



## Jewish Responsibility Towards Immigrants

### Fear of Outsiders - Is it Legitimate?

#### 1) Exodus 1: 9 – 10

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people: 'Behold, the people of the children of Israel are too many and too mighty for us; come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when we wage war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land.'

מִצְרַיִם, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-חָדָשׁ, עַל-וַיָּקָם מֶלֶךְ הַיָּה, עִם עַמּוֹ: -וַיֹּאמֶר, אֶל יוֹסֵף. -אֵת יָדַע, הִבָּה נִתְחַכְמָה, רַב וְעֲצוּם, מִמֶּנּוּ. --בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּקְרָאנָה מִלְחָמָה וְנוֹסֵף -יִרְבֶּה, וְהָיָה כִּי-פָן לוֹ: -בְּנוּ, וְעָלָה מִן-שָׂאֵינּוּ, וְנִלְחַם-לְהוּא ע-גַם הָאָרֶץ.

#### Sforno (Italy 1400's) 1:9-10

**They also will join themselves to our enemies.** Since they are separated from us (and different from us) in that they are circumcised, speak a different language, and the follow Hebrew customs in a manner, that “the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews” (Genesis 43:32) then they are without a doubt our enemies and their hatred will be revealed during the duress of wartime.

וְנוֹסֵף גַּם הוּא עַל שְׂאֵינּוּ. כִּי בְהִיּוֹתָם נִבְדְּלִים מִמֶּנּוּ בְּמִילָה וּבְלָשׁוֹן וּבְדַעוֹת הָעִבְרִים, בְּאִפְסוֹ שֶׁ, "לֹא יוֹכְלוּן הָעִבְרִים לְחֹם" הַמִּצְרַיִם לְאָכַל אֵת (בְּרֵאשִׁית מַג, לב,) הֵם לָנוּ לְאוֹיְבִים בְּלִי סִפְקָא, וַיִּגְלוּ שְׂאֵאתָם אֲזַ בְּעַת צָרוֹת הַמִּלְחָמָה.

- What is Pharaoh's scared of?
- Is his fear legitimate?
- Are our fears of immigrants influenced by the immigrants' motivation to come to America?
- What does the Sforno seem to be adding?

Here we see Pharaoh's conflicting views. He understood the benefits that the Jews brought to his empire as slaves but simultaneously feared that their differences would cause them to be disloyal to the Egyptians. Similarly in America, we tend to not welcome immigrants while simultaneously wanting them to stay, once they are already here, in order to exploit them to our benefit.

### How to Prevent Injustice Despite These Fears

#### 2) Leviticus 25:40 - 41

**As a hired servant, and as a settler, he shall be with thee;** he shall serve with thee unto the year of jubilee. Then shall he go out from thee, he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return.

שְׁנֵת - עַדכְשֶׁכִּיר כְּתוֹשֵׁב, יִהְיֶה עִמָּךְ; הוּא, --וַיָּצֵא, מֵעִמְךָ הַיָּבֵל, יַעֲבֹד עִמָּךְ. -מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ, וְאֶל-וּבְנָיו עִמּוֹ; וְשָׁב, אֶל-אֲחֻזַּת אֲבוֹתָיו, יָשׁוּב.



### Rashi on Leviticus 25:40

**As an employee or a [hired] resident:** [Give him dignified jobs, e.g.,] work in agriculture and craftsmanship; treat him like other employees.

עבודת קרקע כשכיר כתושב : כשאר שכירים ומלאכת אומנות התנהג בו.

- Can we treat immigrant workers differently from non-immigrant workers?
- Are all immigrants asylum seekers? What other classifications are there?
- Should an immigrant's motivation to immigrate guide the Jewish communities' actions towards the immigrant?
- If immigrants have an altruistic motive for immigrating, could our fear be repressed?

### 3) Leviticus 19: 33-34 --- Verbal Discrimination

And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, **you shall not taunt him.** The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, **and thou shalt love him as thyself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.**

לא תונו,--יגור אתך גר, בארצכם-וְנִי כְאֶזְרָח מִמֶּם יִהְיֶה לְכֶם הַגֵּר הַגֵּר אִתּוֹ. גֵּרִים -פִּי--אֶתְכֶם, וְאָהַבְתָּ לוֹ כְּמוֹךָ. אֲנִי, ה' אֵרִץ מִצְרַיִם: כִּי, הֵייתֶם יְכֶם אֶל.

#### Rashi on Leviticus 19:33

**You shall not taunt him:** [This refers to] tormenting with words [as opposed to torment through other means, e.g., financially (see Rashi Lev. 25:14)].

אונאת דברים. לא תאמר לו אמש :לא תונו היית עובד עבודה זרה ועכשיו אתה בא ללמוד תורה שנתנה מפי הגבורה

### 4) Zachariah 7: 9- 10 --- Discriminating Thoughts

And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying: 'Thus hath the LORD of hosts spoken, saying: Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and **let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart.**

משפט אות, לאמר: -פה אָמַר ה' צָבָא אֱמֶת, שְׁפֹטוּ, וְחֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים, עֲשׂוּ אִישׁ -וְאֶלְמָנָה וְיָתוּם גֵּר וְעֵנִי, אֵל. אֶחָיו-אֵת -אֱלֹרְעַת אִישׁ אֶחָיו, תַּעֲשׂוּ; תַּחֲשְׁבוּ בְלִבְבְּכֶם.

### 5) Jeremiah 22:3 --- Physical Discrimination

So said the Lord: Perform justice and charity, and rescue the robbed from the hand of the robber, and to a stranger, an orphan, and a widow **do no wrong, do no violence, and shed no innocent blood in this place.**

פה | אָמַר ה' עֲשׂוּ מִשְׁפָּט וְצְדָקָה וְהִצִּילוּ גְזוּל מִיַּד עֹשׂוֹק וְגַר יָתוּם אֵל תַּחְמָסוּ וְדָם נָקִי אֵל תִּגְוֹןְאֶלְמָנָה אֵל תִּשְׁפְּכוּ בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה.



## Motivations for Caring for Non-Jews

### 6) Exodus 23:9

And you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, **since you were strangers in the land of Egypt.**

וְגֵר לֹא תִלְחָץ וְאַתֶּם יָדַעְתֶּם אֶת נַפְשׁוֹ  
כִּי גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הַהֵגֶר

EMPATHY

### 7) Talmud Bavli - Mesechet Gitten - Daf 61a

Our Rabbis have taught: 'We support the poor of the non-Jew along with the poor of Israel, and visit the sick of the non-Jew along with the sick of Israel, and bury the poor of the non-Jew along with the dead of Israel, **in the interest of peace**'.

ת"ר מפרנסים עניי נכרים עם עניי  
ישראל ומבקרין חולי נכרים עם חולי  
ישראל וקוברין מתי נכרים עם מתי  
מפני דרכי שלום ישראל:

### 8) Darkhei Moshe Yoreh Deah 251:1 (Rav Moshe Isserles 16th Century Poland)

The **Ran** wrote at the end of Perek Nezikin (Gittin 28a) that this is not only when there are also Jewish poor present, rather even if there are only non-Jewish poor we still support them because of *darkhei shalom* (the ways of peace). However, the **Mordekhai** wrote that this is not the case, rather we only support (the non-Jewish poor) in conjunction with the Jewish poor.

סוף נזיקין (כח). דלאו הר"ן כתב  
דוקא עם עניי ישראל, אלא אפילו עניי  
גוים לחוד מפרנסים מפני דרכי שלום.  
שם (סי' תסד) משמע במדרכיאה  
דאין מפרנסים אלא עם עניי ישראל  
דוקא עכ"ל.

- What is the *machloket* (argument) between the *Ran* and the *Mordekhai*?
- According to the *Ran* and the *Mordekhai* when should one help out non-Jews?

### 9) Rabbi Dr. Walter S. Wurzburger Article on Darkei Shalom from Gesher Journal (Yeshiva University) 1977

“The basic question that must be faced is whether the enactments prompted by concern for *Darkei Shalom* should be regarded as expediency measures dictated by the enlightened self-interest of the Jewish community or whether we are dealing in these cases with a supreme ethical principle which transcends purely pragmatic considerations.”

“Maimonides, for example, makes it abundantly clear that concern for the welfare of a non-Jew transcends consideration of enlightened self-interest and reflects the religious mandate to imitate the ethical attitudes of God. It is for this reason, that when Maimonides discusses the obligation to give alms to non-Jews, he cites the verse “God is good to everyone and His mercy encompasses all His creatures, before quoting the passage from Proverbs which the Talmud invokes as justification for ‘the ways of peace.’ Apparently, Maimonides went out of his way to guard against any attempt to look upon moral actions towards non-Jews as grounded exclusively in purely pragmatic considerations calculated to secure the peace of the Jewish community. By linking the pursuit of ‘the ways of peace’ with the divine attribute of compassion, Maimonides suggests that what is involved in ‘the ways of peace’ is an overriding religious imperative.”

- Why do you think Maimonides interprets *Darkei Shalom* as a religious imperative?

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