

## **WATER: A UNIVERSAL SYMBOL OF LIFE, RENEWAL, AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE.**

### **WHY IS WATER CONSIDERED SACRED ACROSS CULTURES?**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*This particular article explores the essence of water, what water represents in diverse cultures across the globe and what role this vital substance plays in different cultural traditions. In addition, there will be given proverbs in Russian and English languages and what their meanings are.*

**Key words:** *water, cultures, symbol, mythology, proverbs, civilization, vital, tradition, folklore.*

#### **АННОТАЦИЯ**

*В этой конкретной статье исследуется сущность воды, что представляет собой вода в различных культурах по всему миру и какую роль это жизненно важное вещество играет в различных культурных традициях. Кроме того, будут приведены пословицы на русском и английском языках и их значения.*

**Ключевые слова:** *вода, культуры, символ, мифология, пословицы, цивилизация, витал, традиция, фольклор.*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Since the dawn of time water has been and continues to be a source of sustenance and fundamental element for life on Earth. Water has strong symbolic implications in many different civilizations across the world.

Water is considered the very core of life in many civilizations. In Egyptian mythology, the God “Hapi” was the personification of the Nile River, the source of life. According to Hindu belief, the Ganges River is revered as a divine mother who sustains and purifies. The Navajo people view rain as a sign of hope and rebirth because it restores vitality to the dry ground.

Water is a potent symbol of purity in many cultures because of its capacity to cleanse both physically and spiritually. Immersion in water during rituals represents rebirth and the washing away of sin in both Judaism and Christianity. Ablutions with

water are also a part of Muslim purification rites. Similarly, Hindus believe that washing in the Ganges purges the soul of karma.

Renewal and transformation are tightly connected to water. Because water is vital substance, it is a symbol of rebirth and transition because of its dynamic character, which allows it to move from rivers to seas and evaporate into clouds. Greek mythology described the river Styx as the line dividing the living from the dead and as a symbol of state transition. Similar to this, crossing rivers or waterfalls as part of purifying ceremonies is common in Japanese Shinto religion, signifying the passing of the old and the entry into the new.

Although, we frequently associate water with tranquility and vitality, its inherent strength may also be devastating. Civilizations have been destroyed and left in ruins by floods and tsunamis. The enormous snake Jörmungandr, which resides in the ocean's depths in Norse mythology, represents the potentially disastrous effects of uncontrolled chaos. Water's dual character as both a creator and a destroyer serve as a reminder of the balance of forces that rule our planet.

Additionally, water can represent reflection and intuition. Water is often associated with contemplation and self-analysis because of its tranquility, which serves as a mirror. In Chinese tradition, staring at a calm pond is said to help one develop inner harmony and comprehension. Similar to this, the soft flow of water in the bowl promotes awareness and focus during Japanese tea ceremonies.

Similar to other cultures, Uzbek culture is deeply and broadly associated with water which is reflected in its symbolism, history, and customs. Water is the most important factor for existence in Uzbekistan's dry regions.

## **DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

As a consequence of the powerful rivers like the Amu Darya and Syr Darya supporting communities and agriculture for ages, water has come to represent prosperity, life, and wealth. For example, the life-giving force of flowing rivers is frequently celebrated in traditional Uzbek songs. Sharing water is a symbol of hospitality, decency, and respect in a place where it is valuable. The sharing of tea and water strengthens ties throughout the community.

The Uzbek flag's blue stripe symbolizes water and the sky, signifying the value of natural resources and its relationship to the country's culture. In addition, traditional irrigation techniques like as the "ariq (ditch)" demonstrate the creative ability of the Uzbek people in regulating water supplies and forming their landscape. Besides, water is deeply embedded in Uzbek folklore.

In Russian culture, water is deeply and multidimensionally associated with history, literature, folklore, and daily life. As a result of the powerful rivers like the

Don, Yenisei, and Volga supporting agriculture and communities for generations, water has come to represent fertility, vitality, and wealth.

Numerous legends in Russian folklore depict water spirits such as “водяной” (water demon) and “русалки” (water nymphs). These frequently represent the opposing life-giving and destructive powers of water, reflecting the respect and caution Russians have historically had for sources of water.

The element of water is widely represented in Russian national emblems and art. The Russian flag's blue stripe symbolizes the size of the nation's waterways and emphasizes their significance to pride in national identity.

The strength and beauty of water have long served as an inspiration to Russian poets and authors. Russian literature has a strong connection to water, from Pushkin's vivid sea descriptions to Lermontov's depressing reflections on the Terek River. It also widely shown by quantity of proverbs in Russian cultural folklore. Here are some of them:

“Как рыба в воде” – word for word translation: fish in water. Meaning: behave confidently and easily in a certain environment. Analogical proverb in English language: “As snug as a bug in a rug” and in Uzbek language “yog’ni ichida yayrab yurmoq”.

“Вода камень точит” – word for word translation: water sharpens stones. Meaning: Even if you act with weak efforts, go towards the goal in small steps, but constantly and persistently, you can achieve a lot. Analogical saying in English language: “Little progress is better than no progress at all” and in Uzbek language “Тома-тома ko’l bo’lur”, word for word translation: *Little dropping make lake*.

“Пролитую воду не соберешь” – word for word translation: You can't collect spilled water. Meaning: What is done, cannot be changed. Analogical proverb in English language: “What is done cannot be undone”.

“Как в воду глядел” – word for word translation: like looking into the water. Meaning: knowing something in advance or something that is very clear or obvious. Analogical proverb in English language: “As clear as crystal”

“В тихом омуте черти водятся” – word for word translation: in silent whirlpool, there are devils. Meaning: a quiet, inconspicuous, secretive person is often capable of unexpected and not always plausible actions. Analogical proverb in English language: “Still waters run deep”.

Water has a rich and varied symbolism in English culture, which is shown in its essential role in life, its ability to create the environment, and its emotional resonance in literature and language. Water plays a significant part in Christian ceremonies of baptism and cleansing, just like it does in many other cultures. From a historical

aspect London's River Thames has changed throughout time, from being an important commerce route to a representation of leisure and urban renewal.

Similar to a pond or lake, still water serves as a mirror, reflecting the surroundings and promoting self-analysis. Shakespeare's plays frequently include characters reflecting on their feelings when by the water or in water. Water often described in literature and folklore. For example, water spirits, such as mermaids and river nymphs, are prevalent and are said to represent the strength and mystique of bodies of water. Additionally, Shakespeare's *Tempest* depicts the characters' inner torment as being reflected in the ocean around the island. Besides, there is a large quantity of proverbs in English language. Here are the most popular:

“A fish out of water” – which means: not feeling at home, where you are. Similar proverb in Russian language: “Быть не в своей тарелке”, word for word translation: not being in your plate.

“Blood is thicker than water” – which means: family is more important than anyone or anything else. Similar proverb in Russian language: “Кровь гуще воды”.

“It is raining cats and dogs” – which means: raining unusually or unbelievably hard. Similar proverb in Uzbek language: “Sharros quymoq”, translation of meaning: *rain fast and heavily* and in Russian language: “Льет как из ведра”, word for word translation: *it's pouring like buckets*.

“In deep waters” – which means: in a place you are not feeling comfortable. Similar proverb in Uzbek “ikki oyog'i bir etikka tiqilmoq”, word for word translation: *two feet in one shoe*; and in Russian language: “Быть не в своей тарелке”, word for word translation: not being in your plate.

“Don't wash your clothes in public” – which means: don't tell private things to people that you may not be able to trust. Similar proverb in Russian language: “Не выноси сор из избы”, word for word translation: don't carry trash out of a house.

The article only scratches the surface of the enormous ocean of culturally-derived meanings associated with water. Water continues to influence our stories, rituals, and basic comprehension of the world around us, from the fertility rites of ancient Babylon to the Christian symbolism of baptism and folklore and literature of many other cultures across the globe.

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