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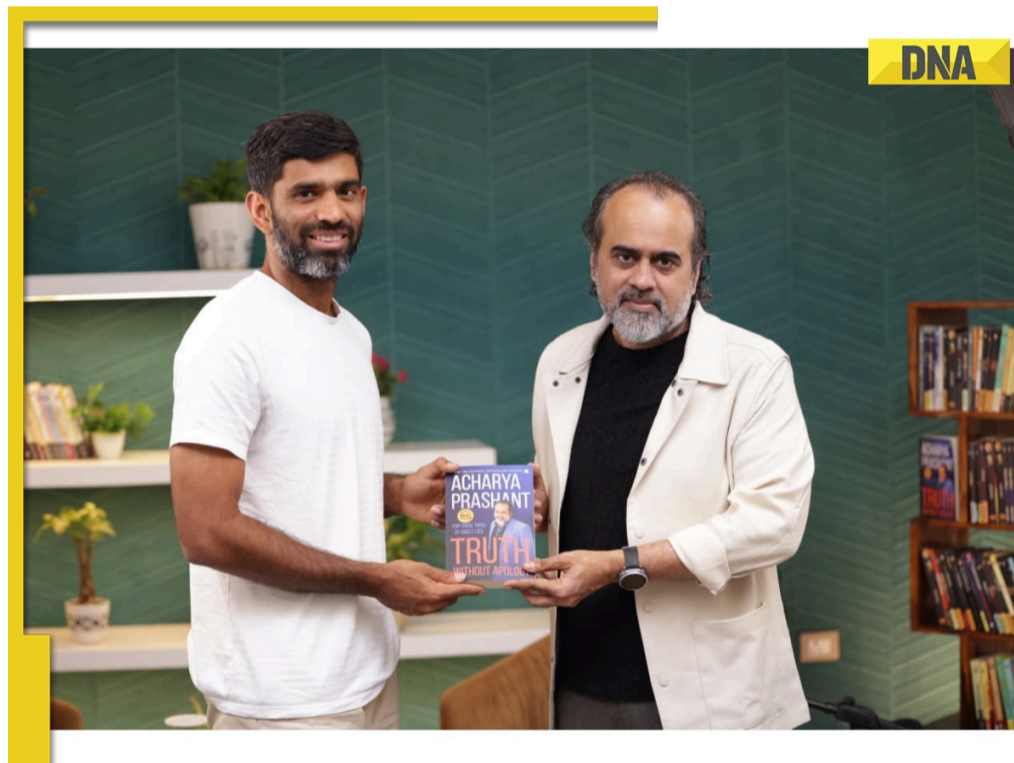
How Gita Wisdom Fuels an International Cricketer's Life: Team USA's Saurabh Netravalkar Speaks with Acharya Prashant

Acharya Prashant and cricketer-engineer Saurabh Netravalkar discuss the Gita, bridging professional excellence with inner discipline, ecological responsibility, and self-awareness.



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A fast bowler's life is built on repetition: run in, land right, release cleanly, then do it again and often without any guarantee that the outcome will reward the effort. The world of a software engineer is not much different: you optimise, test, debug, and then refine the same system until it starts acting like it is supposed to. Between these two disciplines is placed a third, which very few achievers can talk of with sincerity: the inner discipline of seeing oneself clearly.

The intersection was brought alive in a recent interview between the renowned Philosopher and Author Acharya Prashant, and Saurabh Netravalkar, the star of the USA men's international cricket team and a software engineer at Oracle USA. Netravalkar represented India at the 2010 Under-19 World Cup and later played domestic cricket for Mumbai. He is also an alumnus of Cornell University, an Ivy League institution. He has been a student of the Gita Mission for the past two years, a systematic course of live scripture study taught by Acharya Prashant on the Acharya Prashant app.

The conversation, recorded on 20 February 2026, was not an interview in the usual sense. It moved effortlessly from cricketing craft to the psychology of ambition, from team dynamics to climate collapse, from supply chain cruelty to the hidden environmental cost of digital overconsumption. What held it together was a single, persistent theme: inner growth is not an ornament on success, it is the only ground on which success can stop being random and start becoming meaningful.

The false dilemma behind “either this or that”

Netravalkar began with a question shaped by his own journey, one that countless young Indians carry quietly: how does one pursue demanding passions, or balance love and responsibility, without losing one's footing? He spoke of a life that tried to hold together two time-hungry worlds, academics and competitive sport, and of the sacrifices that such a life demands.

Acharya Prashant's reply cut through the familiar “either-or” framing. The real problem, he said, is not that we have two worthy pursuits competing for limited time. The real problem is that a major share of our life energy is already being drained by unnamed, unexamined variables. The mind presents a neat conflict only because it refuses to account for the silent leakages, the wasted hours, the indulgences we protect by calling them “me time.”

If something truly valuable enters life and displaces something else, Acharya Prashant observed, then what got displaced was never worthy of occupying that space in the first place. The point was not productivity for social validation, but responsibility towards one's own life, because every moment is life itself.

From there, the conversation turned to the emotional rhythm of sport: failure as a norm, not an exception. Netravalkar described a process-focused routine, “prep, execute, reflect,” and asked how to evaluate outcomes without becoming trapped in external wins and losses.

Acharya Prashant challenged the binary thinking that dominates both sport and life. Results, he said, are not simply “victory or defeat.” External outcomes remain deeply uncertain, sometimes a perfect delivery still goes for four, sometimes a poor ball takes a wicket. The only result worth tracking is internal: whether one is improving relative to one's own previous state, and whether one feels more fulfilled, more honest, more free.

This was also a direct exposure of the ego's favourite habit: claiming credit when it is undeserved, and playing the victim when randomness or consequence arrives. Sport, in that sense, becomes a training ground where the mind's self-serving narratives are repeatedly punctured.

From the team to the planet: expanding the “I”

One of the most striking portions of the dialogue came when Netravalkar asked how the lessons of team sport could be extended to human conflict and global cooperation.

Acharya Prashant offered a simple but sharp framing: team sport forces an expansion of the ego boundary. In an individual sport, the “I” is largely limited to one body. In a team sport, the “I” must submit to the larger unit, the team, and that submission is not just tactical, it is spiritual. It demands that the individual stop behaving as a sovereign island and start functioning like a limb of a larger body.

Then came the natural extension: if the definition of the team can expand from “me” to “eleven players,” it can expand further to the entire human community, and beyond that, to the planet itself. Not as a moral slogan, but as a fact. Our interests cannot be separated from the interests of the whole, because the whole is the condition for our existence.

When the conversation reached climate and ecological collapse, Netravalkar spoke of humanity trying to score its own “hundred” by relentless development, even as ecosystems fray and species disappear. Acharya Prashant responded with a cricket situation that any fan can visualise: a team needs only to survive the remaining balls to secure a draw, but the striker, obsessed with his personal milestone, declares, “I’ll go for 100.”

In Acharya Prashant’s analogy, that striker is Homo sapiens: so driven by personal achievement, consumption, and prestige that it risks throwing away not just the match, but the series, and in the planet’s case, the very possibility of continued life. The crowd, too, plays its role, cheering the risky shots because it shares the same conditioning. Even when sense arises, social reinforcement pushes the player back into stupidity.

The conclusion was blunt: the real threat is not external. The threat is inside us, in our compulsions, our self-image, our appetite for privilege. Therefore, the deepest solution is inner awakening, not merely external firefighting.

Ethics, supply chains, and the question of intent

Netravalkar then raised a dilemma close to many conscious athletes: the cricket ball itself is traditionally leather, and cruelty is embedded across supply chains. How does one live responsibly when harm seems woven into everything?

Acharya Prashant reframed cruelty not as a “thing” sitting in the process, but as a reflection of the doer. If intent changes, industry changes. Human beings can build extraordinary technologies when they want to, so the absence of humane alternatives often reflects not

celebrity appeal and adoption follows.

As a database engineer working in search technologies, Netravalkar also brought a modern concern: the race for milliseconds, the compute-intensive world behind “instant answers,” and the physical data centres consuming planetary resources. Where should the line be drawn?

Acharya Prashant’s answer returned to fundamentals: real need must determine value, and value must determine price. The crisis grows when people consume what they do not need, and they do so without paying the true cost. Subsidy always has a bearer, and today that bearer is often the planet, other species, and the underprivileged. If the full cost were visible and personally felt, mindless usage would reduce on its own, and only genuine needs would remain.

A conversation that mirrors a new kind of seeker

What makes this dialogue noteworthy is not celebrity appeal, but symbolism. Here is a high-performing athlete in an emerging cricket nation, and a senior tech professional in the heart of modern digital infrastructure, speaking openly about existential restlessness, inner accountability, ecological responsibility, and the deeper meaning of religion beyond rituals.

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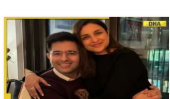
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In a time when spirituality is often packaged as comfort, this conversation stood out for its insistence on clarity. It suggested that excellence in the world need not be powered by anxiety and ego. It can be powered by understanding. And when that happens, outer achievement stops being the centre of life and becomes a byproduct of a life that is finally aligned.

For the Gita Mission, the conversation reflects a broader pattern: students from diverse professions engaging classical wisdom not as heritage, but as a living tool for honest self-examination. Whether one is a journalist, a bureaucrat, a technologist, or an international cricketer, the message emerging from the exchange was unambiguous: clarity does not arise from status or achievement. It arises from direct and uncompromising seeing, which the Gita, studied seriously, demands.

The session is scheduled to be released soon on Acharya Prashant's platforms, continuing a growing series of conversations where contemporary professional, public figures and serious seekers alike explore ancient wisdom with modern seriousness, not as tradition, but as a tool for inner freedom and responsible living.

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