

soundbite



♥ HOLY RIVER ESTABLISHMENT

A BLESSED ENTERPRISE

Mohammad Al Shomali is in the water trade. His business Holy River Establishment (www.holyriver.org) sells holy water collected from Bethany beyond the Jordan, where Jesus is believed to have been baptized.

How do you convince buyers that this holy water is the real thing?

Our company is licensed to distribute consecrated holy water from the baptism site. The extraction, bottling and distribution of the Holy Water are performed under the supervision of the Holy Land Church and the government of Jordan. Each bottle has a unique hologram that has a serial number to help government audit our sales.

How does your work help Jordan's tourism industry?

At Holy River Establishment, we believe that it is everybody's responsibility to breathe life into the Baptism Site and to reinforce its spiritual value in the hearts and souls of all believers.

At what cost did you get this exclusive market?

At the beginning the government asked for JD1 million. But we objected and we reached a revenue sharing solution. The government sells us the authenticity seals which represent a certain amount of holy water.

How much does a bottle cost?

It retails between \$10 and \$15.

Is this a hot item among tourists in Jordan?

Yes. We are selling bottles in the thousands to hotels and shops.

Are churches your biggest customer?

[Smiling] Not really, they usually prefer to bless their own water.

Is Israel selling the same product?

Yes; but the world church council appointed the East Bank of the Jordan as the only authorized and credible source for this holy water.

Do Jordanian vendors sell fake holy water to tourists?

Yes. Many vendors claim the water sold is holy when it's merely tap water. Jordan will have to establish the industry's credibility to maximize its future potential.

