

The Biblical Ger

Source Sheet by Josh Whinston

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.

ויקרא י"ט:ל"ג-ל"ד

וְכִי־יִגְוֹר אִתְּךָ גֵר בְּאַרְצְכֶם לֹא תוֹנֶנּוּ אֹתוֹ:
כְּאֶזְרַח מִכֶּם יִהְיֶה לְכֶם הַגֵּר | הַגֵּר אִתְּכֶם
וְאָהַבְתָּ לּוֹ כְּמוֹךָ כִּי־גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Jacob Milgrom, "Reflections on the Biblical Ger," Leviticus 17-22 (Anchor Bible, 2000).

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.

Bava Batra 7b

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**

בבא בתרא ז' ב

מתני' כופין אותו לבנות בית שער ודלת לחצר רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר לא כל החצרות ראויות לבית שער כופין אותן לבנות לעיר חומה ודלתים ובריה רשב"ג אומר לא כל העיירות ראויות לחומה כמה יהא בעיר ויהא כאנשי העיר י"ב חדש קנה בה בית דירה הרי הוא כאנשי העיר מיד: **גמ'** למימרא דבית שער מעליותא היא והא ההוא חסידא דהוה רגיל אליהו דהוה משתעי בהדיה עבד בית שער ותו לא משתעי בהדיה לא קשיא הא מגואי הא מבראי

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."

ילקוט שמעוני על התורה י"ג:ב'
התחיל לקבץ עפרו מד' פנות העולם אדום
שחור לבן ירקרק. [אדום זה הדם שחור
אלו הקרבים ירקרק זה הגוף.] ולמה מד'
פנות העולם שאם יבא מן המזרח למערב
ויגיע קצן להפטר מן העולם שלא תאמר
הארץ אין עפר גופך משלי חזור למקום
שנבראת אלא כל מקום שאדם הולך
משם הוא גופו ולשם הוא חוזר.

