

## *Parashat Vayeilekh*

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### **SUMMARY**

The name of this week's *parashah* is *Vayeilekh* and I will be chanting the first three lines, Deuteronomy 31:1-3.

In *Parshat Vayeilech* (“and he went”) Moshe tells the Israelites, “I am one hundred and twenty years old today.” He transfers the leadership to *Yehoshu'a*, writes the Torah in a scroll, and gives it to the Levites for safekeeping in the Ark of the Covenant.

The Israelites receive the *mitzvah* of *hak'hel*, or “gathering.” Every seven years, during the festival of *Sukkot* the entire people of Israel—men, women and children—are told to gather at the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, where the Torah will be read to them.

*Vayeilekh* concludes with the predictions that the people of Israel will turn away from their covenant with G!d, and also that the promise that the words of the Torah will not be forgotten out of the mouths of their children and all Jews of future generations.

## QUESTIONS

**1) In this week's *parasha*, right before Moshe hands leadership of the Israelites to *Yehoshu'a*, he tells the Israelites that he is 120 years old. Moshe then writes down the Torah, and gives it to the Levites so they could keep it safe in the ark. Why do you think Moshe starts this whole process by telling the Israelites that he is 120 years old?** <<Pick 3>>

I think Moshe tells the Israelites he's 120 years old because he thinks he might die soon and wants to share with the Israelites all of the goodness and connection to G!d he has experienced.

**2) Later in this week's *parasha* we read about the *mitzvah* of gathering together every 7 years, during the holiday of *Sukkot*, in Jerusalem to read the Torah to the entire Israelite community. Why do you think that gathering together to read Torah was a *mitzvah* to do every 7 years? What might be important about the number 7?** <<Pick 3>>

Seven is the number of days in which the world was created. Maybe the *mitzvah* is to get together every seven years so we can "re-create" the Torah every 7 years by reading the whole thing and challenging ourselves to think about the same rules and stories in different ways.

**3) Why might it be important to gather the whole community together every 7 years for this *mitzvah* of reading the whole Torah? Why not just some of the Israelites, or all of the *kohanim*, or all of the *levi'im*? Why all Israelites?** <<Pick 3>>

I believe that this is teaching us that everyone has a role in creating Torah. All Israelites need to be there, with G!d, because every one of us, and G!d have to work together to make Torah meaningful.