

# Caring about non-Jews

Compiled by Arielle Perlow

Chumash and Navi sources which talk about a גר or stranger:

## Exodus 23:9

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

### שמות כג:ט

וְגֵר, לֹא תִלְחָץ; וְאַתֶּם, יָדַעְתֶּם אֶת-נַפְשׁ הַגֵּר--כִּי-גֵרִים הֵייתֶם, בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

## Deuteronomy 10:19

You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

### דברים י:יט

וְאַהֲבַתְּם, אֶת-הַגֵּר: כִּי-גֵרִים הֵייתֶם, בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

## Leviticus 19:16

Do not stand idly by your peer's blood; I am Hashem.

### ויקרא יט:יז

לֹא תֵעָמַד עַל דַּם רֵעֶךָ, אֲנִי ה'.

## Sforno, Commentary to Exodus 2:11-17

*"He saw a man who was Egyptian striking a man who was Hebrew from among his brethren"* – and owing to his sense of brotherhood he aroused himself to assist (avenge).  
*"He said to the evildoer"* – since each one of them was his brother, he did not arouse himself to avenge, but rather rebuked directly.  
*"Moses arose; He championed them"* – since both parties to the quarrel were aliens, he did not arouse himself to avenge (assist), not did he care to straighten their ways through moral rebuke, rather he arose to rescue the oppressed from the hands of their oppressors.

### ספורנו שמות ב:יא-י

וירא איש מצרי מכה איש עברי מאחיו – ומצד האחוה התעורר לעזור ויאמר לרשע – מפני היות כל אחד מהם אחיו לא התעורר לעזור אבל הוכיח במישור ויקם משה ויושיען – בהיות שני בעלי הריב נכרים לא התעורר להנמק גם לא הקפיד לישר ארחותם בתוכחות מוסר רק קם להושיע את העשוקים מיד עושיקה

## Genesis 18:20-21

Then the Lord said, "The outrage of Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave! I will go down and see whether they have acted altogether according to the outcry that has reached Me; if not, I will take note."

### בראשית יח:כ-כא

ויאמר ה' זעקת סדם ועמרה כי רבה וחטאתם כי כבדה מאד. ארדה נא ואראה הכצעקתה הבאה אלי עשו כלה ואם לא אדעה.

## Jonah 3:1-2

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time. "Go at once to Ninveh, that great city, and proclaim to it what I tell you."

### יונה ג:א-ב

ויהי דבר ה' אל יונה שנית לאמר. קום לך אל נינבה העיר הגדולה וקרא אליה את הקריאה אשר אנכי דבר אליך.

Early halachik and Talmudic sources about caring for non-Jews:

**Babylonian Talmud Gittin 61a**

Our Rabbis taught: We sustain the non-Jewish poor with the Jewish poor, visit the non-Jewish sick with the Jewish sick, and bury the non-Jewish dead with the Jewish dead, for the sake of peace.

**תלמוד בבלי מסכת גיטין דף סא עמוד א**  
ת"ר מפרנסים עניי נכרים עם עניי ישראל, ומבקרין חולי נכרים עם חולי ישראל, וקוברין מתי נכרים עם מתי ישראל מפני דרכי שלום.

**Rambam Laws of Kings and Their Wars 10:12**

Our sages commanded us to visit the non-Jewish sick and to bury the non-Jewish dead along with the Jewish dead, and support the non-Jewish poor along with the Jewish poor for the sake of peace. Behold, [Psalms 145:9] states: "God is good to all and God's mercies extend over all God's works" and [Proverbs 3:17] states: "[The Torah's] ways are pleasant ways and all its paths are peace."

**רמב"ם הלכות מלכים פרק י הלכה יב**  
אפילו העכו"ם ציוו חכמים לבקר חוליהם, ולקבור מתיהם עם מתי ישראל, ולפרנס ענייהם בכלל עניי ישראל, מפני דרכי שלום: הרי נאמר "טוב ה' לכול; ורחמיו, על כל מעשיו" (תהילים קמה:ט) ונאמר "דרכיה, דרכי נועם; וכל נתיבותיה, שלום" (משלי ג:יז)

**Rambam, Laws of the Sanhedrin 12:3 Every Human Being is a Unique Divine Image - Tzelem Elokim**

For this reason, Adam was created as an individual unique in the world - to teach that anyone who causes a single soul to be lost from the world is regarded as if he has caused an entire world to be lost, and anyone who sustains a single soul in the world is regarded as if he has sustained an entire world. Indeed, all who come into the world are created in the form of the original Adam, and no one's face is identical with that of his fellow – for this reason each and every one can say "The world was created for my sake".

**רמב"ם הלכות סנהדרין פרק יב הלכה ג**  
לפיכך נברא אדם יחידי בעולם--ללמד שכל המאבד נפש אחת, מעלין עליו כאילו איבד עולם מלא, וכל המקיים נפש אחת, מעלין עליו כאילו קיים עולם מלא

**Sefer HaChinnukh (13th Century Barcelona), Commandment # 600**

We Jews have been commanded to rescue the pursued from the hands of any who pursue them with intent to kill, if necessary at the cost of the pursuer's life . . . Among the roots of this commandment is that G-d, Who is Blessed, created the world and willed that it be settled, and the settlement of the world is upheld by the championing of the weak against those stronger. Furthermore, the pursued will always have eyes and heart turned toward

**ספר החינוך מצוה תר**

שנצטוינו להציל הנרדף מיד מי שירדפהו להורגו... העולם משרשי המצוה, לפי שהשם ברוך הוא ברא ורצה בישובו, וישוב העולם יתקיים בתשועת החלש מיד חזק ממנו, ועוד כי הנרדף לעולם עיניו ולבו אל ה' להושיעו מיד רודפו, וכענין שכתוב [קהלת ג', ט"ו] והאלהים יבקש את נרדף, כלומר הנרדף מבקש לאלהים ומתחנן אליו, על כן ציונו ברוך הוא לעזור לו.

G-d to champion him against his pursuer, as Scripture says "The L-rd will seek out the pursued", meaning that the pursued seeks the L-rd and prays to him. Therefore He Who is Blessed has commanded us to assist the pursued.

*"Modern" sources:*

**Responsa Sh'eilat Yaavetz 2:51, Rabbi Jacob Emden (18th Century Germany)**

A Jew with political responsibility (*adam chashuv*) has the obligation to rescue the oppressed from the hands of the oppressor by all means available to him, whether by direct action or through political effort, regardless of whether the oppressed is Jewish. So Job praised himself by saying "I have broken the teeth of evil", and the Torah says of Moses that "He arose and championed them", referring to the daughters of Jethro, even though they were the daughters of an idolatrous priest . . .

שו"ת שאילת יעבץ חלק ב סימן נא ד"ה אלא הכי  
משא"כ באדם חשוב שמוטל עליו להציל עשוק מיד  
עשקו בכל אופן שיוכל, אם בגופו או בהשתדלותו, יהי'  
העשוק מי שהי'. כענין שאמר איוב, ואשברה מתלעות  
עול, וכתוב במרע"ה ויקם ויושיען, אע"פ שבנות כומר היו

**Sara Schnirer Em B'Yisroel 2:75-78, (translation from The Jewish Political Tradition, vol.1)** When we state that it is a mitzvah to love people, this means that it makes no difference who the person is, whether Jew or alien . . . Thus Abraham our father, through love and devotion, extended his hospitality to guests, dressing them and feeding them. He endangered his life for the sake of the King of Sodom and begged G-d's mercy for Sodom and Gomorrah. Moses our master, too, was quick to come to the aid of alien shepherds and defended them from attackers.

**Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, from A. Besdin, Man of Faith in the Modern World: Reflections of the Rav**

The Modern Jew is entangled in the activities of the Gentile society in numerous ways – economically, politically, culturally, and on some levels, socially. We share in the universal experience. The problems of humanity, war and peace, political stability or anarchy, morality or permissiveness, famine, epidemics, and pollution transcend the boundaries of ethnic groups. A stricken environment, both physical and ideological, can wreak havoc upon all groups...It is our duty as human beings to contribute our energies and creativity to alleviate the pressing needs and anguish of mankind and to contribute to its welfare.

**Jonathans Sacks, To Heal a Fractured World p273**

"Judaism is the guard on an ancient but still compelling dream. To heal where others harm, mend where others destroy, to redeem evil by turning its negative energies to good: these are the marks of the ethics of responsibility, born in the radical faith that God calls on us to exercise our freedom by becoming his partners in the work of creation."

*Reasons why "religious Jews" should care about non-Jews:*

**Eytan Schwartz, Jerusalem Post (Nov 21 2006)**

"You don't see kids in *yarmulkes* and *tzitzit* holding human rights rallies every day," said Eytan Schwartz

**SHABOT 6000** by Ben Baruch



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