

SAMPLE OPEN-BOOK ASSESSMENT ANSWERS

Open-Book Assessment (Preaching Application)

Present how a pure devotees' passage to the supreme abode is guaranteed by devotional service with reference to Kṛṣṇa's statements in Bhagavad-gītā Chapter 8.

The following paper is an example of a poor response. Note the areas which should be improved:

Sample Answer 1:

Anyone who quits his body in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is at once transferred to the transcendental nature of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord is the purest of the pure. Therefore anyone who is constantly Kṛṣṇa conscious is also the purest of the pure. The word smaran ("remembering") is important. Remembrance of Kṛṣṇa is not possible for the impure soul who has not practiced Kṛṣṇa consciousness in devotional service. Therefore one should practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness from the very beginning of life. If one wants to achieve success at the end of his life, the process of remembering Kṛṣṇa is essential. Therefore one should constantly, incessantly chant the mahā-mantra—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Lord Caitanya has advised that one be as tolerant as a tree (taror iva sahiṣṇunā). There may be so many impediments for a person who is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Nonetheless, tolerating all these impediments, one should continue to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, so that at the end of one's life one can have the full benefit of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Up to this point, the student has simply copied verbatim from Prabhupāda's purport to 8.6. This is unacceptable. One should present philosophical points in one's own words, to reveal ones understanding.

Of all the 8 questions asked by Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa dedicates almost the entire part of Chapter 8 to answer Arjuna's 8th question: How can those engaged in devotional service know You at the time of death? This chapter brings us to gross reality of life – we cannot stay in this body forever. Therefore we must consider where we are going next. That is intelligence. Time is breaking us down in this material world and yet our heads are full of dreams. We don't seem to take our life seriously and we glide from one sensory experience to another.

Good

When we read of Parīkṣit Mahārāj in Bhāgavatam that he had only 7 days to live, we feel sorry for him. Prabhupāda always pointed out we don't even know if we have 7 minutes. Kṛṣṇa being the doctor is giving us instructions how we don't have to subject a period for birth and death. How can I die in a proper state of mind is the intelligent question asked by Parīkṣit Mahārāj. Śukadeva Goswāmī glorified this question as the essence of all questions. The tendency to live and live (since the soul is eternal) is so deep which makes us think we will never die. In real human civilization we understand the present moment is the product of the past. According to the consciousness of our past life we now have our present mentality and our present situation. Therefore what we are thinking now will lead to the future situation.

Here the student is getting off the point of the question (guaranteed passage to the supreme abode) and preaching in general, with reference to texts beyond the scope of the question.

We have to be intelligent to shape our life. We have to be careful where we are heading. We have to understand where we came from. The Lord explains that our consciousness now and our life situation is the result of our previous death. If we have to truly focus our present moment then we have to think of our previous death. People say the magic of the moment. Actually the version of "the now" is the result of our past death. That is how relevant our past death is. Where am I going to be trained for the best possible life in the next birth? A devotee realizes this hard core reality and therefore cultivates and shapes his mind in such a way that at the time of death our mind is in the highest peak possible. The highest possible level is thinking of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Through the mysticism of His pastimes, Kṛṣṇa liberates the whole world.

A vague quote.... The student should include exact references to the 8th Chapter. All or part of the relevant verse can be included.

Training the mind is the most important obligation. Our mind can finish us off. That same mind can act so wonderfully to take us back home back to Godhead. Śāstras explain we are imprisoned in this material nature through the mind. Devotees take up the process of fixing their mind at His lotus feet. That easy process of fixing the mind at the Lord’s lotus feet is made very simple.

Vague quotes without solid references.

My Guru Maharaj said in a class once: “We should practice in our life to remember Kṛṣṇa always and in that way we are always prepared for death....”

This is an unverifiable reference. The question requests references from the 8th Chapter.

The key below indicates the specific marks the student received for the answer shown above.

Column A	B	C
Present how a pure devotees’ passage to the supreme abode is guaranteed by devotional service.	2	0.3
Gives reference to Kṛṣṇa's statements in <i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> Ch 8.	3	0.7
Total Mark		27%

Explanation of marking Key

- Column A The particular component of the question.
- Column B The students grade (out of 10) for that particular component.
- Column C The value of that component in the question overall.

Total Mark

The student’s component grades are multiplied by the component values and the aggregate is calculated.

Overall comments

The student has conviction about the value of human life, and its consequences. The student, however, has neglected to address the question, how a pure devotees’ passage to the supreme abode is guaranteed by devotional service, and has given only vague references to the 8th Chapter.