

## "But if a prince has sinned." (4:22)

The *Talmud* derives from the *posuk* in *Tehilim* (50) "And it will be very stormy around Him" that Hashem is very particular with those around Him, even for matters as light as a single hair (*Bava Kama* 50a).

What is the rationale for such severe measures specifically against those who are so close and devoted to Hashem? We may understand this *Chazal* by applying the words of the *Chovas Halevovos* that "Every man is judged according to the level of his perception of Hashem". This is the distinction between a great leader who sins vis a vis an ordinary individual. A person's comprehension of the pre-eminence of Hashem, and of His Divine supremacy, determines the gravity of his error, and mandates the severity of his punishment.

The ultimate degree of perception of a person is "I have set Hashem before me always" (*Tehilim* 16). He is sensitive to Hashem's constant presence within him. In contrast, is the one who believes in Hashem as a matter of habit and routine. His belief in Hashem is ingrained in him through tradition. By the same token, the sins of these individuals will also vary. The individual who acts without forethought, out of habit, will similarly transgress without reflecting on his actions, not realizing his sinful deeds. This is not true of the one who is always aware of Hashem's greatness and presence, his transgression is magnified by this knowledge, and therefore his punishment is more severe. **kvh rut**