

## BMG Singles – why so many?

When discussing the shiduch crisis, often the following question comes up: “If there are so many more young women than young men in the shidduch parsha, then why are there a significant number of single bochurim still at BMG in Lakewood”? The one line answer is that when there are many more choices, some young men will hold out for more demands, since they can always back off from those demands in the future.

BMG currently has a freezer rule, whereby a single bochur coming to BMG for the first time cannot involve himself in shidduchim for the first three months he is at BMG. If he is already dating, he must say whom he is dating, and he can get engaged to that one person. Also, if bochur is already engaged, they will accept him into BMG. The overwhelming majority of new entrants (about 850 per year be”h as of 2013) are single, and are on average 23 years old. With all the above restrictions, we know that 55% became engaged in the first year of entering BMG, and 80% were engaged within two years of entering BMG. The remaining 20% (170 in our example), are now 25 years old. Of course there are 26 year old single bochurim, 27, 28, and 29 year old bochurim, and a very few that are approaching 30 years old or perhaps a little older, and are still single. We may have 250 to 300 bochurim in BMG that are over 25 years old at any given time. This is a large number of single bochurim. However, there are perhaps 1,000 young women aged 23 through 32 that are hoping to get engaged to these 300 young men. It should be obvious, that under the best of circumstances, 700 of these young women cannot possibly find their zivug, simple because there are not enough young men at BMG for all of them. The 300 bochurim will almost all get engaged by the time they are 30, and 700 of the original 1,000 that hoped to get engaged to this group of 300, will unfortunately be close to age 30 or older and still be single. It is therefore a mirage to assume that the 300 older bochurim of BMG are a salvation for all the young women that are looking for a shidduch.

Now, not all Litvish/Yeshivis young women have to marry a BMG bochur. Perhaps there are other choices. It is important to note that we know that approximately 50% of all Litvish/Yeshivish bochurim that are single at age 23 are in fact entering BMG. When looking at the whole universe of Litvish/Yeshivish people, there are about 600 young men over the age of 25, with a corresponding number of about 2,000 young women in the same age demographic. While we used BMG in our analysis, the overall picture is the same even if we include the non BMG bochurim.

The Gedolim of our time have offered a solution to the crisis, namely that we start shidduchim for bochurim at a younger age. The sooner we heed the words of the Gedolim, the sooner the problem will be resolved .