

Rachatz (Washing the Hands)

Contributed by [Joseph Zitt](#)

Source: The Velveteen Rabbi's Haggadah by Rachel Barenblat

[We wash our hands without saying a blessing. A bowl of water is carried or passed around, along with a towel, and we pour the water from a cup over our hands. Don't forget that the people carrying the bowl have to wash their hands, too.]

This symbolic hand-washing recalls Miriam's Well. This well followed Miriam, sister of Moses, through the desert. Filled with waters of life, the well was a source of strength and renewal to all who drew from it. One drink from its waters was said to alert the heart, mind and soul, and make the meaning of Torah more clear.⁶ When we wash hands again later, we will say blessings to sanctify that act. This hand-washing is purely symbolic, and therefore the blessing is unspoken.