

Why Thank the Nile?

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"and G-d said to Moshe, say to Aharon, take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, and they will become blood..." (Sh'mot 7:19).

As G-d is about to bring the Ten Plagues on Egypt, the Torah relates that G-d tells Moshe to tell Aharon to stretch out his hand over the Nile River. Why does Moshe not strike the Nile River himself?

Rashi explains that since the Nile River sheltered him in his basket when he was a baby, Moshe is not allowed to strike the river, and instead Aharon is given the task. This explanation seems strange. What difference does it make that the Nile River once protected Moshe? Will the river be insulted if Moshe himself strikes it now? Since when does a river have any feelings? And why is it OK that Aharon hits the river?

Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl discusses this question and says that we are concerned about Moshe, rather than about the Nile River's feelings. Rav Nebenzahl explains that the Torah teaches us about showing gratitude to Creation as a whole. Moshe is not showing gratitude for the sake of the river, which has no feelings, but for his own virtue and self-education. Showing gratitude is a skill that needs

to be practiced every day, by demonstrating appreciation to G-d, your family, friends, and even to inanimate objects.

We need a profound awareness about the importance of showing gratitude, because unfortunately human nature is tainted by ingratitude. We should set aside time to exercise this important trait of HAKORAT HATOV.

As the great miracles and plagues of the Exodus are about to begin, the Torah emphasizes the need to show gratitude and appreciation.

The First Lesson the Jewish People had to learn, even before we left Egypt, is to appreciate and thank G-d for ALL of His Wonderful Creations.☺