

## Just One Sin

The Sefer Chasidim relates a story about a man who tragically buried a number of his sons and those who survived did not have children to carry on their father's name. This individual was not a sinner; in fact, he was a Rosh Yeshivah who had over the years inspired many talmidim, students. Yet, prior to his death, the man confirmed that he had one sin that catalyzed all of these tragic occurrences. It seems that he had a younger sister who had been widowed and wanted to remarry. She was ashamed to articulate her feelings to her brother, who could have arranged a suitable match for her. The brother, who was presently speaking, said, "I could have helped her, but did not, because I wanted her property to revert to me."

One sin - a sin of omission - because he wanted to benefit from her possessions, was the cause of all this man's anguish. Certainly, one could find a rationale for justifying his non-action. She never asked for a husband! Should he be blamed for taking advantage of an awkward situation? Indeed, this was a man of distinction, a Torah scholar of reknown, who, quite possibly, wanted to use the money he would gain to sustain the students of his yeshivah. For this sin, his sons should die and he should never see grandchildren?

Apparently, Hashem views this incident from a different perspective. The Chida explains that this man was punished because his inaction caused this widow great pain. She could have had children but because of him, she was left childless. He caused a widow to suffer and that is something which Hashem does not overlook. How careful should we be in our inter-relationship with others - especially those who are helpless.