Publisher's Desk
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Subramuniyaswami, Sivaya H.H. As you read the pages of our journal, you will discover that there are some issues up front in Hinduism today. Animal sacrifice, sati and brahminism are three which inspire great controversy. Our readers and the rest of the world do not quite understand how these three customs fit in with modern living and the way most of the world looks at how a religion should be. No one, for example, has yet been able to adequately explain how killing a goat or a chicken helps one's religious life. We are doing an in-depth, open-minded research on this subject in an attempt to unveil some of the mystery for the modern, thinking Hindu. We do know this much about animal sacrifice: it is a Sakta-sect practice for Amman and Kali worshippers. Perhaps you, our readers, know more and can share with us your knowledge about animal sacrifice.

And then there is sati, the wife's joining her husband on the funeral pyre. When I was 23 years of age, it was explained that if a women did not die at the same time as her husband, it was a sign that she had other men on her mind and was otherwise not one with him. To prove her worth, and to avoid embarrassment, village criticism and the widow's severe life, she would throw herself on her husband's funeral pyre. Conditions have changed and such explanations do not satisfy modern thinking. Don't you think? Perhaps again we can pursue in more mystical depth why this is happening even today. It would be good to know, good for the world to know.

In all of the world's religions it is the priesthood - the ministry and the missionaries - who dedicate themselves to the lifting up of humanity in general and their own congregations in particular. They are trained to encourage, comfort, console and invoke the grace of God upon their spiritual community through prayer, sadhana and worship. This is why it seems to strange to the world community that in the oldest, most profound religion, one of the established priesthoods fosters caste

segregation, communalism and division, thus breeding unhappiness generation after generation. India passed laws to abolish the caste system supported by the Smarta priesthood, but to no avail. Caste segregations are even coming up here in North America in our temples, we are told, creating hurt feelings. Does a priest have the human right to hold another below him? Does a priest possess the privilege to deny our faith and thus hurt another, be he or she a harijan, a sudra or a melecha (non-Hindu)? These are the question in the world mind that is now having a close look into Hinduism through the window of Hinduism Today. Perhaps you can help us answer some of these questions. Put us in touch with the proper sources. We would appreciate this very much.

There is another subject coming up for a closer look after the above three are explored, and that is vegetarianism. Some readers have written to us, saying that scriptures do not support vegetarianism for the lower castes. It is a question of controversy. Over ten million people in North American are vegetarians and by 1990 half the people of great Britain will be. For most, the reason is compassion for other living creatures. They just don't want to eat them, that's all. Soon Hinduism will stand out in the world community as having to take a unified stand on this question. Well, we can tackle this later on. We do have many scriptural quotes affirming vegetarianism and have printed a little pamphlet called "Hindu Ethics" in which some verses are quoted. In the meantime, if you will share some information with our staff, we shall be grateful to you. To receive a few copies of "Hindu Ethics" for yourself and your friends write to Hinduism Today Public Service Department at our Hawaii address. Should you have some quotes from scripture telling that Hindus should eat meat, we certainly would be happy to receive them to complete our research. Thank you in advance for any help that you can give.

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