

# פרשת חיי שרה *Parashat Chayei Sarah*

*Bereshit / Genesis 23:1-25:18, 1 Kings 1:1-31  
Matthew 2:1-23*

## The issue of being double minded

This week's Torah portion Chayei Sara, we read about the death of Sarah, the getting of a wife for Isaac, and the death of Abraham. After burying his wife Sarah, Abraham commanded his servant to go get a wife for his son Isaac. He made him swear by God that he would not get daughters from the land of Canaan. When Abraham causes his oldest servant to swear to do this, Abraham reveals to us his understanding of the God of Israel. We find this in *Bereshit / Genesis 24:3*, ג וְאֶשְׁבִיעֶךָ בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִקַּח אִשָּׁה לְבָנִי 24:3 *and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live. (NASB)* Here Abraham describes the Lord as אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם (God of heaven) וְאֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ (and God of the land). Abraham is explaining to his servant what they are going to do. It is interesting to read then in *Bereshit / Genesis 24:7* how Abraham describes God who caused him to leave the land of his birth. The text states, ז יְהוָה | אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר לָקַחְנִי מִבֵּית אָבִי וּמֵאֶרֶץ מוֹלַדְתִּי וְאֲשֶׁר דָּבַר-לִי וְאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע-לִי לֵאמֹר לְזָרְעֶךָ אֶתְּנוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת הוּא יִשְׁלַח מַלְאָכָו לְפָנֶיךָ וְלָקַחְתָּ: 24:7 *The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from*

my father's house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and who swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I will give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there. (NASB) Abraham does not say "the God of heaven and the God of the land." When speaking to his servant Abraham said the Lord who caused him to leave the land of his birth. Some insight may be taken from something we read according to 1 Samuel 26: 19, וְעַתָּה יְשַׁמְעֵנָא אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת דְּבָרַי עֲבָדוֹ אִם־יְהוָה הִסִּיתָּ בִּי יָרַח מִנְחָה וְאִם אֶבְנֵי הָאֲזָזִים אֲרוּרִים הֵם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כִּי־גִרְשׁוּנִי הַיּוֹם מִהַסְתַּפֵּחַ בְּנַחֲלַת הָאֲזָזִים לְאֵלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים: 26:19 Now let my lord the king hear his servant out. If the LORD has incited you against me, let Him be appeased by an offering; but if it is men, may they be accursed of the LORD! For they have driven me out today, so that I cannot have a share in the LORD's possession, but am told, 'Go and worship other gods.' (Sefaria) These words from 1 Samuel provide insight into why Abraham spoke about God in these two ways. Here, the Land of Israel is connected to the God in heaven, this is why he said that He is אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם (God of heaven) וְאֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ (and God of the land) to his servant in *Bereshit / Genesis 24:3*. The idea is the one who is outside of Eretz Yisrael (Land of Israel) is as if he has no God (or that he worships false gods), whereas the one who is in the land is as one who serves the one true God in heaven.

The next question is why did Abraham request that his servant not take a daughter from the land of Canaan? There are a number of reasons, (i) those living in the Land of Canaan are cursed (see story of Noah and the curse on his son Ham), (ii) the people of the land serve false gods, and (iii) to prevent the claim that Abraham's claim to the land was due to intermarriage (*Chizkuni on Bereshit / Genesis 24:3 Part 1*). The primary reason they have possession of the Land is due to the promise of God, it is an act of faithfulness on God's part! These reasons draw us back to what we just discussed in regards to the way Abraham describes God, אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם (God of heaven) וְאֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ (and God of the land), that his right and the right of his children to be in the land was based on God having promised it to them. This was a matter of faith, believing in and taking hold of the promises of God! Abraham was a man of faith, and the way he causes his servant

to swear draws out this concept of his trust and faith in the Lord God Almighty.

### ספר בראשית פרק כד

א וְאַבְרָהָם זָקֵן בָּא בַּיָּמִים וַיְהִי בְרָךְ אֶת-אַבְרָהָם בְּכָל:  
 ב וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל-עֶבְדוֹ זָקֵן בֵּיתוֹ הַמְּשָׁל בְּכָל-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ  
 שִׁים-נָא יָדְךָ תַּחַת יְרֵכִי: ג וְאַשְׁבִּיעֶךָ בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם  
 מִיָּם וְאֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִקַּח אִשָּׁה לְבָנִי מִבְּנוֹת הַכְּנַעֲנִי  
 אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּקִרְבּוֹ: ד כִּי אֶל-אַרְצִי וְאֶל-מוֹלְדֹתַי תִּלְדֶּךָ  
 וְלִקְחֹתָ אִשָּׁה לְבָנִי לְיִצְחָק: ה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הֶעֱבַד אֵוִלִי לֹא-  
 תֵאבְדָה הָאִשָּׁה לְלֶכֶת אַחֲרַי אֶל-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת הֲהֵשִׁיב אֲשִׁיב  
 אֶת-בְּנִי אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-יֵצְאֶת מִשָּׁם: ו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָ-  
 הָהֶם הַשְׁמֵר לָךְ פֶּן-תָּשִׁיב אֶת-בְּנִי שָׁמָּה: ז יְהוָה | אֱלֹהֵי  
 הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר לִקְחֹנִי מִבֵּית אָבִי וּמֵאָרֶץ מוֹלְדֹתַי וְאֲשֶׁר דָּבַר-  
 לִי וְאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע-לִי לֵאמֹר לְזַרְעֶךָ אֶתֶּן אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת הִנֵּה  
 יִשְׁלַח מִלְּאֹכְלוֹ לְפָנֶיךָ וְלִקְחֹתָ אִשָּׁה לְבָנִי מִשָּׁם: ח וְאִם-לֹא  
 תֵאבְדָה הָאִשָּׁה לְלֶכֶת אַחֲרַי וְנִקִּיתָ מִשְׁבַּעַתִּי זֹאת רַק אֶת-בְּנִי  
 לֹא תָשִׁיב שָׁמָּה: ט וַיִּשָּׂם הֶעֱבַד אֶת-יָדוֹ תַּחַת יְרֵךְ אַבְרָהָם  
 אֲדָנָיו וַיִּשְׁבַּע לוֹ עַל-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה:

### ***Bereshit / Genesis 24:1-9***

*24:1 Now Abraham was old, advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in every way. 24:2 Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, 'Please place your hand under my thigh, 24:3 and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live, 24:4 but you will go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac.' 24:5 The servant said to him, 'Suppose the woman is not willing to follow me to this land; should I take your son back to the land from where you came?' 24:6 Then Abraham said to him, 'Beware that you do not take my son back there! 24:7*

*'The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and who swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I will give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there. 24:8 'But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this my oath; only do not take my son back there.' 24:9 So the servant placed his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter. (NASB)*

Asking the question why did Abraham command his servant to go outside of the Land of Canaan to choose a wife, there are a number of possible reasons, (i) those living in the Land of Canaan are cursed (see story of Noah and the curse on his son Ham), (ii) the people of the land serve false gods, and (iii) to prevent the claim that Abraham's claim to the land was due to intermarriage (*Chizkuni on Bereshit / Genesis 24:3 Part 1*). These points in regards to Abraham's command to choose a wife are very significant and have much application for us today! One of the most significant aspects is what Abraham commanded and why he caused his servant to swear by God in heaven (אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם) to not take a wife from a people who are cursed. When a person is predestined for destruction, such as the women of Canaan, she is apt to drag her husband in the same general direction. (*Rabbeinu Bahya on Bereshit / Genesis 24:3 Part 1-2*) This speaks to us concerning those whom we choose to join ourselves with today. Those who are destined for destruction will draw us also in the same general direction. Note also these concepts are not a proof text for Calvinism. Today we all have the choice to live our lives for the Lord, to believe in His Son Yeshua, and to have the curses that are in our lives broken in the Name of Yeshua the Messiah. The Torah also speaks of the curses and the blessings being connected to those who do not or do love the Lord God of Israel and obey His commands. The point though is related to what Abraham is commanding his servant concerning a wife for his son and how this very same thing influences us today (*I am not specifically singling out marriage alone, but those who we choose to align ourselves with in this world too*). Consider how this



*which cannot be moved but abides forever. 125:2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem, So the Lord surrounds His people From this time forth and forever. 125:3 For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest upon the land of the righteous, So that the righteous will not put forth their hands to do wrong. 125:4 Do good, O Lord, to those who are good And to those who are upright in their hearts. 125:5 But as for those who turn aside to their crooked ways, The Lord will lead them away with the doers of iniquity. Peace be upon Israel. (NASB)*

Here in *Tehillim / Psalms 125:4* the text states, הַיְהוָה שְׁמֶרְךָ יְהוָה הַיְהוָה 125:4 *Do good, O Lord, to those who are good And to those who are upright in their hearts. (NASB)* The Psalmist warns us that God will grant His blessing to those who are upright and whose choices and motivations are guided by the principles being outlined here. The Psalm then goes on to describe those who join themselves with evildoers. There is a clear distinction between those who are drawn between two people, those who have purity of thought and those who do not. In Abraham commanding and making his servant swear by God in heaven to not take a wife from the land of Canaan was so that he would not become complacent or that he would not be double minded in his finding the woman. The Word of God speaks about the issue of being double minded in the following ways:

**1 Kings 18:21**

כֹּה בָּא וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיָהוּ אֶל-כָּל-הָעָם וַיֹּאמֶר עַד-מַתִּי אַתֶּם פֹּסְחִים עַל-שְׁתֵּי הַסַּעֲפִים אִם-יְהוָה הָאֱלֹהִים לְכוּ אַחֲרָיו וְאִם-הַבַּעַל לְכוּ אַחֲרָיו וְלֹא-עֲנוּ הָעָם אֶתֹּו דְבָר:

*Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people did not answer him a word.*

**Tehillim / Psalm 12:2**

ג שְׁוֹא | יְדַבְּרוּ אִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ שֶׁפֶת חֲלָקוֹת בְּלֵב וְלֵב  
יְדַבְּרוּ:

*They speak falsehood to one another; With flattering lips and with a double heart they speak.*

***Tehillim / Psalm 119:113-115***

קִיג סֵעָפִים שְׁנֵאתִי וְתוֹרַתְךָ אֶהְבֵּתִי: קִיד סִתְרִי וּמִגְנִי  
אֶתָּה לְדַבְּרְךָ יְחַלְתִּי: קטו סוּרוּ מִמֶּנִּי מְרַעִים וְאַצְרֵה מְצוֹת  
אֱלֹהִי:

*I hate those who are double-minded, But I love Your law. You are my hiding place and my shield; I wait for Your word. Depart from me, evildoers, That I may observe the commandments of my God.*

***Isaiah 29:13***

יג וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי יֵעָן כִּי נִגַּשׁ הָעָם הַזֶּה בְּפִיו וּבִשְׁפָתוֹ כִּבְדוּנִי  
וְלִבּוֹ רַחֵק מִמֶּנִּי וְתַהֲיִי יְרֵאתָם אֵתִי מְצֻנֹת אֲנָשִׁים מְלַמְּדָה:  
*Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote.*

***James 1:8***

*being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

***James 4:8***

*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

We note how long ago being double minded has been a problem in relation to the topic of spiritual truth. Elijah struggled with the people following Baal and the God of Israel. The Psalmist states that being double minded is synonymous to speaking falsehoods to one another. *Tehillim / Psalms 119* states that double mindedness is contrary to loving the Torah of God. Isaiah describes this as having lips that draw

near with words but the heart and actions are far from God. James interpreted having a double mind makes one unstable, and impure before God. He calls us to purify our hearts before God. These things speak of a kind of spiritual astigmatism, a condition in which the spirit rests upon a half-hearted and dissolution of the will. On the other hand, single-mindedness focuses the will and produces wholeheartedness, conviction, and genuine character. This is why Abraham spoke of the Land of Israel as being connected to the God in heaven, saying that He is אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם (God of heaven) וְאֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ (and God of the land) to his servant in *Bereshit / Genesis 24:3*. This is also why the Scriptures begin with בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: *1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (NASB)* where we are told there is a connection between heaven and Earth in the sense that God did not just create both, He is also working in our lives and we are living for Him! (note the letter vav ם between the words אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ) This is why Abraham commanded his servant to go outside of the Land of Canaan to choose a wife, because the people were cursed, they worshiped false gods, and so his son and family would not be confused with the native peoples (i.e. laying claim through intermarriage). These points again demonstrate for us the significance of Abraham's command to choose a wife and this application today in our lives by whom we join ourselves with. In the Torah, Moshe commands us to be tamim (תמים) to be "perfect" before the Lord. Note that this word does not denote ideal moral perfection as much as it refers to being brought to completion. This is drawn out by the way this word is used to describe completed years (*Bereshit / Genesis 47:18*), healthy animals for sacrifice (*Vayikra / Leviticus 22:21-22*), being a nourishing vine (*Ezekiel 15:5*), truthful in speech (*Amos 5:10*), completed building project (*1 Kings 6:22*), and of the fulfillment of a people being destroyed (*Bamidbar / Numbers 14:33*). Because of our relationship with God, the Lord God is working in our lives to bring to completion the work that He has for our lives, to be wholehearted, resolute, and entirely committed to walk with Him in this world as we see He is אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם (God of heaven) וְאֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ (and God of the land). This may be what Yeshua meant when he said "Be ye perfect" according to *Matthew 5:48*. The reason many people live in despair is



because they are often double minded in their relationship with God. They are conflicted by attempting to walk in two different ways at the same time. Our end is not in this world, it is in the Olam Haba (the World to Come). The one who is mature in the faith, and who seeks a purity of heart, does not look away from being faithful to the God of Israel and His Messiah Yeshua. Despite trials and suffering, the one who is not double minded retains their commitment and their earthly decisions upon their faith in the Lord. All of these things are founded upon the decision to genuinely trust in the Lord God Almighty. Just as Yeshua said, *“if your eye is single, your whole body shall be full of light.”* (Matthew 6:22) Notice how this is the way in which Abraham’s servant lived his life and for seeking a wife for Isaac. He prayed to the God in heaven to bring him the woman he was looking for, and God did as he had asked because his heart was not double minded and his goal was bring glory to the name of the God of Abraham. If we strive to keep a single mind towards God and His ways, we can be assured that He not only hears our prayers, He will also work powerfully in each one of our lives!