



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH  
(Scholarly Peer Review Publishing System)

# WATER: THE MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE OF OUR LIFE

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## ABSTRACT

This paper discusses about the utmost importance of water both from medical and religious points of view. In particular, the paper highlights that water is not only precious for human life, it also vital to all lives in the planet. It points out that water is very much useful in every aspect of our lives including household consumption, flower and vegetable gardens, restaurants, hospitals, laundries, dry cleaners, golf courses, hotels, car washes, beauty shops, barber shops, gas stations, health clubs as well as many other business activities, hydroelectric plants, industries, recreations, and so on. Water is considered a purifier in most religious faiths. Major faiths such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, and Wicca that consider ritual washing (ablution) with water.

**Keyword:** Water in human body, water user in religious faiths, various use of water.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Water (H<sub>2</sub>O) is the most precious resource and abundant compound on Earth's surface, covering more than 70 percent of the planet. In nature, water exists in three states such as liquid, solid, and gas. It is in dynamic equilibrium between the liquid and gas states at standard temperature and pressure. At room temperature, it is a tasteless and odorless liquid, nearly colorless with a slight hint of blue. Many substances dissolve in water and it is commonly referred to as the universal solvent. Because of this, water in nature and in use is rarely pure and some of its properties may vary slightly from those of the pure substance. However, there are also many compounds that are essentially, if not completely, insoluble in water. Water is the only common substance found naturally in all three common states of matter and it is essential for all lives on Earth. Water usually makes up 55% to 78% of the human body.

## 2. WATER IN OUR BODY

Water plays many important roles in our body. It is the major part of most of the body's cells (except for fat cells) and it also cushions and lubricates the brain and the joints. It transports nutrients and carries waste away from the body cells. It also helps to regulate body temperature by redistributing heat from active tissues to the skin and cooling the body through perspiration. Most of the water in the body is found within the cells of the body (about two thirds is in the intracellular space), and the rest is found in the extracellular space, which consists of the spaces between cells (the interstitial space) and the blood plasma.



Water is the main constituent of the human body. It is normally about 60% of body weight in adult males, and is slightly lower, about 50-55%, in females due to their higher proportion of body fat. The muscles and the brain are about 75% water, the blood and the kidneys are about 81%, the liver is about 71%, the bones are about 22% and adipose tissue is about 20%. The body requires sufficient water to survive and function properly. Humans cannot live without drinking water for more than a few days – depending on weather, activity levels and other factors – whereas other nutrients may be neglected for weeks or months. Although commonly it is treated rather trivially, no other nutrient is more essential or is needed in such large amounts.

Water is central to the most basic physiological functions such as regulating blood pressure, body temperature, hydration and digestion. Some of the most remarkable benefits of water in our body are listed below.

### **2.1 Brain**

An adequate amount of water is needed for proper functioning of our brain. When we drink good amount of water, brain cells are better supplied with fresh, oxygen-laden blood, and the brain remains alert. On the other hand, dehydration can cause loss of more than 2% body weight and can affect the brain's processing abilities and impair short-term memory.

### **2.2 Cells**

Water in the body is essential for transporting carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals and other important nutrients and oxygen to the cells. The cells then produce energy for the body to function. Furthermore, water facilitates disposal of the waste products of metabolism, enabling the right cellular chemical function.

### **2.3 Digestion**

Water plays an important role in the digestion of food and the absorption of nutrients from the digestive tract. Water is required to dissolve nutrients so that they may be absorbed into the bloodstream and delivered to the cells. Insufficient water supply in the body will slow the digestive process and can lead to constipation.

### **2.4 Heart**

Water is very important for healthy heart function and is essential to keep blood pressure within the healthy range. Lack of proper water supply in the body decreases cardiac output which may lead to increases in heart rate and a fall in blood pressure. The circulatory system delivers a constant supply of oxygen to the brain, muscles and to all other tissues. Researchers at Loma Linda University in California studied more than 20,000 healthy men and women and found that people who drink more than five glasses of water a day were less likely to die from a heart attack or heart disease than those who drank fewer than two glasses a day.

### **2.5 Kidneys**

An adequate water intake is essential to keep the kidneys working well, helping them to remove waste products and excess nutrients mainly via urine. The kidneys regulate the body's water levels by increasing or decreasing the flow of urine. The kidneys also work to control normal levels of sodium and other electrolytes. A well-hydrated healthy person's kidneys filter approximately 180 liters of water each day; clearly most of this has to be reabsorbed to prevent excessive losses from the body.

### **2.6 Muscles and Joints**

Water acts as a lubricant for muscles and joints. It helps cushion joints and keeps muscles working properly. Muscles and joints, in addition to the bones, are necessary for us to stand, sit, move and carry out all daily activities. Approximately 70% to 75% of the muscle is made up of water. Maintaining the right water balance is essential for optimum muscle function.

### **2.7 Skin**

The skin constitutes a defense against pathogenic agents and contributes to preventing the development of infectious and allergic processes. Some people believe that good hydration helps to moisten body tissues and preserve the skin's elasticity, softness and coloring though this has not been researched adequately.



## 2.8 Temperature

The body water has an important role as a thermo regulator. It regulates the overall body temperature by helping dissipate heat. If the body becomes too hot, water is lost through sweat and the evaporation of this sweat from the skin surface removes heat from the body. Sweating is the most effective way that the body prevents itself from overheating. <http://www.europeanhydrationinstitute.org>; posted in June 13, 2013.

## 3. VARIOUS USES OF WATER

Water is our most precious resource. Water is vital to all lives. Humans, plants, and animals are made up of mostly water. All living things would die if it weren't for water. We use water for drinking, washing, cleaning, cooking, and growing our food as well as many, many other things. On the average a person needs around 150-250 gallons of water daily. Even more water is used by industries to generate electricity, manufacture things, and transport people and goods.

Common household uses consume a lot of water. It takes between 30 and 40 gallons for one bath. The average toilet uses about 5 gallons of water per flush. It takes 20-40 gallons of water for one shower. Washing machines use an average of 25 gallons per load. The kitchen sink takes roughly 20 gallons per day for preparing food and washing dishes. The bathroom sink, used for washing hands, shaving and brushing teeth, requires about 15 gallons per day. These numbers are estimated for the average household in any civilized country of the world.

Much of our fresh water is also used outdoors for watering lawns, flower beds, and vegetable gardens, as well as washing cars and filling swimming pools. We must be careful not to pollute the water that we use outside. Many people use chemicals on their lawns and gardens and then water them with pure water. The water will wash the chemicals off of our plants and then run down a storm drain and go straight to the rivers and streams where fish make their homes. This kind of polluted water can kill fish and wildlife. We should always be mindful of whether or not we are polluting the water around us. We need to take care of our water, not abuse it. Every town and city, whether small or big, uses water. Cities use water for fire-fighting, street cleaning, and watering public areas such as parks, grass, trees, shrubs, and flowers. Water is also used to fill public drinking fountains, including those at schools and libraries. All of the different businesses in our community also use water. Water is hugely used by restaurants, hospitals, laundries, dry cleaners, golf courses, hotels, car washes, beauty shops, barber shops, gas stations, and health clubs as well as all of the other businesses in town. These all add up to quite a big demand on water supply. We need to try to think about how many people need to use water and conserve our water so that there is enough to go around.

The amount of water needed to run a farm is tremendous. When we think of water on a farm, we think of watering crops; but the amount of water needed on a dairy farm is a huge amount also. Chickens, pigs, sheep, and all the other animals in a farmyard need drinking water to stay alive. Food must be grown for them to eat, and water is also required in the cooling systems used to keep production meat fresh. Vegetable and grain crops also require water. Water is used in spreading fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides, which produce a greater crop yield, but can also contaminate the water. Most of the water used on farms is used for irrigation. Studies show that by using drip irrigation, farmers can conserve up to 60% of the water that it would normally take to irrigate their crops using other systems of irrigation.

Research results reveal that it takes about 26 gallons of water to produce one ear of corn while it takes about 2000-2500 gallons of water to produce one pound of beef. Around 120 gallons of water is required to produce one egg. About 300 gallons of water is needed to produce one loaf of bread, and it takes about 12,000 gallons of water to grow a bushel of wheat. Believe it or not, about 1,400 gallons of water are used during the final production of one fast-food meal including a burger, fries, and a soft drink.



Water is hugely used in hydroelectric plants. Hydroelectric plants capture the kinetic energy of falling water to make electricity. They do this with a dam. The dam forces the water level to go up so that the water will have more power when falling. The force of the falling water pressing against the turbines' blades causes them to spin. The spinning turbines transmit the kinetic energy of the falling water to generators. The generators spin when the turbines spin generating electricity that will be transmitted on the power lines to homes and businesses.

Of all the electricity in the world, about 20% is generated by hydropower. Hydropower generating prevents a lot of pollution. Hydropower generating is clean and does not leave any waste. Because of the electricity generated by hydropower, the amount of oil and coal needed to produce enough electricity is reduced. It prevents the need to burn about 22 billion gallons of oil or 120 million tons of coal each year. The amount of electricity that a hydroelectric plant produces depends on two things: how far the water falls and the quantity of water falling. The higher the dam, the further the water falls and the more electric power produced. If the water falls twice as far, there will be twice amount of electricity generated. The quantity of water that falls also affects the amount of power produced. The more water that flows through the turbines making them spin, the more electric power produced.

Water is also essential in industry. It is heated and the steam is used to run machinery. Water is used to cool hot metal such as in the production of steel. Water is also used to cool the air. It is an important element in many products like chemicals, drugs, lotions, shampoos, cosmetics, cleaners, and also beverages. Water is used in processing food and in innumerable factories and industrial processes including the manufacturing of paper. Water used in processing foods and beverages must be absolutely clean, while other industries such as a manufacturing plant may use a lower quality of water. A study done by Eileen Lucas indicates that in the early 1900s, American industry used about 10 to 15 billion gallons of water a day. With the huge growth in industry following World War II, the industrial use of water also grew. By 1980, industry was using about 150-200 billion gallons each day.

Recreation is another way that we use and enjoy water. Many people enjoy fishing, boating, sailing, canoeing, rafting, and swimming, as well as many other recreational activities that depend on water. Most of us enjoy at least one of these activities and would be disappointed if we could never do any of them again. If our water is continually polluted though, then it could become dangerous to go swimming and all of the fish could die so that no one could go fishing either. No one would enjoy boating, sailing, canoeing, or rafting in polluted water either. We need to remember that it is important to guard our waters from becoming polluted.

Transportation is yet another way where we use water. Many people use boats and ferries to commute to and from work every day. People also enjoy going on cruise ships or just going sailing. Water transportation has been a channel for growth in many countries today, but that growth has not come without cost. The destruction caused by shipping includes fuel spills, which coat the water with oil and coal dust, and erosion of the shoreline which causes damage to the fish and other inhabitants of the water. <http://sustainability.about.com/od/Sustainability/a/How-We-Use-Water.htm>

#### 4. WATER USED IN DIFFERENT FAITHS

Water is considered a purifier in most religious faiths. Major faiths that incorporate ritual washing (ablution) include Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, and Wicca. Immersion of a person in water is a central sacrament of Christianity where it is called baptism. It is also a part of the practice of other religions, including Islam (*Ghusl*), Judaism (*mikvah*) and Sikhism (*Amrit Sanskar*). In addition, a ritual bath in pure water is performed for the dead in many religions including Islam and Judaism. In Islam, the five times daily prayers can be done in most cases after completing washing certain parts of the body called wudu using clean water.



#### 4.1 Water in Hinduism

Water in Hinduism has a special place because it is believed to have spiritually cleansing powers. To Hindus all water is sacred, especially rivers. According to their belief, there are seven sacred rivers, namely the Ganges, Yamuna, Godavari, Sarasvati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri. Although Hinduism encompasses so many different beliefs among those that most Hindus do share is the importance of striving to attain purity and avoiding pollution. This relates to both physical cleanliness and spiritual wellbeing. Water is an essential element in nearly all rites and ceremonies.

Pilgrimage is very important to Hindus. Holy places are usually located on the banks of rivers, coasts, seashores and mountains. Sites of convergence, between land and river or two, or even better three, rivers, carry special significance and are especially sacred. Sacred rivers are thought to be a great equalizer. In the Ganges the pure are made even more pure and the impure have their pollution removed if only temporarily. In the sacred water distinctions of caste are supposed to count for nothing, as all sins fall away. Kumbhamela is a pilgrimage of Hindu devotees and is held every three years at four different places in turn Hardwar, Nasik, Prayaga and Ujjain. These places are believed to be where drops of amrita the nectar of immortality fell to earth during a heavenly conflict.

Funeral grounds are always located near a river. Sometimes at the funeral a small hole is drilled in an earthen pot, which is then filled with water. According to their belief the son of the deceased walks around the burning funeral pyre with the pot, dripping water forms a limiting line to prevent the soul from escaping back into the earth as a ghost. On the third day after the cremation the ashes are collected and, on or after the tenth day they are cast into a holy river.

<http://www.bcr1.be/water/hinduism%20on%20water1.pdf>

Every spring, the Ganges River swells with water as snow melts in the Himalayas. The water brings life as trees and flowers bloom and crops grow. This cycle of life is seen as a metaphor for Hinduism. Water represents the "non-manifested substratum from which all manifestations derive" [Dr. Uma Mysorekar, Hindu Temple Society of North America] and is considered by Hindus to be a purifier, life-giver, and destroyer of evil. Milk and water are symbols of fertility, absence of which can cause barrenness, sterility leading to death. [Nikhil Mundra, <http://scienceofhinduism.blogspot.com>]

#### 4.2 Water in Christianity

Water is mentioned numerous times in the Bible. Some of the verses from the Bible about water are given below.

“But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life”. John 4:14 ESV

“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you”. Ezekiel 36:25 ESV

“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” John 7:38 ESV

“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb”. Revelation 22:1 ESV

“They shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them”. Isaiah 49:10 ESV



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The Christian Church has a well-developed spirituality of water. It is biblically-based, but the limits of this brief reflection preclude an exhaustive discussion of water and the Bible. For the Christian Church, water is living water, a concept which has a range of implications. There is a close connection between water and life – no water, no life. Our highly-developed sense of thirst underlines this daily, especially at this time of the year. Our human need for water is absolute. But, equally, the earth's need for water is critical to the health of our land, or any other.

Living water has a strong biblical basis. The first Genesis creation story has God commanding the waters to bring forth living creatures – from the beginning, water is life-giving. The Psalmist sings of trees planted by living water, of resting by still waters. And, while the waters of the Sea of Reeds or Red Sea brought death to the Egyptians, they are celebrated in the drama of God's great act of salvation for the Hebrews.

A Christian spirituality of water is largely based on two New Testament passages. John 4:7-15 tells the story of Jesus' meeting a woman by a well in the noonday heat, and asking her for a drink. To her amazed response, Jesus replies: 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you "Give me a drink" you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. ... Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I give them will never be thirsty. The water that I give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.'

Here, the spiritual aspect of water, living water, 'gushing up to eternal life'. Living water is not just Jesus' gift to us, but also, a gift to others. Living water transforms us when we receive it, but it also has the capacity to change others as well. And the corollary: just as the land can be dry and thirsty, so our souls can be dry, because the stream of living water is not flowing in them. Living water can be equated with eternal life, salvation. Living water thus often features in our prayers, so that we do not become desiccated Christians.

The second New Testament basis comes from the passages dealing with the Baptism of Jesus. John the Baptizer says "I have baptized you with water; but he (the one who is more powerful than I ... coming after me) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:8) Living water ... It is this living water which is the center of the sacrament of baptism, the water which cleanses from sins, as John preached, but which also brings new life. "Baptism plunges us into the faith of Jesus Christ" sings our baptismal liturgy. (*Uniting in Worship 2, p.74*) So in baptism we can say that we die to the old life – drown, if you like - and rise to new life in Christ – through these living waters.

Living Water Thirsty Land was the theme of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) national Assembly meeting in 2009, and for the following three years. At this Assembly, the UCA explored the theme in a number of ways. Our indigenous sisters and brothers made beautiful, dramatic, heartfelt presentations of their understanding of water in relation to land and faith. Our liturgies and prayers developed the theme. A hymn was written round the theme: Holy Spirit, rain. Water imagery permeated the week-long Assembly meeting. Later, there was a pilgrimage to Living Water.

For this, people make physical and spiritual preparation for pilgrimage, for spiritual renewal, using the ancient disciplines of prayer, study, worship and pilgrimage. They journey towards a local spring, stream, lake or pond – or even baptismal fonts in a series of churches, using special resources for study, holy conversation and worship. So the living water of the Spirit and of the Gospel spring up. The pilgrimage reflects Australian life – dry barrenness, followed by floods!

In this way and others, the spirituality of water becomes very practical, earth-based. Spirituality goes hand-in-hand with actions. Uniting Church Synods support Green Church. The Synod of Victoria and Tasmania has a staff team actively involved in environmental activities, including use and care of water, care of rivers. Some congregations have won awards for their green life.





But there is also an echo of the waters of chaos, present before creation. We are reminded of this powerfully destructive energy in Noah and the Flood and the Red Sea drama, but also in the terrifyingly widespread floods in Queensland and New South Wales this week, the third flood in three years in some areas. Is this a new thing, or part of an ancient pattern of flood and drought? What of rising sea levels? The creeping out of the waters of chaos?

Think of drowning in our seas and rivers – or swimming pools – and of drowning to sin in baptism, then rising to new life, reformed, reshaped, rejuvenated, as thirsty land is refreshed by the forces of water. Living water – one of God’s greatest gifts, whichever way you think about it (McRae, J. (2012).

### 4.3 Water in Islam

As a universal religion born initially in the harsh deserts of Arabia to complete the message of former prophets and convey the divine revelation in its last testament (Qur’an), Islam ascribes the most sacred qualities to water as a life-giving, sustaining and purifying resource. It is the origin of all life on earth, the substance from which Allah created man (25:54), and the Holy Qur’an emphasizes its centrality: “*We made from water every living thing (21:30)*”. Water is the primary element that existed even before the heavens and the earth did: “*And it is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and his Throne was upon the waters (11:7)*.”

The water of rain, rivers and fountains runs through the pages of the Qur’an to symbolize Allah’s benevolence: “*He sends down saving rain for them when they have lost all hope and spreads abroad His mercy (25:48)*”. At the same time, the believers are constantly reminded that it is Allah Who gives sweet water to the people, and that He can just as easily withhold it: “*Consider the water which you drink. Was it you that brought it down from the rain cloud or We? If We had pleased, We could make it bitter (56:68-70)*”. In this verse the believers are warned that they are only the guardians of Allah’s creation on earth; they must not take His law into their own hands.

#### ➤ Facing Allah in Radiant Purity: Ablutions

“Cleanliness is half of faith,” the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) tells his companions in one of the Hadiths. These well-known and oft-repeated words reveal not only the central importance of purity and cleanliness, but also the essential role water plays in Islamic religion. Purification through ablution is an obligatory component of the Islamic prayer ritual; prayers carried out in an impure state are not valid. This means Muslims are obliged to carry out ritual ablution before each of the five daily prayers. In addition, a more thorough ritual is required on specific occasions.

The Qur’an tells believers that Allah “*loves those who cleanse themselves (9:108)*” and instructs them: “*O you who believe, when you rise to pray, wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbow, wipe your heads, and your feet to the ankle. If you are polluted, cleanse yourselves... Allah does not wish to burden you, but desires to purify you (5:6)*”. Allah will reward those who purify themselves, as the eleventh century theologian al-Ghazali testifies in the following Hadith: “*The believers will come on Resurrection Day with brightness on their foreheads, wrists and ankles from the effect of ablution.*”

Entire chapters of the Hadiths are dedicated to ablutions, detailing when and how they should be performed, and explaining in which order the various parts of the body should be washed, how the feet are to be cleaned, how the head should be rubbed - even how often the nostrils should be cleared. They also specify that the water used for ablutions should be pure-*mutlaq*-which means it should not be mixed with any other liquid. Water from rain, wells, flowing water



from taps, rivers and streams, and still water from lakes, ponds, seas and oceans, are all considered to be pure and suitable for ritual ablution.

### ➤ The body and the Soul: Physical Purity in Islam

There are two types of ablution. *Wudu'*, the minor purification carried out before prayer, consists of washing the hands, the face, the forearms, the head and the feet. The Hadiths explain that by performing *wudu'* the believer washes away sin, and that each drop of water that falls in the hand makes the devil flee.

The process of *wudu'* is described in a very physical way, as though the sin were a visible stain, an insidious little demon that clings to the believer and can only be chased away with water. Thus when a believer washes his face during *wudu'*, the Hadiths say that every sin that he contemplated with his eyes is washed away from his face with the last drop of water; when he washes his hands, every sin they wrought is effaced; and when he washes his feet, every sin toward which his feet have walked is washed away, until he comes out pure of all sins.

*Ghusl* is the major purification, which cleanses the whole body from impurities and is required after intercourse, menstruation, childbirth, before adopting Islam, and after death, but also before important celebrations and during the Hajj.

### ➤ Cleansing the Mind: Spiritual Purity

*Wudu'* and *ghusl* are both part of the act of worship, rituals that are mandatory before starting prayers, reading, or even touching the Qur'an. As such, these rituals include a spiritual component, which means that even if one is physically clean, but has not carried out the purification in ritual fashion, it is not permitted to read the Qur'an or even touch it.

This prohibition has nothing to do with physical purity - whether one has clean hands or whether one might stain the pages of the Holy Book, for example. It is purely a question of reverence towards the Word of Allah. Thus physical purity alone does not suffice to arrive at a state of *tahara*, ritual purity. Ablution should not be carried out mechanically, but only after *niyyat* (intention), the silent expression of sincerity and obedience to Allah. This is the spiritual component of the purification ritual: while the body is purified with water, the mind must be completely focused on Allah. Carrying out *wudu'* or *ghusl* simply for refreshment in hot weather, for example, makes it invalid.

The physical and spiritual components of the purification ritual reflect the Islamic principle of *tawhid* (unity): body and mind should be united in the performance of religious duties. Islam means "surrendering to Allah", and Muslims, "those who have surrendered to Allah", do so with body and soul. An inscription in the baths of Granada's old Moorish Quarter expresses this link between physical and spiritual purity. It says that the body is the mirror of the soul, and therefore "outer stains suggest inner ones as well."

### ➤ Saving Water in Islam

The Hadiths urge moderation and thriftiness in the use of water during ablution. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) warned that *wudu'* should not be performed more than three times in a row before each prayer; the Prophet himself (peace and blessings be upon him) washed each part only two or three times without ever going beyond three,





even if water supplies were abundant. Commentators add: *“The men of science disapprove of exaggeration and also of exceeding the number of ablutions of the Prophet.”*

The Hadiths also offer advice for times of scarcity, using the Prophet’s actions as a guideline. One day when the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was travelling through the desert with his companions, his wife `Aisha lost her necklace. They spent time searching for it and when prayer time came, the company was nowhere near a water source. It was then that Allah revealed the ritual of *tayammum* to the Prophet: *“O you who believe, (...) if you are sick or on a journey, (...) and if you can find no water, then have recourse to clean dust and wipe your faces and your hands with it (4:43).”* Clean earth can thus be used as a substitute for water in exceptional circumstances. Indeed, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) acknowledged the pure nature of earth when he said: *“The earth has been created for me as a mosque and as a means of purification.”* See for detailed discussion, Chatel, (2002).

#### 4.4 Ritual Washing in Judaism

Ritual washing in Judaism, or ablution, takes two main forms. A *tevilah* is a full body immersion in a mikveh, and a *netilat yadayim* which is the washing of the hands with a cup. References to ritual washing are found in the Hebrew Bible, and are elaborated in the Mishnah and Talmud. They have been codified in various codes of Jewish law and tradition, such as Maimonides's Mishnah Torah (12th century) and Joseph Karo's Shulchan Aruch (16th century.) These customs are most commonly observed within Orthodox Judaism. In Conservative Judaism, the practices are normative with certain leniencies and exceptions. Ritual washing is not generally performed in Reform Judaism.

### 5. CONCLUSION

Water is essential to humans and other life forms even though it provides no calories or organic nutrients. Access to safe drinking water has improved over the last decades in almost every part of the world, but approximately one billion people still lack access to safe water and over 2.5 billion lack access to adequate sanitation. There is a clear correlation between access to safe water and gross domestic product per capita. However, some observers have estimated that by 2025 more than half of the world population will be facing water-based vulnerability. A report, issued in November 2009, suggests that by 2030, in some developing regions of the world, water demand will exceed supply by 50%. Water plays an important role in the world economy, as it functions as a solvent for a wide variety of chemical substances and facilitates industrial cooling and transportation. Approximately 70% of the fresh water used by humans goes to agriculture. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water>

Water is also essential to the mechanics of the human body. The body cannot work without it, just as a car cannot run without gas and oil. In fact, all the cell and organ functions that make up our entire anatomy and physiology depend on water for their functioning. <http://www.freedrinkingwater.com/water-education/water-health.htm>

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