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Wedding Hardships

from "Meeting Elijah" by Eliezer Shore)

My wedding day—the happiest day of my life, my long awaited dream come true, the blessing for which I prayed daily...

At least, that is what it was supposed to be.

Some people get married amid fanfare and grand excitement, with all the thunder and lightning of Mount Sinai. For others, meeting their life-partner is more like encountering a long-lost friend, and marriage like slipping on a pair of comfortable house shoes.

There are those, however, who fairly have to drag themselves to the *chupah*—their cold feet weighing them down like icebergs. On the verse, “God makes a home for the lonely; He leads out the prisoners *b’koshorot*” (Psalms 68:7), Chazal comment, “Some people marry in *bechi* (tears) and some people marry in *shir* (song)” (*Bereishis Rabbah* 68:4). Sadly, I was among the former.

After ten frustrating years on the *shiduch* scene, having spoken to dozens of matchmakers, dated hundreds of girls and shed a thousand tears, I finally met the woman who was going to be my wife. We went out a total of seven times before becoming engaged, and a mere three months later, I was already donning my wedding suit and preparing for the ceremony.

My bride was excited, my friends overjoyed, and my parents relieved. Only I was terrified.

Looking back now, almost two decades later, I can admit that marriage had been for me a terrifying prospect—one that became exponentially worse the older I grew. I was thirty-seven at the time, and all those years of hopeless dating had taken their toll on me, filling me with doubts and fears: Is she the right one? Am I making a mistake? Should I wait for someone better?

But, as I said, at that moment, straightening my tie and dusting off my new hat, these questions were no longer relevant. The wedding day was now upon us and it was far too late to back out (though the thought had crossed my mind). I recalled a famous quote, “Send not to know for whom the wedding bell tolls—it tolls for thee.”

To make matters worse, I was alone in my doubts, with no one to share my fears but G-d Himself, to whom I turned in constant, heartfelt prayers.

I spent the day of my wedding rushing around Jerusalem on last minute errands, praying *Mincha* at the Kotel, immersing in a *mikvah*.

My good friend Simcha accompanied me through all this. As my *shomer* ('protector'), I suspect that he saw his job more as preventing me from running away than getting me to the chupah safely.

By the time we finished all the errands it was already late, and the time to set out for the hall had slipped past. I quickly changed into my wedding suit at Simcha's house, near the Bar-Ilan intersection in north Jerusalem, and prepared to set out for our destination: the wedding hall at the Diplomat Hotel in Talpiot—about a half-hour drive away. It was at that moment that Simcha dropped an unexpected bomb.

"Meir," he said, "We're running very late. Your chupah is scheduled for an hour. I'm afraid that if I drive you there, then drive back here to pick up my family, and then drive to Talpiot again, I'll miss the chupah. I know it's not so nice, but would you be willing to take a taxi there?"

"A taxi!?" my mind screamed. "No! No!" After waiting so many years to get married, after suffering so much doubt and turmoil during the engagement period, after finally overcoming it all, at the very least, I wanted to travel to my wedding with a good friend.

But instead, I graciously replied, "Of course, Simcha, no problem..." for what else could I say? And so, we called the Bar-Ilan Taxi service and gave them the address. "Five minutes," they replied.

And so, five minutes passed... and another five minutes... and another five minutes...

"This is ridiculous!" I declared. "I'm going to be really late! This isn't fair!"

At last, we heard the horn of the taxi outside in the street. I bid Simcha farewell and ran down to the waiting cab. I sat down in the back seat and gave the driver the address. "The Diplomat Hotel in Talpiot," I told him.

"Sorry. I don't want to go there."

"WHAT!!?" I responded.

"You heard me. This is my last call of the day, and I live around here. I don't want to drive to Talpiot."

I was almost speechless.

"But I ordered the taxi. I told them the destination!"

"Sorry," he repeated.

"Listen," I said, trying to appeal to his Jewish sensitivities. "I'm a *chatan* and I'm late for my own *chupah*. Surely, you would take me to that."

“No,” he replied. “I’m not interested. You can get out of the cab!”

By now I was livid. “Is this how you treat a customer!? Is this how you treat a *chatan*!? What type of a Jew are you!?” I yelled at him, and stormed out of the cab.

I rushed back to Simcha’s house. “Simcha! The taxi driver didn’t want to take me. There isn’t time to order another one. I’m running out to the street to see if I can hail one down.”

I ran down to the street, near the Shmuel Hanavi and Bar-Ilan intersection, and put my hand out to hail a taxi. The street was filled with cars.

About thirty seconds passed and a mini-van pulled up to the curb. The window rolled down. There, inside, sat four of my good friends from Tsfat!

“Meir! What are you doing here?” my friend, Aryeh Leib asked.

“I’m on the way to my wedding. What are you doing here?”

“We’re on our way to your wedding, too!”

“Well, don’t worry,” I replied, “I promise that you’re not late!”

Of course, they sat me in the front passenger seat and showed me the honor due a king.¹ Wedding music blared on the car stereo and someone gave me a cell phone (still a rarity in those days) to call the hall and tell them that I was on the way. In the end, it all worked out better than if I had planned it myself.

Twenty years have passed since that day—good years and hard years, years of joy and years of challenges. But I’m still married, and I thank God every day for my wife and family. Over the years, when I’ve struggled with the inevitable difficulties that married life brings, the tremendous *hashgacha pratis* (Divine supervision) I saw on my wedding day helps me pull through.

I have no doubt that *Eliyahu Hanavi* (Elijah the Prophet) was involved, But if you ask me who he was in this story, that’s harder to say. Was he embodied by my friends, who saved me in a moment of need, or perhaps he was the taxi driver, whose obstinacy proved to be a blessing in disguise, for which I thank him until today.

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Source: **Rabbi Dr. Eliezer Shore** currently lives in Jerusalem, where he is a published writer and author, storyteller, and Torah teacher. The above story appears in his newest book, “*Meeting Elijah*”, available from Amazon.

Connection: [Weekly Reading \(Talk about wedding hardships!\)](#)

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<sup>1</sup> For a *chatan* on his wedding day is considered a king.