

Unveiling Societal Rot: Acharya Prashant's Take on Kolkata Doctor's Murder and the Philosophy of Pleasure

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The brutal murder of a young female doctor in Kolkata has not only sent shockwaves across the nation but also exposed a grim reality about our societal values and norms. The horrifying incident at RG Kar Government Hospital on August 9, 2024, reveals unsettling truths about how deeply ingrained ideologies can contribute to violence and systemic failures.

A Broader Societal Issue

Preliminary autopsy reports confirm that the young doctor was sexually assaulted before her tragic death. The arrest of a Kolkata Police civic volunteer on August 10 has intensified scrutiny and highlighted the urgent need for a deeper examination of the systemic issues that allowed such a crime to occur. This tragedy underscores a systemic issue that extends beyond isolated incidents. The emergence of similar cases in the aftermath highlights a pervasive societal crisis demanding immediate and comprehensive reform. Public outrage has been palpable, with widespread demonstrations calling for stronger protections for healthcare workers and the declaration of hospitals as safe zones.

Medical professionals across the country have protested, demanding urgent changes. On August 13, the Calcutta High Court transferred the investigation to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, took suo motu cognizance of the case on August 18, 2024. The hearing took place on August 20, 2024, marking a crucial step in ensuring justice and addressing systemic failures.

Acharya Prashant's Insights

Acharya Prashant, an IIT-IIM alumnus, former civil servant, Vedanta teacher, and advocate for women's empowerment, provides a profound critique of the societal factors underlying this tragedy. He emphasizes that no crime occurs in isolation; rather, societal structures play a crucial role in creating environments where such violence can manifest. This tragic incident highlights deeper systemic failures within our society.

Acharya Prashant argues that a deeply ingrained societal obsession with pleasure significantly contributes to the perpetuation of violent crimes. He asserts that societal values are fundamentally rooted in the relentless pursuit of pleasure, with both sexes, particularly men, viewing the female body as a primary source of enjoyment. This ideology, instilled from a young age, promotes the notion that life's ultimate goal is to maximize personal pleasure. Consequently, when pleasure is unattainable through conventional means such as marriage, some individuals may resort to violence as an alternative. This perspective underscores how pervasive cultural attitudes toward pleasure can foster an environment where violence becomes a distressing response for those who feel deprived.

Acharya Prashant further explores this issue through the concept of "incels" or involuntary celibates—individuals who blame women for their lack of sexual fulfillment and feel entitled to sexual pleasure. He argues that this sense of entitlement, fueled by the belief that personal pleasure is life's ultimate goal, can lead to extreme actions, including violent acts when such pleasure is denied.

Philosophy of Consumption

Acharya Prashant delves into the economic and social ramifications of a pleasure-driven mindset, arguing that the pursuit of consumption is a fundamental thread connecting various societal behaviors. Whether achieved through lawful means or illegal activities, the drive towards consumption influences both the honest worker and the thief.

The honest worker labors to earn and enjoy the fruits of their labor, while the thief resorts to plunder to satisfy the same end. Acharya Prashant prompts us to question, "Is there a significant difference?" If both the honest man and the thief are ultimately motivated by the desire to consume, their underlying drives are strikingly similar.



Drawing from the Bhagavad Gita, Acharya Prashant highlights that if both types of individuals are pursuing consumption, their actions reflect similar central motivations. He stresses that while he is not equating everyone with rapists or murderers, the pervasive philosophy of consumption—whether pursued legally or illegally—dominates societal behavior.

Moreover, Acharya Prashant draws a troubling parallel between societal attitudes towards pleasure and the ongoing environmental degradation. He suggests that the same disregard for ethical considerations driving violent crimes also contributes to the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. This observation underscores how deeply entrenched the consumption-driven mindset is, affecting both human behavior and environmental sustainability.

A Call for Change

The tragic case in Kolkata underscores the urgent need to confront and reassess the philosophical and cultural norms that perpetuate sexual violence. Despite previous incidents of similar gravity, such as the Nirbhaya case, societal responses and preventive measures have seen little substantial change. Acharya Prashant argues that combating violence requires more than just punitive measures; it demands a fundamental shift in societal philosophy. He advocates for a reevaluation of our cultural values to better understand who we are and what philosophy we follow. The prevailing focus on consumption for pleasure needs to be critically reassessed.

Acharya Prashant’s call for a profound examination of our values offers a potential path forward. By addressing the underlying ideology of pleasure and consumption, we can work towards a society where ethical understanding and respect for human dignity take precedence over unchecked desires. This perspective provides a crucial lens for understanding and addressing these pervasive societal issues, urging us to rethink our values and strive for a society guided by empathy and genuine respect rather than unrestrained pleasure.



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