

The Twilight Language of Siddhas and Sanskrit Figures of Speech in *Viśākha Śaṣṭi*

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Abstract: The paper is an attempt to analyse the *Viśākhaśaṣṭi* – the collection of sixty stanzas praising Lord Murukan of Paḷani temple composed by Nārāyaṇa Guru – the mystic, philosopher and social reformer from Kerala. Several stanzas of this mysterious hymn (22, 37, 39, 52, 55) have been selected as representative of Guru’s style of writing characteristic of compositions devoted to Subrahmaṇyan. Nārāyaṇan introduces to his works the twilight language of Siddhas supported with a variety of figures of speech borrowed from Sanskrit *kāvya* literature. An elaborate and highly sophisticated mixture of these two literary and philosophical traditions became the means by which Guru releases the liberating power of each independent literary construction.

Keywords: twilight language of Siddhas, Nārāyaṇa Guru, Murukan of the Paḷani, *alamkāras*

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This paper analyses several stanzas of the Malayalam poem *Viśākha Śaṣṭi* – ‘Sixty Stanzas on Viśākha’, praising Murukan (Tam. Murugaṅ) of the Paḷani (Paḷani; Tam. Paḷaṇi) temple in Tamil Nadu, which was composed by Nārāyaṇa Guru – the philosopher and social reformer from Kerala.¹ The mystical work is included in only one edition of Guru’s works, supplemented with a commentary by Prasād,² who provides an English translation of this intriguing composition.³ The selection of six stanzas of *Viśākha Śaṣṭi* given

¹ Nārāyaṇa Guru (1856–1928) – a saint, philosopher and social reformer born in South India. He is the author of over sixty works composed in Malayalam, Sanskrit and Tamil. The majority of his poetical compositions were aimed at bringing about social reformation in Kerala. Cf. BALACHANDRAN 2015; JAYAKUMAR 1999; KRISHNAN 2018; KUMARAN 2014; NATARAJA 2003; SANOO 2017.

² PRASĀD 2006: 204–231.

³ PRASĀD 2015a: 240–274: prosaic commentary; PRASĀD 2019: 587–668: the same prosaic commentary with a word-by-word explanation. The latter commentary has been published as

below may be treated as representative of the style of composition used by Guru in mystical poems devoted to Subrahmaṇya,⁴ a mixture of the twilight language used by Tamil Siddhas depicting the mystical union with the Lord, which is attained by means of the *Kuṇḍalinī* experience⁵ and the elaborate language of Sanskrit *kāvya* literature.

An excellent example of the repetition of similar letters and syllables – alliteration – mingled with the Siddhas’ vision of *Śakti Manōṅmaṇi* residing in *ājñā cakra* (between the eyebrows) and imagined in the form of a golden or flowery creeper can be found in stanza 22 of *Viśākha Ṣaṣṭi*:

*allīśarāntakanum allīsutāpatiyum allīviśēṣabhavanum
yal līlayā bahula sal līlayōṭati jagallīlarāyitūtanē
allīśarātīruci vallīśanāyū paṭani collīśanāya bhagava-
cillīvilāsamaya cillīlayen manasi tellīnṅudiccu varaṇam //22//*

O, the One who keeps the [Eternal] Union⁶
As the One whose Game makes the destroyer of the one
Who uses the lotus as an arrow [Śivan],
The consort of the lotus flower’s daughter [Viṣṇu],
And the one born gloriously of the lotus flower [Brahmāvū]

a separate book: PRASĀD 2013, first published in 2006. As stated by Prasād in his introduction, he limited himself to three topics, namely the usage of language, the devotional aspect and the philosophy of *Advaita* (PRASĀD 2019: 588). The hymn has been translated by Prasād into English and included in the following book: PRASĀD 2006: 204–231. As Prasād states, the work was discovered by Priyadarśanan, who attached the text as the appendix within a collection of Guru’s works published by SNDP (*Śrī Nārāyaṇa Dharma Paripālana*) *Yōgam*, as the Guru’s authorship seemed to be in doubt. However, Prasād examines the usage of several figures of speech which the author introduced into the poem, namely the *anuprāsa*, the *upamā* and the *yamaka*, and firmly states there is not the slightest doubt that the poem, which proves proficiency in three languages, namely Sanskrit, Malayalam and Tamil, was indeed the work of Nārāyaṇa Guru (PRASĀD 2019: 587).

- ⁴ The other hymns devoted to Subrahmaṇya composed by Nārāyaṇa Guru are *Guha Aṣṭakam* – ‘Eight Verses on Guha or Subrahmaṇya’ (1884); *Navamañjarī* (‘A Bouquet of Nine Verses’) – 1884; *Ṣaṅmātura Stavam* or *Navamañjarī* (‘The Hymn to the One Mothered by Six’ or ‘the Bouquet of Nine Flowers’) – 1884; *Subrahmaṇya Stōtram / Kīrttanam* (‘Hymn in Praise of Subrahmaṇyan’) – 1888; *Ṣaṅmukha Stavam / Stōtram* (‘The Praise of the Six Faced God’) – 1887–1897; *Ṣaṅmukha Daśakam* (‘Ten Verses on the Six Faced God’) – 1887–1897; *Bāhuleya Aṣṭakam* (‘Eight Verses on Bāhuleya’) – 1887–1897. Cf. BHĀSKARAN 2015: 44–114.
- ⁵ According to Ganapathy, ‘the twilight language is a clothed language in which the highest truths are hidden in the form of the lowest, the most sacred in the form of the most ordinary, the transcendent in the form of the most earthly and the deepest knowledge in the form of the most grotesque paradoxes’ (GANAPATHY 2006c: 295).
- ⁶ Tam. *uḍaṅ* means ‘together with, altogether, at once’; similarly Mal. *uṭan*. *Uṭantai* (*uṭanta*) – ‘union, alliance, relationship’. Cf. EMENEAU and BURROW 1961: 69–70; PADMANĀBHAPILLA 2016: 337; DAKṢINĀMŪRTTI 2002: 248–249.

Extremely engaged in the games of the [changeable] universe
 Which spread abundantly when united
 With the Game of [permanent] *Sat* –
 The game of Pure Consciousness (*Cit*) which is the play of the eyebrows
 Of such a Master who remains the Lord of Pañani's glory
 As the Consort of the [Divine] Creeper that displays charms
 Of the one who uses the lotus as a weapon [Kāman] –
 May [such a Game] arise to shine just a little within my mind!⁷

The leading concept of the stanza can be described as follows: the games (*līla*) of the phenomenal world (*jagat*) along with the Game of permanent Existence (*Sat*) have their reversed version in the Game of Pure Consciousness (*Cit*) performed by the pair of creepers – in this instance Murukan's eyebrows. As the embodiment of the Ultimate Reality (*paramporuḷ*), Subrahmaṇyan represents the union of all games played by the trinity of gods, namely Śivan, Viṣṇu and Brahmāvū. The game of the changeable universe, comprising creation, sustenance and dissolution – the three forms of activity these Gods

⁷ *allīye śaramākkīyittuḷḷavanre antakanum (puṣpatte astramākkīyittuḷḷavanre – kāmanre – śatrivum, atāyatū śivanum) alliyuṭe sutaykku patiyāyittuḷḷavanum (tāmarappūvil ninnu janiccalakṣmīyūṭe bhartāvāyittuḷḷavanum, atāyatu viṣṇuvinum) alliyilninum viṣṇarīyil bhaviccavanum athavā saviśēṣamāya alliyil bhaviccavanum (patmasambhavanum athavā brahmāvinum) yātoruvanre līla mukhāntiramāṇō vyāpakamāya, atāyatū ṅōruttarum avaravarūṭēṭāya tarattil sadvastuvine vaccukoṇṭu sattāya tarattiluḷḷa līlayōṭukūṭi (orē sadvastuvine vaccukoṇṭu srṣṭi sthītilayanāḷākunna līlakaḷ naṭattikoṇṭū) ī jagattākunna līlayil ativēgam muḷukuvān iṭayāyatū, aṅṅaneyuḷḷavanum vallīyūṭe bhartāvāyirunnuṅkoṇṭū pañaniyennu pērupeṛra sthanattinū īsanāya bhagavāṅṅre kāmadēvanu cērnna tarattiluḷḷa atyadhikamāya bhaṅgiyōṭukūṭiya (allīśaran – pūvine śaramākkīyittuḷḷavan = kāmadēvan; atiruci = atyadhikamāya bhaṅgi) cillikkoṭi vilasunnatinre rūpattiluḷḷa citśvarūpamāya paramporuḷḷinre līlāvīlāsam enre manassil alpamiṅṅu teḷiṅṅu varēṅṅamē – ‘May the Game of the Ultimate Substance, which is the essential form of *Cit* in the form of the shining eyebrows’ creeper of the Master who is the Lord of the famous place of Pañani, while remaining the husband of the Creeper [i.e., *Parvātī*], endowed with extraordinary grace which is characteristic of the god Kāman (the Lotus Arrowed One – the one who makes the flower his arrow means the god Kāman; the extreme splendour means the extraordinary grace) – [may such a Game] enter to shine a little bit within my Heart. [He is the one] through whose game the room is made for the extremely rapid absorption in the game of this phenomenal world [performed] along with the Game, which is Reality in essence, i.e., bound with the [permanent] Substance of *Sat* (i.e., along with the performance of games, which are creation, sustenance and dissolution, of the one and one only Substance of *Sat* is kept). [Such is the game] which spreads all around, i.e., which [is performed] by each of the Gods, namely the destroyer of the one who uses the lotus flower as an arrow (the foe of Kāman – the one who has made the blossom his weapon, i.e., Śivan), the one who remains as the Lord of the daughter of the lotus blossom (the husband of Lakṣmi, born from the lotus flower, i.e., Viṣṇu), and the one who was born in a particular way from the lotus or the one who was born from the lotus that is the special one (the Lotus Born One, i.e., Brahmāvū) – in his own way’ (PRASĀD 2013: 51–52). All translations of Guru's works are made by the author of the article.*

are responsible for – cannot be undertaken or accomplished until it becomes associated with the play of *Sat*. On the other hand, *Sat*, i.e., permanent and immutable Existence, is not capable of being involved in games until it becomes associated with another aspect of Reality – *Cit*, i.e., Consciousness. The inseparability of all these games (*līla*) with the trinity of Śivan – Viṣṇu – Brahmāvū and Subrahmaṇyan has been emphasised with the use of alliteration (*anuprāsa*):⁸ *trimūrti*'s names contain the term *allī*, which denotes the lotus flower, whereas within the compound defining Murukan, the term *vallī* (creeper) has been included. Not only is *trimūrti* associated with *allī*; the same compound element constitutes the epithet of Kāman (*allīśara*). In other words, the term *līla* ([cosmic] game) corresponds here with the term *allī* – meaning 'lotus' in the following context: *līla*, played by the Supreme Deity, results in various forms of *allī* pertaining to the trinity of Gods, as well as to Kāman. Again, the connection between the *Cit* game (*cillīla*) and the play of Subrahmaṇyan's eyebrows (*cillīvilāsam*) has been suggested with the same figure of speech. However, there is an indication of the difference here between these two groups of games: the latter – *cil-līla* – can be performed by the eyebrows of the Lord alone – the husband of the divine Creeper.⁹ Such an emphasis on the capability of the particular God for an extraordinary performance by means of alliteration can be found in Tamil *Tirumandiram* (TM) 2 386;¹⁰ the same work depicts the Mahēśvaraṅ (Paramēśvaraṅ) as the embodiment of the Substance (*poru!*) which controls the activities of the *Trimūrti* (TM 2 389).¹¹

⁸ Alliteration is a repetition of similar letters, syllables or sounds (GEROW 1971: 102 nn.).

⁹ The reason is Subrahmaṇyan (identical to Śivan) is the only one Deity who undertakes a task of *anugraha* – the bestowal of divine Grace (cf. ARUMUGAM 2006a: 64–65).

¹⁰ Cf. TM 2 386: *bhuvanam paṭacciṭṭum oruvanum oruttiyūm bhuvanam paṭacciṭṭum avarkku putrarañcū / bhuvanam paṭacciṭṭum 'bhum' isayārnna āsān bhuvanam paṭacciṭṭum puṇyanallē* (NĀYAR 2019: 114): 'He and She (as the concentration of mind) together create the Universe (*puvaṇam* = *bhuvanam*); for them, creators of the Universe, five sons are there. [The *Brahmā*] is the One who creates the Universe [*pu-vaṇam*] – as the One who is elevated at the top of the [Lotus] Flower [*pū-micaiyāṅ*]; He creates the Universe as the One who is Virtuous by Himself [*pu-nṇiyyaṅ-tāṅē*]'.

All translations of TM made by the author of the article are based on the 10-volume edition of Ganapathy (cf. References – TM). The original text given here is the Malayalam translation by NĀYAR 2019 or NĀYAR 2007.

¹¹ TM 2 389: *uṅṭulakēlum umiṅṅnavanōṭu aṅḍattilaradēvanam ādiyumāya paran / paṅṭu caturmukhan, kāraṇan tannōṭum kaṅṭu ninnu paṭaccatānippārāya pārellām* (NĀYAR 2019: 115): 'Along with the One who devoured and spat out the seven worlds, with the Primeval One (*ādi*), the Lord (*talaivaṅ*) of immortals within the Egg of the Universe (*aṅḍattu*), and with the one who is the Source [of the World] (*kāraṇaṅ*), the Four Faced One (*Brahmā*), Lord – the Substance (*poru!*) created the world in ancient times (*paṅḍu*).' The Lord identical with the Substance is – in accordance with Śaiva Siddhānta – *Maheśvaraṅ* responsible for the process of manifestation. The one who leads the Souls to liberation is *Sadāśiva*, corresponding with the Murukan in Guru's poem. Nārāyaṇa differentiates between these two aspects in his

In Siddhas' tradition, the space in between the eyebrows constitutes the sphere of the *ājñā cakra* – the sixth energy centre, which starts and represents the moon region of the human body. TM 3 589 mentions a divine dance in the joint of the eye-bows (sic) which results in the flow of heavenly waters from the top of the central channel (*suṣumnā*). Along with that, yogi can experience the effulgence of bliss.¹² The same space of burning consciousness (*terivu*) is the abode of Lord *Śivaṇ* and His consort – *Śakti Maṇḍmaṇi*¹³ in the form of a flowery twig (*pūṅkombu*). Tirumūlar refers to such a place in TM 4 1112 with the term *cilaittalai* – ‘the top of the [eye]-bows – *cilai*’ or ‘the top of the mountain’, whereas *Śakti* is defined with the compound *kaṇṇuḷ* – ‘the One who remains within the Eye (or as the Heart of the [third] Eye) [of the Lord]’.¹⁴ In another mystical poem devoted to Subrahmaṇyan – *Ṣaṇmukha Daśakam* 1 – Nārāyaṇan provides us with a vision of the heart or the inside of the creeper of the eyebrows that shines brilliantly with the fire of awakened wisdom while bringing the flow of *amṛtū*.¹⁵

poem *Śiva Śatakam*, stanza 27 (*Paramaśivan* responsible for granting grace) and stanza 29 (*Paramēśvaran* responsible for manifestation). Cf. VENKATARAMAN 2010b: 484.

¹² *malayārṇna śirassiṭa vānanīr aruvi nilayārṇnu pāyum neṭunāḍi iṭṭēpōyū – cilaiṅka / oliyārṇna sabhayatil tirunaṭanamāṭum polivārṇnatoru ānandajyōtiyokkaṅṅu ṇān* (‘The heavenly waters that crown the mountain top spring to flow down [out from the mouth of the river at the top of the pillar]; through the central channel I could see the unceasing effulgence of bliss [*ānanda-c cōḍi*] after the performance of the divine dance in the joint of the bows [eyebrows – *cilaiyār poduvil*]’ – NĀYAR 2007: 202). With the end of the *suṣumnā nāḍi* (pillar), as soon as the *ājñā cakra* opens, the yogi can experience the bliss along with the stream of heavenly *amṛta*. The mouth of the river denotes the top of *suṣumnā nāḍi*. Cf. VENKATARAMAN 2010c: 708–709.

¹³ Cf. TM 4 1147: *anbārakkaṅṅi ariva maṇḍmaṇi konbāra nuṅṅiṭakkōta kulāvum / cembonnoḷi cceḷum gātri nāḷorūm nambiye nōkkiyē naviluvōl* – ‘Her eyes are like arrows; She is the young virgin – *Maṇḍmaṇi*; She is like a twig, the slender-waisted one, entwined with a flowery garland. Her body is a ruddy gold, in union emitting fragrance; looking at the Trustful (Beloved) One, She keeps conversing [with Him] every day’ (NĀYAR 2019: 344).

¹⁴ *kalattala neṛriṅkaṅṅoṭu mukkaṅṅuṭayōl mulattala maṅkayāyū muyaṅṅi irippōl / śilattalayām eriyatu nōkkiyē alacca pūṅkombu pōlāṭi nilpōl* (‘She remains as the playful virgin ready for performance with her breasts – She is the Heart of the Lord’s Eye – the One who bears the Eye on the forehead and the crescent in the crown; as soon as the Burning Heat (*eri* – Mal.) of Consciousness (Tam. *terivu*) appears at the top of the bows [eyebrows] (or at the mountain top), She remains there as the ecstatically swaying flowery twig’ – NĀYAR 2007: 356). The *Śakti* is ready to undertake activity with her breasts which bestow the milk of Grace on devotees; for that, She remains united with the Lord in *ājñā cakra* in between the eyebrows. It is the sphere where the *suṣumna* channel, identified with Meru Mountain, ends.

¹⁵ *jñānacentiyēḷuppiṭṭeḷuteḷe vilasum cillivallikkoṭiṅkuḷ maunappūntiṅkaḷ uḷḷūturukum amṛtoḷukkuṅṅitirunnuḷḷaliṅṅum / ṇānum nīyūm ṇerukkakkalaruvatin aruḷ ttanmayām ninnaṭtīrtēnuḷḷitūkunna muttukkūṭam aṭiyanaṭakkūṭum accil kkoḷuntē //1//* (‘The heart of the creeper of the eyebrow bows shining brilliantly with the blazing fire of wisdom awakened, having melted what remains within into the flow of the *amṛtū*, softening the inner essence of the tender crescent moon that is Silence – for squeezing and uniting me and You [like that] bring under the control of (or for) [Your] humble servant the pearly pot showering inside the

The aspect of *Cit* permits the individual being to transcend the sphere of the phenomenal world for the sake of the *sallīla* – the game of Existence, which leads the soul to liberation. The game of Consciousness, seen as being equal to effulgence – as stated by Nārāyaṇan – comprises the process of descent, i.e., taking the steps which are necessary in order to enter the path of ascension. Accordingly, TM 4 1091 compares the Śakti – the tender creeper (*iḷaṅkoḍi*) – to the smoke that rises as the great effulgence (*peruṅcuḍar*) during the fire sacrifice that is performed in the lowest *cakra* – *mūlādhāra*. The same smoke releases the flow of *amudu* [*amṛtū*] in the moon region of the body.¹⁶ On the other hand, in TM 4 1142 the Creeper-Lady (*peṅkoḍi*) – the ultimate effulgence and the consort of the Supreme Lord (*Paramaṅ*) – keeps the world moving forward in the process of manifestation.¹⁷

Thus the game of *Cit* provides the individual soul with the possibility and capability of entering the path of liberation, which can be called the game of *Ānandam* – Bliss. The trinity of aspects which is well-known in *Vedānta*, namely *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānandam*, constitutes the level that is rooted within the Sole and Transcendent Reality. The same Meta Substance remains the centre, the top (*tuṅga*) and the peak of such a trio. Once again Nārāyaṇan introduces alliteration (the repetition of *-tt-*) as well as the figure called climax (*sāra*)¹⁸ to build up the gradation of these three aspects: the first one – *sattum* – plays the role of *Gradus Positivus*, the *para-cittum* remains the *Comparativus*, which is crowned with the *Superlativus* of *parama-muttum*. The whole trinity,

honey of the flower of Your feet that is Grace and Truth or sameness (the best quality of grace),
o Tender Sprout [rising] within the [Primeval] Mould!').

¹⁶ *tāmakuḷali dayākaṅṅi uḷḷinilkkuṁ ēvalirūḷ arattiṭṭuṁ iḷaṅkoḍi / hōmapperruṁ cuṭar uḷḷileḷuṁ nuṅṅuka mēviya amutoṭu mīṅṅatu kāṅṅuvin* – ‘The woman with curled hair adorned with a garland of flowers, her eyes [filled with] compassion, remains within the Heart; She is the tender creeper (*iḷaṅkoḍi*), which blows away the darkness spread within the loom [of the universe]; the soft smoke that rises within as the great effulgence (*peruṅcuḍar*) of *ōma* [fire-sacrifice], when united [there] with *amudu* [*amṛtū*], comes back here – Oh! see!’ – NĀYAR 2007: 351). Cf. commentary: ‘The inner murk is *āṅava mala*. The *homa*-fire burns in the *mūlādhāra*. The smoke is the power that blends with the vital air (*prāṅa-vāyu*); it reaches the *sahasrāra* and then descends with the elixir of immortality’ (RAMACHANDRAN 2010: 1253).

¹⁷ *paintoṭiyuṁ paramaṅ iṭattillaṅṅu tiṅkoṭiyāyū tikaḷunna jyōṭiyāyū / viṅkoṭipōle viḷaṅṅi varumataḷ peṅkoṭipōle naṅanniṭṭuṁ lōkavum* (‘The lovely bracelet wearer remains on the left-hand side of *Paramaṅ*, as a strongly fixed creeper, as the shining effulgence, like a heavenly creeper – when it appears manifesting around – the universe keeps proceeding in accordance with this Creeper-Lady’ – NĀYAR 2007: 365). The dynamic Śakti, identical to Grace (*aruḷ*) remains inseparable from static *Paramaṅ* (*poruḷ*). As the *Ādi Śakti*, She manifests Herself assuming the form of the visible universe.

¹⁸ ‘*Sāra* – a figure wherein is expressed a concatenated series such that each succeeding term expresses a characteristic improvement in relation to the preceding’ (GEROW 1971: 322). Cf. Mammaṭa X 43: ‘Climax is the successive rising in the excellence of things to the highest pitch’ (JHĀ 1967: 437).

accompanied by plenty of *-tt-* words (*kattum*; *svattum*; *bhṛttum*) is finalised with the expression *upaniṣatt-uḷḷilēpparaporuḷ* – with the first part referred through *-tt-* to the trio mentioned above and the conclusion and goal of the last part, emphasised by the repetition of *l/l*, which corresponds with the name of *Paḷani* (note that the noun selected by Guru to define bliss is *muttū*, i.e., it can be classified as the *-tt-* group). Since both figures of the word (*śabda*) and sense (*artha*) are involved in such a case, the whole figure can be defined as *śabdārthavarti*.¹⁹ Moreover, the gradation of the trio, suggesting an up and down or vertical orientation, has been set in opposition to the inside or within orientation of the final *uḷḷilē*, which can be treated as a direct allusion to the famous Śaiva myth of *liṅga*.²⁰

Nārāyaṇa defines this Ultimate Source with the Dravidian term *paramporuḷ*, i.e. Ultimate (or Meta) Substance in stanza 52 of *Viśākha Ṣaṣṭi*, although it is claimed to remain within the heart of *Upaniṣads* (*upaniṣattuḷḷilēpparaporuḷ*):

*cattum piṛannumulakattuḷḷa jīvikaḷakattum puṛattum aniśam
sattum tathaiva paracittum punaḥ paramamuttum nijākṛtīyumāyū
kattum vibhāvasu samīpattum aṅṅatha puṛattum yathaiva sakala-
svattum paḷanyavani bhṛttumgabhūvupaniṣattuḷḷilē pparaporuḷ //52//*

The worldly beings who are born to be dead,
Remain incessantly within and beyond [the birth-cycle],
While blazing with their essential form of *Sattū* – Reality,
Higher (transcendent) *Cittū* – Consciousness
And again supreme *Muttū* – Bliss,
Just as the One Abounding in Light (Sun – *vibhāvasu*)
Keeps blazing nearby and far from [its Core];
Thus all the self-possession is owned by the earth of *Paḷani*;

¹⁹ *Śabdārthavarti* – ‘involving both figures of word and sense: a type of multiple *alamkāra* (*samsrṣṭi*) in which are mixed both *śabda* and *artha alamkāras*’ (GEROW 1971: 311).

²⁰ The process of interiorisation of the famous *liṅga* myth can be traced back to Śaiva Siddhānta literature: Śiva is searched for by Gods when turned into a fiery pillar. The vertical orientation (from top to the bottom) symbolises the sphere of deceptive logical recognition, since Śiva should be recognised as the innermost Substance placed within one’s heart. Cf. Nārāyaṇa Guru’s adaptation in *Śiva Śatakam* (cf. PRASĀD 2016: 42): *haribhagavānaravinda sūnūvum nin tiruviḷayāḷaḷarīṅṅatillayonnum; hara, hara pinneyitāraṅṅiṅṅūnnū karaḷilirunnu kaḷicciṭṭunna kōlam? //6//* (‘Neither for Lord Hari, nor for the One who is Son of the Lotus, Your divine dance (or game) could become that which is to be recognised; O Hara, Hara! All the more, who [else] would be able to experience that Form, who keeps playing eternally, having seated within the heart [of each being]?’).

That peak abode (*tuṅga-bhū*) is the Meta-Substance
Contained within (or which is the Heart of) *Upaniṣads*²¹.

TM 8 2437 identifies the supreme state called *Parāparam* with the liberation attained by means of Vedāntic knowledge of the *Tat Tvam Asi* kind. Beyond that, as soon as one becomes *Parāparam* itself, the cycle of birth and death ceases for the sake of final Perfection. When the physical body is rejected, the liberated one shall be *Śivam* – the ultimate Bliss identical in the Siddha tradition to *paramporuḷ*.²² The term *Parāparam* can be understood as ‘that which is deprived of any aspect of *Param*, represented by the *Parai-Paraṅ* (*Para Śivaṅ-Parā Śakti*) level’, as suggested in TM 8 2285.²³ The lack of any *Śakti* (*Parai*) influence protects the liberated soul from the descent into the lower stages of the Path of Self-Realisation. The same supreme state can be defined as *poruḷ* –

²¹ *nirantaram mariccum janiccumkoṅṭṭū samastalōkaññāḷileyum jīvajālaññāḷ āntarikatayūṭe rūpavum bāhyatayūṭe rūpavumārnñū iṭamūiyāḷē sattum atupōle paramamāya cītum atupōletanne paramamāya ānandavum ākunna svantam svarūpattōṭukūṭi athavā ī jīvajālaññāḷeyellām ākṛtiye svantam ākṛtiyākkittirttukōṅṭṭū kattijjivaliccukōṅṭṭeyirikkunna. ētupōle ennāl aṅṇi athavā sūryan toṭṭatuttum atupōletanne puṇamēyūm prakāśikkunna svabhāvattōṭukūṭiyatāññālō; itālōciccu nōkkiyāl sanbattenu paṇayāvunna sakalatum saccidānandasvarūpamāya paḷaṇiyākunna avaniyāl bharikkappeṭṭunnaṭāññū. ā unnaṭabhūmikayāññū upaniṣattukaḷeyellām sāmāyirikkunna paramporuḷ* – ‘The net of sentient beings, along with the [cycle of] birth and death everlasting across all the [created] universe, keeps shining incessantly in the form of interiority as well as in the form of exteriority, when associated with the essential form of *Sattū* – Existence as well as *Cittū* – ultimate Consciousness and *Ānandam* – ultimate Bliss, or [keeps shining] while assuming an essential form which is the form of all sentient beings. Similarly, Fire or Sun remains associated with its self-manifestation, which shines outside as well as nearby. When considered like that, all that can be called wealth is governed by the earth of Paḷani, which is the essential form of *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda*. Such an elevated earth is the Ultimate Substance, which remains the very essence of all *Upaniṣads*’ (PRASĀD 2013: 111–112).

²² *tōññiṭum tvam paḍam tat ppaḍam cūḷavē ēññiṭum asi paḍam immunnōṭu eyuvōn / āñña parāparamākum; pīrapparū ēñña tanatātmā; śivamāyāññirikkum* (‘One, who attained liberation along with these three experienced words: *tom* (= *tvam*), *taṭ* (= *tat*), and encompassing all that *aci* (= *asi*), will become excellent *Parāparam*; released from birth, he shall remain as *Śivam* (*civam*) when united with death’ – NĀYAR 2007: 745). Cf. KANDASWAMY 2010: 2735: ‘“*Tvam*” means “you”, denoting the soul. The word “*tat*” means “that”, denoting Lord Śiva. The word “*asi*” is a verb, meaning “is”. Putting it together, the whole sentence indicates that the soul is Śiva.’ Cf. GANAPATHY 2006b: 267–283.

²³ *paramśivam mēlām brahman [paramam] parattil parambrahman [paramparaṅ] mēlām; parabōdham viriñña svapnaññāḷakarriṭum suṣupti uramtarum mānanditan satyapporuḷē* (NĀYAR 2007: 695): ‘*Paramam* is above both *Param* and *Śivaṅ* (*Paramam* goes above *Para Śivaṅ*, being beyond both the *Parai* and *Paraṅ*); *Paramparaṅ* is what goes beyond [any] *Param* (i.e., it goes beyond any *Param* state as deprived of any *Param* aspect); [the states are]: *Parabōdham* [*naṇavu* – the Awakened State], blossomed [from that] *Svapnam* [*kaṇavu* – the Dream State], after completing [that] – *Suṣupti* [*suḷunai* – the State of Deep Sleep], and the Aloneness of Reality by Itself (*uṇmai tāṇē*) which bestows the hard core – *Mā Nandi* [*Para Mahā Śivam* – the Great Bliss] State’.

when accompanied with its polarised, kinetic version called *aruḥ* (Grace) – or *paramporuḥ*, representing the sharp (sic) top and goal of such a Path, attainable only after death. The suggestion is that the famous Vedāntic scheme of the process of liberation, crowned with the state of *tūriya*, can be supplemented and improved by the Śaiva [Siddhānta] philosophical system with the ultimate state of *tūriyātīta*, which is called by Nārāyaṇa Guru *atiśuddha nirvāṇa*²⁴ – such a state of Permanence, Purity and Transcendence (*nittam parañcuttam = nityam param śuddham*) remains – according to Tirumūlar – the ultimate goal of the extremely pure Śaivas (*parañcutta caivar*).²⁵

²⁴ Cf. *Darśana Mālā* X (*Nirvāṇa Darśanam*) (cf. PRASĀD 2007: 284–297): *nirvāṇam dvividhaṃ śuddham aśuddham ceti tatra yat / śuddham nirvāsanam tadvad aśuddham vāsanānvitam //1//* ('Nirvāṇa is of two kinds, namely the pure and the impure. Of these, pure *nirvāṇa* is devoid of *vāsanas*, while the impure is endowed with *vāsanas*'). *atiśuddhaṃ śuddham iti śuddhaṃ ca dvividhaṃ tathā / aśuddhaśuddhaṃ cāśuddhaṃ aśuddhaśuddhaṃ ucyate //2//* ('Pure *nirvāṇa* is also of two kinds, namely pure [*śuddha*] and the extremely pure [*atiśuddha*]. Similarly, the impure *nirvāṇa* is named twofold, i.e., impure-and-pure [*aśuddhaśuddha*] and impure-and-impure [*aśuddhaśuddha*']). *atiśuddhaṃ tridhā paścād vare caikaṃ varīyasi / ekamekaṃ varīṣthe 'tha śuddhaṃ brahmaṃvidi sthitam //3//* ('The extremely pure *nirvāṇa* is composed of three levels; the first is fixed in the great knower of *Brahman*, the second, in the greater knower of *Brahman*, whereas the last one – in the greatest knower of *Brahman*; thus the whole pure *nirvāṇa* is based on the knower of *Brahman* [*brahmaṃvid*']). *aśuddhaśuddhaṃ virajas tamo 'nyat sarajas tamaḥ / mumukṣau prathamaṃ vidyāt dvitīyaṃ siddhikāmiṣu //4//* ('The impure-pure *nirvāṇa* is devoid of *rajas* and *tamas*, whereas another [impure-impure one] is endowed with *rajas* and *tamas*. The former can be found in the seekers of liberation, whereas the latter – in those who are desirous of magic powers'). *dagdhvā jñānāgninā sarvaṃ uddīṣya jagatām hitam / karoti vidhivat karma brahmaṃvid brahmaṇi sthitaḥ //5//* ('The knower of *Brahman* settled in *Brahman*, having burned down everything in the fire of wisdom, performs actions in accordance with destiny, having dedicated it to the welfare of the people'). *sainnyasya sarvakarmāṇi satataṃ brahmaṇiṣṭhaya / yaś caratyavanau dehayātrāyai brahmaṃvidvaraḥ //6//* ('The one who moves about the world for the sake of maintaining the body (or for the sake of death), who has abandoned all deeds through eternal fixity in *Brahman* itself, is the excellent knower of *Brahman*'). *anyena vedito vetti na vetti svayam eva yaḥ / sa varīyān sadā brahma-nirvāṇam ayam aśnute //7//* ('The one who becomes conscious of something only when informed by others, who is unconscious by himself, is the more excellent one; he always enjoys the *Brahma-nirvāṇa*'). *svayam na vetti kiñcin na vedito 'pi tathaiva yaḥ / sa varīṣṭhaḥ sadāvṛtīśūnyo 'yam Brahma kevalam //8//* ('The one who is not conscious of anything by himself, and he is not so even when informed by others, is the most excellent one; he is devoid of any modifications of mind forever (or is devoid of return [from transcendence] forever); he is the *Brahman* alone'). Cf. YATI 2004: 427–453.

²⁵ Cf. TM 5 1420: *sattum asattum sadasattum tān kaṇṭu siddhum asiddhum cērnniṭā mēlinnū śuddhum aśuddhum kalarnniṭātyarannū nityam paraśuddham śaivartam prēmamē* ('Having realized the Existence, Non-Existence and Existence-Non-Existence alone, after breaking the connection with consciousness and unconsciousness; having remained with no immersion in the pure as well as impure – that what is eternal (*nittam = nityam*) and transcendent (*param*) is the loving grace (*nēyam*) of [extremely] pure Śaivas ([*parañ*]cutta *caivar*)' – NĀYAR 2007: 439). Some commentaries explain the term *param* as *paramporuḥ* (BĀLACUBRAMANIYAṆ 2017: 320; VĀDARĀJAṆ 2014/2015: 223), whereas NĀYAR 2007: 439 and ARUMUGAM 2010: 1526 associate it with the term *cutta* (*paracutta*).

Nārāyaṇa Guru depicts the sphere of the *ājñā cakra* once again in stanza 55, by means of several Sanskrit figures of speech. The first can be defined as a double *pratīpa*, i.e., a type of *upamā* (comparison or simile) in which the *upameya* (the object which is being compared) appears to be superior to the *upamā* (the standard of comparison).²⁶ The latter is represented here by the crescent, mentioned through its Sanskrit equivalents: *pañcamī* – ‘the fifth-night-crescent’²⁷ and *vidhukalā* – ‘the digit of the Moon’. The fifth-night-crescent – the famous cool-maker (*anuṣṇakarān*) – is put to shame by the forehead space of Subrahmaṇyan. Simultaneously, the [same] digit of the Moon – the well-known example of brightness (*sphurat*) – remains dimmed with the mark made of fragrant musk in the centre [of the eyebrows].²⁸ The point is that the irony (*vyāja*)²⁹ of such degradation of the Moon for the sake of a ‘stained’ musk spot is based on the philosophical concept of Śaivism: the crescent or the digit, especially the last sixteenth (*amā kalā*) or the additional – seventeenth digit (*nīrvāṇa kalā*), – are the ‘famous’ *amṛta* makers of the Kuṇḍalinī Yoga system.³⁰ Moreover, the central point of such an ironic composition, i.e., the spot of fragrant musk, is called *kaḷaṅkam*, ‘the dot, mark or stain, impurity and defamation’:

*pañcamyanuṣṇakaranañcunna phālabhuvī cañcal sukuntaḷabharaiḥ
kiñcitsphurad vidhukalāñcatkaḷankamatu tañcunna nanmṛgamadam*

²⁶ ‘*Pratīpa* – against the grain – a simile in which an affected pity or blame is directed at the subject of comparison in the presence of the object, or vice versa’ (GEROW 1971: 208).

²⁷ Cf. *Kāli Nāṭakam* 32–38 (cf. PRASĀD 2008: 20–22): *parampañcamīccadranum tōṛrupōyi tīrayakkappuṛam kuṛramillennu tēri tīramviṭtu kappam koṭukkunna neṛrikkurikkullil vñāḷiyēḷāmaraññāñārayakkanvahan cārttumurvīmañālan mahādevānum brahmanum munparāyōrahō! māyayilpeṭṭīrikkunnu citram!* (‘The fifth-night-crescent, having regarded [its descent as natural], having transgressed the wave (or veil), while thinking there is no fault in that, having rejected its firmness, fell into the spot marked on Your forehead while paying tribute [to its brightness]; the Lord of the spacious Earth, whose waist is decorated with a garland of seven oceans, *Mahādevan* and *Brahman*, as well as other Gods – oh! – all of them are trapped by *māya*’s magic – what a wonder!’).

²⁸ Prasād compares the musk mark to the spot seen in the Moon: ‘The forehead region that makes the fifth night crescent stand aghast, is beautified by the dangling curls and also by the vaguely seen musk-mark in its middle, like the black spot seen in the moon. If, o mind, within you melt down these into your being, then you surely will be graced by the God whose bedstead is *Palani*’ (PRASĀD 2006: 227). However, since the crescent, and not the Moon is mentioned by Nārāyaṇan, it seems to be quite unusual to think of the spot seen in the slender digit.

²⁹ *Vyāja* is a type of *śleṣa* (pun) in which ‘one meaning may be flattery, the other – reproof – ironic praise’ (GEROW 1971: 294).

³⁰ *Amā kalā* is said to be placed in the moon sphere within the triangle symbolising Kailāsa placed within *sahasrāra* (or beyond), and described ‘as thin as the hundredth part of the lotus-fibre’, lustrous, in a shape like the crescent moon turned downward, discharging a stream of nectar. In the lap of this *kalā* is the *nīrvāṇa kalā*, subtler and also turned downward, bestowing divine knowledge (AVALON 1950: 446–449; 457–458).

*neñcil poliññurukil āñcitta tē paḷani mañcasthitanre kṛpayu-
neñcolppattitam udañcikkil ninkaloru pañcatvavum piṭipetā //55//*

Within the forehead space adorned with loads of lovely,
Dangling ringlets which puts to shame
The Cool Maker (*anuṣṇakaran*) – the fifth night crescent,
The charming [fragrant] musk – ‘The Beast-Ruttishness’ –
Rests as the stain [in the centre] that puts to shame
The Moon’s digit flashing just a little;
O mind, once you become condensed within the Heart
And dissolved [finally into That],
The mercy of the One who ascends the throne of Paḷaṇi is yours;
If you become elevated by obediently following my words
You will never attain the five-fold state of dissolution.³¹

The whole figure of speech becomes comprehensible when analysed in the context of the *Bindu* concept in the Śaiva system. First of all, *Bindu* represents the source of power for the origin of the universe; such a *Bindu* shines while entering into the exterior and interior (*puram agam eṅgum pukund-oḷir vindu* – TM 7 1929³²). TM 7 1923 states that *Kuṇḍalini* power arises from

³¹ *pañcamicandran aṅcippōkunna mātiriyuḷḷatum, tōṛrupinvāññippōkunna tarattiluḷḷatum cañcalamāya, iḷakiyāḷunna nalla kuṇunirakaḷōtukūṭiyatum āya nerriṭṭaṭṭil vidhukalaye, candrakalaye alpamonnu teḷiññūkānunna tarattiluḷḷa kaḷankamennapōle cērnniṇaṇṇiyirikkunna nalla kastūrikoṅṭuḷḷa kuṛiyum. allayō cittamē, ninre uḷḷil pūrṇamāyi teḷiññu ninnu nī atil urukiccerūkayāṅenkil ninakkū paḷaniye mañcamākkikkōṅṭū sthiti ceyyunna subrahmaṇyanre kṛpa labhikkukatanne ceyyūm. enre ī upadēṣatte paṭittaramākkikkōṅṭū naṭappu mārggamākkikkōṅṭū nī atanusariccū uyarukayāṅenkil ninaku maraṇamennatu sambhavikkukayē illa* – ‘On the surface of the forehead which stays in touch with charming, shaking or dangling curls of hair and which is of such a kind that it puts to shame the defeated five-night-crescent, there is a mark of sweet-smelling musk which remains adhered, just like a stain that makes the Moon digit shine just a little. O mind, if you remain dissolved within such a state, having illuminated wholly your inside – the mercy of Subrahmaṇyan, who resides while ascending the throne of Paḷani can be attained by you. As soon as you transform this instruction of mine into your own conduct and when you make such conduct your own Path, in accordance with that – if you remain dissolved [within such a state] – there will be no more death for you’ (PRASĀD 2013: 117–118).

³² *puṛamākam eṅṅum pukunnoḷirum vindutan nīram atu veṇma, nikaḷnādam cemmū / uṇum unba śakti śiva pādāmāyū āyur tīraṇam tannoṭu gēhavamaruḷum ceyal koṅṭē //* (‘The hue of the *Vindu* that shines forth to enter all around – within and beyond – is silvery white, whereas that of the spreading *Nādam* is golden-red; while rejoicing in union, the *Catti* (*Śakti*) appears as the descending Grace of Śiva (*Civapātam*); along with excellence, they shower their grace and final release’ – NĀYAR 2019: 564). Almost the same phrase, defining the primeval source of the universe, was used by Guru in his most important philosophical work – *Āmōpadēśa Śatakam* 1: *aṛivilum ēriyariññiṭṭunnavantannuruvilum ottu puṛattum ujivalikkum karuvinu kaṇṇukaḷaṅcumuḷḷaṭakkiterutere viṇuvanāññiyōṭiṭṭēnam* (‘To the mould – the Core which shines forth outside and inside as the essential form of the knower who transcends each act

the primeval *Bindu* ([*para*] *vinduvil* *ōṅgu kuṇḍaliyum*). Another aspect of *Bindu* is contained within the body, and becomes transformed into the *bindu* of the mind; when associated with wisdom, it becomes the *kalā* or portion of the mind (*maṇamāḡuṅ kalāvindu* – TM 7 1935).³³ When absorbed by the kindled fire of the *mūlādhāra cakra*, it moves upward through the *suṣumnā* to the moon region of the *yogi*'s body; here he is able to drink the ambrosia of the Moon (*matiyatt-amudai* – TM 7 1949).³⁴ In TM 7 1959, Tirumulār calls it the *Vindu* of the ambrosial Moon (*amudac-cacivindu*).³⁵ *Bindu* is also said to rise together with *Nādam* in order to commingle with the Moon and release an *amṛta* rain as a response to a fire oblation (TM 7 1971).³⁶ The union of the *Bindu* and *Nādam* can be depicted by the image of the dot and the crescent in Tantric literature.³⁷ Thus the union of the musk dot (*mṛgamadam*) and the crescent (*vidhukalā*) mentioned by Guru can be interpreted as the gradual transformation of the *Bindu* of the body into that of the mind (*kalā vindu*), and

of knowledge – one should bow to That [Core] while chanting, having prostrated oneself repeatedly after restraining the five senses within'). (Cf. YATI 2013: 1–7).

- ³³ *kāyattilatū mūdinattil kalarnneṅṅumāyū kāyattinūḷ tan manādi kalāvinduvākum / nēyattil ninnōrilatū nūṅṅā viṭātākil, māyattil cērttōr manassōḷāḷivōr* ('The *Vindu*, when mingled for three days in the body, will become the mind of the person within the same body – the *kalā* (the portion of the mind); as for those who remain in loving grace (*nēyam*), it will not leave them; as for those who wander in delusion (*māyam*), it will perish along with the mind' – NĀYAR 2019: 566). Cf. SOMASUNDARAM 2010: 2126: 'In association with mind it gains wisdom and becomes the *Bindu* of wisdom (*jñāna bindu*)'.
- ³⁴ *vaṛṛumāranal kōrttu maṛiccuḷyartti tuṛraccuḷiyanal corukiccuṭaruru / muṛru matiyamrtamatu muṛayōḷu erriyūṅṅuvōr śivayōgikalē* ('As soon as the dried fire is kindled, reversed and strengthened, the condensed whirling fire caused to enter [the *suṣumnā*] will appear as Effulgence (*cuḍar*); those who can control and drink the *Amuda* of the Moon-Mind ripened – again and again – are *Civayōgis* (*Śivayōgis*) indeed' – NĀYAR 2019: 570–571).
- ³⁵ *amṛta śaśivinduvilā, vindu māññiatu amṛtappunalāyōḷi agniyil ppulki / amṛtaśivabhōga māyayākumatāl siddhicēṛṅṅnu amṛtakkala śaktiyārṅṅiṭum yōgiyūm* ('When *Vindu* perishes to appear as the *Vindu* of the Ambrosial Moon, and when the flow of *Amuda* perishes within the fire, there is a state of *Śiva-Bhoga* (*Civabōgam*); hence – along with *Siddhi* – for the *yogi* shall appear the preservation (or joy) of the *Amuda*-fruit [*amuda-p(h)alāvaṇam*] there' – NĀYAR 2019: 573). The *Vindu* of the Ambrosial Moon leads to the ultimate state of *Śiva Bhoga*, in which the *yogi* can enjoy the permanent *Amṛta* flow.
- ³⁶ *vinduvum nādavum mēvi uṭal kūṭi candranōṭāṅṅu talayārṅṅu ninnāl / antara vānattamṛtam vannūṅṅum aṅṅudi mantram āhūṭiyākum* ('As soon as the *Vindu* and *Nādam* rise together, in union – and join at the top with the Moon, *Amudam* will rain down from the distant (or: inner – *antara*) heaven, and the *mandiram* (*mantram*) from there will become the fire oblation (*ākuti* = *āhuti*)' – NĀYAR 2019: 578). According to Somasundaram, the *Bindu* and *Nādam* refer here to the *iḍā* and *piṅgalā* channels (SOMASUNDARAM 2010: 2163).
- ³⁷ WOODROFFE 2014: 2: 'The *Parabindu* is represented as a circle the centre of which is *Brahmapada*, wherein are *Prakṛti-puruṣa*; the circumference of which is encircling *māyā*. It is in the crescent of *nirvāṅkalā* the seventeenth, which is again in that of *amākalā* the sixteenth, digit of the moon circle (*candramaṅḍala*), situated above the sun-circle (*sūryamaṅḍala*), the Guru and the *Hamsaḡ* in the pericarp of the 1.000 petalled lotus (*sahasrārapadma*)'.

finally into the *Vindu* of the ambrosial Moon (*amudac-cacivindu*). Hence the second part of the stanza addresses the Mind (*citta*), which should perish and become dissolved within the chest or the Heart (*neñcil poliññurukil āñcitta*) in order to experience the Lord's compassion (*kṛpa*) resulting in the lack of *pañcatvam* (death), i.e., immortality (*amṛtatvam*). The figure called *virodhavat* (contradictory)³⁸ – which states that the musk dot, though it appears in the form of the stain or defamation, brings prosperity and bliss, as rooted in the Śaiva concept of *Bindu*, approves the real process of transformation of the impure *Bindu* of the body into the pure *Bindu* of the Mind within the moon region of an individual being. This is accompanied by the image of a waning Moon with only one digit left, or possibly by the vision of a tiny flash of the additional seventeenth digit, which is to grant *amṛtatvam* through the Lord's Grace. As soon as one considers the type of quality and action of a particular object, i.e., the musk dot, to be contradictory in nature (*mrgam* – '[wild] beast'; *madam* – 'intoxication; ruttishness; exhilaration drink'; *kalaṅkam* – 'impurity' as opposed to its charm or fragrance), one can find the figure called *guṇakriyā* [*virodha*] (a type of contradiction) there.³⁹ Such a contradiction, however, can be easily explained and understood by means of the twilight language of *Tirumandiram*: the fragrant musk symbolises here the scent of the Lord's Grace emitted within the central channel of *suṣumna* of the awakened, motionlessly 'self-centralised' yogi who is capable of transforming the impure *tattvas* into pure Śakti thanks to such a Grace.⁴⁰

The whole process of such a transformation which is aimed at the moon region of the body proceeds by means of opening the lower *cakras* situated below the head realm; the highest of them – *viśuddhi* or the throat *cakra*, constitutes the border between two regions: the dark one (the body below throat level) and the bright one (the sphere of the head, symbolising space or

³⁸ '*Virodhavat* – "contradictory" – a type of *arthāntaranyāsa* in which a seeming paradox is justified'. Cf. 'The orb of night, though covered with blemishes, delights the whole world; even if he has faults, confers favours upon others' (GEROW 1971: 120).

³⁹ '*Virodha* – "contradiction" – a figure in which contradictory properties are expressed of the same subject'. '*Guṇakriyā* – a type of complex *virodha* where incompatibility is shown between actions and qualities or traits of the same subject' (GEROW 1971: 265–267).

⁴⁰ TM 5 1459: *pūvinuḷḷil gandham porunnuka pōl jīvanil śivam pūttirikkuṁ / ōviyam pōl uṇarum vallārkkatu nābhi aṇaṇṇa naṭutaṛiyē* (NĀYAR 2019: 428): 'Within those self-realized motionlessly in awakening like a still painting, the Heart [of such *Jīvas*] is blossomed with the fragrance of *Civaṅ / Civam (civamaṅam)*, like the scent within the flower (*pūviṇil kaṇdam = gandham*) remains united; it is [like] a stick set up in the centre (*naḍu taṛi*) and embraced by a musk-deer (*nāvi = nābhi*)'. The term *nābhi* introduced by the author of *Tirumandiram* here means also the centre or the middle point, which corresponds with the idea of the stick set up in the centre (*naḍu taṛi*) symbolising the activated *suṣumṇā* channel.

the ether).⁴¹ As stated by TM 7 1974, the latter alone is conducive to yoga.⁴² In order to mark the boundary line, the Lord's throat was blackened.⁴³ Guru makes an allusion to this concept in stanza 29:

*jñānapradan tridaśasēnapradhāni kulayānattalānujanumay-
kkānandadan paḷaniyānandavāsi gaḷabhūnandiyōrkka manamē
phēnaprabhāhasita vēnal prabhāta ruci dīnapradīna paramām
yānapradēsamatu dānasthalasmarāṇa dīnakṣayattinutakum //29//*

O heart, please remember the ultimate happiness

(Or *Nandi*⁴⁴) of the throat-spacious [Lord],

Who resides in the bliss of Paḷaṇi; who bestows bliss on Uma;

Who is the younger brother of the Elephant-Headed One [Gaṇapati];

The commander-in-chief of the army of the Gods;

The one who grants wisdom.

Such space of pilgrimage (or the Path [of *Kuṇḍalinī*; breath])

Is the ultimate point of the destruction of misery –

⁴¹ '[...] the body-space below the throat stands for darkness or ignorance. When the sex-energy (*śukla*) is directed below in this body-space it is dark. When the *śukla*-energy is sublimated above the throat, it stands for the *amṛta* and it illuminates the body-space above the throat' (GANAPATHY 2006d: 214).

⁴² *uramaṭi mēdini, untiyilappū viraviya tanmula mēviya kīlū agni / karumula mītiliṣayum kaikkīlū kālū viraviya sundaramēl mēni vēlijumē* ('The firm feet [represent] the earth; there is water up to the navel; the neighbouring area spread below the breast is fire; above the scorched breast and below the shoulder (neck) there is wind; the neighbouring area of the throat (*kanda* = *kaṇṭha[ra]*) and beyond is space' – NĀYAR 2019: 578–579).

⁴³ ARUMUGAM 2006b: 132. Cf. TM 2 521: *aṇḍamoṭu eṇḍiṣatānnum adhōmukha kaṇṭham karutta karuttuṇarunnilla nērāyū / uṇṭatu nañcennuracciṭuvōr uṇarvillātōr vēṇṭala māla viri jaṭayōneyaṇṇē* ('The Downward-Faced Lord (*adhōmugam* = *adhomukham*) supports eight directions along with the egg of the universe (*aṇḍamoḍu*); His darkened throat, nobody knows the purpose of that. "He consumed the poison" – the non-awakened ones would quarrel like that; He is the One who bears reddish matted hair and the garland of white skulls' – NĀYAR 2007: 182–183).

⁴⁴ The *Nandi* may denote the mediator between the Ultimate Reality (Subrahmaṇyan) and the devotee or Grace itself, in accordance with TM 4 948: *ninnīṭum cakram nīl bhūvi ellām. mannatāyū ninna māya nalnāthanum / kannatāyū kkaṇṇiṭum nandipōle kunnīṭa ninnū niṣṭha koṇṭōṇē* ('The fixed *cakra* extends throughout the whole universe; it is the golden hall [of *Cidambaram*] for the great Lord of the *Māyā* which remained flourishing into that [space]; great *Nandi* milking (or yielding) the milk of the grace-bearer as a calf (or as melted within), staying at the mountain top, remains as the receiver of [devotion]' – NĀYAR 2007: 308). He can be also treated as the One who bestows bliss, as in TM 7 1804: *akam pukkavan aṭiyaniḷ aruḷatāl akam pukkum aṭiyilla aruḷillōr / akam pukkū ānandamākki śśivamākki akam pukkavan nandiyānandiyāyū* ('Thanks to the grace (*aruḷāl*) He entered the Heart (*agam*) of His servant; for those who did not experience [His] Grace, He is not to be known even after entering the Heart; He entered the Heart having brought bliss [*ānandam*] as Bliss – *Śivam* [*civam*]; He entered the Heart being the Blissful One [*Ā-nandi*] bringing bliss [*ānandi*]' – NĀYAR 2007: 548).

The bright dawn of the summer [season]
 Mocked for (or expanded with) the brightness of the foam;
 Remembrance of that region of boons
 Would be helpful for the annihilation of suffering.⁴⁵

The throat sphere is the utmost limit for the *sūrya-maṇḍala* associated with *anāhata*, and constitutes the lowest level of *candra-maṇḍala*, which extends from *ājñā* up to *sahasrāra* and beyond.⁴⁶ The lowest sphere of the body is called *agni-maṇḍala*, spreading upward from the *mūlādhāra cakra*. As the *viśuddha cakra* sphere (*gaḷabhū*) becomes the turning point in the liberation process, it is associated with the annihilation of suffering and the remembrance of ultimate happiness (*nandī*). Guru calls this space the holy area of pilgrimage or the goal of the path of liberation (*yānapradēśam*), which leads through the central channel of the body. It is the final point of the destruction brought upon the disease – the dawn light of the summer season, ridiculed for (or blossomed with) the brightness of foam. Nārāyaṇan’s concept evokes two simultaneous pictures, namely the vision of the dark ocean of the body churned with the pestle of *suṣumnā* or *prāṇa* and the vision of the sacrificial fire kindled in the *mūlādhāra* pit in order to burn the *Bindu* and lift it to the sphere of the Sun (*anāhata cakra*). As soon as all these elements are elevated by the burning fire

⁴⁵ *jñānante pradānam ceyyunnavanum tridaśanmāruṭe sēnaykku pradhāniyāyīṭṭuḷlavanum (dēvanmāruṭe sēnādhīpatiāyīṭṭuḷlavanum) kolayānayuṭe talayōḷukūṭiyavanre anujanum umaykkū ānandatte dānam ceyyunnavanum paḷanimalayil ānandattōḷukkūṭi vasikkunnavanum āya subrahmaṇyanre kaṇṭhapradēśam nandippikkunna (ānandippikkunna) svabhāvattōḷukūṭiyatāṇennu manassilākkikkōḷḷuka. allayō manassē, vēnal prabhātaruciyuṭe phēnaprabhaye hasitamākkikaḷayunna (vēnalkkālalte prabhātasamayattu peṭṭennu peṭṭennu varddhiuccu varunna prakāśattinre bhaṅgiye niṣprabhamākki kaḷayunna tarattilūḷḷa) ā gaḷapradēśam dainiyataykkū nallavaṇṇam dīnatvam nalkunnatine lakṣyamākkikoṇṭṭuḷḷa (duhkkatte tīre illātākkikaḷayunnatine lakṣyamākkikoṇṭṭuḷḷa) tīrthayātraykku lakṣyamākkāvunna pradēśamānatū (dhyānaviṣayamākkāvunna pradēśamānatū) ellā abhiṣṭāṇṇaleyum dānam ceyyunna ā pradēśatte sambandhiccuḷḷa dhyānam jīvitattile dīnatakaḷellām illātāyī tīrunnatinū upakarikkum – ‘Please realize within your heart that the realm of the throat of Subrahmaṇyan who dwells with bliss (blissfully) at the hill of Paḷani, who bestows the gift of bliss on Uma, who is the younger brother of the one endowed with the Elephant head, who is the commander-in-chief of the army of gods and who grants knowledge as a gift – is associated with [His] self-manifestation which brings happiness (bliss). O mind, that region of the throat which turns the foamy-white light of the dawn’s brightness in the summer season into a laughing stock (i.e., which turns into gloom and obscurity the charm of the brightness that comes suddenly at dawn during the summer season) is the region which could have become the goal of holy pilgrimage (that is the region which might have become the object of meditation), which makes the proper destruction of suffering the ultimate goal (or which has for its goal the bringing about of the extreme annihilation of grief). The meditation upon that realm which brings whatever is desired as a gift – may be used for the annihilation of all miseries in a devotee’s life’ (PRASĀD 2013: 65–66).*

⁴⁶ GANAPATHY 2006d: 204.

of *Kuṇḍalinī* to reach the moon region of the body, as stated in TM 7 1958, the cool ambrosia will manifest itself there.⁴⁷ Secondly, the brightness of foam brings to mind the concept of the ocean, limited by the atmosphere and dark clouds, compared to the sphere of the body and throat space in two stanzas of Guru's hymns devoted to Śivan (*Śiva Prasāda Pañcakam* 4⁴⁸ and *Sadā Śiva Darśanam* 2⁴⁹). In both of them Nārāyaṇan makes an allusion to the famous myth of poison swallowed by God which stained his throat with darkness.⁵⁰ However, the very same accident is recalled in the context of the Lord's grace or mercy, which brings down the *amṛtū*-flow. Consequently, both visions have been composed based on a figure of speech called *vyatireka* (distinction).⁵¹ Each stanza introduces the contrast between the darkness of the Lord's neck and the brightness of His Grace or ambrosia, with the limit of the two-way transformation represented by Śivan's throat.

In the case of the stanza given above, the contrast between these two spheres (below and above the neck) is based on the opposing results brought

⁴⁷ *vinduvām bījam mēviya mūla nandiyatine agniyāl nayamārnneri / ccantamillā [ati] bhānuvatine kaṅṭham mēlākki ccandranil ccālikkil taṅṅamṛtē* ('Having lovingly burnt (*nayam*) with increased fire the seed of *Bindu* laid in the abode of the root [*cakra*], having lifted it to the endless Sun (*bāṇu* = *bhānu*) and above the throat [*cakra* = *kaṅṭha*], as soon as one unites with the Moon [region], the cool *amuda* [appears]' – NĀYAR 2007: 307).

⁴⁸ *kaḷamuṅṭu karuttatu nī garaḷam kaḷamuṅṭatukoṅṭu kṛpānidhiyē / kaḷamuṅṭoru koṅṭaloṭta kaṭalkkaḷavuṅṭoru sīma ninakku nahi // 4 //* ('O the ocean of compassion! Your neck is black, since you swallowed the blackness of poison; there is a limit for the ocean equal with the dark raincloud (which is the mark of an open space, or which seems to be the upper border of the ocean – but there is no limitation for You'). (Cf. PRASĀD 2015b: 30–32).

⁴⁹ *kaḷam karutta koṅṭaluṅṭiruṅṭa koṅṭakaṅṭeḷum kaḷankamuṅṭa kaṅṭanenkilum kaniṅṅukoḷḷuvān / iḷampīrakkolunnirunnu minnumunnatattalakkulaḷam kaviṅṅā kōmaḷakkuṭam cumanna kuiṅṅaram //2//* ('Having seen Your tuft of hair which has darkened, as if containing a raincloud which is of the blackness of Your throat (or defilement), although You are the one whose throat is stained with double [extreme] darkness (or dirt), [You shine like] the dark reddish mountain, being the charming vessel which has overflowed with the pond raised high at the top of the head illuminated with the Tender Sprout of the crescent – in order to contain (or bestow) grace'). (Cf. PRASĀD 2001: 13–16).

⁵⁰ It is quite interesting that in another mystical poem – *Svānubhava Gīti* – Guru introduces the vision of the one ocean covered with moss which symbolises impurities (*malas*). As soon as such a moss (*śaivalam*) is removed, the Ocean appears to be the perfect purity (*vaimalyam*). Cf. stanza 20: *kaivalyakkāṭalonṅṅāyū vaimalyam pūṅṅiṭunnatoruvaḷiyām jīvitvam keṭumennē śaivalam akalunnatinu paragatīyām //20//* ('The ocean of soleness attains its perfect purity in such a union; it is itself the proper path; it is the ultimate path [as well as goal] for removing the moss – as soon as the state of life becomes extinguished.') In reference to the stanza given above, the term *phena* denotes the scum as well. Cf. NĀYAR 2010: 397–399; PRASĀD 2002: 67–69.

⁵¹ '*Vyatireka* – a figure wherein two notoriously similar things are said to be subject to a point of difference; usually the subject of comparison is stated to excel the object, surpassing the norm of its own comparability, hence, an inverted simile' (GEROW 1971: 276).

to the devotee by each of them. The throat region results in bliss (*ānandam*; *nandī*), whereas the region below bestows suffering or disease (*dīnam*). On the other hand, as they are inseparably connected and interchangeable, the pun [*phēna*] *prabhāhasita* can be interpreted in four ways. From the perspective of the lower stage, the whole process of transformation brings the positive result of the blossoming of the foam's brightness, i.e., the *amṛtū* obtained as a result of the churning of the ocean. From the perspective of the highest stage, where the ambrosial moon shines, the extreme brightness (*phēnaprabhā*) emitted by the summer Sun of *sūrya-maṇḍala* can easily be ridiculed (*hasita*). Again, from the lower perspective, the transformation of the silver *Bindu*, as compared to the red and golden hue of fire and the sun, respectively, evokes a positive association with blossoming whiteness or foamy brightness; from the perspective of the moon region which extends beyond *sahasrāra*, such an initial stage would not be impressive enough. In such a way, the point of transformation is indicated by the ambiguity of the three terms, a kind of pun which becomes the mark of inner pilgrimage, constituting the movable border between two spheres: the one granting joy (above the throat) and the other resulting in grief (below the throat).

One can find an extremely elaborate example of the figure of speech called *prahelikā* (a riddle or puzzle)⁵² in the stanza 37 of *Viśākha Ṣaṣṭi*:

*dēhattil nāniti dṛḍhāhanta marttyanatimōhattināspadamatar-
kkōham vivēkamoṭe rōham vināpi nijasōham nilaykkiṭa varā
āhanyamānam api lōkattin-ammṛḍu tadāhatte viṭṭu variki-
llāhanta tan paḷani gēhasthavahni mayilēhattilēri varaṇam //37//*

The fixed I-ness [which appears to be the conviction]
That 'I am identical with this body',⁵³

⁵² 'Prahelikā – a riddle, puzzle, conundrum, a phrase, statement or question constructed deliberately so that its meaning shall be misconstrued, but in some way intimating a solution to the difficulty thus created' (GEROW 1971: 210).

⁵³ *dēhamāṇṇu nān ennuḷla uṛappuḷla ahanta manuṣyaṇṇu atiyāya mōhattinū (satyāsatyāṇṇaḷ tiriccarīyātirikkuṇna avasthayuṭe paramakāṣṭhayakkū) aṭisthānakāraṇamāyirikkunnu. ikkāryattil enikkū yātoru samāsayavumilla. ī vivēkattōṭukūṭi svayam uddharikkunna sādhanakūṭāte 'sōham' enna nila kaivarunnatinū (paramamāya satyamtanneyāṇṇu nān ennu sākṣātkarikkunnatinū) avasaramuṇṭāvukayilla. ī lōkam naściccupōkunna svabhāvatt oṭukūṭiyātāṇēṅkilpōlum ā lōkattinre ā ēṛṛavum sūksmāṁśamāya nān bhāvatte appōḷtanne upēkṣicciṭṭu varukayāṇēṅkil (upēkṣiccu varumbōḷ) entorāścaryam! ā paḷaniyākunna gēhattil sthiti ceyyunna jyōtiḥsvarūpam mayilinumēḷ etrayum tātparyapūrvvam kayarī (ēham = valiya tātparyam) anugrahikkān ettaṇam – 'The confirmed I-ness of "I am the body" conviction becomes the main reason for the extreme delusion of human beings (i.e., for the extremity of the state devoid of proper recognition between what is real and what is unreal). There is no doubt in that for me. Along with this [power of] discrimination, without self-liberating practice and worship, there is a chance to achieve the state of "I am He" (i.e., to experience the state*

Becomes the basis for the extreme delusion in mortal beings;
 Such a conclusion is free from any doubts.
 Indeed, without the ascension by means of the power of discrimination
 There would be no space (or chance) for the state ‘I am Him myself’;
 As soon as one abandons that I-sense [*aham*] –
 The most subtle and sweet aspect of the world
 Even as the not dead yet – the I-ness [*ahanta*] will not approach then;
 Thereafter the fire – effulgence which remains in the abode of Paṇi
 Should come and rise within me in the form of medicine for licking
 (Or: Should come, having violently mounted the back of the peacock).⁵⁴

The first part of the stanza becomes the exposition of a logical statement which cannot be questioned (*atarkkōham* = *attarka* + *ūham*), namely ‘The firm I-ness that *I am identical with this body*, becomes the basis for the extreme delusion in mortal beings’. Is it the case that such an inference (*ūham* = *anumānam*) cannot be questioned (*atarka*), if Nārāyaṇa includes the most essential question, i.e., ‘*kō’ham*’ (‘Who am I’), within the very same definition? He gives us a direct answer in the next part of the stanza: *vivēkamoṭe rōham vināpi nijasōham nilaykṛta varā* – ‘without **ascending** through the power of discrimination, there is no chance for the inborn state ***I am Him***’. Thus the final solution assumes the form of the sequence: *kō’ham* – *rōham* – *sōham*. Still it constitutes the theoretical aspect of the whole matter. The real answer can be found in the second part of the stanza, where Guru provides us with a vision of the practical aspect of *vivēkamoṭe rōham*, i.e., ascension by means of *vivēkam*. In the twilight language of the Siddhas, the ascending fire (*vahni... ēri varaṇam*) symbolises *Kuṇḍalinī* power kindled in the *mūlādhāra cakra*. Although Guru introduces the well-known image of Subrahmaṇyan, who vehemently mounts the peacock (*mayil ēhattil ēri*),⁵⁵ the final solution

of “I am the ultimate Reality or Truth”). Although this world remains in connection with the perishable self-manifestation, after the state of myself as an extremely subtle aspect of such a world becomes rejected, if it comes back, it would be strange indeed! That essential form of effulgence which resides in the abode of Paṇi, having mounted with great impetus the back of the peacock, should come in order to grant grace’ (PRASĀD 2013: 81–82).

⁵⁴ The second method of translation is accepted by Prasād; he also interprets the phrase *varikillāhanta* as *varikil ā hanta* – ‘if it comes to reject, what a wonder’. Cf. translation: ‘The self-identity strong that “I am this body” is the cause of utter confusion for humans, no doubt there is as to this. Without uplifting oneself with this discrimination clear no attaining the state of “I am That” is reached. As you give up then and there the I-sense, the subtlest part of this perishable world, what a wonder, then should come that fire residing at Paṇi riding on his peacock with all concern for you’ (PRASĀD 2006: 220).

⁵⁵ Here the form *ēhattil* – Loc. of *ēham* meaning *valiya tātparyam* – as stated by Prasād, could be the Mal. version of Sanskrit *ehas* – ‘anger, emulation’, *eha* – ‘desirous, wishing’. (MONIER-WILLIAMS 2011: 233).

is revealed through a different reading of these constituent words. As soon as one is capable of reading such a statement (and being capable of doing so is equal to direct experience) as [*vahni*] *mayi lēhattil ēri varaṇam*, i.e., ‘[the fire] should come as rising within me in the form of medicine’, the process of unraveling a mystery comes to an end. Such a multi-levelled riddle has been crowned with *samāgata*;⁵⁶ however, the whole vision operates on a variety of levels, which renders univocal classification impossible. For example, the first part of the stanza provides the reader with more or less Vedāntic concepts, whereas within the second part the Śaiva Siddhānta, Kuṇḍalinī Yoga etc. is preferred. Accordingly, the method of ascension (*rōham*) by means of *vivēkam* (power of discrimination) has been changed for the yogic practice, such as kindling the *Kuṇḍalinī* fire, along with the use of herbal medicines as well as presumably the *Kecarī Mudra* of Haṭha Yoga, suggested by the term *lēham*, ‘medicine; licking’.⁵⁷

The medicinal herb or medicine as the alternative version or equivalent of wisdom, recognition or liberation (which is the popular concept in the Siddhas’ texts⁵⁸) can be depicted with the help of another figure of speech, namely a pun (*śleṣa*), as in stanza 39:⁵⁹

*vanbārnnaḥaṅkaraṇa, konbārnna durviṣaya kanbārnna mōhanirayā
kinbāka dāruvatil vanpāpa duṣṭaphalamanbā vaḷarṇnu varavē
canbā śataccravi nilinbādi sēvyamiha nin pādabhakti muḷuvan
sanbādyamākumoru tunbākkanaṃ paḷani munbālayādhipa vibhō //39//*

That ‘Ignorant One’⁶⁰ – the *Nux vomica* tree,
Which has the I-sense for the pride-power,
The vile sense objects for branches, the series of delusion for twigs,
Wondrously bears the rotten fruits
Of [one’s own] serious sins when growing [here];

⁵⁶ ‘*Samāgata* – conjoined – a conundrum whose solution is already contained in the statement of the conundrum and is revealed by a different reading of the constituent words’ (GEROW 1971: 216).

⁵⁷ Nārāyaṇa mentions this *mudrā* in chapter IX of *Darśana Mālā* (*Yoga Darśanam* – cf. PRASĀD 2007: 277–280): *dhyānam antar bhruvor dṛṣṭir jihvāgraṃ lambikordhvataḥ / yadā syāt khecarī mudrā nidrāśayādi nāśinī //9//* (‘When the gaze in meditation is fixed in between the eyebrows, and the tip of the tongue touches above the uvula (the soft palate), then it is *khecarī mudrā* (the “moving about in the sky” position), the destroyer of drowsiness, fatigue and the like’).

⁵⁸ Cf. NANDKUMAR 2004: 195–216.

⁵⁹ Cf. GEROW 1971: 288.

⁶⁰ Nārāyaṇa selects in such a case the Sanskrit name of the *Nux vomica*, which means ‘immature; ignorant; stupid’ (*kim-pāka*).

May the devotion of Your feet, shining like hundreds of lightning bolts
 Which are to be worshipped here by all, starting from the gods,
 Become totally transformed into the tip
 (Or: the power of discrimination; medicinal herb),
 Which becomes the complete fulfillment [perfection],
 Lord of temples, headed by the one at Paḷaṇi!⁶¹

The image of the tree representing the phenomenal world or the individual soul (*jīvātman*), which is well known in Sanskrit literature, can be found respectively in *Bhagavad Gītā* XV 1–3⁶² and Śaṅkara's *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* 145.⁶³ The former concept refers to the famous idea of the *aśvattha* tree growing in circles; however, stanza 3 states its essential form is not to be grasped here (*na rūpamasyeha tathopalabhyate*), hence it should be cut down with the strong sword of detachment (*asaṅgaśastreṇa dr̥dhena chittvā*). The latter vision is based on the Upaniṣadic image of two birds dwelling on the same tree,⁶⁴

⁶¹ *valiya valippattōṭṭukūṭiyatum ahaṅkāramākunna valiya konbukaḷōṭṭukūṭiyatum durviṣayaññaḷākunna kanbukaḷōṭṭu kūṭiyatum mōhaññaḷuṭe nirakaḷākunna ilakaḷōṭṭukūṭiyatum āya kāññīramarattil vanpāpaññaḷākunna duṣṭaphalaññaḷ āścaryakaramāmvayṇṇam vaḷarṇnu varunna sandarbhattil nūru minnalppiṇarukaḷ onniccuñṭāyāl ennatupōleyuḷḷa jyōtissākunna svarūpattōṭṭukūṭiyavanum dēvaṇmār tuṭaṇṇiyavarāl sēvikkappēṭunnavanumāya ninre pādattilulḷa bhakti ihajīvitattil muḷuvanum svantamāyittirunnatinuḷḷa vivēkam nī uñṭākkittaraṇam paḷani tuṭaṇṇiya ellā kṣētraññaḷkkuṇṇam adhipaṇāyirikkunna vibhō – ‘As it happens to the *Vomica* tree endowed with the Great Pride, the great branches which are I-sense, the twigs which are the vile senses and the leaves which are a series of delusions – to grow and bear miraculously the rotten fruits of great sins, may You grant the discrimination power so I may make all my own the devotion of Your holy feet worshipped by those [beings] starting from the gods and associated with the essential form of effulgence which is like a hundred lightning bolts put together – O Lord, who is Master of all the temples starting from the Paḷani’ (PRASĀD 2013: 85–86).*

⁶² *ūrdhvamūlamadhaḥ śākhā aśvattham prāhuravyayam / chandāmsi yasya paṇāni yāstam veda sa vedavit //1//* (‘They say that the fig-tree has its roots above and its branches below. Its leaves are the texts of sacred hymns, and the one who knows that is the knower of *Vedas*’). *adhaścordhvam prasr̥tāstasya śākhā guṇapavr̥ddhā viṣayapravālāḥ / adhaśca mūlānyanusantatāni karmānubandhīni maṇuṣyaloke //2//* (‘Its branches spread upward as well as downward, they have grown thanks to three *guṇas*; the shoots are the objects for senses, whereas the roots having deeds as their consequence, extend in all directions downward, in the human world’). (Cf. ZAEHNER 1969: 359–361).

⁶³ *bījam saṃsṛṣṭi bhūmijasya tu tamo dehātmadhūr aṅkuraḥ rāgaḥ pallavam ambu karma tu vapuḥ skandho ‘asavaḥ śākhikāḥ / agrāñīndriyasam̐hatiḥ ca viṣayāḥ puṣpāni duḥkham phalam nānākarmasamudbhavam bahuvīdham bhoktātra jīvaḥ khagaḥ //145//* (‘Taking this world as a tree, the seed of this tree of the world is *tamas*; the idea of the Self as the body is the sprout of that tree; the attachment is the twig and actions the water, whereas the body is the trunk; the different senses are the different branches; the objects of the senses are flowers; pain is the fruit, and the human soul is the bird that lives on that tree and eats the fruits of various sufferings which rise from different kinds of actions.’) (Cf. MADHAVĀNANDA 1944: 63; 49–50).

⁶⁴ *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3 1–4; *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1 3 1. RADHAKRISHNAN 2010: 622, 686 in both cases mentions the R̥gvedic source.

although it remains incomplete, as the R̥gvedic source (I 164 20–22) mentions the sweet fruit [of immortality] grown at the top of the tree, eaten by those who had recognised the Father.⁶⁵

The vision of the Siddhas in which the *Nux vomica* (Strychnine tree) has been appointed to the role of the earthly life symbol on account of its bitter, poisonous fruits, restores the ancient scheme of the *vr̥kṣa*, which has immortality and the process of liberation as its essential and immanent aspect. Such a scheme may be repeated in many stanzas of TM along with exchange of *personae dramatis*; the constant aspect is the immanence of the liberating elements included within the cycle of self-realisation. An excellent example can be found in TM 9 2887, where the palmyra palm tree (symbolising *sūṣumnā*), sheltered in the neem tree (the body), becomes depicted as hiding the snake within (*Kuṇḍalīnī Śakti*).⁶⁶ TM 9 2901 mentions both the strychnine and the neem tree growing in the water lily pond; those who do not eat the sweet plantain mixed with honey will waste their life for the bitter fruit of the *Nux vomica* tree.⁶⁷ In Śaiva Siddhānta tradition, Grace (*aruḷ*) along with

⁶⁵ *dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānaīm vr̥kṣaīm pariṣasvajāte / tayoranyaḥ pippalaṁ svādvatyanaśnannanyo abhicākaśīti //20//* ('Two fair-feathered friends joined together, are clinging to the same tree; one of them eats the sweet fruit, the other looks on without eating.') *yatrā suparṇā amṛtasya bhāgam animeṣaīm vidathābhisvaranti / ino viśvasya bhuvanasya gopāḥ sa mā dhīrah pākamatrā viveṣa //21//* ('Where these two fair-feathered ones vigilantly sing the praises of wisdom about their share of immortality, the mighty herdsman of the whole universe, the steady one, entered me, the ignorant one.') *yasmin vr̥kṣe madhvadaḥ suparṇā nivīśante suvate cādhi viśve / tasyedāhuḥ pippalaṁ svādvagre tan non naśad yaḥ pitaraṁ na veda //22//* ('On that tree, where all these birds eating honey nest and procreate, at the top of it there is a sweet fruit; no one who has not recognized the Father, eats it.'). Cf. MÜLLER 1965: 146.

⁶⁶ TM 9 2887. Cf. NATARAJAN 2018: 443–444 ('From the Bamboo Shoot arose a Margosa tree, close to the Margosa was a Palmyra, in that Palm is a Snake; knowing not to drive that Snake and eat it, the Margosa tree withered away'). *mūṅkil muḷayil muḷaykkumoru vēnḅuṅṅū, vēṅbil ccēṅnu vaḷarum panayiloru / pāmbuṅṅū; pāmbine turatti tinnātatāl vēṅbu kiṭannu vēṅikkunnahō* ('From the bamboo shoot arose the neem tree; within the palmyra palm which found shelter in the neem tree, there is a snake; when there is nobody to chase out and eat the snake, the sheltered neem tree would explode to blow away' – NĀYAR 2007: 888–889).

⁶⁷ *koṭṭiyum āmbalum pūkkum kuḷamatil eṭṭiyum vēṅbum itināyuru vāḷayum / kaṭṭiyum tēnum kalarnnuṅṅātōr eṭṭippaḷattināyū iliyunna mūḍhar* ('Within the pool with water plants, where water lilies blossom there is the strychnine tree and the neem tree; those who do not eat sweet plantain mixed with coagulated honey, become exhausted for the fruit of the strychnine tree' – NĀYAR 2019: 888). 'In the tank of water-plants where the water-lily blossoms (are) the strychnine and the neem; those who do not eat the sweet plantain along with the plentiful honey hanker after the fruit of the strychnine tree' (GANAPATHY 2010c: 3288). 'The different meanings of the terms are: 1. Water-plant – useless things, anger, jealousy, a name, the twenty-four external principles, knowledge, *ātman*; 2. Water-lily – afflictions; desires, form, the body of the five senses, *Pati*; 3. Tank – the human body; *samsāra-sāgara*; earthly life, the world; 4. Strychnine – poison, *ānava-mala*, worldly enjoyments; 5. Neem – bitter, earthly life; *māyā*;

the nectar of immortality (*amuda*) which brings liberation can be granted by the Lord's feet alone; from the *bhakti* perspective, Nārāyaṇan follows such a concept while pointing at Subrahmaṇyan's holy feet (*ninpādam*) in the second part of stanza 39. In fact, the pair of lotus-feet can be treated as the means by which one attains the final goal – the ultimate stage of transcendent Substance (*paramporuḷ*). Hence Guru mentions the necessity of *bhakti* transformation into the *tumb[a]* (*tunbākkāṇam*) – a pun which means '[ultimate] consciousness (*arivū*), brightness or clearness (*teḷivū*); the tip (*arram*)' – or 'the medicinal herb' (*Leuca indica*).⁶⁸ Such a tip (*arram*) represents the point of transgression from the sphere influenced by Śakti (*Parai*) into the realm of Śiva (*Paran*) protecting the soul from descent and leading to the sphere of *paramporuḷ*,⁶⁹ defined as the complete Fulfillment or Perfection (*muḷuvansanbādyam*). It is worth emphasising here that in Tamil literature the poisonous properties of strychnine are attributed to women as being extremely attractive and bitter at the same time,⁷⁰ whereas Nārāyaṇan selects in this case the Sanskrit term for *Nux vomica*, i.e., *kiṃpāka* – 'the ignorant one, immature'.⁷¹

6. Sweet plantain – ambrosia, eternal life, *jīvātman*, *tirodhāna śakti*; 7. Plentiful honey – juice, liberation'. *Nux vomica* symbolises passions, earthly life (TM 9 2901) – GANAPATHY 2006a: 554.

⁶⁸ This medicinal plant has its equivalent in the Tamil language (*tumpai* – white dead nettle; *Leucas* [*Leuca aspera*]). EMENEAU and BURROW 1961: 218.

⁶⁹ The same sequence of consciousness-brightness-medicine-tip appears in stanza 49, wherein the tip defines the borderline of Śivan's soft clothes framed with small bells, covering the Lord's holy feet. The sound of these bells symbolises *Para Nāda* in Śaiva Siddhānta, whereas the lotuses of the feet bestow Grace on devotees: *tumbaṇṇa samsaraṇa vambaṇṇu nōkkilitil ambuṇṇu pōkayarutē munbaṇṇatāya katha pimbatra vannatinu pimum yathaiha tathā / enpaḷaminnitinu kanbaṇṇu pōm paḷani vanbuṇṇa dēvapadamām sambattilē maṇi cilambaṇṇamārnna mṛdu ponpaṇṇilē smarāṇayāl //49//* ('The world of *samsāram*, devoid of any knowledge (or medicine), if considered, appears to be deprived of any greatness of power. Do not set any deep affection on that! After the story which is devoid of "before", the coming [of yours] appears here, and again after that – just as it goes on – and so on. My share in today will move on as freed from that binding stick, thanks to the remembrance of wealth – God's feet endowed with the greatness of Paḷaṇi – as well as the soft golden cloth, the tip of which is made of gem-filled jingling bells').

⁷⁰ TM 1 204: *ila nallatākiḷum eṭṭipaḷuttāl kulayatil nallakanikaṇṇu bhujikalākā, mulamulla moṭṭēnti mandahasippōr tam valayatil cittamatu vilakki vālēṇamennum* ('Beautiful it is, although the leaf is of the strychnine tree; when ripened, do not consume its attractive fruit shot forth in bunches; the lovely-breasted ones, who throw charming smiles: please step aside! Do not heat up your heart for them!' – NĀYAR 2007: 87–88). Cf. VENKATARAMAN 2010a: 252.

⁷¹ On the other hand, Nārāyaṇan ironically depicts coquettes in Śiva *Śatakam* as carrying a cloth money bag (*kiḷi*) instead of their breast: *miḷimunaḷṇu mayakki nābhīyākum kuḷiyiluruṭṭi maṇipattinoruṇni kiḷiyum eṭuttuvarunna maṅkamār tavaḷikaḷiḷ iṭṭuvalaykkolā mahēśā! //69//* ('Having made me soft with a side-glance, having rolled [me] inside the pit of the navel, ready for turning [everything] upside down, carrying a cloth bag [as their breast], coquettes are coming – o Mahēśan! May I not become entrapped while dropped on their paths!'). The same term can also denote a cloth bag with medicinal substances used in the Ayurvedic system of

The language of Nārāyaṇa Guru, although deeply influenced by the twilight language of the Tamil works of the Siddhas, might have been reorganised and revived in accordance with the rules of the Sanskrit theory of poetics. Or, is it so that Guru's profound knowledge of *kāvya* literature enabled him to compose riddled, multi-levelled mystical poems based on metaphorical concepts of the Siddhas, rewritten with the help of elaborate Sanskrit figures of speech? In other words, would Guru's style of composition be of Tamil or Sanskrit derivation? Nārāyaṇan introduces to his mystical poem plenty of Sanskrit compounds, such as *vibhāvasu* (the One Abounding in Light = the Sun) or *anuṣṇakaran* (the Cool Maker = the Moon) which play a key role in the construction of the complex figures of speech. On the other hand, the author of *Tirumandiram* exhibits a great proficiency in Sanskrit language; apart from the loan words (such as *bōdam* = *bodham*; *cōdi* = *jyotis*) introduced in a purely philosophical context, he uses Sanskrit expressions while building the deeply mystical structures with both the philosophical and poetical means of expression.⁷² However, one should consider another option: Guru's mother tongue – Malayalam – is a mixture of Sanskrit and Dravidian by itself, hence for the author of *Viśākha Ṣaṣṭi* the employment of both the Sanskrit and Tamil style of composition is a natural process. As preferred by Nārāyaṇan, the main idea included in the majority of the stanzas can be defined as the riddled exposition of so-called transition points (I hesitate to use the term *arṛam* in such a case) – the climax that symbolises the very moment of transformation of both the macro- and microcosmic dark sphere – *iru!* – as opposed to the sphere of Grace (*aru!*). Thus the essential solution of each stanza, riddled by means of both Sanskrit poetics and the twilight language of Tamil tradition, might have been perceived (or experienced) as an activation of liberating power – as soon as such a stanza has been deciphered in one's mind.

treatment. Thus women – as associated with sensual love – represent the opposite aspect of the process of liberation here. *Śiva Śatakam* 24 mentions the three remedial herbs (*marunnumūnnu*) – most probably the *sat*, *cit* and *ānandam* trinity – which can be found at the top of the mountain (*malayatil*): *malayatilunṭu marunnu mūnnu pānbum puliyumatinnirupāṭumunṭkāvā / pulayaneṭtubhujiccupāṭiyinnum vilasati nīyumeṭuttukoḷkanēñcē //24//* ('At the mountain top there are three remedial herbs, guarded on both sides by snake and tiger; the untouchable one, having attained and taken half [of such a medicine], shines again [with purity]; o heart! May you grasp and taste [the same]').

⁷² An excellent example can be stanza 5 1459: *pūvinuḷḷil gandham porunnuka pōl jīvanil śivam pūttirikkum / oviyam pōl unarum vallārkkatu nābhi anañña naṭutarīyē* (NĀYAR 2019: 428): 'Within those self-realized motionlessly in awakening like a still painting, the Heart [of such *Jīvas*] is blossomed with the fragrance of *Civaṅ / Civam* (*civamaṅgam*), like the scent within the flower (*pūviṅḷil kandam* = *gandham*) remains united; it is [like] a stick set up in the centre (*naḍu tarī*) and embraced by a musk-deer (*nāvi* = *nābhi*)'. The usage of the Sanskrit loan word *nāvi* = *nābhi*, which is the pun ('musk-deer' and 'the centre; middle point') is adapted to the philosophical context: the vision of the central stick of *suṣumnā* becomes perfumed with the musk-deer or the Middle State [of Grace].

Abbreviations

Mal. Malayalam

Tam. Tamil

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