

Do not accept a bribe, for the bribe will blind those who see and corrupt words that are just. (23:8)

Some situations during the course of one's life are so compelling that they determine one's course of action. Indeed, one can reach the point of error even in areas which are usually very clear. Man must elevate himself to the point that he transcends his own vested interests, so that he sees the truth in its reality.

We find a number of instances in which people -- who under normal circumstances had been clear-thinking individuals -- suddenly present themselves in a totally different light. We find that in his dispute with Shmuel *HaNavi*, regarding carrying out his mission of destroying Amalek, Shaul *HaMelech* felt that he was actually carrying out Hashem's command. This is the case despite the fact that Shmuel clearly related to him that he had transgressed Hashem's command. We observe two great leaders, one of whom feels that he is not in error. Indeed, he contends that he has performed a *mitzvah*. The second leader disputes this, admonishing him for violating Hashem's command.

That is exactly what occurs when one accepts a bribe. The situation does not have to involve money; it can be related to a conflict of interests or *kavod*, honor. It does not take much to sway one's mind. The *Torah* tells us the effect of bribery. This applies to everyone - regardless of his stature or virtue. Everybody has his own price. Regrettably, we do not all realize this.