ritual prayers for benevolent remedies from the supernatural powers for their grievances and consolation.

2. Religion: Spirituality is closely associated with religion in terms of faithfulness and rituals. Most of the religions in India and across the world stress mainly about the deep faith on the Almighty and the sacred rituals to get His blessings and benovolence. Worshipping the Almighty God with several types of rituals is the main axis of a religion. In short, the true combination of religion and faith are the basic foundations of spirituality. Spirituality without religion and faith is comparable to the body without life.

3. Faith: The term refers to the belief or trust of an individual to be spiritualistic and religious. It is the true symbol of religious harmony. This is expressed in the form of ritual norms that are commonly presented in each religion. Despite the diversified ritual formalities in all religions, the sense of faithfulness is the common criteria, for all religions irrespective of creed and colour.

1.20 INTRODUCTION TO YOGA AND MEDITATION FOR PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

Yoga, which developed in India, is an ancient tradition of bringing together the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of our being. The goal of yoga is to recognize our true nature and the inherent wisdom. The word yoga is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root “yuj” which means “to yoke”. It has a wide array of meanings which range from “union” to “spiritual endeavour”. Essentially, yoga means union; union within
yourself, union with the divine spirit within and harmony between you and all that is within your world.

The practice of yoga involves stretching the body and forming different poses, while keeping breathing slow and controlled. The body becomes relaxed and energized at the same time. There are various styles of yoga, some moving through the poses more quickly, almost like an aerobic workout and other styles relaxing deeply into each pose. Some have a more spiritual angle, while others are used purely as a form of exercise.

The practice of yoga, while deeply spiritual, need not be affiliated with any one religion. Around the world, yoga is practiced and embraced by people of different faiths as a profound tool for wellness and enhancement of spiritual practice. The elements of authentic yoga include asana, pranayama, mudra, mantra, meditation and service to mankind. Yogic practices enhance muscular strength and body flexibility, promote and improve respiratory and cardiovascular function, promote recovery from and treatment of addiction, reduce stress, anxiety, depression and chronic pain, improve sleep patterns and enhance overall well-being and quality of life.

The human mind is the most powerful tool we will ever have at our disposal, yet we are never given any set of proper operating instruction for how to use it most effectively. Consequently, we often spend the vast majority of our mental resources either reacting to the world around us or simply directing our physical action.

**Meditation** is a practice in which an individual trains the mind or induces a mode of consciousness, either
to realize some benefit or for the mind to simply acknowledge its content without becoming identified with that content or as an end in it. In simple words, meditation seeks to intentionally remove the distraction of the external world to let us observe what our mind will naturally produce on its own, allowing us to gain a deeper understanding of our own thought process.

The term meditation refers to a broad variety of practices that includes techniques designed to promote relaxation, build internal energy or life force and develop compassion, love, patience, generosity and forgiveness. Meditation aims at effortlessly sustained single-pointed concentration meant to enable its practitioner to enjoy an indestructible sense of well-being and practice human values while in any life activity.

Meditation has been practiced for thousands of years. Meditation originally was meant to help deepen understanding of the sacred and mystical forces of life. These days, meditation is commonly used for relaxation and stress reduction. It is considered as a type of mind-body complementary medicine. Meditation produces a deep state of relaxation and eases many health concerns, such as high blood pressure, depression and anxiety by repeating a mantra and closing the eyes.

The mantra is chosen based on its suitability to the individual mediator. Meditation has a calming effect and directs awareness inward until pure awareness is achieved, described as “being awake inside without being aware of anything except awareness itself”. For example: Buddhist monks involve awareness in their day-to-day activities as
a form of mind-training. Prayer or other ritual objects are commonly used during meditation in order to keep track of or remind the practitioner about some aspect of the training. According to Buddhist philosophy the roots of addiction are in the mind and the practice of mindful meditation encourages addicts to accept the basic impermanence of human experience and helps them to develop a detached awareness of thoughts. Yoga and meditation practices exert positive influence on addictive behaviours. Through the practice of yoga, addicts shift from self-inflicted harm and disrespect toward their bodies to more respectful, caring and loving behaviours. Eating disorders are a specific type of addiction and yoga appears to be beneficial in improving body image disturbances and useful in the recovery from eating disorders.

Yoga and Meditation together helps an individual to achieve professional excellence and manage stress because of the work pressure and other factors in the organisation. Mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, stress and insomnia are among the most common reasons that lack individuals from performing their best. Yoga and meditation encourages one to relax, slow the breath and focus on the present, shifting the balance from the sympathetic nervous system and the flight-or-fight response to the parasympathetic system and the relaxation response.

The practice of yoga and meditation generates balanced energy which is vital to the function of the immune system. This practice optimizes the body’s sympathetic responses to stressful stimuli and restores autonomic regulatory reflex mechanisms associated with stress. This inhibition results in lower anxiety, heart rate,
Improved flexibility is one of the first and most obvious benefits of yoga. With continued practice comes a gradual loosening of the muscles and connective tissues surrounding the bones and joints; this is thought to be one reason that yoga is associated with reduced aches and pains. Many studies have shown that yoga, meditation or a combination of the two reduced pain in people with arthritis, Carpel Tunnel syndrome, back pain and other chronic conditions.

Yoga increases blood flow, haemoglobin in red blood cells which allows more oxygen to reach the body cells, enhancing their function. Yoga also dilutes the blood which reduces the risk of heart attack and stroke. Yoga, breathing exercises and meditation can reduce stress, promote healing and enhance quality of life for patients with cancer, thus it is especially important for people with cancer to reduce and manage stress. Because of its ability to increase relaxation and induce a balanced mental state, it has been studied to evaluate its possible effects on sleep and insomnia.

Stress has a negative impact on the immune system and prolonged exposure increases susceptibility to disease and leads to physical and mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. Practicing yoga and meditation as a means to manage and relieve both acute and chronic stress helps individuals overcome other co-morbidities associated with diseases and leads to increased quality of life. As it is a non-pharmacological form of treatment there
is no side effect, yoga based interventions is an alternative option for the treatment of mood disorders.

Yoga and meditation are rapidly emerging in the Western world as a discipline for integrating the mind and body into union and harmony, when adopted as a way of life, yoga improves physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual health.

Researchers are only beginning to understand how disciplines such as yoga promote personal growth, health and well-being. By acknowledging the unity of mind, body and spirit, mind-body fitness programs can assist people in their pursuit of peace, calmness and greater wholeness and integration in their lives. Health care professionals, health educators, etc. need to be aware of the potential of yoga as an important component of a personal wellness plan.

QUESTIONS

Part A

1. Define the term morals.
2. What are values?
3. What is integrity?
4. What are the sources of values?
5. Give any three forms of academic dishonesty among the students.
6. What is work ethics?
7. Give any four qualities of work Ethics.
8. What is service learning?
9. What are the objectives of Service - Learning?