



Nandi Sanctuary

News and Views

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Our Journey with Cows

By Radha Sundari dd
From Lithuania to Mayapur...
Mother and Daughter become servants
of Surabhi Gotra



Our journey begins in Lithuania, the country where I was born. We were living in the North east of the Country, near a small town called Rokiskis. For some time I had been a devotee. In Rokiskis there also lived devotees who had a cow named Smalsute. At this time Smalsute was pregnant and near her time for giving birth. But, recently she had been injured on the side of her stomach. It was a wound made by a bull's horn and it was not doing well, showing signs of major infection, daily becoming worse.

One day it was time for her calf to be born. We were worried because of this infected wound. Her calf was born normally, but immediately after Smalsute completely collapsed. She was not even able to lift her head. It was not even possible for her calf, Nandi, to take milk. We all could see that Smalsute was dying. The calf was in great distress.

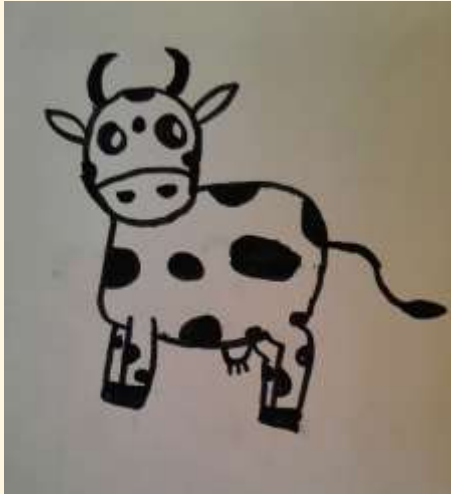
We were also in great distress. It seemed hopeless.

Whether in happiness or distress, a devotee remembers Krsna. This is our natural reaction. It did not seem an auspicious time for Smasulte to leave her body. Her calf needed her and we loved her. So, I prayed fervently to Krsna to please save the life of this Mother Cow, for the wellbeing of her calf: "Whatever pious activity I have done, please give the result to this cow and let her live. I promise that I will chant all my 16 rounds every day. Never less." Shortly after this she got up and her calf was able to take milk from mother. We were so happy! Krsna had taken care of His cow and her little calf. Later the Veterinarian was called. She was given proper medicine. And all became well. But there is more to this story.

In my prayer I had promised to chant ALL sixteen rounds daily...Is it not usually understood that a devotee will do this? Yes, but for the past half year, I was struggling with chanting. I was a mother raising my child alone. Her care and all I had to do to maintain our life together was so overwhelming that I frequently could not chant all my required number of rounds. I felt very bad, but I could not get beyond this problem. The day after my prayer I chanted 16 rounds with no difficulty! This came from the blessing of Smalsute. It seemed like someone had transformed my tongue. Chanting became easy and sweet... and not just for that day. Her blessing is still with me.

There has never been any doubt for me that this enthusiasm for chanting has been the blessing of Smalsute.

Having received the blessings of serving this cow and her calf, it was natural that I wanted to have my own cow, to be able to serve Mother Cow personally. I began to search for a cow that needed a home. One lady had. Her cow was beautiful with a big milk bag, and she was well taken care of. However, one



elderly lady also contacted me. She had a cow, who was not in the best condition. The lady was really too old to take proper care. And the cow kept running away from her into the barn. She pleaded with me to take her. It is not difficult to imagine what would have been the fate of this old cow if we did not take her. My daughter, Sita, instantly fell in love with her and wanted so much to save her. So we brought her home. Her name is Marge, which means colorful. She is black and white!

Marge improved in health as we cared for her. I also observed that she continued to run to the barn all the time. As I came to know her, I understood that she liked the cool atmosphere in the barn, with no flies. Marge would also choose to go out at night when it was cool with very few insects, rather than be outside in the heat of a sunny day.

During the time I was still in Lithuania my Spiritual Master, HH Dhirashanta Goswami, asked a group of us disciples, who were on a walk with him, to make 4 promises. One of those was to never take milk and milk products unless they are Ahimsa. I took this instruction seriously because I had already begun to understand the auspiciousness of cows.

Two years later, Sita and I moved to Mayapur, to the Dhama, the Holy Land of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's birth.

The Dhama where Mahaprabhu also inaugurated His Sankirtana movement. This was extraordinary for us to be doing this.

Contrary to my expectations it was not possible to find milk, from truly protected cows. Many claimed to be selling Ahimsa milk, but there was always some problem in their way of caring for cows, bulls, and calves that excluded their milk being Ahimsa milk.

Finally, I bought a cow and her bull calf, Karuna and Bala. Because I owned no land and therefore had no facility for taking care of them myself, I left them with the local family who had been keeping them. They were not cruel, but they were also not seeing to it that they were living in happy circumstances. Karuna was always tied with a short rope. So was Bala. Though I wanted to see their living conditions change because they were now my responsibility, change was not really possible. This is what they knew to do. That was it.

This was a difficult situation. I wanted them both to be living in circumstances which were natural and beneficial for them. This family had no land for fodder. So, for them to have green fodder, I rented land. What was really



needed was land enough to be sufficient for a natural life for them. In this pursuit, I met a local family who had 10 cows all living on an exceedingly small home property. They were all milking cows, but he had no bulls. How is this possible? So many cows, milk for sale and no bulls. "They were gone." he said. Language difference made communication difficult, but I understood what was happening. He was not protecting bulls...Just cows for the milk. This was not a cow and bull protection program. Albeit small, it was for the purpose of milk production... not Ahimsa milk.

This determination to honor Mother Cow by only taking milk from her, if her calf is receiving what he/she needs and where Bulls are protected, was becoming an almost epic journey. Would it be possible to do this?



On February 15,2021, Karuna gave birth to a beautiful little heifer.

All calves are beautiful, but ours is exceptionally beautiful! Her name is Sarasvati to honor the auspicious day of her birth. Immediately she had Mother's milk and has had Mother's milk since she was born.

Karuna's little family was expanding. They were my responsibility, so I was searching and hoping for a solution for shelter that would not

just be a few feet of earth floor. They needed green fodder and enough space to move around. Little Sarasvati needed to be able to run. Bala was no longer such a small bull calf. What to do?

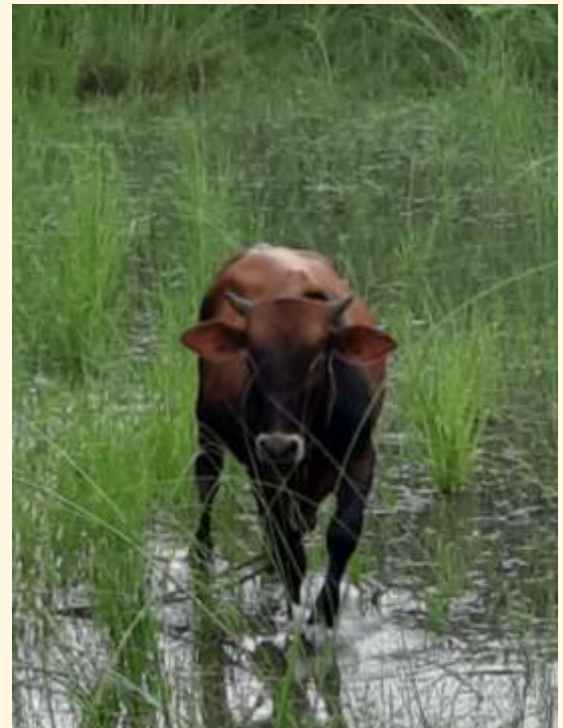
Finally I met HG Dayal Mukunda das. He knew of a place where Karuna and Bala could move to. I would be able to take care of them and Nandi Sanctuary could contribute to some of the daily services they required. He also helped me to find an apartment nearby, so I would be close to them. What a wonderful solution! I felt so grateful. Now I am also contributing to the management of Nandi Sanctuary and People for Animals International by working daily in their office. This is Krsna Consciousness. Devotees facilitating each other's service, in this case for bulls and cows.



In March Karuna and her family moved to their new home....green, clean and with sufficient space for everyone to move around...

And sufficient space for Sarasvati to run! She needs to. She has a playful temperament and is already such a good size and becoming more beautiful, with her healthy brown coat.

When I tell devotees about my Karuna, the immediate reaction is “Oh you have milk?...for purchasing?” And of course we have milk, but not in huge amount. Now, after Sarasvati has had her quota, we receive 1-2 litres a day. This immediate request for milk puts me in an awkward position. Karuna is giving milk, but we are not keeping cows for milk. We are keeping cows to serve cows, because Krsna loves cows. It is our duty to serve cows. Krsna is pleased by our service to cows. Bala, Karuna’s first calf, is a bull. He will never give milk. I will not be plowing the land with him. Still we are happy in our service for Bala, who is the personification of Dharma.



So this is our journey, Sita and I, with Smasulte, Nandi, Marge and now with Karuna, Bala and Sarasvati. For my whole life I had this wandering spirit, wanting to go here and there, trying to enjoy this and that.

Now the journey of walking to their shelter early in the morning for service to them is what makes me contented and happy.

By my experience with cows, I have learned that it is more important to get blessings from cow, than milk. My dream is that one day I will hear: “Can I serve your cow and get blessings?”

Om Surabhyai Namah. Om Nandi Keshavaya namah.

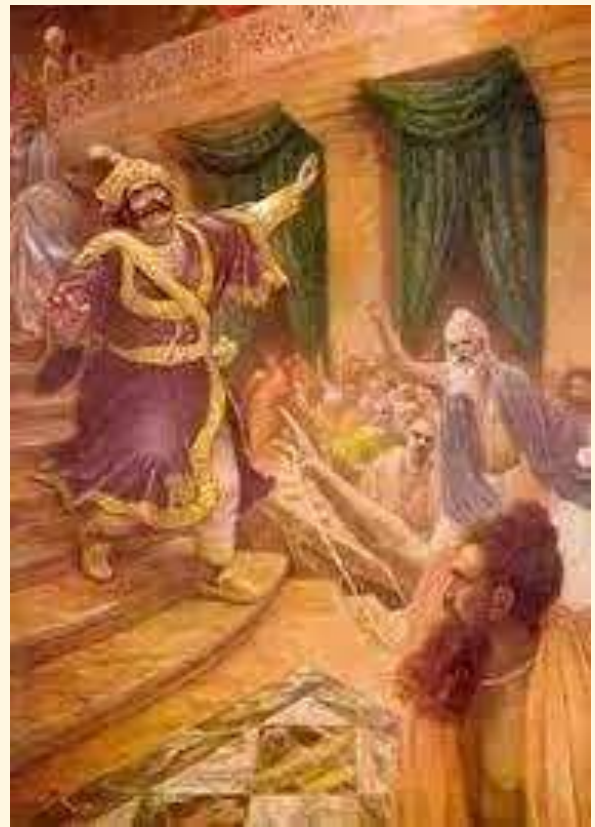
My gratitude and my humble obeisances to my Spiritual Master, HH Dhirashanta Goswami and Srila Prabhupada for mercifully inspiring me in this service.



Prthu Mahārāja Milks the Earth Planet

Adapted from Srimad Bhagavatam

At this particular time in the history of Bharata Varsa, Maharaja Prthu had just been enthroned with all proper Vedic observances by great sages and brahmanas. Mother Earth had been in a situation of great turmoil just previous to this coronation. This was not for the first time in her history and would not be for the last time. Consequently, instead of celebrating, the citizens were begging their King to save them. They were emaciated from starvation due to scarcity of food grains. Such scarcity is certainly not a sign of auspiciousness. After the coronation of an incarnation of Lord Visnu, how could such a situation exist? The cause was direct and understandable. Cruel Vena had been on the throne. Not concerned with his duty, and enamored with the idea that he was king, he had delighted to impress on everyone that Lord Visnu, Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva, Indra, Vayu, Kuvera, Agni, Varuna resided in his body. He saw no reason for yajnas and worship of the Lord. The inevitable result was social disorder, starvation, and hopelessness. Finally, the sages had concluded that such a situation could not be allowed. By mantras they ended the life of Vena. Now there was another problem... no king, a situation equally inauspicious. So, after specific



purificatory methods were observed, the Brahmanas churned the arms of Vena.

From this action came the appearance of a new King, a plenary incarnation of the Lord...Maharaj Prthu and His eternal consort Arci. When He was

coronated, they were both exquisitely ornamented and appeared to be like fire. Faithful to His duty, as soon as He was King, He heard the pitiable lamentation of the citizens who had come to Him for employment, for fair distribution of grains, and to save them lest they die.

Maharaja Prthu concluded that it was Mother Earth who was not producing enough of the necessary grains needed for the maintenance of the citizens. He resolved to put an end to Mother Earth not doing her duty. It is now that the account becomes interesting and enlightening.¹

King Prthu took up his bow and arrows and aimed at the Earth, exactly like Lord Śiva, who destroys the whole world out of anger. When Mother Earth saw that King Prthu was taking his bow and arrows to kill her, she became very much afraid and began to tremble. Knowing that this saintly king would never do violence to a cow, she took the shape of a cow and began to run. Such was the King's anger

that His eyes became as red as the early-morning sun. Placing an arrow on His bow, He chased the cow-shaped Earth wherever she would run. She ran here and there in outer space between the heavenly planets, and wherever she ran, the King chased her with his bow and arrows...At length the Earth, fearful, her heart aggrieved, turned back in helplessness.

Addressing the great, opulent Maharaja Prthu, she said:

"Please save me. You are the protector of all living entities. Now you are situated as the King of this plane. I am very poor and have not committed any sinful activities. I do not know why you want to kill me. Since you are supposed to be the knower of all religious principles, why are you so envious of me, and why are you so anxious to kill a woman? Please also remember

that I am just like a strong boat, and all the paraphernalia of the world is standing upon me. If you break me to pieces, how can you protect yourself and your subjects from drowning?"



King Prthu replied to the earthly planet:

"My dear Earth, you have disobeyed my orders. In the form of a demigod you accepted your share of the yajñas performed, but in return you have not produced sufficient food grains. For this reason I must kill you. Although you are eating green grass every day, you are not filling your milk bag so we can utilize your milk. Since you are willfully committing offenses, it cannot be said that you are not punishable due to your assuming the form of a cow. You have so lost your intelligence that, despite my orders, you do not deliver the seeds of herbs and grains formerly created by Brahmā and now hidden within yourself.

¹ From this point on, the account from Srimad Bhagavatam is paraphrased with additions by the author



Now, with the help of my arrows, I shall cut you to pieces and with your flesh satisfy the hunger-stricken citizens, who are now crying for want of grains. Any cruel person — be he a man, woman or impotent eunuch — who is only interested in his personal maintenance and has no compassion for other living entities may be killed by the king. You are very much puffed up with pride and have become almost insane. You have assumed the form of a cow by your mystic powers. Nonetheless I shall cut you into small pieces like grain, and I will uphold the entire population by my personal mystic powers.”

It is clear from the words of Maharaja Prthu, that the veneration and supplications of Gomata Earth were not sufficient to invoke the compassion of the King. For him to have ignored the plight of all the starving citizens in favor of the Vedic principle of not harming a woman, would have been a neglect of duty. It would have been a kind of false compassion as Arjuna displayed when he wanted to abandon his duty on the battlefield out of affection for his relatives. The Earth was not however ignorant of the exalted position of Prthu Maharaja. In her perilous situation and afflicted with trembling, she surrendered.

With folded hands Mother Earth spoke as follows:

“My dear Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, You are transcendental in Your position...In the beginning of creation You created all these moving and non-moving living entities by Your inconceivable energy. Through this very same energy You are now prepared to protect the living entities. Indeed, You are the supreme protector of religious principles. Why are You so anxious to kill me, even though I am in the form of a cow? My dear Lord, I am also the creation of one of Your energies. Consequently, I am bewildered by Your activities. Even the activities of Your devotees cannot be understood, and what to speak of Your pastimes.”

In spite of hearing the prayers of Mother Earth, King Prthu was still not pacified. His lips trembled in great anger. Though seeing His powerful anger, and herself extremely fearful, she nevertheless spoke as follows to convince the King.

“My dear Lord, please pacify your anger completely and hear patiently. Please turn your kind attention to this. I may be very poor, but a learned man takes the essence of knowledge from all places, just as a bumblebee collects honey from each and every flower. A foolish person who manufactures his own ways and means through mental speculation and does not recognize the authority of the sages who lay down unimpeachable directions is simply unsuccessful again and again in his attempts.”

From Mother earth’s words we can directly understand that what she will be saying to the King will not be mental speculation. We will also witness that, though she is one hundred percent surrendered to the Lord, there is no fearful, servile acquiescence to His transcendental anger.

Gomata Earth humbly, but expertly, presents her case to Maharaja Prthu for not destroying her body. What is a mother to do? This is her duty for she is the shelter of so many living beings.

“My dear King, the seeds, roots, herbs and grains, which were created by Lord Brahmā in the past, are now being used by nondevotees, who are devoid of all spiritual understanding. Not only are grains and herbs being used by nondevotees, but, as far as I am concerned, I am not being properly maintained. Indeed, I am being neglected by kings who are not punishing these rascals who have turned into thieves by using grains for sense gratification.”



Consequently I have hidden all these seeds, which were meant for the performance of sacrifice.”

So here we have it. Mother Earth has valid shastric reasons for not nurturing the growth of seeds within her earthly body. She was not even being properly maintained. In these precarious times we live in, we witness Earth and Surabhi Gotra enduring the same neglect and violations. In Srimad Bhagavatam and elsewhere we read

how cows in pious yugas would naturally moisten the ground with their abundant milk. Now it is not uncommon for local cows to barely give a couple of litres or barely one. Dairies artificially force numerous pregnancies, give questionable drugs and supplements, and deny the calf his own mother’s milk to artificially create large quantities of milk. Is it any wonder that Mother Earth is withholding her natural abundance and flooding lands, that epidemics and wars proliferate? Is it any wonder that her horrified trembling is quaking open rocks, mountains and the habitations of man? Mother Earth continues her explanations to the Lord: *“Due to being stocked for a very long time, all the grain seeds within me have certainly deteriorated. Therefore you should immediately arrange to take these seeds out by the standard process, which is recommended by the ācāryas or śāstras,”*

Now we shall hear from her how she will not only give her gifts in abundance, but she will be pleased to render this service. For those who need the gifts of the Earth, it will not involve a one-hundred-year Asvamedha yajna or great austerities. It will be simple. There is a standard process for us to receive the gifts of Mother Earth. It is the same process as needs be practiced for receiving the *amṛta*, the milk of Mother Cow. *“The cow’s calf not only is beautiful to look at, but also gives satisfaction to the cow, and so she delivers as much milk as possible.” SB 1.17.3 Purport*

This is a confidential instruction, but it is not a secret.

“O great hero, protector of living entities, if you desire to relieve the living entities by supplying them sufficient grain, and if you desire to nourish them by taking milk from me, you should make arrangements to bring a calf suitable for this purpose and a pot in which the milk can be kept, as well as a milkman to do the work. Since I will

be very much affectionate towards my calf, your desire to take milk from me will be fulfilled”

After hearing the auspicious and pleasing words of the Earth, Maharaj Prthu accepted them.

Thereafter the miracles begin, one after another. Those who were as intelligent as King Prthu followed in His footsteps. Each received his gift from Mother Earth in the auspicious and proper way, unlike the rogues who sought only to appropriate her gifts for sense gratification.

He then transformed Svāyambhuva Manu into a calf and milked all the herbs and grains from the earth in the form of a cow, keeping them in his cupped hands.

All the great sages transformed Brhaspati into a calf, and making the senses into a pot, they milked all kinds of Vedic knowledge to purify words, mind and hearing.

All the demigods made Indra, the King of heaven, into a calf, and from the earth they milked the beverage soma, which is nectar. Thus they became very powerful in mental speculation and bodily and sensual strength.

The sons of Diti and the demons transformed Prahlāda Mahārāja, who was born in an asura family, into a calf, and they extracted various kinds of liquor and beer, which they put into a pot made of iron.

The four-legged animals like the cows made a calf out of the bull who carries Lord Śiva and made a milking pot out of the forest. Thus they got fresh green grasses to eat.

The inhabitants of Gandharvaloka and Apsaroloka made Viśvāvasu into a calf, and they drew the milk into a lotus-flower pot. The milk took the shape of sweet musical art and beauty.



Thereafter cobras and snakes without hoods, large snakes, scorpions and many other poisonous animals took poison out of the planet earth as their milk and kept this poison in snake holes. They made a calf out of Takṣaka.

The birds made a calf out of Garuḍa and took milk from the planet earth in the form of moving insects and nonmoving plants and grasses.

The trees made a calf out of the banyan tree, and thus they derived milk in the form of many delicious juices.

The mountains transformed the Himālayas into a calf, and they milked a variety of minerals into a pot made of the peaks of hills.²

In this way Earth supplied everyone his particular *amṛta*. During the time of King Prthu, the earth was fully under the authority of the King. Thus, all the inhabitants of the earth could get their food supply by creating various types of calves and putting their particular types of milk in various pots. Because she was fully protected

² This list is not complete....

by King Prthu, there was an abundance of all natural necessities, not just milk.

“Sri Prabhupada’s barometer of any civilization, how spiritual that civilization is, is how they treat their cows. To the degree cows are happy & protected, to that extent Dharma is in that community. To the degree cows are mistreated, exploited, that is a place of irreligion” HH Radhanath Swami.



Prabhupada dedicated ISKCON to the re-spiritualization of Society from the very early days. It is our responsibility to make sure all our Centers are focused on Cow & Bull protection,

for our own internal spiritual life and for preaching. Preaching with words is Ok. However, if we were just saying “Chant Hare Krsna and be happy” but did not chant Hare Krsna ourselves, there would be negligible potency to the spoken words. To truly be effective in advocating the protection of cows, we must actively, visibly be involved in engaging and offering service to Surabhi gotra in our communities. Collecting donations from guests for keeping some bulls and cows in a Goshala is OK. But then getting in our vehicles and going to purchase milk from the Dairy Industry or from the local gosh who may or may not be protecting his cow and her calf is not the example that will transform society. Our chanting of Hare Krsna has now brought us to this point in pushing on Lord Chaitanya’s Sankirtana movement. It is time to bring cows, bulls, and their calves under our protection in the most sattvic and natural way possible. Our temple lands should be saturated with the milk of contented cows and their calves. This is the vision and reality of the second half of Prabhupada’s mission that is calling us. Let us follow in the footsteps of Prthu Maharaj with complete confidence.

“So human society should develop brahminical culture on the basis of protecting cows.” Srila Prabhupada Lecture on SB – Los Angeles, Dec 4, 1968



Nandi Sanctuary Laddus

specially made for our Bulls and Cows.

These are Vitamin and Mineral Laddus...
Wheat Flour, Wheat Bran, some herbs good for liver and a little vinegar act as antiparasitic.
They are delicious and assure good health



Sri Surabhi Vedic Village

Near Govindapuram, India

A conversation with Vasudam Prabhu

Govindapuram is a small village in the state of Telangana. On the map it is not a significant place, not close to any tourist attractions or natural wonders like waterfalls or high mountains. But, just outside of Govindapuram, there is a rare, large, and valuable gem to be discovered...58 acres of land, trees, and grasses. Why is this land a rare gem? Because it is very rare in this Kali Yuga that 37 bulls, 55 cows, and 19 calves will reside in a place where, for their whole life, they will live peacefully with their Gosevaks. In this village they will serve devotees and Krsna. They will never go to slaughter. Their home is called *Sri Surabhi Vedic Village*. The land of this Village is not only valuable, it is also sacred because it is marked by the hoofprints of Surabhi Gotra and blessed by the chanting of the Holy Name. The Nanda Maharaja of this village is HG Vasudama das. I had an inspiring conversation with Vasudama Prabhu recently. It is my pleasure to share it.

Please give our readers a little of the history of Sri Surabhi Village.

It started as a plan to own land and grow organic. In 2011, I left my regular job to do this and some of my friends did the same. They left their desirable jobs in the Tech industry. This was a bold step out of the comfort zone that is attractive to most people. Even after learning and with assistance from our mentor, Subash Palekar, the first year of organic farming was a big disappointment which led to rethinking my plans. This initial endeavor had not been so successful. "But, for sure, I want to have cows..." This is what I kept thinking. So finally we bought 58 acres of land and some cows, beautiful cows: Gir, Sahiwal and Ongole. We did our best. We had to purchase their fodder and they were living in our Goshala, being fed in stalls. We were attentive to their care, but their health degraded day by day. Some even died. This was so painful that I cannot even really describe.

Through the mercy of my spiritual master, HH Bhakti Raghava Swami, I met Dr Sree Kumar. His directions transformed every aspect of our care of cows. We went from artificially struggling to maintain their lives, to facilitating their natural function. They are grazing animals. Their health and their happiness are directly related to facilitating their natural grazing propensity. Now for 3 years, we have not even had any need for a Doctor... not once!

"Fulfilling their natural function"? Does it mean just eating grass ... What are the details of that?

First please understand that “just grazing” is not such a minor thing. For a cow or bull, grazing means they are in their natural environment where they will be happier and healthier. A good example would be a monkey. He can be kept alive in a cage, but he will be healthier and happier living in a forest area.

So, grazing is one important aspect of giving facility to cows to fulfill their natural function. Equally important is to facilitate the natural relationship between mother and calf. We must FULLY respect the Calf’s quota of milk, and association with his or her mother. She produces milk for her calf. Cow and calf together for 24 hours daily. This is her natural function and the natural function of the calf is to be nourished by mother. Gomata is



so kind that, when she is satisfied in that way, she will give in greater abundance and there will be milk that humans can take. When this relationship is respected, the calf grows to be truly healthy, and will grow to natural maturity within 10 months. These days it is considered normal that the calf will reach maturity after two years, even three. If the calf is female, this will mean she will not be giving milk for at least 3-4 years after her birth. No one is really happy with this situation: neither the deprived calf with minimum health level, nor the farmer who is feeding a cow for so many years without her giving milk.

To respect the natural function of the cow and calf, we are careful to plan the breeding of cows, allowing sufficient time between pregnancies. Also we are careful to breed during mating season. By observing this natural rhythm the calf will be born during rainy season, when there is a good amount of green grass. In this way the milk will be sufficient at the right time. Of course, as long as the calf is with the mother, there will be no breeding. Calf will stay with the mother, content and healthy. The calf will learn by being with the mother what grasses and herbs are good for eating. Then naturally such a calf will separate from the mother at around 10-12 months

Such breeding methods which respect the function of the cow, will year by year increase the strength of the breed. Otherwise the quality and health of the breed becomes lost.

Unfortunately the situation now is that, even though in some Goshalas they are trying to protect the cow and the bull, they are not so much enabling Surabhi gotra to fulfill their natural function. Ultimately, they want milk. Goshala becomes a facility for milk production.

In Srimad Bhagavatam 1st canto 1. 17.3 it is described

“ Although the cow is beneficial because one can draw religious principles from her, she was now rendered poor and calfless. Her legs were being beaten by a śūdra. There were tears in her eyes, and she was distressed and weak. She was hankering after some grass in the field.”



This verse is exactly the present status of a cow today. Srila Prabhupada continues to describe in the purport.

“Milking the cow means drawing the principles of religion in a liquid form. The great ṛṣis and munis would live only on milk. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī would go to a householder while they were milking the cow, and he would simply take a little quantity of it for subsistence. Even fifty years ago, no one would deprive a sādhu of a quart or two of milk, and every householder would give milk like water. For a Sanātanist (a follower of Vedic principles) it is the duty of every householder to have cows and bulls as household paraphernalia, not only for drinking milk, but also for deriving religious principles.”

Srila Prabhupada was always clear on this point. FIRST PROTECT COWS then GET MILK. What comes FIRST is the welfare of the cow. Cow’s Milk is extremely precious. Srila Prabhupada always said that “we want first class cows and first class milk.”

How can we derive religious principles from a cow? By keeping cow and her calf together and allowing them to graze on pasture lands with sufficient grass. In Atharva Veda 10.9.12, it is written:

अंतरिक्ष के देवता सूर्य, और वातावरण तथा भूमि में स्थित देवता (शुद्ध पर्यावरण) सदैव उत्तम मधु समान गोदुग्ध हमें प्रदान करें Nature’s elements the sun, atmospheric airs and clouds along with soil are responsible for the excellent desirable qualities of Milk.

Due consideration is to be given to the living entities on the land and in the soil. These micro and macro organisms need to perform their unique functions of harvesting natural resources like rain, sunlight, air, etc. This interdependence of land and other living entities, by mutually nourishing each other, plays an essential role in improving the nutrient value of the soil. The result will be good soil health which increases the quality and abundance of the grass, which is consumed by the cow. Naturally such a fortunate cow will give good quality and quantity of milk even after the calf’s share... And the devotee who serves this cow will be fortunate!

Lord Krsna says in Bhagavad Gita

*vidyā-vinaya-sampanne
brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śva-pāke ca
paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ*

The humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcaste]. BG.5.18

The Lord teaches that we have to see everyone equally, irrespective of big or small. Mother cow and her calf have equal rights in living. Being that the cow is also the emblem of peace, prosperity, and auspiciousness, and that she is our universal Mother, we should protect her and thereby invoke all blessings material and spiritual.

We are followers of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Our mood is always to be inquisitive and hanker to serve and please Krsna, and His devotees. Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who gives pleasure to the cows and the brahmanas. How can we offer to Him such milk drawn from starving cows, from cows not allowed to graze on pasture lands, from cows whose calves are separated from their mother and do not get their share of milk?

What are the points to be noted so that we know that the milk we receive from Mother Cow is Ahimsa? It is described in the sastras. One should not take milk for any service to the Lord or for consuming if the cow:

- *is in heat.*
- *is pregnant*
- *has just delivered a calf*
- *is stall fed*
- *is not grazing in pastureland with sufficient grass.*
- *is unhealthy*

By obeying the above said simple principles, one can obtain the amrita or nectar in the form of milk. This amrta one can then utilize in the service of the Lord. Then the devotee can consume to improve the finer brain tissues and for religious principles.

What inspires you to continue this service, even in spite of the austerity involved?



Our inspiration is that every day we are learning new things about how to better take care of cows. We are also learning to respect the existence of all living entities and serve them. This realization comes naturally with goseva!

Austerity? When we respect the function of bulls and cows, this service is actually not an austerity. Krsna has shown us how to do. He is the perfect role model. In Krsna Book we read that every day the cows would go to a different forest, then come home in the evening. The

next day, again a different forest. In 2021 we call this Planned grazing. We don't have the opulence of unlimited forests, but we can allocate sufficient land for the number of cows and bulls we are taking care of. Thus by rotational grazing we can make Vrndavana forests. This is a whole science. Come to our Sri Surabhi Vedic Village and I will explain!

This is our only job we have to do... Produce our own food, keep cows, and chant Hare Krsna. Where is the austerity?

What is your vision for the future of *go-raksya* in ISKCON?

This is my personal comment of course... ISKCON has to have a way of giving a solution to all the problems, because Prabhupada gave us solutions for everything.

Today people face problems like food security, health, and money problems. These are all practical issues. To resolve these problems, many people are now going out of village life to the city. Are we devotees addressing these issues? In all honesty, for most of our centers, the answer is NO. Prabhupada instructed to live in a village, and practice simple living and high thinking. If we want to attract people to this kind of living, we must give solution in a practical way. That will happen only when we save our own soil, take care of our own cows. And this is not happening. Bhumata and Gomata are abused in every way in Kali yuga. It is our duty to show by our own example, that if we take care of these two, we can solve all our problems.



My own vision is to encourage more devotees to take this mission. **ISKCON has the solution, but we have to ourselves implement so we can motivate others.** Right now many devotees want Goshala. However keeping cows in stalls and just feeding, and getting donations is not the solution. There may be some donations coming in. That is OK. But we cannot depend on donations, because then how can we say that we have the solutions for the common person?

In his instructions Prabhupada has given us a treasure, we have to distribute it by first doing.

Can you share some personal experiences with cows and bulls?

Well yes! At our Village there is Surabhi, Malati, Champa...Then bulls, there is Baladeva, Krsna, Subal, Siva Rama, Dharma etc. All have names and they know their names.



Generally whenever I go early to be with the cows. By 7:00 AM daily they will go to the fields. And to go with them, we have to run...because they are so pleased to be going out to the fields. They will graze for 1-2 hours, then sit and chew, chew, chew... It is very beautiful to see them. When they are in the fields, they will have a relationship with me. I will call them by name Champa! Malati! Together they will run towards me. They will recognize us when we go to the field with them. Feeding them in the stalls, we will not develop this relationship. But if we go along for grazing, immediately they will connect.

Vasudam Prabhu...Is there a final thought you would like to share?

If we want to achieve an authentic quality of life, we have to take care of cows. This is the only way...And of course Hari Nama. Connecting with cows we will see that quality of life. We can be peaceful. As Prabhupada said we must chant Hare Krsna, keep cows, produce our own food. That is our practical philosophy



**HH Bhakti Raghava Swami...who truly loves Surabhi Gotra.
Spiritual master of Vasudam prabhu**

**Thank you, for your dedication
and your inspiration**

In closing I would just like to bring the name of this land to your attention. It is not called a GOSHALA, as one would expect. Especially in India, goshala has come to mean a place where bulls and cows just exist, and often there is abuse in these goshalas. This land is called **SRI SURABHI VEDIC VILLAGE**, because here bulls, cows, calves, humans and so many other animals and even plants are seeking to live together in a harmonious relationship. This is happening because the leaders of this Village are focused on the principles of Sri Isopanishad. Its residents have the opportunity to fulfill their function in the Lord's plan for Creation.

Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong.

One may aspire to live for hundreds of years if he continuously goes on working in that way, for that sort of work will not bind him to the law of karma. There is no alternative to this way for man.

Sri Isopanishad, Mantras 1 & 2