

Loving the Neighbor/Loving the Stranger

– Rabbi David Seidenberg, neohasid.org

I. Introduction and the main question:

Why are there two separate commands to love in Leviticus 19, one to love the friend and one to love the stranger?

1. Lev 19:18: And you shall show love to your companion/friend/fellow/*rei'eh* רעה (usually translated: 'neighbor') like yourself/ *v'ahavta l'rei'ekha kamokha*.
2. Lev 19:34: Like a native/*ezrach* from among you shall the **stranger/hager/** גר who sojourns with you / *hagar itchem* be for you, and you shall show love to him as yourself/*kamokha*; for **you were strangers in the land of Egypt**.

The Torah seems to ask us to look inside to find what we have in common with the stranger whom we don't know: we know what it is like to feel like a stranger. Reflecting on that can enable us to find within ourselves common ground with almost any person. The Torah requires us to go one level of reflection deeper than with the neighbor, beyond how we feel about ourselves, beyond what might be instinctual feelings, to find the level at which we are all the same.

Part II details all the verses in Torah that speak about the stranger. We say there are 36 but there are many more than that, as well as related verses about the treatment of slaves.

Most of the commandments assume we are living in a society like ancient Israel, where the Israelites (i.e., the Jewish people) are the "native-born" and non-Jews are strangers. The commandment to love the stranger is harder to apply when one sees oneself as a stranger in "someone else's" society. Israel today, where so many people who are not Jewish are native-born Palestinians, presents a different problem. The Torah has a possible solution to that problem: we are all strangers, even when we think we are at home. (Lev. 25:23, #14)

Part III brings rabbinic texts to enlighten this inquiry. III.A is a poignant text from Ramban. III.B focuses on a debate in rabbinic texts about whether "loving your fellow" or the concept of God's image is the greatest humanitarian principle in Torah. III.C includes texts about imitating God. Earlier texts see imitating God as incumbent upon Jews, whereas later rabbinic literature see it as connected to God's image and hence incumbent on all human beings. Part IV includes later medieval and modern texts on refugees with links to further study. All texts are numbered consecutively to make them easy to reference in a group setting.

Note: All the material in Part III, sections B and C, is quoted from *Kabbalah and Ecology: God's Image in the More-Than-Human World*, by Rabbi David Seidenberg (Cambridge, 2015), see kabbalahandecology.com.

II. All the Torah laws and scriptural passages about the stranger

Is the stranger the same as the refugee or immigrant? Different passages can be read different ways. But any verse that talks about caring for the stranger because "you were a stranger in Egypt" necessarily talks about a *ger toshav* (settled stranger) or immigrant – which would most often also include refugees. See Exod 22, Exod 23, Lev 19, and Deut 10 (#3-6). Note also #20, Deut 23:16-17, which is explicitly about a refugee slave who seeks asylum.

- A. Longer Torah passages about loving and protecting the stranger (Note: I have retranslated most of these verses. Edit according to your own interpretation.)
3. Exod 22:21-25 – stranger's rights alongside rights of the poor, orphan, widow (see also #4, #5, #11 below, and Psalm 146:9)

21 You shall not mistreat/tonah a stranger or oppress him/tilchatzenu, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

22 You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. 23 If afflicting you do afflict him, when he does cry out to Me, listening I will surely hear his cry; 24 and My anger will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children orphans.

25 If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, you are not to act as a creditor to him; you shall not charge him interest.

26 If you ever take your fellow's cloak / *salmat rei'ekha* as a pledge, you will return it to him before the sun setting, 27 for it is his/her only covering; it is his cloak for his skin. What shall he sleep in? And it will be that he will cry out to Me, and I will listen, for I am gracious.

4. Exod 23:2-12 – You know the soul of the stranger, for you were strangers

2 You shall not be after a majority to do evil, and you shall not respond concerning a lawsuit/dispute to stretch after a majority to stretch/distort [justice]. 3 You shall not glorify a poor person/*dal* in his dispute.

4 When you come upon your enemy's bull or his donkey straying, returning you shall surely return it to him. 5 When you see your enemy's donkey crouching pinned under its burden, and would stop from helping him – helping you shall surely help, with him.

6 You shall not stretch the judgment of your poor person/*evyonkha* in his dispute. 7 Stay far from a false matter, and an innocent or a righteous person you must not kill, for I will not make righteous the wicked. 8 A bribe you shall not take, for bribes will blind the sighted and undermine words of the righteous.

9 And you shall not oppress/tilchatz a stranger – and you knew the soul/nefesh of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

10 Six years you may sow your land and gather in her produce. 11 But in the seventh [year] you shall release her and let it go; and the poor of your people

shall eat, and what they leave over, the beasts of the field shall eat. So shall you do to your vineyard [and] to your olive [grove].

12 Six days you may do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest, in order that your ox and your donkey shall rest, and your maidservant's son and **the stranger shall be re-ensouled/vayinafeish.**

5. Lev 19:9-34 – Love your neighbor/the stranger, “Holiness Code”

9 When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not fully reap the corner of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest.

10 And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you collect the [fallen] individual grapes of your vineyard; **you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger.** I am *YHVH*, your God.

11 You shall not steal. You shall not deny falsely. You shall not lie, one man to his fellow. 12 You shall not swear falsely by My Name, thereby profaning the Name of your God. I am *YHVH*.

13 **You shall not oppress your neighbor/fellow.** You shall not rob. The hired worker's wage shall not remain with you overnight until morning. 14 You shall not curse a deaf person. You shall not place a stumbling block before a blind person, and you shall fear your God. I am *YHVH*. 15 You shall commit no injustice in judgment; you shall not favor a poor person or respect a great man; you shall judge your fellow with righteousness. 16 You shall not go around as a gossip amidst your people. **You shall not stand upon/over your fellow's blood.** I am *YHVH*.

17 You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your fellow/*amitekha*, and not bear a sin on his account. 18 You shall not take revenge and not bear a grudge against the descendants of your people; **and you shall love your fellow as yourself /*kamokha*.** I am *YHVH*.

...

33 **And when a stranger would sojourn with you in your land, you shall not mistreat/*tonu* him.**

34 **Like a native from among you shall the stranger who sojourns with you be for you, and you shall show love to him as yourself /*kamokha*; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.** I am *YHVH*, your God.

6. Deut 10:12-20 – Walk in God's ways (Note: This passage leads into the second paragraph of the *Sh'ma* at Deut 11:13, *V'hayah im shamo`a*)

12 Now, Israel, what does *YHVH* your God require from you, but to fear *YHVH* your God, to walk in all His ways and love the One, and to serve *YHVH* your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep *YHVH*'s commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? 14 Behold, to *YHVH* your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. 15 Yet on your ancestors did *YHVH* set His affection to love them, and the One chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day. 16 So circumcise your heart, and

stiffen your neck no longer. 17 For *YHVH* your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe.

18 The One does justice for the orphan and the widow, and **loves the stranger by giving him bread and clothing / *lechem v'simlah*.**

19 **So you will love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.**

20 You shall fear *YHVH* your God; you shall serve the One and cleave to the One, and you shall swear by His name. 21 He is your praise and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen. 22 Your ancestors went down to Egypt with seventy persons/souls, and now *YHVH* your God has made you like the stars of heaven for number. 11:1 And you shall love *YHVH* your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His just-rules/*mishpatav*, and His commandments all the days.

7. Deut 16:11-14 – Shavuot and Sukkot, celebrate with the stranger (see also celebration in 2Chron 30:25), and remember you were a slave

11 And rejoice before *YHVH* your God at the place the One will choose as a dwelling for the Name – you and your son and your daughter, and your male servant and your female servant, and the Levite who is in your gates, and the **stranger**, and the orphan and the widow who is within you, in the place that *YHVH* your God will choose... 12 **And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt**, and you will guard and do these statutes....

14 Rejoice in your festival – you and your (children and servants), and the Levite and the **stranger** and the orphan and the widow in your gates.

8. Deut 24:14-22 – Remember that you were a slave

14 You shall not oppress/*ta'ashok* a hired worker who is poor and needy, from your brothers or from **your stranger** that is in your land, in your gates...

17 You shall not stretch the justice [due] a **stranger** [or] an orphan, and you shall not impound for collateral a widow's garment.

18 **And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and that *YHVH* your God redeemed you from there; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing.**

19 When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the **stranger**, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that *YHVH* your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 When you beat your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the **stranger**, for the orphan, and for the widow. 21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not go over it again; it shall be for the **stranger**, for the orphan, and for the widow. 22 **And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing.**

9. Deut 26:11-13 – *Bikurim*, declaration of the first fruits

11 Then you shall rejoice in all the good *YHVH* your God has given to you, and to your house, you and the Levite and the **stranger who is within/among you** / *halevi v'hager asher b'kirbekha*

12 When you have finished tithing the tenth of your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the **stranger**, to the orphan and to the widow, and they will eat in your gates and be satisfied.

13 You shall say before the *YHVH* your God, “I have removed the sacred from my house, and I have given it to the Levite and to the **stranger**, to the orphan and to the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I did not veer from Your commandments and I did not forget.”

10. See also main passage of the Haggadah, Deut. 26:5-8, which uses the term *vayagar*. You can download a haggadah highlighting this passage: neohasid.org/zman/pesach/InnerSeder/

11. Jeremiah 7:5-7 – living securely in the land depends on treatment of stranger, and on justice in general (also Ezek 22:7, 22:29, Zech 7:10, Psalm 94:6):

For if you make good your ways... if you do **justice** between a person and his **fellow; stranger**, orphan and widow **you will not oppress**/*ta'ashoku*, and innocent blood not spill...and after other gods not walk to harm yourselves – I will make you dwell in this place...from forever and until forever.

B. Shorter passages about the stranger

12. Exod 20:7-10 – the stranger must rest on Shabbat

Remember the day of shabbat to make it holy. Six days you will work and do all your craft. And the seventh day is a shabbat for *YHVH* your God; you will not do any work, you and your [children and servants] and your animal and **your stranger in your gates**.

13. Lev 23:22 – harvest

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the **stranger living-as-a-stranger (sojourning) among you** / *hager hagar b'tokham*. I am *YHVH* your God.

14. Lev 25:23 – you (we) are all strangers
(compare also 1Chron 29:15, Psalm 39:13, 119:19, and #26 below)

The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is Mine and you are **strangers/gerim** and (temporary) **settlers/toshavim** with Me.

15. Lev 25:35 – support a brother as well as you would support a stranger

If your brother is made low and his hand slips with you, then you will strengthen him – [as] a **stranger and settler/ger v'toshav** he will live with you.

16. Deut 1:16 – connection to stranger (“his stranger”) and brother; justice

And I commanded your judges at that time, "Listen [to disputes] between brothers and judge justice/*tsedek*, [whether the case is] between a person and his brother or **his stranger**."

17. Deut 5:14 – the sabbath

And the seventh day is a sabbath to *YHVH* your God. You shall not do any work, you and your son and your daughter, and your male servant and your female servant, and your ox, and your donkey and any animal of yours, and **your stranger that is in your gates**, in order that your male servant and your female servant may rest **as you yourself** (do) /*kamokha*.

18. Deut 14:28-29 – third year tithe

At the end of three years you will bring out all the tithe of your produce...and the Levite may come, for he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the **stranger** and the orphan and the widow **in your gates**, and they will eat and be satisfied, so that *YHVH* your God may bless you in all the work of your hand that you will do.

19. Deut 23:3-7 – do not despise an Egyptian; sin of not feeding the stranger

3 Moav and Ammon will not come into the *kahal* of *YHVH*... forever 4 because they did not come forward to you with bread and water on your way when you came out of Egypt ... 7 Do not despise an Edomite, for he is your brother. Do not despise an Egyptian, **for you were a stranger in his land**.

20. Deut 23:16-17 – refugee/fleeing servant has a right to live anywhere

16 **You shall not detain-to-deliver/tasgir a slave/servant unto his lords/masters** when he has been rescued from his master. 17 With you **he will dwell in your midst, in the place where he chooses** in one of your gates **where it is good for him. Do not mistreat him /tonenu**.

21. Deut 27:19 – the blessings and curses include justice for the stranger

“Cursed is the one who bends **justice of the stranger**, the orphan or the widow.” And all the people will say, “Amen!”

22. Deut 29:10-11 – *Atem nitsavim*: the stranger is included in revelation

You are standing together today...your children and your wives, and **your stranger who is inside your camps**, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water.

23. Deut 31:12 – *Hak'hel* – re-enacting revelation after the *Shmitah* year

Assemble the people – men, women and children, and **your stranger who is in your gates**, so that they will listen and so they will learn...

24. Deut 28:43-44 – this may be the only negative biblical statement about the *ger*

15 And it will be, if you do not listen to the voice of *YHVH* your God... 43 The **stranger who is in your midst** shall rise above you higher and higher, and you will go down lower and lower. 44 He shall lend to you, and you will not lend to him; he will become the head, and you will become the tail.

25. Lev 25:47-50 (not quoted) may also be understood as negative. It describes what happens if a poor person sells her or himself to a *ger*. His redemption is enjoined on “one of his brothers” but if he is not redeemed, Jubilee frees him.

C. *Ger toshav* (refugee/immigrant) v. *ger tzedek* (convert): which verses apply to which category?

26. In Genesis, and in some other verses, *ger* can only mean refugee/immigrant:

Gen 15:3: Avram is told “your seed will be a stranger in a land not theirs”

Gen 23:4: Avraham calls himself a *ger v'toshav* among the Canaanites

Exod 2:22: Moshe also describes himself as a *ger*

Jeremiah 14:8: God is disempowered like a *ger*

27. In these verses, *ger* probably means immigrant/refugee:

Exod 12:48-49: If a *ger* wants to eat the *Pesach* he must be circumcised, so not all *gerim* are circumcised

Lev 24:22: *k'ger k'ezrach* – laws applied to one who kills a person or animal

Deut 14:21: *nveilah*/animal that dies without ritual slaughter may be given to *ger* and *nokhri*

Num 15:14-16: offering brought for you and for the stranger / *lakhem v'lager*

Job 31:32: opening the door to the *ger*

Malachi 3:5 sin of turning away the *ger*

[1Chron 22:2, 2Chron 2:16-17: *gerim* used for labor by Solomon]

28. In these verses, *ger* probably equals convert:

Exod 12:19: *ger* must remove leaven or “will be cut off from congregation”

Lev 16:29: fasting on Yom Kippur

Lev 17:8-12: *ger* or Israelite sacrificing outside of sacred tent or eating blood “cut off from his people” – stranger by converting makes Israelites into their own people? (Note however all humanity forbidden to eat blood in Gen 9)

Lev 17:15: *treifah* – doesn't this contradict Deut 14:21?

Lev 18:26: *to'eivot* – usually understood to be culture-specific prohibitions

Num 9:4: who must observe *Pesach*

Num 9:14: one law *lakhem v'lager ul'ezrach ha'aretz*

Num 15:30: soul cut off from her people if one acts *b'yad ramah* / “with a

high hand” (= sinning with the intention to do it because it is a sin)

Num 19:20: ashes of the *parah adumah* / red heifer

Num 35:15: *ir miklat* / city of refuge

Isa 14:1: *gerim* will join themselves to redeemed Israel

Ezek 47:21-23: *gerim* receive land according to tribe where they reside

29. In these verses, the meaning of stranger is ambiguous:

Exod 12:49: *k'ger k'ezrach* – one law for the native born and the stranger

Lev 17:13: *kisui dam* / command to bury the blood of a wild animal

Lev 20:2: none may pass their children through the fire for Molekh

Lev 22:18-19: an offering without blemish

Lev 24:16: the punishment for blasphemy

Num 15:26: Yom Kippur atones for *kol adat b'nei Yisrael v'hager hagar*

b'tokham / all the children of Israel and the stranger living as a stranger

among them (note: this is the verse used in Kol Nidrei)

Num 15:29: the offering for an error

Josh 8:33: *kager ka'ezrach* – affirmation of covenant on the mountains

30. Three other words relate to foreigner or outsider: *nokhri* נוכרי | *zar* זר | *oyeiv* אויב. *Nokhri* is someone with standing allegiance to another country/nation. *Zar* can mean someone outside the priesthood not allowed to access sacred precincts or sacrifices. *Oyeiv* means enemy – either fellow Israelite, whom one must help (#4), or foreigner. *Zar* and *nokhri* can both mean one who tempts an Israelite to disloyalty (Ezra 10, Proverbs 5). Three other words found above are similar to neighbor: *amit* עמית fellow | *ach* אח brother | *ezrach* אזרח native-born/citizen.

31. The Tanakh's most famous stranger is Ruth, and the book of Ruth is all about her acceptance into Israelite society. Because she is the model for conversion, her example is not necessarily related to other refugees. But in the book of Ruth, she is never called *ger*. Rather, in 2:10, she calls herself *nokhriyah*, perhaps as an expression of humility, even though she has given up her allegiance to Moab.

III. Some rabbinic texts about the stranger and the neighbor

A. Nachmanides (Ramban), commentary to Exod 22:21, #3:

The correct interpretation in my eyes is that the One is saying: Do not wrong a stranger or oppress him, thinking as you might that none can deliver him out of your hand; for you know that you were strangers in the land of Egypt and I saw the oppression with which Egypt oppressed you, and I did vengeance against them, because I behold the tears of such who are oppressed and have no comforter, and power is in the hand of their oppressors, and I deliver every human being from the one that is stronger than him. Likewise you shall not afflict the widow and the orphan for I will hear their cry, for all these people do not rely upon themselves and on me they must rely. And in another verse it adds a reason: “You would know the soul (feelings) of a stranger, because you were strangers in

the land of Egypt.” (#4) That is to say, you know that every stranger’s soul is depressed, and he sighs and cries out, and his eyes are always towards God, and the One will have mercy on him even as the One had mercy on you, as it is written, “and the children of Israel groaned from the enslavement, and they cried out, and their plea rose up to God from the enslavement” (Exod 2:23), that is to say, the One had mercy on them, not because of their merit but only because of the enslavement. (Hebrew: http://www.sefaria.org/Ramban_on_Exodus.22.20)

B. “Love your fellow” and “God’s image” as contrasting/complementary principles

The following texts are different versions of a debate about whether the most important principle in the Torah is “Love your fellow/neighbor” (#5) or “God’s image”. The principle of God’s image can be understood as a proxy for “love the stranger”: since God’s image implies a universal obligation to respect all human beings, it must include the stranger.

What the debate was about is not explicit in earlier texts. Later commentaries point out that “God’s image” includes all human beings, whereas “neighbor” may include only fellow Jews. Similarly, the ability to fulfill the command to “love as yourself” could depend on how a person subjectively feels about themselves, whereas God’s image found in all human beings is independent of one’s personal feelings.

32. R’ Akiva says: “And you will love your fellow/friend (usually trans.: ‘neighbor’) like yourself” (Lev 19:18)—this is a great principle in the Torah. Ben Azai says: “This is the book of Adam’s generations [. . . in Elohim’s (God’s) likeness God made him]” (Gen 5:1)—this is a greater principle than this (than “love your fellow”). (*Torat Kohanim, Sifra Kedoshim* 4:12, 42b)
33. Said R’ Akiva: They said a great principle in the Torah: “And you will love your fellow like yourself”. And Ben Azai added: And it said something greater than this, and so it’s written: “in Elohim’s image did God make the human” (Gen 9:6). (David Darshan’s version, quoted in his 16th cent. commentary on *Talmud Yerushalmi Nedarim* 9:4, 41b)
34. R’ Akiva said: “And you will love your fellow like yourself”—this is a great principle in the Torah. Ben Azai said: “This is the book of Adam’s generations”—this is a greater principle in the Torah, for you shouldn’t say: Since I was despised, let my friend be despised. Said R’ Tanchuma: If you did so (despise your friend), know whom you despise, [for] “in Elohim’s likeness God made him”. (*Genesis Rabbah* 24:7 – according to Theodor’s reconstruction)
35. All [people] are the generations of Adam, [so] also all of us are in one image, in one seal/*chotam*, in one form. We are also sealed/stamped with the likeness of Elohim, and we need to treat another with the honor and dignity/*silsul* of Elohim, and not shame our fellow. (*Derekh Hakodesh*, Vidal Tsarfati, d.1619, Morocco)

C. Walking in God’s ways or *imitatio Dei*

Deut. 10:18-19 (#6) says, “The One does justice for the orphan and the widow, and loves the stranger by giving him bread and clothing. So you will love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” This verse requires us to care for strangers as/because God does. So the imperative to walk in God’s ways, or *imitatio Dei*, is related to the question of the stranger. More than this, the stranger should be treated as equal to friend and neighbor, because “you are all strangers” (Lev 25:23, #14). That includes the immigrant, who is like Avram, and the refugee, as equal to ourselves.

Is *imitatio Dei*/imitating God a specifically Jewish task or a human task? When we take care of the stranger, do we do so as Jews or human beings first? Most rabbinic discussions about the idea of “walking in God’s ways” cite verses that apply only to Abraham or Israel: Gen 17:1 (“Walk before me and be whole”), Lev 19:2, 20:26 (“Become holy for I am holy”), Deut 10:12 (“What does *YHVH* your God require. . .but to walk in all His ways and love the One”), Deut 13:5 (“After *YHVH* your God you will walk”), Micah 6:8 (“Walk humbly with your God”) – see #36, 37. Some later texts like #38 focus on *tselem*, God’s image, as the basis for *imitatio Dei*, which makes this an imperative that falls upon all humanity.

36. [This is my God] and I will glorify Him / *V’anveyhu*” (Exod 15 :2). Abba Shaul says: [This means] “I will be like Him—just as the One is merciful and gracious, so you be merciful and gracious.” (*Mekhilta Shirah* 3)
37. Why is it written: “After *YHVH* your God you will walk”?—And would it be possible for a human to walk after the Shekhinah, and wasn’t it already said, “For *YHVH* your God is a consuming fire” (Deut 4:24)? Rather [it means] to walk after the Holy One’s qualities/*midot*. Just as the One clothes the naked. . .so should you clothe the naked; just as the Holy One visits the sick. . .so should you visit the sick; . . .so should you comfort mourners; . . .so should you bury the dead. (*Talmud Bavli Sotah* 14a)
38. “And *YHVH* Elohim said: Here, the human [is/was like one from us]” [Gen 3:22]—This is what scripture said: “The God made the human virtuous/straight/*yashar*” [Eccl 7:29]. The Holy One, who is called righteous and virtuous / *tsadik v’yashar*, did not create the human in His image except in order that he should be *tsadik v’yashar* like Him. (*Tanchuma Berei’shit* 7)
- IV. More texts and resources, many from selected Sefaria source sheets (Note: only sources in which *ger* can mean immigrant/refugee are included):
39. Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, 3:39: Compassion is also the object of the law, “You will not deliver a slave unto his master. . .” (Deut. 23:15,

- #20), but it teaches besides a very useful lesson, namely, that we must always practise this virtue, help and protect those who seek our help, and not deliver them unto those from whom they flee; and it is not sufficient to give assistance to those who are in need of our help; we must look after their interests, be kind to them, and not hurt their feeling by words. Thus the Law says: “With you he will dwell in your midst, in the place where he chooses in one of your gates where it is good for him.” ~ “Sanctuary”, Cathy Schechter, <https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/37374>
40. Rashbam on Exodus 22:20, #3: “For you were strangers (in Egypt)—due to your personal experience of such a status, you, better than anyone else, know that seeing that the oppression of strangers is a great wrong, the punishment for violating such a commandment is equally harsh. ~ “Immigration in the Haggadah and Halacha”, David Siff, <https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/105276>
41. Shmuel David Luzzato on Leviticus 19:34, #5: “Love [the stranger] as yourself”—The nations of the ancient world would only love their own people, and defrauding foreigners/*nokhrim* was not abominable in their eyes. Therefore, it says here, “Love him like yourself”—act towards him as you would want other people to act toward you if you were a stranger/*ger*. This is in accord with...“Love your neighbor as yourself.” ~ “Our Responsibility for Refugees”, Josh Franklin, <https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/30523>
42. *Eshkol Ma'amarim*: “And there was thick darkness throughout all the land of Egypt, for three days”—If a person does not see his fellow, or does not want to see him, there is darkness in the world. (*ibid.*, in Franklin)
43. Shimshon Rafael Hirsch on Exod 22:20, #3: “You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” Here it says simply and absolutely, “for you were strangers,” your whole misfortune in Egypt was that you were strangers there. As such, according to the views of other nations, you had no right to be there, having no claim to rights of settlement, home, or property. Accordingly, you had no rights in appeal against unfair or unjust treatment. As aliens you were without any rights in Egypt, out of that grew all of your bondage and oppression, your slavery and wretchedness. Therefore beware, so runs the warning, from making rights in your own State conditional on anything other than on that simple humanity which every human being as such bears within. With any limitation in these human rights the gate is opened to the whole horror of Egyptian mishandling of human beings. (translated by Uri L’Tzedek from German)
44. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Faith in the Future*, p.78: The Hebrew Bible contains the great command, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18, #5), and this has often been taken as the basis of biblical morality. But it is not: it is only part of it. The Jewish sages noted that on only one occasion

does the Hebrew Bible command us to love our neighbour, but in thirty-seven places it commands us to love the stranger. Our neighbour is one we love because he is like ourselves. The stranger is one we are taught to love precisely because he is not like ourselves.

45. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Loving the Stranger*: You know the heart of the stranger because you were once a stranger in the land of Egypt. If you are human, so is he. If he is less than human, so are you. You must fight the hatred in your heart as I once fought the greatest ruler and the strongest empire in the ancient world on your behalf. I made you into the world’s archetypal strangers so that you would fight for the rights of strangers – for your own and those of others, wherever they are, whoever they are, whatever the color of their skin or the nature of their culture, because though they are not in your image – says G-d – they are nonetheless in Mine. There is only one reply strong enough to answer the question: Why should I not hate the stranger? Because the stranger is me. ~ <http://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation-5768-mishpatim-loving-the-stranger/>
46. From “The land of strangers: Understanding Rashi’s first comment on the Torah”, R. David Seidenberg:
The Torah...insists on describing the people of Israel as being non-indigenous, not rooted in the land: Abraham came from Mesopotamia; the tribes invaded from Egypt.... The ancient Hebrews must be indigenous. Yet the Torah insists otherwise. Why? A clue may be found in the repeated laws about protecting strangers or foreigners, most especially in the verse: “Like a native from among you, so the stranger who sojourns with you shall be for you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Lev 19:34, #5). Another clue is God’s assertion in the laws of Shmita and Yovel, the Sabbatical and Jubilee year, that even after the Israelites take possession of the holy land, still “you all are strangers and sojourners with Me” (Lev 25:23, #14). If one major theme of Torah is the treatment of the stranger, another is the treatment of the land – and both are grounded in seeing ourselves as strangers.
~ <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-land-of-strangers/>
47. For modern quotes from Emma Lazarus, or about the voyage of the St. Louis, etc., see for example <https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/74691>
48. *Yalkut Shimoni* 13:2 (see also *Tanchuma Pekudei* 3:17): The One began to gather the dirt (of the first human) from the four corners of the world - red, black, white, green... Why from the four directions of the earth? So that if one comes from east to west and reaches the end (of his life) to separate from the world, the land won’t say, “The dirt of your body is not from me. Return to the place you were created.” Rather, every place that a person walks, from there her body (was created) and to there she (may) return.