

The following texts will be referred to in our Torah discussion today

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch – 19c. Germany

[The Hebrew word] shachan means both to dwell, and also to be a neighbor. In Jewish thought, to dwell means to be a neighbor. When a Jew takes a place on earth to be his dwelling place he must at the same time concede space and domain to his fellow men for a similar dwelling place.

Rabbi Ezra Batzri – contemporary, Israel

This law [of good neighborship], to our great sorrow is disregarded and many people suffer damage, and even have their lives shortened... and we should sound the alarm on this. Especially responsible are those that are involved in community affairs, who should not be silent on this matter. New factories in particular, should be inspected carefully to know what type of damages they are likely to cause to the community and factories should not be permitted to be established until they are known to be observing the law of distancing of damages properly, and to have all the necessary devices for ensuring that their wastes will not damage the environment.

Robert Frost, “The Mending Wall” – American Poet - 1914

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.' I could say 'Elves' to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me~
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
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."