

# War and woman: A mirror to mankind's inner jungle

Acharya Prashant |  The Sunday Guardian | Published: May 18, 2025



War exposes primal male instincts. Women become symbolic targets. Culture masks brutality. True evolution demands awareness, not just intellect or rituals.

Recently, amid the hysteria usually associated with wars, the daughter of an Indian diplomat became the object of collective vulgarity — not in a war zone, but in public discourse.

The said woman was cyberbullied; her personal details circulated on social media, accompanied by disparaging remarks. Why? Because her father was the one who, on behalf of the government, announced a ceasefire — something that utterly displeased some zealots. The incident compels us to look deeper, not merely at geopolitics, but at ourselves. These events are not isolated anomalies; they reflect a deeper, longstanding pattern.

The connection between war, women, and violence is neither new nor

coincidental. Why is it that women so often bear the ultimate cost of wars started by men? This question doesn't just ask for a reaction—it calls for honest introspection.

## **War — About Possession, Not Ideology**

The modern man, as smart and technologically savvy as he is, remains internally a creature of the jungle. His cerebrum has evolved, but not his consciousness. Just like a wolf that wears a suit or a jackal that tweets, the fundamental instincts remain unchanged. He seeks territory much like an animal marking its turf. He lies, manipulates, and deceives—with the sophistication of a polished ape.

It is not surprising because in the six-seven million years long process of evolution of the homo sapiens, it's been only around ten thousand recent years since we emerged from the jungle – meaning thereby that for more than 99.8% period of our existence as a species, we have been inhabitants of the jungle. The tendencies of the jungle are too deep rooted in our bodies to be quickly civilised or refined. It is this same animalistic urge that drives man to conquer territory, dominate resources, and display power also compels him to claim woman as war trophy.

These are diverse manifestations of the same dark center. That is why history sees hundreds of battles where women have not been mere collateral casualties in war; rather they have been deliberate targets. Whether in the Mahabharata, or the atrocities committed during the Nanking massacre, or the tragic violence of the Partition of India, or more recently during the Bangladesh Liberation War and countless modern conflicts, women have been seen as lucrative spoils, often the ultimate symbol of conquest.

Since thousands of years, warring soldiers are not only incentivised with territory or loot—they are enticed with the prospect of having women. Even mythology testifies to this primal impulse. In the Durga Saptashati, the demons Shumbh-Nishumbh already possess wealth and power, yet they must still possess the goddess, as if riches without the woman remain incomplete. The woman is not sought out of love, but to prove supremacy. However, at least in scripture if not in history, this urge to plunder the woman destroys the demons.

## **War Doesn't Change Man — It Reveals His Animal**

Wars can appear to be about national pride, territory, or ideology. But beneath all the appearance is a primal, unconscious, animalistic drive—the urge to dominate and own. A woman has rarely held the sword in wars, yet has often been the target at the center of war's violence. When a man is to be hurt, his woman is attacked. She is seen not as an equal, but as a vulnerable extension and symbol of his pride. In the Pahalgam attack, men were killed deliberately

while the women were left behind. It was not mercy but a brutal message.

The women were not considered by the terrorists as human beings with their own identity, but as helpless parts of the men they were with. Similarly, on social media, trolls adopt the same tactic by targeting women associated with their intended victims, like the diplomat's daughter. This is not random hate but a calculated attempt to wound the man through the woman linked to him. In both cases, women are not seen as individuals but as symbols of a man's honor or identity.

This is not merely misogyny; it is a stark revelation of the male psyche, where the woman is seen as the final object to be claimed and consumed. Even Arjun in the Bhagavad Gita worries about the corruption of women after the war. His concern is not for their well-being but for preserving caste and lineage. The control of a woman's body has long been disguised as morality, tradition, or protection. But it has always been about possession.

It is systemic, culturally sustained, and socially ignored. War does not make men beasts — it unmasks the beast already within.

## **Civilized Culture or Camouflage?**

This obsession with control doesn't only reveal itself in times of war—it quietly thrives beneath our everyday rituals. We often glorify our customs—marriages, festivals, national ceremonies—as markers of culture. But beneath the surface, much of it turns out to be a deep-seated tendency, merely wrapped in cultural formality.

When a gathering becomes about indulgence and intoxication, is it not a feast of instinct dressed in ritual? At other gatherings, a whole animal is laid out and consumed as part of the celebration. One might pause to reflect—beneath the ceremony and etiquette, is this truly that different from how wild animals in nature devour a carcass? We call it tradition and are so proud of it. But changing its name does not change the essence. When war erupts, the masks fall.

The same urges—territory, dominance, lust—explode in full sight. From the marauding armies of Genghis Khan to the Bengal genocide in 1971, from religious conquests to modern political bullying, women have always been collateral damage—and often, the central target.

## **Why We Feel Disappointed**

The real shock is not in the violent vulgarity. Rather, it is surprising that we feel surprised when the inner animal bares its fangs. We pretend as if most of our action comes from a conscious point.

Disappointment, hence, arises not from people's violent actions but from our expectations that people are designed to act sober. Are we disturbed when a python coils around its prey? No, because the python was never expected to be virtuous. But when a man does the same thing, we feel betrayed, because we had assumed goodness in him. We hope those around us are kind and aware, but that hope often springs from our longing for safety, our need to belong, or our desire to be loved. Yet, unless awakened, people act not from awareness but from habit and conditioning. Pain begins when we seek light where there is still a shadow. Clarity begins with honesty. Recognize the jungle within and around. See it clearly.

If you cling to familiar expectations, you will miss the Krishnas and the Buddhas—searching for them in familiar faces, familiar words. Truth rarely comes in familiar clothing. It unsettles, it challenges, and it asks for your transformation.

## **Intellect Without Awareness Is Still the Jungle**

Mankind proudly claims to be civilized. We build, code, discover and invent—but does this prove we are conscious beings? Awareness and intellect are not the same; intellect is just an evolutionary tool, like fangs or claws.

One can be brilliantly intellectual and still justify war, rape, nationalism, and hate. Many such brilliant minds have utilized their intellect to further and eulogise destruction. Man remains a dangerous predator with intellect but without consciousness—smarter than his ancestors, but no wiser. Consciousness is rare—like a meteor flashing through the night. In Buddhas, in Krishnas, we catch a glimpse. But society is not built around consciousness; it is built around desire, deception, and domination. And yet, amid this darkness, there exists a possibility of light.

## **India's Greatness Lies in Consciousness, Not Conquest**

I take the Indian nation as a people that dared to go beyond animalistic intellect. India's dignity never came from conquest, but from its rare devotion to ineffable truth beyond mentation—pointed to in its philosophies and scriptures, and reverberated in its modern constitution. If that commitment is lost, so is all greatness. Greatness is not inherited; it is earned each successive generation. It must be chosen, nurtured, and lived—moment to moment, through clarity and courage.

The real war is never really between nations or ideologies, but firstly within the human being. Sharp Intellect with blunt consciousness becomes a more potent weapon in the hands of unconscious tendencies. If India is to retain dignity, it must rise above primal instincts. If it seeks pride, it must choose awareness.

That is the only revolution worth having. Until the beast at the core of our being is sublimated, every institution — family, nation, religion — remains a theatre for unconsciousness. Only in sublimating the beast within can a society become truly sacred.

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