

Bochasanwasi Shri Aksharpurushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha  
Satsang Shikshan Pariksha

**SATSANG PRAVIN-PAPER-1**

Time : 9.00 to 12.00 p.m.

Total Marks : 100

Sunday, 1 March, 2020

Note : 1. Answer of the prescribed edition only will be accepted. Any other answer from different addition will not be accepted. 2. Numbers of the right side indicate marks of question number. 3. Numbers in the brackets on the right side of the question heading 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 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, May 2012)

Q.1 Describe any ONE of the following and highlight its significance. (Total Marks: 4)

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

Note: Main points of short note are highlighted. If points are included than give full marks.

1. Bhaguji removed all the quilts from Gunatitanand Swami's shoulders. (6/141-142)  
A. 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 Vasanthar's house. Maharaj and Swami crossed each other at Hanuman 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 off that sadhu's shoulders." Bhaguji removed all the quilts from Swami shoulders. Shriji Maharaj then called for Muktanand Swami, Brahmananad 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 have oneness with Parbrahman. Because of in the three state, Aksharbrahman is not even an atom of a distance away from Parabrahman.

**2. No one has reached upto this last flower. (4/64-65)**

- A. He placed three champa flowers on Acharya Raghuvirji Maharaj’s cushion and added, “Some have reached upto this first flower, others have reached upto this second flower, but **no one has reached upto this last flower.**” In another words, some understood Shriji Maharaj as similar to Ramchandraj. They had reached the first flower. Others who recognized Maharaj as Shri Krishna had reached the second flower. But **no one realized Shriji Maharaj as he was supreme, the ultimate avatari of all avatars, Purushottam-to reach the third flower.** To inculcate this understanding to the jivas, Gunatitanand Swami handed over the third flower to Achintyanand Brahmachari and instructed him to compose a unique text describing Shriji Maharaj’s sublime form and reflecting his divine glory in every word, so that the supremacy of Shriji Maharaj come out. So Achintyanand Brahmachari composed a monumental volume in Sanskrit known as **Harililakalpataru**, which described the supreme glory of Maharaj.

**Significance:** Gunatitanand Swami spread the knowledge of Shriji Maharaj’s supremacy through his talks, but also had it noted in the religious literature of the Sampradaya through his disciples. For that Mumukshoes had met true instruction till many Yugs.


**3. I dwell totally in you. (5/95)**

- A. Shriji Maharaj, after returning to his abode, remained pragat through Aksharbrahman Gunatitanand Swami. After Maharaj returned to his divine abode, his mortal remains were cremated, Swami went to answer a call of nature. He saw some green grass and thought, “**Water is the life of grass**; that is why it is so green. Our life was Maharaj, but he has now passed away.” With this thought, he fainted and fell down. Shriji Maharaj immediately appeared before him, helped him to get up, embraced him and said, **Swami, why are you so sad? Where have I gone? I dwell totally in you.**” Thus, he said this thrice. Manifesting through Aksharbrahman Gunatitanand Swami, Shriji Maharaj liberated many seekers and gave them a pride of place in Akshardham. After Aksharbrahman Gunatitanand Swami returned to Akshardham, Shriji Maharaj remained pragat through the spiritual succession of God-realized gurus. Gunatitanand Swami has revealed, “**All of you will pass away in five to ten years, but I will live forever.**” (Swamini vat 5.67) In the Gunatit spiritual succession, Bhagwan Swaminarayan has remained pragat through successive gurus - Brahmaswarup Bhagatji Maharaj, Brahmaswarup Shastriji Maharaj, Brahmaswarup Yogiji Maharaj, Brahmaswarup Pramukh Swami Maharaj and at **present Shriji Maharaj is pragat through His Holiness Pragat Brahmaswarup Mahant Swami Maharaj.**

**Significance:** Maharaj dwell this world through gunatit - Satpurush, he gave his happiness many seekers(mumukshoes).

**Q.2 For any TWO of the following, give THREE references from the scriptures.**

**(It is compulsory to write the reference 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. One mark should be given for each reference.**

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

- 1. Characteristics of the Gunatit Sadhu: In the words of paramhansas and other**

**Shastras. (5/99-103)**

- A. **Reference 1:** Sacha Santna ang endhan re, joi leva jivadiye;  
Jene malave manyukalyanre, tene jova ghadi ghadiye. - Nishkulanand Swami
- Reference 2:** Jadbuddhi jiva, Prabhu padne ichchhe to kar Santnu parkhu;  
Rang pitapane sonu ne pittal na hoy ek sarkhu. - Brahmanand Swami
- Reference 3:** Nari nayan shar jahi na laga ghor krodh tam nishi jo jaga  
Lobh pash jehi gar na bandhaya so nar tumha saman Raghuraya.  
(Kishkindha Kand: Chopai following 20th verse)
- Reference 4:** Tasmad gurum prapadyeta jignasuhu shreya uttamam  
Shabde pare cha nishnatam brahmanyupashamashrayam.

Therefore an aspirant should, for his own spiritual wellbeing, accept the tutelage of a guru who is an expert in the knowledge of Brahman and through brahmic consciousness has attained the upsham state. (Shrimad Bhagavat 11.3.21)

**2. The necessity of Aksharbraman on the path of Liberation: To become Brahmarup (6/121)**

- A. **Reference 1:** Tatra brahmatmana Krishna-seva Muktishcha gamyatam. (Shikshapatri-121) Ultimate mukti or liberation is serving Parabrahman in the divine abode, after becoming brahmarup.
- Reference 2:** If one associates with Brahman through continuous contemplation in this manner, the jiva acquires the virtues of that Brahman. (Gadhada II 31)
- Reference 3:** Brahma veda Brahmaiva bhavati He who knows Brahman becomes brahmarup. (Mundaka Upanishad 3.2.9)
- Reference 4:** One can become brahmarup by believing this Gunatit Sadhu to be brahmarup and associating with him through one's mind, deeds and speech. Then one becomes brahmarup. (Swamini Vato 3.12)

**3. Necessity of understanding Divyabhav (3/24-27)**

- A. **Reference 1:** Nevertheless, when Purushottam Bhagwan, who transcends both the perishable and the imperishable, assumes a human form and travels in the brahmand for the liberation of the jivas, his actions are just like those of all humans. Just as humans possess mayik swabhavs such as lust, anger, avarice, infatuation, matsar, jealousy, defeat, victory, fear, grief, arrogance, desires, cravings, etc., God also exhibits the same swabhavs himself, but they are all for the liberation of the jivas. So, a true devotee extols the divine actions of God and attains the highest state of enlightenment. **(Gadhada I 72)**
- Reference 2:** Shri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, janma karma cha me divyam-evam yo veti tattvataha, Tyaktva deham punarjanma naiti mameti so'rjuna.  
O Arjun! My birth and my actions are divine. He who realizes them as divine will not take another birth when he leaves his body; rather, he will attain me. "Whenever God performs divine actions, they appear divine to both a devotee and to one who is not a devotee. However, when God performs human-like actions, a true devotee still perceives divinity in them, but by no means does he perceive flaws in such actions of God. Having such understanding is known as having bhakti towards God. In fact, only such devotees earn the fruits mentioned in the above verse. .... Therefore, bhakti in which one perceives all of the actions and incidents of God as being divine, as the gopis did, and never perceives a flaw by understanding them to be human-like, is very rare. .... In fact, such bhakti is itself the highest state of enlightenment. It is this type of bhakti that is greater than jnan and vairagya. If a person has such bhakti in his heart, what would be lacking in his love for God? Nothing would be lacking." **(Gadhada II 10)**
- Reference 3:** Regardless of the type of action God performs, he does not perceive any fault in God. In addition, one who has faith in god coupled with the knowledge of his greatness becomes a fearless devotee. **(Vartal 12)**

**Reference 4:** If a person realizes God to be absolutely flawless, then regardless of his own swabhavs, he himself becomes absolutely flawless as well. **(Gadhada I 24)**

**Reference 5:** One who has realized God completely by believing that there are no mayik qualities in his form and that that god transcends maya and the products of maya, the three gunas- has transcended God's maya. Despite the fact that he was within him the products of the gunas of maya, i.e., the bhutas, the indriyas, the antahkaran and their presiding deities, each of which carries out its respective activities - he is still said to have transcended maya. **(Vartal 5)**

**Reference 6:** One who understands God as flawless by believing, God is capable; so whatever he does is appropriate, is said to have overcome maya. **(Loya 4)**

**Reference 7:** Those who realize this esoteric truth understand the human form of God on this earth as being exactly the same as the form of God residing in Akshardham-they do not feel that there is even a slight difference between that form and this form. One who has known God in this way can be said to have known God perfectly. For him, maya can be said to have been eradicated. One who realizes this is called a devotee with jnan and an ekantik bhakta. Moreover, if, by chance, a person possessing such firm upasana of the manifest form of God - never harbouring any doubts of maya being present in the form of God - were to behave unbecomingly due to the influence of bad company or due to the influence of his own prarabdha karmas, even then he would attain liberation. **(Panchala 7)**

**Reference 8:** When the divine and human characteristics of God and his Sadhu are considered as equally divine, then true bliss in worshipping God is attained. **(Swamini Vat 5.100)**

**Reference 9:** By understanding God as fault-free, one also becomes fault-free. **(Swamini Vat 5.124)**

**Reference 10:** Understand the form of God to be free from all blemishes; and also understand the great God-realized Sadhu to be the same. There is no spiritual endeavour equivalent to this. **(Swamini Vat 2.170)**

**Reference 11:** In fact, if one realizes the truly great Purush to be absolutely lust-free, then, even if one is as lustful as a dog, one will also become lust-free. .... Therefore, if one understands the great Purush to be absolutely free of lust, avarice, taste, egotism and attachment, one will also become free of all of those evil natures and become a staunch devotee. **(Gadhada I 58)**

**Reference 12:** Whoever believes the great Purush to be absolutely free of flaws becomes totally flawless himself. **( Gadhada I 73)**

**Q.3 Given below are references from the scriptures, principles or stanzas. Write the topic they relate to. (Total Marks: 5)**

1. Bese raja gadi par koy re, chhode bandhivanana bandh soy re; (4/57)

**A. Shriji Maharaj's Supremacy: As understood from his incidents**

2. "Those who do not Understand Maharaj as he is and the sadhu as he is, are eternally unfortunate like the yadavs." (5/90)

**A. Deficiencies resulting from not realizing the pragat form of God.**

3. God has no form. Their inference is the result of their misunderstanding. (3/14)

**A. Origin of the understanding of God as Nirakar**


4. No one can become God. Only Shriji Maharaj is God. (5/114)

**A. The Gunatit Sadhu: The Pragat form of God yet a loyal servant**

5. He is incomparable in the entire Sampradaya. (6/154)

**A. Gunatitananad Swami's unique Glory: As described by Gopalanand Swami**

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

 <b>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.</b>
---

1. 1, 3 (1/2-3)

2. 2, 4 (2/5)

**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. Shriji Maharaj's firm conviction in the sakar form. (3/9-11)**

- A.** 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 through 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 firm, 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 blessing, 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 shushka Vedantins 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 had 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**)

## **2. Pragat Bhakti: The pathway to peace (5/83-84)**


- A.** Inner peace and happiness are attained by pragat bhakti. Once Sadguru Muktanand Swami asked Shriji Maharaj the means to peace. Shriji Maharaj narrated various incidents of his own life beginning with his birth. Muktanand Swami felt that Maharaj had missed the point. The following day, he repeated the same question. Maharaj again started to repeat the same account of his life. Muktanand Swami, however, failed to grasp the essence of Maharaj's words. Finally Shriji Maharaj said, "Swami, please go to the villages; you will experience peace." So, Muktanand Swami left Gadhada. Nityanand Swami followed him and explained, "Shriji Maharaj is God himself. Nowhere else will you find the peace which comes from reminiscing the divine episodes of the pragat form of God. Maharaj wanted you to realize this. That is why he had narrated various incidents of his life to you." Muktanand Swami soon realized his mistake. The ancient sage Vyasji had composed many shastras, yet he was still at unrest with himself. Then, as advised by Narad, he recited the episodes of Shri Krishna's life in the Shrimad Bhagavat. Only then did his unrest subside and he experienced true happiness. Precisely for this reason, Shriji Maharaj asked Muktanand Swami, "You too should continuously preach and write shastras related to your Sampradaya and your Ishtadev for the rest of your life. This is my only command to you for as long as you live." (**Vachanamrut, Gadhada II 58**) Obeying this order, Muktanand Swami religiously engaged himself in preparing the literature of the Sampradaya until the end of his life. He clearly wrote: Pragatna bhajanthi param sukh pamie, Ura thaki nash pame andharu ..... Bhajan kar bhavshu. Only devotion to the pragat form of God yields ultimate bliss and dispels inner darkness. Similarly, Swarupanand Swami remained preoccupied with the inner vision of Shriji Maharaj, oblivious of his manifest form. To explain to him the importance of the pragat form, by Shriji Maharaj's will he fell ill. During this illness, Swarupanand Swami failed to have the inner vision of Shriji Maharaj and was quite at a loss. feeling utterly despondent, he went to Shriji Maharaj and prayed. Shriji Maharaj told him, Go to parvatbhai and you will find peace." parvatbhai, in the course of their talks, requested him to meditate on the roof tiles of Dada Khachar's house. Swarupanand Swami soon realized his mistake and understood that by the association of Shriji Maharaj, even the roof tiles had attained nirgunbhav and were worthy of meditation. Therefore Swarupanand Swami realized that he should also be constantly engaged with the pragat form of Shriji Maharaj. He changed his course and attained the desired peace.

## **3. The necessity of Aksharbrahman on the path of liberation: To know parabrahman as He is (6/121-124)**

- A.** Parabrahman in his human form is forever divine. Yet those who are ignorant perceive the pragat form of god as under the same spell of maya as a human being. Because of the ten indriyas are produced from rajogun, and the four antahkarans are produced from sattvagun; 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**) Shriji Maharaj answers, "When one worships God with sincerity, having faith in the words of the Ekantik Sant of God, one's mayik vision disappears. Therefore, one realizes that same form of God as being the supreme chaitanya, characterised by eternal existence, consciousness and bliss." (**Vachanamrut, Panchala 7**) "If a person realizes this greatness of Purushottam

Bhagwan by profound association with the Sant, then all of his indriyas and antahkaran become divine like Purushottam Bhagwan's indriyas and antahkaran. Then, through those indriyas and antahkaran, he can develop the conviction of that God." (**Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 51**) "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**) It is therefore evident that only through the Satpurush can one realize Maharaj as Purushottam and the Satpurush as gunatit. Without understanding the form of Aksharbrahman, it is impossible to have a clear realization of the glory of Purushottam as he is. 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 Prakriti-Purush. (**Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 24**) Beyond Prakriti-Purush is Akshar. Akshar is therefore the embodiment of the knowledge of Purushottam. In other words, Akshar is the most appropriate medium to understand the form of Purushottam. "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, Prakriti-Purush, Pradhan-Purush, mahattattva 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**) After understanding the importance of each entity successively, we can come to understand the importance of Akshar. Having understood the importance and vastness of Akshar, we realize the greatness and glory of Purushottam. To realize Purushottam Narayan with all the associate entities - exactly as he is - it is a precondition to realize Aksharbrahman. Shriji Maharaj has also said, "Purushottam Bhagwan enters and dwells in all of the above as their cause and antaryami. However, he does not manifest in Prakriti-Purush to the extent he manifests in Akshar." (**Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 41**) This means that Aksharbrahman is in close proximity with Purushottam. No mukta can therefore realize Purushottam's glory and greatness as much as Aksharbrahman can. It is no wonder then that others cannot realize it. The condition essential to visualize the immense glory and greatness of Purushottam is to have the association of Aksharbrahman. Shriji Maharaj therefore says, "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**) That is to say, only through Akshar can Purushottam be known. This is the key, the fundamental principle of correct understanding. Therefore, to cultivate indomitable faith in Purushottam Narayan and to understand his divine glory, it is absolutely essential to know Aksharbrahman with all his greatness and to associate with him in thought, deed and word. The shrutis also mention: Brahmadevavidyapnoti param. He who knows brahman attains Parabrahman. (**Taittiriya upanishad 2.1**)

**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. **Mahant Swami Maharaj can be said to have met God. (5/96-98)**
- A. A king may have more than one son, but only one of them - competent and virtuous - inherits the throne. All the sons cannot occupy it. Similarly, the throne of the pragat also can not be an inheritance for more than one. A Sampradaya shines by a galaxy of virtuous sadhus and devotees. But there is only one sadhu who is the pragat form of god with all his redemptive traits. Nishkulanand Swami has written: Bija gunavan to

ghand malashe, pan nahi male Harina malel; Nishkulanand eva Sant sambandhe, anantna pap balel. Nishkulanand Swami uses the phrase, 'One who has met God' for the Sadhu. Shriji Maharaj has also used the same words 'One who has met God' in **Vachanamruts, Vartal 10 and Jetalpur 1**. What is meant by the words 'One who has met God'? Five hundred parahansas were living with Shriji Maharaj. Does this imply that all of them can lead one to final emancipation since all of them had 'met' Shriji Maharaj? The words 'who have met god' do not, however, imply emancipation through the hundreds of thousands of householders or the 500 paramhansas who had met Shriji Maharaj. If these words imply emancipation only through those householders and paramhansas who had physical contact with Shriji Maharaj, then the road to final moksha would come to a dead end once they had all passed away. That, however, is not Shriji Maharaj's implication or intention. The words 'who have met God' therefore do not imply those who actually lived during Shriji Maharaj's lifetime. 'Who has met God' refers to one who is in constant rapport with God, and in whom God has revealed himself completely. Only Aksharbrahman has such constant rapport with God.

## 2. Only God is like God(Narayan). (4/53-54)

- A. Parabrahman Purushottam Narayan is the supreme, the cause of all avatars, the ultimate cause of all causes and the controller of all. There is only one Parabrahman. That Parabrahman is Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He is one and incomparable. And no power - not even Akshar - is capable of becoming Parabrahman. The Shrutis pronounce: Ekamevadvitiam Brahma God is only one and unique. Clarifying this basic principle, Shriji Maharaj says, "Only God is like God(Narayan); no one can become like him." (**Vachanamruts, Loya 13, Kariyani 8, Kariyani 10**) Only God is like God. Many have attained qualities similar to his by worshipping him, yet they certainly do not become like God." (**Vachanamrut, Gadhada III 39**) "After all, there is only one form of God. This God is extremely powerful and no one, including Akshar, is capable of becoming like him. This is an established principle." (**Vachanamrut, Loya 4**) The Upanishads also reiterate this point: Na tatsamashchapyadhikashcha drishyate, None can ever equal or surpass Parabrahman. - **Shvetashvatara Upanishad 6.8; Bhavasambhava Samhita Upanishad 2. 24**

## 3. God is as sakar in Akshardham and on Earth. (3/19-21)

- A. "Conversely, the form of God in Akshardham and the form of the muktas - the attendants of God - are all satya, divine and extremely luminous. Also, the form of that God and those muktas is two-armed like that of a human being, and it is characterised by eternal existence, consciousness and bliss." (**Vachanamrut, Gadhada III 38**) "God, who possesses a definite form, is always present in his abode, Brahmapur." (**Vachanamrut, Gadhada III 7**) In Premanand Swami's kirtan, Shriji Maharaj affirms: "Maru dham chhe re' Akshar amrut jenu nam; Tema hu rahu re, dwibhuj divya sada sakar." Amidst that divine light [of Akshardham], I see the extremely luminous form of God. The form is dark, but due to the intensity of the light, it appears to be rather fair, not dark. The form has two arms and two legs, not four, eight or a thousand arms; and its appearance is very captivating. The form is very serne; it has a human form; and it appears young like a teenager." (**Vachanamrut, Gadhada II 13**) "The manner in which the incarnation form of God resides on this earth, and the manner in which the devotees of God remain in the vicinity of God is exactly how they remain when atyantik-pralay occurs. ...God and his devotees eternally possess a form." (**Vachanamrut, Gadhada I 37**) "Even at the time of atyantik - pralay, he is in a divine form in Akshardham, where the devotees enjoy divine bliss [in the form of darshan], having attained a divine and definite form. Moreover, the form of that God and the forms of the devotees of God possess divine light that is equivalent to the light of countless suns and moons. ... Also, it is to liberate the jivas and to allow those jivas to offer the nine types of bhakti to him that that God - who has a luminous and divine form - becomes like a human out of compassion, always doing so with all of his strength, divine powers and attendants. Even then, those who realize this



esoteric truth understands the human form of God on this earth as being exactly the same as the form of God residing in Akshardham - they do not feel that there is even a slight difference between that form and this form.' (**Vachanamrut, Panchala 7**)

**Q.7 Complete the following statements based on summary. (Total Marks: 7)**

**Upasana: What to understand ?**

1. In the personal attendant form in that Akshardham, Aksharbrahman has, like Parabrahman, a divine human form complete with two arms and all other features. He forever remains engulfed in the service of Parabrahman and is the ideal for the akshar muktas. (14) (170-171)
2. He (Parabrahman) is the cause of all avatars; he is the avatari and is the master of them all. When, by his special wish, he pervades a jiva or an ishwar for a particular task, an avatar manifests. (8) (170)
3. In the form of Dham (Akshardham), Aksharbrahman is the divine abode of Parabrahman, the murtiman(personal) form of Aksharbrahman and the infinite akshar muktas. There is only one such Akshardham; it is eternal and forever beyond the three gunas. Only the muktas who have attained similarity to Aksharbrahman are able to enter it. (13) (170)
4. Ishwar is an eternal chaitanya entity different from Parabrahman, Aksharbrahman and jivas. In comparison to Aksharbrahman and Parabrahman, ishwaras are extremely powerless; but compared to jivas they possess more power and jnan(knowledge). Paramatma, through his wish, assigns them to the tasks of creation, etc. of the brahmands. (18) (171-172)

**Upasana: What not to understand?**

5. Only Purushottam exists, but there is no entity such as Aksharbrahman. (3) (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. Aksharbrahman as the personal attendant is not murtiman(with form). Aksharbrahman is only formless, is merely the abode or is only divine light. (10) (174)

**Q.8 Write a short note on "Akshardham: The Highest Abode; Shriji Maharaj: The Supreme" (35-39) (Total Marks: 5)**

**Note: Minimum three example should be written.**

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, Shivane 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 Rushishwar, Nirannamukta rakhya Shvetdweepma;  
Gopi-gopa rakhya Goloke, rakhya mukta Akshar samipma.

**(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,

Akshardham transcends maya and 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.... **(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. **(Vachanamrut Sarangpur 1, 4, 11; Gadhada III 28)**

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

Ma'pralay 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. **(Chosath Padi 56)**

Shriji Maharaj also explains, "With the exception of God's Akshardham, the form of God in that Akshardham and his devotees 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 cycle of birth and death. Only from Akshardham does a mukta never return:

Na tadbhasayate suryo na shashanko na pavakaha।

Yadgatva na nivartante taddhama paramam mama।। **(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 described 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, Akshar amrut jenu nam;  
Sarve samrathi re, shakti guni kari abhiram.  
Ati tejomay re, ravi shashi kotik varane jay;  
Shital shant chhe re, tejni upama nav devay.

**- Sadguru 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 sinhasa 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 (1813CE), 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 was 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.

**Section 2: Satsang Reader Part 3, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, June 2015 &  
Portrait of Inspiration - Pramukh Swami Maharaj, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. “Your will prevails throughout the countless universes.” (1/1)**

- Gopalanand Swami - Maharaj
- When Maharaj asked, ‘What is your unique attribute? each of sants one question in turn. that time

**2. “Is it in the gourd or in meditation? Or are both equal for you ?” (2/21)**

- Sarjudas - Muktanand Swami
- Muktanand Swami arose from meditation and drove away the dog, lest it should damage the gourd. that time

**3. “Blessed me with a divine experience.” (3)**

- David - Swamishri
- David began narrating his dream, you explained to me about nirvikalp samadhi and blessed with a divine experience.

**Q.10 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. For how many days did Parvatbhai not take meals, when he went to Gadhada for the darshan of Shriji Maharaj? (6/67)

**A. Parvatbhai had not taken meals for seven days, when he went to Gadhada for the darshan of Shriji Maharaj.**

2. What did Shriji Maharaj order Muktanand Swami to constantly do? (2/26)

**A. Shriji Maharaj ordered to Muktanand Swami to constantly keep on writing religious literature.**

3. When and Where did Shival Sheth pass away to Akshardham? (Samvat, Month, Tithi) (7/75)

**A. Shival Sheth passed away in Botad on Ashadh sud 5, Samvat 1916 in Akshardham.**


4. Who is the Mayor of Ashton? What was he acquainted in?

**A. The Mayor of Ashton is Mr. Wilkinson. He was acquainted with the nature and habits of horses.**

5. What is the Pramukh Swami the head of in the words of the late Jain Acharya Muni Sushilkumarji? (xiii)

**A. In the words of the late Jain acharya Muni Sushilkumarji, Pramukh Swami is not the head of Hindu Dharma, but also the head of Indian society.**

**Q.11 From the given options, place a tick (✓) in the box next to the correct options. (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. 1, 2, 3 (6/63)

2. 2, 3 (3/42)

3. 1, 2 (27-28)

4. 3, 4 (9-10)

**Q.12 Give reasons for the following. (In 9 lines each.) (Total Marks: 8)**

 **Note: Only main points are mention here. Examinee should write it briefly.**

**1. Raghuvirji Maharaj arranged discourses on the Satsangijivan in Vartal.**

**(4/47-48)**

- A. Raghuvirji Maharaj was **detached Acharya**. He used his **wealth for the benefit of the satsang**. When in the Samvat year 1911, **Gunatitanand Swami** came to Vartal on the occasion of Hari Jayanti, Acharya Maharaj said, "This time we have **received a considerable amount by way of gift-offering**, so let us arrange for a session of holy **discourses on Satsangijivan**," and declared that **he would bear the entire burden of boarding expenses of all the devotees, for a period of four months**. Gunatitanand Swami pleased and said, "Alright, this proposal is **appropriate on your part**. What else could you do with so much wealth? Since Maharaj has appointed you as Acharya it is your duty to promote, maintain and expand the satsang." Swami returned to Vartal for this occasion. Gomti lake was empty, there was no water in it. So Acharya Maharaj requested Swami: **if you so desire, Gomti would be full of water**. On the same afternoon there was a heavy shower and Gomti lake was overflowing with water. Senior sadhus and devotees arrived from various places. According to the orders of Acharya Maharaj, **Swami used to talk about the Purushottam identity of Shriji Maharaj, on abandonment of sensual pleasures** and on the process of being one with Akshar. The talks were held during the interval between shangar and mangala aaratis, and after the morning session of holy discourses.

**2. The sister-in-law of Shivilal Sheth felt a bit insulted. (7/71)**

- A. Once it so happened that **Shivilalbhai's sister-in-law** had come to his place on some auspicious occasion. Shivilalbhai, who lived in a joint family and did not talk to women unless there was a reason to do so, did not even know about her presence in the house for two to three months. His life was busy with devotion. He performed mansi puja five times daily, visited the mandir at dusk and returned home only after singing chesta. This was his routine. Even at the shop he had cultivated the habit of devoting himself to God. Once he was taking his meals at home and his **sister-in-law came to serve** something. She unwittingly **served excess ghee** in the rice and naturally, he looked up and saw his sister-in-law. He asked her, "**When did you come?**" Hearing this question, the sister-in-law felt a bit insulted. But others pacified her by explaining that Shivilalbhai's condition was always spiritual.

**3. Narendraprasad Swami was elated at the oneness of Swamishri. (19)**


- A. In **Los Angeles**, Swamishri was performing the **fourth consecration anniversary (patotsav)** rituals of the mandir with the chanting of Vedic mantras, at that point, Narendraprasad Swami (Acharya Swami) came to seek permission to depart on a satsang tour. Swamishri gave him a towel and do a **little seva by soaking up the water on the murtis**. While Narendraprasad Swami was performing the seva, **a doubt arose in his mind regarding the divinity of the murtis**. He **pressed the thumb of Gunatitanand Swami a little harder**. At that moment Swamishri, through engaged in another ritual, turned to Narendraprasad Swami as if he had felt the pressure on his thumb and said, "**Acharya, do it gently**." Narendraprasad Swami was astonished and asked, "How did you know?" "I would know" Swamishri replied. Thus Narendraprasad Swami was elated at the oneness Swamishri has with the murti of Gunatitanand Swami.

**4. Harijan youths felt they are also noble and full of pride. (5)**

- A. On hearing a voice, the group of five lower-caste youths looked surprisingly at each other. They wondered as to which one of them was being called. Then they heard the sweet voice again, "**All of you come here**." "Swamiji, **we are all Harijans!**" they

replied shyly. Swamishri spoke out of compassion for them, “**Even we are Harina jan (God’s people). Come closer.**” In response the youths ran towards Swamishri. And Swamishri affectionately blessed them by placing his hands on their heads. The youths felt immensely happy and proud. Then Swamishri addressed them, “Everyone has to become a person of God (Harina jan). But do you have any bad habits or addictions? If so, then give them up. Live a pure life free from addictions. I bless you all. Swamishri then blessed them again. **It was a divine experience for these Harijan youths of Sarangpur, They were blessed not by Swamishri alone, but also by God who resides in him.** There was a glow on their depressed faces, which **dissolved their inferiority complex** and inspired a new wave of joy. Their hearts echoed with the words, “**We are all God’s people (Harina jan); noble and full of pride.**”

Q. 13 Answer the following concisely. (12 lines each.) (Total Marks: 8)

 **Note: Only main points are mention here. Examinee should write it briefly.**

**1. Obedient Lalji Bhakta. (3/36-37)**

A. Lalji Bhakta go to Kutch with Shriji Maharaj - For Maharaj took some food, water and some money - On the way Maharaj pleadings and gave away all the food a beggar and gave away all the water to a sadhu - gave away all the twelve coins to the robbers - **Maharaj felt hungry. Bring me some food** - Maharaj suggested to bring some food from A Lohana devotee of Village Adhoi - **this is the village of my in laws** - everyones knows - how can i beg here? - **If I transform you so that no one would recognize you** - the instant reaction of the devout devotee - Maharaj gave him **tyagi Diksha** - ordered him to go for begging food.

**2. Gopalanand Swami had a dream. (1/10-11)**

A. In Umreth, **Maharaj appeared to Gopalanand Swami in a dream - Spread my supreme glory**, otherwise I will make you remain on earth for a hundred years and if need be, for a even a thousand years - Swami moved this command - in the morning talked to Acharya Raghuvirji Maharaj, senior sadhus, Shivalal Sheth and others **about the supremacy of Maharaj - Akhandanand Swami was shocked** - Raghuvirji Maharaj told Swami not to talk about such hard facts - **It was your father (Bhagwan Swaminarayan) who had ordered me** - I'll not talk so - this incident Swami was restless - **resolved to go to the Akshardham.**

**3. To fulfil a devotee’s wish (24-25)**

A. Where is Dahyabhai? I want to see him. As he is ill, I have been **wanting to see him for the past several days.** As Swamishri spoke, his face showed his eagerness to meet Dahyabhai. Dahyabhai was suffering from cancer. He tried to get up from his bed and welcome Swamishri, “**I was confident that Bapa would come.**” Dahyabhai said with tears of joy. Swamishri sat on the edge of dahyabhai’s bed and told him to remain lying down. His soft, divine touch soothed the much-enduring Dahyabhai. News spread in the village - everyone came - a brief assembly - blessed everyone - Dahyabhai lay in bed wondering about Swmishri’s compassion for him.


**4. The work of Pramukh Swami Maharaj (xii-xiii)**

A. It is Impossible to describe the work of Pramukh Swami Maharaj who has **transformed the BAPS** from a sapling into a sprawling banyan tree. When one looks at his pristine saintly life one is faced with the question as to which of his many divine facets is most impressive and outstanding? As the torchbearer of Hindu revival in modern times. As a guru who has spread the universal message of morality and spirituality preached by Indian culture and **Bhagwan Swaminarayan in over 52 countries.** As the **inspirer of over 700 marvellous mandirs**, including the impressive Swaminarayan Akshardham cultural complexes in New Delhi and Gandhinagar, the world renowned Shri Swaminarayan Mandirs in London, Chicago and Houston, and thousands of character-building centres throughout the world. As

the president of the global BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha. As an epoch-maker who has channelised the energies of hundreds of thousands of youths towards the path of spirituality and service to society. As an initiator of educated youths into the sadhu-fold for lifelong service to society. As an **inspirer and organizer of state-of-the-art educational** and hostel complexes and health institutions. As a promoter of literature, music and the arts. As one who harnesses modern science and technology for the propagation of spiritual wisdom. As **an idol of compassion who has rescued and rushed relief materials** to those devastated by natural disasters in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Kutch, Karnataka and other states. **As one who has tirelessly made 15,500 visits to towns and villages in India and abroad** - regardless of time, the vagaries of weather, discomfort and health - for the benefit of mankind. As a giant who has unfurled the flag of India's cultural pride in the West. As **a liberator of the downtrodden and poor**. As a pure, ideal disciple absorbed in supreme devotion of God. As a living brahmaswarup Sadhu - the crowning glory of all sadhus.

**(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 examine essay on the basis of originality, knowledge of sampraday, special analysis and point from any other scriptures.**

**1. Young Generation: Sunrise of a Bright Future**

The bright sunrise of hope can be felt due to BAPS children-youth activity - Millions of people are witnessing this. - Akhil Bhartiya Bal-Yuva Adhiveshan conducted in Sarangpur also tells the same story. - More than 60000 youth-kids participated in the Adhiveshan - This was the unique celebration of life-development, life-awakening and life-lightening - Different competitions were held by keeping Vachanamrut in mind. - Everyone become engrossed in Vachanamrut. - The youth and kids have developed such an unique and unmatched expertise that the expert judges of the different competitions felt themselves lessened.

Yogiji Maharaj is the visionary behind the Youth-Kids activity. - He was the ocean of affection. - Youth could see divinity in him. - He used to say, "Youth are my heart." "Though you all are living in the city, but you are like Sanakadik." "You are the sons of Chakravarti as you have come in contact with Shastriji Maharaj." - Whoever have experienced the love of Yogiji Maharaj could feel that he is his saviour whom they were waiting since many births. - Motherly love used to flow from his eyes. - His presence means a living spiritual university. The unique weapon he used to have for teaching spirituality to the youth was, Mukhpath. - It was his exemplatory bestowal. - Through mukhpath, he made the youth realize the deep spiritual secrets.

Yogiji Maharaj was having huge resolution. - His spiritual successor Pramukh Swami Maharaj sacrificed his whole life for achieving those resolutions. - He had met millions of youth in person and helped them solve their problems - nurtured the nearly destroyed lives - Provided motherly love by showering affection. - One has to write a lot of books to give justice the grandeur of his work with Youth and Children. - Swamishri had seen in every youth the capability to spread Satsang in thousands. Such was his divine vision! - He never found even the smallest of youth's problems boring. - He has heard youths for hours, understood their problems and advised and helped them with great love and affection. - Due to that, youth has developed the feeling of sacrifice for Swamishri. He is everyone's everything. - Swamishri has decorated Youth's life with

many pious qualities just like a expert artist creates his best sculpture. - He has strengthened the path of Vaidic Upasana shown by Bhagwan Swaminarayan. - As a result, a huge graceful society of youth is being shaped by his hard work of many decades. Swamishri becomes happier when he saw Youth and Children blossomed. - Inspired youth to that their personlity reached to that level where only sky was the limit.

International Youth Festival, Vallabh Vidyanagar, 1990 : Swamishri gave speech during prize distributing ceremony, "This adhiveshan was like never done in the past and will never happen in the future. To do Mukhpath is more than achieving Ashtangyoga. It is not enough if I prostrate in front of all of you." - Our heart is filled with ocean-like memories when the adhiveshan has organized on the occasion of Pramukh Swami Maharaj centenary celebration years. - A true sun of bright future has risen which will lead towards bright future by this adhiveshan.

## **2. Vachanamrut, a Unique Scripture: The Divine Experience of Fulfilment of life**

In the history of this spiritual world, the Vachanamrut stands on as an only unique scripture. The Vachanamrut's dialects are the essence of experiences and the difficult spiritual path is made easier to follow. This fills up the gap of emptiness in life. It helps the soul's incompleteness accomplish its desired goal and helps the soul experience its divinity and fulfilment.

The Vachanamrut or the nectarine discourses of Bhagwan Swaminarayan is the most sacred and foundational scripture of the Swaminarayan Sampradaya. It contains the profound wisdom of the Vedas, Upanishads, Brahma sutras, Bhagwad Gita, Bhagavat, Purana, Dharma shastras like Yagnavalka Smriti, Vidurniti, and epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharat. It is the revealed fact, that the words were spoken by the supreme Reality Himself, Bhagwan Swaminarayan who had mastered the scriptures and Ashtang-Yoga and also scrutinized the beliefs and practices of people throughout India.

In fact, in Vach. Gad II 28 – Shriji Maharaj has gone so far and said, "I have delivered this discourse having heard and having extracted the essence from the Vedas, the Shastras. The Puranas and all other words of this earth pertaining to liberation. This is the most profound fundamental principle; it is the essence of all essences."

It is the essence of ancient Indian wisdom given by Bhagwan Swaminarayan and compiled by four contemporary scholarly-sadhus who were known for their asceticism and scholarship in Sanskrit, besides their devotion to Him. It was even reviewed and approved by Bhagwan Swaminarayan during its compilation, a fact is evident in Vach. Loya 7.2 – 'In the assembly Nityanand Swami brought the Vachanamrut manuscript and presented it to Shriji Maharaj who examined the manuscript and was extremely pleased.' In fact, every statement of the Master is packed with and based on His in-depth religious knowledge, spiritual incite and personal, practical experience. He states in Vach. Gad III 39.16 – "I deliver these discourses to you not from any imagination of my mind nor to display any sort of aptitude. I have experienced all that I have spoken about. In fact, speak accordance to what I practice." It contains practical, philosophical and theological answers to the sincere enquiries of all types of aspirants regarding life in this world and life hereafter. Since the topics discussed have no relation to the ordering of the Vachanamrut, the reader need not read the scripture in sequentially.

Regardless of the subject, Bhagwan Swaminarayan had the gift of lucidity and elegantly explaining complex concepts through simple day-to-day examples. The villagers were able to grasp profound philosophical concepts due to His simple language and meaningful examples.

It is a landmark shastra, philosophically and in all other aspects. It is the first literary work of prose in the Gujarati language, thus providing a good specimen of the culture

and the speaking style of Gujarati language two century ago. It is the generous gift of Bhagwan Swaminarayan to Gujarati literature. It is the first modern Gujarati prose work which the known, Gujarati critic and poet, Shri Uma Shankar Joshi acclaimed as the very pinnacle of Gujarati prose.

The Vachanamrut is a collection of 273 discourses, delivered by Bhagwan Swaminarayan during His last ten years of His life. The scripture is divided into 10 sections, based on the various villages in which the discourses were delivered. The sections are chronologically in order and are named as follows: Gadhada I, Sarangpur, Kariyani, Loya, Panchala, Gadhada II, Vartal, and Amdavad. Gadhada III and finally the additional Vachanamruts. Within each section, individual Vachanamruts are arranged in chronological order and are numbered sequentially.

The Vachanamrut is 'Amrut' in the form of the words of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. All devotees read it daily and illiterate listens to it daily, therefore, realize Atma-Paramatma, Brahma-Parabrahman, Akshar-Purushottam, and Swami-Narayan. That is by identifying one's self with Akshar and worshipping Purushottam, one attains the eternal, lustrous and divine Akshardham of Purushottam Narayan. It guides to strengthen dharma, gnan, vairagya, and bhakti coupled with the knowledge of God, that is, Ekantik dharma and by becoming free from desires and the influence of maya, one eternally remain in the service of Maharaj and attains eternal bliss. It serves to uplift, benefit and liberate all. It is read and elaborated upon daily in the Swaminarayan Mandirs, all over the world.

Bhagwan Swaminarayan describes in one of His many analogies about how to keep one's mind engaged in God. He states, "Consider, for example, pot of water was emptied at one place and same thing was repeated the next day and the next day, but one would not be able to make a pool of water. This is because the water kept on drying up, but on other hand if a trickle of water were to flow continuously, a large pool of water would soon be formed. Therefore, while eating, drinking, walking, engaging in any activity whatsoever, whether pure or impure, in fact, at all the times, one should keep one's vrutis to God, by which one would in turn attains that abiding elevated spiritual state."

In another analogy He specifies, "From the time a satsangi enter the satsang fellowship, he should examine his mind by thinking, 'in the first year, my mind was like this; then it was like this. Previously, I had this much desire for God and this much for the worldly pleasures.' In this manner, should repeatedly reflect on his yearly total of desires and always strive to gradually, yet constantly eradicate all worldly desires that remains in his mind. If, however, he does not introspect in this manner and allows those desires to accumulate, then they will never be overcome. Like if one keeps using the credit card without making regular payments then one will reach a stage where it would be very difficult to do the full payments."

Shriji Maharaj even said in Vach. Gad I 1 and II 22 – "There is no spiritual Endeavour more difficult than to continuously engage one's mind on the form of God. The scriptures state that there is no greater attainment for a person whose mind's vritti is constantly focused on the form of God, because the form of God is like Chintamani, which gives one the desired fruits."

This says that since Vachanamrut is compiled in Shriji Maharaj's own words it can be easily said that it is another form of Bhagwan Swaminarayan therefore it too can give us the desired fruits. We can conclude that 'Amrut' which took Devas long time and with lots of efforts to acquire, after Samudra manthan (churning of the ocean - ref. In the Shrimad Bhagavat), we were given by Bhagwan Swaminarayan, through Vachanamrut. Amrut means nectar, that if we drink it then we become eternal.

The Spiritual knowledge and revelations in the Vachanamrut are unique, divine and eternal. Its teaching is relevant in the time of Bhagwan Swaminarayan when he gave out



the discourses that are also relevant even today in our modern age and will also be so in the future.

Singing the glory of the Vachanamrut, Aksharbrahma Gunatitanand Swami said, "To see the value in other scriptures rather than Vachanamrut is Moh."

Explaining this Gunatitanand Swami is trying to say that in the world there are different Dharma-Sampradaya establishers and acharyas, saints, bhaktas and Mahapurush wrote different spiritual scriptures according to their understandings, there will be some more written in the future, but what more could they write when whatever one requires to be gained, ultimate liberation by Purna Purushottam has been given in Vachanamrut, and is one and unique and authentic scripture which is never before written and never will be ever written. Vachanamrut's glory has been sung by many scholars and Ekantik Bhakta.

Gunatitanand Swami said, "Vachanamrut has essences of Four Vedas, Shatshastra and Eighteen Puranas. Shriji Maharaj has given profound Spiritual guidance for ultimate liberation which needs to be studied dedicatedly."

Bhagatji Maharaj, also recommended the devotees to study carefully all the two hundred and sixty-two Vachanamruts thoroughly.

Shastriji Maharaj in his jivan charitra, said, "Vyasji was at peace after he finished writing Shrimad Bhagwat likewise the essence of all the scriptures are found in Vachanamrut, given to us by Shriji Maharaj, who has given us the solutions for our liberation, true characteristic of Shriji Maharaj and many more, which we could profoundly understand through a Satpurush's sermons only. We should wholeheartedly learn the method for eternal liberation from the Satpurush. In Vachanamrut there is Sarvopari gnan, and for that we should remain under Shriji Maharaj's shelter

Yogiji Maharaj, in his jivan chaitra said, "Study Swamini Vatos and Vachanamrut for eternal peace." Also said, "The constant mention of Limbdo and Dada Khachar's Darbar was illiterate's argument for not reading the Vachanamrut, but it contains essence of the four Vedas."

Pramukh Swami said, "Realize the importance of such a glorious scripture, everyone should read the Vachanamrut daily and study it deeply, also all should inspire others to read and study it, which is a great service to others. By, doing this Maharaj, Swami, Shastriji Maharaj, and Yogiji Maharaj will be pleased. One will also attain peace, bliss in life and the divine Akshardham of Maharaj."

Another unique thing about the Vachanamrut is that each Vachanamrut begins with an introductory paragraph taking the reader back in time to the exact environment in which the discourses were held, thereby mentally preparing the reader for the profound wisdom that is to come. They mention the date, the month, the year, the village, the location within the village, as well as the audience sitting in the assembly. At many instances, they even mentioned the time of the day and the direction Bhagwan Swaminarayan was seated. In many instances, they have even described the seat upon which He was seating as well as the dress and adornment of Bhagwan Swaminarayan at the time. Primarily, the reason for their meticulousness was that they were convinced of His divinity. They understood that the assembly was not an ordinarily, worldly assembly, but a divine assembly presided by the Supreme God Himself.

From the scholarly point of view, this introductory paragraph adds a stamp of authenticity to the scripture. In the words of an eminent Gujarati scholar, Mr. Bhogilal Sandesara; "Among all these Scriptures (of Buddhism, Jainism, Ramanujacharya, Vallabhacharya and other acharyas) the position of the Vachanamrut is unique, because the discourses of Bhagwan Swaminarayan were compiled verbatim. There is reference to the place and time of the discourses; a note of the year, month and day; a description

of Bhagwan Swaminarayan's garments and even the names of the people participating in the dialogue is mentioned.....thus ,there is no room for interpolation."

If the introductory paragraph of the Vachanamrut renders the scripture unique, the method of imparting the spiritual wisdom is no less unique and divine.

### **3. Ghanshyam Is There: The Essence of the Dipavali-Annakut Celebrations**

Bhagwan Swaminarayan consecrated Vasudev Narayan Murti in Gadharpur due to the devotion of the devotees there during His stay in Gadharpur. - The murti had unique attraction to everyone. - Daily routine of arti-dhun-kirtan-discourses. - All the festivals were celebrated. - Shri Hari used to teach about the significance of different festivals. - The festival is not only flaunting but it is about awakening inner consciousness. - V.S. 1863 - First Diwali and Annakut celebration in front of Vasudev Narayan in Gadharpur. - Devotees enthusiasm had no limits. - Lalitaba and Jayaba decided to take the opportunity to do all the seva by themselves, but eventually it was decided that they both will do everything together.

The food materials started pouring in Abhel Khachar's Darbar and all the ladies devotees of the Darbar and the village become engrossed in serving. By keeping Shri Hari's murtis in their minds, sometimes the ladies stopped working. - They could see Shri Hari everywhere, in their rolling pin, food items, flour mills, frying pans, everywhere. - The preparations due to that was really slow. - A lot of food items were yet to prepare. - Shriji Maharaj came to check on the preparations and asked Jayaba about the slow work. - Jayaba said, "It's your fault. You have entered in everyone's minds so that no one can see anything apart from your murti. Everyone becomes motionless so how can they work in that condition?" - Shri Hari said, "This is the ultimate state of the devotion. Whatever service you will do engrossing in my murti will be accepted by Vasudev Narayan. It will become useless if there is not devotion in it." - Motiba sought the blessing as she understood Shri Hari's words. - Then comes the day of the Annakut. - Govardhan Utsav was celebrated - Annakut was arranged in front of Vasudev Narayan's murti. - Shri Hari praised the devotion of Jayaba-Lalitaba. - Brahmanand Swami sung the Thal. -

The food items were arranged in front of Lalitaba's Lalji. - Everyone had darshan of Shri Hari himself eating food by remaining in Lalji's murti. - Also everyone show a shadow of someone near murti. - Lalitaba inquired about this to Maharaj. - The shadow introduced herself as Bhaktimata. - Maharaj told the devotees to ask Bhaktimata to live there always so that devotion can flourish in everyone's heart. - Bhaktimata said, "I can only live if my husband Dharma live here." - Shri Hari told the amused devotees, "If Dharma stays, then Bhakti can stay. And if both of them will stay here then only I can stay here as I am the son of Dharma and Bhakti."

Ghanshyam can only stay where Dharma and Bhakti stay. - Dharma means virtue and ethics. Dharma means to obey the commands of the scripture, Bhagwan and Guru. Dharma cleanses indriyas and Bhakti cleanses our soul. - Shri Hari thus explained the importance of Dharma and Bhakti jointly. - This is the divine message of the festival of Dipavali-Annakut given by Shri Hari.



**THE END**

