

Silent Retreats in JAI MA

“What joy awaits discovery in the silence behind the portals of your mind no human tongue can tell.”

“Through the portals of silence the healing sun of wisdom and peace will shine upon you.”

“Build your inner environment. Practice silence! I remember the wonderful discipline of the Great Ones. When we used to talk and chatter, they would say: “Go back into your inner castle.” It was very hard to comprehend then, but now I understand the way of peace that we were shown.”

Paramahansa Yogananda

Dear Fellow Devotee/Disciple,

A very heartfelt welcome to you, who is interested in or who has even decided to participate in a silent retreat in JAI MA.

We are always in joy to greet old and new members on such an occasion, as a silent retreat gives us the opportunity to collectively go deep within and to do what every one of us longs for – to seek God – ultimately, to find Him. This is the highest purpose of these retreats; yet it does not disregard how we, as devotees of the Lord, are drawing closer to one another as well when we seek God. Words are by no means necessary to know another person, but knowledge of our true Self *is* necessary for this.

In order to give you a picture of how these retreats are being run, please find below the key information necessary for you to orientate yourself and for you to become familiar with the programme offered on these retreats.

First Day: Everyone’s Arrival

On the first day when we gather, there is no strict silence. Everyone will be greeted upon her/his arrival and all individual needs will be taken care of.

In the evening, usually after dinner, together we define precisely how we wish to practice silence, as some souls do not wish to make eye contact, yet others do, and we respect all noble individual wishes.

The general schedule during this time of retreat, as well as the service each soul requests to offer, such as cleaning, food preparation, leading a meditation service, will be set, and all arising questions will be answered.

However, there are certain rules we ask everyone to observe strictly:

1. Please only use cell phones or other electronic devices for spiritual purposes, when we are together in the group.
2. Please only listen to music which is conducive to inner silence and spiritual aspirations (certainly you have the freedom to listen privately to music of your choosing, should you so wish, though we would recommend everyone to occupy their minds only with uplifting thoughts, as the individual level of consciousness will make up the collective state of consciousness).

Second Day: The Commencement of the Silent Retreat

When we have gathered together in the chapel, after the EEs, we will offer a special opening prayer, to open ourselves to God and the Gurus, asking for their blessings and to make ourselves more receptive to their grace.

Final Day: The Closing of the Silent Retreat

We will offer a special closing prayer, following the final period of meditation, and afterwards there will be a *puja* (spiritual ceremony) and *prasad* (blessed food we had offered to the Gurus during the final meditation) will be offered.

Note:

When the period of silence has officially concluded, please do your utmost to hold on to this inner quietude; there will be sufficient time for us each to speak once we have returned to our respective homes. If you have a genuine wish to speak, however, please consider whether what you wish to say is something worthwhile or if it may be unnecessary to mention in the present moment.

We wish you the blessings of God and the Gurus, for you to proceed evermore steadfastly on your spiritual path, never straying away from your highest, and in essence, only true desire: the true remembrance of your unity with the most beloved of your soul.

In divine friendship,

Your brother and sister disciples

WHEN I TAKE THE VOW OF SILENCE

- Paramahansa Yogananda, "Songs of the Soul".

When I take the vow of silence
To remain enlocked with my Beloved
In the arms of His everywhere-ness,
I shall be busy listening to His symphony
Of creation's bliss songs, and beholding hidden wondrous visions.
Yet I shall not be oblivious of you all.
I shall mutely watch you
Walking o'er me in the fresh grass-blades
And seeing me in my living leafy presences.
I shall behold you with mothering tenderness
Through every crimson blossom
That wears a blush of love to bring you delight.
I shall caress you with the enfolding breeze
To relieve your worries and fears;
And enwrap you in sun warmth
When the chill of delusive loneliness strays into your heart.
When you gaze at the ocean
You will be looking right at me,
United with my Beloved on the altar of the horizon,
Sky-canopied with silver rays o'er the azure wavy hazy sanctuary.
I shall not speak except through your reason,
Nor scold except through your conscience.
I shall persuade only through your love
And your heart's longing to seek the Beloved only.
I shall tempt you — but with the sole temptation
To enjoy the Beloved's love alone.
Forget me if you will, but not my Beloved!
Remembering Him, you cannot forget me.