

RAV ASHER FREUND

When I got married, I did nothing but study Torah, and I didn't realize that my wife was also somebody. I treated her like a *shifchah kenaanis* (a slavewoman). "Goldie get me, Goldie give me, Goldie stand, Goldie sit." I noticed she was going off her rocker a little bit. So Rav Asher Freund came into my life, because she needed somebody to go to for guidance. Then she got him to come to me, and he said I had a *neshomoh* (soul) as high as the Arizal's (Rabbi Isaac Luria, the great sixteenth century kabbalist) or something like that, and that I'm the most capable guy in the world. He took me out to the fields to talk with G-d. I went through the whole Breslover regimen. What I got out of it was that I stopped being a dictator. I became a little bit normal. I realized that my wife also has needs. Her needs are things like going to pray at the Western Wall and Rachel's Tomb. Before Rav Freund, I wouldn't let her go to places like that. She had to be with "Mordechai" all day. Rav Asher saved my life because Goldie would have gone crazy. I emancipated her, me and Lincoln. I guess you could say that it was Rav Asher who made me such a big feminist.

One day I'm sitting with him and I see this crowd waiting outside. Dozens of people were waiting to be able to spend a few minutes talking with him. I told him, "Rav Asher, this really gets me down. I know how to learn (i.e., I understand Talmud) ten-thousand times better than you, and nobody stands in line to see me."

He starts laughing really hard -- that's when I saw how truthful he is -- and says to me, "I'll tell you what to do. Just leave your door open and let every miserable soul come in to you. They'll come, you'll see."

That reminds me of something remarkable. At the funeral of my father-in-law, Rabbi Nochum Dovid Herman, an *amuda dinura* (pillar of fire) appeared. At least 500 people saw it. Some of them asked me for an explanation. I told them that it appeared because he used to cheer people up with his jokes everyday. Those people who were unfortunate came to him, and they left feeling a bit better. That's why there was an *amuda dinura*.

When my father-in-law was in intensive care before he died, he started saying, "It hurts, it hurts." One of the doctors present asked, "Where does it hurt?" He said, "My side." The doctor asked, "Which side?" He said, "The Lower East Side."

He was always joking. One day a fellow stops him on the street, a real *nebach*, and tells him, "Rabbi Herman, you're looking really young." He said, "It's like the *gemara* says -- being in the rabbinate shortens your years."

THE FOLLOWING BELONGS IN SOME SECTION ABOUT THE BRISKER ROV
THE BEIS HALEVI AND THE INNKEEPER

I'll tell you a something I heard from the Brisker Rov. When Shechem violated Dinah, it says that the sons of Jacob were incensed "for he had committed an outrage in Israel by lying with a daughter of Jacob, and such a thing is not done." The phrase