

New pipe in Israel aims to halt worship water shortage

by [Michele Chabin](#)

February 10, 2011

JERUSALEM (RNS) Israeli officials have installed an \$11 million pipe to ease a weekly water shortage on Fridays as observant Jews prepare for the Sabbath and Muslims ritually wash themselves before weekly prayers.

Until now, water pressure has been low in some parts of Jerusalem during the hours leading up to Shabbat, which begins at sundown Friday night and ends on Saturday night.

Demand for water is highest on Fridays, when Jewish households traditionally prepare multi-course meals and line up for their pre-Shabbat showers.

Muslims, who compose roughly a third of the city's population, also utilize more water on Friday, the Muslim holy day, as they prepare to go to mosques for morning prayers.

"Every Friday afternoon, we see at our control center a sharp rise in demand for water because of showers for the Sabbath. This demand usually results in a drop in water pressure," said Moshe Katchin, chairman of Hagihon, the Israeli national water company.

The benefits of the new 52-inch pipe "will be felt in homes across the city," Katchin said.

"The pipe is very welcome," said an ultra-Orthodox father of 11 children in Jerusalem, who gave his name only as Avraham. "It can be difficult if you're the last person in our family taking a shower."