

## Parashah Vayeilech

The one where Moses prepares the Israelites for the transition of leadership from himself to Joshua.

**This parashah, the shortest one in the Torah, begins with Moses, who is now 120 years old, addressing the Israelites.** He acknowledges his old age and that he can no longer lead them. Moses reassures the people that even though he won't accompany them into the Promised Land, they will still inherit it.

**Moses announces that Joshua will be his successor and lead the Israelites across the Jordan River into Canaan.** He encourages Joshua to be strong and courageous, knowing that the task ahead won't be easy.

**Moses shares a song with the Israelites.** This song foretells the Israelites' future disobedience and the harsh response, emphasizing the importance of following the commandments.

**Moses instructs the Levites to take the Torah and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant.** This is to ensure that the people always have access to the teachings and divine laws.

**Moses says that in the future, the Israelites will disobey the laws and face various disasters because of their actions.** However, he also offers hope by stating that if they repent, they will not be abandoned.

**Moses gathers the elders and officers of Israel as witnesses to the covenant.** This is to emphasize the importance of obedience to the commandments and the consequences of disobedience.

**Moses ends his address by urging the Israelites to choose life by obeying the commandments.** He emphasizes that keeping the Torah is not too difficult, and it holds the key to their prosperity and survival in the Promised Land.

**In Parashah Vayeilech, Moses prepares the Israelites for the transition of leadership from himself to Joshua and leaves them with a profound message about the importance of faithfulness to the commandments and the consequences of straying from the path.** This parashah sets the stage for the final portions, Parashah Ha'azinu and Vezot Habracha, where Moses will deliver his final words and blessings to the people before his passing.

## Teen Takeaways from Parashah Vayeilech

- 1. Passing the baton:** Parashah Vayeilech shows us how important it is for leaders to hand over their roles to others when the time comes. It teaches us about mentorship and sharing responsibilities. When you cannot be present to carry out your responsibilities, even for a short time, it is important to have someone take over those tasks. The best way to make sure they will be done properly is to show the person how before you leave. It is even more important when the absence will be longer, and in the case of Moses, permanent. Some people write something called an ethical will before they die to be read by their family after they are gone. In it, they share their hopes and dreams of the life they hope their children will live. Often this is a repetition of the many lessons they tried to teach during their lifetime.
- 2. Own up to your actions:** The parashah reminds us that our actions have consequences. If we make good choices, good things usually happen, but bad choices can lead to trouble.
- 3. Write it down:** Just like taking notes in class, the Torah is written down to immortalize important things. This teaches us the value of writing things down and passing on knowledge from one generation to the next. Making lists of things to do is a good way to be thorough in your tasks and responsibilities. While preparing for b'nai mitzvah, it will help if you make lists of homework to prepare for your next lesson, questions to ask your tutor or rabbi/cantor when you meet with them, and things you want to remind your parents about before the big event.
- 4. Second chances:** Even when things go wrong, there's always a chance to make them right. The parashah teaches us that we can fix our mistakes and choose a better path. Can you remember the fear you experienced before you approached an adult to admit something you had done, and the relief you felt when they trusted you again with a similar task?
- 5. Be brave and strong:** Just as Moses encouraged Joshua to be brave and strong, it's important for us to have confidence in ourselves when we face challenges. When was the last time you encouraged someone who was taking over one of your tasks to feel confident?
- 6. Together we're stronger:** When people come together, it's like forming a strong team. The parashah reminds us of the power of unity and working together to achieve common goals.

## Summary

Parashah Vayeilech teaches us about **leadership, taking responsibility for our actions, passing on knowledge, being honest, getting second chances, having confidence, working together, and making choices that lead to a good life**. These lessons are important for teens as they navigate their way through life's challenges and opportunities.