

Loving the Stranger:

The Bible's Moral Revolution

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Rabbi Shai Held – held@hadar.org

1. שְׁמוֹת כג:ט

(ט) וְגֵר לֹא תִלְחָץ וְאַתֶּם יִדְעֶתֶם אֶת נַפְשׁ הַגֵּר כִּי גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

1. Exodus 23:9

⁹You shall not oppress a stranger for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt.

2. וַיִּקְרָא יִט:לג-לד

(לג) וְכִי יִגֹּר אִתְּךָ גֵר בְּאֶרְצְכֶם לֹא תוֹנוּ אֹתוֹ

(לד) כְּאֶזְרַח מִכֶּם יְהִיֶה לְכֶם הַגֵּר הַגֵּר אִתְּכֶם וְאַהֲבֵתְ לּוֹ כְּמוֹךָ כִּי גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

2. Leviticus 19:33-34

³³When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him. ³⁴The 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 the Lord am your God.

3. דְּבָרִים י:יז-יט

(יז) כִּי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים הָאֵל הַגָּדֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשָּׂא פָנִים וְלֹא יִקַּח שֹׁחַד:

(יח) עֲשֵׂה מִשְׁפָּט יְתוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה וְאַהֲבֵה גֵר לְתַת לּוֹ לֶחֶם וְשִׂמְלָה:

(יט) וְאַהֲבַתֶּם אֶת הַגֵּר כִּי גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

3. Deuteronomy 10:17-19

¹⁷For the Lord your God is God supreme and Lord supreme, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who shows no favor and takes no bribe, ¹⁸but upholds the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, providing him with food and clothing. ¹⁹You too must love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.



4. בְּרֵאשִׁית יבִּי-כ

(י) וַיְהִי רָעֵב, בְּאֶרֶץ; וַיֵּרֵד אַבְרָם מִצְרַיִם לְגֹר שָׁם, כִּי-כָבֵד הָרָעֵב בְּאֶרֶץ. (יא) וַיְהִי, כְּאִשֶּׁר הִקְרִיב לְבוֹא מִצְרַיִם; וַיֹּאמֶר, אֶל-שָׂרִי אִשְׁתּוֹ, הִנֵּה-נָא יִדְעֵתִי, כִּי אִשָּׁה יִפְת-מִרְאָה אֶת. (יב) וְהָיָה, כִּי-יֵרְאוּ אֹתְךָ הַמִּצְרַיִם, וְאָמְרוּ, אִשְׁתּוֹ זֹאת; וְהִרְגוּ אֹתִי, וְאֹתְךָ יַחֲיוּ. (יג) אָמְרִי-נָא, אַחֲתִי אַתְּ--לִמְעַן יִיטֵב-לִי בְּעַבְדֶיךָ, וְחַיְתָה נְפֹשִׁי בְּגִלְלָה. (יד) וַיְהִי, כְּבוֹא אַבְרָם מִצְרַיִם; וַיֵּרְאוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם אֶת-הָאִשָּׁה, כִּי-יָפָה הִוא מְאֹד. (טו) וַיֵּרְאוּ אֹתָהּ שָׂרֵי פְרַעֲהוּ, וַיְהַלְלוּ אֹתָהּ אֶל-פְּרַעֲהוּ; וַתִּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה, בֵּית פְּרַעֲהוּ. (טז) וְלֹא-אַבְרָם הִיטִיב, בְּעַבְדֶּיהָ; וַיְהִי-לֹו צֹאן-וּבָקָר, וְחֹמְרִים, וְעַבְדִּים וְשִׁפְחוֹת, וְאֶתְנַת וְגַמְלִים. (יז) וַיִּנְגַע יְהוָה אֶת-פְּרַעֲהוּ נְגָעִים גְּדֹלִים, וְאֶת-בֵּיתוֹ, עַל-דְּבַר שָׂרִי, אִשְׁתְּ אַבְרָם. (יח) וַיִּקְרָא פְּרַעֲהוּ, לְאַבְרָם, וַיֹּאמֶר, מַה-זֹּאת עָשִׂיתְ לִי; לְמָה לֹא-הִגַּדְתָּ לִּי, כִּי אִשְׁתְּךָ הִוא. (יט) לְמָה אָמַרְתָּ אַחֲתִי הִוא, וְאִקַּח אֹתָהּ לִי לְאִשָּׁה; וְעַתָּה, הִנֵּה אִשְׁתְּךָ קַח וְלָהּ. (כ) וַיֵּצֵא עָלָיו פְּרַעֲהוּ, אֲנָשִׁים; וַיִּשְׁלַחוּ אוֹתוֹ וְאֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ, וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ.

4. Genesis 12:10-20

¹⁰There was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, “I know what a beautiful woman you are.” ¹²If the Egyptians see you, and think, ‘She is his wife,’ they will kill me and let you live. ¹³Please say that you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may remain alive thanks to you.” ¹⁴When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw how very beautiful the woman was. ¹⁵Pharaoh’s courtiers saw her and praised her to Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s palace. ¹⁶And because of her, it went well with Abram; he acquired sheep, oxen, asses, male and female slaves, she-asses, and camels. ¹⁷But the Lord afflicted Pharaoh and his household with mighty plagues on account of Sarai, the wife of Abram. ¹⁸Pharaoh sent for Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me! Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? ¹⁹Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her as my wife? Now, here is your wife; take her and begone!” ²⁰And Pharaoh put men in charge of him, and they sent him off with his wife and all that he possessed.

5. בְּרֵאשִׁית יט:ז-ט

(ז) וַיֹּאמֶר: אֶל-נָא אַחִי, תְּרַעֲוּ. (ח) הִנֵּה-נָא לִי שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִדְעוּ אִישׁ--אוֹצִיָּאה-נָא אֹתְהֶן אֵלֵיכֶם, וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶן כְּטוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם; רַק לֹא-נָשִׂים הָאֵל, אֶל-תַּעֲשׂוּ דְבָר, כִּי-עַל-כֵּן בָּאוּ, בְּצַל קִרְתִּי. (ט) וַיֹּאמְרוּ גַשְׁ-הַלָּאָה, וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָאֶחָד בָּא-לְגֹר וַיִּשְׁפֹּט שְׁפוֹט--עַתָּה, נִרְעֵ לָךְ מֵהֶם; וַיִּפְצְרוּ בְּאִישׁ בְּלוֹט מְאֹד, וַיִּגְשׁוּ לְשֹׁבֵר הַדָּלֶת.

5. Genesis 19:7-9

⁷And said, “I beg you, my friends, do not commit such a wrong. ⁸Look, I have two daughters who have not known a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you please; but do not do anything to these men, since they have come under the shelter of my roof.” ⁹But they said, “Stand back! The fellow,” they said, “came here as an alien, and already he acts the ruler! Now we will deal worse with you than with them.” And they pressed hard against the person of Lot, and moved forward to break the door.



6. שמות כב:כא-כג

(כא) כָּל-אֱלֵמָנָה וַיְתוּם, לֹא תַעֲנוּן. (כב) אִם-עֲנֵה תַעֲנֶה, אִתּוֹ--כִּי אִם-צָעַק יִצְעַק אֵלַי, שְׁמַע אֲשַׁמַּע צָעֲקוֹתוֹ.
(כג) וְחָרָה אַפִּי, וְהִרְגַּתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּחָרֵב; וְהָיוּ נְשֵׁיכֶם אֱלֵמָנוֹת, וּבְנֵיכֶם יְתָמִים.

6. Exodus 22:21-23

²¹You shall not ill-treat any widow or orphan. ²²If you do mistreat them, I will heed their outcry as soon as they cry out to Me, ²³and My anger shall blaze forth and I will put you to the sword, and your own wives shall become widows and your children orphans.

7. R. Abraham Ibn Ezra, Shorter Commentary to Exodus 22:21-23

לא תענון - בלשון רבים, כי משפט הרואים הענוי והחרישו כמשפט המענה, על כן כתוב אם ענה תענה...
והרגתי אתכם (כב):

“You shall not oppress”— in the plural, since the one who oppresses and the one who witnesses the oppression but remains silent have the same status.

8. דברים כג:טז-יז

(טז) לֹא-תִסְגִּיר עֶבֶד, אֶל-אֲדֹנָיו, אֲשֶׁר-יִנְצַל אֵלָיךְ, מֵעַם אֲדֹנָיו. (יז) עִמָּךְ יֵשֶׁב בְּקִרְבְּךָ, בְּמִקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר בְּאַחַד שְׁעָרֶיךָ--בְּטוֹב לוֹ; לֹא, תוֹנֶנּוּ.

8. Deuteronomy 23:16-17

¹⁶You shall not turn over to his master a slave who seeks refuge with you from his master. ¹⁷He shall live with you in any place he may choose among the settlements in your midst, wherever he pleases; you must not ill-treat him.

9. ויקרא כה:כג

וְהָאָרֶץ, לֹא תִמָּכַר לְצַמְתָּת--כִּי-לִי, הָאָרֶץ: כִּי-גֵרִים וְתוֹשָׁבִים אַתֶּם, עַמְדִּי.

9. Leviticus 25:23

But the land must not be sold beyond reclaim, for the land is Mine; you are but strangers resident with Me.

