

Bochasanwasi Shri Aksharpurushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha
Satsang Shikshan Pariksha

SATSANG PRAVIN-PAPER-1

Time : 9.00 to 12.00 p.m.

Total Marks : 100

Sunday, 5 March, 2017

Note : 1. Answer of the prescribed edition only will be accepted. Any other answer from different edition will not be accepted. 2. Numbers of the right side indicate marks of question number. 3. Numbers in the blanks on the right side of the answer indicate lesson number & page number.

Important Note

In the question paper the marks of each sub-question should be written in the box (mark : 1) given on the right side and the marks obtained by the candidate should be written in the adjacent box. If the answer is wrong then write '0' (zero) in the given box. The sign or indication of true (✓) or false (X) of each sub-question should be marked only on the left-side before the question starts.

Important Note

While checking the answers, when you come across lengthy answers i.e. shortnotes, reasons, brief answer in five sentence etc. Justify to the left side of the paper for any marks deducted. If the candidate has forgotten to mention any mentioned points then the examiner can deduct mark likewise and explain to the leftside of the paper that which point is not mentioned by candidate. For example there is question in March-2013, Pravesh paper-1, "Transformation of JobanPagi" JobanPagi said to Maharaj, 'Oh Lord, I am crooked worthless and foolish. I was unable to recognize you for who are you. Oh compassionate one! please have pity on me. Please free me from my sins.' If any point is not written then write "My sins" at left side.

(SECTION-1: AKSHAR PURUSHOTTAM UPASANA - 3rd Edition, May 2012)

Q.1 For any TWO of the following, give THREE references from the scriptures.

(It is compulsory to write the reference of scripture and number.) (Total Marks: 6)

Note: It is compulsory to write the reference scripture and number. In the reference shlok and translation is given. If the examinee has written any one from those reference then it should be given correct and marks should be given.

(Note: In Reff. no. 1, 2 & 3, If examinee written any two of the below line than that Reff. should be given correct.)

1. Only one pragat form of Shriji Maharaj. (5.8/96-99)

Reference 1: "(If there was the) existance of several Bhagwans, the governance of the world would not remain orderly. One Bhagwan would say, 'I will create the world,' while another Bhagwan would say, 'I will destroy the world.' One bhagwan would say, 'I will make it rain,' while another would say, 'I will not.' One would say, 'I will instil human instincts in animals,' while another would say, 'I will instil animal instincts in humans.' A stable state would not be possible in this situation. But see how orderly everything functions in the world! there is not even the slightest irregularity. Thus, the governor of all activities and the lord of all is one Bhagwan." (Vachanamrut Gadhada III 39)

- Reference 2: You may find many virtuous persons, but will not come across one who has met God. By contact with such a Sadhu, says Nishkulanand, sins of countless are burnt away. (Nishkulanand Kavya, Sarsiddhi 38.10)
- Reference 3: "At any given time, moksha (liberation) is attained from one whom God has entrusted the task of granting moksha. Just as, when Parikshit was cursed to die, Vyasji and many other greats were present, but moksha was attained only when Shukji came" (Swamini Vato 4.48)
- Reference 4: "A devotee should have firm fidelity to God. Specifically, like a woman who observes the vow of fidelity, he would never develop the same affection towards even other mukta sadhus - however great they may be - as he has developed towards whichever form of God he has had the darshan of" (Vachanamrut, Gadhada III 16)

2. Disadvantages of perceiving manushyabhav in God. (3.9/27-29)

- Reference 1: "God is devoid of each of the flaws that senseless people attribute to him. However, the intellect of the person attributing such flaws will never be freed of those flaws that he attributes to God. Specifically, a person who believes God to be full of lust will himself become intensely full of lust; a person who believes God to be full of anger will himself become intensely full of anger; a person who believes God to be full of avarice will himself become intensely full of avarice; and a person who believes God to be full of jealousy will himself become intensely full of jealousy; etc. In fact, whatever types of flaws a person attributes to God will ultimately cause misery to the person himself - just as a fistful of sand thrown at the sun falls back into the thrower's eyes" (Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 24)
- Reference 2: "...Moreover, if a person does not believe God to be completely divine, then he repeatedly becomes upset and constantly perceives virtues and flaws; i.e., he thinks, 'God is favouring that person, but not me,' or 'he often calls that person, but not, me,' or 'he has more affection for that person, and less for me.' In this way, he continues perceiving virtues and flaws. As a result, his heart becomes more and more despondent day by day, and ultimately he falls from Satsang" (Vachanamrut, Loya 18)
- Reference 3: "However, if at some time that same devotee harbours doubts in the divine actions and incidents of God, either by the influence of unfavourable places, times, company, shastras, etc., or due to his identification with the body, then his jiva, which was like the full moon of Punam, becomes like the unlit moon of Amas. Therefore, some minor flaw in oneself will not really harm the jiva very much; but if one somehow doubts the divine actions and incidents of God, or if one somehow develops dislike for God, then that jiva instantly falls from the path of liberation. Just as when the roots of a tree are cut, the tree automatically becomes dry, similarly, a jiva who in any way perceives faults in God can never stay without falling from the Satsang Fellowship." (Vachanamrut Vartal 12)
- Reference 4: "A person who perceives faults either in God's divine incidents or in his understanding should be known to be a non-believer and a sinner. In fact, he should be considered to be the king of all fools." (Vachanamrut, Gadhada II 53)
- Reference 5: "If even Brahma and others doubt God's yogic powers, then they cannot be said to have overcome the power of God's maya" (Vachanamrut, Loya 4)
- Reference 6: "If one continues to perceive human traits in God, then final moksha is not attained" (Swamini Vato 5.116)
- Reference 7: "God's and his Bhakta's understanding transcends this world. How, then, can a person who believes his self to be the body possibly comprehend it? So, it is simply out of one's foolishness that one perceives flaws in God and his Bhakta and thus falls from the path of God." (Vachanamrut, Gadhada II 53)
- Reference 8: "For such ekantik bhaktas, leaving the body is not considered to be death;

rather, for them, falling from that ekantik dharma is true death. This occurs when an aversion arises in one's heart towards God or his Sant. It is then that devotee should be known to have fallen from the dharma of ekantik bhaktas.Therefore, to perceive flaws in God and his Bhakta is a graver sin than committing the five grave sins." (Vachanamrut, Gadhada II 46)

- Reference 9: "If one perceives the fault of lust in the great Purush, then no matter how lust-free one may be, one becomes full of intense lust. In the same manner, if one views the great Purush to be full of anger or avarice, then one become full of anger and avarice." (Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 58)
- Reference 10: "Whichever faults he perceives in the great Purush all return to dwell in his own heart" (Vachanamrut, Sarangpur 18)
- Reference 11: "What is the worst of all? That one attributes human traits to this Sadhu - there is nothing worse than this." (Swamini Vato 3.36)
- Reference 12: "Therefore, one should perceives certainly not perceive human traits in God. Further, one should not perceive flaws even in the devotees of God... Regardless of whether you realize this fact today or you realize it after a hundred years, it must be realized. In fact, there is no alternative but to realize it and imbibe it firmly. Therefore, all devotees should remember this principle of mine and discuss it amongst each other. Furthermore, whenever someone suffers a setback due to some misunderstanding, he should be alerted by mentioning this. In fact, one should discuss this principle of mine routinely, at least once a day - this is my command. So please do not forget it; please please, do not forget it!" (Vachanamrut, Loya 18)
- Reference 13: "So, even though God assumes a human body, he is still divine, and the place where he resides is also nirgun. His clothes, jewellery, vehicles, attendants, food, drinks, etc. - in fact, any other objects which become associated with him - are all nirgun." (Vachanamrut, Gadhada II 13)
- Reference 14: As God has a divine form in Akshardham, similarly his human incarnation on earth is always divine; his abode is divine; All his enjoyments are divine; the objects of his enjoyments are divine.
His parshads are divine. His powers are also divine. All his devotees are divine; and all his actions are divine. (Satsangjivan 3.29.143)

3. The necessity of Aksharbrahman on the path of liberation: To know Parabrahman as he is. (6.3.2/121-124)

- Reference 1: "The ten indriyas are produced from rajogun, and the four antahkarans are produced from satvagun; thus, all of the indriyas and antahkarans are mayik. God, however, transcends maya. How, then, can one cultivate the conviction of God through the mayik antahkarans?" (Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 51)
- Reference 2: "When one worships God with sincerity, having faith in the words of the Ekantik sant of God, one's mayik vision disappears. Thereafter, one realizes that same form of God as being the supreme chaitanya, characterised by eternal existence, consciousness and bliss" (Vachanamrut, Panchala 7)
- Reference 3: "If a person realizes this greatness of Purushottam Bhagwan by profound association with the Sant, then all of his indriyas and antahkarans become divine like Purushottam Bhagwan's indriyas and antahkaran. Then, through those indriyas and antahkarans, he can develop the conviction of that God". (Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 51)
- Reference 4: "However, such discourses regarding the nature of God cannot be understood by oneself even from the shastras. Even though these facts may be in the shastras; it is only when the Satpurush manifests on this earth, and one hears them being narrated by him, that one understands them. They cannot, however, be understood by one's intellect alone, even from the shastras" (Vachanamrut, Gadhada II 13)
- Reference 5: "It is the highest state of Knowledge to envisage divinity in the human form of Parabrahman. What is this knowledge? Maharaj explains that this knowledge

transcends Prakruti-Purush" (Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 24)

- Reference 6: "Jal is greater than Pruthvi, is the cause of that pruthvi and is subtler than it as well. In turn, tej is greater than jal, vayu is greater than tej, and akash is greater than vayu. In the same way, Akshar, Prakruti-Purush, Pradhan-Purush, mahat-tattva and ahamkar are all progressively greater than each other, the cause of each other and subtler than each other. The cause of all of these is Aksharbrahman, which is the abode of Purushottam Bhagwan" (Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 63)
- Reference 7: "Purushottam Bhagwan enters and dwells in all of the above as their cause and antaryami. However, he does not manifest in Prakruti-Purush to the extent he manifests in Akshar" (Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 41)
- Reference 8: "Aksharbrahman itself is like the sun in the sense that when the sun rises, all ten directions can be determined in relation to it. Akshardham is like that; i.e., above, below, on all four sides of that Akshar - in fact, in all directions - are millions of brahmands" (Vachanamrut, Gadhada II 42)
- Reference 9: Brahavidapnoti Param, He who knows Brahman attains Parabrahman. (Taittiriya Upanishad 2.1)

Q.2 Given below are references from the scriptures, principles or stanzas. Write the topic they relate to. (Total Marks: 5)

1. "How did you introduce me?" (4.6.1/60)

A. Shriji Maharaj's supremacy: As understood from His incidents

2. "Gunatitanand Swami is the very incarnation of Shriji Maharaj's Akshardham." (6.13.7/152)

A. Gunatitanand Swami is Akshar: In the words of Gopalanand Swami

3. "Jeva e Sant kahiye shiromani, eva Hari sau shiramod," (6.13.10/158)

A. Gunatitanand Swami's unique glory: As described by the Paramhansas


4. "Akshar is like this (Akshar te avo chhe), and the bliss associated with him is like this." (6.8/131)

A. One and Unique

5. "Vanchi kagal koi kanthno, jem nar apar raji thai." (5.6/91)

A. Deficiencies resulting from not realizing the Pragat form of God

Q.3 From the given options, place a tick (✓) in the box next to the correct ones. (Total Marks: 4)

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

1. A. 1, 4 (3.3/13-15) 2. A. 3, 4 (1/2-3)

Q.4 Describe any ONE of the following and highlight its significance. (Total Marks: 4)

 **Note: 3 marks for incident, 1 mark for significance.**

1. **Shriji Maharaj felt a heavy load on his body and began to perspire. (6.13.2/141-142)**
In Vartal, Gunatitanand Swami was returning from **Lake Gomti** after **washing the quilts of the ill sadhus**. Shriji Maharaj was returning following his meal at **Vasan Suthar's** house. They crossed each other at **Hamuman Gate**. By the **force of Swami's concentration**, Shriji Maharaj **had to stop** on the spot. The **heavy weight of 18 quilts** had made Gunatitanand Swami sweat profusely. Shriji Maharaj also began to perspire. After a while, asking for Swami's leave, Shriji Maharaj asked, "**Sadhuram, may I go now?**" Swami replied, "Maharaj, of course you may leave." Entering the assembly, Shriji Maharaj said, "I am perspiring because **I feel I am carrying a heavy load.**" Thus Bhaguji and Bapu Ratanji started to fan Maharaj. Shriji Maharaj then pointed out, "To reduce the load, **take the quilts from Swami's shoulders.**" Shriji Maharaj then called for Muktanand Swami, Brahmanand Swami and other sadhus and said, "Just as a snake is held by

pincers, **this sadhu firmly holds my murti in all three states** [i.e., he constantly beholds me]. He is my dwelling place - Akshardham - in person. He is the best of all and worthy of spiritual association even for the most exalted.”

Significance: Aksharbrahman and Parbrahman has unity of souls due to which they cannot be away from each other even for a moment.

2. **Swarupanand Swami had all the jivas freed from the torments of Hell. (4.6.1/56)**

After Ramanand Swami passed away, Shriji Maharaj revealed his supreme glory on many occasions. In Loj and Mangrol, he also initiated trance – samadhi prakran – on a mass scale. Soon after Shriji Maharaj was appointed as Guru of the Sampradaya, **Bhimbhai**, a devout follower from **Kalwani** requested, “When a new king is enthroned, all the prisoners are set free. **You are the ultimate avatari of all avatars. To commemorate this event, kindly free all the jivas who are condemned to suffer the tortures of Hell.**” Moved by Bhimbhai’s prayer, Shriji Maharaj sent **Swarupanand Swami** into trance to **Yamapuri** (Hell). Deeply touched by the piteous wailing of the jivas in Yamapuri, Swarupanand Swami felt sorry for them. He asked them to **chant the name of Swaminarayan**. By chanting that divine mantra, all the jivas were instantly **freed from the torments of hell**. They all assumed four-armed forms and transmigrated to the loka of Bhumapurush. Thus, Shriji Maharaj had also manifested his infinite powers through His paramhansas. **Muktanand Swami** has narrated this incident in the following **kirtan**:

Pote parabrahma re, Swami Sahjanand, Narayan Prabal Pratap Chhe;
Swaminarayan Mukhe uchhare, Tene janmamaran jamno bhay jay;
Sarave **Narakna kund khali thaya, bhukhya jamgana re kar ghasi pastay;**
Sahajanand Swami re, na pragatat a same re, prani koi pamat nahi bhavpar;

On the same theme, Nishkulanand Swami has also written;

Jiva Sayamni e (yamapurima) shid jay re, pragat prabhu chhe pruthvi may re;
Bese raja gadi par koy re, chhode bandhivanna bandh soy re;
Tem **bandhthi chhodya bahu jan re, pote pragat shri bhagwan re;**
Maha moto pratap pragatavi re, rit nautam nyari chalavi re;
Jene upar nahi bijo koy re, te to jem kare tem hoy re;
Sauna nath niyanta swami re, sau dhamna pan dhami re;
Te to adhalak aj dhaliya re, thaya sukhi jan jene maliya re.

Significance: Even the Paramhansas of Shriji Maharaj has that potential to make free the jivas from the hell, than the potential of Shriji Maharaj himself is doubtless obviously. One cannot find the limit of it. However, the potential of Paramhansa is due to Shriji Maharaj only. Purushottam Narayan himself is kind hearted by nature. He ignores the sins of Jivas.


3. **Conviction of Akshar to Keshavjivandas. (6.13.4/147-148)**

Gopalanand Swami identified **Gunatitanand Swami** as **Akshar** to the **Hindustani sadhu Keshavjivandas**, and asked him to go to Junagadh to have the benefit of Swami’s company. There he heard **different accounts about Akshar** and was rather **confused**. Therefore he asked Gunatitanand Swami plainly, “Swami, Gopalanand Swami has explained to me that you are Akshar. Pragji Bhakta and Jaga Bhakta also call you Akshar. But someone calls Brahmamuni Akshar, and others call Mulji Brahmachari Akshar. **What is true?** Swami, I have abiding faith in you. **Kindly explain to me as it is**” Gunatitanand Swami very told him, “You have faith in me. **You believe me as Akshar.** I alone am Akshar personified. If **someone else claims to be Akshar, that’s between him and me.**” On hearing these words of Gunatitanand Swami, he was **fully convinced of Swami’s glory as Aksharbrahman form** and **began propagating it to others**. As Gunatitanand Swami’s **popularity was increasing rapidly**, some **sadhus were becoming envious**. Someone therefore warned Keshavjivandasji, “You know Swami is Akshar, but do not say so here in Vartal. If you will say it, you will be compelled to put on white clothes.” But Keshavjivandas had unflinching faith in Swami’s words and knew Swami as Aksharbrahman. Undeterred, he replied, “**I shall say it, say it and say it! Even if I have to put on black clothes, I shall say Swami is Akshar.** (Kahunga, kahunga, kahunga!

Kala paherke bhi Swami ko Akshar kahunga).” Then Ācharya Bhagvatprasadjī Maharaj had him discard his saffron clothes and put on white clothes. Despite this humiliation, he continued to propagate Swami’s glory as Aksharbrahman.

Significance: If one has complete faith, firm conviction than he/she becomes fearless despite of having a lot of difficulties. Whichever conviction one has, one follows it and fights for it.

Q.5 Write briefly on any TWO of the following. (In 12 lines each.) (Total Marks: 8)

 **Note: (1) If the reference is not given by the examinee related to vachanamrut, Swami Vato or any other scriptures but the explanation is written correctly than it should be considered. (2) The reference should be written according to the distribution of marks. It is not necessary to quote all incidents.**

1. The necessity of Aksharbrahman on the path of libeation: To become brahmarup. (6.3.1/121)

Tatra brahmatmana Krishan-seva muktishcha gamyatam || -Shikhapatri 121

Explaining the defination of liberation or moksha, Shriji Maharaj says: “Ultimate mukti or liberation is serving Parabrahman in the divine abode, after becoming brahmarup.” Having realized the necessity of attaining the brahmarup state, the obvious question is how to become brahmarup? According to Maharaj, ignorance, passion and attachment to the body are not undone by any means. They can only be eradicated by the company of Brahman. The influence of maya can only be removed by association with Brahman, in Brahman there is notrace or influence of maya. Shriji Maharaj states, “If one associates with Brahman through continuous contemplation in this manner, the jiva acquires the virtues of that Brahman” (Vachanamrut, Gadhada II 31). The Shrutis also declares: Brahma veda Brahmaiva bhavati | He who knows Brahman becomes Brahmaroop. - Mundaka Upanishad 3.2.9 It is quite essential to know and to be associated with Aksharbrahman in order to do away with the influence of maya and become brahmarup. Gunatitanand Swami also says: “One can become brahmroop be believing this Gunatit Sadhu to be brahmrup and associating with him through one’s mind, deeds and speech. Then one becomes brahmarup” (Swamini Vato 3.12)

2. Shriji Maharaj: The all-doer. (2.2/5-7)

Parabrahman Purushottam Narayan, the all-doer, is Shriji Maharaj. this point has been clearly brought out in a number of Vachanamruts by Shriji maharaj himself. It has also been reiterated in other texts of the Sampradaya in these and other similar words: :This very manifestation”, “Visible before you in human form”, “The God who accepts your devotion”, “god who is pragat - present - before you.” The following excerpts affirm this point, “Thus God eternally possesses a from. In addition, he is the creator, sustainer amd destroyer of countless brahmands; he is forever present in his Akshardham; he is the lord of all; and he is pratyaksh - manifest here before your eyes” (Vachanamrut, Gadhada III 35). “I am the creator, sustainer and destroyer of all of the brahmands. In those countless brahmands, it is by my divine light that countless Shivs, countless Brahmas, countless Kailasas, countless Vaikunths, Goloks, Brahmapurs, as well as countless millions of other realms are radiant. “What am I like? Well, if I were to shake the earth with the toe of my foot, the worlds of countless brahmands would begin to shake. It is also by my light that the sun, the moon, the stars, etc., are radiant” (Vachanamrut, Ahmedabad 7). In the Bhaktachintamani, written by Nishkulanand Swami, Shriji Maharaj says:

“Vali kahi ek varta, sarve apanu thay chhe, Sukh dukh vali jay parajay, yatkinchit je kahevay chhe.

je je apanane nav game, te jiva kem shake kari; Juo sarve jaktama, kon shake chhe fel achari.

Te mate tame sambhalo, satsangi sahu narnar; Je je thay chhe jakatma, teno bijo nathi karnar.”

Let me give you an account of the divine saga. Whatever happens is solely due to me.

Pleasure or pain, victory or defeat, call it what you will. No one can do whatever I disapprove.

Nor can anybody in the wide world indulge in wanton behaviour.

Listen all male and female satsangis, Whatever happens under the sun is not done by anyone else. –Bhaktachintami 76

“Maru dharyu asatya satya thay chhe, Samarath maru nam sahi;

Mari drushti e jakta upaje shame, Anek rupe maya thai...”

I am the omnipotent. As I wish, the untruth turns into truth. With my look, the earth is created and dissolved, and maya pervades in many forms. –Bhaktachintami 68

Shriji Maharaj succinctly explains his doership in the kirtan ‘Bolya Shri Hari re...’:

“Jiva ishwara tano re, maya kala purush pradhan; Saune vash karu re, sauno prerak hu Bhagwan. Aganit vishwani re, utpatti palan pralay thay; Mari mariji vina re, koithi taranu nav today.”

The inspirer of jiva, ishwara, maya, kala, purush, Pradhan; I control them all. I am the inspirer of all, God. I create, sustain and dissolve countless worlds; Without my will, no one can pluck even a blade of grass. –Sadguru Premanand Swami

3. **Glory of the Gunatit Sadhu: In the bhajans of the paramhansas. (5.10.3/107-110)**

(A) Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami had eulogized such a great Ekantik Sadhu in Purushottam Prakash, Bhaktachintami, Chosath Padi and in many of his kirtans. He has written in Purushottam Prakash:

Sant bole te bhelo hu bolu re, Sant na bhule hu ye na bhulu re;

Sant vat bheli karu vat re, em Santma chhau sakshat re.

Sant juve te bhelo hu jou re, Sant suta pachhi hu sou re;

Sant jage te bhelo hu jagu re, Sant joi ati anuragu re.

Sant jame te bhelo hu jamu re, Sant bhame te kedye hu bhamu re;

Sant dukhane hu dukhano re’ eh vat satya jan jano re,

Sant hu ne hu te vali Sant re, em Shri mukhe kahe Bhagwant re,

Sant manajo mari murati re, ema fer nathi ek rati re. –Purushottam Prakash 41.6-9

Eva sant jamye jamya Shyam, jamya shau devta;

Jamya sarve lok sarve dham, sahu thay truptata.

Eva Sant malye malya Swami, khami koye na rahi;

Kahe Nishkulanand shish nami, sachi sahune kahi. – Chosath Padi 3

Sant Krupae sukh upaje, Sant krupathi sare kam;

Sant krupathi pamie, Puran Purushottam dham.

Sant krupathi sadmati jage, Sant krupathu sadguna;

Sant krupa vina sadhuta, kahone pamya kuna.

Sant sevyate tene sarva sevyate, sevyate Shri Hari Bhagwan;

Rushi muni sevyate devata, jene Sant karya raji man.

Kamadugha kalpataru, paras chintamani char;

Sant saman eke nahi, me manma karyo vichar. – Bhaktachintami 2

Dhanya dhanya e sant sujanane, jenu ulati palaty ap, Sant te swayam Hari

Ap tali malya Bhagwanma, jena apma Harino vyap, Sant te swayam Hari.

(B) Sadguru Muktanand Swami says:

Aise mere jan Ekantik, tehi sam aur na koi; Muktanand kahat yu Mohan,

mero hi sarvasva soi. Muktanand maha Santne, Prabhu pragat pase re;

Anubhavine antare rahe rama vase re.

(C) Sadguru Brahmanand Swami says:

Brahmanand kahe Santki sobat, milat he Pragat Murari, jagatmahi Sant param hitakari.

(D) Sadguru Premanand Swami writes:

Athe pahor anand jena angma, rame Govind eva Santna re sangma;

Eva Sant harine pyara re, Tethi ghadie na rahe Valo nyara re.

Eva Santni balihari re, Jene guno rijhya Giradhari re.

Q.6 Explain any TWO of the following, giving reasons (in 12 lines each). (Total Marks: 8)

 **Note: Give marks even if the examinee has written in narration form only and not given the references of Vachanamrut, Swamini-Vato and other scriptures.**

1. Akshardham is a superior abode than Golok and Vaikunth. (4.2/35-39)

- A.** Akshardham is the divine abode of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. It is distinct and above the abodes of other incarnations and deities. As ordained by God, other incarnations, devotees and deities reside in different abodes. Nishkulanand Swami explains:

Brahma rakhya satyalokma, Shivne rakhya Kailas;
Vishnune rakhya Vaikunthma, ema apyo jujavo nivas,
Indra rakhyo Amaravati, Sheshjine rakhya Patal;
Jya jya kari Harie agna, tiya rahya sukhe sadakal.
Badritale rakhya Rushiwar,
Nirannamukta rakhya Shvetdwipma;
Gopi-gopa rakhya Goloke,
rakhya mukta Akshar samipma.

Brahma's abode is Satyaloka. Ans Kailas is the abode of Shiva. Vishnu's abode is Vaikunth. They each have separate abodes given by God. Indra is placed in Amaravati. And Sheshji is placed in Patal. Wherever ordained by God, they happily live forever. Rishiwar lives under Badri. The nirannamuktas stay in Shwetdwip. The Gopas and Gopis are placed in Golok. The aksharmuktas are in close proximity with God himself [in Akshardham]. - Nishkulanand Kavya, Vachan Vidhi 37

Barring Akshardham, the remaining lokas are enwrapped in maya, and are subject to the triple misfortunes. Sadguru Muktanand Swami says:

Chaud loka Vaikunth lagi, mayani pagi re;
Tethi anubhavi alaga rahe, traya tap agi re.

Vaikunth and the fourteen lokas are under the spell of maya.

The wise shun them to escape from the triple misfortunes.

Akshardham transcends maya hence is immune from the three types of miseries. The bliss in Akshardham is therefore incomparable. Shriji Maharaj explains, "Moreover, the happiness of humans exceeds the happiness of animals; and the happiness of a king exceeds that; and the happiness of deities exceeds that; and the happiness of Indra exceeds that; then Bruhaspati's happiness, then Brahma's, then Vaikunth's. Beyond that, the happiness of Golok is superior, and finally, the bliss of God's Akshardham is far more superior" (Vachanamrut, Panchala 1).

Nishkulanand Swami also says:

Jeh Dhamne pamine prani, pachhu padvanu nathi re,
Sarve par chhe sukhni khani, kevu kahie tene kathi re.
Anant mukta jya anande bhariya, rahe chhe Prabhujini pas re,
Sukh sukh jya sukhna dariya, tya vasi rahya vas re.
Eva Dhamni agal bija, shi ganatima ganaya re...

The ultimate divine abode is from where there is no return.

An indescribable reservoir of sublime happiness, it is beyond all.

Where, in close proximity of God, live infinite muktas; full of infinite bliss.

They live as if in the midst of oceans of utter happiness.

God's divine abode [Akshardham] is unique and incomparable with other abodes.

- Chosath Padi 55-56

Therefore, Shriji Maharaj says that the bliss offered by his divine abode is so infinitely overwhelming that in comparison to it, the happiness offered by the lokas of the deities is described in Mokshadharma as utterly infernal and insignificant (Vachanamruts, Sarangpur 1,4,11; Gadhada III 28).

Apart from Akshardham, all other abodes are perishable. Akshardham is imperishable and eternal. Nishkulanand Swami says:

Mapralay kalana agnima sija, hamesh je hanaya re,

Prakruti Purush pralayma ave, bhav Brahma na rahe koy re,
Chaud loka dham raheva na pame, sarve sanhar hoy re.

In the scorching heat of the final destruction, the fourteen lokas, Bhav (Shiva), Brahma and Prakriti Purush are all consumed.

- Chosath Padi 56

Shriji Maharaj also explains, “With the excerpction of God’s Akshardham, the from of God in that Akshardham, everything else - all of the realms, the deities, and the opulence of the deities - is perishable” (Vachanamrut, Gadhada II 24). All other abodes are ephemeral. Eventually, the jivas have to return to the cycles of birth and death. Only from Akshardham does a mukta never return:

Na tadbhasayate suryo na shashanko na pavakaha I

Yadgatva na nivartante taddhama paramam mama II –Bhagvad Gita 15.6

The other abodes are influenced by the three gunas and maya (e.g. the dispute between Radhikaji and Shridama in Golok is indicative of tamoguna. Tamoguna was also apparent in Jay and Vijay when they belittled Sanak and the sages in Vaikunth). It is only Akshardham that is uninfluenced by the gunas or maya. Golok, Vaikunth and other abodes have specific dimensions according to scriptural descriptions. However, because of its vastness, Akshardham is describes as immeasurable and endless in all directions (Vachanamrut, Loya 14). Other abodes abound with material objects such as diamond-studded palaces, jewels, etc. Akshardham, however, is flooded with divine light. Purushottam, Akshar and the akshar muktas dwell within that divine light. Shriji Maharaj describes his abode in Premanand Swami ‘s Kirtan, ‘Bolya Shri Hari re...’:

Maru Dham chhe re, Aksahr amrut jenu nam, Sarve samrathi re, shakti gune karu abhiram. Ati tejomay re, ravi shashi kotik varane jay; Shital shant chhe re, tejni upama nav devay. (Premanand Swami)

Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami also writes:

Tej tej jiya tej ambar, tejomay tan tena re, Tejomay jya sarve akar, shu kahiye sukh ena re. Te tej madhye sinhasan shobhe, tiya betha bahunami re, Nishkulanand kahe man lobhe, Puran Purushottam pami re. (Chosath Padi 55)

In his talks, Gunatitanand Swami has clearly stated the superiority of Akshardham over other abodes (Swamini Vato 3.11, 3.23, 3.49). Shriji Maharaj also describes, in his own words, the superlative position of his divine abode, “The abode in the form of Akshar is the highest and beyond all” (Vedras, p.146). In Samvat year 1869 (1813 CE), Shriji Maharaj was bedridden. By his yogic powers, he visited various abodes, ultimately reaching Akshardham. He describes the journey, “I went alone to the abode of Shri Purushottam Narayan, which transcends everything. There, I saw that it was I who as Purushottam; I did not see anyone eminent apart from myself. ...Moreover, I will grant my supreme abode to all who come to my refuge and understand this” (Vachanamrut, Ahmedabad 7). Here, shriji Maharaj has unambiguously described Akshardham as the highest. That abode is his and he himself is supreme there. It is therefore but natural that God residing in such a transcendent and divine Akshardham, should also be the highest, the supreme of all gods.

2. That which possesses a form can also be pervasive. (3.5/17-19)

- A.** God is vyapak - all-pervasive or immanent, but also murtiman - always with a form. In the Vedanta and other shastras, God is described as all-pervasive. Questions may arise such as, “How can God be pervasive, yet still have a form?” or “How can God have a form, yet still at the same time be pervasive?” Muktanand Swami asks a similar question in the Vachanamrut, to which Shriji Maharaj replies, “Brahman resides in only one place, but not everywhere. ...even though the shastras describe God as pervasive in the sense of being formless like akash. So in reality, God eternally possesses a form. It is that God with a defnite form, who, while always residing in Akshardham, appears in countless millions of brahmands” (Vachanamrut Vartal 13).

Nityanand Swami questions whether God dwells within the jiva without a form or with a form. And he dwells with a form how can he be described as all-pervasive? Shriji Maharaj replies, "God dwells as the refuge of the indriyas, their presiding deities, the antahkaran and the jiva. Shri Krishna Bhagwan, for example, made Uddhavji explain to the gopis, 'I am near to you by being the refuge of your indriyas, antahkaran, their presiding deities and jiva. Just as the very same five mahabhutas which reside in the brahmands are also within everyone's body, similarly, I reside in Mathura like the mahabhutas reside predominantly in the brahmands; but just like those mahabhutas reside subtly in the bodies of the jivas, I also reside within all of you. The fact that I cannot be seen is to keep the vrutti of your mind confined within me; that is why I cannot be seen. Nevertheless, I reside within you possessing a definite form" (Vachanamrut, Loya 15).

In this way, God resides in all the jivas and at the same time is all-pervasive. Shriji Maharaj explains how this actually happens, "That which possesses a form can also be pervasive. For example, Agnidev possesses a definite form when residing in this realm, but through his powers, he is latent with wood. Similarly, God possesses a definite form in his Akshardham, but through his antaryami powers, he pervades the jivas and functions as if he possesses a form. Therefore, even that antaryami form should be considered to possess a form" Vachanamrut, Kariyani 4).

From these references of the Vachanamrut, it is quite clear that God, with his divine form, dwells in the divine abode Akshardham. Simultaneously he is all-pervasive by his antaryami shakti. The antaryami shakti also has a form as explained by Shriji Maharaj, "Moreover, despite the fact that Purushottam Bhagwan's brahmarup light, which pervades all jivas and ishvars as their antaryami, is formless, it should be considered to possess a form. This is because it governs the granting of the deserved fruits of karmas to all jivas and ishvars according to their respective karmas. This power of governing makes it function as if it possesses a form. Thus, that divine light should be considered to possess a form as well" (Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 45).

Thus, Purushottam Narayan is murtimaan - has a form - and yet is also vyapak - all-pervasive.

3. Devotion, save that of the manifest God is an indication of ego and dogmatism. (5.3/80-82)

- A.** God himself or manifest in the form of the sadhu, is always present on this earth. As observed earlier, jnan mens to know that pragat form of God. And only he who knows the pragat (manifest) form of God is a true devotee; and then to seek shelter in him is genuine devotion. Shriji Maharaj confirms this as follows: "Whenever a jiva attains a human body in Bharat-khand, God's avatars or God's sadhus will certainly also be present on earth at that time. If that jiva can recognize them, then he becomes a devotee of God" (Vachanamrut Vartal 19).

To realize such redemptive virtues in pratyaksh God and to seek his firm refuge is known as bhakti" (Vachanamrut, Gadhada II 10).

Praising bhakti of the manifest, Muktanand Swami says:

Kalpataru sarvana sankalp satya kare, pase jai pritashu seve jyare;

Tem je pragat Purushottam prichhashe, thashe harijan tatkal tyare...

Pragatne bhaji bhaji par pamyā ghana, gidh ganika kapivrund koti;

Vrajtani nar vyabhichar bhavē tari, pragat upasana sauthi moti...

When approached with loving care, the kalpataru (the wish-fulfilling tree) fulfills all desires. Similarly, he who recognizes pragat Purushottam is transformed into a devotee of God. By dedicated service to God in human form, many were liberated - the vulture, the fallen women and hordes of monkeys.

In spite of their amorous sentiments, the women of Vraj by thier sincere pragat upasana were liberated. Also:

Pragatna bhajanthi param sukh pamie, ura thaki nash pame andharu...

Only devotion to the pragat form of God yields ultimate bliss and dispels inner darkness.

Only the most fortunate are privileged to offer pragat bhakti. Devotion, save that of the

manifest God, is an indication of ego and dogmatism, as pointed out by Nishkulanand Swami:

Mote bhagye bhete bhagati, pragat prabhu paramanani;

Teh vinani je bhagati, te to mat mamatna tanani.

Only by extreme good fortune can one serve the pragat form of God. Devotion without that is a display of ego and obstinacy. –Nishkulanand Kavya, Sarsiddhi 22

In his book Bhaktinidhi, Nishkulanand Swami acknowledged pragat bhakti as the highest. When Shiva heard that the villagers of Vraj were blessed with the darshan as well as the touch of Shri Krishna, he was remorseful and felt that had he been born as a cowherd, he would have enjoyed similar bliss. Brahma also became a fish to enjoy the happiness of the pragat form of God.

Nishkulanand Swami writes:

Em pragat bhakti sahu upare, ethi uparant nathi kai;

Nishkulanand nishche varata, saune samajavi manamai.

Devotion of the pragat is the supreme. Nothing supersedes it. Nishkulanand says everyone is convinced of this as an unquestionable fact. -Nishkulanand Kavya, Bhaktinidhi 15
Brahmanand Swami has also written:

Pragat swarup upasi, dhanya so pragat swarup upasi.

Blessed are the devotees who offer upasana to the pragat form of God.

Gunatitanand Swami says, “God is pragat and these talks are pragat. The rest are like the sun painted on the piece of paper” (Swamini Vato 5.64).

Expalining the importanc of faith in the pratyaksh form of God, Shriji Maharaj says, “If a person has firm faith in the manifest form of God and believes himself to be fulfilled merely by his darshan, and desires nothing else, then God himself forcefully shows him his divine powers and forms in his abodes” (Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 9).

“Except for the manifest form of Shri Krishna Bhagwan, he wishes for no other object. Then, even if he has only a slight amount of atma-realization and vairagya, such a devotee still attains profound bliss in the abode of God after leaving his body” (Vachanamrut Gadhada III 5).

Imperfections are eradicated only by the contact of the pragat form of God. Gunatitanand Swami explains, “Indra killed Vishwarup, thereby committing a fourfold crime... Narad then met him and told him, ‘Your brother Vamanji is an incarnation of God; therefore take refuge in him’ Indra developed unshakeable faith in Vamanji and was relieved from the sin of brahmahatya. Only by taking refuge in the pragat are all ends accomplished” (Swamini Vato 1.293).

Q.7 Complete the following statements based on the summary. (Total Marks: 7)
What to understand in upasana?


1. Like the jivas, these ishwars are countless in number, subtle like an atom, possess the qualities of indivisibility, etc., are jnanswarup, jnata, doers of good and bad karmas and experiences of the fruits of those karmas. They have been bound by maya since eternity. Pradhan Purush, Virat Purush, the devas of their indriyas and antahkaran, Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, etc. are all chaitanaya entities of the ishwar category and these ishwars are fundamentally different from each other. (19) (172)
2. In this succession of Aksharbrahman gurus, Gunatitanand Swami, Bhagatji Maharaj, Shastriji Maharaj and Yogiji Maharaj have appeared. This succession continues forever. At any one time, the path of ultimate liberation remains open through only one guru. (16) (171)
3. Parabrahman is forever naturally replete with infinite liberating virtues and devoid of mayik qualities. He is free of all faults, forever possesses all powers, is all-knowing, and is the all-doer and destroyer. He is the material and efficient cause of all creation. (4) (169)
4. The form, qualities, powers, etc. of Aksharbrahman are dependent only on Parabrahman. And by the eternal wish of Parabrahman, it is the cause, support, controller and shariri of all of jad creation and chaitanya forms and pervades them. (11) (170)

What not to understand in Upasana?

5. Paramhansas other than Gunatitanand Swami can also be called Mul Aksharbrahman. (12) (174)

6. When God manifests on earth, he does not remain in his abode, i.e., his abode becomes vacant during that period. (2) (174)
7. Only Aksharbrahman exists. Purushottam is included in him and can live only through him. (4) (174)

Q.8 Write a short note on: (Total Marks: 5)

 **Note: Minumum three example with reference should be written.**


‘Liking for sakar.’ (3.1/9-11)

Earlier, we learnt in the upasana explained by Shriji Maharaj that he is disinterested in the divine light as the final goal. The aspirant should not merely stop at this stage. Shriji Maharaj has clearly shown his liking for sakar - that God is with a form (Vachanamrut, Loya 14) as opposed to nirakar - the notion that God is formless. Maharaj clearly states his liking for the divine form of God. In the Vachanamrut, Maharaj comments, “I myself also accept that view (that God has a divine form)...” (Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 71). Speaking about his innate nature, Shriji Maharaj says, “In fact, so firm is my conviction that God possesses a form that even though I have read and heard many Vedanta shastras, my conviction has not been dislodged” (Vachanamrut, Gadhada II 39). Shriji Maharaj also explains the reason behind his firm faith in the divine form, “I have delivered this discourse having experienced it directly myself. Therefore, there is not a trace of doubt about it” (Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 64). Since Shriji Maharaj has a strong inclination for the divine form of God, he truly likes a devotee who worships the divine form of God (Vachanamrut, Gadhada III 30). Shriji Maharaj further clarifies this point in the Vachanamrut, “He also understands that God and his devotees eternally possess a form; but never does he understand them to be formless, regardless of any Vedanta shastras he may hear. ...A person with such firm conviction that God has a form, even if he is an ordinary person, is still dear to me” (Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 37). In Shriji Maharaj’s eyes, only an aspirant who has faith in the divine form of God is a genuine devotee, “Upasana can be defined as having a firm conviction that God eternally possesses a form. Even if a person becomes brahmarup, that conviction would never disappear. Moreover, even if he happens to listen to shastras propounding the view that God is formless, he would still understand God to always have a form. Regardless of what is mentioned in the shastras, he would only propound that God has a form, never allowing his own upasana to be refuted. One who has such a firm understanding is considered to possess upasana” (Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 40). However, “If he does not understand God to possess a form, then his upasana cannot be considered resolute” (Vachanamrut, Gadhada III 35). Therefore, “One should never refute the form of God” (Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 71). These precise words of Shriji Maharaj make it absolutely clear that he himself has unshakable faith in the divine form of God, as well as love for those who accept such a belief. Shriji Maharaj has deep faith in God’s form. He also wishes his followers to share the same faith, so that they may be freed from all sins and attain liberation. To avail of these double blessings, he instructs all followers to have faith in God’s divine form. He assures them, “If a person realizes God to possess a form and is convinced of this, then even if he happens to commit a sin, there is nothing to worry about. Because by the grace of God, all of those sins will be burnt and his jiva will attain God. Therefore, one should keep a firm conviction of the form of God and staunchly worship him. This is my message to you. So, please imbibe these words firmly in your lives” (Vachanamrut, Gadhada II 39). A follower at a premature stage may not have firm faith in the divine form of God. To protect him from being influenced by the precepts of formlessness, Shriji Maharaj advises with caution, “Shastras which do not promote God possessing a form... but instead discuss pure Vedanta and propound a single, formless entity, should never be studied or heard, even if they have been written by someone very intelligent” (Vachanamrut, Loya 6). Shriji Maharaj has also advised against associating with Shuhka Vedantis as they believe God to be nirakar. In all these spiritual dialogues, Shriji Maharaj has clearly stated his liking for the divine sakar form of God. At the same time, he has also expressed his total dislike for the concept that God is nirakar. He says, “To learn about the beliefs of

those possessing shushka-jnan, I listened to their shastras. Merely hearing them, though, has caused much grief in my heart.” Describing this, the paramhansas write, “In (this) distressed mood, the white feto tied around his head and loosened and become undone, yet he paid no attention to it. In this manner, he sat extremely distressed for a few minutes and tears began to flow from his eyes” (Vachanamrut, Gadhada II 19).

**SECTION 2: SATSANG READER PART 3, 5th Edition, June 2015 &
PORTRAIT OF INSPIRATION - PRAMUKH SWAMI MAHARAJ, 2nd Edition, April. 2011**

Q.9 In the sentences below, state who is speaking to whom and when. (Total Marks: 9)

 **Note : Who is speaking 1 mark, to whom 1 mark and when 1 mark.**

1. “He is crazy after the Swami.” (7/69)

- The schoolmaster - Mother
- Due to the impressions of spiritual endeavours of his previous births, Nagarsheth’s son realized Swami’s true identity at a very young age and became follower of Swami. So schoolmaster complained about this to his mother.

2. “The owners will soon come and take them.” (1/2)

- Khushal Bhagat - his mother
- Khushal Bhagat’s mother, while sweeping her compound, found a jari garment and a foot ornament in the courtyard. She began to look around. Seeing this, he son smiled and said this.

3. “This makes us feel even more guilty.” (34)

- Frank - Swamishri
- Frank’s son had committed suicide and because of it people kept telling them that they did not give him enough love. He couldn’t understand what he should do for getting inner peace and told this to Swamishri.

Q.10 Give reasons for the following. (In 9 lines each.) (Total Marks: 8)

1. Maharaj declined to take the state of Dharampur. (5/58)

- A.** After celebrating the festival of Vasant Pamchmi, as wished by Kushalkunvarba, Vijaydev performed puja of Maharaj with rich costumes and ornaments. The entire body of Maharaj was covered with ornaments and then he performed arti and puja. At this juncture, the devout Queen said to Mahraj, “O Maharaj, **this State, The treasury, everything is yours.** Please stay here. Perform large scale yagnas, utilize all this wealth as you wish. We will claim only a handful of grains from that and **render service to you...**” In this way she repeatedly requested Maharaj, who was pleased and said, **I have not come in this world to rule.** I have yet to liberate many souls. **I advice even you, not to attach yourself with the state,** otherwise you’ll have to take another birth.” thus, Maharaj declined to take the state of Dharampur. **OR**

2. Anopamanand started cooking food for Muktanand Swami. (2/27)

- A.** Once Gopalanand Swami and Nityanand Swami came to his seat to enquire about Muktanand Swami’s health. Swami was busy taking meals. When Swami finished his meals Nityanand Swami took up some left out khichdi from Swami’s plate as prasad. As he put it in the mouth there was a clatter of some pebbles in his mouth. He was angry and asked as to who gave such food to Swami. Nityanand Swami called Swami’s attendant and reprimanded him, “How dare you give such food to the ailing Swami? You must at least clean the grains before you cook.” To this, the attendant who happened to be Swami’s writer, replied, “If I am to engage myself in such jobs as cleaning, etc. when shall I write? So I cook the stuff which I get from the general store. I cannot do anything more.” Hearing his insolent reply, Nityanand Swami called Anopamanand Swami and ordered him to cook and serve good stuff to Swami.

3. The Mayor of Ashton Mr. Wilkinson responded emphatically. (11/12)

- A.** Once the devotees of Ashton-U-Lyne in England had made preparations for a

procession to welcome Swamishri. They had arranged for a decorated buggy and a national prizewinning racehorse named Jacob to pull it. On seeing the horse the mayor of Ashton Mr. Wilkinson drew the attention of C T Patel that this is a racehorse. It will go wild when marching band will play music. If it goes wild, it will cause havoc and injury. But the devout C T Patel said, "Swamishri will take care of it, because he has the power to control and calm anyone and any situation. Once he sits in the chariot, everything will be all right." the mayor did not expecting such an answer and became angry.

OR

4. The student who had joined in satsang tour to Saurashtra, admires Swamishri's deep love him. (7)

- A.** A student from South Gujarat, who had joined Swamishri in his satsang tour in Saurashtra, was shivering and feeling weak because of fever and vomiting. He was confused as to whom to approach and tell about his miserable state of health. At this point, Swamishri held his hand and take care of him. Swamishri made him drink a cup of hot milk made for himself and also advised, "Take rest. Don't go out anywhere." At 10:30 AM, the youth was lying half asleep with a splitting headache. Suddenly, he felt a cool touch on his head. He opened his eyes and to his surprise found Swamishri softly pressing his head. He tried his best to dissuade Swamishri, but Swamishri told him, "Lie still and let me serve you." The next morning, when the youth got up for his bath, he heard Swamishri calling out, "Don't have your bath now. There is cold in all the bathrooms. Take my hot water for your bath." Today, even after many years, when the youth recalls Swamishri's selfless affection and care, his eyes turn moist with emotion and admiration for Swamishri's deep love for him.

Q. 11 Answer the following concisely. (12 lines each.) (Total Marks: 8)

1. Nishkulanand Swami's atmanishtha. (3/41)

- A.** The climate of Dholera did not suit Swami. He suffered from skin rashes. He observed strict dietary restrictions, and ate only loaves and buttermilk, yet he did not get any relief from the disease. Seeing his traumatic condition, all the sadhus and devotees of the mandir began to chant a prayer to Maharaj for his well-being. When he came to know about this, he called them and said, "I have got to bear the suffering, I'll have to take another birth in order to complete it. You cannot share my suffering. Moreover, it is not fair to pray to Maharaj for relief of bodily pains. So if you wish me well, stop the prayer and let me suffer till Maharaj desires it to be so." Everyone was surprised to see that he was true to himself and sincere in his worship. **OR**

2. True tribute to the great contributions of Gopalanand Swami. (1/12-13)

- A.** Gopalanand Swami made invaluable literary contributions to the satsang. He helped to edit the Vachanamrut, the spiritual discourses of Shriji Maharaj, in collaboration with Nityanand Swami, Muktanand Swami and Shuk Muni. He also wrote commentaries on the Upanishads, the Brahmasutras, The Bhagvad Gita and Veda Stuti. In this way he highlighted the Vedic tradition of the Sampradaya and the vedic basis of the Akshar-Purushottam Upasana. In these commentaries, through logical arguments, he has wonderfully described the dual worship of Brahman with Parabrahman, Narayan with Swami, that is God and his ideal devotees. Shastriji Maharaj recognized the great contributions of Gopalanand Swami in spreading the true upasana of Akshar Purushottam Satsang by consecrating Gopalanand Swami's murti along with that of Shriji Maharaj and Gunatitanand Swami in the mandirs.

3. The overwhelming love experienced by Mangal. (22/27-28)

- A.** At Bhimpura village, during Swamishri's stay, he inquired about a middle-aged man about his addictions when he was smoking bidi. Swamishri explained him, "Smoking is worthless and it will spoil your health. It is not for you, therefore give it up and you'll be happy. Remember, it has devastating effects on your health and money." Both of his sons were having addiction of drinking so Swamishri asked him to bring both of his sons in the morning. The next day, Swamishri blessed Mangal with two pats on


his shoulder and inspired him to take an oath. Mangal responded instantly, and with him, his two sons also gave up their addictions. Thereafter, both father and sons started doing daily puja after their morning bath. Swamishri's selfless love has the power to transform people's lives. For Mangal, the divine dialogue of care and love at midnight opened a new chapter and a fresh dawn in his life; and that of his sons, too.

OR

4. The spontaneous, divine joy experienced by Ganesh. (10)


- A.** "Swami, please come to my village." Fifteen-year old Ganesh, who lived in a small village of Kankrawadi near Viramgam, was holding Swamishri's feet and repeatedly requesting him to sanctify his home in 1977. Though there were no other satsangis in his village, and Swamishri's programme had already been arranged elsewhere, Ganesh's faith and love compelled Swamishri to promise him that he would have to bear were of no concern to Swamishri. Finally, the day arrived. At dusk, cutting through the dust-filled air and the bumpy village road, Swamishri's car entered the village of Kankrawadi. Ganesh's happiness knew no bounds. The village was very small and all the houses, except one, were built of mud and straw. Swamishri finally came to Ganesh's mud-house. There was no electricity, no toilet and no bathroom in his house. Later in the night, Swamishri held a satsang assembly outside his house in the light of paraffin lamps. The summer heat was stifling. Swamishri's sleeping arrangements for the night were made on the terrace of a neighbouring house. he and all the sadhus slept on a mattress laid on the terrace floor. Next morning, after his daily routine, Swamishri sanctified a few houses in the village and then held an assembly. After lunch, Swamishri retired for a nap in Ganesh's mud-house. Despite the prickly afternoon heat and absence of ventilation, Swamishri slept soundly. Ganesh's young mind made a note of one point, that in spite of all the discomfort, Swamishri's face was beaming with joy. Even today, Ganesh vividly remembers the pure, divine joy on Swamishri's face.

Q.12 Answer ALL of the following, using one sentence (not just one word) for each answer. (Total Marks: 5)

 **Note: No mark for incomplete answer.**

1. How was time Kushalkunvarba's mostly spent? (5/53)
A. Most of Kushalkunvarba's time was spent in worshipping and listening to the holy discourses.
2. Whom did Gopalanand Swami send into Samadhi in Surat? (4/46-47)
A. Gopalanand Swami sent Sadhu Keshavjivandasji into samadhi.
3. What did Muktanand Swami do when he knew that strict observances were soon to be imposed by Maharaj? (2/27-28)
A. He began to drink the juice of crushed neem leaves in anticipation of the forthcoming restrictions.
4. In which year and where was Swamishri's 51st birthday celebrated? (18)
A. December 1971, the village of Dharmaj, Gujarat, had hosted the 51st birthday celebration of Pramukh Swami Maharaj.
5. What blessings did Swamishri give to Ratansinh? (31)
A. "Dont worry, nothing will happen to you. You will be cured soon."

Q.13 From the given options, place a tick (✓) in the box next to the correct ones. (Total Marks: 8)

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

1. A. 2, 3 (4/45)


2. A. 2 (2/20)

3. A. 3, 4 (2)

4. A. 1, 3
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(SECTION-3: ESSAY)

Q.14 Write an essay on any ONE of the following. (In approximately 60 lines.)
(Total Marks: 15)

 **Note: Essay is an independent original subject. In addition to following points many other point might be included. Examiner has to examin essay on the basis of originality, knowledge of sampraday, special analysis and point from any other scriptures.**

1. Force of transformation from the pious domain of student hostels.

During their stay at the BAPS Swaminarayan Chhatralayas, students learn to excel in academics, become more organized and disciplined, and are inspired with values and faith in God. They also gain self-confidence and learn to serve others through various activities in the chhatralaya and services to society.

1. Inspired in Studies and satsang: Mahendra B Patel, was born and raised in Sadgavan - a remote village in the district of Tapi. A man from his village brought him to Surat so that he could work and study. He was handicapped and that added to him inferiority complex. The sadhus arranged to stay and study in the BAPS chhatralaya and provided for his admission fees, clothes, books, footwear, brush and even the smallest of things. After he became a satsangi, during his 1992 summer vacation, he started a bal mandal in his village. By Pramukh Swami Maharaj's blessings, in 1994, a satsang sabha was commenced in his village. Over time, the local leaders began to trust him and cooperate and satsang spread to other villages. As he progressed in his studies also, other youths also wished to stay there. The education standards rose due to the BAPS satsang mandals, the new generation developed, they worked to develop their villages. A whirlwind of transformation has enveloped this area. In Sadgavan there is now a beautiful BAPS hari mandir set in one acre of land.

2. The Fruits of Persistence:

A Class I officer, approached Pramukh Swami Maharaj and asked "Where should I go?". Swamishri instructed, "Ireland." So, Hitesh went to Dublin and began work as a consultant for the Royal Bank of Scotland. His faith in the BAPS satsang drove him to start a satsang mandal in Dublin. However, the first sabha was attended by only three people: Hitesh, his wife and a well-wisher. Every week, he phoned up to 50 people, inviting them to the sabha. Through their efforts, today, around 150 families regularly engage in satsang. When starting the BAPS chhatralaya activities, Yogiji Maharaj said, "It will prepare youths to be 'living' mandirs. Here, Kaliyug will be transformed into Satyug.

3. From wild to cultured: Liril Silvi was habituated to drugs, alcohol and other intoxicants. The college principal reprimanded him severely. His parents pleaded with him to stop his harmful habits. But he ignored everyone, threatening to commit suicide. Once, he thought that if he could get admission to a respectable chhatralaya he could change. The divine, peaceful atmosphere of the chhatralaya immediately touched Liril from within. This divine atmosphere brought about a total transformation in his life. He excelled in his studies and secured a place for higher studies at NIT Warangal in Hyderabad.

4. The rewards of virtues: Full of youthful enthusiasm, Mit Sutariya graduated with BSc and MSc degrees while staying at the BAPS Chhatralaya in Vidyanagar. He had also attained a high rank in the National Cadet Corps. While staying in the chhatralaya, Mit developed a deep desire to serve India. On completing his studies, he got an opportunity to join the Indian Army. Here, the values and skills of hard work, politeness and leadership helped him progress to the rank of captain. Mit was promoted to Acting Major and transferred to Kashmir. He has resolved many issues related to the 250 soldiers under his command. His humble and polite conduct has touched everyone. His ability to unite everyone and accomplish tasks has established him as a leader with great respect.

5. Helping an ordinary rural boy: Shri Yogesh Vandra, BAPS Swaminarayan Chhatralaya, Vidyanagar

Because of his poor financial status he was worried about his future. He studied till the 10th standard in Khamba. Swamishri talked to Yagnapriya Swami about admitting him to hostel in Vidyanagar, despite getting average marks of 49 per cent in the 10th standard. In the years that followed I attained a bachelor's degree in electronics engineering. During stay Swamishri often came to chhatralaya. His presence infused joy and celebration among the students. Most of the students presented some activity to please Swamishri. Once, I told Swamishri to bless me so that my height would increase. To this, Swamishri replied, "Yesterday, nearly 10,000 people saw you perform on stage. Now tell me haven't we increased your height[popularity]?" – in fact he had increased my prestige. Before I could answer, Swamishri called Bhagvatcharan Swami and told him, "Make arrangements for his further studies."

6. Selfless and abundant love: Sandeep Dheer

The new assembly hall of APC, Vidyanagar. Once a special assembly was held. The programme included a presentation by two groups of students before Swamishri. Each team had to make stage presentations to prove that Swamishri belonged to them. As Sandeep had not practised, he was not allowed to perform. He was depressed. Everyone came to him one by one to touch his feet. I was last, and as I advanced after touching his feet, Swamishri pulled my T-shirt to my surprise. He lovingly said, "Dheer, today everyone said that Swami is mine but why didn't you say anything?" Then Swamishri put his finger on his chest and said in Hindi, "Let others say so, but I am yours." Then he said, "I want to keep you in my heart."

7. Service and Sacrifice: Viveknidhi Swami

Dinesh, a satsangi youth, had recently arrived from India. On ekadashi he observed a waterless fast. Since he was new in America he did not know how to prepare khichdi for parna. Then he remembered a chhatralaya student named Rathin Raval. Dinesh rang him up. Now the rider to Dinesh's request was that he wanted to do parna after midnight. So, Rathin noted down Dinesh's address and told him that he would make the arrangements. Rathin lived a one-and-a-half hour's drive from Dinesh. At 1.30 a.m., Dinesh saw Rathin with a pressure cooker in his hands. Then Rathin served hot khichdi and drove back home soon after.

2. I worship only at the feet of Sahajanand: Shastriji Maharaj's only thought.

1. A genius person once decides to achieve some goal keeping one's personal intentions and ambitions keeping one side, one's each and every breath repeats his achievement of goal.
2. Brahmaswarup Shastriji Maharaj's each and every breathe repeated only one thing during his lifespan. 'I worship only at the feet of Sahajanand.' Shastriji Maharaj was the third spiritual successor of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Born in the village of Mehlav in Charutar region, this great person was initiated bhagvati diksha at 19 and joined in the group of Sadguru Vignananand Swami. Vignananand Swami was in the service of Bhagwan Swaminarayan for 12 years. In Surat, Yagnapurushdasji listened to Brahmaswarup Pragji Bhakta on principle of 'Akshar Purushottam'.
3. Principle of Akshar Purushottam means to worship Bhagwan Swaminarayan by knowing the true glory and becoming like the unique attendant Aksharbrahman Gunatitanand Swami. Bhagwan Swaminarayan Himself acknowledged this vedic principle. Even Yagnapurushdasji himself was a man of principle, interested in eternal truth, and the principle not grown in his own mind but given by Bhagwan Swaminarayan-quest of that principle. For the first time he had darshan of Pragji Bhakta, found the capacity of fulfilling his quest in Pragji Bhakta. Intelligent Yagnapurushdasji felt depth and truth in his speech. Pure and authentic justification of Bhagwan Swaminarayan's Vachanamruts. His guru told him that Pragji Bhakta knows by the grace of Gunatitanand Swami secret and points of all 262 Vachanamruts. Shriji maharaj's principle is true. Advised to engross in him without doubt. Joined in Pragji Bhakta according to words. separated butter by churning. quest was finished. realization of eternal spiritual knowledge. Shastriji Maharaj

writes, 'Now it is my duty to make other understand the principle of Shriji Maharaj and Swami.'

4. BAPS Sanstha was born to propagate Bhagwan Swaminarayan's true worship/ upasana. Grand mandirs were constructed to incarnate it establishment of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and Gunatitanand Swami for eras to come. First mandir in place of pilgrimage Bochasan where Shriji Maharaj had promised Kashidas Mota. Second mandir for worship in Sarangpur. Suffered infinite hardships and begged alms to construct these mandirs just for one and only one purpose. Only one thing, 'I worship only at the feet of Sahjanand.' Nirgun Swami also supported Swamishri's zeal/ambition by letters. Tribute to Shastriji Maharaj by the editor of Bhagvadgomandal Kosh, Shri Chandulal Vidhyadhikari. Bhagwan Swaminarayan propagated upasana of pure sakti form of Brahman and Parabrahman, Akshar and Purushottam which was authorised in Ved-upanishads. Though Shastriji Maharaj was insulted as 'bandiya', and faced lots of hardships, he embodied that true upasana. If Yagnapurushdasji - a spiritual revolutionist had not awakened, matter of pragat Brahman have been in books only.
5. Hundred years have passed to mandirs built by Shastriji Maharaj. BAPS Santha spread worldwide. Amongst all Sarangpur mandir is unique. The founder of this village - Dhana Bapu Khachar would have not even imagine that this village will be sanctified by the pious feet of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and will become famous worldwide. Shriji Maharaj himself came to this village and sanctified the land riding on horse -Rozo. Granted a boon that he will reside here with dham and mukta. Promised that this village will be world famous and people in very big amount will come here for pilgrimage. Gunatitanand Swami blessed, 'Bhagwan Swaminarayan will keep you and satsangis of this village in his constant service.' Yogiji Maharaj uttered the glory of this mandir by doing dandvat pranam to the pinnacle and the gate of this mandir. Built with the blessings of three great persons and infinite hardships, this small pilgrim place has special love in lacs of devotees. Shastriji Maharaj would say, 'This is my favourite place.' Pramukh Swami Maharaj who had never settled in one place throughout his life, stayed for last three years of their life in Sarangpur. Due to his presence, this place became more live. Many sacrifices, many surrenderness and much penance for building this mandir, that's why Sarangpur is honoured 'as Akshardham'. If Shastriji Maharaj had not that only wish, 'I worship only at the feet of Sahjanand', how this sampraday had gained such a mandir as Akshardham? Only that's why we are indebted to him.

3. Divine, transcendent and historic last moments...

The sun rose on 13th August 2016, nobody could have foreseen that it would become etched in history as the last of Swamishri's 1,200-day stay in Sarangpur. At 6.00 p.m., as the heartbreaking news broke that Swamishri had passed away to Akshardham, a deep sadness spread throughout Sarangpur, and also throughout the world. In fact, to those present at Swamishri's bedside, it seemed that Swamishri was merely in deep sleep.

Just prior to this, the bhashya (commentary) about the Akshar-Purushottam doctrine, written by Bhadrash Swami was placed in Swamishri's hands. As the attendant Sadhus bathed Swamishri, they noticed the suppleness of Swamishri's physical form. Meanwhile, Bhadrash Swami recited mantras from the Upanishads describing the glory of Aksharbrahman. After the ritual bath, Param Pujya Mahant Swami, Pujya Tyagvallabh Swami, Pujya Ishwarcharan Swami, Pujya Viveksagar Swami and other senior sadhus performed Swamishri's puja with a mixture of saffron and sandalwood paste. They then performed puja of Swamishri's feet. Throughout, the recital of Upanishad mantras hailing the glory of Aksharbrahman were continually recited and also the shlok "Shobho sadhugune..." was sung. Thereafter Swamishri was brought to the glass cabin at the rear of Sarvasva, where a decorative wooden palanquin had been brought. Swamishri was seated with his legs extended in the palanquin. A fresh, fragrant flower garland was placed around his neck. Here, in the garden, sadhus were blessed with the opportunity to pay homage at Swamishri's feet.

By this time, thousands of devotees had gathered in the mandir precincts, all patiently waiting for darshan of Swamishri's palkhi yatra. At 10.45 p.m., the sadguru sadhus emerged from Sarvasva lifting Swamishri's palkhi as the Swaminarayan mahamantra dhun was sung. Subsequently, many other sadhus present also took turns to lift Swamishri's palkhi. After performing pradakshina of the main mandir, Swamishri was taken to Yagnapurush Smruti Mandir. The palkhi was placed at the steps of the inner sanctum facing guru Shastriji Maharaj. As Swamishri had done, whenever he came here for darshan, the sacred silver rod kept by the marble footprints of Shriji Maharaj in front of the murti of Shastriji Maharaj was taken and touched to Swamishri's eyes.

After darshan at the shrines of the gurus, Swamishri's palkhi was placed in a decorated rath, which was pulled by sadhus to the Murti Mandap of BAPS Vidyamandir (school). For four days, Swamishri would preside in a temperature controlled glass cabin to grant darshan to hundreds of thousands of devotees. The Guru Darshan Mandapam was 60 feet wide, 105 long, 22 feet high and lay in the northsouth direction. Adjacent to it on both sides, two marquees measuring 234 feet long by 60 feet wide and two other marquees measuring 156 feet long by 90 feet wide had been erected for a celebration held several weeks previously. These were used as waiting areas for devotees prior to their entry into the Guru Darshan Mandapam. Large LED screens were set up inside these semi-circular domes on which video memories of Swamishri were continually relayed. Soon after receiving news of Swamishri's earthly departure, the BAPS Sanstha's Satsang Pravrutti Central Office (SPCO) in Ahmedabad sent text (SMS) messages to all sadhus and karyakars in India and worldwide. Also, the Sanstha's Media Department issued press releases to the print and electronic media. TV channels immediately began to broadcast the news and paid tribute to Swamishri's life and work. The Sanstha's website was also regularly updated with news and further information. A special website (www.pramukhswami.org) dedicated to the divine life and work of Swamishri was also launched. On hearing this sad news of the passing away to Akshardham of their beloved guru, devotees everywhere only had one thought – to reach Sarangpur for Swamishri's final darshan. The senior sadhus decided that the final rites would be performed on 17th August afternoon. A steady stream of devotees passed through the Guru Darshan Mandapam from midnight onwards. And by the morning, several thousand volunteers were serving in the various departments. With heavy hearts and teary eyes, many entered the Guru Darshan Mandapam. But the atmosphere inside was peaceful and on having the darshan of Swamishri, people experienced divinity. Everyone felt that Swamishri was merely silently seated and would at any moment open his eyes and touch their outstretched hands! At the foot of the stage, a large replica of Bhagwan Swaminayan's charanarvind had been placed, where devotees offered flowers and garlands to Swamishri. In the background, an audio track of Swamishri reciting 'Om Swaminarayan Namaha...' was continually relayed. This darshan of Swamishri was indeed a divine experience.



THE END

