

Prahlada

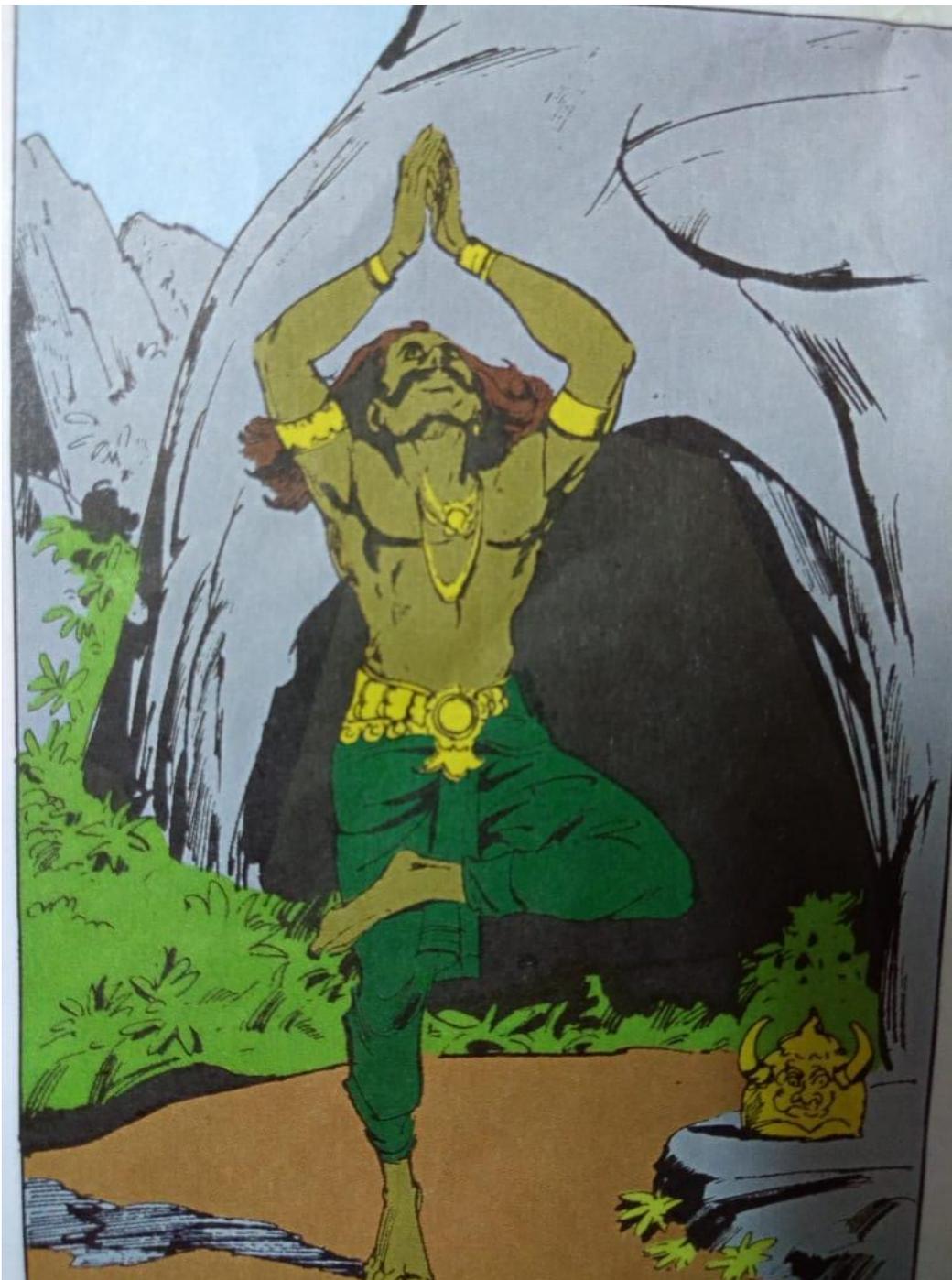


Prahlada was the son of the demon Hiranyakashipu.

Hiranyakashipu's brother had been killed by Lord Vishnu and hence Hiranyakashipu had a deep hatred for Vishnu and his devotees.



He sent his army of Asuras to destroy the devotees of Vishnu on Earth. The Asuras however were unable to do so since the Gods came out to protect the people.

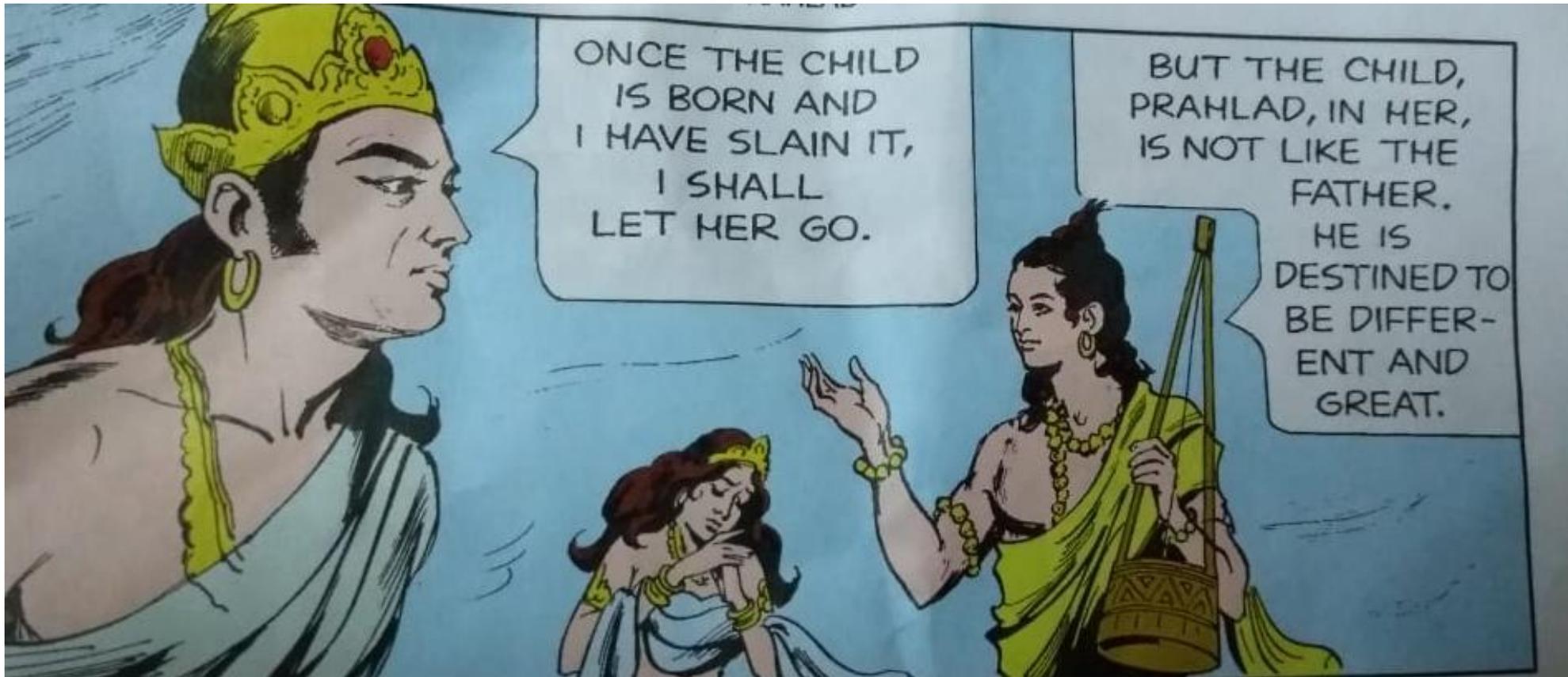


When they informed Hiranyakashipu about this, he was furious and decided to undergo an intense austerity to become the Lord of the three worlds.

He left his kingdom, his wife who was at the time pregnant and went to a secluded spot and was immersed in meditation.

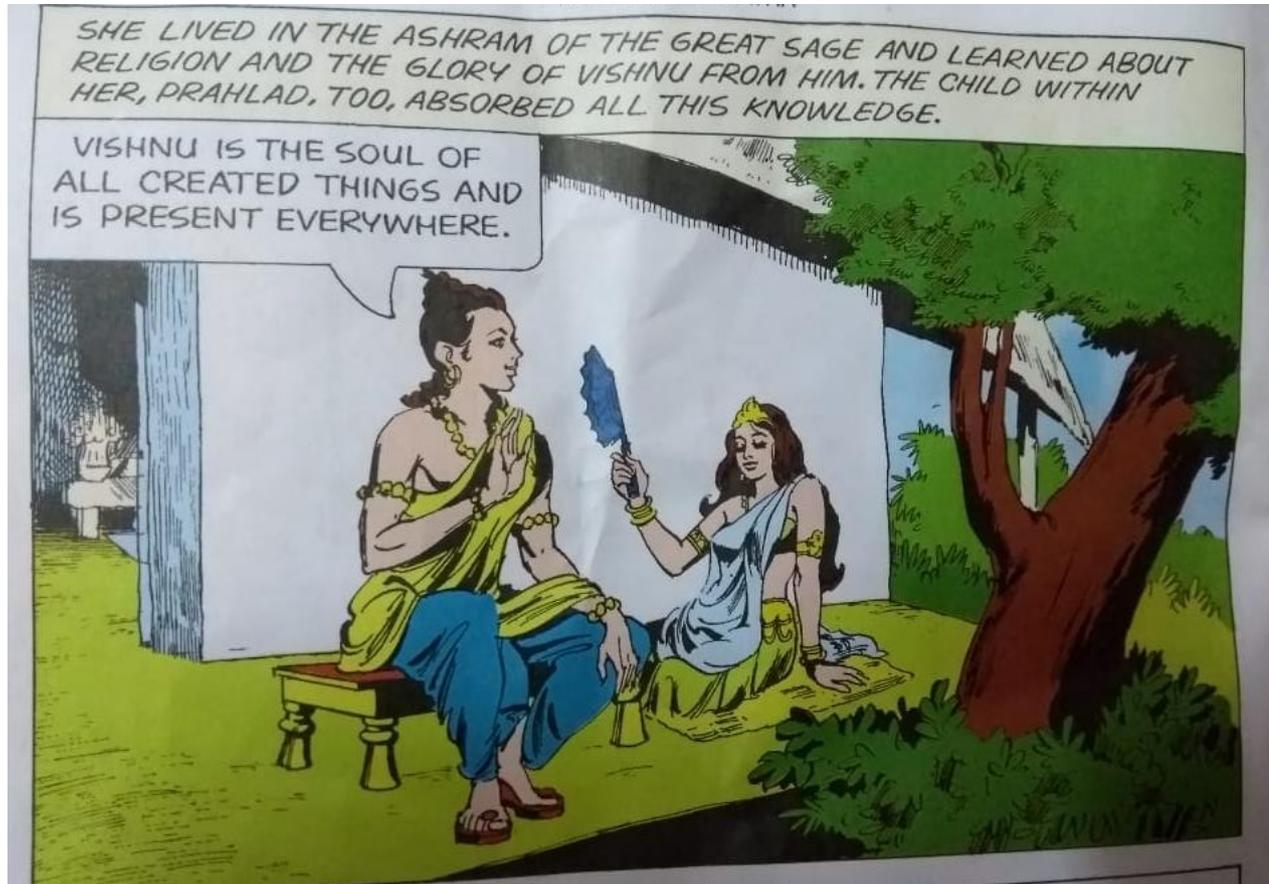


The Devas decided that this was a good time to destroy the Asuras since their King was away. The Asuras fled and Hiranyakashipu's wife taken captive by Indra.



Sage Narada asked Indra to release the Queen. The child who was to be born to her, Prahlada, would be different from his father, he would be a devotee of Vishnu and was destined to be great.

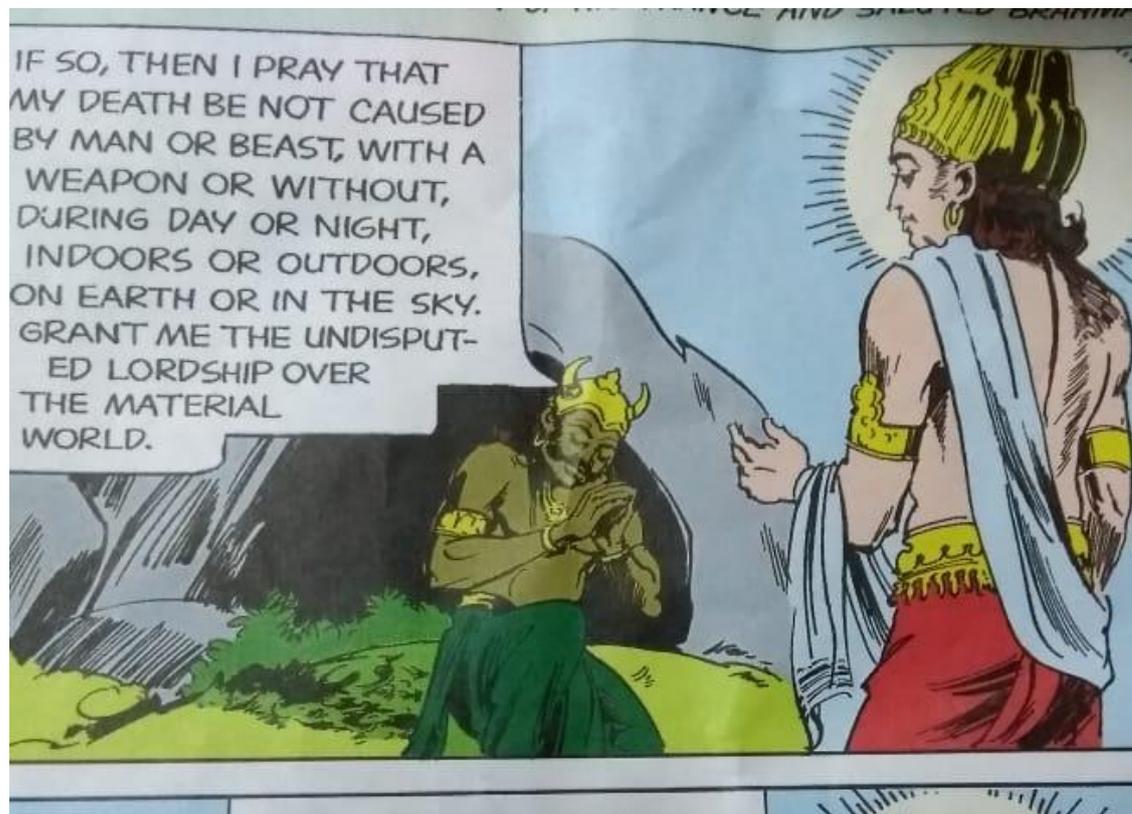
Narada took the Queen to his Ashrama and said she could stay there till her husband returned. There he taught her the Vedas and religious and spiritual ideas.



While the Queen listened, the child in her womb, Prahlada also listened to the high spiritual ideals being taught by Narada and he developed a refined mind with intense love and devotion towards Vishnu.



In the meantime, Hiranyakashipu's intense meditation to become the Lord of the three worlds was generating much disturbance in all the three worlds. Humans, Gods were suffocated by the intensity with which he was meditating. They requested Brahma to pacify Hiranyakashipu. Brahma went to see Hiranyakashipu and brought him out his meditative trance by sprinkling some holy water on him. He asked Hiranyakashipu what he wanted.



Hiranyakashipu said he wanted to be immortal, ie, he wanted to live forever.

Brahma told him that was not possible. Then Hiranyakashipu said:

Let me not be killed by man or animal

Let me not be killed inside or outside

Let me not be killed with or without weapons

Let me not be killed in the daytime or at night

Let me not be killed on the Earth or in the sky.

Brahma granted him this boon.

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



THERE IS NONE STRONGER THAN I. I AM THE LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS. I SHALL BE WORSHIPPED AS SUCH!

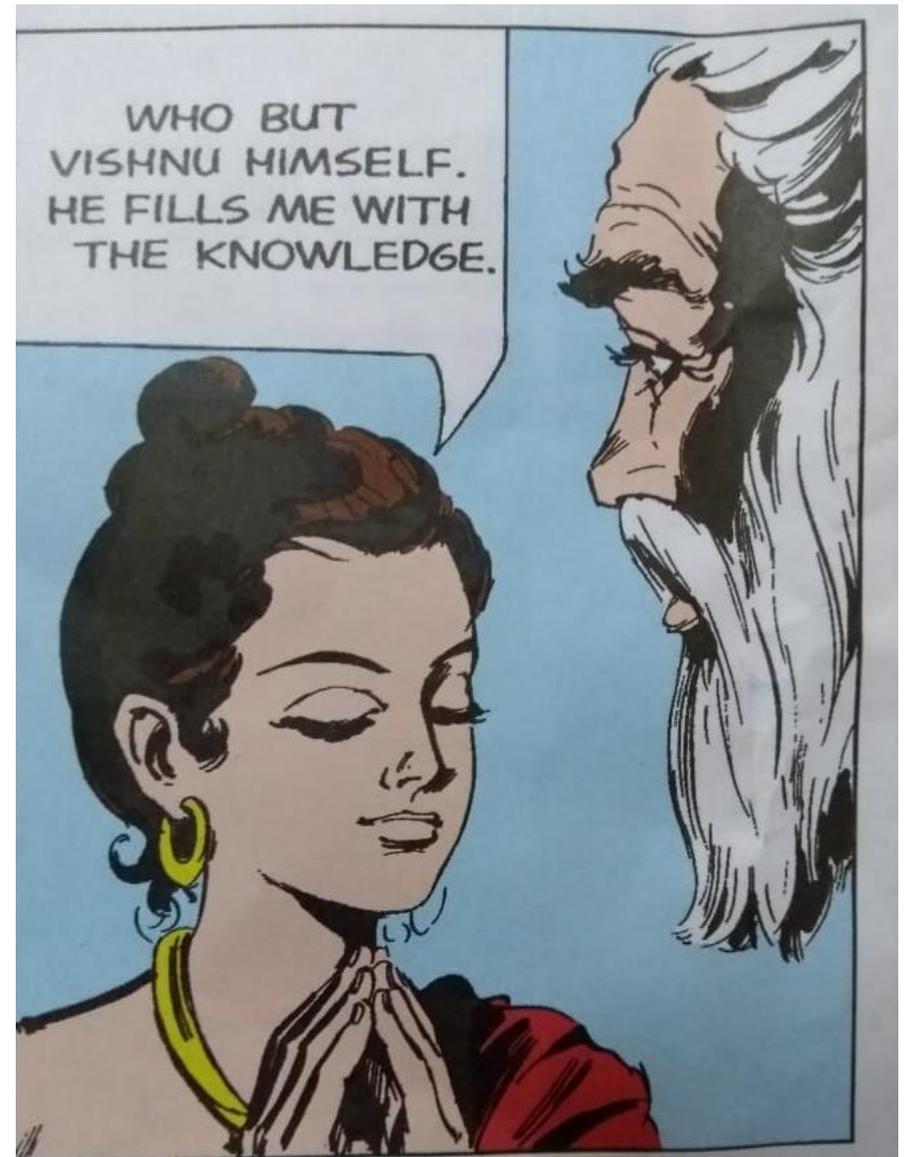
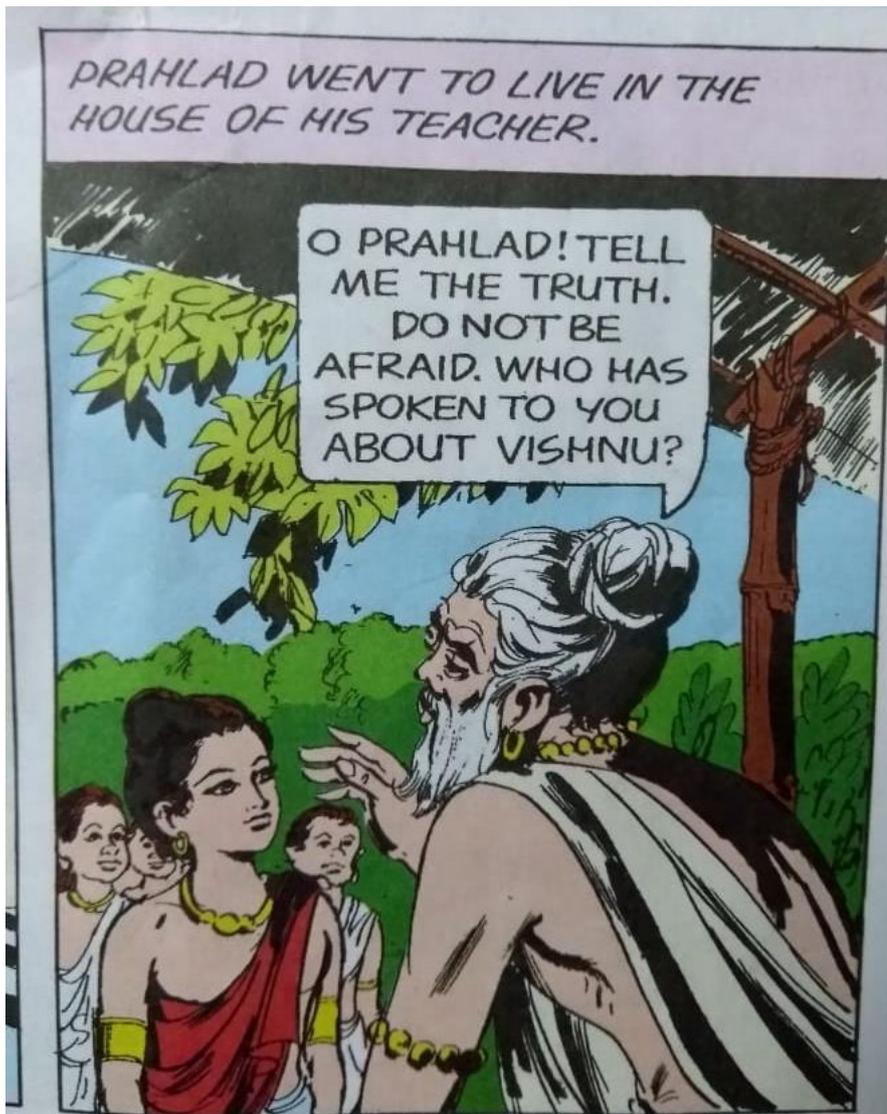
He made life difficult for all forms of life.



Everyone requested Vishnu to help them. Vishnu said he would soon come to destroy Hiranyakashipu when he would start torturing his own son Prahlada because Prahlada, unlike Hiranyakashipu, was a devotee of Vishnu, was peace-loving and was born with a different destiny.

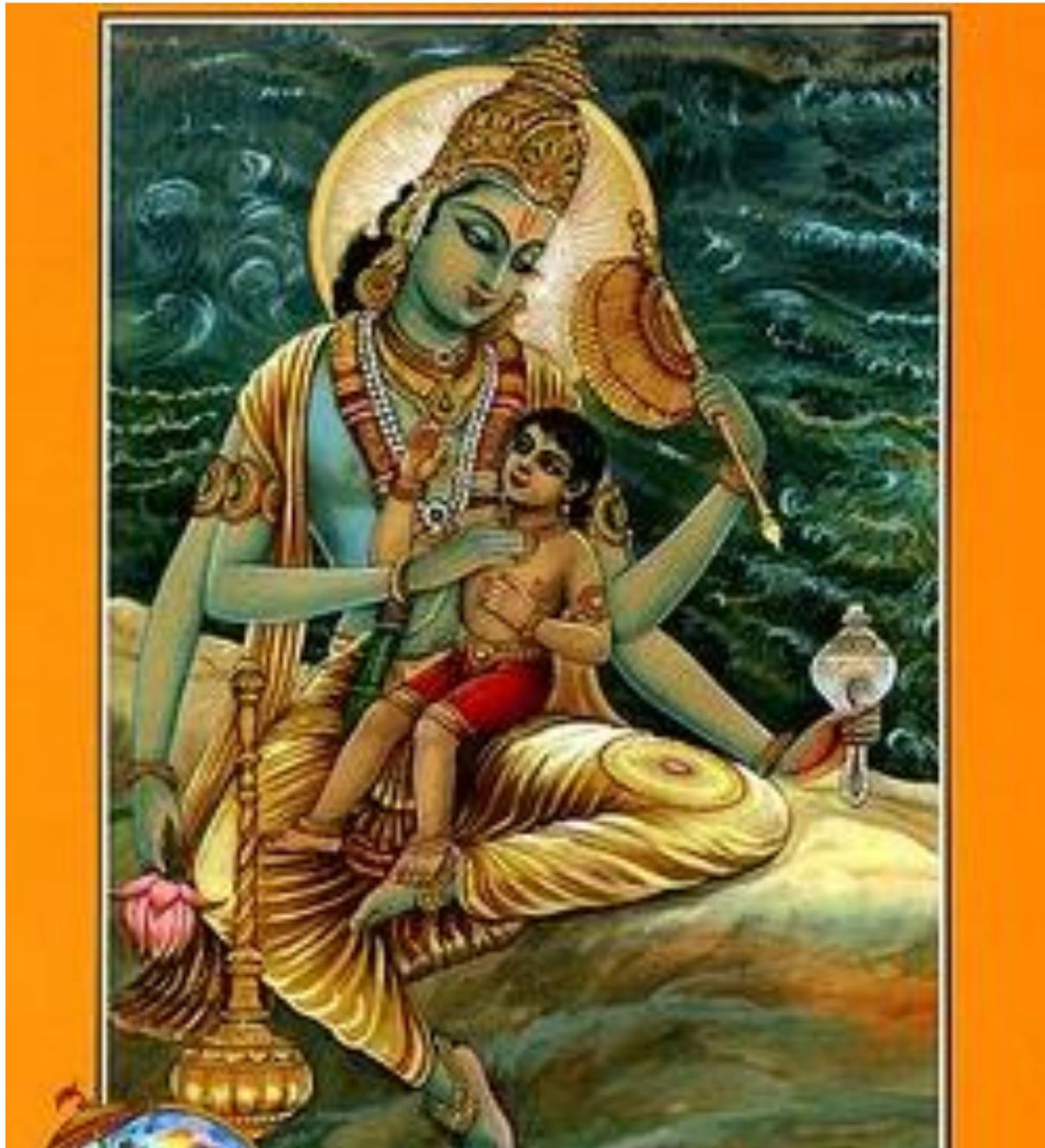


Prahlada was growing up with the ideas of education from Narada manifesting in him. He was a peace-loving, obedient, truthful child who loved Vishnu. Much to the anger of Hiranyakashipu, the young child held onto the high ideals he had learnt from Narada. Hiranyakashipu decided to send him to a Gurukula (school) where his ideas could be changed.

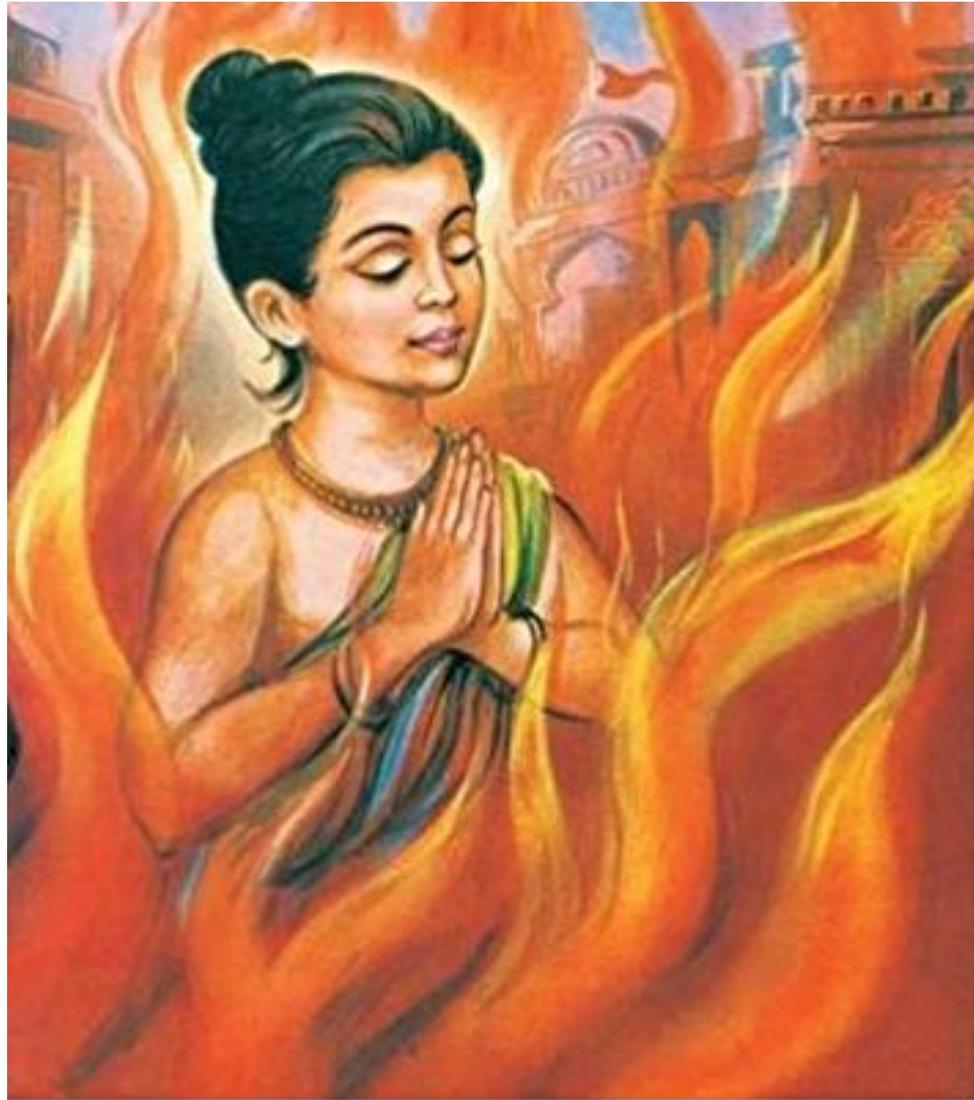


The teacher was also surprised at the steadfastness of the child and how he held onto his beliefs.

Hiranyakashipu then decided to kill his own son since he could not accept that his own son loved Vishnu. The young child was attacked with swords, poisonous snakes were sent near him, wild elephants, he was put into a fire, dropped off a cliff, dropped into the ocean, he was given poison to drink but each time Prahlada miraculously survived.



Vishnu rescued Prahlada when he was thrown into the ocean

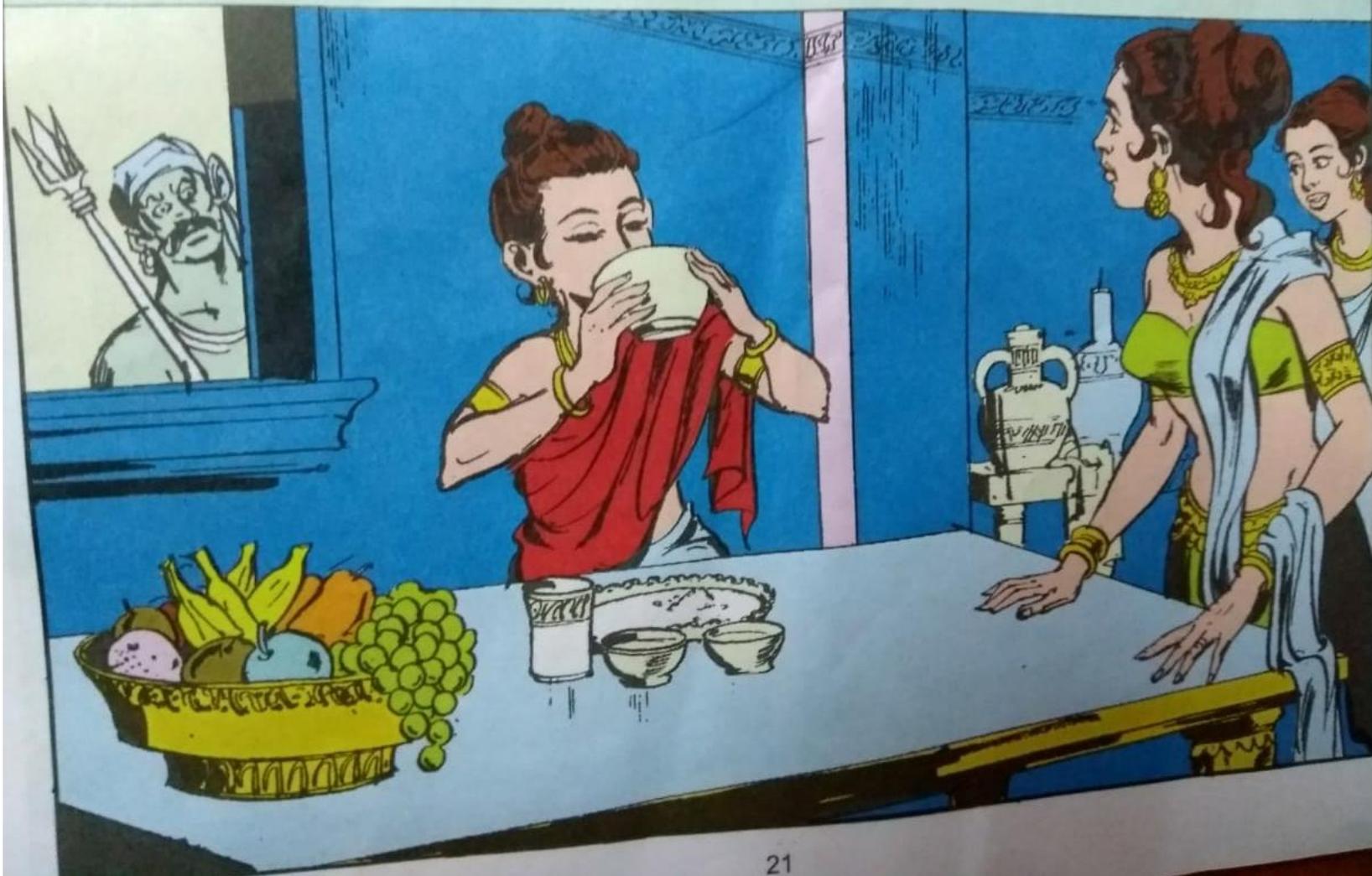


He was unharmed by fire

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



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



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

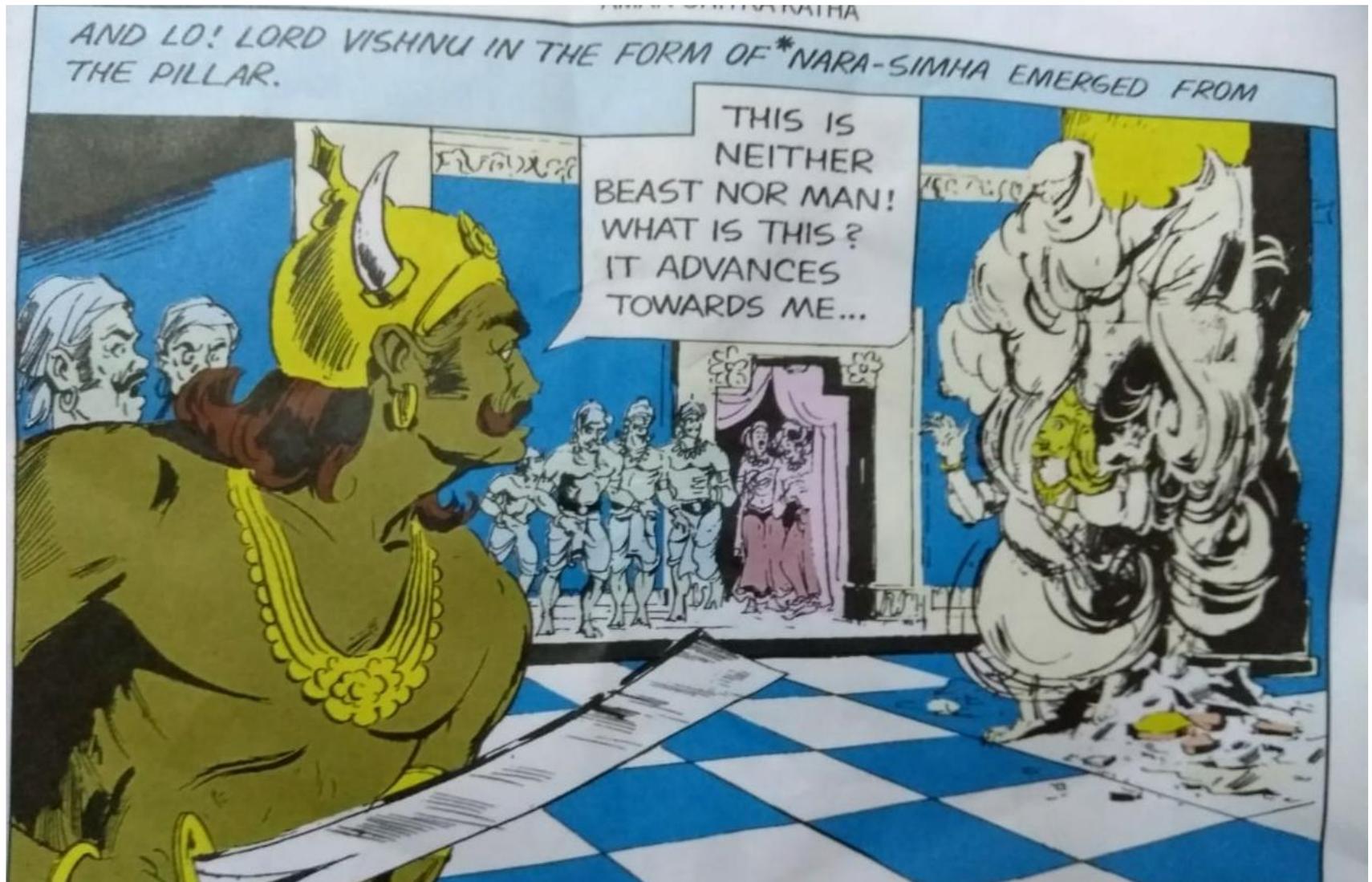




At last Hironyakashipu decided to kill Prahlada with his own hands.



He asked Prahlada if Vishnu were present everywhere, he should come out of the pillar he was about to kick to protect Prahlada.



And lo! Vishnu appeared in the form of Narasimha – neither an animal nor a human.



It was the hour of twilight – neither morning nor night

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

ALAS WE
ARE NEITHER
INDOORS NOR
OUTDOORS.





**He was killed with Narasimha's nails, neither weapon nor a non-weapon.
He was placed on Narasimha's lap, neither touching the ground nor in the sky.**



Narasimha asked Prahlada to rule as a just King and restore order to the three worlds. And Prahlada ruled for a long time.