

“And his blood as well – behold! is being avenged.” (42:22)

Rashi comments that Reuven’s use of the word *v’gam*, which is usually translated as “and/also,” implies “in addition,” that not only was Yosef’s blood being avenged, but also the blood of Yaakov, their aged father, who still grieved over the loss of his dear son. In the *Sefer Chassidim* it is stated that, at times, when a person commits a wrong against his fellow, the result of that action will also affect his victim’s friends and family. They will also suffer with him. For example, one who commits murder causes overwhelming grief to the widow and orphans of his victim. We may add that the emotional scars last far longer than the immediate pain which has been sustained. These scars affect children and even grandchildren who are raised by parents who have undergone a serious emotional trauma. When the perpetrator of the crime will stand before the Heavenly Throne to be indicted for his grievous action, he will have to account not only for its immediate harm, but also for its far-reaching effect. The immediate pain and anguish that he caused, together with the long-term consequences, will be on his head.

This is inferred from the remarks made by Yosef’s brothers when they said *v’gam*, “and his blood as well – behold! is being avenged.” They conceded guilt not only for the harm they caused Yosef, but also for the anguish they caused their father.

Do we realize the far-reaching effects of our actions? “Far-reaching” is a reference to the many people that are affected and also to the duration of time that the repercussions last. Furthermore, for those of us fortunate enough to have the opportunity and astuteness to beg forgiveness, do we realize how many people we really have to ask? When all is said and done, no one really takes into consideration the total effect of his actions. Perhaps if he did, that in itself might prove to be a powerful deterrent.