

Robert Frost, *Mending Wall* (excerpt)

Something there is that doesn't love a wall
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast...

I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go...

There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors'.
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
'Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows?
But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down.'...

He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

The fences of Behar-Bechukotai

1. Vayikra 25:6-7

וְהִיְתָה שְׁבֵת הָאָרֶץ לְכֶם לְאֹכְלָהּ לָךְ וְלַעֲבָדְךָ וְלַאֲמָתְךָ וְלַשְׂכִּירְךָ וְלַתּוֹשֵׁבְךָ הַגֵּרִים עִמָּךְ: וְלִבְהֶמְתְּךָ וְלַחֵיהָ אֲשֶׁר בְּאַרְצְךָ תִּהְיֶה כָּל־תְּבוּאָתָה לְאֹכֵל:

And the Sabbath of the land will be for you to eat – for you, your male and female servant, your hired hand and your settler who live with you. And for your animal and for the beast in your land shall be all of the produce, to eat.

2. Midrash, Mechilta d'R' Yishmael Parshas Mishpatim, Masechta d'Kaspa 20

"והשביעית תשמטנה ונטשתה (שמות כג:יא)" מפני מה אמרה תורה, לא שיאכלו אותה עניים? הרי אני מכניסה ומחלקה לעניים! תלמוד לומר "והשביעית תשמטנה, ונטשתה," מגיד שפורץ בה פרצות, אלא שגדרו חכמים מפני תקון העולם.

"And on the seventh, you shall release it and abandon it (Shemot 23:11)" – Why did the Torah say this, if not for paupers to eat it? I will bring in the produce and distribute it to the needy! Therefore the verse says, "And on the seventh, you shall release it and abandon it." This tells us to break holes in the fences, but the sages fenced it in to improve the world.

3. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Shemitah v'Yovel 4:24

מצות עשה להשמיט כל מה שתוציא הארץ בשביעית, שנאמר "והשביעית תשמטנה ונטשתה." וכל הנועל כרמו או סג שדהו בשביעית ביטל מצות עשה, וכן אם אסף כל פירותיו לתוך ביתו.

There is a commandment to release all that the land produces in the seventh year, as it says, "And on the seventh, you shall release it and abandon it." Anyone who locks his vineyard or fences his field in the seventh cancels a commandment. The same is true if one gathers all of his produce into his home.

4. Vayikra 25:29-31

וְאִישׁ כִּי־יִמְכַר בַּיַּת־מוֹשָׁב עִיר חוֹמָה וְהֵיטָה גְּאֻלְתּוֹ עַד־תֶּחֱמוֹת שְׁנַת מִמְכָּרוֹ יָמִים תִּהְיֶה גְּאֻלְתּוֹ: וְאִם לֹא־יִגְאָל עַד־מְלֵאת לוֹ שָׁנָה תִּמְיָמָה וְקָם הַבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר־בָּעִיר אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ חֹמָה לְצִמְיַתָּהּ לִקְנָה אֹתוֹ לְדֹרֹתָיו לֹא יֵצֵא בַּיִבֵּל: וּבְתֵי הַחֲצָרִים אֲשֶׁר אֵין־לָהֶם חֹמָה סְבִיב עַל־שְׁנֵיהֶם הָאָרֶץ יִחָשֵׁב גְּאֻלָּה תִּהְיֶה־לוֹ וּבַיִבֵּל יֵצֵא:

And when one sells a house of dwelling in a walled city, its redemption shall be until the end of the year of its sale; for a year shall be its redemption. And if it is not redeemed until a complete year has fully passed, the house in the walled city will stand permanently for the one who purchased it, for his generations; it shall not revert in *yove*/. And the houses of villages which have no wall around them shall be considered as fields of the land; it may be redeemed, and in *yove*/it will revert.

5. Talmud, Erchin 33b

"בית מושב עיר חומה" - שהוקף ולבסוף ישב, ולא שישב ולבסוף הוקף

"A house of dwelling in a walled city" – It was walled and then settled, not where it was settled and then walled.

6. Commentary of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch to Vayikra 25:34

For clearly these laws establish the greatest possible upkeep of an "urban population occupied with agriculture" as the predominant fundamental characteristic type of the Nation. It places an obstacle to the growth of large cities at the expense of the surrounding country which otherwise is so very prevalent... [B]y the way that the houses in the country towns were protected, like the land itself, from permanent sale, and in *yove*/reverted to the original owners or their heirs, provision was made, that, on the whole, town and land remained in connection as family property; so that, as a rule, every field and every vineyard would have as its proprietor a householder in the neighbouring town... Only walled cities were detached from the land. In them house property could be transferred permanently to other owners. There a population could develop which was unconnected with agricultural work, and had to find their means of living by trade and industry. But as this character was limited to just cities which had been walled-in and separated from the land already before its inhabitants had settled in it... and moreover, only if they had been already walled off from the land from the time of Joshua... a city life cutting itself off, and being cut off, from agriculture was altogether rigidly limited to a fixed number of points in the land...

7. Kohelet 5:8

וַיִּתְרוֹן אֶרֶץ בְּכָל הוּא מְלָךְ לְשָׂדֵה נַעֲבָד:

The benefit of a land, anywhere, is in a king who is enslaved to the field.

8. Devarim 28:52

וְהִצַּר לְךָ בְּכָל־שַׁעְרֶיךָ עַד רִדַּת חֲמֹתֶיךָ הַגְּבוּהַת וְהַבְּצֻרוֹת אֲשֶׁר אָתָּה בֹטֵחַ בָּהֶן בְּכָל־אַרְצֶךָ...

And he will besiege you at all of your gates, until the collapse of your tall and reinforced walls, in which you trust all through your land...

9. Midrash Tanchuma, Shelach 6

מנין אתם יודעים כחם הבמחנים אם במבצרים אם במחנים הם שרויים הם גבורים ובוטחים על כחם אם במבצרים חלשים הם ולבם רך.
How will you determine their strength? "Are they in open camps or in fortresses?" If they live in open camps, they are mighty, and they rely upon their strength. If they are in fortresses, they are weak and of soft heart.

10. Zechariah 2:8

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו רֵץ דַּבֵּר אֶל־הַנַּעַר הַלֵּז לֵאמֹר פְּרוֹזוֹת תֵּשֵׁב וְרוּשָׁלַם מְרַב אָדָם וּבְהֵמָה בְּתוֹכָהּ

And the *malach* said to him [another *malach*]: Run, tell this youth [Zechariah] to say: Jerusalem will dwell in open areas, due to the multitudes of people and animals in her.

11. Yehoshua 6:15

...וְרִיעוּ כָל־הָעָם תְּרוּעָה גְדוֹלָה וְנִפְלָה חוֹמַת הָעִיר תִּהְיֶה וְעָלוּ הָעָם אִישׁ בְּגָדוֹ:

...the entire nation will blow a mighty blast, and the wall of the city will fall in its place, and the nation will ascend, each in his place.

Good fences

12. Zechariah 2:9

וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה־לָּהּ נֹאמֵד' הוֹמֵת אֵשׁ סְבִיב וּלְכַבֹּד אֶהְיֶה בְּתוֹכָהּ:

And I will be for her – this is the word of Gd – a surrounding wall of fire, and the honour in her midst.

13. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Propinquity>

The propinquity effect is the tendency for people to form friendships or romantic relationships with those whom they encounter often, forming a bond between subject and friend. Occupational propinquity, based on a person's career, is also commonly seen as a factor in marriage selection. Workplace interactions are frequent and this frequent interaction is often a key indicator as to why close relationships can readily form in this type of environment. In other words, relationships tend to form between those who have a high propinquity. It was first theorized by psychologists Leon Festinger, Stanley Schachter and Kurt Back in what came to be called the *Westgate studies* conducted at MIT (1950).

14. <http://99u.com/articles/16408/how-to-build-a-collaborative-office-space-like-pixar-and-google>

Festinger and his colleagues approached the students some months after they had moved into Westgate West, and asked them to list their three closest friends. The results were fascinating—and they had very little to do with values, beliefs, and attitudes. Forty-two percent of the responses were direct neighbors, so the resident of apartment 7 was quite likely to list the residents of apartments 6 and 8 as friends—and less likely to list the residents of apartments 9 and 10. Even more striking, the lucky residents of apartments 1 and 5 turned out to be the most popular, not because they happened to be kinder or more interesting, but because they happened to live at the bottom of the staircase that their upstairs neighbors were forced to use to reach the building's second floor. Some of these accidental interactions fizzled, of course, but in contrast to the isolated residents of apartments 2 and 4, those in apartments 1 and 5 had a better chance of meeting one or two kindred spirits.

Half a century passed, and the Westgate West message began to infiltrate office culture. Steve Jobs famously redesigned the offices at Pixar, which originally housed computer scientists in one building, animators in a second building, and executives and editors in a third. Jobs recognized that separating these groups, each with its own culture and approach to problem-solving, discouraged them from sharing ideas and solutions. Perhaps the animators could introduce a fresh perspective when the computer scientists became stuck; and maybe the executives would learn more about the nuts and bolts of the business if they occasionally met an animator in the office kitchen, or a computer scientist at the water cooler. Jobs ultimately succeeded in creating a single cavernous office that housed the entire Pixar team, and John Lasseter, Pixar's chief creative officer, declared that he'd "never seen a building that promoted collaboration and creativity as well as this one."

15. Michah 6:8

הַגִּיד לְךָ אָדָם מֵה־טוֹב וּמֵה־ד' דּוֹרֵשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי אִם־עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְאַהֲבַת הַסֶּדֶד וְהִצַּנֵּעַ לְכַת עִם־אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

He has told you, Man, what is good: What does Gd require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk privately with your Gd?

16. Devarim 26:17-18

אֵת־ד' הָאָמַרְתָּ הַיּוֹם לְהִיּוֹת לְךָ לְאֱלֹקִים וּלְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכָּיו וּלְשַׁמֵּר חֻקָּיו וּמִצְוֹתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וּלְשַׁמֵּעַ בְּקוֹלוֹ: וְד' הָאָמִירָךְ הַיּוֹם לְהִיּוֹת לּוֹ לְעַם סֻגְלָה כְּאִשֶּׁר דִּבֶּר־לְךָ וּלְשַׁמֵּר כָּל־מִצְוֹתָיו:

You have caused Gd to speak for you today, to be your Gd; and to walk in His ways and to guard His statutes and commandments and laws, and to listen to His voice. And Gd has caused you to speak for Him today, to be for Him a special nation, as He has told you, and to guard all of His commandments.

17. Bereishit 2:24

עַל כֵּן יַעֲזֹב אִישׁ אֶת אָבִיו וְאֶת אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבֶשֶׁר אֶחָד:

Therefore a man will leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and they will be one flesh.

18. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Beit haBechirah 1:5

ואלו הן הדברים שהן עיקר בבנין הבית, עושין בו קדש וקדש הקדשים ויהיה לפני הקדש מקום אחד והוא הנקרא אולם, ושלתן נקראין היכל, ועושין מחיצה אחרת סביב להיכל רחוקה ממנו כעין קלעי החצר שהיו במדבר, וכל המוקף במחיצה זו שהוא כעין חצר אהל מועד הוא הנקרא עזרה והכל נקרא מקדש.

And these are the essential elements of construction of the House: We make a *Kodesh* and a *Kodesh hakodashim* in it, and there should be a space before the *Kodesh*, called the *Ulam*. The three of them are called *Heichal*. They make another divider around the *Heichal*, distant, like the hangings of the yard in the wilderness. Anything surrounded by this divider, which is like the yard of the *Ohel Moed*, is called *Azarah*. The entire area is called *Mikdash*.

19. *Ahali*, Kinot of Tishah b'Av

אהלי אשר חנית מאז בתאיו, מפה ומפה...

My tent, in which You camped in its *ta'ot*, from here and from here...

20. Yechezkel 40:12

וגבול לפני התארות אמה אחת ואמה אחת גבול מפה והתא שש-אמות מפה ויש אמות מפה:

And there was a border before the *ta'ot*, one *amah*, and a border of one *amah* here, and the *ta*, six *amot* from here and six *amot* from here.

21. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, Commentary to Kinot (Verbal, 1980)

You know what the *ta* is, the *ta* is a small room. The Bais HaMikdash - in Bayis Rishon, in Bayis Sheni... were full of *ta'im*. This was, reading Yechezkel, such a *ta*, such a chamber and such a chamber, and such a room and such a room, *lishkas Kohen Gadol* was one, and so forth, because the *kedushah* is in the *mechitzos*. The more *mechitzos*, the greater was the *kedushah*.

22. Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Chajes, Niddah 34a

גדול הפירוד במה שאדם מונע עצמו לאכול אצל ישראל חבירו, ובפרט עת רעה שאינו נאמן אצלו על המעשרות ועל הטהרות. ולא לחנם אמר ר' עקיבא כשהיה עם הארץ מי יתן לי תלמיד חכם ואנשכנו כחמור והיה עיקר הסיבה לעליית רגל משום לחבר את לבות ישראל זה לזה אבל עדיין לא תושג המטרה אם לא יהיו נאמנים זה לזה לטהרות וראו חז"ל עצות מרחוק להשבית המונע שלא יבא השטן לרקד ביניהם הימים הקדושים הללו לגרום שנאה ופירוד הלבבות. ועשאו כל ישראל חברים בשעת הרגל. ואף עמי הארץ נאמנים אז על יינם ועל שמנם. ומפני זה הרשות לחבר ועם הארץ לאכול יחד לחם ולהיות יחד בסעודת מרעים, ועל זה תגדל האהבה ויתחברו הלבבות זה לזה.

The division caused is great when a person abstains from eating with another Jew, and the moment is especially bad when he is not credible regarding tithes and purity. It was not for naught that R' Akiva said, when he was an *am ha'aretz*, "Who would give me a Torah scholar, and I would bite him like a donkey!"

The essential reason for holiday pilgrimages was to join the hearts of Israel, but that goal would not be achieved if they would not be mutually credible regarding purity.

The sages saw farsighted counsel to eliminate the obstacle, lest the Satan come to dance among them on these sacred days, causing enmity and division of hearts. They made all Israel as *chaverim* in the time of the festival, and even *amei ha'aretz* are credible at that time for their wine and their oil.

Because of this, *chaver* and *am ha'aretz* could eat bread together and join together in a meal of friends, and so increase love and join hearts to each other.

The Two Jerusalems

23. Talmud, Erchin 32b

וירושלים מי מיחלט בה? והתניא, "עשרה דברים נאמרו בירושלים, אין הבית חלוט בה"!!! רב אשי אמר, לאו אמר רב יוסף תרי קדש הווי? ה"נ תרי ירושלים הווי.

But could a house be sold permanently in Jerusalem [as a walled city]? We have learned, "Ten statements were made regarding Jerusalem: A house in it cannot be sold permanently"! Rav Asi said: Didn't Rav Yosef say there were two cities named Kadash? There were also two Jerusalems.