Acharya Prashant Links
Violence In Society



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LONDON-Philosopher and author Acharya Prashant, in a dialog with PETA Foundation President Mimi Bekhechi here, said violence against animals reflects a broader culture of violence, arguing that “one who is violent towards animals will be violent towards all.”

The fireside conversation, held before a packed audience on July 2, explored the philosophical foundations of animal consciousness, veganism and non-violence. Acharya Prashant said compassion is not a virtue to be taught but the natural state of human beings, adding that the real question is who teaches violence.

This was Acharya Prashant’s fourth dialogue with PETA’s senior leadership. PETA honored him with its Most Influential Vegan of the Year award in 2022.

Opening the discussion, Bekhechi, President of the PETA Foundation, praised Acharya Prashant’s book ‘Is She Just Food to You’, saying it addresses the central challenge of the animal rights movement by encouraging people to see animals not as objects of consumption but as thinking, feeling beings.

Acharya Prashant said a small child, on seeing a rabbit or a lamb, wants to play with it, not kill it. He asked, “Does the human being have to be taught compassion, or does he have to be freed of the violence he has been taught? Then one must see who spoiled the child, who planted in the child’s mind that a living being is food.”

He cautioned that conditioning children to be violent towards animals creates a violent society. “Now you don’t have a child violent towards a rabbit or a goat. Now you have a violent child. We are raising a violent society,” he said.

Explaining the title of his book, he said the violence inflicted on animals and women stems from the same mindset, adding, “The exploited could be anyone, a forest, a river, a woman, or a cow, but the exploiter remains the same: the conditioned human ego.”

Responding to audience questions, he stressed individual responsibility, saying every gram of meat leaving a slaughterhouse is ultimately consumed by an individual. While legislation and policy are important, he said lasting change must begin with individual choices.

On viral videos of animal cruelty circulating on social media, he said, “Violence is never taught as violence. Violence is taught as tradition, as ambition, as responsibility, even as love. If violence were taught as violence, it would never succeed.” (IANS)

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