

Elijah Blue Prints

A resident of a courtyard community may be compelled by the other residents to contribute to the building of a gate house and a door for the courtyard.

This would seem to show that a gate house is an improvement. Yet, how can this be? After all, there was a certain pious man with whom Elijah used to converse regularly until that man built a gate house, after which Elijah did not come to speak with him anymore! In light of this, a gate house could not be an improvement!

There is no contradiction here. A gate house built within the courtyard's perimeter would be an improvement. Such a gate house would make it possible for a poor man to make himself heard within. But because this man built a gate house that protruded from the courtyard, Elijah refused to come anymore.

If you like, I can say that in both cases the gate house was built protruding from the courtyard and still there is no difficulty. One would not be an improvement while the other would be an improvement. In the one case—of which Elijah disapproved—there was a door and in the other there was no door, just a vestibule that allowed entrance into the waiting area from the outside.

Or again we may suppose that in both cases there was a door and still there is no difficulty in determining why Elijah would come or chose not to come. In one case there was a latch and in the other case there was no latch.

Or again I may say that in both cases there is a latch and still there is no difficulty because in the one case the latch was inside the door and in the other case it was outside.

(Babylonian Talmud Baba Batra 7b)