

**"Do not contend with them, for I will not give you of their land." (2:5) - "Be not at enmity with Moav, and do not contend with them in battle." (2:9) - "Do not harass them and do not contend with them for I will not give of the land of the children of Ammon to you for a possession." (2:19)**

After their lengthy sojourn in the desert, *Bnei Yisrael* had attained a reputation for their physical prowess which commanded profound respect. They had the "ability" to achieve many more conquests, exterminating their adversaries. Hashem implored them, however, three times to refrain from battle. He declared three adversaries who possessed choice pieces of land to be off limits. The *Abarbanel* cites Hashem's desire to educate *Bnei Yisrael* as the reason for this command. *Bnei Yisrael* felt confident that they could defeat all opposition with their own strength. In order to curb their audacious attitude, it was essential to place specific controls over them. They needed to be taught that Hashem was their "commander," and that He was their only source of strength and success. The point to be reinforced was that they would not win *Eretz Yisrael* merely by their own efforts.

*Horav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch Z"l* extends this concept further. The Hebrew word for "contend" - "rd,,", actually means to "incite". *Bnei Yisrael* were enjoined to do absolutely nothing to incite these three nations to war. *Bnei Yisrael* were endowed with great military powers and successes, only for that specific period of time. Divine destiny determined that they would inherit *Eretz Yisrael*. They needed to realize that, just as Hashem had assigned them *Eretz Yisrael*, He also allocated land to these other nations. Hence, unless Hashem told *Bnei Yisrael* to battle with another nation, that nation possessed its land by Divine accord. If *Bnei Yisrael* were to take their place as a nation on the Holy soil of *Eretz Yisrael*, they would have to accept and respect the rights of others. We are not a people who rampantly seize the land of others through unauthorized and unbridled military conquests. The only land which we have a right to take is the land which was Divinely ordained to us by the Creator and owner of all land. These boundaries are clearly stated in the *Torah*.