Loving the Neighbor/Loving the Stranger

~ Rabbi David Seidenberg, neohasid.org, 2021

I. Introduction, outline, 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 (usually: ‘love your neighbor’) like yourselves; v’ahavta l’rei ‘ekha kamokha.

2. Lev 19:34: Like a native/ezrach/הגר who sojourns with you / hager 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 every verse in Torah that speaks about the stranger. We say there are 36 verses, but there are many more than that, as well as related verses about the treatment of slaves.

Most of these commandments assume we are living in a society like ancient Israel, where the Israelites (i.e., the Jewish people) are the “a-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)

Is the stranger the same as the refugee or immigrant? 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, 23, Lev 19, Deut 10, #3-6. Deut 23:16-17, #20, is explicitly about a refugee seeking asylum. Some verses are understood to be talking about the ger tzedek or convert.

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 humanistic 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

A. Longer Torah passages about loving and protecting the stranger (translations adapted)

3. Exod 22:20-26 – stranger’s rights alongside rights of the poor, orphan, widow (see also #4, #5, #11 below, and Psalm 146:9)

20 You shall not mistreat/toneh a stranger and you shall not oppress him/tilchatzenu, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

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

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

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 till the land, and if you gather in its produce.

B. Other Torah laws and passages about the stranger

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

2 You shall not be [going] after many for 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/evyonka 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 have known the soul/nefsesh of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

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

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, your God.
12 You shall not go around as a hired worker who is poor and needy, from your God has made you and now you are about to go as a native from among you. And when a stranger would sojourn with you in your land, you shall not mistreat/toum him.
13 You shall not oppress your neighbor/fellow. You shall not rob. The hired worker's wage will 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 judge your fellow with righteousness. You shall not go around as a gossip amidst your people. You shall not stand upon/over your fellow’s blood. I am YHVH.
15 You shall not hate your brother/achikha in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your fellow/amitekha, and not bear a sin on his account. You shall not take revenge and not bear a grudge against the descendants of your people; and you shall love/show love to your fellow as yourself/kamokha. I am YHVH….
16 And when a stranger would sojourn with you in your land, you shall not oppress/toum him.
17 You shall not be for the stranger who sojourns with you for 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…
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 h"ave forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it will 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 will 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 will be for the stranger, for the orphan, and for the widow. 22 And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing.

6. Deut 10:12-20 – Walk in God’s ways (Note: This passage leads page right before 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.
23:1 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….
13 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/achekha or from your stranger that is in your land, in your gates…
15 You shall not bend/distort justice [for] an orphan stranger / stranger [or] orphan/ger yatom, and you shall not take in pledge a widow’s garment.
16 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.
17 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 will 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 will be for the stranger, for the orphan, and for the widow. 21. And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing.

neohasid.org/pdf/NeighborandStranger8.3.pdf – Loving the Neighbor/Loving the Stranger – texts on refugees and our obligations to protect them ~ p.2
9. Deut 26:11-13 – Bikurim, declaration of the first fruits
   11 And 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

10. Jeremiah 7:5-7 – living securely in the land depends on treatment of stranger, and
   on justice in general (also Ezek 22:7, 15, 29-30, Zech 7:9-14):
   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.

11. Exodus 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.

12. 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 (sojourn) among you / hager hagar
   b‘tokham. I am YHVH your God.

13. Lev 25:6-7 – the Sabbatical harvest is shared by everyone including the settler-
   stranger. (All the fence gates are also kept open to include wild animals.)
   The shabbat [produce] of the land (in the Sabbatical year) will be for you and for
   your male and female servant and for your hired worker and for your migrant
   settler living-as-a-stranger / hagarim with you; and for your animal and the wild
   animal living in your land – all of her produce will be for eating.

14. Lev 25:6-7 – 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/toshevim with Me.

15. Lev 25:23 – you (we) are all strangers
   and (temporary) settlers/toshevim with Me.

16. Deut 23:1-5 – parallel between 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 10:14 – 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 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 23:27-19 – 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!”

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23. 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.

24. Deut 31:12 – Hak’hel – re-enacting revelation after the Shmitah year
Assemble the people – men, women and children, and you stranger who is in your gates, so that they will listen and so they will learn…

C. Possibly negative statements about the ger

25. Lev 25:45 – the settler-stranger may be acquired as a slave/servant – this seems to contradict other laws about how to treat the stranger) – compare with #18, #27
And even from the children of the migrant settlers living-as-a-stranger/hagarim with you, from them you may acquire, and from their families that are with you, which they bore in your land, and they will be yours for a possession.

26. Lev 25:47-50 (not quoted) 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.

27. Deut 28:43-44 – this is the only clearly negative verse (compare #25,26)
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 will rise above you higher and higher, and you will go down lower and lower. 44 He will lend to you, and you will not lend to him; he will become the head, and you will become the tail.

D. Ger toshav (refugee/immigrant) v. ger tsedek (convert)

28. 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’toshash among the Canaanites
Exod 2:22: Moshe also describes himself as a ger
Jeremiah 14:8: God is disempowered like a ger

29. In these verses, ger probably means immigrant/refugee:
Exod 12:48-49: A ger wants to eat the Pesach must be circumcised, so it must be the case that 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: n’veilah (animal that died 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]

30. 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 away from sacred tent or eating blood will be “cut off from his people” (note that all humanity forbidden to eat blood in Gen 9)
Lev 17:15: treifah – can be given to ger – does this contradict Deut 14:21?
Lev 18:26: to eivov – 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

31. 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 taken from ger or beit Yisrael
Lev 24:16: the punishment for blasphemy, k’ger k’ezrach
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: offering for error: “one law” for ezrach or hager hagar b’tokham”
Josh 8:33: kager ka’ezrach – affirmation of covenant on the mountains
Psalm 94:6: the wicked kill the ger and slay orphans

32. Three other words relate to foreigner or outsider: nokhri, zar and oyeiv.
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, prokha fellow (#8) | ach ha’brother (#5, 8, 15, 16, 19) | ezrach harav native-born/citizen (always on equality between stranger and ezrach, #2, 27-29).

33. 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 beheld 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.22.22)

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

The following texts describe a debate about whether the most important principle in the Torah is “Love your fellow/neighbor” (#5) or “God’s image”. What the debate was about is not explicit in earlier texts. Later commentaries point out that the Torah is “Love your fellow like yourself” (Exod 20:18). Said R’ Tanchum: 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)

37. 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/silsil 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.

38. [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)

39. 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)

40. “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?)

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D. More midrash and commentaries, many selected from Sefaria source sheets
   (Note: only sources in which ger can mean immigrant/refugee are included):

41. Maimonides, Guide for the Perplexed, 3:39: Compassion is the object of the law, “You will not deliver a slave unto his master…” (Deut. 23:15, #20. It teaches a great lesson, namely, that we must always practice this virtue, to 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 making them whole, and be good to them, and not hurt their feelings (heart) by words. Thus the One says: “With you he will dwell in your midst…wherever it is good for him…” ~ “Sanctuary”, Cathy Schechter, https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/37374

42. 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

43. 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

44. Eshkol Ma’amaran: “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)

45. Shimshon Rafael Hirsch on Exodus 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… 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 the German)

46. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Faith in the Future, p.78: The Hebrew Bible contains the great command, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Lev 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.

47. 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/

48. From “The land of strangers”, R. David Seidenberg: The calendar, holidays and laws of the Torah are all clearly attuned to the rhythms, ecology and geography of the land of Israel. The ancient Hebrews must be indigenous. Yet the Torah insists otherwise, describing the people of Israel as being non-indigenous, not rooted in the land: Abraham came from Mesopotamia; the tribes invaded from Egypt. Why? A clue may be found in the repeated laws about protecting strangers or foreigners, most especially in the verse: “Like a native among you, so the stranger who sojourns with you will be for you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (#5). Another clue is God’s assertion in the laws of Shmitah 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” (#14). If two major themes of Torah are the treatment of the stranger, and the treatment of the land, for both, right action is grounded in seeing ourselves as strangers. ~ https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-land-of-strangers/

49. For modern quotes from Emma Lazarus, or about the voyage of the St. Louis, etc., see for example https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/74691

50. 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.

51. See also “The Third Promise: Can Judaism’s indigenous core help us rise above the damaging politics of our time?” by R. David Seidenberg, www.tikkun.org/the-third-promise/