise you we will never be more than fifteen minutes away from a toilet stop.

So you can drink as much as you like.
 In fact, I'm going to be a teeny weeny bit fascist about drinking water.
 In this climate you must drink constantly or you'll get very sick.

(responding to questions)

Well, they said it's going to be a mild 38 degrees today
 But building up to a heat wave by Sunday.

-

(German accent)

Ve haf vays unt meanz off makink yu drink.

That's why I gave you all a small mineral water at the airport.

You'll be able to buy them wherever we stop.

Abed also has a stock of bottles in the bus fridge which he's happy to keep supplied for you, for 3 shekels.

I haven't had to take anybody to hospital with dehydration - yet - but it happens. . .

Just remember, bottles out

(holding hers up)

A shluk everybody

And keep drinking !

-

Another thing to remember. . .

(Shosh takes out a kibbutznik's hat)

Your "kova tembel"

(She puts it on, making it look silly)

That's the Hebrew name, it means "fool's hat."

But really you're an idiot if you don't wear one because our desert sun will fry your brains.

Speaking of which there's one other health issue I should mention.

A mental health issue.

It's called "The Jerusalem Syndrome" and it afflicts pilgrims not unlike yourselves.

-

What happens ?

Well, it's a delusional state

It only lasts a few days,

But it does require hospitalisation.

-

Warning signs ?

Well-

You start getting a bit cranky

Because you're tired.

And believe me with this itinerary

(shaking it at them)

You will be tired.

You'll begin haggling over trivial things like

Who's going to get the front seat on the bus.

or

Who's going to get what room

With whom.

You'll start turning up late.

(*Shosh becoming a bit crazy with frustration*)

One morning you'll decide to ignore the wake-up call.
The rest of us are sitting on the bus waiting patiently
for you
To finish your breakfast and come out to identify your
luggage.

The bell boy has to be called back again !

- if he isn't already busy loading another group.

We've lost time.

(*gradually speeding up but really nicely*)

So we'll now have to drop the Church of the Annunciation
in Nazareth where the angel Gabriel told Mary she was
going to give birth to Jesus- we won't make it there in
time because the Franciscan's go to lunch at exactly
12.30, for two hours and they won't make exceptions
which if we have to do it after lunch will throw out
the rest of the day- but you're not Catholics, no cult
of Mary...so I guess that's OK to miss Nazareth.
But because you ignored the wake-up call, because you
wanted to sleep in, because you're not on the bus we're
all in a bad mood and we'll have to do the morning
prayer while the bus is already moving because of the 50
million things we've got to get through on this
itinerary !

(*holding up the itinerary, still nicely*)

and here I am busting my guts to . . .
make . . . this . . . the . . . most . . . important
experience. . . of your lifetime!

As it should be.

And it will be.

Shosh breaks off and takes a deep breath.

Shosh

Look,

It's been a busy season.

(*to the driver*)

Isn't that true Abed?

(*in Hebrew*)

Ihiye kef. Ihiye tiyul im harbe kessef.

(We'll have a good time. It will be a financially
profitable trip for us.)

Shosh

(*as Abed, one hand raised skywards*)

En sha'la

(By the grace of God)

Shosh

(*turning to the landscape going past*)

As you can see we've left the coastal plain and are climbing the Judaeaan foothills.

Continuing slides of the road starting to climb up to Jerusalem, panzer trucks from 1948 war

Those rust coloured armoured trucks on the roadside to your left and right are a reminder of the fierce battle for Jerusalem which took place in the 1948 War of Independence, when the city was cut off from food and water supplies by the Arab forces. These vehicles tried, often in vain, to break the siege.

-
I know a psalm, a prayer for peace, which could be appropriate for our first song. It's in Hebrew, but it's only two lines, and it's one of the hymns which Jewish pilgrims sang for hundreds of years, as they came up to Jerusalem. Jesus Himself would have sung it. Some of you may already know.
Psalm 133:
"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

(Shosh singing)
Hinne ma tov u manalyim
Shevet akhim gam yakhad (x2)

Hine ma tov
Shevet akhim gam yakhad (x2)

The song continues over

Slides of the highway approaching Jerusalem
We turn off to Abu Gosh and arrive at the garage/cafeteria

Shosh
OK folks, we've turned off to Abu Gosh. Somebody was concerned about going to an Arab village. But Abu Gosh is in Israel not the West Bank. There's no danger here. In fact Abu Gosh sided with the Israelis during the War of Independence.

-
Yes, it's . . . a bit complicated.

-
And here we are at our **Stop**. By the way this is also the area where the Arc of the Covenant was kept for 20 years before King David finally took it up to Jerusalem. Just about everywhere you go here, there is a site of some Biblical significance.

Slides of the "Elvis Inn" at the Neve Ilan Gas Station

Shosh

The owner of the cafeteria is also an Elvis fan and just outside he has placed the largest statue of the "King" in the Middle East. That's the King of Rock and Roll not the King of the Jews.

Slides flash cut zoom up to Elvis rotating hips.

Shots of Pilgrims in front of Elvis taking holiday snaps

An Elvis song bridges over. . .

Wait, wait a minute. Before you go. Let's synchronise our watches, it's now 10.05. Please be back on the bus by 10.20 sharp.

(calling out as they exit the bus)

The toilets are inside.

That's 15 minutes OK ?

Shosh turns to Abed

Shosh

(in Hebrew)

Sorry, Abed, I thought we were getting a full bus.

Bugger the office.

Fariid promised me 45 Pentecostals and look what we got

- 12 Baptists from Wales !

I mean, what is he doing to me ?

I've worked my butt off this season taking his small groups.

He owes me.

Shosh raises her hands in response to Abed's complaints.

Shosh

(in Hebrew)

(talking over Abed's objections)

Abed,

Don't pressure me, OK ?

(placating him)

If we can we will.

And if we don't do the gold factory in Jerusalem

We could do the diamond factory at the sea of Galilee.

I'm not promising anything.

I don't know how this group will pan out yet.

-

Hang on, hang on. . .

(resigned)

OK, we'll do the diamond factory.

(a new thought)

Hey, but I've got a better idea,

We won't go into Jerusalem now.

We'll do what you suggested earlier.

We'll go straight to Bethlehem and get the souvenir shopping over and done with so the hawkers don't get to them first..

Happy ?

I'll tell them I've decided to do things chronologically and start with the birth.

-

So- while we're in the Church of the Nativity you ring that olive wood place. . .

What's it called ?

-

No, no, I don't know about you, but I haven't been getting great deals there lately.

Let's try the new one on the way to the Milk Grotto.

Ring them and tell them we'll be there for lunch.

He's to have 12 falafel sandwiches ready.

And we'll be eating before we shop.

OK ?

Shosh pulls out her mobile phone and punches the office number. Then gives up.

Shosh

(big sigh)

Bugger it, why is the office always engaged.

Blackout

Middle Eastern music over

Images of Israeli border checkpoint crossing into Bethlehem

Shosh

We're just crossing the Bethlehem check point into the West Bank.

Or- the "Occupied Territories" .

Or "Judea and Sumaria" - depending on your political orientation.

But don't worry, you're still safe.

If you look at your maps later you will see we've effectively skirted around the western and southern edges of Jerusalem.

We're actually only 10 minutes from your hotel.

Bet you thought Bethlehem was further away, right ?

It's a small country.

Slide of Rachel's tomb

Shosh

There's Rachel's tomb on the right.

Jacob's wife.

She died on the road to Bethlehem giving birth to their son Benjamin.
 Founder of the tribe of Benjamin.
 One of the twelve tribes of Israel.
 Women come here who want to get pregnant.
 As you can see, because it's a Jewish holy site it's permanently guarded by Israeli troops.

The road to Manger Square
Palestinian flags opposite Nativity Church
Palestinian soldiers

Shosh
 Now we've arrived in Manger Square,
 You would have seen it on television at Christmas.

-
 In the blue uniforms ?
 No, these are Palestinian soldiers.

-
 Yes they're allowed to have guns.
 Bethlehem, like all the major towns in the Occupied Territories is now under the control of the Palestinian Authority,
 This is all part of the Oslo Peace Agreement.
 Oh quick there's another bus arriving let's get into the church first.

Religious music over

Slides of Manger Square, the Nativity church and the narrow entrance, inside the church, the steps leading to the grotto.

Shoshi addresses the tour group at the top of these steps.

Shosh
 (quiet, hushed tones)
 While we're waiting for the other group to leave the grotto I'll do some of my explanation here.

2000 years ago people used caves like the one down here for storage, for protecting animals against the elements, and even as living quarters. . . they're cool, and act as natural shelters against the elements.

Shosh
 (as Olwyn in Welsh accent)
 But it's always so stuffy down there.
 I remember last time I nearly fainted.

Shosh
 That's because now it's always packed with pilgrims, Olwyn.
 There's not enough air.

(back to her spiel)

And because the inn at Bethlehem was full,
So many people coming here for the Roman census,
Mary and Joseph sought accommodation in an animal
shelter, which according to tradition is this very
cave..

We hear one of the group burst into tears.

Shosh continues, trying to ignore the sobs.

Shosh

There's an interesting story about why this is the
oldest church still standing in the Holy Land.
When the Persians invaded in the 7th Century they
destroyed all the Christian churches in the country
except this one.
Does anybody know why ?

Shosh

(as Enid - Welsh accent)

Is it because it was too hard to get in, dear ?
I mean it was hard enough for me in a wheelchair but I
doubt a whole army could've squeezed through that
little entrance. Gareth bumped his head even after you
told him to be careful and he's only five foot tall,
Aren't you Gareth ?

Shosh

Well yes, Enid, as I explained outside, the entrance was
narrowed and lowered to prevent horsemen from riding in-
but that was much later.
When the Persians rampaged through the country they came
to this church and saw an image of the three wise men on
one of the walls outside.
And because the wise men looked very Persian they
thought "ooh! better not touch this one."
-
David and Gareth we're starting to move, would you be
able to help Enid out of her chair and down the steps ?
Thanks.
And are you OK with Olwyn, Joan ?

Religious music continues over

slides of the Grotto including the birth star where Jesus was
born

Shosh

When you're down look over to the right and you'll see a
gold fourteen pointed star.

Shosh

(as Olwyn)

Ooh aye, I remember that. But did Mary and Joseph have to go through the church too, to get down here?

Shosh

(as Enid)

(losing patience)

Don't be stupid Olwyn, how would the three wise men have known how to find the manger if it had been under a church !

Shosh

Shhh, Enid.

(back to the group)

Now this star is where, according to the Christian tradition, Jesus was born.

The weeping persists.

Shosh

Geoffrey, are you OK ?

Here, take a tissue.

(handing him one)

And after He was born, Jesus was taken over to the left and placed in a manger.

Don't worry Miriam, you'll see it when you come down the stairs,

Opposite the star.

slides of the manger

Shosh

Oh and by the way, as you'll notice, the manger is made of stone.

-

You will in a minute Enid, just a few more steps.

You managing OK Gareth?

And animals drank out of it,

A manger is actually a water trough for animals.

And it wasn't made of wood.

It was made of stone.

Like the one here.

Not enough trees in Israel to waste on wooden mangers.

Not enough wood to waste on crosses either.

Did you know Jesus only carried the cross beam to Calvary.

(indicating a beam and upright with her hands)

Not the full cross

The uprights were always standing in the ground.

Everything was re-cycled.

She repeats the sign of the cross and with each gesture she says

Shosh
Spectacles, testicles, wallet and watch.
(laughs)
Sorry, A Christian/Jewish joke about a Rabbi on a plane
he thinks is going to crash.

Nobody seems to get it.
Shosh takes out her note book and writes

Shosh
Work on Spectacles and Abu Gosh.
(back to the group)
Sorry about that.
(shrugs/ self consciously)
I just always had this hankering to be a stand up
comediienne. I thought it might come in handy when
there's a big queue.
So-
All those lovely wooden nativity sets. .
(shaking her head)
Not historically accurate I'm afraid.
But,
If it's such an old tradition it's worth keeping, don't
you think ?
And here in Bethlehem you can get genuine olive wood
nativity sets made by the local Palestinians
Possibly, quite possibly descended from the original
shepherds who kept watch over their flock on that first
Christmas Night.

Music of Handel's Messiah is heard
"For unto you a child is born"

Slides of traditional Christian images of the birth of Jesus

Shosh
(reading from her Bible at the page already marked)
"And an Angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the
glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were
filled with fear. And the Angel said to them,
'Be not afraid for behold I bring you news of a great
joy which will come to all the people; for to you is
born this day in the City of David a Saviour, who is
Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you
will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying
in a manger' "
(in Welsh accent)
Amen.

Shosh
Now I'm sure you won't be aware of this-

But 90% of all the Christians in Israel today, in the Holy Land, are Arabs.
Bethlehem, Nazareth, Cana, .. are all Arab cities with large Christian populations.

-
Yes, there's a toilet on the way out.

Slides of a group in the grotto

Shosh
(change of pace)
OK, let's move on down the steps
The group in front are leaving
So we can have the cave to ourselves for a prayer
Or a hymn, Rev Thomas . . . ?

She looks up the steps leading back the way they came at the group following..

Shosh
And the next group will kindly let us have this one moment alone ?
(to the tour guide in Hebrew)
Just one minute, OK
-
(back to Rev. Thomas)
"Away In the Manger" Reverend Thomas- Morgan ?
Lovely.

Shosh
(looking at her watch)
Who leads the choir ?
-
Miriam.
Could you. . . ?
(looking around for her)
Miriam ?
Are you here ?
-
Does anyone know where she is ?
-
Where ?
-
Lighting candles.
Oh never mind.
Can anybody else start us?

The Welsh choir go straight into "Away In the Manger"

Blackout.

"Away In the Manger" continues over

Slide of Bus leaving Manger Square
Bus interior looking down steps at a hawker

Shosh turns to a persistent hawker half way in the bus

Shosh

(in mixed Hebrew/ Arabic to the hawker)

Kahlass! lo akhshav aymlanu zman tayeb?

(Stop not now, we don't have time, OK?)

(to Abed)

Tisgor et ha delet bevakashar

(Please close the door)

(turns to group)

Yes you took the words right out of my mouth, David.

Our next stop is lunch.

It's been a long day for you.

From Bangor to Bethlehem is quite a trip, no ?

You must be very hungry.

Would you like to try a delicious local snack ?

Cheaper than you'll have anywhere else on your trip.

It's called falafel.

A pocket of flat unleavened peta bread which is opened up and inside you have fried chick pea balls in a chick pea sauce called hummus and a sesame sauce called Tahina and lots of healthy vegetables.

Sounds good ?

OK, Abed, take us there. Yulla.

Arabic music over

Shots of people eating falafel sandwiches at a table in a
Palestinian cafeteria

Shosh

Yes the vegetables have been washed in water.

But remember. I said this isn't Egypt.

The water's OK to drink.

Now I promised you the opportunity of buying some local olive wood items.

Well, the little restaurant we're going to has a small shop next to it which is part of a cooperative of local craftsmen- Arab Christians.

And I thought that when you've finished lunch you might like to have a browse around in there.

I'll give you..

(checking her watch)

About half an hour.

The bus swerves

Shosh loses balance and treads heavily on Mrs. Thomas 's foot.

Shosh

Sorry !!

I suppose we could make that 45 minutes.

(glaring at Abed)

It's worth it.

Sorry, Joan, you OK ?

Did I hurt your foot ?

You sure?

I'm terribly sorry.

No, no it was my fault.

(to the group)

This will be our last stop for the day.

Don't forget it's Friday which means the Jewish Sabbath begins in a couple of hours

So don't get caught in the hotel's Shabbat lift or you'll be stuck in there forever.

It stops automatically on every floor.

You'll see the sign.

It's for observant Jews.

So use one of the others.

-

(slight impatience)

Yes, it's in the Bible, Enid.

You can't push buttons in a lift because it's written that you can't build a house on the Sabbath which has been interpreted by the sages as meaning that you can't close an electrical circuit

(making a square circuit with her finger)

and that means you can't switch on any electricity, or answer the phone or watch television or push a button in a lift.

So lifts are preset before Shabbat and run continuously until the Sabbath is over.

When three stars appear in the sky tomorrow night.

-

Yeah I know Enid it is complicated.

Blackout.

Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings" plays softly on Shosh's stereo

Cut to slide, Exterior Night, of Shosh's small flat in West Jerusalem (Nahalot).

Shosh dressed in a sarong is lighting a candle

This is the only light in the scene

The phone rings but she ignores it

Shosh

Baruk Atah adonai
 Eloheinu malech ha olam
 Asher kidshanu be mitzvotav
 Ve tsivanu lehadlik

Shosh's answer message machine starts

Shosh
(Shosh's answer machine: in Hebrew followed by English)
 Higatem le hamesh shalosh shalosh effas shmone ahad
 sheva. Na lehashir hodaa acherei ha zif zuf.
 You've reached 5 5 3 0 8 1 7 please leave a
 message after the beep.
(over the answering machine)

Debbie
(Debbie's voice is heard)
 Shosh answer the phone !
 Oh Shoshi are you home ?
 Where are you ?

Shosh breaks off the ritual and goes to answer phone

Shosh
 Debbie, hang on a sec.

Turns off answer machine and turns down the music

Shosh
(into phone)
 Ner shel shabbat
 Amen
 -
 I'm lighting candles.
 -
 It's Shabbat.
 -
(tired)
 Of course I'm not going religious.
 -
 I just like doing it.
 -
 I dunno- I like the ritual.
 I like lighting candles.
 -
 Yeah, in Australia
 Paul doesn't mind.
 -
 No, not every week,
 If I remember,
 If I have candles.
 If I'm not somewhere else.
 If I'm in the mood.

If I've got the right music
 I like the idea of having an end to the week.
 I know I'm working tomorrow.
 I said I like the idea.
 I'd love to have the Sabbath off !!
 Do you know I haven't had a Shabbat off since
 March.
 I'm buggered ! How are you ?

*while she speaks into her portable phone Shosh is unpacking
 her rucksack and putting in reference marks for the next
 day's Bible readings, organising clothes for the morning etc.*

Shosh
 Oh they're OK.
 Bit of a collection !
 A choir.
 From Wales
 Great voices !
 Two women my age.
 One of them's a space cadet.
 She keeps wandering off.
 I'm not sure what to do about it.
 There's always one lost sheep.
 Sometimes I know what Jesus must have felt.
 All these people following me around the country
 All these damaged souls looking for a miracle
 And I get them there and the church is closed
 It's a guide's worst nightmare
 And it happened to me again this week, Debbie
 St. Anne's
 Where Jesus cured the lame man.
God knows how we're going to do the Stations of the
 Cross with that group and a wheelchair !!!
 You know who'll be pushing it, don't you !
 -
 (*Stretching her back*)
 Well it was getting better !
 But I'm beginning to think it's just another
 symptom of Menopause.
 Only 10 more days left Debbie !
 Can you believe it's nearly over again.
 Shit, I hate this build up to leaving each time.
 I get so irritable.
 -
 And I'll miss you all terribly too.
 Even more so this time for some reason.
 I don't know....
 It's so weird.
 I usually say I'm going back to get pregnant.
 Having a child with Paul was so important.
 I always hoped it would happen.
 Only now I know I'm menopausal it's different.

I'm not sure I know why I'm going back this time

(Shosh reacts to bad news)

She What!?

-

Why didn't you tell me that straight away ?!

That's awful.

Shit Debbie.

Whose dog ?

How badly?

-

Is she OK ?

-

Under the eyebrow ?

Boy she's lucky it didn't get her eye.

-

Rabies ?

An injection..Ouch !

How many stitches ?

-

Oh poor little Michal

Is she all right ?

-

Oh Debale, I'd love to see you all tonight but I'd be sitting in the restaurant like a zombie.

I only just walked in.

-

There were so many stuff ups at the hotel.

They overbooked us again.

Man did I lose it.

Told Itzik,

That useless group coordinator !

That reception better get their act together or

none of my groups will come any more

(defeated)

Although they probably will because it's the cheapest hotel around.

-

No, I haven't heard any news today.

What happened ?

There's a longish pause.

We see deepening concern on Shosh's face.

Shosh

(angry)

Those bloody settlers.

Why don't they just take their machine guns and

Bibles and go back to Chicago where they came from.

Brainwashed.

The lot of them.

Sorry, I just get so worked up about it.

You can't just throw people out of their homes
because the Bible says it's yours.

Those stories are only metaphors anyway.
They're not meant to be taken literally.

(sings, jazzy style)

It aint necessarily so.

The things that you're liable

To read in the Bible

Aint necessarily s ooooooooooooo ooooo o.

*While she sings Shosh empties and refills her water
bottle, placing it in the fridge, which she notices has no
food in it.*

Shosh

Another what ?

Non-kosher Chinese ?

Where ?

-

But have they got real pork ?

-

That's what the last lot said.

-

Oh. OK. Why not.

Give me time for a shower.

-

7's fine.

Just toot the horn and I'll come down.

But it can't be late OK ?

Shosh puts the phone down and blows out candles

Blackout.

Cut to next morning:

Music of Bustan Abraham "No. 3 Suite for Deyzi" over

Slides of the desert looking east from Mt. Scopus
including the Mountains of Moab and the Dead Sea

*The sequence of images and music continues for least 90
seconds giving a real sense of the mystery and allure of the
desert.*

Bustan fades down.

Shosh

I thought it would be appropriate to start our day in
the Holy City by showing you the way Jesus Himself
would have come on His many trips to Jerusalem.

Especially for the three important Jewish Pilgrimages.
 Passover,
 Shavuot (the giving of the Torah on Mt.Sinai),
 And Sukkoth (the Feast of the Tabernacles).
 He would have journeyed on foot or with a donkey from
 Nazareth ..

Along the Jordan valley ..
 Through Jericho which is just below us,
 And up these foothills to the Mount of Olives.
 The Jordan Valley which separates Israel from Jordan is
 part of Rift Valley stretching all the way from Syria to
 Africa.

Those mountains in the distance on the other side of the
 Rift Valley are the mountains of Moab in Jordan
 The highest peak is the traditional burial place of
 Moses.

He never made it into the Promised Land.

So you can see from where we are standing that Jerusalem
 is on the very edge of the desert.

The Judean desert.

And the land you see before you is all part of the
 Occupied Territories.

In fact Jerusalem is almost surrounded by the Occupied
 West Bank.

See those buildings over there.

Slides of Maale Adumim from a distance and close up of
 houses.

Shosh

That's Maale Adumim.

One of the many Jewish settlements built around
 Jerusalem to prevent it from being divided again.

This one is so large it has become a city.

That strip of blue ?...that's the Dead Sea.

Shosh

(as Olwyn)

Ooh Aye, I remember that.

You can't drown there can you.

It's a very funny feeling

Shosh

(as Enid)

And when the Messiah returns will the
 Dead Sea come to life again ?

Shosh

We'll have to wait and see, Enid.

To come up to Jerusalem Jesus would probably have taken the path around to the right and climbed up the Mt. of Olives via Bethany to drop in on his good friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

I have a lovely story to tell you about Jesus as a boy.

Remember how, in one of the Gospel stories, Mary and Joseph leave Jerusalem and after a day's journey notice that their son is missing and go back to look for Him ?

People often wonder how it was possible that Mary and Joseph did not notice that Jesus wasn't with them.

Well, here is a very likely explanation.

The roads in those days were dangerous like they still are today.

Then it was highway robbers, now it's crazy drivers.

So people always travelled in groups for protection.

Incidentally, the man in the Good Samaritan story should never have travelled alone.

He left himself wide open to attack.

When Jesus was about 12 years old he travelled to Jerusalem with his parents quite probably for a coming of age ceremony.

Perhaps something like a Jewish Bar Mitzvah.

Just imagine that, after the event, they were heading home for Nazareth down this way with a group of relatives and acquaintances- as was the custom.

Mary would have been in the women's camp thinking "how wonderful, my young son is now grown up and is with the men."

And Joseph, in the men's camp, would have been thinking "at our next stop I must remember to tell Jesus he shouldn't be travelling with the women anymore. He's an adult now and should come and join us."

So it isn't until a day's journey that they discover he is missing and go back to look for him. They were amazed to find the young Jesus with a group of learned rabbis in the temple.

Shosh flips open her Bible to the marked page.

Shosh

"both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers...and His mother kept all these things in her heart." Luke Chapter 2.

(to Miriam)

Are you OK Miriam ?

-
 Why don't you try some Nux Vom ?
 It's homoeopathic, won't hurt you.
 Might settle that stomach.
 Open wide, six drops under the tongue.

Shosh puts six drops of medicine into Miriam's mouth.

Shosh
 (to the group)
 Miriam had a good excuse for holding us up this morning.
 She didn't ignore the wake-up call.
 Just a bit of tummy trouble.
 Nothing to worry about.
 The system often takes a few days to adjust.

Shosh notices the photographer.

Shosh
 Hullo Jamil, I was hoping we would find you here.
 Let me introduce you to Jamil everybody.
 He does group photographs with the desert view behind us.
 They're mounted in a beautiful cardboard frame showing other important Christian sites in Jerusalem
 Could you hold one up, Jamil ?
 -
 It's a lovely memory to take back home.
 Jamil will bring them to the hotel tonight and you only have to pay if you like the result.
 -
 Five English pounds each.
 Hands up those who want a memento of the trip ?
 Couples only one hand please.

Shosh counts hands.

Slide of the group shot

Blackout.

**Music of the Welsh choir singing the hymn
 "Jerusalem" over**

Slides of the view from the Mt. of Olives
 overlooking the old city of Jerusalem
We see camels, vendors selling photographs, etc

Shosh
 That was so beautiful.

Thank you very much.
 We've stopped here on the Mount of Olives for our second view of the day.
 And with the morning sun behind us it's the best time for photographs.
 By the way the village we just passed through is where our bus driver comes from.
 Abed, in case you weren't aware, is a Palestinian from East Jerusalem. Working with him is one of those rare opportunities where a Palestinian and a Jew can get on peaceably together.

(spots Miriam wandering off)
 Miriam, do you mind if we all stay together over here. That way we won't get caught up with the hawkers. Jerusalem below us is the centre for the three great western religions :
 Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
 The three of them have three different names for the same God
 Which makes them incapable of getting on together. Jerusalem's the umbilical cord of the world.
 The centre of the universe so to speak.
 Today the walled area in front of us is known as The Old City.
 New Jerusalem is spread out behind it to the West. We're standing on one of seven rings of hills surrounding Jerusalem.
 See that spire way over in the distance on one of the rings.
 That's the prophet Samuel's tomb according to Christian, Jewish and Muslim belief
 But if they all agree- it can't possibly be true.
 (chuckles)
 It was from that hill that the Crusaders first laid eyes on the glorious, Holy City of Jerusalem.
 They then proceeded to massacre most of the city's inhabitants including all the Jews and Muslims.
 They had to grab people from surrounding villages to repopulate the city.
 A 1000 years before, Jesus was welcomed into the city with palm leaves.
 The Jews looked to him as their longed for Messiah.
 The one who would free them from Roman oppression.
 And it was here He was also tried and made to carry his cross- beam- to Calvary.

We hear a flood of tears from one of the group.

Shosh
 (searching her pockets unsuccessfully)
 Could somebody pass Geoffrey a tissue ?
 (back to the view)

Can you see that grey dome behind the golden one ?
That's the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
According to long held tradition, Jesus was crucified
and buried in a tomb there.

Shosh reacts to a hawker hassling her from the sidelines.

Slide of a Palestinian vendor with large laminated panoramas
of the view

Shosh

(In Hebrew)

This isn't the time to sell.

-

Sorry, NO !

Not Now.

I'll give you a minute at the end. OK ?

(back to the group)

OK, so- we're standing on the Mt.of Olives.

-

Yes, Olwyn it was covered in olive trees in Jesus' time.

-

(impatiently)

Well obviously there weren't any Greenies in those days
Olwyn.

Anybody could chop down whatever they liked.

In fact when the Turks were here they put a tax on
trees.

(in Hebrew to the hawker again)

Excuse me.

I don't want you to sell these things now.

OK ?

This is a religious time for them.

They DON'T WANT TO BE DISTURBED !

-

No.

No.

That's not true.

I want you to earn a living.

But do it after I'm finished.

Right now, please go away.

GO. . . AWAY!!

(back to the group)

Sorry for that.

-

He was accusing me, Gareth, of being anti- Palestinian.

He says I'm preventing him from selling his goods.

I told him just to wait a bit.

-

Look, Joan, I don't really want to go into this now

It needs a proper discussion, perhaps one night after dinner.

-
I don't know what this guy's particular problem is
But Palestinians generally are in a terrible predicament
at the moment.

Every time there's an "incident" a bomb, a knifing, a shooting, the borders are closed for security reasons. Only a very few Palestinians can cross over from the Occupied Territories to work. Palestinians rely heavily on jobs in Israel. As a result here's no money, no food, no proper health or education, no sewerage, no decent housing. Conditions in places such as the Gaza strip have become intolerable.

Who knows what this man's personal story is ?
I'm happy if you buy from him later but if I encourage him now the others will come over as well.

-
Right.

In a moment we'll be walking down to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus was betrayed and taken to the house of the High Priest Caiaphas for pre-trial.
Can you see that building with the arches on the slope of Mt. Zion over to the left?

Slides of the Church of St. Peter In Gallicantu

Shosh_

Meredith could you point it out to Gareth, please.
Can you see it now Gareth?

-
It's the Church of St. Peter at the Crowing of the Cock.
The traditional site of Peter's denial of Jesus.
After the arrest he followed Jesus to Caiaphus' house and waited in the courtyard.
He was afraid for his life.
So when asked if he knew Jesus he backed off.
The cock crowed.
And Peter wept bitterly when he remembered Jesus' words:
"Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me thrice".

Geoffrey's wailing increases

Shosh takes it out on the hawker, impatient.

Shosh
(in Arabic)
MOVE OFF!!

Slides of the Dome of the Rock

Shosh

(back to the group)

The golden dome, Joan ?
That's the Dome of the Rock,
The third holiest shrine in Islam after Mecca and
Medina in Saudi Arabia.
It's the spot where the Jewish Temple once stood.

-
Yes it's been in Moslem hands more or less since Islam
conquered this area in the 7th Century.
Can you see how the shrine sits on a huge platform ?
It's the size of 8 soccer fields.

Slides of various images of the Second Temple

King Herod the Great constructed that platform,
One of the wonders of the world.
And on top he built the Second Temple, exactly according
to Biblical instructions
Only to add a huge insult to the Jewish people by
Erecting a Roman eagle above the entrance.

The Temple precinct is where Jesus was brought before
God as a baby.
Where he came more than once a year for the Jewish
Festivals.
Where He preached on the steps
And overthrew the tables of the money changers.

You couldn't take Roman coins with images of Caesar into
the Temple.
That would have been idol worship.
And breaking the Commandment
"Thou shalt not have false Gods before me."
So Roman coins had to be changed into Jewish Shekels.

Slide of a 2nd Temple coins around 0 AD

But Jesus saw this activity as
" a den of thieves in a house of prayer"
and "drove out those that bought and sold in it."

-
Why Second Temple, Joan?
Well because there was a first.
A thousand years before Herod the Jebusites had used the
top of that hill as a threshing floor.
A High Place where the wind would separate the chaff
from the grain.
King David bought the area from the Jebusites for fifty
golden shekels.
And his son Solomon built the First Temple there and
placed the Arc of the Covenant in the inner sanctum.
The Holy of Holies, the direct line to God.

Since the destruction of the Temple nobody knows exactly where this line is.
Even today planes are not allowed to fly over there in case they cut across it.

For the same reason, Observant Jews won't go up there in case they accidentally venture onto the spot.
This would be a terrible sin.

-
(breaks off)
Meredith . . . Meredith
Please don't encourage him.
I promise I'll give you time to buy the panorama later.
Don't open your purse like that !
He'll see how much money you have.
I mentioned on the bus it's better to put the bulk of your cash in your money belt.

-
(gives up)
Five shekels to the pound.
(back to her spiel)
The Dome of the Rock
Has a naturally protruding rock inside it.
And in Islam, they believe
That this is the rock from which the prophet Mohammed
Rose into heaven
To speak with God.
When we go there you'll see the footprint
The Prophet left behind
On the rock
As he ascended.
Obviously a pretty good launching pad.
(short pause)

Laughter from the group.

Shosh
(containing her own laughter)
A pretty good launching pad.
For some amazing ideas.

You see, because this is also the rock on which,
according to the Jewish tradition
Abraham almost sacrificed his son Isaac.
(slight pause)
Although in Islam it was Ishmail, his maidservant's son,
And not Isaac who was almost sacrificed,
And not on this rock.
And did you know that in Islam they believe their
origins begin with Ishmail,
Isaac's first cousin.
So what's the meaning of this metaphor ?
Palestinians and Jews are actually related.
Family in fact.

But
 Family's never a guarantee for peace is it ?
(she laughs)

By the way Jesus left a footprint in the rock of the
 Mosque of the Ascension on the Mt. of Olives behind us.

Slides of the Mosque of the Ascension and Jesus footprint

Shosh
 He's a size nine with fallen arches.

-
 Why haven't the Israelis claimed it back, David ?
 You mean the Dome of the Rock ?

-
 Well, in 1967 after the 6 day war, Moshe Dayan, head of
 the army, decided that, because Jews can't go up there
 anyway, he might as well leave it in the hands of the
 Muslims.

And besides, he didn't particularly want to start World
 War III by provoking the entire Islamic world.

More slides of images of the Second Temple, artefacts,
 priestly robes, trumpets, . . . (from the Third Temple
 literature)

Shosh
(dismissing her)
 Very good, Olwyn.
(back to her story)
 When the Temple still stood.
(resigned)

Yes, Olwyn, at the time of Jesus, one man was allowed to
 go into the Holy of Holies.

-
 The High Priest.
 Only on Yom Kippur.

-
(turning calmly)
 That's right, Enid, the Day of Atonement.

Enid, do you mind if we talk about that when we go there
 tomorrow ?

-
 Well yes, Jews can go up there, Meredith.
(relieved)

Oh and thanks. That's where I got lost.
 The WAQF, allows anybody to go up there.

-
 Yes I can go there, too.

-
 Yes I am Jewish.

But for me it's not a problem if I walk around there
Because I'm not religious.

Not all Jews are the same.

They range from fundamentalist orthodox to reform.

That's how I was brought up.

As a reform Jew.

I had my Bat Mitzvah in the reform synagogue

That's the girls' version of the Bar Mitzvah

Something the Orthodox don't accept.

But today I'm a secular Jew.

I'm not religious.

Would you believe I was pelted with eggs once while
competing in a foot race.

We happened to run along the outskirts of a religious
neighbourhood.

The Orthodox Jews there objected to the fact that we
were wearing shorts and men and women were running
together.

They even covered the street with oil so that we would
slip.

I'm Jewish.

I feel myself very much part of the Jewish people.

But I don't worry about kosher food for example.

Whereas Observant Jews worry about it a great deal.

It makes travel extremely difficult for them.

Even Jesus and his disciples stayed predominantly in
those areas where they could be assured of kosher food.

That is, food, which according to the Book of
Deuteronomy, was clean and prepared in the correct way.

For example.

The big one.

You can't mix dairy foods with meat.

You can't eat fish without scales.

You can only eat animals with cloven hooves that chew
their cud.

So Camels are a no no.

They chew their cud but they have soft feet.

Pigs are a no no.

They have cloven hooves

But they don't chew their cud.

Kangaroos are a no no

They're not even mentioned in the Bible !

Didn't even make it on Noah's Ark.

Who remembers the story of Peter and the Roman general
Cornelius ?

Peter was in Jaffa, over on the coast, behind the
airport.

He was praying on the rooftop of Simon the Tanner's
house when he had a vision, an extraordinary vision.

A sheet lowered itself before his eyes

And on this sheet was all manner of unkosher food.

Peter was horrified because he had never eaten anything
unclean.

Don't forget, he was a devout Jew.
 He refused the offer.
 God sent the sheet down three times.
 But each time Peter refused the unclean food not
 understanding what this vision meant.
 The next day God sent him to Caesarea to convert
 Cornelius to the new faith of Christ.
 Cornelius was a Godfearer but not a Jew,
 Peter would never normally go to his house.
 But now he understood.

(flipping open her Bible)

"In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality
 But in every nation whoever fears him and works
 righteousness is accepted by him."

Until then you couldn't join the new faith of Jesus
 unless you were Jewish.
 Which meant you had to be circumcised...ouch!
 And keep the strict laws of Kashrut.
 But after the vision Peter could go to Caesarea no
 worries and

(Italian accent)

Eata Cornelius's mumma's salami
 He could eat da pizza with da pork and calamari
 The antipasta with da scampi and da agostino,

(Yiddish accent)

Forget the gefilte fish and chicken soup already.
 And for desert, now you can have the cassata after the
 bolognasi.

I know, it's complicated.

-
 But bear with me it will all start to make a bit more
 sense by the end.
 Meanwhile we have a long and full journey ahead of us.

-
 Who is Jewish ?
 Someone in our group ?

-
 Really ?
 Miriam's grandmother ?
 I didn't know there were any Welsh Jews.
 Although actually why not.
 I met a Scottish Jew in Rosh Pina last year.
 He ran little restaurant up there.
 I asked him how Jews got to Scotland.

Shosh

(Scottish accent)

Two hundred years ago a group of Lithuanian Jews set out
 from Lithuania for America on a ship.
 They crossed the Baltic.

Passed round the top of Denmark
 And set out across the North sea.
 They dropped anchor in Scotland
 And the Captain said.
 There you are you're in America.
 So they all got off
 And stayed.
 And now there are 2000 Scottish Jews.
 Or are they Jewish Scots.
 I don't know.

Shosh looks at her watch

Shosh
 (under her breath)
 Oh shit.

She quickly counts heads

Shosh
 Reverend is everyone here ?
 We really should move.
 -
 Good,
 Let's go down to Dominus Flavit,

Slides of interior/exterior of the church of Dominus Flavit

Shosh
 Where Jesus wept over Jerusalem.
 You see the church shaped like a tear drop ?
 -
 We'll make time for a prayer.

Shosh starts to move.

Shosh
 It's extremely steep here.
 Bend forward as if you're going to ski.
 (indicating wheel chair)
 I'll need a hand with the wheelchair.
 Gareth, David . . .
 Could you hold on to either side please,
 Just in case she takes off.
 (laughing)
 We'd hate to lose you, Enid.

Shosh is interrupted by one of the group

What ?
 -
 Who's missing ?
 -

Miriam ?
Who saw her last?

-
Slide of the Jewish Cemetery on the Mt. of Olives.

Shosh
Where is she ?

-
In the Jewish cemetery ?
(more to herself)
What's she doing there ?
Reverend could you please collect her on the way ?
We'll meet you down there.
Once again
Bend your knees and lean forward.
Skiing, right ?

We see Shosh walking strangely.

Shosh
(holding her water bottle up)
Oh but before we move on . . .
Bottles Out.
Don't forget.
A quick shluk please.

We see Shosh sipping drink and then struggling to cope with the incredibly steep slope and the unexpected weight of the wheelchair. Gareth and David are obviously pretty hopeless.

Shosh
Look Gareth. . . don't worry,
Why don't you just go on ahead.
Perhaps you can you help Joan with Olwyn
Lookout Joan !
Shit !
Sorry Meredith
We're veering off to the side.
Lookout Clarice
-
David, that's OK.
Really, it's better if I do it
Don't worry .
Thanks.
I'll manage by myself.
Believe me.
It's better this way.
No that's fine.

Shosh's mobile phone rings.

Shosh

Oh no !
 Bet that's the office.
 Not now Fariid !

Still struggling with the wheelchair Shosh has to ignore her mobile.

Blackout

Jewish religious music over

Slides of the steps leading up to the southern wall of what was once the Temple platform

Shosh
 Why are these steps especially important for you ?
 -
 Yes, they're the steps which once led into the Temple.
 Some have been reconstructed, but look..

She points to the ground.

Shosh
 These ones are original.
 They're two thousand years old !
 Built by Herod the Great.
 But there's another reason why they are important..

Let me tell you a story told to me by my archaeology lecturer, from the tour guiding course.,
 Professor Meir Ben-Dov,
 He was taking Neil Armstrong on a private tour of Jerusalem.
 Remember the first man on the moon ?
 He became a born again Christian.
 Everywhere they stopped Ben-Dov would say "this is possibly where the Last Supper happened,"
 Or "tradition has it that this is where Jesus might have been tried by Pontius Pilate"
 Or "we think He could have carried the cross along this route, or that route . . ."
 And finally Neil Armstrong said "isn't there some place you can say with absolute certainty "Jesus was here?"
 So Professor Ben Dov took him to this spot and said
 "These are the original steps which led into the Temple area and it is written in the Gospels that Jesus preached on the Temple steps.
 These are the Temple steps."
 And Neil Armstrong turned to my lecturer and do you know what he said ?

Shosh's phone rings.

She is really pissed off but doesn't want to miss the office.

Shosh
Sorry, I have to get this.

She breaks off and answers it turning away from them

Shosh
(in English, confidentially)
Fariid, I've been trying to ring you.
Do you know I've got a wheelchair ?
You know who's pushing it don't you.
How am I supposed to get up Masada ?
-
Fariid you promised me a full bus this time.
-
You what ?
Why does Danny take preference over me ?
-
But he can work right through the summer and you know
I'm leaving.
-
Yes that's right, next week, Fariid.
-
I told you this is my last trip.
-
Yes I did.
-
No I can't stay on for just one more group.
Even if it is 46 Americans.
I have other commitments in Australia.
-
What?
-
What do you mean we can't go to Baniyas ?
-
Nothing north of the Hula ?
Oh Great, that's all I need.
What'll we do instead ?
-
No I don't have time to listen to the news.
What happened ?
-
Israelis or Hizbollah ?
-
How many ?
-
Shosh, sighs, looks despairing.

Shosh
(matter of fact)
Oh Fariid- wait a minute-
You've got to speak to the hotel.

The guest refrigerator's broken down.
I have a diabetic and the insulin won't keep.

-
No- you deal with it.
I've already tried.

*She hangs up.
Then straight back to group*

Shosh
Neil Armstrong said:
"Being here on these steps is more important to me than
taking the first step on the moon."

Blackout

The choir sing "The Lord Is My Shepherd"

Slides of the walk from the Temple steps to the south-west corner of the platform with shots of the current excavations. A man dressed as King David is singing and playing a gold harp.

Shosh
This man is a Messianic Jew.
There are Jews who believe Jesus was the Messiah.
But they're not Christians.
Joseph is one of them.
He hails from Down Under.
Every day he comes here dressed as King David and busks
for a living.
He does requests.
Recognise this one ?

**Music of "King David" singing "Hinne Ma Tov U Ma
Nayim" bridges over**

Slides of the approach to the Western (Wailing) Wall.
We see a group going through the metal detectors and security
check. The Wall itself with Bar Mitzvah ceremonies

Shosh
Here we are at the famous Wailing Wall.
The holiest site in Judaism today.
Does anybody know why ?

Because of its proximity to where the Temple once stood.
Can you see the tip of the Dome of the Rock up there ?
And because the sages say that after the destruction,
God's presence, the Shkhenah, descended to this wall.

Shosh
(as Olwyn)

Why did they build the Wailing Wall in the Arab Quarter ?

Shosh
We're not in the Arab Quarter Olwyn.
And the wall was built much much earlier.
Actually we don't call it the Wailing Wall anymore.
That was only, when for hundreds of years, Jews were forbidden to enter Jerusalem and were only allowed to come to this wall once a year to mourn the destruction of the Temple.
Now it's simply called the Western Wall or "Kotel" in Hebrew.

Sounds of loud weeping

Shosh
You OK, Geoffrey ?

-
No that's alright, let him cry.

(back to group)

You're in luck today there are Bar Mitzvah ceremonies happening.

This is a coming of age ritual for 12 year old Jewish boys.

It celebrates their passage into adulthood.

Something like your Christian confirmation.

Jews come from all over the world to conduct Bar Mitzvah's here.

I'll give you time to go down to the Wall first and then answer any questions afterwards.

You can write a message to God and place it in one of the cracks in the stones.

Or if you like you can fax or even e-mail one when you return home.

Men and women are separated so that there are no distractions in prayer.

Oh and men have to wear a headcover.

We'll meet back here in 15 minutes.

Make sure you have something to drink.

And don't forget to use the toilets.

Shosh walks off stage.

**Hasidic music plays over the Bar Mitzvah ceremonies.
Women ululating.**

slides of groups praying and celebrating Bar Mitzvah's at the Western Wall. Elegantly dressed women lean over the barrier separating men from women and watch as their sons read the Torah. Other (Sephardi) women throw candies at their boys.

Men are given cardboard hats at the entrance to the men's section. Female tourists not appropriately dressed are given shawls and long skirts. Lots of photographs being taken.

The last slide is of the Western Wall and stays during interval. It contains the word:

INTERVAL

15 minutes later Shosh hurries back on stage concerned

Shosh
 What David ?
 -
 Miriam's gone where ?
 -
 You sure ?
 You actually saw her go up the ramp ?
 -
 When did she go ?
 -
 (to herself)
 Why does she keep doing this !
 (to the group)
 Folks, are the rest of you here ?

Shosh does a quick head count

Shosh
 Sorry, Joan I'll have to answer that later.
 It seems Miriam's gone on ahead.
 If we go now we might catch up with her.
 Perhaps I haven't stressed the importance of staying
 together as a group.
 Especially later in the narrow streets of the Old City.
 It's very easy to get lost.
 So no ducking into shops for souvenirs, please.
 We could suddenly turn a corner and you won't know where
 we've gone.
 Gareth and David are you OK with the wheelchair for a
 bit ?
 -
 I'll be there to help you with the ramp.

Religious Muslim music over

slides of the ramp going up to the Haram Esh-Sharif/Temple Mount, the El-Aksa Mosque, the steps to the Dome of the Rock

Shosh

This is probably the most beautiful Islamic shrine in the world.
It was constructed in the late 7th Century and has hardly changed since, I
largely because it was built on solid rock.
So it hasn't been affected by the many earthquakes that strike this region-
Usually a big one about every sixty years.
We're actually due for one any day now.

-
No no, don't laugh.
That isn't a joke.

Right, shoes off again everybody and please leave all cameras and bags here with me
Just as we did outside the El-Aksa Mosque.
I should get a good price for them in the souk.
Sorry- that was a joke.

Wander around for a few minutes inside and remember...
It's a very sensitive area-
No couples holding hands, please.

Oh and Morgan,
Here....

(hands them to him)

Don't forget the vouchers. . .
(calling out to the group)
And don't forget to keep an eye out for Miriam.

Shosh spots one of the plain clothed Muslim guards walking past.

Shosh

(struggling to make herself understood in English with some Arabic phrases and a lot of hand gestures)

Excuse me., mitasfe..
I've lost one of my group
Fi saih nakes
Maikud

-
She's wearing a cardigan . . .

-
Sweater,
Hiyye btilbas jerzi
Cut down the middle,
Buttons. . .

-
(shocked)
Shu ?

-
She tried to do WHAT ?

-
(*incredulous*)
Hiyye saadat el haram a -sharif !
Onto the rock itself !

-
La.
She wouldn't do a thing like that.
Miriam !

-
Ween hiyye ?

-
Which gate ? Ay baab ?

-
Is she OK ? Keef hiyye ?

-
Shukran
Shukran katir

-
Yes, thank you.
Aywa. shukran

-
Yes, I know. Ana baaraf.

-
Yes, I'm terribly sorry. Ana mitasfe

-
Tayebb Tayebb, OK.

-
It won't happen again.

Shosh quickly punches numbers on her mobile.

Shosh
(*into phone*)
Jamil ?

-
Hi, it's Shosh
How are you ?
Busy?

-
Oh that's good.
Listen, I've lost one.

-
I know.
But this time I've lost one.
Is there anyone free to scout around for me ?

-
Woman about my age, blue cardigan, yellow dress, mousey
hair.

-
A kind of sweater
It'll be obvious
Nobody else is wearing one

Too hot !.
She may be a bit upset.

-
I'm on the Haram Esh Sharif.
She would have left about. . .
(checks her watch)

20 minutes ago.
No more than that.
At least half an hour ago.
Through Bab en-Nazir

-
Look, we're heading over that way anyway.
You've got my number ?

-
Yes, correct.
So call me when you have something and I'll come and get her. OK ?

-
Thanks, Jamil, I really appreciate it.
Speak to you soon, enshala

She raises her hand skywards, sees the group approaching, and puts her phone away.

Shosh
No sign of Miriam ?

-
Then let's not worry about her now.
She's got a card for the hotel.
She'll eventually find her way back there.
We'll just continue without her.
I'm sure she'll be alright.
Are there any questions about what you saw inside ?

Slides of the interior of the Dome of the Rock.

Shosh
They say that niche contains some hairs from Mohammed's beard.

-
Underneath the rock ?

-
This is supposed to be the place where souls meet before they go to heaven.

How are you going with the shoes?

We're running a bit late so as soon as you're ready we'll make our way off the platform to the Crusader Church of St. Anne.

It's considered to be, since the Byzantine period the site of the home of Joachim and Anne the parents of the Virgin Mary.

Now this will definitely be one of the highlights of the choir's tour.

St. Anne's has, in my opinion, the most extraordinary acoustics of any church in the Holy Land.

Shosh

(as Olwyn)

Ooh aye, can we sing there ?

Shosh

Yes, Olwyn that's something I've really been looking forward to.

(giving them the hurry-up)

Perhaps you should think about which hymn as we're walking.

Shosh's phone rings.

Shosh

(turning away from the group)

Yes?

(long pause)

Aha, uh huh.

-

Uh huh.

-

Uh huh.

-

The East Jerusalem Hard Rock Cafe ?

Where's that ?

-

Next to Abu Ahmed's.

Yeah. I know.

-

Who's with her ?

-

Could you ask him to stay until I get there?

Is she OK ?

-

Good. I'll be there in a tick.

Thank you, thank you very much, Jamil.

-

Oh yes, I'll get the group to come to the lobby to look at the photos before dinner.

6.30 OK ?

-

Thanks, Jamil.

Yeah, just leave the envelope at reception.

(back to the group)

Good news everyone!

Miriam's over in the Arab quarter having a coffee.
I'll just go and collect her and we'll meet you at
St. Anne's.

Morgan, you remember the way, don't you ?...

-
Yes, then straight ahead until you get to the Via
Dolorosa, turn right and St. Anne's is 15 meters on your
left.

If you could take them into the church we shouldn't be
long.

Oh and have a toilet stop there.

The toilets are clean.

They're on the right as you come in.

And in case we're a little bit longer just take them
across to the Bethesda Pool.

John, Chapter 5.

Shosh

(as Olwyn)

Ooh aye! I remember that!

The pool of the miracle cure.

I've been waiting to go there.

Shosh

(as Enid)

"'Rise, take up your bed , and walk.' And at once the
man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked."

Blackout.

Arabic music. Sounds of the Souk

Flash slides of the Arab Quarter of the Old City and the
Jerusalem Hard Rock Cafe. The images indicate someone moving
quickly through the crowds.

Shosh comes into the Cafe and sits opposite Miriam.

Shosh

(calmly, getting her breath back)

Thanks Omar, I'll look after her now.

Shosh hands him some money.

Shosh

Hi Miriam,

Thought we'd lost you.

You OK ?

No answer.

Shosh

The others have gone on to St. Anne's.

If we hurry we can catch the hymn.

No answer.

Shosh
(*gently*)

Miriam ?

Is something wrong ?

What were you trying to do up there ?

-

But you can't just go onto the Rock to pray.

You can't go onto the rock.

-

You wanted a direct line to God to ask Him what ?

(*gently but despairingly*)

Who Miriam ? - sorry I can't hear you.

It's noisy in here.

-

He's coming back. . .

Who's coming back, the Messiah ?

-

Then who ?

-

Miriam.

Do you know what could have happened today ?

You could have caused a serious incident.

Someone could have got hurt.

You could have been hurt.

(*no response*)

I still don't understand why you did it.

(*still no response*)

Miriam, people have been killed up there for less than what you did.

It's such a sensitive area.

It's a tinderbox..

Do you know, a few years ago there was a rumour that some Orthodox Jews wanted to go up there to lay the foundation stone for the next temple.

The Moslems feared a take over attempt.

There was a riot and 19 Palestinians were killed.

Shosh tries a lighter tack

Shosh

2000 years ago, a Roman soldier urinated into the Temple grounds from his guard post above and probably started the Great Jewish War.

Seriously, Miriam, you have to be careful around here.

It's so, so sensitive.

How did you even get over the barrier ?

-

(*comforting*)

It's OK.

Have a good cry.

-
Tell me what's the matter.
We've got all the time in the world.
(glances anxiously at her watch)
Take a few deep breaths.
(taking deep breaths herself)
That's it.
Now, do you want to tell me ?

Pause.

Shosh
Great ! congratulations.
That's wonderful !
-
Why, what's wrong ?
-
Do you know where he's gone ?
-
How many months are you ?
-
Look you probably need to talk to someone.
I get a counsellor to come to the hotel if you like.
-
No- no one else will know about it.
-
No, I promise.

Now, I have to go back to the group.
Do you want to come with me ?
Or do you want to go back to the hotel ?
-
If you're sure you're up to it.
-
We can just say you . . got a bit lost.
-
I said I wouldn't tell anyone.
No. not even Reverend Thomas.
OK ?

Blackout.

Classical music fades up.
Beethoven's 9th ("Ode to Joy") over

slides of waiting buses on the street below Lion's gate

Music fades as

Shosh
(to Abed in Hebrew)

Yes, we're early, Abed.
 St. Anne's was shut.
 Don't ask me why.
 They're really disappointed.
 So we have to give them a Tchupå
 (thinks)

I know-
 Let's go to the Panorama restaurant.

Slides of the view from the restaurant on the Haas
 Promenade overlooking the Old City

Shosh

(to the group taking the mike)

OK folks, I reckon we need a little a treat, don't
 you ?
 Let's go to a wonderful spot for lunch with yet
 another spectacular view over the Old City
 This time from the south.
 A restaurant with the cleanest toilets in Israel.
 There's even piped music and a suggestion box for
 improvements.
 Not that there's much room for that.

Slides of the Holyland model, the Shrine of the Book
 and Yad Vashem.

Shosh

(rattling on)

After lunch we'll go to West Jerusalem and do the
 model of the Second Temple period in the Holyland
 Hotel to give you a perspective of Jerusalem at the
 time of Jesus.
 Then on to the Israel Museum where we'll pop into
 the Shrine of the book which houses a magnificent
 exhibition of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the oldest
 known version of the book of Isaiah.
 Then we've got Yad Vashem - Israel's most important
 Memorial to the victims of the Holocaust.
 And because St,Anne's was closed, we now have a bit
 of extra time so I think we could end the day
 going back there for that special chance to

by
 sing.

I'll ring to make sure they've re-opened.
 How do you feel about that ?

The bus swerves. Shosh is thrown off balance again.

Shosh

Sorry, Joan, sorry, did I do it again ?
 Maybe you should try and keep both feet under the
 seat.

(to Abed in Hebrew)

Now what ?

-
 Look Abed, these people are not Americans, they're British, and this is a package tour.
 It's pointless going to the gold factory.

-
 Yes, I know we've got a bit of extra time.
 Believe me it will be more profitable for us if we give them what they want and get a better tip at the end.
 And they want St. Anne's.

-
 They WANT St. Anne's.

-
 I know its right out of our way.

-
 I know it means going all the way back to the Old City.

-
 I know we'll probably go a bit over time.

-
 I know it's difficult to park the bus there.
 But trust me.
 It will be to our advantage in the end.
(looking round)
 Why aren't we moving ?
 Open the door I'll ask this soldier.
(in Hebrew)
 What's happening ?

-
 Ah shit !!!
(to the group)
 Looks like we'll be sitting here for a few minutes, folks.
 Happens now and again.
 There's a suspicious object up ahead.
 We'll have to wait for the sappers to come and investigate.

-
 Well, Meredith, to determine whether it's a bomb, they either send in a robot to shoot it Or they'll hook it up to something high and drop it They've got to clear the area just in case.

-
 Don't worry this happens a lot.
 99 times out of 100 it's just a bag or somebody's shopping left behind.
 Just a fact of life around here.
 Better safe than sorry.
 Why don't we take this opportunity to sing another hymn.
 How about "He Is Lord" Morgan ?
 Miriam are you up to leading us in ?

Choir starts singing.

After a couple of lines there's a huge explosion.

Blackout.

Music of Bustan

Slide of Shosh's flat at night

Shosh on phone to Debbie.

Shosh

Is she going to have a scar ?

-

She goes to bed with sun glasses on !?

Does it look that bad ?

-

How come they don't get rid of it, if it's bitten someone before ?

-

My day ?

Brilliant.

Two of them have severe diahorrea.

Had to rush off the bus and find a toilet with them.

Luckily, we were stuck in the middle of a traffic jam because of a bomb.

No casualties

But we ended the day early.

Everyone was a bit frazzled.

You know, the more I do this job, the more I realise I'm guiding our very own Disneyland.

We've got a Wonderland, a Fantasyland, Adventureland, Frontierland, Old Testamentland, New Testamentland, the Jesus Boatride, the Masada Cable Car, Ghost rides through tunnels.....

Israel's just one big religious theme park.

And I don't know how they do it but I can hardly keep up with the itinerary.

Not to mention pushing that wheelchair, which is killing my back.

But I must say I love the singing.

They're a great choir !

-

Oh by the way, what's the name again of that counsellor you go to ?

Someone in the group needs help.

-

She's pregnant, not married and the bloke's done a runner,

And can you believe it... she doesn't want the baby !

And I am desperate to be a mother and it's too fucking late.

No ! Not going to talk about it now... into the too hard basket.

Maybe I'll just stay here and share your kids with you. Is that OK ?

-
Do you think you'll make it to the demo tomorrow ?

-
Starting from Zion Square at 4.30

-
It's early... you could bring Aaron with you. Judy's bringing Boaz and Avdat.

-
We're walking to the President's house. I guess there'll be some speakers. Try to come... this one is really important. Not enough of us lefties come out any more. What do we need East Jerusalem for anyway. It's Palestinian, for godsake !

-
I'll be coming from Hezekiah's tunnel.

-
I know the water's deep
But the Reverend's done it before and thinks it's a must.

-
I'll have a change of clothes with me.

-
Should only take half an hour
Although with this lot...
Maybe we better not make a meeting point and I'll just catch up with you guys on the march somehow.

Blackout

Sounds of water gushing and people wading through.

Slides of people entering Hezekiah's tunnel

Shosh enters holding a dimly lit torch.

Shosh

Let's just stop for a minute.

Careful with your candles.

Can you hear me at the back, Morgan ?

Shh.. everyone for a minute, please.

This tunnel was built 2700 years ago.

And is the oldest man made construction you will experience on your trip.

Try to imagine The Assyrian army descending on Jerusalem
"like wolves on the fold" Chronicles 2/32

Slides of reliefs of Assyrian Battles

Shosh

And the great urgency with which King Hezekiah's engineers hacked through this solid rock to safeguard the city's water supply.

The tunnel runs half a kilometre underground starting from the water source, the Gihon Spring, where we just entered.

Remember that above us was the City of Jerusalem in those days.

You see this was the problem:

The water source was outside the city walls and therefore vulnerable to attack.

No city would survive for very long if it's water supply was cut.

So Hezekiah built the tunnel and covered over the spring so that the enemy couldn't find it.

His men dug a large pool inside the city walls and planned for the water to run underground to it.

I guess to speed the process, they started digging the tunnel from either end.

The miracle is that the two parties actually met up.

(to Olwyn)

Yes, yes Olwyn,

We come out at the Pool of Siloam.

-

Yes, quite right.

That's where Jesus cured the blind man.

Thank you Olwyn.

So to finish the story:

The engineers probably followed natural cracks in the limestone.

But as the two sides drew nearer they relied on the sound of their tools hacking at the rock from either direction.

If you look at the walls you can actually see the tool marks that show the excavators were coming from our end at this point.

Can you see the chisel marks?

Here Olwyn put your hand up on the wall you can feel them.

Shosh

(as Olwyn)

Ooh aye I didn't do this last time.

Shosh

Later you will feel the marks going the other way.

A Hebrew inscription was found in the tunnel describing the meeting of the two teams of diggers.

Unfortunately that inscription was removed by the Ottomans in the last century.
It's now in the Istanbul museum.
OK if we're all ready let's go on.

**Sounds of sloshing through water continue.
The choir starts singing a hymn.**

Shosh moves slowly across the stage.

Shosh
(as Olwyn)
The water's getting deep isn't it, dear.

Shosh
Don't worry, Olwyn, that's the syphon effect.
It goes up and down.
Like the water in the S-bend of a toilet.
The Arabs say that beneath the pool lives a dragon that swallows the waters.
And when he falls asleep they run again.
Are you managing OK ?

The singing falters and stops.

Shosh
(as Olwyn)
I think there's a problem back there.
Gareth's candle's gone out.
So has Meredith's.
They sound a bit frightened.
I think they're a long way back.
Maybe we should wait for them.
Though I don't know why they need candles.
I don't.

Shosh
I'll go back and close up the gap or we'll be in here forever.
Let me get past you Olwyn.
Squeeze over to the side please.
Why didn't they bring torches !
I knew candles would be useless.

Shosh
(as Olwyn)
Shouldn't we all go back out ?

Shosh
No Olwyn it's quicker if we continue.
Only takes another 20 minutes from here
And it's interesting to do it in the dark, don't you agree.

Shosh
 (as Olwyn)
 Ooh, aye.

Shosh
 Anyway Abed and Enid are waiting for us at the other end.

Shosh's torch goes out. The stage is plunged into total darkness.

Shosh
 Oh shit !
 Bloody batteries !
 I hate doing this in the dark !
 Wait here please Olwyn.
 I'll be back in a couple of minutes.

Shosh
 (as Olwyn)
 Oh don't worry about me, dear.
 But you're sure the dragon won't fall asleep.
 I mean the water won't come up any higher will it ?
 I'm not very tall.
 None of us are.

Shosh
 Yes, I know, you're Welsh.

Blackout

Arabic music from the shops.

Slides of the Via Dolorosa at the First and Second Stations, and the Exit from the Western Wall Tunnel. Images of the Antonia Fortress.

Shosh
 Remember, we are in the Old City ..
 So keep an eye on your wallets..
 This street is particularly bad for pick pockets.
 We're standing in front of what was once the Antonia Fortress, built by Herod the Great- in honour of his good friend Mark Antony- of Antony and Cleopatra fame- To protect the Temple Mount and the city--which was at it's most vulnerable here in the north.
 It marks the beginning of the Via Dolorosa, or Way of Sorrows, the route taken by Christ to the place of crucifixion,
 And has been followed by pilgrims since the Crusader period.
 As the Antonia Fortress is one of the possible locations

of Jesus' trial by Pontius Pilate,
This area has become known as the First Station of the
Cross.

Today it is an Arab school.
We are in the Arab Quarter.

-
Meredith please don't buy that now.
We haven't got time for shopping.
And anyway those bottles of Holy Air, Holy Sand and Holy
Water are a bit of a rip off.
Just fill up a plastic bottle with tap water from the
hotel when we get back.
Most of it comes from the Sea of Galilee anyway.

Opposite us is the Second Station, where Jesus was
stripped of his clothes, mocked and scourged by the
Roman soldiers until the muscles on his back were
exposed.

Slides from The Marian Sunday Missal of Jesus being scourged
at the pillar and carrying His Cross, and of Pilate washing
his hands.

Shosh

A crown of thorns was placed on His head.
And He was lead out to Calvary.
By the way, this gate next to us here is the exit point
of that infamous tunnel you might remember seeing on the
news some months ago.
It was opened in September 1996 causing an eruption of
violence in which 75 people were killed- mostly
Palestinians.
It's the tunnel which runs underground along the entire
Western Wall from the plaza of the Wailing wall.
The Muslim Authorities were concerned that the Israelis
were trying to gain illegal underground access to the
Dome of the Rock.
I was bodily carried off here by police, in a
demonstration against the opening
It was a time of unrest in Jesus' day
And the mood isn't any different now.
Let's continue.

Blackout.

Arabic music continues over.

Slides of the road to the Third Station.

Shosh

OK everybody, gather round.
I hope you're drinking
It's already very hot again today.

If you look at the ground you can see the original massive Roman paving stones. The Israelis found them when they were laying sewerage pipes some years ago. They were lifted up from three metres below and re-laid onto the present street level. You have to remember that if we want to walk at the level of 2000 years ago we have to go underground- because of the accumulation of rubble over the centuries.

-
Ah, those Israeli flags Gareth ?
That's the controversial home of Ariel Sharon, a right wing Israeli politician who bought this property in the heart of the Arab quarter to highlight the right of Jews to live anywhere in Israel.
It was a provocative act.

-
No, no, in fact he's never actually taken up residence there.

Slides from a Catholic Missal of the Third Station where Jesus falls.

Shosh

We've arrived at the spot which traditionally marks the Third Station where Jesus fell for the first time. Remember His back was raw from the scourging.

We hear the sound of Geoffrey wailing

Shosh

And I think, as it's so hot, we should have our lunch break here, at the Third Station Restaurant.

(calling to the manager in Hebrew)

Only 12 this time Mufeed and they're British so nothing fancy. Just a sec.

(to the group)

Do you feel like a proper meal or a snack ?

(shrugs to the manager, in Hebrew)

No harm in trying.

12 falafel sandwiches, no spices,

Thanks, Mufeed. .

Blackout

Cut to inside restaurant

Slides of a crowded Arab Quarter restaurant

Restaurant noises, clatter of cutlery, Arabic music

Shosh

(responding to a question)

Interesting point, Geoffrey.

But I don't actually know if they ate falafel in Jesus time.

What I can tell you about that time however, is that it was fraught with uncertainty - especially for the authorities.

-

How many Turkish coffees.?..how many teas.?..it's real tea, in a tea pot.

Shosh counts hands

Shosh

Twelve teas thanks Mufeed.

(back to her spiel)

So, this region was a sort of backwater,

One of the frontiers of the Roman Empire.

And the Romans were keen to keep a tight control over it.

Revolution was in the air.

The Jews were desperate for a leader who could free them from the Roman yoke.

When Jesus didn't deliver the goods and free the Jewish people, the mob was sorely disappointed and turned against Him.

It was a messianic time.

And more than one pretender appeared on the scene..

Anyone attracting crowds was regarded with great suspicion.

The authorities here were afraid of Rome.

Afraid of losing their jobs if they failed to quell any trouble.

And there was plenty of trouble.

You probably don't know that Pontius Pilate was actually exiled to the sulphur mines in Spain in 36 A.D. for failing to quell a riot.

And in 39 A.D Herod Antipas, the man who beheaded John the Baptist, was also banished for allowing a riot to happen.

It wasn't just the administrators appointed by Rome who were anxious.

The Jewish leaders, the Sanhedrin, were also afraid of disturbances.

Jesus might have been a blasphemer in their eyes for calling Himself the Son of God, but more importantly he stirred up the crowds.

And this could lose the Sanhedrin their jobs

If not their heads.

(notices there's a problem in the group)

Something the matter Olwyn ?

Shosh

(as Olwyn)

There's no features on the face.
 I just opened it to have a feel.
 I didn't want the smooth Jesus.
 It's not right without a proper face.
 The man said it cost more money with the features.

Shosh
 Where did you buy it ?

Shosh
 (as Olwyn)
 At the First Station.
 David took me into the shop.
 I forget a present for my niece Gwen.
 She married a Catholic.
 She'd never forgive me if I didn't bring her anything
 from the Holy Land.

Shosh
 OK, Olwyn.
 It's alright.
 It's not far from here.
 There won't be any problem exchanging it.
 Probably just a mistake.

-
 Thanks David, if you wouldn't mind taking her back we'll
 continue.

-
 On second thoughts, maybe Morgan should go with you.
 Otherwise you mightn't find us again.
 If that's OK with you, Morgan ?

We'll push on with the Stations slowly.
 It shouldn't take you long to catch up.
 (calling out to Olwyn)
 Don't worry Olwyn, they'll swap it for you.
 (to the group)
 Let's go everyone.
 And try to stick together.
 We don't want to lose anyone, do we !

Shosh takes the wheelchair again and starts pushing.

Slides of the Fourth Station from the Missal and also of the spot itself.

Shosh
 Do you see the relief on the arch over the entrance to
 the Armenian Church of Our Lady Of The Spasm ?
 This marks the Fourth Station where Jesus meets His
 Mother.

At a spot like this we can reflect on the anguish that must have overwhelmed Mary when she saw her son in so much pain.

Shosh reacts to Miriam collapsing. And goes straight down to her.

Shosh

It's alright everybody, don't panic.
 It's probably the heat.
 No, leave her there for a minute.
 Stand back a little.
 Don't crowd her.
 Geoffrey can you keep her head shaded from the sun.
 Thank you.
 Just wait a minute before you get up, Miriam.
 You've fainted.
 Here wet your lips with my water.
 How's that ?
 OK now ?
 Do you want to go back to the restaurant and sit down for a bit ?
 -
 No ?
 We can easily put you in a cab to the hotel.
 It's a very hot day.
 Alright, if you're sure.
 Perhaps Joan can take your arm for a bit.

Miriam is vertical again.

Shosh

Shouldn't you take that cardigan off ?
 Looks like it needs a bit of a wash now, anyway.
 I'll do it for you tonight and bring it back tomorrow..
 Could you put it in my backpack for me please Gareth ?
 Oh and do mind giving me a hand when we turn the corner at the Fifth Station ?
 It's going to be quite steep.
 -
 Oh really ? No that's OK then.
 No, don't aggravate it.
 There's nothing worse than a bad back.
 Let's lead the way Enid.

Shosh

(as Enid whispering to Shosh)

You know my dear, we're all surprised Miriam even came on the trip.
 She hasn't been to church for weeks.
 Don't know why.
 Didn't like to ask.

Shosh

Meredith can you wait here at the corner and make sure every one turns right. .

Slides of the Via Dolorosa 5th, and 6th Stations

Arabic music continues.

Shosh is now walking backwards and pulling the wheelchair up the steps with great difficulty. Breathing hard, she stops in front of the 6th Station and waits for the group to catch up.

Shosh
(responding in Arabic to a vendor)
Yes it's very hot.
No we don't have time to come into your air-conditioned shop today.
We're already behind schedule.
(to the group)
Everyone here ?
How are you all going ?
It's a steep climb to Calvary.

Joan starts wiping the back of Shosh's neck with a wet one (tissue)

Shosh
Ah thanks, Joan, that's lovely and cool.
Could you do my face too ?

*Joan wipes Shosh's face.
Shosh starts laughing uncontrollably.*

She slumps onto the steps while hanging onto the wheels of the chair to prevent it from escaping down the alleyway.

Shosh
(still laughing)
Sorry about that.
It's just that Joan...
You see, this is the 6th Station of the Cross where Veronica wipes the sweat from Jesus face with a cloth.

Slide from the Missal of the 6th Station

Shosh
(still giggling)
This station is not mentioned in the New Testament. The word "Veronica" is made up of "Vera" and "Ikon" which mean "true likeness."
Tradition has it that the image of Jesus face was miraculously transferred onto the cloth.
Like the shroud of Turin.

Maybe you should check that wet one Joan.
Let's go. . .

Blackout.

Slides of the exterior and interior of the Holy Sepulchre including Franciscan, Greek, Armenian and Coptic monks with incense. Images of the inside of the dome . Light beams slashing across the sepulchre itself...

Music of Gregorian chanting ("Enigma")

Smell of frankincense

Slides of the steps leading up to Calvary inside the Holy Sepulchre

Shosh

(tired and mechanically)

We are inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at the foot of what is left of the hill of Calvary. These steps take you up to the very spot where Jesus was crucified

Six Christian communities, none of them Protestant, share responsibility for the church.

Each fiercely guards its own turf and rights.

For the sake of peace, the doors are opened and locked by Muslims daily.

It has had many reconstructions but was originally built in the 4th Century by Queen Helena.

She was the mother of the Emperor Constantine who converted the whole Roman Empire to Christianity.

When Helena came to Jerusalem, she learned from Bishop

Mecharius that the Christian community had always secretly believed Jesus was crucified and buried here.

In the 2nd Century Hadrian had erected a Temple of Venus, the Roman goddess of Love, on this spot to remove all memory of Christ.

Helena demolished the Temple of Venus and underneath found not only Christ's burial chamber and a water

cistern containing the crown of thorns, but also the Hill of Calvary

Like millions of pilgrims over the ages you will be able to touch the actual rock where the cross stood.

(to Enid)

Gareth and David will have to help you up the steps of Calvary, Enid.

They're extremely steep and it's quite dark.

Please be careful all of you.

Olwyn, you hold onto Joan.

Don't worry I'll put your Jesus in my backpack.

Joan, is your foot alright now ?

Good.

Miriam, if you're not feeling well why don't you wait here next to the anointing stone until we finish up there.

-

Well, if you're sure...
There'll be too many people for prayers.
So we'll pray later in the quiet of the Garden Tomb.
It's the more authentic place for Protestants anyway.
The 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th Stations are up here.
Follow me.

Blackout on stage

Religious/Gregorian music builds towards a crescendo.

slides of the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th Stations intercut with images from the Missal. Graphic slides of Jesus on the Cross.

Shosh is in silhouette, with her back to the audience. She has removed her clothes.

Shosh
(as Miriam, in a soft whisper which is amplified above the music)

Jesus...Jesus...Jesus...
You can't die
I love you . . .
I love you Jesus
You can't leave me
I need you
Jesus
Jesus
Oh the pain.
Let me take your pain
I can take your pain. . .
Oh God !
Come back.
Don't leave me.

She sinks to her knees and cries out sharply. Laying her face on the floor, she begins to sob..

As people try to reach her she fends them off and runs towards the steps and falls.

Blackout on stage

The music reaches a crescendo as:

A series of freeze frame slides from Miriam's point of view of her falling down the steps of Calvary.

It occurs like an event happening in slow motion.
 Intercut with images of the bleeding Christ on the Cross,
 Roman eagles, and Roman soldiers,
 Nazi eagles and Nazi soldiers /Hitler/ Swastika/
 Holocaust Victims heaped in rows for burial/gas chambers/
 Palestinians being beaten

Blackout/Silence

Calm, serene music plays on Shosh's stereo

Exterior slides of Shosh's flat at night.

Shosh

(on the phone)

She's going back to Wales on the weekend.
 Her brother's coming over.
 It's amazing she didn't miscarry .
 She didn't even break anything.
 That was a hell of a fall.

-
 Yeah, a miracle !
 And a miracle we weren't lynched !
 Just picture it !
 There's this naked woman moaning on the floor of the
 Holy Sepulchre.
 I'm thinking she's possibly got a broken neck.
 The rest of the group are hysterical.
 For some reason my bloody mobile's not working.
 I can't even ring an ambulance.
 And suddenly we're surrounded by these black hooded
 monks trying to get her out of there.

-
 But hang on, hang on .
 Listen to this ..
 At Hadassah Hospital she told the doctors she was
 miscarrying Jesus' baby.

(Debbie misunderstands)

No not the baby Jesus,
 Jesus's baby !
 Yeah, she thinks she's Mary Magdalene.
 And she's carrying His child.

Slides of various paintings/images of Mary Magdalene and
 Astarte worship over:

No, not the Mother of Jesus.
 One of the other Marys.
 Magdalene.
 Didn't they teach you this stuff at Scopus ?

-
 In the New Testament she's a whore.
 But now they think she may have been the leader of a
 large Jewish community by the Kinneret.

-
 At Migdal.
 Some say she may even have been a temple priestess.

-
 Why not ?
 There must have been goddess worship then.
 Why else would the Bible have to keep outlawing it all
 the time ?

(pause, sudden thought, excited)

Ah, ah, that reminds me..
 I forgot to tell you yesterday.
 Guess who's coming to Israel ?

-
 Starhawk.
 She's giving a two day workshop on finding the Jewish
 Goddess within.
 Boy that'll stir a few people.

-
 End of July.
 I won't be here to do it but why don't you go ?

-
 Of course it's New Agey.
 But it'd be a hoot.
 Go on Debbie, be a devil.

-
 God I hope Miriam's OK

-
 Well, they've transferred her over to Kfar Shaul.

Slides of King David, Elijah, John The Baptist, Satan,
 the Virgin Mary, Jesus

She's been diagnosed as having Jerusalem Syndrome.
 It usually doesn't last long.
 A few days maybe.
 They often snap out of it when someone from home turns
 up.
 That's why we called her brother over.

-
 It's a psychotic episode.
 Her doctor called it "An inexplicable intoxication with
 holiness."
 They think they're a character from the Bible.
 They hear voices.
 They do strange things-
 Like climbing onto the Dome of the Rock.
 They have a special message from God.
 Miriam wasn't the only Magdalene.

The hospital's full of John the Baptists. Elijahs. King Davids.
 Would you believe, I met an Archangel Gabriel who told me he could save Israel with sound waves that zapped enemy planes-
 like the sound waves from Joshua's trumpets destroyed the walls of Jericho.
 What is it about Jerusalem that does this to people ?
 Maybe we've all got a touch of the Syndrome ?
 Just being here.
 It's the place itself that does it.
 The settlers gaze over the land promised by God to Abraham and are filled with ecstasy
 Maybe Abraham had it.
 Maybe Moses
 John the Baptist, Elijah.
 They all heard voices.
 Crazy, the lot of them.
 Anyway, I'm out of here.
 Back to sanity and crystal healing in Byron Bay.
 Paul and I are going to build a pole house in the bush and set up a permaculture farm-
 our own Garden of Eden.

Blackout

Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings"

Slides of Exterior/Interior of Kfar Shul Psychiatric Hospital
No people are seen. Images of biblical figures such as John the Baptist, Mary Magdalene, Elijah...

Shosh reappears in Miriam's dress

Shosh
 (as Miriam - Welsh accent)
 I saw Him.
 I tell you I did.
 You must believe it, Shoshan
 He is risen.
 I came early,
 While it was still dark
 The stone had been taken away from the tomb.
 I stood weeping outside,
 And as I wept I stood to look into it.
 And I saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had lain.
 One at the head and one at the feet.
 And they said to me "Woman Why Are you Weeping ?"
 And I said to them "Because they have taken away my Lord
 And I do not know where they have lain him"
 And as I said this I turned round and saw Jesus standing

But I did not know it was that it was Jesus
 And Jesus said to me
 "Woman why are you weeping ?
 Whom do you seek' ?
 Supposing Him to be the gardener I said to Him
 "Sir if you have carried Him away
 Tell me where you have laid Him
 And Jesus said to me
 "Mary",
 And I said to Him
 "Rabbi"
 And Jesus said to me
 "Do not hold me for I have not yet ascended to the
 Father, but go to my brethren and say to them
 I am ascending to my Father and your Father
 to my God and your God."
 And I went and said to the disciples,
 "I have seen the Lord."
 And I told them what He had said.
 But Peter and the other Apostles just say it's women's
 fantasies.
 Fantasies ?
 Was His death a fantasy ?
 I saw Him die.
 I was there.
 I wept at his feet.
 I stroked his feet with my hair.
 My body ached for his touch.
 I licked his wounds.
 His blood ran down my outstretched arms.
 Why should He not appear to me ?
 He loved me.
 And I love Him
 He is risen.
 He told me to tell you.
 And I have done so.

Shosh
 (as Shosh)
 Miriam, Miriam.,
 It's all right.
 You're brother's here from Wales.
 Everything's going to be OK.

Blackout.

Music from Bustan over:

slides of a bus travelling down the highway from Jerusalem to
Jericho,
Bedouin camps in the wadis, camels, Jewish settlements, the
desert
Looking back, the Mount of Olives in the distance

Back on the Bus

Shosh
(to the group)

If you look back up the hill over this side of the bus you can see where we stood on Mt. Scopus and had our group photo taken.

I'd just like to take this opportunity to thank you for the lovely remarks you've made on my photo and share one or two of them with you. . . I won't mention names
"Susan, I will always remember you. You are modern Israel to me."

"Maybe we can't preach to you but at least we can love you. . ."

"Your sweet spirit has blessed our lives these few precious days. Good luck to you in your future. You are Israel to me."

"I want so much to thank you for the great impact you have made on my life. What a great lady you are."

"Thank you, thank you soooooo much for your patience with us, for sharing your knowledge. It has been a pleasure to know you. Continue to have a good life."

"Thank you for your gift of self that has contributed to our experience"

"Faith Love admiration, appreciation and anticipation of a long friendship and frequent chances to be together."

So that was Jerusalem.
From now on it's all down hill.
Oh look.

See that sign on your right-
See how it says "Sea Level"
Put on your goggles and masks everybody
We're going under water.
In fact we're going 250m below sea level.
To Jericho.

That's our next stop.
The oldest- and lowest- city in the world.
By the way, the other day somebody asked me for some statistics
I've brought a Jerusalem Report with some recent figures.

(quoting)

On the rise: population of Israel 5.62 million up 2.7%.
On a visit: 2.215 million tourists. That includes you.
On the roads: 550 killed We're doing fine..aren't we
Abed ?!
On the delivery table: 117,000 babies.
On the rocks: 8780 divorces,
On honeymoon: 35,975 nuptials.
On the scales: (oh this is interesting)

Daily intake: 3242 calories, that's up 160 calories since 1995.

How on earth did they work that out ?

We are a clever race !

On the pension: (this'll interest you)

528,600 over 65s, that's 9.4 % of the population.

On the ball: 913 million shekels spent on lotteries:

(tut tutting)

That's an awful lot of people hoping for miracles.

On the record: 81% of the population are Jews

15% Muslim

and 4 % Others.

(looking down at them)

I guess Christians must fit in there somewhere-

Along with the Druze, Bedouin, Circassians

Achmedians, Bahai's, and Catholics. . .

And the- "Don't Nos".

-Oh, by the way, I forgot to tell you..

Some good news.

Miriam's fine.

Her brother Alan arrived last night.

I've organised a flight for them to Wales on Wednesday.

He asked me to thank you very much for being so kind

and just wished he could take back all those lovely

bunches of flowers on the plane.

Shoah takes out a letter from her vest

Shosh

Miriam has given me a note to read to you.

(she reads)

"Dear Shoshan, Morgan, Joan, and all my dear friends in the choir !

I want to apologise for the trouble I've caused you these last few days. I'm very disappointed I won't

be continuing. I so much wanted to be at the Sea of Galilee. That will have to wait until next time.

I've decided to return home and sort a few things out. It will come as a shock when I tell you that I

am three months pregnant. The father of the child does not want any involvement.

These past few weeks have been so difficult. I don't know how I had the strength to come on this

trip. I even contemplated ending it all.

But Jesus has comforted me. He has given me the strength to return and embrace my situation. The

rapture of being alive is all that's important. How wonderful yet sad that this short life is all we

have, But eternity exists in the moment.

Jesus is risen- not up there in heaven but within us. We must ascend to the heaven inside, to that

source from which we all came.

I hope that some of you may find it in your hearts to support me in my decision to have my baby on my

own. My love and prayers go with you all."

Miriam

Shosh slowly folds the note back into its envelope and hands it to the Reverend.

Shosh
Would you like to keep this, Morgan ?

Slides of Jericho, Sachne pools, Sea of Galilee
Golan Heights, Mt. Hermon, Banias, Nazareth, Caesarea

Shosh
(to the group)

I hope you all remembered not to pack your swimming costumes in your suitcases
Because after Jericho we'll have lunch and a refreshing dip at the pools of Sachne.

-
Well Geoffrey you'll just have to skinny dip.

-
Ah no, Abed says you can borrow his.

Thanks Abed.

Saved from the sight of Geoffrey au naturel.

From Sachne we'll continue to the Sea of Galilee
And stay at the Holiday Inn.

A great choice because the hotel is right on the Hot Springs.

Jesus performed many miracle cures by the Sea of Galilee
Invalids had already gathered here for cures at the Hot Springs

And as guests, you are allowed free entry.

-
Yes, Enid,

There is wheelchair access.

Towels and a bathrobe are included.

It's also close to the jetty where the Holy Land Jesus Boat will pick us up for our sail across the Sea of Galilee.

We'll stop in the middle for reflection on a few of the miracles associated with water and perhaps have time for a hymn or two-

And a prayer for Miriam, Morgan ?

Then we raise anchor and sail for Capernaum on the northern shore where Jesus lived at the home of Peter's mother-in-law for three years-

Now there's a miracle.

Tomorrow it's off to the Golan Heights and the border with Syria, possibly on the very road that Saul took when blinded by the light on his way to Damascus.
Fortunately, there's been a cease-fire and things have quietened down again in the north.

So we'll be able to go to Banias on the Lebanese border
where Jesus gave Peter the keys to the Kingdom of
Heaven.

After that we will follow in the footsteps of Jesus to
Nazareth, where He grew up and learned His father's
trade.

-
No he wasn't a carpenter, Olwyn
Not enough wood remember.
He probably worked in some aspect of the building trade.
But in stone.
My lecturer for Christianity called him the hard hat
from woop woop.
He did, I promise you. It's true.
You know why woop woop ?
Nazareth is not recorded in any Old Testament documents.
Not in Joshua, not in the Talmud
It was an unimportant village.
with a population of about- 200.

From there we'll take taxis up nearby Mt. Tabor to
remember Christ's Transfiguration and enjoy the
magnificent view of the Jezreel valley below-
The scene of many Old Testament stories...
Including Megiddo, one of Solomon's principal cities,
Best known in the Christian tradition as Armageddon,
The setting for the last great battle on earth before
the Second Coming.
And last but not least,
A brief stop on the way back to the airport,
To visit Casarea where Peter converted Cornelius and the
Christian message first went out into the world.
And it is from the Mediterranean coast that you too will
return to Wales
From whence you came.
And where we will say goodbye.
Or better still, "lehittract"
Which means in Hebrew- "See you again everybody."
Have a safe trip home.

Shosh raises her hand in a goodbye gesture

Sounds of applause

Shosh raises both hands and quickly stems the applause

Shosh
Before you all go,
I'd just like to say
(takes a deep breath, sincerely)
This has been a wonderful journey for me.
We have all been through a lot
And I'm sure. . . you'll all agree . . .
We've learned a great deal from our experience together.

I hope you will always remember this trip-
As one of the highlights of your life.
And speaking of memories ...
Abed and I have a small partnership to help you keep
them alive.
We're selling Israeli Folklore tapes for 5 pounds each
Or the CD for 7.
We also have a new 90 minute video of the all the places
we've been to including ones we just couldn't fit.
That tape also now has an extra half hour of Petra in
Jordan.
Finally, there's the box of one hundred slides with
accompanying commentary and music on cassette.
So you can have your own "professional" slide night
And share your pilgrimage with family and friends.
Unfortunately, the bus's video player is out of action
at the moment
So you'll just have to take us on trust for that one
But we can let you hear the music.
You might recognise the first track.
It won the 1983 Eurovision Song Contest.
Hit it Abed.

"Hallelujah" Plays

*Shosh tries to dance the Hora to it - unsuccessfully.
Music and dance continue over*

Slides of pilgrims getting off a bus at Ben Gurion
Luggage is unloaded, people waving good-bye, chaos
inside the airport interspersed with slides of credits
for the show.
