

A Qualified Chide

Excerpted and adapted from a *shiur* by Rabbi Moshe Zev Granek

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http://baishavaad.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/BER81_003_Lech_Lecha_Obligation_of_Rebuking_a_Non-Jew.mp3

And there was a disagreement between the shepherds of Avraham and the shepherds of Lot.

(Bereishis 13:7)

Lot's shepherds were wicked, and they pastured their animals in fields belonging to others, so Avram's shepherds rebuked them for committing robbery."

(Rashi ibid.)

Rashi here implies that Avraham's shepherds felt the mitzvah of *tochachah* (giving rebuke to a sinner) applies even to gentile sinners. This conclusion is reflected in a few other sources as well. For example, the P'nei Yehoshua (Shabbos 55) states that Lot left Tzo'ar after fleeing there because he was afraid of being punished for not having rebuked the residents for their sins. In addition, the Perisha (C.M. 249) claims that Avraham did not accept gifts from the king of Sedom (in our *parsha*) because he would no longer be able to fulfill the mitzvah of *tochachah* with him if necessary (since Avraham would have to treat him with extra respect). This is difficult to understand, though, because the Torah states that the mitzvah of *tochachah* applies only to "*amisecha* (your fellow)" (Vayikra 19:19), meaning another Jew. Rashi (Sanhedrin 75a) also states explicitly that the mitzvah of *tochachah* does not apply to gentiles.

Perhaps the question can be resolved based on a comment of the Sefer Chasidim (Siman 1124) that it is a mitzvah to give *tochachah* to non-Jews, as evident from the fact that Hashem commanded Yonah to instruct the city of Nineveh to do *teshuvah*. Although the Sefer Chasidim does not invoke the actual Torah obligation of *hochaiach tochi'ach*, he seems to hold that it is important to prevent even *goyim* from transgressing *aveiros* whenever possible. Some *Acharonim* suggest that this directive may be classified as a *midas chasidus*. Thus, perhaps Avraham's shepherds were fulfilling this dimension of the mitzvah of *tochachah*.