TESHUBA: Being your own judge… and declaring yourself guilty

Today is the 9th of Elul, 5770

Taking responsibility for our mistakes –*hakarat haChet*– is the first, and probably the hardest step in the process of *Teshuba*. Naturally, we tend to justify our actions and act as our advocates rather than as our prosecutors.

Illustration: David haMelekh committed a terrible sin, taking Bat Sheba, a married woman. Natan the prophet had to admonish David, and help him realize that he had sinned. Natan presented David with a fictitious case: A rich man owned thousands of animals. His neighbor, very poor, only had one lamb. One day, the rich man received a guest. In order to not "waste" one of his own sheep, the rich man decided to steal and slaughter his neighbor's sole lamb, which he dearly loved. Nathan presented the case to the King an–as he had expected–the King reacted angrily. David said: "That man, the rich guy, deserves to die!" Nathan haNabi turned to David and said: *atta haish*…. "You are that man!" Faced now with the facts, and in light of the sentence that he had himself issued acting as an impartial judge, David haMelekh repented '*chattati laHashem*…' he said, 'I have sinned to God'.

David was not permitted to build the Bet haMikdash because of this sin, but God accepted his Teshuba. Part of the credit goes to Nathan who opened the Kings eyes helping him to evaluate his actions objectively allowing him to repent sincerely.