

Praise In Public, Chastise In Private

(Excerpt from lecture series on Caitanya Caritamrta, Kartik 2006, Part 2, Lecture 3
- Mahaprabhu sends Damodara Pandita to Saci Mata)

There is a principle in management, I don't know how many of you have ever managed devotees, but it's a good principle for managing a family or whatever, it said that the principle is – 'Praise in public, chastise in private.'

Unfortunately, unless one is very *sattvika*, very cool headed and very patient and peaceful, he can't control himself, because the pushing of *raja guna* and *tama guna* make one act irrationally and without a cool head.

For example, you are a temple president and you are in the *prasadam* room and a new devotee is serving out *prasadam* and he is serving, and somehow... he is serving with the spoon, with his right hand, he is carrying the bucket and everything, and then maybe at some point he is serving out *puris*. So he holds the *puris* in his right hand and he starts serving with his left hand. He is carrying in his right hand, the big heavy bowl of *puris*, it's kind of heavy, because he can't carry with his left hand, it's weak, he is holding in his right and he is serving with his left hand.

So an ordinary manager will say, "Hey, what are you doing, you stupid! You are not supposed to serve *prasadam* with your left hand. Put that down, somebody else serve, serve with your right hand. Don't you know better?" He will just crack him.

So partially why he is cracking him is because that leader himself, or that authority himself has a problem with false ego. He is trying to lord it over that person - that is one point. And the second point is that he doesn't have any proper love. Because if you have love for someone, you know that – we have a phrase – Put yourself in another person's shoes, or wear the other person's shoes, or something like that.

In other words - Put yourself in another person's shoes. How would you like it if you were serving *prasadam* and somebody yelled at you in front of all the devotees? So this is called criticizing in public. And everyone is going to look at you – "Oh ya you! You serve with your left hand! Oh! Stinking pooh! You are no good. You stupid! Don't you know better?"

So this is the ordinary *tamasika* and *rajasika* leader. He can't control himself, because he wants to enjoy, because of false ego, he wants to enjoy lording it over that dependant or servant or inferior, he gets some ego gratification from that. But if he is actually loving and kind, he will take mental note, or he will write on his diary or whatever, "Talk to Bhakta Joe later", "Talk to Krsnadasa later"

This is called the love principle in management. So the Sunday feast is over and everything said and done, and the server had a big feast and he is feeling good and everything is happy, then you call them into your room and you say, “Excuse me, I would like to speak to you. You had a nice feast? Feast was nice?”

“Yes, very good feast”

“Everything ok?”

“Fine”

You say, “One thing is, you know this left hand business, what do we do with this left hand?”

He says, “Oh we do this thing with the back side”

“So this left hand is not very nice, is it?”

“No, it is not very nice.”

“It is like a dirty thing.”

“Ya.”

“Is it a good thing to use for serving *prasadam*?”

“Uh, no...”

“So did you serve the *puris* today?”

“Ya.”

“Can you remember?”

“Uh, ya... they were really heavy, the bowl was really heavy, I was carrying it in my right hand, you know it was too heavy, I couldn't hold it in my left hand, I was carrying it in my right hand and I was serving it with my left. But I thought it was *prasadam*, *prasadam* is pure, it never gets contaminated...” you know, new devotee, they don't know. “I thought *prasadam* is pure, it never gets contaminated. I knew that maybe it wasn't right, but I thought like this.”

“*Acha, theek hai.*”

So this way, in a very nice way, you try to instruct as best as possible. So here is an example, Mahaprabhu is the ideal devotee, and of course Bhagavan, Radha and Krsna combined. *sri krsna caitanya radha krsna nahi anya*

So it says, *nibhrte*, means solitary or lonely or quiet. We say *nibhrte nikunja*, there is one poem by Rupa Goswami, something like ‘*Nikunja rasa stava*’ and in there he talks about *nibhrte nikunja*, deep in the forest, in a very dark place, there is a very confidential meeting place, a forest bower, grove, and it's very solitary and quiet and that is where I will serve Radha and Krsna. Very beautiful, intimate poem, by Rupa Goswami.

So here the word, *nibhrte*, means solitary place. So He didn't take him out in public, pull him by the ear – “Listen! See this guy? This Damodara Pandita! He is impudent! He is offending Me! He is an offender!”

Nothing like that... He is very considerate, very loving and very proper. So this is actually the proper way – Praise in public. When you praise in public, everyone likes to be appreciated or honoured and distinguished, that is our nature and people are striving so hard for it. So if we have to praise someone, it is nice if other people can hear also. “Oh just see the nice job Krsnadasa is doing! Can everyone appreciate it...”

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura had a very interesting practice, which when we were managing we heard about it from Satsvarupa Maharaja, we incorporated it in our temple and it was quite amusing to see how it would go. It is an interesting principle. This principle was to have *Ista gosti*.

Ista gosti means you make sounds about your *ista*. *Gosta* means sounds or vibration and *ista* means your Lord, or your worshipable object. *Ista* comes from *isa*, *Isa* means controller, *isvara parama krsna*, so *Ista gosti*, means that devotees come together and make sounds about God, they speak about God.

And generally there would be some senior devotees or some junior devotees and they will ask questions. It's kind of an open forum, like they say in college. You have these open forums or open discussions and it will all be centered about the *Ista deva*. It's almost like a class, but there is more informality. Anyone can ask a question on any subject or any topic of *sadhana* or *tattva*, *tattva vicara* or *lila vicara*, etc. and then the senior leader or older devotees will try to answer, like this.

Unfortunately sometimes they have these *Ista gostis* and they are just about parking cars, you know, where to park the cars and the parking lot, who took out the trash can and this and that! And that maybe there as a minor part of the meeting but that's more like a town meeting or an organizational meeting. It's not really technically *Ista gosti*.

Because you read even in *sastras* that Mahaprabhu had *Ista gostis*, I don't think He was talking about someone stealing somebody's socks, someone stole my clock out of my room, and this and that.

But anyway, during these *Ista gostis*, in Gaudiya Matha, during Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's time, he would understand the pulse of the temple, like we take the pulse of the body or the blood pressure, and then you can tell whether the body is healthy or not healthy. So he would observe in the temple, what the health of the devotees was, the relationships they were sharing with each other, the *brahmacaris*, and then he employed this principle, in order to remove envy from one devotee to another, to increase the loving spirit and basically to increase everyone's Krsna consciousness or awareness of the *Ista*, of the worshipable Lord.

So he would do this practice, he would call on the different devotees in the temple after speaking something of philosophy and what not, he would say, “Oh Krsnadasa I want you to stand up and say something good about Caitanya dasa.”

So this is a very good practice, because generally no one wants to say anything good about anyone except me, number 1. We always want to say – “I am so great and I am so good, do you know I can do this and I can do that? And I already did all these other things, I have all these great achievements and I also plan to do so many more great things and right now of course I am doing many great things!”

So in this way you can see, in the past, in the future and now, I am nothing but Great!

So this is the basic way we deal in the material world because everyone is basically God. So I will give the example of our own temple because I employed this. So we had one devotee, I will just give some hypothetical names in case they ever hear this tape sometime, but there was Krsnadasa and Caitanya dasa and they were both very good *mrdanga* players and both very good *kirtana* leaders and they were in our temple and my estimate is they were both quite basically equal.

But often they were always rivals. They were always competing and saying, ‘He is no good...’ They didn’t like each other very much, because they were both involved with the same thing, leading *kirtanas*, and *harinama* and playing *mrdanga* and also harmonium.

So I saw this was getting a little bit out of hand sometimes. So we had one of these *Ista gostis*, so I called on Caitanya dasa, I said, “Can you say something good about Krsnadasa?”

So he stood up and he said, “Uh... ya... Maharaja Krsnadasa...”

Everybody in the temple was laughing because they knew that these two were always at it you know. So then we were trying not to laugh too much because I set it up in a little serious way. It was not like a slapstick practice. It was quite serious, not some comedy. Devotees were... little bit snickering type going on. So he says -

“Alright Maharaja, Krsnadasa ... Well, Krsnadasa, you know, he is a devotee to Krsna. He is taking shelter of Krsna and that is good.”

I said, “Anything else?”

He said, “Well, you know...he...uh...he...”

It was really hard because they couldn’t stand each other, they were really like this, so I said, “Is there anything more that you can say about Krsnadasa?”

He said, “Well, he wears his *tilaka* nicely.” (laughs) He says something like this, and everybody started laughing, you know, it was a little funny, couldn’t repress, I was also laughing.

And then he was like, he wouldn’t say anything! He just wouldn’t go on. And Krsnadasa knew so many *slokas*, and you know, they were good devotees, in many categories, I said, “Well, maybe I can help you out a little bit.”

I said to him, I said, “Does Krsnadasa have any talents? Do you happen to see any talent or abilities in Krsnadasa?”

And he says, “Talents...? uh... abilities? Sometimes he gives a good class...”

Like this... and gradually then I said, “What about music?”

So he said, “Well, you know, he knows a little *mrdanga*...”

(laughs) So like this he gradually got to the point where he could say something about Krsnadasa. And then I called Krsnadasa to say something, you know, vice versa.

So like this. It is a very good practice to learn how to glorify another devotee.

So Lord Caitanya took Damodara to a solitary place, because He wants to correct Damodara, He wants to say something about... we are speaking the story of ‘Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Sends Damodara Pandita to Mother Saci’

Damodara Pandita is a great devotee of the Lord and he is staying with Lord Caitanya in Jagannatha Puri. Lord Caitanya is meeting everyday, a young boy, he was a Brahmin boy, who was the son of a very beautiful *brahmani*. So Damodara Pandita is worried that Lord Caitanya’s reputation will be spoiled because He is everyday meeting this young boy and showing mercy to him, and even one day He was asking the young boy, “Can you tell us about the news, tell Me about different kind of news.”

So then Damodara Pandita, in his attempt to protect Lord Caitanya’s reputation, or in his attempt to, let’s say, protect Him, he became a little offensive himself. He was afraid other people would offend Lord Caitanya by spreading rumors about Him, because of His meeting with this young Brahmin boy, so to prevent those offenses, he made offenses himself by speaking impudently, which means trying to correct Lord Caitanya. He is trying to correct God.

So then Lord Caitanya called Damodara Pandita to a solitary place. So we are speaking about an important principle in management. If anyone is in charge of other devotees, he should criticize in private and praise in public.

If you have anybody that you are managing - You are a *sankirtana* leader, you are IVF director, you are temple president, you are Deity department in-charge, or any position you have, you have to correct someone or chastise him, you should do it privately - Two people, you and the person, not in front of others.

But generally people are passionate. Leaders are very passionate by nature and if you are passionate that means you are also ignorant, because they go together.

So as soon as you see someone doing something wrong, immediately, “Hey! What are you doing!?” even though there are so many people around, then that person becomes so much embarrassed, their heart cracks, because the leader doesn’t know how to control himself. The leader should take a note, ‘Oh this person has made some mistake, or made some incorrect behavior, I have to make a note to meet him later privately and remind him.’

This is proper leader. It is called Enlightened Leadership.

So the very example is here. Damodara Pandita was acting impudently. So then it says, *ara dine damodare nibhrte bolaila, nibhrte* means lonely, solitary place. Lord Caitanya spoke to him alone, one-on-one.