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Acharya Prashant Reveals The Surprising Truth About Human Restlessness

Acharya Prashant captivated AIIMS Rishikesh, dissecting human restlessness, gender identity, and the ego through Ishavasya Upanishad. He challenged doctors to question borrowed purposes and find true liberation beyond societal constructs, offering a profound philosophical inquiry into consciousness.

By Sathish Raman Updated: Thursday, April 30, 2026, 17:49 [IST]

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Philosopher and author Acharya Prashant addressed students and faculty at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Rishikesh, on Sunday, April 27, delivering a wide-ranging discourse on the nature of human restlessness, the psychological roots of gendered identity, and the Ishavasya Upanishad's diagnosis of the ego.

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This was Acharya Prashant's third address at an AIIMS institution, following earlier talks at AIIMS Nagpur and AIIMS Raipur. He has also spoken at other reputed medical institutions including Maulana Azad Medical College, Delhi and ESIC Medical College, Hyderabad, cementing a growing dialogue between him and the country's leading medical community.

The Rishikesh lecture also concluded a three-day engagement in the city: Acharya Prashant had addressed two public sessions on April 25 and April 26, both of which drew large audiences.

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The first half of the session, held before an audience of doctors, researchers, and students, took the form of an open conversation with a panel of young future doctors who put their questions to him directly. This exchange brought philosophy and medicine into an unusual and direct conversation. Acharya Prashant turned the question of life's purpose back on the questioner, arguing that the relentless search for meaning is not a sign of depth but a symptom of unexamined inner restlessness. "As long as restlessness remains, there will be a need for purpose," he said. He pressed his audience to ask where this demand actually comes from, contending that most people treat purposes borrowed wholesale from society as their own, internalising them gradually without ever questioning their origin.

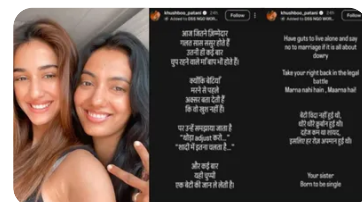


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On the condition of women, Acharya Prashant moved beyond the familiar discourse of reservations and institutional access. He acknowledged that reservations are necessary but not sufficient, because the deeper problem is psychological. Women educated at the world's finest universities, he argued, remain as psychologically dependent as those in rural settings, because the identification with woman-ness itself stays intact. Gender, in his framing, is a mental construct rather than a physical fact, and liberation means stepping outside that construct rather than achieving within it. "The moment I disown the concept of woman-ness, that is where liberation begins," he said.

The final section of the lecture engaged the opening Shanti Paath of the Ishavasya Upanishad. Acharya Prashant cautioned against what he called "pop spirituality," describing it as a system that does not disturb the ego but reinforces it further by supplying it with spiritual goals such as enlightenment and liberation. The ego, he argued, survives on division and will readily absorb even wisdom literature as food for its own expansion. True understanding, by contrast, erases the very boundary the ego depends on. His reading draws on not just traditional Vedanta, but also other wisdom streams from around the world, which he has reformulated as a distinct and rigorous philosophical framework for contemporary inquiry.

Acharya Prashant is the founder of the PrashantAdvait Foundation, which it describes as running the world's largest discourse on global wisdom literature. An alumnus of IIT Delhi and IIM Ahmedabad, he has addressed over 150 premier institutions including IITs, IIMs, the Indian Institute of Science, Bard College, Texas A&M University, and the University of California, Berkeley. His latest book *Truth Without Apology*, published by HarperCollins, became a national bestseller in the first week of its release, as per Amazon reports and Nielsen BookScan. He writes regular columns for The Pioneer, Deccan Herald, and The Sunday Guardian, and with over 100 million followers across social media platforms, is the world's most followed philosopher.

PrashantAdvait Foundation is a non-profit organisation dedicated to making authentic philosophical inquiry accessible to all. Through discourses, publications, and institutional outreach, the Foundation works to address the root causes of human suffering through the examination of consciousness, identity, and the nature of the ego.

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