The Biblical Ger

Leviticus 19:33-34

When a stranger (ger) resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I, Adonai, am your God.


The ger...is a resident alien; he has uprooted himself (or has been uprooted) from his homeland and has taken permanent residence in the land of Israel... Having severed his ties with his original home, he has no family to turn to for support. Thus deprived of both land and family, he was generally poor, listed together with the Levite, the fatherless, and the widow among the wards of society, and exposed to exploitation and oppression.

MISHNA: The residents of a courtyard can compel each inhabitant of that courtyard to financially participate in the building of a gatehouse and a door to the jointly owned courtyard. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel disagrees and says: Not all courtyards require a gatehouse, and each courtyard must be considered on its own in accordance with its specific needs. Similarly, the residents of a city can compel each inhabitant of that city to contribute to the building of a wall, double doors, and a crossbar for the city. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel disagrees and says: Not all towns require a wall. With regard to this latter obligation, the mishna asks: How long must one live in the city to be considered like...
one of the people of the city and therefore obligated to contribute to these expenses? Twelve months. But if he **bought** himself a **residence in** the city, **he is immediately** considered like one of the people of the city.

**GEMARA:** The Gemara asks: **Is this to say that** making a gatehouse **is beneficial?** But wasn’t there that **pious man, with whom** the prophet **Elijah was accustomed to speak,** who **built a gatehouse, and after-ward Elijah did not speak with him again?** The objection to the building of a gatehouse is that the guard who mans it prevents the poor from entering and asking for charity. The Gemara answers: This is not difficult: **This,** the case presented in the mishna, is referring to a gatehouse built on the **inside** of the courtyard, in which case the poor can at least reach the courtyard’s entrance and be heard inside the courtyard; **that,** the story of the pious man and Elijah, involves a gatehouse that was built on the **outside** of the courtyard, completely blocking the poor’s access to the courtyard’s entrance.

**Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 13:2**

God gathered the dust [of the first human] from the four corners of the world: red, black, white and green... Why from the four corners of the earth? So that if one comes from the east to the west and arrives at the end of one’s life as the person nears departing from the world, it will not be said, "This land is not the dust of your body; it is of mine. Go back to where you were created!" Rather, every place that a person walks, from there that person was created and from there that person will return."