

This week's Parashah of Vayera opens with Avraham recovering from his Brit Milah. We find him sitting in the opening of his tent, actively seeking passers-by in order to offer them hospitality. This week's NLI resource features a Ketubah with an inlaid picture of an open tent on the outskirts of Jerusalem:

Parashat Vayera
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in conjunction with NLI

Kerem
School



הספרייה הלאומית
المكتبة الوطنية الاسرائيلية
THE NATIONAL
LIBRARY OF ISRAEL

Ketubah, Jerusalem 1926

This Ketubah, taken from the National Library of Israel, is one of a vast collection of over 4200 Ketubot. The Ketubah is a Jewish marriage contract, the purpose of which is to outline the rights and responsibilities of the groom in relation to the bride.

This Ketubah was made for a wedding that took place on 24th Tevet 5686 in Jerusalem. The groom is Ephraim ben Nachman Sonnenschein and his bride is Rebecca Bat-Zion bat Chayim Arieah Zota.

The Ketubah is painted in watercolours with an ink manuscript. In the top centre of the Ketubah, there is a painting featuring a young couple hugging at the entrance to the tent which overlooks the city of Jerusalem.

Surrounding the picture itself as well as at the base of the Ketubah are marriage-themed verses taken from various book of the Bible including the beautiful verse from Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs) 8:7 "Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away."



Tents and Torah

Avraham and Sarah are famous for emulating HaShem in their performance of endless acts of kindness including their outstanding hachnasat orchim - hospitality. Avraham's tent had openings on all four sides to ensure that he would catch passers-by from whichever direction they approached. When he saw the three 'strangers' (angels) approaching from afar, he jumped up to offer them food and drink. Abraham treated his guests like royalty and served the finest foods, involving his whole family in the Mitzvah.

Further on in the Torah, in the Book of BaMidbar, tents once again take a leading role; this time those of Bnei Yisrael (Children of Israel). We find the prophet Bilaam blessing The Children of Israel with the famous words, "Mah Tovu Ohalecha Yaakov" - "how good are your tents, Yaakov". The commentator Rashi asks the question: What was it that Bilaam saw that made him comment on the tents of the Israelites? The answer we are given is that none of the Israelites tents were directly facing each other, allowing a degree of privacy for each home.

A third and perhaps the best-known tent is the Ohel Moed, the Tent of Meeting. This was part of the Mishkan, the portable Temple which travelled with Bnei Yisrael whilst they were in the desert.



Activities:

To visit the NLI Ketubot site:



Listen to the Disney Song from Beauty and the Beast, "Be our Guest". How do they recommend that you look after guests?



Make a lift-the-flap picture of Avraham and Sarah in their tent



Design a doormat that will make your guests feel welcome and wanted:



Something to discuss

Can you think of other examples from the Torah of the Mitzvah of Hachnasat Orchim - hospitality?

Read Bereishit Ch. 18 vs. 1-15.
What special things did Avraham do for his guests?
What can we learn from Avraham in these verses?