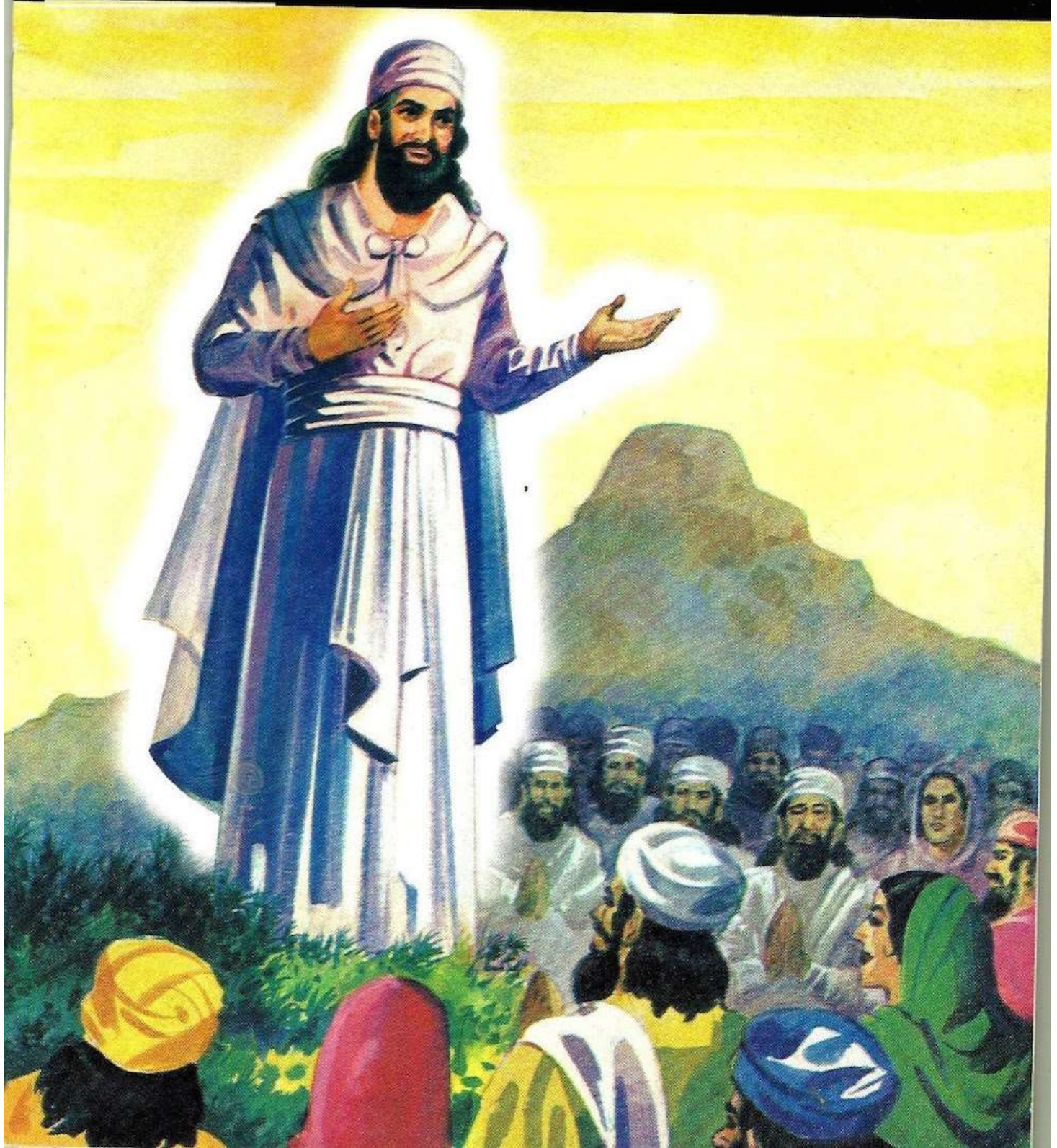


ZARATHUSHTRA

GOD'S MESSENGER FROM ANCIENT PERSIA



ZARATHUSHTRA

THOSE WERE EVIL TIMES
IN ANCIENT PERSIA.





O, AHURA MAZDA, SEND US A SAVIOUR. LET THE PAST GLORY RETURN TO THIS EARTH.



AT THAT TIME, IN THE CITY OF RAE LIVED FRAHIMURVA AND HIS DAUGHTER DUGHDHOWA.

SEND YOUR DAUGHTER AWAY, FRAHIMURVA. SHE PORTENDS EVIL.

YES. THIS RADIANCE COVERING HER IS AN EVIL OMEN. THROW HER OUT.



MY CHILD, WE MUST LISTEN TO THE WISE MEN. BUT I CANNOT BEAR TO SEE YOU GO.



OH, FATHER, PLEASE LET ME STAY WITH YOU. WHO WILL LOOK AFTER YOU WHEN YOU ARE OLD?

NO, CHILD, WE MUSTN'T THINK ONLY OF OURSELVES. GO. MY GOOD FRIEND PAITARASP AWAITS YOU.

OVERCOME BY GRIEF,
BOTH FATHER AND
DAUGHTER STOOD
SILENT FOR A WHILE.
THEN —

LOOK AFTER
YOURSELF,
FATHER. DON'T
FORGET ME.

MAY
AHURA
MAZDA
BLESS
YOU, MY
CHILD.



WHEN DUGHDHOWA
REACHED PAITARASP'S
HOUSE —

WELCOME DUGHDHOWA,
DAUGHTER OF MY DEAREST
FRIEND. THIS
IS YOUR
HOME NOW.



THIS IS POURUSHASP.
IT IS YOUR FATHER'S
WISH THAT YOU MARRY
HIM.

WHAT A
HANDSOME
MAN. I SHALL
BE PROUD TO
BE HIS WIFE.

WHAT A
LOVELY
GIRL! I AM
INDEED
LUCKY.



THEY WERE SOON MARRIED. A FEW MONTHS LATER DUGHDHOWA BECAME PREGNANT. ONE NIGHT —



THE NEXT MORNING -

MY DEAR, YOU LOOK FRIGHTENED. WHAT IS THE MATTER?

I HAD A TERRIBLE DREAM.



THE SAME DAY, POURUSHASP SOUGHT THE HELP OF THE WISE MEN.

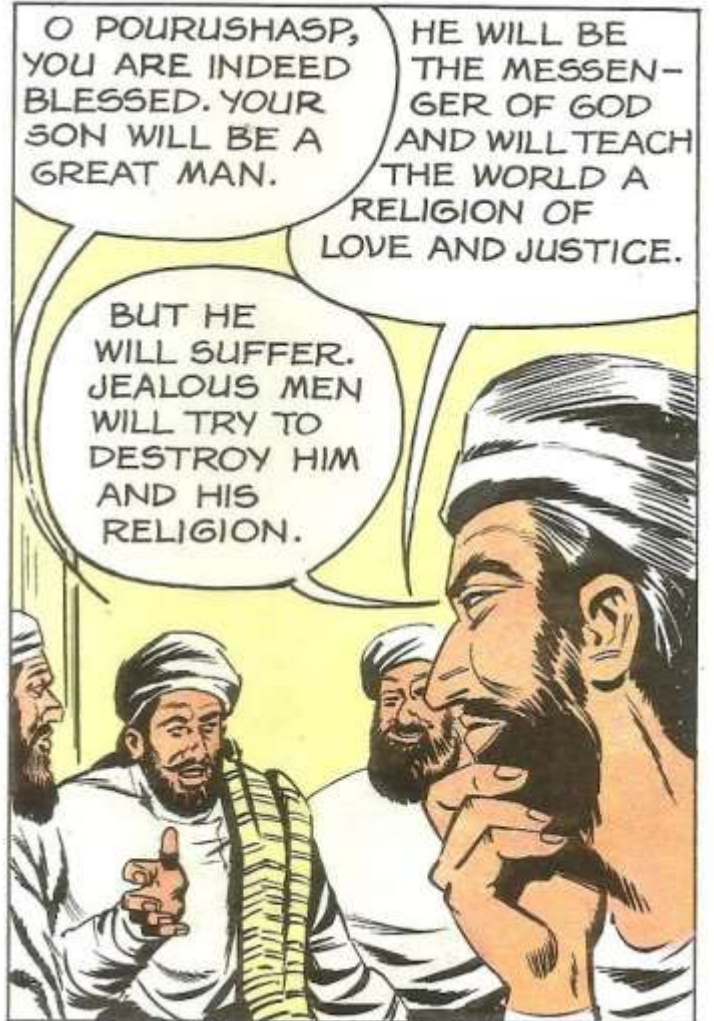
TELL ME. WHAT DOES THE DREAM MEAN?



O POURUSHASP, YOU ARE INDEED BLESSED. YOUR SON WILL BE A GREAT MAN.

HE WILL BE THE MESSENGER OF GOD AND WILL TEACH THE WORLD A RELIGION OF LOVE AND JUSTICE.

BUT HE WILL SUFFER. JEALOUS MEN WILL TRY TO DESTROY HIM AND HIS RELIGION.



AT LAST, ONE SPRING DAY,
ZARATHUSHTRA WAS BORN.

LET US CALL HIM ZARATHUSHTRA.
ISN'T IT STRANGE THAT HE
SMILED INSTEAD OF CRYING
WHEN HE WAS BORN?



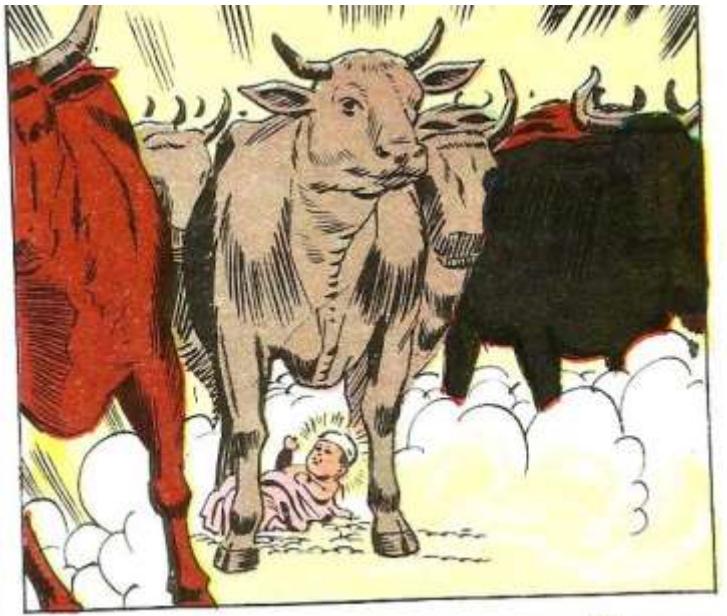
DURASROB, THE HEAD PRIEST
WHO WAS ACTUALLY A SORCERER,
KNEW ZARATHUSHTRA TO BE A
THREAT TO ALL FORCES OF EVIL—

THE CHILD
MUST NOT
LIVE. I
SHALL
KILL HIM.

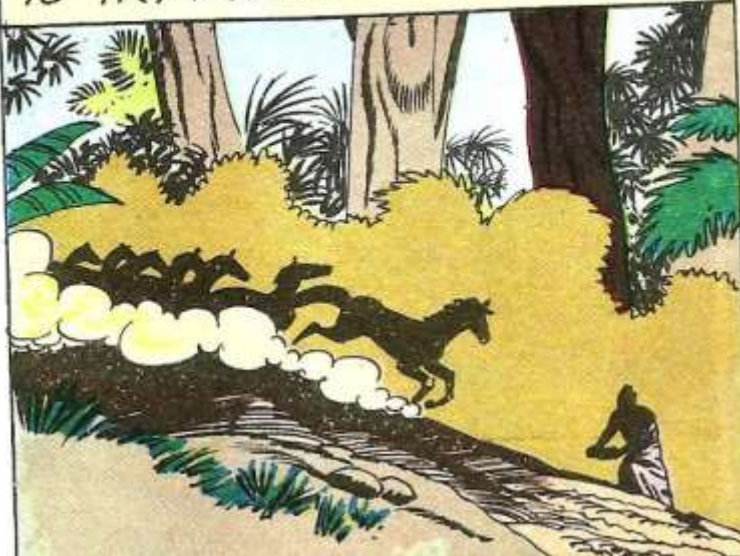


SO ONE DAY HE STOLE THE
BABY AND —





HAVING FAILED IN HIS FIRST ATTEMPT, DURASROB DECIDED TO TRY AGAIN.



ONCE AGAIN THE CHILD WAS SAVED.



THE EVIL MAN, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT ACCEPT DEFEAT SO EASILY. HE TOOK THE BABY INTO A FOREST.



YOU WILL NOT ESCAPE THIS TIME. THE WOLVES WILL TEAR YOU TO PIECES.



BUT THE WOLVES TOOK ONE LOOK AT THE HOLY CHILD AND SLUNK AWAY.



DURASROB SEETHED WITH RAGE.

I SHALL BURN YOU TO DEATH.



BUT THE FIRE TURNED INTO A BED OF FRAGRANT ROSES.



MY DARLING BABY. HOW DID YOU GET HERE? I NEARLY DIED WITH WORRY.



A YEAR LATER, ZARATHUSHTRA FELL ILL.

OH, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY BABY?

I SHALL SEND FOR DURASROB. HE WILL CURE OUR CHILD.



AS SOON AS DURASROB CAME-

SIR, MY SON IS VERY ILL. CAN YOU HELP?



DON'T WORRY. I SHALL SEND HIM A SPECIAL REMEDY IN THE EVENING.



MY POISON NEVER FAILS. LET'S SEE HOW YOU ESCAPE MY CLUTCHES THIS TIME, ZARATHUSHTRA. HA! HA! HA!



THAT SAME EVENING -

THIS IS THE MEDICINE, SIR.

THANK YOU. I SHALL GIVE IT TO MY SON AT ONCE.



OH, YOU NAUGHTY BOY. YOU'VE SPILT THE MEDICINE. BUT WHAT'S THIS? YOUR FEVER HAS COME DOWN.



ZARATHUSHTRA SOON GREW UP TO BE A STURDY, CLEVER, HANDSOME BOY.

YOUNG MAN, IT'S TIME YOU STARTED SCHOOL. THE LEARNED BURZIN KURUS WILL TEACH YOU.



ZARATHUSHTRA WAS THE MOST INTELLIGENT PUPIL THAT BURZIN EVER HAD.

YOU HAVE DONE WELL, ZARATHUSHTRA. I AM INDEED PROUD OF YOU.



ONE DAY THE AGING POURUSHASP SENT FOR HIM.

ZARATHUSHTRA, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE OF MY POSSESSIONS?

YOUR GIRDLE, FATHER.



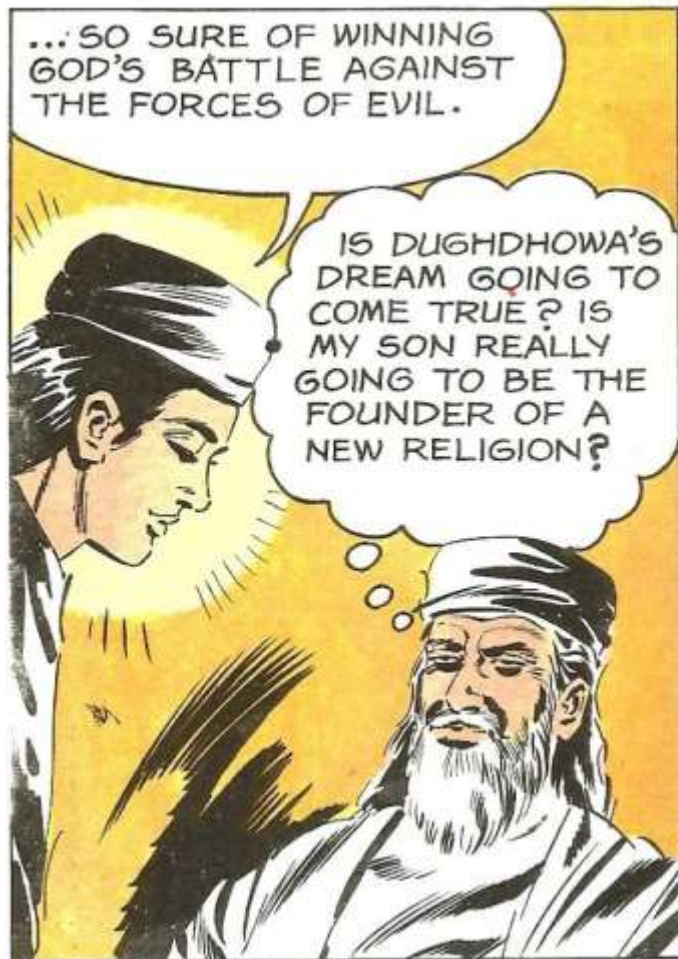
ONLY MY GIRDLE? WHY?

WHEN I WEAR IT, I FEEL SO CONFIDENT...



... SO SURE OF WINNING GOD'S BATTLE AGAINST THE FORCES OF EVIL.

IS DUGHDHOWA'S DREAM GOING TO COME TRUE? IS MY SON REALLY GOING TO BE THE FOUNDER OF A NEW RELIGION?



ZARATHUSHTRA LIVED A SIMPLE LIFE AND SPENT HIS DAYS HELPING THE POOR, THE SICK AND THE NEEDY.



HE WAS ESPECIALLY KIND TO DUMB ANIMALS.



HE PRAYED TO GOD FOR STRENGTH EVERY DAY.



ONE DAY POURUSHASP INVITED DURASROB AND THE EQUALLY EVIL BRATROKRESH HOME.

FATHER, WHY DID YOU CALL THESE SORCERERS HERE? TO PRACTISE SORCERY IS EVIL.



BE QUIET, ZARATHUSHTRA. YOU ARE FOOLISH AND IMPERTINENT.

BY ABUSING ME YOU ONLY REVEAL YOURSELF, BRATROKRESH.



THIS BOY WILL
INDEED GROW
UP TO BE A
GREAT MAN.

YES, HOW EASILY HE
SAW THROUGH THE
EVIL MAGICIAN AND
PUT HIM IN HIS
PLACE.



ZARATHUSHTRA LEFT HOME IN
SEARCH OF TRUTH.



ON THE WAY, HE HAD TO CROSS
THE RIVER ABAHI, WHERE
THERE WAS NEITHER BRIDGE
NOR BOAT, BUT -



HE WANDERED THROUGH
THE LAND, STUDYING THE
MYSTERIES OF NATURE.



THEN HE CAME TO ANOTHER
RIVER - THE DAITI.



HE BEGAN TO CROSS IT.



THE WATER REACHED HIS KNEES...



... THEN HIS CHEST...



... AND HIS NECK. BUT NO HIGHER.

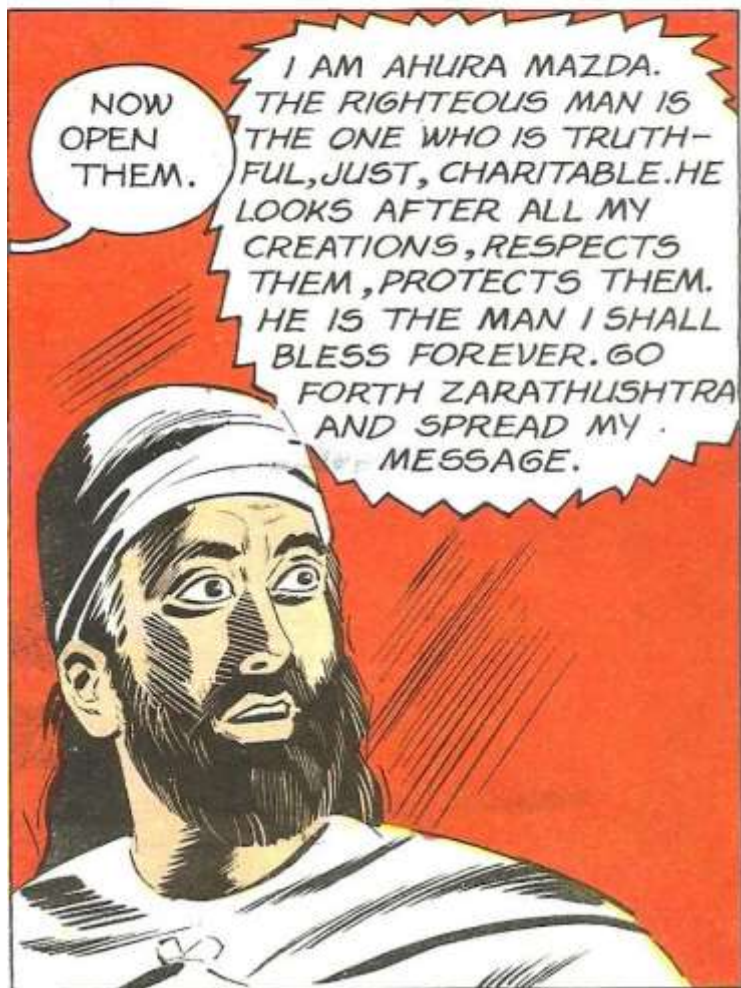


WHEN HE REACHED THE OTHER SIDE,
HE STEPPED OUT, GLOWING WITH A
NEW LIGHT.



THIS MIRACULOUS EPISODE INDICATED THAT THE NEW
RELIGION ZARATHUSHTRA WAS TO FOUND, WOULD
SPREAD THROUGH THE WORLD IN FOUR STAGES.

THE ANGEL OF THE GOOD MIND, VOHU MANO, STOOD BEFORE HIM.



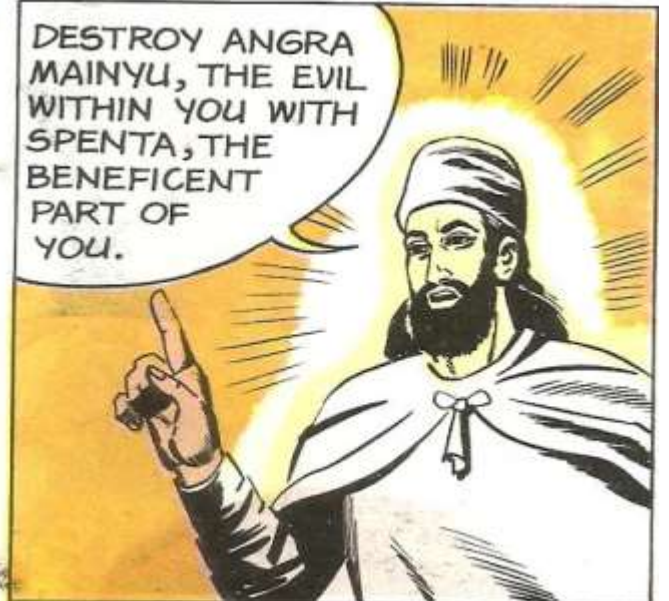


I SHALL TEACH THE PEOPLE THE NEW RELIGION OF HUMATA (GOOD THOUGHTS), HUKHTA (GOOD WORDS) AND HVARESHTA (GOOD DEEDS).

ZARATHUSHTRA WENT BACK TO HIS PEOPLE.



LISTEN TO ME, MY BROTHERS. IT IS UP TO YOU TO DECIDE WHETHER YOU WANT TO TREAD THE PATH OF GOOD OR THE PATH OF EVIL.



DESTROY ANGRA MAINYU, THE EVIL WITHIN YOU WITH SPENTA, THE BENEFICENT PART OF YOU.



GOOD WILL ALWAYS BE REWARDED. EVIL CAN NEVER ESCAPE PUNISHMENT. THAT IS THE MESSAGE OF AHURA MAZDA.



BANISH EVIL FROM YOUR HEART AND MIND; AND MAKE ROOM FOR GOD. GOD DOES NOT SIT IN HEAVEN ON A GOLDEN THRONE. HE LIVES IN YOUR HEART.

ONE DAY -

COUSIN MEDIYOMAH,
I HAVE SEEN YOU
FOLLOWING ME.
WHAT CAN I DO
FOR YOU?

I WANT
TO BE YOUR
DISCIPLE.
TEACH ME
THE RELIGION
OF AHURA
MAZDA.



COME AND LISTEN
CAREFULLY TO
WHAT I HAVE
TO SAY.



MANY YEARS LATER,
IN THE KINGDOM OF
BALKH IN PERSIA,
KING GUSHTASP
HAD A DREAM -



ZARATHUSHTRA CAME THROUGH
THE ROOF ON A GOLDEN
THRONE, HOLDING A BALL OF
FIRE, THE SACRED BOOK
(AVESTA) AND A PLANT.



GUSHTASP PLANTED THE TREE,
WHICH SPOKE TO HIM.

THERE IS ONLY ONE
GOD. HE HAS TAUGHT
ZARATHUSHTRA THE
TRUE RELIGION.
FOLLOW IT,
GUSHTASP.



ZARATHUSHTRA HANDED THE
BALL OF FIRE TO GUSHTASP.

IT DOES NOT BURN MY
HAND, NOR CAN IT BE PUT
OUT BY WATER OR
EARTH. IT'S A
MIRACLE.



THIS IS THE
AVESTA, GOD'S
HOLY BOOK.



THE NEXT MORNING -

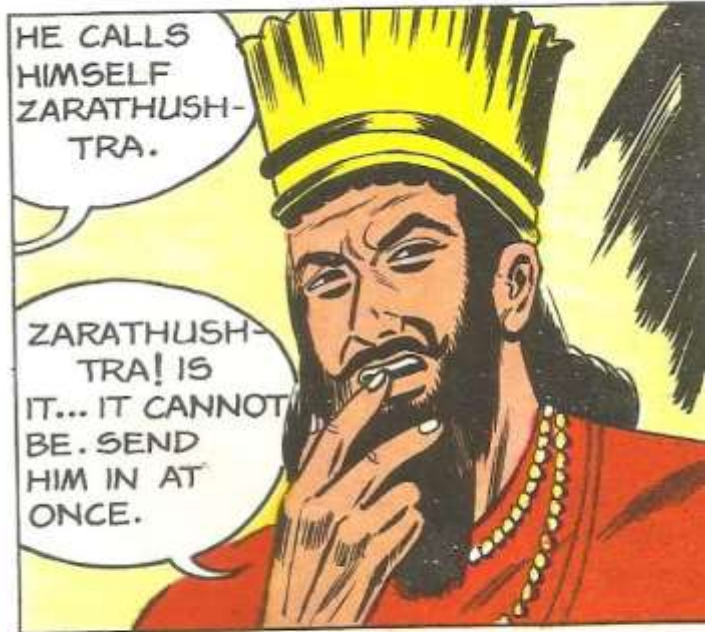
YOUR MAJESTY,
THERE IS A
MAN OUTSIDE
WHO WANTS
TO SPEAK
TO YOU.



WHAT
IS HIS
NAME?

HE CALLS
HIMSELF
ZARATHUSH-
TRA.

ZARATHUSH-
TRA! IS
IT... IT CANNOT
BE. SEND
HIM IN AT
ONCE.



O GREAT
KING GUSHTASP,
MAY GOD BLESS
YOU WITH
WISDOM, POWER
AND LONG
LIFE.





I SHALL BELIEVE IN YOUR GOD IF YOU CAN ANSWER THE QUESTIONS OF THESE WISE MEN.

VERY WELL, YOUR MAJESTY.

ZARATHUSHTRA ANSWERED THEIR QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD AND HEAVEN AND EARTH. HE TOLD THEM THINGS THAT NO LIVING MAN HAD TOLD THEM BEFORE.

HE HAS ANSWERED OUR MOST DIFFICULT QUESTIONS.

NO ORDINARY MAN CAN HAVE SUCH KNOWLEDGE. IT COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO HIM BY GOD.



COME, ZARATHUSHTRA. YOURS SHALL BE THE MOST HONOURED PLACE IN MY PALACE. SIT BY MY SIDE.



KING GUSHTASP, YOU MUST ABIDE BY THE TEACHINGS IN THE AVESTA.

YES, BUT FIRST SHOW ME A MIRACLE.



THIS AVESTA IS THE GREATEST MIRACLE. IN MY RELIGION THERE ARE NO OTHER MIRACLES.

FORGIVE ME. COME EVERY MORNING TO MY PALACE AND TEACH ME THE TRUTHS OF THIS HOLY BOOK.

THE COURTIERS WERE JEALOUS OF ZARATHUSHTRA'S SPECIAL POSITION.

THE KING HAS GIVEN ZARATHUSHTRA A HOUSE IN THE PALACE GROUNDS.

THE KING LISTENS TO EVERYTHING HE SAYS.



WE MUST GET RID OF HIM. LET'S KILL HIM.

NO. WE'LL LOSE OUR HEADS IF THE KING FINDS OUT. I HAVE A BETTER PLAN.



THEN, THEY VISITED ZARATHUSHTRA'S HOUSE AND -

LET'S PLACE THEM HERE.

HURRY. I DON'T WANT TO BE CAUGHT.



I HOPE, WE HAVEN'T LEFT ANY OF OUR OWN THINGS BEHIND.



THE NEXT DAY -

NOBLE, WISE AND GREAT KING GUSHTASP, FORGIVE ME FOR SAYING THIS, BUT ZARATHUSHTRA IS REALLY A SORCERER WHO IS OUT TO DESTROY YOU AND YOUR KINGDOM.

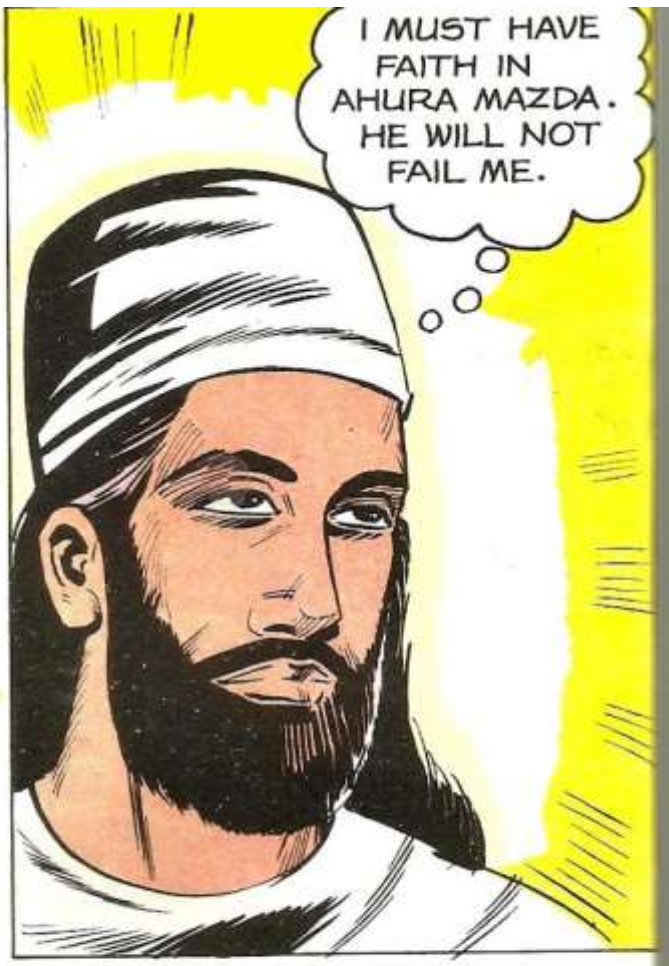
MY ZARATHUSHTRA A SORCERER? IMPOSSIBLE!





SIR, HE SLYLY PRACTISES SORCERY IN HIS ROOM.

YOU LIE, KNAVE. I SHALL PROVE THAT THERE IS NO TRUTH IN YOUR SLANDER. SEND SOMEONE TO SEARCH ZARATHUSHTRA'S HOUSE.



I MUST HAVE FAITH IN AHURA MAZDA. HE WILL NOT FAIL ME.



THE GUARD WHO WENT ON THE ERRAND SOON RETURNED.

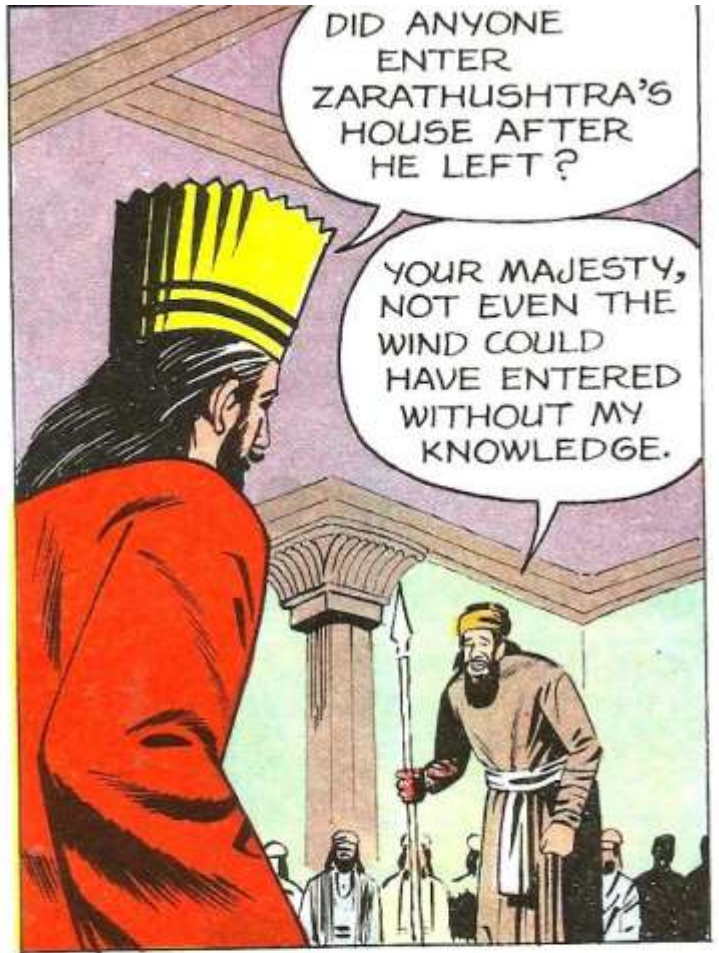
WE FOUND THESE IN ZARATHUSHTRA'S ROOM, YOUR MAJESTY.

ZARATHUSHTRA DECEIVED ME, THE UNGRATEFUL WRETCH!



WHAT HAVE YOU TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?

MY BELOVED KING, I AM INNOCENT.



A WEEK LATER —



WILL MY BELOVED ASP-I-SIYAH EVER GET WELL? IT'S THREE DAYS NOW, SINCE HIS KEEPER FOUND HIM WITH HIS LEGS EMBEDDED IN HIS STOMACH. NO ONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO CURE HIM, YET.



YOUR MAJESTY, SHALL I GET YOU SOMETHING TO EAT? YOU HAVEN'T TOUCHED FOOD FOR THREE DAYS.

NO, MY FRIEND. HOW CAN I THINK OF EATING WHEN MY BELOVED STEED CANNOT EVEN STAND.



THAT EVENING —

YOUR MAJESTY, I AM THE GUARD OUTSIDE ZARATHUSHTRA'S CELL. HE ASKED ME TO TELL YOU THAT HE COULD CURE ASP-I-SIYAH.

WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THIS BEFORE? FREE HIM AND BRING HIM HERE AT ONCE.

ZARATHUSHTRA,
YOU HAVE ONE
LAST 'CHANCE
TO PROVE THE
GREATNESS
OF YOUR GOD.
CURE MY
HORSE.

KING GUSHTASP, YOUR FAITH
ALONE CAN SAVE ASP-I-SIYAH.
YOUR HORSE CAN BE CURED
ONLY IF YOU HAVE COMPLETE
FAITH IN ME AND FULFIL
FOUR CONDI-
TIONS.



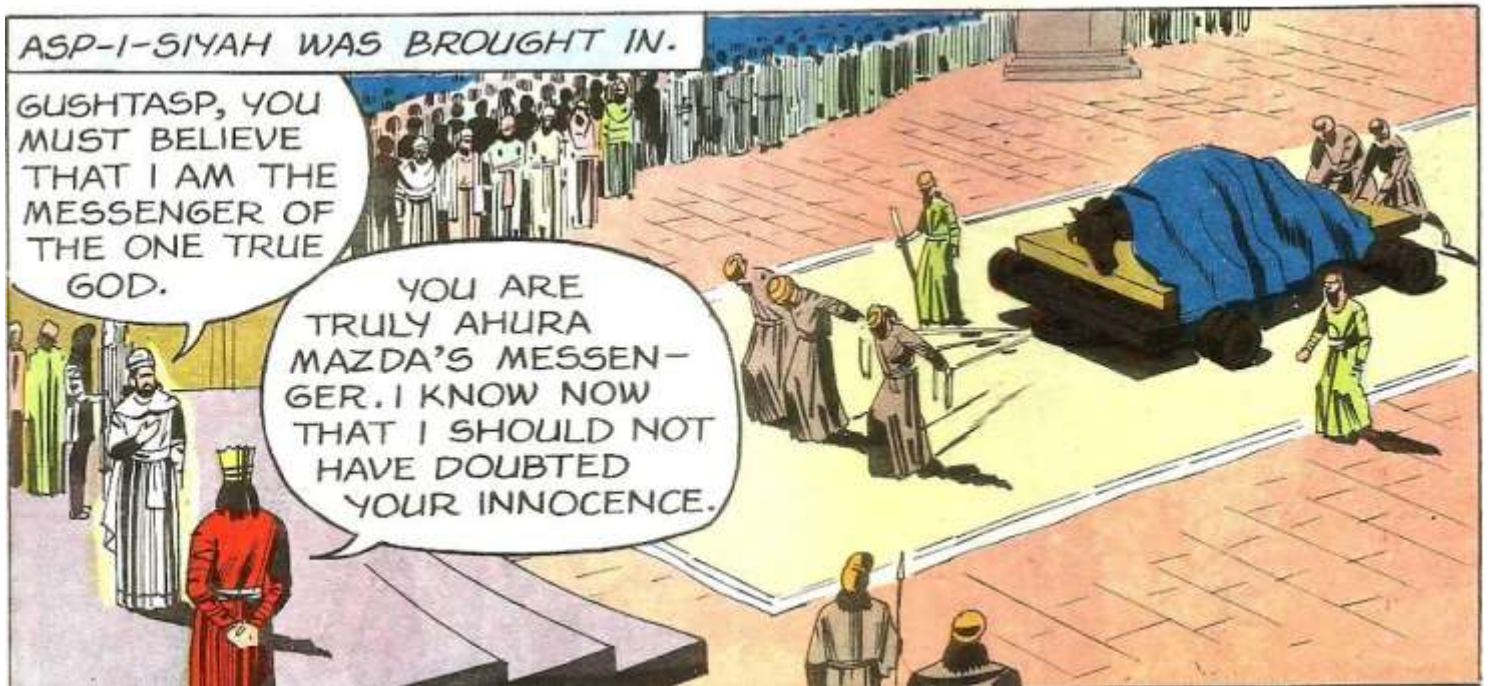
I'LL DO ANYTHING
YOU SAY. JUST
NAME THE
CONDITIONS.

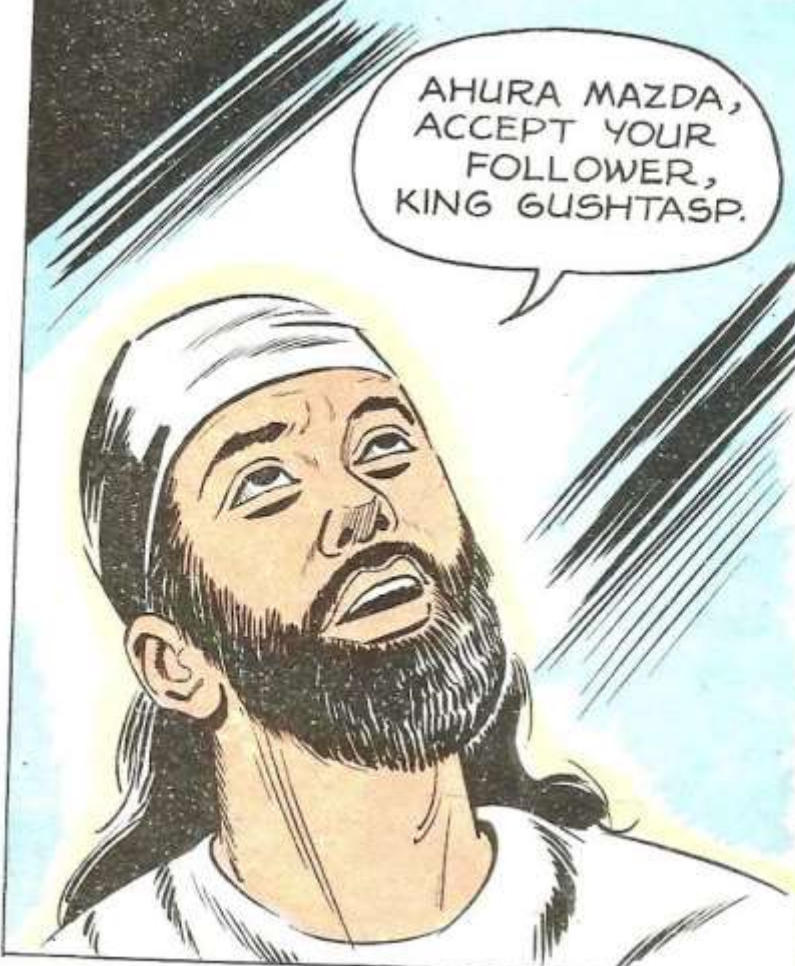


ASP-I-SIYAH WAS BROUGHT IN.

GUSHTASP, YOU
MUST BELIEVE
THAT I AM THE
MESSENGER OF
THE ONE TRUE
GOD.

YOU ARE
TRULY AHURA
MAZDA'S MESSENGER.
I KNOW NOW
THAT I SHOULD NOT
HAVE DOUBTED
YOUR INNOCENCE.






AHURA MAZDA,
ACCEPT YOUR
FOLLOWER,
KING GUSHTASP.



THE
FIRST LEG OF
ASP-I-SIYAH IS
FREE! GLORY TO
ZARATHUSHTRA.




YOUR MAJESTY, SEND
FOR YOUR SON,
THE BRAVE
ASPANDIAR.

AS SOON AS ASPANDIAR CAME
ASPANDIAR, YOU ARE NOTED
THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM
FOR YOUR BRAVERY. PROMISE
THAT YOU WILL USE YOUR
STRENGTH IN THE BATTLE
FOR THE TRUE RELIGION;
THAT YOU WILL SPREAD
GOD'S MESSAGE
TO THE PEOPLE.



I PROMISE
ZARA-
THUSH-
TRA



AHURA MAZDA,
MAY THE
SECOND LEG
OF ASP-I-SIYAH
BE RELEASED.




ZARATHUSHTRA
IS TRULY
GREAT.




KING GUSHTASP,
WITH YOUR
PERMISSION
I SHALL NOW
MEET YOUR
QUEEN.

GUARD,
TAKE HOLY
ZARATHUSH-
TRA
TO HER
MAJESTY.



NOBLE QUEEN,
YOU HAVE BEEN
BLESSED WITH
A WISE HUSBAND
AND A BRAVE
SON. ACKNOWL-
EDGE YOUR
DEBT TO GOD
BY FOLLOWING
HIS PATH.



I HAVE HEARD OF
YOUR GREATNESS,
ZARATHUSHTRA. I
SHALL BE PROUD
TO SERVE YOUR
GOD.

WHEN ZARATHUSHTRA RETURNED TO THE COURT—

BELOVED ZARATHUSHTRA, ASP-I-SIYAH'S THIRD LEG HAS BEEN FREED.

BECAUSE THE THIRD CONDITION HAS BEEN FULFILLED.



NOW, PLEASE CALL THE KEEPER OF MY APARTMENT, AND QUESTION HIM AGAIN.

SUMMON THE KEEPER AT ONCE.



WHEN THE KEEPER CAME—

TELL THE TRUTH AND YOU WILL BE PARDONED. LIE, AND YOU WILL NOT LIVE.

YOUR MAJESTY, F-F-FORGIVE ME, THE BONES AND SKULLS WERE PUT IN ZARATHUSHTRA'S ROOM BY THOSE C-C-COURTIERS.



GUSHTASP WAS FURIOUS.

YOU ARE BANISHED FROM MY LAND. IF I SET EYES ON ANY OF YOU AGAIN, YOU'LL LOSE YOUR HEADS.



YOUR MAJESTY, ASP-I-SIYAH...!!



FORGIVE ME,
ZARATHUSHTRA,
FOR HAVING
DOUBTED YOU.
YOUR GOD
AND YOU ARE
INDEED
GREAT.



YEARS LATER -

YOUR MAJESTY,
FOUR MEN ON
HORSEBACK ARE
OUTSIDE YOUR
GATES. I WAS
NEARLY BLINDED
BY THEIR
DAZZLING
GARMENTS.



WHO COULD
THEY BE?
SEND THEM
IN.



I AM VOHU MANO,
THE GOOD MIND.

I AM ASHA
VAHISHTA,
RIGHTEOUS LAW
AND ORDER.

I AM HAURVATAT,
THAT IS
PERFECTION.

I AM ADAR GUSHASP,
THE SACRED FIRE.



WE ARE THE ANGELS OF AHURA MAZDA. ZARATHUSHTRA IS HIS MESSENGER.

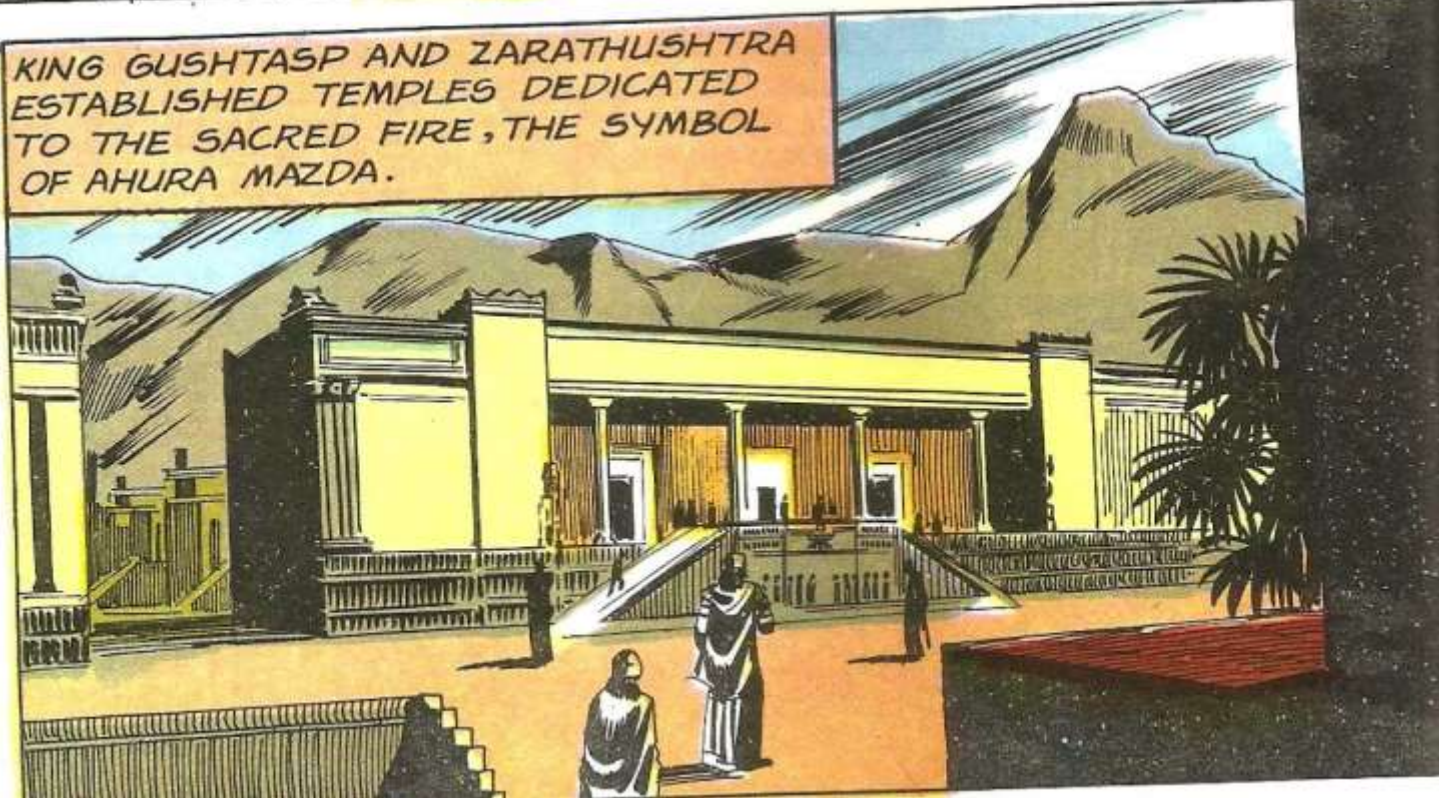
ZARATHUSHTRA IS HIS MESSENGER; LISTEN CAREFULLY TO HIS WISDOM.

ACCEPT HIS RELIGION COMPLETELY.

PROTECT THEM FROM ALL HARM.



KING GUSHTASP AND ZARATHUSHTRA ESTABLISHED TEMPLES DEDICATED TO THE SACRED FIRE, THE SYMBOL OF AHURA MAZDA.



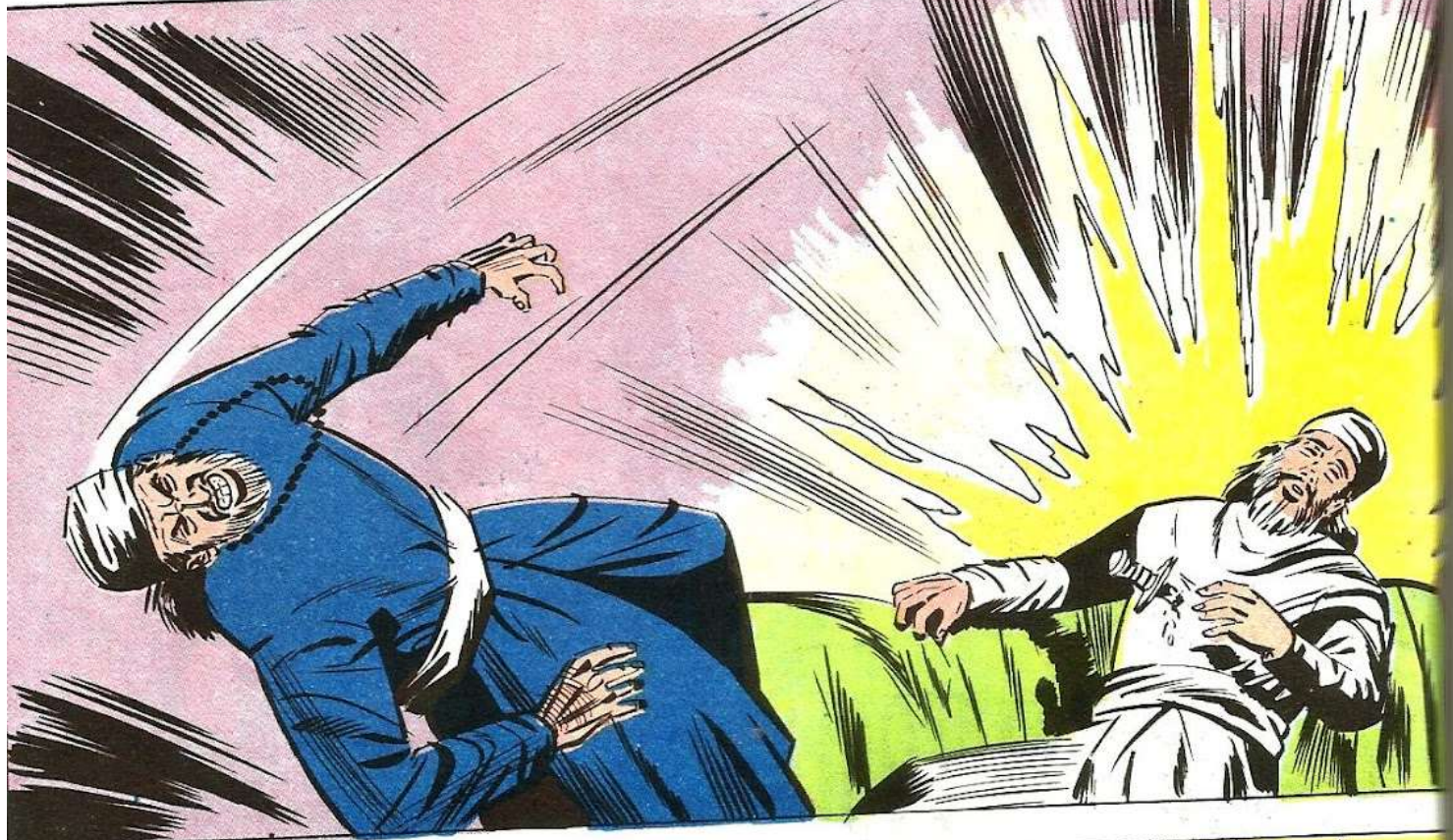
WHEN ZARATHUSHTRA WAS SEVENTY-SEVEN YEARS OLD—



THE MURDERER WAS A TURANIAN RUFFIAN. BUT BEFORE ZARATHUSHTRA DIED



..THE EVIL MAN TOO FELL DEAD.



ZARATHUSHTRA DIED, BUT THE GREAT RELIGION HE PREACHED 8000 YEARS AGO STILL LIVES IN THE HEARTS OF THOUSANDS OF ZOROASTRIANS WHO PRACTISE IT TO THIS DAY.

