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## **For Immediate Release**

Sanskrit chanting, funky world beats, improvisational drumming and hypnotic, audience-inclusive call-and-response are not quite as all-American as turkey and football on Thanksgiving weekend, but maybe they should be.

Bhagavan Das, counter-cultural icon and guru to the Beastie Boys' Mike D., will lead a non-denominational, celebratory giving of thanks in Greenbelt on Thanksgiving weekend. Organizers anticipate that members of several area gospel choirs will be on hand to lift their voices along with the rest of the audience in a completely accessible kirtan event.

"Kirtan (yoga chant) is a participatory, cross-cultural music experience that incorporates the audience right into the performance," worldbeat musician and producer Wynne Paris explained. Paris will be playing guitar at Bhagavan Das' Greenbelt event.

Featured in *Time* Magazine (Oct. 2003), this call-and-response sacred musical experience gained popularity throughout the U.S. following on the heels of the yoga movement. All ages and cultural backgrounds are welcome to the event—there are no prerequisites for participation. Greenbelt Om Community Yoga is sponsoring the event as part of an ongoing effort to forge connections among the black and white, and the eastern and western communities that all call Prince George's County home. "At a kirtan, people create incredible music using Sanskrit words, gospel-style call-and-response, African drums, and joy—just pure joy," Greenbelt Om owner Kim Kash said. "It's multi-cultural, sure. It's universal, really."

Bhagavan Das gained worldwide fame from the publication of *Be Here Now*, the well-known "DIY guide to enlightenment." The book documents Richard Alpert's transformation into Ram Dass through an initial encounter with Bhagavan Das, who ultimately connected Alpert to his guru, Maharaji. Bhagavan Das went on to record a number of albums that are considered classics. *AH* has been called an originator of the world music style, and *Now*, produced by Mike D., brought traditional Indian chants together with contemporary beats and loops. Bhagavan Das has also written a memoir, *It's Here Now, Are You?*, which emphasizes the necessity of personal effort to attain spiritual riches. Today Bhagavan Das tours almost constantly, giving structured workshops on the mystic effects of sound.

Bhagavan Das will be performing Saturday, November 24, 8:00 pm at the Greenbelt Arts Center, 123 Centerway, Greenbelt, MD 20770. Tickets are \$20 reserved (reserve through Greenbelt Om Community Yoga, at [www.greenbeltom.com](http://www.greenbeltom.com)). A limited number of tickets may be available at the door on the day of the event for \$25.

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