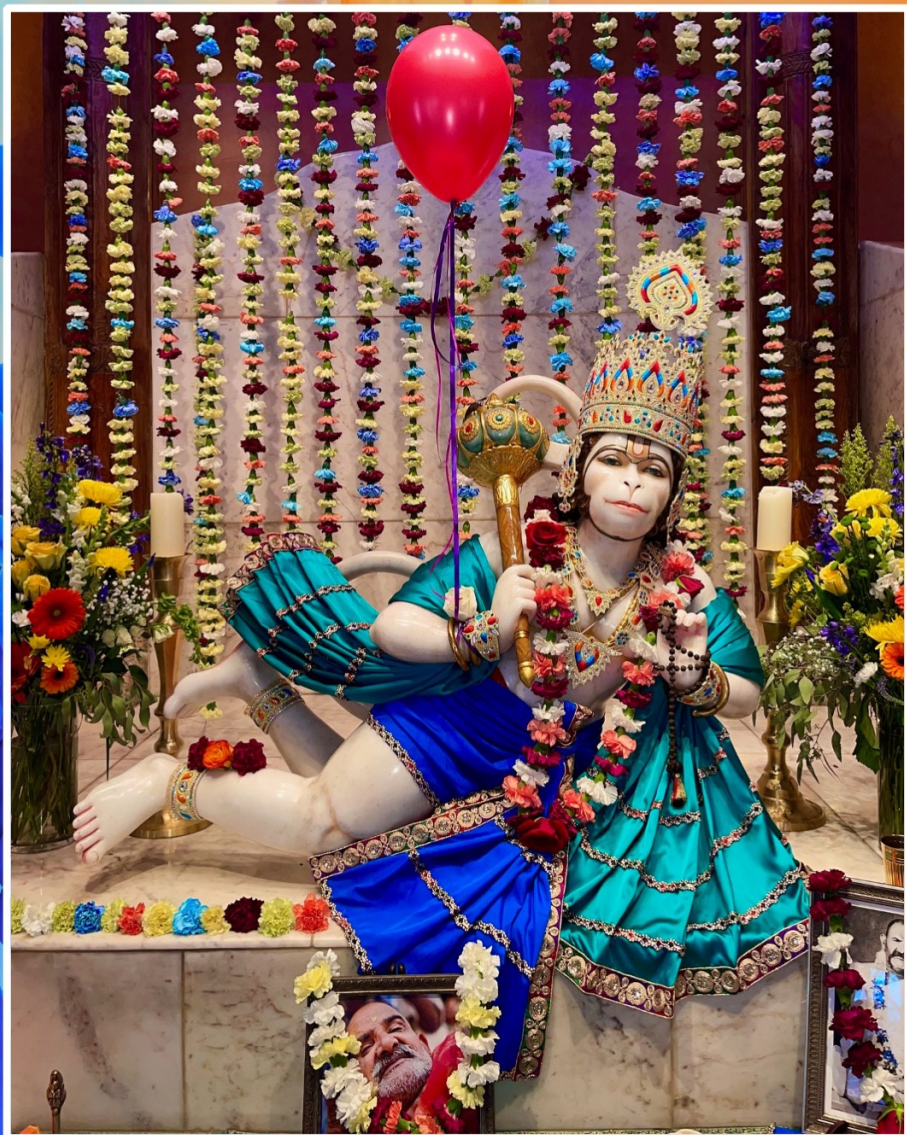


Neem Karoli Baba Ashram



2024 Annual Newsletter

**Neem Karoli Baba Ashram
PO Box 1710
Taos, NM 87571**



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Contents

Words of Grace from Maharaji-ji	2
Ashram Update	3
<i>Whisper in the Heart: The Ongoing Presence of Neem Karoli Baba by Parvarti Markus</i>	15
Hanuman's Heart: The Essence of Bhakti and Service Retreat	17
Remembering Beloveds	18
<i>Sri Siddhi Ma: The Story of Neem Karoli Baba's Spiritual Legacy by Jaya Prasada</i>	25
<i>The Peacock</i>	26
Recipe	27
Treasurer's Report	29
Puja Dukan	30
Festival Date	32



"Constant repetition of God's name, even without feelings of devotion, even in anger or lethargy, brings out his grace. Once this is realized, there is no room for any misgivings." ~ Maharaj-ji

Ashram Update

Ram Ram, Dear Maharaj-ji Satsang,

Another incredible Grace filled year has passed at Neem Karoli Baba's American ashram. This past year, 2023, marked 50 years since our beloved Guru, Maharaj-ji, left His body. Here at His ashram, He continues to bestow His Grace on all who come. It is remarkable how often I meet someone who is visiting the ashram for the first time, who may not have even known about Baba before coming, and when I ask them about their visit, a most often refrain I hear is, "I feel like I've come home."

Maharaj-ji said, "All are my family" and since the ashram is Baba's place and home, it seems that the ashram is fulfilling one of its missions to be a home for all His family.



This past year saw all the ashram's festivals increase in size as more and more of Maharaj-ji's family come for celebrations and daily visits. The first of the ashram's celebrations every year is an all-night puja for Maha Shivaratri. Shivaratri has the distinction of being the smallest of the ashram's celebrations and is the one that is mostly centered on the performance of puja, allowing those who participate to honor Shiva, the Formless Absolute.



The favorite celebration of Baba's Indian devotees, Hanuman Jayanti, continues to grow with more devotees attending each year. Devotees from across the world were in attendance this past Hanuman Jayanti; approximately 1,400 people received bhandara prasad and participated in the 24 hours of chanting the Hanuman Chaleesa. Mahendra Bhai performed a fire ceremony while chanting 108 Chaleesas and offering mantra and coconuts to the sacred fire. In addition, after the Chaleesas and bhandara prasad, the Sundarakanda was sung in the mandir in the afternoon. The flow of love and devotion was palpable!



The full moon in July is the time the ashram celebrates Guru Purnima. This is one of the ashram's smaller celebrations and perhaps the sweetest and most intimate. Fewer attendees allows for more personal interaction, and because it is the time when it's said it is best to worship the Divine in form and when the Guru (dispeller of darkness) is said to be the most accessible, the vibration was incredibly blissful and full of devotion.



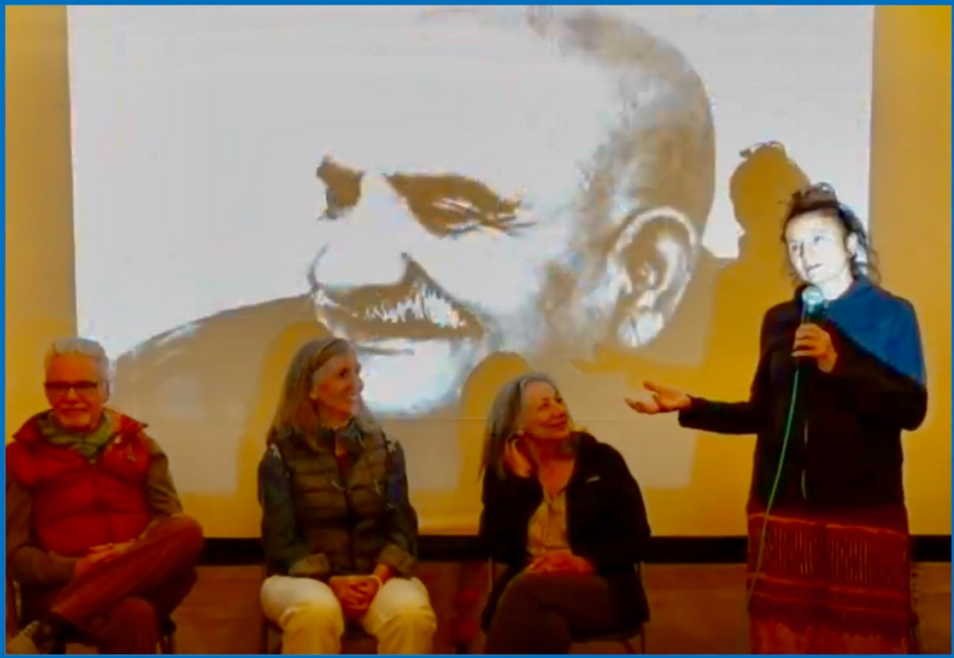




This year, the annual Mahasamadhi Bhandara celebration coincided with the 50th anniversary of Sri Neem Karoli Baba's Mahasanadhi. It was, to say the least, an incredible jam-packed three-day continuous celebration of Maharaj-ji. Not only was the Hanumn Chaleesa chanted for 24 hours in the mandir, but simultaneously, in Baba's Darshan Hall the Sri Ramcharitmanas was also chanted for 24-hours. Following the chanting, a particularly delectable prasad bhandara was served to the more than 1,400 devotees who came to honor Baba.



In addition, following the Chaleesas, a wonderful group of singers chanted the Sundarakanda in the mandir all afternoon. Saturday evening, after an incredibly fun and fruitful auction, everyone was treated to a slide show of Maharaj-ji and the personal stories of some of the western devotees who had the good fortune to sit with Him in His form in the 60's and 70's. It was an event full of tears of devotion, laughter, and unadulterated love. The festivities continued Sunday and after another amazing prasad feast for lunch, the Ramlila was performed. As always, it was pure joy to see the children and adults re-enacting the age-old drama together. It was enjoyed with so much laughter and so much

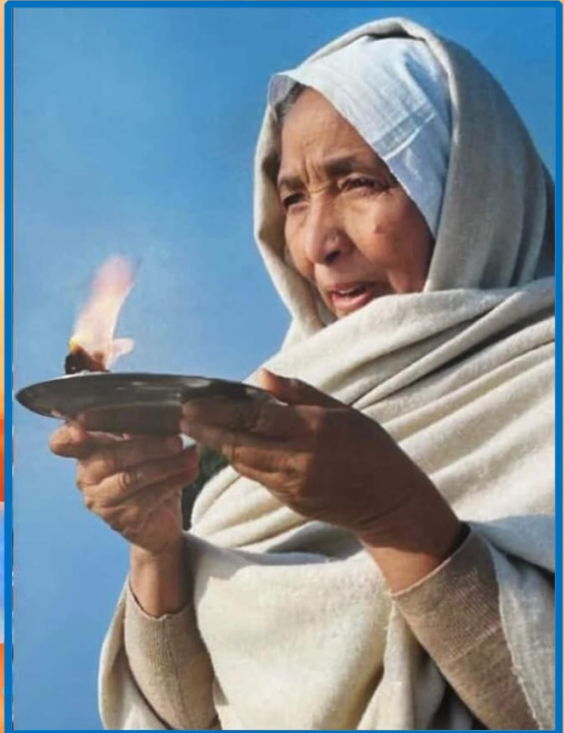


love. The blessings and grace of having Maharaj-ji in our lives is beyond compare.

The celebration of the Devi, Navaratri, this year felt particularly poignant, as the ashram began construction of a shrine to the Mother this past summer. The shrine will be dedicated to Sri Pujaniya Siddhi Ma and will be a place for devotees to connect with the Divine in the form of the Devi. Navaratri is a nine-day celebration centered on worship of the different forms of the Mother. Many devotees participated and helped by attending to the many details of the puja in the mandir, as well as the sacred fire ceremony and yantras that are created for it. The blessings and lessons from Navaratri continue to flow into the New Year.



Sri Siddhi Ma's shrine will be located behind the mandir on the west end of the pond. It will be a small open-air structure and inside there will be photos of Sri Siddhi Ma, Jivanti Ma, and Maharaj-ji on the back wall and a small altar with Siddhi Ma's feet carved in rose quartz set in a lotus centered on it. By Their Grace, the shrine and garden will be complete in the summer of 2024 and a consecration ceremony will be held. The ashram has initiated a fundraiser on its giving page to raise the funds to complete this sacred project. The projected amount to complete the shrine and memorial garden is \$100,000 and by Maharaj/Ma's Grace, already \$45,000 has been donated.



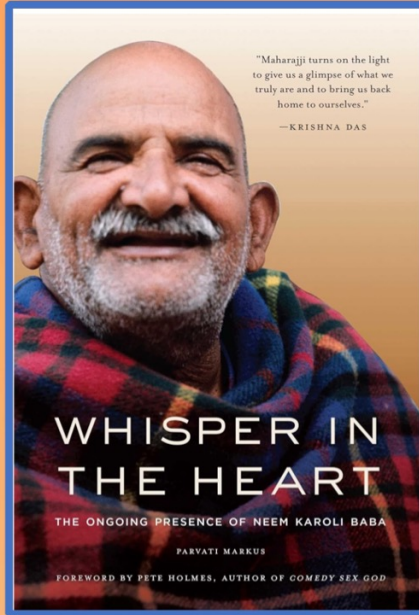
This past year saw some changes in the staff at the ashram. The ashram's farm manager Dylan Hanneman moved back to be with family, and Mathew Meci and Annahata Klutinoty also moved on. Their incredible devotion and service to Baba and His ashram is greatly appreciated. We would like to welcome the new staff that Baba sent to continue serving the needs of the ashram and His devotees: Tyler Sciulli, who was a previous staff member has returned and Gabriel Snodgrass, Kieran Kuschke, and Britton Thomas joined current staff, Ky and Vir Kaur. Chad continues to serve as Operations Manager and Joe continues as Kitchen Manager. Ganesh Das is the Puja Dukan Manager and Tara is the Office Manager. The ashram is fortunate to have these loving and devoted individuals serving in Baba's ashram.

May this coming year be as full of love and joy as ever. We look forward to welcoming and serving the many Maharaj-ji and Hanuman devotees coming from around the world during this next year.

**With Love and Devotion,
In His Service,
Hanuman das**



Whisper in the Heart: The Ongoing Presence of Neem Karoli Baba by Parvati Markus



Michael Brian Baker

As I sat on the front lawn of the Taos Ashram 19 years ago, all I could think about was how angry I was that I got stuck at this stupid temple on my birthday, and how my best friend betrayed his promise that we would head out to explore New Mexico. He was inside chanting some prayer to a monkey, so I decided I would give this meditation thing a try. I sat still and concentrated on my breath, but the blazing sun in the stillness of midday was too much to handle. My discomfort was unbearable. I spoke aloud from frustration and called to this "Maharajji" guy. I requested that, if he did exist, I needed

just a hint of comfort so that I could experience stillness and peace.

At that moment a strong breeze appeared from nowhere, sending chills up my spine that cooled my entire being. The hair on my arms stood on end, and my mind magically stilled. I felt waves of relaxation and calm.

A short while later, I was guided to join the long line to meet Ram Dass, who had arrived unexpectedly. That day my life changed forever. Unexpectedly, unwanted, and proceeded by much resistance, I received the powerful darshan of Neem Karoli Baba through Ram Dass. I experienced an emotional purification that can only be described as miraculous.

When Ram Dass transitioned in 2019, I felt like I had not had the chance to express authentically my gratitude for that experience. Then a friend sent me this note out of the blue: “We all experience Maharajji in our own personal way, like feeling his presence in the form of a breeze that will suddenly swirl on an otherwise windless day.”

This is the way Maharajji works. He’s winking at me from the subtle world of *siddhaloka**, reminding me that I am still under the blanket.”

**Siddhaloka* is the abode of liberated, perfect souls, the world of the blessed.

Hanuman's Heart: The Essence of Bhakti and Service Retreat

The ashram is excited to announce that we are hosting a retreat in collaboration with Love Serve Remember Foundation. A three-day retreat featuring Jai Uttal, kirtan singer and teacher; RamDev Borglum, founder of The Living/Dying Project, lecturer, and meditation teacher; and Nubia Teixeira, teacher, trainer, and founder of Bhakti Nova School of Yoga. The retreat will focus on Bhakti (devotion), Seva (service) and the practice of Kirtan (call and response chanting). It will begin on Friday afternoon, June 7 and culminate on Sunday evening, June 9, 2024. All activities will take place on the ashram grounds and will be limited to 100 participants. To see the full schedule, retreat details, and to register please go to the ashram's website: nkbashram.org





Remembering Beloveds

Remembering Lisa Vaness

August 17, 1968-November 14, 2023



Lisa Chalisa, as she was known to many who loved her so, left her body on Diwali 2023- a fitting date- when the light overcomes the darkness.

I cannot think of anyone who loved Maharaj-ji more deeply and purely as Lisa did.

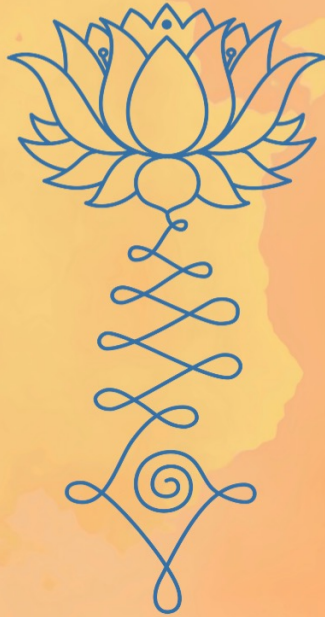
Whatever the topic of conversation we might be engaged in, Maharaj-ji and His Hand in it became obvious. Laughter abounded, her sense of humor tinged with a sarcastic note tempered with compassion for the human condition and its frailties she knew all too well.

I could always find sound advice on any problem I presented to her whether it be spiritual or artistic. Keenly intelligent, Lisa could be tough as well, having honed some survival skills along the way.

There can be no doubt that Lisa adored both her children, Aki and Jivan, whom she was immensely proud of.

Lisa, this complex woman full of courage and playfulness, sorely missed: may she be sitting by Baba's tucket finally with her Beloved.

with Love, Krishnapriya



Remembering Peter Kelsey

December 30, 1956-September 8, 2023



Oh Peter, God he was funny. And he liked to play hardball in life.

One morning many years ago we met at Ram Dass' breakfast table in Maui. He was brimming in wonder being there, eyes wide open, full of questions - and then came the puns, one after another, each with a sly smile and a glint in his eye. I knew he was my brother instantly. As we came to know each other over the years; I always looked forward to our unvarnished and often peppery conversations.

Peter was seriously honest, like it or not. I loved that he did not mince words, and I can't remember a conversation where he expected a polite exchange in

lieu of what was really happening. It was a kind of generosity that was alive - real conversation. The last week I saw him, he immediately wanted to talk about the journey of dying. Music to my ears, as he didn't want to waste precious time. He understood the gift of life and the ticking clock. And for him, ten years battling cancer was a very hard lesson in this incarnation.

And he was smart, just saw things ahead of time.

He could make or fix anything, be it plumbing or building a plane or making chocolate. I continually marveled at his ability to foresee potential in products and business sectors as well as be a master genius in the kitchen. How does someone get all these gifts? And all done with the right intention: work was a kind of worship. You knew that when you tasted his apple tatin. Incredible. Filled with love.

We frequently talked about surrender. He was always full of questions - because he had a very logical mind and wanted to know what the heck that actually was. Just surrendering was too simple an answer - we would laugh about that. How, what about, if....

But he did. That's playing hardball.

I miss you my lovely friend. We will sit at another table with RD, again.

Remembering Phillip Hollenbeck July 24, 1946-September 24, 2023



Phillip Isaac Hollenbeck was born on July 24th, 1946, in Cumaye Indian Country, San Diego, California. Always a musician, he auditioned with his baritone saxophone for the James Brown horn section at age 17.

While studying at Ali Akbar College of Music in Fairfax, California, he helped form the Digariddim Band with Mickey Hart. In 1967 he went to India and studied classical North Indian music at Benares University, focusing in pakhawaj drumming in the Dhrupad Tradition. First performing with the renowned Dagar Brothers in India and on their first American tour, he then expanded to performing and studying numerous other traditional, folk, tribal, and classical Indian drumming styles.

Returning to India as a MacArthur Fellow, Phil spent time in Orrissa with Satchi Dananda das learning classical Oddissi Dance rhythms, which led to performances with Jyoti Rout. In October 2019, world-famous dancer and singer Parvati Baul came to America and upon meeting Phil asked him to drum for her performances and they became close friends.

Other musicians and dancers that Phil played with include Krishna Das, Erich Avenger, Amelia Cun, a European tour with Prem Kumar, and many more.

Some of his teachers include Amarnath Mishra, Tribhuan Upadhyay, Swami Pagaldas, Mahadev Anandasaraswati, and Pannalal Uphadyay of Bihar.

Hollenbeck was a caretaker at the Neem Karoli Baba Taos Ashram with Tracy Cates in 1997.

He died peacefully at home in Albuquerque, New Mexico.



Sri Siddhi Ma: The Story of Neem Karoli Baba's Spiritual Legacy by Jaya Prasada

"One morning, word spread that Maharajji was visiting the house of Sri Ram Sah, a local businessman. The ladies in Ma's family decided to go for His darshan. Ma went with them, but She sat at the very back of the hall.

Maharajji was surrounded by a large group of devotees. Seeing Ma, He pointed His finger towards Her and gestured for Her to come forward. Ma came up close and offered pranam.

Maharajji immediately went on to give a vivid account of Ma's silent sadhana to the gathering: "the constant flow or Ram's name with each breath She took; Her high meditative state; and how She lived Her life in the world like a lotus in water, yet above the water."

Then Maharajji made the prophetic statement - loud enough for all to hear - that He would make a kuti for Siddhi in Vrindavan."



The Peacock

His loud sharp call
seems to come from nowhere.
Then, a flash of turquoise
in the pipal tree.



The slender neck arched away from you
as he descends,
and as he darts away, a glimpse
of the very end of his tail.
I was told
that you have to sit in the veranda
and read a book,
preferably one of your favourites
with great concentration.

The moment you begin to live
inside the book
A blue shadow will fall over you.
The wind will change direction,
The steady hum of bees
In the bushes nearby
Will stop.
The cat will awaken and stretch.
Something has broken your attention;
And if you look up in time
You might see the peacock
turning away as he gathers his tail
to shut those dark glowing eyes,
violet fringed with golden amber.
It is the tail that has to blink
For eyes that are always open.

Sujata Bhatt

Recipe

KITCHARI WITH A TWIST

INGREDIENTS:

1 C Basmati rice

3 C split yellow mung beans

3 TBSP ghee

2 TBSP Banyan Kitchari Spice Mix

64 OZ Ocean's Halo Thai Coconut Broth

8-12 OZ frozen spinach (depends on your taste)

8 OZ vegetable broth (in reserve in case you want soupier Kitchari)



1. Combine the rice and the mung beans in a pot and cover with 1-2 inches of water. Allow to soak for 1-2 hours.
2. Drain and rinse the rice and mung bean mixture.
3. In a large stock pot, melt the ghee.
4. Add the rice and mung beans mixture, Banyan Kitchari Spice Mix, Ocean's Halo Thai Coconut Broth, and frozen spinach.
5. Cover and bring to a boil
6. Reduce heat to simmer and cook for approximately 20 minutes or until rice/mung beans are soft.
7. If necessary, add the vegetable broth to thin the mixture.

Treasurer's Report

In many ways 2023 has been a productive financial year. Noted accomplishments include paying off the 421 house (\$232,425); replacing the windows and other necessary upgrades in the Puja Dukan (\$10,149); replacing the roof on the Badri House (\$11,671); installing the outdoor dining enclosure (\$10,583); commencing work on the Sri Siddhi Ma Memorial Garden (in 2023, \$34,887); and beginning construction of Sri Siddhi Ma's Shrine (in 2023 \$16,000).

We are very thankful for your contributions of both time and money and for your continuing support of our shared goals.

For further explanation of this report, please contact:
chrisjaneczko@nkbashram.org

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Janeczko
Treasurer
Board of Directors
January 6, 2024

NEEM KAROLI BABA ASHRAM AND HANUMAN TEMPLE
2023 Profit and Loss Statement

JANUARY 1, 2023 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2023

INCOME:

AUCTION	\$28,830	
DONATIONS	764,142	
FESTIVALS	3,636	
INSURANCE CLAIM	5,000	
INTEREST	646	
PUJA DUKAN	185,475	
MISC.		
TOTAL GROSS INCOME		\$987,729

EXPENSES:

AGRICULTURAL	15,005	
AUTOMOBILE	2,736	
BOARD	100	
CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS	100	
EQUIPMENT	2,816	
FESTIVALS	63,464	
FUNDRAISING	327	
GROCERIES	67,585	
HOUSE, BADRI	13,062	
INSURANCE	17,403	
NEWSLETTER	13,013	
OFFICE	16,294	
PROFESSIONAL FEES	14,344	
PROJECTS	101,451	
PUJA DUKAN	103,218	
REPAIRS & MAINT.	48,015	
SERVICE CHARGES	5,837	
STAFF	226,799	
SUPPLIES	40,063	
TEMPLE	12,777	
TOOLS	138	
UTILITIES	32,585	
MISC.	580	
TOTAL EXPENSES		797,712

NET PROFIT \$190,017

Neem Karoli Baba Ashram Puja Dukan



Discover and Support In-Store

- * Fine Indian antiques and vintage items
- * Variety of gently-used and new clothing
 - *English and Hindi Comics
 - *Seasonal Holy Basil Tulsi
- *All items shown in our on-line collections



Travelling to India? Your donations help!
Contact pukadujanstaff@nkbashram.org for an idea list of items to donate from shopping in India.
Product donations are a great way to maximize your monetary contributions to the ashram.
Thank you for your support.



The Neem Karoli Baba Ashram Puja Dukan

**All proceeds go directly to support the Neem Karoli
Baba Ashram in Taos, NM**

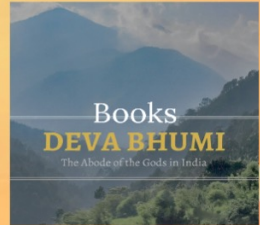
The Puja Dukan is a service to the devotees of Neem Karoli Baba and Hanuman-ji – a one-stop shopping place for items that provide a way to connect more deeply to Maharaj-ji and the deities of his lineage.



Puja Items



Neem Karoli Baba
Ashram Mementos



Books
DEVA BHUMI
The Abode of the Gods in India



Malas



Photos & Stickers



Soft Goods



Incense & Oils



Jewelry &
Devotional Decor



Nina Rao
ANTARAYAMI
Keeper of All Hours
CDs & DVDs

Sri Neem Karoli Baba Ashram and Hanuman Mandir 2024 Festival Dates

Shivaratri

Friday, March 8

Hanuman Jayanti *

Friday, April 19 - Saturday, April 20

Guru Purnima

Saturday, July 20 - Sunday, July 21

Maharaj-ji's Mahasamadhi Bhandara *

Friday, September 13 - Sunday, September 15

Navaratri

Thursday, October 3 - Saturday, October 12

***The ashram observes Hanuman Jayanti and Anant Chaturdashi (the day of Maharaj-ji's Mahasamadhi) the weekend before the full moon.**

Please check the website nkbashram.org and Facebook for updates on Festival activities and schedules.

Neem Karoli Baba Ashram

PO Box 1710

Taos New Mexico 87571

575-751-4080

**For information on Dharmasala stays please call
575-751-4080.**

To make an online donation please visit the ashram's Giving page at: nkbashram.org/giving

If you would like your donation earmarked for a specific project such as the Sri Siddhi Ma Shrine or other activity, please note it on the memo portion of your check. When making an online donation you can notify us verbally by phone at 575-751-4080 or by email to:

mandir@nkbashram.org



Follow Baba's Love

Facebook: Neem Karoli Baba Ashram in Taos New Mexico

Instagram: Taos Hanumanji and Neem Karoli Baba Ashram in Taos New Mexico

Website: nkbashram.org

