PREFACE

Sree Narayana Guru was a philosopher, mystic, poet, social reformer and a humanist all rolled into one. The Guru was essentially a man of practical wisdom. He made notable contributions to all fields of human life such as religion, ethics, education, economics, and aesthetics and so on. His achievements are so great and varied that they make him as one of the pioneers of the modern age. The primary objective of this thesis “The Religious and Ethical Concepts in the Philosophy of Narayana Guru” is to bring to light the religious and ethical contributions of the Guru to humanity.

The Guru’s concept of ‘One Religion’ is a call for human dignity which in essence gives every man the responsibility of preserving the honour and freedom of his fellow-beings to live in equality and well-being. According to the Guru, the aim of all religions is to attain happiness. Happiness is the aim of man that gives unity to human purpose and brings all religions, faiths, or creeds under its single sway.

In the Guru’s teachings we can see that the ethical actions arise directly out of the contemplative way of life. The Guru clearly states that the ethical view is based on a dialectical formula as between one self and one’s own counterpart in the world of human relations. To the Guru, the law of morality is the basis of all actions. This would lead to men’s Self-happiness.
Religion and ethics are related as both aim to attain Self-happiness. It is here the study of Narayana Guru’s ethics is relevant.

In our scientific and technological civilization, where everything is measured in terms of pragmatic results and quick remedies, the man is hardly in possession of the art of self-enquiry, the result of which is that our contemporary human society faces an alarming debasement of values. It naturally paves the way for the spirit of competition, envy, greed, jealousy, prejudice, selfishness and discontentment among men. Drunkenness, suicide and a variety of other maladies are ever on the increase. These problems can be tackled not by going in for more positivistic science, more technology, more life’s amenities or socio-political manipulations of human conditions, but by the understanding and practice of the science of religion and ethics. It is this idea of religion and ethics that Narayana Guru expounded. Only a man of religion and morality can have the strength and wisdom to convert the chaos of life into a pattern of happiness and general welfare.

It is this special contribution of the Guru in the field of religion and ethics that prompted me to choose this topic as the most cherished theme for my research work.

The purpose of the study is to make the people aware that the essential oneness of all religions is one and the same. The study of oneness of the religions and the high human values advocated by Narayana Guru will remove all the problems and make the world peaceful.
The methodology used in this thesis is historical, analytical and descriptive.

The whole thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction. In this chapter a general introduction of religion and ethics are discussed briefly.

The second chapter discusses the philosophy of Narayana Guru.

The third chapter deals with the Guru’s concept of religion. Reasons for religious disputes, their remedies and the One Religion of the Guru are discussed in detail.

The fourth chapter deals with the Guru’s concept of ethics.

The fifth chapter is conclusion. The relevance of the Guru’s teachings in the modern world is discussed in detail.

In this context I may take the opportunity to express my deep-felt and sincere gratitude to my supervising teacher Dr. S. Omana, former Head of the Department of Philosophy, University College, Thiruvananthapuram, who guided me in all phases of this research. Her guidance, help and profound insight, suggestions and encouragement have been a great source of inspiration to me.

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