

PARSHAT MATOT-MASEI
NUMBERS 30:2-36:13
28 TAMUZ 5781/8 JULY 2021



Crossing Over the Jordan River
Painting by Yoram Raanan

“Crossing over to the other side of the Jordan is mentioned hundreds of times in the Bible. Here in the painting, the other side of the Jordan is radiating with golden light reflecting the positive vision of the future.”

NEGOTIATION: HOW TO CROSS THE DIVIDE

1. “Do not cause us to cross the Jordan.” (Numbers 32:5)
2. “Are your brothers to go to war while you stay here? Why will you turn the minds of the Israelites from crossing into the land that God has given them? That is what your ancestors did when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to survey the land.” (Numbers 32:6-8)
3. The explanation is that they said to Moses: “You don’t have to give us an inheritance along with those who settle on the western side, thereby making their inheritance smaller, for an inheritance which is suitable for us has come to us, since it is a land fit for cattle and we have more cattle than other tribes.” This they said in the nature of a request, not by way of contention. (Nahmanides)
4. They confused Moses. By their speech they led him to assume that they feared the battle ahead and were seeking a way to avoid helping conquer the land. They should have said: “We are ready to join in conquering the land and will be satisfied if you allow us to inherit this land east of the Jordan.” (Abravanel)

5. Moses should have apologized for his hasty, false assumptions. Their error was not in their motives but in their lack of clarity about their goals. They were incapable of articulating a clear direction. (Akedat Yitzhak)
6. Your position is something you have decided upon. Your interests are what caused you to so decide. (Roger Fisher and William Ury, *Getting to Yes*)
7. **Four Elements of Principled Negotiation** (from Harvard Law School blog)
 - a. Separate the people from the problem. “In principled negotiation, negotiators work to deal with emotions and personality issues separately from the issues at stake.”
 - b. Focus on interests, not positions. “In principled negotiation, negotiators look beyond such hard-and-fast positions to try to identify underlying interests—their basic needs, wants, and motivations.”
 - c. Invent options for mutual gain. “In principled negotiation, negotiators devote significant time to brainstorming a wide range of possible options before choosing the best one.”
 - d. Insist on using objective criteria. “In principled negotiation, negotiators rely on objective criteria—a fair, independent standard—to settle their differences.”
8. *Zeh neheneh ve-zeh lo chaser* (one side gains and the other side does not lose) [Talmud, Baba Kama 20b]