


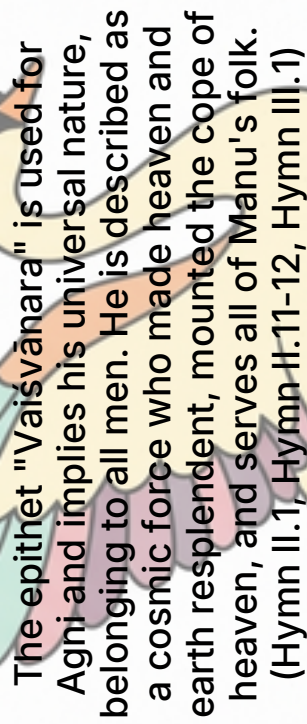
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- Agni is described as:
1. Born from the waters ('Child of Floods' - Hymn I.12, 'midst of waters' - Hymn I.3).
 2. Born from wood or plants (by friction of rubbing sticks - Hymn VIII.1, Hymn III.13).
 3. Born from two 'Mothers,' often interpreted as Heaven and Earth or the two pieces of wood used for kindling fire (Hymn I.7, Hymn II.2).

The hymns describe Agni as being born from or connected to several different sources or 'mothers.' Name at least three.

Difficulty:
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Hint:

Consider the different natural elements with which Agni is associated in his origin stories. Hymn III.13 mentions 'floods and plants.'



The epithet "Vaiśvānara" is used for Agni and implies his universal nature, belonging to all men. He is described as a cosmic force who made heaven and earth resplendent, mounted the cope of heaven, and serves all of Manu's folk. (Hymn II.1, Hymn II.11-12, Hymn III.1)

According to the hymns, what is the epithet "Vaiśvānara" used to describe, and what does it imply?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

This name for Agni connects him to all of humanity and the cosmos. Hymn II.1 begins, 'To him, Vaiśvānara, who strengthens Holy Law...'



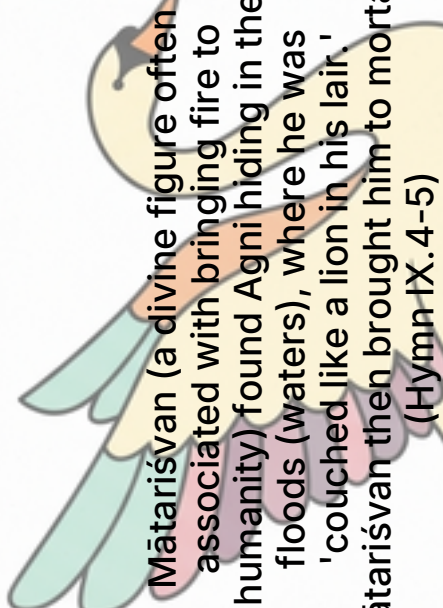
Agni is a guardian and follower of Holy Law (Ṛta). He is described as 'true to Law,' never breaking the everlasting laws of the deities, and his presence helps establish order. His chariot is even driven by the 'lofty ordinance.' (Hymn II.8, Hymn III.1, Hymn VI.6)

What is the relationship between Agni and the concept of 'Holy Law' or 'Order' (Ṛta)?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

Think about Agni's role in maintaining cosmic and ritual correctness. Hymn III.1 states he 'never breaks their everlasting laws.'



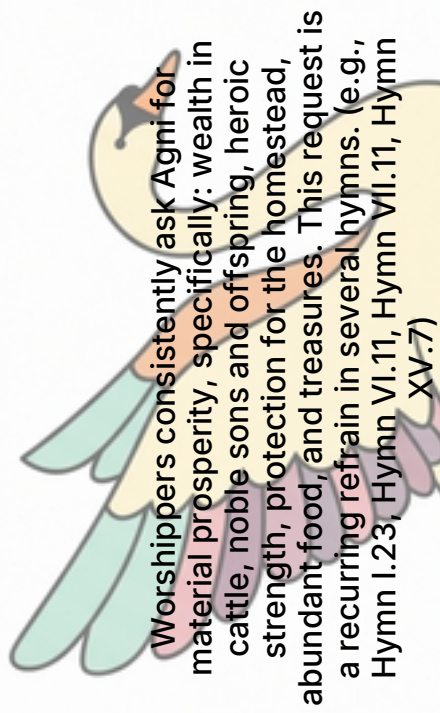
Mātariśvan (a divine figure often associated with bringing fire to humanity) found Agni hiding in the floods (waters), where he was 'couched like a lion in his lair.' Mātariśvan then brought him to mortals. (Hymn IX.4-5)

Hymn IX describes the rediscovery of Agni. Who found him and where was he hiding?

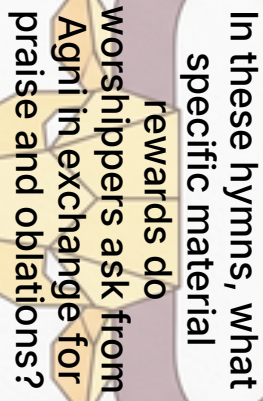
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Hint:

This hymn tells a specific story of Agni's concealment and retrieval. The location relates to one of his birthplaces.



Worshippers consistently ask Agni for material prosperity, specifically: wealth in cattle, noble sons and offspring, heroic strength, protection for the homestead, abundant food, and treasures. This request is a recurring refrain in several hymns. (e.g., Hymn I.23, Hymn VI.11, Hymn VII.11, Hymn XV.7)

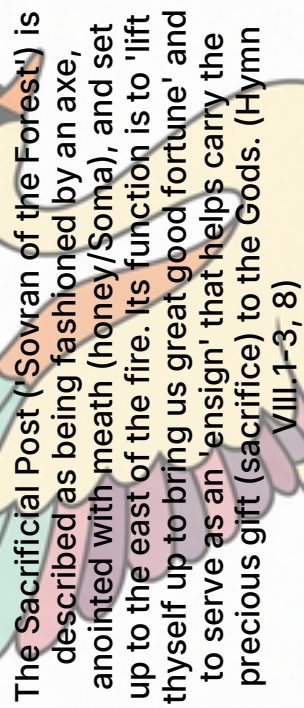


In these hymns, what specific material rewards do worshippers ask from Agni in exchange for praise and oblations?

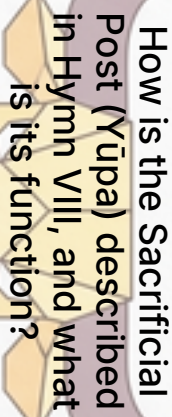
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Hint:

Look for the repeated stanza at the end of several hymns, which outlines the desired boons from the god.



The Sacrificial Post ('Sovran of the Forest') is described as being fashioned by an axe, anointed with meath (honey/Soma), and set up to the east of the fire. Its function is to 'lift thyself up to bring us great good fortune' and to serve as an 'ensign' that helps carry the precious gift (sacrifice) to the Gods. (Hymn VIII.1-3, 8)



How is the Sacrificial Post (Yūpa) described in Hymn VIII, and what is its function?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

This hymn is dedicated to a specific ritual object. Consider its physical attributes and its purpose in the sacrificial context.

The 'threefold light' of Agni refers to his presence in three distinct realms: 1) as the sun in the heavens, 2) as lightning in the atmosphere (mid-region), and 3) as terrestrial fire on earth (including sacrificial and domestic fire).

The Viśvāmitras (descendants of Viśvāmitra, part of the Kuśika clan) are depicted as the patrons or priests who kindle and worship Agni. The hymns state that Agni is 'kindled perpetual by the Viśvāmitras' and that the 'Kuśikas invoke him with oblation.' (Hymn I.21, Hymn XXXVI.1)

Hymn XXVII.7 states 'I am light threefold, measurer of the region'. What are the three forms of light or fire associated with Agni in Vedic tradition?

What role does the group known as the 'Viśvāmitras' or 'Kuśikas' play in relation to Agni?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

This concept refers to Agni's cosmic pervasiveness across the three worlds of Vedic cosmology.

Difficulty:
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Hint:

Consider the identity of the poets/worshippers who are addressing the god in these hymns.

Agni is frequently compared to powerful animals. He is described as a Bull (bellowing, strong), a horse or steed (swift, neighing, carrier), and a lion (hiding in his lair). This imagery emphasizes his strength, speed, and wild nature. (Hymn VII.3, Hymn IX.4)

When kindled, Agni is identified with several other Gods, demonstrating his central importance. Hymn V.4 states he becomes Mitra, Varuṇa, and Jātavedas, acting as priest, minister, and house-friend.

In what ways is Agni's appearance and movement described using animal imagery?

According to Hymn V.4, which other major deities can Agni become or embody when he is properly kindled?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

Think about the similes used to convey Agni's dynamic and potent character throughout the hymns.

Difficulty:
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Hint:

This hymn explicitly lists other gods that Agni is equated with during the ritual.