

# Cows – Oceans of Affection

Welcome to this Kartik Inspiration.

Today, all of Braj celebrates Gopastami—the day when Krishna started to take the bigger cows out into the forest and the meadows of Braj for cow herding. It's a great festival, and everyone worships the cow on this day. We in the West may not always understand why there is such a strong emphasis on worshipping or caring for the cow. I got my lesson a few days ago.

I had visited a Vrajavasi friend and observed what happened during milking time. The calf, which was bound next to the mother, was let loose to go to the mother and have its first drink so that the milk would come spontaneously out of affection from the udder of the mother.

So you should have seen the calf. It jumped and jumped, then ran with joy around the cow. The cow was mooing affectionately, and the calf, which was already one year old and could eat grass, began to drink.

Now, what the cowherd man has to take care of is that they don't drink too much because it will create stomach problems. So after some time, when the calf had its fill, the cowherd man took it away from the mother, or better from the udder of the mother, and bound it so that it could be next to the cow — head to head. And the mother was licking the calf. The calf was enjoying and making sounds of love. It was really an ocean of affection that went on.

Finally, the calf and cow had to be separated. There is a science behind this, why it has to be done. And you should have seen when the calf was led away to its place, five meters away from the cow, it started to cry. Tears were rolling down both sides of its face, and even the mother cried. It was really a scene of love — a scene that will remain etched in my heart for a long, long time.

I'll tell you another cow story.

The other day, I went to Vrinda-kund. I usually sit for hours at one spot and chant. And the farmers there thought, 'Well, our cow likes company,' so they brought a beautiful cow and tied her next to me on the tree, about ten meters or fifteen meters away. The cow did not eat. The cow did not lie down. The cow did not do cow things. The first thing she did was urinate profusely. Now this is a sign of happiness. She was happy to hear me chanting, and then she took her ears, beautiful long ears, and spread them out to hear every syllable with the utmost respect and joy, that I really felt, 'My God, this cow is an advanced spiritualist.'

The point of these two stories is to share with all of you: Yes, they are in different bodies, these cows. Still, they carry in their hearts an affection, a sensitivity, an ability to check out, to perceive the moods of a person that makes them at once into sensitive personalities who, in Braj, are part of the family of the Supreme Lord.

There's actually a beautiful verse where Raghunatha Dasa Goswami says that these cows are actually wish-yielding cows. The cows come from the heavenly cow Surabi, and he has a prayer. He says, "May Sri Krishnna's cows always protect us. Their beautiful hoofs are blueish like blue sapphires. Their white horns are covered with gold, and their large bodies defeat the pride of a mountain."

On Gopastami day, reflect on your own relationship with the cow. Think about the welfare of the cows. Consider principles like ahimsa, which involves protecting the cow. This will be very good for you.

Wishing you all the best, and see you for the next Kartik Inspiration.

*Ratnanandana Brahm*  
SACINANDANA SWAMI

May Sri Krishnna's cows  
always protect us!