The main ritual of the RV. is connected with the Soma Sacrifice. Therefore the god Soma is one of the most important deities of the Veda. In the RV. Soma is celebrated in 120 hymns and in portions of four to five hymns. He is also celebrated in six more hymns with Indra, Agni, Pūṣan or Rudra. In the RV. Soma is mostly dealt with in the form of plant. In some passages Soma may mean plant or the moon. Later how Soma becomes moon is not clearly known.

However, in the MBh. Soma is a subject of about 66 legends. He is mostly dealt with in the form of moon.

In the RV. number of epithets are given to Soma in the form of plant. Some epithets are based on the processing of Soma juice and its function. Soma is called rasa, pitu, mada, ama, madha, amṛta, somyam madhu, su, dīh, madhumat arṇava, samudra, utsa, pavamāna, śūdha, śukra or śuci, admixture is called tryāśir, gavaśir, dādhyāśir, yavaśir, trisadhastra, tripṛtha, paśu, retodha, uksan, irsam, vṛṣabha, tigaśrīga, vācaspatī, vācoagriya or agree, ray, rakṣohan, girīsthā or parvata and vṛdh.
However, in the Mbh. Soma is given epithets in the form of moon. Soma is described mostly as moon or Candramas. He is called Śatasaḥsrānā, Śitānā, Ujjavala, Prasannātmā, Indu, Tārādhipa, Śaśin, Nīśākara and Tamonuda.

In the Rv. Soma in the form of plant has his birth on the mountain and in the heaven. An eagle brought him from the heaven. In the form of moon, he is the eye of Varuna and he is among the five beings which sprang from Prajāpati. He is the offspring of the Sun (Jān).¹

Whereas in the Mbh. Soma's birth is described in the form of moon. It is said that Soma (moon) arose at the churning of the ocean. He is one of the eight Vasus and son of Śvāsā. He is one of the twenty-one Prajāpatis. He is the son of Bhanu.² He is also said to be the son of Rṣī Atri. He is born of the Supreme God.

According to philosophical view he flowed from Kṛṣṇa.³

In the Rv. the physical appearance of Soma is described in the form of plant by the poets. His colour is said to be as brown, ruddy and tawny. He is several-eyed and thousand-eyed. Later he is also identified with moon which is celestial and bright.

However, in the Mbh. Soma's physical appearance is described in the form of moon or Candramas. His diameter
and circumference are given as 1100 yojanas and 38,900 yojanas respectively. He is said to be handsome and of pale hue.

In the ṚV. Soma's living place is in the heaven and on the mountains.

Whereas in the Mbh. His presence as moon is in the crown of Mahādeva. He also remains present in the abode of Brahmā. His presence is also said in the Northern Region.

The daughters of Prajāpati are said to be the wives of Soma (moon) in the ṚV.

In the Mbh. twenty-seven wives of Soma (moon) are described. These are the daughters of Prajāpati Dakṣa.

In the Mbh. the offspring of Soma are also mentioned. They are named Budha and Varças. Soma has also a daughter named Bhadrā.

In the RV. Soma has chariot and heavenly car as his conveyance. He is said to be the best of charioteers.

But in the Mbh. he is having a sky-ranging car (Vimāna).

In the RV. Soma is a prominent god among the Vedic deities. He makes the gods and men immortal. He has strong
medicinal power. He removes the sin from the heart. He is said to be the soul of sacrifice. With its intoxicating power, he stimulates the gods in conflict such as Indra etc. For the generation of two worlds, he performs the great cosmic actions. He is said to be a great fighter. He conquers for his worshippers a thousand boons. He constantly, bestows all wealth of heaven etc. He is said to be the lord of plants.

However, in the Mbh.Soma's position has deteriorated all of sudden. He is bestowed the kingship over the Brähmanas, plants, stars and constellations. The kingship is bestowed by the rising deities of the Mbh. such as Mahādeva.

In the RV. he has a powerful medicinal character, where he cures the sick persons. Whereas in the Mbh. he could not cure himself when he was cursed of phthisis by Lakṣa.

In the RV. he is said to be the father of gods. He is the generator of hymns and the protector of prayer.

However, in the Mbh. he worships the other rising deities of the Mbh. such as Viṣṇu, Mahādeva. He himself has performed diverse sacrifices for freeing himself from the disease phthisis.
There is great set back to his position and that a Vedic deity of strong medicinal power could not cure himself from the disease phthisis in the Mbh. But he is cured by just taking a bath at Prabhāsa Tīrtha.

In the Mbh. he is also cursed by the Rṣi (Dakśa) and Rāhu swallows Soma at the eclipses. There is another set-back to his position. When Rāhu pierced Soma along with Sūrya with arrows, Soma and Sūrya became helpless to shine. Thereupon, Rṣi Atri assumed the form of moon and Sūrya and began to shine.

In the ṚV. several epithets are ascribed to Soma which characterise his nature, functions and forms of his extraction. Soma is invoked under the name of "Indu", bright drop and also he is identified with moon here (ninth book of ṚV. pagw39). The juice from the Soma plant is called Soma and generally "rasa". Juice is also called "pitu", the beverage; it is also known as "mada", intoxicating draught. Soma is referred to "ānna", food. His sweet draught is called "madhu". It is also said that when King Soma is pressed, it is amṛta. He is called "Somyam madhu", Soma mead. Extraction of juice from root is called "Su", to press; "dah", to milk. If juice is intoxicating and honied, he is then "madhumat". Soma is given epithet "ārṇava", sea
(if collected in Vat) or ocean, "Samudra". Heavenly Soma is called Utsa. During the extraction and purification of Soma, if he is passed through strainer, he is called "pavamāna" or "punāna", flowing clear. He is called "Śudha", pure; "Śukra or "Śuci", bright [19] which is often offered to Indra and Vāyu. There are three types of Soma's admixture which are called Tryāśir, with milk, "gavāśir", sour milk, "dadhyaśir"; and barley, "yavāśir". He is given epithet "trīṣadhestha", having three abodes; "Tripṛṣṭha", three-backed. Soma is called "paśu", animal, "retodha", impregnator this epithet is specially applied to moon in the YV. He is "Ukṣan", "Vṛṣan", "Vṛṣabha" and "Tīgmaśrṅga", sharp-horned. Soma is the lord of speech, he is called "Vācaspāti"[20] or leader of speech "vāco agriya or agree"[21] Soma is given epithets "ray", treasure or the wealth of the gods; "rakṣoḥan", goblin slayer; "giristha" or "parvatē Yṛdh" dwelling or growing on mountains.

However, in the MBh. Soma is mostly dealt with in the form of moon than in the form of plant. So Soma is given epithets accordingly.

He is called moon or Candramas[22] He is given epithets "Satasahasrēśhā", having thousand rays;[23] "Śitāṇā",[24] "Ujjavalā" having white complexion[25] "Frasennēṭmā",[26] "Indu",[27] "Tārādhipa", the King of stars[28] "Saśīn". He is called "Nisakara", the
In the form of plant, juice and god his colour is described as brown ('babhru'), ruddy (aruna) and tawny (hari). He is said to have many eyes and thousand-eyed. He is described as drop Indu and is identified with moon which is celestial and bright.

Whereas in the Mahabharata physical appearance is described in the form of moon. Soma (moon) has the diameter 1100 yojanas and its circumference is 38,900 yojanas. The god Soma having the hare for his mark. The moon waxes day by day. Soma is handsome and of delightful. His colour is sometimes said pale hue.

In the Rigveda his living place is said to be in the heaven and on the mountains. Having three abodes epithet trisadhastha is applied to Soma. Soma's drop grows in the waters.

In the Mahabharata the presence of Soma (moon) is described in the Crown of Mahadeva and is placed on his forehead. It is said that a crescent moon of pale hue forms Mahadeva's crown and placed on his forehead, it looks like the moon that rises in the autumnal firmament.

Soma remains present in the abode (palace) of Brahman. In the legend of "Birth of Tilottama," it is
said that Grand sire seated with gods, Siddhas and Brahmārsis around him. There were present Mahādeva, Agni, Vāyu, Soma, Sūrya and Śakra.

In the MBh. it is described that North is protected by the divine Soma along with the Brahmanas. The householder should make sacrificial (Bali) offerings to Soma in the Northern Region.

In the YV. Soma as the moon has the daughters of Prajāpati as his wives.

In the MBh. Soma (moon) has twenty seven wives. Dakṣa gave twenty seven of his daughters as wives to Soma. In the legend of "Mahārsis and Kaśyapa Race", Dakṣa and his wife sprang from the right and left toe of Brahmā respectively. Dakṣa begot upon his wife fifty daughters. Dakṣa bestowed ten of his daughters on Dharma, twenty-seven on Chandramā (the moon). All they are the Nakṣatras. They are assisting the courses of the worlds.

Further, it is described in the MBh. that Soma likes Rohini more than his other twenty-six wives. They complained again and again to their father Dakṣa. Dakṣa warned Soma repeatedly. When Soma did not obey Dakṣa, he was cursed by him with Phthisis. Soma, to cure his disease,
performed diverse sacrifices, but he could not get rid of his disease. Ultimately, following the advice of Dakṣa, he gratified Mahādeva and could cure his disease. Soma has his offspring also. It is said in the Mbh. that Varcas and Budha are the sons of Soma.

Bhadrā is the daughter of Soma. Soma had bestowed his daughter on Utathya.

In the Ṛ. it is described that Soma uses the same conveyance which is used by Indra. Chariot is his conveyance. He is the charioteer of the Indra's car-fighter. He drives in heavenly car. His car has filter and light. He is said to be the best charioteer. He has his own well-winged mares.

In the Mbh. Soma has sky-ranging car (yimāna) as his conveyance. In the "Encounter between Drona and Sātyaki", it is described that Drona and Sātyaki were striking each other with fatal shafts. People, filled with curiosity came there to see that single combat. The gods headed by Brahman and Soma and the Siddhas and the Gṛṇas and the Vidyādhāras and the great snakes, saw it, stationed on their foremost of sky-ranging cars.
In the RV. Soma is a prominent god. Soma bestows immortal life to gods and men. As a medicine he cures the sick persons and bestows long life. He makes blind see and lame walk. He even removes the sin from the heart of human beings. He is called the lord of speech. He is the generator of hymns. He is the soul of sacrifice. He is wise and surveys the creatures. Soma makes Indra powerful for the fight with Vṛtra. He causes the sun to rise and shine. He has established the heaven and the earth. He is the lord of plants. He is said to be father or king of gods, mortal, rivers and of whole earth.

In the MBh. Soma is the king of the Brāhmaṇas. Soma has great energy and great effulgence. He has cool rays. Soma illumines the world. Soma is the maker of night. Soma grows the deciduous herbs. He grows the creepers and diverse kinds of herbs. He fills them with juices.

Candramas was made the king of the Stars and constellations by Mahādeva.

Soma upholds the universe. In the legend of "Etymology of Kṛśna's names", the deity of Fire (Appetite) and Soma (food) combining together, become transfused into one and the same substance. With the result, entire universe of
mobile and immobile creatures is pervaded by these two deities. In consequence of the unification of these two deities, they are said to be the upholders of the universe.

The moon (Candras) rules over all the stars. He dispels the darkness in all the worlds. Soma makes the weapon which is invisible to his enemies by putting his powers into this weapon.

In the legend of "Burning of three cities", when the three cities came together in the firmament, Mahādeva pierced them with the terrible shaft, consisting of three-knots and composed of Viṣṇu and Soma.

Candras has luminous character. He goes round the Meru mountain. He divides the months into several sections. The moon nourishes all creatures.

In the legend of "Worship of Gaṅgā", it is said that the moon, the sun and all luminous with the planets resort to the River Gaṅgā alternately by day and by night.

In another legend, "Description of Sūrya, Candras", it is described that the Sun and the Moon everyday go round Meru and course in an opposite direction. The divine Moon along with stars going round the mountain, divides the months into several sections, by his arrival at the farvas. During his course he nourishes all creatures.
In the *Mbh.* it is further said that the Moon is the lord of plants. Without moon plants cannot survive. It is described in the legend, once Soma was cursed with phthisis by Dakṣa, because he did not have equal behaviour towards all his wives, daughters of Dakṣa. With phthisis, Soma began to waste away day by day. As a consequence of this, the deciduous herbs failed to grow. Their juice dried up and became tasteless. With the result living creatures began to decay. 100

According to philosophical view Candramas is said to be *Adhidaivata* of *Manas*. Mind has been called *Adhyātma*, that which the mind is employed, is *Adhibhūta* and Candramas is its *Adhidaivata*. 101

In the *RV.* being a warrior, Soma has weapons which he seizes firmly in his hand. 103 His weapons are terrible and sharp. It is said that he is armed with a thousand-pointed shaft. 104 He has swift bow. 105

However in the *Mbh.* Soma not only possessed weapons, but he also grants them to his worshippers. 106

King Soma had possessed the bow (*Gāndīva*), the quivers and the chariot which he gave to Varuṇa. 107 In the legend of "Khāṇḍava. Vana-Dāhana", 108 Agni said to Varuṇa,
"Give me that bow and quiver and that ape-banne\ discretionary. also, which were obtained from king Soma."\cite{109}

The celestials worship Soma, the King of the stars.\cite{110} He is among the twenty-one Prajāpatis.\cite{111}

In the RV. Soma is compared with bull. It is said that he is bull among the cows or the lord of the cows.\cite{112}

In the MBH. he has acted as calf when the seven Rṣis milked the Earth.\cite{113} In the legend of "King Prthu\textsuperscript{114}, it is said that the seven Rṣis milk the Earth, getting the Vedas as their milk. Brhaspati became the milker, the Chhandas are the vessel and the excellent Soma, the calf.\cite{115}

In the RV. Soma has frequent relationship with other deities. The different forms of Soma are offered to different deities. The clear and unmixed Soma is offered to Vāyu and Indra, mixed with milk is offered to Mitra-Varuṇa, with honey to Aśvins. Soma has more connection with Indra. He is the soul of Indra and he is auspicious friend. With Soma Indra becomes more powerful. Soma has also his association with Nāruts, Vāyu, Agni, Pūṣan and Rudra. He is identified with Varuṇa. He is mostly identified with the moon.

However, in the MBH. Soma is identified with several gods.
Indra is identified with Soma. In the legend of "Indra's Adoration by Kadru", Once Garuda, on directions from his mother, carried the snakes. He began to ascend towards the Sun. So the snakes were scorched by the rays of the Sun. Kadru, seeing her sons in that state, started praying to Indra, "you are Vāyu, the cloud, fire and the lightning of the skies. You are the light of all creatures, Aditya, Vibhāvasu and the most adored Soma."

Agni is identified with Soma. In the legend of "Adoration of Agni by Mandaśāla", the Rṣi Mandaśāla saw Agni coming towards Khāṇḍava forest to burn it down. Mandaśāla for the protection of his children gratified Agni by addressing him, "you are the mouth of all the worlds, you are the carrier of the sacrificial butter, you are the twin Aśvins, you are Sūrya, you are Soma, you are Vāyu."

Nārāyaṇa is identified with Soma. In the "Description of Nārāyaṇa", the Deity Nārāyaṇa described himself to Nārkaṇdeya, "I am Viṣṇu, I am Brahman, I am Śakra, I am King Vaiśravaṇa, I am Yama, I am Śiva, I am Soma and I am Kaśyapa the lord of the crested things."

Soma held a white umbrella over Rudra's head. After the coronation of Skanda, Rudra with all the deities marched
towards Bhadravata and on the way Soma held a white umbrella over Rudra's head. 

Soma is identified with Krsna. In the "Description of Krsna's Importance", it is said that Krsna is Rāhu and Soma and Śakra.

In the RV. Soma is the most prominent deity among the Vedic deities. However, in the Mbh. there is steep fall in his position.

In the RV. Soma has strong medicinal power. Soma heals who-ever is sick. He grants long life.

Whereas in the Mbh. he could not cure himself from phthisis disease. Once he was cursed with phthisis by Dakṣa. Because wives of Soma, the daughters of Dakṣa complained to their father, Soma did not have equal behaviour with all of them. After warning again and again, Soma was cursed with phthisis by Dakṣa. Soma performed diverse sacrifices but he could not cure himself. Later on the advice of Dakṣa, Soma gratified Mahādeva and could cure his disease.

In the RV. he is said to be king or father of gods and mortals. However, in the Mbh. he himself worships Viṣṇu. In the legend of "Rṣi Uttañka", Indra, Soma, Agni,
Varuṇa indeed all the gods, the Āsuras and the great snakes all wait upon Viṣṇu with humility, adoring him with various hymns.  

Soma along with other deities worships Mahādeva on the Meru. He, as one of the twenty-one Prajāpatis, obeys the eternal law of the Supreme God.

In the Rv. Soma is said to be lord of thought and father, leader or generator of hymns. However, in the Mahābhārata Soma learnt the Science of Hymns from Manu and communicated it to Viśvāvasu.

In the Mahābhārata even Rāhu swallows Soma at the eclipses. In the legend of "Devāsura Battle" after churning of the ocean by the gods and the Asuras, several wondrous articles emerged from the ocean. Among them Lākṣmī and Amṛta also emerged. Nārāyaṇa observed that there might be a fight between Asuras and gods regarding the distribution of articles. Thereupon Nārāyaṇa with the help of his illusive power (Māyā) assumed the form of a female. Viṣṇu started distributing Amṛta first to gods. While the gods were partaking of it, a Dānava named Rāhu was also drinking it among them by assuming the form of god. When Amṛta reached Rāhu's throat only, Sūrya and Soma recognised him and intimated to
the gods. Narayana instantly cut off the head of Rāhu with his discus. Head of Rāhu became immortal because Amrta reached up to throat. From that time there is long-standing quarrel between Rāhu's head and Sūrya and Soma. From that day Rāhu swallows Sūrya and Soma during solar and lunar eclipse.\textsuperscript{140}

In the Mbh. Soma is even cursed by the Rṣi and he loses his effulgence and beauty due to phthisis. After taking bath at Prabhāsa Tīrtha, he regains his form and beauty.\textsuperscript{141}

In another legend, it is said that in the Mbh. Soma along with Sūrya is made helpless to shine, when both of them are pierced by the arrows of Rāhu. With the result, Rṣi Atri assumes the forms of Soma and Sūrya and begins to shine forth in splendour.\textsuperscript{142} In the "Description of Atri and Cyavana",\textsuperscript{143} once gods and Dānavas were fighting each other in the dark as Rāhu pierced both Sūrya and Soma with his arrows.\textsuperscript{144} In the darkness gods began to fall before the Dānavas.\textsuperscript{145} Gods, seeing Atri engaged in austerities, prayed before Rṣi to become Soma and Sūrya. Atri thus assumed the form of Soma, the destroyer of darkness.\textsuperscript{146}
In the Vedas, Soma is a prominent deity and ritual of the RV. is connected with the Soma sacrifice. He makes the human beings immortal. He is having a strong medicinal power and even removes the sin from the heart. He is the soul of sacrifice. He is the soul of sacrifice. He is the lord of plants. In the Vedas, he is mostly dealt with in the form of plant.

However, in the MBH. Soma is mostly described in the form of moon. He is the only lord of the Brâhmaṇas, plants, stars and constellations. The sovereignty over these is bestowed by other deities such as Mahâdeva. Soma of the RV. who was having strong medicinal power, could not cure himself in the MBH. from the disease of phthisis (in the episode of Dakṣa's curse). In the MBH. he is afflicted by Râhu and cursed by Rsi (Dakṣa), even Rsi Atri assumed the form of the moon and Sûrya (in the episode of Description of Atri and Čyavana). Thus due to Brâhmaṇization Soma's position has deteriorated in the MBH.

He worships the other rising deities such as Mahâdeva and Viśnu. He even performs diverse sacrifices. He could cure himself by just taking a bath at Prabhâsa Tîrtha.
Due to the rise of sectarian gods (Viśṇu-Kṛṣṇa and Rudra-Śiva) the position of Soma has declined. Puja became more inspiring than Yajña. Thus, Soma, the great sacrificial god of the Vedas, has become merely the lord, in the form of moon, over the stars, constellations, plants and Brāhmaṇas.
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120. Mbh. I. 228.
123. Mbh.III.189.
125. Mbh.III.231/46.
126. Mbh.III.231.
128. Mbh.XIII.158.
130. IV.9,9724.
132. Mbh.III.201.
133. Mbh.III.201/18.
134. Mbh.XII.323/18.
138. Moh.I.18/44.
139. Moh.I.19/44.
141. Moh.IX.35.
142. Moh.XIII.156/8-10.
143. Moh.XIII.156.
144. Moh.XIII.156/2.
145. Moh.XIII.156/3.
146. Moh.XIII.156/8-10.