

EGYPT ODYSSEY

March 23rd – April 9th 2024

with Gillian Schoemaker and Alan Thewless

'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 – 5th 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, Gillian and Rabab, our Egyptian guide,

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 March 22nd- depart for Cairo. Overnight on the airplane.

Saturday 23rd – Day 1 - Late morning arrival in Cairo where we will be met by our tour manager . We will be transported to the anthroposophically inspired Sekem Farm Community, which is about 50 minutes drive away. www.sekem.com We'll have a brief first meeting before bed. Full board and overnight in the lovely guesthouse.



Day 2 Sunday 24th – 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 will meet with Helmy Abouleish, the son of the founder.

Sekem Guesthouse

Day 3 Monday 25th – Early breakfast. We'll meet Rahab, our local guide. Then departure for our visit to Saqqara, the world's oldest free-standing structure where we will Arrival at 9.30 am, this magnificent complex includes Old Kingdom mastaba tombs; in the Djoser area, more mastabas, Teti's Pyramid, Museum.

Lunch in a simple village 'baladi' restaurant.

Dinner, and o/night at Flamenco Golden Tulip hotel in the center of the city, in the upscale and (relatively!) quiet neighborhood of Zamelek, an island in the Nile.

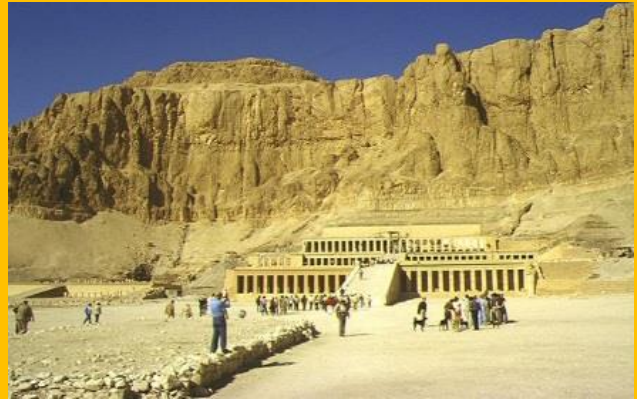
Day 4 Tuesday 26th – An early start for our visit to the Pyramids and the Sphinx. Nothing can prepare us for their monumental immensity, complexity and grandeur! Entry into the Pyramid of Cheops is optional. Lunch. We'll visit a papyrus workshop in the afternoon before returning to the hotel.

Day 5 Wednesday 27th – We will check out of the hotel, and return to Giza to visit the impressive New Giza Museum. At the moment the galleries are not yet open to the public, but we will see what is in the atriums.

Afternoon departure for the airport for the 16.45 pm flight to Luxor in Upper Egypt. Then we will drive to the Maritime Jolie resort on Kings island in the Nile. It has several restaurants, swimming pools etc. In the evening we will visit the magnificent floodlit temple of Amon.

* Dinner at the hotel

Day 6 Thursday 28th – 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. Hopefully we will meet with Bruno Sandkuhler, an anthroposophic one-time tour guide and a friend of Gillian's. If there's time and energy, we will visit Deir el Medina, the village of the workers. * Dinner at the hotel.



Day 7 Friday 29th – . In the morning we will visit the vast temple complex of Karnak, linked to the Temple of Luxor by an avenue of sphinxes. The tiny sanctuary Of Sekhmet is not to be missed, one of the only site where the votive statue is still in its original place. Lunch at Sofra Restaurant. Then we'll visit the well-organized Luxor Museum. Visit the Mortuary temple of Ramses III with initiation chamber. *Dinner at the hotel. Evening discussions.

Day 8 Saturday 30th – Optional dawn balloon ride over the Valley of the Kings. The morning is free. After lunch we will visit the initiation temple of Medinet Habu.

Day 9 Sunday 31st Easter Day! - Early 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

Day 10 Monday 1st April – This morning we set off on the long way back south via the lovely temple of Hathor, goddess of love and laughter, at Dendera. We'll stop for lunch in Luxor before continuing to Esna about 33 miles, where we'll board our dahabiya, our floating home for the next 5 nights. 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 Alan and Gillian.



Day 11 Tuesday 2nd - 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 12 Wednesday 3rd - We set sail towards Silseleh and the quarries there.

Day 13 Thursday 4th - 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

Day 14 Friday 5th - We continue sailing on towards Aswan. The Nile here is green and delightful, dotted with islands, and large-sailed feluccas darting like birds among them.

Day 15 Saturday 6th - 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. Lunch, then we'll enjoy sailing among the islands to a Nubian village. Tonight we stay at the Basma Hotel, beautifully situated on the banks of the Nile.

Day 16 Sunday 7th – Early departure for the 8.00 am flight to Cairo. On arrival, we will be met by Rabab. 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. Then we'll return to the Golden Tulip Hotel. *Dinner

Day 17 Monday 8th – Today we 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. This museum visit sums up and recapitulates our entire two-week experience. Then we make our way to Khan el Khalili – the rather touristy bazaar with its medieval bustling, winding alleys, stalls and little shops. We'll have lunch here in a traditional local restaurant. Then - shopping for souvenirs! Farewell dinner at the hotel.

Day 18 Tuesday 9th – Departure for the airport and the flight home

Tour Leaders –

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 – born in Scotland, she is a eurythmist, living and working in Camphill School, and Carah Medical Clinic Pennsylvania, as teacher and therapist. She is adjunct faculty of the Association for Anthroposophic Psychology, the Therapeutic Eurythmy Training in North America and core faculty for the Camphill Academy. Gillian is interested in the relationship between the spirituality of human beings and landscape, and how the evolution of consciousness is revealed in art and architecture. She has been organizing and leading Odyssey Journeys since 2002 in Egypt, Ireland, Greece and Scotland, her native country. This will be the 5th Egypt Odyssey.

Alan Thewless was born in Sheffield, England and moved to the USA in 2002. He carries a deep involvement in education as a healing art and has worked as a Waldorf Teacher and Special Educator for nearly 30 years. In the USA he completed studies in Anthroposophically extended

psychology (Psychosophy) and Music Therapy. He has been a student of Astrosophy for over 30 years and regularly writes, gives courses and lectures on this subject, and on education, internationally. Since 2016 he has been author of the Holy Nights Journal, a pathway of contemplation and journaling through each of the Holy Nights of Christmas. He is a lyre maker and also project archivist for the Eckersley Shakespeare trust. He is on the adjunct faculty of the Association for Anthroposophic Psychology

Gillian Schoemaker. 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 21 years.

The price is current for October 2023. If the exchange rate changes we will adjust the price accordingly.

16 people — \$5775, approximately. If fewer people sign up we will have increase the price accordingly.

Included -

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.

All meals except 4 dinners

Services of Alan, 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

4 dinners

Visits to sites not mentioned in the itinerary.

Entry into the Pyramid of Cheops

Balloon ride in Luxor

Tips of a personal nature - allow about \$275 Egypt has a tipping/baksheesh culture.

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

Sema Tawy - Bruno Sandkuhler

Lighter reading :

Initiation - Elisabeth Haich

Winged Pharaoh, The Eye of Horus - Joan Grant

The Egyptian - Mika Waltari

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

Please note - You must be in good physical and mental health - 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 very 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 dietary or health issues we should know about.

Reservations should be made as soon as possible.

Your deposit of \$1660 payable to Gillian Schoemaker will secure your place, with 'Egypt Odyssey' on the memo line as soon as possible, please. It is high season and we need to secure accommodation and flights on small planes.

Insurance : 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 and Alan. We are, essentially, a group of friends traveling together. 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.

The final balance will be due in mid-February.

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

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

Gillian Schoemaker

1784 Fairview Road, Glenmoore PA 19343

610 455 2040

gillianschoemaker@gmail.com