

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, 2015

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 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 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.

1. Akshardham is distinct and above the abodes of other incarnations and deities. (4.2/35-39)

Ref. 1: Badritale rakhya Rushishwar, Nirannamukta rakhya Shvetdweepma;

Gopi-gopa rakhya Goloke, rakhya mukta Akshar samipma. (Nishkulanand Kavya, Vachan Vidhi 37) (Note: These two lines of this kirtan are must. Other lines are optional.)

Ref. 2: Chaud loka Vaikunth lagi, mayani pagi re;

Tethi anubhavi alaga rahe, traya tap agi re. (Sadguru Muktanand Swami)

Ref. 3: "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**)

Ref. 4: 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 Prabhuji pas re,
Sukh sukh jya sukhna dariya, tya vasi rahya vas re.
Eva Dhamni agal bija, shi ganatima ganay re....(**Chosath Padi 55-56**)

Ref. 5: 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**)

Ref. 6: '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**)

Ref. 7: "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 deities - is perishable" (**Vachanamrut Gadhada II 24**)

Ref. 8: Na tadbhasayate suryo na shashanko na pavakaha I
Yadgatva na nivartante taddhama paramam mama II

The supreme abode is not illumined by the sun or the moon or the fire. Those who attain it never return to this material world. (**Bhagvad Gita 15.6**)

Ref. 9: Akshardham is described as immeasurable and endless in all directions (**Vachanamrut Loya 14**)

Ref. 10: 'Maru Dham chhe re, Akshar amrut jenu nam;
Sarve samrathi re, shakti guni kari abhiram.
Ati tejomay re, ravi shashi kotik varne jay;
Shital shant chhe re, tejni upama nav devay. (**Shriji Maharaj describes his abode in Premanand Swami's kirtan, 'Bolya Shri Hari re....'**)

Ref. 11: 'Tej tej jiya tej ambar, tejomay tan tena re,
Tejomay jya sarve akar, shu kahiye sukh ena re. (**Chosath Padi 55**)(**Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami**)

Ref. 12: In his talks, Gunatitanand Swami has clearly stated the superiority of Akshardham over other abodes (**Swamini Vato 3.11, 3.23, 3.49**)

Ref. 13: "The abode in the form of Akshar is the highest and beyond all" (**Vedras, p.146**)

Ref. 14: "I went alone to the abode of Shri Purushottam Narayan, which transcends every thing. 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**)

2. Characteristics of the Gunatit Sadhu (5/99)

Ref. 1: Sacha Santna ang endhan re, joi leva jivadiye;
Jene malave manyu kalyan re, tene jova ghadi ghadiye (**Chosath Padi 9**) (**Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami**)

Ref. 2: Jadbuddhi jiva, Prabhu padne ichhe to kar Santnu parkhu;
Rang pitpane, sonu ne pittal na hoy ek sarkhu. (**Sadguru Brahmanand Swami**)

Ref. 3: Nari nayan shar jahi na laga ghor krodh tam nishi jo jaga
lobh pash jehi gar na bandhaya so nar tumha saman Raghuraya (**Tulsidas**) (**Kishkindha Kand: Chopai following 20th verse**)

Ref. 4: Tasmad gurum prapadyeta jignasuhu shreya uttamam I
Shabde pare cha nishnatam brahmanyupashamashamashrayam II
(**Shrimad Bhagvat 11.3.21**)

Ref. 5: "What are the characteristics of a sant who is worthy of being worshipped on par with God? Well, such a Sant suppresses the actions of maya's gunas - the indriyas, the antahkaran, etc.; but he himself does not get suppressed by their actions. In addition to

this, he only performs activities related to God; he is staunch in his observance of the five religious vows; and believing himself to be brahmarup, he worships Purushottam Bhagwan. Such a Sant should not be thought of as a human being, nor should he be thought of as a deity, because such behaviour is not possible for to be human or deities. Indeed, even though that sant appears to be human, he is still worthy of being worshipped on par with God. Therefore, whoever desires to attain liberation should serve such a Sant. **(Vachanamrut Gadhada III 26)**

Ref. 6: "Similarly, the attributes of the Sant - being free of lust, avarice, egotism, taste, attachment, etc. - are also described in the shastras. The Sant who possesses these attributes has a direct relationship with God" **(Vachanamrut Gadhada III 27)**

Ref. 7: "One should attach one's jiva to the Bhakta of God - the great Sant - who does not identify his self with the body, who possesses vairagya, and who feels that he has transgressed a major injunction of God even if he has transgressed a minor injunction. One should act according to his command by thought, word and deed" **(Vachanamrut Gadhada III 38)**

Ref. 8: "Therefore, as long as a person believes the body to be his true self, his entire understanding is totally useless; and as long as he continues to harbour vanity of his caste or ashram, he will never imbibe the virtues of a sadhu. Thus, after discarding the feeling of I-ness and my-ness for the body and its relations, believing one's atma to be brahmarup, and after forsaking all worldly desires, if a person worships God while observing swadharma, he should be known as a sadhu" **(Vachanamrut Gadhada I 44)**

Ref. 9: Bhagvat dharma is upheld by maintaining profound love towards the Ekantik Sant of God, who possesses the attributes of swadharma, jnan, vairagya and bhakti coupled with knowledge of God's greatness. Maintaining profound love towards such a Sant also opens the gateway to liberation" **(Vachanamrut Gadhada I 54)**

Ref. 10: "Only one whose mind has a craving for God and which becomes neither 'hot' nor 'cold' by the vishays should be known as a sadhu" **(Vachanamrut Gadhada II 23)**

Ref. 11: " 'Pushpa-haraya sarpaya' -i.e. to such a Sadhu, a garland and a serpent are the same. He holds the image of God at all times. His definition of Satsang is: concentrating on atma and paramatma. Guiding many jivas to worship God, he maintains his pristine purity and never violates even a minor injunction" **(Swamini Vato 5.142).**

3. Disadvantages of Understanding God as Nirakar (3/11)

Ref. 1: "To realize God as being formless is a sin much graver than even the five grave sins. There is no atonement for that sin" **(Vachanamrut Gadhada II 39)**

Ref. 2: "Furthermore, of all mistakes made against God, to denounce form of God is a very grave mistake. One should never make this mistake. One who does so commits a sin more serious than the five grave sins" **(Vachanamrut Gadhada I 71)**

Ref. 3: "God is complete, with limbs, hands, feet, etc..... So, to say he is not the all-doer and he is formless..... is equivalent to maligning God. Without such an understanding, even if one performs puja by offering sandalwood paste, flowers, etc., one is still a slanderer of God" **(Vachanamrut Vartal 2)**

Ref. 4: "If, however, one... realizes God to be formless or like the other avatars, then that is regarded as committing blasphemy against God" **(Vachanamrut Gadhada II 9)**

Ref. 5: "A person may well be endowed with each and every virtue, but if he believes God to be formless - not possessing a definite form - then that is a grave flaw. So much so, that because of this flaw, all his virtues became flaws" **(Vachanamrut Loya 16)**

Ref. 6: "On the other hand, a person who meditates on God and offers upasana believing him to be formless is consigned to brahma-sushupti, from which he never returns. Nor does such a person ever acquire any spiritual powers from God" **(Vachanamrut Gadhada I 64)**

Ref. 7: "Those who describe and know the form of God as formless, and misinterpret the shastras will, for countless births - for 10,000 years in Tretayuga, for 1,000 years in

Dwaparyuga and for 100 years in Kaliyuga - not even be able to cry with relief when they are cut out from the womb. In this way, they will endlessly suffer miseries for an infinite period of time, but they will not get any happiness” **(Swamini Vato 3.16)**

4. Shriji Maharaj: The Supreme - As expressed in Swamini vato (4/41)

Ref. 1: “Today Purushottam has descended on earth with Akshar and the muktas of Akshardham. Ishwars from innumerable abodes along with their muktas have also accompanied them. Why? They have come to remove their own deficiencies and to understand the divine form of Purushottam” **(Swamini Vato 3.41)**

Ref. 2: There is nothing more to understand and this is all that needs to be understood, know Maharaj as Purushottam[supreme God] and this sadhu as Akshar” **(Swamini Vato 3.38)**

Ref. 3: “Without knowing Maharaj as Purushottam, it is not possible to go to Akshardham. And without becoming brahmarup, it is not possible to stay in the service of Maharaj. Then Shivilal asked a question, “How should Maharaj as Purushottam be known? And how can one become brahmarup?” Then Swami said, “Know that Maharaj is supreme, the source of all avatars and the cause of all causes.” Based on this, he had Vachanamruts, Gadhada II 9 and Gadhada III 38 read and said, “Today, in Satsang, the sadhus, acharyas, mandirs and murtis all are supreme. So what is there to say in Maharaj being supreme? One should understand that he is definitely supreme. **(Swamini vato 3.12)**

Ref. 4: “All avatars are like magnets. Some of them weigh several kilogrammes, some tens of kilogrammes, some hundreds of kilogrammes and some hundreds of thousands of kilogrammes. Of them, a magnet weighing several kilogrammes attracts the metal of this mandir; a magnet weighing tens of kilogrammes attracts the metal of the entire city; a magnet weighing hundreds of kilogrammes attracts the metal of the whole country; and a magnet weighing hundreds of thousands of kilogrammes attracts metal of an entire region. And today, a whole mountain of magnet has come, otherwise how would the whole universe be attracted?” With this, Swami said, “Jivas are drawn to previous avatars according to their powers. And today the source of all avatars, the cause of all causes, Purushottam has come. And seeing him, the lords of countless abodes and the liberated souls in them are drawn to Maharaj’s murti; just as on encountering a mountain of magnet, the nails of a ship are attracted.” **(Swamini vato 3.4)**

Ref. 5: “There are three grades of snake charmers, vadi, fulvadi and gardi. Of this, a vadi captures meek snakes; a fulvadi captures those which are easy to catch, otherwise uses a cloth tie to kill them; and before a gardi all types of snakes, even cobras, dance. The principle of this is, like the first type of snake charmer - vadi - Dattatreya and Kapil liberate the aspirants. Ram and Krishna, like that second - fulvadi - liberate those abide by their dictates otherwise they wield the sword to settle the point. Maharaj, however, is like the gardi, the third type of snake-charmer. Jivas, ishvars, Purush, Akshar and others are all standing before him with folded hands” **(Swamini Vato 3.5)**

Ref. 6: Previously, many great avatars have incarnated. Compared to them, when I look at the children of these satsangis I see that they have tens of millions of times greater divinity than them. So, how can the glory of the great devotees, the great sadhus and Maharaj even be described?” **(Swamini Vato 3.72)**

Ref. 7: Actually, first Ganesh is described as a God; then Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are described; Aniruddha, Pradyumna and Sankarshan are also described as Gods, then who out of them should be believed as God? The explanation for this is that there are tens of millions of classes of jivas, ishvars, Brahmas. The cause of them all is Maharaj himself. When one understands like this, then an answer can be said to have been given. There are countless Ramas, countless Krishnas and countless Akshar muktas - and the creator of them all, the supporter of them all, the controller of them all and the cause of them all is Maharaj. If he is understood in this way, then spiritual wisdom is attained.” **(Swamini Vato 6.254)**

Ref. 8: "What is the difference between a devotee of Purushottam and devotee of other avatars? The difference is comparable to that between the cub of an elephant and a louse" **(Swamini Vato 2.107)**

Ref. 9: Despite all the discourses of Shri Krishna, Uddhava alone managed to renounce the world. Today, however, even teenagers renounce the worldly life to become sadhus. The shastras do not mention anyone renouncing women. Today however, thousands renounce women. The shastras cite only two or three instances where God appeared before devotees on their deathbeds. But today, God appears to call all the devotees when they pass away. The previous incarnations are like parasmani, but Purushottam is like chintamani" **(Swamini Vato 2.169)**

Ref. 10: On many occasions, Gunatitanand Swami explained the distinction between avatar and avatari using these analogies: the archer and the arrow are separate. One should know that the archer is the cause of the arrow. However, the distinction between avatar and avatari is not like the different guises of an actor on a stage. Just as there is sharp difference between a sovereign emperor and a subordinate chieftain, there is a difference between avatar and avatari. It is against the spirit of the shastras to treat all avatars and all sadhus as equal.

Ref. 11: "The bleating of hundreds of thousands of goats incites no fear at all. But the roar of merely one lion is terrifying and can tear apart an elephant's temple. Similarly, there is no problem in describing Maharaj as similar to other avatars. But to proclaim that all the avatars owe their powers to Maharaj and have attained their present state by worshipping him is intimidating as a lion's frightening roar is to an elephant" **(Swamini Vato 5.197)**

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

1. "None can ever equal or surpass Parabrahman." (4/54)

A. **Parabrahman Purushottam Narayan: One and unique**

2. "Tadaikshata bahu syam prajayeyeti" (4/51)

A. **Cosmic evolution**

3. "Aksharmurti Gunatitanand Swami, tene apya vartman." (6/139)

A. **Gunatitanand Swami is Akshar: Scriptural evidence**


4. "Therefore, a devotee of God Should realize that the form of God along with his Akshardham is present on this earth, and he should also explain this fact to others." (6/129)

A. **Aksharbrahman: As the Param Ekantik Satpurush**

5. "Moksha - ultimate liberation - can be attained only through upasana." (1/3)

A. **Importance of Upasana**

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. 1, 3 (2/6-7) 2. 3 (1/2)

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

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


1. **"That sadhu enjoys the taste of my murti."** (6/145): Once, Muktanand Swami, Brahmanand Swami, Nityanand Swami, Anand Swami, Gunatitanand Swami and other sadhus totalling about 18, were seated in a group while Shriji Maharaj served them food. Shriji Maharaj then asked the sadhus, "All of you should learn how to eat from

Gunatitanand Swami.” With tongue in cheek, Brahmanand Swami retorted, “The sadhu eats very well.” Shriji Maharaj immediately corrected him, “I do not mean what you say. Because that sadhu enjoys the taste of my murti. Just as grains are poured in a storage bin, similarly, he fills his stomach with food. He lives suppressing his immense greatness and powers; otherwise crowds of people would follow him in the same way they follow me.” **Significance:** “Diamond itself will not say how precious it is.” Only Parabrahman can identify clearly Aksharbrahman.

2. **Gunatitanand Swami’s introduction of himself at the Chaitra Punam festival in Vartal (6/148):** In Samvat Year 1923 (1867 CE), Gunatitanand Swami was to attend the full moon day festival of the month of Chaitra in Vartal. Pavitrnanand Swami and others had planned in advance not to receive Swami on the outskirts of Vartal. However, when Gunatitanand Swami was about to arrive, most of the devotees from the assembly went to receive him. After Swami’s arrival, there was a great rush for his darshan resulting in pandemonium. As planned, Gopaljidadada (Elder brother of Acharya Raghuvirji Maharaj) was to reprimand Swami. All of a sudden, he shouted, “All of you are showmen rushing around like this; Swami also wants to become God and therefore does not utter one word.” Immediately Swami stood up in the assembly and at the top of his voice boldly said, “Please do not call me God. Only Sahajanand Swami - the most supreme, and the ultimate cause of all causes - is God; no one else. However speaking before you today in this assembly is Mul Akshar - as mentioned in the shastras. Know him as such.” **Significance:** As Gunatitanand Swami himself was Aksharbrahman, unhesitatingly and undeterred, in a highly surcharged situation, he clarified it.

3. **Nityanand Swami’s firm in his understanding of Shriji Maharaj’s Supremacy (4/58):** When Shriji Maharaj had the Satsangijivan Shastra written in Gadhadra, a lengthy debate on Upasana took place. Nityanand Swami insisted on describing Shriji Maharaj as supreme, the ultimate avatari of all avatars, and the final cause of all causes. The other paramhansas, however, were in favour of depicting Shriji Maharaj as equal to Shri Krishna. Nityanand Swami forcefully pointed out Shriji Maharaj’s merging of 24 incarnations into himself, and other evidences of Maharaj’s limitless divine glory. He pleaded that equating Shriji Maharaj with the previous avatars amounted to denial of his omnipotence and supreme glory. Shriji Maharaj however, sided with the rest of the paramhansas by affirming, “Write that I am on par with Shri Krishna. Nothing more should be written.” Shriji Maharaj had a long drawn-out debate with Nityanand Swami regarding this matter, but Nityanand Swami refused to change his stance. Following this, Nityanand Swami was excommunicated and Maharaj stopped talking to him. Despite this humiliation, Nityanand Swami remained firm in his understanding about Maharaj’s supreme nature. After seven days, Maharaj called him and praised his understanding. As a token of his appreciation, he garlanded Nityanand Swami, adding, “A true upasak should have understanding like Nityanand Swami.” **Significance :** By this incidence, we also must make our belief very firm that Shriji Maharaj is the supreme God and even Shriji maharaj try to change it, we should not change.

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. **Glory of the gunatit sadhu : In the bhajans of well-known Devotee Poets (5/110):** Well-known devotee-poets Narsinh Mehta, Mirabai, Pritam, Dayaram, Surdas, Tulsidas

and others are ecstatic in their poems while praising the Gunatit Sadhu and have placed him on par with God.

Narsinh Mehta has written:

‘Pran thaki mune Vaishnav vahala, rat divas hrude bhavu re;
Tapa tirath vaikunth pad meli, mara harijan hoy tya hu avu re.
Lakshmiji ardhangana mari, te mara santni dasi re;
Adasath tirath mara Santne charane, koti Ganga koti Kashi re.’

Tulsidas says:

‘Ramsindhu ghan sajjan dhira, chandantaru Hari sant samira;
More man Prabhu as bisvasa,
Rama te adhik Rama kar dasa.’ (Uttar kand chopai following 119th verse)

Pritam says:

‘Sant harijan ek hai, bhinna na mano koi;
Pritam sadguru mile, taku malum hoy.’

Sant Kabir says:

‘Sahabka ghar Santanmahi, Sant sahab kachhu antar nahi.’

2. Shriji Maharaj: The supreme - In the words of the Paramhansas (4/45):

Attracted by the divine and glorious personality of Shriji Maharaj, many of the paramhansas unreservedly accepted his supremacy. Others accepted him initially as God, but on realizing his immense glory and super human deeds, they started trusting his words and gradually came to acknowledge his divine supremacy. Their realization of Shriji Maharaj's supremacy has been incorporated in the words of their kirtans and shastras, as exemplified in the following excerpts:

(1) In all his literary works, Nishkulanand Swami has described Shriji Maharaj in glowing terms - as Purna Purushottam, the ultimate avatari of all avatars:

(A) “Adya madhya antye avatar, thayaa aganit thashe apar,
Pan sarvena karan jeh, teto Swami Sahajanand eh.”

At the beginning, the middle and the end of creation, countless avatars have incarnated and will incarnate. But the prime cause of them all is one and only one - Swami Sahajanand. - Nishkulanand Kavya, Avatar Chintamani 32

(B) “Vidhipar te virat kahi e, te par Pradhan Purush lahie;
Te par mul Prakruti Purush, tethi par Akshar sujash.
Akshar par Purushottam jeh, tene dharyu manushyanu deh;
Tenu darshan ne sparsh kyathi, sahu vicharone manmathi.
Je chhe man vanine agam, te to aj thayaa chhe sugam;”

Beyond Brahma is Virat. Beyond Virat is Pradhan Purush. Beyond Pradhan Purush is Mul Prakriti Purush. And beyond him is majestic Akshar; Beyond Akshar is Purushottam, who has descended in human form.

Just think - could we ever have seen or touched him? The one who is beyond words and thoughts, he has become easily accesible to us today. - **Bhaktachintamani 77**

(C) “Pachhi boliya Pranjivan, tame sambhalajyo sahu jan,
Tamane je mali chhe murati, tene Nigam kahe neti neti...
Ati apar Aksharatit, thai tamare te sathe prit,
Bhakta jaktamahi chhe jo ghana, upasak avatar tana.
Je je murati janane bhaye, te murati nijadham pahochave,
Pan sarve par je prapati, te chhe tamare kahe Pranpati.”

Then addressing them, Shriji Maharaj said, “All of you listen carefully. Though the Vedas say, ‘He is not, he is not’, he is very much before you in human form. You are associated with him, who is immeasurable and beyond Akshar. Many devotees on this earth worship various avatars. They, in turn, help their followers to attain their respective abodes. What

you have attained is unsurpassable, and beyond their reach,”so said Shriji Maharaj. - **Bhaktachintamani 79**

(D) Nishkulanand Swami sings of Shriji Maharaj’s supremacy in Purushottam Prakash:

“Purushottam pragati re.....

Kalash chadavyo kalyanano re, sahuna mastak par mod;

Dhanya dhanya a avatarne re, jova rakhi nahi jod.....

Dhami je Akshardhamna re, tene apyo chhe anand;.....

Bandh kidha bija barana re, ve’ti kidhi akshar vat.....

Ashadhi meghe avi karya re, jhajha bija jhakal;.....”

The advent of Purushottam marked the pinnacle of liberation as if everyone has a crown on their heads. Blessed and unparalleled in this incarnation. The supreme God of Akshardham has given divine joy in abundance. All other doors are closed, but the royal road to Akshardham has been laid wide open. Before the torrential rains of Ashadh, all others are like dew. -Nishkulanand Kavya, Purushottam Prakash 55 Shriji Maharaj is compared in the simile with the heavy downpour of the month of Ashadh which blossoms the whole earth. The other avatars are compared to dew which cannot affect the earth. In such words, Nishkulanand Swami sung the divine glory of his supreme master.

(2) “Sahajanand Swami re, Pote Parbrahma chhe re, Swaminarayan jenu nam re.”
Sahajanand Swami himself is Parbrahman. His name is Swaminarayan.

- **Sadguru Muktanand Swami**

(3) “Divya chaitanya Akshar jenu ghar chhe jo,
kshar Akshar thaki e to par chhe jo.”

Full of divine consciousness is his abode Akshardham. He is beyond Kshar and Akshar. - **Sadguru Premanand Swami**

(4) “Koti Vishnu Brahma kar jodi, Shankar koti surat ani,
Sharda Shesh aru Narad barane, nahi manat nar abhimani.
Parbrahma Puran Purushottam, Swaminarayan sumarani
Sukhanand sharane sukh payo, bhajan bharosa ur ani.”

Millions of Brahmas and Vishnus respectfully fold their hands; Millions of Shivas, Sharda, Shesha and Narad meditate, but the egoists have no faith. Remembering Parabrahman Purna Purushottam Swaminarayan, Sukhanand is very elated. And holding fast to this faith, he sings his praises. - **Sadguru Sukhanand Swami**

The poems of the eight paramhansa-poets as well as Haridigvijay written by the great scholar sadhu Nityanand Swami, and the monumental Shri Harililakalpataru composed by Acharya Shri Raghuvirji Maharaj and Achintyanand Brahmachari at the inspiration of Gunatitanand Swami contain numerous references of Shriji Maharaj’s supreme status. Firmly convinced of the supreme position of Shriji Maharaj, the paramhansas had no interest in anything upto Prakriti Purush. Therefore, when Shriji Maharaj considered sending Sadguru Swarupanand Swami to Golok, the latter forcefully replied, “I am already lying in that pit!”

3. **God as sakar in Akshardham and on Earth (3/19)** “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, ‘Bolya Shri Hari re.....’ Shriji Maharaj affirms:

“Maru dham chhe re, Akshar amrut jenu nam;

Tema hu rahu re, dwibhuj divya sada sakar.”

My abode is known as eternal Akshardham. I always dwell in it in a divine dwibhuj (two-armed) form. - **Sadguru Premanand Swami**

Describing the divine form of God in Akshardham, Maharaj says, "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 serene; it has a human form; and it appears young like a teenager."

(Vachanamrut Gadhada II 13) Shriji Maharaj has expressly stated in many Vachanamruts that God is with form - sakar - in Akshardham. In his human incarnation on earth, he is also sakar. Therefore, he is forever sakar. Stressing this, Maharaj says, "The manner in which the incarnate 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) As God is with form on earth, similarly at the time of atyantik pralay, he is in a divine form in Akshardham. And as he has a form in Akshardham, similarly he is with form during his human incarnation. Shriji Maharaj explains, "Even at the time of atyantik-pralay, God and his devotees remain 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 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 slight difference between that form and this form" **(Vachanamrut Panchala 7)** In this way God eternally possesses a form.

4. **Deficiencies resulting from not realizing the Pragat form of God (5/89)** From time immemorial, the jiva has been plagued by countless flaws. These can be overcome by the genuine knowledge of the pragat form of God and by seeking refuge in him. The imperfections cannot be eradicated without knowing the pragat form of God and without his association. Shriji Maharaj says, "If any deficiency remains in understanding God, then one's flaw will never be eradicated" **(Vachanamrut Gadhada II 13)** "Thus, even after attaining this Satsang - which is rare for even Brahma and others - affection for objects other than God still remains because the person has not developed as firm a conviction for the manifest (pragat) form of God as he has for the non-manifest (paroksh) form of God" **(Vachanamrut Gadhada III 2).**

"If a devotee of God whose faith is perfect and who is not disturbed by lust, anger, avarice, etc., desires anything other than the manifest form of Shri Krishna Bhagwan, then even if he is a great renunciant and has firm vairagya and intense atma-realization, he will attain a lower level of bliss" **(Vachanamrut Gadhada III 5)** Aksharbrahman Gunatitanand Swami states, "Those who do not understand Maharaj as he is and the sadhu as he is, are eternally unfortunate like the Yadvas. They are like the famine of 1876 (1820 CE) which occurred despite the torrential rains, and like one who bathes in the Ganga but keeps his head dry. Since, without knowing the glory they stay in this Satsang. They remain ignorant like children. But they are not able to understand the true glory of God and his Sadhu" **(Swamini Vato 3.35)** "No matter how learned a scholar of the shastras or an orator of traditions and history one may be, if he does not know this manifest God and manifest sadhu, he is unproductive like the khijdo and in his company, one will not experience peace or happiness" **(Swamini Vato 3.68)** "Today, God is manifest, the sadhu is manifest and dharma is manifest. And those who do not understand this at this time will bitterly regret afterwards" **(Swamini Vato 4.50)**

Sadguru Muktanand Swami writes:

‘Parokshthi bhavatano par ave nahi,
Veda Vedant kahe satya vani.’

The paroksh form of God cannot liberate; the Vedas and Vedanta affirm this truth.

‘Mangal rup pragatne meli, parokshne bhaje je prani re;
Tapa tirth kare dev dera, man na tale masani re....’

Those who leave aside the beneficial form of the pragat and worship the paroksh form; Despite their tapa (austerities), tirth(pilgrimages to holy places), and devotion to the deities, they can never attain the stage of no-mind.

‘Koi kahe Hari ho gaye, koi kahe Hari hovan har;
Mukta prgatki prichh bina, bhatakat sab sansar.’

Some say God has been; some say he is still to come. Not knowing the pragat form, they roam [aimlessly] in the cycle of birth and death. The shastras narrate the episodes of the divine life of God. Their mere reading or listening are of little significance. Only the pragat form of God is the source of bliss.

Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami writes:

‘Vanchi kagal koi kanthno, jem nar apar raji thai;
Pan pragat sukh piyutanu, anu jetlu avyu nai.’

On reading her husband’s letter, the wife was immensely delighted. Yet it was not even an iota of the pleasure of his actual presence. **Nishkulanand Kavya Bhaktinidhi 14**

Unmindful of pragat bhakti, those who worship the paroksh form are really lost, as described in the following by Nishkulanand Swami:

‘Jem koi fulvadina ful meli, akash fulni asha kare;
Par vina parishram pade, sar thoduj male sare.
Tem pragat prabhune parahari, parokshma kare pratita;
Te to piyushno taru parahari, kari chhash piva chahe chitta.’

Instead of plucking flowers from the garden, one who hopes to pluck them from the sky endures endless efforts without any results. Similarly, instead of devotion to the pragat, devotion to the paroksh is like forsaking nectar for buttermilk.

Nishkulanand Kavya, Sarsiddhi 47

‘Pragat bhaji rushi patni, paroksh bhajya Rushiray;
Rushi patnie Hari raji karya, rushi rahya paritap may.
Prabhu pragatna prasang vina, rahi gai eva motane khot;
Aj kalna abhagiya, dash vina diye chhe dot.
Pragat vina chhe pampala, bhakta kare chhe bhavamay;
Khara khandta kusaka, kan nahi nisare te may.
Hari ladila ladu jami gaya, kede padya rahya pataravala;
Jethi bhukh na jay sukh na thay, van samje chate chhe saghala.’

The wives of the rishis worshipped the pragat form of God, whilst the rishis worshipped the paroksh. The wives pleased God; the rishis were left repenting. Without the contact of the pragat form of God, the eminent were losers. The unfortunate ones roam around aimlessly. Without pragat bhakti, all are cripples, Since no grains come out by only pounding the chaff. The beloved of God ate the ladus, leaving the leaf-plates aside. Mindlessly licking them neither gives joy, nor satisfies one’s hunger.


- Nishkulanand Kavya, Sarsiddhi 24

Sadguru Brahmanand Swami also says:

‘Pragat praman Haribina prani, kyu jaha taha bhatkanta hai;
Or upay kiye te koi vidhi, at na bhavako anta hai;
Pragat praman Puran batave, Gita pragat kathanta hai;
Pragat praman bina Brahmanand, sab hi jagat bharmanta hai;’

All are wandering here and there without knowing the pragat form of God. Try all other means, but there is no end to the worldly turmoil. The Gita and other shastras point out the pragat form as the ultimate authority. Brahmanand says that leaving aside the pragat, all the world is under a spell.

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. **The omniscience of Parameshwar is different from that of ishvars. (3/31-32):** The Vayu Purana describes the extraordinary characteristics of God. The foremost among these is omniscience. The word omniscient is not to be taken merely literally, because omniscience is a trait of the ishvars as well as the muktas. The omniscience of Parmeshwar, however, is quite different. He simultaneously knows about all the objects in countless worlds, about every jiva, the ishvars, infinite muktas in his divine abode and Mul Akshar. Precisely this is his omniscience. Within all souls dwells God as a witness - sakshi. Dwelling in their heart as a witness, he is aware of all their physical deeds and mental thoughts. He knows their past, present and future, as well as their virtues and vices, their disposition and desires. He also knows the motives of the ishvars regarding the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the cosmos.
2. **The hallmark of a genuine devotee is to have unparalleled faith and loyalty like a faithful wife towards one's Ishtadev. (4/72-74):** Shriji Maharaj has held all deities, acharyas and avatars in high regard. The comparison with them is purely for the purpose of clearly understanding the basic principle that the various avatars, their deeds and their followers are in no way superior to Shriji Maharaj, his deeds and his followers. In the mandirs he constructed, Shriji Maharaj consecrated the murtis of various deities, thereby showing his high regard for them all. But to have innate faith to one's ishtadev, akin to the loyalty of a faithful wife for her husband, is the hallmark of a genuine devotee. Shriji Maharaj has laid great stress on this point. He says, "A wife who observes the vow of fidelity..... the affection she has for all other men does not even come close to the affection she has for her husband. Nor does she see virtues in other men as she see in her own husband. Such is the firm fidelity that a faithful wife has towards her husband.in the same manner, a devotee should have firm fidelity to God. Nor does he develop affection for other avatars of his Ishtadev. He keeps affection only for the form that he has attained, and he acts according to His wishes only" (**Vachanamrut Gadhada III 16**) Shriji Maharaj was interested in the well-being of all jivas and therefore he has been described as 'Sarvajiva-hitavaha'. He has taught in the Shikshapatri: 'Tasyaiv sarvatha bhaktihi kartavya manujairbhuvni I All human beings on this earth should worship that supreme God only.' - **Shikshapatri 113** The genuine aspirant should be elated by this supreme attainment. Nevertheless, this should not act as an excuse to deride other deities, goddesses or avatars. Shriji Maharaj has strictly forbidden this. He is not pleased with those persons who show such disrespect. He does not approve of the tendency of manifesting petty ego. Brahmaswarup Shastriji Maharaj has followed the same tradition. In the Akshar Purushottam mandirs he constructed, he consecrated the murtis of avatars. In assemblies, he often recited Shrimad Bhagvat. he often encouraged weekly discourses on it to derive inspiration from the lives of devotees such as Shuk, Sanak, Narad, Dhruva, Prahlad and the Gopis. He insisted that all followers of the Sampradaya should develop a broad outlook and not be narrow-minded. The sadhus and Paramhansas of Shriji Maharaj, as well as Aksharbrahman Gunatitanand Swami, Brahmaswarup Pragji Bhakta (Bhagatji Maharaj), Brahmaswarup Shastriji Maharaj and Brahmaswarup Yogiji Maharaj worked tirelessly throughout their lives so that thousands

of jivas could realize Shriji Maharaj in his true form and worship him. At present, Pragat Brahmaswarup Param Puja Swamishri Narayanswarupdasji - Pramukh Swami Maharaj - constantly travels all over the world to spread the message of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. The truly learned are never egoistic and do not assert 'only mine is the best'. They are open-minded enough to accept 'whatever is good'.

3. **To become a devotee of the highest calibre in this very life one should serve the Sant who possesses the highest qualities. (5/104-105):** In the Vachanamrut, Shriji Maharaj has said that the Gunatit Sadhu has as much honour and as much glory as God. Whatever fruits are therefore attained by worshipping God, by abiding by his dictates, by pleasing him and by his contact, are also equally attained through the Gunatit Sadhu. Shriji Maharaj further adds in Vachanamrut Gadhada III 35, "If one serves such a Sant, one earns merits equivalent to having served God." In Vachanamrut Vartal 5, Shriji Maharaj says, "By performing with extreme affection such similar service of God and the Sant who possesses the highest qualities, even if he is a devotee of the lowest type and was destined to become a devotee of the highest type after two lives, or after four lives, or after ten lives or after a hundred lives, he will become a devotee of the highest calibre in this very life. Such are the fruits of the similar service of God and God's Bhakta". In a number of Vachanamruts, it is mentioned that a devotee is endowed with virtues by the contact, service and worship of a gunatit Sadhu; and his bliss leads to attachment to God, removal of inner flaws, erosion of passion, and finally, it culminates in a devotion that is full of dharma and jnan. And the jiva is extremely exalted by the Sadhu. Precisely for this reason, we can achieve whatever we desire through a Gunatit Sadhu.
4. **Shriji Maharaj felt like carrying a heavy load and started perspiring. (6/141):** 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 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's shoulders. Shriji Maharaj then called for Muktanand Swami, Brahmennad 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."

Q.7 Upasana: What to understand? What not to understand? Complete the following statements. (Total Marks: 7)

What to understand?

1. By the wish of Paramatma, such a brahmarup devotee, on leaving the (physical) body, attains the Akshardham of Paramatma via archimarg (a divine path), and there with a brahmic body, while serving by doing darshan with dasbhav, forever enjoys the divine bliss of the Lord of Akshardham, Parabrahman. (7/173)
2. Maya is composed of the three gunas, it is eternally changing, jad (inanimate), a material cause of the creation of infinite brahmands and the diverse mysterious power of Paramatma. As the cause of ego and attachment of jivas and of ishvars, this maya has been the cause of their births and deaths since eternity. Aksharbrahman and Parabrahman are forever totally aloof from and beyond maya and are its shariri. (7/171)
3. Like the jivas, these ishvars are countless in number, subtle like an atom, possess the qualities of indivisibility, etc. are jnanswarup (personified knowledge of their own self),

jnata (knowers), doers of good and bad karmas and experiencers 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 chaitanya entities of the ishwar category and these ishvars are fundamentally different from each other. (7/172)

4. Parabrahman is forever naturally replete with infinite liberating virtues and devoid of mayik(mundane) 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. (7/169)

What not to understand?

5. Only Aksharbrahman exists. Purushottam is included in him and can live only through him. (7/174)
6. Paramhansas other than Gunatitanand Swami can also be called Mul Aksharbrahman.
7. Moksha can be achieved despite not honouring the commands or duties and codes of conduct prescribed in the Shikshapatri, or by minimizing their importance.

Q.8 Write a short note on: Shriji Maharaj's Liking for sakar (3/9-11) (Total Marks: 5)

 **Note: Minumum three reference should be quoted.**













Shriji Maharaj has clearly shown his liking for sakar - that God is with a form as opposed to nirakar - the notion that God is formless. **(Vachanamrut Loya 14)** "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 I 30)**. "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 possess 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 percepts 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.

SECTION 2: SATSANG READER PART 3, 4th Edition, April 2009 & PORTRAIT OF INSPIRATION - PRAMUKH SWAMI MAHARAJ, 2nd Edition, Feb. 2007

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. "I only have these clothes and I never put on any ornaments." (7/82) **OR**
 Shivalbhai Sheth to Raghuvirji Maharaj
 When Sayajirao Gaekwad was to come to the mandir in Gadhada for darshan, according to the wishes of Acharya Maharaj, Shivalbhai became the organizer for his welcome procession. Shivalbhai always used to don simple clothes, and it was in this routine dress that he was about to lead the procession when Acharya Maharaj asked him to dress well....
2. "Do you spoil things in this way at your own homes?" (6/70)
 Shriji Maharaj to Kathi devotees
 In Agatrai, at Parvatbhai's house, Kathi devotees removed the lids of the barrels and let their horses eat the grain and let loose their horses among the heaps of fodder in the yard. When Maharaj saw all this...
3. "What else could you do with so much wealth?" (4/54) **OR**
 Gunatitanand Swami to Acharya Raghuvirji Maharaj
 In Samvat 1911, when Acharya Maharaj declared to arrange for a session of holy discourses on Satsangjivan and would bear the entire burden of boarding expenses of all the devotees for a period of four months from the considerable amount received by the way of gift-offerings....
4. "Now it is not possible to look in the direction of Vadodara." (1/13)
 Gopalanand Swami to Bapu Raiji, Premchand Raiji and other devotees of Vadodara
 Some Devotees who had come there on the occasion of Vaishakh Punam approached Gopalanand Swami to seek his permission to leave, requested him to cast his blessed looks in the direction of Vadodara, then.....
5. "This is the first time in our lives that we have come across such tourists." (15)
 Customs officials in Dar-es-salam to spokesman
 The custom officials examined the belongings of Swamishri and the other sadhus in great detail, they didn't find anything, even 75 shillings permitted on them, then.. **OR**
6. "The mission of God and His holy Sadhu is to bring people closer to each other." (33)
 Swamishri to gathering people / Assembly in Odarka
 200 years of venvetta was dissolved between the villages Kukad and Odarka. While blessing the gathering Swamishri addressed.

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

1. **Vaishnavs asked for forgiveness from Acharya Raghuvirji Maharaj.(4/53-54)**
A. Once a group of sadhus had gone to Mahelav and sang of Maharaj's glory.
 "Mat panthne mathe mekh mari, lidha jan chhodavi jo, Mundya kaik guru bhekh padya mahantne godvi jo....Raje Gadharpur." The Gosai, who was in his palatial Haveli

adjoining the mandir, heard this. As his anger had shot up he attacked the mandir. The young sadhus escaped from the scene, but one elderly sadhu did not move. He was beaten so severely that he died on the spot. When this news reached Vartal, Nityanand Swami asked one hundred armed guards to go to Mahelav and cut the Gosai to size. But when Raghuvirji Maharaj came to know about this, he persuaded everyone not to take revenge. He said that Maharaj would do us a good turn. Meanwhile, the news of the sadhu's death reached the Government and the Gosai was about to be punished for his crime. All the Vaishnavas assembled together, came to Acharya Maharaj, offered their apology to Maharaj and requested him to procure the release of the Gosai. Acharya Maharaj immediately withdrew his complaint and saved the Gosai from punishment. **OR**

2. Shivalal Sheth's sister-in-law felt insulted. (7/80)

- A.** Once Shivalalbhai's sister-in-law had come to his place on some auspicious occasion. Shivalalbhai, 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 Shivalalbhai's condition was always spiritual.

3. Swamishri is an idol of forgiveness. (9-10)

- A.** A person came to see Pramukh Swami Maharaj at the Akshar Purushottam Mandir in London. Rage and anger were writ large on his face. Some misunderstanding had distorted his attitude and inflamed his countenance. He started uttering foul language before Swamishri. His uncouth words and insults incensed the sadhus and youths sitting in the room. But Swamishri was unruffled. There was not a trace of anger on his face and no bitter feeling in his heart. Like an idol of compassion and forgiveness, he merely listened and suppressed any counter reactions from those sitting in the room. After exhausting his rage, the person became silent. Swamishri instructed the attendants, "See that he is served lunch before he leaves." Swamishri can forget the insult rained on him in seconds! So Swamishri is an idol of forgiveness. He accepts honour and insult with equanimity. **OR**

4. The two-month-old agitation was unconditionally called off by the agitators.(37)

- A.** During March and April 1981, there was a students' agitation against reservations in Amdavad. On the one hand, Gujarat echoed with the announcement of the Bicentenary Celebration of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, and on the other, students were vehemently protesting against the reservation of seats in colleges for scheduled caste students. The sponsors of violence in the agitation had upset the daily tenor of life in many cities of Gujarat. The 'Swaminarayan Nagar' - a 200 acre spiritual township specially created in Amdavad for the bicentenary celebration provided a refreshing contrast to the unrest. On 12 April 1981, the climax-day of the celebration, Swamishri was interviewed by many media reporters. One reporter asked, "What have you done to solve the students' agitation in the city?" "We have prayed for peace," Swamishri answered solemnly. "But what has your organization done in the streets and bylanes of the city to solve this issue? Will it be resolved through mere prayer?" "Yes," Swamishri's voice rang with faith. "I have faith that my prayers will work." That same night, during the main celebration assembly, Swamishri prayed on the public address system for peace. He said, "I pray to God that may there be peace in the whole of Gujarat and may the political leaders and students come to a compromise." And then Swamishri appealed for peace to the people of Gujarat. And the very next day, to the surprise and amazement of everyone, the two-month-old agitation was called off by

the agitators unconditionally. The power of Swamishri's prayers became apparent to the sceptic reporter who had questioned Swamishri.

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

1. Kushalkunvarba's devotion. (60-61, 63-66)

- A.** The queen of Dharampur, Kushalkunvarba spent most of her time in worshipping and listening to the holy discourses. Once, she heard the words, "In this way the Lord kidnapped Rukmani" from the Purani, she conveyed her thoughts to him, "Our liberation could come through only when the Almighty himself grasps our wrist, just as he did with Rukmani...". After this incident her desire for an encounter with God grew stronger. Once Paramhansa of Maharaj, Paramchaitanyanand Swami arrived at Dharampur. She heard from him about the real identity and glory of Shriji Maharaj. She had a realization about the real identity of Maharaj. She, herself removed the husk from some rice grains and sent the clean and whole rice grains along with an invitation letter to Maharaj. Shriji Maharaj, with the group of sadhus and devotees reached Dharampur. Vijaydev ran down to welcome them all and brought them all to the town with pomp and glory. When Kushalkunvarba had the darshan of the divine murti of Maharaj, she became unconscious about herself. Maharaj then gripped her wrist and made her get up. She recovered her consciousness and became one with the divine identity of Maharaj. She repeated these same words that, "I am surely liberated because you have gripped my wrist, just as Shri Krishna had gripped the wrist of Rukminiji." She asked Maharaj, "You had written in your letter that Swami Shri Sahajanandji Maharaj was dictating the letter from 'Anirdesh. What is this Anirdesh?" When Shriji Maharaj replied to her question, she was staring at Maharaj, without batting an eyelid, with rapt concentration and trying to meditate on the form of Maharaj full of divine splendour. She prayed to Maharaj to extend the stay for six months and also invite other devotees from Kathiawad and other places. She also arranged for the exemption of the octroi duty at Bharuch and armed guards on the way for patrolling. The queen herself supervised the arrangements for the best possible provisions to feed a variety of rich dishes everyday to Maharaj and sadhus. She arranged for four Brahmin cooks and requested Maharaj to tell the sadhus not to add water in their food. For her God and sadhus, she ordered dry fruits and sweets of high quality from lands far-off. She also arranged for cartloads of sugarcane and chunks of fresh jaggery, milk, curd, ghee, sugar and other rations. Her devotions knew no bounds and she left no stone unturned for him. To honour her wish, Vijaydev brought out a procession in state with a view to provide the citizens with an opportunity for the darshan of Maharaj. Maharaj celebrated the festival of Vasant Panchmi with colours. On this occasion, 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 performed arti and puja. At this juncture, the devout Kushalkunvarba said, "O Maharaj, this State, the treasury, everything is yours. Please stay here." Maharaj said, "I have not come in this world to rule, I have yet to liberate many souls. I advise even you, not to attach yourself with the State, otherwise you will have to take another birth." The queen prayed Maharaj, "I was just waiting for your arrival. Now please make me free of all desires and take me to your dham. Maharaj gave her an impression of his lotus feet made with sandalwood paste as a mark of his special grace. She folded her hands and agreed to act accordingly. Then She accommodated Maharaj on an elephant and covered a distance of a couple of kilometres to see them off. After the departure of Maharaj, Kushalkunvarba felt the pangs of separation, but tried to live according to the words of Maharaj. She was reminded of the divine happiness she had experienced from Maharaj, the twenty two artis and all the meetings suffused with divine love, and many such other memories. Exactly on the fifteenth day after the departure of Maharaj, she passed away, remembering Maharaj. Precisely, at that moment, the whole palace was divinely illuminated. **OR**

2. Gopalanand Swami's detachment and renunciation.(1/9-10)

- A.** Gopalanand Swami's detachment and renunciation were excellent. Since Swami had mastered ashtang-yoga his body was slim and delicate. But his enthusiasm for observing austerities had not at all diminished. Once a devotee presented a silken dhoti to him and affectionately insisted that Swami should wear it till it tore. Swami devised a plan so that he did not disappoint the devotee, and at the same time, obeyed Maharaj's orders. He tied the dhoti so tightly that as he was about to sit it was torn. He changed it immediately. In this way, he respected the wish of Maharaj for not donning a silken or embroidered cloth. He never consumed milk, ghee or fried foods. He ate chapattis without spreading ghee on them. Often, he offered his own share of ghee to the fire deity. As a result of this his body was weak. To look after his health so that the devotees would benefit, Gunatitanand Swami told him, "Swami, you are now aged, so please spread some ghee on the chapattis you eat." Swami did not wish to do so. However, Gunatitanand Swami once gave him a chapatti with ghee spread on it. At Gunatitanand Swami's affectionate insistence, Swami did eat it, but then said, "Now I'll no longer be able to talk on detachment and renunciation. From now onwards, you talk on these topics." Such was his determination to practice.

3. Frank experienced peace. (34)

- A.** In Leicester, Frank, an English person came to Swamishri. He narrated a recent tragedy from his life to Swamishri. He and his wife took his 17 years old son to a psychiatrist for a minor mental problem. But the psychiatrist declared that he was mad and had him admitted to a mental hospital. Subsequently, his son was terribly shocked. He strongly reacted each time and at last he tied a rope and hanged himself. From then onwards, they had been extremely unhappy and full of grief. We feel he committed suicide because of our mistake. Swamishri consoled him and said, "Whatever God has willed is right. Don't burden yourself with grief, otherwise you will suffer from tension. Now that he is no more, he is not going to come back. For peace of mind go to church and pray every Sunday. It was not your son's fault or yours either." Swamishri also told him to offer donations to his church. Frank said, "Today, my tension has dissolved. I feel peaceful. I have never experienced such tranquility before." The next day, when he told his priest about this incident, he was amazed and requested Frank to talk about the great, realized sadhu to the Sunday congregation. **OR**

4. A horse is tamed. (12)

- A.** In 1977, the devotees of Ashton-U-Lyne in England had made grand preparations for a procession to welcome Swamishri. The Mayor of Ashton and Mr. Wilkinson, who was acquainted with the nature and habits of horses drew the attention of C.T.Patel, "This is a racehorse. Look at it now. Its eyes are restless and impatient. Imagine what will happen when the marching band plays music?" But the devout C.T.Patel said, "Swamishri will take care of it, because he has the power to control and calm anyone in any situation. Once he sits in the chariot, everything will be alright." Mr. Wilkinson did not expect such an answer and got angry hearing this, but during that time, Swamishri arrived and before anyone could decide upon anything, Swamishri sat in the buggy. Everyone shuddered with fear as to what might happen. But the horse became calm. His roving eyes and fiery spirit turned placid. Throughout the entire procession the horse trotted tamely amidst the sound of the marching band and the throng of devotees.


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. Appearing in divine form, what did Shriji Maharaj say to Acharya Raghuvirji Maharaj? (4/55)
- A.** Appearing in divine form, Shriji Maharaj told Acharya Raghuvirji Maharaj to make Gunatitanand Swami deliver discourses, since he was kept there for that purpose; or else, he should be allowed to go to Junagadh.

2. Which four sadhus compiled the Vachanamrut? (1/13)
A. Gopalanand Swami in collaboration with Nityanand Swami, Muktanand Swami and Shuk Muni compiled the Vachanamrut.
3. Who was Shivalal Sheth in his past life? (7/79)
A. Shivalal Sheth was King Siddhavallabh in his past life.
4. When and where was Shantilal given bhagvati diksha by Shastriji Maharaj? (xi)
A. On 10/1/1940, Shantilal was given bhagvati diksha by Shastriji Maharaj in Gondal.
5. While in London, why was Swamishri praying in the middle of the night? (36)
A. In London, Swamishri was praying for rains in Gujarat since there was a famine, for the happiness of people and animals.


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. 3, 4 (3/39) | 2. 2, 4 (1/2) | 3. 1, 2, 3 (5, 11, 27) | 4. 3 (vi) |
|----------------|---------------|------------------------|-----------|

(SECTION-3: ESSAY)

Q.13 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. **O Shastriji Maharaj, for the sake of Akshar-Purushottam, you have manifest on earth:** (1) Shastriji Maharaj was born on this earth only to spread Akshar Purushottam upasana - Shriji Maharaj left the work of spreading upasana in future - Maharaj's goal to spread through Param Ekantik Saint. (2) Dungar Bhakta blessed by Gunatitanand Swami said, "This child will become saint and spread the Shriji Maharaj's Sarvopari nishtha (firmness) - At the tender age of 1¾ years, he took illness and in the state of unconsciousness went to Akshardham - Said, "In my childhood I went to Akshardham but Shriji Maharaj and Gunatitanand Swami said, "We have sent you on the earth to spread upasana and liberate many pious souls." So he regained consciousness and recovered from illness. Even in childhood, he used to make mandirs from clay or mud and perform arti - tried to collect all the scriptures of the saints of Vartal in search of real Guru. (3) Took diksha at the age of 19 he had heard from his guru Vignananand Swami about the Sarvopari nishtha of Shriji Maharaj and Gunatitanand Swami but he confirmed it in the presence of Bhagatji Maharaj. That very moment he made his only goal to prove and spread it in the entire world. (4) He accepted Bhagatji Maharaj as his Guru, after his guru Vignananand Swami went to dham. He used to sow the seed of upasana at every place, during every prayer and even while he was out for vicharan. During his stay at Vartal he undertook the construction of three pinacled mandir in Vadhavan and installed the murti of Akshar Purushottam Maharaj. As a result of this he had to face many problems and overcome obstacles. In spite of all the difficulties he remained stuck to his principles. Many people tried to murder him and continuously abused him too. (Quote incidents) He remained firm and steady as a mountain and continued this work. (5) He knew about the obstacles so he left Vartal by the humble request of Krishnaji Ada and within eighteen months he completed the task of construction of first shikharbaddh temple at Bochasan and fulfilled the wish of Maharaj through Kashidas Mota, and installed the idols of Akshar

Purushottam in the centre. Later on he continued making big and giant temples at Sarangpur, Gondal, Gadhada, Atladra and hoisted the flag of B.A.P.S. with limited devotees and saints and extremely financial crisis - the devotees were ready to sacrifice their lives and their names could be quoted in the history of BAPS. Shastriji Maharaj himself was a man of principle, firm as a mountain ready to accept all the challenges - once he completed the task undertaken after carefully checking all the principles - He squat peacefully only after and completing the task. (Quote incidents) **(6)** Because of this reason only Daulatram Pandya said, "For this work Shriji Maharaj himself had to ascerd on earth Shastriji Maharaj completed it." Shastriji Maharaj immediately added "I am born to make mandirs." **(7)** In the end Shastriji Maharaj used to say that "My work will be progressive and Shriji Maharaj is sarvopari and the upasana will be spread in the entire world." and this statement was quoted in the Kirtan "AksharPurushottam upasana ne kaj.....bhutal ma pragtya tame Shastriji Maharaj." **(8)** Conclusion: Our great respectful salutation to our extra-ordinary Guru Shastriji Maharaj.

- 2. Pramukh Swami Maharaj: Everyone's life force:** **(1)** Everyone's life means soul - all living creatures breathe is Pramukh Swami. As everyone loves their own life, in the same way Swamishri is like their life and soul. Why? **(2)** The main reason why everyone loves Pramukh Swami is because he is full of good virtues and loves every one. (quote few incidents) **(3)** Swamishri is saying, "Devotees are everything for me. Saints are my life." Simultaneously devotees are the soul ! To satisfy the devotees and keep them happy, he visited the devotees' home without bothering about his health and tried to solve the problems of devotees without seeing day-night, hunger-thirst etc. (quote few incidents) He always stood by the side of society in physical, financial problems and natural calamities. He replied the letters of devotees himself sitting overnight with a satisfied solution. (quote incidents) **(4)** Swamishri personally used to visit the affected areas during natural calamities. Even in the absence of saints and devotees Swamishri helped and stood by the side of the society as much as possible during earthquake, cyclone, famine and other social problems too. (quote few incidents) He made arrangements not only for the human beings but even for the dumb and poor animals who were literally wandering without fodder and water. (Write few incidents) So he totally supported the system of Narmada-project. **(5)** Everybody experienced the joy of Swamishri's love and personal attention. He showered his love towards young, old, rich, poor in the same manner that's why everybody adores him. Swamishri changed people's life and death too. He promised the devotees to take them to Akshardham. He has closed the gates of hell and took the people out of the ocean of sorrow;but he tolerated all the obstacles. (Quote few incidents) **(6)** Conclusion : In this way, Swamishri is every one's life but for him, the saints and devotees are soul ! Our humble salutation to beloved Guru.
- 3. Mandir Mahotsav: Robbinsville Mandir.** **(1)** Such a huge human gathering that too in U.S.A. ! It was surprising that the crowd of devotees in Akshardham of New Jersy was like the waves of ocean. Why was the croud gathered? The occasion was the inauguration of BAPS Shikharbaddh (Pinnacled)mandir. Let's enjoy the festival. **(2)** Incredible and unique Mahayagna : The unique and divine Indian tradition means yagna, in which prayers for all the living ceatures and for the betterment of everyone is included. The festival strated with the prayer for world-peace. On the land of U.S.A this was an amazing Mahayagna in real sense. The sacrifice (Aahuti) was done by the 17,566 devotees in 6 parts -prayed deeply or through the heart. The first session started on V.S. 2070, Shravan Sud 5, Friday (1.8.2014) at 2.30 P.M. and last session was on Shravan sud 13 (8.8.2014) at 12.30 P.M. planned before a year. Computerised I-cards for all the yagna performers. The ingredients for yagna were collected from far and according to the rules of U.S.A. There were 231 sacrificial pits- his type of traditional ceremony, will raise the age of the land upto 10,000 years. Senior officers and Mayor also participated and spread the message of Swamishri's divine work far and wide. **(3)** Elegant procession :

The festival of Robbinsville Mahotsav means incredible memories of 8th August evening. Twenty thousand people participated in it. Planning was started before six months. Ten chariots were decorated. Temple was like a divine flow of peace. The main attraction was the idol of Akshar Purushottam in the peacock shaped chariot, Harikrishna Maharaj and other deities and Guru parampara in others. - The devotees walked with full temperament and excitement with flags of 15 different countries. The female devotees also were equally enthusiastic. It was a historical event. **(4)** Other inspiring programmes: Religious dances and group marriages of 18 couples were arranged specially by the Indians residing in USA. **(5)** Occasion of the installation of Murti : The golden rays fell on Robbinsville city on V.S.2070, Shravan sud 14,(9.8.2014). At 7.30 A.M. sharp puja, arti and maha abhishek of the murtis were performed by the Sadguru Saints. The holy water was brought from 108 lakes, rivers, ponds. Installation of murtis were done by Swamishri at sharp 9.00 A.M. The devotees welcomed with the proclamation of victory. Small golden auspicious artistic pot was kept at the feet of Swamishri with complete religious rites and rituals. Swamiji welcomed the murtis with holy rice and kumkum. Abhishek on Maharaj with the help of remote control was performed. Everybody present there got mesmerised. Swamishri said in the concluding speech, "Whoever will come here, will attain happiness and prosperity and this is the place for shaping of life. **(6)** The consecration of Murtis : On the pious day of Rakshabandhan, dated 10.8.14 in USA it was an addition of a historical moment in the Hindu religion. It was the installation of murtis of Swaminarayan mandir by Swamishri. The land was overfilled by the devotees in 167 acres. Swamishri came sharp at 9.15 A.M. and the religious ceremony was started. Swamishri placed a mirror in front of Maharaj. Other murtis were placed by Sadguru Saints. Then Swamishri applied chandan, did Aarti, Annakut (Thal) and prayed to Thakorji on the land of Robbinsville. It was being telecasted live worldwide. Mayor of the city was also present there. This temple will become the place of worship and service. **(7)** Elixir of experience : The great people present there shared their experience. They appreciated the entire event which could not be forgotten. Some praised the carvings while others service and devotion. Mayor of USA preferred to visit like an ordinary citizen. Some praised the activities of BAPS and the sacrifice of the devotees for contributing their precious time. Certificate of Excellence was presented. Minute carvings were also noted. They appreciated for gifting such a beautiful and artistic temple and thanked BAPS organization. The entire township of Robbinsville became happy for choosing their land for such a pious and auspicious work. Some considered Swamishri as an Idol of inspiration. This will become the place of firmness and faith. Devotees thanked Swamishri for shaping their lives. Everybody in today's world need such a Guru. Mr. Senator Cori became vegetarian. Devotees' moral values, ideal life impressed the senate officers. The inaugural day of mandir was not only for New Jersey but for the entire USA. Everybody felt proud for such Guru. Mayor was impressed by the philosophy of Swamishri, "My happiness lies in others happiness." Through the temple, people will come to know about Indians and Hindu religion too. The relation between India and USA is not only officially on Government papers but it was made here. Swamishri's philosophy "To make others happy" impressed everyone and thanked Swamishri for that. The relation between two states should become everlasting and strong. We have lit up the lamp near the golden gate and they have enlightened it. **(8)** Official opening for the public : Whoever involved directly or indirectly (Indian or other citizens) associated with different programmes of this campus, experienced proud not only for the Hindus but also for the social service organizations. After welcoming the guests, different activities by BAPS and importance of mandir was shown through audio visual technology. According to the Indian tradition, flowers were offered with spiritual shlokas or songs at 10 A.M. near the main gates to the deities(Akshar Purushottam idols) by cutting the ribbon. Certificate of Excellence was issued by the assembly Mr. John Siminoe of New Jersey State - awarded with the National flag unfurled at the capital city Washington and were appreciated the work (construction)

of the temple. All the devotees bow to Swamishri's knowledge for the Indian culture and carvings. Next day speech was organized on 'necessity of mandir'. If temple is built then piousness comes in the life of human beings also. Many temples built by Swamishri. Celebrities experience spiritually (peace) - emotional due to spiritualism - not only on the basis of architecture but tries to unite several religions-caste etc. - unique - difficult to express in words - selfless society - experience the feeling on reaching other world. atmosphere of family-care - experience the divine feeling on pious place on earth - thanks to all the volunteers - sight of human care - everything is made naturally right from base till the summit - one could visualise the darshan of love and devotion - much patience seen even in the delicate and minute carvings proud for every Indian - felt (experienced) the life living 2000 years ago - beyond our imagination (expectation) eyes don't believe whether you are in a sleeping or a dream state? (9) Conclusion : In this way devotees bow their crores of respectful salutations to Guru Pramukh Swami Maharaj.

