CONCLUSION

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Sree Narayana Guru, the greatest spiritual and social master of Kerala, with a profusion of writing became a unique figure leaving behind a philosophic and poetic cornucopia of thought and wisdom. A traveller from abroad who visited Kerala has written thus, "In India a Christ is roaming about as a Hindu Sanyasi along the cost of the Arabian Sea."¹

The Guru is a religious philosopher and a spiritual teacher more than a social reformer. Therefore any interpretation of his work disregarding the aspect of his being a spiritualist and religious philosopher will be incomplete. Four decades starting from 1888 and ending with 1928 of the Guru’s active ministry for the poor and downtrodden saw a tremendous awakening throughout the length and breadth of Kerala. His life and work give us a practical demonstration of the way in which even the highest ideals of universal brotherhood and religious fraternity could be effectively used to reconstruct society.

The religious philosophy of the Guru is so practical, his influence was so powerful in purifying the lives of his followers and his own life was so pure, simple and full of divine kindness for the poor and helpless, that many of his followers compared him with Buddha. He was such an inspiring picture of dedication and self-sacrifice, that some compared him to Christ, Guru’s religious teachings of equality and brotherhood so

¹ Basheer M.M., Samakaleena Malayalam.(Weekly) 15-09-2000, p. 12
much resembled those of the Prophet of Islam that he was revered as great teacher by many Muslim devotees.

Kerala was a hot bed of casteism, untouchability and unapproachability during the days of the Guru. The Guru, a revolutionary religious reformer, made a decisive onslaught on caste system by the consecration of the first Śiva temple at Aruvippuram. This ceremony was regarded as the exclusive prerogative of Brahmins. He succeeded in the upliftment of the masses by establishing more temples in tune with their aspirations. It was at a time when temple entry was prohibited to the lower castes and untouchables who formed the vast majority. The Guru established temples which were open to all irrespective of caste and religion. This helped to satisfy the curiosity and fulfill their aspirations. When the critical enthusiasm in entering the temple subsided, the temples established by the Guru became more and more helpful for the enlightening of the masses. The idol of mirror with the inscription of ‘AUM’ in the temple of Kalavancode and the lighted lamp in the temple at Karamukku are excellent epitomes. He proved that any symbolic idol that makes man turn to the Higher can be installed in the Sanctum Sanctorum. He had given clear instructions as to how temples should be made useful for the development of man. Thus the Guru could demolish the edifice of meaningless rituals that existed for centuries which even Sree Sankaracharya, the great exponent of ‘Advaita’ could not change. As in religious beliefs, customs and
practices it was his reforms that brought about tremendous change in social customs.

Though casteism still exists today, untouchability has been almost eradicated. This is a great achievement that has been accomplished through the life and work of the Guru. The Guru expressed his ideas on the problems facing man and society through poems and verses in Sanskrit, Malayalam and Tamil. His crusade against superstitions and evil practices, his stress on the cleanliness of the body, mind and environment, the importance he attached to education and the establishment of industries and his unconventional ways of consecrating temples, all there were parts of his efforts to bring about the regeneration of man.

Guru's religious teachings and messages have contributed a great deal towards the making of modern Kerala. So categorically we can say that the Guru is the father of Modern Kerala. He became a cynosure of all eyes in the course of less than half a century of service of his fellowmen. He was a far-sighted leader of men and a rare preceptor. He was a man of incomparable elevation of thought and profound spiritual preceptor. As a jñānīn of action' and spiritual preceptor, he is parallel to himself. To the one who follows the Guru's teaching religion will not be like 'opium'. To the contrary one experiences it as a system based on philosophy which helps the betterment of man to the level of universal consciousness. Through the path of knowledge, Devotion and
Action he reached the heights of spiritual life. From there he descended to the midst of his prejudiced fellowmen to provide them insights into social equality. Religious tolerance is an accepted tradition of India. The interpretation of secularism as the universal oneness of all religions might have been based on the Guru's words 'the underlying principle of oneness of all religions'.

The temple he established are also the growing centres of education, economic regeneration and all-round activity of the people. He was using his spiritual powers for the material and moral uplift of the people. The greatness of his practical achievements for the good of the world and the magnitude of the concrete work he has done made him grew beyond all description in the love and reverence of the masses. Many thousands of people kept his picture and offered prayers and flowers to it everyday because of the unparalleled service and sacrifice of his life and also the grand and universal value of his message in all respects viewed from any stand point. In nutshell the Guru elevated to the rank of Godheads by the people of Kerala. This is evident from the fact that one of the members of eleventh Kerala Legislative Assembly, Umesh Challiyil from Kodungalloore, swore as the members of Legislative Assembly by the name of Sree Narayana Guru. The Guru was a religious reformer who has come in the nick of time as it were, to rescue a depressed and lethargic people from the tyrannical excesses of a hierarchical society. That is why in many Keralite home, today, his
portrait has an honoured place alongside the divine Gods – Śiva, Viṣṇu etc. Kumaran Asan, the famous poet of Kerala and the direct disciple of the Guru, wrote a short poem of felicitation in 1916 on the Guru’s birth anniversary. It was the most perspicuous and comprehensive assessment of the Guru’s life and mission. In this poem he adored the Guru as the God supreme.

"The God Supreme, if sought for is but the Guru
Who dispels darkness and lights Primal Glory’s pristine path
Cognising this, to us art thee worshipful,
Revered Narayana, O Revered Guru Narayana

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O Ocean of Mercy, who counts as thy own Self
Anto and all else, to thee the whole world eternal life wish,
A hundred years may you live, as of old, in felicity absolute
with that foot’s tip which, to those who touch, brings felicity,

O Revered Guru."^2

The Guru considered religious reform and education as pre-requisite to spiritual and temporal freedom. The so called depressed classes recovered their self-respect and they claimed their right for the whole philosophic and ritual wealth of Hindu heritage. He was the first to realise that casteism was the bane of Indian social and religious

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organisations. He encouraged all movements which would lead to the elimination of the system. He carried his activities stage by stage up to the greatest and highest platform of universal Religion. Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam and Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham were organised by the Guru to care for the material welfare and to cater to the spiritual needs of the people. Both these organisations and Sree Narayana Gurukulam organised by the disciple Nataraja Guru, were and are open to all people irrespective of their caste or creed. The essence of his views on universal religion can be seen in the verses of his short poem ‘Jātinirṇayam’. The Guru belongs to the great line of teachers and seers who enlighten man’s difficult paths towards sublime planes of existence.

By the slogan of ‘One caste, One religion, One God for man’ what he meant was ‘happiness to all’. The world of one religion is still a distant dream. To materialise this ideal society we should study and practice the Guru’s teaching. If this is put into practice, we can ward off the frequent communal riots which constantly threaten the peace and harmony of this multi religious nation.

Guru’s teachings can be accepted by followers of all religions as they are based on spirituality and tolerance to all religions. So even without hurting ones religious beliefs and feelings the followers of any religion can practice and preach his ideals. His vision enshrines the goodness of all religions. In the present days one should practice his
ideologies with sincerity and an open mind to attain progress and to lead a contented life. If this is done the dream of Guru’s ‘One world, One religion’ and the craving of the modern times for a ‘peaceful world’ are attainable.

“Gary David the famous scholar who had insights into the Guru’s teachings has opened an office in front of the Headquarters of the United Nations Organisation in the U.S.A. for the realization of the Guru’s dream. When great men like Buddha, Jesus Christ and Mohammed Nabi founded new religions, the Guru never tried to found a new religion. Instead he taught “irrespective of one’s religion man should improve.” Through this he put forward an ideology propounding religious tolerance and religious unification. With this intention the first world religious conference was held in Asia. There after he started the first centre of teaching for all religions at Sivagiri. No other great saint has made such an attempt. The Guru who gave the valuable teaching of ‘One caste, One religion for man’ with a scientific footing and who had a firm belief in universal oneness of man was really a teacher of the whole world. He was a great teacher not bound to any caste or religion. He triggered a social upheaval by installing a Śiva temple at Aruvippuram on 20th February 1888 on Śivarathri day. The message he gave through this had spiritual, social and cultural bearing as well as the principle of oneness of mankind. This installation is the embodiment of

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his saying This is the place where all men live in brotherhood without religious ill will and caste discrimination.

The installation of deities in various parts of Kerala had evolved from his ideologies. The Śivalinga at Aruvippuram has the cosmopolitan outlook as its essence. The religious rejuvenation initiated through the idol of Lord Siva helped to awaken the sense of morality in the society. He made successful efforts to sustain this spirit of awakening through the spread of education with the support of the S.N.D.P. Yogam founded in Kerala in 1903. There is no educationist in Kerala as far sighted as the Guru. He had his own vision of the subjects to be taught in the educational institutions. He ushered in a revolution in the field of education. The contributions by the Guru to the development of Kerala are unparalleled. By the final phase of his life Sree Narayana had laid the foundation of modern Kerala. One can experience a thoroughly scientific format in the enunciation of life applicable for every sphere of life leading to a free and flawless society. The Guru's vision of society is quite conducive to Kerala and India as a whole. He was a great spiritual leader who imbibed the ideals of Śaiva, Arya and other great religious paths to give it a socio-spiritual outlook. Thus he tried to eradicate ignorance, superstitions and evil practices of the society. Not only was he a cultural and spiritual master but also a great social reformer. He imbibed the views of great religious and cultures, understood the equal
importance of all of them and then gave a unified outlook which led to great progress in the field of spirituality.

The views and messages of the Guru gave the society a sense of unity. It was he who paved the way for performing free spiritual practices by the downtrodden. The declaration of "whatever be the religion let man become good" and "One caste, One religion, One god" can be considered as the first spiritual declaration of freedom. He utilised this spiritual freedom to revamp the society and to lead into the universal culture of one world, one religion for social reforms and modernisation. Spirituality is a boon to mankind. The great reformer gave Kerala a new life with this tool. He advised people to respect all religions and modes of worship. He organised a world religious conference in 1924 to highlight the aims of various religions and how that should be used to minimize the distance and enmity between different religions. He knew that religion had an inherent quality to affect the feelings of people. So he desired that all his followers should know the essence of all religions. He had apprehensions regarding competition between religions which could endanger human society. We find how relevant his views are in our strife torn present world. Distancing from spirituality has led to this despicable condition. In June 2000 while referring to the great discovery by man, the then American President Bill Clinton along with two famous scientists Francis Collin (Director H. G.Project) and J. Gaig Venter (Director Celeia Genomics)
said, "the knowledge regarding genetics and origin of life is undergoing tremendous changes. The birth and life and nature of man are all determined by genome. Even though human are divided into races, 99.9% of humans belong to the same family." The thoughts in the ancient religions have thus been vindicated. The ultimate truth is that we all belong to the same human family. The great scientist Arthur Kaulen has told that the gene map shows that we all should live in harmony as brothers and sisters. The knowledge that the Guru imparted, 'One religion, One God, Which was based on pure Advaita and spiritual insight and the great scientific discovery of modern times are all one and the same. Both tell us that man belong to the same famiy.

The Guru never had any belief in this caste system. This is what the scientists had discovered through genomes and what Clinton had meant when he told about the teachings of ancient religions.

A conference of all religions was held in New York under the auspices of the U.N. in August 2000. About 5500 invitees of the secretary general attended the conference. About 300 of them were from India, the great spiritual superpower. The subjects discussed were world peace, eradication of poverty and protection of environment. All agreed that only education and inter religious discussions can do away with religious intolerance and violence. This will lead to world peace. The spiritual bliss and heritage of India extend from 'Rigveda' to

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Mathrubhumi. (Daily), Kozhikode, 21-09-2000, p. 4.
'Ātmōpadesā Sāthakam'. Only a peaceful and constructive revolution based on this heritage can save the world from its inherent evils.

Keeping a firm foot on this peaceful and harmonious land of Advaita, through his great message of unity of man-kind, importance of education of the masses and idol installations he led the march of the spiritual revolution of Kerala to victory. Sree Nraryanan Guru paved the way for freedom to the down trodden through the path of universal brotherhood. If one can imbibe the message of the Guru who demolished through a bloodless revolution the edifice of social evils, and injustices which were in vogue in the guise of Sanathana Dharma, one can realize the dream of peace and harmony in the world.

To the Guru, India and the whole world owe an immerse debt of gratitude which can best be repaid by adopting his principles and teachings which are timeless. He is worthy to be remembered not only by celebrating his birthday and death anniversary but by following his glorious example and by leading a life based on his teachings and messages. As far as the novelty of religious concepts are concerned the Guru stands far above than any other preceptor India had ever seen.

The work of the Guru had its effect even after his departure from this world. His teachings echoes through the years after his Samadhi. Behind the statesmanship of Dewan Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Ilyer and the broad and benevolent disposition of His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore, there was the unconscious effect of the work and teachings
of the perfect Guru of Kerala. That unconscious effect led to the Temple Entry Proclamation in 1936. The Guru showed how caste system can be abolished and world unity can be attained. This is implied in his teaching "to whatever religion, you belong, it is enough that you lead a good life".

From the serious probe and interpretation of Guru's teachings we can conclude that he is really a true religious philosopher and his teachings has echoes of concepts found in the Vedas, the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavadgītā in addition to the originality of his thought. The teachings and message of the Guru are the result of a dynamic system which links the present with the past and also with the future. They are the messages for all ages and are terrifically topical for us.

We can recommend that the study of all major religions of India must be included in the school curriculum to inculcate moral and spiritual values in the tender minds of the students. As a secular country, all religions are equal and there is no state religion in India. We respect all religions as different paths leading to the same goal. The purpose of all religions is to reform man and elevate him to a higher cultural level. Teaching the basic aspects of religions will influence students considerably in this character building and thereby they will get a good religious and cultural base which will enable them to cultivate good qualities and to build up a virtuous life consistent with our background. The religious philosophy of the Guru contains the basic tenants of all
religions and his famous quintessential message "One caste, One religion, and One God for Man" has a high religious and philosophical value. So the study of the religious philosophy of the Guru will help the students to become responsible citizens with an ethical base in the future. It is capable of protecting the youth from religious fundamentalism. All religions should unite for the good will of the society as well as maintaining social justice. All malicious speeches or actions against other religion which may cause internal conflicts and riots must be averted.

Guru's philosophy is one of the living systems of Indian Philosophy. It is a religious philosophy in the proper sense of the term. The object of his philosophy is not merely to advance in knowledge or to find a correct way of thinking. It is more a right way of living. It is not a mere view of life but a way of life. It is essentially a religious philosophy of values. His philosophical ideal is a direct experience of reality and not a mere intellectual mode of apprehending it. He is the great one and also the rare one about whom it could be said 'Guru SākṣŚat para Brahma, tasmai Sri Guruve Namah'.

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