

Position of water in select *Purāṇa*-s

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Abstract

In this creation, water plays an important role and is seen that water is present before the creation, during the creation and at the time of dissolution as well. All water sources such as lakes, rivers, wells, and streams become so important for mankind as they make life on the earth. People give due respect and perform various rites and rituals in and around water sources as the divinities are attached to water.

Starting from the Vedas, water occupies an important role in literature like *Itihāsa*-s, *Purāṇa*-s, and so on. The *Purāṇa*-s promote performing certain rituals at the holy places that give equal fruits as performing certain *yajña*-s. The gods and sages have taken abode nearby rivers and hence such places are considered sacred and visited by many people which is seen to have started from the *Purāṇa* period.

In this paper, an attempt is made to analyse the position of water in the *Purāṇa*-s in various ways that are related to societies.

Keywords: Water, *devatā*, *tīrtha*, *tīrthayātrā*, *vrata*-s, *dāna*, *Purāṇa*-s

Introduction

Being a natural resource and one of the five elements water is given due respect and regard in Indian tradition. *Purāṇas* reveal how water is associated with many rituals and traditions that are followed by a large society for a good life in this mortal world and life after death as Indian philosophy believes in *karma* and *mokṣa* and life after death. Water has got many attributes like purity, divinity, and the power of healing. In ancient literature, water is described as the foundation of the whole world, the essence of

plant life and the elixir of immortality¹. The *Atharva Veda* prays: “May the water brings us wellbeing!”² There are many such descriptions about the quality, use, sanctity, and symbolism of water.

Water deities

Water is talked so high about in the Vedic literature. *Āpah*, *Parjanya*, Indra, Varuṇa, Agni, Soma are the deities related to water and they have a lot of importance in the Vedic literature. Also, there are several *Sūktas* like- *Āpas*, *Hiraṇyagarbh*, *Nāsadiya*, and *saṁvādas* such as *Viśvāmitra Nadī saṁvāda* related to water. The *Śathpatha Brāhmaṇa* identifies waters with all the goddesses (आपो वै सर्वाः देवताः।) and implies that all goddesses are deposited in them.³ The *Atharva Veda* also contains invocation in honour of water-goddesses. They are described as pure and purifying and have been requested to be auspicious towards the invoker.⁴ In this way it is seen that how the water deities are worshipped and praised in the *Vedas* and the blessings are taken from them.

Origin of water

To understand the origin of water we must first understand how the universe is created. The *Veda* mentions the *hiraṇyagarbha*, the golden egg which is the source of the creation of the universe. *Purāṇas* follow the theory of seven

¹Śathpatha Brāhmaṇa 7.8, 2.2, 3.6, 1.7. Also see- Singh P, Rana B. (2013). *Hindu Tradition of Pilgrimage Sacred Space & System*, New Delhi: Dev Publishers and Distributors, p. 160.

² *Atharva Veda*- 2.3.6. Also see- Singh P, Rana B. (2013). *Hindu Tradition of Pilgrimage Sacred Space & System*, New Delhi: Dev Publishers and Distributors, p. 160.

³ *Śathpatha Brāhmaṇa*- 12.8.3.15. (1997). Kashi: Achyuta Grantha Karyalaya, p. 252.

⁴Prof Vira Raghu. (1936). *Atharva Veda of the Paippalādas*- I. 33.4, Lahore: Sarasvati Vihar.

sheaths protecting the Cosmic Egg and influenced by *Sāṅkhya* theory of cosmic evolution where the Cosmic Egg comprises the fourteen worlds divided into three parts, *Svar-Loka*, *Bhūr-loka* and *Atala*. Within the Egg exist all these worlds along with thousands of mountains, rivers, the sun, moon, stars, and whatever that exists at present. They comply at the time of creation, and they swallow up one another at the time of dissolution. The unmanifest conscious principle is the *Brahmā* (the Conscious principle).⁵

According to *Vāyu Purāṇa*, ether has the subtle element sound that penetrates the subtle element of touch, and the air is produced. Thus, air has two attributes, sound, and touch, they penetrate colour and fire comes into existence, thus fire has three attributes, sound, touch, and colour. These three elements penetrate the subtle element of taste and water is produced. Hence, the water has four attributes, sound, touch, colour, and taste. These four elements penetrate the subtle element of smell and earth comes into existence.⁶

Keith has mentioned that “with the waters are connected not only the gods but various plants, and animals, of whom the most prominent are the snakes, the ants and the frogs.”⁷ H. G Wells says, the life started developing at the shoreline and it just went on, in, and by and with water as its home, its medium, and its fundamental necessity. The first jelly-like beginnings of life must have perished whenever they got out of the water. We know life needs air, light and it equally needs water to drink and digest the food taken. The different stages of development of life are described like, the fish, amphibians (*aṇḍaja*), tortoise, turtles, then

⁵Tagare V. G. (1987). *The Vāyu Purāṇa* Part I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, pp. 329-335.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁷Keith A. B. 1970 (1925). *The religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, pt. I, p.142. Also see- Dr. Mahulikar. (2000). *Vedic Elements In Puranic Mantras And Rituals*. Delhi: Nag Publishers, p. 239.

the theriomorphous reptiles, the ancestors of mammals, then the most important division of the life cycle of the record is the Cainozoic period, where huge changes in the crust of the earth and the building up of the mountains progressed. After this the thick forests and plains progressed where vegetations (*udbhijja*) began. By this, the situation becomes quite fit for the development of mammals and appears the giant pig after this the man like creatures originates. The entire process might have taken thousands of years for a cave men, fisher men and sub-men to develop. The proper man like form is considered as Palaeolithic age.⁸ This is how the life on the earth have developed where the beginning is from water.

The *Daśāvatāra* in the *Purāṇas* seems to be based on the evolution of the human race. The incarnation of the *Matsya* or fish relates to the deluge, the incarnations of Tortoise (*Kūrma*) and of Boar (*Varāha*) are also connected with water and deluge. In the *Vāmana avatāra*, Viṣṇu incarnated himself as a dwarf and in the three giant strides, he spanned the earth and heaven. From the feet of lord Viṣṇu, Gaṅgā originated. Brahmā washed Viṣṇu's foot, then this water transformed into the celestial river, Gaṅgā (*ākāśgaṅgā*). According to *Nārada Purāṇa* this water is known as 'सर्वतीर्थोदक' ।

According to the *Garuda Purāṇa*, the lord has an abode in the waters of the ocean. Therefore, He is called Nārāyaṇa. Water is called *Nāra* as the cosmic waters emerge from his side-glances. As He resides in the waters, He is called Nārāyaṇa, the source of this universe.⁹ In the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, it is said that, when the earth

⁸ Dikshitar, [Ramachandra](#) V. R. (1935). *Matsya Purana a study*. University of Madras, p. 27, Wells H. G. (1920). *The Outline Of History Being A Plain History Of Life And Mankind* H G Wells Revised And Brought Up To The End Of The Second World War By Raymond Postgate Volume I, pp. 25-26.

⁹ Shastri J. L. (1957). *Garuda Purāṇa* III-24. New Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, p. 1085.

was submerged in the water, taking the form of a boar He brought the Earth at its place and diverted the water of the ocean to the oceans, the water of the rivers to the rivers. Thus, the creation took place. The sun, the earth, water, fire, air, ether, the initiated Brāhmaṇa and the moon being the source of Brahmā were created. Brahmā guided the lord Nīlaloḥita to stay in the waters in the form of *Rasa* (the lymphatic constituent in his body). This watery element in every living being is *Bhava*, which is another epithet of Rudra. So, any kind of water bodies like rivers, streams, lakes etc are considered pure and divine. Therefore, we should give due respect to these water bodies.¹⁰

In the *Matsya Purāṇa*, it is mentioned that demons plunged into waters of the sea and made their abode under the sea, due to fearful fire on the earth spread with heavy wind with the command of Indra to destroy the demons. Further as demons took shelter of Varuṇa, Indra directed wind and fire to dry up the ocean. As ocean is the shelter of lot of other living creatures also, both wind and fire denied commencing that sin and hence Indra with anger cursed them to be born on earth in the form of a sage and complete that command to get rid of the curse. Thus, both wind and fire (Vāyu and Agni) jointly became sage Agastya who further as a fire dried up the ocean in the fulfilment of Indra's command when the world was afflicted by the demon Tārakāsura.

There are several stories appear in different *Purāṇas*. They describe how water is associated with several deities and sages and how these deities and sages have balanced the water element according to the environment and requirements by following certain acts.

Rivers as Mothers

Anne Feldhaus in her book on Water and Womanhood, says rivers are feminine and have gotten extraordinary importance

¹⁰Ali M. S. (1960). *Vāyu Purāṇa*, part I. New Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, p. 178.

in the Indian culture, except certain rivers like Brahmaputra and Indus which are not feminine.¹¹ The rivers have played very important role in the development of mankind. That is why river is called as ‘The Mother’.¹²

The most important river Gaṅgā appears on the earth to remove sins. She is the river flowing in heaven, on earth and in the netherworld. The *Mahābhārata* describes the Gaṅgā as the savior of life. Because of her grace, compassion, and motherly bliss, the Gaṅgā descended from heaven to earth, carrying with her the blessings of renewal to the weary and life to the dead.¹³ She arrives on the earth to liberate 60000 sagarids by the great penance and efforts of Bhagīratha and she continues this activity. The Gaṅgā liberates men on the earth, Nagas in the *pātāla*, gods in the heaven. Hence, she is called *त्रिपथगा*. *Purāṇas* give information on various aspects about the Gaṅgā, its descent, its source, various currents/streams, geographical details, various names like Jāhnavī, Bhāgirathī, Nandinī, Nalinī, Dakṣa, Pṛthvī, Vihagā, Amṛtā, Śivā etc. It is likely that no other river has so many names¹⁴. The importance of the river Gaṅgā is so much that, local rivers are said to be like the Gaṅgā, and are sometimes called the local Gaṅgā. The *Kāverī river* is considered as the Gaṅgā of the South India. The river Godāvarī in Tryambakeśvara in Maharashtra, is also called the Gaṅgā of the southern India.

¹¹Feldhaus Anne, (1995). *Water And Womanhood, Religious Meanings of Rivers in Maharashtra*. New York: Oxford University Press.

¹²Dr. Acharya N., Prof. Parmar T., *Jagatni Agraganya Sabhyatao*, University Granth Nirmaan Board, p. 7.

¹³Singh P, Rana B. (2013). *Mahābhārata* 3.85.88-97, *Hindu Tradition of Pilgrimage Sacred Space & System*. New Delhi: Dev Publishers and Distributors, p. 166.

¹⁴Dr. Sardesai N. G, Padhye D.G. (1940). *अमरकोष*, 1st Kānda, 9 वारिवर्ग, 1-09-31,32. Poona: Oriental Book Agency. p. 27.

***Tīrtha* and rituals**

Dr. Alka Bakre in her work, ‘*Religion in Social Flux*’, says that in India the tradition of *tīrtha* is seen from the days of the *Ṛgveda*. The word *tīrtha* occurs in the *Ṛgveda* in the sense of a road or a way. The *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* has enjoined a bath for a sacrifice at *tīrtha* or a holy place. The word *tīrtha* could be derived from the root ‘tr’ meaning to cross over the sinful activities performed by an individual which are likely to form an obstruction in his course towards his further journey in the world or the heavenly world are crossed over. The *Ṛgvedic* seers regarded water to be pure and having cleansing and purifying trait. The *Ṛgvedic* seers have requested the water to protect them, says:

या आपो दिव्या उत वा स्रवन्ति, खनित्रिमा उत वा स्वयञ्जाः।
समुद्रार्था याः शुचयः पावकास्ता, आपा देवीरिह मामवन्तु ॥¹⁵

There is an interrelationship between the river and the society where there are wide range of rituals followed by people due to the holistic attachments to that place. The tradition is maintained in this manner, by the society to visit such places for worship known as *tīrthas*. The *Purāṇas* helped the society to easily follow the rites and rituals than the complex, complicated, rigid, and difficult sacrifices. *Vratas*, *dānas* and *tīrthayātrās* were introduced for achieving the desired fruits.

According to *Nārada Purāṇa* “*tīrtha*” is a religious place which is associated with some Gods, Goddesses, sages, holy rivers (Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Narmadā etc) and lakes (Bindusāra, Nārāyaṇsāra etc.). Here people visit for a holy dip, to perform ceremonies, make donations and charity, attend religious discourses, visit temples and hermitages of gods and sages respectively. Visiting the *tīrtha* gives mental peace and relief of accomplishments.

¹⁵ *Ṛgveda*. VII. 49.2. Also see- Dr. Bakre. (1998). *Religion in Social Flux*. Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, pp. 253- 254.

Purāṇas say that the bath, sun worship, meditation performed at the holy places help the body, improves blood circulation. The hot springs at certain holy places contain a large quantity of sulphur, phosphorus, inorganic salts and the ultra-violet rays of the sun possessing vitamin D to the exposed body cure many skin-diseases, bone disorders during drying up the body after the bath on the banks of the rivers. *Purāṇas* also describe the water at the holy places cure various sufferings and diseases.¹⁶ *Skandha Purāṇa* narrates that Agni is associated with rivers as their husband.¹⁷ That is why *Purāṇas* recommend the performance of sacrifices on the banks of the rivers or nearby water. Hence the rituals regarding Gods and *pitṛs* are performed at the holy water places. India is a spiritual country with a diversified culture where water is considered as holy and believed that it has the power of liberating the soul. Due to such divinities attached to the water and water sources, people worship rivers, consider them as auspicious. People do certain rituals on the riverbanks to obtain boon, salvation, removal of sins etc.

Rivers and *tīrthayātrā*

Dr. Bakre discusses further that as per *Padma Purāṇa* certain parts of the body are regarded as most sacred. Similarly earth also has certain parts which are to be considered as sacred due to the quality of land or water, as the places are visited by or resorted to by sages. *Mahābhārata* says, a person who has taken bath and one who has purified himself with self-control is a person who is pure internally as well as externally. *Vāmana. Purāṇa.* states that bath in waters of Somatīrtha leads to the fruit of Rājāsūya sacrifice and bathing in Amṛtatīrtha leads to the

¹⁶Dr. Bakre. (1998). *Religion in Social Flux*. Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, p., 269.

¹⁷*Skandha Purāṇa*, VII. 1. 35. 115, Nag Publishers, 1984. Delhi. Also see- Dr. Mahulikar. (2000). *Vedic Elements In Puranic Mantras And Rituals*. Delhi: Nag Publishers, p. 178.

attainment of Śiva's place and immortality. A visit to Sūryatīrtha, where the sun was worshipped by Bali is said to be removing all sins. Bathing on Sundays, on the days of the sun's transit and on the days of the solar and lunar eclipses gives the benefit of Rājasūya sacrifice. A man satisfies and liberates the manes by bathing in Koṭitīrtha. One attains salvation and reaches the world of God by bathing in Avimukta. Gayā, Prayāga and Vārāṇasī are some of the prominent *tīrthas* and they bestow the religious merits upon the visitors.¹⁸

Many rituals are performed on the banks of the rivers and in this way the *Tīrtha Māhātmya* came into existence. *Gaṅgā Māhātmya*, *Godāvarī Māhātmya*, and *Narmadā Māhātmya* are a few examples that describe the uniqueness and the divinity attached to the rivers. People are always in need and dependent on the continuous water supply throughout the year. Many times, the supply can be affected due to heavy rains and flood or draught during the summer. People visit and worship nearby rivers take blessings request to stay calm and happy and take care of them like a mother taking care of her children. Also, people visit rivers or temples for various reasons like for good health, long life, for marriage, children, wealth, success etc. A bath in the river removes poverty¹⁹.

The fishermen who stay near the ocean and work there worship it as they get their daily earnings through fishing in the ocean. They perform a ritual every year on *Nāriyelī Pūrṇima* in the month of *śrāvaṇa*, on the full moon day which comes after the rainy season, by offering a coconut with a prayer to the ocean to calm down and let the water go down so that they can again start their work of fishing and pray for their safety.

¹⁸ Dr. Bakre. (1998). *Religion in Social Flux*. Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, pp. 257-258.

¹⁹ *Brahmna Purāṇa*. II. 67. 2-40. Also see- Dr. Mahulikar. (2000). *Vedic Elements In Puranic Mantras And Rituals*. Delhi: Nag Publishers, p. 237.

Rivers are offered *haldī* and *Kumkum*, flowers, rice, coconut etc and prayers are offered to keep regular and steady flow of water throughout the year and not to flood during the rainy season. In the ritual, which is still prevalent at Narmadā River, a saree is spread to the other side of the bank from one side. Many rituals are performed considering rivers as mothers and asking for a protection as her children as these rivers provide food, clothing, shelter, growth, and prosperity to the society at large.

Dr. Nath describes different *tīrthas* on the rivers. He says that the *Nārada Purāṇa*, describes that there are as many as four hundred principal *tīrthas* on the banks of river Narmadā. *Brahma Purāṇa* describes the *tīrthas* on the bank of Godāvarī River. *Skandha Purāṇa* describes about sixty-eight *tīrthas* at Hātakeśvara at Saurashtra established by Brāhmaṇas. *Tīrthas* were regarded as substitute of Vedic Yajñas. *Matsya Purāṇa* details the *tīrthas* situated on the banks of river Narmadā, *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* acclaims *tīrthas* in the Vindhyan region, *Bhagavata Purāṇa* glorifies *tīrthas* of Deccan, the *Garuda Purāṇa* for the Mithila region, and *Brahma Purāṇa* for the Utkala region, which is described as the Puruṣottamakṣetra.

According to *Vāmana Purāṇa*, the people from all four *āśramas*, *varṇas* and women, when they take a dip in the *tīrthas*, attain the highest goal and seen in the *Purāṇas* that the rules of untouchability were waived off at the time of bathing at a pilgrimage. The householder who visits the pilgrimage must accompany his wife if she is alive, otherwise he would not reap the fruit of pilgrimage. *Tīrthas* were visited for the religious rites such as *homa*, *mantra-snāna*, *Sandhyā* (morning, evening meditation), *tarpaṇa* (satiation of gods, sages, and ancestors), *piṇḍa-dāna*, *śrāddha*, *tapas* (austerities), *dāna* (religious gift-making), *pujā*, *kirtana*, *mahatmya śravaṇam*, *yātra*, *parikramā*, *muṇḍana*, *vrata* and *japa*. A mere dip in the holy rivers were believed to heal, purify and rejuvenate. A person becomes a new human being by washing away the sins like a new birth of that person. Taking a

dip at the time of solar and lunar eclipses or during the month of *Māgha*, were declared to be sure means of attaining salvation.²⁰ The *Varāha Purāṇa* states that bathing in *Prayāga tīrtha* leads to the merit of *Agniṣṭoma* sacrifice, a bather gets an opportunity to reach the world of Indra and obtains happiness or by merely plunging into *Kanakhala tīrtha*, one can free oneself from all sins and enjoy pleasures in the heaven. *Padma Purāṇa* states that the bath at the *Picumandārka tīrtha* is said to be removing diseases तीर्थ रोगहरं स्नानात्....²¹

In the *Matsya Purāṇa* it is described that the rivers like Gaṅgā, Narmadā, Godāvarī, the confluence or saṅgam of different renowned rivers are famous for the rituals for the ancestors such as *śrāddha*, *piṇḍadāna*, *tarpaṇa*. There are many *tīrthas* in different parts of India but some of the prominent *tīrthas* are Kaśī, Prayāga and Gayā. Nothing is more important for any Hindu than a dip in a sacred river by which the sins are removed especially at one of the famous *tīrthas* such as Gangotri, Haridwāra, Prayāga, or Vārāṇasī. Daśāśvamedha, Gaṅgādvāra, Nanda, Lalita, Māyāpurī, Mitrapada, Kedāra and Gaṅgā-sāgara are also the sacred places where *śrāddha* should be performed.²² Some other famous places are Banārasa, Rīṣikeśa, Haridvāra related to river Gaṅgā where majority of the people would like to visit and take great experience of the Gaṅgā Aartī on the banks of the Gaṅgā river when the entire riverside is lit up with the glow of hundreds of lamps at the time of setting of the Sun. Prayāga is the sacred place where the river Yamunā merges with the Gaṅgā is an ancient pilgrimage site where the *Kumbha Melā* festival occurs once in every twelve years. Gaṅgā Sāgar is the place where Gaṅgā meets the ocean, this pilgrimage

²⁰ Nath Vijay. (2001). *Puranas Acculturation-A Historico Anthropological Perspective*. Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, p. 129-132.

²¹ Dr. Bakre. (1998). *Religion in Social Flux*. Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, pp. 257- 270.

²² Major Basu B. D, I.M.S (1916). *Sacred Books Of The Hindus, Matsya Purāṇa* -Part I, pp. 55-70.

site is associated with Kapilmuni. Aśvatīrtha on the bank of Kauśikī river, one who takes bath there attains the merit of performing a horse sacrifice²³.

Vratas and dānas

Dr. Bakre while elaborating about the *Vratas* and *dānas*, says that the Rgvedic period emphasises to accepting the gifts of horses, cows, gold, clothes as *dakṣiṇā* and charity (*dāna*) as virtuous. *Varāha Purāṇa* emphasises *dāna* of water leads to eternal satisfaction. *Vāyu Purāṇa* describes about a gift of a pitcher full of water at the time of performing *śrāddha*.²⁴ *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* describes that the boat can be crossed over the terrible river, Vaitaraṇī (*naraka nadī*) only by making liberal gifts (*dāna*) to the brāhmaṇas and performing certain sacred rites on river-banks.²⁵ It is believed that *dāna* performed at Prayāga is considered to lift the soul to heaven. The *pitṛs* say that one who offers them a libation of even water and sesamum on the *Ratha-Saptamī* day, gets the same benefit as he would by performing *śrāddha* regularly for a thousand years²⁶.

Purāṇic vratas were to be performed on pure days and when days of the constellations were auspicious. Observing *vratas* must be followed by withdrawing non-vegetarian food and alcoholic drinks on certain days during pilgrims preserve the sanctity of holy places. In this way the pilgrimage becomes the medium to cultivate the cultural, religious, and social values in the society.

²³Dr. Mahulikar. (2000). *Vedic Elements In Puranic Mantras And Rituals*. Delhi: Nag Publishers, p. 238.

²⁴Dr. Bakre. (1998). *Religion in Social Flux*. Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, p. 258.

²⁵Nath Vijay. (2001). *Puranas Acculturation-A Historico Anthropological Perspective*. Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, p.129.

²⁶Major Basu B. D, I.M.S (1916). *Sacred Books Of The Hindus, Matsya Purāṇa* -Part I, p. 55.

The *Agni Purāṇa* describes that one who worships Viṣṇu on *ekādaśī*, obtains wealth, sons and attains *Viṣṇuloka*. Fasting on *Ekādaśī* is observed even today. There is another vow that is performed on the eleventh day of the bright half of *Aśvina*, that is known as *Akhaṇḍa-ekādaśī*. On this day Viṣṇu to be worshipped with leaves, flowers, fruits, not broken (*a-khaṇḍa*) like gold, pearl, etc and the next day the worshipper should take bath, it is believed that the thing with which he takes bath, becomes *akhaṇḍa* (unceasing) in his house for the rest of the year.²⁷

In certain *vratas* the water is used for libation or offering as a part of ritual. *Kamaṇḍalus* filled with water is given to brāhmins as a part of *vrata* is also seen. Performing *vrata* on the *Akṣaya-tīrthīyā* day, the devotee bathe in water that is mixed with unhusked rice (*akṣata*). When the lunar or solar eclipse takes place, bathing after the eclipse is very commonly seen and sprinkling holy water in the whole house is also followed by people.

A person by giving drinking water to a needy for four months beginning from *Chaitra* month and followed by giving a big jar of water with grain, cloth, gold, and a pot with sesamum attains the *Brahma loka*. This is called the *Ānanda vrata*. Those who offer libations of water to the manes of the deceased ancestors and to the Gods, always attain what they desire, wherever they are born. The person who builds well, pond, lake, or any kind of water supply for the society or even repairs such water source is always a meritorious conduct and uplifted to heaven. One who lives upon only one meal a day for a year and then gives away a pitcher of water along with various kinds of eatables, resides in the dominion of Śiva for a *kalpa*. This is *Prāpti-Vrata*. The sun always satisfies men by producing herbs, the *pitṛs* through the libations of water *svadhā* and the Devās through the sacrificial offerings *svāhā*.²⁸

²⁷Dr. Mahulikar. (2000). *Vedic Elements In Puranic Mantras And Rituals*. Delhi: Nag Publishers, p. 34-35.

²⁸Major Basu B. D, I.M.S. (1916). *Sacred Books Of The Hindus, Matsya Purāṇa* -Part I. New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, pp. 275, 357.

Conclusion

Thus, it is seen that *Purāṇas* give ample information about water and water sources like rivers, where we come to know that right from the creation to the daily use, water plays an important role. Water sustains life on the earth and uplifts the soul for further journey. Almost all *Purāṇas* regard water as a goddess, divine and different *Purāṇas* highlight water as sacred and describe various rituals performed near water sources bestow a lot of virtues. Also, it is seen that *Purāṇas* have initiated the social gathering, implemented to remove the caste barriers, and brought people together by introducing pilgrimage and rituals to be performed at certain holy places. In this way, people have become more aware of the religion to follow and the performance of different rituals. It also paves way for the unity of families, understanding of the responsibilities towards the ancestors, individual awareness of cleansing body, mind, soul, and thoughts and attaining peace in the life. *Purāṇas* clearly explain the scientific, religious, spiritual, and philosophical importance of water. The divinity attached to the great gods, the rituals followed by people in the grace and the different attributes of water reveal its importance which is unimaginable and unique. Divinity, purity, healing power, motherhood and godliness are some different facets of water seen in the *Purāṇas*. This makes the position of water more and more strong for the older as well as the newer generations in society.

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