

Professor M.N. Srinivas: In Memoriam

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ABSTRACT Done in memoriam and divided into four sections, the present write-up opens, as it ends, with the author's heartfelt homage to late Professor M.N. Srinivas for whatever he owes him. His rigorous heart-searching has laid bare before him "full many a gem of purest ray serene" radiating the brilliance of the head and the warmth of the heart that "MNS" ever was, thereby treating the demise not only as a great loss to both anthropology and sociology but also as his personal loss in that it has created a void in the field of study of Hindu society and religion where "MNS" worked with great understanding and penetrating insight — the domain which he has enriched with a luxuriant crop of concepts harvested over decades, that domain into which his benign spirit and his monumental work lured a host of his admirers and followers like the author, leading them all a kindly light, enthusing and inspiring them all to do better than ever before. Ritual idiom being the pivotal theme of Hindu theology and social organization which "MNS" studied against the backdrop of the Croogs of South India, his thesis earned him a doctoral degree from the University of Oxford, his rigorous methodological formulations won him universal acclaim and applause while securing him his definite niche in the discipline of his belongings and placing him in the galaxy of many an illustrious scholars across the globe. The third section of the write-up, thus attempts a hurried survey of the theme, starting off from Robertson Smith's and concluding with Henry Orenstein's contributions, while shedding a sharply focused floodlight on those of several other students of anthropology/sociology of religion over a period of about a century.