

Damage by Sight, Privacy and a Prophet with a Closed Eye

Bava Batra 60a

MISHNA: A person may not open an entrance opposite another entrance or a window opposite another window toward a courtyard belonging to partners, so as to ensure that the residents will enjoy a measure of privacy

GEMARA: The Gemara asks: **From where are these matters**, i.e., that one may not open an entrance opposite another entrance, or a window opposite another window, derived? **Rabbi Yohanan says that the verse states: "And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel dwelling tribe by tribe;** and the spirit of God came upon him" (Numbers 24: 2). The Gemara explains: **What** was it that Balaam **saw** that so inspired him? He **saw that the entrances of their tents were not aligned with each other**, ensuring that each family enjoyed a measure of privacy. And he **said:** If this is the case, **these people are worthy of having the Divine Presence rest on them**

בבא בתרא נ"ט ב - מתני' לא יפתח אדם חלונותיו לחצר השותפין

MISHNA: A person may not open his windows, i.e., build an opening in a wall to use as a window, **into a courtyard belonging to partners**, i.e., a courtyard in which he is a partner

שולחן ערוך, חושן משפט קנ"ד: ג'

c) A person shall not open a window to his friend's yard and even one of the partners) in the yard who wants to open a window for him inside his house to the yard is ...prevented by his partner because he is looking at him from it

A person should not open a shop against his friend's door or window because it is always a permanent harm that the masses pass by and do not always look at him, but he sits in his shop all day and looks at his friend's door or window, therefore he should : move away to the point where he cannot see him at all

Seder Rav Amram Gaon 9th Century, Sura, Babylonia

One who enters a synagogue says: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, Thy dwellings, (O Israel!" (Numbers 24: 5

But as for me, in the abundance of Thy lovingkindness will I come into Thy house; I (will bow down toward Thy holy temple in the fear of Thee." (Psalms 5: 8

Maharshal (R. Shlomo Luria, 1510-1573, Poland) Responsa of Maharshal 64

When I come to synagogue I begin with the verse "But as for me, in the abundance of Thy lovingkindness..." (Psalms 5: 8) and skip the first verse "How goodly are thy tents" (Numbers 24: 5) because Balaam said it [first] and he said it as a curse as we find in Sanhedrin 105b, and this is not its proper place

במדבר כ"ד: ב'ו'

(א) וַיֵּשָׂא בָלָעַם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל שֹׁכֵן לְשִׁבְטָיו וְתָהִי עָלָיו רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים: (ג) וַיֵּשָׂא מִשְׁלֹ וַיֹּאמֶר נָאִים בָּלָעַם בְּנֹו בָּעַר וַנֵּאֲמָם הַגִּבֹּר שְׁתֵּם הָעֵין: (ד) נָאִים שְׁמַע אֲמַר־יָאֵל אֲשֶׁר בַּחֲזָה שְׂדֵי יַחֲזִיחַ נִפְל וְגִלְוֵי עֵינָיִם: (ה) מִה־טֹּבוֹ אֶהְלִיךְ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁפָּנְתֶּיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל: (ו) בְּנִחָלִים נָטְיוֹ כְּגִנֹּת עָלֵי נַהֲר כְּאַהֲלִים נָטַע ה' בְּאַרְזֵים עָלֵי־מִים:

As Balaam looked up and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the spirit of God came upon him. Taking up his theme, he said: Word of Balaam son of Beor, Word of the man whose eye is true, Word of one who hears God's speech, who beholds visions : from the Almighty, Prostrate, but with eyes unveiled

!How fair are your tents, O Jacob, Your dwellings, O Israel

Rashi

HOW GOODLY ARE THY TENTS — He said this because he saw that the מה טובו אהליך (5)

Another explanation, the tent of Shiloh and the Temple when these flourished, in that sacrifices were offered therein to alone for you

שני לוחות הברית, תורה שבכתב, בלק, נר מצוה ב'

אין בפרשה זו מצוה ממצות תרי"ג, מכל מקום כתיב בה (במדבר כד, ה) מה טובו אהליך יעקב משכנותיך ישראל, ואמרו רז"ל (הובא ברש"י במדבר כד, ה) מה טובו אהליך בישובן, משכנותיך ישראל אפילו בחורבן. ותנן במסכת מגילה פרק בני העיר (כח, א) שנוהגין בהן כבוד בחורבן כמו בישובן. והאריכו שם בגמרא:

משנה אבות א': ה'

(ה) יוסי בן יוחנן איש ירושלים אומר, יהי ביתך פתוח לרוחה, ויהיו עניים בְּנֵי בֵיתְךָ...

Pirkei Avot 1: 5

Yose ben Yochanan, man of Jerusalem, says, "May your home be open wide, may (5) ...the poor be members of your household