

Not a Bein Hazmanim Problem

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I've read with great interest the recent debate in these pages regarding the amount of leeway society should grant yeshivah bochurim who need to unwind during *bein hazmanim*. While many valid and interesting points have been made, the entire discussion is based on a false premise.

We have created this fiction that yeshivah bochurim are just so overwhelmed from all their hard work in yeshivah and thus react in a certain way during the few weeks of vacation. And we then debate which activities are okay and which are over the line. But here's the inconvenient truth: There are no such bochurim.

Perhaps we just don't want to admit this publicly, but every former and current yeshivah bochur knows this to be true. Or at least they should. If a yeshivah boy is waking up at 10 a.m. during *bein hazmanim*, it's not because he's burned out from waking up at 6 a.m. the whole *zeman*. It's precisely because he *didn't* wake up at 6 a.m. the whole *zeman*. He feels a void in his life. Another *zeman* has passed and he feels no sense of accomplishment. He has nothing to wake up for in the morning and therefore has trouble getting out of bed.

Why do you think those same bochurim also tend to be the ones who come up with all kinds of justification to leave the *zeman* early? I assure you it's not because they just learned so much this past year and are simply about to crack if they learn a little more. It's because they're bored and feel empty. They need a change of scenery. Let's not kid ourselves here.

You want to know where you can find the bochur who learned and accomplished this past *zeman*? Go to your local beis medrash during *bein hazmanim*. You'll find him there. You won't find him at the 10:30 Shacharis minyan. When a boy loves learning, and feels accomplished in his learning, he continues to learn when he leaves the walls of yeshivah and he doesn't act up on *bein hazmanim* trips.

If your son is home and you don't see him crack open a Gemara, he does not have a *bein hazmanim* problem. He has a *zeman* problem.

Girls, if you want a boy who wants to be *moser nefesh* to build a kollel home with a true foundation of learning, find the boy who doesn't make excuses for why



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he needs a break from his work while you don't seem to need the same break for yours. Those boys exist. Do not fall for the "soft bigotry of low expectations."

Parents, if you're worried about a son who's doing nothing over *bein hazmanim*, don't listen to those who reassure you that everything is okay and that this is perfectly acceptable behavior. Trust your instincts.

A former yeshivah bochur