

Vayera, Comment of Brisker Rav

- Brisker Rav's comment, Why should Hashem be angry when Avraham speaks?

VAYERA: BRISKER RAV COMMENT

(From: <http://www.artscroll.com/parashah.html>)

(By Rabbi Asher Bergman.)

And he said, "Let not my Lord be angry, and I will speak" (Genesis 18:30).

On the surface, it appears that Avraham was pleading with Hashem not to become angry at him for his bold request. This interpretation seems difficult, however. Avraham was offering his prayers on behalf of the people of Sodom. Why should Hashem become angry with him for that?

When Avraham first started to plead for the sparing of the Sodomites, he said (following the translation of Onkelos), "Will You, in Your anger, eliminate righteous people along with the wicked?" (18:23). This should be understood in light of the Talmud's dictum (Bava Kamma 60a) that "Once permission has been given to the Destroyer to destroy, he does not distinguish between the righteous and the wicked." This is why there are often cases of mass tragedies, when a righteous minority suffers along with the wicked majority. Avraham thus pleaded with Hashem that He should not act upon His anger, for in that case the result would be the elimination of "the righteous people along with the wicked."

In our verse as well, then, we can understand Avraham's request "Let not my Lord be angry, and I will speak," ? to mean "Let not my Lord act with anger ? against the people of Sodom ? so that I can pray on behalf of the few righteous individuals who may live there."

(Comment by the Brisker Rav)