

RIVERS

1. GANGA RIVER

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganges>



Bhagiratha was a legendary king of the Ikshvaku dynasty. He brought the River Ganga to Earth from the heavens because only she could bestow nirvana to Bhagiratha's ancestors who were cursed by Sage Kapila. After years of great penance, River Ganga descended on Earth and Lord Shiva agreed to channelize her flow. Therefore, River Ganga flowed from Lord Shiva's hair. The place where the sacred river originated is known as Gangotri in present times, and since the river originated from Lord Shiva's Jata (hair) it is also called Jatashankari.

While flowing, the Ganga demolished the ashram of sage Jahna who became furious and stopped her movement. On Bhagirath's appeal, the sage freed her; therefore, Ganga is also called Jahnavi. The Ganga then reached sage Kapil's ashram, where Bhagirath's ancestors were burnt to ashes and liberated to rest in peace.

The Ganga is the only river that flows from all the three worlds - Heaven/Swarga, Earth/Prithvi, and Hell/Patala. The person who has traveled to all three worlds is addressed as *Tripathaga* in the Sanskrit language.

In Hinduism, the holy River Ganga is personified and personalized as the Goddess Ganga. The followers of the Hindu religion believe that bathing in the pious Ganga can help wash all sins. People also believe that a mere touch of the river can help attain moksha (salvation) and so the ashes of the dead are immersed in the sacred river.

2. BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brahmaputra_River



The Brahmaputra is one of the major rivers of Asia possessing mythological importance. The term "Brahmaputra" means "son of Brahma" in Sanskrit. It originates from Mount Kailash in the Himalayan Mountains in western Tibet, passes through China and then flows for 2900kms into the sea in the Bay of Bengal in Bangladesh. It is called Tsangpo in Tibet, Luit or Brahmaputra in Assam, Siang or Dihang in Arunachal Pradesh and one of its main branches is called Jamuna in Bangladesh.

Mount Kailash, the origin of Brahmaputra River is the abode of Lord Shiva and goddess Parvati. The lands and towns along the Brahmaputra River thus attain mythological importance along with the rivers. Koppa Temple at Mansarovar Lake is one of the major visiting spots. Mt. Kailash is claimed to be the summit of the Hindu religious axis, is also one of the highest mountains in Tibet at 22,022 feet. Lord Shiva resides over here among the peaceful Himalayas.

A legendary story says that Lord Shiva once built a house for himself but gave it away to a follower who asked for it. Thus without changing his residence he settled in the mountain of Kailash. This is his abode where he stays with his whole family including his wife Goddess Parvati and children Lord Ganesha and Lord Kartikeya and the other Shiv Ganas like Nandi and others. According to ancient religious texts, the abode of Lord Vishnu is called Vaikuntha, the abode of Lord Brahma is called Brahamaloka and the abode of Lord Shiva is called Kailash. The Brahmaputra River originates from the Kailash. Of the three, one can only go bodily and return in this life from Kailash having experienced spirituality. The Hindus, Bons and Jains all travel to this place as pilgrims. A journey to Kailash along River Brahmaputra is considered as once in a lifetime accomplishment.

It is because of Kailash - Manasarowar, the river Brahmaputra is considered a religious or holy river. The Manasarowar Lake is 865-kms from Delhi, that Kumaon is sometimes called "Manaskhand". Many myths are associated with this unusual mountain and lake and its flowing river. The Buddhists, the Jains and the Bonpas of Tibet too, all respect this river with great fervor and devotion. Therefore, it is not surprising for a devotee to come across the worlds. The Bonpas make an anti-clockwise pilgrimage around Mt. Kailash after a short worship to River Brahmaputra, whereas the believers of the Jain faith specially visit astpaad near the southern region of Kailash in the Kailash --Mansarover region.

Among the thousands of deities of Hinduism, Lord Shiva is the most beloved and the most sought after lord. Lord Shiva finds a great place in the heart of all devotees be it the Human beings, the Devataas or the Rakshasaas and he is directly related to the River Brahmaputra. He is even called Bhola Baba because of his uniqueness of being simple and he grants whatever the devotee asks for. This is the reason why he is having a large number of devotees in all the 3 worlds of Akash, Bhumi, & Patal. Bhola Baba filled with Vairagya or dispassion is a joy of all spiritual seekers.

Divinity is initiated in "Kailash Manasarowar Yatra" along the River Brahmaputra. The most dominant temple is the 'Pashupatinath' with many others that are equally significant temples are of great merit along the towns of this river. This primordial temple enshrines faith of millions of Hindus throughout the world as Lord Shiva's sacred residence. A spiritual atmosphere is carried out throughout the religious trip of River Brahmaputra.

3. INDUS RIVER

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indus_River



Birthplace to the ancient Indus valley civilisation, the Indus river holds immense historical significance.

The country of India got its name from this great river. It is considered one of the seven sacred rivers in India.

The river begins its 3,180 km long journey from the Tibetan plateau of the Kailash Mountain range near lake Mansarovar.

It flows afterward through Ladakh towards the Gilgit-Baltistan region and southward into Pakistan and finally unites with the Arabian sea near Karachi.

A major portion (over 60 percent) of the Indus basin catchment area lies in Pakistan. Indus Waters Treaty between India and Pakistan allows India to use 20 percent of the total water carried by the Indus river.

Some of the major tributaries of the Indus river include Kabul (river), Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej river.

4. GODAVARI RIVER

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Godavari_River



The river's banks have been pilgrimage sites for thousands of years. Baladeva 5000 years ago and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu 500 years ago are supposed to have bathed in her waters to cleanse themselves. Every 12 years, the riverbank has Pushkaram fair.

Sage Gautama and his wife Ahalya supposedly resided in the Brahmagiri Hills near Tryambakeshwar. The pair resided in Govuru, now renamed Kovvur ("cow") after British occupation. Ahalya resided in Thagami (now Thogummi). The sage grew rice and other crops to feed the hungry (annadanam). On the munis' request, Ganesha sent the miracle cow maaya-dhenu. While the sage was meditating, it spoiled his rice. Since Hindus revere cows, he placed dharbha grass on her. Unexpectedly, it died. The munis and their wives said, "We believed Gautama-maharishi was a good man, but he committed bovicide!" The sage wanted to make amends. On the instruction of the munis, he travelled to Nashik to pray to Lord Tryambakeshwara (a manifestation of Shiva) for atonement and to let the Ganges flow over the cow. Shiva was delighted with the sage and redirected the Ganges, washing away the cow and creating the Godavari in Nashik.

5. NARMADA RIVER

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narmada_River



According to the legends, Narmada river came down from the sky as by the order of the Lord Shiva. Some also says that the Narmada river also sprang from the body of the Lord Shiva, while performing the tandava (Lord Shiva's cosmic dance). Narmada means 'Giving Pleasure'. In Sanskrit Narma means 'pleasure' and da refers to 'to give'. In some parts of India Narmada is also known as Narbada. The water of Narmada river purifies a man and help him in attaining salvation. Among the people in India, Narmada River is considered as the mother and the giver of peace.

6. KRISHNA RIVER

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishna_River

River Krishna is sacred among the Hindus in India. The river is named on the name of the Lord Krishna. It is believed that by taking the ritual dip in its water can purify all the past sins of the human beings. The river is referred to as the Krishnaveni mata among the Hindus. There are many pilgrimage centers on the banks of the River Krishna including Mallikarjuna temple (Srisailam), Amareshwara Swamy temple (Amaravati), Dattadева temple, Sangameshwara Shiva temple, Ramaling temple and Durga Malleshwara temple (Vijayawada). The center of attraction is the Krishna Pushkaram fair which is held one in twelve years on the banks of the Krishna river.

7. YAMUNA RIVER

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yamuna>

Association with Yama

In Vedic mythology, Yami is Yama's twin. Yama and Yami are Creator Gods. As Yama is the Lord of Death, Yami is the Lady of Life.

In the Rig Veda, Yami describes liquids served to dying sacrifices in the afterlife. According to Taittiriya Samhita, Yama is Agni (fire) while Yami is earth. Yama is also linked to the goddess of graveyards and sadness, Nirriti, in the Vedas. In Brahmanas; Yama's twin sister in Samhita writings. In the Purushamedha ritual of the Shatapatha Brahmana, a mother of twins is sacrificed to Yami.

The Brahmana literature Maitrayani Samhita says Yami promptly mourned Yama's death. As it was always day at the beginning of existence, Yami couldn't fathom how long had passed since Yama's death. The gods created darkness between two days so Yami may see time passing and heal from her sadness. A brother and sister celebrate Bhau-beej to commemorate the holy twins. A sister prays to her brother to consume her sacrifices to satisfy Yama and Yamuna.

Association with Krishna

Krishna being carried over Yamuna by Vasudeva just after his birth.

In a story related to Krishna's birth, Krishna's father Vasudeva was carrying the new-born Krishna to safety was crossing the Yamuna River, he asked Yamuna to make a way for him to cross the river, which she did by creating a passage. This was the first time that she saw Krishna whom she marries in later life. Yamuna wanted to touch the feet of the baby which she did at deeper depths of the river and as a result the river became very calm.

Krishna also spent most of youth in Vrindavan on the banks of Yamuna, playing the flute and playing with his lover Radha and the gopis on the banks.

The Bhagavata Purana says Krishna once visited his relatives, the five Pandava brothers, their bride Draupadi, and their mother Kunti in their city Indraprastha (modern-day Delhi). Yudhishtira asks Krishna to spend a few days. One day, Krishna and Arjuna hunt in the jungle. While hunting, Arjuna was exhausted. He and Krishna bathed in Yamuna's pure water. A pretty girl was walking near the river. Arjuna was urged to see her by Krishna, who noticed her. The girl informed Arjuna that she was Kalindi, the daughter of Surya, and

that she was residing in a home built by her father in the river. She was doing austerities in order to marry Vishnu and would stay there until she found him. Arjuna tells Krishna, Vishnu's incarnation, about Kalindi, and he agrees to marry her. Kalindi rode the chariot to Indraprastha to meet Yudhishtira. Krishna and Kalindi returned to Dwarka with their company and married after a few days. According to Bhagavata Purana, she had 10 sons: Shruta, Kavi, Vrsa, Vira, Subahu, Bhadra, Santi, Darsa, Purnamasa and Somaka. In the Vishnu Purana, she had several sons led by Shruta.

The Bhagavata Purana narrates: Once, an adult Krishna visited his cousins – the five Pandava brothers with their common wife Draupadi and their mother Kunti in their capital Indraprastha (modern-day Delhi), located on the banks of the Yamuna. The eldest Pandava Yudhishtira requests Krishna to stay with them for a couple of days. One day, Krishna and the middle Pandava Arjuna go for hunting in the forest. During their hunting, Arjuna was tired. He and Krishna went to the Yamuna and bathed and drank the clear water. There, a lovely girl was strolling along the river bank. Krishna who saw her and asked Arjuna to meet her to know who she was. When Arjuna inquired, the girl told him that she was Kalindi, the daughter of Surya, and that she was living in a house constructed by her father in the river where she has been performing austerities with intent to have Vishnu as her husband and would remain there, until she finds him. Arjuna conveys Kalindi's message to Krishna, the avatar of Vishnu, who readily agreed to marry the beautiful damsel. Then they traveled to Indraprastha with Kalindi in the chariot and met Yudhishtira. After a stay of few days there, Krishna and Kalindi returned to his capital Dwarka with their entourage and duly married each other. According to Bhagavata Purana she had ten sons: Shruta, Kavi, Vrsa, Vira, Subahu, Bhadra, Santi, Darsa, Purnamasa and the youngest, Somaka. The Vishnu Purana mentions that she had many sons headed by Shruta.

The Bhagavata Purana also narrates: Krishna's elder brother Balarama was staying in Ambadi on Yamuna's banks for a few months. Once, he was frolicking with the gopis on the river banks and desired to play in the waters. Experiencing the heat of the sun, Balarama felt a need to take a bath in the river. However, he refused to walk to the waters and called upon the river to come near him, but the chaste Yamuna refused despite repeated orders from Balarama. An angry Balarama dragged the river by his weapon – the plough and changed its course, hurting the river goddess. Terrified, the river assumed her form as a goddess and bowed to Balarama and asked his forgiveness. A calmed Balarama ordered the river to flood the forest so he could bathe and play in her waters, and the river complied.

Religious significance

A temple dedicated to Yamuna at Yamunotri near the source of the river.

Yamuna is one of the holiest rivers in Hinduism. Yamuna is only second to the Ganges (Ganga), the holiest river in Hinduism. Her confluence with the Ganges and the mythical Sarasvati River is called Triveni Sangam, which is a very holy pilgrimage spot. Other pilgrimage sites along the river banks include Yamuna's source Yamunotri, Mathura and Bateshvar.

The Mahabharata mentions Yamuna being one of the 7 tributaries of the Ganges. Drinking its waters is described to absolve sin. The river is mentioned many times in the epic as backdrop for events like yajnas (sacrifices), austerities and even a suicide by a defeated minister Hamsa of Jarasandha.

Various Puranas narrate the greatness of bathing in the Yamuna. The Padma Purana narrates the story of two brothers, who lived a life of indulgence and lust and gave up the virtuous ways. They finally plunged in poverty and resorted to robbery and were killed by beasts in the forest. Both of them reached Yama's court for judgement. While the elder brother was sentenced to Naraka (hell), the younger was granted Svarga (heaven). Astonished, the younger brother asked the reason for it, as both had lived similar lives. Yama explained that the younger brother had lived in the Ashram of a sage on Yamuna's banks and bathed in the sacred river for two months. The first month absolved him of sins and the second one granted him a place in heaven.

8. MAHANADI RIVER

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahanadi>

9. KAVERI RIVER

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaveri>



The Kaveri River is believed as one of the holy rivers by the devout Hindus and is often known as Dakshin Ganga or the 'Ganges of the South'. The river is embodied as the Goddess Kaveri Amman, who is worshipped at several shrines along the course of the river. According to Hindu legends, Vishnumaya or Lopamudra, daughter of Lord Brahma, took birth on the earth as the child of the Kavera Muni and later was married to Sage Agasthaya. Later, she took the form of the river Kaveri in order to serve mankind.

Talakaveri is a pilgrimage spot set amidst Bramahagiri Hills in Kodagu. Pilgrims from all over the country come to these three temples at the birthplace of the river, especially on the particular day known as Tula sankramana when the river water has been said to gush out like a fountain at a predetermined time.

In the month of Tula, devotees take holy dip in the Kavery river. The pilgrim centers in its banks across Tamilnadu are visited by thousands devotees, most prominent of them is the Mayavaram. The three major river islands at Kaveri have a strong Sri Vaishnava legacy, with lovely sculptures of Lord Vishnu in a reclining posture on the mythological seven-headed serpent as his celestial bed or the Sheshashayana. These three temples are known as Madya Ranga, Adi Ranga and Anthya Ranga.

10. TAPTI RIVER

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tapti_River



According to the legends, Tapi river also known as Tapti is the daughter of Surya (the Sun God). Some say that Surya created the Tapi river in order to save himself from his own intense heat. The river finds mention in the great Indian epic Mahabharata, according to which Tapti had married Sanvaran, a legendary hero of the moon dynasty. Tapti and Sanvaran also had the son called Kuru. It was on his name only the Kuru dynasty started. Tapi is considered as the Goddess among the Hindus and is worshiped among them.

11. SUTLEJ RIVER

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sutlej>



An ancient river and the easternmost tributary of the Indus river, the Sutlej river has its source in lake Rakshastal in Tibet. It is the longest of the five rivers that give the state of Punjab its name.

In the Chaitra-Ratha Parva of Adi Parva of Mahābhārata, when sage Vasishṭha wants to commit suicide he sees the river named Haimavata (whose source is Himavat), flooded and full of crocodiles and other aquatic monsters. So he jumps into the river. The river thinking that Vasishṭha is a mass of unquenchable fire dilated itself and flew in a hundred different directions. Henceforth the river was named śatadra (or śatadru) which means the river of a hundred courses. So, Vasishṭha landed on dry land and was unharmed.

Though there isn't much of Religious aspects related to Satluj River, still it is considered to have the waters of Satluj River in any of the Religious Functions.

12. CHAMBAL RIVER

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chambal_River



During the ancient era, the Chambal River was named as Charmanvati, implying the river where leather has dried on its banks. With time, the river gained fame as the river of 'charman' or skin and was thereby renowned as Charmanvati.

In the epic Sanskrit tale of Mahabharata, this river is referred as Charmanyavati. This holds another meaning of taking birth from the blood of innumerable animals, which were sacrificed by the Aryan king Rantideva. Even according to this historic tale, the river was also cursed by Daraupadi and presently it is believed that it is that curse which has still kept behind the individuals of today from entering or polluting the river. So as a result, the river remains untouched, dirt free and therefore turns to be one of the pristine rivers of India.

13. BEAS RIVER

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beas_River



Alexander the Great's 326 BC conquests ended at the Beas River. It hampered Alexander's conquest into India. In 326 BC, his army mutinied after eight years away from home. Alexander hid in his tent for three days, but when his troops didn't alter their minds, he built twelve huge shrines to symbolise the end of his journey.

According to the Kavyamimansa of Rajasekhara, Mahipala I's kingdom-territories reached the upper Beas in the north-west.

The Beas Project irrigated and generated hydroelectric power on the river in the 20th century. Pong Dam's second phase was finished in 1974, while Pandoh Dam's first phase was finished in 1977. Pong Dam was built to offer irrigation below Talwara, but its power plant has a 360 MW capacity. The Pandoh Dam diverts the water to the 990 MW Dehar Power Station on the Sutlej River.

The Shahnehar canal starts at the Shahnehar barrage/headwork immediately downstream of Pong dam to feed irrigation water and four cascade power houses where the canal dips before discharging water in the Beas river. Mukerian hydel (12 units) generates 207 MW. Harike barrage was built at the junction of the Sutlej river to transfer water to irrigation canals for Rajasthan and Punjab.

14. SABARMATI RIVER

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabarmati_River



Sabarmati is a popular river in India and it has deep spiritual importance and religious significance. In Hinduism, the river is associated with sacred texts and sages. Legend has it that the spiritual knowledge texts of Hinduism have different names in different yugas. In Kali Yuga the spiritual knowledge texts is known by the name of Sabarmati. Another story states that 88,000 Rishis performed penance on the banks of Sabarmati making it holy. Legend has it that Sage Kashyapa performed penance to please Shiva. When the lord

appeared, Sage Kashyapa asked to release Ganga from his matted locks of purification of the region. Shiva then released Ganga and it came to be known as Sabarmati here. As Sage Kashyapa brought the river it is also known as Kashyapi Ganga.

Different Names of Sabarmati River in Different Yugas

- Satya Yuga - Kritavati
- Treta - Girikarmika
- Dwapara Yuga - Vidhumati or Chandana
- Kali Yuga - Sabarmati