



Eckankar



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Eckankar

Eckankar is a [new religious movement](#) founded by [Paul Twitchell](#) in 1965. It is a non-profit religious group with members in over one hundred countries. The spiritual home is the [Temple of Eck](#) in [Chanhassen, Minnesota](#). Eckankar is not affiliated with any other religious group.

The movement teaches simple spiritual exercises, such as singing "*Hu*", called "a love song to God", to experience the Light and Sound of God and recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Etymology

The word Eckankar is a transliteration of the phrase [Ik Onkar](#), which is used in [Sikhism](#). According to the Eckankar glossary, the term *Eckankar* means *Co-Worker with God*. ECK is another word for the Holy Spirit, also known as the Audible Life Current, Life Force, or Light and Sound of God.

Eckankar's headquarters were originally in [Las Vegas, Nevada](#). Under the leadership of [Darwin Gross](#), the organization was moved to [Menlo Park, California](#) in 1975. In 1986, Harold Klemp moved the base of operations to [Minneapolis, Minnesota](#).

The leader of Eckankar is known as 'the Living ECK Master'. Some leaders, Twitchell and Klemp, for example, also hold the title "Mahanta" which refers to the inner aspect of the teacher. The leader functions as both an inner and outer guide for each member's individual spiritual progress. Twitchell (spiritual name: Peddar Zaskq) was the movement's spiritual leader until his death in late 1971. Gross (spiritual name: Dap Ren) succeeded him until October 22, 1981, when Klemp (spiritual name: Wah Z, pronounced Wah Zee) became the spiritual leader.

Some scholars believe that Eckankar draws in part from the [Sikh](#) and [Hindu](#) religions, and the [Sant Mat](#) movement. Other influences include [Rosicrucianism](#), [Edgar Cayce](#), and the [Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod](#), whose ministry Harold Klemp once trained for.

Beliefs

One of the basic tenets is that Soul (the true self) may be experienced separate from the physical body and in full consciousness travel freely in other planes of reality. Eckankar emphasizes personal spiritual experiences as the most natural way back to God. These are attained via Soul Travel shifting the awareness from the body to the inner planes of existence.

Certain [mantras](#) or chants are used to facilitate spiritual growth. One important spiritual exercise of Eckankar is the singing or chanting of *Hu*, and is viewed in Eckankar as a "love song to God". It is pronounced like the English word "hue" (or "hyoo") in a long, drawn-out breath and is sung for about half an hour. ECKists sing it alone or in groups. ECKists believe that singing Hu draws one closer in state of consciousness to the Divine Being and that it can expand awareness, help one experience divine love, heal broken hearts, offer solace in times of grief, and bring peace and calm. ECKists believe this practice allows the student to step back from the overwhelming input of the physical senses and emotions and regain Soul's spiritually higher viewpoint.

Dreams are regarded as important teaching tools, and members often keep [dream journals](#) to facilitate study. According to followers of Eckankar, dream travel often serves as the gateway to Soul Travel or the shifting of one's consciousness to ever-higher states of being.

Eckankar teaches that "spiritual liberation" in one's lifetime is available to all and that it is possible to achieve Self-Realization (the realization of oneself as Soul) and God-Realization (the realization of oneself as a spark of God) in one's lifetime. The membership card for Eckankar states: "The aim and purpose of Eckankar has always been to take Soul by Its own path back to Its divine source."

The final spiritual goal of all ECKists is to become conscious "Co-workers" with God.

The *Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad*, which means "Way of the Eternal", is the holy scripture of Eckankar. It comprises two books that tell of spiritual meaning and purpose as written by the Mahanta. There are also a series of [Satsang](#) writings, that are available with yearly membership in Eckankar. There are Satsang classes available to study discourses with others, as well as individually.

Some of the key beliefs taught in the *Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad* include Soul Travel, [karma](#), [reincarnation](#), love, Light and Sound, and many other spiritual topics. ECKists believe Sugmad is the endless source from which all forms were created, and that the ECK, the Sound Current, flows out of Sugmad and into lower dimensions.

Primary to the teaching is the belief that one may experience the perspective of soul beyond the limits of the body. Also, the concepts of [karma](#) and [reincarnation](#) help to explain situations in life as the playing out of past causes.

The beliefs that individuals are responsible for their own destiny and that their decisions determine their future are important concepts to Eckankar. Eckankar students meet in open public services and classes to discuss personal experiences, topics, books and discourses.

Worship

Eckankar emphasizes personal spiritual experiences as the most natural way back to God. These are attained via the Spiritual Exercises of ECK. Eckankar offers a Spiritual Exercise of the Week on its website.

An ECK Light and Sound service generally includes a HU Song and contemplation, a talk or panel discussion from members of the Eckankar Clergy, and often includes creative arts and group discussion. Eckankar hosts a Worldwide Seminar in October and a Springtime Seminar every year. Eckankar also hosts annual seminars in countries around the world. ECK seminars include speakers, creative arts, workshops, discussion groups and other activities.

Current status

The Eckankar "EK" symbol appears on the list of *Available Emblems of Belief for Placement on Government Headstones and Markers* by the [United States Department of Veterans Affairs](#). Sources estimate that there were around 50,000 followers in the 1990s.

?Iran

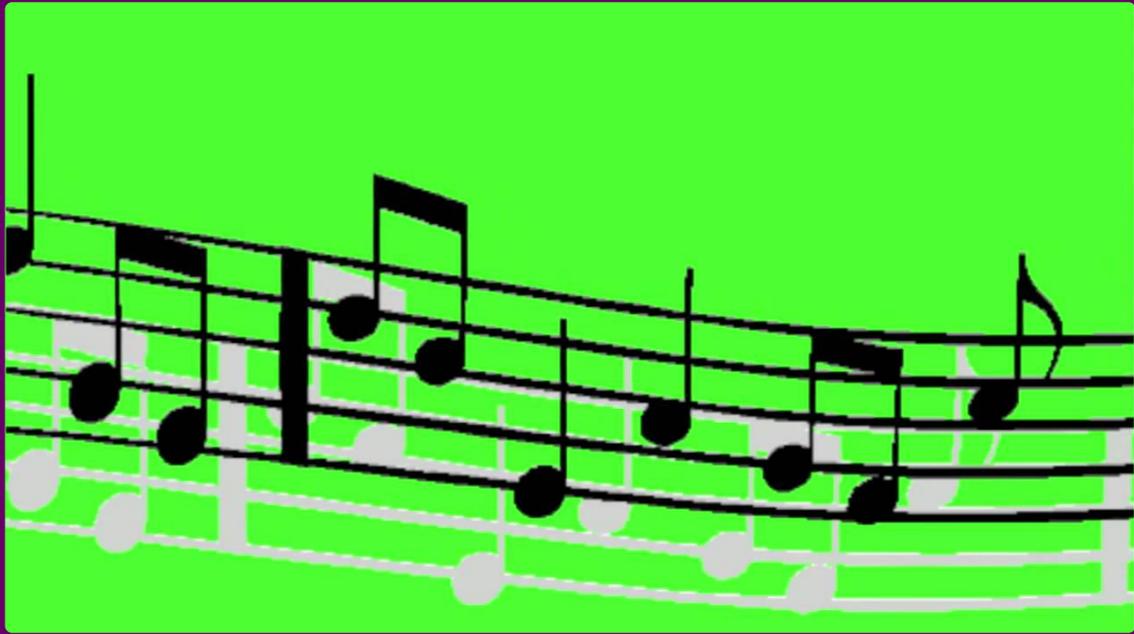
In February 2018, [Iranian](#) agencies reported the execution of an Eckankar member for "establishing fake institution". [Karim Zargar](#), the former Iran TV's channel one broadcast manager, general manager of [IRIB](#)'s international section, head of the Faculty of Radio and Television, and owner and managing director of Film Reports magazine (Gozaresh-e-Film), was hanged at [Rajai Shahr Prison](#). [Marjan Davari](#), Mr. Zargar's former spouse, is also kept in prison and is sentenced to death for being a member of Eckankar. Ms. Davari's family has stated in the media

Eckankar	
 <p>The Eckankar "EK" symbol</p>	
Type	Dharma influenced New religious movement
Scripture	Main: <i>Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad</i> Minor: <i>Autobiography of a Modern Prophet</i> etc.
The Mahanta, the Living ECK Master	Harold Klemp
Region	Mostly worldwide
Headquarters	Temple of ECK, Chanhassen, Minnesota
Founder	Paul Twitchell 1965
Origin	San Diego, California
Centres	367+ (Late 1990s)
Members	50,000-500,000
Official website	www.eckankar.org



Temple of Eck, Chanhassen, Minnesota

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- Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Anchorage, Alaska
- Atlanta, Georgia
- Arlington, Texas
- Aurora, Colorado
- Austin, Texas
- Bakersfield, California
- Baltimore, Maryland
- Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- Billings, Montana
- Birmingham, Alabama

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- Gorillaz
- Jay-Z

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