

Handwashing

Contributed by [The Tasman Center for Jewish Creativity](#)

Source:





Aliza Boyer. 2021. Sacred Reminder.

Artist Statement: As we navigate Passover during this time of great challenge and uncertainty, we have been constantly washing our hands and sanitizing our surroundings, Rachtzah—the second hand-washing and 6th step in the seder—marks a transition in the Passover story of hardship and affliction to redemption, hope, and freedom. Rachtzah comes before the blessing and eating of matzah and sets us up for a new mindset. Washing our hands is a visceral reminder of our responsibilities: that we are all interconnected, share precious resources, and rely on one another for well-being. It is a ritual as well as a practical action, this time with a blessing that sets this washing apart and elevates the act from other times we wash our hands. It also reminds us that there are so many without access to clean water - in Texas and Oklahoma, and in the ongoing plight in Flint, Michigan. Water is vital to life, health, and growth. Rachtzah can remind us that we are responsible for protecting ourselves, one another, and the environment. Let's hope that this year our hand-washing and symbolic expression of washing away impurity (while we sing "Dayenu"!?) helps to finally wash away what has been plaguing us for too long, and gets us closer to wider protection and greater freedom.

Artist Bio: Aliza Boyer is an artist and arts educator who has been creating handmade ketubahs and other contemporary Judaica for over 18 years through her Brooklyn-based design studio, Ketubah Graphia. After studying art at the Claremont Colleges in California, teaching, and working on public art projects in Los Angeles, Aliza moved to New York City to pursue a graduate degree in arts education at NYU. She has remained in NYC working as an arts educator and administrator at the Museum of Arts and Design, Lincoln Center, Society of Illustrators/Museum of Illustration and more. Aliza enjoys sharing and learning about modern Jewish and cross-cultural ritual through her artistic practice, working directly with people to create meaningful designs, as well as collaborating with other illustrators and artists.