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# Acharya Prashant vs. Spiritual Leader is Fi

By Satish Raman Published: Tuesday, August 5, 2025, 16:38 [IST]



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Across many public and religious forums today, one can still hear outdated notions regarding women's roles and value. Ideas equating a woman's purity with her sexual past, or regressive customs like the 'ghoonghat,' are still expressed, and often even lauded. It's not uncommon to hear comments that cast doubt on the character of women in live-in relationships or judge their dignity by obsolete standards. While such perspectives rightly face criticism for being unjust and restrictive, they also gain considerable traction in numerous circles, highlighting the persistent grip these mindsets have on society. Among the many circles where this narrative finds approval, mainstream religious institutions and figures are the most influential. Giving this narrative a religious angle lends it weight and makes it unquestionable, making things more difficult for women. This has been happening for centuries, and surprisingly, even after advancements in all realms of human development, women's freedom continues to remain curtailed.



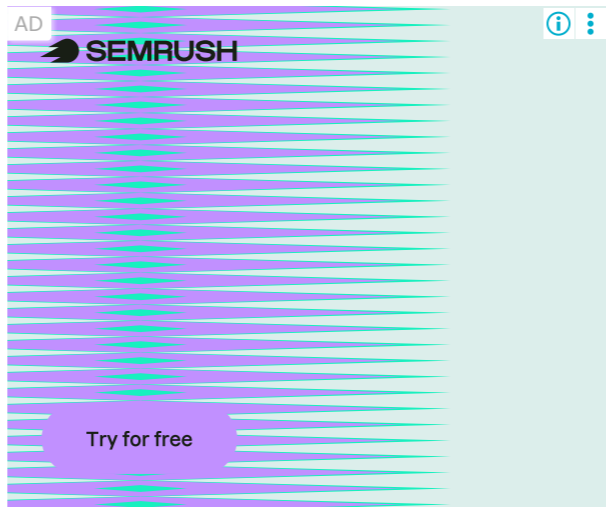
Acharya Prashant vs. The 'Purity' Police

AI-generated summary, reviewed by editors

However, a contrasting voice in the spiritual sphere belongs to Acharya Prashant, a widely followed Vedanta philosopher with an impressive background from IIT and IIM. He's well-known for consistently speaking and writing out against practices that seek to subjugate women under the guise of religious tradition. Rather than telling women to stick to conventional roles, he champions a profound examination of those roles themselves.

Opposed to those who glorify customs such as 'ghoonghat,' he has often said that such customs or obsession with female chastity are not even part of real Indian spiritual teachings. He explains how they are imported practices and links them to 'lokdharm', a set of social codes that were designed to control, not liberate, exemplified by texts such as the Manusmriti. He contrasts this with Vedanta, the core of Indian spiritual philosophy, which teaches that our real identity is not just beyond caste and societal roles, but even beyond gender, and the physical body itself-a perspective that is not commonly heard. When asked recently in an interview about the rising incidences of such regressive statements on women, he explained with facts how this is not a new phenomenon, and the seeds of these patriarchal notions are linked historically with the rise of organized religion, which was used as a tool to subjugate women worldwide, across all mainstream religions.

As a prominent example, he mentioned how temples have through the ages barred women from priesthood and imposed strict limits on their role. The same society that exalted women as goddesses and sanctified them as "pure" could just as easily condemn them for 'witchcraft.' He said that patriarchy survives not just through open rules, but through unspoken fears and confusions. These behaviours then get framed as tradition.



While many spiritual figures still talk about a woman's role as one of sacrifice and obedience, Acharya Prashant is known to urge women to look at whether their choices are really theirs or have they internalised societal norms. He questions why so many women stay limited to household roles and encourages them to ask whether that comes from clarity or social pressure.

His message has found popular resp 86 million and video views on YouTul Prashant's commitment to women's 'Shakti,' which is dedicated to womer such as "Sister, the Nest is not an As These titles are not merely motivatio outdated societal norms.

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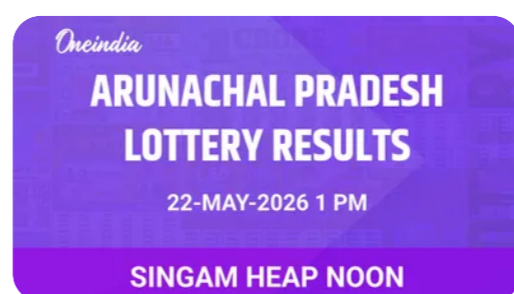
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His books on women, 'Women's Rev... women can unknowingly adhere to lii... Flipkart and Amazon attest to their tr... these books are also widely read by... perspectives on women.

Prominent institutions have also ackr... invited him as chief guest for their Wi... because of the consistent work he ha... invited as chief guest at the Women's... Federation of India. Many were surpr... such platforms that are usually reser...

His work on women empowerment has drawn significant media attention as well. Dainik Jagran interviewed him on topics like feminism and gender. Actress Ulka Gupta, known for playing strong feminine roles like 'Jhansi Ki Rani,' also interviewed him for guidance on how to navigate the entertainment industry as a female. His foundation reports that his flagship Gita course, with around one lakh participants as of now, has more women students than men. While historically women have always been a minority in the spiritual sphere, achieving a women-dominant participation is a rare feat.



Many spiritual leaders on the surface say that women should be respected and revered. But the reality is that in the background of their talks and sermons, subjugation often looms large. Women are praised only when they act a certain way: silent, obedient, or covered. That's not real respect. That's a way of keeping women under control. Acharya Prashant asserts that true change begins only when women stop seeing themselves the way others have historically told them to. As more women resonate with his message and mainstream platforms take note, Acharya Prashant's voice is steadily becoming a distinct and influential counter to long-held, regressive narratives in the name of spirituality.

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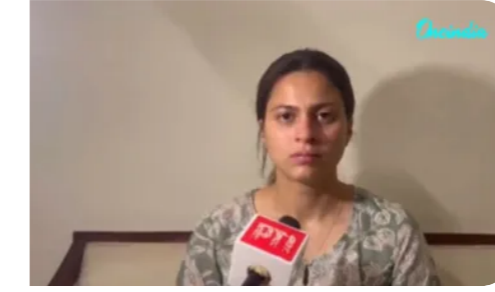
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