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**Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja:** He gave an announcement to all the *paṇḍits* under that state.

"That if you accept me as the principal *paṇḍit* in the whole kingdom then no trouble. But if any of you think that you can defeat me in scholarship, in discussion, theological discussion, then you come."

A challenge was given, issued by the court *paṇḍit* of the then king of Kerala.

And a token was sent. "That whoever will accept this, a golden pumpkin, he must catch this, keep it, and he will come to sit in a discussion with me about the scriptures."

Then Yāmunācārya, boy, he was reading in a *toḷi*, in a school, and the challenge came to his teacher's *toḷi*. Teacher did not want to displease the *paṇḍit*, so he did not care to take the challenge, accept the challenge.

But this boy, Yāmunācārya, he asked his teacher, "Why don't you accept the challenge?"

"No, no, he's a court *paṇḍit*. We receive much help from the state. If he stops that, then much disturbance will be for want of money in my administration in the schools, so I don't like to disturb that man."

But that boy he didn't care. "If you do not accept the challenge, I shall do it."

"Yes, in your own risk you may do."

And he caught that golden pumpkin. They are rather astonished, the agents.

"You boy, you have the courage to fight with that great *paṇḍit*, a court *paṇḍit*? What do you do? You don't know how great a scholar he is?"

"No. I know or do not know. But I want to sit in a discussion with him. And I think I'll be able to defeat him."

What to do?

Then the boy was presented in that day, the fixed date, in the court he attended.

And just going to attend, the king and queen through the window, they're looking at the path by which the boy will pass towards the assembly where the debate will take place. Then the queen is on the side of the boy, a very beautiful and clever boy, intelligent look. "He will conquer."

The king said, "No. It is not possible. Our court *paṇḍit* is a great learned man of high experience. This boy what he will..."

"But I say this boy will win," the queen told.

"No, no, no."

Then there was a bet.

"If this boy wins the fight, what you'll do? I say you'll have to give your daughter and half of the kingdom. Are you ready?"

The king told, "Yes."

Anyhow, the boy came in the court, a large public throng, crowd.

"The boy is coming to fight with the great renowned scholar of the king. What is this?"

There is a great uproar.

And they sat face to face. The court *paṇḍit* asked, "You boy, will you be able to answer my questions? You want to question me? Put your questions. Whatever you'll say, I'll do away with that, smash your questions."

The boy put very strong common sense, put three questions.

First question is that, "Your mother is not a barren lady? That is my question. You must, you will have to demolish it. I say that your mother is not barren. Now you have to prove that your mother is a barren lady.

Next, the king is a sinner. I say the king is not sinner. You'll have to prove that king is a sinner, a criminal, or something.

And the third, I say the queen is chaste. You will have to prove that she's not chaste."

These questions created a great mood. What to do? What to answer? How to refute it? A dangerous position. Then for some long time the *paṇḍit* was in a very serious mood and waited silently.

Then he came out. "These are absurd questions you put to me. You boy, can you prove this? Can you prove against this?"

"Yes I can."

Then there was a great commotion. He failed and this boy he will now answer his own questions, so bold answers, how can he do this? And there must be some evidence from the *śāstra*.

Then anyhow he quoted one *śloka* from the *śāstra* and proved that somewhere written that, "Whose son, the lady who has produced a son like you, who has got no real merit, but only boasts about his merit, she's a barren lady. Bogus son, a cheater, who gives birth to a cheating man, she's called a barren lady." He gave some quotation from some *śāstra* and also, like, something like that, he produced the quotation from some *Purāṇa*. "Whose son is worthless, his mother can be considered as a barren lady, should be considered."

Then there were so many other *paṇḍits*, and so they approved, and they gave their claps in favour when he produced the quotation from some *Purāṇa*. Anyhow the first question finished.

Next, "The king is a sinner." How to prove that the king is sinner? Then also he proved from the quotation of the *śāstra*. "That the king is receiving the rent from the subjects, and with the money the sin of the subjects is always passing to the king. And the king, to get out of that sin, he practices many sacrifices, *yajña*, towards many gods, and thereby he keeps himself released from the sin." Gave some quotation from *Purāṇa*. And he told that, "With the money going towards the king, their sin is also passing through that. And as it is continued, always taking more money and trying to get out of the sin, sins of the subjects are being accumulated always in the king. And king also by performing *yajña*, trying to get relief from that sin. But it is always continued, so he may be taken that he's committing sin, he's sinful."

In this way he proved with quotations, and the *paṇḍits* were satisfied, then that man was benumbed.

Still one question to be answered, that is the most dangerous. "The queen is not a chaste lady?"

That question also he put in this way, all from the quotations of the *śāstra*.

"The king is supposed to hold some eight gods in him, Indra, all these things, some demigods are supposed to stay with the king in his body always. It is mentioned in the *śāstra*.

Mad devata rajan naropena sthiti [?]

With him perhaps six or eight demigods are always living with him. So when he enjoys something, the gods are also enjoying with him. So in this sense it may be thought out, that the queen is being enjoyed by many." In this way he produced the *śāstra* quotations.

There were other *paṇḍits* who also approved. This man could not speak anything against him.

But this boy got the extraordinary victory there, and his name from that time was Pritivadhi Vankara. There is still a Maṭh in the south, the *sampradāya*, the name is *Pritivadhi Vankara*. "Who is a dreadful figure to the opponents." *Pritivadhi* means opponent, and *vankara* means "dreadful, furious to opponent." That Maṭh continues today. This was Yāmunācārya boy, young boy.

Now, as there was the bet between the king and the queen, the boy was married with the daughter of the king, and half of the kingdom given to the boy.

Now, this Yāmunācārya, he came from a Vaiṣṇava family. He engaged himself in some study, and also in the enjoyment of the kingdom.

One Vaiṣṇava, [called Nambi], he saw that, "He's a great genius, but now he's married, he's become king, it is a great loss to our *sampradāya*. The Śāṅkara *māyāvādī sampradāya*, they are rising their head so much. And there are not so many good scholars on our side to fight with them. So he thought that anyhow, that Yāmunācārya, he must be taken out from his enjoying life as a king. If he takes up the cause, then of course the Śāṅkara school, we can make them down."

So he used to - Yāmunācārya was very fond of a particular vegetable, *śak*, the leaf of vegetable [called *tuduvala*]. And that man managed to collect that sort of vegetable every day and give regular supply to the cook of the king, Yāmunācārya.

One day Yāmunācārya told that, "I like very much this vegetable, but this is not available all year round, so where do you get it?" He asked the cook.

"I do not know. One gentleman he supplies it for you."

"Why one gentleman, outsider, he supplies this my favourite vegetable every day? Ask him the cause."

He asked and, "I want to see him once."

Then he told "Yes." Fixed a day and he came.

And when he was present before him he began to cry.

"What is it *brāhmāṇa*? You are crying. I did not do any harm to you. You love me so much, every day you gather from anywhere these vegetables I love so much. And just meeting you, you begin to cry."

"You do not know what pain we're feeling for you."

"Why? I did not give any pain to anybody."

"No, you have done."

"You say what I have done wrong."

"You have left our *sampradāya*. You are mad in enjoyment as a king. But you forget that you are such a great scholar, and lost to our *sampradāya*. The *māyāvādīns*, they're encroaching our *sampradāya*, and you are sleeping. We can't tolerate this. You must come out to save our section, our Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. You are the saviour."

Then anyhow he was affected. "Yes I am trying to do."

So gradually he came to the study and to write books against the *māyāvāda*, so many things he wrote. And when he was sufficient aged, old, Rāmānuja was a boy then, rising boy, rising scholar, this Rāmānuja.

Rāmānuja has also got peculiar history. Rāmānuja he first began his study near a *paṇḍit* teacher who came from Śāṅkara school, named Yādavaprakāśa. He was a good *paṇḍit* and he used to teach many students. Rāmānuja, a very young boy, he's admitted in his school. He's serving his Gurudeva.

Gurudeva is teaching so many students, grown up. And there came one line, [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*].

*[tasya yathā] kupyāsum punḍarikam nāyānam [evam akṣini]*

And he, as Śaṅkara explained it. *Kupyāsum punḍarika nāyānam*. "Nārāyaṇa's eye is reddish like the buttock of a monkey. The buttock of a monkey is red. *Kopi* means *banara*, that monkey. *Asana* where *kopi* takes his seat, the part on which the *kopi*, the monkey takes his seat, that is the buttock, and that is reddish. So Nārāyaṇa's eye is compared how? As red as the buttock of the monkey." He was explaining as Śaṅkara did.

Rāmānuja could not tolerate that sort of explanation, and tears fell on the back of the professor. He was perhaps rubbing the back or something, or the head, serving his Guru, the professor Yādavaprakāśa, and a few drops of his tears fell on his back, Yādavaprakāśa.

"You are weeping? Why you are weeping? What has happened here? Is there any pain in your body suddenly? Why do you weep?"

Rāmānuja had to tell. "By hearing your interpretation of the *Upaniṣad*."

"Interpretation? What interpretation I have given which can make you weep and shed tears?"

"You compared the holy eyes of the Lord Nārāyaṇa with the buttock of a monkey, as red as the monkey buttock."

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