

## Muslim

In the Holy Quran we read *"and We have made of water every living thing"* (21:30). In this brief, concise and powerful statement, the Holy book sums up the importance of water and draws attention to it.

The Quran talks of two types of water, fresh water and sea water, *"one palatable and sweet and the other salty and bitter"* (25:53), the Verses that refer to them are quite different. The benefits of this gift of Allah (God) are mentioned throughout the Holy Book. Drinking: *"then We cause the rain to descend from the sky therewith providing you water to drink"* (15:22). Cleansing: *"and He sent down upon you water from the sky that He might thereby purify you"* (8:11).

According to the Quran, among other bounties that God has showered on the human race, special importance is accorded to Water. Now is the time for us to thank God for His bounty, which we have been receiving constantly without acknowledging His generosity.

## Sathya Sai Baba

"A large part of the water we drink is expelled as urine. A minute part of the water consumed becomes prana (the life force). Therefore, the nature of the food and water that we take in decides our character. Only by controlling the quality of our food and water can we attain divinity. This is why food is said to be God. Hence, to waste food is to waste God. Do not waste food. Eat only what you need, and be sure that what you eat is Sathwic (pure). Give any surplus food to those in need".

"Water is getting scarcer every day. What is the reason? Because of the decline in morality among man water is getting scarce in the world. For human life morality is the life breath. Morality makes humanness blossom. Because morals have been lost, water is getting scarce".

## Sikh

In Sikhism water is regarded as the source of life. Guru Nanak says:

"Air is the Guru, water the father and earth is the mother.  
Day and night are the two nurses in whose lap the whole world plays."

And again:

"From the True Lord came the air, and from the air came water.  
From the water, He created the three worlds; in each and every heart He has infused His Light".

# Interfaith Annual Gathering 2003



## "Year of Fresh Water"

### *The Gift of Life*



## Baha'i

"Know, O thou possessors of insight, that true spirituality is like unto a lake of clear water which reflects the divine . . ."

Spirit is reality, and when the spirit in each of us seeks to join itself with the Great Reality, it must in turn give life . . ."

## Brahma Kumaris

In Brahma Kumaris' philosophy 'water' is symbolic of knowledge. Until the present time the symbolism of water has been used in many rituals by many faith traditions.

In this year of Fresh Water, Fresh Knowledge is also vital for our spiritual life.

- Fresh knowledge gives new life.
- Fresh knowledge gives hope.
- Fresh knowledge gives purpose.
- Fresh knowledge leads to self mastery.
- Fresh knowledge enables us to create our fortune.
- Fresh knowledge leads to purity.
- Fresh knowledge gives liberation in life.

Knowledge cools the senses, enabling us to gain victory over the vices. The practical application of knowledge gives faith.

Fresh knowledge gives a clear understanding of who we are, where we are and where we are going; as well as a clear understanding of God, the Father of all souls, and how to establish a relationship with Him.



## Buddhist

Water makes the earth and everything alive, water comes to us as a message of a beautiful planet. Today, our civilisation is under threat, we are draining our resources, polluting rivers, seas and destroying our environment. It is due to our ignorance, pride, hatred of others.

We must live in awareness every time we use water. Observing our hands in the running water, we are wise enough to realise the action of protecting water source is equal to the action of protecting lives of every being.

Taking water to wash our hands  
May all being  
Have skilful hands  
Protect the Earth

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Water from the high mountains  
Water from deep under the earth  
Water keep running  
Always freshening and giving.



## Christian

In the Bible, a Samaritan woman came and met Jesus by the well. Instead of helping her draw water, He spoke to her on a serious subject of faith. She, a socially unacceptable woman, was surprised when Jesus spoke to her of his provision of the water of life that quenches the thirst for things of the spirit. She rushed off to tell everyone of her encounter with Jesus.

This story has inspired many people as Jesus revealed His concern for *all* people. The well, as the place where water is found, is symbolic; water drawn from this well is life giving for body and spirit. All peoples acknowledge that water is essential for life. Christians claim that the water given by Jesus is needed for a full and abundant life. Water is a potent symbol for Christians for it means renewal, refreshment of soul and replenishment of the spirit.



## Hindu

In Hindu Scriptures, the first mention of water is in the creation story.

*'In the beginning . . . . .'  
Then neither Being nor Not-being was,  
Nor atmosphere, nor firmament, nor what is beyond.  
What did it encompass? Where? In whose protection?  
What was the water, the deep, unfathomable?  
In the beginning was darkness swathed in darkness;  
All this was, but unmanifested water.*

The mode of Brahman (creator or creation) in Hindu religion is Water. Mantras (spiritual hymns) are recited for the puja (worship), cleaning rituals, Tarpana - offering with hands, Achaman - Sipping of water, Shuddhikaran - purification and healing of body, Snan samarpan - giving bath to deities. Water from holy rivers is considered to be sacred for physical cleansing and spiritual well being to attain purity. Water from river Ganges (Ganga jal) is most sacred and is used for rituals and sip is given to the dying for Nirvana.

## Jewish

All living existence needs water to live and endure. Without it nothing can survive and Life as we know and experience it would cease to prevail.

However, the "Gift" of life is from God. He created the world we live in and everything that is within it. Water, which mainly comes from rain, is certainly a most invaluable and necessary ingredient for life but it is not THE gift of life; as we deduct from the Bible (Deuteronomy XI, 13-15).

It is Jewish custom to have special prayers for Rain on the last day of the Harvest Festival of Tabernacles in early autumn, and for Dew on the first day of Passover, the Festival of Spring in April of each year. On numerous occasions the Holy Scriptures mention water for its vital bearing on life but it is simply one of the many "agents" (gifts) God created to sustain life.

