



Dear youth, how about a real revolution?



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You have been wronged. A leaked paper is theft of your years. This time the theft has taken young lives. No honest voice can speak of these weeks without first bowing to the dead. Let that be said first, because it is true.

And let a second thing be said just as plainly, so that nobody twists this article later. I am not against protesting on the streets. A day may come when I myself say: now march. This article has only one condition, and it is the condition every examination hall enforces: first prove you are fit to sit the paper. What follows is not a prohibition; it is a fitness test. The fitness demanded here is not perfection; it is direction.

The state stands indicted. An administration under which question papers travel faster than justice has failed its first duty. The syndicates that sell children's futures for cash deserve the harshest prosecution the law can build. Nothing that follows dilutes that verdict by one drop. In every act of injustice there are two things, not one. First, the action; second, your understanding of the action and response to it. You are examining the minister with full ruthlessness. Now extend the same examination to the examiner. If the test is fair, why should anyone be exempt? Including you.

The paper leaked, somebody sold it, and somebody also bought it. Show me one buyer of the paper in the march. Ask yourself: the students whom the next leak reaches in time, will they be marching or memorising the leaked paper? Is it not the ego's oldest trick to shout about the action so that the actor is never discussed? Man acts from a corrupt centre, and no rearrangement of actions has ever cleaned a centre. Correction is the cleaning of the centre of the old one. Not that you leave the street, but that you clean the one who walks on it.

Look at what your placards demand. A fair examination, an accountable minister; in other words, a cleaner race. Not one placard in the whole capital asks the prior question: is this race so important that a young person takes his life for it? In 2022, this country recorded 13,999 student suicides. No paper had leaked in that year, and the children still died anyway. So the leak did not build the machine that equates a rank with a life.

A whole civilisation has told its seventeen-year-olds that their self-worth is tied to their scorecards. When the result collapses, the young person concludes that he has collapsed. That conclusion is the real killer. A movement that wins a resignation but leaves this machine untouched is preparing the next round of casualties.

A monkey entered the house and wrecked the room. Now the mother returns. Whom does she slap? The monkey, or the child who left the door open? I am only asking why one of them has ten million investigators and the other has none. Who opened the door? The people you now want to drag from their chairs were carried to those chairs by you. What exactly were you doing in the polling booth?

Outer revolution must follow inner revolution, or it is only an outing. Has your family's extra income, legally called black money, not been quietly set aside for your sister's dowry? On the morning of the great march: "Mummy, extra parathas today, I am off to do revolution." Whose money bought the flour, beta? Here is a qualifying exam for revolutionaries. Announce at home: I refuse the corrupt rupee. This exam does not cancel your march; it qualifies you for it. A revolution that reaches the road but never reaches the dining table has not begun. It begins as one unbearable question: why am I the way I am?

Half a century ago, this country saw its largest student uprising, against corruption itself. Its young heroes then ruled states for decades. The record of that rule includes the very corruption convictions their movement was born to prevent. Fifteen years ago, another anti-corruption wave electrified the nation. Its crusader became a governing politician and collected corruption cases of his own. The chair did not corrupt the pure. The chair only handed a bigger stage to an ego nobody had ever questioned. Rotate the patients as often as you like; the disease holds the ward. They do not prove that marching is useless; they prove that unfit marchers are useless. And nothing changed, because the winners were the same unexamined egos as the losers. The failure was never in the feet; it was in the centre the feet carried. That is why fitness comes first. Not instead of the march, but before it. Suppose you win, and the minister resigns. The ego does not weep because it was hurt. It weeps because it has not yet been paid for the hurt. The resignation is the payment. And a compensated victim never again faces the mirror. Prosecute the guilty. A scalp is a trophy, and trophies educate nobody. Krishna stood on a battlefield, not in a hermitage. He took one warrior, and he refused to let him shoot a single arrow until that warrior had self-knowledge. He refused to let him fire, and he equally refused to let him flee. He purified the fighter, and then he said: Now Fight! The bar is honesty, and honesty does not take years at all. I have a problem with blindness on the street. Educate yourself in the self: one hour a day with a text that questions the questioner, before the phone is touched. Then educate the voter beside you.

Then vote, then organise, then contest, and then march. The march of the awakened is not merely permitted; it is awaited. The word revolution means a complete turning. So turn, but turn fully: towards yourself. There is no revolution without love. Not slogan-love, but love as the ego's own decision to turn upon itself and dissolve. Rage rearranges the world and leaves the actor intact. Love alone changes the actor.

Dear youth, you want revolution, and you are right to want it. First the mirror, then the march. The real revolution is not housed in any ministry or maidan. It first lives in you. Then come out, and I will be marching in your middle.



Acharya Prashant is a philosopher and author whose work centres on self-inquiry and its application to contemporary life