



1. Devarim, 10:17-19

For Lord your G-d is the G-d of gods and the Lord of lords: the great, mighty, awesome G-d, Who does not show favor and does not take bribes; Who executes judgment for the orphan and the widow, and loves the stranger (*ger*), giving him food and garments. **You shall love the stranger**, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

2. Vayikra 19:33-34

If a *ger* lives (*yagur*) with you in your land, you shall not wrong him. A stranger who lives with you shall be for you like one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt; I am Lord your G-d.

3. Rambam, Sefer HaMitzvot 206-7

206: We are commanded to love each other as we love ourselves. I should have mercy for and love my brother as faithfully as I love and have mercy for myself... What I want for myself I should want for him, and whatever I don't want for myself or my friends, I shouldn't want for him...

207: We are commanded to love converts... Since the convert spoken of here is a *ger tzedek*, he is included in the commandment for the entire Jewish people, "You must love your neighbor." Nevertheless, since he has now entered the Jewish religion, G-d shows him additional love and added an extra commandment [to love him]. This is similar to the prohibition of mistreating him, where in addition to the prohibition [regarding all Jews], "You shall not mistreat one another," G-d also said, "Do not mistreat a convert." The Gemara explains that one who mistreats a convert transgresses both... We are similarly commanded to love him,...[by both commandments]

- Other prohibitions – don't hurt the *ger*, or emotionally harm him (Rambam 252-3; Chinuch 63-4)
- Mitzvat HaMelech, R. Ziment – action vs. love of person.

4. Rambam, Hilchot Deot 6:4 (Laws of Character Traits) [see also R. Bechaye, Shemot 22:20]

G-d has commanded us concerning the love of a convert just as He has commanded us concerning loving Himself ... The Holy One, blessed be He loves converts as it states: "and He loves converts."

5. **R. Yerucham Fishel Perlow (82) argues that for R. Saadiah Gaon**, there is not a separate commandment. It just emphasizes that "loving others" applies to a convert. However, he argues there is a special command for the courts to treat him as they would treat a born Jew. R. Ziment argues that same is true regarding love.

6. Sefer HaChinuch 431

We should derive from this precious mitzvah that one should have mercy on a person in a city that is not his birthplace and the place of his family... as we see that the Torah warns us to have mercy on all who need help...

7. Sefer HaMitzvot of the Chafetz Chaim 61

The meaning of *ger* here is anyone who came from another land or city to dwell here, and even more so a convert.

8. Sefer HaChinuch 431

One violates this commandment if he causes them pain ... because they are converts...

9. Akeidat Yizchak of R. Yitzchak Arama, Shemot Shaar 46 (on not oppressing *ger* in judgment)

Treat [the *ger*] with a bit more patience, for the soul of the convert is distressed, as he is in a foreign land, and he will think that all pressure or oppression that is done to him is because he is a *ger*.

10. Zohar HaRakia, Rabbi Shimon b. Tzemach Duran (1361-1444) on Loving Converts

Why does no one include in the count of mitzvot the acceptance of converts, which is a unique [obligation] on the court to accept them and not push them away, as it says in Yevamot (47b)...My opinion is that it should be counted separately.

11. Talmud Bavli, Yevamot 47b

Our Rabbis taught: If at the present time a man desires to become a proselyte, he is to be addressed as follows: 'What reason have you for desiring to become a proselyte; do you not know that Israel at the present time are persecuted and oppressed, despised, harassed and overcome by afflictions'? If he replies, 'I know and yet am unworthy', he is accepted forthwith, and is given instruction in some of the minor and some of the major commandments. ... And as he is informed of the punishment for the transgression of the commandments, so is he informed of the reward granted for their fulfilment... He is not,

however, to be persuaded or dissuaded too much. If he accepted, he is circumcised forthwith. ...He is not, however, to be persuaded, or dissuaded too much'. R. Eleazar said: What is the Scriptural proof? — It is written, And when she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her.

12. Rabbi Yerucham Fishel Perlow (Positive Commandments 19)

In my opinion, we can simply say... that it is based on the commandment to love G-d, as the Sifrei explains: “Love Hashem your G-d” – make him beloved to people, like Avraham your father, as it says “the souls he made in Charan.” This teaches that Avraham would convert them and bring them under the wings of the Shechina.

13. Talmud Bavli, Yoma 86a

And thou shalt love the Lord thy G-d, i.e., that the Name of Heaven be beloved because of you. if someone studies Scripture and Mishnah, and attends on the disciples of the wise, is honest in business, and speaks pleasantly to persons, what do people then say concerning him? ‘Happy the father who taught him Torah, happy the teacher who taught him Torah; woe unto people who have not studied the Torah; for this man has studied the Torah look how fine his ways are, how righteous his deeds! Of him does Scripture say: And He said unto me: Thou art My servant, Israel, in, whom I will be glorified.

14. Rabbi Yehuda b. Barzillai/of Barcelona (as cited by Perlow above)

It seems from his words that he believes that included in the mitzvah “and you shall love the *ger*” is also the mitzvah to accept converts and bring them under the wings of the Shechina. For he wrote “let he who comes to convert take refuge in your shade, when he says “in you, G-d, I have taken refuge.”... You must say that even though when he comes to you his is not yet a convert, nevertheless, since with this acceptance he converts, we refer to him “and you shall love the *ger*.”

15. **Rabbi Benjamin Samuels**, “The Contemporary Rabbinate and Conversion”, in *Conversion Intermarriage and Jewish Identity*, p. 359 Arguably, there should be normative application of Rabbi Yehuda of Barcelona’s position, even if only as a *safek deOraita* (as doubt concerning a commandment of biblical force), charging us to deal extra kindly and avoid distressing bona fide conversion candidate. It should also be noted that treating a *ger* benevolently and generously doesn’t necessarily mean shortcutting his or her process, which very likely would be a benefit that turns out to be a liability. However, there may be halakhic justification to treat differentially the various types of conversion candidates discussed at the opening of this paper and to be considered more fully below on the basis of considerations of the mitzvah of Ahavat HaGer. At the very least, all rabbis involved in matters of conversion should take to heart Rabbi Yosef Karo’s codification of the concern of distressing a convert: “One must be exceedingly careful when it comes to aggrieving a convert, whether through his person or possessions, for we have been warned concerning this [commandment] in many places [in the Torah].

16. **Aseh Lecha Rav 2 1:23** R.Chaim David HaLevi, Chief Rabbi Tel-Aviv-Yafo (trans. R. Dov Linzer)

The attitudes of the sages of Israel regarding conversion differ from one extreme to the other, not only in this generation, but already from the times of the Tanaim, the Sages of the Mishna... There are those of the Sages of the Mishna that interpret this positively, and there are those who interpret it negatively - that it is because of the likelihood of their backsliding (Mechilta)... The halakhic takeaway is that regarding conversion it is all according to the assessment of the judge... Based on the above, I will now respond to the second question, whether conversion is an obligation [of the court] or a matter of discretion. Behold, in the Torah it does not say in any place that there is a mitzvah to accept converts... But from the Gemara (Yevamot 47b) it appears that it is a mitzvah... Nevertheless, there is a place to ask why this is not written as an explicit mitzvah in the Torah... However, because the Torah did not write it explicitly, it has hinted that it is not an obligatory mitzvah regardless of circumstances, and not every time that a non-Jew comes to convert is the rabbinical judge obligated to convert him... Rather, every judge and religious leader in his generation has been given the discretion to decide according to his judgment, whether to be more lenient (than the normal standards) or whether to be more strict.. I should mention in closing that both the courts that are lenient regarding conversion and those which are strict - they are all acting with the intent to serve G-d properly, and they are acting according to their understanding and their conscience.

22. **Iggrot Moshe YD, 4:26, R. Moshe Feinstein** (trans. Dov Linzer)

However, in practice you should now, that the mitzvah of “and you shall love the *ger*,” requires us to bring them close and to be lenient regarding all these things. Therefore, after great thought it appears that we need not consider such appointments in our time like appointments of authority...