

RV 5.85

r̥ṣi: atri bhauma; devatā: varuṇa; chanda: triṣṭup

प्र॒ सम्रा॑जे बृ॒हद् अ॒र्चा ग॒भीरं॑ ब्र॒ह्म प्रि॒यं वरु॑णाय श्रु॒ताय॑ ।
 वि॒ यो ज॒घान॑ श॒मिते॒व च॒र्मो॒पस्ति॑रे पृथि॒वीँ सूर्या॑य ॥ ५-०८५-०१
 वने॑षु व्य् अ॒न्तरि॑क्षं त॒तान॑ वा॒जम् अ॒र्वत्सु॑ पय॒ उ॒स्त्रिया॑सु ।
 ह॒त्सु क्र॑तुं वरु॒णो अ॒प्स्व अ॒ग्निं दि॒वि सूर्य॑म् अ॒दधा॑त् सोमम् अ॒द्रौ ॥ ५-०८५-०२
 नी॒चीन॑बा॒रं वरु॑णः क॒वन्ध॑म् प्र॒ सस॑र्ज रो॒दसी॑ अ॒न्तरि॑क्षम् ।
 तेन॑ वि॒श्वस्य॑ भु॒वनस्य॑ रा॒जा य॒वं न वृ॑ष्टिर् व्य् उ॒नत्ति॑ भूम ॥ ५-०८५-०३
 उ॒नत्ति॑ भूमि॒म् पृथि॑वीम् उ॒त द्यां॑ य॒दा दु॒ग्धं वरु॑णो व॒ष्ट्य् आ॒द् इत् ।
 स॒म् अ॒भ्रेण॑ व॒सत॑ प॒र्वता॑सस् त॒विषी॑यन्तः श्रथ॒यन्त॑ वी॒राः ॥ ५-०८५-०४
 इ॒माम् ऊ॒ ष्व् आ॒सुर॑स्य श्रु॒तस्य॑ म॒हीम् मा॒यां वरु॑णस्य प्र॒ वोच॑म् ।
 मा॒नेने॒व त॒स्थि॒वा अ॒न्तरि॑क्षे वि॒ यो म॒मे पृथि॑वी सूर्ये॒ण ॥ ५-०८५-०५
 इ॒माम् ऊ॒ नु क॒वित॑मस्य मा॒याम् म॒ही दे॒वस्य॑ न॒किर् आ॑ द॒धर्ष॑ ।
 ए॒कं यद् उ॒द्रा न॑ पृ॒णन्त्य् ए॒नीर् आ॑सि॒ञ्चन्ती॑र् अ॒वन॑यः स॒मुद्र॑म् ॥ ५-०८५-०६
 अ॒र्य॒म्यं वरु॑ण मि॒त्र्यं वा॑ स॒खायं॑ वा स॒दम् इ॒द् भ्रा॑तरं वा ।
 वे॒शं वा॑ नित्यं वरु॒णार॑णं वा यत् सी॒म् आ॒गश् च॒कृ॒मा शि॒श्रथ॑स् तत् ॥ ५-०८५-०७
 कि॒त॒वा॒सो यद् रि॑रि॒पुर॑ न दी॒वि यद् वा॑ घा स॒त्यम् उ॒त यन् न॑ वि॒द्म ।
 सर्वा॑ ता वि॒ ष्य शि॒थिरे॑व दे॒वाधा॑ ते स्या॒म वरु॑ण प्रि॒यासः॑ ॥ ५-०८५-०८

To the Omniscient Creator¹

In this hymn there is throughout a sustained double sense. In the exoteric Varuna is hymned as the Asura, omniscient and omnipotent lord and creator, the Godhead in his creative wisdom and might forming the world and maintaining the law of things in the earth and mid-air and heavens. In the esoteric, in which the physical phenomena of the exoteric become symbols, the infinite Godhead is hymned in his all-pervading wisdom and purity opening the three worlds of our being to the Sun of knowledge, pouring down the streams of the Truth, purifying the soul from the falsehood of the lower being and its sin. The hymn is rendered here successively in its exoteric and its esoteric significance.

The Mighty Master of Infinite Wisdom²

The Rishi hymns Varuna as the Lord of infinite purity and wisdom who opens our earthly being to the unclouded light of the sun of knowledge, pours out the waters of the Truth upon all our triple existence mental, vital and physical and by its power removes all sin and evil and falsehood from our lives. He creates the free wideness of our vital being above our broken search for the delightful objects of our desire, sets the plenitude in our battling life-forces, the yield of heaven in the shining herds of thought; he has put will in our hearts, Agni the divine force in the waters of existence, the Sun of divine knowledge in the highest heaven of mind and the plant that yields the wine of delight on the many-plateaued mountain of our being. All these are the means by which we attain to immortality. He plans out all our physical existence by his wisdom according to the truth light of the sun of knowledge and creates in us the unity of his own infinite existence and consciousness with all the seven rivers of the Truth-plane pouring their streams of knowledge into it without filling its infinity.

प्र॒ सम्रा॑जे॒ बृ॒हद् अ॒र्चा॑ ग॒भीरं॑ ब्र॒ह्म॑ प्रि॒यं वरु॑णाय श्रु॒ताय॑ ।
वि॒ यो ज॒घान॑ श॒मिते॒व च॒र्मो॒प॒स्तरे॑ पृथि॒वीँ सू॒र्याय॑ ॥ ५-०८५-०१

prá samrāje bṛhád arcā gabhīrám bráhma priyám váruṇāya śrutāya
ví yó jaghāna śamitéva cárma upastíre pṛthivīm sūriyāya 5.085.01

¹ Volume: 15 [CWSA] (The Secret of the Veda), Page: 544

² Sri Aurobindo wrote two different commentaries on this hymn, as if for two different reasons, they are both given here; the second one is more esoteric.

1. Sing thou the word vast and profound and dear to renowned Varuna, the All-ruler, to him who clove away, even as the cleaver of beasts a skin, that he might spread out the earth under the sun.

1. To Varuna of the far-heard inspirations, the all-ruling, ³ sing bright the inspired word of the soul in its vastness and depth and delight; for he has cloven wide away the darkness, as one that cleaves away a skin, that he may spread out our earth under his illumining sun. ⁴

Interpretation:

It is interesting how Sri Aurobindo translates here *arcāḥ*, Subj. from *arc*, to sing and to shine: “sing bright” (*rk* is derived from this root, of the *rg-veda*); and the word *brahma* he translates as “the inspired word of the soul”; and the words *brhad*, *gabhiram*, *priyam* “in its vastness and depth and delight”.

For he has removed the cover on the surface of our consciousness, the skin which kept us closed to the influence of his light, or we can even say, he has stripped us off the narrow surface of our being which we were always preoccupied with and opened us to the influence of the eternal Sun of our deeper and true being.

Vocabulary:

arc, 1. P, (Subj. *arcāt*) to shine, brilliant RV.; to praise, sing (also used of the roaring of the Maruts, and of a bull [RV. iv, 16, 3]) RV. AV. S3Br., to praise anything to another (dat.), recommend RV.

śamitr, m. a killer, slaughterer, cutter up (of a slaughtered victim), preparer, dresser RV. Br. MBh.

upastir, f. anything spread over, a cover RV. ix, 62, 28 (dat. *upa-stire* used as inf. see last col.)

वनेषु व्य् अन्तरिक्षं ततान वाजम् अर्वत्सु पय उस्त्रियासु ।

हृत्सु क्रतुं वरुणो अप्स्व् अग्निं दिवि सूर्यम् अदधात् सोमम् अद्रौ ॥ ५.०८५.०२

vāneṣu ví antárikṣaṃ tatāna vājam árvatsu páya usríyāsu

hr̥tsú krátuṃ vāruṇo ap̥sú agníṃ diví sūryam adadhāt sómam ádrau 5.085.02

³ The two epithets are intended to give the two sides of the divine being, all-knowledge and all-power; *māyām asurasya śrutasya*. Man divinizing himself has to become in the image of the godhead seer and king.

⁴ The limitations of the physical mentality are rolled away and it is spread out in a great wideness to receive the revelations and inspirations of the light of the gnosis.

2. He spread out the mid-air on the tree-tops, he put strength in the battle-steeds and milk in the cows; in hearts he put will, the fire in the waters,⁵ the sun in heaven and the Soma-plant on the mountain.

2. He has spread wide the mid-world above the forests of earth-delight; ⁶ he has put his plenitude in our battle-steeds of life ⁷ and their heavenly milk in our shining herds of knowledge. ⁸ Varuna has put the will ⁹ in our hearts, the divine fire ¹⁰ in the waters,¹¹ the Sun of Light in our heavens, the plant of Delight on the mountain of our being.¹²

Interpretation:

This verse introduces Varuna as the Creator. He introduced the vital force into the matter, into the plants, it is because of this vital force within the plants (matter) that the letter can grow and be used as food (for growth) and enjoyment here in physical world. He has put his substantial power, vāja, or the plenitude, into our movement of our vital force, making it universal and unlimited in power. He has put also the milk of Knowledge in our consciousness, the herds of light, and made it free from our narrow and surface mentality. He also put a power of aspiration in our hearts, the divine Will to lead us on the path of the Sacrifice.

He introduced Agni into the waters of our Cosmic Being, Sun into the Heaven of our Mind, the Soma onto the plateaus of our manifold Self.

नीचीनबारं वरुणः कवन्धम् प्र ससर्ज रोदसी अन्तरिक्षम् ।

⁵ Sayana explains, either the electric fire in the water of the clouds or the submarine fire in the ocean.

⁶ The forests or delightful growths of earth (vana means also pleasure) are the basis of the mid-world, the vital world in us which is the realm of Vayu, the Life-God. That is the world of the satisfaction of desires. This also is spread out in its full wideness, free from limitation, to receive the Ananda or divine delight by means of the knowledge and law of the Truth.

⁷ Arvatsu, meaning both "battlers, strivers" and "horses".

⁸ *Usriyāsu*, meaning both "bright ones" and "cows".

⁹ Kratu, the will to the divine work, the sacrificial will.

¹⁰ Agni, the fire of the divine Will which receives the sacrifice and becomes its priest.

¹¹ The ocean of being or else the waters of Truth which descend from above.

¹² Our existence is compared always to a mountain with many plateaus, each a level or plane of being.

तेन विश्वस्य भुवनस्य राजा यवं न वृष्टिर् व्युन्नत्ति भूम ॥ ५-०८५-०३

nīcīnabāraṃ vāruṇaḥ kāvandham prā sasarja ródasī antárikṣam
tēna víśvasya bhúvanasya rājā yavaṃ ná vṛṣṭír ví unatti bhūma 5.085.03

3. Varuna poured forth over earth and heaven and the mid-air the holder of the waters whose windows open downward; by him the King of all the world floods the earth as the rain floods a field of barley.

3. Varuna has poured forth over our earth and heaven and mid-world the holder of wisdom with his doors opening downward; ¹³ with him the king of all our being floods our earth like rain flooding the barley.

Interpretation:

“Varuna poured out his heavenly waters onto our mental and physical being and the space of the vital being, which connects them. By that the King of the whole Creation washed away [the dust] of our world of becoming, like the flood is washing away the barley.”

Vocabulary:

nīcīnabāra mfn. *having its opening below* RV.

bāra, m. or n. (?) *an opening, aperture* (see jihma- and nīcīna-b-).

kabandha, m. n. (sometimes written kavandha) *a big barrel or cask, a largebellied vessel* (metaphorically applied to a cloud) RV. AV. ix, 4, 3 ud/und, 7. P. unatti (RV. v, 85, 4); 6. P. undati; *to flow or issue out, spring (as water) to wet, bathe* RV. AV. Etc.

bhūman, n. *the earth, world* RV. AV.; m. *abundance, plenty, wealth, opulence, multitude, majority* RV. &c. &c.

उन्नत्ति भूमिम् पृथिवीम् उत द्यां यदा दुग्धं वरुणो वष्ट्यु आद् इत् ।

सम् अभ्रेण वसत पर्वतासस् तविषीयन्तः श्रथयन्त वीराः ॥ ५-०८५-०४

unátti bhūmim pṛthivīm utá dyāṃ yadā dugdhāṃ vāruṇo váṣṭi ād ít
sám abhréṇa vasata párvatāsas taviṣīyántaḥ śrathayanta vīrāḥ 5.085.04

¹³ The gnosis opens upward to receive the Infinite in its will and knowledge; here its doors open downwards to flood the lower being.

4. Varuna floods the wide earth and heaven, yea, when he desires the milk of heaven, he pours it forth; the mountains are clothed utterly with cloud, the heroes of storm ¹⁴ put forth their strength and all is cast down before them.

4. He floods our earth in its wideness and our heaven, yea, Varuna when he desires that milk, ¹⁵ pours it forth; the mountains are covered with the cloud, his heroes¹⁶ put forth their strength and cast it away.

Interpretation:

“When Varuna desires the Milk from the Transcendental realms here, he pours it out on the wide earth and heaven, covering the peaks of our being with his clouds of luminous Waters, and the Maruts, the strong heroes here, cast forth their strength.”

This imagery is also used in the RV 5.63:

samrājāv asyá bhúvanasya rājatho mītrāvaruṇā vidáthe suvardṛśā
vr̥ṣṭīm vāṃ rādho amṛtatvám īmahe dyāvāpṛthivī ví caranti tanyávaḥ 5.063.02

2. Emperors, ¹⁷ you rule over this world of our becoming, O Mitra and Varuna, in the getting of knowledge you are seers of the realm of Light; we desire from you the rain, the felicitous wealth, the immortality, and lo! the Thunderers¹⁸ range abroad through earth and heaven.

samrājā ugrā vr̥ṣabhā divás pátī pṛthivyā mītrāvāruṇā vícarṣanī
citrébhīr abhraír úpa tiṣṭhatho rávaṃ dyāṃ varṣayatho ásurasya māyáyā 5.063.03

3. Emperors, strong Bulls of the abundance, Masters of earth and heaven, O Mitra and Varuna, universal in your workings, you approach their cry with your clouds of varied light and you rain down Heaven by the power of the knowledge¹⁹ of the Mighty One.²⁰

¹⁴ *Vīrāḥ*, the Heroes, here the Maruts as storm-gods.

¹⁵ The milk of the Cow Aditi, the infinite consciousness.

¹⁶ The Maruts as life-powers attaining to full thought-knowledge; they help Indra to break the cloud or coverer, Vritra, and pour out the waters of Truth and also to bring the light hidden by Vala, that of the hidden sun. Here the two ideas are combined in another image.

¹⁷ Samrāt, having perfect kingship over the subjective and objective existence.

¹⁸ The Maruts, Life-Powers and Thought-Powers who find out the light of truth for all our activities. The word may also mean **formers or builders**.

¹⁹ Maya, the creative knowledge-will of the Deva.

²⁰ Asura, a word used in the Veda as in the Avesta for the Deva (Ahuramazda), but also for the gods, His manifestations; it is only in a few hymns that it is used for the dark Titans, by another and fictitious derivation, a-sura, the not-luminous, the not-gods.

māyā vām mitrāvaruṇā diví śritā sūryo jyótiś carati citrām āyudham
tām abhrēṇa vr̥ṣṭiyā gūhatho diví párjanya drapsā mádhumanta irate 5.063.04

4. This is your knowledge, O Mitra and Varuna, that is lodged in heaven; it is the Sun, it is the Light; it ranges abroad as your rich and varied weapon. You hide it in heaven with the cloud and with the raining. O Rain, full of the honey start forth thy streamings.

rátham yuñjate marútaḥ śubhé sukhám sūro ná mitrāvaruṇā gáviṣṭiṣu
rājāṃsi citrā ví caranti tanyávo diváh samrājā páyasā na ukṣatam 5.063.05

5. The Life-Powers yoke their happy car for the bliss, even as might a hero for battle, O Mitra and Varuna, in their seekings for the herds of Light; thundering they range the varied worlds, and you pour out on us, rulers imperial, the water of Heaven.

vācam sū mitrāvaruṇāv írāvatīm parjanyaś citrām vadati tvíṣimatīm
abhrā vasata marútaḥ sū māyāyā dyāṃ varṣayatam aruṇām arepāsam 5.063.06

6. O Mitra and Varuna, the Rain speaks its language²¹ rich and varied and full of the light and the movement; the Life-Powers have put on your clouds for raiment. Utterly by the knowledge you rain down Heaven ruddy-shining and sinless.

Vocabulary:

taviṣya, Nom. P. A., to be strong or violent or courageous , ii , 30 , 8;
v , 85 , 4

vasata, Inj., 3d pers., pl., they put on, from vas, 2.Ā., to put on, to cloth.
śrath, 9. P., to be loosened or untied or unbent , become loose or slack ,
yield , give way RV. (cf. Pāṇ 2. 3-1 , 89 Sch.); Caus., to loosen , untie ,
unbend , slacken , relax (A1. ` " to become loose , yield ") RV. AitBr.

इ॒माम् ऊ॒ ष्व् आ॒सुर॑स्य॒ श्रु॒तस्य॑ म॒हीम् मा॒यां वरु॑णस्य प्र वोच॑म् ।

मा॒ने॒ने॒व त॑स्थि॒वा अ॒न्त॒रि॒क्षे॒ वि यो॒ ममे॑ पृथि॒वी सूर्ये॑ण ॥ ५-०८५-०५

²¹ Here we see the subjective sense of the thunder in the symbol of the storm; it is the outcrashing of the word of the Truth, the Shabda, as the lightning is the outflashing of its sense.

imām ū śú āsurāsya śrutāsya mahīm māyāṃ vāruṇasya prá vocam
mānēva tasthivāṃ antárikṣe ví yó mamé pṛthivīm sūriyeṇa 5.085.05

5. I have declared this vast creative wisdom²² of the famous and mighty One, even Varuna, he who stood in mid-air as with a measuring-rod and wide he measured out the earth with the sun.

5. Vast is this wisdom which I declare of Varuna the far-heard, the mighty Lord, for he stands in our mid-world as with a measuring-rod and wide he measures out our earth with his illumining Sun. ²³

Interpretation:

“I declared this great Power of Knowledge of the Lord Varuna, who extends his consciousness far, thus He has arisen in the space between Heaven and Earth, measuring our Earth with a light of the Sun as his measuring rope.”

Our Earth, the manifestation in matter of the Spirit, is to be measured out, shaped, built by the light of the Sun and the Lord Varuna does it.

Vocabulary:

āśura, 1 mf(ī)n. (fr. asura), *spiritual , divine RV. VS. AV. belonging or devoted to evil spirits belonging or relating to the Asuras RV. AV. VS. māna, m., a building , house , dwelling RV.; measure, measuring-cord, standard RV. &c. &c.; form , appearance RV.*

इ॒माम् ऊ॒ नु॒ क॒वित॑मस्य॒ मा॒याम् म॒ही दे॒वस्य॑ न॒किर् आ॒ दध॑र्ष ।

ए॒कं यद् उ॒द्गा न॒ पृ॒णन्त्य् ए॒नीर् आ॒सिञ्च॑न्तीर् अ॒वनयः॑ स॒मुद्र॑म् ॥ ५-०८५-०६

imām ū nú kavítamasya māyāṃ mahīm devāsya nákir ā dadharṣa
ékaṃ yád udnā ná pṛṇánti éniṛ āsiñcántīṛ avánayaḥ samudrám 5.085.06

²² Maya, with a strong sense of its root-significance, to measure, form, build or plan out.

²³ Man lives in the physical being; Varuna brings the light of the gnosis into it and measures it out, that is, shapes and plans out our earth-existence in the measures of the Truth by means of the mind enlightened by the sun of gnosis: he takes his stand as the Asura in our vital plane, the link between mental and physical, there to receive the light and pass it on to the earth as a creative and determining force.

6. Vast is this wisdom of the divine and the greatest of seers and there is none who can do violence against it; therefore the Ocean is one, yet all these rushing rivers pour themselves into it and cannot fill it.

6. Vast is this wisdom of the godhead greatest in seer-knowledge and none can do violence to it; for into him, the one, the ocean, the bright fostering rivers²⁴ pour their waters, yet they cannot fill him.

Interpretation:

The image of the Ocean, which is one, is the image of Infinity, which is one, therefore none here can do any harm to it, for it is one and all. It cannot be filled by all the streams of its manifestation, which come from it and return back to it after a while.

Vocabulary:

ādhṛṣ, 1 P. to assail , attack , injure , overcome RV. AV.

avani, f. course, bed of a river RV.; stream, river RV.

enī, 2, mf(ā and enī Pa1n2. 4-1 , 39)n., "rushing", "darting"

अ॒र्य॒म्यं वरु॑ण मि॒त्र्यं वा सखा॑यं वा सद॒म् इद् भ्रा॑तरं वा ।

वेशं॑ वा नित्यं॑ वरु॒णार॑णं वा यत् सी॒म् आ॒गश् च॑कृ॒मा शि॒श्रथ॑स् तत् ॥ ५-०८५-०७

aryamíyaṃ varuṇa mitríyaṃ vā sákhāyaṃ vā sádamaś id bhrātaram vā
veśaṃ vā nítyaṃ varuṇāraṇaṃ vā yát sīm āgaś cakṛmā śísráthas tát 5.085.07

7. Whatsoever sin we have done against the law of Aryaman or the law of Mitra, against brother or friend, against constant neighbour or enemy,²⁵ cast it away from us, O Varuna.

7. All the sin that we have done against thee in thy power of Aryaman or thy power of Mitra or as brother or friend or the eternal indweller or the warrior,²⁶ that cast away from us.

Interpretation:

²⁴ The seven rivers that descend from the Truth-plane, here called *avanayah*, which has the same root-sense as *dhenavah*, the fostering cows.

²⁵ Or, stranger.

²⁶ Against the Dasyus.

“Whether it was against your Power as Aryaman or your Consciousness as Mitra, O Varuna, or as the Eternal Friend or a Brother, or as a constant dweller within us or as a far transcendent Godhead, who cannot be fought, *araṇa*, if we have sinned or committed a mistake, cast it away from us, O Varuna.”

Vocabulary:

araṇa, mf(ī)n. (r), *foreign, distant* RV. AV.

Sadam, ind. (prob. fr. sadā) *always, ever, for ever, at any time* RV. AV.

कितवासो यद् रि॒रि॒पुर् न दी॒वि यद् वा॑ घा सत्यम् उत यन् न वि॒द्म ।
सर्वा॑ ता वि ष्य शि॒थिरे॒व दे॒वाघा॑ ते स्याम वरुण प्रियासः ॥ ५-०८५-०८

kitavāso yád riripúr ná dívī yád vā ghā satyám utá yán ná vidmá
sārvā tā ví śya śithiréva deva ádhā te syāma varuṇa priyāsaḥ 5.085.08

8. The sin we have done like cunning gamblers who break the law of the play, or have done against the truth or what we have sinned in ignorance, all these cleave far from us, O god, like loose-hanging fruits: then shall we be beloved of thee, O Varuna.

8. The sin we have done as cunning gamblers offend in their play, our sin against the truth and our sin by ignorance, all these cleave away like loosened things; then may we be dear to thee, O Varuna.

Interpretation:

“Cast away from us like the things, which are loose in our being: the cunning cheater in the game, the offender of the Truth, and the ignorant one! May we be always dear to you, O Varuna!”

It is interesting here to see these three personas within ourselves:

- 1) who has fun by playing with falsehood; kitava, a joking one;
- 2) who offends the truth directly, a liar;
- 3) who does not know the truth, an ignorant one.

All these three personas cleave away from us, says the Rishi, that we may be dear to you, O Varuna.

There is an interesting parallel with the Gita in this regard, where Arjuna asks forgiveness from Krishna for all his false actions that may occurred in their relations, when Krishna revealed him his *Viśvarūpa*:

sakheti matvā prasabhaṃ yad uktam he kṛṣṇa he yādava he sakheti/
ajānatā mahimānam tavedam mayā pramādāt praṇayena vāpi // 11. 41
yac cāvahāsārtham asatkṛto 'si vihāra-śayyāsana-bhojaneṣu/

eko'thavāpy acyuta tat samakṣam tat kṣāmaye tvām aham aprameyam// 11.42

- 1) *ajānatā mayā mahimānam tavedam pramādāt praṇayena vāpi*, not knowing your greatness because of my stupidity or because of my affection.
- 2) Or if you were disrespected jokingly: *avahāsārtham asatkṛto 'si*.

Vocabulary:

kitava, m. , *a gamester , gambler* RV. VS. AV. &c.

rip, (cf. *lip* ; only pf. *riripuḥ*) , *to smear , adhere to* (loc.) RV.; *to deceive , cheat* ib.

dīv, f. (only dat. *dīve*, loc. *dīvi*) RV. ; *gambling , playing with dice*.

śithira, mf(ā)n. (zrath) *loose , lax , slack , flexible pliant , soft* RV. AV. Br.