

## History of Aghor

The word Aghor literally means, that which is not difficult or terrible. Aghor is simple and natural state of consciousness. There is no place for feelings of fear, hatred, disgust or discrimination in the eyes of an Aughar. A person who practices these virtues may be designated as an Aughar. With constant practice when the soul is established in that state, such a person becomes an Avadhuta regardless of his path.

An Aghoreshwar is an Avadhut who has gone through all the various stages of Aghor and then has returned to society for the benefit of others. Even though an Aghoreshwar remains above and beyond all social and material illusions, distinctions, and categories, he can bring many social reforms into effect. Realizing his divine nature, retaining the carefree, unattached Aghor state of being, he may have at the same time the appearance of one observing the contemporary social norm rather than a recluse.

The name of Aghor is a mantra that is above all other mantras. There is nothing higher to be known than the real nature of the Guru.

In the sixteenth century, a great saint called Baba Kinaram was known as Aghoreshwar.

The story of Baba Kinaram tells of his wandering for years until he attained complete knowledge by having the darshan of Bhagwan Dattatreya, who appeared to him in the Girnar Mountains, a holy place in Gujarat state.

Baba Kinaram established an Ashram in Varanasi, called Krim Kund. He initiated many social reforms during the tumultuous times of the Mugal invasion when the Indian people were being persecuted.

The direct lineage of the twelve Aghoreshwars that began with Baba Kinaram extends from the sixteenth century until the present. When Baba Bhagwan Ram became the 12th Aghoreshwar in this lineage, he was likened to Baba Kinaram because he had a strong sense of social responsibility, identifying himself with suffering humanity, and waiting to help the people in their

struggle against social injustices. As in Baba Kinaram's time, there were social problems the people were unable to handle.

Sometimes spiritual beings are able to give the people some protection against injustice but there are other periods of time when the fires of spiritual strength burn low, embers under ashes. Recognizing the need for change Baba Bhagwan Ram renewed the socially conscious spirit of Baba Kinaram when he established a new ashram called Sri Sarveshwari Samooh and dedicated it to help the poor and the afflicted. The ashes leapt into flame again, being fed by the spiritual fuel of another great Aghoreshwar.

In order to maintain the seat of Aghor tradition as a continuum, Baba initiated his own disciple, Siddhartha Gautam Ram, as the head of Krim Kund so he could be free to follow his social callings. Krim Kund and Sri Sarveshwari Samooh are on the opposite sides of the Ganges in Varanasi with many more Ashrams in various locations in India and a number of centers and Ashrams in other countries. All of them are working in cooperation with each other to maintain the ancient tradition as well as to take a freshly motivated direction towards social services and the integration of ancient wisdom into the life of the community.

*In a conversation with one of his monks, Baba Bhagwan Ram gave the following description of an Aughar or a follower of Aghoreshwar.*

*“Followers of Aghoreshwar stay very far from doubt. They do not dwell in the body-mind. They dwell in the consciousness of Self, and with resolve they reach very substantial states. After they reach these states, they become so polite that their voices have nothing but sweetness.*

*Their vocabulary has no place for defiling, provocative words, or words that spread enmity. Such words don't even arise. Whenever you come across such people, take them to be blessed by the Kapaleshwar (the great unknown who dwells in the cosmos, the spirit (of Aghoreshwar). With unbreakable faith and reverence, they are moved by human sufferings. These ascetics are well cultivated, they do not like to see anyone spreading disharmony. Their way is one of friendliness, compassion, seeing love within each other.*

*Following this principle of action-less action, they remain blameless and firm in their austerity while respecting everything. They may get cheated by others, but they never cheat others.*

*Remaining pride-less, they show respect to others. They use discarded pieces of cloth as their clothing, whether that cloth has holes in it or not, whether thrown away in the trash or even having been used as a shroud for the dead. They want to use only such things that are of no more use to any other person.*

*These Aughar ascetics renounce alcohol, sex, lies and deceit as they would poison. They are continuously engaged in providing for the well-being of others, not discriminating as to race, color or religion.*

*The word dialect refers to that very soothing speech of the accomplished ones. With the vibrations of that very speech there is obtained a luster, a glow, and currents like that of electricity, without the necessity for any rituals, worship or pranayama. In the very flow of contemplation, everything is obtained which is of consciousness. To see an Aughar ascetic is like getting a glimpse of Shiva himself. Aughars are not only impartial but they are unbiased as well. In their greatness, they accept social relationships with everyone. They are not judgmental. Just as the Sun, the Moon, the Earth, Fire and Wind are not here for any particular religion, class, caste or nation, in the same way the Aughar who has attained the stage of impartiality acts for the well-being of everyone. All these qualities of Aughars help everyone to learn how to restrain their mental modifications and, as a result, negative thoughts and tendencies subside."*

This was Baba Bhagwan Ram's description of one who walks on the Aghor path. Throughout many centuries, this Aghor path took seekers into deep solitude, into jungles, mountain caves, even into cremation grounds. These places of solitude were chosen by the Aughars not simply to avoid society, but to find the seclusion needed to confront their fears, those demons that dwell in the inner universe. When some of them overcame all obstacles and found their own true Self, they were seen as holy men and people sought them for help of various kinds. That very needy nature of the public drove the Aughars deeper into solitude. Some of those left behind posed as the real thing by displaying whatever magical powers they had acquired. Sometimes they assumed a fearful, unkempt appearance, passing themselves off as Aghoris. Since the true Aughar renounces such magical powers as the mere trappings of illusion, taking no credit for them, he has become known as Avadhut, one who lives in a blissful, carefree state.

Many such beings have inspired us with their clear, simple teachings, which seemed to have come from their pure being rather than from any intellectual storehouse of scriptures. In other regions of India, such beings have been referred to as Paramahans, Brahmanistha, Kaul, etc. These teachers are very few in number at any given time, very difficult to find, and usually impart their teachings on a one-on-one basis.

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