

# **Book Review of Holy Wedlock or Unholy Deadlock By J.L.Dhar**

A book is a solemn effort by its author to present its subject in full gamut and arrive at the judicious and full conclusions on the problems presented by it, if any.

Though Mr.J.L.Dhar's solemnity is beyond reproach, his presentation of the problems created by his subject elegant, but we are not wholly impressed by his judiciousness in drawing conclusions on it.

At heart, Mr. Dhar, is for marriage. He would like this shimmering ornament of past cultures of humanity to survive. He leaves no stone unturned to sing its praises. In fact, he takes it for granted its loftiness, its providing the infrastructural tracks for the journey of man, and its irreplaceability. That is what is the singular shortcoming of the book.

Marriage is no longer among the golden branches of life that it once was. It is because the industrial revolution rendered it a difficult institution to follow. Modern man has to live on his individual economic legs, which necessitates almost forty percent of his daily time to be devoted to earning. Which leaves him physically exhausted and emotionally drained, leading him to become more selfish in certain ways than his ancestors. This impacts his marriage, as that requires love and faith.

So, the institution of marriage as we know it is on its way out. But it will survive in some other form, as sexual relationship between genders is a mighty force of life, and the drive to have offspring is stupendous.

Mr. Dhar's book is incomplete, as it does not give respect to the reality that while sexual and offspring relationships between men and women will continue, marriage as a personal and social fabric binding them will undergo a sea-change in the coming millennia. In one of my projections, it will take the form of a friendship between men and women, where the engendered children are taken care of by a commercial institution. So, basically, men and women will be living alone. But their friendship can take them to spend time together if they please. Everything will be done on a voluntary basis, without any legally enforced cohabitation. They will have equal rights over their children. While the latter will be basically raised by a commercial organization, but their parents can have them for some periods. In fact, at times, they can all live together, if they want. But fundamentally, they will live alone. Parents will be legally responsible for taking care of their children.

It is not a matter of whether such an arrangement is best for a child's growth. It will be an evolutionary step in man woman relationship. Evolutions, whether physical, social, economical, or political are resultants of various forces acting on certain important survival

aspects of human beings. The children, without the traditional rearing by their parents, I am certain, will survive. Whether they will come out emotionally warped has to be seen. But they will still be fully functional. It does not matter to evolution if some human traits are lost, for it caters to the survival of the fittest.

Mr. Dhar's thesis is that if husbands can cater to their wives' needs of repeated assurance of their love for them, expressed verbally, through gifts, providing help in household chores, and giving them their "sovereignty," then marriages would hardly fail. In fact, they would be proverbially blissful. But he is naïve. The marriages are failing in modern times because the stress of economic and emotional survival is so great that in order to cope with it, common man has become much more selfish than his predecessors. And since love requires sacrifice and selflessness, which quite a significant number of the modern men and women are incapable of giving to their spouses, marriages are coming part.

Nevertheless, the book will help some people, as it is rich in its human nature insights and required laundry-list for conjugal survival. But in principle it cannot stop the onslaught of the incoming tornado of emotional and economic survival of man unleashed by the industrial age.

In the preface to the book Mr. Dhar states that he is not for a full philosophical treatment of subjects, for they may be misleading. But without philosophy, which is intellectual processing, no complex matter can be dealt with.

The book has a strange presentation. On one hand it is an essay on marriage, on the other it wants to be a self-help tool on withering marriages. For the latter it invents a novel inside the book. So, it wants readers to learn from the marital drama in the novel, which has a running commentary by the author, together with his general thoughts on marriage. I do not know if any other author has used this technique before. But, unfortunately, it is a failure. A book is not a party where anything goes to make people happy. The form is very important in a book. When you break it, you shatter the presentation of the subject of the book.

This is unfortunate because Mr. Dhar has worked very hard on the book. He is good writer. His flowing language, studded with rich vocabulary and logical presentation embellished with literary effects, would have been great tools for any work. Also, Mr. Dhar uses many mythological and religious stories and connections to make the book a rich palette.

But because he has chosen to present his subject in such a convoluted form, the essence of the book falls. The novel part of the book is often corny, even though he has a special talent for writing it. He can be irresistible in his descriptions of people, scenes, and human nature. He will be a very successful novelist if he chooses to be one. But so far in his literary career he has been consumed by spiritual problems.

The book is studded with quotations, the use of which the author justifies in the preface. Quotations can add luster and dimension to a book but you cannot use them in novels, as the author has used them in this book. A novel is a presentation of a story, in which its author cannot give a commentary about it. The novel and its author are not allowed to converse. Also, the quotations are written in boldface font, which is not in good taste. Nothing in the book text should be in boldface font unless it is highly warranted. Many chapter titles end up with an exclamation mark. Another thing good writers do not do. The title of the book, *Holy Wedlock Or Unholy Deadlock*, is too commercial and sleazy, especially with a figure of an opened lock, with an image of a heart in it. It is all a matter of taste. It is puzzling to figure out how a serious man like Mr. Dhār allowed it.

It is a fine book, which its author has taken a lot of pains to create. I have no doubt it will be helpful to many people who are living on the fringes of matrimonial existence. Congratulations to the author.

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[www.kaulscorner.com](http://www.kaulscorner.com)

[maharaj.kaul@yahoo.com](mailto:maharaj.kaul@yahoo.com)

