

"Perhaps there are fifty righteous men in the midst of the city." (18:24)

The emphasis is in the words "*in the midst of the city*". Avrohom did not ask forgiveness for the sake of fifty righteous men who happened to live in the city. The righteous man in the midst of Sodom's depravity is not one who clings to his sheltered environment smug with pride over his own superiority, and who, therefore, thinks he has accomplished enough if he has saved himself and his household. Such a person does not fulfill Avrohom's criteria of a righteous person. His righteous person can be found *in the midst of the city*, and in his living relationship with everything and everybody. He never stops admonishing, teaching, and warning wherever and however he can. He takes everybody and everything to heart. No matter how distant the hopes of success may be, he never despairs and never tires of trying. These are the righteous who are worthy of saving the community, and for the sake of these he hopes the city of Sodom would be spared.