

Abraham as an Advocate

Source Sheet by the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

בראשית י"ח:כ"ו-כ"ז

(כ) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה וְעַתָּה סָדָם וְעֹמֹרָה כִּי־רַבָּה וַחֲטֹאתָם כִּי כָבֵדָה מְאֹד: (כא) אֲרִדְהָנָא וְאַרְאֶה הַכְּצַעֲקוֹתָהּ הַבָּאָה אֵלַי עָשׂוּ | כָּלָה וְאִם־לֹא אֲדַעָה: (כב) וַיִּפְּנוּ מִשָּׁם הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיֵּלְכוּ סָדָמָה וְאַבְרָהָם עֹדְנָו עֹמֵד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: (כג) וַיִּגַּשׁ אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲאֵף תִּסְּפֶה צְדִיק עִם־רָשָׁע: (כד) אוֹלַי יֵשׁ חַמְשִׁים צְדִיקִים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר הֲעִיר הָאֵף תִּסְּפֶה וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא לְמַלְוֹם לְמַעַן חַמְשִׁים הַצְּדִיקִים אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבָּהּ: (כה) חֲלִלָה לָּךְ מַעֲשֵׂת | כִּדְבַר הַזֶּה לְהַמִּית צְדִיק עִם־רָשָׁע וְהִגִּי כְצְדִיק כְּרָשָׁע חֲלִלָה לָּךְ הַשֹּׁפֵט כָּל־הָאָרֶץ לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט: (כו) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אִם־אֶמְצָא בְסָדָם חַמְשִׁים צְדִיקִים בְּתוֹךְ הָעִיר הֲעִיר וְנִשְׂאֵתִי לְכָל־הַמְּקוֹם בְּעִבְרָם:

Genesis 18:20-26

(20) Then the LORD said, “The outrage of Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave! (21) I will go down to see whether they have acted altogether according to the outcry that has reached Me; if not, I will take note.” (22) The men went on from there to Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the LORD. (23) Abraham came forward and said, “Will You sweep away the innocent along with the guilty? (24) What if there should be fifty innocent within the city; will You then wipe out the place and not forgive it for the sake of the innocent fifty who are in it? (25) Far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the innocent as well as the guilty, so that innocent and guilty fare alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?” (26) And the LORD answered, “If I find within the city of Sodom fifty innocent ones, I will forgive the whole place for their sake.”

בראשית י"ח:ל"ב-ל"ג

(לב) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק לְאֲדֹנָי וְאֲדֹבְרָה אֶדְ־הַפֶּעַם אוֹלַי יִמְצְאוּן שָׁם עֲשָׂרָה וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲשַׁחִית בְּעִבּוֹר הָעֲשָׂרָה: (לג) וַיִּלֶּךְ יְהוָה כְּאֲשֶׁר כָּלָה לְדַבֵּר אֶל־אַבְרָהָם וְאַבְרָהָם שָׁב לְמַקְוֹ:

Genesis 18:32-33

(32) And he said, “Let not my Lord be angry if I speak but this last time: What if ten should be found there?” And He answered, “I will not destroy, for the sake of the ten.”

(33) When the LORD had finished speaking to Abraham, He departed; and Abraham returned to his place.

בראשית י"ט:ד'-ח'

(ד) טָרַם יִשְׁכַּבְוּ וְאֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשֵׁי סֹדֶם נִסְבוּ עַל־הַבַּיִת מִנְעַר וְעַד־גֹּקֵן כָּל־הָעָם מִקְצֵה:
 (ה) וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל־לוֹט וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אַיֵּה הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־בָּאוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה וְיָבִיאוּ אֵלֵינוּ
 וְנִדְבָעָה אִתָּם: (ו) וַיֵּצֵא אֱלֹהִים לֹט הַפְּתִיחָה וְהַדְלִילַת סָגַר אַחֲרָיו: (ז) וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־גְּנָא אַחֵי
 תְּרַעוּ: (ח) הִנֵּה־נָא לִי שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדָעוּ אִישׁ אוֹצִיָּאה־גְּנָא אֶתְהֶן אֵלֵיכֶם וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶן
 כַּטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם רַק לְאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה אֲל־תַּעֲשׂוּ דְכָר קִי־עַל־כֵּן בָּאוּ בְּצַל קַרְתִּי:

Genesis 19:4-8

(4) They had not yet lain down, when the townspeople, the men of Sodom, young and old—all the people to the last man—gathered about the house. (5) And they shouted to Lot and said to him, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may be intimate with them.” (6) So Lot went out to them to the entrance, shut the door behind him, (7) and said, “I beg you, my friends, do not commit such a wrong. (8) Look, I have two daughters who have not known a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you please; but do not do anything to these men, since they have come under the shelter of my roof.”

בראשית י"ט:כ"ג-כ"ו

(כג) הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יָצָא עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְלוֹט בָּא צִעְרָה: (כד) וַיְהִי הִנֵּה הַמְטִיר עַל־סֹדֶם וְעַל־עֲמֹרָה
 גְּפָרִית וְאָשׁ מֵאֵת יְהוָה מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם: (כה) וַיַּהַפֵּךְ אֶת־הָעָרִים הָאֵל וְאֵת כָּל־הַכְּפָר וְאֵת
 כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָעָרִים וְצִמַח הָאֲדָמָה: (כו) וַתִּבָּט אִשְׁתּוֹ מֵאַחֲרָיו וַתְּהִי גִזְיַב מְלַח:

Genesis 19:23-26

(23) As the sun rose upon the earth and Lot entered Zoar, (24) the LORD rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah sulfurous fire from the LORD out of heaven. (25) He annihilated those cities and the entire Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities and the vegetation of the ground. (26) Lot's wife looked back, and she thereupon turned into a pillar of salt.

Discussion Questions:

- Is Abraham an advocate?
- What is he advocating for? What is his ideal outcome?
- On whose behalf is he advocating?

- Is he a willing advocate or does he need to be convinced? Who convinces him?
- What was his strategy? What were the strengths of this strategy? What were the weaknesses?
- Is he a good advocate? Why or why not?
- Is Abraham successful?



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