

PALESTINE

Cultural & religious aspects of water & hygiene



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Climatic zone



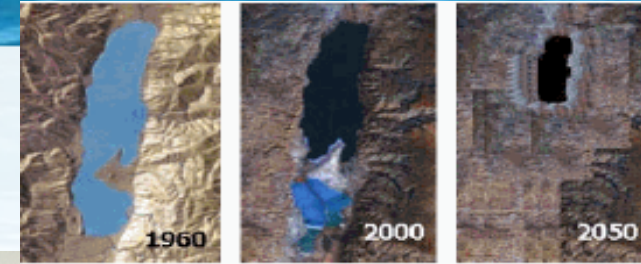
The blessed land

- Terrains: deserts, plains, mountains, coast
- Home to the 3 major religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- 32.9% of Israelis were born outside of Israel
- Culture & religion is very diverse but can partly be representative for the whole middle east



The “dead” sea

- 25-30 % salt content
- Rift between to continental plates (400 m below sea level)
- Halophilic bacteria
- One inlet stream (Jordan) no outlet
- Inlet sunk from $1300\text{m}^3/\text{a}$ to $350\text{m}^3/\text{a}$
- High rate of evaporation



Water conflict

- 1967: Six day war (for water)
- Only 10 % of all water resources available for Palestinians and only groundwater.

Palestinians 20-70 l/d
Israelis 300 l/d

- 9000 Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley consume app. one quarter of the total amount of water made available to all 2.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank
- 90-95 % of water sources in Gaza Strip have no drinking water quality



Judaism

- All abrahamic religions regard purity as an obligation. Spiritual purification results in physical cleanliness. Water is a key element in ceremonies.
- Droughts as a punishment and rain as a reward and blessing from god.
- Drowning of Pharaoh was a salvation for the Israelites. Drowning of the people of Noah as gods punishment.

(Häusermann *et. al*, 1984)

Judaism

- The Talmud orders a number of hygienic rules: Hand washing a) before prayer b) before eating c) after sleeping d) after defecation e) after touching of a dead body.
- Face, hands and feet should be washed daily.
- Moses ordered that war booty should be cleaned either through fire or water.
- Prophylaxis of diseases through abstention of unlawful sexual contact and abstention when a sexual disease occurs.

(Häusermann *et. al*, 1984).

Judaism

- The mikvah (bath) is used after sexual contact, menstruation, childbirth, contact with dead bodies etc.
- Baptism:

“And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and **was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water. And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit,** and became quickened in the inner man.”

(Moses 6:64-65.)

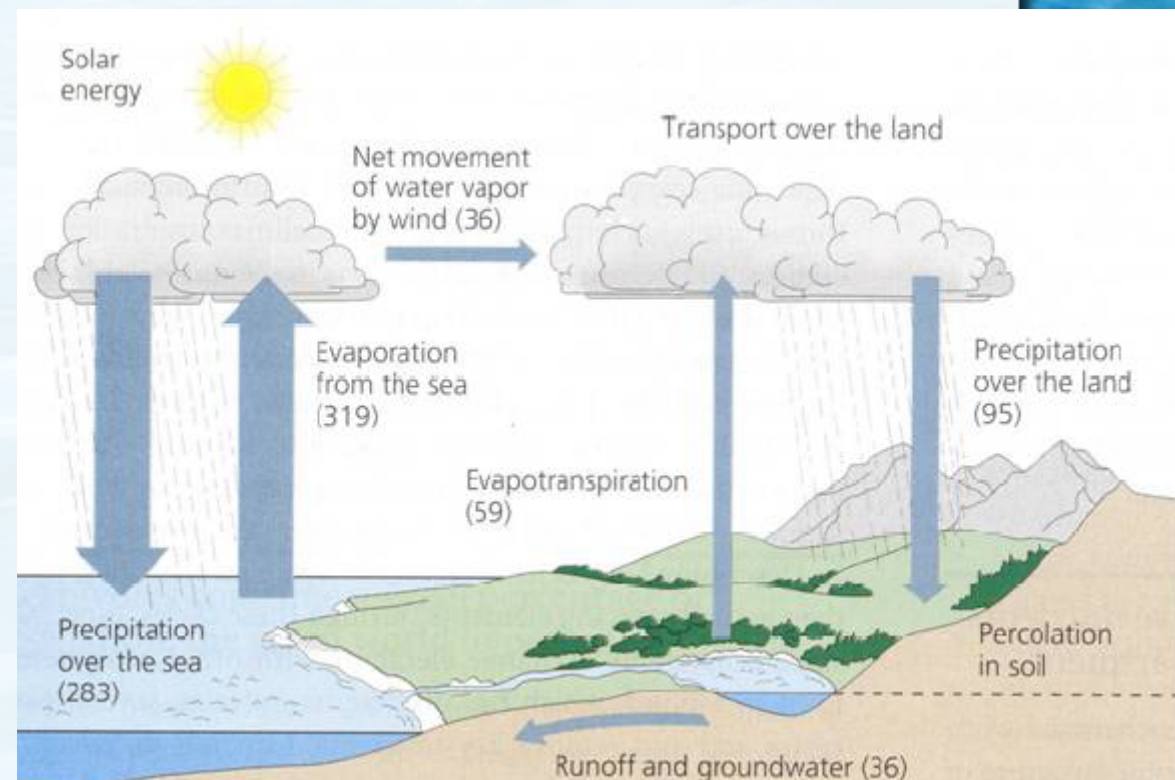


Islam

- The water cycle, a sign for people of understanding

“Are you more difficult to create, or is the heaven that He constructed? (27) He raised its height, and has perfected it, (28) Its night He covers with darkness, and its forenoon He brings out (with light). (29) And after that He spread the earth; (30) **And brought forth therefrom its water and its pasture; (31) And the mountains He has fixed firmly, (32) (To be) a provision and benefit for you and your cattle, (33)**” (Quran, chapter 79)

“Your God is One God; there is no God but He, the Beneficent, the Merciful. (163) Lo! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of night and day, and the ships which run upon the sea with that which is of use to men, and the water which Allah sendeth down from the sky, thereby reviving the earth after its death, and dispersing all kinds of beasts therein, and (in) the ordinance of the winds, and **the clouds obedient between heaven and earth:** are signs (of Allah's Sovereignty) for people who have sense. (164)” (Quran, chapter 2)



Campell and Reece, 2002

Islam

- Water is considered to be a public good
- Water distribution to humans and animals:

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 40, Number 551: Narrated Abu Huraira:

*Allah's Apostle peace be upon him said, "While a man was walking he felt thirsty and went down a well and drank water from it. On coming out of it, he saw a **dog panting and eating mud because of excessive thirst**. The man said, 'This (dog) is suffering from the same problem as that of mine. So he (went down the well), filled his shoe with water, caught hold of it with his teeth and climbed up and watered the dog. Allah thanked him for his (good) deed and forgave him.'" The people asked, "O Allah's Apostle! Is there a reward for us in serving (the) animals?" He replied, "Yes, there is a reward for serving any animate."*

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 40, Number 543: Narrated Abu Huraira:

*Allah's Apostle peace be upon him said, "Do not withhold the **superfluous water**, for that will prevent people from grazing their cattle."*

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 40, Number 547: Narrated Abu Huraira:

*Allah's Apostle peace be upon him said, "There are three persons whom Allah will not look at on the Day of Resurrection, **nor will he purify them** and theirs shall be a severe punishment. They are:*

*1. A man possessed **superfluous water**, on a way and he withheld it from travelers...*

Islam

- It is He who sends down water upon you from heaven with which to purify you (Quran, 8:11):"

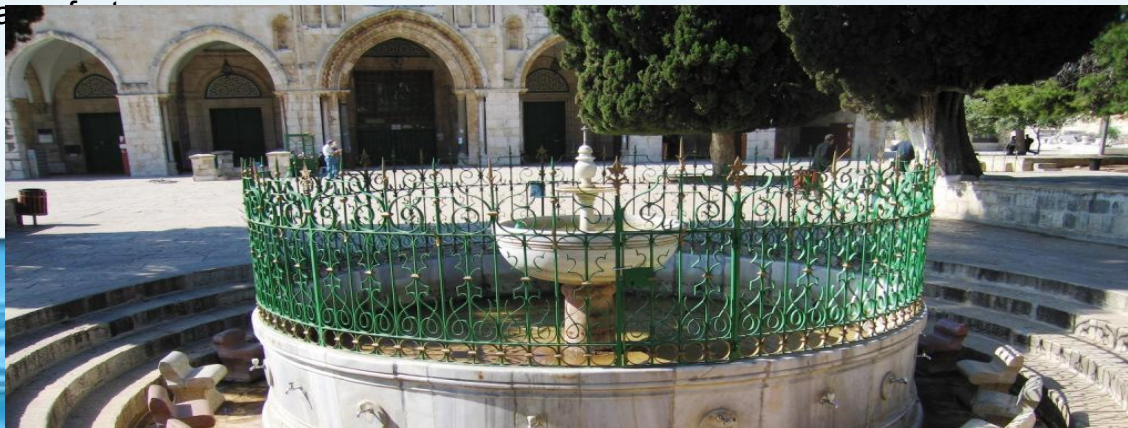
Sahih Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 5, Number 290: Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet peace be upon him said, "When a man sits in between the four parts of a woman and did the sexual **intercourse** with her, bath becomes compulsory."

- Najasa impure materials: fecal material, blood, vomit, dead animals (except fish)...
- Washing before prayer (ablution) and after lavatory:

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 4, Number 141: Narrated Usama bin Zaid:

Allah's Apostle peace be upon him proceeded from 'Arafat till when he reached the mountain pass, he dismounted, urinated and then performed **ablution** (washing ritual) but not a perfect one. I said to him, ("Is it the time for) the prayer, O Allah's Apostle?" He said, "The (place of) prayer is ahead of you." He rode till when he reached Al-Muzdalifa, he dismounted and performed **ablution** and a



Islam

- Hygienic rules:

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 4, Number 156: Narrated Abu Qatada:

The Prophet peace be upon him said, "Whenever anyone of you **makes water** he should not hold his penis or clean his private parts with his right hand. (And while drinking) one should not breathe in the drinking utensil ."

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 65, Number 288: Narrated 'Umar bin Abi Salama:

I was a boy under the care of Allah's Apostle peace be upon him and my hand used to go around the dish while I was eating. So Allah's Apostle peace be upon him said to me, 'O boy! Mention the Name of Allah and **eat with your right hand**, and eat of the dish what is nearer to you." Since then I have applied those instructions when eating.

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 4, Number 163: Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle peace be upon him said, "If anyone of you performs ablution he should put water in his nose and then blow it out and whoever cleans his private parts with stones should do so with odd numbers. And whoever wakes up from his sleep should **wash his hands before putting them in the water** for ablution, because nobody knows where his hands were during sleep."

Sahih Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 4, Number 245: Narrated Abu Burda:

My father said, "I came to the Prophet and saw him carrying a Siwak (breach of a antiseptic plant) in his hand and **cleansing his teeth**, saying, 'U' U'," as if he was retching while the Siwak was in his mouth."

Muslim, Number 423: Jaabir: reported that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade anyone to **urinate into stagnant water**.

The prophet peace be upon him used to **wash his hands before eating** (related by An Nasai)

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