

# - Shekinashram -

## **Karma Yoga Retreat Programme**

The **Karma Yoga Retreat Programme** is designed to offer an opportunity for individuals to enter an ashram environment, to live for one or two weeks within our structure, and to participate in morning spiritual practise, karma yoga (working contemplation), and some evening programmes to get a feel for the way of life. The programme is intended for those who are interested in ashram life and want to use the stay as a retreat and take time for internal focus and deepening spiritual practise.

During this time you will be given a general orientation toward the principles of ashram life, spiritual practise, bhakti yoga, karma yoga, communal living, and prasadam (blessed food) preparation. The duration of this programme is one or two weeks. It costs only £50 per week, which includes accommodation, food, instruction, and all programmes and facilities. Karma Yoga is 4 hours per day plus lunch preparation on this programme. Participation is available every week throughout the year, space permitting.

## **Bhakti Yoga Study Programme**

The **Bhakti Yoga Study Programme** is primarily designed for those who have completed the Karma Yoga Retreat Programme, and are keen to deepen their exploration of ashram life. However, depending on experience it may be possible to participate on this programme regardless of having participated on the Karma Yoga Retreat Programme. This programme lasts 4 weeks and is fully residential.

During this time, in addition to the basic structure of the Karma Yoga Retreat Programme participants will also attend a morning programme after breakfast, which will include a daily yoga (asana & pranayama) class, some kirtan, talks on different aspects of yoga philosophy, Bhagavad Gita study, as well as the evening programme and some basic study requirements. On this month long programme participants have Sunday off (optional), except for the evening programme, which is a weekly sharing group for all participants and staff.

Subjects covered on this programme are:

- History and concept of ashram & gurukula system
- Karma yoga – Perfect Action
- Essence of Bhakti yoga – Melting the ego
- Jnana Yoga – The way of Knowledge
- Karma & reincarnation – the cycle of Samsara
- The gunas – three modes of existence (sattva, rajas, tamas )
- Sadhana, meditation, japa mantra, power of the holy Name
- Eight limbs of ashtanga yoga – right livelihood
- Mind & ego
- Diet & ahimsa (non-violence), prasadam preparation & food offering
- Diety worship & puja
- Learning to play and share kirtan
- Self discipline & tapasya
- Sadhu sangha – the power of right association
- Commitment to Truth
- Conflict resolution
- Right speech
- Viveka (discernment) & viraghya (detachment).

This programme will have 4 participants at a time and costs £295 for 4 weeks, which includes accommodation, food, instruction, and all programmes and facilities. Karma Yoga is 3 hours per day plus lunch preparation.

**The starting dates for this course are:**

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 – Monday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2008

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008 – Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2008 – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2008

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008 – Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2008

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2008 – Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2008

**Arrivals** should be sometime the Monday before so as to allow a little time to settle in, as the programme begins at 7am on the Tuesday morning.

**Working** as a part of the Karma Yoga Retreat Programme/Bhakti Yoga Study Programme is an educational experience, and provides an opportunity for you to be in retreat, and at the same time to experience the benefits of living within a spiritually focused community, to develop your spiritual practice within a structure alongside others, and to be yourself in a place which is open and supportive of that. This programme provides a place to set yourself and your preferences aside for a while and practice Karma Yoga (selfless service), to deepen in self-discovery and become inspired to live a more spiritually fulfilling life. What you receive from being here will be directly reflective of what you give.

**It is important** that you read our principles (later on in this document) which underline the fundamentals of what we are committed to.

**Please note:** We have a 10pm curfew, and that non-vegan foods, smoking, alcohol and caffeine are not permitted on our premises, nor illegal drugs. The ashram respects the precept of ahimsa (non-violence) and therefore adheres strictly to a vegan diet. In addition we do not use sugar or honey as sweeteners, instead we use sweet fruits as an alternative in our food preparation. Please always respect the ashram rules and boundaries and do your best to work within the structure provided.

**Spiritual Practice**

We meet as a community for puja and kirtan (worship and devotional singing) at 7.00 – 8.00 am and meditation at 8.00 am in the morning until 8.45 am, after which we have breakfast. As a commitment to the programme, all karma Yogis are expected to attend between 7.00am – 8.45am. This practise sets a contemplative mood for the day conducive to karma yoga. The meditation room may be used before 7.00am for individual practise such as asana based yoga, chi gung etc.

**Availability**

We have space for two people per week on the Karma Yoga Retreat Programme, and 4 people together on the month long Bhakti Yoga Study Programme. It is recommended to book well in advance to reserve your space. Karma yoga periods usually involve activities like; housework (turning around guest bedrooms and cleaning), gardening, food preparation and clearing away, plus a variety of ongoing jobs that require attention.

**Elahn is the contact** when you want to arrange to book onto either programme. There is an application form on the last page of this document for you to complete which will assist us in organising your stay here. **Radha** is the ashram manager and home care volunteer co-ordinator and will orientate you to the home space and daily karma yoga (work assignment) each day.

**Working Hours:** Karma Yogis/volunteers are expected to work in a contemplative mood. For those on the Karma Yoga Retreat Programme, the main **work period** is usually from 9.30 am – 1.30 pm which includes lunch preparation from 12.45 pm (clearing away after lunch is also

included in your duties). For those on the Bhakti Yoga Study Programme, working period is likely to be either 2.45pm – 5.45pm or 6.45pm – 9.45pm. At 9.15 am every day, there is a meeting for participants of both programmes with the co-ordinator where we check-in and after which karma yoga assignments are given for those on the 1 week programme.

**Food** provided (all organic where possible) is **breakfast** superfood smoothie (banana, hemp milk, superfood powder, spirulina, ginger) and fresh fruit, muesli and hemp or rice milk, plus herbal tea), and **lunch** (usually a soup, seaweed or avocado dish, fresh salads, seeds, dressing, etc). **Evening food** – volunteers can make up a plate at lunchtime to eat in the evening, or prepare something later themselves from the kitchen. Occasionally an evening meal is made collectively. **PLEASE NOTE: Monday is fasting day at Shekinashram.** We use this day as an opportunity to be more internally reflective, and therefore no food is prepared on this day except breakfast (which is optional). If you do not wish to join us on this fast then you are free to leave the ashram to eat in town when you are on your free time.

Filtered water, fresh fruit and herbal teas are available to you throughout the day. Lunch is always the main meal of the day here at the Ashram.

### Accommodation

**Karma Yoga Retreat Programme** accommodation is in the cabin space where you will be sharing with others (mixed gender). **Bhakti Yoga Study Programme** accommodation is in a shared room in the house, where you will share with somebody else on the programme.

**Additional facilities** we can offer are the use of Internet and sauna. Internet is pay as you go, charged at £1 per 30mins. **Please note:** The office and internet facility is only open for use between 9.00am and 10pm. Your charge for the sauna is £2.00 per time. All phone calls are to be made using the payphone in the hallway or personal mobile phone.

### ~ Daily Programme ~

Up until 7.00 am		Self-practice yoga/exercise in the group room (optional)
7.00 am until 8.00 am	KYRP BYSP	Puja & Kirtan
8.00 am until 8.45 am	KYRP BYSP	Group meditation in the temple room
8.45 am approx.	KYRP BYSP	Breakfast
9.15 am – 9.45 am	KYRP BYSP	Morning Check – In & Orientation
9.30 am - 1.30 pm	KYRP	Morning Work Period (including lunch prep. below)
10.00 am – 12.00 pm	BYSP	Morning Yoga & Philosophy Class
12.45 pm – 1.30 pm	KYRP BYSP	Lunch preparation (except Monday's)
1.30 pm – 2.30 pm	KYRP BYSP	Lunch
2.30 pm – 2.45 pm	KYRP	Lunch Clear Up
2.45 pm – 5.45pm	BYSP	Afternoon Karma Yoga period
6.45 pm – 9.45 pm	BYSP	Evening Karma Yoga period
7.30 pm – 9.30 pm	KYRP BYSP	Evening Programme (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday & Sunday)
10.00 pm	KYRP BYSP	Bed

**Key: KYEP** – Karma Yoga Retreat Programme    **BYSP** – Bhakti Yoga Study Programme

If you have any **questions** or would like to discuss any of the above further, please contact Elahn who will be pleased to assist you.

Please be aware that when you have agreed to come here on this programme, you are making a commitment to yourself and to us, and we are relying upon your participation. Payment for both programmes is payable in advance. BYSP 50% (£125) KYRP 100% (£50). In both cases, **please note:**  
**payments are non-refundable, and non-transferable with less than 1 months notice.**

## ~ Karma Yoga Retreat / Bhakti Yoga Study Application Form ~

Name:		Age:
Programme Applying for:	Karma Yoga Retreat:	Bhakti Yoga Study:
Address:		
Telephone Numbers (land and mobile if relevant):		
Email:		Profession:
Dates you would like to visit:		
Practical Skills & Qualifications / What you would like to offer here:		
What is it about this programme that appeals to you?		
Please tell us of any relevant physical or mental conditions which may affect your ability to fulfil your work/study commitment:		
<p><b>Please note</b> that in the unlikely event of injury or sickness occurring whilst at Shekinashram, volunteers are responsible for their own safety. Shekinashram takes no responsibility for any injury or sickness that may happen whilst here.</p>		
Signed:		Date:

**Thank You**..... We will contact you very soon to discuss your application further ♥