

# The Continuity of the Avatāra-Līlā

Svāmī Sadānanda Dāsa

[Into English, notes and © Kid Samuelsson 2007]

I. Each līlā of each individual avatāra appears successively and continuously on each individual earth in each individual universe (system of worlds<sup>1</sup>). The sequence of the appearance of avatāras on one particular earth is related to the geological age of this earth and its historical evolution.

The countless universes, each and every one with its own earth, are in different phases of their geological age. A certain avatāra's līlā, which has been enacted on one earth, immediately takes place on another earth, in another universe, which is exactly at the same evolutionary stage as the universe, in which this avatāra's līlā was enacted the moment before. Each individual avatāra's līlā consequently appears or becomes visible in unbroken continuity, as long as there are universes<sup>2</sup>.

In the śāstram-s the following example is given: Just as the beams of the sun successively in an unbroken course touch the different places of the earth, one after the other, each individual avatāra "touches" the different earths of the innumerable universes, one after the other (i.e. he appears there).

Another image for this, which the śāstram-s use, is the "alāta-cakram". By "alāta-cakram" they refer to the fact that a burning torch that is set in a quick circling motion forms a continuous circle of light. If one theoretically saw *one* individual avatāra's līlā from the centre of *all* universes, how it manifests in the different universes, one could, in correspondence to this "alāta-cakram", see the "līlā-cakram" of this *one* avatāra.

The līlā of each avatāra forms such a "līlā-cakram", which, in correspondence to the nature of the individual avatāra, is more or less intensive. In this connection one should consider the following: The līlā of each avatāra is not to be understood in the sense of a circus, which after the end of the "show" leaves one universe in

---

<sup>1</sup> Brahmāṇḍa.

<sup>2</sup> I.e. in all eternity.

order to start its “show” in the next one. The avatāra and his līlā is cit and only appear to be confined to time and space. Each specific moment of the avatāra-līlā, which has just passed on this earth, already appears in sequence on the earth of the next universe. This means, for example: When Kṛṣṇa, shortly after His birth on one earth, just has given His first cry “AUM̐”, then, in the same situation, He now gives just this cry on the earth in another universe. In other words: Each avatāra has innumerable prakāśa-s, i.e. multiple forms of Existence, which are identical with Himself and are present on the earths in the different universes in successive situations of the līlā.

The līlā of each individual avatāra, which manifests in the different universes according to a līlā-cakram, is nitya, i.e. in all respects eternal.

II. Each individual avatāra’s līlā is not only eternal (nitya) in the sense of this līlā-cakram, however. From the point of view of man, who is confined to think in terms of time and space, the līlā of each avatāra *seems to be* an historical event with a beginning and an end. In reality, however, the līlā of each avatāra is not historical, i.e. historical in the sense of having a beginning and an end<sup>3</sup>. Quite apart from the movement of this līlā-cakram, in other words the continuity of this līlā in other universes, the līlā is also eternal in relation to one and the same universe. Even when human beings in general no longer perceive the līlā, it continuously goes on, and more exactly, on the cit-plane of the eternal cit-realm, which is hidden for the outsiders by the geographical landscape. For example: “Vraja”, the eternal cit-realm of the līlā of Kṛṣṇa, appears in the geographical district of Vraja and pretends to be merely a geographical landscape. Then the līlā becomes manifest and visible there. When the līlā is brought to an end, this eternal cit-realm [once again] becomes invisible [to human beings in general], but could, to the same extent as the līlā, which is present in this realm, even after a thousand years be experienced by a bhakta, who is [physically] present in the geographical Vraja, if the ātmā of this bhakta has been granted the necessary power of Knowledge<sup>4</sup>. Even today, such a bhakta can experience Kṛṣṇa’s līlā as directly

---

<sup>3</sup> It has neither a beginning nor an end. It is eternal. Its historicity is just apparent, as it only becomes visible and again invisible in time and space.

<sup>4</sup> Premabhakti.

present, as it in fact always is. Consequently, he does not have to concentrate on the eternally and continuously appearing līlā in other universes.

III. The eternity of the līlā, however, is not exhausted in the līlā-cakram and the generally non-visible līlā-realm on earth. In the realm of God, called Vaikuṅṭha, which never appears in any universe, each līlā of each individual avatāra is uninterruptedly enacted. When a universe at the end of its history dissolves completely, then the existing cit-realm of the līlā on earth and its corresponding līlā disappear, and they become united with Vaikuṅṭha and its corresponding līlā.

This threefold eternity of the līlā does by no means imply that all the details of the threefold forms of Existence of the līlā simply are identical. It is not a question of a threefold recurrence of the same thing; it is only a question of a structural identity. Each and every one of these three forms of the līlā has singularities of its own and is always new and different.