

# The Four Types of Foreigners in God's Law

Term	Definition	Legal/ Religious Status	Tone/ Connotation	Example Usage	Modern Equivalent
זֶר (Zur)	Stranger, outside of the congregation and outsider to specific contexts	Often excluded from covenantal contexts (e.g., mandated charity or gleaning privileges)	Neutral to negative	Could not eat holy food (Lev. 22:10)	Person of unknown or undecided legal status
גֵּר (Ger)	Integrated, protected resident; part of the congregation	Has most of the rights and obligations of a citizen. Charity to the poor גֵּר(Ger) is commanded (e.g., gleaning)	Positive, protected	Must be treated fairly (Ex. 22:21)	Permanent resident who is not yet a citizen
תוֹשֵׁב (Toshav)	Temporary sojourner in the land	Limited inclusion. Had fewer rights than a גֵּר(Ger), though charity to the poor בָּתִישׁ (Toshav) is commanded	Neutral to positive	Allowed sabbatical benefits (Lev. 25:6)	Visitor on short-term visa or refugee following host country laws
נֶכֶר (Nekhar)	A foreigner from a hostile region or religion	Excluded from covenant life. Excluded from living in Israel (Ex. 23:33)	Negative for immigration; neutral for trade	Complete separation required (Ex. 23:33)	Person with hostile country allegiance