

“But the dove could not find a resting place...and it returned to him to the Ark...So he put forth his hand, and took it and brought it to him to the Ark.” (8:9)

Noach sent the dove out of the Ark in search of dry land to ascertain if the time had come when the Flood was finally over. The first time, the dove returned and Noach stretched out his hand, taking

the dove back into the Ark. The Torah seems to be using this incident to tell us something. Why is it of any significance to us if the dove flew back into the Ark or was brought back in through Noach? *Horav Yechezkel Munk, Shlita, Ram b'Yeshivas Telz*, shared an insight with me which elucidates the matter.

The generation of the Flood was guilty of many transgressions. The people were responsible for the moral and spiritual breakdown of society. In the end, it was one *aveirah*, sin, that sealed their fate. This sin had to be corrected before the deluge could come to an end. It was *chamas*, petty theft, in its various forms. There was a complete collapse of society – man lost all respect for his fellow man. He took whatever he desired – when he desired it. There was no sensitivity, no empathy, no mutual respect. When man has no respect for his fellow man, then society cannot continue to function.

The year spent inside the Ark was a year of education, a year of learning to live with one another under circumstances that were far from comfortable. Noach sent the dove out in search of dry land. When it returned, it did not enter the Ark on its own. It waited to be “invited” back inside by Noach. Is that not the proper way to enter someone else’s home? When Noach noted the dove’s reluctance to enter, he stretched out his hand and “invited” it back in. He now knew that the transgression that had catalyzed the terrible deluge had been overcome. Once again, respect for another creature had returned to the world. There was no longer a need for punishment. The punishment had run its course and served its purpose.