

# The Concept of the Higher/the Lower Energy in the *Ātmōpadēśa Śatakam* of Nārāyaṇa Guru

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## Abstract

The paper presents an analysis of the concept of the higher/the lower energy (*para-apara māyā/prakṛti/śakti*) in the *Ātmōpadēśa Śatakam* ("One Hundred Verses of Self-instruction"), the most important philosophical work of Nārāyaṇa Guru composed in Malayalam. In order to better understand the issue, the same pair of opposites is discussed at length on the basis of Nārāyaṇa's earlier Malayalam poems—devotional hymns (*Śiva Śatakam*—"One Hundred Verses on Śiva", *Kāñi Nāṭakam*—"Dance of Kāñi", and *Jananī Nava Ratna Mañjarī*—"Nine Gemmed Bouquet to Mother") as well as later Sanskrit philosophical work (*Darśana Mālā*—"Garland of Visions"). The comparative analysis of these texts demonstrates that—whereas *Darśana Mālā* reflects more or less accurately *Vedāntic* concepts, *Ātmōpadēśa Śatakam* presents deeply syncretic formation, influenced to a large extent by philosophical systems related to *bhakti* (devotion), like *Śākta* or *Śaiva Siddhānta*. The reason for such a state of affairs could be the purpose of Malayalam work destined to become vehicle for instructions given to lower caste people in Kerala. The paper offers an analysis of the relevant passages of the texts accompanied with explanatory notes extracted from the commentarial literature.

## Keywords

*Para/apara śakti, Ātmōpadēśa Śatakam, Nārāyaṇa Guru, Śaivism, Śaiva Siddhānta*

This paper is devoted to the concept of the higher and the lower energy (Mal. *para/apara prakṛti/māyā/śakti*)<sup>1</sup>, which was introduced by Nārāyaṇa Guru (1854-1928), a Hindu saint and social reformer from Kerala<sup>2</sup>, in his most important Malayalam philosophical work, the *Ātmōpadēśa Śatakam*—"One Hundred Verses of Self-instruction" (henceforth abbr.: AŚ). In order to understand this idea better, one should, at first, become acquainted with the related pair of concepts, the higher and the lower delusions (Skr. *parā/aparā māyā*)<sup>3</sup> which were presented by Guru both in his Sanskrit poem—*Darśana Mālā*—"The Garland of Visions" (DM) and Malayalam one—*Ātmōpadēśa Śatakam*.

The higher/the lower aspect of delusion<sup>4</sup> has been defined by Guru in 5-7 stanzas of *Māyā*

*Darśanam* (constituting the fourth chapter of DM) as follows: "That because of which the subtle aspects such as sense organs, mind (*manas*) and intellect (*buddhi*), the five vital flows of energy (*prāṇas*) and the like emanate from the Self (*ātman*) that is consciousness (*cit*) in essence, is indeed the higher (*parā*)" (DM 4 5). "By appropriating such subtle factors, the Self (*ātman*) which is consciousness (*cit*) in essence, deludedly (i.e. when deluded—H. Urbańska) thinks of itself as happy or unhappy

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because of its own *māyā*—basically nothing of this is real at all” (DM 4 6). “That by which this world (that forms) objects of senses emanates (from the Self that is consciousness in content), is indeed the lower (*aparā*)—in essence it is nothing but the gross ideation of individuated self” (DM 4 7—translated by M. N. Prasad).

The same duality—which is an important topic which comes up for discussion at different stages in the context of *Vedānta*, is mentioned among others in *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1 1 4-5, which differentiates between the higher and the lower knowledge (*parā/aparā vidyā*):

Two kinds of knowledge are to be known, as, indeed, the knowers of Brahman declare—the higher as well as the lower. Of these, the lower is Ṛgveda, the Yajurveda, the Sāmaveda, the Atharvaveda; phonetics, ritual, grammar, etymology, metrics, and astrology. And the higher is that by which the Undecaying is apprehended. (Translated by Radhakrishnan)

Higher and lower reality (*para-apara brahman*) is another pair of concepts present in *Advaita Vedānta*. The eternal, all-underlying, and immortal reality in its unconditional state is defined as the higher (*para*); the same reality which appears as the world in its conditional state is called the lower (*apara*).

Apparently, such is not the *parā/aparā* discrimination introduced by Guru in quoted above stanzas of DM. Here the aspect of *māyā* which gives rise to the subtlest aspects of our being (such as mind or senses) is called *parā*—“the higher”. The *māyā* aspect that makes the Self (*ātman*) being consciousness (*cit*) emanates the gross elements that form the external objective world, will be defined as *aparā*—“the lower”<sup>5</sup>.

## PARA/APARA MĀYĀ/PRAKṚTI/ŚAKTI IN AŚ

The same concept has been presented by Guru in his

Malayalam work AŚ 51 as I-ness/thisness duality (*ahanta-idanta*), which—in the form of two creepers, rooted in consciousness—spreads to cover entirely the tree of *māyā*: “Having existed in knowledge (*aṅv*) an I-ness (*ahanta*), in the beginning, emerges; coming as a counterpart to this is thisness (*idanta*); like two vines, these (aspects) when coming, spread over the tree of *māyā*, completely concealing it” (AŚ 51—translated by N. C. Yati)<sup>6</sup>.

*Ahanta* can be interpreted here as the collective I-consciousness (*ahambōdham*) comprising all individual I-senses (*jīvabōdham*)<sup>7</sup>. Simultaneously—as its counterpart or the opposite—thisness (*idanta*) arises, becoming the awareness of external objects in each individual being. The latter one should correspond with aspect called the lower (*aparā*), the former one—with *parā* (the higher). Is that so that the subtle factors mentioned in DM 4 5 can be equated with I-consciousness/I-ness and the gross factors (DM 4 7) would be equivalents of thisness?

The higher/lower (Mal. *para/apara*) discrimination has been presented by Guru in AŚ 81 as the effect of division of nature (*prakṛti*)<sup>8</sup>. The analyzed above (AŚ 51) scheme based on two opposites appears to be two-levelled here: “*Prakṛti* divides: on one side the form of experiencer shines outside as each (individual being)—being the here and the beyond; on the other side—thanks to thisness, it becomes the enjoyable universe—blossomed widely ‘this’” (AŚ 81—translated by H. Urbńska).

The first level of *para/apara* duality has been constructed vertically: This is the level explained here as “here (in this phenomenal world)—the beyond” (*iha-param*). Another one, represented by the opposites: “enjoyer/experiencer—enjoyable object/this” (*bhōktṛ-itu*), is expanded horizontally. As stated in the previous stanza (AŚ 51), both I-ness and thisness become creepers covering entirely the *māyā*’s tree (*varumitinōṭṭridanta vāmayāyūm*—“coming together with this (i.e. *ahanta*) *idanta* (emerges) as its

counterpart”). It corresponds with the scheme presented in DM 4 6, which suggests duality: experiencer (since the *ātman*, deluded by its own *māyā*, becomes happy or unhappy) and what is experienced; the former aspect is called the higher (*parā*), the latter—the lower (*aparā*).

What is important in AŚ 81, each of two vertical aspects of *prakṛti*: “here” and “beyond” seems to define the whole horizontal opposite: aspect of enjoyer as well as aspect of enjoyable. The universe, becoming the object for individual beings is represented by “this”—*itu* (lower level), expanding through thisness (*idanta*)—which can be treated as the higher level of objective aspect of nature. Accordingly, the whole subjective aspect seems to conform to the “here/beyond” (*iha-param*) scheme: The lower level is represented by all individual beings endowed with I-sense and experiencing objects (*sakalam*)<sup>9</sup> manifesting thanks to the essential nature of experiencer (*bhōktṛ-rūpam*)<sup>10</sup> (see Table 1).

Thus the suggestion is to interpret the compound “the essential nature of experience” (*bhōktṛ-rūpam*) as the higher aspect of subjective level of nature (*prakṛti*); an equivalent of the term “I-substance/substratum” (*aham-poruṣa*), which appears in AŚ 11 and which is mentioned in the next stanza (12) as I-ness (*ahanta*), interpreted in commentaries as I-consciousness (*ahambōdham*)<sup>11</sup>:

The repeated “I, I”, when contemplated in the heart, is not many but remains one; when you multiply all divergent the I-senses, in their totality the I-substance always remains<sup>12</sup> (AŚ 11). You must know that there is only one I-consciousness<sup>13</sup> wielding inner factors which end tragically: the skin, bones, and dirt—all this is perishable; and when the other<sup>14</sup> (i.e. the I-sense) perishes, (I-consciousness) attains wholeness; so one should grant the boon that it may not the I-sense swell. (AŚ 12—translated by H. Urbańska)

Therefore the concept of *para-apara māyā/prakṛti/śakti* presented in AŚ can be depicted as following Table 2.

The striking difference between the concept of the higher and the lower (delusion) presented by Guru in DM 4 5-7 and the concept of the higher and the lower (energy/power) which appears in selected stanzas of AŚ is that the latter one seems to shift the whole higher aspect of subjective level to the realm of *māyā/prakṛti/śakti* (whereas in DM 4 6 the differentiation between the higher level of *māyā* and the ultimate reality being the Self (*ātman*)—has been emphasized). This particular situation allows us to equate the higher (*māyā/prakṛti/śakti*) in AŚ either with the state, thanks to which one attains liberation, or with the ultimate reality itself—as stated in AŚ 15<sup>16</sup>: “Ten thousand years make a moment for the blessed ones, fed with the milk of the higher; if the knowledge is caught in the power of the lower *prakṛti*, half a second would seem ten thousand long” (translated by H. Urbańska)<sup>17</sup>.

The scheme given above seems to reflect the ideas characteristic of *Śākta* system, branch of devotional Hinduism that focuses worship upon *Śakti* (*Devī*)—Divine Mother—being the absolute, ultimate reality. *Śākta* differentiates between the higher and the lower energy (*parā/aparā śakti*) being the active power inseparably connected with the ultimate reality. The case of the former “this” (*idam*) is experienced as a part of the Self (*aham*) and not as separate from it—there is no outer and inner experience; such is the level of the consciousness-force (*cit-śakti*), whereas in the case of the lower energy (*māyā-śakti*), the object (*idam*) is seen as something outside and different from I-consciousness. Thus, the individual consciousness (*jīva-consciousness*) arises at a later stage after the intervention of the lower energy (*māyā-śakti* or *aparā-śakti*)<sup>18</sup>.

These two powers: The higher and lower (*parā/aparā*) in *Śiva Sūtras* (ŚS 4) are defined as rooted in one *Śakti*, which is called Mother (*mātṛkā*) being identical to the ultimate reality (*Śiva*)<sup>19</sup>—and defined respectively as *aghorā*—“not terrific” and *ghorā*—“terrific one”:

**Table 1.** The *Prakṛti/Māyā/Śakti* Concept as Presented in AŚ of Nārāyaṇa Guru

<i>Prakṛti/Māyā/Śakti</i> <sup>15</sup>	Subjective aspect	Objective aspect
<i>Param</i> —the higher (beyond; there)	The real form/essential nature of experiencer; substratum of enjoyer being subject ( <i>bhōktṛ[sva]rūpam</i> ) = I-substance/substratum ( <i>ahamporuḥ</i> ) in AŚ 11 (?) = higher I-consciousness ( <i>ahanta—ahambōdham</i> ) in AŚ 12 (?) [comp. also the same power ( <i>sama śakti</i> ) in AŚ 36, 38]	This-ness ( <i>idanta</i> )
<i>Iha</i> —the lower (here)	“(Shines outside as) each individual being” ( <i>sakalavumāy veḥyē samullasikkum</i> ) = I-sense ( <i>ahamāham</i> ) = lower <i>ahanta</i> , mentioned in AŚ 12 (?) [comp. also the other power ( <i>anya śakti</i> ) in AŚ 36, 38]	“This” ( <i>itu</i> ) The whole enjoyable universe ( <i>bhōgyaviśvam</i> )

**Table 2.** Two Levels of the Higher and the Lower Energy in AŚ of Nārāyaṇa Guru

The higher ( <i>para</i> ) aspect of <i>prakṛti/māyā/śakti</i>	Higher <i>ahanta</i> (the essential nature of experiencer)	<i>Idanta</i> (this-ness)
The lower ( <i>apara</i> ) aspect of <i>prakṛti/māyā/śakti</i>	Lower <i>ahanta</i> (all individual beings)	<i>Idam</i> (“this”, i.e. the whole enjoyable universe)

In the case of superior knowledge (She is) the power called Aghorā because She manifests both as the inner reality (or undifferentiated consciousness) and the outer reality (of the All) as Her own nature. Inferior (knowledge is the domain of the aspect of *Mātṛkā*) called *Ghorāśakti* who direct the consciousness of (the fettered soul) out of himself because of his failure to reflect upon the unity of reality and obscure his *Śiva*-nature<sup>20</sup>.

Such a differentiation between *parā* (*aghorā*) and *apara* (*ghorā*) *śakti* could be suggested in *Kāḥ Nāṭakam*—“Dance of Kālī” (KN 15-24) of Nārāyaṇa Guru—a hymn devoted to Goddess, who is identical to the ultimate reality itself and addressed as *Śivāmbā*—Mother-Śiva (i.e. Mother being auspicious; kind), being of nature of *nādam* and *bindu*<sup>21</sup>:

When contemplated even for a short while, no other (from you) (real) form of Soleness/(bestowing) Liberation will be then known to (your) devotees (...). What a mystery! So few know your real form! Will this terrible form disappear from view? Who in the world is capable of understanding this world to be so? O the great divine lord of

gods, the lord of Gaurī, happiness-maker, the great she-wielder of *māyā*<sup>22</sup>, your divine power should be the only one subject for thought. (KN 15-24, translated by Prasad)

The concept of not terrific form (*aghorā*) can be confronted here with the (real) form (of *Kāḥ*) being soleness/liberation (*kaivalyarūpam*) and identical to the ultimate reality, corresponding with she-wielder of *māyā* (*mahāmāyā*) whereas terrific one (*ghorā*) has been defined as *ghōrarūpam*—“the terrifying/terrible form”—corresponding with the power of illusion (of *Kāḥ*) (*māyā/vaibhavam*)—and its effects—phenomenal world. Similar concept appears in *Jananī Nava Ratna Mañjarī*—“The Nine-Gemmed Bouquet to Mother” (JNRM 3), the hymn devoted to Mother of Royal Yoga (*rājayōgajananī*), in which Guru mentions the empirical knowledge (which arose to disappear again), identical to the knowledge existing from ancient times (i.e. representing consciousness and *śakti* inseparable from it—the higher knowledge), which descends contracting into the form of coil within the inner part

of individual being, causing the division into individual consciousness (concealed by physical body), and external objects (lower knowledge)<sup>23</sup>. Another stanza mentions the real form (*uḷḷat*) of Mother (*jananī*) wrapped wholly in the veil of phenomenality (JNRM 5)<sup>24</sup>.

The quoted above stanza of AŚ 81, introducing two aspects of subjective level of *prakṛti*: higher one (*bhōktṛrūpam*) and lower one (*sakalam*), can be interpreted in the context of another stanza included in *Śiva Śatakam* (“One Hundred Verses on Śiva”—ŚŚ), the hymn composed by Guru earlier than AŚ<sup>25</sup>, in which the term *sakalam* has been used in accordance with *Śaiva Siddhānta* system: “May there be no intention within me to do anything wrong to others; to enable me to be so, please take away from me the idea of *sakalam*, and thus let me become the recipient of your blessings” (ŚŚ 46—translated by Prasad).

In such a context, the expression *sakalam* can denote individual beings (*jīvas*) endowed with physical bodies and bounded with defilements (*malam*)<sup>26</sup>, which corresponds with the presented above (in the 81 stanza of AŚ) concept of lower level of subjective aspect of *prakṛti*<sup>27</sup>. The presence of such a concept of *Śaiva Siddhānta* system in AŚ—simultaneously with the concept of the state of total inactivity (*kēvalam*) as well as the state of being deprived of any bounds (*niṣkalam*), suggested with the expression “glory or splendour” (*mahass*)<sup>28</sup>—can be attested in stanza 13:

By offering a flower of his mind to the Lord (*Śiva*) adorned with holy ashes consisting of three qualities (*guṇas*), having bowed before Him, having restrained his mind, having destroyed the state of being bounded with defilements, having become cool, deprived even of the greatness of *kēvalam* state—one should immerse in the glory<sup>29</sup>. (AŚ 13—translated by H. Urbańska)

Similarly, the concept of higher level of subjective aspect in the quoted above stanza 12 of AŚ could be hinted at in accordance with *Śaiva* system, in which

the higher I-consciousness (*ahanta*), associated with perfection—wholeness (*pūrṇam*), has been mentioned. This idea corresponds with the concept of *pūrṇāharṇatā*—the supreme I-experience on the part of *Śiva*, being non-relational I-consciousness—present in *Advaita Śaiva* system<sup>30</sup>.

The concept of the higher *śakti* has been suggested by NG (Nārāyaṇa Guru) in 44 stanza of ŚŚ: “The Daughter of the Mountains constantly forms one side of yours with the elixir of immortal bliss oozing out from her swaying breasts; from that hill top of blissfulness when will that elixir flow downwards as an ocean-like river (Ganga) to flow profusely over my head, o Auspiciousness—Maker?” (translated by Prasad).

The concept given above in *Śiva Śatakam* present in *Śaiva Siddhānta*—the vision of *Śiva* inseparably connected with His *Śakti* (imagined as Daughter of Mountains—*Umā/Pārvatī*) bestowing grace [*anugraham* or *aruḷ*, imagined in the shape of immortality (*amṛtam*)—the milk flowing downwards from her breast], has been modified in AŚ 15: the opposite the higher/the lower, which is present not only in *Śaiva Siddhānta* system (as *para-apara śakti*), but also in *Vedānta* (where concepts of *parā-aparā vidyā* and *para-apara Brahman* appear), becomes here a substitute for the pair: *Śiva-(para/apara) śakti*. The author keeps the motif of feeding with milk which allows us to include within interpretation some concepts suggesting the influences of systems, containing elements of *bhakti* (*Śaiva Siddhānta*)<sup>31</sup>. What is more, whereas the term “the lower” has been associated with the term *prakṛti*, its opposite—“the higher”—is deprived of any epithets. As a result, the term *para* (“the higher”) can be treated as either an equivalent of the ultimate transcendent reality (*para brahman*), or—taking into consideration the presence of the motif of feeding with milk—an equivalent of inseparable pair *Śiva-para śakti/Umā*, present in *Śiva Śatakam* 44.

It is worth comparing the given above stanza with

the concept introduced in stanza 64 of *Śiva Śatakam*, in which intriguing vision of Śiva being the transcendental milch cow for the devotees appears: “No transcendental milchcow other than you is there for me, o the space-clad God. Please give me your feet as boat and thereby enable me to traverse all my sins and also the ocean of becoming!” (ŚŚ 64—translated by Prasad).

The term *tumba (m)*<sup>32</sup>, denoting here breast, milch cow, or the pot filled with milk, which is defined with epithet *para* (higher, transcendental), could denote in such a case either the higher energy (*para śakti*), inseparably connected with Lord<sup>33</sup> or the Lord (*Śiva*) himself. Similarly, the term *para* (the higher) included in the phrase *parayuṭe pālu* (“milk of the higher”), which feeds (*nukaruka*) the blessed ones (stanza 15 of AŚ), while interpreted in the context of mentioned stanzas of *Śiva Śatakam*, can denote the higher energy (*para śakti*)—mother of the universe, inseparably connected with the ultimate reality or the ultimate reality itself. Let us emphasize that in stanza 51 of AŚ, Nārāyaṇa Guru imagines the appearance of I-ness (*ahanta*) and thisness (*idanta*) in the beginning (*ādyam*) as simultaneous manifestation of both with the term *vāma*—“counterpart” and “the opposite” at the same time. The very same term denotes—what is important here—the opposite being on the left side (among others Goddess *Gauri* or *Lakṣmi*)<sup>34</sup>, bringing to mind the concept of the Goddess representing primeval energy [*(ādyā) śakti*] as inseparably connected with *Śiva* and opposed to Him at the same time (with reference to Her potentiality of future manifestation).

It is worth emphasizing here that Nārāyaṇa Guru—despite introducing the duality *para/apara* in stanza 15 as opposed each to other—uses the term *prakṛti* as related to *apara* only. At the same time, in the stanza 81 of AŚ, he introduces only one term—*prakṛti*, which pertains to both aspects (*para/apara*) exposed horizontally as well as vertically. In stanza 51 both aspects: I-ness and

thisness (*ahanta/idanta*) belong to the realm of *māyā*, whereas in stanzas 36-38, “the same” (*sama*) as well as “the other” (power) (*anya*), which is an equivalent of the lower energy, has been defined as *śakti*.

We can presume that these—let us say—inconsistencies or simplifications could be the effects of construction of syncretic formation which comprises different *darśanas*.

## CONCLUSIONS

The elusive and ineffable character of the style of Nārāyaṇa’s mystic works excludes the possibility of univocal interpretation. As a result, one can find in both—Sanskrit *Darśana Mālā* as well as Malayalam *Ātmōpadēśa Śatakam*—concepts taken from different philosophical and religious systems. However, the *para-apara* concept in AŚ—when analyzed in the light of earlier works of Guru, appears to be influenced by systems like *Śaktism* or *Śaivism*. Nārāyaṇa Guru seems to define these two powers as real active powers (*śakti*), always pulsating to manifest, being the inseparable aspect of consciousness identified in AŚ 13 with Lord (*Śiva*), and representing its dynamic nature rather than the knowledge/ignorance or the higher/the lower delusion opposed to the highest reality (the Self), which remains the more or less *Vedāntic* concept presented in fourth chapter of DM.

It seems possible that the reason to create such a syncretic system in AŚ could be the purpose of that poem composed in Malayalam language. Nārāyaṇa Guru, a social reformer, tried to introduce systems and concepts influenced by *bhakti* and rooted deeply in the tradition of southern India, like *Śaiva Siddhānta*, *Śākta*, or *Tantra*. The majority of Guru’s poems were composed for the sake of his social activity comprising establishment of temples and educational institutions as well as the concern for spiritual and social uplift of the lower caste people of Kerala. Whereas DM—Sanskrit work—can be defined as the

essence of the *Upaniṣadic* (*Vedāntic*) wisdom (slightly influenced by other philosophical and religious systems), written in the traditional scholastic style, AŚ—written in Malayalam language—could become a vehicle for instructions given to common people of Kerala—just like devotional hymns of Guru, composed in most cases on the occasion of installation of a new shrine, performance of religious ceremonies as well as for the sake of education. Pure *Vedānta* system considering the phenomenal world to be illusion and sickness which could be healed by means of proper recognition only, identical to liberation (*mokṣa*), gave way to the syncretic system revealing different aspects of reality which could be influenced, controlled, and supported by devotion and religious beliefs.

## Notes

1. The concept of the higher and the lower (Mal. *para/apara*) can be associated in AŚ with three terms: *māyā/māya*, *prakṛti*, and *śakti*. According to the context, each of these terms can denote energy or active power, nature, illusion, delusion, the false recognition, etc.
2. Nārāyaṇa Guru (1854-1928), a South Indian philosopher, saint, who revisualized the essential *Upaniṣadic* thought and applied the basic aspects of his philosophical system, which comprised *Vedānta*, *Yoga*, *Sāṅkhya*, *Śaivism*, *Śaktism*, etc. to bring about radical social transformations in Kerala. Cf. Nataraja, 2003; Sreenivasan, 1989; Prasad, 2011.
3. The concept of the higher and the lower (Skr. *parā/aparā*) in DM has been associated with the term *māyā*, which can be translated as delusion here [according to the concept included in DM 4 6, where the Self (*ātman*) is said to be deluded by its own *māyā* (*muhyati cidātmā māyayā svasya*)].
4. The *parā/aparā*—as well as *vidyā/avidyā* duality—has been presented in DM 4 1 as the pair of opposites being effects or manifestations of *māyā*, which does not exist (apart from Brahman). Comparing DM 4 2, defining *māyā* as non-existing apart from Brahman and identical to it at the same time (DM 4 2). Comparing also: *Gauḍapāda Kārikā* 4 58: “*dharmā ya iti jāyante jāyante te na tattvataḥ/Janma māyopamaṁ te śāṁ sā ca māyā na vidyate* 58” (The entities which are spoken of as originated are not originated in reality. Their origination is comparable to illusion; that illusion too does not exist). [Karmarkar, R. D., trans. 1953. *Gauḍapāda-Kārikā* (*The Commentary of Gaudapada [on Mundaka Upanishad]*). Edited with a complete translation into English, notes, introduction, and appendices. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute].
5. Comp. Prasad, M. N. 2007. *Garland of Visions. The Darśanamālā of Narayana Guru With an Extensive Commentary* (*The Garland of Visions of Narayana Guru With an Extensive Commentary*). Varkala: Narayana Gurukula. Pp. 130-139; Prasad, S. M. N. 2010. *The Philosophy of Narayana Guru*. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd. Pp. 48-50.
6. M. H. Śāstrikaḥ (AŚ) explains the term *vāma* (counterpart) as the opposite appearing on the left-side. K. Śrīkumār (AŚ) interprets the given above differentiation of the *prakṛti* as the *para-apara* duality: “*Prakṛti* hides reality/the ultimate truth. The very same *prakṛti* reveals reality. Thus there are two *prakṛtis*: The first one is the lower *prakṛti*, another one—the higher. The sign of predominance of the lower *prakṛti* within us is that she makes us dependent on our desires, acting for the sake of our desires and becoming fond of our desires. If the higher *prakṛti* predominates, yearning for breaking free of the influence of the lower *prakṛti* arises. For that reason it is the same *prakṛti* that makes us stay trapped into *māyā*’s force when our intellect (*buddhi*) remains differentiated, and at the same time, makes us break free of the influence of the lower *prakṛti*, when the discrimination (between what is transient and eternal) arises. The very same *māyā* creates bonds for individual beings and liberates them”.
7. Comparing commentaries of J. B. Nāyar, M. H. Śāstrikaḥ, and N. C. Yati.
8. The very same *prakṛti* has been presented in 79 stanza of AŚ as the splendour of consciousness (*cid-prabhāvam*); hence in the given above stanza (AŚ 81), *prakṛti* can be equated with *śakti* of *ātman*/Brahman [*ātmāvinṛte śakti*—M. H. Śāstrikaḥ (AŚ), or *brahmaśakti*—J. B. Nāyar (AŚ)].
9. Comparing R. V. Pōrri, (AŚ)—“*sakalavumāyi—ellā bhōktākkaḥumāyi—prāṇivarggamāyi puṭattu prakāśikkum*—“as all enjoying beings—as a collected group of living beings—manifests itself outside”.
10. T. Bhāskaran (AŚ) interprets the whole stanza as presenting the two-levelled scheme: “*Prakṛti*, having divided, on the one hand becomes I-ness (*ahanta*), on the other—thisness (*idanta*). From the I-ness the world of experienter is born, from thisness—the enjoyable universe”.
11. The second term of the compound *bhōkt-rūpam* can be revealed in such a case as *svarūpam*—the essential nature.
12. P. N. Murali (AŚ) interprets the “I-sense” within each

- individual being as the reflection of the sole *paramātmā*v (*orē paramātmāvinfe praticchāyaka! mātramāñ orōruttarilum nān*). M. H. Śāstrika! (AŚ) defines the I-substratum/substance as the substance which is in real the basis for the (manifested) individual being, i.e. “I-sense”. If I-substance is the only one reality, I-sense is to become one (reality). I-sense as an attribute (*dharmam*) of I-substance exists with respect to the possessor of attributes (*dharmmi*). Multitude does not concern the (only one) possessor of attributes.
13. “I-substance/substratum” (*ahambōdham*)—J. B. Nāyar (AŚ).
  14. “I-sense”, being the power which becomes a basis for arising faults—M. H. Śāstrika! (AŚ).
  15. Nārāyaṇa Guru introduces the term *śakti* among others in the 36 stanza of AŚ, while defining *sama śakti*—i.e. *śakti*, which manifests as Oneness, and *anya śakti*, which is known as manifold variety (comp. stanza 38).
  16. This kind of direct experience is described in the next stanza (AŚ 16), which mentions the sound (*nādam*) expanding everywhere. Hence we can interpret unifying with *para prakṛti* (compared here to the repeat associating with mother), as dissolving in the sound.
  17. J. B. Nāyar (AŚ) associates the higher *prakṛti* with higher knowledge (*parāvidya*) and the lower *prakṛti*—with lower knowledge (*aparāvidya*), which supports matter. According to the commentary of M. H. Śāstrika! (AŚ), the higher *prakṛti* has been presented as mother (*mātā*v) bestowing great affection, whereas the milk the blessed ones are fed with symbolizes the perseverance (in attaining the goal, i.e. liberation). The yogic experience (*yaugikamāya anubhūti*) has been alluded to in this stanza.
  18. Comp. Avalon, A. 2009. *Śakti and Śakta. Essays and Adresses on the Śakta Tantraśāstra*. Leeds: Celephaïs Press. P. 269; pp. 127-166; pp. 383-406.
  19. “*Jñānādhiṣṭhānam mātṛkā* 4 [Little Mother is the ground of (each process) of knowledge—translated by H. Urbańska]. *Jñānasyaiva dvirūpasya parāparavibhedataḥ/syādadhiṣṭhānamādhāraḥ śaktirekaiva mātṛkā* 4 [There are two forms of knowledge, according to whether it is superior or inferior. *Mātṛkā* is the one power which is the ground or support (of both)]” (*The Aphorisms of Śiva. The Śiva Sūtra With Bhāskara’s Commentary, the Vārttika*. 1992. Translated by M. S. G. Dyczkowski. Albany: State University of New York Press. P. 19). Comparing commentary of Abhinavagupta: “*Mātṛkā* is the power one with Bhairava in His form as the Mass of Sounds (*śabdarāśi*). The various aspects of objectivity in it are not yet manifest but are yet to come, thus it is called *Mātṛkā* (lit. little mother) because (this energy) contains in a potential state (the manifest universe like an expectant) mother” (*The Aphorisms of Śiva. The Śiva Sūtra With Bhāskara’s Commentary, the Vārttika*. 1992. Translated by M. S. G. Dyczkowski. Albany: State University of New York Press. P. 21).
  20. *Tatra parajñāne aghorākhyā śaktiḥ antarbahiḥ svātmamayatābhāsayitṛtvāt/aparasmīn abhedānusaṁghānavaikalyāt bāhyaunmukhyasaṁpādinī ghorākhyā śaktiḥ śiva tācchādayitṛtyarthaḥ* [Chatterji, J. C. and Pandits of the Research Department of the Kashmir State, eds. 1916. *The Shiva Sūtra. Vārttika by Bhāskara (The Aphorisms of Śiva With Bhāskara’s Exposition)*. Srinagar: Research Department Jammu and Kashmir State. P. 9].
  21. *Nādam* means the primeval unstruck sound; *bindu*—a metaphysical point, compact mass of *śakti* concentrated into a undifferentiated point ready to create, which symbolizes the divine *śakti* in highly potentialised form.
  22. *Mahāmāya* can be identified with Goddess *Durgga*, *Pārvati*, *Lakṣmī*, or *Gaṁḡā*.
  23. “Knowledge that comes but to go again, is the very same knowledge which arose in the beginning; together with body and inner (part), which act a part in a play according to what is perceived (i.e. objects of senses), it became darkened in thousand ways (with matter) and contracted into the form of coil within the mind to become reabsorbed finally in the great splendour (*mahass*); even while perceived thus the real wisdom does not dawn; the really enlightened is a bee fallen into the lotus-core, relishing therein the nectar of the undifferentiated experience of boundless Supreme Bliss” (translated by H. Urbańska). M. H. Śāstrika! finds here the allusion to the concept of *Kuṇḍalinī*: “The more individual being becomes immersed in the phenomenal world, the more coilness (*curuḥcca*) of *Kuṇḍalinī* increases. The practice of yogi, i.e. controlling the mind, serves as improvement of such a state of *Kuṇḍalinī*”.
  24. “You, o Mother, remain concealed with primeval ignorance, being the root-cause (of whole the universe). From your sportive dance of romantic mood you set free whole this commotion—a mixture of water, air and fire, that constitutes the world—all this is but mere name only. Your fancy vest, woven out of subtle threads being time and the like, envelops wholly your shape, and for this reason nobody knows the real form of you, o Mother, being beyond the comprehension of all scriptures!” (translated by H. Urbańska). The primeval ignorance means collective *prakṛti*, included in all beings (*mūlāvidya*—T. Bhāskaran; *samaṣṭibhāvattilulla prakṛti*—M. H. Śāstrika!).
  25. Composed around 1884 (AŚ was composed in 1897).

26. The concept of *sakala* in *Śaiva Siddhānta* can be understood as follows: “The word ‘*sakala*’ means ‘the all’, ‘the whole’, ‘that which is universal’; here signifying that state of the soul in which it is linked to everything that exists”. “Under *sakala avasthā* there is a characteristic link with all that exists, i.e. receptiveness to all influences and activities”. “In the *sakala avasthā*, having acquired a link with matter, the soul is subject to limits of time and place, and from a *vyāpti* it becomes an *Aṇu*, feeling itself distinct from other things, able to have dealings with them and to recognize this experience. Thus in *sakala avasthā* it the soul comes across as a more or less independent entity, distinct from other substances” (Shomerus, H. 2000. *Śaiva Siddhānta. An Indian School of Mystical Thought*. Translated by M. Law. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. Pp. 195-197).
27. The term *sakalam* has been interpreted by commentators as “constituted of parts”—as opposed to the state *niṣkaḷam* “deprived of parts”—eventually as opposed to two other states, i.e. *niṣkaḷam*, *kēvalam*. Comparing M. N. Prasad (ŚŚ): “*Sakala* is a technical term of *Śaivism*, meaning ‘that which is constituted of parts’. It refers to *Śiva* having the phenomenal world for his body; and seen as the abstract, all-underlying Causal Substance, the same *Śiva* is called *Kevala*” (Prasad, M. N., trans. 2006. *Narayana Guru. Complete Works*. New Delhi: National Book Trust. P. 53).
28. Comparing with the quoted above *Jananī Nava Ratna Mañjarī* 3, where the term *mahass* has been used in the same context.
29. According to T. Bhāskaran interpretation, not only has *Śiva* been indicated here, also *sakala* and *kēvala* states of *Śaiva Siddhānta* system have been hinted at simultaneously. There is also *niṣkaḷa* state suggested (in the last verse). Without being aware of this, one can find it difficult to explain the meaning of the phrase “deprived even of the greatness of *kēvala* state”. In the *kēvala* state the Self (*ātmā*) is deprived of the body, without qualities (*guṇas*) and dependent on the primary defilement (*āṇavamala*). In the *Svānubhavadgītī* 40 (“Lyric of Ecstatic Self-Experience”) the following stanza: “When the *sakalam* together with *kēvalam* state disappears, You alone will arise, the only one Path! In the company of sages such as *Sanaka*, o Word, you can manifest as the Wholeness!”—justifies the interpretation of the (given above) stanza (of AŚ) in accordance with *Śaiva Siddhānta* system.
30. “The self-awareness takes the form of I-experience (*ahamiti*) which, according to *Advaita Śaivism*, is totally different in nature from the ‘ego-experience’ (*aharṇkāra*). The ego experience has its seat in the *antaḥkāraṇa* (in the intellect), and therefore it is held to be conceptual (*vaikalpika*); the ‘I-experience’ (*ahambodha*) is ‘spiritual’ in essence, and is located in the level beyond the intellect, at a ‘supramental’ level, and therefore it is said to be non-conceptual (*nirvikalpa*) in nature” (SenSharma, D. 2009. *An Introduction to the Advaita Śaiva Philosophy of Kashmir*. Varanasi: Indica Books. P. 52). Comp. also: “Due to the activity of *cit-śakti* (Consciousness power), this self-revelation of the supreme Lord is said to take the form of ‘being-experience’, and it produces self-experience within Him as *aham* (pure I-experience). Then the light of *caitanya* is focused on itself, as it were; there is no idea of any corresponding object to be revealed at this stage. As a consequence, the self-experience by the supreme Lord is in the form of *Aham* (I-experience), which—being full in itself (*paripūrṇa*)—is given the name *pūrṇāharṇā*. This self experience is non-conceptual (*nirvikalpa*) in nature, in the absence of *citta* or intellect. (...) It is totally different in nature from the ego-experience (*aharṇkāra*) of a limited embodied being, as the ego-experience is ‘artificial’—that is, created in the intellect and merely conceptual. (...) It represents *Śakti* in Her most ‘potential’ form when She is only expressed in Her form of self-revelation” (SenSharma, D. 2009. *An Introduction to the Advaita Śaiva Philosophy of Kashmir*. Varanasi: Indica Books. P. 57).
31. M. H. Śāstrikaḷ (AŚ)—“*iviṭṭe parayāya prakṛṭiye vātsalyamayiyā mātāvāyi sankalpiccirikkunnu. aṭṭu kūṭṭi nukaruvān iṭṭayāya pālāyi adhyavasāyam ceytirikkunna ātmajñānattin utakumāṭṭulla aupaniṣadamāya vidyatanneyākaṇam*”—“The higher *prakṛti* is imagined as mother bestowing great affection here. The determination being like the milk (the blessed ones) are fed with, should be the *Upaniṣadic* knowledge which becomes useful for attaining the knowledge being *ātman*”.
32. *Tumba (m)—pālccura, curavaḷḷi, kaṭṭavappaṣu, pālṭātram*—“feeding breast, milch cow, milk-pan”—Ś Gōpināthapillā, V. and P. Sētunāthan. 2011. *Śrīkaṇṭhēśvarattinṭe Śabdatārāvali (The Star Cluster of Words. Malayalam Dictionary by Sree Kantheśvara)*. Kottayam: DC Books. P. 1063 (s.v. *tumba*).
33. The milk represents in such a case divine grace (*anugraham; aruḷ*).
34. Rājaśēkharan, J. S., M. R. Rāghavavāryar, and S. K. Vasantan. 2011. *Śabdatārāvali (Malayāḷam Nikhaṇṭu) (The Star Cluster of Words. Malayalam Dictionary)*. Kottayam: Sahitya Pravartṭhaaka Co-operative Society. P. 1547.

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