

# EGYPT ODYSSEY

March 30<sup>th</sup> – April 14<sup>th</sup> 2019

with Gillian Schoemaker and Wolfgang Held

'Concerning Egypt, I will now speak at length, because nowhere in the world are there to be seen so many marvels, nowhere in the whole world is there so much of such unspeakable greatness'.

Herodotus – 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.

In the twenty-five centuries since this was written, nothing has diminished or qualified this statement.

In Egypt, the ancient stones speak with clear and resonant voices, but not in a language of today.

The art and architecture was sacred art, dedicated wholly to religion, to knowledge – to Initiation.

Come with us to wonder at the ancient civilization of Egypt – its pyramids, its temples and tombs, its cult of the threshold between the living and the dead, and its all-pervasive sense of mystery.

We will also consider the many cultural layers since those far-distant time – Islamic, Coptic and into the present.

We will journey together to uncover some of the secrets, and their relevance for us today.

Our life together as a group will aid our experiences to be absorbed in a healthy way.

We will turn to the mysteries of death and rebirth – depicted in Pyramids, temples and tombs.

We will enter into discussion and study together with Wolfgang, Rabab, our Egyptian guide, and Gillian.

When appropriate Gillian will be leading us in eurythmy.

How can we understand the bewildering company of Gods?

And what is their message for us today? What can we learn from ancient Egypt?

We have arranged a program where we hope there is a healthy breathing between activity and relaxation – time to be social and time for contemplation and solitude.

We will be a group of maximum 16 participants and two leaders.

First we'll visit the farm and workshops of the anthroposophically inspired community of Sekem, not far from Cairo, which has created a fertile oasis in the desert. This is a perfect way to recover from jet-lag in a peaceful rural setting. Then we will visit the pyramids of the early kingdom in Giza and Saqqara.

Onwards to Abydos and Luxor – their mighty temples, and the tombs of the Valley of the Kings.

Part of our Odyssey will be on board a beautiful traditional sailing Dahabiya, chartered for our exclusive use.

Not to be missed on our return to Cairo is our visit to the impressive Coptic churches and museum.

## ITINERARY

**Friday 29<sup>th</sup>** – depart for Cairo. Overnight on the airplane.

**Saturday March 30<sup>th</sup>** – Day 1 – Late morning arrival in Cairo where we will be met by a representative of the Sekem community, which is about 50 minutes drive away. [www.sekem.com](http://www.sekem.com)

Lunch and dinner, then overnight in the lovely guesthouse.



**Day 2 Sunday 31<sup>st</sup>** – All day guided visit of Sekem. We will see the many activities which take place in this extraordinary and inspiring community inspired by anthroposophy. In the evening we hope to be able to meet with Helmy Abouleish, the son of the founder. Full board at Sekem.

Sekem Guesthouse

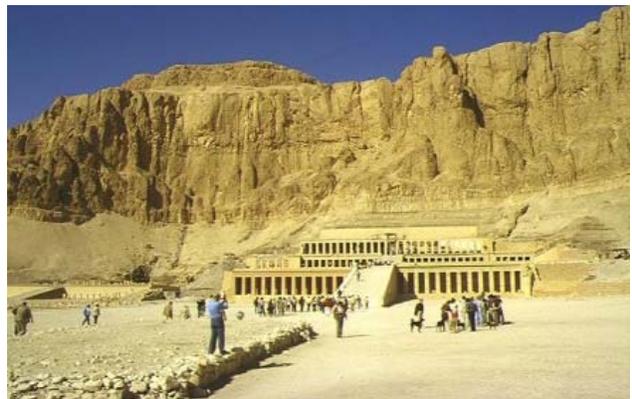
**Day 3 Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April** – Breakfast at 6 am, departure at 7 am for our visit to Saqqara, the world's oldest free-standing structure where we will meet Rahab, our guide in Lower Egypt. Arrival at 9.30 am, this magnificent complex includes Old Kingdom mastaba tombs; in the Djoser area, more mastabas, Teti's Pyramid, Museum. Lunch at 1.15 pm, 3 pm departure for Dashur, visiting till 5 pm.

\*Dinner, then o/night at the Pyramids View Inn. [pyramidsviewinn.com](http://pyramidsviewinn.com)

**Day 4 Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup>** – An early start for our visit to the great Pyramid and the Sphinx. Nothing can prepare us for their monumental immensity, complexity and grandeur! We will also see the wonderfully restored Solar barque. Lunch. 2 pm departure for the airport to take the 4.40pm flight to Luxor in Upper Egypt. Then we will drive to the Maritim Jolie resort on Kings island in the Nile. It has several restaurants, swimming pools etc. Dinner at the hotel.

**Day 5 Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup>** – In the morning we will visit the vast temple complex of Karnak, linked to the Temple of Luxor by an avenue of sphinxes. We will also visit the well-organized Luxor Museum. Lunch at Sindbad or Sofra Restaurant or Oasis cafe. Visit the Mortuary temple of Ramses III with initiation chamber. If there's time, we may visit the Workers' settlement Deir el Medinah. Dinner at the hotel. Evening discussions.

**Day 6 Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>** – We travel to the solemn Valley of the Kings. We will enter into two or three of the tombs - we won't know which ones till we get there. Then we'll visit the monumental Temple built by the female Pharaoh Hatshepsut. Lunch at Hotel Marsam with Bruno Sandkuhler. If there's time and energy, we will visit the tombs of the Nobles after lunch. Dinner at the hotel.



**Day 7 Friday 5<sup>th</sup>** – Free day. \*Lunch on your own.

In the evening we will visit the magnificent floodlit temple of Amon. Dinner at the hotel.

**Day 8 Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>** – 7AM start for the 4 hour drive to Abydos with its temple dedicated to Osiris built by Pharaoh Seti 1, with exquisitely refined and delicate reliefs and still visible touches of vibrant color. Legend tells us that here the head of Osiris was buried. Behind the temple is the ancient Osirion, one of the most powerful, mysterious, and resonant places of all Egypt. It was most sacred to the ancient Pharaohs. We will stay overnight at the House of Life Hotel, a Dutch-run holistic healing center. All meals at the hotel. [www.houseoflifeabydos.com](http://www.houseoflifeabydos.com)

**Day 9 Sunday 7<sup>th</sup>** – This morning we set off on our long way back south via the lovely temple of Hathor, goddess of love and laughter, at Dendera. Then we make our way to Esna about 33 miles south of Luxor, to board the Dahabiya, our floating home for the next days. We settle in to our cabins and meet the crew who serve us lunch on board. A walk through the thriving little town brings us to the Ptolemaic Temple of Khnum with its lotus leaf pillars and a zodiac inscribed upon the ceiling. Then we set sail, arriving at El Kabs where we will moor for the night. Full board on the dahibiya; every evening there will be presentations and discussions with Wolfgang and Gillian. [www.nilesailing.com](http://www.nilesailing.com)



**Day 10 Monday 8<sup>th</sup>** – On the dahibiya, we will begin every morning with some eurythmy before breakfast. We will visit the tombs of El Kabs before we sail southwards towards Edfu. Lunch on board. In the late afternoon, we will visit the best preserved temple of the ancient world, consecrated to Horus of Behedety 'the many-colored', which includes Horus' role as Creator, Sun-God and King of Egypt. The battle with Set is just one aspect in Edfu, occupying only about one fifth of the reliefs and inscriptions. We moor for the night at Fowersi island. Dinner on board, with time to relax and watch the riverbank where life unfolds much as it did three thousand years ago.

**Day 11 Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>** – We set sail towards Silseleh and the quarries there.

**Day 12 Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>** – We will visit the quarries after breakfast, then we will take a leisurely walk along past the Stellaes, meeting the boat further down. We sail on towards the Temple of Kom

Ombo, and visit after lunch. It is consecrated to the duo of Sobek, the crocodile (Death as a cosmic function) and Horus the Elder (return to the Source as a cosmic function). Beautifully sited on a bend of the Nile, Kom Ombo was in its day a healing temple and hospital.

Lunch and dinner on board. In the evening we arrive at Aswan, verdant and green, where we moor for the night on the riverbank. The Nile here is dotted with islands, and large-sailed feluccas darting like birds among them.

**Day 13 Thursday 11<sup>th</sup>** - We continue sailing on towards Aswan, arriving about midday.

We drive to the ancient granite quarry where we can see the last and unfinished obelisk still in place. Afterwards we'll drive a short distance to board a small boat and sail to Philae Temple, consecrated to Isis in her role of Mother of Horus. Philae is on an island in the middle of the Nile (now it's a lake backed up behind the British 'Low Dam' built in 1904.) Quintessentially feminine, it is one of the most beautiful and moving sites in all of Egypt. Here the transition of the ancient Egypt doctrine of Immortality segues almost seamlessly into Christianity in front of our eyes. For lunch we will seek out a restaurant in the bazaar, favored by locals. Rest of the day free. We return to the boat in the early evening to have our last meal on board our floating home.

**Day 14 Friday 12<sup>th</sup>** 7am - we board the coach for the airport and the 8.55am flight to Cairo. On arrival at 9.25 we will be met by Rabab and make our way to visit the astonishing Cairo Museum, one of the treasure-houses of the world, with its four thousand years of Egyptian masterpieces, including the priceless Tutankhamen galleries, the Akhenaton room and the greatest selection of incomparable Old Kingdom sculpture anywhere in the world. The Royal Mummy room is not included, extra fee. This museum visit sums up and recapitulates our entire two week experience. Lunch. At this point, Wolfgang will leave us to return to Switzerland. We will be staying in the center of the city, at Hotel Longchamps in the upscale and (relatively!) quiet neighborhood of Zamelek, an island in the Nile.

\*Dinner near the hotel. [www.hotellongchamps.com](http://www.hotellongchamps.com)

**Day 15 Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>** - Today we will visit Old Cairo - the early Christian Coptic church and the Coptic museum. Lunch in the Citadel View Restaurant in the beautiful Azhar Park where we can share our experiences of the Egypt Odyssey. Then we make our way to Khan el Khalili - the bazaar with its medieval bustling, winding alleys, stalls and little shops. Shopping for souvenirs! Farewell dinner near the hotel.

**Day 16 Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>** - 7am - departure for the airport and the flight home

## Tour Leaders –

Wolfgang Held – age 53. He studied mathematics and Waldorf education. He worked for many years in the Mathematical Astronomical Section of the Goetheanum. He is the author of the 'Sternkalender' and has written books about Astronomy, Anthroposophy and life issues. Wolfgang Held is responsible for Communication at the Goetheanum. He has guided trips to Greece, Egypt, Finland and solar eclipses around the world (Mongolia, China, Easter Island, USA, Turkey).

Books published in English: 'The Qualities of the Numbers', 'The Rhythm of the Week', 'Eclipses 2005-2017'

Rabab Bhagat was born in Braunschweig, Germany, 1962. When she was 5, her family settled in Egypt. She went to the German School in Cairo, and graduated to become a student of Egyptology in Cairo. She works as a freelance tour-guide since 1992 for big travel agencies such as TUI. Egyptian history has always been her favorite subject. She is very proud to be able to represent her country in a good way.

Gillian Schoemaker, age 69. She is a eurythmist, living and working in the Camphill School, Pennsylvania. She has been leading Odyssey journeys to the mystery places of Egypt, Greece, Ireland, Italy and her native Scotland for the past fifteen years.

Dietmar Kreuer is a retired Waldorf teacher and tour-operator, organizing travels to Egypt since 1997, due to the friendship with the founder of SEKEM, Ibrahim Abouleish. [www.sekem-reisen.de](http://www.sekem-reisen.de)

Approximate cost: the price in dollars and British pounds is current for June 2018.

If the exchange rate changes we will adjust the price accordingly.

10 people — 3,370 €, \$3,806	£3,218 pp dbl-room,	3,850 €, \$4,350,	£3,680 pp sgl-room
12 people — 3,270 €, \$3,695,	£3,125 pp dbl-room,	3,750 €, \$4,236,	£3,580 pp sgl-room
14 people — 3,170 €, \$3,580,	£3,026 pp dbl-room,	3,650 €, \$4,125,	£3,487 pp sgl-room
16 people — 2,970 €, \$3,355,	£2,510 pp dbl-room,	3,550 €, \$4,010,	£3,000 pp sgl-room

## The price includes:

- Accommodation in twin-bedded rooms in comfortable 3\* hotels; the guest house at the Sekem community, and on the Dahabiya - if you are traveling alone we will assign you a room-mate of the same sex, subject to availability.

Single rooms are available, and possibly also on the dahibiya if the Odyssey is not full to capacity.

- All meals except dinner on day 3, lunch on day 7 and dinner on day 13

- Services of Wolfgang Held, Rahab and local guides, tips to site guards and restaurants.

- All internal transport – by air, private minibus and boat.

**Not included:**

- International travel
- Visa, obtainable on arrival at the airport - \$25
- Extra visits to sites not mentioned in the itinerary.
- Tips of a personal nature.

Recommended reading:

Egyptian Myths and Mysteries - Rudolf Steiner GA 106

History of Ancient Egypt: An Introduction - Erik Hornung

The Sacred Mysteries of Egypt - Frank Teichmann

Temple of the Cosmos - Jeremy Naydler.

The Traveler's Key to Ancient Egypt - John Anthony West. A concise introduction to the gods and the sites. Out of print but may be found on Amazon.

Lighter reading:

Initiation - Elisabeth Haich

Herbek, volumes 1 and 2 - Lucy Lamy

Winged Pharaoh, The Eye of Horus - Joan Grant

The Egyptian - Mika Waltari

Average March/April maximum and minimum temperatures - Cairo : 54/78°F; Luxor : 52/85°F with very low humidity. Early mornings and evenings can be really quite chilly - pack accordingly!

Please note - the tour can be strenuous, involving some early starts, long drives, and being outside for an extended period each day - there are steps (sometimes many) slopes and galleries with low ceilings, and dusty uneven desert terrain to negotiate, therefore unsuitable for those with limited mobility or respiratory problems. Please inquire! Let us know if you have any health issues we should know about.

The Egypt Odyssey is organized for us by Dietmar Kreuer of the reputable SEKEM-Reisen, tour-operator from Ueberlingen, Lake Constance, Germany.

Reservations should be made as soon as possible.

Your deposit of \$1300 payable to GILLIAN SCHOEMAKER will secure your place, with 'Odyssey' on the memo line. Should you have to cancel - if we cannot fill your place, this non-refundable deposit will cover your part of the shared costs of administration and organization.

Cancellations: Because costs arising from cancellation must be carried by the individuals concerned, you are advised to take out travel insurance which includes cancellation. No responsibility can be ascribed to Gillian or Sekem-Reisen. We are, essentially, a group of friends traveling together.

The balance will be due November 5th 2015.

Later, we will send you further suggestions, and a list of what to bring.

In the event that either of the leaders is unable to come, which has never happened so far of course every attempt to find a substitute will be made.

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Regarding safety, please see the fervent post-script below from my friend John Anthony West, who has led many tours in Egypt:

### TOURISM IN EGYPT TODAY

It truly may be everyone's last chance to see Egypt with tourism still way below normal. Everyone understands the attraction of an uncrowded Egypt, even those who've never been there.

But the question still on most people's minds, is of course the question of safety.

Is it safe? Virtually everybody asks me that, so if that question is on your mind, you have plenty of company.

It is safe ...and the fact is that for tourists, **it has been safe all along** ... though no one would ever suspect that, reading or listening to the incessant hyperventilated scaremongering of our Western print and media pressstitutes.

It has been safe for tourists ever since (and even in the middle of) the 2011 Revolution that brought down Mubarak!. We know. We were there for it! And over the course of three years of major political protest and intermittent violence, **no one has been after us**, no one!

Now, with the Military firmly in charge, it seems to me likely to stay that way. At least for the foreseeable future.

The Muslimbecile Brotherhood has been declared a "Terrorist Organization" (which it was); its leadership has been jailed and awaits trial. Its power has been broken. And the military is busy making sure it does not re-group. .

Notwithstanding pious admonitions and hand-wringings from Hillary Clinton and assorted Democracy-boosting, hypocritical Western windbags of both Right and Left (as if what we have here in Amerika is "Democracy"! ) the Egyptian people are some 80% behind the military. Indeed, the Military only marched in when 30 million Egyptians took to the streets demanding an end to Muslimbecile attempts to Talibanize Egypt.

And once in power, as the history of the world vividly demonstrates, there has never been a Military that ruled in kid gloves, much less kid combat boots.

Some of you may remember me predicting this as the most likely post-Revolution scenario: i.e., that the Military would be deciding the route Egypt would take, and that effectively, the Egyptians being the Egyptians, would find a way to muddle through without self-destructing.

As I write this, both my Egyptian friends and American/European friends living in or traveling to Egypt report back that tourism is still way down, it is safe, and we are, as tourists, and as always, warmly welcomed. But the longer it stays peaceful, the sooner tourism will recover and the crowds will return in force. This is great for the Egyptian economy, of course (and I do not begrudge them that!), but it's hardly conducive to experiencing Egypt the way I like to experience it. And given the experience of the last three almost-tourist-free post-Revolution years, I've now been well-spoiled!

In other words, if you're contemplating a trip, you should do whatever you can to go!

~John Anthony West