

Summary of important Devas found in 9th Mandala of Rig Veda

The following descriptions are just the barest introduction to the devas.

Indra – King of the devas and the region of heaven known as Svarga. He is associated with thunder, lightning, and rain. He is the slayer of Vritra, the primordial obstruction to human happiness and prosperity, and is the primary slayer of obstacles. In the 9th Mandala, Indra is the foremost drinker of the Soma.

Soma – The nectar of immortality, the beverage of the devas, the subject of the entire 9th Mandala of the Rig Veda.

Agni – Associated with fire; also the first word of the Rig Veda. Agni is the bringer of light, the carrier of the sacrifices to the other devas, and a very important figure in the Vedas.

Vayu – The wind deva. A prominent deva, in that his power (prana) animates the other devas, and he, along with Indra, is a primary drinker of Soma. (Perhaps why prana is so noticeably enhanced by Soma.)

Aditi – The feminine personification of the Infinite, and the mother of Indra, the Adityas, the Rudras, and the Vasus.

Adityas – The 12 sons of Aditi: Vivasvan (Surya), Aryaman, Tvashtha, Savitr, Bhaga, Dhata, Mitra, Varuna, Amsa, Pushan, Indra, and Vishnu (in the form of Vamana).

Surya – The sun, and deva that is the sun. Dispels darkness and brings knowledge. One of the most important devas in the Vedas, and worshipped well beyond the original Vedic period. One of the Adityas.

Ushas – The feminine deva of the dawn.

Mitra – One of the Adityas; his name means “friend,” and he is the patron deva of friendship, honesty, and contracts.

Varuna – A primary deva, associated with the waters and the oceans, and a guardian of moral law. One of the Adityas.

Ashvins – The twin physician devas; also twin horsemen that travel in a chariot by horses that never tire. The Ashvins assist humankind and keep them safe and healthy.

Rudra – A powerful, fierce deva associated with wind and storm. Evolved over time to be identified as Shiva, and even, less frequently, identified as Vishnu.

Rudras – Followers and attendants of Rudra. Eleven sons of Aditi and the sage Kashyapa.

Maruts – A troop of fierce, warrior devas that assist Indra in battle. Sons of Diti, sister of Aditi.

Bhaga – Deva of fortune, wealth. One of the Adityas.

Pushan – Deva who protects travelers and weddings. One of the Adityas.

Vishnu – In the Vedas, Vishnu had not become so central a deity as he later became in India. Associated with space. One of the Adityas in the form of Vamana.