

KANISTHA ISKCON – CURE

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A) Intro

Good news! "KAIDS" is preventable and cureable!

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) needs no introduction. Its endemic ruined our sense grat and it's incurable. Only "cure" is being pumped with antibiotics till we die a bit later anyway or else a radical complete diet and behaviour change. But good news devotee folks, "KAIDS" or Kanistha-adhikary Immune Deficiency Syndrome is preventable and curable!! Please read on.

B) STORY SO FAR

1) MV Swami's a real bringdown

MV Swami's articles "They are the Proprietors" and "Part 1 Kanistha ISKCON-Diagnosis" are real long-winded downers. Obviously he is under the influence of his African disciples. Even if it is true nobody wants to hear that ISKCON is "kanistha ISKCON" anywhere. It's just too near the bone. This dreaded "KAIDS" sounds like doomsday or worse. So is this "KAIDS" idea of MV Swami more than just a lighthearted acronym or could it be useful for strengthening ISKCON? Or is it just more stonethrowing?

2) Prabhupada's time

Of course madhyam ISKCON's immunity to kanistha influences was strong during Srila Prabhupada's time as he was an uttama-adhikari and kept prodding and coaxing us to preach like madhyam-adhikaris (MAs). Just see how SP disentangled Brahmananda Swami from "nonsense Hindus" in Nairobi so he was free to preach to the black locals. But later with only Prabhupada's instructions to guide us our immunity to kanistha influence got less and less. We became immune deficient.

3) KAID is really a "Syndrome"?

Is Kanistha-Adhikari Immune Deficiency really a Syndrome? From Bhaktivedanta Manor UK, ISKCON President HG Kripamoya Dasa gave his perception of the Syndrome in relation to his Indian community in UK. In summary it went like this:

1) Rich Indian congregation is traditionally more Krishna conscious than British locals. 2) Easy to get immediate support from them. 3) ISKCON managers get laxmi by mostly Indian-friendly big projects 4) Local preaching gets sidelined and some locals drafted in as cheap manpower to maintain big Indian friendly projects. 5) Results not impressive and any intelligent new Brit bhaktas can't last long when ISKCON's caste system is obvious. 6) ISKCON managers long term committment to cultivate locals becomes unenthusiastic ...

4) Syndrome closeup - my version

As an ISKCON member I and others know this syndrome full well in closeup having perpetuated it ourselves for many years. It's deadening to spiritual life. The critical point in the syndrome is whether or not we are spiritually strong and have enough faith that Krishna will provide for us if we speak boldly to everyone and anyone on His behalf. When we compromise preaching for cash our tongue becomes a prostitute. In this compromised consciousness we become so "wise" we feel we "should not unsettle them" (BG 3:29). We forget that the "devotees of the Lord" are "more kind than the Lord" and take risks. We avoid and internalize any sensitive topics such as "Isn't your Gujarati family consciousness just another form of animalism?".

In this way with habitual polite internalisation for the sake of maintaining sensitive personal relationships with KAs and their donations, we aspiring MAs become dragged back down into the KA quagmire. Then weakened, we become quickly attracted and conditioned to the comfortable status quo of KAIDS ISKCON with its expanding institutionalized opulences and facilities for more KA association. We then conveniently minimize that Srila Prabhupada's order was to preach to the innocent masses at large. We just make token plans to obey him though we only have very faint faith the locals can ever become devotees at all. When we hear a sannyasi saying we should be preaching to the locals as our priority we think he is either childishly naive or envious. We feel our precious KA donor base is being threatened and brand him as a political powermonger. At this stage we have lost the MA plot in the KAI Syndrome. So this infectious disease can be lightheartedly and rightfully dubbed "KAIDS" - "Kanistha-Adhikary Immune Deficiency Syndrome".

5) Aim of ISKCON

Because the prime aim of ISKCON is definitely a madhyam-dhikari (MA) one KAIDS is an extremely dangerous infection. ISKCON's prime aim is:

"To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life, and to achieve real unity and peace in the world."

ISKCON is supposed to be a preaching movement to fulfill the desires of Lord Chaitanya that in

every town and village His name will be heard - “prithivite yata nagaradi gram”. It is supposed to be “the prime benediction for humanity at large” (Siksastakam 1). It is meant to be for “society at large” and to “educate all peoples”. Therefore a healthy ISKCON is a “madhyam ISKCON”. Obviously an ISKCON with a KA mood is an unhealthy ISKCON because it cannot preach and educate effectively. Even if we distribute lots of books the people who come will be disappointed by the KA mood.

Srila Prabhupada had no intention to keep Krishna consciousness as the property of any KA community in any country like it has become in East Africa for instance. In fact he “was not at all encouraged” by his own nation’s KA mood and struggled to get away from India and preach in the USA where he felt there might be some genuine (not just traditional) interest in self-realisation springing from frustration with materialism.

6) Healthy ISKCON is Madhyam-Adhikary (MA) ISKCON

A MA mood is the healthy mood to spread Krishna consciousness worldwide. Even if an ISKCON devotee is in the uttama-bhagavata status he must come down to the second status of life, madhyama-adhikari, to be a preacher (CC Adi 7.52). The kanistha-adhikari is also expected to raise himself up to the madhyam platform: ... by continuing to serve the Supreme Lord and the devotees engaged in propagating the Lord’s mission, the kanistha-adhikari also advances in his realization and comes to the stage of dedicating his activities to helping more advanced Vaisnavas ... becomes more attracted to friendship with other faithful servants of the Lord, ... the kanistha-adhikari approaches the second-class stage, called madhyama ... SB 11.2.45

7) Symptoms of an Madhyam-adhikari

As a reminder here is a compression of various slokas describing the symptoms of the MA.

The MA should be considered to be situated midway in devotional service and is described as “a devotee who worships the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the highest object of love - 1), makes friends with the Lord’s devotees - 2), is merciful to the ignorant -3) and avoids those who are envious by nature -4).”

After receiving spiritual initiation from the spiritual master and being fully engaged by him in the genuine transcendental loving service of the Lord he has a special taste for chanting the Hare Krsna mantra. Having an expanded vision the MA wants to develop his love for Krsna therefore his first qualification is to see that not a moment is wasted without engagement in Krsna consciousness. He is also very anxious to live in places like Vrndavana, Dvaraka and Mathura, places where Krsna lived.

The MA sees the Vaisnavas as his only friends within this morbid world and makes friendships only with similar devotees.

Seeing the Lord as the cause of all causes and the chief goal of everyone’s loving propensity the MA finds devotional service so enchanting that as a preacher his only business is to propagate Krsna consciousness for the benefit of the whole world. Recognizing that every living

entity should become a devotee of Krsna he is mercifully eager to show favour to the neophytes and bring innocent ignorant people within the shelter of Vaisnava society .

The MA may criticize the nondevotees of the Lord and discriminate between the favorable and the unfavorable. They strictly avoid associating with demoniac living entities and self-proclaimed enemies of God who are offenders that immediately become envious as soon as they hear about God or His devotees.

The MA (preacher) is well versed in the sastras and is completely aware of the sastric conclusions and can convince others also but he cannot support his conviction by citing sastric references.

MA/KA criticism natural and healthy

It seems we can always expect tensions between MA and KAs. It's the healthy dynamic and supported by sastra. As well as criticising the materialists MAs must also criticise the KAs to uplift them to the MA platform." In this way people who do not preach are criticised. (SB 11.2.47) Therefore criticism of KAIDS infected ISKCON is natural, healthy and progressive. Srila Prabhupada himself set the example of this and was not afraid to point his fingers even at his own godbrothers. In turn Srila Prabhupada was himself criticised by his godbrothers - "even an authorized devotee who is engaged in the service of the Lord by preaching the mission of Krsna consciousness is sometimes criticized by neophyte devotees". (SB 7.14.39)

8) MAs take the side of the locals and fight KAIDS!

To protect the locals a sincere qualified MA must take their side against KAIDS infected ISKCON leaders. Srila Prabhupada did just that in Kenya in 1971. We should too now. In places where ISKCON leaders are being influenced by KAIDS, (as described in detail in “Part 1 Kanistha ISKCON” and “They are the Proprietors” articles”), the prime aim of ISKCON is effectively being thwarted. ISKCON with KAIDS is just like a saligram-sila being used for breaking nuts. KAIDS ISKCON is no longer acting primarily for the benefit of the people at large but for the self-interest of a KA minority. Under these circumstances the local wannabe devotees naturally feel disenfranchised, cheated, discouraged, disillusioned and disempowered by KAIDS ISKCON. Unless sincere MAs actually step up and speak out to try and protect the locals their devotional integrity is compromised and they soon become KAs again. Then what hope is there for ISKCON’s recovery from KAIDS?

C) TREATMENT FOR “KAIDS”

1) GBC Doctor to the Rescue!

As the the Governing Body Commission (GBC) was appointed as “the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness” its duty is to ensure that ISKCON fulfills its aims and objects to preach all over the world. The GBC, like a good doctor, must act to save ISKCON before it is too late and it succumbs to KAIDS and becomes one more name in the long historical list of impotent sectarian religious institutions who lost the plot and got bogged down in their own particular ritualistic ceremonies and traditions. If ISKCON has a debilitating chronic disease like KAIDS the GBC must treat it to revive its educational potency to

spread non-sectarian devotional service or the science of developing love for God to the people in general. If the GBC does not act decisively now then the further deterioration of KAIDS infected ISKCON is inevitable so that KAIDS may become completely incurable in future.

2) The Cure for KAIDS –Madhyam-adhikari's needed urgently!

My suggestion is that in any place where KAIDS is rampant the GBC body must inject the strong influence of MA devotees. I feel that this is the only sure prevention and treatment. MA devotees must be put into influential leadership positions to ensure that KA influences are counteracted, e.g.:in East Africa, where KAIDS is chronic, the GBC should immediately appoint additional qualified MA leaders in new posts such as “Co-Regional Secretary for Local Preaching” or “Co GBC for Local Preaching”,Co President for Local Preaching”. Such posts are meant for delivering the ” people at large”. Such MA devotees must have their rightful positions on national and temple councils and be provided with adequate facilities. Without such new posts being specifically appointed by the GBC MAs will not have enough clout to counteract the influence of KAIDS infected ISKCON managers who will not take them seriously. These unprotected budding MAs will just probably end up becoming KAIDS victims themselves.

3) Terms of Reference (TOR) for ISKCON's MA heroes

Since KAIDS is a dangerous infective threat to ISKCON here are some suggested TORs for prospective MA hero candidates considering the challenge of entering KAIDS infected areas of ISKCON.

a) By definition a prospective MA can be from ANY ethnic background but they should definitely be situated well above the influence of any minority ethnic interests and be always focused on the interests of the people in general. A preacher devotee who seems qualified for the job in their own home country like India may not be able to rise to the occasion when they are abroad - ie in E Africa. Therefore candidates should already have a good preaching track record in foreign countries.

b) The prospective MA hero must be ready to deal with the dynamics of ethnic incompatibility. If ISKCON is seen by the people at large as belonging to an ethnic minority the local preaching is greatly hindered because of philosophical inconsistency. If that ethnic minority is also unpopular it is even more of a problem, i.e. this is the main problem in many countries such as East Africa, Thailand, Japan and of course in UK and USA also. This is supported by statistics and the observations of senior ISKCON devotees. (This is already explained in "They are the Proprietors" and "Part 1 Kanistha ISKCON" Diagnosis" articles)

c) The prospective MA hero candidate must be aware of and learn to apply appropriate strategies to counteract the effect of KAIDS in ISKCON such as:-

i) Education of KAs, if possible, to uplift them to the preaching MA mood. ii) Innovating fundraising from locals and prioritising expenditures for local preaching projects. iii) Making KAIDS infected ISKCON setups become friendly to the people in general by various practical modifications like advertising, local friendly books and distribution techniques, reception areas, separate entrances, exhibitions, etc. (see Details **A, **B, **C below) iv) Targeting recruiting to the student, educated and upwardly-mobile classes of the people in general. (see Details **5 below) v) Setting up separate parallel ISKCON temples and centres to cater to different ethnic communities in the same cities as suggested by Srila Prabhupada. Small Centres like this

allready exist in Thailand,UK,Uganda etc. (see Details **E below) vi) Starting home temples and informal centres independant of direct KAIDS ISKCON management. (see Details **D below)

d) The prospective MA hero candidate must be super-tolerant of any possible criticism and non-cooperation from KAIDS ISKCON leaders who really believe that they are already advanced devotees who are doing their best for local preaching. Such leaders will site various reasons to oppose any KAIDS treatments such as “alienating or undermining the ethnic community”, “endangering the donor base”,or “ threatening to undermine Deity standards” etc.

e) The prospective MA hero candidate must be ready to possibly deal with powerful and intelligent KAIDS infected ISKCON leaders who prefer their followers to be submissive KAs who can collect big money to build and maintain big marble buildings and provide big cars as a show of their spiritual advancement rather than being able to form close trusting friendly devotee relationships with the local people, e.g. in one ISKCON temple, because its leader had been successful in building a big marble temple and condomonium for the Indian community he was hailed as an advanced devotee in ISKCON even though the local preaching relationships have been neglected for many years,virtually no books printed in local languages and mostly uneducated poor submissive locals are simply used for menial temple services as public tokens for local preaching.

f) The prospective MA hero candidate should not be surprised at the enthusiasm and determination the KAs show for maintaining their status quos even though it means blatantly disobeying Srila Prabhupada’s express instructions, i.e. when will Nairobi ISKCON ever be called “Kirata Shuddhi” as Srila Prabhupada named it? Such is the power of Krishna’s mahamaya that such “minor” discrepancies are always expediently overlooked and minimised.

g) The prospective MA hero candidate should not be discouraged by the inertia and reluctance of the KA community to relinquish its control over ISKCON, e.g. in East Africa KAIDS ISKCON leaders openly identify themselves as belonging to “our” Indian Hindu community and they see “their ISKCON temple’s” interests as part of the business, cultural and political interests of “our Hindus”, or the minority congregation which provides ISKCON with most of its financial backing.

h) The prospective MA hero candidate should not be surprised to discover that KAIDS ISKCON leaders are actually AGAINST successful preaching to the people in general and see it as a positive threat to their ethnic community’s self-interest, e.g. if ISKCON East Africa is “taken over” by the local people’s management then ISKCON may no longer be a convenient support for the East African Indian Hindu minority’s family, business and political interests in East Africa.

D) CONCLUSION

1) But where are such MAs?

I humbly suggest that there is no need for despair. If they take this matter seriously the GBC’s resources are easily enough to find enthusiastic aspiring MA devotees ready for the challenge of treating KAIDS ISKCON. The disease is now diagnosed and the cure is obvious. The younger generation ISKCON MA heroes are fast coming up and need such mighty challenges such as curing KAIDS ISKCON in the global preaching fields. MAs with lively preaching spirit energy are simply not satisfied with just passing higher and higher MIHE/VIHE degrees and making new CDs for their famous ISKCON bhajan groups. Spirited ISKCON MAs will want to advance the frontiers of ISKCON’s local preaching with their heroic pioneering endeavours. ISKCON’s seasoned old-timer preachers will be only too glad to try and give them all their association, advice and support they can.

2) GBC reaction - KA mood

If the GBC body is too much kanistha influenced it will probably be in denial and not want to do anything much as it feels things are OK anyway. It may let the status quo reign supreme until pressure from the local's side gets heavier. The GBC body may not want to interfere with the local GBC's decisions at this point. In which case the local preaching may continue to conveniently stagnate whilst the kanistha's make more kanistha hay whilst the sun shines.

3) GBC reaction – MA mood

If the GBC body and its zonal secretaries has a more MA mood it will certainly want to be active to do something urgently for society at large and to please Srila Prabhupada by fulfilling his local preaching desires in East africa,UK,USA and elsewhere. It will put pressure on local GBCs with KAIDS infections to make some administrative additions in their zones like East Africa and elsewhere in the world. It will be glad to find and appoint MA leaders to cure ISKCON KAIDS troublespots.

FINAL WORDS

Param vijayate sri krishna sankirtanam! Ki Jaya!

KAIDS free ISKCON Ki Jaya!

DETAILS

Jittery Doner base

The tendency of kanistha ISKCON will be to maintain its status quo at all costs so as to assure its jittery doner base that all is well and continue to enjoy its comfort zones. Therefore only a token “safe” show of local preaching is favourable for maintaining the status quo of kanistha ISKCON in East Africa.

Too friendly for comfort

In a modified more “local friendly” ISKCON model many more African people may visit ISKCON and take part in the kirtans. The Indians and local Africans will freely worship Krishna and dance

together in sankirtan as Srila Prabhupada hoped. But familiarity and equality with locals may easily breed disrespect and destroy the validity of the Indian kanistha community's superiority complex and colonial mystique of master and servant which enables the Indian community to effectively exploit the locals.

There is historical evidence for this occurring when after the 2nd world war where Africans fought alongside Europeans and Americans. The African soldiers quickly learned that Europeans and Americans were mere mortals like themselves and when they returned to Africa they were enthusiastic to start their independence movements.

Intermarriage threat

For social reasons also the more "local friendly" ISKCON Nairobi model will be seen as a social threat by kanistha ISKCON because it will naturally increase the risk of ethnic intermarriage which will be felt as a danger to the kanistha-adhikaris exclusive caste and family traditions.

Grass-roots independant movement

If Krishna consciousness spreads amongst the locals outside the formal institution of ISKCON EA , either under a different name or informally in "home temples", it will not be seen as a big threat at first but if it becomes popular with the people and government it will become a threat to the kanistha ISKCON's social standing because it will reveal the hollowness of kanistha

ISKCON's present policy of making a show of local preaching. In this scenario kanistha ISKCON will then be revealed as serving the Indian community's interests and not the locals.

Separate all-black local centres in East Africa

If separate all-black ISKCON EA temples are started (as Srila Prabhupada has given permission for), and they become popular with their respective governments, the African business community and the African intellectuals, then the present kanistha ISKCON setups in EA will feel threatened by losing their credibility and by being seen for what they are as mainly serving and securing the Indian community's business and social ends, i.e.:- The government officials will rightly question why ISKCON Nairobi should import its pujaris from India when the local pujaris will be available?

Therefore we can expect that the managers of kanistha ISKCON will also be against the "separate temples" model. They will cling to the status quo with its token of local preaching.

If educated East African locals are allowed to join kanistha ISKCON

If educated manager-quality local African people are targetted, recruited and trained as devotees intended to be put in ISKCON leadership positions then this will naturally first appear as a serious threat to the financial stability of the ISKCON kanistha temple. This idea will disturb kanistha ISKCON's credibility with its wealthy kanistha Hindu donor base which values its mutual

interdependence with ISKCON as an important factor for enhancing the interests of the Indian community in East Africa.

Therefore the status quo will be much preferred with kanistha ISKCON content to only maintain a few less educated locals of non-managerial quality who can be used for menial services only. These bhaktas can be used to make a token show of local friendliness so kanistha ISKCON can continue to convince East African government officials that it is not just a front for the Indian community's business and social interests.

After some time of purification by hearing Srila Prabhupada's books and taking part in devotional service local new bhaktas may sooner or later observe the hypocritical ethnic agenda of the kanistha ISKCON's managers. Then they will find themselves becoming morose, ask too many leading questions and feel unwelcome and unsure when groomed for initiation by an ISKCON guru belonging to the Indian community. The kanistha ISKCON's record of many expendable bhaktas in Nairobi substantiates this syndrome.



Nairobi Sunday Feast

Hare Krishna Centre - Leicester, UK - ISKCON and the KAID Syndrome

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Nairobi - Birds of a Feather