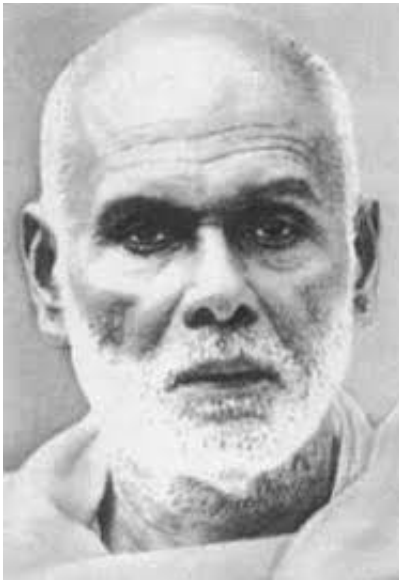




Sree Narayana Guru

Why in News

The **Vice President of India** has virtually launched “**Not Many, But One**”, an **English translation** of poems of **Sree Narayana Gurudev**.



Key Points //

▪ Birth:

- Sree Narayana Guru was born on **22nd August, 1856** to Madan Asan and his wife Kuttiamma in Chempazhanthy, a village near Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

▪ Early Days and Education:

- His family belonged to the **Ezhava caste** and was considered ‘**avarna**’ according to the social mores of the time.
- Right from his childhood he loved **solitude and always indulged himself in deep contemplation**. He was intensely drawn to worship at the local temples and composed hymns and several devotional songs.
- From an early age, he was **drawn towards asceticism**. He lived as a hermit in a forest **for eight years**.
- He learned Vedas, Upanishads, literature, logical rhetoric of Sanskrit, Hatha **Yoga and other philosophies**.

▪ Important Works:

◦ Against Caste Injustice:

- He gave the famous slogan “**One Caste, One Religion, One God for All**” (Oru Jathi, Oru Matham, Oru Daivam, Manushyanu).
- In 1888, he built a temple dedicated to **Lord Shiva at Aruvippuram** which was

against the **caste-based restrictions** of the time.

- In one temple he consecrated at Kalavancode, **he kept mirrors instead of idols**. This symbolised his message that the divine was within each individual.

- **Against Conversions:**

- He taught equality but felt the inequalities should not be exploited to carry out conversions and therefore generate strife in society.
- Narayana Guru organized an All-Region Conference in 1923 at Alwaya Advaita Ashram, which was reported to be the first such event in India. This was an effort to counter the religious conversions Ezhava community was susceptible to.

- **Philosophy of Sree Narayana Guru:**

- Sree Narayana Guru became one of the greatest proponents and re-evaluators of **Advaita Vedanta**, the principle of non-duality put forward by **Adi Shankara**.

- **Literary Works:**

- He wrote various books in different languages. Few of them are: Advaita Deepika, Asrama, Thevarappathinkangal, etc.

- **Contribution to National Movement:**

- A remarkable social reformer, he was in the forefront of the movement for **universal temple entry** and against the **societal ills like the social discrimination of untouchables**.
- Narayana Gurudev provided the impetus for **Vaikom agitation** which was aimed at **temple entry in Travancore** for the **lower castes**. It drew nationwide attention and appreciation from **Mahatma Gandhi**.
- He captured the **essence of Indianness** in his poems which highlighted the unity that lies beneath the world's apparent diversity.

- **Contribution to Science:**

- Emphasized the practice of ideals of cleanliness, promotion of education, agriculture, trade, handicrafts and technical training.
- Sree Narayana Gurudev's **Adyaropa darsanam** (Darsanamala) explains the **creation of the universe**.
- **Daivadasakam** and **Atmopadesa satakam** are a few examples of how the mystic reflections and insights closely resemble **recent advances in physics**.

- **Current Relevance of Philosophy:**

- Gurudev's philosophy of Universal Oneness has special relevance in the contemporary global context where in the social fabric of many countries and communities are being eroded by **hatred, violence, bigotry, sectarianism and other divisive tendencies**.

- **Death:**

- 20th September, 1928. This day is observed as Sree Narayana Guru Samadhi in Kerala.

[Source:PIB](#)