

RIVER OUT OF EDEN: WATER, ECOLOGY, AND THE JORDAN RIVER IN ISLAM

ECOPEACE / FRIENDS OF THE EARTH MIDDLE EAST (FOEME)
SECOND EDITION, JUNE 2014

'We made from water every living thing'

Quran 21:30

COVENANT FOR THE JORDAN RIVER

We recognize that the Jordan River Valley is a landscape of outstanding ecological and cultural importance. It connects the eco-systems of Africa and Asia, forms a sanctuary for wild plants and animals, and has witnessed some of the most significant advances in human history. The first people ever to leave Africa walked through this valley and drank from its springs. Farming developed on these plains, and in Jericho we see the origins of urban civilization itself. Not least, the river runs through the heart of our spiritual traditions: some of the founding stories of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are set along its banks and the valley contains sites sacred to half of humanity. By any measure, this landscape must be counted as part of the heritage of humankind.

But over the past 50 years, the Lower Jordan River has been destroyed. 96% of its historic flow has been diverted. What little water remains is polluted with saline and effluent, including untreated sewage. The valley's wetlands have dried up, its springs are failing, and half its biodiversity has been lost. This is not just a tragedy for wildlife: families have seen their fields turn to dust, not from a lack of water but from the injustice of its distribution. The demise of the Jordan and the collapse of the valley's eco-system represents a failure of our most basic responsibility towards the species whose habitats have been destroyed and the ecological systems that sustain life on earth. It is a neglect that leaves us impoverished,

that cripples the growth of an economy based on tourism, and that exacerbates the political conflicts that divide this region. It also exemplifies a wider failure to serve as custodians of the planet: if we cannot protect a place of such exceptional value, what part of the earth will we hand on intact to our children?

We have a different vision of this valley: a vision in which a clean, living river flows from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea; in which the valley's plants and animals are afforded the water they need to flourish; in which the springs flow as they have for millennia; and in which the water extracted for human use is divided equitably between the nations that share the valley and the people who live here.

Realizing this vision will not be easy. But difficulty cannot be an excuse for inaction. We therefore call upon the governments of the countries that share this watershed to make a serious commitment of resources and political capital to the rehabilitation of the Jordan River. As individuals and organizations, as members of civil society, and as religious or community leaders, we also affirm that this is a landscape of universal ecological, cultural, and spiritual importance, and commit to work towards the vision expressed in this covenant.

Dear Friends,

This is a toolkit of information to help Islamic communities around the world learn about the contemporary reality the Holy Jordan River and join in efforts to rehabilitate the once mighty Jordan.

At the beginning of the booklet you will find background information describing the demise of the Jordan River, what went wrong and why it matters to our community. The second section includes a compilation of writings about the Jordan River in the Muslim tradition, about the sacredness of water, and about the connection between spiritual faith and care for the natural world. Three specially commissioned pieces of writing about the state of the river and about the role of the Muslim community in its rehabilitation are also included. You are welcome to use these works as the basis for your own presentations or sermons, or to adapt them to suit your audience. You will also find scriptural texts, prayers, and essays.

Section three includes sample lesson plans and questions to assist community educators in designing programs for a wide range of age groups on this issue. Finally, we've prepared some suggestions for how your community can support regional efforts to rehabilitate the Jordan River by taking action to let decision makers know that we care about the revitalization of the Jordan. Additional resources to support awareness campaigns and plan visits to the river are available at www.SavetheJordan.com.

We encourage you to treat this as a working document: to annotate it, to select what is most illuminating for your own teaching, and to enrich it through your own knowledge and insight.

We hope that these materials inspire your congregation or class to join in the campaign to revive the Jordan River.

With gratitude,

EcoPeace / Friends of the Earth Middle East
June 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Covenant for the Jordan River	3
I. BACKGROUND	11
A Man-Made Disaster	13
A Source of Life	14
A Blessed Land	15
An Ecosystem Destroyed	16
The Destruction of the Jordan Some Facts and Figures	17
A Failure of Wisdom	18
A New Vision of the Valley	20
A Measure of Progress	21
Justice, Peace, Prosperity	22
Reviving the Jordan	23
II. WATER, ECOLOGY, AND THE JORDAN RIVER IN ISLAM	25
Islam, Muslims and the Jordan River Imam Zaid Shakir	26
Reviving the Jordan: A Challenge for Young Muslims Dr. Husna Ahmed	28
Protecting the Jordan River Prof. Mustafa Abu Sway	33
Water in the Holy Quran	34
Care for the Earth in Hadith and Sunna	35

The Jordan Valley in Islamic History	36
Other Quotes on Water and Creation	37
Declarations and Essays on Islam and Ecology	38
The Islamic Declaration on Sustainable Development	41
Islam and Water Management: Overview and Principles Naser I. Faruqui	42
III. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES	45
Rationalization of Water and Waste	46
Lessons That Can Help You	48
IV. IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY ACTION	53
V. CREDITS	57



I. BACKGROUND

The Jordan River has suffered an ecological collapse. What went wrong and why it matters to our community.



© Francesco Zizzola

A MAN-MADE DISASTER

For thousands of years the Jordan River brought life to one of the cultural heartlands of the Islamic world.

Today, the river has been all but destroyed. 96% of its flow has been diverted. What little water remains is polluted with saline and untreated sewage. The valley's wetlands have dried up, its springs are failing, and half its biodiversity has been lost.

This is a man-made disaster – one that shows an utter disregard for the natural world, for our own spiritual tradition, and for our responsibility as custodians of God's earth.

It's not too late. Eco-Peace / Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) asks you to join us in calling for a return of water to this river, and a return of life to the Jordan Valley.



© Jonathan Kalan / FoEME

A SOURCE OF LIFE

“By any measure – ecological, cultural, spiritual – this river must be counted as part of the heritage of humankind, and as a place of exceptional importance to Muslims.”

Imagine the River Jordan.

In the mind’s eye we see a great river – a river that brings life to al ard al muqadasa - the Holy Land - described in the Quran as the “land that We had blessed for the worlds” (Quran, 21:71).

We know that this river is important in the stories of the Prophets Yusha Ibn Nun (Joshua) and Yahya Ibn Zakariya (John the Baptist) and Isa (Jesus) – peace be upon them all – and that many of the closest Companions of the Prophet Mohammed (SAAS) are also buried in the valley, to the east of the Jordan.

This is a river, then, that flows through the heart of the Islamic world. It is a river of life.

Until about 50 years ago, the river looked much as it did in the time of the Companions of the Prophet (SAAS). From its source in the foothills of Jabal esh-Sheikh the Jordan rushed south

into Lake Tiberius, and then meandered more slowly along the length of the Jordan Valley until it disappeared into the intensely saline lake of the Dead Sea – the lowest point on the surface of the earth.

All along the way, the Jordan River brought life to the valley. It created wetland habitats in which wild plants and animals flourished. It greened a corridor through the desert, connecting the eco-systems of Eastern Africa and Western Asia and forming a flyway used by some 500 million migratory birds each year. And it allowed the flourishing of human life and the emergence of urban civilization.

Some of the first people ever to leave Africa walked across this plain and drank from its springs. And it was here, too, that the world’s first farmers began to plant and harvest grain in the alluvial mud north of the Dead Sea. Agriculture was the breakthrough that allowed

villages to develop into the world’s first real towns, Jericho among them. Jericho’s walls were built some 10,000 years ago, and it can claim to be the oldest continuously inhabited city anywhere in the world.

A BLESSED LAND

The Jordan Valley has been central to Muslim history and culture since the time of Islam’s expansion under Caliph Umar.

It was here that the Muslim armies, including many who had known the Prophet (SAAS), fought one of the decisive battles at Fahl (Pella) in 635 CE. Some of the closest Companions of the Prophet (SAAS) are buried on the Jordanian side of the river. They include Zayd ibn Al-Harithah, the adopted son of the Prophet (SAAS); Ja’far ibn Abi Talib, the cousin of the Prophet (SAAS); Abu ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah,

one of the first to accept Islam and later supreme commander of the Arab armies under Caliph Umar; Bilal bin Rabah, who served as mu’azin to the Prophet (SAAS); Dirar bin Al-Azwar, an early Companion and renowned warrior; and Sharhabil Bin Hassneh, among the most trusted of the Prophet’s (SAAS) Companions and, according to some, one of the scribes of the Holy Quran.



AN ECOSYSTEM DESTROYED

Neither the natural beauty nor the spiritual significance of the Jordan has been enough to save the river from being degraded.

In just over 50 years, the countries that share this watershed have dammed and diverted more than 96% of the river's historic flow. What little water remains is polluted with saline, sewage, and agricultural run-off. In places, the river is little more than a stagnant canal of effluent.

As the river has dried up, the Jordan Valley has suffered an ecological collapse. Half the valley's biodiversity has been lost. The Dead Sea, sustained only by inflowing water from the Jordan, is sinking by more than a meter every year.

This is not just a tragedy for wildlife. Springs that irrigated farmland for thousands of years have started to falter and fail. Wells used for generations have run dry. Refused access to the river and denied a fair share of the water pumped from beneath the land, Palestinian communities have seen fields turn to dust,

livelihoods lost, and families forced to migrate. The neglect of this river shows a disregard for our own cultural heritage and for our moral responsibility as custodians of God's creation. It also exacts a heavy price from the nations that share the valley, crippling the growth of an economy that could be supported by tourism and exacerbating the political conflicts that divide the region. This is an ecological collapse whose severity and cost – economic, ecological, human – we are only now beginning to count.

“The neglect of this river exacts a heavy price from the nations that share the valley, crippling the growth of an economy that could be supported by tourism and exacerbating the political conflicts that divide the region.”



THE DESTRUCTION OF THE JORDAN SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

- The Lower Jordan River begins at Lake Tiberius and flows south for about 120km before reaching its end at the Dead Sea.
- The Lower Jordan Valley is divided between Jordanians, Israelis, and Palestinians. Palestinians have no access to the Jordan and do not receive water directly from the river.
- Until about 1950, some 1.3 billion cubic meters of water flowed through the valley every year.
- 96% of that flow has been diverted.
- Untreated or poorly treated sewage has been dumped or allowed to leak into the river for over 50 years from Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian communities.
- The diversion and pollution of this water has caused an ecological collapse - more than 50% of the valley's biodiversity has been lost.
- The dying of the Jordan is also causing the Dead Sea to disappear – it is now sinking at the rate of approximately one meter per year.
- FoEME estimates that Israel diverts about half of the river's average annual flow, while Syria and Jordan take the rest.



© Jonathan Kalan / FoEME

A FAILURE OF WISDOM

“All the natural resources in this world are trusts, and it is the religious duty of Muslims to take care of these sources and use them in a sustainable manner. The Jordan River is included.”

Prof. Mustafa Abu Sway (Al Aqsa Mosque & Al Quds University)

Why has this happened? How have we allowed this to happen to a place of such exceptional beauty and value?

At the root of the problem is conflict. The basin that drains into the Jordan River is divided between Lebanese, Syrians, Jordanians, Israelis, and Palestinians. Instead of seeing the valley as a single, trans-boundary watershed, these nations have raced to capture the greatest possible share of the Jordan’s water. FoEME estimates that Israel diverts about half of the river’s average annual flow, while Syria and Jordan take about a quarter each. Palestinians, denied access to the river, take almost nothing.

Given the intensity of political conflict in the region, this zero-sum struggle for the valley’s water might seem inevitable. But it is, in the long term, an approach that will undermine the interests of all concerned. This is a single watershed: the flow of its streams does not correspond to the borders drawn on our maps, and its rain and rivers cannot be sustainably managed through a process of competition.

The degradation of this valley also reveals a profound failure of respect for the natural and non-human world. It exemplifies an attitude in which nature, including its water and all its forms of life, is seen as nothing more than a collection of resources to be mined for human use. This directly contravenes our Muslim duty, clearly expressed in the sunna of the Prophet Mohammed (SAAS) to show respect to all living creatures. As recorded in the hadith, the Prophet (SAAS) said “There is reward in [caring for] every living being” (Sahih Muslim, Ch. 7).

The abuse of nature is surely not what was intended when God appointed man as His Vice-Regent (Khalifah) on earth. As Dr. Abdullah Omar Nasseef, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, wrote in the Islamic Declaration on Nature in Assisi in 1986 -

For the Muslim, mankind’s role on earth is that of a Khalifah – Vice-Regent or trustee of Allah. We are Allah’s stewards and agents on Earth. We are not masters of this Earth; it does not belong to us to do what we wish.

It belongs to Allah and He has entrusted us with its safekeeping.

This duty to care for the earth that God entrusted to us was modeled by the Prophet (SAAS), especially in regard to the use of water –

Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr reported that Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) “passed by Sa`d [Ibn Abi Waqqas] while he was performing ablution and said to him: Why the excessive use of water? [Sa`d] asked: Even in ablution there is excessive use of water? [The Prophet] replied: Yes, even if you were at a flowing river.” (Narrated by Ibn Majah, Ch.2)

The respect for water and for all of nature, shown by the Prophet (SAAS) has been lost, along with our sense of wonder at the creation and of responsibility for the world that God made. All of this has contributed to the destruction of the Jordan River. The revival of the Jordan, then, requires not just a shift in policy, but a renewed spiritual effort to honor the creation that God has entrusted to us.





A NEW VISION OF THE VALLEY

FoEME has a different vision for the Jordan Valley - a vision in which a clean, living river runs from Lake Tiberius to the Dead Sea; in which the valley's plants, birds and animals are afforded the water they need to flourish; in which the springs flow as they have for millennia; and in which water extracted for human use is divided equitably between the nations that share this valley and amongst the people who live here.

This is a vision that reflects our moral and spiritual obligations as Muslims, that shows love and respect for the creation, and that is in harmony with Islam's attitude of care towards God's earth.

Given the scarcity of water in parts of this region and the state of relations between the countries that share the valley, realizing this vision will not be easy. But difficulty cannot be an excuse for inaction. To do nothing is to leave a landscape irreparably damaged by our own neglect.

The starting point of any new approach must be to see this river and its tributaries as a single, interconnected ecosystem. If we want the Jordan to survive – if we want to use this water to sustain farms and families and economies – we have no choice but to manage it sustainably through cooperation.

“If we want the Jordan to survive, we have no choice but to manage it sustainably through cooperation.”



A MEASURE OF PROGRESS

In the last three years we have seen the first signs of progress in the struggle to revive the river.

Responding to years of advocacy, national governments and municipalities are now working to prevent the dumping or leaking of untreated sewage into the river. New treatment plants are in development in Jordanian, Israeli, and Palestinian communities throughout the Jordan Valley. FoEME is confident that half a century of using the Jordan as a sewage canal could soon come to an end.

2013 also saw the first release of clean water into the Jordan River in 49 years. The Israeli Water Authority has agreed to allocate 30mcm (million cubic meters) of fresh water every year from Lake Tiberius to help revive the river. This sets an important precedent for future allocations, but it falls far short of FoEME's recommendation that a third of the historic flow be returned as part of an international effort to rehabilitate the Jordan.

FoEME is also developing the first cross-border master plan for the management of the Jordan River Valley – a plan that takes account of the valley's fragile ecology as well as recognizing the legitimate human need to draw on its water resources.

The plan puts scientifically sound and economically realistic policy recommendations behind our vision for the Jordan. Key recommendations include the return of 400-600 mcm (million cubic meters) of fresh water to the river; an end to the dumping of raw or poorly-treated sewage, saline, and other effluents into the stream; and the establishment of functioning international mechanisms for the joint management of the valley's water. With the support of national governments, this master plan can become the blueprint for the revival of the river.



JUSTICE, PEACE, PROSPERITY

We believe the Jordan can be revived without weakening the valley's agricultural economy or causing a shortage of water for human use. In the countries that share the valley, FoEME has identified over a billion cubic meters of water that could be saved (see the fact box below) and used to restore basic water rights to the Palestinians, to revive the Lower Jordan River, and to save the Dead Sea.

In the past decade FoEME has opened eco-parks – ideal places to stay and learn - on both sides of the Jordan. We are now working towards the creation of a trans-boundary ecological peace park centered on one of the river's historic crossing points, on the border between Israel and Jordan. This reserve will welcome visitors from both sides of the valley, providing a much-needed point of access to a river which, for much of its length, remains a closed military zone.

FoEME believes that a living Jordan River can bring prosperity as well as ecological health to this valley, and that the management of the valley's water provides a practical opportunity for regional cooperation and for the advancement of justice and peace.



REVIVING THE JORDAN

- FoEME recommends the release of 400-600 million cubic meters (mcm) of fresh water into the river every year.
- In addition, the Jordan needs to flood at least once each year in order to keep the river's ecosystem healthy (100m³/sec for 24 hours).
- FoEME recommends that Israel release 220mcm of water into the river each year, Syria 100mcm, and Jordan 90mcm. FoEME also recognizes that Palestine, as a riparian to the river, has a right to a fair share of the Jordan's water.
- FoEME's analysis has identified over a billion cubic meters of water that could be saved by these countries (primarily through reduction of leaks, improvements to irrigation efficiency, water harvesting and grey-water recycling, and demand management) and used to revive the river and to restore Palestinian water rights.
- The revival of the river requires that Jordanian, Israeli, and Palestinian decision-makers implement national policy strategies to manage their own demand for water, and to cooperate in the implementation of a comprehensive trans-boundary master plan for the river.
- This master plan should determine levels of water flow, set water quality standards, identify ways to eliminate pollution, define ecological corridors, support environmental rehabilitation programs, and advance plans for the development of eco-tourism in the Jordan Valley.
- Implementation of a master plan requires the establishment of a functioning trans-boundary commission to manage the valley's water resources, resolve disputes, and strengthen the mechanisms of cooperation.



II. WATER, ECOLOGY, AND THE JORDAN RIVER IN ISLAM

Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) reminded us, we will be held accountable: ‘Verily, this world is sweet and appealing, and Allah placed you as vicegerents therein; He will see what you will do.’

ISLAM, MUSLIMS AND THE JORDAN RIVER Imam Zaid Shakir

Zaid Shakir is a prominent American Muslim writer, thinker, and social activist. He co-founded Zaytuna College in California, where he now teaches Islamic law and history.

One of the beautiful features of Islam, one not fully appreciated by some of its adherents, is its ready acceptance of all of the Prophets and Messengers of God who preceded Muhammad. Hence, Muslims view Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and many others as Prophets of Islam. We read in the Qur'an, "We surely sent revelation unto you, as We sent it onto Noah and the Prophets succeeding him. We sent revelation to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, the Tribes, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, Solomon, and unto David we gave the Psalms (4:163)."

Hence, when Muslims read of those events transpiring in the lives of Abraham, Joshua, Lot, John the Baptist or Jesus in and around the area of the Jordan River, we feel as if we are reading Islamic history and we experience an intimate historical connection to the river and its surrounding lands. That connection is only strengthened when we reflect on the fact that the Jordan River is part of the blessed precincts surrounding the "Farthest Mosque" (Qur'an 18:1), and its terminal point is the Dead Sea, a place many Muslim exegetes opine is the area referred to in the Qur'an (30:3) as Adna al-'Ard (the lowest land).

Although the Jordan River contains no specific import in the life and career of the Prophet Muhammad, some of his most prominent companions are buried in the heart of its valley. We can mention among them Abu 'Ubaydah b.

Jarrah; Mu'adh b. Jabal; Shurahbil b. Hasana; 'Amr b. Abi Waqqas; and Darar b. al-Azwar. The specifically "Muslim" history connecting the lives of these individuals to the area, along with the Qur'anic references mentioned earlier, only deepen its significance in the hearts of Muslims.

The Jordan also has tremendous symbolic value. Formed by the meeting of two of the earth's tectonic plates, the river has long been a meeting place for different societies, cultures and religions. Since the advent of Islam, the lands surrounding the Jordan River have been a space where Jews, Christians and Muslims have been able to not only peacefully coexist, generally, but to create a vibrant and dynamic shared culture. Sadly, in more recent times, a lack of coordination and cooperation between the states which have emerged in the area has resulted in too much water being diverted or pumped out of the river and far too much sewage and other pollutants deposited into what remains of her dissipating flow.

Saving the Jordan River will require the joint effort of all of the people, states and religious communities surrounding her. If we can all come together to do just that, perhaps a vibrant river, full with life and surrounded by the lush vegetation that once filled the adjoining valley can revive our hearts and alert us to the fact that there are interests that transcend those of our respective nations.

"Perhaps a vibrant river...can revive our hearts and alert us to the fact that there are interests that transcend those of our respective nations"

There are human, moral and ecological interests that we can ill afford to marginalize as we have done for much of the 20th Century. If we can bring those interests to the fore and on their bases begin a meaningful restoration of the Jordan River, perhaps the area will once again be a meeting place; one symbolizing our ability to transcend conflict through a purposeful pursuit of the common good.

REVIVING THE JORDAN: A CHALLENGE FOR YOUNG MUSLIMS Dr. Husna Ahmed

Dr. Husna Ahmad (OBE) has a PhD in environmental law from London University. She authored the book 'Islam and Water: the Hajjar Story', and co-authored the 'Green Guide for Hajj.' She is the Secretary General of the World Muslim Leadership Forum, and sits on the advisory Board of the largest mosque in Europe, the East London Mosque. She has recently been appointed by the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) as Adviser on Islamic Programmes. In 2010 she was awarded an OBE by the Queen for services to disadvantaged communities in the UK through her work as the CEO of Faith Regen Foundation.

The following is a talk addressed to young people within the Islamic community.

Bismillah al-Rahman al-Raheem, in the name of Allah the most Gracious the most Merciful,

As-Salaamu Alaikum.

It is wonderful to be with you today to share some thoughts about our precious planet and what part you and I can play to affect positive change.

You - young Muslims, men and women - are our future. Your intentions, deeds and actions will determine your destiny and the destiny of this precious planet.

On behalf of the present and past generations I want to apologise to you for leaving you a world which is in turmoil, and crisis, a world where the generations before you only thought of themselves (or thought they were doing you a favour by pursuing reckless industrialization and materialism). Global hunger, population growth, poverty, rising debts, wars and instability within nations – these are all issues we have to deal with in the 21st century.

The elders in the Muslim community took a long time to wake up; and many are still

sleeping. I apologise to you for this and for the fact that we are leaving such a huge burden on your shoulder – the burden of climate change. Climate change has been identified as the greatest challenge of all time as well as increasingly becoming one of the 'world's greatest injustices.'

What I don't want you to do is think you can turn your back on any of these issues and that they will be resolved by someone else. If everyone thought like that it would be disastrous for humanity.

'It is Allah who created the heavens and earth, who has sent down water from the sky and with it brought forth produce to nourish you; He has made ships useful to you, sailing the sea by His command, and the rivers too; He has made the sun and the moon useful to you.'

Qur'an 14: 32-33

Islam teaches us to respect Allah's creation and maintain the balance He created. Allah commands 'Do not cause corruption on the earth' handing us the obligation to practice 'stewardship' over nature.

You may be one person, you may think you are insignificant, and you're probably thinking as a young person, who would even listen to you? But trust me you are the key! You are the future and the hope for humanity.

You have a double responsibility as Muslim youth, because you need to perform your Islamic duties and show the world that as Muslims you are making a valuable contribution to our precious planet. You want it to be a more beautiful, peaceful, and just planet. You need to let the world see how beautiful our actions as Muslims can be; that we are not all terrorists and radicals, we are ordinary decent citizens who want to live in peace within our Deen. Always remember that Islam is the religion of peace – let us show the world through our actions and deeds that peace is what we want for all citizens of the world.

Let us work with other faith communities to bring about positive change in our society and internationally. Every one of the world's great traditions contains a core moral and ethical underpinning that life should be just and fair. Let us pursue justice and fairness, let us pursue poverty alleviation, let us pursue clean drinking water for all - by campaigning together, through advocacy, through social media and through global and regional causes!

THE JORDAN RIVER

Today I want to talk to you about getting involved in a regional cause which is quite unique - I would like to talk about the Jordan River. For

decades now, conflict and human arrogance have been responsible for the demise of the Lower Jordan River. Cooperation in search of peace and sustainability is the only hope to restore it to health.

I will speak first of all about the importance of water in Islam and particularly the significance of the Jordan River; and then focus on the actions that you as young Muslims can undertake in partnership with EcoPeace / Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) to push for the rehabilitation of the Jordan River and thereby work towards peace in the region.

WATER AND ISLAM

The word for water, **Ma`** appears more than 60 times throughout the Quran, as well as other words related to water such as rivers, sea, fountains, springs, rain, hail, clouds and winds. The theme of water in the Quran is explored both symbolically and at a practical level.

'In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which benefits mankind, and the water that Allah sends down from the sky, then gives life with it to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds and the clouds made subservient between heaven and earth, there are surely signs for a people who understand.'
Quran 21:107

Water is an integral part of Islam and has been embedded in Islamic beliefs and customs. The term Shariah (Islamic laws) could either mean “the watering source” or “the path that leads to a source of water”. Thus it is a metaphor for divine law quenching the thirst of knowledge or a path leading to the source of truth.

As Muslims, it is important to acknowledge water as one of the immense mercies Allah (swt) has bestowed upon us. This gift is the proof of the existence and uniqueness of Allah as stated in the Surah of the Ant:

‘Or, Who has created the heavens and the earth, and Who sends you down water from the sky? Yea, with it We cause to grow well-planted orchards full of beauty of delight: it is not in your power to cause the growth of the trees in them. Can there be another god besides Allah?’
Quran 27:60

In Surah Al- Furqan, Allah (swt) describes His Mercy:

‘And it is He who sends the winds as good tidings before his Mercy, and We send down from the sky pure water’
Quran 25:48

In addition another Surah states “And have you seen the water that you drink? Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down? If we willed, we could make it bitter, so why are you not grateful?” (Quran 56: 58-70)

Water is also a symbol of resurrection since paradise is always described as a place with rivers flowing and florid vegetation (Surah Nahl 16: 30-31). The Prophet Muhammad (saw) describes water as one of the three wonders of the natural world that every Muslim is entitled to: “Muslims have common share in three (things). Grass, water and fire” (Abu Dawud – Book 23, 3470).

Another aspect associated to water in the Quran is its purifying power. Several verses focus on the subject of purification and personal cleanliness.

We, as Allah’s stewards on earth, have the responsibility of preserving the natural order of earth and maintaining its balance and must strive to ensure the fair allocation of resources.

‘And we send water from the sky in fixed measure.’
Quran 40:18

‘Tell them that water is shared, everyone in a certain time.’ Quran 54:28

Islam lays down clear instructions on water distribution and condemns wastefulness and prohibits people from defecating or urinating in the proximity of water sources to avoid pollution and contamination. Some basic Islamic norms relating to water management are:-

- Every human being, not just Muslims, has a right to drink water to quench his thirst to assure his survival.
- Denying water to someone asking for it is

condemned by the Prophet [pbuh] as one of the most ignominious acts

- Mankind has a priority in the access to water
- Water belongs to the community and no one is allowed to own it unless they have had to put in their labour and time to access it and distribute it.
- There is also a right of irrigation that permits people to water their crops, but domestic use has precedence over agricultural or industrial use.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JORDAN IN ISLAM

In the past, 1.3 billion metric cubes of water flowed annually through the Jordan River. Today only polluted water, including sewage, flows through it because 96% of this annual flow has been diverted by the national authorities of Israel, Syria, and Jordan. Competition for the valley’s water has been a source of conflict in the region for the last 50 years.

The land around the Jordan River Valley and the Dead Sea plain is revered by Muslims, Christians and Jews as blessed. The Bible calls it “the Garden of the Lord” (Genesis 13:10), and the Holy Qur’an says that God blessed the land “for all beings.” Indeed, half of humanity views the land and the river Jordan as the geographic and spiritual heartland of their faith.

The lower Jordan River Valley, the Dead Sea plains, and the surrounding hills and mountains are the home for some of the most momentous

events in the history of man’s relationship with Allah.

Jordan is also host to the tombs of many of the Prophet Muhammad’s Companions, who were martyred and buried there. The most important companions of the Prophet (PBUH) buried in Jordan include: Zeid ibn al-Haritha (the Prophet’s adopted son and the only companion mentioned by name in the Qur’an); Ja’far bin Abi Talib (cousin of the Prophet and elder brother of Ali, who was the husband of the Prophet’s daughter Fatima and the father of al-Hassan and al-Hussein); Abu ‘Ubaydah ‘Amer Ibn al-Jarrah (one of the “Blessed Ten” companions promised Paradise); Mu’ath bin Jabal (the Prophet’s governor in Yemen); Shurhabil bin Husna (the Scribe of the Qur’anic Revelation), and Dirar bin al-Azwar (a great general).

Furthermore, the sites of several of the most important battles in Islamic history also took place in Jordan. After two unsuccessful attacks against the Byzantine garrison town of Mu’tah in 629 CE, the Muslim Arab tribes regrouped for a much wider military operation. After battles at Yarmouk (634 CE) and Fahl (635 CE), the Muslim armies won a decisive battle against the Byzantines at the second Battle of Yarmouk (636 CE). This victory opened the way to the conquest of Syria and the rapid expansion of the Islamic world.

The river Jordan flows into the Dead Sea and the Quran mentions in Surah Rum that battle that took place between the Persians and the Romans at the lowest part of the earth, i.e. the Dead Sea. [Quran 30: 2,3,4]

PROTECTING THE JORDAN RIVER

Prof. Mustafa Abu Sway

CURRENT CONDITION OF THE JORDAN RIVER

Since the demise of the Ottoman Empire the water resources of the Jordan River have not been fairly allocated; and the situation has worsened because of the consistent diversion of water by the three main riparian countries.

The degradation of the Jordan River in terms of quantity and quality is due to the growing demand for water by Israel, Syria, Palestine, and Jordan, and is compounded by the adverse effects of climate change. Untreated or poorly treated sewage water has been dumped directly or allowed to leak into the river for the past 50 years.

Residents and tourists have little access to the river, due to military restrictions. Palestinians have no access to the river due to its control by Israel and do not receive water directly from the river.

Unless immediate action is taken, the Jordan River is in danger of drying up completely. (See the 'Save the Jordan' website and the report 'A River of Life' for FoEME's recommendations on what needs to be done to revive the river)

Mustafa Abu Sway is the Integral Chair for the Study of Imam Ghazali's Work at Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa and at Al-Quds University. He has been Professor of Philosophy and Islamic Studies at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem since 1996.

The Islamic worldview holds that God chose special places to be blessed and holy, including the "Holy Land" (Qur'an, 5:21) which is also described in the Qur'an as the "land that We have blessed for the nations" (Qur'an, 21:71). An important verse that addresses the extent of this holiness is that which covers the Night Journey, in which God took Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from Mecca to Jerusalem:

Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing. (Qur'an, 17:1)

It is important to emphasize two things in this verse; the first is that the blessedness is extended to the surroundings and precincts of Jerusalem, and the second is that the Holy Land is not to be equated with the geopolitical maps that emerged (still emerging!) vis-à-vis historical Palestine. Would holiness, for example, stop at the Lebanese borders? The same principle applies to Jordan; would holiness stop at the Jordan River? And if it does, does it stop at its western bank, or at the eastern bank of the river? Such an introduction is important to establish that the Jordan River is part of the blessed land in which it runs.

The Jordan River is vital for all inhabitants in the region. It should be protected against

excessive use. It is already reduced to a negligent fraction of what it was before the Israeli Occupation in 1967, especially after the establishment of settlements in the Jordan Valley. While the primary responsibility for protecting this river is that of governments, individuals are also invited to participate in the preservation of this river.

It is the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) to conserve water, even if one is right next to river. `Abdullah Ibn `Amr reported that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) "passed by Sa`d [Ibn Abi Waqqas] while he was performing ablution and said to him: Why the excessive use of water? [Sa`d] asked: Even in ablution there is excessive use of water? [The Prophet] replied: Yes, even if you were at a flowing river. (Narrated by Ibn Majah).

Reports about waste water polluting the Jordan River is also disheartening. One should remember that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) prohibited urinating in water collections (Narrated by Al-Nasa'i).

All the natural resources in this world are trusts, and it is the religious duty of Muslims to take care of these sources and use them in a sustainable manner. The Jordan River is included.

WATER IN THE HOLY QURAN

*All English-language translations are taken from the Sahih International edition of the Holy Quran, with the exception of the quotation (21:30) on the cover of this document, which comes from the translation by Yusuf Ali.

ON WATER, RAIN, AND LIFE...

Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe? **Quran, 21:30**

And Allah has sent down rain from the sky and given life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness. Indeed in that is a sign for a people who listen. **Quran 16:65**

And We have sent down blessed rain from the sky and made grow thereby gardens and grain from the harvest. **Quran 50:9**

It is Allah who created the heavens and the earth and sent down rain from the sky and produced thereby some fruits as provision for you and subjected for you the ships to sail through the sea by His command and subjected for you the rivers. **Quran, 14:32**

And have you seen the water that you drink? Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down? **Quran, 56:68-69**

Say, "Have you considered: if your water was to become sunken [into the earth], then who could bring you flowing water?" **Quran 67:30**

ON MAN'S VICE-REGENCY (KHILAFAH) AND CARE FOR THE EARTH...

And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." They said, "Will you place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?" Allah said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know." **Quran 2:30**

And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily **Quran, 25:63**

CARE FOR THE EARTH IN HADITH AND SUNNA

Abdullah Ibn 'Amr reported that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) "passed by Sa`d [Ibn Abi Waqqas] while he was performing ablution and said to him: Why the excessive use of water? [Sa`d] asked: Even in ablution there is excessive use of water? [The Prophet] replied: Yes, even if you were at a flowing river." **Narrated by Ibn Majah (Chapter 2, p.221)**

There is reward in [caring for] every living being. **Sahih Muslim (Chapter 7, p.44)**

Verily, this world is sweet and appealing, and Allah placed you as vicegerents therein; He will see what you will do
Sahih Muslim, Musnad Ahmad Bin Hanbal **(Chapter 3, page 22)**

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Abdullah bin 'Umar (May Allah be well pleased with both of them), that the Holy Prophet (SAAS) passed by a person performing wudu. He (SAAS) said: Do not waste (water), do not use more water than you need it. **Sunan Ibn Majah**

THE JORDAN VALLEY IN ISLAMIC HISTORY

The Jordan River runs through one of the historic and spiritual heartlands of Islam. The territory around the Holy City of Jerusalem / Al Quds, including the land beyond the Jordan River and even as far as Damascus, has traditionally been understood in Islam as belonging to “the land which We had blessed” (Quran 21:71).

The Jordan Valley also played a crucial role in the expansion of Islam under Caliph Umar, and formed part of the cultural core of the Muslim world during the first great flowering of Islamic culture. It was here, close to the East bank of the Jordan, that the Muslim armies, including many who had known the Prophet (SAAS), fought one of the decisive battles against the Byzantine forces at Fahl (Pella) in 635 CE.

Some of the closest Companions of the Prophet Mohammed (SAAS), veterans of this campaign, are buried on the Jordanian side of the river. They include –

- **Zayd ibn Al-Harithah**, the adopted son of the Prophet (SAAS).
- **Ja'far ibn Abi Talib**, the cousin of the Prophet (SAAS).
- **Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah**, one of the first to accept Islam and later supreme commander of the Arab armies under Caliph Umar. Abu 'Ubaydah is buried in the Jordan Valley.
- **Bilal bin Rabah**, who served as mu'azin to the Prophet (SAAS).

- **Dirar bin Al-Azwar**, an early Companion and renowned warrior, buried in the Jordan Valley.
- **Sharhabil Bin Hassneh**, among the most trusted of the Prophet's (SAAS) Companions and, according to some, one of the scribes of the Holy Quran. Buried in the Jordan Valley.
- **Amir bin Abi Waqqas**, said to be the eleventh Companion to convert to Islam, also buried in the Jordan Valley.
- **Mu'ath bin Jabal**, a Companion who fought in the battle of Badr and who is also said to be among the four compilers of the Quran during the time of the Prophet Mohammed (SAAS). Mu'ath, too, is buried in the Jordan Valley.

On the West bank of the river, too, there are sites sacred to Islam, most notably the maqam or shrine of **Nabi Musa** (pbuh). Believed by many Muslims to be the burial place of the Prophet Musa (pbuh), this site flourished as a focus of popular devotion and ziyara (‘visitation’ or ‘pilgrimage’) from the Ayyubid period until the middle of the twentieth century.

The Jordan River Valley is important not just in the religious history of Islam, but also in the development of a distinctive Islamic culture and civilization. This can be seen at ‘**Hisham's Palace**’ in Jericho – a winter retreat built in the 8th century by the Umayyad Caliphs of Damascus. The palace contained gardens, mosques, bathhouses, and libraries. It still preserves one of the finest Islamic mosaics anywhere in the world.

OTHER QUOTES ON WATER AND CREATION

All the natural resources in this world are trusts, and it is the religious duty of Muslims to take care of these sources and use them in a sustainable manner. The Jordan River is included.

Prof. Mustafa Abu Sway, Al Aqsa Mosque & Al Quds University,

We are God's stewards and agents on Earth. We are not masters of this Earth; it does not belong to us to do what we wish. It belongs to God and He has entrusted us with its safekeeping.

Dr. Abdullah Omar Nasseef, Secretary General, Muslim World League, Muslim declaration on Nature, Assisi, 1976

The Arabic word for water, ماء, occurs sixty-three times in the Quran. God's throne is described as resting on water, and Paradise is described as “Gardens beneath which rivers flow.” As Caponera points out, it seems that in the Quran, the most precious creation after humankind is water. The life-giving quality of water is reflected in the verse, “And Allah has sent down the water from the sky and therewith gives life to the earth after its death.” Not only does water give life, but every life is itself made of water: “We made from water every living thing.” Naser I. Faruqi, Director of Science & Innovation, International Development Research Center

DECLARATIONS AND ESSAYS ON ISLAM AND ECOLOGY

MUSLIM DECLARATION ON NATURE

This is the Muslim Declaration on Nature, taken from the original Assisi Declarations on Nature which were created in 1986, at a meeting held in Assisi at which five leaders of the five major world religions – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism – were invited to come and discuss how their faiths could help save the natural world.

**By His Excellency Dr. Abdullah Omar Nasseef,
Secretary General of the Muslim World League.**

The essence of Islamic teaching is that the entire universe is Allah's creation. Allah makes the waters flow upon the earth, upholds the heavens, makes the rain fall and keeps the boundaries between day and night. The whole of the rich and wonderful universe belongs to Allah, its Maker. It is Allah who created the plants and the animals in their pairs and gave them the means to multiply. Then Allah created mankind - a very special creation because mankind alone was created with reason and the power to think and even the means to turn against his Creator. Mankind has the potential to acquire a status higher than that of the angels or sink lower than the lowest of the beasts.

The word 'Islam' has the dual meaning of submission and peace. Mankind is special, a very particular creation of Allah. But still we are Allah's creation and we can only properly understand ourselves when we recognise that our proper condition is one of submission to Allah who made us.

And only when we submit to the Will of Allah can we find peace: peace within us as individuals, peace between man and man, and peace between man and nature. When we submit to the Will of Allah, we become aware of the sublime fact that all our powers, potentials, skills and knowledge are granted to us by Allah. We are His servants and when we are conscious of that, when we realise that all our achievements derive from the Mercy of Allah, and when we return proper thanks and respect and worship to Allah for our nature and creation, then we become free. Our freedom is that of being sensible, aware, responsible trustees of Allah's gifts and bounty.

For the Muslim, mankind's role on earth is that of a Khalifah - vicegerent or trustee of Allah. We are Allah's stewards and agents on Earth. We are not masters of this Earth; it does not belong to us to do what we wish. It belongs to Allah and He has entrusted us with its safekeeping. Our function as vicegerents, Khalifahs of Allah, is only to oversee the trust. The khalifah is answerable for his/her actions, for the way in which he/she uses or abuses the trust of Allah.

Islam teaches us that we have been created by Allah, that we will return to Allah for Judgement, and that we are accountable for our deeds as well as our omissions. The khalifah will have to render an account of how he treated the trust of Allah on the Day of Reckoning. The notion that describes the accountability of the

khalifah is akhirah (the Hereafter). Islam is the guidance of how to live today so that we can face the akhirah: it is the Message which informs us of what will be involved in that reckoning.

The central concept of Islam is Tawhid - the Unity of Allah. Allah is Unity and His Unity is also reflected in the unity of mankind, and the unity of man and nature. His trustees are responsible for maintaining the unity of His creation, the integrity of the Earth, its flora and fauna, its wildlife and natural environment. Unity cannot be had by discord, by setting one need against another; it is maintained by balance and harmony. Therefore, Muslims say that Islam is the middle path and we will be answerable for how we have walked this path and how we have maintained balance and harmony in the whole of creation around us.

So unity, trusteeship and accountability, that is tawhid, khalifah and akhirah, ...three [of the] central concepts of Islam, are also the pillars of the environmental ethics of Islam. They constitute the basic values taught by the Qur'an. It is these values which led Muhammad, (peace be upon him), the Prophet of Islam, to say: 'Whosoever plants a tree and diligently looks after it until it matures and bears fruit is rewarded', and 'If a Muslim plants a tree or sows a field and men and beasts and birds eat from it, all of it is a charity on his part', and again, 'The world is green and beautiful, and Allah has appointed you as His stewards over it.'

Environmental consciousness is born when such values are adopted and become an intrinsic part of our mental and physical make-up.

And these are not remote, other-worldly notions, they concern us here and now. If you were to ask me what the notion of the Hereafter has to do with here and now, my answer might surprise you. I would say nuclear power and biotechnology. Both of these are very present here-and-now issues. Both have benefits and costs. Both have implications for the health and wellbeing of mankind and nature. If I sincerely intend to be Allah's khalifah, His steward on Earth, then I must have an opinion about them and prepare myself to make choices about them, because I will be accountable for what mankind has wrought with these devices in the Hereafter.

Islam is a very practical world view. It seeks, in all its principles and injunctions, to give pragmatic shapes to its concepts and values. Indeed, the notion of tawhid and khalifah have been translated into practical injunctions in the Shari'ah (Islamic Law). Surah Shari'ah institutions as haram zones, inviolate areas within which development is prohibited to protect natural resources, and hima, reserves established solely for the conservation of wildlife and forests, form the core of the environmental legislation of Islam.

The classical Muslim jurist, Izz Al-Din Ibn Abd As-Salam, used these aspects of the Shari'ah

when he formulated the bill of legal rights of animals in the thirteenth century. Similarly, numerous other jurists and scholars developed legislations to safeguard water resources, prevent over-grazing, conserve forests, limit the growth of cities, protect cultural property, and so on. Islam's environmental ethics then are not limited to metaphysical notions; they provide a practical guide as well.

Muslims need to turn to this nexus of values, this way of understanding themselves and their environment. The notions of unity, trusteeship and accountability should not be reduced to matters of personal piety; they must guide all aspects of their life and work. Shari'ah should not be relegated just to issues of crime and punishment; it must also become the vanguard for environmental legislation.

We often say that Islam is a complete way of life, by which it is meant that our ethical system provides the bearings for all our actions. Yet our actions often undermine the very values we cherish. Often while working as scientists or technologists, economists or politicians, we act contrary to the environmental dictates of Islam. We must imbibe these values into our very being. We must judge our actions by them. They furnish us with a world-view which enables us to ask environmentally appropriate questions, to draw up the right balance sheet of possibilities,

and to properly weigh the environmental costs and benefits of what we want, what we can do within the ethical boundaries established by Allah, without violating the rights of His other creations.

If we use the same values, the same understanding in our work as scientist or technologist, economist or politician, as we do to know ourselves as Muslims - those who submit themselves to the Will of Allah - then, I believe, we will create a caring and practical way of being, doing and knowing; a true Islamic alternative to the environmentally destructive thought and actions which dominates the world today.

THE ISLAMIC DECLARATION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The first Islamic conference of environment ministers held in Jeddah on 29 Rabia I - 1st Rabia II, 1423 A.H. corresponding to 10-12 June 2002 C.E

This is an edited excerpt from the full declaration, which can be found at the website of the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale.

ARTICLE 1: HONOUR BESTOWED ON MAN

Man is the lieutenant of Allah on earth. He is mandated to build civilization and held responsible for the harnessing and protection of environment. The Muslim, in particular, is duty-bound to take care of the environment, in the general acceptance of the term, and to make every personal and possible effort to achieve sustainable development for the general well-being of each and everybody.

ARTICLE 2: RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN

Indeed, the most beloved by Allah are the pious and the charitable, and the most hated by Allah are the one who wreak havoc in earth. Charity is every good deed that benefits to people and takes care of the environment in which they live. It may be an act of social solidarity, a contribution to the restoration of peace and security or the eradication of poverty and unemployment, in a bid to achieve justice and equity through collective participation in the development enterprise, motivated by religious, cultural and humanitarian drives.

ARTICLE 3: ENVIRONMENT FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

The environment is a gift donated to man by Allah. Therefore, individuals and communities are, all, duty-bound to take care of it and promote all its natural resources, including air, climate, water, seas, flora and fauna, and refrain from any act likely to cause pollution or damage the eco-system or disturb the balance thereto.

ISLAM AND WATER MANAGEMENT: OVERVIEW AND PRINCIPLES Naser I. Faruqi

Naser Faruqi is the Director of Science and Innovation at the International Development Research Center (IDRC). He is an expert on water management issues. In 1999, he was named one of the top 14 young water specialists in the world by a group of internationally respected water organizations. Faruqi holds a master's degree in environmental engineering from the University of Ottawa, and has published widely on science, technology, and innovation.

This is an edited excerpt without footnotes from the book 'Water Management in Islam' by Naser I. Faruqi, Asit K. Biswas, and Murad J. Bino (UNU Press, IDRC).

WATER AS A SOCIAL GOOD

Water is of profound importance in Islam. It is considered a blessing from God that gives and sustains life, and purifies humankind and the earth.

The Arabic word for water, *ma'*, occurs sixty-three times in the Quran. God's throne is described as resting on water, and Paradise is described as "Gardens beneath which rivers flow." As Caponera (this volume) points out, it seems that in the Quran, the most precious creation after humankind is water. The life-giving quality of water is reflected in the verse, "And Allah has sent down the water from the sky and therewith gives life to the earth after its death." Not only does water give life, but every life is itself made of water: "We made from water every living thing."

All human beings rely on water for life and good health but, for Muslims, it enjoys special importance for its use in wudu (ablution, that is, washing before prayer) and ghusl (bathing). The benefit of the daily prayers, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, has itself been compared by the Prophet (pbuh) to the cleansing action of

water in the following hadith, "The similitude of five prayers is like an overflowing river passing by the gate of one of you in which he washes five times daily."

WATER AND EQUITY

Muslims believe that ensuring social justice, or equity, in society is the cornerstone of Islam, and that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) set the example for them in this regard. Virtually all of the *hadith* relate to the preservation of equity, and those related to water are no exception. For example, "None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself." Obviously, this applies to the desire for an adequate amount of clean, fresh water, as well as anything else. A Muslim cannot hoard excess water – rather he is obliged to allow others to benefit by it. The Prophet (pbuh) stated that among the three people Allah will ignore on the day of resurrection are "a man [who] possessed superfluous water on a way and he withheld it from the travellers." The Quran warns human beings against unfair distribution by stating that the riches of this world belong to Allah, his Prophet, orphans, the

needy, and the wayfarer, and that these riches ought "not (merely) make a circuit between the wealthy among you." In fact, the recognition of water as a vital resource, of which everyone has the right to a fair share, is emphasized by the following hadith, which effectively makes water a community resource to which all, rich or poor, have a right: "Muslims have common share in three things: grass (pasture), water and fire (fuel)." On the Prophet's advice, one of his companions, Othman, who later became the third Muslim caliph, bought the well of Ruma (a settlement in Arabia) and made its water available free to the Muslim community – the well was actually made into a *waqf*, a usufruct or a collective property for religious purposes and public utility.

WATER CONSERVATION

The Quran makes two clear statements regarding water that support water demand management. First, the supply of water is fixed, and second, it should not be wasted. The statement that water supply is fixed, and that therefore, at some point, demand must be managed because supplies cannot be infinitely increased is: "And we send down water from the sky in fixed measure." The Quran then tells humans that they may use God's gifts for their sustenance in moderation, provided that they commit no excess therein: "O Children of Adam! . . . Eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for God loveth not the wasters."

The hadith are even more explicit. The Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) "used to perform ablution with one mudd of water [equal to

2/3 litre] and used to take a bath with one sa' up to five mudds [equal to 2–3 1/2 litres]." This hadith demonstrates the logical approach to sustainable water use in arid Arabia where the Prophet lived. However, the Prophet forbade waste even in conditions of seeming plenty when he said "Do not waste water even if performing ablution on the bank of a fast-flowing (large) river."

Given the clarity of these examples, it is surprising that they are not used more widely to promote water conservation in predominantly Muslim countries. As noted by Atallah (this volume), ordinary Muslims support the idea of being educated about the environment by their religious leaders. In a 1993 survey in Jordan, 64 per cent of the respondents believed that the imams should play an important role in environmental education and public awareness, but only 34 per cent felt that imams were already doing so.



III. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

This section is focused on Islamic education and the role of educators to create a sound and balanced environment in society based on moral and spiritual values. The section addresses who are the community leaders and their general role from the Islamic perspective, and then how they can help the campaign and bring back life to the river.

- What comes to mind when you think of the "Jordan River"?
- Where is the Jordan River?
- How deep is the Jordan River?
- How wide is the Jordan River?
- What was the Jordan River like 50 years ago? How is it now?
- What is the importance of the Jordan River?
- What is the relationship between Muslims and Jordan River?
- What is your responsibility as a Muslim towards the Jordan River?
- How should we live up to God's command?
- How can we find a way to use earth's resource without exhausting them?
- Do we realize yet that our communities will not thrive and our economies will not prosper if we destroy the natural resources upon which life depends?

Jordan River needs your answer...

RATIONALIZATION OF WATER AND WASTE

The role of Imams, preachers, and students in schools, universities and communities

The teachings of Islam with regards to environmental science are based on the rule of balance and moderation in the interest of human development.

WHY ARE COMMUNITIES IMPORTANT?

A community can be a group of people who live in a certain area, with a community leader that they can call upon in case of any problems, to provide leadership and guidance.

SO WHO ARE COMMUNITY LEADERS?

Community leaders can be teachers, Imams, or preachers, as well as volunteers who work on all kinds of community projects.

Why do we need community leaders in our case?

Community leaders are community builders! Leaders are the people in a community who create action and change. They are able to inspire others to join them in changing things for the better. A good community leader is skilled at listening to others and consistently encourages everyone to have a voice and make things happen. Religion exerts a great influence on society and water plays an extremely pivotal role within Islam. As a consequence of this,

awareness campaigns and water conservation programs based on religious principles have proved very useful, beneficial and cost effective in different areas of the Muslim world as Imams have been trained to convey messages of water conservation while delivering special sermons during the Friday prayer.

Preaching and guidance are of great significance to the positive changes of behavior, and play an important role in the recognition of effective and influential advocates in the community. Imams' roles are vital as they are recognized as a force for improvement and efficacy. With their outreach capabilities they have the honorable task of the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. In addition, they play an important role in raising the awareness of citizens, including providing guidance regarding water conservation and ways to rationalize consumption.

Thus, a successful preacher is someone who can call upon people in circumstance that abides with the teachings of Islamic Sharia. This allows them to achieve beneficial for the individual and society, and warn of the consequences of complacency, apathy, or irresponsibility on the individual in particular, and society in general.

WHY IS AN IMAM IMPORTANT IN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY?

The Imam is the leader of a mosque, and thus the leader of a Muslim community. As he is the most experienced and religiously learned in the community, when people have a question about religion and spiritual affairs people come to him to ask for guidance.

He leads prayers, gives advice, and tends for his community, trying to solve issues and grievances as well as being the most knowledgeable about Islam. In most ways, an Imam has a similar role to a preacher or pastor in Christian community. Indeed, teachers in the Islamic system enjoyed a unique status in the Muslim world. They presented a pattern of moral and social leadership that has no parallel in the social structure of the modern world.

Young people in your community are the leaders of tomorrow! They need to be encouraged, mentored and supported.

IF YOU ARE AN IMAM, TEACHER, OR STUDENT YOU CAN HELP US TO REHABILITATE THE JORDAN RIVER

- Imams can customize the Friday sermon to talk about the Jordan River Rehabilitation.
- You can launch community based initiatives and events aimed at youth, and mobilize young people to help the rehabilitation of the Jordan.
- You can make use of the booklet material to be taught in mosques.
- You can initiate a poster campaign showcasing what the Quran and religious texts teach about the preservation of water sources.
- You can teach lessons to students from the plans provided in this booklet
- Schools can organize trips to visit the Jordan River.
- Imams raise awareness about proper consumption practices e.g. performs ablution in water conserving manner.
- Imams or teachers can set a model for proper water consumption by reusing grey water to irrigate mosque's and school's gardens.

LESSONS THAT CAN HELP YOU

EXAMPLE LESSON 1:

ALLAH IS WITNESS OVER WHAT YOU DO

Praise be to Allah, the Almighty, the All-Wise. I thank him as is befitting to his Sovereign status and Majesty. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship, except for Him alone without any partners or peers. To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatever is within them. And He is over all things, Witness.

I also bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger. He is the Imam of the Pious and Commander of the former and later peoples. May the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, his companions and all those who will follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

O Servants of Allah, I urge you and myself to be mindful of Allah the Almighty and obey Him in light of what He says, "We made from water every living thing" {30.Alanbya'}.

Islam identifies human beings as the custodians of the earth and all that is on it, including vegetation, animals, oceans, rivers, deserts, and fertile land. Allah provides us with the things we need to survive successfully and flourish, but we are obligated to care for them and preserve them for future generations. Water is one resource that is becoming difficult to protect. Verses from the Quran and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad implore us to be mindful of our obligations and to keep the sources of water clean and available to all of humankind.

I urge you and myself to be ever conscious of Allah and to construct our lives in accordance to what He has ordered us, for Allah, The Almighty, says, "we made from water every living thing" {30.Alanbya'}

God has also shown us the functions of water from lakes, seas, and oceans. He has made it the habitat of many created beings that play vital roles in the preservation of life and the development of this world. God has said: "It is He Who has made the sea of service, that you may eat thereof flesh that is fresh and tender, and that you may bring forth from it ornaments to wear, and you see the ships therein that plough the waves, that you may seek of His bounty." (Quran 16:14)

"Lawful to you is the pursuit of water-game and its use for food a provision for you and for those who travel..." (Quran 5:96)

There is no doubt that conservation of this vital element is fundamental to the preservation and continuation of life in its various forms: plant, animal, and human. In Islamic law whatever is indispensable to fulfill the imperative obligation of preserving life is therefore itself obligatory. Any action that obstructs or impairs the biological and social functions of this, whether by destroying or polluting it, or by otherwise impairing its function as the basis of life, is prohibited as the juristic principle is "What leads to the prohibited is itself prohibited."

Owing to the importance of water as the basis of life, God has made its use the common right of all living beings and all human beings. All are entitled to use it without monopoly, usurpation, despoilment, wastage, or abuse. God commanded with regard to the people of Thamud and their camel:

"And tell them that the water shall be shared between them..." (Quran 54:28)

Extravagance in using water is forbidden; this applies to private as well as public use, and irrespective of whether water is scarce or abundant. It is related that the Prophet passed by his companion Sa'd, who was washing for prayer, and said:

"What is this wastage, O Sa' d?"

"Is there wastage even in washing for prayer?" asked Sa' d;

and he said, "Yes, even if you are by a flowing river!"

The long experience of Muslim jurists in the allocation of water rights in arid lands has given rise to an outstanding example of the sustainable use of a scarce resource; an example which is of increasing relevance in a world where resources which were once abundant are becoming progressively more scarce.

Today, we are talking about Jordan River. As you know the Jordan River is a part of al ard al-muqadasa – the holy land mentioned in the Qur'an in surrat al-esra'a "Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al- Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing." {17:1}. We have a great duty towards this river: to save it and to restore it as witness to Islamic history. It was the first territory in which Islam spread outside of the Arabian Peninsula, and it was also the

site of the first contact between Islam and the non-Arab world.

The most important companions of the Prophet (PBUH) buried in Jordan include: Zeid ibn al-Haritha (the Prophet's adopted son and the only companion mentioned by name in the Qur'an); Ja'far bin Abi Talib (cousin of the Prophet and elder brother of Ali, who was the husband of the Prophet's daughter Fatima and the father of al-Hassan and al-Hussein); Abu 'Ubaydah 'Amer Ibn al-Jarrah (one of the "Blessed Ten" companions promised Paradise); Mu'ath bin Jabal (the Prophet's governor in Yemen); Shurhabil bin Husna (the Scribe of the Qur'anic Revelation), and Dirar bin al-Azwar (a great general). In fact, many more companions of the Prophet are buried around this river.

The most important battles in Islamic history took place on the banks of the Jordan River. After two unsuccessful attacks against the Byzantine garrison town of Mu'tah in 629 CE, the Muslim Arab tribes regrouped for a much wider military operation. After battles at Yarmouk (634 CE) and Fahl (635 CE), the Muslim armies won a decisive battle against the Byzantines at the second Battle of Yarmouk (636 CE). This victory opened the way to the conquest of Syria and the rapid expansion of the Islamic world.

'Verily, this world is sweet and appealing, and Allah placed you as vicegerents therein; He will see what you will do.' Prophet Mohammed (SAAS), Musnad Ahmad Bin Hanbal (Ch. 3)

So Allah is witness on what you do, God will ask on what you did in this world in the day of reckoning.

O Allah, Show us the essence of truth and grant us the will to follow it. May Allah also mend our intentions, grant that our spouses and our offspring be a joy to our eyes and make success be an ally to us. O Allah, we seek Your favour to raise our status, increase our good deeds, remove from us our misdeeds and cause us to die with the righteous.

O servants of Allah, remember Allah and He will remember you. Be grateful for His benevolence He will increase His blessings to you.

EXAMPLE LESSON 2:

Water is a pivotal issue in Islam. Scarcity has always influenced the perception of water by Muslims and it has, accordingly, shaped their behaviors and customs. In the last decade Islam and Islamic principles have been used to influence and improve people's concern on the subject of water.

One of the most famous verses pertaining to water is taken from the Sura of the Prophets and it states "We made from water every living thing" (21:30). But this is not the only Ayah (verse)

where the word Mā' (water) appears since it occurs more than sixty times in the Quran. Several other words related to the semantics of water and hydrology, such as rivers, sea, fountains, springs, rain, hail, clouds and winds, are also frequent (Abdel Haleem, 1989).

Water is thus described as a gift by God so that humanity can benefit from it. This gift is the proof of the existence and uniqueness of Allah as stated in the Sura of the Ant: "Or, Who has created the heavens and the earth, and Who sends you down water from the sky? Yea, with it We cause to grow well-planted orchards full of beauty of delight: it is not in your power to cause the growth of the trees in them. Can there be another god besides Allah?" (27, 60). Water is also a symbol of resurrection since paradise is always described as a place with rivers flowing and florid vegetation (Sura of the Bee 16, 30-31).

References to water in the most sacred book for Muslims are also very material and linked to everyday life: water is sent by God so that men can drink it or grow agricultural products. God also created seas and rivers so that they could be used by men for transportation. Water has permeated many aspects of life in Arab-Muslim societies: for example it is quite common to find references to water in Arabic literature, be it an account of the characteristics of a water body, or a poem set in an oasis.

Water also had an impact on art and architecture in Islamic civilization: its presence shaped the planning of the Islamic city. The city was usually built around a mosque where you could find basins for the ablutions and the streets were scattered with Subul (Sabil), public fountains built for charity decorated with Quranic inscriptions, or beverage basins for animals. A characteristic building of Islamic Cairo during the Mamluk era was the Sabil Kuttab, a charitable structure composed of a Sabil (drinking fountain) on the ground floor, and a Kuttab (Quranic school for boys) on top.

Offering water to the thirsty has always been a duty to be fulfilled and it is perceived as principles of Sharaitic law. Denying water to someone asking for it is condemned by the Prophet as one of the most ignominious acts to perform (Abdel Haleem, 1989).

Another distinctive building of the Islamic city is the Hammam (the Turkish bath). Usually located in the proximity of a mosque it was widely used when bathrooms were not a commodity in most houses. Going to the Hammam was also a social experience where people, and especially women, could meet thus making bathing a lay ritual.

All these examples show to what extent water and Islam are intertwined, how the role of water in the society is extremely pivotal and the links between it and religion are very strong. There is an Islamic approach to the environment that is reflected on the way water is perceived in Muslim society too. Water like all other natural resources present on earth is a gift by God and men are not allowed to own it.



© Jonathan Kalan / FoEME

IV. IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

Reviving the Jordan River is a challenge that requires real political commitment from leaders on all sides of the valley.

And that's where you come in.

We need to push this issue up the political agenda – to raise our voices and let Jordanian, Israeli, and Palestinian decision-makers know that we care about this river and expect them to act.

The revival of the Jordan is a not simply a question of politics – it is also a moral and spiritual challenge for Muslims. If we want to the river to survive, we cannot remain silent.

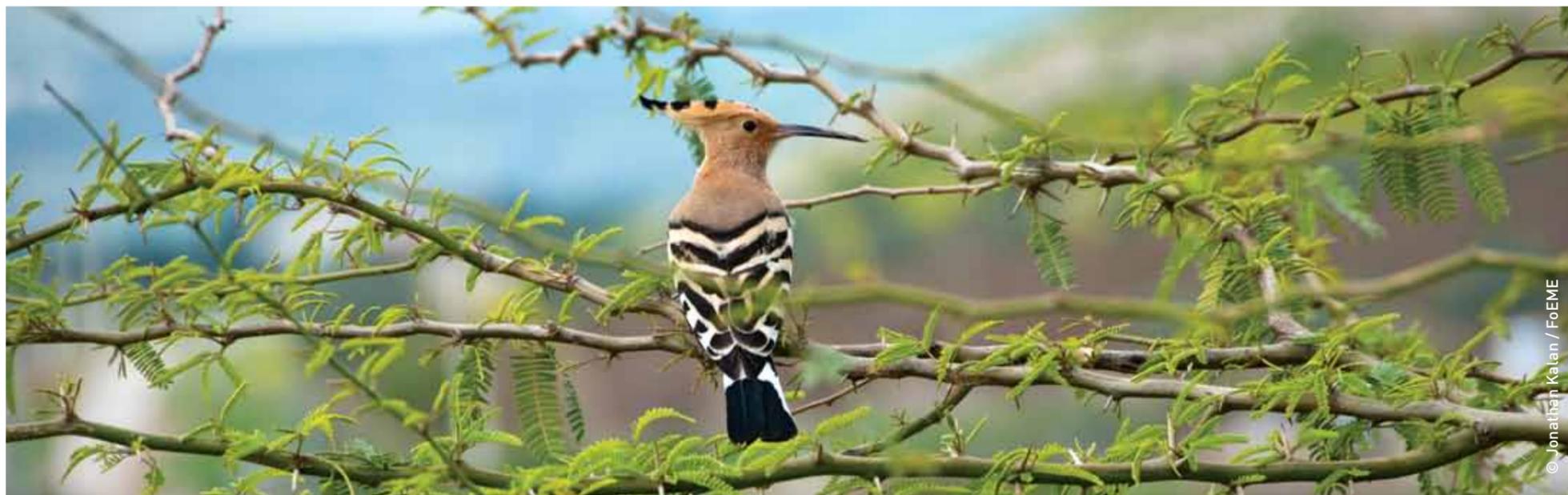
AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED

Finally, I would like to reiterate the importance of your role as young Muslims in preserving the natural environment as, on the Day of Judgment, we will all be held accountable for our time on this precious planet.

The Jordan River is an important global icon that is part of the shared natural and cultural heritage of many people around the world. Whether or not we live in the region we all have a role to play in restoring this renowned river to an ecological state that is healthy enough to sustain the valley.

EcoPeace / Friends of the Earth Middle East is giving you an opportunity to take practical action for both the environment and to build peace in the Middle East. See the campaign website – www.SaveTheJordan.com - for details on how you and your community can support this campaign. You will also find the Save the Jordan campaign on Facebook and Twitter – hashtag #SaveTheJordan.

Thank you and good luck with your efforts.



© Jonathan Kalan / FoEME

“It is Allah who created the heavens and the earth and sent down rain from the sky and produced thereby some fruits as provision for you and subjected for you the ships to sail through the sea by His command and subjected for you the rivers.”

Quran, 14:32

HOW TO JOIN THE CAMPAIGN

- **Sign the Covenant for the Jordan River.** The Covenant is a vision statement articulating the Jordan River’s outstanding value to humanity. Endorsing the covenant demonstrates commitment to champion the rehabilitation of the Jordan in one’s communities and vis-a-vis the world’s decision makers. Join congregations and leaders around the world by endorsing the Covenant for the Jordan River as an individual or community. You’ll find the text of the Covenant on the inside cover of this document.
- **Get together.** Establish a circle of friends, classmates, or co-workers from your community. You might be a group of three or three hundred. It doesn’t matter. Together, you can make a difference.
- **Get inspired.** When you’ve got a group, you need to tell them what happened to the river, why it matters, and what they can do about it. FoEME can provide films, presentations, and fact sheets to help you tell this story. For faith groups we have published sourcebooks that include scriptural quotations, essays, and sample sermons that you can use to engage your religious congregation.
- **Identify your target.** You need to let decision-makers know that you care about the river and want them to act. It is crucial to address this message to the right person. If you’re in one of the countries that border the river, this might be a mayor or minister. If you’re part of a religious congregation, it might be the most senior representative of your community. If you’re outside the Middle East, you might need to address your elected representatives, or the national ambassadors from the countries that share the river. You are in the best position to make this call. Discuss it with your group, and come up with the names and addresses of the political, religious, or civil society leaders you are going to approach.

- **Get the message across.** When you know what you want to say and who you want to say it to, you need to decide how to get the message across.

IDEAS FOR ACTION

WRITE

Old-fashioned paper mail is more effective than email, and personal, hand-written letters tend to make more impact. Pictures, poems and postcards can all help your letter to stand out. On our website you’ll find sample letters, fact sheets, and stories to help you make the case.

MEET

Why not invite your representative or leader to a meeting, so s/he can learn more about the issue and start to work with you on the campaign?

GET NOTICED

Organize a creative, peaceful, attention-grabbing stunt to bring the Jordan River to the

attention of political leaders. Remember to invite the local media, and to get your message as clear as possible. FoEME has used this strategy to great effect in the Middle East – you are welcome to contact us for ideas and advice.

LEARN, CREATE, EXHIBIT

If you are a schoolteacher or faith leader, you may want to design an educational project about the river. This could produce paintings, poems, songs, films, or photos that you can exhibit to raise awareness about the state of the Jordan. Think about which religious or political leaders – as well as which media outlets – you could invite to such an event. A module of this kind is not only raises environmental consciousness; it can also offer young people an education in global citizenship, grassroots activism, and participation in the democratic process.

USE YOUR IMAGINATION

These are not the only ways to raise awareness

about the state of the Jordan River. Use your imagination. Make some noise. And keep it positive - you'll be more effective if you address political leaders as partners, and ask them to join you in this effort, rather than treating them as an obstacle.

OTHER WAYS TO HELP

- **Spread the word.** Use your social networks to call for the revival of the Jordan River. Let people know what the problem is, why you care, and what you're doing to help. On our website you'll find videos, photos, and even sample posts to help get the word out - but your own voice is the most powerful. Please tell us what you're doing via Twitter and Facebook - it helps us build momentum behind the campaign.
- **Invite FoEME to speak to your community.** Get in touch if you would like someone from FoEME to speak to your community about the Jordan River.

- **Come to the river.** If you want to get more deeply involved, organize a journey to see the Jordan River for yourself. FoEME runs eco-parks - ideas places to stay and to learn - on both sides of the valley. A journey like this will equip you with first-hand knowledge that you can use to advocate for the river in your home community. We can also put you in touch with tour operators and local partners (including environmental and faith groups) that'll help make your trip safe and successful.
- **Donate.** We need your financial support to continue this effort. You can donate directly at www.SaveTheJordan.com or, better still, use your local campaign to raise funds.

V. CREDITS

A NOTE ON QURANIC TRANSLATION

All English-language translations are taken from the Sahih International edition of the Holy Quran, with the exception of the quotation (21:30) on the cover of this document, which comes from the version by Yusuf Ali.

NOTE OF GRATITUDE

FoEME would like to recognize and thank the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Osprey Foundation for their support of the Jordan River Rehabilitation Project.

Additional thanks are due to the many international, regional, and local experts and faith leaders who volunteered to contribute time, essays, commentaries, and references to this publication including Prof. Mustafa Abu Sway, Dr. Husna Ahmed, Shahab Hussein, Secretary General of the Wembley Central Mosque in the UK, Imam Zaid Shakir and Dr. Mahmoud Abu-Snaine. Our toolkits are greatly enriched by their thoughtful contributions.

The views expressed in the essays are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the view of EcoPeace/ FoEME, our expert team, contributors, project advisers or reviewers.

THIS PUBLICATION WAS WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY

AUTHOR

Daniel Adamson, Exterior Consultant

FOEME PROJECT TEAM

Anwar Abu Hamour, Jordanian Government Relations Officer
Abdel Kareem Shreiteh, Palestinian Jordan River Rehabilitation Project Coordinator
Elizabeth Koch-Ya'ari, Israeli Jordan River Projects Coordinator
Yana Abu Talab, Jordanian Assistant Director for Projects and International Affairs
Rabbi Michael Schwartz, Resource Development Director

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography: ©Jonathan Kalan / FoEME, ©Francesco Zizzola, ©Jos van Wunnik, ©Jesse Blatutis / FoEME, ©Eddie Gerald / Pixmedia, ©Daniel Adamson / FoEME, ©Ofer Stein. Many thanks to these photographers for their generous contribution of work to this campaign.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Rand Aljammal



ABOUT ECOPEACE / FRIENDS OF THE EARTH MIDDLE EAST

EcoPeace/ Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) is a unique organization at the forefront of the environmental peacemaking movement. As a tri-lateral organization that brings together Jordanian, Palestinian, and Israeli environmentalists, our primary objective is the promotion of cooperative efforts to protect our shared environmental heritage. In so doing, we seek to advance both sustainable regional development and the creation of necessary conditions for lasting peace in our region. FoEME has offices in Amman, Bethlehem, and Tel-Aviv.

For more information on FoEME or to download any of our publications please visit: www.foeme.org

Amman Office

PO Box 840252 - Amman,
Jordan, 11181
Tel: +962 6 5866602/3
Fax: +962 6 5866604
Email: info@foeme.org

Bethlehem Office

PO Box 421 – Bethlehem,
Palestine
Tel: +972 2 2747948
Fax: +972 2 2745968
Email: info@foeme.org

Tel Aviv Office

90 Begin Road – Tel Aviv, 67183
Israel
Tel: +972 3 5605383
Fax: +972 3 5604693
Email: info@foeme.org



CONTACT US

You are welcome to contact FoEME about this campaign -

Email: info@foeme.org
Web: www.SaveTheJordan.com
Facebook: Save the Jordan
Twitter: @FoEMidEast
Hashtag: #SaveTheJordan

© All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, for commercial use without prior permission by EcoPeace/ Friends of the Earth Middle East. The text can be used for educational and research purposes with full accreditation to EcoPeace/ Friends of the Earth Middle East.



SUPPORTED BY

The Swedish International
Development Cooperation
Agency (SIDA) and the
Osprey Foundation

YOU ARE WELCOME TO CONTACT FoEME ABOUT THIS CAMPAIGN

Email: info@foeme.org

Web: www.SaveTheJordan.com

Facebook: Save the Jordan

Twitter: @FoEMidEast

Hashtag: #SaveTheJordan

