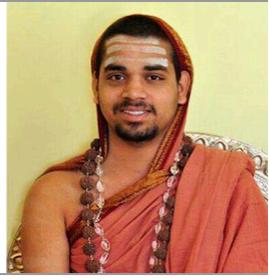


# Voice of Jagadguru

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## ANUGRAHA BHASHANAM

### WAKE UP TO ATMA JNANA (TATTVALOKA - JUNE 2015)

A spiritual life gives happiness to man in this as well as the other world. It consists of devotion to God, unshakable faith, prayer and satsanga. Those with a taste for vedantic inquiry go a step further.



Some of them begin to wonder whether all worldly activities are true or false. Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada explains that all activities appear true until one attains tattva jnana, just as dreams look real until one wakes up.

सर्वव्यवहाराणामेव प्राग्ब्रह्मात्मताविज्ञानात्  
सत्यत्वोपपत्तेः ।

स्वप्नव्यवहारस्येव प्राक्प्रबोधात्...

sarvavyavahārāṇāmeva  
prāgbrahmātmatāvijñānāt satyatvopapatteḥ  
।

svapnavyavahārasyeva prākprabodhāt...

Just as while dreaming one does not feel that all occurrences in the dream are not real but appear to be real, so also to one immersed in ajnana, this world and its happenings, living beings, all appear to be true, till the dawn of knowledge of Atman.

Just as, after waking up, a man sees not the scenes which were presented to him during dream, so too, subsequent to the dawn of right knowledge, he sees not the universe (as real, thereafter).

निद्रया दर्शितान् अर्थान् न पश्यति यथोत्थितः ।

सम्यग्ज्ञानोदयादूर्ध्वं तथा विश्वं न पश्यति ॥

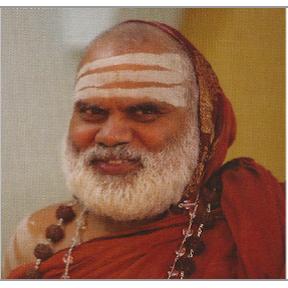
nidrayā darśitān arthān na paśyati  
yathoththitaḥ ।

samyagjñānodayādūrdhvaṃ tathā viśvaṃ  
na paśyati ॥

We bless all to attain Atma Jnana.

Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Mahāsannidhānam Śrī Śrī Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāswāmiji

We submit our efforts at the Lotus feet of Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Mahāsannidhānam Śrī Śrī Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāswāmiji and Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Sannidhānam Śrī Śrī Śrī Vidhuśekhara Bhāratī Mahāswāmiji



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71<sup>th</sup> Aradhana of 34<sup>th</sup> Peedathipathi of Śri Sringeri Sharada Peetham Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Śri Chandrashekara Bhārati Mahāswamigal (21<sup>st</sup> September 2025)

17<sup>th</sup> Oct 2025 133<sup>th</sup> Jayanthi Mahotsava of 34<sup>th</sup> Peedathipathi of Śri Sringeri Sharada Peetham Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Śri Chandrashekara Bhārati Mahāswamigal (1892-1954)

## MODERN EDUCATION

### 1. THE WRONG ATTITUDE



ONE evening a learned Pandit came to pay his respects to His Holiness. After some formal enquiries about his welfare,

**Acharyal** : "What is your elder son studying now?"

**Devotee** : He will be appearing for the School Final Examination at the end of the year.

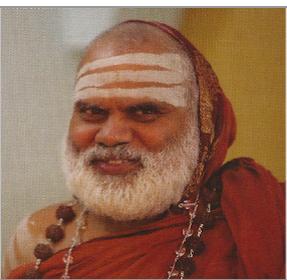
**Acharyal** : And after that?

**Devotee** : I have not yet decided. The authorities within recent years have increased the cost of education enormously and I find it very difficult to meet it out of my scanty earnings. I do not know how I can manage if he has to get higher education. The boy however is very intelligent and promising and his teachers assure me that he is bound to shine in life.

**Acharyal** : I suppose, by shining in life' you mean becoming rich.

**Devotee** : Not only that, I also include a status commanding respect and influence.

**Acharyal** : Anyhow, you mean only worldly prosperity?

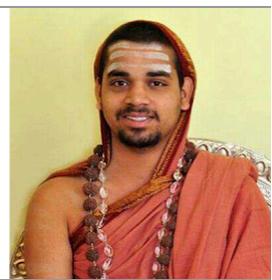


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**Devotee** : Of course. The education that is being imparted in the English schools is purely secular and I cannot expect any spiritual benefit from it.



**Acharyal** : I suppose, then, you have made other arrangements for training him in your own system of Dharma?

**Devotee** : Where is the time for it? The morning and the early night are spent by him in preparing his class lessons and in the evenings he must have some recreation, the rest of the day he has to attend the school.

**Acharyal** : That means, he has no time in which he can learn and practise some of our Dharmas.

**Devotee** : Practically none. But, I am glad that unlike other boys, he is continuing to perform his daily sandhya worship though somewhat perfunctorily.

**Acharyal** : I am equally glad about it. But, don't you think that you are seriously neglecting his spiritual education?

**Devotee** : I fear I am, but how can I help it in the present conditions of the country?

**Acharyal** : I take it that from your infancy you have been trained in the orthodox method and have been taught the Vedas and other sacred literature.

**Devotee** : Yes.

**Acharyal** : Do you really believe that such training and teaching have been beneficial to you?

**Devotee** : Certainly,

**Acharyal** : Are you then justified in denying to your son the kind of training and teaching which you really believe to be beneficial?

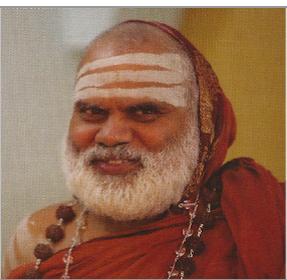
**Devotee** : I know I am not. But what can I do? It is impossible to get on in this world now without the modern education.

**Acharyal** : I hope you are getting on well enough without that education?

**Devotee** : Only so so.

**Acharyal** : How is that? You are certainly above want. You are held in high respect by everybody who comes into contact with you. What is there to complain about in your case?

**Devotee** : Not much, but we are characterised as 'old' Pandits and wherever we go we are looked down upon by the loukika gentlemen (officers, pleaders and the like) for want of the modern education which they have received.

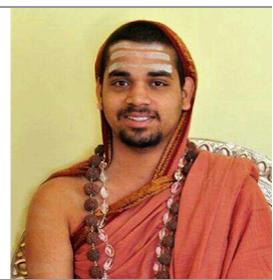


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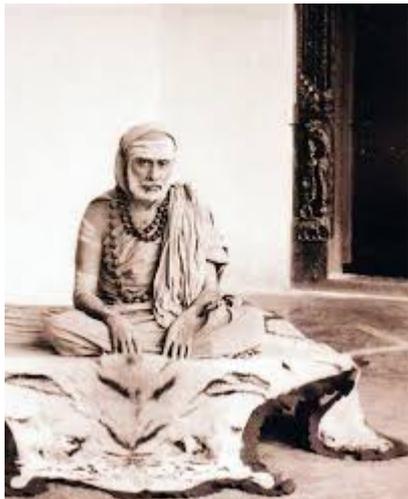
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**Acharyal :** Why don't you reciprocate by calling them 'modern' and looking down upon them for want of the orthodox education which you have got?



**Devotee :** How can we do that?

**Acharyal :** If you really believe that the training that you have undergone is superior to theirs, that alone must be your proper attitude. There is no reason at all, in any case, why you allow them to look down upon you.

**Devotee :** It is not a case of our allowing them or not. It is a fact that they do look down upon us.

**Acharyal :** If so, it must equally follow that you must look down upon them, whether they allow it or not. Do you really ever maintain that attitude?

**Devotee :** I can't say we do.

**Acharyal :** So far as I have been able to understand the trend of modern society, the Pandits not only passively allow themselves to be looked down upon by the modern gentlemen, but positively even look up to them.

**Devotee :** I fear that is a correct reading of the attitude of most of us.

**Acharyal :** Further, when you see a modern gentleman pass by you in a luxurious car while you are trudging along the road with a bundle of books or clothes under your arm, have you not felt very often envious of him?

**Devotee :** I must confess I have sometimes felt so.

**Acharyal :** Though you may not have framed it in so many words, you must have regretted that you were not given the benefit of modern education in your boyhood.

**Devotee :** Sometimes I have had that regret.

**Acharyal :** That regret must have been unconsciously coupled with another regret that your boyhood has been wasted in the pursuit of the worthless Vedic lore?

**Devotee :** I do not think my regret took that form, but I have felt that my education could have been on more modern lines.

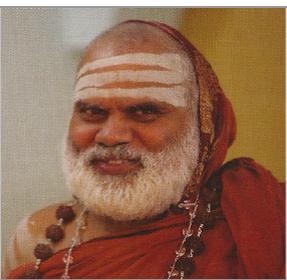
**Acharyal :** By 'more modern lines', you mean more useful lines.

**Devotee :** Yes.

**Acharyal :** That is, you felt that the Vedic training was useless or at least less useful than English education?

**Devotee :** I can't say that I felt so positively.

**Acharyal :** I quite see that; that is why I stated that you unconsciously felt it. In doing so, you must have impliedly thought ill of your parents for giving you this worthless education.

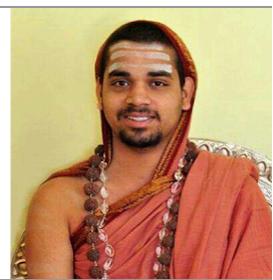


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Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati IV

**Devotee** : Impliedly, as Your Holiness puts it.

**Acharyal** : Thus, whenever you see a modern gentleman, you are sorry that you have not had his education, you are sorry that you had your education and you mentally think ill of your parents for denying you the former and giving you the latter and incidentally perhaps think ill of your teachers also?

**Devotee** : It is not always so, but at some moments my mind does admit of such an analysis.

**Acharyal** : If, in spite of the invaluable training you have got, you are sometimes led to look up to the loukikas, is it any fault of theirs that they accept your attitude at your own valuation and look down upon you? If you, who knows what Vedic culture is, can lower yourself so much as to think ill of your parents, is it any wonder that those who do not know what that culture is do

not appreciate it in you? Don't you think also, believing as you do in our Sastras, that the unmerited abuse of the Vedas and of your parents and teachers is a sin bound to land you in more sorrow? Why can't you pity the loukika for the waste of his boyhood in the pursuit of purely secular education? Why can't you abuse his parents for spoiling his spiritual interests by giving him a training divorced from Vedic culture? Why don't you make him feel that you really pity him? And, why don't you by your conduct make him look up to you ?

## 2. THE RATIONALE OF ACTIVITY

**Devotee** : True worth is not recognised in these days. Only wealth counts.

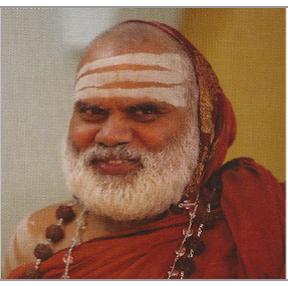
**Acharyal** : But with whom?

**Devotee** : With all

**Acharyal** : Certainly not. A thing has value only to the one who wants it. Wealth counts therefore only with those who want it. If you do not want it, you certainly do not care how wealthy another man is.

**Devotee** : But there is nobody in the world, I mean the world of practical life, who can do without wealth.

**Acharyal** : Quite so. But, it does not mean that you must attach more importance to money than it deserves. You seem to forget that money is only a means to happiness and is not happiness itself. You also seem to forget that the happiness to be had in a particular life is all preordained at the beginning of that life itself, that it is bound to come to us whether we exert ourselves to attain it or not, and that no amount of exertion on our part can hasten it or bring about a new kind of happiness. Have you not seen wealthy men in despair and beggars in exuberant joy? How then can you, who have some idea of our religion, believe for a moment that there is any causal relationship between wealth and happiness, much less that wealth is entitled to respect because it

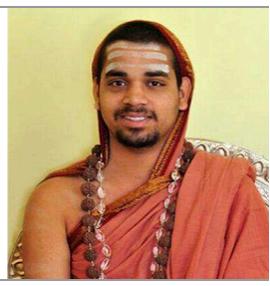


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leads to happiness? The right attitude therefore is to take money when it comes and to use it, and not to want money in the sense of anticipating or hankering after it. These matters apart, are you quite sure that by giving your son modern education you will certainly get him to amass wealth or attain the worldly status which is in your perspective?

**Devotee** : I hope he will, that is all I can say.

**Acharyal** : You are not a layman unaccustomed to right thinking. You must be able to tell me why a person endowed with reason engaged himself in a particular activity.

**Devotee** : It is kāma or desire for the result of that activity which impels him to action.

**Acharyal** : Does a person who desires to attain a particular object, engage himself indiscriminately in any activity that catches his fancy?

**Devotee** : No. He confines himself only to such activities as will yield him the desired result.

**Acharyal** : Or, to such activities which, he thinks, will yield him the desired result?

**Devotee** : Yes.

**Acharyal** : The prime condition of an activity is therefore a conception, which is true or which he assumes to be true, of the relationship between the activity and the desired result as cause and effect. In other words, there can be no activity unless there is an antecedent knowledge that that activity will lead to a particular result.

**Devotee** : Yes, that is so.

**Acharyal** : And, that knowledge is sufficient to make him act, irrespective of the fact that that knowledge may be right or may be mistaken.

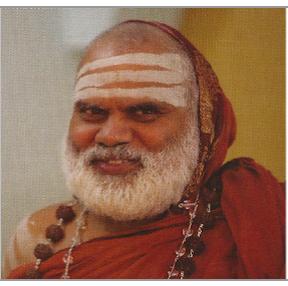
**Devotee** : It is not usual to include mistaken conceptions in knowledge.

**Acharyal** : By 'knowledge' here I mean only a mental perception. If it accords with actuality, it is right knowledge, if it does not, it is wrong knowledge. Knowledge, right or wrong, is enough to make us act. A boy sees a silver coin before him. Another boy is attracted by a glittering mother-of-pearl. Both stoop down to take what they see. That is my point now. Right knowledge is called prama and wrong knowledge is called bhrama. Will you now tell me how prama is caused?

**Devotee** : It is caused by pramānas, the means of right knowledge.

**Acharyal** : Quite so. Leaving aside technicalities, the pramānas are three in number. pratyaksha or direct sense-perception, anumana or inference, and sabda or authoritative word. Are they not?

**Devotee** : Yes

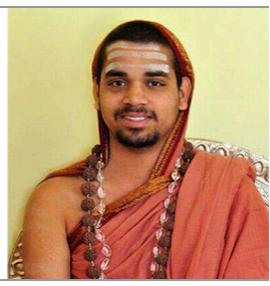


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**Acharyal** : Right knowledge of the relationship between two things, e.g. the causal relationship between modern education and wealth, can therefore be conveyed to us in any of these ways, pratyaksha, anumana and sabda.

**Devotee** : Certainly.

### 3. EDUCATION AND WEALTH



**Acharyal** : Now we shall see how that relationship is brought home to us. When the Englishmen came to our country and assumed the responsibility of governing us, they found it very difficult to carry on the administration without a knowledge of the vernaculars. Some of them therefore learnt the vernaculars. But the majority found it difficult. However, as they wanted to carry on trade and converse with the natives of the land, both in the interests of trade and in the interests of the Government, they hit upon the idea of educating the Indians in English so that the latter can talk to Englishmen in English and to their own people in the languages of the country. Such persons who mainly acted as interpreters were called dvibhāshis (two-languaged), corrupted into Dubashes'. The Englishmen, owing to their ignorance of the native tongues, had to rely mainly upon the Dubash for their transactions with the natives; similarly, the natives also had to rely upon the Dubash, as they were ignorant of the Englishman's tongue. Thus the Dubash commanded a position of great influence at the beginning of the British rule and grew rapidly rich because of his usefulness to both

the parties.

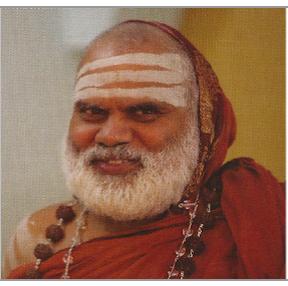
**Devotee** : No doubt so.

**Acharyal** : At that time perhaps it may be stated that the causal relationship between English education and wealth was perceived by direct perception or pratyaksha. We cannot say now that by any direct perception we become aware of any such relationship.

**Devotee** : Certainly not. There are at least half a dozen graduates in every village who do not see their way to employment, much less to wealth.

**Acharyal** : It is not only that. We find that the modern educated young men, whether they are able to earn a proper living or not, have undoubtedly learnt to be costly in their habits. They therefore not only find themselves without the means of livelihood, but are actually far worse off than those who have had our own education and have learnt to live simple and unostentatious lives.

**Devotee** : It is so.

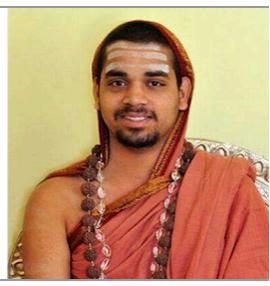


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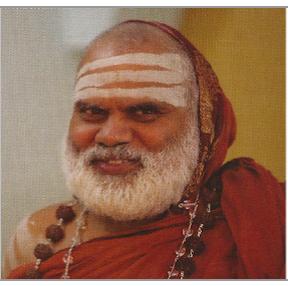


**Acharyal** : I mention this to point out to you that if pratyaksha now teaches anything, it not only negatives the causal relationship between modern education and wealth, but goes to the opposite length of showing that there is, on the other hand, a causal relationship between modern education and poverty.

**Devotee** : That is so. We see as a matter of fact a large number of well-to-do families getting impoverished day by day in the attempt to give their children modern education.



**Acharyal** : Now, the time favourable to the Dubash passed away with more and more of us going in for English education. Then came the stage of anumana or inference. So-and-so had English education and earned therewith two or three lakhs of rupees. Another so-and-so had English education and earned a lakh or two. We deduced therefrom a proposition: 'My son also is having English education and therefore shall become rich'. But this deduction cannot be correct as it ignores the several instances of failures. The 'shall become rich' therefore really means only 'may become rich'. But, in course of time, we realise that in actual life there are only very few who are in the highest rungs of worldly status and that the majority of those who have had English education

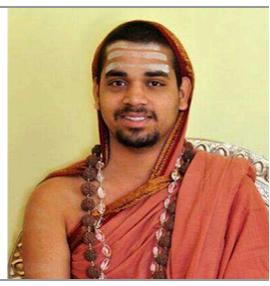


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are no better off, if not really worse off, than before. The exceptions to the rule turn out to be so numerous that we begin to doubt the validity of the rule and to even think that the exception is really the rule. At present, we cannot say that anumana guides us to a knowledge of the relationship between modern education and wealth. There is only one other source of knowledge and that is sabda, the authoritative word. The Eternal Word (the Vedas) does not teach us any

such relationship. We have therefore to confine ourselves to loukika sabda or the secular word. Sometime back, it took the form of circulars and notifications by Government and other bodies that young men having such and such qualifications will be given such and such posts on such and such a pay. But as there is no guarantee for such secular words, it is not incumbent on such bodies to give us employment. They may quite well say and have said often, 'No doubt, we put up such notifications, but we are not prepared now to act up on them. If necessary, we may even withdraw them.' Even this attitude has since changed and I hear that there are positive notifications the other way, e.g. that persons, though possessed of high qualifications, will not be given employment if they happen to be Brahmanās. It would seem, therefore, that the sabda now not only does not bear out any relationship between English education and wealth, but positively denies that relationship, at least as regards the Brahmanās.



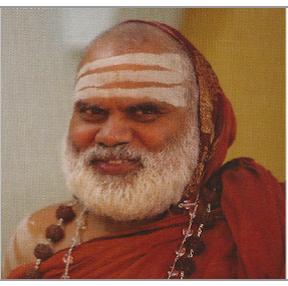
**Devotee** : Disqualifying us from employment simply because we happen to be Brāhmanās is most unjust.

Efficiency alone ought to be the test of a candidate.

**Acharyal** : Our young men are prepared to wipe out their Brahmanāhood and we must really be very thankful to the Government for reminding them that it is in their blood and cannot be wiped out, however much they may try to look outwardly as unlike a Brahmanā as one can and however much they may neglect their own Dharma as Brāhmanās. It is to be hoped that at least now our young men will see the folly of giving up their own Dharma in the vain hope of getting some vague worldly status. Now, you will agree with me that none of the pramānās: pratyakshas or śabda, establish any causal relationship between modern education and wealth. That relationship is not therefore brought home to us by pramā or right knowledge. Still we act as if there were such a 'relationship' for we continue to send our children to the English schools. Why do we do so?

**Devotee** : I see that Your Holiness is driving me to the only alternative conclusion that we are doing so because of bhrama, a mistaken conception of the existence of such a relationship.

**Acharyal** : But a mistake can never exist simultaneously with a right knowledge of the opposite kind. A boy cannot mistake a mother-of-pearl for silver when he knows that it is mother-of-pearl.

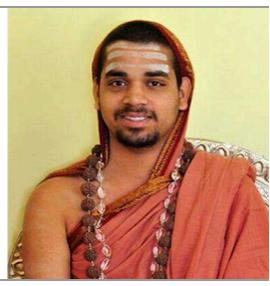


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That is, when pramā or right knowledge is present, there can be no room for bhrama or mistaken conception.



**Devotee** : Quite true. How does that apply to the present question?

**Acharyal** : I have pointed out to you that if the three pramānās: pratyaksha, anumāna and śabda, convey to us any knowledge at present, they are unanimous in negating the causal relationship between modern education and wealth. If pramā therefore tells us that there is no such causal relationship, how can any bhrama, to the contrary, exist at the same time? The bhrama which may have existed sometime back has now been entirely dispelled.

**Devotee** : If then neither pramā nor bhrama is responsible for our action, why do we act at all as if that relationship exists?

**Acharyal** : That is for you to explain. I started with saying that nobody endowed with reason will engage himself in any activity unless he had a knowledge, right or wrong, that it will lead to a particular result.

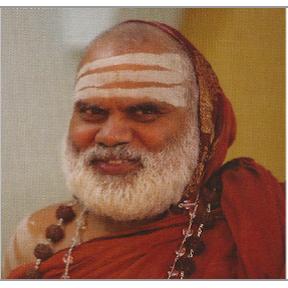
**Devotee** : Evidently, Your Holiness means that we do not reason out the matter or stop to consider the pros and cons before we engage ourselves in any activity.

**Acharyal** : Certainly. By our carelessness we forfeit our birthright as man, the thinker, and allow things to drift for themselves. It is this

sheep-like attitude that is responsible for most of the modern ills which affect us, especially the Brāhmanās.

**Devotee** : May I know what Your Holiness will advise me to do at present?

**Acharyal** : My advice is of no use unless there is any likelihood of its being followed. For your boy who is young and not yet put to school, I would advise you to keep him with you and give him the education and training which our forefathers had highly valued; you may at the same time set apart for him every month what money you will have to spend and are prepared to spend on him for giving him the English education. You will find that at the end of such a course, your son has been brought up as a true Brāhmanā and that you have at the same time placed him above want. As regards the elder boy who has been studying in English school, make him realise that that education is at best only a means of livelihood and that there are higher objects in life than mere

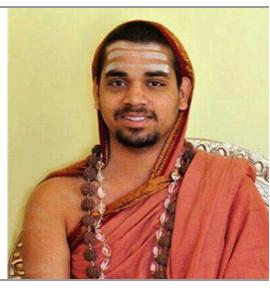


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living and that he must turn to our religion for securing such objects. He must not ignore his spiritual welfare, in the interests of mere living. Ask him to keep himself in touch with our traditional lore and observances, at least when he is at home. That is the least you can do for him.

**Devotee :** I am very grateful to Your Holiness for this advice and I shall try to follow it to the best of my ability.

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Telegram Channel : <https://t.me/voiceofjagadguru>

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