

## **"And He has made me a father to Pharaoh." (45:8)**

*Rashi* translates the word "ct" as a "friend and patron." *Horav Shimon Schwab Shlita* explains that *Rashi's* definition opens up a new vista of understanding regarding the ideal relationship between a father and his child. It should be one of friendship and companionship. There should exist an openness in which a child feels secure in confiding in his father. Later, in *Sefer Devarim*, we learn about the "maysis" (seducer, missionary) who attempts to persuade a fellow Jew to worship idols. The *Torah* states "if you will be seduced by your friend... who is as dear to you as your life." *Rashi* interprets the word "your friend" as "your father". Once again, the relationship between a father and his son is characterized analogously by friendship. One's father must be his dearest friend. He quotes *Horav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch Z"l* who explains that the word gr (friend) is derived from the word vgrn (pasture); a friend is one who offers himself or herself like a pasture for his friend to graze upon.

We may suggest that " gr" consists of the same letters as the word which defines evil (gr). A friend is someone with whom one can share his innermost secrets, even if he has sinned. This is what a father should represent, a child's best friend to whom he can reveal anything, confident that their loving relationship will not change as a result of what may be disclosed. As *Horav Schwab* says, we may presume that the conceptualization of a father according to the *Torah* refers to a mother, as well. He continues by stating that the sense of total security is a basic requirement of every child. We all need our father's hands or our mother's arms. A parent should fulfill the child's desire to be loved, encouraged, and appreciated without contingency. In short, a parent must be the child's most intimate confidante and advocate.

We may be so bold as to suggest that this relationship should also apply to a child's surrogate parent, the *Rebbe* and teacher. A student is encouraged to nurture a feeling of intimacy and affection, which should be reciprocated by the *Rebbe* and teacher. Obviously, the principle of "*kavod HaTorah*" (respect for the *Torah*) must be maintained between the *Rebbe* and student. We often mistakenly expect to employ remoteness as the technique for exacting respect from our students. Respect must emanate from mutual appreciation and esteem.