

Bein Ha'zmanim

Right or wrong? A closer Look

By: Sholi Katz



The torah tells in Bereshis 49:14 **Yissachar Chamor Gorim** - *Yissachar is a strong-boned Donkey*. Rashi explains this is referring to a Torah Scholar, as bearer of the yoke of the torah. **Rovetz Bein Ha'misfasayim** - *Crouching down between the Boundaries*. Rashi further explains; just as a donkey broods along day and night merely crouching down to get a brief rest between the city limits, so is the way of the Torah Scholar.

The Chofetz Chaim, based on this verse write - The way of a **True Torah Scholar is**, he wearies day and night in studying Torah, never stopping himself for unnecessary physical pleasures of the world. The only time he allows himself a little rest is between the borders, the *Misechta's - tractates*. Chazal tells us a person should make a feast in honor of the tractate he finished. As soon as he rested a little while he should immediately begin another tractate - Just like we see in the verse.

I would like to take this a step further. I was looking to see how all this can be an explanation or direction on how we should look at Bein Ha'zmanim. Is there some correlation, or *remez- hint* to connect them? As I started thinking about it, it dawned on me - Read the sentence again, the torah uses the word **BEIN**, it could have used many other words eg. The edge of town, the middle of 2 cities, outside cities, etc. By the Torah using the word Bein when talking about scholars, it is telling us **BEIN** Ha'zmanim means between the tractates. Chazal say take a short rest, make a *seyum - feast*, you also can go out to a park for a day or two, visit the Statue of Liberty, in Israel visit a *Mukubal - tells the future*, go up north, etc....In the outside world, when a Lawyer finishes a big case, or for that matter a Plumber finishes a huge job, they allow themselves a bit of a break. However, notice it is only a few days - not a month, and then they get right back to the next case or job.

So how did this come into being that we close the Yeshivas for a month at a time? When you add it all up, 3 weeks in Av, one month Nissan, 2 weeks Sukkos it is about 20% of the year. Is this carrying the **Yoke of Torah**? The answer is simple; in Europe, say, a boy went to the great Yeshiva of Branovich and had to go home to his family living in the village of Palna. The following would be his itinerary to get home. Arrange with other to hire a horse a buggy for the 15 miles to Bialystok, the next morning he would catch the local train to Minsk. Then wait for the main line train line going 230 miles to Mogilev. The next day catch the once a day local train to Chyetz, then take a horse and buggy transport to Shokolv 40 miles away, there hire another one for the last 13 miles to his village of Palne. Each way took him a good week, he was able to be home with the family for only a week, before he had to do this whole journey in reverse. Unfortunately, for the boys to visit their parents twice a year, the Yeshivas had to close for the duration on this time. What is the excuse today? You can fly halfway around the world in a few hour and half the boys live in the same city! So why keep this tradition? What logic is there **"that's what the Yeshivas did in Europe that's what we do today"** **We NEVER change!**

If that is the case, why do we drive cars? Our parents in Europe drove horse and buggies, and there goes the electricity and don't forget to throw your cell phones out the window. We can be live like the Amish, but NO, we use all new modern technology but when it comes to Bein Ha'zmanim we do exactly as our forefathers.

If this is not bad enough...open any frum newspapers and notice all the advertisements offering "Bein Ha'zmanim trips for Yeshiva boys with the so and so maggid - as "the guide". They advertise who the famous chef will be, how large the pool is, who will be entertaining etc. Then at the end, they throw in "including a fully stocked Bais Hamedrish". I never understood that term "Fully Stocked" isn't that for fisherman? Think of some Mommy that signs up her pure torah prodigy shefi'lla - *delicare one, nebech* so weak from his learning he desperately need this vacation reprieve. The rational is, it is only for his *gizunt- health*, he learned so hard this last Zman - *semester* he needs a good rest. Believe it or not these tours fill up...how far have we gone off the rails?

The Lubaitcher Rebbe of blessed memory, railed against the yeshivas moving up to the mountains in the summer. Before there was air conditioners, the stifling summer heat in the city was unbearable. The Catskills goes up and sits on a higher plane where the temperature is over 10 degrees cooler. However, being in the mountains has the following setbacks which would disturb your learning - Bee's...Mosquitoes...Caterpillars ...Skunks...Ants...Flies...Worms...Yellow jacks... Bats...Squirrels... and the worst one is when a Spider decides to drop down right in front of your face. The Rebbe argued, stay in the regular Bais Hamedrish, put on the cool Air Conditioner and you can avoid all the above distractions...is that not the ultimate goal, learning Torah?

I am not arguing for NO Bein Ha'zmanim, just that we should go back to the original time frame of one whole week with the Shabbos before and the Shabbos after. However, "we want to have our cake and eat it too".

Now, let's take a closer look how hard this Shefi'lla is carrying the **Yoke of Torah Learning**. A typical working person, gets 2 weeks vacation, 5 sick days and the legal holidays off. Compare that with a Yeshiva man, he gets 9 weeks off, unlimited amount of sick days and all the Yom Tovim and half Yom Tovim off. Many years when the Yom Tovim fall out in the middle of the week, a worker has to "use up" his vacation days. That is a **real pity** he cannot take vacation that year. A yeshiva man loses NO vacation days, just the opposite, should the Yom Tov come out in middle of the week...he also gets that week off! The only rational to sending the sheifalla - *delicate one* on vacation is; he is always getting sick. How does the mother know this? Because about 1/4 of the time she calls him, he is in his Deera - *apartment* not feeling so well. Like one Rosh Ha'yeshiva who had the nerve to speak up and say, at any given time about 1/3 of the boys are not in Seder - *study time*. I would not go that far, but 10-15% not being there is hands down. Also, does the yeshiva man have to punch a clock like the rest of the world? C'V, how you can degrade a Yeshiva man to the level of a pushita Baal ha'bayis - *a plain working man*. Didn't the gedolim - *leaders* say Torah learners are the **ROYALTY** of Klal Yisroel, that isuntil it is time to marry off his children then the rich ones take over that position. A fellow learning 25 years, with only 2 quarters, go see how much people seek his daughters for marriage.

In Mesecthtes - *tractate* Eriven there is a passage in which Rav Chisda's daughter beseeches her father to take a rest from his learning. (Wonder why she did not ask him to go to "the Shvyets" - *Switzerland*, he could have met many Israeli Rosh Yeshivas there during Bein Ha'zmanim and "*Rayed in Lernin*" with them). However, Rav Chisda answered; there will come a time when the days are long and the nights short, then I will get plenty of rest - Rashi explains this to mean when he is in his grave. As we know the grave is between the boundaries of this world and the next. This is how the great sage Rav Chisda saw Bein Ha'zmanim.

Author's advice to yeshiva boys; when you get called up - **join** the Israeli Army. When Hashem will ask you what you accomplished in this world, you can answer; when the enemy came to attack Jewish woman and throw the children from second floor windows like they did in the pogroms, I stood there on the border with an UZI Submachine gun and stopped them. When they came to desecrate our land like in the times in the Beis Hamikdosh...**I WAS THERE**... I stopped them at the border with an M Sheish Esrei (Or my Taavor), turned them back and protected K'lal Yisroel from harm. At least you will have something very solid to go up with and get your just reward.

Now let us read the Posik - sentence again. Yissachar Chamor Gorim - is talking about Yeshiva people, then the SAME EXACT POSIK continues **Rovetz Bein Ha'misfasayim**.....the word Rovetz is similar to Rova - "**Rifle**" in **Hebrew**. The Torah is clearly telling you...yes you are **Yissachar Chamor Gorim**, a person learning Torah but you **MUST** also do your duty, and **Rovetz Bein Ha'misfasayim** protect the border with an UZI submachine gun.

CHEVRA, THIS DIRECTIVE BY THE TORAH IS CLEARLY STARING YOU RIGHT IN THE EYES!

Sholi katz - skatz06@yahoo.com - any comments and disagreements are welcome. If you can show where I am wrong I am glad to accept your argument. However no foul language please, intelligent conversation only. This and other articles by different authors can be found on the new site achersmusings.wordpress.com. Uploads by the public are welcome and encouraged.