Only for absent examinees: Cut only this front page with the 'bar code' from the answer book and return with form A and form B.

A few of the questions in this Pre-Test Paper will be asked in the Final Examination to be held on Sunday, 6 March 2016. Use the latest editions of the exam books.

BOCHASANWASI SHRI AKSHAR PURUSHOTTAM SWAMINARAYAN SANSTHA

SATSANG EXAMINATIONS

PRE-TEST: SATSANG PARICHAY : PAPER - 1

JANUARY 2016 **Time: 9.00 to 11.15 am** **Total Marks: 75**

स्वामिनारायण
BAPS

For absent examinees, please return this sheet only.

☞ **Please do not damage in any way the 'bar code' printed above.**

☞ **Compulsory: To be filled by Examinee only** ☜

Answer books without the signature of the Class Supervisor will not be considered valid.

Birthdate of Examinee D D M M Y Y Y Y

Education of Examinee .....

Class Supervisor should only sign after checking the printed personal details and the compulsory written details above.

Signature of Class Supervisor .....

☞ **Please follow the instructions written on the back side.**

Paper Checker's Signature .....

Paper Checker's Note:

For Moderation Dept.	Question No. (Marks)	Marks Obtained
	1 (9)	
	2 (6)	
	3 (5)	
	4 (5)	
	5 (4)	
	6 (4)	
Section-1, Total Marks (33)		

For Moderation Dept.	Question No. (Marks)	Marks Obtained
	7 (9)	
	8 (4)	
	9 (5)	
	10 (4)	
	11(6)	
	12 (4)	
Section-2, Total Marks (32)		

For Moderation Dept.	Question No. (Marks)	Marks Obtained
Section-3, Total Marks		
	13 (10)	

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શબ્દોમાં .....

ચેકરનું નામ

☞ Important Instructions For Satsang Exam Students ☜

1. Students can appear for the Satsang Exams from Prarambh to Pragna - 3 after passing each exam.
2. Satsang exam is only valid for use by the candidate identified on the top sheet, and only at the designated center, in the specified medium (Gujarati, Hindi, English) and for the exam level (e.g. Prarambha, Pravesh, Parichay, etc.) indicated. **Any difference will not be allowed and considered as disqualify.**
3. The medium (Gujarati, English, Hindi) and the exam level in which candidates take **the Pre-Test** will be the medium in which they must take the Final Exam. Answer books bearing details of candidates different from the Final List **will not be accepted for marking.**
4. On the day of the Final Satsang Examinations, all examinees should obtain the signature of the class supervisor on the top sheet of answer book bearing their own personal details only. Answer books without the signature of the Class Supervisor will **not** be accepted for marking**.**
5. Write your answers with either a blue or black pen only. Answers written in pencil, or with a red, green or any other coloured pen will **not be considered valid.** Answers written in more than one coloured ink will not be considered valid.
6. Follow the instructions while answering. Answers crossed out will not be considered valid. Answers will not be considered valid if they are not written in legible handwriting. Please write clearly and legibly. **Answer papers with more than one type of handwriting will not be accepted and considered as disqualify.**
7. Examinations taken at **unauthorized locations** or in which the exam rules have been violated will not be considered valid.
8. Without the prior permission of the Satsang Exam Division in India, answer papers written by substitute writers in place of the original candidate will **not be accepted for marking.**
9. Candidates who wish to change the center at which they will sit the Final Exam **must inform and take prior permission** of the Satsang Exam Division in India. Otherwise there answer sheet **not be accepted for marking**.
10. Candidates who have registered for both papers of Satsang Pragna Exam and candidates sitting the Satsang Pravesh, Parichay and Pravin exams should give both papers. **Presence in only one paper will not be accepted for marking**.
11. **In the Final Examination answers written on extra pages will not be accepted for marking.**
12. Candidates will not be allowed to keep any electronic items, such as, mobile phones, tablets, laptops, etc. in the examination room.
13. **Before filling the Application Form for the Pragna Exam, Please note the following points:**

- Students according to their choice can appear for both the Question Papers in the same year or appear for the 1st paper in the first and the 2nd paper in the following year for any of the Pragna Exams. **One can only appear for the 2nd Paper after passing the 1st Paper.** Candidates opting to sit only one of the two papers for any of the Pragna examinations must score 45 Marks to pass.
- Student should make his/her choice while registration. Pragna candidate can choice first paper or Both papers. **Select the first paper if the student wishes to appear for the first paper and if he/she wishes to appear for both papers select both papers.** Candidates who have registered for both papers of Satsang Pragna Exam should give both papers. **Presence in only one paper will considered as disqualify.** Candidates who appear for both papers in the same year must score a combined minimum of 90 Marks to pass.
- After passing the 1st paper, one can **postpone** appearing for the 2nd paper for a **maximum of 1 Year.**
- If two students are eligible for a prize then the one who has appeared for **both exams together** will be **rewarded with 10% marks** and thus become a candidate for the prize.
- **Note : Now all students who have passed the India Pravin Exams can appear for the Pragna - 1 Exam.**

14. **No valid registration!!! No result.**

SECTION 1: SAHAJANAND CHARITRA - 6th Edition, January 2013

Q.1. In the sentences below, state who is speaking to whom and when. [9]

1. "Your saintliness will speak for you."

   Who is speaking? ..... To whom? .....

   When? .....

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2. "In order to please Rudra-Mahadevji, I have asked you to wear this rudraksha."
3. "Our garuda is coming."

Q.2. Give reasons for the following (two to three lines each). [6]

1. Shriji Maharaj put the child on his lap and gave him two ripe mangoes.

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2. Maharaj remarked, "That means no one is Sahajanandi. Doesn't it?"
3. Shriji Maharaj instructed Sura Khachar to turn fifty one malas as atonement.

Q.3. Write short notes on any <u>ONE</u> of the following. (In 15 lines.) [5]

1. The glory of Gunatit.
2. Give up bad nature.
3. Consecration of murtis in Bhuj.

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Q.4. Answer ALL of the following, using one sentence (not just one word) for each answer. [5]

1. Which scene did Shriji Maharaj ask the puppeteers to present?

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2. Why did Shriji Maharaj ask devotees of Kutch to keep their antahkaran clean?
3. What did Lolangar tie round his waist?
4. Who gave land to Shriji Maharaj to construct a mandir in Ahmedabad?
5. What did Maharaj do after cleaning the kitchen?

Q.5. From the given options, place a tick (✔) in the box next to the correct ones. [4]

Note: One or more of the options may be correct. Full marks will be awarded only if all the correct options are chosen, otherwise no marks will be awarded.

1. Virtues of the sadhus:
   - (1) ☐ Tolerance.
   - (2) ☐ Non-violence.
   - (3) ☐ Travel continuously.
   - (4) ☐ Self-control.
2. Nishkulanand from Lalji
   - (1) ☐ Go and bring water for us.
   - (2) ☐ Don the attire of a sadhu.
   - (3) ☐ Made him collect alms from his own in-laws.
   - (4) ☐ Jivas of the whole village would have been liberated.

Q.6. Fill in the blanks. [4]

1. ..... refused to give land on a hill near the river Ghela in .....
2. In ....., Shriji Maharaj himself satisfied the ..... by serving food.
3. ..... was the chief of the ..... mission.
4. In Samvat 1874 ..... gave an invitation to Shriji Maharaj to visit .....

SECTION 2: SATSANG READER II - 4th Edition, April 2011

Q.7. In the sentences below, state who is speaking to whom and when. [9]

1. "What will your children drink?"

   Who is speaking? ..... To whom? .....

   When? .....

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2. "It is uneven and so your cot is getting jerks."
3. "Why didn't you use ghee and gur?"

Q.8. Give reasons for the following (two to three lines each). [4]

1. Indrajibhai became Akhandanand Brahmachari.

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2. Gopalanand Swami talked about the glory of Gunatitanand Swami.

Q. 9. Write short notes on 'Indifferent to taste Ayodhyaprasadji Maharaj' **(in 15 lines).** **[5]**

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Q.10. Answer <u>ALL</u> of the following, using one sentence (not just one word) for each answer. **[4]**

1. Where did Dada Khachar think of staying when the sadhus stay in the darbar?

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2. What did Jaga Swami recite daily?
3. Where did Shastriji Maharaj build the first mandir and whose murtis did he consecrate there?
4. Which place did Maharaj look upon as his own home?

Q.11 Select the <u>SIX</u> correct sentences from below and write them in the correct story sequence in the boxes. **[6]**

Topic: Jaga Bhakta served according to wish of Gunatitanand Swami.

1. Acharya Raghuvirji Maharaj came to Junagadh. **2.** Jaga Bhakta's sister gave permission to Jaga Bhakta to renounce. **3.** Swami bestowed upon Jaga Bhakta three types of happiness related to Maharaj's murti. **4.** Gunatitanand Swami was worried about protecting eighty thousand bundles of hay in the meadows of Sankhdavadar. **5.** He had spent sixteen years and six months in the company of Swami. **6.** Swami asked Jaga Bhakta, "Will you go to the meadows of Sankhdavadar to protect the grass?" **7.** Jaga Bhakta happily went to the meadows of Sankhdavadar. **8.** Bhagatji did not like other people taunting Jaga Bhakta. **9.** Jaga Bhakta said, "I am your servant, therefore, to me your command is the festival." **10.** Jaga Bhakta felt sad that as he was born later, he was not able to have Ramanand Swami's darshan **11.** You simply have to tell me to go. **12.** When I breathe my last, Swami will come to take me.

(1) Write the correct sentence numbers ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

(2) Correct sequence of sentences ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Note: (1) 3 marks will be awarded in the correct sentence number only if all the six sentence numbers are correct and (2) 3 marks will be awarded only if all the sequence of sentence numbers is correct. Otherwise no marks will be given.

Q.12. Rewrite the incorrect sentences below in relation to the sentence heading. [4]

Note: Marks will be awarded only if a sentence is written completely correct. Otherwise no marks will be awarded.

Example: Sadguru Nityanand Swami: On Maha vad 9, V.S. 1902, in the presence of Acharya Ayodhyaprasadji Maharaj, Gunatitanand Swami, Paramchaitanyanand Swami, Kripanand Swami and other sadhus, he passed away at Ahmedabad.

Ans. Sadguru Nityanand Swami: On **Magshar sud 8, V.S. 1903**, in the presence of **Acharya Raghuvirji Maharaj, Gopalanand Swami, Shuk Muni, Shunyatitanandji** and other sadhus, he passed away at **Vartal.**

1. **Premsakhi Premanand Swami:** If one reminds on God in the way described in these pads, one is liberated from the clutches of gross, subtle and causal.

A. .....

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2. **Mukundanand Varni:** Once, in Gadhada, Gunatitanand Swami was assigning the parshads into pairs. At that time Nityanand Brahmachari asked Swami, "Who is this Akhandanand Swami's companion?"
3. **Sadguru Nityanand Swami:** He came to Rajasthan and visited Nathdwar. On his way from Nathdwar, he came to Mehsana.
4. **Bhaktaraj Dada Khachar:** At that time Jiva Khachar and his brother-in-law Rathod Dhadhal had come there for some official work.

SECTION 3: ESSAY

Q.13. Write an essay on any ONE of the following. (In approximately 30 lines.) [10]

1. Person of Principle: Brahmaswarup Shastriji Maharaj.
   (Swaminarayan Prakash (Gujarati) February 2015, pp. 4 to 5)
2. Memories of Brahmaswarup Yogiji Maharaj's Childhood Incidents in Dhari.
   (Swaminarayan Prakash (Gujarati) March-April 2015, pp. 69 to 73)
3. Experience of the Divine. (Swaminarayan Prakash (Gujarati) August 2015, pp. 13 to 17)

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☞ **Matter of above three essays are shown in the following pages**

(One essay from the list of essays will be asked in the Final Examination of March-2016.)

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☞ **Important Note: Past Papers and their solutions can be downloaded and printed free from the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha's website - link : http://www.baps.org/Satsang-Exams.aspx**

Parichay

<u>Essay 1</u>: Person of Principle: Brahmaswarup Shastriji Maharaj

The 150th birth anniversary ofBrahmaswarup Shastriji Maharaj was celebrated in Vadodara. The 150th birth anniversary, or SardhShatabdi, was a celebration of a pure, spiritual principle.

Shastriji Maharaj was a person of principle. His life goal was to live and die for this principle of truth. To understand this principle, Shastriji Maharaj remained a *sevak* to the person who stayed with Bhagwan Swaminarayan for twelve years, SadguruVignanand Swami. He narrates what he gained by staying with SadguruVignanand Swami, "I renounced my home at 15 years of age. My guru Vignanand Swami had stayed with Shriji Maharaj, and had seen and experienced the immense *mahima*of Shriji Maharaj. The scriptures state many thoughts, but this thought was experienced by Vignanand Swami himself. Through my guru, I determined that Shriji Maharaj was Bhagwan and all-supreme. Shriji Maharaj had given *darshan* as many different *avatars.* From my Guru, I was able to hear all of these experiences."

But what was this principle of Bhagwan Swaminarayan? The search began for young Shastriji Maharaj, and at the first *darshan* of BrahmawarupPragji Bhakta, he felt that his search was complete. The advanced thinker, Shastriji Maharaj saw that the talks of Pragji Bhakta were filled with truth and personal experience. In addition, he had a detailed understanding of the concepts in Bhagwan Swaminarayan's Vachanamrut. Even Vignanand Swami gave his opinion to his dear *sevak* Shastriji Maharaj, "Pragji Bhakta is a *aparokhanobhavi* and *brahmasthithivalaSatpurush.* From Gunatitanand Swami, he learned the essence with conceptual reasoning of 262 Vachanamrut's. That is why the there is no room for doubt in this principle. Be sure to have complete love for Him and keep His company."

Shastriji Maharaj came into contact with BrahmaswarupPragji Bhakta. Churning of ideas happened and novel concept was founded: the *sanatanvedic* "Akshar-Purushottam" principle. To become *Akshar* and offer devotion to *Purushottam* - This is Bhagwan Swaminarayan's true principle, the door to liberation for all. *Akshar* is AksharbrahmaGunatitanand Swami and *Purushottam* is Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Having met many *santo* and *bhakto* who have lived through history, Shastriji Maharaj found evidence of this principle.

The search was complete. The realization of *sanatan* knowledge occurred. Reflecting upon his experience, Shastriji Maharaj says, "Through my association with Bhagatji Maharaj, I learned that Bhagatji Maharaj is an extraordinary *sidhdhashavalaaparokshanobhavi* person. Through this understanding, I have mastered this principle."

Shastriji Maharaj had the answer to any questions that arose. From that moment, he was steadfast. He writes, "Through the understanding of Shriji Maharaj and [Gunatitanand] Swami's principle, my duty is now to explain it to others."

In his life and until his last breath, he took upon this *yagna*. He passed through immense struggle and penance, but he was able to thoroughly fulfill his duty. From his *sankalp*, a worldwide organization: 'Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar-Purushottam Sanstha' was established. Its main goal is to spread the true *vedic* principle of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Today, thousands of devotees of this BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Shastriji Maharaj presenting their respect for him. Shastriji Maharaj never wished upon any glory for himself, he would always be just the *sevak* of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. This was his life principle. From Maharaja Sayajirao of Gaekwad to the former Prime Minister Gulzaverilal Nanda and Amdavad's wealthy industrialistsChimanbhai, Ghirdharbhai, and Mandalbhai were all influenced by Shastriji Maharaj. Despite this, Shastriji Maharaj never wished for any praise.

Sometimes devotees overflowing with enthusiasm for Shastriji Maharaj would say that Shastriji Maharaj was God himself; at that time, Shastriji Maharaj would explain to everyone that there is only one supreme God and that is Bhagwan Swaminarayan. AksharbrahmaGunatitanand Swami is his

truest devotee. To be an ideal devotee like Gunatitanand Swami and offer devotion to Shriji Maharaj is our principle. Other than that, no other principles should be kept.

During the celebration of Shastriji Maharaj's 150th birth anniversary under the inspiration of ParamPujyaPramukh Swami Maharaj, the last year was filled with a variety of programs and activities conducted by thousands of devotees in order to imbibe this principle. To realize this principle, key quotations were written and posted for the devotees in thousands of *sidhantpothi*books. The devotees hence are able to become steadfast in this principle. At the grounds of the celebration, a *murti*of Shastriji Maharaj was placed upon the thousands of the *sidhantpothi* books.

The 150th birth anniversary celebration occurred in Vadodara, and over 150,000 devotees came and offered their devotion at the feet of Shastriji Maharaj. The true celebration was of the lives of the devotees. The celebration was of Shastriji Maharaj's firm faith in this principle.

The divine life works of Brahmaswarup Shastriji Maharaj have been spread worldwide by BrahmaswarupYogiji Maharaj and PragatBrahmswarupParamPujyaPramukh Swami Maharaj. Just like the physical form of Shastriji Maharaj, ParamPujyaPramukh Swami Maharaj was not able to physically to attend the celebration, but in his place, everyone's dear Shri Harikrishna Maharaj attended the celebration. During the celebration P. Mahant Swami said "Until now, ParamPujyaSwamishri would take Shri Harikrishna Maharaj wherever he went, and today Harikrishna Maharaj has brought Swamishri with him."

Honestly, throughout the entire celebration, everyone felt as if the divinity of Swamishri's presence was there. The celebration of the 150th birth anniversary was a nonstop four hour program, and upon the completion, everyone's heart felt the satisfaction of offering devotion to Shastriji Maharaj.

Essay 2: Memories of Brahmaswarup Yogiji Maharaj's Childhood Incidents in Dhari.

The newly inaugurated BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Dhari features stone reliefs that transport one back in time and depict episodes from YogijiMaharaj's childhood. The stone reliefs embellish the jagati pith of the mandir. A few incidents from his childhood years are presented in this article.

BrahmaswarupYogiji Maharaj was born in the village of Dhari on 23 May 1892 (Vaishakhvad 12, V.S. 1948). His childhood was extremely uncommon. Episodes from his childhood reveal that he was on a distinctly superior spiritual stratum. His childhood name was Jhinabhai. Like his mother, Puriba, his heart too was filled with loving devotion for God. His father, Devchandbhai, had understood the greatness of Gunatitanand Swami from Jaga Swami, Balmukund Swami, Krishnacharandas Swami and other sadhus of Junagadh.

Jhinabhai, with his slightly darker skin, broad forehead, beautiful eyes, and head-to-toe holiness, appeared like a great yogi right from his childhood. Eternally detached from this world, he spoke sparingly. A wellspring of love and compassion seamlessly flowed from his kind, soft eyes. He possessed long slender hands. The lines on the soles of his feet showed his spiritual ascendency. A beatific smile forever beamed on his face.

Mother Puriba used to take Jhina along to the fields. Before proceeding for agricultural labour, she would lay Jhina down on a mat in the shade of a tree. The other women of the village also left their children there before going to pluck cottonpods in the field. All the children cried loudly on not finding their mothers nearby. So, the owner of the field would get angry and scold the mothers, "Why do you bring your children to the field if they are prone to weeping?" This happened daily. Only Puriba was above such reproach since Jhina never cried. The field owner would respectfully stare at Jhina and tell Puriba, "Puriba, Jhina is a wonderful child. Just see, how he sucks the thumb of his right leg, as did Shri Krishna." He used to talk about Jhina to all and told Puriba, "Your child will indeed grow to become a great person. People will revere him and he will be dear to all."

Thus, an aura of greatness began to spread from Jhina's early childhood. Whoever looked at him, felt drawn towards him.

Once, after the day's labour in the field, Puriba and all the other women returned as usual to the place where they had left their children. Puriba was shocked to find Jhina missing. Tears rolled down Puriba's eyes and the other women also felt uneasy, fearing that a wild animal may have preyed upon Jhina. The owner of the field also came and tried to look for Jhina.

While they were running helter-skelter, Jhina was crawling quietly and slowly from the other end of the field. Finding him, all the women rushed to him. Puriba ran and lifted Jhina. Tears of joy welled up in her eyes. But Jhina was pointing his small finger towards a corner in the field, as if hinting at something. So, all the women and the owner of the field walked to the spot which was uncultivated. They found some bales of cotton lying there. All of them realized that some thieves had run away without the cotton bales. The farm owner explained, "The thieves must have got the bales ready when we were on the other side of the field. But Jhina must have worked some miracle to make the thieves dash off without the bales."

The news of Jhina's miracle spread in the village. People found it incredible. Some thought, "Jhina must have shown a dreadful form to scare the thieves away."

Once, Jaga Swami, who was a blessed disciple of Gunatitanand Swami, had come to Dhari. Placing his hands over Jhina's head, Jaga Swami blessed this five-year-old devotee at that time. Also, Krishnacharandas Swami visited Dhari often to enlighten the devotees with the knowledge of Akshar-Purushottam. He, too, always remembered Jhinabhai.

Jhina was above all childish pranks. Quiet by temperament, he would remain silent. Endowed with great personal charm, Jhina was fondly loved at home and by all the villagers. The only pastime he knew at school was to tell stories of spiritual worship and devotion to God to his classmates. Also, he used to take them to the Swaminarayan mandir for darshan. The young and old were enchanted by his intense devotion and tender heart.

Jhina, who was free from all boyish instincts, started school. Study was child's play for him. With his remarkable memory, he always stood first in class. Once, when he was barely seven, he climbed the neem tree near his house and tried to look far into the horizon. Kamalshibhai, his elder brother, asked him, "Jhina, what are you looking for perched atop the tree?" Jhina replied, "I can have darshan of Chhapaiya from here. You, too, can have it. Climb up the tree to be with me." Kamalshibhai had no reason to doubt what Jhina said, because even jokingly Jhina never told lies. So, he climbed up the tree out of curiosity and he too had the divine darshan.

Thus, the joy of self-realization and unflinching devotion to and worship of Sahajanand Swami was evident from his early childhood.

On the outskirts of Dhari is the confluence of three rivers – Shetrunji, Dhedhiyo and Nataliyo. A slender, zigzag rivulet from this water body, known as 'PataliyoJharo', flows boisterously and gracefully under a nearby bridge. Here, Jhina would bathe early in the morning and then sit rapt in deep meditation on the form of Shriji Maharaj. As he slipped into that posture, his face glowed like that of an ascetic. His friends, of the same age, felt wonderstruck at this.

During mealtimes, Jhina ate food mixed together with some water added to it. He ate rotlo with buttermilk, but he would not take milk. His mother would serve him milk much against his will. Jhina would never throw tantrums over food served to him. He would eat what was served without any fuss.

Though Jhinabhai was jovial by nature, he always kept a distance from material pleasures, weddings and other such worldly occasions. Once, Jhina had to visit Changadh with Puriba on the occasion of his elder brother, Kamalshibhai's, engagement. As some ladies started singing obscene wedding songs, Jhina walked away to the nearby Ramjimandir to meditate. When it was time for lunch at 12 noon, Puriba started looking for Jhina, but he could not be found anywhere in the neighbourhood. Even the other children did not know where he had gone. On inquiry a villager offered a tip, "There is a boy sitting at the Ramjimandir. He is clad in new clothes and wearing a topi. He does

not belong to this village. It seems he has come with the guests." When the in-laws of Kamalshibhai came, he refused to go with them. Then, on persuasion, he went back with them.

In his school in Dhari, eveyone knew Jhina as a brilliant and amiable student. There was a school for girls in front of Jhina's school in Dhari. So, his classmates would make fun of him, asking, "Jhina, would you like to marry an educated girl or an uneducated one?" But Jhina would not care to hear such words. If he unwittingly heard them, he would slap himself on the cheeks. He was averse to worldly pleasures from early childhood.

Once, Puriba told him, "Jhina, I deeply desire to get you married." But Jhina rejected the idea outright. With utter dejection he said, "Mother, you have already spoilt my elder brother's life. Now, why do you also think of spoiling my life by marrying me off?" Puriba wept copiously over Jhina's reply.

The sadhus from Junagadh had established a small Swaminarayan mandir in Dhari. An aged devotee named Mohankaka used to offer his services as a pujari in this mandir. And at night, Jhina used to stay at the mandir. He also took a few of his friends along with him at night. He used to tell them, "One who reads his school lessons at the Swaminarayan mandir would never fail."

Jhina used to get up at four o'clock in the morning and after his daily routine, he would wake his friends up to study. After the arti, he taught his friends to prostrate before the deities and chant the Swaminarayan mantra. His friends got bored with it, but Jhina was different. He was always happy in doing bhajan. He used to attend the evening arti religiously. Thus, the school and the mandir were the two favourite haunts of his childhood.

In his fifth standard, there was a student by the name of Chandu. One day, the principal, Tribhovandas, dashed Chandu to the ground and punched him for no fault of his. Jhinabhai, with his tender heart, could not bear the sight. He began to chant 'Swaminarayan, Swaminarayan'. Other students hurriedly left the place out of fear. But Jhina stood there. Since Chandu was severely beaten, he died after some time. Chandu's parents lodged a complaint with the education authorities. So, they initiated an inquiry into it. But who would act as witness against the principal?

Sticking to the principle of truth and unafraid of the principal, Jhina spoke the truth. He told the inquiry officer, "Sir, the principal mercilessly beat Chandu for no fault of his." Hearing this, other students got emboldened and they supported the statement of Jhina. Appreciating Jhina's boldness and sincerity, the education officer dismissed Tribhovandas. He appreciated Jhina's devotion to truth and gave him a prize.

Dull-witted students in the class desired to write answers from Jhina's answer sheets but Jhina would not allow them to do so. So, they used to threaten to beat him but Jhinabhai would simply tell them, "Try it yourself. If my answer is incorrect, you, too, will lose marks." He found it grossly unfair if some students copied from the slates of other students, cleverly escaping the observation of the teacher. He believed that to cheat in an exam is equal to cheating God.

When Jhina was in the sixth standard, the principal, NaranbhaiUmedbhai, appreciated Jhina for his brilliance. He told the students, "How clever is Jhina! I need not ask him any question. He is good at the maths tables while you commit several errors. You should be as studious as he is."

Jhina's only interests were study and worship. Even games did not interest him. However, his friends used to take him forcibly to play 'khokho'. Every Friday was a day of feast and Jhina would share baked grams and sweets with his classmates.

Teachers of the school occasionally took the students to the neighbouring mango grove for picnics. The students would bring rotla, pickles and other snacks and share them with their classmates and the teachers. The boys then played games, and ambled across the place for fun. When it was time for lunch, Jhina would spread a piece of cloth imprinted with the images of Sahajanand Swami and Gunatitanand Swami and offer homemade snacks with reverence. Looking at him with surprise, the other students would also bring their lunch boxes to offer them to God. Jhina patiently and lovingly offered each box to the murtis. The teachers wondered how different Jhina was.

On seeing Jhina engrossed in offering food to the murtis, they shared the feeling that Jhina had rare qualities and was cut out to be a great devotee in the future.

Jhina would learn whatever was worth learning. He was always curious to learn. He had a sweet voice and it was a pleasure to hear him sing, whether it was a poem or a devotional song. Whenever Jhina lent his voice to the poem, his classmates experienced a feeling of divinity.

Whenever other students engaged themselves in gossip with the teachers, Jhina would worship God in a corner. Looking at him intently, Naranbhai, the headmaster, often said, “I strongly feel that Jhina will grow up to be a staunch devotee.”

Jhina had learnt the geometry theorems properly in his sixth standard as instructed by Naranbhai. In the exam, Jhina wrote them well. Durgashankar made a gesture atJhina to help him, but Jhina was absorbed in writing and did not lift his eyes. So Durgashankar got irritated. Seated close to him was ManishankarDayashankar. He took out a copy of the theorem to give it to Durgashankar, but he was caught red-handed by the inspector. So, Manishankar chewed the copy at once, as he would chew sugar crystals, and gulped it down. The deputy school inspector was Kanjibhai Purushottam. He instructed Durgashankar and Manishankar to sit on separate benches. Then, the inspector enquired with the headmaster about Jhina. Looking at Jhina, Naranbhai, the headmaster said, “He is very brilliant in studies and honest as well. He would not even think of cheating in the exam.”

After the exam, Durgashankar was threatening Jhina. Just then,Naranbhai, the headmaster, happened to pass by. Finding Durgashankar quarrelling with Jhina, he shouted, “Who is harassing the Bhagat?” Then, Durgashankar and Manishankar ran away.

Simplicity and great contentment clung like jewels to the emaciated frame of Jhina. His simple dress code included a coarse Bagasara dhoti, a broad coat, a cotton topi, traditional footwear and a durable string tightened round the waist so that the dhoti would not get displaced. Jhina seemed not to belong to this world. When all other students played games during recess, Jhina sat quietly in a corner. His eyes reflected a faraway look, exploring the world beyond the endless sky. The teachers would nudge him to know the reason for his indifference, and asked him jokingly, “Jhina, why don’t you join the order of sadhus, since you are so withdrawn and live an austere life?”

To that, Jhina gave only a laconic reply, “Indeed, I am all for it.” So saying, his face would flash a cherubic smile.

In 1906 ce (V.S. 1962), a part of the Swaminarayan mandir in Dhari was extended, retaining the murtis and the pedestal. But the murtis were consecrated again by Swami Krishnacharandas. As stated earlier, Mohanbhai used to offer puja to the murtis and serve there. As his health deteriorated, it became more and more difficult for him to do puja. He expected somebody would take his place. Jhina was a good find for him. He talked to Jhina about it, and Jhina’s joy knew no bounds. Also, he quite fitted the bill. For quite some time, Jhina had seemed uninterested in studies. As a result, Jhina, who used to top the class, stood seventh in the sixth standard. But he was more happy with the service of God he had very much dreamt of. And so, in a rush of great enthusiasm, he busied himself in serving God (Thakorji).

Jhina used to light up the incense stick and the lamp and then offer arti devoutly to the charming murti of Shriji Maharaj. Drawing water from the well, he would water the flower plants and grow creepers on the walls. He plucked flowers and made varied garlands for the murtis. He also offered food to Maharaj while singing the thal penned by Premanand Swami, “Avinãshiãvo re, jamvã Shri Krishna Hari...” (“Welcome, Krishna Hari, the immortal, to savour the exotic food...”). This is how he spent the day.

Jhina was in the good books of Krishnacharandas Swami right from his younger days. Once, pleased with Jhinabhai’s service, unshakable faith and devotion to God at such a tender age, Swami asked, “Jhina, would you like to become a sadhu?” Jhina replied innocently, “Swami, it would be nice if you initiate me into the order. For quite some time I wanted to ask you about that. You have

proposed what's very much on my mind. After becoming a sadhu, I would like to serve you well. It would be kind of you if you take me along."

Krishnacharandas Swami felt satisfied with the reply. He asked Kamalshibhai, Jhinabhai's elder brother, to coax his parents to allow Jhina to become a sadhu. Kamalshibhai always honoured Swami's instructions and began persuading his mother. Finally, she agreed, but asked Jhina to stay in Dhari for some more time. With no interest in domestic life, Jhinabhai now began to stay in the Swaminarayan mandir in Dhari. Sweetly oblivious of life around him, he threw himself headlong into worship. He strongly felt like rushing back to Junagadh to see Krishnacharandas Swami. He ate only one meal a day. Puriba used to go to the mandir with lunch for Jhina. He would eat quietly. He was very taciturn. In this way, a whole year rolled by.

Kamalshibhai now again persuaded Puriba, "I've promised Krishnacharandas Swami to send Jhina. Jhina, too, is uninterested in worldly life. So pray, let us not displease him. Krishnacharandas Swami will also be much pleased. He had once told me, 'Jhina is destined to become a sadhu and as a sadhu he would lend glory to sainthood.'" These words moved Puriba and her attachment to Jhina slowly dissolved. At last, with a heavy heart, she gave her consent. And with his mother's assent Jhinabhai's dispassionate heart imme- diately gladdened.

On 31 October 1908 (Kartiksud 6, Samvat 1965), Kamalshibhai brought Jhinabhai home from the mandir at night. Puriba embraced Jhinabhai and lovingly served him food. Respecting his mother's wish, Jhina stayed overnight at home after a long time.

At daybreak on 1 November 1908 (Kartiksud 7, Samvat 1965), Puriba herself cooked kansar, a sweet dish cooked on auspicious occasions. Nanduba, his sister-in-law, served him kansar. Puriba also served him lovingly. Jhinabhai ate a little and washed his hands. Finally, the appointed hour arrived. Puriba and sister-in-law, Nanduba, put a vermilion mark on his forehead and bid him farewell with heavy hearts.

Kamalshibhai accompanied JhinabhaiuptoKunkavav where they would separate for good, severing all familial bonds. Hiding his pain and grief of separation, he advised Jhinabhai, "Brother, do an honour to the family and stand out as a sadhu. Shriji Maharaj is going to be with you all along." Jhinabhai momentarily set his kindly eyes on his elder brother and then cast them down. In that steady gaze was the testimony of his pre-eminent saintliness. However, during those fleeting emotional moments, how could Kamalshibhai have understood that his brother Jhinabhai, in the years to come, would illumine the world with the sheer brilliance of his saintliness.

Essay 3: Experience of the Divine

June 20, 2015 marks not only the greatest day in the life of the well known scientist and the former President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam but is also a historical day in the spiritual world.

This day was extremely important for Dr. Kalam because his long time wish to express his spiritual experiences through a book had finally come true. From their very first meeting on 30 June 2001, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam and Pramukh Swami Maharaj struck an instant bond of friendship and spiritual rapport. On that day, after meeting Swamishri, DrKalam told the sadhus about Saint Thiruvalluvar's teaching that when you are burdened by some troubling worries, sitting in the presence of a great divinity will free you of those worries. Then he revealed that he had experienced such a feeling in the presence of Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Between 2001 and 2014, DrKalam met Pramukh Swami Maharaj seven times in person and spoke to him on numerous occasions by phone. All these interactions with Swamishri left a lasting impression on DrKalam. He was touched by Swamishri's profound spirituality and divinity. So, to record his feelings he decided to write a book about his spiritual experiences of Pramukh Swami Maharaj. DrKalam, with co-author Prof. Arun Tiwari, spent two years writing the book. They titled the book Transcendence to reflect their belief that Pramukh Swami Maharaj is beyond the three gunas and beyond this world. With the book printed and ready for public sale, DrKalam deeply wished to present the first copy to Pramukh Swami Maharaj in Sarangpur and meet him for the eighth time.

DrKalam is himself 84 years old and has a very busy schedule, yet he was determined to personally hand the first copy to Pramukh Swami Maharaj. While planning for his visit, DrKalam firmly insisted that he would make the journey from Ahmedabad to Sarangpur by car. He was requested many times to travel by helicopter since there were many roadworks in progress along the route which would make the journey longer and uncomfortable. However, he flatly refused to travel by helicopter explaining that, for him, this was a pilgrimage. It was with such deep feelings that DrKalam undertook the journey and arrived in Sarangpur at around 12.15 p.m. on 20 June 2015.

Dr. Kalam writes in his book 'Transcendence - My Spiritual Experiences with PramukhSwamiji' that- "There is no way to describe the impression Pramukh Swami has left on me and the way he has converted and truly changed my life."

Swamishri's former meeting hall was decorated and set up for the private presentation ceremony to celebrate the occasion. There, Swamishri welcomed DrKalam, Prof. Tiwari (co-author), Shri P.M. Sukumar (CEO, HarperCollins India) and a select group of DrKalam's associates. The sadguru sadhus were also present: PujyaDr Swami, PujyaBhaktipriya (Kothari) Swami, PujyaTyagvallabh Swami, PujyaIshwarcharan Swami and PujyaViveksagar Swami. First, Swamishri garlanded DrKalam, softly saying, "I am pleased. Thank you for coming from so far." Then, DrKalam took his seat next to Swamishri and firmly holding Swamishri's hand, he said, "MahaPramukhSwamiji, for me it's 15 years travel…. Beautiful spiritual journey. When Akshardham was inaugurated in New Delhi, it was a beautiful sight. All leaders were there. Everybody talked. You said this is God's creation. That is the great day I decided that we must write a book. Your life's a great life. And we have brought it out in the book. The great life. Purposeful life. Divine life."

After this, DrKalam first offered the book to Shri Harikrishna Maharaj and then presented the first copy of Transcendence to Swamishri, to the chanting of Vedic verses. While presenting the book, DrKalam said, "I have written… MahaPramukhSwamiji. Revered spiritual teacher. My respects. 20.6.2015. Sarangpur." Then DrKalam said, "I have written this book. You are a great teacher. You are a great teacher… I learnt to remove I, remove me. That's a great lesson I have learnt. Remove I and mine. I learnt from you." Swamishri said, "To rise above I and mine is only possible by God's grace. It is the best principle by which to remain happy in life." After the presentation, DrKalam sat down and prepared to read a passage from the book to Swamishri. He began, "This is Transcendence…" Then, he continued, "It was a hot summer's evening on 30th June 2001 when I met PramukhSwamiji for the first time. In saffron robes, the gentle, fair complexion PramukhSwamiji was radiating divinity. That was the first thought that occurred to me upon seeing you. My friend Y.S. Rajan was with me. "We sat down and tried to adjust to Swamiji's powerful, gracious presence. So many people are asking, 'What should be the next vision for India? How do you transform a developing country into a developed country within next 30 years?' I had given five ideas. "But you gave a sixth idea. You said, the sixth idea is spiritual life of India. Apart from prosperity and wealth, be sure to transform India into a spiritual nation. I have added that. I was drawn to PramukhSwamiji's simplicity. I felt as if I had known him all my life; I was sitting in the presence of my father, my great teacher; in a higher presence."

Then, DrKalam called Prof. Arun Tiwari to receive Swamishri's blessings. Prof. Tiwari said, "My challenge was what to write. Two oceans to fit into a small pot. I kept a photo of PramukhSwamiji in front of me and began typing, and this book was made." Next, Shri P.M. Sukumar, CEO of HarperCollins India received Swamishri's blessings. He said to Swamishri, "We are delighted and honoured to have been given an opportunity to publish this book. Our first print run for this book is a record 95,000. That is the highest we have done. And we are publishing in Gujarati and Hindi and have licenced Malayalam rights, and we hope to do it in many other languages. And I'm very grateful also because, since I've been involved with this book, a sort of divine grace seems to have descended on my life as well." Next the Executive Secretary H. Sheridan took Swamishri's blessing and told everyone that, "Every time I have Pramukhji'sdarshan I only see utmost peace within him and that peace gets radiated into me."

Ajay Umate, who translated this book in Gujarati, got up to have Swamishri's blessing and told Swamishri, "I had made a wish that on Gurupurnima I would write a book on you, and you even blessed me in Bochasan for this wish and today that wish has been fulfilled. Tomorrow is Father's day and you are equivalent to a father-figure in my life."

Then, Ishwarcharan Swami honoured Dr Kalam by draping a shawl over his shoulders. Swamishri then presented a beautiful peacock made of precious stones and crystals, a tiger-stone tasbi (rosary) and a special plaque commemorating this historic occasion to DrKalam. Swamishri also presented a special plaque to Prof. Tiwari and Shri P.M. Sukumar to acknowledge their contributions to this project. After the 30-minute presentation ceremony, DrKalam accompanied Swamishri to his quarters. There, DrKalam saw the elegant garden behind Swamishri's room and commented, "The garden is beautiful, godly and divine." The sadhus reminded him of his wish to walk with Swamishri in the Moghul Gardens of the RashtrapatiBhavan. So, to fulfil this wish, he guided Swamishri's wheelchair and walked a few steps. Swamishri was pleased by his love and affection, and gently thanked and blessed him for his visit.

Then, Dr. Kalam made his way into the Yagnapurush Hall where an assembly was organized to honor his presence. Certainly one would agree that Dr. Kalam was blessed to have experienced the bliss Swamishri feels by having Bhagwan Swaminarayan's presence in his life.