

refulgent as the fire said—"O leading gods, I shall kill the Daitya with force. Return to your own abodes fully assured, all of you".

25. O great sage, on hearing the words of Viṣṇu, Indra and other leading gods, fully assured and satisfied, went to their abodes thinking that the younger brother Hiraṇyākṣa was already killed.

26-27. The noble soul Viṣṇu assumed the form partly of lion and partly of man. His head was matted and full of manes. Sharp fangs were his weapons. The claws were keen and pointed. The snout was finely shaped. The mouth was wide open. The body was terrible and refulgent like a crore of suns, blazing and powerful like the fire at the time of dissolution. He was identical with the universe. More words need not be used to describe him. When the sun was about to set, the lord went to the city of the Asuras.

28. The Man-lion fought with the powerful Daityas. He killed many of them. He held them up and whirled. Exhibiting wonderful prowess he smashed and crushed the various Asuras.

29. On seeing that omniformed lion, the son of the lord of Daityas, Prahlāda,²⁹³ said to the king, his father.

Prahlāda said:—

"Is it the universe-formed lord who has come as the majestic lion ?

30. The infinite lord in the form of Man-lion²⁹⁴ has come within your city. Desist from fight and seek refuge in him. I see the terrible form of the lion.

31. Since there is none to fight him in all the three worlds, it is better that you submit to him and continue to be the ruler."

293. Though son of the Asura Hiraṇyakaśipu, Prahlāda was an ardent devotee of Viṣṇu. He had to suffer much at the hands of his cruel father for devotion to Viṣṇu. It was to avenge Prahlāda that Viṣṇu incarnated as the man-lion and killed Hiraṇyakaśipu.

294. The story relates to Hiraṇyakaśipu the younger brother of Hiraṇyākṣa. Hiraṇyakaśipu was proud of his prowess and as blessed by Śiva, could not be killed in an ordinary way. He struck terror in the hearts of the gods whom he had ousted from their vantage positions. He was killed by Viṣṇu assuming the form of Man-lion.