## Your own contemporary utopia



College: Contemporary Utopia: Ashram West Utopia refers to a theoretical model of a perfect social system or community. The term Utopia was conceived by Thomas Moore, a famous English humanist, and used to refer to the humanist's imaginary isolated society. The ideology of a perfect social and political system appears in numerous cultural settings in form of religious stories, philosophical speculation and fictional tales. In this case, religion, as well as, philosophical speculation appears to be the foundation for Ashram West. This is a Gay Spiritual Community that seeks to guide and inspire gay identified individuals to life enlightenment as well as to provide humanitarian services to community members (More 10).

A principal aspect of many Utopias is peacefulness. This implies that there is zero tolerance for violence on the part of the community members. Alternatively, members of a utopian community may result to policies of diplomacy thus treating other societal members with utmost courtesy. This requirement of peaceful coexistence may even encompass living things other than humans. For instance, one of the most renowned imaginary ideal communities, Platos Republic, bears the description of a peaceful community irrespective of its relatively rigid economic equality and social classes supposed to uphold state functions (Grube and Reeve 41-49). Fictional ideal communities serve the purpose of criticizing prevailing societal issues. In the case of Ashram West, the teachings are not any different since they are based on customary Hindu Tantra and Vedanta philosophy. These teachings foster integration of all life factors with spirituality, inclusive of sexuality. Vedanta philosophy also teaches that nature is divine, pure, and perfect, while Hindu Tantra develops additional awareness of an individual's divine self. Additionally, Ashram West community guards against gay stereotyping,

as is evident from giving refuge to gay people.

The ideal utopian society according to Ashram West (n. pag) advocates for reverence, equality, and knowledge. Knowledge refers to the information acquired by individuals and utilized to enhance awareness and comprehension of issues. On the other hand, reverence alludes to the respect accorded to highly esteemed individuals or beliefs. Finally equality refers to the same level ranking of all individuals irrespective of their conditions or status in the society. These three aspects constitute other fundamental grounds upon which a utopian society prevails. These aspects are also evident in Ashram West's case, since even though most community members are gay men, there are also non gay females, as well as, heterosexual males striving to become monks. Nevertheless, Ashram West does not impose celibacy upon its monks, but requires them to uphold commitment in their relationships in the interest of community service as well as attaining the community's goals and objectives. This is a clear illustration that equality among all people is of utmost importance. Additionally, Ashram West offers counseling services, spiritual training, and meditation guidance. This is an indicator of its commitment to knowledge acquisition and fighting ignorance (FIC n. pag).

Overall, Ashram West gay spiritual community inspires social change in regard to fostering acceptance of gay people in society. This is achieved through admission of all individuals to the community irrespective of their sexual orientation. Additionally, Ashram enables gay people to accept themselves through teachings showing that they are normal and can develop an all inclusive identity just like other people in the society. This is particularly imperative in a society that perpetuates a culture which considers gay love or relationships to be unconventional as well as immoral. Ashram West Brotherhood also prevents frustrated gay persons from resorting to vices that can lead to self destruction; like drug abuse and compulsive sex (FIC n. pag).

Works Cited

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