

# *Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala*



*Madhavi Devi Dasi*

# *Krishna's Cows*

## *in New Vrajamandala*

*Madhavi Devi Dasi*



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Editing and Translation by: Bhakti Gauravani Goswami  
Book Design and Original Artwork by: Vedai

Photos by:  
Arjuna Dasa (Alberto Santi)  
Damodara Priya Devi Dasi (Shobna Vrajadas Orekhov)  
Parama Karuna Dasa (Pablo Cristian Mir)  
Madhavi Devi Dasi (María Victoria Maccarini)  
Paul Boar

The testimonies were collected by:  
Arjuna Dasa from Vrindavan, India  
and Madhavi Devi Dasi

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Contact:  
Madhavi Devi Dasi  
Nueva Vrajamandala  
Finca Santa Clara s/n  
19400 Brihuega (Guadalajara) España  
E-mail: madhavidevidasi9@gmail.com  
Tel: +34 641 16 57 45

**Dedicated to**

His Divine Grace

**A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada**

Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness,

who, by his example, inspires us

in our spiritual life



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May the cows walk before me and also be behind,  
may they accompany me at my side and surround me on every side,  
may they come to me as loving mothers, gathering with tenderness,  
and may their presence shine together with the rays of the sun

# The Sacred Cow



I offer my obeisances again and again to Krishna,  
the Supreme Lord, who is the protector  
and benefactor of the cows and the brahmanas.  
He is the well-wisher of the entire human society  
and the world. To Him, Govinda, I offer my obeisances.

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

This verse from the *Vishnu Purana* describes Krishna as the protector and benefactor of the cows, and in many artistic representations we see Him surrounded by cows. We may wonder: Why? What is so special about this animal?

From the *Brahma-samhita* we understand that God has unlimited transcendental forms. Being supreme and all-powerful, He is the original and oldest person, and at the same time, a charming youth whose favorite pastime is to care for cows in abodes made of spiritual gems. For this reason, He is known as Govinda (the one who gives pleasure to the cows) and Gopala (the one who protects the cows); His abode is known as Goloka (the planet of the cows), and His companions are known as *gopas* (cowherd boys) and *gopis* (cowherd girls).

In the *Bhagavad-gita* (18.44), Krishna recommends *go-raksya* (cow protection) as an essential principle for a truly advanced human society.

The Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, taught that the world can live in peace only with a spiritually reformed social structure. The highest form of such a society is one based on cultivation of the land, protection of the cow, and care for the environment.

In the Vedic tradition, the cow is considered a mother and the bull a father, because the cow provides milk and the bull helps produce grains by plowing the land. Therefore, followers of the Vedic way of life hold cows and bulls in great respect and would never harm them, much less kill them for their flesh.

In the West, however, the notion that cows should be respected and protected is often considered somewhat naïve, if not outright absurd, leading to the use of the term “sacred cow” to deride anything considered inappropriately untouchable. Consequently, some Western observers complain that in India cows roam freely on streets and roads, creating what they regard as a nuisance, when in

## The Sacred Cow

their view it would be better to use them to feed the poor.

Therefore, part of the mission of the Krishna consciousness movement is to propagate the philosophical basis for the protection of cows and establish cow shelters where cow protection is practiced and its benefits are demonstrated. Rupa Goshala, in New Vrajamandala, the Hare Krishna rural community in central Spain, is an excellent example of this philosophy in practice.

Cows are very sensitive and can perceive when they will not be slaughtered. They respond to the affection of their caretakers so much that at Rupa Goshala there have been and are today several cows producing milk even without ever having had a calf. Their amazing stories are told in this book.

The cow care center of New Vrajamandala has existed for over 40 years. During this time, thousands of visitors have had a unique experience with happy, well-cared-for cows, who often passed on their good mood to those who were receptive enough.

In fact, in recent years cow cuddling has become more than just a passing wellness fad. With immense benefits for mental health, the practice has gained increasing worldwide appeal, once again showing that cows are not ordinary animals but unique beings. It is therefore not surprising that they are Krishna's favorite pets.

Consequently, those who treat cows with respect and love, attend to their needs, and teach others how to appreciate these wonderful creatures will experience countless blessings, both from the cows themselves and from their supreme protector, Gopala Govinda Himself.

Bhakti Gauravani Goswami  
Gopastami Puja  
November 9, 2024





# Prologue

The inspiration for this book was born from a feeling of deep gratitude toward the cows, because when I finished my service in the *goshala*, I felt immensely fortunate for everything I had experienced with them. Day after day they accompanied me with their presence, with their sweetness, with their character, and in my heart arose the desire to offer them a gift. I thought of a book, a space where their stories could be preserved, where their lives would be told and honored as what they truly are: the queens of our Rupa Goshala.

At first I imagined it with the title *Memories of a Cowherd*, but then I felt that it should not be about me, but about them. That is how this project began. I asked devotees, children, mothers, and friends to send me memories in the form of audio messages. Soon I received more than I had expected. So, I am very grateful to all who contributed their testimony and made the compilation of this book possible.

With all those memories, I had the material, but I needed someone who could put them into written form. No one came to mind... until last year on the day of Gopastami.

Destiny had it that on that day I shared a class on the cows of New Vrajamandala with Madhavi Devi Dasi. She provided the part from the scriptures and I the memories of the *goshala*. The class turned out very lively and was much appreciated by the devotees. Then, after the class, I asked her: "Listen, I want to write a book about the cows and the memories of the devotees who have served them, but I'm not a writer. Would you be willing to do it?" She replied: "No, no, I have no experience; I have written articles, but never a book." I said: "Look, the devotees have sent me so many beautiful testimonies, your spiritual master, too. I'll send them to you so you can see."

When she read what her *guru*, Bhakti Gauravani Goswami, had

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

written, she immediately sent me a message saying: "Send me everything you have." In this way, through her sensitive pen and the guidance of our teachers, this work came to life. My wish with this book is simple: to offer an homage to Krishna's cows and that all those who were ever in contact with them —especially the children who had the experience of milking them— may remember and relive those moments. Because what one does as a child is never forgotten. Today many of those children are adults, and they still greet me with a hug, calling me "cowherd boy!", which fills me with joy and confirms that the relationship with the cows leaves a permanent mark.

If this book comes to light on such an auspicious day as Gopastami, which will soon be celebrated, on October 29, it will not be just another publication: it will be the offering of a grateful heart and the testimony that protection and love for the cows are the true spirit of our devotional life.

Arjuna Dasa (Alberto 'il' vaquero)

Radhastami

August 31, 2025

# Preface

This book is the fruit of the inspiration of Arjuna Dasa (Alberto), who had the fervent desire to make known throughout the world the glories of Krishna's cows in New Vrajamandala. He cared for them for 20 years, giving them all his love, not only to them but also to all who are or have been part of this project, known as Rupa Goshala —the non-violent *goshala* in Spain.

The book is mainly a compilation of stories, adventures, and challenges that took place among the cows of Rupa Goshala and their cowherds; therefore, it is imbued with the sweet love that radiates from Krishna's cows.

It is my sincere desire to glorify them, along with their cowherds, because, although we find ourselves in this material world, which is a place of suffering, in the company of cows we can experience transcendental situations in which hearts overflow with joy.

I have tried to transmit with the greatest possible fidelity the events that occurred in the transcendental and mystical Rupa Goshala, where we these magical stories took place.

I hope readers can delight in the emotions that may arise from intimate contact with Krishna's cows. This close relationship established between Krishna, the cows, the cowherds, and the reader has the potential to inspire us to become aware of the importance of cow protection in society. To care for and protect these kind beings is a source of true peace and prosperity.

Madhavi Devi Dasi  
Krishna Janmastami  
August 16, 2025



Arjuna

# Introduction

In these pages, the reader will come closer to a world where everyday simplicity becomes an offering, and the life of seemingly ordinary animals reveals an unsuspected spiritual depth. *Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala* is not just a book about cows: it is an invitation to look with new eyes at the relationship between the human, the natural, and the divine.

The Vaishnava tradition teaches that cows are very dear to Krishna, the cowherd boy of Vrindavan. They are not regarded merely as a source of food or sustenance, but as companions in life, symbols of abundance, and emblems of a culture founded on compassion. In New Vrajamandala, a spiritual community located near Brihuega, in Spain's province of Guadalajara, that vision becomes tangible: there the devotees have endeavored to care for the cows as an essential part of their devotional service to Krishna. This book captures that spirit and offers it to the reader with tenderness and clarity.

A central place in this account belongs to Alberto, known in the community as "Alberto 'il' vaquero", Albert the cowherd, and today as Arjuna Dasa. For two decades he dedicated his life to caring for Krishna's cows with patience, devotion, and love. It was he who, aware of the value of that experience and the need to preserve it, asked Madhavi Devi Dasi to put it into writing. Without his testimony and initiative, this book would never have come to light. His voice resonates in these pages like that of a caring guardian, who turned daily work into sacred service.

After his time, since 2017, Dina Sharana Dasa and Damodara Priya Devi Dasi have continued that mission with the same spirit of dedication. For more than eight years this devotee couple has cared for the cows in an exemplary way, keeping the legacy alive and adding their own loving and excellent service. Thanks to them, New Vrajamandala has been able to continue offering the cows the care and respect taught by the Vaishnava tradition.



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

At the same time, this book is also a collective homage. Throughout the history of New Vrajamandala, from late 1979 to the present day, numerous cowherds—men and women—, have, with greater or lesser visibility, served Krishna's cows with dedication. Their names may not all be recorded here, but their effort and devotion form an essential part of this history. Likewise, special recognition is due to all those who have contributed their material and spiritual support: from large and small donations to the generous sponsorship of members of the Hindu community, devotees, and friends whose hearts value this service so dear to Krishna and so beneficial to humanity.

At the same time, this book is a mosaic of voices. Members of the community have shared here their memories, anecdotes, and extraordinary experiences with the cows. Some of those stories verge on the magical: moments when the presence of these animals revealed a mystery or a lesson that went beyond the ordinary. By gathering these experiences, the text becomes a choral chronicle that preserves the living memory of New Vrajamandala.

Reading this book is not reserved only for practitioners of the Vaishnava tradition. Anyone who approaches these pages with an open heart can discover in them universal values: care for nature, reverence for living beings, the possibility of living in harmony with what surrounds us. In times when hurry and disconnection define modern life, texts like this remind us that there is another way to live in this world.

I invite the reader to walk through these pages as one who strolls unhurriedly through a meadow at dawn, listening to the serene lowing of the cows and breathing the fresh air that carries with it the promise of a new day. May this book inspire us to recognize in every creature the divine spark and to understand, as Krishna's devotees well know, that the loving care of cows is a special form of service to the Supreme.



## Introduction

Thanks to the sensitivity and dedication of Madhavi Devi Dasi, this testimony has not been lost in the memory of a few, but now opens to the world as a written legacy. She has gathered the voice of Arjuna, Dina Sharana, and Damodara Priya, as well as other devotees, and has interwoven them with her own vision. The result is a book that is at once a homage, a chronicle, and a devotional offering.

Yadunandana Swami  
President of New Vrajamandala  
September 2, 2025



# New Vrajamandala, the Home of Rupa Goshala



New Vrajamandala, the main center of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in Spain, is located near Brihuega, in the province of Guadalajara. Founded in 1979, New Vrajamandala serves people seeking a meaningful change in their lives, offering an alternative based on the principles of *bhakti-yoga*—the *yoga* of love, surrender, and service—as taught by the Founder-Acharya of the Society, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Following the ideal of “simple living and high thinking,” the community cultivates a lifestyle that harmonizes spiritual practice with rural life. Today, it has around sixty residents. Alongside Spaniards, people from various countries of Europe, Latin America, and Asia also live there.

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

In order to present an alternative model of life, the Society receives visitors from all over the world throughout the year, with a high season between May and August.

Another time when the community welcomes large numbers of visitors is during the festivals of Balarama Purnima, Krishna Janmastami, Srila Prabhupada's Vyasa-puja, and Radhastami, which take place according to the lunar calendar between August and September. These are celebrations of reunion and joy, with hours of kirtan, dance, theatrical performances, visits to the *goshala*, the Deities' swan procession, and, after a fast, the enjoyment of a sumptuous feast of *prasadam*, spiritual food offered to God with love and devotion.

Sharing meals is a key aspect of community life, as lacto-vegetarian dishes are prepared daily and offered with love and devotion to Krishna. After the offering, everyone partakes of the spiritual food. With grains, fruits, vegetables, milk, sugar, and rice, countless traditional Indian dishes are prepared, such as *sabji*, *chapati*, *dal*, *halava*, *lassi*, *puri*, *kitchari*, *chutney*, *kachori*, *laddu*, among many others. Those who taste these preparations experience a great variety of flavors, textures, and aromas, living unique and transcendental moments.

The secret of what is known as "Hare Krishna Cuisine" is the love of the cooks. They prepare the dishes in a meditative state, with the intention of pleasing the Supreme Lord, because when Krishna is satisfied, everyone can experience true satisfaction when sitting down to eat—or rather, to honor—*prasadam*.

The vegetables and other ingredients used for cooking come largely from the garden and fields cultivated by the residents and devotees themselves. The gardening team prepares the soil, sows, waters, harvests, removes weeds, and collects seeds, among other tasks. Especially in spring and summer, much help is needed, and sometimes volunteers—visitors who offer hours of work in exchange for lodging and food—collaborate. Thanks to them, large amounts

## New Vrajamandala, the Home of Rupa Goshala

and varieties of vegetables and flowers are obtained. In addition, cereals such as oats are cultivated extensively, as well as fodder for the cows.



The Rupa Goshala is a fundamental pillar of the community. It currently has five oxen, eight cows, one heifer, and one calf. Seven of these cows are milked every morning, and some also in the afternoon. Altogether they produce enough milk to maintain the eight liters offered daily to the Deities. It is also sufficient for preparing delicious *mangala-sweets*, sweets made from milk, such as *rasagullas*, *barfi*, and *sandesh*. The rest of the milk is used for the community's consumption.

Sometimes visitors feel tempted and ask to buy this fresh milk, which is not sold outside; in such cases, they receive a little milk and, in return, leave a monetary donation to help with the care of the cows.

The *goshala* is managed by Damodara Priya Devi Dasi and Dina Sharana Dasa, a couple dedicated to this service since 2017. They are



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also assisted by Pushpa-gopal Devi Dasi, a dear friend of the cows who, whenever she is present, puts on her boots and work clothes and offers herself to the service with great willingness and enthusiasm.



New Vrajamandala seeks to be a worthy replica of the original Vrajamandala, the sacred region encompassing the surroundings of Vrindavan in India. There Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, carried out many of His enchanting childhood and youthful pastimes more than five thousand years ago. Krishna and His elder brother, Balarama, often cared for the cows or played with Their cowherd friends in the forests of Vraja. For this reason, the term “Vrajamandala” is deeply significant.

According to the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (12.9.28), the term *vrajan* literally means “the cowherds,” and is directly related to the adventures of Krishna, His friends, and His herds, especially when They went out to graze on the green hills and meadows of the region.

## New Vrajamandala, the Home of Rupa Goshala

Vraja also symbolizes a realm of divine love and purity, where relationships with Krishna are completely spontaneous, full of unconditional love, and free from all material motivation. In this sense, *vraja* is also a state of consciousness, in which the soul connects with God through pure devotion.



On the other hand, the Sanskrit word *mandala* is usually translated as “circle.” When joined as *vrajamandala*, it means the “circle” or the complete region of Vraja, which includes all the sacred places connected with the pastimes of Lord Krishna. Therefore, it is not only a physical space but also a realm imbued with love, devotion, and transcendental memories associated with Him.

There the connection with Krishna is not mediated by formal rituals, but by spontaneous and selfless love, like that of the cowherd boys, the *gopas*, and the cowherd girls, the *gopis*. For them, Krishna is their friend, their protector, and their beloved. He is the center of their lives and the source of supreme happiness.



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

New Vrajamandala seeks to offer an atmosphere that allows one to fully concentrate on cultivating one's spiritual consciousness, developing a sustainable lifestyle in harmony with nature and favorable both for society and the environment. Under the motto "simple living and high thinking," the community enjoys a natural and simple life that helps keep the mind always fixed on Krishna. New Vrajamandala strives to shape its atmosphere in such a way that everything invites one to think of God.



The spiritual center of the community is the temple of Radha-Govindachandra, located in the main building. There the presiding Deities are worshiped: Radha-Govindachandra, Gaura-Nitai, Giri Govardhana, and Laksmi-Nrisimhadeva. They are the true proprietors

## New Vrajamandala, the Home of Rupa Goshala

of New Vrajamandala, and all community life revolves around these forms of God, manifested according to Their different incarnations and pastimes. They are worshiped daily by the community's devotees through activities such as *arati*, *japa*, *kirtan*, *darshan*, study of the scriptures, *prasadam*, and service.



*Darshan* consists of visiting the temple room to behold the Deities, who are dressed and adorned each day with great care and detail.

*Arati* is a ceremony of worship held several times a day, in which incense, a ghee lamp, water, a handkerchief, and flowers are offered, accompanied by the sound of the conch shell.

These ceremonies are complemented by *kirtan*, congregational chanting, especially the chanting of the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*. This same *mantra* is also recited individually, called *japa*, meditating with a rosary of 108 wooden beads.

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

In addition, every day there are readings and classes where sacred scriptures such as the *Bhagavad-gita*, the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and the *Chaitanya-charitamrita* are studied. These were translated and commented on by the Founder-Acharya and eminent spiritual master of the Society, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Ultimately, the devotees consider all their activities as service to Krishna. But the most important aspect of a devotee's life is to remember Krishna in all circumstances through the chanting of the *maha-mantra*:

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna  
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare  
Hare Rama Hare Rama  
Rama Rama Hare Hare

The devotees accept Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is how the Vedic scriptures describe Him. He is the source of all creation, the supreme controller, the shelter of all souls, and the protector of the cows, including those of Rupa Goshala.

In the *Bhagavad-gita* (10.8) Krishna declares that He is the source of all spiritual and material worlds, and that everything emanates from Him.

Although Krishna comes to this world in a form that appears human, He remains the Supreme Person, full and eternal, in a blissful transcendental form. Yet, by His causeless mercy, He is accessible to those who approach Him with love and devotion.

Krishna is the source of the "magic" of Rupa Goshala, where we live through stories as peculiar as they are wonderful. The accounts described later did not happen by mere chance or coincidence. They happened—and continue to happen to this day—because Krishna, besides being God, is a cowherd.

In the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (10.8.16) it is stated: "To increase the transcendental joy of the cowherd men of Gokula, this child will



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always act auspiciously for you. And only by His grace will you overcome all difficulties.” In this way Krishna’s advent on Earth is announced, highlighting His compassion and His special bond with the cows.



More than five thousand years ago, Mother Earth was weary, saddened, and wounded by the mistreatment she was receiving from evil rulers. She then decided to ask for help: she assumed the form of a cow and pleaded with God to come and relieve her suffering. She became a cow because Krishna’s foremost occupation and concern is to give comfort to the cows.

While Mother Earth was raising her prayers, Krishna was in His spiritual planet. Yet He heard her supplications and immediately offered her His protection. He decided that, besides destroying the demons in order to save the Earth, He would reestablish the principles of *dharma* which teach people how we are meant to live. These had to be taught again, for over time that knowledge seemed

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

to have been lost. And since He Himself was going to descend, He thought that He could also do so accompanied by His friends and in this way enjoy many of His transcendental adventures on Earth.

Thus Krishna and His friends appeared on Earth. He lived His childhood as a cowherd boy, with His family of cowherds, together with His mother Yasoda, His father Nanda Maharaja, and all the residents of Vrindavan.

Krishna is so wonderful that we cannot comprehend His greatness; not even the residents of Vrindavan themselves could do so. That is why I have composed *The Cowherd Boy of Vrindavan*, a simple narration based on a story told in the Tenth Canto of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, where the Supreme Personality of Godhead is presented in the figure of a cowherd boy.

# The Cowherd Boy of Vrindavan

With the sound of His flute, Krishna called the cows, and they, dancing, came joyfully to Him, as if each note were a direct invitation to the heart. His friends, laughing and playing, joined in, amazed at how even the trees seemed to bow to offer Him their flowers. The cows, expressing love in their eyes, quickly came and surrounded Him, as if each one knew that He was not only their caretaker but also their eternal protector, Gopala.



Suddenly, a storm formed on the horizon. Black clouds heavy with rain gathered, and a thunderous roar announced the beginning of a terrible deluge sent by Indra, the king of heaven. The wind intensified, torrential rains fell, and the rivers began to overflow, threatening to sweep away everything in their path. The cows, frightened, huddled together trembling, and the residents of Vrindavan looked to Krishna for protection.



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

Meanwhile, Krishna tenderly caressed a cow, and His eyes shone with a love that transcended everything. With a serene smile, He lifted the immense Govardhana Hill with the little finger of His left hand, as if it were a simple mushroom, turning it into an umbrella that offered perfect shelter for everyone. Thus the cows and bulls with their calves, as well as the cowherds and their families, took refuge under the hill, certain that under the care of Giridhari, the lifter of Govardhana Hill, nobody and nothing could harm them.



For seven days and nights Krishna held the hill aloft with a radiant smile. His friends kept playing around Him, and the cows, calm, grazed even under the storm, knowing that the Supreme Lord was with them. Finally, upon seeing His unlimited power, Indra realized his mistake and bowed down humbly, acknowledging Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

When the storm ended, Krishna gently lowered the hill, restoring peace in Vrindavan. As everyone celebrated, an elder cowherd

## The Little Cowherd Boy of Vrindavan

approached and said: “Krishna, today we have seen how You, though a simple little cowherd, protect everyone with unlimited love. What would we do without You?”



Krishna replied gently: “Even if you do not see Me, I am always present. As long as you remember My pastimes and have faith in My love, I will protect you just as I protect My cows, wherever you may be. My care does not depend on My visible form but on My eternal love.”

Because of His great affection for the cows of Vraja, Krishna became Giridhari, the one who lifted Govardhana Hill. At the end of the day, after gathering all His cows, He played a wonderful melody on His flute, while the exalted demigods worshiped His lotus feet praying: “May the Lord of the cows be pleased with us. Who is Indra compared to Krishna? Krishna is the master of Indra, and yet He has appeared as the master of the cows. The Supreme Absolute Truth has

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

accepted the simple position of a cowherd boy. Superficially, He seems like a small child, but we pray that this cowherd, who possesses the power to control the entire universe, may be pleased with us. We want to worship that Lord who has taken the humble position of the king of the cows.”





# The Cowherds of New Vrajamandala

“A person who serves the cow and cares for her in every way receives from her the rarest blessing. Do not feel envy toward the cow, not even in your mind. Always try to please her and serve her as much as possible. Offer her respect and worship her. A human being who gladly serves the cow daily becomes fit to receive great prosperity.”

*Vishnu-dharmottara II, Sacred Cow*

Krishna’s cowherd boy friends in Goloka Vrindavan, the *gopas*, spend their days in the beautiful pastures of Vraja. They usually wear silk



garments, adorned with ribbons and flowers gathered from the forest. Often they wear flower garlands, bracelets, and turbans. And, just like Krishna, their sweet faces radiate innocence and joy. The *gopas* spend their days running, singing, dancing, and playing with

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

Krishna. They have boundless energy and a contagious laughter, dedicating themselves to caring for cows and calves by taking them to the greenest pastures and allowing them to drink fresh water from the rivers.

They love to play hide-and-seek, tug-of-war, or simply run and jump among the trees. They often share their lunches, enjoying the food lovingly prepared by their mothers. This is how Krishna and the cowherd boys maintain a relationship full of love, friendship, laughter, and complicity, where challenges and difficulties only serve to strengthen their loving bond even more.

The cowherds of New Vrajamandala live a lifestyle deeply connected to the Vaishnava tradition and culture, though they also know how to adjust to the changes of modern times. Their daily lives may be different from those of the cowherd boys who tended cows with Krishna in His transcendental pastimes, but still, they maintain a special bond with the cows, considered sacred in Vedic culture.

Our cowherds, dressed in simple clothes and wearing tulasi wood beads around their necks, continue to care for the cows: taking them to graze, hand-milking them, treating them when they are sick, giving them fresh water and abundant food. They also process the milk to produce yogurt and fresh cheese, butter and ghee, clean the *goshala*, welcome visitors, manage the economy, and make decisions about new projects they seek to carry out to improve the establishment—these, among many other tasks.

“Taking care of the cows is not just a service, it is a mission. Being a cowherd does not only mean coming to milk, graze the cows, and feed them. No. Being a cowherd is like being a firefighter: we have to be alert 24 hours a day to what is happening with the cows. We must always be ready to protect them and help them out of difficulties. They are our family, our mothers, and we must always be available for them.” – Dina Sharana

The cowherds, being devotees of Krishna, regard the cows as



## The Cowherds of New Vrajamandala

members of their household. They listen to and chant the holy names of Krishna while caring for them, keeping the spiritual tradition alive. But this does not mean that only Krishna's devotees can be good cowherds.



From left to right: Dina Sharana, Damodara Priya, Pushpa Gopal, Paul, Arjuna, Parama Karuna and Madhavi, with Krishnachandra

My grandparents, for example, were also cowherds but they knew nothing about Krishna consciousness. Nevertheless, they cared for their cows and other animals with love and dedication. When a cow grew old, some neighbors would suggest sending her to the slaughterhouse, but my grandfather was completely against it. He would say, "How can you do that? After she has given you so much! Let her die at home, peacefully."

They, among many others, are examples that to lovingly care for cows it is not necessary to become a devotee of Krishna. It is enough to become a little more conscious and do what we can from our own position. However, being a cowherd and a devotee at the same time

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is an ideal combination, because the devotee can feel Krishna more deeply, and Krishna will manifest a special favor toward him.

In Rupa Goshala we can point to many cowherds who have dedicated time and sacrifice to the care of the cows: Jitendriya Dasa, Anadi Krishna Dasa, Mahalaksmi Devi Dasi, Venudhara Dasa, Paramadhama Dasa, Adirasa Dasa, Haridvar Dasa, Gauracandra Dasa, Prithu Dasa<sup>1</sup>, Surabhi Dasa, Pushpa Gopala Devi Dasi, Alberto (Arjuna Dasa), Vanamali Dasa, Vraja-jana-ranjana Dasa, Ratnanga Dasa, Víctor, Carlos, Paul, Dina Sharana Dasa, Damodara Priya Devi Dasi, Parama Karuna Dasa... among many others, to whom we are deeply grateful.

To them, and to so many more, we owe our respect and sincere appreciation, for they have carried out a service that, in many cases, no one else was willing to take on. Not everyone is ready to rise early every day, regardless of whether it is New Year's Day or Christmas, whether it rains or snows, whether they are healthy or ill. Every morning and every evening, they were there, because the cows were waiting for them.

Many of them were not cowherds in the beginning; they knew nothing about cows, but they dared to try. That courage which arose in their hearts, inspired by the desire to please Krishna, has borne such fruit that even the most experienced cowherds—those coming from generations dedicated to caring for cattle—are astonished and admire them.

An example is Arjuna Dasa, formerly known as “Alberto ‘il’ vaquero,” the son of Italian parents, who came to know the devotees and Krishna consciousness in Amsterdam in the early 1980s. Later, during a vacation in Spain, he met the devotees again and visited New Vrajamandala for the first time. Arjuna remembers:

“In the following years I would go back and forth from Italy. Sometimes I stayed two or three months at the farm, once even six

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<sup>1</sup> This devotee currently lives in Radhadesh, Belgium. He is different from Prithu, who is in charge of agriculture at New Vrajamandala.

## The Cowherds of New Vrajamandala

months. Finally, in December 1998, I returned again and began going down to the *goshala* every day. I had always liked animals, so I would bring fruit and vegetables to the cows and I learned to brush them. At that time, Adirasa was taking care of the cows, and one day he taught me how to milk. Afterward he asked me if I could stay a month to do this service, because he wanted to go out to distribute books during the sankirtan marathon. Before leaving, he told me: 'Do not worry if at first they do not give much milk, because they do not know you. The important thing is to milk them twice a day.' By Krishna's mercy, there was no problem. On the contrary: within a few days the cows gave more milk than expected."



Arjuna milking Radharani

"The following year I came back again and, since Adirasa wanted to change his service, Yadunandana asked me to stay on as head of the *goshala*. Without thinking twice, I accepted, and thus began my wonderful adventure with the cows."

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

Damodara Priya and Dina Sharana also had no experience with a life dedicated to caring for animals on a farm. Dina Sharana explains:

“We had never lived in the countryside, always in cities, with our own business... but we came to New Vrajamandala to care for the cows and, truly, now our entire inner life has changed. Being with them, we live more in goodness, in peace, and in love. This cowherd life is the best I have had so far, and I will continue here with the cows. As Srila Prabhupada says: cows are not just animals, they are mothers, they are full of love and they transmit that love to everyone. We can feel it, and they still have more to offer to all who wish to come and visit them.”



Dina Sharana and Damodara Priya with Parvati and her calf Ganesh

Both Arjuna and Dina Sharana, as well as Damodara Priya, agree that being cowherds is the best thing in their lives. Their lives changed completely.



## The Cowherds of New Vrajamandala

Another example is Paul who is from Transylvania, a region of Romania. At the age of 19 he came to Spain and, after living a year in Madrid, he met a devotee. Paul was already searching for meaning in his life and, after listening repeatedly to the devotee's explanation of the Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy, Paul felt that Krishna consciousness was what he had been looking for.



When he arrived shortly afterward at New Vrajamandala, he soon began going regularly down to the *goshala*, where he met Alberto, who taught him how to milk and perform other services for the cows. He also helped at Anadi's *goshala*, where he learned many things and began to recall his childhood, since his father had kept some cows.



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



As for my husband, Parama Karuna, and myself, although our experience as cowherds is very short, we can also say that our lives have completely changed since we decided to dedicate ourselves to this service.

Serving the cows offers the opportunity to experience what “simple living and high thinking” truly means, because with cows we cannot be any other way. With them we must be simple; we cannot live an extravagant or complicated life, as that is incompatible. Pushpa Gopal Devi Dasi tells us:

“The stories we live as cowherd girls shape our relationship with the cows. So many anxieties we sometimes have to go through... There are many tests that arise in Kali-yuga. In these times it is not easy to be a cow, and it is not easy to be a cowherd girl and care for her either, because the truth is that real protection can only be provided by Krishna. Even if you are a good devotee or a good cowherd girl, you are not exempt from challenges and obstacles. We depend on

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Krishna's mercy, and if Krishna wants something to happen, then it will happen. We cannot change the Lord's decision."

When we see a painting of Krishna with the cowherd boys and cows, we may develop in our minds a picturesque image or a happy idea. But when we cowherds live the day-to-day reality, we do not always see that joy reflected as it appears in the paintings of the sacred books. In my short time as a cowherd girl, I've learned that serving Krishna's cows involves crucial moments where there is no time to think—moments that demand action in the immediate now, without time for reflection. In those seconds I fully felt how Krishna was arranging to give inspiration within the heart through His form as the Supersoul. Many times I believed myself incapable of doing things that I finally ended up doing. I know those accomplishments happened because Krishna Himself is taking care of His cows. He is looking after them and using us as instruments. So, although my experience is small, for me it is very meaningful.

Arjuna Dasa says that he lived many such stories, in which at first he did not understand how something comes that you do not expect—those ideas, that inspiration that some higher power sends from above:

"It is very nice to be a cowherd, but to be honest: it is also nice when it is over. Now I receive much mercy for having cared for the cows—such as my trips to India or my initiation. But being a cowherd every day... it is, of course, a rewarding service, but it is also very demanding. Because you have to be there every day, morning and evening. And for a long time I was alone, with no help, no one else to milk or clean. But somehow I managed to do it.

Later I realized that I was never alone. Within me is Krishna, who gives me strength—a strength that is not mine, that I never had. I have always been a bit lazy. But not in the *goshala*: there I had a strength and an inspiration that came from within. Sometimes I would get there in the morning and find some situation and did not know what to do... At that moment you do not think, because Krishna directly

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takes charge and you do not even know how.

In the past, there were times when only very few devotees lived here on the farm. Not like now, when being among so many devotees is



Alberto taking milk to the kitchen

normal. Before, it was very hard, but we fulfilled our duty. Because Krishna loves the cows very much. Krishna never allowed His cows to go without food. If we do the service properly, with affection and love, Krishna takes care of the rest. There is no need to worry.”

Arjuna Dasa was not called by this name when he was a cowherd. He received it gloriously from his spiritual master, Purusatraya Swami. His name means “servant of Arjuna,” the greatest of warriors and Krishna’s most intimate friend. Before that, Arjuna was known as Alberto, the name his parents gave him at birth. But after dedicating himself to the process of Krishna consciousness and serving the cows for so many years, his consciousness showed the signs of firm and established faith, and thus he surrendered to his spiritual master and received initiation.

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For his part, Arjuna attributes all this merit to his beloved cows and says that any blessing he may receive is due to Krishna's high regard for the service he performed as a cowherd. Although Arjuna Dasa is no longer Alberto, I decided to tell these stories using his former name, to preserve the originality of the accounts.



Arjuna with Rasa







## Go-mata – Mother Cow



Sundari and her son Jagannatha

The expression *go-mata*, “mother cow,” has been used for centuries to express the special place this animal holds in Vedic culture. The cow not only nourishes with her milk but also embodies qualities of selfless giving and compassion that recall the unconditional love of a mother. When she lives in an environment of respect, free from violence and fed naturally, her milk is considered a pure and beneficial food—capable of strengthening both the physical body and the finer tissues of the brain—very different from the industrial milk of today. For this reason, the sages of antiquity recognized the cow as one of the seven mothers of humanity: the biological mother, the nurse, the wife of the spiritual master, the wife of the king, the wife of a *brahmana*, the Earth, and the cow, and they took her as a foundation of their ascetic life.

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

Those who have lived with cows know that they are much more than milk producers: they have character, memory, emotions, and, above all, a remarkable capacity to form bonds with people. Sometimes they show gentleness, other times firmness, but they always awaken a response in those who relate to them sincerely. In this sense, the cow is not only a symbol of *dharma* but also a silent teacher who imparts lessons of patience, tenderness, and reciprocity.

In Rupa Goshala, this vision comes to life every day. Because the cows are treated with dignity and gratitude, regardless of whether they give milk or not, some have shown astonishing generosity, producing milk even without ever having had calves. Others have moved their caretakers with gestures of affection, intelligence, or unexpected protection. Such experiences show that the bond between humans and cows goes beyond utility: it is a spiritual and emotional connection that transforms whoever experiences it.

For this reason, speaking of *go-mata* is not merely to quote scriptures or repeat a philosophical understanding; it is also to listen to and appreciate the experiences of those who have lived with them. The stories that follow capture tender and revealing moments in which the cows of Rupa Goshala have left an indelible mark on the hearts of both residents and visitors.

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Vraja-lila Devi Dasi has lived in New Vrajamandala for many years. At one point, she and her husband decided to bring a baby into this world. At that time there were no children on the farm, except for one girl who was already nearing adolescence. The atmosphere of mothers and children that she would have liked simply did not exist. She felt lonely, as she also missed her own mother. She was about to become a mother herself, yet there was no other mother to accompany her in those special moments that only another mother can truly understand. They had decided to raise their baby—who would later be Gayatri, a beautiful girl—in an environment where she

## Go-mata — Mother Cow

could develop her Krishna consciousness in a natural way. For that reason, they chose to live in New Vrajamandala. Even so, she still felt that absence and those feelings of loneliness.

“For me it was incredible, even if what I’m going to say sounds a bit mystical. I experienced it as something very real, very vivid. Krishna mothered me at that moment; He gave me what I needed through the cows. I felt loneliness, an emptiness, but when I went down to the *goshala* every day with my baby, that vacuum was filled with the love of the cows. Then I went back home completely nourished, completely at peace. I felt so comfortable, so accompanied, just by being there with mother cow every afternoon.” —Vraja-lila

Every afternoon, at four-thirty, Alberto the cowherd would call the cows in a loud voice: “*Bolo, bolo, bolo!*” Vraja-lila would hear that call, prompting her to get her baby ready and go down with her. On the way, they gathered flowers to offer to Krishna and to the cows—an experience that fulfilled her in every way.

“I remember that when I had that emotional need, I also drank the cows’ milk. It had a very positive effect on me, a sense of fullness and satisfaction that truly surprised me. It surprised me because it was something mystical. In that moment I was able to experience that we do not really appreciate or understand the mysticism of the mother cow, how she is truly a mother in every sense. She is not only a mother because she gives us milk. Mother cow is a mother who goes much further: she can sustain us emotionally like a mother, meet our needs like a mother... These cows are very special. It was a very beautiful experience, one I will never forget.” —Vraja-lila

Cows have the unique ability to offer comfort, love, and companionship in moments of need. Vraja-lila, like many others, is convinced that this experience was due to the fact that Krishna’s cows are special and allow us to live transcendental experiences. They are constantly hearing the holy name of the Lord, living among the

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

devotees, receiving *prasadam*, and being deeply loved by their cowherds and by all the other devotees.

Another story I would like to share is that of Sundari and Dina Sharana. Sundari is a fierce cow with a difficult temperament; at first sight, she seems unfriendly. She commands respect and instills a certain fear. Seeing her expression, one might think she is always in a bad mood. She does not like visitors or human affection—or at least that is how it seems...



One day, Dina Sharana was tired and sad, almost on the verge of tears. He sat on a bench outside in the field. So absorbed was he in his emotions that he did not notice Sundari approaching. Suddenly, Sundari stood right in front of him. They were face to face. Dina Sharana had nowhere to go and no way to escape; he was cornered by her. Nor could he look away, for she was staring at him intently, as if she could see inside him. She looked at him as if to say, “What is wrong? Why are you so worried?”

Then Sundari came even closer.

## Go-mata — Mother Cow

“I was very afraid of being gored, but she licked my face, and I felt that I had nothing to worry about, that everything was going to be all right. Then I understood that the cow is pure love, that the cow is our mother and we are her children. It was something that touched my heart deeply and moved me greatly.” —Dina Sharana

An encounter of this kind is hardly seen in ordinary dairies devoted to livestock exploitation. In today’s society, the mistreatment and exploitation of cows represent a disconnection from these fundamental values. Srila Prabhupada warned that this materialistic and cruel attitude toward cows has consequences both on the spiritual and material levels:

One of the symptoms of the Age of Kali is the distressed condition of the cow. Milking the cow means drawing the principles of religion in a liquid form. The great *ṛṣis* and *munis* would live only on milk. The cow’s milk is also required for the sacrificial fire, and by performing sacrifices the householder can be happy.

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. But in the Kali-yuga, the calves are separated from the cows as early as possible for purposes which may not be mentioned in these pages of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The cow stands with tears in her eyes, the *śūdra* milkman draws milk from the cow artificially, and when there is no milk the cow is sent to be slaughtered. These greatly sinful acts are responsible for all the troubles in present society. People do not know what they are doing in the name of economic development. The influence of Kali will keep them in the darkness of ignorance. Despite all endeavors for peace and prosperity, they must try to see the cows and the bulls happy in all respects. Foolish people do not know how one earns happiness by making the cows and bulls happy, but it is a fact by the law of nature. Let us take it from the authority of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and adopt the principles for the total happiness of humanity. (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 1.17.3)



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



Parvatī with her daughter Yamuna-mayī

# The Cows of Rupa Goshala

## The Children and the Cows

"One time my son Gauranga and I went down to the *goshala*. He came running, took off his boots, and tossed them aside. Then he began digging a hole in the ground and stuck his feet into it. I remember him sitting there with his feet buried and covered with earth. The sun was shining on his little face, and at that moment he said to me, 'Mom, I never want to leave this place.'". —Laksmana

Gauranga was a small boy, about three years old. He spent his tender childhood surrounded by Rupa Goshala's beautiful cows and, from a very early age, learned to milk under Alberto's expert hands.

"When Gauranga was very little, I would place him between my legs while I milked. Sometimes I would take his little hand, place it next to mine, and together we would form a small bowl that we would place under the udder. We would draw a small stream of milk and then I would bring his hand up to his mouth for him to drink. He really liked it, he loved it.

Over time, Gauranga grew and soon began to milk by himself. He would draw a small stream of milk, drink it, and then say to me, 'Look, Alberto! Look!'"—with a face of satisfaction, joy, happiness. He will carry those memories with him for the rest of his life, and so will I."—Alberto

Alberto always encouraged the relationship between children and cows, especially in milking, because the little ones, with their small hands, do it very well and learn quickly. When children experience this for the first time, they are completely amazed and delighted—

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

we've seen it again and again. At first, some feel a bit afraid to approach or touch a big cow, but as we accompany them, they gain confidence and trust. This practice is very simple and, at the same time, truly important, because both children and adults, through contact with the cows, can experience the warmth and affection these animals so naturally offer.

“The first contact I always made with all the children was through touch. I would take their hands, and together we would stroke the animal's skin to feel its hair. I'd tell them, ‘Feel how soft it is... It is like a stuffed toy, is not it? Now you try petting it.’ That is how they started. Then they'd come closer to see how I milked, and afterward they wanted to touch the udder, to squeeze... In this way, many learned to milk perfectly.” —Alberto



Bodhini was a nine-year-old girl who loved cows very much. One of the reasons her parents had decided to move to New Vrajamandala was precisely because she was so fond of cows and wanted to have one and milk her. So every afternoon she went to the *goshala* to milk. She would go into the stalls and brush them, and she knew how to

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala and the Children

milk almost all the cows perfectly. Like most of the children, she was very polite, attentive, and obedient; she had a very special way with the cows, treating them with great love and affection. From time to time, visitors or guests came to the community and were amazed to see how naturally and skillfully the children interacted with the cows. Hand-milking well is not easy, so when the cowherd invited the children to try, it was quite a sight. The visitors could hardly believe it. This is just one example, among many, of how we can show the importance of cows in society—even the smallest ones can experience it.

Can you imagine what a cow's udder feels like? For a while, many schools organized field trips to New Vrajamandala, and the highlight of the visit was "a trip to the *goshala*." There, dozens of schools and hundreds of children had the chance to milk a cow. Tilaka was the most remarkable cow for her tolerance—she would stand patiently and wait until the last child had finished milking before moving.

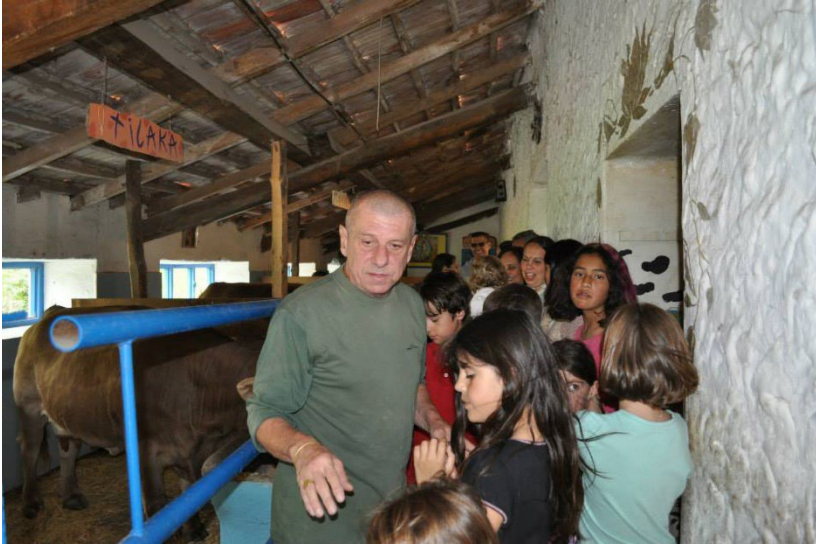
Alberto received the children with great enthusiasm, describing, explaining, and sharing his experiences as a cowherd with such love that no one could fail to feel what he expressed. His affection for the cows was so inspiring that everyone was touched by that sweetness. Together with Vraja-lila, he took on the task of welcoming the children during the visits, and both always remember those moments as experiences that remain etched in the memory for a lifetime.

"Something that impressed everyone during those visits was that the cows were not tied up, yet they stayed still until the last child had finished milking. It was something incredible and fascinating to see that a cow could have such patience." —Vraja-lila

Another thing that most surprised visitors was that the cows continued giving milk even a year after having their calves. This is unusual, since in a conventional dairy cows stop producing milk after about a year. However, many of these cows gave milk for several

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

years—some even up to sixteen years after calving for the last time. Some were milked until the last day of their lives, and others even without ever having had a calf. In addition to the favorable environment and the constant attention to their health, this behavior was due to the fact that the cows were treated with such devotion that, in some way, they wanted to reciprocate the love they received.



Many adventures have taken place—and continue to take place—at Rupa Goshala. Those of us who have had the chance to live close to cows know that there are always stories to tell. Some can even spend hours talking about them—their personalities, their temperaments, their ways of being. So it is only natural that the cowherds have so many stories to share.

After the children—especially those who lived on the farm—had finished milking, Alberto would take them to the hay barn and have them sit on the bales of straw. Once there, he would capture their attention by saying: “Now I’m going to tell you a story, one that sounds like a fairy tale but is not. It is a story that really happened here.”



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala and the Children

### Tulasi's Pacifier

During the time of the cow Yamuna, there lived in New Vrajamandala a little girl named Tulasi. She loved having her pacifier always within reach—it was indispensable to her, and she was never without it.

Tulasi grew quickly. By the age of two she was a beautiful child, and everyone was charmed by her. Since she was still using her pacifier, her parents decided it was time for her to give it up. They tried many ways to convince her, but all attempts failed.

Time went by as they kept trying—persuading her, offering her other things in exchange—but Tulasi suffered because she was so attached to her pacifier, and her parents suffered because they did not want to see her cry, yet they also did not want her to have the pacifier in her mouth all the time.

One day, Tulasi and her mother, Linda, came to visit the cows at Rupa Goshala. I welcomed them with great joy. I already knew what was going on with the pacifier situation. I saw Tulasi with her big, bright eyes, that smile she made whenever she saw me coming... and the pacifier in her mouth.

So I said to her, “Hey, Tulasi! Do you know that here, at night, the cow Yamuna cries? You can hear her every night: moooooo... moooooo... It is because she does not have a pacifier. Why do not you give her yours?”

Tulasi opened her eyes wide and looked at me suspiciously. She did not like the idea at all. “Look,” I said, “we can leave it right there, on that nail. I’ll hang it up, and Yamuna will take it at night, sleep peacefully, and won’t cry anymore... What do you think?”

I pointed to a rusty nail that had been sticking out of one of the beams for who knows how many years.

Tulasi was not convinced, but she was thinking about it. Her face no longer showed her usual cheerful expression; it was clear the matter concerned her. Still, she took the pacifier out of her mouth and handed it to me.

I hung it on the nail, and there it stayed. Tulasi never used her pacifier again. Even so, she missed it, and sometimes she asked her mother, “The pacifier? My pacifier?”

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

"Don't you remember you left it for Yamuna? Otherwise, she cries at night," Linda would reply. Immediately, Tulasi would remember Yamuna and forget about the pacifier.

Today, Tulasi is over twenty years old and tells this story as "the miracle of the cows."

As for me, I understand that such things happen because the power of the cows is immeasurable. I know I was only an instrument so that they could help this little girl. The pacifier remained there, hanging from that nail, for many years. When visitors asked, "Why is that there?" I would happily tell them this charming story. —Alberto

## Tilaka — The Mellow One

Tilaka was a very special cow. A business man from the Indian community had offered to donate a cow, and together with Alberto he went to a dairy farm near Madrid. The owner showed them three beautiful cows, all pregnant and about to give birth. He told them to choose which one they wanted to take. The decision was not difficult, because one of them had a small white mark on her forehead, resembling a symbol of Vishnu. Just like the Vaishnavas, that cow bore a *tilaka* mark, and so, without hesitation, they chose her out of the three and named her Tilaka.

A few weeks later, Tilaka gave birth to a beautiful calf, who was named Dhira. It soon became clear that she had inherited many of her mother's qualities—especially her kindness and patience—and although she never had offspring of her own, she became an adoptive mother and gave milk until her final days. Dhira's story will be told later.

Over time, Tilaka became an extraordinary cow—very mellow, with infinite patience—so that hundreds of people, mostly children, had the privilege of milking her.

This was how the cowherd shared many stories, and the children enjoyed them immensely. The children—and also the adults—

## The cows of Rupa Goshala – Tilaka

because deep down, we never really stop being children. Perhaps we might wonder: why did Alberto devote so much time to the children? He himself explains:

“Because look, it is very simple... What you do as a child stays with you for life. When we’re adults, we cannot even remember what we ate yesterday. But the experiences we live as children, when we’re like a sponge, we absorb them, and they stay with us forever. So, these memories that the children will have of their childhood in the *goshala* will last a lifetime. And just think what mercy I’ve had to be able to do this.”



In this regard, the children who shared their childhood with the cows are now teenagers, and some already adults. Time has passed, and without a doubt, the cowherd’s mission has been fulfilled.

“I have many memories from my childhood that are happy and meaningful to me. I remember when we called the cows with ‘bolo, bolo, bolo,’ and they came; when we were milking and Alberto poured milk into my hand and I drank it; and when we offered the flowers we picked outside. I remember the stories he told us in the

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

hay barn and how we used to play there.

When we fed the kittens milk from a bowl. I remember the Cow Festival, when I played the drums and the mayor came. I remember when Gopi was leaving her body, and we were all there chanting the holy name, accompanying her until she left... I also remember Tilaka, because she was my favorite cow: she was always calm and did not move while we were milking her. It is incredible that the cows on the farm produced so much milk, every day, for so many years. That is not normal. I'm grateful that Alberto always received me with kindness and affection at the *goshala*, teaching me to get to know the cows and to milk them. That is a big part of my childhood, and those are beautiful and important memories for me." —Gauranga

"What I liked most about the *goshala* was when I milked the cows and when Alberto called them and they all came. Also when we walked among them, when we went to pick flowers for the altar, and many other things." —Gayatri

"I'm one of the girls who grew up on the New Vrajamandala farm. I have beautiful and special memories of the *goshala* because it was where I spent my early childhood years. My friends and I would go to milk the cows, and we were all there together. While one of us was milking, another would brush a cow or pet her, or we'd simply stay there together, waiting eagerly for our turn to sit on the little stool with the milk bucket. It was very special; we enjoyed it so much. When we finished milking, Alberto would take us to the hay barn and tell us stories. We had such a good time. I remember running in and climbing like crazy onto the hay piles, sitting down to listen to him, and then staying to play afterwards. That was my childhood—my happy early years." —Kunti

"I have many memories of the *goshala*. I still have my two friends, Gauranga and Kunti, and we often recall the stories in the hay piles. We used to climb up there; I was terrified to do it, but I did it anyway because they did. I remember seeing the little cows, the river, the

## The cows of Rupa Goshala – Tilaka

caravan; I remember the stories Alberto told us, like the one about Tulasi's pacifier, which is still there. I'll always keep a beautiful memory of that *goshala* and all the goodness it gave me, with great affection. When we arrived, we always had to bring a little flower to offer, and we'd all make the offering together: one lit the incense, another rang the bell, another placed the flower. And the milking... I do not remember the cows' names very well, but I do remember milking, being so small, looking at the huge cow and milking her. It was amazing. When the cows came to drink water and



Ishani milking Tilaka

stuck their heads through the fence... their heads were enormous and covered us with slobber. It was so beautiful... I remember it with great fondness.” —Ishani

“There are so many memories. When I walked toward the *goshala*, I felt a beautiful connection with Krishna through the cowherd, through his service, and through the great and beloved devotees of the Lord—the cows. I loved when we called them; they already recognized the sound of the call and came happily to eat. I was



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

fascinated to feed them, to feel that I, as a child, almost a teenager, was being nourished myself. It lit something inside me, like a spark; I felt a surge of love and affection just by feeding the cows. It was a special connection.

Another memory is when we brushed them—seeing their faces of satisfaction, how they enjoyed being caressed. As a child, you see things differently. At that moment, I felt that when I brushed them, they looked at me with a special affection just because I was caring for them. That is, without realizing it, spiritual merit being accumulated, which helps one remain conscious of Krishna in this life. Being able to chant my *japa*, follow the principles, do service, and help in preaching—I believe, to a great extent, comes from serving the cows of New Vrajamandala. I'm very grateful to them. And coming from the city, arriving in the countryside and seeing the cows... As a child, I felt like I was producing milk. I did not really understand much—an adult can grasp it—but at that moment, I touched the udders, squeezed, and milk came out. To me, it was mystical, a connection that went beyond words. I cannot exactly express what I felt; I can say love, affection, tenderness... but they were many sensations at once. And when I think back, I tell myself, 'When I have children, I'll have them milk cows,' because if they can feel the same, it is something wonderful." —Arjuna (boy)

## The Rescue of Tilaka

No one knows how Tilaka ended up on the other side of the river, but she refused to cross the water and come back. Alberto, who was there alone and had no rope at hand, took off his belt and used it to tie her horns. The problem was that as he did so, his pants started to fall down, so he had to hold them up with one hand while gently pulling the cow with the other to make her walk.

As you may remember, Tilaka was a very good-natured, calm, and obedient cow, so she followed him without resistance. However, to reach a bridge and cross back, they had to walk nearly two kilometers. The most difficult part was that on the way back they had to walk

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Radhe

almost a kilometer alongside the road, which was dangerous. Alberto needed to hold Tilaka somehow, and at that moment, the only thing he had was his belt. Fortunately, it was enough, and he managed to bring her safely back to the *goshala*.

The journey was not quick. One kilometer there and one back took them nearly two hours, because they did not just walk—they also stopped to let Tilaka eat fresh grass, take in the view, and rest for a while. Despite the challenges, the effort was worthwhile, and once again, patience and affection brought home one of Rupa Goshala's most beloved cows.

## Radhe — The Loving One

A friend of the devotees, José María, used to visit New Vrajamandala regularly. It was around 2004 or 2005. He was already an elderly man and had some health problems. Still, every afternoon he went to the *goshala* to watch Alberto milk the cows. There was something in the relationship between the cowherd and the cows that moved him deeply. It was a bond that captivated his heart.

One day, as he watched Alberto's skilled hands, José María broke the silence:

—Look, I'm selling an apartment. If I sell it, I'll fill your barn with hay and buy you a cow.

Alberto smiled without stopping his work. He had heard many promises in his life, and in his mind, this was just another one. "People say many things," he thought, without giving it much importance. But José María was not one to speak idly. He sold the apartment, filled the barn to the roof, and together they went to find a cow.

They arrived at a place where brown alpine cows were being sold. They had to choose one among twenty-two. Standing on the other side of the fence, they admired them with awe. At that moment, José María said to Alberto:

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

—You choose. Pick whichever you like.

Alberto was overwhelmed. How could he choose just one? He would have taken them all—every single one. So beautiful, strong, with impressive horns and soft colors. But he could only pick one.

Then he took a handful of grass in his hand and reached his arm over the fence where the cows were standing. His arm was tense, waiting for one of them to come for the fresh grass.

—The first one that comes to eat, I'll take her.

And that is how Radhe arrived at the *goshala*.

And Radhe did not come alone. Inside her belly she carried a calf.

When the day of birth came, the little one arrived too early—premature, fragile, and weak. They named him Balarama, and Alberto never left his side. Since Balarama could not stand on his own, Alberto gave him his full attention: he carried him into the sun, held him in his



Radhe with her son Balarama

arms, and helped him nurse. Balarama was very weak, but also very pampered by his caretaker. Alberto was exhausted, but his heart overflowed with hope and love for the little one.

After a week, Balarama took his first steps—what joy! But only a

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Radhe

few days later, while Alberto was in town running errands, Balarama reached the nearby canal, fell in, and drowned.

Upon returning, Alberto searched for him desperately until he discovered what had happened. The death of little Balarama devastated him. He sat by the canal, with trembling hands and eyes full of tears. He had put in all his effort, all his love, and yet he could not save him. He was sad and shattered by the loss of that calf. There was no comfort; nothing could heal that wound.

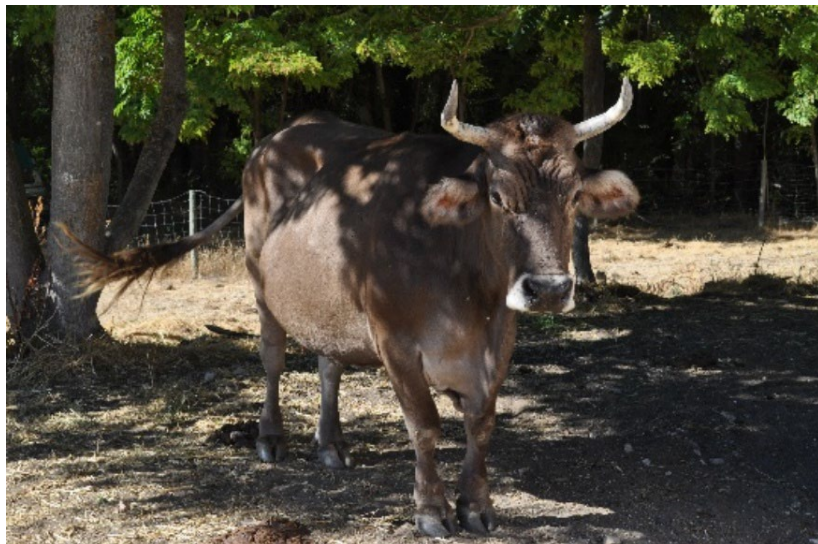


Another devotee, seeing him so dejected, approached and said gently: "Alberto, think about it: this calf was born in a sacred place and departed in a sacred place. In less than a month, it has gone to be with Krishna. Do not worry about it. Now take care of its mother." Radhe had felt the loss of Balarama in the depths of her being. Her gaze reflected sadness, and her face was pure anguish. She knew what had happened; there was no need to tell her.

The canal where Balarama died had been a problem for a long time. It took years for the devotees to build a fence around the entire field of the *goshala*.

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

One morning, shortly after the accident, Alberto went to the *goshala* as he did every morning. Radhe was not in her stall. He looked for her everywhere and finally found her submerged in the canal. Perhaps she had gone to look for her son. The canal was one and a half meters deep, maybe a little more. There she was,



frightened, thrashing among the mud and stones.

Upon seeing that scene, the first thing Alberto thought was: "You must calm her down."

Without hesitation, he jumped into the water. He held her, stroked her, and said: "Radhe, calm down, just stay calm."

Meanwhile, he called for help. Soon, about ten devotees arrived. From the water, without letting go of her, Alberto asked them to bring a long rope and an iron pipe. When they did, they tied Radhe's horns with the rope, and Alberto, with the pipe, prepared to leverage from behind, at her hindquarters and legs.

"Alright, guys, let us see... on the count of three, you pull, and I'll try to lift from here. Come on! A cow weighs 600 or 700 kilos!"

For Radhe to reach solid ground, she had to climb about two



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Dhira

meters in height. Everyone was ready: Alberto with the pipe, and on the other side, all the devotees prepared to pull the rope.

“One, two, three!” Alberto leveraged, the devotees pulled hard, and Radhe came out as if she were flying. She landed calmly, placing all four hooves on the grass, without being dragged, without complication or distress. It was as if she had floated, as if she had been lifted to the sky and gently placed on the meadow. It seemed like magic, because Krishna was directing everything.

Radhe and Alberto went on to share many more adventures together. Their relationship and their way of facing difficulties were an example of service, compassion, and strength: of moving forward and persevering. Radhe, despite her pain, never stopped giving. She was a mother in every sense of the word. For sixteen years, she offered her milk as an act of love and service, asking for nothing in return.

## Dhira — The Patient and Brave One

On the eighth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Kartika (October-November), Gopastami is celebrated, commemorating the day when Krishna transitioned from tending calves to caring for adult cows, thus marking the end of His childhood pastimes.

In the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, it is described how Krishna, along with Balarama and His cowherd friends, began to take the cows to graze in the forests of Vrindavan, performing wonderful pastimes. On that day, Nanda Maharaja and the adult cowherds recognized that Krishna was no longer a small child and should take on greater responsibilities, so they allowed Him to tend the cows along with the calves.

While the *gopas* tended the cows and roamed freely through the forests, the *gopis* generally stayed at home, engaged in activities such as churning butter, milking, and cooking.

In the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.15.1), in the purport, it is explained:

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

As Lord Krishna's spiritual body had apparently grown somewhat in age and strength, the elder men of Vrindavan, headed by Nanda Maharaja, decided to promote Krishna from the task of herding calves to the position of an ordinary cowherd boy. Now He would take charge of the cows, bulls, and oxen. Out of great affection, Nanda Maharaja had previously considered Krishna too young and immature to tend adult cows and bulls.

In the Karttika-mahatmya section of the Padma Purana, it is stated:

“The eighth lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month of Karttika is known by authorities as Gopastami. From that day onward, Lord Vasudeva served as a cowherd, whereas previously He tended to the calves.”

Krishna blessed the Earth by walking upon it, leaving the imprints of His lotus feet in the dust of Vrindavan. The Lord wore no shoes or any other footwear but walked barefoot through the forest, causing great anxiety to the maidens of Vrindavan, who feared that His soft lotus feet might be injured.

Srimati Radharani and Her intimate friends, the *sakhis*, always longed to be with Krishna during His herding pastimes. Thus, when Krishna graduated from tending calves to caring for cows, He began to venture deeper into the forests of Vrindavan. This meant that the *gopis* could no longer see Him as easily as before. To resolve this, Srimati Radharani, Lalita, Visakha, and the others devised a bold plan: they disguised themselves as *gopas*, wearing turbans, *dhotis*, and carrying herding sticks. Thus disguised, they managed to meet Krishna in the forest without being discovered.

To this day, Gopastami is celebrated in many temples and sacred towns like Vrindavan. On this day, the Deity of Srimati Radharani is dressed as a *gopa*. Processions are held in which cows are led with great respect, worshipped, adorned, and offered *prasadam*. This day also honors the importance of *go-seva* (service to cows), as they are dear to Krishna and essential in Vedic culture.

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Dhira

On such a special day as Gopashtami, Dhira was born.



It was November 9, 2005. The birth took place during the night, so in the morning, when the cowherd arrived, he found Dhira standing beside Tilaka, her mother, with her beautiful tail brushing the ground. He immediately ran out to ring the neighbor's gate bell as loudly as he could, filled with euphoria and joy. The whole valley heard the call, and soon Dhira was receiving congratulations and blessings from all the devotees of New Vrajamandala. The signs surrounding her birth already hinted that she would be a very special cow. Dhira means courage, steadiness, wisdom, or serenity. It is used to describe a person who possesses bravery, patience, and discernment—someone especially capable of remaining calm and determined in difficult situations.

A music group led by Tirtha Kirti had just been formed and was named "Dhira." As a gesture of gratitude and support for the band, Alberto decided to give the same name, "Dhira," to the beautiful calf that had just been born.

Dhira's childhood was very well cared for. After Balarama's

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

accident, Alberto decided to build a fence to prevent any other fall into the river. Every day he would take the little calf in his arms and carry her to the enclosed field so she could walk around. When Dhira became heavier, he began leading her with a rope to keep her from running away. Very soon Dhira gained weight and strength, so there were no more worries—if she fell into the river, she would be able to stand up and get out by herself without difficulty.

Dhira was fearless and brave. When she set her mind on going somewhere, no obstacle could stop her. She was adventurous, commanded respect, and watched attentively everything happening around her. When someone new arrived at the *goshala*, she would not allow anyone to touch her horns and sometimes got upset with visitors. However, as the herd grew, she became more sociable.

### A Milk Cow Without a Calf

The way Dhira came to allow herself to be milked despite not having a calf is a surprising story told by Alberto:

“While I was milking the other cows, I kept walking past her stall again and again, carrying the bucket, the stool to sit on, and the cloth to clean the udders. I went back and forth, and she kept watching me. She looked at me and kept looking at me continuously. At one point, I stopped in front of her and observed her. When I saw her big, attentive eyes, I wondered: Why is she looking at me like that? Could it be that she wants me to milk her too?

So one day I started brushing and caressing her. Little by little, I moved my hand down to her udders, touched them, and pressed gently. A liquid came out that seemed neither milk nor water, but it was there. I ran to the room where I kept the buckets and took a small container. When I came back to the stall, she looked at me and moved away. I tried to get closer to milk her again, but she moved away once more. Then I thought and said to her, “Do you want to be like the others?” And in her bright eyes, I saw the answer: yes.

I quickly went back to the room, took the bucket, the stool, and the

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Dhira

cloth, and returned to the stall. This time, she stood still and allowed me to milk her.”

In the first days, what she produced did not look like milk but rather a thick whitish liquid. However, after fifteen days, the consistency had changed, becoming denser and more substantial.

The devotees decided to test its quality by boiling it three times and confirmed that it was good, since it did not curdle and maintained its uniformity.

On the first day, Dhira gave less than 100 ml. After fifteen days, she was producing half a liter, and when it was confirmed that her milk was good, we began to mix it with that of the other cows. Little by little, her production increased. Although her daily average was about two and a half liters, she once produced as much as nine liters in a single day. It was not a significant amount compared to a dairy cow — which can yield up to forty liters a day — but for a cow without a calf, it was quite an extraordinary volume.

Dhira would allow herself to be milked only by Alberto, and that



became a problem because he was soon to travel to India, and there was no one else who could milk her in his absence. So Dina Sharana



decided to embark on this adventure to help him. Milking her was very difficult because she moved a lot, and Alberto had to stay inside the stall repeating: “Dhira, stay still,” “Dhira, do not move,” “Dhira, here,” “Dhira, there.” In this way, little by little, Dina Sharana managed to milk her. However, that did not completely solve the problem, because Alberto still had to be present. Thus they came up with a plan:

While Dina Sharana was milking Dhira, Alberto, who stood beside her, began calling the other cows that still had not come in—especially Radharani, who was always the last.

“Dhira, stay still, I’m going to call Radharani!”

“Radharaniiii!” Alberto shouted.

They continued like this for several days until Dhira got used to it.

The next step was for Alberto to call the cows from outside Dhira’s stall. So he would step out and call again, “Radharani, come...” As always, Radharani would arrive, enter her stall, and Alberto would return to Dhira to make sure she did not move.

After a few days, he kept up the same routine, but each time going a little farther away—until he eventually went out into the field to look for Radharani and then came back to Dhira’s side.

Meanwhile, Dina Sharana was milking her and soon won Dhira’s trust and affection.

Soon after, Alberto no longer entered Dhira’s stall. Later, he even hid so she would not see him, and finally the day came when she could not hear him either. In the final test, Alberto stayed hidden and silent, neither calling the cows nor looking for Radharani. Thus, Dhira could neither see nor hear him.

This was how Dina Sharana succeeded in milking her when no one else could. And Alberto, happy and at ease, was able to travel to India, since the plan had worked.

When Alberto returned from India, he managed to get Dhira to allow even the children who came to the *goshala* to milk her. But everything changed when her friend Radhe died.

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Dhira

“Dhira had the last stall from the entrance. Right next to her had been Radhe, who had recently left her body. So that stall was now empty. The people who came to milk Dhira found it difficult because she moved around a lot and was very restless. In the end, I went myself to show them, thinking I was the experienced cowherd—but Dhira was moving from side to side even with me. I said to her, “What is wrong with you? Why are you moving so much?” Then I thought, “I’ll move Radharani, who is in the first stall by the entrance, to Radhe’s stall, and I’ll put Dhira in Radharani’s stall.” I told her, “Now you’re going to behave well, because all the children who come in here, the first little cow they see is you, right?” From that moment on, she did not move again, and milking her became a joy—even for the very youngest children.” —Alberto



After some time, Dina Sharana and Damodara Priya noticed some problems with her udders. They suspected it might be mastitis and called the veterinarian, who confirmed their suspicion. The veterinarian diagnosed her with chronic mastitis and suggested they dry her off. After discussing it, they decided to do so. Dhira responded very well to the treatment and indeed dried up completely, so they stopped milking her. No one could have imagined that everything would change with the arrival of a little orphaned bull calf.

## Dhira Adopts Hanuman

The story of Hanuman, and how Dhira adopted him, once again shows that cows are deeply sensitive beings overflowing with incomparable maternal love.

Eager to learn more about cow care, Damodara Priya and Dina Sharana visited a nearby dairy farm. Upon arrival, at the entrance, they found a small bull calf tied with a short rope. It was midday, and while the other animals were far away, this little calf remained alone, mooing insistently. He was dirty, unable to move from the spot where he also relieved himself. When Damodara Priya looked at him, she felt something special. The calf kept looking at her again and again, mooing as if begging to be rescued.

The whole day passed, and when they were about to leave, the little bull was still there, alone, calling out for help. Seeing this, Damodara Priya gathered the courage to ask the owner why he did not untie him. The man replied that the calf was already one year old and, being male, could impregnate the cows, which was of no interest to them. He also mentioned that they had already decided to send him to the slaughterhouse.

Damodara Priya could not say anything at that moment. She returned home with a heavy heart, and that night she could not sleep—the image of that little calf would not leave her mind. “He is only a year old... still just a baby,” she thought.

The next day she spoke with the leading members of the community, and after several attempts, she managed to convince them to bring the little bull to New Vrajamandala. When the owner was informed of their decision, he seemed surprised:

“What do you want him for? You do not need a bull. He is not smart; he will be of no use to you,” he said.

But for Damodara Priya, those words only strengthened her resolve to save him. That is how Hanuman came to Rupa Goshala. As

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala — Dhira Adopts Hanuman

soon as he was freed, he ran joyfully across the meadows with his tail raised like an antenna, overflowing with happiness. His contagious energy stirred up the whole herd: all the cows began to move more, to play, and to enjoy greater exercise.



Damodara Priya with Hanuman

“When Hanuman arrived at our dairy farm, he was very happy to experience freedom, as he was normally kept tied up to prevent him from getting the cows pregnant. They were planning to sacrifice him because they believed he would be difficult to train and they did not need a bull.” —Damodara Priya

Although they tried to negotiate for his mother as well, who was still

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

nursing him, they could not bring her, as she produced thirty liters of milk a day and the owners refused to sell her.

Hanuman's arrival brought a wave of enthusiasm to the herd. Mischievous and full of energy, he ran after Baladeva and the others, and soon found affection among them. One day, he was seen suckling from Dhira and from Sundari, like a child who once again felt safe and loved.

It was then that, moved by love, Dhira—though already an older, dry cow—adopted him and, astonishingly, began producing milk again, enough to feed Hanuman and also to offer a few liters to the presiding Deities Radha-Govindachandra.

“We thought that Dhira had already done a lot and that it was time for her to live a more peaceful and relaxed life, but apparently the Deities wanted to continue receiving her milk. In fact, Dhira started giving more milk than before; she got rid of all her previous problems, including mastitis. After a while, Hanuman stopped suckling, but Dhira continued to give milk.” —Damodara Priya



Hanuman being trained by Dina Sharana



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala — Dhira Adopts Hanuman

“When Hanuman was a year and a half old, I tried to train him. But he was stubborn and would not obey at all, until one day Dharma pushed him with his horns, as if to say, ‘Behave yourself, you mule!’



Hanuman was good-natured, but he also had his temperament. He wanted to do things his own way and would not obey; that is why they did not want him at the other dairy farm — he was a bit difficult. Later, as he got older, he calmed down, and after Dharma gored him, he settled completely; now he is very gentle and well-behaved.” — Dina Sharana

Parama Karuna describes his first encounter with Hanuman took place and how, little by little, a relationship of trust was forged between them:

“The first time I saw him, I was amazed by his size; he was huge and a bit intimidating, because when he stuck his head out into the corridor of the *goshala*, where the stalls are, I had to pass under him every time I went back and forth. Later, over time, I got to know him and grew more confident around him; you come to realize that what he has in size, he also has in goodness.

He is curious and does not want to miss anything that happens in the *goshala*. Because of his size, he can look over the partitions to see

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

what is going on—and also eat the food of the other cows.

Hanuman stands out not only for his size but also for the way he manages his own time. He takes as much time as he wants to come in or go out. He can stand still in the same position for a long time, whether entering or leaving the *goshala*, blocking the way for the other cows, who have to wait.

Another thing that surprised me is that he loves to look at the river. He can spend the whole morning just watching it.”

## Dhira in the Kitchen

Dhira's passion was food; she loved to eat. However, she did not eat with anxiety or impatience—neither too fast nor too slow—she simply enjoyed every bite calmly. Her expression of pleasure and contentment while eating was, to me, something unique and beautiful to behold.

Dhira would ruminate with her head held high, serene, displaying an unshakable calmness—a simple gesture that revealed her inner peace. When I met her, she was already quite old; it was hard for her to stand up because her hip was misaligned, and she dragged one leg slightly. Yet whenever she heard the sound of the wheelbarrow full of hay or vegetables, she would get up quickly—so much so that by the time the food reached her, she was ready to start chewing.

One cool, rainy morning, Parama Karuna went to milk the cows. He loved that time with them and usually isolated himself completely from the rest of the world. I knew that between 6:30 and 9:00 in the morning, he was not available for anyone. Those hours were his special time of the day. That is why it surprised me when he called: “Madhavi, can you come? Dhira is stuck in the kitchen.”

“Every day when I entered the *goshala*, I turned on the lights and greeted the cows. When I opened the door to the corridor where the individual stalls were, I was surprised not to see Dhira in her place; since she slept right in front of the entrance, she was always the first to appear. I looked to one side and then the other—she was not

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala — Dhira in the Kitchen

there. All the other cows were, except her. Very strange. I greeted the others and went toward the kitchen.

When I arrived, I found an astonishing scene, almost like something out of a movie. Dhira was wedged inside the small kitchen, with her head over the sink. The faucet was broken, and a stream of water was splashing her face. “She is dead,” I thought. “I cannot believe what I’m seeing.” I panicked within seconds. But suddenly Dhira moved. That gave me a bit of relief—she was alive, though she could not move either forward or backward.” —Parama Karuna



After that brief and urgent call, I quickly ran down to the *goshala*. When I arrived, the other cows were looking at one another with a mix of concern and innocence, as if to say they had nothing to do with what had happened, yet at the same time they remained serious and attentive.

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

I entered the kitchen—which, in fact, was not really a kitchen, but a narrow little room where we stored and weighed the milk. There was Dhira, lying down and wedged between the wall, the small refrigerator, the shelf, the sink, and the boxes of milk bottles. With her horns, she had destroyed everything around her, including the faucet, from which a jet of water was still gushing at full pressure.

Her twisted hips were injured from rubbing against the wall; her legs, crossed beneath her body, were pressed against the refrigerator and soaked by the water that had been pouring for who knows how long. She also had cuts from the broken glass bottles, and her dung, mixed with the water, completed that incredible scene.

Parama Karuna and I did not know what to do or where to start. After observing the situation for a bit, it occurred to me to shut off the water valve and begin dismantling the kitchen. We took out everything we could. Some things were easy to move, but others required great effort. Even so, we managed to make it so that at least Dhira was not so tightly wedged in.

However, even though she now had more space, she still could not get up. Without hesitation, we went to ask the devotees for help. Adirasa and Chaita arrived, and later Ugrasena joined them.

They tried to encourage Dhira to stand up, but she could not. Each time she tried, her legs slipped on the wet floor. To help her, they placed straw and soil underneath, but that did not do much either.

Then they dismantled what was left of the kitchen: they removed the door frame, cut down the shelves, and knocked down part of the wall. Dhira now had more room to get out, but even so, she could not move. She was old, tired, and trapped.

The devotees tried to help her by tying ropes around her horns and hips, but that did not work either. I felt sorry to see her like that, so I brought her some food. That was a mistake—she settled down to eat and spent quite a while happily enjoying her meal, as always.

Time went by and the situation did not change, so we decided to

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala — Dhira in the Kitchen

take care of the other cows, who were still watching expectantly. As they left the *goshala*, some passed by quickly, but the more curious ones lingered, looking at Dhira.

Since we had removed the kitchen items, the most inquisitive cows came closer to explore and poke around the different objects, so we also had to keep an eye on them.

Finally, at midday, Dhira got up with the devotees' help. It was a collective effort: one used a stick as a lever to lift her tail, another pulled on the rope tied around her hip. When they saw Dhira respond positively, they knew there was hope.

Overjoyed, everyone began encouraging her with shouts of support:

"Come on, Dhira, come on!"

"Stay strong, Dhira!"

"Let's go, let's go!"

When she finally managed to stand up, Dina Sharana positioned himself in front to guide her backward. One devotee held the rope tied to her horns, another the one around her hip, and together they led her until she was able to step back and turn toward the corridor. They had done it!

That moment was a tremendous relief for everyone. Parama Karuna and I will never forget that day.

Later, when we checked the cameras, we discovered what had happened. Dhira had left her stall the previous night at 11:00 p.m. The door had not been firmly closed, and with her left horn, she managed to unhook the latch that barely held it. She opened the door and went down the corridor straight to the kitchen, where there were carrots and cabbages—her favorite delicacies.

We believe she was tempted by those treats and, despite the space being small, uncomfortable, and hard to access, she ventured inside. What she could not do was get back out. She got stuck and, later, lay down.



## Dhira Leaves Her Body

Damodara Priya always looked after Dhira with great care, as she was the oldest cow and therefore needed special treatment. During the winter, Damodara Priya covered her with a blanket, bought her fruits and vegetables to keep her strong, brushed her even though her hair was short, gave her massages, and occasionally bathed her so that she would always look beautiful. When Dhira did not have the strength to go out to the field with the others, she was moved to the larger space in the *goshala* so she could rest peacefully.

Dhira left her body at the age of nineteen. Three days before her departure, she offered her last milk to the Deities and devotees of New Vrajamandala.

Despite her age and the limitations caused by her bone problems, she remained determined and continued grazing every day in the fields. Until two days before her passing, she was still able to stand up, but on the eve of her departure, despite her efforts, she could no longer keep herself on her feet. With the devotees' help, she was carefully moved throughout the day to ensure her comfort, and on the morning of her passing, they positioned her in a way that allowed her to stretch and relax, offering her a bit of relief.

On her final day, around four in the afternoon, Dina Sharana, Damodara Priya, and Ramanuja understood that her time was near. They offered her Ganges water and began chanting the holy names. That same morning, I had given her *charanamrita*—the water that had bathed Krishna's lotus feet—and she drank it gladly.

Before five in the afternoon, Dhira peacefully left her body without difficulty. Immediately afterward, a large group of devotees gathered to bid her farewell with the chanting of the holy names. That day, there were also about seventy Erasmus guests visiting the farm, and thanks to them, together with the members of the community, they were able to carry her out of the *goshala*. Thus, Dhira received a grand farewell.

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala — Dhira Leaves Her Body

“Our wish was to bury her in New Vrajamandala, the sacred land she had been grazing on. But government regulations required that her body be cremated by the authorities. However, due to delays in the collection of the body and the road closures caused by the local bull festival, we obtained a special permit to bury her on our land. I would like to express special gratitude to Pushpa Gopala, whose efforts were decisive in obtaining that permit and giving Dhira a peaceful resting place.

Throughout her life, Dhira showed remarkable courage and determination, grazing in places where other cows did not dare to go. Although she never had a calf, she produced milk for many years and continued to do so until the end of her life. She even lovingly cared for Hanuman, feeding him with her milk when he arrived here at barely a year and a half old. Although we tried to dry her off due to her advanced age, she insisted on continuing to serve, increasing her production up to nine liters in her later years. Even in her final days, she offered 300 ml of milk, demonstrating her devotion until her last breath.” —Damodara Priya



Dhira is an icon of our *goshala*, a true symbol of what it means to be Krishna’s cow. Among all the special cows of New Vrajamandala, she

was the most special one. All of us who knew Dhira closely agree on that. And we all carry her in a special corner of our hearts, for she was a mother who dedicated herself with determination to the service of Radha-Govindacandra.

## Yamuna — The Tender One

In the early 2000s, the devotees of Rupa Goshala bought a cow on the outskirts of Madrid. They named her Yamuna, in honor of the river that flows through Vrindavan, where Krishna and His friends performed many pastimes. The name suited her perfectly, as her fondness for water would soon reveal itself on more than one occasion.

When the devotees went to collect Yamuna with the temple van, she refused to get in, and it took them nearly four hours before they finally managed to load her. Shortly after, Yamuna gave a strong headbutt and broke one of the side windows. The glass hung loose, and the cow stuck her head out. That is how they crossed all of Madrid—with Yamuna's head poking out the window.

Later, as they were leaving the city, Yamuna struck again with her horn, this time breaking the rear window. So, for the rest of the journey, Yamuna alternated between sticking her head out of the rear window and the side one. That is how she arrived at New Vrajamandala—looking all around through the windows.

«When she arrived at the farm, Yamuna was two years old and about three months pregnant. At the end of her pregnancy, she gave birth to Gopi. It was a very complicated delivery. I remember that December 23rd perfectly. I was returning from India and knew that Yamuna was giving birth, so I went to see her immediately. When I arrived, Gopi had already been born, and Yamuna had what appeared to be the placenta hanging down.

At that time, I was quite inexperienced and did not really understand what was happening. A devotee told me, "That must be the placenta. It will come off during the day, and then she'll eat it herself." The

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala — Yamuna

placenta is very nutritious and helps strengthen the milk for the calf's first days.

However, the next day the supposed placenta was still there. So we quickly called the veterinarian, who arrived right away at the *goshala*. There we discovered that it was not the placenta, but the uterus, which had completely inverted. It is like when you turn a sock inside out. We had to reinsert it as quickly as possible, since Yamuna's life was in danger.

We spent about four hours in total massaging the cow and pushing the uterus back in. We lifted it with a sheet up to the height of the vulva and, with oil and massages, gradually reintroduced it. When one of us got tired, another took over; when the second was exhausted, a third stepped in. In this way, four of us worked for several hours.

Once it was back in place, the veterinarian made some stitches on the vulva to prevent the uterus from coming out again. Yamuna had to be anesthetized, but only lightly, as she needed to remain standing; that way, at least, she would not feel so much pain.

It was December 24th, 9:00 p.m., when the veterinarian said, "Thank God, we've saved her life."» —Anadi

Yamuna recovered well and raised Gopi without any problems. At New Vrajamandala, the calves are not separated from their mothers—they can drink as much milk as they wish. Naturally, however, when they begin to eat grass, their milk intake decreases. Thus, by six months, Gopi started eating more grass and drinking less from her mother. Even so, Yamuna continued producing plenty of milk, so there was more and more to be milked each day.

## Vacation on an Island

One day, in the middle of winter, Yamuna had gone to the other side of the river, to a small island. There she was, enjoying her "vacation," as if she were on a little beach—very calm, eating the greenest grass.

"What are you doing over there, Yamuna?" asked Alberto.

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

Determined to bring her back, he crossed the river using some fallen trees that served as a bridge. Once there, he tried to help her return to the *goshala*, but she flatly refused. She did not want to move. No matter how much he insisted, Yamuna stood her ground firmly. Alberto waited a while and tried again. She walked a little, but as soon as she reached the edge of the river, she suddenly stopped, as if her legs had sunk into the earth. Perhaps she sensed that the river's current had strengthened—or maybe she simply did not feel like returning. The fact was, there was no way to make her move forward.

Alberto, together with his friend Antonio, decided to build her a more accessible path so she could cross more easily, but Yamuna was not interested in that either. She made no effort to come back.

During one of the attempts to get her across, Yamuna moved a little but stumbled and fell into the water. She lay there, and since she was already an older cow, she found it hard to get up. Her head became submerged, and the cowherds, reacting immediately, rushed to grab her by the horns to lift her head so she could breathe. But in the middle of the struggle, Yamuna made a sudden movement, raising her neck so forcefully that Alberto was thrown backward. The impact sent him straight into the water, soaking him from head to toe—in the middle of winter.

Despite that incident and the freezing cold he had to endure, Alberto did not give up on his effort to bring Yamuna back. Moved by her situation, he began visiting her regularly. He brought her fruit and vegetables, stroked and petted her to make her feel more comfortable, and even went there to milk her. Perhaps, he thought, that way he could convince her to come home.

Each time he went to see or milk her, he had to cross the river using the fallen trees, which required extra effort. Yet, despite all his dedication, Yamuna would not yield. The situation was becoming increasingly concerning.



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala — Yamuna



So Alberto decided to consult Venudhara, one of the oldest residents of New Vrajamandala, who had once been one of the most experienced cowherds. After Alberto told him what had happened, Venudhara firmly said:

“Do not give her food. Do not give her anything at all.”

“What do you mean, do not give her food? Poor thing...”

“Not poor thing. Do not give her food.”

Following his advice, Alberto stopped bringing food to Yamuna. He only offered her a small handful of feed when he went to milk her—just enough to wet her mouth and let her lick a little. Nothing more.

On the third day, Yamuna appeared on her own at the barn door. She had understood that if she wanted to eat, she had to come back.

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Having an unfenced river near the dairy farm always presented a risk for the cows. Although the water rarely exceeds half a meter in depth in its usual course, when it floods, it can reach more than a meter and

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

a half, becoming dangerous. Not only did Yamuna have problems trying to cross it; on another occasion, Tilaka also got trapped. Although the water is not always deep, the current and the uneven terrain make it difficult for them to get out on their own.

These incidents made clear the need to take preventive measures to protect the animals and avoid future complications. For this reason, today Rupa Goshala now has protective fence along the entire field that borders the river.

Yamuna was a happy cow: she enjoyed the company of her daughter and, later, her grandson Rupa throughout her life. She lived a very peaceful life and, since giving birth to Gopi, she gave milk for fourteen years. During her time at the dairy farm, she demonstrated her weakness for water, falling into the canal twice and crossing the river twice. On one of those occasions, she was left on the other side of the river for a week; they had to bring her food, milk her, and carve out a path for her, with a pickaxe and shovel, so she could return more easily. And one of the times she fell into the canal, the devotees threw stones for more than three hours so that the depth would gradually decrease, and Yamuna could get out.

### The Farewell

Yamuna stopped giving milk a month before she passed away, as her fondness for water led her into a difficult situation that would eventually cause her death.

The cold was intense when Yamuna left her body. She was already very old, and walking had become hard for her because of her hip. The fields behind the *goshala* were filled with frozen puddles, and she fell into one of them. The surface broke under her weight, trapping her in the water.

The devotees tried to help her with ropes, but it was impossible to free her. Since they could not pull her out, they decided at least to drag her from the puddle and move her to a place with dry grass. They

managed to do so, but once there, she could no longer stand—she could not lift herself up or stay on her feet.

Night was quickly approaching, bringing with it the intense cold that would freeze everything, including Yamuna. They had to act urgently. Unable to move her in time and with night already falling, the devotees looked for alternatives. They decided to light bonfires around Yamuna to keep her warm and help her survive the night. They lit five fires and kept them burning all night, taking turns every two hours to watch over them and make sure Yamuna did not freeze. The next day, Yamuna was still alive, though still unable to get up. They had to find a way to bring her to the *goshala*, where she would be more protected, under a roof and on warm straw. Then Krishna inspired them with an idea: to use a large old iron door. They tied the door to the van and brought it to where Yamuna lay. Taking her legs, they pulled firmly toward the door. Yamuna rolled over her rounded back and was resting on the door within seconds.

Once she was on the door, they slowly dragged her with the van to the *goshala*. There they made her comfortable and cared for her. Death was gradually approaching, and after a month of care, her time was drawing near. It was a difficult period, as lying down for so long caused sores, so they had to turn her over and massage her constantly with ointments.

Finally, the day of her departure came. Alberto covered Yamuna with a blanket, and they carried her body to the *goshala* door. Gopi, who was far away, sensed what had happened and ran toward her mother's lifeless body. She laid her head upon her, moaned loudly three times, and then slowly walked away toward the field.

## Gopi — The Tough One

Yamuna's daughter, Gopi, was a cow with a strong character. From her behavior, one might think she was half cow, half bull. Dealing with her was quite difficult, as she tended to kick and butt with her head. However, with Alberto, Gopi was more gentle—the two shared a very good relationship.

One day, while Alberto was caressing her, she moved and accidentally scratched his arm with her horn.

“Look, Gopi, what you’ve done here! Look! Have I ever hurt you? Why did you do this to me?” Alberto said to her in a deep, serious tone.

Gopi lowered her head and began licking the tiny wound. Seeing her affectionate reaction, Alberto felt how “tough Gopi” had won his heart.



Gopi in her stall

## The Alarm

One night, Gopi's loud mooing echoed throughout the valley:

"Mooooo... mooooo... mooooo...!"

She had a strong voice and a distinctive moo. Everyone could hear her and recognize her call.

"Moooo... mooooooooo...!"

Alberto woke up and went down to the cowshed to see what was happening. Some devotees also woke up and started calling on the phone to find out what was going on. But when Alberto arrived, everything seemed to be in order. Nothing strange. Yet Gopi kept mooing with great intensity.

"But Gopi, what is the matter? Everything is fine... what do you want?"

"Mooooo... mooooooooo...!" she answered with another powerful moo.

Immediately, Alberto suspected what was happening. At that time, the *goshala* was divided into two areas. Almost a kilometer away were other cows, and among them was one about to give birth.

"Could it be that the cow has given birth?" Alberto wondered.

He quickly went up to the house of Mahalaksmi, a dedicated devotee and friend of New Vrajamandala. He woke her up and asked for her car keys. He also woke her son Ananda and asked him to come along in case he needed help.

When they arrived at the other *goshala* and turned on the lights, they were struck with wonder—there was the newborn calf. Gopi had been giving the alarm.

## A Difficult Milking

Alberto recalls:

"Gopi—truthfully, I loved her very much; I felt a strong affection for her. We had something unique. But she was not easy to handle, and even less so when it came to milking. She constantly tried to kick; she

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

never stopped. So, with one hand I had to milk, and with the other I had to block and restrain her legs so the kicks would not hit the bucket where I collected the milk. She did not stay still for a moment. It was not easy, but somehow we had gotten used to it.

There was one day when I was very sick, with a fever, feeling awful. But of course, I had to milk. So I went down to the *goshala* as best I could to do my service. When I entered Gopi's stall, I said to her: Listen, Gopi, behave well today, please. You know I'm really unwell. I'm exhausted. Please do me a favor and do not move."

I went inside, and—can you believe it?—she did not move at all. Not one bit. She stayed perfectly still for the entire milking.

When I finished and stepped out of the stall, she started kicking again, just as usual. It was incredible."

Cows are gentle creatures endowed with a silent wisdom that few can truly grasp. On that day of exhaustion, when Alberto could barely stand, Gopi, through her behavior, revealed the depth of that bond that transcends the visible. It was not just about milking or daily routine—it was about mutual understanding, an unspoken respect. Cows know when their companion needs a moment of respite, and through a simple act, they become something far greater than mere animals of production. Gopi was very rebellious, but at the same time also very perceptive. When someone unpleasant, aggressive, or rough-mannered arrived, she would immediately become agitated and moo loudly, as if in protest. She was very sensitive to people's moods. When small children of four or five years wanted to milk her, Alberto would say,

"Hey, Gopi, behave yourself, it is a little child."

And she would not move.

Cows are very sensitive beings; they can perceive everything that happens around them. Another very clear example is when the veterinarian comes. Cows do not like the vet because he pricks their tails, sometimes takes their blood, or performs tests that prick their necks—and they do not like that. What they do like is being brushed.



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala — Gopi

On the day the vet arrives, the cowherds act as if it is just an ordinary day, pretending nothing unusual is about to happen, but they never manage to fool the cows. The cows always know—and they try to run quickly toward the field.

### Gopi Leaves Her Body

Time passed, and the moment came to bid farewell to Gopi. Usually, before departing, cows lie down, stop getting up, stop eating, and stop drinking water. They remain like that for a few days, until their time arrives. Gopi had been lying down for three days, waiting for the moment to leave her body. The devotees stayed with her; they had prepared a cozy spot, a parasol protected her from the sun, and they took turns chanting the holy name by her side.

Suddenly, the devotee who was outside with her came into the *goshala* to call the cowherd:

“Alberto! Alberto! Come quickly, Gopi has left her body!”

Alberto rushed to the door and saw Gopi move her ear, as if waving her hand, as if to say, “Bye-bye.”

“She is not dead! She moved her ear!”

“Yes, she is gone,” replied the devotee.

Alberto approached and touched her, confirming that she had indeed left her body. Astonished, he turned to Eva, another companion who was there, and said,

“Did you see what she did? Did you see her move her ear?”

“Yes, yes, I saw it too,” she replied.

Thus, in an atmosphere of love and reverence, the devotees accompanied Gopi on her final journey, surrounding her with chanting and care until her departure. In that moment, everyone was reminded that true bonds transcend time and form—connections that leave indelible memories in the heart.

“I remember very well when Gopi was leaving her body. My family and I were there with her, chanting the holy name. There she was,

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covered up, no longer getting up. It was incredible to be with her until the very last moment. We saw Alberto there, especially with Gopi... his eyes were shining, on the verge of tears. That made our own tears start to flow as well. In that moment, we realized that relationships of love go beyond physical bodies. They are bonds that remain eternally. Saying farewell to the great Gopi together as a community was a sad moment—but also a beautiful one.” —Laksmāna



## Rupa — The Gentle One

Anadi Krishna Prabhu, known among the devotees simply as Anadi, tried to artificially inseminate Gopi three times. For each attempt, they waited for her fertile period and called the veterinarian, who brought semen from an American bull named “Ringo.” All three attempts failed. Because of the high cost of each procedure, Anadi decided not to try again and moved Gopi to the enclosure of the “dry cows.”

Eight months later, a devotee came running to him and shouted:

“Hey! There is a calf among the dry cows! Have you seen it?”

“What are you saying?!” replied Anadi incredulously.

He went to check, and behind Gopi he found a beautiful calf nursing from her large udders that hung between her legs. The last insemination had not failed—it had been a complete success! Gopi had given birth in the field, somewhere within the twenty hectares set aside for grazing and roaming. There, Rupa was born. Thus, Gopi returned to the group of milking cows and raised her little calf there. Rupa was beautiful, with a light, almost golden blond color.



Rupa taking his first steps

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

When he was born he was very small, but over time he grew into an enormous ox, weighing over a thousand kilograms. Despite his size, he was extremely gentle and kind. People who visited the dairy farm were astonished and delighted by his beauty, nobility, and majesty.

Unfortunately, one day Rupa injured himself beneath one of his hooves. The wound went unnoticed, and since he remained in good spirits, no one realized there was a problem. Time passed until the injury developed into an infection. By the time the symptoms became apparent, it was already too late. Only when Rupa lay down and refused to get up did they discover what was happening. The infection had advanced considerably, and after a long and difficult month of treatment with antibiotics and manual drainage of the pus, Rupa passed away from septicemia.

Rupa left a lasting memory in the *goshala*. Unlike his mother, his nature was completely gentle and peaceful. In his honor, the *goshala* took his name and is now known as “Rupa Goshala,” which means “the *goshala* of Rupa.”



## Radharani — The Queen

Laxmi was a Holstein cow, and Dharma a Brown Alpine bull. From them was born a little calf: Radharani. She was able to drink as much milk as she wanted for as long as she pleased—in fact, she nursed from Laxmi for more than a year.

"Radharani was born on October 1, 2008. Her father was the noble Dharma, and her mother was Laxmi, a Holstein cow given to me by Krishna Devi Dasi when her father closed his dairy farm upon retiring.



From a young age, Radharani was independent, clever, and mischievous—just like her mother. At four months old, she was already nibbling on grass and tasting the feed, and by six months she was eating like the adult cows, though she continued nursing for more than a year." —Anadi

Today Radharani is a large black cow. She has slender horns that curve toward the sky, big beautiful eyes with long, even eyelashes. Her legs

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

are strong and elegant, her build graceful, and her gait smooth and dignified.

Her size and character command respect. She is always the last to enter the stalls, and when she does, the other cows step aside from the corridor. Sometimes you can even see a few lowering their heads as she passes. She is the queen of Rupa Goshala.

Though mischievous, Radharani was also gentle but very reserved. It is not easy to approach her; she does not like to be touched unless she feels enough trust to allow it. To build a relationship with Radharani requires much patience and affection. Winning her heart is not so simple.

Over time and through daily interaction, we can see how cows respond to us. They're not like dogs—a dog, with just a bit of bread, quickly trusts you and follows you. With cows it is different: you can give them orders, make them go in or out, but forming a close relationship is another matter. Paul recalls how he came to build his bond with the queen of the *goshala*.

“Radharani was very sensitive—you could not touch her. Every time I tried to get closer to her, hoping to connect, she would not allow it. My daily routine was that after milking and brushing the cows, I took them out to the field one by one. Before they went out, I would caress each one—the eyes, the face, the fringe, the belly, the neck—and then open the door for her to leave. That is how it was with the first, the second, with all of them. But when it came to Radharani's stall, no. I simply opened the door and she went out. She would not let me show her any affection; it was the same every day.

Almost four months went by until one day I opened the door and she did not want to go out. She lowered her head in front of me, and I understood instantly: ‘Is she asking me to caress her too?’ From that moment on, she allowed me to stroke her belly, behind her ears, everywhere... and then she would go out to the field. From that day on, she accepted me.

From this experience, I drew a conclusion: for more than three months, she had been watching, watching, watching... She observed



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Radharani

my every move, how I treated the others. Every being has its own rhythm for allowing us to come close. With time and daily care, both we and they lose our fears. Many cows have suffered traumas that take time to overcome.” —Paul

Radharani went through two traumas that were difficult to bear. The first occurred when she and Sundari were moved from Anadi’s *goshala* to Rupa Goshala, located barely a kilometer away. It was a very difficult transfer, as both cows, newly pregnant, did not want to leave. The second trauma happened during childbirth, when she gave birth to a stillborn calf. Anadi recalls:



“In May 2012, I gave Radharani and Sundari to the temple’s *goshala*. At that time, I had nine cows and two bulls, while the temple had only four, as several cows and an ox had recently died. The transfer was traumatic; both cows were three months pregnant, and Radharani lost her calf during birth. She also suffered from being separated from her mother and her companions, becoming more distant. Even so, she continued giving a few liters of milk each day, and thanks to the loving daily care of her keepers, her temperament gradually changed over time.”

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

The two shocks Radharani endured were so severe that their effects lasted quite some time. However, through the patience and affection of the cowherds, she gradually overcame them. In time, she became gentler and more trusting, allowing herself to be loved by those who inspired her confidence.

“When Radharani and Sundari reached the edge of the fenced area where they lived, they refused to continue walking along the road. There was no way. We were a group of devotees trying to get them to move, pulling them with a rope, but they would not budge. In the end, a tractor came; we tied them and slowly dragged them forward because they dug their hooves into the ground, resisting every step. One of them fell and hurt her knee. It was a mess. It took us a long time to get from one *goshala* to the other. Then, helping them get used to the new place was not easy either. At first, they slept outside; later we managed to get them into the larger area, at least to eat, because they had not yet integrated with the other cows. Both were pregnant. Sundari gave birth without problems to Jagannatha, an ox who is still with us today. He was born on Ratha-yatra day, and it was a very beautiful story. But Radharani had complications during childbirth. By Krishna's grace, Prema Murti, who has experience with cows, was there to help me. We made a tremendous effort, but when we finally pulled the calf out, it was already dead.” —Alberto

For more than a decade, Radharani faced these challenges with introspection, courage, and resilience. Her gaze changed and became more solitary, yet she always remained calm and peaceful. Still, milking her after the loss of her calf was a great challenge. The cowherds who accompanied her and still serve her today had to develop new skills in order to handle her.

Alberto recounts that milking her was extremely difficult because she kicked fiercely—it was necessary to tie her legs, and even then it remained dangerous. Over time, as she got to know the cowherds, she gradually became more gentle.

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Radharani

“Once, Alberto went away for two weeks and I was left in charge of the cows. He had already taught me everything, but there was one cow, Radharani, whom only he could milk. It was very difficult for me; I tried, but she would not let me. Even so, I did not lose patience... I kept getting to know her, speaking to her kindly, and treating her well. As the days went by, we connected, and she let me touch her.

One day, when I started milking her, a family arrived with their children, full of happiness. I also felt very happy. While all this was happening, Alberto arrived too, radiating joy. I have those moments etched in my heart: Radharani, Alberto, the family, and I, all sharing a transcendental happiness." —Ratnanga

“Prema Murti and Alberto trained Radharani well, so she always goes to her place on her own when we milk her. In the beginning, she gave only half a liter of milk per day because of the small size and delicacy of her udders. However, after the herd expanded and she had time to rest inside the *goshala*, her production increased to three liters a day. Radharani has several sponsors who help with her upkeep. One of them is the *brahmacari* Rasananda Sankirtana, who spent a long time with us caring for the cows. With great enthusiasm, he cleaned the stalls and had a very special affection for Radharani, whom he always lovingly called ‘Radha,’ and he milked her every day. Now, even from his *brahmacari ashram*, he continues to send monthly support for her.

Another devotee and dear friend of ours, Sahadeva, visited the cows daily during his long stay at New Vrajamandala and became a great admirer of Radharani, so he also contributes.

Radharani has also inspired Ana and her mother, devotees who live in Lisbon. They have grown very fond of her and faithfully help each month to cover the expenses of her care. They always ask about her well-being. When they come to visit, Ana goes to the village to buy carrots especially for her and for the whole herd. With great devotion, she also offers direct service to all the cows.” —Damodara Priya

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

Yamuna-mayi, daughter of Parvati, is a very sweet calf who has the peculiarity of not only suckling from her own mother but also from other cows, including Radharani. In this way, Radharani, who has not had the experience of being a mother, could finally see her wish fulfilled. When Yamuna-mayi suckles from her, Radharani feels so much satisfaction that she closes her eyes and can be seen looking very happy.



"Nowadays, Radharani is much more affectionate and has overcome her trauma. Some cows take a long time to heal, even with good treatment and love from their caretakers. Now she allows us to pet her and shows her gratitude for the attention she receives, being much more integrated into her herd. The day we decided to put a collar around her neck, her eyes shone and her behavior changed. It was as if she felt special..." —Damodara Priya

The story of Radharani invites us to reflect on the sensitivity of cows and the importance of learning with humility from those who have more experience and have already formed a bond with them. We must be fully aware of how we treat them, for they teach us to awaken our own sensitivity.

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala — Parvati

Cows possess an innate goodness, a purity that we humans often lack. They always remain in the mode of goodness and cannot go to a lower mode. Human beings, on the other hand, fluctuate between goodness, passion, and ignorance. Sometimes, out of impatience or frustration, we expect cows to adapt to our emotional state—but that will never happen. We may hurry them, shout at them, or even mistreat them, but none of that benefits anyone.

The real task is to transform ourselves—to rise to the level of goodness so that we can relate to them with respect and love. Cows do not respond to fear or violence; they respond only to affection. With just our voice, we can convey authority, gratitude, or tenderness. They understand these subtleties and, in return, offer us their protection and unconditional devotion.

Radharani is the beloved black cow of Radha-Govindachandra. She lovingly serves Them with her milk every day, even though she was never able to raise her calf. Today she is 17 years old, 13 of which she has spent offering her milk to Their Lordships.

## Parvati — The Relaxed One

Parvati came from Málaga in 2023, when she was barely two years old. The devotees rescued her because her owner wanted to send her to the slaughterhouse, as she belonged to a breed prone to many illnesses. Miraculously—or rather, by Krishna’s mercy—she has remained healthy ever since her arrival at Rupa Goshala.

Parvati was already pregnant, although still very young. Normally, one waits longer before a cow has her first calf, so Parvati gave birth to her son Ganesh while she was still a heifer.

The birth took place at night, in her stall, while everyone was asleep. Parvati, lying down with her tail resting against the door, began to push, and Ganesh came out without any complications. Since her tail was still on the door, the calf fell into the corridor.

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

When Damodara Priya and Dina Sharana checked the cameras in the morning to make sure everything was fine in the *goshala*, they saw a small black calf walking down the corridor, visiting the other cows one by one.

They quickly went to bring the newborn back into the stall with his mother. Soon after, Ganesh had begun to nurse, but he was not drinking enough to reduce the amount of milk accumulated in Parvati's udders, which became swollen. They had to call the veterinarian.



Dina Sharana and Damodara Priya with newborn Ganesh

Since Ganesh continued drinking too little, the vet said it was necessary to milk Parvati to relieve her. Parvati was furious. Even though four people were holding her by the horns, she would not let anyone touch her—she was in great pain. Finally, after quite some effort, they managed to milk her.



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Parvati and Ganesh

Over time, Parvati became a calm cow, and today she allows herself to be milked with great gentleness. She now has the body of a full-grown cow—her face and temperament have changed. She is of the Belgian Blue breed, which surprised the *goshala*'s veterinarian when he saw her producing milk regularly.

### Ganesh — The Bold One

Ganesh is fearless, amiable, and playful. He is always looking for someone to play with and is often unaware of how strong he is. Whenever someone goes out to the field with the wheelbarrow, he starts running with excitement. His weakness is charging at it with great enthusiasm. *Parvati con su hija*



Ganesh with his mother Parvati

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



Ganesh in his youth



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Parvati and Yamuna-mayi

### Yamuna-mayi — The Sweet One

On the night of June 27, 2025, Parvati gave birth to a beautiful little calf, Yamuna-mayi. She is very sweet, gentle, and calm, and her charm draws everyone's attention. She is yet another blessing for New Vrajamandala, an auspicious sign of Krishna's mercy.

Yamuna-mayi is careful by nature and quickly won the affection of all the members of the herd. Even so, she is very independent and accepts other cows as mothers. Kunti loves taking care of Yamuna-mayi, and Yamuna-mayi enjoys drinking her milk. She also brings joy to Radharani, for Radharani lost her only calf, and this is the first time she has been able to nurse a little one.



Yamuna-mayi with Parvati, Dina Sharana and Madhavi

## Rukmini — The Reserved One

The story of Rukmini also begins in Anadi's *goshala*—he was the one who saw her come into this world.

“Rukmini was born in September 2009, the daughter of Dharma and Kartika. She was very close to Sundari and became deeply upset when I gave her to the temple—and even more so when her mother, Kartika, and her other friend, Bhumi, were taken away to be sacrificed because they had supposedly contracted tuberculosis, which was later disproved by the autopsy. But the damage had already been done.

Rukmini always had a rebellious and reserved temperament, like her mother Kartika, but all those circumstances made it worse.

In October 2019, I came to India to stay for six months, and I only had Dharma, the bull, and Rukmini left, who remained under the care of Devarsi Prabhu and Sriji Didi. When Covid arrived in March 2020, I ended up trapped in India for more than two years. Devarsi and Sriji took care of my *goshala*, which then had only Dharma and Rukmini. But in 2023, Devarsi began working elsewhere, so they gave both animals to the *goshala* at New Vrajamandala.” —Anadi

That is how Rukmini and Dharma became part of the herd at Rupa Goshala.

Devarsi and Dina Sharana organized the transfer from the field to the *goshala*—eight hundred meters on foot. However, Rukmini, known as a strong, fiery, and distant cow, was not going to let things go so easily.

Taking Dharma was not a problem, since he was a very tame bull; they tied him and he walked obediently with them. Rukmini, on the other hand, began running all over the field, with everyone chasing her, running among the trees and trying to corner her. When they finally managed to do so, they tied her up, but she still refused to leave her place. She did not like going somewhere unfamiliar without knowing what would happen to her. Yet, forced by circumstances, she began to walk. After about two hundred meters, she stopped and lay

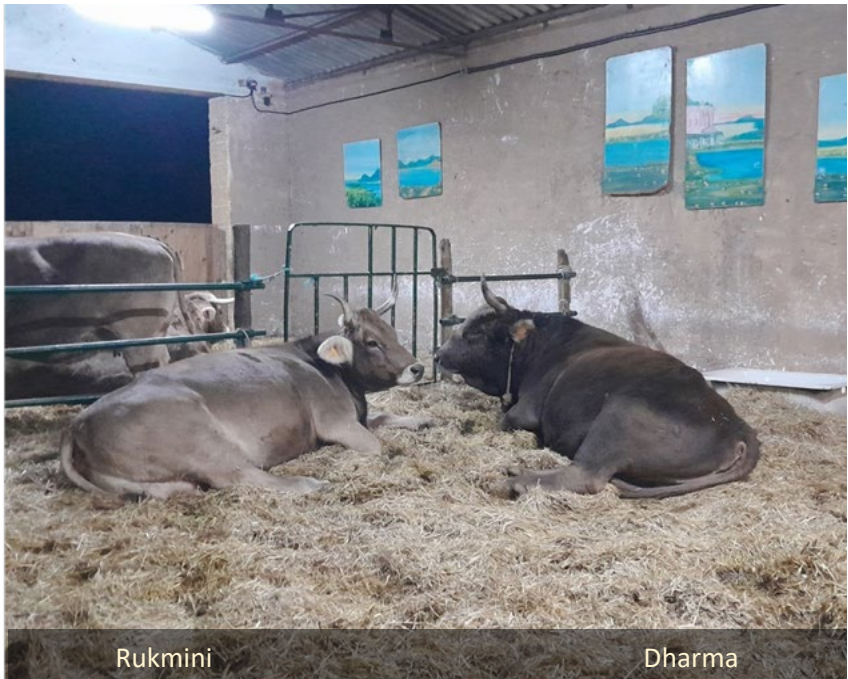
## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Rukmini

down in the middle of the road. She refused to get up, move forward, or turn back.

Seeing this, Dina Sharana untied Rukmini and said, “All right, go wherever you want,” and they took only Dharma.

Rukmini was left alone on the road, in a place unknown to her. At that moment, she gave up her resistance and, on her own, began to follow her father Dharma. Soon they arrived together at the *goshala*.

When they arrived, the cowherds had prepared a special place for both of them, as they were always together. Father and daughter shared such a deep bond and attachment that they were dependent



on one another.

One day, Dina Sharana noticed that Rukmini’s udders were very large, swollen with milk. Rukmini, to this day, has never been pregnant—yet there she was, ready to be milked. But Rukmini does

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

not allow anyone to come near her; she does not like being touched. Still, she had to be milked. Dina Sharana tells the story of that adventure:

“The udders were too full, but I thought, how am I going to milk her if she wo not let me get close? So I tried, dodging and taking blows from her horns, kicks, and shoves. At that time, she was fourteen years old and had never been milked before. She did not know what it was—never a birth, never a calf. So just touching her udders—which, of course, is a very intimate part for cows—frightened her terribly. Even though I tied her by the horns, she began jumping with her hind legs, moving from side to side, kicking like a karate fighter... she did everything she could. Just milking her took me forty minutes. The first day was very hard for both of us. She had so much milk that it was clear she had been like that for a while; at first, it came out with blood, and since she had never been milked, it hurt when I pressed. That is how it began, and little by little she calmed down. Later, she started letting herself be touched—not on the face, but on other parts of her body. We kept milking her; she still gives a few kicks at the beginning, but then she relaxes. From the very first day, she gave three liters of milk, and to this day, three years later, she continues to give three liters every day.”

Rukmini was raised with affection—but only as much as she allowed. She lived through experiences and traumas that hardened her nature. She always keeps her distance. She was never docile, nor did she want to be tamed. And yet she offers what she has. She never gave birth, never had a calf, but she gives milk every day. No one demands it of her. She does it because she wants to and because she can. Her body, her energy, her whole being are offered to God. This is her form of *bhakti*, devotional service—service offered without expectation, without need for reward, and without anyone watching.

What Rukmini gives is not only milk—it is a direct lesson that service does not depend on temperament, past experiences, or comfort. It is the essential function of the soul. And though her body



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Rukmini

is strong, guarded, and mistrustful, she expresses her love through that silent willingness to give. This is how Krishna's cows serve. By watching them, we are reminded of who we are and where we should be heading.



## Madhurya and Rasa — Two Exceptional Mothers

Pushpa Gopal and Godruma-pati had long cherished the desire to offer more milk to the Deities. At that time, among the four cows they had, only about three liters of milk were obtained daily. There were not many cows, and Alberto, after serving them for so long almost on his own, was not ready to take on the responsibility of bringing in more animals.

But when Dina Sharana and Damodara Priya arrived, they assessed the situation together with Alberto and, with the help and goodwill of Pushpa and Godruma-pati, decided to buy two more cows for Rupa Goshala. One would be donated by Pushpa Gopal and Godruma-pati, and the other would be sponsored by a great friend of the cows, Oleg Ulyanov.

Alberto knew where to buy them—from a dairy farm near Madrid—because he had prior experience and personally took charge of speaking with the owner. He asked if there were any pregnant cows, and the owner said yes. Then he told the others, “It is better to buy pregnant cows; that way, later on, we’ll have four instead of two.”

However, Damodara Priya was concerned. She agreed with expanding the herd but felt her experience was not yet enough to go so quickly from four to eight cows. Then Yadunandana Swami said to her, “Do not worry—Krishna always helps.”

Thus, Damodara Priya surrendered to the will of Krishna and the devotees, trusting that she would be able to do it. That faithful surrender was a very important step, for later, together with her husband Dina Sharana, she would come to care for a herd of seventeen animals—including cows, oxen, a bull, calves, a donkey named Ramanya, and several sheep.

It was winter, and when the devotees organized the trip to Madrid, it was cold, raining, and in some areas there was snow. Even so, they

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Madhurya and Rasa

went, and there they met the cowherd—a man who cared for his cows as if they were part of his family. It was clear that he was fond of them: he took them out to pasture every day; they were well cared for and looked healthy and beautiful. However, the man could not afford to keep them all and was forced to part with some. It was very sad.

The devotees had to choose only two among the twenty-five cows there. It was very difficult, because they were all beautiful. Pushpa Gopal recalls:

“I thought, I’m going to bring *prasadam*. If I offer them *prasadam*, they’ll come to eat, and that way we’ll know... the one who likes it must be a devotee.

But there was one in particular who loved it. She eagerly looked for more and always wanted another piece. She even became a bit restless from excitement. That cow’s name was Margarita. We chose her, but the owner did not want to sell her because she was pregnant and close to giving birth.”

Dina Sharana was convinced that she had to be the one, because she had accepted the *prasadam* with such enthusiasm. It was an excellent sign. Determined, he went to speak with the owner and, after some time, managed to persuade him. That is how Margarita came to our *goshala*.

We gave her the name Madhurya (“the Sweet One”), because what most distinguishes her is her splendid temperament—her sweetness, love, and gentleness. There is no other cow in Rupa Goshala with those qualities. Moreover, her life so far has been very peaceful; she has never suffered from any problems or trauma.

But aside from Madhurya, there was another cow who also stood out for her appetite: Rasa. She ate and ate—she never stopped! So, in the end, they brought the two cows who had been the most excited about the *empanada-prasadam*.



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Madhurya and Rasa



Madhurya digesting prasadam



Rasa waiting for prasadam

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

Frankly, they could have taken them all, because every one of them was beautiful. But those two, besides their fondness for *prasadam*, also showed excellent physical and anatomical form. Godruma-pati recalls:

“Among all the cows, Rasa caught my attention because from the very beginning she allowed herself to be petted and enjoyed that affectionate contact with the devotees. It was as if, with her tender and loving gaze, she was saying, ‘Choose me, take me with you.’ In the end, we chose this cow as well and decided to name her ‘Rasa’ because of her sweet and loving nature, which she always shows to everyone.”

Both cows were pregnant, and soon after they gave birth without any complications. Madhurya gave birth to Baladeva, and twenty days later, Rasa had Subhadra.

### Baladeva — The Fearless Saint

Baladeva was born on June 24, 2018. The birth had some complications, as he seemed reluctant to leave his mother Madhurya's womb. Since the time had come, the cowherds had to pull him out by his legs.

Madhurya is a very traditional mother, like mothers of old, always keeping her calf well under control. Even after her son Baladeva grew up and became a large ox, she continued to care for him and stayed close by his side.

From the very beginning of his life, Baladeva was always surrounded by his caretakers. He received plenty of affection and love, especially from Damodara Priya and Dina Sharana.

He grew up happy and always trusting toward people. Having never suffered mistreatment, to this day he allows everyone to pet him; he loves being brushed and shown affection.

Baladeva is quite adventurous. Sometimes he crosses the river to graze on a small island. And although he is calm and tame, he enjoys



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Madhurya and Baladeva

rough play—especially with his friend, the ox Hanuman, and lately also with the new ox Arjuna.

Once, when Baladeva was six months old, he was grazing near the edge of the canal. He did not notice Hanuman coming up behind him, and Hanuman pushed him. Baladeva fell into the water.



Dina Sharana carrying newborn Baladeva

“It was December, and the water was freezing. When Damodara Priya saw Baladeva in the canal, she let out a loud scream, and all the cows—his mother leading the way—came running. Subhadra came quickly too, because Subhadra is like a sister to Baladeva. She always worries about him. His mother came to protect him and see what was happening.

So I had to get into the canal to try to pull him out. Since the canal is very narrow and deep, he could not get out by himself. When he managed to place his front legs on the edge, he could not lift his hind legs, so I had to help him.

I had to submerge myself and push him up from underneath, lifting him from behind, but even then, he could not make it—he was already very heavy.

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

I guided him through the water to a shallower spot, but we still could not get him out. So we called for help; someone else came, we tied a rope around his little horns, and while one person pulled the rope to keep him from sliding backward, the other pushed from behind and upward to lift him out of the canal.

Finally, we managed to pull him out. The whole ordeal lasted nearly an hour, and the two of us were left there, freezing, shivering from the cold.” —Dina Sharana



Baladeva with his mother Madhurya

“I have an experience with Baladeva and all the cows that filled my heart. Once I was out in the field with them, and Baladeva—who was not as big back then, maybe half his current size—stepped on my foot. He did it in such a way that, besides stepping on me, he also slipped to one side. Of course... I screamed. It was such a loud scream that it echoed through the whole valley. And because I screamed so loudly, all the cows came running toward me. Can you imagine?

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Madhurya and Baladeva

Even Radharani—yes, even Radharani—came.

They had all been lying down, some in one field, some in another... and they all came. I can still picture Rasa's face, alarmed, as if asking, 'What happened?' I still have that image in my mind.

Before I knew it, they were all there, worried.

It was a moment that filled me with love... I felt so good seeing them there with me. I realized that while we take care of them, they also take care of us." —Damodara Priya

"Baladeva is the kindest, calmest, and most approachable—the sweetest, most loving, and saintly of all. He is trusting, he loves people, petting, and brushing. So much so that if you brush him out in the field, he'll follow you around so you do not stop, and he won't let you brush any other cow. Baladeva is so tolerant that you can do anything to him, and he'll just stand there, undisturbed." —Parama Karuna



Baladeva likes to challenge Arjuna to see who is stronger. They lock horns and begin to push. Baladeva is enormous—one of the most impressive oxen you have ever seen. Arjuna, on the other hand, is still

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

a young and growing ox, smaller but full of spirit. It might seem that Baladeva takes advantage by facing such a young rival. But Arjuna, though smaller, is pure muscle, pure strength.

Madhurya, for her part, also has her own character: she is quite steady in her habits—she always does the same things and sticks to them. I always see her the same way, in the same mood.

The only time I saw her different was when she was in heat. During those days, she did not want to come into the *goshala* and preferred to stay out in the field. She showed a deep longing to be a mother, so I was overjoyed when I found out she was pregnant. It seems her greatest happiness is motherhood.

### Krishnachandra — The Mellow One

When Madhurya gave birth to Krishnachandra, the atmosphere in the *goshala* changed instantly, filled with the euphoric energy of love radiating from her. It was an incredible experience—just crossing the threshold, everyone could feel a wave of joy sweep through the air.

But the birth itself was a dramatic and suspenseful event.

Krishnachandra was born on August 14, 2025, just two days before the most auspicious day on the Vaiṣṇava calendar—Janmastami, the appearance day of Krishna. He is black, with curly hair, clearly inheriting the features of his father, Ganesh.





## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Madhurya and Krishnachandra

The delivery was complicated because the calf was breech, coming out hind legs first. Normally, calves are born with their front legs and head first. The cowherds had to intervene.

At two in the afternoon, Madhurya began to release the amniotic fluid. Dina Sharana and Paul stayed alert, waiting for the delivery to progress. Three hours passed with no advancement. They called several veterinarians, but none were able to come. The situation was urgent, so they decided to act themselves.

Dina Sharana inserted his hands into the birth canal and quickly located the calf's legs. They tied them with a soft cloth and began pulling gently. While Paul pulled, Dina Sharana widened the passage and adjusted the body. That is when they realized the calf was upside down. Working together, they slowly repositioned and delivered him.



Paul and Dina Sharana hold newborn Krishnachandra while Hanuman observes the scene with curiosity

Madhurya, at fourteen years old, had little strength left. She remained standing, trusting and surrendered to her caretakers—her life and her son's were in their hands. Gradually, with careful effort and



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

coordination, Paul pulled while Dina Sharana guided. Meanwhile, Madhurya, sensing her son's scent, was frantically searching for him, unaware that he was still inside her womb.



Yadunandana Swami greets  
the new member of the community

Finally, with one last effort, the little calf fell into Dina Sharana's arms. Seeing him motionless, Dina grew alarmed and gave him a few gentle taps on the face. Then Krishnachandra began to breathe. The cowherds stepped back and burst into tears of joy. Dina Sharana recalls the experience:

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Madhurya and Krishnachandra

“There is no cow—and there will probably never be another—like Madhurya. When it was all over, we were covered with her saliva and blood. She looked at us and began to lick us clean, just as she did with her newborn calf.”



Madhavi fondling Krishnachandra

The delivery had lasted nearly three hours. While the cowherds did everything possible to bring out the calf, the devotees had gathered and were chanting the holy names of the Lord. One group went to pray before an image of Nrisimhadeva kept in the *goshala*, while another group chanted the Hare Krishna *mantra* around the stall

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

where the birth was taking place. Yadunandana Maharaja was also present to give blessings and to suggest the name for the black calf—Krishnachandra.

When the delivery ended and it was clear that everything had gone well, they announced his birth by blowing the conch shell, and the chanting became even more joyful and exuberant.

The presence of Krishna in that chanting once again showed how the Supreme Lord personally cares for His cows.

Today, Ganesh—the father of young Krishnachandra—is the fiercest and most rebellious of the *goshala*, while Madhurya is the sweetest and most loving. Their temperaments are complete opposites, and everyone is eager to see what kind of disposition Krishnachandra will have. In these first days, he already shows quick learning: he plays with Yamuna-mayi and longs for his mother's affection, which she never tires of giving.

Two weeks later, some aspects of little Krishnachandra's personality were already evident. He is gentle and kind like his mother and his brother Baladeva. He is very trusting and enjoys human company. He loves being touched and petted.

Krishnachandra has a favorite teat and always tries to nurse from the same one. Sometimes Damodara Priya stays with him and hides that teat so he will nurse from the others, but his mother Madhurya notices and protests in her own way.

Although Krishnachandra is still very young, he is growing fast and healthy—and he promises to be a great treasure for Rupa Goshala.

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We now continue with the story of the other exceptional mother: Rasa.

As soon as her daughter Subhadra was born, Rasa began producing an abundance of milk—so much that it was not only enough for her calf but could also be brought to the kitchen and shared among the families of the community.



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala —Rasa and Subhadra

Rasa is the most intelligent cow of the herd. She is attentive, perceptive, and very sensitive. She responds well to instructions and understands everything happening around her.



“When Madhurya and Rasa were pregnant, I was also pregnant—with Jay Gopal. When Baladeva and Subhadra were born, the cowherds shared some of their colostrum with me, that first, highly nutritious milk, so Jay Gopal received a boost of superfood while still in the womb.” —Gauranga-lila

“I really like the cows’ milk because it is very tasty and sweet. When it is heated, it forms a delicious cream on top.” —Jay Gopal

“One day, Rasa was looking for her daughter Subhadra. She could not see her, so she started calling and searching everywhere. Finally, she came up to me and looked straight at me. I told her, ‘Rasa, Subhadra is over there with Damodara Priya, walking in the field.’ She looked at me as if to say, ‘Ah, okay,’ and then went off in that direction. That day I realized how intelligent these animals are—how they seek us out,

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

how they expect responses. Taking care of them is not something mechanical. The relationship with them is deeply personal. They're attentive to what we do and want to see that we're doing things properly." —Pushpa Gopal

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Subhadra was only a few weeks old when the provincial government veterinarian came to conduct a tuberculosis inspection. After checking all the cows, he said, "Rasa is questionable."

The test had not come back negative, but because of a mark on her neck, the vet suspected she might be infected. The devotees explained the origin of the mark and requested a second test. The veterinarian was not convinced and said he would return in a few weeks. If the next test result was still "uncertain" or turned positive, he would take her away to be put down.

Those words caused great fear. Just the thought that Rasa could be taken away brought tears to more than one of the cowherds. Action was taken immediately: Pushpa Gopal and Godrumapati sponsored fresh vegetables—beets, carrots—and she was given *charanamrita*, the water that had washed Krishna's lotus feet, and everything possible was done to strengthen her immune system. They also acquired an ozonizer to purify the water and oxygenate her body. All the devotees in the community contributed in their own way, even some who were far from New Vrajamandala..

"Many devotees got involved, each in their own way. Some searched for information, Pushpa sent lots of food, everyone helped however they could, everyone went to see her..." —Damodara Priya

"I was in Mayapur, and the thought that they might take Rasa made me tremble. I went to the altar of Nrisimhadeva and prayed: 'Please, O Lord, protect Rasa from these people, because they do not know what they're doing. Help us—the situation is serious. The government has sent a veterinarian, and they're taking the cows away. Many times these tests are not reliable.'" —Pushpa Gopal



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Rasa and Subhadra

Rasa was not the only one in danger. Many cattle owners in the area reported that cows were being sent to the slaughterhouse without justification. Some veterinarians claimed tuberculosis when it was not true. The medical tests used had an accuracy rate of barely forty percent. Because of this, the results were often unreliable, and based on them, healthy cows were taken from their owners and killed. These cases were later confirmed when autopsies showed that there had been no tuberculosis at all.

When Rasa was labeled “suspect,” the veterinarian ordered that she be separated from the herd. It was a devastating blow. She was taken away from her daughter, and Subhadra was not allowed to drink her milk. They were separated by a fence. Rasa, distressed and deeply affected, stopped eating. She paced restlessly, desperate because she could not be with her calf. Subhadra, on the other side of the field, kept looking for her, calling out, and waiting to nurse, as she always had.

Until Rasa could not take it anymore.

“The fence that separated the fields was about a meter and a half high, but Rasa jumped over it to reach her daughter. I saw her lift her legs to cross to the other side—first the front ones, then the back. When I saw that, I said to Damodara Priya, ‘This is torture for Rasa—let them be together.’” —Pushpa Gopal

It was six weeks of anxiety and deep concern.

“On one hand, we were thinking about how to help Rasa and prevent her from being taken away, but at the same time the question arose: ‘What if she really does have tuberculosis?’ In that case, the most prudent thing would be to keep her isolated from the others. I was very worried, since I was feeding Subhadra milk. What if she got infected too? It was a huge responsibility.

But after much investigation, we found out that these tests react to other substances as well. Moreover, the veterinarian had performed the test on Rasa’s neck, right where she had dermatitis. So we also

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

thought that could have been the cause of the initial positive result.”

—Damodara Priya

When the waiting period finally ended, the veterinarian returned to perform a new test. All the devotees heard about it and went down to the *goshala*. The whole community was present—watchful, engaged, and emotionally invested in the outcome. This time, it was the devotees who were observing and evaluating the veterinarian as he examined Rasa.

A few minutes before he arrived, the cowherds rubbed Rasa's neck with clove powder, because this natural remedy could interfere with the test result, ensuring that it came out negative. A simple trick, but also a way to show just how unreliable those tests really were.

The diagnosis of bovine tuberculosis can be done using four different methods, each with varying degrees of complexity, accuracy, and cost. Of course, the higher the accuracy, the greater the expense. That is why many veterinarians preferred the cheapest and fastest method, even at the cost of an animal's life.

After massaging Rasa, everything was ready for the veterinarian to repeat the test. The result came back negative—no tuberculosis. The relief and joy were immense. The threat, the fear, the tension, and the sense of helplessness all vanished. The atmosphere filled with happiness and celebration.

This episode will always serve as a reminder that unity among devotees is essential—especially when facing rigid, impersonal, and unjust opposition. The veterinarian was ready to send a healthy cow to the slaughterhouse, but through faith, collective determination, prayer, intelligence, and ultimately Krishna's mercy, Rasa was saved. For it is Krishna who truly protects His cows.

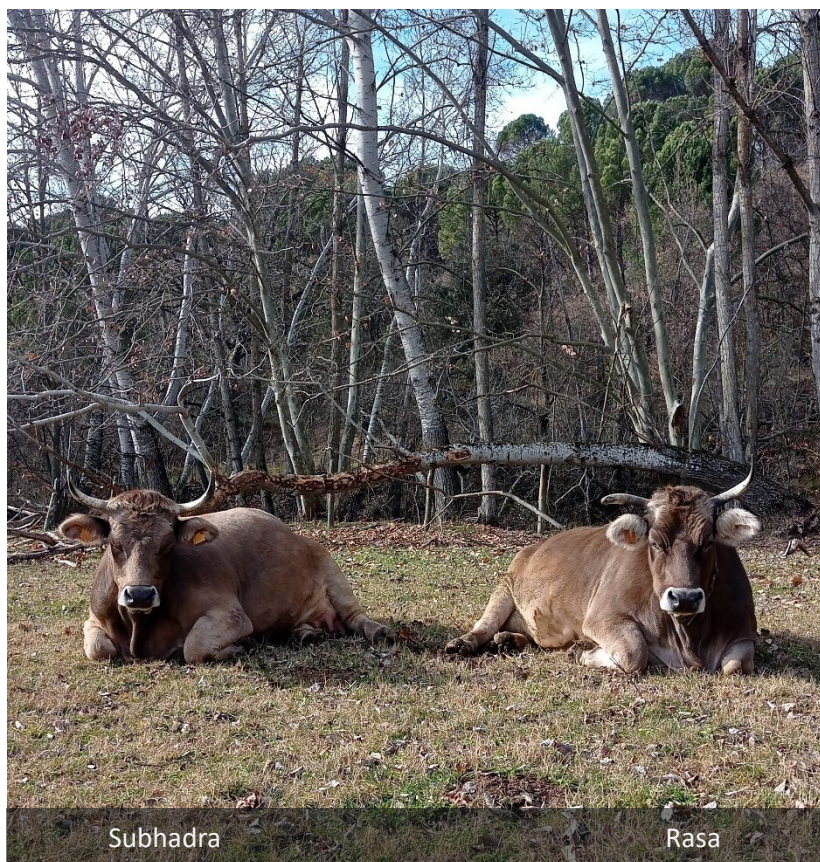
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Cows are exceptional mothers. They care not only for their own calves but also for others when needed. Rasa's love for Subhadra is unique

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Rasa and Subhadra

and special, and it has shown itself on many occasions.

Once, the *goshala*'s veterinarian had to examine Subhadra, who was already five years old at the time. They decided to keep her inside while the other cows went out to the field. But Rasa, who had been left outside, began to moo loudly, pacing back and forth, looking through the windows and calling for her daughter until Subhadra was finally let out. Since then, whenever the veterinarian examines Subhadra, Rasa stays inside as well—so that her daughter feels calm and can see that everything is fine.



That is Rasa—she always gets what she wants.

## Subhadra — The Brave Beauty

Subhadra was born on July 4, 2018, a hot summer day. Before noon, Rasa went into labor. She hid among the trees so that the other cows would not disturb her, and there, calmly and quietly, in the cool shade, she gave birth to the beautiful Subhadra.

“At that time, at two in the afternoon, we would call all the cows to come and rest inside the *goshala*. So they all came—except Rasa. We wondered, why is Rasa not coming? So we went to check the field, but we could not find her. Dina Sharana went to see what was going on. Back then, the field was not properly fenced, and sometimes the cows escaped. Could it be that Rasa had gotten out?

Finally, he found her near the canal, well hidden. I think she had been there for quite some time, so the other cows would not bother her. When Dina Sharana found her, he shouted from afar, ‘She is born!’ and when I got closer, Subhadra was already nursing.” —Damodara Priya



Subhadra playing with Baladeva

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Subhadra and Baladeva

“I was walking near the canal, where there were lots of blackberry bushes, and suddenly a calf came running out of there. At first, I thought it was a little bull, but no—it was a little cow! From the moment she was born, she already had the strength to run, and she grew up to be a fearless cow.” —Dina Sharana

Rasa and Subhadra stayed hidden among the trees until Damodara Priya and Dina Sharana invited them to come into the *goshala*. But Rasa did not want to leave; she did not want to abandon that place. So the cowherds went to fetch a large blanket. They laid the newborn Subhadra on it and carried her like a palanquin—one holding each side. Behind them came Rasa, watchful and a bit nervous, as if saying, “Why are you doing this to my daughter?”

Thus, the four of them arrived at the *goshala*. They placed Rasa and her daughter in their stall, and as soon as they settled in, Subhadra began nursing again.

Subhadra had a very happy childhood alongside Baladeva, the little calf who had been born just twenty days earlier to Madhurya. We believe they were half-siblings, since Madhurya and Rasa came from the same farm, both pregnant—probably by the same bull—which would explain why Subhadra loved Baladeva’s company so much. She always followed him everywhere. When everyone went out to graze, she would wait for Baladeva so they could go together and play. Sometimes Baladeva ignored her, but she followed him anyway.

“One of her first adventures was when we put up an electric fence in the field. The idea was to let the calves graze on one side and the cows on the other. Baladeva approached the electric fence and got a shock. When Subhadra did the same and received a shock too, she got really angry and completely tore down the offending fence.

From that moment on, she proved to be a cow who fears nothing. You cannot yell at her or scold her—she is not afraid. But at the same time, she is a very special cow.” —Dina Sharana



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



Baladeva and Subhadra nursing  
while Thiago touches Subhadra carefully with a straw

Subhadra grew up joyful and healthy among the other cows in the herd, drinking all the milk she wanted. Even as a young cow, her strong character was evident—she was determined and fearless. Over time, her delicate and graceful features became more and more pronounced, making her increasingly beautiful. Even today, when we visit her, we can see those traits that make her a true “beautiful lady.”

When Subhadra turned one year old, she expressed her happiness and gratitude in a gesture that took everyone by surprise.

“Subhadra was out in the field, and I noticed some milk dripping from her udder. At first, I did not think it could really be milk. She was only one year old and was still nursing, so I wondered whether she might have an injury or something might be wrong.

Then I got closer and saw that it truly was milk flowing from her udder. I called Dina Sharana, and he confirmed it. So he took a small bucket and started milking her. That first time he got about 300 ml. Later it became 500 ml, then a bit more. The amount kept increasing. She was giving between five and six liters, and now she gives ten.” —

Damodara Priya

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Subhadra and Baladeva

Subhadra was still small, still nursing, yet she was already being milked. In the beginning, Dina Sharana would milk her while she nursed from Rasa. Since Subhadra was busy drinking her mother's milk, she did not resist. It was a brief but beautiful moment—Dina Sharana milking her while she nursed from her mother.

Over time, Subhadra stopped nursing, and milking her without Rasa nearby became a little more difficult. Still, she felt comfortable with Dina Sharana. He would hold her hind legs with one hand while milking with the other. Eventually, Damodara Priya also tried. It took her a bit of time, but with love, patience, and dedication, she too managed to milk Subhadra. Finally, Parama Karuna wanted to try as well. He recounts his experience with Subhadra:

At first, only Dina Sharana milked her. I tried a few times myself, but mostly as an adventure—because as soon as she saw anyone approaching, she would start moving, and the moment you touched her udder, she would lean her body to the side and kick. Over time, I figured out a way to do it: I would give her a little food and feed her spoonfuls of barley. While she was busy eating—and after securing her with the neck chain—I would begin milking.

Her teats were very small, and because of the size of my hand, it was quite difficult to milk her. I could only use two fingers, which made the process rather long, especially since she kept moving and kicking from time to time.

As time passed, we developed a more personal bond. Although she has her own temperament and does not like too much touching or closeness, Subhadra is gentle, and gradually she allowed me to milk her more easily. Once, I even forgot to tie her up, but she neither moved nor got upset. In fact, as time went by, when milking time came, she would settle herself and shift her hind leg slightly so I could work more comfortably.

Subhadra continues to give plenty of milk because she feels good. It is no coincidence—it is because she is happy.

## Sundari — The Tender Rebel

Sundari is the most unusual cow in the *goshala*. She is not just any cow—she is one of a kind, with a personality that sets her apart from all the others. There is something special about her, a blend of affection and strength, that gives her a manner both distant and tender at the same time.



When I first met her, I tried to approach and greet her as I did the others, but she made it clear that she preferred distance—she lowered her head and pointed her horns toward me as a warning not to try again. The message was unmistakable, so from that moment on, we had a good relationship—at a respectful distance.

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Sundari

One day, while in the field, I was feeding the cows carrots and bananas. They would stretch their heads forward, open their mouths, and stick out their tongues for me to give them food. I went from one to another, and when it was Sundari's turn, I threw the fruit on the ground from afar so I would not have to get too close. But she did not go for it. She looked straight at me and started walking directly toward me.

I backed away at the same pace she advanced until I reached the wall. Sundari stopped firmly in front of me. She looked at me—serious as always—but this time, I could see a deep gentleness in her eyes. Still frozen with fear, I did not move until she lowered her head and opened her mouth, asking me to feed her directly. Trembling, but understanding her message, I held out a carrot. She ate it—and then waited for more.

In that moment, I knew she was not going to harm me. Sundari's love entered my heart. She wanted to be fed by hand like the others, and as I did so, she showed me through her eyes a glimpse of the affection she carried within.

## Jagannatha — The Majestic One

Sundari became pregnant by Dharma, and when her calf Jagannatha was born, things were far from easy. Alberto was not there—he had gone to attend the Ratha-yatra festival in Barcelona. Since the birth was imminent, he had left clear instructions: they had to make sure the calf nursed right away. But Sundari—rebellious and distrustful as always—would not let anyone touch her. She kicked and moved constantly. The cowherd temporarily replacing Alberto did not know how vital the first milk, the colostrum, was for the newborn calf, so he let the little one nurse from Tilaka instead, as she was gentle and calm.

When Alberto returned to the farm the next day, they finally managed to get Jagannatha to nurse from his mother.

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

The bond between Sundari and her son was extraordinarily strong. For three full years, Jagannatha drank only his mother's milk. All of it was for him. Although there were several attempts to milk Sundari, none were ever successful for long.



Sundari and her son Jagannatha

One day, Dina Sharana decided to try again. He tied her carefully and began to milk her—and it worked, but only for two days. On the third, Sundari vanished. She had understood what was coming and simply disappeared. That's just her way.

Jagannatha wore a ring through his nose that caused him pain. Blood would often drip from the wound when he ate. He learned to eat with great care, moving as little as possible, because any sudden motion hurt. Because of this, his mother Sundari completely dominated him and often took his food. The poor fellow could not resist her.

Eventually, Dina Sharana and Damodara Priya decided to remove the ring and start training the oxen using only voice commands. They called in an experienced man, who tied Jagannatha and used a metal



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Sundari and Jagannatha

cutter to snip off the ring. The expression on Jagannatha's face in that instant was one of utter astonishment—as if he could not believe that he was finally free from the source of his constant pain.



Jagannatha as a youth

“After that, for a week or maybe a little longer, Jagannatha came every day to the very spot where we had removed the ring. He would stand there quietly, looking around, as if trying to understand what had happened. He stared at the place as though asking, ‘What happened here? How is it possible that I no longer feel that pain?’ From then on, he showed deep gratitude. Even later, when he experienced some health problems, he would come toward us. If something was wrong with his leg, he would approach, gently lift it, and look at us with complete trust.” —Dina Sharana

Jagannatha is calm; he moves slowly and patiently. He never causes trouble—he is a good-natured ox, though somewhat aloof. His character is strong, and although he has never harmed anyone, he has given a few good scares, as Raghuvira recounts:

“One time I was out in the field among the cows, holding a stick in my hand. Everything was peaceful, and suddenly Jagannatha became

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

angry with me. He came straight toward me. I had the stick in my hand and thought, 'What am I going to do? I cannot defend myself—he is going to crush me.'

Instinctively, I dropped the stick, and Jagannatha stopped dead right in front of me. He did not touch me.

It was a moment of real fear. If he had attacked, what could I have done? Nothing. But the moment I let go of the stick, he stopped.

That incident stayed with me. I've always loved being among the cows; it is something that truly relaxes me."

Our friend and cowherd Paul also tried to milk Sundari, but she would not allow it—she simply refused. He knew it would be a great challenge because Sundari was always alert, watching his every move. She looked at him with those large, slightly bulging eyes, wearing an expression that seemed to say, "What do you think you are doing?"

Paul remembers that he tried everything: touching her, brushing her, feeding her, pampering her... nothing worked. No method proved effective. He simply could not milk her. Until one day, he decided to speak to her seriously. He asked her what she was doing there. Paul said something like this: "Sundari, look at the other cows—all of them are giving milk for the Deities, serving Krishna. And you? What are you doing? Nothing. Just eating, resting, watching, and butting the others... Do not you think you should give something too?"

That is how he finally reached her—not in an aggressive way, not at all, but as if he were speaking to a friend. He told her how things were and how he saw her. It was a direct and sincere conversation. From that moment on, Sundari allowed Paul to milk her, and she continued letting him do so for several days—perhaps about two weeks.

But Paul was the only one she would allow to milk her, which became a serious problem. If Paul was not around, who would do it? This turned into a real dilemma, because when a cow produces milk and is not milked, she can easily develop an infection.

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Sundari and Jagannatha

“I felt confused. One day I decided not to milk her for that reason. But then I thought, ‘Now that I’ve started milking her, I should continue.’ However, she did not let me. The next day I tried again, but no... and she never let me again.

I had been milking her for two weeks straight without any problem—everything was fine... until the day I missed once. Because of that one day, I understood her nature. She understands, she has empathy, but she does not forgive mistakes. That is Sundari.” —Paul

Until recently, Sundari was the only cow in Rupa Goshala that was not milked. But now, at sixteen years old, she allows herself to be milked every day. She gives two liters daily and remains calm during milking. She has even been seen in the field, her milk dripping from her udders. Beautiful Sundari has always taught us the importance of respect and sincerity in relationships of love. Like all of Krishna’s cows, she has her story—and her own way of showing love.



Sundari is not a exactly a fierce cow but a mother with character. She is one of those mothers who do not smile easily, yet when they do, it is because they truly mean it. Sundari is not unreachable; she

simply demands respect. She does not ask for affection or seek attention; she simply is—fully present, with all her strength, beauty, and hidden tenderness.

Sundari cannot be deceived.

Once, Alberto tried to get Sundari into her stall. With Radharani, it had been easy—a little trail of food, step by step, and once inside, a feast of fruits and vegetables. But with Sundari, it was different. She would come up to the door, sniff, look around, think it through carefully—and refuse to go in. Alberto offered her the best fruit, her favorite treats... nothing worked. She would not be persuaded.

So he decided to build a fence, stake by stake, over several weeks. Everything was planned so that, at the right moment, he could close it and keep her inside. When the day came, Sundari was eating calmly, completely at ease. Just as Alberto shut the gate and thought he had finally succeeded—boom!—with a small jump, she leapt out effortlessly. Calm and unruffled, as if saying, “Nice try, but no.”

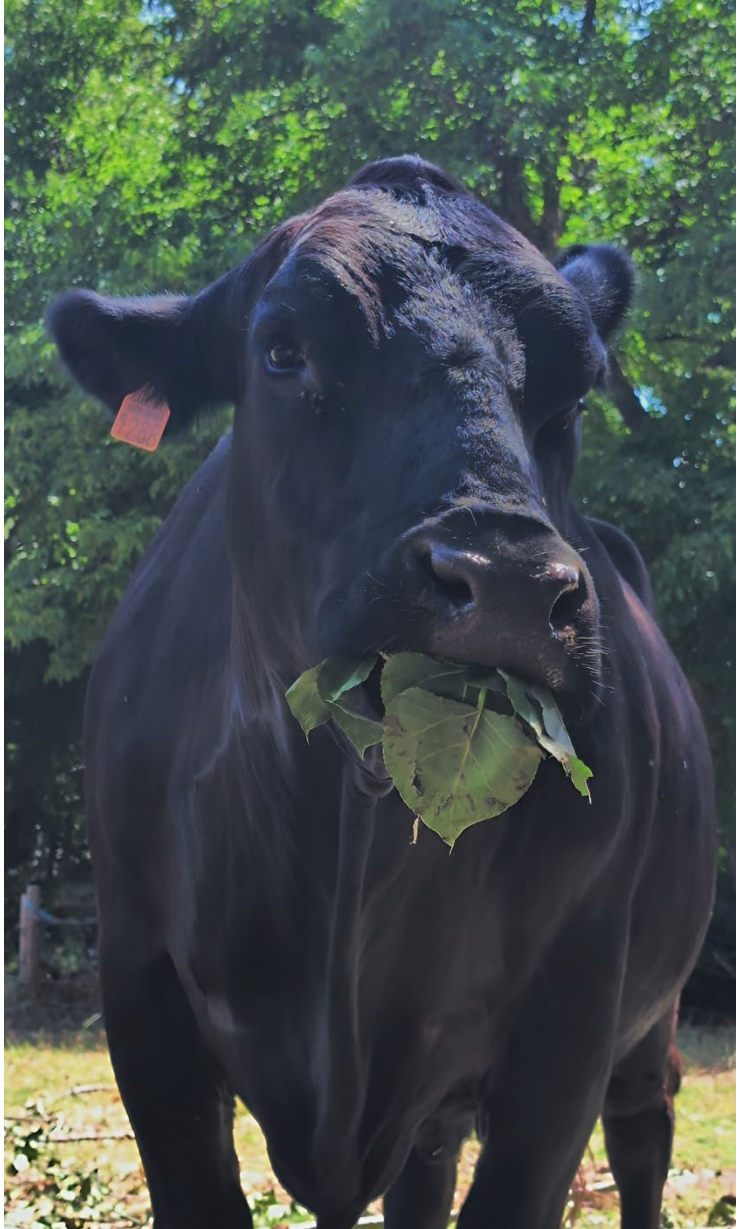
She acted from intelligence, from awareness. She knew exactly what was happening—always alert, always watchful.

As mentioned earlier, Sundari had been transferred to Rupa Goshala from Anadi's place, and that experience had left a mark. Since then, she has been wary—if something does not feel right, she simply leaves. She disappears, and no one can make her come back.

Sundari is not the most friendly or the most docile cow. Her beauty lies in her strength. Her sweetness is not obvious, but when it shows, it is genuine. Her fierceness, deep down, is her way of protecting herself—of preserving her dignity.

The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Kunti

## Kunti — The Determined One





## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

Kunti is a black cow without horns, which makes her stand out among the others—most of whom are light-colored and proudly display their large, curved horns. She is the only one without them, yet she never seems to need or even want any. Kunti is authentic—she does not try to be like the others, nor does she care to.

She came from Cantabria with her newborn calf, and since she produced more milk than he could drink, she needed to be milked.

“When she arrived at the farm with her calf, the cowherds asked the gurukula children to give him a name. We called him Arjuna. Then they also wanted to give a name to the mother, and we chose Kunti.”

—Madhava

When Kunti enters the *goshala*, she does it quickly—one of the first to come in—and it is as if she is parading down the aisle. Her entrance is confident; she knows exactly where her stall is and never makes a mistake. She walks with a graceful sway of her hips, and the sound of her black hooves echoes on the floor with a steady *clack, clack, clack, clack*.

When I first met Kunti, I found her a very cheerful cow. Sometimes in the afternoon I would cut fresh grass from the field, bring it in a bag, and hand out a little to each cow. Of all of them, Kunti was the one who waited for me most eagerly. When she saw the green grass peeking through the zipper of the bag, she'd get excited, stretch her head out of the stall, and start moving about restlessly. She would follow the bag wherever it went. She was extremely enthusiastic about food—always alert to hay, grain, fruit, or anything edible. She ate well, and fast. Everything she did, she did with intensity and joy.

“It was very difficult because she had to be milked, and blood would come out. From the pain, she kicked a lot. Kunti does not have horns, since she is an Angus breed, so instead she managed to give me a headbutt right in the chest that knocked me flat on the ground. This breed is not really meant for milking; normally, it only produces enough milk for its calf.

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Kunti

In the beginning, Arjuna would drink as much as he wanted, and then we would milk the rest. We had to distract her with food; she could only be milked for a short time, as long as the feed lasted. She allowed milk to be taken from three teats—the fourth was strictly for her calf. Milking her was complicated because she kept moving and kicking constantly.



Now Kunti is much gentler. We started brushing her before milking, and she began to stay still, even though she no longer ate—she was too alert to everything happening around her. Lately, Kunti has become more relaxed and calm; now she even chews a little hay while we milk her. It is so nice to milk Kunti now—so easy. She does not kick at all anymore.” —Damodara Priya

Another difficult situation with Kunti happened a few years ago, when she gave everyone quite a scare. Damodara Priya recalls that during

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

the installation of the new irrigation system in the pasture, the entire edge of the canal—covered with bushes for years—was cleared. That made it much easier to lay the irrigation pipes, but it also left the canal completely exposed. From the pasture, the opening was not clearly visible, which made it dangerous.

“Kunti was grazing nearby and, without realizing it, fell into the canal. Dina Sharana was right there setting up the pipes and saw everything. By Krishna's mercy, Kunti managed to get out on her own, with an agility that amazed us all. Her strong and flexible body helped her push herself up and escape the canal without any injuries. It was a great blessing, especially since her calf Arjuna had just been born, and we were worried that something might happen to his mother. After that day, we decided to urgently fence the entire canal to protect the cows. And so, with the help of the devotees and Krishna's guidance, both the irrigation system and the much-needed fencing were completed.” —Damodara Priya

Parama Karuna recalls his first steps as a cowherd and his experience with Kunti....:

“At first, I did not milk Kunti; I worked with Rasa and Dhira, who were gentler and easier to handle. But as I gained experience, strength, and speed, one day it was my turn to milk Kunti, following Dina Sharana's instructions.

Kunti has very large teats—broad, long, and soft—quite comfortable for the hands. But there were two important things to keep in mind when milking her: she needed plenty of food, and you had to be very fast.

All the cows were given two spoonfuls of ground barley each morning, but Kunti got half a bucket—about three kilos, four times more than the others. The technique was as follows: while Kunti grew impatient for her feed, we tied her collar with a rope, and then I would quickly jump into the stall with the bucket and the water to wash her udder.

## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Kunti and Arjuna

I had to milk her as fast as possible, because the time she spent eating was the time I had to finish. And Kunti ate very quickly. When she finished, she would start kicking and moving—that was the sign that the milking had to end. So I had to focus completely and give it my all in those few minutes.

Kunti had a lot of milk, and with such large teats, milking her was easy but exhausting—it required great strength and speed in a very short time. In those few minutes, she could give up to eight liters.

Another special detail was that one of the four teats could not be milked. The rear one, on the left side, was untouchable—that one she reserved exclusively for her son Arjuna. No one else could touch it. If anyone tried, Kunti reacted immediately—kicking, moving, and protesting.

While I milked the other three teats, Arjuna, already two years old, ate his barley. And as soon as he finished, he went straight to drink the milk his mother had kept for him in that special teat.”

## Arjuna — The Herculean One

From a young age, Arjuna already looked like a very strong little bull, but when he first arrived at Rupa Goshala, the change of environment frightened him, and more than once the cowherds had to go looking for him because he was hiding.

“Arjuna looks like a miniature Schwarzenegger. At first, he was scared of us and would run away, but little by little, with love and gentle touches, he began to let us approach and started getting close to the people who came to visit him, to feed him, and to show him affection. They would hug him, spend time with him... That is how he began to trust.” —Dina Sharana

Kunti and Arjuna still live together, enjoying the open fields, the company of the herd, and the care of those who look after them. They arrived together and have remained together, free to enjoy each other’s presence.

Arjuna is growing strong and healthy, surrounded by the herd that

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

has always accepted him naturally. He is now in his adolescence—somewhat more obedient, but still overflowing with energy.

He learned from Parvati how to climb up onto the feeding troughs, so whenever he hears any sound in the *goshala*, he jumps up to see what is going on. Maybe someone is arriving, maybe it is feeding time... or maybe they're coming with a brush to scratch his beautiful golden curls.



Arjuna is the favorite ox of Madhava and Jay Gopal, the sons of Gauranga-lila and Chaitanyachandra. They love giving him his favorite treats—apples and carrots..

“Since we’ve been living in New Vrajamandala—we arrived in September 2017—Madhava and Jay Gopal have been drinking milk from the cows almost every day for breakfast.” —Gauranga-lila

Jay Gopal: “Sometimes we go to the *goshala* to feed the cows. They love it when we bring carrots, apples, and bananas.”



## The Cows of Rupa Goshala – Kunti and Arjuna

Madhava: “Especially Arjuna. He is a big ox, and he stands right in front of everyone to eat everything himself.”

Jay Gopal: “He is really handsome with his curls—and so strong.”



Madhava feeding apples to Arjuna

Madhava: “When I was little, Alberto once sat me on top of Arjuna when he was still small too. And Alberto showed me how to milk the cows. I milked several—Dhira, Rasa, Kunti, and Parvati among them. The milk would come out in a strong stream, making a sound as it hit

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

the bucket. Once or twice they even let me drink a bit of that warm, delicious milk.”

Arjuna has a lot of strength. Furthermore, he is very agile and fast. Recently, high up on the mountain of hay bales, he saw one that stood out. He climbed up, reached the top, and from there, with his horns, pushed it down. Arjuna is young, full of vitality and beauty. He will continue to grow and, surely, live many more adventures among the fields of New Vrajamandala.



Arjuna receiving more apples from Jay Gopal

# The Bull of Rupa Goshala

The bull symbolizes religion, *dharma*, and its four legs represent the pillars that uphold it: truthfulness, purity, austerity, and mercy. Just as a table stands firmly on four legs, religion remains steady as long as these four virtues are being upheld.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto One, Chapter Seventeen, it is described how King Parīkṣit encounters a wounded bull with three broken legs and a cow weeping beside him. The bull is *dharma* personified, and in that scene, he is being attacked by Kali—the personification of the present age of quarrel, in which spiritual values are gradually declining. This image powerfully illustrates how the erosion of religious principles affects the entire fabric of society.



King Parikṣit threatening to kill Kali for attacking the bull of dharma

Śrīla Prabhupāda comments:

When the king asked the bull who his assailant was, the bull did not blame anyone directly. Then the king confirmed his identity with

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

these words: O you, who are in the form of a bull! You know the truth of religion, and you are speaking according to the principle that the destination intended for the perpetrator of irreligious acts is also intended for one who identifies the perpetrator. You are no other than the personality of religion. (SB 1.17.22)

### Dharma — The Noble One

“When we read in a letter from Śrīla Prabhupāda that it is better to avoid artificial insemination and to use the natural method of procreation, we decided to acquire a full bull—both as a sire and as a representative of religious principles.

Thus, in 2006, Dharma arrived at New Vrajamandala—the first and only full bull ever to live in the *goshala*. He was only six months old and came with a nose ring, so I began training him from a very young age to pull logs and a cart. He even learned to move backward.

At the age of two, Dharma fathered the bull Krishnita with Amrita. Later, with Kartika, he sired Bhumi and Rukmini. With his consort Laxmi, he fathered Radharani, and again with Amrita, Sundari. In the end, he impregnated both Radharani and Sundari. Radharani lost her calf, while Sundari gave birth to Jagannatha.

Dharma was a truly noble bull. He never showed a trace of aggression, even when approached by strangers.” —Anadi

When Dharma first entered Rupa Goshala, accompanied by his daughter Rukmini, the other cows—who did not know him—came closer to see them. Radharani and Sundari, who already knew who Dharma was, stayed at a certain distance.

Hanuman, a large and powerful ox, quickly approached to challenge him. Dharma, much shorter and smaller, showed neither fear nor hesitation. Hanuman pushed him back with all his strength, forcing Dharma to retreat step by step. Yet Dharma, calm and composed, waited for the right moment—and then delivered a precise blow to Hanuman's nose with his horn. Blood started to flow.

From that day on, Hanuman recognized Dharma's courage and



## The Bull of Rupa Goshala – Dharma

understood that he was the true leader of the herd. It was the only time anyone ever saw Dharma act that way, and it was also the last day Hanuman ever displayed aggression. From then on, he stopped breaking doors and fences in the *goshala*, stopped bothering the other cows, and became gentle and peaceful.

When Dharma arrived, he still wore a ring through his nose. The cowherds decided to remove it, and after they did, Dharma became even more serene—so much so that Damodara Priya could care for him on her own. He accepted her service with full trust, knowing he would never be harmed. He was a noble and kind-hearted bull.



Dharma and Rukmini

As the years went by, Dharma became slower and even gentler. With humans he was calm and dignified, and with the cows, tender and romantic. He behaved like a true gentleman: whenever a cow was in heat, Dharma would immediately assume his noble bearing, ever



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

ready for procreation. Though age had taken some of his agility, his strong spirit still filled him with enthusiasm.

This bull, whose character was beyond reproach, left his body on a summer afternoon in 2024. That day I had gone to clean, feed, and milk the cows when Parama Karuna told me, "When you arrive, go check on Dharma—he is lying near the river."

Parama Karuna had been watching him that morning and found it strange that he had not gotten up for so long.

When I arrived, I went straight to him and found him lying down, unable to stand. He tried, but his body was already weak and swollen. I ran to get a rope to try to help him. I hurried back, but when I reached him, Dharma was already in his final moments. His breathing was deep and labored, then gradually grew calmer, slower, and softer.

Witnessing Dharma leave his body was an experience I will never forget. I felt powerless, yet I knew his time had come. Krishna granted me the privilege of being by his side in his final hour as a bull. Aware that nothing more could be done, I turned my heart toward our Lord, the protector of cows, and began to call out to Him in faith and surrender: "Krishna! Krishna! Krishna! Please, help us."

And then, Dharma released his final breath.

The difference between a living body and a lifeless one is clearly perceivable. The soul cannot be seen, yet its presence is undeniable. Some may think the soul does not exist, but I could feel it the very moment Dharma's soul left his body. With that final breath, the bull's body was left empty and became a corpse.



Arjuna holding Krishnachandra

# The Mystic Power of the Cow

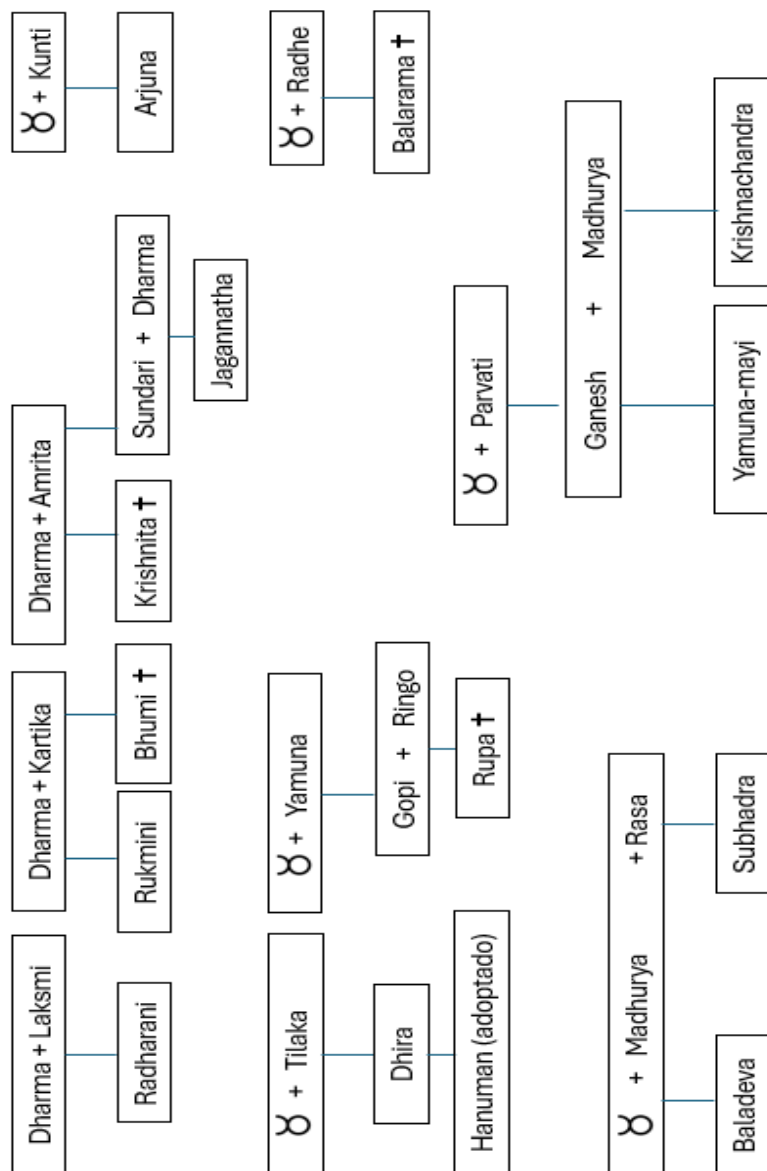
For a time, the Brihuega Tourist Office organized cultural visits to Finca Santa Clara—the legal name of New Vrajamandala. Thanks to this initiative, not only did neighbors from the nearby villages come, but also groups arrived by bus from larger cities such as Madrid and Guadalajara to learn about the community, its temple, and, of course, the cows living in a unique refuge in Spain: the nonviolent dairy, Rupa Goshala. Arjuna recalls:

“Once, a group of about fifty elderly women came to the *goshala*. It was a bit chaotic, with all due respect, because they never stopped talking. But well, cows are very tolerant.

We gave them the opportunity to milk, so they entered the stalls in small groups of five. One by one, they began to milk. Then, at one point, something incredible happened. A woman who had just milked, after drawing a little milk, stood up and began to cry uncontrollably—she could not stop crying. Then she hugged me and said: ‘Thank you, thank you, thank you. You see, for a long time I’ve been struggling with myself because I want to become a vegetarian and just couldn’t do it... you know? I could not. But after milking this cow, something has changed inside me. Now I’m sure—I will never eat meat again.’

I’m convinced that this crucial step she took—that determination—was inspired by the cow.”

# Genealogical Table



# Cows in Love

An idea to promote care and appreciation for our mother cow was the creation of “The Cow Festival.” This celebration became a warmly received event, full of activities designed so that everyone could offer their talents in service to the cows.

“The idea of organizing a Cow Festival came to me as a way to make things more joyful and to invite people from the nearby villages to come and get to know the *goshala*. The festival went like this: it began with a welcome breakfast for everyone, and later in the afternoon we would bring the murti of Srila Prabhupada down to the *goshala* in procession. We had prepared a seat for him made of hay bales, which the devotees decorated with cloths and flowers. The celebration continued with a performance by the children—something I always loved to include—either a play or songs. Then there were traditional Indian dances performed by professional dancers, which people were always amazed to see.

We continued with other activities that changed from year to year. I remember I wanted the Deities to visit the cows too, so I prepared a swing just their size, and we began to swing Them right there in the *goshala*. These were things never done before, and which I found very beautiful, because the devotees became enthusiastic and helped me bring these ideas to life.

Finally, the musical group *Cows in Love* closed the festival. When they began singing the *maha-mantra*, everyone started jumping with joy—singing and dancing together. Especially the visitors, most of whom were not devotees, enjoyed it immensely, just like we did.

It was a very joyful festival and a great success. We organized the Cow Festival for sixteen years.” —Alberto

*Cows in Love* was not just the finale of the event—it was the moment when everyone, no matter where they came from, joined together in a single chant. That shared joy around our beloved cows became a project that carried Rupa Goshala beyond the limits of its fence.



## Cows in Love

*Cows in Love* was a Spanish musical band active in the early 2000s. Led by Tirtha Kirti, the group included members from the bands *Undrop* and *Dhira*, who, together with other devotees, released their debut album *Happy Cows* in 2003—a fusion of tropical rhythms, electronic sounds, and chill-out atmospheres. The band also appeared on television programs such as *Los conciertos de Radio 3* on RTVE's La 2, where they performed songs from their first album.

In 2007, they released their second and final album, *Terminal Goloka*, performed at several concerts across Spain, and were invited by Indradyumna Maharaja to play at Woodstock Poland—one of the largest Hare Krishna festivals in Europe.



Their live performances featured the Bharatanatyam dancer Katyayani, whose classical movements contrasted with the break-dance style of the rapper Michi.

This musical project was inspired by our non-violent dairy farm, Rupa Goshala, and together they brought greater awareness and energy to the cause of animal protection—especially the care and reverence for cows.

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

“We must maintain the animals throughout their entire lives. We should make no plans to send them to the slaughterhouses. This is the true way to protect the cows. Krishna Himself taught us to give full protection to the cows by His own example. This service is the most important activity on our Hare Krishna farms. Vrindavan is also known as Gokula—the place of the cows. Therefore, the main feature of our Hare Krishna farms should be cow protection. Milking the cows means extracting the religious principles in liquid form; the great sages lived only on milk. No one has the right to deprive another living entity of its life; every living being is equally valuable. We must use our time to elevate ourselves in Krishna consciousness.” —*Hanumat Presaka Swami, in the song Rupa Goshala Jam from the first album Happy Cows.*

The cows of Rupa Goshala, together with the enthusiasm of the herdsman Alberto, inspired the devotees to become more involved in caring for the cows—cleaning them, brushing them, feeding them, visiting them whenever they could, and helping financially. Every small action to support this service is deeply appreciated, especially by Krishna. We all have different skills and talents, and according to our individual psychophysical nature, these qualities can be offered in Krishna's service—in this case, in service to Krishna's cows.

While preparing “The Cow Festival,” among many other things, Alberto designed a PowerPoint presentation to show during the celebration. As he worked on it, he thought, “I'd like it to have a little background music.”

So, without hesitation, he asked for help from a visitor who “happened” to be spending a few days in New Vrajamandala.

For several summers, Justo Bagüeste, a well-known Spanish musician and composer, spent about a month vacationing on the farm. He loved the place and had formed a close friendship with the devotees, so he was delighted by the idea and immediately created “the little piece of music,” which turned out to be a genuine work of art.

## Cows in Love

The collaboration with Justo sparked a creative flame. That simple melody not only accompanied the slideshow images but, combined with Alberto's contagious enthusiasm, began to transform the spirit of the community. When Tirtha returned from India and encountered this new energy surrounding the cows—nourished by Bagüeste's musical sensitivity and Alberto's dedication—new ideas began to emerge almost naturally.

“When Alberto arrived at the *goshala*, he completely transformed the atmosphere and inspired a deep appreciation for the cows and all the auspiciousness they represent. Our return from India coincided with Narayani's—she was also coming back from Vrindavan, filled with the same enthusiasm. So, the idea of making an album dedicated to the cows was born immediately.” —Tirtha Kirti

Together they set up a small studio in front of the temple and began recording. That is where the first *Cows in Love* album came to life—an eclectic production with clear messages about cow protection and musical styles ranging from Cuban changüí to reggae.

“We formed a band with artists like Zángano (Antonio, the bassist) from Undrop, Justo on saxophone, Narayani, Bhaktidevi, and other musicians. We played live with a great response from the audience. We performed on Los Conciertos de Radio 3 on Spanish TV (TVE) and organized a big release event in an old concert hall in Madrid, featuring guests like ‘El Muñeco,’ percussionist for Amparanoia and Ojos de Brujo. With the support of a booking agency, we played at festivals and events all over Spain, always spreading the message of nonviolence—ahimsa.” —Tirtha Kirti

Later they recorded their second album, *Terminal Goloka*, a concept album centered on a mystical journey represented by a comet-shaped cow, with photos taken in Terminal 3 of Madrid Airport by Samantha. Artists such as Zángano, Deva, Jhanavi, Narayani, Michi, and

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

Laksmana took part in the project. They recorded real sounds from the *goshala*; thus even the rhythm of milking became a musical beat. One recurring track included the names of all the cows, serving as a kind of leitmotif.

The entire production was handcrafted at the farm. Mastering was done by Peter de Beu in Stockholm, a well-known professional. They even had to drive to meet a delivery person and pick up the master themselves in order to meet the deadlines and press the CDs on time. The result was an excellent album, sold mainly at concerts and at the *goshala* itself.

“The project kept growing over the years. We made a documentary using music from the first album, with real scenes filmed in the *goshala*. Even our children joined in—like Gauranga and later Shyam. They grew up close to the cows, learning to milk from a very young age. That living connection with the animals left a deep impression on them, reconnecting them with a simple, meaningful way of life.”

—Tirtha Kirti

The *Cows in Love* project became a recurring presence every year, every summer, at each Cow Festival. People from the nearby village would come down to the *goshala*—people who, if not for the festival, might never have visited. And suddenly they were there, dancing, appreciating this initiative from New Vrajamandala, grateful to have been invited.

“I remember every Cow Festival—it was a fixture. I was always touring in the summer, but I’d always find a way to be there. Even if I had not slept much, I’d arrive straight from a concert and head right over. We’d set everything up... and start playing. I always ended the day with a deep sense of satisfaction—playing for the cows, seeing everyone full of enthusiasm, dancing like crazy. That always filled me with joy. It was a shared experience and a collaborative effort, where we simply spent an amazing time together in an incredible place.” —

Tirtha Kirti

# Living and Serving Among Cows

This section presents a series of testimonies, words of appreciation, and expressions of gratitude from a wide range of devotees—both young and old—who, at some point in their lives, maintained a close bond with Rupa Goshala.

## **Laksmana:**

I want to express my gratitude, because the years I spent near the *goshala* were the most beautiful and happiest of my life.

Who would have told me that I would have two wonderful children like Shyam and Gauraṅga, and that their childhood would unfold in a beautiful valley, surrounded by nature, rivers, a temple, and cows?



In the afternoons, we would run to milk them, and when we arrived, a kind cowherd was waiting for us. We also ran through the



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

fields gathering little flowers to offer along with incense.

It sounds like a fairy tale, but it was real. It was a blessing to have grown up among Gopi, Rupa, Jagannatha, Dhira, Radhe, Yamuna, Tilaka...

Thank you for this wonderful gift of life.

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### **Gopal:**

I arrived at the farm when I was very young, and it was Alberto, the cowherd, who taught me how to milk for the first time.



Alberto watching Gopal milk Tilaka

Later, when I was already in school, I went there with all my classmates.

As time went by and I kept growing, Alberto continued teaching me, my friends, and other devotees who lived on the farm.

Years later, I moved away and stopped living there, but I returned several times—with my partner, my sister, some friends... And every

## Living and Serving Among Cows

time I came back, the same atmosphere, the same love, was still there.

The cowherd would once again teach us how to milk, because I had forgotten, as had those who came with me.

For me, the *goshala* has been a place of transformation.

I sincerely believe we are very fortunate to have such a place in Spain—and in the world—a place where one can learn, grow, and evolve.

I have always felt that everything on the farm was based on love: love for the devotees, love for the cows, love in general.

That is why I want to thank Alberto for the great work he has done, continues to do, and will undoubtedly keep doing.

And I also want to send him a big hug, for being, above all, a great friend.

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### **Vraja-lila:**

I'm grateful to the cowherd, Alberto, because I do not know if he realizes how important his welcoming attitude was for me. It was vital.

Thanks to him and to the cows, I was able to climb out of the abyss I was in; I could emerge from that lonely upbringing I had been living among single and monastic people.

Both my baby and I were embraced by the mother cow, and I came to understand that my capacity for comprehension cannot grasp the mysticism that cows possess.

So I thank him for sharing and providing a space that allowed me to live this experience.

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### **Lilesvari:**

So many things come to mind when I remember the *goshala* and my life on the farm...

From our room we could see Alberto, the cowherd. It was freezing cold, and there he was, going to milk and take care of his cows.

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

Everything was covered in snow, but he too was there calling them: “Bolo, bolo, bolo!”

In the summer, forty degrees under the sun: “Bolo, bolo, bolo!”

I used to tell Abhay: “Do you know what perseverance is? That—what the cowherd does.”

Because he knows exactly what he is doing, and that is why he remains there, year after year, taking care of his cows, who give him so much mercy. How fortunate the cowherd is!

I remember when a calf was born. It was winter, there was snow, and I was very worried. We went down there, and the cowherd put his hand inside the cow and pulled the calf out.

It was deeply impressive to me—it was the first time I had ever seen something like that.

And so many other memories... the cow festivals... the children milking...

These are tender memories, for which I feel deeply grateful and fortunate to have lived them.

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### Yoga:

Going to the *goshala* was my moment of peace, of calm. It gave me strength—both physical and mental.

Shouting “bolo bolo” and watching the cows come was an experience in itself...

Witnessing the stages of life—the birth and death of the cows—made me feel serene. It was my moment of meditation, of being with myself.

I felt great satisfaction listening to classical music or mantras, and sensing the patience and good energy that Alberto radiated.

The innocent game of guessing how many liters we had milked and then proudly writing it on the board...

Receiving the *goshala* key as a birthday gift—that gives you a sense of pride as a teenager.

Thank you for those beautiful moments.

## Living and Serving Among Cows

I often remember Víctor “the Russian” and Vanamali, two other people with whom I had the pleasure of sharing wonderful times in the *goshala*.

And those small privileges, like always receiving a bit of *maha-prasadam* as gratitude for our effort and dedication.

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### **Ambarisa:**

I have a very special memory of the *goshala*: my wedding with Ingrid—an event where I had the great mercy of getting married in that sacred place. The devotees were there, along with family and friends... Mahalaksmi performed the ceremony. It was beautiful.

The cow is the mother, and she must be treated as such. She must never be mistreated. I encourage people to take care of their mother. Krishna is Govinda, and Govinda is He who gives pleasure to the cows. If the Supreme Personality of Godhead cares for them, we should do the same—or at least respect them.

So I encourage everyone to visit the *goshala* of New Vrajamandala, to live a deeply rewarding experience. I have many fond memories there.

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### **Parama Karuna:**

When we returned from India, after being away from New Vrajamandala for three months, we went to greet the cows. As soon as we entered, we came across Rukmini and Baladeva. I immediately threw myself on Baladeva to pet him, hug him, and tease him a little. He is such a loving ox—the gentlest one in the *goshala*.

Right beside him was Rukmini, drinking water. From afar, I looked at her, but she did not come closer. So I greeted her, saying, “Hey, Rukmini! Have you already forgotten me?”

Rukmini is a very beautiful cow—sweet-looking, but with a strong character, difficult to approach and show affection to. Always distant, always demanding respect. She was always a challenge for me to milk.

She glanced at me sideways, and after a little while she came

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

closer and greeted me with her head. Despite the tension I felt—thinking she might butt me at any moment—I understood it as a greeting. So, from the other side of the fence, I reached out my hand and waited to see if she would accept it. She came closer and let me touch her face and her tuft of hair. I brushed it gently and withdrew my hand. But she stayed there, so I realized she wanted a bit more affection. After that, she walked away, and we went back to our usual, respectful distance.

That moment showed me that they carry love in their hearts and never forget the years we've spent together—the many moments shared day after day. It was a beautiful moment, one of my fondest memories of the *goshala*.





# Dhenu-stotra

(Śrīdhara Svāmī)

Verse 1

मातर्नमामि चरणांस्तव पावनांश्च  
संसारनावैतिय हृदभावभक्त्या ।  
पारं नायशु तवपुत्रमिमं सुरीत्या  
संसारसिन्धु-तरणं हि तवाश्रेयण ॥ १ ॥

*mātar namāmi caraṇāṁś tava pāvanāṁś ca  
saṁsāra-nāvā iti ya hṛda-bhāva-bhaktyā  
pāraṁ nāyaśu tava putram imam surītyā  
saṁsāra-sindhu-taraṇam hi tavāśrayeṇa*

*mātar*—O mother (cow); *namāmi*—I bow, I offer obeisances; *caraṇān*—feet; *tava*—Your; *pāvanān*—pure, sanctifying; *ca*—and; *saṁsāra-nāvā*—the boat to cross worldly existence; *iti*—thus; *yaḥ*—who; *hṛda-bhāva-bhaktyā*—with heartfelt devotion; *pāram*—the other shore (liberation); *nāyaśu*—may lead, carry; *tava putram*—Your son (the devotee, or the protected one); *imam*—this (myself); *surītyā*—by proper conduct, good means; *saṁsāra-sindhu*—ocean of birth and death; *taraṇam*—crossing, deliverance; *hi*—indeed; *tava āśrayeṇa*—by taking shelter of You.

**O Mother Cow, I bow down to Your holy feet. You are the boat to cross the ocean of birth and death. With heartfelt devotion I beg you to kindly carry me, Your child, across this ocean of saṁsāra, which is only possible by taking shelter of You.**

Verse 2

देवाश्च देव्य इतिय निवसन्ति धेनौ  
गोपूजनेन निखिलाश्च भवन्ति तृप्ताः ।  
आयुघृतं पय इदं भवतीह वीर्यं  
मातः स्तुतासी बहुधा श्रुतिभिस्त्वमित्थम् ॥ २ ॥

*devāś ca devya iti ya nivasanti dhenau  
go-pūjanena nikhilāś ca bhavanti tṛptāḥ  
āyuhḥ ghr̥tam paya idam bhavatīha vīryam  
mātaḥ stutāsi bahudhā śrutibhis tvam ittham*

*devāḥ*—the gods; *ca*—and; *devyaḥ*—the goddesses; *iti*—thus; *yaḥ*  
*nivasanti*—who dwell; *dhenau*—within the cow; *go-pūjanena*—by  
worship of the cow; *nikhilāḥ*—all; *ca*—and; *bhavanti*—become;  
*tṛptāḥ*—satisfied; *āyuhḥ*—life; *ghr̥tam*—ghee; *payah*—milk; *idam*—  
this; *bhavati*—is; *iha*—here; *vīryam*—potency, strength; *mātaḥ*—O  
Mother; *stutā asi*—You are praised; *bahudhā*—in many ways;  
*śrutibhiḥ*—by the *Vedas*; *tvam*—You; *ittham*—thus.

**All the gods and goddesses dwell in the cow; by worshipping her, all  
become satisfied. From her come life-giving ghee and milk that gives  
strength. O Mother, You are thus glorified in many ways by the  
Vedas.**

Verse 3

ओजो धृतिः सुमतिरेवमतीवशान्तिर्ज्ञानं च  
भक्तिरपि नित्यमदैन्यमेवम् ।  
मातस्त्वदीय पयसो घृततस्ततस्तद्  
वाञ्छन्ति नित्यममराः कीमुत्यान्यमर्त्याः ॥ ३ ॥

## Dhenu-stotra

*ojo dhṛtiḥ sumatir eva matīva śāntir  
jñānam ca bhaktir api nityam adainyam evam  
mātaḥ tvadīya payaso ghṛtataḥ tataḥ tad  
vāñchanti nityam amarāḥ kim uta anyamartyāḥ*

*ojaḥ*—vigor; *dhṛtiḥ*—fortitude; *sumatiḥ*—good intelligence; *eva*—indeed; *matīḥ*—wisdom; *eva*—also; *śāntiḥ*—peace; *jñānam*—knowledge; *ca*—and; *bhaktiḥ*—devotion; *api*—also; *nityam*—eternally; *adainyam*—absence of meanness, nobility; *evam*—in this way; *mātaḥ*—O Mother; *tvadīya*—Your; *payasaḥ*—milk; *ghṛtataḥ*—and ghee; *tataḥ-tataḥ*—again and again, from them; *tat*—that (wealth of virtues); *vāñchanti*—desire; *nityam*—always; *amarāḥ*—the immortals, gods; *kim uta*—what to speak of; *anya-martyāḥ*—other mortals.

**From Your milk and ghee arise vigor, fortitude, intelligence, peace, knowledge, devotion, and noble qualities. Even the gods constantly desire these gifts from You — what to speak of ordinary mortals.**

## Verse 4

अग्निर्यथेङ्घनमिदं स्तुतपञ्चगव्यं  
पापं तथा दहति सत्यमितीह मत्वा ।  
मातः पिबन्ति खलु वेदरताश्च विप्राः  
पुष्पासि पासि सकलान्परिशुद्धदेहा ॥ ४ ॥

*agnir yathā iṅghanam idaṁ stuta-pañcagavyaṁ  
pāpaṁ tathā dahati satyam iti iha matvā  
mātaḥ pibanti khalu veda-ratāś ca viprāḥ  
puṣṇāsi pāsi sakalān pariśuddha-dehāḥ*

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala

*agniḥ*—fire; *yathā*—just as; *iṅghanam*—wood, fuel; *idam*—this; *stuta*—praised; *pañca-gavyam*—the five products of the cow (milk, curd, ghee, urine, dung); *pāpam*—sin; *tathā*—thus; *dahati*—burns away; *satyam*—truly; *iti*—thus; *iha*—here; *matvā*—considering; *mātaḥ*—O Mother; *pibanti*—drink; *khalu*—indeed; *veda-ratāḥ*—absorbed in the *Vedas*; *ca*—and; *viprāḥ*—the *brāhmaṇas*; *puṣṇāsi*—You nourish; *pāsi*—You protect; *sakalān*—all; *parisuddha-dehāḥ*—purified in body.

**Just as fire consumes wood, so do the five products of the cow, when honored, burn away sins. Knowing this truth, the learned brahmanas drink these five products. O Mother, You nourish and protect all, purifying their very bodies.**

### Verse 5

यम वर्णयन्ति निखिलाः श्रुतयः सदैव  
ब्रह्मेति कृष्णभगवान् स हि देवदेवः ।  
सेवां तवेह कृतवान् किमु माद्रुशाश्च  
किं वर्णयामि तव भाग्यमितो महात्म्यम् ॥ ५॥

*yam varṇayanti nikhilāḥ śrutayaḥ sadaiva*  
*brahma iti kṛṣṇa-bhagavān sa hi deva-devaḥ*  
*sevām taveha kṛtavān kimu mādṛśāś ca*  
*kiṁ varṇayāmi tava bhāgyam ito mahātmyam*

*yam*—whom; *varṇayanti*—describe; *nikhilāḥ*—all; *śrutayaḥ*—the *Vedas*; *sadaiva*—always; *brahma iti*—as Brahman; *kṛṣṇa-bhagavān*—Lord Kṛṣṇa; *saḥ hi*—He indeed; *deva-devaḥ*—the God of gods; *sevām*—service; *tava*—Your; *iha*—here; *kṛtavān*—has performed; *kimu*—what then of; *mādṛśāḥ*—persons like me; *ca*—and; *kiṁ*—what; *varṇayāmi*—shall I describe; *tava bhāgyam*—Your fortune; *itaḥ*—beyond this; *mahātmyam*—Your greatness.

**All the Vedas always describe that the Supreme is Brahman, and He is Lord Kṛṣṇa, the God of gods. Even He has rendered service to you, O cow — so what can insignificant persons like me say of your great fortune and glory?**

Verse 6

कुर्वन् सेवा प्रत्यहं भाव-भक्त्य  
स्तोत्रं धेनोर्यः पठेदर्थ-युक्तः ।  
प्राप्य ज्ञानं भक्तिमैश्वर्यमेवं  
देहारोग्यं मोदते मोदते च ॥ ६ ॥

*kurvan sevām pratyaham bhāva-bhakyā  
stotram dhenor yaḥ paṭhed artha-yuktaḥ  
prāpya jñānam bhakti-maiśvaram evam  
deha-arogyam modate modate ca*

*kurvan*—doing, rendering; *sevām*—service; *pratyaham*—daily; *bhāva-bhakyā*—with sincere devotion; *stotram*—this hymn; *dhenor*—of the cow; *yaḥ*—who; *paṭhet*—recites; *artha-yuktaḥ*—with understanding of the meaning; *prāpya*—having obtained; *jñānam*—knowledge; *bhakti-maiśvaram*—devotion and prosperity; *evam*—thus; *deha-arogyam*—bodily health; *modate*—rejoices; *modate ca*—and delights.

**Whoever daily serves with heartfelt devotion and recites this hymn to the cow, with understanding, attains knowledge, devotion, prosperity, and health of body — and lives in bliss.**



# Sridhara Svami —

## The Esteemed Commentator and Devotee

Sridhara Svam (c. 14th century) is one of the most revered Vaiṣṇava teachers of medieval India, remembered above all for his celebrated commentary on the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, the *Bhavartha-dipika*.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu declared:

*śrīdhara-svāmi-prasāde 'bhāgavata' jāni  
jagad-guru śrīdhara-svāmī 'guru' kari' māni*

“Sridhara Svam is the spiritual master of the entire world because by his mercy we can understand *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.” (Cc. *Antya* 7.133).

In addition to his *Bhagavatam* commentary, Sridhara Svami composed hymns and *stotras* that reflect his devotion. Among them is the *Dhenu Stotra*, a prayer to Mother Cow. Here the cow is praised not only as the sustainer of human life through her milk but also as a divine being, linked to Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune, and Brahmā, the secondary creator of the universe.

For Sridhara Svam, the cow embodies *dharma* itself, nourishing both body and spirit, and serving as a reminder of humanity’s duty to protect and honor her.

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First of all, I wish to thank Srila Prabhupada, because his teachings have inspired me throughout all these years—especially in the service of the *goshala*.

A special thanks to Madhavi Devi Dasi for taking my collection of memories and notes, organizing them into a coherent narrative, and shaping them into this book.

I also want to thank Bhakti Gauravani Goswami Maharaja for editing the text, designing the book, translating it into English, and overseeing its production and printing.

My gratitude also goes to my friend Tirtha, whose music has always supported this project—with *Cows in Love*, by recording albums, joining the festivals, the *parikramas*... in everything he could.

And finally, heartfelt thanks to all the devotees and visitors who shared their memories. They make it possible for these stories to live on, not only in remembrance.

With all my heart,  
Arjuna Dasa

# My Gratitude

Without the inspiration of Srila Prabhupada and the guidance of my spiritual master, Bhakti Gauravani Goswami Maharaja, I would never have dared to attempt writing this book.

Without the support of my husband, Parama Karuna Dasa, I could not have accomplished anything.

Without the collaboration of the cowherds, I would not have had much to tell.

And without readers, this book would have no meaning.

My deepest gratitude.

I also wish to thank my family, who are always present.

But above all, my thanks go to the Supreme Cowherd, Krishna, who has, in His kindness, allowed us to enter—if only in part—into His intimate pastimes: those enjoyed among cows and gopas, pastimes not so easily approached.

Madhavi Devi Dasi

## The Author



María Victoria Maccarini was born in Bustinza, Santa Fe, Argentina, in 1993. As a child, she was lively, cheerful, mischievous, and diligent in her studies.

During her early years, caring for and playing with the family's pets was her favorite pastime, while she also helped her grandmother Pichona feed the animals on the farm.

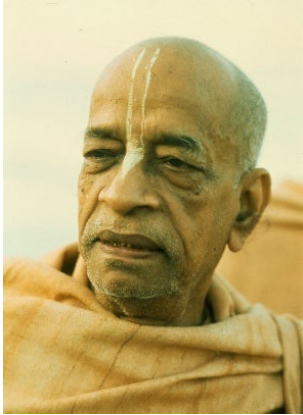
As time went on, her duties and responsibilities increased, and her involvement with the animals took a back seat. She became more reserved and, later in her youth, more sociable and independent.

She always had a natural inclination toward inquiry and exploration, which led her to develop an interest in many subjects. Her university years were marked by a constant search for meaning—until 2018, when, during a trip through northern Argentina, she received a copy of Srila Prabhupada's *Bhagavad-gita*. That encounter marked a turning point: a few months later, moved by the desire to understand those teachings more deeply, she met the devotees of Krishna in Rosario.

In 2023 she married Parama Karuna Dasa, and together they traveled to Spain to live in the New Vrajamandala community, where they both serve in the kitchen and as pujaris, among other duties.

She was initiated by Bhakti Gauravani Goswami Maharaja and received the name Madhavi Devi Dasi. She continues to live in New Vrajamandala, where, through her service in the *goshala*, she has formed a loving bond with those most special beings—the cows. There, she reconnects with her beginnings and integrates them into her philosophy of life.

# The Founder-Acharya



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (1896–1977), founder and spiritual preceptor of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), came to the West in 1965 with the mission of sharing the wisdom of the ancient Vedic tradition of *bhakti-yoga*, the path of pure love for God. At first, his main effort was to translate and comment upon the most essential scriptures—such as the

*Bhagavad-gita* and the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*—into English. Yet his mission was not limited to imparting philosophical education; he also sought to demonstrate the practical application of Vedic knowledge in daily life, showing how society could live simply, peacefully, and in harmony with nature under the principles of devotional service to God.

From the very beginning, therefore, he emphasized the need for rural communities where devotees could live from the land—growing their own food, protecting cows, and creating an atmosphere favorable to spiritual growth. He often described this principle as “simple living and high thinking.” For him, the village lifestyle sustained by the land and the cows was not a sign of backwardness or poverty, but the true wealth of human life: freedom from material anxiety and a foundation for cultivating *bhakti*, loving devotional service to Krishna.

Prabhupāda repeatedly spoke of agriculture and cow protection as the central pillars of every civilized society, not only of the ancient Vedic culture. He explained that society must care for cows as mothers and for bulls as fathers, since they nourish humanity with milk and grain. Naturally, he strongly condemned the exploitation and

## The Founder-Acharya

slaughter of these sacred animals. Protecting cows, he said, is not sentimentality but *dharma*—a spiritual duty that benefits the entire world.



Srila Prabhupada visiting the *goshala* in Gita-Nagari

To bring this vision into practice, Prabhupada promoted the establishment of ISKCON's farming communities worldwide, beginning with New Vrindaban in West Virginia, USA, in 1968. These communities were meant to serve as models of a spiritual economy—living off the land, protecting animals, and saving time to dedicate every aspect of life to Krishna. He regarded such projects as essential to the survival and authenticity of the Hare Krishna movement.

Thus, the legacy of Srila Prabhupada is not only the books that continue to inspire millions, but also the vision of a way of life that offers devotees the chance to live free from the pressures of industrial society—rooted in the land, centered on the cows, and uplifted by devotion. A life that reflects the eternal culture of Vṛndāvana, the pastoral home of Krishna Himself.



## Epilogue

Editing this book has been an unforgettable experience. Over the past fifty years, I have worked with many texts—mostly philosophical ones—but this book is different. It does not present conceptual discourses or lofty treatises, at least not in appearance, yet it touches the heart with a power equal to, or perhaps greater than, that of a revelation heard through words on transcendental truths.

Madhavi's tender style draws us close to the animals of Rupa Goshala as beings with personality, character, and emotion. As spiritual souls, they are, in essence, persons who wish to love and be loved—just like us—and the experiences gathered in these pages reveal this with unmistakable clarity.

When Prabhupada speaks of the *gopis*, he often emphasizes that they were neither philosophers nor *brahmaas*, nor even men, but village girls. Yet their love and devotion for Krishna were unparalleled.

Something similar can be said of the cowherd women and men who have cared, who care now, and who will continue to care for Krishna's cows at Rupa Goshala. What is even more astonishing is that the cows themselves belong to the same category: they offer their milk, their companionship, and their entire lives in service to Krishna, without expecting recognition or reward. They seek nothing for themselves. In their presence—as companions—the influence of Kali-yuga, with all the weight of its dark burden, fades into the distance, erased from the scene.

The pages of this book overflow with love: selfless, unconditional love born solely from the sincere desire to please Krishna. Reading the stories collected here—the affectionate exchanges between cows and caretakers—is like immersing oneself in a lake of crystal-clear waters that refresh the soul. They remind us that peaceful coexistence is indeed possible—without endless arguments about how things should or should not be done—when we serve together, with one heart, the Supreme Cowherd.

# A Song

## A Day in Vrajamandala

Text & Music: Bhakti Gauravani Goswami

Digital Art: Vedai



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



**1a**

**As dawn appears on Vrajamandala's horizon,  
a hush before the sun's first golden ray,**

## A Song



**1b**

**Krishna awakens to Yasoda's loving gaze,  
to begin another day of blissful play.**





2a

**After bathing, she dresses Him in yellow silk  
and decorates with sandalwood His bluish skin;**

A Song



**2b**

**a peacock feather is tucked into His blackish hair,  
a new round of pastimes will soon begin.**



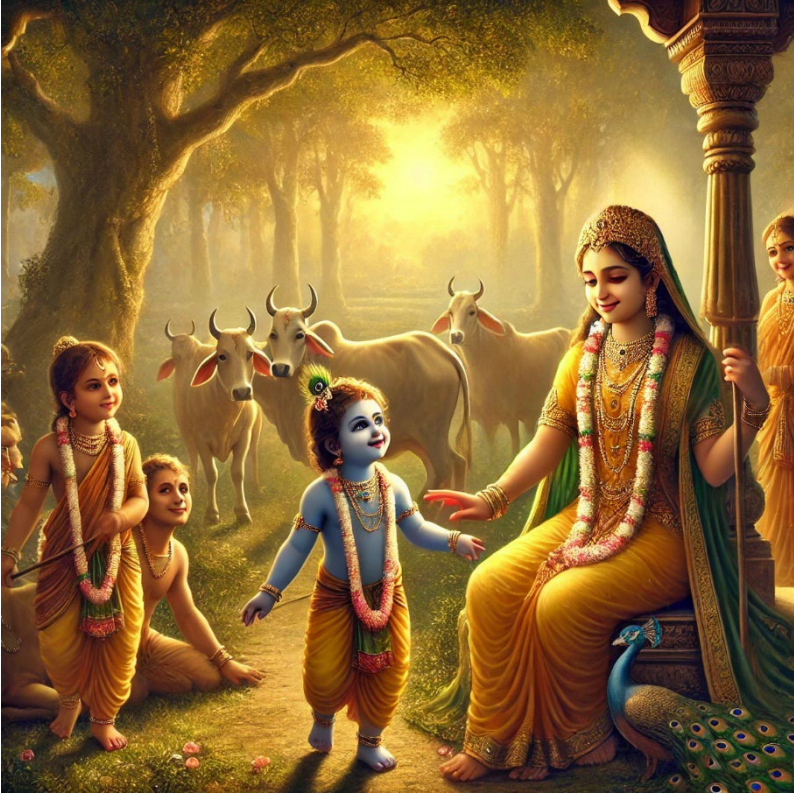
## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



**3a**

**The cows and their lovely lowing sound,  
Balarama and His friends awaiting near,**

## A Song



**3b**

**pull Krishna from His mother's tender arms  
to meet them all with a joyful cheer.**

Chorus



**govinda jaya jaya gopala jaya jaya  
radha-ramana-hari govinda jaya jaya**

¡Glory, glory to Govinda! ¡Glory, glory to Gopala!  
¡Glory, glory to Govinda Hari,  
the delightful lover of Radha!



## A Song



4a

**As Govinda's lips touch His beloved flute,  
producing streams of nectar-sounds,...**

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



**4b**

**...He leads His herd, a lively rolling tide,  
to Govardhan's lush and hallowed grazing grounds.**



A Song



**5a**

**Vrajamandala unfolds its superb splendor,  
a land of radiant beauty so sweet.**



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



**5b**

**The trees overloaded with fruits and flowers,  
bend down to touch Govinda's lotus feet.**

A Song



6a

**The birds of every colored hue  
sing songs in joyful dance and flight.**

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



**6b**

**A gentle breeze bears the lotus' scent  
to fill the air with pure delight.**



Chorus



**govinda jaya jaya gopala jaya jaya  
radha-ramana-hari govinda jaya jaya**

¡Glory, glory to Govinda! ¡Glory, glory to Gopala!  
¡Glory, glory to Govinda Hari,  
the delightful lover of Radha!

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



**7a**

**Govinda knows each cow by name and color;  
He calls them to His side one by one.**



A Song



7b

**He embraces them and feeds them soft fragrant grasses;  
He is their dearest friend, second to none.**

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



**8a**

**In the sun-drenched forests of Vrajamandala,  
Krishna and His friends enjoy their pranks.**



## A Song



**8b**

**They tussle, they tumble, they hide and seek,  
and share their meals on Yamuna's sandy banks.**

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



**9a**

**His flute then sings sweet melodies  
that charm the whole world, the entire creation.**

A Song



9b

**Peacocks dance in ecstasy, stones melt,  
deer are stunned,  
rivers flow slowly in deep meditation.**



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



**10a**

**Their voices echo through the trees and meadows,  
as the boys run with their calves—a most enchanting sight!**

## A Song



**10b**

**A symphony of rasa in a pastime paradise,  
filled with laughter, from morning until night.**

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



**11a**

**As golden dusk begins to fade,  
and day gives way to night,**



A Song



**11b**

**the cows come home, their udders full,  
a sacred and most wondrous sight.**

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



**12a**

**The dust their hooves raise forms a golden veil,  
covers Krishna's face and rises to the sky.**



## A Song



**12b**

**Seeing their beloved soon return,  
the gopis release a heartfelt sigh —and sing:**

## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



**govinda jaya jaya gopala jaya jaya  
radha-ramana-hari govinda jaya jaya**

¡Glory, glory to Govinda! ¡Glory, glory to Gopala!  
¡Glory, glory to Govinda Hari,  
the delightful lover of Radha!



A Song



**13a**

**The cowherd damsels milk the surabhi cows,  
draw life's essence with loving care.**



**13b**

**Radha offers Krishna a delicious feast,  
sweeter than nectar, and then takes Her share.**



A Song



**14a**

**O Govindachandra, jewel of New Vrajamandala,  
Your sweet loving smile enlivens our heart.**



## Krishna's Cows in New Vrajamandala



**14b**

**Your flute-song and Your cows' pleasant mooing voices  
give each new day a blessed start.**

A Song



**govinda jaya jaya gopala jaya jaya  
radha-ramana-hari govinda jaya jaya**

¡Glory, glory to Govinda! ¡Glory, glory to Gopala!  
¡Glory, glory to Govinda Hari,  
the delightful lover of Radha!

## A Song



**govinda jaya jaya gopala jaya jaya  
radha-ramana-hari govinda jaya jaya**

¡Glory, glory to Govinda! ¡Glory, glory to Gopala!  
¡Glory, glory to Govinda Hari,  
the delightful lover of Radha!





*Lo único que necesita el mal para triunfar es que los hombres buenos no hagan nada.*

*Les invitamos a participar en una de las acciones más nobles y piadosas de este mundo:  
En la protección de las vacas*

*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.*

*We humbly invite you to participate in one of the most noble and pious activities in the world  
The protection of the cows*



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