Krsna's Cows Graze Below Mt. Warning

Worship of Haridas Varya
Cows & Sattva Guna
Don’t be a Butcher-bandhu
“The attitude of taking care of and working for the welfare of one’s self as well as others is called Dharma. People, however, are more interested in taking care of themselves, sometimes even at the cost of others’ welfare!

“The Supreme Lord wants us to take up Dharma and thus take care of the well being of the entire creation. This is possible if we have within us, two qualities primarily; being niraparadhi (not causing distress to others) and being upakari (working for the welfare of others).

“But human beings are selfish. How would they become niraparadhi and upakari?

“For this purpose, the Lord has manifested the scriptures so we can gain understanding of Dharma. And for practically inculcating the values of Dharma, the Lord has created a special creature that demonstrates the ideal of niraparadhi and upakari behaviour. That ideal creature is Go (the Sanskrit word that refers to those varieties of cows, calves and bulls that are native to the land of India.) They possess the two qualities that are primarily required in a person to be able to work for the welfare of others (niraparadhi and upakari).

“God has created Go in such a fashion that everything they give is for the welfare of others. The extent to which they are upakari can be understood from the fact that even their dung and urine contain medicinal qualities which are meant for serving others. On the other hand, such wastes of even great saints and incarnations of God Himself are discarded.

“By creating Go, the Lord presents to us an ideal creature from whom we can get the inspiration to inculcate within us the values of being niraparadhi and upakari, and eventually work for the welfare of all.”

— Sri Haridas Shastri ji Maharaj
Worship of Haridas Varya -- The Best Devotee of Sri Krsna -- Govardhana Hill

Festival photos by Paul Muso || Above and right: Devotees make sitting places for Govardhan Silas.
Each year we observe two festivals commemorating Sri Krsna’s pastimes in cow-protection... Govardhana Puja and Gopastami. Basically the festivals revolve around glorification of Sri Krsna by chanting His Holy Names, worshiping cows with traditional paraphernalia, sumptuously feeding the cows and then all attendants.

This year our small attempt was blessed with approximately 200 cows and 300-350 guests on each occasion. The following chronicle of photos demonstrate that one becomes happy by the simple activity of making cows happy.
Above: Devotees circumambulate the Hill while chanting the glories of Sri Krsna.

Left and below: Hansi agreed to accept the worship but became shy (left) until Kesi enticed her with many laddhus.
Above: Gopal was appointed the official Receptionist. Below: Bholanath dressed for the auspicious occasion.
Above: Damodara Dasa prepares to worship Pushpa (right).
Above: Pushpa allows an admirer to scratch her behind the ear.

Raghava (far left) and Haridas (left) offer benedictions to friendly guests by allowing them to stroke their dewlaps. Local folklore states that stroking a cow or bull on the underside of the neck softens one’s heart and makes one more eligible to perform Bhakti Yoga.
Affectionate strokes applied with a loving attitude are interpreted by cows to be equal to the licks of their affectionate mother. The like to be groomed almost as much as they like to eat.

Madhu, the leader of the herd, prepares to accept a laddhu on behalf of all his subordinates.
The main kirtaneers were Nandu, Keshava and students of the Sandipani Muni School.
Right: Care for Cows
Manager Kesi Nisudana Dasa beams with joy to see so many wonderful guests chanting, dancing and feeding cows.

Below: Following the tradition, many of the women guests wear colorful turbans and sashes as do the cow herd boy friends of Sri Krsna as they take the calves out to pasture.
Bhagavad-gītā explains that material nature is composed of three modes — goodness, passion and ignorance — and that when the living entities, who are spiritual, come in contact with nature they become conditioned by these modes. Of these three, the mode of goodness (sattva guna) is superlative as it conditions one to develop peace and clarity of mind, illumination, wisdom and furthermore frees one from all sinful reactions. Those situated in the mode of goodness experience a sense of happiness and knowledge.

The mode of passion (rajo guna) inspires an endless flow of uncontrollable desires and longings: attachment to possessions, self-indulgence, self-promotion, oneupmanship, elitism, consumerism, and other forms of fruitive activity. As all these can never be fully accomplished, those situated in the mode of passion are characterized by frustration and misery.

The mode of ignorance (tamo guna) conditions one to foolishness, madness and illusion. Those situated in this lowest mode manifest lethargy, procrastination, listlessness, depression, disorientation, inertia, senseless violence and destructiveness all of which lead to gradual and steady dehumanization.

Certain aspects of material nature impel us towards goodness, others towards passion and still others towards ignorance and thus according to the predominating influence of the particular time, place and circumstance, one is forced to act accordingly.

For those interested in personal upliftment or spiritual progress cultivation of the mode of goodness is essential as it results in developing peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, knowledge, wisdom and religiosity (Bg. 18.42) all of which are essential ingredients in the recipe of a wholesome life.

While cultivating sattva guna (goodness) is elaborate and intricate, this article will touch on the main three aspects: purity, peacefulness and illumination (knowledge/wisdom) and demonstrate how cow protection compliments the effort.

1. Purity
Purity is accomplished by performing certain external and internal practices. Succinctly put, external purity means keeping the body clean and healthy which means bathing regularly, eating salubrious foods and avoiding those foods which are disease-producing; it means observing habits.
which are life-promoting as opposed to those which promote decadence and decay. Thus, the symptoms of external purity are cleanliness and good health.

Internal purity refers to cleanliness of the heart and mind. While no doubt diverse types of yoga, meditation and prayer are recommended, experts have concluded that in this age internal purity is most effectively accomplished by congregational recitation of the holy names of Hare, Krsna, Rama, Govinda, Gopal, Radharamana and so on. The main symptoms of purity of mind and heart are self-satisfaction and the diminishing presence of lust, anger and greed.

2. Peacefulness
Peacefulness is generally said to be a state free from disturbance. Since this material world is in constant flux, disturbing factors are ever-present. Peacefulness then, means one can remain tranquil, steady and equipoised while undergoing changes and challenging circumstances.

Peace can be achieved by following yoga discipline under competent guidance. Briefly this means regulating one’s life with respect to diet and habits.

Peacefulness is directly related to the types of food we eat. We’ve all heard the maxim, “You are what you eat.” Foods affect our physical and mental health. According to the Gita, sattvic foods increase the duration of life, purify one’s existence and yield strength, health, happiness and satisfaction. These are foods naturally grown and obtained with minimum violence. Eating other foods will influence us towards passion and ignorance and their concomitant reactions (Bg. 17.8-10).

Sattvic food are fruits, grains, vegetables and milk which are best obtained in a natural rural setting. Cows and bulls are most helpful in the production of these foods as they provide the finest fertilizer and tillage.

Natural rural settings are in themselves sattvic and serene and of all creatures in the animal kingdom cows are said to be the most sattvic so together they produce a powerful influence spreading peacefulness to all in their proximity. I am told that Ayurvedic and Naturopathic hospitals in South India commonly keep contented cows in natural settings near the cottages of their patients as simply seeing them creates an atmosphere tranquility enhancing healing. Today in Europe, Australia and North America more and more people are discovering the therapeutic effects cows have on relieving stress, anger, anxiety and depression which deeply plague urban dwellers today.

3. Illumination / cultivation of knowledge
Perhaps the most important element of illumination is that one can distinguish reality from illusion... the temporary from the eternal... Truth from falsehood. The influence of sattva guna stills the mind, promotes the intelligence and enables one to penetrate the surface of things -- to differentiate substance from shadow; good from evil; the apparent from the actual. Sattva guna is the catalyst which transforms theoretical knowledge into realized knowledge. It makes one eligible to live knowledge rather than to just possess it.

To a large degree each one of us has the choice to pick which of the three modes we want to predominate our lives. If we eat food obtained by
violence, that which is decayed... expose ourselves to media which depicts violence, death and destruction, live in filth and squalor, associate with criminals, drug addicts, pessimists and so on, we will undoubtedly be predominated by tamo guna.

If we eat food that is excessively spicy, meant only for stimulating the tongue and arousing sensual desires, live in places where passion predominates (urban areas), subject ourselves to media that promotes accumulation and consumerism and associate with heathens, we will be influenced to act in rajo guna.

If, however, we eat fresh foods which promote tranquility, good health and are obtained by minimum violence, live in natural settings and associate with those who are peaceful, virtuous, honest, loving, and oriented towards giving rather than taking, we place ourselves under the influence of sattva guna, the most favorable environment to achieve spiritual progress.

One may now ask, “What do cows have to do with cultivating goodness?”

In brief, cows are pure, peaceful and enhance learning and perception which are the essential elements of the mode of goodness as described above.

It is an established fact that cows are unpolluted, even their dung and urine are antiseptic and medicinal (purity); they are known to be tranquil and content (peaceful); and their influence promotes concentration and increases learning (illumination).

Researchers from the Sage Colleges in Troy, New York, have determined that specific bacteria found in cow dung and healthy soil (micobacterium vaccae) effectively increase levels of serotonin in the brain and decrease anxiety. Vaccae is the Latin term from which the Spanish term vaca is derived which means cow. Anti-depressant medicines are being made from this bacteria.

Tests conducted with mice also suggest that micobacterium vaccae increases learning behavior. Researchers found that mice who ingested micobacterium vaccae could navigate mazes more quickly than those without the bacteria. Dorothy Matthews and Susan Jenks, who conducted the study, shared their findings with those in attendance at the meeting of the American Society for Microbiology in San Diego. In short, their findings indicate that ingestion of micobacterium vaccae results in happiness and enhanced learning which are key aspects of sattva guna.

The above scientific findings reinforce the copious Vedic statements declaring that protecting and serving cows offers human society great benefits; mainly that cows have a sattvic affect on their loving caretakers. Thru the Vedic scriptures declare: “A person who serves the cow, and takes care of her in all respects, receives the most rare benediction from her.

“Do not become envious of the cow, even in your mind. Always try to please her and serve her as far as possible. Offer respect and worship her. A human being who joyfully serves the cow daily becomes fit to receive great prosperity.”

—Gomati–vidya from Visnu–dharmottara Part II – 42/49 to 58

Lord Brahma said, “I created the cow for the nourishment of everyone. She is the form of the demigods and she is merciful to all living entities. Every object produced from the cow is pure. If one drinks pancagavya, (cows milk, ghee, yoghurt, dung and urine), all their sinful reactions become destroyed. That is why pious people use her products daily. The products of the cow are sacred and auspicious. A person who does not have the good fortune to consume cow products is said to be unlucky, and his body is as good as stool.”

—Padma Purana, Sristhi Khanda 57/151-156
Bangalore Devotees Save Cow from Slaughter

rakhe krsna mare khe / mare krsna rakhe khe

If Krsna wants to save someone, no one can kill him
If Krnsa wants to kill someone, no one can save him

by Varada Krsna Dasa
Temple President ISKCON Bangalore,
Sri Narsimha Giridhari Mandir

Oct 24, 2013 — BANGALORE, KARNATAKA

When the Lord decides to protect, the fortunate living entity beats the odds and survives.

The miraculous sequence of events unfolded before our eyes on the Tuesday, the day before the Bakrid. Bakrid is a painful day for the devotees of Lord Krsna as they helplessly and tearfully watch the cruel butcher of the several cows in the lanes and bylanes of area surrounding the Narasimha Giridhari temple. But this Bakrid was different as the Lord had a plan to involve us in a heroic rescue act.

As I entered the temple in the morning, Suvi-graha Das, the devotee incharge of the Goshala came running towards me and told me about an incredible event. One young cow, being taken for slaughter somewhere in one of the lanes near the temple, had apparently escaped from the clutches of the slaughterers and ran for its life and came running into the Narasimha Giridhari temple complex and headed straight for the Goshala at the rear end of the temple and joined the rest of the cows there and hid herself. For those who don’t know about our Goshala, it is important to note that to reach the goshala, the cow had to cross the bridge, enter the compound and take a right, then turn left and then take a right and then a left and go straight a few hundred feet. In other words, unless someone knows where the Goshala is, it is impossible to stumble into it by chance. And the cow, as if lead by the hidden hands of the Lord, came into the temple compound by crossing the road and seemed to have headed straight into the goshala.

A bunch of people came right behind the cow and demanded that the cow be made over to them. They even entered the temple complex and the goshala. Suvigraha prabhu sent them out and told them not to enter the temple without permission. They stayed near the gate and their strength was slowly increasing. As a precautionary measure, Suvigraha called the police to inform them about the developments and the presence of some intruders in the compound. Within minutes, a couple of cops arrived on the scene. They enquired about the cow that has strayed into our compound. They informed us that the slaughterers of the cow had lodged a complaint against us in the police station minutes before our call.

There is a law in the country and the state that prevents the slaughter of the cows especially young ones, but who cares for the law, there is numerous extraneous considerations in play and with a pliable government in the state and the centre, the slaughters get away. So, it was not surprising when we heard the police asking us to release the cow and let the slaughterers have her again. The people who are to ensure that such illegal slaughter of cows does not happen, were asking us to release the cow. They pleaded...
helplessness. They cited political compulsions and were rather straightforward in telling me that they feared that this issue could be easily escalated and could lead to tensions between two communities.

In the meanwhile, I was getting calls from the chief trustee initially telling me to hold on to the cow and he would settle the matter by talking to the Police. But within minutes the gentleman was forced to change his stance in view of the intense pressure from the Police. The matter very soon escalated and several teams of police were coming and going trying to persuade us to give the cow. We were having very anxious moments not knowing what to do, our normally very resourceful Chief Trustee too indicated that if we hold on any longer to the cow, the police may send a search party to the temple premises. This could force the Police to take action and this would probably spoil the relationships between the Police and the leaders of the area.

We were torn between these different pushes and pulls. While there is law prohibiting the slaughter of young cows, nobody seemed to be talking about it. The Police warned us that the slaughterers would get aggressive and stage protest demonstrations (dharnas) as they have done a few times in the last week whenever they have been obstructed from transporting the cows or killing the cows. Here was the cow, so shell shocked and scared, innocently looking into our eyes as if asking us the question. The cow was badly bruised and had cuts all over the body. The cow had very mysteriously and miraculously escaped and had reached the temple Goshala. So, were we not obliged to at least try to save the cow from what would have been a certain slaughter the next day. The Chief Trustee called me again to say that he had offered the claimants of the cow, money so they would give up their claim on the cow.

The Inspector of Police called me and pleaded with me to release the cow. I offered to pay for the cow several times but the Police were unmoved. The Cops then moved to the room where the cow was lying down and they too were moved to see the cow in such a state.

The A.S.I then remarked, that the cow seemed to be lucky and it would have a long life. I clung on this statement that he made and begged him to help us to make this statement true. I begged him to somehow grant us time till the evening when I could safely shift the cow and claim the cow ran away.

After a few more exchanges, the Police came up with a formula and told us the we should surrender the cow to the Police and that they would shift the cow to the Jain Goshala, nearby. It seemed hard to believe the sudden change of stance of the Police, who trusts them anyway? In the meanwhile, the chief Trustee too called us saying that the Police did not want to hurt our religious sentiments and they had agreed to shift the cow to the Jain Goshala. My team here suspected something fishy but I latched on to the offer and told the Police that it was good that they were willing to let the cow be shifted to the Jain Goshala. All I was proposing to them was to shift the cow instead to another goshala, we were more familiar with. The Police were caught and could not respond immediately. If they refused to let us shift the cow to the goshala we were proposing, their game would be revealed. And if they genuinely intended that the cow be shifted to a goshala what was the problem in shifting her to a goshala we knew. They took some time to discuss this with the A.C.P.

In the meantime, the devotees were frantically making calls to everybody they knew and requesting them to speak to the D.C.P or the A.C.P and convince the police to let go off the cow. I honestly don’t know how it worked, but
one thing I know is that when Krsna decides to protect, a way would have been worked out and the cow would be saved. All of us were trying everything we could.

We were waiting to know if Krsna had some plan. The Assistant Sub Inspector of Police came back and informed us that they had managed to convince the higher ups in the department and also the set of people who sought the custody of the cow. In a rare gesture of solidarity with the temple, the Police team refused my offer to pay for the cow and instead they pooled the money by collecting it among themselves and paid off the people who sought the cow and the A.S.I had obtained permission to have the cow shifted to the goshala we knew.

But the Police apprehending that there could be some change of mind among the higherups in the department, wanted the cow to be shifted immediately. The Goshala team arranged a closed tempo and the cow was shifted to a friendly goshala we were familiar with.

The Police team accompanied the tempo just in case there was some trouble on the way. The cow was safely shifted and it returned to the shelter of Sri Narasimha Giridhari mandir, this Sunday, 20th of October. She received a hero’s welcome and the entire team of devotees greeted her with a Go Puja and she was taken up for a darshan of the deities.

The cow is now named – Bahula.

You too can do something to make this world a safer place for the cows. Please chant Hare Krsna mahamantra and support Srila Prabhupada’s mission of taking Krsna consciousness to all the lanes and bylanes of the world.
My mother has been kidnapped by terrorists and is being tortured. The miscreants allowed her one phone call and she pleads that I do something to help!

I respond, “Don’t worry Mom. I’ll go to your home and offer all the food in your kitchen to Krsna and distribute the remnants to my family and friends. Krsna will be soooo pleased with you for this.”

She responds, “But my dear son, isn’t there anything else you can do? These devils are causing me so much pain!”

I answer, “OK Mom. Don’t worry. We’ll use your savings to purchase Bhagavad-Gita’s and your car to distribute them on sankirtana! Be assured that Srila Prabhupada and Lord Caitanya will bless you for this!”

She sobs...

To console her, I say, “Don’t worry Mom. You’re not that body... and remember, we love you soooo much!”

It rings hollow doesn’t it?

Do you think attending to one’s spiritual well-being while completely ignoring one’s material plight indicates compassion, concern and love?

I don’t.

The above scenario parallels the attitude some devotees have towards serving those cows imprisoned and tortured by the commercial dairy industry. They think that to purchase commercial dairy products and offer them to Krsna serves the spiritual well-being of those cows, and perhaps it does... if offered with sincere devotion. But offering the milk of those cows to Krsna is the very LEAST one can do. Offering their milk without making any effort to relieve their suffering leads one to ask, “Are such people actually serving the cows, or are they just serving their tongue? Does satisfying their palate take priority over cow protection?”

The above attitude announces an unwillingness to do more than the minimum. It indicates that avoiding personal inconvenience and staying within one’s comfort zone takes priority over protecting Mother Cow.

What I find uglier still is the insidious attempt to pass off this lethargy and indolence as the virtue of compassion. Some propose that the tortured cows’ only hope is that we continue purchasing their milk mixed with pus, blood and anxiety to offer to Lord Krsna for if we stop, those cows are doomed.

But purchasing commercial dairy products only fuels the slaughterhouse industry and keeps those horrible works alive. We become “butcher-bandhus” (friends of butchers). It assures that the female calves of the tortured cows will soon meet the same fate nd the bull calves will end up in the veal crate.

What such people propose is a perfect survival formula for the slaughterhouse industry as it inspires both those who favor and oppose the cruelty to purchase their products! And the bloody butchers cheer and encourage this indolence masquerading as compassion.

You will remind me that Srila Prabhupada allowed us to offer commercial milk to Krsna. Yes, he did. But simultaneously he told us to start farm communities where we could obtain milk from protected cows and grow our own vegetables and grains to offer to Krsna. It’s clear that his allowing us to offer commercial dairy products is a temporary concession much like that made by Narada Muni to Mrgrari the hunter. Narada told Mrgrari that instead of half-killing forest animals, he should kill them fully. Narada did not advocate or sanction animal killing; rather he gave an incremental instruction meant to bring Mrgrari one
step closer to Vaisnava behavior. Similarly, forty years ago when Srila Prabhupada told us savages we should offer milk to Krsna, he wanted us to take one short step towards serving Krsna. As service to Krsna must be favorable (anukulyena) he ordered us to establish farms for protecting cows and offer their milk as the next step.

Narada ultimately told Mrgrari to break his bow and desist from animal killing — that was his intent from the start. Similarly, as there was nothing else, Srila Prabhupada allowed us to offer commercial milk but simultaneously ordered us to establish farm communities to protect cows and offer their milk to Krsna. We are too lazy and attached to follow his full instruction and we rationalize obedience by following only half of it. Shame on us!

One may shrug and say, “I don’t have the power to stop the monstrous dairy industry.” And it may be that no individual has that power. But each of us does have the power to control our tongue... and if enough of us do, and refuse to purchase slaughterhouse products, it will have a detrimental affect on the industry.

By following Srila Prabhupada’s order to establish farms to produce and offer milk, vegetables and grains to Krsna we automatically boycott commercial dairy products and all junk foods which are tailored to reduce longevity. Then we will have the potency to preach with conviction and influence others to do the same, and by our united effort, the commercial dairies will dry up!

If we are too entrenched in the urban lifestyle and require more dairy products than our farms produce, then we should find alternative whole milk obtained with minimum violence and be willing to pay more for it. Moreover, we should be honest and admit our weakness and attachment and, instead of shunning those who do control their tongue, support them and seek their blessings so we can develop the strength and conviction to follow.

By imagining that tortured commercial dairy cows are pacified when we offer their milk to Krsna, we indulge in the first of the five nescient activities created by Lord Brahma

— self deception (SB 3.12.2).
This seven-month-old bull was abandoned and found shivering on the street. He is undernourished, famished and covered with ticks. He was treated for ticks and intestinal parasites and admitted to the recuperation group on the condition that he agree to eat all he can... including ladhus. We expect a speedy recovery. He requires a sponsor.
Sadhu joined us on January 16, 2009. He suffered a broken tibia in his village and was brought to us by bullock cart (above left). Three days later a pin was surgically inserted into his broken tibia by Dr. R.P Pandey of the Mathura Veterinary College (above right). The operation was a success and Sadhu is now well and happy and about to complete his fifth year at Care for Cows. He is an emblem of self-satisfaction and peace.
May cows stay in front of me; may cows stay behind me; may cows stay on both sides of me. May I always reside in the midst of cows. —Hari Bhakti Vilas 16.252

The cows send their heart-felt thanks to those who assisted during September 2013

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