

REGISTRATION AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

## ENTERING INTO SILENCE

A Sufi walking retreat in the Moroccan desert

with

Karim Noverraz and Elmer Koole

FEBRUARY 23 - MARCH 3, 2020



**This spiritual journey is a joint project of *Conscience Soufie* and *Agence Désert et Montagne***

# REGISTRATION AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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# REGISTRATION AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

## CONTACTS

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### For further information and enquiries about the retreat

Karim and Elmer will gladly answer your questions on: [sufipilgrimage@gmail.com](mailto:sufipilgrimage@gmail.com)

# REGISTRATION AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

## REGISTRATION & PAYMENT

Please download the registration form and follow the instructions therein.

1. As soon as the form and your initial payment have been received, we will confirm your reservation by email.
2. At the time of paying the next instalment, please also provide a copy of your passport and a copy of your travel insurance – see relevant section.
3. The total fee should be paid by January 17, 2020

Cancellation policy: the conditions for cancelling, fixed by the “Agence Désert & Montagne”, are as follows:

- 40 to 31 days before the event: 50% of the total fee
- 30 to 26 days before the event: 75% of the total fee
- From 25 days before the event: 100% of the total fee

Any cancellation request must be made in writing, specifying the reason for cancelling. We ask you to get a travel insurance that includes cancellation.

## COST

**Cost of the retreat: € 1100 per person.**

- Student discounts are available at € 100 per student from 18 to 25 years old
- Some bursaries are available for those on a low income – please apply on [sufipilgrimage@gmail.com](mailto:sufipilgrimage@gmail.com)

The price includes:

- Collection from (day 1) and transfer to (day 10) the airport or the bus stop of Ouarzazate
- 3 nights in a double room at the three star Dar Daif guest house, 6 nights in a communal tent in the desert
- All food from the evening meal of day 1 to breakfast of day 10. Free mineral water available throughout
- Retreat facilitation, desert guide, drivers, camel drivers, cook, camels
- Equipment: communal tents, mattresses, WC tent, shower tent, cooking tent, other necessary equipment

This price does not include:

- Travel costs to and from Ouarzazate
- Mandatory travel insurance, including cancellation, rescue and repatriation
- Unforeseen expenses due to an interruption or a modification of the programme, for instance due to a prolonged sandstorm

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- Any additional options – see below

## Additional options

The following additional options can be ordered from the time of registering

- A single room at the three star Dar Daïf guest house for the 3 nights of the retreat can be booked for an extra € 80
- An individual igloo tent for sleeping in the desert can be booked for € 90
- A camel for riding in the desert with the camel driver can be booked for € 210
- A very warm (-12 to -17°C ) sleeping bag for the desert, with a pillow and a warm sleeping bag liner, can be booked for € 50. Here is the model for rent:  
<http://www.snugpak.com/outdoor/sleeping-bags/sleeper-expedition>
- A room at the Dar Daïf guest house for extra nights before or after the retreat can be booked for € 52 per person per night. This tariff includes breakfast and an evening meal

## TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- **Valid passport** required. In addition, please keep a photocopy of the main pages with you at all times
- **Travel insurance** including cancellation, repatriation and rescue is required. On registering, you will be asked to provide a copy of your insurance contract. Keep one photocopy with you during the retreat
- **Waterproof pouch** for your travel and personal documents
- **Vaccination:** none required. However, it is recommended to have tetanus and polio vaccinations

## HEALTH

You must be in reasonably good health and fit. It is recommended that you prepare yourself for the walking.

## SAFETY

Desert camping has some inherent dangers. The trek guide and her team are very well trained and have professional expertise to avoid and respond to dangers. Participants are asked not to take risks and to always listen to and comply with the instructions given by the trek guide and her team. Risk-taking can be a distraction from the deeper purpose of this retreat. We trust you are willing to help make this trip as safe as possible for yourself and the group.

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## YOUR TRAVEL

### International travel connections to and from Ouarzazate:

There are not many flights to and from Ouarzazate and they are not conveniently scheduled for the retreat. Most participants will prefer to fly to Marrakech and then catch a bus to Ouarzazate. In addition, the flights to Ouarzazate are relatively expensive while those to Marrakech are cheaper.

The national bus company is called CTM and there are several stations in Marrakech – see <http://www.ctm.ma/en>

### Pick-up and Drop-off points in Ouarzazate:

The Dar Daïf guest house will pick you up and drop you off at the CTM bus station or at the Ouarzazate airport. Please communicate your arrival and departure dates and times to the guest house.

## DAR DAÏF - GUEST HOUSE IN OUARZAZATE



<https://www.dardaif.ma/>

<https://www.facebook.com/dardaif/>

You will be accommodated in a double room unless you have booked a private single room as an optional extra – see section *Additional Options*. Accommodation is included in the total price of the retreat.

## WEATHER CONDITIONS IN THE DESERT

The south of Morocco has a Saharan climate, characterized by large temperature variations between day and night. In February it will be cold at night with temperatures around 0° Celsius. During the day, it will usually be sunny with temperatures between 12° and 28° Celsius. Check the weather forecast on:

<https://www.accuweather.com/en/ma/ouarzazate/245772/weather-forecast/245772>

Sandstorms are a potential hazard – it is therefore necessary to bring glasses to protect your eyes – for instance ski goggles.

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## INDIVIDUAL EQUIPMENT

In order to prepare for your journey, here is the list of personal equipment to take with you.

**Please note:** You will be requested to leave your cameras and phones in Dar Daif. During the retreat, our trek guide, Zineb will have a phone with her for emergency purposes. Elmer will take pictures for the group.

### Travel bags

For the desert:

- Large, flexible and robust travel bag, which can be loaded on the roof of vehicles and on camels. The full bag must not exceed 12 kilo.
- Day backpack: for clothes and small equipment (windproof jacket, water bottle, suncream and sunglasses, snacks, binoculars. It is better to have a day bag pack that is not too small and with straps and a comfortable waist belt, even if you don't want to overload it. Be aware that carrying several kilo all day long is a significant effort. However, it is possible to let the "assistance" camel carry it if you are very tired.

To remain at the guest house during the trek:

- Any other bag or suitcase with anything you do not take with you to the desert.

### Clothing

- Fleece jacket – or a pullover
- Waterproof and windproof light jacket for use during the day. Rain cape or poncho, if you do not have a waterproof and windproof jacket
- Warm anorak or down jacket for evening and early morning wear
- 2 pairs of light and loose cotton trousers. You are kindly requested not to wear shorts or dresses as they do not comply with local customs
- Warm tracksuit
- 2 or 3 cotton shirts with long sleeves to prevent sunburn
- Comfortable underwear and T-shirts
- 4 or 5 pairs of good quality socks – trekking socks. Poor quality socks can be the cause of sore feet, even for those who are used to walking. Avoid ribbed material
- Sun hat, cap or a turban
- Large cotton scarf
- Swimsuit for the hammam (Turkish bath) in the guest house

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## Shoes

- VERY IMPORTANT: Lightweight walking shoes, preferably ankle height. These must have been used several times before your departure so that they are well broken in:



- Comfortable walking sandals. If you are going to buy them, look for a thick sole and select one or two sizes larger than usual to prevent your toes from hitting a stone or a branch. Wear them with thick socks the first few days to protect the feet from irritation caused by dust and sand
- Light sport shoes as a backup to your other shoes or sandals, in case your feet are painful. Avoid sport shoes with synthetic mesh fabric because sand penetrates them.

## Miscellaneous

- Good quality sunglasses with a rigid case – preferably a wrap-around model.
- Led headlamp with spare batteries. This is an essential item
- Water bottle of up to 2 litres. Screw caps are preferable. Please be informed that plastic water bottles will be distributed to everyone every morning
- Plastic bags such as garbage bags, including 1 or 2 large ones in case of rain
- Transparent zipped plastic bags to store small items
- Optional pillow cases for your clothes
- Notebook and pencil
- Optional pocket knife – not to keep as hand luggage in the airplane!

## Personal toilet kit

- Sunscreen for skin and lips.
- Absorbent microfiber towel
- Sanitary wipes
- Toilet paper (that you must dispose of through burning, so bring matches)

Whenever possible in the desert, you will get a small bucket of warm water in the evening and in the morning to wash yourself.

## Personal medical supplies and first aid kit

Bring your personal medicines and a first aid kit with you (the trek guide will carry an extensive first aid kit)

## Seats

Those who want to be seated more comfortably at the camp site should bring a light folding seat with them. These seats will be carried by a camel.

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## Mobile telephones and cameras

As mentioned, you will be requested to leave your mobile telephones and your camera with your luggage at the guest house during the trek. This is to enable you to connect on a more profound level with yourself and the environment without being distracted by these items.

Our trek guide will carry a mobile telephone for important communications. Elmer will make photographs that will be shared with everyone later on.

## SLEEPING IN THE DESERT

We will sleep 6 nights in the desert.

Bring a very warm sleeping bag, suitable for the desert nights with temperatures around 0° Celsius. Please bear in mind that temperature indications on sleeping bags are often over-estimated. We recommend therefore that you bring a sleeping bag with an indication of -40°. See model in section *Additional Options*.

Bring a fleece sleeping bag liner to provide extra warmth if you have a medium-warmth sleeping bag or if you easily get cold.

## EQUIPMENT PROVIDED BY THE TREK AGENCY

- 1 very large dormitory tent for men
- 1 very large dormitory tent for women
- 1 mattress per person (8-10 cm thick)
- 1 shower tent
- 1 WC tent
- 1 kitchen tent with all the kitchen equipment
- Cups, plates, bowls and cutlery
- An extensive first aid kit

## EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE FOR RENT

Please refer to section *Additional Options*

## CAMEL HIRE

We will be walking 3 to 5 hours a day, except on day 5 when we stay in the campsite. If you feel uncertain about walking that much, you can consider hiring a private camel with its driver for € 210. You can then ride that camel whenever you feel tired.

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## FOOD & DRINKS

All meals are prepared by a cook in the kitchen tent. Great care is taken in their preparation and you will be offered varied, delicious and balanced menus.

Participants with special dietary requirements should communicate these at the time of registration. The required ingredients will be purchased and the cook will take these requirements into consideration.

**Breakfast:** black or green tea, instant coffee, hot chocolate, cereals, butter, jams, biscuits, bread, cheese.

**Snack for walking and breaks:** tea and herb tea, fruits, jam, bread or biscuits.

**Lunch:** mixed salads: tomatoes, rice, potatoes and vegetables, tuna, sardines, cheeses, dried and fresh fruits, tea.

**Evening meals:** various soups, hot vegetable dishes, tagines with or without meat, rice, pasta, bread baked in the embers of the fire, cheeses, desserts, teas, herb teas.

## ECOLOGY

Everyone must take responsibility for not leaving our footprint on the environment. We will travel in a clean and often fragile environment and we must not leave anything behind. At the campsites, we will have large garbage bags for paper, plastic, metal waste and batteries. These bags will be brought back with us at the end of the trip.

Keep any waste in your pockets until the evening when they can be thrown in the garbage bag. Do not dispose of them in the camp fire.

## GIFTS AND TIPS

It is customary to express our appreciation and gratitude to our fellow travellers, the camel drivers and guides, for their considerable efforts which often exceed what is required of them. At the end of the trip, you may offer them clothes and objects that you do not wish to take home that would be of use to them. All these items will be put in a big bag and equally divided amongst them.

Similarly, if you wish to give a tip (this is entirely optional), the amount will be equally distributed.

### **For your information:**

*Agence Désert et Montagne* employs most of its staff on a full-time basis. The organization complies with Moroccan law and declares its employees on a yearly basis, which is not the case for many other organizations in this sector.

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## HOW TO BE CONTACTED IN THE DESERT

Participants will not make use of their mobile phones in the desert. Only the trek guide will carry her mobile phone for important communications. The telephone network can sometimes work in the desert.

If family or friends need to urgently contact a participant, they can do so via *Agence Désert et Montagne* who will inform our trek guide: telephone number 00 212 524 85 49 49, email [desertmontagne@gmail.com](mailto:desertmontagne@gmail.com)



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## CHECKLIST

- Plane ticket, insurance, passport
- Waterproof pouch
- Travel bag for the desert
- Suitcase or bag to be left at Dar Daif
- Day backpack
- Sleeping bag, sleeping bag liner
- Water bottle
- Fleece jacket
- Waterproof and windproof jacket or rain poncho
- Warm jacket or anorak
- 2 pairs of trousers
- Warm clothing
- 2 or 3 shirts with long sleeves
- Underwear and T-shirts
- 4 or 5 pairs of socks
- Sun hat, cap or turban
- Walking shoes, walking sandals, light shoes
- Notebook and pen
- Sunglasses, special sandstorm glasses or ski goggles
- Headlamp
- Small and large garbage bags
- Plastic zipped bags
- Towel
- Swim suit
- Toilet wipes and toilet paper, matches
- Suncream
- Personal first aid kit

