

Key Points from Introductory Unit

1. TBL supports exploration of primary sources in two stages:
 - (a) orientation to readings, leading to TRA; and
 - (b) application of key concepts (#2) to SAME reading.
2. Religion can be studied objectively, neutrally & empathically.
3. Temple traditions co-exist with universalist “Hinduism” in U.S.

+ one more thing:

choose a ****celebration to visit**** at a local worship site (see SacCT)

Essential Lesson from Trial Application Exercise

Studying religion requires

BOTH

(a) observing what is visible
(practice & community)

AND

(b) gathering clues about the invisible
(reflection about unseen powers/forces)

& most importantly,
investigating the way the two **shape one another**.

Content Objectives for Unit 1: Daily & Weekly Worship in Vedic & Shaivite traditions

By the end of this unit you should be able to describe, for an interested peer unfamiliar with these topics:

1. the ancient Vedic culture associated with fire-offering rituals, performed individually and communally year round.
2. the medieval image worship of Shaiva Orthodoxy, used also for honoring Shakti, Vishnu, and subsidiary deities.
3. the way that these foundational Hindu **practices** shape the **reflection** of the specialists who preserve and transmit them.

→not only in a given situation but **over years & generations**.

Thinking As You Read (part 1)

What you think about when you read should go beyond summarizing.
Consider an analogy that symbolically describes this thinking.

When putting together a puzzle, one **first looks for**

(a) the shape of each puzzle piece & how it fits with others

but then also

(b) forms and colors that appear on different pieces;
similar looking pieces that are hard to distinguish;
and finally the whole picture of the assembled puzzle.

This analogy spotlights the **different skills** needed
to prepare for (a) TRAs and (b) application exercises.

reviewing basic terminology for the academic study of religion
“Essential Elements of Religious Life (on-line syllabus)

(a) “Integrating The Visible Elements of Religion” (4th section)

dimensions layers

(b) “Detecting Clues About Practice” (5th section)

worship informal roles written records

actions objects words spaces

ideal vs. actual

fire-offering* (=yajña, "sacrifice") in Vedic* hymns & Brāhmanas* (RDR, 1-22)

harmony/[cosmic] order = Rta imagination *veda**

(a) substances, priests, fires & times for fire-offering* (p.109-10, 119-23, 130)

clarified butter burnt offering mantras sacred fire *soma*
brahmin (=Brāhmin*) priest(s) *brahman*-priest Agni hearth
Agnihotra Full-Moon Offering Four-Month rituals

(b) Rta, yajña*, *brahman** & Brahman: conceptual overviews (p.1-4, 104-10, 114-19)

Vedic* religion/period/poets *satya* *tapas* *vrata*
dharman *karman* *skambha* the One

(c) yajña's power to sustain the forces of life (p.124-31)

Ādityas vs. Dānavas Brhaspati Indra* vs. Vrtra

(d) yajña's power to reintegrate the fractured cosmos (p.110-14, 131-41)

Vāc = Word Purusha* = Person Prajāpati* *Shatapatha Brāhmana*
ritual ground/enclosure altar fire bird --> head, wing, tail *loka*

Purusha* Nārāyana* in the *Shatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (RDR, 23-25)

Vishnu Pāñcarātra Prajāpati Kṛshna

(a) Brāhmanas* overview (p.1-2)

*brahman** Veda* collection Vedic lineage

(b) Purusha* Nārāyana*'s year-long (=Sattra) fire offering (p.2-3)

Vasu, Rudra & Āditya [deities]

(c) the five-day (Pāñcarātra) Person Offering (p.4-6)

brahman [priest] *Purusha Sūkta* = Purusha Nārāyana hymn
ritual fee ritual fires Latter Narayana [hymn]

God appears on earth: the *Bhagavad Gītā in the *Mahābhārata** (RDR, 26-30)**

Krshna* (=Hrshiksha, Mādhava, Keshava, Govinda, Janārdana, Hari, Madhusūdhana)
Arjuna* (=Gudākesha, ape-bannered Pāndavas, Dhanamyaja, Pārtha) Law [=dharma*]

(a) the battlefield (p.69-71)

Dhritarāshtra Samjaya flowers & incense conches & drums
Pāndavas Duryodhana Dhārtarāshtras [=sons of Dhritarāshtra]

(b) Arjuna's despair & Krshna's* response (p.71-75)

miscegenation gurus senses body

(c) vision of Krshna's* cosmic form (p.113-121)

Supreme Person [=Purusha*] Yoga vs. yoga* God Vishnu Vāsudeva
Gods Ādityas, Vasus & Rudras Brahmā = Prajāpati*
Time fire mouths Veda sacrifices [=yajña] bhakti*

worship of Vāsudeva* in *Vaishnava Dharmashāstra (ViDh)* (RDR, 31-57)

*dharma** = “Law(s)” Dharmashāstra = ancient jurisprudence, (rules of) Dharma* (literature)

(a) worship of Vishnu* (=Vāsudeva, Purusha*) in medieval Kashmir (p.7-13, 31-38)

Kāthaka branch/school statue(s)/iconography Pāñcarātra Madhya Pradesh
āryavarta (“land of the Āryas”) vs. *mlecchadesha* (“region of foreigners”)

(b) the frame story: Earth (element) seeks out Vishnu* (p.16-17, 47-51, 160-64)

Manu & Yājñavalkya Shrī/Lakshmī Vishnu = boar, Yogin, Madhusūdhana, Janārdana
Vedas*/vedic chants sacrifice/altar/offering/ladle Kashyapa ocean Shesha

(c) rituals for the Vaishnava householder (p.21-22, 109-11, 123-24, 128-30, 150-52)

state/king marriage social classes Brāhmana (=Brāhmin*) veda sacrifice fire
barley Mārgashīrsha forest cow full-moon day Shakra [=Indra*]
bath/water Purusha hymn Sāvitrī* statue ornament/garment/flower/incense/lamp/food

(d) the wandering ascetic’s (=mendicant, yogin) meditation on Purusha* (p..156-59)

alms pain hell body (objects of) senses Knower of the Field

purification of the elements* in *Jayākhya Samhitā* (RDR, 31-57)

Lord = Vishnu,* Vasudeva, Narayana emanations earth, water, fire, air/wind & space
heart body breath crown of the head/circle of light mantra mantra-body

(a) preparing the space, purification and mantras* (#1-22)

water complete Vishu seat flames

(b) visualization, absorption and expulsion of elements (#23-57)

sound, touch, [visible] form, taste & smell
quadrangle half moon sky goers

(c) withdrawing the soul and “burning” the physical body (#58-77)

sixfold mantra (*Om vishnave namah*) ashes subtle channel

(d) constructing the divine body (#78-103)

lotus nectar joy/bliss kadamba tree/nishambhu flower moonlight channel

passages to locate and study in the above primary sources:

"...his lotus face was hard to discern amidst the radiance of the gems in the hood of the serpent Shesha; he was shining like a hundred moons; his brilliance equaled a hundred suns; dressed in yellow clothes and imperturbable, he was adorned with all kinds of jewels; he was radiant with a diadem the color of the sun and with earrings; his two feet were being rubbed by Lakshmi with her splendid palms; he was being attended on all side by his weapons in bodily form."

"Meditating on the god whose form is flames, whose splendor is like a thousand suns, covered with millions of flames, vomiting flames from his mouth, [the practitioner] should fill the entire universe up to the world of Brahma with that visualization. He should flood the directions, making them blaze with the splendor of his mantra, and meditate upon the entire circle of the earth baked, like a clay pot, by the fire of his mantra, O Best of the Twice-Born."

"...preparing to build agni [that is, the fire altar], he...gathers him [Agni] within his self: for it is from within his own self that he makes him to be born, and one's source determines who one is....He then sings the Song of Truth for, as the gods have said, 'Let us make the truth his mouth: thereby we will become the truth, truth will turn onto us, and our hopes in performing the ceremony will come true.'...He then places a lotus leaf in the center of the site. The lotus leaf is a womb. Thus he places a womb [from which Agni may be born] on the site....Then he places a gold plate on [the ground]. This gold plate is the distant sun that shines on all creatures here on earth...."

"...the hosts of kings of the earth...
Along with their own chief warriors too
Are hastening into your numerous mouths
That are spiky with tusks and horrifying—
There are some who are dangling between your teeth,
Their heads already crushed to bits.
As many a river in spate ever faster
Streams oceanward in a headlong rush,
So yonder heroic rulers of earth
Are streaming into your flame-licked mouths."