

# Mistakes in the Models for the Temple of Vedic Planetarium

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In this two part paper, we would like to point out some fundamental mistakes in the present depiction of the universal form in the working models for the main dome exhibition at the Mayapur Temple of Vedic Planetarium, particularly the depiction of the Earth or Bhu-mandala. In pointing out these mistakes we mean no disrespect to the artists who have worked on these exhibitions. The issue is really with the concept of Bhu-mandala that has been handed to the artists, not with the work of the artists themselves. The mistake emerges from an erroneous understanding of the Earth itself. Part one will therefore examine the state of consciousness behind the erroneous depictions of Bhu-mandala and other features of the universal form, and part two will look at the mistakes in the actual models presently being prepared.

I should also point out that the intention in writing these papers is not to continually hammer the management of the TOVP for what I perceive to be mistakes and misconceptions regarding their understanding of the Earth in Srimad Bhagavatam. I offer my respects to everyone engaged in the momentous task to establish the Temple of Vedic Planetarium in fulfillment of Srila Prabhupada's vision to present the Vedic cosmology to the modern world. A difference of opinion or understanding does not make one an enemy.

## **DEPICTING THE UNIVERSAL FORM OF KRISHNA WITHOUT ADDITION, OMISSION, SPECULATION, OR CONCOCTION**

In part two of a previous paper called "[Spiritual Science Applied to the Question of the Earth's Shape and Location](#)", we briefly discussed the universal form or *virta-rupa* and the relevant place of the Earth within it.

The *virta-rupa* is the form of Krishna as He appears in His expansion as the universe itself. How the universal form of Krishna appears is of significance to us here. As devotees of Krishna, we must learn to accurately depict and explain the universal form as it is described in the original verses of the Srimad Bhagavatam. This is particularly relevant to those responsible for presenting the Srimad Bhagavatam's cosmological description in the Temple of Vedic Planetarium. Respecting that, the *virat-rupa* is a form of Krishna, one should be attentive to depict the form as it is described. This is no less important than depicting any of the other forms of Krishna.

The idea that God has a form was a novel idea before reading the books of Srila Prabhupada. The word 'form' appears over 20,000 times in the Bhaktivedanta VedaBase and it is a word constantly used by Srila Prabhupada to stress the idea that God is not formless or impersonal. Far from being just spiritual light, Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead has a beautiful transcendental body that is the object of adoration and devotion for all other living beings. Although not an artist himself, Srila Prabhupada diligently instructed and guided his artist disciples to depict the descriptions of Krishna's form and pastime scenes without concoction and speculation. The same observance and adherence to detail must hold true for the depiction of the universal form. The universal form is the body of Krishna as He appears in the form of the universe itself. Prahlada Maharaja says:

"This cosmic manifestation, the material world, is also Your body (*tasya*—of that Supreme Personality of Godhead; *eva*—certainly; *te*—of You; *vapuh*—the cosmic body; *idam*—this universe)" (*SB 7.9.33*)

Again in SB 2.1.24, the universe is described as the cosmic body of Krishna:

"This gigantic manifestation of the phenomenal material world as a whole is the personal body of the Absolute Truth, wherein the universal resultant past, present and future of material time is experienced. (Sb 2.1.24) visheshah—personal; tasya—His; dehah—body; ayam—this; sthavisthah—grossly material; ca—and; sthaviyasam—of all matter"

From the above verses we can understand that the depiction of the universal form in the main dome of the Temple of Vedic Planetarium is more than just a map of the universe. It is a display of the form of Lord Krishna in His expansion as the universe itself. The Mayapur planetarium thus becomes the temple, and the worshipful deity is the virat-rupa or universal form of Krishna. When one walks into the Vedic Planetarium to see the form of the universe displayed in the main dome exhibition, one will be looking at a massive deity of Krishna as He manifests in the virat-rupa or universal form. The proposed models for the universal form, however, do not by any means accurately depict the description of the universal form as it is described in Srimad Bhagavatam. This needs to be addressed.

The universal form (Krishna's extraordinary form as the universe itself) is no less fascinating than any other of Krishna's innumerable incarnation forms. The universal form of Krishna, however, can only be depicted properly when it is properly understood. Just as a lack of knowledge and devotion causes people to speculate in their depictions of Krishna, so a lack of understanding of the universal form leads to many mistakes in the depiction of Krishna's form as the universe. In her memoir of Srila Prabhupada, Govinda dasi recounts the following lesson which is of relevance to us here:

"On one occasion, when Srila Prabhupada, and Goursundar and I, arrived in San Francisco, there was a new painting of Narada Muni hanging on the temple wall. I was impressed. It was one of Jadurani's latest works. Jadurani's technique had improved immeasurably, and her proportions were also much better. Her colors were more subtle, so the painting showed great technical improvement over her past works. Looking at it from a purely technical point of view, as a trained artist, it was indeed much better than her work in past. So I mentioned it to Srila Prabhupada, commenting that "Jadurani has improved her oil painting technique so much!" Srila Prabhupada glowered and winced. He said, "I do not very much like this new style painting!" I was shocked. This painting was obviously adapted from some Renaissance work of the old masters; it looked a bit like a figure from a Renaissance painting, that was then modified with an orangey saffron dhoti and a vina placed in Narada Muni's hand. Technically, it was good.

"Why?" I exclaimed. "What is it that you don't like, that you find so distasteful?" I was truly concerned. "Narada Muni is an eternal brahmachari!" Srila Prabhupada exclaimed. "She has made him look like a meat-eater and a woman hunter!" I was stunned. Later, Srila Prabhupada explained this in more detail. He said, "Cheeks gone down. 'Galtobra.' This is the face of a meat eater, and a womanizer. And a wine drinker!" I noted that the figure did indeed have a lustful and wanton look about the face. It was not a face full of spiritual luster and innocent beauty. While sitting in front of his desk, taking dictation for a letter to Jadurani, he explained further. I asked, "So, how should this be corrected? What should his face look like? What needs to be done?" Srila Prabhupada pointed to a Brijbasi print hanging on the wall near his desk. "Like this," he said. "These are the faces of milk-drinkers, rounded and beautiful. They have moon-like faces!" He explained that Krishna has the "moon-like" face of a milk-drinker, and so do His servants like Narada. No "nonsense muscles," or "squared jaw," as is shown in Western art, especially in Renaissance art. Renaissance artists, such as Michelangelo, were famed for their elaborate portrayal of the musculature of the human body. Even in art school, I recalled, the female face was said to be rounded, like an egg, and the male face was said to be squared off, like a flower pot. This was indeed what the old masters taught. But Srila Prabhupada wanted all the faces to be round and full. My husband did not particularly like my drawings of moonlike round faces; he sometimes teased me, calling them "balloon faces," and "balloon figures." But this is what Srila Prabhupada liked, this is what he wanted, and he clearly did not like the figures from the Western schools of art! He wanted us to use for reference the

Indian styles of art, showing the beauty of the "transcendental form." And, it suddenly dawned on me, the people of that era, the European Renaissance, were indeed meat-eaters, wine drinkers, and womanizers!

I quickly contacted Jadurani, and she created her future paintings based on Srila Prabhupada's instructions on this, and his explanation of "galtobra." Perhaps it was safe to assume that we could draw upon European art for some things, but not for all. And certainly not for figures or for faces! Nor for the dark and foreboding colors often found in the backgrounds of old masters' paintings. Dark surroundings were not to be a prominent feature in our transcendental art style. Transcendental art, Swamiji explained, was meant to depict the spiritual world. That means it has to be bright, shimmering, colorful, and effulgent. The faces and figures should be soft and supple, rounded and child-like, full of innocence and sweetness. The backgrounds should be bright and full of colorful beauty, with birds and flowers gracing every part of the landscape. Since Swamiji had the vision and experience of the spiritual world, and how it was to be depicted - and I certainly did not - I tried to model my artistic style after what he wanted. That should be the goal of any artist who is attempting to paint transcendental art...

Another incident took place while we were staying in Los Angeles. Srila Prabhupada wanted Goursundar and I to make Deities of Gour-Nitai, dancing with upraised arms. To do this, we first had to perfect a drawing that was approved by His Divine Grace. Because my husband Goursundar was more expert with male figures, this drawing was first done by him. Goursundar had studied male body structure, and had also been a weight trainer, so he knew the exact muscles that would show in upraised arms. He carefully drew the upraised arms of Lord Chaitanya and Lord Nityananda having some very gentle hint of muscles, both in the upraised arms and in the upper chest. The muscles were not very pronounced at all; they were quite subtle, only hinted at. But Srila Prabhupada immediately nixed it. "No! No muscles showing!" he said. "This is not transcendental form - this muscles, this is human form. Human bodies have muscular forms, but not transcendental bodies. They are smooth and beautiful."

Srila Prabhupada explained that transcendental form is always smooth and graceful. "Arms like the trunk of the elephant," he described. Muscles and veins should never be shown in pictures of Krishna or any transcendental beings. "This fleshy muscle and vein form is the body of human beings. Not transcendental beings!" Srila Prabhupada taught that we could not simply take a photo of a human being, and paint it blue for Krishna, or golden for Lord Chaitanya! Rather, he explained, the transcendental form has long sloping arms, like the elephant's trunk, delicate hands, graceful feet, large head, high forehead, arching brows, waving hair, lotus eyes, and curved, sweet smiling lips. The transcendental form does not look at all like the mundane beauty of human beings. There are many examples of this in Indian art. South Indian sculptures show the graceful beauty of transcendental form...

*...Srila Prabhupada wanted everything to be done exactly as he prescribed, down to the details, without our taking it upon ourselves to create something new, or to in any way change things. This was always his greatest criticism of our Western culture - that we would take things cheaply and change them or edit them according to our limited understanding. Or, as he would often say, "according to our whims."*

*(Srila Prabhupada the Transcendental Art Master by Govinda dasi)*

Although not an artist himself, Srila Prabhupada personally guided his artist disciples to produce paintings of Krishna and His associates that would become 'windows into the spiritual world'. Under the direction of Srila Prabhupada, the artwork of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness features Krishna as He is described in the Srimad Bhagavatam. Krishna has a bluish complexion, not white, or some other colour. Krishna wears a peacock feather in his hair, not a crow's feather. Krishna plays a flute, not a

saxophone. Krishna is youthful, happy, and beautiful, not old, cranky, and ugly. Krishna herds cows, not sheep. Krishna lives and sports in a rural setting, not a metropolis made of concrete, steel, and glass. Krishna is always accompanied with His consort Srimati Radharani and other associates of the spiritual world. Thus, by the guidance of Srila Prabhupada, the devotees of Krishna have a bona-fide form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead to mediate upon. The followers of Srila Prabhupada find no interest or enjoyment in speculative depictions of Krishna that have no reference to shastra, or authorized books of knowledge. The attention to detail in a scientific presentation of Krishna's universal form is no less important than the attention to detail in artistic representations of Krishna.

I mention the above seemingly unrelated memoir from Govinda dasi because of its lesson to those responsible for the exhibition of the universal form in the Mayapur Temple of Vedic Planetarium. Srila Prabhupada clearly did not like the imposition of the European idea of beauty and stature unto the transcendental forms of Krishna and His associates. Srila Prabhupada's distinction between the square muscular beauty of the 'meat-eaters,' and the round and gentle beauty of the 'milk-drinkers,' is an interesting analysis with many subtle lessons that can be applied elsewhere. His disciples were clearly unaware of the subtle influence of mleccha culture upon their art until it was pointed out to them. What then about the subtle influence of Western secular science upon the mentality of devotees of Krishna, and especially those who find themselves responsible for presenting the Vedic cosmology?

Continuing on from the above example of devotee artists unwittingly imbibing mleccha culture into their paintings of Krishna, we wish to point out how the depiction of a globe-shaped Earth in the TOVP is a similar instance of Krishna devotees imbibing a non-Vedic, concept about the Earth, and then whimsically super-imposing that idea unto the otherwise clear description of the Earth by Sukadeva Goswami. The whole endeavour to merge these two completely opposite world-views arises on account of an unquestioned 'belief' in the science supposedly supporting the globe model. This superimposition of the assumed Earth globe onto the Srimad Bhagavatam's Earth circle (Bhu-mandala) has somehow got the official rubber-stamp as 'Vedic cosmology,' when it is actually nothing of the sort. The same Western inculcation about the globe has obviously affected those at the TOVP cosmology department, who wish to present the Earth as a globe despite the glaring fact that:

(1) There is no description of an Earth globe rotating in space in the original verses of Srimad Bhagavatam itself, or in any of the Puranas, or in any of the commentaries on the fifth canto cosmology by the Vaishnava acharyas. In our previous papers we have presented the relevant verses from Srimad Bhagavatam describing the 'names,' 'measurements,' and 'characteristics' of Bhu-mandala (the one and only Earth described in Srimad Bhagavatam and other Vedic literature). The Bhu-mandala is a four billion mile diameter circular landscape that crosses the center of the universe. There is no concept anywhere in the original Vedic texts of a second Earth globe floating in space.

The absence of an Earth globe in the Vedic literature is not because the Rishis lived in a pre-scientific age and were thus unable to see the Earth in relation to the universe from the vantage of modern technology like telescopes, space ships, and satellites. The Rishis did not describe the Earth as a globe because there is no Earth globe in Krishna's creation, at least according to Srimad Bhagavatam which is the essence of all Vedic literature (*sarva-vedetihasanam saram* SB 1.3.41). The Rishis describe Earth as a great circle because that is how Krishna obviously created it. If Krishna had created the Earth otherwise there would be a different description provided. The idea that the Vedas describe an Earth globe is pure invention based on a preconceived idea of an assumed Earth globe. This preconceived idea of the Earth is then improperly superimposed onto the Srimad Bhagavatam's description.

(2) The assumed Earth globe can be argued to be nothing more than a grand combination of the speculations of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, etc., as well as a visually deceptive (fake) creation of so-called space agencies like NASA. Amazingly, as the TOVP rises, a massive Internet revolution against the globe and its supporting

science, as well as an on-going exposure of the false photographic and video images of the space program, all prepare the way for a greater acceptance of Srimad Bhagavatam's fantastic description of the great Earth circle. Unfortunately, as the rest of the world wakes up to the fact that the Earth globe is a false construct of reality, the TOVP cosmological representatives are intransigent in trying to prove the superiority of the Vedas by introducing a supposed Earth globe into the Planetarium. However, the description of the form of the Bhu-mandala is clearly that of a great Earth circle, not a small globe floating in space. The glory and victory of the TOVP will be in exposing the fake Earth construct of non-Vedic origin as concocted by Copernicus etc, not in obscuring the Bhu-mandala model simply for the sake of acceptance by mainstream science and politics.

(3) Recognizing that the Srimad Bhagavatam's description of the Earth is at complete variance with the modern globe concept, an attempt is made by the supporters of the globe to derive a description of an Earth globe from astronomical texts such as *Surya Siddhanta*. This amounts to no more than an embarrassing interpolation on the original verses as we will also demonstrate in future papers. Interpolation means to render the verse in a certain way that is different from the original meaning. A lack of knowledge of the subject means that the uninformed and innocent devotees can be easily manipulated into accepting the jugglery of translators who present the Earth of the Vedas as a globe when the original texts do nothing of the sort. Just as NASA can fake an Earth globe with trick photography and special effects, so also can a 'pandita' fake a globe by manipulation of Sanskrit texts. Advocates of the globe conveniently neglect the original description of the 'names,' 'measurements,' and 'characteristics' of the Bhu-gola (round Earth) as a 4 billion diameter circular landscape provided in Srimad Bhagavatam. Yes, the Vedic Earth is round, but it is the roundness of a roundabout, not a globe. In a previous paper we have attempted to explain why Srila Prabhupada may have referred to the Earth as a globe when Srimad Bhagavatam itself describes something radically different. The paper can be found [here](#).

The failure of the TOVP representatives to understand the Earth circle (Bhu-mandala) and our place upon it, arises on account of two factors (1) not following the description of the 'names,' 'measurements,' and 'characteristics' of the Earth circle as it is presented by Sukadeva Goswami beginning at SB 5.16.4. (2) not accepting the radical implications of Sukadeva Goswami's description of a greater Earth area, on account of having a pre-conceived idea that the Earth is a globe in space.

Regarding the depiction of the universe in the TOVP, Srila Prabhupada continually stressed the point that the exhibitions are based exactly to the description given in Srimad Bhagavatam:

**Prabhupada: Exactly to the description of Fifth Canto, we want.**  
(Room Conversation, May 8 1977, Hrishikesh)

As we shall see in part two, the existing models depicting the universal form are not accurate or 'exact' depictions of the 'measurements,' 'forms,' and 'characteristics' of the Bhu-gola provided by Sukadeva Goswami beginning at SB 5.16.4. Moreover, by introducing the Earth globe into the TOVP exhibitions, Srila Prabhupada's seemingly straightforward instruction to present the cosmology of Srimad Bhagavatam 'exactly to the description of fifth canto,' has been conveniently overlooked by those with a pre-conceived idea that the Earth is indeed a globe-shaped planet, and who feel that the Srimad Bhagavatam's description must at all costs be reconciled with the modern understanding, and particularly with the globe shaped Earth supposedly photographed by NASA. In fact, no description of such an entity exists in the Srimad Bhagavatam or any of the Puranas. Rather than taking Sukadeva Goswami's description of the Earth as a basis for disproving (or at least questioning) the authenticity of the globe conception, our present TOVP representatives insist on doing the very opposite. The TOVP representatives automatically assume the authenticity of the assumed Earth globe, and vehemently disprove of anyone who dares to suggest that our known Earth simply continues into other areas of the great Earth circle as it is plainly described in Srimad Bhagavatam. It's simply an amazing play of maya that the representatives of the Temple

of Vedic Planetarium are adamant about defending the globe when no such globe actually appears in the Srimad Bhagavatam or anywhere in the Vedas. Contrarily, they are in denial of the Srimad Bhagavatam's description that our own Earth area in Bharata-varsha is surrounded by other lands and oceans belonging to the greater Earth area. However, as we shall see later, by insisting on this globe model the TOVP representatives are at a complete loss to explain Bharata-varsha's measurements, characteristics, and location on the Earth circle as described by Sukadeva Goswami.

The Srimad Bhagavatam presents a completely different concept of the Earth that radically changes our perception of life on Earth and its purpose. By presenting the Earth as a globe, the TOVP will fail to present and emphasize this revolutionary concept of Earth, a concept that has the potential to spiritually revolutionize the world overnight. Our perception of the Earth as either a small insignificant planet in dark, lifeless, godless, space; or as a vast and continuous Earth plane filled with other lands and teeming with other life has profound psychological and spiritual effects on who we are, where we are, and our sense of purpose within the universal scheme of things. Since the Earth of Srimad Bhagavatam is described as a vast cosmic circle, and not a small globe in space, the obvious inference is that we are not being told the truth about the Earth we live on. Indeed, the exposure that the Earth is not a globe, spells the end of the materialistic system that has misled the people of the world for the last five hundred years. Unfortunately, as it stands, the TOVP representatives are more interested in continuing to defend and propagate this Earth globe illusion than they are in bursting the bubble.

If one *does not* believe in the Srimad Bhagavatam's version, then what is one doing making arguments, models, and exhibitions for an assumed Earth globe that obviously has nothing to do with the original text? If one wants the job, one should at least *recognize, acknowledge, and present* what is actually being described in Srimad Bhagavatam. The description is simple, clear, and unambiguous. Whether one believes in it or not, the mandate is to present the cosmology of Srimad Bhagavatam, not the cosmology of Western astronomers such as Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, etc. This is a very important point. The TOVP management and the ISKCON community in general have to understand that the TOVP is not a project to depict a 21 century merger of Vedic and Western cosmological concepts. It is a planetarium to depict the cosmology of Srimad Bhagavatam. One may like it or not like it, one may agree or not agree, one may think it pure science or pure fantasy, but in either case, the mandate is to present Srimad Bhagavatam's cosmology, not a concoction of Vedic and modern conceptions. One's own inability or unwillingness to understand, accept, and present the Srimad Bhagavatam's description of Earth is not a license to try and make it understandable and acceptable to the public by merging it with the modern globe concept. As Srila Prabhupada says below, whether you understand or do not understand, or whether you believe or do not believe, you have to accept it. I take this to mean that those assuming responsibility for preaching the Srimad Bhagavatam's cosmology have to accept it *as it is*, and not introduce other ideas in order to make it acceptable to so-called scientists:

Harikesha: Srila Prabhupada, I was wondering if it was more important to understand the universal make up or simply to accept what Srimad-Bhagavatam says.

Prabhupada: That means you don't accept Srimad-Bhagavatam?

Harikesha: No. But some of the things in Srimad-Bhagavatam are difficult to understand.

Prabhupada: Rascal, fool. Therefore it is difficult for you.

Harikesha: Yes.

Prabhupada: You should not... **You understand or not understand, you have to accept it.**

Harikesha: That is why we are asking so many questions about the moon and the planets.

Prabhupada: Yes, so where is the doubt? It is a fact that they did not go to the moon. That's a fact.

Harikesha: I'm just trying to understand for preaching purposes.

Prabhupada: Why do you try to understand?

Harikesha: Because I have a hard time explaining about the make-up of the universe as far as...

Prabhupada: That make up is all right, what they say?

Harikesha: What they say?

Prabhupada: Yes.

Harikesha: No.

Prabhupada: Then don't understand them also, you don't understand here also.

Then what you will do?

Siddha-svarupa: **What it is is that we're automatically taking as authoritative what the scientists say, but we don't think is authoritative what Srila Prabhupada and the Bhagavata is saying.**

Harikesha: Well, the difficulty I was having about this mountain, this Meru. It sounds... It's very difficult to explain that to someone.

Prabhupada: No, no, that is difficult, but everything is difficult for you. **Because you want to see. You have not seen their arrangement; neither you have seen our arrangement. So but your proposition is you don't believe what you don't see. You have not seen neither of them, so you have to remain silent.**

Harikesha: So the best position is just remain silent until realization comes?

Prabhupada: **No. You should... Sukadeva Gosvami says. You have to believe that. It is an idea. If you believe or not believe, it doesn't matter. But you can get an idea about the planetary situation. That's all. Neither you can go there; neither you can see it. An idea is given, that is all. But there is no argument...**

...Harikesha: So our preaching platform should be is that "You don't know." We can say, "You don't know" or "We don't know. Why shouldn't one accept what we say over what you say?" We should just prove that we...

Prabhupada: **No, accept or not accept, the whatever is description there, in Bhagavatam, we are accepted.**

*(Morning Walk, June 10, 1975, Honolulu)*

In the above conversation Siddha-Svarupa dasa makes a telling admission about the mentality of Srila Prabhupada's followers: "we're automatically taking as authoritative what the scientists say, but we don't think is authoritative what Srila Prabhupada and the Bhagavata is saying." This in a nut-shell is the whole problem. Srila Prabhupada explains the root of the doubt is that "one wants to see." In other words, those with no faith in the description of Srimad Bhagavatam will only believe what one they can see. Srila Prabhupada, however, points out that "you have not seen their arrangement." This statement is a reality check for everyone. Outside of a small group of so-called astronauts, scientists, and military and government bodies, no one has the independent means to verify the authenticity of their claims about the Earth and the rest of the universe. Since the proposition is that one will only believe what they see, then those who have not seen the situation described by space agencies and astrophysicists' have to remain silent on the issue. In practical terms this means that no one in ISCKON can come out guns blazing in defense of the globe because no-one in ISKCON has ever seen the globe from the vantage of outer space. This is worth repeating:

"Because you want to see. You have not seen their arrangement; neither you have seen our arrangement. So but your proposition is you don't believe what you don't see. You have not seen neither of them, so you have to remain silent."

This next part of Srila Prabhupada's discussion needs to be addressed directly to the TOVP management in regards to their presentation of Srimad Bhagavatam cosmology:

"You have to believe that. It is an idea. If you believe or not believe, it doesn't matter. But you can get an idea about the planetary situation. That's all. Neither you can go there; neither you can see it. An idea is given, that is all. But there is no argument..."

Srila Prabhupada's usage of the word 'idea' should not be taken to mean that Sukadeva Goswami is presenting a theoretical idea or suggestion about the state of the universe (something that may be true or not). Sukadeva Goswami gives a very precise description

including name of various places along with their specific 'measurements,' 'forms,' and 'characteristics' (SB 5.16.4). This description should not be taken as something imaginative, but rather, it should be taken as a true account of the layout of the universe. However, since we can't go there, and since we can't see it, we have to take the idea only. As Srila Prabhupada says, "there is no argument." One can't present a different version to what Sukadeva Goswami is describing. One can believe or not believe, but one has to present it *as it is* described.

## WESTERN PREJUDICE

Srila Prabhupada was constantly warning his disciples about the subtle influence of so-called science on their way of thinking. The Western mindset is prejudiced from the beginning by the secular upbringing, conditioning, and indeed indoctrination into a non-Vedic perception of reality. This Western mindset has greatly influenced the Hindus in their understanding of Vedic texts, as also the members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. It is perhaps the greatest irony that many presentations of so-called Vedic cosmology are, in fact, nothing of the sort; rather, they are impositions upon Vedic cosmology from non-Vedic sources. Is the Vedic cosmology still Vedic? I read so many papers on 'Vedic cosmology' that really nothing but a glorification of Western so-called science. Particularly in their understanding of the Earth, various authors exhibit a complete misunderstanding or disregard for Sukadeva Goswami's actual description of the great Earth circle (Bhu-mandala). Srila Prabhupada addressed this Western prejudice in his disciples. In a discussion about the Bhu-mandala, he spoke frankly to his disciple Tamala Krishna:

Prabhupada: You are prejudiced. That's all. If I can understand, why don't you understand? You are prejudiced.

Tamala Krishna: Well I can understand if I accept it as... I'm only trying to think as the persons who are going to make this planetarium.

Prabhupada: **You are Western. You are prejudiced.** That is reason. If I can understand why you...

Tamala Krishna: I can understand blindly, but I don't want to do that.

Prabhupada: I do not understand blindly.

Tamala Krishna: No.

Prabhupada: Then.

Tamala Krishna: But I don't want to...

Prabhupada: Still we differ. That means one of us is prejudiced. Tamala Krishna: Well it's not Your Divine Grace. (laughter) I mean I'm sorry I have to take this thankless task to ask all these questions.

*(Discussion about Bhu-mandala, July 5 1977, Vrindavana)*

In fairness, Tamala Krishna Goswami sincerely wanted to present the version of Srimad Bhagavatam, and was raising challenging questions merely to ascertain the right understanding of Bhu-mandala. Still, Srila Prabhupada considered it his duty to point out that Tamala Krishna Goswami's failure to understand Bhu-mandala was a result of Western prejudice. Let Srila Prabhupada's criticism be a reality check for us all. How prejudiced are we towards the Vedic concept of the Earth as a result of our own Western education and upbringing? Members of ISKCON who are writing on this topic may think they are faithful followers of the Vedic cosmology, when in actuality it appears they have no understanding, faith, or realization of the thing at all. The Srimad Bhagavatam describes the Earth as a great circle that stretches from the center to almost the edge of the shell of the universe. Looking at the description of Bharata-varsha's place on the Bhu-mandala, we see that our own Earth area continues into vast areas of lands and oceans as yet unknownst to us. Such a description completely nullifies the globe concept, but who at the Vedic cosmology department in Mayapur will accept and defend the actual Vedic version? Who in the TOVP will have the insight and courage to say: "This means the globe is false, and we have to prove it!"



Continuing with the same discussion from above, Srila Prabhupada states that everyone is prejudiced but for the devotees of Krishna, the truth of the thing must be decided by shastra:

Prabhupada: ...Everyone is prejudiced. But who is rightly prejudiced who is wrongly prejudiced. That is everywhere. Now who is correct? Who will decide? I accuse you, you accuse me. But who is correct? Who will decide? That is shastra. There is no question of argument. That is called pratistha. You will never come to any conclusion by arguing. I think you are wrong, you think I am wrong. Somebody must decide. Judge. And that is shastra.

Tamala Krishna: Supposing they say...

Prabhupada: They say, we are saying so many things. In the court there are two parties. I say something, another party says. The judge is there. He has now decision.

Tamala Krishna: Then they'll ask for the verse to prove it, and we must quote the correct sloka to substantiate our claim.

Prabhupada: Yes. That the judge gives. Judges according to lawbook. Tad-vijnanartham sa gurum evabhigacchet [MU 1.2.12]. So we have to approach the right person who can give the judgment.

*(Discussion about Bhu-mandala, July 5 1977, Vrindavana)*

Srila Prabhupada's directive here is that we have to settle the question with reference to shastra. Sukadeva Goswami's description of Krishna's universal form, like the description of Krishna's personal feature as a cowherd boy, is brief but unequivocal. There is no need to speculate about the form of the Earth within the universal form. The description of the Earth circle (Bhu-mandala), and our place upon it, is clear and unambiguous. The only question is whether we believe it or not.

Just as we should accurately depict the different forms and appearance of Krishna such as Rama, Nrsingha, Varaha, etc, so we should also accurately depict the form of the virat-rupa or universal form of Krishna as it is described in Srimad Bhagavatam. This is Srila Prabhupada's instruction. The Hare Krishna maha-mantra, for example, is another transcendental form of the Lord comprised of sixteen names that appear in a particular form or sequence. The attentive chanter of the mantra repeats the sixteen names in their proper sequence (or form) without missing or adding any names. In this way, one respects the transcendental form of the Hare Krishna maha-mantra itself. Srila Prabhupada had occasion to interrupt kirtans whenever the singer would add something to the mantra such as the word 'bhaja,' meaning chant. Although, the usage of the word 'bhaja' seems insignificant, Srila Prabhupada angrily objected to it as an unnecessary embellishment to the Hare Krishna mantra, explaining that one has no business to add to or subtract to mantras as they appear in the scriptures, and as given by bona-fide teachers in the disciplic succession.

The form of the virat-rupa, likewise, appears in a particular way, and is adorable when properly depicted. If we accept that the descriptions of the forms of Krishna should be accurately depicted without addition, omission, speculation, or concoction, what about the place of the Earth in the universal form of the Lord? Is there really an Earth globe floating around in the body of Krishna's universal form, or is that conception simply an imposition caused by our modern 'scientific' understanding of what the Earth is, and looks like? Is the depiction of an Earth globe an unnecessary addition to the universal form, like someone adding the word 'bhaja' to the Hare Krishna mantra; or does it, indeed, have its rightful place in the scheme of things? As it turns out, the Earth globe is nowhere described in the Puranas and related Vedic texts, and its introduction into Vedic cosmology amounts to nothing more than a superimposition of a non-Vedic concept onto the original Vedic description.

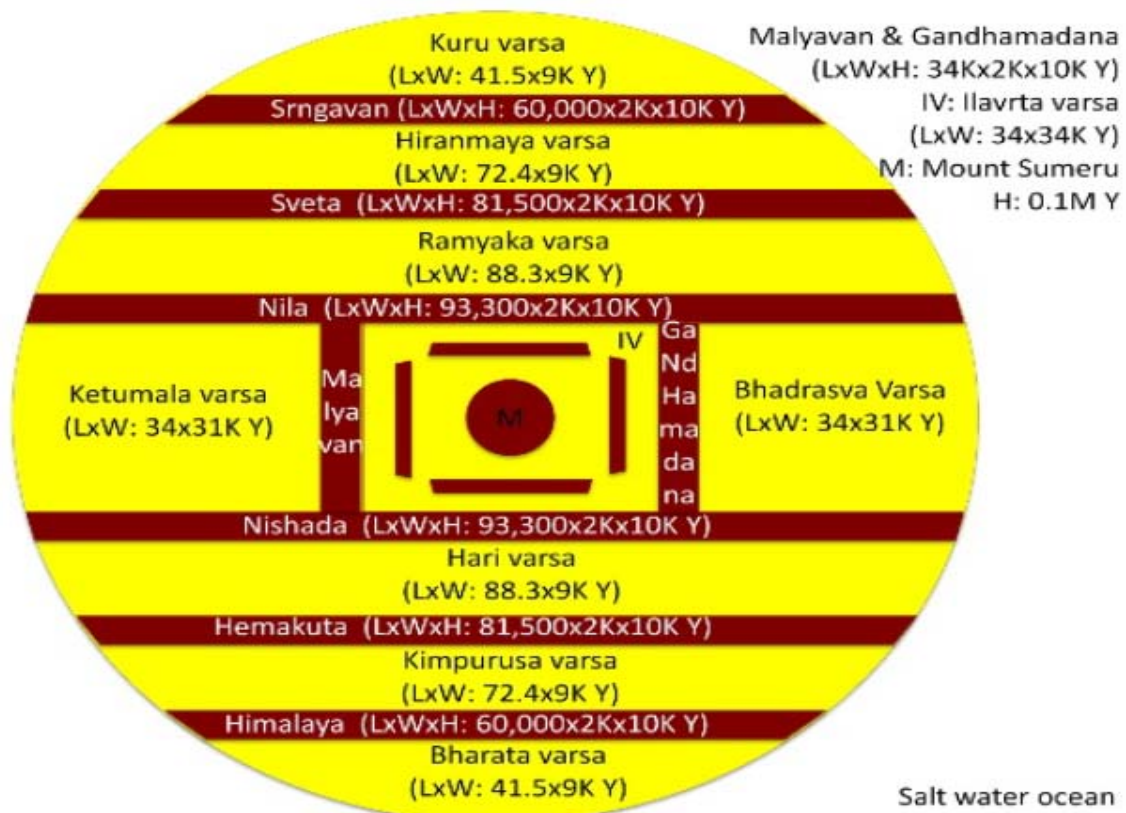
## **THE SIZE OF BHARATA-VARSHA**

A question is often raised: since the universe is so vast, is a seemingly small detail like the shape of the Earth, really of any significance? What harm is there if we stick a globe-

shaped Earth into the Vedic planetarium? The answer to this question is that the Bhu-mandala (Earth) is not a small detail, as it is actually the biggest feature in the Vedic universe. The absence of a description of an Earth globe is not simply due to a small omission on Sukadeva Goswami's part. One may think that the description of a small Earth globe in a vast universe, is a minor detail that may have been overlooked, and requires bringing in evidence from other sources. On the contrary, Earth is clearly described as the largest feature in the universe and Bharata-varsha (our own section of the earth) is described as an area of hundreds of thousands of miles. The overall size of Bharata-varsha is 72,000 miles running north to south; and hundreds of thousands of miles running west to east. The continents of our own Earth would make up just a small part of this vast landscape. Sukadeva Goswami's describes that the nine varshas of Jambudwipa are each 72,000 miles in size:

"In Jambudvipa there are nine divisions of land, each with a length of 9,000 yojanas [72,000 miles]. There are eight mountains that mark the boundaries of these divisions and separate them nicely." (SB 5.16.6)

Thus Bharata-varsha (which is one of the nine varshas mentioned) is 72,000 miles (three times the circumference of the so-called globe). This calculation refers only to the width or distance going north to south. The length or east-west distance of Bharata-varsha is much greater. In the northern border of Bharata-varsha is a mountain called Himavat (Himalaya) which is approximately 60,000 yojanas (480,000) miles in length and 80,000 miles high. The Himavata runs east-west from coast to coast of Jambudwipa, and divides Bharata-varsha from its northern neighbour called Kimpursuha-varsha. Thus, Bharata-varsha refers to an incredibly vast area, and not simply to the tiny land mass know as India. These figures are according to the calculation of devotees from ISKCON's Chowpatty temple who produced a paper called *Universal Structure Presentation Notes* (Chowpatty, ISKCON, July, 2016). The diagram below shows the layout and measurements of Jambudwipa with Bharata-varsha in the southern section:



The measurement here for Bharata-varsha is stated as 41.5x9 K Y. The letter K stands for thousands of miles, and the letter y stands for yojanas (one yojana = 8 miles). This means the length of Bharata-varsha is 41,500 yojanas (332,000 miles), and the width as mentioned is 72,000 miles. This measurement for the length may not be entirely

accurate as it appears to be some kind of average, but in any case the distance is in hundreds of thousands of miles. We can explain in a later paper how the measurements are calculated. The essential point is that these measurements for Bharata-varsha are clearly not a description merely of India (2,000 miles in length) on the assumed space ball of 24,900 mile circumference floating in space.

## SEEING THE EARTH WITH DIVINE EYES

The faithless mind may take the description of Earth's fantastic landscape with its enormous mountains as pure fantasy. The joke, however, is that the modern mind has been made faithless by the pure fantasy that one lives on a globe. Krishna's universal form is colossal, magnificent, and extraordinary, and one has to be extraordinary to grasp it. When Arjuna requested Krishna to show him His universal form, Krishna answered:

"O Arjuna, whatever you wish to see, behold at once in this body of Mine! This universal form can show you whatever you now desire to see and whatever you may want to see in the future. Everything – moving and non-moving – is here completely, in one place. But you cannot see Me with your present eyes. Therefore I give you divine eyes. Behold My mystic opulence!" (*Bg 11.7-8*)

We may not literally be able to see the complete universal form with divine eyes as Arjuna did, but one with faith can get the idea by seeing through the eyes of shastra:

*"kavibhih shastra-cakshusa, 'learned authorities see through the eye of scripture"*  
(*SB 10.84.36*)

By seeing through the eye of scripture, one with faith will be able to quickly ascertain Bharata-varsha's location on the flat-Earth plane. The conditioned mind is otherwise not capable of grasping the reality of Bhu-mandala. The members of ISKCON who lack faith in Sukadeva Goswami's description of the Earth, will ironically find themselves arguing against Srimad Bhagavatam's version of reality by insisting on arguing in defence of the globe model. Sukadeva Goswami states that the form of the Bhu-mandala is understood by "Learned scholars who are free from mistakes, illusions, and propensities to cheat." (*SB 5.20.38*). We cannot, therefore, expect that everyone within the International Society for Krishna Consciousness will understand the Bhu-mandala for the above mentioned reasons.

One has to seriously question the motivation for introducing this globe model into the TOVP, and the almost desperate attempt to reconcile the Vedic conception with the modern scientific idea. Why not just present Sukadeva Goswami's description of the form of the Earth as it is? Why not question the globe instead? The negative attitude of the TOVP representatives towards those who question the globe, arises more from a lack of faith in Srimad Bhagavatam's description of a greater Earth plane, than from any scientific certitude that the Earth is indeed a small globe in space. Spiritual science (seeing through the eyes of shastra) does not prove the globe. Spiritual science disproves the globe. If we see Bharata-varsha 'through the eyes of shastra,' then we see Bharata-varsha on the plane of Bhu-mandala, not floating around in space. And if one is not convinced of seeing through shastra, then experiments using one's own eyes will also disprove the globe concept. One cannot, for example, present any experiment by which one can observe and measure curvature of the Earth over a certain distance of say, one hundred miles; but one can present numerous experiments to prove that there is, in fact, no curvature over such distances that should otherwise have massive drops in curvature. We can discuss in later papers some of the hundreds of empirical proofs against the globe concept. Empirical arguments against the globe may obviously come as a surprise to the uninformed reader who has never been taught alternative arguments to the quasi-science that supports the globe conception. Rather than teaching school children any real observable experiments that prove the Earth is a continual flat horizontal plane, the children are taught instead to guffaw at the ancient cosmologies describing the Earth as we all perceive it - a flat horizontal plane. But this guffawing goes against any child's first conscious reaction against the globe theory. As children, did we not all question why

people at the opposite side of the so-called globe are not standing upside down? Of course, magical gravity is wheeled in to answer all that. We can discuss more on that topic in another paper. (Gravity, by the way, is a concept that Srila Prabhupada never accepted). In any case, as children our first and innate instinct that the globe is a highly dubious concept actually turns out to be true - people from London to Australia all stand upright because they all stand on the same horizontal plane, not because gravity keeps them sticking to opposite sides of a ball.

There are many occasions when Srila Prabhupada chided and rebuked his disciples for falling victim to the prevailing materialistic viewpoint which operates under the pretenses of science:

Prabhupada: Unless one understands this very first instruction, eternity of life, so-called scientists, philosophers—all nonsense. All rascals. Animal...The so-called scientists, they are no better than the animals. That's all. They cannot understand the very simple thing. Animals cannot know. Otherwise any sane man can understand...I am the consciousness. Vasamsi jirnani... They never try to understand this. What is their advance? **You are supporting these rascals. That means you do not understand about the soul.** Do they not?

Shatadhanya: Yes. Nobody.

Prabhupada: **Still in doubt. The brain is not clear. Your background is that rascal civilization.** (indistinct) **If you understand Bhagavad-gita, you cannot support all this...**

Shatadhanya: You are not moved by the scientists.

Prabhupada: You should be firmly convinced about our philosophy. Otherwise where is that firm...? **How you can support these rascal scientists? That is your rascaldom. Take it for granted. One who cannot understand this fact, that soul is immortal, body is... He is no more human; he is animal.**

*(Morning Talk, June 19 1977, Vrindavana)*

As an emissary of Sri Krishna, Srila Prabhupada taught the method by which one can understand the factual situation of the universe:

"Although it is not in our experience, there is a milk ocean within this universe. Even the modern scientist accepts that there are hundreds and hundreds of thousands of planets hovering over our heads, and each of them has different kinds of climatic conditions. Srimad-Bhagavatam gives much information which may not tally with our present experience. But as far as Indian sages are concerned, knowledge is received from the Vedic literatures, and the authorities accept without any hesitation that we should look through the pages of authentic books of knowledge (shastra-cakshurvat). So we cannot deny the existence of the ocean of milk as stated in the Srimad-Bhagavatam unless and until we have experimentally seen all the planets hovering in space. Since such an experiment is not possible, naturally we have to accept the statement of Srimad-Bhagavatam as it is because it is so accepted by spiritual leaders like Sridhara Svami, Jiva Gosvami, Visvanatha Cakravarti and others. **The Vedic process is to follow in the footsteps of great authorities, and that is the only process for knowing that which is beyond our imagination.**" (SB 2.17.13)

"So, therefore, you should see through the shastra, authoritative shastra, books. What we are speaking about the moon planet, sun planet, or God, His abode is Vaikunthaloka, spiritual world, so many things we are talking. How we are talking? We are talking through the Vedic literature. Because Vedic literature is authoritative. According to Vedic civilization, we don't accept any book written by rascal. We take, we accept the authority of the Vedas. What is stated there in the Vedas we accept, without any argument." (*Bhagavad-gita 2.13, Manila, October 12 1972*)

"But we have to know actually from authentic sastra what is the actual thing. Shastra-caksusa. You don't see with your, these blunt eyes, rascal eyes. We see

through the shastras. That should be. That is real knowledge. What is our capacity of these eyes, these senses? They are all imperfect. So whatever knowledge you gather, the so-called scientists, they are all imperfect. Real perfect knowledge is here, Veda. Vedais ca sarvaih. **Therefore you should see through the Vedic version what is actually the fact.**" (SB 2.9.4-8, Tokyo, April 23 1972)

"That is their defect, that their eyes are defective. They cannot go there. That they will not accept. The camera which they manufactured, that is also defective. Because you have manufactured it. You are defective. Your senses are defective. Therefore, in the Vedic literature: "Don't try to see with your eyes, but try to see by ear, shruti. " Shastra-cakshusha. You should accept as your eyes the shastras. Not your so-called eyes."

*(Morning Walk, June 8, 1976, Los Angeles)*

## SEEING THE EARTH THROUGH THE EYES OF NASA

Rather than seeing the Earth through the eyes of shastra, many devotees remain attached to seeing the Earth through the eyes of NASA and other so-called space agencies. The predominance of photos and videos of the so-called globe appears to be overwhelming proof of its factual reality. Srila Prabhupada was not moved by such so-called evidence. In relation to the moon-landing hoax, for example, Srila Prabhupada told the following story about the death of Sargal Singh in order to illustrate the foolishness of blindly following the propaganda of government and media. The story is retold by Satsvarupa Goswami as follows:

"Sargal Singh was very much loved by a merchant, so when Sargal Singh died, the man shaved his head [a sign of mourning] and wore dark clothes. When another man came into the merchant's shop, he asked who had died. "Sargal Singh has died," said the merchant. The visitor did not want to seem ignorant, so he did not ask who Sargal Singh was, but he also shaved his head and wore dark clothes. Other people in town began to follow, not wanting to appear ignorant. When anyone asked who had died, they replied, "Sargal Singh has died."

When a minister of the king saw so many citizens in mourning he also wore dark clothes and shaved his head, but when the king saw this, he inquired, "Why are you mourning and for whom?" "Sargal Singh," the minister replied. The king asked, "Who is that?" When the minister couldn't answer the king told him to find out. The minister then inquired and inquired and finally reached the merchant. "Who is Sargal Singh?" The merchant replied, "Sargal Singh was my donkey, whom I loved very much."

*(Srila Prabhupada Nectar, SPN 2, Chapter 2, 2.48, Srila Prabhupada Tells more Stories)*

Srila Prabhupada's purport on the story is as follows:

**"The unintelligent persons are like that. They do not know, inquire what is the real thing.** Just like twenty years ago I said, "This is all nonsense, moon-going." And now they are coming: "Oh, it is hoax." So that is the difference. Twenty years before and "This is all childish waste of money. This rascal will never be able to go to the moon." And now they are coming. That is the difference. I said from common sense. Nakshatranam aham shashi. **And we read in the Bhagavatam that to go to the moon planet, one has to execute such yajnas, karma-kanda. We understand from shastra. And how this rascal with a machine will go there? That is a common sense. But they do not believe in the words of the shastra. Rascals, they were bluffed and they believe. Shastra-cakshus. Your eyes should be through the shastra.** Yah shstra-vidhim utsrjya vartate kama..., na siddhim sa... [Bg. 16.23]. We believe in this. Therefore I said twenty years before. That is the difference. We take the words of shastra, words of Krishna, ultimate. That's all. So we have no difficulty.

**They do not believe in shastra. They do not believe in Krishna. So they were bluffed.** That is the difference. We have... I started this movement. It is not manufactured by me. Take the words of authorities and spread. There is no adulteration. There is no alteration. That is... Mahajano yena gatah..."

*(Bhu-mandala Diagram Discussion, July 2, 1977, Vrindavana)*

Srila Prabhupada emphasizes here again that one has to 'see through the eyes of shastra.' Srimad Bhagavatam does not describe Bharata-varsha (where we are situated) as part of a globe; it describes Bharata-varsha as part of the central island of Bhu-mandala called Jambudwipa. Jambudwipa is 800,000 miles in length and breadth, and surrounded by an ocean of similar size. If the shastra (Srimad Bhagavatam) says that Bharata-varsha is on the southern side of the 800,000 mile island of Jambudwipa (not an isolated globe floating in space) then followers of Srimad Bhagavatam should see it like that. A photograph of the Earth from the moon would look like this:



The Earth seen from the surface of the moon does not look like this:





This iconic image of the so-called Earth globe taken from above the surface of the so-called moon was unfortunately faked at NASA's studios at Langley in the USA, as can be undisputedly seen in the following video posted on Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4zTR9ubkD4>



Without exception, every other photo and video of the so-called Earth globe is a continuation of the same deception. In a separate paper we will look exclusively at more examples of these fake Earth globe images. As a footnote to the above image of the Earth from the moon, I find it interesting that those in the Vaishnava community who hold strongly to the globe conception of life, also find it hard to doubt the authenticity of the moon-landing fiasco. One senior disciple of Srila Prabhupada forwarded a BBC article with various 'proofs' of the globe. One of these 'proofs' was the above picture of the Earth from the surface of the moon. When I replied with a conversation wherein Srila Prabhupada personally told him that the moon-landing was fake, he made no reply. Either this devotee was not convinced by Srila Prabhupada's position on the moon-landing and preferred to remain silent rather than disagreeing publicly with Srila Prabhupada, or he could not face the fact that his faith in the globe version of the world was untenable (Obviously, since the moon landing was fake, then the photos of the so-called Earth globe from the surface of the so-called moon are also fake). NASA's special effects crew obviously assumed the Earth was round and floating in space like the sun and moon, but Srimad Bhagavatam calls their bluff. The Earth that Krishna created is indeed round, but it is the roundness of a great circular disc that extends for a 4 billion mile radius across the center of the universe. The massive Earth circle is held by Ananta, and does not float in space. The above video link reveals the whole procedure how the most famous Earth globe picture was faked at Nasa's base at Langley, and every subsequent image of the Earth globe is a continuation of the same space movie.

Prabhupada: ...That we want to say, that all of them are rascals, and they are simply wasting time by false idea. Cheating. You know, there are companies. They'll... They have got photographic studio. So they adjust their moon hoax. They'll help you. If you have got particular idea... They are going to the moon planet, Mars. Nowhere the rascals go. There is no knowledge. How they can go? Teeny, imperfect. So if we can prove that they have no knowledge of the universe, neither of the position of their..."

Svarupa Damodara: Actually if these two things, that life comes from life and this concept of the universe, two points are clear, then everything is taken care of.

Prabhupada: Very good. Their false propaganda...

*(Room Conversation with Swarupa Damodar, June 21, 1977, Vrindavana)*

Again:

Tamala Krishna: What about these pictures we have seen on the television showing them jumping on the moon?

Prabhupada: That you can make in laboratory. That is not very difficult.

Tamala Krishna: Colossal hoax...

Candanacarya: How are they able to perpetuate such an enormous hoax?

Prabhupada: Enormous hoax for the fools, not for the intelligent persons.

Hari-sauri: They never fooled you, Srila Prabhupāda.

Prabhupada: Huh?

Hari-Sauri: They never fooled you. (Prabhupada laughs)

Candanacarya: That means that some people must know the actual truth about the hoax in the American system, so if we can find them...

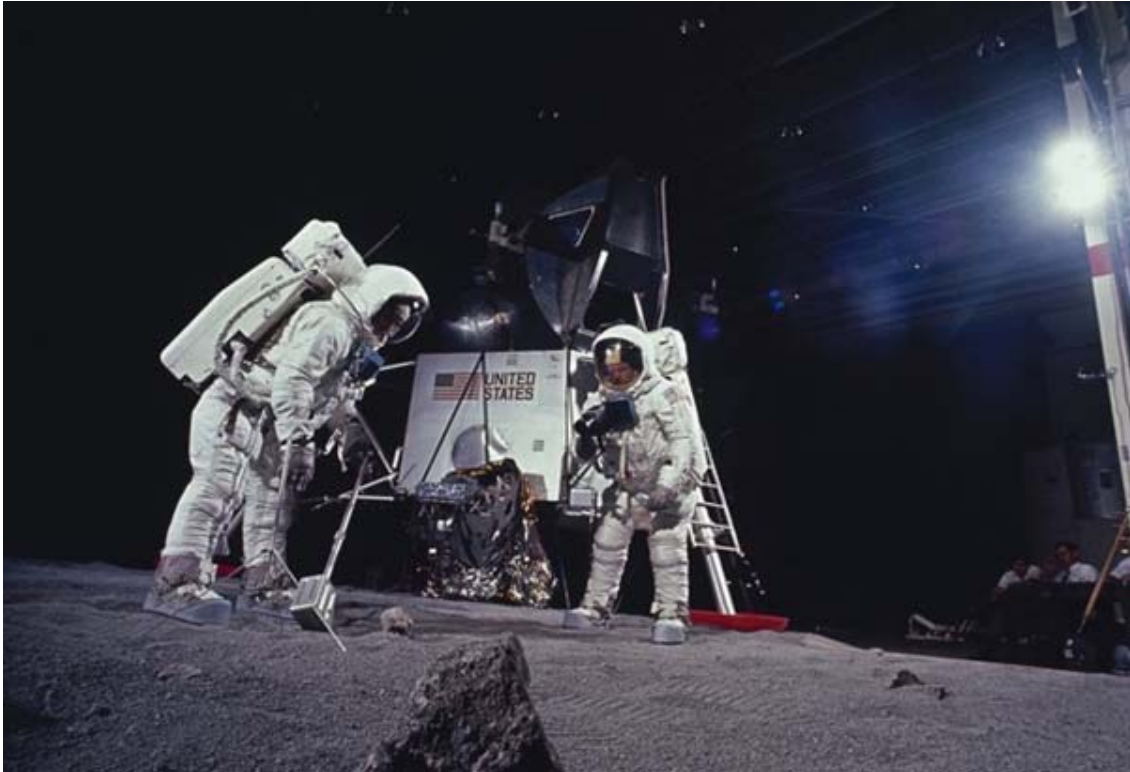
Prabhupada: So you are knowing that. State it.

*(Morning walk, June 4 1976, Los Angeles)*



The so-called surface of the moon turns out to be nothing more than the floor of a film studio on Earth:

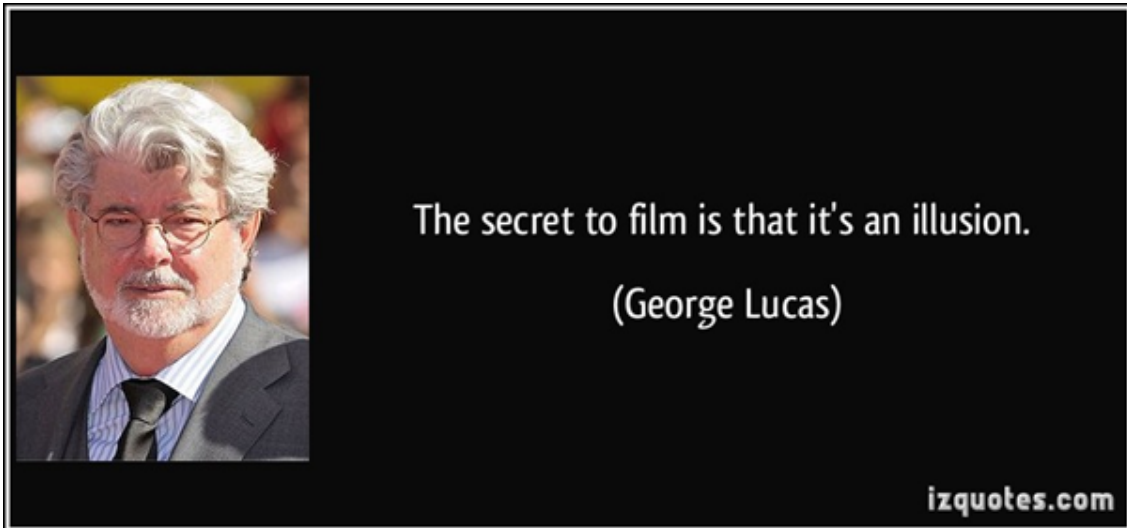




Neil Armstrong rehearsing for the greatest space movie of all time – The Moon Landing:



"And they are going to moon. They are going nowhere, simply taking laboratory photo, studio photo, and cheating. Why this cheating can go on? You do not know." (June 28, 1977, Vrindavana)



Of course, simply stating that pictures of American *astro-NOTS* on the moon are fake doesn't prove the fact. However, Srila Prabhupada's statement has been overwhelmingly vindicated by the multiple investigations into the authenticity of the photography and videos of the so-called moon landing that prove beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the whole thing was indeed fabricated in studios here on Earth. In pursuance of Srila Prabhupada's above instruction to 'state it' (i.e. the truth about the moon landing hoax), the TOVP should include a major exhibition exposing this moon landing hoax. Will ISKCON's leadership have the courage to present such an exhibition or will they tremble and cower at such a proposal? The research for such an exhibition has already been done, and it only needs to be gathered and assembled. Certainly Srila Prabhupada was preparing for such a showdown:

Prabhupada: They have become unnecessary authorities and misleading people. That we want to expose. (*Room Conversation, July 6, 1976, Washington DC*)

Again:

Jayapataka: ...exhibit the farce of modern science.

Prabhupada: Hm?

Jayapataka: Farce of modern science, and every philosophy and science group, where they are just cheating the public. Then exhibit how Krishna consciousness is showing the real way.

Prabhupada: Yes. So do that in this planetarium.

(*Morning Walk, March 18, 1976, Mayapur*)

We hope that Jayapataka Swami will ensure that such an exhibition is actually established in the TOVP. For those who still believe in this space age pantomime, let us hear Srila Prabhupada's statement again which we cited earlier: "*And we read in the Bhagavatam that to go to the moon planet, one has to execute such yajnas, karma-kanda. We understand from shastra. And how this rascal with a machine will go there? That is a common sense. But they do not believe in the words of the shastra. Rascals, they were bluffed and they believe.*" So it is not only non-devotees who are "bluffed and believe." It is the very devotee community who continue to be *bluffed* and to *believe* in NASA's on-going space deception. The present generation of devotees may have forgotten, or perhaps never known Srila Prabhupada's radical stance on this issue:

Prabhupada: ...to keep their service in order. This is going on, all cheating. To keep people in darkness and exploit them. The so-called swamis exploiting, yogis exploiting, politician exploiting, scientists exploiting, philosophers exploiting. What is the position of the world? And this is the opportunity, human life, to know everything, to solve all the problems. They are not given the opportunity, they are kept in darkness. The demons. "There is no God, science is everything, life is produced from chemicals, and there is no living entities on other planets." They

are simply show. This planet is full of..., it is all scientists, and they are vacant. And we have to believe that. Perhaps for the first time I am raising protest against all this nonsense.

Tamala Krishna: It is such a challenge. Your statements are such a challenge to their so-called science that they're still in shock. I still think that they do not take us seriously yet because it's such a difference to what they are saying. *Soon, gradually, they'll take.*

*(Morning Walk, July 10 1976, New York)*

Despite Srila Prabhupada's eschatological preaching that the Supreme Personality of Godhead (Nama Avatar or Holy Name) has appeared in the form of transcendental sound vibration in order to counteract the 'demoniac influence' on the Earth, many devotees remain naive to the spiritual warfare presently being waged in the world. In the above conversation Srila Prabhupada's main point is that the people of the world are being deliberately misled (kept in darkness) by certain groups of people regarding the nature of life and the universe. Who are these people? What is the nature of their false teachings that keep people in darkness? Is the globe concept one of the many deceptions in Kali-yuga that keeps people in darkness for exploitation? Has that nefarious agenda masquerading as science, covertly and insidiously influenced the thinking of devotees within the Hare Krishna movement, and particularly in regards to the current question of the Earth's depiction within the TOVP? It behoves the gurus of ISKCON to thoroughly investigate this subject and expose the false propaganda of the materialists, not that non-Vedic speculations about the Earth are allowed to dominate in a planetarium supposedly dedicated to Vedic cosmology and meant to bring about a spiritual revolution in the world. What revolution in consciousness will come about by reinforcing people's belief in fake moon landings and computer generated images of Earth globes?

In the discussion below, Srila Prabhupada states that 'we' (ISKCON) have to prove that 'they' (so-called scientists and space agencies) have no knowledge of the universe. What does Srila Prabhupada mean by saying they have no knowledge of the universe? Don't 'they' know about Earth, the Moon, and Mars? Do telescopes not allow astronomers to see conditions on the other planets? The fascination produced by the spectacle of so-called astro-Nots in space, landers on Mars, and telescopes that reputedly see light years away into the universe, have duped the people of the world into believing what is essentially, a false construct of reality regarding the universe and one's place within it. The etymological meaning of the word 'fascinate' is relevant in this regard:

"fascinate (verb) 1590s, "bewitch, enchant," from Middle French fasciner (14c.), from Latin fascinatus, past participle of fascinare "bewitch, enchant, fascinate," from fascinus "a charm, enchantment, spell, witchcraft," which is of uncertain origin. Earliest used of witches and of serpents, who were said to be able to cast a spell by a look that rendered one unable to move or resist. Sense of "delight, attract and hold the attention of" is first recorded 1815. To fascinate is to bring under a spell, as by the power of the eye; to enchant and to charm are to bring under a spell by some more subtle and mysterious power." (*Century Dictionary*)

People's fascination (bewitchment) with so-called space-age technology is almost unshakable. The people's implicit trust in the 'bogus propaganda' put out by clandestine forces operating through the main channels of control – government and military, education and media, etc., requires an immensely powerful spiritual personality like Srila Prabhupada to break the spell. Srila Prabhupada's above statement in this regard was not an over-estimation: "Perhaps for the first time I am raising protest against all this nonsense." On the very day that American astro-NOTS landed on the so-called moon, Srila Prabhupada declared it to be a hoax, and he consistently lambasted the 'bogus propaganda' of the American space agency regarding their so-called space expeditions and speculative claims about the universe. In the discussion below, Svarupa Damodara correctly ascertains that the false propaganda can be defeated in two major areas (1) by establishing that life comes life, and does not evolve by chemical evolution (2) by establishing the Vedic concept of the universe, and thereby disproving the materialistic concept of the universe. This understanding shows the immensely important role that

cosmological concepts are to play in the spiritual revolution predicted in Srimad Bhagavatam (SB 1.1.2). Indeed, the Mayapur Temple of Vedic Planetarium was one of Srila Prabhupada's main projects to counteract the prevailing materialistic world view of life and the cosmos.

Prabhupada: ..."Things which are beyond your conception, don't foolishly argue, rascal." That will prove your rascaldom. Better accept what the authority says. It is beyond your conception, rascal. Why you are wasting time? That we want to say, that all of them are rascals, and they are simply wasting time by false idea. Cheating. You know, there are companies. They'll... They have got photographic studio. So they adjust their moon hoax. They'll help you. If you have got particular idea... They are going to the moon planet, Mars. Nowhere the rascals go. There is no knowledge. How they can go? Teeny, imperfect. So if we can prove that they have no knowledge of the universe, neither of the position of their..."

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Prabhupada: Very good. Their false propaganda...

*(Room Conversation with Swarup Damodar, June 21, 1977, Vrindavana)*

Again:

"Just like this planetary system. So many planets are there. They do not know anything. And they are going to the Mars. They are going to the moon. All bluff. **Two things unsolved. They do not know what is life and they do not know what are these planetary system. And still, they are speaking on these two subjects as authority. That is bluff.**" *(Evening Darshan, July 8 1976, Washington DC)*

In the conversation below, one may wonder, is Srila Prabhupada the original conspiracy 'theorist,' or is he correct in trying to inform us about an actual conspiracy? In the following conversation, Srila Prabhupada tells his disciples that the so-called images of Mars taken by a so-called Mars Lander in 1976 were actually taken in the desert of Arizona. He also explains why so-called enemy governments of the Americans don't reveal the truth to the world:

Ramesvara: Deliberately cheating. You said that in Los Angeles...

Prabhupada: Brought newspaper, and as soon as they say... Who said?

Hari-sauri: That was in Washington. They showed a picture of Mars...

Prabhupada: Stop, don't read, it is now understood what is.... Mars, it is all in Arizona.

Tamala Krishna: You were very perceptive to find it.

Ramesvara: No one is thinking like that. You are the only one who caught that, Srila Prabhupada.

Prabhupada: Because I am the only one at the present moment intelligent.

Tamala Krishna: We are still as dull (Prabhupada laughs) as the karmis. We would never have thought like that, Prabhupada, about Arizona.

Pusta Krishna: They mentioned that the pictures of Mars appear just like some of the picture of national parks in Arizona.

Prabhupada: In other places they could not find, throughout the whole world,

Arizona. That means the whole business is going on in Arizona. Pusta Krishna:

They say that if this terrain were on the earth, we would immediately make it a national park, it looks just like one of the national parks.

Bali-mardana: In Arizona there is much government land. I passed through there recently. So there is good facility for them to make secretly.

Prabhupada: Yes. The moon business was done there.

Tamala Krishna: **This means it's definitely a very calculated plot to cheat the public.**

Prabhupada: **That's all.**

Tamala Krishna: And the whole, all of the nations...

Prabhupada: Just to convince people that our, this rascal civilization is advanced.

Ramesvara: **International conspiracy.**

Tamala Krishna: That means all the nations are cooperating in this project.

Ramesvara: Russia and America.

Prabhupada: All the so-called scientists.

Tamala Krishna: Do they know that they are, are they talking with each other, or are they just...

Prabhupada: No, they are knowing. They talk. Chauri chauri matrka-bhai.(?)

Ramesvara: **It's a conspiracy.**

Prabhupada: **All thieves, they are cousin brothers, "Don't expose me and I'll not expose you. Let us keep peace." Two thieves, he knows he is a thief, but if he wants to reveal a thief, then his business will be suffer.**

Tamala Krishna: They are the greatest cheaters.

Prabhupada: Chauri chauri matrka-bhai.(?) Hare Krishna.

Tamala Krishna: Except for you, no one is blowing the whistle on these people. You are like a transcendental detective.

Prabhupada: That is the test. Krishna says na mam prapadyante mudhah [Bg. 7.15]. Anyone who is not Krishna conscious, he's a mudha. It's a fact.

*(Morning Walk, July 12 1976, New York)*

One has only to look at the absolutely pathetic attempts of China at staging their own moon landing to see the truth of Prabhupada's statement: *"All thieves, they are cousin brothers, "Don't expose me and I'll not expose you. Let us keep peace." Two thieves, he knows he is a thief, but if he wants to reveal a thief, then his business will be suffer."* One thing that is certainly worth noting in this and other similar conversations on the issue of the space program, is the dramatic change of tone in many of Srila Prabhupada's disciples from 1976 to the present situation in 2017. From once agreeing with Srila Prabhupada that an international conspiracy is at hand to dupe the people of the world regarding the so-called space program, this same devotee, Ramesvara Prabhu, along with other disciples of Srila Prabhupada's at the TOVP, are now tenaciously arguing for the placement of a globe into the planetarium. Each one of those devotees personally heard Srila Prabhupada time and time again lambaste the whole space program as fake and bogus propaganda. I mean no disrespect to these devotees who I personally admire for having served Srila Prabhupada's mission for many decades, but there is a serious question they also have to ask themselves: How have the disciples of Srila Prabhupada arrived at such a reactionary position? What happened to talk of the 'international conspiracy' mentioned above? What happened in the course of almost fifty years that everyone now starts believing that NASA's pictures of the so-called Earth from the so-called surface of the moon are actually authentic pictures of the Earth? If NASA faked images of the Moon and Mars in the desert of Arizona, is it any less surprising that they fake the image of the Earth itself?

Ambarisha: No, I agree. I wonder where they went? I think they went somewhere. Maybe not.

Hari-sauri: **Prabhupada said in Los Angeles it's very easy to simulate these moon landing pictures in a movie so that they're.... Just like there are so many films now where they show this.**

Satsvarupa: People in the classes, when the students say that that they do not see God, there is no proof for God, I give that argument you give. I say, "Well, I am a common layman, I have no proof that we've actually gone to the moon. At least I haven't gone to the moon. Show me right away that you can prove it me." They say, "Well, we have rocks, they brought back rocks." "I don't believe that they are from the moon." **They are astonished that I..., we could actually doubt.** (laughter)

*(Morning Walk, June 15 1976, Detroit)*

In the above discussion we get a little piece of 'ancient history' when devotees were once actively preaching in colleges against the moon hoax. Satsvarupa Goswami says "they



are astonished that we could actually doubt." What happened that to that spirit, of 'astonishing' people with a spirit of doubt in the version of reality presented by NASA. Yes, it's astonishing that anyone could doubt that the Earth is a globe, but not if you see through the eyes of Srimad Bhagavatam.

Is it any surprise that the same moon hoax is continuing to the present day with contemporary fake space programs like the International Space Station and the European Space Agency? Would Srila Prabhupada gullibly accept all this media spectacle, or would he simply denounce it as a continuation of an on-going deception? In the above discussion Hari Sauri Prabhu quotes Srila Prabhupada that 'it is very easy to simulate these moon landing pictures in a movie.' Despite the fact that the first so-called pictures of the Earth globe were a product of the same fake moon-landings, Hari-sauri Prabhu now fully supports this globe construct of reality. But is it any less difficult to simulate an astro-NOT floating inside the so-called International Space Station, or hovering over the globe Earth below than it is to show them walking on the so-called moon? The exact same images of astronauts hovering over the Earth are used in movies such as *Gravity*. *The only difference is that Warner Brothers, unlike NASA, let you know that it is only a movie.* This first picture is a scene of the Earth globe from the movie *Gravity*:



The next image is a scene of the so-called Earth globe from NASA. Can you tell the difference between the movie image and the so-called real image?



*STS-123 mission specialist Richard Linnehan participates in a spacewalk outside the International Space Station. Photo by NASA*

Why are people incapable of penetrating the 'bogus propaganda' put out by the asuric governments of Kali-yuga? The following verses from Srimad Bhagavatam tells us about the psychology of leaders and followers:

"The mass of people follow the example of a leader in society and imitate his behavior. They accept as evidence whatever the leader accepts.

People in general are not very advanced in knowledge by which to discriminate between religion and irreligion. The innocent, unenlightened citizen is like an ignorant animal sleeping in peace with its head on the lap of its master, faithfully believing in the master's protection." (SB 6.2.4-5)

Here it says *sa yat pramanam kurute lokas tad anuvartate*, "the people accept as evidence (pramanam) whatever the leader accepts," In other words, the mass of people have the tendency to believe whatever the leader tells them. This tells us something about the in-built psychology of the living entity. Because Krishna is the Absolute Truth, and truthful, the spirit souls situated in their constitutional position naturally believe Krishna (the Supreme Leader) and follow His direction. When the living entities come to the material world, they bring with them the same tendency to accept as truthful whatever the leader says. The problem is that the leaders of Kali-yuga are 'dedicated' (parah) to irreligion (adharma) and deceitfulness (anrta) (SB 12.1.38). Thus the people's innate tendency to follow the leader is shamelessly exploited by low-class criminals posing as leaders who then virtually devour the citizens *prajas te bhakshayishyanti* (SB 12.1.40). Indeed the rajas or leaders of Kali-yuga will be merciless (nirghrñaiḥ), and no better than thieves (dasyu) (SB 12.2.8). As explained by Sukadeva Goswami to King Parikṣit:

"There will be many such uncivilized kings ruling at the same time, O King Parikṣit, These barbarians in the guise of kings will devour the citizenry, and they will all be uncharitable, possessed of fierce tempers, **and great devotees of irreligion and falsity.**

**These barbarians in the guise of kings will devour the citizenry**, murdering innocent women, children, cows and brāhmaṇas and coveting the wives and property of other men. They will be erratic in their moods, have little strength of character and be very short-lived. Indeed, not purified by any Vedic rituals and lacking in the practice of regulative principles, they will be completely covered by the modes of passion and ignorance.

The citizens governed by these low-class kings will imitate the character, behavior and speech of their rulers. Harassed by their leaders and by each other, they will all suffer ruination." (*SB 12.1.38-41*)

It is worth considering these verses in relation to the propaganda put out by government through media, education, and various other agencies in relation to the space program. Since the people have the innate tendency to follow whatever the leader tells them, the mass of people will instinctively believe what the leaders say and duly follow them. Again, this tendency is not bad in itself as it is an innate quality of the soul to follow leadership (Krishna), but unfortunately, it leads to ruination when the people put their faith in the wrong leaders. Even when it can be clearly pointed out where the so-called leaders or authorities are cheating, the people will still rally to defend their perceived leaders, even against someone who is trying to enlighten them by explaining the truth of the situation. The point is dramatically made in the epic opening statement of the Gospel of John regarding the incarnation of Jesus into the world of darkness:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." (*John 1.1-4*)

*The light shines in the darkness but the darkness cannot comprehend it.* To a person in ignorance or passion, the truth will be perceived as lies, and lies will be perceived as truth. It takes a person of pinnacle spiritual intelligence such as Srila Prabhupada (the light) to help us see through the lies and propaganda of the atheists and asuras (the darkness). The question is whether members of ISKCON are going to accept Srila Prabhupada as their authority, or whether they accept will continue to accept the authority of secular leaders. Since the principle established by Srimad Bhagavatam is that people 'accept as evidence whatever the leader accepts,' it follows that one's choice of leadership will determine one's faith. We see this confusion of allegiance very clearly in many members of ISKCON who due to accepting secular leadership as their authority (government, science, media, etc.), simply can't accept Srila Prabhupada's claim that moon landings of 1969-72 were fake. The danger is that one can be easily misled due to attraction for the demoniac and atheistic views:

"Those who are thus bewildered *are attracted by demonic and atheistic views*. In that deluded condition, their hopes for liberation, their fruitive activities, and their culture of knowledge are all defeated. (BG 9.12)

#### PURPORT

There are many devotees who assume themselves to be in Krishna consciousness and devotional service but at heart do not accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, as the Absolute Truth. For them, the fruit of devotional service—going back to Godhead—will never be tasted.

O son of Prtha, those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible." (*BG 9.13*)

So on this issue of the space program in general, and the Earth in particular, each member of ISKCON is faced with the choice of accepting either secular science, or Srimad Bhagavatam as their authority:



Prabhupada: It is up to the man to believe or not believe, but we have got authorities, different; they have got authorities, different. So if we follow our authorities, then we have to accept according to that.

Indian man: We get in a dilemma, we people who do not know more than they explain about.

Prabhupada: There is no dilemma, because our literature is there from millions and millions of years, and they have their knowledge within two, three hundred years. Now it is up to us whom to believe.

Indian man: You want to say that the astronomers are the mistaken. The astronomers have been mistaken to say all these things?

Prabhupada: Yes. Everyone commits mistake. Anyone who is conditioned, he must commit mistake. This is our position, that anyone who is not liberated, he must commit mistake. We take knowledge from liberated soul, not from the speculators. That is the difference.

Cyavana: They prove their inadequacy by changing their theories every twenty years.

Prabhupada: Yes.

*(Morning Walk, October 25, 1975, Mauritius)*

Srila Prabhupada was not motivated to find favour and acceptance with the 'demoniac governments' and 'rascal scientists' of the world. Srila Prabhupada was motivated to present Srimad Bhagavatam as it is to the innocent people of the world:

Prabhupada: We do not require to satisfy the scientists. We have to describe according to our book. That's all. If they can understand, let them understand. Otherwise... It is not our business to satisfy the so-called scientists. We are giving the real description." *(Room Conversation, June 18, 1977, Vrindavana)*

Again the devotees involved at the TOVP have to ask themselves: are they pleasing Srila Prabhupada by trying to satisfy the scientists of the world, or would Srila Prabhupada be more pleased by presenting Bhu-mandala *as it is* to the world? And to hell with what the scientists think! The problem is a lack of faith in the words of shastra, and a committed faith in the forces of maya such as NASA and other space agencies. Srila Prabhupada mentioned this lack of faith in some of his own god-brothers:

Prabhupada: No, **we want do it according to Bhagavatam.**

Indian Astronomer: That is what I mean...

Prabhupada: **What is the difficulty? The shastra is there. You have to make drawing according to shastra. That's all...**

Prabhupada: So how he'll make diagram? He has no idea.

Tamala Krishna: No, he doesn't. He never thought about it. No one reads the Bhagavatam as a scientific book, Srila Prabhupada. That's the point. Except for Your Divine Grace, they are thinking it's story, "It is stories."

Prabhupada: Yes, **they do not believe.**

Tamala Krishna: No. And therefore no one takes it seriously. Modern people don't take it seriously.

Prabhupada: **There was a Gosai. He was reading Caitanya-caritamrta. So the description of the planetary system there is. He used to say to his audience, "Actually these things are not there. These are imaginary descriptions." He was such a fool. So the whole world has taken like that, "symbolic, imagination."**

Tamala Krishna: And he was lecturing on Caitanya-caritamrta. I think you mentioned that one of your Godbrothers once said to you, "You really believe that there is such a place, Krishnaloka, Vaikunthaloka?" He was himself...

Prabhupada: Bon Maharaja did not believe. No... Nobody ever thought of it.

*(Conversation with Vedic Astronomer, April 30, 1977, Bombay)*

*So if Sukadeva Goswami's description of the Earth is not 'symbolic' or 'imagination,' why are the TOVP management not making bold declarations that according to Srimad Bhagavatam, our Earth area is surrounded by a greater Earth area? Why are they in denial about this concept, and instead promoting faith in fake images of an Earth globe floating in dark space? Why vehemently deny the possibility that the Earth continues into other parts of the greater Earth plane? It is really quite astonishing, that in spite of Srimad Bhagavatam's clear description of Bharata-varsha's position on a continual Earth plane, the TOVP management (who are supposed to be presenting Srimad Bhagavatam as a factual description of the universe), flatly refuse to acknowledge even the possibility that this may be a true account of our Earth. There are powerful ramifications to Srimad Bhagavatam's description of Bharata-varsha's location to Jambudwipa that the TOVP simply do not want to deduce: if the Earth of Srimad Bhagavatam continues, then it is not a globe, and our life on Earth must be a very different one from this day on. Until this point, devotees of Krishna may have felt no reason to question the idea that the Earth is a globe. However, as the temple of Vedic Planetarium rises, the necessity to question the globe emerges from the description in Srimad Bhagavatam of Bharata-varsha's size, shape, and location on the plane of Bhu-mandala. If one believes in Krishna, why would one doubt the description of Earth in Srimad Bhagavatam? If we do not believe in the shastra, are we not better than those condemned by Srila Prabhupada in the conversation cited earlier: *"They do not believe in shastra. They do not believe in Krishna. So they were bluffed."* Those Vaisnavas who do not believe the shastra, that is, who cannot accept the literal description of Sukadeva Goswami, have they also been *'bluffed'* into believing the Earth is a globe? Of course everyone will be quick to assert that they *do believe* in the shastra, but if that is the case, then where is the demonstration of one's belief in Bhu-mandala? If one believes in Bhu-mandala, why not explain and present the situation as it is plainly described. At least from the scriptural point of view, the idea that Bharata-varsha is part of a globe is clearly unfounded, and has nothing to do with the original description. Certainly, Sukadeva Goswami describes the Earth very differently from what we see from NASA's so-called space ships, and thus as followers of Srimad Bhagavatam we have to, at the very least, exercise some curiosity, some critical thinking, and some doubt in the globe construct of reality. Unfortunately, instead of questioning one's faith in the globe, the TOVP representatives display a surprising lack of faith in Bhu-mandala. In part two of this paper we shall see how this lack of faith manifests in the erroneous depiction of the Bhu-mandala.*