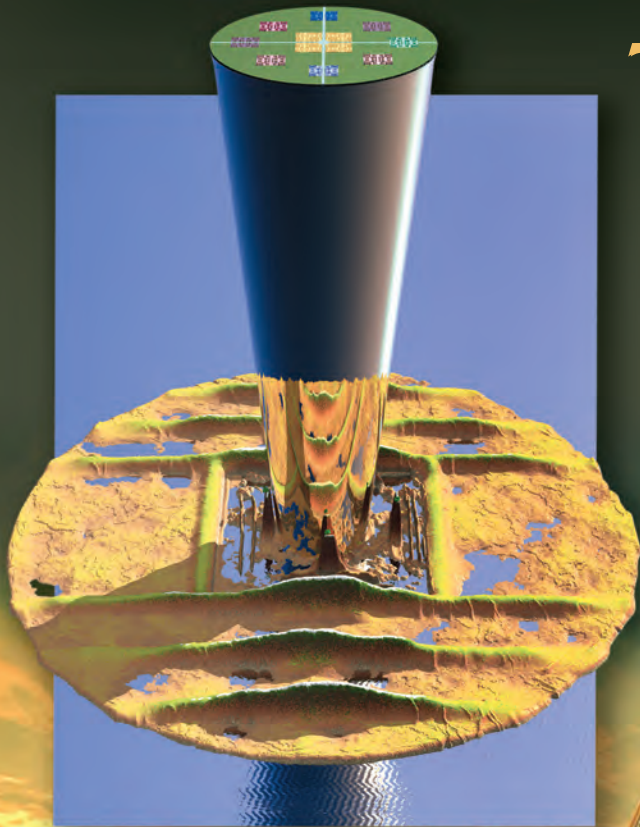


Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



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THE UNSEEN UNIVERSE

*A groundbreaking
museum of science – the
Vedic Planetarium –
seeks to reveal what the
eye cannot see.*



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CG art by Śrīṣa Dāsa

*A groundbreaking museum
of science – the Vedic
Planetarium – seeks to reveal
what the eye cannot see.*

by Yogeśvara Dāsa
(On behalf of the Temple of the Vedic
Planetarium Executive Committee)

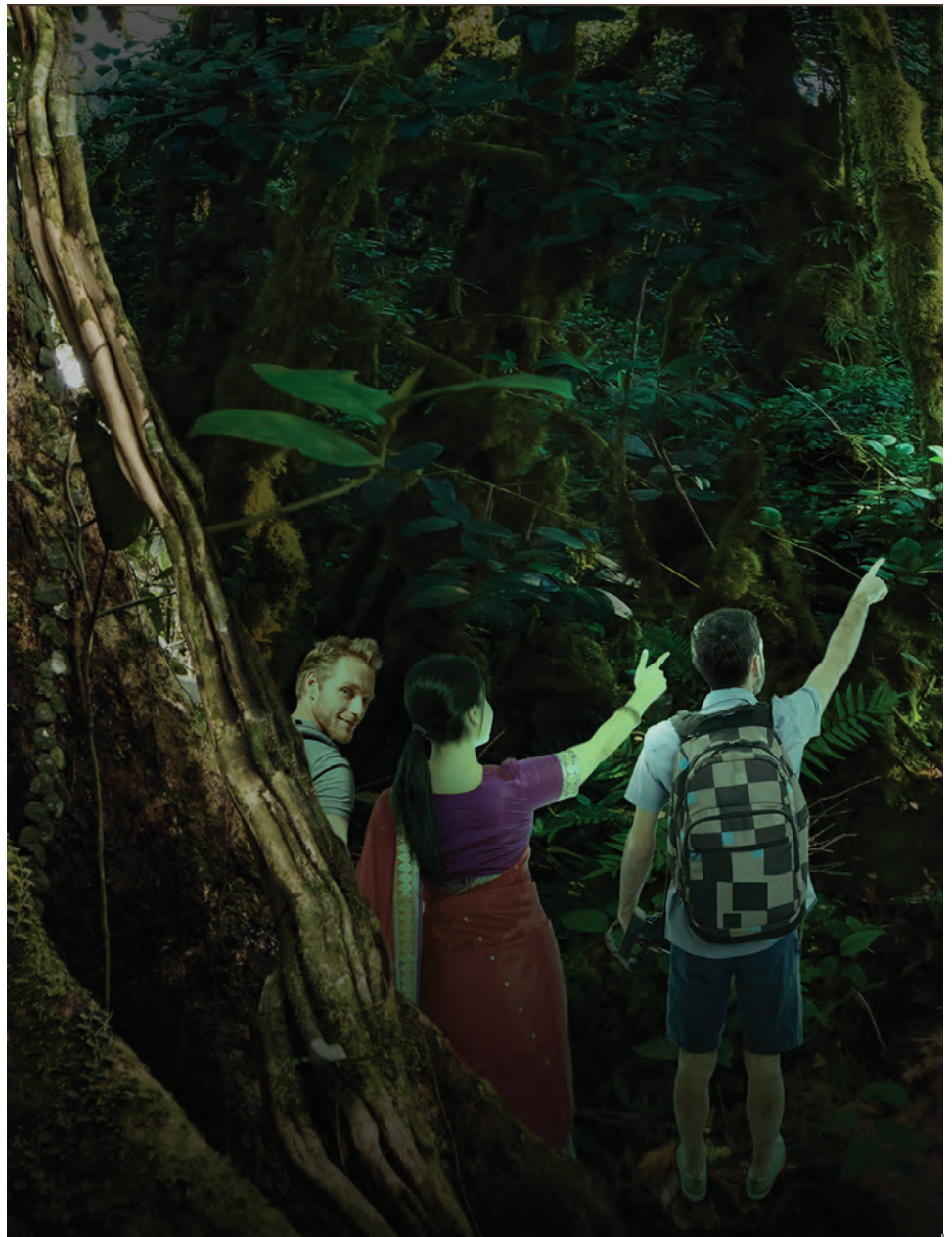
Illustrations by Alexey Klimenko,
Duncan Smith, and Nina Tara

The UNSEEN

In 2022 the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium (above) is scheduled to open in Mayapur, eighty miles north of Kolkata. The 200-foot-tall left wing of the TOVP is the Vedic Planetarium, dedicated to the cosmology of ancient India.

Forest Of Naimisha

Exhibits in the Vedic Planetarium will begin with a life-size recreation of a gathering of sages at the edge of Naimisha Forest that took place five thousand years ago. Kali-yuga, our current age of war and tragedy, had just begun, and the sages asked revered teacher Sūta Gosvāmī how humanity could be immunized against Kali's influence. What followed was Sūta's recitation of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, India's most revered Purāṇa, or history, which outlines the nature of consciousness, the purpose of life, the structure of the universe, yogic methods for ending the cycle of birth and death, and devotional practices that unite the soul with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Being, in His eternal abode.



AS VISITORS to India travel north by car from Kolkata, the landscape gradually shifts from urban sprawl to pastoral farmland. High-rise housing and industrial construction sites give way to a flat horizon of villages and rice paddies. Four hours and eighty miles later, visitors enter the district of Mayapur on the banks of the Ganges River, at the point of its confluence with the Jalangi. Here at Mayapur, in the early

sixteenth century, Lord Kṛṣṇa in His form as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu popularized the public chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare as the means for achieving realization of God in the current age.

Dominating the landscape of Mayapur is the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium (TOVP), a massive structure featuring three domes of steel-reinforced

concrete covered in robin's-egg blue tiles. The center dome rises more than 350 feet and covers an atrium large enough to accommodate 10,000 visitors.

When the TOVP officially opens in 2022, it will be a major step toward further establishing Mayapur as the capital of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, the spiritual movement begun by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Today, His movement is known around the

UNIVERSE



globe through the temples and programs of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (1896–1977). Śrīla Prabhupāda requested his followers to build the TOVP as an international attraction at the center of the ISKCON Mayapur campus. More than four million people visit the ISKCON Mayapur site each year. That number is expected to double when the TOVP opens.

The 200-foot-tall left wing of the TOVP is the Vedic Planetarium, history's first museum of ancient Indian cosmology. It will feature five levels of interactive exhibits, computer graphics, projection mapping, and on the top level a 75-foot-wide hemispherical dome theater. The Vedic Planetarium will introduce visitors to the Kṛṣṇa-centered – God-centered – vision of the cosmos described by ancient India's Sanskrit texts, in particular the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Based on the Bhāgavatam

Among India's many classical texts, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, or *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, holds a unique place for its breadth of content and public appeal. Its 18,000 verses include descriptions of the cycles of universal creation, maintenance, and destruction; an analysis of the components and functioning of material nature; biographies of men and women who have undertaken the journey to God; as well as an exposition of various yoga practices and the preeminence of *bhakti*, or devotional yoga. The *Bhāgavatam* is particularly popular for its descriptions of Kṛṣṇa – God in His ultimate personal form – and His various avatars.

While changes may occur in current plans for particular exhibits, the overall purpose of the Planetarium will remain the same: to illustrate the teachings of the *Bhāgavatam*, beginning with the foundational lesson that all living beings – plants,

fish, animals, humans, etc. – are eternal spirit souls, sparks of Kṛṣṇa, housed in material bodies. The *Bhāgavatam* describes that as sparks from a fire share the qualities of fire, living beings share Kṛṣṇa's qualities of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. Living beings also possess a degree of Kṛṣṇa's independence, or free will. Some be-

ings exercise their free will to live apart from Kṛṣṇa, and it is for these souls that the material universe comes into existence. The Supreme Being feels compassion for those who live apart from Him, and designed the universe for their spiritual benefit. The Vedic Planetarium will attempt to reveal that beneficent design and



the opportunities it affords for self-awareness and freedom from the cycle of birth and death. In his purport to 3.5.24 of the *Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “The Lord wanted to create the cosmic manifestation to give another chance to the conditioned souls who were dormant in forgetfulness. The cosmic manifesta-

tion gives the conditioned souls a chance to go back home, back to Godhead, and that is its main purpose.”

Under the influence of the stringent laws of material nature, souls in this world reincarnate again and again, residing in one body after another, in eight million species, until at last they are born in human form.

Visions of Material and Spiritual Universes

Opposite page: Ordinary human observation, no matter how greatly enhanced by telescopes, satellites, and other instruments, cannot see past the outermost reaches of the universe. Exhibits in the Vedic Planetarium will seek to illustrate how yoga, meditation, and study of scripture, coupled with devotional practices, can reveal what lies beyond the limits of human perception.

Left: The material universe, which is the object of scientific study, represents only one-quarter of the creation. The unlimited spiritual world makes up the greater three-quarters. In that spiritual world, the topmost planet, resembling the whorl of a giant lotus flower, is called Goloka Vṛndāvana. This is the abode of Kṛṣṇa, the original Personality of Godhead. From Kṛṣṇa’s spiritual body emanates an effulgence called brahmajyoti. Innumerable spiritual planets float in the brahmajyoti. Four-armed Viṣṇu expansions of Kṛṣṇa reign over each of these planets, which are home to liberated souls who live with the Supreme Being in ever-fresh exchanges of loving devotion. Collectively this expansive spiritual realm is called Vaikuṅṭha, “the place of no anxiety.”

Like a cloud in the spiritual sky, the material creation exists to accommodate souls who choose to live apart from Kṛṣṇa. In this illustration, Śrīla Prabhupāda is shown translating and commenting on the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which reveals the method (bhakti-yoga) for reviving the soul’s original spiritual consciousness. At the moment when their souls leave their bodies, people who have become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious (God conscious) enter Vaikuṅṭha and never return to the material world of birth and death.



At this point in the evolutionary cycle, free will begins. The *Bhāgavatam* thus describes evolution as the step-by-step progress of souls from less evolved species to human form. With the advanced intelligence afforded by the human form, conditioned souls may begin inquir-

other than self-perpetuation and the gratification of biological impulses. The *Bhāgavatam* presents a radically different definition: Consciousness is a symptom of the soul, analogous to heat or light as a symptom of fire; and the purpose of existence is to know ourselves beyond biological

sages gathered at the Naimisha Forest to question the revered teacher Sūta Gosvāmī about how to immunize humanity against Kali's influence.

"O sage," a spokesman for the sages asked, "what have you ascertained to be the ultimate good for the people of the forthcoming Age



ing, "Who am I? Where have I come from? Where am I going?"

Underlying these fundamental inquiries is a mystery that has been pondered since ancient times. What is consciousness? Consciousness allows us to experience feelings, emotions, and desires, and know that we exist. Yet the scientific community has reached no consensus on the origin of consciousness. Current thinking suggests that consciousness emerges from complex computations among brain neurons and their synaptic connections, a spontaneous interaction of molecules and biochemical processes. By this mechanistic view, there is little purpose to life

functions, as eternal beings in loving relationship with God. It is this perspective on the indestructible nature of consciousness and life's higher purpose that will be addressed by exhibits in the Vedic Planetarium.

Setting of the *Bhāgavatam*

How the *Bhāgavatam* came into being will be a fascinating introductory exhibit. According to references within the text, five thousand years ago the world entered Kali-yuga, the current age of darkness, of confusion and quarrel, fourth in a cycle of ages that repeats throughout the lifespan of the universe. At the onset of Kali,

of Kali? O learned one, in the coming age lives will be short, quarrelsome, disturbed. Please tell us the essence of all wisdom by which people's hearts may be appeased. Kindly explain the teachings imparted by previous masters, which uplift by being spoken and heard."¹

What followed was Sūta's recitation of the *Bhāgavatam*, in which he outlined, among many other topics, devotion to the Supreme Being as fulfillment of the human mission. Sūta faithfully recited teachings he had heard from his teacher, Śukadeva, who in turn had imparted to Sūta what he learned from a succession of teachers dating back before

recorded history. In India, over the generations, the teachings passed down in this lineage of teachers (*paramparā*) have inspired political leaders in their approach to law and administration, spiritual figures and philosophers in their commentaries, and artists in their performances and

lineage, coupled with wholehearted dedication to spiritual practices. It is a provocative notion: knowledge not as the product of sophisticated research, but as a gradual awakening of the soul through active devotion to God. The highest stage of this awakening is full God realization.

Visitors will be invited to position themselves in front of a mirrored wall. Looking at their own reflection, they will see themselves transform, grow older, younger, change from one sex to another, from one race to another, in a series of personalized “reincarnations” that illustrate



creations. Yet despite the prominence of the *Bhāgavatam* in Indian culture, there has never been, before now, a museum dedicated to its explanation of consciousness and cosmology. No matter how powerful our tools of magnification and no matter how clever our scientific theories, the *Bhāgavatam* declares, nature’s deepest secrets will always remain beyond our comprehension. Limited sensory perception and intellectual conjecture cannot grasp that which can be known only through revelation. A full perception of reality can be achieved through the blessings of a self-realized spiritual master who represents the *paramparā*

Entering Naimisha Forest – And More

Visitors entering the Planetarium, as currently designed, will walk through a re-creation of the Naimisha Forest and observe sages hearing the recitation by Sūta Gosvāmī. This opening exhibit is intended to establish the historicity of what is to follow. Visitors then move by escalator to Level One, where the question addressed is “Who am I?” Exhibits for this first level will offer evidence that all living beings are imperishable sparks of the Supreme Being and that consciousness is not a byproduct of the brain.

Changing Bodies

Level One of the Vedic Planetarium addresses the question “Who am I?” and the first exhibit is designed to give visitors a visceral sense of themselves as nonmaterial beings: souls who inhabit temporary material bodies. Seeing themselves change from man to woman, from young to old, from Indian to European, or white to black, visitors will know they are seeing a computerized simulation. Yet by combining entertainment with a photo-realistic sensation of reincarnating, this exhibit is intended to prompt a rethinking of identity.



how life exists separate from the physical body. Other exhibits on this first level may use similar morphing technology to animate the process of evolution – not an evolution of bodies as proposed by current scientific theory, but an evolution of consciousness as the same soul reincarnates millions of times until at last achieving human form. Attention on this level will be given to near-death experiences and other accounts suggestive of consciousness existing

separate from the body and brain.

Level Two is dedicated to answering the question “Where am I?” Exhibits on this level will describe for visitors that, as eternal souls, we are not a part of the material creation and that our true and original home exists outside the universe. These exhibits will include a model of upper, middle, and lower planetary systems and explanations of the atmospheric conditions and forms of life found on each. As a middle planet, our

Earth contains both heavenly and hellish conditions. It is consequently well suited to the spiritual quest. Level Two exhibits will take visitors inside these planetary systems to meet their respective residents and presiding divinities.

Level Two will also outline the karmic criteria that determine a person’s destination after death. This vision of the soul’s evolution through millions of bodies emphasizes the rarity and privilege of hu-



man life, which is the opportunity to end the cycle of birth and death. If that rare opportunity is wasted, the soul risks falling down again into lower forms and repeating the evolutionary process, prolonging its imprisonment in the material world.

**The Purpose Behind
The Analysis**

The question arises, why would the *Bhāgavatam*, a text dedicated to love

Evolution Through the Species

Level Two addresses the question, “Where am I?” One exhibit expands on the changing body experience to include birth in other than human form and on other planets. Thousands of years before Darwin, the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam outlined an evolutionary process, not of bodies but of consciousness. Those souls who enter material creation move up and down this evolutionary scale, from elementary species (bacteria, plants, insects) to more advanced species (fish, birds, reptiles, mammals), and finally to human form. In human bodies, depending on the quality of their actions and behavior, souls may evolve even higher – to inhabit bodies of demigods and other elevated beings on other worlds – or devolve back down to lower-than-human species.



of God, give so much attention to an analytical description of the cosmos? The *Bhāgavatam* answers that love of God unfolds in gradual stages, and that the preliminary stage is to appreciate God in the creation we can observe. Properly guided meditation on the majestic material universe can evoke moral, intellectual, and devotional qualities that are prerequisite to realizing more personal forms of

the Supreme Being. “When the mind is fixed upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His external feature made of the material modes of nature,” the *Bhāgavatam* (5.16.3) states, “it is brought to the platform of pure goodness. In that transcendental position, one can understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who in His subtler form is self-effulgent and beyond the modes of nature.”

One contemporary *Bhāgavatam* scholar suggests that studying Vedic cosmology “is a form of yoga, performed by holding a divinized vision of the cosmos in one’s mind. . . . Reading or hearing the *Bhāgavatam*’s teachings on the natural world is meant to transform the receiver of the text from a soul bound to the cycle of birth and death to a devotee infused with a sense of . . . Kṛṣṇa’s



Viṣṇu and Brahmā

Level Three asks, “Where am I going?” and contains exhibits that compare and contrast the material and spiritual worlds. The third level begins with the Bhāgavatam’s explanation of how the universe comes into being. Before the moment of creation, the Supreme Being assumes a gigantic form known as Mahā-Viṣṇu, who reclines in an ocean of gross and subtle energies. From the pores of His skin, Mahā-Viṣṇu exhales seedling universes, like bubbles that gradually inflate. Viṣṇu enters into each of these nascent universes and reclines on the body of Śeṣa-nāga, a thousand-headed serpent. In this state of repose, Viṣṇu sprouts a lotus flower from His navel. From the whorl of the lotus, Brahmā, the first created being, appears. It is Brahmā who will engineer the appearance of millions of species on planets throughout the universe. Souls will then inhabit these species according to their karmic disposition. By positioning the story of creation at the start of Level Three, the Planetarium will seek to inform visitors that the material universe, like our material bodies, is neither permanent nor our natural place of residence. As eternal souls, we belong to another, eternal nature.

beauty and power expressed in the world.”²²

Level Three of the Vedic planetarium will present a brief history of everything, from the dawn of creation to the soul’s ultimate journey out of the universe and into the eternal realm. The opening exhibit on Level Three will be a reenactment of creation, during which the Supreme Being in His gigantic form known as Mahā-Viṣṇu reclines in an ocean of creative energies. From the pores of His skin emanate tiny bubbles, which expand and become separate universes. Viṣṇu again enters each universe and reclines on waters that fill the lower half. From His navel sprouts a giant lotus. In the stem of this lotus reside the living beings who await birth in the material world. Once the universe is set in motion, Viṣṇu enters as Paramātmā, or Super-soul, the witness within, and throughout their stay in the material world, through millions of births, all

Model Chandelier

Śrīla Prabhupāda envisioned the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium as an emotionally stirring and esthetically beautiful experience. He proposed that this could be achieved by showing all the spiritual and material worlds in a giant chandelier suspended from the temple’s center dome. As currently envisioned, this cosmological chandelier will hang down more than 200 feet and weigh 10,000 pounds. To understand the many components of the chandelier, a twenty-foot replica will be incorporated into Level Three of the Vedic Planetarium. Video viewing stations positioned around the periphery of this scaled-down model will explain the chandelier’s many planetary systems along with their presiding deities and the prerequisites for living there.





conditioned souls are accompanied in their hearts by this form of God who offers direction and guidance for their ultimate liberation from birth and death.

The Sanskrit literature describes the universe in two fundamental ways. One, given in texts known as the *Siddhāntas*, corresponds to the universe as we see it. The other, given in the *Bhāgavatam*, describes regions of space imperceptible by material tools of observation. Exhibits on Level Three will compare and contrast these two perspectives, conveying the sophistication of Vedic cosmology, the limitations of empiric observation, and the excitement of alternative explanations of creation.

All of Existence Depicted In a Chandelier

Hanging from the central dome of the TOVP will be a massive computer-operated detailed model of the cosmic manifestation as described in the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The model will take the form of a chandelier depicting material and spiritual realms. This elaborate 200-foot-tall, 100-foot-wide model of Vedic cosmology, projected to weigh more than 10,000 pounds, will illustrate the orbits and movements of the stars and planets, the various Vedic divinities, and the many planetary systems, including the luminous heavenly realms of the material world, leading to the edge of the universe and then out into the vast eternal spiritual realm.

Level Three of the Vedic Planetarium will feature a 20-foot-tall replica of this elaborate chandelier, small enough to permit visitors to look more closely at its contents. Exhibits will show that calculations offered in the 5,000-year-old *Bhāgavatam* – such as the distances between planets – enable us to scientifically explain the causes of seasonal changes, eclipses, and phases of the moon. The similarity between

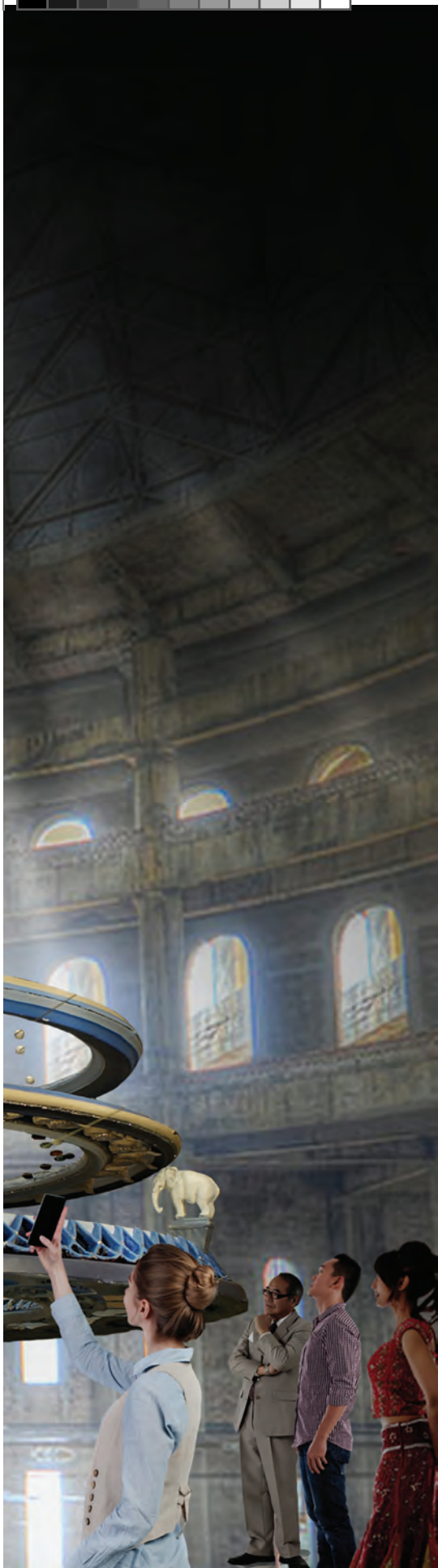
these ancient calculations and those of recent science are striking.

Headsets will offer visitors recorded explanations of the chandelier's component parts, while video viewing stations will enlarge details of the chandelier such as the layout of the various worlds: Goloka-dhāma, the highest world, Kṛṣṇa's own abode; Hari-dhāma, the vast expanse of spiritual world where Viṣṇu expansions of Kṛṣṇa reign; Maheśa-dhāma, on the border between the spiritual and material worlds, where demigod Śiva and his followers dwell; and Devī-dhāma, the material world, comprising all the material planetary systems. In each strata of creation there exist forms of life, some higher than humans and some lower, and these will also be explained in the model-chandelier exhibit.

The top floor of the Planetarium will feature a 275-seat auditorium and 70-foot-wide curved screen. Here, in a full-dome immersive cinematic experience, visitors will watch a twenty-minute special F/X film that will take them on a nonstop voyage from Earth to the edge of the universe using a single, unbroken movement created with spectacular CGI technology. This epic journey across the cosmos will escort spectators past the moon, past neighboring planets, out of the solar system, into outer space, out of the shell surrounding the universe – and into the eternal, self-effulgent sky that culminates in Goloka Vṛndāvana, the abode of Kṛṣṇa. While scientific textbook descriptions tend to portray space as empty and uninhabited, a cold mechanical wasteland, this filmed journey through the universe will depict something quite different: a miraculous universe in which every planet teems with extraordinary forms of life and purpose.

The Planetarium Team

Heading this ambitious project is a team of *Bhāgavatam* scholars working in tandem with scientists,



architects, sculptors, computer-graphics artists, and senior Vaiṣṇava devotees. In development is an institute staffed by teams of devotee-scientists with expertise in hard sciences such as physics, cosmology, astronomy, biology, biochemistry, and neurology, as well as more theoretical fields such as consciousness studies. The Planetarium theater will be dedicated to one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's first scientist-disciples, Professor Richard L. Thompson (Sadāpūta Dāsa, 1947–2008). The

dedication acknowledges Sadāpūta's groundbreaking comparative studies of the *Bhāgavatam* and contemporary scientific thought, which inform much of the background to Planetarium exhibits.

Like the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium itself, the idea for an advisory body of devotee-scientists was conceived by Śrīla Prabhupāda and outlined by him in discussions and writings between 1973 and 1977 (the year he passed away). From the outset, his thoughts on how to visu-

alize the *Bhāgavatam*'s cosmology in the physical space of a science museum were well formed. In a letter dated November 14, 1976, Prabhupāda wrote, "The [Planetarium] model will depict . . . the lower planetary systems, the earthly [middle] system . . . the upper planetary system . . . beginning from the sun, showing . . . Vishnu [and the] Garbhodaka ocean, the seven coverings of the universe . . . impersonal brahmajyoti, Vaikuntha-loka with the various Vishnu-murtis, [leading



to] Goloka Vrindavana. This model . . . will be engineered to suspend from the structure of the dome and rotate according to the real movement of the planets. . . . It will be a glorious exhibition of India's Vedic culture that will attract visitors from all over the world."

Will visitors unfamiliar with Vedic cosmology be able to relate to such fantastic displays? Prabhupāda replied that the litmus test for the project's success would be that anyone visiting the Vedic Planetarium

should conclude that the *Bhāgavatam* is an eloquent, inspiring blueprint to the wonders of God's creation and feel motivated to take up devotional service. On a morning walk in Mayapur, February 27, 1976, he said, "[Visitors] will come to see the civilization, the philosophical culture, the religious culture by practical demonstration. . . . It will be a unique thing in the world."

Prabhupāda began his translation and commentary of the *Bhāgavatam* long before leaving India, and after

his arrival in the United States in 1965 he continued to rise early each morning to write. Despite constant travel, between 1965 and 1977 he produced thirty additional volumes of the *Bhāgavatam*. During his final days, he was too weak to sit comfortably but not too ill to continue his translations and commentaries. His staff of Sanskrit scholars and editors recorded his dictations as he lay in his bed, whispering into a microphone held inches from his lips.

Prabhupāda's commentaries are filled with practical, commonsense explanations of esoteric subjects, yet there remain vast, perhaps unbridgeable differences between the *Bhāgavatam*'s perspective on the universe and that of modern science. Still, Prabhupāda's explanations clarify why those differences exist. It is primarily because most of science does not allow room for transcendent causes, and in particular how a life of devotion can lead to deeper perceptions of reality.

The Universal Form

In the Bhagavad-gīta, Śrī Kṛṣṇa poetically describes how He can be perceived in nature. "Of luminaries," He declares, "I am the radiant sun. Of heavenly bodies I am the moon, of bodies of water the ocean, of purifiers the wind. Of subduers I am time. Of secret things I am silence. . . ." In memorable language, He offers a meditation on the natural world as His viraṭ-rūpa, or universal form. Among seasons, Kṛṣṇa adds, He is flower-bearing spring, and of stationary things the Himalayas. The Bhāgavatam says that appreciating the natural world as an incarnation of God is a prerequisite to realizing God in person, as displayed in Vaikuṅṭha, the spiritual world. Designers of the Vedic Planetarium have envisioned a universal form exhibit that will inspire visitors to rethink their relationship with the earth and discover that respect for nature is an essential part of devotional practice.



This approach to the quest for truth as an act of self-surrender to God radically redefines the very sense of what is “scientific.” Prabhupāda appreciated the practical side of science, but he decried those scientists who exaggerated their ability to understand consciousness or the universe through empiric experimentation. He went so far as to call such presumption “dangerous,” as it misleads people into believing that science is sufficient for knowing who and what we are and understanding the workings and purpose of the universe. The *Bhāgavatam* proposes that the universe of scientific experience, the universe of stars, planets, and galaxies, is essentially an interesting but superficial side of creation. The important parts – the soul and the eternal realm that is the soul’s ultimate destination – are inaccessible by material observation. Another perspective is required. “Kṛṣṇa consciousness,” the *Bhāgavatam* (4.29.69) states, “means constantly associating with the Supreme Personality of Godhead in such a mental state that the devotee can observe the cosmic manifestation exactly as the Supreme Personality of Godhead does.” To see the universe as God sees it: that succinctly describes the purpose of the Vedic Planetarium.

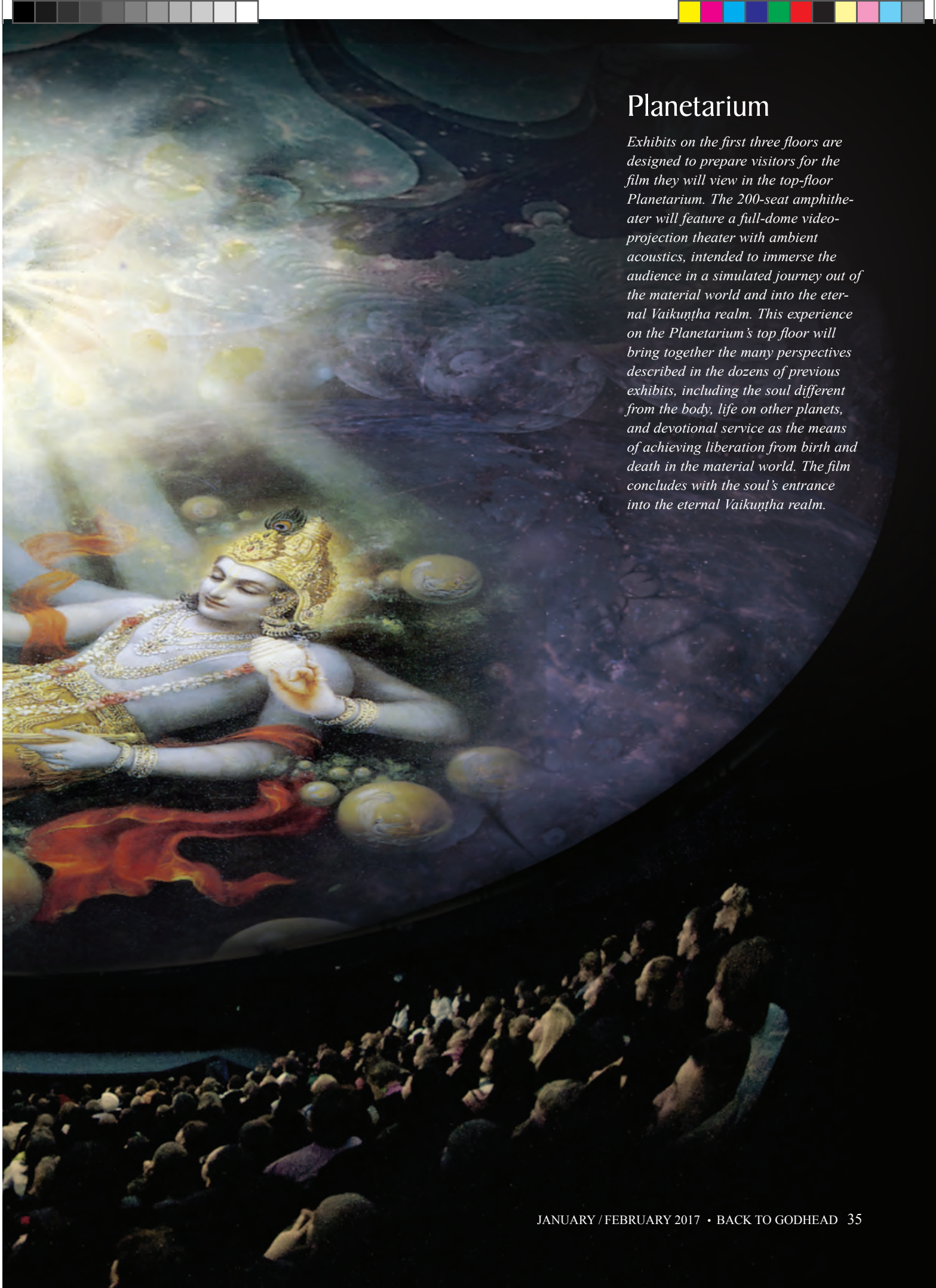
Prabhupāda never claimed exclusive credit for revealing the wisdom of the *Bhāgavatam*. With a humility that characterized his mission, he always acknowledged the teachings of his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Goswami, and those of the Vaiṣṇava sages of history. Still, he created an unprecedented plan for bringing those teachings to the attention of the world through the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium, and for that followers are justified in honoring him as an unprecedented God-realized pioneer who permanently reshaped our perceptions of the cosmos. 🌸

Yogeśvara Dāsa (Joshua M. Greene) was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1970. He retired in 2013 after nine years in the Hofstra University Department of Religion and Philosophy. Since 2007 he has led a weekly Bhagavad-gītā workshop at Jivamukti Yoga School in New York City. His latest book is Swami in a Strange Land: How Krishna Came to the West. For more information: www.atma.org.

NOTES

1. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto 1, Chapter 1
2. Jonathan B. Edelman, “Cosmology: Dialogues on Natural Theology,” in *The Bhāgavata Purāṇa: Sacred Text and Living Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), p. 49





Planetarium

Exhibits on the first three floors are designed to prepare visitors for the film they will view in the top-floor Planetarium. The 200-seat amphitheater will feature a full-dome video-projection theater with ambient acoustics, intended to immerse the audience in a simulated journey out of the material world and into the eternal Vaikunṭha realm. This experience on the Planetarium's top floor will bring together the many perspectives described in the dozens of previous exhibits, including the soul different from the body, life on other planets, and devotional service as the means of achieving liberation from birth and death in the material world. The film concludes with the soul's entrance into the eternal Vaikunṭha realm.