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## A Defective Species: Outrage Won't Help, Acknowledgement Would

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By Acharya Prashant



Every few years, a similar pattern keeps repeating. A set of names tumbles into public view, and the world performs its ritual of shock. Court records are unsealed, testimonies surface, networks are exposed, photographs emerge, and for a few weeks, it seems as though something that nobody knew has been shockingly revealed. Media commentators express disbelief, the public gasps, soc , and there are demonstrations on the streets.

And then, quietly, the cycle completes itself: the names are absorbed into the archives, the outrage fades, and many of those condemned reappear on public stages within months, sometimes even welcomed back with applause. Harvey Weinstein's conviction was partially overturned on procedural grounds; the system that punishes also provides the escape routes.

The Epstein files are only the latest instance. The names may be new, but the pattern is ancient: powerful and rich men caught using their power and money for exploitation and gratification. What distinguished this case was not just individual predation but institutional complicity: JPMorgan Chase settled for \$290 million over its relationship with Epstein, Deutsche Bank for \$75 million, and MIT's Media Lab accepted his funding knowingly. The defect does not merely operate through individuals; it operates through the structures that enable, protect, and profit from them. We have seen this before, in every century, under every political system, in every religion, and on every continent. The details change; the principle does not.

Yet each time, we react as though something unprecedented has occurred. Each time, the shock seems genuine. Each time, the public treats the revelation as a rupture rather than a confirmation.

Why? Why does something so predictable keep surprising us?

Is it because the alternative is unbearable? If these are not exceptions but expressions of something fundamental in the species itself, then the problem is not confined to a few powerful predators. It is everywhere, including in the one who is reading this and feeling safely distant from it.

That is the inquiry this article undertakes. Not the scandal itself, but what it tells us about who we are. What follows is not comforting. It is not meant to be. Comfort is precisely how the defect survives.

## The Defect

Every other species on this planet runs on prakriti, on nature. Two snakes in the same field will behave almost identically; their instincts are calibrated by millions of years of ecological feedback, and those instincts include a natural ceiling. A predator kills when hungry and stops when full. Predators may occasionally kill more than they can eat, but no animal has ever built a civilisation of accumulation.

Humans, too, run on prakriti, but they have developed a peculiar centre that no other species possesses: ego, the sense of "I" that identifies first with the body, then with everything the body accumulates, and then demands that the world arrange itself around those accumulations. The critical difference is that this centre has no natural governor. Instinct tells the leopard when to stop. Nothing tells the ego when to stop. It does not know when to stop eating, acquiring, expanding, or consuming. It recognises no limit because it is, at its core, a feeling of incompleteness, a hunger that no amount of feeding can satisfy. The ego does not accumulate because it has large appetites; it accumulates because it is fundamentally hollow. The same oversized cerebral cortex that gave us language, tools, and civilisation also produced an operating system whose intelligence is sophisticated enough to override every natural governor. And the smarter the ego becomes, the more sophisticated its cruelty; intelligence without self-knowledge does not moderate the defect, it arms it.

This is what I call a manufacturing defect. Not that nature made an error, but that a mechanism which was meant to aid survival becomes disastrous when it operates without self-awareness. It is congenital, present at birth, and it is universal. This is not a condemnation; it is a diagnosis. East and West, rich and poor, literate and illiterate, the defect operates identically. A Wall Street financier and a village moneylender are running the same inner programme on different hardware. A Delhi politician and a Washington senator share the same relationship to power: it exists to serve the centre, and the centre exists to consume. The customs differ, the languages differ, the suits differ; the animality beneath is one.

And here is what must be said plainly, even though it will not be welcome: this defect is not restricted to the powerful. It operates in all of us. The common man who has never committed a serious crime is not necessarily a decent human being; he may simply be a constrained one, whose apparent decency owes less to inner clarity than to the absence of means and the presence of fear. Remove those constraints, hand that man enough money or power to be untouchable and enough secrecy to be invisible, and what emerges is not a new person. It is the old person, finally unmasked. Remove the fear of consequences, and you do not reveal a monster; you reveal what fear was keeping in check. That is why morality built on surveillance collapses the moment surveillance ends, and why anonymity, whether online or on a private island, produces the same results.

The common saying that 'power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely' has been repeated so often that it has acquired the status of wisdom. It is not wisdom; it is the ego's favourite alibi. It allows one to h

horn decent and are later ruined

by circumstance. They are not. The corruption was already present; power merely provides the room for it to unfold.

This is why the outrage that follows every scandal is so hollow and so temporary. The man typing furious denunciations on social media would, in many cases, accept a job at that same predator's company if offered a ten per cent raise. And he would find his reasons without difficulty: the company does important work, one cannot judge an entire organisation by its founder, everyone deserves a second chance, and besides, employment is scarce. The moral vocabulary would shift from condemnation to accommodation without the man even noticing the shift in himself. That is the defect at work, not in someone else but in him. And the very platform on which he types his outrage is engineered to exploit the identical centre: craving, stimulation, the dopamine of moral performance. The algorithm does not care whether you are consuming entertainment or consuming outrage; to the attention economy, both are the same fuel. The defect has been monetised, and the outraged user is its most profitable product.

Jeffrey Epstein apparently believed his DNA was so exceptional that he planned to bring hundreds of women to his private estate and impregnate them, creating what he imagined would be a superior race. He saw himself not as a predator but as a benefactor of the species. The grandiosity is staggering, but the principle is ordinary: the ego, when unchecked, does not merely consume; it genuinely believes its consumption is a gift to the world.

And this is not confined to one man on one island. Celebrated public figures today father a dozen children and declare it a service to humanity, as though their genetic material were a philanthropic donation. The vocabulary is updated; the delusion has not moved an inch.

## The Violence We Call Normal

The defect does not express itself only in what we call crime. It expresses itself in what we call breakfast, too. It expresses itself in what we call national security. It expresses itself in what we call economic growth. Wherever the principle "I am stronger, therefore I take" operates, the defect is at work, whether it wears a uniform, a suit, or an apron.

More than 80 billion land animals are slaughtered for food every year worldwide. The number is so large that for most, it probably no longer even registers as suffering; it becomes a statistic, and statistics do not disturb sleep. Fish are kept barely alive in shallow trays at the market, mouths opening and closing in desperate gasps, kept breathing only so the customer can be told the product is fresh. Tens of thousands of chickens transported through the

streets at dawn, tied by their feet to bicycles, twenty on each side, alive and dangling, and nobody on the road pauses because this is simply how mornings work.

The principle in every case is the same one that operated on the billionaire's island: whatever is weaker, whatever cannot resist, whatever cannot retaliate, is consumed. We recoil when the victim is a child; we do not recoil when the victim has feathers, or scales, or fur. But the inner centre that produces both cruelties is identical.

This is the point where comparison becomes unbearable. So the mind looks for escape clauses.

You may find this comparison extreme. You may say that eating a chicken and abusing a child cannot belong in the same sentence. But ask yourself honestly: what is the operating principle in both cases? It is this: I am stronger, therefore I consume. The International Labour Organization estimates that 3.3 million children worldwide are trapped in forced labour, more than half of them in commercial sexual exploitation. This is not just an island, it is a planetary system. And the overwhelming majority of abuse, sexual or otherwise, is committed not by strangers but by someone the child knows and trusts: a parent, a relative, a teacher, a priest. The horror is not exotic; it is domestic.

India's census, whenever it next arrives, will reveal skewed sex ratios so stark that they point to tens of millions of missing girls, eliminated over decades through a machinery of sex-selective abortion enabled by the ultrasound industry, reinforced by inheritance norms, and sanctioned by social pressure. They were not taken by foreign predators. They were eliminated by their own families: by fathers who wanted sons, by mothers who complied, by grandparents who approved, by doctors who performed the procedures. There are documented cases of newborn girls killed in ways too brutal to print, including salt stuffed in their mouths. Aborted female fetuses discarded behind small-town hospitals, eaten by stray dogs.

The child cannot fight back; the chicken cannot fight back; the foetus cannot fight back. The same darkness in the species that permits one permits the other. The difference is not in the principle; it is in which victims we have collectively agreed to look away from.

This is not the work of a criminal network on some faraway island. This is the defect operating across millions of ordinary homes with the full participation of ordinary people. And the same society that produces this will display outrage at foreign scandals, as though cruelty were an imported product.

If one truly follows any of these threads to their root, something terrifying becomes clear: every system currently running on this planet would need to be fundamentally re-rooted. Economic, political, educational, familial, and religious. Every single one. Not because these systems are badly designed but because they are designed by the defective species and therefore encode the defect. They do not exist to correct the ego; they exist to serve it. Epstein's 2008 plea deal in Florida, brokered by a man who was later appointed US Labour Secretary, is one of the starkest illustrations: a man facing charges that would have imprisoned an ordinary person for decades received thirteen months of county jail with daily work release. The law did not fail; the law did exactly what the defect required of it.

A child spends fifteen to twenty years in formal schooling and is taught about the world in extraordinary detail, but at no point in those years is she asked to examine the one who is learning. "Who am I? Where do my beliefs come from? Why do I fear what I fear? What is this centre that demands constant feeding?" These questions are absent from every curriculum on Earth, not because they are impractical but because the defect ensures its own protection.

Family teaches the child to accumulate identity: name, caste, religion, ambition, the prescribed fears and the prescribed aspirations. Mainstream religion teaches the child to believe and belong, but never to inquire into the one who believes. Media teaches aspiration: imitate the successful, worship the powerful, desire what they display.

If self-knowledge were made central to education, the defect would begin to dissolve within a generation. But every vested interest on Earth depends on the defect remaining intact. That is why nobody in a position of institutional power will ever pursue this question to its end: the end would mean the dissolution of the very structures from which they derive their power.

And yet, there is one force the defect has never been able to domesticate: Love.

Not the word as it is commonly used, which is mostly attachment and possessiveness dressed in tender vocabulary, but love as the movement toward truth, the willingness to dissolve the boundaries the ego has constructed.

Love shows itself most clearly not in passion, but in the refusal to use another being as a means.

The defect tolerates lust without difficulty; lust is ancient and normalised, and the ego is comfortable with it because lust feeds the centre rather than threatening it. But love, in the deeper sense, requires the diss  
no spends its life defending.

A person who genuinely loves truth will not obey without inquiry. A person who genuinely loves another will not treat that person as property. This is intolerable to the defective centre, so the ego performs its most characteristic inversion: it labels its own lust as love, to dignify it, and labels genuine love as a threat, to destroy it.

The honour killing is the ego's most honest moment: it cannot bear love, so it kills, and then calls the killing 'honour'.

## The Cure and Its Refusal

Here is what makes the situation tragic rather than merely grim: the defect can be repaired. Not "repaired" in the sense of a machine fixed once and set aside, but in the sense of an honest seeing that must be lived daily, because the body persists and the ego keeps attempting its old tricks. The ego is biological, a prakritic phenomenon, not some kind of moral evil, but its suffering is not inevitable. It becomes monstrous only when it operates in the dark, unobserved.

Unlike every other species, human beings possess the capacity to observe themselves, to watch the ego in operation, to see its mechanisms of fear, desire, and aggression as they arise. This is what the rare honest ones in every tradition have always pointed toward. The Upanishads called it atma-gyaan, self-knowledge. The Buddha asked only that you see clearly, without the comfort of belief. Kabir Saheb called it waking up.

The direction is the same: turn the light inward, see the defect in operation, and in that clear seeing, the defect begins to lose its grip.

When one genuinely sees a compulsion for what it is, the compulsion weakens. When one sees that one's outrage is partly entertainment, the outrage becomes quieter and more honest. When one sees that one's consumption is compensation for an inner void, the consumption loses its desperation. Honest seeing is the repair.

Yet the species, as a collective, refuses. Not because the medicine is unavailable but because the disease has convinced the patient it is his identity. "I am my desires, my fears, my ambitions, my tribe." This is the ego speaking, and it will fight to the death against being seen through.

And the species' track record with those who actually achieved the repair is telling. Socrates was executed. Kabir saheb was \_\_\_\_\_ . Jesus was crucified and then turned into a religion. The Buddha \_\_\_\_\_ a temple rituals within a few

generations. The species does not merely refuse the cure; it kills the doctor and then builds a hospital in his name, one that serves the very disease he tried to dissolve.

The species has the knowledge to repair itself, the traditions to guide the work, and enough clarity in its best moments to see the defect plainly. But it has absolutely no collective will to act on any of it, because every collective intention is itself an expression of the defect. The patient is the disease. That is the peculiar horror of the human situation.

So the question is not addressed to the species. The species will not answer.

It is addressed to you, the reader.

The defect operates in you. In the way you consume without asking why, in the way you worship figures whose private lives you have never honestly examined, in the way you scroll past suffering that does not serve your entertainment, in the way you avoid the one question that could begin the repair: "Who am I, beneath all the accumulated identity, beneath the opinions, the tribe, the outrage, the aspiration?"

The scandals will continue. New files will get leaked. The cycle of shock and forgetting will repeat itself faithfully. But none of it will repair the species.

What can change is one person's willingness to stop pointing outward and begin the terrifying, unglamorous, deeply private work of looking inward. Not as a weekend retreat or a journaling exercise, but as the central undertaking of one's life.

The defect is yours. So is the possibility of repair.

It has been done before, by those rare human beings whose names survive precisely because they broke the pattern. What they achieved was not superhuman. It was the human possibility that the rest of us leave untouched, because touching it would cost us all that we presently call ourselves.

The species is defective. That is the honest starting point.

Whether you remain so is no longer the species' question. It is yours alone.

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