

**Q:** How do you manage a budget when you're bringing in less than what you're spending on necessities? How much debt is acceptable? With a large family, large debt seems to be inevitable. Can you please discuss about managing debt?

**A:** Zero Debt is an acceptable amount of debt. The only debt that is acceptable is a mortgage. The most successful way of getting rid of debt is to line up your debt smallest to largest (regardless of interest rate) and tackle the smallest first while paying minimum payments on the rest. Once the smallest is paid, you throw all the money you were putting into that smallest debt into the second smallest. (This is called the debt snowball.)

Managing debt shouldn't be an option. Erasing debt should be the only option. Once you start getting rid of debt you will find more money to work with (money that you were paying towards the minimum payments) to spend on more important things. As growing Chabad Families, it's understood that there may be higher expenses than most Americans. However, spending money you don't have is just digging a deeper hole.

**Q:** Should my wife try hard to work when the majority of her paycheck will just be going to childcare anyways?

**A:** Yes, of course! If you need her income, then yes. Even if majority of her paycheck will go towards childcare, there will be a small percentage that you get to keep and eventually your expenses will grow as your children grow (tuition) and you'll need all the income you can get. The paycheck will start small but with time that will grow as well.

**Q:** How can I get my husband to be interested in working at another job to make more money so that we don't have to wait until it's too late?

**A:** If you sit together and show him the amount of money that is incoming and the amount of money you need for the expenses (include money for a down payment, money to begin investing for future expenses) he can clearly see how much more money is needed to cover the deficit. And then you can both decide where you can both help bring in the money.

**Q:** An average income (in my case shlichus) cannot possibly pay for everything in the future - retirement, weddings, other simchos, etc. When making a budget of basic necessities, how can we possibly add in our entire future - there simply won't be enough money. (This is without the flow cash you mentioned before).

**A:** I don't mean that your income now will pay for all future expenses. I mean that you start investing money in mutual funds (Roth IRA's,) to save for those future expenses. And as mentioned above, when you budget, you can see how much more money you absolutely need to fill in the deficit. But we need to remember that every dollar counts. Small subscriptions, car leases, take-out foods are all relatively "small" bills that can be used towards more important things.

Q: We have many different opinions in budgeting money. I like getting advice from those with more experience and think ahead while my husband doesn't worry. He is happy with what he has today and doesn't worry about tomorrow. He won't worry about tuition until the day school starts. Sometimes, our kids stay home from school for the first few days because tuition wasn't taken care of.

He claims it's very healthy not to worry. He feels it's important to have bitachon and believes Hashem pulls through and we see miracles. People feel like we live a rich happy life. Baruch Hashem with 9 kids and being a full time mother we do need miracles.

My husband wants me to rely on him. I don't always like how he chooses to spend our money but sholom bayis is more important than all the money in the world so we don't fight. It takes lots of discipline from my end.

When I felt I needed my son in a good yeshiva I needed to raise the money or else my son couldn't go and it was crucial to chinuch. I also raised money for my daughter's seminary

My husband owes money to the whole world because he borrows. I never grew up like that. I don't promise people money I don't have.

Baruch Hashem, we have a happy marriage. No two people are alike and he is an excellent father to the kids. Very generous to them and very kind and reads them stories each night before they go to sleep so we have lots to thank for.

What do you suggest?

A: This is not a question for a financial Coach. This can better be addressed with a marriage counselor. Unfortunately, if you are unable to have this important yet tough conversation, then there are likely other communication issues. However, if your husband is willing to take the first step to see a financial coach, then the coach might be able to explain things to him that you may not be able to.

It is truly beautiful to see how his bitachon keeps him going but he needs to remember that Hashem also expects us to make a Keili to pour in the Brachos. We need to do our part.

Q: The husband wants his wife to always be happy and spend money on everything she wants. But the wife gets nervous from that because she doesn't want to get into debt. How does she go about it? If she doesn't buy the stuff then that will make the husband feel he failed... but if she does she'll feel like she's getting into debt...

A: They definitely need to have a conversation about budget and income and expenses. If she can show him the expenses and incoming money and say that she refuses to live a life in debt and constantly paying for things needed. She can also say that she'd rather save money for item A or B instead of paying for it on a credit card.