

In the Rigvedic hymns provided, what are the primary roles and characteristics attributed to the god Agni?

Difficulty:  
★ ★ ☆☆☆

Hint:

Consider his titles like 'Priest', 'Envoy', 'Guest', and 'Banner', as well as his origins and relationship with darkness/light.

Agni is depicted as a central deity with multiple roles: 1. A divine priest and envoy between mortals and gods (Hymn I.5, III.1). 2. The 'Guest of men' and 'Banner of each act of worship' (Hymn I.5-6). 3. A child of Earth and Heaven, born from plants (Hymn I.2). 4. A youthful yet ancient being who overcomes darkness with light (Hymn III.1). 5. A protector of mortals and source of wealth (Hymn VII.7). 6. A knower of seasons and corrector of ritual errors (Hymn II.3-4).

What is the central conflict in the dialogue hymn between Yama and Yami (Hymn X), and what is the outcome?

Difficulty:  
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Hint:

This is a dialogue hymn (samvada-sukta). Focus on what each speaker wants and who prevails.

The central conflict is Yami's desire for an incestuous union with her twin brother, Yama, for the sake of procreation, arguing it was ordained by the creator God Tvaṣṭar. Yama firmly rejects her pleas, calling such an act a sin and a violation of the Law of Varuna and Mitra. He urges her to find another partner. The outcome is Yama's successful refusal of Yami's advances, upholding the social and divine taboo against incest.

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

Difficulty:  
Hint:

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

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.

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

Difficulty:  
Hint:

to a person after death?  
According to Hymn XIV

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.

**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 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).

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

Difficulty:  
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Hint:

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

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.

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

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

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 (Mrtyu) 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.

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.

In Hymn VIII, what is involving Trita Āptya is recounted?

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



## 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 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'.

## 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.

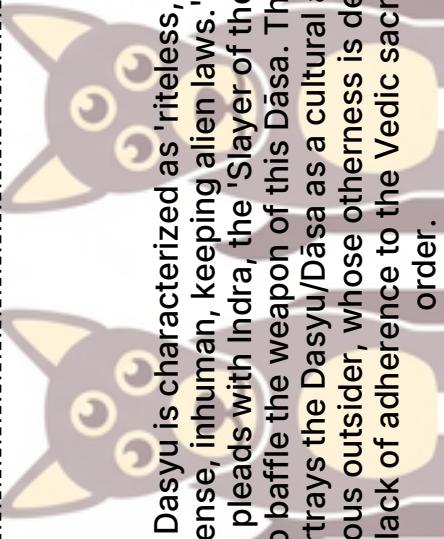
The hymn is a charm or prayer for the return of lost or stolen cattle (kine). The speaker invokes Agni, Soma, and Indra to bring the cows back, calls upon their herdsman to return with them, and offers butter and milk to secure their safety and the preservation of wealth. The goal is to have the cattle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

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

Difficulty:  
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Hint:

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



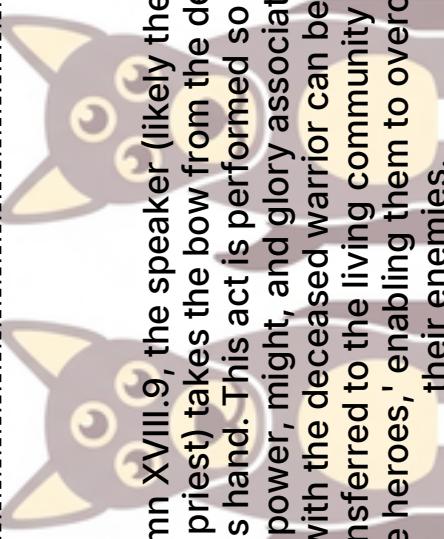
The Dasyu is characterized as 'riteless, void of sense, inhuman, keeping alien laws.' The hymn pleads with Indra, the 'Slayer of the foe,' to baffle the weapon of this Dāsa. This portrays the Dasyu/Dāsa as a cultural and religious outsider, whose otherness is defined by a lack of adherence to the Vedic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

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.



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.