

“VEX” (deport) NOT THE STRANGER

What does that Hebrew word really mean?

“And if a stranger [immigrant] sojourn [come to live] with thee in your land, **ye shall not vex [deport] him.**” Lev 19:33

Lev 19:34 *But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you*, [whom you would hardly deport!], and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

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This chapter offers detailed, comprehensive evidence that Leviticus 19:33 is appropriately translated “you shall not deport the immigrant”. Actually this command is already clear from verse 34 which commands that the same “stranger” be treated the same as a natural born citizen. As long as we don’t deport natural born citizens, we can’t deport immigrants and obey this command.

Nevertheless, even though this long study of verse 33 is unnecessary because its conclusion is obvious from verse 34, here is the long study anyway, to prove that even if there were no verse 34, verse 33 commands us to not deport immigrants.

Some say “ger”, the Hebrew word translated “stranger” in this verse, means an immigrant with our permission to be here. “Nekhar” are immigrants who didn’t get our permission; this verse doesn’t protect them. So if “deport” is the right translation, they would say God approves of us deporting anyone we want to deport; God just doesn’t want us to deport the folks we don’t want to deport. ? Why would God make a command out of that?! Or if the Hebrew yanah means “mistreat” as most modern translations say, the interpretation is even worse: it’s OK for us to “mistreat” the people we have chosen to not give permission to live among us.

“Vex, “oppress” and “mistreat” are the words used by various translators for yanah. Exodus 22:21 says “Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him” (KJV) as if these two Hebrew terms describe distinct prohibited actions instead of being synonyms describing the same or overlapping actions. Other translations likewise turn these terms into indistinct synonyms. The implication of distinctness in Exodus 22:21 invites us to explore what yanah might more specifically mean.

Here are the translations of these two distinct terms showing their indistinctness in the minds of translators:

Vex-oppress, Darby, KJV, Webster.

Wrong-oppress, ASV, ESV, NET, NASB95, NRSV, RSV, ISV, JPS,

Exploit-oppress, HCSB

abuse-take advantage of, Message
cheat-hurt, NCV, ERV
treat badly-beat them down, Nlrv
mistreat-oppress, NIV, NKJV, NLT, TNIV, GNB,
oppress-crush, YLT
maltreat-afflict, ABP
do no wrong-do not be hard on him, BBE
hurt-afflict, Brenton
mistreat-abuse, CEV
molest-afflict, DRB

Did I hear me right? Did I just hear me say the KJV “vex” should actually be translated “deport”? Even though I know not one Hebrew dictionary acknowledges this meaning of the Hebrew word **יָנַח** (yanah), and not one of the 23 translations before me chooses, for this verse, a meaning of this word anything as specific as “deport”?

Why would I say such a thing? Why, indeed, would I go on to say every Hebrew dictionary is wrong in not listing *displacement* as at least a possible definition of this Hebrew word? Me, whose major in college was playing trumpet?

(“Displace” means “1. to put out of the usual or proper place; to remove from its place; as, the books in the library are all displaced. 2. To remove from any state, condition, office, or dignity; as, to displace an officer. ...displaced person, a person left homeless in a foreign country as a result of war.” [Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, 1979.]

(Synonyms: “forcible, involuntary removal; dispossession; denial of rights; limiting freedom; shunning; restraining; constriction; crimp, crush, squeeze, pinch, strangle, cramp, circumscribe, repress, suppress, confine, keep under, smother, shackle, bridle, muzzle, confine, cage, subjugate, evict, drive out, drive away.”)

Not content with so brazen a position, why would I go on to say the evidence shows *displacement* is not merely a *possible* definition of the word, but the *primary* definition, according to the Word of God?

But before I ask me to answer that, consider the significance of such claims, should they actually be true. If God actually tells Israel not to deport immigrants who come here to live, and if the United States was indeed founded on the Word of God, its very laws patterned after the categories of law found in the Bible, and if the 1854 Hunt v. Hunt ruling of the Iowa Supreme Court was correct in saying “man’s laws cannot be very far out of the way, when they are in accord with the laws of God”, and if Christians today can do no better than to apply Biblical principles to their public policy, and if Christians turn away from God by enacting laws which flagrantly defy the spirit of Scripture, why, then Numerical Limitations that deport 99% of the immigrants playing Musical Chairs for a line to get into are a sin against God as well as a perversion of the “Rule of Law” in America!

My head is swimming in all those conditional clauses. Let me repeat the bottom line: if Leviticus 19:33 actually commands us not to deport immigrants who come here to live, then our Numerical Limitations (often called immigration quotas) are a sin against God!

(That interpretation wouldn’t mean we should let in criminals and terrorists. Ezra and Nehemiah are Biblical precedent for a “fence” with “watch lists” for criminals and terrorists. God’s welcome is for nonviolent immigrants whose worst “crime” is seeking freedom and hard work. Exodus 12:49 specifies that God’s welcome is for those willing to obey the same laws which citizens obey. Luke 11:46 specifies that this willingness to obey the same laws does not spiritually obligate immigrants to carry terrible burdens imposed by laws from which the lawmakers have exempted themselves.)

If Leviticus 19:33 actually tells us not to deport immigrants, why, that would be consistent with what Jesus said that we don’t want to take seriously either: Matthew 25:41 “Then shall he say also unto

them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: ...43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: 45 ...Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.” Notice there is no controversy over whether these words of Jesus are for us today, like I am introducing over the words of Moses. There is just controversy over whether Jesus really meant what He said or was just being melodramatic to make some obscure point.

In other words, Jesus warned that if our hearts are too cold to take immigrants in, God will find a way to warm them up. That’s even stronger than Moses’ law! Not only is deportation a sin of commission, for which the penalty, according to other verses, is deportation by foreign invaders who come and take you into slavery in a far away land, but *not* taking in an immigrant is a sin of *omission*, for which the penalty is eternity in Hell Fire! Surely God is not serious! Surely this is just a metaphor of something, or an insertion by Scribe B, or one of those verses that “we will understand when we get to heaven”! Surely God is not suggesting that we risk receiving this understanding in Hell!

With that fiery introduction, we are ready to consider the evidence whether, indeed, the primary meaning of **יָנַח** (yanah) is indeed *displacement*, despite unanimous scholarly opposition.

The evidence is in five categories:

1. The opinion of translators. **יָנַח** (yanah) is written in 21 verses. In one of them, Ezekiel 46:18, 24 of 24 translations choose English words that mean *involuntary removal, or displacement*. The fact that translators universally translate the word that way, in this verse, proves they think this meaning is at least one of the ways God uses the word, and therefore ought to be listed in Hebrew lexicons as at least one of yanah’s possible meanings.

2. The failure of dictionaries to account for the verse which forces yanah to mean *involuntary removal*. None of the definitions given in 5 Hebrew dictionaries make sense in this verse. The mission of a dictionary is to explain what a word means in every way that it is used. The dictionaries fail this mission in not listing *displacement* as at least a *possible* meaning of yanah, to explain how Ezekiel 46:18 makes sense.

3. Context studies of all the verses in the Bible that contain the verb **יָנַח** (yanah), showing that in none of them is any other meaning *but* displacement indicated or specified. 14 of the verses in which God wrote them use them as if *displacement* is not an incidental or optional meaning but is the *primary action* consistently described. The 21 verses are in three categories: (1) 6 verses whose contexts do not specify any actions to which the word might allude, (2) the verse in which no other translation of the word, besides *displacement*, makes any sense, and (3) 14 verses whose contexts specify various kinds of *involuntary removal* to which the word clearly alludes. The 14 verses still make a *little* sense when the word is taken as a general description of some unspecified wrong, but they would greater sense had the translators allowed the word to describe, specifically, the actions being condemned to which they clearly allude.

These three categories of evidence confirm that the *letter* of Leviticus 19:33 describes *displacement*. The following two categories of evidence confirm that the *spirit* of God’s prohibition extends to *displacement*.

4. Logic. As the U.S. Supreme Court has stated, it is irrational to religiously “guarantee” a few “due process” rights to unauthorized residents, and then deny them the most fundamental right, Liberty, the right to be here, without which they cannot enjoy any other right. (See www.Saltshaker.US/HispanicHope/Deportation-Brief.htm) By the same logic, when we see that God so strongly condemns a small wrong, we dare not assume He winks at a huge wrong. This logic repudiates the translation of **יָנַח** (yanah) as meaning only some lesser offense against immigrants, and not also one of the greatest possible offenses.

5. Studies of the treatment of immigrants by God’s people from Genesis through the Gospels, showing that God expects us to treat immigrants as if we were entertaining God, and that of all the cruelties we might heap upon God or “the least of these My brethren”, deportation must surely be the

most spiritually hazardous to ourselves.

It is very difficult, reading how Moses said to treat immigrants, to continue believing we Christians today are so morally superior to Moses with all his wars and slaves. It makes one almost want to study more carefully what Moses wrote about war and slaves, to see if we have been accusing him justly, or if in fact there might even be moral lessons for us there. Well, no, let's not get THAT radical. But just read what Moses said about immigration.

Psalms 146:9 says God protects immigrants and blocks the wicked, with grammar that identifies the wicked as those who hurt immigrants.

Leviticus 19:18, compared with v. 34, makes the commandment to “love your neighbor” equal in moral power to the commandment to “love the immigrant”; while Jesus, in Luke 10:25-37 and Matthew 22:35-40, says the two are not only equal in force, but they are the same commandment: the immigrant *is* your neighbor. Jesus identifies our “neighbor” as the foreigner who, despite our dehumanization of him, still serves us patiently.

God expects us not only to tolerate “travelers” passing through, but we are to *provide for their needs* or be punished by God (Dt 23:3-4) and man (1 Sam 25:2-38, Judg 8:5-17)! We are supposed to wash their feet (Gn. 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; Jdg. 19:21) and anoint them with oil (Ps. 23:5; Am. 6:6; cf. Lk. 7:46). That principle applied to today would mean we are to give them a hot bath, and maybe a meal and a haircut.

We are to welcome with a handshake. (The NT mentions a kiss of welcome. I hope God is OK with a handshake.)

We are to “take in” immigrants, to whatever extent we want God to think we are willing to take Him in, Matthew 25:39-45.

Hospitality [not excluding immigrants] is a qualification of a pastor (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8). It is an expectation of every layman (1 Pet. 4:9), in a spirit of “brotherly love” (Heb 13:1-2).

If you are a senior citizen who has never housed an immigrant, God doesn't even think you deserve to receive Social Security! (1 Timothy 5:10).

1. The opinion of translators.

יָנָה (yanah) is written by God in 21 verses. In one of them, 24 of 24 translations choose English words that mean *involuntary removal*. The fact that translators universally translate the word that way, in this verse, proves they agree this meaning is at least one of the ways God uses the word, and therefore ought to be listed in Hebrew lexicons as at least one of yanah's possible meanings.

In **Ezekiel 46:18**, 24 translations translate יָנָה (yanah) as *involuntary removal*. “Thrust(ing) them...out” is the most common translation (Darby, ASV, AV 1873, ESV, ESV OT, Rev. Int., KJV, NASB 95, Geneva, and NRSV); “I don't want my people losing their property and having to move away” (Book); “evicting them” (HCSB); “so that none of my people will be driven from their property” (NAB); “dispossessing them of their land”, (Message); “oppressively removing them” (NET); “forcing them out of their land” (NCV); “driving them off their property” (NIV); “evicting them from their property” (NKJV); “evicted from their property” (NLT); “dispossessed of his property” (RSV); “so that My people are not scattered each from his possession” (YLT). Basic English: “the ruler is not to take the heritage of any of the people, driving them out of their property”. Webster's Revised KJV: “the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression, to thrust them out of their possession”. Young's Literal: “the prince doth not take of the inheritance of the people to oppress them, out of their possession.” The LXX (Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, translates “each of the people out of his full possession” [ὁ λαός (the people) μου ἕκαστος (each one) ἐκ (out of) τῆς (the) κατασκέσεως (to have in full and secure possession) αὐτοῦ (his).]

(Where I list several translations after a phrase, there may be word form variations I do not list.)

Here's the verse in the KJV: "Ezekiel 46:18 **Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression, to thrust [displace, evict] them out of their possession; but he shall give his sons inheritance out of his own possession: that my people be not scattered every man from his possession.**"

Here's what the verse looks like in Hebrew – yanah is in red:

וְלֹא־יִקַּח הַנְּשִׂיאַ מִנְחֻלַּת הָעָם לְהוֹנִיחַם מֵאֲחֻזָּתָם מֵאֲחֻזָּתוֹ יִנְחַל אֶת־בְּנָיו
לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִפְצְוּ עַמִּי אִישׁ מֵאֲחֻזָּתוֹ:

I have translated yanah differently than any definition found in any dictionary, and people say, "what authority do you have for twisting words to mean something entirely different than any dictionary knows about?" But every translator has done the same thing in translating Ezekiel 46:18. Will you accuse every translator, along with me, of redefining Hebrew words to suit our prejudices? Or can you see that there is a clear contradiction between the translators and the dictionary writers?

Another instance in which translators chose words not found in 20th Century Hebrew dictionaries is the way the KJV translates 11 verses.

King James Version and Geneva translators chose an English word, for 11 of the 21 times yanah is in the Bible, that meant to force people against their will into places or conditions not of their choosing. The word was "oppress". That meaning is forgotten now, but that is what the word meant when the KJV was published.

When Noah Webster wrote the first American dictionary, the "Original American Dictionary of the English Language", in 1828, two centuries after the KJV was published in 1611, Noah understood "oppress" to include the idea of "overpowering". To "overpower" people means to force conditions upon them which they are resisting with all their might.

The first English dictionary was published in England in 1755 by Samuel Johnson. He called it the "Dictionary of the English Language". He defined "oppress" as "to crush by hardships; subdue."

"Overpower" and "subdue" are very close in meaning to "constrict", which is how the Greek Septuagint (LXX) translators rendered yanah, as the TWOT dictionary below explains.

Actually several modern translations choose "oppress" about as often as the KJV and Geneva do. But I'm not sure that is significant, since "oppress" seems to have lost its historical connotation of "overpowering" or "subduing". Today a hot day without an air conditioner may be considered "oppressive". Or high taxes.

Our inquiry is to decipher what translators have thought the Hebrew word means. Their opinion is important, since they are the world's experts on what Hebrew and Greek words mean. The KJV and Geneva translators thought it meant to subdue, or overpower. That is significant, because in Leviticus 19:33 where immigrants are trying to come live with us, to "overpower" or "subdue" them means to not allow them to come live with us; in other words, it means to deport them.

The reason I do not think it is significant evidence, that modern translators choose the same word "oppress", is that today the word has lost those connotations: so that their choice if the same word is not evidence that they think the Hebrew yanah means anything like overpowering. I will have to settle for the evidence they provide me, in their translations of Ezekiel 46:18.

2. Hebrew dictionaries fail (generally) to account for

Ezekiel 46:18 which forces yanah to mean *displacement*. None of the definitions given in 5 Hebrew dictionaries make sense in this verse, unless you count TWOT, below, which hints at the synonym (depending on the context) "constrict". The dictionaries are in error in not providing at least an alternate definition for the word that works in this verse.

Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Harris, R. Laird ; Harris, Robert

Laird ; Archer, Gleason Leonard ; Waltke, Bruce K.: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. electronic ed. Chicago : Moody Press, 1999, c1980, S. 383, By Dr. Paul Gilchrist, Covenant College, Tennessee)*

The TWOT acknowledges “However, in Ezk 46:18 it is translated ‘to thrust them out of their inheritance.’” but it does not provide an alternate meaning consistent with that translation, to assure us the translation wasn’t a mistake. To the contrary, the “however” clause implies we might do well to question the translation. It says in effect, “here’s what the word means; however, this verse is translated differently.”

Here are TWOT excerpts:

yānā seems to be used in the sense of “doing wrong” to someone as in the Mosaic legislation which protects the rights of the *gēr* “resident alien.” Exodus 22:21 [H 20], “And you shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him” (*lāḥaṣ* “press, crush, oppress”) appending the rationale, “For you were *gērīm* in the land of Egypt.” See further Lev 19:33 where the opposite of *yānā* is to “love him as yourself.” Similarly Deut 23:16 [H 17] expresses the great king’s concern for the refugee slave, seeking asylum from a foreign land, that he not be maltreated. The Levitical legislation further protects the economic rights of people who could easily be bilked by the abuse of the year of Jubilee (Lev 25:14, 17). In sum, covenantal stipulations forbade the maltreatment of the poor and infirm, particularly the alien, by the rich and powerful.

But there is one clue in TWOT that *yanah* means, maybe not involuntary removal, but some kind of involuntary restriction that keeps a person from something that he wants:

The [LXX](#) uses *thlībō* or *thlipsis* for *yānā* as also for several Hebrew synonyms, the most common of which is *šārar* ‘to treat someone with hostility,’ Hiphil ‘to constrict someone.’

This means that when the Septuagint, the translation of the Old Testament into Greek, translates *yanah*, it uses the same Greek word as it does for a Hebrew word meaning “to constrict”.

So how is a pattern in Greek translation of the Hebrew words relevant to anything? Why does the dictionary author think this might be helpful to our understanding of the Hebrew word? Well, it’s indirect evidence, but the fact that the Septuagint translators translate “several” Hebrew words with the same Greek word indicates they understood the Hebrew words to be very close synonyms. Why does their opinion matter? Because they lived closer to the time the Hebrew texts were written, and are more likely to be familiar with what people meant by the words back then. The fact that translators over 2,000 years ago thought *yanah* a very close synonym to a word meaning “to constrict someone” suggests that we should watch for evidence that *yanah* has connotations in that vicinity. The dictionary writer doesn’t specify whether “to constrict someone” is meant in a positive sense, such as a parent constricting his toddler’s freedom to tumble down the stairs, or in a negative sense; but to whatever extent this connotation transfers to *yanah*, it will be its negative sense, since every translator of *yanah* agrees it is negative in every verse.

“To constrict someone”, in a negative sense, is a way of saying “to deny someone his rights”. Depending on what someone wants, “constricting” him can be the same as “displacing” him. For example, if someone wants to come and live as your neighbor, in your country, the way to “constrict” him would be to deport him.

Strong’s Concordance acknowledges that “(thrust out by) oppress(-ing)” is one of the ways KJV translates *yanah*. This translation certainly makes sense in Ezekiel 46:18. Here is the

verse – the words in brackets translate yanah:

Ezekiel 46:18 Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by [**oppression, to thrust them out**] of their possession;

But none of the word choices offered in the Strong's definition make sense in this verse. Here is the verse again, with the KJV translation of yanah, in brackets, replaced by the Strong's definition. See if you can make sense out of either of the word possibilities:

Ezekiel 46:18 Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by [**to rage or be violent: by implication, to suppress, to maltreat**] of their possession;

Swanson, James: *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)*. electronic ed. Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, S. DBLH 3561, #2

There is no hint in this definition of anything remotely like the *displacement* needed to make sense of Ezekiel 46:18, even though it lists the verse:

3561 יָנָה (*yānā(h)*): [y](#); ≡ [Str](#) 3238; [TWOT](#) 873—**1**. [LN](#) 20.31-20.60 ([qal](#) [impf.](#) [lcp.](#)) **oppress, crush, i.e., destroy an object completely** (Ps 74:8+), note: for another parsing as a noun, see 5769 or 3435; **2**. [LN](#) 88.126-88.134 ([hif](#)) **mistreat, take advantage of, i.e., cause the oppression of another weaker person, with a focus that this violates a moral standard** (Ex 22:20[[EB](#) 21]; Lev 19:33; 25:14, 17; Dt 23:17[[EB](#) 16]; Isa 49:26; Jer 22:3; Eze 18:7, 12, 16; 22:7, 29; 45:8; 46:18+), see also domain [LN](#) 39.45–39.46

Enhanced Strong's Lexicon, electronic edition, 1996

No hint of *displacement* here, either, in the definition portion, even though it acknowledges that the KJV translates it “thrust out” once:

3238 יָנָה, יִנְיָה [yanah /yaw-naw/] [y](#). A primitive root; [TWOT](#) 873; [GK](#) 3435 and 3561; 21 occurrences; [AV](#) translates as “oppress” 11 times, “vex” four times, “destroy” once, “oppressor” once, “proud” once, “do wrong” once, “oppression” once, and “thrust out”. **1** to oppress, suppress, treat violently, maltreat, vex, do wrong. **1a** (Qal) to oppress, suppress. **1b** (Hiphil) to treat violently, maltreat.

Notice it adds “oppress” to the original Strong's definition. Likewise several translations use the word as often as KJV uses it. However, as I said before, that is less significant, since the word does not mean the same now as when the KJV was published. Had the original Strong's added “oppress” to its definition, that would have provided evidence in my favor, since Noah Webster's original dictionary was, then, still the standard of what words mean. But alas, I must make my case without such assistance.

The Online Bible not only defines the words, using the Enhanced Strong's Lexicon, but the forms of the verbs. The stem of yanah, we learn, is “Hiphel”, meaning to cause. In other words, not “don't deport”, but “don't cause to be deported.” Thus it is not only the USCIS agent that physically deports an “illegal” who falls under God's judgment, but also the hot-tempered complaints about “illegals” on the lips of average Americans which cause their politicians to so authorize agents. (James 3, Matthew 12:33-36) The mood of yanah is “imperfect”, meaning it describes not only what you did, but how you did it. This explains that “deport”, alone, is only part of the definition: the rest of the definition is the rights-denying manner in which deportation occurs.

3. Context studies

The most direct way to learn the meaning of a word is the way dictionary authors use, and the way toddlers use as they first learn the meanings of words: from how words are used in different contexts. By seeing how several different verses uses *yanah*, we can learn more about what the word means.

Word context studies are something we do every day, though we don't normally give it a name. Suppose you are buying your first computer and it promises a **hard drive with 80 gigabytes**, and you are trying to figure out what a hard drive is. So you look for other contexts of the phrase for clues. You go down the row and find that every computer has a hard drive, so you add to your definition, "something that every computer has". You look on a software boxes, and read "Hardware and Software Requirements...Hard disk with at least ___ megabytes of free space." So now your definition reads "something that every computer has, that has space on it measurable in megabytes, and sometimes in gigabytes." When you get email with attachments you see the length of attachments is given in kilobytes, megabytes, and sometimes just bytes. You notice text and web pictures take up kilobytes, large pictures and sound megabytes, a couple of minutes of video can take a gigabyte, and your definition grows.

The process you go through to decipher these terms has a name for it: a "word context study". It is the use of deductive and inductive reasoning to narrow down what a word must mean in the mind of its users.

We can search farther back in memory for a simpler illustration. You are one year old. After much repetition you begin to notice that "da-da" is most often heard in association with a tall moving object that gives you the most rides, "ma-ma" is associated with the almost as tall object who most often feeds you, and "pee-pee" is associated with a short unmoving object whose usefulness you have yet to determine. Thus the meanings of all words are determined, ultimately, by "context".

Here are definitions of the word "context" from a variety of authorities, to help settle any doubt about the critical role of context in establishing the definitions of words:

www.thefreedictionary.com: con-text *n.* **1.** The part of a text or statement that surrounds a particular word or passage and determines its meaning. **2.** The circumstances in which an event occurs; a setting.

<http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=context>: discourse that surrounds a language unit and helps to determine its interpretation; the set of facts or circumstances that surround a situation or event; "the historical context"

Wikipedia: [Context \(language use\)](#), the relevant constraints of the communicative situation that influence language use, language variation and discourse. **Context** is a notion used in the language sciences ([linguistics](#), [sociolinguistics](#), [discourse analysis](#), [pragmatics](#), [semiotics](#), etc.) in two different ways, namely as verbal context -- social context.

Verbal context refers to surrounding text or talk of an expression (word, sentence, conversational turn, speech act, etc.). The idea is that verbal context influences the way we understand the expression. Hence the norm not to cite people 'out of context'. Since much contemporary linguistics takes texts, discourses or conversations as its object of analysis, the modern study of 'verbal context' takes place in terms of the analysis of discourse structures and their mutual relationships, for instance the [coherence](#) relation between sentences.

Traditionally, in [sociolinguistics](#), **social contexts** were defined in terms of objective social 'variables', such as those of class, gender or race. More recently, social contexts tend to be defined in terms of the [social identity](#) being construed and displayed in text and talk by language users.

In his new multidisciplinary theory of context, [Teun A. van Dijk](#) rejects objectivist

concepts of social context and shows that relevant properties of social situations can only influence language use as subjective *definitions of the situation* by the participants, as represented and ongoingly updated in specific [mental models](#) of language users: *context models*.

Termiumplus. Context: The part of a text or statement that surrounds a particular word and determines its meaning. A type of textual support on a terminology record that provides information about the semantic features of a concept or the use of a term. Examples: defining context; explanatory context; associative context. www.termiumplus.gc.ca/didacticiel_tutorial/english/glossary/context.html

Essex. Context: all the factors which systematically determine the form, meaning, appropriateness or translation of linguistic expressions. One can distinguish between linguistic context (provided by the preceding utterances or text) and non-linguistic context (including shared assumptions and information). www.essex.ac.uk/linguistics/clmt/MTbook/HTML/node98.html

The context of yanah in Leviticus 19:33 does not, by itself, *require* the definition “deport”. That is, were there no other contexts pressuring us to define yanah as *dispossession*, this verse would not rule out every other meaning. Had we only this verse, we might wonder if yanah means some lesser harm than deportation. But once we suspect such a meaning from other verses, we may look for its appropriateness here, and indeed we find it enhances our understanding of this verse.

Leviticus 19:33 And if a stranger [immigrant] sojourn [come to live] with thee in your land, ye shall not X him. 34 But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

What is the meaning of “X”? If we had no other verses to provide clues, verse 34 indicates “X” is something we wouldn’t want done to ourselves. Verse 33 provides the physical scenario: an immigrant coming to live with us. Nothing else is said of the immigrant’s needs or desires, other than coming here of his own volition to live with us. From these facts alone, we would reasonably deduce that “X” must mean some interference of an immigrant’s ability to live with us, which we would not want done to ourselves were we in his shoes.

It takes more than that to prove that’s what “X” means in this verse, when we have clues from other verses. But if we find that at least some other contexts likewise describe some form of dispossession, that would be strong evidence that we should so interpret “X” here.

“Do not deport immigrants”, say Lev 19:33 and Ex 22:21?

Summary of the contextual evidence: 14 of the 21 Verses containing yanah (that’s 67%, enough to break cloture in the U.S. Senate) have contexts that specify some manner of *dispossession or involuntary removal* as what God condemns, and there is no verse that specifies or even suggests any other meaning. This begs the question why all translators (except possibly the KJV, as explained above) choose to translate yanah as some *unspecified* wrong in these two verses. Even if the meaning of yanah can be established as a general, *unspecified* wrong, at least the fact that whenever a context is specified, it is *always* dispossession/involuntary removal, proves that *dispossession* is a strong “connotation” or implied meaning. The 14 verses in which context is specified are: Deut 23:17, Eze 45:8, Lev 25:14, 17, Is 49:26, Jer 25:38, Zeph 3:1, Jer 46:16, Jer 50:16, Ps 74:8, Jer 22:3, Eze 22:7, 29, Ps 123:4

1. Deuteronomy 23:17, Deport/dispossess, uses the same Hebrew word, yanah, to mean to *dispossess/involuntarily remove* an escaped slave from his liberty on land near you which he has chosen, leaving him to be recaptured into slavery: 16 “*Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the*

*servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: 17 He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not **deport** [יָנַח] yanah; KJV “oppress”] him.”*

Notice that the scenario is not to “thrust out by oppressing”, suggesting such bad treatment that the immigrant finally chooses to voluntarily leave. No other “oppression” is specified or even suggested than the “oppression” of *involuntary removal*. Meaning, the direct, primary action is thrusting out, or *involuntarily removing*. Certainly the *effect* of this removal action is generally oppressive. But the context supports that as only an indirect meaning. The direct action specified by the context is *involuntary removal*. Notice this order in all the verses that follow.

Other translations: “**oppress**” (Darby, ASV, AV 1873, KJV, NET, NIV, NKJV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, YLT); “**wrong**” (ESV, ESV OT Rev. Int.); “**mistreat**” (HCSB, NASB95, NCV); “**take advantage**” (Message); θλίψεις (Septuigint: “**trouble, distress, oppression, tribulation**”)

This verse, applied to us today, says if an immigrant flees from bad conditions to your town, don't force him back. Let him live in your town. Let him buy property wherever he likes.

2. Ezekiel 45:8, Evict/dispossess, like 46:18, uses yanah to describe government confiscation of private property, leaving homeowners homeless, *dispossessed/involuntarily removed* from their homes where they had enjoyed peace, safety, and liberty. (Verse 7 gave the maximum amount of land which the executive branch of government could take.)

It therefore seems strange that most translations of 45:8 treat yanah as some unspecified wrong – the same translations that specify, in 46:18 (above), that the wrong being condemned is involuntary removal.

As I said before, the exception is the KJV and Geneva. They use the same word, “oppress”, as several other translations, but the word didn't mean exactly the same when the KJV and Geneva used it.

The King James Version translates 45:8, “In the land shall be his possession in Israel: and my princes shall no more **oppress** [יָנַח] yanah; “evict/dispossess”) my people; and the rest of the land shall they give to the house of Israel according to their tribes.” Other translations choosing “**oppress**” include Darby, ASV, AV 1873, ESV, ESV OT Rev. Int., HCSB, NET, NASB95, NIV, NKJV, NLT, NRSV, RSV, YLT. Then there is the Message, with “**bully**”, NCV, “**be cruel**”, LXX ἀφηγούμενοι.

Here are the two verses together, Ezekiel 45:8 and 46:18, with verse 9 to fill in more context: Eze 45:8 *In the land shall be his possession in Israel: and my princes shall no more oppress [dispossess, evict: יָנַח] yanah] my people; and the rest of the land shall they give to the house of Israel according to their tribes. 9 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord GOD.Ezekiel 46:18 Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression [dispossession: יָנַח] yanah], to thrust them out [evict them from: יָנַח] yanah] of their possession; but he shall give his sons inheritance out of his own possession: that my people be not scattered every man from his possession.*

3, 4. Leviticus 25:14, 17: Dispossession, Confiscation. yanah is given as the opposite of two things: correctly calculating how long you can rent a man's home, and giving the man back his home when your rent is up. God expresses the pair of opposites in this order: “Give him back his home – don't yanah him”; and “calculate your rental term accurately – don't yanah him.” The context therefore supports two possible meanings of yanah: specific *dispossession/confiscation*, or general *cheating*. That is, either meaning works in both sentences: it makes sense to say “Give him back his home; don't cheat him...calculate your rental term accurately; don't cheat him”, and it makes sense to say “Give him back his home; don't dispossess him...calculate your rental term accurately; don't dispossess him.” But almost every translator prefers to translate yanah as the general statement about cheating, rather than

the specific statement about *what* the man was cheated out of. “**ye shall not overreach**” (DARBY), “**ye shall not wrong**” (ASV), “**ye shall not oppress**” (AV 1873, KJV, Geneva), “**you shall not wrong**” (ESV, ESV OT Rev. Int., RSV, NET, NASB95), “**do not cheat**” (HCSB, Message, NCV, NRSV), “**do not take advantage**” (NIV, NLT), “**you shall not oppress**” (NKJV, YLT), “**do not deal unfairly**” (NAB), “**a fair price shall be arrived at**” (Book). Verse 17 says almost the same, and is translated almost the same.

The context is their economic equivalent of our home mortgages, or multi-year employment contracts such as for sports and movie stars, or military enlistment. God is saying, don't yanah, but give the man back his home, or his freedom, when the contract is paid off: “*13 In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession. 14 And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour; or buyest ought of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not **dispossess** [**נָחַ**] yanah; KJV “oppress”] one another: 15 According to the number of years after the jubile thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee: 16 According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it: for according to the number of the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee. 17 Ye shall not therefore **evict** [**נָחַ**] yanah; KJV “oppress”] one another; but thou shalt fear thy God: for I am the LORD your God.”*

The specific action is *involuntary removal*, removing landowners from their property. Dispossession. Confiscation. One may certainly describe unjustified confiscation as “cheating”, “oppressive”, or “unfair”, but where context provides a choice between a specific or a general meaning, the specific meaning is more informative.

For example, “Pete threw the thing” is less informative, and a worse translation, than “Pete threw the ball”, if the final word can mean either “thing” or “ball”, and the context is a ball game.

But even if other contexts pressure us to adopt the general, less informative meaning, which they don't, we should acknowledge the specific meaning as at least a “connotation” of the word, as long as other contexts do not discourage that – which they don't.

5. Isaiah 49:26, Displace, Exile. yanah describes a conqueror *dispossessing/involuntarily removing* his captives away from their homes, where they had enjoyed liberty: “*Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? 25 But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: [fulfilled by the three waves of returning Jews, along with their Temple treasures] for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. [fulfilled by Daniel's reign as defacto emperor of the Babylonian realm during almost all the Babylonian occupation] 26 And I will feed them that **exile** [**נָחַ**] yanah; KJV “oppress”] thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: [fulfilled by the Persion invasion of Babylon the night Daniel read the Handwriting on the Wall] and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. [fulfilled by the proclamations of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3:29 and chapter 4; Darius the Mede in about 537 BC, Daniel 6; the emperor Cyrus, in 536 BC, Ezra 1:1-4; and King Ahasuerus, husband of Queen Esther, in 479 BC, Esther 8.]*

Isaiah lived during righteous King Hezekiah's reign. Hezekiah's rebellious great great grandson saw the violence prophesied in this passage, that is, until the Babylonian conqueror Nebuchadnezzar plucked out his eyes, Jeremiah 39:6-7, in 588 BC.

Yet God sheltered His remnant even while in captivity, as Isaiah 49 prophesied, beginning with God raising up Daniel to be ruler next to Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, officially, but in many respects, the defacto ruler over Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar had thought he would extend his rule over the people of God, but God used it to extend the authority of God's people over Nebuchadnezzar and his entire world empire!

Daniel lived to see the part of this prophecy fulfilled about God feeding the conquerors with

their own flesh; Daniel 5-6 describes the overthrow of Babylon by the armies of Cyrus, king of Persia, (born 599 BC, became King of Persia in 559 BC) who appointed Darius the Mede as Viceroy over the lands from Babylon to Palestine. Darius reigned only from BC 538-536, but in that short time he made Daniel chief administrator of the new kingdom. It was this Darius who was tricked into throwing Daniel into a lion's den. After Daniel's miraculous rescue for which Darius himself had prayed, Darius commanded his whole realm, with a law that cannot be altered, to "tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God....", Daniel 6.

After Darius' Viceroyship ended, Cyrus directly ruled over those lands including Palestine, which is why Ezra 1:1 calls BC 536 the "first year of his reign". Daniel "prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian." Daniel 6:28. Daniel was probably 85 in 536 BC when Cyrus, obviously influenced by Daniel, sent the first wave of Israelis back to Jerusalem, as described in the first chapters of Ezra. (Dates are taken from Eastman's Bible Dictionary.) With them went 42,360 Israelis, 7,330 servants including 200 singers, 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, 6,720 asses, and all the temple treasures. (Ezra 2). Thus Isaiah 49 was completely, wonderfully, miraculously fulfilled.

But that was not the end of God's protection in far away lands. 57 years later, 479 BC, Jews were still living in the palace that ruled over Palestine, in Shushan; and God raised up Esther and Mordecai to rule over the whole realm – again – protecting both those back home and those abroad.

20 years later, 459 BC, Ezra led the second wave of returnees. 14 years later, in 445 BC, Nehemiah came.

Conquerors kill and maim wantonly, destroy property, culture, and economies, and enslave the survivors, besides removing them from their land. All these things are specified as the focus of Isaiah 49:26, which uses *yanah* to describe them. All Bible versions translate it as "oppress", even though that is quite an understatement of these terrors. "Oppress" is a weak translation of a word that means these things. "**Exile**" captures them all. "Spoil", from the Geneva Bible, captures them pretty well, except that readers today are unfamiliar with the wanton violent displacement meant by the word. And of course the KJV used the word "oppress" back when it meant to "overpower" and "subdue".

Yet all translators prefer the far more general "**oppress**" as the meaning of *yanah* (Darby, ASV, AV 1873, ESV, ESV OT Rev Int, HCSB, KJV, NET, NASB 95, NIV, NAB, NKJV, NRSV, RSV, YLT) "**enemies**" (Message, NLT, Book), "**those who trouble you**" (NCV), "**spoil**" (Geneva).

The exile of Isaiah 49:26 was accomplished with bloodthirsty soldiers, while the evictions of Leviticus 25:14, 17 were accomplished with bloodthirsty lawyers. The Lev 25 evictions were motivated by lost for property, while the Is 49 exile was motivated by lust for property and slaves. *Dispossession/Involuntary removal* is common to both passages.

However, the general secondary meaning is not as common to both passages. "Cheating" came to some translator's minds in Lev 25, but that doesn't fit this scenario of conquerors ravaging your land. One may certainly describe unjustified confiscation of a house, or a homeland, as "oppressive", or "unfair", or "naughty", but where context provides a choice between a specific or a general meaning, the specific meaning is more informative. "Those who exiled you" helps the reader grasp what troubles God more than "those who were naughty". *yanah* is used to describe direct, specific actions which include *involuntarily removal*. Only indirectly is the word used to describe some more general statement of the wrong, such as "oppression".

6. Jeremiah 25:38, Exile, evacuation, displacement, dispossession. Deporters, Uprooters. *yanah* describes conquerors as "deporters" who came and marched away all the inhabitants captive, away from their homes and liberties, leaving the land desolate: "*He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion: for their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the displacement, [נָחַ* *yanah, KJV "oppressor"] and because of his fierce anger.*"

Other translations choosing "oppressor" include Darby, AV 1873, ESV, NET, NKJV, YLT, Young's Literal, Webster's Revised KJV, Geneva. Then there is "torn to pieces" (Message), "terrible

war” (NCV), “oppressing sword” (ASV, NASB95), “sword of the oppressor” (NIV, RSV, ESV OT Rev. Int.), “sword of the enemy” (NLT), “cruel sword” (NRSV, Basic English), [the Hebrew doesn’t mention any sword], Geneva Calvin note: “or do him wrong”.

However, the following translations at least inform us *involuntary removal* of the citizens from their land had occurred, by letting the rest of the verse tell us the land was made “**desolate**”: Darby, AV 1873, HCSB, KJV, NIV, NKJV, NLT, YLT. Almost as clear is the report that the land was laid “**waste**”, by ESV, ESV OT Rev. Int., NET, NRSV, RSV.

A clue that yanah can’t refer to a human “oppressor”, so it must refer to the action taken (evacuation), is that the Hebrew word, in this verse, takes the feminine form. “Feminine segments refer to the female when there is a distinction made between male and female.” (Anderson-Forbes Analysis of the Hebrew Bible.) None of Israel’s conquerors were women.

7. Zephaniah 3:1, drives away, casts out, vomits out, dispossesses. *Woe to her that is filthy* [Heb: who puffs out his chest in pride] *and polluted*, [Heb: smeared with feces] *to the* [נדה] yanah; KJV “oppressing”] *city that dispossesses the poor!*

Or, “**Woe to the city that puffs out its chest in pride, rolls in feces, and vomits out the poor!**”

Zephaniah 3:4 identifies this “oppressing city” as Jerusalem. Therefore the manner in which Jerusalem is accused of “oppressing” must be the ways in which God has previously accused Israel of yanah-ing its own people: evicting mortgagees, deporting immigrants, shunning widows and orphans. It *dispossesses* people, *removing* them from their rights. It labels immigrants, the poor, widows, orphans, crippled, etc. as “outcasts”, and drives them away from before its cruel face.

Jesus listed the principal wickedness of Jerusalem as involuntarily removing its prophets from its streets, and as actually driving out or “deporting” God: *Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!*

Yet no translation captures this *involuntary removal* of this context. Translations: “**oppressing city**” (Darby, ASV, AV 1873, ESV, ESV OT Rev. Int., HCSB, KJV, NKJV, NRSV, RSV, YLT, WRKJV), “**city of violence and crime**” (NLT), “**city of oppressors**” (NIV), “**stubborn city of Jerusalem, which hurts its own people**” (NCV), “**tyrannical city**” (NASB 95, NAB), “**city filled with oppressors**” (NET), “**home of oppressors-Sewer City**” (Message), “**cruel town**” (BBE), “**city of violence and crime**” (Book).

8. Jeremiah 46:16, Displacing, scattering, life-removing. *He made many to fall, yea, one fell upon another: and they said, Arise, and let us go again to our own people, and to the land of our nativity, from the displacing* [נדה] yanah; KJV “oppressing”] *sword.*

A sword *involuntarily removes* a soul from its body. The threat of it also *involuntarily removes* people from wherever they live. It dispossesses people of life on Earth, and everything on the Earth. It “overpowers” people. It “subdues” people. The threat of it “scatters” people from their homes.

“Maltreating” or “oppressing” is an awfully weak adjective to “sword”. “Oppression” is one of the least complaints you have as swords slash through your family. But a sword that *removes life* from your body is not only a sensible adjective, but describes the scenario of the verse, “let us go back home, to get away from the sword”.

Nevertheless, the astonishingly understated, over-generalized, “**oppressing [sword]**” is a favorite choice of translators, including Darby, ASV, AV 1873, ESV, ESV OT Rev. Int., HCSB, KJV, NASB95, YLT, RSV, NKJV, NIV, WRKJV. Others choose “**destroying sword**” (NRSV, NAB), “**sword of the enemy**”, (NLT, NCV), “**all this slaughter**” (Book), “**cruel sword**” (BBE).

Some of the translations are particularly good at capturing the urgency of the *involuntary removal* which is the context of *yanah*:

“Arise, and let us go back to our own people and to the land of our birth, because of the sword of the oppressor.” ESV OT Rev. Int.

Your rag-tag army will fall to pieces. The word is passing through the ranks, ‘Let’s get out of here while we still can. Let’s head for home and save our skins.’ The Message

I will make many stumble. They will fall over one another in their hurry to flee. They will say, ‘Get up! Let’s go back to our own people. Let’s go back to our homelands because the enemy is coming to destroy us.’ NET

“Get up! And let us go back To our own people and our native land Away from the sword of the oppressor.” NASB95

“Get up. Let’s go back to our own people and our homeland. We must get away from our enemy’s sword!” NCV

“Come, let’s go back to our people, to the land of our birth. Let’s get away from the sword of the enemy!” NLT

9. Jeremiah 50:16, displacing, scattering, says almost the same as 46:16, and is treated almost the same by translators: *Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: for fear of the **displacing** [**יָנַח**] *yanah*; KJV says “oppressing”] sword they shall turn every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land. 17 Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.*

The scenario is that Israel, taken into captivity into Babylon, flees back to Israel when Babylon is invaded. Two interesting translations that don’t even mention a sword, and a third that avoids turning *yanah* into an adjective modifying “sword”:

Destroy her farms and farmers, ravage her fields, empty her barns. And you captives, while the destruction rages, get out while the getting’s good, get out fast and run for home. The Message

Kill all the farmers who sow the seed in the land of Babylon. Kill all those who wield the sickle at harvest time. Let all the foreigners return to their own people. Let them hurry back to their own lands to escape destruction by that enemy army. NET

The Septuagint says “*away from in front of the sword*”: ἐξολεθρεύσατε σπέρμα ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος, κατέχοντα δρέπανον ἐν καιρῷ θερι ἀπὸ προσώπου μαχαίρας Ἑλληνικῆς ἕκαστος εἰς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀποστρέψουσιν καὶ ἕκαστος εἰς τὴν γῆν αὐτοῦ φεύξεται.

10. Psalm 74:8, Wipe them off the face of the earth, clear off, dispossess. *yanah* describes burning the Temple and its satellite synagogues – as if to describe *violently “thrusting out”* buildings from their assigned land. *“They said in their hearts, Let us **dispossess** [**יָנַח**] *yanah*; KJV “destroy”] them [the people and their religion] together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.”*

Who or what are the “them” who are “destroyed” (“let us destroy them together”, KJV)? Every translation says “them”, which could mean the people, or the Temple described in verse 7, or the synagogues burned down in the rest of verse 8 according to ASV, AV 1873, KJV, or the meeting places/meeting places of God/places of worship/God’s places of assembly according to YLT, RSV, NRSV, NLT, NKJV, NIV, NCV, NASB95, NET, Message, HCSB, ESV OT Rev. Int., ESV, Darby. Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary asks how “synagogues” could have been destroyed during the Babylonian *invasion*, since synagogues were not begun until afterwards, during the Babylonian *captivity*? I am curious, for the same reason, how “God’s places of worship”, plural, could be correct, also, since Moses’ law forbade any other place of worshiping God, than the Temple, singular, Deuteronomy 12! There were “high places”, as the Assyrian Rabshakeh boasted in Isaiah 36:7 that

Hezekiah had cleared off, but how could the Psalmist be grieved if *they* were destroyed? The Septuagint surprises everybody by translating “feast days”. εἶπαν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῶν ἡ συγγένεια αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό Δεῦτε καὶ κατακαύσωμεν πάσας τὰς ἐορτὰς τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς.

Geneva note: “They encouraged one another to cruelty, that not only God's people might be destroyed, but also his religion utterly in all places suppressed.”

Translators have chosen oppress, destroy, crush, subdue, make an end, to translate yanah.

11. Jeremiah 22:3, shun, dispossess, ostracize, exclude, make outcasts, uses yanah to describe treatment of immigrants, orphans, and widows. As Ezekiel 22 suggests, widows and orphans are “thrust out” in the sense of being *involuntarily removed* or *displaced* from society, and as Deuteronomy 23:16 indicates, immigrants are “thrust out” in the sense of being deported.

*Jer 22:3 Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do not **make outcasts of** [נָהַ] yanah; KJV “do no wrong”], do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.*

If “oppress” is part of God’s meaning in this verse, it is the indirect part. The scenario is to involuntarily remove uncool people from community social life: meaning, removing is the direct meaning.

Other translations: “do no wrong” (Darby, ASV, AV 1873, ESV, ESV OT Rev. Int., KJV, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, RSV, YLT, BBE, WRKJV), “do what is right” (NLT), “don’t mistreat” (NCV, NASB95), “do not exploit or mistreat” (NET), “don’t take advantage” (Message), “don’t exploit or brutalize” (HCSB),

12, 13. Ezekiel 22:7, 29 shun, ostracize, exclude, shut out, discriminated against uses yanah to describe oppression of “the fatherless and the widow” which presumably meant shun, or “thrust out” of society and all its benefits, including advice, information, and help: “7 *In thee have they set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they **ostracized** [נָהַ] yanah; KJV “vexed”] the fatherless and the widow. ... 29 The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have **shunned** [נָהַ] yanah; KJV “vexed”] the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.”*

Other translations: “vexed” (Darby, AV 1873, KJV), “oppressed” (YLT, NLT, Message, HCSB, NRKJV), “wronged” (ASV, ESV, ESV OT Rev. Int., NET, NASB95, NCV, RSV, BBE), “wronged and oppressed” (NLT), “mistreated” (NCV, NIV, NKJV).

Geneva: vexed, 12:29 violently oppressed, vexed the poor, oppressed the stranger

14. Psalm 123:4 Usurpers, Supplanters, displacers. *Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of those who have displaced us.* [נָהַ] yanah; KJV “the proud”]

The commentaries of Matthew Henry and Treasury of David note the speculation that this was written during Israel’s displacement in Babylon. Treasury of David observes that even if it was written by David, he could have written prophetically of the future displacement.

Matthew Henry: This psalm was penned at a time then the church of God was brought low and trampled upon; some think it was when the Jews were captives in Babylon, though that was not the only time that they were insulted over by the proud.

Treasury of David: It has been conjectured that this brief song, or rather sigh, may have first been heard in the days of Nehemiah, or under the persecutions of Antiochus. It may be so, but there is no evidence of it; it seems to us quite as probable that afflicted ones in all periods after David's time found this psalm ready to their hand. If it appears to describe days remote from David, it is all the more evident that the Psalmist was also a prophet, and sang what he saw in vision.

One clue that it was written during a time of expulsion from the writer's homeland is that the writer is troubled by the scorning of those that are at ease, and by their contempt. It is not likely the one who holds political power would be greatly troubled by the scorn of those without power.

Of course, David would not have had to write prophetically, to despair over his own displacement, or expulsion from his rightful place. He was driven from his own throne by his own son. Before he had a throne, he was chased by Saul 7 years.

If *yanah* indeed describes those who have driven out, or supplanted, or usurped power – those who have taken power away from the writer, then indeed “usurper”, “supplanter”, “displacer”, or even “deporter”, describing those who involuntarily remove others from their rights and liberties, makes a logical translation, consistent with every other verse implying “involuntary removal”.

Translations: “proud”, (Darby, ASV, AV 1873, ESV, ESV OT Rev. Int., HCSB, KJV, NET, NASB95, NCV, NKJV, NRSV, RSV, BBE, WRKJV), “arrogant” (Message, NIV, NLT, YLT).

I'm not sure how translators wound up thinking the word might mean “proud”, since such a translation fits no other context, and no dictionary suggests it. The only explanation I can think of is that “displacement” did not occur to them, perhaps because “do not deport him” seemed too bold a translation of Lev 19:33, and no other clue from any other verse seemed to fit, so they did a pure context definition from scratch, looking for a word that fit with “contempt”.

The 6 Verses that translate *yanah* as an unspecified wrong, where the context does not describe any specific wrong being condemned. Lev 19:33, Ex 22:21, Jer 22:3, Eze 18:7, 12, 16

The first verse on this list is the verse which inspired this study. I believe it should be translated “And if a stranger [immigrant] sojourn [come to live] with thee in your land, ye shall not vex [*deport*] him.” Lev 19:33

But no translator shares my view. So why not? If 14 out of 21 times the object of the word is specified as some sort of *forcible, involuntary removal*, not counting the one verse where all translators agree that's what it has to mean, and no verse specifies any other object, why don't they think that's what it probably means in this verse? Do they think it inconsistent with God's character to hate seeing a nation deport people just for being foreigners? Here is how translators render Leviticus 19:33:

Leviticus 19:33 “Ye shall not vex him” (KJV), “ye shall not molest him” (Darby, NAB), “ye shall not do him wrong” (ASV, ESV), “do not wrong him” (Book), “you shall not do him wrong” (NASB95, ESV OT Rev. Int., RSV), “you must not oppress him” (HCSB, NET), “don't take advantage of him” (Message), “do not mistreat” (NCV, NIV), “you shall not mistreat him” (NKJV), “do not take advantage of” (NLT), “you shall not oppress” (NRSV), “thou dost not oppress him” (YLT). The LXX says “don't press/compress/squeeze/afflict him.” (οὐ θλίψετε αὐτόν) Geneva vex.

The surrounding verses are listed later. Lesser wrongs than deportation are listed in verse 35-36, but they are separated from verse 33 by the general, but powerful, appeal to fairness in verse 34. There is no indication that *yanah*, in verse 33, describes anything in verse 35-36, but rather every indication that it is the first item on a list which continues in verse 35-36.

Leviticus 19:32 Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD. 33 And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex [deport] him. 34 But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. 35 Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment [in court], in meteyard [taxes], in weight, or in measure [do not cheat when he buys, sells, hires you, or works for you]. 36 Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land

of Egypt. 37 Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I am the LORD.

It is not possible that we could “love him [the immigrant] as thyself”, and deport him forcibly and involuntarily. Even if yanah were not a prohibition of deportation, love is.

You say, “But how could God forbid deportation in verse 33 and then appeal to the memory of Egypt where they longed to be deported?”

Remember that deportation is forcible and involuntary, just as is true of the 14 contexts where the object of yanah is specified. In the late period of their stay in Egypt, the Israelites wanted to leave, but not under pressure or with oppressive restrictions. In fact, Pharaoh twice offered an “Exodus” with oppressive conditions which Moses turned down in Exodus 10:8-11, and in 24-28.

In the early period, with Joseph in charge, the last thing they wanted to do was be forced to leave.

You say, “The Israelites were enslaved, not deported. So if God says in verse 33 and 34 ‘don’t do X to people, but remember when that was done to you in Egypt’, doesn’t that tell us that ‘X=slavery’? Isn’t God telling us, ‘don’t enslave immigrants, but remember when you were slaves in Egypt’?”

The Israelites were yanahed in a lesser sense than deportation. Their liberties were denied them. they were shut out, thrust out, removed from free society, its interaction, and benefits, more thoroughly even than widows and orphans in Jer 7:6, Zec 7:10, Mal 3:5.

Ex 22:21 Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

The context of yanah in this verse does not *require* the definition “thrust out”. That is, were there no other contexts pressuring us to define yanah as thrusting out, this verse would not suggest to us such a meaning. Once we suspect such a meaning from other verses, we may look for its appropriateness here, and indeed we find it enhances our understanding of this verse. But had we only this verse, we might suspect yanah means some lesser harm than deportation.

Exodus 22:21 provides a context of yanah that defines it as whatever we would not done to ourselves, and surely the last thing we would want done to ourselves is to be deported from the land where God has brought us. *Exodus 22:21 Thou shalt neither vex [יָנָה] yanah] a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.*

It is the same with our final 3 verses.

Here are the remaining verses in which yanah appears. Their contexts are silent on whether the word means “thrust out” in any sense, but certainly no verse is diminished in sensibility, or rendered confusion, by taking “thrust out” as the primary action of the word:

Eze 18:7, 12, 16 7 [if a man be just] And hath not oppressed [יָנָה] yanah] any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; ... **Eze 18:12** [but if his son] Hath oppressed [יָנָה] yanah] the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, ... **Eze 18:16** [but if the grandson] Neither hath oppressed [יָנָה] yanah] any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment,

Normally the English word “vex”, according to English dictionaries, does not mean anything like “deport” or “thrust out” or “drive out” or “exclude” or “remove”. But in the Chicago Tribune 9/14/7, page one, a story was titled “Story of Abraham can vex the faithful”. It was about how the Jewish New Year Scripture is Abraham willing to obey God’s command to sacrifice his son Isaac. Of

course God was testing Abraham's obedience, and God had no intention of ever calling upon any parent to do such an abominable thing, but the point of the article was: were a parent to do that today we would lock him up for crazy or a criminal. A Jewish synagogue even did a Mock Trial of Abraham, and poor Abraham was just barely found innocent. The article spoke of Jews who only come twice a year, and one of those times, this is what they get, which discourages them coming back. "...many rabbis try to craft a message based on a story that threatens to turn off half the flock – many of whom attend services only twice a year." So in this article, the word "vex" is literally used to mean it "deports", or drives out the faithful from synagogues.

(The key to understanding this story is to realize there are many things God tells us to do where we don't understand why, even when we clearly understand what. Therefore it is very important to carefully discern whether it is really God speaking to us. Usually there is enough persecution available for obedience to God to ensure God will be obeyed only by people who are fairly sure it's Him.)

4. Logic.

We have one other bit of evidence that requires us to conclude that the wrongs referred to by *yanah* have to *at least include* deportation in this verse, Leviticus 19:33, too: logic. It is not logical to assume God's commandment to treat immigrants right, only prohibits us from wronging immigrants in lesser ways, such as discrimination that withholds *some* opportunities from immigrants, but does not prohibit us from wronging immigrants through the *greater* way of deportation, which withholds *all* opportunities from immigrants.

A Supreme Court dissent put it this way: "If those rights, great as they are, have constitutional protection, I think the more important one - the right to remain here - has a like dignity." 1952, *Harisiades v. Shaughnessy*, 342 U.S. 580, 599, dissent by Douglas and Black. "The right to be immune from arbitrary decrees of banishment certainly may be more important to 'liberty' than the civil rights which all aliens enjoy when they reside here. Unless they are free from arbitrary banishment, the 'liberty' they enjoy while they live here is indeed illusory." Deportation is no small disruption of one's life. "Banishment is punishment in the practical sense. It may deprive a man and his family of all that makes life worth while. Those who have their roots here have an important stake in this country. Their plans for themselves and their hopes for their children all depend on their right to stay. If they are uprooted and sent to lands no longer known to them, no longer hospitable, they become displaced, homeless people condemned to bitterness and despair." (This is especially true for immigrant children who were not born here but who were raised here and know nothing of their birth country's society except their parents' dread of it, and little of its language, yet who live in dread of being deported there.)

5. The treatment of immigrants by God's people

The fifth category of evidence that "thou shalt not deport" is a reasonable translation is its consistency with the general spirit in which God calls us to treat immigrants.

This is not direct evidence, but circumstantial. It is like a "double check". This evidence, alone, could not justify such a translation. But were this evidence not favorable – that is, if the general spirit in which God calls us to treat immigrants were hostile to immigrants – this evidence would cast serious doubt on any translation of any verse that frowned on deporting immigrants.

So a thorough study of *yanah* cannot ignore this evidence.

It is very difficult, reading how Moses said to treat immigrants, to continue believing we Christians today are so morally superior to Moses with all his wars and slaves. It makes one almost want to study more carefully what Moses wrote about war and slaves, to see if we have been accusing him justly, or if in fact there might even be moral lessons for us there. Well, no, let's not get THAT radical. But just read what Moses said about immigration.

Psalms 146:9 says God protects immigrants and blocks the wicked, with grammar that identifies the wicked as those who hurt immigrants.

Leviticus 19:18, compared with v. 34, makes the commandment to "love your neighbor" equal in moral power to the commandment to "love the immigrant"; while Jesus, in Luke 10:25-37 and Matthew 22:35-40, says the two are not only equal in force, but they are the same commandment: the immigrant *is* your neighbor. Jesus identifies our "neighbor" as the foreigner who, despite our dehumanization of him, still serves us patiently.

God expects us not only to tolerate "travelers" passing through, but we are to *provide for their needs* or be punished by God (Dt 23:3-4) and man (1 Sam 25:2-38, Judg 8:5-17)! We are supposed to wash their feet (Gn. 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; Jdg. 19:21) and anoint them with oil (Ps. 23:5; Am. 6:6; cf. Lk. 7:46). That principle applied to today would mean we are to give them a hot bath, and maybe a meal and a haircut.

We are to welcome with a handshake. (The NT mentions a kiss of welcome. I hope God is OK with a handshake.)

We are to "take in" immigrants, to whatever extent we want God to think we are willing to take Him in, Matthew 25:39-45.

Hospitality [not excluding immigrants] is a qualification of a pastor (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8). It is an expectation of every layman (1 Pet. 4:9), in a spirit of "brotherly love" (Heb 13:1-2).

If you are a senior citizen who has never housed an immigrant, God doesn't even think you deserve to receive Social Security! (1 Timothy 5:10).

This section will conclude with verbatim excerpts from several Bible commentaries on the words "stranger", "hospitality", and "aliens", with a few phrases highlighted for emphasis, and a few passages added where the commentary provides only the citation.

Here are highlights from them:

Matthew Henry concludes that "it is therefore at our peril if we do them *any* wrong, or put *any* hardships upon them." Applying God's often repeated "for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt", Henry is reminded that whatever deficiencies we see in today's immigrants, our ancestors had them too when they immigrated; whatever advancement we have made since then, today's immigrants will also achieve.

Treasury of David, commenting on Psalms 146:9 ("The LORD preserveth the strangers...but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down"), describes the treatment of immigrants over the centuries, and the condition of English anti-immigrant prejudice a century and a half ago: "Many monarchs hunted aliens down, or transported them from place to place, or left them as outlaws unworthy of the rights of man; but Jehovah made special laws for their shelter within his domain. In this country the stranger was, a little while ago, looked upon as a vagabond, -- a kind of wild beast to be avoided if not to be assaulted; and even to this day there are prejudices against foreigners which are contrary to our holy religion. Our God and King is never strange to any of his creatures, and if any are left in a solitary and forlorn condition he has a special eye to their preservation."

Notice how Psalms 146:9 contrasts God's treatment of strangers with His treatment of "the wicked". This underlines the fact that we who mistreat immigrants are "the wicked" whose goals God turns upside down.

The *New Bible Commentary* notes the connection between anti-immigration, abortion, and euthanasia: "A society which loses any respect for God (32b) quickly loses that deep and sacred respect

for human life that protects those (such as the unborn, the very young and the very old) who are otherwise expendable.”

NBC notes the powerful irony that Christians today imagine themselves so much more morally advanced than the Old Testament with its wars and slaves, and yet the OT’s laws regarding immigrants make our laws look morally barbaric (maybe we should look more carefully at what the OT really says about wars and slaves – we might actually learn something about morals):

“The OT is so often maligned because of its exclusive and negative attitude to foreign nations external to Israel and its insistence on Israel’s separation that we easily overlook the astonishing emphasis in Israel’s law on just and compassionate treatment for aliens who lived in Israel’s midst. It is remarkable to find this explicit legal equality for aliens in the law of ancient Israel in view of its absence, until comparatively recently, in the legislation of modern countries. And even where legislation for racial equality does exist, the actual practice of society and officialdom can be very far short of it.”

NBC notes the parallel between Leviticus 19:34 and v. 18: “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”, “the stranger that dwelleth with you...thou shalt love him as thyself”. Observing, “the command to *love the alien as yourself* (34) is phrased almost identically to v 18”, NBC concludes “its moral force is on the same level as the second greatest commandment in the law”.

The naming of the “love thy neighbour” law in verse 18 as the Second Greatest Commandment was done by Jesus in Luke 10:25-37 and Matthew 22:35-40. The equation of “love your neighbor” with “love the stranger” in Leviticus 19 is made again by Jesus, who goes beyond merely saying “love the stranger” is *equal to* “love your neighbor”. Jesus says “the stranger” is “your neighbor”. Jesus identifies our “neighbor” as the foreigner who, despite our dehumanization of him, still serves us patiently.

This tells us that today’s immigrants are not the first, in world history, to work so hard for us, so patiently, with such miniscule protest in relation to our treatment of them. That is the experience and nature of immigrants in every land, in every time.

NBC applies the Second Greatest Commandment: “This law has a powerful moral relevance to the pressing issues of the rights and treatment of ethnic minorities, refugees, migrant labourers, asylum seekers *etc.*”

New Naves says our “love” for immigrants goes beyond mere toleration, to providing for their needs – and even more than that: to providing for their comfort! Compare THAT with today’s Moral Superiority to Moses’ laws!

Failure to **provide for the traveller’s needs** was a serious offence, liable to punishment by God (Dt. 23:3-4) and man (1 Sa. 25:2-38; Jdg. 8:5-17).

A **guest’s feet were washed** from the dust of travel (Gn. 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; Jdg. 19:21), and his **head sometimes anointed with oil** (Ps. 23:5; Am. 6:6; *cf.* Lk. 7:46).

Many aspects of OT hospitality reappear in the **NT**. The courtesies of providing water for a guest’s feet and oil for his head continue, though the NT also mentions a **kiss of welcome and guests reclining at a meal** (Lk. 7:44ff.).

A special responsibility towards God’s servants is also evident, and Jesus’ earthly ministry (Mk. 1:29ff.; 2:15ff.; Lk. 7:36ff.; 10:38-41) and the apostles’ missionary labours (Acts 10:6ff.; 16:15; 17:7) were greatly dependent on the hospitality they received. The NT develops this by regarding the giving or refusing of hospitality to Jesus and his followers as an indication of one’s acceptance or rejection of the gospel (Mt. 10:9; Lk. 10:4), even at the final judgment (Mt. 25:34-46).

These Christian responsibilities, however, are no more than a pale reflection of divine generosity. Jesus both spoke of the parable of the Great Supper (Mt. 22:2ff.; Lk. 14:16ff.) and gave the disciples an example to follow (Jn. 13:1ff.). Above all, he took the obligations of hospitality to the extreme by laying down his life to redeem his guests (Mk. 10:45;

14:22ff.).

As if *New Naves* hasn't already caused enough damage, it notes that hospitality towards immigrants was one of the qualifications of a pastor! And everyone in the congregation is obligated to provide it "without grudging"! In fact, we are to do it to show our own "gratitude"!

The duty of providing hospitality was also one of the special qualifications of a *bishop (1 Tim. 3:2; [A bishop then must be ... given to hospitality...] Tit. 1:8 [Tit 1:7 For a bishop must be ... 8 But a lover of hospitality, ...] , and of a *widow requiring support from the church (1 Tim. 5:10).

Although hospitality was a mark of civilization for the Greeks, and the NT contains an excellent example of non-Christian generosity (Acts 28:7), hospitality in the NT had a specifically Christian character. It was to be offered freely, without grudging (1 Pet. 4:9) [1Pe 4:9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.] and in a spirit of brotherly love (Heb. 13:1). [Heb 13:1 Let brotherly love continue. 2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.]

Such love (*agapē*: 1 Pet. 4:8; *cf.* Rom. 12:9) is essentially outward-looking, issuing in a readiness to provide for the needs of others, and could be demonstrated only because the giver had received a gift (*charisma*) from God (1 Pet. 4:10-11). The care of others was therefore the discharge of a debt of gratitude. (New Naves)

The New Topical Text Book characterizes 1 Timothy 5:10 as listing the "lodging" of "strangers" as "a test of Christian character". It is that, but it says much more, actually: if we apply the verse to today's circumstances, God is saying that any senior citizen who has not "lodged strangers" (allowed immigrants to stay in their homes) doesn't deserve to receive Social Security!

1 Timothy 5:10 [9: Let a widow receive assistance who is not under 60 years old, not divorced and remarried,] Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, **if she have lodged strangers**, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

The *New Topical Text Book* notes how numerous immigrants were in Israel during Solomon's reign: 153,600. (2 Chronicles 2:17). This was about 10% of the population, according to the census taken by David, Solomon's father, in 988 BC. David's was the 6th census in Jewish history. He counted 1,300,000 men of military age according to II Sam 24:9, or 1,570,000 according to 1 Chr 21:5. The discrepancy is because the total was an estimate, since God did not allow the census to be finished before He disrupted it with an epidemic. God disrupted it because David had taken a census like we do today, where he sent his army across the land to write down names and addresses of citizens. God had commanded that the government not record such information, but rather take a census by having everyone come to a central location with a unit of money equivalent to 5 days' wages, and only the money was counted.

An immigrant population of 10% of the total population is about twice the percentage of non-citizen immigrants in the U.S. today. (U.S. population in 2008 is over 300 million. The "findings of fact" of HF 2088, a bill drafted by anti-immigrants prone to exaggerate the undocumented population, state the number of undocumented immigrants is 11 million. Besides these, we have a few million "legal residents".)

Yet the surrounding verses say Solomon found productive work for all of them, and many other verses say that was the wealthiest period of Israel's long history.

What a coincidence! The U.S. is a nation of immigrants – despite our spotty treatment of them, they are more welcome here than anywhere else in the world – and yet we are the wealthiest nation in the history of the world! (That is, Solomon's wealth was probably greater than ours, relative to the technology of the time and the wealth of his neighbors, but ours is greater in terms of actual physical luxuries. And we owe today's wealth to the size, as well as the freedom and work ethic, of our brain pool. And we owe the size of our brain pool, and much of its work ethic, to immigration.)

Commenting on Psalm 146:9 (“The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.”) the *Family Bible Notes* (1861) say:

The strangers--the fatherless and widow; these three classes of persons are mentioned together because they are peculiarly exposed to injury, and are therefore the special objects of God's care. The poor, afflicted, and defenceless are the objects of God's special regard. Herein we ought to imitate our heavenly Father.

The Geneva Bible generalizes: “Meaning, all who are destitute of worldly means and help.”

Now here are the selections from Bible commentaries, unedited except for occasional highlighting:

Bible Commentaries

Leviticus 19:33, 34. if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him—The Israelites were to hold out encouragement to strangers to settle among them, that they might be brought to the knowledge and worship of the true God; and with this in view, they were enjoined to treat them not as aliens, but as friends, on the ground that they themselves, who were strangers in Egypt, were at first kindly and hospitably received in that country.

Jamieson, Robert ; Fausset, A. R. ; Fausset, A. R. ; Brown, David ; Brown, David: *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, S. Le 19:33

IV. A charge to the Israelites to be very tender of strangers, v. 33, 34. Both the law of God and his providence had vastly dignified Israel above any other people, yet they must not therefore think themselves authorized to trample upon all mankind but those of their own nation, and to insult them at their pleasure; no, *"Thou shall not vex a stranger, but love him as thyself, and as one of thy own people."* It is supposed that this stranger was not an idolater, but a worshipper of the God of Israel, though not circumcised, a proselyte of the gate at least, though not a proselyte of righteousness: if such a one sojourned among them, they must not vex him, nor oppress, nor over-reach him in a bargain, taking advantage of his ignorance of their laws and customs; they must reckon it as great a sin to cheat a stranger as to cheat an Israelite; "nay" (say the Jewish doctors) "they must not so much as upbraid him with his being a stranger, and his having been formerly an idolater." Strangers are God's particular care, as the widow and the fatherless are, because it is his honour to help the helpless, Ps. 146:9. It is therefore at our peril if we do them any wrong, **or put any hardships upon them**. Strangers shall be welcome to God's grace, and therefore we should do what we can to invite them to it, and to recommend religion to their good opinion. It argues a generous disposition, and a pious regard to God, as a common Father, to be kind to strangers; for those of different countries, customs, and languages, are all made of one blood. But here is a reason added peculiar to the Jews: *"For you were strangers in the land of Egypt. God then favoured you, therefore do you now favour the strangers, and do to them as you then wished to be done to. You were strangers, and yet are now thus highly advanced; therefore you know not what these strangers may come to, whom you are apt to despise."*

Henry, Matthew: *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible : Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Peabody : Hendrickson, 1996, c1991, S. Le 19:30

Ps 146:9 The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

Ver. 9. The Lord preserveth the strangers. Many monarchs hunted aliens down, or transported them from place to place, or left them as outlaws unworthy of the rights of man; but Jehovah made special laws for their shelter within his domain. In this country the stranger was, a little while ago, looked upon as a vagabond, -- a kind of wild beast to be avoided if not to be assaulted; and even to this day there are prejudices against foreigners which are contrary to our holy religion. Our God and King is never strange to any of his creatures, and if any are left in a solitary and forlorn condition he has a

special eye to their preservation. (**The Treasury of David**: C.H. Spurgeon's exhaustive commentary on the Psalms, Public domain.)

(Regarding Psalm 146:9) The strangers--the fatherless and widow; these three classes of persons are mentioned together because they are peculiarly exposed to injury, and are therefore the special objects of God's care. The poor, afflicted, and defenceless are the objects of God's special regard. Herein we ought to imitate our heavenly Father. (**Family Bible Notes**, 1861, Public Domain)

(Regarding Psalm 146:9) Meaning, all who are destitute of worldly means and help. (**Geneva Bible Notes**, 1599)

32 *Respect for the elderly* is characteristic of **OT** law's concern for categories of people who could be vulnerable to poor treatment by society, e.g. children (*cf.* v 29), the immigrant or alien (32–33), the disabled (14) and the homeless (widows and orphans). **A society which loses any respect for God (32b) quickly loses that deep and sacred respect for human life that protects those (such as the unborn, the very young and the very old) who are otherwise expendable.** Part of the ironic tragedy of Job was that he, who had been meticulous in his defence of such people, himself became the victim of exclusion and mockery because of his illness (*cf.* Jb. 29:7–17 with 30:1, 9–10).

33–34 The same principle applies to this far-reaching law. **The OT is so often maligned because of its exclusive and negative attitude to foreign nations external to Israel and its insistence on Israel's separation that we easily overlook the astonishing emphasis in Israel's law on just and compassionate treatment for aliens who lived in Israel's midst.** This law is one of many (Ex. 12:48f., 22:21, 23:9, Dt. 10:18f., 14:29, 24:14, 17, 27:19, *cf.* Ps. 146:9; Jb. 29:16). **Equality before the law** was a principle that included both inclusion in the benefits of the sacrificial system (Nu. 15:15f., 26) and of the annual festivals (Dt. 16:11, 14), but also accountability for wrongdoing (24:16, 22, Nu. 15:27–31).

It is remarkable to find this **explicit legal equality for aliens** in the law of ancient Israel **in view of its absence, until comparatively recently, in the legislation of modern countries.** And even where legislation for racial equality does exist, the actual practice of society and officialdom can be very far short of it. This law has a powerful moral relevance to the pressing issues of the rights and treatment of ethnic minorities, refugees, migrant labourers, asylum seekers *etc.* **In fact, its moral force is on the same level as the second greatest commandment in the law, since the command to love the alien as yourself (34) is phrased almost identically to v 18.** It comes with a similar sanction (*I am the Lord*) and the added motivation of Israel's own experience of oppression and deliverance. And this too is holiness.

Carson, D. A.: *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*. 4th ed. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA : Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, S. Le 19:1

Respect is to be shown for the elderly (v. 32), and aliens who live in the land are to be given the same consideration as those native-born.

Richards, Larry ; Richards, Lawrence O.: *The Teacher's Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1987, S. 119

ALIENS, strangers, heathen. To be treated with justice, Ex. 22:21; 23:9; Lev. 19:33, 34; Deut. 1:16; 10:19; 24:14, 17; 27:19; Jer. 7:6; 22:3; Ezek. 22:29; Mal. 3:5. Religious privileges of, Ex. 12:48, 49; Num. 9:14; 15:14, 15. Kindness to Edomites, enjoined, Deut. 23:7. Jews authorized to purchase, as slaves, Lev. 25:44, 45; and to take usury from, Deut. 15:3; 23:20; not permitted to make kings of, Deut. 17:15. Forbidden to eat the passover, Ex. 12:45. Partially exempt from Jewish law, Deut. 14:21. Numerous in times of David and Solomon, 2 Sam. 22:45, 46; 2 Chr. 2:17; 15:9. Oppressed, Ezek.

22:29. Rights of, Num. 35:15; Josh. 20:9; Ezek. 47:22, 23. David's kindness to, 2 Sam. 15:19, 20. Hospitality to, required by Jesus, Matt. 25:35, 38, 43. See **Gleaning; Heathen; Hospitality; Inhospitableness; Proselytes; Strangers.**

Swanson, James ; Nave, Orville: *New Nave's*. Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, 1994

hospitality, the act of friendship shown a visitor. Hospitality in the ancient Near East was tightly bound up in customs and practices which all were expected to observe. As in an intricately choreographed dance, where any participant who does not observe his or her role must either learn it, or leave the dance if the whole is not to be jeopardized, so it was with the customs of ancient hospitality. One ignored the customs at one's own peril. To try to understand those carefully structured and rigidly observed practices in terms of the relative informality of modern Western practices of hospitality would be completely to misunderstand them.

In the ancient Near East, **hospitality was the process of 'receiving' outsiders and changing them from strangers to guests.** Hospitality thus differed from entertaining family and friends. If strangers were not to be entirely ignored (or worse) either physically or socially (see Matt. 10:14-23), the reception occurred in three stages:

Testing the Stranger: Strangers pose a threat to any community since they are potentially harmful. Hence they must be tested both on how they may fit in and whether they will subscribe to the community's norms. Officials (Josh. 2:2) or concerned citizenry (Gen. 19:5) could conduct such tests; an invading outsider must be repelled (Mark 5:17; the Gerasenes ask the 'stranger' Jesus to leave). An invitation to speak can be a test (Acts 13:14-15), while letters of recommendation can excuse from a test, although not always (e.g., 2 and 3 John; Rom. 16:3-16; 1 Thess. 5:12-13). The ritual of foot washing marks the movement from stranger to guest (see Gen. 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; lacking in Luke 7:36-50).

The Stranger as Guest: Since transient strangers lacked customary or legal standing within the visited community, it was imperative that they be under the protection of a patron, a host, who was an established community member. Through a personal bond with the host (something inns could not offer), strangers were incorporated as guests or clients/protegés. To offend the stranger become guest was to offend the host, who was protector and patron of the guest (poignantly underscored in the case of Lot, Gen. 19:1-10). Yet such patronage could yield more trouble than honor (e.g., Prov. 6:1).

A guest could infringe the requirements of hospitality by insulting the host or by any show of hostility or rivalry either toward the host or other guests; a guest must honor the host (when Jesus eats with sinners he neither accuses them of being sinners nor asks them to change, Matt. 9:10; Luke 5:29). The guest must not usurp the role of the host, e.g., make oneself at home when not yet invited to do so (in the home of another, Jesus heals only when asked, Mark 1:30), or take precedence (see Luke 14:8), or give orders to the dependents of the host, or demand or take what is not offered (see Luke 7:36-50, where Jesus is the perfect guest; Mark 6:10 and parallels with its rules for traveling disciples). By refusing what has been offered, the guest infringes the role of guest. The guest is above all bound to accept food (see Luke 10:18); the directives to disciples for their travels in Mark 6:8 require them to accept patronage (see 1 Cor. 9:4).

On the other hand, a host could infringe the requirements of hospitality by insulting the guests or by any show of hostility or rivalry, or by neglecting to protect the guests and their honor, for guests individually are the responsibility of the host. Thus while fellow guests have no explicit relationship, they were bound to forego hostilities, since they offended their host in the act of offending one another. The host had to defend each against the other since both were his guests (thus Paul's problem at the Lord's supper in 1 Cor. 11:17-34). The host could not fail to attend to the guests, to grant them the precedence that was their due or to show concern for their needs and wishes, or in general to earn the good will guests were supposed to show. Thus in Luke 7:36-50, Simon the Pharisee fails on all counts with his guest, Jesus: no foot washing; no kiss; no anointing; no keeping away the sinful woman; the

parable in Luke 7:40-41 represents Jesus' defense of his honor as guest. Finally, failure to offer the best is to denigrate the guest (John 2:10).

A host's infringing these requirements assures that a stranger will rarely, if ever, reciprocate hospitality. Hence the necessity and value of observing rules of hospitality (Matt. 25:38) and avoiding their infringement (Matt. 25:43).

While hospitality entails reciprocity between individuals, it can also be viewed as a reciprocal relationship between communities. Such hospitality to traveling Christians was both urged (see Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9) and much practiced (e.g., Acts 17:7; 21:17; 28:7; Rom. 16:23).

From Guest to Transformed Stranger: The stranger-guest will leave the host either as friend or enemy. If as friend, the guest will spread the praises of the host (e.g., 1 Thess. 1:9; Phil. 4:16), notably to those sending the stranger (e.g., Mark 9:37). If as enemy, the one aggrieved will have to get satisfaction (e.g., 3 John).

It is probably in this context of the practice of hospitality that the meaning of John 1:10, 'his own received him not,' may best be understood.

Achtemeier, Paul J. ; Harper & Row, Publishers ; Society of Biblical Literature: *Harper's Bible Dictionary*. 1st ed. San Francisco : Harper & Row, 1985, S. 408

HOSPITALITY. Throughout Scripture, the responsibility of caring for the traveller and those in need is largely taken for granted. Although examples are found right through the Bible, the only specific commands about providing hospitality concern the Christian's responsibility towards his fellow believer.

I. In the Old Testament

Comparison with modern bedouin tribes, among whom hospitality is very highly regarded, suggests that the prominence of hospitality in the **OT** is partly due to Israel's nomadic origins. Abraham's generosity towards the three strangers (Gn. 18:1-8) provides an excellent illustration of nomadic practice, and was often remembered in later Jewish writings for its exemplary character, though settled communities were no less welcoming to the stranger (Jdg. 13:15; 2 Ki. 4:8ff.)

Hospitality in the OT was more than just a custom, however. It was also a demonstration of faithfulness to God (Jb. 31:32; Is. 58:7). One might even entertain Yahweh (Gn. 18:1-8) or his angels (Jdg. 6:17-23; 13:15-21; cf. Heb. 13:2), while God in his turn held a feast on the day of the Lord to which guests were invited (Zp. 1:7). The divine provision of *cities of refuge (Nu. 35:9-35; Jos. 20:1-9) and concern for the sojourner (Ex. 22:21; Lv. 19:10; Dt. 10:19) indicate the extent of OT hospitality.

Failure to provide for the traveller's needs was a serious offence, liable to punishment by God (Dt. 23:3-4)

De 23:3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever: 4 Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.

and man (1 Sa. 25:2-38;

(the story of Nabal, who rudely refused to help David whose army had protected him)

Jdg. 8:5-17

(the story of Gideon's vengeance upon Israelites who would not feed his army while his army was pursuing enemies). The use of *peša'* (1 Sa. 25:28), a term employed for transgression of covenants, indicates the importance attached to such obligations. The unique breach of hospitality by Jael (Jdg. 4:11-21; 5:24-27) could be commended only because of her unwavering loyalty to old family ties and to Yahweh. Some invitations were better refused, however, since they might result in spiritual ruin (Pr. 9:18).

Though hospitality was extended to all, a particular responsibility existed to provide for one's own family (Gn. 29:1-14; Jdg. 19:10-12; Is. 58:7) and for God's servants (2 Sa. 17:27-29; 1 Ki.

17:10ff.; 2 Ki. 4:8ff.). A future son-in-law might be entertained as a guest, though this is known only as a Midianite custom (Ex. 2:20). The peace agreement between Heber the Kenite and Jabin of Hazor seems to have included a mutual obligation to provide hospitality (Jdg. 4:11-21).

That a host was responsible for the safety and welfare of his guests is vividly illustrated by Lot and by the old man of Gibeah (Gn. 19:8; Jdg. 19:24-25). The immorality of the communities in which both lived suggests that their disregard for their daughters was due more to the prevailing moral climate than to the requirements of the hospitality oath.

A stranger would wait at the city-gate for an offer of hospitality (Gn. 19:1; Jdg. 19:15), though the well also formed a suitable meeting-place (Gn. 24:14ff.; Ex. 2:20). Sometimes hospitality might be given in return for an earlier kindness (Ex. 2:20; 2 Sa. 19:32-40). Bread and water was the minimum provision (Dt. 23:4; 1 Ki. 17:10-11), though such meagre fare was often exceeded. **A guest's feet were washed from the dust of travel (Gn. 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; Jdg. 19:21), and his head sometimes anointed with oil (Ps. 23:5; Am. 6:6; cf. Lk. 7:46).** The best *food might be presented (Gn. 18:5; 1 Sa. 25:18), and meat, rarely eaten in the E, specially procured (Gn. 18:7; Jdg. 6:19; 13:15; cf. Lk. 15:23). Curds and milk also particularly refreshed the traveller (Gn. 18:8; Jdg. 5:25). Animal fodder was supplied when required (Gn. 24:14, 32; Jdg. 19:21), while Elisha even received furnished accommodation (2 Ki. 4:10).

II. In the New Testament

The Gk. terms used are *philoxenia* (lit. 'love of strangers'), cf. *xenizō*, 'to receive as a guest', also *synagō* (Mt. 25:35ff.) and *lambanō* (3 Jn. 8).

Many aspects of OT hospitality reappear in the NT. **The courtesies of providing water for a guest's feet and oil for his head continue,** though the NT also mentions **a kiss of welcome and guests reclining at a meal** (Lk. 7:44ff.). In fact, Simon the Pharisee's home appears to have been an open house, judging by the way in which the presence of the woman who anointed Jesus was unconsciously accepted (Lk. 7:37ff.).

A special responsibility towards God's servants is also evident, and Jesus' earthly ministry (Mk. 1:29ff.; 2:15ff.; Lk. 7:36ff.; 10:38-41) and **the apostles' missionary labours (Acts 10:6ff.; 16:15; 17:7) were greatly dependent on the hospitality they received.** The NT develops this by regarding **the giving or refusing of hospitality to Jesus and his followers as an indication of one's acceptance or rejection of the gospel** (Mt. 10:9; Lk. 10:4), even at the final judgment (Mt. 25:34-46). These Christian responsibilities, however, are no more than a **pale reflection of divine generosity.** Jesus both spoke of the parable of the Great Supper (Mt. 22:2ff.; Lk. 14:16ff.) and gave the disciples an example to follow (Jn. 13:1ff.). Above all, he took the obligations of hospitality to the extreme by laying down his life to redeem his guests (Mk. 10:45; 14:22ff.).

The NT letters specifically command the provision of hospitality for fellow believers (*e.g.* Gal. 6:10). The existence of certain special factors in the 1st century ad emphasized the importance of these instructions. Persecution led to Christians being scattered and driven from their homes, and in many cases there was doubtless very real material need (Acts 8:1; 11:19). Itinerant preachers were also a charge upon the church. They received nothing from the pagan world (3 Jn. 7), and therefore became the responsibility of local Christians (Acts 9:43; 16:15; 18:3, 7), even though risks might be involved (Acts 17:5-9). Sometimes the hosts would be the evangelists' own converts (3 Jn. 5-7). False teachers, however, were to be turned away (2 Jn. 10), and letters of recommendation served to identify genuine cases (Rom. 16:1; 2 Cor. 3:1). Many inns of the time were also of low standard, both materially and morally, and the Christian traveller would often have found them unattractive.

The 'pursuit' of hospitality (Rom. 12:13) was obligatory for the Christian, who must ensure that the needs of fellow believers were properly met, though hospitality was to be offered to all (Rom. 12:13-14; Gal. 6:10). Thus Paul instructs the Colossian church to receive Mark (Col. 4:10), and assumes that Philemon will prepare a room for Paul when he is released from prison (Phm. 22). **The duty of providing hospitality was also one of the special qualifications of a *bishop** (1 Tim. 3:2;

1Ti 3:2 A bishop then must be ... given to hospitality...

Tit. 1:8

Tit 1:7 For a bishop must be ... 8 But a lover of hospitality, ...

), and of a *widow requiring support from the church (1 Tim. 5:10).

Although hospitality was a mark of civilization for the Greeks, and the NT contains an excellent example of non-Christian generosity (Acts 28:7), **hospitality in the NT had a specifically Christian character. It was to be offered freely, without grudging** (1 Pet. 4:9)

1Pe 4:9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

and in a spirit of brotherly love (Heb. 13:1).

Heb 13:1 Let brotherly love continue. 2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Such love (*agapē*: 1 Pet. 4:8; *cf.* Rom. 12:9) is essentially outward-looking, issuing in a readiness to provide for the needs of others, and could be demonstrated only because the giver had received a gift (*charisma*) from God (1 Pet. 4:10-11). **The care of others was therefore the discharge of a debt of gratitude.**

III. The biblical inn

OT references to a 'lodging place' (*mālōn*) are rare (Gn. 42:27; 43:21; Ex. 4:24; Je. 9:2) and specific locations are confined to routes linking Egypt and Palestine or Midian. Nothing is known of these places, though one of them was large enough to accommodate a sudden influx of nine travellers (Gn. 42:27). The lxx equivalent *katalyma* and the cognate verb *katalyō* suggest the idea of unharnessing the animals, though it usually conveyed the general sense of lodging. Bethlehem's inn (*katalyma*) may have been a fairly simple lodging-place. It was probably not a guestroom in a private house, as no name is given, and may have been the village's common responsibility. Elsewhere *katalyma* describes a room in a private residence borrowed for the Passover meal (Mk. 14:14; Lk. 22:11; *cf.* Lk. 19:7). The *pandocheion* of Lk. 10:34 is more developed, being open to anyone and providing overnight shelter, food and attention for a recognized charge, while *xenia* is used both for Philemon's guest-room and the place of Paul's house-arrest in Rome (Phm. 22; Acts 28:23).

Bibliography. J. Pedersen, *Israel* 1-2, 1926, pp. 356-358; D. W. Riddle, *JBL* 57, 1938, pp. 141-154; G. Stählin, *TDNT* 5, pp. 17-25; A. D. Kilmer, *Ugarit Forschungen* 3, 1971, pp. 299-309; W. Günther and C. Brown, *NIDNTT* 2, pp. 547-550.

Wood, D. R. W.: *New Bible Dictionary*. InterVarsity Press, 1996, c1982, c1962, S. 484

HOSPITALITY. Ex. 22:21; Ex. 23:9; Lev. 19:10, 33, 34; Lev. 24:22; Deut. 10:18, 19; Deut. 26:12, 13; Deut. 27:19; Prov. 9:1-4; Prov. 23:6-8; Isa. 58:6, 7; Matt. 22:2-10; Matt. 25:34-46; Luke 14:12-14; Rom. 12:13; Rom. 16:1, 2; 1 Tim. 3:2; 1 Tim. 5:10; Tit. 1:7, 8; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9-11; 3 John 5:8 See **Guest; Strangers.**

Instances of: Pharaoh to Abraham, Gen. 12:16. Melchizedek to Abraham, Gen. 14:18. Abraham to the angels, Gen. 18:1-8. Lot to the angel, Gen. 19:1-11. Abimelech to Abraham, Gen. 20:14, 15. Sons of Heth to Abraham, Gen. 23:6, 11. Laban to Abraham's servant, Gen. 24:31; to Jacob, Gen. 29:13, 14. Isaac to Abimelech, Gen. 26:30. Joseph to his brethren, Gen. 43:31-34. Pharaoh to Jacob, Gen. 45:16-20; 47:7-12. Jethro to Moses, Ex. 2:20. Rahab to the spies, Josh. 2:1-16. Man of Gibeah to the Levite, Judg. 19:16-21. Pharaoh to Hadad, 1 Kin. 11:17, 22. David to Mephibosheth, 2 Sam. 9:7-13. The widow of Zarephath to Elijah, 1 Kin. 17:10-24. The Shunammite to Elisha, 2 Kin. 4:8. Elisha to the Syrian spies, 2 Kin. 6:22. Job to strangers, Job 31:32. Martha to Jesus, Luke 10:38; John 12:1, 2. Pharisees to Jesus, Luke 11:37, 38. Zacchaeus to Jesus, Luke 19:1-10. The tanner to Peter, Acts 10:6, 23. Lydia to Paul and Silas, Acts 16:15. Publius to Paul, Acts 28:7; Phebe to Paul, Rom. 16:2. Onesiphorus to Paul, 2 Tim. 1:16. Gaius, 3 John 5-8.

Rewarded: Instances of: Rahab's, Josh. 6:17, 22-25. Widow of Zarephath's, 1 Kin. 17:10-24.

See Feasts; Inhospitableness; Strangers.

Swanson, James ; Nave, Orville: *New Nave's*. Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, 1994

Hospitality.

1. Commanded. Ro 12:13; 1Pe 4:9.
2. Required in ministers. 1Ti 3:2; Tit 1:8.
3. A test of Christian character. 1Ti 5:10.

[Applied to today, this would actually suggest that senior citizens who have not welcomed immigrants should not qualify for Social Security!]

1Ti 5:9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, 10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

4. Specially to be shown to
 - a. Strangers. Heb 13:2.
 - b. The poor. Isa 58:7; Lu 14:13.
 - c. Enemies. 2Ki 6:22,23; Ro 12:20.
5. Encouragement to. Lu 14:14; Heb 13:2.
6. Exemplified
 - a. Melchizedek. Ge 14:18.
 - b. Abraham. Ge 18:3-8.
 - c. Lot. Ge 19:2,3.
 - d. Laban. Ge 24:31.
 - e. Jethro. Ex 2:20.
 - f. Manoah. Jdj 13:15.
 - g. Samuel. 1Sa 9:22.
 - h. David. 2Sa 6:19.
 - i. Barzillai. 2Sa 19:32.
 - j. Shunammite. 2Ki 4:8.
 - k. Nehemiah. Ne 5:17.
 - l. Job. Job 31:17,32.
 - m. Zacchaeus. Lu 19:6.
 - n. Samaritans. Joh 4:40.
 - o. Lydia. Ac 16:15.
 - p. Jason. Ac 17:7.
 - q. Mnason. Ac 21:16.
 - r. People of Melita. Ac 28:2.
 - s. Publius. Ac 28:7.
 - t. Gaius. 3Jo 1:5,6.

Torrey, R.A.: *The New Topical Text Book : A Scriptural Text Book for the Use of Ministers, Teachers, and All Christian Workers*. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos research Systems, Inc., 1995, c1897

HOSPITALITY Biblical concept often used with the terms “guest,” “stranger,” and “sojourner.” It is useful to limit the meaning of “hospitality” to benevolence done to those outside one’s normal circle of friends, as is implied in the literal meaning of the Greek word meaning “love of strangers.” Although the concept is thoroughly endorsed in the Bible, it is clearly found in nonbiblical cultures as well, especially among the nomadic peoples, where definite obligations to provide food, shelter, and protection are recognized.

The normal exercise of hospitality in the OT can be seen in the examples of Abraham and the three visitors (Gn 18:2–8, 16), Laban's reception of Abraham's servant (24:15–61), and Manoah's treatment of the angel (Jgs 13:15). But there are also cases in which the host felt compelled to take extreme steps to protect his guest, even to the harm of his own family (Gn 19:1–8; Jgs 19:14–24). The hospitality of the Shunammite family is also noteworthy, although Elisha was no stranger to them (2 Kgs 4:10).

According to the NT, Jesus relied on the general practice of hospitality in sending out the disciples (Lk 10:7), as well as in his own travels. As the gospel was spread by traveling missionaries, Christians were commended for entertaining them in their homes (Heb 13:2; 1 Pt 4:9; 3 Jn 1:5–8). Church leaders must not exempt themselves from this ministry (1 Tm 3:2; Ti 1:8); to do so is grounds for judgment (Mt 25:43–46).

See also Foreigner.

Elwell, Walter A. ; Comfort, Philip Wesley: *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House Publishers, 2001 (Tyndale Reference Library), S. 617

STRANGERS. Mosaic law relating to: Authorized slavery of, Lev. 25:44, 45; usury of, Deut. 15:3; 23:20; sale to, of flesh of animals that had died, Deut. 14:21; forbid their being made kings over Israel, Deut. 17:15; their eating the passover, Ex. 12:43, 48; their eating things offered in sacrifice, Ex. 29:33; Lev. 22:10, 12, 25; their blaspheming, Lev. 24:16; their approaching the tabernacle, Num. 1:51; their eating blood, Lev. 17:10; injustice to, Ex. 12:49; Lev. 24:22; Num. 9:14; Deut. 1:16; Jer. 22:3; oppression of, forbidden, Ex. 22:21; Lev. 23:9; Deut. 24:14, 17; 27:19; Jer. 22:3. Instances of oppression of, Ezek. 22:29; Mal. 3:5. Required to observe the sabbath, Ex. 20:10; 23:12. Might offer oblations, Lev. 17:8; 22:18, 19. Were buried in separate burial places, Matt. 27:7. Kindness to, required, Lev. 19:33, 34. Love of, enjoined, Deut. 10:18, 19. Abhorrence of, forbidden, Deut. 23:7. Marriage with, forbidden, Deut. 25:5. Hospitality to, see **Hospitality**. See **Aliens**; **Giving**; **Gentiles**; **Heathen**; **Proselytes**.

Swanson, James ; Nave, Orville: *New Nave's*. Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, 1994

Strangers In Israel.

1. All foreigners sojourning in Israel were counted as. Ex 12:49.
2. Under the care and protection of God. De 10:18; Ps 146:9.
3. Very numerous in Solomon's reign. 2Ch 2:17.

2Ch 2:17 And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found an hundred and fifty thousand and three thousand and six hundred.

4. Chiefly consisted of
 - a. The remnant of the mixed multitude who came out of Egypt. Ex 12:38.
 - b. The remnant of the nations of the land. 1Ki 9:20; 2Ch 8:7.
 - c. Captives taken in war. De 21:10.
 - d. Foreign servants. Le 25:44,45.
 - e. Persons who sought employment among the Jews. 1Ki 7:13; 9:27.
 - f. Persons who came into Israel for the sake of religious privileges. 1Ki 8:41.
5. Laws respecting
 - a. Not to practise idolatrous rites. Le 20:2.
 - b. Not to blaspheme God. Le 24:16.
 - c. Not to eat blood. Le 17:10-12.
 - d. Not to eat the passover while uncircumcised. Ex 12:43,44.
 - e. Not to work on the Sabbath. Ex 20:10; 23:12; De 5:14.
 - f. Not to be vexed or oppressed. Ex 22:21; 23:9; Le 19:33.

- g. Not to be chosen as kings in Israel. De 17:15.
- h. To be loved. Le 19:34; De 10:19.
- i. To be relieved in distress. Le 25:35.
- j. Subject to the civil law. Le 24:22.
- k. To have justice done to them in all disputes. De 1:16; 24:17.
- l. To enjoy the benefit of the cities of refuge. Nu 35:15.
- m. To have the gleaning of the harvest. Le 19:10; 23:22; De 24:19-22.
- n. To participate in the rejoicings of the people. De 14:29; 16:11,14; 26:11.
- o. To have the law read to them. De 31:12; Jos 8:32-35.
- p. The Jews might purchase and have them as slaves. Le 25:44,45.
- q. The Jews might take usury from. De 23:20.
- r. Might purchase Hebrew servants subject to release. Le 25:47,48.
- s. Might offer their burnt-offerings on the altar of God. Le 17:8; 22:18; Nu 15:14.
- t. Allowed to eat what died of itself. De 14:21.
- 6. Motives urged on the Jews for being kind to. Ex 22:21; 23:9.
- 7. Admitted to worship in the outer court of the temple. 1Ki 8:41-43; Re 11:2; Eph 2:14.
- 8. Were frequently employed in public works. 1Ch 22:2; 2Ch 2:18.
- 9. The Jews condemned for oppressing. Ps 94:6; Eze 22:7

Torrey, R.A.: *The New Topical Text Book : A Scriptural Text Book for the Use of Ministers, Teachers, and All Christian Workers*. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos research Systems, Inc., 1995, c1897

Conclusion: “deport”, “thrust out”, or “involuntarily remove”, is central to the meaning of yanah. In the verses in which yanah appears, *removal* is not an incidental or optional meaning, but is the central action described. All these verses make a little more sense when this sense of the word is understood.

RELEVANCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Such a startling verse cries out for some way to dismiss it. Two thirds of the Bible is, fortunately, very easy to dismiss, as needed, since it is the Old Testament. We don't need to pay attention to anything in the Old Testament, which was “done away”, so says popular Christian culture.

After reading in Matthew 25 that hell is the penalty for not helping immigrants come, which is even more startling, it may seem unnecessary to establish the authority of Leviticus 19:33 over us. But the specific commandment not to deport, plus the “one law” passages, help clarify a few details, so it is worthwhile to determine whether every word of the Old Testament, even when not found in the New Testament, is there for us to live by.

Much of what Jesus said was quoted from the Old Testament, indicating God did not go through a “conversion experience” between commissioning the Old and New Testaments. The difference between the Testaments most often alleged is that God expresses more love and mercy through the New Testament. By this reasoning, when we find God's mercy for immigrants in the Old Testament, we should expect to find, after Jesus came, more mercy – not less! For example, Matthew 5:27-28 says that where Moses said don't commit adultery, Jesus says don't even *think* about committing adultery.

So if the Old Testament says not to deport immigrants, we should expect God to want us, after Jesus came, to not even *want* them gone. When we find God telling us to treat immigrants mercifully, in the Old Testament, we should expect God to want us, after Jesus came, to not even *think* about treating them ruthlessly.

Indeed, Luke 10:25-37 and Matthew 22:36-40 establish “love thy neighbour as thyself” as the second greatest commandment, and identifies as our “neighbour” as the Mexican who still treats us

with decency, not returning evil for evil but serving us with love, despite all our cruel labels and burdens which we will not carry ourselves.

Indeed, Matthew 18:23-35 warns that even after we are “saved”, if we are not reciprocally merciful with others, we will still go to Hell!

Matthew 18:32 “Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. 35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

Indeed, by the principle of Luke 12:48, “...unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required...”, God expects us to be more merciful towards immigrants than Israel under Moses, since we have received so much more grace than Israel had.

These New Testament passages require of us even more mercy and love than Moses. Not less!

Jesus says the same thing in Matthew 25 as Leviticus 19:33 but more broadly, more forcefully, and with a far severer penalty.

More broadly, because it is not mere active deportation of immigrants which Jesus condemns, but also omitting to invite immigrants in.

More forcefully, because Jesus calls immigrants his brothers and sisters, and says when we don't invite in “the least of these my brethren”, we shut Jesus Himself out of our hearts, lives, and nation.

With a far severer penalty, because He warns that if we turn away immigrants, we will go to Hell. (The only penalty under Moses was that those who deport immigrants will find themselves deported, as prisoners of war of cruel invaders. Jeremiah 22:3-7, Ezekiel 22:29-31, Zechariah 7:9-14.)

But that does not mean there is inconsistency between the Old and New Testaments. Jesus simply applied the *principle* behind Moses' law against adulterous actions to the realm of *thoughts*. Jesus explained how to make such applications of Scripture, in a way that applies not only to the laws of Moses but to all the commandments of Scripture, Old and New Testaments.

The manner in which we apply Scripture to our lives is explained in Matthew 9:14-17. We look for the “original intent” or the “spirit of the law”, and apply it appropriately as circumstances change. Jesus gave two examples: we don't patch an old shirt with new cloth, or the new cloth will shrink and tear the old shirt worse. By that principle, we should not legalistically judge a new situation by an old law addressed to earlier, different circumstances, where the lawmakers would never have intended their law to be applied. To do so would undermine the old law.

Jesus' second example: when we are canning grape juice, we don't put fresh juice in old bottles (made of goat skins which could not be sterilized) because that would cause the juice to ferment and expand, breaking the bottles. By that principle, we should not force new circumstances to fit inside the situation outlined by the old law; to do so would burst the old law (cause a public outcry for repeal) and leave the new circumstances without any restraint – in chaos. But instead, we adapt the principles from the old law as appropriate for the new circumstances.

For example, we no longer sacrifice animals to atone for our sins. But not because our sins are so much less serious, now that our deliverance from their consequences is possible without others willing to sacrificially help us clean up our messes. To the contrary, the reason we no longer legalistically sacrifice animals is because a far greater sacrifice was made. Same principle, new circumstances. New application of the old principle.

That helps explain what Jesus meant in Matthew 5:17-19 when He said not one comma or semicolon shall go out of date of Moses' laws “till all be fulfilled”. Some actually say “all was fulfilled” when Jesus died, but 2 Timothy 3:16-17, written decades after Jesus' death, agrees that every word of Moses' laws should still guide our actions.

An example of how to conduct this application is given by comparing 1 Corinthians 9:7-14 with Deuteronomy 25:4. The only Biblical authority for preachers getting paid is founded, by the New

Testament, on the Old Testament. Since I do not know a preacher who refuses to be paid, I know preachers will back me in affirming the relevance of the Old Testament for Christian living.

Jesus gave us an example of treating every syllable of the Old Testament as a solid enough foundation even for a startling, controversial theology. The way He said it was “the Scripture cannot be broken” [Gr: “loosened”]. As if a more traditional theology based on the same passage, but based on a less scrupulous reliance upon “every jot and tittle” of it, is wrong.

The passage is John 10:30-38. The people are preparing to stone Jesus for saying He was the Son of God. He reminded them that Psalm 86 uses the word “gods” to describe the ordinary humans hearing the Psalmist warn them for winking at injustice in courts. So if the people “to whom the Word of God came” were called “gods”, reasoned Jesus, “Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the *Son* of God?”

Our lesson is that not one syllable of Scripture can be questioned. It is an absolutely solid foundation which will bear the most majestic theologies founded securely on it.

DOES GOD KNOW WHAT HE IS TALKING ABOUT?

That is my best shot at defending the relevance of the Old Testament to people who accept the authority of the New Testament, but there are more people who question the relevance of both.

I have pointed out that God doesn’t show much respect for our immigration laws, and even less for our public debate about them.

Unfortunately, the feeling is mutual. The public doesn’t show much respect for God’s discussion of immigration policy. Which would be understandable if that attitude were confined to unbelievers.

Funny how Bible believing Christians can be the most defensive when you suggest the Bible outlines an immigration plan that we ought to include in national discussion.

Actually it is not funny at all. I was joking. It is no laughing matter. It would be hard enough for Bible believers to discern God’s meanings, if we were all researching together, correcting each other, helping explain difficult passages, without other Bible believers telling us to stop studying because that is religion and this is politics and you dasn’t mix them. It is hard enough to be certain how to apply Scripture to our lives, without having to establish, for Christian readers, that we *ought* to study, together, God’s advice for us, as if we mean to follow it.

But when I ask “If you knew replacing Immigration Quotas with reasonable criteria were God’s Immigration Plan, would you still be loyal to quotas?” or when I quote Scripture, I rarely hear “you are interpreting the verse wrong”. I often hear “the Bible is irrelevant. That was then. This is now.” Which is another way of saying “the Bible might work for a primitive tribe, but it is out of date now. Are you now going to tell me not to get a tattoo because Leviticus 19:28 prohibits it?”

APPLICATION OF SCRIPTURE TO AMERICAN LAW.

I have read through the laws given by Moses and thought about how the categories there are reflected in U.S. laws. Not perfectly, obviously, but generally. Auto insurance, and consideration for fault, is right there in treatment of accidents with oxen. Even the distinction between involuntary manslaughter and murder is right there.

Today's hygiene laws are there. It is hard to imagine how God could have created healthier, or easier to follow, hygiene laws, for a culture without microscopes who knew nothing of germs. For example, human waste was to be buried. If an animal fell into a clay water jug and died it was to be smashed – we know today that unglazed clay cannot be sterilized – but brass pots could be kept. The meats not to be eaten were the dangerous meats which, we know today, must be more thoroughly cooked to kill the terrible diseases which they carry.

In response to my op-ed article in the Des Moines Register, someone wrote “get your nose out of the Bible ...I’ll fight to the death to support your right to hold your religion true but I will not support fanatical religious views to creep into legislation.” Another said “...So [you] profess to know what God

thinks about laws made by man. I call that scary arrogance bordering on fanatical.”

My Reply: “So [you] think it a new idea, that anyone can read God’s opinions of man’s laws, just by opening his Bible? And [you] think [you] can prevent ‘religious views’ from ‘creeping into legislation’? How do you think our legislation started? Do you think a bunch of atheists got together and dreamed up the most successful Constitution in world history (outside the Bible itself) out of the air? If you want to live under a Constitution and set of laws not dripping with Christian influence, you should consider living in Mexico, Russia, China, or Iran.”