



How Much Money Should Your Future Husband Make?

לעילוי נשמת
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Recently, I wrote in The Free Press about something I see constantly as a matchmaker: successful women who tell me they need a man they can “look up to,” and who sometimes translate that into needing a man who earns at least as much as they do, and preferably more.

My argument was simple: maybe we need to redefine “up.”

A man’s salary can tell you something about his career. It cannot tell you whether he is kind, emotionally intelligent, disciplined, generous, loyal or capable of building a beautiful marriage.

I believe that deeply.

But something I didn’t address in that article is that within the Orthodox community, there is another layer to this conversation.

One Orthodox educator I discussed this with put it beautifully, “The Torah gives us an ideal. We want to build homes where Torah and character - not money, status or titles determine a person’s worth. But we are also flawed, striving human beings living in the modern world, and we don’t always live completely according to that ideal.”

That tension is real.

In many Modern Orthodox communities,

there is still a strong expectation that a man will be a provider or primary breadwinner. Interestingly, in many Haredi or yeshivish communities, particularly those built around long-term Torah learning, the model can be almost the reverse: a woman may knowingly take on a significant portion or all of the financial responsibility while her husband learns Torah.

So clearly, there isn’t only one Orthodox definition of what a successful husband, or wife, looks like.

And perhaps that is exactly the point.

Our communities can create expectations for us before we ever sit down across from someone on a date. Who should earn? Who should provide? What should a husband’s career look like? What should a wife’s role be?

Those expectations aren’t automatically wrong. But they do need to be examined.

The same educator pointed out that men’s responsibilities toward minyan and Talmud Torah can help anchor them against some of the messages coming from the outside world, while simultaneously creating a certain dissonance with modern definitions of success.

And then came the line I loved most: “Hala-vai our communities would live the value of Torah above all else.”

Amen.

Because ultimately, I don’t want women to

marry down financially, or up financially. I want men and women to stop using money as a measurement to determine another human being's worth.

Money matters. Providing for a family matters. Torah matters. Character matters. Shared expectations matter.

The question isn't simply, "Does he make enough for me to respect him?"

The better question is: What kind of life are we trying to build, and is this someone I can respect while we build it together?

While we don't have all the answers I hope we never stop asking these questions.

May Hashem bless each of us with the clarity to recognize what truly matters, the courage to question expectations that no longer serve us, and the wisdom to choose a partner with whom we can build a beautiful bayit ne'eman b'Yisrael. ■

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