



SAILING TO JAMBŪDVĪPA

The Māyāpur Vedic Planetarium and the Flat Earth According to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

By Māyeśvara dāsa

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(1.0) A New Earth

The Vedic Planetarium in Māyāpur, West Bengal, India (presently well under construction as of November 2015), is an attempt to present the cosmography¹ of the Universe according to the ancient Vedic literature, primarily the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as translated and presented by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Śrīla Prabhupāda is the Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, popularly known as the Hare Krishna society. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* otherwise known as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* was originally spoken by the great Vedic sage Śrīla Vyāsadeva to his son Śukadeva Goswāmī and is described as being the essence or cream of all Vedic literature and histories *sarva-vedetihāsānāṁ sāram* (SB 1.3.41). Canto 1, chapter 5, verse 11 of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* predicts that this literature will bring about a revolution in the impious lives of this world's misdirected civilization (*janatāgha-viplavo*). The Māyāpur Vedic Planetarium is based on the cosmography of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and was one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's main projects to counteract the prevailing materialistic world view of life and the cosmos.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s depiction of the universe immediately creates a clash of world-views that most people may prefer to avoid, and that includes many of the followers of the Vedas who find it difficult to understand or conceptualize the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s depiction of Earth and its relation to the greater universe. We have all grown up with an image of Earth as a rotating ball in space, and we're pretty happy with that. But how did we get that image and conception of a globe into our heads? Is the globe-shaped Earth an authentic image, and is the Earth truly a round planet rotating in space around the sun? Will it come to be, that one of the most earth-shattering events in our life is the discovery of the real nature of Earth itself? What will the Māyāpur Vedic planetarium reveal? To quote from the Book of Revelations, a Christian book of prophecy:

And I saw a new heaven and a new Earth, for the first heaven and the first Earth were passed away (Rev 21.1)

Will the Māyāpur Vedic Planetarium reveal a new looking Earth? Or will it look like the one that The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has been presenting ever since the first photographs of Earth taken in 1969, reputedly taken from outer space as the Apollo spacecraft made its way to the moon? This subject can be of interest to all of us; not only because we certainly ought to know the location and shape of the Earth that we live on, but also because the position and shape of the Earth has wider implications in regard to the world views we will adopt, created by either a

¹ Cosmography is the science that maps the general features of the cosmos or universe, describing both heaven and Earth.

materialistic or transcendental perspective. We have on our hands a clash of world-views that is truly mind-blowing.

(1.1) The Shape of Earth

What shape is the Earth?

But we know the answer to that already! It's a globe-shaped ball floating in space; right! Right? We've all seen the pictures in books and films, and done the math to prove its round. The sun and moon are round. The other planets are round. Earth is round. What other shape could it be?

Well let's think about that for a moment...

I would like to first draw the reader's attention to the depiction of Earth in a video called *Vedic Cosmos* produced by His Holiness Dānavīr Goswami, a prominent disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda. I am an admirer of Dānavīr Goswami's scholarship and dedication to Śrīla Prabhupāda. The following paper merely questions a few points of the presentation with the intention of coming to the correct understanding of Earth's position and depiction as described in Vedic texts; indeed I am surprised that Dānavīr Goswami has depicted the Earth as globe-shaped when *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* itself offers no such description. I assume the animation in this video will help formulate the ideas of how the Vedic cosmos will be presented in the Māyāpur Vedic planetarium when it eventually opens. I would like, therefore, to present some counter arguments to Dānavīr Goswami's depiction of a globe-shaped Earth specifically to those involved in preparing the images for the future planetarium. The question of Earth's shape and location, however, is of general interest to all of us, and so I'm presenting the following paper for everyone's interest. According to the Vedic *Purāṇas* (histories) the continents of our Earth (running from north to south) are an 8,000 mile section of a much greater land area called Bhārata-varṣa; Bhārata-varṣa is altogether a 72,000 mile region of the even greater 800,000 mile circular island of Jambūdvīpa; and Jambūdvīpa itself rests on the cosmic flat plane of Bhū-maṇḍala which has a diameter of 4 billion miles stretching to the shell of the universe. All of this huge land area is populated by various forms of life, including advanced human life. According to NASA we are standing on a rotating ball in empty lifeless space. Which is it? Do we actually have any assurance that the Earth is indeed a globe rotating in space?

Well perhaps we are already so assured and confident in the image of Earth that we've been presented, that to question it is unnecessary, and for anyone to do so, means they must be bordering on the insane. What do you mean by questioning the globe-shaped image of the Earth? Are you crazy? The animation presented in the video *Vedic Cosmos* is relevant here (at least to those interested in Vedic knowledge) because in that video we see Bhārata-khanda (the Earth) depicted as a globe. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* however

describes Earth as part of a massive island called Jambūdvīpa which lies on the cosmic flat plane of Bhū-maṇḍala. Houston, we have a problem!

(1.2) The Flat Earth

Usage of the term ‘flat Earth’ does not mean a landscape devoid of highlands and mountains; it is a term used to distinguish the idea of Earth lying on a horizontal plane, from the opposing and most widely accepted idea of Earth being a rotating globe floating in space. The flat Earth idea is usually equated with primitive and pre-scientific ideas. A common expression to equate certain ideas with stupidity is to say, “And people used to think the world was flat.” In most people’s minds, a flat Earth conjures up pictures of boats falling off the edge. However, almost all ancient cultures and religions (including the Vedic culture) taught that the world was flat and motionless, and that the sun and moon rotated around the stationary Earth. This system is referred to as the geo-centric system. The opposing idea of Earth as a moving planet rotating the sun began to take hold in the modern era with Copernicus (1473-1543), Galileo (1564-1642), and Newton (1642-1726). This movement of the Earth around the sun is referred to as the heliocentric system. The word comes from the Greek words helios (sun) kentron (center). Although the heliocentric view of Earth rotating around the sun has always been contended, it was the idea that one the day. Until now...

In just a few years, there has been an almost instant revolution in ideas about the flat Earth with an accompanying explosion of interest in the concept. It has been perhaps one of the most popular internet topics of 2015 and will continue to gain momentum in the coming years. *Actual* science in the sense of empiric observation, hypothesis, and demonstration has now come back to take the side of a geo-centric and flat Earth model. There have been some truly revolutionary books and documentaries produced which blow apart many of our ideas about the globe-shaped Earth. Interestingly, part of this revolution has involved taking a hard look at the authenticity of the photos and videos from the Apollo moon-landings (1969-1972), as also those subsequent images and videos circulated by NASA that depict the Earth as a rotating ball in space.

It is also interesting timing that this revolution in thinking about the flat Earth is occurring simultaneously with the construction of the Māyāpur Vedic Planetarium whose cosmology clearly describes an expanded flat Earth called Bhū-maṇḍala. Many centuries of Western astronomical propaganda has instilled a false belief in all of us that a flat Earth concept is un-scientific and idiotic; moreover, satellite images of a globe-shaped Earth taken from outer space are presented as conclusive proof that the Earth is round not flat. As will be explained later, however, no such authentic image or video of a globe-shaped Earth rotating on its axis in outer space actually exists. The images we’ve been presented of the globe-shaped Earth have either been clearly exposed as fake, or as openly admitted by NASA, merely computer generated images of Earth pieced together from composites of photos of land areas taken from so-called ‘low orbit.’ Basically what you see of the Earth from supposed outer-space is no more what

you see of Earth when looking out of an airplane window; namely, some land, sea, and clouds with a flat horizon in all directions. The curved lens camera used on NASA's images is a simple and disingenuous method to create a round or curved shape to the land below. In actuality, the horizon is flat in every direction as can be directly perceived by anyone from a height of 35,000 feet whilst sitting in an airplane. Amateur cameras sent to a height of 120,000 feet also show the same flat horizon and no curvature anywhere. If studied carefully, with respect and without fear and prejudice, the many exposes of NASA's deceptive imagery of Earth, as well as the hundreds and thousands of scientifically presented arguments for the flat Earth model will help support the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s depiction of an expanded flat Earth.



(1.3) The Māyā Earth

Vedic cosmography is the science that deals with maps of the universe. For those not familiar with Vedic cosmography, the Sanskrit names and descriptions of the various areas of the universe can be bewildering and one tends to quickly turn off and find something a little easier to discuss and think about. However, the great question of self-realization, “Who am I?” entails a further question, “Where am I?” The world’s oldest spiritual literature known as the Vedas, explain that we are eternal spiritual beings now inhabiting an illusory realm of existence called *māyā*. The term *māyā* or illusion is applied to the material world, not because the material world doesn’t exist, or is a mere figment of the imagination, but because it’s not what it seems. The material world creates an illusion for the soul because it covers the knowledge of our own spiritual identity, and covers our perception of the eternal spiritual reality or Kingdom of God. We don’t perceive the real world because we have entered a different one—one that creates illusion. Think of going to Disneyland where reality is suspended for a period of time. The Disneyland sets are real, but they create various illusions and fantasy for the viewer.

The material world or *māyā* is created by God to enable the individual soul to exercise their free will and live an independent existence if they wish to so. Originally inhabitants of the spiritual world, we have somehow or other, become attracted to the Lord’s illusory energy. The material world is primarily the realm of self-centered as opposed to God-centered activities. Here we have the license to do things our own way, rather than God’s way. As a result we generally just end up getting hopelessly lost and confused about life and its purpose.

On entering the material world, the tiny soul, tempted and bewildered by *māyā*’s distractions, begins to desire and act in materialistic ways; and the result of these desires (*kāma*) and actions (*karma*) oblige him to rotate in a cycle of birth and death. Although the soul is eternal without beginning or end, by entering the material nature he makes a pact with material time and becomes subject to the experience of having to take birth, and having to endure death. The various regions in the universe facilitate the various desires and reactions of the living entity as he wanders from one lifetime to another in forgetfulness of his eternal identity. The Vedas give descriptions of the whereabouts, environment, and inhabitants of these various regions in the universe. The various scriptures of the world’s religions are meant to gradually remind us of who we are and where we are in relation to God, but the Vedas are very specific in their detailed map of the universe. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, referred to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the post-graduate study of Godhead.

Cosmography forms a large part of the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other Vedic texts. This is a subject that the Vedic sages clearly want us all to be informed about. This cosmological knowledge has been transmitted from guru to disciple for thousands of years. In order to make this knowledge known throughout the world, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in the 1970's instructed his disciples to build a planetarium that would inform the people of the world, not only about where the Earth is in its relation to the universe, but also about the astonishing features of Earth itself. After an initial slow start, the construction work of the Māyāpur Vedic Planetarium is now well under way and upon completion will be an astonishing example of the resurgence of Vedic culture in the modern era.

Sometimes discussions on cosmography are neglected or dismissed as too abstract, but this subject is placed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other Vedic texts for a reason. The reason is so that the living entities get to learn about the various options and destinations available to them whilst residing in the material world. According to one's *karma* and desire, the soul will transmigrate from one lifetime to another and be placed in various situations throughout the universe. Knowledge of *karma*, reincarnation, and cosmography helps one to live in such a way that one can choose favourable destinations rather than be forced to accept unfavourable ones as a result of ignorantly neglecting or violating spiritual laws. This is a world view that obviously takes into account many lifetimes. Detailed explanations of the transmigration of the soul are described throughout the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, Krishna briefly describes this transmigration of the soul to various regions in the universe:

Those situated in the mode of goodness gradually go upward to the higher planets; those in the mode of passion live on the earthly planets; and those in the abominable mode of ignorance go down to the hellish worlds. (Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, 14.18)

Here Krishna says *madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ*. Śrīla Prabhupāda translates the verse as 'those in the mode of passion remain on the Earthly planets.' The word *madhye* refers to those places in the middle of the universe located along the horizontal circular sphere called Bhū-maṇḍala, a 4 billion diameter area which divides the universe into higher and lower regions. Bhū-maṇḍala is not, therefore, a planet as we presently understand the word. We shall look at this sphere presently to see exactly where our Earth is located in the Vedic cosmos.

Both the celestial and hellish areas within the upper and lower regions of the universe are temporary sojourns as the soul rotates in a cycle of repeated births and deaths over billions of lifetimes:

Those who study the Vedas and drink the soma juice, seeking the heavenly planets, worship Me indirectly. Purified of sinful reactions, they take birth on the pious, heavenly planet of Indra, where they enjoy godly delights.

When they have thus enjoyed vast heavenly sense pleasure and the results of their pious activities are exhausted, they return to this mortal planet again. Thus those who seek sense enjoyment by adhering to the principles of the three Vedas achieve only repeated birth and death. (Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, 9.20-21)

The Vedas also include knowledge of the spiritual world (the Kingdom of God) and the yogic process of how to attain that realm. The idea is that the living entities after experiencing all varieties of existence within the material world can eventually extricate themselves from material illusion and return to their original home. Krishna says:

After attaining Me, the great souls, who are yogīs in devotion, never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries, because they have attained the highest perfection.

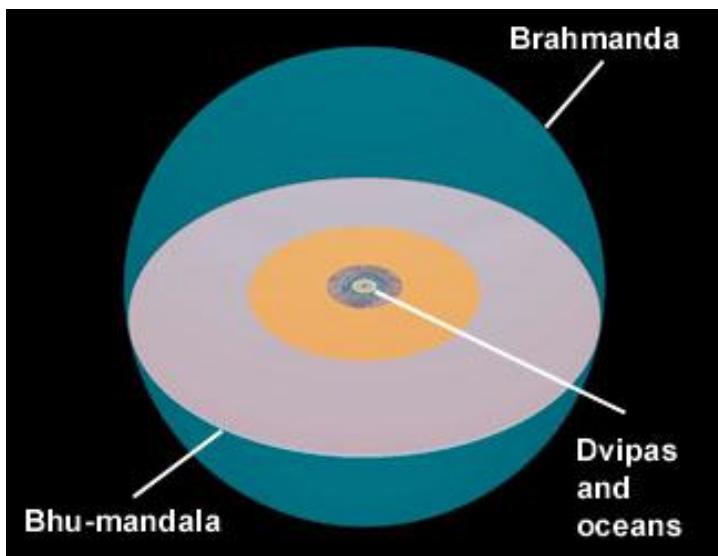
From the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode, O son of Kuntī, never takes birth again. (Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, 8.15-16)

All of these regions are described in detail throughout the Vedic literature to inform the hearer of his options within the material world, as also the types of bodies and environments that he can expect to enjoy or suffer as a result of either applying or neglecting Vedic directives. A further reason for including descriptions of places in the universe in the Vedic literature is so that we get to see the fantastic layout of the universe itself and in this way we can gain a greater appreciation for its designer. The universe is not random; it is brilliantly and beautifully created. The brilliant symmetrical layout of the Bhū-maṇḍala, for example, rules out any possibility of the idea that the universe arose out of nothing and chance.

(1.4) The Earth According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is a book which is described as being the cream or essence of all Vedic literature *sarva-vedetihāsānām sāram* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.41) In other words, it contains the highest and most essential truths of all the Vedic knowledge. In this book, descriptions of the universe are given including the nature of life in the different locations. So where are we in the Vedic universe, and what does Earth look like from the Vedic perspective? *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes that our universe is round in shape. The diameter of the universe is calculated to be 4 billion miles which is not so big according to modern calculations. The Vedas do, however, describe that there are innumerable universes and that life is present in multi-various forms throughout these multi-universes. The total number of these collected universes is of inestimable quantity. Despite the inconceivable number of material universes, the entire material world is only a fraction of the spiritual world from which we have fallen.

In the image below we see a simplified depiction of our round universe (*brahmaṇda*) divided across the middle by a flat plane called *Bhū-maṇḍala*. Think of cutting a large water melon in half. The flat circular shape of the sliced melon is comparable to the *Bhū-maṇḍala*.



Bhū-maṇḍala literally translates as ‘Earth circle’ or ‘Earth sphere.’ *Bhū-maṇḍala* has many features including various divisions of land and oceans stretching for millions of miles along its four billion mile diameter. In the above diagram these are indicated as the *dvīpas* (islands) and oceans. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*’s fifth canto provides a description of the varieties of geography, life, and spiritual culture of the people situated in these different areas of the greater Earth.

Bhū-maṇḍala divides the universe into higher and lower planetary systems. There are altogether fourteen planetary systems in the universe; six planetary systems are above Bhū-maṇḍala and seven below it. This huge horizontal plane dividing the universe from higher and lower levels is basically what the Vedas describe as Bhūmi (Earth). We shall discuss more of the features of this expanded Earth concept in section 1.7; for now, we want to look particularly where our Earth is situated in Bhū-maṇḍala.

Here we have to introduce some more Sanskrit names which may cause some uncertainty to the reader if one is unfamiliar with the Vedic language and concepts. Think of the Sanskrit place names in the following way. Imagine if it was suddenly announced in the world's media that new continents were discovered beyond the Arctic and contact had been made with humans of a vastly superior culture. One would be obviously fascinated to hear about these new lands and advanced human beings. The first thing we would want to know is the names of these new places and people, and of course, what they look like. Practically the first question we ask anyone is, 'Where do you come from?' So think of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as your local media informing you of the startling discovery of new land and new people beyond the Arctic. In fact, the huge scale of these new lands surrounding us makes us appear like ants in comparison.

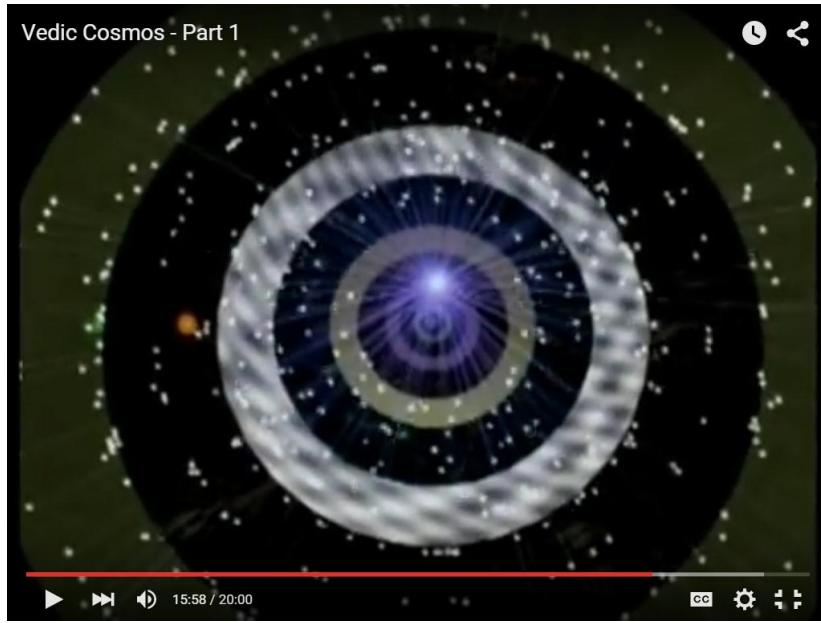
According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the places that we know as Earth—America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, etc., are only a small part of a huge land mass to the north of us called Jambūdvīpa; and Jambūdvīpa is the central island of Bhū-maṇḍala, the great cosmic sphere that stretches across the universe. Got that? No? OK don't worry! Just bear this in mind for now: Earth is part of Jambūdvīpa and Jambūdvīpa is in the center of Bhū-maṇḍala.

So what does Jambūdvīpa look like? In the picture below we see the circular island of Jambūdvīpa (800,000 miles wide) with a great golden mountain named Meru in its center. Meru is altogether 800,000 miles in height but only 672,000 miles are visible above the Earth. The remaining 128,000 miles are below the Earth. Jambūdvīpa is surrounded by the salt water ocean coloured blue here in the diagram. This ocean also has a breadth of 800,000 miles and completely surrounds Jambūdvīpa in a huge circle. Past that, we can see another concentric circle representing a further island (*dvīpa*). A series of these concentric circular islands and oceans continue for millions of miles along this central part of the 4 billion diameter plane of Bhū-maṇḍala. Eventually one comes to the shell of the universe which, as mentioned, is round shaped and encloses everything within it.

Looking from above, Jambūdvīpa appears in the next image with Mount Meru in the center of the circular island:

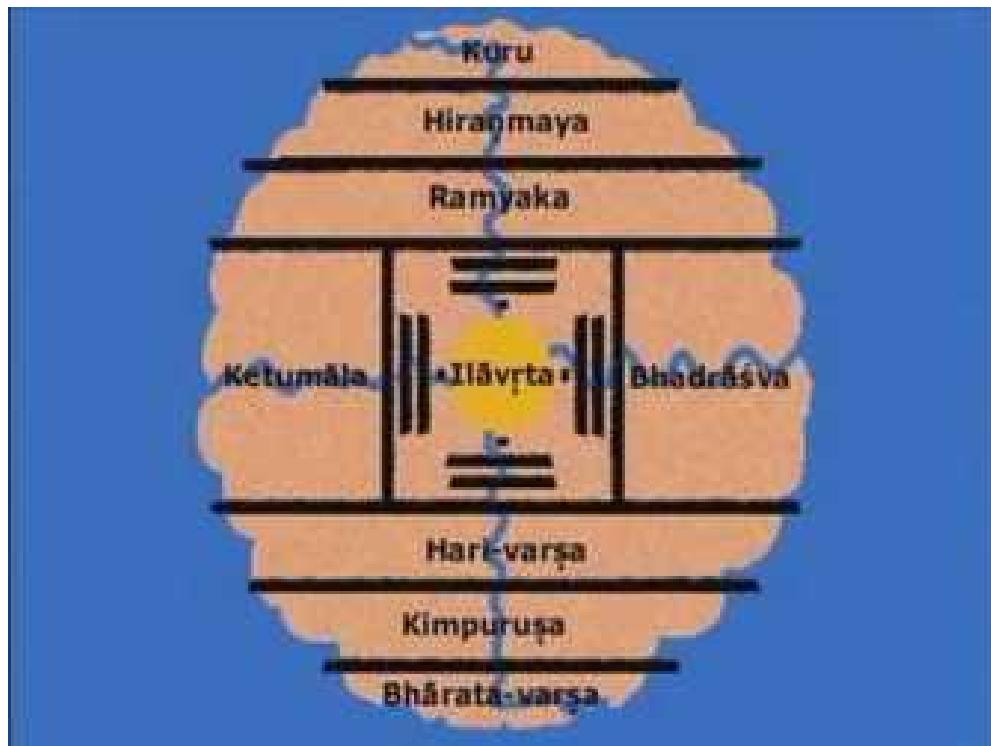


Looking down from above the pole star across the great plane of Bhū-mandala, Jambūdvīpa in the center with its surrounding concentric islands and oceans would look this:



The circles that you see in the diagram are the seven island and seven oceans that stretch for millions of miles along the Bhū-maṇḍala (*sapta jaladhayah sapta dvīpa*). All of these areas are inhabited by human life. If you are lost already, don't worry, because the point of this paper is not to make you an expert in Vedic cosmography, but rather to focus on an explanation of the position and shape of the Earth we live on (according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*). At this point we have simply learned that Earth is a small part of a

huge circular island called Jambūdvīpa, and that Jambūdvīpa is just one of many tracts of land that lie on the great plane called Bhū-maṇḍala. If we take a closer look at Jambūdvīpa, we can see its division into nine regions:



The above diagram shows an aerial view of the circular island of Jambūdvīpa with Bhārata-varṣa (where we are) in the south. OK, so now we've introduced another Sanskrit place name: *Bhārata-varṣa*. This is very important because it is the Sanskrit name of our own locality. Basically the inhabitants of the rest of the Vedic universe refer to our Earth as part of Bhārata-varṣa which (as the diagram illustrates) is one of the nine varṣas (divisions) of Jambūdvīpa. Should you ever meet anyone from Jambūdvīpa, you can tell them you're from Bhārata-varṣa and they'll understand you're from the place we call Earth.

Actually, Bhārata-varṣa has a total length of 72,000 miles and like Jambūdvīpa itself is also divided into nine regions of which our Earth is only one part. We will discuss these divisions of Bhārata-varṣa later in section 1.6. But let us go back now to our news report from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* TV about the wonderful discovery of other land and other people in the vicinity of Earth. What have we learnt so far? Basically, we have learned that the Earth is not in fact a round globe rotating in space, but is part of an expanded land area called the Bhū-maṇḍala. Earth is located in an area called Bhārata-varṣa which is a division of Jambūdvīpa, the central island of Bhū-maṇḍala. In practical terms we have just discovered that we are part of an 800,000 mile island inhabited by other

humans which is only one of many such islands stretching across the center of the universe.

OK back to Jambūdvīpa. Looking at the previous diagram above, we can see that to the north of Bhārata-varṣa, one proceeds through Kimpuruṣa-varṣa, then Hari-varṣa before arriving at Mount Meru itself which stands in the center of Jambūdvīpa in Ilāvṛta-varṣa. The black lines that cross the image represent huge mountain ranges that divide one varṣa from another. In the *Mārkeṇḍeya Purāṇa*, Bhārata-varṣa is described as bow-shaped; the south, east and west form the bow shape (the rounded coastal area), and the Himalaya Mountain forms the bow's string in the north. This Himalaya is not the one we know in India. This Himalaya rises to a height of 80,000 miles high. This Himalaya mountain range separates Bhārata-varṣa from Kimpuruṣa-varṣa. The mountain ranges dividing Jambūdvīpa are more clearly illustrated below with Bhārata-varṣa shown here in the bottom right area of the picture:



The above picture shows Jambūdvīpa with the golden Mount Meru in the center. The rows of mountains around its base rise to a height of 80,000 miles. These huge mountain ranges divide Jambūdvīpa into nine *varṣas* (regions). Earth is one of nine islands situated in the area called Bhārata-varṣa.

Worship of Krishna takes place among the inhabitants of all these varṣas of Jambūdvīpa as described in the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*:

*mathurā-maṇḍale yas tu
jambūdvīpe sthito 'tha vā
yo 'rcayet pratimāṁ prati
sa me priyatara bhuvi*

"One who worships Me in My Deity form while living in the district of Mathurā or, indeed, anywhere in Jambūdvīpa, becomes most dear to Me in this world."
(Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad, Uttara 47)

A brief description of the environment, people, and spiritual culture of the residents of Jambūdvīpa, including Bhārata-varṣa, is given in the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, chapters sixteen to nineteen. A description of further inhabited islands surrounding Jambūdvīpa is given in chapter twenty. A description of further features of Bhū-maṇḍala as well as a description of the planets and stars is given in chapters twenty-one and twenty-two. A description of the seven planetary systems below Bhū-maṇḍala is given in chapters twenty-four and twenty-five. The different planetary systems of the universe (fourteen in all) are not to be construed as planets as we generally understand them, but are more like vast expanses or levels that are situated above and below the Earth (or plane of Bhū-maṇḍala), and which facilitate the different desires and karmas of the living entities within the material world. All of these places have diverse environments and are inhabited by various forms of life. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* particularly describes the varieties of spiritual culture (or lack of it) throughout these regions. A description of the hells is also given in chapter twenty-six. These various descriptions of life and situations throughout the universe educate the living entity within the material world about his choice of environment as well as reminding him of the karmic results that follow as a result of applying or neglecting directives from the Vedic literature.

The essential message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, however, is to persuade the living entities to give up their fascination and attachment to these temporary situations within the material world and to work towards re-establishing their eternal relationship with Krishna through the process of *bhakti-yoga*. By this process one can get liberation from the cycle of repeated birth and death, and ultimately return back to the Kingdom of God, the original home of the soul. To this end the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s Fifth Canto which contains most of the teachings on cosmography, also contains the teachings of Jada Bharata a great Vedic sage who teaches strongly about the many illusions that capture the mind and senses of the living entities within the material world.

(1.5) The Earth of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is Not a Globe

Now, to come to the main point of this paper which is to raise a doubt about the depiction of Earth presented in the *Vedic Cosmos* video by Dānavīr Goswami. If we take a look at the *Vedic Cosmos* video we will see Earth floating like a ball in the salt water ocean that surrounds Jambūdvīpa:



Referring to Earth as Bhārata-kanda (the Sanskrit nomenclature or name used here for Earth) the video states that Earth is one of the nine islands lying off the shore of Jambūdvīpa, and that these islands known as Bhārata-varṣa were created by the sons of Sagara. We wish to question this detail below, but accepting for now that it is true, why is it that Bhārata-kanda (Earth) is depicted as a globe floating on water? If Bhārata-kanda is formed of the same topography as the rest of Bhārata-varṣa (simply being one of the parts of the original landscape that was later formed into nine separate islands) then how did it suddenly become a perfect globe, looking spectacularly incongruous (out of place and ill-fitting) with the surrounding terrain of Jambūdvīpa? The animation

accurately depicts Jambūdvīpa as a normal-looking island, but then goes on to depict our Earth (which is simply a region of the same island) as somehow miraculously forming the shape of a globe.



Imagine, for example, if sea levels began to rise around America causing new islands to form around the high land that was not submerged. The new islands would still look very much like the rest of America; they would not start taking the appearance of a perfect ball. In the *Vedic Cosmos* animation we hear an explanation of how nine islands are formed in Bhārata-varṣa, but curiously, only one of them is globe-shaped. Why do the other islands depicted in the animation not also take the form of globes floating in the water? They are accurately depicted as normal looking islands; not planets. The depiction of Earth as a globe floating on water is at variance with what is actually being described, namely the formation of smaller islands or regions from the larger island of Jambūdvīpa. The dissimilarity of the globe-shaped Earth with the other islands is striking, and the reasons stated for depicting it in this way are conjectures based on interpolation of certain Sanskrit words (see below). Where is there any mention in any Vedic scripture of this particular tract of Bhārata-varṣa forming into a globe-shaped ball? The extraordinary creation of one perfectly round-shaped globe formed out of an ordinary island such as Jambūdvīpa would surely warrant a mention by Śukadeva Goswāmī the speaker of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Imagine if an 8,000 high pyramid-shaped

island/planet was formed instead of a globe-shaped one; would such a fantastic design not be mentioned by a geographer, especially if the oceans and people on all of its sloping sides managed to remain as if horizontal and without sliding off? A perfect globe-shaped ball floating on water is no less of an astonishing creation demanding explanations of gravity, etc., that would surely be pointed out by Śukadeva Goswāmī. The fact is there is no mention of such a creation taking place anywhere. One is left to assume the obvious, that Earths islands or continents are lying flat like the other areas of Jambūdvīpa. Let us put aside for a moment what we assume the Earth to look like, and just take in the actual description of Bhārata-varṣa as part of Jambūdvīpa. If we present the Earth as a globe it means we haven't represented (re-presented) the *actual description* given by Śukadeva Goswāmī. In any case, the depiction of the Earth as a globe cannot stand the various scientific observations that have been made which clearly demonstrate that there is no observable or measurable curvature on the Earth (see section 2.4).

An important point to note, however, is that the video *Vedic Cosmos* correctly shows Earth's relation to Jambūdvīpa. The video's animation of a globe-shaped Earth floating on water and surrounded by other land features is, of course, a shock to the mind accustomed to perceive images of the Earth as a lonely globe floating in dark, empty space. However, the idea presented in the above images from *Vedic Cosmos* that there are other land areas within the vicinity of our Earth's continents and oceans is not something that any of us can personally confirm or deny. Which one of us, for example, has personally gone into outer space to confirm the actual position of Earth as a rotating globe in space? And which one of us has personally crossed the Arctic and Antarctica regions to see if there is actually more land to be discovered? All of us rely on images of Earth from agencies such as NASA. In section 2.2 we call these official images into question. Although most people would not feel any need to call these images and accounts into question, a follower of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam has to call these images into question because according to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam there are indeed other lands and other humans in the vicinity of the place we call Earth. They rest on the same salt water oceans as our own. Theoretically, if we set a northern course, we could sail to Jambūdvīpa on the same ocean (see section 2.6). The recent exposé of NASA's so-called images of Earth by members of the flat-Earth society not only uncovers the greatest hoax in history, but opens up a whole new understanding and appreciation of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's expanded Earth concept.

The previous image from *Vedic Cosmos* of the globe-shaped Earth floating on Jambūdvīpa's salt water ocean would perhaps appear more credible and acceptable if it simply depicted the continents of Earth as lying flat on the salt water ocean, not floating like a ball on top of it. The correct depiction of Earth lying flat will resonate with the soul's innate comprehension and intuition of the truth of Krishna's creation. Such a

depiction would actually correspond with our perception of reality; for as we fly or sail over land and oceans we find Earth to be perfectly flat in all directions. There is no observable or measurable curvature of the Earth anywhere (see section 2.4).

It appears from the *Vedic Cosmos* video that the actual description of Bhārata-varṣa given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has been interpolated to fit a pre-conceived and ill-conceived notion of the Earth according to NASA – an image that has been indelibly marked in our minds as the authentic image of Earth’s shape. I personally do not accept the images of a globe-shaped Earth rotating in space as authentic (see section 2.2) but assuming for a moment that they are true, in the images of Earth provided by NASA, we don’t anywhere see a ball-shaped Earth floating on a cosmic size ocean. Rather, we see a ball-shaped Earth floating in dark empty space. How does Dānavīr Goswami hope to explain the disparity? What is the motivation behind this depiction which clearly departs both from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*’s description, and from NASA itself?

Here, by the way, we have a spectacular clash of world views which is not a debate for the faint-hearted. If NASA’s claim to be photographing Earth from outer space is authentic, then according to the followers of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* they would show other regions of land in the vicinity of Earth’s continents - these being the eight other regions of Bhārata-varṣa that stretch over an area of 72,000 miles on the same salt water ocean as our own. From an even further distance in space they would see the huge circular island of Jambūdvīpa itself, and looking even further from outer space they would see the huge tracts of land forming the other concentric islands surrounding the central island of Jambūdvīpa. It has to be one or the other. Either NASA is lying, cheating, and deceiving people with their images of a globe Earth rotating in dark empty space, or the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a nice fairy story to entertain its Vedic followers with nothing more than fantastic myths and legends.

The description of Bhārata-varṣa is given in the 5th Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in sections of the *Mahābhārata*, as well as in other *Purāṇas* (Vedic history). Bhārata-varṣa has a total land area of 72,000 miles and sits in the southern region of the larger area of Jambūdvīpa (800,000 miles). Bhārata-varṣa itself is further divided into nine sections of which our Earth is one. This is described in various *Purāṇas* such as *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, and *Mārkeṇḍeya Purāṇa*. In the *Mārkeṇḍeya Purāṇa* it is stated:

Kraushtuki spoke. Adorable Sir! Thou hast fully described this Jambudvipa...Therefore tell me, O brahman, about this Bharata in detail, and what are its divisions, and how many they are, and what is its constitution accurately; it is the country, and what are the provinces and the mountains in it, O brahman?

Markandeya spoke. Hear from me the nine divisions of this country Bharata they must be known as extending to the ocean, but as being mutually inaccessible. They are Indra-dvipa, Kaserumat, Tamra-varna, Gabhastimat, and Naga-dvipa, Saumya, Gandharva and Varuna; and this is the ninth dvipa among them, and it is surrounded by the sea. This dvipa is a thousand yojanas from south to north.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's quotes from the Siddhānta-śiromāṇi to confirm the existence of these divisions of Bhārata-varṣa:

In the Siddhānta-śiromāṇi, Chapter One (Golādhyāya), in the Bhuvana-kośa section, the nine khaṇḍas are mentioned as follows:

"Within Bhārata-varṣa, there are nine khaṇḍas. They are known as (1) Aindra, (2) Kaśeru, (3) Tāmraparṇa, (4) Gabhastimat, (5) Kumārikā, (6) Nāga, (7) Saumya, (8) Vāruṇa and (9) Gāndharva." (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā, 2.10)

In the above quote from the Mārkeṇḍeya Purāṇa, Mārkeṇḍeya Ṛṣi says that the region of Bhārata-varṣa which we know as Earth is 8,000 miles from north to south and is completely surrounded by the sea. Mārkeṇḍeya Ṛṣi's measurement of the Earth's diameter is very close to the modern calculation of approximately 7,920 miles, and his depiction of the Earth being completely surrounded by water is, of course, exactly how Earth can be experienced by any of us living here. For the vast majority of us who have not yet taken a ride on a rocket ship or a UFO to confirm by personal experience whether the Earth is round or flat, we can at least experience by direct perception that wherever we go by land, sea, or air, the horizon below us is always flat.

So according to Mārkeṇḍeya Purāṇa and Viṣṇu Purāṇa, as well as other Purāṇas, Bhārata-varṣa has a total area of 72,000 miles and is divided into nine areas of which our Earth is but one part measuring 8,000 miles. This means that to the east and west of Earth's continents there are more land areas belonging to Bhārata-varṣa; and to the north of Earth's continents is the next varṣa of Jambūdvīpa known as Kimpurusa-varṣa. Our Earth is 1,000 yojanas or 8,000 miles from south to north. Theoretically, therefore, when we get to the northern part of our Earth, we are almost in reach of Jambūdvīpa itself. If we could reach Jambūdvīpa and kept going north (on a flat plane) we would eventually reach Mount Meru. According to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam we are in fact part of Jambūdvīpa, but are just separated by water. The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Mahābhārata states that only 5,000 years ago, the Pāṇḍavas were ruling this entire area from their capital in present day India (see section 1.8 below). Now we no longer have access to this area.

We are also separated from the other areas of Bhārata-varṣa. According to the above description by Mārkeṇḍeya Ṛṣi, there are eight other land areas (covering an area of 72,000 miles) somewhere in the vicinity of Earth's oceans. Although 'mutually inaccessible' they are not far away. Of course this only makes sense on a flat Earth model with expanded planes. It makes no sense from the perspective of a globe. We shall explain with examples later why this globe image is actually an artificial creation from the special effects department of NASA (see section 2.2). We live on a flat Earth, and there is a lot more to be discovered or rather re-discovered. This is the version of the *Purāṇas* and the one most consistent with the science that proves the Earth is on an expanded flat plane, not a rotating ball in space.

Mārkeṇḍeya Ṛṣi says the islands are mutually inaccessible. I'm not sure exactly how to take this because the distances are not inconceivably distant by modern transportation such as ships and airplanes. A 72,000 region roughly divided into nine parts would give a rough estimation of 8,000 miles for each region. Modern airplanes and ships are easily able to cross these distances. Why these areas are considered mutually inaccessible is not explained. Certainly, only 5,000 years ago, the Pāṇḍavas were governing not only all of Bhārata-varṣa, but also all of Jambūdvīpa which is an area of 800,000 miles. This would indicate that the islands are not so much mutually inaccessible as extremely difficult to access—at least for our present generation. We shall discuss these points later and offer some reasons for why we are now separated from these other areas of Jambūdvīpa.

In any case, from these descriptions we are not hearing anything that remotely resembles a globe-shaped planet. Jambūdvīpa is described as being like a huge circular continent surrounded by water. This continent is divided into nine regions called *varṣas* of which Bhārata-varṣa is one. Earth itself is just one of nine further divisions of Bhārata-varṣa. Parts of Bhārata-varṣa may, indeed, have been separated into islands as depicted in the video, but there is absolutely no reference anywhere to Earth being a ball-shaped planet floating on water. Earth is as we find it – a number of continents lying horizontal and surrounded by water. As described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, if one proceeds north from Bhārata-varṣa, one passes Kimpuruṣa-varṣa and Hari-varṣa before arriving at Meru itself which is at the center of Jambūdvīpa. Think of going, for example, from the south of Africa to the north of Europe, or going from the west of Europe into Eastern Asia; this is simply one land mass divided into continents and surrounded by water. Similarly, Jambūdvīpa is one huge circular island surrounded by

water and Bhārata-varṣa is one of these regions of Jambūdvīpa. Bhārata-varṣa is on a horizontal surface all the way. Is the depiction of Earth as a globe-shaped ball, therefore, not a case of imposing our modern conception of the globe onto a text that describes it accurately (in my opinion) as part of an island surrounded by the vast salt water ocean?

If, the information is indeed factual, that Bhārata-varṣa has been divided into nine islands, and that Earth is one of these nine islands lying off the south coast of greater Jambūdvīpa, then it will obviously have the same topography and character as the other islands, all of them resting on the flat plane of Bhū-maṇḍala. Where did the ball idea come from? It doesn't make any sense at all! Certainly it is not what the text is describing. There is no description anywhere in Vedic texts that Earth has a whole set of different rules from the rest of Bhārata-varṣa such as the law of gravity etc., that would be required to support a globe-shaped conception.

Regarding the Earth being a round globe like shape, His Holiness Dānavīr Goswami goes onto to say:

Sometimes Vedic cosmology is misconstrued as portraying the Earth to be a flat disc. This flat Earth misconception arises partly due to our inability to understand Vedic nomenclature. A single object may be referred to by several names and a single name may refer to several objects. For example, the term Earth may be used to describe at least 6 different aspects of Vedic cosmology. The Earth we live in is indeed a globe as explained by the word parimaṇḍala meaning spherical used in the Mahābhārata text. The flat disc refers to the greater planetary system of Bhū-maṇḍala.

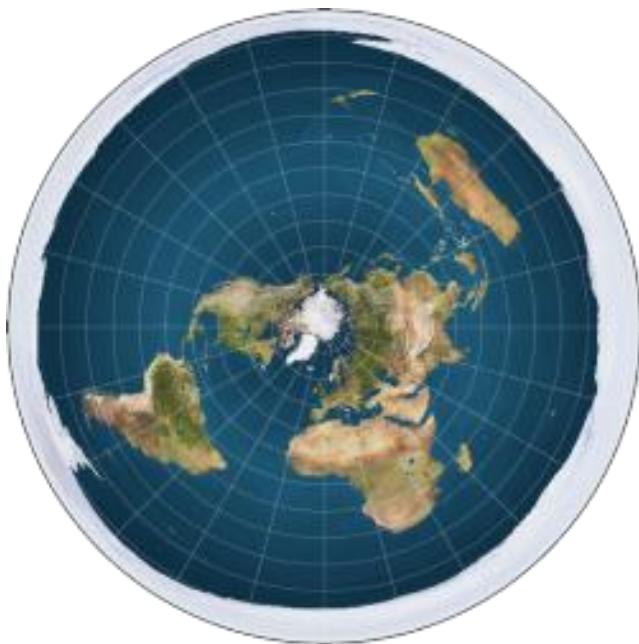
Unfortunately the Sanskrit verse in which the word *parimaṇḍala* is used is not included in the Video's dialogue. One needs to see the specific verse reference and context in which the word *parimaṇḍala* is used to describe Bhārata-kanda. The word *parimaṇḍala* can just as often mean round or circular, and it is not a definitive evidence for the Earth being spherical. Something can be circular on a flat surface such as a round-about on a motorway. The devotees of Krishna speak of *Vraja-maṇḍala parikrama*, for example, meaning to walk in a rotating or circumambulating fashion around the *maṇḍala* (circle) of Vraja (a pilgrimage place in India sacred to followers of Krishna). There is no mention in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam of Bhārata-varṣa being a globe-shaped ball floating on water, a shape that would make it completely incongruous with its surrounding environment. The translation and application of the Sanskrit word *parimaṇḍala* has to be sensitive and appropriate to the thing being described. The *Purāṇas* describe Bhārata-

varṣa as being 72,000 miles in length and divided into nine regions (or islands?). It forms one part of the huge circular island of *Jambūdvīpa* which lies at the center of the flat circular plane of *Bhū-maṇḍala*. There is no mention of any part of it resembling anything like a globe floating on the salt water ocean. *Bhārata-varṣa* sits next to *Hari-varṣa* and *Kimpuruṣa-varṣa*, just as Europe sits next to Asia. One can cross from the same land mass of *Bhārata-varṣa* into *Kimpuruṣa-varṣa* and northward to Mount Meru itself. Only 5,000 years ago this entire land was governed by the *Pāñḍavas* from their capital in India. *Bhārata-varṣa* is not described as a globe. It is on a horizontal plane. It seems that undue license has been taken here to interpret one word in such a way, that *Bhārata-varṣa* is made to conform to a preconceived idea of what the Earth should like, rather than how *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes it as actually looking like.

If we look at the context again, the word *parimaṇḍala* may perhaps be referring to either *Jambūdvīpa* itself, which is described as an island being circular in shape, or to the greater Earth disc known as *Bhū-maṇḍala* itself; indeed the use of the word *pare* (great) would suggest the larger *Bhū-maṇḍala*. Again the context would have to be looked at. Dānavīr Goswami has also quoted the Sanskrit word *Sudarśana* as a reference to Earth being round. *Sudarśana* refers to the round shape of Krishna's disc weapon. However, the *Bhīṣma-parva* section of *Mahābhārata* (sections V and VI) wherein Sañjaya describes to King Dhṛtarāṣṭra about the Vedic cosmography, clearly and unequivocally uses the word *Sudarśana* to describe the circular shape of *Jambūdvīpa*, not Earth itself. Misappropriation of the word *Sudarśana* to make Earth appear as a globe is a careless interpolation in an otherwise congratulatory attempt to depict Earth's position in the Vedic Cosmos. To his credit, Dānavīr Goswami has correctly positioned Earth in its relation to *Jambūdvīpa*; the continents of the Earth just have to be depicted as lying flat on the salt water ocean as we indeed experience it.

In any case, if one insists on interpreting *parimaṇḍala* or any other Sanskrit word to mean that the Earth is ball-shaped, one faces a massive disparity between the presentation of the Earth as globe, and the actual description given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other *Purāṇas* which depict it as a small region surrounded by water and forming one small part of the larger island of *Jambūdvīpa*. We need to take the description of *Bhārata-varṣa* as it is; not impose our pre-conceived idea.

If the word *parimaṇḍala* is actually attributable to Earth, it may actually confirm the flat Earth map which depicts the continents of Earth surrounded by the Antarctica wall which encloses the land mass in a circular ring of ice. Indeed any of the Sanskrit nomenclature which may describe Earth as circular could possibly be referring to this Antarctic belt. The picture below shows an aerial view of the most popular flat Earth map with the enclosing Antarctica wall:



The flat Earth map with enclosing circular ice wall of Antarctica. This map does not indicate the places that according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* would lie beyond the ice regions.

The ice regions could indeed possibly present some type of physical barrier that prevents us from entering Jambūdvīpa. Mārkenḍeya Ṛsi says that the regions of Bhārata-varṣa are mutually inaccessible, so obviously some kind of barrier exists to prevent us going further. It is true also that from whatever part of the world one sails in a northern or southern direction, one eventually runs into an impassable wall of ice.



A telling map of the world from NASA actually shows ice regions running the length of the world in both northern and southern regions:



In the globe-Earth model Antarctica is an ice continent which covers the bottom of the globe from 78 degrees South latitude to 90 and is therefore not more than 12,000 miles in circumference. However, in the flat-Earth model, Antarctica becomes a huge circle of ice completely surrounding the other continents. Eric Dubay writes of the inconsistencies found in exploration of the Antarctica:

Many early explorers including Captain Cook and James Clark Ross, however, in attempting Antarctic circumnavigation took 3 to 4 years and clocked 50-60,000 miles around. The British ship Challenger also made an indirect but complete circumnavigation of Antarctica traversing 69,000 miles. This is entirely inconsistent with the ball model. (Eric Dubay 200 Proofs Earth is not a Spinning Ball)

Speculation abounds as to what lies beyond the Antarctica but according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* beyond the polar ice plateaus one would find the other regions of Bhārata-varṣa as well as the mainland of Jambūdvīpa itself. For this reason, I'm not completely confident with the existing flat-Earth map because according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the north of our continents and oceans one would eventually come to the 80,000 mile high Himalayan Mountain that separates Bhārata-varṣa from Kimpuruṣa-varṣa, two of the three varṣas on the southern side of Jambūdvīpa. From India the Pāṇḍavas went north (possibly crossing Russia) and somehow entered Jambūdvīpa. This northern route was also the course taken by Olaf Jensen who accidentally sailed into an enchanted world reminiscent of descriptions of Jambūdvīpa given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The people he met even spoke a dialect of Sanskrit. This adventure is retold in the book *The Smokey God* by Willis George Emerson (1908). On the flat-Earth map, however, if one heads north from India, one crosses Russia and comes to the Arctic. But after the Arctic one only finds North America, not Jambūdvīpa. So something appears to be wrong with this flat-Earth map, at least from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s description. In another sense, the layout of the continents on the flat-Earth

map seems correct when we come to consider the strange world of flight routes (see section 2.3). I have as yet to find a solution to this disparity.

In any case, according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* if one kept going north from India, the compass would actually keep pointing north even after coming to the so-called North Pole. The compass would keep pointing north because that is the direction of Mount Meru. Meru (not the so-called North Pole) is the central point in the greater Earth (or Bhū-maṇḍala) from which all directions are measured. Meru is directly north of Bhārata-varṣa. Previously the Pāṇḍavas were governing all of Jambūdvīpa from their capital in India (see below section 1.8) so access was possible at that point, but about 5,000 years ago we entered into the Kali-yuga period (the age of fighting and hypocrisy) and our particular place in Bhārata-varṣa became isolated from the mainland of Jambūdvīpa. It is mentioned in various *Purāṇas* that the *yugas* (four repeating cycles of time that bring about variations in people's mind, behaviour, and environment) only affect Bhārata-varṣa and not the other *varṣas* of Jambūdvīpa were pious people live happily enjoying the results of their previous karma. For that reason we are put into a kind of quarantine, and the formation of the Antarctica circle may be part of the physical barrier which prevents our entrance into Jambūdvīpa.

The problem for most of us in conceptualizing what Earth looks like is because we have been convinced that we are on NASA's ball in space. If we are to believe *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we are actually not that far from our neighbours on Bhārata-varṣa, and from our more enlightened neighbours on Jambūdvīpa. In reality we are only a few thousand miles away. We are surrounded by the same salt water ocean. Think about that; the salt water ocean surrounding Jambūdvīpa is the same salt water ocean that surrounds our own continents. This is because we are actually part of Jambūdvīpa, but just separated by ocean. The salt water ocean is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as being the same breadth as Jambūdvīpa, that is, 800,000 miles across. The salt water ocean completely surrounds Jambūdvīpa in a great circle. From our Earth, if we go north we would reach Jambūdvīpa in a relatively short distance. But going in a southerly direction would mean continuing for another 800,000 miles on the salt water ocean until one reaches Plakṣadvīpa which is the next concentric island surrounding Jambūdvīpa on the plane of Bhū-maṇḍala. In the *Mahābhārata* Sañjaya mentions that there are also various kingdoms scattered throughout this huge salt water ocean, however, the prominent land features of the Bhū-maṇḍala are commonly acknowledged as the *sapta-dvīpa* or seven islands and their surrounding oceans. These seven circles of various islands and oceans continue for millions of miles along the Bhū-maṇḍala. A description of the geography and spiritual life of the people living in these areas is described in the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other Vedic texts.

In any case, somehow, we've been somehow separated from the mainland of Jambūdvīpa. The possibility of rediscovering it exists, and it doesn't involve taking spaceships to other Earth-like planets that are similarly floating in space. We do not need rocket ships to find the other regions of Jambūdvīpa because according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we are not on a rotating globe-shaped planet at all. We are already standing on part of the flat 800,000 mile circular island of Jambūdvīpa, and are literally only a few thousand miles away on the same stretch of salt water ocean that surrounds our continents from the mainland of Jambūdvīpa. We have difficulty to conceive of this because of the ball-shaped Earth concept.

(1.6) The Divisions of Bhārata-varṣa

Just as Jambūdvīpa is divided into nine *varshas*, the *Mārkeṇdeya Purāṇa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, etc., also describe Bhārata-varṣa itself as being divided into nine regions. Being unable to read Devanāgarī, I cannot find a clear English translation in which the divisions are described as being either *kandas* (regions) or *dvīpas* (islands). If some knowledgeable scholar can provide references for this, it would be very helpful. In my own reading through the different English translations of the *Purāṇas* and other source material which describe Bhārata-varṣa, the language and translations available are contradictory or ambiguous. Sometimes Bhārata-varṣa is divided into *kandas* (regions) and sometimes *dvīpas* (islands)? Earth, however, is specifically mentioned as being completely surrounded by water which puts it in the category of *dvīpa*. In the *Vedic Cosmos* video, all nine regions of Bhārata-varṣa have been depicted as separate islands, and this depiction seems to be confirmed by a few texts from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

Of the one hundred sons of Lord Rṣabhadeva, the eldest, Bharata, was completely devoted to Lord Nārāyaṇa. It is because of Bharata's fame that this planet is now celebrated as the great Bhārata-varṣa. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.17)

Nine of the remaining sons of Rṣabhadeva became the rulers of the nine islands [nava-dvīpa] of Bhārata-varṣa, and they exercised complete sovereignty over this planet. Eighty-one sons became twice-born brāhmaṇas and helped initiate the Vedic path of fruitive sacrifices [karma-kāṇḍa]. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.19)

Here the word *nava-dvīpa* (nine islands) is used to describe Bhārata-varṣa, although in the commentary they are strangely mentioned as the nine varṣas of Jambūdvīpa. In any case, very little description is given elsewhere about these other regions or islands of Bhārata-varṣa.

In the video *Vedic Cosmos* we see Earth positioned at the southern part of Jambūdvīpa situated in the salt water ocean alongside the other islands of Bhārata-varṣa. In his commentary, HH Dānavīr Goswami explains:

Bharata kanda is one of the nine islands of the originally bow-shaped Bhārata-varṣa which was divided by the sons of Sagara. Being completely surrounded by water the islands are mutually unreachable.

The formation of certain islands surrounding Jambūdvīpa by the sons of Sagara is indeed described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, but it is not evident from the verse that these islands are actually referring to a division of Bhārata-varṣa into islands:

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: My dear King, in the opinion of some learned scholars, eight smaller islands surround Jambūdvīpa. When the sons of Mahārāja Sagara were searching all over the world for their lost horse, they dug up the earth, and in this way eight adjoining islands came into existence. The names of these islands are Svarnaprabha, Candraśukla, Āvartana, Ramaṇaka, Mandara-hariṇa, Pāñcajanya, Simhala and Laṅkā. (Śrimad-Bhāgavatam 5.19.29-30)

I would like to point out in passing, that here it mentions eight islands. It does not appear in the verse that these islands refer to the nine divisions of Bhārata-varṣa. The list of names of these islands is also different from the names given in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, *Mārkeṇḍeya Purāṇa*, etc., to indicate the nine regions of Bhārata-varṣa; again indicating that we are talking about two different sets of places. At least in this verse, it seems that Śukadeva Gosvāmī is just incidentally mentioning the existence of another eight smaller islands that surround Jambūdvīpa. The islands in question could be anywhere around the huge coastal area of Jambūdvīpa. There is actually one early illustration from *Śrimad-Bhāgavatam* which depicts them as such, and other renditions of the story of Sagara's sons creating these islands have placed the islands surrounding Jambūdvīpa, not in Bhārata-varṣa. I'm not trying to contradict HH Dānavīr Goswami here, but clarification and specific references would be helpful. This is in one sense a minor point in the discussion and I only include it for those Sanskrit scholars involved in the final depiction of Bhārata-varṣa to be displayed in the Vedic planetarium.

In any case, whether divided into *varṣas* (regions) or *dvīpas* (islands) the whole area of Bhārata-varṣa lies within the bow-shaped portion of southern Jambūdvīpa. We know, therefore, exactly where Earth is, but not exactly what we look like in relation to the other parts of Bhārata-varṣa. One thing we do know for certain, however, is that our Earth is measured as 1,000 yojanas or 8,000 miles from north to south; and going just north from Bhārata-varṣa we come to our neighbours in Kimpuruṣa-varṣa. We are not actually so far away from the rest of Jambūdvīpa. The idea that we are neighbours to huge tracts of land with billions more people living on the mainland of Jambūdvīpa, is a revolutionary concept that cannot be reconciled with the idea that we are alone on a planet rotating in empty space. This understanding requires a new level of Krishna consciousness.

In the narration HH Dānavīr Goswami says that:

These islands [referring to Earth and its neighbouring islands] are surrounded by water that makes them mutually inaccessible.

If indeed it is the entire region of Bhārata-varṣa that has been divided into nine islands, the actual distance between the islands would still not be so great as to make them inaccessible to each other. Bhārata-varṣa is described as being 72,000 miles in length. If we divide that by 9 we have a surface area of roughly eight thousand miles for each island. Interestingly, the diameter of Earth is estimated at approximately 7,920 miles by modern calculations. The distance to the shore of Jambūdvīpa, therefore, is relatively small and quite possible using our present modes of transport. Our continents are lying on the same salt water which theoretically would lead us to the shore of Jambūdvīpa if we just kept flying or sailing. That's of course if we are on a flat plane and not a globe as NASA presents. As yet, the Antarctica creates an impasse by either sea or air, and no complete north-south circumnavigation has ever taken place. The mystery surrounding the true nature of Antarctica and the denial of access to independent explorers by the world Antarctic Treaty of 1959 has been the focus of much flat Earth research. One thing is for sure—at least according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Mahābhārata*—what we know today as present day India once had connections to the greater Jambūdvīpa, indeed only 5,000 years ago, the entire 800,000 mile area of Jambūdvīpa was governed by Maharaja Yudhiṣṭhīra and later Mahārāja Parikṣit (see sections 1.8 and 1.9). So it would seem that the islands of Bhārata-varṣa are not so much mutually inaccessible, but rather extremely difficult to access.

This raises an interesting question: Are we still connected to Jambūdvīpa, or entirely cut off and separated by water? It may be that we are still possibly connected to Jambūdvīpa and access is only permitted to spiritually qualified people. The lack of perception and access to Jambūdvīpa would involve some kind of illusion or diversion by higher forces that prevents us from seeing and entering the crossing. This is not an inconceivable proposition. If master magicians such as David Copperfield can disappear the Statue of liberty, it is well within the power of great controllers of the universe (*devas*) to prevent our perception of Jambūdvīpa. If we are indeed entirely separated by water, the mainland of Jambūdvīpa could not in any case be an inconceivable distance from us, and again some kind of illusion or physical barrier may be employed to prevent entry. Certainly, the globe Earth concept has us all thinking that we are just going around in a small circle. Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions in a conversation with Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami (see section 2.5 below) that can go further east and west, but we are prevented from further travel by higher forces. We should again bear in mind that according to *Mārkeṇḍeya Purāṇa*, the *yuga* cycles only affect Bhārata-varṣa, (not the other *varṣas* of Jambūdvīpa). Due to it being Kali-yuga here in Bhārata-varṣa (the age of quarrel and hypocrisy) it makes sense that we have been put into a kind of quarantine and isolated from the rest of Jambūdvīpa.

(1.7) The Earth Disc (Bhū-maṇḍala) and the Vedic Empire

The main speaker of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śukadeva Goswāmī, narrates of events five thousand years ago when Earth (*bhūmir*) was overburdened by demonic beings in the guise of Kings. These apocalyptic events precipitated the appearance of Lord Krishna who incarnated to protect the saintly devotees of God, destroy the demons, and re-establish *dharma*. It should be understood, however, that when Śukadeva Goswāmī speaks of Earth (*bhūmir*), he is referring to the whole Bhū-maṇḍala, not what we simply think of as an Earth globe. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there actually is no description or image of Earth as a globe-shaped planet rotating in empty space. By Earth is meant the great Bhū-maṇḍala, the 4 billion diameter circle that divides the upper and lower planetary systems.

Once when mother earth (*bhūmir*) was overburdened by hundreds of thousands of military phalanxes of various conceited demons dressed like kings, she approached Lord Brahma for relief. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.1.17)

When *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* speaks specifically of where we are, it is called Bhārata-varṣa, a tiny portion of the greater Bhū-maṇḍala. For example:

Thus, when he [Vidura] was in the land of Bhārata-varṣa traveling to all the places of pilgrimage, he visited Prabhāsakṣetra. At that time Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhīra was the emperor and held the world under one military strength and one flag. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.1.20)

Here Bhārata-varṣa is mentioned as a specific place within Bhū-maṇḍala: *itthaiṁ vrajan bhāratam eva varṣaiṁ*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* mentions that Bhārata-varṣa is named after a great devotee of Krishna called Bharata the eldest son of Rṣabhadēva:

yeshāṁ khalu mahā-yogī bharato jyeṣṭhaḥ śrestha-guṇa āśid yenedaiṁ varṣaiṁ bhāratam iti vyapadiśanti

Of Rṣabhadēva's one hundred sons, the eldest, named Bharata, was a great, exalted devotee qualified with the best attributes. In his honor, this planet has become known as Bhārata-varṣa. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.4.9)

At other times when *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* speaks about events in the place we know as Earth it simply refers to specific place names within our area such as Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, and Dvārakā (holy places in India). These places are well known in the Vedic world because of their association with Krishna. One can speak of New York, for

example, without mentioning America because everyone knows that New York is in America. Similarly when *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* speaks of places where we are, it just refers to specific cities, places, or rivers; notably those in India wherein is situated the most important spiritual places in the Vedic universe.

Most of Lord Krishna's pastimes happened in Bhārata-varṣa (specifically in India) when He was manifest on Earth five thousand years ago. When, however, it is stated that the Lord incarnated to relieve the burden of the Earth *avatīrṇo 'si viśvātman bhūmer bhārāpanuttaye* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.27.21) we should understand that the Earth (*bhūmer*) of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a much bigger conception and has a much greater geographer than what we know as Earth. When we read about references to Earth in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we tend to get confused because we think Earth refers to this ball-shape conception presented by NASA, and not to the whole Bhū-maṇḍala itself as depicted in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It mentions, for example, in the above verse (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.1.20) that Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhīra ruled the world (*chaśāsa kṣitīm*) with one military force and under one flag. But as we shall read presently (see section 1.8) Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhīra's sovereignty was over the entire area of Jambūdvīpa *jambūdvīpādhīpatyām* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.12.5). The world of Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhīra refers to the entire Jambūdvīpa and beyond, not just the few continents that we know as Earth (see section 1.8). 5,000 years ago, prior to the advent of Lord Krishna, the demons had captured Bhārata-varṣa, but from Bhārata-varṣa they were causing great disturbance and fear to Bhūmi. Thus Bhūmi (the personified Earth) appealed to Brahma, and on Brahma's appeal, Lord Krishna eventually incarnated to halt the advance of the demons who had become a burden on the Earth (*bhū-bhāra*).

The burden of the earth [bhū-bhāra] was certainly diminished by the Personality of Godhead and by others as well. When He was present as an incarnation, all good was performed because of His auspicious footprints. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.17.26)

Similarly when *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes Varāhadeva saving the Earth which had fallen from its position, this is referring to the whole Bhū-maṇḍala. There is no second conception of Earth as a globe-shaped planet in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

O Lord, as the peaks of great mountains become beautiful when decorated with clouds, Your transcendental body has become beautiful because of Your lifting the earth (Bhū-maṇḍala) on the edge of Your tusks. (SB 3.13.41)

Here it is specifically said *ca saukaram bhū-maṇḍalenātha datā dhṛtena te*, in the form of a boar you lifted Bhū-maṇḍala on your tusk.



Lord Varāhadeva lifting the flat earth, Bhū-maṇḍala

When Śrīla Prabhupāda was questioned as to whether Varāhadeva should be depicted holding a globe or the whole Bhū-maṇḍala, the following conversation ensued with Prabhupāda humbly deferring to the research of his disciple Bhakti-Prema:

Devotee (2): Śrīla Prabhupāda, previously we painted in the art department... Just like Varāha lifted the earth, and the earth was a globe, and we showed also a globe of the earth. How does that relate to this? Previously, when we painted, we showed the earth a ball. So now the artists will be very confused. How it fell in the Garbha Ocean as a ball?

Yaśodānandana: It depends on what we mean by earth. The Western conception of earth is just five continents and a few oceans, but according to Bhāgavatam, earth means Jambūdvīpa, because earth is connected with Jambūdvīpa.

Devotee (2): So whole Jambūdvīpa fell.

Bhakti-Prema: Bhāgavata describes the height of Himalayas, eighty thousand miles.

Prabhupāda: No, about this earth globe.

Bhakti-Prema: About the earth it describes four billion miles.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: That means Jambūdvīpa.

Bhakti-Prema: No, that means complete earth, four billion miles. That is eight lakhs miles, Jambūdvīpa.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Four billion is the universe.

Bhakti-Prema: Bhū-maṇḍala.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Bhū-maṇḍala. Oh, the Bhāgavatam describes Bhū-maṇḍala as earth.

Prabhupāda: Oh.

Yaśodānandana: Bhūmi.

Bhakti-Prema: ...has come right from the ocean, from the bottom of the ocean.

Prabhupāda: **So explained there. Then this question is solved.**

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Yes. The whole Bhū-maṇḍala fell.

Bhakti-Prema: So the universe is round, and from bottom of the Garbhodaka ocean to top of Satyaloka there is four billion miles. Then the again, from east to west again is another four billion miles. Because Bhū-maṇḍala is situated in between the earth.

Prabhupāda: Explain. He'll explain. (Showing of Planetary Sketches, June 28, 1977, Vṛndāvana)

This explanation is also confirmed by Sadāpūta Dāsa in his book *Vedic Cosmography and Astronomy*:

In the pastime of Lord Varāha's lifting the earth from the ocean, the earth is frequently depicted by artists as our familiar earth globe. However, the Sanskrit verses of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam describing this pastime do not use any words denoting a sphere when referring to the earth, and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa indicates that Lord Varāha lifted Bhū-

maṇḍala as a whole. The relevant passage states that after lifting the earth from the waters, Lord Varāha divided it into seven great continents, as it was before, thus indicating that the earth that was lifted included the seven dvīpas of Bhū-maṇḍala (VP, p. 65). The Vaiṣṇava commentator Vaiśidhara, in his commentary on SB 5.20.38, also points out that the earth lifted by Lord Varāha is Bhū-maṇḍala (see Appendix 1).

In the Fifth Canto the earth is directly described as the vast disc of Bhū-maṇḍala. The word bhū-golam, or "earth-globe," generally refers to the sphere of the universe, and the Bhāgavatam seems to make no direct reference to the earth as a small globe. (Vedic Cosmography and Astronomy VCA 3.C Planets as Globes in Space).

India is often referred to as Bhārata-varṣa, but India (and the rest of what we know as Earth) is but a small part of the greater Bhārata-varṣa. The main events of the great *Mahābhārata* war certainly took part in what we know as India, but this India is only a small part of the other regions involved. The *Mahābhārata* clearly describes the conquest and pilgrimage of the Pāṇḍavas around the greater area of Jambūdvīpa (see section 1.9). Actually these areas were all once connected. They were ruled and conquered on different occasions by the Vedic kings. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes the reign of King Āgnīdhra, the son of King Priyavrata who was the first king in the present creation to rule this vast tract of land:

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: After his father, Mahārāja Priyavrata, departed to follow the path of spiritual life by undergoing austerities, King Āgnīdhra completely obeyed his order. Strictly observing the principles of religion, he gave full protection to the inhabitants of Jambūdvīpa as if they were his own begotten sons. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.2.1)

As one reads through the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it becomes apparent that the pastimes of the Lord and His incarnations which occur on Earth actually do so over the whole of Bhū-maṇḍala, and (unless otherwise stated) are not limited to the tiny region that we call our Earth. For example, in the pastime of Mahārāja Pr̥thu it is stated:

After this, the king of all kings, Mahārāja Pr̥thu, leveled all rough places on the surface of the globe by breaking up the hills with the strength of his bow. By his grace the surface of the globe almost became flat. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.18.29)

Here it is specifically stated that in this pastime of Mahārāja Pr̥thu the whole of Bhū-maṇḍala was levelled: *bhū-maṇḍalam idam vainyah prāyaś cakre samam vibhuḥ*. Indeed, Mahārāja Pr̥thu's rule was over the vast area of Bhū-maṇḍala, not just our tiny little Earth area:

Mahārāja Pr̥thu was an unrivaled king and possessed the scepter for ruling all the seven islands on the surface of the globe. No one could disobey his irrevocable orders but the saintly persons, the brāhmaṇas and the descendants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead [the Vaiṣṇavas]. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.21.12)

Here it is stated *sapta-dvīpaika-danya-dhṛk*. Mahārāja Pr̥thu possessed the scepter for ruling all the seven islands on the surface of the globe. The words *sapta-dvīpaika* are very important in our understanding of the dimensions of Earth and refers to the seven concentric islands and oceans surrounding Mount Meru. These seven islands and their surrounding oceans stretch for millions of miles along the central plane of the universe (Bhū-maṇḍala). In the purport to the above verse from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.21.12, Śrīla Prabhupāda's states that *sapta-dvīpa* refers to the seven great islands or continents on the surface of the globe: (1) Asia, (2) Europe, (3) Africa, (4) North America, (5) South America, (6) Australia and (7) Oceania. Of course, the continents of Earth are also included in the lands comprising *sapta-dvīpa*, but it elsewhere stated very clearly in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that *sapta-dvīpa* refers to the islands along Bhū-maṇḍala. Śrīla Prabhupāda's main purpose to convey in his purport to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.21.12) is the extent of the Vedic Empire even on this Earth:

In the modern age people are under the impression that during the Vedic period or the prehistoric ages America and many other parts of the world had not been discovered, but that is not a fact. Pr̥thu Mahārāja ruled over the world many thousands of years before the so-called prehistoric age, and it is clearly mentioned here that in those days not only were all the different parts of the world known, but they were ruled by one king, Mahārāja Pr̥thu.

Otherwise we should take it that *sapta-dvīpa* clearly refers to the seven islands and surrounding oceans of Bhū-maṇḍala. Śrīla Prabhupāda makes this point clearly in the purport to Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya- līlā, 20.218:

Within the universe the Lord is situated in different spiritual manifestations. These are situated on seven islands in nine sections. Thus Their pastimes are going on. (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya- līlā, 20.218)

In his purport to this verse the seven islands of Bhū-maṇḍala are named:

The seven islands (dvīpas) are known as (1) Jambu, (2) Śāka, (3) Śālmalī, (4) Kuśa, (5) Krauñca, (6) Gomeda, or Plakṣa, and (7) Puṣkara.

Whenever *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* speaks of Earth we should, therefore, understand that it includes these seven islands and oceans surrounding Mount Meru; an area that spans for millions of miles:

The seven oceans respectively contain salt water, sugarcane juice, liquor, clarified butter, milk, emulsified yogurt, and sweet drinking water. All the islands are completely surrounded by these oceans, and each ocean is equal in breadth to the island it surrounds. Mahārāja Priyavrata, the husband of Queen Barhiṣmatī, gave sovereignty over these islands to his respective sons, namely Āgnīdhra, Idhmajihva, Yajñabāhu, Hiranyaṛetā, Ghṛtaprṣṭha, Medhātithi and Vītihotra. Thus they all became kings by the order of their father. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.1.33)

Here the seven islands and oceans of Bhū-maṇḍala are mentioned: *sapta jaladhayah sapta dvīpa*. The exact measurements of these islands and oceans are given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and cover an area of 202,800,000 miles. This vast area is only a portion of the complete Bhū-maṇḍala which has an overall diameter of 4 billion miles. This gives us some idea of the immense prowess of the Lord's devotees who are empowered to spread God consciousness throughout the universe. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we hear of Vedic Kings like Yayāti empowered with superhuman prowess to rule this vast area:

Thereafter, King Yayāti became the ruler of the entire world, consisting of seven islands, and ruled the citizens exactly like a father. (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 9.18.46)

Again:

By the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead [acyuta-tejasā], the son of Yuvanāśva was so powerful that when he became emperor he ruled the entire world, consisting of seven islands [sapta-dvīpa-vatīm], without any second ruler. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.6.33-34)

Sometimes demoniac entities such as Ravana and Hiranyaśipu also capture the Earth, causing the Lord to personally incarnate and destroy them:

As if in fear of Hiranyaśipu, the planet earth, which consists of seven islands, delivered food grains without being plowed. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.4.16)

Here the Earth is called Mahī and consists of seven islands (*sapta-dvīpavatī mahī*). Throughout *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Earth is actually defined as consisting of seven islands. Indeed the Vedic history of Earth states that its division into seven islands and oceans was originally created by Mahārāja Priyavrata:

My dear Lord, the rolling wheels of Mahārāja Priyavrata's chariot created seven ditches, in which the seven oceans came into existence. Because of these seven oceans, Bhū-maṇḍala is divided into seven islands [sapta-dvīpa]. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam -5.16.2)

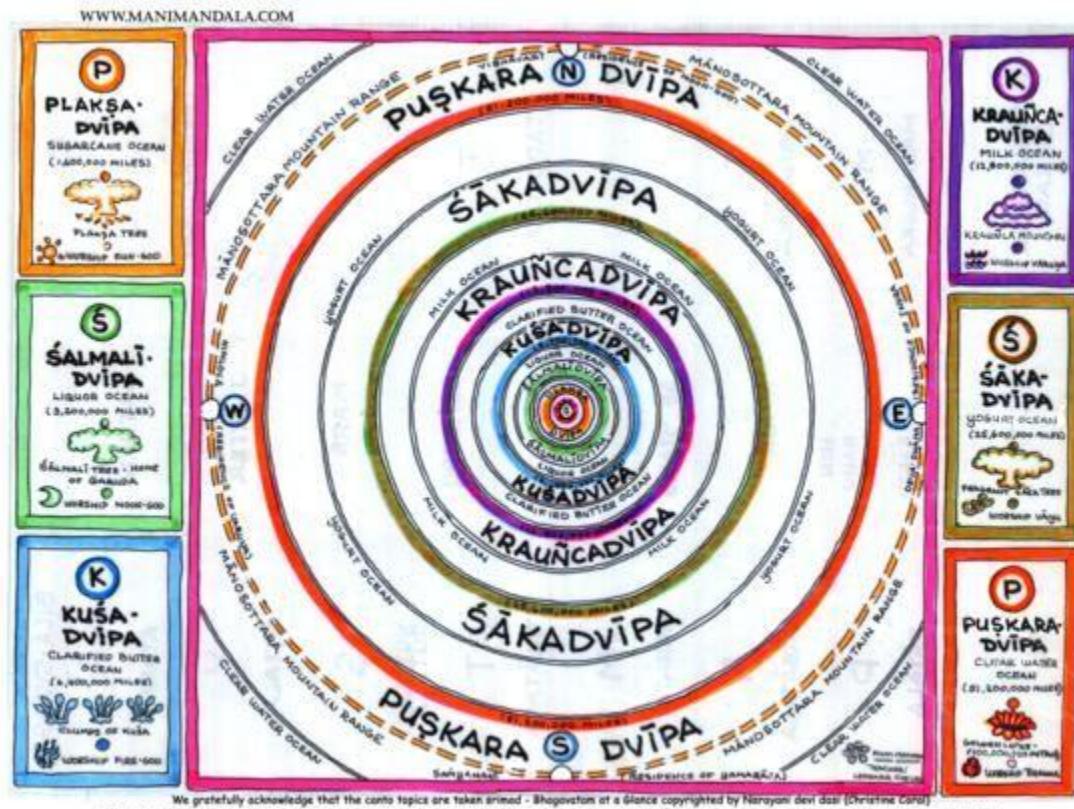
In the next verse, the Earth [*bhuvaḥ*] is again defined as *sapta-samudravatyā dvīpeṣu* consisting of seven islands and seven seas.

Learned scholars chant about the transcendental qualities of Lord Rṣabhadeva in this way: "Oh, this earthly planet contains seven seas and many islands and lands, of which Bhārata-varṣa is considered the most pious. People of Bhārata-varṣa are accustomed to glorifying the activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His incarnations as Lord Rṣabhadeva and others. All these activities are very auspicious for the welfare of humanity. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.16.13)

These verses should make it clear that when *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* refers to the Earth, it is not talking about a small globe floating in space. When *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* talks about where we are, it specifically invokes the place name Bhārata-varṣa which is a region to the south of Jambūdvīpa (the central island of Bhū-maṇḍala).

To give us some idea of the huge size of these seven islands and oceans, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* begins by stating that the central island of Bhū-maṇḍala is called Jambūdvīpa and has a breadth of 800,000 miles in area. It is surrounded by an ocean of equal breadth. Each successive island and ocean along the horizontal plane of Bhū-maṇḍala is measured at twice the size of the preceding one. The next island is called Plakṣadvīpa and being twice the size of called Jambūdvīpa has a breadth of 1,600,000 miles. Its surrounding ocean is equal in breadth to the island itself. The third island is called Sālmalīdvīpa. It is 3,200,000 miles wide, twice as wide as Plakṣadvīpa and is surrounded by an ocean of the same size. The fourth island is called Kuśadvīpa. The width of this island is 6,400,000 miles, or, in other words, twice the width of Sālmalīdvīpa. It is surrounded by an ocean of equal breadth. The fifth island, Krauñcadvīpa, is 12,800,000 miles wide and is surrounded by an ocean of equal size. The sixth island, Śākadvīpa is 25,600,000 miles wide and is surrounded by an ocean of equal size. The seventh island, Puṣkaradvīpa, which is twice as wide as the previous island, is 51,200,000 miles wide and is surrounded by an ocean of clear water as broad as the island itself. In this way, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes the seven islands and oceans of the greater expanded Earth. One can read some details about the geography and spiritual culture of the residents of these seven islands in Canto Five, Chapter Twenty of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

To help envisage this series of concentric islands and oceans, think of dropping a stone in a pond and watching how concentric circles spread out from a central point. In the same way, one can think of Mount Meru as the central point on the Bhū-maṇḍala, and the seven islands and seven oceans that surround Meru like ripples spreading out along the Earth's expanded plane. The following image shows the wonderful geometric arrangement of Bhū-maṇḍala's seven islands:



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Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam also mentions how Arjuna crossed this vast distance with Krishna:

The Lord's chariot passed over the seven islands of the middle universe, each with its ocean and its seven principal mountains. Then it crossed the Lokāloka boundary and entered the vast region of total darkness. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.89.47)

From these descriptions we can understand that we are not dealing with personalities who are restricted and limited to the small area that we know as India, or even to the tiny area of what we know as the Earth. Here it is stated that Krishna and Arjuna passed over *sapta dvīpān sa-sindhūniś ca* meaning the inner area of Bhū-maṇḍala with its seven islands and seven oceans. Again, this does not refer to the continents and oceans of what we understand as the globe Earth. We must always bear in mind that Earth

according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is not a globe but a huge stretch of land spanning the center of the universe called Bhū-maṇḍala. The tendency of our ant-like mind is to immediately place such descriptions of the Earth, and of the Lord's pastimes on Earth, into the category of mythology; thus we fail to appreciate how such transcendental narrations of Lord Krishna and His eternal associates have any bearing on our tiny lives of bewilderment and struggle with the material energy.

By the practice of *bhakti-yoga* and by the grace of Krishna's *śāstra-cakṣusā* (the eye of scripture), the vision of the Vedic cosmos comes gradually, bestowing peace and happiness to the mind. Among the beautiful arrangements of the Bhū-maṇḍala are the celestial cities on top of Mount Meru from which the controlling deities of the universe govern all directions under the supervision of Krishna. Such a vision naturally enlivens the mind that has been indoctrinated to believe the false propaganda of the asuras who teach:

*asatyam apratiṣṭham te
jagad āhur anīśvaram*

*They say that this world is unreal, with no foundation, no God in control.
(Bhagavad-gītā As It Is 16.8)*

Indeed, part of the asura's globe-Earth deceit is to hide the truth of Krishna's creation from the mass of people who are kept in ignorance and fear so that they can be easily controlled and exploited. This deception is ultimately directed by māyā and the asuras are mere instruments of *karma* in causing further delusion to those souls who have rejected a God-centered world in favour of a self-centered one (see section 2.8). People thus fear for their future existence on 'planet' Earth, not realizing we are not on a planet but on a sphere that stretches to the shell of the universe. There is no question of it being destroyed. Of course, all physical forms including the great universe itself are eventually destroyed by time but according to Vedic calculations the destruction of the universe is not for a very long time; a few hundred trillion years to be exact. In any case, despite the destruction of all physical bodies through such agencies as disease, war, famine, environmental catastrophes, etc., the souls living within the material world are never destroyed. They simply transmigrate in the cycle of birth and death until such time as they become liberated from māyā and go back home, back to Godhead. One's anxiety is naturally removed when one contemplates contemporary events on Earth as just a particular cycle (Kali-yuga) on one small area of the greater Earth plane, and not simply those occurring once and forever on a planet seemingly doomed to destruction because of the blind ignorance and greed of the human race.

(1.8) The Sovereignty of the Pāñdavas over Jambūdvīpa

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam specifically states that only 5,000 years ago, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira's sovereignty was over the whole of Jambūdvīpa:

*sampadah kratavo lokā mahiṣī bhrātaro mahī
jambūdvīpādhipatyam ca yaśāś ca tri-divam gatam*

News even reached the celestial planets about Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira's worldly possessions, the sacrifices by which he would attain a better destination, his queen, his stalwart brothers, his extensive land, his sovereignty over the planet earth, and his fame, etc. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.12.5)

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira is one of the eternal associates of Krishna that periodically incarnate on the Earth in order to re-establish *dharma*. Yudhiṣṭhira along with his four brothers Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva are known as the Pāñdavas. Together they serve Krishna's mission to annihilate the demons when they become a burden on the Earth. In the above verse the Sanskrit word for Yudhiṣṭhira's sovereignty over the planet Earth is *jambūdvīpādhipatyam*. The place name of Jambūdvīpa is clearly mentioned. King Yudhiṣṭhira's sovereignty was over the whole of Jambūdvīpa, not just India which is in Bhārata-varṣa. Śrīla Prabhupāda translates the above verse *jambūdvīpādhipatyam* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.12.5) as Yudhiṣṭhira's 'sovereignty over the planet Earth.' Śrīla Prabhupāda would translate words in that way because he had the understanding that Earth was a much larger domain than what we experience now. Śrīla Prabhupāda may have used the nomenclature of the day to call Earth a planet, but what *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* means by planet, and what NASA depicts as a planet are two entirely different things. This understanding makes sense when we consider the more detailed description given in *Mahābhārata* of the Pāñdavas conquest of areas in Jambūdvīpa on behalf of their brother Yudhiṣṭhira. For example, we hear of Arjuna conquering Kimpurusa-varṣa and taking tribute from the residents of Hari-varṣa. This is an area of hundreds of thousands of miles:

Vaisampayana said, "That heroic and foremost of the Pāñdavas endued with great energy, crossing the White mountains, subjugated the country of the Kimpurushas ruled by Durmaputra, after a collision involving a great slaughter of Kshatriyas, and brought the region under his complete sway...At last the son of the slayer of Paka, arriving in the country of the North Harivarsha desired to conquer it. Thereupon certain frontier guards of huge bodies and endued with great strength and energy coming to him with gallant hearts said, 'O son of

Prita, this country can never be conquered by thee. If thou sleekest thou good, return hence. He that entereth this region, if human is sure to perish. We have been gratified by thee; O hero thy conquests have been enough. Nor is anything to be seen here, O Arjuna that can be conquered by thee. The Northern Kurus live here. There cannot be war here. Even if thou enterest it, thou will not be able to behold anything for with human eyes nothing can be seen. (*Mahābhārata, Sabha Parva, Section XXVII*)

The giant guards then give gifts of celestial origin to Arjuna to be presented to Yudhiṣṭhīra thus acknowledging his position as Emperor over Jambūdvīpa. It is further mentioned in *Mahābhārata* that during Yudhiṣṭhīra's Rājasūya sacrifice in which he was installed as emperor of the world, gifts were coming in from all of the different *varṣa*'s of Jambūdvīpa in tribute to Yudhiṣṭhīra. The envious Duryodhana relates to his father King Dhṛtarāṣṭra about the ocean of wealth that was pouring in from places such as Meru and Mandara Mountains, and as far away as Northern Kuru (Uttarakuru-*varṣa*) which is on the very opposite side of Jambūdvīpa and hundreds of thousands of miles away from Bhārata-*varṣa*:

Duryodhana said, 'O sinless one, listen to me as I describe that large mass of wealth consisting of various kinds of tribute presented unto Yudhishtīra by the kings of the earth. They that dwell by the side of the river Sailoda flowing between the mountains of Meru and Mandara and enjoy the delicious shade of topes of the Kichaka bamboo, viz., the Khashas, Ekasanas, the Arhas, the Pradaras, the Dirghavenus, the Paradas, the Kulindas, the Tanganas, and the other Tanganas, brought as tribute heaps of gold measured in dronas (jars) and raised from underneath the earth by ants and therefore called after these creatures. The mountain tribes endued with great strength having brought as tribute numerous Chamaras (long brushes) soft and black and others white as moon-beam and sweet honey extracted from the flowers growing on the Himavat as also from the Mishali champaka and garlands of flowers brought from the region of the northern Kurus, and diverse kinds of plants from the north even from Kailasa, waited with their heads bent down at the gate of king Yudhishtīra, being refused permission to enter. (*Mahābhārata, Sabha Parva, Section LI*)

In *Mahābhārata* we hear a further confirmation by Draupadi of the vast territories governed by Yudhiṣṭhīra. These verses seem to indicate that Yudhiṣṭhīra's rule was over not just Jambūdvīpa but even extended to the other dvīpas along the Bhū-maṇḍala:

Formerly, O puissant one, thou hadst, O monarch, swayed with might, the region called Jambu-dwipa, O tiger among men, abounding with populous districts. Thou

hadst also, O ruler of men, swayed with might that other region called Kraunchadwipa situated on the west of the great Meru and equal unto Jambudwipa itself. Thou hadst swayed with might, O king, that other region called Sakadwipa on the east of the great Meru and equal to Krauncha-dwipa itself. The region called Bhadraswa, on the north of the great Meru and equal to Sakadwipa was also swayed by thee, O tiger, among men! Thou hadst even penetrated the ocean and swayed with might other regions, too, O hero, and the very islands begirt by the sea and containing many populous provinces. Having, O Bharata, achieved such immeasurable feats, and having obtained (through them) the adorations of the Brahmanas, how is it that thy soul is not gratified? Mahābhārata, Śānti-parva, XIV)

In another fascinating purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.16.12, one will see how Śrīla Prabhupāda uses the words Earth, world, and Jambūdvīpa interchangeably to describe the vast territories of Jambūdvīpa that were conquered by Mahārāja Parīkṣit the grandson of Arjuna who ruled the empire after Yudhiṣṭhīra.

The verse in question narrates the conquest of Mahārāja Parīkṣit over Jambūdvīpa, naming specific places. These are not place names within India; they are the place names of Mahārāja Parīkṣit. Bhārata-varṣa (our Earth) is mentioned almost incidentally. One should note again that these areas of Jambūdvīpa cover an area of 800,000 miles:

Mahārāja Parīkṣit then conquered all parts of the earthly planet—Bhadrāśva, Ketumāla, Bhārata, the northern Kuru, Kimpuruṣa, etc.—and exacted tributes from their respective rulers. (SB 1.16.12)

PURPORT

Bhadrāśva: It is a tract of land near Meru Parvata, and it extends from Gandhamādana Parvata to the saltwater ocean. There is a description of this varṣa in the Mahābhārata (Bhīṣma-parva 7.14-18). The description was narrated by Sañjaya to Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhīra also conquered this varṣa, and thus the province was included within the jurisdiction of his empire. Mahārāja Parīkṣit was formerly declared to be the emperor of all lands ruled by his grandfather, but still he had to establish his supremacy while he was out of his capital to exact tribute from such states.

Ketumāla: This earth planet is divided into seven dvīpas by seven oceans, and the central dvīpa, called Jambūdvīpa, is divided into nine varṣas, or parts, by eight huge mountains. Bhārata-varṣa is one of the above-mentioned nine varṣas, and Ketumāla is also described as one of the above varṣas. It is said that in

Ketumāla varṣa, women are the most beautiful. This varṣa was conquered by Arjuna also. A description of this part of the world is available in the Mahābhārata (Sabhā 28.6).

It is said that this part of the world is situated on the western side of the Meru Parvata, and inhabitants of this province used to live up to ten thousand years (Bhiṣma-parva 6.31). Human beings living in this part of the globe are of golden color, and the women resemble the angels of heaven. The inhabitants are free from all kinds of diseases and grief.

Bhārata-varṣa: This part of the world is also one of the nine varṣas of the Jambūdvīpa. A description of Bhārata-varṣa is given in the Mahābhārata (Bhiṣma-parva, Chapters 9 and 10).

In the center of Jambūdvīpa is Ilāvṛta-varṣa, and south of Ilāvṛta-varṣa is Hari-varṣa. The description of these varṣas is given in the Mahābhārata (Sabhā-parva 28.7-8) as follows:

It is mentioned here that the women in both these varṣas are beautiful, and some of them are equal to the Apsarās, or heavenly women.

Uttarakuru: According to Vedic geography the northernmost portion of Jambūdvīpa is called Uttarakuru-varṣa. It is surrounded by the saltwater ocean from three sides and divided by Śringavān Mountain from the Hiraṇmaya-varṣa.

Kimpuruṣa-varṣa: It is stated to be situated north of the great Himalaya Mountain, which is eighty thousand miles in length and height and which covers sixteen thousand miles in width. These parts of the world were also conquered by Arjuna (Sabhā 28.1-2). The Kimpuruṣas are descendants of a daughter of Dakṣa. When Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhīra performed a horse sacrifice yajña, the inhabitants of these countries were also present to take part in the festival, and they paid tributes to the Emperor. This part of the world is called Kimpuruṣa-varṣa, or sometimes the Himalayan provinces (Himavatī). It is said that Śukadeva Gosvāmī was born in these Himalayan provinces and that he came to Bhārata-varṣa after crossing the Himalayan countries.

In other words, Mahārāja Parīkṣit conquered all the world. He conquered all the continents adjoining all the seas and oceans in all directions, namely the eastern, western, northern and southern parts of the world.

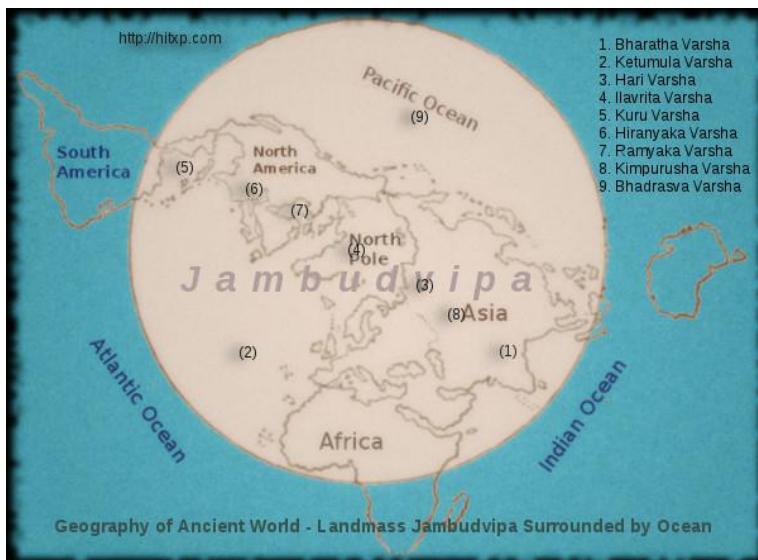
These verses from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Mahābhārata prove conclusively—at least to followers of Vedic history or Purāṇas—that what we know as the Earth was once connected to the rest of the 800,000 mile island of Jambūdvīpa. Such a conception completely rules out, and immediately demolishes, any idea of the Earth being a globe rotating in empty space. We should also immediately reject the many foolish explanations that try to place these huge areas of Jambūdvīpa either within India and its surrounding area, or within the Earth itself. Speculations abound in this regard and

display a complete lack of faith and understanding of Vedic cosmology. These speculations probably began with the first English translators of the Vedic texts and their complete misunderstanding and distortion of the text has unfortunately been repeated verbatim by most if not all Hindu commentators on Vedic geography in the modern age. Completely ignoring the huge land measurements ascribed to Jambūdvīpa in the various Vedic literatures, foolish speculators try to interpret these areas as regions in and around India.

It is very difficult for the conditioned mind to accept (without speculation or interpolation) what the Vedic texts describe as a huge land mass to the north of our land and oceans. But even if one cannot accept the truth of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s description, at least one should have enough intellectual integrity to accurately represent what the text is describing rather than trying to interpret the text to make it conform to one's very limited understanding of reality? In the images below we see the huge region of Jambūdvīpa squashed into the region of India and its surrounding areas:



Another foolish theory attempts to ascribe the varṣas of Jambūdvīpa to the continents of the Earth itself such as found in the map below:



In the above map we see another complete misunderstanding of the Vedic universe wherein the cartographer completely disregards the description given in the Vedic texts and attempts instead to identify the varṣas of Jambūdvīpa with the continents of our Earth. Of course, texts from ancient scriptures mean nothing to those opposed to, or completely disbelieving in the Vedic authority, but if any sincere follower of Vedic authority has any doubts on the matter of the greater Earth region described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Mahābhārata*, I suggest undertaking a serious study of the hoax that NASA has pulled over the eyes of the world for the last 50 years in its presentation of the Earth as a globe rotating in space. Once one sees through the deception that NASA has created, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s description of the greater Earth begins to make sense. Even for those who think of themselves as Vedic agnostics, sometimes listening to what are regarded as ancient myths and legends can often pay off, such as the recent discovery of the sunken city of Dvārakā off the west coast of India. Dvārakā is mentioned in *Mahābhārata* as having being submerged by the ocean after the departure of Krishna. These events took place five thousand years ago and evidence for them has only emerged.

The armies assembled in Kurukṣetra came from all over Jambūdvīpa, not just Bhārata-varṣa

Further evidence that the Earth is on an expanded flat plane and was once connected to the greater island of Jambūdvīpa comes from the *Mahābhārata* itself. In the following section we learn that all the warriors assembled in India at the battlefield of Kurukṣetra came from all over Jambūdvīpa, an area as already mentioned is 800,000 miles:

Janamejaya said,--"How did those heroes, the Kurus, the Pandavas, and the Somakas, and the high-souled kings assembled together from various countries, fight?"

*Vaisampayana said,--"Listen thou, O lord of the earth, how those heroes,--the Kurus, the Pandavas, and the Somakas,--fought on the sacred plain of the Kurukshetra. Entering Kurukshetra, the Pandavas endued with great might, along with the Somakas, advanced, desirous of victory, against the Kauravas. Accomplished in the study of the Vedas, all (of them) took great delight in battle. Expectant of success in battle, with their troops (they) faced the fight. Approaching the army of Dhritarashtra's son, those (warriors) invincible in battle stationed themselves with their troops on the western part (of the plain), their faces turned towards the east. Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, caused tents by thousands to be set up according to rule, beyond the region called Samantapanchaka. The whole earth seemed then to be empty, divested of horses and men, destitute of cars and elephants, and with only the children and the old left (at home). **From the whole area of Jambudwipa over which the sun sheds his rays, was collected that force,** O best of kings. Men of all races, assembled together, occupied an area extending for many Yojanas over districts, rivers, hills, and woods..."*

... Indeed, that encounter of the two armies was highly wonderful, like that of two oceans when the end of the Yuga is arrived. The whole earth was empty, having only the children and the old left (at home), in consequence of that large army mustered by the Kauravas. (Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma-parva, Jambu-kanda, Section 1)

In this next section from *Mahābhārata*, the blind King Dhṛitarāṣṭra enquires from his secretary Sañjaya about the places from where the kings and their armies had come from to fight the battle. Here we are again informed that the kings are coming from all over Jambūdvīpa, not simply out little area that we know as the continents of Earth. From *Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma-parva*:

And, soon, O bull of Bharata's race, the king asked Sanjaya of soul worthy of praise,--saying,--'O Sanjaya, these kings, these lords of earth, so brave and taking delight in battle, are for smiting one another with weapons of diverse kinds, being prepared to lay down their very lives for the sake of earth. Incapable of being restrained, they are, indeed, smiting one another for increasing the population of Yama's domain. Desirous of prosperity connected with the possession of earth they are incapable of bearing one another. I, therefore, think

that earth must be possessed of many attributes. Tell me all these, O Sanjaya, Many thousands, many millions, many tens of millions, many hundreds of millions, heroic men have come together at Kurujangala. I desire to hear, O Sanjaya, with accurate details, about the situation and dimensions of those countries and cities from which they have come. Through the potency of that regenerate Rishi Vyasa of immeasurable energy, thou art endued with the lamp of celestial perception and the eye of knowledge. (Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma-parva, Section)

Here we learn that ‘hundreds of millions’ of soldiers were involved in the battle. This explains the huge number of dead calculated by Yudhisṭhira in reply to an inquiry by Dhṛitarāṣṭra:

The royal sage Dhritarashtra, however, restraining the grief that arises from folly, enquired of Yudhisṭhira the just, saying, ‘If, O son of Pandu, thou knowest it, tell me the number of those that have fallen in this battle, as also of those that have escaped with life!’

“Yudhisṭhira answered, ‘One billion 660 million and 20,000 men have fallen in this battle. Of the heroes that have escaped, the number is 240,165.’

“Dhritarashtra said, ‘By the power of what knowledge, O son, thou seest these things like one crowned with ascetic success? Tell me this, O mighty-armed one, if thou thinkest that I can listen to it without impropriety!’

“Yudhisṭhira said, ‘While at thy command I wandered in the forest, I obtained this boon on the occasion of sojourning to the sacred places. I met with the celestial rishi Lomasa and obtained from him the boon of spiritual vision. Thus on a former occasion I obtained second sight through the power of knowledge!’ (Mahābhārata, Strī Parva, Section 26)

Although this figure of over one and a half billion soldiers being killed in an 18 day long battle seems fantastical, it makes sense when we understand that the Battle of Kurukṣetra was not fought on a globe-shaped Earth at all. According to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Mahābhārata, the continents of our Earth are just one region of the greater Jambūdvīpa, a huge 800,000 mile circular island which rests on the flat plane of Bhū-maṇḍala. In other words Earth is not a Globe rotating in empty space around the sun: it is an area of land resting on the flat plane of Bhū-maṇḍala. 5,000 years ago, these lands were connected and so the soldiers participating in the Battle of Kurukṣetra were gathered from all the kingdoms of the greater area of Jambūdvīpa. Thus in reply to

King Dhṛtarāṣṭra's question about the places where the kings and their armies come from, Sañjaya goes on to name the various places within Jambūdvīpa. This forms a famous section of the *Bhīṣma-parva* of *Mahābhārata* wherein the cosmography of the Vedic Universe is described to King Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Sañjaya is not naming and describing the place names of kingdoms within India, or even places limited to the continents of our small Earth. Rather he is naming and describing the various regions or *varṣas* of Jambūdvīpa which is a land mass of 800,000 miles. The Kurukṣetra war was a world war of cosmic size, not global size and to appreciate this, we must begin to understand that the size and shape of the world is actually not anything like a globe. Mundane scholars who have no faith in the Vedic history try to squeeze all these place names of Jambūdvīpa with the huge distances dividing them into the tiny area of India. In this way they try to make sense of a text that is incomprehensible to them; the result is simply no-sense or nonsense.

The purpose of these examples is to point out that the Vedic kings on our Earth region once had access to those greater regions of Bhārata-varṣa and Jambūdvīpa; land that we are now cut off from. Why is this significant in a discussion of the flat Earth? The history of a crossing between Earth and Jambūdvīpa is significant because NASA is presenting the idea that our Earth is bounded and confined to the circumference of our ball shaped Earth; whereas in fact, the continents that we know as Earth are simply lying off the shore of the southern shore of Jambūdvīpa on the flat plane of Bhū-maṇḍala. This means that there are vast stretches of land that we yet have to discover, or rather rediscover, if the Vedic history and geography is correct.

(1.9) The Pilgrimage of the Pāṇḍavas to Jambūdvīpa

The *Mahābhārata* (*Vana Parva*) also describes in great detail the pilgrimage of the Pāṇḍavas led by Lomasa Muni from what we know today as present India through the greater area of Bhārata-varṣa, passing through other *varṣas* until they come to view Mount Meru itself which is in the center of Jambūdvīpa. The mountains dividing the different the southern region of Jambūdvīpa are all mentioned. The height of these mountains called Hemakūṭa, Niṣadha, and Himalaya, are given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as 80,000 miles high. This is a journey of hundreds of thousands of miles. There is no mention of the Pāṇḍavas crossing from an island to the shore of Jambūdvīpa. They just kept travelling on the same land mass. This suggests a much greater land mass than what we presently understand as our Earth. Our idea of the Earth as a globe cannot accommodate this historical account because according to the globe idea if you keep walking north, then one will eventually reach the Arctic; and if one manages to cross the Arctic then you would simply be heading south again around the globe. *Mahābhārata* simply describes that the Pāṇḍavas kept travelling north from India and somehow entered the vast areas of greater Jambūdvīpa.

We should note that according to *Mahābhārata*, one's ability to perceive and access these regions does not depend on mechanical machines; it depends on spiritual qualification:

O thou of the Kuru race, observing the ordinance as explained by me, visit with subdued senses, these tirthas [places of holy pilgrimage]...men of piety and learning are able to visit these tirthas, by reason of their purified senses, their belief in Godhead, and their acquaintance with the Vedas. He that doth not observe vows, he that hath not his soul under control, he that is impure, he that is a thief, and he that is of crooked mind, doth not, O Kauravya, bathe in tirthas.
(*Mahābhārata*, *Vana Parva* LXXXV translated by Kisari Mohan Ganguli)

Therefore, taking the narrative in a literal sense, we read in *Mahābhārata* that the Pāṇḍavas went on pilgrimage from what we know as present day India, crossing the huge areas of Jambūdvīpa before settling on Gandhamādana Mountain from where they viewed Meru itself. Gandhamādana Mountain is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as being 16,000 miles high and is situated to the east of Mount Meru. From the summit of this mountain Dhaumya, the priest of the Pāṇḍavas pointed out Meru in the distance:

Behold that excellent and bright summit of the Meru where sitteth the great sire (Brahma) with the celestials happy in self-knowledge. (*Mahābhārata*, *Vana Parva* CLXII, translated by Kisari Mohan Ganguli)

The Himalaya beyond the arctic zone

In the concluding chapter of the *Mahābhārata*, we once again hear of the Pāṇḍavas return to Jambūdvīpa:

Then by the northern coast of the salt sea, those Princes of Bharata's race proceeded to the south-west. Tuning next towards the west, they beheld the city of Dwaraka covered by the ocean. Turning next to the north, those foremost ones proceeded on. Observant of yoga, they were desirous of making a round of the whole Earth. Vaisampayana said, 'Those princes of restrained souls and devoted to Yoga, proceeding to the North, beheld Himavat, that very large mountain. Crossing the Himavat they beheld a vast desert of sand. They then saw the mighty mountain Meru, the foremost of all high-peaked mountains. (Mahābhārata, Mahaprasthaika Parva, Section 1 and 2)

Here it is described that the Pāṇḍavas first circumambulated the world as a mark of respect and then proceeded north again through the Himalayas before reaching Mount Meru in Jambūdvīpa. At this last stage of their Earthly pastimes, the Pāṇḍavas departed the world of mortals. In an interesting lecture given in 1973, Śrīla Prabhupāda speaks of the Pāṇḍavas passage to these greater Himalayas through the Arctic region:

*udīcīm praviveśāśāṁ
gata-pūrvāṁ mahātmabhiḥ
hṛdi brahma param dhyāyan
nāvarteta yato gataḥ*

Translation: "He then started towards the north, treading the path accepted by his forefathers and great men, to devote himself completely to the thought of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And he lived in that way wherever he went."

Prabhupāda: Uḍīcīm praviveśā. So one who goes to the northern side, it is to be understood he never comes back. Northern side means the Arctic zone, covered with snow. So this was known in Bhāgavata days. Not only in Bhāgavata days, some, about a thousand years ago also, there is Kālidāsa's book Kumāra-sambhava. Kumāra-sambhava, "The Birth of Kārttikeya." So in the book the beginning is asty uttarasyam diśi himālayo nāma nagadhirājah. Uttarasyam diśi, in the northern side, there is mountain which is covered with snow, Himalaya. Hima means ice, hima. Asty uttarasyam diśi himālayo nāma nagadhirājah: "In the northern side, there is a hill or a mountain which is always

covered by snow." Although at the present moment, Himalaya, there is one mountain that is also called Himalaya, Mount Everest, but I think this Arctic zone was referred. Because it is said that "touching both sides, water." Asty uttarasyam diśi himālayo nāma nagadhirājah, toya-nidhi avagāhya. Toya-nidhi. Toya-nidhi means oceans, both sides ocean, the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean. Avagāhya, touching. So the Arctic zone was referred in many books, Vedic literature. It is not that it was unknown. Everything was known. The modern historians, they say like that. They say the Bhāgavata was written about 1,500 years ago. No. Five thousand years ago. They bring everything within the Christian era. And before that, there was no history, according to them. But that is not the fact. (Lecture on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.15.44, Los Angeles, December 22 1973)

From a flat Earth perspective, it makes sense that the Pāñdavas were crossing somewhere from Bhārata-varṣa into Jambūdvīpa. Here Śrīla Prabhupāda postulates a passage through the Arctic. According to my own understanding of the flat Earth this would indeed be the case that as one proceeds north from India, one would eventually come to Jambūdvīpa after crossing the ice regions. Either that, or there is some kind of portal from the Himalaya in India to the greater Himalaya which stands at 80,000 miles tall and separates Bhārata-varṣa from Kimpuruṣa-varṣa. I believe if Sanskrit scholars begin to study the Vedic texts from the perspective of an expanded flat Earth, much linguistic evidence will surface to prove this point that a passage exists between Bhārata-varṣa and Jambūdvīpa.

The regions of Arctic and Antarctica are presently closed off to independent exploration. My understanding is that the top officials in NASA and other military agencies belonging to the world's governments have knowledge of an expanded flat Earth beyond Arctic and Antarctica. Although they know of the existence of land beyond these regions, they themselves are unable to gain access there. Indeed, they have very little movement either on a horizontal or vertical plane. The fake images from outer space only prove that they cannot leave the Earth's atmosphere. From as early as 1960, Śrīla Prabhupāda had argued in his book *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, of the impossibility of travelling in outer space by mechanical arrangements. Śrīla Prabhupāda consistently argued that the conditioned souls are placed in certain areas of the universe by their karma and are bound and restricted in various ways from travelling where-ever they will. This is a Krishna conscious perspective on the world; one that recognises Krishna's supreme control over the movements and actions of the living entities. The claims by NASA to be able to travel in outer space are mere propaganda. Humans bound by karma can no more travel from Earth to outer space

than a prisoner bound by locks and chains can transfer from his prison to a beach in Hawaii. One group of Earth's prisoners can merely try and convince the others that they are in control of the prison environment when both are in fact bound hand and foot by the chains of karma.

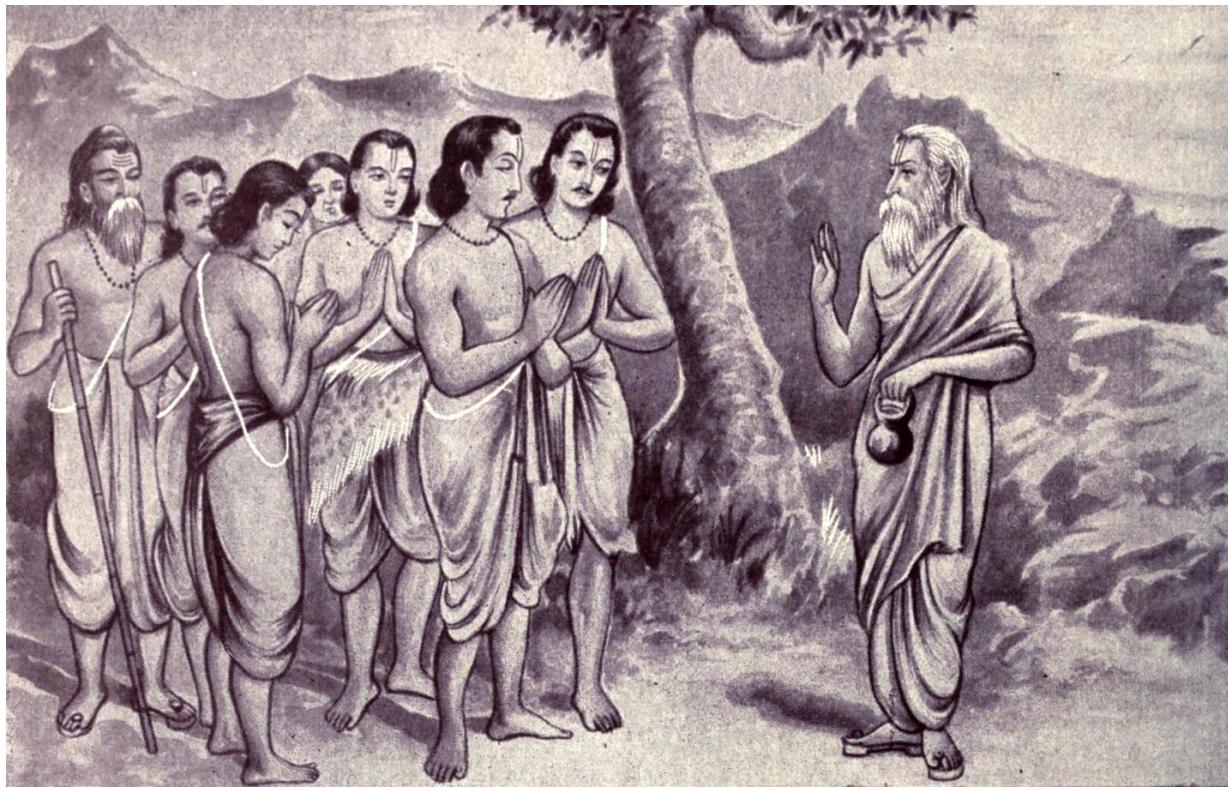
In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the Himalaya (Himavat) that separates Bhārata-varṣa from Kimpuruṣa-varṣa is described as being 80,000 miles high. Mount Meru itself is 100,000 yojanas or 800,000 miles in height. His Grace Sadāpūta Dāsa has attempted to explain the huge measurements of Bhārata-varṣa and Jambūdvīpa with reference to the theory of parallel universes; namely that the place we know as India with all its holy places, rivers and mountains has its celestial counterpart in the much larger landscape of Jambūdvīpa. For example, the landmarks mentioned such as the Himalaya Mountain in India, has its parallel counterpart in the much larger (80,000 mile high) version in the greater Bhārata-varṣa. In an article called the *Universe of the Vedas* Sadāpūta Dāsa writes:

First of all, consider the very large sizes of mountains and land areas in Jambudvīpa. For example, India is said to be 72,000 miles (9,000 yojanas) from north to south, or nearly three times the circumference of the Earth. Likewise, the Himalayas are said to be 80,000 miles high. People in India in ancient times used to go in pilgrimage on foot from one end of India to the other, so they knew how large India is. Why does the Bhagavatam give such unrealistic distances? The answer is that Jambudvīpa doubles as a model of the heavenly realm, in which everything is on a superhuman scale...

...Why would the Bhagavatam describe Jambudvīpa as both part of the Earth and part of the celestial realm? Because there's a connection between the two. To understand, let's consider the idea of parallel worlds. By siddhis, or mystic perfections, one can take shortcuts across space. Mystical travel explains how the worlds of the devas are connected with our world. In particular, it explains how Jambudvīpa, as a celestial realm of devas, is connected with Jambudvīpa as the Earth or part of the Earth. Thus the double model of Jambudvīpa makes sense in terms of the Puranic understanding of the siddhis.

In this sense we could account for the huge tracts of land that the Pāñḍavas must have traversed to get around Jambūdvīpa by stating that the Pāñḍavas were actually just walking around the holy places of India, but had spiritual access to their celestial counterparts in the greater Jambūdvīpa. Thus they had the eyes to see things on a grand scale even though they never left India itself. While there is truth to this concept – the Ganges, for example, has its source in India and also at the top of mount Meru – the question remains: when *Mahābhārata* describes the Pāñḍavas pilgrimage around Jambūdvīpa, is it referring just to a pilgrimage around India, or did they in fact go

around the places of the actual Jambūdvīpa, and notably to one of its principle mountains, namely Gandhamādana? From a straight reading of the text itself, there is no sense in which we should take it that they were entering other dimensions of reality when in fact they were just walking around the pilgrimage sites of what we call present day India. They do indeed enter other dimensions on their pilgrimage of Jambūdvīpa, but whenever that happens it is specifically mentioned as a particular event. Otherwise, it simply describes Lomasa Muni leading them on a pilgrimage from a forest in India to close to the center of Jambūdvīpa, perceiving greater and greater wonders as they proceed on their journey. Forget Lord of the Rings; this is the real middle-earth. Jambūdvīpa is literally the middle of Earth (Bhū-maṇḍala) and it is full of wonders.



The Pāñdavas pilgrimage around Jambūdvīpa with Lomasa Muni

The point we wish to make is that in the video *Vedic Cosmos*, it depicts Bhārata-kanda (Earth) as a ball-shaped globe floating in the salt water ocean, but in *Mahābhārata* there is no mention of the Pāñdavas crossing from a globe-shaped Earth to the mainland of Jambūdvīpa. They just kept travelling north from present day India and somehow reached Gandhamādana Mountain on Jambūdvīpa. It would be more like travellers crossing from Europe into Asia and not like astronauts flying from a planet to another strange land, or like astral travellers moving from one dimension to another. The

journey from Bhārata-varṣa to Jambūdvīpa may indeed have required ships, although that is not specifically indicated in the case of the Pāṇḍavas journey. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* one reaches Jambūdvīpa by heading in a northern direction from India. This makes no sense with a globe conception but it does make sense with an expanded flat Earth conception. Some people may try to argue that places like Gandhamādana and Meru Mountains must refer to places within India but this idea can be immediately rejected as it shows no faith in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's* cosmology.

The Pāṇḍavas were superhuman entities. What would prevent them from going to the actual Jambūdvīpa? According to the texts, Arjuna was travelling all over the universe, what to speak of merely going from one *varṣa* of Jambūdvīpa to another. Lomasa Muni, their guide, had just arrived from Indraloka. There is no doubt that the Pāṇḍavas and their associates had the qualification and ability to undertake such a journey. The problem is whether we believe the story; whether we actually believe there is a place called Jambūdvīpa which forms the greater part of an 800,000 mile diameter island which is no longer visible to our eyes and senses. Believe me, it becomes a lot more probable narration when one gets to look at the story that NASA has spun about the world we live on. But we shall come back to that. For the sake of this presentation in favour of the flat Earth concept, I would therefore take a literal understanding that from India, they actually toured around these huge land areas. Lomasa Muni took the Pāṇḍavas to many fantastic places, all of which fit the descriptions of Jambūdvīpa, not our tiny little India.

Actually, we do not need to resort to ideas of parallel universes in order to explain Earth's relationship to Jambūdvīpa. The idea of a parallel universe, in any case, would still beg the question of where exactly Earth is in relation to Jambūdvīpa in the parallel universe. Although special qualification is required for entering other parts of the universe, the passage to Jambūdvīpa is not like going through Professor Digory Kirke's wardrobe and ending up in Narnia. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is actually very precise in its description of the size and shape of Jambūdvīpa and its distance from where we are. Śukadeva Goswāmī describes it using our measurements and dimension. He describes its physicality in the dimension that we understand. In other words, he wishes to inform the reader (here in this part of the Earth) of a greater Earth that is literally a few thousand miles away to the north.

We do not, therefore, actually require to take any fanciful meaning of Earth's relationship to Jambūdvīpa; nor is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's* description of the relationship beyond our visualization or comprehension. If I hear England described as an island 20 miles off the mainland coast of Europe, I just accept the description *as it is*. I don't need to resort to the idea of a parallel universe to conceptualize the relationship of England to Europe, nor to find my way. There may be some mystic process by which I could

cross the sea in an instance making normal distances and measurements redundant, but that is not the process being described on a regular map for humans using conventional methods of travel over a commonly recognised distance. If one wants to go to Europe from England, for example, one could take a train and cross under the sea using the Eurotunnel, or one could take a boat and sail upon the sea, or one could take an airplane and fly over the sea. Or, one could simply astral travel if they had developed some mystic *siddhi*. However, whatever the mode of transport, one is still crossing the same distance, only in a shorter or longer time. The distances are commonly recognised units of measurement that are relatively traversed by faster or slower modes of transport whether they be gross (machines) or subtle (mystic power).

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam similarly uses commonly understood distances and dimensions that are intended to help us here in Bhārata-varṣa to understand where and how far other places in the universe are from us. We should, therefore, take the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s description of Earth's relationship to Jambūdvīpa *as it is*. Jambūdvīpa is just north of our northern land areas and oceans. If the description of Earth's place in the universe was beyond our comprehension, why would Śukadeva Goswāmī even bother mentioning it? Why even bother making a planetarium if Earth's shape and locality can't be conceived? The description of Jambūdvīpa is actually very straight forward and should be taken as a literal description of a huge land mass that neighbours our own. Many of the observations and arguments presented by advocates of the flat Earth society actually confirm at least part of Śukadeva Goswāmī description that Earth is resting on an expanded flat horizontal plane, not rotating in empty space around the sun.

So let's try to take this in: According to Śukadeva Goswāmī we are not on a round globe in outer space; rather, what we know as our present land area of Earth, is only part of a much greater Earth called Bhārata-varṣa, which is only part of an 800,000 mile circular island called Jambūdvīpa, which itself is only the inner island of various concentric circles of lands and islands that continue for some distance along the 4 billion diameter circle called Bhū-maṇḍala. Above and below Bhū-maṇḍala are other levels of the universe. Śrīla Prabhupāda referred to these fourteen levels as planetary systems, though they are not planets in our conventional sense of the word. All of these places are populated by various forms of life. Bhū-maṇḍala is the central horizontal plane that divides the universe into higher and lower systems. Bhū-maṇḍala stretches to the shell of the universe which encloses everything else within it. Earth, or rather, Bhārata-varṣa is a small section of the central island of Bhū-maṇḍala called Jambūdvīpa. We are literally in the center of the universe. Bhārata-varṣa is described as a unique place in the universe because here is where the living entity creates the karma that decides their future place and position in the universe. It is also the place in the universe where the

living entity most easily achieves liberation. Bhārata-varṣa's unique position is explained in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

The country that lies north of the ocean, and south of the snowy mountains, is called Bhārata, for there dwelt the descendants of Bharata. It is nine thousand leagues in extent, and is the land of works, in consequence of which men go to heaven, or obtain emancipation.

The seven main chains of mountains in Bhārata are Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Śuktimat, Riksha, Vindhya, and Páripátra.

From this region heaven is obtained, or even, in some cases, liberation from existence; or men pass from hence into the condition of brutes, or fall into hell. Heaven, emancipation, a state in mid-air, or in the subterraneous realms, succeeds to existence here, and the world of acts is not the title of any other portion of the universe...

...In the Bhārata-varsha it is that the succession of four Yugas, or ages, the Krita, the Treta, the Dwápara, and Kali, takes place; that pious ascetics engage in rigorous penance; that devout men offer sacrifices; and that gifts are distributed; all for the sake of another world. In Jambu-dwípa, Viṣṇu, consisting of sacrifice, is worshipped, as the male of sacrificial rites, with sacrificial ceremonies: he is adored under other forms elsewhere. Bhārata is therefore the best of the divisions of Jambu-dwípa, because it is the land of works: the others are places of enjoyment alone. It is only after many thousand births, and the aggregation of much merit, that living beings are sometimes born in Bhārata as men. The gods themselves exclaim, "Happy are those who are born, even from the condition of gods, as men in Bhārata-varsha, as that is the way to the pleasures of Paradise, or the greater blessing of final liberation. Happy are they who, consigning all the unheeded rewards of their acts to the supreme and eternal Viṣṇu, obtain existence in that land of works, as their path to him. We know not, when the acts that have obtained us heaven shall have been fully recompensed, where we shall renew corporeal confinement; but we know that those men are fortunate who are born with perfect faculties in Bhārata-varsha." (Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Book 2, Chapter 3)

The unique position of Bhārata-varṣa is also explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto 5, chapter 19. Here we read the words of the demigods who lament their materially opulent position which causes them to neglect their spiritual life. They pray instead for a birth in Bhārata-varṣa where devotion to Krishna is easily cultivated and liberation from the cycle of birth and death most easily achieved:

Since the human form of life is the sublime position for spiritual realization, all the demigods in heaven speak in this way: How wonderful it is for these human beings to have been born in the land of Bhārata-varṣa. They must have executed pious acts of austerity in the past, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself must have been pleased with them. Otherwise, how could they engage in devotional service in so many ways? We demigods can only aspire to achieve human births in Bhārata-varṣa to execute devotional service, but these human beings are already engaged there.

The demigods continue: After performing the very difficult tasks of executing Vedic ritualistic sacrifices, undergoing austerities, observing vows and giving charity, we have achieved this position as inhabitants of the heavenly planets. But what is the value of this achievement? Here we are certainly very engaged in material sense gratification, and therefore we can hardly remember the lotus feet of Lord Nārāyaṇa. Indeed, because of our excessive sense gratification, we have almost forgotten His lotus feet.

A short life in the land of Bharata-varṣa is preferable to a life achieved in Brahmaloka for millions and billions of years because even if one is elevated to Brahmaloka, he must return to repeated birth and death. Although life in Bhārata-varṣa, in a lower planetary system, is very short, one who lives there can elevate himself to full Kṛṣṇa consciousness and achieve the highest perfection, even in this short life, by fully surrendering unto the lotus feet of the Lord. Thus one attains Vaikuṇṭhaloka, where there is neither anxiety nor repeated birth in a material body.

We are now living in the heavenly planets, undoubtedly as a result of our having performed ritualistic ceremonies, pious activities and yajñas and having studied the Vedas. However, our lives here will one day be finished. We pray that at that time, if any merit remains from our pious activities, we may again take birth in Bhārata-varṣa as human beings able to remember the lotus feet of the Lord. The Lord is so kind that He personally comes to the land of Bhārata-varṣa and expands the good fortune of its people. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.19.21-28)

(2.0) The Rediscovery of Jambūdvīpa

Despite the impediments mentioned earlier about the difficulties in perceiving and accessing the inhabited land areas beyond Earth, I would venture a prediction based on the statements contained in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, that the saṅkīrtana movement will spread all over the universe, and that a connection with Jambūdvīpa will be re-established. In the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, it is stated by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī the author of the book:

*nagare nagare bhrame kīrtana kariyā
bhāsāila tri-bhuvana prema-bhakti diyā*

The saṅkīrtana movement went on from one part of the town to another, as the Lord wandered everywhere performing kīrtana. In this way He inundated the whole world by distributing love of Godhead. (Śrī Caitanya- caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā, 13.32)

Here it mentions that the three worlds (*tri-bhuvana*), meaning the upper, lower and middle planetary systems of the universe will all be inundated by *prema-bhakti* (love of Godhead).



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and his associates performing saṅkīrtana (congregational chanting of the names of God) in the villages of West Bengal.

In his commentary to the above verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda makes an incredible prediction:

One may raise the question how all three worlds became inundated with love of Kṛṣṇa, since Caitanya Mahāprabhu performed kīrtana only in the Navadvīpa area. The answer is that Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself. The entire cosmic manifestation results from the Lord's first setting it in motion. Similarly, since the saṅkīrtana movement was first set in motion five hundred years ago by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's desire that it spread all over the universe, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, in continuity of that same motion, is now spreading all over the world, and in this way it will gradually spread all over the universe. With the spread of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, everyone will merge in an ocean of love of Kṛṣṇa. (Śrī Caitanya- caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā 13.32)

We should bear in mind that before Śrīla Prabhupāda's epic journey to the Western countries in 1965 to teach Krishna consciousness, many Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavas born in Bengal, India believed that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's prophecy that the Hare Krishna mantra would be sounded in every town and village, referred to only the towns and villages of India. It was Śrīla Prabhupāda, following the direction of his guru, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura who stressed that every town and village meant every town and village in the world (and ultimately in the universe). Śrīla Prabhupāda subsequently made the 500 year old prophecy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's a reality by leaving India in 1965 and propagating the Hare Krishna mantra throughout the world. Śrīla Prabhupāda also taught that the Hare Krishna mantra would be similarly propagated among all the living entities in the Universe. This is not a small vision. To help fulfil that vision, we should at least be aware of where we are in the universe, and that we have other human neighbours living in other tracts of land that are yet to be discovered by us. This discovery will depend solely on a person's level of spiritual qualification, and not by means of brute force such as that exercised by the Europeans when they first 'discovered' America. There is absolutely no possibility of entering Jambūdvīpa by material qualification or machines (without higher permission). In the Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta it is stated:

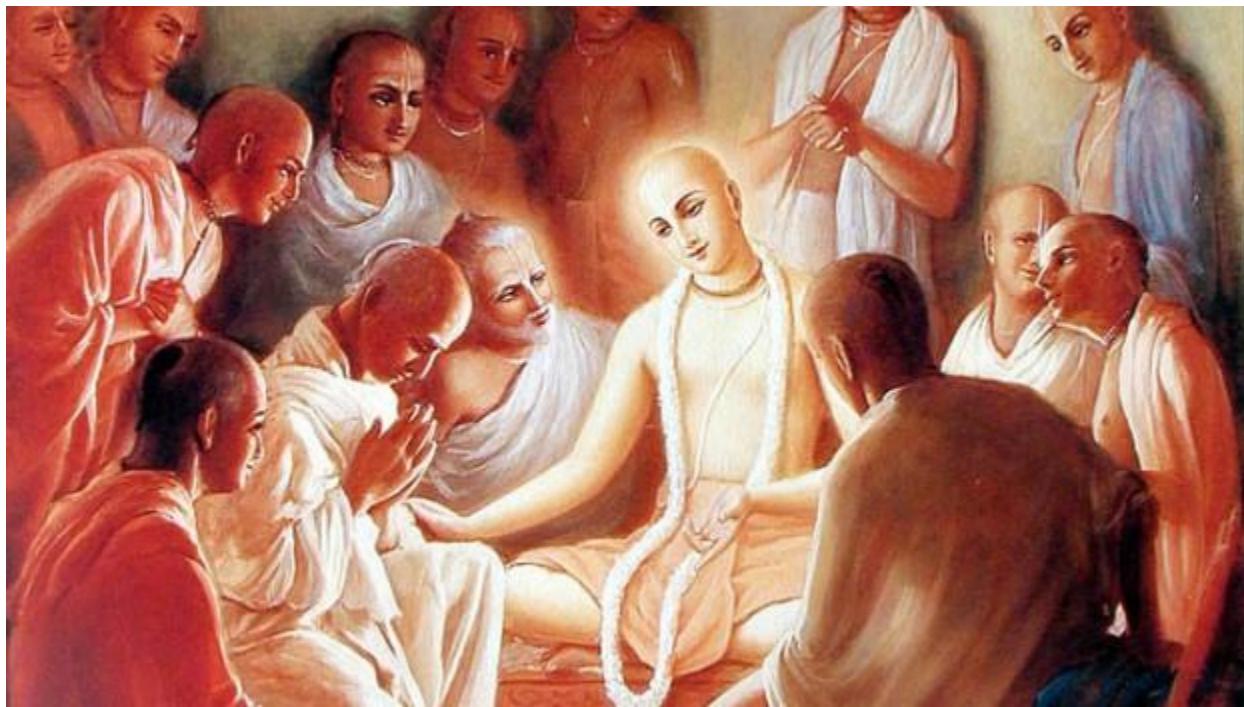
Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates of the Pañca-tattva distributed the holy name of the Lord to invoke love of Godhead throughout the universe, and thus the entire universe was thankful. (Śrī Caitanya- caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā, 7.163)

In his commentary on this verse Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

Here it is said that Lord Caitanya made the entire universe thankful to Him for propagating the saṅkīrtana movement with His associates. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu has already sanctified the entire universe by His presence five hundred years ago, and therefore anyone who attempts to serve Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu sincerely by following in His footsteps and following the instructions of the ācāryas will successfully be able to preach the holy names of the Hare Kṛṣṇa māhā-mantra all over the universe. (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā, 7.163)

From this and similar predictions made in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, it is not unreasonable to imagine, that as the saṅkīrtana movement increases throughout the Earth, renewed contact with the living entities on Jambūdvīpa, Bhū-maṇḍala, and indeed all parts of the universe could well be re-established. Indeed, it is stated in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that living entities were coming from Jambūdvīpa to see Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in India only 500 years ago.

People from all over the universe, including the seven islands, the nine khaṇḍas, the planets of the demigods, Gandharvaloka and Kinnaraloka, would go there in the forms of human beings. (Śrī Caitanya- caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā, 2.10)



Residents of Jambūdvīpa and other parts of the universe would visit Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu at his place of residence in Jagannath Purī, India.

In the above verse from *Śrī Caitanya- caritāmṛta*, (Antya-līlā, 2.10) it mentions how people were coming not only from Jambūdvīpa, but also from the other *dvīpas* or

islands that form the other areas of Bhū-maṇḍala. Indeed they were coming in disguise as ordinary human beings from all over the universe. Here we learn that the residents of Jambūdvīpa were visiting Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Jagannath Puri (a pilgrimage place on the West coast of East India). These events happened only 500 years ago. The residents of Jambūdvīpa mingled in disguise among the ordinary humans. It seems the residents of Jambūdvīpa having superior mystic ability can travel back and forth from Jambūdvīpa to Bhārata-varṣa, but the residents of Bhārata-varṣa are curtailed from going back and forth to Jambūdvīpa. There is no reason why advanced devotees of God will not have similar encounters; indeed that seems to be the indication from Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports on the subject of the saṅkīrtana movement spreading throughout the universe. As stated in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

Within the universe the Lord is situated in different spiritual manifestations. These are situated on seven islands in nine sections. Thus Their pastimes are going on. (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 20.218)

The seven islands mentioned here are the huge tracts of land that stretch across the Bhū-maṇḍala with Jambūdvīpa in the center. In Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport to this verse, we learn that the activities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are going on in these seven islands of Bhū-maṇḍala; and within Jambūdvīpa itself, the Lord's pastimes are also taking place in each of the nine varṣas including Bhārata-varṣa. The point of this is to inform everyone not only of the existence of life, and notably other human life, in other parts of the universe, but that all of the universe is being liberated from material illusion by the mercy of Krishna in His form as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the golden coloured avatar who propagates love of God throughout the Universe:

The Lord is situated in all the universes in different forms just to please His devotees. Thus the Lord destroys irreligious principles and establishes religious principles. (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 20.219)

Moreover those who are spiritually qualified will be eligible to visit, interact, and teach Krishna consciousness in these places. As stated in the following verses from *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

Thus by direct meetings, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu delivered the three worlds. Some people, however, were entangled in material activities and could not go. To deliver people in regions throughout the universe who could not meet Him, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally entered the bodies of pure devotees.

Thus He empowered living beings [His pure devotees] by manifesting in them so much of His own devotion that people in all other countries became devotees by seeing them.

In this way Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu delivered the entire three worlds, not only by His personal presence but also by empowering others. I shall briefly describe how He empowered a living being in Bengal. (Śrī Caitanya- caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā, 2.12-15)

Here it is specifically mentioned that the Lord engaged personally, and empowered His pure devotees to deliver the three worlds (*tri-bhuvana*), that is to liberate the conditioned souls who are entangled in the cycle of repeated birth and death. The Vedas describe how great sages like Śrī Nārada Muni can freely traverse the universe without the need of machines. These great sages travel from place to place and teach other conditioned souls about devotional service to Krishna (*bhakti-yoga*). By the arrangement of the Lord, empowered devotees of the Lord also take birth throughout the universe and propagate *bhakti-yoga* or loving devotional service to Krishna to the people of those places. By applying the practices of bhakti-yoga, the conditioned souls can awaken their eternal love for Krishna and thereby gain release from the clutches of *māyā* that keeps them bound in the cycle of repeated birth within the material world.

For practitioners of *bhakti-yoga* the goal of life is not simply in discovering these new areas of Earth, or indeed any part of the universe; but rather, to return home back to Godhead and to persuade others to do likewise. The idea is to ultimately leave the material world behind altogether. Anything physical is subject to destruction and is therefore a cause of suffering to the eternal living entity who seeks permanent relationships in a permanent and perfect environment. Only by returning to the complete and perfect spiritual landscape can souls be truly happy. Nevertheless, an appreciation for the shape, measurement, beauty, and varied nature of Krishna's fantastic creation should be present in the devotee of Krishna. Krishna Himself wishes us to know these details, and has provided the relevant information in the various Vedic texts. We can also be happy for our sojourn here in the material world by following the direction of Krishna.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's saṅkīrtana movement will bring together people from all over the universe. Just as cities such as London and New York are populated by people from every diverse nation in the world, so the Earth will again be populated by people from diverse parts of the Bhū-maṇḍala and beyond. Such was the situation only 5,000 years ago and if the predictions of Śrī Caitanya- caritāmṛta are correct, it will appear so again in the immediate future.

(2.1) Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami and the Flat Earth

In a conversation with Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1977, his most senior disciple Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami who was helping to work on the research for the Vedic Planetarium shows his clear comprehension of what Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is actually describing as Earth's shape:

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Look at the earth. Now, this is a real question that we still have to answer. They picture the earth round, and we say, no. Bhū-maṇḍala is like a lotus, like this, and the earth is only one part of one island in Bhū-maṇḍala, and it's not, you know, it's not round(?). It doesn't look like that. And all the pictures they take of the earth when they go up in their satellites show round. And we're going to tell them that it's not. This is a very tricky question. In other words, if this is the picture of the world, like this, and we say that... If we take an airplane from here, from Los Angeles. Now, supposing we go to India, which is here. So there's two ways to go. One way, you can go like this, and the other way, you can go like that. But if the earth is not a round globe, then how is it sometimes people go from Los Angeles via Hawaii to Japan and then India? So we can't figure this out. We have experience, those of us who have flown, that actually the plane went from Los Angeles to Hawaii to Tokyo to Hong Kong and then to India. So it doesn't work out in our maps so far, right? We can't figure it out. This thing has to be very complete in its answers. Otherwise everyone will laugh at us. We can't leave any loopholes.

Prabhupāda: So are you thinking on this?

Bhakti-prema: In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam... According to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, it is (indistinct).

Prabhupāda: Find out from our side, according to Bhāgavatam. (Bhū-maṇḍala Diagram Discussion, July 2 1977, Vṛndāvana)

Here Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami correctly apprehends and agrees with the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's description of Earth as being part of the island of Bhū-maṇḍala, 'not round' as depicted by photos and images from outer space. Here we also get a sense of Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami's frustration in trying to come up with an explanation for the disparity. He takes up the same question again a month later:

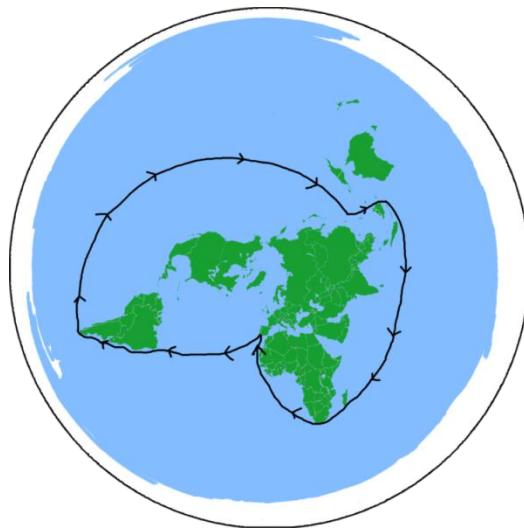
Tamala Kṛṣṇa: ...is flying in an airplane from Los Angeles to India via Hawaii, but in the picture that we have drawn, there is no way you can go from Los Angeles to India via Hawaii. If you go this direction, from Los Angeles, say, this

way, you don't come to India. India's over here according to our description. Yet when they take a flight, they say, "We go around the earth." But we say, "You cannot go around the earth." So far, our understanding... So far—unless we have not completely understood yet—it is like a lotus, Jambūdvīpa, and the whole Bhū-maṇḍala is like a lotus. So how do... You cannot fly around Bhāratavarṣa, or earth. Yet every day the whole science of aeronautics, of flying, is based upon the fact that they're flying around different places of the earth. And everyone who sees this, that, our description, is going to ask this question. It's a very important question to answer, and Bhakti-prema has not yet answered it. None of us can. We are avoiding it at this point until we get further information. There must be an answer, but we have not yet been able to give the answer. I have absolute faith in these, the Vedic description. I am completely convinced. I just know that I have not understood perfectly yet. Therefore the answer's not apparent. But it's definitely a question that they will raise. (Conversations with Śrīla Prabhupāda, June 30, 1977, Vṛndāvana)

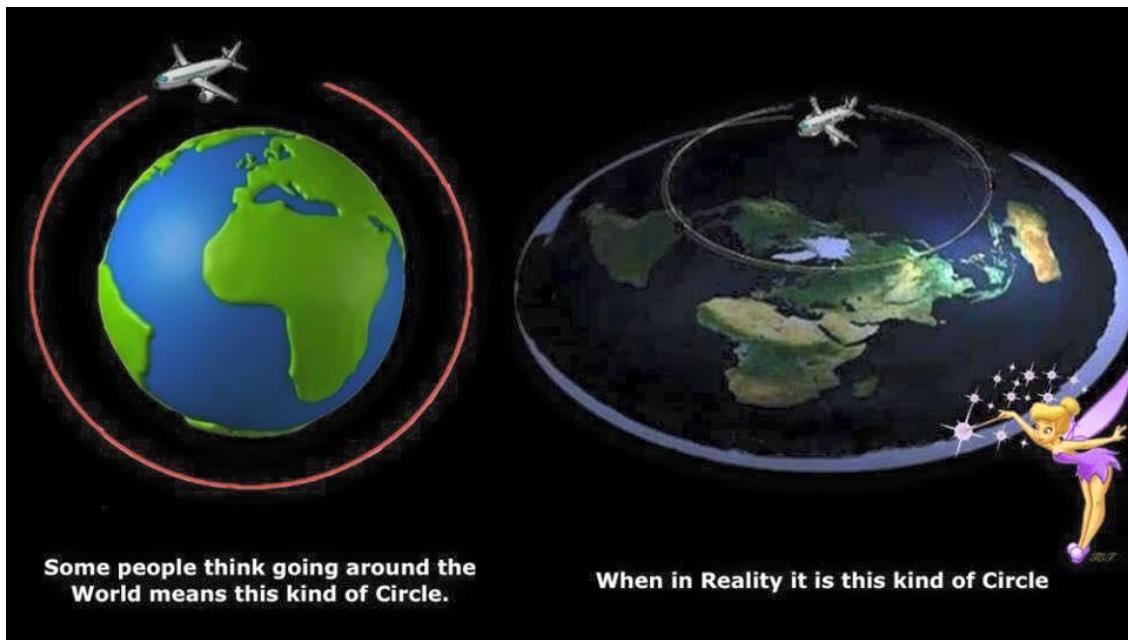
So the question that Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami poses here is that if the Earth is flat as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam describes, how is it that we have the experience of flying around the world, and how do we explain photographs and video of Earth from outer space which looks round? Be conscious here that Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami is in no way objecting to the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's description of Earth; he clearly expresses to Śrīla Prabhupāda his 'absolute faith' in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's description; yet he admits to being stumped for an explanation. The answer to his inquiry is actually quite simple: (1) one can still fly around the world on a flat surface. (2) The pictures and films of Earth from outer space are fake; they are part of the same hoax that has been perpetrated since the first faked moon-landing in 1969. We shall look now at both these issues.

Firstly, an explanation of how one can circumnavigate a flat Earth is very simple. In a flat Earth conception, one can still actually be sailing or flying around in a circular motion from one continent to another, thinking one is circling a globe whilst actually just going around a limited flat surface area like a bull moving in a circle around a grinding stone. Imagine if America, Europe, Africa, Australia, etc., were laid out flat on a big round-about. One could go around the round-about west to east or east to west. One may think that the complete round-about surface is the totality of area to be explored, when in actual fact, there are different exits or roads leading away from the

round-about to vastly greater areas along the same plane. The image below shows an east-west circumnavigation on a flat Earth map:

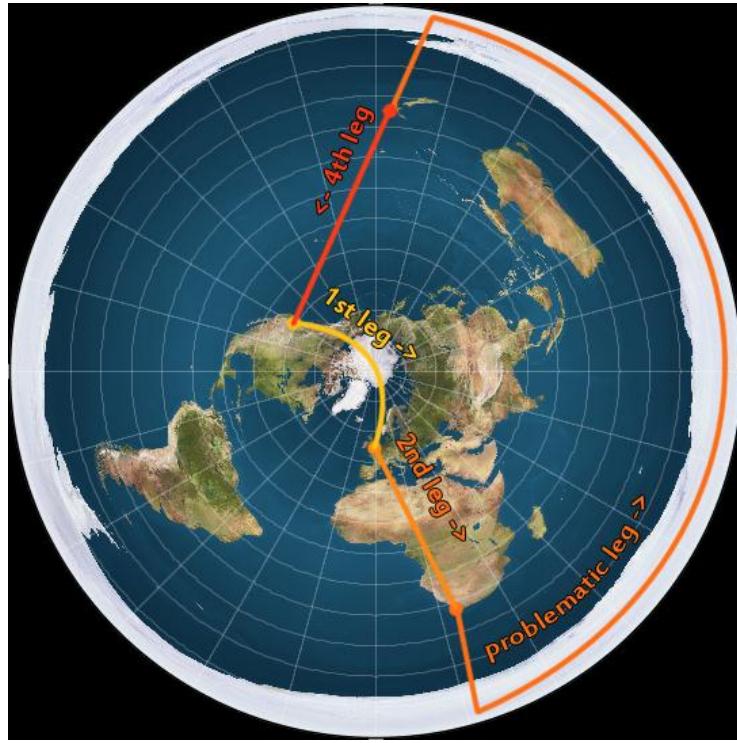


Flying around the world from west to east or east to west on a flat Earth would thus look like this:



As Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in the conversation following below (section 2.5), we are at present restricted from seeing and going to other places due to being conditioned and controlled by higher forces. East-west circumnavigation is therefore possible on a flat Earth model, but circumnavigation from north to south is impossible both on a flat

Earth model and a globe model which explains why there are no recorded missions of north-south circumnavigation. Extravagant claims to north-south circumnavigation usually end up looking something like this, with a pilot flying north over part of the Arctic, then heading south to the Antarctica until he is forced to turn east or west before heading back north again:



From the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s description of Bhārata-varṣa's relation to Jambūdvīpa, it cannot be that someone has flown north to south, then went under the globe and flown back north on the other side. Bhārata-varṣa is resting on an expanded flat surface that stretches for billions of miles, and there is no question of looping up and over, or down and under. What one can do, is sail or fly south, turn around whatever land is there, then head back north again. It appears that one is going around a circle but actually one is just going north to south on a flat surface. Because of the image of the globe in our head, we think going north means going up vertically and ascending the top of the globe; and that going south means descending and around the bottom of the ball. But try thinking instead of walking from the north of a city to the south, turning around a landmark and heading back north again by a different route. On a horizontal plane one can still go in a northerly direction and turn back in a southerly direction. Indeed, one can walk to the north or south, east or west of a particular city, or a particular country. On a flat Earth concept, theoretically one can keep flying or sailing for hundreds of thousands of miles. In fact the greater Bhū-maṇḍala goes in all directions, north, south, east, and west, along a flat plane for two billion miles in each direction until one comes

to the shell of the universe. As Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in the conversation below (section 2.5), the range of east and west is actually greater than we think, but at the moment we are restricted from going there. There is, of course, an up and down in the universe, but on the Bhū-maṇḍala at least, the directions north, south, east, and west are on a horizontal plane. Thus heading in a northerly direction from the south of India, one eventually comes to Jambūdvīpa, as was the case when the Pāṇḍavas marched into Jambūdvīpa from Indraprastha in India 5,000 years ago. How this was accomplished, and by what route, I do not precisely know; but as suggested above in section 2.0, I predict—based on statements in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*—that access to this region will be available again at some point in the future.

Upon researching evidence for the flat Earth, and the faking of images of the globe from outer space, it quickly becomes obvious that we are living in an artificially manipulated reality of stupendous proportions, and one must be prepared for a shock to the system. To his credit, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, very sincerely expressed to Śrīla Prabhupāda his ‘absolute faith’ in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*’s description of Earth’s depiction, but admitted that he was unable to explain such things as flying around the world, or the existence of photographs that show a round Earth floating in space. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami integrity, and faith in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*’s description of Earth, is displayed by his willingness to wait for a suitable explanation that was consistent with the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*’s description, not that he favoured continuing to present the Earth as globe-shaped Earth simply because it appears to match our present experience of reality. In other words, he was willing to challenge that very model of reality which is being presented to us from non-Vedic sources:

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Our question was mostly coming out of how to draw what the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is saying. We're not supporting any kind of mundane argument, nor do we have any doubt in *Bhāgavatam*. We're simply trying to understand the *Bhāgavatam*...

Prabhupāda: *Bhāgavata* is there. You try to understand.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: We're not siding with the preconceptions that we had before. We'll throw them away. We're trying to accept the *Bhāgavatam*. Everything has to be according to the *Bhāgavatam*. (Conversation about Bhu-mandala, July 5, 1977, Vrindavana)

In this same spirit, I think the followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda should be courteous and open to listening to the many quite fascinating arguments in favour of the flat Earth,

which at least are consistent with what *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes. These arguments, of course, would have to be adjusted (were necessary) in line with the complete Vedic understanding of things.

Listening to the many arguments in favour of the flat Earth, it may come as a great shock to discover the extent of how our present experience of reality has been manipulated by a non-spiritual agenda. We should bear in mind that the Sound Incarnation of Godhead or Hare Krishna mantra has manifested at this time precisely because the world is now being controlled and manipulated by *asuras* (the demoniac).

Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion—at that time I descend Myself.

To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I Myself appear, millennium after millennium. (*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 4.7-8)

In a lecture given in Los Angeles in 1974, Śrīla Prabhupāda explained the present situation in the world:

So Kṛṣṇa comes here, as it is stated in the Bhagavad-gītā, *paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ vināśaya ca duṣkṛtām* [Bg. 4.8]. So Kṛṣṇa appeared to kill so many demons. Whenever there will be demons, Kṛṣṇa will come. At the present moment, now, the world is full of demons. Therefore Kṛṣṇa has come in the form of Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Devotees: Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Prabhupāda: That is Kṛṣṇa avatāra. Kali-yuge nāma-rūpe avatāra. So don't think that Kṛṣṇa, this vibration Kṛṣṇa, is different from that Kṛṣṇa. The same Kṛṣṇa. The same Kṛṣṇa. (Srimad Bhagavatam 1.16.23, Los Angeles, July 13 1974)

This was a theme that Śrīla Prabhupāda repeated throughout his purports and lectures, namely, that Lord Krishna is now incarnated in the world in the form of transcendental sound vibration or Hare Krishna mantra. Krishna appears whenever the demoniac or satanic influence becomes too great:

Kṛṣṇa appears in this world for two purposes, paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ vināśāya ca duskr̄tām: [Bg. 4.8] to protect the innocent, religious devotees of the Lord and to annihilate all the uneducated, uncultured asuras, who unnecessarily bark like dogs and fight among themselves for political power. It is said, kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa avatāra. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is also an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa in the form of the holy name (nāma-rūpe). Every one of us who is actually afraid of the asuric rulers and politicians must welcome this incarnation of Kṛṣṇa: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Then we will surely be protected from the harassment of asuric rulers. At the present moment these rulers are so powerful that by hook or by crook they capture the highest posts in government and harass countless numbers of people on the plea of national security or some emergency. Then again, one asura defeats another asura, but the public continues to suffer. Therefore the entire world is in a precarious condition, and the only hope is this Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Lord Nṛsimhadeva appeared when Prahlāda was excessively harassed by his asuric father. Because of such asuric fathers—that is, the ruling politicians—it is very difficult to press forward the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, *but because Kṛṣṇa has now appeared in His holy name through this movement, we can hope that these asuric fathers will be annihilated and the kingdom of God established all over the world.* The entire world is now full of many asuras in the guise of politicians, gurus, sādhus, yogīs and incarnations, and they are misleading the general public away from Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which can offer true benefit to human society. (SB 10.3.21)

The level of deception and illusion employed by the *asuras* is not to be underestimated. The idea placed in our heads that we are floating in space on a globe, not on the flat Earth, certainly requires awesome powers of manipulation and propaganda. However, once one begins to look at the trickery involved in this deception, the whole show looks so comical. As light dissipates darkness, the Holy name dissipates illusion by manifesting things as they are. The Vedic planetarium must also be seen as part of Krishna's mission to dispel illusion and manifest reality. Earth in Krishna conscious reality is part of Jambūdvīpa; it rests on the horizontal plane of Bhū-maṇḍala wherein billions of other advanced humans reside. It is not a globe-shaped ball rotating in lifeless space.

(2.2) Faking the Images of the Earth



Now to return to Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami's second puzzlement from section 2.1: the images of a round Earth from outer space. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami had many times heard Śrīla Prabhupāda denounce the bogus moon-landing, but like all of us, he probably never made the connection between the fake moon-landing and the faked first images of the Earth from the so-called moon-landing. The idea of the round Earth had already been so engraved into the mind that it seemed impossible to dispute the Earth's image, even when the first 'photographic evidence' of Earth from outer space came from an obviously faked moon-landing that never set foot out of a television studio.

When one begins to closely study the so-called images of Earth from outer space, they are very much on a par with the so-called pictures of man on the moon. In other words, the authenticity of these images of man on the moon are highly questionable; and having been scrutinized, dissected, and analysed, by various parties over the last fifty years, one finds overwhelming vindication in Śrīla Prabhupāda's claim that the whole thing was a hoax:

Prabhupāda: 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. That's all. (June 28, 1977, Vṛndāvana)

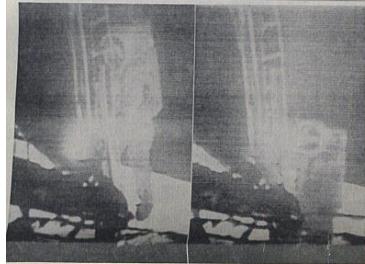
A complete expose of the moon-landing hoax would take a book in itself to explore all the details of the conspiracy. We will mention here just a few points. In a three minute video posted on Youtube called *Secret NASA, Real Footage* one can see an example of the film sets in which a rehearsal for the moon land landing was enacted. The link to this video is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFAZoVGxqY4>

At 1.24 minutes, one can see Neil Armstrong descend from the space craft unto the 'moon' only to have a studio light crash in upon him. People then appear on the set to make the necessary adjustments (see pictures below). An almost exact scene of Neil Armstrong descending the ladder was later released as the official version of the first moon landing wherein Armstrong spoke the following famous words: "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." In the 'official' NASA footage one can see Neil Armstrong from the exact same camera angle, descending the ladder of the space craft onto the so-called 'moon' surface; only this time no hitches appeared on the stage to give the game away:



WE WALK ON MOON: 'A LEAP FOR MANKIND'



Astronauts Blast Off
Safely From Lunar Soil
Following Historic Feat

BREVARD, July 17.—Neil A. Armstrong and his fellow Col. Edwin E. Aldrin Jr. blasted off safely from the moon Saturday morning after completing maneuvers to link up with their mother ship. They left behind their two crewmates, Michael Collins, who remained in the command ship, with Lt. Col. Michael Collins as their passenger, passed through the thin atmosphere of the moon's atmosphere and headed back to Earth. The two astronauts will land for home at 12:05 a.m. Tuesday. The 15-hour, 36-minute flight has been described as the most difficult ever made, served them, too, as a test. They left behind the speediest lunar stage, the Eagle, which will be used again for the return trip to the day shift here.

It was the first time a rocket had lifted anything from the moon.

"It was very quiet outside," said Aldrin, and reported Eagle took off from the descent stage.

"I was surprised to learn it was so quiet."

The astronauts were in the descent stage when they began their climb back to the command module.

Armstrong, carrying a television camera, maneuvered the two stages into alignment.

"It was like a dream," he said.

He then reported that the crew had completed the maneuver.

"We're all in good shape," he said.

Associated Press photo by AP Wirephoto

Now we may think the first video is some kind of joke, and the second one is really what happened; but how would you know if the official version is not also a joke? Two almost identical scenes depict Neil Armstrong stepping onto the moon; one was obviously filmed in a studio, while the other is to be accepted as the authentic historical event. But was it an actual historical event, or just another scene from the special effects department of NASA? The last fifty years has seen literally thousands of books and documentaries exposing the moon hoax. Śrīla Prabhupāda was perhaps the first one to denounce it as such:

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

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

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Colossal hoax...

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

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

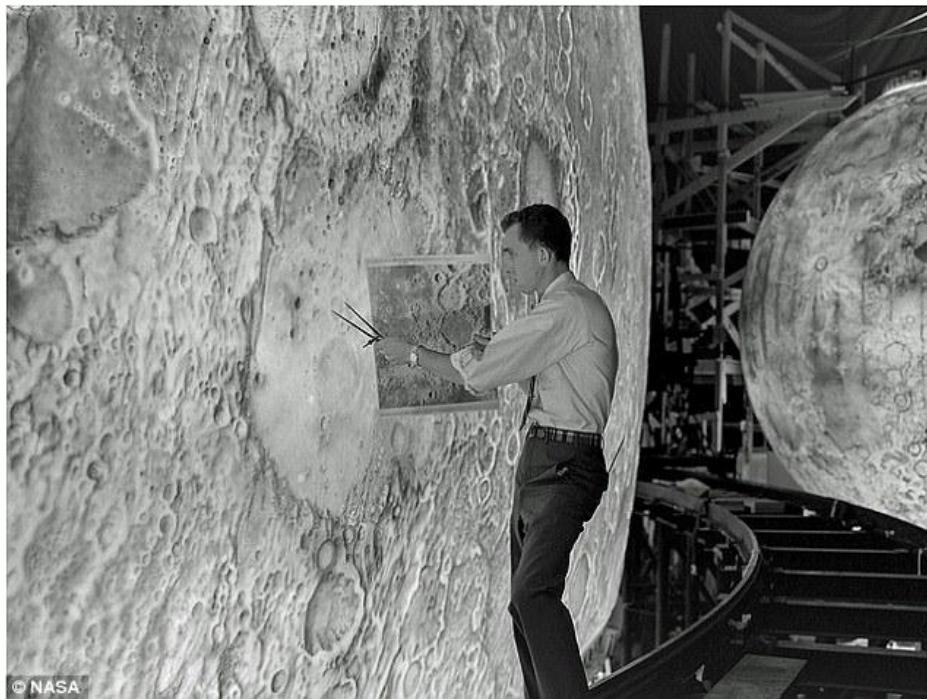
Hari-śauri: They never fooled you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Prabhupāda: Huh?

Hari-śauri: They never fooled you. (Prabhupāda laughs)

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

Prabhupāda: So you are knowing that. State it. (Morning walk, June 4 1976, Los Angeles)



Moon sets at NASA's 'training center' in Langley Space Center, Virginnia.

A further question may arise: OK NASA's claims to have gone to the moon may be false, but what about images of the Earth from the space agencies of other countries such as Russia and China. To this proposal Śrīla Prabhupāda was equally dismissive:

Prabhupāda: So since 1955 even. So twenty years, what they have done?

Devotee: Spent billions of dollars.

Prabhupāda: Yes, simply they have brought little dust, that's all.

Madhudviṣa: Now they have found that that same dust is here on the earth.

Prabhupāda: Yes. Simply propaganda. They are not going. Now the Russian scientist and American scientist are combined. Because both of them thieves, so one thief is asking, "Don't expose me. I will not expose you, so that our business will go on." This is the way. "Let us combine together and cheat these rascals, and otherwise, if you expose me, then I will expose you. Then our business will stop."

Devotee: They are cooperating.

Prabhupāda: Cooperating. Thief, thief's cooperation.

(Morning Walk, May 1975, Melbourne, Australia.)

Below is the famous image of the Earth globe supposedly photographed from the moon's surface. The photograph is called Earthrise and is posted on NASA's official website:



It begs the question, if as Śrīla Prabhupāda claimed, the Apollo moon landing was a hoax, then do we actually have authentic photographic evidence that the Earth is a

globe as they depict it? The documentary by Bart Sibrel called *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Moon* actually shows actual footage of the Apollo astronauts faking the first Earth shots supposedly thousands of miles on their way to the moon, when in actual fact they were only a few miles above the Earth. You can see this starting at 32.00 minutes into the video posted below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xciCJfbTvE4>

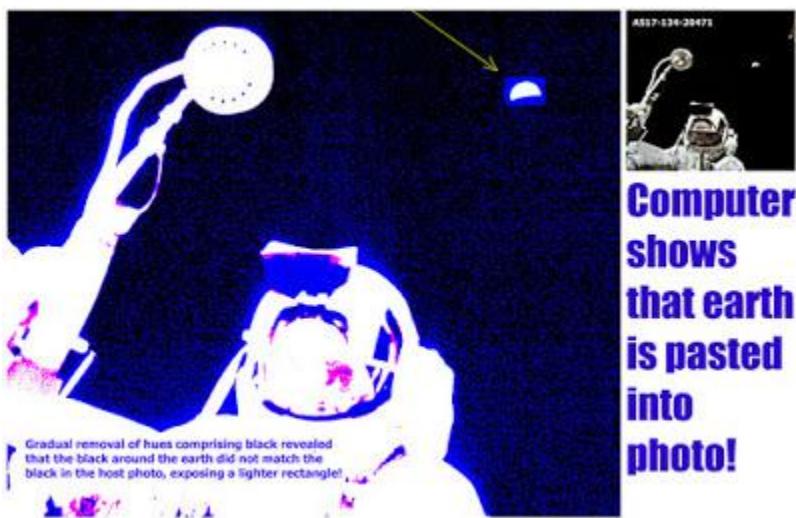
Eric Dubay comments on the video footage as follows:

In the documentary “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Moon,” you can watch official leaked NASA footage showing Apollo 11 astronauts Buzz Aldrin, Neil Armstrong and Michael Collins, for almost an hour, using transparencies and camera-tricks to fake shots of a round Earth! They communicate over audio with control in Houston about how to accurately stage the shot, and someone keeps prompting them on how to effectively manipulate the camera to achieve the desired effect. First, they blacked out all the windows except for a downward facing circular one, which they aimed the camera towards from several feet away. This created the illusion of a ball-shaped Earth surrounded by the blackness of space, when in fact it was simply a round window in their dark cabin. Neil Armstrong claimed at this point to be 130,000 miles from Earth, half-way to the Moon, but when camera-tricks were finished the viewer could see for themselves the astro-nots were not more than a couple dozen miles above the Earth’s surface, likely flying in a high-altitude plane!



Again from Eric Dubay's *200 Proofs Earth is Not a Spinning Ball*:

Professional photo-analysts have dissected several NASA images of the ball-Earth and found undeniable proof of computer editing. For example, images of the Earth allegedly taken from the Moon have proven to be copied and pasted in, as evidenced by rectangular cuts found in the black background around the "Earth" by adjusting brightness and contrast levels. If they were truly on the Moon and Earth was truly a ball, there would be no need to fake such pictures.



Once NASA had committed to televising their triumphant so-called journey to the moon, and having pictures of Earth as 'evidence,' they have been subsequently committed to propagating the image of a globe-shaped Earth. There are, in fact, very few images of the Earth from outer space, and the same images seem to keep being regurgitated. One would expect after fifty years in outer-space, and with claims of thousands of satellites orbiting the Earth, that we would have thousands upon thousands of images of Earth, and thousands of videos of Earth rotating in space. Not so! Those few that are provided by NASA are routinely exposed as fraudulent, and the rest are admitted to be composites and computer generated images (CGI'S). Again from Eric Dubay's *200 Proofs Earth is Not a Spinning Ball*:

When NASA's images of the ball-Earth are compared with one another the coloration of the land/oceans and relative size of the continents are consistently so drastically different from one another as to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the pictures are all fake.



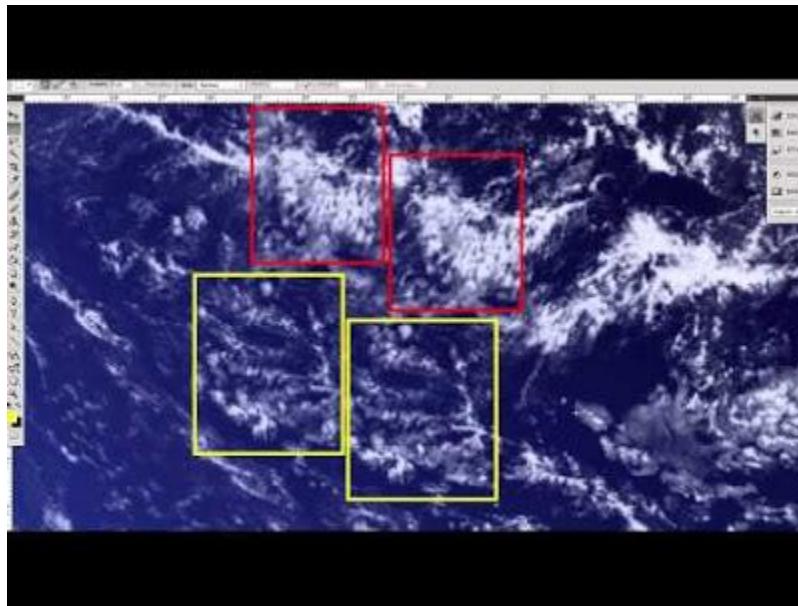
People claim Google Earth somehow proves the ball model without realizing that Google Earth is simply a composite program of images taken from high-altitude planes and street-level car-cameras superimposed onto a CGI model of a ball Earth. The same could be just as easily modelled onto a square Earth or any other shape and therefore cannot be used as proof of Earth's rotundity.



If you pick any cloud in the sky and watch for several minutes, two things will happen: the clouds will move and they will morph gradually changing shape. In official NASA footage of the spinning ball Earth, such as the "Galileo" time-lapse video however, clouds are constantly shown for 24+ hours at a time and not moving or morphing whatsoever! This is completely impossible, further proof that NASA produces fake CGI videos, and further evidence that Earth is not a spinning ball.



NASA has several alleged photographs of the ball-Earth which show several exact duplicate cloud patterns! The likelihood of having two or three clouds of the exact same shape in the same picture is as likely as finding two or three people with exactly the same fingerprints. In fact it is solid proof that the clouds were copied and pasted in a computer program and that such pictures showing a ball-shaped Earth are fakes.



NASA graphics artists have placed things like faces, dragons, and even the word "SEX" into cloud patterns over their various ball-Earth pictures. Their recent 2015 Pluto pictures even clearly have a picture of Disney's "Pluto"

the dog layered into the background. Such blatant fraud goes unnoticed by the hypnotized masses, but provides further proof of the illegitimacy of NASA and their spinning ball planet mythos. (Eric Dubay: *200 Proofs*)

In an article entitled *NASA's "Blue Marble" Earth is a Fake* posted by Dr. Eowyn on October 6, 2015, the following story behind the blue marble image of so-called Earth is revealed:

When we think of Earth, this iconic image of the "Blue Marble" immediately comes to mind.



We'll call the above image "Blue Marble I".

From Wikipedia:

The Blue Marble is a famous photograph of the Earth, taken on December 7, 1972, by the crew of the Apollo 17 spacecraft, at a distance of about 45,000 kilometers (28,000 miles). It is one of the most iconic, and among the most widely distributed images in human history....

The image is one of the few to show an almost fully illuminated Earth disk (slightly gibbous), as the astronauts had the Sun behind them when they took the image. To the astronauts, Earth had the appearance and size of a glass marble, hence the name.

The photograph was taken about 5 hours and 6 minutes after launch of the Apollo 17 mission, and about 1 hour 54 minutes after the spacecraft left its parking orbit around the Earth, to begin its trajectory to the Moon.

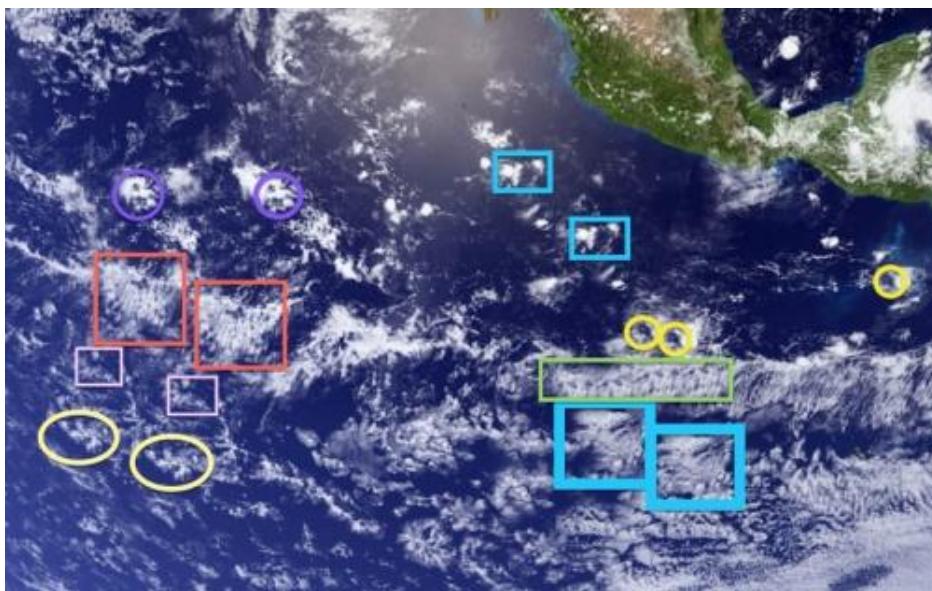
Or maybe that's not the Blue Marble you have in mind. Maybe it's this iconic image of a more vividly-colored Blue Marble which was released by NASA in 2002. Let's call it "Blue Marble II".



Blue Marble II is so familiar to us in part because it was the default image on the first iPhone.



But some sharp-eyed geeks discovered “anomalies” in Blue Marble II, specifically duplicate clouds, as you can see in a cropped section of Blue Marble II (below):



The discovery of duplicate clouds has led to accusations that not only is the 2002 image (Blue Marble II) a fake, the original Apollo 17 image (Blue Marble I) was likely a fake as well. That, in turn, has led some to question whether everything NASA did and said was fake. The problem is that, in the years after the first Blue Marble photo was taken by Apollo 17, NASA has released many Blue Marbles, "Blue Marble II" being one of the best known and most popular. As NASA explains about the 2002 "Blue Marble II":

Metadata

- Data Date: February 8, 2002
- Visualization Date: February 8, 2002

This spectacular "blue marble" image is the most detailed true-color image of the entire Earth to date. Using a collection of satellite-based observations, scientists and visualizers stitched together months of observations of the land surface, oceans, sea ice, and clouds into a seamless, true-color mosaic of every square kilometer (.386 square mile) of our planet. These images are freely available to educators, scientists, museums, and the public.

Much of the information contained in this image came from a single remote-sensing device-NASA's Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer, or MODIS. Flying over 700 km above the Earth on board the Terra satellite, MODIS provides an integrated tool for observing a variety of terrestrial, oceanic, and atmospheric features of the Earth. The land and coastal ocean portions of these images are based on surface observations collected from June through September 2001 and combined, or composited, every eight days to compensate for clouds that might block the sensor's view of the surface on any single day.... The cloud image is a composite of two days of imagery collected in visible light wavelengths and a third day of thermal infra-red imagery over the poles. Global city lights, derived from 9 months of observations from the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program, are superimposed on a darkened land surface map.

In other words, rendered in simple English, NASA is saying that the 2002 “Blue Marble II” is not a photo. Instead, the image is a combination and composite of many “satellite-based observations” (whatever that means), which were “stitched together” (whatever that means) by scientists and “visualizers” (whatever that means). In other words, Blue Marble II is a fake — which would explain the duplicate clouds.

Here’s an admission by Robert Simmon, one of the “visualizers” who “stitched together” Blue Marble II, as related by David Yanofsky in his March 27, 2014 article for Quartz, “The guy who created the iPhone’s Earth image explains why he needed to fake it:

As it turns out, much of what one might assume about this beautiful image is not true.... It isn’t actually a photograph of Earth. And that blackness surrounding it? That’s not space, either....

Simmon, a data-visualizer and designer at NASA’s Earth Observatory, created the image in 2002. He told Quartz it’s not a photograph, but a sophisticated visualization. Images of the Earth may seem commonplace, but there are actually very few pictures of the entire planet. The problem, Simmon said, is all the NASA Earth-observing satellites are in low-Earth or geostationary orbit, meaning none of them are far enough away to see a full hemisphere. The most familiar pictures of the entire Earth are from the 1960s and 1970s Apollo missions to the moon.

As realistic as it looks, the image is a composite of four months of light data collected in 2,300 km (1,429 mi) wide bands as NASA’s Terra satellite orbited from pole to pole, and the Earth rotated beneath it. That data was then stitched together and applied to the surface of a digital ball, then modified in Photoshop.

Simmon readily admits there are numerous fakeries in his image. The atmosphere is Photoshop blur. Some of the clouds are collaged together using Photoshop’s clone tool to cover gaps in the satellite’s coverage. The black area around the Earth is not the void of space. It is simply a background of black color that Simmon placed the Earth on top of. (This is

standard practice, Simmon says: most actual “photographs” of the Earth—including the Apollo images—present the planet on a black background). Without these alterations, the image wouldn’t look very Earth-like. Simmon said he based his manipulations on reality, “in the sense that I’ve looked at a lot of imagery to see how thick should that be, how blue should that be.” But, he later added, “It’s more hyper-realistic than realistic.”

“Without these alterations, the image wouldn’t look very Earth-like.”

That’s a doozy of a sentence, because our visual images of Earth all came from NASA in the first place as none of us has flown into space to actually see the entire Earth.

(<http://fellowshipoftheminds.com/2015/10/06/nasas-blue-marble-earth-is-a-fake/>)

And if you don’t believe any of that, below is a statement by Dr. John Holdren, senior science advisor to President Obama who lets the cat out of the bag in the following astonishing admission:

Have you seen this image? The chances are the answer is yes. It's the iconic blue marble image; this first photo of the whole Earth was taken on December 7th 1972 by the American crew of the Apollo 17 mission. In the decades since Apollo 17, NASA has released a number of other blue marble images, but because we've never permanently positioned a space craft at the appropriate distance and with the appropriate equipment needed to take photos of the entire Earth, many of the images that we use to visualize the Earth are composites; that means they stick together multiple images taken by satellites in order to create what only appears to be a seamless portrait of the planet as a whole. Composite imaging is an extremely valuable tool for helping us study the Earth. It also enables us to produce remarkable images like the Black Marble which shows a global view of the city lights across our planet.

Until now though, we haven't had the capacity to take snap shots of the entire Earth on a regular basis. That's where the Deep Space Climate Observatory or DSCOVR mission comes in. DSCOVR is a satellite that was launched earlier this year [2015]...DSCOVR also contains a powerful instrument called the Earth Polychromatic Imaging Camera. From DSCOVR'S orbit about a

million miles away from Earth, this camera will take snapshots of our planet at 10 different wavelengths.

The above dialogue from Dr John Holdren is taken from the Youtube video *Our Blue Marble* published by the White House Channel on July 21 2015. So here we an admission by the senior-most science and technology adviser to the American government that apart from the Apollo missions images of the Earth from 1972, and DSCOVR's so-called images of Earth from one million miles away in 2015, the rest of NASA's pictures of Earth are composites; in other words not actual photos of Earth. By the way, DSCOVR'S image of the Blue Marble in 2015 reputedly from one million miles away and Apollo's image of the Blue Marble reputedly from the moon (225,000 miles away) in 1972, don't look substantially different. A photo from one million miles away showing clearly the continent of North America!? Really?



Earth from one million miles away 2015?

According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other *Purāṇas*, if this were indeed an actual photo of the Earth from one million miles away, we would see the continents of the Earth lying flat on the salt water ocean surrounding Jambūdvīpa; we would see Jambūdvīpa

itself along with Mount Meru in its center, as well as a large portion of the other islands along the Bhū-mandala. From the perspective of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is clearly a fabricated image.

Now if the image above is not spectacular enough for you, check out this super-amazing shot of the dark side of the moon as it passed the Earth, photographed by the same DSCOVR satellite from 1 million miles away. Folks this is an official NASA image and if you believe this you'll believe anything:



But here, of course, we enter the clash of world-views. Are the images of Earth from the Apollo moon landing, or any of other images of Earth taken from various satellites supposedly in outer space, actually real or are they just fake images produced in

studios here on Earth? In a Youtube video posted on June 27 2015 by the Ronald Show channel entitled *NASA Official Says There is no Video of the Earth in Space Rotating on its Axis*, Youtube user Ronald Farnham gains an admission from a NASA employee that there are actually no videos of the Earth rotating on its Axis in space. Amazing! The only official videos from NASA show a full frontal view of Earth spinning (not on its axis) with clouds that don't change (even though it's a supposed 24 hour time lapse of the Earth's rotation) and with a black background (without stars). In other words, a fake Earth model filmed in a studio.

Are videos from the International Space Station supposedly orbiting Earth for real; or is it nothing more than an airplane flying at high altitude using a round lens camera to create a sense of curvature? A famous publicity campaign in 2012 on behalf of the International Space Station reputedly shows images of the Earth from the space station as it rotates around the round Earth at night. Spectacular images of city lights and triumphant music create a mesmerizing effect as the Space station circles the Earth overhead. But in the above video John Holdren mentions that the Black Marble images are also from composites and this can also be easily observed when you look closely at the special effects employed to get a sense of travelling around the Earth globe at night. Basically it's just images of Earth stitched together from photos taken in a high altitude airplane with a curve added to create the round effect of the Earth. It's just another episode from NASA's on-going space saga that has gripped viewers since 1969. But they don't tell anyone it's just a movie. Welcome to the *Truman Show!*



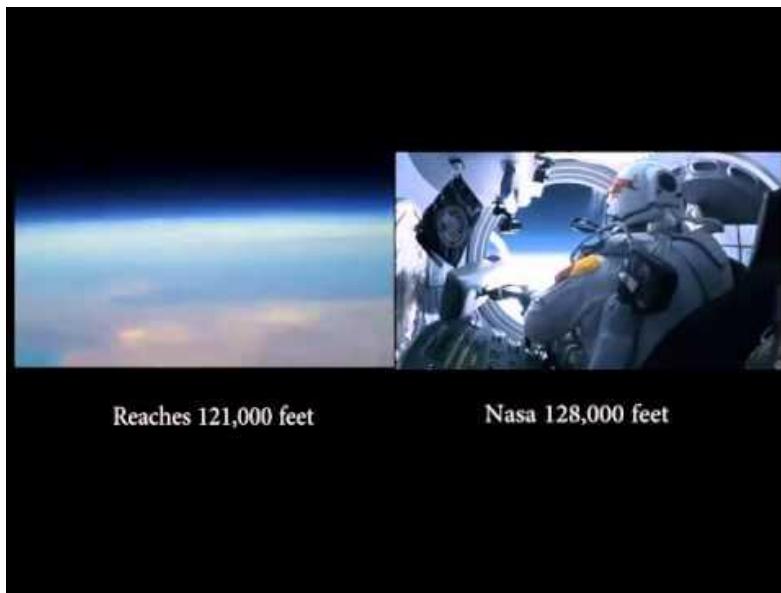
The Black Marble

An example of this type of cheating using fish-eyed wide angle lens to create a curved effect on the Earth can be clearly seen in the much hyped Felix Baumgartner Red Bull dive – the highest free fall jump from outer space. The jump supposedly took place

from 128,000 feet above the Earth's surface. In the top right inset of the image below we see the skydiver looking out of his window onto a perfectly straight horizon. As he steps outside the capsule, however, the Earth miraculously curves into a ball (see image below).



The special effects department obviously forgot to change the horizon line on the inside of the capsule to match that on the outside. Amateur cameras at almost the same level show also show a perfectly straight horizon:



The supposed curvature on the Earth on NASA's imagery is achieved simply by using a fish-eyed wide-angle lens. In lens-corrected images and footage taken without wide-angle technology, all amateur high-altitude horizon shots appear perfectly flat.

Check for yourself! Check the official images and then check the oppositions expose of the official images. Bear in mind, Śrīla Prabhupāda never once accepted as evidence the photographs and film images of the so-called moon landing, and the same cynicism

should be applied when presented any image of Earth from outer space. Śrīla Prabhupāda evidence was *sāstra-caksusā*, to see through the eyes of *sāstra* (scripture):

Prabhupāda: But *sāstra* is the proof. Our proof is *sāstra*. Your proof is your *sāstra*. Did you go to the moon planet or you believe the newspapers? Have you gone?

Gargamuni: No.

Prabhupāda: Then if you can believe newspaper, why shall not believe in the Veda, Vedānta?

Gargamuni: No, but one man has come.

Prabhupāda: So one man... You have not done. You have no experience. So one man you believe authority.

Gurukṛpā: But we saw the television. They showed on the television.

Prabhupāda: No. Television could not show that. You can arrange in the laboratory such television, cheat others. And you have done it. But anyway, television or man or newspaper—you believe on others. You have not personally gone. So you believe some authority. We believe some authority. What is the difference? You take newspaper as authority. We take Vedic literature as authority. Where is the difference? You have personally not gone. How do you believe? The difference is that you believe somebody, we believe somebody. (Evening Conversation, January 25 1977, Puri)

In another conversation Prabhupāda insisted that since they keep perpetrating the lie that they have gone to the moon, then whatever they say should be accepted as false propaganda and immediately rejected:

Prabhupāda: Why if one is settled up that he's a rascal, we should not hear anything. And why not? He has not gone to the moon. They are insisting, "Yes, we have gone," by false propaganda. Why the one who makes false propaganda and one who says nonsense, we have to believe? Immediately, whatever he says, reject. There's no argument. You have proved yourself rascal so we don't accept any statement. (Conversation about Bhu-mandala, July 5, 1977, Vrindavana)

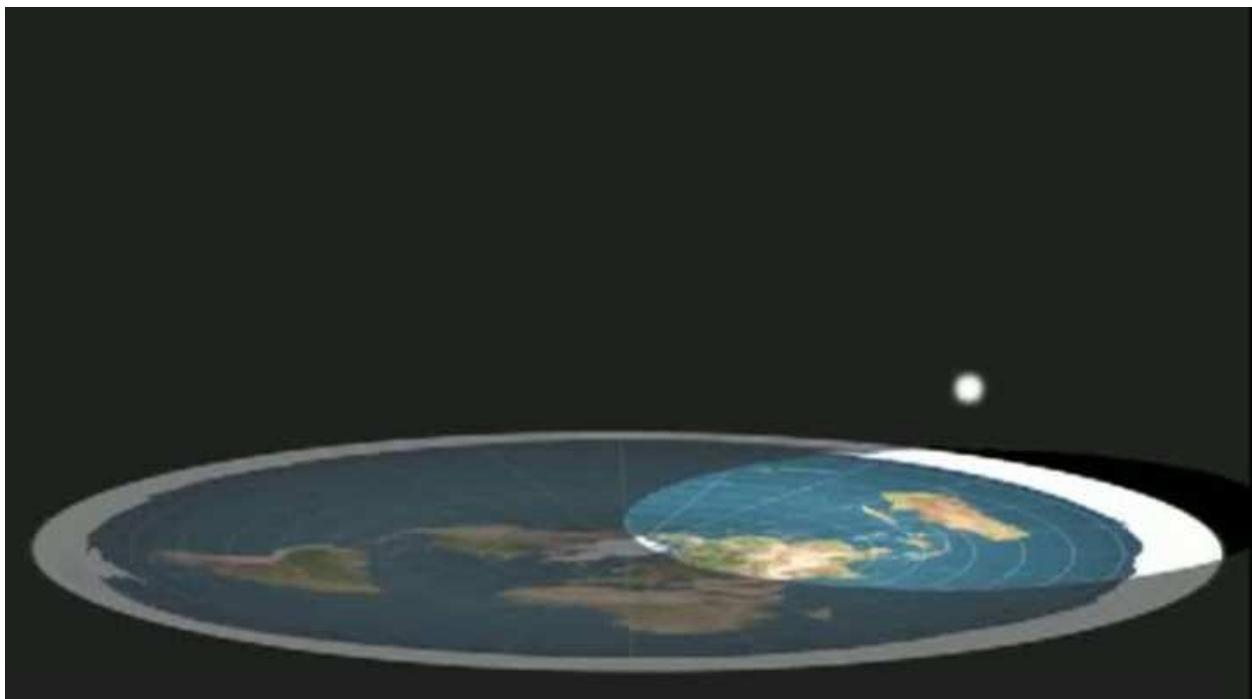
Under no circumstances can the words of persons bewildered by the illusory energy of the Lord deviate the intelligence of those who are completely surrendered souls. (*Śrimad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.10)

(2.3) Sadāpūta Dāsa on the Round Earth

Sadāpūta Dāsa, a prominent disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda and author of the book *Vedic Cosmography and Astronomy* appears to favour a round Earth. In a paper called the *Universe of the Vedas*, he writes.

“Although the Bhagavatam doesn’t explicitly describe the Earth as a globe, it does so indirectly. For example, it points out that night prevails diametrically opposite to a point where it is day. Likewise, the sun sets at a point opposite where it rises. Therefore, the Bhagavatam does not present the naive view that the Earth is flat”.

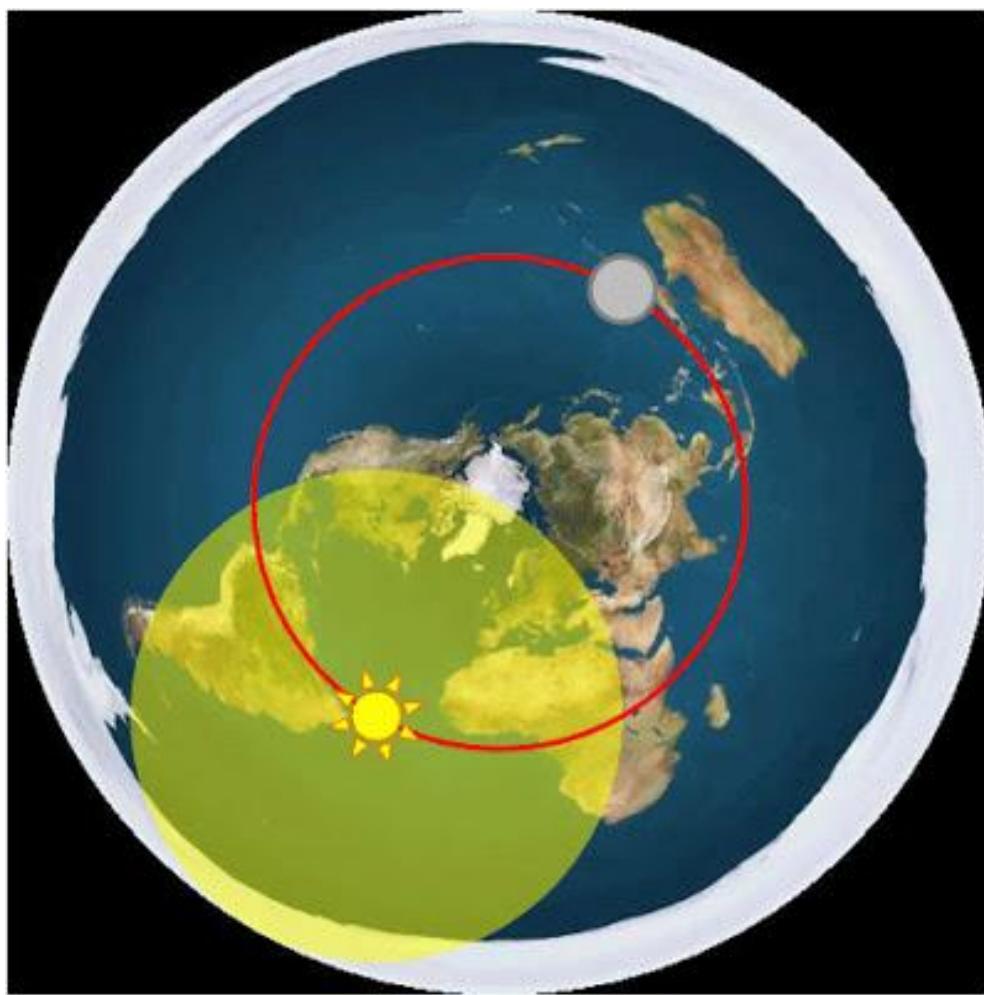
However, day and night can be explained just as easily using a flat Earth concept. The apparent rising and setting of the sun does not imply by any means that the Earth has to be round for day and night to occur. Just as the light of a lighthouse does not expand infinitely into the distance but is limited to a finite circle around itself, similarly the sun spreads its rays to a limited circle of light upon the Earth only lighting portions of the Earth at a time as it circles in its orbit around Mount Meru.



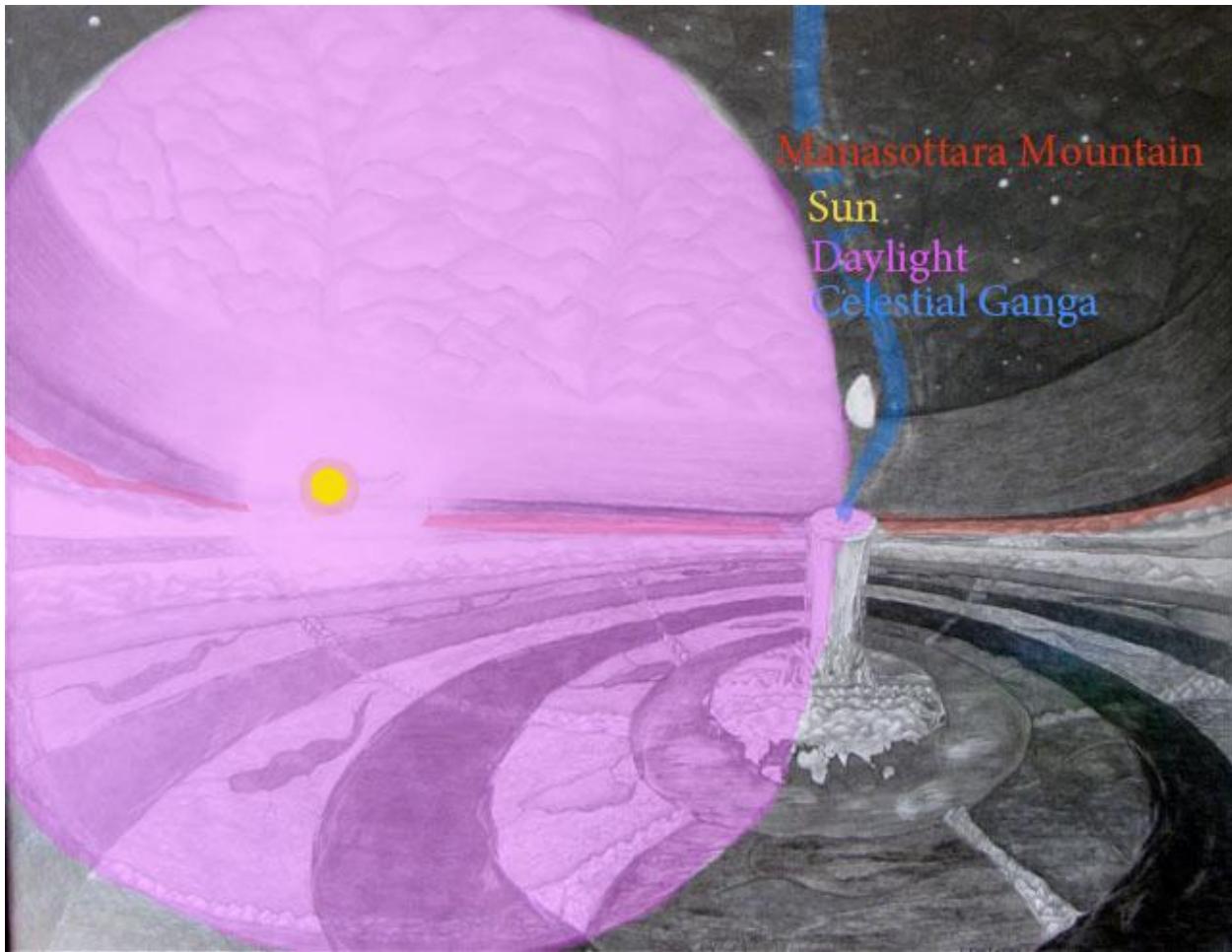
The sun always circles above the Earth and the apparent vision of the rising and setting sun are caused by perspective. As the sun approaches from our horizon line it appears to ascend and when disappearing below the horizon in evening time it appears to descend. In actual fact the sun is always circling at the same distance above the Earth. The appearance of the rising and setting sun is only from our particular perspective.

When the sun sets for the people in India, the sun is still shinning for people in another part of the world. Theoretically one could stay in daytime for 24 hours if one had a fast enough airplane to follow the sun.

The flat Earth society actually presents the sun as being very close to the Earth, indeed, directly above it. The sun shines down like a spot-light forming a circle of light over parts of the Earth, creating day in one area and night in another.



Although their calculations of the sun's position and distance from the Earth would not be acceptable to followers of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, an adopted version of their animation would still work as an explanation for the creation of day and night on a flat Earth model. The basic idea would be that the sun spreads a circle of light over parts of the Earth as it circles around Mount Meru. Abhaya Mudra Devi captures this idea in her picture of the sun creating day and night on different parts of the Bhū-maṇḍala as it rotates around Mount Meru. See image below:



In his book *Vedic Cosmography*, Sadāpūta Dāsa writes:

In this book we will take it for granted that the earth planet on which we live our daily lives can be practically thought of as a globe with a diameter of about 8,000 miles. In the age of international travel by jet airplanes, it is easy for people in general to accumulate abundant evidence that confirms this. Commercial airlines fly regularly scheduled flights along a network of routes that completely covers the inhabited areas of the earth. A glance at an airline's route map shows that each of these routes follows a great circle—the shortest path connecting two points on the surface of a sphere. (There are some exceptions, of course, due to political considerations.) One can experience changes in time zones of the kind that one would expect to find if the earth is a globe, and one can consider that if the airline authorities do not properly understand the size and shape of the earth, along with the location of various cities on it, then how is it possible for them to arrange regular flights from one city to another?

There are many regions on the earth that have not been thoroughly explored. However, it would be difficult to argue that airplanes have not flown over most areas of the earth's surface, including the Arctic and Antarctic regions. One can read popular articles describing life during the winter at an American base at the South Pole, and one can also read about artificial satellites with orbits ranging from equatorial to circumpolar. Thus human experience with remote, seldom-visited regions of the earth is also consistent with the idea that the earth is a sphere.

Such an analysis by Sadāpūta Prabhu certainly seems to satisfy our everyday view of the world as we've been taught to experience it; however, it does not consider the descriptions given in the *Purāṇas* which describe the world as being completely surrounded by Jambūdvīpa's salt water ocean, not space. The *Purāṇic* description of Earth lying on a flat horizontal plane and surrounded by water is how we experience it, and which one of us has personally gone into outer space to see how the Earth looks otherwise? It also neglects the history of the Pāṇḍavas conquest of the 800,000 mile circular island of Jambūdvīpa, a rather conspicuous land mass which is certainly not anywhere in the vicinity of NASA's images of lonely Earth floating in space. How can a follower of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* accept the argument that the world is a sphere simply because airplanes have supposedly flown all over the world? How does this argument account for *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's* description that Bhārata-varṣa is joined to Jambūdvīpa? Where did the rest of Jambūdvīpa suddenly disappear to? The *Purāṇic* descriptions, of course, would be of no concern to anyone who has zero interest or faith in what the Vedic texts describe as reality, but for a faithful follower of Vedic literature it is a matter of concern when the *Purāṇic* description is overlooked in favour of a world view that has been clearly manipulated in a certain way to make us feel that we are on a globe when we are actually on a flat surface.

I'd like to quickly reassure the reader that my objection here to Sadāpūta Prabhu's arguments for a round Earth is not simply based on blindly asserting the authority of a religious text over 'modern science,' or indeed, our own commonly experienced observations such as flying around the world in an airplane. I'm not trying to fly in the face of reason. The experience of sailing or flying around the Earth, for example, can also be explained from a flat Earth perspective as we have demonstrated in section 2.1 above. In a flat Earth conception, one can still actually be sailing or flying around in a circular motion from one continent to another, thinking one is circling a globe whilst actually just going around a limited flat surface area like a bull moving in a circle around a grinding stone.

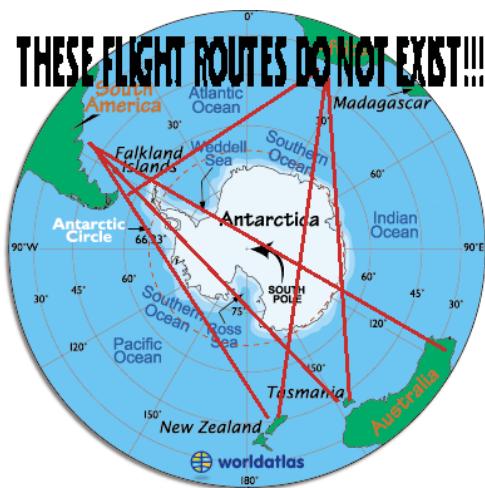
As for Sadāpūta Dāsa's argument that airplanes and satellites have flown all over the Earth and surveyed it, including looping north and south over Arctic and Antarctica, the claim remains highly controversial as to who can explore, and what has actually been explored. Which one of us has personally crossed the Arctic or Antarctica to see whether or not there is more land and people to be observed? I don't have space here to get into the detail of alledged circumnavigations of the globe, but from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s description of Bhārata-varṣa's relation to Jambūdvīpa, it cannot be that someone has looped the planet by flying north over the globe; then heading south and going under the globe; and then flying back north on the other side. Bhārata-varṣa is on a flat horizon surrounded by Jambūdvīpa's 800,000mile ocean and there is no question of looping up and over, or down and under. As explained previously, one can circumnavigate east to west around a limited area of the Earth, but one cannot circumnavigate north to south which explains why there are no recorded cases of anyone ever having done so.

North-south circumnavigation usually transpires as someone sailing or flying north, turning around whatever land is there, then heading back south again. It appears that one is going around a circle but actually one is just going north to south on a flat surface. Because of the image of the globe in our head, we think going north means going up vertically and ascending the top of the globe; and that going south means descending and around the bottom of the ball. But try thinking instead of walking from the north of a city to the south, turning around a landmark and heading back north again by a different route. On a horizontal plane one can still go in a northerly direction and turn back in a southerly direction. Indeed, one can walk to the north or south, east or west of a particular city, or a particular country. On a flat Earth concept, theoretically one can keep flying or sailing for hundreds of thousands of miles. In fact the greater Bhū-maṇḍala goes in all directions, north, south, east, and west, along a flat plane for two billion miles in each direction until one comes to the shell of the universe. As Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in the conversation below (see section 2.5), the range of east and west is actually greater than we think, but at the moment we are restricted from going there.

Flight routes are another very strange and mysterious area of study which ironically seems to present more arguments in favour of a flat Earth than a round one. The following information on flight routes is from Eric Dubay's *200 Proofs Earth is Not a Spinning Ball*:

If Earth was a ball there are several flights in the Southern hemisphere which would have their quickest, straightest path over the Antarctic continent such as Santiago, Chile to Sydney, Australia. Instead of taking the

shortest, quickest route in a straight line over Antarctica, all such flights detour all manner of directions away from Antarctica instead claiming the temperatures too cold for airplane travel! Considering the fact that there are plenty of flights to/from/over Antarctica, and NASA claims to have technology keeping them in conditions far colder (and far hotter) than any experienced on Earth, such an excuse is clearly just an excuse, and these flights aren't made because they are impossible.



If Earth was a ball, and Antarctica was too cold to fly over, the only logical way to fly from Sydney to Santiago would be a straight shot over the Pacific staying in the Southern hemisphere the entire way. Re-fueling could be done in New Zealand or other Southern hemisphere destinations along the way if absolutely necessary. In actual fact, however, Santiago-Sydney flights go into the Northern hemisphere making stop-overs at LAX and other North American airports before continuing back down to the Southern hemisphere. Such ridiculously wayward detours make no sense on the globe but make perfect sense and form nearly straight lines when shown on a flat Earth map:



On a ball-Earth, Johannesburg, South Africa to Perth, Australia should be a straight shot over the Indian Ocean with convenient re-fueling possibilities on Mauritius or Madagascar. In actual practice, however, most Johannesburg to Perth flights curiously stop over either in Dubai, Hong Kong or Malaysia all of which make no sense on the ball, but are completely understandable when mapped on a flat Earth.



On a ball-Earth Cape Town, South Africa to Buenos Aires, Argentina should be a straight shot over the Atlantic following the same line of latitude across, but instead every flight goes to connecting locations in the Northern hemisphere first, stopping over anywhere from London to Turkey to Dubai. Once again these make absolutely no sense on the globe but are completely understandable options when mapped on a flat Earth.



On a ball-Earth Johannesburg, South Africa to Sao Paolo, Brazil should be a quick straight shot along the 25th Southern latitude, but instead nearly

every flight makes a re-fueling stop at the 50th degree north latitude in London first! The only reason such a ridiculous stop-over works in reality is because the Earth is flat.



On a ball-Earth Santiago, Chile to Johannesburg, South Africa should be an easy flight all taking place below the Tropic of Capricorn in the Southern hemisphere, yet every listed flight makes a curious re-fueling stop in Senegal near the Tropic of Cancer in the North hemisphere first! When mapped on a flat Earth the reason why is clear to see, however, Senegal is actually directly in a straight-line path half-way between the two.



The same situation applies to shipping routes with ships sailing close to the northern hemisphere. The southern oceans are generally avoided because on a flat Earth the circumnavigation distances in the southern hemisphere become huge.

Regarding Sadāpūta Dāsa's mention of satellite images as confirmation of Earth's roundity, a difficulty arises in accepting satellites as proof since what to speak of finding an authentic image of the Earth from a satellite in space, one cannot even find an authentic image of a satellite in space. The images of satellites in space also fall clearly into the category of computer generated images.

There are many, many exposes into satellite hoax and one requires spending some time weighing the evidence. Eric Dubay comments briefly as follows:

NASA claims there are upwards of 20,000 satellites floating around Earth's upper-atmosphere sending us radio, television, GPS, and taking pictures of the planet. All these supposed satellite pictures, however, are admittedly "composite images, edited in photoshop!" They claim to receive "ribbons of imagery" from satellites which must then be spliced together to create composite images of the Earth, all of which are clearly CGI and not photographs. If Earth were truly a ball with 20,000 satellites orbiting, it would be a simple matter to mount a camera and take some real photographs. The fact that no real satellite photographs of the supposed ball Earth exist in favor of NASA's "ribbons of composite CG imagery," is further proof we are not being told the truth.

Satellites are allegedly floating around in the thermosphere where temperatures are claimed to be upwards of 4,530 degrees Fahrenheit. The metals used in satellites, however, such as aluminum, gold and titanium have melting points of 1,221, 1,948, and 3,034 degrees respectively, all far lower than they could possibly handle.

The "geostationary communications satellite" was first created by Freemason science-fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke and supposedly became science-fact just a decade later. Before this, radio, television, and navigation systems like LORAN and DECCA were already well-established and worked fine using only ground-based technologies. Nowadays huge fibre-optics cables connect the internet across oceans, gigantic cell towers triangulate GPS signals, and ionospheric propagation allows radio waves to be bounced all without the aid of the science-fiction best-seller known as "satellites." (Eric Dubay 200 Proofs Earth is not a Spinning Ball).



Perhaps Sadāpūta Prabhu would have reconsidered his opinion about the round Earth in the light of many interesting arguments put forward by the flat Earth advocates in

the last few years. Undoubtedly such an investigative mind would have given the time to consider and weigh up various arguments. In any case, regardless of Sadāpūta Prabhu's statement that we can take it for granted that we are living on a globe, there is actually nowhere in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that describes Earth as such. The *Purāṇas* consistently describe that Bhārata-varṣa lies on the flat horizontal plane of Bhū-maṇḍala and that our particular area of Bhārata-varṣa (Earth) is completely surrounded by Jambūdvīpa's salt water ocean, not by outer space. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* states:

The varsha of Bhārata is divided into nine portions, which I will name to you; they are Indra-dwīpa, Kaserumat, Támravarnā, Gabhastimat, Nága-dwīpa, Saumya, Gandharba, and Várūṇa; the last or ninth Dwīpa is surrounded by the ocean, and is a thousand Yojanas from north to south. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Book II, Chapter III, Translated by Horace Hayman Wilson, 1840)

The exact same description of Earth being completely surrounded by water is given in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* and *Märkendeya Purāṇa*.

Bhārata-varṣa is part of the huge 800,000 mile circular island of Jambūdvīpa. It rests horizontally on the flat plane of Bhū-maṇḍala. It is surrounded by ocean, not space. You cannot loop Bhārata-varṣa by flying underneath and back over the top as we think of flying around the north and south poles of a globe; indeed no such north-south circumnavigation has ever been made. Our experience of reality may not correspond with what *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes, but perhaps that is because our experience and understanding of reality had been deliberately manipulated in a certain way to make us feel that we are on a globe when we are actually on a flat surface. There are alternative explanations of what is going on, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is one of them. Unfortunately, I feel Sadāpūta Dāsa's explanation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s description of the shape of the Earth as a globe in space has not brought us nearer to the understanding that our neighbours on Jambūdvīpa are only a short distance away somewhere in the vicinity of the same salt water ocean.

Nor do I feel that we need to resort to Sadāpūta Dāsa's idea of parallel dimensions in order to explain the discrepancy between *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s description of Earth as part of a flat expanded plane, and the modern education which teaches that Earth is a globe in space. There are, of course, parallel dimensions, but Śukadeva Gosvāmī plainly describes Bhārata-varṣa for our dimension, physicality, and measurements. Śukadeva Gosvāmī explained this point to King Parīksit who was sitting by the bank of the Ganges in India which of course is part of our Earth. In other words, Śukadeva Gosvāmī is explaining the position of Jambūdvīpa relative to a person here on Earth. It's just like someone explaining the position and distance of England to Europe:

The great rṣī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: My dear King, there is no limit to the expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead's material energy. This material world is a transformation of the material qualities [sattva-guṇa, rajo-guṇa and tamo-guṇa], yet no one could possibly explain it perfectly, even in a lifetime as long as that of Brahmā. No one in the material world is perfect, and an imperfect person could not describe this material universe accurately, even after continued speculation. O King, I shall nevertheless try to explain to you the principal regions, such as Bhū-goloka [Bhūloka], with their names, forms, measurements and various symptoms. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.16.4)

tasmāt—therefore; prādhānyena—by a general description of the chief places; eva—certainly; bhū-golaka-viśeṣam—the particular description of Bhūloka; nāma-rūpa—names and forms; māna—measurements; lakṣaṇataḥ—according to symptoms; vyākhyāsyāmaḥ—I shall try to explain.

There are indeed other dimensions to reality, but at least lets accept the one that is being described to us. We only need to take it *as it is*. Śukadeva Goswāmī clearly describes Bhārata-varṣa (wherein Earth is located) as resting on the flat plane of Bhū-maṇḍala! Jambūdvīpa is somewhere a few thousand miles to the north.

(2.4) Arguments for a Flat Earth

In the past few years there has been an incredible rise in the number of videos dedicated to proving the flat Earth. There have been less books and websites produced on the subject as the favoured medium for flat Earth advocates seems to be video presentation. Although many of the people engaged in propagating the flat Earth conception are well-educated and have academic credentials, the mood is more of a people's revolution against the prevailing cosmological ideas than a subject dominated and dictated by those in the established academia. Indeed, there has been very little credible counter-argument from the establishment's defenders' of the heliocentric and globe-shaped Earth. Robert Sungenis and Robert Bennett, for example, the authors of the three volume work, *Galileo was Wrong*, have offered \$100,000 for anyone to prove that the Earth rotates around the sun; as yet, the offer still stands uncontested.

Video presentations on the flat Earth are numerous, and the sheer amount of information is difficult to summarise; for convenience I have chosen some of the arguments from one of the leading flat Earth advocates, namely Eric Dubay, which form the bulk of this chapter. For those readers who are interested in a closer study of the arguments and counter-arguments involved in the flat Earth discussion, I refer you to the innumerable video channels and growing number of websites dedicated to the topic.

Surprisingly, science (observation, hypothesis, and demonstration) actually comes to the defence of a flat Earth. Apart from NASA's demonstrably fake photos of Earth from outer space there are otherwise no scientific demonstrations that can prove a globe-shaped or heliocentric Earth.

For one thing, there is no observable or measureable curvature on the Earth. If we consider the Earth as a globe, we have to account for curvature. From where-ever one stands, the Earth would be curving in all directions and things in the distance would fall below one's line of sight. When a car on a motorway, for example, goes around a bend it disappears from one's vision; the same should be true for objects and places that are tens or hundreds of miles away from one's horizon line, that is, they should disappear from one's line of vision as they disappear around the circumference of the Earth. This, however, is not the fact; distant shorelines, landmarks, lighthouses, ships, etc., can all be seen on the horizon when according to the mathematical formulas for calculating the curvature of the Earth, they should have fallen hundreds or thousands of feet below one's line of vision.

To appreciate the many following examples to illustrate this point, let us first look at the method for calculating the Earth's curvature. The Pythagorean Theorem gives approximately 8 inches per mile as the curvature on a sphere 25,000 miles in circumference. This is a generally accepted formula. However, simply giving the curvature in inches per mile can be misleading. If it was just 8 inches for every mile that would make a calculation for a downward sloping straight line rather than a curve. To calculate the Earth's supposed curvature we must also use spherical trigonometry, and figuring a 25,000 mile circumference ball, 8 inches is correct, but varying inversely with the square of the mile. Thus, after 2 miles the curvature drop would be 32 inches; after 3 miles 72 inches; 4 miles 128 inches; 5 miles 200 inches; and so on. The calculation is squared for each successive mile because on a round globe each mile is curving away from the other, not just sloping.

The following table will show at a glance the amount of curvature, in round numbers, in different distances up to 100 miles. The rule, however, requires to be modified after the first thousand miles.

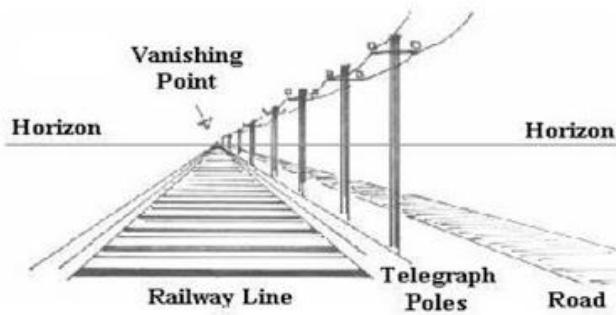
Statute Miles Away	Math	= Drop
1	$1 \times 1 \times 8 =$	8 Inches
2	$2 \times 2 \times 8 =$	32 Inches
3	$3 \times 3 \times 8 / 12 =$	6 Feet
4	$4 \times 4 \times 8 / 12 =$	10.6 Feet
5	$5 \times 5 \times 8 / 12 =$	16.6 Feet
6	$6 \times 6 \times 8 / 12 =$	24 Feet
7	$7 \times 7 \times 8 / 12 =$	32.6 Feet
8	$8 \times 8 \times 8 / 12 =$	42.6 Feet
9	$9 \times 9 \times 8 / 12 =$	54 Feet

10	$10 \times 10 \times 8 / 12 =$	66.6 Feet
20	$20 \times 20 \times 8 / 12 =$	266.6 Feet
30	$30 \times 30 \times 8 / 12 =$	600 Feet
40	$40 \times 40 \times 8 / 12 =$	1,066.6 Feet
50	$50 \times 50 \times 8 / 12 =$	1,666.6 Feet
60	$60 \times 60 \times 8 / 12 =$	2,400 Feet
70	$70 \times 70 \times 8 / 12 =$	3,266.6 Feet
80	$80 \times 80 \times 8 / 12 =$	4,266.6 Feet
90	$90 \times 90 \times 8 / 12 =$	5,400 Feet
100	$100 \times 100 \times 8 / 12 =$	6,666.6 Feet
120	$120 \times 120 \times 8 / 12 =$	9,600 Feet

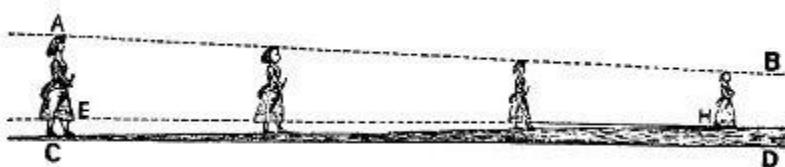
From this table we can see that every mile has a curvature drop of a certain amount of feet which would make seeing objects in the distance impossible. For example, if I look at something out at sea with a telescope for say one hundred miles, I should not be able to see something at my eye level. Because of the curvature of the Earth an object in the distance should disappear below my eye-level by thousands of feet. Yet we can perceive objects in the distance at horizon level even hundreds of miles away. Eventually images do disappear from vision, but this is because of perspective, not curvature. Think of railway lines for example that disappear in the horizon, even though they lie on a flat surface. The absence of a curvature drop on the horizon line clearly indicates a flat Earth rather than a curved Earth. Eric Dubay explains the vanishing point on the horizon as follows:

The Law of Perspective dictates that the angle and height at which an object is seen diminishes the farther one recedes from the object, until at a certain point the line of sight and the seemingly uprising surface of the Earth

converges to a vanishing point (i.e. the horizon line) beyond which the object is invisible. In the ball-Earth model the horizon is claimed to be the curvature of the Earth, whereas in reality, the horizon is known to be simply the vanishing line of perspective based on the strength of your eyes, instruments, weather, and altitude.



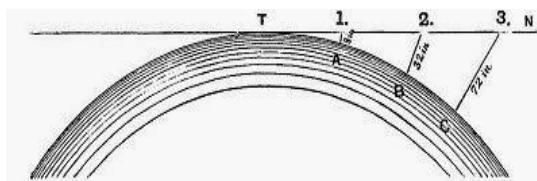
Another favorite “proof” of ball-Earthers is the appearance from an observer on shore of ships’ hulls being obfuscated by the water and disappearing from view when sailing away towards the horizon. Their claim is that ships’ hulls disappear before their mast-heads because the ship is beginning its declination around the convex curvature of the ball-Earth. Once again, however, their hasty conclusion is drawn from a faulty premise, namely that only on a ball-Earth could this phenomenon occur. The fact of the matter is that the Law of Perspective on plane surfaces dictates and necessitates the exact same occurrence. For example a girl wearing a dress walking away towards the horizon will appear to sink into the Earth the farther away she walks. Her feet will disappear from view first and the distance between the ground and the bottom of her dress will gradually diminish until after about half a mile it seems like her dress is touching the ground as she walks on invisible legs. Such is the case on plane surfaces, the lowest parts of objects receding from a given point of observation necessarily disappear before the highest.



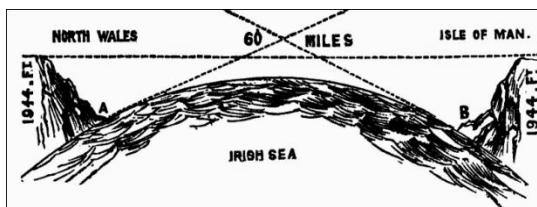
Not only is the disappearance of ship's hulls explained by the Law of Perspective on flat surfaces, it is proven undeniably true with the aid of a good telescope. If you watch a ship sailing away into the horizon with the naked eye until its hull has completely disappeared from view under the supposed "curvature of the Earth," then look through a telescope, you will notice the entire ship quickly zooms back into view, hull and all, proving that the disappearance was caused by the Law of Perspective, not by a wall of curved water! This also proves that the horizon is simply the vanishing line of perspective from your point of view, not the alleged "curvature" of Earth. (Eric Dubay *200 Proofs Earth is Not a Spinning Ball*).

The Earth has no Measurable Curvature

The following information is from Eric Dubay's article *The Measurable Non-curvature of the Flat Earth* posted on February 11, 2015:

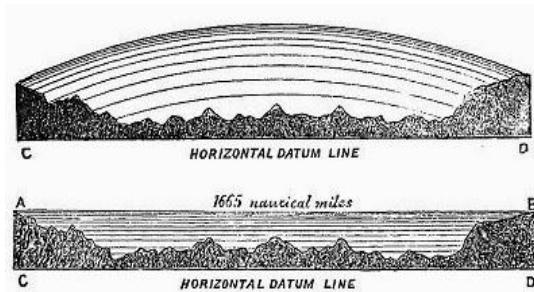


NASA and modern astronomers claim we are living on an oblate spheroid 25,000 statute miles in equatorial circumference with a curvature of 7.935 inches to the mile, varying inversely as the square of the distance, meaning in 3 miles there is a declination of nearly 6 feet, in 30 miles 600 feet, in 300 miles 60,000 feet and so on. Therefore, if we wish to prove or disprove the validity of their convexity claim, it is a fairly simple, straightforward matter of measurements and calculations.



For example, the distance across the Irish Sea from the Isle of Man's Douglas Harbor to Great Orm's Head in North Wales is 60 miles. If the Earth was a globe then the surface of the water between them would form a 60 mile arc, the center towering 1944 feet higher than the coastlines at either

end! It is well-known and easily verifiable, however, that on a clear day, from a modest altitude of 100 feet, the Great Orm's Head is visible from Douglas Harbor. This would be completely impossible on a globe of 25,000 miles. Assuming the 100 foot altitude causes the horizon to appear approximately 13 miles off, the 47 miles remaining means the Welsh coastline should still fall an impossible 1472 feet below the line of sight!



"Astronomers are in the habit of considering two points on the Earth's surface, without, it seems, any limit as to the distance that lies between them, as being on a level, and the intervening section, even though it be an ocean, as a vast 'hill' - of water! The Atlantic ocean, in taking this view of the matter, would form a 'hill of water' more than a hundred miles high! The idea is simply monstrous, and could only be entertained by scientists whose whole business is made up of materials of the same description: and it certainly requires no argument to deduce, from such 'science' as this, a satisfactory proof that the Earth is not a globe. Every man in full command of his senses knows that a level surface is a flat or horizontal one; but astronomers tell us that the true level is the curved surface of a globe! They know that man requires a level surface on which to live, so they give him one in name which is not one in fact! This is the best that astronomers, with their theoretical science, can do for their fellow creatures - deceive them." (William Carpenter, *100 Proofs the Earth is Not a Globe*).

"Vast areas exhibit a perfectly dead level, scarcely a rise existing through 1,500 miles from the Carpathians to the Urals. South of the Baltic the country is so flat that a prevailing north wind will drive the waters of the Stettiner Haf into the mouth of the Oder, and give the river a backward flow 30 or 40 miles. The plains of Venezuela and New Granada, in South America chiefly on the left of the Orinoco, are termed Ilanos, or level fields. Often in the space of 270 square miles the surface does not vary a single foot. The Amazon only falls 12 feet in the last 700 miles of its course;

the La Plata has only a descent of one thirty-third of an inch a mile." -Rev. T. Milner, "Atlas of Physical Geography"



"These extracts clearly prove that the surface of the earth is level, and that therefore the world is not a globe. And when we come to consider the surface of the world under the sea, we shall find the same uniformity of evidence against the popular view. In 'Nature and Man,' by Professor W.B. Carpenter, article 'The Deep Sea and its Contents,' the writer says: 'If the bottom of the mid-ocean were laid dry, an observer standing on any spot of it would find himself surrounded by a plain, only comparable to that of the North American prairies or the South American pampas ... The form of the depressed area which lodges the water of the deep ocean is rather, indeed, to be likened to that of a flat waiter or tea tray, surrounded by an elevated and deeply sloping rim, than to that of the basin with which it is commonly compared.' This remarkable writer tells of thousands of miles, in the Atlantic, the Pacific, and the great Southern Ocean beds being a plane surface, and from his remarks it is clear that a flat surface is the general contour of the bed of the great oceans for tens of thousands of square miles." (Thomas Winship, *Zetetic Cosmogeny*)

Water Levels Prove a Flat Earth: Whether ones sails from North America to Australia or from South America to Siberia, one sails on the same horizontal plane. There is no measurable curvature anywhere. It is the same water level everywhere one goes. The following extracts are from Eric Dubay's article, *The Natural Physics of Water Prove Earth Flat:*

It is part of the natural physics of water and other fluids to always find their level and remain flat. If disturbed in any way, motion ensues until the flat level is resumed. If dammed up then released, the nature of all liquids is to quickly flood outwards taking the easiest course towards finding its new level:

"The upper surface of a fluid at rest is a horizontal plane. Because if a part of the surface were higher than the rest, those parts of the fluid which were under it would exert a greater pressure upon the surrounding parts than they receive from them, so that motion would take place amongst the particles and continue until there were none at a higher level than the rest, that is, until the upper surface of the whole mass of fluid became a horizontal plane." (W.T. Lynn, *First Principles of Natural Philosophy*).

If the Earth is an extended flat plane, then this fundamental physical property of fluids finding and remaining level is consistent with experience and common sense. If, however, the Earth is a giant sphere tilted on its vertical axis spinning through never-ending space then it follows that truly flat, consistently level surfaces do not exist here! Moreover, if the Earth is spherical then it follows that the surface of all Earth's water, including the massive oceans, must maintain a certain degree of convexity. But this is contrary to the fundamental physical nature of water to always be and remain level!

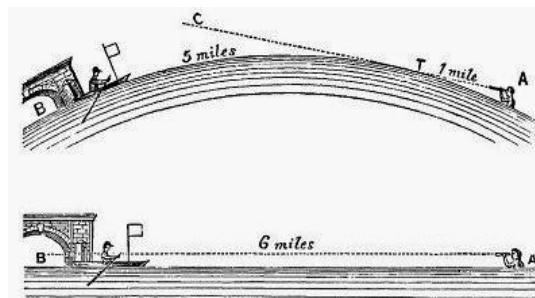
"The surface of all water, when not agitated by natural causes, such as winds, tides, earthquakes etc. is perfectly level. The sense of sight proves this to every unprejudiced and reasonable mind. Can any so-called scientist, who teaches that the earth is a whirling globe, take a heap of liquid water, whirl it round, and so make rotundity? He cannot. Therefore it is utterly impossible to prove that an ocean is a whirling rotund section of a globular earth, rushing through 'space' at the lying-given-rate of false philosophers." (William Thomas Wiseman, *The Earth An Irregular Plane*).

If we were living on a whirling ball-Earth, every pond, lake, marsh, canal and other large body of standing water, each part would have to comprise a slight arc or semi-circle curving downwards from the central summit. For example, if the ball-Earth were 25,000 miles in circumference as NASA and modern astronomers say, then spherical trigonometry dictates the surface of all standing water must curve downwards an easily measureable 8 inches per mile multiplied by the square of the distance. This means along a 6 mile channel of standing water the Earth would dip 6 feet on either end from the central peak. To the benefit of true science, and to the detriment of

modern astronomy's pseudo-science, such an experiment can and has been tested.

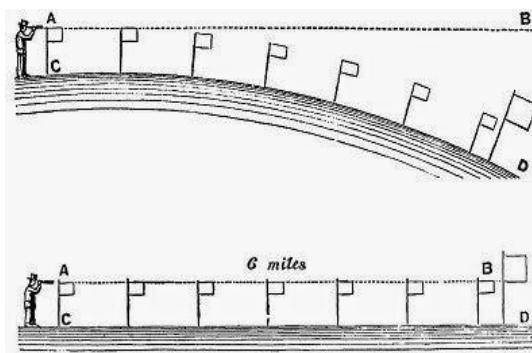


In Cambridge, England there is a 20 mile canal called the Old Bedford which passes in a straight line through the Fenlands known as the Bedford Level. The water has no interruption from locks or water-gates of any kind and remains stationary making it perfectly suitable for determining whether any amount of convexity/curvature actually exists. In the latter part of the 19th century, Dr. Samuel Rowbotham, a famous Flat-Earther and author of the fine book, *Earth Not a Globe! An Experimental Inquiry into the True Figure of the Earth: Proving it a Plane, Without Axial or Orbital Motion; and the Only Material World in the Universe!* travelled to the Bedford level and performed a series of experiments to determine whether the surface of standing water is flat or convex.



"A boat, with a flag-staff, the top of the flag 5 feet above the surface of the water, was directed to sail from a place called 'Welche's Dam' (a well-known ferry passage), to another called 'Welney Bridge.' These two points are six statute miles apart. The author, with a good telescope, went into the water; and with the eye about 8 inches above the surface, observed the

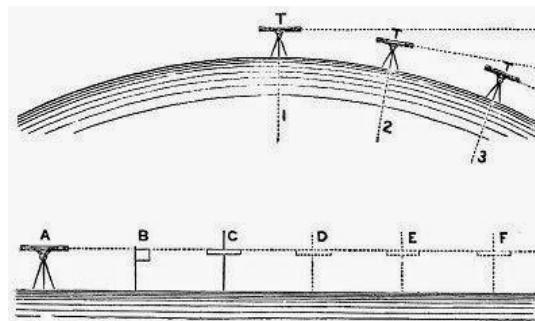
receding boat during the whole period required to sail to Welney Bridge. The flag and the boat were distinctly visible throughout the whole distance! There could be no mistake as to the distance passed over, as the man in charge of the boat had instructions to lift one of his oars to the top of the arch the moment he reached the bridge. The experiment commenced about three o'clock in the afternoon of a summer's day, and the sun was shining brightly and nearly behind or against the boat during the whole of its passage. Every necessary condition had been fulfilled, and the result was to the last degree definite and satisfactory. The conclusion was unavoidable that the surface of the water for a length of six miles did not to any appreciable extent decline or curvate downwards from the line of sight. But if the earth is a globe, the surface of the six miles length of water would have been 6 feet higher in the centre than at the two extremities. From this experiment it follows that the surface of standing water is not convex, and therefore that the Earth is not a globe! On the contrary, this simple experiment is all-sufficient to prove that the surface of the water is parallel to the line-of-sight, and is therefore horizontal, and that the Earth cannot be other than a plane!" (Dr. Samuel Rowbotham, *Zetetic Astronomy, Earth Not a Globe*)



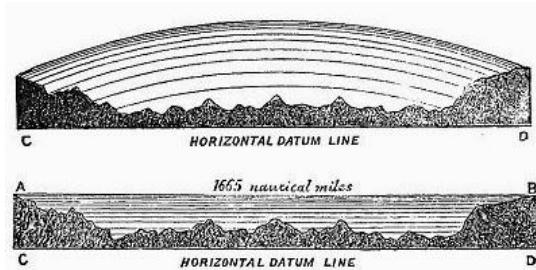
In a second experiment, Dr. Rowbotham placed seven flags along the edge of the water each one mile distant from the next with their tops positioned 5 feet above the surface. Near the last one he also positioned a longer, 8 foot staff bearing a 3 foot flag so that its bottom aligned precisely with the tops of the other flags. He then mounted a telescope at a height of 5 feet behind the first flag and took his observations. If the Earth was a globe of 25,000 miles, each successive flag would have to decline a definite and determined amount below the last. The first and second flags simply established the

line of sight, the third flag should then fall 8 inches below the second, the fourth flag 32 inches below, the fifth 6 feet, the sixth 10 feet 8 inches, and the seventh flag should be a clear 16 feet 8 inches below the line of sight! Even if the Earth was a globe of a hundred thousand miles, an amount of easily measurable curvature should and would still be evident in this experiment. But the reality is not a single inch of curvature was detected and the flags all lined up perfectly as consistent with a flat plane.

"The rotundity of the earth would necessitate the above conditions; but as they cannot be found to exist, the doctrine must be pronounced as only a simple theory, having no foundation in fact--a pure invention of misdirected genius; splendid in its comprehensiveness and bearing upon natural phenomena; but, nevertheless, mathematical and logical necessities compel its denunciation as an absolute falsehood." (Dr. Samuel Rowbotham, *Zetetic Astronomy, Earth Not a Globe.*)



Dr. Rowbotham conducted several other experiments using telescopes, spirit levels, and "theodolites," special precision instruments used for measuring angles in horizontal or vertical planes. By positioning them at equal heights aimed at each other successively he proved over and over the Earth to be perfectly flat for miles without a single inch of curvature. His findings caused quite a stir in the scientific community and thanks to 30 years of his efforts, the shape of the Earth became a hot topic of debate around the turn of the nineteenth century.

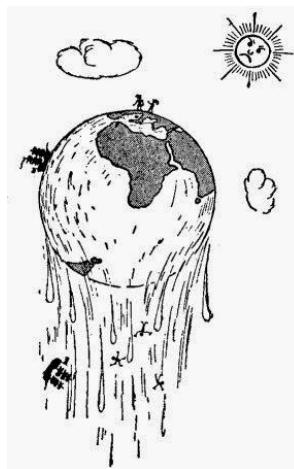


"Is water level, or is it not?" was a question once asked of an astronomer. 'Practically, yes; theoretically, no,' was the reply. Now, when theory does not harmonize with practice, the best thing to do is to drop the theory. (It is getting too late, now to say 'So much the worse for the facts!') To drop the theory which supposes a curved surface to standing water is to acknowledge the facts. Whenever experiments have been tried on the surface of standing water, the surface has always been found to be level. If the Earth were a globe, the surface of all standing water would be convex. This is an experimental proof that Earth is not a globe." William Carpenter, (*100 Proofs the Earth is Not a Globe*).

"Since any given body of water must have a level surface, no one part higher than another, and seeing that all our oceans (a few inland seas excepted) are connected together, it follows that they are all virtually of the same level." (The English Mechanic, 26th, June 1896)

Astronomers say the magical magnetism of gravity is what keeps all the oceans of the world stuck to the ball-Earth. They say that because the Earth is so massive, by virtue of this mass it creates a magic force able to hold people, oceans and atmosphere tightly clung to the underside of the spinning ball. Unfortunately, however, they cannot provide any practical example of this on a scale smaller than the planetary. For example, a spinning wet tennis ball has the exact opposite effect of the supposed ball-Earth! Any water poured over it simply falls off the sides, and giving it a spin results in water flying off 360 degrees like a dog shaking after a bath. Astronomers concede the wet tennis ball example displays the opposite effect of their supposed ball-Earth, but claim that at some unknown mass, the magic adhesive properties of gravity suddenly kick in allowing the spinning wet tennis ball-Earth to keep every drop of "gravitized" water stuck to the surface. Again, their theory flies in the face

of all practical evidence, but they have been running with it for 500 years, so why stop now?



"If the Earth were a globe, rolling and dashing through 'space' at the rate of 'a hundred miles in five seconds of time,' the waters of seas and oceans could not, by any known law, be kept on its surface - the assertion that they could be retained under these circumstances being an outrage upon human understanding and credulity! But as the Earth - that is, the habitable world of dry land - is found to be 'standing out of the water and in the water' of the 'mighty deep,' whose circumferential boundary is ice, we may throw the statement back into the teeth of those who make it and flaunt before their faces the flag of reason and common sense, inscribed with a proof that the Earth is not a globe." (William Carpenter, *100 Proofs the Earth is Not a Globe*).

The Nile is the longest river in the world running for 4,258 miles (6,853 km). In one portion of its long route, the great river Nile flows for a thousand miles with a fall of only one foot! This is a feat which, of course, would be a sheer impossibility if the Earth had spherical curvature. Many other rivers including the Congo in West Africa, the Amazon in South America, and the Mississippi in North America all flow for thousands of miles in directions totally incompatible with the supposed globularity of the Earth as well.

"Rivers run down to the sea because of the inclination of their beds. Rising at an altitude above sea-level, in some cases thousands of feet above the sea, they follow the easiest route to their level - the sea. The 'Parana' and 'Paraguay' in South America are navigable for over 2,000 miles, and their

waters run the same way until they find their level of stability, where the sea tides begin. But if the world be a globe, the 'Amazon' in South America that flows always in an easterly direction, would sometimes be running uphill and sometimes down, according to the movement of the globe. Then the 'Congo' in West Africa, that always pursues a westerly course to the sea, would in the same manner be running alternately up and down. When that point of the globe exactly between them was up, they would both be running up, although in opposite directions; and when the globe took half a turn, they would both be running down! We know from practical experiment that water will find its level, and cannot by any possibility remain other than level, or flat, or horizontal - whatever term may be used to express the idea. It is therefore quite out of the range of possibility that rivers could do as they would have to do on a globe." (Thomas Winship, *Zetetic Cosmogeny*)

"Whoever heard of a river in any part of its course flowing uphill? Yet this it would require to do were the Earth a Globe. Rivers, like the Mississippi, which flow from the North southwards towards the Equator, would need, according to Modern Astronomic theory, to run upwards, as the Earth at the Equator is said to bulge out considerably more, or, in other words, is higher than at any other part. Thus the Mississippi, in its immense course of over 3,000 miles, would have to ascend 11 miles before it reached the Gulf of Mexico!" (David Wardlaw Scott, *Terra Firma*)

"There are rivers which flow east, west, north, and south - that is, rivers are flowing in all directions over the Earth's surface, and at the same time. Now, if the Earth were a globe, some of these rivers would be flowing uphill and others down, taking it for a fact that there really is an 'up' and a 'down' in nature, whatever form she assumes. But, since rivers do not flow up-hill, and the globular theory requires that they should, it is a proof that the Earth is not a globe." William Carpenter, *100 Proofs the Earth is Not a Globe*.

Architecture and Engineering does not Consider the Curvature of the Earth.

The following information is from Eric Dubay's article *Architects and Engineers for Plane Truth:*

Surveyors, engineers, and architects are never required to factor the supposed curvature of the Earth into their projects, providing another proof the world is a plane, not a planet. Canals and railways, for example, are always cut and laid horizontally, often over hundreds of miles, without any allowance for curvature.

One surveyor, Mr. T. Westwood, wrote into the January, 1896 "Earth Review" magazine stating that, "In levelling, I work from Ordinance marks, or canal levels, to get the height above sea level. The puzzle to me used to be, that over several miles each level was and is treated throughout its whole length as the same level from end to end; not the least allowance being made for curvature. One of the civil engineers in this district, after some amount of argument on each side as to the reason why no allowance for curvature was made, said he did not believe anybody would know the shape of the earth in this life."

Another Surveyor and Engineer of thirty years wrote to the Birmingham Weekly Mercury, Feb. 15th, 1890 stating, "I am thoroughly acquainted with the theory and practice of civil engineering. However bigoted some of our professors may be in the theory of surveying according to the prescribed rules, yet it is well known amongst us that such theoretical measurements are incapable of any practical illustration. All our locomotives are designed to run on what may be regarded as true levels or flats. There are, of course, partial inclines or gradients here and there, but they are always accurately defined and must be carefully traversed. But anything approaching to eight inches in the mile, increasing as the square of the distance, could not be worked by any engine that was ever yet constructed. Taking one station with another all over England and Scotland, it may be stated that all the platforms are on the same relative level. The distance between Eastern and Western coasts of England may be set down as 300 miles. If the prescribed curvature was indeed as represented, the central stations at Rugby or Warwick ought to be close upon three miles higher than a chord drawn from the two extremities. If such was the case there is not a driver or stoker within the Kingdom that would be found to take charge of the train. We can only laugh at those of your readers who seriously give us credit for such venturesome exploits, as running trains round spherical curves. Horizontal curves on levels are dangerous enough, vertical curves would be a

thousand times worse, and with our rolling stock constructed as at present physically impossible."



Engineer, W. Winckler, wrote into the Earth Review October 1893 regarding the Earth's supposed curvature, stating, "As an engineer of many years standing, I saw that this absurd allowance is only permitted in school books. No engineer would dream of allowing anything of the kind. I have projected many miles of railways and many more of canals and the allowance has not even been thought of, much less allowed for. This allowance for curvature means this - that it is 8" for the first mile of a canal, and increasing at the ratio by the square of the distance in miles; thus a small navigable canal for boats, say 30 miles long, will have, by the above rule an allowance for curvature of 600 feet. Think of that and then please credit engineers as not being quite such fools. Nothing of the sort is allowed. We no more think of allowing 600 feet for a line of 30 miles of railway or canal, than of wasting our time trying to square the circle"



The Suez Canal which connects the Mediterranean Sea with the Gulf of Suez on the Red Sea is a clear proof of the Earth's and water's non-

convexity. The canal is 100 miles long and without any locks so the water within is an uninterrupted continuation of the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea. When it was constructed, the Earth's supposed curvature was not taken into account, it was dug along a horizontal datum line 26 feet below sea-level, passing through several lakes from one sea to the other, with the datum line and the water's surface running perfectly parallel over the 100 miles. The average level of the Mediterranean is 6 inches above the Red Sea, while the floodtides in the Red Sea rise 4 feet above the highest and drop 3 feet below the lowest in the Mediterranean, making the half-tide level of the Red Sea, the surface of the Mediterranean Sea, and the 100 miles of water in the canal, all a clear continuation of the same horizontal line! Were they instead the supposed curved line of globe-Earthers, the water in the center of the canal would be 1666 feet (502×8 inches = 1666 feet 8 inches) above the respective Seas on either side!

"The distance between the Red Sea at Suez and the Mediterranean Sea is 100 statute miles, the datum line of the Canal being 26 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and is continued horizontally the whole way from sea to sea, there not being a single lock on the Canal, the surface of the water being parallel with the datum line. It is thus clear that there is no curvature or globularity for the whole hundred miles between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea; had there been, according to the Astronomic theory, the middle of the Canal would have been 1,666 feet higher than at either end, whereas the Canal is perfectly horizontal for the whole distance. The Great Canal of China, said to be 700 miles in length, was made without regard to any allowance for supposed curvature, as the Chinese believe the Earth to be a Stationary Plane. I may also add that no allowance was made for it in the North Sea Canal, or in the Manchester Ship Canal, both recently constructed, thus clearly proving that there is no globularity in Earth or Sea, so that the world cannot possibly be a Planet." (David Wardlaw Scott, *Terra Firma*).

"If the earth be the globe of popular belief, it is very evident that in cutting a canal, an allowance must be made for the curvature of the globe, which allowance would correspond to the square of the distance multiplied by eight inches. From The Age, of 5th August 1892, I extract the

following: 'The German Emperor performed the ceremony of opening the Gates of the Baltic and North Sea Canal, in the spring of 1891. The canal starts at Holtenau, on the south side of Kiel Bay, and joins the Elbe 15 miles above its mouth. It is 61 miles long, 200 feet wide at the surface and 85 feet at the bottom, the depth being 28 feet. No locks are required, as the surface of the two seas is level.' Let those who believe it is the practice for surveyors to make allowance for 'curvature' ponder over the following from the Manchester Ship Canal Company (*Earth Review*, October, 1893) 'It is customary in Railway and Canal constructions for all levels to be referred to a datum which is nominally horizontal and is so shown on all sections. It is not the practice in laying out Public Works to make allowances for the curvature of the earth.' (Thomas Winship, *Zetetic Cosmogeny*)



The London and North-western Railway forms a straight line 180 miles long between London and Liverpool. The railroad's highest point, midway at Birmingham station, is only 240 feet above sea-level. If the world were actually a globe, however, curving 8 inches per mile squared, the 180 mile stretch of rail would form an arc with the center point at Birmingham raising a full 5,400 feet above London and Liverpool. Adding the station's actual height (240 feet) to its theoretical inclination (5,400 feet) gives 5,640 feet as the rail's necessary height on a globe-Earth, more than a thousand feet taller than Ben Nevis, the tallest mountain in Great Britain!

"In projecting railways on a globe, the datum line would be the arc of a circle corresponding to the latitude of the place. That the datum line for the railway projections is always a horizontal line, proves that the general configuration of the world is horizontal. To support the globe theory, the

gentlemen of the observatories should call upon the surveyor to prove that he allows the necessary amount for ‘curvature.’ But this is what the learned men dare not do, as it is well-known that the allowance for the supposed curvature is never made.” (Thomas Winship, *Zetetic Cosmogeny*)

“In a long line, like that of the Great Pacific Railway, extending across North America, the supposed curvature would, of course, be proportionately great, extending to many miles in height, but not one inch was allowed by the engineers for curvature during the whole course of the construction of that vast line of Railway. And, if we think of it, how could it be otherwise? All Railway metals must, of necessity, be straight, for how could any engine or carriage run with safety on a convex surface?” (David Wardlaw Scott, *Terra Firma*)

J.C. Bourne in his book, “The History of the Great Western Railway” stated that the entire original English railroad, more than 118 miles long, that the whole line with the exception of the inclined planes, may be regarded practically as level. The British Parliament Session in 1862 that approved its construction recorded in Order No. 44 for the proposed railway, “That the section be drawn to the same horizontal scale as the plan, and to a vertical scale of not less than one inch to every one hundred feet, and shall show the surface of the ground marked on the plan, the intended level of the proposed work, the height of every embankment, and the depth of every cutting, and a datum horizontal line which shall be the same throughout the whole length of the work.”

“One hundred and eighteen miles of level railway, and yet the surface on which it is projected a globe? Impossible. It cannot be. Early in 1898 I met Mr. Hughes, chief officer of the steamer ‘City of Lincoln.’ This gentleman told me he had projected thousands of miles of level railway in South America, and never heard of any allowance for curvature being made. On one occasion he surveyed over one thousand miles of railway which was a perfect straight line all the way. It is well known that in the Argentine Republic and other parts of South America, there are railways thousands of miles long without curve or gradient. In projecting railways, the world is acknowledged to be a plane, and if it were a globe the rules of projection have yet to be discovered. Level railways prove a level world, to the utter

confusion of the globular school of impractical men with high salaries and little brains." (Thomas Winship, *Zetetic Cosmogeny*)

"That in all surveys no allowance is made for curvature, which would be a necessity on a globe; that a horizontal line is in every case the datum line, the same line being continuous throughout the whole length of the work; and that the theodolite cuts a line at equal altitudes on either side of it, which altitude is the same as that of the instrument, clearly proves, to those who will accept proof when it is furnished, that the world is a plane and not a globe." (Thomas Winship, *Zetetic Cosmogeny*)

The Philadelphia skyline is clearly visible from Apple Pie Hill in the New Jersey Pine Barrens 40 miles away. If Earth were a ball 25,000 miles in circumference, factoring in the 205 foot elevation of Apple Pie Hill, the Philly skyline should remain well-hidden beyond 335 feet of curvature.



The New York City skyline is clearly visible from Harriman State Park's Bear Mountain 60 miles away. If Earth were a ball 25,000 miles in circumference, viewing from Bear Mountain's 1,283 foot summit, the Pythagorean Theorem determining distance to the horizon being 1.23 times the square root of the height in feet, the NYC skyline should be invisible behind 170 feet of curved Earth.



From Washington's Rock in New Jersey, at just a 400 foot elevation, it is possible on a clear day to see the skylines of both New York and Philadelphia in opposite directions at the same time covering a total distance of 120 miles! If Earth were a ball 25,000 miles in circumference, both of these skylines should be hidden behind over 800 feet of Earth's curvature.

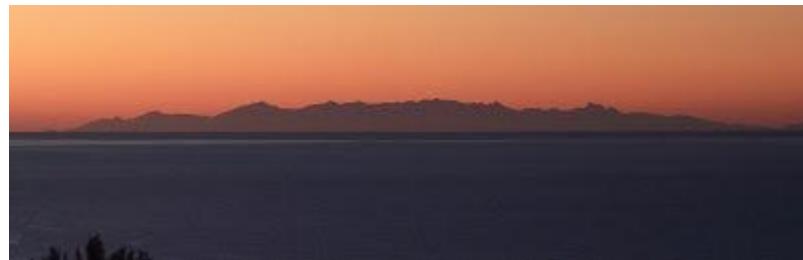
It is often possible to see the Chicago skyline from sea-level 60 miles away across Lake Michigan. In 2015 after photographer Joshua Nowicki photographed this phenomenon several news channels quickly claimed his picture to be a "superior mirage," an atmospheric anomaly caused by temperature inversion. While these certainly do occur, the skyline in question was facing right-side up and clearly seen unlike a hazy illusory mirage, and on a ball-Earth 25,000 miles in circumference should be 2,400 feet below the horizon.

October 16, 1854 the Times newspaper reported the Queen's visit to Great Grimsby from Hull recording they were able to see the 300 foot tall dock tower from 70 miles away. On a ball-Earth 25,000 miles in circumference, factoring their 10 foot elevation above the water and the tower's 300 foot height, at 70 miles away the dock tower should have remained an entire 2,600 feet below the horizon.

In 1872 Capt. Gibson and crewmates, sailing the ship "Thomas Wood" from China to London, reported seeing the entirety of St. Helena Island on a clear day from 75 miles away. Factoring in their height during measurement on a ball-Earth 25,000 miles in circumference, it was found the island should have been 3,650 feet below their line of sight.

From Genoa, Italy at a height of just 70 feet above sea-level, the island of Gorgona can often be seen 81 miles away. If Earth were a ball 25,000 miles in circumference, Gorgona should be hidden beyond 3,332 feet of curvature.

From Genoa, Italy at a height of just 70 feet above sea-level, the island of Corsica can often be seen 99 miles away. If Earth were a ball 25,000 miles in circumference, Corsica should fall 5,245 feet, almost an entire mile below the horizon.



From Genoa, Italy 70 feet above sea-level, the island of Capraia 102 miles away can often be seen as well. If Earth were a ball 25,000 miles in circumference, Capraia should always remain hidden behind 5,605 feet, over a mile of supposed curvature.



Also from Genoa, on bright clear days, the island of Elba can be seen an incredible 125 miles away! If Earth were a ball 25,000 miles in circumference, Elba should be forever invisible behind 8770 feet of curvature.

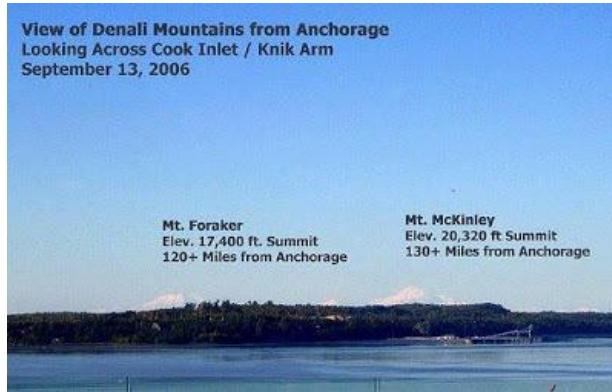


From Anchorage, Alaska at an elevation of 102 feet, on clear days Mount Foraker can be seen with the naked eye 120 miles away. If Earth were a ball 25,000 miles in circumference, Mount Foraker's 17,400 summit should be leaning back away from the observer covered by 7,719 feet of curved Earth.

In reality, however, the entire mountain can be quite easily seen standing straight from base to summit.



From Anchorage, Alaska at an elevation of 102 feet, on clear days Mount McKinley can be seen with the naked eye from 130 miles away. If Earth were a ball 25,000 miles in circumference, Mount McKinley's 20,320 foot summit should be leaning back away from the observer and almost half covered by 9,220 feet of curved Earth. In reality, however, the entire mountain can be quite easily seen standing straight from base to summit.



In Chambers' Journal, February 1895, a sailor near Mauritius in the Indian Ocean reported having seen a vessel which turned out to be an incredible 200 miles away! The incident caused much heated debate in nautical circles at the time, gaining further confirmation in Aden, Yemen where another witness reported seeing a missing Bombay steamer from 200 miles away. He correctly stated the precise appearance, location and direction of the steamer all later corroborated and confirmed correct by those onboard. Such sightings are absolutely inexplicable if the Earth were actually a ball 25,000 miles around, as ships 200 miles distant would have to fall approximately 5 miles below line of sight!

The distance from which various lighthouse lights around the world are visible at sea far exceeds what could be found on a ball-Earth 25,000 miles in circumference. For example, the Dunkerque Light in southern France at an altitude of 194 feet is visible from a boat (10 feet above sea-level) 28 miles away. Spherical trigonometry dictates that if the Earth was a globe with the given curvature of 8 inches per mile squared, this light should be hidden 190 feet below the horizon.

The Port Nicholson Light in New Zealand is 420 feet above sea-level and visible from 35 miles away where it should be 220 feet below the horizon.

The Egert Light in Norway is 154 feet above high-water and visible from 28 statute miles where it should be 230 feet below the horizon.

The Light at Madras, on the Esplanade, is 132 feet high and visible from 28 miles away, where it should be 250 feet below the line of sight.



The Cordonan Light on the west coast of France is 207 feet high and visible from 31 miles away, where it should be 280 feet below the line of sight.

The light at Cape Bonavista, Newfoundland is 150 feet above sea-level and visible at 35 miles, where it should be 491 feet below the horizon.

The lighthouse steeple of St. Botolph's Parish Church in Boston is 290 feet tall and visible from over 40 miles away, where it should be hidden a full

800 feet below the horizon!

The Isle of Wight lighthouse in England is 180 feet high and can be seen up to 42 miles away, a distance at which modern astronomers say the light should fall 996 feet below line of sight.

The Cape L'Agulhas lighthouse in South Africa is 33 feet high, 238 feet above sea level, and can be seen for over 50 miles. If the world were a globe, this light would fall 1,400 feet below an observer's line of sight.

The Statue of Liberty in New York stands 326 feet above sea level and on a clear day can be seen as far as 60 miles away. If the Earth were a globe, that would put Lady Liberty at an impossible 2,074 feet below the horizon.



The lighthouse at Port Said, Egypt, at an elevation of only 60 feet has been seen an astonishing 58 miles away, where, according to modern astronomy it should be 2,182 feet below the line of sight!

The Notre Dame Antwerp spire stands 403 feet high from the foot of the tower with Strasburg measuring 468 feet above sea level. With the aid of a telescope, ships can be distinguished on the horizon and captains declare they can see the cathedral spire from an amazing 150 miles away. If the Earth were a globe, however, at that distance the spire should be an entire mile, 5,280 feet below the horizon!

The St. George's Channel between Holyhead and Kingstown Harbor near Dublin is 60 miles across. When half-way across a ferry passenger will notice behind them the light on Holyhead pier as well as in front of them the Poolbeg light in Dublin Bay. The Holyhead Pier light is 44 feet high, while the Poolbeg lighthouse 68 feet, therefore a vessel in the middle of the channel, 30 miles from either side standing on a deck 24 feet above the water, can clearly see both lights. On a ball Earth 25,000 miles in circumference, however, both lights should be hidden well below both horizons by over 300 feet!

Some Further Arguments for a Flat Earth From Eric Dubay's *200 Proofs Earth is Not a Spinning Ball*:

If the Earth were truly a sphere 25,000 miles in circumference, airplane pilots would have to constantly correct their altitudes downwards so as to not fly straight off into "outer space;" a pilot wishing to simply maintain their altitude at a typical cruising speed of 500 mph, would have to constantly dip their nose downwards and descend 2,777 feet (over half a mile) every minute! Otherwise, without compensation, in one hour's time the pilot would find themselves 31.5 miles higher than expected.



If the Earth were truly constantly spinning Eastwards at over 1000mph, helicopters, and hot-air balloons should be able to simply hover over the surface of the Earth and wait for their destinations to come to them!



Ball-believers often claim “gravity” magically and inexplicably drags the entire lower-atmosphere of the Earth in perfect synchronization up to some undetermined height where this progressively faster spinning atmosphere gives way to the non-spinning, non-gravitized, non-atmosphere of infinite vacuum space. Such non-sensical theories are debunked, however, by rain, fireworks, birds, bugs, clouds, smoke, planes and projectiles all of which would behave very differently if both the ball-Earth and its atmosphere were constantly spinning Eastwards at 1000mph.

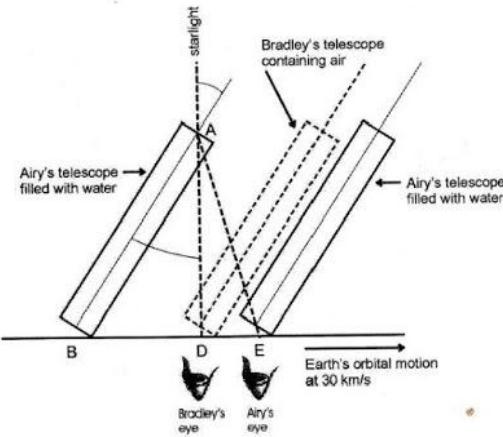
If “gravity” is credited with being a force strong enough to hold the world’s oceans, buildings, people and atmosphere stuck to the surface of a rapidly spinning ball, then it is impossible for “gravity” to also simultaneously be weak enough to allow little birds, bugs, and planes to take-off and travel freely unabated in any direction.

If “gravity” is credited with being a force strong enough to curve the massive expanse of oceans around a globular Earth, it would be impossible for fish and other creatures to swim through such forcefully held water.

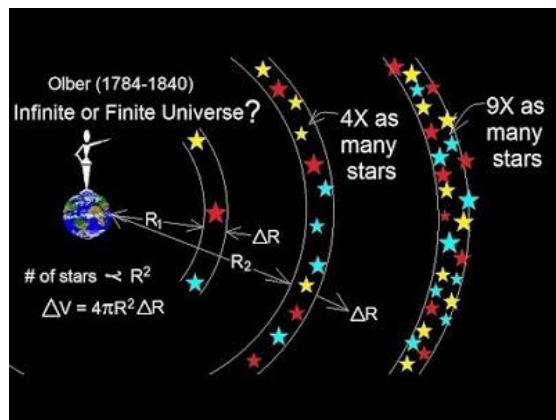
If the Earth and its atmosphere were constantly spinning Eastwards over 1000mph, then clouds, wind and weather patterns could not casually and

unpredictably go every which way, with clouds often travelling in opposing directions at varying altitudes simultaneously.

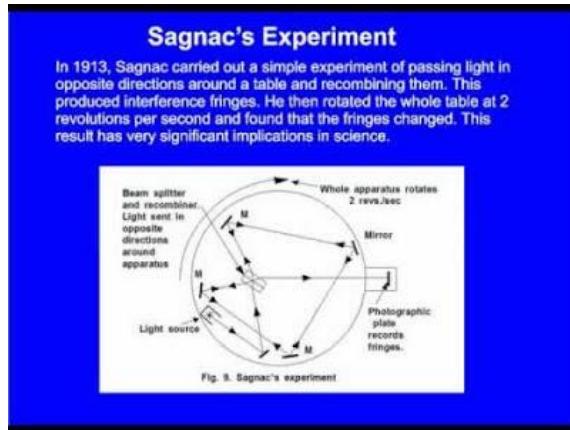
The experiment known as “Airy’s Failure” proved that the stars move relative to a stationary Earth and not the other way around. By first filling a telescope with water to slow down the speed of light inside, then calculating the tilt necessary to get the starlight directly down the tube, Airy failed to prove the heliocentric theory since the starlight was already coming in the correct angle with no change necessary, and instead proved the geocentric model correct.



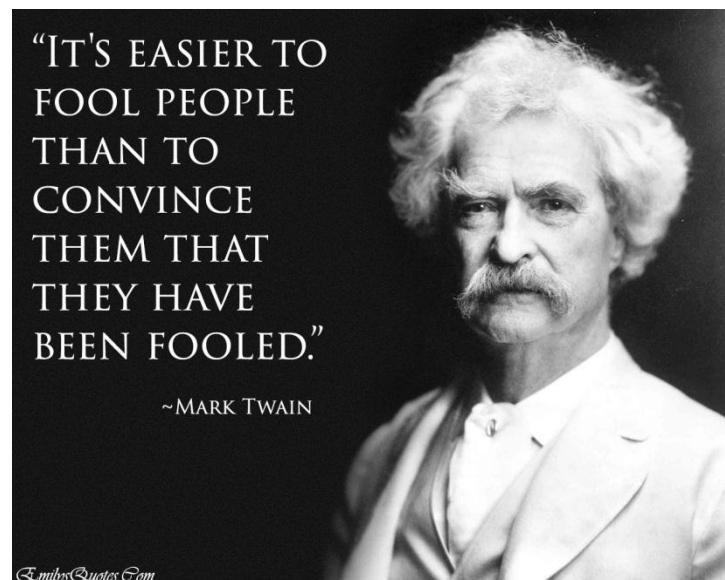
“Olber’s Paradox” states that if there were billions of stars which are suns the night sky would be filled completely with light. As Edgar Allan Poe said, “Were the succession of stars endless, then the background of the sky would present us a uniform luminosity, since there could exist absolutely no point, in all that background, at which would not exist a star.” In fact Olber’s “Paradox” is no more a paradox than George Airy’s experiment was a “failure.” Both are actually excellent refutations of the heliocentric spinning ball model.



The Michelson-Morley and Sagnac experiments attempted to measure the change in speed of light due to Earth's assumed motion through space. After measuring in every possible different direction in various locations they failed to detect any significant change whatsoever, again proving the stationary geocentric model.

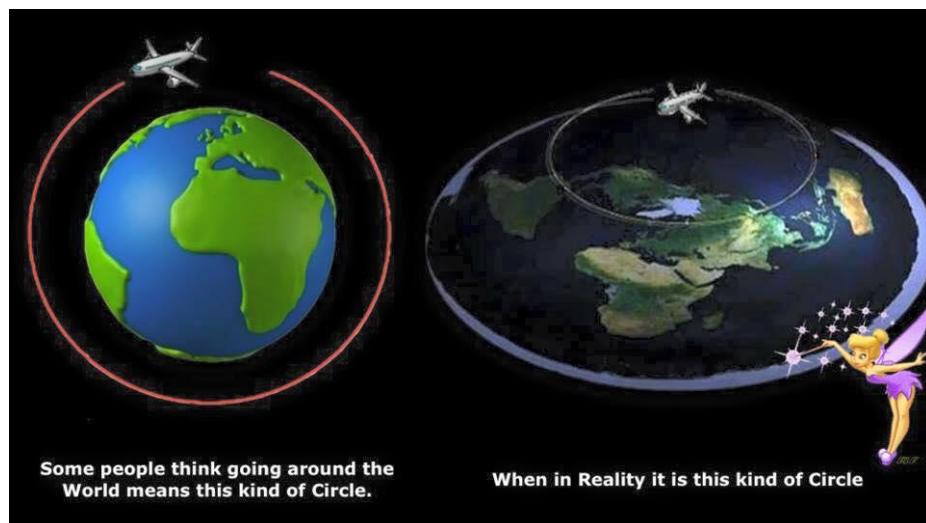


Tycho Brahe famously argued against the heliocentric theory in his time, positing that if the Earth revolved around the Sun, the change in relative position of the stars after 6 months orbital motion could not fail to be seen. He argued that the stars should seem to separate as we approach and come together as we recede. In actual fact, however, after 190,000,000 miles of supposed orbit around the Sun, not a single inch of parallax can be detected in the stars, proving we have not moved at all.



(2.5) Our Limited Understanding of East and West

In the transcription below, Śrīla Prabhupāda had the following fascinating conversation with Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami regarding our limited perception of what we know as the boundaries of travel. I'm not claiming here that Śrīla Prabhupāda is directly making arguments in favour of a flat Earth, but his cryptic words certainly apply to the flat Earth concept when we consider Bhārata-varṣa's position to the greater Jambūdvīpa. Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions that we are restricted by superior power from going further and seeing further. This is interesting when one begins to consider the denial of access or passage to regions such as Antarctica. Rather than being merely a frozen area at the bottom of a supposed round globe, it may actually be some kind of confining barrier to us from gaining access to an expanding flat plane. I only offer this as a speculation based on what we should expect if the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s description of Bhārata-varṣa's location to Jambudvipa is correct. In the following discussion Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami is again repeating the same argument to Śrīla Prabhupāda that since one can fly from America to India by taking either a westerly direction or a western direction that this proves the world is a round globe. Accepting the flight patterns as true, Prabhupāda compares the situation to a bull tied to a central stake and made to walk in circles around a grinding stone. There is much more area surrounding the bull but since he is tied to a stake, and since blinkers are put over his eyes to encourage him to keep walking in a circle, he is unable to see or venture into that greater area. In a similar way the living entities are flying around in a restricted circular motion above the Earth and thinking this is the furthest they can go, when really there is much more area to the east and the west. Again, this makes sense when we consider how flying around the Earth is easily explainable from a flat Earth perspective:



In the above diagram we see the restricted motion in which planes fly ‘around’ the world on the flat Earth model. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other Vedic literatures, however, are now removing our blinkers and giving us information about the greater land surfaces that lie all around us.



Let us consider again *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s description of Earth's position as part of Bhārata-varṣa which is situated on the southern coast of Jambūdvīpa. To the east and west of Earth's continents are the other areas of Bhārata-varṣa, and to the north is the next varṣa of Jambūdvīpa known as Kimpuruṣa-varṣa. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in a purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.16.12:

Kimpuruṣa-varṣa: It is stated to be situated north of the great Himalaya Mountain, which is eighty thousand miles in length and height and which covers sixteen thousand miles in width. These parts of the world were also conquered by Arjuna (Sabhā 28.1-2). (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.16.12 purport)

In the illustration below we see Earth in the salt water ocean with the other areas of Bhārata-varṣa to its east and west and the 80,000 mile high Himalaya Mountains separating it from Kimpuruṣa-varṣa. So according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, all around us are vast areas of land inhabited by other human beings. Thus, when Śrīla Prabhupāda argues in the discussion following below, that we can go further east and west, but are presently restricted from doing so by higher forces, this is what I take him to mean.



As I have attempted to argue in this paper, the above depiction of the Earth as globe floating in the salt water ocean makes no sense at all. However, the Earth itself has been correctly situated in relation to Jambūdvīpa. All that is required to make the picture accurate is to depict the continents of Earth as lying flat on the salt water ocean. In fact, this is how we experience the continents in reality; for everywhere one goes in the world, one is surrounded by water, and the water on which one sails has the same horizontal surface whether sailing from North America to Australia, or from South America to Siberia. It does not curve anywhere. Water always finds a level and stays at a level. Our oceans are on the same level horizontal level in every direction.

However, the point I wish to emphasize here is in relation to the directions and particularly the expanded directions of the flat Earth. In the illustration above, we see Earth in the salt water ocean with the other *kandas* of Bhārata-varṣa to the east and west. In the northern direction we see the 80,000 mile Himalaya Mountain range that separates Bhārata-varṣa from Kimpurusa-varṣa, our next door neighbour on Jambūdvīpa. As mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* and quoted by Śrīla Prabhupāda in his

purport, Arjuna not only crossed this mountain range and conquered Kimpuruṣa-varṣa, but all of these varṣas of Jambūdvīpa were conquered and controlled by the Pāṇḍavas. Thus the idea of Earth as a ball rotating in space cannot be reconciled with this history of the *Mahābhārata*, but the history of *Mahābhārata* does begin to make sense when we come back to thinking again about the expanded flat Earth concept of Bhū-maṇḍala. So bear this in mind when we listen to the following conversation with Prabhupāda regarding our limited concept of east and west on the globe model:

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: So something's wrong with their instrument. When they fly from Los Angeles and their compass...

Prabhupāda: Nothing is wrong. From their estimate it is all right. But there is superior power.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: They go due west and they hit India from Los Angeles, but according to our calculation, that's not possible.

Prabhupāda: **You can go further, but you cannot go. That is condition. You are restricted. The same, that you are bound up. If an animal can go further... But he cannot, because he is bound up.** Ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate [Bg. 3.27]. He is thinking, "I am free." He is not free. So what is the value of his education? This is the real point.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: They'll want to talk about another point.

Prabhupāda: What is that?

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: They'll want to talk about the point that the point on their compass that points west while they're flying in the airplane, and they keep it going west, and they eventually land in India from Los Angeles.

Prabhupāda: You are flying west or east—you do not know. You are controlled.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: They say, "No, our compass shows it. And you accept the compass."

Prabhupāda: **That's all right. You are going west, but do you think where you think that the west is end, that is not end. You can go further.**

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: They say it never ends because we're going around the planet.

Prabhupāda: No, that is his dog's mentality, going round. That is dog. He is thinking that "This is the area. Now I..." He's controlled by superior power, that "You cannot go." An example is... There are so many. There are so many stars, moons, and we'll go there. But he cannot go.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: They say, "We accept this premise, that we are limited."

Prabhupāda: But then limited, you cannot say final.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: "But we say within our limited means we can understand that..."

Prabhupāda: And limited means if you understand that "I am bound up. I am going round the law," that is all right. But don't say that "Beyond this limit there is nothing."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: No, they don't.

Prabhupāda: No.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: But supposing that within this limit we accept that we are limited.

Prabhupāda: That is all right.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: But we say that we're going west and...

Prabhupāda: **That's right, west up to this point, rascal, not more than that. Why don't you understand this? West you have gone. That's all right. But up to this point, no more. You cannot go.** You don't say that there is no more after this western... They are saying that.

Śatadhanya: Yeah, they say, "Then west becomes east."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Right, they say.

Śatadhanya: They say.

Prabhupāda: No.

Śatadhanya: But why? Just because it is finished for them...

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Śatadhanya: ...'cause they are limited.

Prabhupāda: Unlimited.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: But how do they fly direct to India?

Prabhupāda: Unlimited way.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: This question they're still going to put. They're still going to put this question, that they... We say, "Here is Jambūdvīpa, and this is Bhāratavarṣa on the bottom, and you cannot go beyond Bhāratavarṣa because you're conditioned. You're limited. That is our position. And within Bhāratavarṣa there is India. We accept that. Even we accept that. There are oceans. There are continents, seven continents, as described in the Bhāgavatam." So their question is: "Okay, but then how do you explain that you can go this direction and you come out in India, over, back here?"

Prabhupāda: **We don't say that, that this direction, what you are saying, it is end. That is not.** We say that.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: That it doesn't end.

Prabhupāda: **That you can go further, but you cannot go. Therefore you are thinking, "This is end of the position."** The same dog mentality. He is within that small area. He is thinking, "There is no more, other space." That example is another, that bull. His eyes are closed, and he crushes the oil mill, going. He's thinking he is going three hundred miles.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: They keep the eyes blinded so he won't...

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: ...understand what's going on.

Prabhupāda: Because in one place, simply going round, going round, it makes one mad. So those eyes are closed. He is thinking, "This is the end of world." ...Kūpa-maṇḍūka, the frog in the well, he is thinking that "This is the whole water area."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Then what is it? If it is not what I am thinking, then what is it?

Prabhupāda: That I am explaining. Take it.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: But we can't explain it. That's the problem.

Prabhupāda: No, no, why cannot explain?

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: That's the problem...They can go from New York, that direction, or they go from Los Angeles, the other way. Either way, they come to India, and they say, "That proves the world is round 'cause we can go like this or we can go this way." But we say, "No, you can only go this way." But the compass shows I am going due east...

Prabhupāda: So we don't say differently. You can go this way.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: But we don't say that. Because there's no round, we say...

Simply it's a lotus. It's not...

Prabhupāda: No, I... **It is the same example. Just as animal is bound up, so he's going this round or this round, the same thing. But you cannot go beyond that.**

(Discussion about Bhū-maṇḍala, July 3, 1977, Vṛndāvana)

In the above conversation, Śrīla Prabhupāda agrees with Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami that from America one can go to India either in a westerly or easterly direction, but he insists this circumnavigation of the Earth is not the limit of going east or west. One can go further east and west, but like an animal bound to a stake with a rope and with blinkers on his eyes, he is kept moving in a limited circle; and that's all the animal gets to experience of a much greater environment. Taking this example, I would argue that we are like the animal bound within a limited jurisdiction and blinkered to the vision of the greater Jambūdvīpa. We can go further east and west but we are restricted by certain illusions and diversions from doing so.

(2.6) Śrīla Prabhupāda on the Flat Earth

What does Śrīla Prabhupāda have to say on the topic of a flat Earth? As is the case with many subjects that Śrīla Prabhupāda taught, we have to consider that Śrīla Prabhupāda sometimes answered questions with seemingly contrary replies. In this conversation, he was asked directly is the Earth round like a ball, or round like a plate? Here we have a direct answer that the Earth planet should be depicted as an island (*dvīpa*) indicating the roundness of a plate, not a ball:

Satsvarūpa: Śrīla Prabhupāda, are the planets shaped liked balls or more like plates? Because it's, it's hard to understand, 'cause they're called *dvīpas*, "islands." Their roundness is the roundness of a plate or like a ball?

Prabhupāda: Which one?

Satsvarūpa: The earth planet?

Prabhupāda: If it is like a tree, then these things can be as *dvīpa*, island.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Wow. You know...

Prabhupāda: Eh?

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: The scientists are getting smashed to bits by your statements, Śrīla Prabhupāda. This destroys their whole theory. Orbs, round spheres. I think that this Māyāpura building, we must build a big planetarium in it.

Prabhupāda: Yes. That, that I am going to do, Vedic planetarium.
(Morning Walk, March 18, 1976, Mayapur)

In answer to another question by Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, Śrīla Prabhupāda said that whether the Earth is round or flat should be decided by the version of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, not by the changing theories of Western astronomy.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Do we accept the contour of the continents? Do we accept the general continents?

Prabhupāda: We accept nothing of their theory. They are prejudiced and nonsense. Formerly they were speaking that the world is flat. Now they have changed: "It is round." So what is the value of his estimate? And you'll find in that book, "probably."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: That was the most frequent word used.

Prabhupāda: Yes. So what is the value of their knowledge?

(Discussion about Bhū-maṇḍala, July 3, 1977, Vṛndāvana)

Here as in other places when the question was raised by Tamāla Kṛṣṇa about the shape of the Earth, Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't give a decisive yes or no as to whether Earth is flat or round like a ball. He says, that the materialists sometimes say it is flat, then change their minds and say it is round. He concludes that we should reject their speculations and present the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s version instead:

Yaśodā-nandana: Prabhupāda, what is the shape of this tiny portion of earth or whatever place we are on? What is the shape of this, whatever you call...

Prabhupāda: Ask them. Why don't you ask them? Sometimes they say flat, sometimes they say it is round. Why don't you ask them, the scientists?

Yaśodā-nandana: We don't accept what they say.

Prabhupāda: No, no. Formerly they were under the impression the world is flat. And now they are saying round. So what they'll say after few years?

Yaśodā-nandana: They are not consistent. That's a fact. They're very inconsistent in their theories.

Prabhupāda: Ask them which is correct. "Probably" this is correct.

Bhakti-prema: When someone asks this question, first one would reply.

Prabhupāda: I answered it. You people say like that, so which is correct? Flat or round?

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: They will say "What does the Bhāgavatam say?"

Prabhupāda: Huh?

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: They may reply to us, "All right, we are rascals. So please tell us what is the fact."

Prabhupāda: That is, we are...

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: That's what he's asking. What should be shown? Actually we're a little stumped by... I mean...

Prabhupāda: Yes, you must have proper answer as far as possible.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: We just read... We got a version from South India, and we've even found that there are different conceptions of what the Bhāgavata is saying. But the Purāṇas, they give some Puranic references.

Bhakti-prema: It is written the world... The earth is round and flat.

Prabhupāda: Hm?

Bhakti-prema: Earth is round and flat both, together.

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Bhakti-prema: First we should reply it is acintya. This should be the reply. "Inconceivable."

Yaśodā-nandana: If it is inconceivable, then they will say how we can conceive it?

Prabhupāda: Take the version of Bhāgavatam.
(Discussions about Bhū-maṇḍala, July 5 1977, Vṛndāvana)

From these last available conversations on the topic, it appears Śrīla Prabhupāda was not necessarily committed to the idea of presenting Earth as a ball-shaped globe. Here Śrīla Prabhupāda states very decisively that we should take the version of *Bhāgavatam*. This of course puzzled the devotees because they couldn't ascertain whether it was depicted as flat or round. It appears there was some difficulty in the depiction of the Bhū-maṇḍala. Śrīla Prabhupāda had sent some of his disciples to search around India for Vedic astronomers who could help with drawing the maps for the Vedic planetarium. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself acknowledged his own limitations. Speaking of his difficultly in conceiving the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's* description of the universe:

Prabhupāda: And it was not possible for me to digest. (laughs) Somebody else helped me to... I am a layman. I do not know.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: How did you write it?

Prabhupāda: That somebody, Kṛṣṇa, helped me. That He manufactured.

Yaśodānandana: And these mountains, they extend to the beaches. "It is considered, according to the Bhāga..."

Prabhupāda: When I was writing, I was praying Kṛṣṇa that "I do not actually accommodate all this knowledge. Please help me." Yes. That's all right. (Room Conversation, June 18 1977, Vṛndāvana)

Śrīla Prabhupāda again mentioned to one astronomer:

Prabhupāda: I have tried to translate it as far as possible, but I am not satisfied. (Conversation with India Astronomer, April 30 1977, Bombay)

Actually Śrīla Prabhupāda's translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was perfect, but it appears there was some difficultly in taking the written description to a visual presentation. Śrīla Prabhupāda had sent some of his disciples to locate Vedic astronomers around India who could help with drawing a map for the Vedic planetarium but the result was disappointing. He then basically left it to his disciples to figure it out taking guidance from Krishna:

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: And what to do? How to get...?

Prabhupāda: Kṛṣṇa will help.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Hm?

Prabhupāda: Kṛṣṇa will help. He has no idea. (Conversation with India Astronomer, April 30 1977, Bombay)

Śrīla Prabhupāda again suggested advertising in newspapers for Vedic astronomers to help:

Prabhupāda: "Astronomer knowing the planetary system," you can advertise. "Expert astronomer who knows the planetary systems as described..."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: "...in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam."

Prabhupāda: Hm.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Yeah, we can advertise. Instead of having somebody going all over India. (Conversation with India Astronomer, April 30 1977, Bombay)

To their credit, the devotees involved done a marvellous job in preparing a map for the Bhū-maṇḍala which was eventually presented to Śrīla Prabhupāda in July 1977. However, a direct answer to the question of whether Earth was round or flat remained unanswered. Between 2nd and 5th of July 1977 in Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Prabhupāda had a number of meetings with his disciples to discuss the designs for the Vedic planetarium. In the wonderful exchange between guru and disciple that took place on that occasion, we hear Śrīla Prabhupāda and his beloved disciple Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami discuss back and forth about the shape of the Earth. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami who wanted nothing other than to present an accurate depiction of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's description of Earth, felt forced to press Śrīla Prabhupāda again and again for a specific answer regarding the shape of the Earth.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: 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.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami describes this exchange in his published Diary (*TKG'S Diary*, July 3 1977). He writes of feeling that his attitude had been a little offensive for heavily questioning Śrīla Prabhupāda, a claim that Prabhupāda in response dismissed. Prabhupāda said there was no wrong as they were simply discussing and trying to understand a difficult subject. Actually Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami's love for Śrīla Prabhupāda comes across very clearly in these discussions; his only intention being how to accurately depict the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's cosmography as it should appear in the Vedic planetarium. From *TKG's Diary*:

When Śrīla Prabhupāda awoke after a night's rest, he opened his eyes and said, "They go from Los Angeles. You all think over it. Then I shall tell

you." Śrīla Prabhupāda was referring to the question which we had not yet solved: If the world is not a globe but part of Jambudvīpa, which is the center of the huge, lotus-like Bhūmaṇḍala, how does an airplane fly from Los Angeles to Hawaii to Tokyo and on to India? The scientists explain by saying that the airplane circles the globe. But according to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, there is no planet Earth as the scientists say, floating in space. Rather, there is Bhāratavarṣa with its seven continents and oceans and Himalayan Mountains. After challenging us thus, Śrīla Prabhupāda went back to sleep. When he again awoke, Prabhupāda began to reveal the answer. "They are bound up and cannot go beyond a point. They are conditioned and are forced to return. They can only go so far and not farther." I told Prabhupāda that we accepted that point, but it still did not answer the question. Prabhupāda replied, however, that it did. "You are prejudiced. You are conditioned with preconceptions of how everything is." He was saying that my difficulty to understand was due to my acceptance of the scientists' assumptions. "It is just like a bull grinding, going around in a circle. He is tied up and simply going around. So everyone is tied up. They cannot go beyond a point, and they cannot move in any way they like, just like the bull only has certain limits to his movement. How can a frog in the well understand the ocean? They say the Himalayan Mountains are twenty-eight thousand feet high. But Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam says eighty thousand miles high. You have cheated about going to the moon. How can I believe you? You want to explain the whole universe, how can I believe you? Once someone is shown to be a cheater, he will always cheat. A gentleman would say, 'I don't know!' But they are not gentlemen. They are loafer class! How we can believe them? I have personally seen in Switzerland, you cannot see where the mountain goes. Many planes are crashing there. The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam says that great kings crossed the Himalayas. But they crash. They said the world was flat. Then Galileo said it was round, and for this he was hanged. They didn't know and he didn't know. Our knowledge doesn't change, because it is perfect. As soon as there is change, it is not perfect."

After lunch, Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke again about the planetary system. In trying to understand the fact of flying from Los Angeles to India, I had an energetic discussion with Śrīla Prabhupāda. I left feeling very perplexed

with Prabhupāda's admonition, "You are prejudiced." Later in the afternoon, I was still feeling disturbed, mainly because of my argumentative attitude during the earlier discussion. I felt that perhaps I had been offensive in questioning too much; thus, I came in and apologized. Śrīla Prabhupāda said there was nothing wrong; we were merely discussing a difficult subject. After some time, Prabhupāda called me back to the room and said, "Why you are thinking this way, that I am offended?" My mentality seemed to disturb Prabhupāda. He said, "Now the atmosphere is disturbed. I cannot translate." The emotions produced by this situation were very difficult to understand. Perhaps I will realize their implications as I become more Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Instead of translating, Prabhupāda had me call the others: Bhakti Prema Swami and Yaśodānandana Swami. A conversation ensued, similar to the one Śrīla Prabhupāda had with me after lunch. Our question of how the Bhāgavatam's description of Jambudvīpa can accommodate traveling west from Los Angeles to reach India seemed to remain unanswered. Prabhupāda stressed, however, that we were overly concerned with such a minor issue, just "a drop of water" (Prabhupāda's description of the Pacific Ocean). "With your experimental logic you cannot understand. It is inconceivable. Just accept the śāstra. True understanding only comes by the mercy of the spiritual master. You cannot adjust the description of the Bhāgavatam within the limits of your knowledge. Our Nārada Muni went to Vaikunṭha. After coming back, he told a cobbler about an elephant passing through the eye of a needle. The cobbler said, 'Oh, Nārāyaṇa is so great!' But a brāhmaṇa said, 'It is simply stories!' Nārada then asked the cobbler, 'How can you believe that Nārāyaṇa was passing an elephant through the head of a needle?' The cobbler explained, 'Why not? We are sitting under a banyan tree. There are so many fruits; and each fruit contains so many seeds, which each will grow into a huge banyan tree.' Everything is inconceivable, and these rascals want to bring it as conceivable. Don't be puffed up by your so-called education. It has no value." Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us the spiritual solution to a mundane question. (TKG' Diary, July 3 1977)

This is an interesting position on Śrīla Prabhupāda's part because in many of Śrīla Prabhupāda's earlier purports and conversations he seems to take it for granted that we are on a globe-shaped Earth, not a flat Earth. For example:

Prabhupāda: So Brahmā means the manager of one brahmāṇḍa, universe. And there are millions of Brahmās, millions, trillions. They are numberless. Ananta-koṭi. Yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṁḍa-koṭih [Bs. 5.40]. Koṭi. Koṭi means unlimited. Jagad-aṁḍa. Jagad-aṁḍa means universe. Brahmāṇḍa or jagad-aṁḍa. Aṁḍa. Aṁḍa means it is egg-shaped, round, egg-shaped. Therefore it is called aṁḍa, brahmāṇḍa. Bhū-gola. Gola means round. I have heard that before the science, the people were under the impression that this world is square. Is it not?

Devotees: Flat.

Prabhupāda: Flat. Flat, yes. But in the Vedic śāstra, millions of years ago it is mentioned: bhū-gola. Gola means round. Just see. And these rascals say that formerly people were not so intelligent. They are intelligent because they are thinking that this world is flat. And those who have spoken millions of years ago, "It is round," they will have less intelligence. Just see. Bhū, gola. Gola means round. Bhū-gola. Similarly, jagad-aṁḍa. Abda means round, just like egg. Aṁḍa means egg. Jagad-aṁḍa. This universe is egg-shaped. And we can see also, the sky is round. This is the wall of this universe. (*Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, 1.43, London, July 30 1973)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, would often reconsider his understanding of a thing when presented with an alternative explanation or contrary evidence. Perhaps when Śrīla Prabhupāda saw the maps of Bhūmaṇḍala and was presented with Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami's direct questions about the shape of the Earth, it became apparent that a flat Earth was the only reasonable answer to the question. As pointed out to Śrīla Prabhupāda by Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, the Earth of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is not round as depicted by NASA:

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Look at the earth. Now, this is a real question that we still have to answer. They picture the earth round, and we say, no. Bhū-maṇḍala is like a lotus, like this, and the earth is only one part of one island in Bhū-maṇḍala, and it's not, you know, it's not round(?). It doesn't look like that. And all the pictures they take of the earth when they go up in their

satellites show round. And we're going to tell them that it's not. This is a very tricky question. (Bhū-maṇḍala Diagram Discussion, July 2 1977, Vṛndāvana)

I believe it could also be presented to Śrīla Prabhupāda, that the flat Earth is also demonstrably true as there is otherwise no observable or measurable curvature on the Earth (except for the fake photos produced by NASA). I've no doubt that after a thorough inspection of the so-called photos and videos of Earth as a round-globe from outer space that Śrīla Prabhupāda would have equally dismissed them as fraudulent.

As pointed out before, when it came to a final decision about whether the Earth should be depicted as round or flat, Śrīla Prabhupāda decisively instructed those of his disciples who were working on the planetarium to take the version of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. I think this statement should be regarded as holding greater authority than some of his earlier statements and purports in which he speaks of the Earth as a round globe. Śrīla Prabhupāda mood in the conversations of 1977 also seemed to indicate a freedom to his disciples to intelligently figure it out. This mood comes across in the various conversations in 1977 regarding the depictions for the Vedic planetarium. Śrīla Prabhupāda had himself requested the help of other Vedic astronomers to help in the conceptualization of the planetarium's depiction of the universe but he was not satisfied with the current understanding among the Vedic astrologers that he spoke to. The problem was that no one took the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s description literally:

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: No, he doesn't. He never thought about it. No one reads the *Bhāgavatam* as a scientific book, Śrīla Prabhupāda. That's the point. Except for Your Divine Grace, they are thinking it's story, "It is stories."

Prabhupāda: Yes, they do not believe.

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

Prabhupāda: There was a Gosāī. He was reading Caitanya-caritāmṛta. 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."

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: And he was lecturing on Caitanya-caritāmṛta. I think you mentioned that one of your Godbrothers once said to you, "You really believe that there is such a place, Kṛṣṇaloka, Vaikuṇṭhaloka?" He was himself...

Prabhupāda: Bon Mahārāja did not believe. No... Nobody ever thought of it.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: You are the only representative, the lone representative of religion left on this planet, Śrīla Prabhupāda. (Conversation with Astronomer, April 30 1977, Bombay)

But if we are to take the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* literally, and not simply as some 'story-book,' then the description clearly points to a flat Earth concept with the rest of Jambūdvīpa somewhere to the north of our oceans. This means having to accept that the world as it has been presented to us is false, and that there are actually greater areas of land in the vicinity of Earth's oceans that expand for millions of miles along the horizontal plane of Bhū-maṇḍala. Thus taking the *sāstras* description of the actual relationship between Earth's position to Jambūdvīpa, as well as the observable science refuting a heliocentric and globe-shaped Earth, and not forgetting the innumerable exposés of NASA's fake Earth images from outer space, I would be confident that Śrīla Prabhupāda would reconsider his statement that the Earth is round not flat. When it was pointed out, for example by Bhakti-prema Dāsa in the conversation of June 28, 1977 (Vṛndāvana) that Varāhadēva lifted the entire Bhū-maṇḍala and not simply what we think of as the Earth globe, Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted his version because it was backed up by the *sāstra*. I would feel equally confident to present to Śrīla Prabhupāda that the Vedas are right in presenting the earth as a flat land area on the expanded plane of Bhū-maṇḍala.

Humbly submitting questions to the spiritual teacher is a process of legitimate inquiry in order to overcome any doubts and to positively ascertain the truth. Krishna teaches in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth. (*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, Is 4.34)

If I could present three questions to Śrīla Prabhupāda on this topic of Vedic cosmography, it would be the following. I would like to think that my questions are motivated by the deepest love and affection for Śrīla Prabhupāda and in a spirit of wishing to genuinely understand the reality of what is being described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

First, I would wish to question Śrīla Prabhupāda why he sometimes speaks of the Earth as a round planet in space when all the Vedic history clearly points to Earth being connected with the greater Jambūdvīpa at the time of the Krishna and the Pāñḍavas. The Vedic history relates the Pāñḍavas conquest of, and final departure to Jambūdvīpa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as mentioned, actually discussed this conquest of Jambūdvīpa by the Pāñḍavas in his purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.16.12. Again in a lecture in 1973 he referred to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhīra's passage into Jambūdvīpa via the Arctic region. Bhakti-prema Dāsa again mentioned this history to Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1977 whilst showing the planetary sketches for the Vedic planetarium:

Prabhupāda: They will be puzzled. These material scientists will be puzzled. (laughter)

Bhakti-Prema: But according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in the beginning of creation we have relation with all this, in India. Even five thousand years ago Parīkṣit Mahārāja went and he conquered this area. I have translated this. This Tattvata-varṣa was conquered by... And this Ramya-varṣa was also conquered. And Vardhanya also... And then this is Bhārata-varṣa, this whole world.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Where?

Bhakti-Prema: This.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: That is Bhārata-varṣa.

Bhakti-Prema: Yeah, and he was presiding here. He was living here. And then he crossed this mountain.

Prabhupāda: Crossed?

Bhakti-Prema: Yes. And he conquered it. Not only he saw, he conquered it. And it is surrounded by five other oceans. (Showing of Planetary Sketches, June 28, Vrindavana, 1977)

So if it is true that the Pāṇḍavas, and later their grandson Parīksit Mahārāja, controlled Jambūdvīpa from their capital in India, then a question for avocates of a round-shaped Earth arises; namely, where is the round Earth in relation to Jambūdvīpa? If Earth is a round ball in space, where is Jambūdvīpa to be found? Where is Jambūdvīpa in NASA's pictures?

Such a conception of a globe ball in space does not make any sense in the light of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s description. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes that Earth is part of Bhārata-varṣa and literally next door to Kimpuruṣa-varṣa. Bhārata-varṣa is surrounded by Jambūdvīpa's salt water ocean; not by space. At the northern point of Earth is an 80,000 mile mountain over which the Pāṇḍavas crossed to control the 800,000 mile land mass of Jambūdvīpa. None of this makes any sense from the understanding of Earth as a globe in space; but it makes perfect sense with the understanding that Earth is lying on the salt water ocean surrounding the central island of Bhū-maṇḍala's central island of Jambūdvīpa.

Would it not, therefore, make more sense to depict Earth as lying flat on the Bhū-maṇḍala as indeed *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* indeed describes it; and that our image of a globe in space should be taken as nothing but false propaganda straight from the special effects department of NASA? This would be my first question.

My second question to Śrīla Prabhupāda would be this: why does Śrīla Prabhupāda use the word *bhū-gola* to describe the Earth as a round planet? For example in this conversation of 1973:

Prabhupāda Yes, world is round. That is fact. Goloka. In Vedic literature it is *bhū-gola*, *jagad-aṇḍa*. These words are there. We can see also it is round, *jagad-aṇḍa*. The universe is round. And Goloka. Or *Bhū-gola*. *Bhū-gola*, the earth is round. So in the Vedic literatures... Therefore their knowledge is also imperfect because they do not refer to the Vedic literatures. It is already there. *Bhū-gola*. *Bhū* means the earth; *gola* means round. It is already there. And the geography's called, according to Sanskrit, it is called *Bhū-gola*. Long, long ago, before Galileo. So if the state is blind, he does not see whether he's talking right or wrong, then

havi candra raja gobi candra mantri (?). What can be done? That is going on. (Morning Walk, Dec 9, 1973, Los Angeles)

However, all references in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the round Earth such as *bhū-gola*, *bhū-maṇḍala*, *dharā-maṇḍala*, etc., all appear to be references to the great circular sphere of the Bhū-maṇḍala. In the story of Karadama Muni, for example, a description of his journey on the aerial mansion (*vimāna*) contains the word *bhū-gola*:

After showing his wife the globe of the universe (*prekṣayitvā bhuvo golamī*) and its different arrangements, full of many wonders, the great yogī Kardama Muni returned to his own hermitage.

In his purport to this verse Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

All the planets are here described as *gola*, round. Every planet is round, and each planet is a different shelter, just like islands in the great ocean. Planets are sometimes called *dvīpa* or *varṣa*. (SB 3.23.43)

The word *bhū-golasya* is also used in (SB 5.20.38) to describe the Bhū-maṇḍala. Here Śrīla Prabhupāda takes the word *bhū-gola* to describe the Earth as a round planet when the context seems to only indicate the greater Bhū-maṇḍala. Neither Bhārata-varṣa, nor any of its nine divisions are described as round ball-like globes. Bhārata-varṣa is otherwise described as being bow-shaped (from its position on the curved coastal area of Jambūdvīpa) and divided into nine areas of which our continents are one. Our Earth is described as being surrounded by Jambūdvīpa's salt water ocean, not outer space. Does it not seem, therefore, that the concept of a flat Earth lying on the salt water ocean is actually more consistent with the *Purāṇic* description of Bhārata-varṣa's location to Jambūdvīpa, than to NASA's depiction of a ball in space?

My third question to Śrīla Prabhupāda would be this: Śrīla Prabhupāda says in the above conversation of July 5th 1977 that we should settle the question of the Earth's shape by taking the version of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This is a very important statement in deciding the matter. Are we to understand from this that if it is clearly ascertained that the *Purāṇas* do indeed describe a flat Earth, and if the empirical science is found to support a flat Earth concept, will such a resolution stand above Śrīla Prabhupāda's other statements that Earth is a round planet?

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it states that Bhārata-varṣa is one of the regions of Jambudvipa which is an island surrounded by a salt ocean resting on the expanded flat

plane of Bhū-mandala. Whatever it is, it is not a description of a round globe rotating in space as depicted by NASA.

(2.7) Difficulties in Accepting a Flat Earth

The problem as I see for any devotee of Krishna who wishes to understand the subject of the flat Earth is:

(1) *Getting or taking the time to study the subject in detail.* On both sides of the many arguments that we humans contend in this world of duality, we generally argue from the platform of ignorance rather than the platform of knowledge of any given subject. Among conditioned souls, the motivating factor in argument is generally to exercise one's false ego over the other, and not to genuinely search for the truth of the subject matter in question. Considering these points, it is entirely predictable that the average programmed response to the idea of flat-Earth is a guffaw and a mocking look of incredulity. However, it takes a lot of time and interest to research any subject thoroughly and that includes a study of the flat Earth; so before dismissing the concept of the flat Earth out of hand, one should at least make some research into the arguments presented for an expanded flat Earth model. One may find to one's great surprise that the joke is on oneself; and that the greatest lie ever told is the one that convinced us all that we are standing on a ball-shaped Earth spinning in space.

For certain followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda, it may seem easier to dismiss the topic of the flat Earth as irrelevant, conspiratorial, or indeed a dangerous idea. However, taking Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's description that the Earth rests on the flat plane of Bhū-mandala, and taking Śrīla Prabhupāda's assertion that the 1969 Apollo moon landing (from which the first photographic images of Earth were supposedly sent) was a hoax, we have every reason to suspect the present depiction of the Earth as a globe. This is worthy of a serious investigation and discussion. As one can read from the various transcriptions of July 1977, the final depiction of Earth in the planetarium was left unsettled, and Śrīla Prabhupāda basically instructed his disciples to come to the proper understanding based on the version of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

(2) *Having the inclination to do so.* In the small amount of spare time that we have, we may prefer to do something less brain-taxing and controversial. Māyā has often tastier distractions which further eclipse our vision of the reality.

(3) *Having the courage to do so.* Who wants to argue the Earth is flat? Who wants to even hear that the Earth is part of the expanded flat plane of Bhū-maṇḍala? It flies in the face of images and reports from NASA and other government agencies over the last fifty years. Who wants to look like a fool? Knowledge of the subject is the key to presenting a reasonable and rational counter-argument to NASA's propaganda. But that requires

an interest in the subject, which in turn takes time, and inevitably involves arguing with people with views opposed to your own.

(4) *Having the sanction to do so.* How many temples will encourage a program for Krishna conscious devotees to research the moon hoax or a flat Earth? Indeed, does the International Society for Krishna Consciousness want to take on NASA at all? Certainly, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness wanted the cheating exposed, and the truth of Krishna's creation to be presented.

(5) *Having the purification to see reality as it is.*

I certainly can't claim to have the purification to see reality as it, but taking the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s straight forward description of Jambūdvīpa, and considering NASA's obvious false images of a globe shaped Earth floating in space, I have no reason at this point to discount the idea that the Earth is indeed flat. It is the idea most consistent with observation, and the one that makes most intellectual sense when weighing up the various arguments for a geo-centric or a heliocentric understanding of the world.

(2.8) Why Fake a Globe-shaped Earth?

Due to the appearance of Kali-yuga on Earth some 5,000 years ago, the Earth became quarantined and cut off from the rest of Bhū-maṇḍala. This is because the yugas only affect Bhārata-varṣa and not the other parts of Jambūdvīpa. In Kali-yuga, the *tamo-guṇa* or mode of ignorance becomes prominent and the Vedic knowledge of the universe is gradually withdrawn. Connection with larger land masses is gradually forgotten or regarded as mythological. The general ignorance and materialism prevailing in Kali-yuga is part of *māyā*'s arrangement to further facilitate the soul's illusion of a life devoid of God. In Kali-yuga the crude and base desires of the human beings are allowed free reign. Knowledge of the soul, God, and the creation is gradually covered over so that the more perverse aspects of material existence can be experienced, and their severe karmic reactions ignored by the materialistic people destined to take birth at this time. Knowledge and experience of God's wide creation along the Bhū-maṇḍala and throughout the universe is withdrawn and the expanded flat Earth is gradually replaced by such illusions as the globe model. The globe model is a spell-like speculation that literally traps one in a bubble—a prison planet floating alone in lifeless Godless empty space. Since there is no God, whoever controls the prison planet controls your being. Such are the fearful illusions that follow as a result of turning from God and the truth. The materialist is given over to the deceptions, untruths, and illusions created by atheistic agencies such as NASA. Such agencies are empowered by the Lord's own *māyā* potency to bewilder souls adverse to God consciousness. The deceivers, however, are themselves subject to the greater deception of *māyā*:

asuryā nāma te lokā
andhena tamasāvṛtāḥ
tāṁś te pretyābhigacchanti
ye ke cātmā-hano janāḥ

The killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets known as the worlds of the faithless, full of darkness and ignorance. (Śrī Īśopaniṣad, mantra 3)

The saṅkīrtana movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is a brief chance in the onward march of Kali-yuga for the soul to take advantage of the Vedic knowledge and to re-establish his eternal relationship with God. The Vedic planetarium is a very important project of the saṅkīrtana movement to enlighten the people in Earth's region of Bhārata-varṣa about their real position in the cosmos, and ultimately about their real home in the Kingdom of God.

(2.9) A Proposal for the Vedic Planetarium

The following is a conversation in which Śrīla Prabhupāda was asked about whether the Krishna consciousness movement should engage in exposing the cheating and deception of NASA's space missions:

Prabhupāda: Rascals, how they are cheating people.

Rūpānuga: Such a big hoax. They have spent billions of dollars for such a hoax.

Prabhupāda: Now you consider whether I am right or wrong. The moon planet is also Arizona. (laughs) All their business asset is there.

Rūpānuga: So one of the things we want to do is expose this cheating. Should we expose this kind of thing directly like this, or should we indirectly deal with it?

Prabhupāda: No, you do scientifically. I give you the hint. (laughter)
(Room Conversation, July 6, 1976, Washington D.C.)

When Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami proposed to Śrīla Prabhupāda about writing a book to expose the moon hoax Śrīla Prabhupāda answered in the affirmative:

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: I think that we should write a, we should publish a little book on this, Prabhupāda.

Prabhupāda: If you can.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Maybe one of the scientists.

Candanācārya: There are many scientists who agree.

Prabhupāda: Now our scientists are challenging, Svarūpa Dāmodara and others.

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa: Yes. They could scientifically publish a book.

Candanācārya: There are scientists in England who agree that they didn't go to the planet.

Prabhupāda: Huh?

Candanācārya: There are some scientists in England who agree with you that they did not go to the moon.

Prabhupāda: Yes, they did not. Simply propaganda.

(Morning Walk, June 4, 1976, Los Angeles)

In adherence to Śrīla Prabhupāda's wish, may I humbly suggest a proposal that part of the research department for the Vedic Planetarium is dedicated to:

- (1) 'Scientifically' exposing the moon landing and subsequent images of Earth from outer space as inauthentic and fraudulent. This should lead to a permanent

display within the planetarium itself that vindicates Śrīla Prabhupāda's claim that the moon landing was a hoax. All the groundwork of this expose has already been done by numerous parties and the information has only to be gathered and edited.

- (2) Researching and presenting arguments in favour of the flat Earth conception. This should also become part of a permanent display wherein phenomena such as eclipses, sunrise and sunset, seasons, etc., are explained from a flat Earth perspective. Again the science for such a presentation is now forthcoming and only has to be gathered and edited.
- (3) As part of the research for such an undertaking, and to add a little fun to life, the leading exponents of the Moon Landing conspiracy, the Flat Earth Society, as well as representatives of NASA, could be invited to Māyāpur to present their various arguments. This would create a huge sensation and media attraction for the Planetarium itself. It would create the biggest revolution in thinking since Copernicus himself.

(3.0) Conclusion

The concept of a flat Earth is a huge paradigm shift and raises many questions which I can't hope to answer here. For those interested, I refer the reader to the various websites, books, and documentaries available on-line which present evidence and arguments for the flat Earth concept. Perhaps a good introduction is Eric Dubay's *200 Proofs that Earth is not a Spinning Ball* which can be read on-line. A word of caution is necessary though in searching through the thousands of available videos debating the subject. Amidst the many compelling arguments presented for the flat Earth from various sources, there are also certain limitations and inevitable speculations (at least from the perspective of anyone who accepts the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the ultimate authority). It is difficult for advocates of the flat Earth, for example, to understand the exact shape and location of the flat Earth in relation to the rest of the universe. Where is its edge? What does it rest on? What lies beyond the boundaries of the flat Earth? The sun and moon are also placed much closer to the Earth than in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's* description. One therefore, has to exercise caution in reading through these arguments, appreciating that sincere as one may be in arguing for a flat Earth, one of the four defects of conditioned nature is the inevitability of making mistakes. Apart from that, there are many hundreds of sound arguments presented in favour of a flat Earth. Indeed, where the flat Earth advocates excel, is in demonstrating the impossibility of Earth being a round ball floating in space. Thus the strength of the arguments in these books and videos lies not in presenting what Earth looks like (which is highly speculative in the absence of an overall Vedic perspective) but in pointing out incongruities of the rotating globe-shaped Earth idea. Inspiring also is the courageous and revolutionary spirit present in those persons challenging the politics and spirit behind the round globe Earth concept presented first in the modern era by Copernicus and solidified recently by NASA.

The flat Earth concept is a huge and highly relevant internet debate happening at the moment (2015) and I believe Krishna has inspired and empowered it to coincide with the opening of the Māyāpur Vedic Planetarium. Many of the arguments presented by supporters of the flat Earth lend support to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's* description that Earth is flat land on a flat plane; it is not spinning in space like a ball. I feel we have much to learn from this debate that will aid in our own understanding of how to properly depict Earth according to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's* description.

Your servant Māyeśvara Dāsa