



# Betrayal of the Spirit: My Life behind the Headlines of the Hare Krishna Movement

*Nori J Muster*

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Combining behind-the-scenes coverage of an often besieged religious group with a personal account of one woman's struggle to find meaning in it, *Betrayal of the Spirit* takes readers to the center of life in the Hare Krishna movement. Nori J. Muster joined the International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)--the Hare Krishnas--in 1978, shortly after the death of the movement's spiritual master, and worked for ten years as a public relations secretary and editor of the organization's newspaper, the *ISKCON World Review*. In this candid and critical account, Muster follows the inner workings of the movement and the Hare Krishnas' progressive decline. Combining personal reminiscences, published articles, and internal documents, *Betrayal of the Spirit* details the scandals that beset the Krishnas--drug dealing, weapons stockpiling, deceptive fundraising, child abuse, and murder within ISKCON--as well as the dynamics of schisms that forced some 95 percent of the group's original members to leave. In the midst of this institutional disarray, Muster continued her personal search for truth and religious meaning as an ISKCON member until, disillusioned at last with the movement's internal divisions, she quit her job and left the organization. In a new preface to the paperback edition, Muster discusses the personal circumstances that led her to ISKCON and kept her there as the movement's image worsened. She also talks about "the darkest secret"--child abuse in the ISKCON parochial schools--that was covered up by the public relations office where she worked.



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