



FRIENDS OF BHAKTI MARGA

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2020

There's only one God. He has many names, many forms.
He comes when He has to come.

When you see Him within you, then you will perceive Him
everywhere. Know that deep within, it is the same
Narayana who is seated in each one's heart.

--Paramahansa Vishwananda

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Introduction

Jai Gurudev, dear Friends of Bhakti Marga:

Paramahansa Vishwananda, 1 January, 2020



Happy New Year 2020! May Lord Nrsingadev protect all of you. May Srimati Radharani grace you all with Her Love so that you can get closer in your devotion to the Supreme Lord Himself.

On New Year's Eve, Paramahansa Vishwananda welcomed the new year of 2020 with a record number of guests filling the Sri Bhutabhrteshwarnath Mandir. His inspiring message focused on the importance of listening. But listening to whom?

Every year, people say they want to change something. Very often we say, 'What you have to change is your mind'. We forget that in the Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 10, Verse 2, Krishna said, 'Among all the senses, I am the mind.' That mind itself is Krishna. When He said, 'Among the senses, I am the mind', it means that your mind must be focused upon Him. If your mind is focused upon Him, everything in your life will be perfect. But if your mind is diverted from Him, this is where a problem arises.

It's not about what people tell you. It's about what you feel inside of you. If you really turn your mind inward and really feel Him, you will see that the Bhagavad Gita is your life itself, and that He wants you to come closer to Him. He wants you for Himself.

When you are in love with someone, they want you to be closer to them, but with an expectation for something. [But with God] it is not like that. Actually, He wants you to be closer for your own self. Because your *atma* wants only that, nothing else. Your *atma* doesn't have anything to do with this world. But you have to learn to listen to Him. The point is that you listen always to the outside. You always listen to people. That's why you don't progress. You have to learn to listen to what He says.

<https://paramahamsavishwananda.com/talk/celebrating-the-new-year-2020>

1. Christmas letter and change of address

The FoBM Christmas and New Year's letter together with the Christmas card was sent to 44 countries by the Bad Schwalbach post office mid-November 2019. This is the only mail-order by FoBM to all those members who have given us their full address. In case you haven't received the letter, you can let us know at friends@bhaktimarga.org. Please send all inquiries and amendments (address, name, membership, etc.) to friends@bhaktimarga.org. Urmilaavati or Anjushri will gladly respond to you.

2. Christmas present

Paramahansa Vishwananda's generous Christmas present, which He chose for Friends of Bhakti Marga in South India in January 2019, was greatly appreciated and delighted many hearts. It is a "thank you" to all members.

You can find a detailed description of the four murtis at the end of this newsletter. If you have not yet picked up your chosen murti of Lord Balaji (Lord Vishnu), it will continue to be available at the FoBM info table in Shree Peetha Nilaya with Urmilaavati or Anjushri. **Please show us your membership card for that purpose.**

You can also ask somebody to pick up the present for you. For that, please give us the person's name and give her or him a photo of your membership card, e.g. on the mobile phone. Unfortunately, we are not able to mail these presents.

3. FoBM Membership Card

Please, always have your FoBM membership card with you when you come to Shree Peetha Nilaya. You need to show it whenever you wish to get information from FoBM.

Important: The FoBM cash card **cannot** be used for room or meal bookings in SPN as it is programmed for a 10% discount.

When paying with the FoBM membership cash card, the all-year discount of 10% is deducted automatically. If this does not work, please contact Urmilaavati or Anjushri of Friends of Bhakti Marga. In most cases, the problem can be solved quickly.

Let us know when you have lost your card. The card can be disabled, if you wish so, and the value of the lost card can be transferred to a new one (less €5 for the card re-issue).

4. Webpage

Friends of Bhakti Marga runs a webpage with the following subjects:

- Overview, English
- Payment options in 15 languages
- Application form, English
- FoBM livestream, English
- Newsletter archive: There are three newsletters issued in 14 languages each year, starting with 2016.

Where do you find the FoBM Webpage?

- Open the Bhakti Marga webpage www.bhaktimarga.org
- Scroll down to the bottom of the page (under Shop & More Information) and click on Friends of Bhakti Marga.

5. Livestream Events with Paramahansa Vishwananda

Certain events of Shree Peetha Nilaya are broadcast live for FoBM members who transfer their contributions regularly. This is in appreciation of your support.

About one week before the event, you will receive an invitation with a password which changes with each event. (Because of that, you don't need to save it.) The user name is **always** FoBM, not your own name, because you are a part of FoBM.

The invitation will be sent as a newsletter in 15 languages. Please, also check your spam or junk mail folder in case you cannot find the invitation in your normal email inbox.

The following is the list of direct broadcastings planned by Bhakti Marga for 2020. To be on the safe side, please compare the dates before each event with the dates issued in the BM event calendar since there can be changes on short notice.

Livestream Schedule: Event Days 2020

Date	Livestream for FRIENDS OF BHAKTI MARGA only with PASSWORD	Bhakti Marga Livestream without password for everybody
21/02/2020	Shivaratri	
25/03/2020		Chaitra Navaratri
26/03/2020		Chaitra Navaratri
27/03/2020		Chaitra Navaratri
28/03/2020		Chaitra Navaratri
29/03/2020		Chaitra Navaratri
30/03/2020	Chaitra Navaratri	
31/03/2020	Chaitra Navaratri	
01/04/2020	Chaitra Navaratri	
02/04/2020	Chaitra Navaratri	
06/05/2020	Narasimha Chaturdashi	
13/06/2020	Gurudev Jayanti	
12/08/2020		Krishna Janmashtami

22/08/2020		Ganesh Chaturthi Morning Prayer
17/10/2020		Navaratri
18/10/2020		Navaratri
19/10/2020		Navaratri
20/10/2020		Navaratri
21/10/2020		Navaratri
22/10/2020	Navaratri	
23/10/2020	Navaratri	
24/10/2020	Navaratri	
25/10/2020	Navaratri	
14/11/2020	Diwali / eventually	
26/11/2020	Tulsi Vivaha	
30/11/2020	Babaji Day	
31/12/2020		New Year's Eve

6. Extra Information: Turmeric (Curcuma)

A few highlights about turmeric:

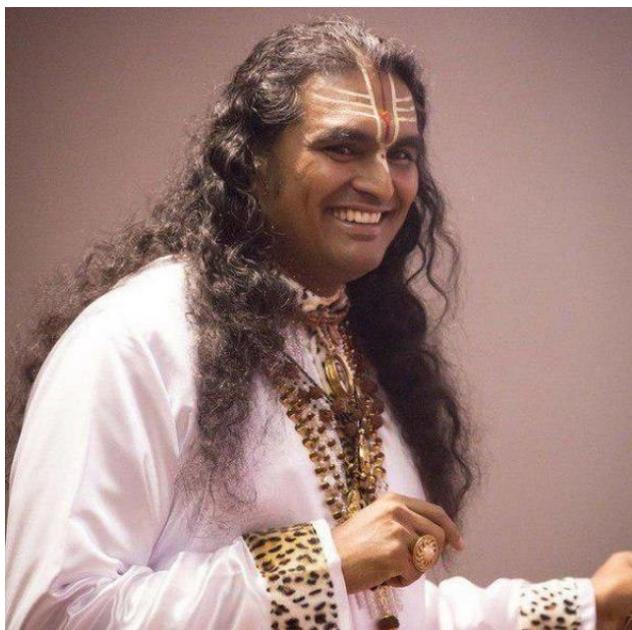
At Darshan with Paramahansa Vishwananda, He gives you a small bag of turmeric.

Turmeric represents purity and auspicious beginnings. It is also connected with gold. Maha Lakshmi likes to be worshipped with it (in SPN and in various Sri Vaishnava temples in India) and with it you receive Her blessing in the turmeric that Guruji personally gives to people during Darshan (info gathered from Aaradhaka).

Turmeric (also called Indian saffron) is a very healthy, strongly anti-inflammatory spice containing many antioxidants, which has a positive effect on digestion (bloating) and joint pain, improves skin conditions (acne, eczema), and supports the liver to be healthy. It also helps with diabetes and heart disease, reduces Alzheimer risk and the growth of cancer cells. Turmeric has been widely used in Ayurveda and in holistic medicine since 500 BC. The active substance is curcumin (in turmeric as a spice, there is around 3% of curcumin; curcumin exists also as a strong food supplement and a natural remedy). It can be very good to combine turmeric with black pepper (active substance: piperin) which helps with a better absorption of curcumin. Turmeric is also used as a dye for fabrics.

Thanks

If you want to experience the Love of God, help, do charity. This will open the heart, because when you do charity, you don't think of yourself, you think of serving.



Guruji during Maha Shivaratri

Paramahansa Vishwananda
Just Love 2

Your regular financial contribution is very important for Bhakti Marga because it helps to spread Paramahansa Vishwananda's message of love in our world. This way, ignorance and egoism can be transformed into peace, unity and mutual respect.

Our beautiful planet, Mother Earth, will once again become a place of joy and harmony for the whole of creation. With the blessing of our Satgurudeva Swami Vishwananda, we can achieve this goal.

A heartfelt thank you for your help and friendship in the name of Bhakti Marga!

7. Appendix: Texts on the murtis

Balaji (Venkateshwara)



Lord Venkateshwara, also called Balaji, is the presiding deity of Tirumala Venkateshwara Temple located in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh in India.

Balaji-Venkateshwara has stood at Tirumala since the dawn of civilization, to save his devotees from the evils of Kali Yuga. History cannot explain or record the power and capabilities of the God, the temple and the hill.

Whenever Dharma is in danger, Vishnu manifests himself on earth to rid the world of the evil. As Varaha, Vishnu destroys the evil demon Hiranyaksha, who steals the knowledge of truth as it is documented in the Vedas, and settles on the sacred Tirumala hill. Again, as Venkateshwara, he destroys evil demons who threaten the existence of Dharma. The demons represent negative forces and actions which prompt us to deviate from the path of righteousness. The destruction of evil and the triumph of good is central to all religions, particularly Hinduism. Balaji is omnipresent and omnipotent. As Vishnu the all-pervading protector, he identifies with every believer.

Marriage of Venkateshwara and Padmavati: After the Mahabharata war, the land of Thondaimandalam was ruled by Akasha Raja, whose capital was situated at Narayanapuram, near the Venkatachala hill range. As he was childless, he decided to perform a great sacrifice and, when the land was ploughed for the sacrifice,

a thousand-petalled lotus containing a baby was discovered. She was an incarnation of Goddess Lakshmi and was named Padmavati, as she was born in a lotus. The baby grew up into a beautiful young girl.

One day, sage Narada appeared in the court, read her palm and predicted that she would be the bride of Vishnu. The same day, Venkateshwara was chasing a wild elephant in the Venkatachala forest and followed it into the royal garden where he met Padmavati, who fell in love with him. It was destined that Vishnu and Lakshmi in Kali Yuga would be married as Srinivasa-Venkateshwara and Padmavati.

The whole story can be found at: <http://blessingsonthenet.com/indianculture/hindugod-hindugodess/articles/162/marriage-of-venkateshwara-and-padmavati>

Balaji (a Form of Maha Vishnu) with Ashta Lakshmi – 8 qualities of the Divine Mother



She is the eternal consort who serves Lord Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṅṭha. She is unique amongst all feminine deities, as She is the direct redemptive Grace of the Lord. Souls trapped by worldly existence appeal to Her mercy and, through that, win the favour of the Lord, which is why She is known as the Mother of the Universe. Shri Maha Lakshmi is the embodiment of love and beauty. She came out of the ocean during the great churning of Milky Ocean. When the heart and the mind are churned, then the spiritual wealth awakens and that spiritual wealth is Maha Lakshmi. She is

one, but she has 8 specific qualities by which she is venerated or praised. She gives 8 different gifts or 8 different forms of prosperity:

1. Adi Lakshmi - the primal mother goddess lives in Vaikuntha; she looks after everybody
2. Dhana Lakshmi - goddess of material wealth, money and clothes
3. Dhanya Lakshmi - goddess of good harvest and grains, provides food
4. Gaja Lakshmi - goddess of power and strength, grants abundance
5. Santana Lakshmi - goddess of offspring, wealth of children with high spiritual qualities
6. Veera Lakshmi - goddess of courage and inner strength
7. Vijaya Lakshmi - goddess of victory of the six lower qualities
8. Aishwarya Lakshmi - goddess of mighty powers, grants spiritual wisdom and siddhis

(source: Paramahansa Vishwananda speaking at Maha Lakshmi Yagna 2014, WikiPedia, and as expressed in the Bhutabhrteshwarnath Mandir by the murals)

Lord Balaji with Vaishnava Tilak as Prabhavali



Very often the special emblems of God to whom the Prabhavali belongs are sculptured on each side of it; for example, sankha and chakra are found in association with the Prabhavali of Vishnu. The Prabhavali is an ornamental circular or oval ring. A tilak is a mark or a symbol traditionally worn on the forehead by a Hindu to showcase his specific spiritual affiliation. It is said to bring protection and prosperity to its bearer.

The Vaishnava Tilak is called Urdhva Pundra and is worn by Vaishnavites to show that they are devotees of Vishnu. The Bhakti Marga Tilak is an adapted version of the tilak of the Sri Sampradaya (can be translated as 'tradition', 'spiritual lineage'). It

is made using chandan (sandalwood paste) and kumkum (red turmeric). ([source: Wikipedia and BM Devotee Manual](#))

Balaji Tilak here can be seen as a depiction of our spiritual practice (Sadhana), a reminder of what we should live and achieve as Vaishnavas: to serve the feet of the Supreme.

Lord Padmanabha



Padmanabha is a lotus-naved God and the one from whose navel sprang the lotus which contained Brahma, who created the universe and His right hand touches a Shiva Lingam, hence it can be considered a Trimurti.

Lord Ananta Padmanabham refers to Sri Ananta Padmanabhaswamy from Thiruvananthapuram Temple in Kerala, South India. The name of the city of Thiruvananthapuram in Malayalam translates to 'The city of Lord Ananta (Lord of the Serpents)', referring to the deity of the

Padmanabhaswamy Temple.

Ananta is a Sanskrit term which means endless or limitless; it also means 'eternal', 'infinity', or an unending expansion or without limit. It is one of the many names of Lord Vishnu. Ananta is also referred to as Sheshanaga, the celestial snake, on which Lord Vishnu reclines. Around the world, the Lord Ananta Padmanabhaswamy Temple is renowned for its beauty and grandeur. Dedicated to Lord Vishnu, it is one of the 108 sacred Vishnu temples or 'divya-deshams'. Divya-deshams are divine abodes revered by the 12 Alvars in the Divya Prabandham, a collection of 4000 Tamil verses worshipping Lord Narayana and other forms of Him. Lord Ananta Padmanabhaswamy Temple is one of the most important temples in the world and one of the oldest temples of India. It is an ancient Sri Vaishnava temple known to be the second richest temple in the world. The principal deity, Lord Ananta Padmanabhaswamy, is enshrined in the Anantashayana posture, the eternal yogic sleep on the serpent Adishesha. ([Internet research](#))

This gifted murti is a replica of His form in Thiruvananthapuram Temple in Kerala, South India.

Mataji Anjushri, Mataji Urmilaa, and Paarthaa

Anjushri Urmilaa Paarthaa

On behalf of

The Ashram - Shree Peetha Nilaya, Bhakti Marga Centre, Springen