

there was a fight between the asuras and the devas in which the asuras were defeated. After a truce with the devas Bali, son of Virocana, and grandson of Prahlāda was crowned the emperor of the asuras. Prahlāda then went to the mountain Gandhamādana and started doing penance to increase his personal power. Bali ruled as an antagonist of the devas and so very soon a grisly battle ensued between the devas and the asuras and Mahāviṣṇu defeated them. They fled from their land and took refuge under their preceptor Śukrācārya. Śukra then told them thus : "You remain here without fear. I shall protect you by my power of mantra and medicines. I shall devote my cogent brilliance to your advantage. It is enough if you remain here with full confidence in me."

The devas understood all these plans of the daityas through spies and they met in conference to consider their future plans. They knew that Śukrācārya was very powerful and if the daityas attacked them with the help of Śukrācārya the defeat of the devas was sure. They feared that they might even be compelled to flee from Svargaloka. How could the daityas under the shield of the mighty Śukra be destroyed ? That was the worrying thought of the devas.

They were thus worrying about this when Śukrācārya went to do penance for attaining more power. The daityas awaited the return of their ācārya. In the meantime they sent Prahlāda who was, though a daitya, a friend of the devas to talk peace terms with the devas. The mission was successful and the devas agreed to a no-war treaty. Prahlāda returned triumphant.

Śukra did severe penance to propitiate Śiva and Śiva appeared before Śukrācārya and when he knew that the purpose of Śukra was to defeat the devas he was a bit embarrassed. So he told him thus : "Oh sage Śukra, you take a vow and do penance with your head downwards over smoky incense for a thousand years. You will then attain power and happiness as you desire." In fact Śiva thought Śukra might not be able to complete the penance and so not succeed in his plan of destroying the devas. But Śukra started the penance in right earnest.

The devas were frightened when they knew the deceit of the daityas and the strategy of their preceptor. They decided to go to war with the daityas immediately. The daityas were in a fix. They knew that if they fought without the help of their guru defeat to them was sure. So they ran to the mother of Śukra and sought her help. The devas rebelled against Śukra's mother and she invoked the goddess of sleep and put all the devas into deep slumber. Mahāviṣṇu stealthily carried away Indra lying asleep. Indra persuaded Mahāviṣṇu to kill Śukra's mother and he cut off the head of Śukra's mother by the divine discus, Sudarśana.

Bhṛṅgumaharṣi, father of Śukra, was angry at that arrogant and cruel deed of Mahāviṣṇu and cursed him saying that he would be born on earth several times as man. After that he brought to life by sprinkling water his wife lying dead with her head severed from her body. Knowing well the havoc that would be created when Śukra came back after his penance Indra sent his daughter Jayantī to destroy the penance of Śukra. She went in the guise of a demon girl to serve Śukrācārya. In the meantime at the request of Indra Bṛhaspati took the form of Śukrācārya and presented

himself before the daityas. The daityas believed him to be their real guru Śukra and were pleased.

Ten years went by and one day Śukrācārya remembering the old events left Jayantī and went to his court in the demon land. Bṛhaspati had by that time returned to devaloka fully satisfied with his mission. The devas not knowing that Śukra had returned started for a war with the daityas. Śukra when he came back went wild when he knew that his people had been worshipping Bṛhaspati for ten years. The angered preceptor was not to be pacified by any amount of arguments and so they sent Prahlāda to Śukrācārya and Prahlāda pleaded for controlling his anger and Śukra did so.

Śukra then saw with his divine vision the maneuverings in mind of the devas and was convinced that a war with the devas at that juncture would be an utter failure. So he advised the daityas to desist from war and assured them that during the period of Sāvarni Manu to come, emperor Bali would become all-powerful and he would then fight and win the devas. Prahlāda returned and told the asuras the message of Śukrācārya. But the daityas were not satisfied and compelled Prahlāda to go to war with the devas. At last Prahlāda was forced to agree and a fierce devāsura battle ensued. Prahlāda met Indra in a single combat and it prolonged for a hundred years. In the end Prahlāda won. Indra prayed to the goddess and fearing that she might destroy the demon world, Prahlāda also prayed to her. The devī was pleased with both of them and she pacified them both and each went back to his own place. (4th Skandha, Devī Bhāgavata).

9) Other details.

(i) Once there was a fight between Prahlāda and Kāla. (Bhaviṣya Parva, Chapter 59).

(ii) Bali who was trampled down to Pātāla built a Viṣṇu temple and worshipped Viṣṇu following the advice of Prahlāda. (See under Bali).

(iii) Once Prahlāda taught Indra the rules of good conduct. (Śloka 28, Chapter 124 Śānti Parva).

(iv) Once Uśanas sang in honour of Prahlāda. (Śloka 50, Chapter 139, Śānti Parva).

(v) Once Prahlāda learnt the importance of Ājagara-vṛtti from a sage. (Chapter 179, Śānti Parva).

(vi) During the reign of emperor Prthu when the goddess of earth (Bhūmidevī) was milked, the asuras used Prahlāda as the calf to milk madya (wine) from her. (4th Skandha, Bhāgavata).

(vii) Prahlāda sits in the court of Varuṇa and worships him. (Śloka 12, Chapter 9, Sabhā Parva).

(viii) Prahlāda once went to the court of Brahmā to worship him. (Śloka 19, Chapter 11, Sabhā Parva).

(ix) Prahlāda acted as mediator in the controversy between Virocana and Sudhanvā. (See under Sudhanvā). (For knowing more details about Prahlāda please see under Virocana and Bali.)

PRAHLĀDA II. A Kṣatriya King born of the family of Bālīhika. This King belonged to the line of kings under the demon king Śalabha. (Śloka 30, Chapter 67, Ādi Parva).

PRAHLĀDA III. A serpent. This serpent sits in the court of Varuṇa and worships him. (Śloka 10, Chapter 9, Bhīṣma Parva).

PRAHLĀDA IV. A place of human habitation of Purāṇic fame. (Śloka 46, Chapter 9, Bhīṣma Parva).