

SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

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May you love your Guru and be loved by him!

May your love for God increase

AUGHAR VANI, Avadhuta's Wisdom



Aghoreshwar
Baba Bhagwan Ramji

AGHOR GURU SEVA PEETH Kashi

The first report from a new born Ashram

Which is the most spiritual country in the world? Which is its holiest river? Where on its banks is located the sacred city par excellence, the "City of Lights?" Well, if you can answer these questions you will easily find the new Aghor Ashram right there in Varanasi (a.k.a. Benares or Kashi), India on Mother Ganges' bank.

It is said that all around in the world humankind is experiencing a particular frame of time called kali yuga, the eon of disorientation, except for Kashi, India's main place of pilgrimage which is supposed to rest on Lord Shiva's trident. As you can see no better location for an Ashram would be found from the point of view of sacred geography, as well as from the point of view of sacred time.

But the traveler who knows a little bit about India could object, "Why to build a new spiritual center in a city already crowded with so many Ashrams, Gurus, sadhus, missions and spiritual seekers?"

Baba Harihar Ramji conceived the challenging idea of creating an Ashram in India in order to fulfill the two main tasks of an ideal Ashram, seva and sadhana. As for seva, the focus of the Ashram is on childhood. Just as a young tree can easily be helped to grow straight, whereas for an old tree nothing will work, so utmost attention will be given to the seedlings of society, children. Needless to say, that it is through young generations only, that a decisive change can be brought for a better world. For this reason, priority has been given on manifesting a positive social impact in the environment by creating an orphanage that works in symbiosis with Little Stars School.

Little Stars School offers education to children living in the slums and on the streets of

Benares. Parents of these children are hopelessly poor. Many of them live on the sidewalk of the city in homes made out of cardboard boxes, burlap, and plastic. These children have no future. They work for their parents begging, collecting trash, pushing carts and working in roadside stalls. Their parents are reluctant to let them go to school. They are more inclined to push their children into the child labor market, including prostitution and drug related activities. These children beg for their living or are often used as forced labor by adults. The Little Stars School provides education, meals and a brief daily respite from the harsh reality of homelessness and street living. Yet, some children - the most desperate cases - don't want to go back home. So, in order to be able to offer them a safer environment, Babaji has planned to build an Ashram which also includes an orphanage. So far, early in the morning before going to school, children from the neighborhood come to receive guidance in the practice of yoga, while in the evening they joyfully attend arati.

The second aim of this new Ashram consists of offering the opportunity for Western seekers to find a place where they can sharpen their spiritual practice by simply being in "the right space." As everyone knows no other place can work as a spiritual catalyst like "Mother India." After visiting India one is not the same anymore. Even the most radical materialist will be affected by the sacredness of its grounds, charged with millennia of continuous worship. In addition to this, one is exposed to the intensity of existence - poverty, illness, death, and harrowing beauty. So, the purpose was to build an Ashram as an oasis of stillness in which the sadhaks coming from the West can examine the manifold layers of their own maya within an environment which offers cleanliness, peace and simplicity of life.

A further objective was to set an ecological example in the surrounding area where the Ashram is set. Such aim will be accomplished with the creation around the Ashram of a natural park with a section of land used to grow ayurvedic herbs that will be used in the Ashram's clinic. This accomplishment will be the pretext to instill the basic values of conscious living in the youth.

At present all this is not just a vision. The new Ashram, Aghor Guru Seva Peeth, is a reality. Located directly on the bank of the river Ganges, it enjoys a spectacular position. Facing north one can see all of Benares' ghats unwinding one after the other at sunrise. Facing south the royal palace of the Maharaja of Benares becoming tinged with red at sunset.

During the months of November and December many important steps have been taken. A well has been drilled and a septic system has been completed. Since the Ashram is on the bank of the river, in order to build the boundaries, 120 earth holes, 30 feet deep have been dug every 5 feet, filled with iron rods and concrete. Every day 40 people work at new projects. In the evening they gather together to sing devotional songs.

All the buildings have thatched roofs and bare ground smeared with cow dung. There already is a nice garden with flowers, an organic vegetable garden, while all around small papaya trees have been planted. The fruits of these trees will certainly parallel the sweetness already present in the smiling eyes of those individuals whose souls draw enlivening water at the river of the Aghor lineage, today springing from a pristine source, the new born Ashram Aghor Guru Seva Peeth.

A Worthy Cause

It is a challenging task that Babaji has assumed the responsibility of another Ashram and it is all possible because of the generosity of readers like you. As Babaji says, *We are creating a*

home for the needy as well as a home for sadhaks from the West to come here and participate in the sadhana of service as well as going deeper in their personal sadhana. We urge you to participate in this worthy cause by making your tax exempt contribution through our Sonoma Ashram.

India Update

Babaji continues to make service happen in Benares with the help of many devoted disciples. There is a lot more foundation digging than first expected as the Ganges dumps a lot of silt onto that land every year. Fortunately with the grace of Sarveshwari and devoted workers, Babaji is managing to make the most out of the contributions made towards creating the Kashi Ashram. We see this here in the Sonoma Ashram where so much beauty is created out of so little or the discarded. Regardless, it has been a challenge because the main building materials have unexpectedly rose 50% due to rising oil prices.

Babaji is now connected to the internet and sends email out of his thatched hut with an eye on funeral pyres across the river. It is a good way for him to get a perspective on our problems. Some locals have returned from India giving many compliments and blessings on the activities there. There is much work and equal amounts of celebration.

Meet the faces at the Ashram:

Through this column we salute the special individuals at the Ashram:

Ramdev

One of our newer members of the Ashram community has become one of the most ardent practitioners. Ramdev came to the Ashram seeking a catalyst to assist in his spiritual journey. He says that he felt dry within, that the juices of love were blocked. After meeting Babaji, he knew he had found the inspiration he was seeking.



Ramdev exemplifies the idea, that when one encounters Truth, the seeking stops and the deepening begins.

He first arrived at a critical time when the group was constructing the community hall. Along with an eager attitude, Ramdev brought with him construction skills that were put to immediate good use. This was a time during which Babaji was emphasizing 'community building', and all involved in the construction project were increasingly aware that the real construction was among the people, not the building that they were working on.

Ramdev first spent long weekends, absorbing the shakti of the Ashram, before returning to his job in Santa Cruz. However, in March of this year, he moved to the Ashram to be a full time resident. As we all know, there are many tasks to be done, and these usually fall upon the shoulders of the residents. His presence has proved to be invaluable.

Today Ramdev's consistency in tending to the Ashram activities is inspirational to all. The fact that he always has a smile and a kind word for every-one is a testimony that his heart

is no longer blocked, and that he is a living example of Baba's teaching: to be a human being first.



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