

Vayeilech · וילך · “And he went” · Deut 31

OVERVIEW:

Though it is the shortest of all portions—clocking in at only 30 verses—Vayeilech has many things to teach us. And the portion progresses, basically, in the following way: Moses tells the people the vision (of them in the Land, and to be strong and courageous) and that Adonai goes before them and will be with them. Moses publicly tells Joshua to be strong and courageous, that he will *go with* the people, and that Adonai goes before him and will be with him. Moses instructs the priests to regularly teach the people the Torah and to fear God. God informs Moses that he will die soon, that the people will mess up (making God angry), and He instructs Moses to teach the people a song that will mitigate their inclinations. God tells Joshua, for the second time, to be strong and courageous, that he will *bring* the people—which is slightly different from Moses’ words—and that God will be with him. Moses tells the priests all that God had told him. And finally, Moses teaches the people the song—which is, of course, next week’s portion. So, this portion is entirely God speaking—either directly or through Moses—to Moses, Joshua and the people.

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS:

1. What other portion’s name shares a root word with “vayeilech”?
2. What other related Hebrew word translates as “Jewish law”?
3. What is too hard for Moses to do anymore?
4. What’s the difference between the two verses (30:19 and 31:28) wherein Moses calls on the heavens and earth as a witness against Israel?
5. In what way is the Torah a “song” (31:19)? What makes a song beautiful? Memorable?
6. What does it mean for Adonai to hide his face from the Israelites?
7. Moses was undoubtedly gracious in his death. Could I model a gracious letting go of life? What could I teach others as death draws near?
8. Where in my life do I need to just make a choice and move forward? And where should I be more cooperative?
9. Am I just going through the motions or am I being alert and intentional about every movement of my soul—every placement of my feet—along the tightrope of this life?

RESOURCE LINKS:

BT 2019 - <https://bethtikkun.com/vayeilech-haazinu-2018-19/>
Aleph Beta - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZyH8g_HP8
119 Ministries - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1x_FOI_TLs