

Initiations

Welcome to our Initiation Portal. This is your first step to applying for initiation in ISKCON through Hare Krishna Melbourne. Here you can find an introduction to the process of initiation.

You can also download our current initiation papers, including the standard Governing Board Commission (GBC) exams as part of the Initiation Compendium

The secret of success in the matter of Krsna consciousness is devotion to the Lord and the spiritual master. In the Vedas, the secret of success is described as follows:

yasya deve para bhaktir, yatha deve tatha gurau tasyaite kathita hy arthah, prakasante mahatmanah

“Anyone who has developed unflinching faith in the Lord and the spiritual master can understand the revealed scripture unfold before him.’ So continue your present attitude and you will be successful in your spiritual progress. I am sure that even if I am not physically present before you, still you will be able to execute all spiritual duties in the matter of Krsna consciousness if you follow the above principles. I thank you once more for your service.” (Srila Prabhupada letter to Subala, 29.09.1967)

Steady observance of vows to chant sixteen rounds daily and to observe the four regulative principles are the basis of a candidate’s qualification to accept initiation from a diksha guru (initiating spiritual master) in Srila Prabhupada’s line.

TAKING SHELTER OF SRILA PRABHUPADA

The first step toward taking shelter of an initiating guru is to take shelter of ISKCON’s Founder-Acharya, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, as one’s shiksha guru.

Because Srila Prabhupada is ISKCON’s Founder-Acarya, he always remains our primary instructing spiritual master. A minimum period of six months under Srila Prabhupada’s shelter is required by ISKCON law. A candidate who desires to progress further on the path toward initiation should then complete ISKCON’s Disciples’ Course, then sit and pass their shelter interview and examination. In this way they prepare themselves to seek shelter of a diksha (initiating) guru.

QUALIFYING TO RECEIVE SHELTER OF AN INITIATING GURU

A candidate should accept a number of shiksha gurus, both formal and informal. However, apart from a few exceptional circumstances, one will accept only one diksha guru. The next step toward accepting initiation is to observe the example and realised

teaching offered by the devotees serving as ISKCON's diksha gurus. Both by serving them and asking questions of them, you should determine which devotee's instruction and example most fully represent Srila Prabhupada to you, and can deliver his mercy into your life. You may then request the guru to accept you into his shelter as a candidate for future initiation.

Should the initiating guru accept you into their shelter, a further minimum probationary period of six months will apply following receipt by the examiner of written confirmation from the guru. The candidate is responsible for arranging for this letter to be sent.

QUALIFYING FOR HARINAMA INITIATION

Harinama initiation strengthens one's chanting and sadhana. The disciple's service is purified by being offered directly to Sri Krishna through the disciplic succession. During his six month period of accepting shelter from his diksha guru a candidate should develop his student-teacher relationship, by serving and seeking instruction from his guru. The aim is to allow both guru and disciple to develop conviction that the disciple is able to assist the guru in his service to Srila Prabhupada, and apply his instructions to his practice of sadhana. The disciple should also verify that the guru fully represents Srila Prabhupada to him. The test is whether you can honour this service relationship throughout this life (and beyond).

When a candidate has demonstrated steady advancement in sadhana under the diksha guru's shelter by upholding his or her vows relating to japa and the four regulative principles, one may apply for Harinama initiation. With the permission of the temple president, you will need to sit and pass further interviews and an exam.

QUALIFYING FOR BRAHMINICAL INITIATION

Brahminical initiation strengthens one's chanting and preaching, and qualifies one to worship the Deities directly. When – following Harinama initiation – a candidate demonstrates steadiness in sadhana and devotional service over a further (minimum) twelve month period, he or she may apply to qualify for brahminical initiation. After gaining the permission of the temple president, you must sit the relevant interviews and exam.

SIMPLE STEPS TO INITIATION IN ISKCON

FIRST SIX-MONTH PERIOD

- take shelter of Srila Prabhupada as your instructing Guru and chant his pranam mantra
- chant 16 rounds daily
- strictly follow the 4 regulative principles
- maintain steady sadhana and service
- develop steady service relationships with ISKCON Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. ISKCON Melbourne is currently introducing a Founder-Acharya Course for candidates
- register for, attend and pass the ISKCON Disciple Course. This is mandatory for all applicants within Melbourne Yatra.
- at the end of six months, ask permission of your Examiner to sit your shelter exam
- pass your shelter interview and sadhana requirements (as above)
- pass the GBC exam

Then

- develop a relationship with the Initiating Spiritual Master of your choice
- ask him for shelter
- arrange for his written confirmation of giving you shelter to be sent to your Examiner
- your minimum 6 months as a sheltered disciple begins from the Examiner's receipt of your Guru's written confirmation

SECOND SIX MONTH PERIOD:

- chant your Initiating Spiritual Master's pranam mantra
- chant 16 rounds daily
- strictly follow the 4 regulative principles
- increase steady sadhana and service
- develop steady devotional relationships with your Spiritual Master and senior ISKCON devotees to serve Srila Prabhupada
- request your Temple President's permission to sit your first initiation exam and interviews
- sit and pass your interviews on sadhana, personal behaviour and required reading
- sit and pass the GBC exam (Bhakti Sastri Course graduates are exempt from the exam)
- receive your Temple President's recommendation for your initiation
- request first initiation from your Spiritual Master
- receive first initiation

FOLLOWING 12 MONTH PERIOD:

- chant 16 rounds daily
- strictly follow the 4 regulative principles
- increase your steadiness in sadhana and service to the Deities
- increase your steadiness in your service relationship with your Spiritual Master and senior ISKCON devotees to serve Srila Prabhupada
- request your Temple President's permission to sit your second initiation exam and interviews
- sit and pass your interviews on sadhana, personal behaviour and required reading
- sit and pass the GBC exam (Bhakti Sastri Course graduates are exempt from the exam)
- receive your Temple President's recommendation for your initiation
- request second initiation from your Spiritual Master
- receive second initiation