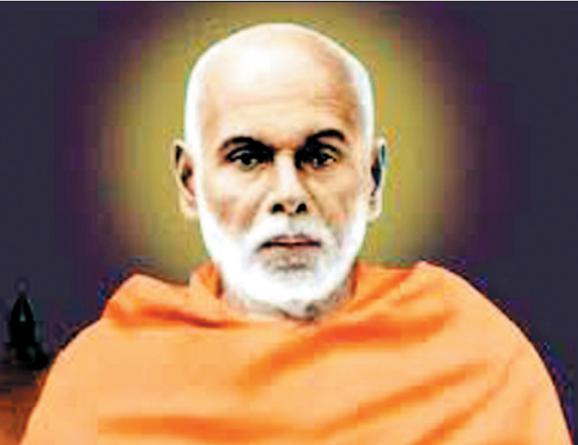


Sree Narayana Guru Jayanthi today



Who is Sree Narayana Guru

The originator of the golden slogan "One caste, One religion, One God to mankind" was Sree Narayana Guru, silent-revolutionary sanyasi, who transformed a society ridden with social inequalities to a society which stands in front in equality and literacy in the country now. The Karma Yogi, who Sree Narayana Guru was accomplished this without causing hatred, without breaking any idol, but installing idols, without challenges caste or god, but standing within a temple, accepting the caste- but still making equality and eradicating discrimination with a silent revolution of forty years. Though he led a great social transformation, he was leading a simplistic, austere life of sanyasi throughout.

one god for all". Narayana Guru consecrated more than 40 temples across the state as an act of protest to permit so called lower caste people to enter temples. The famous "Vaikom Satyagraha" protest movement against caste discrimination and untouchability, which centered around the Sri Mahadeva Temple at Vaikom, was triggered by an upper-caste person blocking Narayana Guru from walking on the road leading to the famous temple. This led to all such restrictions being finally abolished and everyone, irrespective of caste, being given the freedom to walk on public roads that led to the temple.

The Sivagiri pilgrimage was approved with his blessings in 1924 and initiated by three of his disciplines and continues till this day. Under the Guru's tutelage, the pilgrimage is undertaken to promote the virtues of cleanliness, education, devotion, agriculture, handicrafts, and trade.

While translating three major sacred texts, he also published more than 40 works of his own in Malayalam, Tamil, and Sanskrit.

Sree Narayana Guru embodied and propagated communal harmony and universal brotherhood following in the footsteps of Adi Sankara. The development of Kerala into a more humane and egalitarian society began in the wake of these footsteps. Sree Narayana Guru passed away on 20 September 1928. Today, this philosophy is a way of life for the state of Kerala.

Sree Narayana is considered to be one of the greatest of all saints and social reformers who ever lived in all India. He is most famous for opposing the caste system in India, although he adhered to traditional Hinduism in most other ways. On Sree Narayana Jayanti, there are "harmony parades", floral tributes, public prayers, special Narayana conferences, and feasts to which the poor are invited, in the state of Kerala. It is a time of major festivity for people of every caste and economic level.

Sree Narayana Guru's journey to spread the awakening

That was the time when there were certain social inequalities. Untouchability was also prac-

ticed. Certain sections of the society had to keep a certain distance from others. The distance went far or near as per the unwritten hierarchy. His own Ezhava caste was also practicing same. They were somewhere in the middle, that means there were some 'above' them and some 'below' them. His own caste people discouraged

him from mingling with 'untouchables'. Though he wanted to be a teacher, his own family did not want him to teach the lower castes. The Ezhava caste was a sizable percentage of the population. Hence Sree Narayana Guru started the reforms from his own caste. His awakening teachings made him a 'Guru'.

Consecration of an "Ezhava Siva" temple - start of a silent revolution

It was a norm in those days that temples should be consecrated by only Brahmins. All were not allowed entry to inside temple also. The ezhavas complained this to Guru. They wanted entry to

tree and told them, now this is your temple. He told his on caste people that they also commit the sin of not allowing the other lower castes near them. They should first start equality among them and then start for equality with higher castes. Reluctant at first, his caste people yielded to this. He told that the idol was to be treated as Siva. That was in 1888. When the upper castes heard this, they came to him and objected. But very patiently Guru said he had consecrated an Ezhava Siva. With this he blunted any opposition, but won over them also. That was the beginning of a silent, no-hate revolution.

There was lot of requests from many places for temples. Though he obliged them all, he also took steps to remove the darkness of ignorance in the people. In Murukkumpuzha he just placed a lamp and above it inscribed the words 'Satyam, Dharma, Daya, Sneham' - Truth, Virtue, Kindness, Love. His message was that the ignorance is to be removed first and anybody who can practice the four qualities, can realize god.

The last of his temple installations was at Kalavamcode. He was to consecrate and install a pre prepared idol. But there was a dispute between two sections of people, one wanting idol installation and other opposing that. After hearing both, Guru asked for a mirror. Writing 'Om' on it he installed it at the demarcated place.

He symbolically told the world that, one should reform self by seeing himself in a mirror. It was a



the Brahmins' temples. Narayana Guru advised them to have their own temple and not to go and fight for entry into other's temples. When everybody got wondered Narayana Guru dipped him into the river, took a shapely stone, kept it below a

great teaching of Advaita delivered in simple way that ultimate salvation is to be found in oneself. Narayana Guru made his people to keep the temple for worship by all - even the 'lowest of the lowest'. These temples were open to anyone.

Celebrations of Sree Narayana Jayanti

Sree Narayana Jayanti is celebrated with great aplomb across the state of Kerala. The state is dotted with shrines to Sree Narayana Guru. On this day, the shrines as well as long stretches of roads are decorated with floral tributes using specially dried coconut leaves. People carry out harmonious processions in remembrance of the great guru. Community feasts are arranged with special emphasis on the poor and downtrodden. There are also common prayers held that are attended by people irrespective of caste or creed. There are also special conferences or seminars held in educational institutions and other organisations. These talks and discussions remind people of his teachings and philosophy.

Legacy of Sree Narayana Guru

Sree Narayana Guru was born in a time when the caste system was rampant in Kerala society. Born in the Ezhava caste, which was thought to be a lower caste, he had experienced firsthand the discrimination wrought upon them by the upper caste section of society. His most famous saying in Malayalam translates as "One caste, one religion,

Madhya Pradesh blessed with immense natural beauty

By Nitin Saxena

The Scindia dynasty is deeply intertwined with the history and identity of Gwalior. They were a powerful Maratha ruling family who, for a time, dominated much of northern India.

Here's a brief overview of the Scindia dynasty's connection to Gwalior:

Founding of the Dynasty: The dynasty was founded by Ranoji Scindia, a military commander under the Maratha Peshwa (chief minister) Bajirao I in the 18th century. He was put in charge of the Malwa region and initially established his capital at Ujjain.

Move to Gwalior: The Scindia capital was later moved to the formidable rock fortress of Gwalior, which became the heart of their state.

Rise to Power: Under the leadership of figures like Mahadji Scindia (reigned 1761–1794), the Scindias became a major regional power. Mahadji Scindia is considered one of the dynasty's most significant rulers, as he restored Maratha power after the defeat at the Third Battle of Panipat. He also gained control of Delhi and made the Mughal Emperor a puppet of the Marathas.

Princely State under the British: After the Anglo-Maratha Wars in the 19th century, Gwalior came under British suzerainty and became a princely state of the British Indian Empire. During the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the Scindia ruler of Gwalior, Jaijirao Scindia, remained loyal to the British, despite his army joining the mutineers.

Modern Gwalior: Rulers like Madhavrao Scindia I (reigned 1886–1925) are credited with modernizing Gwalior by introducing educational reforms, building railways, and establishing hospitals and schools.

Integration into India: The last ruler, Jaijirao Scindia, acceded to the Union of India in 1947, and the princely state of Gwalior was absorbed into the new Indian state of Madhya Bharat (which later became part of Madhya Pradesh).

Even after the end of their princely rule, the Scindia family has continued to play a prominent role in Indian politics and soci-



ety. The legacy of the Scindias can be seen in the numerous palaces, forts, and monuments they built and patronized in and around Gwalior, most notably the magnificent Jai Vilas Palace.

Madhya Pradesh, often called the "Heart of India," is a state blessed with immense natural beauty, ranging from dense forests and ancient mountains to roaring rivers and serene lakes. Its diverse landscape is a paradise for nature lovers and adventure enthusiasts.

Here are some of the key highlights of the natural beauty of Madhya Pradesh:

Wildlife and National Parks

Madhya Pradesh is famously known as the "Tiger State of India" due to its large population of Bengal tigers. The state is home to numerous national parks and wildlife sanctuaries that are major attractions for wildlife safaris and nature exploration.

Bandhavgarh National Park: Known for having one of the highest densities of Bengal tigers in the world, this park is a must-

visit for tiger sightings.

Kanha National Park: This is one of the largest and most well-managed parks in Central India. It is a vital habitat for the

Barasingha (swamp deer), which was successfully brought back from the brink of extinction here.

Pench National Park: This park inspired

Rudyard Kipling's "The Jungle Book."

It is known for its diverse flora and fauna,

including tigers, leopards, and various other species.

Satpura National Park: Unlike other parks,

Satpura offers a unique experience with opportunities for walking safaris, canoeing, and trekking.

Mountains and Waterfalls

The state's landscape is defined by the Vindhya and Satpura mountain ranges, which give rise to several rivers and spectacular waterfalls.

Pachmarhi: Often called the "Queen of

Satpura," Pachmarhi is a beautiful hill station nestled in the Satpura range.

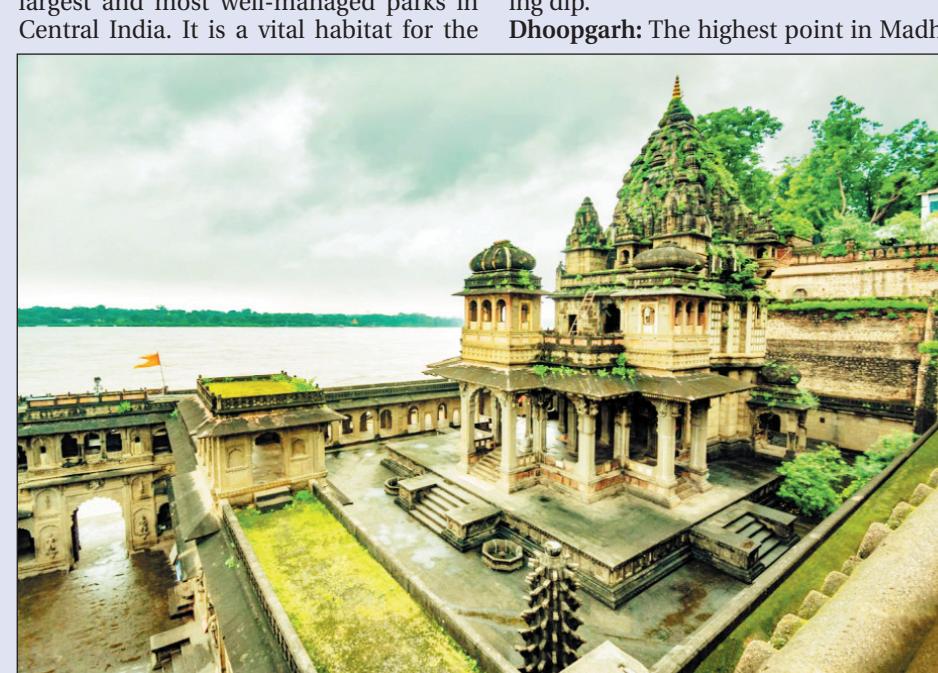
It's a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve with lush

greenery, cascading waterfalls, and ancient caves. Key attractions include:

Bee Falls: A stunning waterfall that

plunges into a pool, perfect for a refreshing dip.

Dhoopgarh: The highest point in Madhya



Pradesh, offering breathtaking views of the sunrise and sunset.

Jata Shankar and Pandav Caves: Ancient caves with unique rock formations.

Bhedaghat (Jabalpur): This is a unique natural wonder where the Narmada River carves its way through towering white marble rocks. The "Dhuandhar Falls" (Smoke Cascade) is a major attraction, where the water plunges with such force that it creates a misty spray.

Rivers and Lakes

Several major rivers, including the holy Narmada, Betwa, and Chambal, flow through Madhya Pradesh, contributing to its rich ecosystem and providing scenic beauty.

Narmada River: Considered one of India's most sacred rivers, the Narmada offers

tranquil ghats and picturesque views, particularly at places like Maheshwar and Omkareshwar.

Bhopal: Known as the "City of Lakes,"

Bhopal is famous for its natural and artificial lakes. The Bhojtal (Upper Lake) is a major landmark, providing a serene environment and opportunities for boating.

Chambal River: The National Chambal

Sanctuary is a protected area along the Chambal River, known for its diverse aquatic life, including gharials (a type of crocodile) and various bird species.

Other Notable Natural Sites

Amarkantak: A significant pilgrimage site and a nature destination where the Narmada, Son, and Jhola rivers originate. It is surrounded by lush forests and hills.

Bhimbetka Rock Shelters: While famous for their prehistoric cave paintings, the site is also a natural wonder. The rock formations are set in a beautiful forest landscape within the Vindhya Range, offering a unique blend of history and nature.

Panna National Park: In addition to its tigers, Panna is also known for its beautiful

Raneh Falls, a series of waterfalls that cascade over a deep canyon of crystalline granite.