

THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT IN NORTH AMERICA IS ROOTED IN THE ANCIENT  
VAISHNAVA TRADITION OF INDIA

*The Hare Krishna movement is historically very significant, for now for the first time since the days of the Roman Empire, an Asian religion is being openly practiced by people of western origin in the streets of western cities.*

- Dr. A.L. Basham; *A Cultural History of India*

Popularly known as the Hare Krishna movement, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) belongs to the Gaudiya-Vaishnava *sampradaya*, a monotheistic tradition within Vedic, or Hindu, culture. It is based on the *Bhagavad-gita*, the spiritual teachings spoken by Lord Krishna. According to tradition, this sacred text is over 5,000 years old and documents the conversation between Lord Krishna and his close friend and disciple Arjuna.

ISKCON traces its spiritual lineage directly to the speaker of the sacred book, Lord Krishna, who is revered as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The text teaches that the goal of life is to develop love of God, or Krishna. Love of God is realized through the practice of *bhakti-yoga*, the science of devotional service.

In the latter part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a saint named Chaitanya Mahaprabhu revitalized the *bhakti-yoga* tradition by introducing an expansive spiritual movement that swept India. Central to this renaissance was Chaitanya's emphasis on the chanting of Krishna's name. Underlying this simple practice was a profound, rational, and intellectually comprehensive theology. Hare Krishna devotees worship Lord Chaitanya as an incarnation of Krishna for this age, and ISKCON is a vibrant continuation of the movement Chaitanya began.



MORE...



# THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY *for* KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

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

The Krishna movement waned somewhat in the years that followed. Then, in the late 19th century, Bhaktivinoda Thakura, a scholar, magistrate, and religious leader in Chaitanya's tradition, led a second renaissance of devotion to Krishna. His son, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, continued his work, and established prominent temples and institutions in India. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati was the spiritual mentor for A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, and it was he who requested that Prabhupada take the teachings of Krishna outside of India.

Srila Prabhupada arrived in New York in 1965 at the age of seventy. The next eleven years would see him establish an international institution, guide thousands of men and women of diverse backgrounds and nationalities in their spiritual lives, and help to make "Hare Krishna" a household phrase all over the world. ISKCON has since grown into a worldwide confederation of over one million members, from a variety of backgrounds. Today there are more than 400 Hare Krishna temples across six continents.

*This material is available online at <http://www.iskcon.com/media>*

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## OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

10310 Oaklyn Drive, Potomac, MD 20854 • Phone: (301) 299-9707 • [www.iskcon.com](http://www.iskcon.com)  
1490 Van Houten Avenue, Clifton, NJ 07013 • Phone: (973) 471-2335 • [ybd@iskcon.com](mailto:ybd@iskcon.com)

