

# The Bhaktivedanta Academy

## Prospectus

### **Mission Statement:**

The **Bhaktivedanta Academy** aims to provide a facility for its members to study, practice, and disseminate the teachings of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, along with corollary studies of the standard works of the Gaudiya Vaisnava *acaryas* and the branches of Vedic philosophy, culture, and science in the context of *Srimad Bhagavatam* and Srila Prabhupada's teachings.

To accomplish the above mission, the Academy endeavors to:

- Maintain an educational environment appropriate to the Vaisnava tradition.
- Impart to the Academy's staff and students a deep appreciation for Vedic teachings, resulting in a lifetime personal commitment to practice the Vaisnava way of life.
- Impart to the Academy's staff and students a deep commitment to preserve, perpetuate, and disseminate the knowledge, practices, and values of the Vaisnava tradition.
- Acknowledge and reward Academy staff and students according to their individual achievements in their respective fields of study and practice.
- Maintain a resource library of Vedic and Vaisnava literature.

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### **Management:**

The activities of the Bhaktivedanta Academy are overseen and coordinated by a council composed of the heads of the Academy's colleges. The council chairman is the Academy's Vice-Chancellor. These heads are each responsible for running the division under their charge, according to the policies established by a consensus of the council.

### **The Colleges:**

- **Sri Rupanuga Paramartika Vidyapitha**
  - Adult educational programs
- **Sri Sandipani Muni Asrama**
  - Primary & secondary educational programs for boys
- **The Bhaktivedanta Cultural Academy**
  - Primary, secondary & tertiary educational programs for girls
  - Cultural educational programs for women

**The Schools:**

Educational facilities under the colleges:

**Sri Rupanuga Paramartika Vidyapitha:**

- **The Bhaktivedanta Theological Seminary**
  - Lectures & tutorials for Academy students
  - Deity worship & cultural training for residential students
  - Correspondence educational programs
- **The Bhaktivedanta Research Institute:**
  - Facilities for research scholars & associate professors.
- **The Bhaktivedanta Resource Library:**
  - Providing study material for Academy students
  - Publishing Academy publications.

**Sri Sandipani Muni Asrama:**

- **The Bhaktivedanta Vidyasrama**
  - Asrama facilities & training for senior students
- **Sri Yajna Varaha Vidya-ksetra**
  - Vedic academic & cultural education for Brahmanas, Ksatriyas & Vaisyas.
- **Sri Vidya-vacaspati Tol**
  - Udgamana-ksetra: Training of new students in the methods & culture of the Academy
  - General Vedic academic & cultural education
  - Primary & secondary home schooling programs

**The Bhaktivedanta Cultural Academy:**

- **Sri Anasuya Vidya-mandala**
  - Vedic academic & cultural education for girls.
- **Sri Mangala-ksetra**
  - Cultural educational programs for women

**Curriculum:**

The curriculum – centered on the 14 subjects of Vedic knowledge – is studied in the context of *Srimad Bhagavatam* and Srila Prabhupada's teachings.

The 14 subjects comprise:

- Transcendental knowledge: Vedanta & Pancaratra
  - Philosophy
  - Pancaratra: The concepts & philosophy of Deity worship, Festivals & Sadhana
- Vedic Sciences: Veda & Vedanga
  - Mantra: Vedic & classical
  - Sanskrit: Phonetics, Prosody (meter), Grammar & Vocabulary
  - Kalpa: Vedic Rites of Passage & Sacrifice
  - Jyotisa: Astronomy, Astrology & Vedic Math
- Vedic Arts & Social Sciences: Upanga
  - Communication Skills: English, Public Speaking & the concepts of language
  - Logic: Nyaya & Mimamsa; Hermeneutics – The law of interpretation
  - Purana: History, Geography & Natural Science
  - Civics: Varnasrama, Administration, Economics & Ethics
  - Upaveda: Principles of the Vedic Performing Arts, Medicine, Fine Arts, Architecture & Vastu
  - The 64 Arts

Lessons are taught using tutorial and multilevel classroom methods. This involves the more senior students teaching the junior students as they master their lessons. Thus all students benefit by both learning and teaching simultaneously.

**Degrees:**

- **Sastra-caksus**
- **Bhakti-sastri**
- **Bhakti-sastri-visarada**
- **Upadyaya Degrees**
- **Bhakti-anucana**
- **Bhakti-vaibhava**
- **Bhakti-vedanta**
- **Bhakti-sarvabhauma**
- **Acarya Degrees**

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- **Sastra-caksus:** History of Philosophy & Religion – the Academy’s orientation course  
Awarded to those completing a study of the essentials of Gaudiya Vaisnava philosophy and an overview of the 14 books of Vedic knowledge.
  - Vastu-traya: sambandha, abhidheya & prayojana
  - Dasa-mula-tattva: Lord Caitanya’s ten essential truths
  - Logic: Nyaya & Mimamsa; Hermeneutics – the law of interpretation
  - The philosophy of the Four Sampradayas
  - The six schools of Vedic philosophy
  - World Religions & Apa-sampradayas
  - Overview of the 14 books of Vedic knowledge
  - Srimad Bhagavatam – as the essence of all the Vedic literatures
  
- **Bhakti-sastri** – awarded for the study of: *Bhagavad-gita, Isopanisad, Nectar of Devotion Part 1 and Upadesamrta.*
  
- **Bhakti-sastri-visarada (Bhakti-sastri Honors)** – awarded for further study of: *Bhagavad-gita, Nectar of Devotion Part 1 and related books of the Gaudiya Vaisnava acaryas.*
  - A study of Srila Prabhupada’s “Analysis of Bhagavad-gita”
  - A study of works by the *Gaudiya Vaisnava acaryas* expanding on verses of the *Nectar of Devotion* & the *Upadesamrta*
  
- **Upadyaya** – awarded for in-depth study and research into one of the 14 topics of Vedic knowledge.
  - Pancaratra: The concepts & philosophy of Deity worship, Festivals & Sadhana
  - Sanskrit: Phonetics, Prosody, Grammar & Vocabulary
  - Kalpa: Vedic Rites of Passage & Sacrifice
  - Jyotisa: Astronomy, Astrology & Vedic Math
  - Communication Skills: English, Public Speaking & the concepts of language
  - Logic: Nyaya & Mimamsa; Hermeneutics – the law of interpretation
  - Purana: History, Geography & Natural Science
  - Civics: Varnasrama, Administration, Economics & Ethics
  - Upapurana: Principles of the Vedic Performing Arts, Medicine, Fine Arts, Architecture & Vastu
  - The 64 Arts

- **Bhakti-anucana** – awarded to those who have completed:
  - **Sastra-caksus, Bhakti-sastri, Bhakti-sastri-visarada &** the required **Upadyaya** degrees
  - The required study of the **14 books of Vedic knowledge**
    - A study of the individual disciplines of Vedic knowledge
    - A comparative study between the 14 disciplines
    - A comparative study of the 14 disciplines with their specialized area of study (Upadyaya)

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The required study of the 14 books of Vedic knowledge for Bhakti-anucana includes:

- Transcendental knowledge
  - Pancaratra: The concepts & philosophy of Deity worship, Festivals & Sadhana
  - Learning the 64 items of Deity worship according to Pancharatra Pradipa
- Vedic Sciences
  - Mantra: Memorizing Vedic *mantras* for Deity worship, festivals & *yajna*
  - Sanskrit: Students learn spoken Sanskrit, grammar, phonetics, prosody & vocabulary
    - Grammar is learnt through Srila Jiva Goswami's *Lagu Harinamarta Vyakarana, Dhatu-samgraha* with Vishnu Sharma's *Hitopadesa* (Sanskrit text) as reading material.
    - Phonetics is learnt through *Naradiya & Pannani Siksa*.
    - Prosody is learnt through Baladeva Vidyabhusana's *Chanda Kaustubha* and Rupa Goswami's *Astha dasa chanda*.
    - Vocabulary is learnt from *Amara Sar & Yaska's Nirukta*.
  - Jyotish & Vedic Math: The Vedic math course teaches the calculation skills of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and trigonometry, through 16 aphorisms and 13 sub-aphorisms derived from the Vedic literatures. The course includes:
    - The concept of numbers, arithmetic, algebra, geometry & trigonometry
    - The histories of the 9 planets & 27 constellations
    - The structure of the universe
    - *Kurma vibhaga*: spherical geometry
    - The *kala purusa*: the concept of time & movement
    - The theory and application of Astronomy & Astrology
    - The fundamental vocabulary & concepts of:
      - Muhurta – auspicious timings
      - Jatika – Horoscope
      - Palmistry
      - Vastu
      - Numerology

- Arts & Social Sciences
  - Communication skills: students learn the concepts, function and usage of language to effect practical communication skills.
    - As English is comprised of components mainly borrowed from other languages, it's grammatical framework, by necessity, tends to be somewhat arbitrary, molded by popular usage. Traditionally therefore, English Grammar was taught in comparison with Latin Grammar to lend to it a more logical structure.
    - In pursuance of this same principle, the Academy's English course is taught in relationship to Sanskrit Grammar, to provide students with a clear understanding of language, grammar and communication.
    - To create confidence through logical reasoning, oral communication skills are taught according to the directions given in Vedic literatures.
  - Purana: History, Geography & Natural Science according to the Vedic version – from creation to the contemporary
  - Civics:
    - Dharma-sastra: the cultural & philosophical concepts of Varna-asrama
    - Artha-sastra: political science & economics
    - Niti-sastra: ethics
  - Upa-purana:
    - Gandharva-veda: the concepts of Musicology, Dramaturgy & Dance
    - Ayur-veda: concepts of Medicine & healthcare
    - Stapan-veda: concepts of Architecture
    - Dhanur-veda: concepts of Military Science
  - Nyaya: Logic – analytical & presentation skills
- The history and development of the 14 subjects of Vedic knowledge, as understood and practiced by non-vedic civilizations, both ancient and contemporary.
- **Bhakti-vaibhava** – awarded for the study of the 1<sup>st</sup> 6 Cantos of Srimad Bhagavatam
- **Bhakti-vedanta** – awarded for the study of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 6 Cantos of Srimad Bhagavatam
- **Bhakti-sarvabhauma** – awarded for the study of the Caitanya Caritamrta
- **Acarya Degrees** – awarded for Advanced study in a specialized field of Vedic or Vaisnava literature

## Schedules

The **Bhaktivedanta Academy** school year is divided into three terms: Rama, Krsna, and Hayagriva:

- **Hayagriva:** *Visvarupa Mahotsava – Vasant Pancami*
  - The main academic session.
- **Rama:** *Vasant Pancami – Nrsimha Caturdasi*
  - The secondary academic session.
- **Krsna:** *Nrsimha Caturdasi – Visvarupa Mahotsava.*
  - For individualized study & pilgrimage.

## Exams & Assessment

Exams are held twice yearly:

- Mid-terms, at the conclusion of the Hayagriva term
- Final exams at the conclusion of the Rama term

Final results are calculated as follows:

- 60% continuous assessment
  - Mid-term exam results 30%
  - Assignments completed and submitted at the allocated time 30%
- 40% final exam

The minimum percentage required for students to progress to the next level is 60%.

Results from exams and continuous assessment appear in the students' academic records and reports.

## Graduation:

Students may graduate after completing:

- The *Sastra-caksus & Bhakti-sastri* degrees
- The *Bhakti-sastri-visarada* degree
- With honors, after completing the *Upadyaya, & Bhakti-anucana* degrees
- Or, after completing further advanced degrees offered by the Academy's tertiary educational programs.

## Admission Policy

As training students to be highly learned – a combination of academic ability and cultural maturity – is the aim of the school; the school seeks to identify prospective students with the potential to benefit from the school’s educational programs.

Qualities sought in potential candidates for admission: a desire to learn, compatible goals, a standard of discipline, academic ability, character, respectful social dealings & a devotional service attitude:

- **Desire to learn:**

Without a desire to learn, a student will be unable to take advantage of, or appreciate, the different educational programs the school offers.

- **Goals:**

Student’s goals should be compatible with the mission statement of the **Bhaktivedanta Academy**.

- **Standards of Discipline**

According to scripture, there are two types of discipline – inborn & acquired. Applicants for enrollment should have developed a level of inborn and acquired discipline that practically manifests in their obedience to the instructions of seniors. This discipline is a fundamental principle of Vedic education and forms the basis for higher spiritual discipline.

- **Academic Ability**

Inherent academic ability is a necessary prerequisite to take advantage of the school’s different educational programs.

- **Character**

According to Vedic standards, good character is the most important qualification for a student. As such, knowledge taught in the school is not merely academic learning, but is education in the culture of learning. “When a person is highly educated and acts strictly on moral principles, he is called highly learned. A person conversant in different departments of knowledge is called educated, and because he acts on moral principles, he is called morally stout. Together, these two factors constitute learning.” (*Nectar of Devotion* 21.11)

Lord Caitanya glorified Srila Haridasa Thakura as the ideal preacher, as he both practiced *acara* (culture) and preached. The aim of the institution being to train preachers, culture – within the context of the Vedic tradition as practiced within the Gaudiya Vaisnava *sampradaya* – is necessarily a fundamental aspect of training.

- **Social Relationships** – with juniors, equals & seniors

To participate in the Vedic educational system, a student must have the ability to relate within different spheres of social dealings. The standard being – to respect seniors, have camaraderie with equals, and to be kind towards juniors. The antithesis is jealousy towards seniors, unnecessary competitiveness with equals and to be exploitive of juniors.



- **Acceptance of Authority**

Vedic education being a descending process, *avaroha* – success is founded on the students' acceptance of *guru*, *sadhu* and *sastra*. Without acceptance of authority, the imports of Vedic knowledge will not be revealed.

- **Service Attitude**

By the performance of service, the desire to learn is invoked. By service, the heart is purified and character is developed – thereby awakening the ability to question submissively. Service performed with knowledge and devotion elevates one from the theoretical platform to the platform of realization. Therefore, service under the guidance of authority, is the root of Vedic education.

### **Enrollment Procedure:**

Parents wishing to enroll students in the **Bhaktivedanta Academy** are required to attend a preliminary interview with the Dean of the **Bhaktivedanta Academy** at this time parents will be informed verbally of Academy policies and will be given a prospectus to study. Subsequent to this interview a further interview will take place with the parents and prospective child to answer any questions on the prospectus or any other queries parents or prospective candidates may have. Students wishing to enroll into one of the schools of the **Bhaktivedanta Academy** are required to fill in and submit an application form along with any admission/administration fees.

### **Contributions:**

In keeping with Gurukula tradition, education is without charge. Donations are used towards defraying establishment costs and adventitious expenses. This defrayment cost is due twelve months of the year regardless of scheduled holidays, or time out of the Gurukula for any other reason.

### **Campus facilities:**

In line with the concept of “simple living and high thinking” and to maintain a *sattvik* atmosphere, the campus – constructed using traditional thatched roofs and walls made from woven bamboo – is situated in a garden setting. The campus includes Temples and libraries housing books for study and curriculum development.