



After death, the deceased travels upon ancient pathways to meet Yama, the king of the dead, and the Fathers (ancestors). They meet the merit of their past deeds in the highest heaven, leave behind sin, and receive a new, glorious body. Yama provides them a resting place adorned with light and waters, and two four-eyed dogs guard the path.

According to Hymn XIV  
(Yama), what happens  
to a person after death?

Difficulty:  
★★★★☆

Hint:

Look at the hymn dedicated to Yama, which describes the soul's journey and destination.

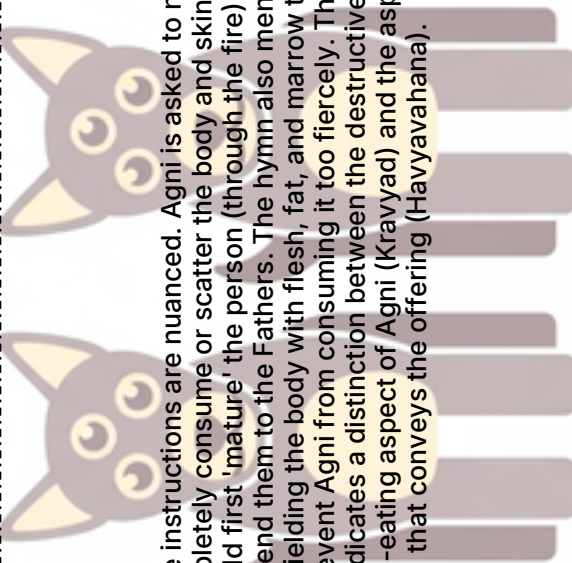
The supplicants ask the Waters for several benefits: 1. Energy and delight. 2. Auspicious sap and procreant strength. 3. Health, strength, and balm for healing. 4. Cleansing from sins, evil deeds, lies, and false oaths. Within the waters are said to dwell all healing balms and Agni.

What specific requests  
are made to the Waters  
(Āpas) in Hymn IX?

Difficulty:  
★★★★☆

Hint:

Review the short hymn dedicated to the Waters and list the boons being sought.




The instructions are nuanced. Agni is asked to not completely consume or scatter the body and skin. He should first 'mature' the person (through the fire) and then send them to the Fathers. The hymn also mentions shielding the body with flesh, fat, and marrow to prevent Agni from consuming it too fiercely. This indicates a distinction between the destructive, flesh-eating aspect of Agni (Kravyad) and the aspect that conveys the offering (Havyavahana).

**Hymn XVI describes a funeral rite involving cremation. What are the specific instructions given to Agni regarding the deceased's body?**

Difficulty:  
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Hint:

Focus on the first few verses of Hymn XVI, which directly address Agni's handling of the corpse.



The 'Fathers' are the spirits of ancestors who have passed on. They are categorized as lowest, highest, and midmost, and as those who passed long ago and more recently. They are considered righteous beings who deserve a share of the Soma offering. Their role is to aid, bless, and protect their living descendants, granting them health, strength, riches, and hero sons in response to homage and sacrifice.

**Who are the 'Fathers' (Pitrs) as described in Hymn XV, and what is their role?**

Difficulty:  
★★★★★

Hint:

The hymn titled 'Fathers' describes their nature, who they are, and what they do for the living who worship them.



Look towards the end of Hymn VIII for a narrative about a specific heroic battle.

Difficulty:  
★★★★☆  
Hint:

In Hymn VIII, what  
mythological event  
involving *Trita Āptya* is  
recounted?

Urged on by Indra, *Trita Āptya*, well-skilled with his father's weapons, fought and slew a three-headed, seven-rayed foe, identified as the son of *Tvaṣṭar* (*Viśvarūpa*). By defeating this powerful being, *Trita* freed the foe's cattle. Indra is also credited with this victory, smiting the three heads from the body.

Consider the context of Hymn XVIII, which is about separating the living from the dead after a funeral.

Difficulty:  
★★★★★  
Hint:

What is the purpose of  
the 'rampart for the  
living' erected in Hymn  
XVIII?

The 'rampart' (*paridhi*) is a symbolic barrier erected during a post-funeral rite to separate the living from the dead. Its purpose is to prevent Death (*Mṛtyu*) from reaching the living survivors, allowing them to survive a hundred lengthened autumns, and prolong their existence, turning back to life, dancing, and laughter after the funeral is concluded.

The hymn states that Tvaṣṭar prepared the bridal of his daughter, Saranyū, who was married to Vivasvān. However, they hid the immortal Saranyū from mortals, made a likeness of her (a mortal double), and gave that to Vivasvān. The original Saranyū then brought forth the Aśvin brothers and subsequently, 'deserted both twinned pairs of children'.

According to Hymn XVII, what is the origin story of the Aśvin brothers?

Difficulty:  
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Hint:

The first two verses of Hymn XVII recount a mythological story about a divine wedding and hidden identity.

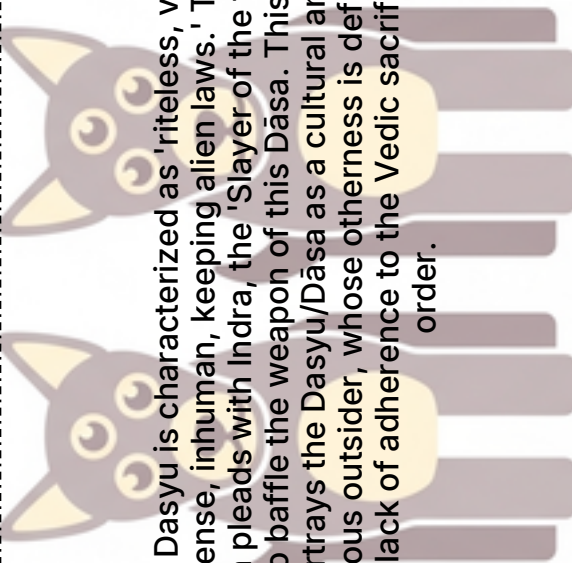
The hymn is a charm or prayer for the return of lost or stolen cattle (kine). The speaker invokes Agni, Soma, and Indra to bring the cows back, calls upon their herdsman to return with them, and offers butter and milk to secure their safety and the preservation of wealth. The goal is to have the cattle return and feed securely under their proper herdsman.

What is the central plea in Hymn XIX, 'Waters or Cows'?

Difficulty:  
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Hint:

The title and repeated phrases like 'Make these return to us again' reveal the hymn's primary purpose.



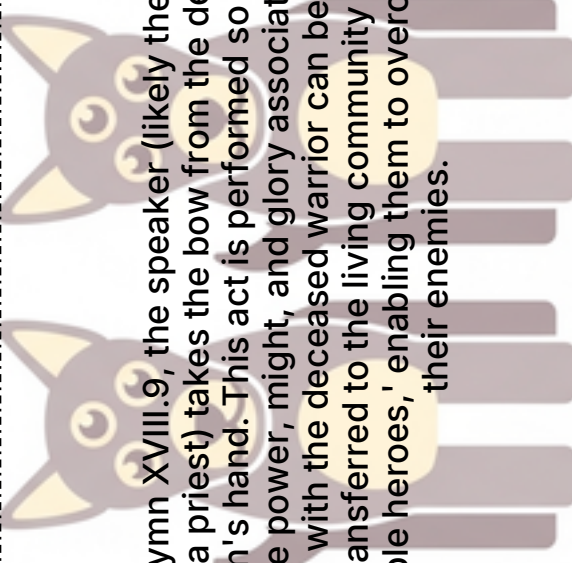
The Dasyu is characterized as 'riteless, void of sense, inhuman, keeping alien laws.' The hymn pleads with Indra, the 'Slayer of the foe,' to baffle the weapon of this Dāsa. This portrays the Dasyu/Dāsa as a cultural and religious outsider, whose otherness is defined by a lack of adherence to the Vedic sacrificial order.

Hymn XXII mentions a conflict between Indra and a 'Dasyu'. How is this enemy characterized?

Difficulty:  
★★★★☆

Hint:

Verse 8 of Hymn XXII provides a specific list of attributes for this enemy.



In Hymn XVIII.9, the speaker (likely the heir or a priest) takes the bow from the dead man's hand. This act is performed so that the power, might, and glory associated with the deceased warrior can be transferred to the living community of 'noble heroes,' enabling them to overcome their enemies.

What ritual action involving a bow is described in the post-funeral rites of Hymn XVIII?

Difficulty:  
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Hint:

This hymn deals with separating the living from the dead. One verse describes what is done with the deceased's weapon.