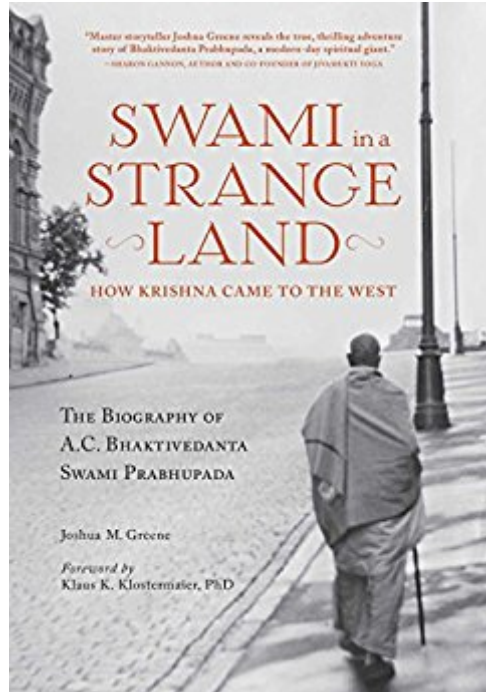


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Swami In A Strange Land: How Krishna Came To The West



Synopsis

Discover the man behind the movement in this intimate biography of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, founder of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). In 1965, a seventy-year-old man—soon to be known as Prabhupada—set sail from India to America with a few books in his bag, pennies in his pockets, and a message of love in his heart. He landed in New York at the peak of the revolutionary counterculture movement of the 1960s, and went on to spark a global spiritual renaissance that led to the creation of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, which has changed millions of lives. Through the depiction of Prabhupada as both an enlightened luminary and a personable, funny, and conscientious individual, Swami in a Strange Land shows why cultural icons such as George Harrison and Allen Ginsberg incorporated Prabhupada's teachings into their lives, and why millions more around the globe embarked upon the path of bhakti yoga in his footsteps. Carefully researched, skillfully crafted, and extraordinarily intimate, this narrative follows Prabhupada as he rises from an anonymous monk to a world-renowned spiritual leader. Set in locations as far ranging as remote Himalayan caves and the gilded corridors of Paris's City Hall, Swami in a Strange Land traces the rise of Eastern spirituality in the West—and in particular, the rise of yoga culture and vegetarianism and the concepts of karma and reincarnation. A remarkable journey into the deepest dimensions of the human experience, Swami in a Strange Land shows how one man with a dream can change the world.

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Customer Reviews

Joshua M. Greene, making full use of his seasoned storytelling expertise, offers the world a readable and accessible book about a consequential spiritual personality, Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. What I found most appealing about this book is not merely the biographical information, which is conveyed in an intriguing novellike style and is valuable in its own right, but how the teachings of Swami Prabhupada come through almost incidentally, so that readers imbibe the Swami's contributions without even knowing they do so. For example, Prabhupada's teaching on the primacy of consciousness -- what it is and how we can perceive it through the practice of Krishna Consciousness -- inadvertently emerges at various points in the book, allowing the reader to gradually feel at home with this teaching. Indeed, Greene weaves the idea into the narrative so naturally that it begins to feel like an old friend. So too with the touchy dichotomy between science and religion, which Greene elucidates as not really being a dichotomy at all -- one must merely have the eyes to see. Prabhupada ultimately reconciles the longstanding battle between the two with the higher vision of Krishna Consciousness. Greene also notes that Prabhupada "put a face on God." No longer is God some amorphous void or some vague abstraction: He is Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He and His devotees live in a world of reciprocal love. There are many such theological or philosophical contributions in this book, all based squarely on Prabhupada's life and teaching.

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