

Ministering for the Earth... tending the heart of the planet

Water Rituals in the Various Faith Traditions



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Vicki Michela Garlock, Ph.D.

In the Beginning...

- “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.” (Genesis 1:1)
- “Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were of one piece, then We parted them, and we made every living thing of water? Will they not then believe?” (Qur’an 21:30 – Pickthall translation)

Native American Traditions

“In the beginning of things, there was nothing but water everywhere and no land could be seen. On the waves a canoe floated, and a man sat in it and wept because he had no idea what would happen. After a while, a muskrat climbed up on the canoe and said: ‘Greetings, grandfather! Why are you crying?’ The man answered, ‘I have been here a long time, and I cannot find any land.’ The muskrat replied, ‘But there is earth under all this water!’ The man asked the muskrat to get him some land, and the muskrat dove down and came up again with both paws full of mud.”

(Potawatomi)

Common Rituals

- 13 Grandmothers
- UU church
- World Water Day
- Easy one with kids

Help! I'm Dirty and I Can't Get Clean! (Water as Purification)



Jewish



Christian



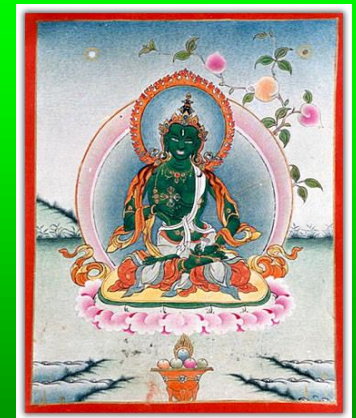
Muslim



Shinto



Hindu



Buddhist

“Sometimes, I just want to pray to God – you know, when I’m on the bus or at the grocery store or something – and then I have to remind myself that I haven’t washed yet. But I pray to God anyway. I just make sure to wash before I say my Muslim prayers.”

Let it Go! Let it Go!



Tashlich

Sand Mandala Dissolution



Mirror, Mirror on the Wall (Water as Reflection)

“Imagine a bowl of water, agitated, stirred up, muddied, put in a dark place. If a man with good eyesight were to look at the reflection of his own face in it, he would not know or see it as it really was. In the same way, Brahman, when a man dwells with his heart possessed and overwhelmed by doubt-and-wavering... then he cannot know or see, as it really is, what is to his own profit, to the profit of others, to the profit of both. Then even sacred words he has long studied are not clear to him, not to mention those he has not studied.

But, Brahman, when a man dwells with his heart not possessed, not overwhelmed by sense-desires... ill-will... sloth-and-torpor... worry-and-flurry... doubt-and-wavering... then he knows and sees, as it really is, what is to his own profit, to the profit of others, to the profit of both himself and others. Then even sacred words he has not long studied are clear to him, not to mention those he has studied.”

(Tipitaka, Sutta Pitaka, Samyutta Nikaya (Grouped Collection), Sangaravo Sutta: Sangarava (The Hindrances))

....And now from Bruce Lee (Be Like Water)



“You must be shapeless, formless, like water. When you pour water in a cup, it becomes the cup. When you pour water in a bottle, it becomes the bottle. When you pour water in a teapot, it becomes the teapot.... Become like water my friend.”

Tao Te Ching

Nothing in the world
is as soft and yielding as water.
Yet for dissolving the hard and inflexible,
nothing can surpass it.

The soft overcomes the hard;
the gentle overcomes the rigid.
Everyone knows this is true,
but few can put it into practice.
(from Chapter 78)

Hindu Tradition

“Water, by its nature, takes the shape of whatever vessel it is put into. Likewise, our attitude towards serving God should be to accept whatever service comes to us as is and embrace that service as its own reward. So the appropriate attitude is ‘being like water’ -- willingness to wholeheartedly do whatever service is offered by God and His representatives, the saints. Without this attitude, we become cold-hearted, like ice.”

(Hindu monk in the Caitanya Vaisnavism tradition)

The Kitchen Sink (Offerings of Water)

- Hindu arati
- Tibetan Water Bowls



(Offerings *by* Water)

- Brigid



Handout

- References from sacred texts/legends
- Links to water rituals
- Water songs
- Ritual actions
- Prayer/Mantra themes



It's All about that Well, 'bout that Well (Water as Giver of Life)

It is He Who sendeth down rain from the skies: with it We produce vegetation of all kinds: from some We produce green (crops), out of which We produce grain, heaped up (at harvest); out of the date-palm and its sheaths (or spathes) (come) clusters of dates hanging low and near: and (then there are) gardens of grapes, and olives, and pomegranates, each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety): when they begin to bear fruit, feast your eyes with the fruit and the ripeness thereof. Behold! in these things there are signs for people who believe. (Qur'an 6:99 – Yusuf Ali translation)

Indigenous Rain Rituals



Hindu Tradition

