Eduqas A level RS Year 2 Component 1E Hinduism Knowledge Organiser: Theme 3A
The reasons for the development and growth of ISKCON

eduqas

Key concepts

- Many would state that without Prabhupada's influence ISKCON would not have grown or developed. He had a true desire of spreading Krishna to all over the world. From the outset Prabhupada maintained that ISKCON was not a part of Hinduism.
- Srila Prabhupada arrived in the US during the decade of discontent; there was widespread dissatisfaction with America's war with Vietnam. The American youth created their counter-culture popularly known as hippie culture. They were trying to break away from the status quo, searching for an alternative. Srila Prabhupada presented this alternative.
- Srila Prabhupada brought the Hare Krishna Movement to the public eye by chanting in the parks, distributing the Back to Godhead Magazine, conducting love feasts, delivering lectures from the Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam in a rented storefront. Thus, he attracted many youngsters, who gradually became his disciples. Prabhupada is often described as having been a charismatic leader.
- Of all his contributions, many consider his books to be of utmost importance. These books present the timeless wisdom of Vedic scriptures in modern English with startling clarity and a convincing, simple eloquence that proves the relevance of the science of self-realization to the modern world. These books it is argued have changed the lives of millions. An important aspect of his influence was his uncompromising preaching of vedic tradition to the entire community irrespective of caste.
- ISKCON has what appears to be quite strict rules for its followers, but are designed to help devotees achieve Krishna Consciousness, which is an extremely difficult thing to achieve. This austerity is referred to as the regulation of life.
- At the same time, members of ISKCON are encouraged to do certain other things such as reading and chanting the Maha-mantra.
- The main beliefs of ISKCON are found in the Bhagavad Gita, many of which are also accepted by orthodox Hindus. One of their key beliefs is that the devotee's dormant relationship with Krishna can be reawakened by the practice of bhakti-yoga.

Key quotes

"We are not preaching Hindu religion. While registering the association, I purposely kept this name, 'Krishna Consciousness,' neither Hindu religion nor Christian nor Buddhist religion." **(Prabhupada – lecture Mumbai 1974).**

"The Krishna consciousness movement has nothing to do with the Hindu religion or any system of religion.... One should clearly understand that the Krishna consciousness movement is not preaching the so-called Hindu religion." **(Prabhupada in Science of Self Realization), Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, (1977).**

"When a man dwells in the solitude of silence, and meditation and contemplation are ever with him; when too much food does not disturb his health, and his thoughts and words and body are in peace; when freedom from passion is his constant will. And his selfishness and violence and pride are gone; when lust and anger and greediness are no more, and he is free from the thought 'this is mine'; then this man has risen on the mountain of the Highest: he is worthy to be one with Brahman, with God." **(Bhagavad Gita 18:52-53).**

Key words

Srila Prabhupada	ISKCON	Krishna Consciousness	charismatic	Bhakti-yoga
counter-culture	Maha-mantra	Bhagavad Gita	regulation of life	vedic tradition

Issues for analysis and evaluation

Key arguments/debates

Some would argue that ISKCON is not a part of traditional Hinduism.

Others would argue that it is an aspect or a sect within Hinduism.

Another argument is that they share certain elements which illustrate their relationship, but that there are also differences in approach.

Key questions

To what extent is ISKCON a part of traditional Hinduism?

How important is Prabhupada in the development and growth of ISKCON?

What are the main beliefs and practices of ISKCON?