

# Refugee Torah



Welcome the stranger.  
Protect the refugee.

## Directions

1. With a partner, skim through the texts below, and pick one text each that particularly speaks to you (preferably different texts from one another).
2. Read the text you selected to your partner.
3. *Discuss:* What is the text saying? Why do you think it says that? What resonates with you about the text?
4. *Discuss:* How would you use this text to respond to those who question whether taking action on the contemporary refugee crisis should be a Jewish concern?

## Texts

### Exodus 22:20

וְגֵר לֹא־תוֹנֶה וְלֹא תִלְחָצֶנּוּ כִּי־גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם :

You shall not wrong nor oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

### Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael Mishpatim, Massechet Nizikin, Parasha 18

לֹא תוֹנֶה וְלֹא תִלְחָצֶנּוּ כִּי גֵרִים הֵייתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם - לֹא תוֹנֶנּוּ בְּדַבְרִים וְלֹא תִלְחָצֶנּוּ בַּמָּוֶן .

*You shall not wrong or oppress the ger (stranger), for you were gerim (strangers) in the land of Egypt (Exodus 22:20).  
You shall not wrong with words, and you shall not oppress financially.*

### Numbers 15: 16

תּוֹרַה אַחַת וּמִשְׁפָּט אֶחָד יְהִיֶה לָכֶם וְלַגֵּר הַגֵּר הַגֵּר אֶתְכֶם :

The same ritual and the same rule shall apply to you and to the stranger who resides among you.

### Leviticus 19:34

כְּאֶזְרַח מִמֶּנּוּ יְהִיֶה לְכֶם הַגֵּר | תִּגְר אֶתְכֶם וְאַהֲבַתְּ לּוֹ כְּמוֹד כְּיִגְרִים הֵייתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי  
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם :

The strangers who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love each one as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I Adonai am your God.

### Passover Haggadah

הָא לַחֲמַא עֲנִיָא דִי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהַתְנָא בְּאֶרֶץ דְּמִצְרַיִם. כָּל דְּכָפִין יֵיתִי וַיִּיכַל, כָּל דְּצָרָךְ יֵיתִי  
וַיִּפְסַח.

This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Whoever is hungry, let them come and eat; whoever is in need, let them come and conduct the Seder of Passover.

### Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 127a

א"ר יוחנן גדולה הכנסת אורחין כהשכמת בית המדרש. . . . רב דימי מנהרדעא אמר יותר  
מהשכמת בית המדרש. . . . אמר רב יהודה אמר רב גדולה הכנסת אורחין מהקבלת פני  
שכינה. . . . ששה דברים אדם אוכל פירותיהן בעולם הזה והקרן קיימת לו לעולם הבא ואלו  
הן הכנסת אורחין וביקור חולים ועיון תפלה והשכמת בית המדרש והמגדל בניו לתלמוד  
תורה והדן את חברו לכף זכות.

Rav Yochanan said: Hospitality to guests is as 'great' as early attendance at the House of Study. . . . Rav Dimi of Nehardea said: It is 'greater' than early attendance at the House of Study....Rav Judah said in Rav's name: Hospitality to guests is greater than welcoming the presence of the *Shechinah* (God).... There are six things, the fruit of which humans eat in this world, while the principal remains for them in the world to come: welcoming guests, visiting the sick, meditation in prayer, early attendance for study, rearing one's children to the study of Torah, and judging one's neighbor in the scale of merit.

### Maimonides' Mishneh Torah Hilchot Deot 6:4

אהבת הגר שבא ונכנס תחת כנפי השכינה שתי מצות עשה אחת מפני שהוא בכלל ריעים  
ואחת מפני שהוא גר והתורה אמרה ואהבתם את הגר צוה על אהבת הגר כמו שצוה על  
אהבת עצמו שנאמר ואהבת את ה' אלהיך הקב"ה עצמו אוהב גרים שנאמר ואוהב גר.

The love of the stranger who has entered beneath the wings of the Divine presence is enjoined by two Biblical commandments: One because he is considered to be within the category of "reyim" (a friend) and one because he is a stranger, and the Torah states: "And you shall love the stranger..." The Holy One commanded that we should love the stranger just as God commanded that we should love the Divine, as it is written: And you shall love Adonai your God. The Holy One loves the stranger, as it is written: And God loves the stranger.