

# Ritual Washing of Hands

Contributed by [Religious Action Center](#)

Source: The Story of Modern Day Slavery Haggadah

Washing hands is a cleansing process and often regarded as symbolic of this purpose, perhaps cleansing ourselves of certain aspects of our day or of this world. However, instead, we might regard it as a focus on hands themselves; the labor of human endeavor and the skillful creations crafted, both of which contributed to this meal. There is a particular significance in focusing on this aspect of the ritual tonight, as we consider the human endeavor exploited in the act of enslavement.

*The hands are washed without a blessing*

Today, it is still possible to buy and sell another human being. The price of a slave, adjusted for inflation, has actually dropped compared to the time of the American Civil War. In our time, human life is cheap. It's another commodity, to be bought and consumed. Like our ancestors in Egypt, every day voices cry out to God for freedom. Will we hear them? Will we help them be free? Or will we harden our hearts?

*- Rabbis for Human Rights, Passover and Human Rights.*

*For more information on human trafficking, please visit [rac.org/human-trafficking](http://rac.org/human-trafficking).*

*For all Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism resources, please visit [rac.org/Passover](http://rac.org/Passover).*