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The Zera Emes Project by Rabbi Moshe Hubner was created to honor and share the Torah of over 250 Gedolim who weren't zocheh to descendants of their own. Their legacy lives on through their words of Torah and emunah that continue to inspire and touch countless lives. By bringing their timeless divrei Torah and wisdom to life, we create a powerful connection to the past to help inspire today's generation.

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Keeping Busy

The Apocalypse had begun. The entire planet was being destroyed, and the surviving living beings were on the *teivah* that Noach had built. This was a miraculous situation for numerous reasons, including the fact that the *teivah* could not naturally accommodate every creature or species that had the merit to be there.

What were the fewer than ten human beings doing the entire time they were trying to survive? We might picture them huddled together, simultaneously saying *Tehillim* and *Birkas Hagomel* (Thanksgiving). But that is not what was happening. The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 108b) relates that Eliezer, the servant of Avraham, asked Shem, the son of Noach, this very question. Shem answered, "We were in tremendous distress. We were feeding the animals. Any creature whose habit was to be fed by day, we fed by day, and any creature whose habit was to be fed by night, we fed by night." In other words, they were busy feeding the animals 24/7. It was a full-time job! There was no rest and no downtime.

As mentioned, space was limited inside the *teivah*, given the constraints of the natural world. Therefore, one can ask why it was necessary to feed these creatures constantly. Couldn't Hashem have added to the miracles by allowing one small seed to sustain each creature for the entire duration,

assuming they needed food at all? Also: Why did they have to be so particular about their feeding schedules? Couldn't Noach simply have placed the food in the center and let the animals work it out themselves? Couldn't the animals have fed themselves?

TAKERS AND GIVERS

Rav Simcha Wasserman said that there are two types of people in the world: givers and takers. Everyone is naturally born a taker. A little child screams when he wants to be fed, unconcerned about his parents' sleepless nights. No one else matters to him; he has needs and desires and wants them satisfied immediately. A person's job is to train himself to change from that child – a taker – into an adult who gives. Rav Simcha used to say that he met 70-year-olds who were "still babies." What he meant was that they were still entirely focused on taking.

Hashem was destroying the world because everyone had become a taker – even the animals and vegetation. The theft that served as the final transgression leading to the Flood was, in a sense, the classic taker transgression. To merit staying alive and to build a new world, the survivors had to perfect their ability to give. Simply placing the food in the middle was not good enough. Personally feeding each animal according to its individual feeding habits was the ultimate act of giving. That was

their full-time job in the *teivah*, because that was what was required to build the new world. See *Meshech Chochmah* (*Bereishis* 22:14) and *Rav Shmuel Yaakov Borenstein* (*Bereishis*, p. 98).

The new world was built on givers.

GIVERS

Rav Simcha Wasserman (*yahrtzeit* 2 Cheshvon) lived this way too. His students related that one time, he was in a shul where a wealthy American was also present. The students approached him and suggested that he speak to the man to try to raise some money for the yeshivah. He responded that whenever he approaches someone, his first thought is what he can give to that person, not what he can get from them.



R' SIMCHAH (SEATED ON LEFT) ON THE DAY OF HIS WEDDING. SEATED ON RIGHT IS HIS BROTHER, R' NAFTALI BEINISH *Hy"d* (9 CHESHVON 1941). STANDING ON RIGHT IS ANOTHER BROTHER, R' TZVI YEHUDAH LEIB *Hy"d*. MURDERED IN KELM IN AV OF 1941.

He added that even when he goes collecting, whenever he enters someone's home, his first thought is what he can give to the person, even if it is only a small token. He did not want to be a taker; he wanted to be a giver. He could not approach someone without first working on his thoughts and intentions. That morning in shul, he had not yet developed the proper mindset to approach the wealthy American, as he would only be trying to take; not give.

R' NAFTALI BEINISH

This characteristic was found throughout the Wasserman family. His brother, Naftali Beinisch, *Hy"d*, was a star in the Mir.

A young student named Eli Mishkovsky had just entered the yeshivah. He was nervous when Naftali Beinisch suddenly approached him and said, "You have a good reputation.

I have a question in Torah I would like to discuss with you." Eli was shy, but offered an answer. Naftali Beinisch responded that he liked the way he thought and asked if they could learn together.

Eli was shocked. Here was the star of the entire yeshivah approaching a newcomer and offering to spend private time learning together! The experience built up his confidence, and Eli eventually became a prominent Rosh Yeshivah himself.

Years later, Eli discovered that his father had sent a message to Naftali Beinisch offering to pay him to learn with his son. In other words, the entire arrangement had been set up in advance. But Naftali Beinisch presented it in a way that young Eli felt good about himself, as though he were equal to the star. Giving to others and making them feel good was the point.

YAHRTZEIT

Rav Shlomo Lorincz, a distinguished activist, served for many years as the representative of the Torah community in the Israeli Knesset. After retiring, he was lucky enough to learn together with Rav Simcha Wasserman. He eventually published *Milu'ei Shlomo*, which included some of the ideas from Rav Simcha.

Rav Lorincz had bought a burial plot on Har Hazeisim, but when Rav Simcha was *niftar* on 2 Cheshvan 1993, he changed his mind. Rav Simcha was buried on Har Hamenuchos, and Rav Lorincz then sold his plot and bought a new one near Reb Simcha on Har Hamenuchos. It was a final act of friendship.

Rav Lorincz explained, "Rav Simcha had no children, so who will go and daven at his *kever*, especially on his *yahrtzeit*?" He instructed his family, "Whenever *Tehillim* would be recited at my graveside, you should also recite some at the neighboring grave – Rav Simcha's. When you'll daven at my *kever*, you'll also go to his."

Seventeen years later, in 2009, Rav Lorincz passed away. The date was Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan. In keeping with the *minhag* not to visit a *kever* on Rosh Chodesh, every year, Rav Lorincz's children visit the *kever* a day after their father's *yahrtzeit*, on the 2nd of Cheshvan. When there, they follow their father's instructions and also say *Tehillim* at Rav Simcha's grave – on his *yahrtzeit*!

ר' אלעזר שמחה וסרמן זצ"ל

R' Elazar Simcha Wasserman (1900 - 2 Cheshvan 1993), the *bechor* of R' Elchanan, met the Chofetz Chaim and was directed by him to begin working in outreach. He learned in Novardok, Telz, Grodna, Kletzk, and Slutsk, and had ties with nearly every *Gadol* of the previous generation. He married Feiga Rochel, the daughter of R' Meir Abavitz. R' Simcha started a yeshivah in France in the 1930s and returned to Europe to help in the D.P. camps after the war. He helped to edit his father's work and was a pioneer in Jewish outreach. He headed the Aish Dos program of R' Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz. He was a pioneer in establishing yeshivos in Washington Heights, Detroit, in Los Angeles, and Southern California. The Wassermans made *aliyah* in 1979 and helped grow Ohr Elchanan. In his will, he requested no *hespedim* or titles, unless his wife was still alive. For her honor, he permitted limited *hespedim*. Rebbetzin Feiga Rochel passed away right after she sat *shivah* for him (12 Cheshvan 1993).

ר' נפתלי ביינוש הי"ד

R' Naftali Beinisch was born in 1914 in Brisk (R. Chaim was his *sandak*). He learned in Mir, and in 1935, was included in the third group of Mir students sent to study under the Brisker Rav. There are three letters of his to Rav Simcha published in *Kovetz Shiurim*. In the summer of 1940, he married Miriam Rabinowitz from Telz (she was the daughter of R' Naftali's first cousin). In 1941, the couple gave birth to a daughter named Michla (named after R' Naftali's mother) who tragically died from toxemia. R' Naftali Beinisch was murdered on 9 Cheshvan 5702 (October 30, 1941). Michla (infant daughter) was killed on 2 Teves 5702 (December 22, 1941).

משך חכמה

See Fisher Family Haggadah page 207; and Zera Emes Weekly ROSH CHODESH ELUL 5786 • AUGUST 13, 2026.

ר' שמואל יעקב בורנסטיין

See Fisher Family Haggadah page 32; and Zera Emes Weekly YISRO • FEBRUARY 6, 2026