

November 18, 2009

The explanation we believe to be true relies on two assumptions;

- 1) The fact that the frum community is growing relatively rapidly - estimated to be between 3.5 and 4.5% a year.
- 2) The fact that on average boys marry girls several years younger than themselves – in our estimation 2.5 to 3.5 years.

Assuming the community is growing at 4% a year this means that there are 100 10 year olds there are 104 9 years olds 108 8 year old etc. (leaving out compounding for the sake of simplicity). If we assume that on average boys marry at age 23 and girls marry at age 20 this means that for every 100 boys there will be 112 girls (4% times three years). As there are more boys than girls born the number total disparity is somewhat less than 12% but it still is large enough to be a significant problem, probably somewhere between 8 and 10%.

The growth rate of the Yeshivish community has been independently estimated by two people to be about 4%. A friend of mine wrote a well documented paper using multiple methods to show that the community is growing by this rate. I also estimated the growth rate by calculating the ratio of numbers of children in successive grades.

It is a little more difficult to get an accurate number on the average age gap. We have compared the ages of a significant number of couples and are pretty confident that the average is between 2.5 and 3.5 years.

Regardless of whether the percentage of girls left without corresponding boys is 7% or 12% the fact is that we as a community have a serious problem. The solution to this problem lies in reducing the average age gap, in other words reducing the average difference in age between husband and wife.

If you have any questions about either the mechanics of the argument or the credibility of the data please feel to email me camt999@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Chaim Tropper