

But you shall command Yehoshua, and strengthen him and give him resolve, for he shall cross before this people and he shall cause them to inherit the Land. (3:28)

Upon a cursory reading of the text, the phrase, “For he shall cross before this people,” is superfluous in light of the following phrase, “And he shall cause them to inherit the Land.” Clearly, if Yehoshua was leading the nation in *Eretz Yisrael*, he would cross before they did. In his *Aderes Eliyahu*, **Horav Yosef Chaim zl, m’Bagdad**, distinguishes the leadership characteristics of Yehoshua’s from that of his *Rebbe* and predecessor, Moshe *Rabbeinu*. Yehoshua “crossed” before the nation, very much like a monarch who precedes his people. Moshe, on the other hand, was a *roeh*, shepherd, who led from “behind.”

At first glance, the variance between king and shepherd is in the “subject” of their leadership. A king leads people; a shepherd cares for sheep. While this is certainly true, a deeper distinction goes to the very nature and quality of their leadership styles. It all reverts back to the basis of their specific purposes in leadership. The shepherd is charged with caring for the welfare and safety of the sheep. Therefore, he stays behind to observe that all goes well, every sheep is in its place, none have strayed. For if something were to happen to any of the sheep, the shepherd would be called to answer to the owner. The king, however, does not guard over the people. On the contrary, the people must protect the monarch. Therefore, he travels in the forefront, with the nation behind – to guard him from harm.

The shepherd’s goal is to address the visceral/tangible needs of his flock. Each individual sheep has significance; each of its necessities are considered. In the Moshe *Rabbeinu/Klal Yisrael* equation, this translates into a leader who is concerned with every aspect of his people’s needs – both physical and spiritual. He ignores nothing. Thus, *Chazal* refer to Moshe as *raaya meihemna*, the true and trusted shepherd.

A king concentrates on the spirit and attitude of the nation. The people’s mood, dedication to the country, and ability to conquer enemies are all major elements of his concern. He cares about the “nation” as a whole. Therefore, he stands in the foreground, setting the standard by example, seeing to it that the nation is aware of what is expected of them. He is present to judge and lead. His relationship is not as personal. This was Yehoshua’s function as a leader.