



Srimathe Ramanujaya Nama:  
 Srimathe Baladhanvi Mahagurave Nama:  
 Srimad VaraVara Munaye Nama:

**SRI PILLAI LOKACHARYA AS EXPOUNDED BY SRI MAMUNIGAL**

(Sriman Elayavilli Sriram, Bangalore)  
 (Son of Sri U.Ve Mahavidwan Elayavilli Bhuvarahachariar Swami)

Sri Manavala Mamunigal has written poems and commentaries. Among them Upadesa Rathinamala (a garland of exhortation) is unique in its features. Apart from educating the people as regards to Alwars and some Acharya's date of birth, their birth place and their works, the main interest of Sri Mamunigal in this poem seems to be offering rich tributes to Sri Pillai Lokacharya and his magnum opus SriVachanabhushanam.

Sri Manavala Mamunigal wishing to pay glorious tribute to Sri Pillai Lokacharya and SriVachanabhushanam describes the manner in which Sri Lokacharya got his name. He introduces this topic from stanza no: 50 in UpadesaRathinamalai. The stanza begins: - "NumPerumal Nammalwar...etc". NumPerumal (our Swami) is the name of the Utsava Idol (the icon carried out during the festivals) at SriRangam, because that is the name all our Acharyas used to call Him with great affection and love. That NumPerumal with affection called Sri Satakopan, "Nammalwar". Even today, after Kartigai festival, NumPerumal orders his palanquin bearers to go to Alwar Thirunagari to bring Nammalwar to SriRangam, so that Periya AdhayayanaUthsavam of Sri Satakopan could be celebrated with due pomp and glory.

Kamban, wrote SriRamayana in Tamil, and requested Lord Sri Ranganatha and His courtiers to hear the recital of his composition. But the Lord questioned him, "Did you sing at least one poem in praise of Num Satakopan (our Alwar)?" The poet hung his head in shame and replied no. Then the Lord directed him to compose a poem in praise of Nammalwar. That is how "Satakopar Andaadi" came into existence. Thus Nammalwar got the title bestowed on him by Lord Ranganatha Himself.

Sri Parasara Bhattar journeyed from SriRangam to Karnataka and vanquished Madhavacharya who was an ardent follower of Advaita philosophy in a wordy duel. Later on Madhavacharya embraced Vishistadvaita philosophy, and became dejected with his domestic life. He came to SriRangam having relinquished his vast wealth and became a Sanyasi. Sri Bhattar welcomed him with a heart overflowing with affection exclaiming; "NumJeeyar" (Our Sanyasi) has





arrived. Thus he got the title Nunjeeyar. That Nanjeeyar wrote a super commentary on Thiruvoimozhi and he wanted someone with a good hand to write it on palm leaves legibly and attractively. Nambur Varadachariar was finally chosen at the recommendation of his disciples. Nanjeeyar gave the manuscript to him after reading it out to him once and explaining the commentary. But while crossing River Cauvery to go to his village, the manuscript was washed away by torrential rains, in spite of Sri Varadhachariar carrying the manuscript carefully over His head. He was of extreme intelligence and had remarkable recollection; he wrote the commentary by remembering each and every word. He also enumerated the commentary by drawing parallel comparisons from Tamil literature. When it was handed over to Nanjeeyar the Guru was astonished to see the additions. Questioned by Nanjeeyar, the disciple narrated all that happened. This episode filled the heart of Nanjeeyar with supreme joy and warmth and He called his dear disciple, from that day onwards, "Numpillai" (my dear child).

Thus we find endearing and deserving titles conferred by our Purvacharyas on their dear ones. Only those titles stayed with them, eclipsing the given names by their parents.

A similar happening did take place in the life of swami Numpillai - [Mamunigal in his Upadesarathinamalai Stanza No: 51], "Thummupugal Kandadai" etc. The grandson of Sri Mudaliandan by name Kandadai Tholappar was seized with jealousy due to the glowing reports about Numpillai. The reason was that Numpillai by his profound knowledge and wisdom gave illuminating and instructive discourses which attracted enormous gatherings of learned scholars and laymen alike. They gathered at SriRangam Temple as bees to the flowers. There is an interesting saying "NumPerumal Purappado? Numpillai ghoshtio? (Is the street procession of NumPerumal or is the crowd gathered for Numpillai's discourse? They both used attract large crowds.

One day when Tholappar was worshipping Lord SriRanganatha at the Temple, Numpillai arrived there. Unable to contain the jealousy, Tholappar, poured out his wrath and jealousy in the form of ugly and indecent words targeting Numpillai who maintained silence. After worshipping the Lord, both of them left the temple. Tholappars' wife got this news before he reached home. She was highly sensible and knew all the cordial principles of SriVaishnavism. She advised her husband to beg forgiveness from Numpillai. He concurred and left his house to go to Numpillai's residence accompanied by her. There Numpillai was sitting in the streets outside Tholappar's house waiting to beg his forgiveness for having made him angry. He rushed forward and fell at the feet of Tholappar like an uprooted tree.

On seeing this unusual and uncommon behavior of Numpillai, Tholappar's heart melted and his jealousy vanished into thin air. He lifted Numpillai, embraced Him and named him Lokacharya and begged to forgive him. He said that he was the only soul deserving the title Lokacharya. Acharya is one who practices what he preaches and thereby makes others practice the golden rules.

Later on, Sri Vadakku Tiruveedi Pillai, the devoted disciple of Numpillai got a son by the blessings of Numpillai i.e., Sri Lokacharya. It is highly recommended to name the child after the Guru for anyone in this world. Following this dictation, Sri Pillai named his child Lokacharyar Pillai (i.e. a son born by the blessings of Lokacharya – Sri Numpillai). This is also registered by Mamunigal in the next stanza No: 52 ("Pinnai Vadakku Thiruveedi" etc).

Beginning from Stanza No: 53 to 59, Mamunigal sings the glory of SriVachanabhushanam, the wonderful treatise written by Sri Pillai Lokacharya. He says that of the 18 Rahasyas written by Sri Lokacharya SriVachanabhushanam is the best one. The reasons are as follows

- 1) This is the quintessence of all the Vedic lores both in Tamil and Sanskrit.
- 2) Unless a thorough study of this SriVachanabhushanam: Divya Shastra is done, it is not possible to understand in a clear cut manner, the ideas expressed by all the sages in the spiritual lore and by the Alwar's in Divyaprabandham and by the Acharyas in their commentaries.
- 3) Sri Lokacharya is also considered to be an incarnation of Lord Varadaraja of Kanchipuram. This is quite evident from the introduction of Sri Mamunigal for the SriVachanabhushanam commentary.
- 4) All the sutras are composed by him using the golden words of ancient Alwars and Acharyas.
- 5) Another special greatness of this work is that Lokacharya, the author himself named this work SriVachanabhushanam thereby indicating that all the words used by him in all the Sutras are almost the sayings of venerable sages and saints.



- 6) As a golden ornament decorates the body of a person, this work adorns the soul. The body and the ornament are perishable, but not so the soul and its ornament, SriVachanabhushanam.
- 7) Lord SriKrishna elaborately spoke several means of salvation in his Gita Shastra, like Karma, Jnana, and Bakthi etc. Finally he advised Arjuna to discard them all and have Himself as the soul means of liberation in His Charama Sloka. Sri Lokacharya goes a step further advising the people to eschew even that Upaya and have Acharya Abhimana as the absolute and safe means of salvation. This is called Panchama Upaya (the fifth means).
- 8) Though the Lord is merciful, He is known for this Swathanthrayam (independence), so it is doubtful to reach His abode for a soul by taking refuge onto Him. But the Acharya Abhimana that is Acharyas' loving care and benevolent nature is sure to secure salvation for the soul. This is the greatest secret that is kept hidden in Vedas. All the Acharyas prior to Sri Lokacharya were only handing down this information surreptitiously to their very close disciples but Sri Lokacharya had the courage to put it in His Rahasyas. So he has rendered yeoman service to the entire humanity. This is well brought out by Mamunigal in seven stanzas.

I humbly request to all the readers of this article a careful study of the seven stanzas 53 to 59 with the commentary of Sri Pillai Lokam Jeeyar under the holy feet of a great preceptor.

Any amount of write up will not be enough to bring the excellences and the meritorious service rendered by this great Acharya who stands out as the beacon light for the entire humanity.

Lokacharya Gurave Krishnapadasya Sunave  
Samsara Bhogi Sandhashta Jeevajeevathave Namaha

Alwar Tiruvadigale sharanam  
Emberumanar Tiruvadigale sharanam  
Pillai Lokacharyar Tiruvadigale sharanam  
Jeeyar Tiruvadigale sharanam