

BHĀGAVATA-SPARŚA

PROSPECTUS FOR 2009 ACADEMIC SESSION

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Vidyāpīṭham



The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Vidyāpīṭham is a school directed by the BBT's senior Sanskrit editor, translator and commentator, His Grace Gopīparāṇadhana dāsa adhikārī. The school is located at Govardhana, Mathura district, India. The main purposes of the school are to train Sanskrit editors and translators for the BBT, promote deep study of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and help devotees learn to function as brāhmaṇas in ISKCON. Sanskrit is taught at the school to accomplish the above mentioned main purposes. The school in its current original phase of operations 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 Goswami and undergo training to read the Sanskrit commentaries on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by our

previous ācāryas. The students also study Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā under the tutelage of His Grace Gopīparāṇadhana dāsa adhikārī. The school commenced its operations on 1 October 2005 and the first batch of students graduated in 2008.

Bhāgavata-praveśa, an eight-month course in Māyāpura

The Vidyāpīṭham also offers an eight-month course titled **Bhāgavata-praveśa** in Śrī Māyāpura, West Bengal, India. Graduates of this program are well-prepared for knowledgeable preaching of the Bhāgavad-gītā and are equipped to take up the three-year Bhāgavata-śāstrī program in Govardhana. Students who do not plan to study further at the Vidyāpīṭham's headquarters in Govardhana are also eligible to join this program at Śrī Māyāpura. The Śrī Māyāpura program began in the year 2005.

Bhāgavata-sparśa, a new three-month course in Sri Māyāpura

The Vidyāpīṭham's branch at Śrī Māyāpura now offers a three-month course, **Bhāgavata-sparśa**, to help students to become familiar with the Bhāgavad-gītā and a portion of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, to introduce them to elementary Sanskrit—script, pronunciation and conversational—and to teach them to understand the Sanskrit text of the Bhāgavad-gītā through the procedure outlined by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Objectives

The classes on Bhāgavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam will 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.

The Sanskrit classes will prepare the students to:

1. recognize and write in the devanāgarī script, be able to produce accurate roman transliteration;
2. pronounce, with reasonable accuracy, the Sanskrit sounds;
3. understand the Sanskrit text of the Bhāgavad-gītā to a reasonable extent.

Content

(1) Śāstra: During the first week, the students will be given an overview of the entire Gītā by studying Śrīla Prabhupāda's translation. They will then be guided to systematically study Śrīla Prabhupāda's Introduction to the Gītā in conjunction with Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's Introduction for the next seven weeks. The last month will feature a study of Ajāmila-upākhyāna, the section of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that deals with the history and deliverance of Ajāmila (Canto 6, Chapters 1 to 3) highlighting the value and potency of chanting the holy names of the Supreme Lord.

(2) Classes on **spoken Sanskrit** will introduce the students to proper pronunciation of Sanskrit sounds during the first week, and subsequently they will be taught basic conversational Sanskrit.

(3) **Written Sanskrit**¹ will teach them the devanāgarī script.

(4) Classes on **Bhagavad-gītā Sanskrit** will acquaint them with Sanskrit grammar and vocabulary through an analysis of the Sanskrit text of the Bhagavad-gītā, and equip them with the skills needed to enlarge their knowledge of Sanskrit for the same.

Students taking up all classes can expect up to 90 minutes of homework and reading assignments per day. They can also expect to be asked to memorize about 30 ślokas. Competition is deemphasized, and as far as possible students are provided with individual help as needed.

The course will begin on 1 June 2009 and end on 31 August 2009. Those who have been accepted as students for Bhāgavata-sparśa should expect a disciplined course of study. The program has four classes per day, usually six days a week. There are separate classes for men and women. The details are set out below:

Class	Duration	Teacher
Śāstra	90 minutes	For men: Vidvān Gaurāṅga dāsa For women: Ramaṇīyā Mātājī
Spoken Sanskrit	45 minutes	For men: Prahādānanda Prabhu For women: Ānanda-sarovara Mātājī ²
Written Sanskrit	30 minutes	For men: Prahādānanda Prabhu For women: Rāseśvarī Mātājī
Bhagavad-gītā Sanskrit	60 minutes	For men: Kīśora dāsa For women: Ānanda-sarovara Mātājī

Medium of Instruction

This program will be conducted in English.

Assessment

There will be an assessment for each class at the end of every month. These are mandatory for all those who have been accepted as students.

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

Certification

Satisfactory performance in each of the assessments is mandatory to receive the **Bhāgavata-sparśa** certificate.

Remedial help and reassessment

As far as possible we will 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 chant Hare Krishna, follow the four regulative principles and be seriously interested in the study program. They

¹ This class will run for one month.

² Sanskrit pronunciation for women will be taught by Rāseśvarī Mātājī

should also find enough time to carry out their homework and reading assignments. It is best if they also have an aptitude for learning Sanskrit.

Those who want to be admitted as students should fill out an application form in which they have to provide information about their devotional background and service history. Submission of an application form does not automatically entitle admission into the program. The application forms will be duly processed on an individual basis and the short-listed candidates will be personally intimated.

Dismissal

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavata Vidyāpīṭham reserves the right to dismiss any of the students from the program if they are found to be lacking in Vaiṣṇava brahminical integrity.

Tuition fee and other expenses

Tuition is free for those who have been admitted as students. They 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 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Canto 6, Chapters 1 to 3, by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Books to be used in the Sanskrit classes will be available for purchase in Māyāpura with Vidvān Gaurāṅga dāsa. Students should also arrange for their own stationery such as notebooks, pens, papers, etc.

Teachers

Kiśora Prabhu, a disciple of HH Bhakti Vikāśa Swami, is a graduate of the Bhāgavata-śāstrī program at Govardhana. His wife **Ānanda-sarovara Mātāji**, a disciple of HG Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Prabhu, studied Sanskrit extensively at the Benaras Hindu University at Vāraṅāsī. **Prahlādānanda Prabhu**, a disciple of HH Gopala Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja, is a graduate of the Govardhan school's Bhāgavata-śāstrī program with a special interest in spoken Sanskrit. **Ramaṇīyā Mātāji**, a disciple of HDG Śrīla Prabhupāda, has been a long-term student of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and is a śāstra teacher for women in the Bhāgavata-praveśa course at Māyāpura. **Rāseśvarī Mātāji**, a disciple of HH Jayapatākā Swami, has taught Sanskrit pronunciation and the devanāgarī script for women in Bhāgavata-praveśa course at Māyāpura. **Vidvān Gaurāṅga dāsa**, a disciple of HH Jayapatākā Swami has learnt Sanskrit at HH Bhaktividyā Pūrṇa Mahārāja's Gurukula in the early '90s and has taught śāstra for men in the Bhāgavata-praveśa course at Māyāpura.

This Bhāgavata-sparśa study program at Śrī Māyāpura program is coordinated by Vidvān Gaurāṅga dāsa under the direction of Śrī Gopīparāṇadhana Prabhu.

Devotees interested in becoming students of the Bhāgavata-sparśa program can e-mail Vidvān Gaurāṅga dāsa at vidvan.gauranga@gmail.com for an application form and further details.