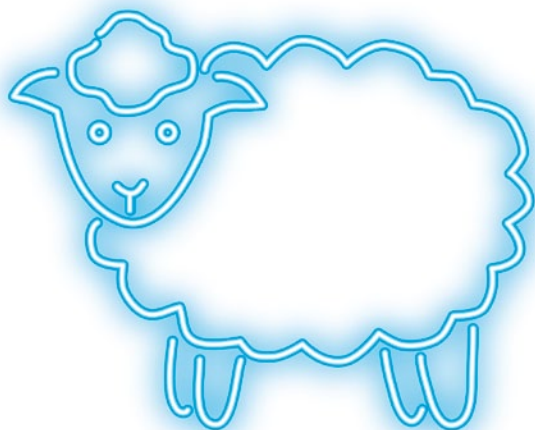


אָנו צאָנךּ וְאַתָּה רוֹעֵנוּ

We are Your sheep
and You are our Shepherd
Yom Kippur service



On leadership and followership

When are we shepherds and when are we sheep? Can we find room for both at the same time?

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SHEPHERD

“... Our teachers have said: Once, while Moses our Teacher was tending [his father-in-law] Yitro’s sheep, one of the sheep ran away. Moses ran after it until it reached a small, shaded place. There, the lamb came across a pool and began to drink. As Moses approached the lamb, he said, ‘I did not know you ran away because you were thirsty. You are so exhausted!’ He then put the lamb on his shoulders and carried him back. The Holy One said, ‘Since you tend the sheep of human beings with such overwhelming love – by your life, I swear you shall be the shepherd of My sheep, Israel.’”

Shemot Rabba 2:2

Later when Moses nears the end of his life, he appeals to God:

“let the congregation of the Lord not be as sheep without a shepherd.”

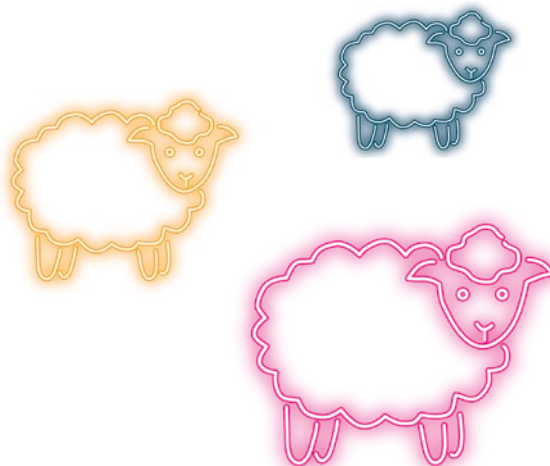
Numbers 27:17

“A leader... is like a shepherd. They stay behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realising that all along they are being directed from behind.”

Nelson Mandela



- What are the qualities that drew God to choose Moses as the leader of the Israelite people?
- Our ancestors were shepherds. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Rachel, Joseph and King David all herded goats and sheep. What leadership qualities do you think could be needed in shepherding?
- Which shepherding qualities do you think you have? Which would you like to develop?



Rosh Hashanah presents us with a different model, where even the leader becomes part of the flock

“On Rosh Hashanah, all the world passes before God like sheep, as it says, ‘The One who fashions the hearts of them all, who discerns all their doings’ (Psalms 33:15).”

Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:2

During the upcoming festivals, leaders and followers, natural shepherds and natural sheep alike, become part of a flock. It might be helpful here to put aside negative associations we have with sheep not being particularly bright or not thinking for themselves. When we refer to sheep below, we’re talking about a skill called followership (it’s a thing!)

THE ART OF FOLLOWERSHIP

“Followership is a Key Component to Leadership

Followers are not inferior to their leaders, and leaders are not superior to their followers. Leaders don’t always have extra information or knowledge that their followers don’t have access to. They don’t live in an alternate universe. They’re flawed human beings, just like their followers.”

Terina Allen

Read more: <https://www.fastcompany.com/90273002/want-to-be-a-good-leader-learn-to-follow>



- Why is the “flock of sheep” analogy used for the Jewish people at this time of year?
- As a leader, how would it feel to relinquish your sense of leadership for this period in the Jewish calendar?
- Being a “sheep” or a follower is at best an active role, not a blind one. There are different types of followers described in the HBR further reading article below. Which, if any, do you identify with?
- As leaders, it’s not always easy to step into a follower role. But sometimes we need to follow and others need to lead. Can you think of times when this has been the case in your leadership?

Consider the following texts:

“Hezkiya taught: ‘Israel are scattered sheep’ (Jeremiah 50:17) – why are Israel likened to a sheep? Just as a sheep, when hurt on its head or some other body part, all of its body parts feel it. So it is with Israel when one of them sins and everyone feels it.”

Vayikra Rabba 4.6

“Know that the Lord is God... we are the sheep of God’s pasture.”

Psalm 100

“The Lord is my shepherd; I lack nothing.”

Psalm 23

“What characterises followership?

Based on my experience:

1. Good followers are versatile. Even if the task or process I’m asked to work on isn’t something I want to do, and even if I’m a leader being called upon to be a follower in this instance, I know that I need to shift my mindset, take on the task, and allow myself to be led.
2. Good followers must listen and participate. Maybe the way things are being done isn’t the way I would do them, but as a follower I need to be open to new and different ways. My attitude is important, too. Remember: positive breeds positive!
3. Good followers need to show up. Many of us take on leadership roles in a variety of ways in both our professional and personal lives. As important as leadership is, it is equally important that we show up and support other leaders. We can’t affect the outcome if we don’t show up to get in the race.

With all the focus we place on leadership, it’s critical that we don’t overlook the importance of followership. It’s essential to good leadership.”

Sandy Weissinger

Read more: <https://www.harvardbusiness.org/what-hurricane-harvey-taught-me-about-the-importance-of-followership/>