October 17, 2011: Going Down to the River Jordan

The River Jordan is celebrated in song and scripture as a fount of salvation and redemption. The Jordan’s spiritual significance rivals India’s Ganges: The Ganges is integral to the teachings of Buddha, and the Jordan is believed to be the baptismal site of Jesus Christ Himself. To this day, evangelicals make the pilgrimage to Israel from as far away as Brazil and beyond for ceremonial dunking. Unfortunately, like the Ganges, much of the Jordan is dangerously polluted with human waste. Friends of the Earth Middle East—a joint endeavor of Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian activists—is determined to eliminate all dumping of sewage and to restore the River Jordan’s timeless flow.

Photo: Amir Cohen/Reuters