

ADARSH

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24

KING JANAKA



The glory of a country has always been the glory of its people. In happy times, India knew great prosperity. Kings were noble and conscientious but the land got its true flavour from its holy men.

Kings there were many and holy men galore. But we also have the unique instance of a royal saint—King Janaka. Janaka was a man full of Upanishadic wisdom and even while he discharged the duties of a king, he was acclaimed by all as truly a man of perfection !

Editor : **D. Kumar**

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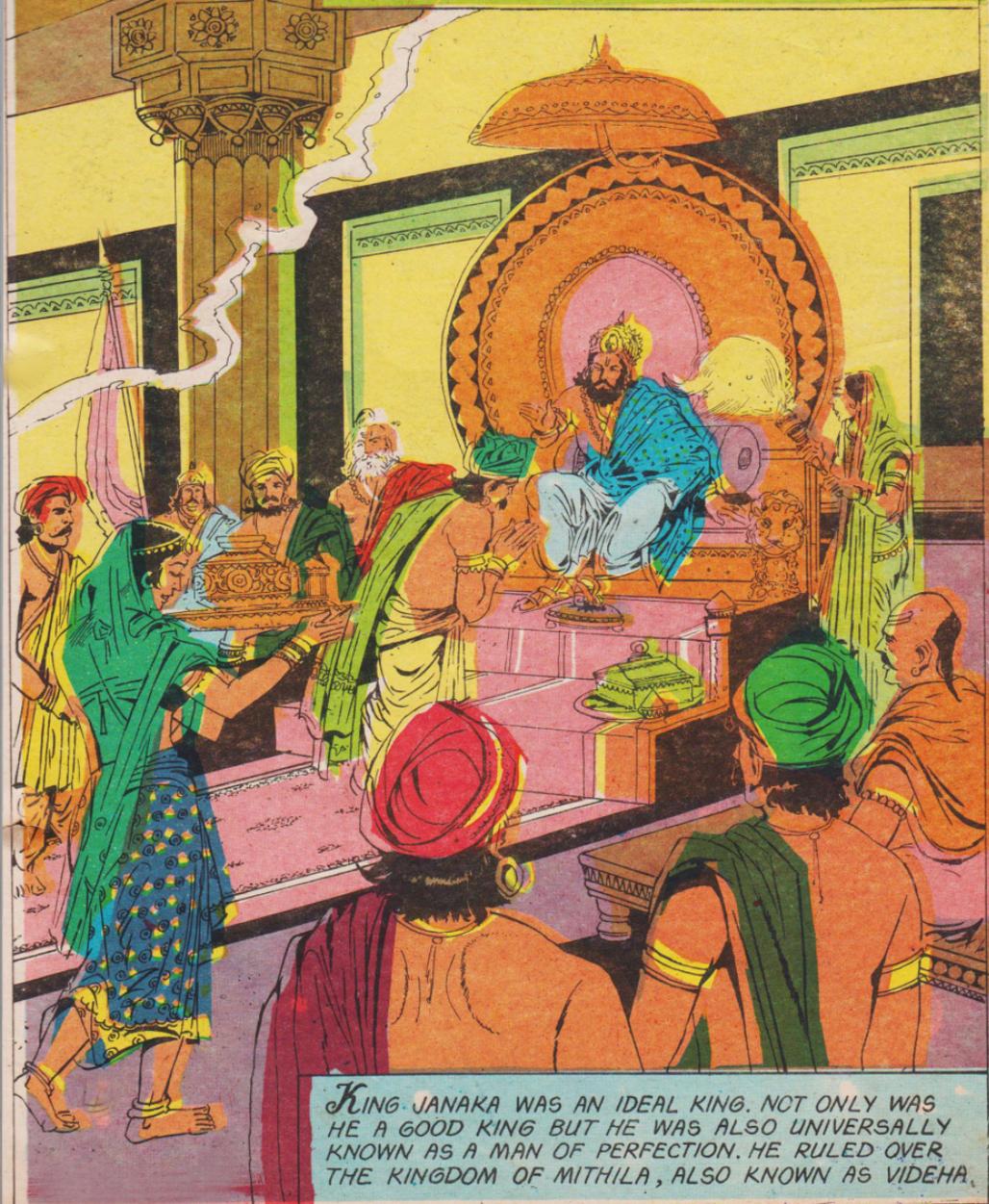
Art Work : **B. G. Mandke**

OUR NEXT TITLE

AANDAL

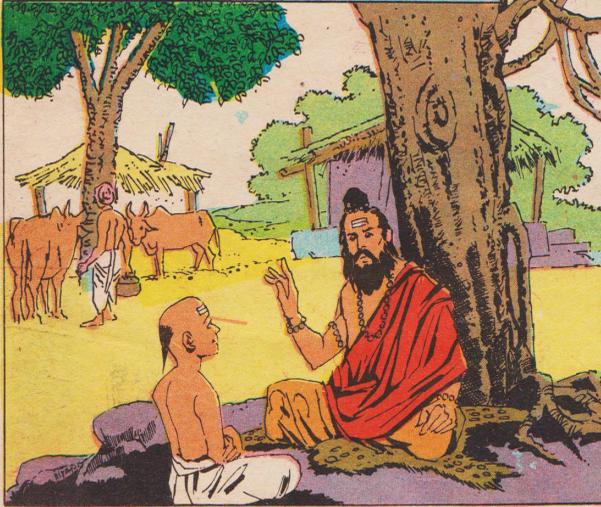
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KING JANAKA

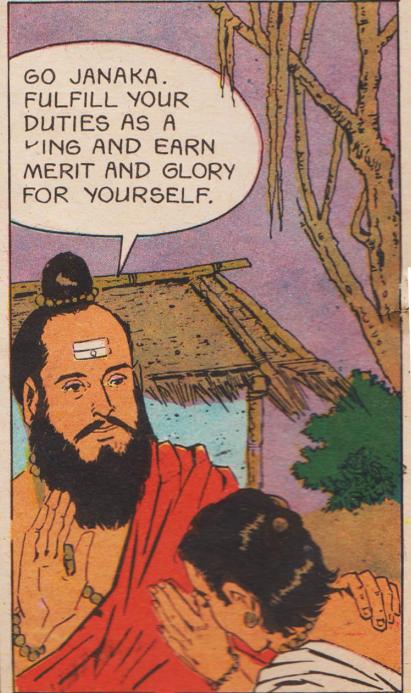


KING JANAKA WAS AN IDEAL KING. NOT ONLY WAS HE A GOOD KING BUT HE WAS ALSO UNIVERSALLY KNOWN AS A MAN OF PERFECTION. HE RULED OVER THE KINGDOM OF MITHILA, ALSO KNOWN AS VIDEHA.

JANAKA WAS THE PUPIL OF THE RENOWNED SAGE, YAGNAVALKYA, FROM WHOM HE HAD RECEIVED BRAHMAJNANA, OR THE HIGHEST KNOWLEDGE.



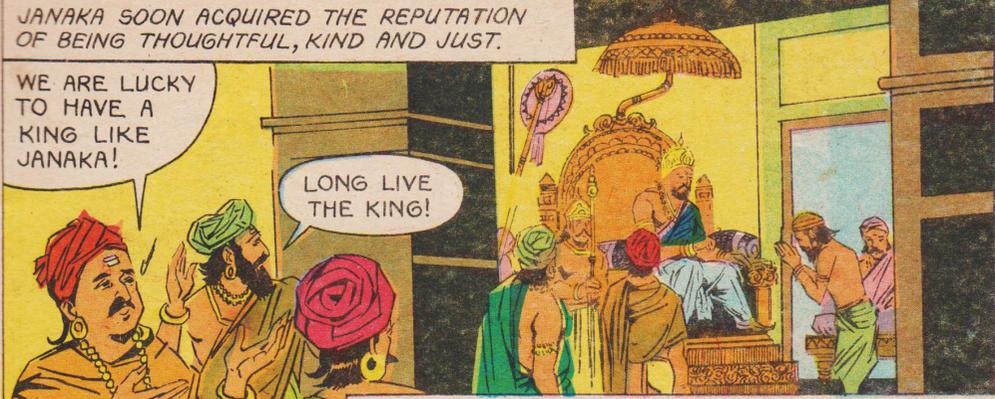
IN FACT, ONE OF THE FOREMOST UPANISHADS, THE BRIHADARANYAKA, IS IN THE FORM OF A DIALOGUE BETWEEN YAGNAVALKYA AND JANAKA.



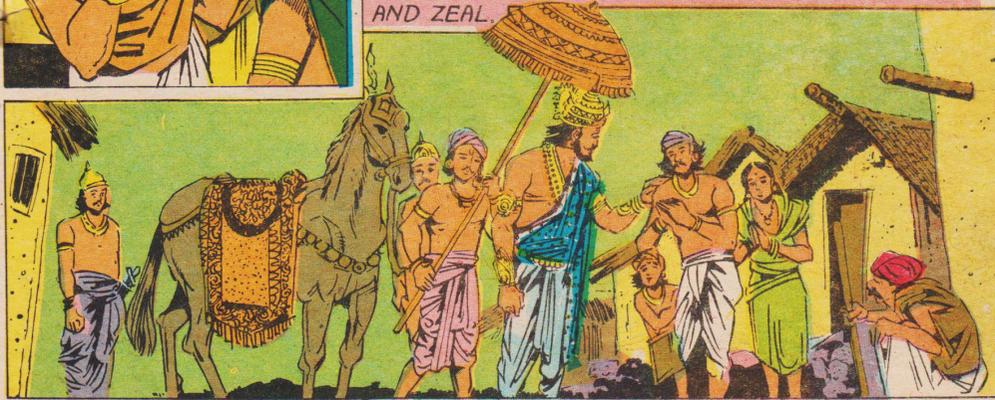
JANAKA SOON ACQUIRED THE REPUTATION OF BEING THOUGHTFUL, KIND AND JUST.

WE ARE LUCKY TO HAVE A KING LIKE JANAKA!

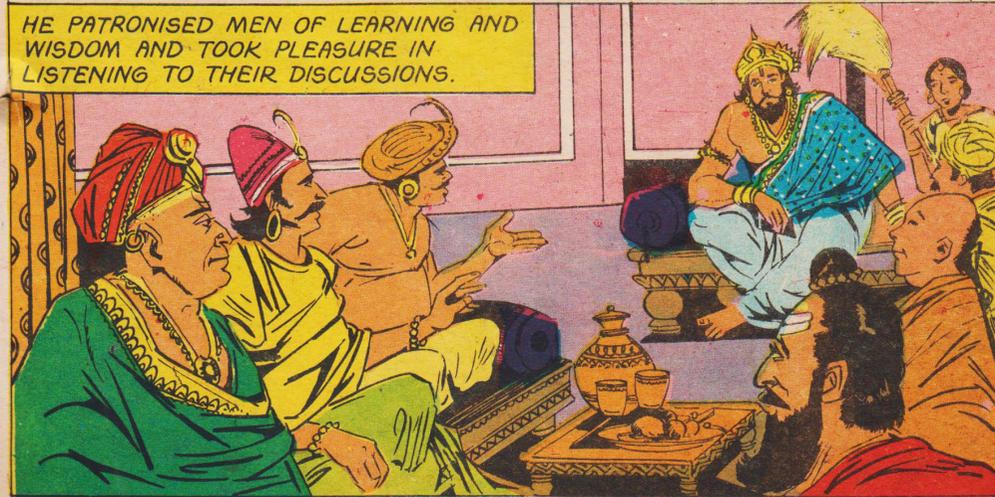
LONG LIVE THE KING!



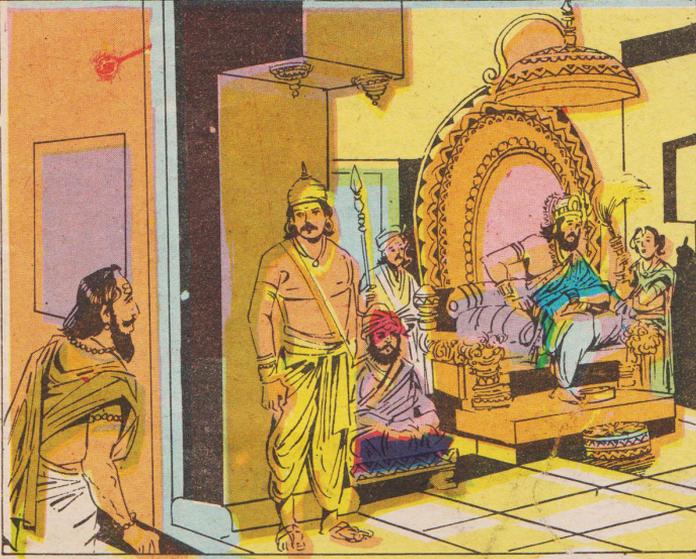
HE WAS A TRUE FATHER TO HIS SUBJECTS AND LOOKED AFTER THEIR WELFARE WITH SINCERITY AND ZEAL.



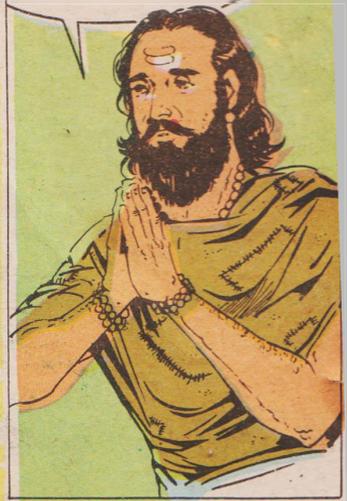
HE PATRONISED MEN OF LEARNING AND WISDOM AND TOOK PLEASURE IN LISTENING TO THEIR DISCUSSIONS.



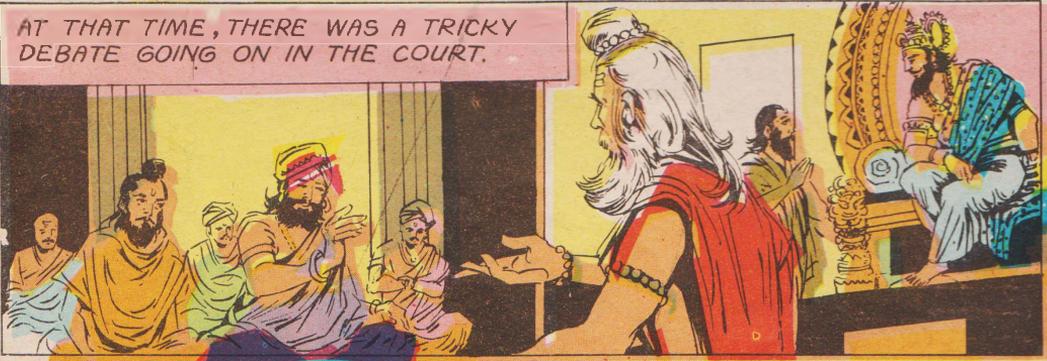
ONCE, A LEARNED VEDANTIN CALLED KAHOR
CAME TO THE COURT OF KING JANAKA.



I AM POOR, O KING,
AND HAVE COME
FOR YOUR
PATRONAGE.



AT THAT TIME, THERE WAS A TRICKY
DEBATE GOING ON IN THE COURT.



ANOTHER LEARNED PUNDIT CALLED
SRI VANDIN EMERGED
VICTORIOUS.

HOW CLEVER
HE IS!

HOW
GREAT!



WELL, KAHOR.
HERE IS YOUR
CHANCE.



IT WOULD BE
MARVELLOUS TO HEAR
A DEBATE BETWEEN
YOU AND SRI
VANDIN.



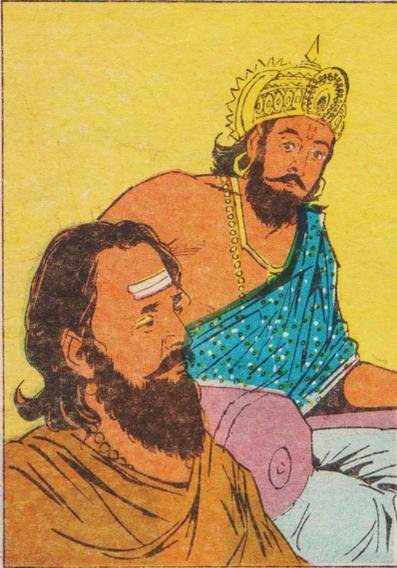
ON ONE
CONDITION,
O KING...



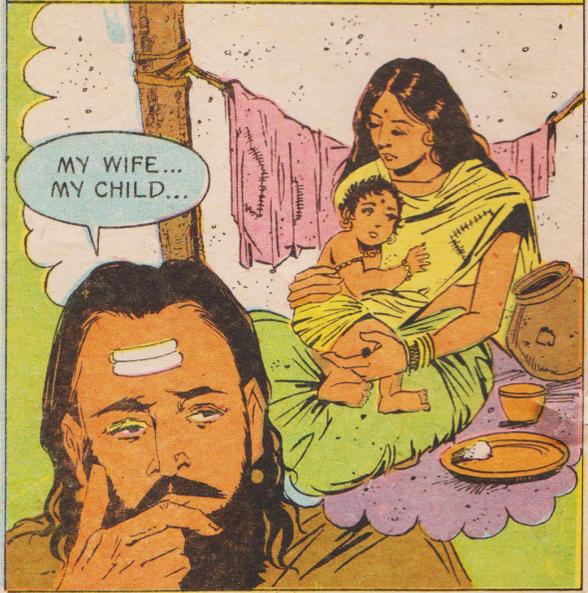
...IF I WIN,
KAHOR MUST
BECOME MY
SERVANT.



JANAKA LOOKED QUESTIONINGLY AT KAHOR.



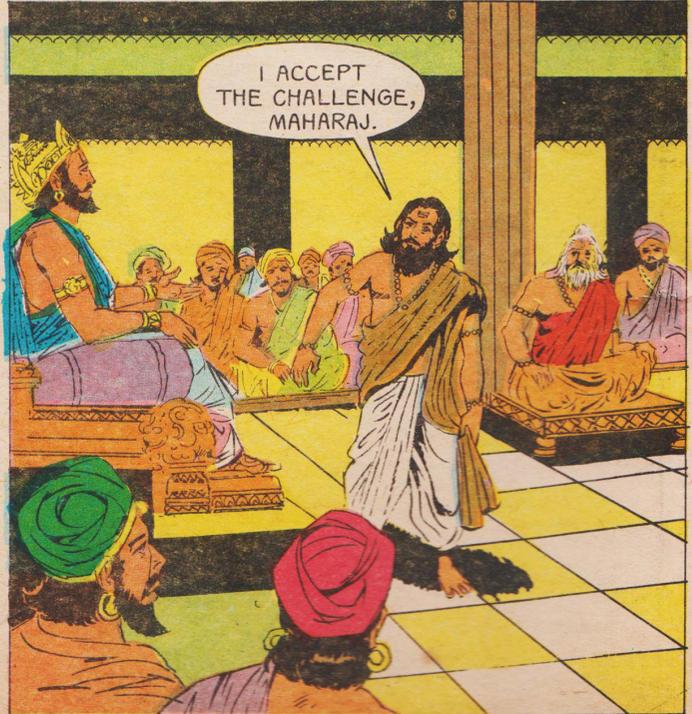
AND KAHOR HESITATED BUT A MOMENT.



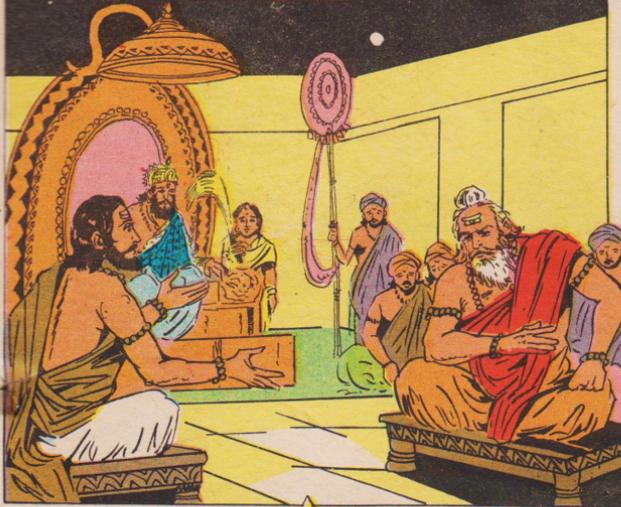
NEVER MIND! THIS IS MY ONLY CHANCE OF BANISHING THIS ACCURSED POVERTY.



I ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE, MAHARAJ.



A HEATED DEBATE ENSUED BETWEEN THE TWO LEARNED MEN.



JANAKA LISTENED INTENTLY TO THEM BOTH. BUT IN THE END...



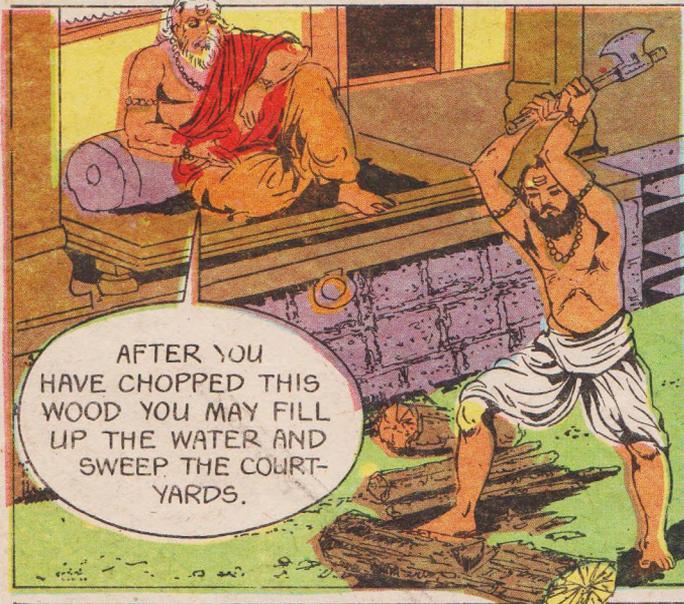
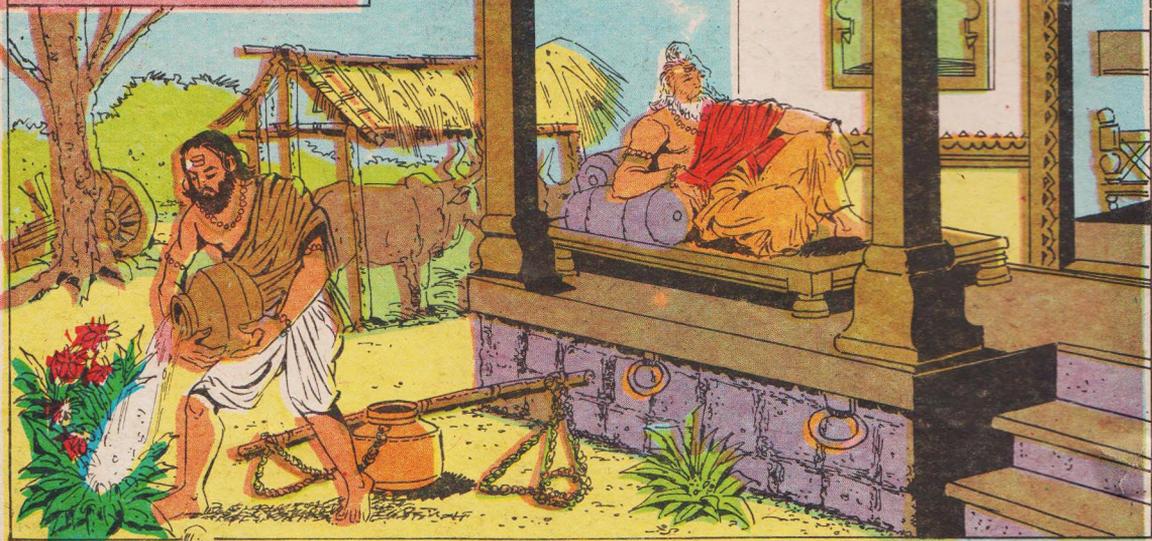
I AM SORRY FOR YOU, KAHOR. SRI VANDIN WINS THIS DEBATE!



KAHOR BOWED HIS HEAD AND GRACEFULLY ACCEPTED DEFEAT.



HE WORKED AS A MENIAL IN THE HOUSE OF SRI VANDIN.



BUT WHEN HE SLEPT AT NIGHT, HIS MIND WOULD GO BACK TO HIS WIFE AND CHILD—



I USED TO READ ALOUD THE SACRED MANDALAS* TO SUJATA, LATE INTO THE NIGHT WHEN SHE WAS EXPECTING.

THE UNBORN BABE LEARNT THEM ALL IN HIS MOTHER'S WOMB AND ONE DAY...



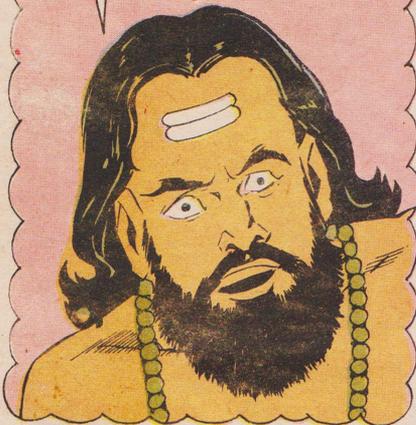
I HAVE LEARNT ALL THE SACRED TEXTS BY YOUR GOOD GRACE, FATHER...



... BUT IT PAINS ME THAT YOU OFTEN MAKE MISTAKES IN YOUR RECITATION.



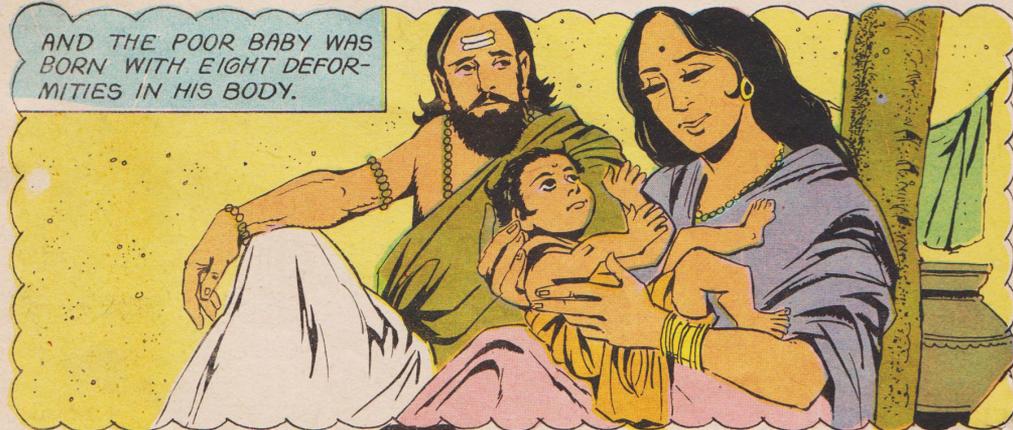
HOW DARE YOU
CRITICIZE ME!



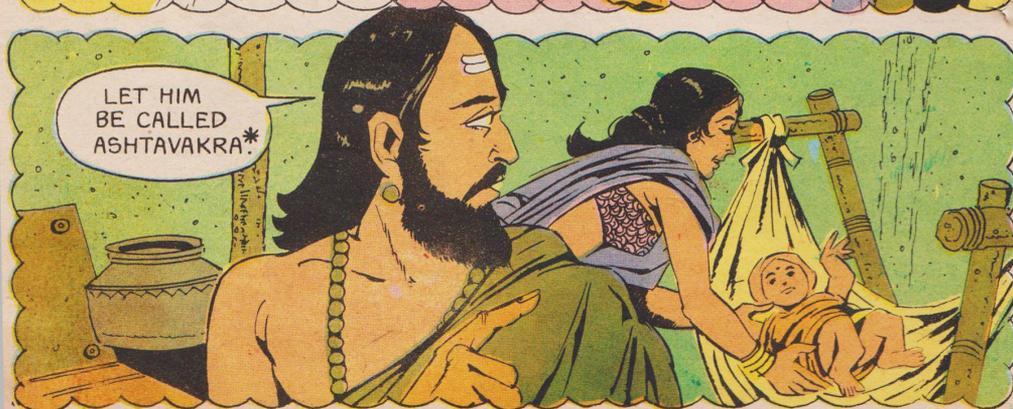
I CURSE
YOU TO BE
BORN AS A
DEFORMED
BABY.



AND THE POOR BABY WAS
BORN WITH EIGHT DEFORMI-
TIES IN HIS BODY.



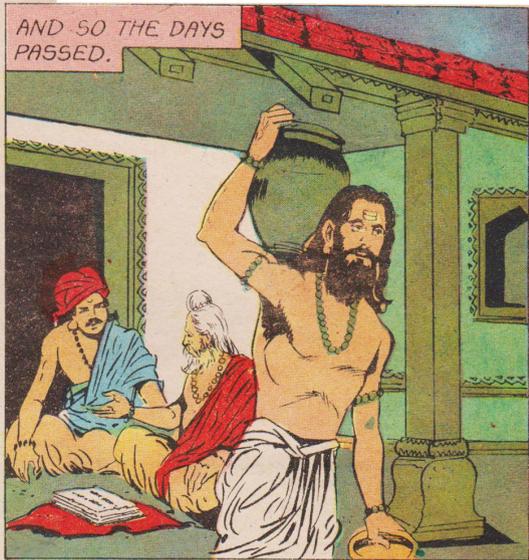
LET HIM
BE CALLED
ASHTAVAKRA*



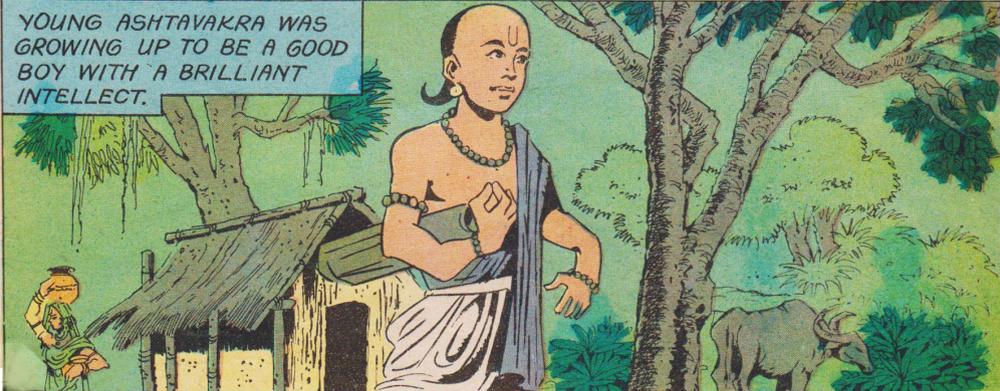
TRULY, MAN'S
EGO AND TEMPER
ARE HIS WORST
ENEMIES.



AND SO THE DAYS
PASSED.

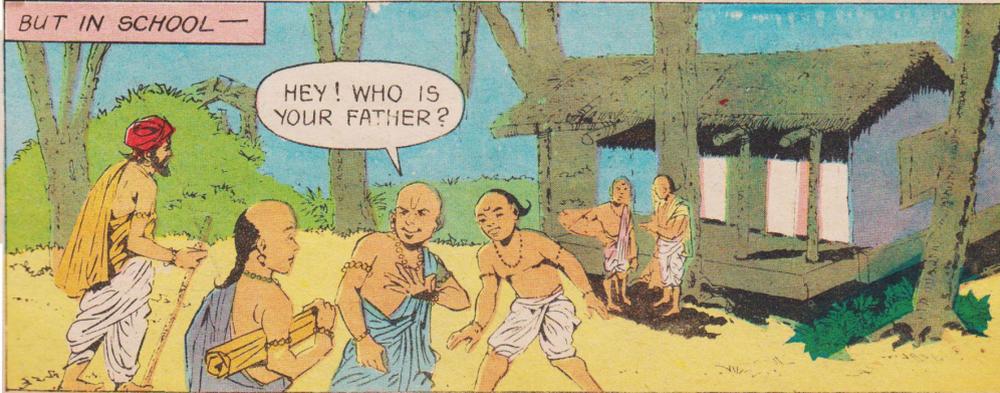


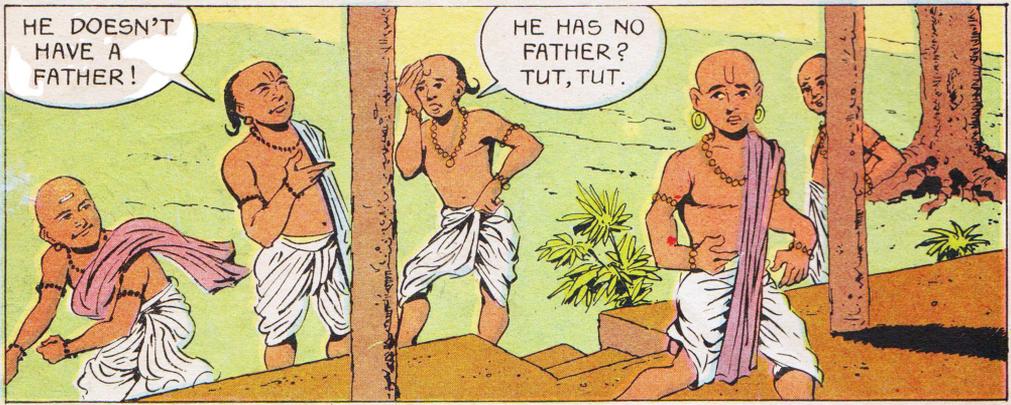
YOUNG ASHTAVAKRA WAS
GROWING UP TO BE A GOOD
BOY WITH A BRILLIANT
INTELLECT.



BUT IN SCHOOL —

HEY! WHO IS
YOUR FATHER?



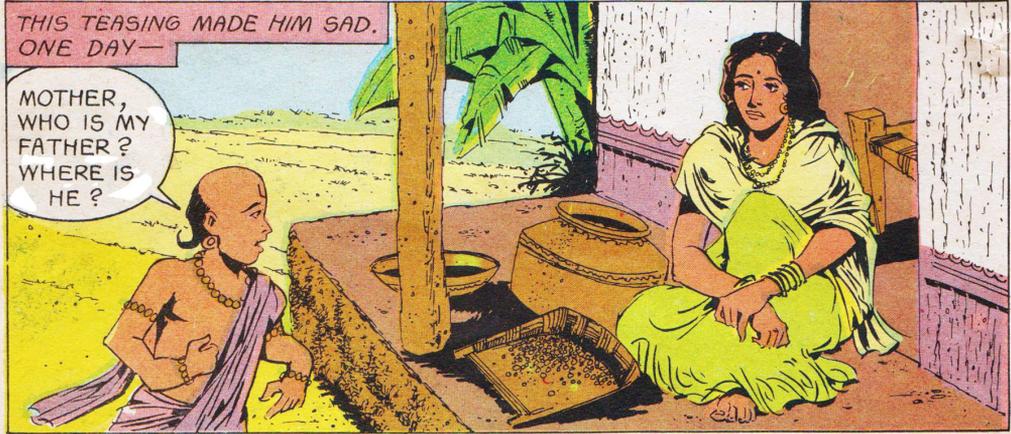


HE DOESN'T HAVE A FATHER!

HE HAS NO FATHER? TUT, TUT.

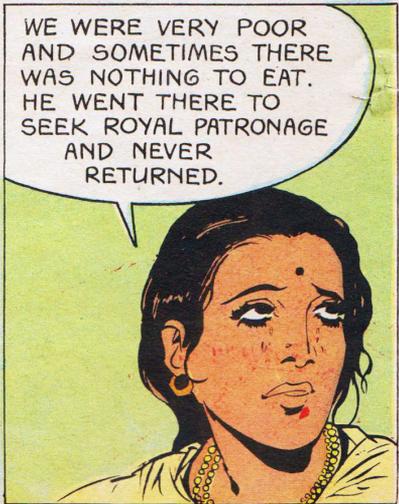
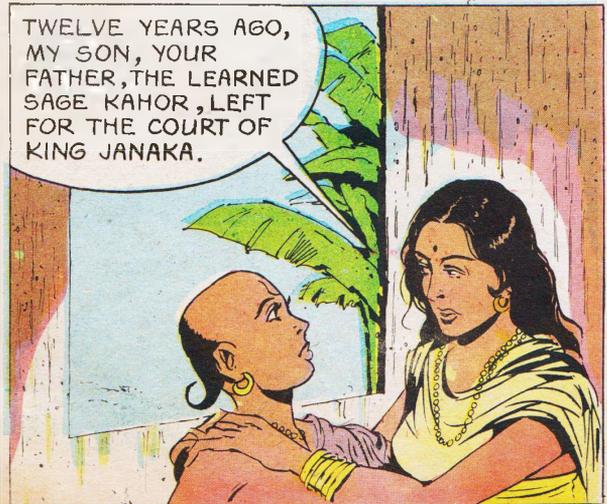
THIS TEASING MADE HIM SAD. ONE DAY—

MOTHER, WHO IS MY FATHER? WHERE IS HE?

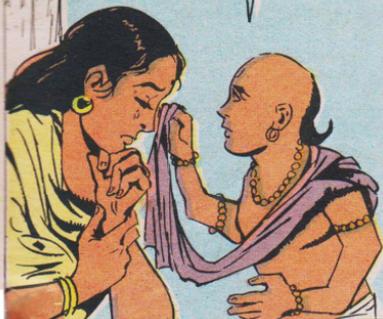


TWELVE YEARS AGO, MY SON, YOUR LEARNED FATHER, THE LEARNED SAGE KAHOR, LEFT FOR THE COURT OF KING JANAKA.

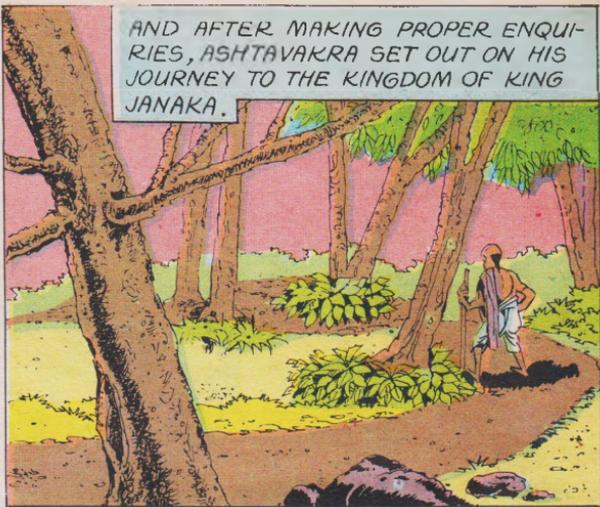
WE WERE VERY POOR AND SOMETIMES THERE WAS NOTHING TO EAT. HE WENT THERE TO SEEK ROYAL PATRONAGE AND NEVER RETURNED.



I WILL GO TO
VIDEHA, MOTHER.
I WILL GET
MY FATHER
BACK.



AND AFTER MAKING PROPER ENQUI-
RIES, ASHTAVAKRA SET OUT ON HIS
JOURNEY TO THE KINGDOM OF KING
JANAKA.



HE WAS STOPPED AT THE PALACE GATES.

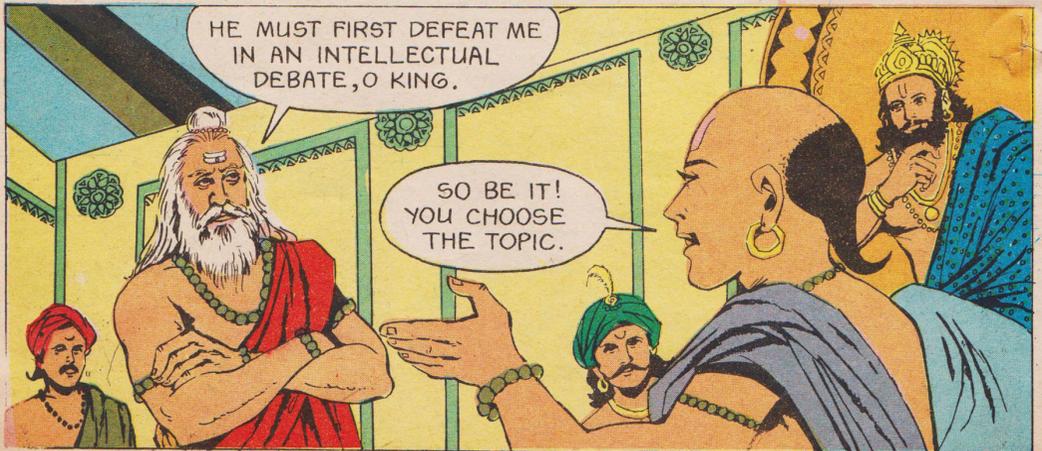
WHO ARE
YOU? WHAT DO
YOU WANT?



I AM ASHTAVAKRA,
THE SON OF
KAHOR. I HAVE
COME HERE TO
TAKE MY
FATHER BACK.



WHEN KING JANAKA WAS INFORMED ABOUT THIS—



SRI VANDIN'S OUTDATED ARGUMENTS
COULD NOT WITHSTAND THE ONSLAUGHT
OF YOUNG ASHTAVAKRA'S INTELLECT.



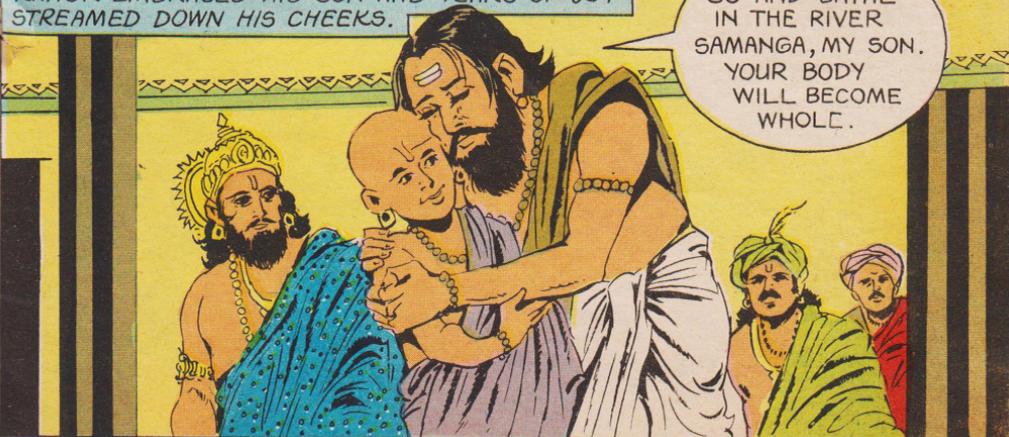
BRILLIANT!



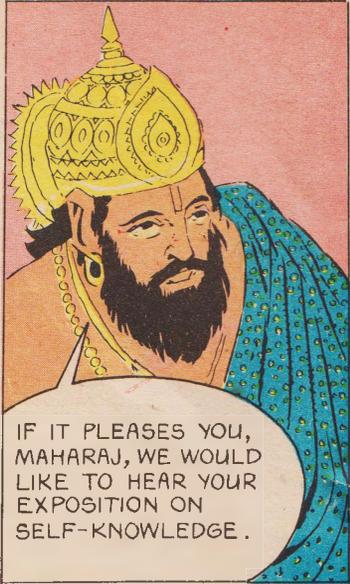
TAKE YOUR
FATHER, ASHTAVAKRA.
YOU HAVE EARNED
HIS FREEDOM.

KAHOR EMBRACED HIS SON AND TEARS OF JOY
STREAMED DOWN HIS CHEEKS.

GO AND BATHE
IN THE RIVER
SAMANGA, MY SON.
YOUR BODY
WILL BECOME
WHOLE.



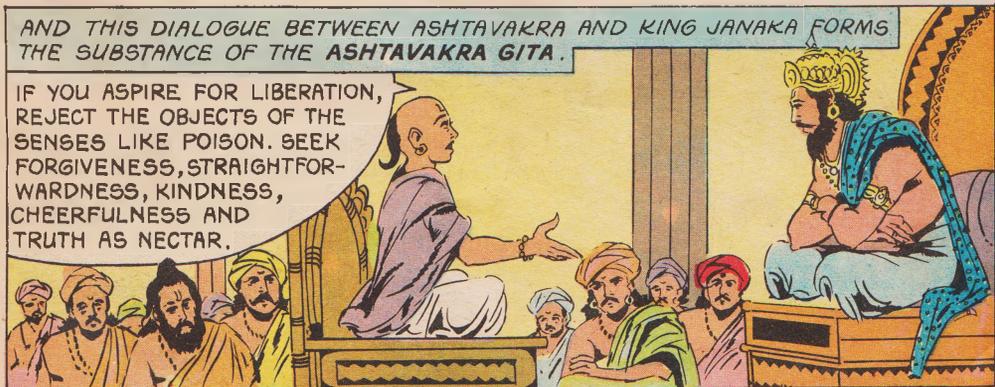
ASHTAVAKRA DID AS HIS FATHER BADE HIM AND RETURNED TO THE COURT OF JANAKA, HANDSOME AND GLOWING WITH DIVINITY.



IF IT PLEASES YOU, MAHARAJ, WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR YOUR EXPOSITION ON SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

AND THIS DIALOGUE BETWEEN ASHTAVAKRA AND KING JANAKA FORMS THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ASHTAVAKRA GITA.

IF YOU ASPIRE FOR LIBERATION, REJECT THE OBJECTS OF THE SENSES LIKE POISON. SEEK FORGIVENESS, STRAIGHTFORWARDNESS, KINDNESS, CHEERFULNESS AND TRUTH AS NECTAR.

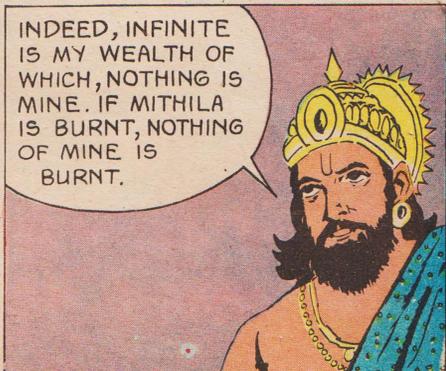


AFTER WHICH JANAKA DECLARED —

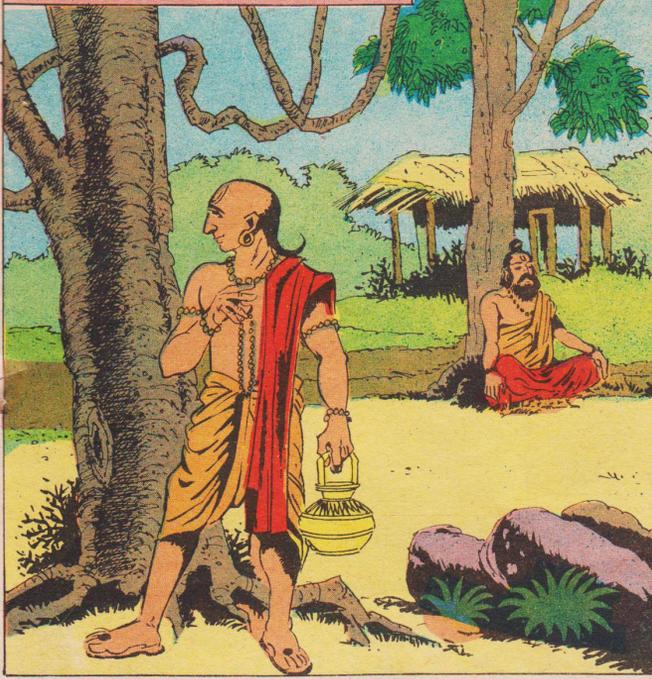
IN ONE WAY, NOTHING BELONGS TO ME, IN ANOTHER, EVERYTHING BELONGS ONLY TO ME!



INDEED, INFINITE IS MY WEALTH OF WHICH, NOTHING IS MINE. IF MITHILA IS BURNT, NOTHING OF MINE IS BURNT.

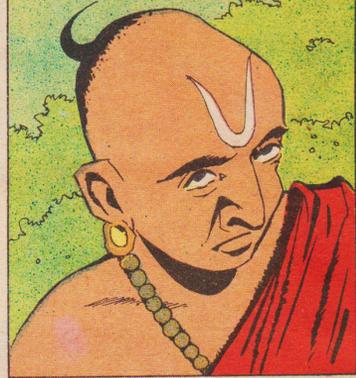


SHUKA, THE YOUNG SON OF VYASA, WAS A SEER OF GREAT REPUTE. AT HIS UPANAYANAM* HE HAD BEEN PRESENTED WITH A DIVINE KAMANDALU BY NONE OTHER THAN INDRA.

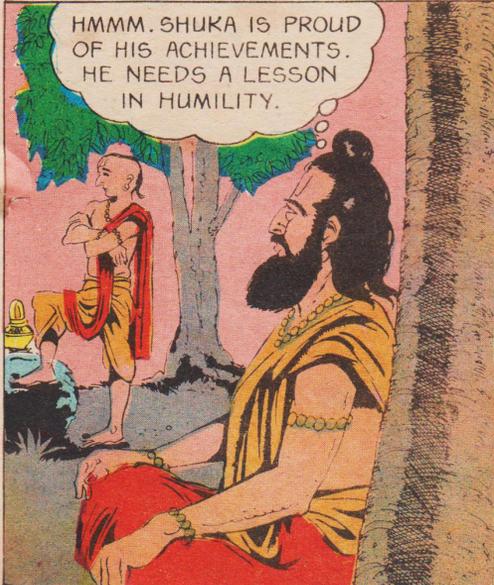


HIS FATHER HAD GIVEN HIM THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE VEDAS, BUT SHUKA WAS NOT SATISFIED.

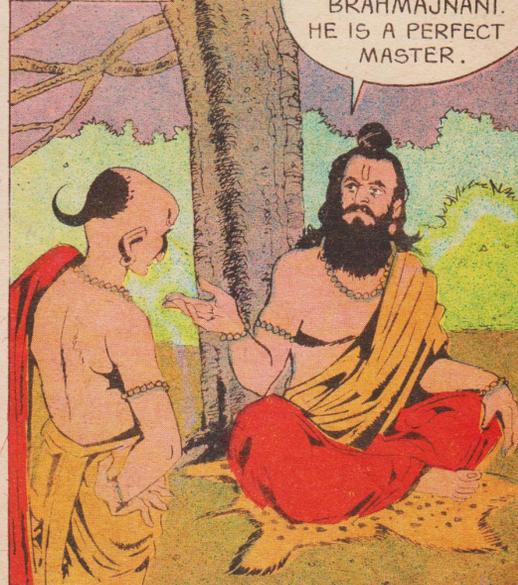
I WANT TO MEET A BRAHMAJNANI. I WANT BRAHMAJNANA.



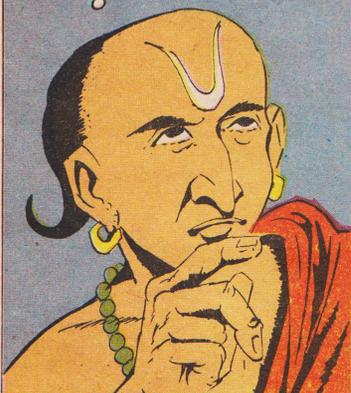
HMMM. SHUKA IS PROUD OF HIS ACHIEVEMENTS. HE NEEDS A LESSON IN HUMILITY.



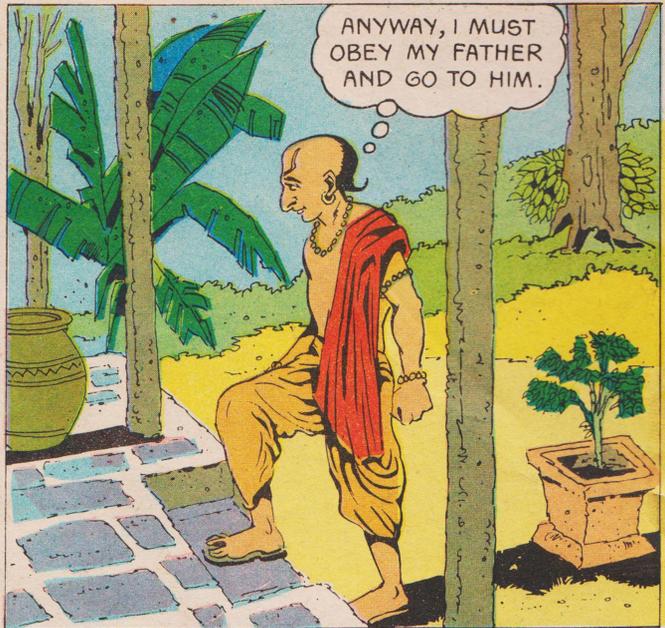
GO TO KING JANAKA, SON. HE IS A BRAHMAJNANI. HE IS A PERFECT MASTER.



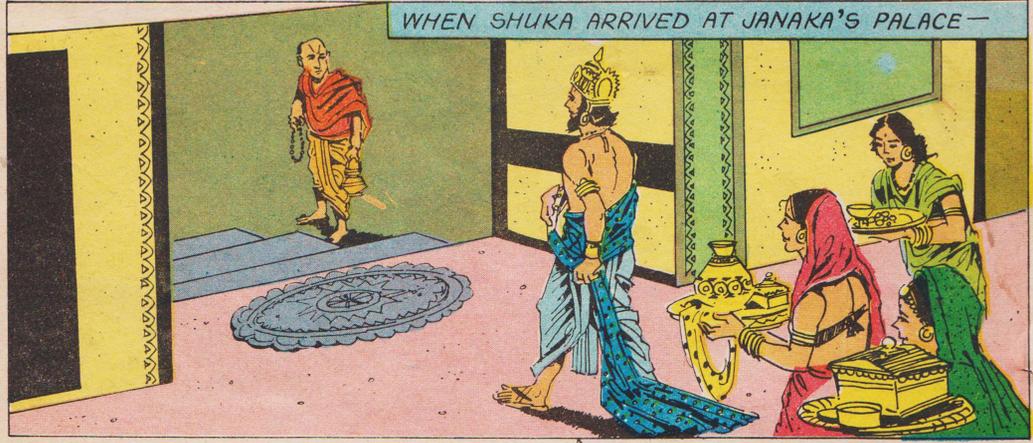
JANAKA! A HOUSEHOLDER!
WHAT KNOWLEDGE
CAN HE GIVE ME?



ANYWAY, I MUST
OBEY MY FATHER
AND GO TO HIM.



WHEN SHUKA ARRIVED AT JANAKA'S PALACE —



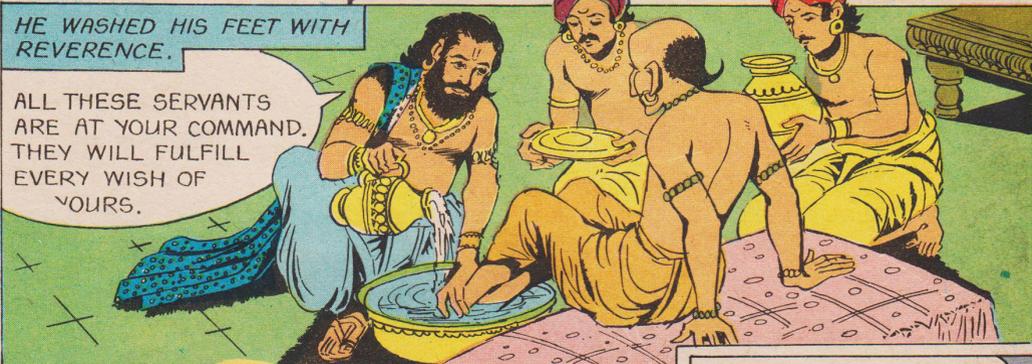
WELCOME, REVERED SAGE.
WE ARE HONOURED BY
YOUR VISIT.



JANAKA THEN TOOK SHUKA TO A SET OF LAVISH APARTMENTS.



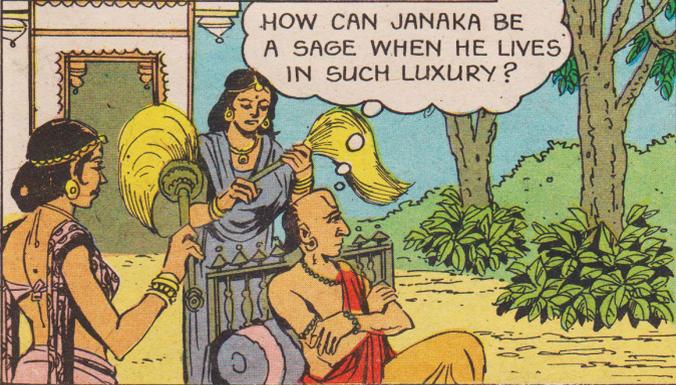
PLEASE. MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE MAHARAJ.



HE WASHED HIS FEET WITH REVERENCE.

ALL THESE SERVANTS ARE AT YOUR COMMAND. THEY WILL FULFILL EVERY WISH OF YOURS.

SOME DAYS PASSED. SHUKA WAS UNMOVED BY THE SPLENDOUR OF HIS SURROUNDINGS.



HOW CAN JANAKA BE A SAGE WHEN HE LIVES IN SUCH LUXURY?

THE MIND OF A SAGE WILL SEEK SOLITUDE. IT WILL SHUN ALL THIS WEALTH AND POMP AND SHOW.

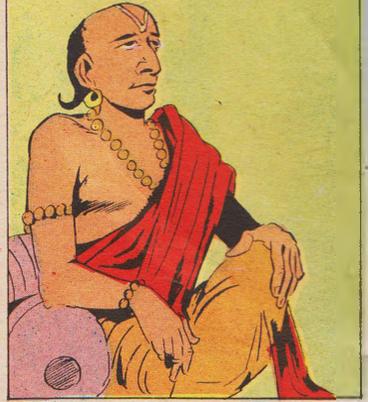


ONE DAY—

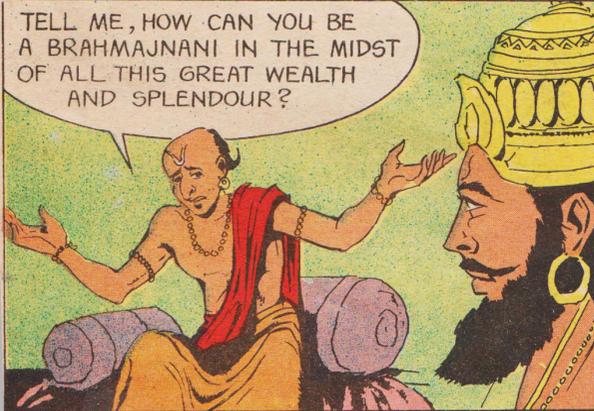
O KING, I HAVE ENJOYED YOUR HOSPITALITY FOR MANY DAYS NOW. I AM TIRED OF THIS LUXURY.



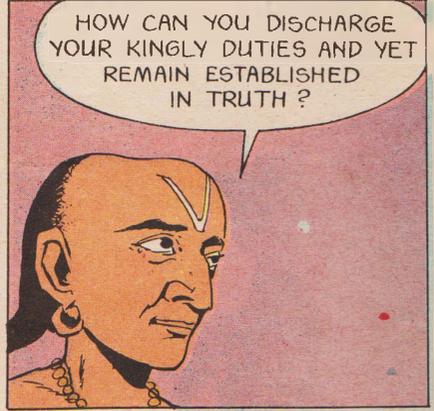
I CAME TO YOU FOR BRAHMAJNANA.



TELL ME, HOW CAN YOU BE A BRAHMAJNANI IN THE MIDST OF ALL THIS GREAT WEALTH AND SPLENDOUR?



HOW CAN YOU DISCHARGE YOUR KINGLY DUTIES AND YET REMAIN ESTABLISHED IN TRUTH?



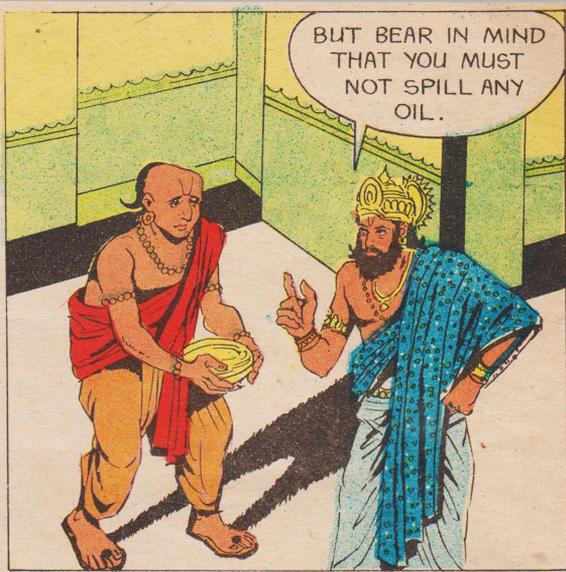
MAHARAJ. HERE IS A BOWL FULL TO THE BRIM WITH OIL.



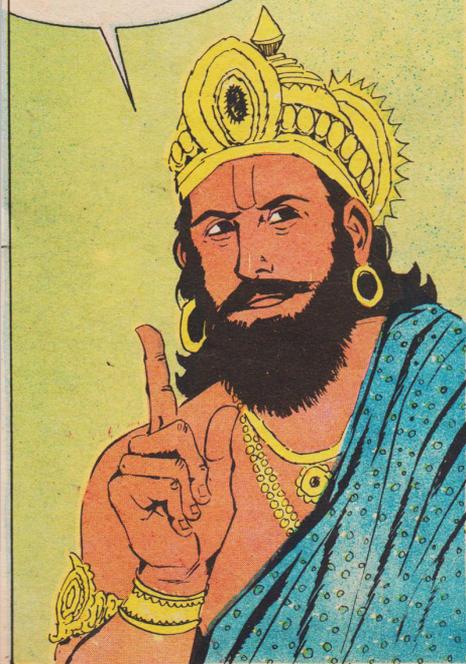
PLEASE TAKE THIS
AND WALK ALL
AROUND MY
PALACE.



BUT BEAR IN MIND
THAT YOU MUST
NOT SPILL ANY
OIL.



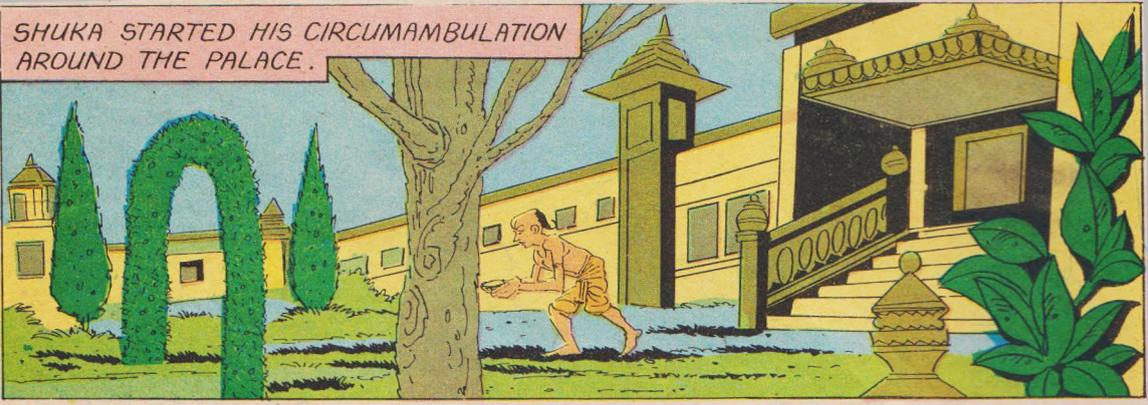
SHOULD YOU SPILL
EVEN A DROP, YOU
WILL LOOSE YOUR
RIGHT TO THE
ANSWER OF YOUR
QUESTION.



WHAT A STRANGE
CONDITION ! BUT
I WILL DO AS HE
SAYS.



SHUKA STARTED HIS CIRCUMAMBULATION AROUND THE PALACE.



AT ONE STAGE, A GROUP OF BEAUTIFUL DANCING GIRLS CROSSED HIS PATH.



AT ANOTHER, HE HAD TO PASS THROUGH A THRONG OF PEOPLE EATING, DRINKING AND MAKING MERRY.



ELSEWHERE, THERE WERE PEOPLE ENGAGED IN ALL KINDS OF SPORT.



MANY FASCINATING AND BEAUTIFUL DIVERSIONS WERE PUT IN HIS PATH.

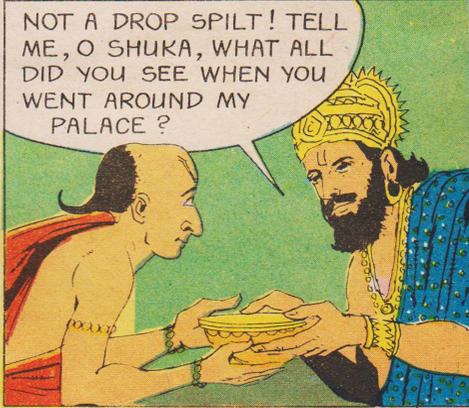


BUT NOT EVEN FOR A SPLIT SECOND DID HIS GAZE LEAVE THE BOWL.

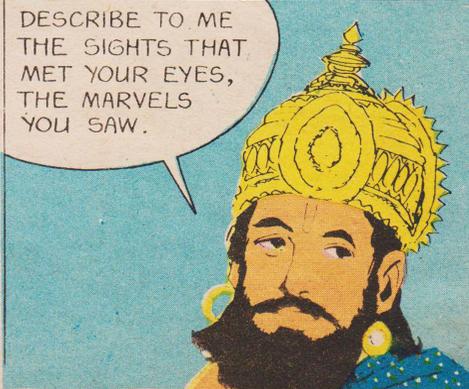
EVENTUALLY —



HERE O KING, IS YOUR BOWL OF OIL.



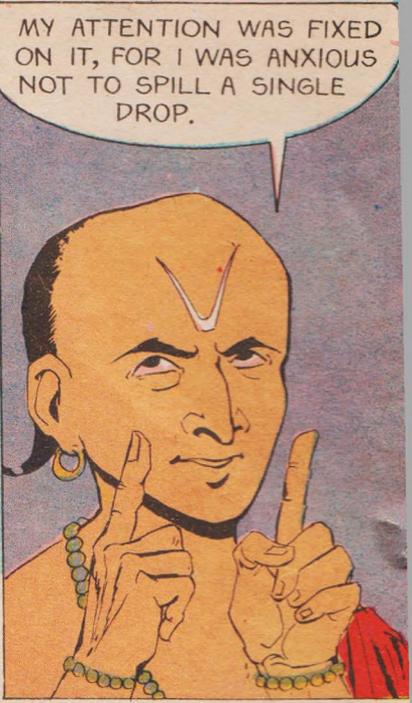
NOT A DROP SPILT! TELL ME, O SHUKA, WHAT ALL DID YOU SEE WHEN YOU WENT AROUND MY PALACE?



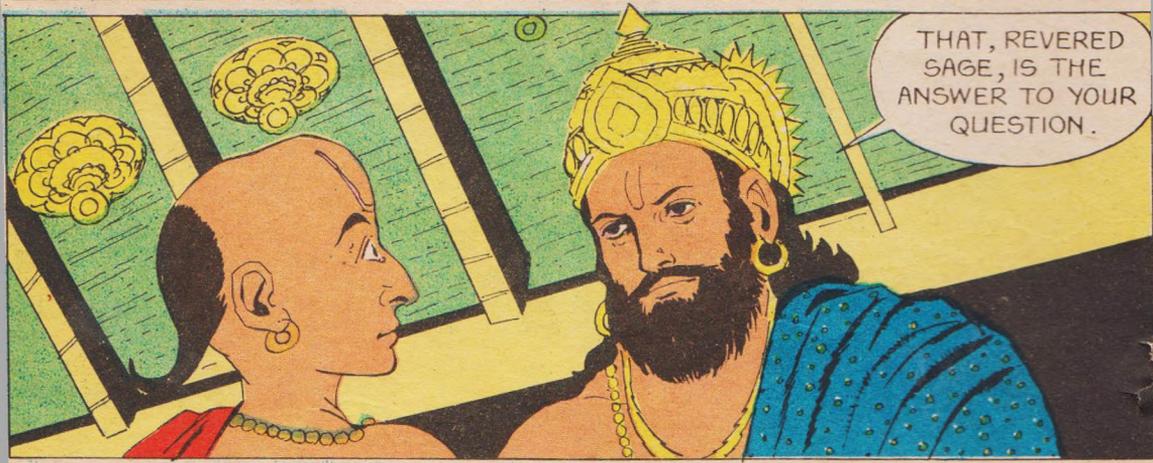
DESCRIBE TO ME THE SIGHTS THAT MET YOUR EYES, THE MARVELS YOU SAW.



I SAW NOTHING, O KING,
SAVE THIS BOWL OF OIL.



MY ATTENTION WAS FIXED
ON IT, FOR I WAS ANXIOUS
NOT TO SPILL A SINGLE
DROP.



THAT, REVERED
SAGE, IS THE
ANSWER TO YOUR
QUESTION.



WHEN A MAN LIVES
IN THE WORLD WITH
HIS MIND FIXED IN
TRUTH, HE DOES NOT
GET DISTRACTED BY THE
MANY CHARMS
OF THE WORLD...

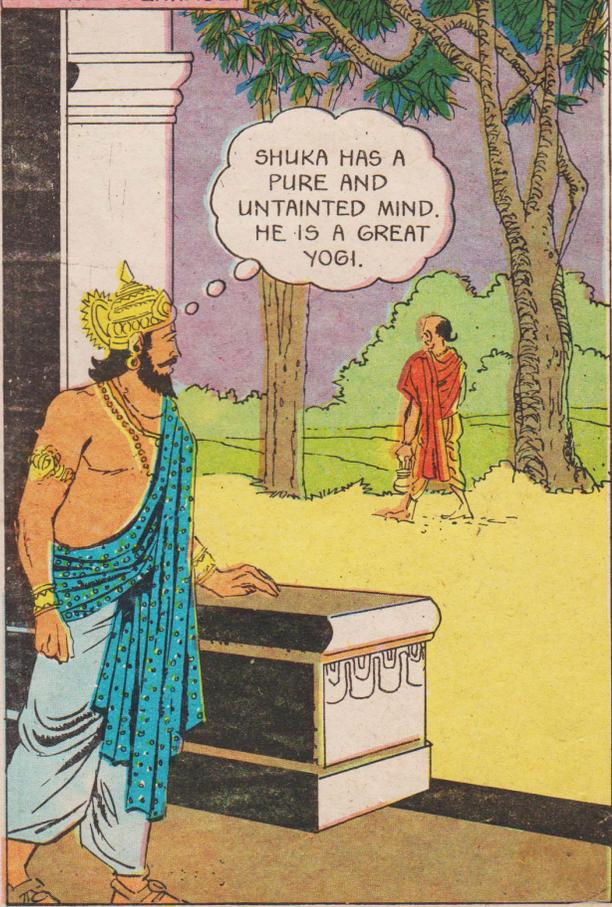


...HE WILL NEVER GET CAUGHT IN ITS SILKEN SNARES!



YOU ARE INDEED A BRAHMAJNANI, O KING. YOUR ANSWER HAS TAUGHT ME MANY LESSONS. GIVE ME LEAVE TO GO.

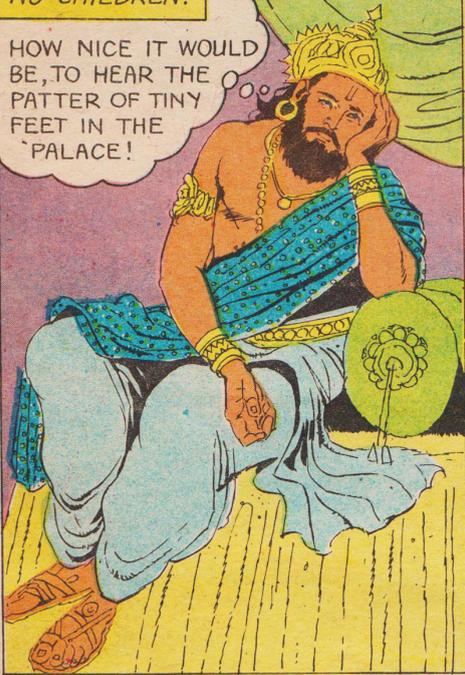
AND SHUKA DEVA, HAVING LEARNT HIS LESSONS IN HUMILITY, TURNED TO GO TO THE FOREST FOR FURTHER PENANCE.



SHUKA HAS A PURE AND UNTAINTED MIND. HE IS A GREAT YOGI.

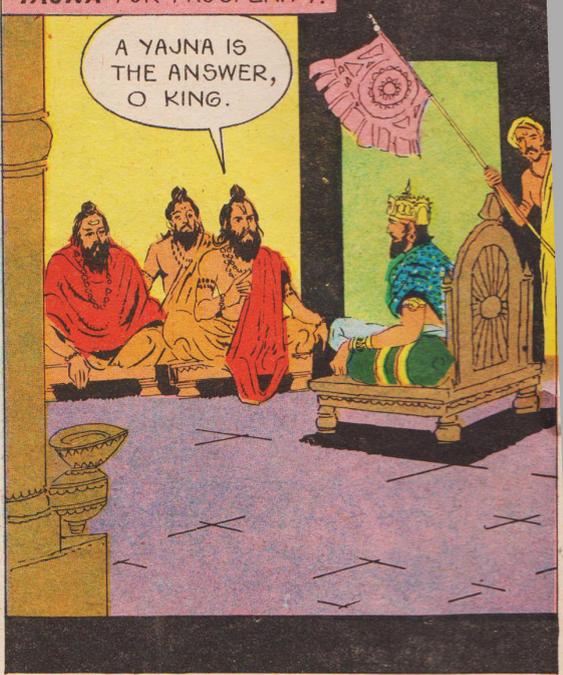
NOW JANAKA, ALTHOUGH HE WAS VIRTUOUS AND UPRIGHT, HAD NO CHILDREN.

HOW NICE IT WOULD BE, TO HEAR THE PATTTER OF TINY FEET IN THE PALACE!



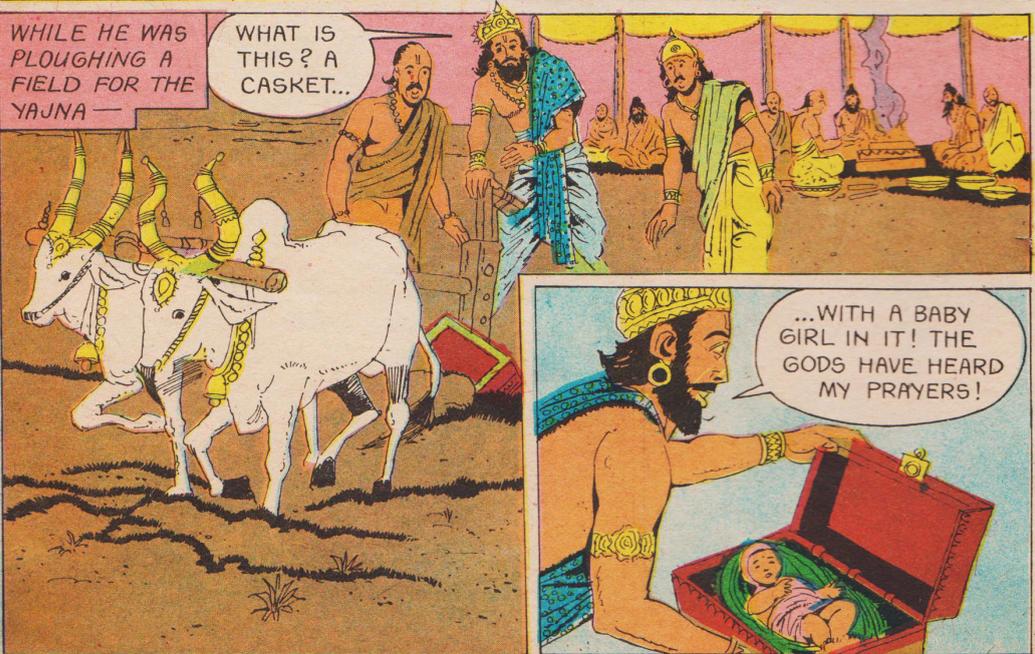
A TIME CAME WHEN THE CROPS FAILED. JANAKA WAS ADVISED TO PERFORM A YAJNA FOR PROSPERITY.

A YAJNA IS THE ANSWER, O KING.



WHILE HE WAS PLOUGHING A FIELD FOR THE YAJNA —

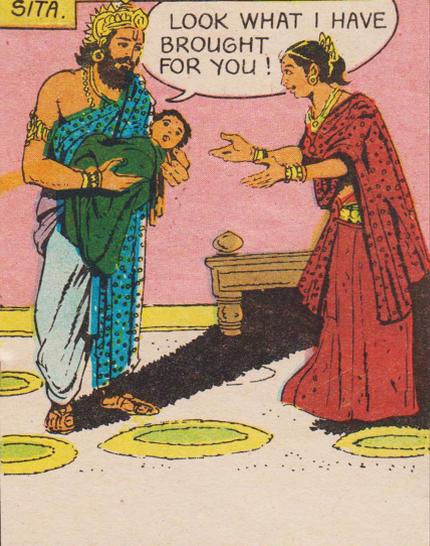
WHAT IS THIS? A CASKET...



...WITH A BABY GIRL IN IT! THE GODS HAVE HEARD MY PRAYERS!

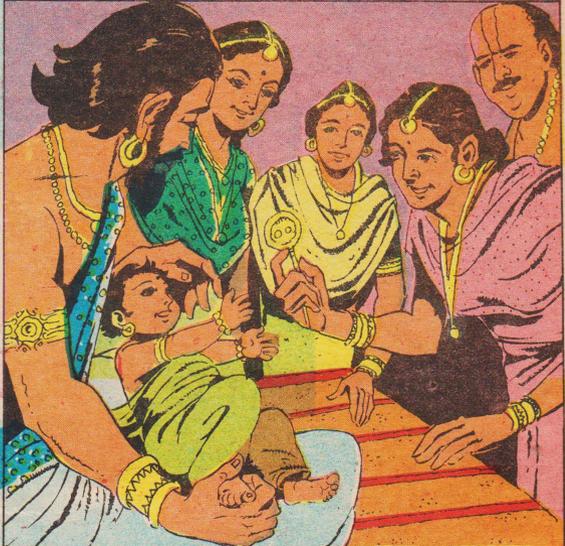


HE TOOK THE BABY GIRL HOME AND BROUGHT HER UP IN THE MANNER OF A PRINCESS. SHE WAS NAMED SITA.



LOOK WHAT I HAVE BROUGHT FOR YOU!

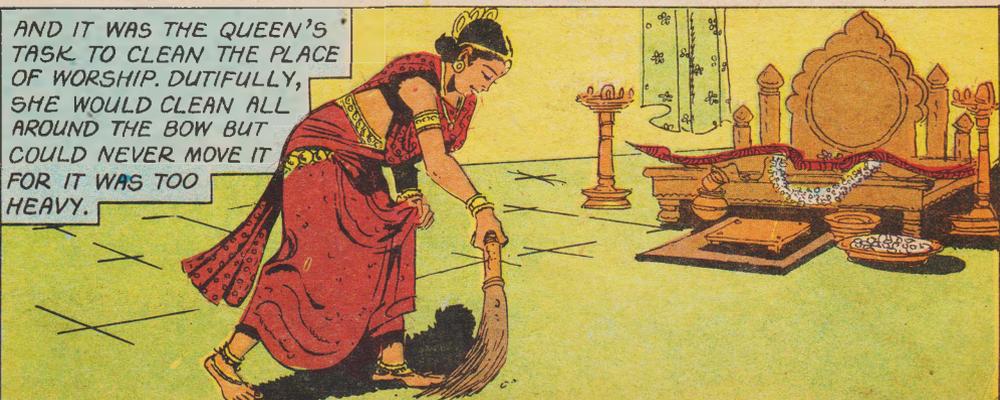
SITA HAD WINNING WAYS AND SHE SOON BECAME A FAVOURITE WITH EVERYONE. HER FATHER SIMPLY DOTTED ON HER.



IT SO HAPPENED THAT LONG, LONG AGO, JANAKA HAD BEEN PRESENTED WITH RUDRA'S BOW. THIS BOW WAS HUGE AND POWERFUL AND WAS MUCH REVERED BY THE KING WHO WORSHIPPED IT EVERY DAY.



AND IT WAS THE QUEEN'S TASK TO CLEAN THE PLACE OF WORSHIP. DUTIFULLY, SHE WOULD CLEAN ALL AROUND THE BOW BUT COULD NEVER MOVE IT FOR IT WAS TOO HEAVY.



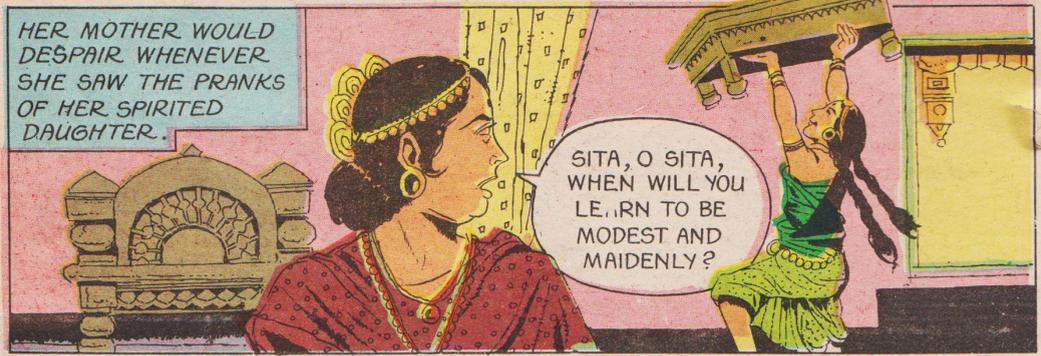
SITA WAS VERY FOND OF PLAYING ON RUDRA'S BOW.

SEE HOW WELL I CAN RIDE THIS BOW!



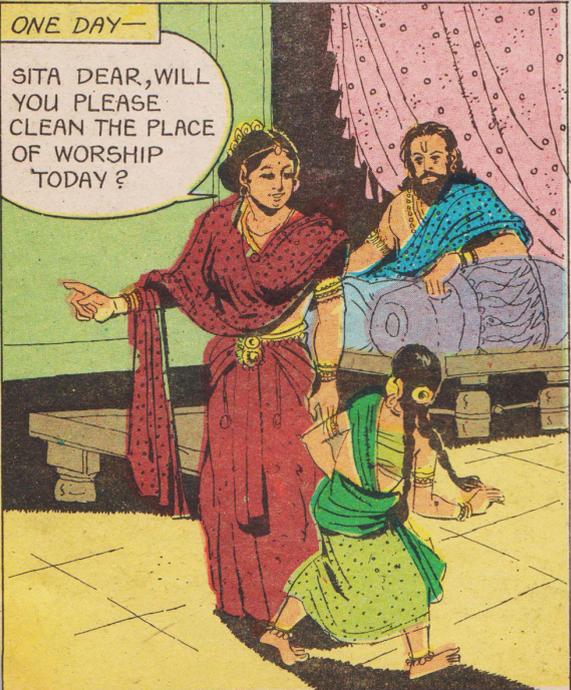
HER MOTHER WOULD DESPAIR WHENEVER SHE SAW THE PRANKS OF HER SPIRITED DAUGHTER.

SITA, O SITA, WHEN WILL YOU LEARN TO BE MODEST AND MAIDENLY?



ONE DAY—

SITA DEAR, WILL YOU PLEASE CLEAN THE PLACE OF WORSHIP TODAY?



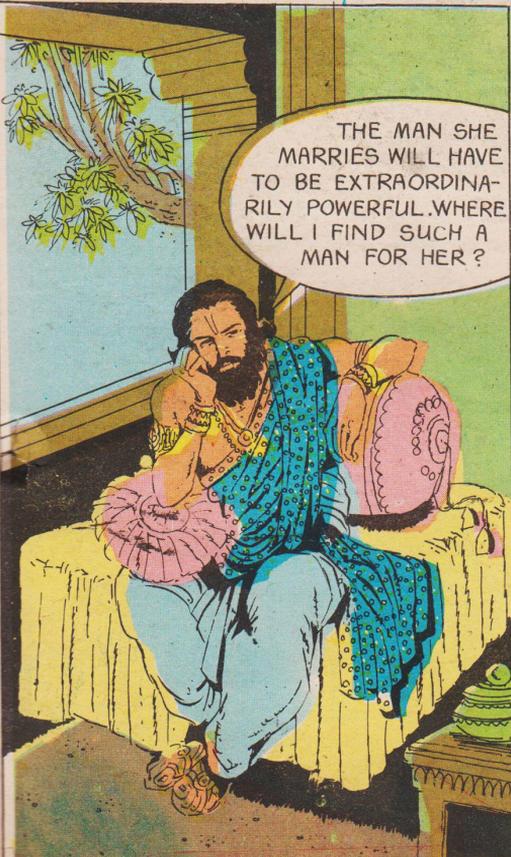
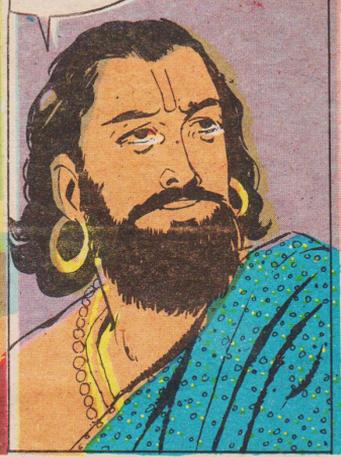
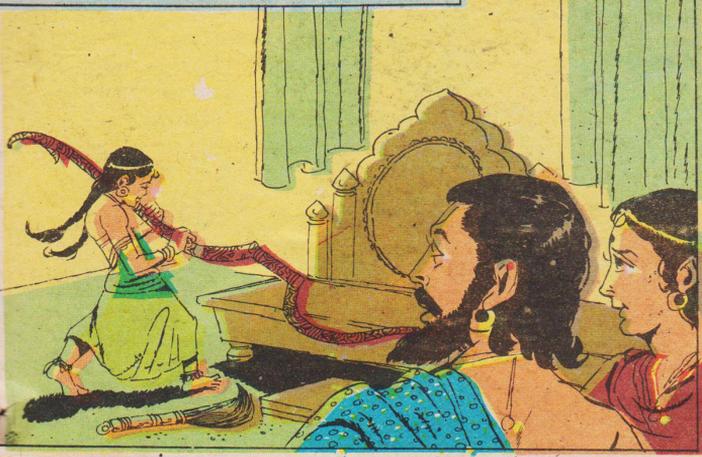
YES, MOTHER. CERTAINLY.



FOR SHE WAS ONLY TOO HAPPY GET NEAR HER FAVOURITE PLAYTHING.

AND WHILE HER MOTHER AND FATHER WATCHED IN AMAZEMENT, SHE MOVED THE BOW AROUND EFFORTLESSLY AND CLEANED THE PLACE!

SITA IS NO ORDINARY GIRL.



THE MAN SHE MARRIES WILL HAVE TO BE EXTRAORDINARILY POWERFUL. WHERE WILL I FIND SUCH A MAN FOR HER?



AND AS SHE GREW INTO A COMELY AND BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN, TALENTED AND VIRTUOUS, THE FOND FATHER'S ANXIETY GREW.



I WILL HOLD A **SWAYAMVARA** FOR HER. LET IT BE KNOWN FAR AND WIDE THAT HE WHO IS ABLE TO LIFT RUDRA'S BOW, WHOEVER HE BE, WILL WED MY DAUGHTER SITA.



MANY YOUNG PRINCES CAME FROM FAR AND DISTANT LANDS AND TRIED THEIR LUCK. BUT NONE COULD BUDGE THE MIGHTY BOW, EVEN AN INCH!

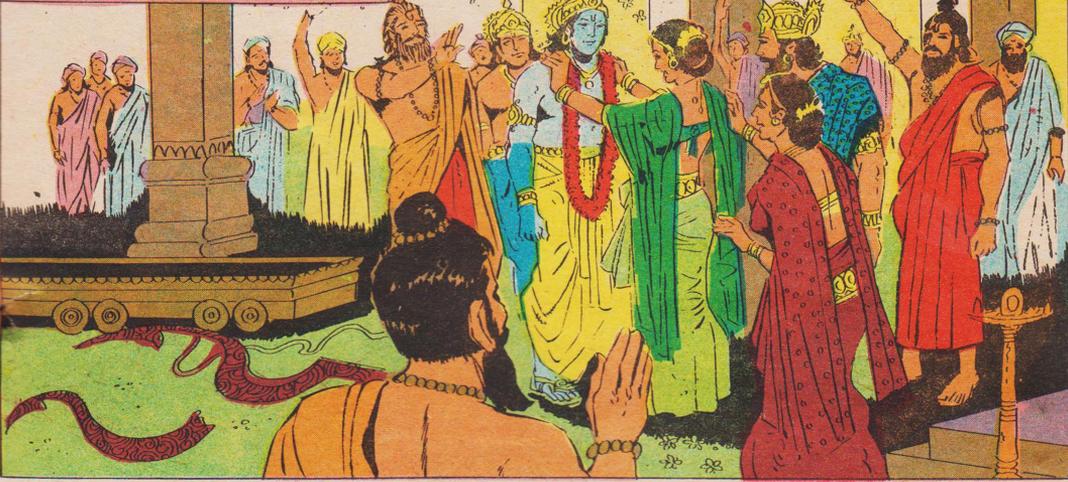
JUST THEN, THERE CAME TO THE COURT OF JANAKA, THE SAGE VISWAMITRA, ACCOMPANIED BY THE TWO DIVINE PRINCES OF AYODHYA, RAMA AND LAKSHMANA.



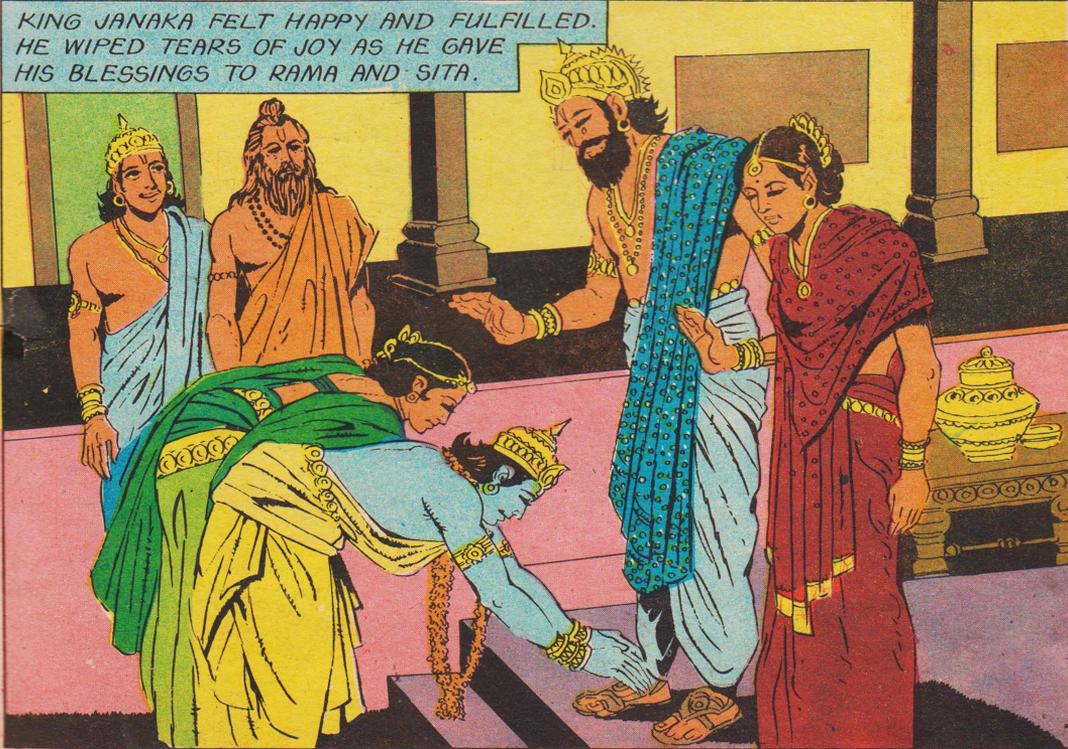
AT VISWAMITRA'S BEHEST, RAMA ROSE. HE NOT ONLY LIFTED AND STRUNG THE BOW WITH EFFORTLESS EASE, BUT HE EVEN SNAPPED IT IN TWO!



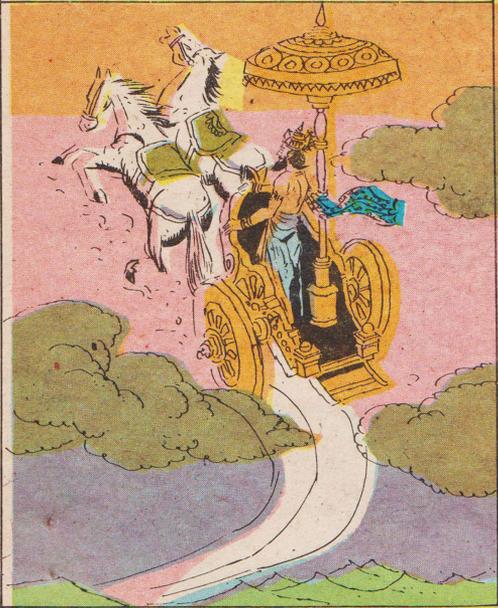
THE SOUND PRODUCED BY THE SNAPPING BOW WAS LIKE THE RESOUNDING CLAP OF THUNDER. DIVINE MUSIC FILLED THE HALL AS THE GODS SHOWERED FLOWERS FROM ABOVE. SITA GARLANDED RAMA, AN AVATAR OF VISHNU. SHE HAD FOUND A HUSBAND WORTHY OF HER!



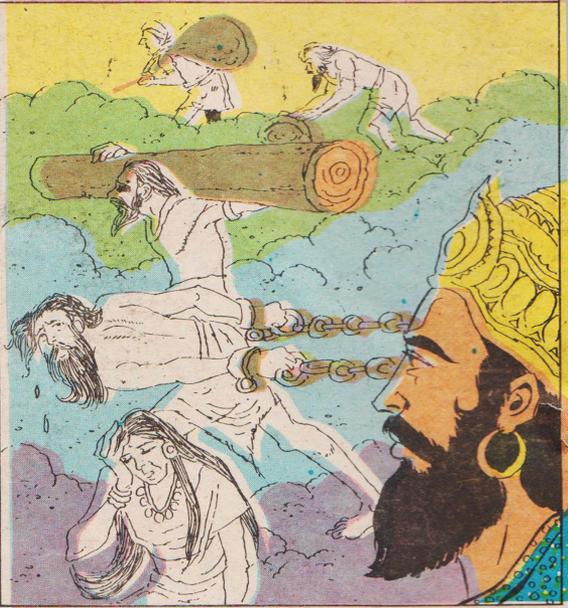
KING JANAKA FELT HAPPY AND FULFILLED. HE WIPED TEARS OF JOY AS HE GAVE HIS BLESSINGS TO RAMA AND SITA.



LEGEND HAS IT, THAT WHEN JANAKA'S
TASK ON EARTH WAS OVER AND HE
WAS ON HIS WAY TO HEAVEN...



... HE FOUND, ENROUTE, MANY MISERABLE
JIVAS, CARRYING OUT THE PUNISHMENTS
FOR THEIR VARIOUS MISDEEDS.



A LIGHT BREEZE PASSED OVER JANAKA AND
TOUCHED THEM, PURIFYING THEM AT ONCE!



SUCH THEN WAS
THE GLORY OF THE
ROYAL SAGE
JANAKA.



(See Rule 8)

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