

Then Yaakov rent his garments... he mourned for his son many days. (37:34)

Rashi explains the term *yamim rabim*, many days: twenty-two years, which lasted from Yosef's sudden departure until Yaakov *Avinu* went down to Egypt. This specific time was by design (as is everything) to coincide with the twenty-two years that Yaakov *Avinu* did not fulfill the *mitzvah* of *Kibbud av v'eim*, honoring his father and mother. Yaakov *Avinu* experienced twenty-two years of agony and mourning over the painful loss of a son, as *middah k'neged middah*, measure for measure, for his lack of fulfilling the *mitzvah* to honor his parents. At first glance, Yaakov's departure from home by his mother's instruction in order to save his life is a far stretch from Yosef being sold, of which Yaakov was unaware. He thought that he was dead, torn by a wild animal. What is the equity between a passive lack of honor and active grief over the loss of a child?

I think that we may glean from here a powerful lesson which should give us food for thought. We have no idea of the pain experienced by parents when their child acts up and disrespects or ignores them. The pain is tantamount to losing a child! Yaakov's pain at losing Yosef was the penance for the pain his parents sustained when he was gone for twenty-two years. Frightening.