

Viṣṇu in Ṛgveda.

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Abstract

This paper proposes a novel interpretation of “*Viṣṇu*” as described in *Ṛgveda*.

Keywords: *Vishnu; Rigveda*

A *deva* named *Viṣṇu* has only small presence in the hymns of *Ṛgveda*. The word *Viṣṇu* occurs in *Ṛgveda* 111 times and in many cases an occurrence does not say anything specific about *Viṣṇu*. To say that his figure is enigmatic is to say very little since many *deva*-s in *Ṛgveda* are enigmatic. The most essential feature of *Viṣṇu* is that he makes three strides leaving three footprints. Although in later texts it is stated that these footprints are “the Earth, the atmosphere and the Heaven”, it is far from certain that this is the case in *Ṛgveda*. Even less clear how different features of *Viṣṇu* relate to each other. There are several interpretations of *Ṛgveda*’s *Viṣṇu* that attempt to give a unifying vision of his features, aspects and actions. For example, Sri Aurobindo in the “Hymns to Mystic Fire” equates *Viṣṇu* with “the God of electrical energy”[Aur, p.446], while T. Paramasiva Iyer equates him with “basaltic lava”[Iye11, p.84]. Arthur Macdonnell considers *Viṣṇu* as “the sun, not in his general characteristics, but as the personified swiftly moving luminary which with the vast strides traverses the three worlds”[Mac00, p.80]. Jan Gonda comes up with a formulation based on etymology *vi-ṣan* “who by pervading, traversing, etc. wins or secures powers or influences (for good)”[Gon69, p.54] but explains seemingly unconnected characteristics of *Viṣṇu* by “processes of identification and amalgamation of religious figures and conceptions belonging to different peoples or milieus”[Gon69, p.6]. Interpretations that different illustrate how hazy is the image of *Viṣṇu* in *Ṛgveda*. Proposed here interpretation aims at a unified vision of *Viṣṇu* as a particular psychological process and is obtained by following two principles: first, restricting analysis to *Ṛgveda*, and, second, seeking to interpret all stanzas related to *Viṣṇu* only from *adhyātma* (reference to individual) perspective. The plan of this paper is to give the resulting formulation for “*Viṣṇu*”, then to explain and illustrate it with expressions from *Ṛgveda*, and, finally, to give translation of entire hymns dedicated to *Viṣṇu* and some stand-alone stanzas referring to him.

Viṣṇu is what creates the persistence of imposed relevance in various domains of the mind/body and causes shifts of the persistence from one domain to another.

For example, “the persistence of imposed relevance of social status and relations” means that everything that happens to someone, be it external event, activity, or a thought, a mood or an emotion, will be evaluated as to how it affects the social status and relations with other people. That evaluation will spring up in one’s mind as if from nowhere, even if the event, activity, etc. is not explicitly involving anything social. Another example is given by behavior of a religious zealot who relates and attempts to connect everything to the will of some god or gods by interpreting even the smallest and random event according to his adopted creed — as a result of the invisible hand or the will of a deity. It is not the presence in a situation of social interactions or of divine

manifestation that is brought about by *Viṣṇu* but the imposition of relevance of them to perception, evaluations of and changes to the situation. The relevance in its turn brings up, time and mental energy allowing, the images, aspects, qualities, etc. connected to social interactions, or to beliefs and gods. The presence of the imposed relevance itself is hardly ever understood on the conscious level, but what the imposed relevance evokes is usually presented to the consciousness. The domain which is made relevant might be very narrow, like “search for food” for a person who always goes hungry, or it might be very wide like “social interactions” for a person who tries to avoid being alone and can be defined as “social butterfly”. At any given time there might be multiple domains whose relevance is maintained and as if enforced.

It shall be noted that the proposed formulation is in agreement, though being more specific, with traditional etymology of *Viṣṇu* as that which “takes possession”, “pervades”, “occupies”, “attains or reaches through separation” (*vyaśnoti*), or “that which releases, sets free or looses” (*yad viṣito* — Nir.12.18 [Sar27]) if the “footprint” from which *Viṣṇu* strides is what is being released (see discussion below).

If the proposed interpretation is adopted then *Viṣṇu*-related stanzas of *Ṛgveda* imply that if only the largest, most general domains which can possess imposed relevance are considered then there are three of them, and only one can possess the persistence at any point in time. That is an important having practical consequences statement.

The impact of persistence on the three domains are called “footprints” (*padá* 1.22.17b, 1.154.3d, 1.154.4a, 1.156.6 1.22.18a, 8.12.27b), or “abodes” (*sadhásthā* 1.154.3c, 1.156.5c), or “strides” (*vikrámaṇa* 1.154.2c, 8.9.12d, 10.15.3b) of *Viṣṇu*. Only the third one, the least experienced by humans in the course of an ordinary life is somewhat described in *ṛk*-s (stanzas) of *Ṛgveda*. What other two are can be only guessed. Here is a guess that has some experiential support.

The first “footprint” is in the domain where sensory stimulation paces events. Extreme relevance in this domain causes reactive behavior. In this domain it is something without that sets goals, objectives, attention focus, evaluation criteria, reference points, conjures visions, etc. while everything within is just an addendum. It is called “the Earth” in 1.22.16bc:

whence *Viṣṇu* strode out — from the Earth.

The second “footprint” is in the domain of mental activities not driven by needs of the body or sensory stimulation. This domain is called “the Heaven” in 1.155.3:

The son imprints the lower than the father [footprint] and the higher one,
called the third, above the luminous sphere of the Heaven.

Extreme relevance in this domain causes person to be “not of this world”, to behave like an “absent-minded professor” who is mostly oblivious to the world without, yet fully concentrated on mental constructs like “invariants of groups of diffeomorphisms” (mathematics provides the purest way to dwell in this domain). In the second domain activities are predominantly self-directed and it is the without that is addendum to the world within. The sensory stimulation and needs of the body still become relevant — from time to time — but their relevance is situational, not persistent. In the same way, the relevance of abstract thoughts, imagined places, meta-constructs and contemplations when dwelling in the first domain is situational only — it has no persistence. Such persistence makes staying with relevant activities easy, but switching to non-relevant ones difficult or annoying.

These two domains are called “earthly” in 7.99.1cd:

We got to know both thy earthly regions¹,
O deva *Viṣṇu*, thou got to know the highest one.

The third domain the impact upon which is called “the ultimate, the highest footprint”, is, as proposed here,

the domain of pure and total awareness, of being a dispassionate observer.

Here are descriptions to support this definition:

- 7.99.2c the vast space where there is no pain², which is sublime³
- 1.22.19ab,20a Whence he observed spheres of action⁴,.. that is the ultimate footprint of *Viṣṇu*
- 1.22.20bc sages always see [it] as an eye spread over the Heaven
- 1.155.3d the higher one, called the third, above the luminous sphere of the Heaven
- 1.154.6cd therein the ultimate footprint of the wide-ranging bull shines down abundantly

It seems that it is the third “footprint” that is called “refuge” (*śárman*) that *Viṣṇu*, sometimes together with *Indra*, grants to a human (6.49.13c, 4.55.4cd).

All three “footprints” have their rewards and attractiveness — they are filled with “honey” (1.154.4ab):

... three filled with honey never becoming diminished footprints
gladden through [their] natural disposition [seeking deva-s men]

a source of “the honey” is in the third “footprint” (1.154.5d):

in the ultimate footprint of *Viṣṇu* is a source of honey.

Inside each of the three domains there are sub-domains which can possess the persistence:

- 7.100.3a thrice the deva mightily strode across the Earth,
- 1.22.16bc whence *Viṣṇu* strode out — from the Earth — through the seven abodes.
- 6.49.13ab who exactly thrice delineated earthly realms
- 1.154.2cd along whose three wide strides all aspects of life are extended.

¹*rájāsī*

²*nāka* = “where there is no pain” per Nirukta [Sar27]

³*ṛṣva* which alternatively can be translated as “best to remove anxiety”

⁴*vatāni*

The “seven abodes” mentioned in 1.22.16 can be interpreted as the seven cakras of later systems of yoga. The same seven abodes are called “half-embryos of life’s facets” in 1.164.36ab⁵. “The Earth” has three lower cakras (6.49.13ab) that encompass earthly realms such as shelter, territory, physical needs of the body, sex, food, etc. The next three cakras situated in the second domain contain the realms of social interactions, compassion, speech, creativity, contemplation, etc. The third domain contains the highest cakra — *sahasrāra* — “that his favorite spot wherein seeking *deva*-s men revel” (1.154.5ab). Thus along the three “footprints” all aspects of life are extended (1.154.2cd).

When a locus of persistence of imposed relevance changes it is said that “*Viṣṇu* strides” (*vi-√kram*). When the change is between the the three largest domains, there are three strides (1.154.1d “striding triply”) meaning that transitions between all of the three domains are possible. Any change — be it from one domain to another, or from one abode to another withing a domain — is a rare event. *Viṣṇu* is said to be “roaming little” (*kucaraḥ* 1.154.2b), “staying put” (*sthaviraḥ* 7.100.3d) and to be an energetic defender/protector (*ināsya trātūr* 1.155.4b) which can be understood as defender of current locus of the persistence, for example 10.1.3ab

In the same way, *Viṣṇu*, having found his highest point,
manifest, extensive, protects the third [footprint].

This protection is part of the persistence — any change of the locus is resisted to, sometimes vehemently. *Viṣṇu* is called a bull (*vṛṣan*) in 1.154.3b, 1.154.6c and said to have “vehement nature” in 7.100.3d (*tveṣam ... nāma*) though non-injuring (*aghnat* 8.25.12a) and without malevolence (*adveṣa* 1.186.10c). The combination of “roaming little”, “protective” and “vehement” might have been expressed by calling *Viṣṇu* “a boar” (*varāha* 1.61.7d). One of the effects of *Viṣṇu*’s “staying put” and “roaming little” is maintaining habitual behaviors (*dhārmāṇi dhārāyan* 1.22.18.c) — this would explain the phrase “his simple subjects are settled” (7.100.4c).

Despite “staying put”, when *Viṣṇu* moves, he can move far and wide: he is wide-ranging (*urugāyā* 1.154.3b, 1.154.6c, 2.1.3b, 4.3.7c, 7.100.1b). *Indra*’s pleading in 8.100.12a

O like-minded *Viṣṇu*, farther off do stride!

likely expresses the idea that heroic deeds require one to get far from habitual attitudes, environment and states of mind.

Wherever *Viṣṇu* dwells he increases mental space, that is, any domain which is made relevant in variety of contexts becomes bigger — variety of experiences, subtlety of perceptions, specificity of evaluations, and cognitive complexity in general increase. This quality to increase mental spaces is mentioned several times:

1.156.1b who is accompanied by width

7.100.4d he, producing things well, has made a wide domain

7.99.4a you two have created a wide space for a fire offering

6.49.5

O *Indra* and *Viṣṇu*, this yours astonishing wide space
you two have created in the rapture of Soma.
You two made the intermediate space wider,
stretched the regions for us to live.

⁵1.164.36ab Seven half-embryos of life’s facet[s] remain indicating *Viṣṇu*’s flow into a spreading expanse;

Domain that has the persistence tends to grow. This is expressed as *Viṣṇu* having “the power to increase in size” (*mahimán*) and being “extensive” (*bṛhát*).

7.99.2ab Neither [deva] being manifested [now],
nor [the one that was] manifested before, O *Viṣṇu*,
has reached the ultimate limit of your, O deva, power to increase in size.

8.3.8c his power to increase in size

7.99.1a who in his body has grown beyond measure

1.155.6c having extensive body

10.1.3b extensive, he protects the third.

Viṣṇu's dwelling in a domain is described as a “flow” (*rétas* 1.164.36ab, 4.3.7c).

When *Viṣṇu* moves, he moves quickly (*évayāvan* 1.90.5b, *evayá* 1.156.1b, 5.87.4b), hastening (*eṣá* 2.34.11b, 7.40.5b, 8.20.3c), or rushing energetically (10.113.2ab) or striding energetically (8.12.27ab). He also tends to move far being “wide-striding” (*urukramá* 1.90.9d, 1.154.5d, 3.54.14c, 5.87.4a, 7.99.6b, 8.77.10b). A stride from one domain to another happens in a matter of minutes. The change in relevance that results from such a stride might be subjectively felt as quite big: what only several minutes ago felt as inherently important now is minor, unimportant and as if foreign; one wonders how he could have been so involved, moved and influenced by things so secondary or superficial. A stride or anticipation of a stride can cause real anxiety (1.155.5):

Perceiving just two of his, who is beholding *svàr*,
strides being made, a mortal scrambles
to ensure that nothing would dare [to make] his third,
not even flying feathered birds⁶.

Dealing with this anxiety is an important preliminary practice for entering the third domain.

Another characterizations of *Viṣṇu* is “pervaded by rays” (*śipiviṣṭa*). It occurs only in 7.99 and 7.100 without any clues to its meaning. On the basis of etymology (Nir.5.8 [Sar27]) that yields the given translation “pervaded by rays” (MW)⁷ it might be surmised that this characterization is there to emphasize that in the third, the highest domain there is a full awareness of what happens on the plane of sensory stimulation and demands of the body (the plane of “the Earth”) and on the plane of mental activities (“the Heaven”). “The Earth” remains fully available to the indifferent observer of the third “footprint” and to the mental activities of speech, contemplations, etc. of the second “footprint” — the domain of “the Heaven” (7.99.2d, 7.99.3cd):

you kept the region of the Heaven to be facing the Earth.
...
you, O *Viṣṇu*, propped the two *Rodas*-es apart
[but] you keep the Earth in close proximity by means of pegs.

This complete connectivity is what differs being in the “third footprint” from other states of mind/body such as REM-stage of sleep. So, “pervaded by rays” can be understood as the statement that in any of the three domains some awareness and situational relevance of things from other two

⁶“birds” here are imagination, dreaming and fantasy

⁷taking *śipi* as “ray” and *viṣṭa* as “enveloped, filled, pervaded”

domains are present. One other characterizations of *Viṣṇu* — “residing on a mountain” (*giriṣṭhā* 1.154.2b) or “dwelling on a mountain” (*girikṣṭā* 1.154.3b) might be connected with the same aspect — residing on a mountain means to be in a position where the earth below is easy to survey while being far away and above it. It is such full awareness of dispassionate observer that *Indra* needed from the alliance with *Viṣṇu*. In 7.100.6cd there is a pleading to *Viṣṇu* to keep manifest this form — “pervaded by rays” even in a conflict, which can be understood as asking to assure the persistence of observer-from-the-middle form when a relentless pursuit of advantage over adversary induces a shift to another domain.

Now relation of *Viṣṇu* to other deva-s will be discussed. Most prominent in *R̥gveda* is *Viṣṇu*’s relation with *Indra*. There are two aspects of the relation — an alliance of the two deva-s and conflicts between them.

Viṣṇu is said to have an alliance with *Indra* (8.52.3cd) whom he approached to assist⁸. *Viṣṇu* makes his three strides for *Indra* (8.12.27ab, 8.52.3cd). In his turn, *Indra* calls *Viṣṇu* “like-minded”⁹, urges him to help in releasing rivers¹⁰ and asks him to stride farther off¹¹ since it is in association with *Viṣṇu* that *Indra* shall slay *Vṛtra* (6.20.2cd). Other than striding farther off, *Viṣṇu* helps *Indra* by extracting *Soma*¹² and by making *Indra* stronger¹³.

On some occasions *Viṣṇu* and *Indra* become at odds with each other (1.155.2):

A conflict of the two exerting themselves is truly vehement;
O *Indra* and *Viṣṇu*, he who drinks pressed out [juice]
wants to restrain you two, who [in turn] for the sake of the mortal
would want to hinder what is being fitted — an arrow of shooter *Kṛśānu*.

and (6.69cd):

O *Viṣṇu* and *Indra*, what you contend,
in three ways you break that into thousand pieces.

Causes of such vehement conflicts between the two are not even hinted at. It might be surmised that it is the very persistence of various mind/body states that *Viṣṇu* establishes that interferes with changes that *Indra*’s beneficial manifestation would require. It might be further assumed that any such conflict is dissipated when *Viṣṇu* strides into the third domain¹⁴, and that *Soma* (in both forms) helps the transition and establishment of an alliance between the two deva-s.

Viṣṇu has a particular relation with *Soma*. First, *Viṣṇu* sometimes extracts (or presses) *Soma* (2.22.1b); next, he drinks it (6.69.7ab, 8.12.16a) and is called together with *Indra* a master of raptures of all exhilarating drinks (6.49.3ab). *Soma*, although being extracted for *Indra*, *Vāyu* and others, flows for *Viṣṇu* (9.33.3c, 9.34.2c, 9.65.20c); *Soma* also engenders *Viṣṇu* together with *Indra* (9.96.5d). It can be hypothesized from these statements that *Soma* engenders and helps to maintain the persistence of the states of body/mind.

All other relations of *Viṣṇu* to deva-s are only mentioned in passing. *Viṣṇu* is attended by the *Marut*-s (5.87.1b), moves together with *Marut*-s (5.87.4e), and his fast movements are compared

⁸ *ā yó vivāya sacáthāya* 1.156.5a

⁹ or a friend, assistant, companion — *sákhi*

¹⁰ 8.100.12c Let us two slay *Vṛtra*, let us two release the rivers!

¹¹ 4.18.11d, 8.100.12a which likely refers to the third domain

¹² 2.22.1b [Indra drank] mixed with barley extracted by *Viṣṇu Soma*.

¹³ 8.3.8ab *Indra* grew his manly might in the rapture of extracted [Soma] in *Viṣṇu*

¹⁴ 10.66.4b [let] *Indra* and *Viṣṇu* [urge on] vast *svar*!

to those of *Marut*-s (5.87.1b, 5.87.4b). *Varuṇa* and *Aśvin*-s assist *Viṣṇu* in his quick movements (1.156.4ab). *Aśvin*-s sometimes stay in the strides of *Viṣṇu* (8.9.12d). *Viṣṇu* and *Indra* cause *Sūrya*, *Uṣas*, *Agni* to emerge (7.99.4b).

Many occurrences of word *Viṣṇu* in *Ṛgveda* are in lists of various deva-s. Here are the frequencies of co-occurrence in the same *ṛk*-s of *Viṣṇu* with deva-s. The frequencies are given in ().

Viṣṇu relates mostly to *Indra* (52),

then to *Marut*-s (22), *Agni* (20), *Varuṇa* (19), and *Soma* (18),

then to *Pūṣan* (14), *Aśvin*-s (14), and *Mitra* (13),

then to *Vāyu* (8),

then to *Rudra*, *Savitṛ*, *Aditi*, *Aryaman*, and *Āditya*-s as a group (7 each),

then to *Sarasvatī*, the Earth and the Heaven (6 each),

then to *Bhaga*, and *Sūrya* (5 each),

then to *Brhaspati*, *Brahmanas pati* (4 each),

then to *Tvaṣṭṛ*, and *Uṣas* (3 each)

and to ten others less than 3 times each.

To conclude the analysis of the occurrences of *Viṣṇu* in *Ṛgveda*, it shall be mentioned that some characterizations remain unclear, for example, “whose many girls do not abandon mothers” (3.54.14), 1.155.3ab, or 10.181.3cd.

The formulation given on page 1 yields an integral view of many characterizations of *Viṣṇu* making them tenable (as far as human psychology and physiology are concerned) yet does not lead to contradictions with any statements in *Ṛgveda*.

Following are translations of all hymns to *Viṣṇu* and of some stanzas mentioning him. Words in [] are absent in the Sanskrit original but are introduced on the basis of syntax and/or context.

1.22.16–21

áto devá avantu no yáto viṣṇurvicakramé |
ṛṥthivyáḥ saptá dhámabhiḥ || 16||
idám viṣṇurví cakrame tredhá ní dadhe padám |
sámūdhamasya pāṃsuré || 17||
tríṇi padá ví cakrame viṣṇurgopá ádābhyah |
áto dhármāṇi dhārúyan || 18||
viṣṇoḥ kármāṇi paśyata yáto vratáni paspasé |
índrasya yújyah sákhā || 19||
tádvíṣṇoḥ paramám padám sádā paśyanti sūrúyah |
divíva cáksurátatam || 20||
tádvíprāso vipanyávo jāgṛvāṃsaḥ sámindhate |
viṣṇoryátparamám padám || 21||

16. Hence let deva-s favour us
whence *Viṣṇu* strode out — from the Earth —
through the seven abodes.
17. This [world] *Viṣṇu* strode out;
thrice he impressed a footprint
compacted in its dust.
18. Three steps he strode out,
Viṣṇu — worthy of trust shepherd,
henceforth preserving habits¹⁵.
19. Behold *Viṣṇu*'s deeds!
Whence he observed spheres of action
he, a suitable companion of *Indra*,
20. that is the ultimate footprint of *Viṣṇu*
[that] sages always see
as an eye spread over the Heaven.
21. That inspired attracting admiration
awakened ones do inflame
which is the ultimate footprint of *Viṣṇu*.

¹⁵ *dharmāṇi*

1.154

vīṣṇor ná kaṃ vīryāṇi prá vocaṃ yáḥ páṛthivāni vimamé rájāṃsi |
yó áskabhāyadúttaraṃ sadhásthamaṃ vicakramāṇástredhórugāyáḥ || 1||
prá tádvīṣṇu stavate vīryèṇa mṛgó ná bhīmáḥ kucaró giriṣṭháḥ |
yásyorúṣu triṣú vikramaṇeṣvadhikṣiyánti bhúvanāni víśvā || 2||
prá víṣṇave śūśámetu mánma girikṣíta urugāyáya vīṣṇe |
yá idám dīrghám práyatam sadhásthamaṃ éko vimamé tribhírítpadébbiḥ || 3||
yásya trí pūrṇá mádhunā padányákṣīyamāṇā svadháyā mádanti |
yá u tridhātu pṛthivímutá dyáméko dādhāra bhúvanāni víśvā || 4||
tādasya priyámabhí pátho aśyāṃ náro yátra devayávo mádanti |
urukramásya sá hí bándhuritthá víṣṇoḥ padé paramé mádhva útsaḥ || 5||
tá vāṃ vástūnyuśmasi gámadhyai yátra gávo bhúriśṛṅgā ayásah |
átrāha tádurugāyásya vīṣṇaḥ paramám padámáva bhāti bhúri || 6||

1. I shall proclaim heroic deeds of — yes! —
Viṣṇu who delineated earthly realms
 who caused the highest abode to be propped,
 [who is] striding triply, wide-ranging.
2. Forward then! *Viṣṇu* —
 one extols [him] with manly vigour —
 [he is] like a wild beast — fearsome, roaming little, residing on a mountain,
 [it is him] along whose three wide strides all aspects of life are extended.
3. May [this] high-spirited expression of thought proceed
 for the sake of *Viṣṇu* — dwelling on a mountain wide-ranging bull —
 who alone by means of just three footprints
 delineated this lasting farextended abode.
4. Whose three filled with honey never becoming diminished footprints
 gladden through [their] natural disposition [seeking *deva*-s men],
 who alone maintained consisting of three components [world],
 the Earth and the Heaven, all aspects of life.
5. I can reach that his favorite spot
 wherein seeking *deva*-s men revel.
 In the ultimate footprint of *Viṣṇu* is a source of honey —
 it really is a connection to the wide-striding one.
6. To those places of you two¹⁶ we desire to go
 wherein nimble cows with many horns [are];
 therein the ultimate footprint of the wide-ranging bull
 shines down abundantly.

¹⁶most likely *Viṣṇu* and *Indra*

1.155

prá vaḥ pāntamāndhaso dhiyāyaté mahé sūrāya viṣṇave cārcata |
yá sánuni párvatānāmádābhyā mahástastháturárvateva sādhnā || 1 ||
tveśamitthá samáraṇaṃ símvatoríndrāviṣṇū sutapá vāmurusyati |
yá mártiyāya pratidhīyāmānamítkrśānorásturasanāmurusyáthaḥ || 2 ||
tá īṃ vardhanti máhyasya páuṃsyam ní mātārā nayati rétase bhujé |
dádhati putró'varaṃ páraṃ pitúrñāma tṛtīyamádhi rocané divāḥ || 3 ||
táttadídasya páuṃsyam grñīmasīnāsya trātúavrakásya mīdhúsaḥ |
yáḥ pārhivāni tribhírídviḡāmabhirurú krámiṣṭorugāyāya jīvāse || 4 ||
dvé ídasya krámaṇe svardíśo'bhikhyāya mártyo bhuraṇyati |
tṛtīyamasya nákirā dadharṣati váyaścaná patáyantaḥ patatrīṇaḥ || 5 ||
catúrbhiḥ sākāṃ navatīm ca námabhiścakráṃ ná vṛttām vyátīṃravīvipat |
bṛhācharīro vimímāna íkvabhiryúvákumāraḥ prátyetyāhavám || 6 ||

1. Ye shall praise in verses your drink from the herb
for the sake of having visions mighty hero¹⁷ and *Viṣṇu*;
[those two], who on top of the mountains [are] undeceived,
gladly remained unerring like two coursers [on a home stretch].
2. A conflict of the two exerting themselves is truly vehement;
O *Indra* and *Viṣṇu*, he who drinks pressed out [juice] wants to restrain you two,
who [,in turn,] for the sake of the mortal
would want to hinder what is being fitted — an arrow of shooter *Kṛśānu*.
3. They [— waters —] greatly strengthen his manly power;
he guides two mothers down to make use [of them] for the flow.
The son imprints the lower than the father¹⁸ [footprint] and the higher one,
called the third, above the luminous sphere of the Heaven.
4. It is just this his manly power that we extol —
of bountiful non-tearing energetic defender,
who has projected over earthly [domains] by means of just three paces
for the sake of wide-ranging [space] [for us] to live [in].
5. Perceiving just two of his, who is beholding *svār*,
strides being made, a mortal scrambles
to ensure that nothing would dare [to make] his third,
not even flying feathered birds¹⁹.
6. With four aspects²⁰ at the same time — like set in motion wheel²¹,
he has made ninety diverging [loci] to vibrate.
Having extensive body, pacing [events] through reciters of verses
the youthful one, not a boy, accepts the challenge.

¹⁷*Indra*

¹⁸*Dyaus* — the Heaven

¹⁹“birds” of imagination, dreaming and fantasy

²⁰these might be the four paires of opposites gain/loss, pain/pleasure, honor/dishonor, praise/censure described in Lokavipatti Sutta

²¹a wheel having eight spokes that define four pairs of opposite points that are moving in opposite to each other direction yet remain around the center that is equally disposed towards each point

1.156

*bhāvā mitrō ná sévyo ghṛtāsutirvībhūtadyumna evayā u sapráthāḥ |
ádhā te viṣṇo vidúṣā cidárdhya stómo yajñásca rádhyo havíṣmatā || 1||*

*yáḥ pūrvyāya vedhāse návīyase sumájjānaye viṣṇave dádāṣati |
yó jātámasya maható máhi brávatsédu śrávobhiryújyaṃ cidabhyàsat || 2||*

*támu stotāraḥ pūrvyāṃ yáthā vidá ṛtásya gárbhaṃ janúṣā pipartana |
áśya jānánto náma cidvivaktana maháste viṣṇo sumatīṃ bhajāmahe || 3||*

*támasya rájā váruṇastámaśvínā krátuṃ sacanta márutasya vedhásah |
dādhára dákṣamuttamámaharvídaṃ vrajám ca viṣṇuḥ sákhivāñ aporṇuté || 4||*

*á yó vivāya sacáthāya dáuvya índrāya viṣṇuḥ sukṛte sukṛttaraḥ |
vedhá ajinvattriṣadhassthá áryamṛtásya bhāgé yájamānamábhajat || 5||*

1. As if a to-be-treasured patron, become enlivening by means of ghee;
[become one] whose power to illuminate came into being,
 who is moving quickly, who is accompanied by width [of mental space]!
Therefore, for you, O *Viṣṇu*, [are] forming a half chant — by him who understands
and [forming the other half] sacrifice to be accomplished by him who has an oblation.
2. Who to a peerless adept, to a novice, [or] to one with a wife
would render a service for the sake of *Viṣṇu*
who would speak mightily of [him who is] engendered by his extensive [effort]
he indeed would surpass by means of auditory impressions even his yokefellow.
3. Just him[, Agni], O hymn singers, [who is,] as is known, peerless,
him who is by birth an embryo of *ṛta* ye bring over;
noticing his very sign ye do speak [so that] we would swiftly obtain
your benevolence [of moving from a current footprint], O *Viṣṇu*.
4. That his skill²² king *Varuṇa*, that one *Aśvin*-s
[and] adepts of *Marut*-s shall assist.
Viṣṇu maintained the highest, knowing [the right] time, mental power,
and [now] he, having a companion, uncovers to himself the enclosure [of the Heaven]²³.
5. Who, divine, approached to assist — *Viṣṇu* [approached to assist] *Indra* —
one who acts better [approached to assist] the one of good action
[it was] he, having three abodes, enthusiastic, [who] urged on conducting upwards one,
he let the sacrificer have the good fortune of *ṛta*.

²²the skill of moving quickly from a current footprint

²³on the strength of 9.102.8b

7.99

paró mātṛayā tanvā vṛdhāna ná te mahitvámánvaśnuvanti |
ubhé te vidma rájasī pṛthivyá viṣṇo deva tvám paramásya vitse || 1||
ná te viṣṇo jáyamāno ná jātó déva mahimnáḥ páramántamāpa |
údastabhñā nákamṛṣvám bṛhántaṃ dādhártha prácīm kakúbhaṃ pṛthivyáḥ || 2||
írāvati dhenumatī hí bhūtám sūyavasīnī mánuse daśasyá |
vyàstabhñā ródasī viṣṇaveté dādhártha pṛthivímabhíto mayúkhaiḥ || 3||
urúm yajñáya cakrathuru lokám janáyantā sūryamuṣásamagním |
dásasya cidvṛṣaśiprásya māyá jaghnáthurnarā pṛtanájyeṣu || 4||
índrāviṣṇū dṛṃhitáḥ sámbarasya náva púro navatīm ca śnathīṣtam |
śatám varcínāḥ sahásraṃ ca sākám hathó apratyásurasya vīrān || 5||
iyám manīṣá bṛhatī bṛhántorukramá tavásā vardháyantī |
rará vām stómaṃ vidátheṣu viṣṇo pínvatamíṣo vṛjáneṣvindra || 6||
váṣat te viṣṇavāsá á kṛṇomi tánme juṣasva śipiviṣṭa havyám |
várdhantu tvā suṣṭutáyo gíro me yūyám pāta svastíbhiḥ sádā naḥ || 7||

1. O thou, who in his body has grown beyond measure,
they do not equal thy greatness.
We got to know both thy earthly regions,
O deva *Viṣṇu*, thou got to know the highest one.
2. Neither [deva] being manifested [now], nor [any that was] manifested before, O *Viṣṇu*,
has reached the ultimate limit of thy, O deva, power to increase in size.
Thou maintained the vast space where there is no pain, which is sublime;
you kept the region of the Heaven to be facing the Earth.
3. [Thinking] “because you two shall become full of draughts, full of milch-cows,
[thus] having good pastures to please a human”,
thou, O *Viṣṇu*, propped the two *Rodas*-es apart
[but] thou keep the Earth in close proximity by means of pegs.
4. Causing *Sūrya*, *Uṣas*, *Agni* to emerge
you two have created a wide space for a fire offering.
During close combats you two, O men,
defeated wiles of even the savage *Vṛṣaśipra*.
5. O *Indra* and *Viṣṇu*, you two pierced nine and ninety
fortified strongholds of *Śambara*
a hundred of *Varcin* and a thousand the same time
you two slay without opposition heroes of the guiding spirit.
6. This extensive reflection is causing you two,
extensive, wide-striding, to become stronger.
I grant to you two [this] chant in assemblies, O *Viṣṇu*!
You two do make the libations swell in [sacrificial] enclosures, O *Indra*!
7. I make *vaṣat* for thee, O *Viṣṇu*, from the mouth.
May thou delight in this my oblation, O pervaded by rays²⁴!
May my beautiful hymns, chants, strengthen thee!
May ye²⁵ always protect us with [your] blessings.

²⁴ Śipiviṣṭa

²⁵ deva-s

7.100

nú máрто dayate saniṣyányó viṣṇava urugāyāya dásat |
prá yáḥ satrácā mánasā yájāta etávantaṃ náryamāvivāsāt || 1 ||
tvám viṣṇo sumatím viśvájanyāmáprayutāmevayāvo matím dāḥ |
párco yáthā naḥ suvitásya bhúrerásvāvataḥ puruścandrásya ráyáḥ || 2 ||
trírdeváh pṛthivímeśá etám ví cakrame sátárcasaṃ mahitvá |
prá viṣṇurastu tavásastáviyāntveśám hyasya sthávirasya náma || 3 ||
ví cakrame pṛthivímeśá etám kṣétrāya viṣṇurmánuṣe daśasyán |
dhruvāso asya kíráyo jánāsa urukṣitím sujánimā cakāra || 4 ||
prá tátte adyá śipiviṣṭa námāryáḥ śaṃsāmi vayúnāni vidván |
tám tvā grṇāmi tavásamátavyānkṣáyantamasyá rájasaḥ parāké || 5 ||
kímítte viṣṇo paricákṣyaṃ bhūtprá yádvavakṣé śipiviṣṭó asmi |
má várpo asmádāpa gūha etádyádanyárūpaḥ samithé babhútha || 6 ||
váṣat te viṣṇavāsá á krṇomi tánme juśasva śipiviṣṭa havyám |
várdhantu tvā suṣṭutáyo gíro me yūyám pāta svastíbhīḥ sádā naḥ || 7 ||

1. Now, a mortal, who keeps rushing, does partake [of the treasure]
if he were to worship wide-ranging *Viṣṇu*,
[But] then he who were to sacrifice with concentrated mind —
he can attain so much more agreeable to a human [share of it].
2. You, O *Viṣṇu*, shall give [us] effective, good for everybody, mental gesture,
non-heedless mental gesture, O moving quickly,
so that you would bestow upon us the good luck
of frequent brightly radiant treasure consisting of horses.
3. Thrice the deva mightily strode out the Earth,
he — her, who is described by hundred stanzas.
Then, may *Viṣṇu* be stronger than strong
because his, of the staying put one, is the vehement nature.
4. He strode out the Earth, he — her, for a portion of space [to delineate] —
[he,] *Viṣṇu* doing favour to a human.
Settled are his simple subjects —
he, producing things well, has made a wide domain.
5. Now then, this your name “pervaded by rays”²⁶
[is] of the tending upwards, knowing motives one²⁷.
Such thee — strong — I, [who is] not stronger, extol,
[thee,] having the power over this region, [though] being far away.
6. Whether for you it should have been [too] explicit, O *Viṣṇu*, [or not,]
when you announced “I am pervaded by rays”²⁸ —
do not hide away from us that form
when in a conflict you has become another in your form.

²⁶ *Śipiviṣṭa*

²⁷ *Agni*

²⁸ *Śipiviṣṭa*

7. I make *vaṣat* for thee, O *Viṣṇu*, from the mouth.
 May thou delight in this my oblation, O pervaded by rays²⁹!
 May my beautiful hymns, chants, strengthen thee!
 May ye³⁰ always protect us with [your] blessings.

1.85.7

tè'vardhanta svátavaso mahitvaná nákaṃ tasthúrurú cakrire sádaḥ |
viṣṇuryáddhávadvíṣaṇaṃ madacyútaṃ váyo ná sīdannádhi barhíṣi priyé || 7||

7. They grew strong, self-strong through greatness
 they remained in the place of no pain, wide they have made the seat.
 When *Viṣṇu* favours impregnating, oozing exhilaration [drink]
 like birds they shall sit on the cherished sacrificial grass.

4.18.11

utá mātá mahiṣámánvavenadamí tvā jahati putra devāḥ |
áthābravidvṛtrámíndro haníṣyánsákhe viṣṇo vitaráṃ ví kramasva || 11||

11. Would that the mother entice the mighty one [thus],
 “these deva-s desert you, O son!”
 Rather, *Indra*, who was about to slay *Vṛtra*, spoke [thus]
 O companion *Viṣṇu*, do stride father off!

5.87.4

sá cakrame maható nírurukramáḥ samānásamātsádasa evayāmarut |
yadāyukta tmánā svádádhi ṣṇúbhírvíṣpardhaso vímahaso jígāti sévṛdho nṛbhiḥ || 4||

4. He, wide-striding, strode, moving quickly as a Marut,
 out of extensive holding-the-middle-between-extremes seat.
 Whenever he attaches himself — above the self, throughout the heights —
 with competing with each other, mighty [emotions],
 he moves, increasing felicity, together with the men [*Marut*-s].

²⁹ *Śipiviṣṭa*

³⁰ deva-s

6.69

sám vāṃ kármaṇā sámiṣā hinomíndrāviṣṇū ápasaspāré asyá |
juṣéthāṃ yajñāṃ dráviṇaṃ ca dhattamáriṣṭairnaḥ pathíbhiḥ pāráyantā || 1 ||
yá vísvāsāṃ janitārā matínámíndrāviṣṇū kalásā somadhánā |
prá vāṃ gíraḥ śasyámānā avantu prá stómāso gīyámānāso arkáḥ || 2 ||
índrāviṣṇū madapatī madānāmá sómaṃ yātaṃ dráviṇo dádhānā |
sám vāmañjantvaktúbhirmatínāṃ sám stómāsaḥ śasyámānāsa uktháḥ || 3 ||
á vāmáśvāso abhimātiśáha índrāviṣṇū sadhamádo vahantu |
juṣéthāṃ vísvā hávanā matínámúpa bráhmāṇi śṛṇutaṃ gíro me || 4 ||
índrāviṣṇū tátpanayáyyaṃ vāṃ sómasya máda urú cakramāthe |
ákrṇutamantárikṣaṃ várīyó'prathataṃ jīvāse no rájāṃsi || 5 ||
índrāviṣṇū havíṣā vāvṛdhānāgrādvānā námasā rātahavyā |
ghṛtāsutī dráviṇaṃ dhattamasmé samudrá sthaḥ kalásāḥ somadhánaḥ || 6 ||
índrāviṣṇū píbataṃ mádhvo asyá sómasya dasrā jaṭháraṃ pṛṇethām |
á vāmándhāṃsi madirāṇyagmannúpa bráhmāṇi śṛṇutaṃ hávaṃ me || 7 ||
ubhá jigyathurnā párá jayethe ná párá jigye kataráscanáinoḥ |
índraśca viṣṇo yádápasprdhethāṃ tredhá sahásraṃ ví tádairayethām || 8 ||

1. At the ultimate reach of this action [that] I urge with the rites,
you two together, O *Indra* and *Viṣṇu*, [are].
Bringing us over by safe roads [you two]
do enjoy the sacrifice and impart the substance!
2. [Here are] two goblets containing Soma, O *Indra* and *Viṣṇu*,
which are the progenitors of all mental gestures.
Then may being-repeated-praises animate you two,
then the chants that are being sung with illuminating hymns.
3. O *Indra* and *Viṣṇu*, masters of raptures of exhilarating drinks,
producing the substance, attain Soma,
May the chants, being repeated together with verses,
smear at night you two with mental gestures.
4. May the horses [of the inner Soma] overcoming those who intend to hurt
O *Indra* and *Viṣṇu*, bear here a drinking bout!
Enjoy all offerings of mental gestures,
give ear to sacred formulas, to my praises!
5. O *Indra* and *Viṣṇu*, this yours astonishing wide space
you two have created in the rapture of Soma.
You two made the intermediate space wider,
stretched the regions for us to live.
6. O *Indra* and *Viṣṇu*, having become stronger through the oblation,
eating ahead of [others], you two, to whom the offering is given with reverence,
enlivened by ghee, do impart to us the substance!
You two are the sea containing Soma.

7. O *Indra* and *Viṣṇu*, have a drink of this honey, of Soma!
 you two, accomplishing wonderful deeds, fill the belly!
 Brewing exhilaration juices approached you;
 at the time for sacred formulations, do listen to my call!
8. You both have conquered, you are not ultimately conquering [anything now].
 Neither of these two was ultimately defeated.
 O *Viṣṇu* and *Indra*, what you contend,
 in three ways you break that into thousand pieces.

6.49.13

yó rájāṃsi vimamé párvhivāni tríscaivíṣṇurmánave bādhitáya |
tásya te sármanupadadyámāne ráyá madema tanvā tánā ca || 13||

13. Who exactly thrice delineated earthly realms
 for being harassed Manu — *Viṣṇu* —
 in his refuge for you still being granted,
 with the treasure we might get drunk ourselves — and continually.

8.3.8

asyédíndro vāvṛdhe víṣṇyaṃ sávo máde sutásya víṣṇavi |
adyá támasya mahimánamāyávo'nu ṣṭuvanti pūrváthā || 8||

8. *Indra* grew his manly might
 in the rapture of extracted [Soma], in *Viṣṇu*.
 Today him, first of all, his power to increase in size,
 the agitated ones repeatedly extol.

8.9.12

yádíndreṇa saráthaṃ yáthó aśvinā yádvā vāyúnā bhávathaḥ sámokasā |
yádādityébhírṛbhúbhiḥ sajóśasā yádvā víṣṇorvikrámaṇeṣu tíṣṭhathaḥ || 12||

12. When with *Indra* you two travel on the same chariot, O *Aśvin*-s,
 or when you dwell together with *Vāyu*,
 when acting in harmony with with *Aditya*-s, with *Rbhu*-s,
 or when you stay in the strides of *Viṣṇu*.

8.15.9

tvám̐ víṣṇurbṛhánkṣáyo mitró gṛṇāti váruṇaḥ |
tvám̐ sárdho madatyánu márutam || 9||

9. Thee dwelling *Viṣṇu* is making stronger,
Mitra invokes, *Varuṇa* [too].
 Thee the troop of *Marut*-s repeatedly exhilarates.

9.33.3

sutá índrāya vāyáve váruṇāya marúdbhyaḥ |
sómā arṣanti víṣṇave || 3||

3. Extracted for *Indra*, *Vāyu*,
Varuṇa, *Marut*-s,
 Soma [drops] flow for *Viṣṇu*.

10.1.3

viṣṇurithá paramámasya vidvāñjātó bṛhánabhí pāti tṛtīyam |
āsá yádasya páyo ákrata svám̐ sácataso abhyârcantyátra || 3||

3. In the same way, *Viṣṇu*, knowing his highest point,
 manifest, extensive, protects the third [step].
 When through the mouth they made his juice (Soma) their own
 then they, of the same mind, sing.

10.113.2

támasya víṣṇurmahimānamójasām̐śúm̐ dadhanvānmádhuno ví rapśate |
devébhíríndro maghávā sayāvabhirvṛtrám̐ jaghanvāñ̐ abhavadváreṇyaḥ || 2||

2. Towards him, his might, *Viṣṇu* has energetically rushed,
 towards the stalk – it teems with honey.
 Munificent *Indra* with riding along deva-s,
 he, slaying again and again *Vṛtra*, became preferred [to all others].

10.181

práthaśca yásya sapráthaśca nāmānuṣṭubhasya haviṣo havíryát |
dhātúrdyútānātsavitúśca viṣṇo rathamtarámá jabhārā vásiṣṭhaḥ || 1||
ávindanté átihitam yádásīdyajñásya dhāma paramám gúhā yát |
dhātúrdyútānātsavitúśca viṣṇorbharádvājo bṛhádá cakre agnéḥ || 2||
tè'vīndanmánasā dídhyanā yájuskanám prathamám devayānam |
dhātúrdyútānātsavitúśca viṣṇorá sūryādabharangharmámeté || 3||

1. From the illuminating mediator *Savitṛ* and from *Viṣṇu*
Vasiṣṭha has brought here *Rathamtara* [sāman]
 which nature is extension and to be extensive,
 which is the offering of [any] offering consisting of *anuṣṭubh*.
2. They found what was placed beyond,
 what in the cavern is the ultimate abode of sacrifice.
 From the illuminating mediator *Savitṛ* and from *Viṣṇu*
Bharatvāja brought from *Agni Bṛhat* [sāman].
3. Visualizing with the mind breaking sequence formula for directing a sacrifice
 they found the most excellent way to deva-s.
 From the illuminating mediator *Savitṛ* and from *Viṣṇu*
 they brought the heat up to the sun.

10.184.1

viṣṇuryóniṃ kalpayatu tváṣṭā rūpāni piṃśatu |
á siñcatu prajāpatirdhātá gárbham dadhātu te || 1||

1. May *Viṣṇu* make the womb suitable,
 may *Tvaṣṭṛ* mold the forms,
 may *Prajāpati* emit the semen here,
 may the establisher establish for you the embryo.

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