

And these are the generations of Aharon and Moshe...and these are the names of the sons of Aharon. (3:1,2)

The Torah declares that it is about to enumerate the generations of Aharon and Moshe. Yet, it only mentions Aharon's sons. Rashi explains that this is consistent, since Moshe taught Torah to Aharon's sons. Thus, we infer that whoever teaches his friend's son Torah is considered as if he had fathered them. The Torah forges a bond between rebbe and talmid which is almost biological in nature. This means that the love that exists between a father and son should be nurtured between a rebbe and talmid.

The bond between teacher and student is the subject of a talk which Horav Yitzchak Hutner, zl, gave to a group of yeshivah students. He said that when Rav Chaim Volozhiner, zl started his famous yeshivah, he introduced a new terminology to define a student of a yeshivah. No longer was the student referred to as talmid ha'yeshivah, but rather, ben ha'yeshivah, son of the yeshivah. He felt that once a boy enrolls in a Torah institution, it becomes his home, and his rebbe, his source of Torah, becomes like a parent. A yeshivah is not simply a place where one receives an education. A yeshivah is a place where one learns a way of life. He is provided with the tools to exist and thrive in this world. It molds his personality, as it shapes his perspective. The yeshivah is the lifeblood of a ben Torah, and, thus, a student is called a ben ha'yeshivah.

A true rebbe should view himself as a parent to his students. The decision he makes for a student should be made with the same care and love that he employs when making decisions for his family. Every student should have individual status before his rebbe. Just as a parent is sensitive to the individual needs of each one of his children and does not treat them collectively, so, too, should a teacher relate to the singular needs of his students on a one-to-one basis.

Horav Mishkovsky, zl, was once delivering the eulogy at the funeral of a student of the yeshivah who had passed away in his youth. With moving words, he spoke at the gravesite. Heartbroken, he expressed his fatherly love for the student. He spoke as a father who had lost a part of himself. He said, "The Torah obligates a shomer, watchman, to swear two oaths in the event of a mishap with the object he was to guard. He swears that he was not negligent in its care and that he had received no personal benefit from it. When parents send their son to a yeshivah, they are entrusting the Rosh Hayeshivah/rebbe with their child. Consequently, as the rebbe, I should make these two oaths. That would be the case if I was a mere watchman. Just as a father is not obligated to make these oaths, I, too, feel that I am not obligated to make these oaths. This talmid is my child!"

This is a very moving statement made by a heartbroken rebbe at the fresh grave of his beloved student. Does it apply always - with all students and all teachers? If it does not - then something is very wrong with their relationship. It is not the purpose of this paper to lay blame, but rather to raise the issue and perhaps to succeed in making people think. In a recent orthodox periodical, an

observant parent wrote with indignation how his child was "subjected" to the "domineering" rules and regulations of his yeshivah at the expense of his parents. Imagine the "chutzpah" of a Rosh Hayeshivah not to permit a son to have dinner with his parents in a certain restaurant in Eretz Yisrael during the parents' visit, because the restaurant was not the appropriate place for a yeshivah student to be. Unfortunately, this parent's understanding of the rebbe/talmid relationship is apparently myopic.

When we send our children to a Torah institution, we should demonstrate that we trust the rebbe to render the correct and proper educational decisions that will nurture our child's emotional, spiritual and moral development. Furthermore, if the parent has a problem with his child's yeshivah, he always has the option of switching schools. To denigrate the rebbe and the school, however, does nothing more than to defeat the ultimate purpose of the parent. Perhaps, if we would permit those entrusted and experienced in the area of Torah chinuch to do their job, we might be pleasantly surprised with the products they produce!