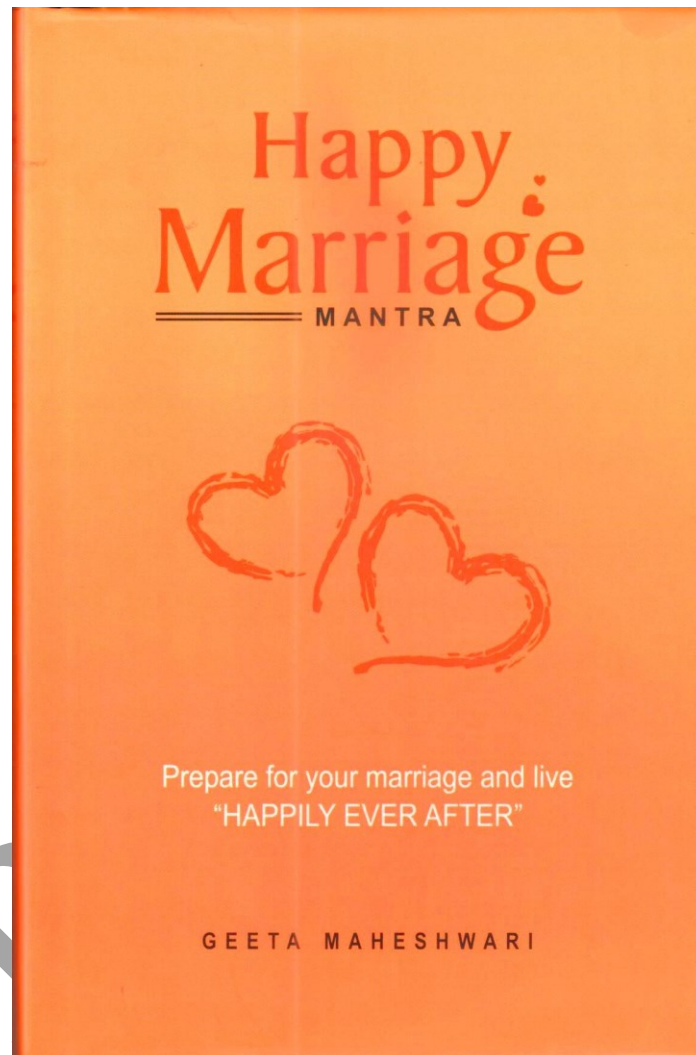


Book review

An essential guide for happy marriage



Happy Marriage Mantra is a marriage preparation guide in the form of 28 highly valuable troves like Emotional Intimacy and Self-Esteem; Kindness and Affection; Optimistic Attitude; Trust and Sincerity; Zest and Zeal; Patience; Understanding, etc to make marriage a meeting of two bodies in one soul in a literal sense. Each mantra is the author's guide in the form of practical,

common sense tips to help the marriage thrive and stand both the proverbial test of time and tides of life which cannot be escaped but, if worked out wisely, can be withstood by a husband and wife leading to not just a successful life but a happy, healthy family in which children do not have to suffer in silence as they watch their parents fight, nag and argue and not love each other, be together, laugh together and last together.

Happy Marriage Mantra

Geeta Maheshwari, Teksons, New Delhi, (Third Edition, 2016)

ISBN 978-81-7379-625-8, 79 Pages, RS 126 RS 350 US\$ 9.95

Reviewed by **Manzar Imam**

Marriage for man and woman of any saner age conjures different images emanating either from the desire to get married or the lived experience of having got married. It is quoted with reference to Hazrat Ali, father of the historically tall figures of Imam Hasan and Husain: If someone hurts then don't be upset as it's the law of nature that the trees with the sweetest fruits are beaten the most. He is also famously reported: Whenever I looked at her [his wife Fatimah], all my grief and sorrows vanished away.

The book under review *Happy Marriage Mantra* by Geeta Maheshwari, a renowned psychiatrist, is a kind of anecdotal reference that must be read by those willing to get married, sooner or later, and those who are already tied in the nuptial knot.

The pace with which things are changing, coupled with the ever-increasing number of failed marriages, Maheshwari's book, if read like a class text, as suggested by her, might help get some better results in protecting the most significant human relationship which is the foundation of

family and social unit. The book, according to the author is aimed at “preventing the damage in marriage, rather than undoing it.”

Underscoring marriage myths as a cause for hurt and disappointment, she mentions 34 myths which need to be debunked, at the end of which is this beautiful advice: Deconstructing marriage myths is a “Must Do” before the “I Do’s”. Marriage Myths, the longest section, probably has the best tips in the form of myths that need to be burst to let marriage bloom, Fight Fair is my favourite though, because of the golden rule, “Never use the D-word.” The reasoning too sounds genuine as it should not be thought about, said aloud, or considered as an answer to a problem. Almost all marital problems are short term. Divorce is a long term answer (p.29). It is also because “Many disagreements have nothing to do with facts”, but your interpretation of those facts. And “As you and your spouse are two different people, your interpretation of the same fact is likely to be different” (p.26).

The 28 ‘simple, practical, and common sense tips’, in the words of the author, can truly serve as ‘indispensable guide’ for a happy marriage. The number 28 can best suit to even a man who wishes to read them one each day in the shortest month of the annual solar calendar – February. The lucid, simple and easily understood language of the book makes it an easy and effortless reading. Even if one reads one quotation a day given at the end of each guideline, it would serve as a great help to what she says is ‘the most important’ thing that ‘slips your mind’ while in the process of preparing for your wedding. Take these gems for example:

A happy marriage is photography, not snapshots; it is developed deliberately over time, not captured ficklely in a moment. The goal of marriage is not to be alike, but to BE together. ‘In marriage, each partner is to be an encourager rather than a critic, a forgiver rather than a collector of hurts, an enabler rather than a reformer’, a quote by Norman Wright, as cited by the author. And, one can only have the mind of a psychiatrist to put it in such a short one-liner, “Couples that laugh together, last together.”

Happy Marriage Mantra is not a survey report or lab experiment result which authors like John M. Gottman, Dr Julie Schwartz Gottman, Nan Silver and others have turned into major books. It

is a quintessential guide coming from a practitioner aware of the peculiar Indian conditions. In the form of 28 treasure-troves like Emotional Intimacy and Self-Esteem; Kindness and Affection; Optimistic Attitude; Trust and Sincerity; Zest and Zeal; Patience; Understanding, etc, Dr Maheshwari desires to make marriage a meeting of two bodies in one soul in a literal sense. Each mantra is the author's guide in the form of practical, common sense tips to help the marriage thrive and stand the proverbial test of time.

The 28 mantras, if read like a textbook and followed like faith, can be the most effective tool to not only to a lifelong togetherness but can also help address a major social problem which is the outcome of "an unhappy marriage, somewhere," as pointed out by the author. Being a doctor her words have a ring of truth, "Like medicine, in marriage too, prevention is better than cure." So, all those willing to tie the knot, go, grab a copy of *Happy Marriage Mantra* and read it before you say I do, I do.

Bio

The reviewer is a Ph.D. Candidate at the Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. He is also doing an online program "Contending Modernities" of the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA.