



PRAHLAD

A TALE OF DEVOTION FROM THE BHAGAWAT PURANA

Vol 537 | ₹70





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Amar Chitra Katha Pvt Ltd

© Amar Chitra Katha Pvt Ltd, 1973, Reprinted October 2018,
ISBN 978-81-84820-19-5

Published by Amar Chitra Katha Pvt. Ltd., AFL House, 7th Floor,
Lok Bharati Complex, Marol Maroshi Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India.

Printed at M/s Indigo press (I) Pvt Ltd., Mumbai.
For Consumer Complaints Contact Tel : + 91-224918881/2
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PRAHLAD



PRAHLAD WAS THE SON OF THE ASURA, HIRANYAKASHIPU.

HIRANYAKASHIPU'S BROTHER HIRANYAKSHA HAD BEEN SLAIN BY VISHNU.

O BROTHER ASURAS!
I SHALL DESTROY VISHNU
AND KEEP THE OTHER
GODS IN HEAVEN
SUBDUED.

GO TO EARTH, MY BROTHERS,
AND CRUSH ALL THOSE
WHO WORSHIP
VISHNU.

THE ASURAS, BY NATURE FOND
OF OPPRESSING OTHERS, JOYFULLY
OBEYED THE COMMAND.



WHILE THE ASURAS WERE BUSY HARASSING THE DEVOTEES OF VISHNU,
THE GODS WENT ABOUT PROTECTING THEM.

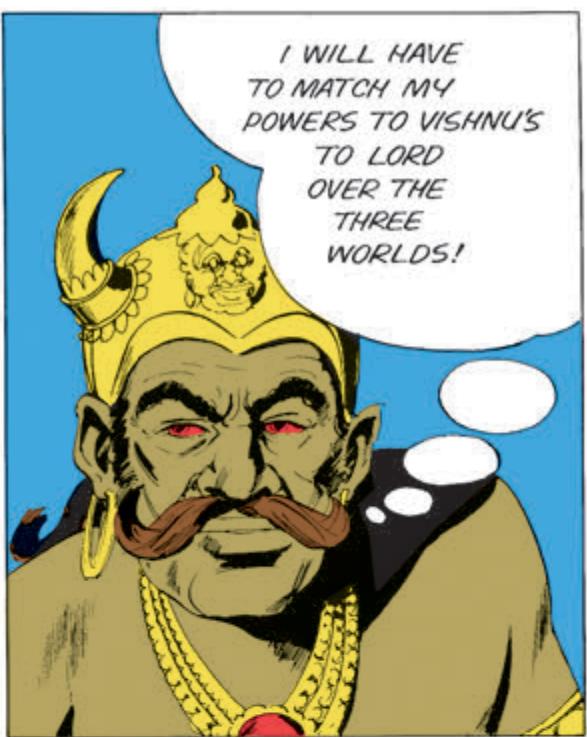


THE ASURAS RETURNED TO HIRANYAKASHIPU.

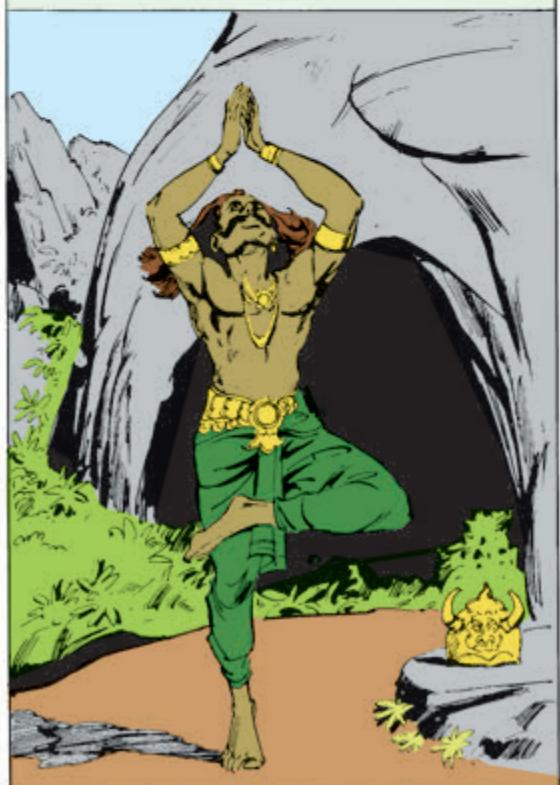
LORD! WE CANNOT CARRY OUT YOUR ORDERS. THE SERVANTS OF VISHNU THWART OUR EFFORTS.



I WILL HAVE TO MATCH MY POWERS TO VISHNU'S TO LORD OVER THE THREE WORLDS!



SO HE BEGAN TO PERFORM SEVERE PENANCES.

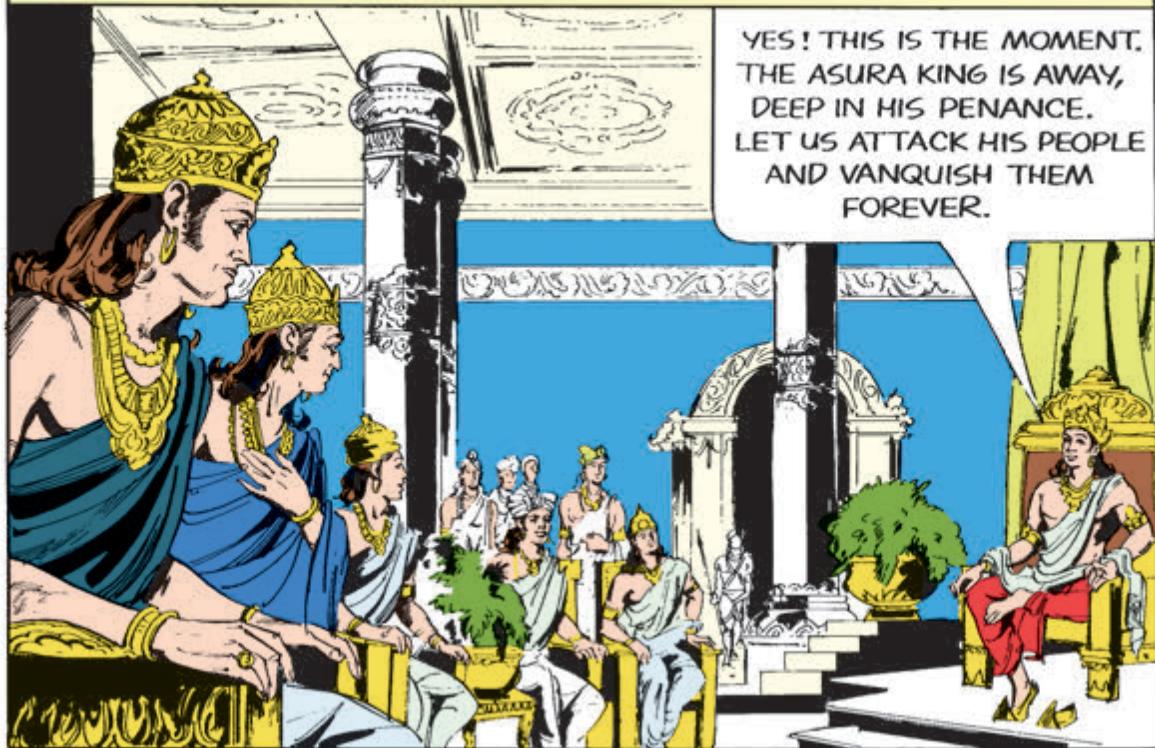


WHEN THE GODS FOUND THAT VISHNU'S DEVOTEES NO LONGER NEEDED THEIR PROTECTION THEY RETURNED TO THEIR HEAVENLY ABODE.



THERE THEY HELD COUNCIL.

YES ! THIS IS THE MOMENT.
THE ASURA KING IS AWAY,
DEEP IN HIS PENANCE.
LET US ATTACK HIS PEOPLE
AND VANQUISH THEM
FOREVER.



THE ASURAS WERE PANIC-
STRICKEN.

THE GODS ARE PLANNING
TO ATTACK US. WITHOUT
OUR LORD WE ARE
HELPLESS.



IN THEIR HASTE AND ANXIETY TO
SAVE THEIR OWN LIVES, THEY DID NOT
BOther TO TAKE EVEN THEIR WIVES,
CATTLE OR MONEY.



THE GODS RANSACKED THE ASURA CITY AND DESTROYED HIRANYAKASHIPU'S PALACE.



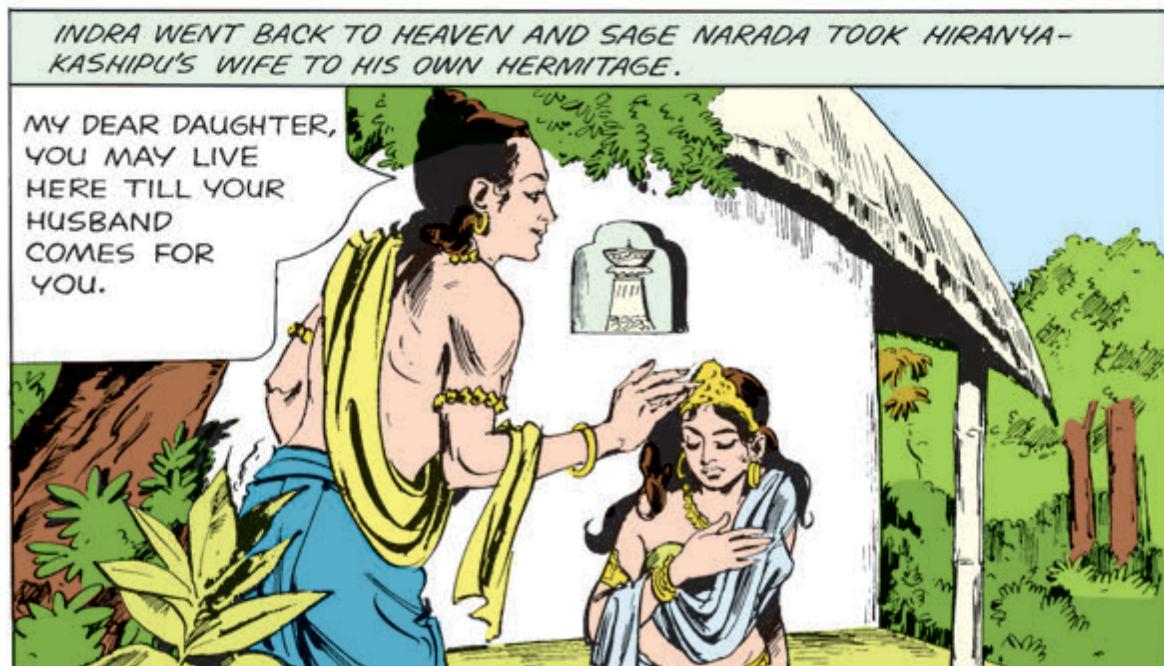
WHILE INDRA WAS TRANSPORTING HER TO HEAVEN, HE MET SAGE NARADA.

WAIT! YOU SHOULD NOT CARRY OFF THIS GUILTYLESS QUEEN, THE CHASTE WIFE OF ANOTHER.



SHE IS GOING TO BE THE MOTHER OF HIRANYAKASHIPU'S SON. SHE SHALL BE WITH ME TILL THE CHILD IS BORN!





SHE LIVED IN THE ASHRAM OF THE GREAT SAGE AND LEARNED ABOUT RELIGION AND THE GLORY OF VISHNU FROM HIM. THE CHILD WITHIN HER, PRAHLAD, TOO, ABSORBED ALL THIS KNOWLEDGE.

VISHNU IS THE SOUL OF ALL CREATED THINGS AND IS PRESENT EVERYWHERE.



IN THE MEANWHILE, WHEN INDRA REACHED HEAVEN—



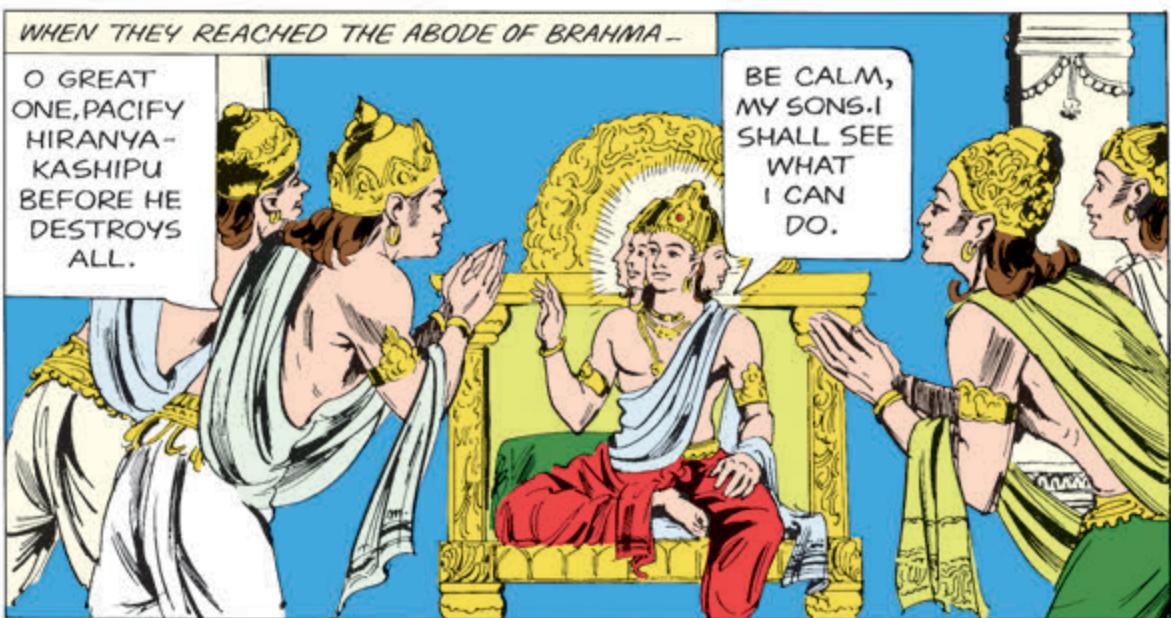
HIRANYAKASHIPU'S AUSTERITIES ARE SCORCHING THE THREE WORLDS.



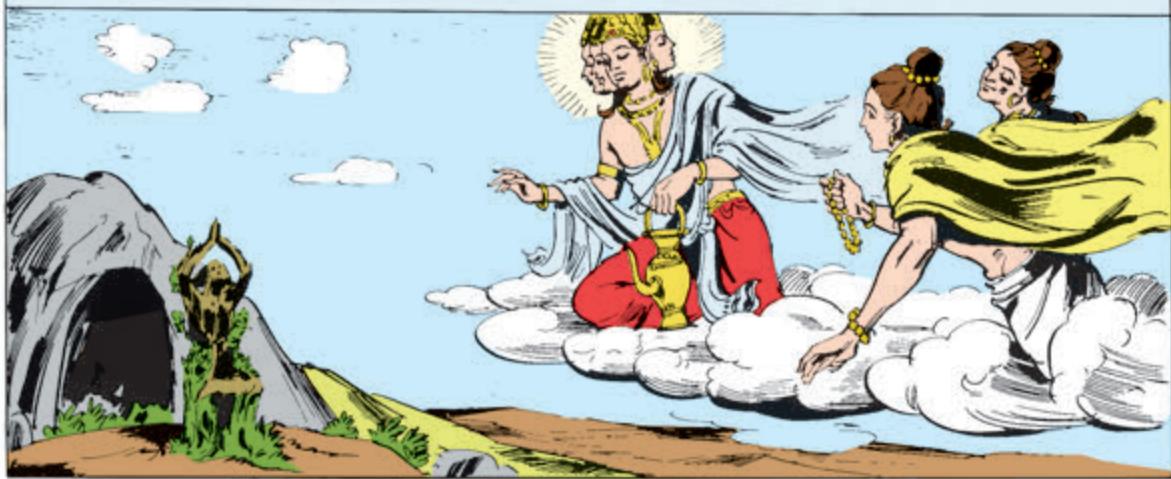
WHEN THEY REACHED THE ABODE OF BRAHMA—

O GREAT ONE, PACIFY HIRANYAKASHIPU BEFORE HE DESTROYS ALL.

BE CALM, MY SONS. I SHALL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.



THE MIGHTY BRAHMA, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS CELESTIAL SAGES, WENT TO HIRANYAKASHIPU'S HERMITAGE.



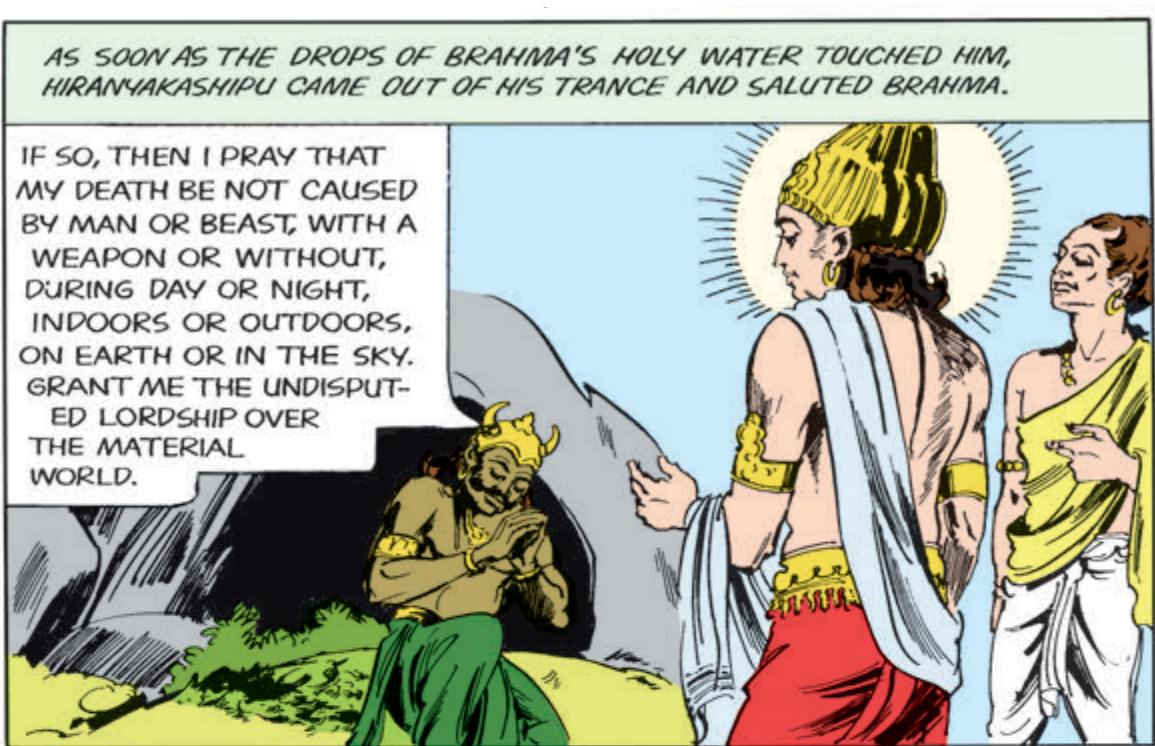
BRAHMA WAS ASTONISHED BY THE SIGHT.

ARISE HIRANYAKASHIPU. ANY BOON THAT YOU ASK OF ME SHALL BE YOURS.

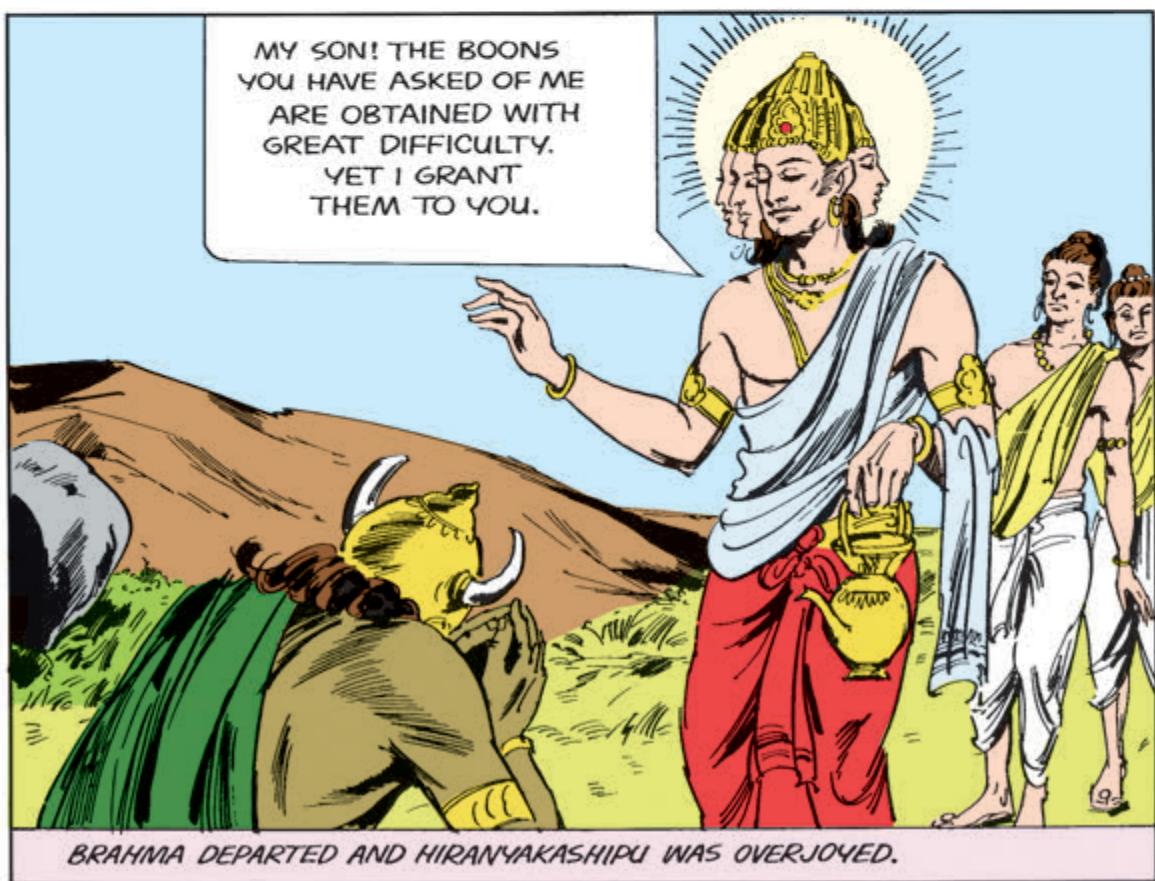


AS SOON AS THE DROPS OF BRAHMA'S HOLY WATER TOUCHED HIM, HIRANYAKASHIPU CAME OUT OF HIS TRANCE AND SALUTED BRAHMA.

IF SO, THEN I PRAY THAT
MY DEATH BE NOT CAUSED
BY MAN OR BEAST, WITH A
WEAPON OR WITHOUT,
DURING DAY OR NIGHT,
INDOORS OR OUTDOORS,
ON EARTH OR IN THE SKY.
GRANT ME THE UNDISPUTED
LORDSHIP OVER
THE MATERIAL
WORLD.



MY SON! THE BOONS
YOU HAVE ASKED OF ME
ARE OBTAINED WITH
GREAT DIFFICULTY.
YET I GRANT
THEM TO YOU.



HIRANYAKASHIPU BROUGHT HIS WIFE BACK TO THEIR CITY WHERE PRAHLAD WAS BORN.

MY SUCCESSOR!
YOU SHALL
VANQUISH
THE
GODS.



HIRANYAKASHIPU, WITH HIS NEW POWERS, RENEWED HIS HOSTILITIES AGAINST VISHNU AND HIS FOLLOWERS.



HE DROVE THE GODS OUT OF THEIR ABODE AND ESTABLISHED HIMSELF IN HEAVEN.



ALL THE GODS IN HEAVEN EXCEPT BRAHMA, VISHNU AND SHIVA, BEGAN TO WORSHIP THE INTOXICATED HIRANYAKASHIPU.



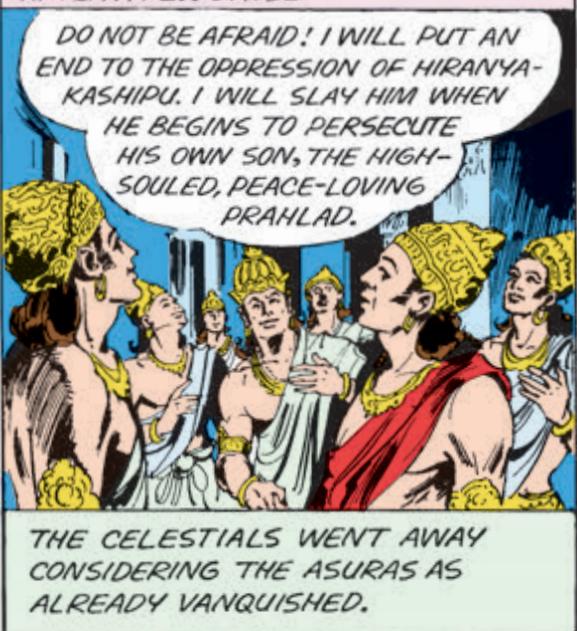
AT LAST THE OPPRESSED GODS AND DEVOTEES OF VISHNU APPEALED TO HIM.

O LORD, WE SHALL FOREGO SLEEP AND LIVE ONLY ON AIR TILL YOU COME TO OUR AID.



AFTER A FEW DAYS...

DO NOT BE AFRAID! I WILL PUT AN END TO THE OPPRESSION OF HIRANYAKASHIPU. I WILL SLAY HIM WHEN HE BEGINS TO PERSECUTE HIS OWN SON, THE HIGH-SOULED, PEACE-LOVING PRAHLAD.



THE CELESTIALS WENT AWAY CONSIDERING THE ASURAS AS ALREADY VANQUISHED.

PRAHLAD IN THE MEANWHILE WAS GROWING UP AND WAS HIRANYAKASHIPU'S DELIGHT. ONE DAY—

DEAR SON! TELL ME WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST THING IN LIFE?

TO RENOUNCE THE WORLD AND SEEK REFUGE IN VISHNU.



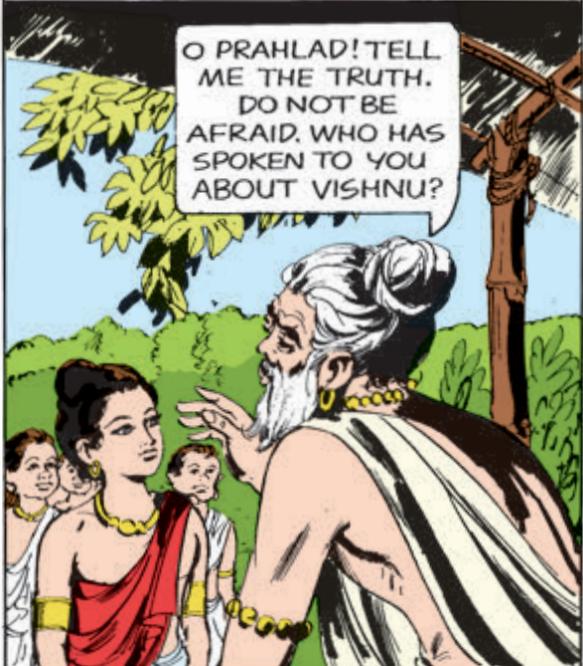
HIRANYAKASHIPU LAUGHED. THEN HE CALLED HIS SON'S TEACHER TO HIM.

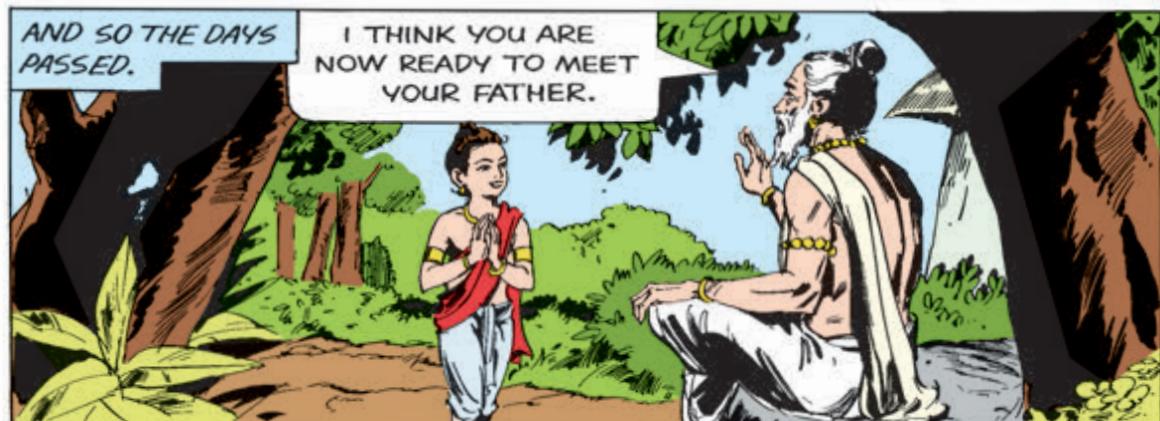
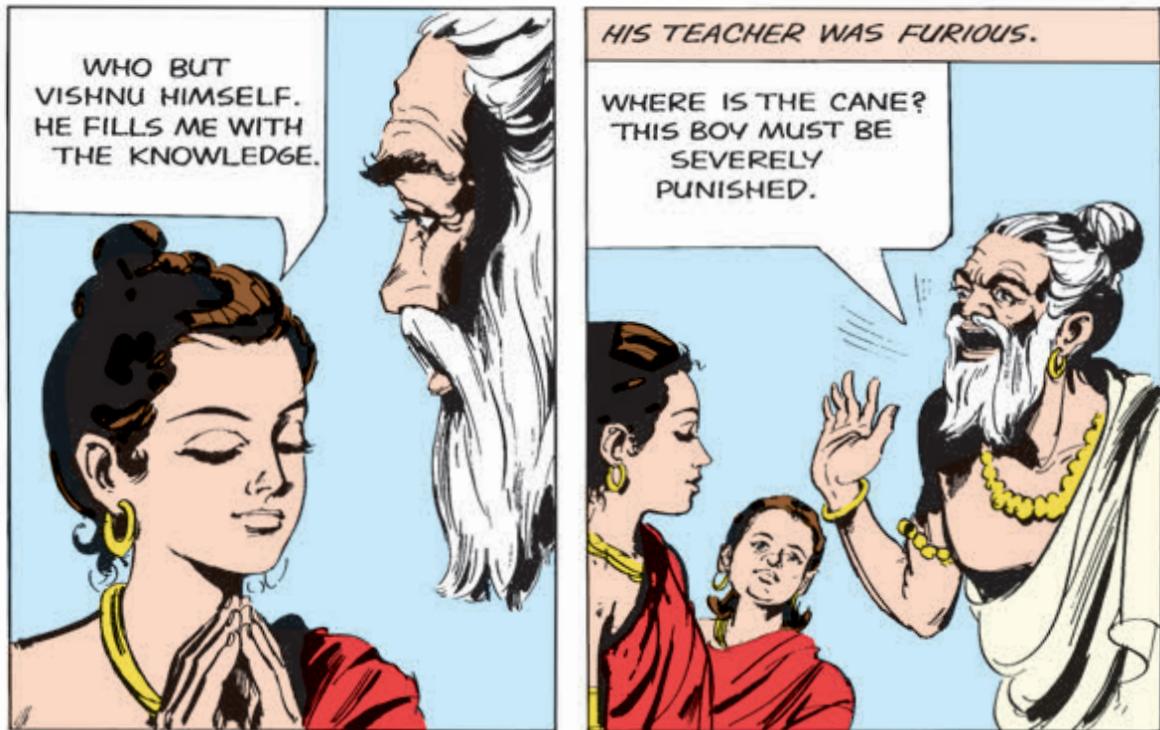
GUARD HIM CLOSELY. I THINK THAT THE FOLLOWERS OF VISHNU ARE SECRETLY INFLUENCING HIM. DON'T LET HIM OUT OF YOUR SIGHT.



PRAHLAD WENT TO LIVE IN THE HOUSE OF HIS TEACHER.

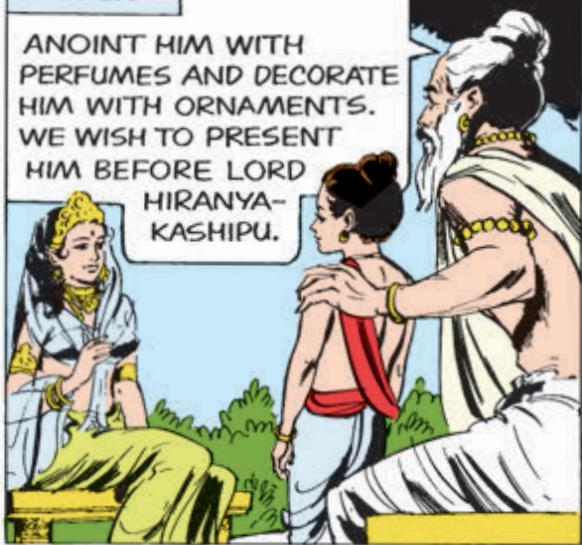
O PRAHLAD! TELL ME THE TRUTH. DO NOT BE AFRAID. WHO HAS SPOKEN TO YOU ABOUT VISHNU?



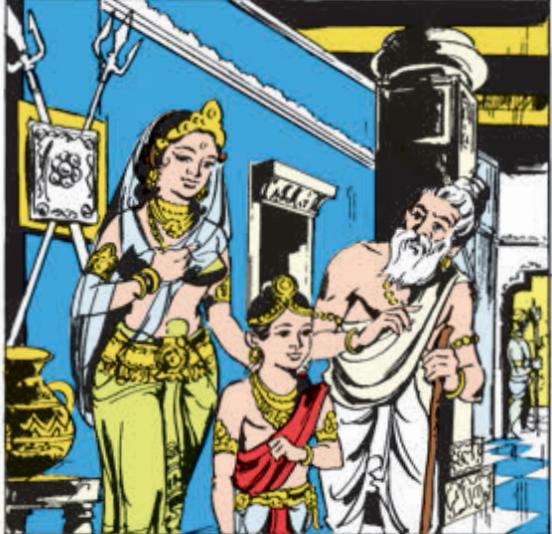


THE TEACHER THEN SENT FOR PRAHLAD'S MOTHER.

ANOINT HIM WITH
PERFUMES AND DECORATE
HIM WITH ORNAMENTS.
WE WISH TO PRESENT
HIM BEFORE LORD
HIRANYAKASHIPU.

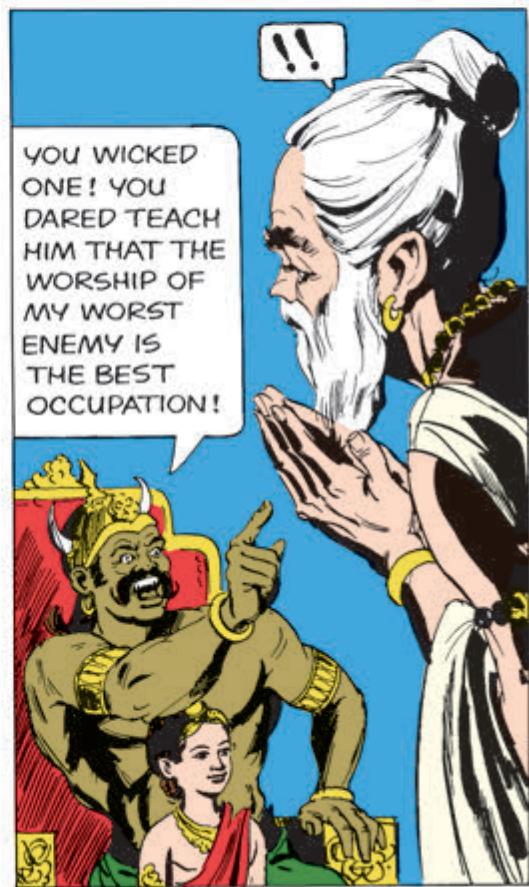
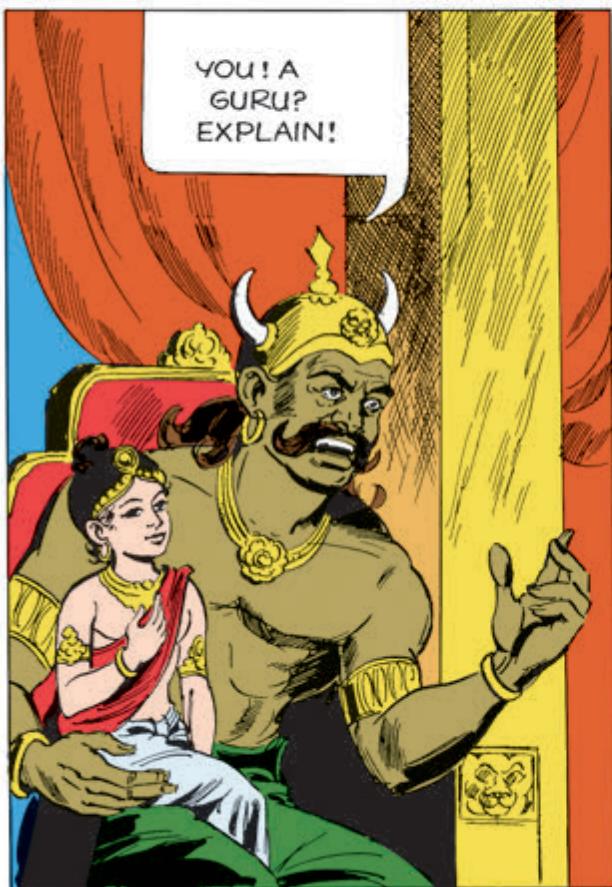


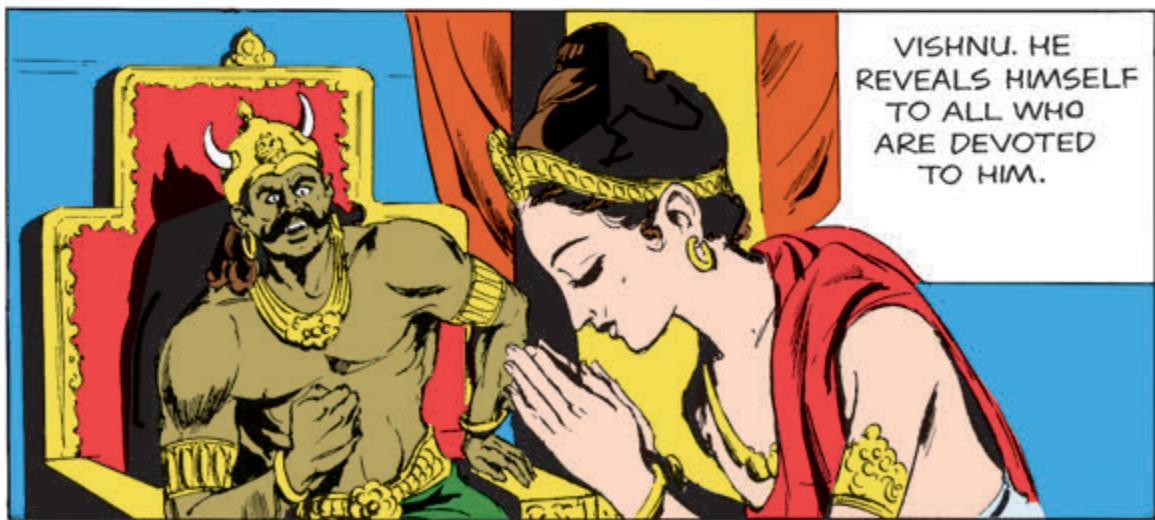
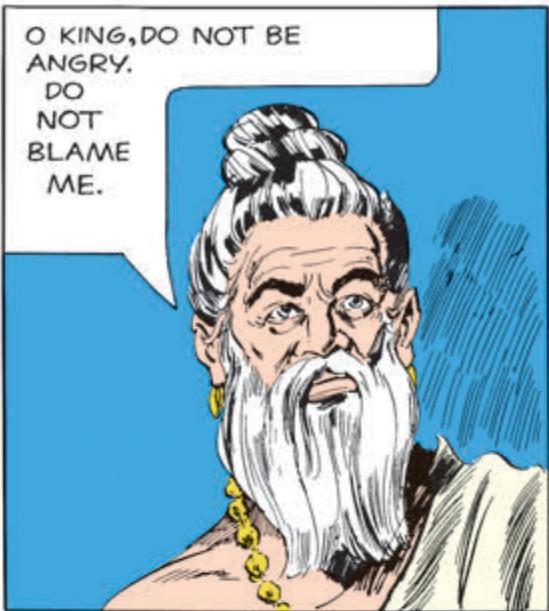
THE BEDECKED PRAHLAD WAS
THEN LED TO HIRANYAKASHIPU.



O MY SON!
MAY YOU
LIVE
LONG.





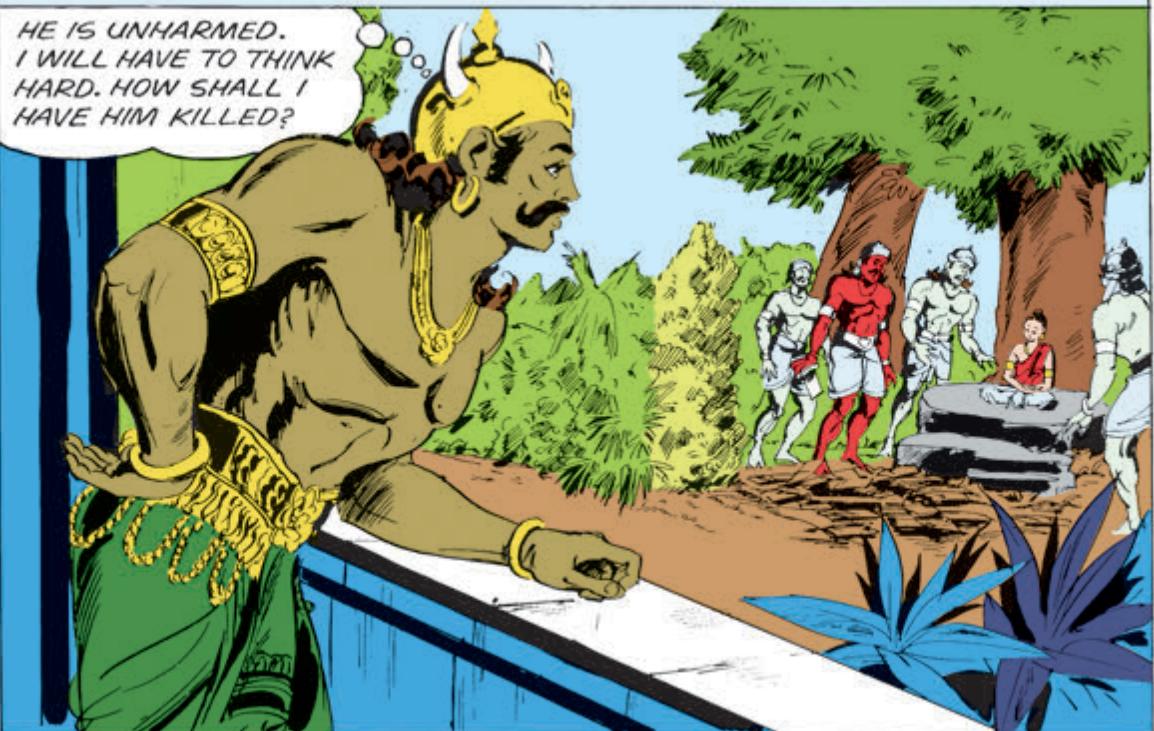




THUS COMMANDED BY HIRANYAKASHIPU, THE ASURAS BEGAN TO ATTACK PRAHLAD.



BUT THEIR STROKES WERE OF NO AVAIL FOR PRAHLAD WAS DEEPLY ENGROSSED IN HIS ADORATION OF VISHNU.



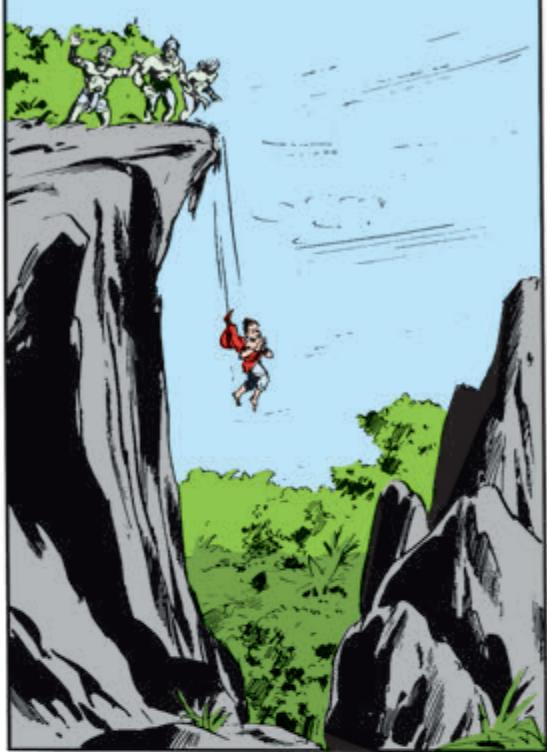
HIRANYAKASHIPU HAD THE MOST DEADLY SERPENTS BROUGHT. THEY WERE LET LOOSE ON PRAHLAD. BUT THEIR FANGS TURNED IMPOTENT.



HIRANYAKASHIPU THEN CALLED FOR MIGHTY ELEPHANTS AND MADE THEM TRAMPLE UPON PRAHLAD. BUT ONCE AGAIN IT WAS THE ELEPHANTS THAT WERE INJURED.



THEN HIRANYAKASHIPU HAD HIM PUSHED OFF A CLIFF AND...



...THROWN INTO A BLAZING FIRE.



BUT NOT A HAIR ON PRAHLAD'S HEAD WAS SINGED.

IN DESPERATION HIRANYAKASHIPU HAD HIM FED WITH A DEADLY POISON BUT IT TURNED INTO NECTAR IN PRAHLAD'S MOUTH.



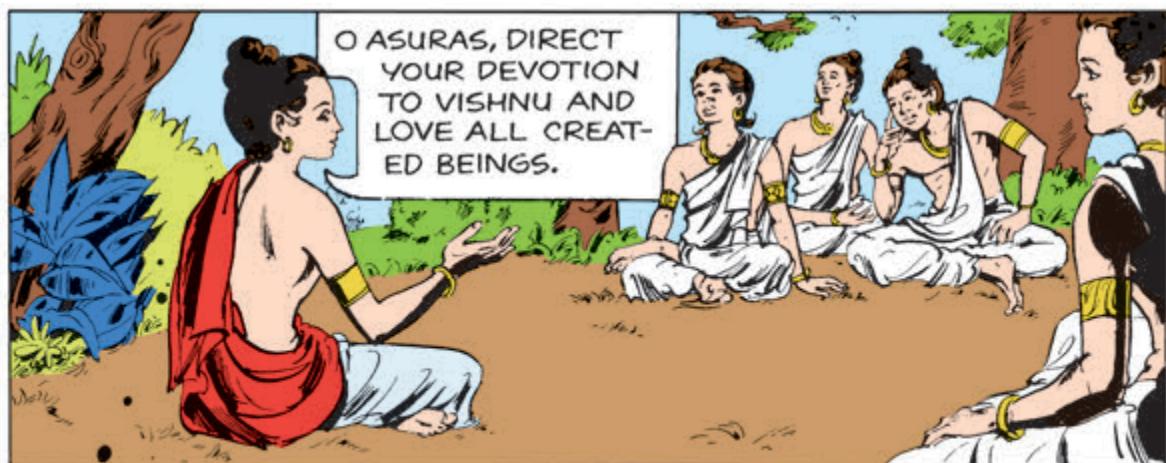


THIS TIME THE TEACHER TRIED TO GET PRAHLAD INTERESTED IN THE MEANS FOR ACQUIRING WEALTH AND PHYSICAL PLEASURES. BUT—

HOW CAN THE PURSUIT OF PHYSICAL PLEASURES AND WEALTH BRING HAPPINESS? IT WILL ONLY LEAD TO ENVY AND ANGER.

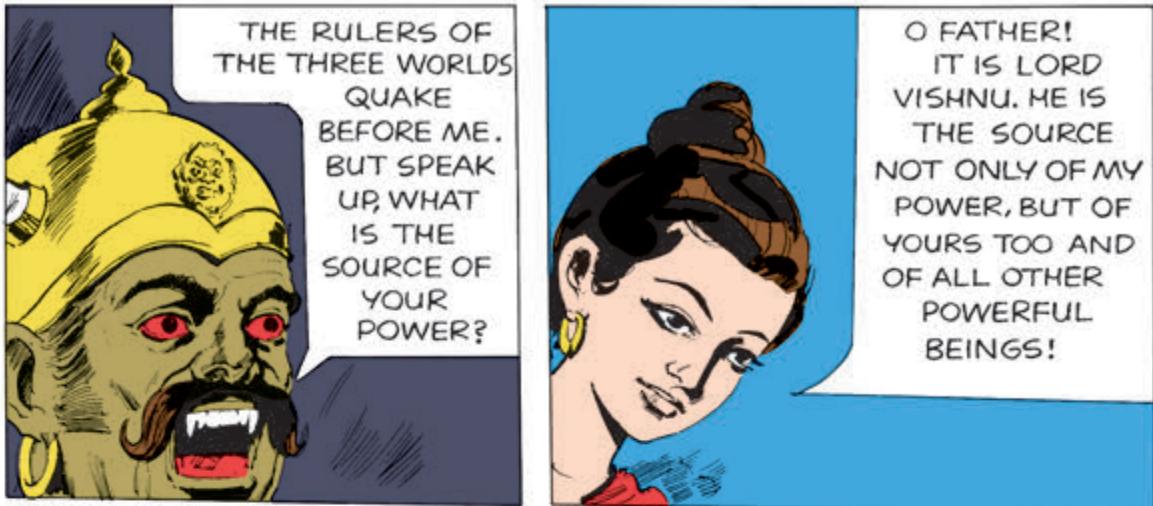


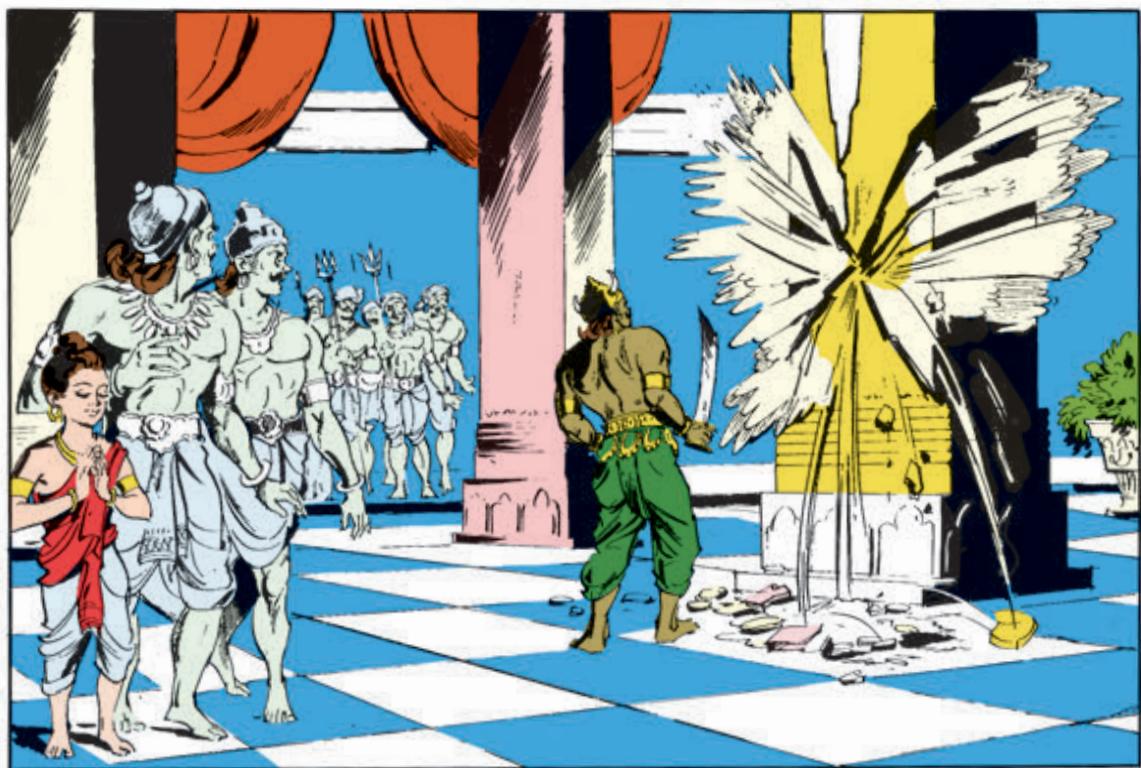
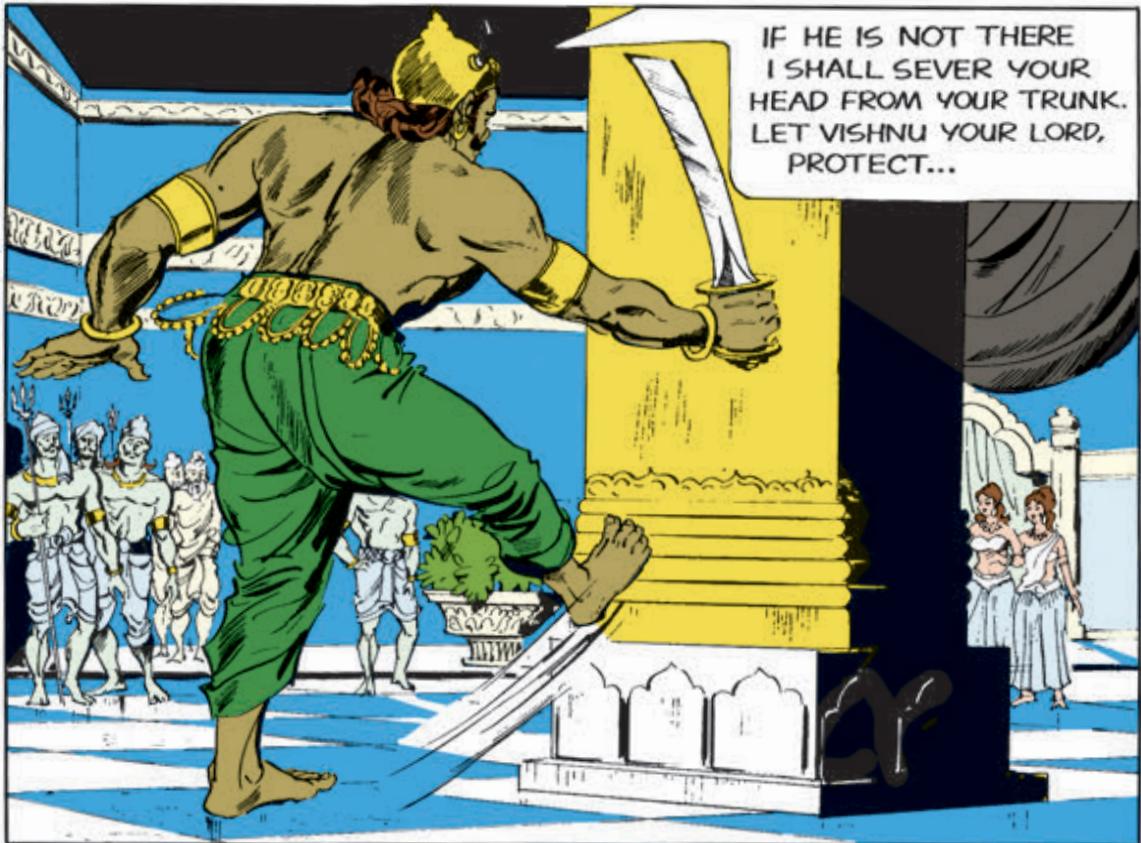
WHILE PRAHLAD WAS ENGAGED IN SUCH THOUGHTS, OTHER PUPILS CAME AND JOINED HIM.











AND LO! LORD VISHNU IN THE FORM OF *NARA-SIMHA EMERGED FROM THE PILLAR.



NARA-SIMHA CAUGHT HIRANYAKASHIPU AND...



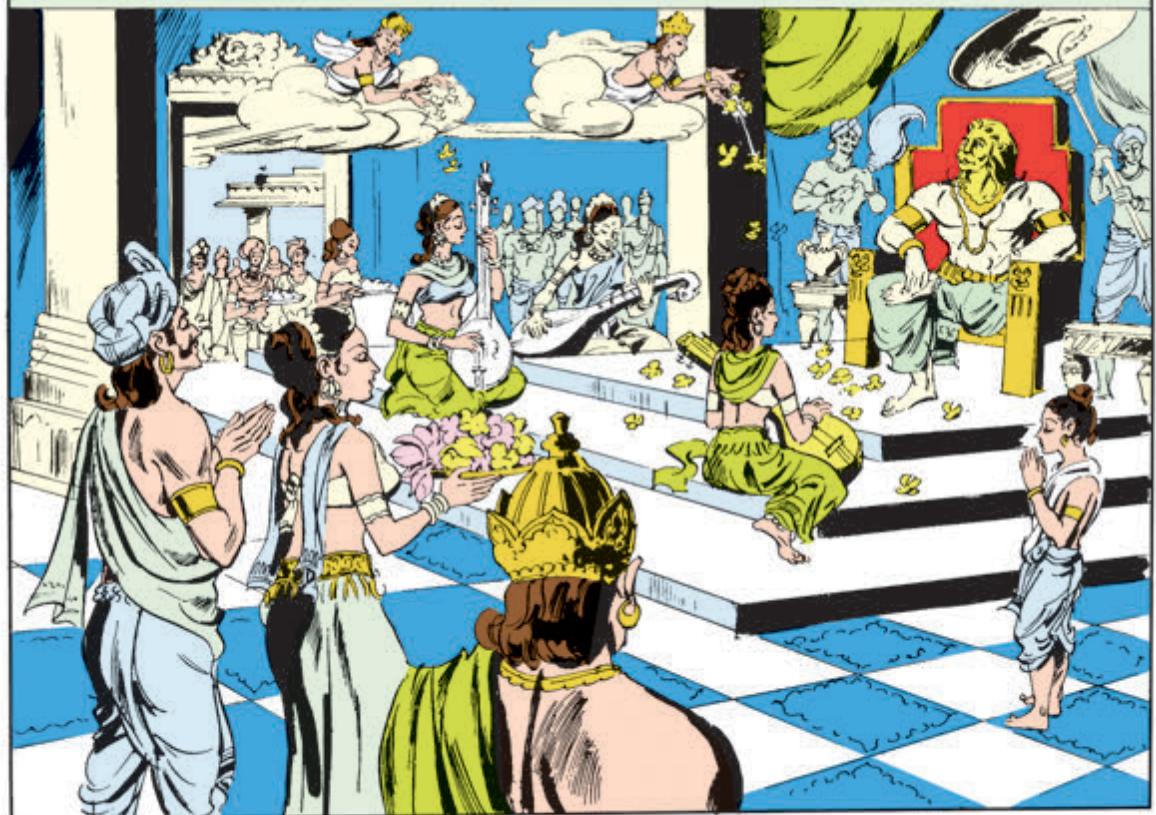
...CARRIED HIM TO THE THRESHOLD OF THE COURTROOM.



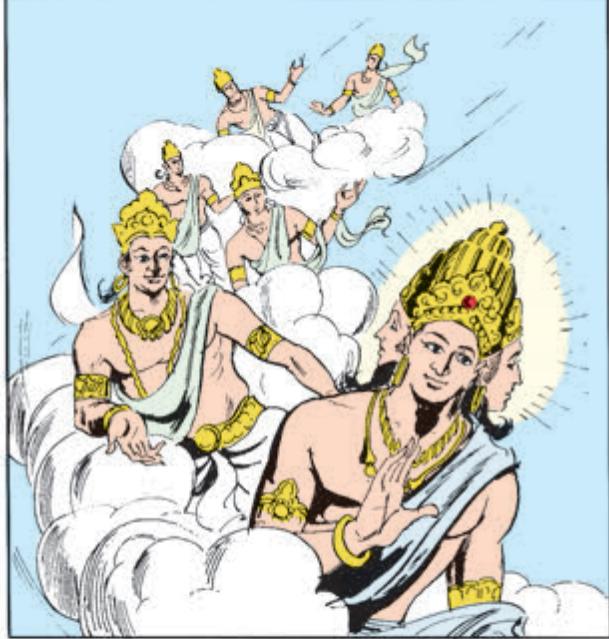
THERE HE KILLED HIM.



THEN NARA-SIMHA SEATED HIMSELF ON HIRANYAKASHIPU'S THRONE.



BRAHMA AND INDRA CAME TO PAY HOMAGE TO HIM.



BUT WERE WARY OF APPROACHING VISHNU IN THIS TERRIFYING ASPECT.



THEN BRAHMA WENT TO PRAHLAD WHO WAS STANDING NEARBY.

O SON APPROACH AND PROPITIATE THE LORD!



NARA-SIMHA WAS TOUCHED.



O GREAT PRAHLAD! I AM PLEASED WITH YOU. ASK ME ANY BOON OF YOUR CHOICE.

I HAVE ALL I DESIRE. YOU HAVE ALLOWED ME TO TAKE REFUGE IN YOU.

BUT NARA-SIMHA INSISTED.



YET I WISH TO GRANT YOU A BOON.

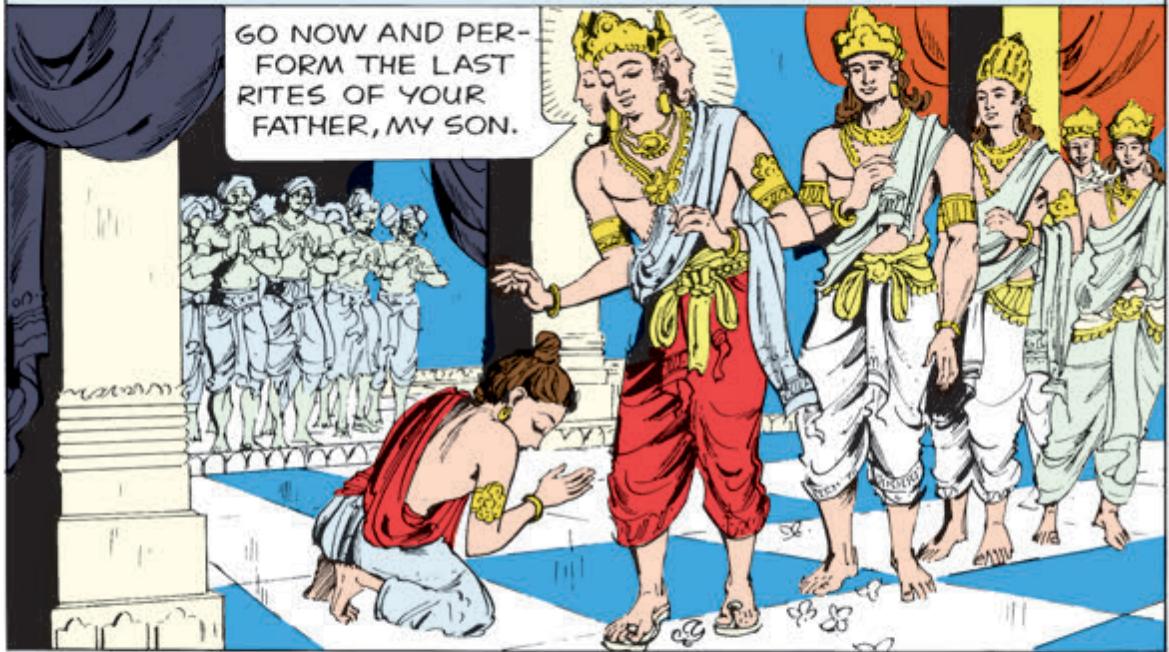
THEN LET MY FATHER BE PURIFIED OF ALL HIS SINS.

BEING YOUR FATHER HE IS ALREADY PURIFIED. REIGN IN HIS PLACE AND DO YOUR DUTIES.

SO BE IT.



NARA-SIMHA VANISHED. AND PRAHLAD BOWED TO BRAHMA AND TO THE OTHER CELESTIALS.



AFTER THE LAST RITES OF HIS FATHER WERE OVER, THE GODS WITH THE HELP OF THE ASURAS INSTALLED PRAHLAD ON THE THRONE AS LORD OF THE ASURAS. AND HE RULED WISELY AND WELL FOR MANY YEARS.



WHICH OF THE ACKS HAVE YOU STILL NOT READ?

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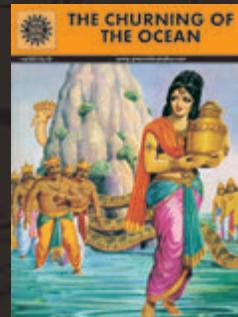
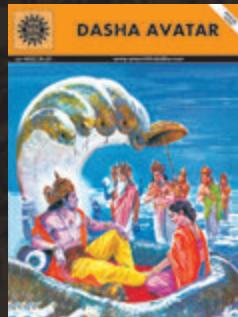
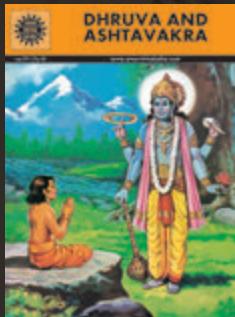


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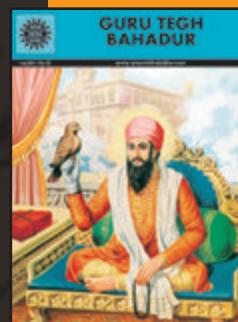
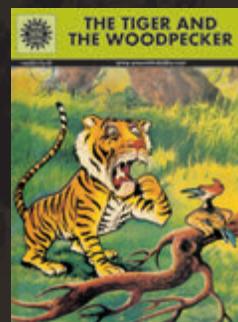
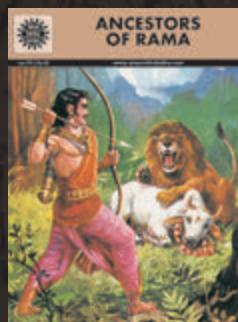
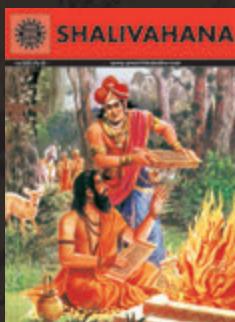
PRAHLAD

Prahlad drove his monstrous father to a murderous rage. He insisted on praising Lord Vishnu who was considered a sworn enemy by his father Hiranyakashipu. When he tried to punish his disobedient son, Hiranyakashipu's potent poisons turned to nectar while his lethal weapons fell harmlessly away. In this tale of bloodthirsty revenge, Prahlad's only defence is his devotion which dramatically puts an end to all evil.

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