

Look at the first verse of the first hymn. The deity is 'Lord of the homestead'.

Difficulty:
★ ★ ★ ★

Hint:

In Book 7, Hymn 1 of the Rigveda, what is the primary deity being praised and how is this deity described as being created?

The primary deity is Agni, the god of fire. He is described as being 'engendered' or created 'from fire-sticks, with their hands' swift movement' by men.

Consider his functions during a sacrifice and his relationship with the worshippers.

Difficulty:
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Hint:

What are some of the key roles and attributes of Agni as depicted in Hymns I-XVI?

Agni's key roles include being a messenger between humans and gods ('envoy between both worlds'), a priest ('Hotar') who officiates sacrifices, a purifier, a protector of the homestead, and a bestower of wealth, wisdom, and brave sons. He is described as youthful, radiant, wise, and a destroyer of demons and enemies.

Agni Vaiśvānara is credited with causing the 'dark-hued races' (Dasyus) to flee and desert their possessions by burning and rending their castles for Pūru. In Hymn V.6, he is praised for driving the Dasyus from their home and bringing 'forth broad light to light the Ārya'.

Hymn V praises Agni in his form as 'Vaiśvānara'. What specific action is attributed to Agni Vaiśvānara in relation to the 'dark-hued races' and the 'Ārya'?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

This concept relates to the conflict between different groups of people mentioned in the Veda.

Indra aids King Sudās of the Trītsu tribe. The conflict is often identified as the 'Battle of the Ten Kings', and takes place at the Paruṣṇī river, which Indra makes shallow and easy for Sudās to cross while his enemies are overwhelmed.

Hymn XVIII, dedicated to Indra, describes a major conflict. Who is the central human hero Indra aids, and what is the name of the battle or the river involved?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

This hymn recounts a specific historical or mythological battle where Indra intervenes on behalf of a king.

X

The hymn mentions a coalition of peoples against Sudās. Among them are the Pakthas, the Bhālānas, the Alinas, the Śivas, the Viśāṇins, the Anavas, the Druhyus, and Pūru. The hymn also mentions the Simyu and Kavasa as enemies.

In Hymn XVIII, list at least four of the tribes or peoples who allied against Sudās.

Difficulty:
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Hint:

Look for a list of names in the verses describing the gathering of Sudās's enemies.

X

Indra is referred to by many titles, including 'Lord of Bay Steeds', 'Thunder-wielder', 'Maghavan' (the Bountiful/Generous), 'Fort-destroyer', 'Hero', 'Victor', and 'Lord of cattle'.

What are some of the key epithets or titles used for Indra in these hymns (XVIII-XXVI)?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

Think about the symbols and powers most associated with this warrior deity.

What role does Soma play in the worship of Indra, as described in Hymns XX-XXIV?

Difficulty:
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Hint:
Consider what the worshippers offer Indra to gain his favor and power.

Soma is a divine, intoxicating juice that is pressed and offered to Indra during rituals. It is said to gladden, cheer, and strengthen him, making him ready for heroic exploits like slaying Vṛtra and battling foes. The hymns state that 'Soma unpressed ne'er gladdened liberal Indra.'

Hymn XIX mentions several enemies Indra defeated for his worshippers. Name at least two specific enemies and the person Indra was aiding.

Difficulty:
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Hint:
Review the hymn dedicated to Indra's past military victories.

Indra is mentioned as subduing both Kuyava and the Dāsa Śuṣṇa for Kutsa Ārjuneya. He also sent Cūmuri and Dhuni to 'swift death to sleep' for Dabhitī.

The Vasiṣṭhas are the family of seers (Rṣis) who are traditionally credited with composing Book 7 of the Rigveda. The text explicitly mentions them by name (e.g., 'We, the Vasiṣṭhas, now implore thee, Agni' in Hymn VII.7) as the worshippers and poets offering these prayers to the gods like Agni and Indra.

The hymns frequently mention a group called the Vasiṣṭhas. What is their relationship to these hymns and the deities?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

Look for a recurring name associated with the authors or singers of the hymns.

Worshippers primarily seek material rewards: wealth (especially in the form of cows and horses), brave sons and descendants ('hero children'), protection from enemies and demons, victory in battle, strength, fame, and general prosperity ('felicity').

According to these hymns, what are the primary rewards sought by worshippers from Agni and Indra?

Difficulty:
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Hint:

Consider what the singers repeatedly ask for at the end of their praise.

An Āpri hymn is a special type of invocational hymn used to invite a series of specific deified objects and minor deities to the sacrifice. Hymn II invites figures like Narāśamsa, the divine Doors, Morning and Night, the divine Bards, the three goddesses (Bhāratī, Ilā, Sarasvati), and Tvaṣṭar to participate in the offering.

What is the function of the Āpri hymn (Hymn II)?

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

Hint: This hymn has a unique structure, calling upon a succession of different divine entities.

According to verse 12 of Hymn XVIII, Indra 'o'erwhelmedst in the waters' the famed ancient Kavasa and the Druhyu. This suggests they were drowned, likely in the Paruṣṇī river, during the battle against Sudās.

In Hymn XVIII, Indra is praised for defeating ancient Kavasa and 'the Druhyu'. What happened to them?

Difficulty: ★★★★☆

Hint: This detail is part of the specific events of the battle recounted in the hymn to Indra.