

STELLA MARIS COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS) CHENNAI 600 086
(For candidates admitted during the academic year 2019–2020 and thereafter)
SUBJECT CODE: 19EL/PC/LM24

M.A. DEGREE EXAMINATION, APRIL 2023
BRANCH VII – ENGLISH
SECOND SEMESTER

COURSE : CORE
PAPER : LITERATURE & MYSTICISM

TIME : 3 HOURS
MAX. MARKS : 100

SECTION A

I. Answer any four of the following in about 650 words each. (4x15=60)

1. Discuss the role of ecstasy in mysticism. How do mystics describe the experience of ecstasy, and what does it signify for them? Answer with reference to any two texts from your syllabus.
2. Examine the ways in which the literature of mysticism challenges conventional notions of self and identity. Discuss with reference to the poems by George Herbert and Kabir.
3. Attempt a comparison of how mystics of various religions personalise the divine, creating a literary space of devotion.
4. The body remains a recurrent and important presence both as a locus of wisdom and a hindrance to spiritual union. Discuss with reference to the poems by Andal and Rabia.
5. Discuss the role of symbolism in the literature of mysticism. How do mystics use symbols to convey their ideas and experiences, and what do these symbols represent?
6. How does the literature of mysticism provide a critique of institutionalized religion, and what alternative paths to spirituality do mystics propose? Discuss with reference to any two texts prescribed.

SECTION B

II. Answer any one of the following in about 750 words. (1x20=20)

7. Compare and contrast the approaches to spirituality between religious and non-religious traditions.
8. Do you perceive of any common thread among the women mystic poets prescribed for study? Elaborate.

SECTION C

III. Analyse the following poem given below in about 750 words with reference to aspects of mystical experience. (1x20=20)

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

Jalal ud-Din Muhammad Rumi
