



לעילוי נשמת
מאיר יצחק בן יוסף אצליהו הכהן ז"ל

Imagination vs Reality

Michael asks:

My candidate is dating a girl I set him up with, and it's going well - they have chemistry, good communication, and he enjoys her company. The only thing holding him back is that this isn't what he imagined. He had a picture in his mind of who his wife would be, and this doesn't match it. What can I tell him?

Aleeza answers:

Many people walk into the dating world holding an image they've carried for years. Sometimes it's shaped by family, sometimes by culture, sometimes by quiet dreams we've built in our heads and hearts. And there's nothing wrong with having a picture in mind. The question now is: Is this picture preventing him from seeing what's real and in front of him?

A vision can lead us in a direction, but connection lives in the present. If he's feeling warmth, respect, enjoyment, and growth, those are not small things. Those are the foundations of something real. The yetzer hara can sometimes dress itself up as "clarity," whispering, But this isn't exactly what you had in mind. And suddenly, a living, breathing person is being compared to an idea that never had to exist in reality.

You can gently help him get curious about his picture instead of being controlled by it. Ask him: What part of your vision is missing? Listen as he reflects what's different from his vision. We are often comforted in finding what we were searching for. Instead we should be comforted by what we found, even if it's different from what we imagined. Discomfort exists when reality does not align with our vision. As we know, Hashem doesn't always send us what we want. He sends us what we need to grow into the person we're meant to become.

Another question that can open his heart is: How do you feel when you're with her, and who do you become in her presence? Does he feel more grounded? Kinder? More himself? Those are deeper indicators there is something real and good here.

It's also important to reassure him that doubt doesn't mean something is wrong. Transitioning from fantasy to reality can feel disorienting. The shift from "imagined spouse" to "real human connection" requires a little time. And time passing to become more comfortable can feel scary.



You're not trying to convince him to ignore his thoughts. You're helping him listen more deeply. If there's genuine chemistry, communication, and joy that's rare and a great sign. There's nothing to decide right now. Although he feels like something is holding him back my advice is to keep dating. Nothing is wrong. He's just not sure if it feels right...and for now it doesn't exactly feel right. I imagine for him it feels different and different is uncomfortable. Just to be clear, different isn't bad. it's just not what he expected.

Sometimes the greatest love stories begin not with, "This is exactly what I pictured," but with, "This feels good, even though it's different than who I had in mind."

May your guidance help him to gracefully navigate dating.

Blessings, Aleeza ■

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