

JEWISH SOURCES ON OUR ATTITUDE TO REFUGEES

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From the point of view of the Torah a foreigner is a stranger.

As it says (Deuteronomy 17:15), "...You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother."

However, the Torah also ensures the foreigner protection in that he is G-d's creation; the foreigner must be assisted, and one must act exceptionally benevolent toward him, because "what is hateful to you, do not do unto others" (including the refugee) (Shabbat 31:1).

And in Deuteronomy 23:16-17, it is written: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master a slave that has escaped from his master; he shall dwell with thee, in the place which he will choose within one of thy gates...thou shalt not wrong him."

Thus, we must allow the refugee to live among us, with us. We must give him a feeling of belonging, so that he feels welcome. We must familiarize him with the Land, tell him about the cities and villages, and allow him to choose where he wants to live. We must help him choose the best possible place for him and not exploit him for our purposes; for example, not send him to a barren or dangerous place.

Rav Kook (Orot 4,5) has written: "The love of Israel obliges us to love all persons."

In all aspects of universal ethics, the foreigner is equal to a Jew, and therefore it is forbidden to exploit and steal from a foreigner, and he must be treated fairly.