

**Good Shabbos Everyone.** The Torah tells us this week, "Do not pervert the judgment of a convert or orphan..." (Devorim 24:17) This is merely one of the many injunctions in the Torah against mistreating converts. The commentator Chinuch comments that it is a mitzvah to love and to show love for converts, and "that we must be very careful not to cause pain to converts, and that we should always seek out ways to do acts of kindness for them, as much as is possible." (Mitzvah #431) The following story illustrates many concepts, including the importance of being kind to converts.

Several years ago, thousands of Jews were crowded into the huge shul at 770 Eastern Parkway, the shul of the Chabad Chassidim in Brooklyn, New York to hear the Lubavitcher Rebbe speak. And although it was Shabbos and he didn't use a microphone somehow every single person heard every word he said. Not only religious Chassidim but all sorts of Jews were there and even those who didn't understand a word of Yiddish were hypnotized by the awesomeness of the man. Mr. Dovid Asulin came to see for himself and, although he didn't exactly believe all the stories, he was glad he came. He had been born in Morocco. There everyone believed in Tzadikim; unique Jews who were very G-dly. So all this wasn't completely new to him. In fact since he moved to France twenty years ago he had almost forgotten about the Tzadikim and now he felt at home. This was his first visit to America, he was going for business, and his friends told him that if he wanted an unforgettable experience he had to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

And it was just as they said. After about two of listening, with ten minute pauses between topics people began to stand up and form lines to the Rebbe which eventually became one line and when they reached him he would give each one a bottle of vodka. Mr. Asulin didn't understand that the bottles were only for those people that were making simchas (such as weddings or bar mitzvahs) throughout the world, he thought that everyone was entitled to a bottle. So he got in line as well!

When it came his turn and he was face to face with the Rebbe, the Rebbe smiled, gave him a large bottle and said in French "This is for the wedding." He was amazed; how did the Rebbe know he spoke French! That was astounding, it just verified all the other stories he had heard. The Rebbe certainly had uncanny powers of perception! But one thing for sure...it also proved he wasn't infallible. Dovid had been happily married for years! What he said about the wedding was clearly wrong.

A week later he returned to France, unpacked, and when he showed his wife the bottle they had a good laugh over what the Rebbe said. But when he visited his local Chabad house (Rabbi Chiam Malul in Cartel France) the Rabbi didn't agree with Dovid's conclusion and assured him that in time he would see that it was no mistake.

"The Rabbi is certainly a bit out of it..." David laughed to himself, "But he is a nice man, very dedicated. So what if the Rebbe made a little mistake" and Dovid promptly forgot the entire incident. Months later he happened to open the cabinet where he had put the bottle and it reminded him of his experience in Brooklyn. "You know" he said to his wife, "It's a shame that this should just remain unused. Let's make a party, invite all our friends and family and give them all to drink a Le'chiam. It will be fun for everyone and a blessing as well. And I'm sure they will all come."

They began making plans. At first they thought of making the party at their home but at the last moment decided it would be less trouble to move it to the small wedding hall of the local shul (in Rancee near Paris) and to have it catered by a local kosher restaurant.

The day of the party arrived and the guests began arriving in good spirits. A small band played happy music and people were exchanging greetings and handshakes. But as they were sitting down to begin the meal the Rabbi of the synagogue entered the room with a smile, looked around for Dovid and when he found him took him aside and whispered something in his ear.

Dovid turned to the crowd and said: "The Rabbi needs nine men to join him to make a minyan. It will only take a few minutes, who wants to come? I'm going to go." In no time he had the required number following the Rabbi to the next room for what they thought would be prayer (Jews are supposed to pray in groups of at least ten adult males) but they were in for a surprise. In the room stood a bride and groom alone; it was a wedding! In fifteen minutes the entire ceremony was over. Dovid and the other men shook the groom's hand, wished the newlyweds 'Mazal Tov' and gingerly asked where the wedding meal would be (they also were wondering why there were no guests but were ashamed to ask). When the groom answered that no meal had been arranged Dovid joyously announced that they were invited to his. Dovid's informal party suddenly became a real wedding party. The band played merrily and the men began to dance on one side of the room with the groom, while the women on the other side danced with the bride. When the dancing finished they all sat down to eat. Then in the middle of the meal Dovid stood, held up the Rebbe's bottle, cleared his throat for silence and told the story of the Rebbe saying it was "For the Wedding!" Now he understood that the Rebbe wasn't mistaken at all. "What!" exclaimed the bride. "That bottle is from the Lubavitcher Rebbe for my wedding?" and she burst into tears; she was weeping from sheer joy. When she calmed down she explained.

This was her second marriage. Her first ended in a bitter divorce that, coupled with the fact that she decided to be an observant Jew, resulted in a major rift in her family and none of her relatives showed up. No one came from her husband's side either but his reason was more simple. He converted to Judaism and simply had no family. She felt so uncertain and alone that she felt she was bothered to no end. Then someone suggested she write a letter to the Lubavitcher Rebbe. And a few weeks previous she did it and in the letter she asked for some sign that the marriage would succeed. "And here you are with the Rebbe's blessing!!" **Good Shabbos Everyone.**

**A Refuah Shleimah to Shusha Malka bas Golda**

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