


Periya Vacchan PiLLai

Periya Vacchan Pillai	
thirunkaksathram: AvaNi rOhiNi	
avathAra sthalam: sanganallUr	
Acharyan : Nampillai	
Sishyas nAyanArAchAn piLLai, vAdhi kEsari azhagiya maNavALa jlyar, parakAla dhAsar, etc	

Avatara Rahasyam

Thirumangai Azhvar saw that Thirukkannamangaik Kannan wanted to learn the meaning of his periya thirumozhi from him and sang

meymmai sollil veNsangamonREnthiya

kaNNa! ninthanakum kuRippAkil

kaRkaAm kaviyin poruLthAnE

(periya thirumozhi 7-10-10). Lord Krishna told him that He would definitely learn from him but not at that time as He was present as

archAvathAram. He told Azhvar that Azhvar would be reborn later as thirukkalikanRidAsar in the same "kaarthikayil kaarthikai nAL" and that He would be born as Srikrishnar in Avani Rohini day, and that He would take him as His acharya and learn from him the meanings of the works of all Azhvars and Andal, other rahasyas and Ramayanam and teach them to the world. So, Kaliayn Azhvar was born as nampiLLai (thirukkali- kanRidAsar) and Sri Pariya Vachhan Pillai was born as Lord Krishna's amsam and learn all the meanings of the aruLicheyal.

Sri Periyavaccan Pillai was born in the sarvajith year (1167), in the month of avani in Krishnashtami Rohini. He was born to Yamunacharya and Nacciyaramman, in the town of Sanganalloor near Thiruvelliyankudi (in Tanjore district). Since he was born as the amsam of Lord Krishna he was named as Sreekrishnar.

He then left Sanganalloor and reached Srirangam and became Sri Nampillai's disciple. He is one of the prime sishyas of nampiLLai and learnt all sAsthra arthams from nampiLLai himself. Periya Vacchan PiLLai became an illustrious AchAryan in our sampradhAyam by the grace of nampiLLai. He was the right hand of Sri Nampillai (like Lakshmana was to Rama), and wrote several vyAkhyAnams based on Sri Nampillai's upanyAsams.

He spent his time learning from nampiLLai the meanings of different works and with his permission writing them as vyakhyanam. After Sri Nampillai attained emperumAn's thiruvadi, he gathered Sri

Vadakkuththiruveethippilai and others and spent his time in maintaining the Srirangam temple.

Periya Vacchan Pillai did not have his own son and adopted his sister's son (Nayanaraccan Pillai) who learnt the meanings of several works from him. It is also learnt (from periya thirumudiyadaivu and other works) that other than Sri Nayanaraccan Pillai, Vadikesari Azhagiyamanaval Jeeyar (who wrote panneerAyirappadi), Srirangacharyar (who was the Acharya of Adivansadagopa Jeeyar who established Ahobila Mutt), and Parakaladasar (who wrote Parakalanallan Rahasyam, and vyakhyanam for maivaNna naRunkunchi and other works) were also Periya Vacchan Pillai disciples.

It is also said that after Sri Nampillai's time, Sri Vadakkuththiruveethippilai learnt the meanings of some works from Periya Vacchan Pillai and that Sri Pinbazhagiyapperumal Jeeyar was also his disciple. He adopts nAyanArAchAn piLLai as his son.

He was given the titles paramkAruNikar and apArakaruNAmruthasAkarar. Sri Pillai Lokacharyar once said "periyAzhvAr is like no other azhvar". It could be said that Periya Vacchan Pillai is like no other acharya. He is also known as vyAkyAna chakkaravarthi, abhaya pradha rAjar, etc.

The power of his grace can also be understood from the incident happened in vAdhi kEsari azhagiya maNavALa jlyar. jlyar, in his pUrvAshramam was serving in the thirumadappaLLi (kitchen) of Periya

Vacchan PiLLai's thirumALigai. He was an illiterate but had strong devotion towards his AchAryan. Once when he overheard some srivaishnavas discussing some vEdhAnthavishayam, he enquired from them about the topic of discussion. Them being arrogant and considering him as an illiterate said they were discussing about a grantham called "musala kisalayam" (newly blossomed pounder). He went and mentioned this to his AchAryan and Periya Vacchan PiLLai out of his grace decided to teach everything to him. After a few years, he becomes a master of all sAstram and goes on to become vAdhi kEsari azhagiya maNavALa jlyar and writes several granthams himself on our sampradhAyam

maNavALa mAmunigaL in his upadhEsa rathina mAlai dedicates two pAsurams specifically to Periya Vacchan PiLLai. (Pasuram 43 & 46)

In Srivaishnavism, the three important works are the rahasyams, thiruvAymozhi and SriRamayanam. Periya Vacchan Pillai stored the essence of these three in his mind and not only taught them to all his disciples, but also wrote vyakhyanam to them for the benefit of the vaishnavas yet to come. He is the person who wrote vyakhyanam for all the nALAyira divyaprabhandam.

After hearing his vyakhyanam Sri Ranganatha Himself gave him the name Abayapratharajar. By writing the essence of Ramayanam for us, he earned the title SriRamayanapPerukkar. Upon hearing his work, it was wondered if he was the reincarnation of Sri Valmiki

His works are

- 4000 dhiyva prabhandham – He has written vyAkyAnams for all of aruLicheyal. vyAkyAnams for approximately 400 pAsurams for periyAzhwAr thirumozhi was lost and mAmunigaL just wrote those missing pAsura vyAkyAnams.
- sthOthra granthams – He has written vyAkyAnams for pUrvAchArya srisUkthis like sthOthra rathnam, chathu sLOki, gadhya thrayam, etc and jithanthE sthOthram.
- sri rAmAyaNam – He has selected important sLOkams from sri rAmAyaNam and written a detailed commentary for those in rAmAyaNa thani sLOki. He was named abhaya pradha rAjar for his masterful explanation of vibhIshaNa sharanAgathi episode.
- He has also written many rahasya granthams such as mANikka mAlai, parantha rahasyam, sakala prAmANa thAthparyam, etc which explains rahasya thrayam in an excellent manner. He was a pioneer in documenting rahasya thrayam – piLLai IOkAchAryar took the essence of nampiLLai and Periya Vacchan PiLLai's teachings and wrote his astAdhasa rahasya granthams.