No “Understanding,” simply Vedic—
“Temple of Vedic Planetarium.” That’s all.
We shall show the Vedic conception of
planetary system within this material world
and above the material world. . . . We are
going to exhibit the Vedic culture
throughout the whole world, and
they’ll come here.
Dear Śrila Prabhupāda,

In your early childhood, your parents impressed upon you that if a grain of rice falls on the floor and it touches your feet, you must pick it up and touch it to your head to show respect. Later, you drew upon this early life lesson to instruct your disciples:

We are teaching . . . how to utilize everything for Kṛṣṇa, how to understand Kṛṣṇa in everything. That is our mission. . . . Kṛṣṇa says, “Anyone who sees Me everywhere, . . . and everything in Me, is perfect.” . . . Everything is created by Kṛṣṇa. Everything is meant for Kṛṣṇa. Everything should be engaged for Kṛṣṇa. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness life. That is perfect life. [Morning Walk, Los Angeles, 14 May 1973]

This simple yet profound message holds within it the entire philosophy of bhakti-yoga. Not just perceiving everything as Kṛṣṇa’s property, but utilizing it all in Kṛṣṇa’s service.

After risking your life to obey the order of your glorious spiritual master to preach in English, you arrived on the shores of America at Boston in September of 1965, aghast at what you saw: a misguided nation with an ever-increasing disrespect for life, whether it be human, plant, or animal. At that time you prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa in your Bengali poem Märkine Bhāgavata-dharma (“Kṛṣṇa Consciousness in America”):

Most of the population here is covered by the material modes of ignorance and passion. Absorbed in material life, they think themselves very happy and satisfied, and therefore they have no taste for the transcendental message of Vāsudeva. I do not know how they will be able to understand it. But I know Your causeless mercy can make everything possible because You are the most expert mystic.

How will they understand the mellows of devotional service? O Lord, I am simply praying for Your mercy so that I will be able to convince them about Your message.

Strictly following the insights and guidance that emerged as a result of your heartfelt prayers, you wracked your brain how not to waste a single drop of energy, a single moment, a single talent, a single flicker of potential, nor waste whatever resources came to you, money or human power. You understood this one principle: because everything is Kṛṣṇa’s property, it must be used in His service. In doing so, the otherwise fallen world of darkness would be redeemed.

For all the blood, sweat, and tears you poured out in your efforts, you were not interested in merely teaching people how to be clean, dress modestly, or eat vegetarian food, although along the way doing so became an obvious response to your message of love. You were not interested in simply creating a new religious group of do-gooder moralists who conformed to a mundane standard of religious piety, although those who understood and followed your teachings automatically became “good” and “moral” people. You were aiming for the impossible: handing down that one simple instruction your parents gave you and getting all people to practice that in every area of their lives—“See Kṛṣṇa in everything, and use everything in His service.”
Over and over in your letters to your disciples, you beat your drum, saying,

Simply offer all your talents and energies in this service of the Lord and know that Kṛṣṇa promises that for one who surrenders fully unto Him, He fully protects such devotees from all kinds of material distresses and sinful reactions. [Letter to Mukunda, 4 February 1971]

And

Kṛṣṇa says, svā-karmaṇā: “Whatever talent you have got, you can serve Me and be perfect.” That is the program. [Morning walk, Māyāpur, 16 January 1976]

When you observed your disciples’ hearts light up with even the tiniest spark of enthusiasm to preach, you fanned it until it blazed with the same fearless joy you knew as an ambassador of the holy name. You utilized everything and everyone in the sankīrtana mission, regardless of their bodily designation. Men, women, children, householders, businessmen and -women, artists, educators, scholars, builders, craftsmen and -women, carpenters, etc. Everyone was urged to join the war effort to kill the demonic mentality of this Age of Kali.

When asked by your dear disciple Mülaprakṛti Devī Dāsé what she should say to people while distributing books, you pulled out Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and slowly and carefully read a verse (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.3.43): “This Bhāgavata Purāṇa is as brilliant as the sun.” This verse is so wonderful. If you just tell people this verse, how can they resist? You don’t need to say anything. The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam will sell itself.” Then you said that in this age it is actually a benefit to be a woman, that “in Kali-yuga things are so degraded that people don’t trust men. Hardly anybody will allow a man to come up to them or will open their door if a man knocks.” You said that when you were a young man, a company selling a product called Brahmi Hair Oil sent respectable young women door to door, and everybody opened their door and bought the Brahmi Hair Oil. Chuckling, you mused, “It was never even proven that Brahmi Hair Oil had any medicinal properties.” You were illustrating the clever utilization of women’s natural propensity to influence and inspire. Today, you explained, “Lord Caitanya is sending nice young women to help the poor conditioned souls go back to Godhead. This is His plan.” (Memories—Anecdotes of a Modern Day Saint, Volume 1, Siddhānta Dasa, Susan Murray, and others)

In addition to noting the many ways in which women contributed to your movement, you “credited [your] movement’s success to their magnetic presence amidst the men, nearly all of whom, [you] reasoned, would not have otherwise stayed.” (A Living Theology of Kṛṣṇa Bhakti—Essential Teachings of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Tamāl Krishna Goswami, pp. 175-6)

In a letter you wrote:

Personally, I am so much engladdened that the pairs of young boys and girls whom I have placed in householder life are doing so nicely in the Western world. When Lord Caitanya delivered Jagai and Madhai He was also a householder, but when Jagai and Madhai were actually reclaimed, His wife, Visnupriya, was not there. But in this case and in many other cases also, I find that my disciples combined together, husband and wife, are doing this preaching work so nicely. So, I am especially proud how my householder disciples are preaching Lord Caitanya’s Mission. This is a new thing in the history of the Sankīrtana Movement. In India all the acaryas and their descendants later on acted only from the man’s side. Their wives were at home because that is the system from old times that women are not required to go out. But in Bhagavad-gītā we find that women are also equally competent like the men in the matter of Krishna Consciousness Movement. Please therefore carry on these missionary activities, and prove it by practical example that there is no bar for anyone in the matter of preaching work for Krishna Consciousness. [Letter to Himavatī, 20 December 1969]
Homages from Ministries
At Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.16.41 we find this verse translation:

Being full of contradictions, all forms of religion but bhāgavata-dharma work under conceptions of fruitive results and distinctions of “you and I” and “yours and mine.” The followers of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam have no such consciousness. They are all Kṛṣṇa conscious, thinking that they are Kṛṣṇa’s and Kṛṣṇa is theirs.

In your purport you write:

Bhāgavata-dharma is called sarvotkṛṣṭa, the best of all religious systems, because those who follow bhāgavata-dharma are not envious of anyone. Pure bhāgavatas, pure devotees, invite everyone, without envy, to join the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. A devotee is therefore exactly like the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ: he [or she] is the friend of all living entities. Therefore this is the best of all religious systems. Whereas so-called religions are meant for a particular type of person who believes in a particular way, such discrimination has no place in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or bhāgavata-dharma.

As your movement continues to flourish and grow, may we stay focused on this simple yet profound instruction that your saintly parents instilled in you: “Understand that everything is Kṛṣṇa’s property and engage it in His service.”

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your servants at the ISKCON Vaiṣṇavī Ministry.

(written by Rambhoru Devī Dāsī)
I witnessed it while you eagerly heard about the success and adventures of our first long padayātrā. The love you showered on the padayātrés when they arrived in Māyāpur will convince them that padayātrā is very dear to your heart. We are now working on the other two volumes, covering more than 105 padayātrás from 1986 to the present.

In 2018 we had a total of at least 14 padayātrás: 5 in Europe, 1 in Africa, 1 in Canada, and at least 7 in India alone, including the ongoing All-India Padayātrā, which has been on the road non-stop since 1984.

In 1991 the GBC made this statement describing one of the missions of ISKCON: “To bring congregational chanting of the holy name to every town and village of the world through organized padayātrā festivals.” Since then we have seen that whenever and wherever padayātrás are organized, they prove to be an effective, self-sufficient, and engaging activity, attractive to both the public and devotees. This year the Czech Republic celebrated its silver jubilee padayātrā and Slovenia held its 17th annual Eco-caravan padayātrā. The Hungarian devotees arranged a padayātrā festival and spent fifteen days in the tourist towns and beaches around Lake Balaton. This was also their 16th padayātrā.

The ISKCON India Advisory Committee (IIAC) published a declaration in April 2018 that reminded the ISKCON leaders present that you were, and still are, the inspiration behind padayātrā. You envisioned its contributing role to ISKCON’s future everywhere, at all times. As usual, you never thought small. In June 1977 you wrote the following: “We can introduce millions of such carts all over the world.” With the regular increase of padayātrás in India, we can now witness how padayātrā is an essential part of your strategy for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in that country, promoting huge distribution of your books in the remotest towns and villages. The IIAC resolved that all divisional councils; individual temples; and farm communities with gošālas in India should include padayātrā as one of their key outreach programs and that in general all temples are recommended to organize padayātrā, at least as an annual event. Some devotees have taken this resolution seriously, and in the past few months a few more padayātrás have been taking place around the country.

One-day padayātrás are becoming more and more popular in India. Ahmedabad just recently held its 33rd one-day padayātrā. These padayātrás have served as an inspiration for other temples, and now Bangalore, Surat, Baroda, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Jalgaon, Nandurbad, and Mauritius have followed in Ahmedabad’s footsteps and successfully held one-day padayātrás. This year ISKCON Amravati held a one-day Vaiṣṇavī padayātrā, the first in ISKCON. Dhamangaon and Akola are in the process of planning theirs. Some devotees are so fired up that they extend the planned one-day padayātrā to multiple days. This enthusiasm resulted in a twenty-day padayātrā being held by ISKCON Bhuvaneshwar.

Two full-fledged padayātrás will be inaugurated in the next few months. The first one is the All-Maharashtra Padayātrā, which will be inaugurated from ISKCON Pandharpur, and the second will be from ISKCON Tirupati, which will travel all over Andhra Pradesh.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I would like to share the realizations of some of the devotees.

Mūrtimān Dāsa from Surat excitedly reported: “This first-ever padayātrā organized in Surat was an inspirational experience. This is a very nice way of preaching the holy names of the Lord in the villages. I have decided to start a padayātrā every year from the ISKCON Varachha center.”

Jaya Govinda Dāsa from Zambia shared his experience: “I was feeling the experience of Jhārikhana Forest, where Lord Caitanya preached the holy name to trees, plants, and beasts. Even animals that were usually enemies were chanting together. When I saw Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi on the oxcart, I got the same feeling—that the Lord has come out again to deliver the people in remote villages.”

Bhaktin Rādhā describes her participation in the first-ever Vaiṣṇavī padayātrā, held in Amravati: “I actively participated in the one-day Vaiṣṇavī padayātrā. The purpose was to pay homage to the martyred soldiers on the border and to tell everyone that in this Kali-yuga only chanting Lord Kṛṣṇa’s name will bring peace of mind.”

Braja Hari Dāsa from South Africa is certain that more padayātrás will be held in 2019: “Looking back over the year, I think we are achieving our objectives because the Nāmahaṭṭa leaders have assured me that the initiative has been paying dividends. Hopefully, in 2019 we will consolidate this with more padayātrás in South Africa arising from our association with the Nāmahaṭṭa.”
Through our *padayātrā* websites and annual newsletter we continue to invite and inspire temples, preaching centers, and adventurous devotees worldwide. We try to show them how *padayātrā* can and should be adapted to local situations, climates, circumstances, times, and places: in countries where ox-carts are not feasible, devotees can use a horse-cart or a small man-pulled cart. We strongly encourage devotees to engage the oxen standing idle on our ISKCON farms. In Western countries we have witnessed again and again that the presence of oxen automatically drew interest from people and the media, thus creating a golden opportunity for the *padayātrās* to talk about the value of cows and oxen. You more than anyone else are aware of the urgent need to stop the worldwide torture and massacre of billions of farm animals each year. In the US alone, 39 million cattle and calves are slaughtered every year. How long will Govinda, the lover of cows, tolerate this situation and suspend the very heavy karmic reactions due our world? People have to see and touch these noble animals and develop some affection for them before they can seriously decide to stop eating them. And where else but via a *padayātrā* can today’s city-dwellers encounter oxen?

*Padayātrā* does indeed have a very important role to play in purifying the supercontaminated ether with the vibration of the holy names, in educating people about the spiritual science, and in presenting practical spiritual solutions to all the world’s problems. Lord Caitanya’s *padayātrā* is here to stay and will travel around the world for another 9,500 years, at least. When the petrol supply starts to seriously dwindle, there will still be grass to feed the oxen pulling the *padayātrā* carts.

*Padayātrā* Worldwide *ki jaya*!

*Your servants at Padayātrā Worldwide.*

(written by Lokanāth Swami, Padayātrā Worldwide Minister)