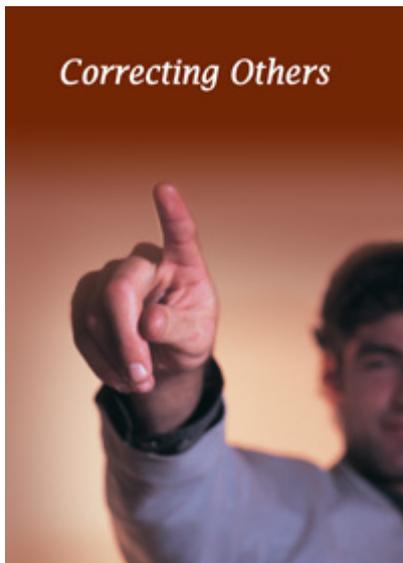


Correcting Others



Devotee means he is able to tolerate all kinds of discomfort and whims of the material nature, and because he is too much absorbed in serving Krsna he takes no time to become angry or take offense with others or find out some fault. No. Devotee means very liberal and kind to everyone, always gentleman under all kinds of conditions of life.

SP letter to Hamsaduta (December 10, 1972)

01. There is a difference between criticism and correction. A devotee realizes that criticizing a Vaisnava pollutes the heart and impedes spiritual advancement.

02. To correct a devotee one must be: -

a) non-envious

b) desirous to practically assist the devotee in his Krsna consciousness.

c) in a position spiritually or managerially which justifies and/or necessitates such intervention.

OR be personally requested by the devotee to help him in his difficulty.

03. The devotee offering correction must be practicing what he preaches.

04. Methods of Correction:

a) Correct by personal example and association.

b) Guide the devotee to the shelter of a more advanced devotee.

c) A junior devotee should not personally attempt to correct another devotee. He should reveal his heart to a senior devotee

whom he feels at ease with and seek his assistance/advice to adjust the situation.

05. Harsh words and actions have no place in correcting a sincere devotee. We want to destroy the ignorance in the heart of a devotee-not the devotee himself.

06. If there is some sincere and honest criticism offered, we should be grateful, not upset. To react negatively to well intentioned correction is to manifest false ego.

07. An advanced Vaisnava will see each and every correction offered as the mercy of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

08. Prevention is better than cure. If all devotees take up the responsibility to develop proper awareness in their devotional behavior the need for correction will be minimized.

Quotes from Srila Prabhupada

Devotee means he is able to tolerate all kinds of discomfort and whims of the material nature, and because he is too much absorbed in serving Krsna he takes no time to become angry or

take offense with others or find out some fault. No. Devotee means very liberal and kind to everyone, always gentleman under all kinds of conditions of life.

SP letter to Hamsaduta (December 10, 1972)

A devotee-one who is humble-doesn't fault-find. So in your letter you are not finding fault with anyone. So you are good Vaisnava.

You do not find fault with anyone. This is the qualification. We should always think ourselves humble and meek. This you must know. So we all have to cooperate amongst ourselves, otherwise what will people think if we ourselves fight with one another? A devotee is always ideal in behavior."

SP letter to Patita Uddharana (December 12, 1974)

This is called Vaikuntha attitude. In the Vaikuntha factually there is no fault in anyone, but there is another type of competition. The competition is that one devotee thinks of other devotees how nicely they are serving the Lord. In the material world the attitude is that everyone likes to think that I am doing better than others. This is material conception. In the Spiritual Sky it is just the opposite: Everyone thinks that my contemporary devotees are doing better than me. We are trained to address Godbrothers as Prabhu, which means Master. This means we shall try to find out always the serving side of our Godbrothers. Sometimes there are misgivings, but we should try to overlook.

SP letter to Brahmananda (November 15, 1969)

Otherwise

I have received one complaint from an Indian devotee at Mayapur, Prabharupa Das Brahmachary, that he is maltreated by our American devotees. Kindly inquire into this matter and do the needful. Either Indian or foreign whoever joins us they are not under any obligation, our only tie is Love of Godhead. It should be our definite policy that nobody is ill treated that he may go away. We recruit a person to join us after spending gallons of blood. Everyone comes for reformation, you cannot expect everyone to be perfect, rather it is our duty to make everyone perfect as far as possible. So we shall be very much cautious and careful in this connection.

SP letter to Tamala Krsna (August 23, 1973)

Devotee misbehavior

Kindly observe the regulative principles, chanting 16 rounds regularly and see that all your other assistants are doing the same. If someone is lacking, try to induce him peacefully.

SP letter to Upendra (August 18, 1970)

Regarding some misbehavior, that we have to check by training peacefully. Your attitude of tolerance and kindness is very nice, so train them in this way.

SP letter to Bhavananda (October 28, 1970)

Yes, a new man may commit blunders in the beginning, but that does not mean we may be too impatient with him. After all, training means the man does not know, so you should train him nicely. A Vaishnava is expected to be humbler than the blade of grass, so when you train some new man you should not get agitated with him. After all, we are preachers, and we do not expect our audience or candidates completely respondent to our call. If everyone is trained [already] then what is the use of our preaching?

SP letter to Upendra (March 11, 1969)

Mend it; Don't Break it

Try to settle up amicably and correct yourself. One man is trained up with great difficulty, especially in spiritual life. Everyone has got some weakness and deficiency. It is better to correct or mend it than to break it."

SP letter to Hamsaduta (September 29, 1974)

Let The Authority Handle It

I beg to thank you very much for your letter pointing out some of the discrepancies of many of the devotees in New York. You are correct regarding the items which you have stated, such as sleeping in front of the deities, taking of unoffered foodstuffs, drinking water from the bathroom, and non-chanting of rounds. But the thing is discipline can not be observed unless there is obedience. As you are obedient to me, you should be similarly obedient to my representative. Your statement about Brahmananda that he is a wonderful devotee is 100 percent agreed by me. He is in charge of the New York center, and therefore, if proper obedience is not given to him, it will be impossible for him to manage affairs of the temple. Under the circumstances, the discrepancies you have observed in the temple may be referred to him, and he is quite reasonable, and will handle the matter with the respective devotees.

SP letter to Nara-Narayana (February 7, 1969)

Regarding general state of affairs at Amsterdam temple, I can understand there is some disturbance among you, but that is not to be taken very seriously. Real business is preaching work. And if there is full attention on this matter only, all other businesses will be automatically successful. Fighting amongst ourselves is not at all good, but if our preaching work is neglected, or if we fall down in following the regulative principles-such as rising before four, chanting 16 rounds, like that-if these things are not strictly observed, then Maya will enter and spoil everything. So my best advice to you is to strictly observe these things yourself and be the example so that all others may follow. We should not criticize each other as Vaisnavas, because there is fault in everyone and we may be ourselves subject to criticism. Best thing is to be above suspicion

ourselves, then if we see discrepancies and make suggestions, the others will automatically respect and take action to rectify the matters. That is cooperation. And we must exist on such cooperation, otherwise the whole thing is doomed if we simply go on fighting over some small thing. So try to organize things and preach together in this spirit and that will please me very very much.

SP letter to Madhu-mangala (November 18, 1972)

You have mentioned about some criticism made by Jayagovinda which upset you. I do not know exactly what is the point, but if there is some honest criticism, there should be no cause of becoming upset.

SP letter to Vrndavanesvari (July 8, 1969)

The Defect Lies Within You

If there is some incident and I claim that no one is cooperating with me or no one will work with me, that is MY defect, NOT THEIRS. The Vaisnava devotee must think like this. We should not find fault with others and criticise and go away. That is not the Vaisnava way. Better we should always be willing to offer all respect to others and consider them as our superiors always.

SP letter to Gaurasundara (August 26, 1972)