

Individual Retreats at The Abode of the Message

The Abode of the Message is a Sufi community, retreat and conference center, cradled in the Taconic-Berkshire Mountains of Upstate New York, owned and operated by The Sufi Order of North America. Individuals have been coming to the Abode Sufi Retreat Center for over 25 years for guided personal retreats in a beautiful and serene atmosphere, an easy three-hour drive from New York City or Boston and just forty minutes from the Albany airport.

This 400-acre Berkshire Mountains sanctuary offers a complex of historic Shaker buildings including secluded areas with personal retreat huts and cabins, as well as a meditation hall with retreat rooms for year-round comfort. Our experienced staff of cooks and hosts take care of all your needs while you're on retreat.

Taking Time for Personal Growth in a Supporting Environment

Is it time to reconnect your inner and outer life? Are you at a turning point, deciding on your next step? Looking for healing? Perhaps you want to deepen your attunement and spiritual practice in ways not possible with your hectic daily schedule. All of these are good reasons to consider taking an individual guided retreat.



Altar in Retreat Hut

The Sufi Retreat Center at the Abode has been offering individual guided retreats for nearly three decades. Some take retreats here year after year, but we also serve many who are new to the retreat process. Some are Sufi Order initiates, others have little or no experience with Sufi practices. All are welcome.

We provide a sacred, secluded space for seekers to rest and restore themselves, to turn within and rediscover their source; and to know the deep stillness that is the wellspring of authentic guidance. The Center's retreat guides are experienced in guiding both beginning and advanced retreatants and offer a range of retreat types: Sufi alchemical retreats, healing retreats, and retreats focused on particular religious traditions. We work with you to design a retreat to meet your goals and needs.



Personal Retreat Hut

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I've taken group retreats. Why should I consider an individual one?

A: An individual retreat starts with your goals, intentions, and level of experience. It unfolds at your pace, and often permits a deeper experience of the practices than is possible on a group retreat.

Q: How do I choose a retreat guide?

A: All retreat guides are trained, experienced, and certified by the Sufi Order in a process that typically takes several years. Call the Retreat Coordinator. You will be asked what your intention is for the retreat, about your background and experience with spiritual practices, and if you have a preference for a female or male guide. If you don't know the retreat guides on staff, S/He will then choose someone who is a good match for you, and you will speak with your guide before the retreat.

Q: Where will I stay during the retreat?

A: Most retreatants choose to stay in one of our small, more secluded rustic huts, located around a meadow a 10-minute walk uphill from the main community buildings. Each hut has heat and electricity, and is simply furnished with a bed, altar, lamp, hot pot, fan, and meditation cushions and benches.



Inside View of Personal Retreat Hut

There is an outhouse located in the retreat meadow; showers and toilets are available in the bathrooms of the Meditation Hall.



One of Several New Retreat Cabins

Three new cabins nestled in the woods near a whispering stream offer more comfort and space than the huts, as well as easier access in winter. Comfortably furnished, the cabins are situated near an odor-free, heated composting toilet, and indoor showers and toilet facilities are located a five-minute walk away.

Some retreatants choose to stay in a retreat room above the Meditation Hall, giving them direct access to an indoor bathroom.



A Retreat Room in the Meditation Hall

Q: What happens when the guide visits?

A: Visits may be once or twice a day. The guide will come into the hut and sit in silent meditation with you for a few minutes. Then s/he will suggest practices for you that generally include work with breath, light, and sound, as well as meditations and prayers from the Sufi and other spiritual traditions. S/he will explain and demonstrate all the practices as needed; and will answer any questions you may have. She or he may also provide meditation and music tapes for you to listen to, if desired.

Q: Do I spend the whole time sitting in the hut or room?

A: Not unless you choose to. Some continue their daily yoga or tai chi practices while on retreat. Many do practices while walking around the hundreds of Abode acres enjoying our fresh "mountain" air, some like to swim in the pond in the summer months, and everyone appreciates our gorgeous sunsets.

Being in nature is usually an important part of a retreat; and you and your retreat guide will discuss how and when to incorporate outdoor activities.

Q: What and where will I eat?

A: You will eat in your hut or room. We provide a large container of simple vegetarian foods from which you may prepare your own breakfasts and lunches: granola, juice, rice cakes, fresh fruits, dry soup cups, almond butter, herb teas, etc. Each evening a delicious, freshly prepared, vegetarian meal is delivered to your door. We serve mostly organic food, much grown on our own organic farm. If you have any food allergies or concerns, we will try to accommodate them. Discuss any dietary restrictions with us before your arrival.

Q: How can I receive support for healing during my retreat?

A: If you wish you may ask for a guide who has specific training by the Sufi Healing Order in guiding healing retreats. However, many retreatants receive healing sessions before or after a retreat. Our center has guides who are also certified Raphaelite Work Healing practitioners, who offer these services. For more info visit www.sufihealingorder.org.



Healing Arts Room

Q: How do I get to the Abode Retreat Center?

A: The Center is located at The Abode of the Message in New Lebanon, N.Y. Directions can be found at the web site www.theabode.net. A shuttle service is available to and from nearby airports, train and bus stations. The retreat facilities are not wheelchair accessible.

Q: How much does a retreat cost?

A: The cost per day fluctuates depending on the type of accommodation and includes accommodation, linens, food, and visits with the retreat guide.

To discuss cost, ask other questions, or schedule a retreat: **contact Khabira Hull, Abode Retreat Center Coordinator, at (518) 794-7285 or email khabirahull@taconic.net.**