

A Hindu at the Polo Grounds

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A Letter from Mahatma Sri Paramananda
Guru Swamiji (Great soul saint supreme-
bliss teacher learned person) to his brother
in India

Honored Brother:

Yesterday I went with a friend to the great temple. It is an oval like the *yonis* of the most holy Bhavani, and the *cakras* are marked in sand. On these paths the priests run in their mystic dances. There are two kinds of priests. There are Redsox and Yanks, according to their tribes. The worshippers sit around in tiers reaching to the sky. Some of the priests are armed with clubs to slay the victims. There is also a white ball, symbolizing the sun. My friend remarked: "The Yanks will get their goat." I cannot see any goat nor is there an altar to sacrifice a goat!

Now the priests take their stations in the temple, and the ritual begins. One high-priest throws the white ball; this represents the sun travelling through the heavens. Another high-priest strikes it with the *mahalinga* club, meaning that even the sun is tossed about by the will of God. Many priests representing other gods are stationed according to the places of the planets, as I understand, for my friend says: "It is an all-star team." The god with the club is a symbol of man, and if the sun, or ball, strike him he is dead; he throws away his club, and walks to his base, that is, he makes the next stage in his incarnations. If he strike the sun far away beyond any planets, he makes the complete circle in his sacred dance.

They have an idol here—one McGraw! He is a *ma-hathera*.

The worshippers are full of religion; sometimes the sacred cry changes to a roar as if they wanted something killed. Then my friend says: "See! he sacrifices himself," but I do not see him sacrifice himself.

He only throws himself down at the feet of a god. But there is no blood; it is not good religion.

The ritual has nine parts, for the nine planets (there are nine priests of each of the two castes) and for the nine greater gods. After the seventh part all the people rise and make mystic gestures with their arms, out of reverence to the sacred number seven. And now the people disperse. They will drink of the sacred *soma* of the country, the gin-rickey, or *jin-ricksha*—so called because with it they are wheeled swiftly and surely to *nirvana*.

I join in this part of the ceremony also. I grasp the hand of my friend and, on gin-rickeys, we shall peacefully glide into *nirvana*.

Your Happy Brother.