

SACRED SPACE

# Relevance of Srimad Bhagavadgita today

B. L. Chakoo

While at Angers a graduate student of the Université de D'Angers, France, politely asked me: "Explain to me why today's intelligent man whose mind is the most scientifically advanced about

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everything in this universe and who is gradually losing faith in religious texts should, as you say, turn around and start reading "The Bhagavad Gita", which provides one with the teachings delivered centuries ago by Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield.

This is the question that many young educated minds do often ask me. The answer to this question is not so simple as one may think. In fact, the vast majority of people, in both conservative and secular milieu, throughout today have been seeking not to be deprived of the chance of living by science alone, for true scientific thinking raises man's consciousness to that high level of suspension which acts like a "filter to clear the mud from the muddy water." Moreover, living in the world of knowledge explosion today's man has lost faith in myths, superstitions, man-made imaginings about God, religious institutions which very often result not only in an enhancement of the separate personal self and an eclipsing of truth but also in bad ends: the poisoning, slandering, denying of life, hatred for the body, the condemnation and self-violation of man through the idea of sin and abysmal vulgarity.

However, before I answer the above question I feel impelled to utter a few words of warning in regard to "The Bhagavad Gita." The Bhagavad Gita is neither a religious book nor a book of the worst obscurantist fundamentalism. Unfortunately scholars and commentators of "The Gita" have favoured the view for several centuries now that its



response to life is "moral," "religious" and even "spiritual", and that it advocates the idea of renunciation which is now regarded with distrust by almost every human being in every part of the world.

"The Bhagavad Gita" is non-religious book and is not addressed to any community in particular. Unlike the other religious books it is not a study in myths, linking primitive concepts and modes of thought to the many institutions and customs they underlie. It is not a book of any religious authority but a great book of science whose philosophy is vast, multi-layered and complex. It, in particular, represents (of course in a complexly scientific manner) a profoundly significant and important contribution to the philosophy of karma done in freedom. In fact, Krishna's perception of life here is no different from that of a scientist and that is why The Gita's fame in Europe and other countries has gone far beyond the bounds of Indology.

The greatest blessing that "The Bhagavad Gita" can offer today to our generation suffering from confusion, tension, unhappiness, violence and fear is not any appreciation of the powers of God or Allah or any mythological ancestor of the human race (in fact, there is - if understood in its penetration - no concept of God in the Gita) but the principle of Karma, whose aphoristic profundity and relevance to human life is to be accepted as the core of its wisdom. And this philoso-

phy of karma or the technique of enlightening oneself by the path of right action presents a complete practical wisdom of life, beginning from the evolution of consciousness and ending in the state of fulfillment.

Moreover, "The Gita" creates a perception of the whole creation in the readers' mind by structuring its ideas about parkriti (nature) in such a scientific manner as to make him realize that everything in creation - which in its entirety displays the interplay of n gunas (sativa, rajas and tamas, born of parkriti or nature) evolves through karma (activity) only. Therefore, a proper understanding of "karmas" - which do come under the influence of these gunas that make man's life toss about as "ship on the rough sea from one wave to another" - would provide one (as it did in case of the rationalist not ignorant Arjuna on the battlefield) with a dharma (path) guided by wisdom that calls upon humans to transcend the human condition (e.g. negative thinking which is responsible for giving birth to, world of lies, devils and diseases) and live the integrated life in all its "truth and fullness." Once this is done, one need not to go to any god or temple or church, or perform any ritual to satisfy God or gods.

Hence, today when we are aspiring for revival of true life and living "The Bhagavad Gita" will be worthy of reading, contemplating and practicing.

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BOOK REVIEW

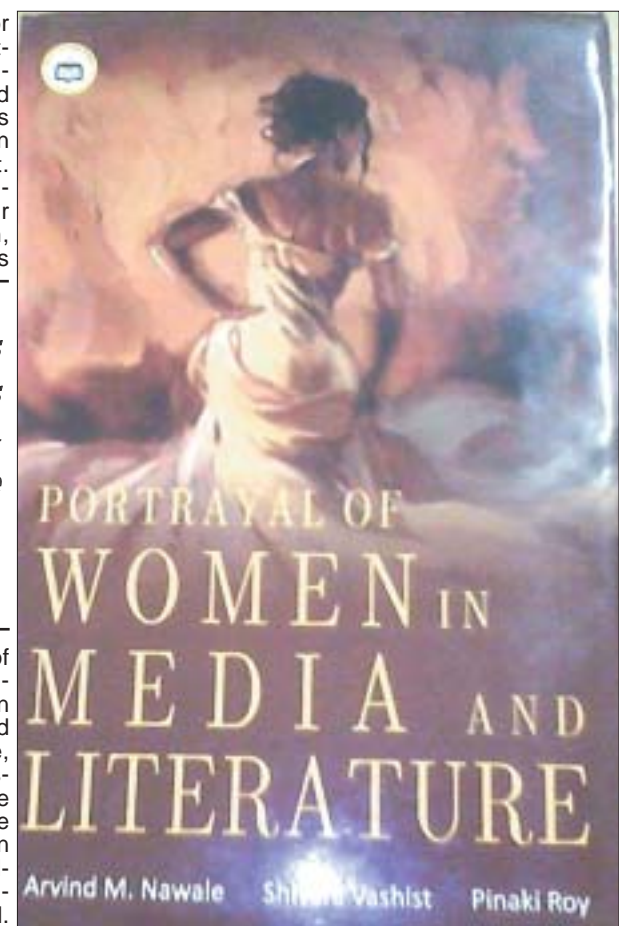
# Portrayal of women in media and literature

Lt. Col Janak Raj Bats

Ever since the time of The Ramayana or The Mahabharata, women have been constantly relegated to peripheries vis-à-vis the usual male assumption of centrality, with the powerful men looking down upon their female counterparts merely as submissive sexual objects. Women have been consistently stereotyped as unintelligent human beings who are expect-

women are directly or unwillingly participating in their own commodification, and allowing themselves to be sexualised on screen or in print. Rather than becoming a century for women's liberation, the 21st-century has

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ed to serve in kitchens, follow the directions of their male and female in-laws, act as caring mothers to children, and ensure, on the peril of unpopularity, that servants did their tasks 'correctly'. Though the 21st-century has often been referred to as the age of women empowerment when every crusader against patriarchal norms is applauded, representation of female emancipation, be it in films and serials or in literature, often assume distorted forms. The depiction of women in media and literature seems to be aimed more at satisfying the subconscious male voyeuristic desires than at how the females have become modernised enough to take on the world. Even in Europe, which seemed to have had been modernised by the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, women were not allowed proper education or encouraged to write.

Only as late as in 19th-century did some sensitive intellectuals, starting with John Stuart Mill, and involving personalities like Frances Cobbe, Harriet Martineau, and Josephine Butler among others, began clamouring for equal rights for women.

20th-century critics like Kate Millett, Simone de Beauvoir, Elaine Showalter, and Judith Fetterley have, in various publications, cautioned their female readers about the 'traditional male hypocrisies' which seek to dismiss the importance of females even while clamouring for their developments. Fetterley, especially, speaks for the necessity of 'resisting readers' who would identify the specific areas in male-constructed literature which offer demeaning portrayal of women and conspire to keep them submissive. However, as far as casual re-readings of post-modern literature reveal or cursory glances at films and television serials notice,

become a period of gross female sexualisation. In such an age of artistic and aesthetic decadence, it has become necessary to identify the specific areas where women are being, on daily basis, distortedly depicted, patronised, or dominated. Even if such identifications and relevant publications would not normally stop violent attacks on young women, they would at least make maturing readers aware of the deplorable ground-realities for women in India and on international arena, and make them stake and encouraging views of the female efforts for liberation.

The present critical anthology besides focussing on this pertinent issue through its variety of collected essays, includes an interview taken by Dr. Jaydeep Sarangi of the noted feminist author and activist Sarojini Sahoo. Commenting about the relevance and necessity of publishing this compilation of essays on portrayal of women in media and literature, I definitely shall recommend it. Numerous crimes against women, as social scientists have pointed out, are taking place on a daily-basis particularly because of ignorance and lack of compassion for femininity. The variety of issues explored in this critical anthology would make some epistemic contributions to the fields of feminism and pro-women-activism, with cautious approaches adopted towards the depreciations of females in different fields. If the role of humanities is to make individuals more humane, such a compilation is expected to further advance humaneness and humanity.

In recent years, the Government of India and all the Indian states are taking stringent measures against female harassments and anti-women violence. Academic activism has also been making its contribution. In the field of written literature, the femininity-indicating 'actress' and 'authoress' have been diligently replaced with 'actor' and 'author', respectively. But, interestingly, while such academic 'measures' perceptively try to abolish the discriminating female signs and signifiers, the males have not been motivated into becoming 'authoresses', 'actresses', or 'poetesses'. The males have been traditionally granted superior places; even while indicating uni-sexuality, male signifiers have been adopted! If Spivak's strategic essentialism is to be taken into account, abolishment of the '-esses' might interpreted as offering scopes for re-examination. Nevertheless, this compilation of critical essays is expected to be referred to by teachers and students alike who want to further their studies and activism regarding female empowerment and dignities.

The book is published by ACCESS (An Imprint of Authorspress), New Delhi. The book indeed shall be useful to the future researchers and teachers for further studies related with female empowerment.

CAREER COUNSELLING

# Pave way to a 'Pet' Career

Gauri Chabbra

Do you love the cuddly comfort of pets? Can you feel the love of animals and understand their language? Well, if this is the case you can translate your passion into a promising profession where you can care for and nurture animals.

Getting in

For an oft trodden path like that of a vet, you might require a bachelor's degree in biology, animal science, or a related field if it is a specialized field like veterinary science whereas for other off beat pathways you do not require to have any specialized training or qualifications.

You will have to complete BVSc & AH (Bachelor of veterinary science and animal husbandry), a five-year program the eligibility criterion for which is 50% of the aggregate marks in English, physics, chemistry and biology. For specialization, you can go in for MVSc in medicine, surgery, biochemistry, genetics and breeding, poultry science, biotechnology, pharmacology, physiology, immunology.

Institute scope

\*Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Science University, Ludhiana.

\*College of Veterinary Sciences, Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar

Career Pathways:

There is a broad spectrum of career options open before you ranging from being a vet to a dog walker.

Veterinary Sciences

A veterinarian, or a vet, is a physician for animals and a practitioner of veterinary medicine. Most vets look after dogs, cats, or other domesticated animals, while some treat wild animals, too, like the big cats and other animals kept in a zoo. Some veterinarians specialize in the care of livestock too.

Treating an animal is more of experience and a caring attitude than cognizance of a battery of tests. As Dr Ramesh Kumar, veterinary doctor says, "Dealing with animals is very difficult as very few people are ready to spend money on an animal. If it's a human being, you can put them through CT scan, blood tests and ultrasound to be sure about the ailment. So, most of the times, we have to just go by our experience in dealing with animals."

Besides, you can also foray into Border Security Forces and the army. The former employs veterinarians for the care and treatment of their mounted regiments which have horses, mules, camels and dogs while the latter can work as officers of the Remount Veterinary Corps.

If zoo interests you, you can be a zoo keeper where you will be responsible for monitoring the daily health and well-being of zoo animals. Keepers typically aren't directly responsible for the treatment of health problems in zoo animals - that is typically a zoo veterinarian's job. You may be required to feed animals and clean their enclosures.

Education and Research

For those of you who have a PG degree in animal genetics and breeding can apply for the post of assistant professor in the faculty of veterinary, animal science, agriculture and fisheries and for the post of scientist in various animal, veterinary and fisheries institutions. You can work in research or academics at centers of repute like the Indian Veterinary Research Institute or a state university, State Veterinary and Animal Sciences and Agricultural Universities and ICAR institutes, National Dairy Development Board, State Dairy Co-operative Federation, NABARD FAO, wild life insti-



tute and national institute of animal welfare and commercialized banks.

Here, you can get job as chief executive officer, scientist, and farm manager.

Animal Breeding

With renewed focus on protecting animals from extinction, many private companies have come up that are engaged in in healthcare aspects of animal and human being. Armed with an M.Sc. in animal genetics and breeding, you can also work as animal breeder on livestock and poultry farms of NGO and private companies engaged in animal research. There is lack of skilled animal breeders in the area of livestock genetic improvement.

Training

If you've ever watched any television crime documentaries like Crime Patrol, you've undoubtedly seen police canine units featuring dogs that sniff out drugs hidden in a car or help locate a missing person. These dogs are trained by experts in this field.

This same is true when it comes to training aquatic animals like dolphins that perform at aquariums and the horses that race for fortune and fame. You might not require a formal certification for these jobs, all you need is a heart that cares for animals.

Animal Protection and outreach

If your heart beats for these animals, jobs are plenty with the local shelters, rescue groups, and NGOs that deal with animal welfare. These organizations may hire you as cruelty inspectors and enforcers of laws against animal cruelty. Today, with a lot of emphasis being laid by environmentalists, you can find shelters run by dedicated people who help abandoned or injured animals get some rest and healing. Some of them go to the extent of adopting them.

Similarly, wildlife professionals work to ensure endangered animals get the protection they're possibilities in animal-focused research.

These same types of organizations often employ outreach personnel to teach the general public about various animals and their habitats.

Petcare

You can also volunteer to take dogs out for a walk. You need to educate yourself about dog body language, pack-management techniques and canine first

aid. You also have to build a strong recall with dogs by enforcing commands, learn fight prevention, pack composition and other essential dog-walking fundamentals.

Pet groomers help keep pets looking their best by providing regular services, including bathing, combing, shearing and nail-cutting. As a pet groomer, you can work out of your own home, travel to a client's home, or work in a shop or a mobile grooming van. A day in the work life of a groomer might include seeing eight to 10 dogs a day.

In this time crunched world, pet sitters would come to your rescue when you need to go out for a vacation or your odd working hours do not allow you to take care of your pet. Generally, pet sitting when an owner is away includes feeding the pet, providing water and giving the pet attention up to twice a day for approximately an hour each time. You can also provide overnight coverage. While you may need a college degree in biology or animal science to work in a zoo or aquarium, you need only a passion for animals to work in a kennel, shelter or animal hospital as an animal attendant. Attendants feed, water and bathe animals, and disinfect and repair their habitats. They also socialize with animals, giving them attention and observing behavioral changes that could cause injury or illness.

Entrepreneurship

Perhaps you have a unique mish mash of skills and interests that, combined with your love for animals, could turn into a successful business. Pet store owners function much like other small business owners. The main difference is that their daily tasks center around pets. If you choose this career path, you should be prepared to interact with people and act as a responsible business owner. You may need to keep track of your store's finances and inventory, oversee employees, promote your business and ensure customer satisfaction. There are other small businesses that pet lovers can start, including pet grooming, boarding, sitting and walking services.

So, build on your passion for animals and pave your way to your pet career...

For queries contact gauri\_nagpal@yahoo.com

INNER VOICE

O GOD

Don't hurt me so much,  
I am praying to you O GOD.  
Don't separate me from my love,  
don't make my life so hard.  
I can't imagine my life,  
Without the person whom I love.  
If I don't deserve her,  
Then what else I deserve?  
My heart is crying,  
But no one sees my tears.  
But why don't you listen my cries?  
Have you closed your ears?  
Why is she going away?  
Is not my love strong?  
Please tell me O God,  
What I did so wrong?  
For me without her,  
My life is like a hell.  
Then how to live without her,  
O God please tell.  
I request u my Lord,  
Not to ignore my pain.  
What to do with my life,  
Please God, just think again.  
Ajay Kumar Lahoria (Teacher)

R.S.Pura

LORD IN THE LING

Imagine the 'Lord of Lords'-the ultimate 'Shiv'  
the only incarnation of formless 'Sadashiv'  
in the Ling form being worshipped by devotees  
all over the theosophical world-theism to renew...  
The only deity who meditates in sun and storm,  
unmindful of snow and ice but  
transcendently engaged in diluting the miseries  
of His devotees and protecting them from hassling  
harm.  
'Lord Barfani' is easy to win over  
by pure devotional meditation and His  
rational rage cooled by sprinkling nectar dew  
onto His Ling form in a spiritual shower....  
Whether in mountain cave in Kashmir valley  
or a temple at Mahabaleshwar bay,  
an ice or sandy Ling looks immortal in  
trance dispersing tranquil bliss benignly.  
Pious pilgrimage of devotees to snow cave  
on 'Saavan-Poornaamaashi' celebrated in religious  
fervor,  
travelling the trek while humming the Shiv hymns  
amid jingling conch shells, drum beats and bugle  
wave...  
To me it is the only occasion when fragrance  
of festive divinity is celebrated without  
bothering for the hateful and stingy smell  
of prejudice, bias and apartheid arrogance....  
The Legendary Couple in white Pigeon and Dove  
in trill tweet sing the divine duet  
of equality, adaptability and compatibility  
in the Ice Ling cave with devotion and love....  
Fathomless faith, benign belief and tenacious  
trust  
divinely mesmerize the devotees to travel  
miles of pilgrimage to quench the thirst by  
having a glimpse of 'Lord Barfani' in a Ling  
at its best....  
Dr. Roshan Saraf

A MOON...

On the blackish-blue canvas,  
Amidst several tiny glittering stars,  
Inhabited a moon!  
A moon which waxes and wanes every  
month,  
And disappears on one day of the month,  
So as to avoid our sight!  
A moon which is partially stained,  
And is still considered the epicenter of beauty,  
which, perhaps, makes it feel insulted!  
A moon which is miles and miles away,  
But still can be seen on some days,  
Perhaps, it is an incarnation or just an illusion  
A moon which is exemplified by lovers,  
which makes it feel shy and blushing,  
Oh! then there it hides behind the clouds!  
A moon which has got everyone's love,  
Every woman's dream to look like a moon,  
A moon which has no descendant,  
Is, perhaps, nothing or is nowhere !!!  
Apoorva Shekhar

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