

How Do I Qualify For Initiation?

ISKCON MELBOURNE INITIATION COMPENDIUM

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SIMPLE STEPS TO INITIATION IN ISKCON MELBOURNE

The steps to initiation are laid out in the order they are to be completed.

Our administration team follows the same steps when we process your application.

We'll assist your individual application within the framework of

1. ISKCON's Governing Body Commission (GBC) directives (ISKCON Law)
2. Melbourne-yatra requirements.

You'll personally drive your application throughout. So, responsibility for complying with ISKCON law and Melbourne requirements rests with you. Read *How Do I Qualify for Initiation* for the relevant laws and more details on your level of application.

Please note that – regardless of when you began your application - the following requirements apply to you at the time you attend your interview. You may need to complete lower-level requirements that you have missed.

FIRST SIX MONTHS:

1. Take shelter of Srila Prabhupada as your instructing spiritual master and chant his *praṇāms* (6 months minimum).
2. Chant 16 rounds daily and strictly follow the 4 regulative principles (6 months minimum).
3. Maintain steady *sādhana*. Develop a steady service relationship with Srila Prabhupada by offering rostered service at the Temple, and to Hare Krishna Melbourne's preaching mission. If you are unable to offer these services, you are expected to participate in Harinama and book distribution. Your service should be regular and ongoing over the 6-month period leading up to your application and be verifiable with senior devotees.
4. Complete the reading of *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* unabridged edition (by Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami). This reading is mandatory.
5. Sit & pass the open-book essay on *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* (mandatory).
6. Attend and pass the [Founder-Acarya Course](#) and the [ISKCON Disciples' Course](#) (both are mandatory).
7. Complete the reading of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* (with purports). This reading is mandatory.
8. Begin the required reading for initiates if you have yet to do so (this includes Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 1 and Nectar of Devotion to Ch. 19).
9. At the end of six months, complete the *Service Record Form for Shelter Candidates* and the *Application To Qualify For Shelter* forms at <http://www.harekrishnamelbourne.com.au/members.html>, and receive automatic responses that your forms have been lodged successfully.
10. Your administrator will receive your forms and log your position in the applicant's queue. They will enter your data into your records, then arrange for you to sit your shelter interview and exam according to your place in the queue.
11. Sit and pass your *sādhana* interview. This includes being able to supply positive 6-month *sādhana* references from senior local devotees outside your immediate family. Your examiner will contact your referees.
12. Sit and pass the GBC 16 Question exam. Bhakti Sastri graduates are no longer exempt from questions 1-13. The Bhakti Sastri degree is prescribed for second initiation candidates.
13. When you have successfully completed steps 1-12 your administrator will email you written confirmation of your passing the GBC and Melbourne Yatra shelter requirements. At this point you are qualified to choose a spiritual master.
14. Develop a service relationship with the initiating spiritual master of your choice. Meet any extra requirements he/she sets. Ask him/her for shelter and provide written evidence from step 13.
15. Arrange for his/her written confirmation of giving you shelter to be sent to your administrator. Your minimum 6 months as a sheltered disciple (per ISKCON law) begins from our receipt of your *guru's* written confirmation.

SECOND SIX MONTHS:

1. Regardless of when you began your application, the current requirements apply to you at the time you attend your interview. You may need to complete lower-level requirements that you missed.
2. Chant your initiating spiritual master's along with Srila Prabhupada's *praṇāmas*.
3. Chant 16 rounds daily and strictly follow the 4 regulative principles.
4. Increase your steady *sādhana*. Develop an ongoing service relationship with your initiating spiritual master and Srila Prabhupada by offering rostered service at the Temple, and to Hare Krishna Melbourne's preaching mission. If you are unable to offer these services, you are expected to participate in Harinama and book distribution. Your service should be regular and ongoing over the 12-month period leading up to your application and be verifiable with senior devotees.
5. Attend and pass the [Founder-Acarya Course](#) and the [ISKCON Disciples' Course](#) if you have yet to do so (mandatory).
6. Complete reading of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Canto 1 (with purports) and *Nectar of Devotion* (to chapter 19, minimum). This reading - plus the compulsory reading for Shelter candidates (above) – is mandatory.
7. Complete the required reading for initiates (*How Do I Qualify for Initiation*).
8. Learn the *Guru-pūjā* prayers (*Śrī Guru-vandanā* by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura), to be recited in interview. This is mandatory.
9. Complete the *Service Record Form for First Initiation Candidates* and the *Application to Qualify for First Initiation* forms at <http://www.harekrishnamelbourne.com.au/members.html> and receive an automatic response.
10. Your administrator will log your position in the applicant's queue and upload your data to our database according to your place in the queue.
11. When your admin. shares your application summary with our Temple President, you'll be invited to meet him to discuss your ongoing service to ISKCON and to seek permission to attend your first initiation interviews and exam. He will refer to your record of regular, ongoing Temple service (minimum 12 months) and plans to increase your service.
12. Sit and pass your interviews on *sādhana*, personal behaviour and required reading. This includes being able to supply positive 12-month *sādhana* references from referees: senior local devotees outside your immediate family. Your examiner will contact your referees.
13. Sit and pass your exam. You can only sit once every 12 months. Bhakti Sastri graduates are no longer exempt from this exam. The Bhakti Sastri degree is prescribed for second initiation candidates.
14. Your admin. will summarise your completed application to our Temple President for approval.
15. Receive your Temple President's recommendation for your initiation.
16. Meet any extra requirements your initiating spiritual master sets. Request first initiation and, with his/her permission, receive first initiation.

FOLLOWING 12 MONTHS:

1. Melbourne Yatra is committed to strictly adhering to ISKCON Law as our core principle of administration. We ask all candidates who move to Melbourne but have yet to complete elements of ISKCON Law to do so (check Excerpts from ISKCON Law on Discipleship in ISKCON in this guide).
2. Regardless of when you began your application - the current requirements apply to you at the time you attend your interview. You may need to complete lower-level requirements that you missed.
3. Brahminical initiation is not an automatic outcome of the time you've spent in devotional service. You must apply to be considered for second initiation. Approval will come from your Temple President.
4. First, you must check with your Temple Authorities or Managers whether there is a need for your existing, ongoing service at brahminical level. You'll supply evidence of this in your application form.
5. You must demonstrate a record of substantial service to the Deities - either in Their worship or in Their kitchen - or to Srila Prabhupada's preaching mission (for example, in management). If you are unable to offer substantial service in these fields, you are expected to demonstrate it in Harinama and/or book distribution. Your service should be regular and ongoing over the 2-year period leading up to your application (minimum). It must be verifiable with your Manager/Department Head or Temple Authority.
6. Your Temple President will explore your service record to see what substantial service you are performing over time. He'll discuss what opportunities exist to move to this next level with you and your mentors.
7. If your application is to be considered, you'll be invited to complete the registration and service record forms. If not, you may re-apply after 2 years.

Sadhana requirements and steps to follow:

1. Chant 16 rounds daily and strictly follow the 4 regulative principles.
2. Demonstrate increased steadiness in your sādhana and service to the Deities.
3. Increase your steadiness in your service relationship with your initiating spiritual master and Srila Prabhupada.
4. Attend and pass the Founder-Acarya Course and the ISKCON Disciples' Course if you have yet to do so (mandatory).
5. Complete the reading for Shelter and 1st Initiation candidates (above) if you have yet to do so (mandatory).
6. Complete the required reading for second initiation (see How Do I Qualify for Initiation)
7. Learn the Guru-pūjā prayers (Śrī Guru-vandanā by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura), to be recited in interview if you have yet to do so (mandatory).
8. Apply to be considered for second initiation at <http://www.harekrishnamelbourne.com.au/members.html> and receive an automatic response.
9. Your administrator will log your position in the applicant's queue and upload your data to our database according to your place in the queue.
10. When your admin. shares your application summary with your Temple President, you may be invited to meet him to discuss what opportunities exist to move to this next level.
11. If your application is to be considered, you be invited to complete the registration and service record forms. (If not, you may re-apply after 2 years.)
12. You'll be invited to attend your interviews on sādhana, personal behaviour and required reading. This includes being able to supply positive 2-year sādhana references from referees: senior local devotees outside your immediate family. Your examiner will contact your referees.
13. Sit and pass your exam. Bhakti Sastri graduates are exempt from this exam on presentation of Pass Certificates.
14. Receive your Temple President's recommendation for second initiation.
15. Meet any extra requirements your initiating spiritual master sets. Request second initiation from your spiritual master and, with his/her permission, receive second initiation.

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INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to make the procedure for receiving *śikṣā* (instruction) and *dikṣā* (initiation) in ISKCON (Melbourne Yatra) clear and – as each step is completed - achievable. Please remember that the process of developing a service relationship with an ISKCON guru is a natural one that stands the test of time.

EXCERPTS FROM ISKCON LAW ON DISCIPLESHIP IN ISKCON

ISKCON Lawbook (1997) is available at <https://archive.org/details/IskconLawBook>

7.2.1. First (Harinama) Initiation

7.2.1.1. Qualifications for First Initiation

7.2.1.1.1. One-year preparatory period

In order to receive first initiation, one must have been engaged favourably in devotional service, strictly following the four regulative principles and chanting sixteen rounds a day, for at least one year without interruption.

7.2.1.1.2. First Six-month Period

During the first six months of following the four regulative principles and chanting sixteen rounds daily, a new devotee who is aspiring for initiation should not commit himself to a particular initiating *guru*. Rather, he should chant Srila Prabhupada's *praṇāma-mantra* and worship him as Founder-Ācārya of ISKCON and as his *śikṣā guru*.

7.2.1.1.3. Second Six-month Period

After successfully completing the first six-month preparatory period, and after passing the required examination, the candidate may choose his future *dikṣā guru*. Receiving permission from that *guru*, and notifying the local temple president, the candidate should take shelter and begin to worship that *guru* as his own spiritual master and chant his *praṇāma-mantra*. Actual initiation may take place only after a minimum six-month period from the date shelter was taken and the local temple president notified.

7.2.1.1.4. Devotees Residing Within Temple Communities

In addition to satisfying the above requirements, devotees residing in temple communities must, during the one-year preparatory period, regularly attend the full morning program.

7.2.3.1.1.5. Devotees Residing Outside of Temple Communities

Devotees who do not live in a temple community and who cannot come daily to the temple programs may be initiated provided they have regular morning programs at home or attend regular morning programs at the *nāma-haṭṭa* centre.

7.2.1.1.6. Pass Examination

Before a devotee can be permitted to formally take shelter of a particular ISKCON spiritual master and be subsequently recommended for initiation, he or she must demonstrate a basic understanding of Srila Prabhupada's teachings by answering an oral or written test administered by the Temple President or other recommending authority. The questions to be answered are:

1. What are the qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master?
2. Why are you convinced to follow the orders of the spiritual master in this life, and even life after life?
3. Why does one worship the spiritual master like God?
4. Do you believe the spiritual master speaks the Absolute Truth? If so, why?
5. Under what circumstances should the spiritual master be rejected?
6. What are the qualifications and responsibilities of a disciple?
7. What is the unique position of Srila Prabhupada in ISKCON?
8. Why do you accept Lord Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead?
9. Why do we follow the four regulative principles?
10. Why do we chant Hare Krishna?
11. What is the position of the GBC Body?
12. Explain the difference between the body and the self.
13. What is ISKCON, and why should one remain in ISKCON?

7.2.2. Second, or Brahminical, Initiation

7.2.2.1. Qualification for Second Initiate

7.2.2.1.1. One-Year Wait Between First and Second Initiation

To be qualified to receive second initiation, a first-initiated devotee must have been steadily engaged in favourable devotional service, chanting sixteen rounds a day without fail, and strictly following the four regulative principles for a period of at least one year from the time of receiving first initiation. In addition, the candidate must have regularly attended a morning program, whether in a temple, preaching centre, *nāma-haṭṭa* centre, or at home.

ISKCON Governing Board Committee Annual General Meeting 2013.

Resolution 306, 2013. Amendment to Required Examination Prior to Accepting a Diksa-guru [ISKCON Law]

“Whereas the GBC Statement on the Position of Srila Prabhupada and the paper “*Harmonizing ISKCON’s Lines of Authority*” have been approved by the GBC and been made required reading for all *harinama* initiation candidates,

Whereas it is also important to make sure that the candidates have understood these papers,

Whereas according to ISKCON law 7.2.1.1.6, every *harinama* initiation candidate must take a test before initiation. This test is a good opportunity to make sure that the candidates have read these papers and to judge their level of understanding of their important concepts:

RESOLVED:

(a) that ISKCON Law 7.2.1.1.6 be amended to include the following three questions in the test that all *harinama* initiation candidates must take before initiation:

14. Have you read the GBC Statement on the Position of Srila Prabhupada?

15. Have you read the paper “*Harmonizing ISKCON’s Lines of Authority*”?

16. What have you understood as the most important points of the “*Harmonizing ISKCON’s Lines of Authority*” paper?

ISKCON Governing Board Committee Annual General Meeting 2014.

[Resolution 317](#), 2014 (ISKCON Disciple Course).

“That the ISKCON Disciple Course, as developed by the GBC Guru Services Committee, shall be a mandatory prerequisite for all devotees accepting first or second initiation by an ISKCON guru, effective Janmastami, 2015. After that date, no guru may initiate a disciple who has not first completed the Disciple Course. This is in addition to current requirements of new initiates.”

ISKCON Governing Board Committee Annual General Meeting 7-21.2.1993.

Resolution 2, 1993 (Changing Gurus).

“It is resolved that the following standard for changing gurus shall be adopted as ISKCON Law:

That, in the case of candidates for initiation who had formerly accepted shelter from one spiritual master and subsequently desire to change to another, this change must be communicated to the former prospective spiritual master, new prospective spiritual master, and local Temple President. The candidate must also remain fixed under the shelter of the newly proposed initiating guru for six continuous months from the time of newly accepting formal shelter prior to receiving initiation.” [1993 – ISKCON GBC](#)

ISKCON Governing Board Committee Annual General Meeting 5 –16.2.1999.

Resolution 405 [Law] 1999. Standards of Guru Worship in ISKCON

It is hereby resolved that ISKCON laws on worship of gurus shall be amended to include the following new laws:

B. After chanting the pranam mantra of their diksa (or siksa) guru, all grand-disciples and future generations should chant at least the first of Srila Prabhupada’s pranam mantra while offering obeisances as a means of respecting the Founder-Acarya.

C. In order to offer appropriate respect to Srila Prabhupada as Founder-Acarya and preeminent spiritual master of ISKCON, it is considered an essential devotional practice for all ISKCON devotees to observe or perform Srila Prabhupada’s guru puja daily either in an ISKCON temple or if not possible in one’s home. [1999 – ISKCON GBC](#)

SADHANA STANDARDS

To qualify for shelter or initiation in Melbourne, the sadhana standards established by Srila Prabhupada and ISKCON's Governing Body Commission must be strictly followed. Please be aware of the following.

Handling Non-Vegetarian or Prohibited Items

You must not handle meat, fish, eggs, alcohol or other drugs in the course of your work. "...the killer of an animal is to be considered a murderer because animal food is never meant for the civilized man, whose prime duty is to prepare himself for going back to Godhead. [Manu] says that in the act of killing an animal there is a regular conspiracy by the party of sinners, and that all of them are liable to be punished as murderers...He who gives permission, he who kills the animal, he who sells the slaughtered animal, he who cooks the animal, he who administers distribution of the foodstuff, and at last he who eats such cooked animal food are all murderers, and all of them are liable to be punished by the laws of nature." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.7.37 purport.*) This standard applies not only to meat-eating, but to all the regulative principles.

Grhastha Brahmācārya

Vaiṣṇava Grhasthas who practice sex-life according to the Vedic literatures for the purpose of procreation of Krishna conscious children are doing a devotional service to Lord Krishna and are considered to be grhastha brahmācārīs. While there is no hard and fast rule limiting how many children a grhastha may have, shelter and initiation candidates only try to have children one day per month. That day garbhodhana samskara is practised by increasing spiritual activities, chanting fifty rounds and praying to Guru and Kṛṣṇa to send a pure devotee child. (*Śrīla Prabhupāda Śikṣāmṛta Complete Edition, Grhastha Āśrama: Conception 68-09, 69-01; ISKCON Chowpatty Grhastha Manual 2003, 1.13: Samskāras*)

Apart from the time when you are trying to have a child, you must remain celibate. You must have followed this standard for at least 6 months to qualify to receive shelter, 12 months to qualify for initiation, and 2 years to qualify to receive second initiation.

REFERENCES

69-01 My Dear Syama Dasi,

Please accept my blessings. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of January 14, 1969, and I was very glad to hear from you.

You have asked me some questions about the functions of sex life in Krishna Consciousness, and the basic principle is that it should be avoided as far as possible. However, if it is unavoidable, then it should be utilized only for begetting Krishna Conscious children. In that case, the husband and wife should chant at least fifty rounds before going to sex. The recommended period is six days after the menstruation period...

I hope this finds you in good health.

Your ever well-wisher, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

[*VedaBase, Letter to Syama — Los Angeles 18 January 1969; also cited in Compilations (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's words) Śikṣāmṛta – Complete Edition, Grhastha Asrama: Conception; also cited in Śikṣāmṛta – Complete Edition, Sadhana-Bhakti And Regulative Principles: The Four Regulative Principles.*]

68-09 "... In your letter of the 17th instant, you have very frankly inquired from me about householder life, especially in the matter of sex relationship. A sannyasi is not supposed to be asked about anything sexual. But still, because you are so much dependent on my instruction, so I must give you information as far as possible.

Married life is not for sex indulgence. The principle of marriage is on the background of getting good children. So, the householder is allowed to have sex life once a month, just after the menstrual period. The menstrual period prolongs at least for five days, so after these five days, one can have sex life provided he desires to get a child. And as soon as the wife is pregnant, no more sex life until the child is born and grown up at least for six months. After that one may have sex life on the same principle. If one does not want more than one or two children, he should voluntarily stop sex life. But one should not strictly use any contraceptive method and at the same time indulge in sex life. That is very much sinful.

If the husband and wife can voluntarily restrain by powerful advancement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that is the best method. It is not necessary that because one has got wife, therefore you must have sex life. The whole scheme is to avoid sex life as far as possible. And if one can avoid it completely then it is a great victory for him. Married life is a

sort of license for sex life on condition of raising children. So, you should try to understand these principles of married life and use your discretion.

You should not imitate great personalities like Bhaktivinoda Thakura, but you must follow his footprints. But it is not always possible to have the same success as great personalities like Bhaktivinoda Thakura achieved. So, in all circumstances you should try to follow the footprints of the authorities but never to imitate them..." (SPL to Satsvarupa, 20th September 1968, cited in *Compilations (from Śrīla Prabhupāda's words) Śikṣāmṛta – Complete Edition, Grhastha Asrama: Conception.*)

THE PROCESS OF INITIATION

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 *dikṣā guru* (initiating spiritual master) in Śrīla Prabhupāda's line. This process is described as follows.

Taking shelter of Srila Prabhupada

The first step toward taking shelter of an initiating *guru* is to take shelter of ISKCON's Founder-Ācārya, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, as one's *śikṣā guru*. Because Śrīla Prabhupāda is ISKCON's Founder-Ācārya he is the *param* (superior) *śikṣā guru* in our *sampradāya* (school), and always remains ISKCON's primary instructing spiritual master. A minimum period of six months under Śrīla Prabhupāda's shelter is required by ISKCON law. A candidate who desires to progress further on the path toward initiation should then attend and pass the Founder-Acharya Course and the ISKCON Disciple's Course, then sit and pass their shelter interview and examination. In this way they prepare themselves to seek shelter of a *dikṣā* (initiating) *guru*.

Taking shelter of an initiating guru:

A candidate should accept a number of *śikṣā gurus*, both formal and informal. However, apart from a few exceptional circumstances, one will accept only one *dikṣā guru*. The next step toward accepting initiation is to observe the example and realised teaching offered by the devotees serving as ISKCON's *dikṣā gurus*. Both by serving them and asking questions of them, you should determine which devotee's instruction and example most fully represent Śrīla Prabhupāda 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 Temple President of written confirmation from the *guru*. The candidate is responsible for requesting this letter to be sent.

Accepting harināma initiation:

Harināma initiation strengthens one's chanting and *sādhana*. The disciple's service is purified by being offered directly to Śrī Kṛṣṇa through the disciplic succession. During his six-month period of accepting shelter from his *dikṣā 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 him in his service to Śrīla Prabhupāda and apply his instructions to his practice of *sādhana*. The disciple should also verify that the *guru* fully represents Śrīla Prabhupāda to him. The test is whether you can honour this service relationship throughout this life (and beyond).

When one has demonstrated steady advancement in *sādhana* under the *dikṣā guru*'s shelter (while continuing to strictly uphold one's vows relating to *japa* and the four regulative principles), one may request *harināma* initiation. You will be required to attend further interviews and sit an exam to verify your qualification.

Accepting brahminical initiation:

Brahminical initiation strengthens one's chanting and preaching and qualifies one to worship the Deities directly. When - following *harināma* initiation - a candidate demonstrates steadiness in *sādhana* and devotional service over a further (minimum) twelve-month period, he or she may qualify for *brāhminical* initiation.

Brahminical initiation is not an automatic outcome of the time you've spent in devotional service. Before beginning your candidature for second initiation, check with your Temple authorities whether or not there is a need for your service at the brahminical level. Furthermore, the Temple authorities must see a concrete demonstration of your past and present commitment to brahminical service, as well as to regular ongoing brahminical service.

A third round of interviews and an exam will verify your qualification to apply.

SHELTER AND INITIATION OVERVIEW

REGISTERING TO ATTEND COURSES OR TO QUALIFY FOR INITIATION

COURSE REGISTRATION

Registration links for the Founder-Acharya and ISKCON Disciple Courses are published within our community regularly each year. We also try to publish them on our website in the Education Hub at harekrishnamelbourne.com.au/members

REGISTERING FOR EXAMS

The same (above) applies to registration for the Prabhupada Lilamrta exam.

To apply to qualify for shelter, complete the form [here](#).

To register to apply for first initiation, complete the form [here](#).

To register to apply for second initiation, complete the form [here](#).

TIMING YOUR APPLICATION

Your application forms (above) will be received and noted by your initiation administrator. It will be tracked and processed according to your place in the candidates' queue.

Due to exponentially increased demand, applications to qualify cannot be processed within a time frame of your choice. An exception will be made when your spiritual master is terminally ill.

To avoid disappointment, ensure that you complete your requirements several months in advance of any potential initiation date.

EXAM APPOINTMENTS

Completing your compulsory courses, reading and essay (as required) is to be done prior to your sadhana interviews. Your sadhana interviews must be passed in order for you to sit your exams.

Set aside a total of up to five hours for your interviews, essays and exams:

1. shelter, first and second initiation *sadhana* interviews: 60 minutes
2. shelter exam, 60 minutes
3. first initiation exam: 3 hours
4. second initiation exam: four hours (compulsory maximum)

To request assistance from translators or scribes, write to the admin: Rasanandini Dasi (rasanandini@iskcon.net.au).

THE ADMINISTRATION OF EXAMS

**MOBILE PHONES, COMPUTERS, & REFERENCE MATERIALS OF ANY KIND
ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED FROM EXAMINATION ROOMS.**

**ALL REFERENCE MATERIALS MUST BE SURRENDERED FOR SAFE-KEEPING
UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF YOUR EXAM.**

1. Shelter Examination

- for those who have taken shelter of Srila Prabhupada, and who are preparing to choose and to take shelter of an initiating spiritual master in ISKCON. You should pass this exam before you begin to choose who among your *śikṣā gurus* may become your *dikṣā guru*.

2. Harinama Initiation Examination

- for those preparing for first initiation.

3. Brahmana Initiation Examination

- for those preparing for second initiation. Devotees who hold Bhakti Sastri degrees are exempt from this exam upon presentation of their Pass Certificates.

SHELTER CANDIDATES PLEASE NOTE:

From 2.3.2018 within Melbourne Yatra, it is compulsory for candidates to completely read *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* (by Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami). Candidates who can demonstrate that they are illiterate (who are unable to read any of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books) must have listened to the full narration of *Your Ever Well Wisher*. This is not a substitute for those who can read, however.

From 1.7.2018 within Melbourne Yatra, it is compulsory for candidates to attend and complete the [Founder-Acarya Course](#).

From 19.12.2018 within Melbourne Yatra, it is compulsory for candidates to completely read *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* (with purports). Candidates who can demonstrate that they are illiterate (who are unable to read any of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books) must have listened to the full narration (available on Bhaktivedanta Vedabase). This is not a substitute for those who can read, however.

Within Melbourne Yatra, it is mandatory for all shelter candidates to pass the ISKCON Disciple Course. The Course is designed to assist candidates prior to selecting a guru, not afterwards.

HARINAMA AND BRAHMANA INITIATION CANDIDATES PLEASE NOTE:

“That the ISKCON Disciple Course, as developed by the GBC Guru Services Committee, shall be a mandatory prerequisite for all devotees accepting first or second initiation by an ISKCON guru, effective Janmastami, 2015. After that date, no guru may initiate a disciple who has not first completed the Disciple Course. This is in addition to current requirements of new initiates.” (ISKCON Governing Board Committee Annual General Meeting 2014, [Resolution 317](#)).

From 19.12.2018 within Melbourne Yatra, it is compulsory for 1st Initiation candidates to completely read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Canto 1 (with purports) and *Nectar of Devotion* (to chapter 19, minimum). 1st Initiation candidates must also be able to recite the *Guru-puja* prayers in interview.

Second Initiation candidates must also have completed the compulsory courses and reading for Shelter and First Initiation candidates (as above) from 19.12.2018.

From 4.7 2020, initiation candidates may sit the exam only once in 12 months.

EXAM CONDITIONS

Candidates prepare for their exams knowing their exam questions. All exams are invigilated (supervised at the Temple) and closed book. Candidates cannot discuss answers with other candidates, or use notes, reference books, smartphones, or other electronic aids when they sit exams. Exams are to be hand-written. If you need support, for example, to work in a language other than English, email rasanandini@iskcon.net.au

The examinations are not exhaustive tests but rather are considered suitable for testing a candidate's working knowledge of Krishna consciousness.

MARKING CRITERIA

Markers look for practical, realised understanding of the questions asked. You should make as many points as are indicated by the marks available. No extra marks will be given for extra arguments.

Please prepare for your exam by referring directly to scripture, just as Srila Prabhupada demonstrates to us in his writings. We want to see whether you base your answers on *sastra* (especially Bhagavad-gita), that you appreciate the mood and mission of Srila Prabhupada - ISKCON's Founder-Acharya - and are able to pass that on.

Prabhupāda: So according to Vedic civilization, whatever is stated in the Vedas, we take it - fact. *Śruti-pramāṇam*. *Śruti* means Vedas. *Pramāṇam* means evidence. There are two persons talking, arguing, but the person who can give Vedic evidence, he is victorious...That is the system...And therefore, generally you will find, whenever we speak something, we give evidence from the *śāstra* in Sanskrit, in all our books. That is the way of proving that whatever I am speaking, it is fact. (*Room Conversation with Maharishi Impersonalists -- 7.4.1972, Melbourne.*)

Prabhupāda: ...it is admitted that inductive logic is imperfect; deductive logic is perfect...logic means *śrota-panthā*, *paramparā*, *śruti*, *Śruti pramāṇa*. *Pramāṇa* means evidence, and *śruti* means Veda. *Pratyakṣa*, *anumāna*, *śruti*. *Pratyakṣa* means direct evidence, and *anumāna*, hypothesis...And *śruti*, Vedic. So out of these three kinds of evidence, *śruti-pramāṇa* is accepted as supreme. *Pratyakṣa*: you are seeing the sky, but you cannot say the length and breadth...Hypothesis, *anumāna*, guessing, that is also not perfect. And *śruti*, we take *śruti* from the perfect person, Kṛṣṇa. He says, *aham evāsam agre*: "Before the creation I was there." We take simply. (*Morning Walk -- July 11, 1975, Chicago.*)

EXEMPTION FROM AN EXAM

"...some devotees think that if they have done Bhakti Śāstrī they don't have to sit the 1st initiation exam. That isn't correct. Bhakt Śāstrī degree holders still have to sit the first initiation exam, which is standard for all first initiates Australia-wide. They are exempt from the second initiation exam, only." *Direction from the Temple President to the Initiations Administrator, 12.9.23.*

At least since 2015, ISKCON Melbourne advertised that Bhakti Sastri degree holders were exempt from initiation exams - whether at the shelter, first, or second initiation level. Today (12.9.23) we're aligning our advice with VTE* policy: that is, that a Bhakti Sastri degree (and therefore an accompanying exam exemption) is aimed at second initiation candidates only.

The following references are from the Vaishnava Training & Education Teacher's Handbook for the Bhakti Sastri Course (published in 2000). [BSTeachersHandbook\(Colour\).pdf \(google.com\)](#)

"...We have got so many books now and I want all of my disciples to read them carefully. Soon we shall be instituting Bhakti-sastri examinations and all brahmanas will have to pass. So, utilize whatever time you find to make a thorough study of my books." *Letter from Srila Prabhupada to Upendra, 7th July 1976 (Dedication, page 4).*

"Your plan to have the Bhaktivedanta Summer Institute...is a very good idea...brahmana means pandita. Therefore, I am suggesting examinations. Bhakti-sastri - (for all brahmanas) based on Bhagavad-gita, Sri Isopanisad, Nectar of Devotion, Nectar of Instruction, and all the small paper backs...*Letter from Srila Prabhupada to Svarupa Damodara, Bombay, 10th January 1976 (The Four Sastri Degrees, page 12).*

"The Bhakti Sastri Course (and final assessment) should be completed at about the same time a devotee is ready for second (brahmana) initiation" (*Overview of the Four VTE Courses, page 13*).

*The UK-based VTE (Vaisnava Training and Education) organisation is a team of professional devotees mandated by the ISKCON Ministry of Education to develop systematic training courses for the members of the Society. [Welcome to Vrindavan Institute for Higher Education \(vihe.org\)](#)

RE-SITTING AN EXAM

Should your responses to your examination questions not earn the pass mark noted on your exam paper, you will be given a breakdown of your marks so that you can prepare to re-sit your exam.

1. Shelter candidates who fail their exam must re-sit the questions they failed.
2. First and second initiation candidates who fail their exam must re-sit the entire exam.

Shelter candidates must complete your supplementary exam within 8 weeks of receiving the examiner's breakdown of your marks. After 8 weeks, you must re-sit your entire exam.

Initiation candidates (first and second) may sit the exam only once in 12 months.

RECEIVING A RECOMMENDATION

When you complete the requirements of ISKCON law and Melbourne Yatra, your Temple President may recommend you at his discretion. Receiving a recommendation is not a direct result of completing required reading and coursework. You must also display a mood of co-operative, regular, ongoing service to the Temple and to Srila Prabhupada's Melbourne mission, as well as maturity in your *sadhana*.

The Temple President may invite you to qualify for second initiation when the Deity Worship Department is in need of the service that you offer.

MAKING YOUR APPLICATION TO YOUR GURU & FOLLOWING IT UP

Melbourne Yatra will send proof of your completing your shelter requirements, or your 1st or 2nd initiation recommendation to your spiritual master if you have provided us with their contact details.

All follow-ups for shelter, 1st and 2nd initiation applications must be made by you. Melbourne Yatra is never involved with shelter and initiation applications except when that is necessitated by administrative problems.

Melbourne Yatra's policy is never to advocate for candidates with initiating gurus or their secretariats. Each individual candidate is responsible for progressing his or her application with their guru or their guru's secretariat.

GUIDELINES TO RE-INSTATING YOUR CANDIDATURE AFTER A FALLDOWN

Sometimes spiritual life can seem like you are treading a razor's edge. How do I reinstate my candidature after my sadhana has fallen below ISKCON's standards?

If you have stopped chanting or following the 4 regulative principles your candidature can be re-instated:

- Please make suitable arrangements to inform your spiritual master, your guiding devotees, your Temple President and your examiner of your desire to re-instate your candidature, the period of your fall down and when you restored your sadhana to ISKCON standards.
- Candidates for 1st initiation must chant 16 rounds daily and follow the 4 regulative principles for at least 12 months to become re-eligible for initiation. You must log at least 12 months' standard sadhana practice (verified by a senior devotee in good standing) before you may be recommended for initiation.
- Candidates for 2nd initiation must chant 16 rounds daily and follow the 4 regulative principles for at least 24 months to become re-eligible for initiation. You must log at least 2 years' standard sadhana practice (verified by a senior devotee in good standing) before you may be recommended for initiation.

Bhagavad-gita 9.30-34

Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service, he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination. He quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace...Therefore, having come to this temporary, miserable world, engage in loving service unto Me. Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.

PURPORT (to Text 31): This should not be misunderstood. In the Seventh Chapter the Lord says that one who is engaged in mischievous activities cannot become a devotee of the Lord. One who is not a devotee of the Lord has no good qualifications whatsoever. The question remains, then, 'How can a person engaged in abominable activities—either by accident or by intention—be a pure devotee?' This question may justly be raised. The miscreants, as stated in the Seventh Chapter, who never come to the devotional service of the Lord, have no good qualifications, as is stated in the Srimad-Bhagavatam. Generally, a devotee who is engaged in the nine kinds of devotional activities is engaged in the process of cleansing all material contamination from the heart. He puts the Supreme Personality of Godhead within his heart, and all sinful contaminations are naturally washed away...Therefore, the chanting of *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare* should be continued without stoppage.

SHELTER CANDIDATE PRE-REQUISITES
COVER SHEET *For office use only*

CANDIDATE'S NAME:

TEMPLE/BHAKTI VRIKSHA RECOMMENDING:

Inclusions:

- 1. Founder-Acarya Course Certificate (sighted)
- 2. ISKCON Disciple Course Certificate (sighted)
- 3. Disciple Census Form (bio data and address)
- 4. Interview Questionnaire
- 5. Written/Oral Examination
- 6. Photo (digital or hard copy)
- 7. Release of Information Form (if needed)

Examiner's/ Reviewer's Approval:

- Complete
- Incomplete

Examiner's Name:

Signature.....

SHELTER CANDIDATE'S DATA SHEET

Candidate to complete in full

FIRST NAME: **FAMILY NAME:**

Nationality: Date of birth:/...../..... Male Female Age:.....

Occupation:

PRESENT ADDRESS: (Street no.)

Suburb/City: State: Postcode: Country:

Phone Nos.: mobile: home: office:

EMAIL.....

PERMANENT ADDRESS (if other than above)

City: State: Postcode: Country:

Phone Nos.: mobile: home: office:

MARRIAGE STATUS: I AM Single Seeking Engaged Married Separated/divorced Widow/widower

(If applicable) I have a spouse/partner. Their legal name is:

Their date of birth is:...../...../.....

My spouse/partner's Krishna Conscious status is Favourable Unfavourable Aspiring Initiated 2nd Initiated

(If applicable) I have..... (number of) children. They are:

Name:.....Date of birth:/...../..... Male Female Is a devotee Yes No

Name:Date of birth:/...../..... Male Female Is a devotee Yes No

Name:Date of birth:/...../..... Male Female Is a devotee Yes No

(Please use the back of this sheet if you need more space.)

DEVOTIONAL HISTORY: I have been in contact with Krishna consciousness for years.

I am a member of Bhakti Vriksha Group, mentored by

..... (servant-leader's name) I live in Temple.

I am connected to Temple.

I have chanted Hare Krishna japa foryears.....months. My devotional instructors are:

.....My personal guide/advisor(s) are:

.....The names of my family members who are initiated ISKCON devotees are:

Name: Name:

Name: Name:

Name: Name:

(Please use the back of this sheet if you need more space.)

EDUCATION: I attended the Founder-Acarya Course Yes. Date: .../.../.... Location: No.

I received a Certificate of Completion (compulsory) Yes. Date:/...../..... No

I attended ISKCON's Disciple Course Yes. Date: .../.../.... Location: No.

I passed the Course and received a passing Certificate (compulsory) Yes. Date:/...../..... No

I have completed the Bhakti-śāstrī Course. Date: .../.../... No. I passed the Course. Date: .../.../... No

I received my Certificate. Date: .../.../... No

I have completed the Bhakti Vaibhava Course. Date: .../.../... No. I passed the Course. Date: .../.../... No

I received my Certificate. Date: .../.../... No

I have completed the Bhakti Vedanta Course. Date: .../.../... No. I passed the Course. Date: .../.../... No

I received my Certificate. Date: .../.../... No

SADHANA: I have chanted 16 rounds daily since...../...../..... (minimum 6 months)

I have strictly followed 4 regulative principles since...../...../..... (minimum 6 months)

Signed: Date:/...../.....

REFEREES: Two senior devotees outside my immediate family who can verify my sadhana (above) to an examiner are:

(1) Name: Bhakti Vriksha mentor instructor guide

Phone: Email:

(2) Name: Bhakti Vriksha mentor instructor guide

Phone: Email:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SHELTER CANDIDATES IN MELBOURNE YATRA

*To be completed during your interview, unless your examiner asks you to do otherwise.
You must pass your interview in order to sit your exam.*

1. Chanting japa:

a. Have you daily chanted 16-rounds of Hare Krishna maha-mantra japa during the past six months?

Yes/ No

1. In a month how many do you miss on the average?

2. Do you make up the missed rounds? Yes/ No.....

b. Do you know the 10 offenses in chanting the Holy Name? What are they?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

c. Do you avoid these offenses? Yes/ No

d. Do you make arrangements to chant attentively and try your best to do so? Yes/ No.....

e. What is your daily routine to complete 16 rounds (at home or the Temple)?.....

2. Following the regulative principles:

a. What are the 4 regulative principles? What qualities do each of the 4 regulative principles encourage in a devotee?

1.

2.

3.

4.

b. Have you strictly followed the 4 regulative principles for the past six months? Yes/ No

8. For devotees who live outside the temple:

- a. How often do you visit the temple?
- b. How often do you attend Bhakti Vriksha meetings?.....
- c. Which local ISKCON temple or Bhakti Vriksha group do you attend on a regular basis?
- d. Are you connected to any other religious organization/s? Which ones? What kind of service do you offer them?
- e. Are you married? -Yes/ -No
- f. Do you generally avoid eating anything but prasadam? -Yes/ -No. If No what exception?
.....

9. Have you offered regular and ongoing devotional services at the Temple during the past 6 months?

This means offering rostered service at the Temple and to Hare Krishna Melbourne’s preaching mission. If you are unable to offer these services, you are expected to participate in Harinama and book distribution. Your service should be regular and ongoing over the 6-month period leading up to your application and be verifiable with senior devotees. Yes/ No

What are your services?

.....

.....

.....

10. Additional questions only for those who possibly may marry:

- a. If you ever get married, would you first try to marry only an initiated vaisnava devotee (ISKCON) and if not available then only marry a pious vegetarian person? -Yes/ -No
- b. Would you consult with ISKCON authorities and the *guru* before and while making such decision? -Yes/ -No
- c. Do you know the rules of Krishna conscious life including regulations for Krishna conscious sex life?
 -Yes/ -No
- d. Do you feel capable of following # c above? -Yes/ -No
- e. Do you think the married life will affect your present service? -Yes/ -No; If yes, how? Give details:
.....

- f. Are you engaged to marry? - Yes/ - No
- g. Where you married before? - Yes/ - No
- h. What is your position regarding any future marriage alliance?
.....

11. Questions for those practising regulated family life:

a. I have been totally celibate (no sexual activity) for.....(years).....(months). *If you have been celibate for 6 months, you have completed this requirement.*

b. MINIMUM STANDARD FOR CANDIDATES: Vaiṣṇava *Gṛhasthas* who practice sex-life according to the Vedic literatures for the purpose of procreation of Krishna conscious children are doing a devotional service to Lord Krishna and are considered to be *gṛhastha brahmacārīs*.

While there is no hard and fast rule limiting how many children a *gṛhastha* may have, *shelter and initiation candidates* only try to have children one day per month. That day *garbhodhana samskara* is practised by increasing spiritual activities, chanting fifty rounds and praying to Guru and Kṛṣṇa to send a pure devotee child. (*Śrīla Prabhupāda Śikṣāmṛta Complete Edition, Gṛhastha Āsrama: Conception 68-09, 69-01; ISKCON Chowpatty Grhastha Manual 2003, 1.13: Samskāras*) Do you practice this standard of *gṛhastha* life?

- Yes How long have you and your spouse followed this standard? (go to Q.12)
- Trying. How long have you and your spouse followed this standard?
- No

Please note that you must have followed this standard for at least 6 months to qualify to receive shelter. Following this minimum standard for candidates is compulsory for all levels of gṛhastha sādḥikas, beginning from shelter applicants.

c. If you are not following the minimum standard for initiates at present, are you able to do so from now on? -Yes (go to Q.12) -No

d. If you are not able to follow the minimum standard for initiates, which of the following levels are you able to follow?

- I am generally follow but only occasionally not able to follow.
- I have relations once per month (although not necessarily for procreation).
- I have relations more than once per month (although not necessarily for procreation).
- I have relations according to the Manu Samhita codes (non-Ekadasi, etc.)
- I have relations without any strict regulation within marriage.
- Any other standard:.....

e. If you are not able to practice the minimum standard for initiates, please explain what obstacles prevent you from doing so.

- I am personally not able to commit to that level of celibacy.
- My spouse (marriage partner) is not a practicing devotee which makes it difficult.
- We cannot have children (or more children) but cannot remain fully celibate.
- We do not want more children but cannot remain fully celibate.
- In order to preserve the marriage more relations are required.
- Other obstacle in following:.....

12. Regarding family planning matters:

a. Do you use modern family planning techniques (contraceptives)? Do you intend to use them or to have an abortion in the future? -Yes -No

b. Have you or your spouse undergone a sterilization operation? -Yes -No

c. Are you sure and committed that you will never undergo sterilization in the future or perform an abortion? (If you have any doubt on this then answer NO.) -Yes -No

19. a. Are you training your dependent children to be Krishna conscious devotees? -Yes -No

b. Do you feed them only prasadam? -Yes -No

RECOGNITION OF ISKCON LAW

PLEASE NOTE that according to ISKCON Law it is your responsibility to contact your guru of choice when you are ready to ask for shelter. You must forward written confirmation from your guru to the Melbourne Temple President's representative (your examiner) that you have received shelter.

ISKCON Law 7.2.1.1.3: Second Six-month Period

After successfully completing the first six-month preparatory period, and after passing the required examination, the candidate may choose his future *dīkshā-guru*. Receiving permission from that *guru*, and notifying the local Temple President, the candidate should take shelter and begin to worship that *guru* as his own spiritual master and chant his *pranāma-mantra*.

Actual (sic. first) initiation may take place only after a minimum six-month period from the date shelter was taken and the local Temple President notified.

Please note that the six-month waiting period between receiving shelter and becoming eligible to qualify for first initiation cannot begin until the Melbourne Temple President's representative (your examiner) receives written notice from your guru.

I have read and understood the ISKCON law above.

(Name) _____

(Signed) _____ **Date** _____

Witness _____ **Date** _____

SHELTER EXAM

You may answer in point form. The pass mark is 75% (45.5/61 marks)

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UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF YOUR EXAM.**

MARKS

1. What are the qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master?..... (5)
2. Why are you convinced to follow the order of the bona fide spiritual master in this life and even life after life?..... (3)
3. Why does one worship the spiritual master like God?..... (3)
4. Do you believe the spiritual master speaks the absolute truth? If so why?..... (3)
5. Under what circumstances should the spiritual master be rejected?..... (3)
6. What are the qualifications and responsibilities of a disciple?..... (5)
7. What is the unique position of Srila Prabhupada in ISKCON?..... (3)
8. Why do you accept Lord Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead?..... (4)
9. Why do we follow the 4 regulative principles?..... (6)
10. Why do we chant Hare Krishna?..... (4)
11. What is the position of the GBC body?..... (3)
12. Explain the difference between the body and the self..... (5)
13. What is ISKCON? Why should one remain in ISKCON?..... (4)

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE COMPULSORY.

You cannot pass your exam without completing and passing them.

THIS SECTION IS OPEN-BOOK. Appendix 1 and 2 are supplied with your exam materials.

14. Have you read the GBC Statement on the Position of Srila Prabhupada (Appendix 1)?.....(Yes/No)
15. Have you read the paper “Harmonizing ISKCON’s Lines of Authority” (Appendix 2)?.....(Yes/No)
16. What have you understood as the most important points of the *Harmonizing ISKCON’s Lines of Authority* paper? (Pass mark 7.5/10).....(10)

COMPULSORY READING FOR MELBOURNE YATRA CANDIDATES FROM 2.3.2018:

***Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta* by Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami.**

You cannot qualify for initiation without completing this book and passing a related essay question.

Have you previously completed and passed the Prabhupada Lilamrta essay?

- Yes: I have completed and passed this essay.
 No: I have yet to complete and pass this essay.

READING LIST

COMPULSORY

- Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta by Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami (<https://www.vedabase.com/en/spl>)
- ISKCON Disciple Course notes
- Bhagavad-gīta As It Is, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (<https://www.vedabase.com/en/bg>)

SUGGESTED

- Temple Mantra Guide (http://www.harekrsna.de/Temple_Mantra_Guide.htm)
- *The Spiritual Master and the Disciple*, compiled and edited by Subhananda dasa (<http://www.prabhupada-books.de/english-book-scans/The-Spiritual-Master-and-the-Disciple.pdf>)
- *Srila Prabhupada Siksamṛta*, Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (or Bhaktivedanta Vedabase program, <http://www.prabhupada.com/Vedabase/VedaBase.html>)

Chapters on:

- Chanting Hare Krishna
- Deity Worship
- Spiritual Master and Disciple
- Governing Body Commission

Prabhupāda: So according to Vedic civilization, whatever is stated in the Vedas, we take it - fact. Śruti-pramāṇam. Śruti means Vedas. Pramāṇam means evidence. According to Indian system [if] there are two persons talking, arguing, the person who can give Vedic evidence, he is victorious. That is the system...And therefore, generally you will find, whenever we speak something, we give evidence from the śāstra in Sanskrit, in all our books. That is the way of proving that whatever I am speaking, it is fact. (*Room Conversation with Maharishi Impersonalists -- April 7, 1972, Melbourne.*)

Prabhupāda: ...it is admitted that inductive logic is imperfect; deductive logic is perfect...logic means śrotāpanthā, paramparā, śruti, Vedic language, śruti. Śruti pramāṇa. Pramāṇa means evidence, and śruti means Veda. Pratyakṣa, anumāna, śruti. Pratyakṣa means direct evidence, and anumāna, hypothesis...And śruti, Vedic. So out of these three kinds of evidences śruti-pramāṇa is accepted as supreme. Pratyakṣa: you are seeing the sky, but you cannot say the length and breadth...Hypothesis, anumāna, guessing, that is also not perfect. And śruti, we take śruti from the perfect person, Kṛṣṇa. He says, aham evāsam agre: "Before the creation I was there." We take simply. (*Morning Walk -- July 11, 1975, Chicago.*)

HARI-NAMA INITIATION CANDIDATE PRE-REQUISITES

COVER SHEET *For office use only*

CANDIDATE'S NAME:

TEMPLE/BHAKTI VRIKSHA RECOMMENDING:

Inclusions:

- 1. ISKCON Disciple Course Certificate (sighted)
- 2. Recommendation Sheet from Temple Authorities
- 3. Disciple Census Form (bio data and address)
- 4. Practical Interview Questionnaire
- 5. Personal Interview Questionnaire
- 6. Written/Oral Examination
- 7. Initiation Oath
- 8. Optional essay on why the candidate wishes to receive initiation from their diksa *guru* of choice
- 9. Photo (digital copy)
- 10. Interview appearance (with spiritual master)
- 11. Release of Information Form (if needed)

Examiner's/ Reviewer's Approval:

- Complete
- Incomplete

Examiner's Name:

Signature.....

Initiating Guru's Decision after Interview:

- Accepted for receiving initiation: additional points given below.
- Not accepted for current initiation: should improve in following area(s):

1.

2.

3.

4.

Thank you,

.....Initiating Guru (initial)

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATION FOR HARI-NAMA INITIATION

For office use only

Center:.....

To (name of guru):.....

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

It is my pleasure to recommend.....for first initiation by you. I find that he/she has fulfilled the necessary qualifications for initiation to the best of my understanding. Specifically, for the last twelve months he/she has been engaged in favorable devotional service, has chanted sixteen rounds of japa daily, and has adhered to the four regulative principles. He/she is sufficiently knowledgeable in the philosophy of Krishna consciousness and the structure and purpose of ISKCON for initiation, as evidenced by passing an examination as prescribed under ISKCON Law. The candidate has accepted your shelter for at least six months. Either I have observed these qualifications personally or I have heard of them from sources I know to be reliable.

Your servant,

.....(Name)

.....(Position Held)

.....(Date)

FIRST INITIATION CANDIDATE'S DATA SHEET

Candidate to complete in full

FIRST NAME: **FAMILY NAME:**
Nationality: Date of birth:/...../..... Male Female Age:.....
Occupation:

PRESENT ADDRESS: (Street no.)
Suburb/City: State: Postcode: Country:
Phone Nos.: mobile: home: office:
EMAIL.....

PERMANENT ADDRESS (if other than above)
City: State: Postcode: Country:
Phone Nos.: mobile: home: office:

MARRIAGE STATUS: I AM Single Seeking Engaged Married Separated/divorced Widow/widower
(If applicable) I have a spouse/partner. Their legal name is:
Their date of birth is:...../...../.....
My spouse/partner's Krishna Conscious status is Favourable Unfavourable Aspiring Initiated 2nd Initiated
(If applicable) I have..... (number of) children. They are:
Name:.....Date of birth:/...../..... Male Female Is a devotee Yes No
Name:Date of birth:/...../..... Male Female Is a devotee Yes No
Name:Date of birth:/...../..... Male Female Is a devotee Yes No
(Please use the back of this sheet if you need more space.)

DEVOTIONAL HISTORY: I have been in contact with Krishna consciousness for years.
 I am a member of Bhakti Vriksha Group, mentored by
..... (servant-leader's name) I live in temple.
 I am connected to temple.
I have chanted Hare Krishna japa foryears.....months. My devotional instructors are:
.....My personal guide/advisor(s) are:
.....The names of my family members who are initiated ISKCON devotees are:
Name: Name:
Name: Name:
Name: Name:
(Please use the back of this sheet if you need more space.)

EDUCATION: I attended the Founder-Acarya Course Yes. Date: .../.../.... Location: No.

I received a Certificate of Completion (compulsory) Yes. Date:/...../..... No

I attended ISKCON's Disciple Course Yes. Date: .../.../.... Location: No.

I passed the Course and received a passing Certificate (compulsory) Yes. Date:/...../..... No

I have completed the Bhakti-śāstrī Course. Date: .../.../... No. I passed the Course. Date: .../.../... No

I received my Certificate. Date: .../.../... No

I have completed the Bhakti Vaibhava Course. Date: .../.../... No. I passed the Course. Date: .../.../... No

I received my Certificate. Date: .../.../... No

I have completed the Bhakti Vedanta Course. Date: .../.../... No. I passed the Course. Date: .../.../... No

I received my Certificate. Date: .../.../... No

SADHANA: I have chanted 16 rounds daily since...../...../..... (minimum 1 year)

I have strictly followed 4 regulative principles since/...../..... (minimum 1 year)

Signed: Date:/...../.....

REFEREES: Two senior devotees who can verify my sadhana (above) to an examiner are:

(1) Name: Bhakti Vriksha mentor instructor guide

Phone: Email:

(2) Name: Bhakti Vriksha mentor instructor guide

Phone: Email:

SPIRITUAL MASTER: I received shelter from(name of spiritual master)

Date shelter officially confirmed:/...../..... Location:

PERMISSION TO APPEAR FOR INTERVIEWS & EXAM: I have asked my Temple President's permission and he/she has agreed Yes No Date he/she agreed:/...../.....

PRACTICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR 1ST INITIATION CANDIDATES

To be completed during your interview, unless your examiner asks you to do otherwise.

Note: You will receive access to this checklist before you take your interview. You must come to the standard indicated here prior to your interview. You may receive as much help as you require.

Name: I took shelter of my *guru* (date):.....

MINIMUM SADHANA STANDARDS	✓
All mantras & prayers should be recited by heart and books read the prescribed number of times Date completed/...../.....	
I have taken shelter of my <i>guru</i> for 6 months or more [since: _____]	
I have followed the 4 regulative principles for 1 year or more [since: _____]	
I have chanted 16 rounds of Hare Krishna japa daily for 1 year or more [since: _____]	
I rise early every day and attend or perform Mangalarati (can be in my own home).	
I know the procedure for offering bhoga to Lord Krishna and can recite these <i>mantras</i> to you	
I know my <i>guru's</i> & Srila Prabhupada's name & <i>pranam mantras</i> and can recite them to you	
I can recognize and recite the proper names of ISKCON's <i>guru-parampara</i> as I see them on the altar	
I wear Vishnu <i>tilaka</i> on the 12 places on my body daily. I can tell you the places & <i>mantras</i> to apply it.	
I regularly attend the temple or <i>Bhakti Vriksha</i> meetings and I perform Krishna- <i>seva</i> .	
I have demonstrated steady commitment to devotional service for 12+ months	
I bathe early in the morning and otherwise maintain cleanliness.	
I have read Srila Prabhupada's unabridged biography [COMPULSORY from 19.12.18: if illiterate I can demonstrate general knowledge of these topics]	
I have read Bhagavad Gita As It Is with purports [COMPULSORY from 19.12.18: if illiterate I can demonstrate general knowledge of these topics]	
I have read Srimad Bhagavatam 1 st . Canto with purports [COMPULSORY from 19.12.18: if illiterate I can demonstrate general knowledge of these topics]	
I have read Nectar of Devotion (at least to chapter 19) [COMPULSORY from 19.12.18: if illiterate I can demonstrate general knowledge of these topics]	
I have passed an approved philosophical exam for 1 st . initiation with 75%+ grade (may be taken orally)	
I avoid offending vaisnavas and unconstructive criticism of devotees	
My cook is properly initiated, or at least vegetarian	
I avoid eating anything but Krishna prasadam (except in emergencies)	
I don't have an occupation or activities that are contrary to vaisnava principles (eg. selling non-vegetarian items or intoxicants, prostitution, gambling etc.)	

I only listen to ISKCON authorized spiritual lectures & preaching.	
I can recite the <i>guru-puja</i> prayers (COMPULSORY from 19.12.18), " <i>samsara davanala</i> " prayers and <i>Tulasi's pranam mantra</i> to you	
When I am unable to write to my guru or personally contact him, I am able to receive support from senior devotees. I am confident I will receive their support in a crisis.	
I have received written recommendation from my local Temple President for first initiation	
I have completed a <i>vaisnava</i> etiquette course (where it is available). (You can find a copy at https://ebooks.iskcondesiretree.com/pdf/Vaishnava_Etiquette/Vaishnava_Etiquette_Manual.pdf)	
I know the rules of the renounced <i>ashram</i> and am personally trying to follow them appropriately	
I know the rules of <i>grihastha</i> life. I am personally trying to practise them & I am raising my minor children in a Krishna conscious manner	
I observe all Ekadasi days and vaisnava festivals mentioned in ISKCON's Vaisnava Calendar	

Comments by the Examiner:

Name of the Examiner:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

PERSONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR 1ST INITIATION CANDIDATES

(MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR FIRST INITIATES)

*To be completed during your interview, unless your examiner asks you to do otherwise.
You must pass your interviews in order to sit your exam.*

Name:

1. Which applies to you? (Check all that apply)

- I live in the Temple Ashram and do service there.
- I live at home and regularly do devotional service at:
 - My local ISKCON Temple (name):
 - My local Bhakti Vriksha group (name):
 - Other:

2. Have you daily chanted 16-rounds of Hare Krishna maha-mantra japa during the past two years or since taking shelter (whichever is shorter)? Yes/ No

a) In a month how many do you miss on the average?

b) Do you make up the missed rounds? Yes/ No

3. a) Do you regularly attend temple Mangalarati every day? Yes/ No

b) How many days do you miss in a month on average? days.

4. Have you offered regular and ongoing devotional services at the Temple during the past 12 months? This means offering rostered service at the Temple and to Hare Krishna Melbourne's preaching mission. If you are unable to offer these services, you are expected to participate in Harinama and book distribution. Your service should be regular and ongoing over the 12-month period leading up to your application and be verifiable with senior devotees. Yes/ No. What are your services?

.....
.....
.....

5. a) Have you ever left the temple, stopped attending Bhakti Vriksha or stopped performing your responsibilities and services without permission of the spiritual authorities? Yes/ No

b) Have you ever wilfully disobeyed or neglected to follow an order of the spiritual master since you took shelter of him? --Yes/ --No If Yes, give details [time, place, etc.]:

.....

6. Do you regularly bathe early in the morning and otherwise maintain cleanliness (fingernails, hair, clothes, etc.) -Yes/ -No

7. Are you implicated or involved in any dishonesty such as theft, breaking state laws etc. during the past two years? Are you guilty of child abuse? -Yes/ -No If Yes, give details:.....

.....

8. Have you lied/ told untruth, to senior devotees during the past 2 years? -Yes/ -No

9. How many times have you read the following books?

- a. Bhagavad Gita As It Is
- b. Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 1.....
- c. Srimad Bhagavatam Cantos 2 -5 (or which cantos).....
- d. Srimad Bhagavatam Cantos 6-12 (or which cantos).....
- e. Krishna book.....
- f. Caitanya Caritamrta (which volumes).....
- g. Teachings of Lord Caitanya

h. Nectar of Devotion.....
 a-h are required reading. You must commit to systematically reading these books in your own time if you have not already done so. Do you promise to read these books? -Yes/ -No

- i. Sri Isopanisad.....
- j. Nectar of Instruction.....

Which other BBT books have you read?.....

10. Are you prone to depression and material anxiety? -Yes/ -No

11. Have you considered committing suicide or leaving ISKCON during the previous 24-months? Yes/ No

12. Are you presently particularly agitated by any of the senses to the extent that you fear that you are in eminent danger of falling down? -Yes/ -No If yes, describe source(s) of agitation:.....

13. Do you avoid offending vaisnavas and un-constructive criticism of devotees? -Yes/ -No If no mention what:

14. Ritvikism

a. Have you heard about Rtvikism?: No, haven't heard. Yes, I've heard through:

Newspaper Internet Rtvik adherents talked to me. Devotees warned me.

Other:

b. If you have heard, what is your opinion about Rtvikism?:

c. Have you become doubtful by pro-rtvik preaching or believed in rtvikism? -Yes/ -No

15. For devotees who live outside the temple:

g. How often do you visit the temple?

h. How often do you attend Bhakti Vriksha meetings?.....

i. Do you practice a daily sadhana routine of rising before sunrise chanting, etc.? -Yes/ -No

ISKCON law 7.2.3.1.1.5 (Re. Devotees Residing Outside of Temple Communities). Devotees who do not live in a temple community and who cannot come daily to the temple programs may be initiated provided they have regular morning programs at home or attend regular morning programs at the nama-hatta centre.

j. Resolution 405c [Law] 1999, Standards of Guru Worship in ISKCON. In order to offer appropriate respect to Srila Prabhupada as Founder-Acarya and preeminent spiritual master of ISKCON, it is considered an essential devotional practice for all ISKCON devotees to observe or perform Srila Prabhupada's guru puja daily, either in an ISKCON temple, or if not possible, in one's home. Do you do this? -Yes/ -No

k. Which local ISKCON temple or Bhakti Vriksha group do you attend on a regular basis?

l. Are you connected to any other religious organization/s? Which ones? What kind of service do you offer them?

- m. Are you married? -Yes/ -No
- n. If are are not married do you plan to or would like to get married in the near future? -Yes/ -No/ Not applicable
- o. If you are not married and do not intend to get married, do you plan to join a temple in the future? -Yes/ -No When or why not?.....
- p. Do you contribute any percentage or amount from your income to Lord Krishna's service?
 -Yes/ -No If yes give details:.....
.....
- q. Do you have capacity, plans or the idea for increasing your devotional service? -Yes/ -No If yes, what?.....
.....
- r. Do you generally avoid eating anything but prasadam? -Yes/ -No. If No what exception?
.....
- s. Which of the following are spiritual problems/challenges for you?
 Watching mundane television Gossiping and rumour spreading
 Watching mundane movies Involvement in frivolous sports
 Reading mundane literature or news Over-endeavor for mundane things
 Wasting time on social media or internet

16. Additional questions only for those who possibly may marry:

- a. If you ever get married, would you first try to marry only an initiated vaisnava devotee (ISKCON) and if not available then only marry a pious vegetarian person? -Yes/ -No
- b. Would you consult with ISKCON authorities and the *guru* before and while making such decision? -Yes/ -No
- c. Do you know the rules of Krishna conscious life including regulations for Krishna conscious sex life? -Yes/ -No
- d. Do you feel capable of following # c above? -Yes/ -No
- e. Do you think the married life will affect your present service? -Yes/ -No; If yes, how? Give details:
.....
- f. Are you engaged to marry? - Yes/ - No
- g. Where you married before? - Yes/ - No
- h. What is your position regarding any future marriage alliance?
.....

QUESTIONS FOR GRIHASTHAS LIVING WITH SPOUSE

This Sheet to be completed by Candidate.

17. Practicing regulated family life:

a. I have been totally celibate (no sexual activity) for.....(years).....(months)

If you have been celibate for 1 year, you have completed this requirement.

b. MINIMUM STANDARD FOR CANDIDATES: Vaiṣṇava *Gr̥hasthas* who practice sex-life according to the Vedic literatures for the purpose of procreation of Krishna conscious children are doing a devotional service to Lord Krishna and are considered to be *gr̥hastha brahmacārīs*.

While there is no hard and fast rule limiting how many children a *gr̥hastha* may have, *shelter and initiation candidates* only try to have children one day per month. That day *garbhodhana samskara* is practised by increasing spiritual activities, chanting fifty rounds and praying to Guru and Kṛṣṇa to send a pure devotee child. (*Śrīla Prabhupāda Śikṣāmṛta Complete Edition, Gr̥hastha Āśrama: Conception 68-09, 69-01; ISKCON Chowpatty Gr̥hastha Manual 2003, 1.13: Samskāras*) Do you practice this standard of *gr̥hastha* life?

- Yes How long have you and your spouse followed this standard? (go to Q.18)
 -Trying. How long have you and your spouse followed this standard?
 -No

Please note that you must have followed this standard for at least 1 year to qualify to receive first initiation. Following this minimum standard for candidates is compulsory for all levels of gr̥hastha sādṛhikas, beginning from shelter applicants.

f. If you are not following the minimum standard for initiates at present, are you able to do so from now on? -Yes (go to Q.18) -No

g. If you are not able to follow the minimum standard for initiates, which of the following levels are you able to follow?

- I am generally follow but only occasionally not able to follow.
 I have relations once per month (although not necessarily for procreation).
 I have relations more than once per month (although not necessarily for procreation).
 I have relations according to the Manu Samhita codes (non-Ekadasi, etc.)
 I have relations without any strict regulation within marriage.
 Any other standard:.....

h. If you are not able to practice the minimum standard for initiates, please explain what obstacles prevent you from doing so.

- I am personally not able to commit to that level of celibacy.
 My spouse (marriage partner) is not a practicing devotee which makes it difficult.
 We cannot have children (or more children), but cannot remain fully celibate.
 We do not want more children but cannot remain fully celibate.
 In order to preserve the marriage more relations are required.
 Other obstacle in following:.....

18. Regarding family planning matters:

a. Do you use modern family planning techniques (contraceptives)?

Do you intend to use them or to have an abortion in the future? -Yes -No

b. Have you or your spouse undergone a sterilization operation? -Yes -No

c. Are you sure and committed that you will never undergo sterilization in the future or perform an abortion? (If you have any doubt on this then answer NO.) -Yes -No

19. a. Are you training your dependent children to be Krishna conscious devotees? -Yes -No

b. Do you feed them only prasadam? -Yes -No

FIRST INITIATION EXAM

Pass mark 75% (115/153 marks) NOTE: you may answer in point form

**MOBILE PHONES, COMPUTERS & REFERENCE MATERIALS OF ANY KIND
ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED FROM EXAMINATION ROOMS.**

**ALL REFERENCE MATERIALS MUST BE SURRENDERED FOR SAFE-KEEPING
UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF YOUR EXAM.**

SECTION 1 (40 marks) *Originally the 1st Year Bhakti Sastri Exam set by Srila Prabhupada in 1969.* MARKS

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 1 | Who is Krishna?..... | (1) |
| 2 | What is your relationship with Krishna?..... | (1) |
| 3 | What are you expected to do with your relationship with Krishna?..... | (1) |
| 4 | What is the aim of Krishna consciousness?..... | (1) |
| 5 | What do you mean by religion?..... | (4) |
| 6 | Is Krishna consciousness a type of religion or religious faith?..... | (5) |
| 7 | How do you distinguish between religion and faith?..... | (5) |
| 8 | Can religion and faith be changed from one type to another?..... | (5) |
| 9 | How do you distinguish between changeable and eternal religion?..... | (5) |
| 10 | What are the different types of religious faiths?..... | (2) |
| 11 | Can religion be manufactured by philosophical speculation?..... | (1) |
| 12 | What is the greatest common engagement of religious men? | (1) |
| 13 | If you believe that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead how do you substantiate your belief?..... | (5) |
| 14 | What are Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan?..... | (3) |

SECTION 2 (50 marks) MARKS

- | | | |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | (a) What is the meaning of the maha-mantra?..... | (5) |
| | (b) What are the progressive stages of chanting?..... | (3) |
| | (c) How does chanting affect us?..... | (2) |
| 2 | What are the four regulative principles and why should they be followed?..... | (4x2) |
| 3 | Sadhana bhakti is comprised of various devotional observances. Please describe (1) the purpose and (2) the benefit of taking part in each of the following activities. (1+1 mark for each item) | |
| | (a) Mangala-arati..... | (2) |
| | (b) Tulasi-puja..... | (2) |
| | (c) Japa-meditation..... | (2) |
| | (d) Worship of the Deities..... | (2) |
| | (e) Guru-puja..... | (2) |
| | (f) Srimad-Bhagavatam class..... | (2) |
| | (g) Honouring prasadam..... | (2) |
| | (h) Observance of Ekadasi..... | (2) |
| | (i) Serving devotees..... | (2) |
| | (j) 'Preaching' – distributing knowledge of Krishna to others..... | (2) |

- 4 Who are the personalities usually worshipped in ISKCON Temples?
Match the following descriptions with these personalities:

- | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Lord Nityananda | b. the Six Gosvamis | c. Lord Balarama | d. Laksmi-devi |
| e. Lady Subhadra | f. Lord Jagannatha | g. Srimati Radharani | h. the Disciplic Succession |
| i. Tulasi Devi | j. Lord Caitanya | k. Lord Nrsimhadeva | l. Lord Krishna |

1. The most merciful incarnation..... (1)
2. The original Supreme Lord..... (1)
3. A pure devotee in the form of a plant..... (1)
4. The most recent acaryas..... (1)
5. Krishna's sister..... (1)
6. Half-man, half-lion incarnation who appears to protect His devotee..... (1)
7. The Goddess of Fortune..... (1)
8. Krishna's eternal consort who is in charge of devotional service..... (1)
9. The original spiritual master..... (1)
10. The Lord of the Universe..... (1)
11. Krishna's brother..... (1)
12. Great devotees in the disciplic succession from Lord Caitanya..... (1)

SECTION 3 (40 marks)

MARKS

- 1 What are the three modes of material nature and how do they affect us?..... (3x3)
- 2 Describe the characteristics of the soul or atma..... (5)
- 3 Describe the process of transmigration of the soul..... (5)
- 4 (a) Is the phenomenal world true or false?..... (2)
(b) Explain how a devotee should interact with the material world..... (2)
- 5 Explain Lord Caitanya's philosophy of acintya-bheda abheda-tattva..... (2)
- 6 Explain the origin, meaning and purpose of Varnasrama-dharma..... (10)
- 7 What are the four defects of the conditioned soul and how do they affect us?..... (5)

SECTION 4 (23 marks)

MARKS

- 1 Describe the characteristics and qualities of the following positions in devotional service:
(a) Kanistha Adhikari..... (4)
(b) Madhyama Adhikari..... (4)
(c) Uttama Adhikari..... (4)
- 2 What is the prospective disciple's relationship with Srila Prabhupada:
(a) before initiation?..... (2)
(b) after initiation?..... (2)
- 3 How should one regard the god-brothers and god-sisters of his *guru*?..... (1)
- 4 Give the English translations of the 1st, 7th, and 8th verses of the *Guruvastakam* of Srila Visvanatha Carkravati Thakura..... (3x2)

SECTION 5 (15 marks: marked separately)

In June 2013 ISKCON's Governing Board Commission resolved (306) that "ISKCON Law 7.2.1.1.6 be amended to include the following three questions in the test that *all Harinama initiation candidates must complete before initiation.*"

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE COMPULSORY.

You cannot pass your exam without completing and passing them.

THIS SECTION IS OPEN-BOOK. Appendix 1 and 2 are supplied with your exam materials.

- 1 Have you read the GBC Statement on the *Position of Srila Prabhupada*? (Appendix 1)
- 2 Have you read the paper *Harmonizing ISKCON's Lines of Authority*? (Appendix 2)
- 3 What have you understood as the most important points of the *Harmonizing ISKCON's Lines of Authority* paper? (Pass mark 8/10).....(10)

Since August 2013 Melbourne Yatra has required each shelter candidate to answer these questions. Have you answered these questions and received a passing mark?

- Yes. If so, when?.....(Day/Month/Year). *Go to page 33.*
- No. If so, read the two papers (Appendixes 2 and 3) and answer the three questions above.

COMPULSORY READING FOR MELBOURNE YATRA CANDIDATES FROM 2.3.2018:

***Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta* by Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami.**

You cannot qualify for initiation without completing this book and passing a related essay question.

Have you previously completed and passed the Prabhupada Lilamrta essay?

- Yes: I have completed and passed this essay.
- No: I have yet to complete and pass this essay.

SUGGESTED READING FOR EXAM

- Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta - Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswāmī (<https://www.vedabase.com/en/spl>)
- Bhagavad-gita As It Is, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada: Introduction, Chapters 2, 3, 7, 10, 14-18 (<https://www.vedabase.com/en/bg>)
- Temple Mantra Guide (http://www.harekrsna.de/Temple_Mantra_Guide.htm)
- Srimad Bhagavatam Cantos 1, 11 (<https://www.vedabase.com/en/sb>)
- Sri Isopanisad (<https://www.vedabase.com/en/iso>)
- The Nectar of Instruction (<https://www.vedabase.com/en/noi>)
- The Nectar of Devotion (<https://www.vedabase.com/en/nod>)
- Brahma Samhita (<https://www.vedabase.com/en/bs>)
- The Teachings of Lord Caitanya (<https://www.vedabase.com/en/tlc>)
- Sri Namamrita (http://www.harekrishnajapa.com/wp-content/ebooks/Sri_Namamrta_Compiled_From_The_Srila_Prabhupada_Books.pdf)
- ISKCON Lawbook (<https://archive.org/details/IskconLawBook>)

1ST INITIATION ESSAY

(not compulsory)

"Why I Want to Take Initiation."

Write an essay to the spiritual master explaining why you want to take initiation from him and why you want him to accept you as his disciple.

- You may explain personally what has fixed or strengthened your faith in him.
- Kindly also explain in which ways after initiation you intend to serve the spiritual master in his devotional service of fulfilling Srila Prabhupada's mission of spreading the Harinama Sankirtana movement all over the world.
- How do you intend to further develop and maintain a strong and proper relationship as a disciple with him?

REQUIRED READING FOR FIRST INITIATES

Book	Read ✓
Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta (COMPULSORY from 19.12.18)	
Bhagavad Gita As It Is with purports (COMPULSORY from 19.12.18)	
Teachings of Lord Chaitanya	
Krishna book	
Nectar of Devotion to Chapter 19 (COMPULSORY from 19.12.18)	
Nectar of Devotion to Chapter 51	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 1 with purports (COMPULSORY from 19.12.18)	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 2	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 3	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 4	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 5	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 6	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 7	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 8	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 9	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 10	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 11	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 12	
Caitanya Caritamrta Adi-lila	
Caitanya Caritamrta Madhya-lila	
Caitanya Caritamrta Antya-lila	

INITIATION ACCEPTANCE OATH

To be Completed by Candidate

It is my sincere, voluntary and loving desire and request to be accepted by

Om Visnupada Srila
 (disciple of His Divine Grace Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada) as his initiated disciple.

To clarify what this signifies to me and to all concerned, I make the following declarations and

I HEREBY SOLEMNLY MAKE THE FOLLOWING VOWS:

1. I accept Srila to be my initiating (*diksa*) and instructing (*siksa*) spiritual master (*guru*) forever, even life after life.
2. It is my desire and commitment to help Srila in his devotional service to His Divine Grace Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and the previous *acaryas* in the *guru-parampara*.
3. I vow to follow throughout my life the instructions, etiquette, and principles prescribed according to Srila Prabhupada's instructions, Bhagavata-dharma sastras (Bhagavad-gita, Srimad Bhagavatam, Caitanya Caritamrta, etc.) and ISKCON Law in my dealings with my spiritual master.
4. I vow to follow the four regulative principles of avoiding the following sinful activities:
 - (a) eating meat, fish, eggs, onion, garlic and any non-vegetarian food products
 - (b) taking all forms of intoxication including alcohol, drugs, tobacco, caffeine, coffee, tea, etc.
 - (c) engaging in gambling, highly speculative business investments and frivolous sports
 - (d) engaging in illicit sex in any form.
5. I vow to chant 16 rounds (16 × 108 mantras) of Hare Krishna Maha-mantra japa every day.
6. I vow that I shall follow the general and specific individual instructions given to me by my spiritual master Srila..... I accept these instructions as representing Srila Prabhupada's and Lord Krishna's will.
7. As an initiated disciple I understand that I am accepted as a member of and under the eternal shelter of the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-(ISKCON) disciplic succession coming through His Divine Grace Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and I vow to accept my further spiritual instructions and initiation from Srila and in such circumstances where he is not present in this world to give them I shall accept the same only from bona fide ISKCON spiritual master representing Srila Prabhupada.
8. I shall always remain loyal to ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) as an extension of Srila Prabhupada and I shall avoid doing anything detrimental to the mission of my spiritual master and to ISKCON.

Name of Initiate: _____

Signature of Initiate: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Two Witnesses: (1) _____ (2) _____

**FOR DAILY RECITATION:
SRI GURU-VANDANA, THE WORSHIP OF SRI GURU**
(from Prema-bhakti-candrikā)

(1)

śrī-guru-caraṇa-padma, kevala-bhakati-sadma,
bando mui sāvadhāna mate
jāhāra prasāde bhāi, e bhava toriyā jāi,
kṛṣṇa-prāpti hoy jāhā ha'te

The lotus feet of our spiritual master are the only way by which we can attain pure devotional service. I bow to his lotus feet with great awe and reverence. By his grace one can cross the ocean of material suffering and obtain the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.

(2)

guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete koriyā aikya,
ār nā koriho mane āsā
śrī-guru-caraṇe rati, ei se uttama-gati,
je prasāde pūre sarva āsā

My only wish is to have my consciousness purified by the words emanating from his lotus mouth. Attachment to his lotus feet is the perfection that fulfills all desires.

(3)

cakhu-dān dilo jei, janme janme prabhu sei,
divya jñān hṛde prokāśito
prema-bhakti jāhā hoite, avidyā vināśa jāte,
vede gāy jāhāra carito

He opens my darkened eyes and fills my heart with transcendental knowledge. He is my Lord birth after birth. From him ecstatic prema emanates; by him ignorance is destroyed. The Vedic scriptures sing of his character.

(4)

śrī-guru karuṇā-sindhu, adhama janāra bandhu,
lokanāth lokera jīvana
hā hā prabhu koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā,
ebe jaśa ghuṣuk tribhuvana

Our spiritual master is the ocean of mercy, the friend of the poor, and the lord and master of the devotees. O master! Be merciful unto me. Give me the shade of your lotus feet. Your fame is spread all over the three worlds.

SECOND INITIATION CANDIDATE PRE-REQUISITES COVER SHEET *For office use only*

CANDIDATE'S NAME:

TEMPLE/BHAKTI VRIKSHA RECOMMENDING:

Inclusions:

- 1. ISKCON Disciple Course Certificate (sighted)
- 2. Recommendation Sheet from Temple Authorities
- 3. Up to Date Disciple Census Form (bio data and address)
- 4. Practical Interview Questionnaire
- 5. Personal Interview Questionnaire
- 6. Written Exam (60% pass)/Oral Exam (90% pass)
- 7. Photo (digital or hard copy)
- 8. Interview appearance (with spiritual master)
- 9. Release of Information Form (if needed)

Examiner's/ Reviewer's Approval:

- Complete
- Incomplete

Examiner's Name:

Signature.....

Initiating Guru's Decision after Interview:

- Accepted for receiving initiation.
- Not accepted for current initiation. Should improve in following area(s):

1.
2.
3.
4.

Thank you,

.....Initiating Guru (initial)

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATION FOR SECOND INITIATION

For office use only

Center:.....

To (name of guru):.....

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

It is my pleasure to recommend.....for second initiation by you. I find that he/she has fulfilled the necessary qualifications for this initiation to the best of my understanding. Specifically, for the last twelve months he/she has been engaged in favorable devotional service, has chanted sixteen rounds of *japa* daily, and has adhered to the four regulative principles. It has been more than one year since he/she received first initiation. Either I have observed these qualifications personally or I have heard of them from sources I know to be reliable.

Your servant,

.....(Name)

.....(Position Held)

.....(Date)

SECOND INITIATION CANDIDATE'S DATA SHEET

Candidate to complete in full

<p>FIRST NAME: FAMILY NAME:</p> <p>INITIATED NAME Nationality:</p> <p>Date of birth:/...../..... <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female Age:..... Occupation:</p>
<p>PRESENT ADDRESS: (Street no.)</p> <p>Suburb/City: State: Postcode: Country:</p> <p>Phone Nos.: mobile: home: office:</p> <p>EMAIL.....</p>
<p>PERMANENT ADDRESS (if other than above)</p> <p>City: State: Postcode: Country:</p> <p>Phone Nos.: mobile: home: office:</p>
<p>MARRIAGE STATUS: I AM <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Seeking <input type="checkbox"/> Engaged <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Separated/divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widow/widower</p> <p><i>(If applicable)</i> I have a spouse/partner. Their legal name is:</p> <p>Their date of birth is:...../...../.....</p> <p>My spouse/partner's Krishna Conscious status is <input type="checkbox"/> Favourable <input type="checkbox"/> Unfavourable <input type="checkbox"/> Aspiring <input type="checkbox"/> Initiated <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Initiated</p> <p><i>(If applicable)</i> I have..... (number of) children. They are:</p> <p>Name:.....Date of birth:/...../..... <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female Is a devotee <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Name:Date of birth:/...../..... <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female Is a devotee <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Name:Date of birth:/...../..... <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female Is a devotee <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><i>(Please use the back of this sheet if you need more space.)</i></p>
<p>DEVOTIONAL HISTORY: I have been in contact with Krishna consciousness for years.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am a member of Bhakti Vriksha Group, mentored by</p> <p>..... (servant-leader's name) <input type="checkbox"/> I live in temple.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am connected to temple.</p> <p>I have chanted Hare Krishna japa foryears.....months. My devotional instructors are:</p> <p>.....My personal guide/advisor(s) are:</p> <p>.....The names of my family members who are initiated ISKCON devotees are:</p> <p>Name: Name:</p> <p>Name: Name:</p> <p>Name: Name:</p> <p><i>(Please use the back of this sheet if you need more space.)</i></p>

EDUCATION: I attended the Founder-Acarya Course Yes. Date: .../.../.... Location: No.
 I received a Certificate of Completion (compulsory) Yes. Date:/...../..... No
 I attended ISKCON's Disciple Course Yes. Date: .../.../.... Location: No.
 I passed the Course and received a passing Certificate (compulsory) Yes. Date:/...../..... No
 I have completed the Bhakti-śāstrī Course. Date: .../.../... No. I passed the Course. Date: .../.../... No
 I received my Certificate. Date: .../.../... No
 I have completed the Bhakti Vaibhava Course. Date: .../.../... No. I passed the Course. Date: .../.../... No
 I received my Certificate. Date: .../.../... No
 I have completed the Bhakti Vedanta Course. Date: .../.../... No. I passed the Course. Date: .../.../... No
 I received my Certificate. Date: .../.../... No

SADHANA: I have chanted 16 rounds daily since...../...../..... (minimum 2 years)
 I have strictly followed 4 regulative principles since/...../..... (minimum 2 years)
 Signed: Date:/...../.....

REFEREES: Two senior devotees who can verify my sadhana (above) to an examiner are:
 (1) Name: Bhakti Vriksha mentor instructor guide
 Phone: Email:
 (2) Name: Bhakti Vriksha mentor instructor guide
 Phone: Email:

SPIRITUAL MASTER: I received 1st initiation from (name of spiritual master). Date initiation received:/...../..... Location:

PERMISSION TO APPEAR FOR INTERVIEWS & EXAM I have asked my Temple President's permission and he/she has agreed Yes No Date he/she agreed:/...../.....

PRACTICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR 2ND INITIATION CANDIDATES

To be completed during your interview, unless your examiner asks you to do otherwise.

MINIMUM SADHANA STANDARDS	Date	✓
All mantras & prayers should be recited by heart and books read the prescribed number of times completed:/...../.....		✓
I attend the temple regularly each week (or have approved reasons for being unable to do so)		
I set a good example of enthusiasm in rendering service in the Temple, Bhakti Vriksha group, or other authorized ISKCON activities.		
I have read the following books		
Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta (COMPULSORY from 19.12.18)		
BG with purports (COMPULSORY from 19.12.18)		
SB 1 st Canto (COMPULSORY from 19.12.18)		
SB other Cantos.....times		
TLC		
Upadeshamrita		
NOD to chapter 19 (COMPULSORY from 19.12.18)		
I can recite the <i>guru-puja</i> prayers (COMPULSORY from 19.12.18), " <i>samsara davanala</i> " prayers to you		
I avoid degrading and non-devotional activities including the following, but not limited to them alone:		
Watching mundane television without Krishna conscious reason;		
Going to mundane Movies without Krishna conscious reason;		
Being negligent in KC activities and other related responsibilities like my ashrama duties;		
Domestic violence or other unauthorized violence;		
Excessive arguments without KC cause;		
Dishonesty or failure to tell the truth to devotees;		
Rumor mongering or tendency towards <i>kuti-nati</i> ;		
Political or offensive activities against spiritual authorities;		
Other degrading and non-devotional activities for which I don't have previous permission from the guru and local authorities.		
I show an interest in & tendency for preaching & accept training to give devotional classes.		
I am one or more of the following:		
A resident in good standing of a temple or temple community.		
An active member of the congregation who regularly attends and offers service at the temple.		
An active member in good standing of an authorized Bhakti Vriksha group.		
I have another program that is previously authorized by local spiritual authorities and the guru (where possible in writing).		
I am known to chant 16 rounds daily and follow all the regulative principles sincerely.		
I haven't had a major fall down in the past 2 years or broken any regulative principle in the past year.		
I passed the <i>Philosophical Examination</i> with 66% minimum mark.		
I have the recommendation of my local Temple President; or my local Bhakti Vriksha leader designated for this purpose and the Regional Director of Bhakti Vriksha group.		

PERSONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR 2ND INITIATION CANDIDATES

(MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR BRAHMANAS)

*To be completed during your interview, unless your examiner asks you to do otherwise.
You must pass your interviews in order to sit your exam.*

1. Which applies to you? (Check all that apply)

- I live in the Temple Ashram and do service there.
- I live at home and regularly do devotional service at:
- My local ISKCON Temple (name):
- My local Bhakti Vriksha group (name):
- Other:.....

2. Have you regularly chanted 16-rounds of Hare Krishna maha-mantra japa during the past two years or since taking first initiation (whichever is shorter)? --Yes/ --No

- a) In a month how many do you miss on the average?
- b) Do you make up the missed rounds? --Yes/ --No

3. a) Do you regularly attend temple Mangalarati every day? --Yes/ --No

b) How many days are missed in a month on the average?days.

4. Have you offered regular and ongoing devotional services to the Deities during the past 2 years? Brahminical initiation is not an automatic outcome of the time you've spent in devotional service. Before beginning your candidature for second initiation, check with your Temple authorities whether or not there is a need for your existing, ongoing service at brahminical level. When you meet your authorities, you must be able to demonstrate a record of substantial service to the Deities, either in Their worship or in Their kitchen. If you are unable to offer these services, you are expected to participate in Harinama and book distribution. Your service should be regular and ongoing over the 2-year period leading up to your application and be verifiable with senior devotees. Yes/ No. What are your services?

.....

.....

.....

5. a) Have you ever left the temple, stopped attending Bhakti Vriksha or stopped performing your responsibilities and services without permission of the spiritual authorities? --Yes/ --No

b) Have you ever wilfully disobeyed or neglected to follow an order of the spiritual master since your first initiation? --Yes/ --No; if Yes, give details [time, place, etc.].....

.....

6. Do you regularly bathe early in the morning and otherwise maintain cleanliness (fingernails, hair, clothes, etc.) -Yes/ -No

7. Are you implicated or involved in any dishonesty such as theft, breaking state laws etc. during the past two years? Are you guilty of child abuse? -Yes/ -No If Yes, give details:.....

8. Have you lied/ told untruth, to senior devotees during the past 2 years? -Yes/ -No

9. How many times have you read the following books?

- a. Bhagavad Gita As It Is
- b. Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 1.....
- c. Srimad Bhagavatam Cantos 2 -5 (or which cantos).....
- d. Srimad Bhagavatam Cantos 6-12 (or which cantos).....
- e. Krishna book.....
- f. Caitanya Caritamrta (which volumes).....
- g. Teachings of Lord Caitanya
- h. Nectar of Devotion.....

a-h are required reading. You must commit to systematically reading these books in your own time if you have not already done so. Do you promise to read these books? -Yes/ -No

- i. Sri Isopanisad.....
- j. Nectar of Instruction.....
- k. Which other BBT books have you read?.....

10. Are you prone to depression and material anxiety? -Yes/ -No

11. Have you considered committing suicide or leaving ISKCON during the previous 24-months? -Yes -No

12. Are you presently particularly agitated by any of the senses to the extent that you fear that you are in eminent danger of falling down? -Yes/ -No If yes, mention source(s) of agitation:

13. Do you avoid offending vaisnavas and un-constructive criticism of devotees? -Yes/ -No If no mention what:.....

14. Ritvikism

a. Have you heard about Rtvikism?: No, haven't heard. Yes, I've heard through:
 Newspaper Internet Rtvik adherents talked to me. Devotees warned me.
 Other:

b. If you have heard, what is your opinion about Rtvikism?:

c. Have you become doubtful by pro-rtvik preaching or believed in rtvikism? -Yes/ -No

15. For devotees who live outside the temple:

- a. How often do you visit the temple?
- b. How often do you attend Bhakti Vriksha meetings?.....
- c. Do you practice a daily sadhana routine of rising before sunrise chanting, etc.? -Yes/ -No

ISKCON law 7.2.3.1.1.5 (Re. Devotees Residing Outside of Temple Communities). Devotees who do not live in a temple community and who cannot come daily to the temple programs may be initiated provided they have regular morning programs at home or attend regular morning programs at the nama-hatta centre.

- d. Resolution 405c [Law] 1999, Standards of Guru Worship in ISKCON. In order to offer appropriate respect to Srila Prabhupada as Founder-Acarya and preeminent spiritual master of ISKCON, it is considered an essential devotional practice for all ISKCON devotees to observe or perform Srila Prabhupada's guru puja daily, either in an ISKCON temple, or if not possible, in one's home. Do you do this? -Yes/ -No
- e. Which local ISKCON temple or Bhakti Vriksha group do you attend on a regular basis?
.....
- f. Are you connected to any other religious organization/s? Which ones? What kind of service do you offer them?
- g. Are you married? -Yes/ -No
- h. If are are not married do you plan to or would like to get married in the near future? -Yes/ -No/ Not applicable
- i. If you are not married and do not intend to get married, do you plan to join a temple in the future? -Yes/ -No When or why not?.....
- j. Do you contribute any percentage or amount from your income to Lord Krishna's service?
 -Yes/ -No If so, give details:.....
- k. Do you have capacity, plans for increasing your devotional service? -Yes/ -No. If yes, what service?
.....
- l. Do you generally avoid eating anything but prasadam? -Yes/ -No If No what exception?
.....
- m. Which of the following are spiritual problems/challenges for you?

<input type="checkbox"/> Watching mundane television	<input type="checkbox"/> Involvement in frivolous sports
<input type="checkbox"/> Watching mundane movies	<input type="checkbox"/> Over-endeavour for mundane things
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading mundane literature or news	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Wasting time on social media or internet	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Gossiping and rumour spreading	

16. Additional questions only for those who possibly may marry:

- a. If you ever get married, would you first try to marry only an initiated vaisnava devotee (ISKCON) and if not available then only marry a pious vegetarian person? -Yes/ -No
- b. Would you consult with ISKCON authorities and the guru before and while making such decision? -Yes/ -No
- c. Do you know the rules of Krishna conscious life including regulations for Krishna conscious sex life? -Yes/ -No
- d. Do you feel capable of following # c above? -Yes/ -No
- e. Do you think the married life will affect your present service? -Yes/ -No; If yes, how? Give details:
.....
- f. Are you engaged to marry? - Yes/ - No
- g. Where you married before? - Yes/ - No
- h. Express your position regarding any future marriage alliance
.....

QUESTIONS FOR GRIHASTHAS LIVING WITH SPOUSE

This Sheet to be completed by Candidate.

17. Practicing regulated family life:

a. I have been totally celibate (no sexual activity) for.....(years).....(months) *If celibate for 2 years, you have completed this requirement.*

b. MINIMUM STANDARD FOR CANDIDATES: Vaiṣṇava *Gṛhasthas* who practice sex-life according to the Vedic literatures for the purpose of procreation of Krishna conscious children are doing a devotional service to Lord Krishna and are considered to be *gṛhastha brahmacārīs*.

While there is no hard and fast rule limiting how many children a *gṛhastha* may have, *shelter and initiation candidates* only try to have children one day per month. That day *garbhodhana samskara* is practised by increasing spiritual activities, chanting fifty rounds and praying to Guru and Kṛṣṇa to send a pure devotee child. (*Śrīla Prabhupāda Śikṣāmṛta Complete Edition, Gṛhastha Āśrama: Conception 68-09, 69-01; ISKCON Chowpatty Gṛhastha Manual 2003, 1.13: Samskāras*) Do you practice this standard of *gṛhastha* life?

-Yes How long have you and your spouse followed this standard? (go to Q.18)

-Trying. How long have you and your spouse followed this standard?

-No

Please note that you must have followed this standard for at least 2 years to qualify to receive second initiation. Following this minimum standard for candidates is compulsory for all levels of gṛhastha sādhanikas, beginning from shelter applicants.

i. If you are not following the minimum standard for initiates at present, are you able to do so from now on? -Yes (go to Q.18) -No

j. If you are not able to follow the minimum standard for initiates, which of the following levels are you able to follow?

I am generally follow but only occasionally not able to follow.

I have relations once per month (although not necessarily for procreation).

I have relations more than once per month (although not necessarily for procreation).

I have relations according to the Manu Samhita codes (non-Ekadasi, etc.)

I have relations without any strict regulation within marriage.

Any other standard:.....

k. If you are not able to practice the minimum standard for initiates, please explain what obstacles prevent you from doing so.

I am personally not able to commit to that level of celibacy.

My spouse (marriage partner) is not a practicing devotee which makes it difficult.

We cannot have children (or more children) but cannot remain fully celibate.

We do not want more children but cannot remain fully celibate.

In order to preserve the marriage more relations are required.

Other obstacle in following:.....

18. Regarding family planning matters:

a. Do you use modern family planning techniques (contraceptives)? Do you intend to use them or to have an abortion in the future? -Yes -No

b. Have you or your spouse undergone a sterilization operation? -Yes -No

c. Are you sure and committed that you will never undergo sterilization in the future or perform an abortion? (If you have any doubt on this then answer NO.) -Yes -No

19. a. Are you training your dependent children to be Krishna conscious devotees? -Yes -No

b. Do you feed them only prasadam? -Yes -No

BRAHMAN INITIATION EXAMINATION

**MOBILE PHONES, COMPUTERS & REFERENCE MATERIALS OF ANY KIND
ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED FROM EXAMINATION ROOMS.
ALL REFERENCE MATERIALS MUST BE SURRENDERED FOR SAFE-KEEPING
UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF YOUR EXAM.**

4 hours are allowed for completion.

Complete exam offers 150 marks (+ 15 extra bonus points in Section 1)

Passing score 60% (90/150 marks)

NOTE: you may answer in point form.

SECTION 1 (30 marks)

Write the correct **English translation** to 15 of the following 50 important Bhagavad-gita slokas.....(15x2)
Free extra bonus points can be earned for the correct **Roman transliteration** (see example below).....(15x1)

EXAMPLE (Bhagavad-gita 1.1)

Sanskrit verse (not required)

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच
धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥ १ ॥

Roman transliteration (for bonus points)

*dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca
dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre
samavetā yuyutsavaḥ
māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāś caiva
kim akurvata sañjaya*

English translation (required):

Dhrtarastra said: O Sanjaya, after my sons and the sons of Pandu assembled in the place of pilgrimage at Kuruksetra, desiring to fight, what did they do?

2.12	2.13	2.14	2.20	2.40	2.41	2.44	2.59	2.62	2.63
3.9	3.21	3.27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4.7	4.8	4.34	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.18	5.29	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.47	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7.3	7.7	7.14	7.19	7.24	7.26	-	-	-	-
8.5	8.6	8.16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.2	9.10	9.11	9.13	9.22	9.25	9.26	9.27	-	-
10.8	10.10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13.22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14.26	14.27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15.7	15.15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18.42	18.54	18.55	18.61	18.65	18.66	18.78	-	-	-

SECTION 2 (20 marks)

- 2.1 What is the difference between Deity worship and idol worship?.....(5)
- 2.2 Why is purity stressed in Deity worship?.....(5)
- 2.3 Discuss the inter-relationship between Deity worship and nama-sankirtana.....(5)
- 2.4 How does opulent temple worship benefit: (i) devotees?.....(2.5)
(ii) people in general?.....(2.5)

SECTION 3 (100 marks)

- 3.1 The subject of Bhagavad-gita entails the comprehension of five basic truths. Describe and explain them.....(5)
- 3.2 Describe (i) Sanatana Dhama,.....(2.5)
(ii) Sanatana Dharma.....(2.5)
- 3.3 Give an account of the events leading up to the battle of Kuruksetra.....(5)
- 3.4 Explain the ten offences in the chanting of the Hare Krishna Maha-mantra.....(10x2)
- 3.5. Give an account (approx. 500 words) of the life of Caitanya Mahaprabhu.....(20)
- 3.6 Discuss the similarities and differences between Visnu and Krishna.....(5)
- 3.7 Explain the concept of *isavasya* given in Sri Isopanisad.....(5)
- 3.8 Give a chronological account of the development of the Srimad Bhagavatam.....(5)
- 3.9 Explain (giving evidence) how Krishna is the source of all incarnations.....(5)
- 3.10 Explain Vyasadeva's lamentation (as described in the First Canto of the Srimad-bhagavatam).....(5)
- 3.11 Describe and give examples of the five primary rasas described in the Nectar of Devotion.....(5x2)
- 3.12 How can we counter argument that the super-human pastimes of Krishna are mythology?.....(5)
- 3.13 Explain, giving examples, Prabhupada's statement that 'life comes from life.' Contrast the Vedic viewpoint with modern scientific theory.....(5)

SECTION 4 (10 marks: marked separately)

Since August 2013 Melbourne Yatra has required each shelter and first initiation candidate to answer the following 3 questions. You cannot pass your exam without completing and passing them. Have you previously answered the following questions and received a passing mark?

- 1 Have you read the GBC Statement on the *Position of Srila Prabhupada*? (How Do I Qualify For Initiation, Appendix 1)
- 2 Have you read the paper *Harmonizing ISKCON's Lines of Authority*? (How Do I Qualify For Initiation, Appendix 2)
- 3 What have you understood as the most important points of the *Harmonizing ISKCON's Lines of Authority* paper? (Pass mark 8/10).....(10)

-Yes. If so, when?.....(Day/Month/Year). Please proceed.

-No. If no, you will be asked to do so.

SECTION 5

Since March 2018 Melbourne Yatra has required each shelter and first initiation candidate to pass an essay on Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta by Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami. You cannot pass your exam without completing and passing it. Have you previously passed this essay?

Yes. When and where?.....You have completed your exam requirements.

No. If no, you will be asked to do so.

REQUIRED READING FOR SECOND INITIATES

Book	Read ✓	Book	Read ✓
Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta (COMPULSORY from 19.12.18)		Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 5	
Bhagavad Gita As It Is with purports (COMPULSORY from 19.12.18)		Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 6	
Teachings of Lord Caitanya		Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 7	
Nectar of Instruction		Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 8	
Krishna book		Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 9	
Nectar of Devotion Ch 1-19 (COMPULSORY from 19.12.18)		Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 10	
Nectar of Devotion Ch 20-51		Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 11	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 1 (COMPULSORY from 19.12.18)		Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 12	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 2		Caitanya Caritamrta Adi-lila	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 3		Caitanya Caritamrta Madhya-lila	
Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 4		Caitanya Caritamrta Antya-lila	

FOR RECITATION: SRI GURU-VANDANA, THE WORSHIP OF SRI GURU (from Prema-bhakti-candrikā)

- (1) śrī-guru-caraṇa-padma, kevala-bhakati-sadma,
bando mui sāvadhāna mate
jāhāra prasāde bhāi, e bhava toriyā jāi,
kṛṣṇa-prāpti hoy jāhā ha'te

The lotus feet of our spiritual master are the only way by which we can attain pure devotional service. I bow to his lotus feet with great awe and reverence. By his grace one can cross the ocean of material suffering and obtain the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.

- (2) guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete koriyā aikya,
ār nā koriho mane āśā
śrī-guru-caraṇe rati, ei se uttama-gati,
je prasāde pūre sarva āśā

My only wish is to have my consciousness purified by the words emanating from his lotus mouth. Attachment to his lotus feet is the perfection that fulfills all desires.

- (3) cakhu-dān dilo jei, janme janme prabhu sei,
divya jñān hṛde prokāśito
prema-bhakti jāhā hoite, avidyā vināśa jāte,
vede gāy jāhāra carito

He opens my darkened eyes and fills my heart with transcendental knowledge. He is my Lord birth after birth. From him ecstatic prema emanates; by him ignorance is destroyed. The Vedic scriptures sing of his character.

- (4) śrī-guru karuṇā-sindhu, adhama janāra bandhu,
lokanāth lokera jīvana
hā hā prabhu koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā,
ebe jaśa ghuṣuk tribhuvana

Our spiritual master is the ocean of mercy, the friend of the poor, and the lord and master of the devotees. O master! Be merciful unto me. Give me the shade of your lotus feet. Your fame is spread all over the three worlds.

APPENDIX 1: GBC RESOLUTION 303/2013

PLEASE NOTE THAT READING THE FOLLOWING PAPER IS COMPULSORY. You cannot pass your exams without having done so.

GBC Statement on the Position of Srila Prabhupada

adopted March 9, 2013.

As the *Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)* and the pre-eminent teacher and ultimate authority within our society, Srila Prabhupada has a unique relationship with every ISKCON devotee.

Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the original *guru* whose Divine Grace descends through the medium of the Guru Parampara. As such, a devotee is ultimately delivered by Sri Krishna acting through a combination of various manifestations of His mercy. These include, but are not limited to, the *chaitya guru*, Srila Prabhupada, the Guru Parampara, one's *diksha guru*, other *siksha gurus*, the Holy Name, *sastra*, and the nine processes of devotional service.

Within these cooperative elements, Srila Prabhupada, as the *Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness*, is the preeminent guru for all members of ISKCON. All members of ISKCON, for all generations, are encouraged to seek shelter of Srila Prabhupada. All members of ISKCON are entitled and encouraged to have a personal relationship with Srila Prabhupada through his books, teachings, service, and his ISKCON society.

All members accepting leadership roles within ISKCON, including *diksha gurus* and *siksha gurus*, have the duty of serving together under ISKCON's Governing Body Commission (GBC) to fulfil Srila Prabhupada's instructions as he has given in his books, lectures, and personal communications.[1]

Overall, the primary duty of all *diksha gurus*, *siksha gurus* and others in leadership positions is to assist Srila Prabhupada in his service to his Guru Maharaja Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur, and our *Brahma Madhva Gaudiya Sampradaya*.

Those who accept the service of *diksha guru* or *siksha guru* in ISKCON are required to be exemplary in representing Srila Prabhupada's teaching in their words and personal behaviour. The *siksha guru* gives spiritual instruction and inspiration on behalf of Srila Prabhupada and our Guru Parampara. The *diksha guru* gives spiritual instruction, inspiration, formal initiation, a spiritual name, and later imparts the sacred Gayatri mantras to a qualified disciple as a service to Srila Prabhupada and our Guru Parampara.

Srila Prabhupada has clearly explained that devotees who are strictly following the Krishna Conscious principles are acting on the liberated platform, and, as such, are pure devotees, even though they may actually not yet be liberated. [2] (Such unalloyed devotional service is not necessarily determined by one's role or position of service, but by one's realization.)

Those who accept the service of *diksha* or *siksha guru* within ISKCON are mandated to be strict followers of the instructions of Srila Prabhupada, and, as long as they follow, they are

acting on the liberated platform. Thus they may serve, as Srila Prabhupada ordered, as bona fide representatives of the Lord and the Guru Parampara and be a via medium of Their mercy. Yet it should be clearly understood that if such *diksha* or *siksha gurus* deviate from strictly following, they may fall down from their position.

Thus, to act as a *diksha guru* in ISKCON means to serve under the GBC and in cooperation with other ISKCON authorities by functioning as a “regular guru” as Srila Prabhupada has directed.

This statement, while conclusive, is not exhaustive in its discussion of these principles. The GBC may authorize additional statements and papers in the future to further explain the pre-eminent position of our *Founder-Acharya* Srila Prabhupada, the role and responsibilities of those who serve as gurus in our society, and the related duties of ISKCON members and initiates.

All GBC members must distribute this resolution to all ISKCON temples, communities and congregations via all appropriate means of communication for the education of all ISKCON members. This statement shall also be studied in ISKCON courses including introductory courses, the *ISKCON Disciple Course*, the *Spiritual Leadership Seminar*, and other relevant venues. *Reading this statement, and affirming it has been read prior to initiation, shall be part of the test for all prospective initiates.*

1 More details on these spiritual relationships and duties may be found in the official *Lines of Authority Paper* approved by the GBC in 2012.

2 “This Krishna consciousness movement directly receives instructions from the Supreme Personality of Godhead via persons who are strictly following His instructions. Although a follower may not be a liberated person, if he follows the supreme, liberated Personality of Godhead, his actions are naturally liberated from the contamination of the material nature. Lord Chaitanya therefore says: ‘By My order you may become a spiritual master.’ One can immediately become a spiritual master by having full faith in the transcendental words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and by following His instructions.” Purport to SB 4.18.5.

And...

“A person who is liberated *acharya* and *guru* cannot commit any mistake, but there are persons who are less qualified or not liberated, but still can act as *guru* and *acharya* by strictly following the disciplic succession.” Letter to Janardana, 26 April 1968.

And...

“We may not be cent percent perfect, but as far as possible, if we follow the instruction as it is, that much perfect. In this way one will get perfection. So, one has to follow. The same example - try to understand - that a perfect, expert technologist or technician or mechanic is working, and somebody is working under his instruction. So, this somebody, because he is strictly working under the instruction of the expert, he's also expert. He may not be cent percent expert, but his work is expert. Is that clear? Because he is working under the expert. Do you follow? So, if you follow pure devotee, then you are also pure devotee. It may not be one is cent percent pure. Because we are trying to raise our self from the conditional life. But if we strictly follow the pure devotee, then we are also pure devotee. So far we do, that is pure. So pure devotee does not mean one has to become immediately cent percent pure. But if he sticks to the principle that "We'll follow a pure devotee," then his actions are... He is as good as a pure devotee. It is not I am explaining in my own way. It is the explanation of Bhagavata: *mahajano yena gatah sa panthah* [Cc. Madhya 17.186].” Ref. VedaBase, Bhagavad-gita 2.1-10 and Talk - Los Angeles, November 25, 1968.

APPENDIX 2: HARMONIZING ISKCON'S LINES OF AUTHORITY

Translations of this paper – including in Hindi, Tamil and Telegu – are available [here](#).

As adopted in GBC Resolution 305/2013

PLEASE NOTE THAT READING THE FOLLOWING PAPER IS COMPULSORY. You cannot pass your exams without having read this paper and answering a question on it.

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1. Preface

This paper has been voted on by the GBC and is now an official GBC policy paper. The following offers more about the paper's purpose and scope.

The topic of "Lines of Authority" is a heritage or legacy issue. By "heritage" or "legacy" issues we mean those topics that are of core importance to the future of ISKCON. These are the issues that are going to be relevant for generations to come. How to address them in a way that reflects Srila Prabhupada's intent and purpose will be expressed in papers like this one.

This "Lines of Authority" paper is not the full and final statement on this topic. Rather, it is a good first step. The GBC fully expects that the paper will be updated, made more comprehensive, and improved in the course of time.

Of special importance is the section outlining conduct for gurus, managers, and disciples. Starting implementation of these practices now will provide the GBC with valuable feedback on where the paper works and what needs to be adjusted and improved.

2. History of the Topic

Several years ago, the GBC embarked upon developing a systematic plan for the future of ISKCON. They selected several issues of primary importance to the movement and formed committees to discuss those issues. One of the committees was requested to study the divergent lines of authority within ISKCON and suggest a method for settling disagreements between them. The members of this committee were Bhanu Swami, Guruprasada Swami, Prahladananda Swami, Ramai Swami, Sivarama Swami, Badrinarayan Dasa, and, later, Niranjana Swami.

After a thorough discussion, the members of this committee concluded that the most pressing issue to address was the tension created when spiritual masters sometimes act as an independent line of authority within ISKCON.

3. Focus of the Essay

Hence, this essay will focus exclusively on defining principles that should be followed by initiating or instructing spiritual masters, disciples of initiating or instructing spiritual masters, Zonal GBCs, Regional Secretaries, Temple Presidents, and other ISKCON authorized managers. The aim is to prevent misunderstandings between spiritual masters and managers, as well as to minimize the influence these potential misunderstandings may have upon devotees under their combined care.

4. "Spiritual Master" Means Diksa, Siksa, or Both

It should be noted that, from here on, unless specified, whenever we refer to "the spiritual master" we mean both initiating spiritual masters and instructing spiritual masters (including managers who act as such). Additionally, whenever we refer to "spiritual authorities" we mean anyone (spiritual master or manager) whose instructions (siksa) and example have formed the foundation of a devotee's faith in devotional service and who continues to build on that foundation of the devotee's faith.

5. Authority Within ISKCON

This essay is not a detailed or definitive analysis of ISKCON's management system, nor is it a detailed analysis of guru tattva — the requisite qualities and duties of a spiritual master and the process of choosing a spiritual master.

The basic premise of this essay is as follows: Whether a devotee is an initiating spiritual master, an instructing spiritual master, a sannyasi, a Governing Body Commissioner, a Zonal Secretary, a Regional Secretary, a Temple President, a congregational leader, or anyone else in a position of authority within ISKCON, the authority bestowed upon that devotee is complete only if he or she follows Srila Prabhupada's instruction to serve in ISKCON under the authority of the GBC Body.

To establish this premise, we feel we need do no more than emphasize that His Divine Grace consistently and clearly established this principle in his teachings, as well as within official documents he himself signed. Srila Prabhupada thus clearly established the GBC as the ultimate managing authority and also indicated that the GBC's jurisdiction includes the responsibility to offer spiritual guidance (siksa) to the whole of ISKCON, including all devotees serving as spiritual masters:

Reporter: "Is there anyone who is designated to succeed you as the primary teacher of the movement?"

Srila Prabhupada: "I am training some, I mean to say, advanced students so that they may very easily take up the charge. I have made them GBC." (Room Conversation with Reporter, Los Angeles, June 4, 1976.)

In other words, although the GBC is the ultimate managing authority in ISKCON, the GBC's duty is not only to manage but to teach.

6. Two Lines of Authority

Since every devotee accepts his or her spiritual inspiration from higher authorities, two lines of authority, with their representatives, exist within ISKCON — one is seen as primarily spiritual, while the other is seen as primarily managerial.

Both lines of authority serve their own unique yet interdependent purposes in submission to the orders of our Founder Acarya. Both are authorized by the GBC to give shelter to devotees under their care. This shelter is given through both instruction and example.

By distinguishing the two lines of spiritual authority in these terms — as primarily spiritual or primarily managerial — we are not suggesting that managerial authority is contrary to spiritual authority. Nor are we suggesting that the spiritual line of authority is somehow more privileged or intrinsically more pure.

"Management is also spiritual activity...It is Krishna's establishment." (Room Conversation, January 16, 1977, Calcutta.)

"In our preaching work...we deal with so much property and money and so many books bought and sold, but because these dealings all pertain to the Krsna consciousness movement, they should never be considered material. That one is absorbed in thoughts of such management does not mean that he is outside of Krsna consciousness. If one rigidly observes the regulative principle of chanting sixteen rounds of the mahamantra every day, his dealings with the material world for the sake of spreading the Krsna consciousness movement are not different from the spiritual cultivation of Krsna consciousness." (Srimad Bhagavatam, 5.16.3, purport.)

In a spiritual society a manager cannot fulfill his or her duty to manage simply by declaring and enforcing rules. The rules themselves must have a spiritual foundation, and their implementation and enforcement must be applied in accordance with Vaisnava principles. Managers who serve with this understanding will generally carry the full weight of spiritual authority for those under their charge.

We should therefore see the oneness between "spiritual" and "managerial." But there is also some difference, and understanding this simultaneous oneness and difference requires the use of these two distinct terms with their explanations.

7. The Spiritual Line of Authority

The spiritual line of authority begins with Lord Krishna and continues to Brahma, Narada, Vyasa, and the entire disciplic succession through Srila Prabhupada, our Founder Acarya. Those who are submissive to our sampradaya and who serve under the authority of the GBC are authorized to give siksa and shelter in this spiritual line, under the auspices of ISKCON. This spiritual line can include Governing Body Commissioners, GBC Zonal Secretaries, spiritual masters, sannyasis, Regional Secretaries, Temple Presidents, congregational leaders, and both traveling and community preachers. In fact, anyone who strictly follows a bona fide spiritual master, both by example and precept, can be authorized to represent the spiritual line of authority.

Generally speaking, the most prominent spiritual authority is one's initiating or instructing spiritual master. The scriptures clearly say that devotees should obey and be loyal to their spiritual masters. The spiritual masters thus exert authority over their disciples, and in so doing the spiritual masters are able to train and educate their disciples in the development of bhakti. The spiritual masters, therefore, assume a significant role in giving their disciples the spiritual education and inspiration necessary to advance in Krishna consciousness.

8. The Managerial Line of Authority

In the managerial line of authority, and in accordance with Srila Prabhupada's instructions, the supervision of the Society and the enforcement of its rules proceed from the GBC. When we use the word "authority" in the context of the managerial structure, we do not mean an absolute, infallible authority — such as the authority of scripture — but the mandate to organize the preaching movement so that it is aligned with the instructions of Srila Prabhupada. To carry out that mandate, his followers have adapted ISKCON's managerial system, given by Srila Prabhupada, to take into account the proliferation of temples, congregational devotees (who are not temple residents), and projects like farms and gurukulas, as well as other favourable organizations and entities. Thus, to better serve this expanding field and its members, this structure presently includes various regional, national, and continental governing bodies consisting of, but not limited to, Governing Body Commissioners, GBC Zonal Secretaries, spiritual masters, sannyasis, Regional Secretaries, Temple Presidents, congregational leaders, and both traveling and community preachers.

9. Defining the Point of Divergence

Although in an ideal world everything would work according to Srila Prabhupada's vision for ISKCON, we have seen tendencies from those in one line of authority to interfere with those in the other line of authority.

For instance, there are spiritual authorities who sometimes interfere with competent and responsible managers. They do not consider themselves part of the zonal managerial structure where their preaching has influence (though they are in fact accountable to it), but they are still either directly or indirectly managing some project(s) within that structure.

Therefore at times they manage devotees, money, and even projects that their followers and dependents are responsible for, without a clear agreement with the managerial structure with which they intersect. By so doing, they may inadvertently undermine the managerial line of authority by encouraging their dependents to direct their service, and thus their loyalty, to their spiritual authority's own management structure. (**Note:** "Dependents" are not only those who are spiritually dependent. There are instances where devotees are also financially dependent upon their spiritual authorities and are financially maintained by the structures the spiritual authorities have themselves created.)

This scenario creates not only confusion but a spirit of separatism as well. Situations such as these can also become points of contention for managers, although the more junior managers often refrain from directly voicing their grievances because they feel intimidated out of fear of committing offenses, especially to spiritual masters.

On the other hand, there are also managerial authorities who sometimes provide inadequate spiritual care. This can fuel the spiritual master's inclination to intervene by suggesting an alternative for his disciple's association or service.

For instance, managers may sometimes place greater importance on management goals than on sadhana, preaching purely, or the development of purity in the devotional service of those under their care. Managers may even neglect the spiritual development of those within their jurisdiction who do not offer resources to help their managerial vision, even though said managers may have done little to inspire help from them or to empower other authorities to do the same.

10. Deference to The Managerial Line of Authority

The above-mentioned scenarios cause tension between the spiritual and the managerial lines of authority.

Of course, it is understood that circumstances do arise where there are financially independent devotees who have no managerial connection with locally organized sanghas. Still, it should not be assumed that no effort is being made by local management structures to include every devotee, or aspiring devotee, within their locally managed system of care for congregational devotees.

Therefore, with respect to the service performed by ISKCON managers, a spiritual master should always seek approval from the managers overseeing the area of jurisdiction in which his disciples are living before suggesting a new sangha or service for them or intervening in other managerial decisions.

Best, of course, is to train the disciples to offer respect to their local managers right from the start of the spiritual master/disciple relationship. Many ISKCON managers are carrying out the responsibility of maintaining the temples, Deities, book distribution, and other standards given to us by Srila Prabhupada.

"Deity installation means regular worship without fail and for good." (Letter to Sivananda, 2 September 1971)

Therefore, spiritual masters should teach their disciples to serve Srila Prabhupada's mission by cooperating with their local leaders and managers. But this does not mean that a manager should assume that he or she has complete freedom to ignore legitimate needs of those under his or her care or that he or she has the freedom to ignore concerns expressed by spiritual masters who ask them to see that their disciples are properly cared for. They should be sensitive to the concerns of the spiritual masters as well as their disciples.

If the spiritual master still strongly feels that the level of care for his disciples within the local management structure is inadequate, taking into account the level of commitment and responsibilities being asked of them (his disciples), then he may appeal on their behalf to the higher levels of management, the local GBC, or other ISKCON avenues of appeal, as listed later in this paper.

More on this point will be addressed later. But before we do that, we will first briefly discuss the topic of faith. Those in both lines of authority would be well served to consider the relevance of faith to the broader issues being discussed here.

11. Authority Is Built on the Continuous Development of Faith

ISKCON's greatest asset is the faith of its members. Even if there are no temples, no projects, no income, and only a few followers, if there is faith, there will be prosperity, in the true sense of the term. Consider what Srila Prabhupada has written in the following letter:

"There is a proverb in Sanskrit literature that enthusiastic persons achieve the favour of the Goddess of Fortune. In the Western part of the world there is tangible example of this slogan. People in this part of the world are very much enthusiastic in material advancement and they have got it. Similarly, according to the instructions of Srila Rupa Goswami, if we become enthusiastic in spiritual matters, then we also get success in that way. Take for example, I came to your country in ripe old age, but I had one asset: enthusiasm and faith in my Spiritual Master. I think these assets only are giving me some lights of hope, whatever I have achieved so far with your cooperation." (Letter to Jaya Govinda, Tittenhurst, 15 October 1969.)

And in his purport to "Bhagavad-gita As It Is" 9.3, Srila Prabhupada writes: "Faith is the most important factor for progress in Krishna consciousness...It is only by faith that one can advance in Krishna consciousness."

Those in the spiritual line of authority should preach and behave in such a way that they nourish and protect their dependents' faith in pure devotional service, in our sampradaya, in Srila Prabhupada, and in ISKCON, including its management. Spiritual masters also have the added responsibility of nourishing and protecting ISKCON's managers' faith that they (the spiritual masters) are fit representatives of the spiritual line of authority. If the spiritual masters act in a contrary way, they will erode the faith of others.

Conversely, those in the managerial line of authority should manage, preach, and behave in such a way that they build and sustain the trust of those in the spiritual line of authority and their disciples. By the managers showing genuine concern for the devotees under their care, the spiritual masters will then naturally encourage their disciples to assist the manager in his service. But if managers act in a way contrary to spiritual principles,

in conflict with the spiritual interests of those devotees for whom they are responsible, that will also erode others' faith.

Therefore, to safeguard the faith of all of ISKCON's members, it is necessary that we delineate clear principles for both lines of authority to follow.

12. Spiritual Masters are not Independent

To further clarify the need to introduce well-defined principles, we will examine the position of spiritual masters within the managerial structure of ISKCON.

When Srila Prabhupada was physically present, he was ISKCON's sole initiating spiritual master, its preeminent siksa guru, and the supreme managerial authority, superior to the GBC:

"[...]we are managing our Krishna Consciousness Movement by the Governing Body Commission, GBC. We have got about 20 GBC's looking after the whole world affair, and above the GBC I am there. Below the GBC there are the temple president, secretary, treasurer in every centre. So, the temple president is responsible to the GBC and the GBC is responsible to me. In this way we are managing." (Letter to Vasudeva, New Vrindaban, 30 June 1976.)

In Srila Prabhupada's physical absence the structure is now somewhat different. His Divine Grace instructed that the GBC should be the ultimate managing authority for ISKCON. At the same time he indicated that the Society should have multiple spiritual masters:

"Anyone following the order of Lord Caitanya under the guidance of His bona fide representative can become a spiritual master, and I wish that in my absence all my disciples become the bona fide spiritual master to spread Krishna Consciousness throughout the whole world." (Letter to Madhusudana, Navadvipa, 2 November 1967.)

This gives rise to a challenging situation. Many spiritual organizations have one spiritual master operating as the sole head of the institution, whereas ISKCON has many spiritual masters within one organization, in addition to a "governing body" that operates as the "ultimate managing authority" for the institution as a whole. Those serving as spiritual masters in ISKCON are meant to follow the instructions of Srila Prabhupada and work under the GBC Body.

The spiritual masters are thus obligated to follow the Society's policies and codes of conduct, including those outlined in this GBC-approved paper, and to abide by the decisions of its management. Included within that obligation is the responsibility to inspire their disciples to associate with and serve within ISKCON's already existing managerial and devotee care sangas, located within their disciple's area of residence rather than only inspiring them to associate with themselves (the spiritual masters) or with their sangas and projects that have no connection with the ISKCON zonal management structure.

13. Disciples Should Avoid Creating Conflict Between Their Authorities

Disciples should also understand the greater picture within ISKCON. Certainly, a spiritual master may be more spiritually advanced than any given GBC member or any other ISKCON manager (while there may also be cases where the local GBC or ISKCON manager may be more spiritually advanced than a particular spiritual master).

Nevertheless, concerning the spiritual management of the Society, as we have already clearly shown, Srila Prabhupada invested authority in the GBC and its individual members and in other ISKCON managers.

If a disciple has the mistaken conviction that his or her spiritual master is above the GBC and ISKCON's laws and policies, that should be corrected by the spiritual master and other authorities. Otherwise, that misconception may lead to actions which create conflict between his or her spiritual and managerial authorities.

Indeed, all disciples should follow their ISKCON authorities in the same way that all initiating and instructing spiritual masters should follow their own authorities within ISKCON.

By both example and precept, therefore, all spiritual masters should not only educate and train their disciples in the development of bhakti but should also educate and train them about their relation to the managerial structure of ISKCON, as well as about the spiritual masters' own relation to that structure.

14. Principles Being Introduced

I. Education of guru's disciples

It is the responsibility of the spiritual masters within ISKCON to help every one of their disciples clearly understand the following:

- 1) The spiritual master draws his authority from his fidelity to Srila Prabhupada. This includes fidelity to Srila Prabhupada's order to work within his mission, ISKCON.
- 2) The spiritual master is a member of ISKCON and, as such, is accountable to the collective will of its leadership, the GBC Body.
- 3) The spiritual master does not derive any specific right or prerogative over ISKCON resources simply by dint of his being a spiritual master. Moreover, the spiritual master should not misuse his rights and prerogatives over his disciples.
- 4) The disciples should follow their ISKCON authorities in the same way that all initiating and instructing spiritual masters set an example by following their own ISKCON authorities.
- 5) Disciples have the essential task of surrendering to Krishna through the spiritual master. Included within this task is recognizing and respecting other superiors within ISKCON's management who are helping them in their process of spiritual progress.
- 6) Spiritually mature managers may be the main siksa gurus for devotees who are not their initiated disciples, and such relationships are to be fully encouraged by the initiating spiritual masters.

2. Conduct of gurus

Moreover, to show respect toward the managerial line of authority and to help nurture and protect managers' faith in the spiritual line of authority, every spiritual master should:

- 1) When first visiting or preferably before arriving at a recognized ISKCON temple or preaching center, ask the local manager how he (the spiritual master) may serve that yatra during his visit (rather than the spiritual master only pursuing his own agenda).
- 2) Before planning a visit to a zone or region where there is no local temple or preaching center, first ask the Zonal GBC if there is a vision that local leaders have for that place or region which he (the spiritual master) could serve.
- 3) If there is a disagreement in terms of managerial decisions, do his best to cooperate with the relevant authority. If no agreement can be reached, then the spiritual master should defer to the decision of the relevant authority, with the option of appealing to higher authorities if necessary.

3. Duties of Managers

To build cooperation within ISKCON, show respect for the spiritual line of authority, and help nurture and protect the faith of spiritual masters and their disciples in the managerial line of authority, all managers should:

- 1) Be receptive to advice given by initiating spiritual masters and other itinerant preachers visiting their area of jurisdiction, especially on matters concerning devotee care.

- 2) Protect the faith that their dependents have in pure devotional service and in the principle of accepting and serving an initiating spiritual master and instructing spiritual masters.
- 3) Encourage and support a system of devotee care (i.e., counsellor system, brahminical advisory board, etc.) within their sphere of management.
- 4) Assure that the managers in their line of authority are themselves trained in the principles of devotee care.
- 5) Inform visiting spiritual masters about the spiritual health and overall well-being of their disciples.
- 6) Encourage and help visiting spiritual masters and other itinerant preachers to reach out to those disciples who are in need and who would be most responsive to their help.
- 7) Insure that there is an equitable system for initiation recommendations which does not condone unwarranted pressure or manipulation from the local management for managerial gains.

15. Summary

To promote the full flourishing of devotees' spiritual lives, Srila Prabhupada created for ISKCON a managerial structure with clear lines of authority. Every member of ISKCON should respect this structure and learn to work within it. The goal of the managerial structure is spiritual: to facilitate the spiritual advancement of ISKCON's members through association with devotees, opportunities for service, and effective preaching strategies. Simultaneously, ISKCON affirms the fundamental importance of accepting initiation from a bonafide spiritual master.

Of paramount importance, of course, is our Founder-Acarya, Srila Prabhupada, who is the initiating spiritual master of many devotees in ISKCON and the foremost instructing spiritual master of every devotee, now and in the future. Also important are the many initiating and instructing spiritual masters now serving in ISKCON.

All spiritual masters and their disciples should likewise appreciate the importance of the many managers in our society, who help guide and train disciples and oversee the facilities ISKCON provides for their spiritual advancement. All spiritual masters and their disciples should work cooperatively within ISKCON's managerial system, both to benefit themselves spiritually and to help the Society flourish.

This cooperative, mutually respectful spirit is the best way to preserve the Society's unity, please Srila Prabhupada, and expand the sankirtana mission.

In the mood of Lord Caitanya, Srila Prabhupada desired that the sankirtana movement be spread all over the world, "to every town and village." He demonstrated that desire by his constant traveling, writing, and speaking. He requested his disciples to open centers far and wide, distribute his books, arrange for attractive festivals, distribute prasada, etc. It was Srila Prabhupada's desire that ISKCON continue to expand, to rise as the benediction moon of Lord Caitanya's mercy.

It is for this purpose that Srila Prabhupada established ISKCON as a spiritual institution with a managerial structure. The purpose of this structure is to maintain the standards he established, to offer shelter and spiritual nourishment to the devotees, and to support and increase the sankirtana mission. To please Srila Prabhupada by delivering the mercy of Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai to the conditioned souls, everyone within ISKCON — spiritual masters, disciples, and managers alike — should work cooperatively within this structure.

APPENDIX 3: MELBOURNE CANDIDATES APPLYING TO HIS HOLINESS JAYAPATAKA MAHARAJA

To complete your application, you must successfully complete the GBC requirements, implemented through Melbourne Yatra. You must also complete the requirements of JPS Office, as requested by His Holiness.

What follows is a summary of JPS Office requirements to give you an overview of what is required.

ALWAYS CHECK FOR UP-TO-DATE REQUIREMENTS AT <https://www.jayapatakaswamioffice.com/>

All applications are made by the candidate. Melbourne Yatra is never involved with shelter and initiation applications except when that is necessitated by administrative problems.

Melbourne yatra's policy is not to lobby initiating gurus, especially those who don't visit Melbourne. Devotees who choose such gurus are responsible for following them up.

Contact information (23.5.23):

1. **From <https://www.jayapatakaswamioffice.com/initiation/initiation-information/>:** “for any clarification please contact us at (+91)03472-245277 or email at jpsofficedatabase@gmail.com.”
2. **From JPS Office Email Footer (27/04/2023):** “official contact: +91-74777-16108 (WhatsApp and voice call - between 10.30 AM to 5.30 PM). Contact persons names: Devesvara Jagannatha Das / Pavana Gauraprema Das / Subrata Das.”
3. **Received 20.4.23 from Pavana Gauraprema re. devotees taking shelter online during Caitanya-lila classes:** “If you have any difficulties, pls WhatsApp me on +919064321152.”

CANDIDATES APPLYING FOR SHELTER/INITIATION CEREMONIES IN MAYAPUR

See the updated requirements for candidates including reading and Course passes at
<https://www.jayapatakaswamioffice.com/initiation/initiation-information/>

Books to be studied for being eligible to apply for 1st initiation (minimum no. of times):

Bhagavad-gita – 2	Srimad Bhagavatam (1st canto) – 1
Nectar of Devotion (1st part) – 1	Life and Teachings of Lord Caitanya – 1
Srila Prabhupada's biography (brief version) – 1	

Books to be studied for being eligible to apply for 2nd initiation (minimum no. of times):

Bhagavad-gita – 3	Srimad Bhagavatam (1st canto) – 2
Srimad Bhagavatam (2nd and 3rd canto) – 1	Nectar of Devotion (1st part) – 2
Nectar of Instruction – 1	Teachings of Lord Caitanya – 1
Srila Prabhupada's biography (brief version) – 1	

Second Initiation

Jayapataka Maharaja directs that “There is no need to take 2nd initiation if someone is not engaged in any temple deity worship or deity kitchen. For worshipping home deity, 2nd initiation is not mandatory. Just by chanting Harinama without any offense one can go back to Godhead. Therefore, the temple presidents or eligible authorities are requested to recommend only those who are needed for temple deity worship/deity kitchen and not to encourage everyone to take 2nd initiation.”

Completion of the **Bhakti Sastri Course** is **compulsory** for 2nd initiation candidates. From April 2019, there will be an exemption from the long exam at JPS office (Mayapur) for those who have completed the Bhakti Sastri course. Bhakti Sastri holders must sit a 15-question philosophical test and 30 multiple choice questions. Bhakti Vaibhava holders are exempt from the 15-question philosophical test.

You should fully complete your application at least 4 weeks prior to the ceremony in Mayapur. You must inform yourself of upcoming ceremony dates, register for initiation, and personally establish and maintain communication with JPS Office online via [jayapatakaswamioffice.com](https://www.jayapatakaswamioffice.com).

A *sample* of the *registration form* can be found [here](#). Please note that the *actual link* changes every time JPS Office posts the *current registration form* at jayapatakaswamioffice.com. You need to fill out the *current* form (posted around 4 weeks prior to the ceremony) in order to successfully register.

You must attend a short face-to-face interview at JPS Office Mayapur. **Do not book your tickets before you book your interview.** You should book your interview 4 weeks prior to the ceremony. Prior to initiation ceremonies the Office is flooded by international applications. The latest you may appear in person is 4 days prior to the ceremony. **You should confirm your eligibility and book your interview at JPS Office before you book your flights.**

JPS OFFICE: Room 106 Chakra Building

Email: jpsofficedatabase@gmail.com

Phone: +91 0347-2245-277

Cell: 09126-495-325 (WhatsApp only)

Office hours: Monday-Friday 10am - 5.30pm, Saturday 10am-2pm.

The Office Supervisor (Database & Initiation Section) is Mani Gopal Dasa, +91-0912-6495-325.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM JPS OFFICE:

Steps to be followed by the candidate:

- 1. Check your eligibility** for initiation with your local ISKCON authority. You may call us to clarify any doubts if necessary.
- 2. Fill out the online registration form**, submit it to the JPS office to register yourself for initiation. All the remaining checklists and forms are available at jayapatakaswamioffice.com.
- 3. Please contact Mani Gopal Dasa** (Initiation Co-ordinator) at JPS Office to fix the date for written test (if yet to do) and oral interview 4 weeks prior to the ceremony.
- 4. Please submit all the required documents** to the JPS office with proper approvals and recommendation. You may send your papers either through email or by personal visit to the JPS Office.

All candidates should bring a passport-sized photo ID.

Initiation forms are available in English, Bengali, Hindi, Russian and Spanish at jayapatakaswamioffice.com.

The candidate is requested to kindly keep in touch with JPS Office for any clarification, updates, or any further assistance. After finalizing your date of exam/interview with JPS Office, kindly book your tickets and rooms in advance, so that you can be present here in time.

Harinama candidates:

- Tulasi chanting beads for Harinama initiation candidates are issued by JPS Office. Please do not bring your own chanting beads.
- If necessary, new Harinama initiates can collect an initiation name card from JPS Office on the day after their initiation.

Please note that successful completion of the 'ISKCON Disciples Course' (IDC) is mandatory to receive initiation as per the GBC mandate. For detailed information please visit the following link:

http://gbc.iskcon.org/gbc_res/GBCRES14.html

Aspiring first and second initiation candidates must show the original copy of the ISKCON Disciples Course completion certificate during the interview and submit a photocopy of the same along with other initiation documents. **NO INITIATIONS ARE ALLOWED WITHOUT IDC COMPLETION CERTIFICATE.**

Melbourne candidates are normally exempted from re-sitting exams they pass in Melbourne. However – at Maharaja's request - all candidates presenting at the JPS office in Mayapur must briefly re-sit their interviews, *especially on book reading and mantras*. **All candidates are expected to know by heart all prayers & mantras and to have read all the books mentioned the prescribed number of times.** You can download up-to-date JPS shelter, initiation and second initiation forms at <https://www.jayapatakaswamioffice.com/initiation/forms/>

Melbourne's initiation administration will scan your completed Melbourne application file (including your photo ID) for you to email to Mayapur. You should complete the relevant forms, then send soft copies to rasanandini@iskcon.net.au so that your application can be completed. **Please fill out your downloaded forms in CAPITAL LETTERS only and avoid overwriting.**

To enable us to release the personal information included in your Melbourne file, please *read, complete, sign* and *date* the following form.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM

for Candidates applying for Initiation through Jayapataka Swami's Office (Mayapura)

Your privacy is a top priority for ISKCON Melbourne. When dealing with your personal information we observe our obligations under the *Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988* and comply with the *Australian Privacy Principles*, as well other relevant State legislation.

We only use your personal and sensitive information for the reason we collect it as set out in our policy and for the purpose(s) for which it was collected, or as otherwise permitted by law. We will not disclose the above information that we collect to affiliates or third parties without your consent.

You may give Jayapataka Swami's Database Office access to the following information in writing by acknowledging and signing this authorization form.

- **Application for Initiation files held by ISKCON Melbourne.** This includes contact details such as your photo ID, address, phone numbers, email address; sadhana history and referees; interview and exam responses. Releasing this information allows JPS Database to contact you and allows JPS Database to verify that you have completed the GBC requirements, as well as the additional requirements laid out in the relevant forms at jayapatakaswamioffice.com. Your permission to release your information allows us to assist you to submit your application to His Holiness Jayapataka Swami.

(Name: *Please Print Name*)

(Postal Address: *Please Print*)

(Mobile Number)

(Email Address)

I hereby authorize ISKCON Melbourne to release information as stated above to the following organisation: Jayapataka Swami's Office Database (jpsofficedatabase@gmail.com)

____/____/____ **End Date of Authorization** (*Note: If no end date is indicated, a one-year authorization period will be put into effect.*)

Please review the form before signing.

(Signature)

(Date)

APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE MARKING SHEET FOR AN ORAL RE-SIT OF AN EXAM

Marking oral exams in compulsory within Melbourne Yatra. A simple ‘pass’ confirmation from the invigilator is not sufficient.

THIS IS A *CLOSED-BOOK* EXAM. NO REFERENCE MATERIALS ARE ALLOWED WHILE SITTING THE EXAM

- Use the exam sheets supplied by the main examiner to mark the oral exam.
- The hours allowed for completion are as designated for a written exam. For example, if the candidate requires 1/2 of the available marks to pass, the time limit should be 1/2 the time normally allocated for the exam.
- Passing marks are as per a written exam, but in oral conditions the candidate’s responses are expected to be of higher quality.

- The candidate is to re-sit the questions they failed (for shelter exams), or the sections they failed (for first and second initiation exams).
- Using the exam sheets supplied, mark the questions to be answered with red. The candidate’s written exam score for the question is given as **SCORE 10/20** (for example).
- The questions the candidate passed should be marked with blue. Their written exam score for the question will be given as **SCORE 3.5/5** (for example).
- The candidate should attempt to answer all outstanding questions to the best of their ability.

NOTE TO ORAL EXAMINER:

- Please mark the relevant questions on your exam sheet with the **new scores the candidate achieves.**
- **Give 1 point for 1 correct response.**
- **MARK TO THE CLOSEST 1/2 MARK**
- The marks allocated to each question are shown in brackets at the far right of the sheet.
- **PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING FORM IN FULL and supply it, together with the completed oral exam sheets, to the main examiner.**

SCORE SHEET	TOTAL SCORE	
WRITTEN EXAM SCORE: FROM QUESTIONS PASSED ONLY	(1)	MARKS
ORAL EXAM SCORE: FROM QUESTIONS RE-SAT ONLY	(2)	MARKS
TOTAL SCORE (3) = (1) + (2)	(3)	MARKS

ORAL EXAMINER’S STATEMENT

This is a true and honest estimation of responses given by.....
 (Name of Candidate) - given to me on this day without the use of reference materials (on their part) and without prompting from anyone present.

EXAMINER’S NAME IN FULL (PLEASE PRINT).....

EXAMINER’S SIGNATURE.....

DATE OF EXAM.....