

And the dove came to him in the evening and behold an olive leaf, freshly plucked, was in her mouth. (8:11)

Rashi cites the *Talmud Eruvin 18b* which notes that the bitter tasting leaf was unnatural for a *Yonah*, dove, to eat. By bringing it, the dove was essentially saying, "I would rather eat bitter food from the hand of Hashem than something as sweet as honey from the hand of flesh and blood." It seems puzzling that the dove would "talk" this way to Noach. *Chazal* laud Noach's exemplary display of *chesed*, kindness, in feeding all of the animals. He wasn't satisfied to give them all the same food simultaneously. Instead, he fed each animal its preferred food at its accustomed time. This around the clock responsibility deprived Noach of his sleep for a full year. Yet, the dove preferred bitter leaves, rather than rely upon this kindly gentle man.

Rabbi A.H. Lebowitz, Shlita, suggests a profound rationale for the dove's behavior. By nature it is problematic to turn to another human being for help. It becomes even more difficult when our request for a favor is either denied or granted grudgingly. Why is this so? *Rabbi Lebowitz* explains that man, as a creation of Hashem, possesses a *neshamah*, soul, which is bound up within Hashem. It feels pain when it must turn to a human being for sustenance, rather than receiving it from its original source, Hashem. Regardless of the graciousness and benevolence of the giver, it remains difficult to accept a favor, even from a close friend. The image of Hashem which is inherent in everyone aspires to reach out to its source.

Among Hashem's creations, man is undoubtedly the most sensitive. This is not a human failing, but rather a part of his spiritual composition. How careful should we be, when granting our fellow man a favor, to do so in an amiable manner, expediently and compassionately.