

# BHĀGAVATA-PRAVEŚĀ PROGRAM

PROSPECTUS FOR 2008-09 ACADEMIC SESSION

## The Śrīmad-Bhāgavata Vidyāpīṭham



The Śrīmad-Bhāgavata Vidyāpīṭham began operations in fall, 2005. The school is directed by BBT's senior Sanskrit editor, translator and commentator, His Grace Gopīparāṇadhana dāsa. The main purposes of the school are to train Sanskrit translators and editors for the BBT, promote deep study of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, help devotees learn to function as brāhmaṇas in ISKCON, and for the accomplishment of these main purposes teach proficiency in reading and speaking Sanskrit. In its initial phase of operations, the school offers a three-year Bhāgavata-śāstrī study program, the students of

which study Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports to the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, learn the Sanskrit grammar of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and undergo training to read the Sanskrit commentaries on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by our previous ācāryas. From July, 2007 Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā has been taught by the director of the Vidyāpīṭham as a part of this study program.

## Bhāgavata-praveśā, an extension course in Māyāpura

The Vidyāpīṭham also offers an extension course titled Bhāgavata-praveśā in Śrī Māyāpura-dhāma. Graduates of this program will be well prepared for the three-year Bhāgavata-śāstrī program in Govardhana, and will be better equipped for knowledgeable preaching of the Bhagavad-gītā. This program in Māyāpura is also open to those who do not plan to study at the Vidyāpīṭham in Govardhana. This program began on 1 November, 2005.

## Content

The Bhāgavata-praveśā program includes an intensive study of the Bhagavad-gītā, the first three chapters of the First Canto of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and an introduction to Sanskrit.

Classes on the Bhagavad-gītā will include a study of the commentaries on the Bhagavad-gītā by Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. The students will also be taught the nine essential teachings of Lord Caitanya (nava-prameya) as presented by Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Students will then enter the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by studying its first three chapters of the First Canto which summarize the teachings of the Bhāgavatam.

Sanskrit: Students will be taught elementary Sanskrit grammar and vocabulary in order to understand the text of the Bhagavad-gītā. They will also be introduced to the Hari-nāmāmṛta system of Sanskrit grammar formulated by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī.

## Medium of instruction

The program is conducted in English.

## Objectives

The Śāstra classes prepare the students to:

1. understand, defend, and apply Śrīla Prabhupāda's presentation of the teachings of his predecessor-ācāryas and Vaiṣṇava śāstra;
2. develop a well-rounded understanding of Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings as reflected in his mood, mission, emphasis, and balance;
3. help align their understanding and practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and their desires and beliefs with Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings.
4. quote extensively from the Sanskrit text of the Bhagavad-gītā and the portion of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam under study, and confidently unpack their meaning.

Students will also be prepared to:

1. recognize the devanāgarī script.
2. accurately pronounce and recite Sanskrit texts.

The introduction to Sanskrit prepares the students to:

1. Translate simple texts from Sanskrit to English;
2. Be able to understand the Sanskrit text of the Bhagavad-gītā to a reasonable extent.

## Program schedule

The course runs for 8½ months, beginning on 1 June 2008 and ending by 15 February 2009, with a two week break in between.

## Classes

Those who have been accepted as full-time students for Bhāgavata-praveśa should expect a challenging, disciplined, and intensive course of study.

The program usually has three classes per day, six days a week.

**Sanskrit 1:** Students will be prepared to understand and grammatically analyze the Sanskrit text of the Bhagavad-gītā.

**Sanskrit 2:** This will familiarize the students with the Hari-nāmāmṛta system of Sanskrit grammar provided by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī.

**Śāstra:** This will focus on the teachings of Bhagavad-gītā, based on the purports of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. A study of the first three chapters of the First Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam will follow this. Memorization and recitation of the śloka will be practiced daily. Classes on the nine prameyas will be included. Śāstra classes for men and women are separate.

The duration of each of the above classes will be 90 minutes.

Additionally, a **Sanskrit workshop** will train students in learning the devanāgarī script and Sanskrit pronunciation.

Students will have to read ahead the verses and purports for each section of the Gītā and the Bhāgavatam. They will have to memorize 108 śloka from the Bhagavad-gītā and about 20 from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Competition is deemphasized and, as far as possible, students are provided with individual help as needed.

## Assessments

These are mandatory for all those who have been accepted as students. The assessments will be cumulative, including the current covered material along with previous ones, in the manner indicated below.

	Type	No. of times
Śāstra	1. “Closed-book” written examination 2. Memorization and assessment of śloka 3. Essays	Students will be assessed every three chapters (a total of seven times) and will have to write 3 essays.
Introduction to Sanskrit	Written examination	Students will be assessed every week.

Students are not awarded marks or grades for any of the assessments. However this does not mean that the Vidyāpīṭham is liberal in its assessments. Rather there is a rigorous criteria which students have to fulfill for the Vidyāpīṭham to consider that their performance is satisfactory. The criteria may be different for each assessment, and students shall be informed of these prior to each assessment.

## Certification

For the **Bhāgavata-praveśa** certificate, students must have a satisfactory performance in the “Śāstra”, “Sanskrit 1” and “Sanskrit 2” assessments.

For the **Bhāgavata-dvāra** certificate, a satisfactory performance in “Śāstra” and “Sanskrit 1” is required.

For the **Bhāgavata-paricaya** certificate, students will be assessed only in Śāstra.

## Remedial help and reassessment

As far as possible we try to provide students who do not perform satisfactorily in the assessments with remedial help and opportunities for reassessment. Such students shall obtain certification only after satisfactory performance in the reassessment(s).

## Eligibility and admission

The classes are open to both men and women. Those who want to be admitted as students should be chanting Hare Krishna, following the four regulative principles and seriously interested in this study program. They can apply and we will consider their admission individually. They should also have enough time at hand to carry out their homework and reading assignments. It is best if they have read Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Bhagavad-gītā As It Is at least once and if they have an aptitude for learning Sanskrit.

Candidates should fill our application form in which they are asked about their devotional background and service history. Submission of an application form does not automatically entitle admission into the program. The application forms are duly processed and the short-listed candidates are personally intimated.

As per ISKCON Māyāpura’s bylaws, single men or women who are coming to reside in Māyāpura for more than six months are required to arrange for some ISKCON Māyāpura resident in good standing to become his or her guardian.

## Tuition fee and other expenses

There is no tuition fee for the course. However, students have to arrange for all other expenses, including their travel to and from Māyāpura, visas, accommodation and prasāda in Māyāpura.

## Textbooks

Students have to bring their personal copies of Bhagavad-gītā As It Is (second edition) and the First Canto of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by Śrīla Prabhupāda with them. Other books can be purchased at Māyāpura. Students should also arrange for their own stationery such as notebooks, pens, papers, etc.

## Serve-and-study schemes offered by ISKCON Māyāpura

In order to facilitate devotees who would like to come to Māyāpura to take advantage of our classes, but who are unable to provide for their own prasāda and accommodation, ISKCON Māyāpura offers two serve-and-study schemes:

### **1. One year serve-and-study scheme for devotees who want to study the Bhagavad-gītā:**

Devotees can enroll in the Śāstra class as students from 1 June 2008 to 15 February 2009. They will have to attend the morning temple program and render five hours of practical devotional service everyday for one year, from 1 June 2008 to 31 May 2009, in and under ISKCON Māyāpura. ISKCON Māyāpura will provide such students with prasāda and accommodation.

### **2. Two year serve-and-study scheme for devotees who want to study the Bhagavad-gītā and Sanskrit:**

Devotees can enroll in the Śāstra class as students from 1 June 2008 to 15 February 2009, and enroll in the Sanskrit classes from 1 June 2009 to 15 February 2010. They will have to attend the morning temple program and render five hours of practical devotional service everyday for two years, from 1 June 2008 till 31 May 2010, in and under ISKCON Māyāpura. ISKCON Māyāpura will provide such students with prasāda and accommodation.

*Guru-sevānanda dāsa, a disciple of HH Jayapatākā Swami, will teach Śāstra for the men; Racitāmbārā devī dāsī, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, will teach Śāstra for the women. Vidvān Gaurāṅga dāsa, a disciple of HH Jayapatākā Swami, will teach Sanskrit. The course will be coordinated by them under the guidance of His Grace Gopīparāṇadhana dāsa Adhikārī. For an application form, interested male devotees can e-mail Gurusevānanda dāsa at [gurusevananda.jps@pamho.net](mailto:gurusevananda.jps@pamho.net), while interested female devotees can e-mail Racitāmbārā devī dāsī at [racitambara.acbsp@pamho.net](mailto:racitambara.acbsp@pamho.net).*