

The first Mythical Prototypes of Man: Manu and Gayomart in

The Rig Vedic and Avestan scriptures
[An Introductory Note and Sample: A Comparative Approach to Indo-Iranian Mythology]

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Abstract: Some say that the scriptural Vedic Manu is the Noah of, or the Adam of, India. This interpretive comparison, whatever loose it may be demonstrated, is not appropriately explained and it is not logically approached. Multi-dimensional drama of Manu, who is the first mythical and mortal creature, the first mythical man or father of the Rig Veda's Aryans should mostly and contextually seem to be compared and paralleled with the homogeneously scriptural one, that is Avestan Gayomart or at last with Jam, Jamshid, the first king in Iranian 'mythical history'. The contextual and mythical points of similitude of the Rig Vedic 'Manu' and the Avestan 'Gayomart' and 'Jam' are verifiably recognizable, realizable, and positively understandable. Otherwise, the extent of discourse and logic of explanation would be diverted.

Key words: pioneer, Manu, Gayomart, man, mythical root, comparative samples, prototypes

The first mythical mortal creature in different mythical literatures of the early men represents various aspects of cultural consciousness of that given community or tribe. Gayomart is the first mythical prototype Indo-Iranian human being and mortal creature. In the Rig Veda, on the other side of the continent, it is Manu who is the first man, the first mortal Adam, borrowing from Ibrahamite terms.

Alberuni was the first well-aware and acute mythologist in order to give the well structured, stratified, and properly detailed illustration of, for example, the Fourteen Vedic Manus in his forty fourth chapter of his great multidisciplinary-approach based book on India written in the first decades of the eleventh century. What one realizes and comprehends from reading the vastly knowledgeable and up to the point eighty chapters of Alberuni’s scientific research collection on India is not probably less than all things Max Muller and his followers have essentially said since the late decades of the nineteenth century. One of the most significant and evidential and well proved topics is 'O the Manvantaras' which is associated with Manu the first mythical and Rig Vedic man. Alberuni methodologically details the periods, names, and related items and data concerned in all scriptures recognized till then. Caplas, Manvantaras, Caturyugas, the titles of fourteen Manvantaras according to the Vishnu-Purana, Vishnu-Dharma, and other sources are tabled and analyzed( Alberuni's India, pp.297-99), exactly like the twentieth century research papers.

Alberuni introduced the great literature of the Vedas to the outside world in the early eleventh century. He, in one whole chapter, entitled 'On the Veda, the Puranas, and Other Kinds of Their National Literature', gives the meaning of 'Veda' before explaining the four great Vedas of India in chapter twelve of his book. Veda, Alberuni reports, "means knowledge of that which was before unknown." He explains why the Vedas should not be written down from the rsis point of view. (Alberuni’s India, pp.86-8) He then elaborately defines the four great Vedas: 1. The Rig Veda, 2. The Yajur Veda, 3. The Sama Veda, 4. The Atharva Veda. He gives sound meanings of each term to the audience: Sama Veda "is recited in a tone like a chant, and hence it name is derived, because saman means the sweetness of recitation."(ibid. 89)
Researchers are to access, and have to try to touch and avenue to, the nearest and most reliable evidence to their object of investigation it is confirmed. Authentically, to understand the earliest myths of India one should first base his research on the actual text of the Rig Veda, the earliest reports, histories, and comments on the Rig Veda. Then other secondary sources are touched and consulted.

Arthur Emanuel Chirstensen in his magnificent research in early twentieth century (1916) about Gayomart, and very very poorly about Manu, he knew well his context of his research: [Les Types du premier home et du premier roi dans l’histoire legenndaire des iraniens. 2 vols] refers to considerable primary and great sources of knowledge of (and about, the history, believes, religions, sciences, cultures, literatures, myths and other subjects of) the ancient and contemporary nations and eras of the world written in earlier centuries. Plus the Avestan and the Pahlavi texts, some more essentially classic references are exploited. Among them there are references to Alberuni’s extensive book: ‘Chronology of Ancient Nations’ (trans.) and the very fundamental and appropriately detailing Book of Religious and Philosophical Sects’ by al-Shahrestani. Moreover the most famous and intimated Avestan scriptures like the Gatha, Yasns, Yashts Bundehishn, and the different 'Pahlavi Texts' translated by West. Christensen have, in addition to the above mentioned sources seen as many as sources possible about Gayomart and Manu the first prototype mythical men in Indo-Iranian mythology. He recited from works Byf Tabari, Ibn-Asthir, Masaudi, Bal’ami, Yaghoobi, al-Beruni, Hamzeh Isfahani, Ghodamma, Khazarni, Mirkhand, Dha’alebi [Sa’alebi] and the Vedas, Oldenberg’s 'the Religion of The Veda Schrader' Indogerms, Zoroastrian Papers.

It is not necessary, it is well understood, to repeat all narrations and recitations that Christensen tells us about Gayomart the first prototype of mythical mortal believed in the Ancient Aryans of Iran and then developed in Indo-Iranian mythology.

Tabari thus reports about Grayomart:” Iranian have held that Gayomart is Adam…” and follows the story of Mashya and Mashyana (Tabari,vol.1,p.99). He also counts that he is the forefather of human race.

He reports and considers different narratives about Gayomart as the 'holy man', the 'father of Aryan', "Persians’ repeatedly emphasized, "first man", progenitor of human race, the "offspring of Noah" the Prophet. Thus He mixes and compares the narratives of Ancient Farsis with purely religious narratives of the holy Books: Tura, old Testaments and the Quran.

Ibn-Athir also repeats what Tabari says befor him. One point in his book called al-Kamil, and indeed in Tabari's History , is significant in comparative mythology in order to note is the 'kingdom of Gayomart' and of his son in a very long period of time. These sorts of characteristics, among many others, are parallel to that of Manu’s Caplas and Mantavaras. In al-Kami, l Gayomart is “the father of persian”, the progenitor of the Aryan race”, and he is associated with Adam,Noah’s sons and events.

In the first one hundred page of al-kamil,mostly, the stories, myths, and religious believes with recitations from the previous sources are, again, almost like Tabari, are mixed up indistinguished. Herbrow prophets, Adam’s sons and events, Persian kings, and Gayomart’s episodes altogether seems to be similar to Manu’s Manvantaras. (al-kamil,p.51-4; also consult Alberuni’s India pp.297-299, 86-93)

In the chapter called ‘the first Heirarchy of Persian Kings: Their stories and Events’ of Morooj al-Dhabab by Masaudi, Ali’ibn Hossein, eleventh century AC, the events of Gayomart are reported-
Masaudi in the third chapter of his book goes on the creation, an in four chapter of twenty one to twenty four follows up the History of Iran, her kings, myths, believes, and ethics, details of some episodes of Gayomart are accounted.

Christensen, in addition to Marooj al Dhahab, refers to Tanbih al Ashraf, another book by Masaudi in order to strengthen his research. In both of Masaudi’s texts Gayomart is: the first forefather, king, producer of Mashya and Mashyana, great commander and the long living master of Persian, the first mortal, the first king of the first mellennium’s human life’s millennium on the earth.

And the whole Christensen's reported details of the episode about mythical Gayomart originally and generally correspond to the Pahlavi Texts and the Avestan Scriptures, particularly to Bundahishn, Yasns, and some statements in Yashts defined above.

In verse 3 hymn 30, Mandala VIII, the Rig Veda, Manu is the illustrated as the general subject and the bridge way to salvation: "Lead us not from our Father’s and from Manu’s path into the distance far away:" Also in verse 1, hymn 52 the same Mandala, again, there are some parallel characteristics of Gayomart that in the Avestan Yasns and Yashts, and Bundahishn are counted:"… the Father Manu made prayers efficacious with gods." He does what the nearest associate of Ahura Mazda does. In verse 10, hymn 23 in the above mentioned Mandala he is called as "The Most illustrious priest.”

Manu who preaches for the sacrifice and does the sacrifice himself is he whom Agni kindled.

Griswold outlines some Vague conceptual picture of Manu and Yama in his book called 'The Religion of the Rig Veda. The author of the book bravely seem to express something abot three great and focal as well as functionally significant figures: Manu, Vivasvant, and Yama. He, accordingly, goes on about his unexplained inference :” when Yama anthropomorphized, the name Manu (Manus)’man’ was altogether suitable. To say that Yama and Manu are 'doublets' is to say that "they are practically identical."(Griswold,1999,p.325)

This is because Vivasvant, Griswold holds, is the father to both. This makes him believe Yama and Manu are selfsame, identical. If this were the reason for identification of two first and early men, then there would be several other mortals and deities that should have been realized as unique being. Yama can assumedly be said to be ‘man’ or ‘a manu’ in a general sense, but they do not seem, according to the Rig Vedic hymns, to be identical and same selves at all. The mythical Manu, the forefather of human race, is unique symbol, a general sample specimen, representative, and prototype man as Gayomart is so in the Avestan scriptures.


However, Alberuni, regards both the Avestan Gayomart and the Rig Vedic Manu as the first men. Alberuni in his 'Chronology of Ancient Nations' expresses that ” Gayomart is the first man from the point of view of ancient Iranians. Manu has very interesting and directive representation, character, and meaning. Literally, the root of Manu is 'man', and man linguistically and morphologically means "to think." I And if it is so, the language capacity, linguistic approach, and its philosophy indicate a great deal of semantic explications and implications.
Alberuni’s approach to Manu, Gayomart, k and Manvantara

It is interesting that Alberuni (975-1048 AC) in his study of India approaches Manu as the lord of period (Alberuni’s India, p. 130). He writes: “When Brahmam wanted to create mankind, he divided himself into two halves, of which the right one was called Viraj, the left one Manu. The latter one is the being from whom the period of time called Manvantara has received its name. Manu had two sons…” (ibid.p.179)

“The Brahman is the lord of the world, but the lord of the, Manvantara is Manu.” (ibid,p.297)

“There are fourteen Manus, from when the kings of the earth, ruling at the beginning of each manvantara(ibid.p.297). He then in the next page gives the detailed classified Manvantaras. Perhaps, nearly assured, it is the first scientific stratification in the realm of Indo-Iranian, if not the Aryan mythology, a well learned modernist, an advanced post-renaissance scholar has ever presented. There Alberuni states that “Manu, as the ruler of the first Manvantara, is Indra, who has nothing in common with any other being.” (Alberuni’s India, p. 298). Moreover, the scientifically detailed chart represented in this page is perhaps the first one in an introductory text about the Rig Vedic Manu illustrating different features of the first sacrifice. Because there is no any other texts on India’s ‘mythology’ outside India that be written by an Iranian, Arab or others except Alberuni himself. Chapter forty four of his book elaborates on Manvantaras periods of Manus(pp.297-99). He chronologically gives, among other things, the chain of Manus Kings and their periods all of which used and alluded to by other later and modern scholars searching for the understanding history and mythology of country.

One can frankly express that there is no any information in Max Muller, Macdonell, Christesen, Schrader, Bergaignel, Oldenberg, Hillebrandtg, Bloomfield, Mallory’s and other later scholars’ works about myths of India that may not be, in one way or another, pointed out in Alberuni’s eighty chapter book called in French: Memoire geographique, Historique et scientifique sur l’Inde’, in English ‘Alberuni’s India’[ translated(Date?) but officially printed in France in late 1840s, and in English in early 1870s in Europe by Edward Sachau]. Most research and knowledge based-academicians and scholars would confess this if they saw the great book of Alberuni’s India, say ‘Alberuni’s Indology’: [Tahghigh ma lel Hind]. Alberuni’s other important book about some Iranian myths is ‘Chronology of Ancient Nations’:[Asar al Baghiya]. There he states about Gayomart from various points of view.

[See Chronology of Ancient Nations, English translation by C.E.Sachau, London, 1879; this research’s ‘s reference is the recent Farsi translation: ‘Asar al Baghiya’ by Dana Seresh, Akbar, printed by Amirkabir Publications, Tehran,2007]. Moreover, Windischmann, Spiegele, Noldeke, Marquart, Darmesteter, Husing, according to Arthur Manuel Christensen, all follow what Alberuni found and said about Gayomart in the eleventh century. And Alberuni himself has not added anything further than what Tabari said in the ninth century.

Alberuni who experienced and got direct touch to, and sources of , the Sanskrit language, believes, philosophies, myths, religions, Morphology and philology, science, and technology in India and lived there for methodic and experimental study founded the ‘Comparative Cultural Studies’, ‘Anthropology’ and ‘Intercultural Approach to Mythology and Ethnology.’[ see Sachau, Edward,1888, pp .IX-XLV, 521-648]

Nevertheless, Alberuni in chapter forty-five of his Indology, called’ On the Constellation of the Great Bear’ give a brief analytical record and report on the missions of Indra, Manu, and the sons of Manu:
“… The theologian believe that the Seven Rishis[the holders of all knowledge-omniscients] stand higher than the fixed stars, and they maintain that each manvantara there will appear a new Manu whose children will destroy the earth; but the rule will be renewed by Indra….. The angels are necessary, for mankind must offer sacrifices to them and must bring to the fire the shares for them… (Alberuni’s India, p.303) The table presented on the following page of 304 of the book [new print March 2003] illustrates fourteen Manvantaras periods and the seven Rishis necessary for renewing the Veda and…

Again, most later mythologists, scholars, and anthropologists have been, in one way or another, using this unique, observational, and great multidisciplinary Eighty-Chapter Book of 'Alberuni’s India' without mentioning its original and pioneering status of the book, Alberuni the author. They, indeed, use the very research papers like chapters of his India without honouring and without even naming Alberuni. This is assumedly because of Egocentrisms, and Egocentrisms make people deny, keep aloof from, and avoid academic fairness, even from and in the advanced, industrialized countries, unfortunately. But nonetheless, no one can deny the functions, uses, and effects of this eleventh century giant text of Alberuni on Indology and ‘Multidisciplinary Comparative Study’ about India, her people, culture, ethics, and spirit.’ This huge research designated to one of the most ancient nations of the world.

Nevertheless, Manu, being the son of Vivasvant, is an important mortal authority in the Rig Veda: "Agni, on thy most easy car, glorified, hither bring the gods, Manu appointed thee a priest."(RV. 1.4) He participates in determination of the cosmological decision. The rsis knows that Manu shares the affairs of the globe. He gets the status after he gives a satisfactory sacrifice. And strengthen our father "Whatever health and strength our father Manu won by sacrifice…”(1. 94.2) Manu is such a character in the Rig Veda that the dominant gods of the world like Varuna, Mitra, and Aryman are invoked to sit beside him: " Here let the foe-destroyers sit, Varuna, Mitra, Aryman, like men, upon our sacred grass."(RV. 1. 26.4) "Manu hath established thee a light,Agni, for all the race of man ."(RV. 1.35. 19) "Like Manu, we will establish thee, Agni, performer of the rites…”(RV. 1. 45. 11).

The story of Manu in the Rig Veda parallels, is related, and associated with Gayomart in the Avestan scriptures and texts. "I gave this earth to Aryaman."[2] The earth is the abode on which both are settled. A hawk from heaven brings drink and the divine oblation for Manu (RV.IV. 26.4) and then the bird is given rewards because of this heavenly act. The episode of Manu in the Rig Veda is fictionally, dramatically, and symbolically comprehensive and critically interpretable in a vast extent.

**Divine Oblation, Manu, and the Hawk**

First of all, some of the imagery and metaphors in the myth is significantly remarkable and delicate. It is romantically striking. The episode of the hawk, with his flight mission, for the achievement of the duty, and eventually the reward and promotion given to the celestial bird are all indicative, suggestive, and constructional. This is a good and advanced as well as spiritual honour for the mythical man, the first prototype sample that is given a dramatic fiction by the Rig Veda's rsis. That means the spirit of the mortal deity does have a celestial link.

Manu enjoys Soma, the sacred drink, as well as the divine present from heaven. The gifts are well godly offered. It is metaphorically meaningful and surprising in that period of feeling, of life, and of thought to have such a figurative episode, and such a symbolic narrative as
wonderfully advanced as modern metaphoric short story and drama. The existential and human consciousness plays and manoeuvres over its own plot and creation, over itself.

"Among even the hawks, the hawk who is fastest moving, be the best, because it through the divine oblation and Sormras from heaven for Manu.". Sometime one eminent sample of poetic work, and self-conscious utterance represent timeless, spaceless, and magnificent capacity of an individual or a people. The episode of Manu in the Rig Veda is an immortal narrative of a mortal creature who equates and lives with mythical gods: Mitra, Indra, Varuna, and other Adityas.

And this piece of episode in the Rig Veda, an ancient text, seems to be that sort of example which has endured and lives everlasting.

The episode of the hawk and Manu in the Rig Veda is written long before the "Prometheus Bound" the tragedy written by the Greek tragedy composer: Aeschylus and it is before any other literary works produced by man on the earth. It is before Homer. The story is unique in its own. It can be approached from different critical points of analyses and views. It can be well appreciated symbolically, explained philosophically, and explicated textually. The mythic linkage of Manu with heaven chronologically distances the myth, character and all 'mythemes' involved with all other European myths. And in the event that the fastest bird becomes the best one, too, the myth elevates itself further up than other parallel ones. The given hawk that flies high in the sky materializes the certain awareness that one of the poet-rsris represents in one of the greatest hymns of man: his faculties and his spiritual linkage with some meta-earthly sources one of the greatest hymns of man, his faculties and his spiritual linkage with some meta-earthly sources.

Some may compare or associate the Rig Vedic 'mythical Manu' with doctrinally symbolic and imm Mythical 'Adam', or historically religious and non-mythical Noah. But the real similitude is with Gayomart as the image, the story, and metaphor are all Aryans and myth-based characters. Both are the main mythic ancestors of man. Both are mythic mortals. If there were a chance for Gayomart of the Avesta to be immortal before, we would have else Gayomart, but that opportunity has gone. He, as the mortal ancestor of mythical man was assistant to Ahura Mazdaonce (refer to the concerned Texts of the Avesta). They were sacrifices in different events, rites, or Yagna.

Again, Manu is said to be the Noah of India[4] and the progenitor of human race and father of mankind. He is also said to be the first king. Indeed, his parallel (Iranian king) is Jam (Jamshid) then, but his parallel as the progenitor of human race is Gayomart. The mythical periods of both are, however, giant, fantastic and surrealistic.

On the Myths of Creation and Gayomart in the Avestan Scriptures: Bundahishn:

[From Chapter 1]

8. Of Ohrmazd's creatures of the world, the first was the sky; the second, water; the third, earth; the fourth, mankind.

[From Budahishn] Chapter 3

1. On the rush of the destroyer at the creatures it is said, in revelation, that the evil spirit, when he saw the impotence of himself and the confederate (ham-dast) demons, owing to the righteous man, became confounded, and seemed in confusion three thousand years. 2. During that confusion the arch-fiends of the demons severally shouted thus: 'Rise up, thou father of us! for we will cause a conflict in the world, the distress and injury from which will become those of Ohrmazd and the archangels.'
3. Severally they twice recounted their own evil deeds, and it pleased him not; and that wicked evil spirit, through fear of the righteous man, was not able to lift up his head until the wicked Jeh came, at the completion of the three thousand years. 4. And she shouted to the evil spirit thus: 'Rise up, thou father of us! for I will cause that conflict in the world wherefrom the distress and injury of Ohrmazd and the archangels will arise,' 5. And she twice recounted severally her own evil deeds, and it pleased him not; and that wicked evil spirit rose not from that confusion, through fear of the righteous man.

6. And, again, the wicked Jeh shouted thus: 'Rise up, thou father of us! for in that conflict I will shed thus much vexation on the righteous man and the laboring ox that, through my deeds, life will not be wanted, and I will destroy their living souls (nismo); I will vex the water, I will vex the plants, I will vex the fire of Ohrmazd, I will make the whole creation of Ohrmazd vexed.' 7. And she so recounted those evil deeds a second time, that the evil spirit was delighted and started up from that confusion; and he kissed Jeh upon the head, and the pollution which they call menstruation became apparent in Jeh.

8. He shouted to Jeh thus: 'What is thy wish? so that I may give it thee.' And Jeh shouted to the evil spirit thus: 'A man is the wish, so give it to me.'

9. The form of the evil spirit was a log-like lizard's (vazak) body, and he appeared a young man of fifteen years to Jeh, and that brought the thoughts of Jeh to him.

10. Afterwards, the evil spirit, with the confederate demons, went towards the luminaries, and he saw the sky; and he led them up, fraught with malicious intentions.

11. He stood upon one-third of the inside of the sky, and he sprang, like a snake, out of the sky down to the earth.

12. In the month Frawardin and the day Ohrmazd he rushed in at noon, and thereby the sky was as shattered and frightened by him, as a sheep by a wolf.

13. He came on to the water which was arranged below the earth, and then the middle of this earth was pierced and entered by him.

14. Afterwards, he came to the vegetation, then to the ox, then to Gayomard, and then he came to fire; so, just like a fly, he rushed out upon the whole creation; and he made the world quite as injured and dark at midday as though it were in dark night.

15. And noxious creatures were diffused by him over the earth, biting and venomous, such as the snake, scorpion, frog (kalvak), and lizard (vazak), so that not so much as the point of a needle remained free from noxious creatures.

16. And blight was diffused by him over the vegetation, and it withered away immediately.

17. And avarice, want, pain, hunger, disease, lust, and lethargy were diffused by him abroad upon the ox and Gayomard.

18. Before his coming to the ox, Ohrmazd ground up the healing fruit, which some call 'binak,' small in water openly before its eyes, so that its damage and discomfort from the calamity (zanishn) might be less; and when it became at the same time lean and ill, as its breath went forth and it passed away, the ox also spoke thus: 'The cattle are to be created, and their work, labor, and care are to be appointed.'

19. And before his coming to Gayomard, Ohrmazd brought forth a sweat upon Gayomard, so long as he might recite a prayer (vaj) of one stanza (vichast); moreover, Ohrmazd formed that sweat into the youthful body of a man of fifteen years, radiant and tall.

20. When Gayomard issued from the sweat he saw the world dark as night, and the earth as though not a needle's point remained free from noxious creatures; the celestial sphere was in revolution, and
the sun and moon remained in motion: and the world's struggle, owing to the clamor of the Mazendaran demons, was with the constellations.

21. And the evil spirit thought that the creatures of Ohrmazd were all rendered useless except Gayomard; and Astwihad with a thousand demons, causers of death, were let forth by him on Gayomard.

22. But his appointed time had not come, and he (Astwihad) obtained no means of noosing (avizidano) him; as it is said that, when the opposition of the evil spirit came, the period of the life and rule of Gayomard was appointed for thirty years.

23. After the coming of the adversary he lived thirty years, and Gayomard spoke thus: 'Although the destroyer has come, mankind will be all of my race; and this one thing is good, when they perform duty and good works.'

24. And, afterwards, he (the evil spirit) came to fire; and he mingled smoke and darkness with it.

25. The planets, with many demons, dashed against the celestial sphere, and they mixed the constellations; and the whole creation was as disfigured as though fire disfigured every place and smoke arose over it.

26. And ninety days and nights the heavenly angels were contending in the world with the confederate demons of the evil spirit, and hurled them confounded to hell; and the rampart of the sky was formed so that the adversary should not be able to mingle with it.

27. Hell is in the middle of the earth; there where the evil spirit pierced the earth and rushed in upon it, as all the possessions of the world were changing into duality, and persecution, contention, and mingling of high and low became manifest.

[From Budahishn] Chapter 15

1. On the nature of men it says in revelation, that Gayomard, in passing away, gave forth seed; that seed was thoroughly purified by the motion of the light of the sun, and Neryosang kept charge of two portions, and Spandarmad received one portion.

[The following numbered verses-piece is one of the portion of the series of mythical episodes of the first prototype mortal, the Rig Veda:IV.26.1-7]:

**Divine Hawk, Sacrifice, the Sacred Drink, and Manu**

[1] I was Manu. I am Savita. I am wise sage Kakshiwan too.

I bedecked Arjuni’s son Kutsa. I am the poet Ushna too. O mortals, look at me.

[2] I gave this earth to Arya Manu. I bless those who offer me oblation with water in the form of rain. I have brought smooth flowing streams on land. All the deities follow my example.

[3] After drinking the intoxicating Somras, I destroyed the ninety-nine establishments of the demon Shamber. I gave a hundred forts to Divodas who played a perfect host to all his guests in the Yagya.
[4] O Marutganas, let the hawk be the best among all the birds. Among even the hawks, the hawks who is fastest moving be the best, because it brought the divine oblation and Somaras from heaven for Manu.

[5] When this hawk brought Soma, overcoming all obstacles, he flew very high on his way back. He became famous for his flight all the world over.

[6] The simple hawk that flies in a straight line, accompanied the deities on its way back while bringing Soma. It brought the famous intoxicating Soma with determination.

[7] The hawk bird brought this Soma with a thousand and ten thousand Yagyas. With the help of this Soma, Indra, in an inebriated state, destroyed all the enemies.

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