

Lordship of Soma in the context of R̥gVeda

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Abstract:

Soma is the most mystical and magical riddle of the Vedas. The R̥gveda is essentially a book on the praises of the Gods, in which many deities such as Agni, Indra are glorified and praised. In the Rik Samhita 'Soma' is a deity and one of the principal God. The entire Ninth Mandala of the Rig Veda is devoted to this magical Soma. It inspires great creativity and deep mystical insights. It moves the tongue to song. Soma made the Vedic seers creative and prolific in their output of mystical verse. Soma is also said to lengthen out the human life spans. It is the elixir of immortality - the fabled fountain of eternal youth. The Soma juice is configured as Soma, King and God, making a royal progress across the filter to his rendezvous with the Gods. Or he is a powerful charging bull or a swift racehorse or a bird in flight. The fleece filter is a ewe; the milk is regularly conceived of as a herd of cows, eager to mate with the bull Soma. These ritual elements are also given cosmic dimensions. The fire bursts of Soma give incredible courage and heroism to the warriors in the battle fields. They take all fear of death and pain. So again 'Soma' is best paid to the Gods. In the Samhita there are two forms of Soma - one mortal and the other divine. Different thinkers discuss these two forms of Soma. But just as there is a lack of certainty about the substance of mortal Soma, there is also uncertainty about Soma. The appearance of this Soma is still unknown. Again, what does Dibya Soma mean is it Gandharvaloka, Vayuloka, Indraloka, Suryaloka, Somloka or Parama-byoma, in which Soma actually has room for discussion? Many characteristics of this Soma deity can be observed in the entire Rik Samhita mainly in the Ninth mandala. Sometimes he is seen as a God, sometimes as a bestower of wealth, sometimes as a delighter of the universe, sometimes as the master of all Gods, and sometimes as a servant. In this article we will discuss about all the divinity and lordship of Soma.

Keywords: Vedic Soma, Deity Soma, Divya Soma, Pavamāna Soma, Bestower, Lordship

Methodology:

The descriptive and analytical methods are used in this study. Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study. The secondary data have been collected from various books, different research reports, articles, journals, websites etc. The primary data are mainly collected from the original books of Sanskrit literature.

Main Part:

The Soma juice is configured as Soma, King and God, making a royal progress across the filter to his rendezvous with the Gods. Or he is a powerful charging bull or a swift racehorse or a bird in flight. The fleece filter is a ewe; the milk is regularly conceived of as a herd of cows, eager to

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mate with the bull Soma. These ritual elements are also given cosmic dimensions. Soma is a pillar between heaven and earth; the sheep's fleece is the whole surface of the earth or of heaven; the waters for dilution are a vast sea into which the waves of Soma empty themselves; the milk in its gleaming brightness is the Sun or the day-lit sky. Once they have assumed these other poetic identities, the elements of the ritual then participate in still other metaphors and images that stretch those identities further.

Lordship of Soma:

In the R̥gveda there is a frequent observation or complaint about the Hindu faith is the presence of so many Gods in the Vedic Dharma, there is but one God, the lord and master, the R̥gveda specifically names this deity as the one. Subordinate to the one are the many divine Vedic forces and energy such as Agni, Indra or the subject of this Soma. All these divine Vedic forces are manifestations of the one God. Lordship therefore is equally divided among the Vedic forces and energy to different responsibilities and duties but all are subject to the one. And even to those objects over which Soma or the other Vedic forces and energies exercise their lordship, that presiding exercise is many times shared with other Vedic forces and energies. It is not lordship as much as an exercise in influence like that Soma is the Lord of discreet physical phenomena, such as growing plants by the words using “विरुधां पति”²

ऋषे मन्त्रकृतां स्तोमैः कश्यपोद्धर्धयन्तिरः ।

सोमं नमस्य राजानं यो यज्ञे वीरुधां पतिरिन्द्रायेन्दो परिस्रव ॥

It means - O lord omniscient, cosmic seer, sustainer of life, the sage who sublimates and raises his songs of praise with hymns realized in the essence by the Vedic seers, and, having paid homage to self-refulgent ruling Soma, rises in the self-awareness of divinity is divine. O Indu, lord of light, sustainer of nature, vibrate and flow in your presence for such a soul and bless him. Here Soma addressed as the lord of cosmic growing plants. Soma is also Lord of intangible strength.

आ दिवस्पृष्ठमश्वयुगव्ययुः सोम रोहसि ।

वीरयुः शवसस्पते ॥³

Here R̥shi says, O Soma, lord of purity, power and life energy, giver of strength and courage, lover of lands, cows and culture, horses, victory and advancement, brave warriors and noble progeny for humanity, you pervade and prevail not only on earth and in the skies, you shine in glory on top of heaven too for the sake of devoted celebrants.

Soma is the lord of the Swar and Cows.⁴ R̥shi says, O Soma, lord of peace and purity, Indra, lord of honour and excellence, both of you are protectors, sustainers and sanctifiers of earth, earthly

² ऋग्वेद - 9.114.2

³ ऋग्वेद - 9.36.6

⁴ ऋग्वेद - 9.19.2

well being, culture and sacred speech, of heaven and heavenly light and joy. Rulers and sustainers of existence pray bless us with exuberant intelligence and will for holy thought, action and advancement.

युवं हि स्थः स्वर्पती इन्द्रश्च सोम गोपती |
ईशाना पिप्यतं धियः || (ऋ. – 9.19.2)

Soma is also Lord of thoughts as in RgVeda describe by the word 'ईशस्पतिम्'. Devala Kashyapa Rshi says - The intelligential faculties of the soul cleansing themselves, together in concentration, move to the lord omnipotent of food, energy and intelligence and reach the fount and foundation of all action and attainment for the soul.⁵

अभि क्षिपः समगमत मर्जयन्तीरिषस्पतिम् |
पृष्ठा गृभ्णत वाजिनः || (ऋग्वेद – 9.14.7)

Soma is the leader of all human. As the *Prabhuvasu Angirasa Rshi* declared 'जनस्य गोपति'⁶ to Soma and says that with hymns of adoration we exalt and glorify Soma, inspirer of song, purifier, saviour and guardian of humanity and their lands, cows and culture.

तं गीर्भिर्वीचमीङ्ख्यं पुनानं वासयामसि |
सोमं जनस्य गोपतिम् || (ऋग्वेद – 9.35.5)

We have seen that the Soma is the lord of Enlightenment⁷, – 'ब्रह्मणस्पति' as declared by the Rshi. He says, O Brahmanaspati, lord of expansive universe Vast and expansive is your holy creation of existence and the voice divine. You are the master and supreme controller who pervade and transcend its parts from the particle to the whole. The immature man who has not passed through the crucibles of discipline cannot reach to that presence, but the mature and seasoned ones who still maintain the ordeal of fire and abide by the presence attain to it and the divine joy – "पवित्रं ते विततं ब्रह्मणस्पते प्रभुगात्राणि पर्येषि विश्वतः. _" (ऋग्वेद – 9.83.1)

Soma is the Sovereign Lord of all stating by *Kashyapa Rshi* "vishva/tas pa/tiH"⁸. Soma is Refulgent sovereign ruler and sustainer of the world, *Pavamāna*, pure and purifying, shines in glory, giving fulfillment to all, generous and virile, roaring as thunder all round. Rshi says –

समिद्धो विश्वतपतिः पवमान वि राजति |
प्रीणन्वृषा कनिक्रदत् || (ऋग्वेद - 9.5.1)

Soma is the King of all Creature Rshi states by his word "विश्वमा रजः सोमः".⁹ He says This Soma, lord of peace and power, moves all the particles of nature and forces of power from the centre of light

⁵ ऋग्वेद - 9.14.7

⁶ ऋग्वेद - 9.35.5

⁷ ऋग्वेद - 9.83.1

⁸ ऋग्वेद - 9.5.1

⁹ ऋग्वेद - 9.68.9

and, pure and purifying, sits and pervades in all forms of existence. By the adamant and generous powers of nature and humanity, it is exalted with the dynamics of energy, will, acts and voices of intelligence, and the holy spirit, thus distilled and realized, pure and purifying, brings us the best and dearest wealth, honour and excellence of immortal value.

Soma is the Lord of all Worlds or “विश्वस्य पतिः”.¹⁰ Rshi states that Soma is the lord of all seeing existence, the mighty radiations of his power reach and prevail over all regions of the world. Soma flows and vibrates with the virtues of his own nature, power and function. So calling by Rshi O sovereign sustainer of the entire universe, you shine and rule supreme. “...सोम धर्मभिः पतिर्विश्वस्य भुवनस्य राजसि”. Soma is also the Lord of Riches. Rshi narrates him as “रायिपतिः”.¹¹ Soma is the Lord of all Directions¹² as “दिशां पत_”. Rshi states that Soma is the spirit of power and glory, master ruler and protector of the quarters of space, virile and generous, realized with faith and relentless austere discipline in pursuance of the Vedic voice, come from the depths of nature and simplicity of eternal law, and flow, pure and purifying, for Indra, the ruling soul, in the service of divinity.

आ पवस्व दिशां पत आर्जीकात्सोम मीदध्वः |

ऋतवाकेन् सत्येन श्रद्धया तपसा सुत इन्द्रायेन्दो परिस्रवः || (ऋग्वेद – 9.113.2)

Soma is the Lord of the Plentitude and Fullness¹³. As Rshi says “वाजेषु वाजिनम्”. In the Ninth Mandala of RgVeda Bhargava Rshi states that, lord sustainer of earth and heaven, pure and purifying sanctifier, watchful guardian and giver of bliss, absolute victor in the evolutionary battles of existence, we invoke, exalt and glorify for our good and advancement.

“तं त्वा धर्तारिमोण्योः पवमान स्वर्दृशम् |

हिन्वे वाजेषु वाजिनम् || (ऋग्वेद – 9.65.11)

Soma is also the Lord of the Steeds¹⁴ as Rshi says- “हरीणां पतः” and he states about Soma that he is the spirit of beauty and universal majesty, controller of all movements, beauties and perfections, divine presence that comprehend all forms of refulgence and generosity, like a friend for friends, be good for our pioneer leadership and brilliance on the vedi.

स नो हरीणां पत इन्दो देवप्सरस्तमः |

सखेव सख्ये नर्यो रूचे भव || (ऋग्वेद – 9.105.5)

¹⁰ ऋग्वेद - 9.86.5

¹¹ ऋग्वेद - 2.40.6

¹² ऋग्वेद - 9.113.2

¹³ ऋग्वेद - 9.65.11

¹⁴ ऋग्वेद - 9.105.5

Rshi also states that Soma is the Lord of the Impelling Force¹⁵ or “इषस्पते” as he narrates to, O refulgent generous Soma spirit of life, lover of divinities, master of food and energy for body, mind and soul, give us the light to rise to the honour and excellence of higher life towards divinity, and for that pray open the middle cover of the soul and let us rise to the state of divine bliss.

“अभि द्युम्नं बृहद्यश इषस्पते दिदीहि देव देवयुः |
वि कोशं मध्यमं युव || ” (ऋग्वेद – 9.108.9)

Soma is also the Lord of Strength as Vashistha Rshi says by addressing Soma – “हन्ति रक्षो बाधते पर्यरातीर्वीरिवः कृण्वन्वृजस्य राजा.”¹⁶ Rshi narrates O brilliant Soma, energetic and victorious, pure and purifying, vibrant and dynamic, creating strength, patience and endurance for the soul’s joy, is ever on the move. It destroys evil, prevents negativities and opposition and casts them far off, and, giving wealth, honour and excellence of the best order of our choice, rules as the brilliant creator, controller and dispenser of strength, courage, power and life saving vitality in existence.

In RgVeda it also describe that the Soma is the Ruler of Nations¹⁷. Rshi states – “ईशान इमा भुवनानि वीर्यसे युजान इन्दो हरितः सुपर्णः” he also narrates in this verse, O Soma, Indu, lord of light and beauty of peaceful life, you rule over all these regions of the world harnessing dynamic forces of nature’s energy. May these forces of yours produce and shower on us ghr̥ta and milk of honeyed sweetness and may the people abide by your laws and discipline of life.

Soma is the King of essence of rapture of the flowing Soma.¹⁸ Rshi narrates in his word - “पवमास्य ते रसो मदो राजन्नुच्छुनः/ वि वारमव्यमर्षति.” (ऋग्वेद – 9.61.17) means O Soma, beauty, grace and joy of life, refulgent power, as you flow, pure and purifying, the pleasure you release, the ecstasy you inspire, and the peace you emanate free from negativities, radiates to the mind and soul of the loved celebrant. Soma is the Master of Brave Progeny¹⁹ called by Rshi “वीर्युः शवसस्पते”. Prabhuvasu Angirasa Rshi addressed to the Pavamāna Soma that he is the lord of purity, power and life energy, giver of strength and courage, lover of lands, cows and culture, horses, victory and advancement, brave warriors and noble progeny for humanity, you pervade and prevail not only on earth and in the skies, you shine in glory on top of heaven too for the sake of devoted celebrants.

¹⁵ ऋग्वेद – 9.108.9

¹⁶ ऋग्वेद – 9.97.10

¹⁷ ऋग्वेद – 9.86.37

¹⁸ ऋग्वेद – 9.61.17

¹⁹ ऋग्वेद – 9.36.6

Soma is the King of Sacrificial Paths.²⁰ *Rshi* addressed to the *Pavamāna Soma* and say all these, sparkling pure immortals ever on the move tire not. Pure energy they are, restless, eager to traverse the paths of space.

“एते मृष्टा अमर्त्याः ससृवांसो न शश्रमुः।/ इयक्षन्तः पथो रज ||”

Soma is the King of Upper Level of Heaven.²¹ *Rshi* says Pressing forward on the journey all round, they cross the regions of heaven and earth and then reach the highest pinnacle of light and space in existence. “एते पृष्ठानि रोदसोर्विप्रयन्तो व्यानशुः।/ उतेदमुत्तमं रजः || (ऋग्वेद – 9.22.5)

Soma is also the King of the Rivers²² as spoken by *Rshi* “सिन्धुनां राजा”. *Rshi* states Ruler and controller of the cosmic streams of evolution, lord of the light of heaven, moves and flows on loud and bold by the paths of cosmic law in a thousand streams and showers of new life. The creative spirit dispelling want and darkness, pure and purifying, goes on close by sustainers of life, creating new forms and names of existence, and is celebrated as divine creator, controller and director of the evolution of life. As we got in RigVeda – “राजा सिन्धुनां पवते पतिर्दिव ऋतस्य याति पथिभिः कनिक्रदत् |” (ऋ. – 9.86.33)

So the description of Lordship of Soma in only RgVeda is Vast and comprehensive. The Pavamāna Soma is the Lord of tangible phenomena possessing an esoteric meaning. Created like fire by friction in the serious business of life, Soma spontaneously creates mighty motions of flow in the dynamics of existence. Like almighty man warrior roaring and resounding as a great victor, soma goes forward to billows of the sea sending out waves of purity and power of all rounds.

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²⁰ ऋग्वेद – 9.22.4

²¹ ऋग्वेद – 9.22.5

²² ऋग्वेद – 9.86.33

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