

According to Hymn I,
what is the primary role
of Agni at the beginning
of the day?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

Consider the first few verses of Hymn I,
which describe Agni's awakening and
purpose at dawn.

Agni is awakened by the people's fuel
to meet the Dawn. He is kindled for the
worship of the Gods, rising at morning
to be the Priest for the sacrifice. His
flames rise to the heavens, and he is
set free from darkness.

In Hymn III, Agni is
identified with several
other major deities.
Name at least three of
these deities and the
context for the
identification.

Difficulty:
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Hint:

Refer to the first three verses of Hymn III.

1. Varuna: Agni is Varuna at birth.
2. Mitra: Agni becomes Mitra when kindled.
3. Indra: Agni is Indra to the man who brings
oblations.
4. Aryaman: Agni is Aryaman in relation to
maidens.
(Also mentioned are Rudra and Visnu in
different contexts).

Agni is referred to by many titles, including: Priest (most skilled in worship), House-Friend, Most youthful (Omniscient), offering-bearer, Purifier, Lord of human races, and Asura. Agni is similarly released from their own bonds, from a preceding prayer, used as a precedent. The hymn invokes Agni after fervent prayers, bound to a stake for a sacrifice but freed by Agni.

The story of Śunahśepa, who was

What is the significance of the story of Śunahśepa mentioned in Hymn II?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

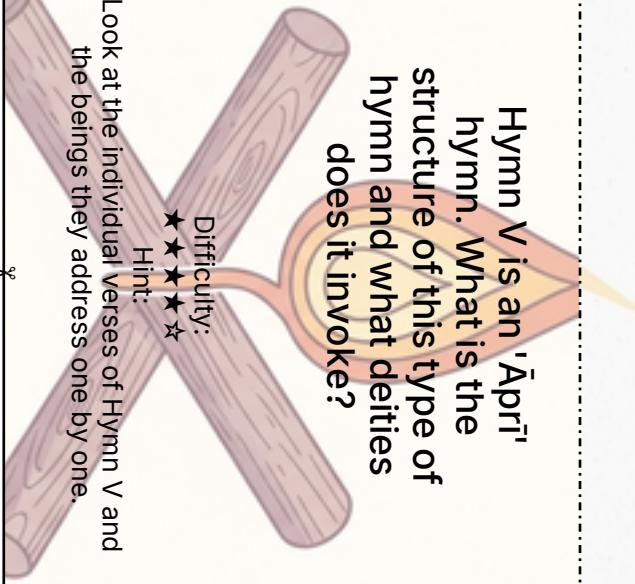
Think about how a past event involving a deity is used as a basis for a present request in prayer.

What are some of the key epithets or descriptive titles used for Agni throughout these hymns?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

Look for recurring descriptive phrases used to address or describe Agni.

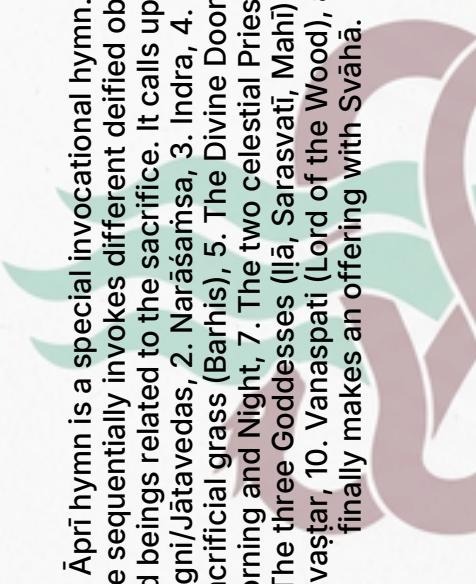


Hymn V is an 'Āpri hymn. What is the structure of this type of hymn and what deities does it invoke?

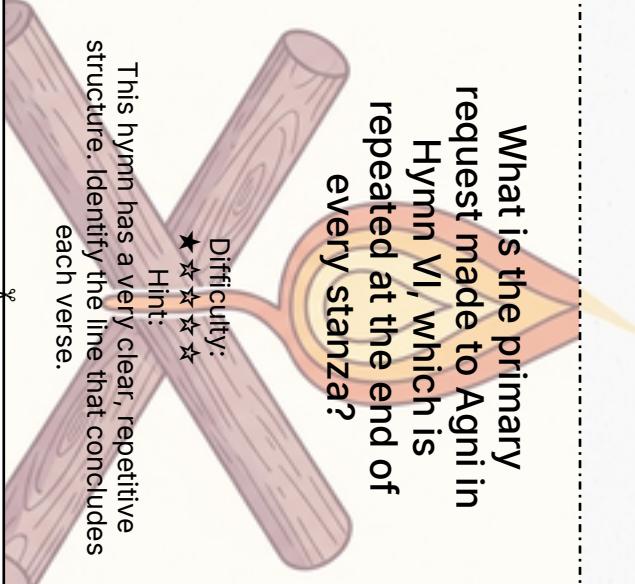
Difficulty:
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Hint:

Look at the individual verses of Hymn V and the beings they address one by one.



An Āpri hymn is a special invocational hymn. This one sequentially invokes different deified objects and beings related to the sacrifice. It calls upon: 1. Agni/Jātavedas, 2. Narāśamsa, 3. Indra, 4. The sacrificial grass (Barhis), 5. The Divine Doors, 6. Morning and Night, 7. The two celestial Priests, 8. The three Goddesses (Ilā, Sarasvatī, Mahī), 9. Tvāṣṭar, 10. Vanaspati (Lord of the Wood), and finally makes an offering with Svāhā.

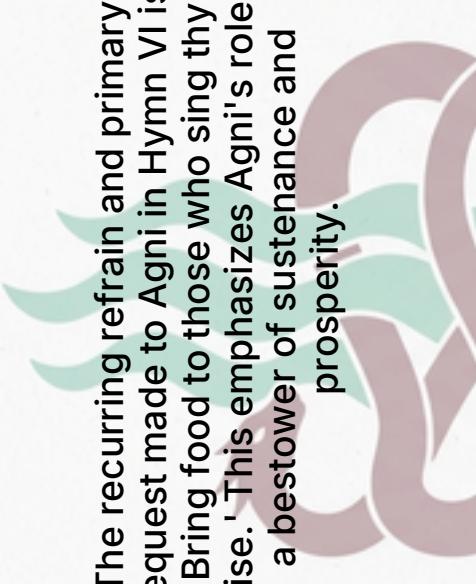


What is the primary request made to Agni in Hymn VI, which is repeated at the end of every stanza?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

This hymn has a very clear, repetitive structure. Identify the line that concludes each verse.



The recurring refrain and primary request made to Agni in Hymn VI is 'Bring food to those who sing thy praise.' This emphasizes Agni's role as a bestower of sustenance and prosperity.

In Hymn XXX, what specific mythological feat does Indra accomplish after drinking Soma, according to the Maruts' song?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

Focus on verse 2 of Hymn XXX, which describes Indra's actions after being fortified by Soma.

After drinking Soma, Indra grasps his thunderbolt to slay the Dragon (Vṛtra). This act releases the youthful Waters that had been obstructed by the Dragon.

What specific deed did Indra perform for Yādu and Turvāśa, according to Hymn XXXI?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

See verse 8 of Hymn XXXI for this specific event.

Indra stayed the gushing waters (likely a river) for Yādu and Turvāśa, allowing them to cross to the farther bank. This act helped them escape from a 'fierce' pursuer.

What material rewards did the speaker receive from Tryaruna and the Rusamas, as mentioned in Hymns XXVII and XXX?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

These hymns explicitly list gifts of patronage. Check Hymn XXVII for Tryaruna's gift and Hymn XXX for the Rusamas' gifts.

From Tryaruna, son of Trvrsan, the speaker received ten thousand (cattle), two oxen with a wagon, a hundred and twenty kine, and two bay horses. From the Rusamas, the speaker received four thousand cattle and a heated metal caldron.

How is Agni's birth and discovery described in Hymn XI?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

Look at verses 3 and 6 of Hymn XI for the details of his origin and discovery.

Agni is described as being born pure from his 'two Mothers' (the two fire-sticks). The Agnirases are credited with discovering him when he was hidden, fleeing from wood to wood. He is produced by attrition (rubbing sticks together) and is therefore called the 'Son of Strength'.