



**no
milk.**
In Our Mandirs

TAKE ACTION TOOLKIT

AHIMSA IN ACTION

#NoMoreMilkInMandirs



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Welcome Message
2. Just the Facts: Animal Cruelty
3. Just the Facts: Environmental Impact
4. Just the Facts: Temples & Mandirs
5. What Can I Do?
6. Temple Leaders Meeting
7. Host Awareness Events
8. Social Media
9. Publish a Letter Online
10. About Sadhviji





WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We offer milk in the form of devotion and worship, but today's dairy industry, especially in America, is full of violence and suffering. Factory-farmed cows live short, painful lives, exploited lives and their milk is no longer a symbol of purity—it represents cruelty. By supporting this industry, we're also directly supporting the beef industry, and also fueling environmental destruction. It's time to rethink our rituals and choose ahimsa and compassion.

We must come together and replace offerings of harmful milk, which is just a product of violence and suffering, with pure alternatives that honor life and the planet. It's time to educate our communities on the true impact of industrial dairy and choose cruelty-free, ahimsa offerings like water infused with organic rose petals, tulsi, or sandalwood chandan paste. Let's protect our faith, our beloved Gol Mata and our future.

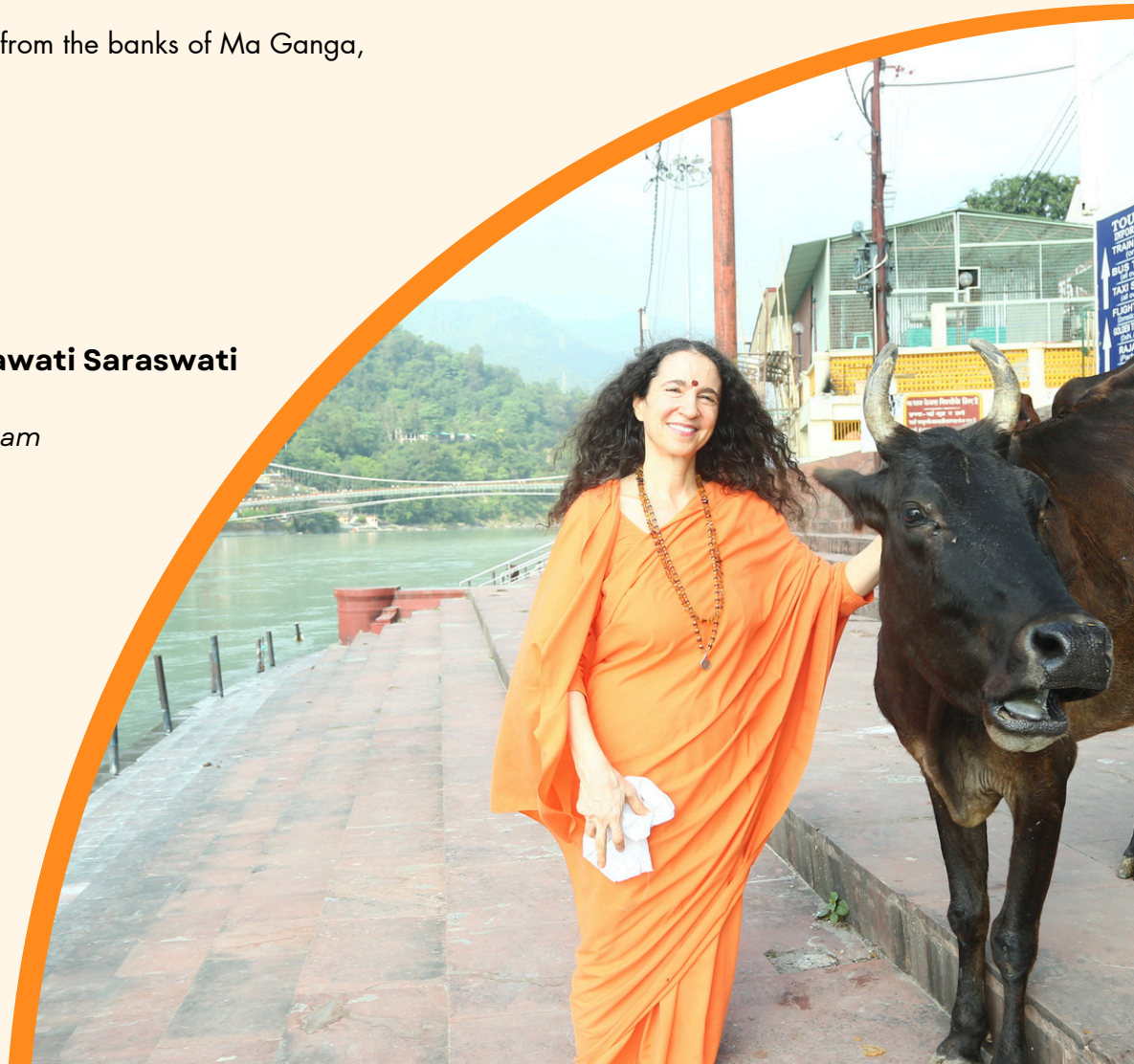
In love and reverence for our mother cow, we're launching a pledge for No More Milk in Our Mandirs. We've caused way too much pain and suffering to our mother cow and planet in the name of milk. Let the violence end now. Let it end with each of us.

With love and blessings from the banks of Ma Ganga,

A stylized signature of 'Sadhvi' in a cursive script, preceded by a small lotus flower icon.

Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati

*International Director,
Parmarth Niketan Ashram*



JUST THE FACTS:

Animal Cruelty

- 9 million U.S. dairy cows live their entire lives in tiny 1 x 2 meter, indoor stalls.
- Well-treated cows live 20 years, industrial dairy cows are "spent" and killed at 5 years.
- Newborn calves are taken within 36 hours of birth; after the separation, the mother cries out for days, searching for her baby.
- Dairy cows endure brutal journeys to slaughter, often without food or water in extreme weather, many die.



Why do we use milk in mandirs?

Abhishekam is an act of devotion and purification where we pour milk over a Shiva lingam to honor Lord Shiva.

Traditionally cows were treated as beloved members of the Indian family, and they freely gave the gift of milk in return. Milk given in this way is a clear symbol of purity, nourishment, and devotion.

However, the reality of modern dairy production is one of cruelty and environmental harm.

JUST THE FACTS:

Environmental Impact



"More than 800m Amazon trees felled in six years to meet beef demand," The Guardian.

- Dairy farming contributes to deforestation, water waste, and greenhouse gas emissions.
- By 2050, we must feed two billion more people, yet much of our land grows crops to feed livestock, not humans. Experts say going Veg is ESSENTIAL.
- The UN says beef creates 35 times more greenhouse gasses than legumes.
- 1/3 of greenhouse gasses come from food production; the largest contributor is animal agriculture.
- Ending dairy production could PAUSE the growth of greenhouse gases for 30 years, according to research from Stanford and U.C. Berkeley.
- 254 trees in the Amazon are clear cut every minute to graze cattle for beef.

JUST THE FACTS:

Temples & Mandirs



An average US mandir pours 1,130 gallons of milk per year.

On average, an industrial dairy cows produce 2,000 gallons of milk per year.



Therefore, every 2 temples that pledges to stop using milk saves 1 cow a year of suffering!

WHAT CAN I DO?



1. Talk to Your Temple Leaders:

Have respectful dialogue with temple authorities. Explain the issues and suggest alternative offerings. Encourage them to sign the pledge!

2. Host Awareness Events:

Organize a film screening and discussion at your college campus.

3. Share No More Milk in Our Mandirs on Social media:

Share social media posts

Create your own and tag #NoMoreMilkInOurMandirs

4. Educate Your Community

Write articles for local publications on why cruelty-free offerings matter. Even better, host a letter-writing party with 5-10 friends!

Read on for some temple materials and guides!



TALK TO YOUR TEMPLE LEADERS

Hold a Meeting with Temple Leaders

Directly meeting with your temple leader is a great way to let them know about the harms of industrial dairy and the pledge temple leaders across the world are already taking to end needless harm to our mother cow.

Meeting Preparation

1. **Schedule Your Meeting:** Request a meeting for a few days to a week out. Be sure to include a list of attendees, a brief agenda, and a link to more information about the campaign. If you don't hear back, send a follow-up email and call.
2. **Prepare for the Meeting:** Familiarize yourself with the pledge, and select a few stats about industrial dairy that stand out to you. If you already know your temple leader, what information will he or she find most moving? If the meeting is online, test links before hand. If it's in person, plan your transportation the time it will take to arrive.
3. **Hold the Meeting:** Show up early, dress respectfully, and speak truthfully. Share from your heart why you care about ending industrial dairy, and your temple taking the lead. Remember: no one expects you to be an expert on the dairy industry. If they ask a question you don't know how to answer, don't worry! Just let them know you'll get back to them.
4. **Follow Up:** Send a thank you email with any follow-up information you promised. You can also thank the temple leader for meeting with you with a Twitter post or an Instagram story (make sure you tag their official account). You can also follow-up with invitations to upcoming events like joining a discussion on your campus about industrial dairy.

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

- Introduction
Thank the temple leader for their time.
- Connect!
Learn about them and the temple.
- Introduce your group/organization
- Campaign ask
Describe the problem and solution - tell a personal story if possible.
- Describe the campaign and support for the issue in your community
How many other leaders, especially nearby, have signed, notable names, etc
- Make your ask
Ask the temple leader to pledge right now. IF they don't agree, that's OK. Encourage them to consider signing and thank them again for their time!
- Wrap-up
Ask the temple leader to participate in an event on campus and take a photo with them!

HOST AWARENESS EVENTS

Can You Start a Dialogue In Your Community?

Hosting a film screening, art show, or performance, followed by a discussion is a great way to let more people know about the harm of industrial dairy.

Planning an Event

1. **Plan Event Logistics:** Start as soon as possible. Set the date, reserve a location, plan for food, materials, audio, visuals, any tech and tech team needed. Double confirm everything!
2. **Recruit Volunteers:** Big events take lot's of people to pull off well. Ask friends, classmates, and other groups if they want to help!
3. **Get Speakers, Presenters, MCs:** Make a list of speakers and send out invites early. If you want to screen a documentary film, make sure to get permission (unless it's freely available, ie on YouTube). Make sure speakers know the topic and amount of time they have to talk.
4. **Generate Publicity:** Post the event on online event calendars, media in your community, hang posters, put up social media posts, make announcements at other similar events.
5. **Hold the Event:** Here's where your hard work shines! Show up early, greet presenters as they arrive, have some ready to show the audience to their seats, keep time for speakers to make sure the event runs on time. Have fun!
6. **Follow Up:** Thank the speakers. Ask them to do collab posts on social media, be sure to tag #NoMoreMilkInOurMandirs.

SAMPLE FREE-TO-SCREEN DOCUMENTARIES

Why Drinking Milk Is WORSE Than Eating Beef," [Suresh Vyas](#) on YouTube, reveals the modern dairy industry in India.

"Dairy is Dead On Arrival - Investigation by Animal Outlook," on YouTube, inside footage from a 2 year investigation into California, USA dairy farms, covered by the New York Times.

"Dairy Disclosed | Mini Documentary," Mic the Vegan, on YouTube, focuses on industrial beef and dairy in the US, and touches on environmental impacts.

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

HELEN KELLER

SPREAD THE WORD: SOCIAL MEDIA

Share Our Posts

Share and re-post our campaign posts and videos to your followers! Follow @sadhviji on Instagram, X, Threads, YouTube and Facebook.

Selfie Challenge

Post a selfie on Instagram holding a sign saying #NoMoreMilkInMandirs and tag @sadhviji. We want to see as many as possible and will be sharing them during the campaign!



**True devotion protects all living beings.
It's time to rethink our rituals and
embrace offerings that honor both our
faith and the planet.**

@sadhviji

Ideas for Posts

1. Create short, engaging videos using facts about cow welfare, environmental impact, and alternatives for temple offerings.
2. Tell a personal story! Why did you make the switch?
3. Host a virtual event where you share alternative offerings for rituals, showing how plant-based options can be meaningful and symbolic.
4. Create photos or art pieces that reflect the campaign's mission of cruelty-free offerings.
5. Create carousel posts or reels sharing quick, impactful facts about the campaign's message.



#NoMoreMilkInMandirs
#sadhviji

PUBLISH A LETTER ONLINE

Words Are Power!

Most college campuses have a newspaper that accepts guest editorials or letter to the editor. Larger newspapers in your city also accept letters to the editor, especially if they directly tie into a story that's recently been published. Use your gifts for words to write a letter yourself, or even better, get a dozen friends to all write letters together. A dozen letters are even more powerful than one!

Tips for Compelling Writing

1. **Tie your letter to a recent article:** Newspapers are more likely to publish responses to recent news.
2. **Start Strong with a Clear Message:** Open with a powerful statement that grabs attention. Be clear about the purpose of your letter—whether it's to support, criticize, or offer a new perspective on an issue.
3. **Be Concise and Focused:** Keep the letter short and focused on one main point. Editors are more likely to publish letters that are clear and concise, usually under 200 words. Stick to one main argument—such as the ethical implications of using milk in temples—rather than trying to cover multiple issues.
4. **Use Data and Personal Stories:** Combine compelling facts with personal anecdotes to make a stronger case. Use a statistic or fact from the campaign to support your argument, paired with a personal story about why this issue matters to you.
5. **Speak to the Readers' Values:** Frame the message in a way that resonates with the values of the readers, whether it's compassion, environmental stewardship, or preserving cultural traditions.
6. **End with a Call to Action:** Conclude the letter with a specific call to action that encourages readers to reflect or take steps toward change.

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Enough is enough. It's 2024, and we're still using milk in our mandirs, even though it causes suffering to cows and harms the planet. As a proud yogi who believes in ahimsa, I'm calling for change. We have to practice what we preach!

Growing up, we'd bring liters of milk to the temple, but I later learned the truth: 1/3 of greenhouse gases come from food production, with animal agriculture as the biggest contributor. Cows are kept in cruel conditions, often separated from their calves just days after birth.

There are kinder, cleaner alternatives—like rose water or sandalwood paste—that align with our values. I've made the switch, and it's more meaningful. Imagine if our whole community did the same!

Let's make our temples places of compassion, not cruelty. The power to change is in our hands. It's time to shift toward plant-based offerings and evolve our traditions without losing their soul.

Together, let's make our faith a force for good.

ABOUT SADHViji

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati is a renunciate monk or *sanyasi*, living in an ashram on the banks of the sacred Ganges River in Rishikesh, India, nestled amidst the majestic Himalayan Mountains. Originally from Los Angeles, California, and a graduate of Stanford University, she holds a Ph.D. in psychology and has dedicated her life to sharing the profound wisdom from the ancient Vedic tradition of India. Sadhviji is a bestselling author, a world-renowned speaker, a recipient of President Biden's Award for a Lifetime of Service, and she serves on the United Nations Advisory Council on religion.



 Sadhviji



IG: @sadhviji * @sadhviji.hindi * @sadhviji_en_espanol

Facebook: @sadhviji

YouTube: @sadhviji

IG THREADS: @sadhviji

X: @SadhviBhagawati

Website: www.sadhviji.org



"In the middle of the chaos, with cars honking and trucks zooming past, the cow lies there so peacefully, so beautifully. She knows the traffic is all around her, but she has faith. She knows nothing will happen to her. It's a lesson for us, too—how to be calm in the middle of the chaos, just like the cow who rests in peace, trusting in the world around her."

-Sadhviji



No More Milk in Our Mandirs