

STELLA MARIS COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS) CHENNAI 600 086
(For candidates admitted from the academic year 2011-12)

SUBJECT CODE: 11EL/PC/BT44

M. A. DEGREE EXAMINATION, APRIL 2013
BRANCH VII – ENGLISH
FOURTH SEMESTER

COURSE : CORE

PAPER : THE BHAKTI TRADITION

TIME : 3 HOURS

MAX. MARKS: 100

- I. Analyse *Vaaranamaayiram* (The Auspicious Dream) by Andal and discuss how it echoes the theme of 'love' through the wedding rituals with Lord Narayana as the cosmic Male (*Purusha*) and the devotee (here Andal) as the Female (*Stree*).

(1x25=25)

I had a dream O friend!
The town was decked with festoons and golden urns.
Surrounded by a thousand caparisoned elephants
Our Lord Narayana came walking towards me.

I had a dream O friend!
Under a canopy was spread areca fronds and various gifts
the lion called Madavan, Govindan
Entered like a youthful bull and they fixed our wedding for the morrow.

I had a dream O friend!
Lord Indra and a horde of celestials came
They approved the match and chanted Mantras
Andari his friend draped me with the bridal sari and garland.

I had a dream O friend!
Scores of sages and seers chanted on a high note
They anointed us with sacred waters from the four Quarters
Then they tied that talisman thread on the wrists of that pure one and me.

I had a dream O friend!
Bright young women with lamps and sacred urns
came to greet our King of Mathura
the Earth trembled as he strode with sandaled feet.

I had a dream O friend!
Drums beat and the conches blew
Under a canopy decorated with pearls on strings
Our Lord Madhusudhana held my hand in his.

I had a dream O friend!
Learned Priests recited from the Vedas
Laid the faggots on the Darbha grass (reed)
Like an irate male elephant he led me around the holy fire.

I had a dream O friend!
 Lord Narayana, our sole refuge in this and seven lives to come
 with his red lotus-like hands
 lifted my foot and placed it on the grindstone (Ammi)

I had a dream O friend!
 Brothers with shining faces and bow-like eyebrows
 made me stand before the holy fire
 placed my hands over the lion-like Achyuta's
 then heaped puffed-rice for feeding the fire.

I had a dream O friend!
 Red Vermillion and cool sandal paste were smeared on us
 they took us around the town on an elephant
 then drenched us both with scented water.

This decad of pure Tamil verse
 By Goda (Andal) the daughter of the Villiputtur kind
 Describes her dream of marrying the cow-herd Lord
 Those who sing it will be blessed with good progeny.

II. Answer any THREE of the following questions in about 1000 words each:

(3x25=75)

1. For many of the Sufi mystics and poets "religion was mostly a personal experience and not limited to logical arguments or perceptions of the senses". Elaborate with reference to the poems of Rumi, Emre and Khayyam.
2. Herbert himself, in a letter to Nicholas Ferrar, said of his writings, "They are a picture of spiritual conflicts between God and my soul before I could subject my will to Jesus, my Master". Illustrate this with the reference to "The Collar and The Temper".
3. "Fix your mind on me; be devoted to me, sacrifice unto me. Bow down to me; having thus united your whole self with me, taking me as the Supreme goal, you shall come to Me". Elaborate this 34th stanza of Bhagavad Gita Chapter IX with reference to the devotional hymns of Mirabai, Andal, Jayadeva and Surdas.
4. Hopkins used poetry to express his religious devotion but through the most modern and innovative verse patterns where language and landscape become the metaphor for the mind. Discuss.
5. The Songs of St. John of the Cross and St. Francis of Assisi inaugurate fresh insights into Christian Mysticism. Justify.
6. The Puranas introduced the aspect of 'personal God' sans rituals and negated the Vedic intellectual abstraction that referred to the notion of a God-head. The Alwar/Nayanmar movement adapted this concept and the secular man/woman relationship of *akam* poetry became the sacred God/devotee relationship. Explicate this statement with reference to the poems of Manickavachagar, Nammalwar and Andal.
