

Who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall take them out and bring them in; and let the assembly of Hashem not be like sheep that have no shepherd. (27:17)

Moshe *Rabbeinu* asked Hashem to appoint his successor, presenting criteria for an effective leader, a person: who leads from the front; who takes the nation out and brings them in; who does not remain in the background. He then adds, “And let the assembly of Hashem not be like sheep that have no shepherd.” *Horav Aryeh Finkel, zl (Rosh Yeshivah Mir/Brachfeld)*, wonders why Moshe had to supplement his request for a leader with a comparison to a herd of sheep who are shepherdless. Was not his request sufficient in its own right, without the added analogy about sheep? The *Rosh Yeshivah* explains that, indeed, Moshe was not referring to an analogy in order to impress upon Hashem that a competent leader was vital to the nation’s stability and forward growth. Moshe sought to instill the concept in himself, to underscore the need for a strong leader that would lead, because otherwise the nation would be rudderless, much like a herd of sheep without its shepherd.

Horav Eliezer HaLevi Turk, Shlita, supplements this with the *Malbim’s* commentary, *Ka’tzvo asher ein lahem roeh*, “Like sheep that have no shepherd.” Veritably, if for some reason the shepherd were to become lost or AWOL, the sheep would still have somewhat of a leader to guide them. The he-goat would “step in” and lead. While this may sound good on paper, the *tayash*, he-goat, is not much of a leader, because, after all is said and done, he is also a member of the herd and possesses the same level of intelligence as the other sheep. A leader must have *seichel*, be prudent, and possess common sense and intelligence. A leader must tower over his flock. In the human sphere of endeavor, a leader must be the repository of *ruach Elokim*, the spirit of Hashem, thus serving as the conduit that inspires spiritual growth. He must have the *seichel*, common sense, critical to understanding his flock and how to convey Hashem’s message to them. The appropriate leader channels the *dvar Hashem*, word of G-d, through his *daas Torah*, wisdom developed and honed by the Torah. Moshe *Rabbeinu* feared that *Klal Yisrael* would appoint its own leader from among its ranks, who had similar interests, goals and objectives as they did. This would be a recipe for disaster. Hashem decided that Yehoshua was a perfect fit who could step into the shoes of his venerable *Rebbe*, Moshe, and lead the nation on the next leg of its journey.

Horav Avraham Farbstein, zl (Rosh Yeshivah Chevron), explains that herein lay Korach’s contention to Moshe. He claimed that, while it is true that the nation needed leadership, once they received the Torah all together, “All the nation was holy” – In other words, they could go at it alone. It was not necessary to have a leader to lord over them. *Horav Chaim Brim, zl*, opines that the core principle of Korach’s position concerning *Kehunah* and *malchus*, the Priesthood and monarchy, was inaccurate. His perception of these two positions/functions in *Klal Yisrael* was viewed/based on his looking through the lens of physicality. His fallacious claims that *malchus* could be bestowed on anyone and that *Kehunah* was a position that was “dispensed” gratuitously without lineage or worthiness indicated how off base he was. Spirituality and physicality are irrevocably dissimilar

and, under no circumstances, co-equal. *Rav Chaim* adds, “Anyone who is *moser nefesh*, sacrifices himself (time, energy, emotion, spirituality), for *Klal Yisrael* will be *zocheh*, merit, to achieve distinction with *siyata diShmaya*. He is valued by Hashem, because of what he has given up for His children.