

# The Multitude of Divine Realms of the ONE

(From Vāmandās' book on Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya)

Into English Mario Windish and Bengt Lundborg  
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Man's comprehension has access to the idea of different infinite Divine realms only in a successive manner, not in a simultaneous way. In its totality it is inconceivable (*acintya*<sup>1</sup>). According to the *bhakti-śāstrams* and the *līlā-bibliography*, above all the works of Sanātana, Rūpa, Raghunātha, Jīva Gosvāmī of the Caitanya-school, one should think of the infinite realm of eternal existence-knowledge-joy (*sat-cit-ānanda*) as a sphere, having no end in any of its dimensions, neither inwards, nor outwards, but with an infinite number of cross-sections. Simultaneously, this "sphere" is the infinite realm of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, Goloka-Vṛndāvana, the infinite realm Dvārakā, the infinite realm Vaikuṅṭha of Nārāyaṇa-Lakṣmī, the infinite realm Ayodhyā of Rāma and Sītā, the infinite realm of Śiva and Pārvatī, etc. God's realm is not one realm, but countless realms, each of them a complete Divine infinity (of different degrees of intensity). All these realms are located at the same place. Still, the events in one of the realms are not in any way disturbed by the simultaneous events in the other Divine realms. The laws of worldly mechanics are not valid there; two, three... an infinite number of things can be at the same place. Kṛṣṇa can be the child and at the same time the boy or youth, cowherd-boy, warrior, royal hero, but without being limited either by space or time in any of these different modes of being. His realm, His countless realms, His eternal co-players, the events in each of these eternal infinite realms, everything is simultaneously there (*sarva-vyāpi*), completely encompassing everything in time and space, to such a degree that no space or time outside of Him is left over.

The infinite realm of Divine omnipotence of Nārāyaṇa and Lakṣmī is called Vaikuṅṭha. The very essence of all realms of Divinity, however, is also *vaikuṅṭha*, i.e. without break (*vi-kuntha*); there time does not split painfully at every moment into past and present. There eternal presence prevails. The Sanskrit word for time, *kāla*, is derived from the root *kal*, to drive, to push on. Just like a butcher without pity drives a herd of cattle to the slaughterhouse, so the mighty power of time drives all living entities irresistibly towards death, starting from the light-glimmering devas, with lifetimes of millions of years, to the insignificant worm and insect. But time in the eternally omnipresent realms

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<sup>1</sup> *Acintya* = "Only cognizable through the realization of the unrestricted import of the *Shastrams*." (Shridhara in *Vishnu-Purana-tika* I,3,2)

of God is not of such nature. There time and space are not lords but servitors of all that happens, they are of the nature of cit-śakti, they contract and extend, as it best serves the hidden Divine course of events.

One of the names of the innermost of all Divine realms (Goloka-Vṛndāvana) is Vraja. The name Vraja means: For all eternity one can stride (vraj) without ever coming to an end.

Between Kṛṣṇa and His co-players in each and every realm there is a relationship of acintya-bhedābheda, i.e. in an inconceivable way they are parted and not-parted, different and not-different, separated and never separated. And in each of these realms there is again a countless multitude of appearances of the ONE, manifestations of an infinite number of Kṛṣṇas and of Kṛṣṇa's eternal companions, where none of these manifestations interferes with the other; although each Kṛṣṇa and each of His companions are omniscient, still one Kṛṣṇa is not aware of the other Kṛṣṇa identical with Him, nor is any particular companion of Kṛṣṇa aware of the other companion identical with him.

All these events become even more unfathomable as many a bhakta, serving God, is simultaneously present in many of the Divine realms at the same time. Moreover, some of them sometimes wander from one Divine realm to another, or – like Nārada – from the earth to one of the Divine realms.

When the ātmā of a bhakta still living in this world directly meets Bhagavān – Who is eternally omnipresent – because Bhagavān has become attracted by the particular kind of premabhakti of His bhakta and has made Himself visible; when the bhakta thus has been carried into the cit-cosmos of this sphere, then he finds himself on one of the infinite cross-sections of the sphere, e.g. in front of Kṛṣṇa in His eternal form of a most lovely child – Kṛṣṇa is then surrounded by specific eternal companions and the bhakta now serves Him in the form of the eternal child in the realm of Divine loveliness and beauty and playful exuberance. Another bhakta endeavouring to attain the majestic aspect of Divinity and wanting to render loving service there, will find himself in the realm of Divine omnipotence of Nārāyaṇa and serve Him in that realm.

A non-bhakta, however, in place of this sphere experiences an accumulation of astronomical systems of matter and there finds the laws of time and space.